

Flexible working patterns at the Audit Commission

Types of employment



The Audit Commission is regularly faced with changing employment needs. A number of different patterns of employment have been developed to meet these needs. These include:

- * full-time employees
- * part-time employees
- * job-sharing arrangements
- * permanent and fixed term posts
- * the use of temps or contractors from agencies.

These different contracts help the Audit Commission to cope with all of its changing needs. They also help it to be flexible. There are three main types of flexibility:

- * numerical flexibility
- * functional flexibility
- * place-of-work flexibility.

Numerical flexibility

The Audit Commission is constantly faced with peaks and troughs in the workload that cannot be met simply by having its employees on full-time contracts. There are situations where they need either more staff or fewer staff. By increasing or reducing staff in these situations the Audit Commission has developed numerical flexibility.

Functional flexibility

The Audit Commission has also developed flexibility through developing the skills of its employees to deal with a wider variety of work. This means that when the nature and type of work changes, employees are comfortable undertaking different tasks. This is known as functional flexibility.

Place-of-work flexibility

Homeworking is an example of place-of-work flexibility. The Audit Commission uses this way to respond to the challenges within their business environment. This method of working has helped it to meet more closely the needs of its staff. As part of its flexible working arrangements, homeworking has helped to transform the ways in which many people work and improve their work-life balance.

Homeworking

Homeworking occurs where an employee uses her or his home as a work base. There are two main types of homeworking:

1. *Occasional homeworking* – the employee may work sometimes from home, but is normally present at an Audit Commission office or working on the site of a client for the majority of their working time. They still have an office base.
2. *Regular homeworking* – the employee works from home for the majority of the time.

Homeworking involves one-off set-up costs in which a home is provided with access to broadband and information and communications technology equipment. There are also the ongoing costs of using these technologies. In the same way that health and safety is important in the workplace, it is also important in the home. A risk assessment of health and safety issues is undertaken to ensure that the work area is suitable.