

16 November 2023

Changes in Hybrid Working in DWP

This morning, under pressure from the government, Civil Service Heads of Department jointly wrote to staff to state the expectation that office based staff should work in person in the office for a minimum of 60% of their working time.

This decision will mean a significant change for many PCS members in DWP who are currently only expected to be in the office for 40% of their working time.

DWP members very angry

Before this announcement PCS had already been inundated with responses expressing how angry members are about this decision, following a [leak in Civil Service World](#) . The decision has the potential to seriously disrupt the working and domestic arrangements of many PCS members in DWP.

DWP is already in the midst of a staffing crisis. Forcing staff to attend the office more frequently, and incurring extra expense, will make the DWP an even more unattractive employer to work for and make the recruitment and retention of staff much more difficult.

Talks taking place in DWP

PCS attended a recent meeting on hybrid working where the Department advised us that it is being asked to plan for staff working 60% of their time in the office. We objected to this in the strongest terms, and will continue fight the unfair imposition of unreasonable working arrangements.

Members have adapted to current hybrid working patterns, and have often arranged their lives, and caring responsibilities, around the 40% office based requirement.

PCS reminded DWP that many of its sites will not have the capacity to accommodate a 60% attendance rate. The Department has closed a significant number of offices since the pandemic. Many offices are already filled to capacity on 40% attendance and cramming any more staff into them will be impossible and create unacceptable health and safety risks.

When offices closed many people accepted a relocation to a site further away from where they live on the understanding that they would only be required to attend the new office 40% of the time. Any changes in these arrangements will not be accepted by PCS.

Detailed update to follow

Both Cabinet Office and departmental talks are still ongoing. In DWP we will continue to supplement the central talks with the Cabinet Office, by pressing the department 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 more detail as it emerges.

Jobcentre staff

PCS will continue to argue that all Jobcentre staff should have access to hybrid working. DWP's current position that Jobcentre work can only be delivered from Jobcentres is untenable. It was clearly demonstrated throughout the pandemic that Jobcentre work could be delivered from home using digital and telephony channels as well as face to face. As technology advances and with the right safety processes video channels can be opened as well.

The notion that Jobcentre work has to be done face to face is out of date and PCS will do all we can to persuade the DWP to allow access to hybrid working for Jobcentre staff.

Join PCS

Being a member of PCS has never been more important. At a time when DWP staff are facing a staffing crisis and attacks on their ability to work flexibly we need strength in numbers. Please ask your colleagues to [join PCS](#) if they have not done so already.