

Bankside Connects Session 2: What Does Hybrid Working Mean for Bankside?

The Impact of Hybrid Workplaces on Culture,
Community, and Local Identity

Wednesday 15 April 2026



Summary

- On 15th April, Better Bankside hosted the second event in the Bankside Connects series.
- Bankside Connects brings together senior leaders from across the neighbourhood to share ideas and build connections.
- This session focused on the new hybrid working landscape, and aimed to explore what's working, what's not, and how Bankside businesses can support one another.
- The panel discussion was chaired by Katie Matthews, Director of Communications and Engagement, Better Bankside, and featured three speakers from different sectors: Simon Winters, a Partner in Prager Metis LLP and Managing Partner of their London office; Megha Khanna, co-owner and manager of the Gladstone Arms pub; and Amy Elliott, Account Director and Head of Employee Engagement at Powwow Events.
- Along with approximately 30 senior leaders from Bankside businesses, they led a lively, frank, and engaging discussion.

Key Insights



- There is **no one single model** of hybrid working. Everyone is finding their way: developing, testing, and refining new models.
- Most organisations recognize that **hybrid working is here to stay**, and there's a need to embrace it while addressing the associated challenges.
- Leaders acknowledge that **hybrid working is now expected by employees**; most of them believe that they would struggle to recruit/retain employees if they did not offer this.
- Better Bankside's recent survey of its members revealed that **employee wellbeing**, and **recruitment/retention of staff**, are the two top priorities. Hybrid working speaks to these priorities.
- **Different sectors are affected differently.** For office-based businesses, it is very rare for employees to spend all of their working hours in the office. For hospitality businesses, there has been a different type of shift, where others have begun to use the venue as an 'office', a need they have responded to by offering new amenities.

Advantages of hybrid working

- Hybrid working enables organisations to **widen their recruiting pool** and to **make more effective use of their office space**, thus reducing overheads.
- Hybrid working also saves money for workers, **reducing travel costs** and commuting time, and allows greater opportunities for those who have childcare and other caring responsibilities, contributing to **greater sex equality and inclusivity** in the workplace.
- Hybrid working can **improve well-being and work-life balance** and can **increase productivity** by reducing distractions.



Adapting to challenges of hybrid working

- Hybrid working can make it **difficult to integrate and train new team members.**
- Informal conversations and learning ‘through osmosis’ – overhearing discussions, absorbing what is happening in the workplace – are crucial for people to learn and develop their skills. This requires not only the new starters to come in physically, but also the senior leaders who are needed to train and mentor them.
- Hybrid working requires an **explicit, structured, and detailed onboarding process** that includes **broader guidelines around workplace culture and values**, as well as **job-specific training.**
- It is also essential to introduce new starters to the **social opportunities, spaces, and team events** both within and outside the organisation, to foster connection and belonging. People are seeking genuine connections.
- New employees should also be **closely mentored and guided** to help them integrate into the team and offered regular two-way check-ins and feedback opportunities.



The importance of relationships



- Successful hybrid working requires **building trust** and **maintaining open, honest communication**. While some people need to demonstrate that they are committed to completing their work away from the office, others may need encouragement to ‘switch off’ when working from home.
- **Contact time with colleagues is essential** to maintain team bonding and morale. Team social events and designated ‘contact days’ with social events work well. Recent wellbeing and volunteering sessions run by Better Bankside have had excellent take-up, reflecting the demand for these kinds of activities.
- However, an overly strict attitude to which days should be designated as ‘in the office’ can backfire, depending on individuals’ commitments.
- **Different generations may have varying expectations** about work hours, boundaries, and social interaction. The most effective way to address this is through **ongoing, honest conversations**.
- Hospitality, which is often a first job for young people who then move on to other careers, offers a very effective training ground for work, as timekeeping, strict rules (e.g. food hygiene, checking ID, et cetera), and clear communication are essential.

Models of hybrid working

- There is **no one single model of hybrid working**. Everyone is finding their way: developing, testing, and refining new models. Most organisations recognize that flexible working is here to stay, and there's a need to embrace it while addressing the associated challenges.
- Hybrid working models can vary from a strict policy on numbers of days worked in the office per week, per month, or even per quarter, to more fluid and responsive models that may or may not take account of days worked on other sites, or while travelling.
- People might come into the office solely to meet and interact with others, while business planning and other types of focused work are undertaken elsewhere.

Models of hybrid working

For hospitality businesses, there has been a different type of shift, where people from other businesses have begun to use the venue as an 'office'. It has therefore become increasingly important for venues to offer appropriate facilities.

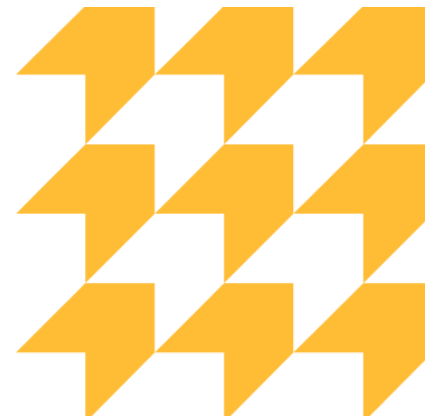
“Initially, post-covid, we saw a decrease in trade for lunch. But over the course of the years, especially in the last couple of years, things have changed with a hybrid and flexible working model. And now, we've seen an uplift in lunch trade again.”

“People are coming in for big team meetings, and I think there is a call on pubs and hospitality businesses to offer a working space in addition to just working from home. There are some locals of ours that come in and work from the pub during lunchtime, and it helps to build up that social environment. We offer a lunch express deal, free Wi-Fi, a projector, and so on. It's building an environment where people can work from the pub as well as just work from home. It's been an interesting journey.”

This is an example of economic resilience, and how businesses can respond to changing demand by adapting their offer.

Legal implications of hybrid working

- Some leaders have had difficulties with employees requesting further flexible working beyond what the organisation already offers and would like to understand more about the statutory requirements here. New employment legislation is coming into force in 2027 which will affect this.
- Leaders would welcome more guidance on the legal framework.
- Better Bankside is offering an introductory course on understanding and compliance with the new Employment Rights Act in June this year:
<https://www.seedl.com/o/betterbankside/programme/compliance/course/an-introduction-to-the-employment-rights-act>



Feedback from attendees

- 100 per cent of those who responded to the post-event survey rated the event as 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- 60 per cent rated the information provided as 'really useful', and 40 per cent as 'somewhat useful'.
- 100 per cent of survey respondents said they had made at least one new contact via the event.
- 100 per cent said they would recommend the event to a friend or colleague.



Feedback from attendees



- “The panel discussion was fascinating but I very much enjoyed the free flow of talk before and after the panel, and the way these conversations flowed easily around the formal Q&A.”
- “I really enjoyed the panel - and also the catching up with others afterwards”
- “[I enjoyed hearing] the different perspective from the various panel members.”
- “I enjoyed the relaxed and social atmosphere. It was great.”
- “It was interesting to hear how different businesses deal with the hybrid way of working and what entices their work force back into the offices.”

Feedback from attendees

- “Seeing how other companies are managing hybrid working including incentives [was really valuable]. I found it interesting talking about the intersection of boundaries, policy and culture when understanding what makes hybrid successful. The event was great.”
- “What I found most interesting was that we are all still trying to find the best solutions for hybrid / flexible working and how this will work for the next generation / starters coming through.”



Feedback from attendees



“The fact that the situation with regard to hybrid working has genuinely irreversibly changed in the past few years, in ways which are significant and consequential for a wide variety of businesses [interested me most], in particular the fact that the expectations of a younger generation entering the workforce include, as a given, that hybrid and flexible working will be permitted and encouraged. Having a slightly blinkered view of this question due to working for the same employer, which already had hybrid working norms prior to COVID, I found a lot of this information new and striking. The multiple ways in which different businesses are already adapting to this new reality, and the trade-offs involved, was also particularly interesting to me.”

“I've found in recent years that my employer is moving towards the same idea aired in the panel discussion, i.e. that coming into the office has to have some extra value as an experience in itself in order to draw people in, whether that comes in the form of finding ways teams can benefit from working together in person, or in the form of offering extra enticements (social activities, e.g.) I think in the case of [my organisation], they are struggling to find a formula that actually gives people an incentive, so it was very interesting to see how other companies have progressed with this.”

Further reading and resources



Acas, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, 'Organisational case studies on flexible working'

<https://www.acas.org.uk/research-and-commentary/organisational-case-studies-on-flexible-working>

Choudhury, Prithwiraj, Professor of Organisational Behaviour in the Department of Management at LSE

<https://prithwirajchoudhury.com/>

European Regional Development Fund, 'Hybrid Working: Create a hybrid way of working'

<https://theinclusivityproject.co.uk/hybrid-working-create-a-hybrid-way-of-working-full/>

Giray Aksoy, Cevat, Lecturer in Economics, Kings College London <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/cevat-giray-aksoy>

[Global Survey of Working Arrangements \(G-SWA\)](#), the largest cross-country survey to collect detailed information on workers' experiences and attitudes regarding remote work arrangements.

<https://wfhresearch.com/>

Kings College London, 'Working from home now 'defining feature' of UK labour market', 26 May 2025

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/working-from-home-now-defining-feature-of-uk-labour-market>

Parry, Jane, 'Hybrid working and UK Government policy', *House of Commons Library, UK Parliament*, 27 November, 2025 <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/hybrid-working-and-uk-government-policy/>

Sellman, Mark, 'What time does work finish on Fridays? 3pm if you WFH', *The Times*, 31 July 2025

<https://archive.ph/A8zpl>

Work Life, 'Hybrid working rights in the UK: What employees need to know in 2025', 22 September 2025

<https://work.life/blog/hybrid-working-rights-in-the-uk/>



Thank you