DEMOS

DISTANCED REVOLUTION

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES OF WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE PANDEMIC

FOR THE **WORKSHIFT COMMISSION**

JUNE 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused home working on a scale like no other. Just over a third of people (35%) worked exclusively from home in January 2021, up from 5% in 2019.[1] This huge, unintended experiment has dramatically catalysed the trend towards more remote working, proving its feasibility on a scale many had previously doubted.[2]

As we prepare for a further easing of restrictions at the end of June, much of the focus has been on the economic impacts on city centres, some of which are already preparing to transfer office space into housing.[3] In *Post Pandemic Places* (2021) Demos argued this economic trend should be capitalised on, with remote working acting as a key lever for levelling up places outside of city centres post-pandemic.[4]

The impact of home working on individuals, however, has been underrepresented in the policy debate. How have the 30%, who've had to transform the way they work almost overnight, fared during the pandemic? Drawing on data collected by Demos' *Renew Normal: The People's Commission on Life after Covid-19* that reached over 50,000 citizens, we have sought to better understand employees' experiences of working from home during the pandemic - the benefits, challenges and future opportunities.

In sum, we found that many home workers have had a generally positive experience. Working from home has been linked to better eating habits and improved stress levels during the pandemic, indicating flexible working policies could help tackle obesity and improve public health. Home workers have also been more likely than non-homeworkers to experience improved mental health and volunteer more. However, low income households have experienced the opposite, irrespective of whether they've worked from home. Low incomes have been linked to the deterioration of eating habits and stress levels, building on the arguments that more needs to be done to improve the living standards of low earners in the UK if we are to 'build back better'.

From a wider evidence review, we have found increased homeworking could come with increased surveillance, health and safety risks and costs for employees if remote working continues without employee protection. Those with the resources and access to adequate desk space, technology, privacy and uninterrupted time have been more likely to be productive than those without, suggesting more home working in the future could have negative effects on the performance and progression of those without the right resources.[5]

In many ways, a distanced revolution has already taken place, with many expecting to continue some form of hybrid working as restrictions come to an end. However, without strong leadership from the government, over the coming months we could see a reverse in improvements in diets and stress levels while other employees could be at risk of unfair or unsafe remote working conditions. We therefore recommend the government builds on the Flexible Working Taskforce to establish a Remote Working Strategy based on three pillars: promoting remote working, protecting workers from unfair remote working models, and integrating flexible working with other strategies such as tackling obesity.

1   House of Lords Covid-19 Select Committee. Beyond Digital: Planning for a Hybrid World. 2021. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5801/ldselect/ldcvd19/263/26302.htm [Accessed: 26/04/2021]
2   House of Lords Covid-19 Select Committee. Beyond Digital: Planning for a Hybrid World. 2021.
3   City of London to convert offices into homes in post-Covid revamp. The BBC, 2021. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-56888615 [date Accessed: 29/04/2021]
4   Ussher, K., Rotik, M. and Jeyabraba, M. Post-Pandemic Places. Demos. 2021. Available at: https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Post-Pandemic-Places-Report.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]
5   Parry, J. et al. Working from Home under COVID-19 lockdown: Transitions and tensions, Work after Lockdown. 2021. Available at https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f5654b537cea057c500f59e/t/60143f05a2117e3eec3c3243/1611939604505/Wal+Bulletin+1.pdf [accessed 26/04/2021]

Methodologically, this report draws on:

- An open access survey with responses from nearly 12,000 members of the public in May 2020.
- Two nationally representative polls: the first of 10,000 UK adults in September 2020 and the second poll of 1,000 UK adults in November 2020.
- A regression analysis of the data collected in the September 2020 poll of 10,000 UK adults.
- An open access polis survey with 930 responses in October 2020.

KEY FINDINGS

Working from home during the pandemic has been positively linked with improved wellbeing.

- Working from home during the pandemic has been linked with improved eating habits and stress levels:
    - Our regression analysis shows that working from home (when other factors are controlled for) has been linked with better eating habits and improved stress levels during the pandemic.
    - Respondents who saw improvements in their eating habits were statistically more likely to have been working from home.
    - Individuals who saw improvements in their stress levels were statistically more likely to have been working from home.
    - When controlling for income, we found that those on low incomes (under £20,000 per annum) experienced worse eating habits and stress levels during the pandemic, irrespective of the positive effect of working from home.

- Working from home has also correlated with a range of mental, social, and physical health benefits for employees, although we did not explore how these interact with income or other demographic characteristics:
    - Those who were always working from home have been twice as likely to volunteer in their local communities as those who have not (25% vs 13% respectively).
    - A third (35%) of people always working from home said that their mental health got "much better" compared with 17% of those who were never working from home.

Being on a low income during the pandemic has had a negative link with wellbeing.

- Being on a low income during the pandemic have had a negative relationship with eating habits and stress levels:
    - Our regression analysis found that being on a low income (living in a household with an income under £20,000 per annum) was associated with worse eating habits and higher stress levels, irrespective of the positive force working from home has.
    - We cannot say whether working from home is good or bad for people on low incomes as their income overrides any effect working from home may have. Further research in this area as to whether working from home is good for low earners would be needed.

Working from home in the future is popular, although not for everyone.

- We found a strong desire among those who have been working from home to continue working from home after the pandemic:
    - The majority (51% - November polling) of employees who have worked from home during the pandemic want to do so more in the future than they did before the pandemic.[6]
    - One in four (25%) rank the ability to work from home when you want as the most important factor in a job.
- The desire to work from home is not evenly split across demographic groups in the overall population:
    - Black British (45%) and Asian British people (41%) were significantly more likely than White people (25%) to want to work from home "always" or "usually after the pandemic.
    - Higher earners were twice as likely as lower earners to want to "always" or "usually" work from home than lower earners: four in ten (39%) of those earning more than £50,000 compared to just 2 in 10 (20%) of those earning up to £20,000 (20%).
    - Older people were least likely to want to work from home in the future, for example, just 2 in 10 (21%) of those aged 60+ wanted to work from home (21%) "always" or "usually" after the pandemic.

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6   Other Demos polling found that when asking only people who had been required to work from home during the pandemic, this proportion was higher; Ussher, K., Rotik, M. and Jeyabraba, M. Post-Pandemic Places. 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS: TOWARDS A REMOTE WORKING STRATEGY

Promoting remote working in the labour market

Recommendation 1: The Government should take urgent action to fulfil its stated intention of making all jobs flexible by default, with location flexibility explicitly included. This would shift the legal balance in favour of remote working, with the burden of proof lying on employers to demonstrate why a specified location is required in their particular circumstances, which can then be challenged at a tribunal.

Protecting two-sided flexibility in the labour market

Recommendation 2: The Government should consult on and update employee rights to make sure employees are not financially accountable for home-working or remote-working spaces nor at risk of unfair surveillance while at work. Employee rights may need to include the right to a workspace or home working allowances.

Integrating remote working with other agendas

Recommendation 3: The second part of the Obesity Strategy should consider how standard working practices could be reformed to support healthier diets and reduce stress at work. This should include the creation of a Healthy Workplaces Playbook that provides detailed guidance and incentives for employers to create working conditions that best support health and wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

"Our commitment to flexible working is based on our desire to open up employment opportunities to people regardless of their sex or location...We now have the chance to break down these barriers and boost opportunities for everyone."

— Liz Truss, Minister for Women & Equalities, 2021

"It would be short-sighted to sacrifice flexible working rights on the altar of short-term economic recovery, particularly because they can be complementary, in that greater availability of flexible working allows for a more inclusive labour market, expanding the size of the labour force and increasing output."

— Reinventing The Workplace, Demos, 2011

Working nine to five in a fixed location has been out of step with people's lives for too long. Working families have had to juggle work with childcare, while others have been physically dislocated from the world of work altogether because of where they live or their health. In some cases, people's health has suffered too, from high levels of stress or relying on quick and affordable on-the-go food to fit around busy working lives.

Yet, since the right to request flexible working was introduced in 2003, progress towards more flexible working ways of working has been slow.[7] Until the requirement to work from home during the pandemic catalysed the transition towards more remote and hybrid forms of working.[8] This transition may have turned the tables on the way some of us eat, encouraging employees to cook more at home and eat more healthily.[9]

Whether the more flexible forms of remote working will continue, however, remains unknown. The Chancellor has said workers could 'vote with their feet' if they are not allowed to return to the office after the pandemic, a positioning which may indicate the sacrifice of flexible working rights on the altar of short-term economic recovery.[10] This comes despite the role remote working could play in driving 'levelling up' and tackling obesity, in addition to the economic wins from increased flexibility in the labour market and improvements in productivity. As restrictions ease, we are coming to a crossroads where we have the opportunity to build on the improvements made during the pandemic or return to business as usual.

7   BIS. Extending the right to request flexible working to parents of children aged 17, 2010. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32157/10-1217-impact-flexible-working-parents-children-aged-17.pdf [accessed 28/04/2021]

8   Cabinet Office. (COVID-19) Coronavirus restrictions:What you can and cannot do. March 2021-April 2021. Available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do [accessed 28/04/2021]

9   Lasko-Skinner, R. and Sweetland, J. Food in a Pandemic. Demos. 2021. Available at: https://demos.co.uk/project/food-in-a-pandemic/ [date accessed: 01/04/21]

10   Rishi Sunak warns workers could 'vote with their feet' and quit jobs if they are not allowed to return to the office after lockdown as he praises 'culture' of people 'riffing off each other'. The Daily Mail, 2021. Available at https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9405819/Rishi-Sunak-warns-workers-vote-feet-quit-jobs-offices-dont-reopen.html [accessed 28/04/2021]

THE IMPACTS OF HOMEWORKING IN 2020

2020 saw profound changes in the labour market. One of the most significant was the increase in home working as a result of unprecedented government restrictions, public health advice, and the actions of individual employers and employees. For the first time, many employees were by law consigned to working from home. The ONS estimates that 27% of the workforce were working remotely instead of at their normal place of work in 2020.[11] This figure has changed somewhat during the pandemic; in April 2020, for example, 47% of people in employment did some work at home.[12] This chapter will assess the impact of this unprecedented rise in home working with a focus on productivity, employee health and wellbeing, and diversity and inclusion.

PRODUCTIVITY

There are early indications that increased remote working may have had a positive impact on productivity. While the second quarter of 2020 saw the steepest fall of output per worker on record (21.1% on the previous year), once furloughed workers were removed from the analysis, productivity (in terms of output per job) actually increased for the rest of the economy. Furthermore, the level of output per job was 11.7% higher in Quarter 4 2020 when furloughed workers are excluded, similar to the 14.6% difference in the third quarter, indicating that the furlough scheme is predominately being used in industries with lower levels of productivity.[13] This uptick could be, in part, because of increased home working, with research before the pandemic suggesting that remote working can have positive impacts on employees' working lives and performance at work.[14]

The drivers of this increased productivity, however, remain a black box; it is difficult to attribute a rise in productivity to any one factor alone, particularly as Covid-19 has changed so many aspects of our working lives. It is possible that more heavily-furloughed sectors were less productive than the ones that have continued to operate. In addition, research suggests many have worked longer hours, perhaps because they are spending time working instead of commuting.[15] Some of us may have been focusing on the parts of our jobs that are best done in isolation, i.e. 'execution' tasks, holding off on 'exploratory' tasks that rely on 'sporadic interactions', it is possible that we may then see a decline in productivity longer term if those tasks are not possible to do in person.[16]

While it is too early to tell if remote working really has brought about productivity gains, qualitative evidence suggests that remote working has had a major impact on many individual's productivity. We heard via *Renew Normal: The People's Commission on Life After Covid-19* that people had found remote working to be a complete game-changer

11   ONS. Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 5 November. 2020. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronavirustheukeconomyandsocietyfasterindicators/5november [Accessed: 01/04/21]

12   ONS. Productivity economic commentary, UK: October to December 2020. 2020. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/ukproductivityintroduction/octobertodecember2020 [Accessed: 26/04/21]

13   ONS. Productivity economic commentary. 2020.

14   Thompson, J. and Truch, E. The Flex Factor: Realising the value of flexible working. RSA. 2013. Available at: https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/blogs/rsa_flex_report_15072013.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]

15   The Economist. People are working longer hours during the pandemic. 2020. Available at: https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2020/11/24/people-are-working-longer-hours-during-the-pandemic [Accessed: 01/04/21]

16   Demos. The Workshift Commission Roundtable. 24th December 2020.

with knock-on benefits in their working life.[17] Many expressed that increased remote working had driven improvements in their productivity; for example, because they could take more ownership over their work in a space outside of the office or because the absence of a commute improved their work-life balance. Both of which - the nature of the work and work-life balance - have been found to correlate with better levels of productivity.[18] These experiences are illustrated in the testimonies collected via our open access survey in the first lockdown (2020):

> *"I was spending too much time commuting and not enough time with family. Life is short. Community is important. Working from home is possible. I want to be more involved in my son's education. It's important to stop and take time for yourself."*
>
> Woman, 30s, South East England

> *"I have also noticed that being self motivated and not having an office that is constantly monitoring me has meant that I have become more invested in my role. I am now trying to do what I can to help others in my team more."*
>
> Woman, 20s, East Midlands

It should be noted that self-reported gains in productivity have been felt more in certain sectors than others, with IT and Communications seeing the largest self-reported improvements, according to the ONS.[19] This is likely to be related to the fact that as a sector they were already set up for remote working. But equally it reminds us that employees' experiences of remote working have been highly diverse, and often highly polarised. As one respondent illustrated, work grounded in human interaction has been particularly difficult to replicate with technologies:

> *"The challenge for me as a social worker has been to do the job using social media such as Skype, Zoom etc. It means restrictions on how I communicate with people - there's so much we gain from face to face contact that I'm missing and that impacts on the work being done."*
>
> Woman, 60s, London

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The experiences during the first lockdown for remote workers tends to be in stark contrast to non-remote workers, with remote workers being more likely to see improved habits and feel more connected to their local communities (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

In addition, remote workers were more likely to improve their spending, exercise habits and physical and mental health than those who have not been working from home. For example, over a third of people always working from home said that their mental health got "much better" (35%) - almost twice the proportion of those who "never" worked from home (17%).

FIGURE 1

COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE "ALWAYS" WORKED FROM HOME AND HAVE "NEVER" WORKED FROM HOME DURING THE PANDEMIC: HABITS

■ Always working from home during the pandemic ■ Never working from home during the pandemic
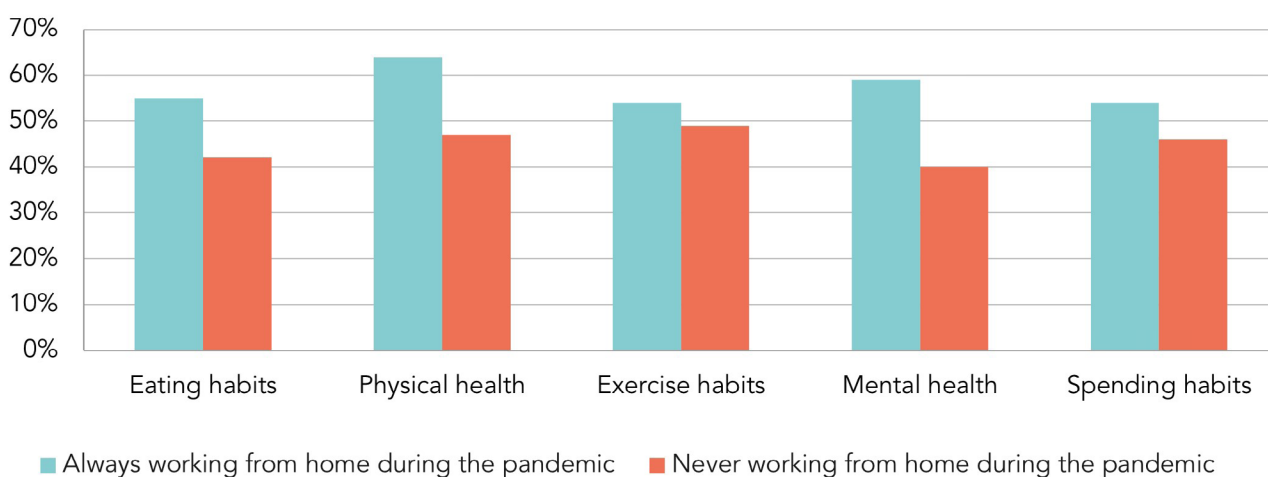
Source: Demos polling, September 2020.

17   Demos. Britain under Lockdown. 2020. Available at: https://demos.co.uk/project/britain-under-lockdown/ [Accessed: 01/04/21]
18   Bosworth, D and Warhurst, C. Does good work have a positive effect on productivity? Developing the evidence base in: Can Good Work Solve the Productivity Puzzle? Collected Essays. RSA. 2020. Available at: https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/reports/2020/can-good-work-solve-the-productivity-puzzle.pdf
19   ONS. Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society. 2020.

FIGURE 2

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN "ALWAYS" AND "NEVER" WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE PANDEMIC AND MENTAL HEALTH

Source: Demos polling, September 2020.

Those who have been working from home have also been more likely to volunteer (25% vs 13%) and feel more connected to their local community than those that have not worked from home during the pandemic (56% vs 46%, see Figure 3). This suggests that the benefits of home working may extend beyond individual employees, creating wider social value within local communities.

In comparison, we found that those who have been working from home have been more likely to feel isolated than those who have "never" worked from home. They have also been less likely to feel more connected to their friends and family than those "never" working from home exclusively. Interestingly, it seems that the two groups have felt equally connected to their colleagues, indicating that homeworking is not necessarily a negative force on workplace culture (see Figure 3).

In previous work, we found people from higher social grades (i.e. ABC1) and income groups, who have been more likely to work from home, were

FIGURE 3

COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE "ALWAYS" WORKED FROM HOME AND HAVE "NEVER" WORKED FROM HOME DURING THE PANDEMIC: FEELING

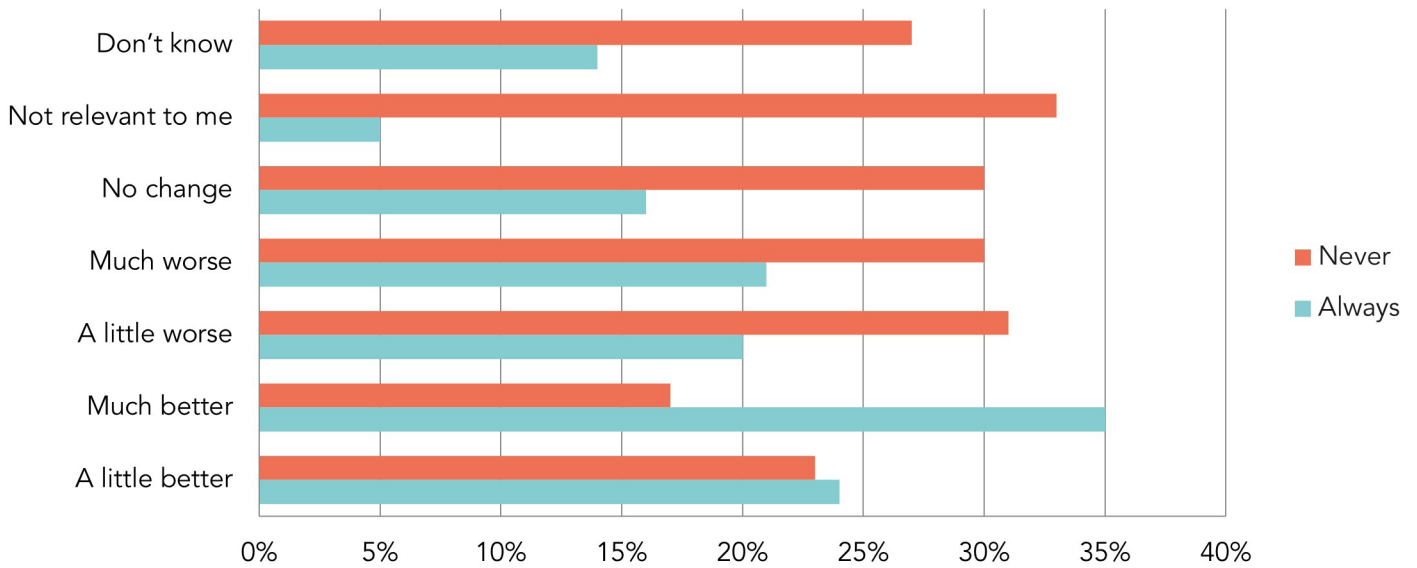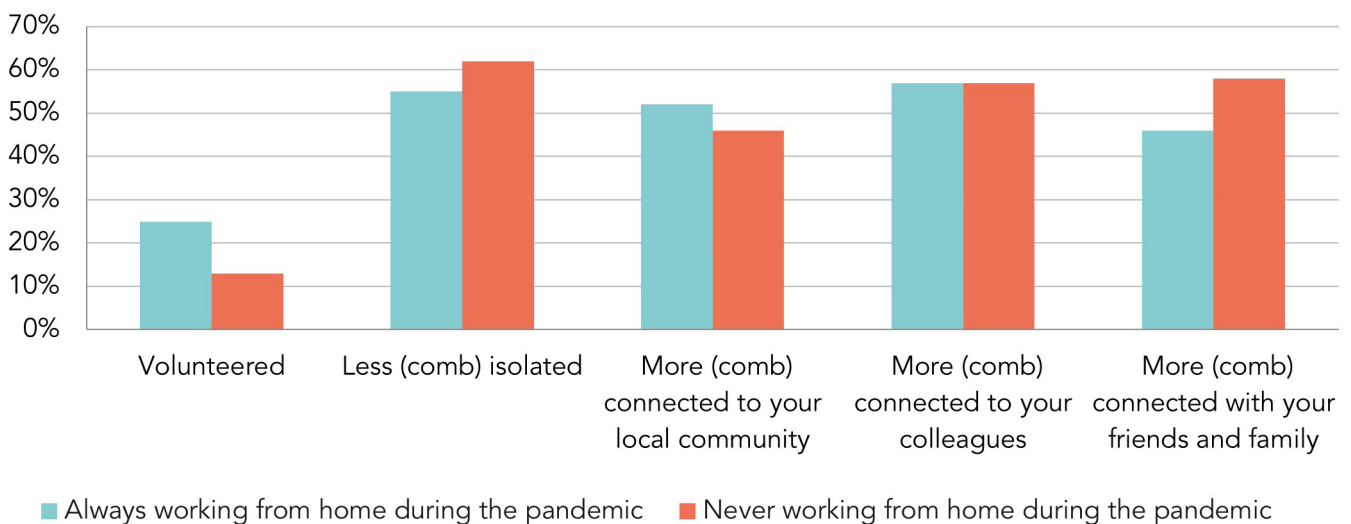Source: Demos polling, September 2020.

significantly more likely to report upsides from the crisis.[20] We ran a regression analysis to assess the extent to which these upsides - in particular, improved eating habits and stress levels - were more related to people's status and wealth, rather than working from home. For both eating habits and stress levels, we found a statistically significant positive association between working from home and health improvements suggesting that working from home can improve eating habits and reduce stress levels (see Appendix for breakdown).

However, being in a low income household (i.e. households who earn up to £20,000 per year) was associated with worse eating habits and stress levels. This suggests that the effect of the pandemic was to worsen eating habits for those on a low income regardless of whether they worked from home or not. Overall, therefore, this supports our earlier conclusion that people with higher incomes were more likely to report upsides from the crisis.

These findings have two key implications. First, more working from home could help us improve our eating habits and reduce our stress levels. Second, people on low incomes may not see wider health benefits, such as reduced stress, from working from home without their income increasing. We cannot say whether working from home is good or bad for people on low incomes as their income overrides any effect working from home may have. Further research in this area as to whether working from home is good for low earners would be needed.

The positive relationship between improved eating habits and working from home is likely related to free time and cooking more. In recent Demos research with the Foods Standards Agency, we found that eating habits and diets during the pandemic have correlated with people's employment status and working from home. Indeed, people who've had more free time and cooked more have been particularly likely to see improvements in their eating habits.[21] If more homeworking allows people to save time on the commute and spend more time cooking, it could go a long way to supporting healthier lifestyles among the working population.

However, even for those that can, remote working is not for everyone. As our research shows, low income groups are less likely to see improvements in wellbeing because of their income.[22] In addition,

a significant number of those always working from home have seen things get worse: over a quarter (27%) have felt "much more" isolated, nearly a quarter (22%) reported their eating habits get "much worse", a fifth (20%) reported their exercise habits got much worse, and 15% reported their mental health get much worse (see Figure 3).

For some, this might be directly related to the types of work environments they have at home - something that is likely to be related to their gender, age or household income. As one respondent explained during the first national lockdown, factors such as whether they have somewhere quiet place to work or a comfortable seat were really important in determining their wellbeing:

> *"For me it [working from home] means I now sit on the sofa 16 hours a day as there is nowhere else in a small flat to work. It is uncomfortable, not like sitting at a desk and my hands and arms sometimes hurt. I miss the office banter, working from home when you live on your own and in lockdown is very isolating. It is all email and not much conversation, or if it is - it's a meeting that is much more painful to do over zoom or skype or whatever."*
>
> Woman, 60s, London

Homeworking environments have not necessarily been safe and this will need to be addressed going forward. There have, for example, been concerns about whether people's homes meet the same health and safety standards as office space. A survey conducted by the Institute of Employment Studies on homeworker wellbeing during the first two weeks of lockdown suggested a significant increase in musculoskeletal complaints; the survey reported more than half of respondents had new aches and pains in the neck (58%), shoulder (56%) and back (55%) since working from home.[23] The survey was conducted early in the first lockdown - before employees had necessarily had a chance to acquire office equipment - but nonetheless demonstrates the immediate impact of a lack of provision of office equipment. Further, it seems that health and safety advice has not been provided for employees. Research commissioned by Bullitt Group suggests that 81% of those who have been asked to work from home have not been given any health and safety advice.[24]

20   Such as spending habits, eating habits etc. In: Atay, A. Carr, H. Lasko-Skinner, R. Mackenzie, P. What's Next: Priorities for Britain. Demos. 2020. Available at: https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/What-Next-Priorities-for-Britain.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]
21   Lasko-Skinner, R. and Sweetland, J. Food in a Pandemic. 2021.
22   Lockey, A. Workshift Commission: Defining a new model of work after coronavirus. Demos. 2020. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3YMAn_aoyE [Accessed: 01/04/21]
23   Bevan, S., Mason, B., Bajorek, Z. IES Working at Home Wellbeing Survey. IES. 2020. Available at: https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/ies-working-home-wellbeing-survey [Accessed: 01/04/21]
24   Scully, E. Thermal images show the dangers of working from home as 81% of Britons not in the office say they've not been given any safety advice. The Daily Mail. 2020. Available at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8948921/Coronavirus-lockdown-UK-Thermal-images-dangers-working-home.html [Accessed: 01/04/21]

There are also fears that increased homeworking could increase working hours. Before the pandemic, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) warned that working from home without clear working hours or time to 'go home' risks employees working longer hours.[25] Data from the pandemic bears this out, although there is substantial variation: according to the ONS, one third of remote workers in April worked longer hours than usual and one third worked shorter hours than usual.[26]

In addition to longer hours, there are also risks of greater surveillance of employees and the impacts it may have on mental health. New forms of worker surveillance and employee monitoring have evolved over the past decades, with new technologies such as 'presence control' that can monitor presence remotely and 'content monitoring' that can analyse employee communications.[27] Algorithms can be applied to the workplace to exert further surveillance and control over employees, which may constantly record and rate employees' performance.[28]

Pre-pandemic, the "datafication of the workplace" was on the rise - but the risk is that with such a fast shift towards remote working we will see additional surveillance without employee consent.[29] Anecdotal evidence collected by journalists suggests that trend is already in progress; for example some employees have had to download software that enables managers to see their screen whenever they want. A survey commissioned by Skillcast found one in five (20%) of employers were using or intending to use new software to monitor employees who are working from home.[30]

Overall, our data suggests that remote working has been good for employee wellbeing - with working from home being linked with improved eating habits and reduced stress levels. The relationship between our working lives, food environments and eating habits have never been so stark and given the current focus on tackling obesity, this shift in

eating behaviours must not go unnoticed. In the immediate term, it is important that those willing to preserve their eating habits are able to via continued home or remote working. At the same time, there are also clear risks to employees from increased remote working without protection. Namely, greater surveillance and working in places without health and safety standards that must also be addressed if remote working is to continue. A failure to do so would likely result in poor outcomes for vulnerable employees.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Jobs that can be done remotely tend to be those that require higher qualifications or experience. These jobs are therefore already afforded a degree of pay privilege relative to the rest of the labour market.[31] However, for some, remote working may be the only option they have. For the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) - that amounts to a population of 2.2 million and some 600,000 in the labour force - the ability to work from home will be a priority. According to the ONS, more than 40% of this group who plan to continue to work from home are not at all comfortable with working outside the house altogether.[32] For others, such as those with disabilities or caring responsibilities, remote working can be the difference between an income or not.[33]

In addition, some are physically dislocated from opportunities because of their location. There are people living in specific areas in the UK that could, with effective policy intervention, gain from remote working. The Social Mobility Commission found a 'postcode lottery' of social mobility across England driven by a lack of labour market opportunities.[34] The research highlighted a list of cold spots with few managerial and professional jobs - where those who with a good education still experience poor outcomes in the labour market. For this group, additional opportunities from remote working could

25   Birmingham Business School Blog. Remote work and worker well-being during the pandemic. University of Birmingham. 2020. Available at: https://blog.bham.ac.uk/business-school/2020/11/02/remote-work-and-worker-well-being-during-the-pandemic/ [Accessed: 01/04/21]
26   ONS. Coronavirus and homeworking in the UK: April 2020. 2020. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/coronavirusandhomeworkingintheuk/april2020 [Accessed: 01/04/21]
27   Sánchez-Monedero, J. and Dencik, L. The Datafication of the Workplace. Cardiff University. 2019. Available at: https://datajusticeproject.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2019/05/Report-The-datafication-of-the-workplace.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]
28   Kellog, K.C. Valentine, M. A. Christin, A. Algorithms at Work The New Contested Terrain of Control. Academy of Management Annals. 2020. Available at: http://www.angelechristin.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Algorithms-at-Work_Annals.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]
29   Sánchez-Monedero, J. and Dencik, L. The Datafication of the Workplace. 2019.
30   Owen. One in five employers monitoring remote workers or planning to do so, poll finds. People Management. 2020. Available at: https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/news/articles/one-five-employers-monitoring-remote-workers-planning-do-so-poll-finds [Accessed: 01/04/21]
31   ONS. Productivity economic commentary. 2020.
32   ONS. Coronavirus and shielding of clinically extremely vulnerable people in England: 9 July to 16 July 2020. 2020. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronavirusandshieldingofclinicallyextremelyvulnerablepeopleinengland/9julyto16july2020 [Accessed: 01/04/21]
33   Benton, L. Working from home is not a privilege. Liberty Mind. 2020. Available at: https://libertymind.co.uk/working-from-home-is-not-a-privilege/ [Accessed: 01/04/21]
34   The Social Mobility Commission. The long shadow of deprivation: Differences in opportunities across England. 2020. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923623/SMC_Long_shadow_of_deprivation_MAIN_REPORT_Accessible.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]

go a long way to help them enter the labour market. However, it is also speculation that increased remote working could push displacement even further, as companies - subject to new tax legislation - offshore their workforce to push down wage bills.[35]

Data suggests working families particularly value the flexibility of working from home and would support more working from home in the future.[36] This is consistent with almost two decades of Demos research which has highlighted the importance of flexibility for working families and groups that have traditionally been excluded from the labour market.[37] However, we also found that working from home for those with caring responsibilities, particularly for children who were not at school, has been very difficult during lockdown.[38] It is therefore a risk that forced home working may have a negative effect on gender equality, with women being more likely to have to juggle work associated with the home while remote working.[39]

In addition to working mothers, people without access to the right space and equipment have also struggled. According to research by Work After Lockdown, people with desk space, technology and privacy have been most productive during the pandemic - suggesting that those who do not have access to such resources may be at risk of under-performance and a lack of progression.[40] This suggests that homeworking might benefit some groups more than others. As a result, some have argued that more hybrid working must come with clear responsibility for home-working space, including the physical provision of chairs, technology and financial support for broadband and domestic heating.[41]

At a wider level, some have also predicted increased polarisation from increasingly siloed workforces that do not interact with each other.[42] This is consistent with our data that shows those support for remote working falls unevenly across different demographic groups. Younger people (aged 18-24, 37%); Black British people (45%) and those earning more than £50,000 per annum (39%) were more likely than

average (27%) to want to work from home "always" or "usually" in the future. Additionally, those on higher incomes were twice as likely (39%) to want to work from home as those earning up to £20,000 (20%), which may reflect more negative experiences of remote working for low earners or the fact that they are less likely to work remotely.

Interestingly, those aged 18-24 were more likely than the average to want to work from home after the pandemic, suggesting that they may stand to gain from a transition to a remote working labour market (see Figure 4). However, many predict a lack of in-person training and pastoral care in the context of a geographically fractured workforce. In this context, it is likely that managers will have a difficult job in ensuring pastoral and training support can be delivered online for those who want to work remotely.[43]

FIGURE 4

HOW MUCH OFTEN, IF AT ALL, WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK FROM HOME AFTER THE PANDEMIC?
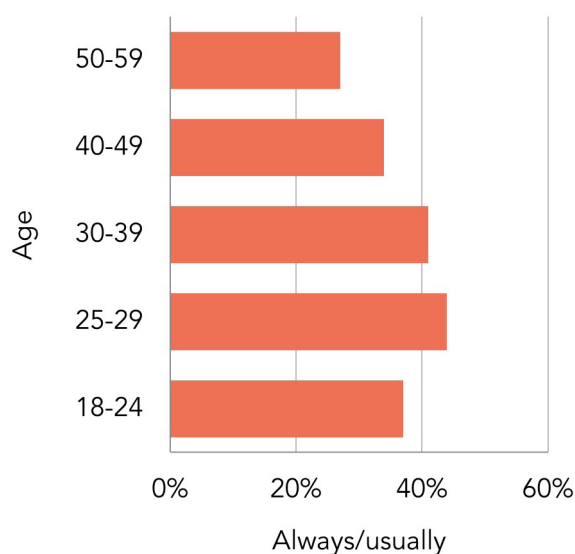
Source: Demos polling, September 2020.

35   Demos. The Workshift Commission Roundtable. 24th December 2020.
36   Working Families. Covid-19 and flexible working: the perspective from working parents and carers. 2020. Available at: https://workingfamilies.org.uk/publications/Covid-19-and-flexible-working/ [Accessed: 01/04/21]
37   Green, H. and Parker, S. The Other Glass Ceiling, Demos. 2006. Available at: https://lx.iriss.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/The%20other%20glass.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]; Leighton, D and Gregory, T. Reinventing the Workplace. Demos. 2011. Available at: https://demosuk.wpengine.com/files/Reinventing_the_Workplace_-_web.pdf?1310724451 [Accessed: 01/01/21]
38   For more detail: Demos. Britain Under Lockdown. 2020. pp.11-18. Available at: https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Britain-under-Lockdown.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]
39   House of Lords Covid-19 Select Committee. Beyond Digital: Planning for a Hybrid World. 2021.
40   Parry, J., Young, Z., Bevan, S., Veliziotis, M., Baruch, Y., Beigi, M., Bajorek, Z., Salter, E. and Tochia,C. Working from Home under Covid-19 lockdown: Transitions and tensions, Work after Lockdown. 2021. Available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f5654b537cea057c500f59e/t/60143f05a2117e3eec3c3243/1611939604505/Wal+Bulletin+1.pdf [Accessed: 26/04/2021]
41   House of Lords Covid-19 Select Committee. Beyond Digital: Planning for a Hybrid World. 2021.
42   Farley, H. and Dahlgreen, W. Working from home could lead to more prejudice, report warns. BBC. 2020. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-54937713 [Accessed: 01/04/21]
43   CIPD. Coronavirus (Covid-19): Flexible working during the pandemic and beyond. 2020. Available at: https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/during-Covid-19-and-beyond [Accessed: 01/04/21]

It may also be that older workers - particularly those over 60 - who on average have less digital skills, may be particularly at risk of being overlooked if not given the choice to continue working from the office in the future.[44]

Ethnic minority groups were also more likely to want to work from home in the future. Four in 10 (45%) Black British people wanted to work from home "always" or "usually'' as did a similar proportion (41%) of Asian British people in comparison with 1 in 4 (25%) of White people. There are likely many reasons for this difference, but it could be related to failures of workplace culture pre-pandemic. Indeed, while many have been worried about losing workplace culture, it seems that for some groups workplace culture has failed to be inclusive and new virtual socialising during lockdowns - that have, for example, revolved less around alcohol - have been more inclusive.[45] In a recent paper for Demos, Julia Hobsbawm argued that the pandemic was an important opportunity to reform the workplace to better support employee health.[46]

Remote working solves many long-term problems for those who have been traditionally excluded from the labour market, either because of health reasons, geographic location or caring duties. However, this does not mean it does not come with risks, in particular for those who do not have access to a place to work where they can be productive, either because of their income or gender, who may see their performance drop as a result. It is as much for the risks as it is the benefits that we need to make sure we have a strategy in place, to ensure a transition towards more hybrid or remote working is valuable to society.

44   Davidson, Z. Digital Inclusion Evidence Review 2018. Age UK. 2018. Available at: https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/age_uk_digital_inclusion_evidence_review_2018.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]
45   Owusu-Sem, D. The Workshift Commission: Defining a new model of work after coronavirus. Demos. 2020. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3YMAn_aoyE [Accessed: 01/04/21]
46   Hobsbawm, J. The Nowhere Office. Demos. 2021. Available at: https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Nowhere-Office.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]

PUBLIC PREFERENCES TOWARDS FUTURE REMOTE WORKING

A long-term move towards more remote working seems popular among employers, in particular a hybrid model where employees work from home and from the office part time. Many businesses in the City of London have already announced that they will be changing their working patterns.[47] A survey by PwC of employers worldwide suggests 80% of companies surveyed are adopting remote work as the new norm.[48] Similarly, a CBI survey of its members found that over quarter 28% of its members expected to work entirely or mostly in the office in the future and a much larger proportion are in favour of splitting working evenly between the home and the office (47%).[49] Yet, some employers have rejected the idea of long-term remote working, indicating not all employees will be able to continue remote working.[50]

We found significant support among employees for increased remote working. In a poll in August, we found that over a quarter (27%) of people wanted to work from home always or usually in the future. In a more recent poll (November 2020), we found that the majority (51%) of those who can work from home want to do so more often than they did before the pandemic; (and other studies, including from YouGov, have shown even higher proportions).[51] Moreover, when looking purely at those who have been restricted to work from home, Demos found 79% wanted to continue doing so, at least part (57%), if not all (22%) of the time.[52]

This is not surprising considering the correlation between positive experiences of the pandemic and working from home. Those who want to work from home "always" in the future have seen some of the biggest improvements in areas such as eating habits and reduced stress levels during the pandemic. These improvements in health and habits should be protected and promoted, and individual employees given the opportunity to sustain the gains made from these new ways of working.

At a population level, the ability to work from home is now high up the list of people's priorities for work (see Figure 5). A quarter (25%) of the public rank the ability to work from home first, compared with a similar proportion (29%) who rank pay first; while only 8% of people rank flexible hours first and only 4% rank workplace culture first.

One reason for the popularity of remote working could be the increased freedom over where you live. Our data from November indicates there is appetite among city dwellers to move out to more remote locations, if possible in their jobs. We found that if people could work anywhere, 70% would choose to live outside of a city - either in a large town (17%), small town (26%) or a village (26%).[53]

47   Thomas, D. Employers aim for hybrid working after Covid-19 pandemic. Financial Times. 2021. Available at: https://www.ft.com/content/d2ad4ae3-6b40-4051-a6fe-6f8a75924e30 [Accessed: 01/04/21]

48   PwC. PwC Survey: 80% of companies anticipate remote work as the new norm on the labour market. 2020. Available at: https://www.pwc.ro/en/press-room/press-release-2020/pwc-survey--80--of-companies-anticipate-remote-work-as-the-new-n.html. [Accessed: 01/04/21]

49   CBI. No Turning Back. 2020. Available at: https://www.cbi.org.uk/media/5855/no-turning-back.pdf [Accessed: 01/04/21]

50   BBC News. Goldman Sachs: Bank boss rejects work from home as the 'new normal'. 2021. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-56192048 [Accessed: 26/04/21]; Yeung, P. The bosses who want us back in the office. BBC Worklife. 2021. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20210323-the-bosses-who-want-us-back-in-the-office [Accessed: 26/04/21]

51   Smith, M. Most workers want to work from home after Covid-19. YouGov. 2020. Available at: https://yougov.co.uk/topics/economy/articles-reports/2020/09/22/most-workers-want-work-home-after-Covid-19 [Accessed: 01/04/21]
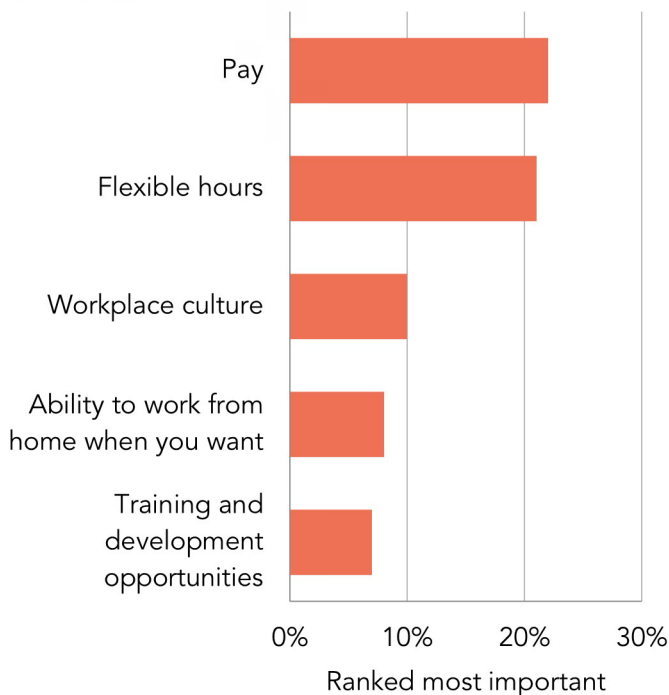
52   Ussher, K., Rotik, M. and Jeyabraba, M. Post-Pandemic Places. 2021.

53   Demos nationally representative poll. November 2020.

FIGURE 5

THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES
IN A JOB FOR THE POPULATION
AVERAGE

Source: Demos polling, November 2020.

In addition to shifts in our economic geography, we could see changes in our political geography. A Demos poll in August found that people who voted for the Labour Party were more likely to want to work from home more in the future - suggesting that the Labour voters who live in cities could be more inclined to long-term remote working.

Green voters (69%) and Labour voters (54%) were the most likely to want to work from home in the future. If in the future this leads to left wing voters migrating out of urban centres this could have huge effects on the political representation across rural and urban constituencies as well as the political and cultural identity of places.

THE REMOTE WORKING TRADE-OFFS

We used Polis to explore the trade-offs between working from home in more detail and how people's attitudes interact and hang together. In short, Polis builds a picture of how different attitudes fit together from the statements respondents disagree or agree with (see the Appendix for more detail).

We found two distinct groups: Remote Working Enthusiasts, who were enthusiastic about remote working and willing to make sacrifices to see it happen; and Remote Working Moderates, that were conflicted over the future but overall in favour of a shift.[54]

As Figure 6 demonstrates, Remote Working Enthusiasts prioritised working from home over many other important job aspects, including money, while Remote Working Moderates prioritised other job aspects such as workplace culture.

While we cannot say how representative these groups are of the overall population or whether one group is larger than the other, we can use Polis to better understand how attitudes to the future of remote working sit together. We found that irrespective of whether people personally like remote working or think it is an important aspect of working life, there is consensus that remote working should be an opportunity to make improvements to current working practices. In particular, for employers using remote working as a way to widen the talent pool or to re-skill in light of increased remote working opportunities.

We can also highlight consensus support for boosting employee protections, irrespective or personal desire to work remotely, such as updating Health and Safety Executive guidance in line with increased homeworking and the right to an office space or the right to work from home. There was also consensus that businesses should play a role in footing the additional costs such as heating and broadband for employees as a result of increased homeworking.

54   Please note that because the respondents are not nationally representative we do not make any assumptions about the size of the groups. The polis survey was in the field

FIGURE 6
POLIS REMOTE WORKING

**REMOTE WORKING
ENTHUSIASTS**

**REMOTE WORKING
MODERATES**

Being able to work from home is more important than the salary

Working from home is more important than workplace culture or other employees wellbeing

The government should encourage all employees to work from home if they can (after the pandemic)

Strong support the right to work from home

Oppose the government encouraging all employees to go back to the office (after the pandemic)

Working from home should be an opportunity for social mobility

Employers should foot the additional costs of employees working from home

Employers should embrace multiple forms of flexibility

Working from home will create social divsion between those that can and those who can't

The government should not encourage employees to work from home if they can (after the pandemic)

Being able to work from home is not more important than workplace culture

Being able to work from home is not more important than working hours

Source: Demos polling, November 2020.

TOWARDS A GOVERNMENT REMOTE WORKING STRATEGY:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In some form or another, remote working is destined to stay. As the academic Matthew Clancy concludes, with or without legal change, remote working is likely to increase for four reasons: it can boost worker productivity; it is now easier to conduct over significant geographic distances; it can reduce staff costs; and the benefits of people being physically close is reducing in many areas of the economy.[55]

Not only is remote working likely to stay, but the findings in this paper demonstrate that it should. The value of a shift in working patterns that improves eating habits and reduces stress are vast. Stress costs employers and productivity a significant amount - the HSE reported 17.9 million working days are lost due to work-related stress - notwithstanding the personal impacts on employees.[56] Similarly, the economic costs of obesity are significant; the last estimation in 2002 of the loss of earnings alone from obesity have been estimated at £1.3–1.45 billion per year.[57] There is also significant evidence of indirect economic costs of obesity from productivity loss, not to mention the potential savings for the NHS and care system from improved public health.[58] Given this, it is crucial that the shifts in working patterns for home workers during the pandemic are built on in a way that ensures these improvements continue long-term.

The clear value remote working presents for people, employers, the economy and public health, however, does not mean there are no challenges ahead from increased remote working. Working from home is not possible in every job, and those that can work remotely do not necessarily want to. Indeed, with more flexibility will inevitably come more risks and responsibilities for employees, from ensuring that they have a work space that they can be productive in to further surveillance on their work while at home. The most vulnerable employees - such as those who earn less - may find themselves struggling to afford a good place to work or constantly monitored while at home with potentially acute impacts on their productivity, progression and wellbeing.

To both maximise the benefits and minimize the risks highlighted in this paper from increased remote working, we need a clear strategy. A strategy that first and foremost supports and encourages employers and employees to make the long-term changes necessary to see the benefits from remote working or hybrid models. In addition, we need a strategy to ensure minimum standards for remote working are in place to prevent employees shouldering the additional costs of creating and maintaining workspaces.

55   Clancy, M. The Case for Remote Working. Iowa State University. 2020. Available at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1101&context=econ_workingpapers [Accessed: 01/04/21]
56   Hobsbawm, J. The Nowhere Office. 2021.
57   House of Commons Health Committee. Obesity, Third Report of Session 2003-04. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmhealth/23/23.pdf#page=131 [Accessed: 27/04/2021]
58   Goettler, A., Grosse, A., and Sonntag, D. Productivity loss due to overweight and obesity: a systematic review of indirect costs. BMJ Open, 2016. Available at https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/10/e014632 [Accessed: 27/04/2021]

To these ends, we recommend that the government establish a remote working strategy that considers how it can promote flexibility in the labour market, protect employees from unfair remote working conditions and ensure the wider benefits of flexible working are capitalised on by integrating flexible working with other government agendas, such as levelling up and tackling obesity.

PROMOTING REMOTE WORKING IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Given the backdrop of wellbeing and dietary benefits to gain from continued remote working - and the economic benefits outlined in previous Demos research of increased remote working outside of city centres - the argument for promoting flexible working in the labour market has never been greater.[59] We now know that people can be productive at home while also experiencing wider health benefits. On this basis, it is important that the government moves forward with boosting the rights of employees who may not be able to vote on their feet and leave jobs that do not offer the right form of working.

In the 2019 Queen's Speech, the government committed to update the legislation to boost flexible working by requiring employers to publish their flexible working policies.[60] Since then, the House of Lords Select Committee on Covid-19 published a report recommending, in addition to a new hybrid strategy, the government "consult on strengthening the current legislative framework for employment rights, to ensure it is suitable for the digital age."[61] We endorse this recommendation, and suggest it move faster to ensure that all employees who have experienced notable benefits in their wellbeing are able to continue to, unless there is good reason from their employers not to. We therefore endorse previous Demos recommendations that.[62]

Recommendation 1: The Government should take urgent action to fulfil its stated intention of making all jobs flexible by default, with location flexibility explicitly included. This would shift the legal balance in favour of remote working, with the burden of proof lying on employers to demonstrate why a specified location is required in their particular circumstances, which can then be challenged at a tribunal.

PROTECTING TWO-SIDED FLEXIBILITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET

There is also a need for further protection to ensure that new forms of remote working do not become another form of 'one sided flexibility'. This is where employers financially benefit from additional flexibility - such as saving on the overheads of office space - at the expense of workers who must live with additional surveillance or pay for their own workspace. As the Taylor review highlighted, more flexibility in the labour market - while a good thing - is likely to come with the transfer of such risks to workers. In the case of remote working for employees this would primarily be to ensure they have a safe workplace that they can be healthy and productive in.[63] This is particularly important considering this research has highlighted that those from low income households have been more likely to experience poor outcomes during the pandemic. Low income groups therefore, in particular, should be protected from paying for and managing their workspace. In addition to low earners, the risk of home working without other options could be particularly high for women who have disproportionately borne the burden of home and child care during the pandemic.[64]

It is important that the responsibility for work space is made clear and fair. We therefore recommend that the government moves quickly to ensure protections exist to make sure the additional costs and accountability of working from home do not fall disproportionately on employees:

Recommendation 2: The Government should consult on and update employee rights to make sure employees are not financially accountable for home-working or remote-working spaces or at risk of unfair surveillance while at work. Employee rights may need to include the right to a workspace or home working allowances.

59   Ussher, K., Rotik, M. and Jeyabraba, M. Post-Pandemic Places. 2021.
60   Elizabeth II. The Queen's Speech 2019. Prime Minister's Office, 2019, p.44. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/853886/Queen_s_Speech_December_2019_-_background_briefing_notes.pdf [Accessed: 9 March 2021]
61   House of Lords Covid-19 Select Committee. Beyond Digital: Planning for a Hybrid World. 2021.
62   Ussher, K., Rotik, M. and Jeyabraba, M. Post-Pandemic Places. 2021.
63   Good Work: The Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices. Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. July 2017. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/627671/good-work-taylor-review-modern-working-practices-rg.pdf [accessed: 15/04/2021]
64   House of Lords Covid-19 Select Committee. Beyond Digital: Planning for a Hybrid World. 2021.

INTEGRATING REMOTE WORKING WITH WIDER GOVERNMENT AGENDAS

Beyond the immediate needs to support employees and employers find a fair flexible working model, there are also wider benefits from remote working for levelling up and public health.

During the pandemic, we've seen that working from home has a positive relationship with imrpoved eating habits and stress levels, suggesting long-term more remote working could improve public health - with the double dividend of reducing the cost of obesity and stress-related poor health while potentially boosting productivity.[65]

Work and health have perhaps never been so clearly linked - and while the vital role schools play in supporting children's nutrition has become clear, the potential role of employers seems untapped. We therefore call on the government to better integrate health and work to shift diet and lifestyle changes. Part One of the Obesity Strategy indicated the start of a national conversation with employers about how to support better health at work. We recommend these efforts be extended with clear outputs:

Recommendation 3: The second part of the Obesity Strategy should consider how standard working practices could be reformed to support healthier diets and reduce stress at work. This should include the creation of a Healthy Workplaces Playbook that provides detailed guidance and incentives for employers to create working conditions that best support health and wellbeing.

65   Bajorek, Z. and Bevan, S. Obesity and Work: Challenging stigma and discrimination. IES, May 2019. Available at: https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/526.pdf [Accessed: 15/05/2021].

APPENDIX 1
POLIS

Originally developed in the US, but first deployed in Taiwan, Polis enables us to take a new approach to building consensus. Polis is an interactive survey format which allows respondents to do more than just answer the questions: they can also submit questions for others to answer. It therefore enables us to crowdsource ideas directly from the public. Polis separates respondents to the survey into two groups, according to the answers they give - we called them Remote-Working Enthusiasts and Remote-Working Moderates. Crucially, however, it also empowers us to identify what - if any - statements or opinions bridge that divide.

This polis survey was open access and in the field in October 2020. We received 930 responses.

APPENDIX 2
ORDINAL LOGISTIC REGRESSION: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF WORKING FROM HOME ON EATING HABITS AND STRESS

Using a nationally representative survey of 9698 UK adults[66], our analysis of the data found that working from home has been positively related to better eating habits and feeling less stressed during the pandemic.

To do this, we used the independent variable, *wfh*, which indicates whether a respondent was required to work from home during the pandemic. We asked people how frequently they worked at home during the pandemic to which they could answer: "Always", "Usually", "Sometimes", "Rarely" and "Never". 1935 respondents answered "Always", 1047 answered "Usually", 907 "Sometimes", 339 "Rarely", and 2571 answered "Never". We re-coded this to be an ordinal variable, coded "1" if the respondent had answered "Never", "Rarely", "2" if they had answered "Sometimes", and "3" if they had answered "Always" or "Usually". As we are only interested in working people, all others who responded saying they were not employed, were removed from this sample. The variable is structured as follows:

Original		Re-coded
Mostly worked from Home	"Always" & "Usually"	"3"
Sometimes worked from Home	"Sometimes"	"2"
Rarely worked from Home	"Rarely" & "Never"	"1"

The two dependent variables used in this empirical study are *eatinghabits* and *stresslevels*. *Eatinghabits* indicates how people's eating habits had changed during the pandemic, ranking from "much worse" to "much better". These were then recoded to the following:

Original	Re-coded
"Much Worse" & "A Little Worse"	Worse
"No Change"	No change
"A Little Better" & "A Lot Better"	Better

Similarly, *stresslevels* indicating how people's stress levels had changed during the course of the pandemic, constructed exactly as the *eatinghabits* variable and then recoded the same as above.

We built an ordinal logit model where *wfh* is the independent variable and *eatinghabits* is the dependent variable. We chose this model due to the ordinal nature of the dependent variable. We ran the regression controlling for household income (*Income*) - as it provided more stratification than social grade-, Household Size (*Family*) and Educational attainment (*education1*).[67] Household Size is a dichotomous variable whereby "1" indicates the respondent has children under the age of 18 and "0" indicates they do not.

Below is the output.

66   Demos polling, September 2020
67   Please note: You may find that the income bracket £20,000 to £35,000 is missing from the tables below. This is because this specific income variable drops out of the models due to multicollinearity.

TABLE 1

IMPACT OF WFH ON EATING HABITS

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
wfh	0.20***	0.20***	0.23***	0.21***	0.19***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
$RN Income 35,000 - 50,000$	−0.08	−0.10	−0.07	−0.06	−0.03
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
$RN Income More than 50,000$	−0.11	−0.12	−0.07	−0.04	0.02
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
$RN Income Up to 20,000$	−0.20**	−0.18**	−0.21**	−0.21**	−0.22***
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
family		0.23***	0.23***	0.21***	0.23***
		(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
education1Yes			−0.26***	−0.28***	−0.29***
			(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
$RN Ethnicity Black/Black British$				0.11	0.07
				(0.15)	(0.15)
$RN Ethnicity Mixed$				−0.06	−0.09
				(0.17)	(0.17)
$RN Ethnicity Other$				−0.43	−0.40
				(0.24)	(0.24)
$RN Ethnicity White$				−0.42***	−0.34***
				(0.09)	(0.09)
$RN age1 30 - 39$					−0.36***
					(0.08)
$RN age1 40 - 49$					−0.50***
					(0.08)
$RN age1 50 - 59$					−0.54***
					(0.08)
$RN age1 60+$					−0.32***
					(0.08)
AIC	13247.66	13228.51	13204.33	13172.28	13121.39
BIC	13288.44	13276.08	13258.71	13253.84	13230.14
Log Likelihood	-6617.83	-6607.25	-6594.17	-6574.14	-6544.70
Deviance	13235.66	13214.51	13188.33	13148.28	13089.39
Num. obs.	6613	6613	6613	6613	6613

$^{***}p < 0.001, ^{**}p < 0.01, ^{*}p < 0.05$

We see the usual regression output coefficient table including the value of each coefficient, goodness of fit measures (AIC and BIC), and residual deviance. From Table 1, we can see that the effect working from home (*wfh*) has on eating habits is positive and statistically significant to the 0.001 level. When adding control variables in, we found that low income earners (up to £20,000) have a negative effect and that this is statistically significant to the 0.01 level (see Model 2). From Model 4, we can see that Ethnicity (White) and being aged 40-59 also have a statistically significant negative effect.

AIC is the information criteria - the lesser the better. This shows that model 4 is the best fit. Using model 4, we now calculate some essential metrics such as p-Value, confidence intervals and odds ratios.

An odds ratio of 1 suggests no association between the two variables, with an odds ratio greater than 1 suggesting a positive association and an odds ratio less than one suggesting a negative association.

Therefore we can see from Table 2, that there is a positive association between working from home and eating more healthily (OR 1.15; 95% CI 1.09-

TABLE 2

ODDS RATIOS AGAINST CONFIDENCE INTERVALS
(EATING HABITS AGAINST WFH)

	OR	2.5%	97.5%
wfh	1.2116018	1.1484993	1.2782603
RN$Income£35,000-£50,000	0.9663234	0.8526507	1.0950607
RN$IncomeMore than £50,000	1.0248371	0.8986121	1.1686595
RN$IncomeUp to £20,000	0.8038405	0.7057211	0.9153171
family	1.2575707	1.1297204	1.3998632
education1Yes	0.7516787	0.6791269	0.8317675
RN$EthnicityBlack/Black British	1.0767216	0.7967379	1.4542609
RN$EthnicityMixed	0.9176056	0.6598644	1.2740346
RN$EthnicityOther	0.6697231	0.4160865	1.0670597
RN$EthnicityWhite	0.7149984	0.5982941	0.8549295
RN$age130-39	0.6957349	0.5966597	0.8111422
RN$age140-49	0.6041299	0.5177202	0.704807
RN$age150-59	0.5822747	0.500505	0.6772881
RN$age160+	0.7239402	0.6145235	0.8526666

1.21; p<0.001) and - regardless of working from home status - a negative association between having income under £20,000 and eating more healthily (OR 0.83; 95% CI 0.73-0.94; p<0.01). We can also see that being aged between 40 and 59 has a negative association with eating more healthily (40-49 OR 0.83; 95% CI 0.71-0.97; p<0.05 and 50-59 OR 0.81; 95% CI 0.70-0.94; p<0.01).

When interpreting the figures, we use the regression of the independent variable to explain the change in the dependent variable. This tells you that for a one unit increase in the predictor (*wfh*), the response variable (eating habits) level is expected to change by its respective regression coefficient in the ordered log-odds scale. Table 2 tells us that a one unit increase in working from home, from 1 (Rarely) to 2 (Sometimes) or 2 (Sometimes) to 3 (Mostly), the odds of eating habits being "Better" as opposed to "No change" or "worse" applying combined are 1.17 times greater compared to those who did not work from

TABLE 3

IMPACT OF WFH ON STRESS LEVELS

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
wfh	0.17***	0.16***	0.16***	0.14***
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
$RN Income 35,000 - 50,000$		0.06	0.06	0.07
		(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
$RN Income More than 50,000$		−0.03	−0.03	0.01
		(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
$RN Income Up to 20,000$		−0.19**	−0.18**	−0.19**
		(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
family			0.08	0.07
			(0.05)	(0.05)
education1Yes				0.01
				(0.05)
$RN Ethnicity Black/Black British$				−0.00
				(0.15)
$RN Ethnicity Mixed$				−0.10
				(0.16)
$RN Ethnicity Other$				−0.05
				(0.23)
$RN Ethnicity White$				−0.25**
				(0.09)
$RN age 130 - 39$				−0.12
				(0.08)
$RN age 140 - 49$				−0.18*
				(0.08)
$RN age 150 - 59$				−0.21**
				(0.08)
$RN age 160+$				−0.10
				(0.08)
AIC	14349.82	14340.97	14340.01	14333.05
BIC	14370.23	14381.79	14387.63	14441.91
Log Likelihood	-7171.91	-7164.48	-7163.00	-7150.53
Deviance	14343.82	14328.97	14326.01	14301.05
Num. obs.	6660	6660	6660	6660

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$

home. In other words, people with better eating habits are 1.17 times more likely to have been working from home.

However, this doesn't apply to people earning up to £20,000. We found that you're more likely to eat badly if you're on a low income regardless of whether you worked from home.

We found similar results for the impact of working from home on stress levels.

Table 3 tells us that there is a statistically significant effect (to the 0.001 level) of working from home on stress levels. We also found that, again, there is a negative effect on those earning up to £20,000. Having a family (a household with children under the age of 18) proves to have a positive effect on people's stress levels. While high educational attainment results in a negative effect of working from home on stress levels. AIC indicates that Model 4 is the best fit.

Using model 4, we now calculate some essential metrics such as p-Value, CI and odds ratios.

Table 4 tells us that a one unit increase in working from home, from 1 (Rarely) to 2 (Sometimes), the odds of stress levels being "Better" as opposed to "No change" or "Worse" applying combined are 1.21 times greater compared to those who did not work from home. In other words, individuals who saw improvements in their stress levels are 1.21 times more likely to have been working from home.

However, this doesn't apply to people earning up to £20,000. We found that if you are in a low-income group, the odds of their stress levels improving are 0.8 times lower regardless of whether they worked from home. Low-income earners' stress levels were worse off. We found that having a family improves the odds of stress levels being "Better" - it is 1.26 times greater than those who do not have a family, regardless of whether they worked from home.

We can see from Table 4, that there is a positive association between working from home and improving stress levels (OR 1.21; 95% CI 1.15-1.28; p<0.001) and - regardless of working from home status - a negative association between having income under £20,000 and improving stress levels (OR 0.8; 95% CI 0.71-0.92; p<0.01).

TABLE 4
ODDS RATIOS AGAINST CONFIDENCE INTERVALS
(STRESS LEVELS AGAINST WFH)

	OR	2.5%	97.5%
wfh	1.1462762	1.0885154	1.2071645
RN$Income£35,000-£50,000	1.0741566	0.9510955	1.2131311
RN$IncomeMore than £50,000	1.0059936	0.885239	1.1432091
RN$IncomeUp to £20,000	0.8309774	0.7341073	0.9405373
family	1.0776946	0.9707451	1.1964472
education1Yes	1.0074348	0.9133083	1.1112389
RN$EthnicityBlack/Black British	0.9956908	0.7356697	1.347978
RN$EthnicityMixed	0.9078655	0.6572765	1.2542003
RN$EthnicityOther	0.9476169	0.6077683	1.4782829
RN$EthnicityWhite	0.7797789	0.6514904	0.9330841
RN$age130-39	0.8898777	0.7649361	1.0351722
RN$age140-49	0.83156	0.714671	0.9674987
RN$age150-59	0.811675	0.6999611	0.941142
RN$age160+	0.9065571	0.7735006	1.0624466

We also found that there is a positive association between having a family (a household with children under the age of 18) and improving stress levels (OR 1.26; 95% CI 1.13-1.40; p<0.001) regardless of whether they worked from home or not.

Overall, the empirical analysis shows that there is a statistically significant positive connection between working from home and eating more healthily, and between working from home and experiencing reduced levels of stress. Control variables, such as income and family shows that low earners experienced more adverse effects on their eating habits and stress levels regardless of whether they worked from home. Family, on the other hand, seems to have a positive association with stress levels.

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