

# Getting buy-in for flexible working

Flexible working is on the rise. The benefits for both the business and its workforce are largely positive, and include improved staff retention, reduced sickness absence, better wellbeing, and increased job satisfaction.

This flowchart provides guidance to people professionals who need to gain buy-in and present a business case for flexible working.

## Spread the word

- Use a range of internal communications and campaigns to spread the word, and network with external peers to gain a broad and impartial perspective.
- Create a network of flexible working champions at different levels across the organisation.

## Involve senior leaders

- Involve senior leaders in presenting a case for flexible working and focus on how it aligns with the organisation's strategy, branding and values.
- Provide examples of senior leaders working flexibly and think creatively about how this information is distributed throughout the organisation (such as a short video interview with the senior leader or a drop-in Q&A).

## Celebrate the successes

- Introduce case studies and highlight the positive outcomes. Provide examples where flexible working has benefited both the individual and organisation.
- Build a business case listing the financial benefits, key statistics and positive outcomes as a result of the flexible working measures (eg reduction in sickness absence and better performance).
- Demonstrate the ways flexible working can support the organisation's recruitment and retention strategy and widen the talent pool, particularly when there is a skills shortage.
- Focus on the key issues your organisation is facing that flexible working may help to address.

## Support line managers

- Communicate the potential benefits to managers, particularly those who have negative experiences of flexible working.
- Encourage managers to document strategies that have and haven't worked well, so they can learn from previous successes and mistakes.
- Provide training to equip managers with the information, resources and skills required to implement flexible working within their team.
- Work together to explore how flexible working can be applied and help to delegate some of the people management responsibilities, if their team has expanded (due to part-time hours).
- Consider different working patterns and set realistic goals and expectations. Ensure people are not asked to do full-time jobs in part-time hours.

## Rethink your culture

- Establish an organisational culture that listens to employees (and their needs) and supports flexible workers.
- Communicate consistent messages about flexible working and highlight the key benefits; this may involve challenging traditional thinking and shifting perceptions.
- Have policies and infrastructure that help embed flexible working within the organisation.
- Link flexible working to other policies and initiatives (eg health and wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion, recruitment and retention).

## Improve knowledge and awareness

- Provide guidance materials and HR support to managers and teams across the organisation, particularly where flexible working is difficult to implement.
- Ensure guidance is not 'one-size-fits-all' – flexible working arrangements will look different across varying business areas and teams.