



During the COVID-19 pandemic, federal public sector agencies were able to move swiftly to facilitate working from home (WFH) arrangements to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. This allowed agencies to undertake critical work to meet the challenges of the pandemic, and to keep employees safe while doing so.

We acknowledge the positive role that DSS played in facilitating this.

It is now clear that working from home can work very well, and it should be more widely available where this is something employees wish to do. It can offer employees and employers significant benefits - reducing commuting time, promoting greater gender balance in the workplace, increasing employee engagement and productivity, helping employees better manage work and home responsibilities, among many others.

As agencies transition employees back to the workplace, the CPSU is discussing WFH arrangements with your agency to make sure WFH remains available to employees now and into the future. We are seeking an agreed policy and practices to support employees and supervisors to facilitate WFH arrangements.

Working from home report card

AGENCY NAME: DSS

OVERALL GRADE: 😞 😐 😊

This report card assesses your agency's WFH policies at 30 July 2020 and identifies areas for improvement.

BEST PRACTICE	CURRENT AGENCY POLICY	AGENCY GRADE
Presumption WFH can be approved		
Where an employee requests to work from home, the request should be granted unless there is a compelling operational reason why not.	States this will be made on 'reasonable business grounds' but can be rejected on policy grounds. Also restricts access to employees on basis of significant training or supervisory responsibilities.	😞 😐 😊
Where a compelling operational reason requires an employee to present at the workplace, the supervisor should explore whether the employee's request can be partially approved.	Provides for genuine negotiation but doesn't include options like partial approval.	😞 😐 😊
Support for employees WFH		
Once the WFH request is approved, supervisors should:		
Provide employees with a guide to working safely, information about who to contact about health and safety queries, and ensure that the employee has read & understood it.	Onus is on employee through use of with checklists rather than offering support.	😞 😐 😊
Ensure the employee has the necessary technology and arrange for a virtual ergonomic assessment of the work space.	Onus is on employee to comply with checklists rather than offering support.	😞 😐 😊
Schedule meetings via MS Teams or WebEx where possible, so that employees WFH can participate.	Not adequately met.	😞 😐 😊
Make regular contact with employees to ensure participation and inclusion.	Not adequately met.	😞 😐 😊
Ensure employees have clear instructions and expectations.	Yes - the manager and employee must agree on any changes necessary to work deliverable expectations.	😞 😐 😊

Our grading system:



NEEDS DEVELOPING



DEVELOPING



MEETS BEST PRACTICE



NEED ADVICE?

CPSU members who have had their WFH requests denied can call the CPSU Member Service Centre on 1300 137 636 for advice and support.

NOT YET A MEMBER?

You can show your support for better workplace flexibility by joining the CPSU and supporting our campaign for better ongoing access to working from home.

If you're already a member, you can talk to your colleagues about supporting our WFH campaign by joining today.

**JOIN TODAY AT
CPSU.ORG.AU OR
CALL 1300 137 636**

BEST PRACTICE	CURRENT AGENCY POLICY	AGENCY GRADE
Ensure employees take regular breaks and record their hours.	Not adequately met.	☹️ 😐 😊
Regularly discuss how WFH is going with the employee.	Not adequately met.	☹️ 😐 😊
Protections		
Ensure employees are aware of the bandwidth which exists to prevent employees from working unsociable hours and to promote boundaries between work and home.	Although policy states that employee retain employment rights this does not specify bandwidth.	☹️ 😐 😊
Supervisors should not unreasonably expect employees to be contactable when they are not working.	Not adequately met.	☹️ 😐 😊
Where an employee is asked to vary WFH arrangements, supervisors should give as much notice as possible.	Not met.	☹️ 😐 😊
Capacity for employee-initiated agreement to work flexible hours		
Subject to the enterprise agreement, approved WFH arrangements may include an agreement that work be undertaken outside the normal span of hours or bandwidth, for example to allow employees to manage childcare and school drop off and pick up. These arrangements can be initiated by employees, and require genuine agreement.	Not met.	☹️ 😐 😊
Be flexible in the approach to what working from home looks like i.e. pattern of days and locations away from the office to enable employees to make lifestyle decisions accordingly.	Policy doesn't promote idea of flexibility in approach e.g. ad hoc days and is rigid in terms of how often informal arrangements can be used.	☹️ 😐 😊
Openness and workplace culture		
Data on WFH approvals and disapprovals provided at each consultative committee meeting.	No.	☹️ 😐 😊
Build a supportive workplace culture promoting WFH and flexible working arrangements at all levels of the organisation.	No.	☹️ 😐 😊