



Flexibility

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Granting your employees with more freedom over *when* and *where* they work can improve their wellbeing and productivity.

Flexibility can also be offered through *leaves* for personal or professional reasons that promote rejuvenation and inspiration.

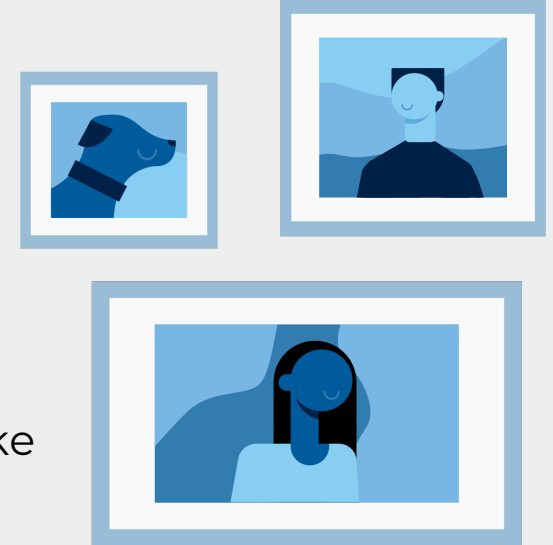


Flexibility Interventions

Give employees the option to work from home

Giving employees the choice to work from home (WFH) can boost employee wellbeing and productivity, especially as workplaces transition away from fully remote work during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and explore alternative ways of working.

- According to findings from a choice experiment, the average job seeker is willing to take an 8% pay cut for a WFH option.¹
- A longitudinal analysis in the US showed that new mothers returning to work with a WFH option were less likely to experience depressive symptoms 6 to 24-months post-childbirth.² (See section on **Inclusion and Belonging**).
- Post-pandemic, a randomised controlled trial showed that workers in a large IT office in Bangladesh were more productive and had higher wellbeing when working hybridly (2-3 days in office).³



Sources:

1. Mas and Pallais (2017)

2. Shepherd-Banigan et al. (2016)

3. Choudhary et al. (2022)

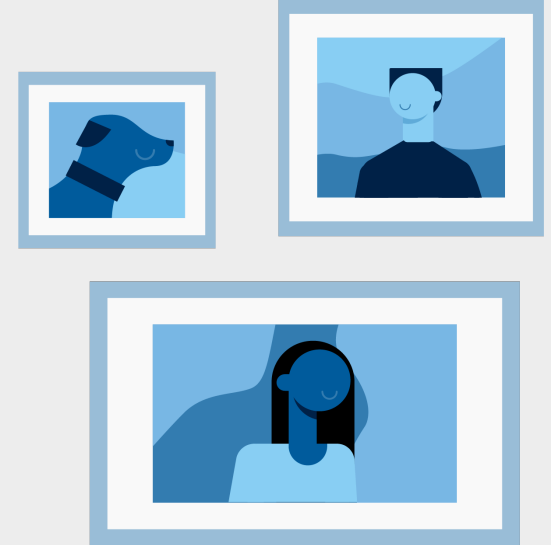


Flexibility Interventions

Give employees the option to work from home (contd.)

There are several risk factors that can impact the success of working from home on employee wellbeing and productivity that organisations should consider:

- **Poor working conditions:** Ensure employees' home working environments are suitable including workstation ergonomics, noise, lighting, and air quality.¹ Simply offering screen monitors and headsets can go a long way.
- **Collaborative work:** Research suggests that collaborative work is compromised when attempted remotely.^{2,3} Encourage teams to be strategic and schedule in-office time together to complete such tasks.
- **Work overload:** Remind employees to take breaks and consider implementing a digital disconnection policy to help employees set boundaries between their work and personal life.⁴



Sources:

1. Becker and Fisher (2022)
2. Yang et al. (2022)

3. [MIT Sloan Management Review](#)
4. Chung (2022)



Flexibility Interventions

Let your employees have say over their schedule

Employees who have control over their schedule report lower levels of stress, exhaustion, and greater work-life balance.¹ In contrast, employees with limited to no control over their schedule are less happy and at higher risk of poor health.²

Research suggests that schedule control is highly valued among workers. The results of a choice experiment showed that job seekers were willing to give up 20% of their income to avoid having no say with limited notice regarding their schedules.³

Empowering employees to determine their schedules collaboratively can improve work-life balance and perceptions of social support.⁴ Kraft Foods created *Fast Adapts* for shift workers to make shift swaps and single-day vacation requests easier.⁵



Sources:

1. Moen et al. (2016)
2. Schneider and Harknett (2019)
3. Mas and Pallais (2017)
4. Albertson et al. (2014)
5. [Georgetown University Law Center](#)



Flexibility Interventions

Recharge employees with leave options

Giving employees a break from their routine work frees up time and mental space that they can put towards other goals. Employees returning from leave often report feelings of inspiration and rejuvenation.^{1,2}

Sabbaticals are paid leaves for employees to focus on professional development. For example, many universities offer sabbaticals that relieve them of their teaching and administrative duties to concentrate on their research. At Monzo bank, employees get a 3 month sabbatical for every 4 years they work for the company.

Deferred compensation leave provides employees with the option to defer a portion of their salary over time to self-fund a leave for any purpose. This type of leave works best when the employee's job remains secure and they are notified of potential promotional opportunities while away.



Sources:

1. Davidson et al. (2010)
2. Jacobson and Kennedy (1997)



Flexibility Interventions

Encourage employees to take paid parental leave

Providing mothers and fathers with paid parental leave beyond the statutory minimum for the birth, adoption, or surrogacy of a new child can protect their mental health.¹ One study found that women who took paid leave were 53% less likely to seek mental health care compared to women who did not.² Research also suggests that there may be an extra wellbeing boost to families when both parents take parental leave.³

Reduce workplace stigma by encouraging fathers to take parental leave and put mechanisms in place to mitigate negative career consequences such as missed training or promotional opportunities for both women and men. All employees should have equality of opportunity regardless of their leave status.



Sources:

1. [McKinsey](#)
2. Jou et al. (2018)
3. Cardenas et al. (2021)



Flexibility References

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Making the most of this resource



The Work Wellbeing Playbook is a concise guide derived from a systematic literature review of workplace wellbeing interventions. It offers a high-level summary of evidence-based interventions categorised by 12 key drivers of workplace wellbeing, distilled from over 3,000 academic studies.

Aimed at busy professionals, it provides accessible insights to improve employee wellbeing.

This playbook builds upon the World Wellbeing Movement's science-based recommendations for how to measure both [how employees are feeling at work](#), and [why they are feeling that way](#). You can then use the Work Wellbeing Playbook to address the areas for improvement within your organisation.

Business leaders are recommended to keep diversity top of mind when leveraging the playbook to craft a **holistic** employee wellbeing strategy for their organisation. While no single intervention guarantees success, combining multiple interventions across various levels and drivers of wellbeing can yield positive results for organisations.