

This accounting firm will let staff choose start times — and clock off early in the summer

[marketwatch.com/story/pwc-lets-u-k-based-staff-choose-start-times-and-clock-off-early-in-the-summer-11617275290](https://www.marketwatch.com/story/pwc-lets-u-k-based-staff-choose-start-times-and-clock-off-early-in-the-summer-11617275290)

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PwC has told its U.K. based staff they can spend around half their working hours at home after the COVID-19 pandemic ends — and clock off early on Fridays during the summer.

The accounting giant said it expects its 22,000 employees in the U.K. to spend an average of working with colleagues, either in its offices or at client sites, once pandemic restrictions are lifted, with the freedom to work remotely the rest of the week.

Under the “hybrid” working model — dubbed the “Deal” — employees will also be able to personalize their working hours, for example by starting or ending the day earlier.

During July and August, staff will be able to finish by lunchtime on Fridays.

PwC chairman Kevin Ellis said he hoped the announcement would make flexible working “much more the norm rather than the exception.”

“We want our people to feel trusted and empowered,” Ellis said in a statement on the company’s website. “The future of work is changing at such a pace we have to evolve continually how we do things to meet the needs of our people and our clients,” he added.

The shift to home working during the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted some of the U.K.’s biggest financial institutions to make changes to their working models.

FTSE 100-listed fund manager Schroders SDR, -0.42% became one of the first to move to a permanent flexible working approach, saying in August 2020 that employees could work from home or , so long as the requirements of their team and clients are met

More recently, HSBC HSBC, -0.41% announced plans in February to shrink its global property footprint by 40% over the long term, as Europe's biggest bank reshapes its workforce and expects a larger proportion of employees to work remotely. Rival bank Standard Chartered STAN, +0.62% signed a global deal that will allow staff to work away from central offices.

A recent survey from Microsoft MSFT, -0.49%, which surveyed 30,000 people from 31 countries, found that want flexible remote work options to continue, once the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic passes.

“The data is clear: extreme flexibility and hybrid work will define the post-pandemic workplace,” noted Microsoft's first-annual .

The move to “hybrid working” has spread to other sectors beyond financial services. In March, oil giant BP BP, +3.46% told its office-based staff that they will be expected to spend two days a week working from home after lockdown restrictions ease.

The same month, British Airways, which is owned by International Consolidated Airlines IAG, +1.42%, said it was considering selling its headquarters because the shift to home working meant it may no longer need so much office space.

However, Goldman Sachs GS, +1.09% Chief Executive David Solomon last month called working from home “an aberration,” as he cited collaboration as a key reason to get bankers back to the office.

“While some major corporations such as Goldman Sachs continue to denounce the idea of Flexi-working in the long term, dialogues and action have affirmatively changed,” said Chris Biggs, partner at accounting and consulting firm Theta Global Advisors.

“These new working norms open a variety of opportunities for employers to improve the health and productivity of their workforces and employ higher quality talent going forward with fewer geographic restrictions,” he added.