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Health & Wellbeing - Future Ways of Working Survey Results

August 2021

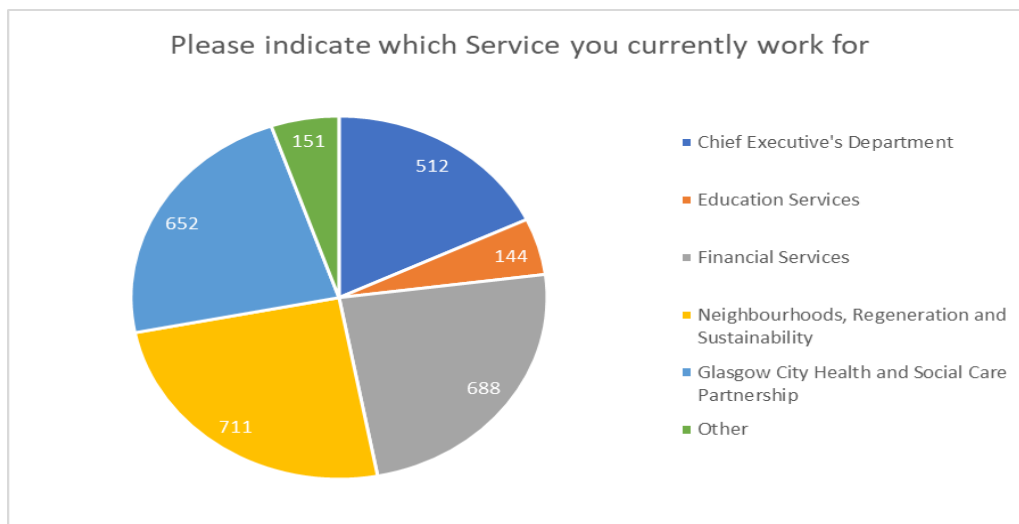
1. Background

On 9th July Glasgow City Council launched a digital survey targeted at all employees who had found themselves working some or all, of their working week, out with the usual office environment as a result of the global pandemic restrictions. The purpose of this report was to learn and understand the employee experience in three parts;

1. **Health and wellbeing impact** – how has the pandemic impacted this group of employees' health and wellbeing since the restrictions were implemented in March 2020.
2. **Adapting to change** - To identify what has worked well and not so well as we've adapted to more remote working practices and engaged in a more digital way of working.
3. **Work life balance impact for an engaged workforce** – To learn our employees views for the future ways of working vision and how this will help create an engaged workforce of the future that is resilient and responsive to change.

All this information will be used to inform and shape the organisations strategic direction on keeping our employees well and engaged, supported in their work life balance as we ease out of restrictions and look towards the design of our future ways of working.

1.1 Organisational data

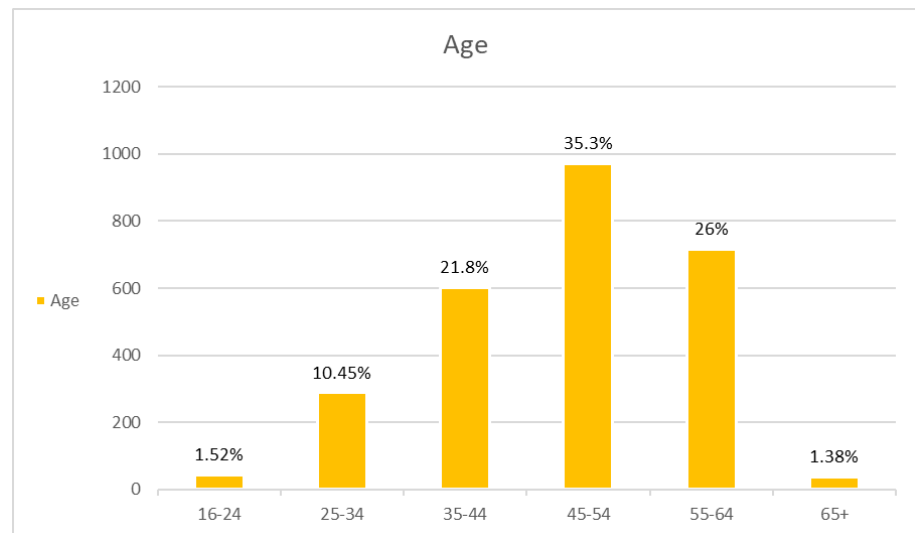
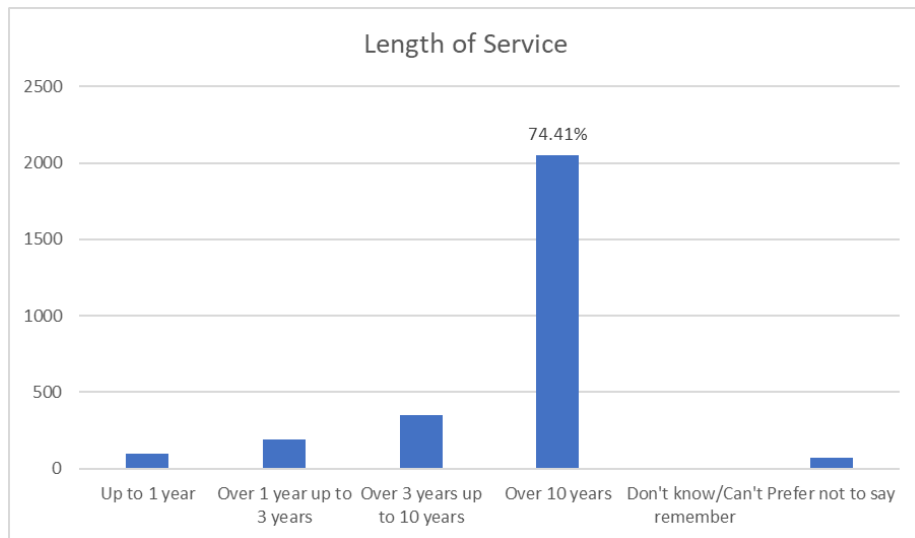
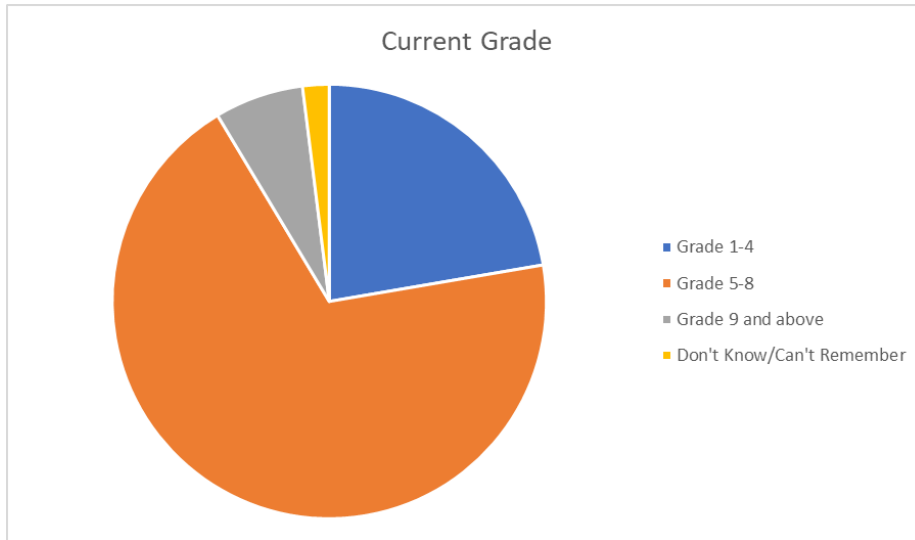


The survey was open for 3 weeks across a key Glasgow holiday period and engaged **2'861** full survey responses. It is suggested by the service innovation team (SIT) that there are 9000 remote workers using devices. This would mean an engagement response of nearly 32%. If we restrict this to the 6'500 M365 Teams users only, the response rate is nearer 43%. Either way the final response rate is higher than average for corporate employee surveys and can be specifically noted as being strongly representative of the workforce views.

Other was made up of CGI secondees, Glasgow Life, City property, JBG, City Parking. From the analysis of respondents who chose to enter open data 6-7% of respondents noted that they did not work from home at all, it is unknown if this was through choice or they were unable to conduct their role from home. At the time of the survey, again from our open data, 31% indicated they were already working back in the office on a part time basis.

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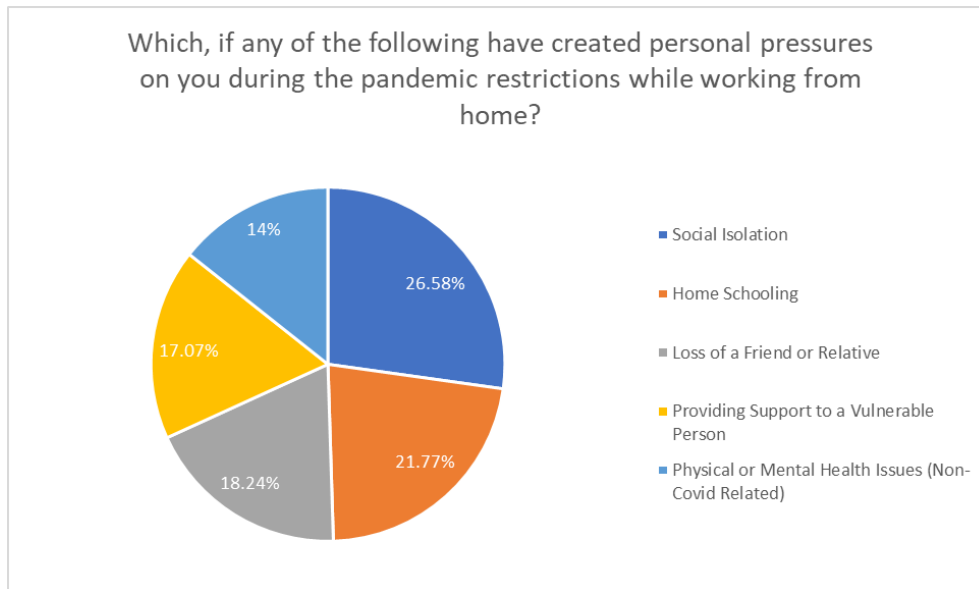
The survey demographics are indicative of our organisational profile. With nearly 75% of employee holding over 10 years' service and an age curve that is weighted towards an ageing workforce.

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2. Health & Wellbeing Impact of Working from home during restrictions

2.1. Personal impacts

We asked our employee group to identify how they had most been affected as a result of the restrictions.



Over a Quarter of employees felt impacted by the **social isolation** of working from home through the pandemic.

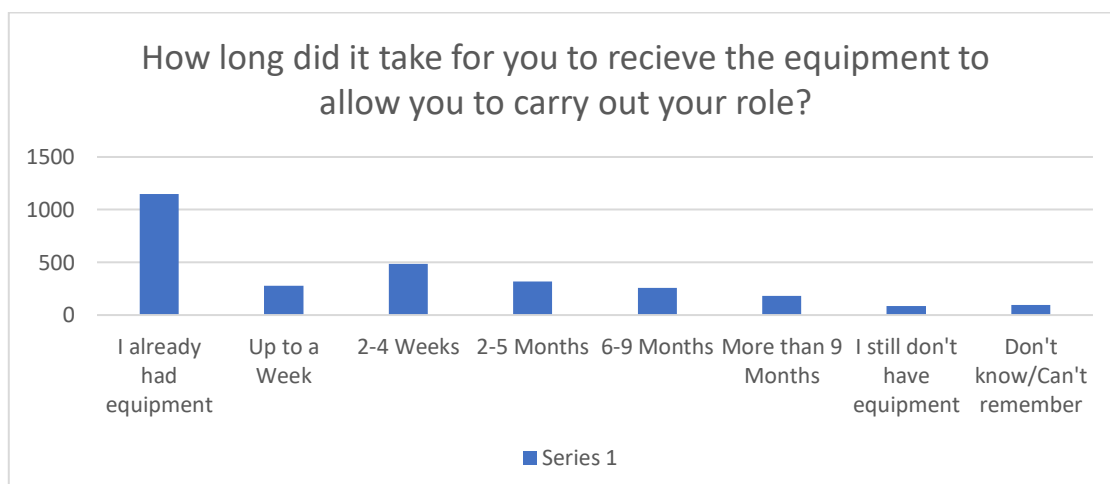
Home schooling and young children at home, along with caring responsibilities featured highly as having an impact, although **57.4%** of employees reported they were fully supported to make reasonable adjustments to deliver work and manage the personal impact of the restrictions.

18% employees had been heavily impacted by the loss of friends and family in the past year. Whilst we can't compare this with data norms for outside the pandemic, it does highlight the need for specific focussed H&WB supports, especially as our usual cultural grieving practices have been curtailed with restrictions.

There was also strong evidence through the questions and open data of the wider family impact on working from the same house. Of the survey participants to answer "other", 13.8% identified a shared workspace as one of the personal pressures brought about by the pandemic restrictions. Multiple workers in the one house, especially any impact of the physical and mental health of other family members especially those that were frontline workers. The economic impact was also noted of furloughed or redundant family members on finances and those having to manage ill health appointments through restrictions.

There were also many positives felt by employees as a result of the pandemic. Employees welcomed the ability to feel safe, be available to look after family and keep them safe too and many disabled and those managing long term ill health conditions found great advantages to working from home.

2.2. IT Kit data



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As we locked down just over **67%** of respondents had available kit to work from home in the first **4 weeks**. It took up to a further 9 months for 20% of staff to be assigned kit. For over 6% of respondents it took over 9 months and **79** respondents have reported that they are still unassigned IT kit for work.

DSE support at home

68% of respondents utilised our specifically designed DSE online assessment. **35%** felt the assessment really supported the improvement of their workspace with a further **57%** assuming no changes as a result, suggesting their workstation standard was met. Only **7%** of employees felt they didn't know about it. Of those who utilised the assessment **24%** took up the opportunity to access further workplace aids to support their workspace.

Although not significant, there was a recurring concern from the open data, of employees reporting a lack of space to work and the impact of poor ergonomic working practices leading them to seek physiotherapy support as well as the psychological effect of the difficulty of separating work and life within the same space.

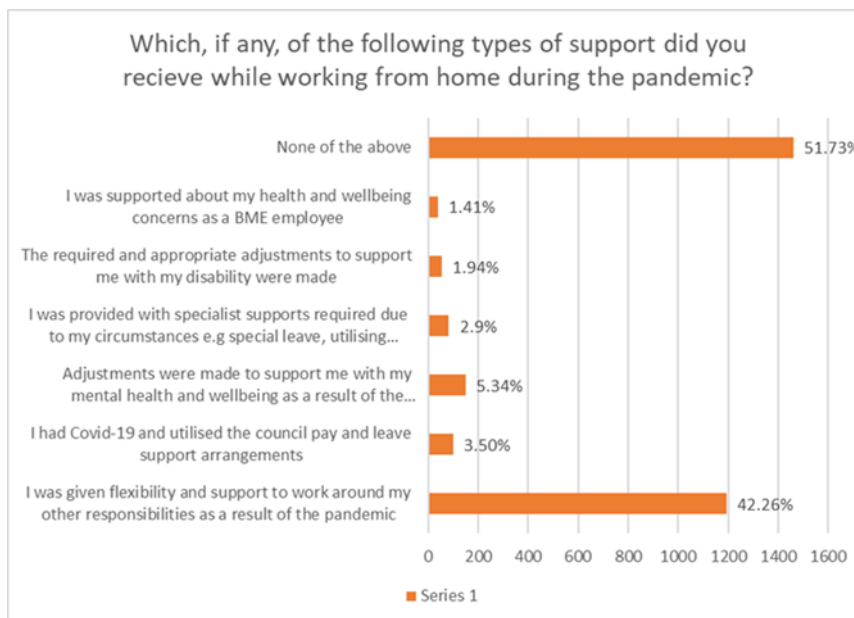
Volunteering

Respondents reported that over 10% of employees supported the organisation through volunteering in other required areas in response to the pandemic. There was a variety of reasons employees turned to do more, including over 45% through their own desire to step up and help.

3. Working from home - Adapting to Change

3.1 Supporting employees

Whilst we've worked through restrictions it was important that managers helped employees deliver their role and show compassion to the personal circumstances the pandemic and restrictions posed.

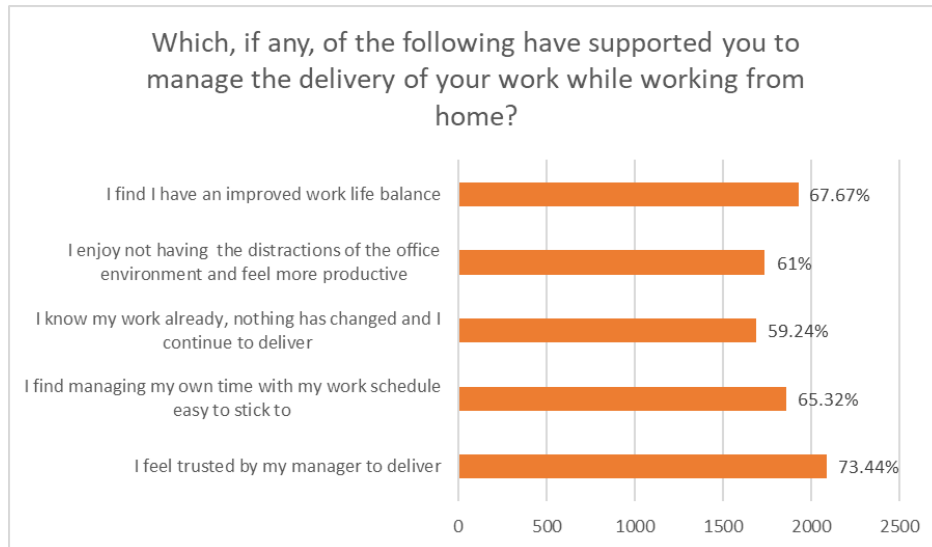


Over **42%** employees were given flexibility and support to work around their other responsibilities. However nearly **52%** reported that the categories of support did not apply to them suggesting that either they did not require support, or they were not supported.

Nearly **6.5%** of employees (182) reported testing positive for covid-19 and 99 of those employees utilised the specific council pay and leave arrangements for covid to support them. 3% of respondents reported having experience of Long covid.

Over **300** respondents felt supported in their specific personal circumstances related to their disability, ethnicity, mental health and any further specialist supports available in the council. Open data responses noted some positive impacts on supporting employees with longer term health conditions and disabilities, who previously felt they might have required time off from the workplace, whereas working from home, they could carry out their role around their individual needs.

3.2 Supporting delivery



Over **73%** of respondents felt they had been trusted to deliver their roles from home. **61%** said they felt fewer distractions at home and this also aided productivity.

Nearly **68%** of respondents noted that working from home had improved their work life balance which they felt contributed to their productivity. In our open data, Work life balance (WLB) featured the most heavily in stories of personal positive impact especially for caring responsibilities. Also noted was an appreciation for being able to spend more time with their families and on recreational activities for themselves.

The positives weren't without some detrimental impacts, for some, the boundaries between work and life in a home space felt difficult, maybe working longer hours and being less able to switch off.

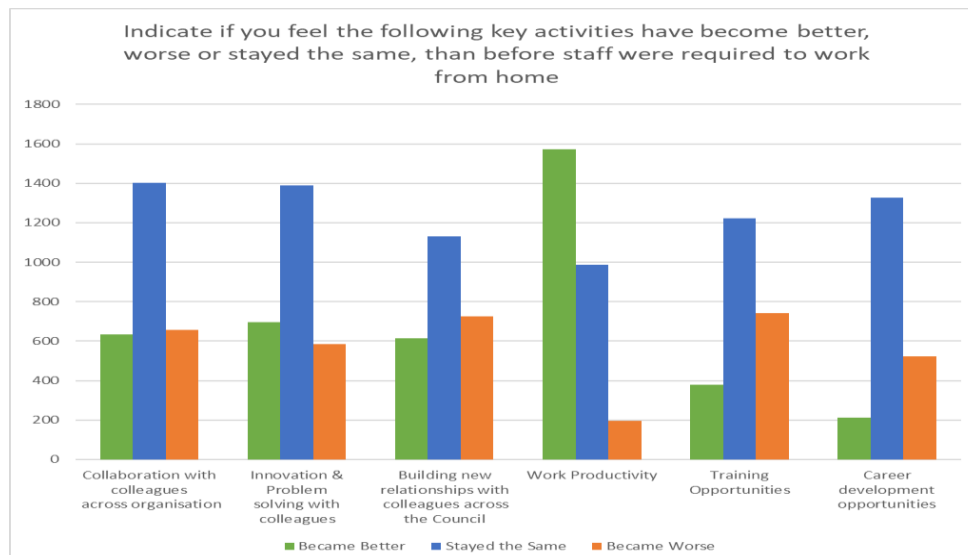
Only **one quarter** of respondents reported having agreed outputs and supervision in place, however over **60%** reported feeling comfortable with what their outputs were as they know their job well and **65%** reported being able to manage their time well in this regard, indicative of the longer length of service of respondents.

48% of employees felt the organisational messages kept them informed while working at home.

3.3 Learning our digital tools to work from home

Just over **10%** reported to be familiar with MS teams, with just under **50%** of respondents reported learning MS teams themselves or with their work team. **25%** were supported by their manager to learn and **13%** took up the offer of available training. **72** respondents have highlighted a specific need for learning intervention as they are still struggling to engage in teams.

3.4 The Impact on the delivery of work activities – working from home



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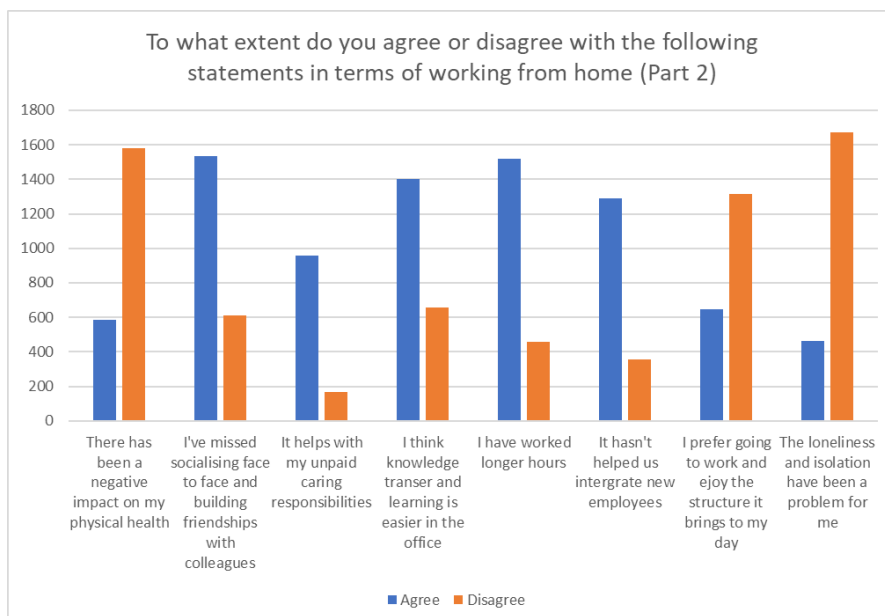
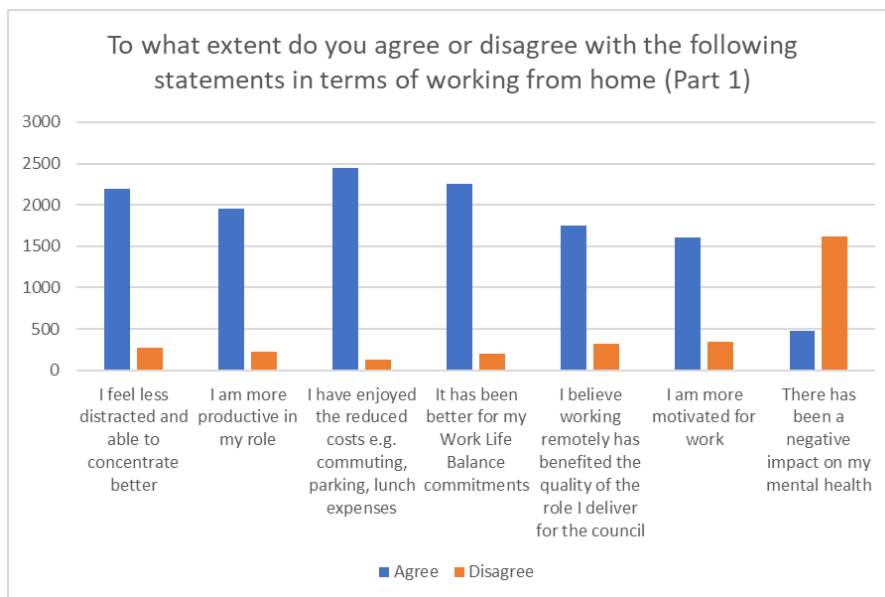
Interestingly respondents report that Collaboration, innovation and relationship building has remained unaffected working from home, except for those that may have a preference for home or in person working, which is balanced equally, it suggests that digital tools have been effective in ensuring no negative impact in these task areas has occurred for the organisation through the pandemic.

What is of specific note is that **35%** of respondents advise that work productivity has stayed the same working from home and for over **55%** of respondents this has been better, with less than **7%** reporting that working from home has been worse for productivity. With **90%** of respondents noting productivity being the same or better, working from home can be noted as a meaningful workplace for the organisation proving productivity is not related to presenteeism.

Respondents were more inclined to highlight that training and career development opportunities may have been less positive working from home. The concept of proximity bias has historically been considered influential on career and training, we should continue to work to ensure equality of opportunity for all employees, no matter which Flexible working option they may engage in.

3.5 Personal engagement working from home

There has been an overall positive impact reported by respondents on the impact of working from home on their engagement and personal circumstances. Unexpectedly reduced costs and improved Work Life Balance feature highest. Engagement has improved with over 60% of respondents feeling the quality of the delivery of their role has improved and they feel more motivated in delivering work.



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Although 54% of respondents have reported to have missed the social interaction with their colleagues.

Of the 2861 respondents, nearly 1000 of them said it has helped them meet their unpaid caring responsibilities. An important point of note as we work as an organisation to continue to better support employees who take on this role in society, whilst working to meet the needs of themselves and their families.

53% reported to be working longer hours, on open comments employees reported using the commute time to focus on completing work tasks, but also that this felt optional and could be used positively for their own personal wellbeing and work life balance too.

3.6 Health and wellbeing impact of working from home through restrictions

There was a mixed response to the impact working from home had, had on existing employee challenges of gambling, mental health, physical health, alcohol, drugs, diet, and isolation. Whilst many employees talked about changing personal wellbeing habits, there were as many again who had not and felt this had been worse for them. This information was also asked in the GCC household survey and we should compare results when available. We should also analyse this data through our EQUIA and ensure we instruct our H&WB action plans and equality networks on the results.

3.7 Communication and available support

89% of respondents are aware of all the Health and Wellbeing supports information that has been made available to them while working from home and **82%** of people were made aware of this through the weekly corporate emails. This is overwhelmingly positive, and we can feel certain that our available organisational supports reach the majority of our digitally engaged employees.

4. Future ways of working – lessons learned from home working

4.1 A working day from home

There was a smaller proportion of staff 20%, who reported feeling an intensity to the working day and 17% feeling there were too many meetings and there should be mandatory breaks in between. Further analysis would be recommended to see if this was associated more with management grades.

Positively the majority of respondents felt able to take appropriate work breaks, but less so for lunch with only 68.5% taking a regular lunch break.

Employees reported positively that 77% felt confidence in their manager, managing their remote working team.

4.2. Reasons for the workplace

Over half, **52.4%**, reported no need to return to the workplace as they believe their role was being delivered effectively remotely.

Although **5%** reported that they needed the office as their workplace to ensure they were able to attend a personal safe place. This shows the duty of care having office space has on our responsibilities for employees Health & Safety.

36% felt the workplace would be relevant for face to face contact with colleagues for business meetings if it was safe to do so.

In the open answers' employees took the chance to express their wishes for more balance being brought to the future ways of working, with specific multiple requests of an expectation of a Hybrid approach to working in the future. Views were also held that level zero did not outline a return to the workplace and safety was a concern and the communication on a way forward for work felt unclear, both from the Scottish government and the organisation.

4.3. Health and safety factors

Results in this section showed a strong indication that a quarter to over a third of respondents had strong views on the need for effective and clear Health and safety practices that were adhered to, to allow employees to feel confident with others in an office space to ensure no virus transmission. Nearly **40%** reported that it would be important to understand how to escalate matters that made them feel unsafe at work.

Mechanisms should be communicated clearly that build employee confidence in our Health & safety management systems e.g. standards and audits on ventilation, cleaning and mask wearing. **22%** of employees highlighted a clear need for specific employee risk assessments that are conducted with respect and support so as not to stigmatise

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those who need it. Specifically, there were concerns noted from pregnant women who have so far made the decision not to be vaccinated and immunosuppressed employees looking for confidence in health and safety arrangements.









Open comments including a request for increased cleaning practices for toilets, kitchens and shower facility areas, including the basic fulfilment of basics like soap and toilet roll were highlighted as a concern before the pandemic and a necessity now. With many that have been in during the pandemic not seeing basic hand sanitisers being replaced.

The organisation should respond to the compassionate management required of potentially diverse views, as seen in the open data, on employees' personal health and safety behaviours and beliefs, to ensure everyone feels safe and respectful of one another, ensuring no conflict, harassment or an increase in workplace related stress absence that could occur.








Ideas to support wellbeing included more and visible mental health first aiders and a wellbeing chill out space for away time from the office. Also, reconsideration of what now constitutes appropriate work wear in dressing for your day would help support wellbeing.

Factors outside council control with relation to travelling to work featured heavily as a concern in returning to the workplace. Including staggered start and finish times to eradicate 'rush hour; disabled parking availability, increased flexibility for carers and more showers for active travelling.

4.4. Days in office to meet needs of role

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	0 days, I believe I can deliver my role remotely		26.10%	727
2	Up to 1 day		15.48%	431
3	Up to 2 days		28.29%	788
4	Up to 3 days		15.80%	440
5	Up to 4 days		3.34%	93
6	5 full days as I would not want to work remotely at all		2.94%	82
7	Don't know / No opinion		1.58%	44
8	Other (please specify):		6.46%	180

Nearly 60% of respondents felt 1-3 days would meet the demands of their role in the office and still offer them the appropriate work life balance. Over one quarter (26%) see no reason to return and can deliver fully remotely. Of those that answered other, employees commented that attendance should meet the requirements of the role tasks, dictated presenteeism didn't feel appropriate and trust should continue to deliver the outputs as we've achieved through the pandemic. Other ideas around 1 week across a month (fitting with commuting tickets), longer days for a 4-day week, increased flexibility across school holidays of need to be in office.

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Up to 1 week		7.65%	213
2	2 to 3 weeks		20.25%	564
3	Up to 1 month		33.82%	942
4	Up to 2 months		10.27%	286
5	Up to 3 months		10.16%	283
6	More than 3 months		8.65%	241
7	Don't know / No Opinion		9.19%	256

Just over 60% of employees (61.72%) require up to one months' notice to return. For those indicating a preference for a longer lead in managers should work closely with employees to support them with the re-adjustment to returning

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to work in line with the impact on people's personal lives of disentangling caring arrangements or other like children returning to school.

5. Recommendations

- Further specific analysis of the H&WB data to support inform the organisations H&WB action plans.
- A service data cut to inform local responses where required.
- A high-level Equality impact assessment (EQUIA) should be conducted to further analyse the data and ensure the specific fit with our vision and future policy review.
- Specific open data stories, both positive and negative will be fed into the Organisational development teams, support for managers sessions. These examples of good and bad practice will be invaluable to the organisations learning.
- Communicate the findings and actions to employees to build trust and integrity driven by CHR.
- Use the findings to consult with networks as required.
- Overall ensure that a focus on a person centred approach is taken to the development of our Future ways of working vision.