

Employers can boost productivity by involving staff in return-to-office plans

- *One in five staff are uncertain about their employers' plans for the future of their workplace, putting productivity at risk*
- *Study reveals the seismic shift in working practices, with 75% of staff now working from home*
- *British businesses will need to provide employees with the right skills and training to succeed, whether they work in an office, virtually, or in a hybrid environment*

LONDON – 7 October 2021: Millions of British workers face uncertainty as a snapshot of the nation's work practices reveals that one in five employees are unsure whether they'll be expected to work remotely, onsite, or a mix of both in the future. Without having a clear decision from their employer, some employees are unsure about their organisations' return-to-office plans.

The research*, commissioned by the Project Management Institute (PMI), suggests that employers stand to benefit from engaging more closely with their staff on decisions regarding the future of their workplace, as UK workers clearly know their preferences. The research found that 35% of staff report getting more work done in the office; meanwhile, 36% achieve most when working remotely, and 29% say they are most productive with a hybrid work setup.

"As organisations navigate a new work ecosystem in the wake of COVID-19, an opportunity has emerged for employers to renew their focus on culture and leverage new technology, tools, and training to strengthen the capabilities of their teams. This includes an enhanced focus on what we call 'power skills' – people-centric capabilities like cultivating an innovative mindset, collaborative leadership, problem-solving acumen, and empathy," said Ashwini Bakshi, PMI's Managing Director of Europe & Sub-Saharan Africa. "This focus on continuous development and support is more important than ever, as our survey showed that one in five workers are still feeling uncertain about where they are expected to do their jobs in the future."

Mr Bakshi added: "It's not just where people do their work that's important, but how they work. Whether their employees are at home, in the office or some of both, organisations must compete to attract and retain talent by offering robust opportunities for professional development and embracing new ways of working."

The study demonstrates how the past 18 months have catalysed a revolution in the workplace:

- Employees are not prepared to return to the same working lives they had before the pandemic, with lengthy commutes and time spent in the office. Despite restrictions lifting, less than a third (31%) of people want to go back to the office full-time, while a slightly greater proportion (34%) would like a hybrid work setup. The greatest proportion (35%) want to work from home exclusively going forward.
- This is a significant shift from the situation before the pandemic, when 72% of staff spent all their time in the office, with only 13% working remotely, and 15% doing a mix of both.
- The report found that currently, 75% of Brits work from home all or some of the time – with the vast majority of those (55%) spending no time in the office at all.

The findings suggest employers must adapt to the new reality of dispersed teams; meanwhile, companies are advised to implement new agile ways of learning and working to optimise employees' performance, regardless of location. The research also suggests that organisations need to invest in technology and train teams in new ways of working to tackle challenges associated with hybrid workplace setups.

"Confusion among employees about the future of their workplaces can have a devastating impact on productivity, and the ability for teams to do their best work," said Mr Bakshi. "This is particularly important in today's business environment where work is increasingly project-based and projects are how we get things done, make change and deliver better business outcomes."

Notes to editors:

**Independent research conducted by market research and advisory company Savanta between August and September 2021 - sample size 500+ full and part-time workers aged over 18*

About Project Management Institute (PMI)

Project Management Institute (PMI) is the world's leading professional association for a growing global community of millions of project professionals and changemakers worldwide.

As the world's leading authority on project management, PMI empowers people to make ideas a reality. Through global advocacy, networking, collaboration, research, and education, PMI prepares organizations and individuals at every stage of their career journey to work smarter so they can drive success in a world of change.

Building on a proud legacy dating to 1969, PMI is a "for-purpose" organization working in nearly every country around the world to advance careers, strengthen organizational success, and enable changemakers with new skills and ways of working to maximize their impact. PMI offerings include globally recognized standards, certifications, online courses, thought leadership, tools, digital publications, and communities.

Visit us

at www.PMI.org, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/projectmanagementinstitute>, <https://www.facebook.com/PMInstitute>, and on Twitter [@PMInstitute](https://twitter.com/PMInstitute).