Remote working policy

Covid-19 has triggered a paradigm shift in where, how and when we work

86% *of UK CEOs believe the shift towards remote collaboration will endure (78% globally)*

68% *believe the shift towards lower-density workplaces, with fewer people working together in person, will endure (61% globally)*

Source: PwC CEO Panel Survey, 2020

Current challenges

- As we reflect on the experience of 2020 and think about life post-pandemic, the general view is that remote working to various degrees, is here to stay - so what do we need to do next?
- Ad-hoc requests are now becoming too frequent - we now need a more formal remote working policy/guidelines to outline expectations and manage workforce risk
- Concern around bringing risk profile and desired culture together, to create the right policy for both the organisation and employees

Issues to consider, questions to ask

Expectations about being in and out the "office" - once lockdowns are lifted, will you ask people to work a percentage of their time in the office? Will you ask them to be in the office for certain days of the week? Will you require teams to all be in the office once a week, or will it be a personal choice? What do you mean by the "office"; is it a fixed location, or one of several sites in the UK? What will your position be if your employees do not follow the guidance on office presence? Should alternative rules apply to different roles and jobs, locations and parts of the business?

Employee expectations - to answer the above questions and manage expectations, you need to know what your people want and understand where they are in their journey for readiness to come back to an office environment. Research shows that the average response to the question 'How many days per week would you prefer to work from home?' has increased over time and many are never expecting a return to working 100% in the office

X-border remote working - will you let your people work from another country? If so, will you have a maximum number of days for them to do so and how might you police that? Will there be some countries that your employees won't be allowed to work from to manage corporate tax risks, such as permanent establishment? How will you support your employees in managing the potential income tax and social security implications if they were to choose to work from another country? Will you track your people to manage risk and what tech solutions might you need to do this?

Regional pay - is your policy to pay the same wages for the same roles, regardless of location, or will you consider different levels of pay for differing geographies, taking into account the contract type and the task being performed? What broader impact might working from home have on your overall approach to reward? Remember that your decisions will have an impact on equal pay liability and will need careful planning to manage risk

Diversity - Covid-19 has exacerbated workplace inequalities and diversity challenges driven by remote working need to be addressed. You need to think about fair work access, career progression and performance management to avoid creating disparities and ensure equal treatment regardless of work location or "facetime" with leadership

How can we help?

The answers to the above policy questions are driven on where your organisation sits on the people risk spectrum. Your current (and desired) culture also plays a key role in determining your policy choices. We can help you to:

- *Understand what 'good' looks like for your organisation, optimising employee experience and productivity*
- *Consider the risks your approach might create and how best to manage those risks effectively*
- *Prepare or update contracts and policies on remote working, performance management and acceptable conduct to support your approach*