



Where ideas work

Considerations for adopting Flexible Work in the BC Public Service

February 2025

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Overview and purpose

This resource, provided by the BC Public Service Agency (PSA), is intended to provide guidance and considerations for ministries in the evolution of flexible work arrangements. This resource may help ministries seeking guidance and support for planning and implementing greater flexibility while also adhering to the [criteria and requirements for flexible work](#) that apply to all BC Public Service employees. Recognizing each ministry, program area, and employee group has unique and important characteristics to consider, there is no definitive template or prescribed approach to offer but rather guidance for consideration.

Background and context

The BC Public Service consists of dedicated professionals committed to delivering exceptional service to the public. Offering flexible work arrangements makes the BCPS a more competitive employer and supports the corporate goal of being a trusted, talented, and modern workforce that provides quality service to the people of B.C.

Trusted: Allowing employees a choice of flexible work options demonstrates our trust in our employees as valued professionals who can be relied upon to do their jobs effectively and successfully in a variety of work environments.

Talented: Offering flexibility in where and how people work will improve recruitment and retention of skilled and diverse talent from across all demographics and all regions of the province. It also supports improved employee engagement, which we know directly correlates to improved service to the public.

Modern: Flexible work arrangements reduce barriers to employment, increases participation, and make it easier for diverse groups to build long-term careers in which to learn, lead, and grow. Impacts of this approach directly support increased inclusion in the BC Public Service and may also lead to improving the lives of more British Columbians and improving the outcomes in the communities in which they live.

Our support for flexible work dates back more than a decade, with the launch of the [Workpoint](#) strategy that sets out the benefits and essential elements of an approach to remote and flexible working. The model put in place at the time was updated in the summer of 2021 applying lessons learned during the widespread adoption of remote work

during the COVID-19 pandemic and the longer-term impact of that experience for most employers.

Research and global trends show that hybrid work is here to stay. Data from research across Canada and within the BCPS shows a general preference for remote work, with the majority of employees preferring some level of part-time remote arrangement. Our own experience in the BCPS also shows employees are capable of successfully performing their jobs and meeting the needs of British Columbians in a hybrid model. Like all employers, our opportunity now is to ensure we can continue to expand our sustainable adoption of this new way of working through a thoughtful and intentional approach.

While we work to maximize the potential of flexible work, we also recognize there are many BCPS employees who may not wish to work remotely or who are unable to do so given the nature of their work. It's important that adopting flexible work in a team takes the considerations of these employees into account to ensure there are no unintended negative impacts on their work, engagement and job satisfaction.

The BC Public Service Framework for Flexible Work

Desired outcomes

A More effective and efficient BC Public Service

- Enabling operational efficiencies, collaboration and productivity
- Optimizing use of space and reducing facilities costs
- Reducing government's carbon footprint
- Enabling employees to effectively respond to events that impact the functioning of the workforce and workplace (e.g., pandemics, extreme weather events, natural disasters)

A more competitive employer

- Contributing to wider recruitment options and across different regions in B.C., which in turn can help foster a more diverse workforce, reflective of the province we serve
- Higher employee engagement and job satisfaction
- Improving work/life balance and overall employee well-being
- Better addressing the needs of employees with visible and invisible disabilities, accommodation needs and different personality types

As we work to expand adoption of flexible work, we will ensure that we are:

- **Service-focused** – prioritizing better outcomes for the public
- **Performance-focused** – achieving our operational and policy objectives
- **Accountable** – meeting our public service obligations and upholding public trust
- **Flexible** – adapting to ministry/organization operational needs
- **Empowering** – supporting employees to do their best work regardless of location in B.C. and ensuring we remain a competitive employer
- **Inclusive** – bridging geographical, organizational, or cultural gaps

Criteria

The BC Public Service supports flexible work options up to and including full-time remote work. Our corporate approach to flexible work balances:

1. Our shared obligation to prioritize effective service to the public
2. The responsibilities of the BC Public Service as an employer
3. Individual employee preferences.

Service to the public remains the primary focus and employees engaged in flexible work must meet or exceed service delivery standards. With that overarching priority, the following principles define our corporate approach to flexible work options:

- Flexible work is not an entitlement nor a term of employment.
- The suitability of flexible work options will vary according to specific operational requirements or employee circumstances.
- Flexible work options must enhance and not detract service to the public, including availability and accessibility of services, etc.
- Participating in a flexible work arrangement is voluntary and requires the mutual agreement of the employee and supervisor.
- Employees must be performing satisfactorily prior to being approved and must maintain their productivity and performance.
- Open, ongoing communication about performance, team goals, workplace environment, scheduling changes, training and technology is key.
- Flexible work options support the health and safety of employees.
- Flexible work options safeguard the safety and confidentiality of information.

Ministry leaders and supervisors have the latitude to define the extent of flexible work they adopt within the unique context of their respective ministry, operational needs and desired culture. However, all flexible work arrangements must align with the BC Public Service corporate approach and the criteria set out by the BC Public Service Agency as included in the mandatory [Telework Agreement](#) that must be completed for all flexible work arrangements.

While all flexible work arrangements must follow the corporate guidelines, ministries may set specific additional criteria or operating practices to reflect their unique operational context or ensure consistency in how they adopt flexible work.

Service to the public remains the primary focus and employees engaged in flexible work must meet or exceed service delivery standards.

Roles and responsibilities in adopting flexible work

Deputy Ministers' Council

- Ensure the direction of the BC Public Service will enable government to meet its mandate and commitments in a flexible work environment
- Support consistent implementation and communication of the corporate flexible work model as an essential component of the BC Public Service's ability to recruit and retain top talent across B.C.
- Proactively raise and address issues and concerns related to flexible work and collaboratively seek effective solutions

Deputy Ministers' Committee on Public Service Renewal

- Set the overall cultural direction for the BC Public Service that aligns with and leverages a flexible work environment

Ministry executive

- Determine the overall flexible work approach for their ministry, in alignment with corporate guidelines and principles, and in consideration of the specific operational requirements of their ministry
- Be accountable for the inclusion of flexible work strategies, actions, and measures in their ministry's annual workforce plan
- Maintain relationships, foster connection by modelling and ensuring consistent communication with teams and colleagues
- Proactively address or propose solutions to any challenges that may arise as a result of flexible work
- Be accountable for overall employee engagement and the consideration of flexible work impacts
- Ensure an equitable approach is taken in their ministry to flexible work, looking across similar roles in their ministry as well as down through individual reporting structures
- Determine ministry space-planning considerations are aligned with approach to flexible work.

Senior leaders/branch heads

- Assess team readiness for flexible work, in consultation with teams, against the assessment guidelines
- Work with their teams to collaboratively create team-based approaches to flexible

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work

- Ensure principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility are considered and applied in team approach to development and implementation of flexible work arrangements
- Consider internal team dynamics and internal/external partners or clients in decision making
- Lead clear team communications, support and model team engagement and processes, and address any team conflict in a timely manner
- Proactively address or propose solutions to any challenges that may arise as a result of flexible work
- Maintain relationships, foster connection by modelling and ensuring consistent communication with teams and colleagues
- Build culture through regular team interactions, whether in-person, virtual or hybrid
- Ensure the availability of tools and technology for teams to maintain communication and engagement in a flexible work environment.

Supervisors

- Work with their teams to collaboratively create team-based flexible work arrangements
- Ensure an up-to-date telework agreement is in place with each team member, including all provisions included in the agreement about safety and security
- Ensure satisfactory performance of employees and completion of mandatory training
- Ensure satisfactory performance of their team and local service requirements are met through effective scheduling as required
- Leverage and model the use of tools and technology available to enhance team communication and engagement
- Maintain regular contact with employee regardless of location
- Ensure regular performance and development conversations are maintained
- Ensure a safe check in/check out procedure is followed
- Proactively address or propose solutions to any challenges that may arise because of flexible work
- Maintain relationships and foster connection by modelling and ensuring consistent communication with team and colleagues
- Ensure principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility are considered and

applied in the team's approach to development and implementation of flexible work arrangements.

Employees

- Assess personal readiness for flexible work
- Participate in co-creation of team agreements for team-based approach to flexible work
- Adhere to the telework agreement, including all provisions included in the agreement about safety and security
- Ensure responsiveness to supervisor, colleagues, and adherence to service delivery standards for clients
- Recognize that flexible work is a benefit, and not a term of employment, and that flexibility on the employee's part may be required at times to support operational requirements and team needs
- Proactively address or propose solutions to any challenges that may arise as a result of flexible work
- Maintain relationships, foster connection, and ensure consistent communication with supervisor and colleagues.

Ministry human resources leaders

- Stay up to date on corporate and ministry guidelines and considerations
- Act as liaison point between the ministry and the Public Service Agency with respect to flexible work, supporting communications, required training, issues resolution and reporting expectations
- Develop the ministry's annual workforce plan, ensuring flexible work strategies are reflected
- Provide reporting and status updates as requested to the Public Service Agency
- Provide support and issues resolution to executive, leaders and supervisors in both the ministry and team application of flexible work arrangements
- As required, escalate any issues resulting from flexible work arrangements to executive or the Public Service Agency.

BC Public Service Agency

- The head of the Public Service Agency establishes and maintains effective human resource management policy
- The Public Service Agency is responsible for providing corporate and

organizational-level policy and development supports and for assessment, measurement, and reporting on corporate impact of flexible work arrangements

- The Public Service Agency is accountable for responding to questions and issues that cannot be managed at the supervisor or ministry level
- The Public Service Agency is responsible for clear corporate guidelines, criteria, communications around flexible work, including liaison with Corporate Executive and Ministry Human Resource leads.

Ministry of Citizens' Services

- Provide and maintain appropriate physical workstation assets and related software and programs required to effectively support a hybrid- flexible work culture
- OCIO: Provide IM/IT strategy, policy, infrastructure, and standards required to support hybrid-flexible work
- CIRMO: Provide records management and information security policy and standards that effectively support a hybrid work environment
- RPD: Prepare the planning and implementation of the future of work hybrid workplace strategy.

Checklist of considerations in adopting flexible work arrangements

All flexible work arrangements must consider the broader context of each team's operational requirements and desired culture, as well as any guidance developed to allow for consistency in adoption of flexible work. Ensuring alignment across each ministry and, where operationally feasible, across the BC Public Service is advised.

The following checklist is provided to help ministry executive, leaders and teams define an effective approach to flexible work within their work units. Executive and senior leaders are expected to lead with a consistent approach and are strongly encouraged to engage teams in dialogue to establish a shared understanding and support for a shared approach to flexible work. Ministries may define their own process for monitoring and reporting but will be expected to assess and prioritize ministry requirements, identify required corporate resource supports, and meet corporate reporting requirements.

The checklist of considerations to be addressed is divided into two categories:

1. **Leadership considerations:** What do leaders need to think about to ensure their teams are set up for successful, appropriate, consistent flexible work arrangements?
2. **Team considerations:** What do teams need to assess and address together to ensure the adoption of flexible work allows them to deliver on expectations and maintain a positive and engaging experience for everyone?

Many of the decisions regarding these considerations will be documented as part of each employee's telework agreement.

Leadership considerations

Leaders play an essential role in assessing the readiness of their teams to successfully adopt and achieve the benefits of flexible work. Shifting to a hybrid environment may also require leaders to assess and adapt their own approach to supervision and aspects of how they support and empower employees to achieve their best work. The following checklist is a guide to some of the key considerations leaders should address in preparing their teams and themselves for success.

Consideration	Addressed Y/N	Notes
<p>Can your team members complete all their job duties under their proposed flexible work schedule?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An employee must be able to complete 100 percent of their job within their flexible work arrangement. • Job duties should not be changed to accommodate a desire for remote work. • Colleagues cannot be expected to take on additional duties to accommodate another employee’s flexible work arrangement. • Supervisors should consider whether any changes are needed to allow them to continue to effectively assess performance in a hybrid environment.
<p>Does your team understand the requirement to have an appropriately private, safe and secure workspace at their remote work location?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All applicable policies regarding information management and the Standards of Conduct apply regardless of where an employee works. • Employees are required to work with their supervisor to ensure they have a safe work environment. • Because flexible work arrangements are voluntary, excluding basic employer

		provided equipment and office supplies such as laptop, pens, paper, etc., employees are responsible for the cost of setting up, furnishing and maintaining a remote work location.
Does your team understand the mandatory requirements for all flexible work arrangements, including completion of mandatory training?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory training for all telework agreements includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IM117: Information Management ○ Annual review of the Standards of Conduct and Oath of Employment ○ Fraud Awareness and Prevention
Does your team understand the need for flexibility under the terms of a telework agreement?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The telework agreement specifies “the employee will make necessary adjustments or changes to their telework schedule if required to attend the worksite based on operational requirements as determined by the supervisor.” • Employees must be readily available to be contacted by colleagues and their supervisor during work hours. • Flexible work arrangements are not to be used to allow you to do other non-work-related tasks.
Does your team understand the impact of their flexible work arrangement within the broader context of the ministry/work unit dynamic?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each individual member of the team should act intentionally to create opportunities to build connection and team culture, especially in hybrid and virtual contexts.
How does your team’s flexible work arrangement impact when and		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the BC Public Service criteria effective February 2025,

<p>where they work in the workplace?</p>		<p>employees working more than one day per week from home are required to forego a dedicated workspace at their assigned workplace location. Exceptions can be made where an employee requires specialized equipment or another form of accommodation to work in the office.</p>
<p>What additional training might your team need to work more effectively in a hybrid environment?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing and working in a remote team is different and requires innovations in supervision, work assignment, supporting employees, and monitoring/follow up. Consider if your team requires any additional training or resources to be successful in a flexible environment.
<p>How will you ensure employee health and well-being in a virtual environment?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the safety and ergonomic requirements in the telework agreement, it is important to be aware of employee mental health and the risk of issues such as bullying, which can be less visible in a virtual environment. For assistance, consider the health, safety and sick leave resources available on MyHR.
<p>How might hybrid and remote work options change your approach to hiring into your team?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of more flexible work arrangements provides the opportunity to recruit new employees in a wider range of communities across B.C., opening up the potential of a more diverse talent pool. Consult the supporting hiring manager resources on Careers

		<p>and MyHR.</p>
<p>How might you adapt your leadership style to be successful in a hybrid environment?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building trust-based relationships and fostering ongoing conversations with team members can be more difficult in a virtual or hybrid work environment. It can be even more important that employees have a clear understanding of work expectations, roles and responsibilities, and a shared definition of success are essential. • The Learning Centre offers numerous courses and resources on coaching approaches for leaders and supervisors, tools for leading hybrid and virtual teams, facilitating results, and having difficult conversations when needed.
<p>Are there any ministry criteria or corporate guidance for flexible work the team needs to adhere to?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All flexible work arrangements must meet the corporate requirements and criteria prescribed by the BC Public Service Agency. • Ministries may determine additional requirements or criteria that reflect their unique operational context and organizational culture. • Ministries may also consider whether there is value in defining consistent levels of remote work for similar jobs across the organization.

Team considerations

Flexible work isn't just about what works for individuals. It needs to be considered as a team to ensure the benefits can be realized while also mitigating any potential negative impacts on team performance, engagement and culture. The following checklist is a guide to some of the key considerations teams should discuss together in developing a team agreement for their approach to flexible work.

Team agreements should define what connection and responsiveness look like in a flexible work environment, and should include aspects such as communication, engagement, respectful behaviours, being fully present, acting inclusively, and being mindful of and honouring differences.

Consideration	Addressed Y/N	Notes
<p>How often do we need to be in the workplace together and how will we make the best use of that time?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which face-to-face interaction impacts the team's work will impact whether and how often all members of the team need to be in the workplace in-person at the same time. • Consider whether a regular schedule of consistent days in the workplace is best, or the schedule can be flexible in response to operational and team needs. • Consider how you might adjust work to take advantage of in-person time together and save focused individual work for when you are remote.
<p>How will we communicate effectively in a hybrid work environment?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams should agree on which methods of communication they will use and what their shared practices are for virtual engagement (i.e.: always have cameras on in Microsoft Teams meetings; virtual meetings as the default etc.).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under workplace safety regulations, virtual workers are required to check-in with their supervisor at the start of their workday, and supervisors may wish to prescribe a consistent method for doing so.
<p>How might we need to adjust how we manage administrative aspects of our work in a virtual environment?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are any changes required to information management and security when there are fewer or no people in an office location? Teams should also have a clear and consistent understanding of the implications of remote work on issues such as travel expenses.
<p>How should or could the team change its business processes to maintain or enhance delivery?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider if changes are necessary to how work is delivered, and if remote work enables any potential enhancements.
<p>Will the adoption of remote work require any changes to the physical workspace to enable different ways of working when we are in-person?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with your ministry's facilities leads to assess whether any changes to the space used by the team are required or possible. Any employee working 3 or more days per week from home must forego a dedicated workspace at their regular workplace location.
<p>Will we need any new or different technology to more effectively work in a hybrid environment?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with your ministry Information Management Branch on the potential to access new or different technology solutions and the need for any related training.
<p>How will we onboard new</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider documentation to be

<p>members into our team in a hybrid work environment?</p>		<p>made available to new team members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be value in agreeing to steps such as having the entire team attend the workplace together for additional days to help build relationships with new team members.
<p>How will you monitor and review your flexible work approach to ensure it is working for everyone on your team?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All individual telework agreements must be reviewed annually. • Teams should also define a timeline and process for reviewing their approach together and make adjustments when required to ensure individual and team performance, productivity and engagement.

Supporting resources

The following resources are available to support leaders and teams design and adopt flexible work arrangements that support their specific operational requirements:

- [Getting Started with Flexible Work in the BC Public Service](#): An introduction to the BC Public Service framework for flexible work.
- [Flexible Work in the BC Public Service FAQ](#): Answers to the most common questions about flexible work arrangements.
- [Flexible Work Readiness, Reflection and Discussion](#): Guidance for employees and supervisors on how to address the requirements and considerations in establishing a telework agreement.
- [Flexible Work Manager's Resources](#): Guidance for supervisors in how to prepare and lead their teams and employees in a hybrid work environment.
- [Guide to Submitting a BC Public Service Digital Telework Agreement](#): Guidance on preparing, submitting, and managing the telework agreement required for any flexible work arrangement.
- [Flexible Work Learning Resources](#): Virtual courses and other resources to support working and leading in a hybrid environment.
- [Safety Inspection for Working from Home](#): Information on ensuring necessary workplace health and safety practices in a home-based workspace.
- [Flexible Workspaces and Information Security](#): Guidance for ensuring appropriate management of information in a remote work environment.
- [Telework at a ShareSpace Location](#): Guidance on accessing BC Public Service ShareSpace co-working locations.
- [Post-Implementation Discussion Questions for Flexible Work](#): Suggested questions for employees, teams and supervisors to ask when assessing the impact of flexible work over time.
- [Remote Work Toolkit](#): Resources from the Learning Centre, CITZ, Microsoft and LinkedIn to help employees work from home more effectively, whether just getting going or working remotely for some time.
- [Diversity and Inclusion Resource Centre](#): Resources and information on the BC Public Service diversity strategy, training, governance and working collaboratively and respectfully with Indigenous peoples and communities.
- [Ergonomic tips and guidelines](#): Resources to assist with setting up a workstation to reduce the risk of injury.
- [Creating a respectful workplace](#): Information, tools, and services to help build and maintain respectful workplaces.

Appendix

Policies and legislation

- [Public Service Act](#)
- OHS Regulation and Workers Compensation Act and [OSH policy](#)
- [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FOIPPA\)](#) and the [FOIPPA Policy and Procedures Manual](#)
- [Accessible British Columbia Act](#)
- [Hiring and Deployment Policy](#)
- [Accountability Framework for HR Management](#)
- [Standards of Conduct](#) and [Oath of Employment](#)
- [Core Policy and Procedures](#)
 - [Travel Policy](#)
- [Privacy Management and Accountability Policy](#)
- [Managing Government Information Policy](#)
- [HR policy 11 – Discrimination, bullying and harassment in the workplace](#)

Related strategies and frameworks

- [Corporate Plan](#)
- [Corporate Values](#)
- [Workpoint: Rethinking How and Where We Work in the BC Public Service](#)
- [Where We All Belong](#) (Corporate strategy on equity, diversity and inclusion)
- [Ethics Management Framework](#)
- [Framework for Change](#)
- [Collective Agreements](#)
- [Terms and Conditions for Excluded Employees and Appointees](#)
- [Work Environment Survey](#)
- [Managers' Guide to Reasonable Accommodation](#)