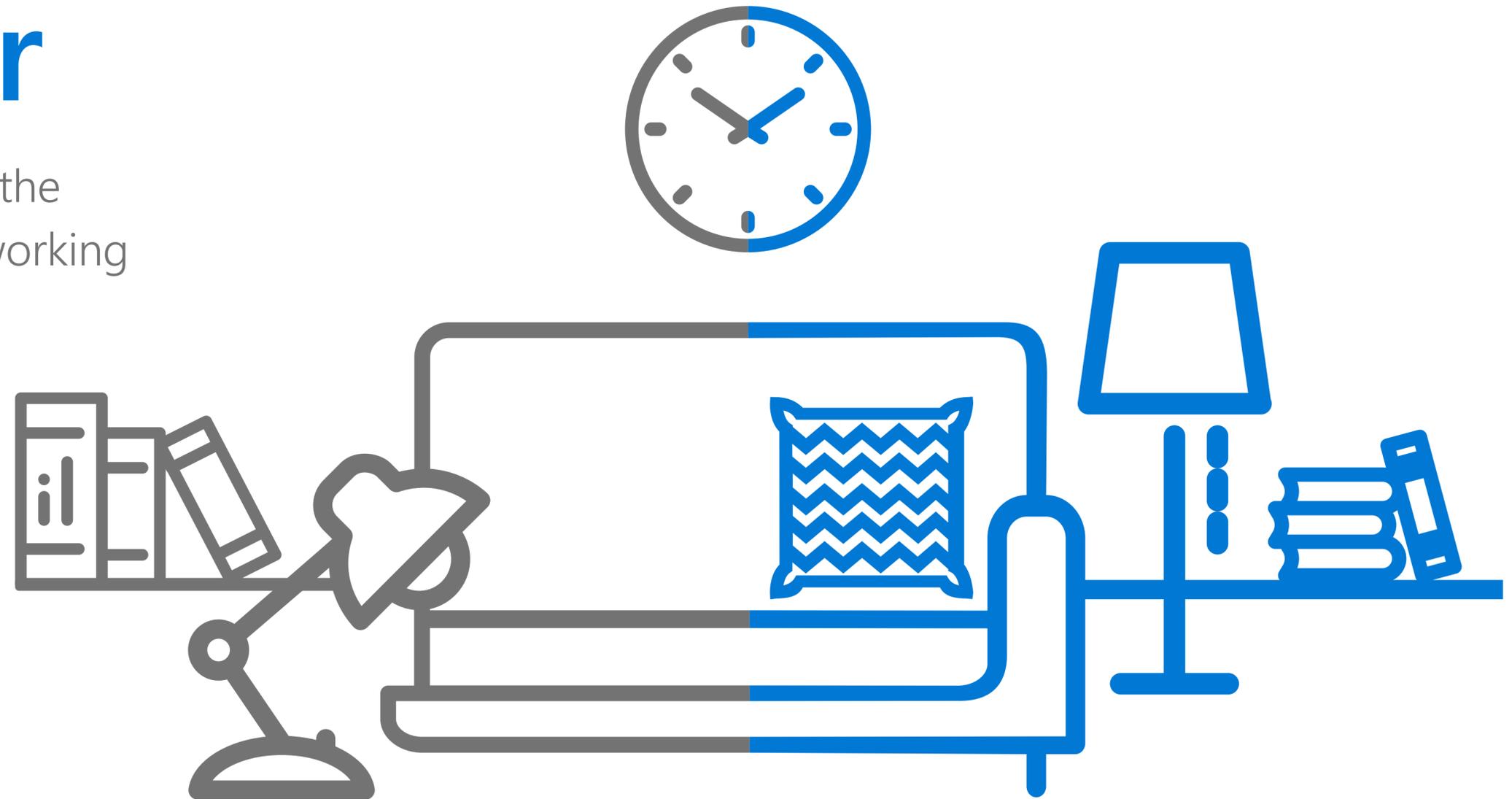


Work Smarter to Live Better

Understanding the new expectations of the
UK workforce when it comes to hybrid working



The Future is Hybrid: Helping Organisations Work Smarter to Live Better

At the end of 2020, Microsoft Surface conducted research to understand the habits and new expectations of the UK workforce when it comes to hybrid working. In-depth interviews were conducted with senior business leaders across the UK, in addition to a YouGov research survey, which took place online with over 4,000 UK office workers surveyed.¹ The findings of this report have been analysed in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the professional body for HR and people development.

¹Total sample size was 4282 employees surveyed that work in an office, of which there were 2863 that work in an office and work from home. Unless otherwise stated, the findings in this report relate to the 2863 sample that work in an office and work from home.



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Foreword



Ben Willmott, CIPD Head of Public Policy



We are delighted to be partnering with Microsoft Surface on this important research into hybrid working. The continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered the biggest homeworking experiment we have ever seen in the UK. It has opened-up mindsets about the possibility of remote working, with previous [CIPD research](#) showing that productivity levels have remained constant, or even improved throughout this period.

However, this is not home-working in normal times – much of this experience has been enforced home working and many people have been dealing with a range of additional pressures and anxieties.

This research clearly shows that over half (56%) of workers surveyed are happier working from home and a similar proportion say they have a better work-life balance (57%). Furthermore, not having to commute has freed up personal time for many people, who have used it to focus more on what matters to them.

Yet, many report being stretched further than before, and more than half (53%) agree they feel they have to be available at all times, and work longer hours and take fewer breaks (52%). It is therefore crucial that line managers are ensuring that workers are not over-working and that organisations are supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of all employees. This will require senior leaders to model the behaviours they expect of others and for businesses to focus more on equipping managers with the people management skills they need to manage and support more home and remote workers.

It is clear that more employers intend to adopt a hybrid mixture of home and workplace working in the future and this is certainly positive as it can provide greater employee flexibility and work-life balance, and support greater diversity and inclusion. Importantly, our [review](#) of the homeworking evidence also suggests that partial, voluntary homeworking can help to create good quality jobs.

We see the emergence of four timely themes in these findings for organisations and people professionals.

“It is clear that more employers intend to adopt a hybrid mixture of home and workplace working in the future and this is certainly positive as it can provide greater employee flexibility and work-life balance, and support greater diversity and inclusion.”



Four themes for organisations and people

1 Support hybrid workers through good people management

Design work processes that suit all locations, concentrating particularly on knowledge-sharing, co-ordination of work and team relationships to encourage performance and innovation.

Encourage line managers to: hold regular catch-ups with employees to discuss any work and personal concerns they might have; make any reasonable adjustments that are needed at home or in the physical workspace; set clear objectives and manage by outputs rather than inputs.



2 Ensure fairness of opportunity

Ensure ongoing access to development and career conversations for all employees. Make sure there is a fair allocation of work and opportunities, and record training and development sessions so that employees are able to catch-up at a time that suits them.



3 Put health and wellbeing front and centre

Ensure that employees are not over-working and remind them about the importance of maintaining their physical and mental wellbeing and taking regular breaks, fresh air and exercise. Make it clear to all employees any health and wellbeing support you have available. Crucially, ensure line managers understand the importance of showing empathy and providing support and flexibility in their approach to people management, regardless of whether their staff are in the office or working remotely. These behaviours are central to building trust in the employment relationship and for managing and preventing stress and helping staff balance work and personal/domestic responsibilities.



4 Offer a range of broader flexible working options

Go beyond remote working and look at introducing wider flexible working options like job shares, compressed hours, flexible start, and finish times. Support flexibility from the start by recruiting flexibly and making the right to request Flexible Working a day 1 right.

Executive summary



Howard Lewis, Surface Business Group Lead, Microsoft UK



2020 was a watershed year for workplace digital transformation. Out of necessity, organisations accelerated their modernisation journeys – making significant digital infrastructure investments to support remote operations and embrace new ways of working. This collective shift has changed the nature of work. Flexible working has taken on a whole new meaning, with remote work suddenly feeling ‘the norm’. Employees have been empowered to think about where and how they are most productive, whilst employers have been tasked with ensuring the devices they provide to their organisations are fit for today’s purpose. The ability to successfully support remote operations and distributed teams is now indispensable for business resilience and innovation, with technology playing a vital part.

To better understand the changing workplace and the role technology has in supporting this paradigm change, Microsoft Surface conducted a large-scale survey of thousands of UK employees and put our

findings to senior business leaders in the UK for their expert opinions. The results, analysed in partnership with the CIPD, are a fascinating window into the ways in which we have adapted - including how we use our devices and structure our working days to compensate for the limitations of virtual-only connections. The results also point to a number of factors that organisations must navigate in the months and years ahead, including how business investment priorities will require change to keep up with employees’ new demands, and the challenges associated with developing talent and protecting equality of opportunity remotely.

The findings do suggest a disconnect between employee experience and employee expectation. Whilst staff are generally feeling healthier and happier working from home, and would like to maintain this new working rhythm, many report longer working hours and are looking for employers to provide more resources to support mental health.

It seems that whilst staff perceive their home environments to be happier places to work, in reality, working for long periods of time away from colleagues is potentially having a detrimental impact on individuals’ everyday lives and lifestyles, due to new pressures that have arisen.

That's why, as firms across the UK are currently taking a digital-first approach, few plan to have a 100% remote workforce for the long term.

The likeliest scenario is that most organisations adopt a hybrid working model, wherein the workforce is split between working remotely and working in the office. What the office will go on to physically look like remains unknown, with leaders examining the benefits of adopting co-working spaces, moving to satellite offices or redesigning their existing office infrastructure. Regardless, adopting a hybrid model offers the best of both worlds: structure and sociability on one hand, and independence and flexibility on the other. With all these considerations and challenges

comes the requirement for the right tools and devices to keep us collaborating, connected and able to find balance in our day. It is a chance to refocus on what matters – giving people the devices and support to be more productive and creative at work, so that they can lead richer and more satisfying lives – wherever they are.

Microsoft Surface is focused on empowering organisations with modern technology to help navigate this pivotal transition and support employees in the new hybrid era. The shift to hybrid working has presented organisations with a golden opportunity to revisit the role of technology in the workplace, and therefore unlock the broader opportunity to innovate and reimagine the world of work.



It is clear UK workforces will need to:



Address critical questions about resilience and workplace culture



Help employees mindfully disconnect



Foster a culture where people and performance can both thrive



Help employees remain flexible with devices that can seamlessly integrate from the desktop one minute, to being just as productive when on the go the next

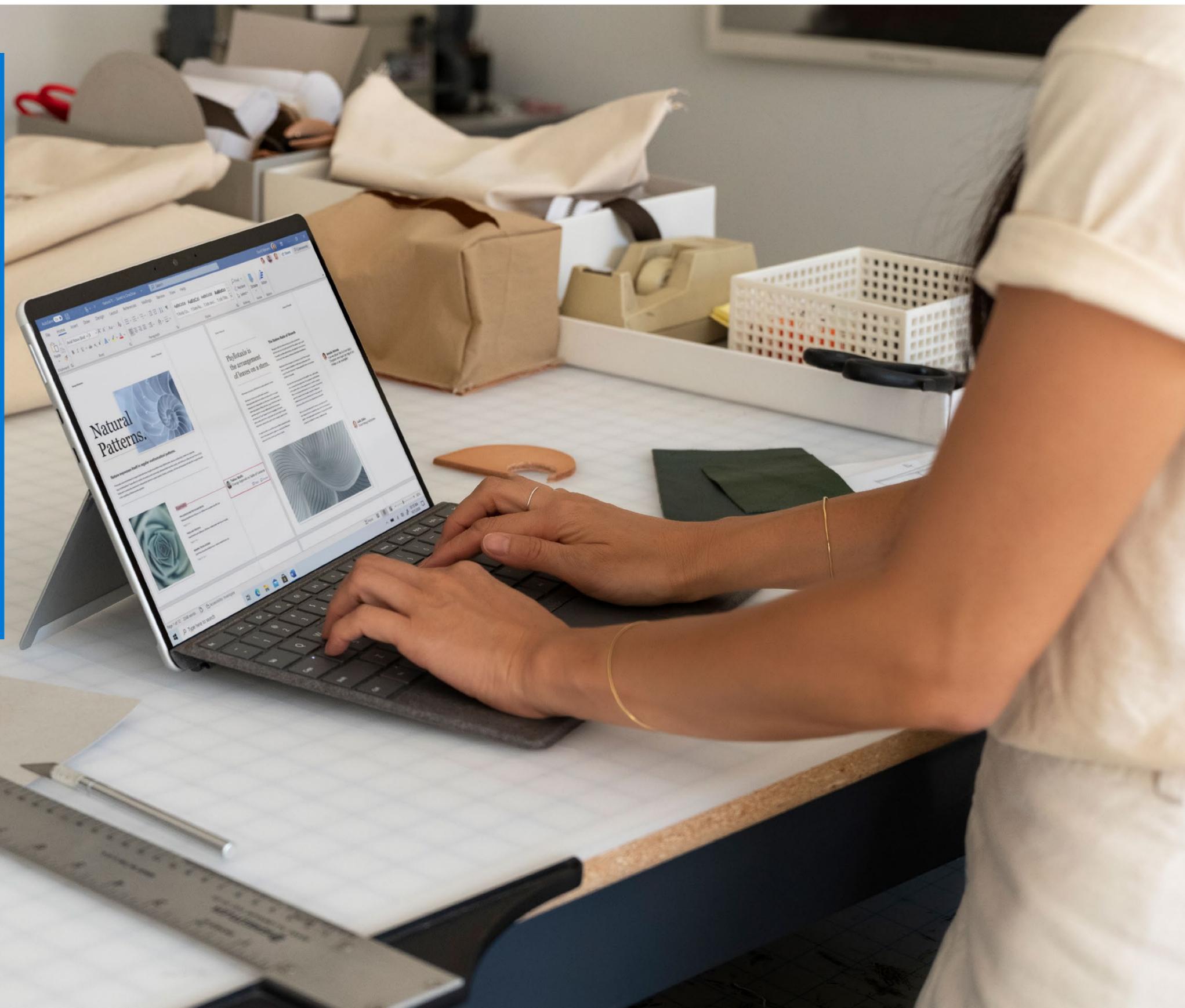
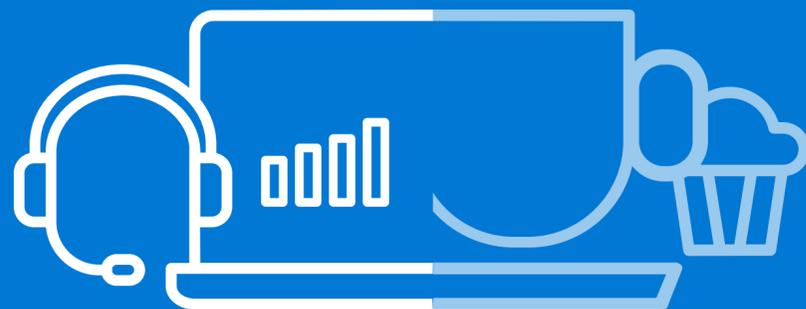


Create a new team standard where connection, collaboration and well-being are not just valued, but seen as vital to success



Chapter one

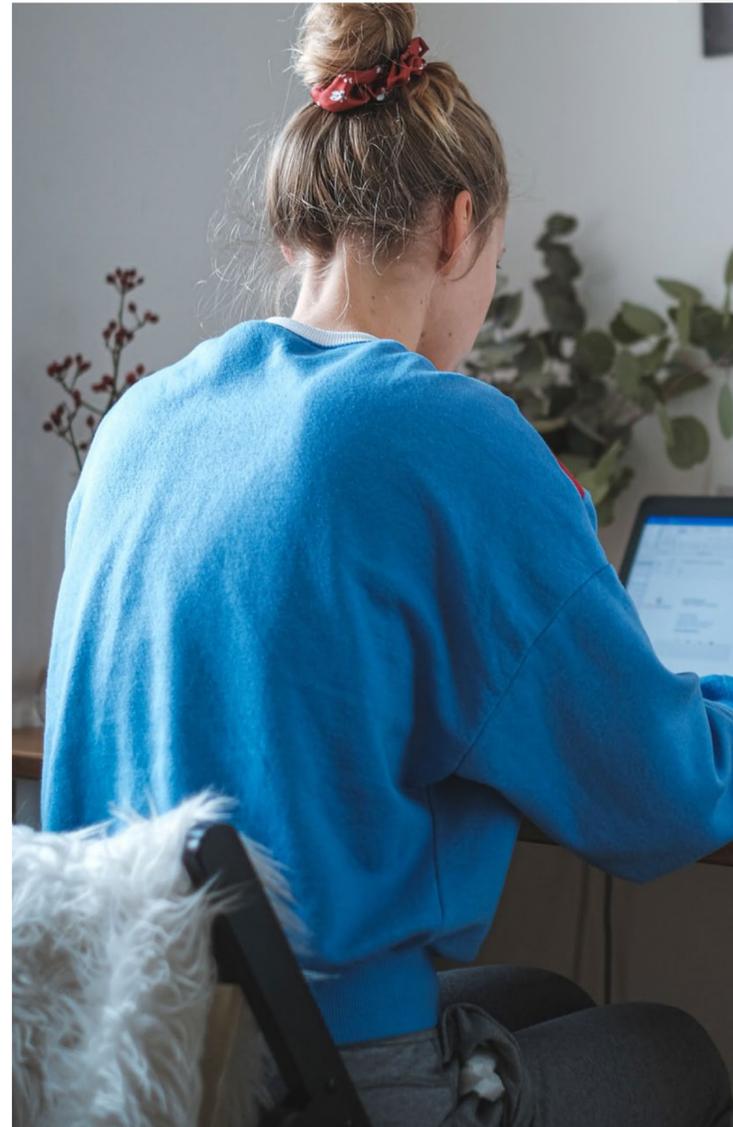
Embracing hybrid working habits



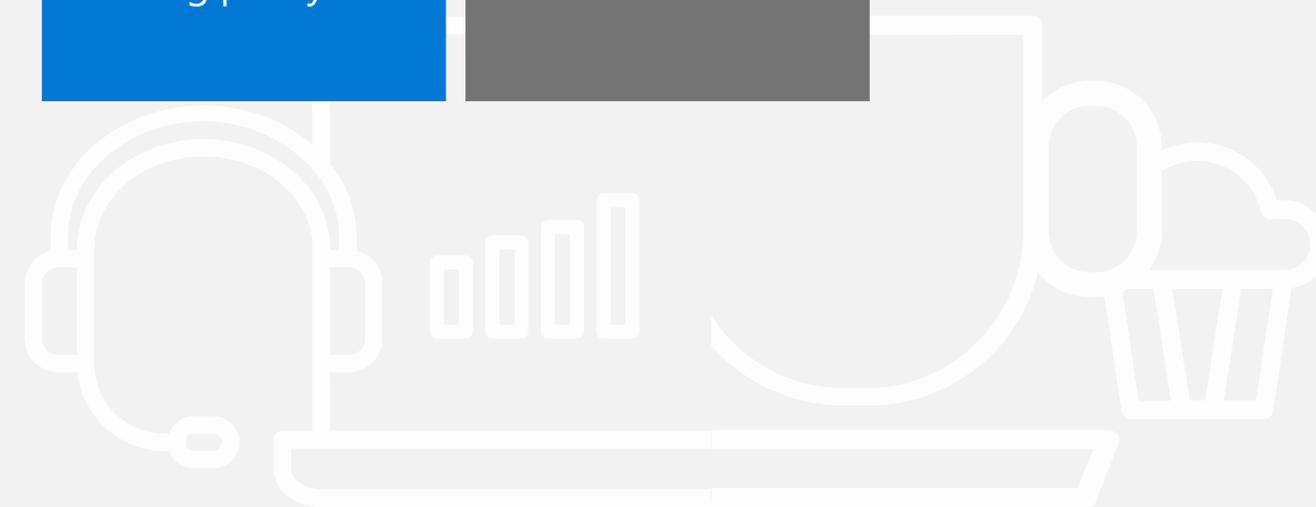
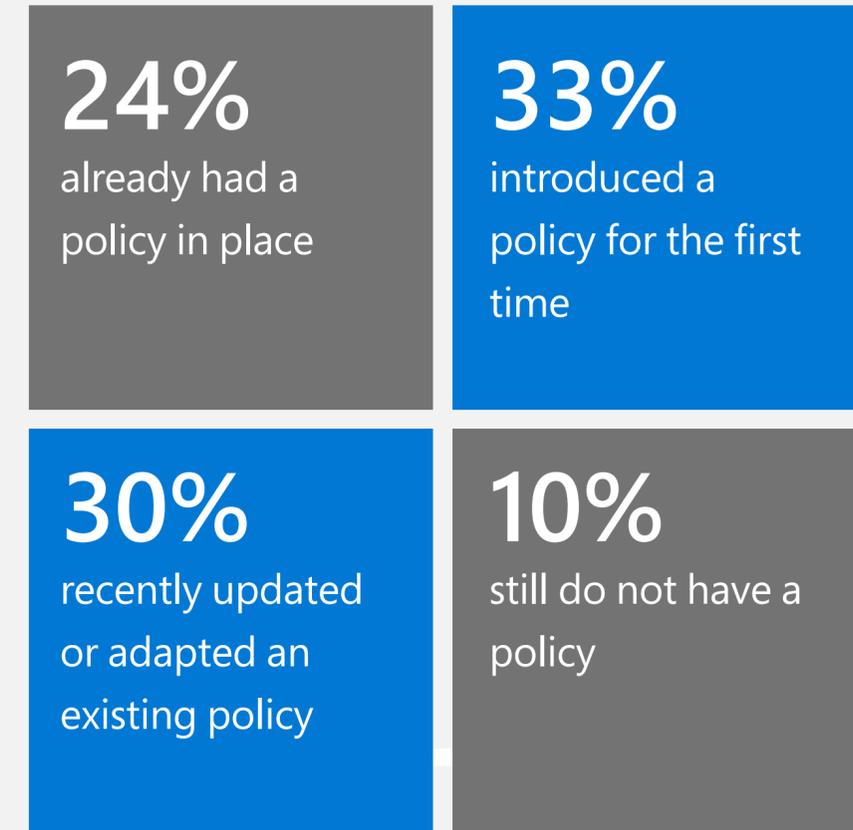


Hybrid work habits

The response to this public health moment has shown that UK organisations can shift operations swiftly when their needs demand it. However, the scramble and upheaval of the early days has given way to a more deliberate and thoughtful approach to managing remote work. The new research reveals almost 9 out of 10 (87%) say their businesses have adapted to hybrid working. The majority of leaders have evolved their work from home policies to support staff and their well-being, which has required looking at everything from employee benefits, to training, to roles and responsibilities.



Work from home policies in UK organisations have evolved in recent months as follows:



As a result of these new and updated work from home policies, brought about by COVID-19 restrictions, employees are embracing remote working. Three-fourths (74%) of those surveyed agree their company actively encourages them to work from home (in accordance with government guidelines and their personal needs). Of those whose organisations have a formal working from home policy, 63% disagree they feel pressure to work from the office, even if guidelines allowed them to, and two fifths (41%) of employees have chosen not to go into the office since the start of the first lockdown.

63%

disagree they feel pressure to work from the office

41%

have chosen not to go into the office since the start of the first lockdown

As one C-suite leader interviewed said, *“It has taken a pandemic to realise the vision of many CIOs who have been driving for workplace flexibility for a long time. It had been drowned out by other business imperatives, but the pandemic has unlocked a lot of forward thinking out of necessity, rather than desire.”*

Many recognise that COVID-19 has been the external stimulus to drive disruptive transformation. Change such as this can be beneficial and bring with it a newfound resilience within organisations.

A common finding from the business leaders interviewed was the importance of regular and open communication throughout such change. Since the onset of COVID-19 leaders have been communicating with their workforce more than they ever have before, and the impact of this has been

positive. Steve Dalton, Managing Director of Sony UK Technology Centre stated: “we have communicated more now than ever. I have sent far more frequent communication bulletins to our staff on the status of our company, our business situation and my personal thoughts and experiences. The feedback we have received is that staff are almost waiting for these updates – they want to know what we are doing and what I am thinking – so we have several mechanisms to make sure it reaches everybody.”

Clearly, organisations and their employees have adapted to this new reality, and new policies and processes will help ensure that staff are kept updated and hybrid working remains the norm long after it is safe to return to the office.



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Steve Dalton, Managing Director of Sony UK Technology Centre

Case study



Lorraine Culligan,
Group Director, People and
Culture at Primark Stores

Primark operates in over 380 stores in thirteen countries across Europe and America, with approximately 70,000 staff. Here, Lorraine Culligan, Group Director, People and Culture, discusses how it has supported its staff at different stages of the global health pandemic.

'Stay connected from the top floor to the shop floor'

PRIMARK®

How have your operations adapted as a result of COVID-19?

In September 2019 we launched a new initiative, Your Day, Your Way, which gave our head office colleagues the opportunity to work more flexibly in a way that suited them. This included working from home one day a week and optional 2pm finish on Fridays. As part of that roll-out we issued everyone in our offices with new equipment to enable them to work remotely whether that meant from home, another office or a store. In hindsight, this was of great benefit as otherwise we would have faced a much bigger challenge in March 2020.

How critical was communication in supporting the workforce?

The one thing that we have done well right from the beginning is communication. Our internal communications team worked really hard to make sure that we had a regular drumbeat of constant messaging, ensuring we were clear in what we were saying and that people heard directly from the leadership team. Hearing from our leaders was a point of difference and we were very honest in our positioning. None of us had faced this type of situation before, so we were learning as we went and gave constant updates on what we knew in that moment.

Our digital learning platform was also useful giving our colleagues easy access to information and guidelines to support them. The technology enables everyone to learn more flexibly to suit different needs – our digital platform enables our people to access the information they need when it suits them, rather than being at a prescribed time.

Will you return to the office or maintain a hybrid approach moving forwards?

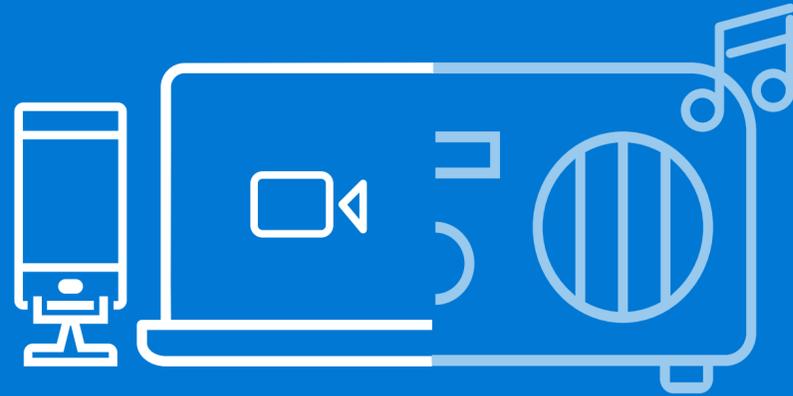
We have a working group in place considering all options that would work for the business and our people. We are a business that thrives on collaboration and we do have colleagues who need to be in the office for a number of different reasons. We need to consider all of the learnings from the past 12 months to find the best solution for the business that allows us to be more flexible and agile, all against the backdrop of supporting our teams in store and ultimately our customers.

I am very proud of how our people adapted to such new and unfamiliar ways of working so quickly. I think it really comes down to individual circumstances and the jobs that people need to do. Some individuals really enjoy being in the office and socialising. However, if we have learned anything from the pandemic it is that people can work very effectively from different locations and I would expect a more blended approach in the future.



Chapter two

Employees feel well-equipped for hybrid working



This Lease Agreement is made between [Redacted] LLC ("Landlord"), and Kai Carter ("Tenant") located at Lake Union Center, Seattle, WA 98101.

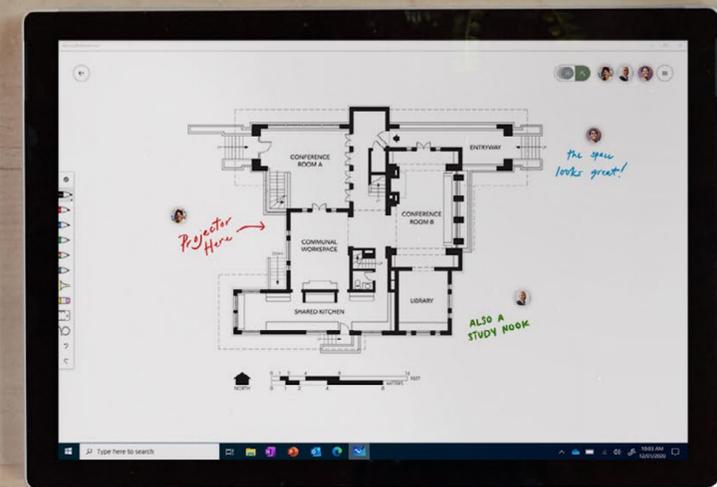
PREMISES. Landlord, in consideration of the lease payments to be made by Tenant, shall lease to Tenant the premises located at Lake Union Center, Seattle, WA 98101, consisting of Floors 4, 5, and 6 (the "Premises") located at Lake Union Center, Seattle, WA 98101.

TERM. The lease term will begin on October 01, 2020 and will terminate on September 30, 2021.

LEASE PAYMENTS. Tenant shall pay to Landlord monthly installments of \$8,000.00, payable in advance on the 1st day of each month. Lease payments shall be made to the Landlord by direct deposit. The payment method may be changed from time to time by the Landlord.

POSSESSION. Tenant shall be entitled to possession on the first day of the term of this Lease, and shall yield possession to Landlord on the last day of the term of this Lease, unless otherwise agreed by both parties in writing. At the expiration of the term, Tenant shall remove its goods and effects and peacefully yield up the Premises to Landlord in as good a condition as when delivered to Tenant, ordinary wear and tear excepted.

USE OF PREMISES. Tenant may use the Premises only for conducting business. The Premises may be used for any other purpose only with the prior written consent of Landlord, which shall not be unreasonably withheld. Tenant shall notify Landlord of any anticipated extended absence from the Premises no later than the first day of the extended absence.



Equipped for hybrid work

Along with the right policies and processes, an effective hybrid workplace also requires the right technology. Fortunately, the data shows that the majority of organisations have stepped up to prepare and support their workforce for hybrid working with suitable tools such as Office 365, Microsoft Teams and instant messaging. Nearly half of employees (49%) surveyed that work in an office and work from home said their organisation has upgraded or introduced new communication tools, and 65% agree that their organisation has provided them with everything they need to work effectively from home. Only 15% agree the collaboration tools they use are not effective, and only 16% agree they did not have the right technology to work remotely.

Furthermore, given the increased risk of security vulnerabilities associated with remote working, organisations have taken extra steps to secure their operations in

the face of new working habits. 73% of respondents agree that their organisation's security measures make them feel that their devices are well-protected when they work from home. One CIO interviewed from the not-for-profit sector deployed 1,000 laptops to their workforce in six weeks, with security a key consideration:

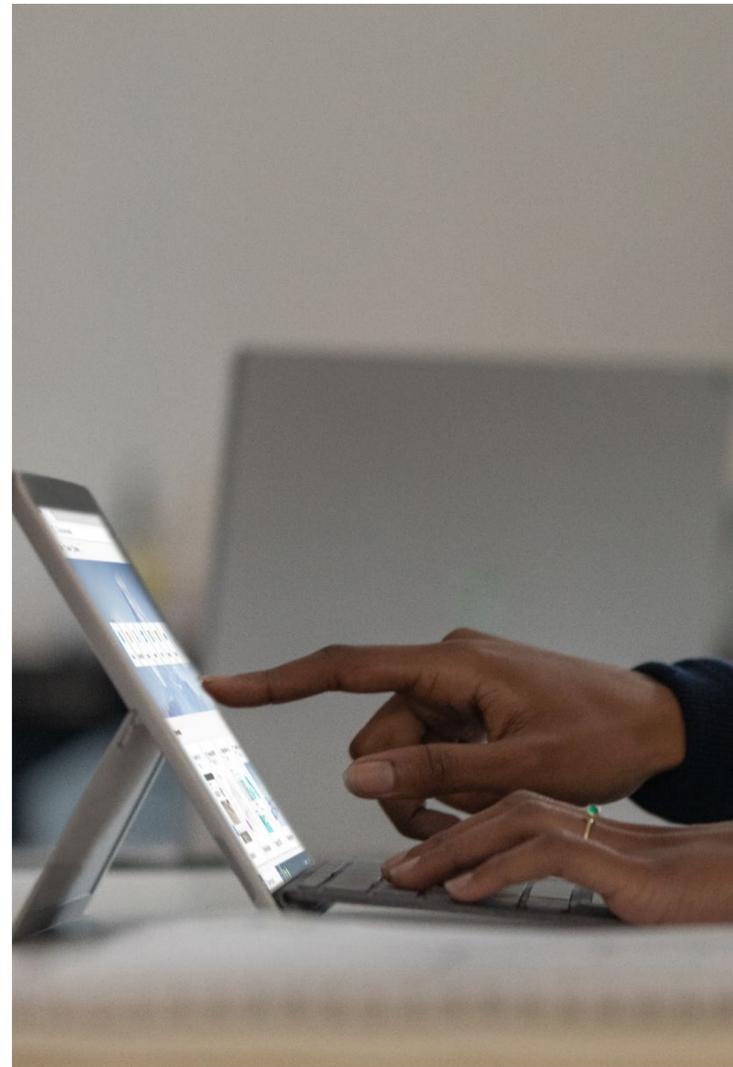
"The project was delivered with security as our first priority. We've also made our security function available to staff on a personal level, making sure they get proper virus protection on personal devices at home. By addressing their personal network, we're increasing security awareness across the workforce."



However, amongst the business leaders interviewed there was not a clear consensus on how secure their remote workforces are, suggesting a disconnect between the confidence of staff and senior leadership teams. Whilst many leaders felt that staff were well equipped, they were closely examining the potential risks of home personal networks.

As one CIO stated, "We need to come up with solutions that allow people to operate in an 'always-on' scenario. If you make everyone an extension of the office, what used to be 5,000 people in one building suddenly becomes 5,000 people in 5,000 buildings. That work to build a larger wrap of security is more complicated, so I expect to see an increase in the volume of spend on cybersecurity over the next five years."

Further investment and support such as this, including providing employees with secure devices, will not only keep businesses operational in the face of large-scale changes to working habits, but also help prepare employees for a longer-term future of hybrid working.



Microsoft Security on Surface

Security protections maintained by Microsoft are built into every layer of a Surface device. Our customers use Surface devices across a variety of mission critical scenarios – from collaboration in Office on important documents, to Microsoft Teams calls with co-workers across the globe. Providing robust protection against the latest malware and ransomware is a critical goal. Endpoint security enables organisations to manage devices through the cloud wherever employees work, to stay secure and maintain control.



Case study



Dr David Greenberg,
CEO and Founder, Eave

Eave creates technology to prevent occupational deafness, with a mission to eliminate the isolation and loneliness caused by hearing loss. It is based in Central London. Dr David Greenberg, CEO and Founder, discusses how the business has equipped its staff for working from home.

E A V E

How has COVID-19 impacted the organisation?

The way we do business has changed and the way we operate is very different compared to the start of 2020. We have always had a 'Work From Home' policy and prior to COVID-19 around 80% of our team were regularly in the office; the other 20% worked flexibly. Now, we have seen four or five waves of change and when offices are open we have around 30% of the team on-site.

For our customers, we have had to change the way we organise deliveries, installation and training. Internally, it has impacted almost every level of our business operations

from how we communicate within the team to how we hire. However, our productivity levels have stayed the same. There are small examples where it may have gone up or down, but on a whole we are just as productive as before.

What are some of the challenges you faced in terms of equipping your staff to work from home?

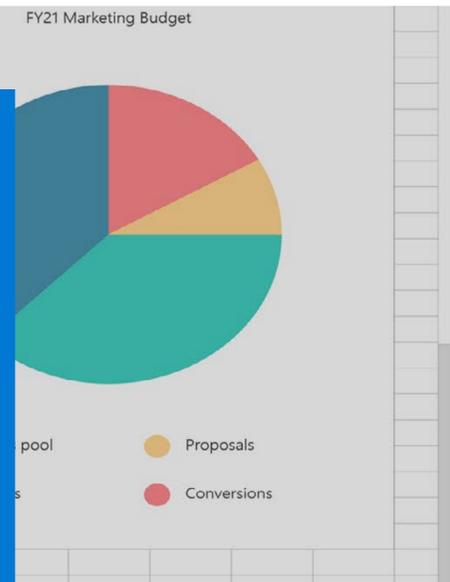
Our staff are equipped with a work computer to get their job done and those devices are secure as can be. What has been on my mind is connectivity. One of the most frustrating things is when staff are on a video call and it gets disrupted by a connectivity issue. We probably will not be able to get involved in having new cabling put in for people's home networks, but one solution could be to make a budget available to staff so they can upgrade their connection to whatever the fastest broadband option is. If you can avoid disruption caused by connectivity issues, you can address a source of pain that is causing some people to come into the office to meet face-to-face.

What other support have you offered to remote staff?

As we progressed through the various lockdowns we were able to learn from what had come before. This meant we could do certain things that we knew would make working from home a little bit easier and communicate how the organisation really cares. Our communications team really wanted to support the physical and mental well-being of our staff as we know how difficult it can be to adapt to new scenarios and different working routines. Recently, we sent everyone a plant to bring some greenery into their home space and a branded water bottle to stay hydrated. We also gave everyone a £10 voucher to buy something that made their work from home space better and which they could show to other staff in our virtual catch-ups. All of this was in addition to virtual coffee mornings we hosted, which aimed to recreate that social feeling of seeing people face-to-face.

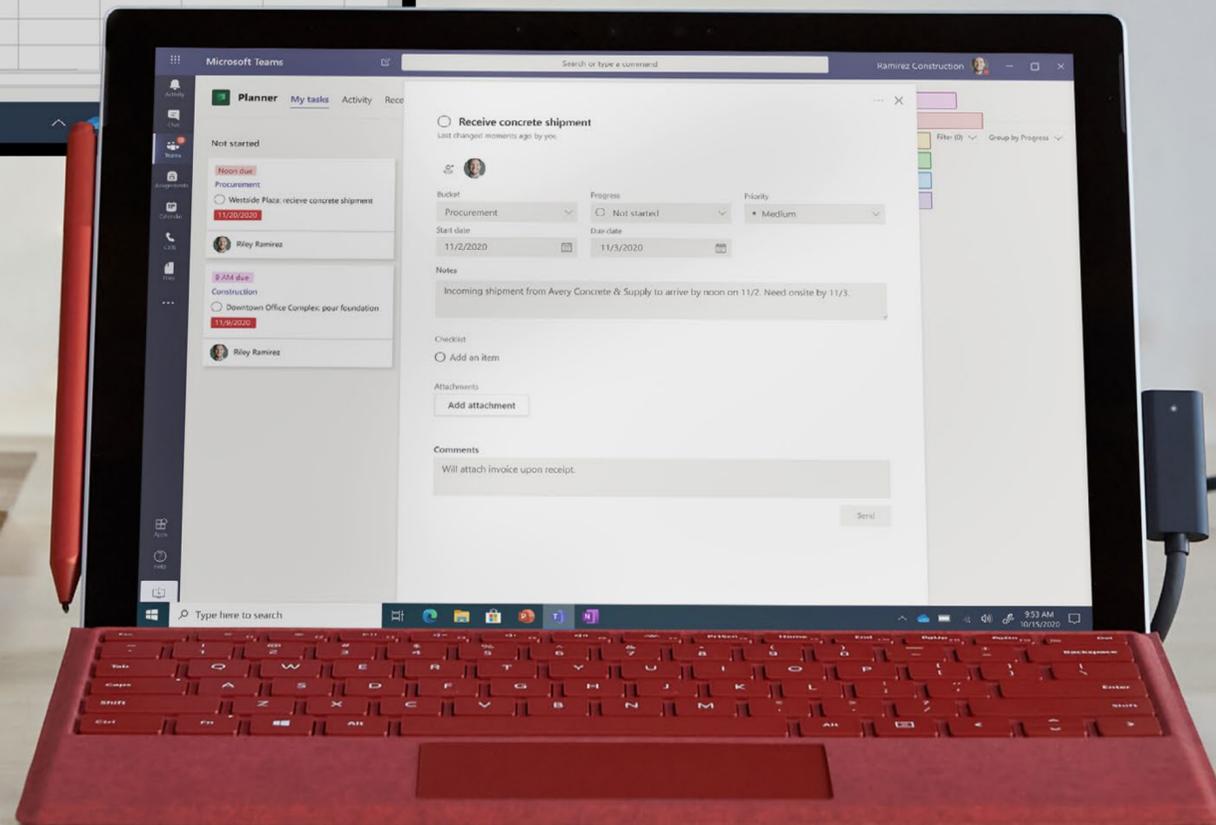
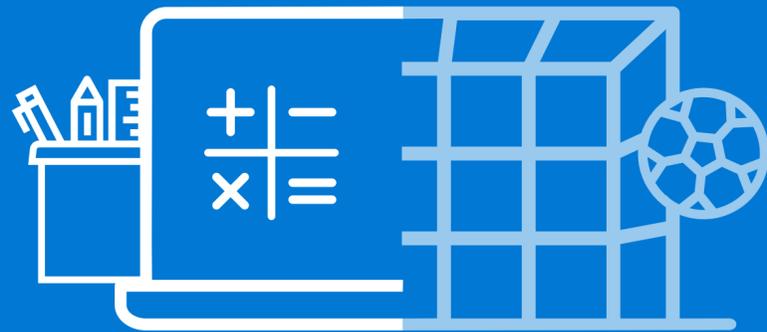


6	Contracts/proposals	\$17K	\$23K			
7	Sales conversions	\$6K				
8						



Chapter three

Working from home makes people happier



Happier at home

This new way of working has provided people with an opportunity to live life to a different rhythm, and UK employees are embracing the opportunity. According to the survey, 44% of people are working the same number of hours that they did before, but to a different pattern based on the schedule that works best for them. Nearly half (48%) take their full lunch break without feeling guilty most days, and 55% use their lunch break to focus on their personal life.



Furthermore, not having to commute has freed up personal time for many people, who have used it to spend more time on what matters to them:

75%
spend more time
with friends and
family

79%
are better able to
balance running
their households
with work

70%
have more
time to invest in
their personal
well-being





Working from home is also allowing individuals to develop their skills elsewhere; 33% report that it allows them to pursue their own hobbies and interests.

When it comes to working from home, there's evidence people want this to stick, with 56% reporting an increase in their happiness levels when they work from home. Nearly one in five (17%) would not choose to go back to the office to work when the restrictions have been lifted.

These findings have profound implications for business leaders in the UK and around the world. If the majority of their workforce is happier working from home, this creates new mandates and incentives to build an effective hybrid workplace that works for everyone.

Businesses will need to explore how to make better human connections for its hybrid teams, with technology such as life-sized video and clear audio. The Surface Hub 2S can bring people together wherever they work. Meet, move and collaborate without boundaries.

33%

report that it allows them to pursue their own hobbies and interests

56%

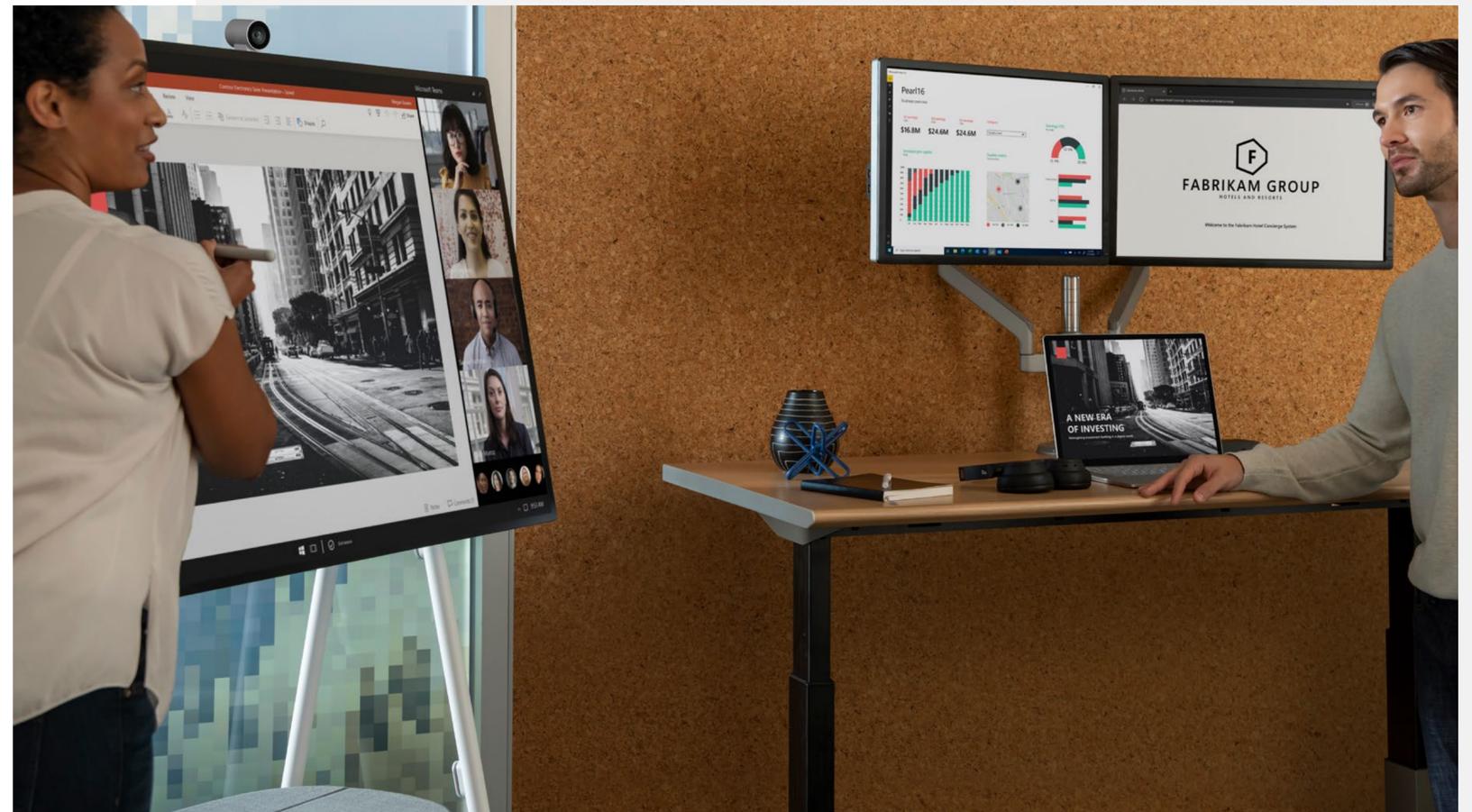
reporting an increase in their happiness levels when they work from home

17%

would not choose to go back to the office to work when the restrictions have been lifted

"When we first started working from home everyone said they couldn't work that way. Now, staff are saying if they have to come back into the office, they will no longer want to work here at all. We have had a complete change in people's mindsets. Our staff now believe they've got the tools they need to do their jobs even when working from home. I think our workforce will remain virtual moving forwards and this will mean smaller offices that are less traditional and more focused on collaboration and engagement"

COO in the healthcare sector





Chapter four

Although we're happier working from home, we're under increased pressure



Under increased pressure

Whilst many people and organisations have enthusiastically embraced the shift toward remote working, the hybrid workplace comes with challenges. More than half of employees feel happier working from home, and 46% feel healthier.

However, this overall positive sentiment towards working environments does not necessarily translate to the work itself.

Many employees report that they are being stretched further than before in the work they need to deliver. Nearly one in three (30%) report an increase in their hours whilst working from home, and more than half (53%) agree they feel they have to be available at all times, and work longer hours, and take fewer breaks (52%).

These findings suggest a disconnect between staff sentiments and employer demands. The positive impact on happiness

caused by being based at home comes at the cost of visibility – meaning staff feel they need to show their worth by putting in a longer shift.

Staff are mindful of this, however. As a result of these new pressures, for more than a third of people surveyed (36%), mental health and resilience resources were the most popular option when it comes to selecting training to build remote working skills. Employees want the happiness they experience working from home to translate across their various work demands. However, respondents surveyed report that only 29% of organisations have introduced additional benefits and resources to support employees' physical and mental well-being.

Senior leaders acknowledged the challenge of supporting mental health and well-being amongst their staff, with one noting:

“Mental health is a real issue and I have had to come to terms with it myself. As an extrovert getting energy from being around people, to being stuck in a virtual prison of four walls, has affected me on a personal level. There is an increase in people becoming more aware of this mental health risk and it is becoming more socially acceptable to talk about it. The next challenge with flexible working will be addressing people who no longer have to commute to the office but are choosing to fill the time saved with even more work.”



Another challenge identified by leaders was how to recognise changes in behaviour and provide support to staff when they are fully remote. Atif Hafeez, CFO in the B2B Private Equity sector, stated that bringing in external specialist support was one solution to this:

“Unlike the pre-COVID working environment, we don’t have the luxury of in-person meetings when our teams are working from home. Therefore, we are training our team managers as to how to be more effective under the given circumstances. Previously the external counsel was enlisted only when it was specifically needed. Now, we are having to retain the external counsel to support our staff because the need for that is rather regular.”

In general, there’s a large discrepancy in employer support for physical and mental well-being across industries. The survey shows that employees working in industries that have been most impacted by the public health crisis are receiving the least support; for example, of those who said that their organisation has introduced additional benefits and resources to support their health and mental wellbeing (29%), fewer than 2% of those were working in medical and health services. By contrast, the industries investing more in employee health and well-being, such as finance/accounting (18%) and IT/telecoms (16%), are also the industries where employees feel best supported.²

²Of the 53% of respondents who said they have felt well supported by their employer during this time, the breakdown by industry was as follows: IT / Telecoms (17%), Finance and Accounting (15%), Media/ marketing/ advertising/ PR & sales (12%), Construction (9%), Manufacturing (9%), Legal (9%), Retail (6%), Hospitality and leisure (3%), Transportation & distribution (2%), Medical & health services (2%), Education (1%), Real estate (1%), Other (13%).



Case study



suzy lamplugh trust **LIVE LIFE SAFE**

Suky Bhaker, CEO,
Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Suzy Lamplugh Trust is the UK's personal safety charity and leading authority on stalking, having run the National Stalking Helpline since its launch in 2010. Here, CEO Suky Bhaker discusses how it has supported frontline workers as its working operations changed due to the global health pandemic.



How have you managed remote working for frontline staff?

For frontline staff it is difficult to manage work that takes place in isolation. If you are working with trauma, alone and in a personal setting, it can be very challenging. We recommend that staff who work with trauma have a really clear boundary between home and work so they do not bring it into their personal space. For these staff members, co-location is really important as they learn and get support from their peers so where we can, we try to bring these people into the office.

We really try to maintain the informal and formal connectivity we have across the organisation, such as staff meetings where

we bring everybody together so people can see staff they may not interact with on a day-to-day basis. We have also offered clinical supervision, via a trained professional with a psychotherapy background, to the whole organisation. This could be via a group session with all our helpline staff or one-to-one if a staff member needs to reach out to this person anonymously for additional support. We have always offered that to frontline staff, but we have rolled it out more broadly, as the well-being of all our staff is absolutely imperative.

Continued...

"We really try to maintain the informal and formal connectivity we have across the organisation, such as staff meetings where we bring everybody together so people can see staff they may not interact with on a day-to-day basis."

What challenges have you faced?

Overnight, we had to ensure that the National Stalking Helpline was able to operate remotely. It was completely office-based so we had to introduce a new virtual control centre. This has meant we have had to offer specialist training, ensuring our staff can operate the virtual control centre and embedding it within our working culture. We have also had to introduce or update our policies for working from home which includes a more detailed component around cyber safety and cyber security. We have seen an increase in spam and phishing emails come through to the Trust, so we have had to make sure our staff are up to date on best practice to work safely from home.

A lot of the work we have done with other employers has been around how most home workers are lone workers – meaning policies and procedures need to be in place to ensure they have a safe working

environment. We have ensured that has been implemented in our own work from home policy, ensuring that there are robust safety mechanisms in place to help staff carry out their work safely.

Do you think you will go back to a full-time office operation?

We have never been 100% office-based and I think that will remain the same. I expect that there will be a greater level of remote-working after the pandemic depending on the specific roles in question.

I think it largely depends on the individual. If the role doesn't require them to be in the office or delivering face-to-face work for a victim, it makes sense for us to offer a greater level of flexibility. We will be speaking with our colleagues across the sector to understand what is working for other organisations, as niche and specialist frontline support services will need to adapt based on victims' needs.





Chapter five

We're missing those water cooler conversations



Human connection

Employee satisfaction depends on a number of factors, chief among them being relationships with co-workers. The data shows that employees miss seeing their colleagues in person, and that the opportunity for social interaction is a key driver for people's decision to go into the office when guidelines allow. When possible due to COVID-19 restrictions, more than a quarter of people (27%) have chosen to go into the office to meet with their colleagues in person. For the majority (65%), socialising is what they miss most when they work remotely. When it is safe to return to the office, 62% would seize the opportunity to go into the office to work with colleagues, and almost a third (32%) would do it to socialise in person.

Whilst there is a large volume of employees eager to meet up in person, there still

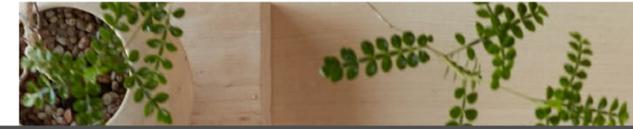
remains those who have happily adapted to remote work. Businesses will need to enable teamwork from anywhere, with devices that can bridge the distance between remote workers and those who have returned to the office, such as the Surface Hub.

Whilst many organisations initially set up time for employees to socialise online, only 39% of people surveyed reported their employer organising regular virtual social meet-ups when working from home, and just over a third (34%) said that their employer actively encourages them to take time out from regular work to socialise virtually.

As a result, a majority of employees (60%) report that they feel less connected to their team and colleagues whilst working from home.

As many adapt to hybrid work, the importance of large screen, collaborative devices such as the Surface Hub becomes apparent. Surface Hub 2S enables businesses to run all their critical applications, utilising the massive 4K PixelSense touch and ink enabled screen, Microsoft Teams certified audio and video and an array of onboard sensors. Workers can collaborate, bridging the distance between those in the office and those at home for a powerful and productive meeting.





Business leaders interviewed also noted a disparity in socialising between long-standing staff members and newer hires. Suky Bhaker, CEO of Suzy Lamplugh Trust, noted that

“The organisation is almost operating within two slightly different cultures: one which the older staff members are already used to, and one where newer staff members have not had a chance to mingle with the broader organisation. We have lost that informality where you might just walk into the office and meet and speak with a colleague from any department”.

It is a sentiment shared by a senior leader in the healthcare space:

“People who are newer to the organisation do not have such strong relationships. To bring people together we have hosted virtual events such as quizzes and wine-tasting. There are also special interest groups that form which take a life of their own and do not need support from the organisation.”

Organisations face a balancing act in creating more opportunities for employees to virtually connect with each other outside of the context of work obligations, at a time when employees are experiencing more of their personal lives digitally too. The fatigue caused by numerous virtual family quizzes alongside virtual staff meetings, for example, must be closely monitored. However, for those staff craving social interaction, virtual experiences provide an opportunity for companies seeking to bolster employee engagement and satisfaction. This is an important consideration for all remote employees, but particularly so for those who have been abruptly transitioned out of the office. There needs to be a new team standard created where connection, collaboration and employee well-being are all balanced.

It is completely understandable that employees will be missing opportunities for human interaction with their colleagues. It is therefore important that organisations and managers build in time and space for employees to connect with one another.

We are all different and might need different levels of interaction, depending on our personalities, interests and our personal circumstances. It is therefore a good idea to offer voluntary opportunities for colleagues to connect – after all, ‘forced fun’ is no fun.

Think about setting up regular team virtual coffee break drop-ins and organisation-wide opportunities for employees to connect such as through virtual exercise classes, choirs, book clubs or special support groups.

Also tap into people’s creativity and ask staff to suggest their ideas for building in more social interaction and fun into the working week.

For new members of staff make sure they are given a supportive induction and consider setting them up with a buddy to help support them through their first few months.

Finally, provide flexibility so that employees can choose what activities they want to engage with. Staff face demanding workloads and often competing demands on them from both work and home, so being able to take-part in social interactions at a time and via a medium that suits them can provide a sense of balance.



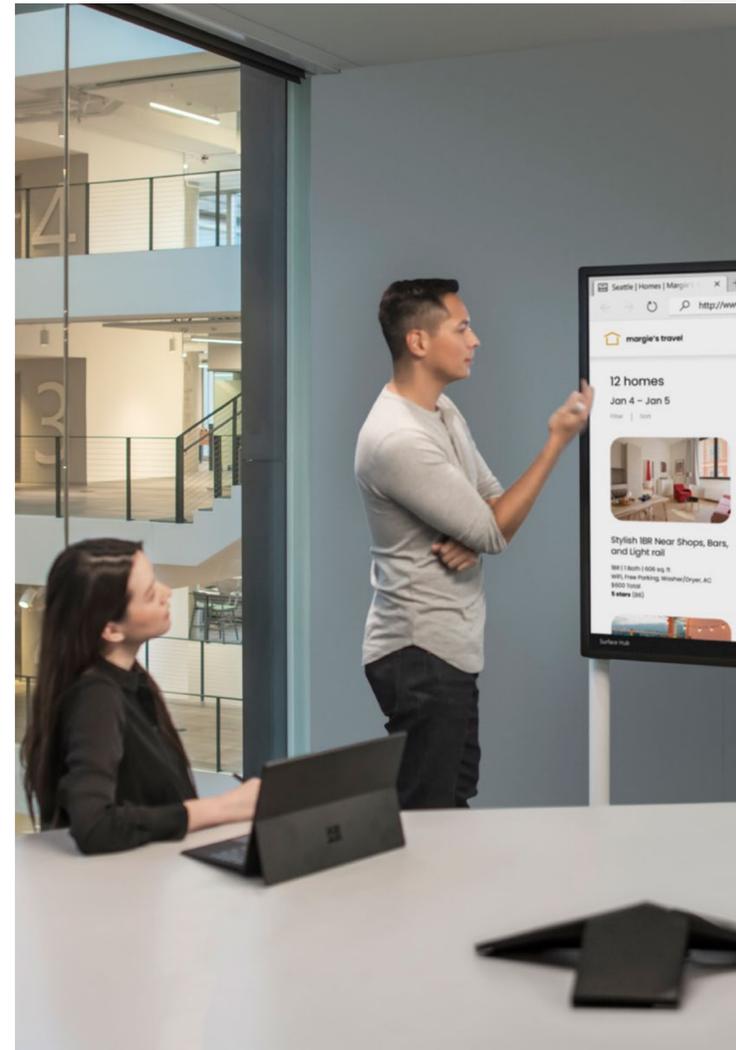
Chapter six

Career development seems harder to achieve remotely



Career development

With the shift to hybrid working, both organisations and employees are having to adapt to new ways of assessing and measuring performance in a virtual environment. This can be a source of anxiety for many people, particularly those in highly visible or collaborative roles that have traditionally relied on in-person interactions. Whilst half of those surveyed (52%) disagree that they are concerned that working from home will have a negative impact on their career progress, this is still a concern for nearly one in four (24%). And one-third (32%) worry that “out of sight” means “out of mind” when it comes to promotions.

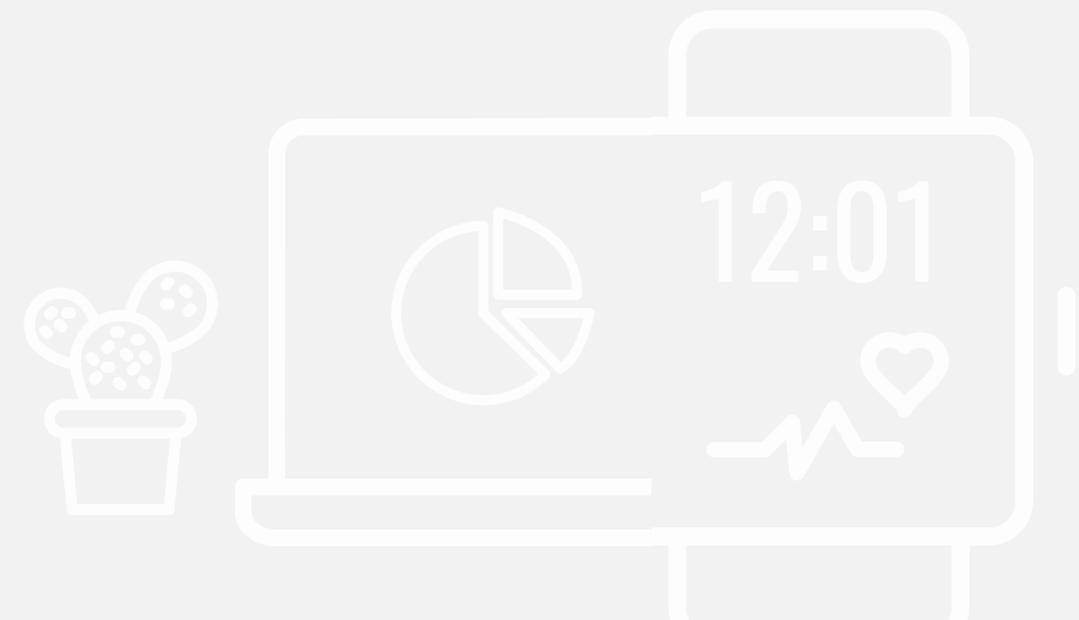


Moreover, nearly half (48%) feel that they need to communicate more to demonstrate their value, and 36% said that it is harder for them to make an impact when they are working remotely. To address these concerns, people are working longer and harder to make an impact:

31%
feel they have to be
twice as productive
when they work from
home

52%
are working longer
hours and taking
fewer breaks

42%
are working longer
hours as they are not
having to commute
to and from work



Helping hybrid workforces learn, grow, develop and thrive is uncharted terrain for many organisations and managers without the traditional signals and cues that they would have in a physical office. And for employees who want to ensure that they remain visible while working remotely, collaboration tools and technologies will play an increasingly important role.

As a result, leaders are shifting their focus to measuring results and outcomes, as opposed to the time spent at a task or project. As one CIO put it, their organisation looks at

"a culture of 'commitment-based management'. If someone makes a commitment to do something by a certain date, within a certain budget and with a certain outcomes, we expect you to meet that commitment. That commitment is made voluntarily, so if they fall short the question becomes why, as those expectations were not forced upon you."

Business leaders also highlighted how development for staff in interactive roles, such as designers and engineers, will require a different approach when they are remote working. Martin Burkitt, HR Director at Green Park Content, noted that "Working from home is presenting a particular issue for the development of junior creative staff. Much of their development comes from watching and learning from line managers and this is not so easy when you have to book a meeting with them. It is different when you are in the office and can ask someone to look at your screen to see what you are doing."

A one-size-fits-all approach cannot work for all staff, and policies need to factor in the varying needs of specific roles.

"Working from home is presenting a particular issue for the development of junior creative staff. Much of their development comes from watching and learning from line managers and this is not so easy when you have to book a meeting with them. It is different when you are in the office and can ask someone to look at your screen to see what you are doing."

Martin Burkitt, HR Director, Green Park Content



Case study

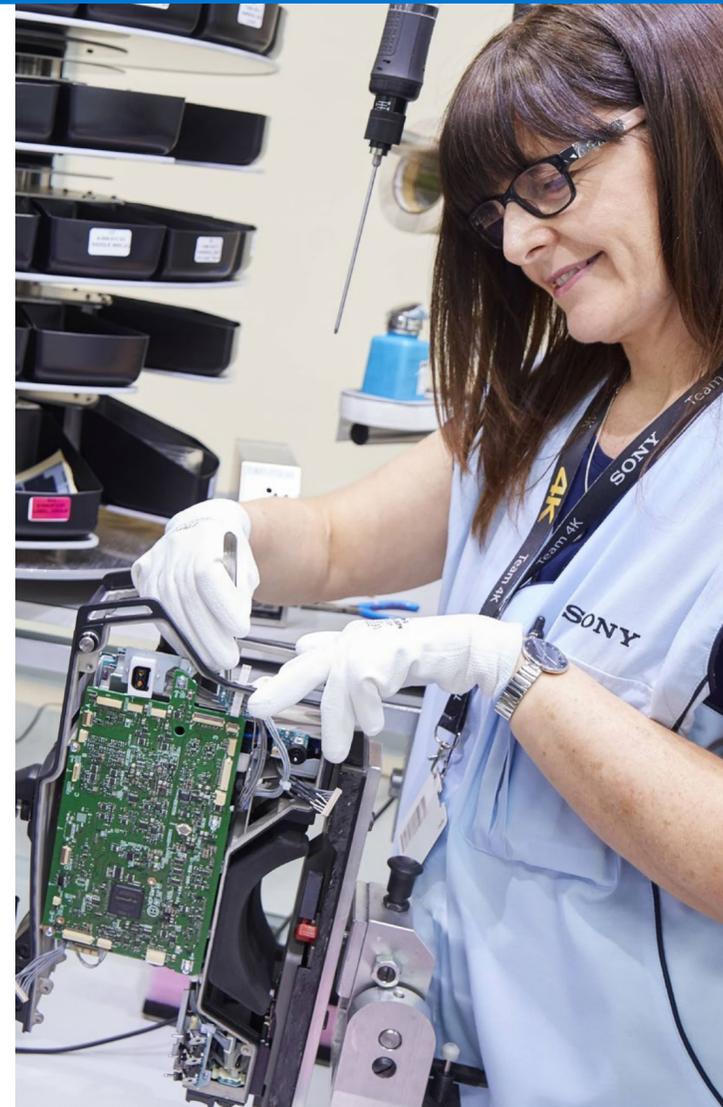


Steve Dalton OBE,
Managing Director at Sony
UK Technology Centre

The Sony UK Technology Centre is a manufacturing and operational centre based in South Wales. Here, Steve Dalton, Managing Director, discusses how the Centre has maintained productivity amongst staff – both on-site and in home environments.

SONY

UK Technology Centre



What challenges has the move to remote working presented?

Prior to COVID-19, working from home was quite rare in this sector of the company. We operate in an industry where there are some people who are making and producing things, so they simply cannot do their job from home. There are others though who have the potential to work from home as an enabling function, this is where the opportunity to try new ways of working have emerged. It has made working from home quite complicated for our workforce who are required to interact quite a lot. We found that, we could split the workforce between those who are needed on-site to produce items and those in supporting roles who can do their job from home. One of the challenges for example, was supporting our engineers who require access to confidential software that is connected to other internal groups, and find efficient and secure ways for these teams to interact. This meant we had to learn and adapt for new home working practices and procedures, and

introduce new software which our managers can use for remote project management control.

Similarly, we now have software engineers writing software for test development from home and they are delivering it in a faster timescale than they normally would. They still need to come together with the wider team on-site though, to install this software into machinery, review it and then go back to working from home again. We have found this approach worked particularly well for our environment and staff are quite efficient working this way.

Continued...

Why do you think staff are more efficient?

You can at most times work efficiently from home as you are not disturbed – provided you are not interrupted by a pet, partner, child or home delivery for example. However, those disturbances are different from the disturbances you experience on-site. Being at home is a more relaxing experience as a result.

Meeting efficiency has dramatically improved utilising Microsoft Teams. If you are physically sitting in a room with twelve people debating something, it is not uncommon for the conversation to be taken away from the topic at hand by one or two people or one of the stronger characters influencing the conversation or even diverting the conversation away from the topic or decision at hand. When you are on a Teams call at home, everyone is on the screen and everyone is listening, heightening the concentration and attention level. The ability to raise a hand allows for a better meeting protocol as well; people

are more inclined to interrupt in a physical meeting than an online meeting. There does seem to come a threshold though – when a meeting is bigger, with thirty people for example, it can feel more isolating.

For this reason, we have increased the support that our learning and development Sony Wales Academy offers to all staff, and focused a lot of our efforts on helping people learn how to use these online tools effectively. What has been interesting to see is that some teams have started new initiatives and found new ways to share their knowledge with their colleagues by organising internal master classes online. The fact that people are not physically in a classroom has not stopped their learning and development – and some courses may even be more productive than their physical equivalents.

Are you planning to offer other training to staff?

Our training and development team offer support on an ongoing basis throughout the year, and they are constantly keeping

an eye on what our team members need. At this stage there may be a need for some refresher training for managers about how they approach performance management to judge the performance of employees.

It needs to be done on a much more regular basis as people who have been working from home will not have had as much

interaction with their manager as they might have done in the office. We need to remove our own biases when reviewing people's performance, as people's performance will be fundamentally different right now compared to last year. As a result, we will have to think quite differently in our judgement mechanisms.



CIPD

*Championing better
work and working lives*

It is clear that employees are worried about the impact of working remotely on their career development, whether that perception is real or imagined.

Previous [CIPD research](#) has shown that employees working flexibly, particularly those that reduce their hours, are more likely to indicate negative career implications.

We want to avoid the emergence of creating a two-tiered workforce - those present and visible in the office, and those who by choice or necessity work at home/remotely.

Employers should maximise the use of digital learning technology to ensure people who are working from home or remotely can build the skills they need to develop and progress through access to online training courses and qualifications.



To ensure that all employees have fairness of opportunities, line managers need to provide:

- ongoing access to development and career conversations for all employees
- a fair allocation of work and opportunities
- recorded training and development sessions, so that employees are able to catch-up at a time that suits them
- ways of enhancing and maintaining visibility for hybrid and home-workers – for example, opportunities to chair meetings, lead on work streams or run virtual presentations
- support for staff development through promoting opportunities for digital training courses and qualifications which can be accessed by remote and home workers as well as the wider workforce.
- equal access to the right technologies and support to get their jobs done





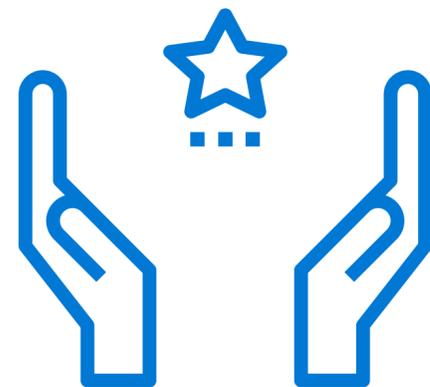
Chapter seven

Dedicated "Heads of Remote" drive employee satisfaction



Employee satisfaction

The abrupt shift to a hybrid environment and the new and increased demands of working remotely are leading to changes in how people view employee benefits and support from their employer. Whilst there is still interest in conventional benefits like private health insurance, people are increasingly interested in benefits and perks that help make remote working more comfortable and efficient.



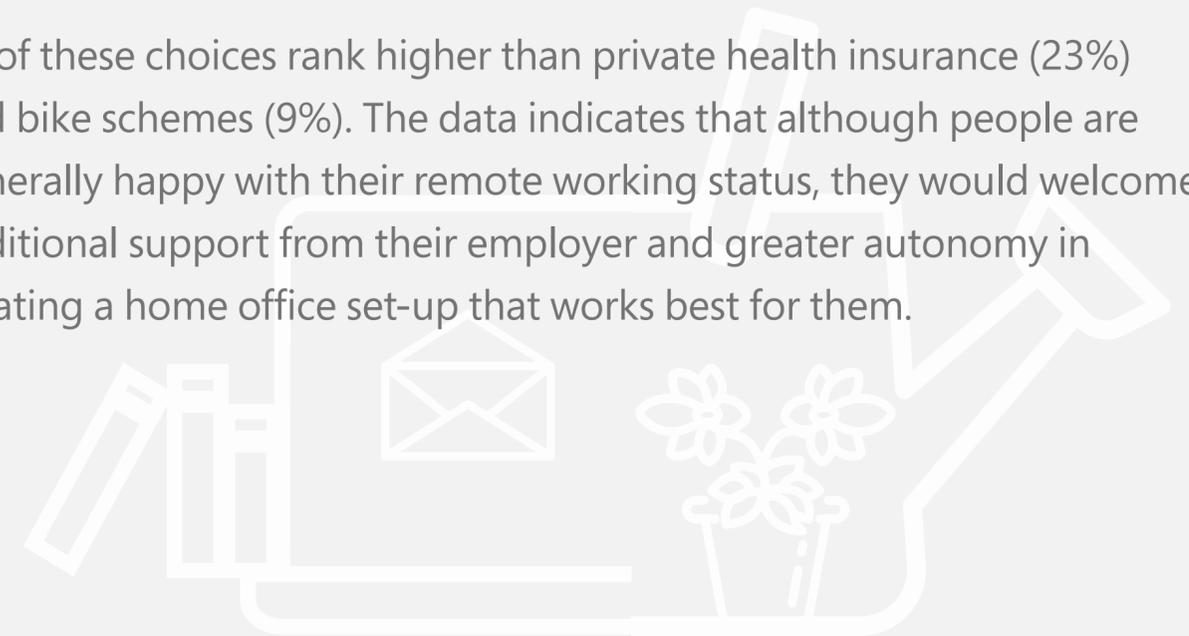
More than half of employees surveyed (55%) reported that they have had to invest their own time and/or money in creating a suitable home office set-up. These are the top benefits people would choose to support their remote working environment:

56%
a bonus to invest in
their home office
however they see fit

51%
high-speed
broadband

48%
new office
furniture

All of these choices rank higher than private health insurance (23%) and bike schemes (9%). The data indicates that although people are generally happy with their remote working status, they would welcome additional support from their employer and greater autonomy in creating a home office set-up that works best for them.



Sarah Touzani, COO at Creditspring, took an alternative view on health insurance, suggesting it should remain a regular benefit.

“Health insurance is going to be more important, both for the employee and employer. It means we know that when an employee needs help, they can receive it straightaway and in some cases avoid becoming unwell.”

She went on to note other packages brought in to support the health of their staff:

“Physical and mental well-being is really important, so we did arrange a membership with an online gym, as that was what people missed the most.”

To address these evolving employee expectations, some firms have also created new roles and responsibilities for managers to help their organisations adapt to the hybrid environment - with positive results. The survey findings show that more employees in organisations that have introduced these new roles to oversee remote working reported feeling supported during this time (67% compared to 47% for those without

new roles). The findings show that more respondents surveyed in organisations that have introduced these new roles agree that their employer organises regular virtual social meetups (57% compared to 33%) and encourage their employees to take time out of work to virtually socialise (52% compared to 27%) and build and maintain relationships (57% compared to 33%).

As Dr David Greenberg, CEO and founder at Eave, noted, specialist teams can help hybrid workers adapt to rapidly changing situations and hybrid environments: “We set up what we call a ‘communications team,’ which is very similar to the general leadership team in the company. During the first lockdown in March, we met every day in the afternoon because things were changing so rapidly. The purpose of that group was to communicate to the wider team our interpretation of the guidelines and any changes to our standard operating procedures. At the end of that lockdown we continued using that communications team because we found it a really good way to not only check on staff, but

also to keep the wider team informed on our latest thinking and the elements of work we thought were appropriate for people to come into the office for.”

Yet the majority of organisations have not assigned these roles or responsibilities. 62% of those surveyed do not have a designated person or team responsible for overseeing remote working in their organisation. Only 19% said that new roles have been introduced in their organisation to ensure employees are supported and working effectively.

These findings highlight the type of investments required for organisations to successfully transition to a hybrid work model. Investing in tools and technology like connected devices is a good start, but UK workers are also looking for more support from their employers in other areas, such as opportunities for socialising, training and resources for mental health.

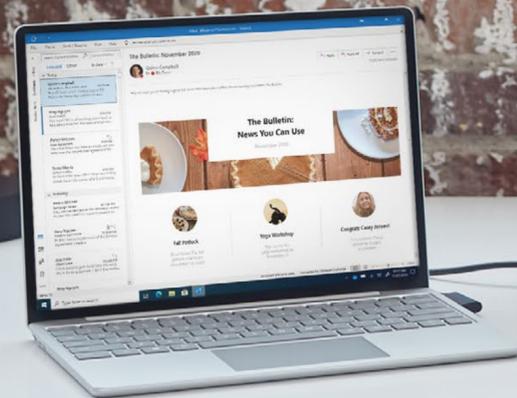
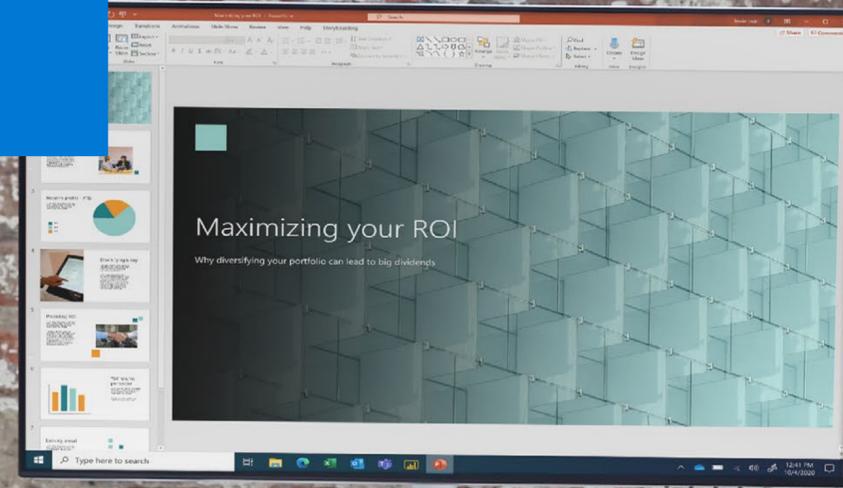
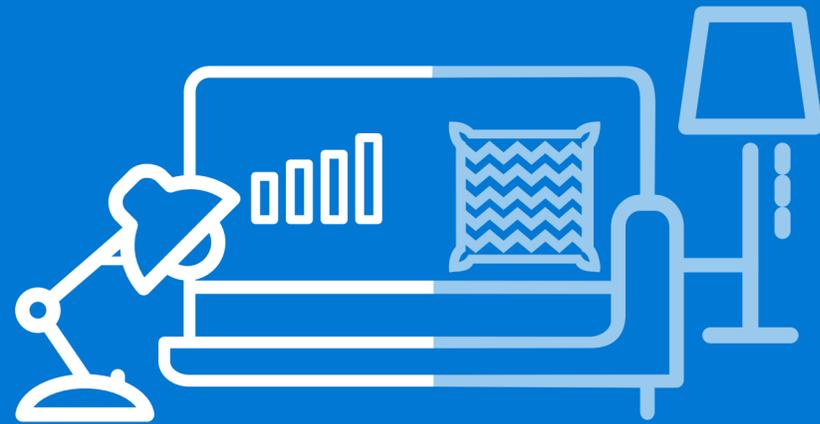
“We set up a national incident group which ran all aspects of response and an enablers group which dealt with all of our requirements from a technology perspective. We also had a policy group that looked into all the policy changes and new training that was required. This has continued to run throughout the pandemic and meets on a weekly basis. Our designated senior team, supported by project managers, reports into the Board as part of the governance we have put in place to manage all the changes we have seen.”

COO in the healthcare sector



Chapter eight

Preparing for the future of hybrid work



The future of hybrid work

As the survey results have shown, organisations everywhere have adapted to the unprecedented circumstances of this past year and settled into the rhythms of remote work. Now, as they look to the future, the vision for many business leaders is a model that combines remote work with face-to-face collaboration in the office. We have moved from flexible work to remote work, but are now moving to a new stage: a hybrid-working future. The new world of work means that home and work lives are heavily intertwined

Organisations will need to find balance. A successful hybrid model requires examining and, in some cases, reimagining the workplace culture, and the devices and processes needed to support employees in this new era. Employers will need to think beyond the immediacy of device deployment and examine technologies that

set workers up for long-term success in a hybrid world. Staff well-being will prove a vital consideration, with technology expected to reinforce healthy digital habits, support productivity and allow for satisfying home lives.

With Microsoft Surface, there is opportunity for business decision makers to re-define workflow productivity and deliver devices that meet new expectations from workforces. Devices born with mobility in mind, like Surface Duo, ensure you can do your best work at home, at the office and everywhere in between. With Surface, organisations can simplify device deployment and management and extend advanced security across their infrastructure, while employees collaborate freely and more productively – they too can rest assured and mindfully disconnect at the end of the working day.

Technology is only one component of a successful hybrid model, but the right solutions can be a game-changer. What started out of necessity has become an opportunity for organisations to reimagine their entire business strategies for the long-term, starting with smart investments in connected devices and collaboration tools. At Microsoft Surface, we are committed to supporting UK organisations as they navigate this seismic shift in the way work gets done - helping organisations work smarter to live better.



To learn more about the results of this study, or to speak with someone about sourcing tools to help your organisation facilitate a successful hybrid working environment, visit the [Microsoft Surface website >](#)

"If your desire as a team is to always work together on certain days in the office, you need to be quick and collaborative with other teams to book the space you need. I want to have more devices like the Microsoft Surface Hub as these would give me shareable collaboration space across locations, including people who are at home or somewhere else with the camera technology. I can move it around so that it either works off wi-fi or it is pluggable into multiple locations. With a space planning system, you will have the ability to divide up and allocate space on a flexible basis."

CIO in the managed services and staffing sector

Methodology

This report was compiled by Microsoft Surface UK. A research survey was conducted online by YouGov. Total sample size was 4282 employees surveyed that work in an office, of which there were 2863 that work in an office and work from home. Fieldwork was undertaken between 27th October - 5th November 2020. The survey was carried out online.

In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 leaders of organisations who hold decision-making responsibility for their UK workforce.

These were:

- Suky Bhaker, CEO, Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- Martin Burkitt, HR Director, Green Park Content
- Lorraine Culligan, Group Director People and Culture, Primark Stores
- Steve Dalton, Managing Director, Sony UK Technology Centre
- David Greenberg, CEO and Founder, Eave
- Atif Hafeez, CFO in the B2B Private Equity sector
- Sarah Touzani, COO, Creditspring
- CIO in the not-for-profit sector
- CIO in the managed services and staffing sector
- Vice President in the healthcare sector
- COO in the healthcare sector
- Operating Advisor, CIO/COO in private equity and digital

