

Working from home: messages for organisations

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A mass experiment in working from home (WFH)

Slow but steady increase in WFH pre-pandemic

- from 1.5% in 1981 to 13% in 2019
- Often seen as a 'perk'

Sudden widespread shift to homeworking

- 38% WFH exclusively
- 86% WFH sometimes

WFH depended on:

- Type of work done
- Age, status, skills, location



Felstead & Reuschke (2020)
Etheridge et al. (2020)

Working from home: people's experiences

Initial challenges and difficulties

- Equipment, space, communication, support
- Impact on working hours/routine
- Juggling caring responsibilities/schooling with work demands
- Women, carers, people living alone, new starters, inexperience

Impact on wellbeing and productivity?

- Well, it depends ...

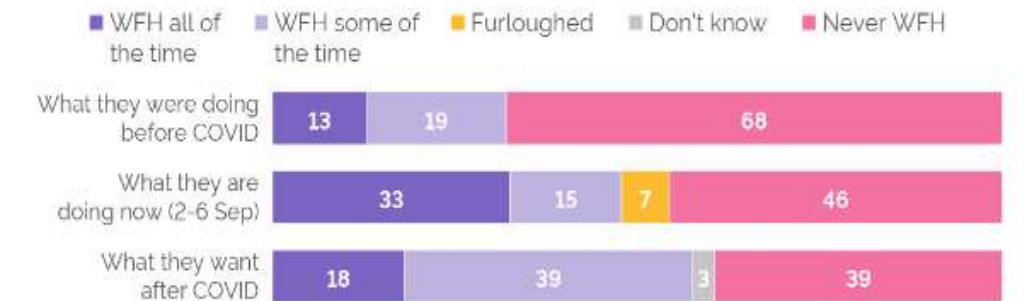


Working from home: the future?

- 57% wish to continue WFH in some way; 18% always
- Survey of <1,000 businesses: 74% plan to maintain the increase in WFH
 - 44% saw WFH as more effective
- How can individuals and organisations make this work?

Most workers want to be able to work from home once coronavirus is over, at least some of the time

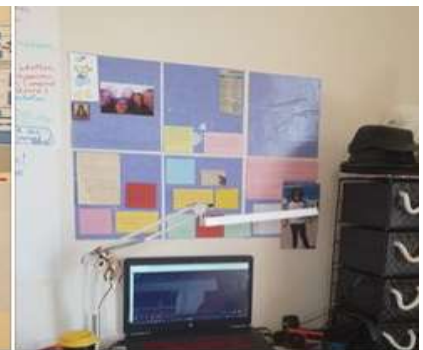
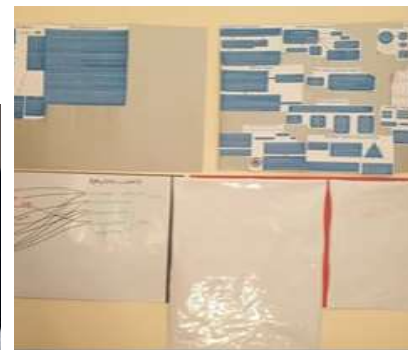
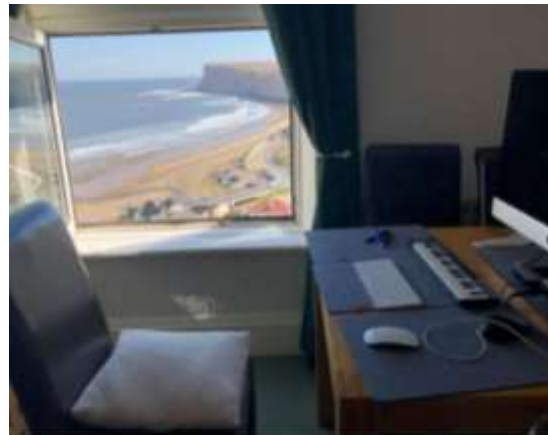
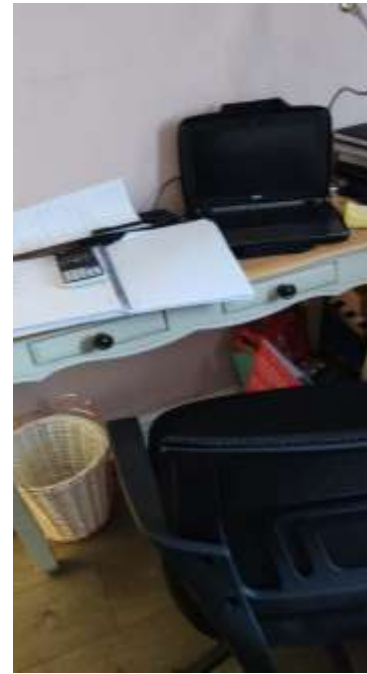
% of workers who were working prior to the coronavirus crisis and who also expect to still be in the workforce once the crisis is over



YouGov

2-6 September 2020

IOD (2020)
YouGov (2020)



Travers, Maher, Kinman and Bateman (2020)

A psychologically safe workplace: 3 key areas

Trust

Social
cohesion

Information
sharing

A psychologically safe workplace: 3 key areas

Trust

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Working from home
can challenge all
three areas

The SHARE approach

1. *Safe homeworking*: Duty of care and setting up the workspace
2. *Help yourself and others*: Communicating and meeting needs
3. *Adapt to change*: Different home situations and working styles
4. *Relieve the pressure*: Flexible approach to work-life balance
5. *Evaluate*: Review the situation regularly for ongoing success

SHARE in practice

SHARE	Employers	Employees
1. Safe Homeworking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider your duty of care - Provide practical guidance to employees - Maintain trust and communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify an appropriate workspace - Plan your day and schedule breaks - Consider privacy and data regulations
2. Help Yourself and Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set realistic expectations - Communicate and check-in regularly with employees - Support the development of digital resilience skills - Consider employees' hidden costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate and stick to your schedule - Make sure to switch off regularly - Develop new skills if possible
3. Adapt to Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise diverse needs and circumstances - Understand the risks - Assess and address risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow time to develop your own style of homeworking and establish a routine - Set boundaries between home and work life - Stay socially connected and consider the positives
4. Relieve the Pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use a flexible approach - Show support - Role model healthy behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain work-life balance - Keep active - Sleep well, eat well
5. Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regularly review your SHARE approach with each employee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regularly review your SHARE approach with your manager

Protect home workers (HSE)

- **IES (2020) 75% said their employer had not carried out a health and safety risk assessment of their homeworking arrangements**
- Employers have the same health and safety responsibilities for home workers as for any other workers
- When someone is working from home (permanently or temporarily) employers should consider:
 - How they will keep in touch with them
 - What work activity will they be doing (and for how long)?
 - Can it be done safely?
 - Do they need to put control measures in place to protect them?

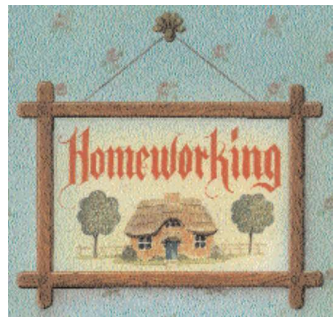


Holistic risk assessments needed

- **Assess** psychosocial as well as physical/ergonomic risks
- **Promote** safe and healthy working practices
- **Ensure** healthy equipment and workstation
- **Manage** stress and mental health
- **Provide** support and regular check-ins
- **Identify** risk factors: e.g. lone working, caring, working with trauma



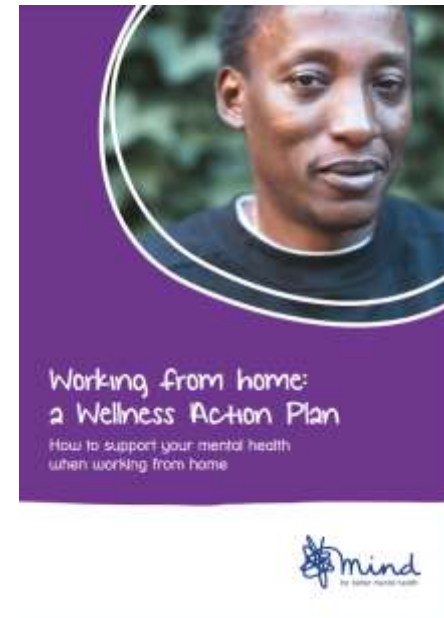
Other key issues for leaders and managers



- **Set (realistic) expectations**
- **Trust staff** - avoid excessive monitoring and measuring
- **Involve** staff in decisions about reorganising and reallocating work
- **Be aware** of issues such as 'Zoom fatigue' and take action
- **Provide** several different communication options
- **Promote** informal mechanisms for support
- **Encourage** routine
- **Provide** guidance on boundary-setting
- **Discourage** presenteeism
- **Be vigilant** for signs of struggle and stress in teams and individuals
- **Role model** healthy behaviours

Some useful tools:

- CIPD: Homeworking questionnaire
- MIND: Wellness Action Plan
- HSE tools



Management competencies (skills/behaviours) for preventing and reducing stress

Competency	Sub-Competency
Respectful and responsible: Managing emotions and having integrity	Integrity
	Managing emotions
Managing and communicating existing and future work	Considerate approach
	Proactive work management
	Problem solving
Managing the individual within the team	Participative/empowering
	Personally accessible
	Sociable
Reasoning/Managing difficult situations	Empathetic engagement
	Managing conflict
	Use of organisational resources
	Taking responsibility for resolving issues

Resources

- ACAS. Working from home during the coronavirus pandemic. <https://www.acas.org.uk/working-from-home/health-safety-and-wellbeing>
- BPS. Taking trauma related work home. <https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/professional/taking-trauma-home>
- CIPD. Homeworking questionnaire. <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/homeworking-questionnaire>
- CIPD. Getting the most from remote working <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/remote-working-top-tips>
- CIPD. Managing remote working and business closures FAQs <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/coronavirus/faqs/remote-working-business-closures>
- Centre for Ageing Better. Flexible working for over 50s – A toolkit for employers. <https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/publications/flexible-working-over-50s>
- HSE. Protect home workers. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>
- International Labour Organisation. Teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. A practical guide https://www.ilo.org/travail/info/publications/WCMS_751232/lang--en/index.htm
- NHS Employers. Enabling and supporting staff to work from home. <https://www.nhsemployers.org/covid19/health-safety-and-wellbeing/supporting-staff-at-home-and-work/enabling-and-supporting-staff-to-work-from-home>
- SOM. Meeting the impact of home learning on parents and employers. https://www.som.org.uk/Meeting_the_impact_of_home_learning_on_parents_and_employers_Feb_2021.pdf
- SOM. Home working and display screen equipment during COVID-19 https://www.som.org.uk/Home_Working_and_DSE_during_COVID-19_factsheet.pdf