

Fussy or Flexi: Two-fifths of professionals think switching to 'chrono-working' would improve their mental health

1 year ago



Two-fifths of professionals feel that their mental health could be improved by trailing 'chrono-working' – the process where companies allow you to choose work hours according to your natural sleeping pattern.

The findings come amidst 54% of employees stating that their organisations flexible work policies are not tailored to their needs – with over a third of organisations (35%) taking a one-size fits all approach to flexible working such as 2-days in the office, or early finish Fridays.

The vast majority of flexible working policies have come about organically (22%) as a result of Covid-induced working practices. However, 37% of employees have stated that their organisation has no obvious approach or strategy toward flexi-working – according to the survey from specialist recruitment consultancy [Robert Walters](#).

Chris Eldridge, CEO of Robert Walters UK comments: "Chrono-working offers significant benefits in helping professionals to achieve a work-life balance they are happy with.

"However – it's definitely not a universal working practice – most companies have a whole ecosystem of suppliers, clients and stakeholders to consider when approaching working hours.

"The decision to adopt this way of working may come more easily for those who don't operate based on a set of strict core hours like start-ups, tech and ecommerce firms – whilst for those with fixed core hours or availability requirements may run into more challenges."

Benefits of Chrono-Working

42% of UK professionals felt that their mental health would improve if they worked according to their natural sleeping pattern.

Whilst over a third (37%) felt that they would be more focused and productive in the workplace – a further 11% believe that the quality of their sleep would improve drastically.

Chris comments: “While it may initially feel like a drastic departure from the usual working styles – flexible-working has been a normalised workplace benefit for a while now.

“What chrono-working understands is that an individual’s productivity and wellbeing shouldn’t be mutually exclusive – and not all professional’s productivity levels fall in line with the traditional 9-5 set-up.

What flexi-work do professionals want?

When asked what flexible work policy they’d like to see their company pilot, a 4-day week (33%) came out on top – followed by working from anywhere around the world (27%), and being fully remote (29%). With only 12% opting for chrono-working.

However – upon being asked what working-pattern they’d choose if their company adopted chrono-working, 47% of professionals opted for an early start / early finish followed by alternate between all (38%).

Chris comments: “There may seem to be more initial pull towards working entirely remote or abroad, however, these strategies are less sustainable in the longer term – when professionals start to miss certain aspects of the office or want to return home.”

Interestingly, just 8% stated that they would stick to the traditional 9-5 – and even less opted for a late start / finish (7%).

Chris concludes: “It’s worth noting that variable hours within a team could limit time spent on project work and collaboration – but on the other hand, for support roles and back-office functions it would increase a team’s hours of availability during the working day.

“All in all, chrono-working shouldn’t be regarded as the magic pill solution for flexible working – instead, employers can take elements that best fit their business model such as allowing early birds to start an hour earlier and finish earlier and night owls to start an hour or two later and make the time up by working later – this approach could see them reap the benefits of boosted employee morale, sleep and productivity levels.”

According to recruitment firm Robert Walters, lessons can be taken from the 4-Day Week pilot when considering the implications around changing working practices. The [Considerations for the implementation of a 4-day work week](#) can be downloaded here.