Homeworking during COVID-19

Lessons learnt to help plan for the future

cezanne

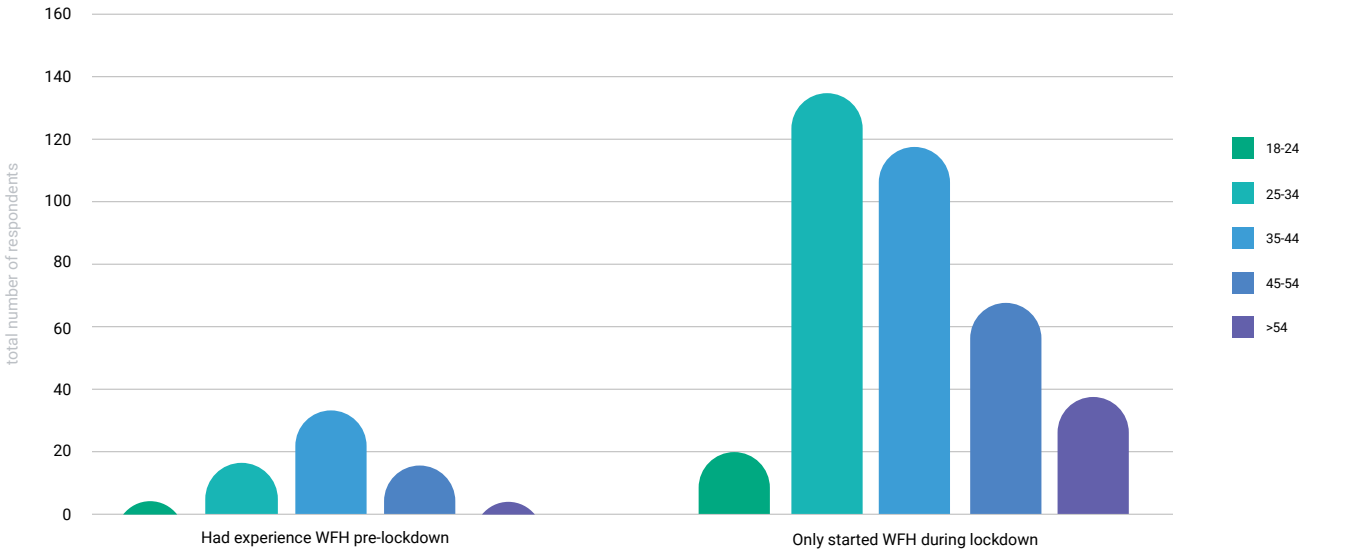
Interesting things we discovered

We wondered: how were the people who weren't used to full-time homeworking getting on, since COVID-19 forced them to embrace it? So, we asked 455 UK and Ireland employees in May about their experience working from home.

This report reveals our findings of what people enjoy and don't enjoy about working from home (WFH), what they miss about the office, their concerns, and their thoughts on remote working going forward.

- 56% of remote workers felt that WFH has had some level of negative impact on their mental health.
- 49% of managers are feeling more stressed in managing a remote team.
- 47% of older employees (>54) would like to return to the workplace as soon as possible.

Are you currently working from home?



Total respondents = 455

*Across all age groups, the majority of respondents only started working from home due to the lockdown, with only 12% having experienced homeworking from time-to-time beforehand.

The pros and cons of working from home

+ Benefits of home working:

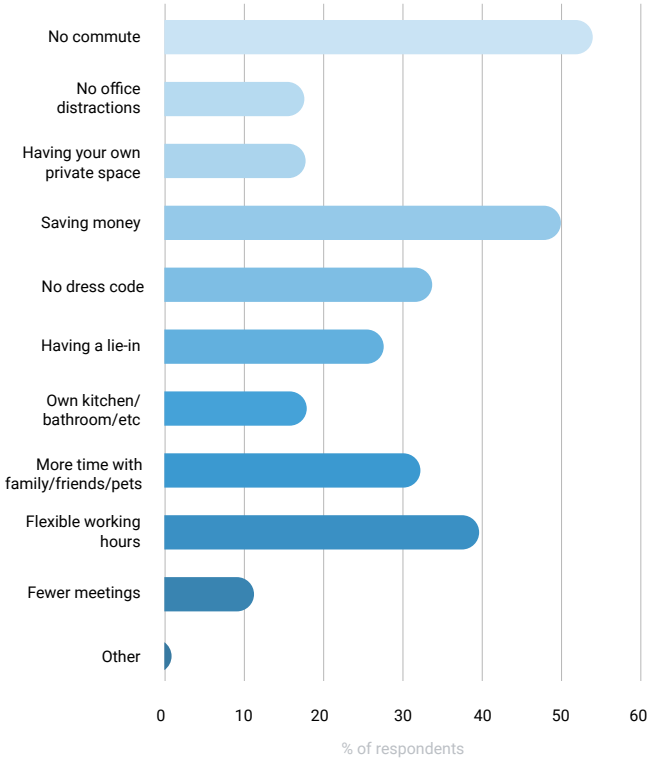
- No commute
- Saving money
- Flexible working hours

− Downsides of home working:

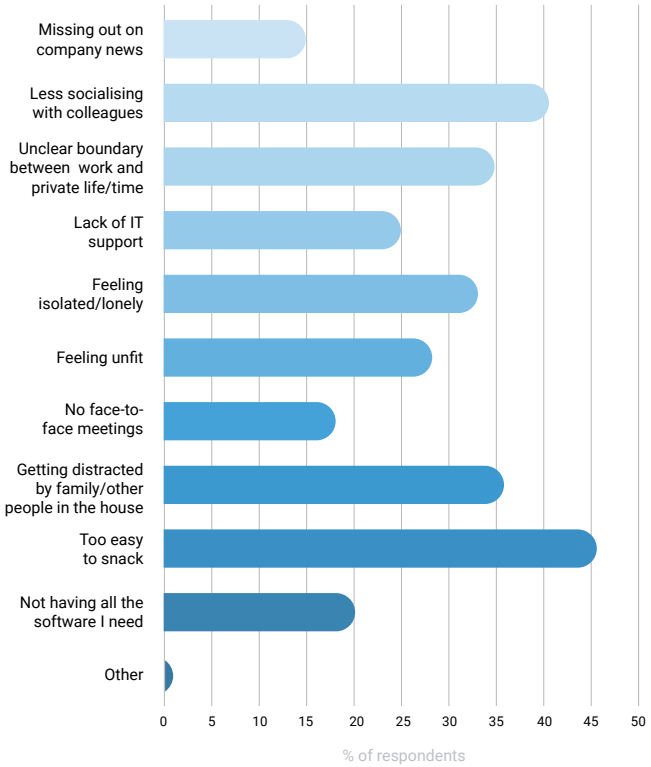
- Too easy to snack
- Less socialising with colleagues
- Getting distracted by family or other people in the house

Compared to the other age groups, older employees (>54 age group) disliked not being able to socialise with colleagues most

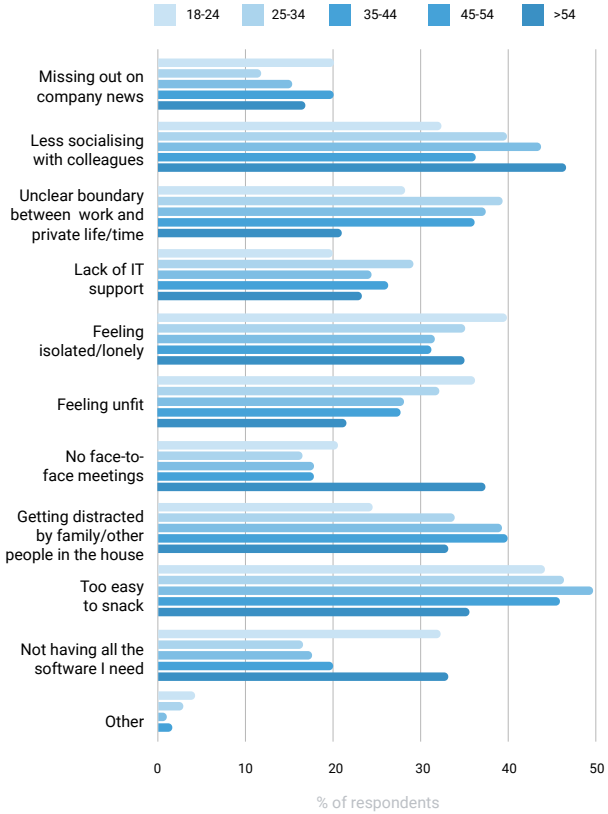
What do you enjoy the most about working from home?



What do you not enjoy about working from home?



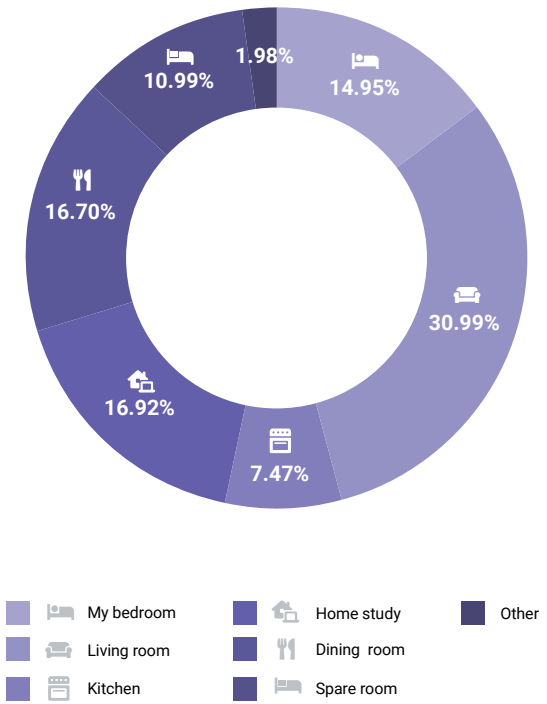
What do you not enjoy about working from home? (by age group)



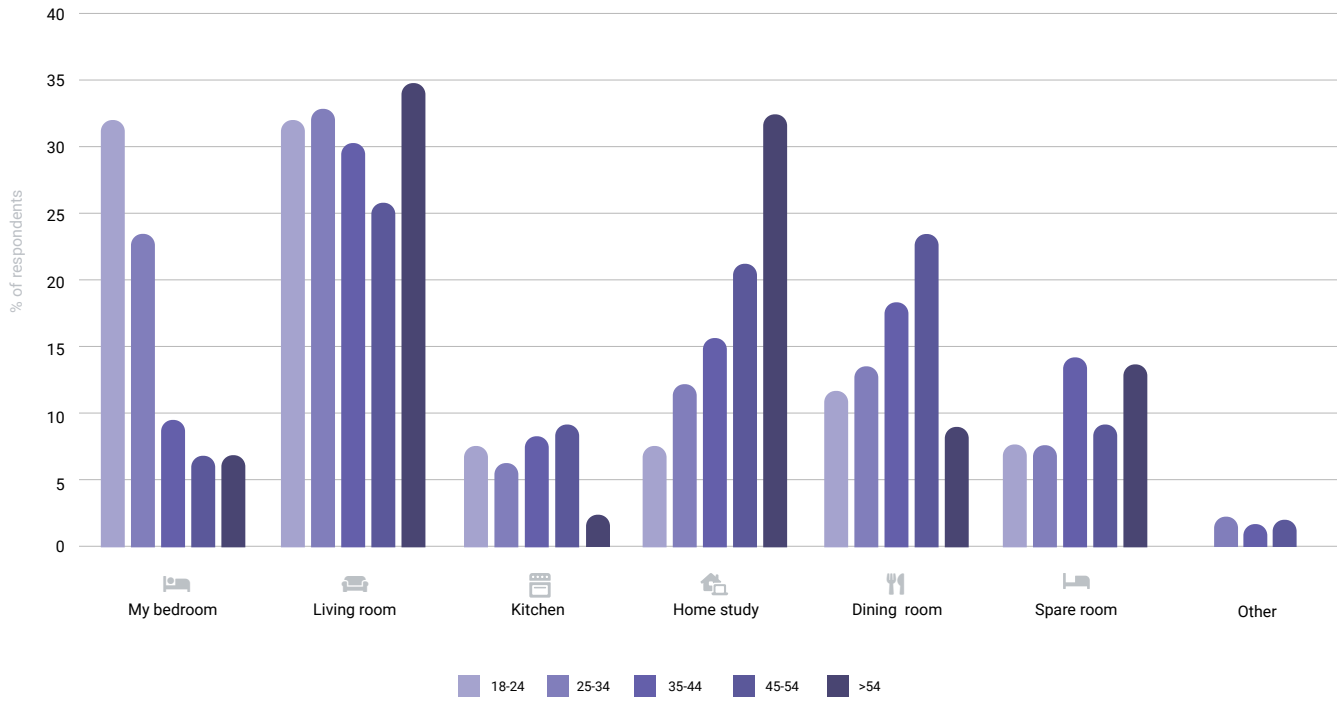
The **home office**

- The survey showed there was an attempt to create physical boundaries between rest and work.
- But, this was slightly difficult for the youngest age group, with the bedroom one of their top working-location choices.

Where **do you usually work at home?**



Where **do you usually work at home? (by age group)**



Daily **routine**

- Just under half of the respondents (44%) said they talk to a colleague daily.
- Less than 30% had online training or discussions about their performance and goals.

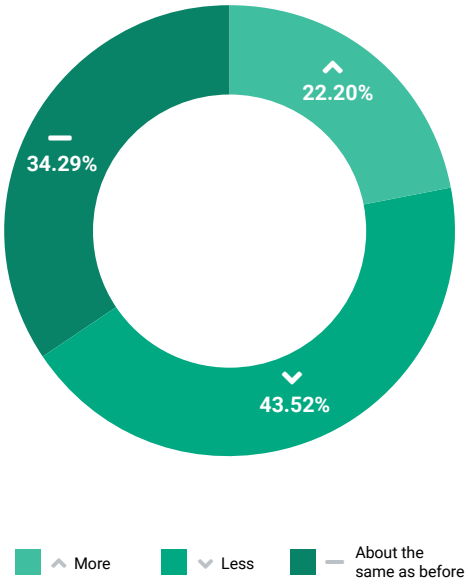
While working from home, have you...?

Communication with line managers

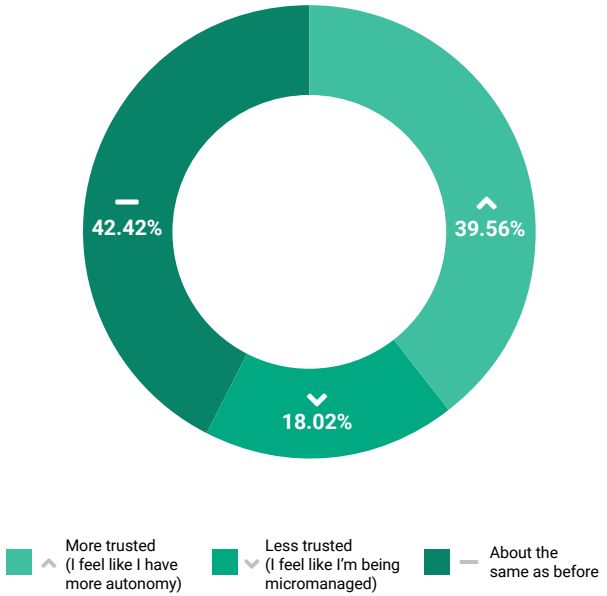
- Almost half of respondents had been communicating less with their managers.
- But, the majority of respondents felt an increased, if not the same, level of trust from their managers.
- Older employees didn't notice a significant change in the levels of communication and trust.

- For the 18% who felt less trusted and micromanaged:
  - More than half (55%) said WFH impacted their mental health a little.
  - 46% also said they'd be happy to go back to work tomorrow when asked about returning to the office.

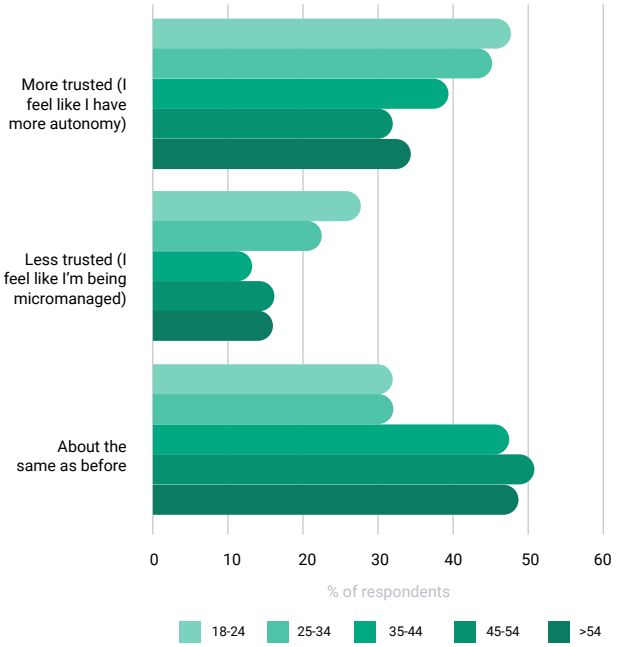
Do you communicate with your manager more/less often than before?



How does the current level of communication with your manager make you feel?



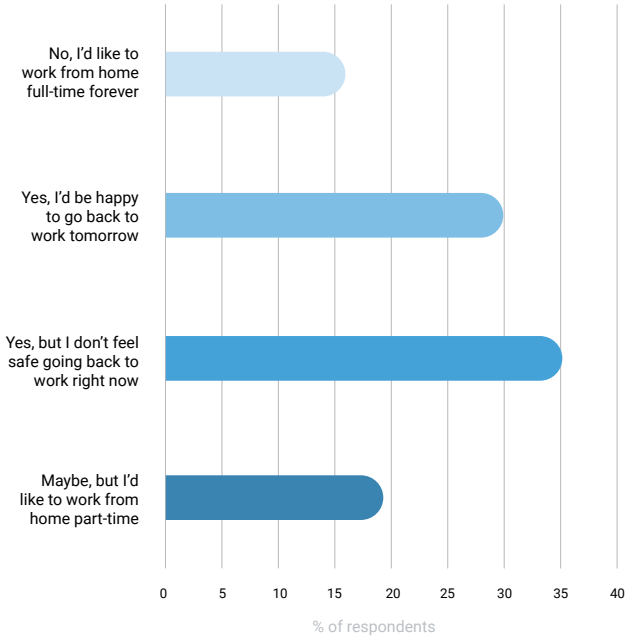
How does the current level of communication with your manager make you feel? (by age group)



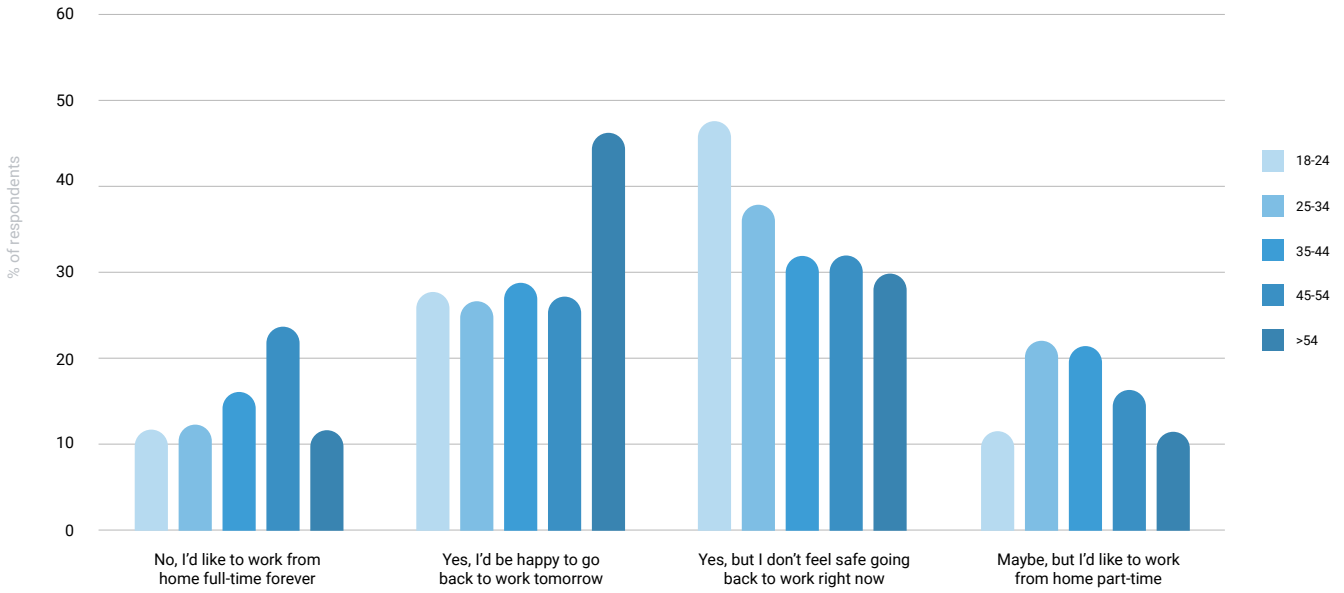
Returning to the workplace

- At the time this survey was taken (when lockdown was in place), over half wanted to go back to work in the office.
- But 35% didn't feel safe going back at that point.
- Older employees were more likely to say they were ready to go back to the office straightaway.

Are you looking forward to returning to work in the office/workplace?



Are you looking forward to returning to work in the office/workplace? (by age group)



Missing the office?

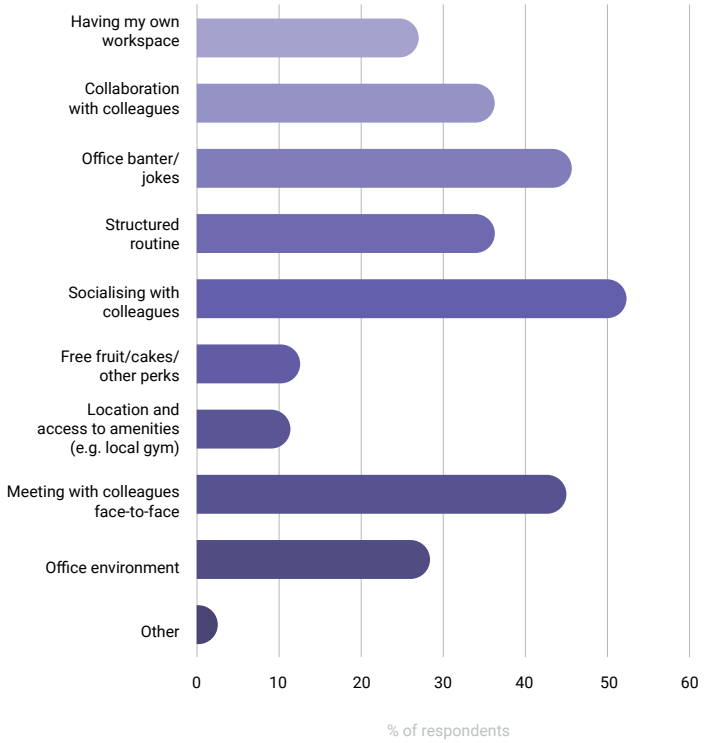
What people missed most:

- Socialising with colleagues
- Office jokes/banter
- Meeting with colleagues face-to-face (especially among the older employees)

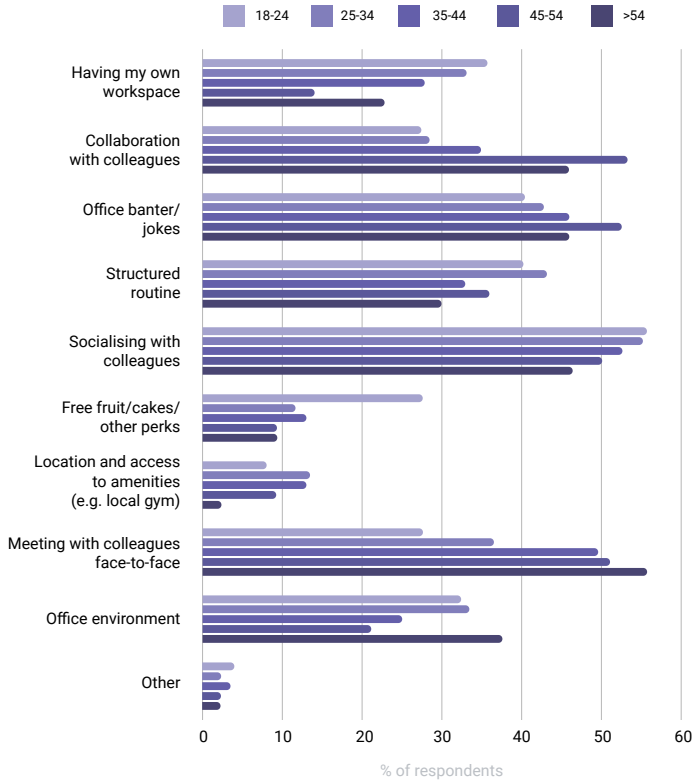
What they didn't miss:

- Daily commute
- Office politics
- Dress code

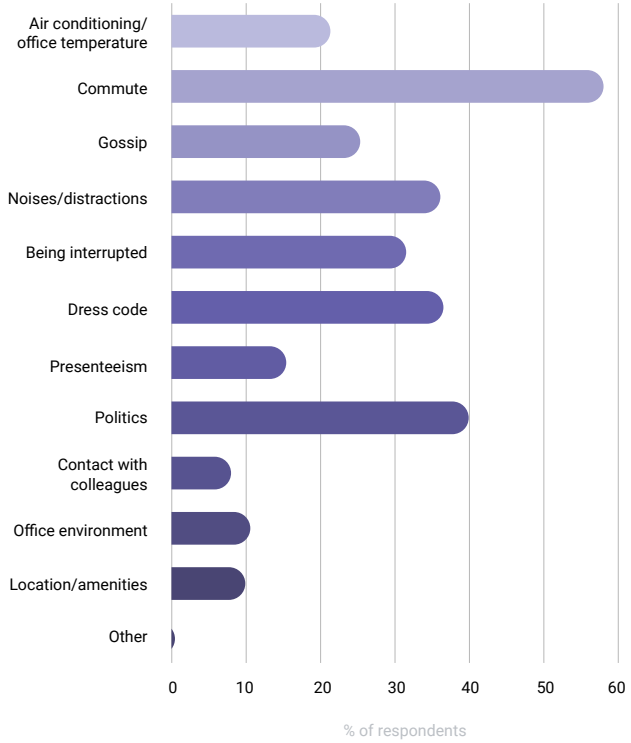
What do you miss about the office?



What do you miss about the office? (by age group)



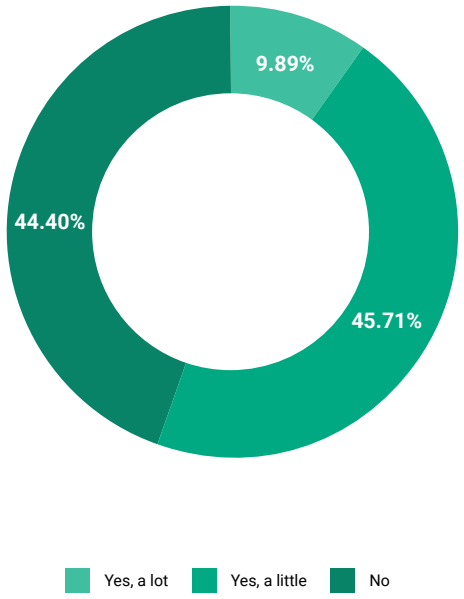
What do you not miss about the office?



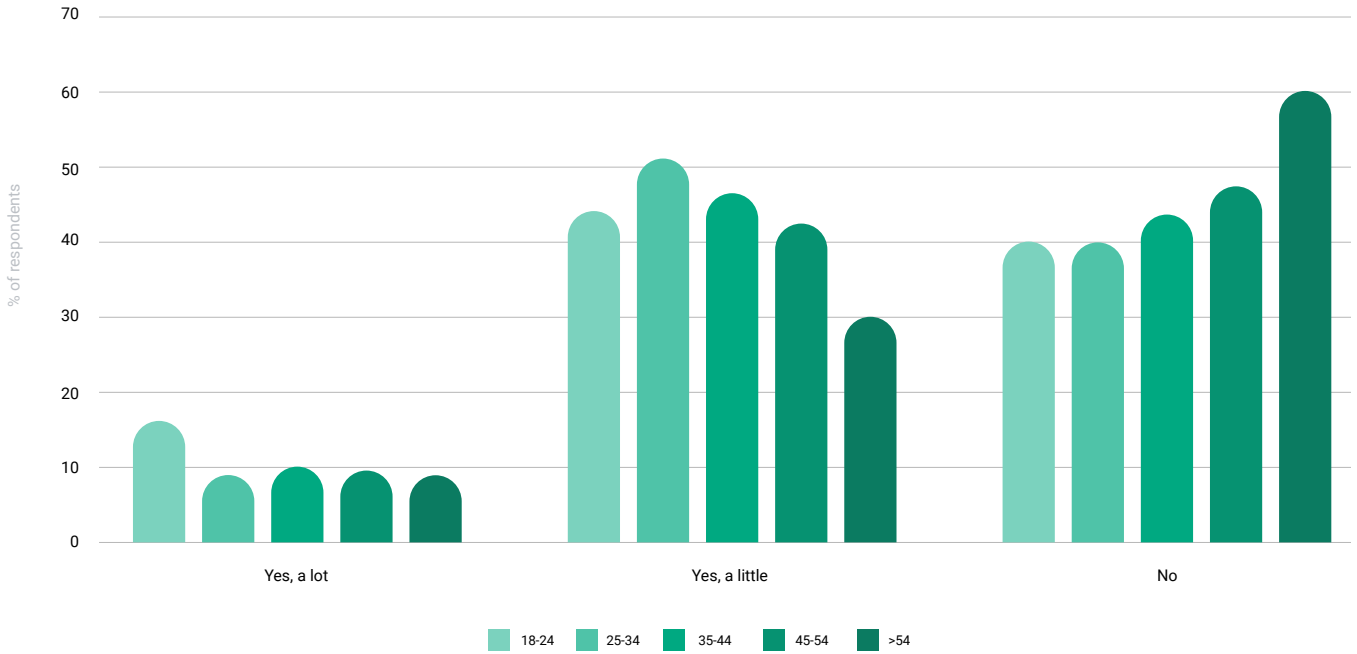
Mental health

- More than half of respondents stated WFH had had a negative impact on their mental health.
- This was more prevalent for younger employees and less of an issue for older respondents.

Is working from home having a negative impact on your mental health?



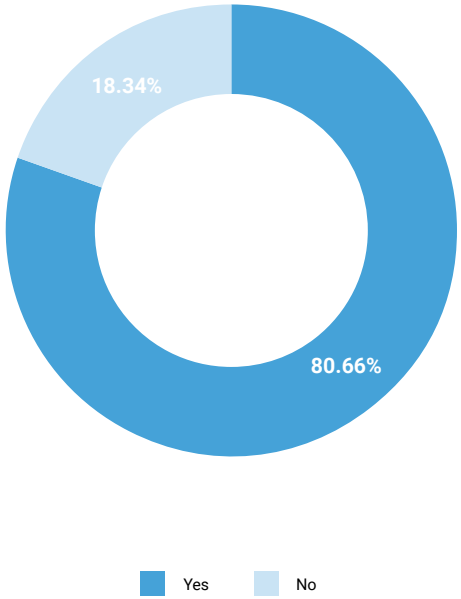
Is working from home having a negative impact on your mental health? (by age group)



Company **support**

- 4 in 5 employees felt sufficiently supported by their company.
- Those who didn't feel supported were more likely to say WFH was having a negative impact on their mental health.

Do you feel you are getting enough support from your company?



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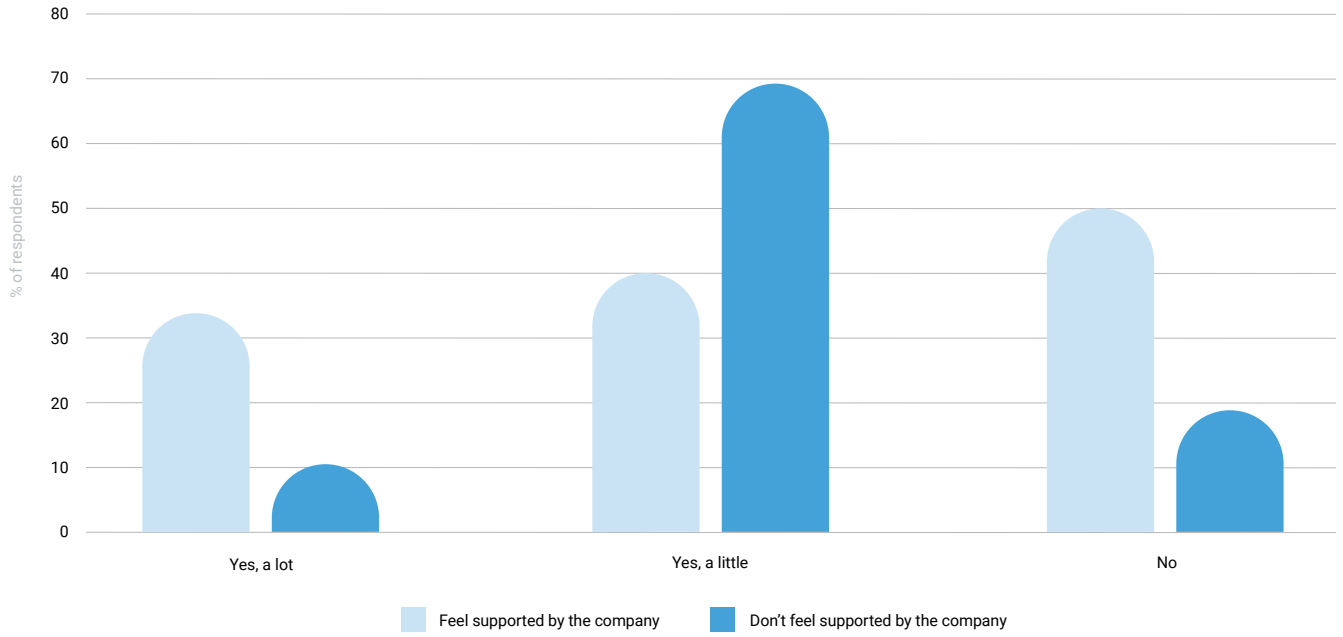
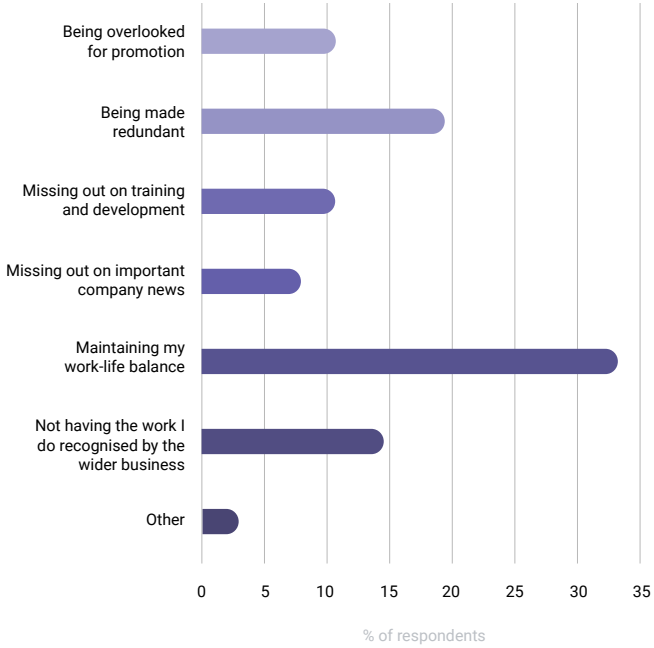


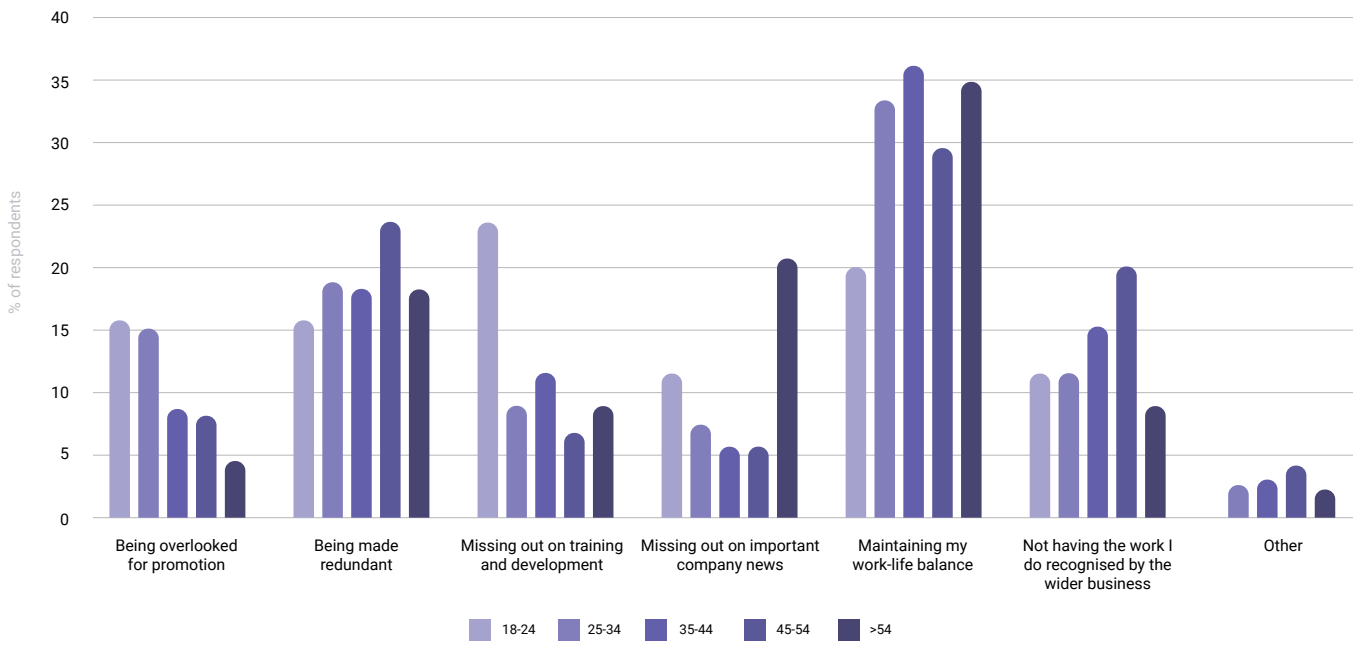
Concerns about homeworking

- A third were worried about maintaining work-life balance.
- 20% were worried about redundancy.
- Younger employees were more concerned about missing out on training and development.

When thinking about your career, what worries you the most about working from home?



When thinking about your career, what worries you the most about working from home? (by age group)

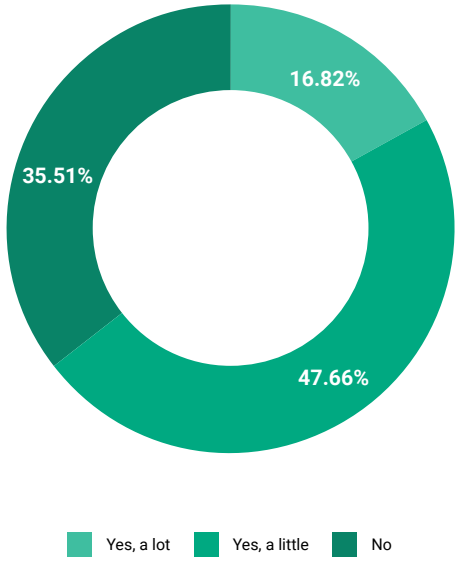


The **managers'** experience

Of the 455 employees we surveyed, 24% were managers. As many of them had not worked remotely before, we investigated the challenges of managing a remote team while adjusting to a new work lifestyle.

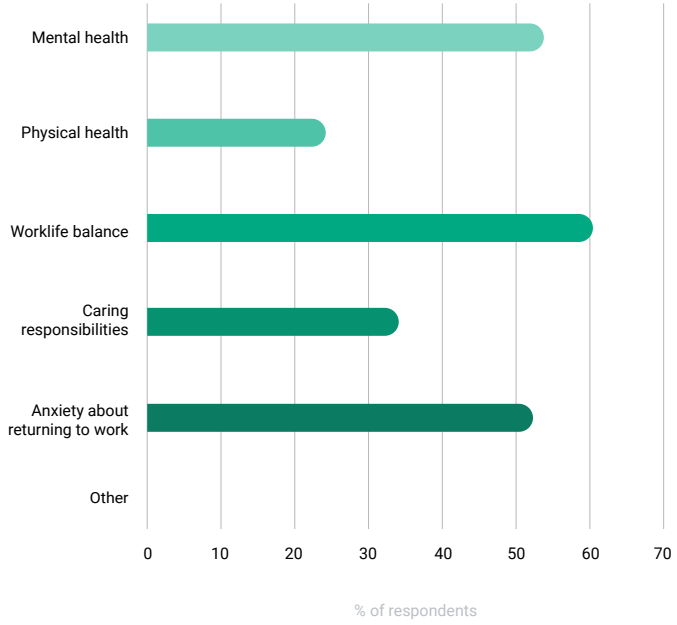
- 83% of managers said their mental health had been negatively affected by WFH.
- Supervising remote teams while managing their own workload was the most challenging aspect.
- 60% felt most confident in identifying work-life balance and mental health issues in their teams, but weren't so confident about spotting physical health issues.

Is working from home having a negative impact on your mental health? (managers)



What are you finding the most challenging?

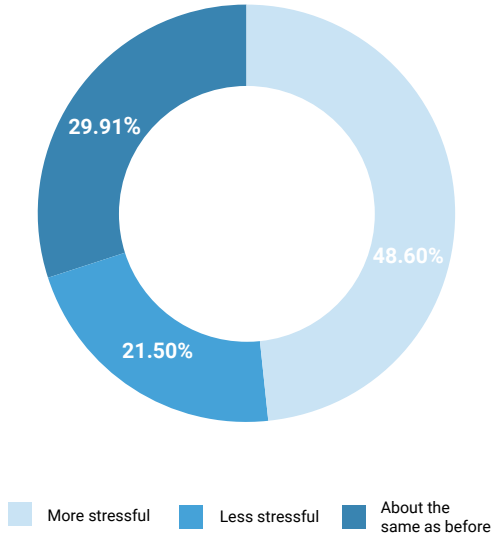
Thinking about your team, which of the following potential issues are you confident you could identify?



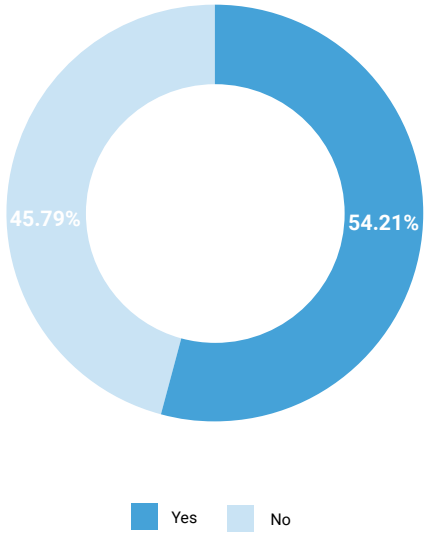
Company **support** for **managers**

- Almost half found managing their team remotely to be more stressful than before.
- 46% felt they were not given additional support by the company to help manage staff.

Are you finding managing staff remotely more/less stressful than before?



Has your company provided additional support to help you manage your staff?



Summary

Older employees seem to have fared better in transitioning to homeworking compared to their younger counterparts. But despite this display of resilience, they wanted to go back to the office as soon as possible and were least wary. And, while older employees were more concerned about maintaining work-life balance and social interaction, younger employees were worried about missing out on training and development while working from home.

The majority of respondents stated they were well supported by their companies, but there is still plenty of room for improvement in terms of how organisations can help their homeworkers, especially their managers. Whether you're bringing employees back to the workplace or considering a more flexible homeworking policy, organisations must ensure that they provide enough support for their staff to allay anxieties and maintain a healthy workforce.

This survey was completed in May 2020, by 455 on-site employees working from home full-time due to the lockdown, with responses from the UK and Ireland.

About Cezanne HR

This report was written by Cezanne HR. Cezanne HR is leading the way in delivering smart Cloud HR software solutions to mid-sized and growing businesses, both locally and globally, at a cost unthinkable just a few years ago. Cezanne HR's system is quick to deploy, easy to manage and packed full of features that save time and help everyone work together more productively and successfully.

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