

## Growing number of employers report increased productivity as they embrace home and hybrid working, new CIPD research finds

3 years ago



CIPD stresses the need for employers to consult with staff as research shows nearly two thirds of employees who can work in a hybrid way haven't been asked about their future preferences.

The number of employers who report that an increase in homeworking has increased their organisation's productivity or efficiency has jumped significantly over the last year, according to [new research](#) from the CIPD.

When asked in December 2020, a third (33%) of employers said homeworking had increased their organisation's productivity or efficiency. However, when asked about increased home/hybrid working in October/November 2021, over two-fifths (41%) said these new ways of working had increased this.

At the same time, the number of employers that say the increase in home and hybrid working has had a negative impact on their organisation's productivity has fallen. Under a fifth (18%) of employers say it has decreased productivity, compared to 23% who previously said the rise in homeworking had decreased productivity.

The new research by the CIPD, based on a survey of over 1,000 employers and 2,000 employees, gives a clear picture of how organisations and individuals are now approaching hybrid and flexible ways of working as businesses look to 'live with Covid'.

Despite the reported productivity improvements associated with home and hybrid working, there is a potential mismatch emerging between the ways organisations want their employees to work and how their people want to work. One in four (25%) employers want their employees to be in the office/on site all the time, while 39% of employees would like to work from home all or most of the time going forward. One reason for this mismatch is likely to be because a majority (63%) of employees who can work in a hybrid way still haven't been asked about their future working preferences. With increasing numbers of employees heading back to workplaces for at least part of the working week, it's important that organisations consult and collaborate with their people when designing hybrid working practices to benefit both the organisation and individuals.

The CIPD is urging employers to develop and implement hybrid and flexible working practices in collaboration with employees that are inclusive and offer more choice to all. Organisations should have clear and transparent policies that outline eligibility and access to hybrid working. They should focus on principles of equality to ensure all employees have the same opportunities for learning and development and reward and recognition, regardless of when and where they work, or their role/level of seniority.

The CIPD believes a day-one right to request flexible working would help boost the number of people using a variety of flexible working arrangements – such as part-time working, compressed hours, or job shares – and has been calling for this change through its [#FlexFrom1st](#) campaign since February 2021. Currently employees must have been in their role for six months before they can request flexible working which could discourage a diverse range of candidates from applying for roles and could see organisations lose key talent.

Claire McCartney, senior policy adviser for resourcing and inclusion at the CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development, comments: "It's great that many employers are embracing the benefits of more hybrid and flexible ways of working. However, it's really important that they work collaboratively with employees to find solutions that work for both the organisation and individuals. This is a crucial moment for flexible working, but a mismatch on expectations and an adhoc approach could set back progress.

"Consulting with employees is a big part of developing inclusive hybrid and flexible working practices. Employers who listen and are open to testing, learning and adapting will benefit from a more diverse workforce and the ability to retain and attract a wide range of talent. This is particularly crucial at a time where the labour market is so tight.

"Everyone should have the chance to benefit from more choice about when, where and how they work. This can lead to increased wellbeing and engagement, and enhanced performance, all of which can lead to the productivity gains many employers are reporting."

Other key stats from the report include:

- Both employers and employees are concerned about potential inclusion risks that could arise from a move to increased hybrid or home working. Nearly half (48%) of organisations report being concerned about this, while a quarter (24%) of employees are concerned about being treated less favourably if they work in this way compared with colleagues that are in the workplace.
- Over half (56%) of organisations believe it's important to provide flexible working as an option when advertising jobs. This is seen as a key way of attracting staff and addressing skill or labour shortages.