

THE END OF THE 9-5?

What Workers Want Report 2021



Overview

Employers and professionals alike are questioning whether the traditional 9-5, office-based way of working will ever return or if the mass move to remote working for many during the pandemic has overturned working patterns forever.

We asked over 4,200 professionals across the UK their views on the shape future ways of working will take, and what they will need to consider for the new world of work.

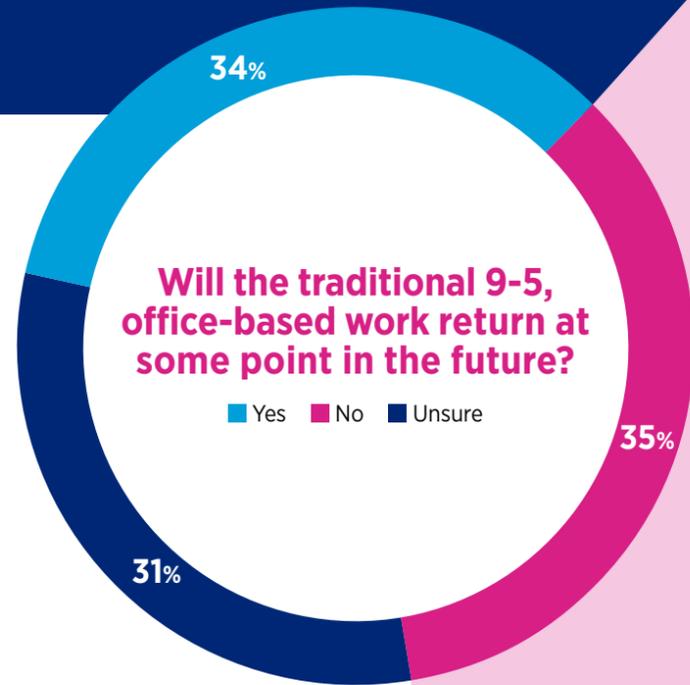
Senior professionals more likely to say the traditional 9-5 is over

2020 was rife with uncertainty and difficult market conditions for many organisations, meaning many business leaders had to make quick decisions and overhaul their ways of working, often overnight, in order to adapt to the rapidly evolving crisis. But just how well do professionals think their leadership fared in navigating the pandemic?

On the surface, professionals are fairly evenly split regarding their opinion on whether we have seen the end of the traditional 9-5. But digging a little deeper shows that senior level professionals are more likely to think pre-pandemic ways of working are no more, as do those based in regions that contain some of the largest cities in the UK.

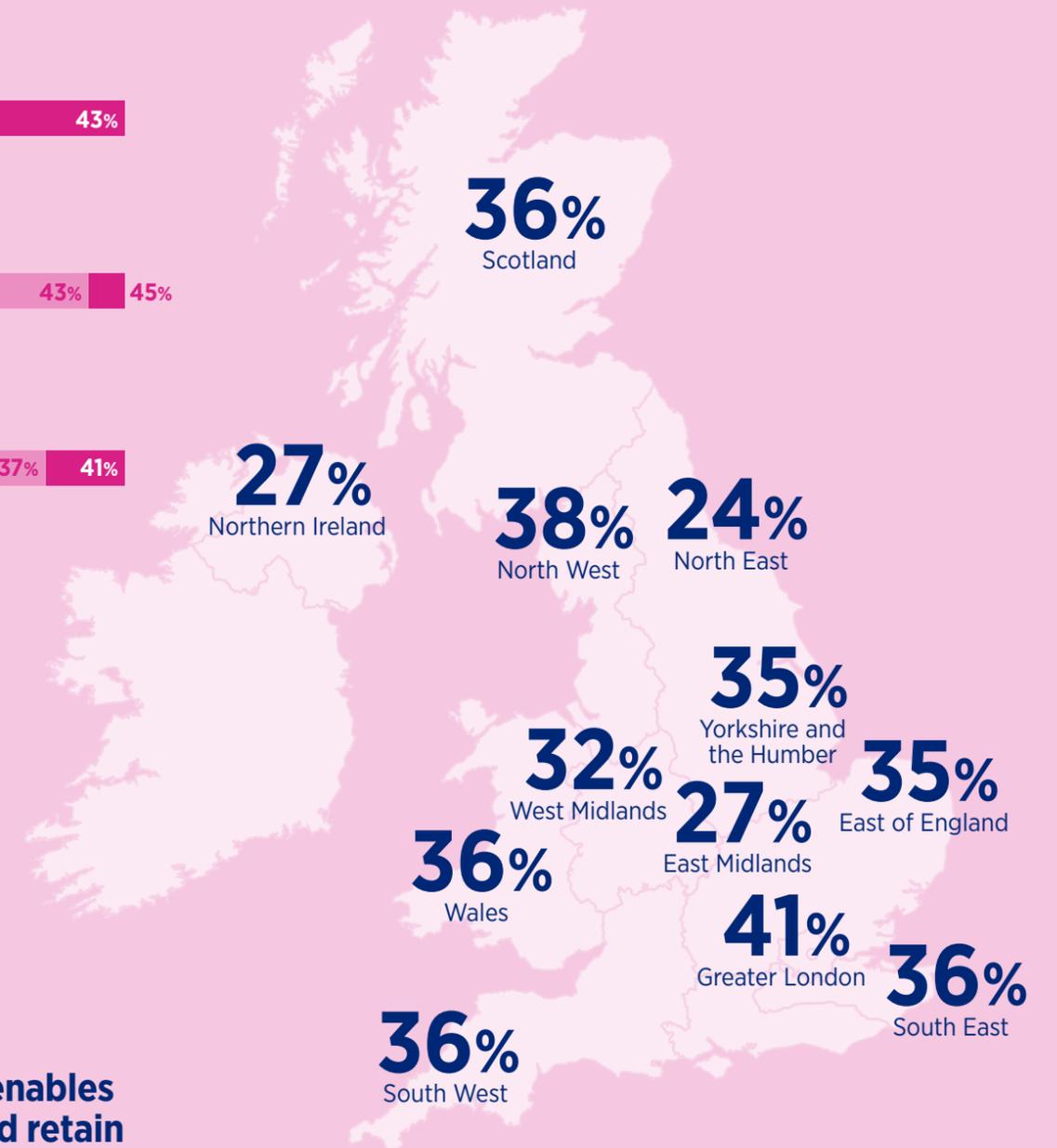
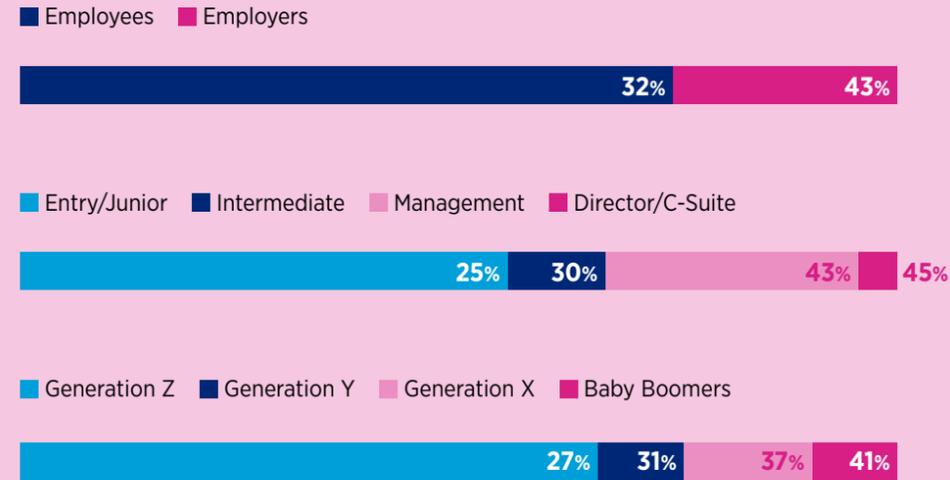
Adopting a hybrid working model can help you to meet the individual preferences and needs of your team. While working from home can help boost productivity and improve work-life balance, providing the opportunity for staff to be in the office is important from a cultural, collaboration, knowledge sharing and wellbeing perspective. Ultimately, organisations choosing to adopt a hybrid working approach will need to put policies in place that suit most people most of the time – you need to do what’s best for your business, and what’s right for people as well.

Carmena Wood
Managing Director for North West, Hays



Will the traditional 9-5 return?

Respondents who think the traditional 9-5, office-based work will not return:



“ Adopting a hybrid working model enables organisations to attract, engage and retain a wider group of talented individuals to their workforce. ”

Hybrid working is on the horizon, and it's a big deal to employees

Nearly half of employers think hybrid or remote working will be offered to staff on a permanent basis going forward, and most foresee their workforce operating in a hybrid manner from July 2021 onwards. This is significant given that most employees say they'd be more likely to move to an organisation that offers a hybrid working pattern.

Although hybrid working is predicted to be widespread, both employers and employees will require upskilling so they're fully equipped to adapt to this new way of working.

Will employers offer hybrid or remote working on a permanent basis going forward?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure



How do expected and preferred working patterns from July 2021 align?

■ Work fully remotely ■ Work fully in the workplace
■ A mix of in the workplace and remotely ■ Not sure

Employer expectations



Employee preferences



Do employers and professionals feel equipped with the right capabilities, skills and technology to manage or work in a hybrid team in the future?

■ Yes, fully ■ Yes, to an extent ■ No

Employers



Employees



Who's most likely to move to a job that offers permanent hybrid or remote working?

■ Baby Boomers ■ Generation Z ■ Generation X ■ Generation Y



■ Entry/Junior ■ Intermediate ■ Director/C-Suite ■ Management



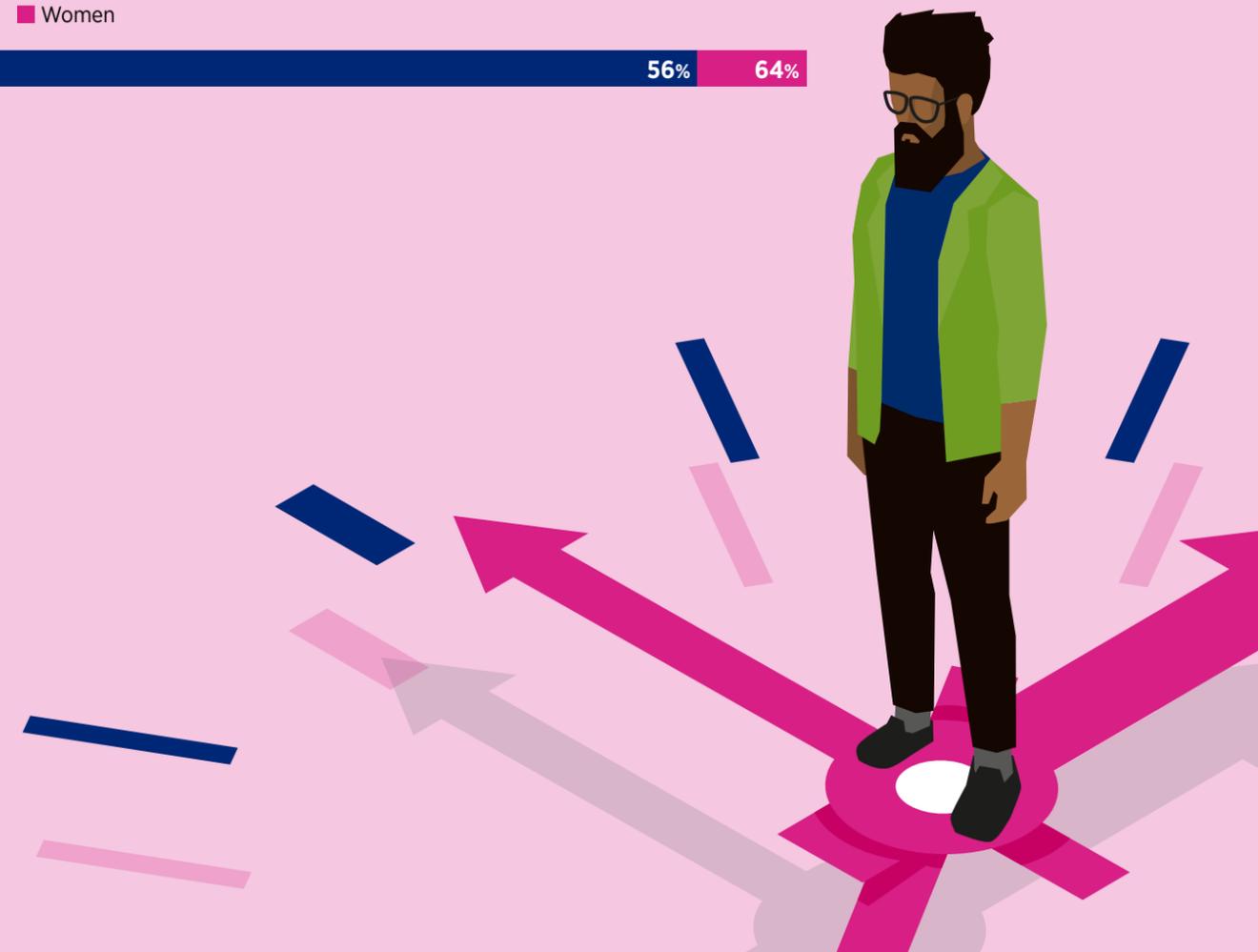
■ Men ■ Women



HAYS THRIVE HONE YOUR HYBRID WORKING SKILLS

To help your managers and staff prepare for a hybrid way of working, our free online training portal, Hays Thrive, includes a range of courses to navigate the new era of work.

Visit hayslearning.co.uk to find out more and sign up for free.



Remote working agreements are top challenge to overcome

The move back to the workplace, and subsequent uptake of hybrid working, will not be without its obstacles. As was the case for many who moved to remote working almost overnight in March 2020, shifting to a hybrid working pattern will bring its own set of unknowns that professionals will need to adapt to.

The primary concern will be agreeing remote working policies – top of the list for employers and employees alike. After months of lockdowns, job security worries and social distancing measures, addressing poor morale and motivation will also be a main focus area to overcome.

Employees are also more concerned than employers about the impact of a reduced workforce as they transition back to the workplace.

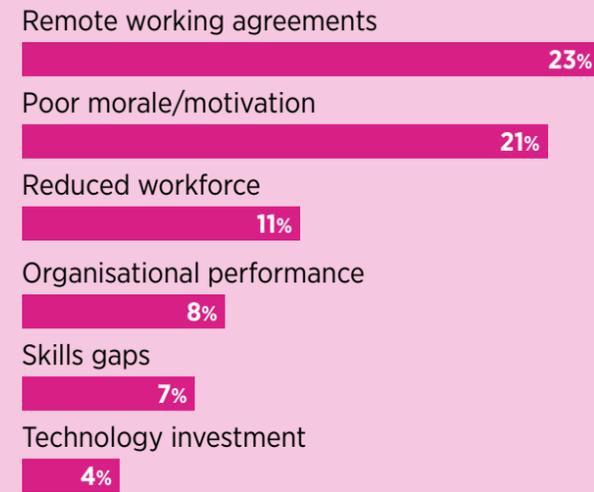
One of the benefits of adopting a hybrid working model is it enables organisations to attract, engage and retain a wider group of talented individuals to their workforce who may not be able to, or indeed want to, adopt a traditional wholly office-based working pattern. In many cases it also provides professionals the opportunity to better combine their professional duties with personal commitments and interests.

When moving to a hybrid working model, purposefully creating an inclusive work environment and ethos across your team, wherever they are based, will be more important than ever. Taking steps to ensure team members who elect to split their time in and away from the office continue to feel ‘seen’ and have their opinions sought and heard will be key.

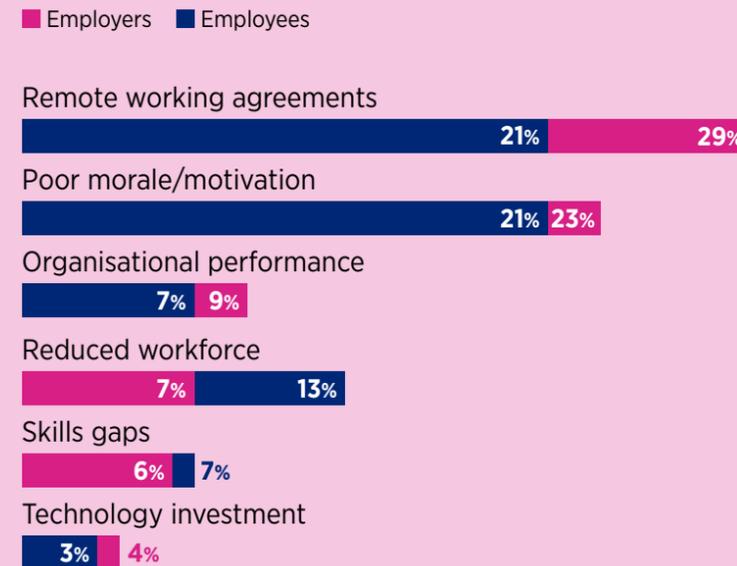
Create open channels of communication which reach all colleagues regardless of location, invite feedback on its effectiveness and be prepared to make adjustments to your approach as you go – after all, it’s going to be a learning curve. Getting it right will allow you to stay engaged with your employees and ultimately help drive success.

Yvonne Smyth
Group Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Hays

Expected challenges when transitioning back to the workplace

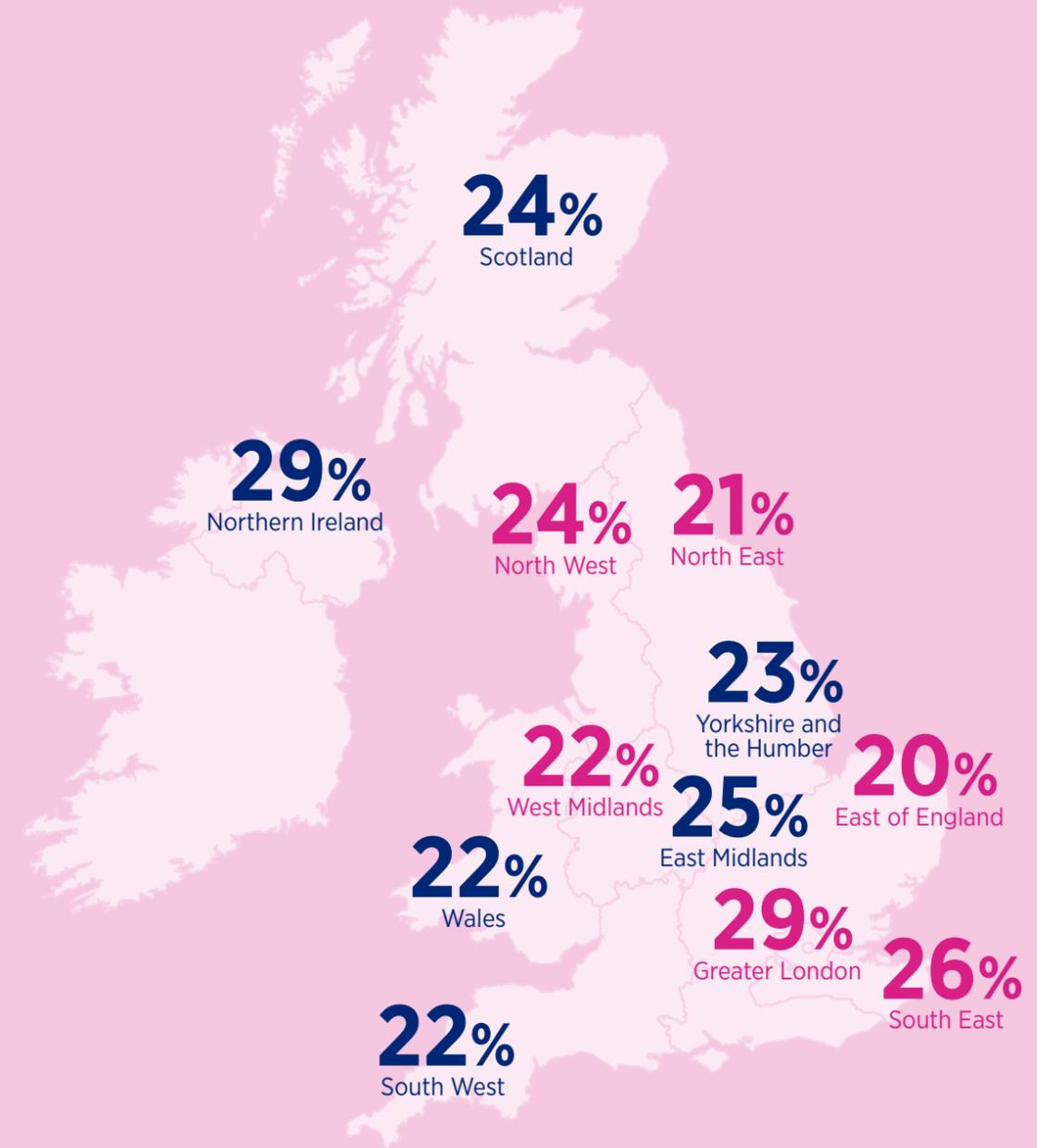


Expected challenges for employers and employees



Top challenge by region

■ Remote working agreements ■ Poor morale/motivation



“ When moving to a hybrid working model, purposefully creating an inclusive work environment and ethos across your team, wherever they are based, will be more important than ever. ”

Our approach to developing a hybrid working model - a case study

Flexible working has been high on our employee agenda for several years now. Therefore, we plan to continue exploring workplace flexibility in its broadest sense and provide hybrid working opportunities for our employees where operationally viable.

The benefits of enabling employees to be happy in their work and achieve the right work-life balance are well documented. Over the last 12 months our employee engagement has increased by 13% and we are keen to sustain and improve this as we explore further workplace flexibility. Flexible working helps to create the right internal culture and driving engagement through optimum use of resource, how we maintain productivity and ultimately meet customer demands. We involve our employees in the development of key policies to ensure their engagement which in turn shapes our culture. It's important to overlay this with the implications on business strategy and long-term sustainability.

When developing our approach, we evaluate the impact of flexible working on a case-by-case basis. Our initial findings show that our employees are seeking more informal flexibility, such as to work from home for certain projects, as opposed to permanent changes to terms and conditions.

“Flexible working has been high on our employee agenda for several years now. Therefore, we plan to continue exploring workplace flexibility in its broadest sense and provide flexible working opportunities for our employees where operationally viable.”

To support the return to work, we have set up a dedicated project group that focuses on flexible working options. Our HR team and line managers ensure employees are kept updated through regular communications. We will also continue to place great focus on employee wellbeing throughout the transition.

When creating a flexible working environment it is really important to:

- Understand your culture and values
- Listen to your employees and find out what's important to them
- Not be afraid to trial new ways of working
- Look at flexibility in its broadest sense including the benefits you offer, for example, offering the opportunity to buy extra holiday or take career breaks
- Create a workplace experience that employees will want to be a part of

Amanda Felstead
Brand and Comms Manager,
Health Shield Friendly Society



What are the potential benefits and challenges of embracing hybrid working practices?



Possible benefits include:

- Increased focus and productivity as employees have the flexibility to choose how they work best
- Improved work-life balance and reduced stress as your team have more opportunities to design their lives with their wellbeing in mind
- Increased engagement and autonomy which can lead to greater retention of staff
- A strong EVP that attracts top talent when your hybrid working model is promoted during the recruitment process



Possible challenges to consider:

- How can you successfully maintain your company culture if people are working in different locations?
- How can you build and maintain a structure or routine that ensures all workers, wherever they are based, do not miss out on important ad hoc activities?
- How do you ensure communication is effective if some workers are in the workplace and others are working from home?
- How do you manage the ongoing personal development of all members of your team if upskilling is no longer contained to the workplace?



For many, the transition to a hybrid working model will be one of the most significant changes their business will have faced in recent times. As with any significant change, effective communication with your workforce whilst defining and implementing the new way of working will be crucial if the transition is to become successfully embedded across the business, whilst also minimising disruption to business as usual or any negative impact on productivity. Ongoing and open dialogue with your staff will enable you to identify challenges, expectations, and what support they will need as they adapt to a new way of working.

Having a clear, structured and well understood approach to how you will communicate, both across your business and within your teams, will also become increasingly important in an ongoing hybrid working model, where informal catch ups by the coffee machine or impromptu team scrums in the office may become a thing of the past.

Ongoing formal and informal communication is vital in maintaining your culture and providing a sense of security, belonging and connection to your team, which are all key to keeping your staff engaged, motivated and productive. Ensuring a more intentional approach to keeping your people connected and informed, regardless of their location, will become invaluable. This will include scheduling times to catch up individually and as a team, exploring which methods of communication work best, being mindful of not scheduling back-to-back video calls for the sake of it, and remembering to connect on subjects that don't solely focus on work.

This will require careful, advance planning set against a clear strategy but will deliver significant return on investment.

With time, ongoing consideration and thoughtful, intentional communication, a new 'normal' will become embedded that will drive continued success within your team and your business.

Alex Fraser
Group Head of Change, Hays

How can you make hybrid working a success?

As was the case with a mass shift to remote working in March 2020, moving to a hybrid way of working will throw up its own set of unique challenges. If your organisation is planning to move away from the traditional 9-5, office-based way of working, there are lots of things to consider to help make it a success for your team.

Here's some things to think about as you transition into a post-pandemic world of work.

- **It might not work 1st time** – with some colleagues working at home and others in the office, a fine balancing act will be needed to ensure communication, collaboration, productivity, culture and employee wellbeing are maintained. Mistakes are therefore inevitable, but that's okay – and it's important that your team knows this, otherwise they may not suggest improvements or feel safe trying new things.
- **Collaboration will be different** – with key stakeholders likely based in different places at any one time, conventional meeting structures will be ineffective in a hybrid working environment. Digital collaboration tools and hardware that can be used on site and remotely are therefore essential. You may also need to rethink the layout of your office – if the primary reason staff members go to the office in the future is to collaborate, could your office space change to better facilitate this?
- **Care will be needed to ensure inclusion** – if some workers are in the workplace more often than others, there's the risk that not everybody could be included in important decisions, department updates or just plain socialising. Inclusion will need to be closely monitored and prioritised to make sure that hybrid working is a positive experience for all, and extra focus should be placed on ensuring all team members have equal access to opportunities, irrespective of where they are working.

If you're a manager, check out our [guide to managing hybrid teams](#) for further practical recommendations to make hybrid working a success. If you'd like to speak to an expert consultant about your hiring plans or the next step in your career, visit hays.co.uk/offices.

Methodology

The survey on which these findings are based was carried out between 19th February - 8th March 2021 and received 4,269 responses. The survey was sent to the Hays database (not limited to current jobseekers) and offers the views of both employers and employees.

The survey was completed by professionals from across the UK, working across a range of industry sectors and employed in various types and sizes of organisation in both the private and public sectors.

