ATLAS CLOUD

IT for the Modern Workplace

SURVEY:
Get Hybrid Working Done

Nationwide research of the UK's working practices as lockdown eases.

Introduction

Our second large-scale survey of the working habits of British office workers marks the easing of lockdown restrictions.

Remote working is on the rise - in part necessitated by Covid-19 - but what does the future hold for the UK workplace and is this the death of the office? Our 'Get Hybrid Working Done' survey sets out to investigate.

You may also be interested in:

View the results of our inaugural survey titled 'Get Home Working Done' – published just one month into lockdown – looking into just how Britain was coping with Covid-19 enforced restrictions.

Read now >

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Methodology

The research findings are based on a survey of 2,533 randomly selected respondents, consisting of UK employees over the age of 17 that had worked from home during the Coronavirus lockdown. The margin of sampling error is +/- 2 percentage points, giving a confidence level of 95%. Where scaling/ranking were not used, all responses were randomised to minimise bias.

Age ▲	Count
18 - 24	16.6%
25 - 34	31.6%
35 - 44	27.8%
45 - 54	14.5%
> 54	9.5%

Marital Status ▲	Count
Cohabiting	18.0%
Divorced	4.5%
Married	37.0%
Separated	0.6%
Single	37.3%
Unknown	2.1%
Widowed	0.5%

Income ▲	Count
high_i	11.1%
high_ii	3.7%
high_iii	2.1%
lower_i	9.9%
lower_ii	12.3%
middle_i	37.4%
middle_ii	17.5%
prefer_not_to_say	6.0%

Region ▲	Count
East Midlands	6.9%
East of England	6.6%
London	17.1%
Manchester	2.8%
North East	3.6%
North West	8.0%
Northern Ireland	1.8%
Scotland	6.7%
South East	12.2%
South West	5.4%
Unknown	8.3%
Wales	3.4%
West Midlands	9.1%
Yorkshire	8.1%

Male 46.55% **Female** 53.45%
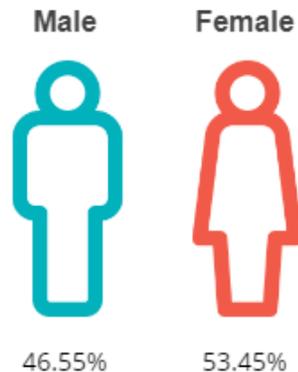
Sample Size: 2,533

If you would like to see industry-specific responses, to benchmark yourself, please see our interactive infographic where you can filter by both industry sector (career) or region.

Executive Summary

If you're short on time, here's a quick overview of the significant findings of the research:

- **Remote working is becoming a must have:**
  87% of UK office workers stated their desire to be able to work from home at least some of the time.

- **However, the office is not dead yet:**
  Only 26% of UK office workers say that they want to work from home on a full-time basis.

- **Hybrid working could become the new normal:**
  Just shy of 70% of UK office workers stated their desire to be able to work both from home and the office.

- **But will employees get what they want?:**
  Only 23% of UK office workers say their employer has confirmed they'll be able to work in their preferred manner moving forwards.

Atlas Cloud's Views

Pete Watson, Atlas Cloud CEO, weighs in on the findings from the 'Get Hybrid Working Done' Survey:

"Working from home can be a win-win for employees and employers as the lack of commuting gives people more time to spend working and more leisure time.

"The pandemic has transformed the way that Britain's workers think about the workplace, but it is by no means the death of the traditional office, it is the birth of hybrid-working.

"Instead, employers need to build agility and flexibility into their policies, enabling flexible working in order to boost efficiency, productivity, and employee satisfaction, as well as attracting and retaining the best talent.

"This research clearly demonstrates that the vast majority of people want more to move to a hybrid working model. Companies need to think about how to achieve this, particularly when it comes to implementing digital transformation, if they want to avoid being left behind as the country moves into this new phase of hybrid working."

"One of the few bright spots of the coronavirus is that is shows we can build a better way of working which will help to create better businesses, a better society and ultimately better lives for ourselves, our colleagues and our families. We now have a golden opportunity to embrace flexible and remote working to create a better work-life balance for millions of people."
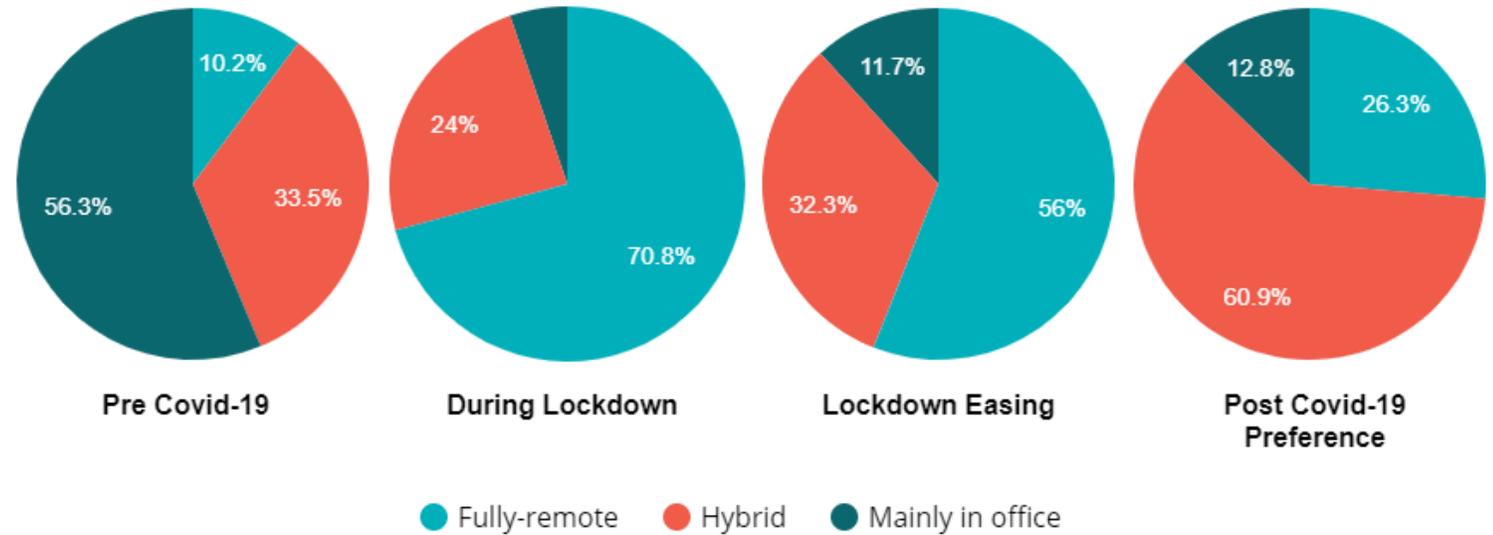
Pete Watson
CEO, Atlas Cloud

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1. Work locations & preferences

Where have people worked in 2020?

Pre Covid-19 — 10.2%, 33.5%, 56.3%
During Lockdown — 70.8%, 24%
Lockdown Easing — 11.7%, 56%, 32.3%
Post Covid-19 Preference — 12.8%, 26.3%, 60.9%

● Fully-remote   ● Hybrid   ● Mainly in office

Unsurprisingly, the number of normally office-based workers operating fully remotely rose significantly during lockdown. With lockdown easing, the majority are still working fully remotely, however, our research suggests that the overwhelming preference for post-Covid working is for a more hybrid approach (i.e. working partly from home and partly in the office). Over 87% of people stated their desire to work from home for at least part of the working week. Just over 3 out of 5 people (60.9%) would like to work in a hybrid fashion (partly in office, partly from home) and over a quarter (26.3%) would like to work remotely all of the time.

Interestingly, 12.8% of people would prefer to work exclusively from the office, meaning that 73.7% of people would like to work from the office at least some of the time. The office may well look different going forwards, but it's far from dead yet.

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1. Work locations & preferences
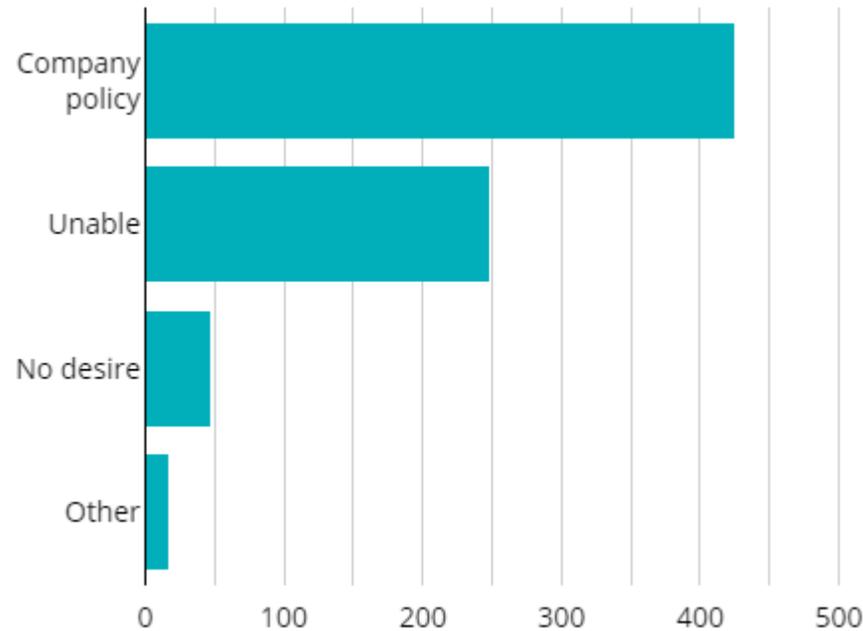
## Why did some people work everyday in the office pre-lockdown?

Pre-lockdown 56.3% of people worked predominantly from the office with the majority citing company policy as being the primary obstacle to home working. Worryingly 5.2% of people still had to work from the office at the height of lockdown and nearly a quarter of people (24%) operated in a hybrid fashion, showing an inflexibility in some employers' approaches.

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1. Work locations & preferences

Will employers allow people to work their location preference?
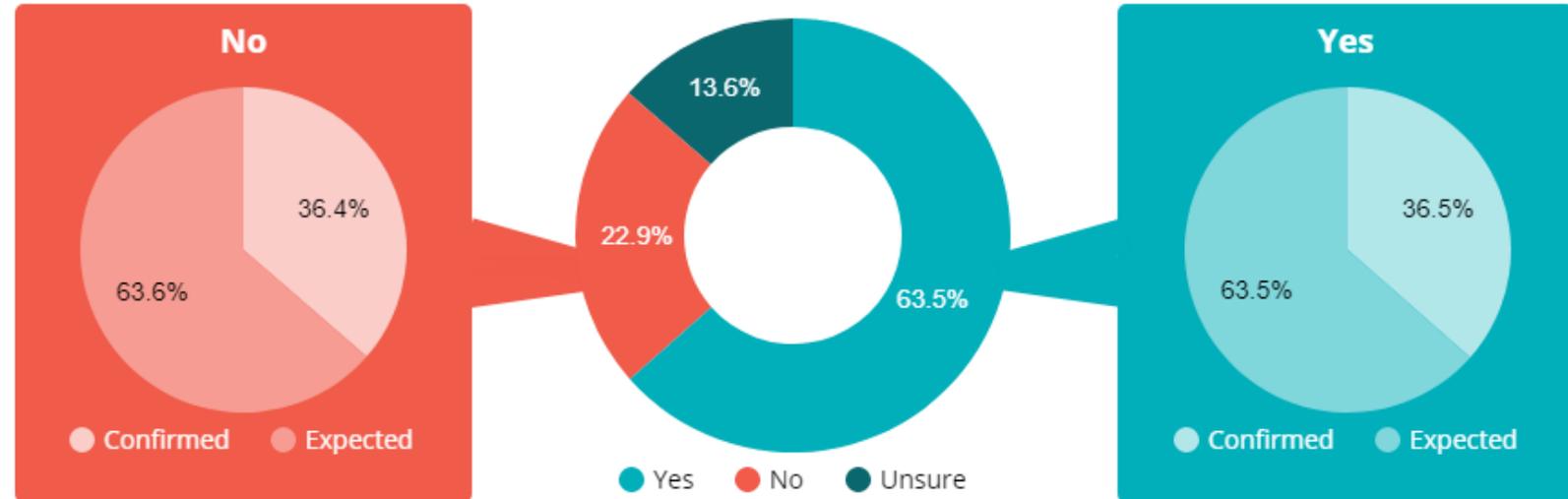
The majority of UK office workers expect to be able to work their preference in terms of their work location mix. However, a substantial number may yet be disappointed in their employer's approach to post-Covid working. 63.5% of people either expect or have had confirmed that their employers will allow them to work their location preference. 22.9% of people don't think they'll be allowed to work their preference while 13.6% are not sure. That's a substantial proportion of the UK workforce that might consider themselves as being disadvantaged in terms of job flexibility. Could this lead to top talent leaving their current companies to join more progressive employers? Only time will tell.

1. Work locations & preferences

Forget the living room, study and kitchen, what are the unusual places where people have worked during lockdown?

	Outside (away from home)	Toilet	Kids Playroom	Kids Bedroom	Basement
% of respondents	2.7%	1.2%	3.9%	8.5%	3.1%
Equivalent UK population	363,875	158,207	522,082	1,139,088	416,611

The survey unearthed some interesting insights into some of the more unusual places people have been working out of during lockdown. 1.2% of respondents admitted to working from the bathroom on occasion (echoey conference calls anyone?), that's equivalent to 158,207 people in the UK. There was commandeering of children's playrooms and bedrooms by 3.9% and 8.5% of people respectively. And 2.7% of people took advantage of the early lockdown heatwave by working outdoors away from their home (presumably in parks and beauty spots).

2. Commute time savings

How much time have people regained by working remotely and how have they used it? (average in minutes)

84 mins

Work time
38

Personal time
46

Regained time distribution

Work

1K
800
600
400
200
0

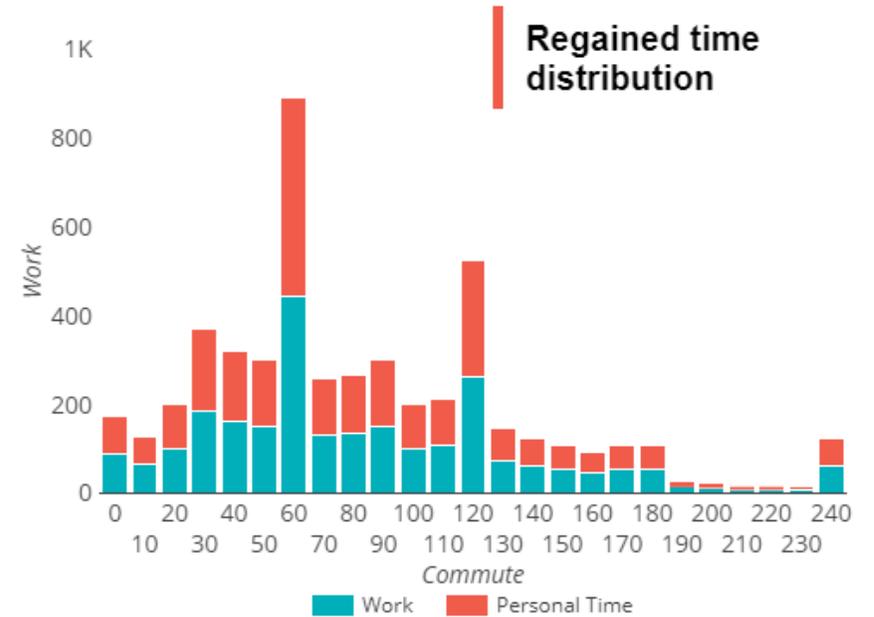0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200 210 220 230 240

Commute

Work   Personal Time

Office workers who are working from home are regaining a significant amount of time in their day by not having to commute. Not only will this be a tremendous boost for their work-life balance but the survey results show that, on average, employees are willing to give back a substantial proportion of their time saved as additional work hours. The average home worker regained 84 minutes in their day by not having to commute. 46 minutes (55%) of this regained time was spent doing personal activities and 38 minutes (45%) was spent working.
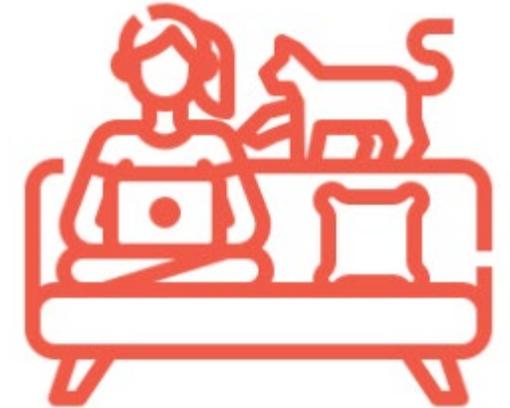
2. Commute time savings

> **How many additional days per year do people effectively work while working from home?**

Number of days working from home	Additional days worked (per year)	Additional hours worked (per year)
1 Day/Week	4.3	30
2 Days/Week	8.5	60
3 Days/Week	12.8	90
4 Days/Week	17.1	120
5 Days/Week	21.3	149

Figures based on a 47 week year, working 7 hours per day.

Employers could be benefit from employees working an average of 21.3 additional days each year (based on a 7 hour working day), assuming they're working from home full-time. That's equivalent to an entire working month (which is 21 days for the average worker).

2. Commute time savings

How have people spent the personal time they have regained from not having to commute?

	% of respondents
More time exercising	43.0%
More time for hobbies	36.5%
More time for housework/DIY	38.2%
More time reading/internet browsing	40.5%
More time sleeping/lying in	49.3%
More time with family/children	46.2%
Other	2.6%

Employees could regain more than 25 working days of personal time over the year (based on a 7 hour working day). That's more than the UK's statutory leave entitlement (excl. Bank Holidays).

With the top 3 uses for the extra personal time being: 1) Sleeping (49.3%), 2) Spending time with family (46.2%), and 3) Exercising (43%), employers could benefit from well-rested, happier, and healthier employees, making them likely to be far more productive in the time that they do spend working.

3. Covid-19 & Digital Transformation

What changes were made by IT teams due to Covid-19?
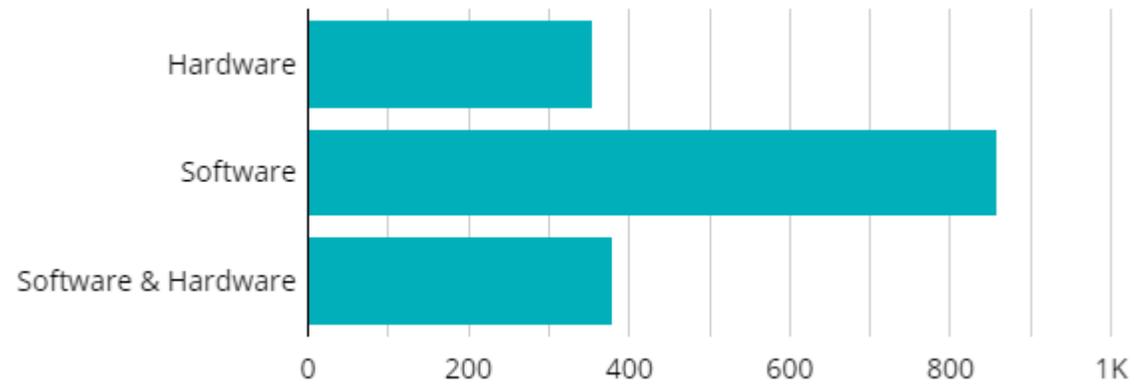
With Covid-19 forcing companies to rapidly embrace home working it's not surprising that many made changes to their IT setup during lockdown. 63% of respondents said their companies made changes to hardware and/or software during lockdown with the greatest investment being seen in software (presumably Unified Communication platforms, VPN software etc.). 37% of respondents said their companies made no changes to hardware or software during lockdown
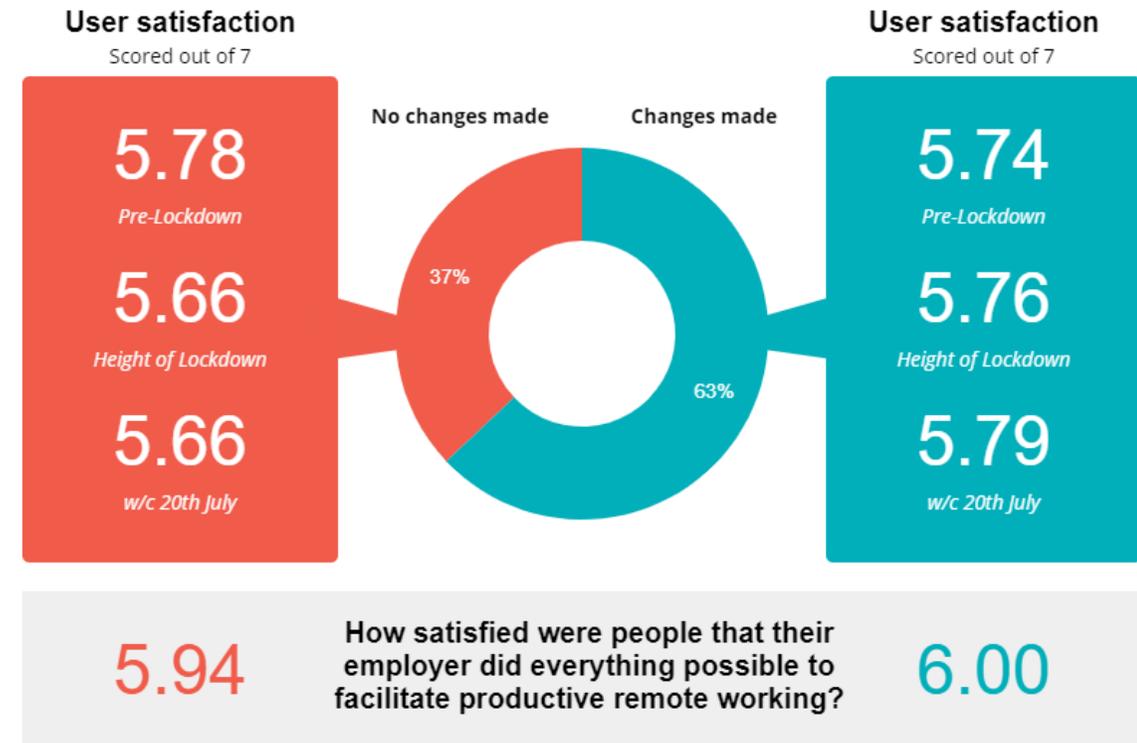
3. Covid-19 & Digital Transformation

Did IT teams make changes due to Covid-19 and how has user satisfaction with tech altered during the course of the pandemic?

User satisfaction increased marginally from 5.74 to 5.76 for companies where investments were made in software or hardware. Overall, respondents in this camp rated their companies' response to enabling remote working 6 out of 7.

User satisfaction fell by a slightly larger margin from 5.78 to 5.66 out of 7 where there was a lack of investment in software or hardware. Respondents in this camp rated their companies' response to enabling remote working 5.94 out of 7.

User satisfaction
Scored out of 7

No changes made

5.78
Pre-Lockdown

5.66
Height of Lockdown

5.66
w/c 20th July

37%

Changes made

63%

User satisfaction
Scored out of 7

5.74
Pre-Lockdown

5.76
Height of Lockdown

5.79
w/c 20th July

5.94   How satisfied were people that their employer did everything possible to facilitate productive remote working?   6.00

It seems the UK has been able to work reasonably productively from home during the pandemic and the majority of survey respondents were happy with their employer's response to Covid-19 in terms of enabling remote working.

4. The future of job search

> **What are the top 3 factors that people consider when searching for a job and how has this changed due to the pandemic?**

Pre-lockdown the 3 most important factors considered when looking for a new job were salary, flexible hours, and commute time. Since Covid-19 hit our shores priorities have shifted slightly, with salary still being the most important factor, then remote working making a debut as the 2nd most important, and then flexible working.

So it seems the ability to work from home will be a big part of the decision process when people consider job opportunities. It would be fair to deduce from this that companies that don't allow remote working will find it harder to attract new talent and, by the same token, will put themselves at risk of losing their top talent.

It's perhaps somewhat surprising that job security didn't make it into the overall top 3 given the significant uncertainty with the UK job market, the redundancies already announced and those – sadly but inevitably – yet to come.

	Pre Lockdown	Post Lockdown
Ability to work flexible hours	45.9%	47.2%
Ability to work remotely	32.5%	48.7%
Colleagues/managers	18.6%	19.8%
Commute time	43.2%	34.0%
Job security	42.0%	44.3%
Location of office	35.8%	24.3%
Promotion prospects	16.7%	15.5%
Salary	59.7%	59.6%
Technology used	5.9%	7.0%

% of respondents who put factor in their top 3

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5. Cyber Security awareness

How prepared are home workers for cyber security threats?

How would you best describe the level ...	Count ▾
Self-service guidance	26.57%
Brief guidance	25.62%
Some training and support	21.44%
None	16.23%
Comprehensive training and support	10.15%

The survey also looked into the preparedness of the UK workforce for working from home from a cyber security perspective. The results showed that companies could perhaps do better in educating their employees about cyber security threats. Only 10.15% of remote workers stated their training in cyber security threats to be comprehensive. A worrying 16.23% said they had received no cyber security awareness training at all.

5. Cyber Security awareness

What best practices have home workers followed?

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>% of respondents</td></tr>
<tr><td>Changed or created password on your computer</td><td>38.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Changed the password on your home Wi-Fi</td><td>20.7%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Refrained from emailing work documents to personal email address</td><td>74.6%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Flagged up or reported a suspect email to your company</td><td>16.6%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Updated/checked antivirus software</td><td>35.4%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Updated/checked firewall software</td><td>25.8%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Updated/checked operating system for security patches</td><td>23.5%</td></tr>
</table>

Cyber security awareness training is seen as an incredibly important step in mitigating cyber security threats, along with implementing specialist software, for example, email and web security solutions such as Mimecast. To their credit, many remote workers did take some steps to mitigate cyber security threats such as changing passwords (38%), keeping anti-virus up-to-date (35.4%), changing Wi-Fi passwords (20.7%), reporting suspect emails (16.6%) etc. However, a disturbing 25.4% of people sent work documents to their personal email, presumably to get around deficiencies in their company's IT set up.

5. Cyber Security awareness

What percentage of home workers have done nothing to mitigate potential cyber security threats?

20.0%

Working from home can pose additional threats on top of those experienced when working in the office. Worryingly, a fifth of respondents (20%) stated they have done nothing to mitigate potential cyber security threats. This could leave a lot of organisations susceptible to a data breach and heavy fines.

About Atlas Cloud

The 'Get Hybrid Working Done' survey is published by Atlas Cloud.

Atlas Cloud is a specialist IT service provider that uses the best of Microsoft 365 and Azure to enable secure work from any location. Operating nationally from our Newcastle headquarters, we offer consultancy through to fully-managed services – and anything in between.

This year, we celebrate 10 years of enabling great work from anywhere. Welcome to IT for the Modern Workplace.

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CYBER ESSENTIALS

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