

# Season tickets for part-time commuters prove hybrid working here to stay

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By LLB Editor

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## LONDON*loves*BUSINESS

Today, National Rail announced plans for new season tickets designed specifically for part-time commuters. This change in the private sector for the masses of commuters in London comes at the same time as MP considerations for legislative changes in rights to work from home making hybrid structures the 'default norm'. Given this, flexible structures and hybrid working are objectively here to stay in the long term and employers must adapt accordingly if they are to survive and thrive.

While some employers may be concerned about this normalisation of working from home and flexible structures, employees have shown that this approach has been effective and their calls for these structures to be maintained explain National Rail's new season tickets. Testament to this is the 51% of Brits that have seen the quality of their work and their productivity increase with hybrid working structures.

A national study commissioned by consultancy and accounting disruptors, Theta Global Advisors, dissects the newly emotive measures that define productivity in the workplace that explain the shifts we are seeing both privately, and publicly to our new working norms and how, at its core, stand empathetic bosses with flexible approaches:

### Key Stats

- More than half (51%) of Brits agree that they have seen the quality of their work or their productivity improve due to increased employer empathy, flexibility, and working from home over the last year
- A quarter (25%) of Brits agree that despite working effectively over lockdown, their employer still doesn't trust them to work flexibly or from home
- 57% of Brits say they are returning to the office with the worst mental health in their lifetimes \*under 35s\*
- 41% of workers in the UK agree that their employers are not managing correctly post-pandemic
- Over a quarter (27%) of Brits agree that a lack of empathy from their employers post-pandemic is resulting in their being less inclined to work hard for them

· 40% of Brits agree that given their experience over the last year, their employer forcing a strict return to pre-pandemic office norms would hinder their performance  
(Research taken from a poll of 2,069 and nationally representative as per the British Polling council)

Theta's research shows that at the beginning of the pandemic, more than a third (35%) of Brits stated that returning to traditional office environments would have a negative impact on their mental health and productivity. Now, a year later, this figure has increased to 40% as Brits have adapted and developed an understanding of how they can best work post-pandemic, setting out their expectations of employers more blatantly than ever.

Chris Biggs, partner at Theta Global Advisors has been leading by example at his firm. Theta provide flexible hours and hybrid working structures to their employees, allowing them to adapt on a case-by-case basis in order to be most productive, recognising the need for subjectivity for a happy and productive working environment.

Chris comments on the disruption of the Big Four's monopoly and how auditor-independent advisors such as Theta are critical to ensure the independence of auditors:

“National Rail's announcement for season tickets designed for part-time commuters comes after legislative considerations making working from home rights the default norm. We are thus seeing both in the private and public sector a shift after more than a year seeing just how effectively we can work with more flexible approaches.

“Attitudes to the future of work have affirmatively shifted, and to ensure people are at their happiest and most productive, flexibility is needed in both where and when they work. Freedom from the office must also mean freedom to go to the office to account for different experiences, priorities, and conditions. New policies will account for substantial differentiations in employees' experience of working during Covid-19. However, greater flexibility is still needed to account for different experiences and resources on a case-by-case basis. Working environments are looking like they will never return to what they were in 2019, changing very much for the better.

“As such, while employers may instinctively want to see their staff back in the office and for work to go 'back to normal' as soon as possible, this is not necessarily the strongest or most sensible approach. Working culture and expectations have changed, and if approached with empathy and flexibility, will result in a far happier, more productive workforce delivering work of a higher standard than before Covid-19. Employees have proven they can be effective when given flexible options or working from home, and employers need to respond to this with trust and structured flexibility approaches allowing employees to alter as necessary.”