Work After Lockdown: No Going Back

Findings from the qualitative research with organisations and secondary data analysis

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The end of the 9-5?

"The grand experiment that nobody wanted has worked."

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UKRI Economic and Social Research Council

Working at home during the pandemic

Percentage of employees working at home 'at least sometimes'

Month/year	All industries	Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (PST)	Public Admin and Defence (PAD)
Jan/Feb 2020 (pre-lockdown)	24.9%	53.2%	38.9%
June 2020	43.6%	73.0%	69.9%
January 2021	47.3%	77.3%	74.9%
September 2021	**40.0%**	74.5%	69.3%

Source: Understanding Society COVID-19 Study, Waves 1–9, and authors' calculations.
Notes: Weighted data; % of employees.

Preferences for future working at home

Percentage of employees stating that they would like to be able to work at home in the future.

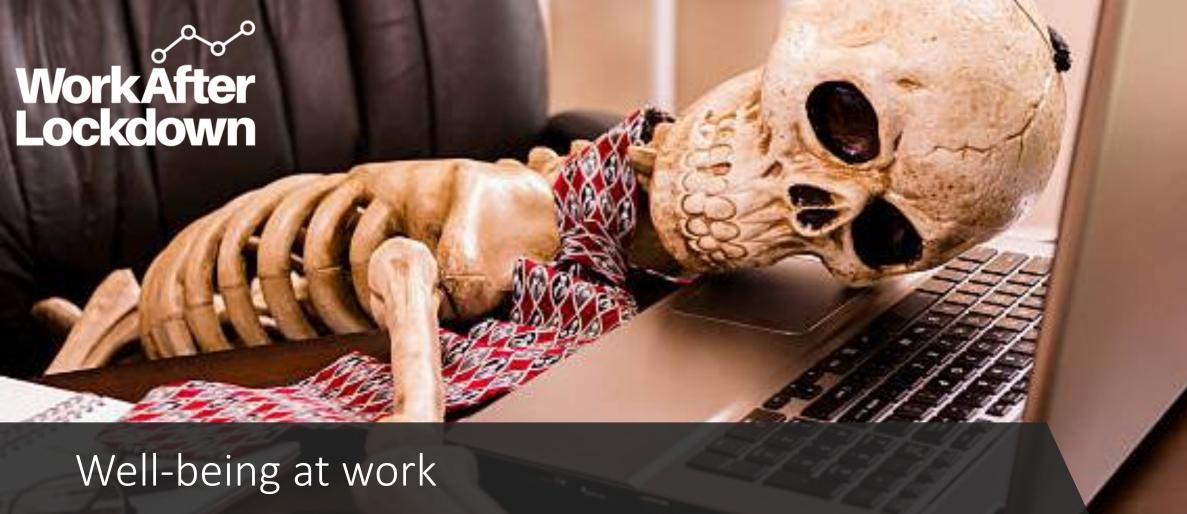| Month/year	Always	At least sometimes
June 2020	13.3%	87.8%
January 2021	12.8%	85.8%
September 2021	18%	**95.6%**

Source: Understanding Society COVID-19 Study, Waves 1–9, and authors' calculations.
Notes: Weighted data; % of employees currently working at home at least sometimes.

New working spaces

"It isn't 'my office', it's 'an office', and I book it and I come into work"

"I want to come into the office to see people."

Well-being at work

"I'm really strict with myself because, in the beginning I was getting quite stressed, like: I need to do this. But now I stop work, close the laptop and don't go back. Because one, I'm not really paid for that, and two, it's not really good for my mental health to be thinking about it, because I get stressed easily."

New skillsets

"Everyone's got more skilled at operating in a digital world because you've had to do it. I think people realise how important it is now, whereas a lot of them probably thought they could do the job with just a vague understanding of how to do emails. But actually the world has significantly changed for us."

Moving into hybrid

"Hybrid working will be disruptive because it's less certain. It will actually be more difficult than moving from one certain state to another certain state."

Managing hybrid workers and working preferences

- A new default has emerged
- Good job design and transparency
- Skilled conversations about working arrangements
- Some groups benefit from more office presence

"hybrid doesn't work by accident, it only works if it's planned and structured."
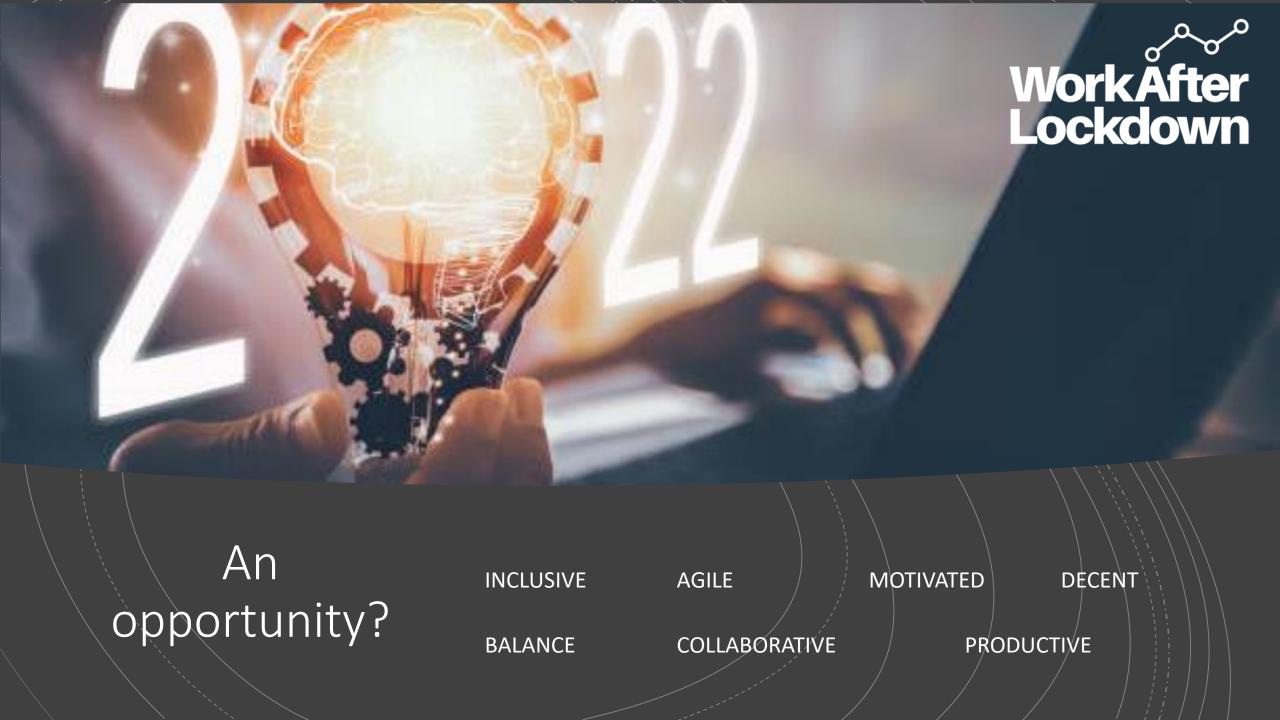
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Pandemic learning

- New ways of measuring productivity
- Inefficiencies around office design
- Well-being is key
- Trust and autonomous workers
- Frequent and deliberate messaging

"our people were phenomenal and just kind of dug in and leaned in … and I think everybody felt really proud of that."

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From the accidental experiment around working from home to the mass hybridisation of the workforce … what next for HRM?

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Recruitment

Induction & on-boarding

Development and training

Diversity management

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