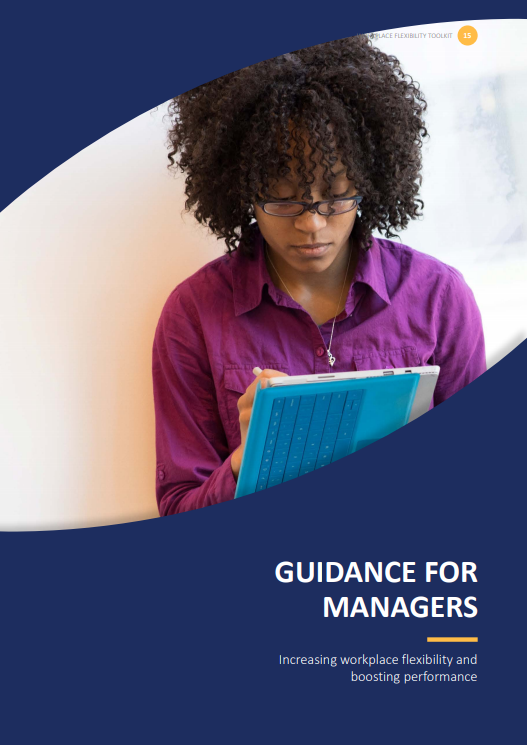
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**Handling difficult conversations**

There may be times when you have to handle difficult conversations relating to flexible working, and that’s okay. Leading discussions that enable multiple, contrasting perspectives is how problems are solved, and performance improves. Below are some examples of possible conversations around flexible work, and some suggested responses.

I have over 14 years of experience

in finance. When my son was in a bad accident

I dropped everything to take care of him. We

had to move towns to get him access to

appropriate schools and therapies. It was hard,

but it gave me an opportunity to become

really involved in fund raising, parent

committees and advocacy program. My son

will always depend on my husband and I, but

he is well supported now and I need to do

something for me. I have always been a high

performer, but I don’t know how

competitive I will be after such

a long time away…

**RESPONSE**

Remind employees that they should use sick

leave when they are sick as a general rule.

However, there are times when an

employee may be well enough to do some

work at home, and this is when to exercise

judgment.

“I’m sick, but I can work from

home.”

**RESPONSE**

Remind employees that context does

matter. Applying a policy fairly doesn’t mean

everyone has the same outcome. Instead,

offer to talk to them about their needs and

desires and how best you and the team can

accommodate them.

“I want to work from home on

Wednesdays, like Kevin does. It’s

not fair he gets to and I don’t.”

**RESPONSE**

Remind the employee that flexible

working is about give and take. Making

inflexible arrangements around flexible

work does not work. Sometimes team

events on flexible working days is

unavoidable. Discuss whether remotely

dialling in is an option and the possibility

of scheduling the next team meeting on

another day.

“I work from home on Wednesdays, but there is a

team meeting scheduled Wednesday afternoon.”

**RESPONSE**

Remember that poor performance should

not preclude flexible working. Have a

discussion about their performance and

how they plan to address it. Consider

trialling a flexible working arrangement

with clear goals that they need to achieve.

“I know I received a poor

performance rating, however I want

to work from home 1 day a week”

**RESPONSE**

Talk to the employee about the reality of

compressed work. Ask if they think they can

do the job effectively in four days without

impacting on their colleagues and the

businesses and discuss whether they will be

willing to flex and adapt as required.

**RESPONSE**

Response to requests for infrastructure

will depend on the context of your

business. Have a conversation about

why they think they need another

computer. When you understand the

reason for the request, you will be

more equipped to help them find a

meaningful solution.

“I want to work from home but will

need another computer to do this.”

“I’d like to work a compressed

week. I could easily fit five days

work into four.”



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| **Question** | **Response** |
| **“I’m sick, but I can work from home.”** | Remind employees that they should use sick leave when they are sick as a general rule. However, there are times when an employee may be well enough to do some work at home, and this is when to exercise judgment. |
| **“I want to work from home on Wednesdays, like Kevin does. It’s not fair he gets to and I don’t.”** | Remind employees that context does matter. Applying a policy fairly doesn’t mean everyone has the same outcome. Instead, offer to talk to them about their needs and desires and how best you and the team can accommodate them. |
| **“I work from home on Wednesdays, but there is a team meeting scheduled Wednesday afternoon.”** | Remind the employee that flexible working is about give and take. Making inflexible arrangements around flexible work does not work. Sometimes team events on flexible working days is unavoidable. Discuss whether remotely dialling in is an option and the possibility of scheduling the next team meeting on another day. |
| **“I want to work from home but will need another computer to do this.”** | Response to requests for infrastructure will depend on the context of your business. Have a conversation about why they think they need another computer. When you understand the reason for the request, you will be more equipped to help them find a meaningful solution. |
| **“I’d like to work a compressed week. I could easily fit five days work into four.”** | Talk to the employee about the reality of compressed work. Ask if they think they can do the job effectively in four days without impacting on their colleagues and the businesses and discuss whether they will be willing to flex and adapt as required. |
| **“I know I received a poor performance rating, however I want to work from home 1 day a week”** | Remember that poor performance should not preclude flexible working. Have a discussion about their performance and how they plan to address it. Consider trialling a flexible working arrangement with clear goals that they need to achieve. |