



Case study: flexible working

COVID-19 accelerates improvements to flexible working policy

Like many other engineering, technology and commercial companies in its sector, work continues to improve Drax's attractiveness as an inclusive employer to target candidates in under-represented groups and widen its talent pool, as well as retaining critical employees.

As part of this holistic strategy, Drax began a family friendly review of all its policies in early 2020. Early plans were already in place to introduce a flexible working policy, when the need for this was rapidly amplified as the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

After swiftly enabling colleagues to work effectively from home and giving a few months to settle, Drax recognised that ways of working had changed forever. **In summer 2020, colleagues were asked how they wanted to work in future.**

The feedback was overwhelming - nearly 95% of employees cited choice and flexibility as the most important thing to consider in future ways of working, with nearly 70% saying they wanted to continue working from home and come in as needed. Employees particularly said they liked the time working from home gave to spend with family and manage their own wellbeing too.

This feedback helped to shape the skeleton flexible working policy into its final format and in October the policies were formally introduced. As well as engaging and providing guidance for managers, a resource hub was set up on the intranet with examples of how flexible working could work for an individual in practice and how to request it.

Since launching, nearly 100 colleagues have requested flexible working and 19 were approved for colleagues returning from maternity leave.

It's expected the number of requests will increase as people return to offices.

In its subsequent annual engagement survey, Drax saw an 11% increase in colleagues responding positively to the statement 'Drax promotes a healthy work environment' and an 8% increase in employees saying they were able to balance their work and personal life. The trend has continued with 85% of employees saying they had the flexibility they need to balance their work and personal responsibilities in a January 2021 Wellbeing pulse survey.



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Flexible working helped single dad Tim Cole juggle home schooling and

work during the early lockdown, he said “I adapted my work day to give my son the attention he needed, as well as getting my work done. I’d have an early start and whilst my son had online lessons, I’d catch up on emails and have meetings. We’d take a break to go out for some exercise and I always finished at 5.30pm to spend a couple of fun hours together. Once he’d gone to bed I could get into the really heavy lifting work, the more strategic stuff that required my absolute attention.”



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Like many people, Kendra Jackson has found the company of a dog has been great for

her wellbeing during the pandemic. She said: “Getting a dog was made possible thanks to flexible working. It was something I’d wanted to do for a long time but didn’t think it would be practical with the hours I worked. Now I can flex my day to walk Digby, which is especially important in the winter months so we can go out in daylight Taking those breaks and being able to work flexibly is good for my physical and mental health - the fresh air helps my concentration and focus so it’s a win all round.”

Lauren Care found flexible working helpful before she went on maternity leave. She said, “It [working from home] meant I could have a quick nap at lunch time to help with the tiredness,” explained Lauren. “And nobody noticed the high amount of toilet trips!”



Drax updated both its internal and external vacancy advertising strategies to demonstrate that flexible working is available for appropriate roles. Whilst it’s too soon to see evidence of the impact this has on recruitment for diverse talent, early signs show it is attracting more females into senior roles and has extended the search criteria for specialist talent.

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