The Post Covid-19 Workplace (Part 2)

Kim Howell, Partner
Lowri Phillips, Partner

@geldards

The Headlines

- CIPD – **"Home working set to more than double compared to pre-pandemic levels once crisis is over"**

- Average proportion of workforce working from home during the pandemic - **54%**

- Proportion of staff working from home full time will increase to **22% from 9%**

- Proportion of staff working from home on a regular basis will increase to **37% from 18%**

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The Headlines

- CIPD Survey – 63% plan to introduce or expand the use of hybrid working

- BBC Survey – Almost all 50 of UK's biggest employers do not plan to bring staff back to the office full-time

- KPMG Survey – reduction in number of organisations who want to cut some office space (69% in August 2020/17% in March 2021)

  - Are organisations changing their minds? Or

  - Has downsizing already taken place?

Agile Working

- Increased prevalence due to Covid-19 pandemic

- Changed the nature of work and the workplace

- Traditional office based working is very likely to change

  - Some will opt for wholescale homeworking

  - Others may adopt a hybrid approach

  - Some roles may not be possible to do from home

  - No one size fits all approach

Agile Working

- Encompasses a number of different "work styles"
  - Homeworking
  - Mobile working
  - Remote working
  - Hybrid working
  - Hotdesking
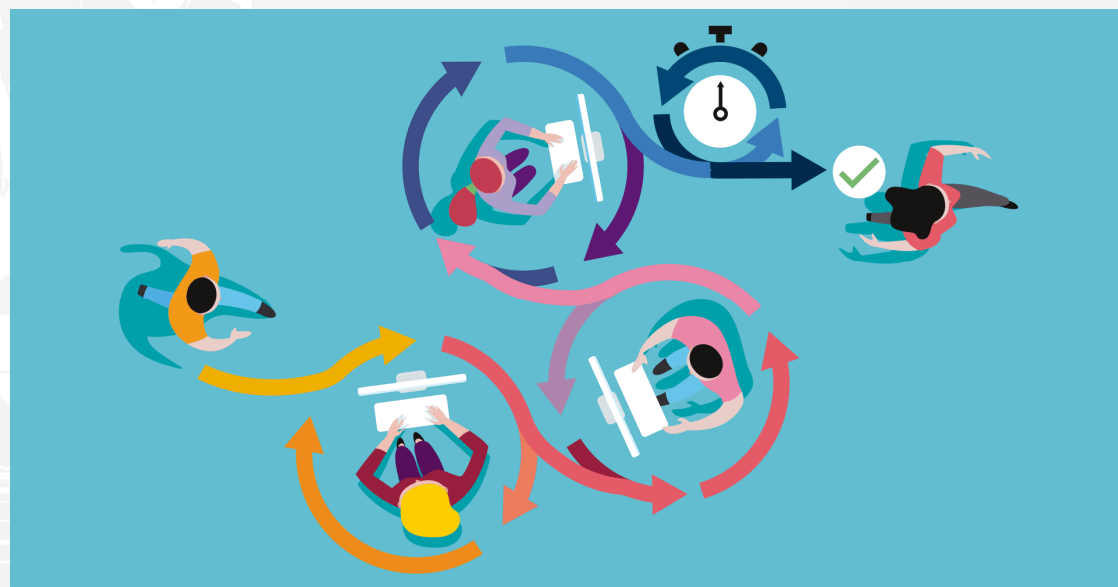
Agile Working - Benefits

- Reduced overhead costs

- More focused work time/fewer distractions

- Increased productivity

- Avoiding the commute

- New and different collaborations through the use of IT tools

Agile Working - Benefits

- Skills retention

- Greater pool of candidates for roles – not confined to local area

- Increased flexibility of hours

- Higher levels of staff motivation and engagement

- Enhanced employee wellbeing

Agile Working - Drawbacks

- Loss of control

- Difficult to carry out remote performance management/monitoring

- Junior employees have less support and engagement

- Loss of separation of work and personal life – overwork

- Dependence on technology

Agile Working - Drawbacks

- Less energy and drive from staff

- Lost team camaraderie

- Isolation

- Difficult to gauge how employees are feeling/impact on wellbeing

- Data security

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Strategies to support agile working

- CIPD have identified 7 strategies to make agile working successful

  - Develop the skills and culture needed for open conversations about wellbeing

  - Encourage boundary-setting and routines to improve wellbeing and prevent overwork

  - Ensure effective coordination of tasks and task-related communication

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Strategies to support agile working

- Pay special attention to creativity, brainstorming and problem-solving tasks

- Build in time - including face-to-face time - for team cohesion and organisational belonging

- Facilitate networking and inter-team relationships

- Organise a wider support network to compensate for the loss of informal learning

Flexible Working Regime

- Statutory entitlement to request for employees with at least 26 weeks' service

- 3 months to deal with the request

- Can only be refused on specific grounds

  - Cost

  - Effect on meeting customer demand

  - Re-organisation of work

  - Impact on quality or performance

  - Insufficiency of work

  - Planned structural changes

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Other Issues to Consider

- Legal barriers/implications

- Health and Safety

- Data Protection
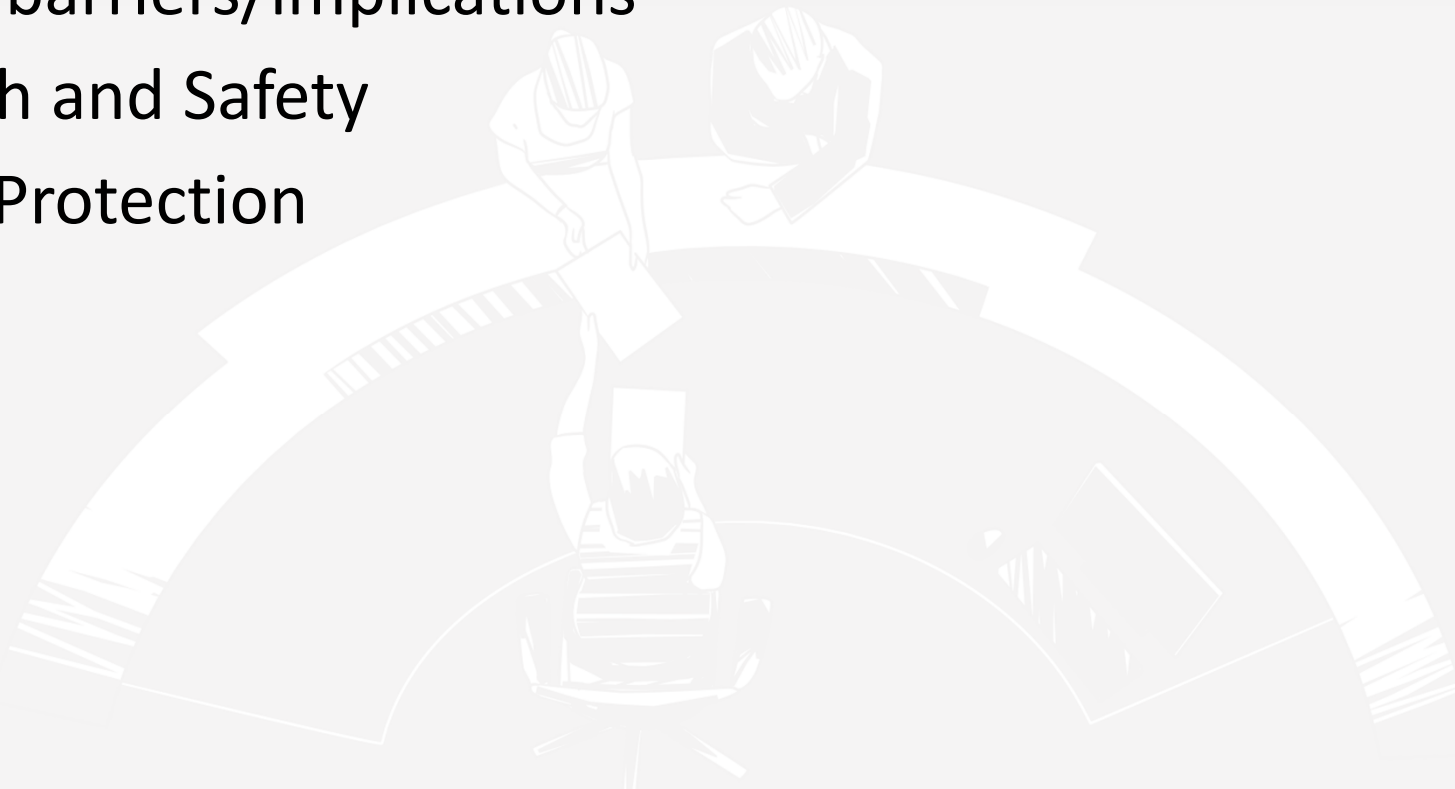
Case Study – Flexible working post Covid -19

You are the manager of a team which consists of 6 others. Following the Covid-19 pandemic you receive 5 flexible working requests on five consecutive days as follows:

1. A request from Kate Flemming who wants to work from home full time. She was very ill with Covid – 19 and believes that she caught it from the workplace. Although she has made a full recovery she has developed anxiety about returning to the office.

2. A request from Steve Arnott who wants to work from home full time. He suffers with an auto-immune deficiency and was on the shielding list due to this condition.

3. A request from Joanne Davidson who wants to work from home 4 days a week and to work flexible hours on those 4 days and come into the office 1 day a week. She is a single mother of three young children (all of primary school age) and finds the flexibility of being able to start work early and work in the evenings means that she is able to take the children to school and pick them up and give them tea gives her significantly improved work/life balance.

4. A request from Ted Hastings who wants to work from home full time. His wife has complex medical needs and has been on the government shielding list. She is unable to receive the vaccine due to her medical conditions.

5. A request from Tommy Hunter to work from home 3 days a week. He found that he was more productive working from home and he also has an hour's commute to the office each day so can get more work done from home and this has given him a significantly increased work/life balance which he wants to maintain. He confirms that this is very important to him and he has had job offers from other companies offering him this flexibility.

Whilst all of the team have been working fully from home during Covi-19, work productivity has reduced and team camaraderie has suffered. Some tasks are difficult to manage from home and the organisation has indicated that whilst there will be increased flexibility moving forward it wants to return to a predominantly office-based workforce.

The remaining member of the team is a single male who has found working from home difficult from a mental health perspective and has been suffering with depression as a result of the isolation. He cannot wait to return to the office and spend time working with the remainder of the team.

Identify the issues associated with each of the requests received.

How would you respond to each of these requests?

Any questions

Contact details

Kim Howell
Partner

+44 029 2039 1473
lim.howell@geldards.com

Lowri Phillips
Partner

+44 029 2039 1758
lowri.phillips@geldards.com

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Cardiff
4 Capital Quarter,
Tyndall Street
Cardiff, CF10 4BZ
Tel: +44 (0)29 2023 8239

London
80 Coleman Street
London
EC2R 5BJ
Tel: +44 (0)20 7620 0888

Derby
Number One Pride Place
Pride Park
Derby DE24 8QR
Tel: +44 (0)1332 331 631

Nottingham
The Arc
Enterprise Way
Nottingham NG2 1EN
Tel: +44 (0)115 983 3650

geldards.com   +44 (0)844 736 0006   @geldards