



New Dynamics

People and culture

Remote and hybrid work: a practical guide

Agree working norms, support distributed colleagues and assess contribution without monitoring presence.

[Practical guidance](#) · [Worked examples](#) · [Printable worksheet](#)

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Read in order for the full approach, or use the linked contents to find a section. The final worksheet gives you space to record decisions and next steps.

Agree working norms, support distributed colleagues and assess contribution without monitoring presence. This practical guide to remote work guide brings together a step-by-step approach, illustrative examples, a reusable worksheet and answers to common questions. Start with the section closest to your current challenge, then use the working session to turn the guidance into a clear next action.

Agree how the team will work

Remote and hybrid work arrangements need shared expectations about outcomes, availability and communication. Begin with the work that requires coordination. Discuss which decisions benefit from a live meeting and which can be handled asynchronously through a written update.

Write a team agreement that covers normal working patterns, response expectations, handovers and urgent issues. Make room for different time zones and agreed individual arrangements. A visible online status is not evidence of availability or contribution.

Make information available beyond the meeting

Record decisions in a shared, accessible location with an owner and a date. State what changed, why and what happens next. People who cannot attend should be able to understand the decision without watching a long recording.

Use agendas and pre-reading for meetings. Invite written contributions and make sure remote participants can hear and participate. Avoid treating informal office conversations as the only route to important information. Check accessibility needs when choosing collaboration tools.

Support people and protect boundaries

Managers should discuss workload, isolation, equipment and practical barriers in regular check-ins. Ask what support is needed without pressuring employees to disclose private circumstances in a team channel. Provide the approved route for equipment or workplace support.

Set a realistic expectation for urgent contact and define what counts as urgent. Delayed replies outside an agreed work pattern should not become a performance signal. Cross-border work, contractual terms, health and safety, tax and local employment requirements need review before an arrangement is approved.

Worked example: a distributed handover

Illustrative scenario: a customer-support team works across two time zones. The outgoing team posts a short handover with open issues, customer commitments, the next action and the owner. The incoming team acknowledges critical items at the start of its working period.

An unresolved urgent issue follows a named escalation route. Routine questions stay in the written record. The manager checks missed commitments and handover quality rather than counting messages or hours online.

Team agreement worksheet

- **Shared outcomes:** What must the team deliver together?
- **Coordination windows:** When can people reasonably meet?
- **Communication:** Which channel is used for decisions, questions and emergencies?
- **Response expectations:** What is reasonable within each working pattern?
- **Handover standard:** What information must travel with unfinished work?
- **Access and equipment:** Where can a colleague request help?
- **Review date:** When will the agreement be tested with the team?

Keep the agreement short enough to use. Link to the organisation's approved policies rather than duplicating terms that may change elsewhere.

Check whether the arrangement works

After a trial period, review missed handovers, decision delays, workload and employees' ability to contribute. Compare access to projects, feedback and development for remote and office-based colleagues. A process that works for a senior employee may still leave a new starter unsupported.

Adapt the norms based on the work. Use the [onboarding guide](#) for new starters and the [manager 1:1 guide](#) to sustain individual support.

Put the guide into practice

Set aside a working session with the people who own this process and one or two people who experience it. Use a fictional or appropriately authorised case, so the discussion can be specific without sharing unnecessary personal information. The purpose is to leave with a usable decision or document, not just agreement that the topic matters.

Prepare the case

Choose a workflow that crosses locations or time zones, such as a project decision or customer handover. Identify the information people need before acting and the points where a live conversation adds value. Ask remote and office-based colleagues separately where they currently miss context or wait for an answer.

Write the starting assumptions down before discussing solutions. If the group disagrees on what happened, identify the information needed to resolve that difference rather than building a plan on an untested story.

Work through the decision

Draft a communication agreement for that workflow. Define the channel, required information, owner and reasonable response window within working patterns. Explain how a decision becomes visible to people who did not attend the meeting. Avoid assuming that a recording is accessible or that everyone can search a long chat history.

Ask each participant to explain the proposed decision in their own words. Differences in interpretation often reveal an unclear criterion, a missing responsibility or an instruction that will be difficult to follow.

Test an exception

Imagine the usual coordinator is unavailable and an urgent request arrives outside the receiving team's working hours. Apply the escalation route and decide what can wait. Then test a routine request incorrectly labelled urgent. The agreement should protect genuine continuity without turning every employee into an always-available contact.

Record what changes in this situation and what remains the same. An exception should lead to a clear next step, with an owner, rather than an informal workaround that nobody can explain later.

Agree the handoff

Give the team a short, accessible record of the agreed norms and a date to review them. Managers should explain how individual arrangements fit within the shared workflow without disclosing private circumstances. Check that new starters can find the same decision records and support routes as established colleagues.

Finish by confirming the owner, the next action and the date when the result will be reviewed. Give the person receiving the work enough context to continue without repeating the whole discussion.

Frequently asked questions

How should managers assess remote employees?

Use agreed outcomes, role-relevant behaviours and evidence of contribution. Discuss dependencies and changes in priorities just as you would for an office-based colleague. Online status, message volume and time at a keyboard are weak substitutes for understanding the work. Make sure remote employees have comparable access to feedback, development opportunities and the information needed to perform well.

Does a hybrid team need fixed office days?

That depends on the work, the organisation's approved arrangements and the needs of the people involved. Start with the activities that benefit from shared presence, then consider accessibility, travel and coordination. A fixed pattern can help some teams but should have a clear purpose. Review whether it improves the intended activity rather than treating attendance itself as the outcome.

How can remote onboarding be improved?

Prepare access and equipment before arrival, give the starter a named contact and explain the first week clearly. Arrange purposeful introductions, a bounded first task and frequent opportunities to ask questions. Provide written context that does not depend on overhearing office conversations. Check whether the person can find help independently before assuming that completed induction meetings mean they are settled.

Review the first cycle

Review handover failures, decision delays and access to opportunities across working patterns. Ask whether meeting load or urgent messages increased unnecessarily. Keep the norms that support coordination and revise those that create presence-based pressure without helping the work. A team agreement should evolve when the workflow changes.

Keep a brief record of what was tried, what participants found useful and what needs to change. Compare the result with the original problem rather than judging success only by completion. If the process created extra work without improving clarity, quality or support, simplify it and test again. Share the agreed change with the people who will use it, and name the person responsible for keeping the guidance current.

About New Dynamics

[New Dynamics](#) connects goals, feedback, recognition and reviews around the way organisations work. This guide is published by the New Dynamics Editorial Team as part of our practical library for HR leaders, managers and People teams.

Use the examples and worksheets to structure your own discussions and adapt them to your organisation. Illustrative scenarios are not customer case studies. Policy and employment guidance needs appropriate local review before adoption.

For questions about this guide, corrections or a conversation about your performance management process, email contact@new-dynamics.com. Explore the complete [guide library](#) for related resources.

Your working worksheet

Use the prompts from this guide to prepare one real conversation or decision. Keep personal or sensitive information in your organisation's approved records. This page is for your own working notes.

Shared outcomes: What must the team deliver together?

Coordination windows: When can people reasonably meet?

Communication: Which channel is used for decisions, questions and emergencies?

Response expectations: What is reasonable within each working pattern?

Handover standard: What information must travel with unfinished work?

Access and equipment: Where can a colleague request help?

Review date: When will the agreement be tested with the team?

Discuss your next step with New Dynamics: contact@new-dynamics.com