



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

22 February 2022

Dear

On 9 October 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. A copy of your flexible working policy;*
- 2. A copy of any policy/processes specifically regarding applications for remote working;*
- 3. The number of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 received by this agency between 1 January 2019 and 8 October 2021, the type of flexibility sought in these applications eg compressed hours, remote working, reduced hours etc., and whether each applicant was a manager or a non-manager;*
- 4. The number of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 approved by this agency between 1 January 2019 and 8 October 2021, the type of flexibility sought in these applications eg compressed hours, remote working, reduced hours etc., and whether each applicant was a manager or a non-manager;*
- 5. The percentage of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 approved by this agency between 1 January 2019 and 8 October 2021;*
- 6. The number of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 refused by this agency between 1 January 2019 and 8 October 2021, the type of flexibility sought in these applications eg compressed hours, remote working, reduced hours etc., the recorded reason for the refusal, and whether each applicant was a manager or a non-manager;*
- 7. The percentage of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 refused by this agency between 1 January 2019 and 8 October 2021;*

*8. The number of people working in your agency as at 8 October 2021, and a breakdown of your employees by gender.*

On 9 November 2021, you were advised that more time was required to respond to your request, and that you would be provided with a decision on or before 21 December 2021. On 21 December 2021, you were provided with a decision outlining that your request would be granted.

I would like to extend my apologies for the long time it has taken to respond to your request for information. Please find the Ministry's response to each of your questions below.

- 1. A copy of your flexible working policy;*
- 2. A copy of any policy/processes specifically regarding applications for remote working;*

The Ministry has a flexible working policy and set of guidelines for both managers and employees. Flexible working at the Ministry is defined as employees having options around how, when and where they work. Due to a range of operational environments, different flexible working options are available for different types of roles.

Flexible work requests can be formal or informal. Formal flexible working arrangements involve a recurring work arrangement that impacts on pay or involves changes to employment terms and conditions such as working hours, patterns and/or location. Informal flexible work arrangements usually occur where a manager has agreed that employees have flexibility over when and where they carry out their work, as long as organisational responsibilities and team deliverables are met. There may be informal flexible work requests or variations which are not recorded in writing.

Remote working is a Ministry-initiated arrangement where employees work primarily from a location other than a Ministry site, including from an employee's home, for a specified term (defined as a minimum of three months to a maximum of two years) in response to a business need.

The following Ministry policies, guides and self-assessment checklists are enclosed in response to question one and two:

- Flexible Working Policy
- Flexible Working Guidelines
- Flexible Working: Working from home assessment
- Remote Working Policy
- Remote Working Manager's guide
- Remote Working - Employee Guide
- Remote working EOI: Employee self-assessment

- 3. The number of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 received by this agency between 1 January 2019 and 8 October 2021, the type of flexibility sought in these applications eg compressed hours, remote working, reduced hours etc., and whether each applicant was a manager or a non-manager;*

The Ministry started recording flexible working arrangements in its HR system on 16 November 2020. The number of applications received under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2020, broken down by type of flexibility, is outlined in **Table One** in the **Appendix**. All applications were made by non-managers (note, managers are defined as those with direct reports).

The Ministry is unable to provide the number of applications for flexible working arrangements for the period 1 January 2019 to 15 November 2020 as this information was not centrally recorded. It is held in notes on individual employee files, and in order to provide this information, Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such, this aspect of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

The Ministry has considered whether it would be able to respond to the request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. The Ministry has concluded that, in either case, its ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

4. *The number of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 approved by this agency between 1 January 2019 and 8 October 2021, the type of flexibility sought in these applications eg compressed hours, remote working, reduced hours etc., and whether each applicant was a manager or a non-manager;*

Please refer to **Table One** in the **Appendix**.

5. *The percentage of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 approved by this agency between 1 January 2019 and 8 October 2021;*

96.2% of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 were approved between 16 November 2020 and 8 October 2021. Note that prior to this date this information was not centrally recorded.

6. *The number of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 refused by this agency between 1 January 2019 and 8 October 2021, the type of flexibility sought in these applications eg compressed hours, remote working, reduced hours etc., the recorded reason for the refusal, and whether each applicant was a manager or a non-manager;*

Please refer to **Table One** in the **Appendix**.

7. *The percentage of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 refused by this agency between 1 January 2019 and 8 October 2021;*

3.8% of applications for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 were refused between 16 November 2020 and 8 October 2021. Note that prior to this date this information was not centrally recorded.

8. *The number of people working in your agency as at 8 October 2021, and a breakdown of your employees by gender.*

Please refer to the below **Table Two**, outlining the number of Ministry employees (by headcount), including a breakdown by gender as at 8 October 2021.

**Table Two: The number of Ministry employees (by headcount), including a breakdown by gender as at 8 October 2021**

| <b>Gender Label</b> | <b>Number of employees (fixed-term and permanent)</b> |
|---------------------|---|
| Female              | 6,551   |
| Gender Diverse      | 25  |
| Male                | 2,742   |
| Undeclared          | 12  |
| Unknown             | 4   |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>9,334</b>  |

The principles and purposes of the Act under which you made your request are:

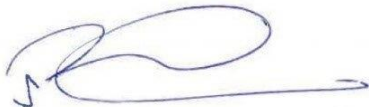
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Penny Rounthwaite  
**Group General Manager  
People**

## Appendix

**Table One: The number of flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 received by the Ministry from 16 November 2020 to 8 October 2021, broken down by type of flexibility sought.**

|  |            | Applications | Approved   | Refused  | Reason for refusal   |
|--|------------|--------------|------------|----------|--|
| <b>Total requests</b>                                |            | <b>183</b>   | <b>176</b> | <b>7</b> |  |
| <b>Flexi-time</b>                                    |            | <b>99</b>    | <b>97</b>  | <b>2</b> |  |
| Part time  |            | 67           | 67         |          |  |
| Compressed week                                      |            | 6            | 5          | 1        | Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand (1)                                    |
| Compressed fortnight                                 |            | 8            | 7          | 1        | Inability to reorganise work among existing staff (1)  |
| Varied work schedule                                 |            | 9            | 9          |          |  |
| <b>Flexi-location</b>                                |            | <b>57</b>    | <b>52</b>  | <b>5</b> |  |
| Working from home: Days per week (WFH)               | <b>1</b>   | 5            | 5          |          |  |
|  | <b>2</b>   | 18           | 16         | 2        | Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand (1); Detrimental impact on quality (1) |
|  | <b>2.5</b> | 1            | 1          |          |  |
|  | <b>3</b>   | 23           | 23         |          |  |
|  | <b>4</b>   | 1            | 1          |          |  |
|  | <b>5</b>   | 9            | 6          | 3        | Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand (2); Planned structural changes (1)    |
| Working from another MSD office: Days per week (WFO) | <b>5</b>   | 1            | 1          |          |  |
| <b>Flexi Career</b>                                  |            | <b>1</b>     | <b>1</b>   |          |  |
| Phased retirement                                    |            | 1            | 1          |          |  |
| <b>Remote working</b>                                |            | <b>34</b>    | <b>34</b>  |          |  |

### Notes:

- Some applications requested more than one type of flexible working arrangement, for example, flexi-time and flexi-location. Therefore, the number of total requests is not the sum of the rows of the table.
- Flexi-time is defined as options that allow employees to vary their work hours or days on a regular basis or from time to time.
- Flexi-location is defined as options that allow employees to work from locations other than their designated workplace.

- Flexi-career is defined as options that allow employees to manage their roles and careers more flexibly, including phased return to work, phased retirement, seasonal working, job sharing.
- Remote working is a Ministry-initiated arrangement where employees work primarily from a location other than a Ministry site, including from an employee's home.

# Flexible Working Policy

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This page outlines the Ministry of Social Development's flexible working policy.

On this Page:

[Purpose](#)

[Policy statement](#)

[Scope](#)

[Principles](#)

[Specific types of flexible arrangements](#)

[Responsibilities](#)

[Definitions](#)

## Purpose

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The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is a service delivery organisation helping New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent through a wide range of services. Doing this successfully requires us to have face-to-face engagement and collaboration with clients, colleagues and partners within core business hours.

This Policy provides guidance and clarity for employees and managers so they can fully consider flexible working arrangements and ensure arrangements meet the operational needs of the organisation and the team as well as the needs of individuals.

Having flexible working options helps MSD to:

- be a good employer
- build a more diverse and inclusive workplace
- enhance the ability to deliver better outcomes for the public in normal and crisis times
- attract and retain diverse talent
- honour our commitments to eliminating pay equity gaps
- create an agile and resilient organisation, able to ensure business continuity in times of crisis
- give effect to the Gender Pay Principles
- support the mental health and wellbeing of MSD employees.

## Policy statement

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Flexible working can be across a range of areas including different work hours, leave patterns, location of work or flexibility within a role. To meet MSD's operational objectives, we need to be responsive and collaborate, this means that for some roles options such as working mostly from another location are less likely to fit well within our business context. Flexible working arrangements will need to fit with MSD's responsibilities, with the team's functions and deliverables and the employee's role.

Because our people and the work they do is so diverse, flexibility will be different for our people depending on the work they do, the team situation and their individual needs.

Different types of flexibility may suit different types of roles. Managers, teams and individuals should formally agree what could work for them in their operational context.

Flexible working arrangements must be consistent with our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, Employment Relations Act 2000 and MSD's Code of Conduct. Arrangements must not impact the delivery of services, compromise health and safety, information security or privacy obligations.

This policy is not intended to be used when MSD initiates people working from another location for a specified period of time (three months to two years). In these situations, MSD's [Remote Working Policy](#) will apply.

This policy complements MSD's Reasonable Accommodation in Employment Policy which relates to adjustments within the workplace.

This policy is based on and aligned to, Public Service flexible-by-default principles and Gender pay principles. MSD supports people to request flexible working arrangements and will

consider these taking into consideration the needs of the organisation, the team and the individual. MSD will comply with the requirements of the [Employment Relations Act 2000](#).

## Scope

This policy applies to all MSD employees.

## Principles

Te Kawa Mataaho – Public Service Commission have established six principles for flexible working. These principles underpin flexible working arrangements at MSD:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>If not, why not?</b><br/>All roles are treated as flexible unless there is a genuine business reason for a role not to be. Flexibility is equally available to women, men and gender diverse employees, irrespective of the reason for wanting it. Working flexibly does not undermine career progression or pay.</p>   | <p><b>Works for the role</b><br/>Every role should be suitable for some form of flexibility but not every type of flexibility will work for every role. Genuine business reasons may mean that some types of flexibility cannot be implemented for some roles.</p> |
| <p><b>Works for agencies and teams</b><br/>Flexible working should not be viewed as something which is just agreed between an employee and manager. This means that the impact of arrangements should be considered on teams and the agency as a whole.</p>   | <p><b>Requires give and take</b><br/>Flexibility requires give and take between the employee, manager and team. It also places collective obligations on employees, managers and teams to be open and adaptable so that it works for everyone.</p>                 |
| <p><b>Mutually beneficial</b><br/>Flexible working needs to work for the agency, teams and employees. Consideration should be given to how flexible work arrangements can maintain or enhance service delivery and the performance of agencies, teams and employees. It should not result in increased workloads for employees working flexibly, or for other team members who are not.</p> | <p><b>Actively championed by leaders</b><br/>Leaders support, champion and role model flexible working for their teams and themselves.</p>   |

## Specific types of flexible arrangements

This is an overview of some of the more common types of flexible working.

| <p><b>Flexi-time</b><br/>Options that allow employees to vary their work hours or days on a regular basis or from time to time</p>      | <p><b>Flexi-leave</b><br/>Options that allow employees to vary their leave patterns to create more flexibility</p>                | <p><b>Flexi-place</b><br/>Options that allow employees to work from locations other than their designated workplace</p>                      | <p><b>Flexi-role/Career</b><br/>Options that allow employees to manage their roles and careers more flexibly</p>                                      |
|---|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flexible start and finish times ie variable start and/or finish times are worked on a</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>leave without pay</li> <li>term-time working ie working during school terms and</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>working from another location eg another MSD office or home regularly or from time-to-time</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>phased return to work ie employees gradually increase their hours on returning from long-term leave</li> </ul> |



|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>regular or as needed basis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• swapping workdays or hours with non-work hours or days</li> <li>• part-time hours</li> <li>• compressed week or fortnight ie full-time employees work longer days over a four-day week or nine-day fortnight</li> <li>• flexible shifts – full-time or part-time</li> <li>• fixed shifts – full-time or part-time</li> <li>• combination of fixed shifts and flexible shifts – full or part-time</li> </ul> | <p>taking leave during school holidays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• other types of leave eg study leave, special leave</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working from another location - part-time</li> <li>• working from another location temporarily as part of a return to work plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• phased retirement ie employees gradually reduce their hours as they approach retirement</li> <li>• seasonal working ie to cover busy periods</li> <li>• job sharing ie splitting a role with another employee</li> <li>• taking career breaks</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|---|

## Responsibilities

| Person/Party       | Responsibilities  |
|--------------------|---|
| Employee           | <p>Read MSD's flexible working policy and guidance before making a request for flexible work arrangements. Make all requests for formal flexible working arrangements in writing. Ensure a request for formal flexibility is made at least one month in advance of when they want it to take effect. Provide enough information on the variation to working arrangements they are after to enable their manager (and MSD) to give their request proper consideration. Be able to discuss their request in an open and constructive manner with their manager. Be prepared to be flexible themselves in order to reach an agreement.</p> |
| Employer (Manager) | <p>Provide guidance and expectations for their team on how flexible working can work for MSD, teams and individuals. Consider formal requests fully in accordance with the set process set out in the flexible working guidelines which includes responding to employees' requests in writing. Deal with the request in a timely manner, no later than one month after receiving it. NB: For requests for flexible working arrangements for people affected by</p>  |

| Person/Party  | Responsibilities   |
|---|--|
|   | <p>domestic violence, this is 10 working days (refer to MSD's <a href="#">Domestic and Family Violence Policy</a>).</p> <p>Understand the support employees need to make flexible working successful.</p> <p>Discuss formal flexible work arrangements with HR Business Advisory/AskHR before deciding a request.</p> <p>If a request is accepted, ensure it is made clear to the employee where the variation is for a fixed period of time and what the end date is, or at what point the variation will be reviewed.</p> <p>Refuse the request where grounds for refusal of request provided for in Section 69AAF(2) of the Employment Relations Act 2000.</p> <p>If request is refused, state that the request is refused because of a ground in section 69AAF (2) and explain the reason to the employee including the business and/or team context as applicable.</p> <p>Refuse the request if it is from an employee covered by a collective agreement and the employee's proposed working arrangements would be inconsistent with the collective agreement as outlined under section 69AAF(3).</p> |
| One up manager  | Decide a review of decisions of flexible working arrangements  |
| Level three Manager as defined by HR delegations (eg Group General Manager, Regional Commissioners, General Managers) | Set the organisational context for flexible working with managers within their group to ensure arrangements can work for MSD and teams.  |
| HR Business Advisory  | <p>Provide advice on flexible working, including guidance on approving or refusing flexible working requests.</p> <p>Action formal flexible working arrangements in myHR (if required).</p> <p>Complete appropriate employment documentation related to the flexible working arrangements agreed between employees and MSD.</p>  |

## Definitions

| Word/ phrase              | Definition  |
|---------------------------|---|
| Formal flexible working   | Occurs when a recurring work arrangement impacts on pay or involves changes to employment terms and conditions such as working hours, patterns and location. It may take place for an agreed period or on an ongoing basis with regular review. Examples could include regular part-time hours, job sharing or working from another location on a regular basis.  |
| Informal flexible working | Usually occurs when managers agree that employees have flexibility over when and where they carry out their work, subject to meeting position responsibilities and deliverables. This can mean that the exact arrangements (times or place of work) vary and are agreed between managers and employees as and when needed. It can also involve agreements to more regular arrangements, such as regular changes to start and finish times, as long as arrangements don't require changes to pay or employment agreements. |

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Employee                 | Person engaged on either a permanent, fixed term or casual employment agreement with MSD.   |
| Reasonable Accommodation | Adjustments in the workplace to ensure a person can perform their job. Reasonable accommodation refers to creating an environment to ensure equality of opportunity by meeting an employee's needs in relation to a disability or particular practices of an employee's religious or ethical beliefs. |

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## Flexible Working Guidelines

This guide provides advice on how to approach and manage flexible working at the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) so employees and managers can fully consider flexible working arrangements and ensure arrangements meet the operational needs of the organisation and, the team, as well as the needs of individuals.

On this Page:

### Introduction

MSD is a service delivery organisation helping New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent through a wide range of services. Doing this successfully means we have to have face-to-face engagement and collaboration with clients, colleagues and partners within core business hours.

This guide provides advice on how to approach and manage flexible working at MSD so employees and managers can fully consider flexible working arrangements and ensure any arrangements meet the operational needs of the organisation and the team, as well as the needs of individuals.

### How to use this guide

This guide is to be used in conjunction with the Flexible Working Policy and an individual's employment agreement and outlines the steps to follow when requesting, considering and making a decision around formal or informal flexible working arrangements.

[Flexible Working policy](#) s9(2)(k)

### About flexible working

#### What is flexible working?

Flexible working is about people having options around how they work and can include adjustments to when and where they work.

Because our people and the work they do is so diverse, 'flexible working' will be different for people depending on the work they do, the team situation and their individual needs. Different flexible working options may suit different types of roles and not all types of flexibility will work for all roles or situations.

#### Types of flexible arrangements

The below table indicates a range of flexible working arrangements:

| <b>Flexi-Time</b><br>Options that allow employees to vary their work hours or days on a regular basis or from time to time  | <b>Flexi-leave</b><br>Options that allow employees to vary their leave patterns to create more flexibility  | <b>Flexi-place</b><br>Options that allow employees to work from locations other than their designated workplace   | <b>Flexi-role/Career</b><br>Options that allow employees to manage their roles and careers more flexibly  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flexible start and finish times eg variable start and/or finish times are worked on a regular or as needed basis</li> <li>swapping workdays or hours with non-work hours or days</li> <li>part-time hours</li> <li>compressed week or fortnight eg full-time employees work longer days over a four-day week or nine-day fortnight</li> <li>flexible shifts - full time or part time</li> <li>fixed shifts - full time or part time</li> <li>combination of fixed shifts and flexible shifts - full time or part time</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>leave without pay</li> <li>term-time working eg working during school terms and taking leave during school holidays</li> <li>other types of leave eg study leave, special leave</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>working from another location eg another MSD office or home regularly or from time-to-time</li> <li>working from another location - part time</li> <li>working from another location temporarily as part of a return to work plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>phased return to work eg employees gradually increases their hours on returning from long-term leave</li> <li>phased retirement eg employees gradually reduce their hours as they approach retirement</li> <li>seasonal working eg to cover busy periods</li> <li>job sharing eg splitting a role with another employee</li> <li>taking career breaks</li> </ul> |

## Informal vs formal flexible working arrangements

Flexible working arrangements can be informal or formal.

**Informal flexible working arrangements** (on a regular or ad hoc basis) usually occur where a manager has agreed that employees have flexibility over when and where they carry out their work, as long as organisational responsibilities and team deliverables are met. This can mean that the exact arrangements (times or place of work) vary and are agreed between managers and employees as and when needed. It can also involve agreements of more regular arrangements, such as regular changes to start and finish times, as long as the arrangements don't require changes to pay or employment terms and conditions.

**Formal flexible working arrangements** involve a recurring work arrangement that will impact on pay or involves changes to employment terms and conditions such as working hours, patterns and/or location. It may take place for an agreed period or on an ongoing basis with regular review. A request for formal flexible working must be made in writing by an employee or on their behalf.

## Why have flexible working?

When people have flexible working options, they are more likely to enjoy their work and experience a good work-life fit. This contributes to creating a positive workplace culture at MSD, helping MSD deliver excellent services to our clients.

Flexible working can have a range of benefits.

- Eliminating pay gaps
- Increasing diversity and inclusion
- Attracting and retaining talented people
- Increasing employee productivity
- Supporting business continuity.

### Eliminating pay gaps

Flexible working is one of the focus areas of the Government and MSD's Gender Pay Gap Action Plan because women still take on most family care work and are currently more likely to work flexibly than men. Having flexible working options for all types of roles will help break the association between working flexibility and stalled careers.

Research suggests that men face barriers to accessing flexible working which limits their ability to invest more in family care responsibilities. Increasing men's access to workplace flexibility also has the potential to even out the distribution of family-caring work and help close the gender pay gap.

### Increasing diversity and inclusion

MSD is committed to increasing diversity and inclusion to ensure our workforce reflects, values and understands the communities we serve. Workplace flexibility is a big enabler of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and supports increased diversity in leadership. Flexibility is one of the main tools for disabled people to secure and succeed in employment. Disabled people are currently employed less in the Public Service than the private sector.

Māori, Pasifika and Asian women can face the compounding impact of gender and ethnic bias, leading to wider pay gaps than those experienced by Pakeha women. Flexible working can help address ethnic, as well as gender bias, by recognising and respecting the responsibilities employees have outside of their paid work, including cultural and/or religious responsibilities, and community and family/whānau care responsibilities.

### Attracting and retaining talented people

Flexibility is a key enabler of talent retention. It supports transitions between, or blending of, work across different life stages, study, professional development, parenting, ill health or rehabilitation, retirement and more. Rather than requiring people to 'opt in' or 'exit out' of the workforce, flexibility can create a phased or graduated transition, optimising succession management and maintaining business continuity by maximising the retention of skills and institutional knowledge.

Work-life boundaries have become increasingly permeable. Most people have expectations that work will blend with other parts of their life – rather than dominating it. For these reasons and more, people value being able to work flexibly and will actively seek it when selecting an employer.

### Increasing employee productivity and engagement

Engaged employees are more productive. The reverse is also true, with workplace stress and poor organisational health reflected in high rates of sick leave and low rates of employee engagement. Workplace flexibility enables work to be tailored to both the employer's and employee's needs and can be changed over time as required. The result is more engaged employees and a more agile workplace. For an employer, this translates into higher productivity.

### Supporting business continuity

Flexible working allows for better business continuity before, during and after a disaster has occurred. People may need to do different things or to do things differently to keep our services going. It may mean working different hours, different days or from different locations to get the most important work done. Flexible working can help us mobilise quickly to make sure we can keep delivering because people are used to working differently. For business continuity, employees and managers would together complete a relevant risk assessment when working in different locations. Check out the resources in Part Four for a link to the risk assessment document.

## Who can request a flexible working arrangement?

Any employee can make a request for permanent or temporary changes to their pattern or place of work.

All requests for flexible working arrangements will be considered in line with the requirements of the [Employment Relations Act 2000](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2000/0024/latest/DLM1398200.html) [http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2000/0024/latest/DLM1398200.html] – taking into account the needs of the organisation, the team and the individual.

### Employees affected by domestic and family violence

Employees affected by domestic and family violence may request flexible working arrangements for up to two months to allow them to deal with the effects of domestic or family violence (regardless of how long ago the violence occurred).

For further information you can refer to [MSD's Domestic and Family Violence Policy](#) s9(2)(k) and/or seek advice from AskHR or your HR Advisor.

## Flexible working principles

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>If not, why not?</b></p> <p>All roles are treated as flexible unless there is a genuine business reason for a role not to be. Flexibility is equally available to women, men and gender-diverse employees, irrespective of the reason for wanting it. Working flexibly does not undermine career progression or pay.</p> | <p><b>Works for the Role</b></p> <p>Every role should be suitable for some form of flexibility but not every type of flexibility will work for every role. Genuine business reasons may mean that some types of flexibility cannot be implemented for some roles.</p>  | <p><b>Works for MSD and teams</b></p> <p>Flexible working should not be viewed as something which is just agreed between an employee and manager. This means that the impact of flexible arrangements should be considered on teams, and MSD as a whole.</p> |
| <p><b>Requires give and take</b></p> <p>Flexibility requires give and take between the employee, manager and team. It also places collective obligations on employees, managers and teams to be open and adaptable so that it works for everyone.</p>  | <p><b>Mutually beneficial</b></p> <p>Flexible working needs to work for MSD, teams and employees. Consideration should be given to how flexible work arrangements can maintain or enhance service delivery and the performance of MSD, teams and employees. It should not result in increased workloads for employees working flexibly, or for other team members who are not.</p> | <p><b>Actively championed by leaders</b></p> <p>Leaders support, champion and role model flexible working for their teams and themselves.</p>  |

## Does the request work for the organisation?

When considering requests we need to consider the needs of the organisation, the work we do and the impact the arrangement may have.

### Setting the organisational perspective

To ensure flexible working arrangements will work for the organisation level three Managers (as defined by [HR Delegations](#) s9(2)(k) which includes roles like Group General Managers, General Managers and Regional Commissioners), will decide what flexible arrangements will work for their area of the organisation. Different business groups have different work demands and operating environments. Level three managers will ensure their managers have a good understanding of how flexible work can work successfully within their group.

Level three managers also need to understand the context for all of MSD and other business groups. They need to make sure that any decisions they make within their group do not have negative impacts for other groups or are inconsistent with MSD's overall approach eg staff being available at certain times to provide services to clients, stakeholders or other teams.

## Does it work for the team?

## Setting expectations for the team

To ensure flexible working arrangements work for the team, it is recommended that you have a team conversation about your core service and service expectations and how flexible working could work for the team as a whole.

Below are some suggested discussion points to help set expectations for your team and guidance around establishing flexible working norms within your teams.

### What's your core service?

Discussing your core service is key to helping clarify expectations and flexible working norms. Some things to think about and discuss include:

- the work the team does
- the way the work is conducted (including core coverage/service hours)
- how the work contributes to MSD's purpose.

### Expectations of the business, clients and stakeholders

MSD is a service delivery organisation – the nature of our work requires us to engage with stakeholders and clients, to collaborate with other business areas and agencies. When discussing flexible working options for your team, the service expectations of these groups needs to be taken into consideration.

Working from home is not practical for all roles eg those which require face-to-face client or stakeholder contact or regular access to large volumes of physical records due to security issues (eg information security, physical security). Some roles require business applications that cannot currently be accessed remotely, such as client information systems and therefore, it may not be possible or practical to perform these kinds of roles at home.

### Non-negotiables

We recommended you include any non-negotiables in your team discussion. This could include the requirement to attend regular team meetings (or the weekly brief), or expectations of stakeholders and clients that our people are available and accessible during core business hours.

### Discussing flexible working options with the team

Involving teams in discussion around flexible working is key to having successful flexible teams. Discussing flexible arrangements with the team will provide them with an opportunity to provide input on how flexible work arrangements can work, any potential impacts on the team and to work through concerns. We suggest teams discuss and record any reciprocal expectations or norms of behaviour, to help flexibility operate smoothly across teams.

The privacy of individuals is important. Team discussions should focus on the type of arrangement a person has requested, not the reasons for the request. If an employee wishes to disclose the reasons for the request, they can, but this is not a requirement for team discussions.

When discussing with the team you should:

- provide an overview of the arrangement requested
- provide an overview of how the arrangement is proposed to work
- provide an opportunity for team members to discuss concerns or alternatives
- discuss the changes that may need to be made.

**Note:** Managers, if you are planning a team discussion and would like some advice, support or help with facilitating that session, you can talk with your HR Business Partner or contact AskHR.

## Informal flexible arrangements

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### Examples of Informal Flexible Working arrangements

An informal flexible working arrangement is an arrangement that doesn't require changes to pay or employment agreements. The exact arrangements (times or place of work) can vary, be regular or ad hoc and are agreed between managers and employees as and when needed verbally or by email. To guide you in making an appropriate request, here are some examples of informal flexible working arrangements:

- Starting or leaving early and making up time on another day
- A one-off agreement to work from another location for the day or part of the day
- A regular agreement to work from another location on a particular day of the week
- A regular agreement to start and finish at a particular time between core business hours.

### How to make a request for informal flexible work

Some flexible arrangements, so long as they work for the organisation and team, can be managed on an informal basis and agreed between employees and their managers without going through a formal request and response process.

Informal arrangements:

are generally appropriate for flexibility that doesn't involve changes to pay or employment agreements  
may be established at the request of an individual employee or by a manager proactively offering informal arrangements  
may involve ad hoc arrangements which are agreed between managers and employees  
on an as-needs basis, such as variable start and finish times and/or working from another location on some days  
may also involve regular arrangements such as specific start and finish times on particular days or regular days an employee will work from another location  
should involve give-and-take on the part of the employee, manager and team, to ensure team delivery is maintained.

## Considering a request

Managers should approach employee requests for ad hoc or regular informal arrangements, in an open-minded and fair way, and focus on exploring all available alternatives that will work. Employees making a request, and their managers should familiarise themselves with [MSD's flexible working policy](#) s9(2)(k), any limitations on flexibility relating to particular roles and on the flexibility Principles, keeping in mind that any flexible arrangements will need to fit with MSD's responsibilities, with the team's functions and deliverables and the employee's role. Consider the health and safety aspects of your employee working in a different location, any information security issues that may arise and the impact on the employee if the request is not approved.

## Responding to a request

Informal types of arrangements can be agreed verbally between managers and employees; however, it is best practice to record agreements in email where possible. If managers and employees agree on regular arrangements, record these by email including regular review periods to provide more certainty and clarity. This may be helpful if a manager leaves or any issues arise with the flexible arrangement that need to be worked through.

[Informal flexible arrangements process flow](#) (PDF 127.5KB)

## Formal flexible working arrangements

### Examples of Formal Flexible Working arrangements

A formal flexible working arrangement is a recurring work arrangement that will impact on pay or involves changes to employment terms and conditions such as working hours, patterns and/or location. To guide you in making an appropriate request, here are some examples of formal flexible working arrangements:

A change in the total number of hours worked in a week (eg moving from full-time to part-time or vice versa)  
a change in work schedule (eg working longer hours some days and less on others or compressed weeks or fortnights)  
a change in work location (eg working from an alternative location for your full working hours)

### How to make a request for formal flexible work

#### Employees need to:

discuss their request to work flexibly with their manager  
submit their request for formal flexible working arrangements in writing to their manager including:  
their name  
date of their request  
that the request is being made under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act (ERA)  
the desired working arrangement, and whether it's permanent or for a fixed period of time  
the date the proposed new working arrangement will take effect and, if the new working arrangement is for a fixed period of time, the date the new working arrangement will end  
what changes (if any) the manager may need to make if the request is approved, eg changes to the way the team works together, changes to the physical set up of the workplace.

#### Tips for employees making a request:

Familiarise yourself with MSD's [flexible working policy](https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/flexible-working-policy.html) [https://doogie.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/flexible-working-policy.html] and consider any limitations on flexible working options for your type of role.

Talk with your manager about your interest in flexible working. This is a chance to talk about the requested work arrangement in depth. While there is no requirement to provide a reason for your request, providing some information and focusing on why you are seeking flexibility, rather than on one specific type of arrangement, will help both you and your manager explore all the



options available that might work for you and the team. This is also a chance to identify any barriers or issues and develop solutions on how these can be managed.

Complete the request form and submit it to your manager.

## Considering a request

Under [Part 6AA Flexible working](https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2000/0024/latest/DLM1398200.html) of the ERA managers must consider requests for flexible working arrangements in a fair-minded way and in good faith. Managers must respond to requests as early as possible but no later than one month after receiving the request.

Ensure the request includes all the information needed. If it doesn't, ask your employee to re-send the request when complete and let them know what they need to include.

Acknowledge the request in writing.

Meet face-to-face with your employee to discuss the requested working arrangement in depth and consider how it could fit with MSD responsibilities, with the team's functions and deliverables and the employee's role.

Approach the request in an open-minded way, focusing on finding solutions that will work. To get the most from the meeting you should:

make a list of the issues you want to discuss at the meeting

familiarise yourself with MSD's flexible working policy, the rest of these guidelines and the 'Making flexible working effective' tips for managers.

Some important questions to consider when making your decision.

Is reorganising work necessary, and if so, how can it be managed?

Does the employee understand their commitment to their team under the new arrangement?

Are there peaks and troughs of demand in the business that this new arrangement could meet?

Are there health and safety implications (for example if the employee is [working from home](#) s9(2)(k) or if they are working alone late/early or out of core-business hours).

If the form of flexible working requested can't be accommodated, which types could? Have these been fully explored with the employee?

What would the impact be on the employee if the request was not approved?

Before making your decision, you should discuss the requested arrangement with your team. You are responsible for deciding on the request, but it is useful to engage with the team as soon as possible as team members share responsibility for making flexible arrangements work and may have questions and concerns that are best worked through collaboratively.

Contact your HR Advisor/AskHR to understand whether the new working arrangement means changing your employee's pay and what the impacts might be on holidays and leave.

Discuss the detailed arrangement with the employee, including a period during which the effectiveness of the arrangement will be tested eg three months followed by annual reviews.

## Responding to a request

### Approving the request:

Once you've considered your employee's request for flexible working arrangements, give them your decision in writing. You must deal with a request no later than one month after you receive it or 10 working days where the request is due to domestic or family violence. (Note: these timeframes are statutory requirements under Section 69AAE of the ERA).

Remember because this is a formal request it will require a variation to the employee's terms and conditions of employment, and must be recorded in writing,

Reconfirm with your team the previously agreed mutual expectations and behaviour norms

Finally:

inform your HR Advisor/AskHR so that they can update the HR records,

consider if health and safety requirements are still satisfied. This might be relevant if the employee is going to be working from another location or alone out of core business hours.

### Refusing the request:

**Note:** Managers, if you are considering refusing a flexible working request and would like some advice, you should talk with your manager and/or contact AskHR or your HR Consultant for advice.

You can only refuse a formal request for flexible working arrangements under Part 6AA of the ERA under certain grounds. These grounds are stated in section 69AAF as follows:

inability to reorganise work among existing staff

inability to recruit additional staff

detrimental impact on quality

detrimental impact on performance

insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work  
planned structural changes  
burden of additional costs  
detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.

However, an employer **must** refuse a request if:

the request is from an employee who is bound by a collective agreement and  
the request relates to working arrangements to which the collective agreement applies, and the employee's working arrangements would be inconsistent with the collective agreement if the employer were to approve the request.

**Under the ERA when declining a request, managers must, in writing and no later than 1 month from receiving the request:**

state the request is refused because of a ground in section 69AAF(2) or (3); and  
state the ground for refusal; and  
explain the reasons for these ground/s applying to the employee's circumstances

### **Disagreement about decisions**

Most requests will conclude when the manager gives their decision. There may be instances where an employee feels their request has not been fully considered or dealt with appropriately. The employee may want to involve a third party (eg union or colleague support) or make a formal complaint. There are a number of options available.

First off, try to resolve the problem together by informal discussion between the employee and manager.

Issues could include:

miscommunication and not understanding the other's viewpoint  
the time limit has not been met  
alternative options may not have been discussed.

Talk through the concerns and see if you can resolve them. It may take more than one meeting and some compromise.

If the concerns cannot be resolved between the employee and the manager, then the employee can request a review of decision by escalating this to their manager's manager, who will review the request and decision, or they may refer the matter to mediation or the Employment Relations Authority for determination under section 69AAI where mediation fails to resolve the matter.

[Flexible working arrangements employee request form](#) (Word 46.63KB) s9(2)(k)

[Formal flexible arrangements process flow](#) (PDF 131.99KB) s9(2)(k)

### **Responding to requests for Employees affected by Domestic Violence**

A person affected by domestic or family violence may request short-term changes to their working arrangements lasting up to two months to help them deal with the effects of domestic violence (regardless of how long ago the violence occurred). For example, to relocate, settle children into school, attend legal proceedings, medical, counselling, other appointments, or to rest and recover from the effects of domestic violence. All requests will be considered and accommodated wherever possible.

#### **Employment terms that can be varied:**

Under Part 6AB an employee can request variation to the following terms:

the location of the employee's workplace  
the employee's duties at work  
the extent of the contact details that the employee must provide to the employer,  
any other term of the employee's employment:  
o that is not a term covered above in this definition or in the definition of "working arrangements" above and  
o that, in the employee's view, needs variation to enable the employee to deal with the effects of being a person affected by domestic violence.

#### **Responding to a request**

The process for responding to requests for flexible working from employees affected by domestic and family violence is largely the same as the formal request for flexible working process. However, the following process must be followed.

When responding to a request for flexible working under Part 6AB we must:

deal with the request as soon as possible, but not later than 10 working days after receiving it

notify the employee in writing whether his or her request has been approved or refused  
provide the employee with information about appropriate specialist family violence support services.

### Refusing a request

Under [section 69ABF \[https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2000/0024/latest/LMS186659.html\]](https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2000/0024/latest/LMS186659.html) an employer may refuse a request under Part 6AB only if the employer determines that the request cannot be accommodated on one or more of the following grounds:

- inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- inability to recruit additional staff
- detrimental impact on quality
- detrimental impact on performance
- insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- planned structural changes
- burden of additional costs
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.

Note: MSD does not require evidence of domestic violence and therefore this would not be a ground for refusal at MSD (even though this is grounds for refusal under the Part 6AB).

An employer **must** refuse a request if:

- the request is from an employee who is bound by a collective agreement and
- the request relates to working arrangements to which the collective agreement applies and
- the employee's working arrangements would be inconsistent with the collective agreement if the employer were to approve the request.

For further information you can refer to [MSD's Domestic and Family Violence Policy](#) s9(2)(k) and/or seek advice from AskHR or your HR Advisor.

### Making flexible working effective

Teams working flexibly are most successful when delivery expectations are clear and the quality of team deliverables are measured against these expectations, rather than by hours in the office. Team members, whether they work flexibly or not, do their best work when they manage their time, deliver to expectations and maintain good lines of communication with their managers and the rest of the team. When working flexibly, it is especially important that managers, employees and teams talk regularly about flexible arrangements, how they are working and how any challenges can be addressed.

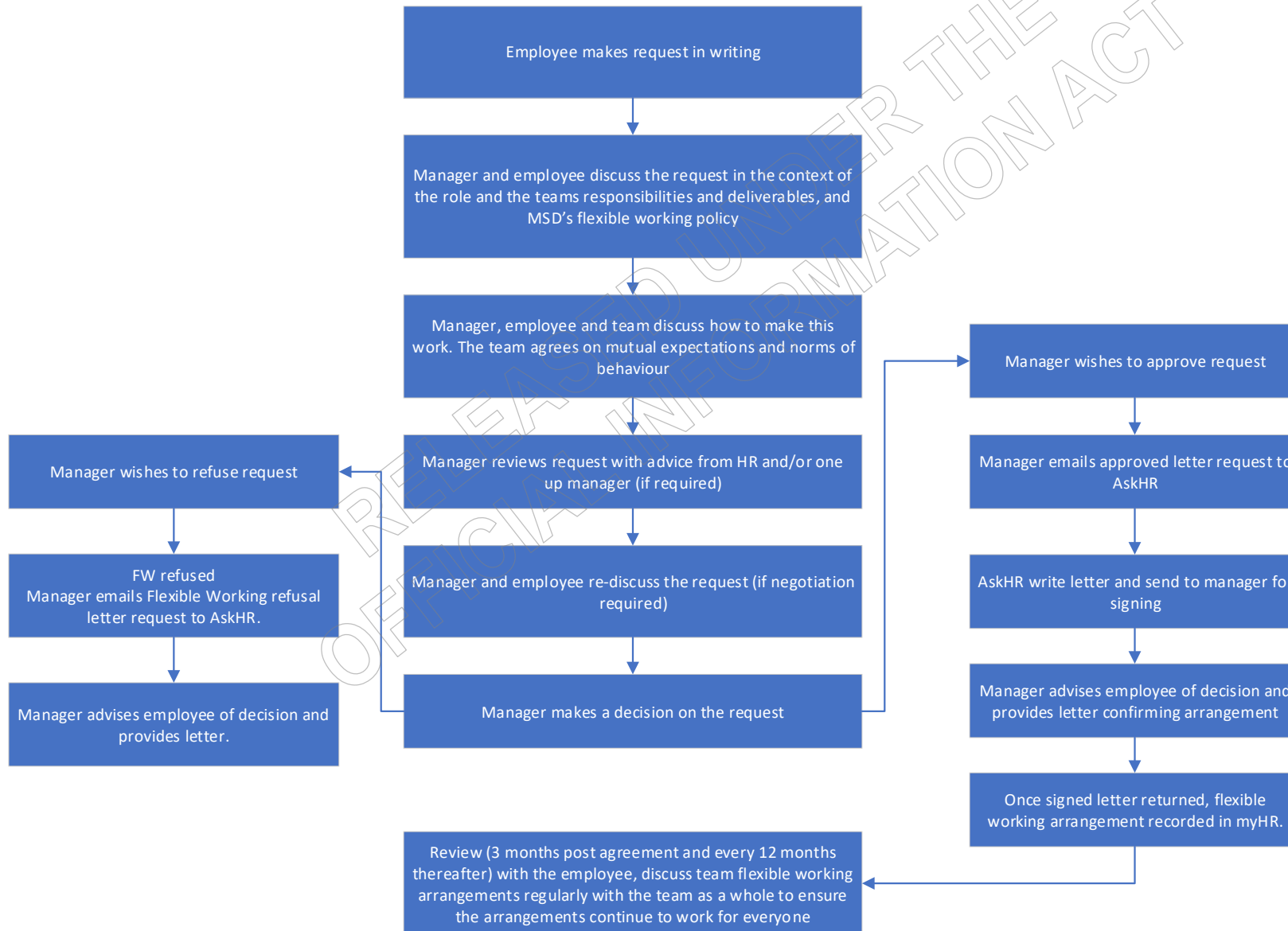
There can be a perception that flexible work, especially working from another location, can result in under-delivery. Performance issues can arise with any work arrangement and being visible in the office is no guarantee that employees will deliver to expected standards. Managers should therefore be careful not to assume that it is the flexible work arrangement which is causing any performance issues, when that may not be the case. If there are underlying performance issues managers should manage these in the way they would with any employee, regardless of their working arrangement.

[Tips for managers](#) s9(2)(k)

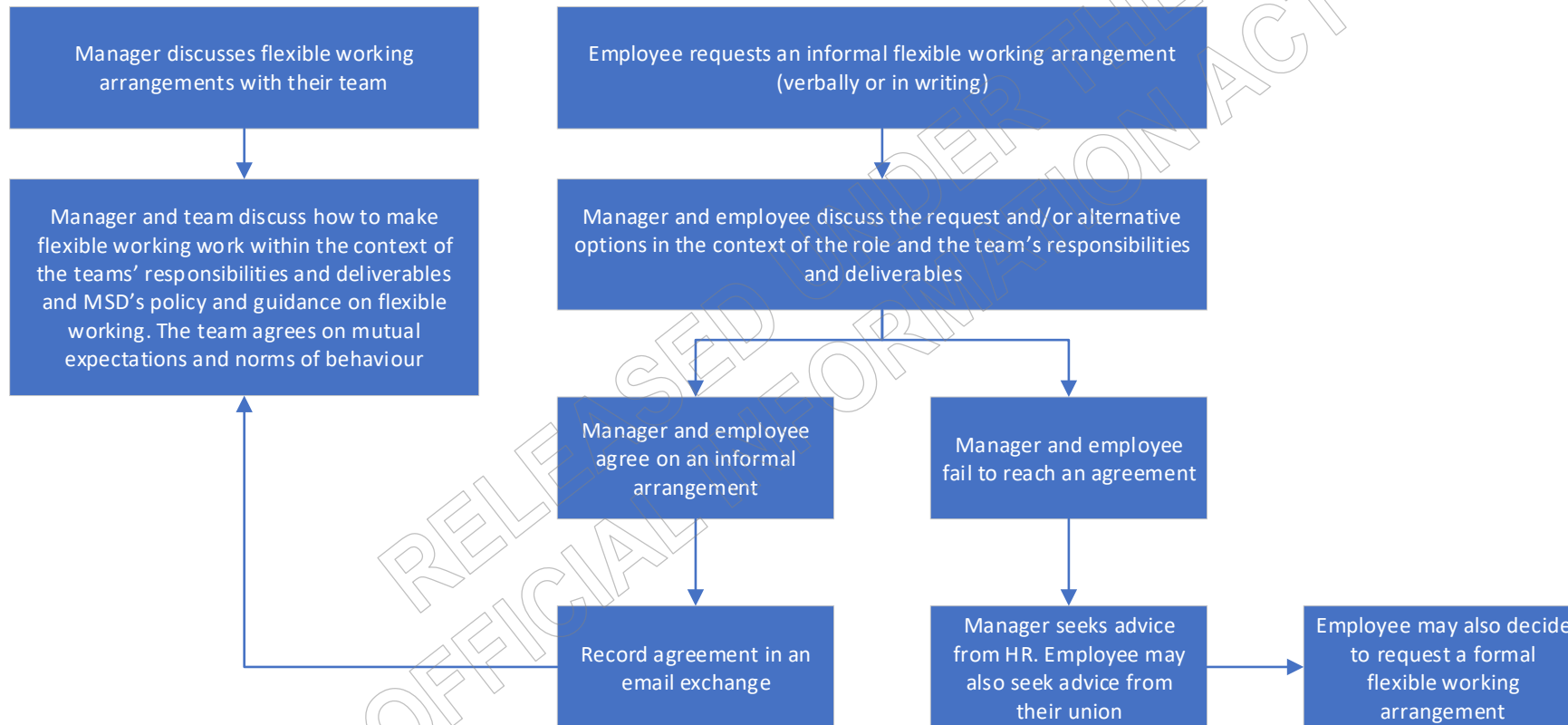
[Tips for employees working flexibly](#) s9(2)(k)

[Tips for working in flexible teams](#) s9(2)(k)

# Formal Flexible Arrangements process flow



## Informal Flexible Arrangements process flow



# Flexible Working: Working from home assessment

This document captures your details and provides your manager with the information required to consider whether working flexibly from home is appropriate.

MSD is committed to ensuring your working environment is safe, so this self-assessment also considers your designated workspace within your home from a health, safety and security perspective, both for yourself, MSD and in relation to client information.

## Part 1: Personal details

### Your details

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Your name |  |
| Your role |  |

### Your connectivity

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do you have internet access with Wi-Fi at home? Please circle Yes or No</li><li>If your answer is Yes, please specify the Plan (e.g. unlimited or capped)</li></ul> | Yes / No<br><br>Plan: |
|---|-----------------------|

### Your environment

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Are there other people in your home during your working hours? Please circle Yes or No   | Yes / No |
| If yes, are you able to work away from other people in your home to maintain client privacy, including private telephone contact with clients? | Yes / No |
| Is the space comfortable to work from without any personal, safety or security concerns?<br><br>If not, discuss with your manager.             | Yes / No |

## Part 2: Health, safety and security

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The actions required in this section will help you and your manager determine what is required to have an appropriate designated workspace in your home.

### Step 1: Learn

- Read the flexible working Policy, Guidelines and the [Health and Safety information](#) on doogle.
- Complete MSD's [Managing Health, Safety and Security while working at home](#) module in myHR.

### Step 2: Apply

Now you need to apply what you've learnt in [Step 1](#), and make sure your home is an appropriate workplace.

Minimum requirements

You need to meet the minimum requirements before a remote working arrangement can start.

a. Complete the below minimum requirements\* checklist:

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Do you have <a href="#">appropriately placed and functional smoke alarms</a> installed?   | Yes / No |
| Do you have access to <a href="#">first aid supplies</a> that are appropriate for the risks you might encounter when working at home? | Yes / No |

\*It is your responsibility to ensure that your home meets the minimum requirements.

b. Complete a [Safety Plan](#) (attached at the back of this document) which identifies hazards and risks that exist in your proposed workplace and designated workspace, and what controls you can take to reduce or eliminate them. We have provided some examples in the template for you to consider. Please delete any that don't apply and add any others you identify. You can discuss with your manager the likelihood of the risk occurring using the definitions from the [HSS Risk Matrix](#). Don't forget to follow the off-site safety plan and check for overlapping duties if you work from a location that is not your home.

## Part 3: Information security

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This section will help you understand what's required when working with MSD and client information within your designated workspace:

- Read the Information Group's [Working flexibly from home](#) guidance on Doogle.
- Read the Information Group's [Collaboration and communicating tools](#) guidance on Doogle.

## Part 4: Agreement

### Employee confirmation:

- I am familiar with and understand my obligations under MSD's Flexible Working Policy.
- Within my designated workspace I am able to work while keeping MSD and client information secure.
- I agree to set up my workstation using the guidance available.
- The resources and online learning required in this self-assessment have been read and completed.
- Relevant risks have been identified and controls put in place to reduce or eliminate these in my [Safety Plan](#).
- I agree to eliminate or minimise any risks that have been identified as discussed with my manager.
- I understand that in the case of a [notifiable event](#), MSD and/or WorkSafe may need to enter my home to conduct an investigation.

Employee Name:

Signature:

Date:

### Manager confirmation:

- I have met with the employee and discussed their safety plan, including the risks and hazards that exist within their designated workspace, and our joint plan to minimise or eliminate these, and I am satisfied that the risks are being managed appropriately and that the minimum requirements have been met.
- Based on the information provided within this self-assessment, I am satisfied that the employee's home environment and designated workspace are suitable for MSD to agree to a flexible working arrangement, in line with the flexible Working Policy.
- 

Manager Name:

Signature:

Date:



# Safety Plan

Date:

Manager Signature:

We have provided some examples in the template (in grey) for you to consider. Please evaluate your environment, delete any that don't apply and add any others you identify. You should also use the [HSS Risk Matrix](#) to assess and update the likelihood of any of the risks occurring.

| Hazard                 | Risk   | Likelihood  | Controls   |
|------------------------|--|-------------|--|
| Lone working/isolation | Psychosocial harm (socially isolated from team, stress from reduced contact) | Very likely | Communication plan for regular daily contact<br>Team digital channels set up for informal 'watercooler' chat   |
| Work hours             | Fatigue<br>Psychosocial harm (overworked from extra hours worked)            | Likely      | Agreement of hours of work<br>Taking regular breaks<br>Set up Wellnomics to make sure you're getting the appropriate breaks  |
| Workspace setup        | Pain and discomfort  | Likely      | Set up workstation so you can maintain good posture<br>Vary your working position throughout the day<br>Report any discomfort to your manager as soon as it happens  |
| Environmental issues   | Pain and discomfort  | Likely      | Set up workspace so that there is no screen glare  |
| Electrical hazards     | Physical injury  | Rare        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSD-supplied surge protectors not overloaded</li> </ul> Cables or cords are in good condition and secured under a desk, or along a wall, and away from heat sources<br>Equipment switched off when not in use |
| Fire hazards           | Physical injury  | Rare        | Smoke detectors installed and checked monthly<br>Heaters kept away from flammable items  |
| Slips, trips and falls | Physical injury  | Rare        | Ensure floor coverings in the workspace are secure<br>Keep walkways, stairways, aisles, doorways and corridors within the workspace clear of trip hazards  |

| Hazard                                 | Risk                           | Likelihood | Controls  |
|--|--------------------------------|------------|---|
| Physical assault                       | Psychosocial and physical harm | Rare       | HSS Induction and Training<br>Guidance to keep your personal information safe (including online)<br>Debrief with manager                        |
| Verbal abuse and/or threats by clients | Psychosocial harm              | Likely     | HSS Induction and training<br>Wellbeing support for staff<br>Debrief with manager<br>Process to escalate any issues during calls through Jabber |

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OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

# Remote Working Policy

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This page outlines the Ministry of Social Development's remote working policy.

On this Page:

[Purpose](#)

[Policy statement](#)

[Scope](#)

[Principles](#)

[Responsibilities](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Related policies](#)

## Purpose

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This policy defines 'remote working' as it applies to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and outlines the requirements of remote working arrangements such as health, safety and security.

## Policy statement

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Remote working is an MSD initiated arrangement where employees work primarily from a location other than an MSD site for a specified term (defined as minimum three months - maximum two years) in response to a business need. Where an employee will be working primarily from a location that is not the employee's home, such as an NGO, other Government agency or a rented venue, this policy must be used in conjunction with the [Off-site safety and security policy](#).

This policy does not replace our obligations under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000, under which allows employees to request a change to their working arrangements. These requests are covered by MSD's [Flexible Working Arrangements guidance](#).

This policy is not intended to be used as part of MSD's response to a site, regional or national crisis including, but not limited to, natural disaster or pandemic. These situations would be covered by the business continuity plans.

## Scope

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This policy applies to all permanent and fixed term MSD employees

## Principles

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### Approach

- Remote working is initiated by MSD in response to a business need as approved by Senior Management.
- All decisions to work remotely will be mutually agreed between a manager and their employee. Any agreement will take into consideration the appropriateness of the arrangement for MSD and the employee, the health, safety and security of the employee, and the privacy and security of MSD information (e.g. making sure the remote working environment is suitable for an enduring remote arrangement before any agreement is made, including internet connectivity and a working space away from other occupants).
- Remote working will be supported by effective management and support. This includes employee access to coaching, training, 'buddies', Helpline, peer networks and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Workload distribution and management, productivity and performance will be proactively managed between the manager and employee.
- Employees may need to work from an MSD site for a period of time to receive support to address any issues that have arisen.

### Contracts and obligations

- Remote working arrangements will be for a specified term (minimum three months, maximum two years) which will be reviewed every three months to ensure the arrangement is operating effectively.
- The benefits of working remotely should offset any ongoing additional expenses. Any actual and reasonable costs associated with a remote working arrangement will require pre-approval.
- The setup of the remote working environment must be suitable, including management of health and safety, information security and privacy requirements.
- There may be occasions where employees will need to travel to MSD sites.

## Provision of suitable equipment

- Employees will be provided with the appropriate IT equipment, and a desk or chair if required and consideration of reasonable accommodations as agreed between MSD and the employee.
- Remote workers will not have a dedicated desk at an MSD site. They may arrange with their manager to work from an MSD site on occasion if there is space, to attend meetings or use office facilities etc.

## Health, safety, security and wellbeing of remote workers

- Hazards and risks must be identified in advance, effectively controlled and reviewed regularly through an active Safety Plan.
- Ergonomic issues and any sign of pain and discomfort will be managed through self-management and support. The standard MSD process will apply to people experiencing pain or discomfort, including early reporting in STAR. Workstation assessments will be initiated through the same process that exists for people working in MSD sites and will be carried out by WellNZ, MSD's contracted provider.
- Where health, safety and wellbeing issues are unable to be reasonably accommodated in the remote location, employees may need to be relocated to an MSD site in order to address these needs.

## Responsibilities

| Person/Party                             | Responsibilities   |
|--|--|
| Manager                                  | Understand and meet the requirements of managing remote workers including proactive, regular communication and connection to teams.<br>Meet obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, including management of hazards and risks in partnership with employee.  |
| Employee                                 | Must abide by all MSD policies and obligations, including MSD's Code of Conduct, health, safety and security, and information security and privacy requirements.<br>Meet obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, including identification and management of hazards and risks in partnership with manager. |
| Senior Management i.e. at least GM level | Responsible for approving the use of remote working within their designated group.   |

## Definitions

| Word/phrase      | Definition  |
|------------------|---|
| Remote working   | An agreement, based on business need, for an employee to work primarily from a location other than an MSD site, including from an employee's home, for a specified term (minimum three months - maximum two years).   |
| Flexible working | Flexible working is about people having options regarding how they work and can include adjustments to when and where they work. Arrangements can be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• formal – recurring work arrangement which impacts pay or involves changes to employment terms and conditions such as working hours, pattern or location.</li><li>• informal – agreement between manager and employee to have flexibility over when and where they carry out their work subject to meeting position responsibilities and deliverables.</li></ul> |
| Primarily        | An employee's full working week from another location with the ability to return to the office on occasion, as outlined in the policy principles.   |

## Related policies

The following is not an exhaustive list but an indication of the types of policies you need to be aware of when working remotely as all MSD policies apply.

| Policy | Definition |
|--------|------------|
|--------|------------|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <a href="#">Acceptable Use of Technology Policy</a>                     | Outlines what is acceptable use of technology including, use of technology to store, transfer or process MSD information, and personal use of MSD technology for anything other than MSD work.  |
| <a href="#">Business-Related and Sensitive Expenditure Policy</a>       | Provides principles and policies that must be followed when claiming reimbursement of expenditure incurred on behalf of the Ministry.   |
| <a href="#">Code of Conduct</a>   | Guides you on how to go about your work and how best to service the Government of the day. It does not cover every situation or requirement that you experience in your role, but it does include very clear expectations about behaviours or conduct that we cannot and will not tolerate. |
| <a href="#">Flexible Working Arrangements</a>                           | Sets out MSD's approach to flexible working arrangements in line with Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000.  |
| <a href="#">Health and Safety Policy</a>                                | Sets out MSD's commitment to the health, safety, security and wellbeing of our people and the people we work with, and how we will meet our responsibilities to ensure a psychologically and physically healthy and safe working environment.   |
| <a href="#">Legislative Compliance Policy</a>                           | Explains how certain legislation and law impacts on our people, clarifies rights and obligations, gives guidance about what to do and what to avoid and says who to contact with specific queries.  |
| <a href="#">Managing Performance Policy</a>                             | Outlines the mutual responsibilities of managers and employees in relation to performance issues.   |
| <a href="#">Off-site Safety and Security Policy</a>                     | Staff have the responsibility for the on-going assessment of the off-site environment in which they are working and for making appropriate decisions to keep themselves safe in those environments.   |
| <a href="#">Responsibility for the Security of MSD Computer Systems</a> | Everyone has a responsibility for the security of MSD computer systems. This includes MSD, managers, staff and Human Resources.   |
| <a href="#">Secure Workplace Policy</a>                                 | Defines the requirements for how employees should protect MSD information both in the workplace and when working remotely.  |
| <a href="#">Travel, Accommodation, and Related Expenses Policy</a>      | Sets out the principles and policies that must be followed when organising, undertaking, or authorising business-related travel on behalf of the Ministry.  |

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

# Remote Working Manager's guide

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[What is remote working?](#)

[Who is this guide for?](#)

[The Expression of Interest \(EOI\) process](#)

[Preparing your people for remote working](#)

[Managing remote workers](#)

## What is remote working?

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Remote working is an MSD-initiated arrangement where employees work primarily from a location other than an MSD site, *including from an employee's home*, for a specified term (defined as a minimum of three months to a maximum of two years) in response to a business need. An expression of interest process, including a self-assessment of the alternative location, a discussion with the manager and appropriate training and support, will help determine if remote working is appropriate.

As an example, there'll be times when a decision or event puts pressure on the space available in our offices, such as needing to recruit more people to support New Zealanders into employment. When this happens MSD would make a decision to have some people working remotely at identified location/s. Other types of working from another location will be considered under flexible working arrangements, eg short term or employee-initiated arrangements.

## Who is this guide for?

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This guidance is for managers who are considering remote working arrangements and should be read in conjunction with MSD's [Remote Working Policy](#).

Where an employee will be working primarily from a location that is not the employee's home, such as a Non-Government Organisation, other government agency or a rented venue, this guidance must be used in conjunction with Health, Safety and Security's Off-site safety and security guidance.

Managers who have people working from an alternative location under a flexible working arrangement should refer to the [flexible working arrangements policy](#) and guidance.

## The Expression of Interest (EOI) process

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### Why we have an EOI process

When the need arises for some of our people to work remotely, it is important that we take into consideration the health, safety and wellbeing of our people. The [self-assessment form](#), which forms part of the EOI process, includes the requirement for people to review their environment in relation to health, safety and security, wellbeing and information security. Running an EOI process provides people with the opportunity to express their interest and be considered fairly using the same set of criteria.

### Considerations

A senior manager (eg at least GM level) with the appropriate HR delegation must approve Remote Working in their designated group before commencing an EOI process. This would include the number of people required to work remotely, timeframe and budget approval.

People can apply to work remotely through an EOI process. Decisions take into consideration information provided by the employee in their self-assessment and conversations you have with them regarding their EOI.

It's important you consider the following areas when deciding on a remote working arrangement:

- the employee is clear on their responsibilities
- a designated workspace has been identified
- the employee has the necessary skills and knowledge to work remotely
- support and training are able to be provided remotely
- information is able to be kept secure. Its recommended that no paper-based documents are held remotely, and any notes are recorded digitally
- a safety plan has been completed and all risks have been mitigated to an acceptable level. When assessing the risks identified, consider the likelihood that harm from the hazard may occur and the consequences (the degree of harm) if this happens. Talk to your site's Health and Safety Representative or your Senior Advisor Regional HSS if you need guidance on this
- there are no technology constraints

- the employee is able to travel to an MSD office as required
- there should be no additional costs to the employee. Any cost implications related to set up will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If you have any questions when assessing a remote working EOI, please contact [s9\(2\)\(k\)@msd.govt.nz](mailto:s9(2)(k)@msd.govt.nz)

## Process

It's important that a consistent and fair process is applied for all employees who express an interest in a remote working arrangement. The process is:

1. A business need is identified by the site and approved by the relevant senior manager (eg Group General Manager/General Manager) in writing.
2. An EOI is prepared and advertised across the identified location with a closing date. This should ask employees to discuss their application with their manager.
3. EOIs are assessed using the employee's self-assessment.
4. The manager or management team reviews the EOI's, seeking further information or clarification from employee/s if required.
5. The site manager approves or declines the applications. The employee's manager is sent the decision to share with the employee/s.
6. The manager starts the process of organising equipment.
7. The manager contacts AskHR to formalise the remote working arrangement.
8. AskHR completes the documentation and records the arrangement in the relevant employee file in myHR.
9. The remote working arrangement starts once the equipment is available, the agreed safety plan is in place and any security measures have been completed.
10. The arrangement is reviewed every three months by the manager and employee.

If you have any questions when assessing a remote working EOI, please contact [AskHR](#).

## Preparing your people for remote working

### Organising equipment

Your employee identifies any equipment they need to set up their designated workspace as part of their self-assessment. Once you've met with the employee and approved the remote working arrangement, you will need to take the following actions:

1. Email parts four and five of the employee self-assessment to [s9\(2\)\(k\)@msd.govt.nz](mailto:s9(2)(k)@msd.govt.nz) who will action the request and arrange delivery of the furniture with your employee. This process will generally take 10 working days.
2. Complete and submit the [Procurement of Hardware for Remote Working form](#) on Doogle. This will then be sent to IT who will arrange the delivery of the equipment to the employee's MSD office for collection.

### Formalising the remote working arrangement

Before a person starts a remote working arrangement, they must receive a letter outlining the arrangement and varying their terms and conditions of employment. The remote working arrangement will start following the delivery of equipment, the agreed safety plan is in place and any security measures have been completed where required.

To formalise the arrangement:

1. Complete the [Remote Working Request](#) to Ask HR form
2. Email template to [s9\(2\)\(k\)@msd.govt.nz](mailto:s9(2)(k)@msd.govt.nz)

AskHR will complete the documentation and upload to the relevant employee's file in myHR once the employment variation has been signed by all parties.

### Setting expectations

Before the remote working arrangement begins, meet with your employee and discuss processes and expectations around how the remote working arrangement will work. You should then discuss this with your team so everyone is clear on the arrangement.

### With your employee

Here's what you need to cover in your conversation with your employee:

- Being reachable, responsive and dependable within working hours
- Work allocation, including any urgent priorities on the day
- Agree what regular contact you'll have such as a daily message, daily/twice weekly catch ups, booked in calendars
- Agree on the process for the employee to take responsibility for identifying and managing hazards and risks and to notify their manager if any occur (see the next section, 'Managing remote workers' for more detail on how to create a safety plan together)

- Address the risk that the lack of social connections and support, as well as the challenge of separating home and work life, may have on the employee's mental health and wellbeing and the steps they could take to address these risks. This might include visit/s to the employees work location (eg their home) by you in the event of any concern about keeping connected
- Agree on the escalation process if the employee has any concerns
- Agree the timing of the three-monthly reviews, and book these
- Agree on timeframes for the employee to meet with the team at their MSD site (if applicable).

### With your team

Things to discuss with the rest of your team:

- Confirm how you will support and manage your employees who are working remotely and your expectations that all team members should keep in regular contact with each other as needed to support work activities and to resolve any issues
- Agree how you will connect and collaborate virtually as a team using [MSD's approved tools](#).

## Managing remote workers

### Health and safety

When any of your people are working remotely, both the employee and MSD have a shared responsibility to ensure their workplace will not impact their health or safety. This means that as a manager you are still responsible for ensuring that hazards and risks are managed for remote workers, just as you are in the office environment.

Where the remote working location is an employee's home, your employee will have responsibility for identifying and managing hazards and risks. They will complete a safety plan for their home workplace and provide this to you as part of their self-assessment. You will need to work with your employee to ensure their safety plan keeps them safe from any risks or hazards identified.

Smoke detectors and access to first aid supplies are essential. Your employee will note whether or not they have these in the self-assessment. If an employee does not have these, they will need to get them before a remote working arrangement can begin.

If the employee will be working from their own home, you will need to work with them to identify risks in their home and determine appropriate controls. When assessing the risk, consider the likelihood of harm occurring and the potential consequences as well as the amount of time someone will work from home. Though it is preferable to eliminate a risk, if this is not reasonably practicable, you must put in place controls to minimise the risk. Therefore, it is important to have a good conversation with your team member to discuss everything that is reasonably practicable, so both you and your team member are comfortable with the working from home arrangement. If you need extra help or have any questions relating to this, please talk to your site's Health and Safety Representative or if they can't help, your Senior Advisor Regional HSS. [The Health Safety and Security - who we are](#) page identifies these people.

Pain and discomfort is an important risk to consider, particularly if your employee has had previous issues. If this risk can't be mitigated with appropriate equipment, breaks and exercise you wouldn't approve a remote working arrangement.

If the employee will be working in an off-site location, rather than their own home, the manager should visit the proposed workplace, meet with the other organisation to discuss the arrangement and complete the [Manager's Risk Assessment Template](#). Managers should consider that [overlapping duties](#) may apply.

The safety plan should be developed jointly by you and your employee.

Once the remote working arrangement has begun, keep having regular conversations with your employee about their health, safety and wellbeing.

### Mental health and wellbeing

When working remotely, people may be impacted by the lack of social connections and support as well as the challenge of separating home and work life. This may have an impact on their mental health and wellbeing. As a manager, it's recommended that you:

- have regular, frequent contact with your remote working team member/s including video contact
- provide frequent meaningful feedback on their work and performance
- ensure your people follow usual work hours/routines and take regular breaks
- recognise stress and poor mental health early
- ensure your people are aware of all the supports available to them.

For advice on supporting your remote worker you can contact [s9\(2\)\(k\) @msd.govt.nz](#).

### Workplace investigations

In the case of a [notifiable event](#), MSD and/or WorkSafe may need to enter your employee's home to conduct an investigation if that is their designated workspace. An employee can refuse entry, however WorkSafe can obtain a warrant to enter their home for the purposes of investigating.



## **Travelling for work**

Travel from your employee's remote workplace to a MSD office or other work location during their working day is work-related travel. The Ministry is required to protect employee's safety for work-related travel. If people have any concerns about this, they should discuss these with you.

More information around [managing hazards](#) while travelling for work can be found on Doogle.

## **Performance issues**

MSD's process for [managing performance issues and disciplinary action](#) remains the same for employees who are working remotely.

Indications of issues need to be discussed as early as possible with the employee. One consideration could be whether the employee can be accommodated in an MSD office for a period of time to ensure support is provided to 'get back on track'.

## **Reviews of arrangements**

Remote working arrangements need to be reviewed every three months to ensure they are still working well. As part of the three-monthly review, the Safety Plan that the employee submitted as part of the EOI process needs to be reviewed and refreshed to take into account any changes in the remote working environment.

The three-monthly review should also include discussion around:

- how the arrangement is working for them
- any difficulties they are experiencing and how they can be addressed
- if there have been any changes in their working environment.

## **Triggers for ending a remote working arrangement**

The following may be reasons to end a remote working arrangement. It's important that there is a mutual understanding between yourself and your employee, and you should seek advice from [AskHR](#) as part of this process.

- There is no longer a business need within the team or organisation for the remote working arrangement to continue e.g. the property constraint no longer exists.
- The employee's situation has changed, and remote working is no longer suitable. For example:
  - there is a risk to their health, safety security or wellbeing by continuing the arrangement,
  - the home or work environment has changed, and MSD or client information is no longer able to be kept secure,
  - the employee wishes to return to the office.

# Remote Working - Employee Guide

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On this Page:

[What is remote working?](#)

[Things to consider](#)

[Who is this guide for?](#)

[What's in this guide?](#)

[What's not in this guide?](#)

[Your environment and designated workspace](#)

[Privacy and information security](#)

[Your health, safety and security](#)

[Working effectively remotely](#)

## What is remote working?

---

Remote working is an MSD-initiated arrangement where employees work primarily from a location other than an MSD site, *including from an employee's home* for a specified term (defined as a minimum of three months to a maximum of two years) in response to a business need.

As an example, there'll be times when a decision or event puts pressure on the space available in our offices, such as needing to recruit more people to support New Zealanders into employment. When this happens MSD would make a decision to have some people at the identified location/s working remotely. Other types of working from another location will be considered under flexible working or normal business arrangements eg short-term or employee-initiated arrangements.

## Things to consider

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If you are working remotely, primarily from another location, you'll be responsible for working with your manager to manage your workload, the security and confidentiality of information and your health, safety and wellbeing. Your manager will discuss your situation and any concerns you may have and how these concerns can be addressed. Areas of discussion will include your:

- Safety – assess your workplace and your plan to manage any hazards and risks
- Security – assess any external risks from working alone such as clients or other people approaching you at home
- Information security – assess how you will ensure client/MSD information is kept secure and confidential. It is recommended that no paper-based documents are held remotely, and any notes are recorded digitally
- Technology – assess whether your current technology is sufficient to perform your role
- Social isolation – consider how you can stay connected with your colleagues. Your manager will work with you to organise regular opportunities to keep in touch with you one on one and as part of your wider team, using MSD-approved collaboration tools. This may include organising the frequency of return visits to reconnect with your manager and colleagues. It might include visit/s to your off-site workplace by your manager to address any concern about keeping connected.

## Who is this guide for?

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This guidance is for people with remote working arrangements, or people considering whether a remote working arrangement is right for them. It should be used in conjunction with MSD's [Remote Working Policy](#) and the [self-assessment tool](#).

Where you will be working primarily from a location that is not your home, such as a non-government organisation's premises, other government agency or a rented venue, this guidance must be used in conjunction with Health, Safety and Security's [off-site safety and security](#) guidance.

People working from an alternative location under a [flexible working](#) arrangements guidance in Doogle.

## What's in this guide?

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This guide is focused on key areas of shared responsibility for you and MSD, including:

- your workplace and designated workspace
- privacy and security

- your health, safety and security
- working effectively remotely
- other information.

## What's not in this guide?

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This guide does not include details about all of MSD's policies and procedures.

As an MSD employee working remotely or at an MSD site, [MSD's policies](#), procedures and the [Code of Conduct](#) continue to provide important guidance and information about your obligations as an MSD employee. This guide provides additional clarification and guidance for people working remotely.

## Your environment and designated workspace

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### Your designated workspace

Your designated workspace is the space within your off-site workplace that contains your desk, chair and workstation set-up. This will be the space you primarily work from. You may want to do certain tasks, such as make calls or read a document from somewhere else, as you would in an office.

MSD will provide you with the following equipment for your designated workspace:

- laptop (if required to replace your existing desktop) – this includes replacing wired with wireless keyboard/mouse
- either:
  - a single monitor on standard base – this includes a surge protector
  - dual monitors on standard bases – this includes a surge protector and docking station
  - 1400mm x 750mm wide desk (if required)
  - adjustable chair (if required)

All equipment MSD provides remains the property of MSD and must be returned on completion of your remote working arrangement, or at the end of your employment with MSD.

More information on what else your [designated workspace](#) needs to include can be found on Doogle.

### Your environment

Environmental factors such as lighting and temperature may impact your level of comfort in your designated workspace.

See Doogle for some [handy tips and tricks on how to ensure your environment works for you](#).

## Privacy and information security

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MSD information must be kept safe and secure wherever and whenever you're working, and the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and [Privacy Policy](#) continue to apply. On the [Information Hub](#) on Doogle, you'll find valuable information related to information management and security including how to manage MSD information, privacy and detail on [working with information from home](#) or another location outside of an MSD office. Remember to ensure client and MSD information is kept secure and confidential.

### Collaboration tools

When working remotely, it's important that you stay connected and are able to collaborate with your team no matter where you're working. MSD has a range of [approved tools](#) that enable you to do this. For work-related purposes, you must use the approved tools and ensure actions, decisions, or information that has been created, is saved into the appropriate MSD system. This helps keep an accurate record of your work and ensures we meet our obligations under the Official Information Act.

### Know what to do if you run into a problem

- Call the [IT Service Desk](#) if you experience problems connecting to the MSD network remotely or issues with MSD-issued equipment. If your IT equipment is faulty, or requiring repair, you will need to bring this into the office.
- If you need advice or help with information or using EDRMS Objective, contact the Information Management team at [s9\(2\)\(k\)@msd.govt.nz](mailto:s9(2)(k)@msd.govt.nz).
- If you think a privacy breach or data loss has occurred (eg if you think the information you're working with, or the device you're using has been compromised), please talk to your manager immediately and get in touch with the [IT Security team](#) and/or the Information Privacy and Sharing team at [s9\(2\)\(k\)@msd.govt.nz](mailto:s9(2)(k)@msd.govt.nz).
- If you experience a power or internet outage, phone your manager to let them know and discuss options for working from an MSD site for the rest of the day.

## Your health, safety and security

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Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, when working remotely, both you and MSD have a shared responsibility to ensure your workplace and designated workspace will not impact your health or safety, including identifying and mitigating any risks or hazards.

MSD's existing [Health and Safety Policy](#) and guidance applies to your workplace and designated workspace.

Your input and contribution to workplace health and safety is important, and when you're working remotely this becomes even more important. Make sure you are having regular conversations with your manager about your health, safety and wellbeing and connect in with your Health and Safety Representative, PSA delegate (if you are a PSA member) and health and safety committee, as needed. It is important that you understand who to go to for help, who will give direction in an emergency and the emergency procedures in place at the location you're working from.

### Setting up your workstation

You are responsible for adjusting your seating, desk and monitors just as you would be if you were working from an MSD office. Take the time to make sure you have your desk and monitors set up in a way that ensures your posture is good, your arms are well supported, and your neck and back are not strained. Good practice for sighted people is to make sure the top of your monitor is no higher than eye level. Wellnz can work with you and your manager to organise a workstation assessment if you agree with your manager that this would be beneficial.

If you need other items, such as ergonomic equipment or furniture, please discuss this with your manager. More information, including examples of [workstation set up and exercises](#) can be found on Doogle.

### Pain and discomfort

Regular breaks are key to managing your wellbeing when working at a computer. It's important you find ways to take breaks as you may not get the same natural interruptions as when you are working in a busy office. Have set/routine times for breaks (arranged with your manager when working on a roster) and stick to them to provide routine to your day.

Consider reviewing your [Wellnomics settings](#) to prompt regular workplace breaks.

If you experience pain and discomfort as a result of work duties, make sure you talk to your manager and report this using our Health, Safety and Security notification system – [STAR](#). Your manager may talk to you about ways to manage discomfort such as adjusting your workstation set-up, workload management and taking regular breaks.

Wellnz can work with you and your manager to organise a workstation assessment and/or physio if you agree with your manager that these are likely to help.

For more information see the Workstation set-up and [Pain and Discomfort Programme](#) Doogle Page.

### Wellbeing support

As a remote worker it's important to pay attention to your mental health and wellbeing. To look after your wellbeing, it's crucial that you:

- take regular breaks
- notice and talk about any signs of stress
- stick to a routine/regular hours when working
- form connections and professional relationships with others in the workplace, even if it is through the use of technology.

Wellbeing supports available to you include:

- Regular discussions with your manager
- [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (delivered by Benestar) – EAP is a private and confidential counselling and coaching service for anything that's impacting on your wellbeing, whether it's work-related or personal
- [s9\(2\)\(k\) @MSD](#) – a range of resources for managing your wellbeing
- [Peer Support Programme](#) – Contact your local Peer Supporter
- Anxiety helpline – 0800 269 4389
- Need to talk – 1737.

### Managing hazards in your workplace

When you are working remotely you must take responsibility for identifying hazards and risks and then work with your manager to ensure they are appropriately managed.

For guidance on [common hazards and risks](#) you may need to manage see Doogle. Use the self-assessment tool and this Doogle guidance to develop a Safety Plan on how you'll keep yourself safe in your remote workplace and share this with your manager.

The plan should include [what to do in emergencies such as a fire or earthquake](#) and what equipment you might need such as a first aid kit and smoke detector. If you do not have smoke detectors in your home or

access to first aid supplies, you will need to obtain these prior to the start of a remote working arrangement. Your Safety Plan should be reviewed regularly and updated whenever there is a change in your remote work environment.

If you have an accident or injury while working, you must report this in STAR. Your manager will review your Safety Plan with you, and together you will consider whether it needs to be revised.

### **Safety and Security**

If any security incidents occur, make sure you follow the security protocols. In any emergency, you should immediately call 111.

Once you are safe, remember to report all security incidents in [STAR](#).

It is important to debrief with your manager after any incident, threat or abusive call.

### **Workplace investigations**

In the case of a [notifiable event](#), MSD and/or WorkSafe may need to enter your home to conduct an investigation if that is your designated workspace. You can refuse entry, however, WorkSafe can obtain a warrant to enter your home for the purposes of investigation.

### **Travelling for work**

Travel from your remote workplace to an MSD office or other work location during your working day is work-related travel. The Ministry is required to protect your safety for work-related trips. If you have any concerns about this, talk to your manager.

More information around [managing hazards while travelling for work](#) can be found on Doogle.

## **Working effectively remotely**

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Listed below are a collection of tips gathered from people and their employers who have experience working remotely.

### **Approach days working from home\* like normal workdays**

\*in this section 'home' refers to your home or other specified location for remote working

- Treat working from home like normal workdays, not like weekends or holidays.
- Establish a routine for working from home that is similar to your office routine.
- It's recommended that when working from home you get dressed for work. Dressing for work helps you make a clear psychological distinction between working and not working.
- You must take breaks – you could use this time to do some exercise. 10 to 15 minutes is all you need to give your brain a break and your body a boost.
- Have a routine for ending the work day. Turn off your computer and switch your electronic equipment off at the wall.
- Let your manager know if you're sick, and make sure you do not work on that day.

### **Avoid potential household distractions**

- Set ground rules for other household members and visitors in advance. Reinforce that you are working and let them know when you are available or under what circumstances you can be interrupted.
- Take care of minor household tasks that could be distracting when working from home before beginning your work day.
- Make sure others in your house understand even though you are home, you are working; and that work time is not a time for you to do housework and other home maintenance activities or childcare duties.
- If there are distractions at home, like a hobby, activity or non-work projects, make them inaccessible while you are working.

### **Keep in contact**

- Check Doogle and the In the Loop emails regularly to find out what's going on around MSD.
- Stay in contact with your work colleagues.
- Bouncing ideas off colleagues or your manager or discussing a difficult or challenging conversation you've just had is important and working from home should not be a barrier to doing this.

### **Your work area**

- Keep your desk clear of clutter.
- Surround yourself with things that will keep you in a positive frame of mind.

# Remote working EOI: Employee self-assessment\*

\* In this form 'home' and 'house' refers to your home or other specified location away from an MSD site.

Remote working is where an employee works from a location other than an MSD site for a specified term (three months to two years).

This self-assessment captures your details and provides your manager with the information required to consider whether a remote working arrangement between MSD and yourself is appropriate.

MSD is committed to ensuring your working environment is safe, so this self-assessment also considers your designated workspace within your home from a health, safety and security perspective, both for yourself, MSD and in relation to client information.

**Note:** if the remote working location is not your home, you should discuss this with your manager who can consult with AskHR.

## Part 1: Personal details

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### Your details

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Your name                   |   |
| Your role                   |   |
| Location for remote working | <input type="checkbox"/> Own home<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other<br>Please specify:<br>_____ |

### Your approach

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Why are you interested in remote working?</p>   |  |
| <p>How will you organise your day?</p>   |  |
| <p>If any, what distractions are you likely to face when working remotely?</p>   |  |
| <p>How will you avoid workspace distractions?</p>  |  |
| <p>How do you manage when you are stressed or unwell?</p> <p><i>For example, if you start to experience a downturn in your mental health, or when you are under work pressure.</i></p> |  |
| <p>How will you seek help if you encounter any issues?</p> <p><i>For example, IT, broken equipment, difficult client or personal problems.</i></p>                                     |  |

## Your connectivity

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do you have internet access with Wi-Fi at home? Please circle Yes or No</li><li>If your answer is Yes, please specify the Plan (ie unlimited, or capped)</li></ul> | Yes / No<br><br>Plan: |
|--|-----------------------|

## Your environment

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Are there other people in your home during your working hours? Please circle Yes or No<br><br>If yes, are you able to work away from other people in your home to maintain client privacy, including private telephone contact with clients? | Yes / No |
| Is the space comfortable to work from without any personal, safety or security concerns?<br><br>If not, discuss with your manager.   | Yes / No |
| Where in the house will you be set up to work from?  |          |

## Part 2: Health, safety and security

The actions required in this section will help you and your manager determine what is required to have an appropriate designated workspace in your home.

### Step 1: Learn

- Read the [Remote Working Policy, Guidelines](#) and the [Health, Safety and Security when working from home](#) section on Doogle.
- Complete MSD's [Managing Health, Safety and Security while working at home](#) module in myHR.

### Step 2: Apply

Now you need to apply what you've learnt in [Step 1](#), and make sure your home is an appropriate workplace.

#### Minimum requirements

You need to meet the minimum requirements before a remote working arrangement can start.

- Complete the below minimum requirements\* checklist:



|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Do you have <a href="#">appropriately placed and functional smoke alarms</a> installed?   | Yes / No |
| Do you have access to <a href="#">first aid supplies</a> that are appropriate for the risks you might encounter when working at home? | Yes / No |

\*It is your responsibility to ensure that your home meets the minimum requirements.

- b. Complete a [Safety Plan](#) (attached at the back of this document) which identifies hazards and risks that exist in your proposed workplace and designated workspace, and what controls you can take to reduce or eliminate them. We have provided some examples in the template for you to consider. Please delete any that don't apply and add any others you identify. You can discuss with your manager the likelihood of the risk occurring using the definitions from the [HSS Risk Matrix](#). Don't forget to follow the off-site safety plan and check for overlapping duties if you work from a location that is not your home.

## Part 3: Information security

This section will help you understand what's required when working with MSD and client information within your designated workspace:

- Read the Information Group's [Working flexibly from home](#) guidance on Doogle.
- Read the Information Group's [Collaboration and communicating tools](#) guidance on Doogle

## Part 4: Equipment

MSD is able to provide you with the following equipment, in addition to equipment already provided (eg headsets), under a remote working arrangement. Please confirm what equipment you would need (please circle Yes or No).

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Laptop (to replace your existing desktop)<br><i>Includes replacing wired with wireless keyboard/mouse</i> | Yes / No |
| Desk  | Yes / No |
| Chair   | Yes / No |
| Single monitor on standard base<br><i>Includes power board</i>  | Yes / No |
| Dual monitors on standard base<br><i>Includes power board and docking station</i>                         | Yes / No |

Please note: you will need to collect your IT equipment from your office and instructions will be provided on how to set up this equipment.

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Are you comfortable setting up your IT equipment using the instructions provided? | Yes / No |
|---|----------|

Please confirm your home address, mobile phone number and any access details we may need to be aware of for delivery of furniture (eg secure apartment, stairs etc).

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Your home address:  |   |
| Access details:   |   |
| Mobile phone number (preferred) or alternative contact number:<br><i>To receive notice of delivery time from the delivery company</i> |   |
| Do you currently work from home?  | <input type="checkbox"/> No<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br>Please provide details:<br>_____ |

## Part 5: Agreement

There may be occasions that require external support and we would like to get your agreement upfront for when this is required.

Do you agree to MSD or an approved contractor visiting your home in the instance provided below (please circle Yes or No).

|                                     |          |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Delivering required equipment       | Yes / No |
| Completing a workstation assessment | Yes / No |

### Employee confirmation:

- I am familiar with and understand my obligations under MSD's [Remote Working Policy](#).
- Within my designated workspace I am able to work while keeping MSD and client information secure.
- I agree to set up my workstation as per my workstation assessment.
- The resources and online learning required in this self-assessment have been read and completed.
- Relevant risks have been identified and controls put in place to reduce or eliminate these in my [Safety Plan](#).
- I agree to eliminate or minimise any risks that have been identified as discussed with my manager.
- I understand any equipment MSD provides remains the property of MSD, that I must take reasonable care of them, and that they must be returned to MSD on completion of my remote working arrangement, or if my employment with MSD ends.
- I understand that in the case of a [notifiable event](#), MSD and/or WorkSafe may need to enter my home to conduct an investigation.

Employee Name:

Signature:

Date:

### Manager confirmation:

- I have met with the employee and discussed their safety plan, including the risks and hazards that exist within their designated workspace, and our joint plan to minimise or eliminate these, and I am satisfied that the risks are being managed appropriately and that the minimum requirements have been met.
- Based on the information provided within this self-assessment, I am satisfied that the employee's home environment and designated workspace are suitable for MSD to offer a remote working arrangement, in line with the Remote Working Policy.
- This arrangement meets the criteria for remote working, and I approve the release of the approved equipment to the employee for the purpose of remote working.

|                            |            |       |
|----------------------------|------------|-------|
| Manager Name:              | Signature: | Date: |
| Remote working start date  |            |       |
| Remote working review date |            |       |
| <b>Comments:</b>           |            |       |
|                            |            |       |

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# Safety Plan

Date:

Manager Signature:

We have provided some examples in the template (in grey) for you to consider. Please evaluate your environment, delete any that don't apply and add any others you identify. You should also use the [HSS Risk Matrix](#) to assess and update the likelihood of any of the risks occurring.

| Hazard                 | Risk   | Likelihood  | Controls  |
|------------------------|--|-------------|---|
| Lone working/isolation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychosocial harm (socially isolated from team, stress from reduced contact)</li> </ul> | Very likely | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication plan for regular daily contact</li> <li>Team digital channels set up for informal 'watercooler' chat</li> </ul>  |
| Work hours             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fatigue</li> <li>Psychosocial harm (overworked from extra hours worked)</li> </ul>      | Likely      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement of hours of work</li> <li>Taking regular breaks</li> <li>Set up Wellnomics to make sure you're getting the appropriate breaks</li> </ul>   |
| Workspace setup        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pain and discomfort</li> </ul>  | Likely      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up workstation so you can maintain good posture</li> <li>Vary your working position throughout the day</li> <li>Report any discomfort to your manager as soon as it happens</li> </ul>                                   |
| Environmental issues   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pain and discomfort</li> </ul>  | Likely      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up workspace so that there is no screen glare</li> </ul>   |
| Electrical hazards     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical injury</li> </ul>  | Rare        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSD-supplied surge protectors not overloaded</li> <li>Cables or cords are in good condition and secured under a desk, or along a wall, and away from heat sources</li> <li>Equipment switched off when not in use</li> </ul> |
| Fire hazards           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical injury</li> </ul>  | Rare        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smoke detectors installed and checked monthly</li> <li>Heaters kept away from flammable items</li> </ul>   |
| Slips, trips and falls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical injury</li> </ul>  | Rare        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure floor coverings in the workspace are secure</li> <li>Keep walkways, stairways, aisles, doorways and corridors within the workspace clear of trip hazards</li> </ul>   |

| Hazard                                 | Risk   | Likelihood | Controls  |
|--|--|------------|---|
| Physical assault                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychosocial and physical harm</li> </ul> | Rare       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HSS Induction and Training</li> <li>Guidance to keep your personal information safe (including online)</li> <li>Debrief with manager</li> </ul>                              |
| Verbal abuse and/or threats by clients | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychosocial harm</li> </ul>              | Likely     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HSS Induction and training</li> <li>Wellbeing support for staff</li> <li>Debrief with manager</li> <li>Process to escalate any issues during calls through Jabber</li> </ul> |

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