

15 November 2023

Hybrid Working: CSW article cites 40% home working cap

'Civil Service World' article talks of "expectation of increased office-based working". PCS is in talks with the Cabinet Office, as well as departmentally with HMRC.

In Civil Service World (CSW) earlier today - 15 November - the journal has reported that:

"Ministers have directed senior officials to "set and implement an expectation of increased office-based working" among their staff"; with the leaked Ministerial letter, seen by CSW, going on to say:

"We have together agreed, therefore, that across the civil service, those based in offices will spend a minimum of 60% of their working time working face to face with their colleagues either in offices or on official business, rather than at home."

Central talks ongoing

For some weeks now, various Ministers, including the former Cabinet Office Minister, have been pontificating about the number of days spent by civil servants working from home, despite the fact that - as the pandemic made clear - those civil servants have been working just as effectively from home as from the office.

PCS nationally has already been in lengthy discussions with the Cabinet Office, making these very points.

Talks taking place in HMRC

PCS has also begun discussions departmentally, separately with HMRC, regarding this central drive to increase the number of staff in the office, regardless of the fact that it doesn't really improve productivity.

We've also reminded HMRC in particular, that our Pay and Contract Reform (PaCR) Collective Agreement allows more than 40% working from home where

the business can accommodate it; and should allow the department enough leverage to push-back on any arbitrary, 'blanket' office attendance figure. In particular, PCS has also reminded the department about the "up-to-five-days home working as redundancy mitigation" clause of the agreement; and said that in no uncertain terms, we expect full adherence to this.

Additionally, PCS has raised the matter of accommodation capacity; since we know that in a number of sites, HMRC has already relinquished accommodation to other government departments.

Detailed update to follow

Both sets of talks are still ongoing. In HMRC we will continue to supplement the central talks with the Cabinet Office, by pressing the department and agency to take a pragmatic, hybrid working approach; rather than introducing an arbitrary cap on the home/office working ratio.

Further discussions are planned, and we hope to provide you with a detailed briefing in the next few days.

Join PCS

As your trade union, PCS continues to negotiate with HMRC to stand-up for your interests. If you've read this article, and you aren't yet a member of PCS, then you should [join today](#).