

THE SmartWorking

HANDBOOK 3rd EDITION

More than hybrid
– maximising the benefits of dynamic flexibility
A practical guide



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THE SmartWorking HANDBOOK

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Foreword

It seems there has never been so much interest in flexible ways of working and the future of the workplace. But the trends we see did not come out of the blue with the pandemic. Forward-thinking companies have been modernising their ways of working, the technologies they use, and the workplaces for several decades.

In 2011 we published the first edition of the Smart Working Handbook. Our aim was to encapsulate best practice in the field of transforming organisations through smart working techniques.

We didn't entirely anticipate how successful and influential this pioneering and practical guide would be. Over the first two editions, there have been tens of thousands of downloads from Flexibility.co.uk and the partners.

And we know that it has been shared far beyond this. It has been recommended by membership organisations in the fields of HR, property and technology, and has been picked up in countries across the world.

The Smart Working Handbook has also been adopted, or adapted with help from us, by many organisations as their internal guidance. As well as being adapted by the UK Cabinet Office as guidance on Smart Working for the UK's 440, 000 civil servants, it was further developed into the British Standards guidance PAS 3000 (2015): Smart Working Code of Practice.

This new edition of the Handbook provides updated guidance, techniques and examples of how to implement excellence in Smart Working, recognising the acceleration of experience during the pandemic.

So we are delighted at the recognition for the Handbook and the influence it has had. But we are most delighted that the clarity and coherence of message and its practical inter-disciplinary approach is making a positive difference to organisations and their employees. For we continue to believe that Smart Working makes a difference to the Triple Bottom Line, bringing benefits for organisations, for the people who work there, and for the environment.

What's new in this edition?

This edition builds on the strengths of the previous ones, and follows a similar structure. There are new case studies, new photos, updates to the technology section, more about coworking and flexible officing and a greater emphasis on wellbeing in the Smart Workplace.

There is also more about Smart Working in non-office environments. This reflects changes in the world of work, and how organisations are innovating in their approaches to workplaces and ways of working.

We know many organisations improvised rapidly to implement home-based and 'hybrid' working in 2020.. This Handbook will help them adopt a **strategic approach to transforming working practices so as to maximise all the potential benefits.**

At the outset I'd like to thank the sponsoring partners and the case study organisations, without whom this 3rd edition would not be possible. And similarly the members of the Smart Work Network (www.smart-work.net) who have over the years shared experiences and good practice as they implement their programmes. Further details of our partners and sources of further support and information are at the back of this Handbook.

The Smart Working Handbook is the result of many years of experience and pooling of knowledge. We look forward to sharing this with you and helping you on your journey into successful Smart Working.


What's in a name?

'**Hybrid working**' is a term that emerged strongly during the pandemic to describe a mix of working in a traditional workplace and working elsewhere – usually interpreted as working from home. Working in more than one location has always been an element of flexible, agile and Smart Working – but it's only one element amongst many.

Smart Working involves transformation, innovation and improvement on a much wider front than just working sometimes in one place, sometimes in another.

So a key aim here is **make Hybrid Working smarter**, adding in a transformational dimension. That involves **challenging and rethinking all traditional ways of working**, rather than trying to graft 'remote working' onto a set of traditional premises-based assumptions and practices.

Andy Lake



THE Smart Working

HANDBOOK 3rd EDITION

1

The vision



The way we work is changing. With most companies and public sector organisations rethinking what they do and where they do it, we have a great opportunity for transforming work for the better.

Now is the time to take steps not only to respond to an increased appetite for flexibility and the impacts of new technologies, but also to plan for lasting benefits in the longer term. Becoming more flexible, adaptable and working smarter should be at the heart of making organisations more effective and creating truly great places to work – wherever people are working.

Our vision for transforming the way we work through Smart Working focuses on achieving the following benefits:

- Increasing the effectiveness of our activities
- Focusing work on outcomes rather than time or presence
- Meeting the aspirations of staff for an improved interface between work and the rest of life
- Using the flexibilities at the heart of Smart Working to create new opportunities for excluded groups
- Reducing the financial costs of running an organisation
- Creating workplace environments that facilitate collaboration, innovation and wellbeing
- Reducing negative environmental impacts from our working practices.

Work in the mid-21st century should focus on what we do, more than where or when we do it. Workplaces should be seen as a combination of physical and digital environments, creating new possibilities for how, where and when work is done. All the environments where people work should be seen as a single, Extended Workplace.

Automation, intelligent systems and new, more immersive communications technologies open the door to strategic changes to both processes and working practices. We should be prepared to embrace

the possibilities to create better work and better experience of work.

While many organisations have been on a Smart Working trajectory for several years, for others it has been a reactive response to the pandemic crisis of 2020-2022. However, what we often see are attempts to recreate the old work of work using the new tools that organisations now have to support anywhere working.

The call of a familiar and traditional work culture can indeed be strong. However, **we need to be prepared to challenge all traditional assumptions and practices**, involving employees at all levels to rethink what they do and how they do it.

Smart Working is about embarking on a journey, where the aim is to make continuous progress towards achieving strategic and targeted benefits.

Our aspiration here is to provide the framework for new working practices that will enable all employing organisations to work seamlessly across locations, and at times that are more advantageous to both customers and employees.

The workforce will be empowered by a new results-focused and trust-based working culture. They will have access to workplaces that are designed for interaction with colleagues, partners and customers. And they will work for employers that have become much more agile and in better shape to deliver their mission.

In a nutshell: What is Smart Working?

Smart Working is a business-focused and dynamic approach to flexibility that delivers more efficiency and effectiveness in work organisation, service delivery and organisational agility, as well as benefits for working people and wider benefits for society and the environment.

Key features are management by results, a trust-based culture, high levels of autonomy, flexibility in the time and location of work, new tools and work environments, reduced reliance on physical resources and openness to continuing change.

2 Principles of Smart Working



Smart Working is about taking a comprehensive and strategic approach to modernising working practices.

It is based on the following principles:

- Work takes place at **the most effective locations**.
- Work takes place at **the most effective times**.
- **Flexibility, mobility and virtuality become the norm** rather than the exception.
- **Everyone is in principle considered eligible for working flexibly**, without prior assumptions being made about people or roles.
- Employees have **more choice about where and when they work**, subject to business considerations.
- **Space is allocated to activities**, not to individuals nor on the basis of seniority.
- **All work locations should be considered as equal** across the Extended Workplace.
- Working practices and the processes people are asked to work with are **continuously challenged** to make sure they are fit for purpose.
- The **costs of doing work are reduced**.
- There is effective and appropriate **use of technology to achieve Smart Working benefits**.
- Managing performance focuses on **results rather than presence**.
- Smart Working underpins and adds **new dimensions to diversity and equality** principles.
- Work has **less impact on the environment**.
- Work is organised to seek **positive impacts on the 'Triple Bottom Line'** – benefits for the business, the individual, and for the environment.

What will this mean in practice?

These Smart Working Principles provide a **strategic and business-focused framework for adopting flexible, agile and virtual working as the norm**.

In practice, this means managers and employees at all levels taking a proactive rather than a reactive approach to flexibility. At the forefront of thinking about how work is organised the aim should be actively to seek out the benefits, rather than waiting for individual employee requests. Limitations on flexibility need to be based on clear operational need.

The high-level Vision and Principles need to be supplemented by local Team Agreements, reflecting the needs of different kinds of work across the business. **It's the Principles that provide the touchstone that inform decisions at all levels** about how work is organised.

Strategic change will involve an integrated programme that brings together the core functions of People, Property (Corporate Real Estate and Facilities Management) and Technology working together, along with other specialist functions as necessary, such as Transformation, Learning & Development, Communications, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Health & Safety, Security, and Sustainability. It will also need senior sponsorship and support at Executive level.

3 Targeting Benefits across the Triple Bottom Line



Enabling employees to work on a more decentralised and flexible basis on its own is not enough to maximise the potential benefits. It's important to pinpoint specific benefits and support the measures that will deliver them.

The following table highlights the range of benefits that it's possible to aim for across the Triple Bottom Line.

Business	Employee	Environment
Improved productivity	More choice and autonomy	Reduced transport energy for business and individuals
Improved service delivery	Culture of trust	Reduced energy costs of workplaces
Greater focus on results	Better work-life balance/harmony	Reduced or eliminated paper
Improved and more effective collaboration	Reduced stress, improved health and wellbeing	Reduced consumption of material products through dematerialisation
Decisions taken at appropriate level	Working in healthier workplaces	Reduced land-take and construction impacts for workplaces
Reduced business travel	Better ability to manage disability and long-term conditions	Improved interfaces with natural environment
Improved innovation and adaptability	Reduced time and costs of commute travel	Reduced congestion and pollution
Improved business continuity	More flexibility to manage caring responsibilities	Revitalised local communities
Reduced real estate requirements	Equality of opportunity through enhanced inclusion and diversity	Positive engagement between organisations and local communities
Workplaces better suited to the activities people do	Improved engagement and work satisfaction	
Improved recruitment and retention		
More efficient use of working time		

Having a reactive approach to Flexible Working, or an approach to hybrid working that simply focuses on presence in one place or another, may deliver some benefits – but these will be limited or even incidental.

So one needs to **adopt a more strategic, targeted approach**. Benefits that are especially important to your organisation can be incorporated into your Vision for change, and integrated into the planning of the workstreams delivering the change.

It's worth noting too that these benefits are all measurable – which we will return to in the sections on implementation and evaluation.

Generating conversations around the potential benefits is a crucial part of awareness-raising at all levels, as well as shaping the nature of the transformation. The best conversations often start with a question – for example:

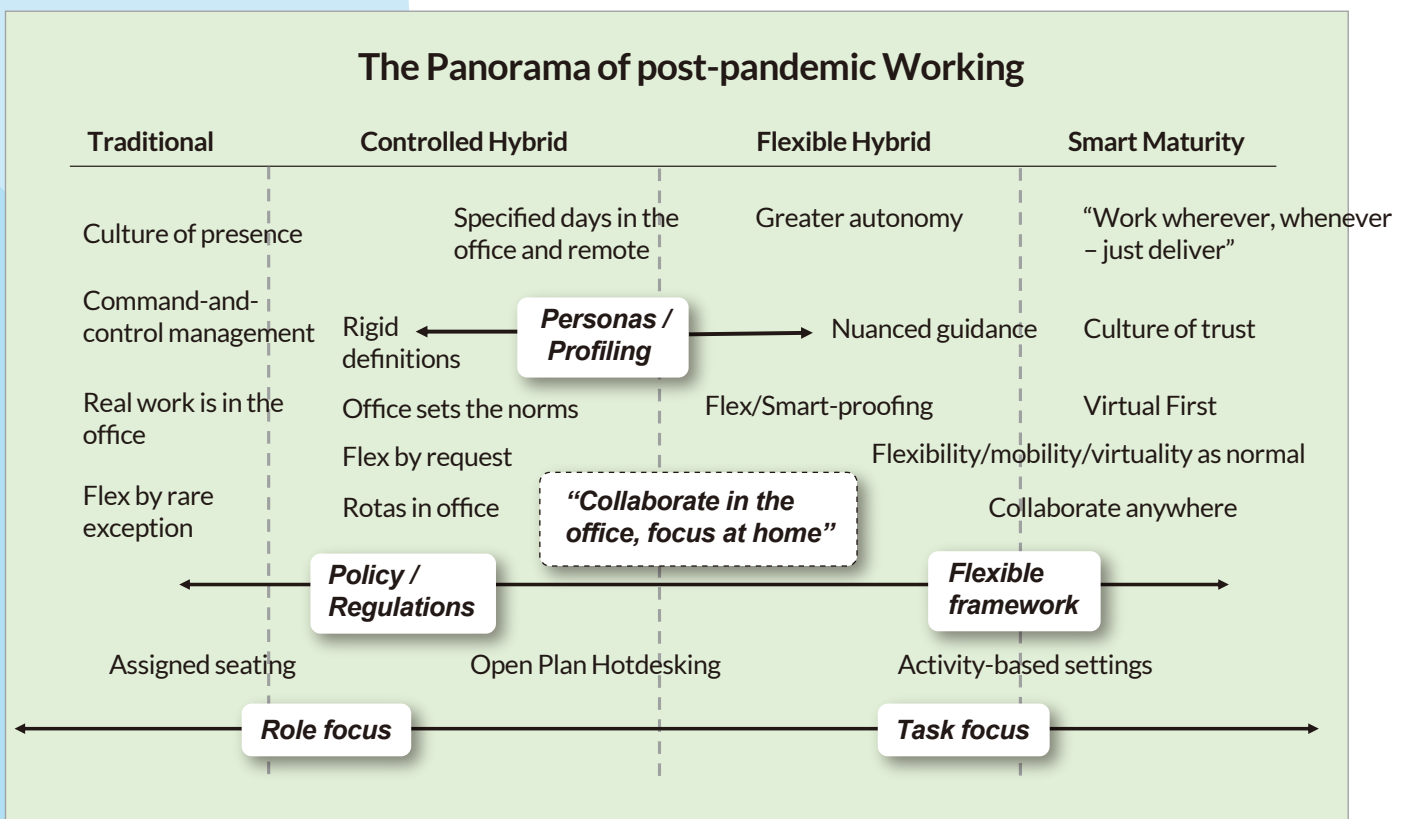
- ‘How can we use smarter ways of working to speed up innovation?’
- ‘In what ways can Smart Working support our efforts to improve our environmental performance?’
- ‘How should our desire to promote healthier working impact workplace design?’

Any conversations about where to work (e.g. how often to work in the office, how often at home or elsewhere) should be way downstream, once the framework of benefits is established and an examination of work requirements been carried out.

Aiming for more dynamic forms of flexibility

If we think about the way work is shaping up after the pandemic, we can broadly group responses into four categories: Traditional, Controlled Hybrid, Flexible Hybrid and Smart Working. Some of the main characteristics of these are set out in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Panorama of Traditional, Hybrid and Smart Working



Key thematic differences between the categories can be seen in the levels of:

- Control versus choice
- Rules versus flexible guidance
- Blanket decisions covering large numbers of people, versus decisions at team and individual levels
- Focusing on roles rather than tasks
- Premium on physical proximity, versus awareness of the value of all places for work
- Anchoring work practices in traditional office culture, versus readiness to innovate and improve using new work practices.

Implementations of hybrid working often carry forward a mindset and assumptions from the old world of work, even while enabling different degrees of flexibility around location or time.

The practices towards the left of Figure 1 will have the impact of reducing the scope for achieving the full benefits of new working practices.

5 reasons why mandating specific days in the office may compromise the benefits

Many organisations have taken the approach to mandating specific days, or a specific number of days, in the office. The advantages are basically clarity and familiarity, and finding a compromise with strongly held traditional views.

But from a Smart Working perspective:

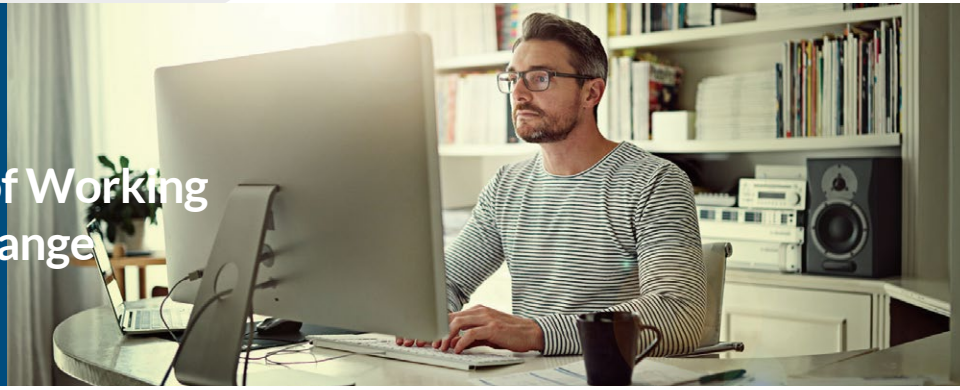
1. They can compromise work effectiveness and employees' work experience
2. Tasks which may be better carried out elsewhere are constrained by being in the office, or by having to go there first before going out, e.g. to see customers
3. The focus in work organisation fixes on time and presence, rather than results
4. It reduces the potential for improved environmental performance by requiring unnecessary travelling (see section 8)
5. It reduces the potential to reduce the physical footprint of work, and the potential for cost and environmental savings from buildings, while leaving them largely empty for several days of the week. (see section 5)

If in the end requirements for presence in the office are to be specified in hybrid implementations, it is much better to specify a percentage of time over a longer period. That gives more scope and flexibility for individuals and teams to align the times and locations and times of work with the actual needs of the tasks they carry out.

Our recommendation, whatever the starting point, is to aim for the more dynamic forms of flexibility that characterise Smart Working Maturity.



4 People, Ways of Working and Culture Change



In an integrated change programme bringing together **People, Property and Technology**, the most visible and tangible changes involve designing offices and rolling out new IT.

But while these are key enablers, **Smart Working** is crucially about people and culture change. It's about changing the way people work, by empowering them to work in smarter ways to deliver better services, to enjoy a better work experience, and to organise their work in ways that improve the relationship between work and the rest of life.

Making flexibility smart and dynamic

Many organisations already have good practices in responding to requests for Flexible Working. In some countries, a 'right to request' Flexible Working is enshrined in legislation, and companies have procedures for responding to such requests. Smart Working, however, takes this a very significant stage further by **embedding flexibilities in how everyone works**.

This involves a substantial move away from any idea that an individual applies for and is granted a single alternative workstyle, that is then set in stone.

With Smart Working, making the appropriate decisions about where, when and how to work depends on:

- **Examining the tasks involved in the work**, in conversation with the team(s) involved, in terms of how effectively the tasks can be done at different times and in different locations
- Thinking through how **changes to processes and practices** can open up new possibilities for flexibility

- The potential of smarter working choices to **reduce the financial and environmental footprint of the organisation's working practices**
- Consideration of **other dependencies**, such as the levels of security required and specific requirements of customers
- The **preferences of the employee** and being able to meet their aspirations
- **Any impacts on teamwork** that may arise, e.g. how team communications and grouping of tasks might need to evolve to maximise the benefits.

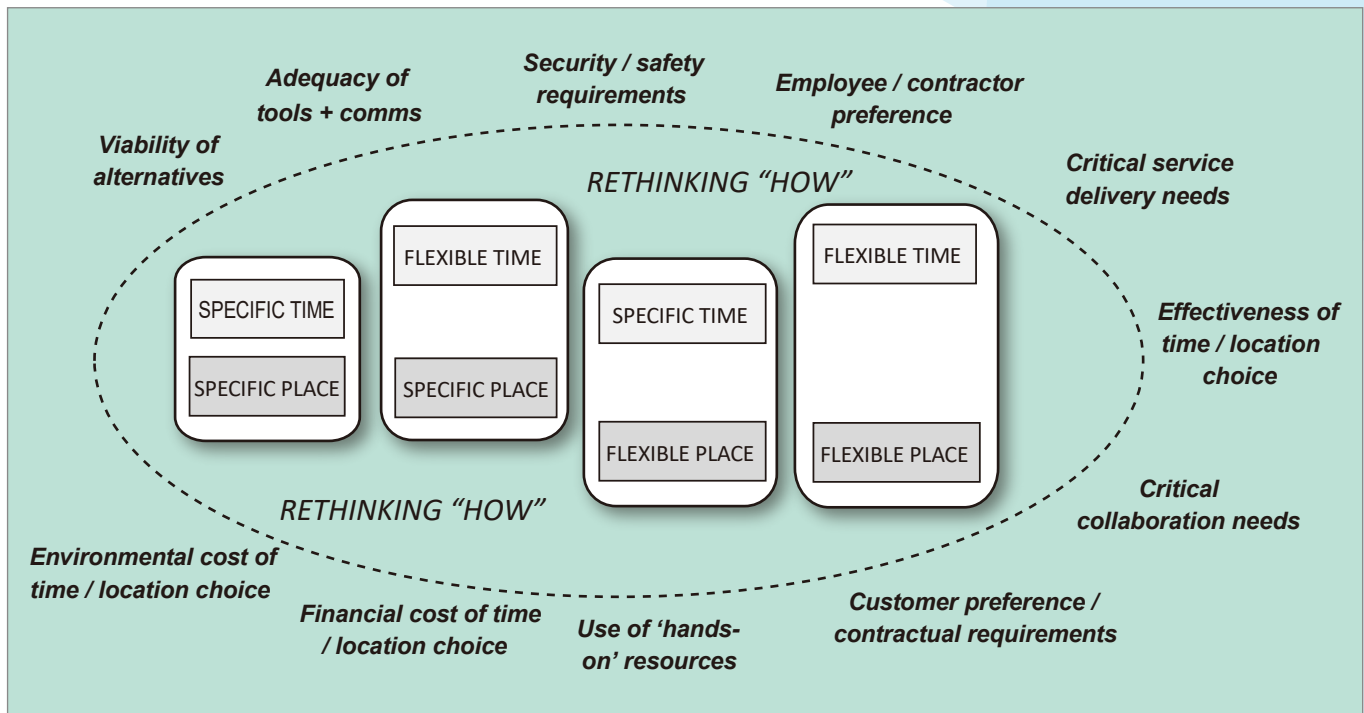
It is an important principle that work times and locations need to be evaluated on the basis of the tasks involved, rather than whole jobs. It's too easy to say, based on traditional practices, 'This sort of job can't be done flexibly'. Increasingly, work consists of more knowledge-based components that can be untethered from physical resources. This requires fresh thinking about how, where and when work can be done.

Most roles have scope for some flexibility, whether variations of times or locations, depending on the nature of the activities that make up the role. Employees should have the opportunity to suggest ideas for working smarter and more efficiently.

Managers and team members should think how changing times and places of work can improve effectiveness, reduce travel and resource use, and drive down the cost of work.

Figure 2 sets out the Critical Choice Factors that individuals and teams should consider when making decisions about the location and time of work activities.

Figure 2: Critical Choice Factors for rethinking the location, time and method of working



Rethinking the ‘how’ of work is also important. For example, it may be the custom to have team meetings or product launches at a certain place and time, but how necessary is it? Similarly, inspections may always have been carried out in person, but could at least some of them be carried out by video, by drone or through remote diagnostics? So changes to the ‘how’ of doing tasks can open up new possibilities for where and when activities are done, and how the information and interactions with people are handled.

Hands-on, site-specific and customer-facing workers

Smart Working involves changes to the way all people work. It is not a question of saying some roles are eligible and some are not. People with more hands-on, place-specific, time-critical or public-facing components to the work are also likely to be working with colleagues whose ways of working are modernising. The nature of the tools they use and their interactions with colleagues should therefore change as a consequence.

So it’s important to **ensure that there is a single framework and culture of Smart Working.** The risks of seeing some people as ‘smart workers’ while others carry on as before are that:

- Two different work cultures will emerge
- The traditional work culture remains dominant by default, reducing the benefits of working smarter
- Or issues of fairness might arise, if people who can work off-site are seen as having a benefit denied to their site-based colleagues.

Where working patterns are tied to direct interaction with customers (or patients, students, etc), or to the operation of machinery, maintenance of sites or handling of goods, the possibilities for the staff directly involved to work off-site might be limited. In such circumstances other time-based forms of flexibility, such as team self-rostering and flexible hours, should be considered as appropriate for the tasks involved.

The benefits of Smart Working are not confined to particular sectors. Many organisations in sectors such as manufacturing, engineering, construction, defence, health and retail have adopted Smart Working. As artificial intelligence, robotics and automation (the so-called ‘Industry 4.0’) impact hands-on and site-specific work, many tasks have increased knowledge-based components. These offer greater scope for flexibility, and often require new kinds of workplace settings.

There will also be people – e.g. product engineers, o

people leading teams or departments with hands-on work – that have a more frequent need to be close to the people they manage or supervise. But they are also likely to have a need to interface with people who have more ‘footloose’ kinds of work, and have greater responsibility for reporting and other knowledge-based activities.

So to boost their effectiveness by working smarter requires thinking through the way they interface both with their site-based colleagues and all the other people they need to communicate with, wherever they are working.

The existence of specific tasks that act as constraints on flexibility and mobility for some types of work must not be seen as ruling out Smart Working for the whole of an organisation.

People skills for managers

In Smart Working there is a greater emphasis on having the people skills to establish and maintain a culture of trust, and maintain team cohesion regardless of physical proximity. It’s a great opportunity for managers to reflect on their people skills and add new capabilities to exercise those skills over distance.

People managers need to work on their skills for effective communication, empathy and promoting colleagues’ development and their wellbeing. There’s also an element of knowing one’s limitations, and where delegation to a colleague (e.g. for mentoring or for building the social connections in the team) is the best way forward.

Engaging team members in having a shared understanding of the new ways of working and motivating them to embed the changes is also part of the required skillset. Leading by example is an important element of this.

Team Agreements (or Charters, Protocols)

It is important to have clear and agreed expectations about how the team works together across the Extended Workplace.

Team agreements should be established to cover four key areas:

- **Where and when we work** – factors to consider and procedures for deciding the time and place of work, how to deal with time-specific or place-specific activities, any special arrangements for new recruits, etc.
- **How we work together** – any requirements or preferred practice about contactability, sharing work-in-progress, communication channels for different purposes, reporting structures, how to look out for each other’s wellbeing
- **New ways to collaborate** – setting the ambition for more purposeful and streamlined interaction, and how best to do it
- **How we share space in the workplace** – agreement on behaviours and etiquette for use of activity-based settings in collective workplaces.

It works best if workshops to develop such Team Agreements follow a ‘Smart Working 101’ session, so everyone understands the high-level principles and the possibilities for working smarter. Then the team can explore their ways of working and how the activities they do can be carried out in innovative and more effective ways.

Such agreements encourage team members to adopt the new behaviours, as they have been closely involved in establishing a smarter working culture. And if people start to slip back into old ways, colleagues can give a gentle nudge rather than having a situation where someone is trying to enforce a set of rules.



Continuous challenge and improvement – The CAN Test

Central to Smart Working is a constant quest to improve working practices and business processes as new opportunities emerge. A useful way to do this is through the **CAN Test** – to **Challenge Assumptions of Necessity** around traditional or habitual ways of working. It involves asking questions such as:

- Why are we doing this (at all)
- Why are we doing this here?
- Why are we doing it in this way?
- Why are we doing it at this time (rather than another time)?

Having identified practices and processes that could be done differently, the next questions to ask are whether, using Smart Working techniques, there are ways of doing these things that are:

- Faster?
- More flexible?
- Lighter (i.e. less heavy on resources – time, energy, physical resources)?
- More in line with customer needs?
- More in line with employee aspirations?

People are encouraged to propose new ways of working that will deliver benefits. Focusing on practical questions in this way not only delivers benefits, but will help to embed Smart Working behaviours and an a future-focused mindset.

Source: Andy Lake. *Beyond Hybrid Working*. Routledge 2024.

Rethinking meetings – not just moving them online!

Smart Working involves fundamentally rethinking meetings. One of the things most complained about during the pandemic was having the day filled with back-to-back video meetings.

The aim should be to reduce the number of formal meetings by **focusing on purpose rather than presence**, and to **move from a meetings culture to one of dynamic and flexible collaboration**. Ways to do this include:

- Replacing 'set-piece' formal meetings by shorter interactions, in person, online or mixed physical/virtual
- Avoiding meetings that mainly consist of sharing routine information
- Reducing the number of people at a meeting for the whole session, calling people in remotely when needed, or having them primed to respond to questions by messaging if needed
- Authorising decision-making at the appropriate

level, so it can be carried out without the need for a meeting or a succession of meetings

- Adopting more dynamic practices like collaborating in real time on documents, online whiteboarding, working together with live data (etc). These are ways to streamline traditional linear processes of creating reports, emailing documents, presenting at meetings and slow decision-making
- Where appropriate, adopt asynchronous methods of information-sharing, collaboration and decision-making.

Managers should consider setting targets for reducing the numbers of meetings overall – whether virtual or physically in person – to liberate more time for more productive work. By focusing on purpose and streamlining interactions, it's possible to reduce the number of meetings by at least one third in most organisations.

In reaching decisions about holding meetings, attention should always be given to the cumulative effects of meetings on people's productivity, and the need to reduce any requirement to travel.

Managing by results

On a day-to-day basis, managing Smart Working teams means moving away from managing by presence to managing by results, i.e. focusing on output and outcome. This involves different ways of keeping in contact with staff, of assessing workloads and monitoring and measuring performance.

For the team this will involve:

- Greater sharing of schedules with colleagues and managers
- Ensuring work carried out can be accessed by others and
- Updating each other about work-in-progress.

However, we should not exaggerate the changes involved. Many of the management skills required are the same as always, only applied with more discipline so that people, wherever they are working, are not treated differently or excluded from the team.

Enhancing productivity

It also requires an understanding of how Smart Working can make a difference to productivity. Productivity is basically about the ratio of inputs to outputs in work. Smart Working makes a difference both by reducing the costs and improving the quality of inputs, and by streamlining the routes to achieving the output.

So, for example, Smart Working can reduce the costs of inputs by reducing real estate overheads and the costs of travel. It can help to improve the quality of people's efforts, engagement and motivation by providing better environments for work. It can liberate time from unnecessary meetings, and help people to rethink all business practices and processes. And the focus on results brings a renewed emphasis on the quality as well as the quantity of what is produced.

Highly collaborative and dynamic teams

The aim in moving to Smart Working is to create the context in which teams can operate more dynamically, and have better physical and online spaces in which to interact.

Though they may no longer always sit at adjacent desks, Smart Working with new technologies and team protocols should facilitate much more effective sharing of work and enable team members to communicate more effectively than before, and from anywhere.

CASE STUDY Remote First at Grammarly

One company that has adopted a progressive approach to work flexibility and to modernising workplaces is Grammarly, a company with global reach that was founded in Ukraine and is now headquartered out of San Francisco. Well-known for its AI-based communication assistant, Grammarly has hubs in Kyiv, San Francisco, Berlin, New York, Vancouver, Krakow, and Seattle.

Learning from the experience of homeworking during the pandemic, Grammarly developed its 'Remote First Hybrid' model of work. This enables employees to work from home most of the time if they wish to, and come into a local Hub two to four weeks every quarter depending on their role.

A high value is put on connection and collaboration – both virtually and in person. So reconnecting in person in an intentional way is key to ensuring a strong foundation and robust relationships across the company.

Remote First as a principle builds in the assumption that everyone is considered equally remote. This provides an equitable basis for how people work with each other, both through asynchronous written communication and synchronous virtual meetings. These are also supported by having teams based around three adjacent time zones, creating a set of common hours for communication.

Grammarly places a high value on people getting together in the same place on a periodic basis, to help build trust-based relationships that will support

their virtual teamwork. Teams will generally agree to get together in person two to four weeks every quarter. There's a strong emphasis on making these in-person times highly intentional rather than routine. So there will be a clear purpose to the time spent together, e.g. for mapping out work, developing new ideas, learning and development, socialising or giving back to the community.

A vision of a future of work that values autonomy and choice for employees while supporting new dynamics for in-person collaboration informs the new design of their office hub buildings. The balance of settings orients towards spaces for events, training, All Hands meetings, Town Halls and other forms of collaboration that support brainstorming and projects that require fast sprints.



There's a recognition that settings are still needed for focus work as well, both for people who visit for team alignment days and for those who choose to work year-round in one of the hubs. So height-adjustable desks are available to be booked for individuals and teams through an online booking tool which also helps employees know who is in the hub and what resources are available at each workstation. Lunch can be ordered online for delivery to the office, and teams partner with the Workplace Experience and Connection team to plan out their in-person time.

Grammarly is also partnering with companies that provide on-demand space for use by those who don't work close to a hub but need a space outside of their home to work in a hybrid way in between the in-person weeks.

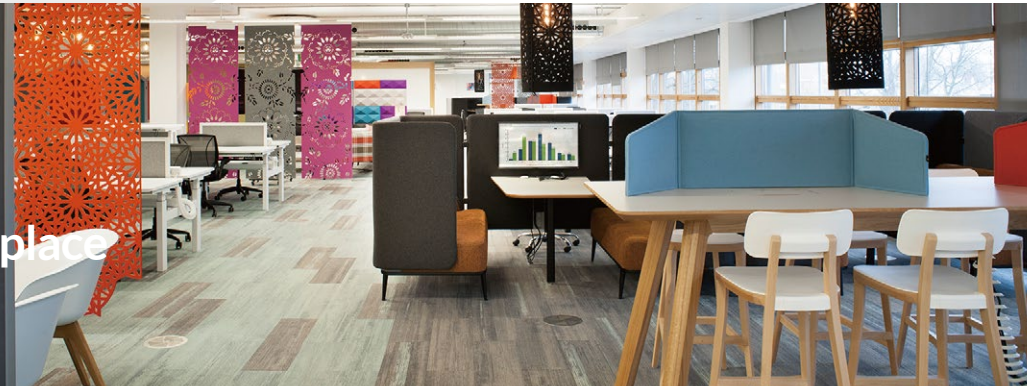
For Grammarly, it continues to be a time of learning and experimentation in ways of working. Employees are regularly consulted on ways of working, and how the times spent together are working, and feedback is very positive. There are high scores for feeling productive and connected. Suggestions are also taken on board for future improvements, showing a commitment to continuing evolution.

As the company thinks about supporting employees in this new way of working, it's interesting to see that Workplace Experience and Connection, who are part of the People function, encompasses not only the traditional remit of facilities and real estate but also the Events and Connections team (who support in-person time), Global Travel and IT. This shows a strong commitment to the employee experience, ensuring a more complete, end-to-end approach across the Extended Workplace.



Grammarly Berlin Hub

5 The Smart Extended Workplace



Smart Working aims to create attractive and inspiring work environments to support the new work styles, increase the adaptability of space, and increase business performance. At the same time, there are opportunities to create much more human-friendly workplaces, through innovations in delivering quality work environments.

A smart and flexible approach to workplace design seeks to achieve these benefits while at the same time achieving significant savings and efficiency gains.

Offices are not the only workplaces

Much of the work people now do can be carried out on a decentralised basis. Attending a central organisation-owned workplace, in particular an office, has become less of a daily necessity for hundreds of millions of workers across the world.

So it's not just about the office. It's not even just about home plus office. **We need to think about all the locations people work in across the Extended Workplace, and how to design them better for productive work and to ensure a much better work experience.**



UK Government Hub, Birmingham

The 5 domains of the Extended Workplace

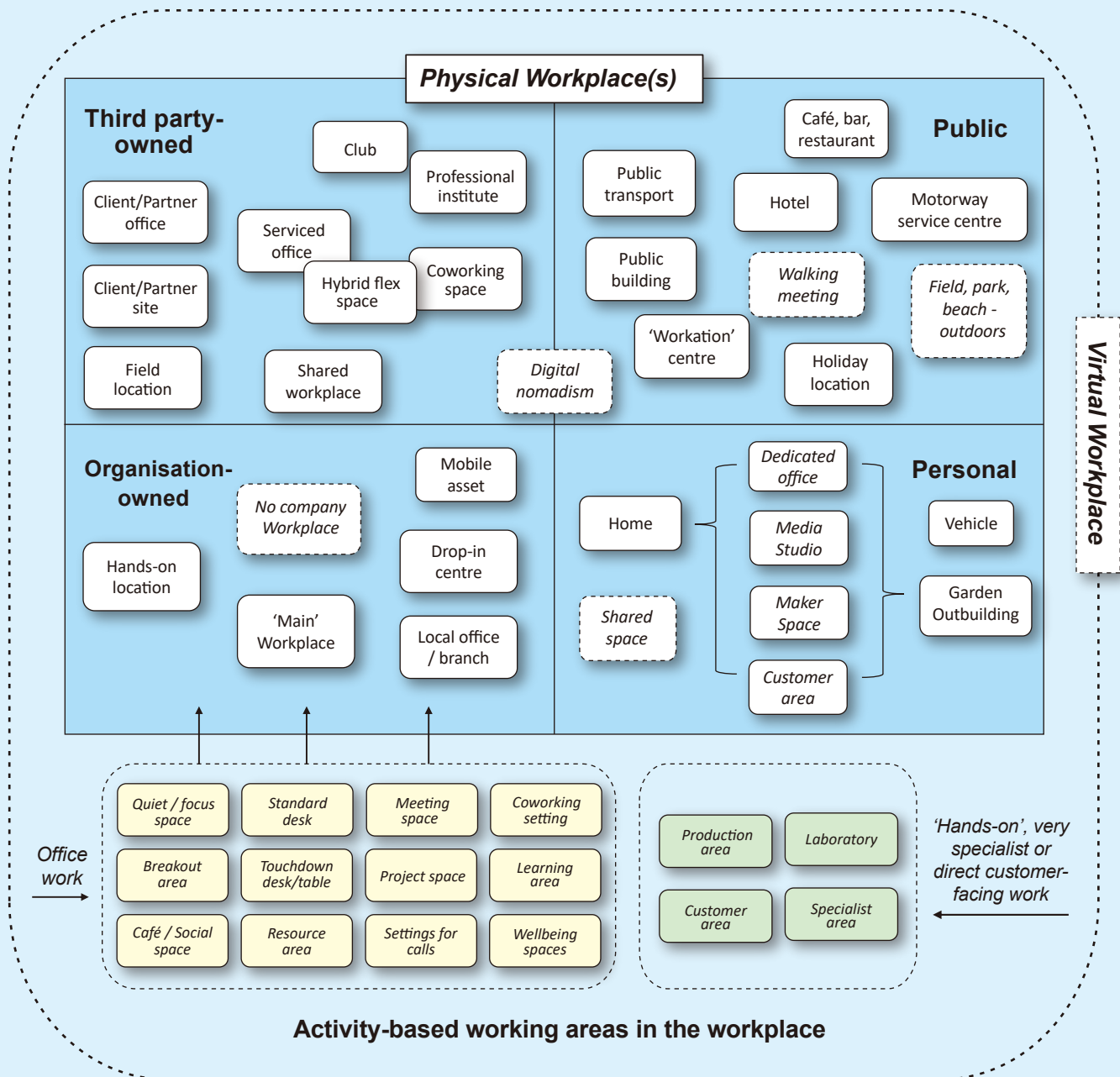
We're seeing a general trend of organisations being reduced in size, as people are able to work across many different locations. **But while offices are getting smaller, we might observe that 'the workplace' as a whole is getting larger.** The workplace is, in effect, wherever we happen to be working.

We can segment this larger workplace into five domains: the Organization-owned, Third Party-owned, Public and Personal domains provide physical locations. And wherever we work, we also work in (or have ready access to) the fifth domain, the Virtual Workplace (as in Figure 3).

The high-level Vision and Principles need to be supplemented by local Team Agreements, reflecting the needs of different kinds of work across the business. **It's the Principles that provide the touchstone that inform decisions at all levels** about how work is organised.

Strategic change will involve an integrated programme that brings together the core functions of People, Property (Corporate Real Estate and Facilities Management) and Technology working together, along with other specialist functions as necessary, such as Transformation, Learning & Development, Communications, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Health & Safety, Security, and Sustainability. It will also need senior sponsorship and support at Executive level.

Figure 3 – The Extended Workplace



The trend has long been developing where daily work extends beyond the boundaries of the Organisation-owned workplace, and not only for mobile or field work but for most kinds of desk-based work.

At the same time, rapid innovations in automation, artificial intelligence and robotics are having a profound impact on the nature of hands-on and site-specific work. While this changing nature of work is in its own sense 'smarter' in how work is done, it **also alters the relationship between work and**

location for those carrying out the various tasks associated with it.

All this makes a difference not only to the locations and times when people can work, but also to the optimal settings within workplaces for carrying out work.

We will outline the main considerations for each of the four physical domains in the sub-sections that follow, and for the Virtual Workplace in Section 6.

The Organisation-owned Workplace

The Organisation-owned Workplace refers to the premises and assets directly under an organisation's control. This includes headquarters buildings, satellite offices, branches, production sites, warehouse, depots and sites where specific services are delivered to customers.

We have included 'mobile asset' here too. This would be mainly vehicles, but could also include vessels, mobile scanners etc. These should also be considered as workplaces. How they connect with the rest of the data, systems and people across the Extended Office is a vital consideration, as well as the quality of the environment people have to work with in them.

Activity-based work settings

Unlike traditional offices, with ranks of assigned desks and private offices, or barn-like open areas of shared desks, **Smart Working environments have a range of settings that better support the different tasks that people do over the course of a day.**

These include the types of setting in the lower part of Figure 3, but may also include for example reading nooks, 'space to pace' for people who value that, outdoor terraces and open space for both work or relaxation, and so forth.

Two key benefits from this approach are 1) enabling people to be mobile rather than sitting for 7 or 8 hours in one place, and 2) providing the choice over work setting that people value, as we will explore further in Section 7 on Wellbeing.

This also **opens up the potential to design much more interesting and human-centric workplaces.**

Typically, an office designed for Smart Working moves substantially away from a desk-dominated design towards one with a greater proportion of spaces for interaction – that includes in-person interaction within rooms and informal breakout spaces, virtual interaction, and a combination of the two.

Understanding space requirements

But how do we know what the balance of different settings should be?

Smart Working takes a strongly evidence-based approach to transformation. This involves gathering both quantitative and qualitative data about how people work now and how, with a transformative and future-focused approach, they could and would like to work in the future.

Consultation with employees, senior leadership interviews and feedback from pilots form part of the picture. It's also essential to have data from monitoring how the workplace is used. This is now best achieved through use of workplace sensors that continuously monitor whether space is occupied or not, and how many people are using spaces for collaboration. This enables the nature and balance of settings to be adjusted over time, to align better with how people actually work.

The caveat here is that how people use space that is currently sub-optimal can only tell you so much. People might use a setting because it's the least unsuitable place, rather than because it's really the ideal setting for the work. So getting continuous feedback about the user experience of the various settings is essential. And for that to be informed, people also need to have some ideas about other options that could potentially be available.

Scoping requirements on the basis of calculating a desk ratio (e.g. 7 or 8 desks for 10 people) was always questionable, and artificially focuses attention on desks when people need to gain a better understanding of the range of settings and how they can be used.

It comes back to understanding the nature of the work. For example, a team doing highly secure work that can only be done in a controlled area is likely to need more in the way of desks to do that. However, it's important also to explore how much work they do at a non-classified level that they could do – and would be happy to do – elsewhere. Their need for interaction with colleagues, suppliers and customers should also factor into the calculation of the range of settings that will be needed.

A team whose work is highly footloose and where there is a culture of trust and flexibility as normal will have a minimal need for traditional desks. But they will need a good variety of spaces for work when they are on site, and mustn't be pushed into marginal spaces as a result of various traditionally-minded interests demanding more desk space for themselves.

Team space and the alternatives

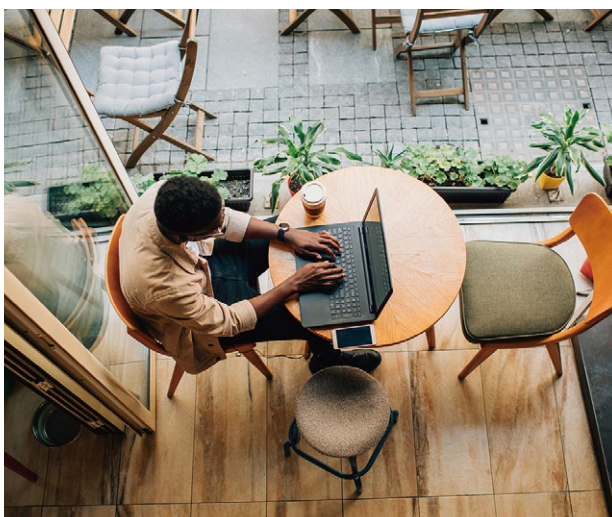
In the 2nd edition of the Smart Working Handbook, we recommended an approach of ‘non-exclusive team space’ as being generally the best. That is, there are team neighbourhoods/zones, but the permissions and capacity have to be there for people to flow in and out of each others’ spaces to accommodate peaks, subject to genuine needs for confidentiality and security.

That approach is still valid in many cases, where the nature of the work often requires people to work on site. It’s also a better approach than having exclusive team areas in organisations that are requiring attendance on site for more than half the week.

However, with the ability to work extensively elsewhere, we need to question the need for a five-days-a-week dedicated team area. If a team only gets together in the same place more occasionally, and that is primarily for collaboration and social interaction, how much do they actually need a dedicated team area? As long as they have access to paces for the tasks they need to do, a dedicated team area may be superfluous to requirements.

One alternative could be a bookable and reconfigurable ‘team suite’ for when people do come in and want to be together. That would consist of space(s) for getting together to work, and some associated quieter spaces for getting down to focus on individual work as needed.

Of course, such a space need not be in an organisation’s own building. It could be at a third party setting that has environments more conducive to the tasks involved.



The variety of collaboration spaces

The Smart Working workplace will have a mix of more and less formal settings for meetings and other forms of interaction.

Most traditional meeting rooms, with a table in the middle and a screen at the end of the room, do not work well for meetings that include remote participants. And if truth be told, they were never great for presentation-style meetings, with set-ups where most participants have to turn through ninety degrees to see the screen.

So it’s important to rethink the layout of meeting rooms as well as the technology available in them. Excellent audio-visual setup and acoustics are essential. Having larger screens on the long wall rather than the end wall of a meeting room, and furniture arranged so all participants can face the screen(s) is preferable. Triangular and semi-circular tables are practical options. Participants joining from elsewhere need to be able to see and to hear clearly everyone attending, and also anything being presented or being written e.g. on a physical whiteboard.

In larger rooms, a variety of levels and reconfigurable seating add to the potential usefulness of the space for different activities.

As well as more formal meeting rooms, there’s a need for different kinds of settings designed for different tasks, e.g. with space to stand for brainstorming or around a screen to analyse live data on a dashboard (etc).

Smaller, unbookable timed meeting rooms (e.g. with a timer to set to maximum 15 minutes) are good for short, focused interactions. There’s a growing range of pods and booths of variable size and design that can accommodate different kinds of interactions, and media booths or bays for joint focused working and if needed to bring in a participant virtually.

A mix of enclosed and semi-enclosed booths and bays can be used for virtual interaction, one-to-ones or just solo working. The different degrees of enclosure reflect the nature of the activity and confidentially involved. Semi-open bays work well in a business lounge or coworking-style environment, where the buzz of activity creates an atmosphere some people draw their energy from.

Getting the balance of settings right

In the immediate post-pandemic period, many organisations struggled to get the balance of different settings right. Frequent complaints were heard about the lack of acoustically well-designed settings for people to have virtual meetings with colleagues or customers who were working elsewhere. This leads to the highly unsatisfactory experience of people making calls from areas of desks or breakout areas, with intrusive background noise affecting all call participants as well as being disruptive for other colleagues in the surrounding area. Alternatively, it puts pressure on larger meeting spaces where there might be a sole occupant making a call.

On the other hand, companies that went all out for maximising collaboration space have found that when people come into the workplaces, they also need to do other work besides whatever more social and collaborative activities are planned for the day. This doesn't necessarily restocking the space with traditional desks, but thinking through how touchdown positions and quiet focus spaces can be made available. How many of these are needed depends to a large extent on the wider approach to requiring attendance in the collective workplace.

The pros and cons of booking systems

The response of many organisations to the rise in people often working off site has been to implement booking systems for desks, other work positions and meeting spaces.

Employees often want to ensure that when they do go into an office they have a place to work, and, with some systems, to be able to find where a colleague or colleagues are working. Similarly, when arranging a meeting, people want to ensure a room is reserved for them. Data from booking systems are also used to analyse how space is being used.

There are however some disadvantages to be aware of. People often book space that they don't use in the end, or use for shorter periods of time than booked. This can create artificial scarcity, and be misleading when it comes to interpreting occupancy data.

Desk booking is often only needed in places where there is very high footfall, and it is known that demand is likely to regularly exceed the number of available

work positions (desks, touchdown spaces, quiet spaces, informal areas, etc). In many of the more conservative hybrid implementations, occupancy will rarely be so high as to necessitate booking a desk.

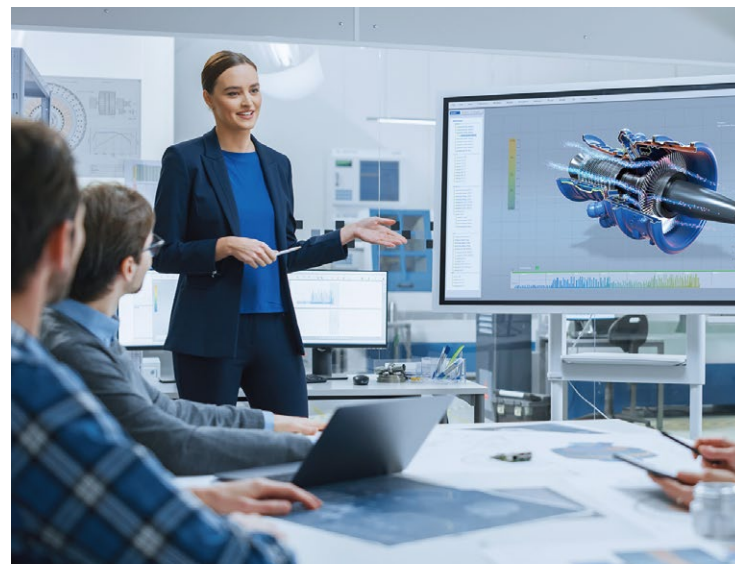
While booking meeting rooms is highly practical, having a mix of bookable and unbookable meeting spaces helps take the pressure off meeting room demand, so that people are able to find spaces for ad hoc and short interactions rather than taking over formal meeting space.

Paper and storage

In most traditional offices, the dominant elements were desks, private offices, meeting rooms and storage. In a Smart Working environment, physical storage is minimised by:

- Replacing paper processes and routine printing with electronic processes
- Storing personal items and personal-professional storage (like laptops when not in use) in lockers
- Moving any work-related storage (e.g. samples, reference texts, etc) into team storage areas and reducing duplication
- Moving any archive storage that needs to be retained (e.g. for statutory purposes) away from the floor or into off-site storage.

Generally great progress has been made in paper reduction and digitisation during and since the pandemic. Organisations should aim for primarily paperless working not just for efficiency, but for freeing up space in workplaces to create better work environments with a greater variety of settings.



Non-office workplaces need better settings too

Smart Working should operate in a single culture that includes people with hands-on and site-specific roles. And that means their having access to settings and facilities of comparable quality and functionality to those of their knowledge worker colleagues.

Depending on the work involved, these might include collaborative spaces that can be used for standups, team briefings, training (etc) and settings for people to access colleagues virtually. Very possibly different levels of soundproofing could be

necessary to screen out noises from production environments. For people doing lab work, places to carry out concentrated focus work away from the lab – and connected to by quality laboratory information systems – are becoming more common. Library-type settings and reading nooks may be appropriate.

Production or site offices crammed with paper should be consigned to the past, and become digitally integrated workplaces.

Changes in the nature of work through further digitisation, automation, artificial intelligence and robotics change the possibilities for where people can work as well as the settings they may require. For some tasks that previously required on-site presence, remote working will be possible subject to security requirements.

Other tasks might be undertaken in a corporate office, or in an office-type facility close to or integrated in a hands-on setting. The choices increase, giving people potentially more autonomy in where they can work.

We can see from this, that while the overall trend is for more work to leave the office, there are also trends to bring some kinds of work into offices as well. The dominant centrifugal tendency is to a smaller extent offset by some kinds of work migrating in from hands-on locations. This should also prompt further thinking about what kinds of activity-based settings are best.



Making Third Party spaces work for you

As organisations seek to reduce the physical footprint of their own workplaces, there are complex spatial and mobility impacts on spaces controlled by third parties.

The most commonly used Third Party-owned sites are generally client sites and field locations. The possibilities for virtual interactions and remote diagnostics mean that to some extent there is a reduced need to be physically on-site with partners and customers, or to attend or monitor field locations in person.

At the same time, over the past two decades we have seen a growing market in flexible spaces. This encompasses both the more long-established serviced offices and the growing coworking sector that has until recently has generally been more attractive to freelancers and start-ups than larger organisations. These sectors have been innovating rapidly to take advantage of increased corporate interest and in response to perceived limitations of home-based working.

Client spaces and field locations

Employers have limited control over the environments that people work in at client sites. But it is possible to have some influence, and seek to work with clients in ways that are compatible with a Smart Working approach.

Many organisations have been creating environments that are easier and more conducive for visiting contractors, partners and customers to work in, including creating coworking-style settings as well as more attractive café and 'street' style environments for visitors to work in.

How colleagues collaborate between client sites or field locations and offices or elsewhere in the Extended Workplace is rapidly changing too. It's increasingly possible to have remote colleagues working virtually alongside a mobile colleague and able to have eyes on the work being carried out there.

Flexspace and coworking

There are three main categories of flexible space provider:

- Traditional serviced offices providers, providing primarily private rented office space and meeting rooms for hire, and sometimes 'virtual office' services
- Providers of 'pure' coworking space (i.e. not including any private office space), and
- Providers of hybrid space, offering a combination of offices that can be rented and coworking or business lounge space that is shared between those anchor tenants and individuals who use facilities on an as-needed basis.

Despite the apparent novelty of coworking spaces, their antecedents go back over more than three decades, with a variety of telework centres, telecottages, resort offices and other shared workspaces in the late 1980s and early 1990s. What is different now is a greater maturity of offering, very substantial investment in some brands, and, since the pandemic, greater interest amongst corporates and public sector organisations.

Coworking centres provide a professional environment and support, while having a more informal atmosphere. Many centres actively promote collaboration between users, and some specialise in supporting and developing new businesses or supporting a particular sector (e.g. creative or environmentally-focused businesses).

In many ways, coworking centres are based on the principles of Smart Working, and using them offers several advantages to Smart Working organisations:

- Organisations can grow or establish a presence in new areas without acquiring additional space, but rather use space on an as-needed basis
- They provide a professional environment, meeting spaces and other facilities to offer a professional alternative to home-based working or working in cafés, and offer a social dimension to work that might otherwise be lacking
- Use of coworking centres can be a way to retain valued employees who relocate for family reasons – and conversely as a way to retain employees when a company relocates
- They can be used to support more location-agnostic and inclusive recruitment practices

- Using them can contribute to office costs moving from a fixed cost to a variable cost basis
- They can be used positively to promote connections and collaboration with partners and customers.

There is also a growing phenomenon of coworking providers providing maker space. This can include, for example, facilities for 3D printing or other kinds of fabrication, lab space or space for arts, crafts, textiles and food production, plus expertise on hand to assist. Use of such shared facilities is another way for organisations to reduce the costs of facilities and also enhance the capacity for innovation and learning.

In using flexible space, organisations and individuals need to start from the nature of the work and consider the best environment for the work that needs to be done, e.g. whether they require dedicated private space as well as shared facilities, or whether there is benefit from being well embedded in a community and ecosystem of other businesses.

There also needs to be careful consideration of the ergonomic and acoustic environment if people are to spend extensive periods of time working there.

Other organisations like professional institutes and clubs have long been popular as places for members to touch down and work. Many now have enhanced offerings with improved facilities, technology and more active community-building.

There is a lot of both innovation and cross-fertilisation of ideas across the flexible space/coworking sector, and we can expect to see more and more attractive offerings to support work flexibility in the coming years.

Learning from the flexible space sector

Many organisations are learning lessons from the serviced office/coworking sector. Chief amongst these are:

- The advantages of having a hospitality approach to facilities management and IT support, and treating employees as customers of the space
- The value of actively building community
- The possibilities for sharing space with other organisations in the same sector (as in e.g. the UK's government hubs programme) or with other organisations they may have a relationship with.

The Personal Domain – rethinking home working environments

During the period of enforced homeworking during the pandemic, most surveys showed that people felt they were more productive, or at least as productive, as they were in an office. Many people, however, were working in sub-optimal conditions. Less than half of those working from home had a separate room to do so, and many had no dedicated space at all.

It is as important to create good quality, ergonomic and human-friendly work settings at home as in other locations. Other advantages, such as avoiding commuting and having better control of the work-life interface, should not be seen as part of a trade-off with poor working conditions.

Key ingredients of an optimal homeworking environment include:

- Good acoustic separation from other noise and distractions in a home environment
- Ideally, a separate room in the home or in, for example, a garden studio or annexe
- Best practice ergonomic set-up, good lighting and air quality
- The right technology and connection for being able to interact with colleagues virtually
- Options for sometimes working in other settings, according to the nature of the task, for short periods at least.

It should also be noted that it is far from the case that people who work from home are all doing the kinds of knowledge work that would otherwise take place in an office.

Many people working from home are involved in more traditional and hands-on occupations, such as textiles, food production, arts and crafts, music production, health-related therapies, woodworking, light engineering and various types of innovation requiring the development of physical products.

We know that most start-ups begin life at home, and increasingly do not want to move from there when they grow. Instead they prefer to work with a network of home-based employees, associates or contractors, and perhaps make use of third-party or public spaces on an as-needed basis.

This is why in Figure 3, in the Personal domain, we also draw attention to examples of the kinds of activity-based settings that might be needed in the home, in an outbuilding, or in a shared facility within the development.

More specifically, work settings might include as well as office space, space for more immersive virtual collaboration, sound-proofed studio for media production or music rehearsal or teaching, workshop (with space for storage as needed), food/drink preparation area, treatment room (for those in health or beauty professions), shop front (e.g. fronting onto a workshop) or space for receiving customers.

It has to be said that **developers, architects and planners generally are a long way behind the curve in appreciating the significance of the possibilities for home-based enterprise and the potential contribution this can make to local economies and to area regeneration.** There is much to be done to build a variety of homes that can accommodate a range of different kinds of work and enterprise.

Photo-EASI Studio



Well-designed home office

How employers should support home-based working

In the meantime, organisations with employees working from home should be prepared to raise the bar and do more to facilitate and support quality home work environments.

This includes providing (or providing an allowance for) a height-adjustable work surface, fully adjustable chair plus screen(s) that can be set to the optimal height, and/or laptop (or tablet) riser with separate keyboard and mouse. Support may need to be provided from a qualified person to ensure that everything is set up correctly, taking into account differences in people's size, age and any disability or health condition.

In the UK and many other countries, there are no specific health and safety regulations for homeworking as such: all the provisions that apply in the workplace apply wherever an employee is working, and the duty of care of the employer applies wherever employees are working. In general, however, the evidence is that working from home does not carry substantial additional risk, and where it reduces travel, it plays a part in reducing risk.

Photo-CMI Architecture



Global technology company

CASE STUDY

Live and work anywhere – while staying connected at Airbnb

Airbnb's Live and Work Anywhere initiative for employees was launched in April 2022. It was both a response to what was learned from the success of distributed working during the pandemic, and a conscious embracing of the future of work.

That the world was becoming more flexible was seen in changes in Airbnb's market, with a substantial upturn in customers booking long stays and seeking premises suitable for working.

Key features of the approach are that:

- Employees, apart from a small number whose job requires them to work at a specific location, can choose to work from home or from any office. They are trusted to make decisions about where the most productive place will be to work
- Employees can work for up to 90 days in over 170 countries – in effect living one of the key offerings the company provides for customers, the digital nomad way of working
- There are still regular in-person gatherings throughout the year, but no set days per week to be in an office. These get-togethers happen for around a week, once a quarter, with well-defined purposes for working together, learning and building human connection

Working in public spaces and holiday locations

Many people also frequently work from public places: on public transport, at stations, airports and service centres, in hotels, cafés and restaurants. Many venues open to the public have been making improvements in facilities and services, influenced both by the example of coworking centres and organic growth in demand from the numbers of customers setting up to work or have meetings. Providers need to work a bit harder to provide conducive environments for work, particularly in the area of having settings with improved acoustics. While the buzz of being in a public space may remain important, being overwhelmed by noise and distraction is not a draw for people who have work to do.

It's important to be able to take a break from work, but people often do work, or at least keep in touch with

- Operating with this high level of flexibility requires a strong structure and coordination, and agreement within teams around ways to collaborate, operate across time zones and always with a focus on delivering results.

As well as being at the forefront of new working practices, the Live and Work Anywhere model is designed to open up recruitment to a wider talent pool, one that is not limited to a geographic area around an office.

And it's intended to promote openness to new ideas and innovation. As CEO Brian Chesky said when announcing the approach, 'I think it will unlock some amazing creativity and innovation—and make working here really fun'.

The approach is also carried through into Airbnb's approach to the market. They are working with locations to promote the combination of work and travel, and putting the spotlight on the most work-friendly destinations around the world. The company is also actively working with local governments to clarify regulations and to help integrate remote workers into local communities.



their work, when on holiday. And there has been a growth in facilities specifically catering for working while also having the capacity to relax and/or enjoy spending time in a scenic location, such as in 'workation' centres that combine coworking with leisure facilities and community building, sometimes combined with programmes for local economic development.

In the years ahead we will see more innovation and improved facilities in this field. For organisations, it's a question of how prepared they are for employees to exercise considerably more autonomy in choosing to work in locations further away, and potentially for longer periods. Focusing on results should make this possible. Focusing on physical presence may deter people with a more adventurous spirit from joining or staying with the organisation.

Implications for real estate strategy

Smart Working has very significant implications for every organisation's property strategy.

As the nature of work changes and organisations use a wider mix of physical and virtual spaces for doing business, real estate needs to become a flexible resource to be deployed according to the changing requirements of the business.

In the short to medium term, the opportunity is there for organisations with an extensive property portfolio to reduce the amount of property they have and to consolidate on the best performing and most strategically located buildings.

This may bring capital receipts, but most importantly will reduce the running costs of the organisation.

The nature of property strategy will also change as Smart Working is implemented. Traditional approaches connecting buildings to headcount and restructuring need to be rethought. As well as enabling concentration on the best-performing and most appropriately situated assets, the new approach enables a degree of 'spaceless growth' and radically reduces the costs of internal moves.

The development of a strategy that embraces Smart Working requires the integration of expertise in people, property, technology and business process improvement into a single vision, so that the smart workplace can continue to evolve as new opportunities for business improvement and cost savings emerge.



CASE STUDY

Smarter Working at Merseyside Police



How does Smart Working work for complex organisations where there is a high need to have people on site and also being out and about with the public?

One such organisation that has been embracing Smart Working as part of a comprehensive modernisation programme is Merseyside Police.

Key drivers for smart working change are being able to meet the priorities of the communities they serve and have the adaptability to respond rapidly to service needs. This can include both the need for immediate response to a major incident, or longer-term changes such as the growing need to counter criminal activity online.

The Smarter Working programme, which began in 2021, originated in the Digital Futures programme. The lockdowns during the pandemic created the context for rethinking how the new technologies being introduced could support more flexible ways of working. As a result, a more strategic approach was developed to address changes to the workplace and culture as well.

Merseyside Police define Smarter Working as 'An approach to organising work that aims to drive greater efficiency and effectiveness in achieving job outcomes, through a combination of flexibility, autonomy and collaboration, in parallel with optimising tools and working environment for employees.'

Building on this, Smarter Working principles were established to guide decisions across the organisation about ways of working. These reinforce the importance of always putting the public first in making decisions about ways of working. At the

same time they establish the principle that everyone is capable of smarter working, while acknowledging that some roles have more capacity for agility than others.

The newly modernised station at St Anne's Street has been designed for activity-based working, with no personal ownership of desks. Workspaces are being designed to facilitate collaboration and innovation. With the introduction of a wide range of settings, the emphasis is on how the space is used rather than who it is used by. Meeting rooms are set up for hybrid meetings, with completely modernised audio-visual technology to facilitate meetings that are inclusive for people, wherever they are working.

The new arrangements have already proved to be important in enabling the adaptability to rapidly reallocate space for major investigations, as in a high-profile murder enquiry when many officers were drawn in from neighbouring forces to assist. Investigative teams are adapting quickly to the advantages of being able to work on a more distributed basis as required, then having the facilities to support team working when they come together as needed.

At other buildings, changes are taking place in stages. Several local stations have been modernised. The old chunky desks have been removed, and new workstations with double monitors introduced. A single technology approach enables officers and staff to be provided with a device to use wherever they are working.

The approach supports greater mobility, with officers being able to spend more time in the community, accessing information and writing up notes on the move.

There is also a combined sustainability and cost-efficiency driver in providing the necessary working arrangements to eliminate repeated car journeys across the city to return to base.

Another important driver is to enable different kinds of flexibility to support recruiting a more inclusive workforce, one that aligns more closely to the demographics of the communities the force serves.

A police force in a major city provides a living example of how 'one size does not fit all' when implementing a transformation and modernisation programme. As well as investigative teams, police support staff, and officers who are highly mobile, there are many people with more hands-on and site-based roles. Examples include people in control rooms, firearms officers, custody officers and vehicle maintenance staff. For them, Smarter Working is about working in smarter ways with colleagues working on a more distributed basis, and having access to more time-based forms of flexibility.

At Merseyside Police they have made major steps forward, but know there is still much to do in modernising ways of working, workplaces and culture, as well as keeping pace with continuing technological change. But the journey is well underway, and the commitment to Smarter Working continues.



6 Smart Working in the Virtual Workplace



In one very important way, the Virtual Workplace is essentially different from the other four workplace domains (Organisation-owned, Third Party-owned, Public and Personal, as in Figure 3). That is, whenever you are working in one of the other domains, you'll also be working in the Virtual Workplace – or at least need on-demand access to it.

It's the Virtual Workplace that connects us to information, applications and colleagues wherever we are working. It should support us frictionlessly as we move between settings in a physical workplace, and as we move between different locations.

Principles for working in the Virtual Workplace

The following are some guiding principles for developing and working in the Virtual Workplace:

- People should for the most part work with the same devices and systems, wherever they happen to be physically located
- Technology and devices chosen should put a premium on supporting mobility and choice – within places and between places
- Processes should be digital by default, while applications should improve the experience of work and service delivery for the user
- Processes and work practices will therefore be entirely or primarily paperless
- Systems and infrastructure should be future-friendly and scalable
- Everyone should adopt a willingness to innovate and experiment
- The Virtual Workplace is not only internal – it reaches out for interactions with customers, partners and suppliers

- There must be a strong focus on inclusion when specifying both technologies and ways of working with technology

Virtual First and what it means

A Virtual First approach means that all ways of working, processes and systems are designed to ensure that everything works optimally for people who work outside the traditional organisational workplace, as a guarantee of equality between all colleagues. It doesn't mean that people never meet and the organisation becomes completely virtual.

But it does mean that the usual starting point of default in-office working practices, then seeing how that can work for colleagues not on site, is turned on its head. It removes any 'proximity bias' that can come not only into decisions about where and when to work, but also decisions about the technologies used and how technology is integrated into the workplace.

Frictionless working

The goal to aim for is for work to be a seamless and frictionless experience, wherever people are working, with access to all systems, data and colleagues, as far as is securely possible.

Limitations on this should be based on security considerations around the work and the context of the location where the work is being carried out, e.g. a public setting or a foreign country where there might be security or data protection issues. Rather than blanket bans, however, IT policy should make decisions on a case-by-case basis according to the circumstances.

A single sign-on to cover all applications will support a more frictionless experience for users.

Smart-proofing innovation and technology decisions

There has been an acceleration in technology innovation since the onset of the pandemic. This is in areas such as the digitisation of processes, online interactions with customers and in AI. There have also been innovations in how workplaces are managed.

A key principle is that for any innovation or technological deployment, we need to factor in the implications for where, when and how people work, as well as who does what.

This is part of what we call ‘smart-proofing’. It’s mostly about considering, ‘What additional benefits can we achieve if we also address how this innovation can improve both productivity and the experience of work, by creating new possibilities for working smarter?’ So Smart Working is not an afterthought, but factored into the development process from the beginning.

Choices for mobility

To work effectively, people need to have choices over the settings within buildings where they work as well as working elsewhere in the extended workplace. Infrastructure needs to support this, e.g. by having excellent Wi-Fi throughout a site, without any dead spots, that does not require people to repeatedly sign in.

Devices should support this mobility, e.g. being able to take a laptop or tablet into any setting rather than having to log into an alternative device. This will enable people for example to jump on a call in a dedicated space and move away from a quieter work area with their device.

Organisations have found that lightweight devices offer the greatest advantage for supporting mobility and supporting the wellbeing of users.

One of the key mistakes to avoid in deploying Smart Working is to consider mobile workers as having radically different requirements to other workers. Most office-based workers can be mobile to a greater or lesser extent, so there’s a big overlap in requirements. Where there are differences, it is likely to be around the requirements of some mobile workers for specific devices related to the nature of their work, e.g. ruggedised devices for use in specific environments, or handheld devices for recording data or taking notes and statements when interfacing with the public in blue light services.

Supporting teamwork over distance

Working productively with colleagues across the Extended Workplace is a question of both technology and work behaviours.

Most of us have become more familiar with using collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom since 2020. Yet for many, the primary use of such tools is for meetings – in essence shifting pre-existing culture of in-person meetings into the online space.

The opportunity is there with these and other tools, however, to rethink the nature of interactions, using both synchronous and asynchronous technologies.

We looked at some of the potential to rethink meetings in section 4 above. It’s possible to cut the amount of time spent in meetings by using not only video collaboration, but by working jointly on documents and other products. This can be by working simultaneously on the same version of a document, or by making changes and messaging co-creators that changes have been made. This streamlines the traditional process of people working solo on a product then emailing it to others for their input, having periodic meetings to discuss progress and iterating until complete.

Companies that are completely virtual emphasise the value of asynchronous teamwork, especially when working across different time zones. One advantage highlighted is that all work is documented as people message their coworkers to say what has been done.

For most organisations, it will be a mixture of purposeful synchronous interactions in combination with the use of asynchronous project and messaging software. Teams can work through in their team agreements the preferred balance, and which tools are best used for different tasks.

Brainstorming and ‘brainwriting’

It is often asserted that high interaction activities like brainstorming and other innovation activities are best carried out when everyone is in the same room. While there is a case for this view, it is not necessarily a requirement for all such activities, and many organisations routinely carry out such activities virtually or in a hybrid context.

There are many software products now available to support whiteboarding activities and more structured approaches to brainstorming. It is how they are used

and the team culture of participants that makes the biggest difference to how effectively they are used.

It is helpful to think of brainstorming not just as revolving around single events, but as a process that involves both intense interaction and periods of reflection either individually or with smaller groups of colleagues. This could be to initially generating new ideas, or to take forward ideas emerging from larger group interaction. Some practitioners and commentators think it is helpful to refer to 'brainwriting', to emphasise the shift to a more continuous process than more traditional concepts of brainstorming.

Such activities can be entirely virtual, or for parts of it have everyone in the same place. More commonly, however, there is likely to be a mix of people in the room and people participating from elsewhere.

For this reason, it's essential to have a virtual first approach to ensure people who join in virtually are equal and equally valued participants.

Formal and informal collaboration spaces and ensuring 'meeting equality'

In or at any of the collaboration or meeting settings, interaction between people will almost certainly be assisted by having excellent audio-visual provision, which will vary according to the nature of the spaces and the tasks they are most likely to be used for.

Screens need to be bigger, even in the small group meeting spaces. Or have more than one screen to display a better view of the virtual participants and also to see any shared materials at the same time.

How people see each other and hear each other well is a major area of innovation. Artificial intelligence in the better solutions is able to distinguish who is speaking, to cancel out extraneous noise and provide an overall 'meeting equality' between participants, wherever they are located.

This can involve cameras that turn to focus on people speaking, and/or an array of cameras to capture more of the dynamics of the meeting. Cameras pointed at boards that people write on and even with the capacity (using AI) to 'look through' the writer at what is being written can be part of the solution, so people joining remotely can have a similar level of participation to those clustered around the board.

As well as the technology involved, these kinds of solutions also require acoustic excellence within the room, and all participants adopting the etiquette required, so they don't talk over each other.

One- or two-person enclosed rooms and the semi-enclosed spaces (sometimes referred to as media booths) need a screen to connect with. For the semi-enclosed spaces, interaction with people joining virtually should be via noise-cancelling headsets to limit disturbance to others, and prevent ambient noise creating a poor audio experience for virtual participants.

A more immersive future

A key part of the transformational approach is to be aware and to prepare for technological changes that can impact ways of working. Many of the changes emerging will have an impact of facilitating improved and more immersive forms of virtual working.

Bigger and smarter screens will be part of the picture, including at home locations. And there are developments in 3D or 3D-effect screens and projection, and innovations in holopresence. These are likely to follow a similar model to videoconferencing. That is, initially with high-end studio systems will over time be supplemented by the growth of a lower-cost consumer market.

Developments in virtual, mixed and augmented reality are also likely to take several steps forward, enabling various forms of team interaction over distance as well as having uses in training applications and in providing remote support.

Even allowing for some overenthusiastic hype about the 'metaverse', we will be seeing a variety of immersive worlds and economies in which both employees and consumers will be spending considerable amounts of time. Many of the people working in developing, maintaining and running applications and services within such immersive environments will be able to work, in principle, from any location and interact with colleagues virtually as they do so





A combination of increasing familiarity, the greater and more natural levels of immersion, and increasing numbers of the workforce who have grown up with such technologies, will increasingly erode the apparent proximity premium from being gathered physically in the same place.

Technology to support homeworking

Generally when working from home, people will use the same laptop or tablet they use when working in the office or elsewhere, to avoid duplication. To have a good ergonomic setup with the screen at the correct height, the device should connect to a separate screen or/and be used with a laptop riser (plus separate keyboard and mouse). Having excellent broadband Internet connection is a must.

There's a case to be made for providing a second screen to connect to (if the laptop does not serve that purpose) or larger screens. This can help with having multiple applications open at once, and reduce the urge to print things for cross-referencing. As a rule, with rare exceptions, printers should not be provided for home use.

Good quality noise-cancelling headsets should be standard issue for home and mobile workers. As well as adding to the quality of collaborative work, they give the flexibility to work from places like cafés and public transport where the ambient noise may be greater.

Organisations are often reluctant to pay for equipment used by people working from home, but ought to be open to setting people up better to be productive and to support wellbeing.

Technology choices, as well as the set-up of the physical environment, should reflect the kind of work people do when working from home. If, for example, they do a lot of presenting or recording media content, having a good quality camera and mic are essential.

Technologies for managing the workplace

The extensive uptake of homeworking and the prospect of a 'return to the workplace' has accelerated the number of offerings from vendors that measure and monitor the workplace environment and how people use workspace.

The big growth has been in sensor-based technologies and booking systems, some of which we covered earlier. From a technology perspective, the innovation has been in the following areas:

- Using sensors to monitor the occupancy of work positions
- Using the same sensors to monitor air quality
- Integration of these systems into building and resource management systems
- Integrating booking systems with usage information
- Using booking systems and sensors to be able to locate colleagues
- Integration of booking systems and occupancy status with calendars and online user interfaces.

When we think of the extended workplace, we can see some deficiencies in tools for analysis of how people work, as they are primarily focused on the physical Organisation-owned workplace, though there are various presence-management tools for flagging up where else people are located and their availability.

The analytical tools in standard office products that claim to report on how productive people are and the share of focus time and collaboration time are still quite basic and one-size-fits all (e.g. in their analysis of time and assessment of focus work and collaboration) and somewhat misleading. There's a gap in the market for approaches that take a step forward in bringing together data about building utilisation and how people are really working elsewhere across the Extended Workplace.

Another growth area is in apps to monitor people's work experience and their wellbeing. While in principle these are useful, there are concerns about respecting people's privacy and blurring the boundary too much between work life and personal life.

Monitoring ways of working while respecting privacy and autonomy

There are various systems for monitoring work progress and quality, and for carrying out surveillance to monitor more closely when people are working. These are in addition to systems monitoring occupancy in the workplace. Some of this is simply good practice, aimed at improving productivity, maintaining oversight of work-in-progress and supporting teamwork.

There is a line to be drawn between these and the kinds of software that is intended to exercise more control over how people spend their time, e.g. by keystroke monitoring. This is contrary to the trust-based principles of Smart Working, which support employee autonomy and choice about the times and places of work.

The exceptions might be when tasks are time-critical and safety is involved, when it is essential to have someone actively working. However, it's generally better to establish a trust-based way of working rather than use technology to support a command-and-control approach.

The UK Information Commissioner's Office published a guide in October 2023, *Employment practices and data protection: monitoring workers*, to help employers ensure that monitoring of employees in the workplace is lawful. This includes stipulations to:

- Make workers aware of the nature, extent and reasons for monitoring
- Have a clearly defined purpose and using the least intrusive means to achieve it
- Have a lawful basis for processing workers data – such as consent or legal obligation
- Only keeping the information which is relevant to its purpose
- Carrying out a Data Protection Impact Assessment for any monitoring that is likely to result in a high risk to the rights of workers
- Making the personal information collected through monitoring available to workers on request.

Keeping the focus on the benefits

When deploying new technologies, there should be a strong focus on how to maximise the range of Smart Working benefits (as outlined in section 3). These should improve productivity and performance, reduce waste of time and resources, improve employees' work experience, support employees' aspirations for choice about when and where to work, create the context for work to be more inclusive, and reduce the non-essential travel for work.

CASE STUDY Smart and secure at GCHQ

GCHQ, the UK's intelligence, security and cyber agency, began its implementation of Smarter Working in 2016, although there had been an iteration a decade earlier that introduced activity-based work settings. In this new phase, GCHQ explored the potential for greater flexibility and piloted portable devices to enable people to work remotely at a lower security classification. The team and the pilot groups learned by doing as the project progressed, supported by some external guidance and awareness-raising sessions for the pilot groups.

By 2019 a more strategic approach was adopted as the benefits of the shift to more remote working were recognised, and spurred by the UK central government's Smarter Working programme. The external factor that really propelled plans and shifted the pace of delivery was the COVID-19 pandemic, where it was necessary to rapidly shift to extensive offsite working.

Moving to increased remote and flexible working was a major shift for GCHQ. For decades, all work was done entirely in a classified, secure office-based environment. GCHQ knew that there was benefit from being able to operate more at Official (i.e. a lower classification level) and being able to connect to the Internet. However there were many challenges in terms of working culture and working practices to ensure security and compliance. Balancing this risk was the key challenge. As an intelligence agency, much of GCHQ's work must unavoidably remain secret.

Technology-wise, the challenge of working on Official devices in an environment designed for the handling of Classified material wasn't straightforward, and collaboration tools were only recently available. Progress in this area, which required a lot of innovation and a shift in risk appetite, was such that GCHQ won the 2019 Civil Service Smarter Working Award for technology.

Now GCHQ aims to actively manage rather than avoid the risks around Smarter Working in a highly secure environment. This has enabled thousands of employees to work 'outside the wire' as needed, improving productivity and reducing costs.

At first there was a considerable degree of both resistance and discomfort with the approach. Managers worried about how they would manage



staff, about security, and whether staff would work productively away from the office. So, for an organisation that had largely operated within the perimeter fence, this was a big change.

New policy and guidance were developed, and a Working from Home Portal created. On the leadership front, a Strategic and Tactical Coordination group was set up to steer the changes. This would lead the shift to create a distributed organisation, with Smarter Working as central to its function.

The new approach also included the development of a Hub model, with a new location in Manchester and repurposing of the London office to go along with the remodelling of the Cheltenham headquarters.

All workspace is now laid out according to Smarter Working principles as encapsulated in central government guidance and PAS 3000 Smart Working Code of Practice. GCHQ developed its own system for monitoring space usage on an anonymised basis. The data from this helped to align the future workplace layout and sizing to support the tasks people wish to do when they are in one of the offices.

All this involved a major change of culture. Support included training and coaching for psychological

safety and mental health, as people adapted to the new distributed working patterns. Several channels for wellbeing were set up, and teams encouraged to monitor the wellbeing of their colleagues on a weekly basis.

In GCHQ's 2022 staff survey, the new Hybrid Working patterns were rated as being very effective and received the highest number of positive comments. Several staff indicated that if it wasn't for the new ways of working, they would have left the organisation. It is also seen as a positive for attracting new starters wishing to join.

One of the challenges is maintaining a position of 'Reimagine, don't just digitise', e.g. to rethink meetings, and ensure a focus on outcomes rather than inputs. The aim is to liberate time to be more productive, while balancing the vision with the constraints that come from the nature of the work.

The aim going forward is to embed Smarter Working practices throughout and link them to an organisational approach that is more adaptive, in which teams work seamlessly across different locations and security classifications, with management structures that support a distributed and more diverse workforce.

7 Smart Working for Wellbeing



Working life ought to have a positive impact on our health and wellbeing. Flexible working practices where workers have more control over where, when and how they work have been shown to reduce stress, and can result in improved physical and mental health outcomes.

Introducing Smart Working practices and a trust-based culture should make these benefits more far-reaching by opening up the possibilities of more flexibility to all.

The link between health, wellbeing and flexibility

Research over several decades has confirmed a close link between health, a sense of wellbeing and flexibility. Central to this is the ability to have some control over one's work schedule and/or the location of work.

Reducing the stresses connected to work and around the work-life interface are important factors in both improving the work experience and establishing a more satisfying work-life balance. Surveys consistently show improvements in work-life balance reported by those who have greater flexibility and more control over their work.

This was also reported extensively during the period of the pandemic lockdowns. However, in many ways this was an untypical experience that lacked true flexibility: many people were not in control of their work schedule, and had situations forced upon them that created friction around the work-life interface, for example by having to contend with home schooling while also having to deliver their work in an unfamiliar context, and sometimes without the right tools or support in place.

But as we move forward, it is possible to maximise choice and to get smarter about the way work is organised, and put wellbeing at the heart of the work experience.

Flexibility, productivity and wellbeing

- 78% of people working from home in the UK say that being able to do so gives them an improved work life balance
- 47% report it improves their wellbeing
- 53% report there are fewer distractions when homeworking
- 52% say it's quicker to complete work.

Source: UK Office for National Statistics, February 2023

A major driver of the demand for greater flexibility is a desire to spend less time commuting. For most people, commuting adds not only to the length and costs of the working day, but also to stress. Removing this stress for at least part of the working week, or being able to vary the time of travelling to work, introduces a greater element of control.



The importance of time flexibility

The demand for time flexibility is actually greater than the demand for locational flexibility – in large part because not all kinds of work have scope for location flexibility.

However, some kinds of work arrangement usually classed as ‘flexible work’ are often not all that flexible, such as part-time, compressed hours or term-time working, which usually have set arrangements embedded in contracts or agreements. Even so, what they do enable is some compartmentalisation of life’s responsibilities into different times. In that way, they reduce stress and allow time for undertaking non-work tasks and responsibilities such as childcare, learning or voluntary activities.

Having flexible working hours can be very important for people with disabilities, chronic conditions such as musculoskeletal problems, longer-term illnesses or in recovery from accidents or treatments. Having the dynamic flexibility offered by Smart Working arrangements is very valuable for managing changes to condition, or integrating with treatments and support. This time flexibility can be in combination with working from home, and sometimes in combination with, for example, part-time working.

Non-linear workdays

As well as varying the start and finish times of work, being able to vary the hours of work during the day is valuable for work-life harmony and wellbeing. For many kinds of work that are not time-critical (i.e. requiring immediate response), being able to take breaks in work to do something else that is of value in life can relieve pressures from work and potential work-life conflict.

Several studies and some software analytics confuse longer periods between the first and last instances of work with ‘work intensification’. While this can be a danger in a long hours culture, it is more often evidence of people using their autonomy to have non-linear workdays.

This needs to be managed well, and is best done at team level in relation to the nature of the work and the needs of the team and of customers.

Mental health and work flexibility

During the unusual conditions of the pandemic, organisations stepped up in awareness and support for mental health – a development in many ways long overdue.

Though sometimes asserted, there is no clear evidence that mental health issues are more associated with working from home or working from an office or anywhere else. What seems to be the case is that different pressures can be felt by different people in different locations – but location may be less of a factor in any location than factors such as workload, the nature of the work, work culture, and levels of management and colleague support and interaction.

There is concern about the potential for isolation – both professional and psychological – if an employee rarely meets their colleagues. This in part lies behind requirements to attend a collective workplace for part of the time in hybrid working. However, there are completely (or mostly) virtual organisations who facilitate effective colleague interaction on a wholly or primarily virtual basis. This implies that premises-based organisations should aim to get better at virtual interaction too, even if they have good reasons from the nature of the work to want people to get together in the same place.

It needs also to be remembered, that bringing people into an office has a long history associated with negative mental health impacts, deriving from bullying, harassment, exclusion (etc), and for some personalities can be a daily trauma. So **improving the mental health climate is a priority that stretches across locations**. It has as much to do with culture, relationships and behaviours as with online or offline interaction.





Photo-Donal Murphy / Ecophon

Health, wellbeing and the design of work environments

Wellbeing should also be integral to the rolling out of new working environments. This includes:

- an approach to the ergonomics of work and the provision of facilities that **promote mobility** and helps to make work a healthier experience
- recognising that there is a **wide range of different preferences and requirements** for work environments, especially in terms of the sensory environment
- facilitating **choice, variety and controllability** of work settings
- ensuring **access to daylight, outdoor space and natural materials and features.**

Mobility

Spending 7-8 hours sitting working is an unhealthy working practice. Sit-stand desks (or a separate area of standing desks) helps to vary this – but it is mobility that is much more important from a healthy working point of view.

This can be facilitated by:

- Having a wide range of activity-based settings – and a culture of using them
- Embracing the practice of walking meetings [see resources]
- Creating outdoor spaces that encourage people to get up, get out and re-energise
- Having, or supporting membership of, fitness facilities

- Allowing people the flexibility to take active breaks and exercise
- Raising awareness of the importance of being active.

Importantly, this is not only about on-site provision. People working from home or elsewhere need also to vary their location of work – whether within their own homes (if possible) or outside. An element of smart-proofing is to see that any on-site benefit is paralleled with support for people working elsewhere.

Acoustics, lighting and the sensory environment

Paying close attention to all aspects of the sensory environment is central to creating human-centred workplaces – places where people will feel more comfortable and able to work at their best.

Shared settings for work can be quite noisy, especially in some open plan areas. Accommodating different activities and working preferences can be challenging. For this reason, it is important to apply a good acoustic strategy as part of the Smart Working solution. This involves creating an optimal acoustic environment by means of physical features, such as insulating ceilings and walls, textured surfaces to break-up sound waves and sound-absorbing panels and furnishings to capture and control echoes and the spread of sound across the space.

Technological solutions such as good headsets can help to counter-balance disruptive noise whilst using



Photo-Tarvo Tammeoks / Ecophon



Photo-James French, Nulty Lighting

phones. As many more people will be involved in online meetings using their computer or other mobile device, it is important to manage the noise impact of this. Noise cancelling headsets are increasingly part of the standard issue for smart workers. But it is also about having the right behaviours, such as knowing when to take a call in a different setting, e.g. a sound-proof pod.

Breaking up open areas both acoustically and visually creates variety that can give people choice about where to work. Guidance on acoustics for open plan spaces has recently been published. But organisations can go further in designing a range of settings so that people with different auditory sensitivities can find spaces that work for them in relation to the tasks at hand.

Much more is possible with modern lighting techniques to create environments that support productivity and enhance feelings of wellbeing. One-size-fits-all overhead lighting tends to provide harsh and sterile environments that many find oppressive and headache-inducing. Again, controllability is an important factor, so the use of task lighting at work positions is helpful.

Use of lighting and changes of lighting to create visual interest and evoke different moods can enhance variety in different activity spaces. The ways artificial lighting interfaces with both natural daylight, light emitted from screens and light reflected from surfaces need also to be considered. Changes to lighting over the course of the day can also offer cues for varying the ambience over the course of the day, in line with the uses of the space for different purposes.

This is also an area where organisations can help employees to create better homeworking environments, by raising awareness of the issues and offering practical support.

Biophilia and access to nature

Biophilia – the human tendency to seek connection with nature – is also an important element of human centred workplaces that promote feelings of wellbeing. There is a growing science base for the positive impacts that biophilic environments have in workplaces, hospitals, educational settings and public spaces. Being able to see, touch, smell, and be amongst natural objects, hear natural sounds and have access to natural light and air improves our sense of wellbeing, and helps us to perform better in whatever we are doing.

This needs to go beyond installing some pot plants in offices-as-usual. It involves thinking through from the outset how natural features, materials, sounds, access to daylight and access to a natural environment outdoors are integrated into the layout and design of workplaces.

Work settings at home also benefit from thinking through biophilic principles. This applies to the design of home work areas, and also either the main or alternative spaces for work having access to gardens or views over them. Employees should also have the freedom to leave the confines of home and take walks to take their daily dose of 'vitamin N' (for Nature). This could be for time out and re-energising, or integrated into work as a walking meeting.

Smart Working gives opportunities to push the boundaries of the workplace, and integrate work and life more closely with nature, as well as bringing natural features indoors.

Biophilic Benefits

Research projects have associated biophilic design with:

- Reduced stress
- Reduced blood pressure
- Improved concentration and productivity
- Improved short-term memory
- Improved creativity
- Enhanced mood and cognitive performance.

Source: Research summarised in Journal Biophilic Design, Workplace. Issue 1, (October 2022)

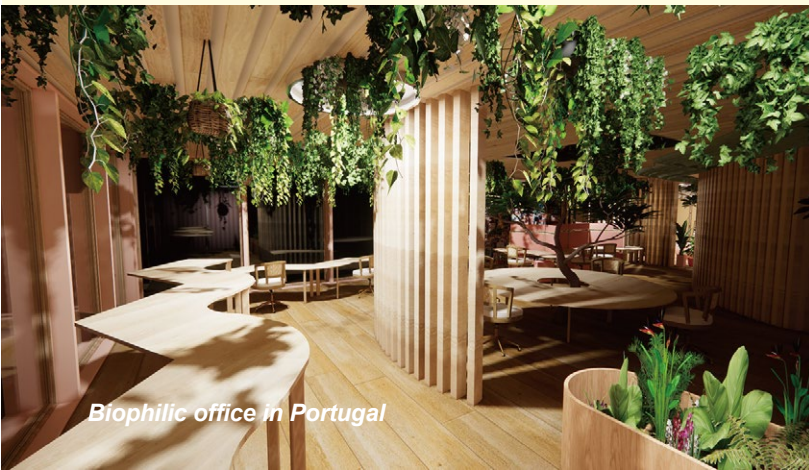


Photo-Habitarmonia

Personality, sensory processing and neurodiversity

People have differing preferences and sensitivities that impact their experience of work environments, and can profoundly impact their work experience.

A growing body of evidence indicates that noisy environments adversely affect the performance, health and wellbeing of autistic individuals in particular.

Attention needs to be given not only to areas where people work, but also to routes into and through buildings which may tend, for some individuals, towards sensory overload. Providing alternative quieter and less distracting routes into buildings can be valuable.

People on the neurodiversity spectrum may also value calmer spaces where they can chill, or 'space to pace' (British Standards PAS 6463:2022 Design for the mind – Neurodiversity and the built environment – Guide).

Personality, gender, stage of life and health condition are also factors to be taken into account for creating human-centric workplaces that promote wellbeing. These can affect how we experience sound, temperature and light, as well as how we react to being around other people.

The key again is to have a variety of settings, some degree of control over those settings, and the ability to choose a setting beyond the corporate workplace when that will help us to be at our best.

Smart Working to support diversity and inclusion

While attention is often focused on the way work impacts wellbeing, lack of work also negatively impacts wellbeing. This can be in terms of both

financial security and sense of self-worth. So creating the conditions to maximise the opportunity for people in marginalised groups to enter the workforce is a key benefit of Smart Working.

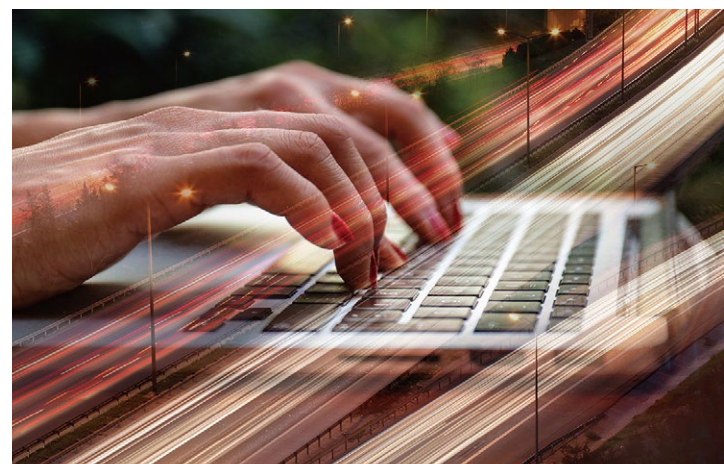
Inflexible work arrangements are a major factor in excluding people from the workforce, or of making working life difficult and stressful for people. Women returning to work after maternity leave or a career break value flexibility very highly. While access to flexibility has grown in recent years, there is still a lack of quality part-time work available, especially in senior roles.

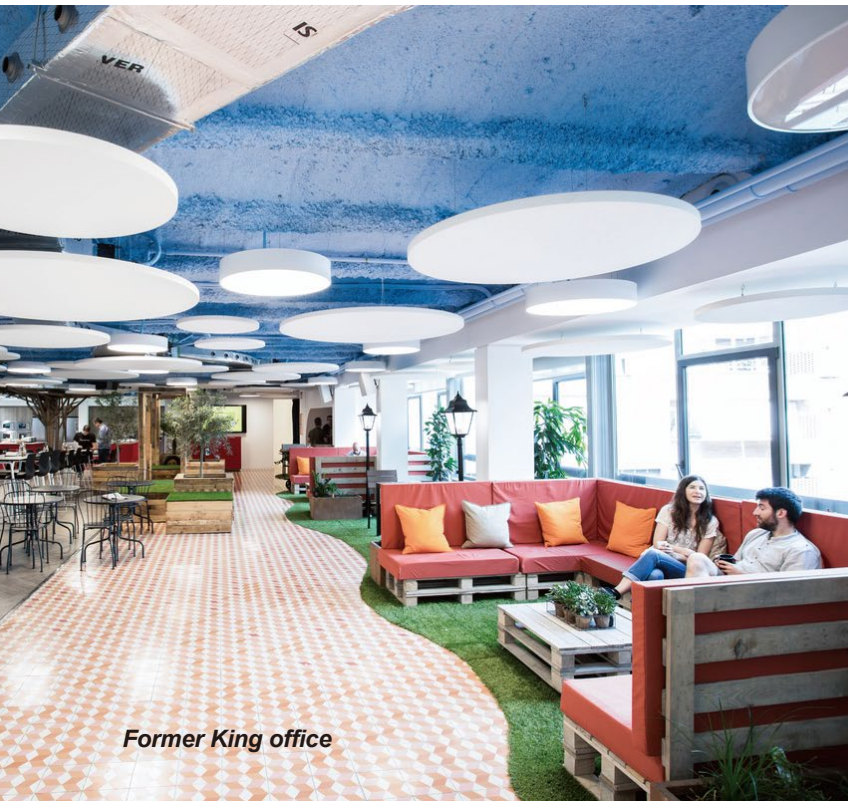
Many workers over 50 have left the workforce, and lack of flexibility is cited as a major reason (see fact box). Many would return if they could strike the right balance to have the work-life harmony they seek.

Having flexibility around both time and location can be very important for people with disabilities, chronic conditions such as musculoskeletal problems, longer-term illnesses or in recovery from accidents or treatments. The dynamic flexibility offered by Smart Working arrangements is very valuable for managing changes to condition, or integrating with treatments and support.

Smart Working can also facilitate people on the neurodiversity spectrum to enter the workforce and stay there. This group in particular will benefit from well-designed smart workplaces that offer choices of different settings and different sensory environments.

Thoroughly embedded 'flexibility as normal' rather than as exceptional helps develop a vital sense of belonging for people who might otherwise be marginalised, or under constant pressure from traditional working practices and culture.





Former King office

Relationships – a crucial variable for wellbeing

The way work is carried out, keeping active, and how workplaces are designed, have big impacts on health and wellbeing. Relationships at work and in daily life are also crucial to our wellbeing.

Research has shown that poor or toxic work relationships are a major factor in stress, burnout, disengagement and the desire to change jobs.

Having work relationships based on trusting people as mature adults is central to Smart Working and the approach of managing by results.

This is not just about managers trusting employees to organise their work. It's also about the ways people in teams support and look out for each other, wherever they are working. Routines and permissions can be built into team agreements so that people are supported and so team members won't hesitate to reach out if it seems that a colleague is in danger of feeling isolated, overworked or is otherwise having problems in life.

It's also about allowing people the time and space to strengthen relationships in their family and community, enabling people to establish their own work-life harmony.

Inclusive Flexibility – key facts Older Workers

For people who have retired in their 50s and 60s and are thinking of returning to work, the top three aspects they are looking for in choosing a new job are:

- A job that offers flexible working hours (36%)
- A job where they can work at home (18%)
- A job they can fit around their caring responsibilities (16%).

Additionally, 69% would prefer to return to work on a part-time basis.

Source: UK Office for National Statistics, Over 50s Lifestyle Study (OLS), 2022

People with Musculoskeletal (MSK) Conditions

- According to the World Health Organisation, around 1.71 billion people suffer from musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions worldwide
- 62% of people of working age with MSK conditions are in work, compared to 81% who have no long-term health condition
- They are also considerably more likely to retire early.

Source: Versus Arthritis, The State of Musculoskeletal Health in 2021 - Arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions in numbers.

People with Autism

- One in seven people in the UK are neurodiverse
- This includes more than 700,000 on the autistic spectrum
- Only 16% of adults diagnosed with autism are in full-time work
- However, a further 77% are not in work but would like to be.

Source: Paige Hodson & Adrian Burton. (2021). Managing auditory sensitivity in the workplace. RICS Property Journal.

CASE STUDY

Flexibility on all fronts at Lloyds Banking Group

Lloyds Banking Group, which includes Lloyds Bank, Halifax and Bank of Scotland, has a long track record in introducing flexible working. Since 2013, it has been a pioneer in developing an Agile Working culture, comprising the introduction of an Agile Group Strategy and set of Principles. This was built on in 2015 when a 'Smart about Agile Working' campaign was launched, spanning across five pillars of activity: agile culture, agile workforce, agile tools and technology, agile property and agile travel.

Their focus on flexibility extends to programmes for women returners and for older workers that have garnered them numerous awards, including the 2023 WM People Overall Top Employer Award, as well as topping the categories for Best for Flexible Working and Best for Older Workers.

This extensive and well-embedded approach to agility and flexibility has put Lloyds Banking Group in a strong position to transition to home-based working during the pandemic and provide the support needed to make it work well. And this experience has created a new context for shaping future ways of working at the Group.

Having established that working from home has many advantages for agility, recruitment and for employee wellbeing, going forward Lloyds Banking Group has adopted a new approach that focuses on balancing employee wellbeing with the needs of their customers, colleagues and the business. There's also a strong emphasis on consistency and fairness for people across all kinds of roles and building connection across the organisation.

Key to this new approach is combining the best elements of remote working and the benefits of coming together face to face by asking hybrid colleagues to attend the office for 40% of their time. Doing so enables colleagues to collaborate more effectively, share learning and solve problems more rapidly by being more connected with each other.

As Lloyds Banking Group embarks on one of the largest transformation programmes ever undertaken in UK financial services, getting flexibility right is critical to offering faster, better services for their customers. To support this approach, Lloyds Banking Group is investing heavily in new workplace hubs and new styles of customer-facing branches.

Office spaces are designed with a range of activity-based settings to promote collaboration and connection and are equipped with the most up to date technology. Designs and features are tested through consultation with employees, creating a people-centred workplace that supports the way colleagues need to work.

The new hub at Bristol also has a strong focus on sustainability and wellbeing. There are gyms, yoga studios and wellbeing rooms, and initiatives to encourage active travel rather than driving to work, as well as a Walk and Work room, with treadmills and exercise bikes to allow colleagues to exercise while on a call. There are also large event spaces which are used for not only internal activities but also events with the local community.

A focus on sustainability is also evidenced in branches, as well as office buildings. This includes using recycled furniture and materials in their Oxford Street branch, plus biophilic elements such as moss discs suspended from the ceiling, planting and a living wall.

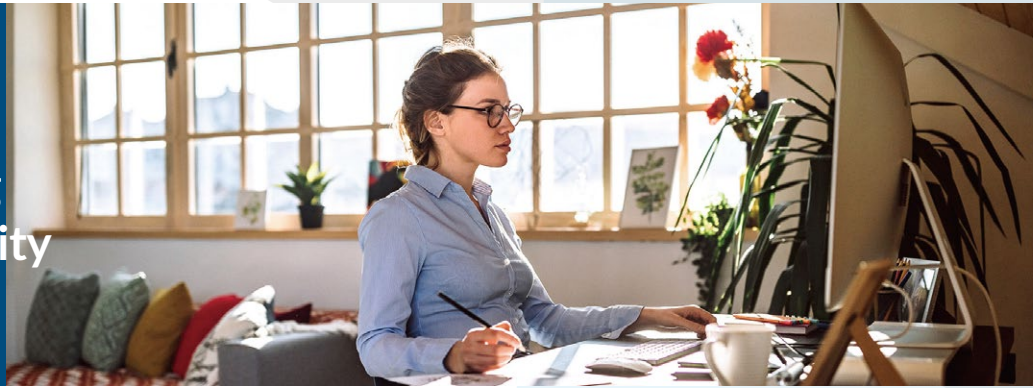
The feedback from the first of these new workplaces has been extremely positive, with 93% of colleagues located in Bristol thinking positively about the new office and 1 in 3 going into the office more often. The transformation will continue across further key hub locations in Leeds, London, Manchester, Birmingham, and Halifax.

The new approach is enabling Lloyds Banking Group to consolidate its real estate footprint, while creating better quality and more fit-for-purpose workplaces for the post-pandemic world.

Lloyds Banking Group provides an example of an organisation that had already achieved considerable maturity in smarter ways of working, but is committed to continued evolution of its working practices and working environments as it embraces the future of work.



8 Smart Working and Sustainability



We now have more than 30 years of evidence that flexible forms of working – in particular home-based working – have a significant impact for travel reduction and, overall, reduce the carbon footprint of work.

The effects are complex and there are many variables. While in general adopting flexible/smart working practices has a positive environmental impact, **it is vital to adopt an intentional approach to maximise the benefits.**

And we should be wary of trying to establish that working from one location, the home, is generally more sustainable than working in an office – or indeed, vice versa. **The ambition should be to reduce the environmental footprint of work, wherever people are working.**

This is done primarily in the following ways:

- Reducing work-related travel: both commuting and business travel
- Reducing the amount of corporate real estate required
- Improving the environmental performance of (all) workplaces
- Dematerialising resources and reducing waste
- Finding ways that workplaces can impact positively rather than negatively on the natural environment and biodiversity.

A lot of this is about making positive and environmentally informed choices about where to work, and where we require others to work.

Reducing work-related travel

Between half and three quarters of the carbon footprint of work per capita relates to transport energy. For most workers, the dominant part of this is the journey to and from work.

Every day that one does not travel to separate premises to work – for example by working from home, or working a four-day week – reduces the weekly commute by 20%.

This is an important factor organisations and individual managers need to consider when mandating people to attend a workplace: the environmental cost, as well as the financial and time costs for the individual. (We consider domestic energy consumption separately below.)

Organisations should think in terms of a hierarchy of sustainable travel for commuting:

- Least environmental impact: working from home, walking, cycling
- Medium to high environmental impact: travel by trains and buses, car sharing
- Highest environmental impact: solo or low occupancy car travel.

Being able to work at a local coworking centre or organisational hub can reduce the length of the commute journey. However, studies have shown that accessibility of public transport and the nature of the road network (e.g. how cycling or walking-friendly it is) can make a big difference to the mode of travel.

Business travel has reduced significantly with the rapid roll-out of advanced collaboration technologies – as we have long advocated. Virtual meetings have become commonplace, saving travel time and costs (though not always used as purposefully as they could be, as we have seen).

On the other hand, Smart Working does provide the capability for some workers to be more mobile, for example to see more clients in person per day by eliminating repeated trips back to a base office. So the benefit is in eliminating unnecessary journeys. That involves having the right systems in place to have seamless access to data, applications and colleagues, wherever one is working.

Organisations and teams should set targets for reducing work-related travel – both commuting travel and business travel – in the context of the nature of the work tasks they need to carry out. This is about having a purposeful approach to mobility to achieve the outcomes of their work, rather than having one-size-fits-all policies about work location.

Did you know?

Between 2002 and 2015, average household car mileage in England decreased by 15%, from 9,200 to 7,800 miles. Around 800 of the 1,400 miles per year reduction per household is attributed to reductions in work-related travel. The Department for Transport identified the rise of homeworking during this period as a significant factor in this trend.

A further analysis of the National Travel Survey in 2019 found a decline of 9% in the number of commuting trips between 2002 and 2018.

During this period there was a 32% rise in the number of people homeworking for more than half the week.

People on higher incomes have reduced their travel most – and are also the group most likely to work remotely. This remains true since the pandemic, despite people at all income levels having experienced remote working. If Smart Working practices were adopted more evenly across different income levels, the impact would be even greater. The issue here is in part a question of trust – leaders and managers trust themselves to work outside the office, but often not their staff.

Source: Department for Transport (2016), Commuting Trends in England 1998-2015; National Travel Survey 2019.

Reducing organisation-owned real estate

With the advent of the ability for many to work from anywhere, and the growth of flexible officing and coworking, the trend towards reducing the size of organisation-owned real estate has accelerated since 2020. This in itself contributes to improved environmental performance of an organisation.

However, the environmental benefits will be maximised with a purposeful approach to:

- Aligning the amount of space required and the locations of hubs with a strategic approach to Smart Working
- Adopting the approach to shared work settings outlined in section 5
- Facilitating the use of third-party workspace
- Upgrading building systems to be more intelligent and efficient, and reducing energy consumption
- Monitoring occupancy, utilisation and employee sentiment to see where improvements can be made
- Refurbishing where possible rather than going for new build
- Sharing facilities with other organisations or the local community where practical.

The trend overall is for smaller offices, more intensively used, and used by different people flowing through during the day and over the week. Requiring specific days in an office will limit the potential savings on real estate by creating artificial peaks, typically in the middle of the week.

Spaceless growth

The reduced need for an organisation to have its own workspace means that it can adopt an approach of 'spaceless growth'. This aligns with location-agnostic recruitment, as well as envisaging the corporate office more as a centre for collaboration, team-building and social interaction, and having a comprehensive approach to workspace that makes more use of third-party and public spaces on an as-needed basis.

For growing companies, the trend is already well-embedded to avoid taking on the fixed overheads of corporate space. Over 70% of startups in the UK and the USA begin life at home, and over half of them intend to stay there as they grow. Many others use third-party space such as coworking centres for space-as-needed as they grow.

Reducing the environmental impact of homeworking

The carbon cost of office space is around 90kg CO₂e (CO₂ equivalent) per square metre per year. If we take a fairly dense layout of 10m² per person, that comes to around 1 metric tonne per person per year. Traditional offices are more likely to be in the region of 14 m² per person, so around 1.4 tonnes.

Studies of homeworking show a carbon footprint around one third to one half of this. However, we have to beware the seduction of averages. There are good and there are badly performing homes, just as for offices. So a home office will not necessarily perform better than an office, but it is likely to do so. And the reduction in commuting will in most cases outweigh any increases in energy use at home.

It's important, though, not to sit on one's laurels, but strive to improve the energy performance of domestic environments as well. Having a separate place to heat, if the rest of the home is in use, can help.

If one is using the same technologies as one would use in the organisation's workplace, then the impacts on energy use should be more or less neutral.

Overall, however, any improvements in the environmental footprint of work depend on reducing the amount of unneeded space in the organisation-owned workplace, as well as reducing commuting.

Reducing paper and resource use

Although great strides were made in many countries to move to a more paperless and all-electronic work environment during the pandemic, there's still a long way to go for many organisations around the world.

The practical goal is to adopt a 'primarily paperless' approach, by reducing the number of printers, not routinely printing off papers for meetings or for editing drafts, stopping the production of paper records and archives for documents that are available online, and keeping a focus on improving business processes.

In some countries there are statutory requirements for retention of paper copies, and governments there need to up their game to become more sustainable by facilitating digital alternatives.

Impacting positively in the natural environment and biodiversity

Buildings designed for work typically have a destructive impact on the natural environment and on biodiversity. This may seem minimal when building on brownfield sites, but every opportunity should be sought to have a positive impact on the natural environment.

In section 7 we reviewed the positive impact of biophilia for people's wellbeing. Developers, architects and employing organisations should go further than retrofitting some natural features to glass, concrete and steel boxes.

Instead they should adopt solutions that create a flow between biophilic design within buildings and the natural environment outside. Building processes are inevitably disruptive, but creating landscaping and planting schemes that support greater biodiversity and integrate buildings – and the uses of buildings – into the natural environment should be high priority. Contributing to enhancing natural spaces in the wider community can be part of such a commitment.

Tying this all together

The research literature and commentary on the environmental impacts of new ways of working is full of 'whataboutery'. What if a homeworker is working in a drafty cottage? What about other household members using cars made available by not commuting? What about possible reduction in public transport use?

The key principle is that developers, organisations, teams, individuals, planners and policymakers need to make an impact in the areas under their control. In this way, progress can be made on all fronts. An individual has little say on how or when an organisation reduces its office space or upgrades its building systems. But they can still, if allowed to, reduce their own environmental footprint. Likewise, an organisation has no control over how an employee's family might change their travel behaviour locally.

However, organisations can seek to influence and support individuals in best practices. They can also make choices about using third-party providers of workspace that reflect their own environmental values.

It's also the case that most of the measures to reduce the environmental footprint of work also support greater productivity and wellbeing. Taking a strategic and intentional approach to delivering benefits on all fronts should be the way forward.

9 The Strategic Approach to Implementation



Programmes of Smart Working transformation need to bring together all the different strands we've highlighted in this guide. It involves raising awareness of what is possible, identifying the benefits, gathering evidence, consulting with employees throughout, and rolling out an integrated programme of change across the key functional areas.

The importance of top-level support, enthusiasm and role-modelling

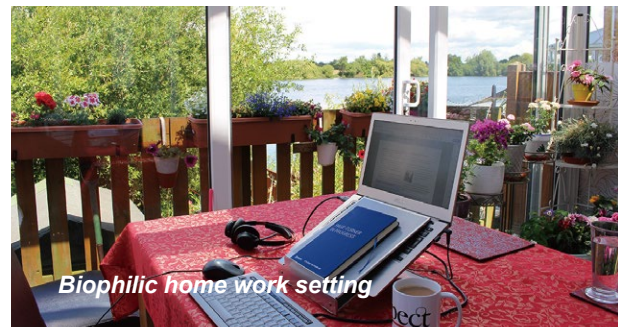
In this Handbook we have stressed the importance of consultation and getting staff buy-in and enthusiasm. Implementations that are purely top-down and ignore staff aspirations and the importance of culture change will run into trouble.

However, consultations through the Smart Work Network show that one of the biggest barriers to success is lack of engagement at the top level.

Smart Working change programmes need to have clear and dynamic support at C-suite level. Without this, projects can often die the death of a thousand compromises as programme managers struggle against powerful interests who may resist change or seek to divert projects into their own pet schemes.

The Vision has to be clearly endorsed and communicated. The message is 'This will be done. We'll consult on and adapt the detail, but the Vision and Principles are not in question'. This empowers the programme managers to move ahead confidently.

There are also several well-known implementations where director-level staff row back on their own working practices – e.g. reintroducing personal offices for themselves or not allowing any flexibility for staff working closely with them. 'Do as I say, not as I do' is a message that will undermine the success of Smart Working.



Taking an evidence-based approach

An implementation is much more likely to succeed if it is grounded in robust evidence about how the organisation works. This involves looking at current ways of working, use of space, patterns of mobility, technology deployments and usage, the appetite for change, skills and learning needs and identifying what is working well and what is not.

For organisations that improved rapidly during the pandemic, or have implemented limited forms of hybrid working, there is value in starting with an evaluation of where they have got to and identifying the opportunities for Smart Working improvement.

Gathering both quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, interviews, workshops, travel/activity diaries and also examination of existing data sources (e.g. on recruitment and retention, property usage, travel, technology use, etc) will establish a strong baseline for identifying what needs to be done, the priority benefits to target, and also to measure success and assess the need for adjustments and improvements after implementation.

Awareness raising – at all levels – is integral to the process of evidence gathering. This will help people understand what is potentially possible, and raise the bar in aiming for Smart Working Maturity.

Establishing the programme team

Organisations will have their own way of organising programmes and projects. Here we outline an approach to ensure an integrated and strategic approach, even when an implementation may be driven by one function or department. Programme teams are likely to include:

- Executive level sponsor
- Senior team to oversee the programme
- Core implementation group to run the programme. This should include heads or senior representatives from the core functions of People, Workplace and Technology, supplemented as necessary by e.g. representatives from Transformation, Security, workers' representatives, (etc), according to the practice of the organisation and needs of the programme.
- Working groups overseeing workstreams to cover the core areas implementing change: culture change, training, communications, property, facilities, technology and transformation. These plan the necessary actions and procurement for the changes to be implemented, reporting back to the core implementation group.

Each of the workstreams will have initial tasks gathering evidence as outlined above, and there needs to be resource in the programme for collating and analysing the data.

Each workstream will have its own budget and project timeline, reporting to the central programme to create an integrated timeline and have control of the overall budget. This integrated timeline is very important as there will be many dependencies between the different workstreams, e.g. having the technologies ready to be deployed to ensure that people can actually change their working practices and that the new work environments can be used effectively.



Consultation

Implementations work best when people are actively involved in shaping their new working practices. Key activities usually include:

- Senior leader interviews – to get people on board, and align the Smart working programme with their own aspirations for modernisation and innovation in their parts of the business. These also identify other changes planned, e.g. new areas of business, other change programmes, changes to headcount, etc
- Smart Working employee survey – a practical survey covering current working practices and locations, travel (including commuting distances), use of technology, feedback on quality of work environments, feedback on current work culture, aspirations for change across all these areas
- Workshops – working with teams or representative groups of employees to scope e.g. designs of new work environments, potential for working in more flexible ways, identifying opportunities and barriers
- Interviews or workshops in key benefit areas, e.g. for improved recruitment, sustainability, wellbeing, or to cover areas of potential concern e.g. security or health and safety.

Can't do it all at once?

We strongly advocate a strategic and comprehensive approach to change. But we recognise that not all organisations are in a position to do this.

In circumstances where there is limited scope for investment in new IT or refurbishment of premises, it should be remembered that much can be achieved in moving towards new ways of working using existing technologies more effectively and placing more of an initial emphasis on cultural change.

But it also needs to be remembered that under-utilised space, or unnecessary travel, constitute major ongoing costs. Savings not achieved can have a negative impact on the ability to deliver front-line activities. It may be worth regularly reminding people unwilling to invest in change gently of this, e.g. 'Another month without change has just cost us x thousands in property costs we could have saved.' The same goes for underachieving on the productivity front by not moving to more effective working practices.

The elements of implementation

The following is an outline 'timeline' for implementing Smart Working:

1. Work with senior team to understand the possibilities, and agree the Vision
2. Establish team with executive-level sponsorship to drive the change programme forward
3. Gather the evidence – space occupancy, workstyles, travel, productivity, staff preferences, technology use, customer locations and needs (etc)
4. Consult staff, staff networks and Trade unions
5. Prepare the business case, identifying the benefits and investment required
6. Work with teams to identify the ways working practices can modernise, in the context of the nature of the work tasks they do
7. Identify and address any health and safety and equal opportunity and diversity issues
8. Set targets and priorities
9. Plan any changes to technology, working with IT team
10. Plan any changes needed to the office space, working with the property and facilities team
11. Begin procurement processes
12. Run awareness raising and training sessions with managers and teams
13. Develop Team Agreements for Smart Working
14. Set up a fast-track pathfinder/trailblazer implementation to learn from, and make any appropriate modifications
15. Roll out the changes to the rest of the organisation
16. Continue culture change processes and training
17. Evaluate, and monitor progress for lessons learned

Training and awareness-raising

Smart Working may fail to realise the full range of benefits if managers and staff are not fully prepared for working in new ways, and for playing their part in developing a Smart Working culture.

Training and awareness-raising for managers should include:

- Understanding the benefits of new ways of working
- Understanding the possibilities for transformational flexibility
- Understanding the linkages between new technologies and the possibilities for new working practices
- Understanding how to involve and motivate staff to implement Smart Working
- How to manage a dispersed workforce
- How to manage by results rather than presence
- New approaches to empowerment and trust
- Performance issues
- Impacts for diversity, equity and inclusion
- Effective communication in distributed teams
- Understanding any pitfalls and issues that may arise, and how to deal with these.

Training and awareness-raising for teams should include:

- Being clear about the type of workplace culture that it's hoped to develop
- Understanding the benefits and goals
- Understanding roles and responsibilities
- Developing skills and understanding in working more flexibly:
 - Working with less direct supervision
 - Communicating with colleagues and partners
 - Time management
 - Monitoring and reporting arrangements
 - Health and safety in new working environments
 - Working in shared activity-based environments
 - Working with Smart Working technologies and understanding the processes for having issues resolved.

These can be carried out through workshop sessions, webinars, self-help online learning and structured e-learning courses.

Communications

Good communications before and during the implementation process are vital to the success of the project, and in particular supporting the culture change process. The intended benefits, vision and principles should be communicated clearly, as should any targets being set.

Keeping everyone up to speed can pre-empt the rumour mill by providing accurate information and timelines, and report and celebrate progress.

Communications is not a one-way process, and the recommended consultative approach to designing the changes requires good processes for dialogue and taking on board feedback.

It is useful to have a dedicated resource with updated information on the changes, including capturing people's stories as they work in new ways and dealing with frequently asked questions.

It's also useful to capture the approach to Smart Working and how to work in new ways within an internal Smart Working Guide that reflects the specific implementation.



Keeping a strong focus on quality

To maximise the benefits, the leadership needs to maintain a commitment to quality. It's important to keep a commitment to excellence in areas like acoustics, biophilic design, the quality of office furniture and fit-out, and the quality of technologies deployed.

Under budgetary pressures, organisations may be tempted to cut back on the quality of some of these, but the price will be paid in how well work settings are used, in mobility, and in employee wellbeing and performance.

Evaluation

To understand whether Smart Working has achieved the benefits anticipated, an evaluation study should be carried out around 9-12 months after implementation and thereafter on an on-going basis.

It is vital that baseline metrics have been established in order for the evaluation to be robust. The achievements can then be measured against this baseline. Where necessary, further changes can be made where expected targets are not met, or where further consultation and feedback show that there are particular difficulties or issues.

Smart Working will also continue to evolve, and involves openness to future change. So the evaluation process needs to take account of new possibilities for increasing flexibility and agility.

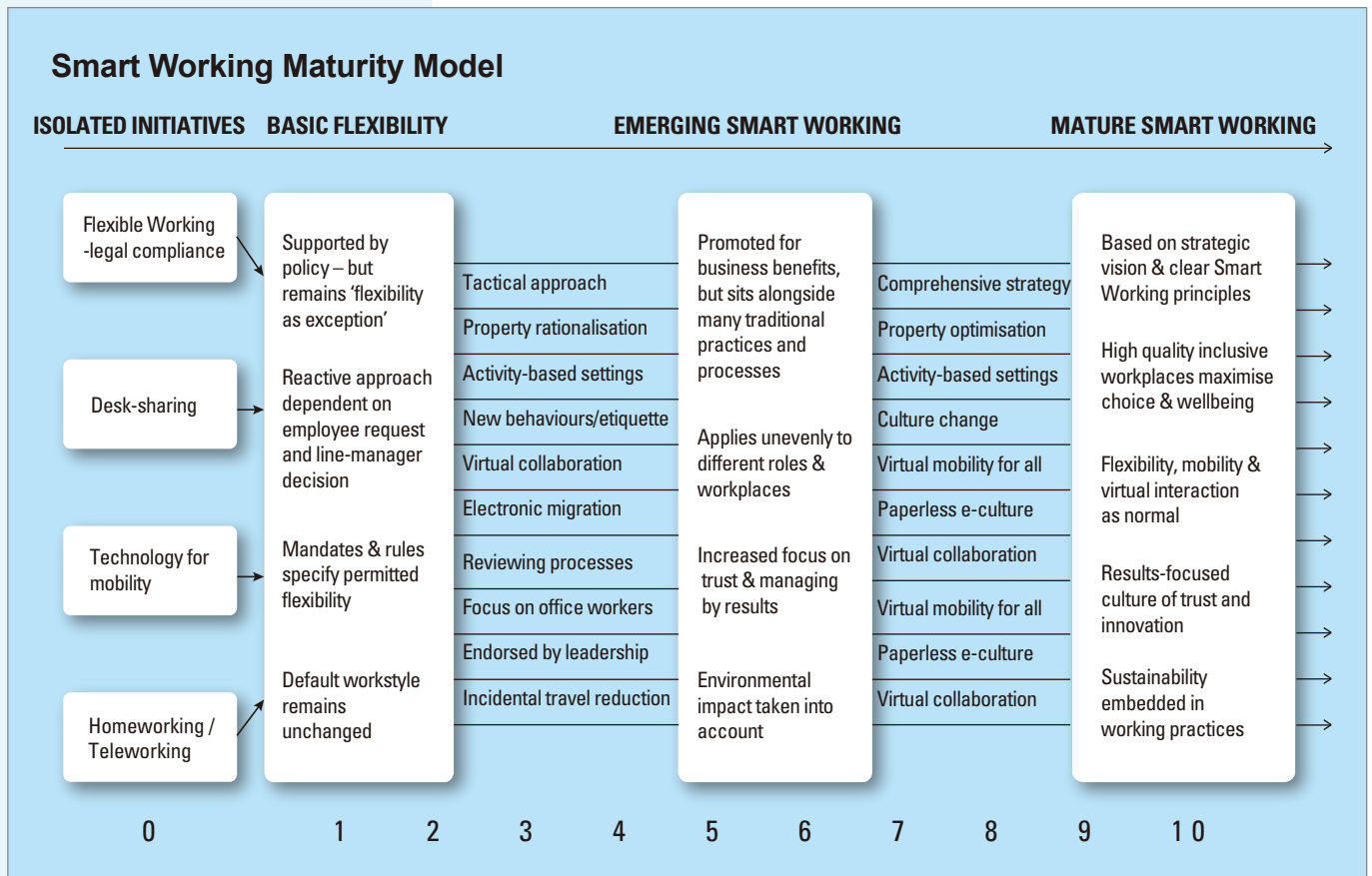
10 A Smarter World – Now and into the Future



People often describe Smart Working as a ‘journey’. And it’s one that continues into the future in a continuously changing world.

First, though, it’s helpful for organisations to assess where they are now, to determine their next steps. The Smart Working Maturity Model (figure 4) outlines the main stages an organisation may be at on their journey to embracing Smart Working in a strategic and integrated way.

Figure 4 – The Smart Working Maturity Model



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This provides a useful tool for starting conversations about where an organisation is doing well, and where there needs to be improvement. This can be supported by a full evaluation process to drill into the detail.

Continuing change

However, the story does not stop here. The journey will continue. Further innovations in the world of work are bound to impact the possibilities for achieving greater effectiveness and efficiency, improved work experience and all the benefits we've highlighted so far.

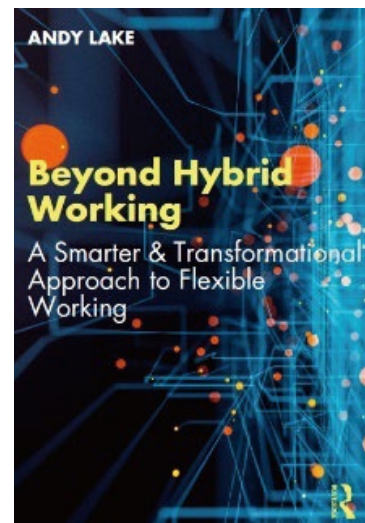
While many organisations are wrestling with making best use of current technologies, new technologies are coming on stream all the time. New generations of portable devices, new screen and surface technologies, social media applications, communications technologies, voice recognition technologies, virtualisation, ambient computing, AI, robotics and Industry 4.0 will over the next decade further transform the nature of work, and the spaces in which we work.

Coupled with this are changing aspirations and demographic changes. All this will create new possibilities in working culture, with not only flexibility as normal but also virtuality as normal, different time allocations for working, and working much more closely with intelligent systems and environments without losing the human touch.

We're already seeing some degree of backlash amid a misplaced nostalgia for archaic ways of working. It's important to resist the temptation to look back with rose-tinted glasses, or to model new ways of working on the old.

A successful future depends on embracing change and intentionally seeking the potential benefits. We hope you're ready to seize the opportunities.

Resources and further information



Beyond Hybrid Working
– A Smarter & Transformational Approach to Flexible Working

Andy Lake's new management book (Routledge 2024) sets out in detail a strategic, comprehensive and integrated approach to Smart Working in the context of new possibilities for working on a more distributed basis, and the impact of new AI-based technologies coming over the horizon.

He also explores the possibilities for greater flexibility for workers with hands-on and site-specific roles. Featuring 13 detailed case studies and input from industry experts, the book takes a pragmatic and evidence-based approach covering different sectors and types of work, and presents practical techniques for implementing change.

www.routledge.com/9781032265780

www.flexibility.co.uk/how-to-go-beyond-hybrid-working-for-transformative-change



Flexibility.co.uk

For 30 years, Flexibility has reported on and provided resources for flexible ways of working and business innovation, providing thought leadership, provocations to challenge accepted wisdom, plus case studies, research summaries and downloads, and many insights into the future of work.

www.flexibility.co.uk

The Smart Work Network

The Smart Work Network is a peer collaboration network for practitioners of Smart Working from large organisations across the UK and Europe. Members are people working in private, public and voluntary sector organisations to roll out substantial programmes of Smart Working.

The Smart Work Network website carries news, insights, interviews, videos and other resources to support Smart Working, plus a members area with additional news and downloads.

The Network holds a mixture of online and in-person meetings to bring the community together, share ideas, issues, problems and solutions.

www.smart-work.net

MillerKnoll Insight Series

The MillerKnoll Insight Group runs regular online and in-person events covering a wide range of workplace-related subjects, with invited speakers presenting their latest insights.

Recent subjects covered have included:

- The Future of Work
- Collaboration
- Menopause and the Workplace
- Embodied Carbon
- Working from Home
- Wellbeing at Work
- Workplace Change.

Further information and past recordings can be found at:

www.mkinsightgroup.com/events

Acoustic Bulletin

Acoustic Bulletin is where Saint Gobain Ecophon shares news about, and reflections on, room acoustic design, communication and health issues in the indoor acoustic environment. This is a global platform with blog posts that provide quick access to knowledge, opinions and solutions for acoustic design. It's a valuable tool for acousticians, building engineers, researchers and others with a keen interest in room acoustics and how it impacts people using the spaces.

The aim is to exchange knowledge and be an inspiration to support the creation of an acoustic environment that optimises the outcomes of people's activities in working, learning and health environments.

www.acousticbulletin.com

Some further helpful resources

Nigel Oseland, *Beyond the Human Zoo – Humanising the Office* (2022)

Brian Elliott, Sheela Subramanian & Helen Krupp, *How the Future Works – Leading Flexible Teams to do the Best Work of their Lives* (2022)

Neil Usher, *The Elemental Workplace – The 12 Elements for Creating a Fantastic Workplace for Everyone* (2018)

Pauline Roussel & Dimitar Inchev, *Around the World in 250 Coworking Centres* (2021)

The Journal of Biophilic Design
www.journalofbiophilicdesign.com

Weeting.nl – All about walking meetings
<https://www.weeting.nl/english/>

Workplace Insight www.workplaceinsight.net

British Standards Institute, *PAS 3000 (2015) – Smart Working Code of Practice*

Supporters of the Smart Working Handbook

We are grateful to the forward-looking organisations that have supported this publication of this new updated edition. They share a commitment to sharing insights and best practice into new ways of working and the future of work.



Saint Gobain Ecophon

Saint-Gobain Ecophon develops, manufactures and markets acoustic products, systems and provides services that contribute to a good working environment by enhancing peoples' wellbeing and performance. Our promise 'A sound effect on people' is the core backbone of everything we do.

Ecophon has business units in 20 countries, delegations in another 30 countries worldwide, and approximately 1100 employees. The head office is located in Hyllinge, just outside Helsingborg, Sweden. Ecophon is part of the global Saint-Gobain Group.

For further information contact: Paige Hodsman, Office Concept Developer and Workplace Specialist,

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www.ecophon.com

MillerKnoll Insight Group **MillerKnoll**

The MillerKnoll Insight Group was created to help share MillerKnoll's research globally.

We do this by speaking at conferences, running workshops, and delivering seminars in our own design centres or online, as well as at dealers and client's premises.

Check out a list of our seminar subjects here:
www.mkinsightgroup.com/seminarsubjects.

In addition, we curate a range of 3rd party speakers to participate in our Insight Series Online. Most speakers on this series are from outside of our organisation, and we look to cover a wide range of workplace related subjects.

www.mkinsightgroup.com

CMI Architecture



CMI Architecture is a multi-disciplined practice delivering architectural & interior projects that not only consider the aesthetics of a proposal but also the practical human experience of the space, providing schemes and solutions that consider all the senses.

As a chartered architectural practice, we follow the RIBA Plan of Work, organising the project into 8 stages. This allows a legible and transparent process that embeds the client into the project and ensures that clear milestones are established, setting a framework for new interior and design or architectural construction projects. Stage 0-1 enable us to engage with our client to better understand their organisational needs and the key drivers for change.

It's in our DNA to think big and come to every discussion ready to explore all aspects of the project from client engagement through to project delivery on site. We draw our inspiration from people and their purpose for using space and as a result, align well with the Smart Working ethos for our clients' workplace. Our team strives to make the space an experience that people enjoy, whether as workplace, residential or retail space.

www.cmiarchitecture.co.uk
www.cmiworkplace.co.uk

About the author

Andy Lake is a writer, researcher and adviser in the field of Smart and Flexible Working. For 30 years he has advised companies, charities and government organisations on implementing Smart, Agile and Flexible Working. He has also led leading-edge research projects on the impacts of new ways of working on business, government and society.

Andy is Director of Flexibility.co.uk, and Founder of the Smart Work Network. His management books, Smart Flexibility and Beyond Hybrid Working set out a strategic and practical approach to workplace change that embraces the future of work.

Acknowledgements

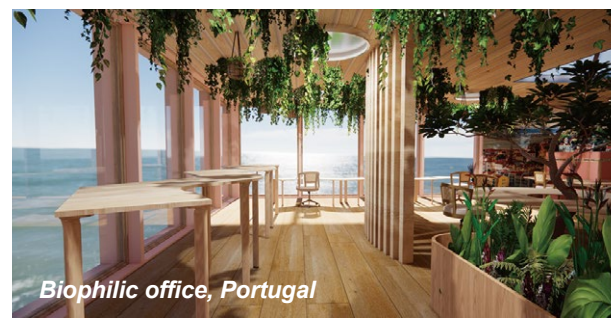
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Adaptation

We are happy to discuss adaptation and customisation for in-house use by organisations implementing Smart Working. Contact Andy Lake to enquire.



Biophilic office, Portugal

Photo- Habitarmonia

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RESOURCES FOR NEW WAYS OF WORKING

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