

Flexible working patterns at the Audit Commission

The benefits of managing a flexible workforce



For regular homeworking to take place, it has to be appropriate to the working needs of the Audit Commission. An employee wanting to work from home has to apply to do so. He or she must show managers how their work from home would affect customers, colleagues and the people they manage or work with. After the homeworking arrangement is set up, it is regularly reviewed. This monitors its effectiveness for both the employee and the Audit Commission.

Advantages of homeworking

The advantages to employees and the business are very strong. For example, the Audit Commission's corporate offices are based in Millbank in London. There are many reasons for employees based there to want to adopt homeworking. The following outline some of the main ones:

- * The trip into the city can take up to two hours each way on the train.
- * People may have childminding arrangements to set up and pay for.

Regular homeworking helps an organisation to develop family-friendly policies that improve the work-life balance of its staff.

- * Some may have considered a break from work while their children are young.

For the organisation, homeworking assists in recruiting individuals who are attracted to this style of working and this enables the Audit Commission to retain a diverse workforce. The process is inclusive as it takes account of the wider needs of employees.

Other benefits

The other benefits of homeworking are that it:

- * reduces travelling and this is good for the environment
- * frees up desk space and allows office accommodation to be used more efficiently
- * uses information and communications technologies to good effect.

Management systems for effective flexible working

The Audit Commission has a system of matrix management. This is a system in which individuals work in teams that are not necessarily supervised by their own line manager. These project teams are not functional, but may include staff from across the three job families.

Whoever manages the team will also manage the homeworker. Each person may work on a number of projects for a number of different teams. In this type of homeworking situation, individuals manage their own role and also undertake the responsibilities for each team they work with.