

# SAGE CYGNET AWARD APPLICATION FORM



# SAGE

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA  
GENDER EQUITY

## SAGE Cygnet Award Application

<b>Name of Institution</b>	The Kids Research Institute Australia (formerly Telethon Kids Institute)
<b>Date of Application</b>	
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## Acknowledgements

The Kids Research Institute Australia (The Kids) would like to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of Australia. We also acknowledge the Nyoongar Wadjuk, Yawuru, Kariyarra and Kurna Elders, their people and their land upon which the Institute is located and seek their wisdom in our work to improve the health and development of all children.

We would also like to acknowledge the work of the Institute’s Gender, Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Council and our Special Interest Groups. These groups dedicate their time and passion to advancing the causes of equity, fairness, inclusivity and diversity at The Kids, providing continued support to people of all backgrounds who work and study at the Institute.

## To the Reader

### Organisation name change

In 2024, Telethon Kids Institute rebranded to The Kids Research Institute Australia. This change reflected the fact that the organisation operates as an independent separate legal entity to Telethon, with their own governance, structures, and distinct missions. The change also reflected contemporary brand and donor recognition practices for charitable/NFP organisations that receive significant financial support from funding bodies including, but not limited to, Telethon.

Please note that some of the narrative within this Cygnet may refer to Telethon Kids Institute (TKI), whilst other parts will reference The Kids Research Institute Australia (The Kids). This distinction will be related to the timeline in which activity took place.

### Gendered Data Statement

The Kids acknowledges the diversity of gender identities and expressions and recognises that the binary terms ‘male’ and ‘female’ refer to biological sex, while ‘men’ and ‘women’ refer to gender. Due to current data system limitations, gendered data in this report is presented as ‘male’ and ‘female’ where that is how it was originally collected and reported.

## Glossary of Key Terms and Acronyms

*To improve readability for reviewers, please include a Glossary of Key Terms and Acronyms.*

Term   Acronym	Definition   Description
AS	SAGE Athena Swan
Bronze Award	SAGE Athena Swan Bronze Award
Bronze Cygnet	SAGE Bronze Cygnet Award (5 Cygnets obtained post-Bronze Award)
FWA	Flexible work arrangements
GEDI	Gender, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
SIG	Special Interest Group
The Kids	The Kids Research Institute Australia
TKI	Telethon Kids Institute
2018 GE Survey	2018 Gender Equity Survey

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## THE KIDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE: SAGE CYGNET #1

	Current Cygnet	Barrier - List the barrier addressed in this Cygnet - List the Barrier for Cygnets already submitted
<b>Institution-wide barrier</b>		- Inequity and lack of consistency in flexible working conditions

### INTRODUCTION

This Cygnet addresses an institute-wide barrier relating to inequity and inconsistency in the availability and application of flexible working arrangements (FWA) at The Kids Research Institute Australia (The Kids). While flexible work was valued by staff and used in practice prior to the Institute's SAGE Bronze Award, access was largely informal, highly manager-dependent and experienced unevenly across roles, employment types and caring responsibilities.

### KEY BARRIER

Within this context, the core institutional barrier addressed in this Cygnet is the inequitable and inconsistent application of flexible working arrangements across The Kids.

Sub-barriers include:

**Sub-barrier 1:** A lack of formal policies and procedures governing FWA

**Sub-barrier 2:** Inequitable application of flexibility in work practices across The Kids

**Sub-barrier 3:** Additional impacts for carers utilising FWA

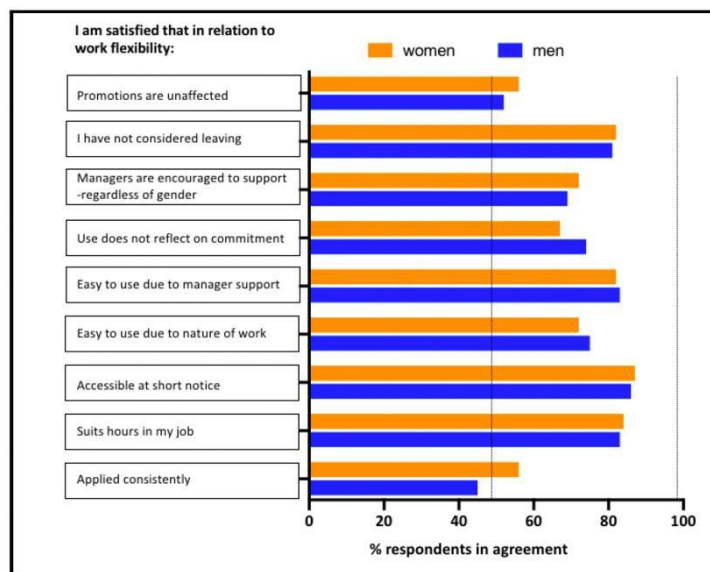
### EVIDENCE OF BARRIER

#### **Sub-barrier 1: A lack of formal policies and procedures governing flexible work arrangements (FWA)**

This sub-barrier was identified through analysis of data collected in the 2018 Gender Equity Survey (2018 GE Survey) conducted internally by Telethon Kids Institute (TKI), in which employees were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with various measures of work flexibility (Figure 1, as outlined in our 2020 SAGE Bronze application). At that time, TKI employed approximately 676 staff, of whom 203 employees (around 30%) completed the survey.

At the time of data collection, TKI did not have formal policies or procedures governing flexible work arrangements. This gap was identified through a review of existing organisational policies and procedures conducted as part of the 2018 GE Survey analysis and the development of the Institute's 2020 SAGE Bronze application. Staff responses found the 2018 GE Survey also reflected that flexible work arrangements were largely managed informally on a case-by-case basis, with decisions typically guided by individual discussions and ad hoc risk considerations, rather than a documented framework.

**Figure 1** Gender Equity Survey (2018) results related to workplace flexibility for women and men respondents.



### Sub-barrier 2: Inequitable application of flexibility in work practices across The Kids

Inequitable application of flexibility in work practices is a well-documented barrier that limits the retention and/or progression of women in STEMM, particularly for those with caring responsibilities, and workplaces that do not offer flexibility in work arrangements may struggle to attract women into senior positions. Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) important for supporting a range of personal circumstances and wellbeing needs. When applied equitably and consistently, flexible work practices benefit all staff, fostering an inclusive, supportive, and productive workplace where everyone can participate.

Data from multiple sources highlighted early concerns regarding the inconsistency and inequity of flexible work arrangements at TKI. The 2018 GE Survey indicated that while many respondents were satisfied with specific aspects of work flexibility, only 54% felt that flexible work was applied equitably of consistently across the Institute (Figure 1). Perceptions of inconsistency varied across staff groups, with lower levels of agreement reported among professional staff, Level B academics and part-time employees (Table 1). Gender differences were also evident. While both women and men reported high satisfaction with the flexibility of hours in their role (84% of women and 83% of men) and agreed that flexible work options were easy to use (82% of women and 83% of men), perceptions of consistent application differed. A lower proportion of men (45%) compared to women (56%) felt that flexible work practices were applied consistently, highlighting a gendered experience of inconsistency which informed future actions.

Earlier data from the Institute’s 2017 employee engagement survey (Voice Project) similarly suggested generally positive perceptions of work flexibility, with 75% of staff responding favourably. This dataset could not be disaggregated by gender, professional, academic level or FTE status, and further detail cannot be provided due to lack of access to the raw data. Considered together, these findings indicated that while flexible work was broadly valued, its equitable and consistent application across roles, levels and employment types remained a key barrier requiring action.

**Table 1** Perceptions of Flexible Work Arrangements by Staff Group (2018 Gender Equity Survey)

Category	Staff Group	% Responding Favourably
<b>Gender</b>	Male	75%
	Female	76%
<b>Career Stream</b>	Research staff – Public Health	75%
	Research staff – Basic Sciences	75%
	Research staff – Clinical Sciences	83%
	Project / Program Managers	76%
	Research Students	94%
	Professional Services Staff	67%
<b>Academic Level</b>	Level A	78%
	Level B	65%
	Level C	71%
	Level D	N/A
	Level E	N/A
	Student	92%
	Prefer not to say	83%
<b>Employment Type</b>	Full-time	75%
	Part-time	74%
	Casual	N/A

### Sub-barrier 3: Additional impacts for carers utilising FWA

Gendered attitudes and norms around caring responsibilities in Australia, where societal pressures encouraged women to be the predominant user of flexible work arrangements to care for children, aging parents and family with high-support needs, may impact career progression and comfort levels when requesting FWA.

Additional role, sector and society-wide conditions may also have contribute towards this barrier, including:

- Role-specific requirements, where some employees must complete activities in laboratory or clinical settings, often completed in standard office hours, due to occupational, health and safety requirements and/or normalised practices may impact FWA.
- External sector pressures, such as strict grant submission deadlines or urgent media requests may require staff to be highly responsive and 'on call,' limiting their ability to access FWA.
- Societal conditions such as the pre-COVID context, where there was limited/no Institute-wide policy on flexible work, and practices varied significantly between teams and managers, some teams allowed sporadic work from home, but remote participation in meetings was not supported, requiring physical attendance for scheduled discussions.
- And while the pandemic acted as a catalyst for normalising digital/virtual collaboration, it highlighted the need for consistent, equitable, and well-supported flexible work policies.

# ACTIVITIES (ACTIONS AND OUTPUTS)

## Summary of Activities

Sub-barrier	Activities (SMART Actions and Outputs)	Activity Identified at or post Bronze	Target cohorts; roles; responsibilities	Intended Outcome/Impact
<b>1. Policies and Procedures</b>	Development (2018) and implementation (2020) of the Working from Home Procedure	Bronze	Staff, Students and Managers; Overseen by the GEDI Strategy team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalised and standardised requirements for flexible work arrangements (FWA)</li> <li>Improved satisfaction with FWA</li> </ul>
	All Staff Forums (ongoing from 2020)	Bronze	All staff; Executive leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved communication, transparency and trust</li> <li>Provided consistent messaging</li> </ul>
	Development (2020) and delivery (2020) of an online blended working curriculum, including modules on managing flexible and hybrid work and running effective virtual and hybrid meetings	Bronze	Staff and managers; People & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported implementation of flexible and blending working arrangements</li> <li>Built manager capability during rapid transition to remote work due to COVID-19</li> </ul>
	Blended Working Information Sheet and online curriculum (2020-2021)	Bronze	Staff and managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported early implementation of hybrid working practices</li> </ul>
	All-staff email announcing the introduction of Working from Home Procedure (sent on 4 August 2020)	Bronze	All staff; Executive leadership; People & Culture; Health, Safety and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness and understanding of the new Procedure</li> <li>Supported consistent update of FWA across TKI</li> </ul>
	Development and implementation of the Remote and Flexible Work Procedure (2025)	Post-Bronze	Staff, students and managers; People and Culture; Health, Safety and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embedded inclusive and contemporary FWA</li> <li>Addressed equity and accessibility concerns</li> </ul>
	Introduction of mandatory individual ergonomic assessments for staff undertaking remote work, risk with escalation based on rating (2026)	Post-Bronze	Staff; Managers; Health, Safety & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensured safe remote working environments</li> <li>Strengthened Workplace Health and Safety compliance</li> </ul>
	Review and retirement of blending working curriculum due to declining engagement.	Post-Bronze	People & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensured learning resources were fit-for-purpose and aligned to work practices</li> </ul>

	Date of action unknown.			
	Integration of flexible and remote working content in New Starters Induction (2026-ongoing)	Post-Bronze	New staff and Managers; HSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensured consistent understanding and application of FWA from commencement</li> <li>• Embedded practices as standard</li> </ul>
	Planned (2026) communication strategy for updated Remote and Flexible Work Procedure	Post-Bronze	All staff; Leaders; People & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased procedure awareness</li> <li>• Improved compliance and leadership capability</li> <li>• Supported proactive workstation and ergonomic review</li> </ul>
<b>2. Consistency</b>	Roll out of Microsoft Teams and related software (2020)	Bronze	All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabled hybrid work and cross-location collaboration</li> </ul>
	Team Workplace Planner for managers	Post-Bronze	Managers and team leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved coordination, visibility and workload planning</li> </ul>
	Planned 2026 communication campaign (intranet, Viva Engage, leadership comms)	Post-Bronze	All staff; leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness and uptake of new procedure, including completion of assessments</li> </ul>
	Provision of IT support for remote work, including access to equipment for eligible staff (>0.2 FTE, contracts >6 months)	Post-Bronze	Staff; People & Culture; IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabled safe and effective remote working</li> <li>• Reduced barriers to participation in flexible work</li> </ul>
	Inclusion of Ergonomic and Workstation Guide in HSW intranet quick links (2025)	Post-Bronze	All staff; Health, Safety & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved accessibility and visibility of documents</li> </ul>
	Delivery of Lab Supervisor Duty of Care training, incorporating awareness of Remote and Flexible Work Procedure (2025)	Post-Bronze	Lab Supervisors; Managers; Health, Safety and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased procedure awareness</li> <li>• Improved compliance</li> <li>• Improved leadership capability</li> </ul>
	Planned extension of Duty of Care training to other areas of the Institute (2026)	Post-Bronze	Managers; Supervisors; People & Culture; Health, Safety & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased procedure awareness</li> <li>• Improved compliance and leadership capability</li> </ul>
<b>3. Impact on Carers</b>	Design and delivery of Carers Survey (July-August 2021; n=118) to gather data on experiences of job flexibility, familiarity with, and use of 2020 Working from Home Procedure.	Bronze	Staff with caring responsibilities; Supporting Carers SIG; GEDI Council; People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved understanding of how flexible work arrangements are experienced by staff with caring responsibilities</li> <li>• Identified barriers, enablers, and equity considerations related to flexible work</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Informed actions to better support carers, recognising that flexibility impacts the broader workforce</li></ul>
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Based on the 2018 GE Survey findings, TKI identified work flexibility as a priority within its GEDI strategy and introduced its first Working from Home Guidelines in 2018 (Figure 2). These guidelines provided an initial framework to support FWA, supporting more consistent decision-making, clarifying eligibility and suitability, and clarify consideration and outlining health and safety responsibilities. They marked an important first step in formalising flexible work practices across the Institute.

To address negative perceptions of work flexibility reported by a minority of staff, TKI planned focus groups for June 2021 (Bronze Action 5.20). These were intended to inform targeted improvements to flexible work practices but were not undertaken due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 required FWA to be rapidly scaled. Following 'stay at home' orders in March 2020, immediate action was needed to support staff and students to work remotely in a safe, consistent and sustainable manner. Although Microsoft Teams had been introduced prior to the pandemic, its use not yet embedded, and FWA were still largely managed on a case-by-case basis. The widespread shift to remote work highlighted limitations in the 2018 Guidelines which were advisory and relied heavily on manager discretion.

In response, the TKI Executive Team implemented a new Working from Home Procedure (Figure 3) on 16 July 2020, replacing the 2018 Guidelines. The 2020 Procedure established a formal framework with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for employees and managers, approval and review processes and explicit requirements for work health and safety risk assessments and escalation. The 2020 Procedure also clarified expectations around blended working, employee accountability for outcomes and manager responsibilities for overnight and support. It enabled TKI to roll out a blended working model at scale, allowing FWA to be implemented equitably and safely during the pandemic while also generating evidence to inform longer-term approaches to flexibility and hybrid work.

The 2020 Procedure was complemented by a Blended Working Information Sheet (Figure 4), which provides further details for employees and managers, including guidelines on how to effectively manage teams working in a blended mode across multiple locations including homes and workplaces. The information sheet is still currently available to support Institute staff via our Intranet.

**Figure 2** 2018 Working from Home Guidelines



## WORKING FROM HOME GUIDELINES

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### AIM

Telethon Kids Institute is committed to fostering flexibility in employment and working arrangements to achieve the optimum balance between work and family responsibilities for all employees. Home based work can provide benefits to both employers and employees, with the flexibility and productivity outcomes available often being attractive to both parties.

The Institute is legally obliged to provide staff, students and visitors with a safe and healthy workplace. This obligation extends to those who are working off-site or at home. There can be contributory risk factors in the home office that do not exist within the Institute; therefore a higher level of responsibility for your own health, safety and welfare while working from home is encouraged.

The following Guidelines offer some basic points to consider before you or your staff begin working from home. It is essential that all parties meet to discuss the work required, agree on outcomes and confirm how the working from home arrangement will operate.

### ELIGIBILITY AND SUITABILITY

When considering whether working from home is appropriate, consideration must be given to the nature of the work to be performed at home, the individual's attributes, the home-based worksite and facilities, the effects on co-workers and whether service delivery will be impacted. Working from home may not be appropriate for every situation and there are some work requirements which necessitate physically working at the Institute.

Home based work arrangements will be considered on a case by case basis by the relevant supervisor / manager; and are subject to individual situations and operational requirements.

### IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WORKING FROM HOME

Working from home arrangements may be for regular periods of time or on an ad-hoc or one-off basis:

Ad-hoc or one-off periods of working from home, or at an alternative work location, do not require a formal agreement; however approval from a supervisor / manager must be obtained in advance.

Regular periods of working from home must be formalised prior to commencing to outline clearly the duties to be performed whilst undertaking home-based work.

Expectations and required outcomes need to be clearly understood. It's important for all participants to discuss how the arrangement is operating and allow for adequate feedback.

When implementing a formal working from home arrangement, make sure that designated tasks are appropriate as well as meeting the needs of the project, the supervisor and the individual. There are several issues to be negotiated before regular working from home commences:

- Will the home worker still need to be available at the normal working hours or will they be able to complete work at different times such as weekends or evenings?
- Are the standards of work expected by the Institute and the project supervisor clearly understood by all parties?
- How will tasks be allocated and progress monitored? For example, by timeframe or by delivery of completed work?
- How will equipment and services be maintained? Note that workstations and associated furniture such as chairs, keyboard rests and footrests will not be supplied by the Institute. The employee is required, where necessary, to purchase and maintain their own equipment.
- Can the duties be performed safely at the external site?

#### **SAFETY AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

The home-based site requires a designated area that is deemed to be an acceptable workspace. A Working from Home Arrangement: Self-Assessment Checklist (refer to Schedule A) should be completed and sent to your supervisor / manager and to the [OS&H Business Partner](#). Should any concerns be raised, an assessment may be required (which may include a health and safety risk assessment of the home-based site).

If you are working from home, you must notify your supervisor / manager as soon as practicable of any work-related accident, injury, illness or disease which occurs by completing an Accident or Incident Report as appropriate. Refer to [Accident & Incident Management](#).

#### **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

Workers' compensation is a no-fault, regulated insurance scheme which provides financial compensation to employees who incur a personal injury in the course of their employment, irrespective of where that work is carried out. As with all workers' compensation claims, the insurer will investigate the circumstances to establish the validity of the claim. A significant proportion of the workers' compensation scheme is dedicated to ensuring injured employees are enabled to return to work as soon as medically appropriate.

A formal Working from Home Arrangement may be suspended where an accepted workers' compensation claim is active and/or a Return to Work Program is in place or where medical evidence indicates the individual is unfit to work.

The formal Working from Home Arrangement may recommence when the individual is certified fit to return to their normal duties or where the Institute agrees to continue the formal Working from Home Arrangement as part of the individual's suitable duties in a Return to Work Program.

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## **INSURANCES AND UTILITIES**

Employees seeking to work from home will need to undertake enquiries (where relevant) as to the effect (if any) of a formal Working from Home Arrangement on their household insurance, mortgage or leasing arrangements and taxation. Employees must bear any additional costs incurred as a result of a formal Working from Home Arrangement. The cost of any utilities furnishings or fittings, ergonomic aids, first aid supplies or any other items required to perform home-based work are at the expense of the individual.

## **SCHEDULES**

Schedule A – Working from Home Arrangement: Self-Assessment Checklist

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

### *Internal Documents*

[Workstation Assessment Guidelines](#)

[Occupational Safety & Health Policy](#)

[Risk Management Policy](#)

[Risk Management Framework](#)

### *External Documents*

[WorkSafe WA Guidance Note: Working Alone \(2009\)](#)

## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

WA Occupational Safety and Health Act (1984)

WA Occupational Safety & Health Regulations (1996)

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information about this Guideline please contact the [OS&H Business Partner](#).

**SCHEDULE A – SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

**Working from Home Arrangement: Self-Assessment Checklist**

Please complete and sign the following Self-Assessment Checklist in relation to your proposed home-based work site.

Email the completed form to your supervisor and cc. the [OS&H Business Partner](#).

Equipment	Institute Owned	Employee Owned
Laptop		
Laptop peripherals (e.g. mouse & keyboard)		
Desktop PC		
Wireless Internet / Modem		
Printer		
Mobile Phone		

Training, Instructions, Safety & Security	Yes/ No
Expectations for work performance and communications are clear between all parties.	
I have been instructed by my supervisor/manager on safety & health considerations for working from home, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the risks associated with manual handling in the home environment.</li> <li>the importance of home security and domestic fire alarms.</li> <li>assessment of floor surfaces, stairs, steps, hand-rails and loose mats or carpets to prevent slips, trips or falls.</li> <li>ensuring first aid supplies are available, adequate for foreseeable personal injuries and within expiry codes.</li> </ul>	
' <a href="#">Workstation Assessment Guidelines</a> ' have been read and are understood.	
A Residual Current Device (RCD) circuit breaker is installed in this home to protect from power surges and electrical faults. adequate power outlets for all electrical devices are available double adapters are not in use	

Name & Signature of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Self-Assessment:

Name & Signature of Supervisor/Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 3** 2020 Working from Home Procedure



## WORKING FROM HOME PROCEDURE

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### GOVERNING POLICY

Occupational Safety and Health Policy

### PURPOSE

This Procedure aims to deliver on the Telethon Kids Institute commitment to provide a safe working environment for all employees who are undertaking work from home and is utilised if an employee is undertaking work duties from home.

In the interest of promoting co-operative and collaborative working relationships, it is expected that employees utilise a blended approach (working part of their time at their work site) when discussing working from home options with their Manager.

### SCOPE

This Procedure applies to all persons engaged under a contract of employment at the Telethon Kids Institute.

### DEFINITIONS

General definitions can be found on the Policy Library website [here](#).

### PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

#### 1. General

- Approval to work from home must be authorised by the employee's Supervisor or Manager and if ongoing, will be reviewed at a minimum of every 6 months to ensure the arrangement is still working. Approval can be rescinded at any time; this includes for ad hoc arrangements.
- Employees must bear any additional costs incurred as a result of working from home.

#### 2. Employee Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the employee include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring all hazards are identified, assessed and are adequately controlled.
- Advising the Supervisor or Manager if new risks emerge.

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- Delivering on agreed work outcomes on a consistent basis.
- Ensuring all practicable measures are taken to protect the security, integrity and confidentiality of property and documents.
- As required, seek training and support from People & Culture to obtain the tools and skills necessary to succeed in a working from home environment.

### 3. Supervisor or Manager Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Supervisor or Manager include, but are not limited to:

- Considering, and if appropriate, approving requests for work to be undertaken from home and ensure that agreed work outcomes are consistently being delivered.
- Confirming that adequate controls have been implemented & escalating to Health, Safety and Wellbeing where a risk remains high, or uncontrolled. Refer to [Risk Management Framework](#) for information on the assessment of risk.
- Reviewing the working from home arrangement with the employee no less than twice yearly to ensure that work and safety requirements are being met.
- As required, seek training and support from People & Culture to obtain the tools and skills necessary to effectively manage staff in a working from home environment and how this may look for individual teams.
- Retaining a copy of Schedule A – Working from Home Assessment.

#### 3.1 Supervisor or Manager Considerations

Supervisors or Managers should consider the following aspects:

- whether the duties are suitable for work at home including the types of work and the amount of work that can be performed;
- the impact on interactions within, and the morale and dynamics of, the team and the Institute more broadly;
- whether the employee has demonstrated the ability to work independently and without supervision to achieve required outcomes;
- the result of the home – based work WHS-assessment;
- the past performance of the employee.

Working from home arrangements may not be suited for work that requires a high level of face-to-face interaction with external stakeholders and colleagues or access to specific equipment.

The underlying circumstances for the request by the employee need to be considered.

Working from home is not a substitute for regular childcare or other carer's responsibilities. Employees who work from home must ensure that they have suitable childcare/carer arrangements in place.

#### 4. Approval Process

Before approval is given to work from home:

- The employee must accurately complete Schedule A – Working from Home Assessment and submit a copy to their Supervisor or Manager.
- The Supervisor or Manager will:
  - Review the information contained within the Working from Home Assessment to ensure all identified hazards are adequately controlled.
  - If the request is for an ongoing working from home arrangement, confirm it is suitable in terms of the nature of the employee's job, specific deliverables, time management skills and job tenure.
- The Supervisor or Manager must escalate to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team for approval if any hazards remain high risk or uncontrolled.

#### 5. Document Retention and Assurance

A copy of Schedule A – Working from Home Assessment must be kept on file by the Supervisor or Manager. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing team reserve the right to seek a copy of this document, or audit for compliance against the requirements of this procedure.

#### 6. Insurances and Utilities

Employees seeking to work from home will need to undertake enquiries (where relevant) as to the effect (if any) of a formal working from home arrangement on their household insurance, mortgage or leasing arrangements and taxation.

#### SCHEDULE

Schedule A – Working from Home Assessment.

#### RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Institute Occupational Safety & Health Policies, Procedures & Guidelines Risk Management Framework](#)

#### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Occupational Safety and Health Act (WA) 1984

Occupational Health and Safety Act (VIC) 2004

Work Health and Safety Act (NSW, ACT, NT & QLD) 2011 (SA & TAS) 2012








#### FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about this procedure can be obtained by contacting the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team within People & Culture.

### VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Review Date	Sections Modified	Owner	Implementation Officer	Author
1.0	Institute Management Team	16/07/2020	16/07/2023	New. Replaces WFH guideline	Chief Operating Officer	Head People & Culture	Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager

## Schedule A - Working from Home Assessment

Potential risk and Items for assessment	Solutions and further information / controls	
Common working from home risks	Checklist of common risk control measures	Further Information
 <p><b>Electrical Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Electrical leads are intact and undamaged.</li> <li>▪ Power boards are available and are not overloaded.</li> <li>▪ All electrical equipment supplied by the Institute is tested and tagged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Utilise multiple power sockets.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the home is RCD protected.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Isolate and do not use faulty equipment.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure cords are positioned neatly.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate the use of double adaptors.</li> </ul>	<div style="border: 1px dashed gray; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>
 <p><b>Expectation Management</b></p> <p>Consider any impacts due to the lack of clarity around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How tasks are allocated and monitored.</li> <li>▪ How equipment is accessed and maintained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clarify procedural information and policy positions on the supply of equipment.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enter a formal agreement around tasks, hours and expectations.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use technology to support interactions.</li> </ul>	<div style="border: 1px dashed gray; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>
 <p><b>Ergonomic Setup</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Your chair and table are fit for purpose and positioned correctly. Documents are stored correctly.</li> <li>▪ The monitor is one arm's length away, with your eyes positioned in line with the top of the monitor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete the ergonomic assessment training via Discover.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Undertake the workstation self-assessment. This is accessed via telescope.</li> </ul>	<div style="border: 1px dashed gray; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>
 <p><b>Emergency Management Planning and Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication devices are charged and can be used support if and when required.</li> <li>▪ Ensure smoke detectors are in good working order.</li> <li>▪ You have access to first aid supplies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure first aid supplies are readily available.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, check and replace smoke detector batteries.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have an emergency plan in place.</li> </ul>	<div style="border: 1px dashed gray; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>
 <p><b>Environmental Hazards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Noise levels are not excessive or distracting.</li> <li>▪ The intended work area is smoke free.</li> <li>▪ There is sufficient lighting to complete visual tasks without eye strain.</li> <li>▪ There is adequate heating/cooling options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Position your workstation next to a light source or maximise natural sunlight.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take microbreaks for wellbeing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Minimise noise distractions.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not smoke within work areas.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement heating &amp; cooling options</li> </ul>	<div style="border: 1px dashed gray; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>
 <p><b>Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General and sustained manual handling activities.</li> <li>▪ Tripping hazards such as sunken floor levels, slippery surfaces, curled mats, or clutter.</li> <li>▪ Privacy and the security of sensitive information.</li> <li>▪ Medical concerns that may be aggravated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Break down manual handling tasks or use assistive equipment where possible.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Minimise obstructions near workstations.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Secure sensitive documents in a safe location. Minimise hard copies.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seek sign off from a medical professional</li> </ul>	<div style="border: 1px dashed gray; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>
<b>Individualised Risks Considerations</b>		
 <div style="border: 1px solid gray; width: 100%; height: 30px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; width: 100%; height: 30px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px dashed gray; width: 100%; height: 30px;"></div>
<b>Identification of Risks</b>	<b>Implement Suggested or Other Controls</b>	<b>Further Support and Review</b>
<p>The above assessment items are only general risks. Further risks are documented in the above section.</p>	<p>Additional controls may be implemented to further reduce the residual risk of the above assessment items</p>	<p>Access Telescope for hazard control information and procedural guidance. Contact Health, Safety and Wellbeing for support.</p>
<b>Sign off and Acknowledgment</b>		

I confirm that I have completed the Working from Home assessment and to my knowledge all the information supplied is correct. I also acknowledge and accept the conditions contained in this schedule and procedure. I will notify my supervisor or manager of any change in circumstances which may impact on my working from home arrangement.

<b>Employee Name</b>
<b>Employee Signature</b>
<b>Date</b>

<b>Supervisor / Manager Name</b>
<b>Supervisor / Manager Signature</b>
<b>Date</b>

## Blended Working Information Sheet

### What is blended working?

For the Institute, 'blended working' (sometimes also called hybrid working) is when staff are working both in the office (or another location) and from home. For some, that is working in the office surrounded by the buzz of other colleagues, while for others it is a combination of the office and working from home in a quieter and focussed setting.

Blended working can help create a more sustainable, nimble, and agile workforce focused on outcomes and productivity, while also facilitating greater autonomy and different styles of working.

The [Working from Home Procedure](#) sets out the requirements for staff wanting to work from home. Requests for blended working need to be approved by your team leader / manager and decisions will be guided by a combination of factors including operational needs, Institute and team requirements, and personal preference. If a request is approved, the Working from Home Assessment will need to be completed.

On [Discover](#) you will find links to a variety of online modules to help support you and your team as you navigate blended working. The People & Culture team also run virtual training sessions which can be found on Discover, and they are available to provide one-on-one coaching in person or virtually. Please note, you will need to be logged into [Discover](#) to search and access training.

### Considerations when requesting blended working


- Does the request have any effect on operational/work plans?
- What is the impact on service requirements?
- How will the request affect staffing requirements?
- How will team communication and collaboration be sustained?
- Will there be any budget implications?
- How will any future changes in the role be addressed?
- How and when will the arrangement be reviewed?

### As a Team Leader / Manager, what do you need to think about when considering requests?

It's important to assess requests on a case-by-case basis by weighing up the benefits and challenges for the team member who has made the request, as well as the impact it would have on the team as a whole, and the Institute. Section 3 of the [Working from Home Procedure](#) outlines the considerations that should form part of your decision-making.

Some of these include:

- focussing on outputs and outcomes and whether these can be achieved equally via flexible working arrangements;
- considering the employee's demonstrated skills and ability to manage their work autonomously;
- planning for contingencies through multi-skilling, job rotation, and streamlining;
- trusting the employee to do their job; and
- ensuring the health and safety of your team, including taking all reasonable care to prevent injuries wherever they are working.



As a leader, you should **set a standard and keep it yourself!** This can mean things like ‘walking the talk’ and ‘leaving loudly’ (actively communicating when you are leaving the office and why, vocally sharing your personal commitments where appropriate) to role model work-life balance.

Successfully managing a blended team requires a different approach to managing people who are all in the same physical workplace; the main focus and the first step being to trust people.

### **As an employee what do you need to think about when making a request to your team leader / manager?**

It’s important to:

- understand the broader Institute requirements and the flow-on effects to other staff in and out of your team if you are not working in the office;
- understand your manager is responsible for your entire team and has many factors to take into account when considering your request. While you have a right to ask for flexibility as an employee, the decision rests with your team leader / manager;
- remain flexible about your flexibility needs; and
- take reasonable care for your own health and safety and the health and safety of others wherever you are working.

### **How to manage a blended team**

On any day, you might have some of your team coming into the office, and others working from home. Below are some tips to help manage this new way of working:

#### **Define blended working schedules**

This will help you and the team know who is working where and when. Sharing your work calendars can also help, especially for those who do not physically sit next to each other (you can still keep personal appointments private!).

#### **Set expectations**

Just as you would for staff working solely in the office, it is important to set clear expectations with staff working in the office and at home / remotely around their duties, priorities, and deadlines. So long as you are realistic and primarily focus on outcomes, establishing these expectations ensures that staff know what constitutes success. This will also assure you that the tasks you need completed will be done and on time.

#### **Think about how you will measure performance in a fair way**

No matter the locations of staff, the focus should largely be on the quality of the work that they produce on time, rather than how much time they physically spend at their desks.

#### **Should you keep video calls your default for meetings?**

When a team is spread across locations, it can be challenging to run effective meetings. There are different ways you can manage this such as:

- Encourage people who are joining the meeting virtually to use the chat feature to let the group know when they want to jump in and nominate one person (whose in present at the meeting in person) to be the overseer of the virtual experience, to keep an eye on the chat and to make sure when someone raises their virtual hand that they have a chance to speak.
- Regularly stop and check that any virtual participants can hear, follow the discussion and make contributions.



### Be perceptive

In-person meetings allow you to read body language and facial expressions, which can help you identify and diffuse any possible conflicts, tensions, or issues.

It can be tricky to read people's body language and facial expressions all the time in video calls when you factor in aspects like camera quality and angle. So, pay extra attention to people's voices, specifically any changes in tone, pitch or pace, which can help you identify and nip any potential problems in the bud.

### Blended Working - Productivity

Managers with staff who have a blended approach to working can sometimes find that they struggle with uncertainty about whether work will be completed to the same standard as it would be if the employee was 'seen' working in the office, or they worry about 'time theft'. If you find yourself in this situation, don't be tempted to increase your level of oversight over an employee's workload as the risk of micromanaging staff will only lead to low employee engagement and morale.

A high degree of trust will lead to improved staff commitment and increased productivity. Misuse of flexibility can be either a misconduct or poor performance issue and should be discussed with People & Culture.

Outcomes cannot be measured by the length of time someone physically spends in the office, although clearly for some positions maintaining a presence in the office may be an important consideration (for example in a customer service role). Performance should be primarily assessed on outputs, outcomes, and the nature and quality of the work, not just hours worked. This means looking at things like the extent to which project deadlines are met, the quality of work produced and the results of service delivery. Not only is this a more valid way of measuring productivity, it also takes into account the variety of different working styles and arrangements that can be utilised to achieve work outcomes.

For advice, support or coaching on blended working, please contact [Louella Paramor, People & Culture Business Partner](#) or [Genevieve Brownhill, Head People & Culture](#) in the first instance.

The Working from Home procedure was communicated to staff via an all-staff Microsoft Teams meeting led by then Executive Director Jonathan Carapetis, supported by an all-staff email, sent on 4 August 2020, and newsletter communications on 12 August 2020. These All-Staff Forums were introduced during COVID-19 to provide timely organisational updates, and a forum for staff questions. Positive feedback on their role in strengthening connection and communication led to their continuation as monthly forums post-COVID.

To support implementation of flexible work arrangements, an online blended working curriculum was developed and hosted on the Institute's learning management system, Discover. The curriculum included modules on planning and managing blended work, including effective virtual and hybrid meetings. As of 26 July 2023, 148 staff members had accessed these courses, with 82% of participation occurring in 2020 and 2021, reflecting immediate pandemic-related demand.

Curriculum engagement declined after 2021, partly due to reduced urgency once mandatory work-from-home requirements eased, and partly due to feedback that the content was no longer fit for purpose. Consequently, the curriculum was not reinstated under the 2025 Remote and Flexible Working Procedure (Figure 5). Instead, revised content has been embedded into New Starters Induction to ensure consistent, up-to-date guidance for incoming staff. Additional practical support is provided by People & Culture through virtual workshops, one-on-one manager training, an online Team Workplace Planner to map team activities across locations, access to second-hand IT equipment provision of laptops to all employees ( $\geq 0.2$  FTE, contracts longer than six months) to support flexible and remote work.

While initially responsive to COVID-19, these initiatives formed part of a broader strategy to embed hybrid work practices across the Institute, culminating in the 2025 Remote and Flexible Working Procedure.

A comprehensive review of the 2020 Working from Home Procedure was undertaken in 2025 to align with contemporary and inclusive work practice. Renamed the 2025 Remote and Flexible Work Procedure (Figure 5), it expands scope beyond home-based work to varied locations and explicitly recognises the needs of people with disability, including accessibility considerations. The 2025 Procedure sets out approval processes, employee and manager responsibilities, and health and safety requirements, including mandatory ergonomic assessments with escalation based on assessed risk. The accompanying Ergonomic and Workstation Guide (Figure 6) provides clear guidance and referral pathways to the Safety and Wellbeing team where risks remain.

Although launched in October 2025, initial communication of the 2025 Procedure was limited. By December 2025, it had been shared with over 50 participants through Lab Supervisor Duty of Care training, with plans to extend this approach training rollouts out across The Kids. The updated Ergonomic and Workstation Guide is accessible via HSW intranet quick links.

In addition, a structured communication strategy is planned for 2026. including an intranet article, Viva Engage post, and targeted messaging to leaders. From 2026, information on the 2025 Procedure and required ergonomic assessments has been embedded in New Starters Induction, positioning the start of the year as an opportunity for staff and managers to review FWA and proactively assess ergonomic needs.

Figure 5 2025 Remote and Work from Home Procedure



## REMOTE AND WORK FROM HOME PROCEDURE

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### GOVERNING POLICY

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

### PURPOSE

At The Kids Research Institute Australia, we recognise that flexibility can help our people do their best work – supporting balance, wellbeing, and connection. This Procedure outlines how we support safe and effective remote working arrangements, including working from home. It reflects our shared commitment to providing a healthy and productive work environment, whether it is onsite, remote work or working from home.

Flexibility means different things to different people. While being on-site helps us stay connected, we're also open to blended working arrangements where it makes sense. These can be discussed with your manager to find the right balance for you, your role, your broader team, and the work we do.

### SCOPE

This Procedure applies to all workers engaged at The Kids Research Institute Australia including employees, honoraries, students or other employment arrangements.

### DEFINITIONS

General definitions can be found on the Policy Library website [here](#).

### PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

#### 1. General

Whether we're working at the Institute, in the community, or from home, our professional standards and behaviours remain the same. Working remotely is an extension of our workplace, and the same office protocols, safety requirements, and respectful behaviours apply.

- All remote work and working from home arrangements must be discussed and approved by the workers Supervisor or Manager.
- For ongoing arrangements, a review should take place at a minimum of every 6 months to ensure the arrangement is still working.
- Remote working and working from home arrangements, including ad hoc arrangements can be changed or withdrawn by line managers depending on operational needs or changes in circumstances with view to consulting with

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impacted team members in the first instance.

**2. Persons engaged in remote work are responsible for any additional costs associated with working remotely or from home (e.g. internet, utility expenses or additional screens).  
Worker Responsibilities**

All workers play an important role in making remote work safe and productive. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining a safe and healthy work environment by identifying, assessing and controlling all hazards and disruptions.
- Advising the Supervisor or Manager if new risks or concerns emerge.
- Delivering on agreed work outcomes on a consistent basis.
- Staying connected with the team and manager with regular check-ins and meetings.
- Maintaining professionalism including having appropriate work attire and etiquette wherever work is being performed.
- Ensuring all practicable measures are taken to protect the security, integrity and confidentiality of property and documents.
- Completing Schedule A – Remote / Working from Home Assessment available with this procedure.
- Applying the principles in the [Ergonomics and Workstation Guide](#).
- Seeking advice and support from People & Culture to obtain the tools and skills necessary to succeed in a remote work environment.
- Taking reasonable steps to maintain their own wellbeing – including a healthy work routine, with regular breaks and boundaries between work and home life.
- Sharing with the Supervisor or Manager any specific accessibility or adjustments needed to be able to perform safely and effectively.

**3. Supervisor or Manager Responsibilities**

Managers play a key role in ensuring remote and home working arrangements are safe, effective, and promote connection across teams. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Working with team members to agree on remote or blended work arrangements that meet the Institute, team and individual needs.
- Approving requests for work to be undertaken remotely or from home and ensure that agreed work outcomes are consistently being delivered.
- Ensuring each team member completes Schedule A – Remote / Working from Home Assessment, and this is authorised by the line manager before starting remote work or working from home.
- Following up on any identified risks or issues and confirming adequate controls have been implemented.
- Escalating any concerns to Health, Safety and Wellbeing where a there is potential risk Refer to our [Risk Management Framework](#) for information on the assessment of risk.
- Reviewing the remote or working from home arrangement with the employee no less than twice yearly to ensure they remain suitable for the role, the individual and the team.
- Seeking training and support from People & Culture or advice on safety, wellbeing or managing performance in remote or working from home environments.
- Retaining a copy of Schedule A – Remote / Working from Home Assessment for team members who perform remote work, including work from home.

### **3.1 Supervisor or Manager Considerations**

Supervisors and Managers play an important role in ensuring that remote or blended work arrangements are practical, safe, and support both individual and team success. When reviewing a request to work remotely or from home, Supervisors or Managers should consider:

- Whether the duties are suitable for working remotely including the types of work required, the equipment, the amount of time that can be spent away from the workplace, and also the type of work that can be performed;
- The impact of the arrangement on team connection, morale and dynamics of the team and the Institute more broadly;
- Whether the employee has demonstrated the ability to work independently and without supervision to deliver the agreed outcomes;
- The team members previous performance and reliability in managing their responsibilities;
- The factors identified in the Remote / Working from Home Assessment (Schedule A).

Working remotely or from home may not be appropriate for all roles in particular, work that requires a high level of face-to-face interaction with external stakeholders and colleagues, in clinical settings or when access to specific equipment is needed. The underlying circumstances for the request by the employee need to be considered.

Workers with disability may have varied needs that affect how their home workspace is set up or how ergonomic assessments are conducted. These needs will be considered on an individual basis to ensure that adjustments are made to support comfort, safety, and productivity.

Working from home is not intended to replace regular childcare or other carer responsibilities. Team members must ensure they have suitable care arrangements in place when working remotely.

## **4. Approval Process**

Before approval is given to remote work:

- The employee must accurately complete Schedule A – Working from Home Assessment and submit a copy to their Supervisor or Manager.
- The Supervisor or Manager will:
  - Review the information contained within the assessments to ensure all identified hazards are adequately controlled.
  - Consider whether the arrangement is appropriate for the role considering role specific deliverables, time management skills and job tenure.
- Seek guidance from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team if any risks remain high or uncontrolled.

## **5. Document Retention and Assurance**

A copy of Schedule A – Working from Home Assessment should be sent by the team member to their Supervisor or Manager and a copy provided to Page 3 of 6

healthsafetywellbeing@thekids.org.au.

## 6. Insurances and Utilities

Team members seeking to work remotely, including from home, should check if their home insurance, lease, mortgage or tax arrangements are impacted by a formal working from home set up. Everyone's circumstance will be different, and it is the team members responsibility to make any adjustments as needed.

## SCHEDULE

Schedule A – Working from Home Assessment.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Risk Management Framework](#)

[Ergonomics and Workstation Guide](#)

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Work Health and Safety Act

Work Health and Safety Regulations

## FURTHER INFORMATION







Further information about this procedure can be obtained by contacting the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team within People & Culture.

## VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Review Date	Sections Modified	Owner	Implementation Officer	Author
1.0	Institute Management Team	16/07/2020	16/07/2023	New. Replaces WFH guideline	Chief Operating Officer	Head People & Culture	Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager
1.1	HSW Manager	14/09/2022	16/07/2023	Updated Legislation Reference	COO	HSW Manager	HSW Coordinator
1.2	Head, People & Culture		16/07/2023	All Document	COO	HSW Manager	Health, Safety & Wellbeing
1.3	Manager, Health Safety and Wellbeing		16/7/23	Update to align with new brand	Chief People Officer	Manager, Health Safety and Wellbeing	Manager, Health Safety and Wellbeing
2.0	Manager, Safety, Wellbeing and Student Experience		16/10/25	Updates include improved Schedule A and broadening to include Remote Work	Chief People Officer	Manager, Safety, Wellbeing and Student Experience	Manager, Safety, Wellbeing and Student Experience

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## Schedule A – Remote / Working from Home Assessment

Potential risk and items for assessment	Solutions and further information / controls	
Common working from home risks	Checklist of common risk control measures	Further Information
 <p><b>Electrical Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Electrical leads are intact and undamaged.</li> <li>▪ Power boards are available and are not overloaded.</li> <li>▪ All electrical equipment supplied by the Institute is tested and tagged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Utilise multiple power sockets.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the home is RCD protected.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Isolate and do not use faulty equipment.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure cords are positioned neatly.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate the use of double adaptors.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Expectation Management</b></p> <p>Consider any impacts due to the lack of clarity around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How tasks are allocated and monitored.</li> <li>▪ How equipment is accessed and maintained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clarify procedural information and policy positions on the supply of equipment.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish agreement around tasks, hours and expectations.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use technology to support interactions.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Ergonomic Setup</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Your chair and table are fit for purpose and positioned correctly. Documents are stored correctly.</li> <li>▪ The monitor is one arm's length away, with your eyes positioned in line with the top of the monitor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete the ergonomic assessment training via Discover.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review and implement the Ergonomics and Workstation Guide.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Emergency Management Planning and Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication devices are charged and can be used for support if and when required.</li> <li>▪ Ensure smoke detectors are in good working order.</li> <li>▪ You have access to first aid supplies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure first aid supplies are readily available.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, check and replace smoke detector batteries.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have an emergency plan in place.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Environmental Hazards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Noise levels are not excessive or distracting.</li> <li>▪ The intended work area is smoke free.</li> <li>▪ There is sufficient lighting to complete visual tasks without eye strain.</li> <li>▪ There is adequate heating/cooling options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure adequate lighting.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take microbreaks for wellbeing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Minimise noise distractions.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not smoke within work areas.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement heating &amp; cooling options.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General and sustained manual handling activities.</li> <li>▪ Tripping hazards such as sunken floor levels, slippery surfaces, curled mats, or clutter.</li> <li>▪ Privacy and the security of sensitive information.</li> <li>▪ Medical concerns that may be aggravated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Break down manual handling tasks or use assistive equipment where possible.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Minimise obstructions near workstations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Secure sensitive documents in a safe location. Minimise hard copies.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seek sign off from a medical professional as applicable.</li> </ul>	
<b>Individualised Risks and Considerations</b>		

**Additional Hazards and Controls:**

**Sign Off and Authorisation:**

I confirm that I have completed the Remote / Working from Home assessment and to my knowledge all the information supplied is correct. I also acknowledge and accept the conditions contained in this schedule and procedure. I will notify my supervisor or manager of any change in circumstances which may impact on my working from home arrangement.

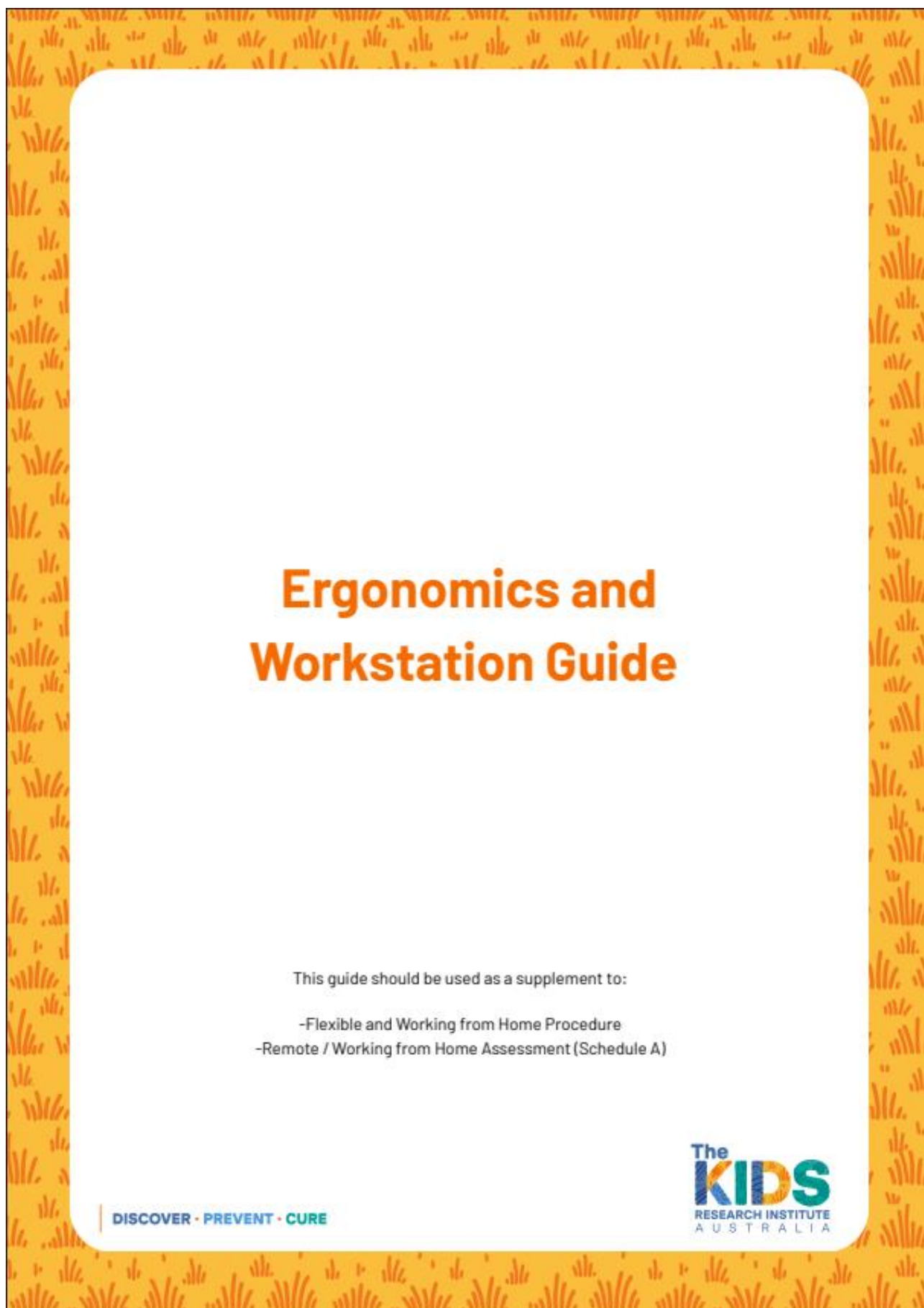
Employee Name
Employee Signature
Date

Supervisor / Manager Name
Supervisor / Manager Signature
Date

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Send completed form to [healthsafetywellbeing@thekids.org.au](mailto:healthsafetywellbeing@thekids.org.au)

**Figure 6** 2025 Ergonomics and Workstation Guide



# Ergonomics and Workstation Guide

## SETTING UP YOUR WORKSTATION

This form is designed to assist you with setting up and assessing your own workstation

### Considerations

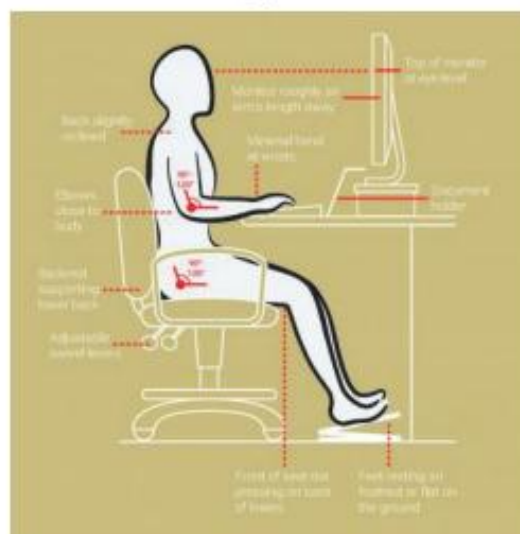
If you have an acute or long-term injury, or if there are any other considerations to be made, [healthsafetywellbeing@thekids.org.au](mailto:healthsafetywellbeing@thekids.org.au) will assist

### Additional Information

You can find information about ergonomics and workstations at the Health, Safety and Wellbeing pages on Telescope

An online module Working from Home - Ergonomics and Self-Assessment is available on Discover. Although this is focused on a home workstation, the principles remain the same, and is a good starting point for ergonomics awareness. You can also search for other learning content on Discover. Search 'ergonomics' for more courses.

Use the below image as visual guidance on the most appropriate ergonomic set up of a workstation, in conjunction with the following guide.



## Ergonomics and Workstation Guide

### Items to review

#### Chair and desk

- Adjust the height of the chair and desk (if possible) so that your elbows rest at right angles when typing, and your feet rest on the floor with your knees at right angles, or slightly greater.
- Adjust the backrest to support your lower back when sitting upright.



#### Monitors and documents

- Ensure the top of your screen is at eye or forehead level (whichever is more comfortable).
- If you use more than one screen, think about how you use them and position them accordingly, sitting directly in front of your primary screen.
- If you use a laptop screen, use an external keyboard and mouse and raise up your laptop to an appropriate height.
- If you refer to paper documents, place these between the keyboard and screen, directly in front of you.



#### Keyboard and mouse

- Mouse and keyboard position should allow for forearm support, whilst also being close enough for your shoulders, elbows and wrists to be relaxed and close to the body.
- Avoid over-reaching, especially for your mouse. Pull it as close to the keyboard as possible.



## Ergonomics and Workstation Guide

Items to review

### Other equipment layout

- Ensure frequently used objects are in easy reach.
- Ensure there is enough space for the work you need to do. Declutter, or try and do that task from a different space.
- If you use a phone regularly, consider attaching earphones or headphones with a microphone



### Other things to consider

- Adjust screen brightness and resolution to reduce fatigue
- Close blinds if outside light is producing glare
- Declutter your desktop to ensure there is plenty of space to work
- Avoid balancing your phone on your shoulder for any length of time
- Change posture at frequent intervals
- Avoid undertaking repetitive tasks for a long time, and take breaks regularly



### Individual Considerations

Any injuries or personal health conditions to be considered?

Do I have adequate ventilation?

Do I have optimal heating and cooling?

Are there any specific hazards in my work area?

Do I have the appropriate equipment to work optimally?

Do you have any specific functional or medical requirements requiring adjustments?

Employees are encouraged to discuss any access or adjustment requirements with their manager, People & Culture team or the Diversity & Inclusion Specialist. Information shared about a person's disability or adjustment needs will be treated confidentially and used only to facilitate safe and inclusive work arrangements.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Issue

Try this



### My shoulder hurts

- Make any changes required to enable your arms to be supported at right angles
- Keep all regularly used items within close reach
- Take regular rest/stretch breaks to reset your posture
- If your pain is on the same side as your mouse, move mouse to the other side and alternate



### My back hurts

- Sit straight on, and place documents, monitor and keyboard directly in front of you
- Take regular rest/stretch breaks to reset your posture
- If you have a sit-stand desk, alternate between sitting and standing throughout the day



### My head hurts

- Rearrange your work area to reduce glare and/or noise stress
- Vary your tasks
- Take regular micro-breaks
- Reduce time on your computer
- Consider an eye test

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Issue

Try this

- I can't get my elbows and knees at right angles because my desk is not adjustable



- Prioritise getting your elbows at right angles, and then use a footrest to get your knees in the right position.

- I can't get comfortable; I can't adjust my chair enough to support my lower back



- Use lumbar supports, a cushion or small pillow.

- My neck hurts



- Use a document holder so that you are not looking down at documents
- Check your monitor height.
- Try not to look down at your keyboard if you can.
- Put documents and primary monitor in front of you, to minimise twisting your neck.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Issue



### Eye fatigue or strain

Try this

- Your screen may be too close, or there may be too much glare
- Rearrange your work area, close blinds and avoid high contrast on your screen/environment
- Take regular micro-breaks
- Reduce time on your computer
- Consider an eye test



### Leg / hip fatigue while standing

- If using a sit-stand desk, regularly change from sitting to standing. Do not over-tire yourself from standing too long
- Take regular posture breaks
- Avoid favouring one hip when standing: stand in a neutral posture with feet flat on the floor
- Wear supportive footwear and avoid high heels

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If you have worked through this form, made any changes required, and are still uncomfortable or unsure, please email your form (with notes on what issues you are experiencing) to [healthandsafetywellbeing@thekids.org.au](mailto:healthandsafetywellbeing@thekids.org.au)  
One of the HSW team will then contact you to discuss further

Despite progress, there are ongoing challenges and intersectional issues associated with the 2025 Procedure. These include:

- The need for a post-implementation review to assess intended and unintended GEDI impacts across different staffing groups, including benefits and potential harms (Further Action 4).
- Role based limitations on flexible work for duties requiring specific times and/or locations (e.g. laboratory or clinic-based roles), which may contribute to perceptions of inequity or inconsistent access to FWA (Further Actions 4 and 5).
- Time and location requirements for on-Country and community-based research, which may disproportionately affect Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff, students and research activities, requiring culturally appropriate application of FWA (Further Action 3).
- Research governance, ethics and data privacy requirements that constrain remote work for some roles, including those involving clinical trials or sensitive participant data (Further Action 4)
- Requirements for home-based ergonomic assessments, including consideration of the varied needs of people with disability and/or chronic conditions, and the need to strengthen manager capability and escalation pathways to support safe and equitable implementation (Further Actions 2 and 5).
- Potential psychosocial risks associated with remote and home-based work, including impacts on family relationships and safety for those experiencing family or domestic violence (Further Action 5).

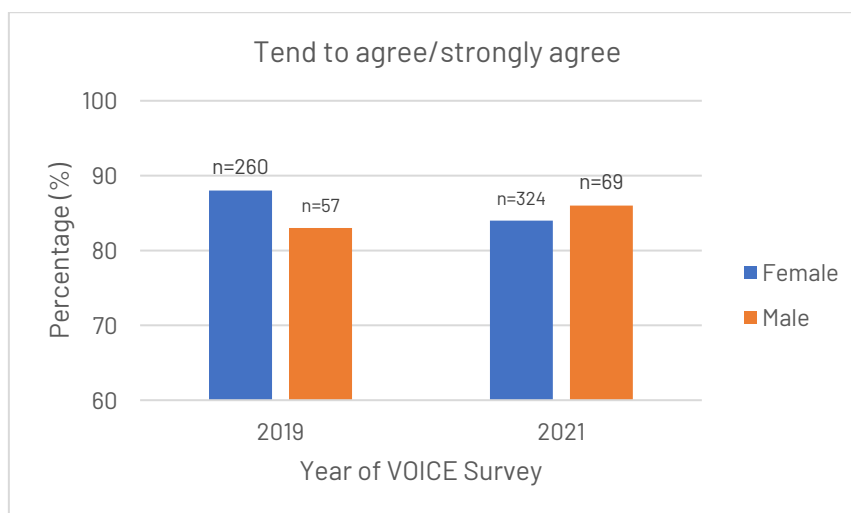
## OUTCOMES

### Satisfaction with flexible working arrangements (addressing sub-barriers 1 and 2)

Data on satisfaction with work flexibility was gathered from the Voice engagement surveys, enabling comparison before (2019) and after (2021) the introduction of the 2020 Working from Home Procedure. Employees were asked to respond to the statement, "Telethon Kids has enough flexible work arrangements to meet my needs (e.g., blended working)".

A  $\geq 5$  percentage point increase in positive responses ('tend to agree' or 'strongly agree') to suggests access to flexible working conditions has improved, though not universally. Positive responses increased by 4 percentage points for men but reduced by 7 percentage points for women (Figure 7). Additionally, a significantly higher proportion of women disagreed with this statement ( $n=76$ , 19%) in 2021 compared to in 2019 ( $n=35$ , 12%) (Fisher's exact test,  $P=.01$ ).

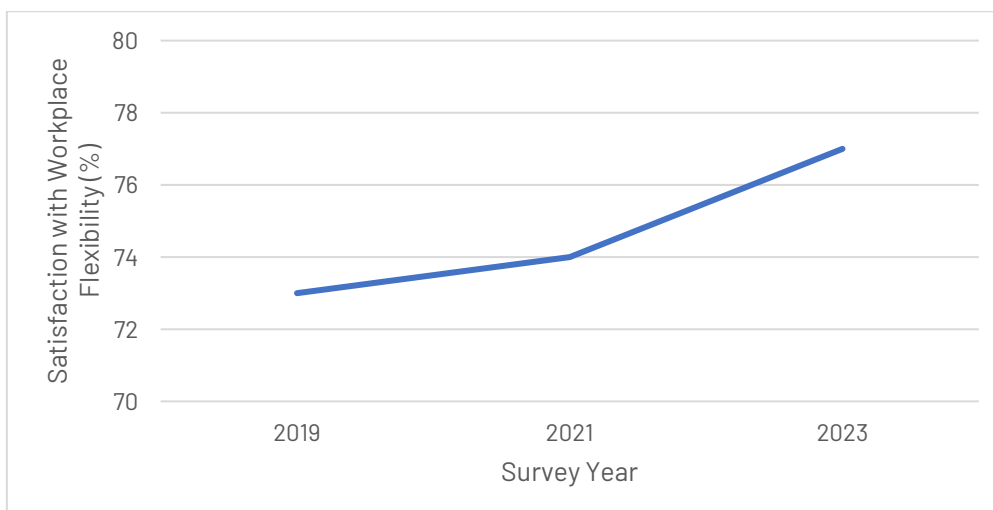
**Figure 7** Voice Engagement Survey 2019 and 2021 results:  
"Telethon Kids has enough flexible work arrangements to meet my needs (e.g., blended working)"



It is difficult to determine whether the 2020 Procedure was directly responsible for reduced satisfaction for women, as these findings could also reflect uneven and adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and carers, such as increased childcaring and homeschooling obligations (see Impact Section and Further Action 3).

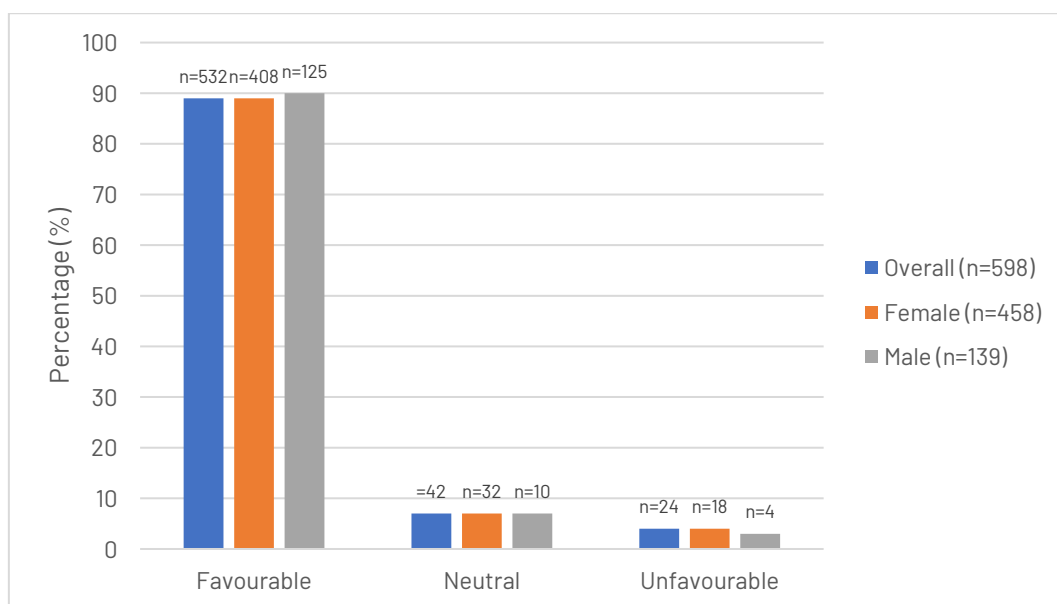
Workplace flexibility data, collected over multiple survey cycles, demonstrates a steady increase in staff satisfaction over time. At the higher-order factor level, satisfaction with workplace flexibility was 73% in 2019, rising to 74% in 2021 and 77% in 2023. Indicating positive upward trend across the organisation (Figure 8). Gender specific data is not available at the factor level for these survey cycles.

**Figure 8** Trend in Staff Satisfaction with Workplace Flexibility



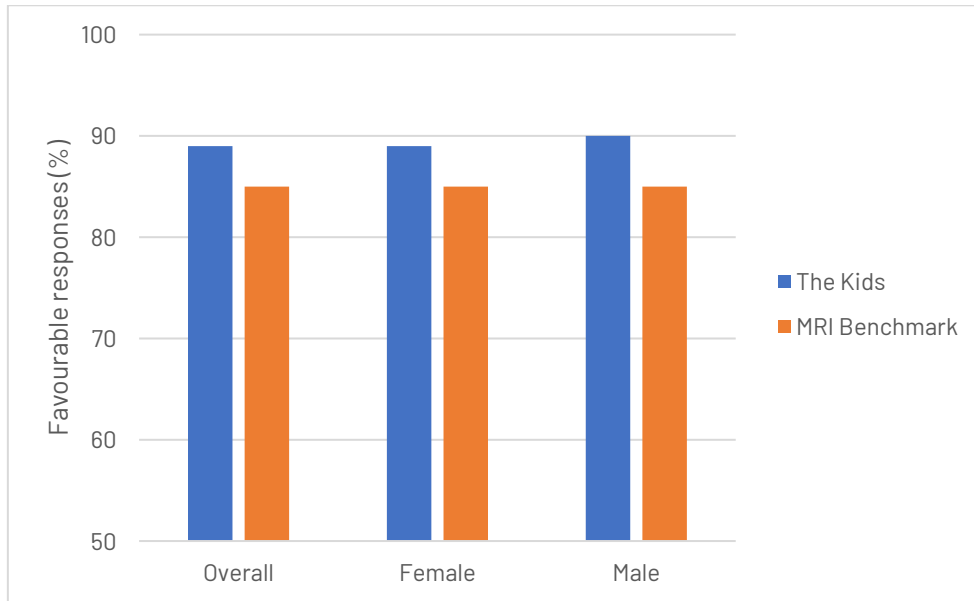
In 2025, The Kids transitioned to a new survey provider. The Have Your Say Engagement Survey question states: “We at The Kids are supported if we request flexible work arrangements,” is not directly comparable to the earlier measures, however the findings are positive. In 2025, 90% of staff responded favourably (with 6% neutral and 4% unfavourable), reflecting high levels of perceived support for flexible work (Figure 9). We note that men continue to report slightly more favourably than women. Due to the confidentiality limits, data breakdowns are not available where respondents in any category is ≤ 8.

**Figure 9** 2025 Have Your Say Engagement Survey: “We at The Kids are supported if we request flexible work arrangements”



The new survey platform has a benchmarking capability and on this item The Kids rated five percentage points higher than other Australian Medical Research Institutes (MRIs)(Figure 10). Whilst we are unable to compare question-level data with earlier survey cycles, the overall trajectory continues to trend upward. Women at The Kids rated their flexible work support four points higher than their national MRI counterparts, and men rated theirs five points higher. This indicates that The Kids is performing strongly relative to the broader medical research sector, suggesting positive effects of the 2020 and 2025 Procedures, manager training, and continued commitment to embedding flexible, inclusive, and person-centred work practices.

**Figure 10** 2025 Have Your Say Engagement Survey:  
Favourable responses to flexible work support vs MRI benchmark

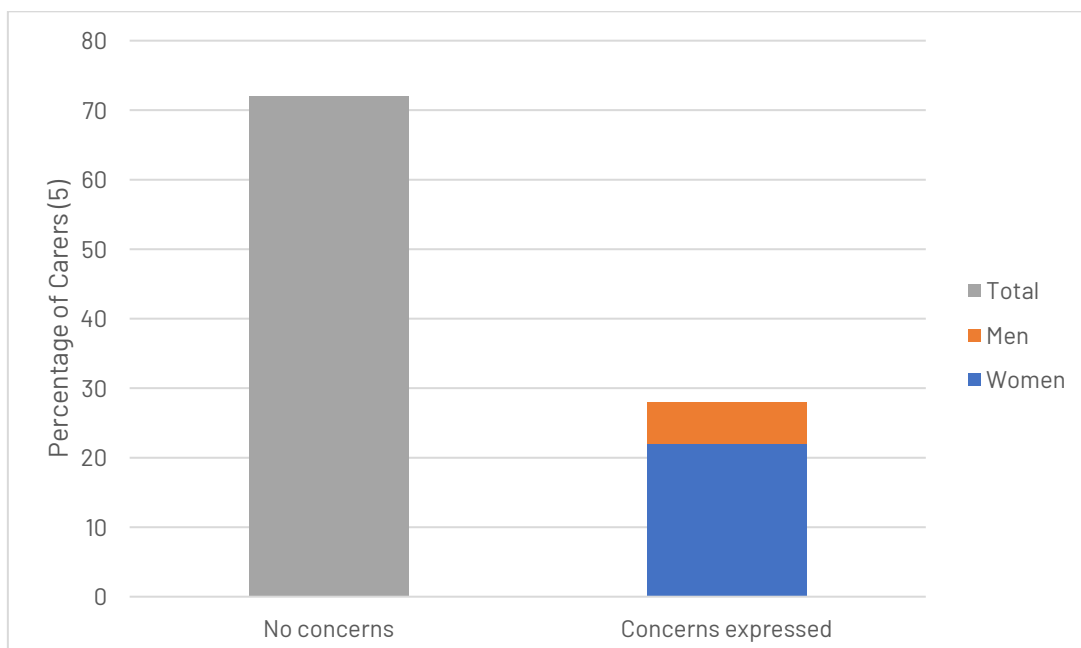


### Concerns with flexible working arrangements for carers (addressing sub-barrier 3)

We gathered additional data on concerns about job flexibility experienced by employees as well as familiarity and use of the 2020 Procedure, via an online survey that targeted people with caring responsibilities (e.g., looking after children, parents, or loved ones with chronic conditions/disability) in July-August 2021 (n=118). This data is significant as more than 50% of Institute staff have caring responsibilities; nonetheless, the Institute acknowledges that work flexibility impacts everyone, and not just people with caring responsibilities.

As shown in Figure 11, most employees with caring responsibilities did not express concerns about job flexibility (>70%). Concerns about job flexibility (see Impact section) were expressed by 30 participants (28%; ≤6 men and the remainder women), and our measure of success was we saw no statistically significant differences when data were compared by gender or employee stream (i.e., Researchers compared to Professional Services staff).

**Figure 11** Concerns about job flexibility among employees with caring responsibilities (2021). Head counts not available.



Most carers were familiar with the 2020 Working from Home Procedure (>85%) and the majority who had used the procedure indicated they found it helpful (65%). As a direct before and after comparison could not be made, our measure of success was we saw no statistically significant differences in responses when gender was considered ( $\chi^2(1)=3.887, P=.27$ ). That said, only 61% of women (n=31 of 51) who used the procedure found it helpful compared to 89% of men (n=8 of 9)(Table 1). Some caution is needed when interpreting these findings due to small sample sizes (particularly number of man/male respondents).

Unfortunately, we are unable to access the raw survey data to further explore the experiences of the 35% of respondents who reported neutral or unfavourable views. To address this, The Kids will explore perceptions of the 2025 Remote and Flexible Work Procedure in greater depth via the 2026 GEDI Survey, which will include targeted questions to better understand barriers, usability, and areas for improvement across different staff groups (Further Action 7).

Most carers were familiar with the Working from Home Procedure (>85%), and the majority of those who had used the procedure indicated that they found it helpful (65%). As a direct before-and-after comparison could not be made, our measure of success was that no statistically significant differences were observed when responses were analysed by gender ( $\chi^2(1) = 3.887, p = .27$ ). However, this finding also indicates that 35% of respondents who had used the procedure reported neutral or unfavourable experiences, which warrants further exploration (Further Action 7). While 61% of women (n = 31 of 51) who used the procedure reported finding it helpful compared with 89% of men (n = 8 of 9) (Table 2), caution is required when interpreting these results due to small sample sizes, particularly among men.

**Table 2** Familiarity and use of Working from Home Procedure by Carers at Telethon Kids (August 2021, n=101). Data is shown as headcount and percentage.

Gender	Familiar, not used	Used	Used, helpful	Unfamiliar
Man or male	≤6	≤6	8 (61.5%)	≤6
Woman or female	24 (27.3%)	20 (22.7%)	31 (35.2%)	13 (14.8%)
Total	26 (25.7%)	21 (20.8%)	39 (38.6%)	15 (14.9%)

### Intersectionality

The 2021 Carers survey was able to consider intersections between gender, age and disability. We defined success as equitable familiarity with and use of the 2020 Working from Home Procedure across different groups of women. No statistically significant differences were observed between younger (26–45 years) and older (>45 years) women ( $\chi^2(1)=3.09, p=.38$ ), or between women with and without a disability or chronic condition ( $\chi^2(1)=2.87, p=.41$ ). Given the number of men respondents was low, additional disaggregation could not be done meaningfully. It was also difficult to evaluate other intersectional aspects in outcomes of both the Voice and Carers surveys.

While the 2021 Carers Survey included questions intended to capture diversity-related information, fewer than six respondents identified as LGBTQIA+, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or as a person with disability or a chronic condition. Additionally, there were significant gaps in responses related to language other than English spoken at home (n=53, 49.1%) and ethnicity (n=35, 32.4%). These missing data suggests that many respondents experienced concerns around voice safety and confidentiality, limiting the extent to intersectional impacts of the Working from Home Procedure, particularly related to gender, sexuality, language, and ethnicity, could be meaningfully assessed (Further Action 3).

## Discussion

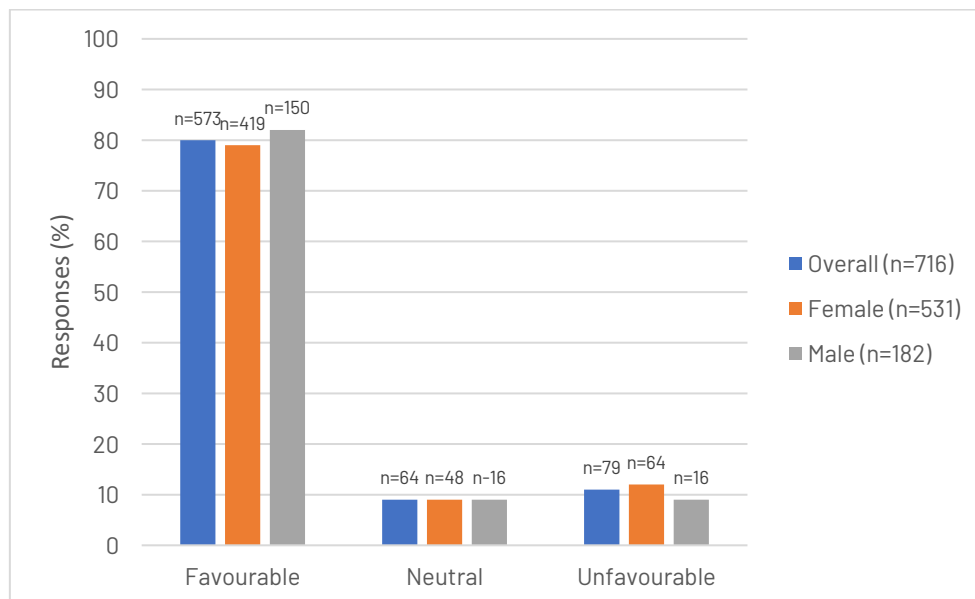
Employees at The Kids now work flexibly but barriers persist (Further Action 1). Findings from an Accommodation Survey (n=443, September 2022) suggest that 80% of people worked flexibly at Telethon Kids in a variety of ways, including:

- Working from home
- Varying their work patterns (e.g., starting time) and locations (including remote)
- Accessing time-off in lieu (TOIL)
- Rostering days off
- Working part-time and/or casually.

However, for 32% of people, there were barriers in achieving their preferred method of working flexibly. This was most frequently related to the expectations of management (n=30) (Further Actions 2 and 7) and/or a need to work onsite (n=32). Furthermore, it was not possible to examine how these responses varied with a GEDI lens, as diversity questions were not posed in this survey.

When asked in the 2025 Engagement Survey whether “I feel I have the right to disconnect from my work while on leave and during non-workdays/hours,” 80% of respondents answered favourably, while 9% were neutral and 11% unfavourable (714 respondents, Figure 12). Gender patterns were consistent with these numbers; 79% of women and 82% of men felt they had the right to disconnect, while unfavourable responses were slightly higher among women (12%) than men (9%).

**Figure 12** 2025 Have Your Say Engagement Survey: “I feel I have the right to disconnect from my work”



When the 2025 Engagement Survey data and Focus Group feedback (see Impact section) is considered together, it suggests that while most staff feel supported, 11% of survey respondents continue to experience uncertainty or pressure that impacts their ability to fully disconnect. This highlights a clear opportunity to strengthen expectations, role-modelling and communication about out-of-work boundaries and the right to disconnect (Further Action 2).

## IMPACT

The introduction of formalised flexible working structures during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the 2020 Working from Home Procedure, marked an important step towards consistent, organisation-wide guidance on flexible work. These structures have been strengthened and revised post-COVID, supporting ongoing access to flexible arrangements, however the impact has been mixed. Inconsistencies remain, influenced by the nature of some positions requiring on site work and by some managers' expectations for staff to be physically present.

### Qualitative methods and findings

Qualitative impact data was drawn from multiple sources to understand how flexible work arrangements have affected staff experiences over time. One key source of evidence is the 2021 Carers Survey, which explored the experiences of staff with caring responsibilities following increased access to FWA associated with the 2020 *Working from Home Procedure* and COVID-19 pandemic (Table 3).

**Table 3.** 2021 Carers Survey – Respondent Profile and Key Findings

*Summary of survey scope, respondent demographics, caring responsibilities, employment context, and reported impacts on flexible work, workload, and career experiences.*

Domain	Summary data
<b>Survey scope</b>	Internally designed and analysed Carers Survey initiated by the Supporting Carers SIG under the GEDI Council
<b>Workforce context</b>	777 staff employed as of 30 June 2021
<b>Participation</b>	131 commencements; 118 respondents included in analysis; 106 completed in full (~15% of workforce)
<b>Gender</b>	88.1% women; 11.9% men
<b>Age profile</b>	26–35 (17.8%); 36–45 (54.2%); 46–55 (25.4%)
<b>Lived experience</b>	1% LGBTQIA+; 0 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents; 6.8% disability and/or chronic condition; 1.7% prefer not to say
<b>Employment streams</b>	Research staff (n=51); research students (n=9); professional services staff (n=42); project/program managers (n=19)
<b>Employment type</b>	Part-time (50.8%); full-time (43.2%); small proportion casual/other
<b>Caring responsibilities</b>	Children (n=104); parents/elderly relatives (n=20); people with disability/chronic conditions (n=7); additional responsibilities including extended family care, partner mental health support and self-management of chronic conditions
<b>Access to care</b>	Paid care (40%); unpaid care (57%)
<b>Workload and availability</b>	Time pressure affecting work-life balance (81%); working after hours (78%); personal expectations of availability outside work hours (60%); external expectations (39%)
<b>Job security and flexibility</b>	Concerns about job instability (48%); concerns about job flexibility (27%)
<b>Caring and work interface</b>	Working while undertaking caring duties requiring focus or concentration (63%)
<b>Career impacts</b>	Caring role impacting or potentially impacting promotion/career progression (43.2%);

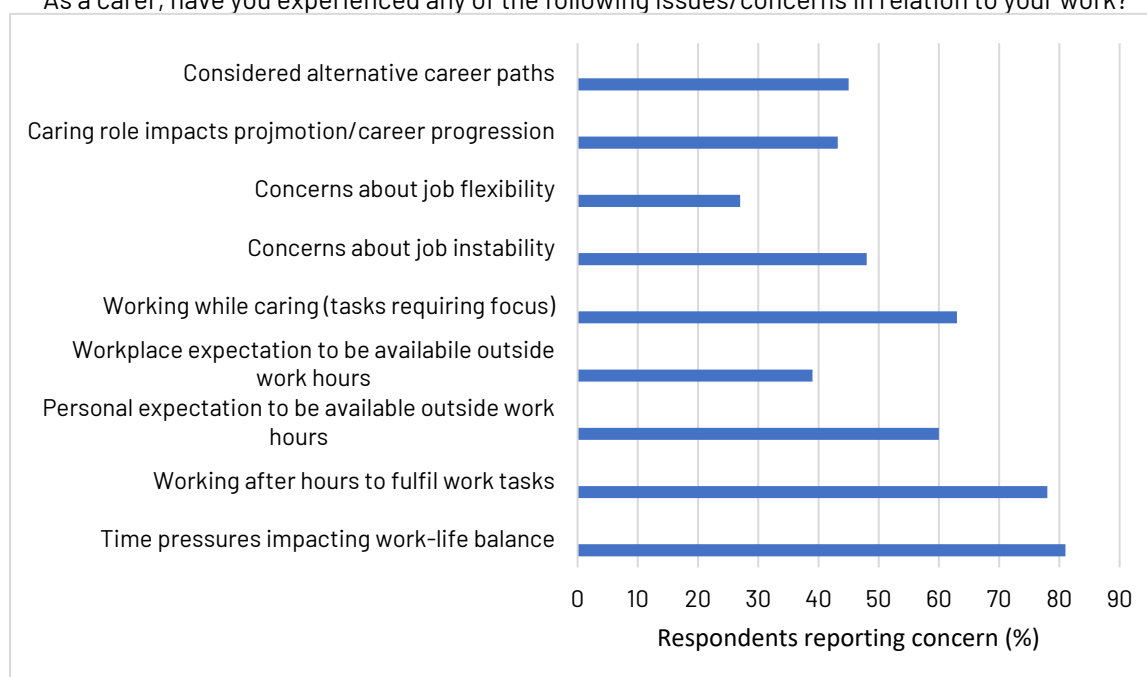
consideration of alternative career paths (45%) (Figure 13)

**Data limitations** Demographic patterns suggest potential voice safety and confidentiality concerns, limiting disaggregated analysis

Please note that percentages are calculated based on respondents included in the analysis (n=118), unless otherwise specified. Respondents were able to select multiple caring responsibilities. Low representation of some demographic groups limits the ability to conduct intersectional analysis and may reflect confidentiality and voice-safety considerations (Further Action X). All qualitative responses were reported anonymously. Therefore, individual demographic identifiers were not linked to quotes to protect confidentiality and support voice safety.

**Figure 13** 2021 Carers Survey:

“As a carer, have you experienced any of the following issues/concerns in relation to your work?”



The 2021 Carers Survey results have been drawn on to understand the experiences of staff with caring responsibilities, who represent a significant proportion of the workforce at The Kids. While previous internal estimates suggested that more than 50% of staff had caring responsibilities, the 2025 Have Your Say Engagement Survey identified this figure as 44% of the workforce.

To complement and update the Carers Survey dataset, three focus groups were conducted in 2025 (n=28) to explore the lived experience of flexible and remote work under the 2025 Remote and Flexible Work Procedure. The focus groups included participants from across employment streams, roles, working patterns and caring statuses, and provided contemporary qualitative insight into both the benefits and unintended impacts of flexible work arrangements. The 2021 Carers Survey and the 2025 focus groups provide a longer-term understanding of flexible work impacts, informing the assessment of impact and the identification of further actions, including the monitoring and future collection of data (Further Actions 7) and targeted exploration of experiences across staff groups (Further Action 3).

### **A universal experience: two sides to increased flexibility**

Respondents of the Carers Survey typically shared one of two perspectives in relation to increased FWA. The first was that increased flexibility to work from home and/or work non-traditional hours allowed for a greater capacity to fulfill both work and carer responsibilities. The second view was that increased flexibility blurred definitions of when individuals were expected to work (Further Action 2).

These different perspectives are encapsulated by quotes from two respondents:

*“As a result of COVID and blended working - the option to work a day or so from home a week is gold - saving some travel time and therefore easing the pressure of fitting everything in.”*

*“During the shutdowns, when many of us had to juggle caring responsibilities, homeschooling and work, there seemed to be an understanding of the challenge that this presented and we were allowed to spread our working hours. The unfortunate legacy of this is that this spreading of working hours now seems to occur as part of the culture. I still find myself receiving work emails and even texts from supervisors or colleagues well into the evening and on weekends. There seems to be no common time at which everyone is expected to have their personal time with no work interruptions. It leaves me with a feeling that I am always on call for work.”*

These experiences highlight the importance of strengthening boundaries around working time, particularly with the Right to Disconnect legislation coming into effect. It is also consistent with data from the 2025 Have Your Say engagement survey statement: *“I feel I have the right to disconnect from my work while on leave and during non-work days/hours.”*

### **Time burden**

Pressure to complete urgent tasks outside of work hours was mentioned by many survey participants who reflected that this contributed to increased stress, anxiety and reduced ability to disengage from work.

Time pressure was exacerbated by the increased flexibility around working from home, which in some cases created an implied expectation of being available at all hours:

*“I would also like people to still feel they can take actual carer days and that they don’t always have to be getting some work in just because they’re at home on what is usually a workday. Just because we’ve shown we CAN work from home, shouldn’t mean we are expected to no matter what, if we can’t be in the office. If someone has a sick child/other caring responsibilities arise, they should feel they can take a carer’s day without feeling they have to keep on top of the emails/calls/work.”*

Whilst The Kids has since taken steps to clarify expectations around reasonable work hours and promote healthier boundaries, including leadership training and communication regarding Right to Disconnect legislation, it is not yet clear how these changes have shifted the staff experience. This will be explored in the 2026 GEDI survey which will include items designed to capture whether this has improved (Further Action 3).

### **Team impacts**

Team culture was reported to contribute to this anxiety, not only in terms of perceptions that one is less committed when accessing workplace flexibility, but also due to the reality that taking leave or working adjusted hours can shift workload pressures onto other team members, particularly given the time sensitive nature of many research activities:

*“My experience of being allowed flexible hours has been quite different depending on whether my line manager has children or not, with a lot less understanding from the latter. At the same time, it is important that those without caring responsibilities in a team are not disproportionately burdened with unwanted tasks because they are more available at certain times.”*

In recognition of this, The Kids is progressing work to uplift leadership capability, with a focus on ensuring leaders are better equipped to support diverse teams. This includes strengthening self-awareness, increasing understanding of differing life stages and responsibilities, and building the skills required to manage teams fairly and with empathy in a flexible work environment (Further Action 2).

## Inconsistency in leadership

Although the 2020 *Working from Home Procedure* was implemented across TKI, respondents of the Carers Survey reflected that the extent it was enacted in practice often depended on team managers:

*“For me, work and family are constantly intertwined, and it is important our managers support this. The current institute policies (eg. ... flexible work arrangements) strike a fair balance that suits me, but I feel some line managers are not as understanding of these as mine are.”*

*“No point having policies which state inclusion and support if team leaders still expect workload/commitment that don’t allow [it] e.g. taking leave, having work/life balance.”*

These views align with the barrier identified earlier regarding the influence of manager expectations on their staff’s ability to work flexibly in their preferred mode. This concern was echoed in the 2025 focus groups, where one participant stated that what would make flexible work easier is *“a formal process that is communicated and enacted equally, not at a manager’s discretion. Consistency across teams.”*

Whilst the Institute has made progress in reducing inconsistencies, they have not fully been eliminated. This has informed the development of further actions focused on clarifying baseline expectations, strengthening leadership capability and reducing reliance on manager discretion (Further Actions 2 and 6).

## Intersectionality

The 2021 Carers Survey provided limited scope to examine intersectional impacts, due to small numbers of respondents from diverse groups and identified concerns regarding voice safety and confidentiality (as discussed in the Outcomes section). As a result, meaningful quantitative analysis across intersecting identities (e.g. gender, disability, cultural background or caring status) was not possible using this dataset alone.

However, the 2025 focus groups offered some qualitative insight into intersectional experiences of flexible and remote work. Participants described how flexible work arrangements intersect with caring responsibilities, disability or chronic health conditions, neurodivergence, role type and seniority, influencing both access to flexibility and the extent to which it could be used without stigma or negative career implications. For example, carers and people managing health needs described flexibility as essential to participation and sustainability at work, while staff in laboratory-, clinic- or community-based roles highlighted more constrained access, regardless of personal need.

Despite these insights, participants also noted reluctance to share information about personal circumstances in some workplace contexts, reinforcing the need for psychologically safe and confidential data collection mechanisms. To address these gaps and strengthen the Institute’s understanding of intersectional impacts, future data collection will use more inclusive and safe approaches, including targeted qualitative methods and improved survey design (Further Action 3).

## Evaluating Flexible Work Arrangements: Outcomes, Experiences and Areas for Improvement

Evidence presented in both the Outcomes and Impacts sections suggests that the 2025 Procedure needs to be refined (Further Action 4) by:

- Ensuring consistent implementation across teams, reducing reliance on manager preference
- Clarifying expectations around in-office days, probation and eligibility for remote work
- Addressing equity gaps experienced by specific groups
- Integrating explicit wellbeing supports such as ergonomic advice, burnout-prevention measures and employee assistance programs.
- Updating supporting resources to reflect hybrid work practices, including remote working, role-

based flexibility and utilisation of digital tools.

Furthermore, an unintended negative impact around work-life balance has emerged with some people experiencing the need to be available to work 'at-all-hours'. This has led to poor boundaries between what constitutes work and personal time. This is not an issue limited to The Kids nor the research/university sectors. However, ignoring it will likely have significant negative consequences for diversity at The Kids due to increased risk for burnout and adverse mental health outcomes (Further Actions 6 and 7).

Focus groups were undertaken in 2025 and in the spirit of flexible work, participants were able to join face-to-face or online, ensuring accessibility, encouraging participation and minimising disruption to competing priorities. Demographic data of focus group participants was not collected. The Expression of Interest was circulated widely, including through all employee Special Interest Groups, to encourage broad participation and support an intersectional approach to representation.

Participants were first asked to describe how they currently use flexible work. Responses demonstrated a broad range of flexible work practices, including ad-hoc work from home, hybrid arrangements, variable start and finish times, remote work, early or late shifts to accommodate caring responsibilities, compressed hours, remote attendance from alternate locations and more. Participants reported using flexible work to support health needs, caring duties, commuting challenges, neurodivergence, sensory needs, project-based work and managing demands.

Many participants described flexible work as central to maintaining work-life balance, productivity and a sense of trust and autonomy within their team:

*"[I]t definitely works for me. I couldn't do my role and balance the needs of my team and family without it. It is one of the main perks to working at the Institute."*

This sentiment was common across groups, though it was also noted that flexible work arrangements are not available to those who provide clinical services and are required to meet with community members.

Most participants indicated that flexible work arrangements are working well and positively contribute to their wellbeing, performance and ability to balance demands. Many highlighted that the flexibility allows them to "fit life into work," attend appointments, manage school pickups, reduce commute times, create focus time for complex tasks or accommodate health needs. Senior staff also noted that flexibility can support their leadership responsibilities by giving them more control over how and when work is completed:-

*"I feel I can succeed in both my jobs as an employee and as a parent. I am able to manage what has to be done at any given time."*

This reflects a pattern across the focus groups, where flexibility was viewed as an enabler of professional and personal success.

Some participants found it difficult to disconnect, describing blurred boundaries between work and home life, particularly when working in hybrid or remote arrangements. This often led to fatigue, overwork, or feeling unable to fully 'switch off.' Others described expectations about being present on certain days, especially when precedents or team norms were unclear. A small number of focus group participants shared experiences of judgement, or perceived judgement, when working from home or expressed concerns that flexibility was not applied consistently across teams.

*"For team members with fewer caring responsibilities they have noted the extra pressure flexibility puts on them when other team members need to take time off or tasks need to be redistributed to accommodate for 'flex'"*

Focus Group participants identified a range of factors that make flexible work either easier or harder

to use effectively. Many emphasised the importance of trust-based relationships, strong communication, and clear expectations. Teams with supportive managers, well-established norms, and good IT infrastructure reported the smoothest flexible work experiences. For several participants, flexibility was seen as a core cultural strength of the organisation, with one stating, *“The Institute supporting flexible and hybrid work as a valuable and valid way of working” was what they valued most.* In contrast, barriers presented when communication was inconsistent, team expectations unclear meetings were scheduled without sufficient notice for remote participation. Many also noted that flexible work is influenced by the nature of their role, project requirements, and the need for in-person collaboration. Several participants highlighted the importance of psychological safety, explaining that flexible work is easier when they feel trusted and not required to “prove” their productivity while working remotely.

**Table 4** Summary of themes from 2025 focus group activity: What does flexible work look like?

Theme	What Participants Said	Impact
<b>Forms of Flexibility Used</b>	Hybrid work, ad-hoc work-from-home, remote work, flexible and/or compressed hours, early/late shifts, adjusting office days, remote meeting attendance, working evenings when needed	Shows flexibility is diverse, role-specific, and widely used across teams
<b>Reasons for Flexibility</b>	Caring responsibilities including school pickups, personal appointments, health management, sensory needs, commuting time, periods of intense work, project cycles	Flexibility is critical for wellbeing, equity and retention
<b>What Works Well</b>	Trust and support of managers/leadership, strong team culture, clear expectations, autonomy, good IT, predictable meeting patterns	Enables productivity, work-life balance and positive work culture
<b>Challenges</b>	Disconnecting from work, judgement about WFH, inconsistency across teams, last-minute meetings, difficulty joining some Perth-based activities, workload pressures	Highlights gaps in consistency, communication and role-based constraints
<b>Enablers</b>	Trust, psychological safety, flexibility both ways, communication, collaborative norms, inclusive scheduling, well-designed hybrid meetings	Supports a positive, equitable work culture
<b>Barriers</b>	Rigid expectations, poor meeting planning, lack of clarity, workload pressures, role inflexibility, needing in-person presence for some tasks	May limit update, can create inequities or staff stress

To understand the ongoing impact of flexible work arrangements at The Kids, the second activity in the 2025 focus groups asked participants to rate how flexibility impacts four key domains, Connection & Communication, Productivity & Focus, Wellbeing & Balance, and Fairness & Inclusion, using a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = lowest impact, 5 = highest positive impact).

**Connection & Communication:** ratings ranged widely from 2/5 to 5/5, demonstrating that experiences are significantly varied between teams. Participants reported that flexibility enhances communication by enabling them to choose environments that support clearer thinking and purposeful engagement.

*“There is a positive impact to building relationships virtually and developing the skills to do it online or across times zones to maintain sense of belonging.”*

Many noted strong communication systems, predictable touchpoints, and trusting line managers as key enablers (5/5). A substantial number of comments reflected mixed or lower scores (2/5–3/5). These

included feelings of disconnection when team members work on different scheduled, reduced incidental conversations, and difficulty knowing colleagues' locations. Participants shared that hybrid arrangements require intentional effort to maintain belonging and that inconsistent team norms (e.g., unclear in-office days) can weaken cohesion.

*"Less personal communication makes it harder to build strong connections with colleagues, but virtual meetings enable better connectivity with those overseas or interstate"*

Overall, the data suggest that while flexibility can enhance communication, it also increases the need for structured communication practices, predictable shared office days, and role-modelling from leaders.

**Productivity & Focus:** feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants rating this domain 4/5 or 5/5. People noted that flexibility allows them to manage their work according to energy levels, task demands, and personal contexts. Working from home was frequently described as enabling deep concentration, fewer interruptions, better planning, and high-quality outputs. This was particularly evident among researchers and staff with high writing or analytical workloads.

*"I can do my best work because of flexible work by allowing me to reduce life stresses which helps me manage stress at work better."*

A smaller group (ratings 1–3/5) described challenges such as open-plan office distractions, inconsistent environments, and individual preferences for structure or sensory context.

*"There is a slight improvement on focus e.g. time at home, but slight negative on productivity e.g. less time together to problem solve together."*

These participants emphasised that productivity is influenced not only by flexibility, but also by workspace design, personal needs, and the availability of tools or supports that allow for focus across both home and office environments.

**Wellbeing & Balance:** showed consistently strong positive impact, with many ratings at 4/5 or 5/5. Participants described flexibility as supporting better rest, lower stress, improved sleep, reduced commuting time, and the ability to manage health or caring responsibilities more effectively. Several highlighted that flexibility reduces the emotional burden associated with full-time work, particularly for parents and those with health conditions or family members that require support.

*"Flexible work arrangements significantly reduce my overall anxiety and stress. I can better meet deadlines and have clear thinking time. I have two neurodivergent children who need lots of support, school meetings, appointments etc. The flexibility to manage this is very much appreciated."*

Some participants rated their experience 3/5. These comments noted that while flexibility improves balance, it can also blur boundaries, create pressure to "fit work in anywhere," or reduce opportunities for rest on days traditionally spent at home. Overall, sentiment strongly indicated that flexibility is a significant protective factor for wellbeing.

*"It is good and bad as allows me to be home for my daughter but means I don't get a break."*

**Fairness & Inclusion:** responses varied widely, with ratings from 1/5 to 5/5, reflecting significant inequities in how flexibility is accessed and applied. Many participants reported positive experiences within their own teams, describing flexibility as fair, inclusive, and widely accessible. Teams with established norms, clear expectations, and supportive managers were more likely to score this domain 4/5–5/5.

*"Lot of people in my team work remotely for children and the rest of us are able to take WFH days too."*

Several participants raised concerns about inconsistency across the Institute, describing flexibility as "manager-dependent" or less available to certain roles, particularly laboratory staff, clinical staff, those

on probation, or staff without high levels of autonomy. Others observed that leaders did not always model flexible work, which contributed to perceived inequity.

*"I have heard that other people across the Institute don't have the same access. I am sometimes told I'm 'lucky' which I am, but also it should be standard."*

*"For team members with fewer caring responsibilities, they have noted the extra pressure flexibility puts on them when other team members need to take time off or tasks need to be redistributed to accommodate flexibility."*

Lower ratings (1–2/5) reflected experiences of low trust, inflexibility, or a lack of understanding of individual needs, especially related to disability, neurodiversity, or caring responsibilities.

The final activity of the 2025 Focus Groups asked participants to reflect on three prompts:

1. What they value most about flexible work at The Kids
2. What needs to change for flexible work to operate more effectively, and
3. What organisational trials or adjustments might make flexibility easier or fairer.

Across the sessions, participants consistently emphasised that flexibility is deeply valued, strongly embedded, and integral to their ability to work productively, sustainably, and with a sense of belonging.

Participants described flexibility as a core organisational strength. Many highlighted that they value being able to work around family commitments, adjust start and finish times, and manage their day in a way that aligns with both workload and personal responsibilities. Trust emerged as a recurring theme.

*"I appreciate flexibility in being able to manage a team and be there for my kids."*

Staff appreciated that flexibility is *"offered as standard,"* that they can work remotely when needed without stigma, and that flexible arrangements allow them to meet individual needs related to health, caregiving, neurodivergence, and work–life balance. Many noted that flexible work enhances their capacity to contribute meaningfully both at work and in their personal lives, describing it as *"a great initiative to attract staff"* and an important factor in their long-term engagement with the Institute.

Despite strong support for flexibility, participants identified structural and cultural barriers that limit equitable access. The most referenced issue was inconsistency across teams, with some staff enjoying high levels of autonomy while others experienced restrictive or manager-dependent arrangements. The need for clearer organisational guidance was noted, including more transparent expectations around in-office days, probation policies, workload distribution, and communication about who is working where and when.

*"We need equitable access and implementation of the policy across the Institute."*

*"As part of team induction, encourage sharing with managers any specific needs and accommodation requirements."*

Performance expectations based on hours rather than outcomes were raised as a concern, particularly for staff whose workload exceeds their contracted hours.

*"Performance based expectations rather than hours based - I work 4 days for The Kids but do a full-time load."*

Some highlighted practical needs, such as improved accommodation layouts, additional meeting rooms, and more functional hot-desk setups. Others expressed a desire for greater managerial capability, including support for managers to implement flexible work confidently and equitably.

Focus Group participants suggested a range of initiatives aimed at strengthening fairness, consistency, and sustainability. These included:

- Piloting a four-day work week or nine-day fortnight
- Trialling better systems for tracking or replacing TOIL
- Increasing manager training and accountability
- Embedding conversations about flexible work into annual goal-setting processes
- Introducing monitoring of WFH patterns
- Reviewing job descriptions to ensure workloads are realistic
- Ensuring role requirements, not manager preference, determines access to flexibility
- Taking a multi-channel approach to communication (e.g., Telescope updates, All Staff Forums, team calendars) to reduce confusion about team locations and expectations
- Adopting a formally communicating process that is fairly applied across teams, roles, and levels, and routinely reviewed.

This activity demonstrated that while flexible work is a strongly positive feature of the organisational culture, staff view fairness, clarity, and consistency as the next critical area for improvement. Participants' suggestions provide a clear direction for strengthening policy and practice.

## FURTHER ACTION

Ref	Rationale/Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start and end)	Person/Group responsible for action	Senior Leader Accountable	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
1	To provide greater consistency and comparability when examining demographic information	<b>SMART Action 1:</b> Develop, endorse and regularly review a standardised demographic question set for use across all internal surveys (including Engagement, GEDI, WHS and other organisational surveys), and promote its consistent application	End Q3 2026	Manager Organisation Capability	Chief Operating Officer, Donna O'Hara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardised demographic question set is established and routinely used, enabling consistent, comparable and intersectional workforce analysis over time.</li> </ul>
2	Perceived inconsistency in FWA and workload expectations	<b>SMART Action 2:</b> Review and update Manager Essentials training (mandatory for all new leaders), ensuring it explicitly covers workplace boundaries and work-life balance, including right to disconnect, and access to FWA, aligned with the rollout of the Remote and Flexible Work Procedure. For leaders who have already completed Manager Essentials, develop and publish a concise one-page toolkit summarising key expectations, principles and practical guidance.	End Q4 2026	Manager People, Operations and Experience, Manager Organisation Capability	Chief Operating Officer, Donna O'Hara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated Manager Essentials training in place</li> <li>One-page toolkit published and accessed by leaders (e.g. intranet page views/downloads)</li> <li>Improved and consistent understanding of FWA and expectations reported in future surveys and focus groups.</li> </ul>
3	Data gaps related to FWA, including intersectional experiences	<b>SMART Action 3:</b> Conduct focus groups to gather intersectional qualitative data on the impacts of the Remote and Flexible Work Procedure, with a focus on groups likely to experience differential impacts (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Q2 2027	Manager Organisation Capability	Chief People Officer, Angela Edwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key intersectional cohorts identified and engaged</li> <li>Participation from Aboriginal staff where culturally appropriate</li> <li>Qualitative insights documented and integrated</li> </ul>

		staff, carers, people with disability or chronic health conditions, part-time staff and laboratory- or clinic-based roles). Use findings to inform refinement of policy, guidance and supporting resources.				into subsequent policy review and actions.
4	Remote and Flexible Work Procedure requires ongoing refinement to ensure consistent, equitable and effective implementation.	<b>SMART Action 4:</b> Undertake a post-implementation review of the Remote and Flexible Work Procedure using a GEDI lens, integrating feedback from 2025 focus groups and intersectional cohorts to identify areas requiring clarification, additional guidance or strengthened supports (rather than a full policy rewrite).	Q2 2027	Manager, Organisation Capability and Manager, Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Chief Operating Officer, Donna O'Hara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-implementation review completed</li> <li>• Targeted refinement or supporting resource requirements identified</li> <li>• Diversity groups consulted</li> </ul>
5	2025 focus group data indicates risks related to burnout, workload, wellbeing and safety in the context of flexible and remote work	<b>SMART Action 5:</b> Identify, assess and address organisational and role-based psychosocial hazards associated with FWA. Develop an evidence-based risk management plan to manage risks and optimise wellbeing.	Q1 2027	Manager, Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Chief People Officer, Angela Edwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychosocial hazards associated with FWA are identified and assessed</li> <li>• Suitable control measures are implemented to reduce harm</li> <li>• Actions integrated into HSW action plans</li> <li>• Increased staff awareness of supports available</li> </ul>
6	Concern about inconsistent application of FWA across teams	<b>SMART Action 6:</b> Develop and implement an organisation-wide Flexible Work Framework that clearly articulates expectations for FWA. The framework will clarify where managerial discretion applies, the	Q1 2027	Manager, Organisation Capability; Manager Health, Safety	Chief Operating Officer, Donna O'Hara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework endorsed, launched and communicated across The Kids</li> <li>• Clear understanding of</li> </ul>

		requirements for documented decision-making and escalation where flexibility is declined.		and Wellbeing		<p>expectations reported in surveys and focus groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced reporting of 'manager dependent' access to FWA</li> <li>• Increased consistency in how flexible work is documented across teams</li> </ul>
7	Lack of carer-specific data limits understanding of how FWA are currently experienced by staff with caring responsibilities	<b>SMART Action 7:</b> Integrate questions relating to caring responsibilities and flexible work in the 2026 GEDI Survey.	Q1 2026	Diversity and Inclusion Specialist, Carers SIG	Chief People Officer, Angela Edwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carer-related questions included in survey</li> <li>• Sufficient response rate to enable data analysis</li> <li>• Data used to inform future actions and monitor progress over time.</li> </ul>