Hybrid Working Pilot Outcome

Dec 2022

The Hybrid Working Pilot commenced on 1 November 2021 and is due to end 31 December 2022. Hybrid working arrangements were put in place to support agile working as well as facilitating a level of attendance on campus which contributes to a welcome, vibrant atmosphere that supports our staff, students and business needs.

School and Services were asked to discuss hybrid working arrangements with their teams to ensure that all voices were heard. Feedback is anecdotal as a result and the request for how feedback was received was left deliberately open to encourage comments and thoughts, although areas were asked to address six main themes as outlined below:

- the positive and negative impacts overall on the work, team and individuals
- the minimum expectation of being on campus – is this right, does it work for all?
- Equipment/kit – using own or being provided
- Team working
- Keeping track of performance
- Department/Team communications

There is overwhelming support to continue with hybrid working with the majority of schools and services reporting that the current arrangements in place are working well. On that basis there is no proposal to change the arrangements at this time and with effect from 1 January 2023 hybrid working will be available on an ongoing basis to eligible professional services support staff with local flexibility and discretion retained within the parameters of the framework. The framework will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it is fit for purpose.

The summary feedback received from all schools and services is provided below collating the most frequently made comments together under each theme.

Summary Feedback

Positive and negative impacts overall on the work, team and individuals

- Increased productivity, time more efficiently used when not commuting, improved concentration

- Teams and individuals more efficient, accessible and responsive due to MS Teams

- Virtual meetings offer flexibility and improved disability access

- Improved individual wellbeing and work-life balance and feeling of empowerment

- More customer centric

- No detrimental impact on support for students and academic colleagues

- WFH can provide less distractions when meeting deadlines and project related work

- No days lost due to inclement weather or public transport strikes

- Majority of areas agree an 'anchor day' when most staff try to be on campus

- Reduced costs of commute

- Some virtual meetings are more difficult than in person

- Some reports of unprofessional appearance when working at home in a Teams meeting and distractions such as pets

- WFH may mask sickness, staff inclined to log on, detrimental for health

- Car parking costs not reflective of hybrid working arrangements

- Public transport season tickets not set up for agile working arrangements

- Some feelings of negativity from office-based staff in roles not eligible for hybrid working

Minimum expectation of working on campus

- Overall, the majority of areas report that 60% of working time on campus works well, with two areas reporting a minimum time on campus to be negative, advocating for no minimum time or between a 50/50 split or a 40/60 where 40% should be on campus

- Areas report that setting a minimum expectation is easier to manage and is fairer

- Areas report good practice of using electronic diaries in Outlook and

Teams more effectively to identify where people are working

- Local flexibility and discretion work well in terms of working the split over days, weeks, months or to focus on key dates and times within a year

- Good balance between staff flexibility and business needs

- Most areas report having set days or key dates or meetings where staff are expected to be on campus

Equipment and kit

- All areas report current equipment and kit working well

- Access to university systems is easy, secure and robust

- Some university systems require access via the VPN requiring individuals to have a dedicated PC which may provide future challenges around cost

- Due to WFH in lockdown areas report a mix of using own kit and university kit

- Majority report they have suitable working space at home

- Some technical staff are not equipped to work at home

- Some challenges reported in managing DSE

- Areas reporting concern that whilst they want to maintain hybrid working, challenges presented around using your own device may lead to higher equipment costs and/or less opportunity for hybrid working

Team working

- Overall areas report improved team working with an increased sense of team spirit and community

- Majority of areas introduced 'anchor days' and attendance at key meetings to ensure a balance of on and off campus contact

- Use of Teams reported as positive impact on maintaining good working relationships within Team

- Recognition that new colleagues need support from both face-to-face interactions and online via Teams

- One area reported using 1-1 Teams meetings is more personal, reflecting challenges around privacy in open plan office

Keeping track of performance

- Majority of areas reported that all usual meetings have been maintained but the use of Teams has impacted on how they take place

- During lockdown managers adapted and had to think differently about keeping connected and supporting performance, this has proved a positive development for hybrid working arrangements

- There was no negative impact reported

- Teams Chat function was reported as a means of maintaining more frequent and less formal contact

- Some reported the Teams Tasks function as an effective way of keeping track of performance

Department/Teams communications

- All areas reported that staff have adapted well to using Teams and Teams chat as means of effective communication

- All areas report regular teams' meetings either face to face or hybrid

- Most areas report that staff make an extra effort to 'touch base' with colleagues using Teams when working patterns mean they do not see all colleagues frequently face to face

- More effort around making social interactions and arranging lunch, walks and coffee runs

- Staff have skilled up and embraced the technical developments available for communications