Toolkits for a
Blended Working
Environment

Foreword

The 2021 efforts of the Task Team on Future Work, Future Workplace and Future Skills have concentrated on considering the longer term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ways National Statistical Institutes, their staff and managers organise and deliver their outputs.

The great "work from home" experiment of 2020 has evolved through 2021 and it is now clear that for many, the way we work has changed irrevocably. This is not just a shift in geography – displacing work from one location to another; rather it represents a seismic change in the organisation of work, affecting where, how, when and with whom we engage, co-create, collaborate, learn and share knowledge to accomplish our professional objectives.

To help National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) address the challenges arising from this huge shift, the Task Team on Future Work, Future Workplace and Future Skills has produced a series of three Toolkits, shaped around issues affecting Employers (NSIs), Employees (all staff) and Managers (employees with staff management responsibilities).

These Toolkits examine the issues associated with future Hybrid or Blended Working models for NSIs and attempt to sketch the challenges under the following dimensions:
- Examining considerations arising when moving from a single office based work place to a Blended or Hybrid Working Model
- Exploring the challenges, needs and opportunities for the Employer, the Employee and the Manager
- Identifying questions that require solutions
- Pinpointing common areas of concern or needing attention
- Suggesting high level actions to help
- Serving as internal conversation starters…

These Toolkits are a start point but are not complete support resources. A further phase of work could establish a shared repository of knowledge, comprising, for example, relevant research papers into the Future of Work, emerging Policy Frameworks, Health & Safety Guidelines, relevant common Training Materials etc. A proposal has been submitted for this Task Team to pursue its efforts into 2022 with this objective. We look forward to the challenge!

Jeremy Visschers, Chair
Future Work, Future Workplace & Future Skills Task Team
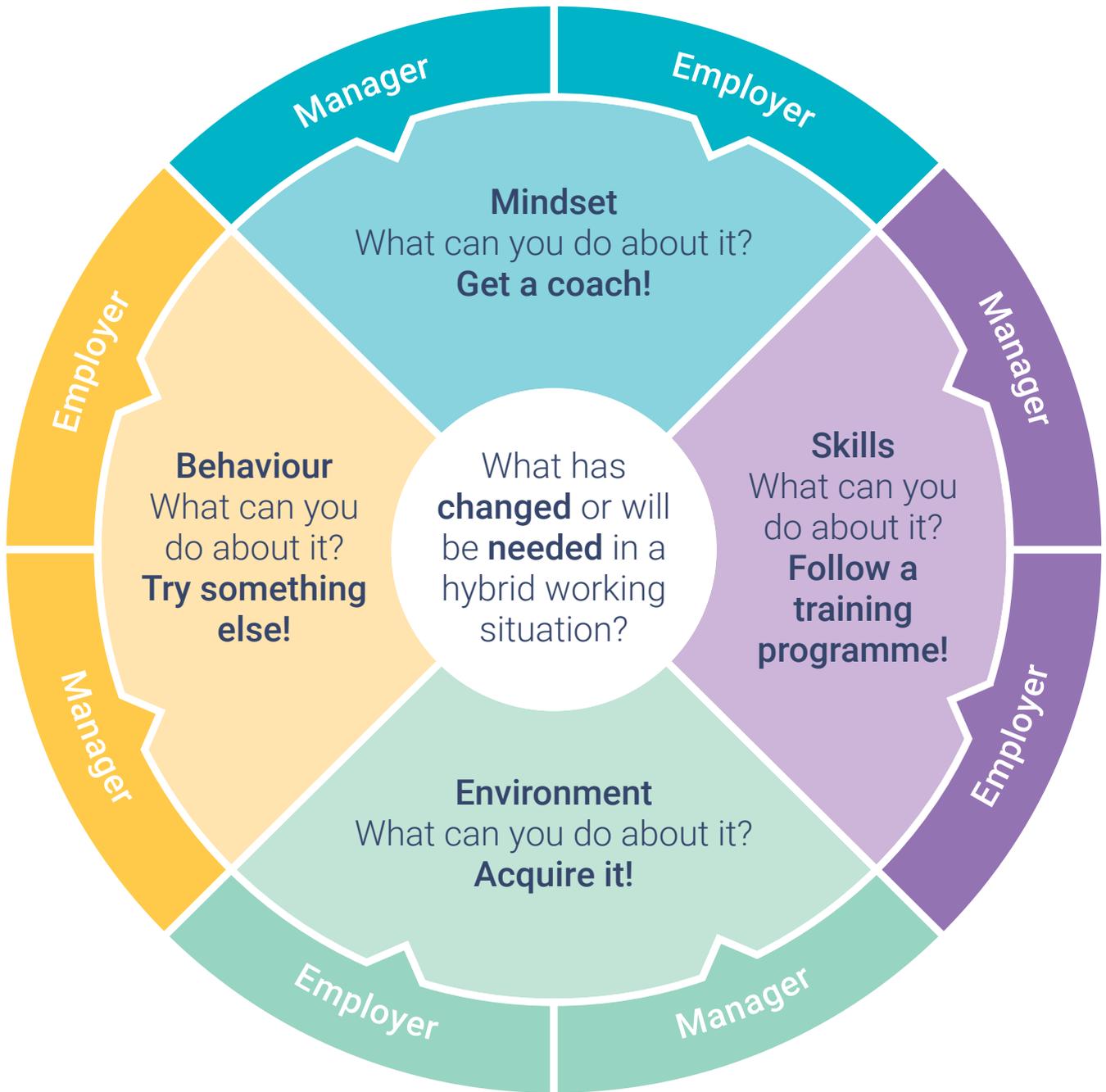
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Employee
Toolkit

Mindset
What can you do about it?
Get a coach!

Skills
What can you do about it?
Follow a training programme!

Behaviour
What can you do about it?
Try something else!

Environment
What can you do about it?
Acquire it!

What has **changed** or will be **needed** in a hybrid working situation?

Manager

Employer

Manager

Employer

Manager

Employer

Manager

Employer

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Environment

Rules & Regulations – Am I aware of the rules and regulations that affect me in my hybrid working environment?

- How do I register my attendance?
- How do I contact/communicate with my colleagues and manager?
- What health and safety rules must I follow?
- What kind of documents should I prepare – paper or electronic?
- How can I find out? – read the policy/policies (post it here/above), ask my Manager, ask HR

Access – Do I have access to the tools (applications/software/resources) I need to complete my role in a hybrid environment?

- Am I aware of my responsibilities in relation to cyber security?
- Do I understand how to store key documents safely?
- If not, I must gain access or find out – read the policy (post it here), ask my Manager, ask IT

Equipment – Do I have access to the equipment (workstation set-up etc) I need to complete my work at home, in the office or in an agreed other location?

- What kind of equipment is assigned to me in the office environment?
- What kind of equipment can I take home?
- How can I gain access to the equipment I need – read the policy (post it here), ask my manager, ask Facilities Management

Support – What kind of supports do I have access to enable me to perform my role in a hybrid environment?

- How do I access technical support? Who do I contact?
- What supports are available to address learning needs? How do I access them?
- What services are available to support my wellbeing? How do I access them?
- What other supports are available to me?

Behaviour

Tasks – How will my work be organised in the future (on-site/off-site/blended)?

- Is it flexible? Is it up to me? Who decides – Manager/Employer?
- Review the policy, consider your preference and speak to your manager

Presence/Visibility – Have I agreed my hours of attendance for physical (onsite) and virtual (off-site) work?

- If not, I must review the policy, consult my manager and communicate my availability to stakeholders

Collaboration – Have I agreed with my colleagues about the way we collaborate

- What kind of collaboration tools are available? Can I get access to them? Do my colleagues have access to them? Do I need training?

Contact – Have I made my stakeholders aware of how to contact me?

- Have I included information on my work pattern and availability in my email signature?
- Can I be contacted by phone while working off-site?
- What is the office policy? Consult my Manager and make my stakeholders aware of how to communicate with me

Well-Being – Am I looking after my own well-being?

- What are my needs?
- Am I looking after my health?
- How can I balance my professional and private lives?
- How can I reconcile my employers' need for a flexible workforce with my need for security (flexicurity)?
- I must review/consider my own wellbeing, speak to my manager, engage with the organisations Wellbeing Programme or resources

Skills

Learning Needs Analysis – Are there additional skills I need to perform my role in a Blended/Hybrid Working Environment?

- How do I find out? - Conduct a Learning Needs Analysis – consider the requirements of the organisation and the role
- Prioritise skills gaps in consultation with my manager
- Engage with Learning and Development for interventions
- Develop an agreed learning path

Knowledge Sharing – how do we share knowledge in the hybrid environment?

- Do I have access to a knowledge sharing platform – a blog, a Community of Practice?
- How do I engage with my peers?

What services are available to support my wellbeing? How do I access them?

- What other supports are available to me?

Mindset

Open – Do I have an open mindset? Am I willing to consider new ideas?

. . . .

If not, reflect, find your purpose, speak to your manager about taking on new challenges.

- Satisfied - Am I happy with my blended or hybrid working arrangements?

If not, what can I do about it? Speak to my manager, meet a coach, use the employee assistance service

- Connection - Do I feel part of my organisation?
- If not, I should speak to my manager, join organisational events, engage face to face with my colleagues, consider spending more time on-site

Employer
Toolkit

Manager

Employer

Hybrid Working Model
What model will work best for the Organisation and its workforce?

Manager

People and Culture
Ensuring a Great place to work in a new working arrangement

Employer Toolkit

Legal
What legal obligations need t be met?

Employer

Manager

Employer

Key enablers
What technological and physical supports are required?

Employer

Manager

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Hybrid Working Model

Design model that meets the following essential criteria:

- No standard one size fits all model, will vary between organisations
- Supports business needs and supports employee work life balance
- Flexible and agile model to safeguard the continuous prioritisation of business needs
- Introduction and implementation of hybrid working supports business continuity, no disruption

Develop comprehensive policy and procedures that set out hybrid working arrangements, need to consider:

- Key principles – supports business needs, improves work/life balance, complies with legal, health and safety regulations
- Key parameters – how flexible - location independent, time working independent?
- Automatic entitlement or must meet eligibility criteria? Are some roles not suitable?
- How to request hybrid working, ensure a fair and transparent decision-making process
- Set mandatory working hours for remote and on-site employees to avoid delays in working processes linked to each other?

- Clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations for both hybrid workers and people managers
- Staff management challenges in a hybrid working arrangement, managing dispersed teams
- Trial period and review mechanism – what does success look like?
- Ongoing assessment of arrangement – right to review and amend to meet evolving business needs
- Work station assessment for suitability – decision on equipment provision
- How will hybrid working sit with other existing forms of flexible working, review and amend such policies accordingly if no longer fit for purpose
- Review and amend, where necessary, other policies, e.g. IT usage, data protection, recruitment
- Review and amend safety policy and procedures to include hybrid working, e.g. amend definition of accident at work

Key stakeholder feedback

- Internal - Employee surveys/ Pulse surveys pre- and post-implementation, working groups
- External - Service User/Customer surveys

Legal Obligations

Health and Safety

Safe place of Work

- Employer obligations
  - Duty of care to ensure a safe place to work, regardless of location
  - Homeworking Risk Assessment
  - Provision of equipment/resources
- Employee Obligations
  - Take reasonable care of themselves and any equipment supplied
  - Identify and maintain dedicated work space
  - Follow procedures
  - Report risk and work-related accidents

Safe System of Work

- Provide instructions and training on working safely remotely
- Update Safety Statement to incorporate hybrid working

Insurance and liability considerations, tax implications

- Implications for both the employer and the employee, e.g. house insurance

Employment Terms and Conditions

- Contractual implications – need to consider whether commencing hybrid working results in a formal or informal change to employment contract
- Terms of Employment
  - Right to request Remote Working
  - Right to disconnect – establish normal hours of work

- Statutory entitlements in respect of rest, maximum working time and holidays
- System for recording time and attendance for remote working to ensure employee rights and responsibilities in relation to working times are adhered to, address any privacy issues

Equality consideration – Ensure equal access for employees working remotely as those working on-site to career opportunities, training and development opportunities

Cybersecurity measures – ensure effective measures are put in place and provide training to employees

Data Protection and Security with Remote Access

- Ensure data protection by design and by default
- Implement technical and organisational measures to ensure a level of security appropriate to the risk
- Update policies and procedures to include remote working
- Provide training - ensure employees are aware of security measures and comply with them, personal accountability and responsibility

Note: Covering sources – laws, regulations, legally binding collective agreements

Key Enablers

Technology and Physical Work Space (Workstation)

Technology

- Establish Software, Infrastructure and Devices requirements to facilitate remote working
- Provide Virtual Communication and Collaboration Tools
- Ensure appropriate Data Protection and security measures are in place when remote working
- Provide secure data access and file sharing platforms, virtual private networks
- Ensure suitability of the remote working software in maintaining cybersecurity
- Decide what encrypted technology equipment will be supplied to the employee
- Mobile device management
- Training employees in the following:
  - safe use and care of work-issued devices
  - build digital capability
  - best practice in maintaining cybersecurity
  - data protection advice on safeguarding data when working remotely

Remote Workstation

- Ensure employee's workstation and equipment are suitable for their work
- Identify what equipment and resources are required
- Carry out ergonomic risk assessment of remote environment
- Take appropriate follow-up protective and preventive measures to mitigate against any identified risks
- Decide what the employer will provide
- Train employees in managing safety issues when working remotely

Office Re-design

- Quiet spaces
- Collaborative spaces
- Consider designated workstations versus hot desking
- Equip meeting rooms with video conferencing technology
- Wellbeing spaces
- Outdoor spaces

People and Culture

People

Leadership and Management

- Develop Inclusive leadership – effective communication, trust and relationship building with a dispersed team
- Setting and managing expectations
- Effective performance management with focus on outputs and outcomes
- Managing hybrid teams
- Proximity bias awareness

Employees

- Opportunity for more positive working experience
- Consultation and employee voice, include staff surveys, focus groups
- Increased autonomy and individual accountability
- Build in reviews with employees

- Monitor retention rates and absence rates
- Employee engagement levels
- Wellbeing implications of hybrid working, invest in wellbeing programme
- Provide training to employees on managing work life balance

New/Prospective staff

- Strengthen your attractiveness as Employer of choice
- Design on-boarding programme for a hybrid working arrangement to ensure a positive Year 1 experience.
- Achieve greater diversity of workforce through making the workplace more accessible to a range of diverse groups, e.g. helps remove physical barriers to accessing the workplace

Culture

Protect Organisational values and norms

- Effective Communication, maintain shared purpose
- Flexibility and agility
- Innovation
- Trust
- Fairness
- Individual accountability and personal responsibility
- Equality and Inclusion

Manager
Toolkit

Manager
Employer
Manager
Employer
Manager
Employer
Manager
Employer

Mindset
How do new Ways of Working impact Values, Culture, Behaviours?

Skills
Do I/you/we need to reskill/ upskill or adapt to internal dynamics and/or changed stakeholder/ customer needs?

Behaviour
What changes are needed in how I, you and our Teams work & engage? Have our customers'/ stakeholders' ways of working changed?

Environment
What resources do I, you, our Teams need to work efficiently and effectively in the new environment? How have our customer/stakeholder needs evolved?

Manager Toolkit

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Environment

Manager (ME)

- Do I understand the tools (applications/software/resources) I need to work and to manage in a Blended/Hybrid work environment?
  - If not, where do I look; who do I ask?
- Do I have access to the equipment (workstation set-up; smart-working hardware...) I need to work and to manage in a Blended /Hybrid work environment?
  - If not, what is my organisational policy and how do I influence it/ensure it works for me?

My Staff (YOU)

- Do you have the tools (applications; software etc) and equipment (hardware; resources) you need to do your job?
  - How can I, as your manager, help you with these requirements?
- Any accommodation needs you have that are not being fulfilled?
- Are your health, safety and wellbeing at work needs being satisfied?
  - If not, what are the areas for action?
  - If yes, are there opportunities to leverage these positives for wider organisational impact?

My Team (US)

- What tools does the Team need to collaborate in a hybrid environment?
- Are there any accommodation needs we have that are not being fulfilled?
- Are our Team health, safety and wellbeing at work needs being satisfied?
  - If not, what are the areas for action?
  - If yes, are there opportunities to leverage these positives for wider organisational impact?

My Stakeholders (THEM)

- Have my customers' ways of working/work environments changed post pandemic?
  - Primarily On-Site/Off-Site/ Hybrid?
  - What does this imply for how I/We interact with them?

Behaviour

Manager (ME)

- Am I visible (physically & virtually)? Do I have "open hours" for the team?

- Am I listening (at virtual and physical meetings)?

- Am I responsive? Do I reply to enquiries/ messages reliably/predictably?

- Am I building trust? Do I ensure all staff, irrespective of location, are included in communications?

- Am I guilty of proximity bias? Do I rely more on staff that are onsite?

- Am I treating staff in a fair way in relation to their applications for hybrid working?

- Have I ensured that the Health and Safety requirements of my team are being met?

- Have I ensured that the Data Protection/Cyber Security requirements are being met by my team? What about other requirements?

- Do I show an interest in staff well-being (especially for less visible team members)?

- Am I looking after my Well-Being? Have I conducted a Well Being Audit, for me/for You/ for Us?

My Staff (YOU)

- How will You organise Your work in the future (On-site; Off-site; Blended) in compliance with the organisations policy on blended working?
  - Is this what they want? If yes, great. If not, what can I do about that? What options/ alternatives, if any, are available?

- How can we resolve any conflict?
  - Self-assessment of suitability of your work for "on-site" versus "off-site" practice [insert link to any work evaluation support tools/ checklists etc]

- Is there a performance issue? How is this affecting output? How can we work together to resolve this?

- Do my staff understand how best to organise their work for onsite' offsite and/or hybrid completion?

- How does the way my staff organise their work influence their commitment to their role?

- Any support actions necessary?

My Team (US)

- How does our Team need to structure its work for a hybrid environment?

- What tools are available to help us to conduct this examination?

- Are there gaps in our structure/work organisation that threaten our ability to get the job done?
  - If yes, what are they?

- How are we performing as a team? Has output increased or decreased in the blended working environment? What can we do to maintain or rectify this?

My Stakeholders (THEM)

- Have my Stakeholders changed their ways of working post pandemic/in the new work environment?
  - If yes, how do I need to change mine correspondingly?
  - Do we need to conduct a User/Stakeholder Survey?

Skills

Manager (ME)

- Am I personally skilled to carry out technical aspects of my role in a Blended/Hybrid Working Environment?
    - How do I perform this analysis? [Link to Job Analysis Resources, if available]
    - What gaps have I identified?
    - How can I plug them? [Link to organisational skills development resource]
- Am I personally skilled to carry out the people management aspects of my role in a Blended/Hybrid Working Environment?
    - What new skills do I require? [link to soft skills for Blended Work resources e.g. people management]
    - Any special areas of support required? [Insert into Personal Development Plan/Performance Plan]

My Staff (YOU)

- Review your objectives and the organisation of Your work to reflect the new work environment
    - Any redundant objectives or skills? Any new objectives/skills required?
    - Has the prioritisation of Your work changed? How?
    - What about timelines or challenges to achievability?
- What skill supports, and soft resources do you need to do your job – onsite/offsite/in a hybrid way?
    - How can I support you with these requirements?

My Team (US)

- What are the different skills needed, as a Team, for us to make the new organisation of work a success?
    - How do we acquire these skills (resources; supports etc)? How can I help?

My Stakeholders (THEM)

- To better respond to my Stakeholders new/emerging expectations and requirements, what skills development (soft/hard) is needed?
    - Where can I/We source these upskilling supports?

Mindset

Manager (ME)

- Am I supportive of Blended Working?
  - If not, what can I do as a Manager to deliver what's required?
- Am I minding my own mental health in a hybrid work environment?
  - Well Being Self Audit and Action Plan (if needed)
  - Well Being Audit of Team and Action Plan ("YOU"/"US")

My Staff (YOU)

- How can You maintain a shared sense of culture and values with Your Manager [me], Your Team and Your Organisation? How can I help? [insert link to Culture & Values Information]
- How does Blended Working impact Your well-being at work?
  - What helps!? What are the positive learnings we should document/monitor?
  - What hinders? How/Why and what should You do to support positive well-being?
  - How can I help?
- Do You need to prioritise any behaviours to promote Your well-being at work? Do You need to avoid any behaviours to promote Your well-being at work?
  - What can I do to help?

My Team (US)

- Do we each understand our role in the new organisation of work?
  - If not, let's explore and clarify
- Do we all understand/agree how the new Blended/Hybrid Working model delivers for all stakeholders?
  - If not, where are the concerns?
  - How can we address them?

My Stakeholders (THEM)

- Have my Stakeholders changed their Culture/ Ways of Thinking post pandemic/in the new work environment?
  - How?
  - Does it affect me/us; our methods of engagement?