



Remote Working and Relocation

Evidence from the 2022 National Remote Working Survey

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Introduction

Remote working is often considered as particularly advantageous to rural and regional development, supporting employment located away or 'remote' from the office location which is often in an urban area. The WDC has been researching remote work for over two decades in the context of regional and rural development. Some of this research and an examination of e-working in Ireland is available [here](#).

It is only now, following the third annual remote work survey and the ending of Government workplace restrictions due to Covid-19, that we have some data to ascertain to what extent has remote working influenced relocation in practice. This briefing presents further analysis and additional data on relocation not included in the full 2022 report.

National Remote Working Survey 2022

The WDC in partnership with the Whitaker Institute NUI Galway have conducted annual national remote working surveys since the start of the pandemic. The previous national survey reports conducted in April 2020 and April 2021 are available [here](#). In the two most recent surveys we have asked questions on whether people have considered relocation and if so from where and to where, see the 2022 [here](#).

This was an online survey with a self-selected sample and was open to those aged 18 years and over. The 2022 survey was conducted at the end of April 2022. A total of 8,428 usable responses were received. Table 4 in the Appendix provides detail on the resident profile of survey responses.

The survey is explicitly designed to capture employee views on remote working at a point in time each year since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those who are interested in remote working, current and aspiring remote workers, are the target respondents. As only some occupations within the overall working population have roles that are amenable to remote working, the survey findings are not intended to generalise to the working population.

Overall, in 2022, respondents were asked if they would consider relocating due to their experience of remote working since COVID-19: (in brackets are the responses in the 2021).

- 52.5% said they would not consider relocating (53%).
- 21.6% said they would consider relocating (24%).
- 16.5% said they may consider relocating (14%).
- 9.3% indicated that they have already relocated within Ireland since COVID-19 because they can work remotely (9%).



The resident profile of respondents is presented in Table 4 in the Appendix. Over 8,400 responses were received.

The 2022 Survey was conducted in late April 2022

Over one-fifth-21.6% of survey respondents said they are considering relocation due to their experience of remote working since COVID-19

A further 16.5% said they may consider relocating. Combined this group accounts for 38% of responses

Outside of Ireland is the top location destination for those who may or would consider relocating

The relative consistency in figures over the two years is interesting.

Below is analysis of the group of those who **would and may consider** relocating (38.1%). This is followed by an analysis of those who **have already** relocated (9.3%).

Remote workers considering relocation

Survey respondents were asked *based on your experience of remote working since COVID-19, would you consider relocating?* Respondents could reply: *Yes, No, Maybe* or *I have already relocated*.

Combining the two categories of those who *would consider* (21.6%) and *maybe consider* (16.5%), comprises over 38%, over 2,200 responses. Of these considering relocation the counties they would choose to relocate to are illustrated in Map 1 and Table 1. The top 5 places respondents would move to are:

1. Outside of Ireland – 16.8%¹.
2. Galway (10.1%)
3. Cork (9.2%)
4. Wicklow (5.9%)
5. Kerry (5.8)

The survey responses are based on those living on the island of Ireland. The high number of responses, 16.8% -(460) considering re-location outside of Ireland is particularly interesting. If this level of relocation started to occur this could have wider policy implications, particularly for a relatively mobile multinational workforce. This issue is not confined to Ireland but it will be interesting to examine to what extent multinational relocation occurs in practice.

Within Ireland, counties on the Western seaboard are the top two destinations for possible relocation; Galway (10.1%) and Cork (9.2%). The next most popular destinations are counties around Dublin. All these counties are among the most populous so it is not surprising that greater numbers would occur here.

One factor which may account for the popularity of counties around Dublin as a destination to relocate to is the need to commute to workplaces in Dublin if working in a remote hybrid pattern, for example if attendance at the office is required a few days a week.

¹ No further detail on destinations outside of Ireland is available. The percentages displayed includes those Outside of Ireland.

Nearly one tenth of survey respondents say they have relocated within Ireland since Covid-19 because they can work remotely

Over two-thirds (63.4%) have relocated from Dublin

Cork and Galway are the next most significant counties from which people have relocated from.

Remote workers that have already relocated

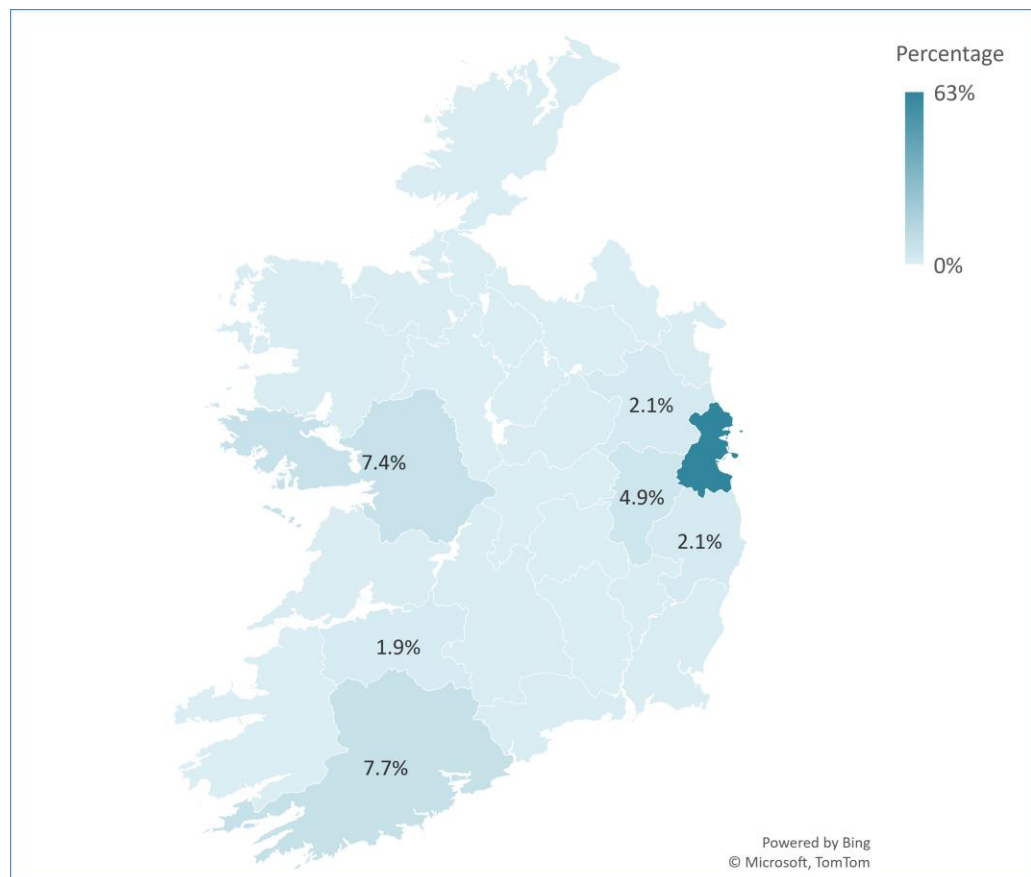
Of possibly more interest is those respondents who have actually relocated since COVID-19 because they can work remotely. Nearly one tenth - 9.3% (approx. 700 people), indicated that they have already relocated within Ireland since COVID-19 because they can work remotely, (in the 2021 survey this was 9%).

The county destinations **from** which they relocated is illustrated in Map 2 below and Table 2 in the Appendix. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of those who have already moved within Ireland relocated from Dublin.

While Dublin is the most populous county and a third of survey respondents are living in Dublin, its relative share of remote workers that have relocated from is particularly high. The more populous counties are likely to have higher numbers relocating, for example Cork and Galway, albeit much less than Dublin.

Some socio-economic characteristics of those who have relocated are examined below.

Map 2. Counties from which remote workers re-located from



Source: 2022 Remote Working in Ireland Survey. NUI Galway Whitaker Institute & WDC.

Those who have relocated are younger and more educated

More women than men have relocated

Those who have relocated are generally younger. A quarter of all those who have relocated are aged under 30 years

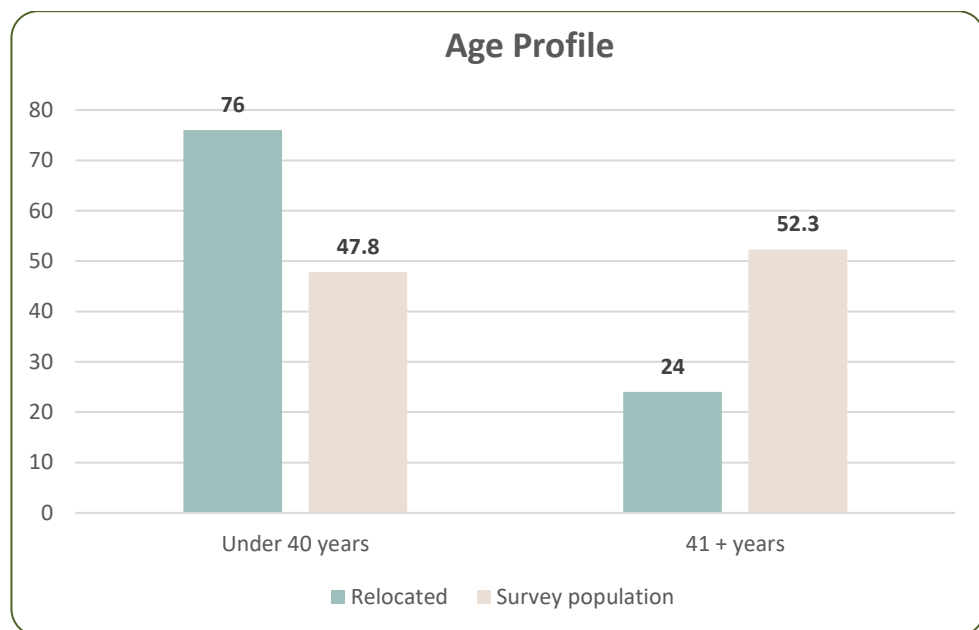
Those who have relocated have a higher level of formal education

Profile of those already relocated

Over 700 people (9.3% of respondents), said they had relocated since Covid-19 because they can work remotely. Some of their characteristics are discussed below.

More women than men have relocated (61.5% of respondents were female), though there was a higher share of females among the respondent population (64%). This higher female response rate suggests a greater interest among females in remote working and continuing to remote work.

Those who have relocated are younger than the survey population, see chart below. 76% of those who have relocated are aged under 40 years compared to 47.8% of the survey population. Examining age groups in more detail, a quarter of all those who relocated were aged under 30 years (24.9%) and these comprise 12.9% of survey respondents.



The Chart below illustrates the level of education of those who have relocated and the survey population. There is a higher level of formal education among those who have relocated, compared to the survey population and the general population². 48% of those who have relocated have a masters or doctoral degree compared to 39.3% of the survey population (This corresponds to NFQ level 9 and 10 – National Framework of Qualifications).

² 42% of people had a third level education in 2016. Census 2016

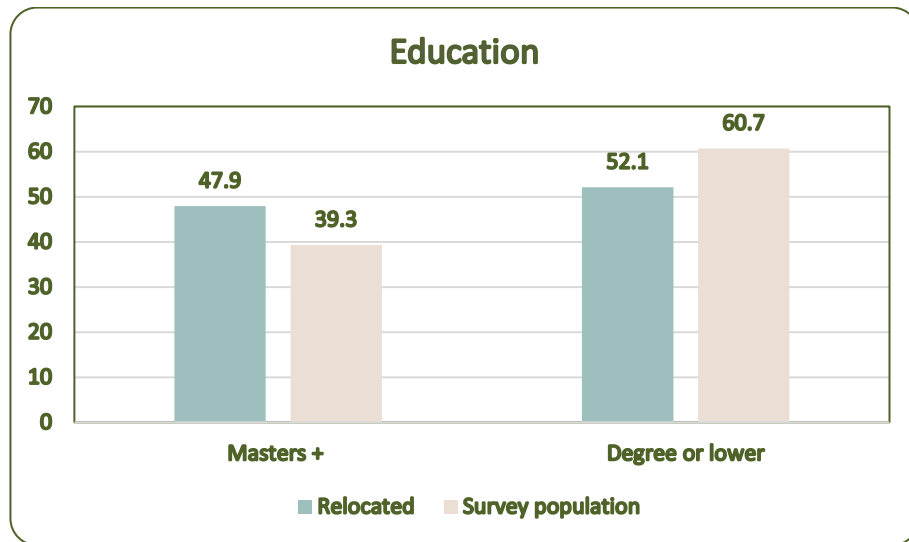


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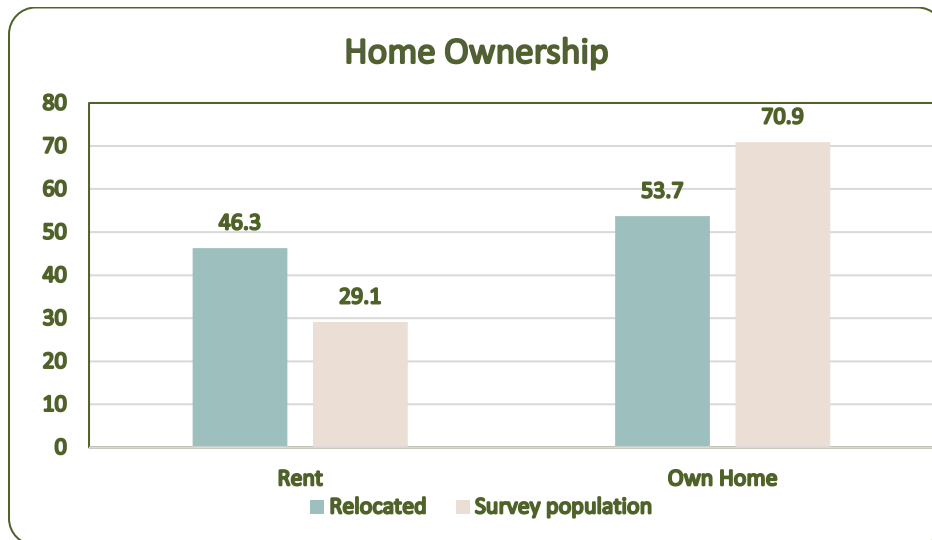
Those who have relocated are more likely to rent than the survey population, however a majority of those who have relocated are home owners

As the Tables below illustrate remote working and relocation is a feature of all counties, though the more populous counties generally have higher numbers.

The impacts of even relatively small numbers of workers relocating to more rural and regional locations can be relatively greater than the impact of them leaving larger centres of population.



The chart below illustrates the share of home ownership and renters among those who have relocated and the survey population. While 29% of the survey population rented their home, 46.3% of those who relocated were renting. A majority (53.7%) of those who relocated reported owning their own home.



Policy Conclusions

This briefing provides further analysis of data on remote workers and their relocation patterns from the 2022 National Remote Working Survey. These provide insights into the characteristics of remote workers who are considering and have relocated. The impacts of even relatively small numbers of workers relocating to more rural and regional locations can be relatively greater than the impact of them leaving larger centres of population.

To what extent these patterns will continue will be interesting. The current tight labour market, relatively high house prices and the more established practice of remote working compared to just a few years ago are key factors. How these trends develop will influence future relocation patterns. The WDC and NUI Galway will continue to examine these issues in subsequent surveys and analyses.

Appendix

Table 1. (Map 1) Counties to which workers would consider relocating to

Total Count N=2,726	Percentage
Outside Ireland	16.8%
Galway	10.1
Cork	9.2
Wicklow	5.9
Kerry	5.8
Wexford	5.7
Dublin	5.5
Kildare	4.6
Clare	3.8
Waterford	3.8
Donegal	3.7
Mayo	3.6
Meath	3.4
Sligo	3.2
Limerick	1.7
Kilkenny	1.7
Tipperary	1.6
Louth	1.4
Roscommon	1.3
Cavan	1.2
Westmeath	1.1
Offaly	0.9
Leitrim	0.8
Carlow	0.8
Laois	0.7
Down	0.4
Monaghan	0.4
Longford	0.3
Antrim	0.3
Derry	0.2
Tyrone	0.2
Armagh	0.1
Fermanagh	0.0

Source: 2022 Remote Working in Ireland Survey. NUI Galway Whitaker Institute & the WDC.

Table 2 (Map 2) Which county did you relocate from?

Total Count N=700	Percentage
Dublin	63.4
Cork	7.7
Galway	7.4%
Kildare	4.9%
Meath	2.1%
Wicklow	2.1%
Limerick	1.9%
Louth	1.0%
Mayo	1.0%
Westmeath	1.0%
Waterford	0.9%
Donegal	0.7%
Sligo	0.7%
Wexford	0.7%
Carlow	0.6%
Clare	0.6%
Tipperary	0.6%
Longford	0.4%
Kerry	0.3%
Kilkenny	0.3%
Monaghan	0.3%
Offaly	0.3%
Roscommon	0.3%
Down	0.3%
Cavan	0.1%
Laois	0.1%
Leitrim	0.1%
Antrim	0.1%
Armagh	0.0%
Derry	0.0%
Fermanagh	0.0%
Tyrone	0.0%

Source: 2022 Remote Working in Ireland Survey. NUI Galway Whitaker Institute & the WDC.

Table 3 (Map 3) Which county did you relocate to?

Total Count N=688	Percentage
Galway	11.2
Cork	8.9
Kildare	7.7
Dublin	6.4
Mayo	5.4
Kerry	4.8
Donegal	4.4
Clare	4.4
Limerick	4.1
Wicklow	3.9
Wexford	3.8
Sligo	3.8
Tipperary	3.3
Meath	3.2
Roscommon	2.8
Louth	2.8
Kilkenny	2.8
Westmeath	2.3
Waterford	2.3
Leitrim	2.2
Cavan	1.9
Carlow	1.9
Offaly	1.7
Longford	1.5
Laois	1.3
Monaghan	0.4
Derry	0.4
Tyrone	0.2
Fermanagh	0.1
Down	0.1
Antrim	0
Armagh	0

Source: 2022 Remote Working in Ireland Survey. NUI Galway Whitaker Institute & the WDC

Table 4 Resident Profile of Survey Respondents

Total Count N = 7,532	Percentage
Dublin	33.9
Galway	10.9
Cork	9.5
Kildare	6.4
Meath	4.3
Wicklow	3.4
Limerick	3.0
Mayo	2.4
Louth	2.2
Wexford	2.2
Clare	2.1
Donegal	1.9
Sligo	1.9
Kerry	1.8
Waterford	1.8
Tipperary	1.7
Westmeath	1.4
Roscommon	1.2
Kilkenny	1.2
Offaly	1.2
Cavan	1.2
Laois	1.1
Carlow	0.9
Leitrim	0.8
Longford	0.6
Monaghan	0.5
Down	0.2
Derry	0.1
Tyrone	0.1
Armagh	0.1
Fermanagh	0.1
Antrim	0.1

Source: 2022 Remote Working in Ireland Survey. NUI Galway Whitaker Institute & WDC.

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