

AIB says it is moving to minimum three-day office working

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Citing ‘collaboration, connection and innovation’, AIB has told its staff that there will be a minimum three days in the office by the start of next year, a move criticised by the FSU as “regressive and short-sighted”.

AIB’s announcement of three-day minimum office working comes one week after Bank of Ireland told its hybrid staff they will need to be on site eight days per month, starting this September (see [IRN 28/2025](#)).

Similar to its response to the Bank of Ireland hybrid working change, the Financial Services Union (FSU) has criticised the move by AIB, saying it “is a backward step for a bank that consistently presents itself as a family friendly employer”.

AIB says that its employees “benefit from in person time with their own team and broader colleagues”, which enables “greater collaboration, connection and innovation that supports our customers, the economy and communities in achieving future success.”

It says also that it recognises “the benefits of structured, hybrid working”, is “committed to enabling it”, and that it has a “balanced and comprehensive hybrid working structure in place” which is kept under review “to ensure it continues to serve the needs of both our customers, colleagues and the Group.”

The extent to which work can be completed in-office or remotely “varies depending on the needs of our customers and our business”.

The Bank uses three categories of staff in terms of place of work: office/branch staff who are office-based five days per week; “office-centric” staff who are onsite three to four days a week; and “remote-centric” staff who are office-based two days a week.

AIB told IRN that employees “will be required to work in an office-based location for a minimum of three days a week. This will be phased in and will take full effect from 1 January 2026.”

NO RATIONALE

John O’Connell, General Secretary of the FSU said, AIB “have given no rationale for this change” and that the current working arrangements “has resulted in record profits for the Bank over the last number of years showing the benefits and productivity of remote working.”

“There is no justification for this change and the decision should be revisited with any possible change fully reflective of the views of staff”, he added.

Mr O’Connell also commented that it “seems inconceivable to think both Banks [AIB and Bank of Ireland] made these decisions independent of each other.”

“For AIB, a highly successful business to not fully understand the labour market and to make significant workplace changes without prior consultation with their staff indicates real cultural deficits within its decision-making processes. This is a regressive step which has the potential to create unforeseen future problems for both banks”, he said.

HYBRID RATIO SHIFT

The other main retail bank, PTSB, told IRN that it reviewed its Smart Working Policy earlier this year and has not implemented any changes recently.

About 70% of PTSB employees work on a hybrid basis. These employees “are generally on site for a minimum of two days a week, with team arrangements set at a local level, aligned to our Smart Working Policy, and in consideration of meeting the needs of our customers, colleagues and business”, a spokesperson said.

That the two largest retail banks are increasing office days may be reflective of work changes in banking internationally. It also means that a competitive edge in a tight labour market may not be lost if there is a general shift towards more office working.

Company-wide policy change, setting new minimums, is also management’s way of handling deficits in workforce dynamics/performance – especially at a generational level – and may reduce the exposure to allegations of unfairness in local arrangements, where some staff have more remote working days than others.

A 3:2 or 2:3 office/remote mix have been the most common hybrid working ratios, but even shifting from a two-day office minimum to three days can raise issues, when a two-day office arrangement has informed other decisions, such as childcare.