



Cabinet Office

How PAS 3000 helped improve smart working

PAS 3000 is now integral to the government's Civil Service working reform

The starting-point

In 2012 the Civil Service Reform initiative was calling for the 'creation of modern workplaces to enable flexible working'.

At the same time, the Olympics were coming to London. There was a serious concern that the transport system might not cope with the massive influx of visitors – and with 70,000 civil servants working in central London postcodes, it became an **urgent priority to explore new ways of working**.

For two months, civil servants in London were encouraged to work more flexibly by having virtual meetings and working remotely. "Lots of people found the experience hugely positive," says Richard Graham, Strategic Lead of the Cabinet Office's Great Place to Work programme.

"There was a feeling of 'this works really well'. It gave real momentum to our initial campaign "[The Way We Work](#)", which promoted smarter working throughout the Civil Service."

"The Way We Work" pioneered 'smart working', an approach to organizing work that maximizes flexibility, autonomy, and collaboration. Its aim was to **make flexibility the norm instead of the exception**, to create workplaces and practices that were fit for the 21st century. A key principle was that work should ultimately be about the results people achieve, not where they spend their day.

Since the start of the campaign, other smart working programmes have been initiated across the public sector. A great example is [Barnet Council's TW3 programme](#) that has made improvements across people, accommodation and technology to equip their workforce for flexible working.

“PAS 3000 is a brilliant document: well-conceived, readable, and very well regarded in the environment it’s used in. It’s central to our plans for how the Civil Service will work in future.”

Richard Graham,
Strategic Lead of ‘A Great Place to Work’, The Cabinet Office

The challenge

Although flexible working has been on the rise for years, many organizations are wary of changing the traditional workplace model, where employees are present and supervised all day, every day.

“Smart working is about focusing on people’s results, not on their presence,” says Andy Lake, founder of [Flexibility](#). **“We could see that organizations needed guidance on how to move to a trust-based culture,** where they trust their employees do their job well by working when and where they can be most productive.”

Even when senior managers were receptive to the idea, it was clear that smart working meant different things to different organizations. Their initiatives also often lacked integration and worked to separate timelines.

With smart working becoming more common, and with the advent of ‘Industry 4.0’, **organizations needed a single set of guidelines that brought together good practice across all disciplines** – from HR to property and technology.

The solution

To introduce guidance quickly, the Cabinet Office asked BSI to create a Publicly Available Specification (PAS). A PAS is a fast-track standard that can be created in 9-12 months.

“We wanted something flexible that we could shape with experience, but for the first time would represent a single code of practice applicable to all organizations,” says Richard Graham. “We went to BSI, who introduced us to the exciting world of PASs – and we could see that a PAS on smart working should absolutely be the first stage of our charter.”

The Cabinet Office sponsored the PAS and BSI began its independent, consensus-based development process. The steering group received input from organizations such as Agile Future Forum, workplace consultants AMA, the CIPD, Department of Health, Henley Business School, Local Government Association, Microsoft, Vodafone, Ministry of Justice, UCL’s Built Environment faculty, and the charity Working Families.



“The fact that PAS steering groups are so cross-sector is a big benefit,” says Andy Lake, the PAS’s technical author.

“Having charity and academic representatives there, as well as business and government, helped to keep our focus on people, as well as on business efficiency and the bottom line. And the manufacturers there made us think beyond office workers and towards people who must be physically present on site. Knowing what we’ve gathered in best practice from across all sectors gives people confidence in the PAS.”

Creating PAS 3000

This group developed the PAS rapidly by a fast turnaround at every stage: commenting on drafts, resolving technical issues, and submitting it for public consultation before reaching consensus. After approval by the Cabinet Office and by the BSI’s Director of Standards, BSI published the final document: **PAS 3000 Smart Working: Code of Practice.**

PAS 3000 covers changes to working practices, culture, working environments, and associated technology. By bringing together best practice from across the world and across disciplines, it allows organizations in all sectors to move from principles to standards and benchmark themselves against high performers.

The new PAS was welcomed by John Manzoni, then Permanent Secretary of the Cabinet Office, who said, **“It will establish good practice across a range of disciplines for the first time and help turn smart working from an art into a science.”**

Buy PAS 3000 [here](#).



The result

PAS 3000 has helped to create modern workplaces that will transform UK productivity. Organizations have seen excellent results from using PAS 3000 as a starting-point, or by using it to take a more strategic approach to modernization of working practices and physical workplaces.

By supporting greater flexibility and collaboration, and a better work-life balance, its benefits range from happier and more productive employees to increased retention, greater productivity, space efficiencies, and higher profits.

Organizations that have adopted smart working principles have also been better placed to react to the Covid-19 crisis by moving swiftly to remote working, while maintaining business functions as usual.

“We’ve upped our game in government since PAS 3000 was created,” says Richard Graham. “Before, we were just talking principles. Now it’s done exactly what we expected – it’s created a standard, and **it’s now government policy for every Civil Service organization to ensure it is aligned with it.**”

“PAS 3000 is central to our future plans; our Smarter Working programme will ensure that all parts of the Civil Service have integrated the principles of PAS 3000 by the end of this Parliament. This model has gone from rhetoric to reality, with government departments now making these principles part of their everyday practice.”

Richard Graham,
Strategic Lead of A Great Place to Work, The Cabinet Office

Helping to create new Government Hubs

An integral part of ensuring that the Civil Service is at the forefront of the smart working revolution is the Government Hubs programme.

These hubs, pioneered by HMRC working with the Government Property Agency, will ultimately bring together multiple departments into one building in city centres across the country. They are about modern workplace design, state-of-the-art mobile IT and, above all, will encourage people to work productively from a variety of locations, rather than being tied to a desk.

“These are brilliant buildings because they’ve been designed with PAS 3000 in mind from day one,” enthuses Richard. “The designers interpreted the PAS’s smart working principles in terms of office layout and usage, and they’re some of the best offices I’ve seen anywhere. You can make people’s whole lives better by improving the environment that they work in.”

About the sponsor

The UK Cabinet Office supports the Prime Minister and ensures the effective running of government, from developing policy to modernizing public services.

It is also the corporate headquarters of the Civil Service and takes the lead in critical policy areas. Its Smarter Working programme is designed to make the Civil Service a great place to work and to lead the way for organizations of all sizes and across all sectors.

Why BSI?

BSI lead the world in standards and our trademark Kitemark™ is recognized globally as a symbol of quality and safety. For a standard to be accepted and adopted by Governments, Industry, trade associations and businesses of all sizes it must be built on consensus and credibility. The PAS is developed through a rigorous consensus based process, evolved by BSI over more than 100 years.

Our aim

We aim to improve the quality and safety of products, services and systems by enabling the creation of standards and encouraging their use.

New standards are being developed all the time as new sectors, markets and business models emerge. The sooner these standards are in place, the faster and more efficiently growth occurs.

Take the lead in your sector

Learn more about what your business will gain by sponsoring a PAS, visit: bsigroup.com/pas

Or get in touch with us to discuss creating a PAS today!



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