

Employers report increased productivity as they embrace home & hybrid working

BRIAN SHEEHAN

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

CIPD stresses the need for employers to consult with staff as research shows nearly two-thirds of UK 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 the 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 is based on a survey of over 1,000 UK employers and 2,000 employees. The Institute says it 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’.

“POTENTIAL MISMATCH” – WARNING

Despite the reported productivity improvements associated with home and hybrid working, CIPD says 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, CIPD says.

“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.”

The CIPD in the UK says it 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 are advised to 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.”

RIGHT TO REQUEST

The CIPD in the UK 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.

KEY STATS

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.