

Hybrid working and well-being - what's the current evidence?

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Where we are (May 20th)

- The ratio of vacancies to every 100 employee jobs increased slightly on the month to 4.3 in February to April 2022
- On the quarter, vacancies increased by 33,700 with the largest increases in construction (10,700) and arts, entertainment and recreation (9,300).
- There are just under one unemployed people for every vacancy – this is the first time we have had more vacancies than unemployed people
- Welsh vacancies are currently 14% above pre-pandemic levels and 4% above this time in 2021.

Hybrid working

- In February 2022, 84% of workers who had to work from home because of the coronavirus pandemic said they planned to carry out a mix of working at home and in their place of work in the future.
- In spring 2022 (27 April to 8 May), 38% of working adults reported having worked from home at some point over the past seven days.
- 38% of workers earning £40,000 or more hybrid worked between 27 April and 8 May 2022. Workers in this income group were the only ones for whom hybrid working was the most common working pattern. They were also more likely than other income groups to work from home exclusively. They are also very likely to be graduates.

Hybrid working

- 78% of those who worked from home in some capacity said that being able to work from home gave them an improved work life balance in February 2022. Half reported it was quicker to complete work (52%) and that they had fewer distractions (53%). 47% also reported improved well-being.
- In January 2022 46% of reported seeing their spending decrease since working from home. While the majority of homeworkers reported an increase in their spending on utility bills (86%), half said they spent less on fuel and parking for commuting (50%), and two-fifths said their spending on commuting on public transport had reduced (40%).
- However, 8% of homeworkers reported no advantages.
- The most common disadvantage experienced by homeworkers was difficulty in working with others, with 48% of homeworkers reporting this in February 2022. A little over a quarter also reported more distractions when working from home (26%). Nearly a third (31%) reported no disadvantages at all.

Is hybrid working here to stay?

- Since the start of the pandemic, 46% of employees have worked from home all or most of the time, while 37% have not worked from home at all.
- On average, organisations expect around a fifth (21%) of their workforce to work from home all the time once the crisis is over, while they expect 40% of their workforce to work from home on a regular basis.
- Those employees who have flexible working arrangements in their current role are more likely to be satisfied than those who don't, including in relation to their work–life balance, control over work, their job overall and their line manager.

Hybrid working

- There has been an increase in employers supporting and already providing a day one right to request flexible working (FW).
- More than a third (37%) have seen an increase in requests for FW in the last six months.
- Over half of organisations (56%) believe that it is important to provide flexible working as an option when advertising jobs. They see this as a key way of attracting staff and addressing skill or labour shortages.
- More than two-fifths of organisations (42%) say they will be more likely to grant requests for flexible working, besides working from home, compared with before the pandemic

Is hybrid working here to stay?

- Just over half of employees (51%) say they have flexible working arrangements (FWA) in their current role. Women (55%) are more likely than men (47%) to have FWA.
- Those employees who have flexible working arrangements in their current role are more likely to be satisfied than those who don't in a range of different areas. This includes satisfaction with their:
 - work–life balance (76% vs 60%)
 - control over their work (64% vs 46%)
 - job (68% vs 56%)
 - manager (70% vs 57%).
- They are even more likely to be satisfied than those without FWA in their current role with their opportunities for progression (39% vs 30%) and their salary (56% vs 45%).

Is hybrid working here to stay?

- Organisations plan to expand a range of flexible working arrangements, including working from home on a regular basis (46%), part-time working (38%), flexitime (37%), full-time homeworking (25%) and job-sharing (18%).
- Four per cent of employees say they have left a job in the last year specifically due to a lack of flexible working and 9% have changed their careers/profession due to a lack of flexible working options within the sector.
- When it comes to the key benefits of shifting to increased homeworking or hybrid working, respondents point to: improved work–life balance (69%), improved employee satisfaction (48%), improved business flexibility and improved employee wellbeing (41%).
- Some of the top issues faced as a result of the shift to increased home or hybrid working include: increased stress or mental health problems due to working remotely (44%), difficulty in working as expected for employees who lack space or privacy (43%), and employee conflict due to the challenges of communication and team relationships (34%).

What do people *want*?

- Employers were most likely to think that being on site/in the office for approximately 40% of the time would be most popular with their employees (23%). Eighteen per cent point to being on site/in the office for 60% of the time and 16% think their employees would want to be in the office/on site for 20% of the time.
- HOWEVER, compare that with what organisations view as *their* preferred approach for their workforce as an employer, the highest proportion (25%) would like employees to be in the office/on site *all the time*. Seventeen per cent point to being in the office/on site for 60% of the time. However, 15% say they don't have a preference – it will depend on what works best for the individual employees and the teams and part of the business they work within.
- When employees are asked what would be their preferred way of working, 39% would like to work from home/remotely all or most of the time and 37% would like to work in the office/workplace all or most of the time.
- More men (28%) than women (21%) would like to work in the office/workplace all the time, and the older an employee is, the more likely they are to want to do this (aged 18–24: 11%; 25–34: 14%; 35–44: 17%; 45–54: 26%; 55+: 38%).

Work/life balance

- Largely, remote and flexible working are seen as a net positive for work/life balance – particularly for working parents
- Not having to commute, more flexibility around childcare and just having more time to spend with the family are all often cited

- BUT

- Also increasing concerns about the boundaries between work and home being blurred and the stress of an ‘always on’ culture
- These have tended to emerge more slowly – and are taking longer to examine as well, so the evidence base is not as well developed.

What does this all mean?

- Most employees like flexible and hybrid working and want to carry on doing it
- A minority really *do not* like it though
- It is mostly the well-paid, the senior and graduates who will get to do it in future
- Most employers accept it will have to be a part of their future plans in order to recruit and retain staff. But some would rather not be doing it
- Most people who do enjoy it particularly appreciate improved work/life balance
- But there are issues with blurred boundaries and an 'always on' culture.
- The more significant issues seem to be taking longer to emerge