

# Goodbye 9 to 5 office life: UK companies must prep for flexible working boom after lockdown, says national survey

[jf freelanceinformer.com/news/goodbye-9-to-5-office-life-uk-companies-must-prepare-for-flexible-working-boom-after-lockdown-says-national-survey/](https://freelanceinformer.com/news/goodbye-9-to-5-office-life-uk-companies-must-prepare-for-flexible-working-boom-after-lockdown-says-national-survey/)

January 21, 2021



Employers and hiring companies ought to buckle up for a slew of flexible working applications once the current lockdown ends, according to Theta Global Advisors – a chartered accountancy and consultancy firm specialising in freelance working options for the UK private sector.



Two-thirds of people in a national survey said their commute was the most stressful part of their day. The majority of people (57%) say they do not want to go back to office life with 9-5 hours.

A nationally representative survey involving 2,000 UK adults found that most people do not want to go back to anything approaching 'normal' 9 to 5 office life. Interestingly, commuting came into the equation. Two-thirds of people said it was the most stressful part of the day. Unsurprising then that a majority of people (57%) say they do not want to go back to office life with 9-5 hours.

Many employers recognise that change is afoot, said the report. Around half of business leaders interviewed say the working environment will change for the better due to the virus and lockdowns. However, a quarter of employers have yet to explore flexible working options.

Yet, some are already thinking ahead. Companies such as [Zurich](#) and Schneider Electric told [Workingdads.co.uk](#) that they were well placed to weather this year's storms because they had already embraced flexible working, supported working fathers in their workforce. But they know they will have to be agile to deal with the next normal.

“From the removal of the commute to boosted productivity when working from home, there are numerous benefits to flexible working that the pandemic has uncovered for millions of employers and employees alike,” said Chris Biggs, Managing Director and Founder of Theta Global Advisors.

“Now, as we head back into nationwide lockdown, many workers will be looking forward to being able to work more flexibly and comfortably. But there will also be a number of people whose employers are still reluctant to compromise,” said Biggs.

The private sector freelance economy advisor suggested business leaders would do well to realise that the ‘new normal’ of flexible, remote working is here to stay, and should adapt now to pivot their business, remove unnecessary overheads and commit to a plan for a post-Covid future.

## **US also preps for surge in remote working**

---

In a study of 1,000 remote workers in the US and UK, overwhelmingly, workers’ experiences of technology for remote communication have been generally positive, and remote working has been a net benefit, despite its challenges. As many as 85% found work/life balance advantages to remote working, suggesting a rise in digital comms for work as lockdowns lift, according to global comms agency FleishmanHillard who carried out the research.

The report said that workers do not want to give up what they have gained, indicating that companies should maintain some degree of flexible working arrangements and double-down on digital tools for remote communication.

## **Flexible working equals record productivity**

---

Britain’s workforce displayed the fastest productivity increase in 15 years in the three months to September, a rise which has not been seen since 2005, according to the latest figures released by ONS. What was at the heart of it?

This increase in productivity represents a 4% rise compared to the same time in 2019, showing a dramatic upshift in workers productivity, at a time when the pandemic had shuttered many businesses and forced firms to reassess their working practices.

A willingness to adopt flexible working and invest in technology has helped small firms to succeed, says Biggs. He says the erosion of archaic working practices and the adaptability of Britain’s SMEs will be key for economic recovery.

## **Presenteeism source of lack of productivity**

---

According to research by Be the Business, companies with between two and 250 staff “made significant changes to their business models” that “may prove to be beneficial to productivity in the year ahead”, whilst research from Theta Global Advisors discovered that 9 million people put ‘presenteeism’ – something which has been dramatically reduced with flexible working amidst the pandemic – has been the main cause for lack of productivity in the past.

Of those surveyed, six million people said that their commute was the hardest part of their day and made them tired even before they started work – with far fewer people commuting thanks to flexible working, which helped their productivity skyrocket.

“Companies which have taken an active role in helping employees to achieve a greater work-life balance during the pandemic, and have eliminated damaging aspects of their work-life such as the commute and presenteeism, are now reaping the benefits of the

dramatically improved level of productivity,” says Biggs.

Theta’s research, alongside the study carried out by Be the Business, suggests firms across Britain should reexamine their practices to combat presenteeism and invest in technologies to streamline the working process.

“Once we are through the COVID-19 period of disruption, flexible working options and extended training programmes can help companies become more productive and change the course of UK productivity across the entire economy,” says Biggs.