

blackbaud®



Future of Work 2021



FOREWORD



More than 2,500 years ago the Ephesian philosopher Heraclitus introduced the notion of ‘becoming’ as the characteristic feature of our world. His famous statement “panta rei” (all things are flowing) speaks to how change is our only constant, a philosophy taken up by his follower Plato who wrote in his work Cratylus, those famous words, “Everything changes and nothing remains still.”

For most of history, change moves slowly, barely perceptible until a major disruption of mind, structure or technology dislocates all that we know, causing us to reconsider what was, and to build what will be. Heraclitus likens these periods of tension to a bow, its strings held taught by the bending of the wood, the wood held taught by the tension of the strings. Tension is the equilibrium, utilising this tension allows the arrow to be propelled far ahead to its target.

As we live with COVID-19 and the complex realities that it has brought upon us, we are faced with a tension between what was and what will be. This report looks at how we have coped with the changes to our working patterns and environments, it explores the tensions that have arisen and the effectiveness of our responses to date, providing us with an in-depth insight into the remote working trends experienced by our sector over the past year.

Our attentions must be drawn to the very high level of concern shared by the majority (79%) of respondents of the effects that the pandemic is having on their lives, with almost half noting that their overall wellbeing has deteriorated during the pandemic. Going forward, a conscious focus on the health and wellbeing of our people will remain of paramount importance to the support of our teams and the effective delivery of our visions and missions as non-profits.

We can be encouraged by the levels of positivity that the majority of respondents felt towards their organisations and how they have responded to COVID-19. Adaptation to remote working has been extremely high and there is a clear indication that many people want to continue working remotely post pandemic, with many stating a desire for increased home/office workplace flexibility in the long-term. It will be no surprise to readers that adequate resource provision will be critical for future success, and the respondents highlight that having the right technology and software in place has been and will remain critical to enabling effective remote working.

Overall, the report provides us with an opportunity to understand the breadth and depth of the changes to our working environment in the past year, changes which for the most part were outside of our control, and affords us an opportunity to look ahead to the future, taking responsibility for what is within our control, to embrace change and harness the tension of the past year to propel us into the future.

This report will be followed-up with inspiring, useful resources that will further help us adapt to our ever-changing world. I hope that it will help you focus your thoughts on the future of work for your organisation and for our shared non-profit sector.

Brian J. Higgins

CEO – The Resource Alliance

We can be encouraged
by the levels of positivity
that the majority of
respondents felt towards
their organisations



INTRODUCTION

The Future of Work Report 2021 was carried out by Blackbaud Europe in partnership with The Resource Alliance. The data was collected in January and February 2021 via an online survey of 46 questions. A total of 814 respondents completed the survey.

32%

of respondents are from small non-profit organisations (total income less than £1M), **30%** from medium (between £1M – £10M) and **21%** are from large (income more than £10M)

50%

of respondents work at organisations with less than 50 paid employees, **25%** work at organisations with 250 or more

54%

of respondents are fundraisers

25%

of respondents have been furloughed at some point during the pandemic, **2%** on a continuous basis

73%

work full time, **25%** part time

43%

are in non-manager roles, **35%** are in manager roles, **11%** are directors and **7%** are CEO/trustees

74%

of respondents are living with family, **12%** are living alone and a further **12%** are in shared accommodation. **59%** have no caring responsibilities

98%

of respondents have worked from home during COVID-19, of these **34%** never worked from home prior to the pandemic

81%

of respondents are under the age of 55, **18%** are 55 or older

89%

of respondents are white, **7%** of respondents identify as minority ethnic

75%

of respondents identify as female, **23%** identify as male

We also carried out a number of in-person interviews with leaders at a broad cross-section of charities. We would like to give special thanks to Stroke Association UK, Poetry In Wood, British Red Cross, HIGGS, Wakefield District Sight Aid, and RNLI.

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CHAPTER

01

Key findings



2020 was a year of exceptional circumstances and the COVID-19 pandemic had a substantial impact on the third sector and those who worked within it. A year on from the first UK lockdown, people feel overwhelmingly positive towards their organisation and their COVID-19 response.

- ✓ 90% of respondents agreed that their employer is treating them fairly
- ✓ 87% feel that overall, their employer has adapted well to the current situation. This is up from 60% of respondents cited last June in the Status of UK Fundraising 2020 Report
- ✓ 83% said that their employer demonstrated care and concern about employee wellbeing
- ✓ 94% feel trusted by their manager to do their job

The majority of people have worked remotely at some point over the past year. Despite the change, people have adapted well and would like to continue flexible working long-term.

- ✓ 90% of respondents believe that flexible working policies are the future
- ✓ 74% of respondents enjoy working from home
- ✓ 80% of people would like to work from home more often in the future, up from 67% of respondents cited in the Status of UK Fundraising 2020 Report.
- ✓ However, this does not mean people want to only work from home in the future. Whilst 22% agree that they would like to work mostly from home long-term, a further 23% disagree

Having the right technology and software in place has been essential for remote workers. Some organisations have recognised this and are now planning on investing more in technology and to begin digital transformation projects.

- ✓ 87% of respondents said that technology has helped them to work more effectively during COVID-19
- ✓ 83% stated that access to cloud-based technology has been essential whilst working remotely
- ✓ Despite this, there have still been a portion of remote workers who have had inadequate access to the software they need (10%) or the appropriate hardware (13%)
- ✓ 64% of respondents who identified as the ultimate decision maker within their organisation said as a result of the pandemic, they are now planning to invest more in technology

Overall, despite feeling supported by their employer, people’s wellbeing has deteriorated over the past year. Employers may now have to re-evaluate what their duty of care is and how they can support their workforce in the return to 'business as usual' and beyond.

- ✓ In common with the whole country, 79% of respondents are worried about the effect the pandemic is having on their life.
- ✓ 48% said their overall wellbeing has deteriorated during the pandemic
- ✓ 50% of respondents said that their mental wellbeing had deteriorated during the pandemic



CHAPTER 02

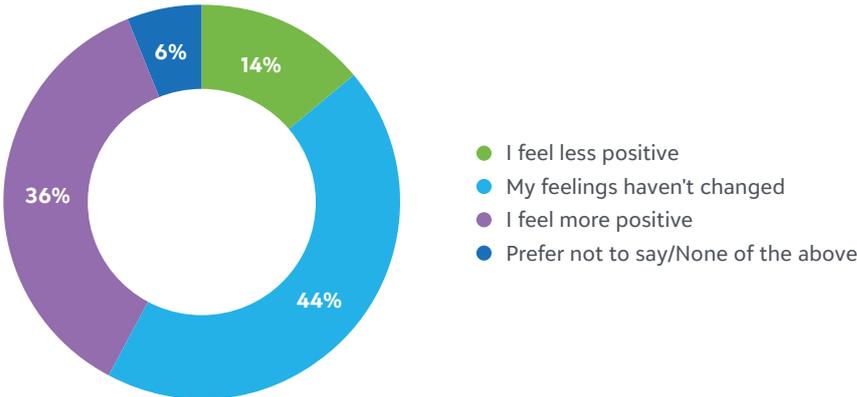
Perception of Organisations' Response to COVID-19

The survey found that despite the challenging personal and professional circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple lockdowns across the U.K, respondents feel very positive towards their organisation.

When asked if the relationship with their organisation had changed during the pandemic, more than three quarters of respondents said that the relationship was either the same or that it had changed for the better over the past year. Of those who answered yes to their relationship changing, **73%** felt more positive towards their employer.

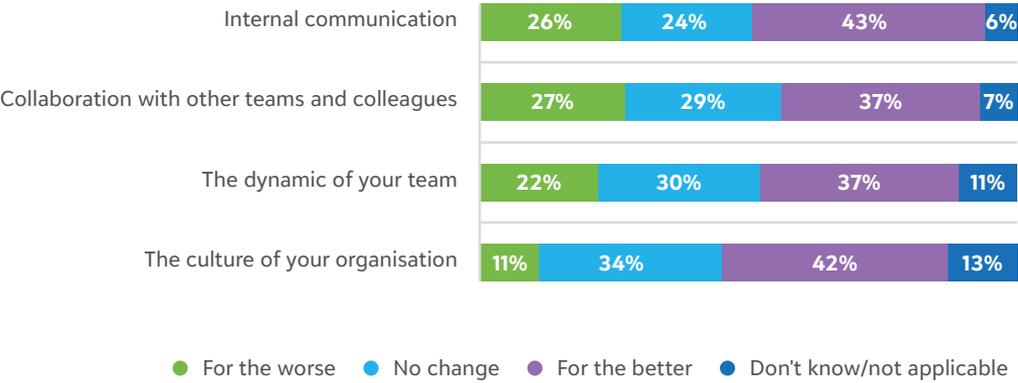
2020 was difficult to navigate and hopefully these insights provide organisations with reassurance that employees appreciate how they have handled the pandemic and its repercussions across the sector.

Overall, how would you say your feelings towards your employer have changed during the COVID-19 Pandemic?



42% of respondents also believe that their organisation's culture has changed for the better during the pandemic. The same number again reported seeing a positive change in the organisation's internal communications, however this was caveated by a quarter reporting a decline. This indicates that organisations have room for improvement in how they convey updates to employees.

Overall how do you think these things have changed during the COVID-19 Pandemic?



Nine out of 10 people felt that they could work effectively with other teams, however **27%** still believed that cross-team collaboration had changed for the worse over the course of the pandemic. When asked about the dynamic within just their team, over a third said that it had noticeably improved. It appears that managers have done a good job enabling their employees on a local level, however there is still work to be done in connecting people across the wider organisation and to reduce any remaining silos.



”

“We have found that our fundraising meetings have become easier as there's no time lost between travelling, so we have also managed to become much more productive.”

SOTIRIS PETROPOULOS, *Founder, HIGGS*

Despite this, respondents were almost unanimous (94%) in stating they feel trusted to do their job, with nine out of every ten people feeling fairly treated by their employer. The positive sentiment towards organisations continued, with 83% or higher agreeing that their employer cared about their wellbeing, the organisation had adapted well to the new normal, and even that they had tried and tested new ways of working.

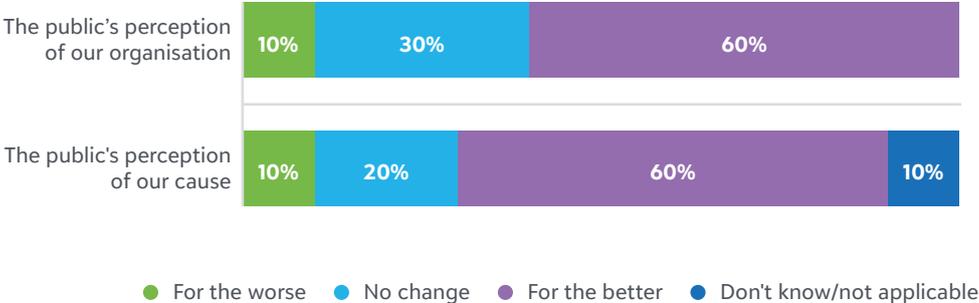
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Note: continuously furloughed staff included where appropriate



It also appears that organisations’ internal activities have been translating well externally, with over half of respondents saying their organisation’s public perception had appeared to have improved during the pandemic.

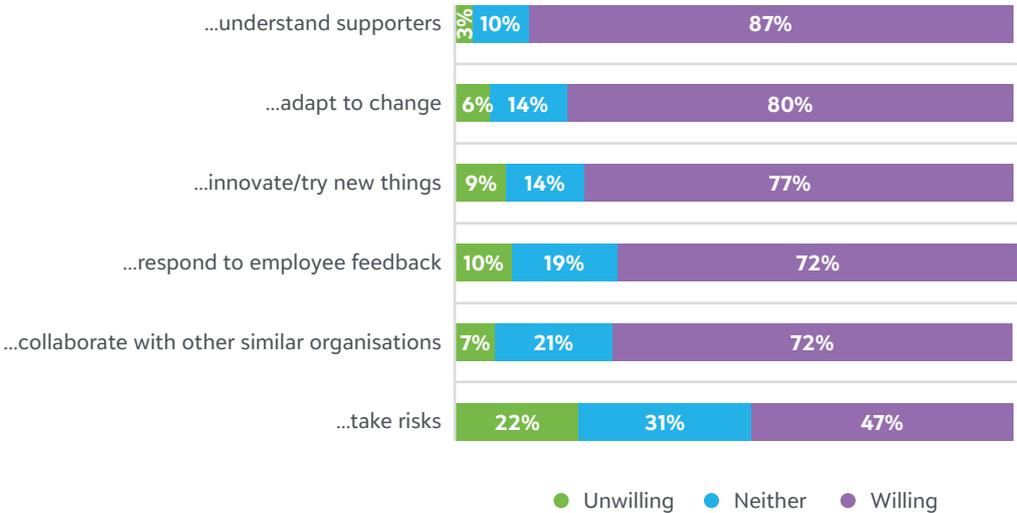
Overall how do you think these things have changed during the COVID-19 Pandemic?



80% of respondents said that their organisation was open to change, with a further **77%** saying they were willing to innovate and try new things. This is particularly reassuring to hear as our Status of UK Fundraising 2020 Report found that **60%** of organisations who experienced income growth attributed innovation as one of the key factors.

However, our survey did find substantial hesitation when it came to risk taking. Less than half of respondents said their organisation was open to taking chances and nearly a quarter said they were actively unwilling to do so. Those most likely to take risks were small non-profits with an annual income below £100,000.

How willing is your organisation to...



Overall, most people are happy with their organisation’s strategic choices since March 2020, with over a quarter saying their employer could not have done anything more to make the pandemic easier for them.

It is important to note that whilst respondents are committed to their organisations, a high proportion have missed face to face interactions with their colleagues (**87%**).

Nothing – they have done all they can to accommodate the changes and provide me with moral support and any necessary things needed for working from home.”

“Very little, they made every effort to share information and prioritise wellbeing. They also took pay cuts and worked relentlessly to keep the organisation afloat.”

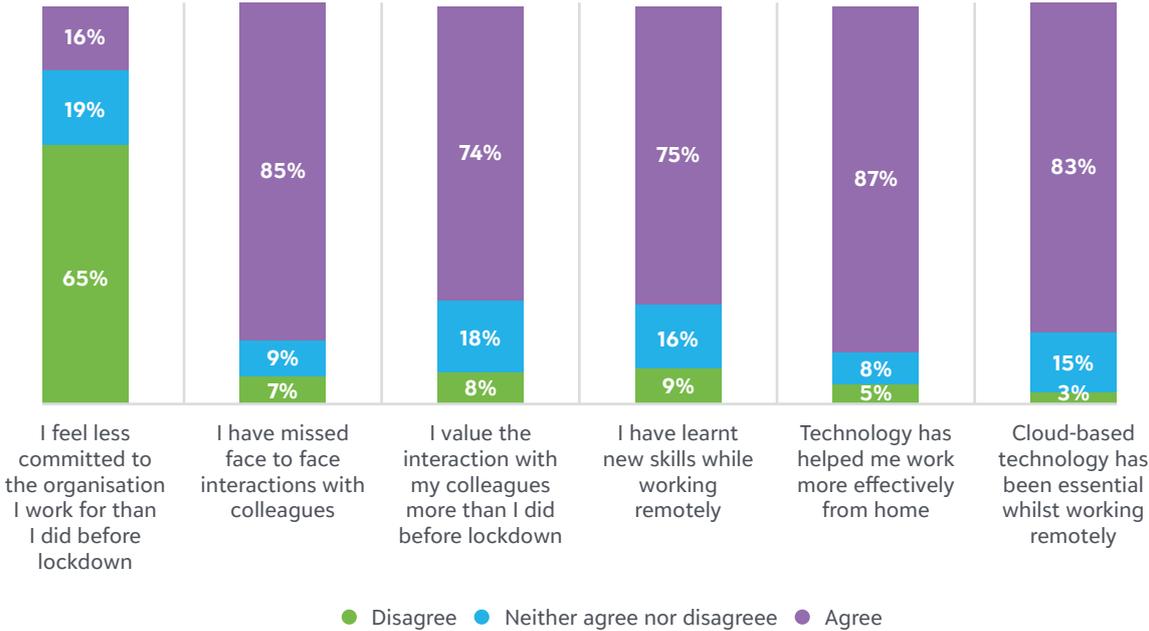
“My employers have been great and it is hard to know what else they could have done.”

“My organisation have been so supportive and ensured I have all equipment needed to work effectively.”



Finally, when asked about their organisation’s response and their ways of working, a substantial **87%** said that technology has been a key factor in being able to work more effectively from home, with **83%** agreeing that cloud-based technology has been essential in order to work remotely. Whilst this may not be surprising to hear, it demonstrates the clear benefits of having the right resources and technology readily available for employees.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements





Fortunately, last January, we moved to a cloud-based system for our database and shared drive documents on Microsoft 365. And thank goodness we did that, because if we hadn't it would not have been possible for us to work from home and the charity would have had to close.”

HAYLEY GROCOCK, *CEO, Wakefield District Sight Aid*

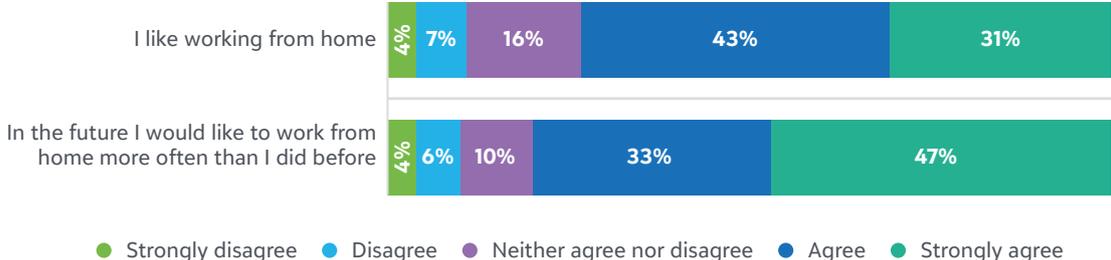


CHAPTER
03

Remote Working

It appears that those working in the third sector are highly flexible and have managed to adapt to their new working circumstances, with just under three quarters saying that they like their new set-up and working from home. A further **80%** would like to work from home more often in the future, this is **13%** higher compared to when we surveyed people in May 2020 for our Status of UK Fundraising Report.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about working from home?



Respondents made it clear that whilst they want a balance of both remote and office-based working in the future, this does not mean that they want to work predominantly from home. Over a fifth agreed that they would like to work mostly from home after the pandemic, yet almost the same number of respondents said they would NOT like to. Employers will have to balance these preferences going forward, with flexible working policies being essential if they wish to retain existing team members and attract new, quality candidates in the future. In fact, there is a strong business case for organisations to adopt a hybrid office model for future ways of working, investing in the right technologies to enable people to seamlessly continue working, no matter where they or their teammates are working from.

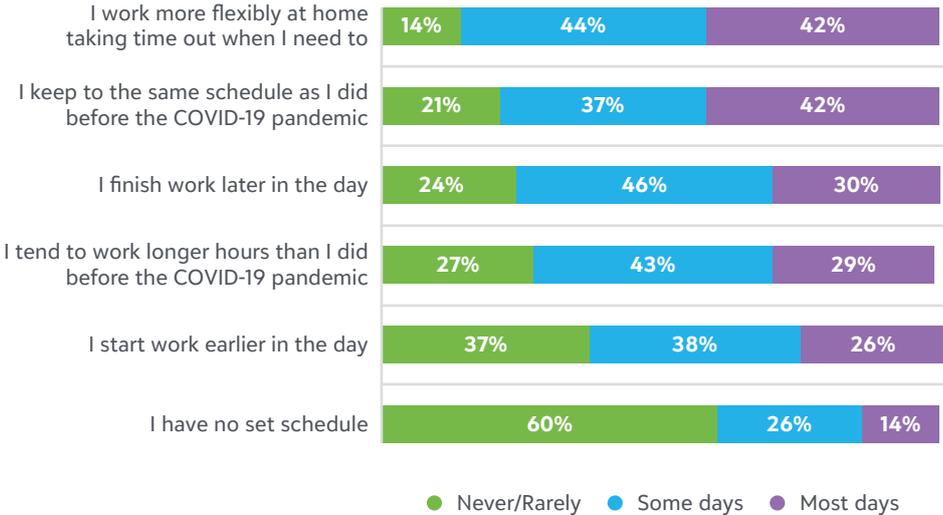
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about working from home?



Over a third of respondents have worked remotely for the first time in their current role during the pandemic, however, there has been less disruption to people’s working habits than you may expect. **79%** have kept to the same working schedule as they did pre-COVID-19, preferring to be flexible and take time out as and when they feel it is needed.

When asked for more details about their daily working routine, **72%** said they tend to work longer hours either some or most days compared to before the pandemic. Most people clocked up their extra hours later in the day, with nearly a third finishing work later most days than when they were office based. This raises a question around how managers can actively support or enforce boundaries within their team, and ultimately contribute towards reducing employee burnout. It could be that additional training and HR guidance has an essential role to play here.

How has your working schedule changed during the COVID-19 Pandemic?



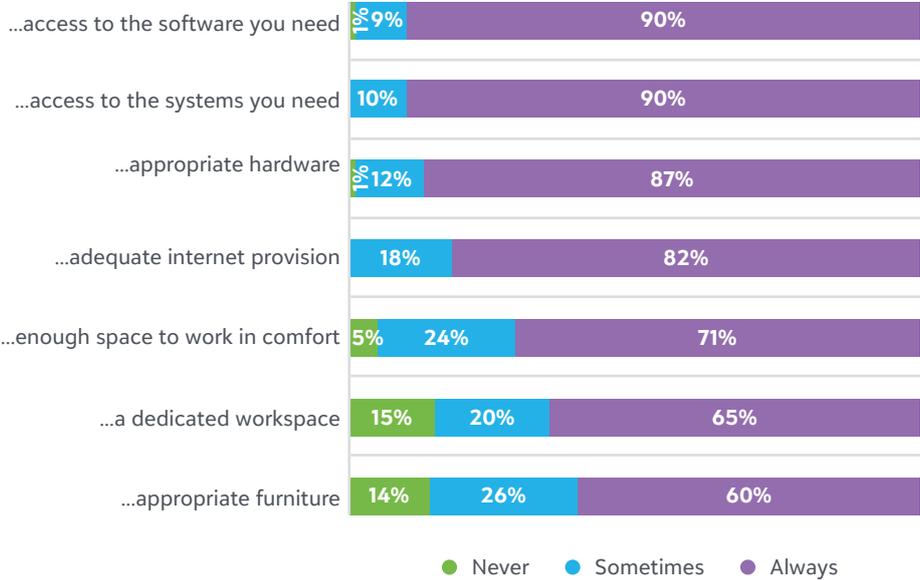
Just under two thirds of respondents have a consistent, dedicated workspace. This number decreased when asked if they had access to appropriate furniture, with over a quarter of people saying only sometimes. It appeared to be those under the age of 44 who were struggling the most with their at-home workspace, particularly those 18-34. This may be due to their living circumstances, as we noted that those in flat shares were significantly less likely to have a comfortable or dedicated workspace.

“Working from home isn’t an option for me long-term. There’s nowhere else for me to work except at our kitchen table and after the first lockdown I needed physio on my back after months and months of being hunched over a kitchen table. People don’t necessarily have the physical spaces in their houses that enable them to do that when there are partners and other family members at home occupying and needing the space too.”

HAYLEY GROCOCK, CEO, WAKEFIELD DISTRICT SIGHT AID

Of the respondents who felt their employers could have done more to make the past 10 months easier, **14%** think they could have been better supported with setting up home offices.

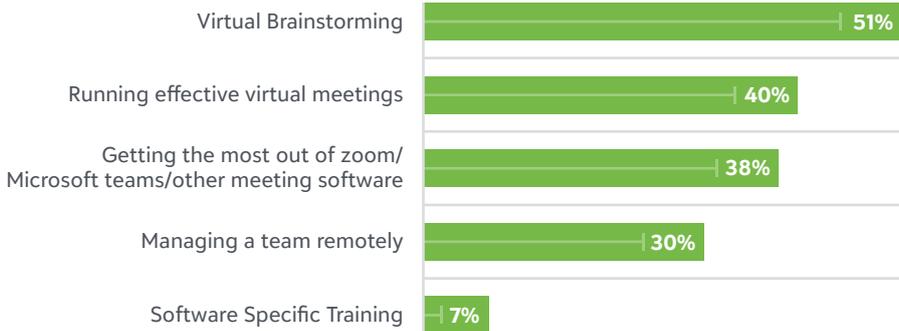
When you work from home do you have...



10% of the people that have worked from home during the pandemic either never or only sometimes have access to the software and systems that they need. This may sound like a small fraction of the total respondents, however in the current climate this means that these people may be unable to adequately complete or perform daily tasks. At a time when every donor communication matters, and every penny truly does count, this is still, arguably, too high a percentage.

In the survey, we identified several key areas where respondents believe additional training would help them to work more successfully from home. These included virtual brainstorming (**51%**), how to manage a team remotely (**30%**), software specific training (**7%**), and even advice on how to effectively run virtual meetings (**40%**).

Which of the following training would be helpful for you to adapt to working from home during the COVID-19 Pandemic?



.....

“We worked very hard to get devices out to our services, and we were faced with the fact that many people on the team didn’t have laptops, tablets, or any way of getting onto Zoom calls. It’s been really hard for some team members, and we still have around 10 people who still don’t have access to the right devices due to us being unable to afford them.”

JACKIE REMFRY, GENERAL MANAGER, POETRY IN WOOD

.....

There were additional training needs outside of remote working tools. A fifth of people mentioned a desire to have training that focused on their wellbeing, including mental and physical health. There was also an even split between those wanting ideas and advice on how to stay feeling focused and motivated whilst working alone, and those who would like to receive support on self-improvement techniques. These included areas such as time management and effective communication when working predominately in a virtual environment.

Given that communication was one of the key areas that people felt most unhappy with in their organisation, it’s interesting to see that people would like to take it upon themselves to improve their own communication skills.

We spoke to Paul Amadi, Chief Supporter Officer at the British Red Cross, on their organisation's approach to wellbeing.

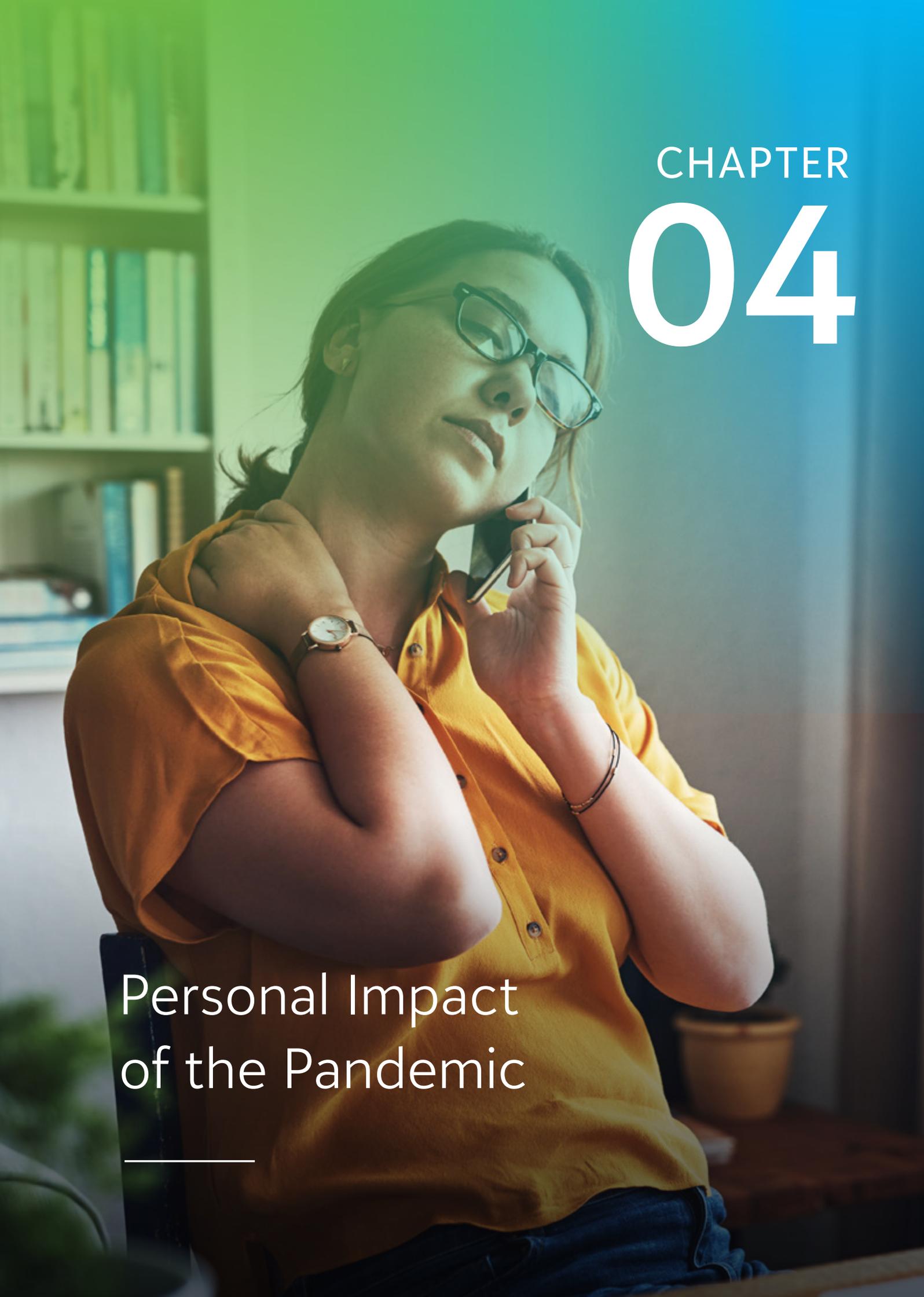
“The wellbeing of our people has been a primary focus over the last 12 months. We recognised the impact of working remotely and developed a range of resources and support to help to mitigate the impact. In particular we listened to feedback about the negative impact of spending too much time in virtual meetings, so we launched “zap zoom”, an initiative to reduce this. There are 3 key elements:

- A zoom free hour between 12.30 and 1.30 every day
- Permission to block out zoom free time in diaries to focus on other work or take a break
- Shorten all meetings to 25mins or 50mins to ensure breaks between and avoid back to back meetings. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are now reviewing how we can expand and further embed this”.



“As a very small charity, with very limited resources we had never worked remotely before and we weren’t amazingly well set-up to work remotely (mainly due to hardware). The first lockdown forced us to get better at it, so offering flexible working is now an option.”

HAYLEY GROCOCK, *CEO, Wakefield District Sight Aid*

A woman with glasses and a yellow shirt is sitting in a chair, talking on a mobile phone. She is in a room with bookshelves in the background. The image has a green and blue gradient overlay.

CHAPTER 04

Personal Impact of the Pandemic

The past 10 months have been highly turbulent and as a result, **79%** of respondents said that they feel worried about the effect COVID-19 is having on their life right now. These findings reflect the mood of the nation, as recent ONS data indicates that **75%** of people across the UK have the same concerns.

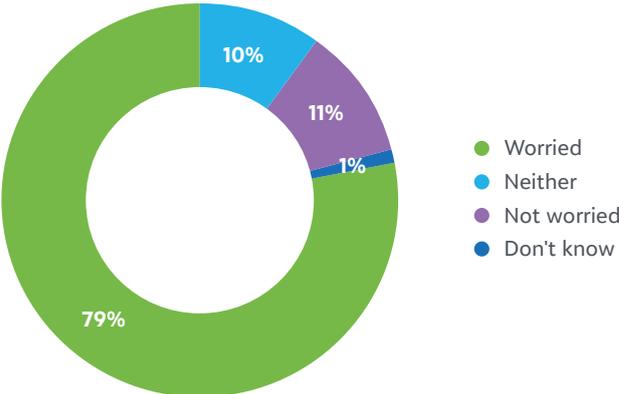
Leaders and their organisations will need to be mindful of this and appreciate that “returning to normal” or “business as usual” won’t automatically make everything better. It has been over a year of change, and it may take just as long for the sense of worry and concern to subside. So, what should leaders be considering to address this and support their workforce? What do they see as their duty of care?

We spoke to Jayne George, Director Fundraising at RNLI, about employee wellbeing.

“We have employees that are struggling with the mental health side and we have prioritised them and given them an advanced path to work from the office part of the time (in accordance with government guidelines). We have already implemented that so that people didn't feel isolated by the situation that they found themselves in.

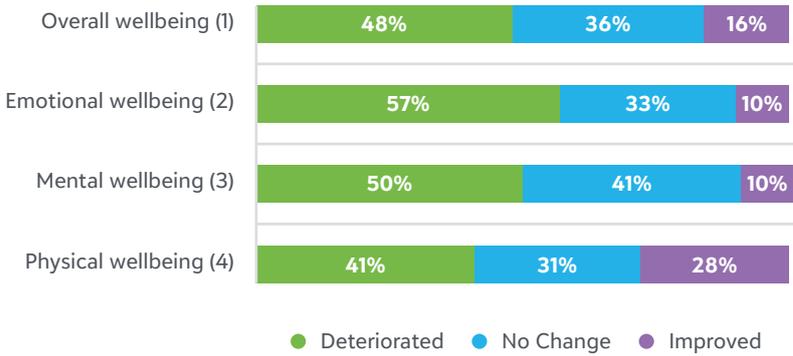
We also have a “One crew, one you” mental health approach, which means that we've got really good resources that are available, and we really encourage managers to have more open conversations. I think that the challenges that we have had around mental health, we have been able to overcome just by being more human.”

How worried or unworried are you about the effect that the COVID-19 outbreak is having on your life right now?



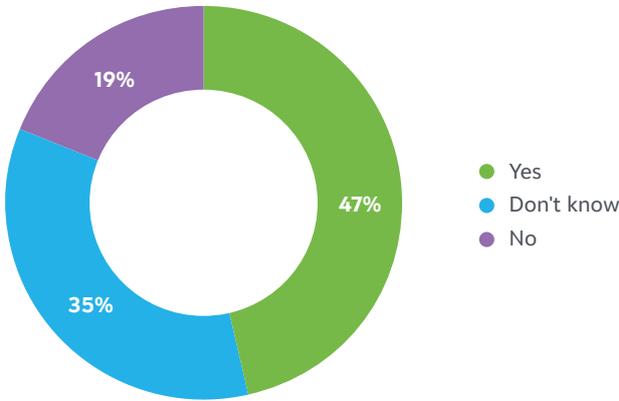
Most people have experienced an overall decline in their wellbeing, with over half of the respondents saying their emotional and mental states have deteriorated during the pandemic. Physical wellbeing has also been negatively affected, however over a quarter of people said that their physical wellbeing had actually improved. This may be down to outdoor exercise being the only consistent form of recreation available during the pandemic.

How has your overall wellbeing changed during the COVID-19 Pandemic?



For some, the past year has had a substantial impact on their life and wellness. **47%** of people said they were planning to make changes to their work life once the pandemic has passed. This is a substantial number, especially in comparison to just **19%** who said they had no plans for any work-related changes.

Are you planning to make any changes to your work life after we have recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic?



When asked for further details as to the type of plans they intended on making, over a quarter said reduce their working hours. We saw some respondents planning on changes related to their wellbeing, including improve their work/life balance (**8%**), however around a fifth were looking to make career changes by leaving their current job or re-training in another field.

We did see a smaller percentage of people (**7%**) state that they were planning on moving out of the third sector, however, this does not appear to be cause for concern as **7%** also said they want to increase their working hours post-pandemic.

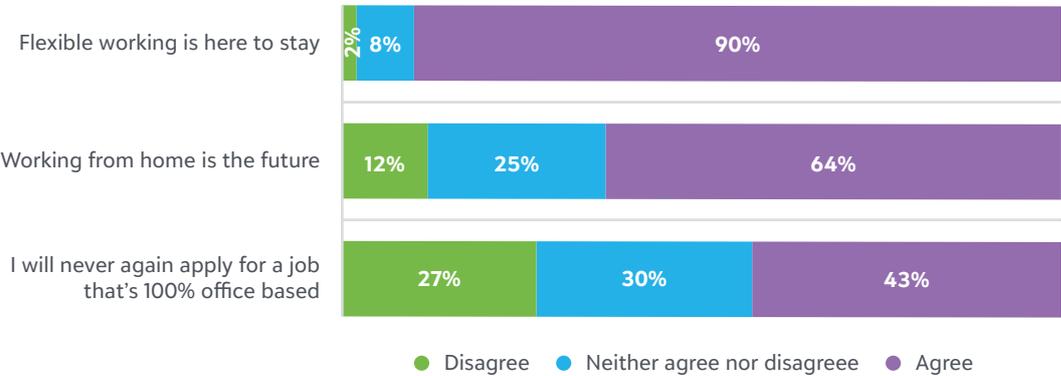
CHAPTER 05

Future of Work

Flexible working is here to stay! **90%** of all respondents agree that flexible working will continue even when the pandemic has become a distant memory. Although not everyone is ready to say goodbye to the office, with **12%** disagreeing that working from home is the future.

One of the most interesting outcomes of the survey was that **43%** will never again apply for a job that is entirely office based and that does not offer flexible working practices. This statistic indicates that flexible working could seriously impact the level of candidates applying for roles in the future and could be a deciding factor in people choosing to leave their current role.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



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“It's been a year and people have just got used to how it is now, so switching back to how it was before is never going to happen for us. We have all moved on so far.”

JAYNE GEORGE, *DIRECTOR OF FUNDRAISING, RNLI*

.....

64% say that people are now more likely to be judged on the impact of their work, rather than the number of hours spent working. Plus, there are currently very high and positive trust levels between employers and employees – **94%** of respondents feel trusted to do their job. This combined with the shift in how people wish their quality of work to be perceived provides organisations with the interesting opportunity to extend that trust upon the return to the office, testing new flexible hours or potentially, even flexible work weeks.

When we examine long-term working preferences, respondents fell into three groups.

- FLEXI:** Those who want to work flexibly based on their personal schedule and workload (45%)
- HOME:** Those who would prefer to work from home most or all of the time (33%)
- OFFICE:** Those who are ready to go back and then stay in the office environment (21%)

People that would prefer flexible and home working options going forward are more likely to be a Director or working in a senior level role. Leaders will need to be mindful that they do not only draw upon their owned lived experiences of the pandemic and roll-out remote working by default – home working is not for everyone and there is an organisational risk that this choice may impact staff retention and the ability to attract a diverse workforce.

Flexible Working (45%) n=316	Home working (33%) n=233	Office working (21%) n=149
More likely than total	More likely than total	More likely than total
Director or more senior (50%)	Commute >2 hours (49%)	Live Alone (31%)
	Wellbeing improved (40%)	Extrovert (28%)
	Introvert (42%)	Have been furloughed (27%)
		Commute up to 1 hour (28%)
Less likely than total	Less likely than total	
Wellbeing improved (39%)	Live Alone (26%)	
Commute >2 hours (39%)	Director or more senior (24%)	

.....

“We will also be carrying out a piece of work to categorise our roles into the various working styles. Home worker, Flexible mostly home, Flexible mostly office, other British Red Cross buildings and community based. This will allow us to review our property portfolio and ensure we have the optimum capacity to meet the needs of the business.”

PAUL AMADI, CHIEF SUPPORTER OFFICER, BRITISH RED CROSS

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Over a third of respondents who have worked from home during the pandemic said that the single biggest benefit to them has been removing their daily commute. Over half of people also considered increased flexibility in their working hours and being able to adhere to social distancing as key benefits to remote working.

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“Initially, we had a mixed response to our decision to go 100% remote working. Some welcomed it, mainly due to the greater flexibility, and more work/life balance that comes with not travelling to the office. Some remain concerned – they think they thrive when working with a team they are sitting with in an office. Particularly younger people, or people living in circumstances that makes homeworking difficult, such as flat shares or where no spare capacity in a home.”

ANDREW COOK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AT STROKE ASSOCIATION UK

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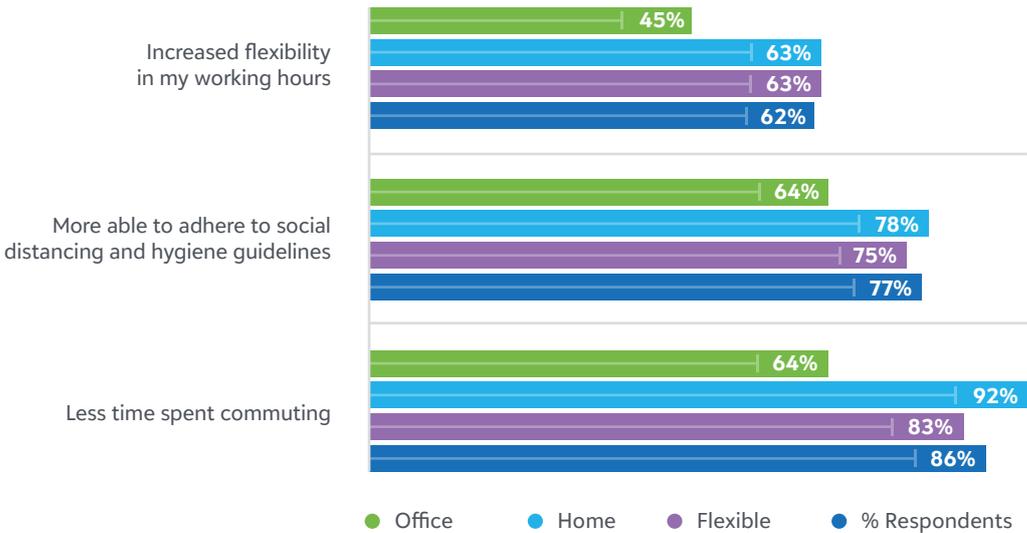
Which of these do you consider to be the main benefits of remote working?



Of the three groups, those who want to go back to the office were the most likely to say that adhering to social distancing and hygiene guidelines has been a big benefit of remote working. This leads us to believe that when offices re-open their doors to employees, they will have to set-out clear guidelines for office behaviour and distancing in order to put people at ease with returning.

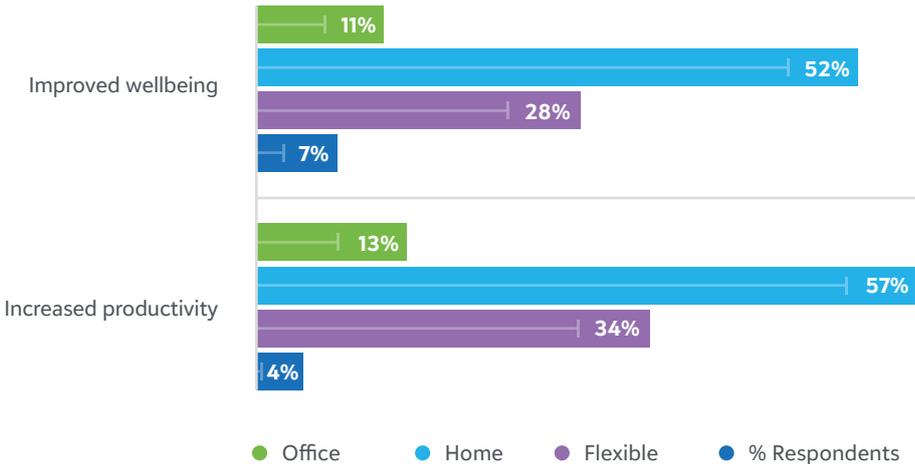
45% of this group also said that they have enjoyed the increased flexibility in their working hours, so it will be interesting to see if organisations can offer this upon return to the office, and if not, will the positive feelings towards employers decline?

Which of these do you consider to be the main benefits of remote working?



When we look at the benefits to those who want to continue working from home as often as possible, over half said their wellbeing had improved whilst working remotely. Initially this may seem unusual given that most respondents reported a decline in mental, physical and overall wellbeing in the past year. However, when we cross-referenced this result, we learnt that those with improved wellbeing were also the most likely to describe themselves as an introvert (**42%**).

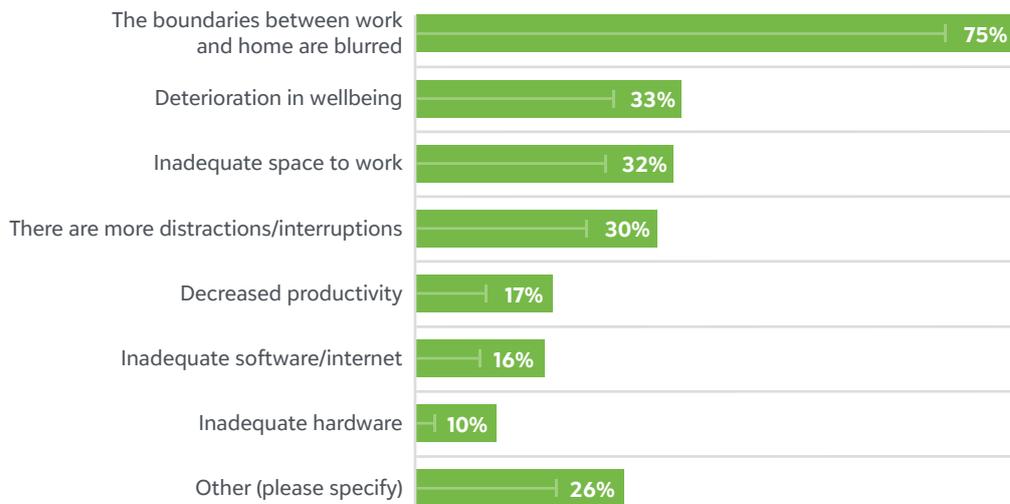
Which of these do you consider to be the main benefits of remote working?



To create a full and balanced perspective, our survey asked additional questions on the challenges of remote working. Three quarters of respondents said that the blurred boundaries between home and work were a challenge, and an additional **40%** named this as their single biggest challenge. Interestingly, at **48%**, the group most likely to struggle with blurred boundaries is those who wish to continue working from home.

32% said that having an inadequate space to work in was one of their challenges. This supports our findings within Section Three: Remote Working, which shared that only **65%** of respondents said they had everyday access to a dedicated workspace.

Which of these do you consider to be the challenges of remote working?



You will notice that over a quarter of respondents also selected to list an ‘other’ challenge. A common theme that emerged through their answers was that people are missing social interactions with colleagues.

“Lack of team contact”

”

“Social interactions with colleagues – creating that creative spark with others instantaneously”

”

“You miss the serendipity of bumping into someone and having a completely unscheduled but inspiring meeting!”

”

“Missing colleagues and friends – the social element of an office”

”

A common challenge faced across all three groups is inadequate software and hardware. **16%** of those wishing to work flexibly said that inadequate software/internet was a constant challenge and, despite their preference towards remote working, this was a challenge shared by **10%** of the home working group. This also appears to be one of the drivers in respondents wishing to return to the office, with the office group being the most likely to say they did not have access to adequate hardware and software, with nearly a quarter of this group finding their organisation's software to be an ongoing challenge.

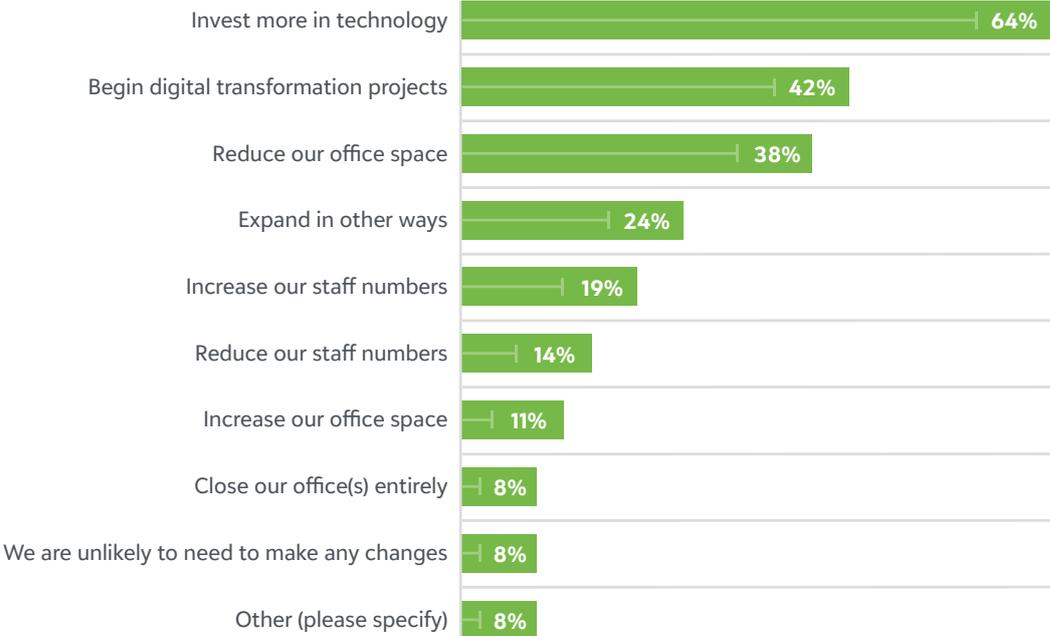
Which of these do you consider to be challenges of remote working?

	Total	Flexi	Home	Office
The boundaries between work and home are blurred	75%	74%	58%	72%
Deterioration in wellbeing	33%	33%	13%	53%
Inadequate space to work	32%	35%	19%	36%
There are more distractions/interruptions	30%	28%	18%	40%
Decreased productivity	17%	16%	5%	33%
Inadequate software/internet	16%	16%	10%	22%
Inadequate hardware	10%	8%	6%	17%
Other (please specify)	26%	25%	24%	21%



It appears organisations are aware of this as a challenging factor, with **64%** of decision makers saying that as a result of the pandemic they are now more likely to invest more in technology. **42%** also said they would begin digital transformation projects. This indicates that employers are preparing themselves for long-term remote working and using the lessons of the pandemic to drive change within their organisations.

Which of the following changes are you likely to make as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic?



Overall, there are conflicting opinions about the peaks and pitfalls of remote working amongst our survey respondents, with all three groups (Flexi, Home and Office) experiencing challenges. However, one thing that they do all agree on is that in general, tasks are more effective when conducted face to face compared to virtually.

Company events, group brainstorming and engaging with beneficiaries stood out from the results, all seen as more effective face to face by approximately two thirds or more of respondents. **46%** believed strategic planning was easier face to face, and **43%** preferred face to face team meetings. There was a small portion of respondents who believed this was more effective in a virtual setting, indicating the training and experience may be a factor.

How effectively can the following tasks be completed remotely compared with face-to-face?



Finally, when decision makers were asked about their organisation’s return to ‘business as usual’, two thirds said that they had already started planning, with **21%** of these respondents going so far as to say that they are already in the advanced stage of planning.

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“We have already taken the bold decision to close all our offices and move to remote working. We had over 100 office locations, three of which were significant in size, including one for 200 people, and another for 80 people. We’re now repurposing some of these into collaborative work spaces for when people need to meet in person and will save somewhere in the region of £1 million a year by moving to this new way of working.”

ANDREW COOK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, STROKE ASSOCIATION UK

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Just over a quarter are being conservative and waiting to find out more about what the future holds in a post-pandemic world.

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“I’m hopeful in lots of ways, because what the team has demonstrated over the last year, above all things, is incredible resilience, flexibility and drive to care for our beneficiaries. We want to carefully, cautiously, and respectfully plan for the next phase when we’re more certain what that looks like.”

HAYLEY GROCOCK, CEO, WAKEFIELD DISTRICT SIGHT AID

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It is clear that there is guidance and lessons to be shared, not only with one another across the third sector, but also from the commercial world who face similar question marks and uncertainty.

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“We are renting our offices and they are quite large; the building is 500 square meters. Our office acts as a hub and co-working space for non-profits, so previously many non-profits had their headquarters within our building, and before COVID-19 we were on course to double the space that we rented. However, because of the pandemic will now maintain the same space and in our annual building renewal we have added an option in to cancel the contract in case we don’t return to having high usage of the building.

SOTIRIS PETROPOULOS, FOUNDER, HIGGS

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Future of Work: Blackbaud Perspective

Jon Walder, Director of People, International Markets Group, Blackbaud



Unprecedented is a term widely overused in modern society. Yet the last 12 months is as close to the definition of that term that one might recall.

Not so much because of the effect of any single moment, but the cumulative aftermath of a physiological, political, economic, and social pressure that has reshaped our lives. COVID-19 has forced us all to rethink and in many ways reimagine the very essence of how we live, as our private and professional personas have merged against a previously unimaginable backdrop of change and tension. From that pressure has emerged new opportunities to put people at the center of any organisation, create new working practices, and connect with employees more deeply. However, it has not been without challenge.

Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, our whole work environment has changed. Baby changing stations and attics began moonlighting as temporary offices and standing desks, only it has not been that temporary. Most of us have been working from home for over a year now. Office meetings have been replaced by virtual ones with Webex and Teams now the key environments for collaboration. Ironically, whilst in many ways we've never had so much access to each other, keeping everybody truly connected and present has been a challenge. Initially like many organisations, we countered this by increasing our contact points with each other – daily stand-ups, social virtual lunches, town hall meetings, and even quiet, virtual hotdesking (simulating working side by side in an office environment). To begin with, it worked. We were even more productive and it helped us all to feel in it together. Gradually, as the repetition grew, and the months passed, we realised that giving each other virtual space was as important as seeing a face on a screen. Who knew Microsoft Teams would need social distancing too?

That repetition or Groundhog Day effect meant that helping people find the balance between switching off and leaning in became critical. Naturally, many of our employees initially filled the gap left by other social endeavours with work. One of the great things about our people is the deep sense of passion they feel for doing more good in this world, and there were times where this has shone more brightly than ever. Faster decision-making and team-led agile-based projects saw improved collaboration and a self-imposed onus on performance. However, longer hours and social displacement created a COVID cocktail of burnout, and, like many organisations, we felt how COVID-19 can take the wind out of our collective sails.

It is probably in this facet where Blackbaud has changed and learned the most. Throughout the past year, we have sent out internal surveys and encouraged managers to check-in with their team members. Statistically speaking, our own experience has been similar to the findings represented in the report - specifically around how the pandemic has affected mental health and the blurring of lines between our working and home lives. To combat this, since March 2020, we have invested a significant amount of time and energy in our wellbeing programs, offering access to holistic wellness sessions that explore topics such as nutrition and exercise, right through to mental health, sleep, and most recently financial too. We have also encouraged teams to shorten meeting times (we all have a lot going on) and have given much more flexibility to how work is performed and assigned.

Throughout this all, we have maintained an acute focus and narrative on wellbeing and as a result, our latest company-wide survey revealed that 80% of all our people strongly agreed that we enable them to balance their personal and working life. Work matters, but health and balance matter most.

There is no greater evidence of this evolution than our new workforce strategy, part of our new 'together anywhere' model. During the height of the pandemic, we asked people across the global organisation how they saw themselves working in the future, and a key takeaway was that whilst people enjoyed the flexibility of working from home, the majority saw a balance of home and office based as the way forward. In our new strategy – which focuses on ways of working in the future, not just the pandemic - nearly all roles at Blackbaud will be either flexible (2-3 days in the office) or fully remote (4-5 days at home), with only about 5% of our population working in the office 4-5 days a week in the foreseeable. A blend of working styles caters to a much broader demographic and will enable us to bring in previously untapped talent into our world, which aligns well with the Future of Work Report finding that almost half of the working population will only apply for roles going forward that offer flexibility on where and how they work.

On a pragmatic level, what this means for us at Blackbaud is we will now be moving away from an office with fixed or assigned seating. Instead, we plan to have daily 'working neighbourhoods' which will be bookable up to two weeks in advance through an app. Our ambition is that this office change will allow us to have more collaboration spaces and increase the use of technology across teams to fully support an 'anywhere' experience. After all, we have learned what truly binds us is not where we do our work from, but how we do it together.

CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION



The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the majority of the UK workforce having to adapt to remote working at an unprecedented scale. Individuals and organisations alike have had to rethink and adapt their approach to the working day; however, is this truly a revolutionary moment in working culture history for the non-profit sector?

Back in May 2020, just two months after the first set of UK lockdown measures were put into action, 67% of people in the non-profit sector reported they would like to continue working from home more often on a long-term basis post COVID-19 (Source: The Status of UK Fundraising 2020). Fast forward to January 2021, when we asked the same question again, and that number had increased to 80%.

Yet, our research shows that remote working is not necessarily appealing, effective or healthy for everyone at all times. Leaders at charities in particular must be mindful of this as they consider adapting their workforce strategy and culture – doing so with empathy and sensitivity of the different lived experiences of their employees over the last 12+ months. Balance is key and for many organisations that we talked to in putting together this report, the future of work is not 100% working from home, or 100% office based. There's a hybrid model in between.

The pandemic has, almost overnight, completely shifted how we think about work and has fast-tracked the implementation of technology and cloud-based tools that enable efficient and smooth digital working from anywhere. This kind of change management and digital transformation would have likely taken years were it not for COVID-19 forcing us to all rapidly adapt. Now, with lockdown measures once again beginning to ease, the sector is at a pivotal moment to reimagine what the future of work looks like at our organisations and ensure the sector remains attractive to employees who are key in helping us all achieve our respective missions.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their voices to their report. As we move into new, uncharted waters over the coming months, it's never been more important to collaborate and learn from each other. We hope this report is a good place to start to help you have meaningful discussions with your colleagues and peers about what the future of work means to you.

Stay safe. Stay well.

Sally Falvey
Head of Corporate Go-To-Market, Blackbaud Europe

