

Licensing system suggested for employees working from home

2 years ago



A new study from workplace consultancy [Advanced Workplace Associates \(AWA\)](#) has suggested that organisations could introduce a licensing system to ensure employees have the conditions to deliver high performance and work safely, in a hybrid work model.

This follows the company's recent Hybrid Index Report, a study of nearly 120 workplaces in 22 countries, representing 155,000 employees, which found that workers are still only coming into the office an average of 1.75 days a week.

It says that in most countries, organisations have a duty of care to their employees working from home enshrined in law, and that they must take every reasonable endeavour to ensure the physical and mental safety of their people, whatever their location. However, the hybrid working model is more dynamic, where people work on laptops, on trains, in hotels, bedrooms, kitchens, or in dining rooms. Conditions at home change rapidly, as does the safety and welfare of the employee.

According to the Health and Safety Executive, 36.8m working days were lost due to work-related ill health and non-fatal workplace injuries in 2021/22. The company believes that a specific hybrid working licence will maintain high levels of performance while keeping employees physically and mentally safe, as well as ensuring leaders develop a new set of understandings and disciplines.

Moreover, the Hybrid Index Report found that employees are not adhering to employers' directives to attend the office anyway. Where organisations mandate three- or four-days' attendance, staff only come in an average of around two days a week.

Highlights of the licensing report include:

- Organisations have a duty of care to provide a safe physical and psychological working environment for employees, whether they are working from home or in an office. This duty extends to physical, mental, and cognitive health and safety.
- Working conditions at home can change rapidly in ways that impact employees' ability to work productively and safely. One-time home office assessments are no longer sufficient.
- Leaders require new skills to manage hybrid teams effectively across multiple environments. Poor management can negatively impact performance, health, safety and wellbeing.
- Employees need ongoing training and guidance on best practices for peak performance when working from home, such as sleep, nutrition, exercise, hydration, rest ergonomics, and cybersecurity.
- Mental health issues like burnout and anxiety have increased and organisations must manage the mental workloads they place on their people in relation to their mental capacity and enable employees to speak up when demands placed on them create potential overload and anxiety.
- A licensing system requiring home workers to regularly demonstrate they are following safety and performance best practices when working from home may be appropriate to ensure hybrid work is sustainable into the long term.
- Organisations should consider providing ongoing training and coaching to employees and leaders on thriving in a hybrid environment.

Founder Andrew Mawson said: "Organisations should establish a licensing framework to consistently validate that employees' and their working conditions are suitable to maximise performance and enable safety whilst working from home. A licensing framework could assess various aspects, including whether employees have undergone adequate training and guidance for effective and safe remote work; whether they are implementing the prescribed methodologies; if they have evaluated their home office setup; if their internet connectivity supports efficient work; if their work environment fosters concentration without disruptions; if they possess the necessary skills for their roles; and whether their supervisors have received training in managing hybrid work teams."