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6 November 2020

# Remote Working in Ireland – Evidence from National Surveys

RSA Conference 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
Tele-working in Ireland- Beyond Covid

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# Western Development Commission (WDC)



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- State body – Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), Minister Humphreys
- 7 county Western Region
- WDC Act 1998  
*‘....foster and promote the economic and social development of the Western Region’*





# WDC and Teleworking, e-working and Remote Working

- WDC has a long history both operating and researching the practice.
- E-work a policy for staff from the start-1999/2000
- Represented on Govt E-Work Action Forum in early 2000s
- Tele-work, e-work, Remote work research
  - <https://westerndevelopment.ie/insights/working-from-home-the-new-normal/>
  - <https://westerndevelopment.ie/insights/working-from-home-what-are-the-regional-patterns/>
  - [https://westerndevelopment.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/WDC\\_Policy-Briefing-no-7.pdf](https://westerndevelopment.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/WDC_Policy-Briefing-no-7.pdf)
- WDC –Whitaker NUIG National Remote Working Study – Pre Covid – Late 2019:  
The overall objective is to examine issues, challenges and opportunities in extending the practice of remote working, to highlight best practice and to make proposals to inform public policy.



## WDC- NUIG Remote Work Survey – profile of respondents (Phase II)

- 50% private sector
- **Industry sectors:** Education – 17%, Financial, banking,& Ins – 12.8%, ICT 12%, Public & Civil Service – 13.5%, Prof, Scientific & technical – 9.8%
- **Org size:** 500+ (50%), 250-499 (11%), 50-249 (18%), 11-49 (13%), 1-10 (7%).
- 75% female
- 54% no dependents
- **Region:** Dublin (33%), West (25%, Mid-East (13%, South-west (9%), Mid-west (6%), Border (5%), Midlands & Southeast (4%)
- **Age Profile:** 18-30yrs (13%), 31-40 (29%), 41-50 (36%), 51-60 (19%), 60+ (3%)





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# NATIONAL REMOTE WORKING STUDY

**THEN...**

**PHASE I - APRIL 2020**

**7,241**  
respondents



**87%**  
working  
remotely

**11%**  
mix onsite  
and remote

**2%**  
fully onsite/  
not working

**NOW...**

**6 MONTHS ON**  
**PHASE II - OCTOBER 2020**

**5,639**  
respondents



**68%**  
working  
remotely

**24%**  
mix onsite  
and remote

**8%**  
fully onsite/  
not working

83%

Majority want to work remotely some or all of the time post-crisis

12%

would like to work remotely on a daily basis

42%

would like to work remotely several times a week

29%

would like to work remotely several times a month

16%

they do not want to continue working remotely

94%

Majority want to work remotely some or all of the time post-crisis

27%

would like to work remotely on a daily basis

54%

would like to work remotely several times a week

13%

would like to work remotely several times a month

6%

they do not want to continue working remotely

**51%**  
**never** worked  
remotely before  
COVID-19

of that  
**78%**  
want to **continue**  
to work remotely  
some or all of  
the time  
post-COVID-19



**49%**  
**never** worked  
remotely before  
COVID-19

of that  
**92%**  
want to **continue**  
to work remotely  
some or all of  
the time  
post-COVID-19





# NATIONAL REMOTE WORKING STUDY

## PHASE II OCTOBER 2020

### TOP 3

#### ADVANTAGES OF REMOTE WORKING

1. no traffic and no commute
2. greater flexibility as to how I manage the working day
3. reduced costs of going to work and commuting



#### BIGGEST PROBLEMS OF REMOTE WORKING

1. loneliness/isolation
2. staying motivated
3. physical workspace





## WORKING REMOTELY INCREASES MY PRODUCTIVITY



**62%**  
agree  
& strongly  
agree

**24%**  
neither

**14%**  
disagree  
& strongly  
disagree

## COMPARED TO WHEN YOU STARTED REMOTE WORKING DUE TO COVID-19, HOW ARE YOU FEELING ABOUT REMOTE WORKING?



**52%**  
more  
optimistic



**31%**  
about  
the same



**16%**  
more  
pessimistic

## WHEN WORKING REMOTELY COMPARED TO WORKING ONSITE



**52%**  
work  
more  
hours



**41%**  
work  
same  
hours



**7%**  
work  
less  
hours



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# NATIONAL REMOTE WORKING STUDY

## PHASE II OCTOBER 2020



**RESPONDING  
TO EMAILS AND  
COMMUNICATIONS  
OUTSIDE OF  
WORKING HOURS**

**36%  
DO NOT**



**64%  
DO**



- they choose to (26%)
- because of workload (26%)
- won't be taken seriously by employer if don't respond (7%)
- fear of missing out if I don't (4%)



## **Post pandemic patterns?**

**Will the new normal (rate of RW) be significantly higher than previously?**

### **Considerations against:**

1. A relationship between economic growth, unemployment levels and no's WFH?. E.g, over last 20 yrs as unemployment rate declined the % wfh increased.
2. Post pandemic higher unemployment rates?.. with lower employment levels & lower congestion on transport networks.
3. But current circumstances unprecedented so maybe any correlation with RW & high unemployment will not apply.
4. The cultural shift much discussed is overstated (supported by media) & only confined to specific sectors, e.g technology (some of whom have a commercial interest). Post pandemic revert to normal.

## **Post pandemic patterns?**

**Will the new normal (rate of RW) be significantly higher than previously?**

**Considerations for:**

1. Technology more advanced with V Conferencing widely available - useful in maintaining the employment relationship.
2. Extensive unprecedented Covid practice of RW has created a shift in thinking, for employees & especially for employers on productivity.
3. WFH (before the pandemic) a feature of some company's business models, illustrating that some companies can operate successfully with all staff RW (e.g Shopify, Wayfair)
4. Government policy more supportive??





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# Q & A Thank You

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