

Supporting frontline organisations develop a culture of inclusion as they transition to hybrid working

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The Inclusivity Project

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Background

- Covid-19 has changed the way we work
- **Hybrid work:** Where in-person office and remote work co-exist
- Workers in the UK want the option of hybrid work to continue
- Minority of businesses plan to mandate full return to offices
- Hybrid work is here to stay



Aim and rationale

- Hybrid working is **experimental**
- Need for a **planned, systematic approach** while navigating the transition.
- Opportunity to make work **more accessible, more inclusive, and more enriching** to our lives.



Supporting small businesses

- Culture change **needs planning and resources** (human & capital)
- Small businesses and frontline organisations **lack access** + recovering from **shocks of the pandemic**
- Need to **support small businesses** to **respond to and navigate the uncertainty and culture change**



THE PROCESS

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Co-designing a hybrid work culture

- Aim: To support frontline organisations to develop a **flexible, hybrid culture of work** that is **inclusive, fair, and equitable**
- Project partner: AgeUK Cornwall & Isles of Scilly
- **Co-design approach:** Active involvement of all stakeholders who will be benefit; CIPD recommended
- **Individual accountability** and **participation**

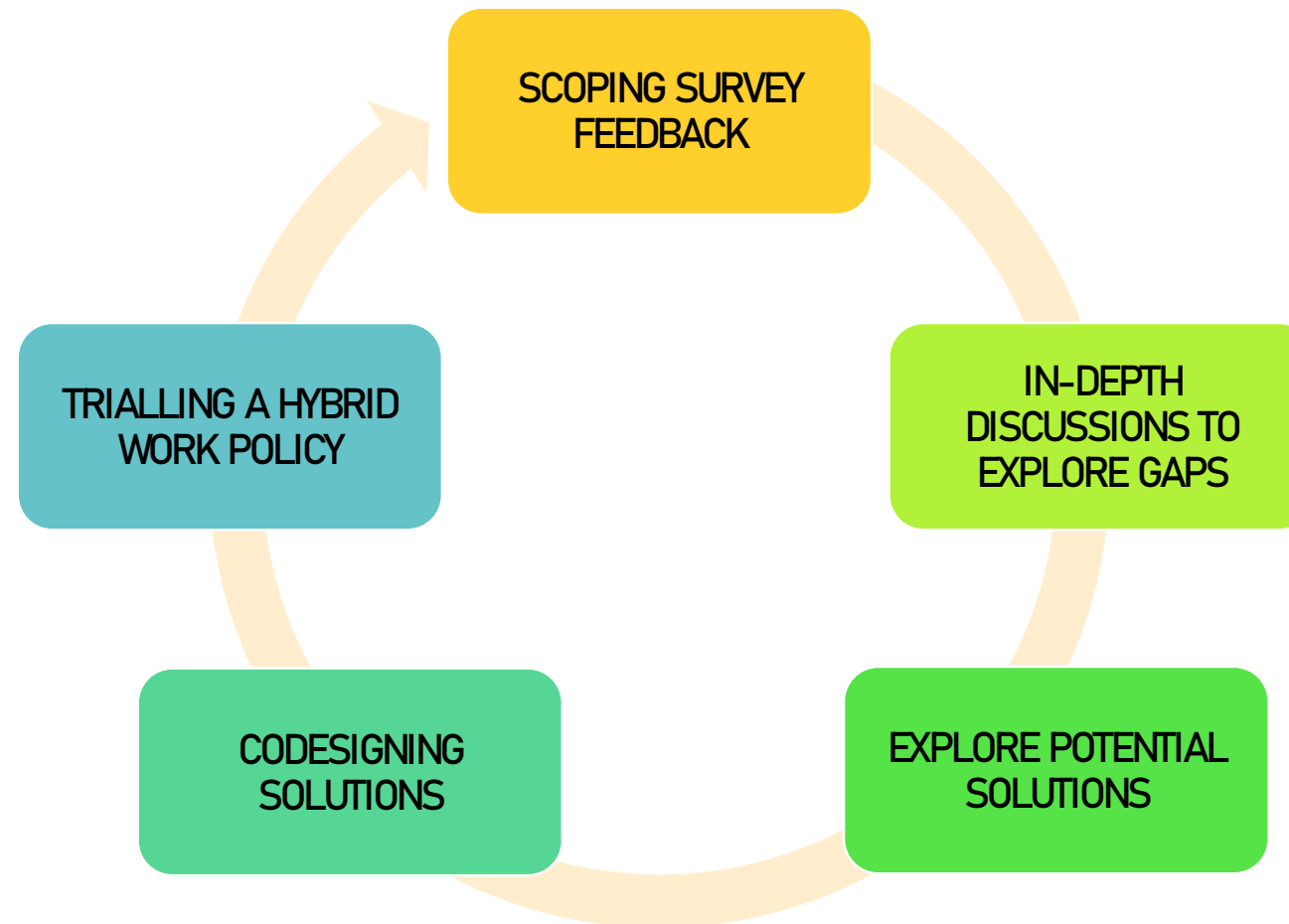


How-to guide

How can small businesses and frontline organisations co-design a culture change process for hybrid work?

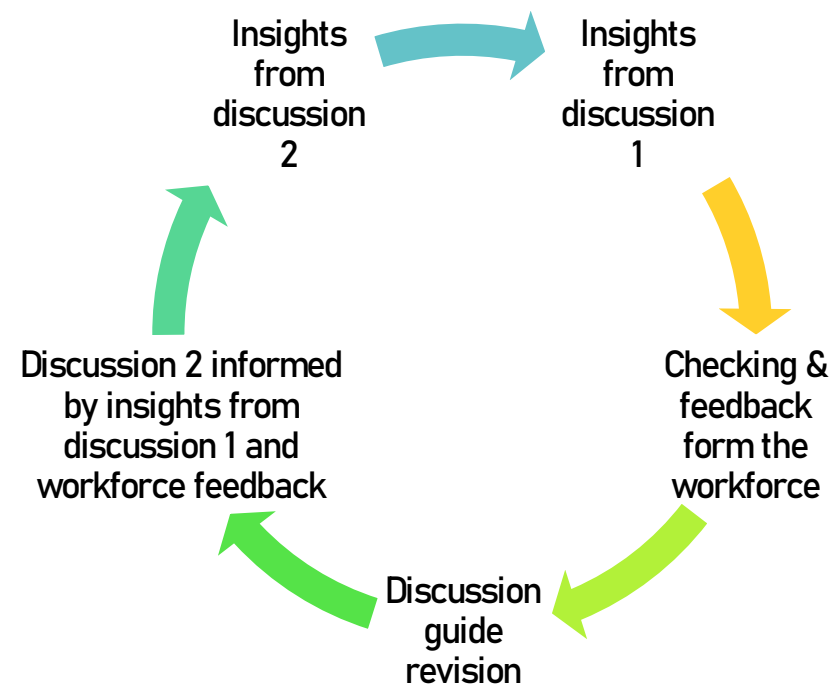
- Useful for organisations that are looking to transform their culture of work (e.g., to hybrid working)
- Step-by-step process: adaptable, amenable to each organisation
- Response to other crises in the future





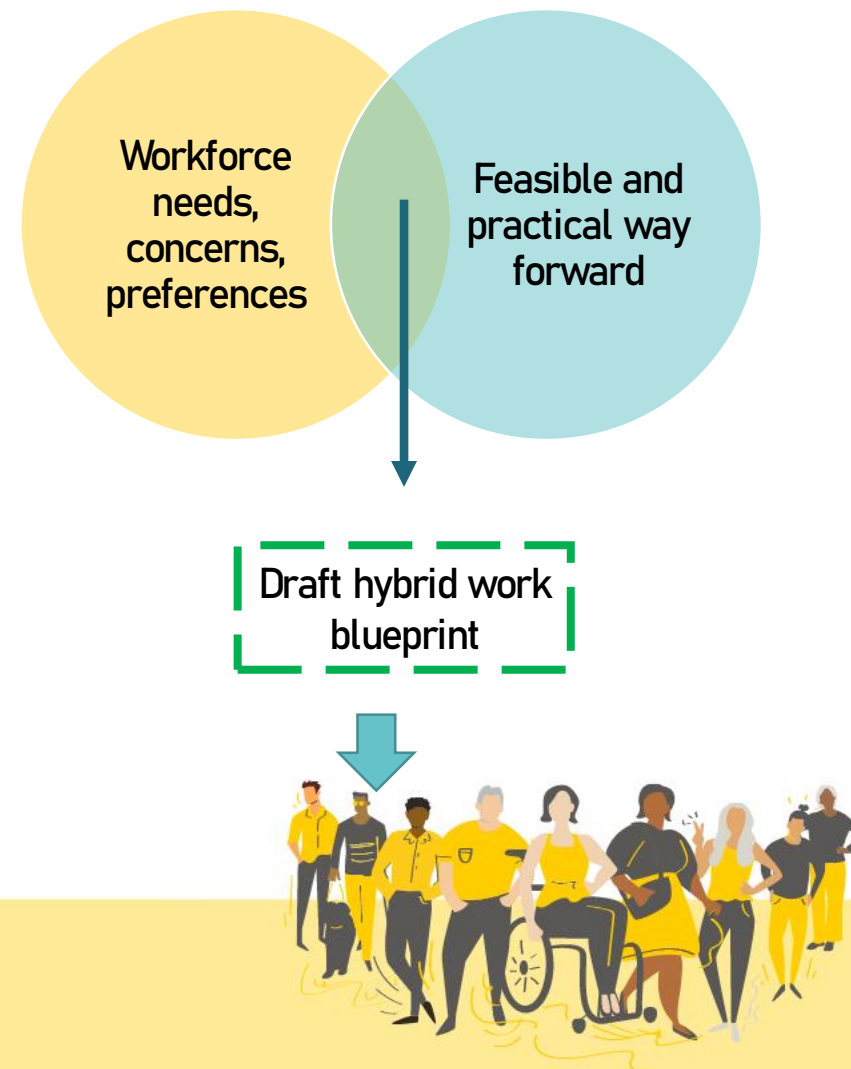
In-depth, facilitated discussions

- Discussion **guided by survey** results
- Small **sub-section, representative sample**, 10-12 participants
- **Dig deeper** into issues; safe space
- **Iterative approach**; each subsequent discussion guide informed by previous one



Exploring potential solutions

- Revisiting **organizational purpose and goals** to set the context for the transition:
 - Re-examining the **individual roles and responsibilities** of staff
 - **Reassessing or re-allocating** organisational resources
- ↓
- **Formulation of a flexible roadmap or blueprint**



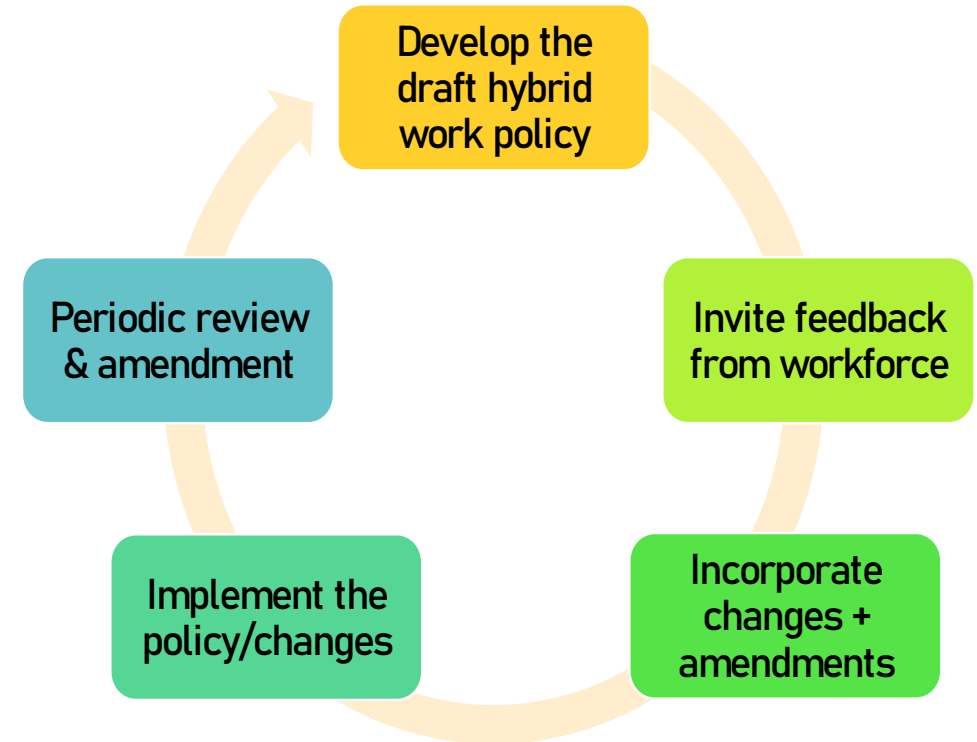
Co-designing solutions

- Blueprint: Organisational perspective for what is feasible
- **Flexible, adaptable** and **amenable** to workforce feedback
- Invite feedback from the workforce
- In-depth, facilitated discussions as before
- Iterative process



Trialing a hybrid work policy or practice

- Trial with **small teams**, non-frontline staff
- Rolled out through the organisation
- Build in opportunities for **review, feedback and revision**
- **Hybrid work policy**: live, evolving document



THE FINDINGS

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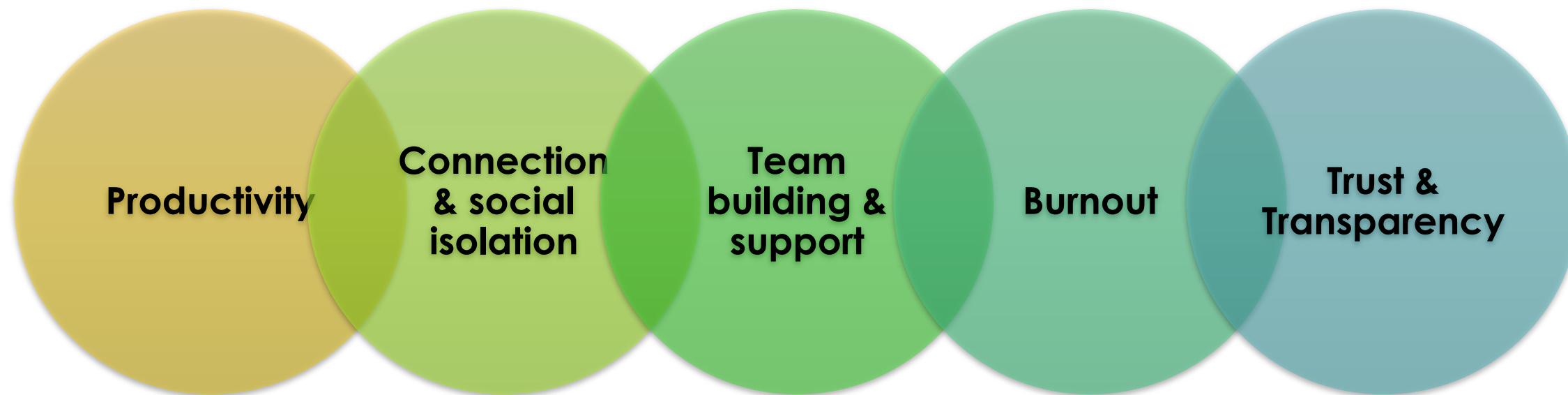
Our findings

What should small businesses and/or frontline organisations be mindful of as they navigate the transition to hybrid working?

- What did we find from our discussions with the AgeUK staff?
- **Case study:** Evidence-based guide on what to expect and what to be mindful of when navigating this transition



AgeUK - Findings



Productivity

- Re-imagining how productivity is measured
- Clarity about how performance/outcomes are monitored
- **Proximity bias/visibility:** Anxieties around **evaluations and role progressions**
 - Out of sight, out of mind?
- Quality over quantity



Team building and support

- Explicit guidelines for **managing asynchronous working**, maintaining **cohesiveness**
- **Access to support** (one-on-one or group/peer) is key for frontline workers
- **De-escalation support** for specific roles and responsibilities
- Establishing **virtual teams**



Connection & social isolation

Physical social spaces have gone



Social spaces have become virtual



- Dangers of becoming **isolated, silo-ed**
- Designing **accessible work & social** spaces for everyone



Burnout

- Added stress of navigating new ways of working
- Balancing **conflicting work-life demands**
- Lack of **visibility** = lack of **access to support**
- Technology solutions
 - e.g., diary management, reminders to take breaks, rota systems



Trust & transparency

- Not everyone has **equitable access to flexibility**
- **Managing expectations** is key
- **Transparency & consultation** in the decision making process can ease anxieties
- Guidelines must be explicit, but not prescriptive



Key considerations

- **One size doesn't fill all**
 - Tailored to organisational size, capacity, goals
 - Tailored to staff roles, responsibilities, needs and preferences
- Culture change is a slow process; **adjustments over time**
- **Periodic review** and feedback



AgeUK: An ongoing organisational response

- Flexible and **agile working** in response to crises
 - e.g. Cost of living toolkit
- Re-energized the **healthy workplace team**
- **Mental health first aid** made a priority
- Developing **personalised approaches to need**
- **Place-based team** development



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THANK YOU

