

Anywhere Working

Flexibility is the key

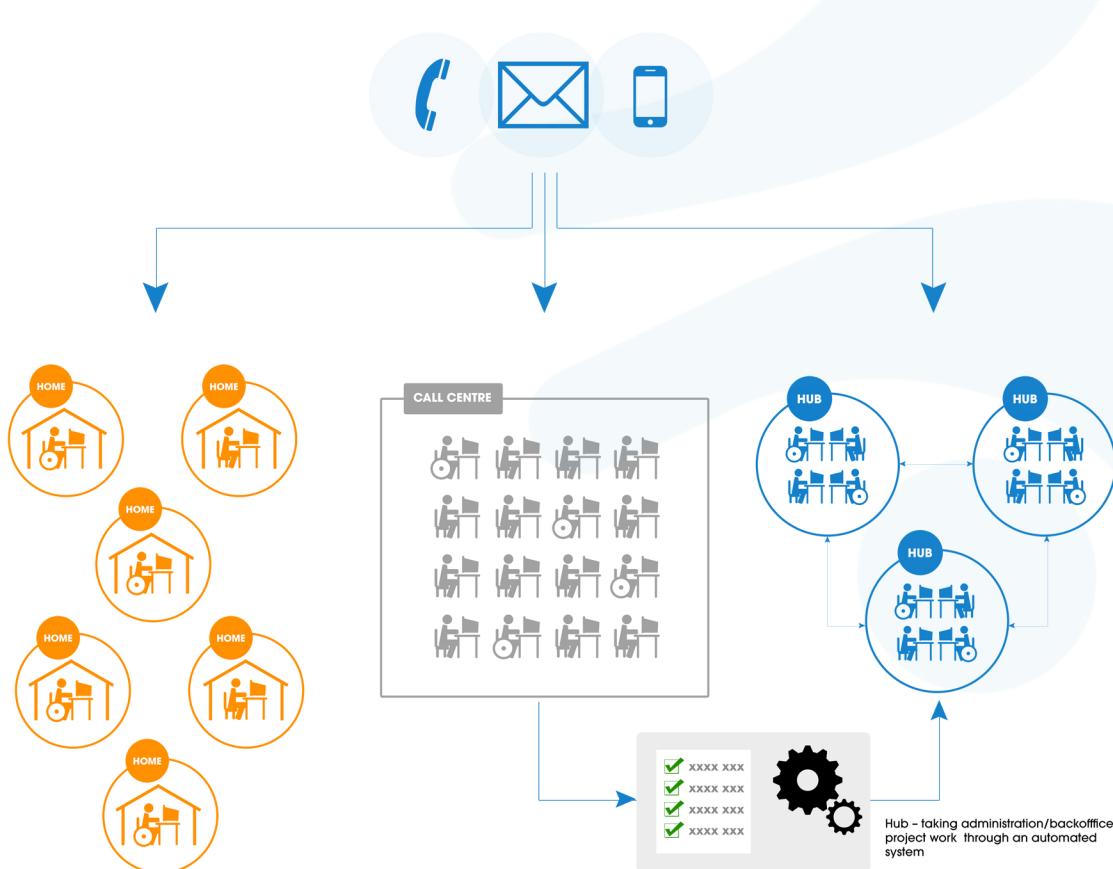
Anyone who manages a call centre will testify that employees who are able to give a measure of flexibility in working hours are worth their weight in gold. Indeed, with the average call centre workload graph looking like a roller-coaster, the ability to match employees to shifts AND workload, is a sure-fire way of giving a much improved service level to customers.

But it is not only time that needs flexibility. Location can be flexible too, depending on requirements. So although normality might be working from the office, the ability to work from home or from a local hub, gives more people the opportunity to apply for the vacant roles, and therefore a wider pool of candidates to review.

This wider pool includes people with disabilities who, as we know, can offer a unique array of skills and attributes to employers. To fully unlock their potential, we need to be more open-minded about where they work.

There's good evidence that giving employees more freedom to choose where they work improves their sense of job satisfaction, their motivation and therefore their performance.

ContactAbility is encouraging employers to consider 'anywhere working' – giving candidates with disabilities the option of working from home, from a dedicated hub or in the main office.



Office

For many people, the central office, with a thriving contact centre, is the ideal place to work. Creating a teamwork ethic, with a mentoring programme to help new employees fit in and are given the best support to become valued employees. The office suits disabled employees who:

- Live close-by
- Would normally expect to work a complete shift
- Would either need parking or good transport links
- Are mobile

But there are alternatives that suit both employees and employers, because flexibility is the key. For many disabled people, homeworking is an ideal solution

Homeworking

More and more people work from home, either part time or full time. This working method gives benefits for both the employee and employer. Cost savings, flexibility and a wider-pool of suitable candidates for the employer, with flexibility and lower travel cost amongst the benefits for the employee. Homeworking suits employees who:

- Are more geographically diverse
- Are required to work split or variable shifts
- Are required to work unsociable shifts
- Have mobility limitations

For employers are the joint benefits of extensive cost savings and having access to quality staff who currently cannot be included in the available pool. ContactAbility can help provide advice and help for home-working pilots.

Hub Working

The third option is gives the benefits of office working and the benefits of homeworking combined. Hub working is a centrally managed outsourced office facility that employs both disabled and able-bodied employees to deliver high quality support to the main office.

To give even more flexibility, a number of hubs will be situated around the country, typically in areas of high unemployment, so that workload can be spread evenly to make sure work is delivered on time.



The support varies. Companies can source dedicated agents taking calls, managed professionally within the hub. Alternatively, call overflow, additional agent resource or back-office administration assistance is available, or delivered on a project basis. Using a powerful internet portal, work can be uploaded easily and the results delivered, high in accuracy and quality, all within agreed deadlines. Perfect to cover staff shortages or increased workloads.

And work is taken, one job at a time. So there is no commitment, no minimum workload and no high-prices. But by using the hub, you are directly contributing to the employment of people with disability, even if it is not possible to employ them at the office.