



**WESTERN
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

Remote Work and Relocation Opportunities & Challenges

19 April 2024

Deirdre Frost



Outline of Presentation

- Our Work
- Remote Work before Covid-19
- Remote Work during Covid-19
- Regional Patterns
- A new normal yet?
- Remote Work & relocation
- Future outlook & Conclusions



What we do

Research and Analysis



Key statistics from Census 2022 for the Western Region and its counties

26 July, 2023

Inputs to National Policy



The Revised National Development Plan: Key Regional Issues

16 September, 2021

Collaboration and Briefings



2023 Annual Remote Working Survey finds remote working opportunities strongly impact employment decision-making

13 November, 2023

Remote Work is not new!! e-Working in the Western Region in 2017

- Teleworking and e-working
- 1990s, e-Working cited as a tool for rural development, to help counteract rural depopulation
- South West of France in the Gers region, 2008 the Gers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), launched the Soho Solo programme and has over 200 members
<https://www.soho-solo-gers.com/>
- Research from Scotland suggested e-Working is relevant to more rural locations, noting high take up of e-Working was associated with low population densities & highest incidence in managerial, professional, skilled occupations

WDC policy briefing no.7

March 2017

e-Working in the Western Region
A Review of the Evidence

WDC Policy Briefings: The Western Development Commission (WDC) is a statutory body promoting economic and social development in the Western Region of Ireland (Counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon, Galway and Clare). WDC Policy Briefings highlight and provide education and analysis of key regional policy issues.

Introduction

e-Work is a method of working using information and communication technology in which the work is not bound to any particular location. Traditionally this has been understood as working remotely from the office, usually from home, whether full-time or for a period during the working week.

With the introduction of basic broadband services nearly two decades ago, there had been a view that e-Working would become more prevalent and could be particularly advantageous to more rural regions, supporting employment, especially outside of the Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing sector. With the widespread rollout of broadband services and greater speeds anticipated under the National Broadband Plan (NBP), along with increasing congestion and longer journey times to work, it might be expected that e-Working is becoming more common. This WDC Policy Briefing aims to identify:

- The extent of e-Working.
- The extent to which weaker broadband access in more rural locations impacts on the rate of e-Working.
- Factors driving e-Work.
- Recommendations on how e-Working can be further promoted.

Measuring the extent of e-Work is complicated by the changing nature of work but the focus of this WDC Policy Briefing is on the extent to which e-Work is a feature of 'traditional' work and employment relationships. Communications technology has enabled to allow new forms of work and service delivery to emerge, often termed the 'gig economy'. The typical income generation is outside the scope of this WDC Policy Briefing but will be the subject of a forthcoming WDC publication.

Case studies from companies and individual e-Workers in the Western Region illustrate how e-Work operates in practice. The case studies highlight the extent to which e-Work is generally a policy applied at the discretion of local management as well as illustrating the benefits to employers and employees.

Benefits and limitations of e-Work

The benefits of e-Working from an employee perspective include an improved work-life balance especially for those commuting for long periods. Benefits of e-Work are evident from the perspective of management also, in addition to improving staff retention, the efficient introduction of e-Working can increase productivity.

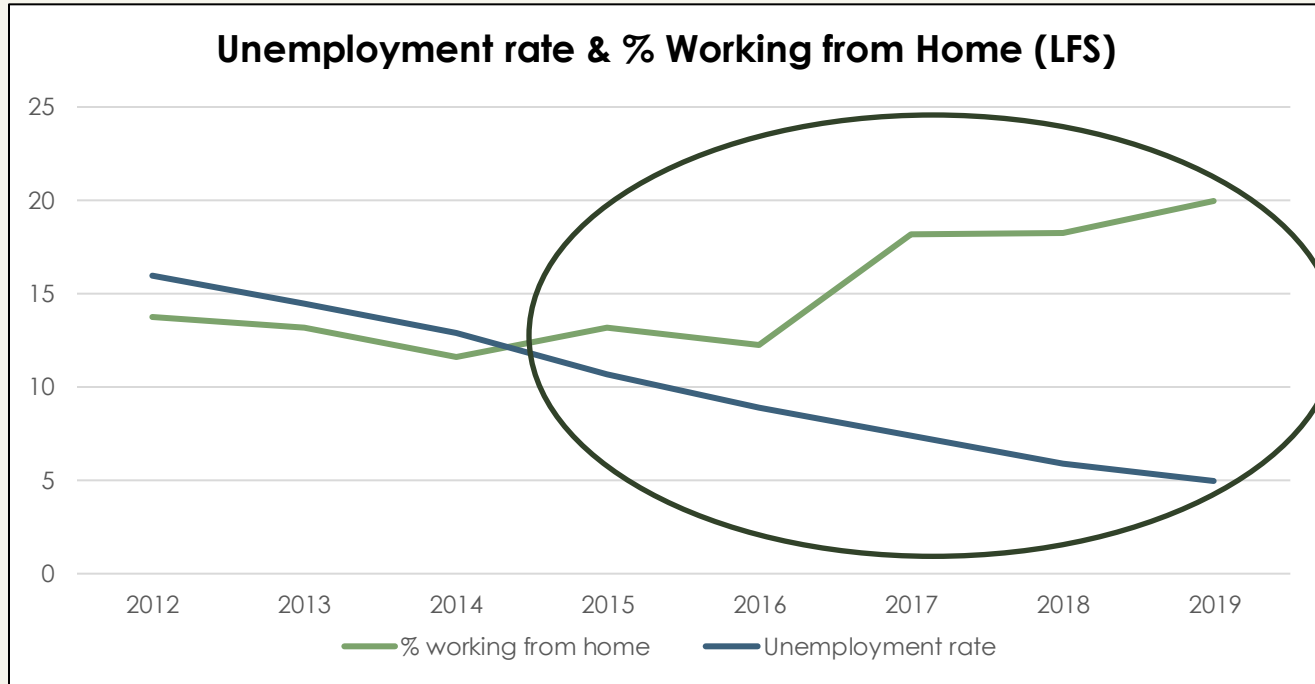
There has been recognition of the wider economic and social benefits of e-Work from a public policy perspective, greater e-Working can reduce transport demand, traffic congestion and emissions. For example, it has been

1. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, UK Civil and Domestic Airports White Paper (The Future of Working Practice: A Literature Review) June 2014 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/290306/uk-civil-and-domestic-airports-white-paper-june-2014.pdf

Contents

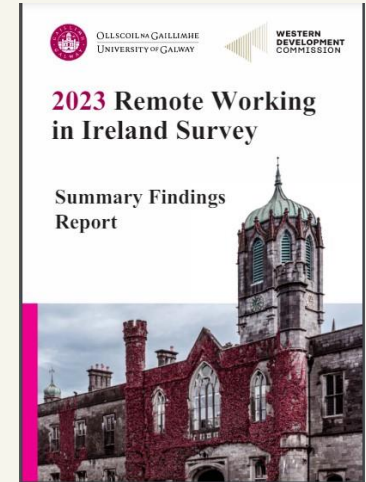
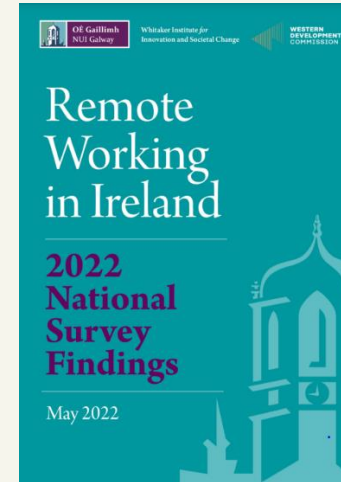
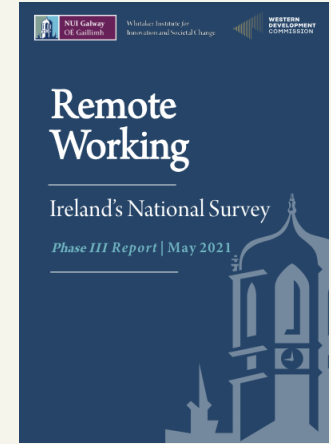
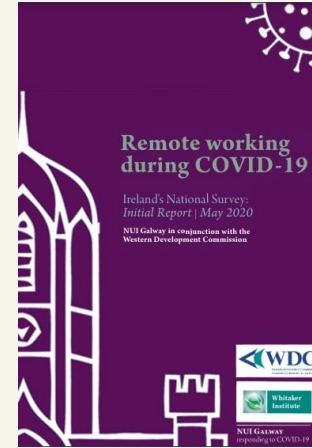
- Introduction
- Benefits and limitations of e-Work
- The international experience
- The evidence on e-Working
- Company e-Work practice
- e-Working policy
- Conclusions and recommendations

Before Covid. Unemployment and Working from Home 2012-2019



Remote Work during Covid

- Pre Covid *Remote Work in Ireland* (2019) Department of Enterprise
- WDC-University of Galway annual national surveys
- Supportive Government Policy
Making Remote Work: National Remote Work Strategy (2021)
- DCRD *Our Rural Future 2021-2025*



Remote Working in Hubs – WDC and Connected Hubs

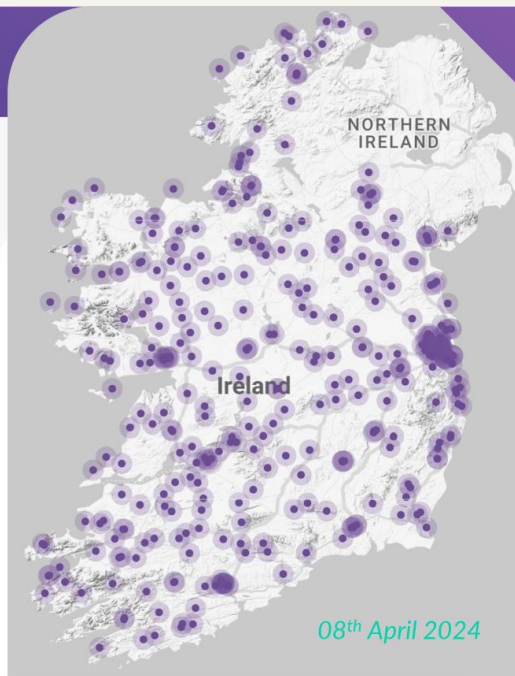


connectedhubs

<https://connectedhubs.ie/hubs/search>

Status Update | CH Booking Platform

- 357 | Hub profiles onboarded (live)
- +67 | Hub profiles pending
- ~ 5,300 | Desks available to book
- ~ 535 | Meeting rooms
- ~ 15,415 | Registered user accounts
- ~ 25,000 | Total bookings / orders
- ~€825,000 | Value of all orders



357
COWORKING HUBS



5299
DESKS AVAILABLE



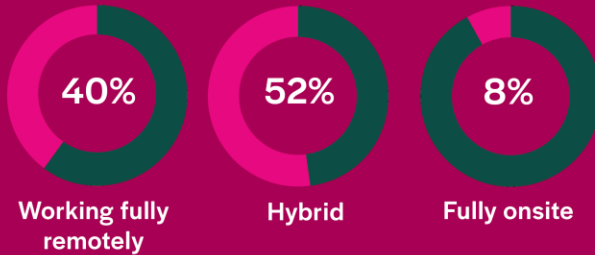
537
MEETING ROOMS



APRIL 2022

RESPONDENTS **8,428**

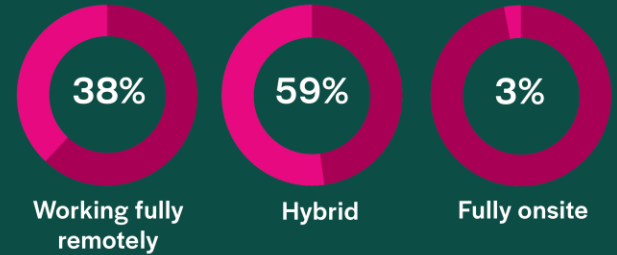
Current
Remote Work
Patterns



OCTOBER 2023*

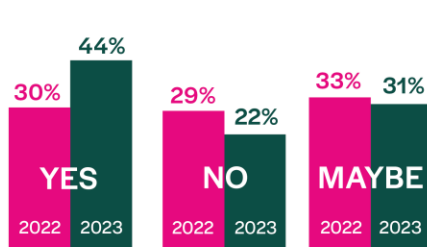
RESPONDENTS **5,929**

Current
Remote Work
Patterns

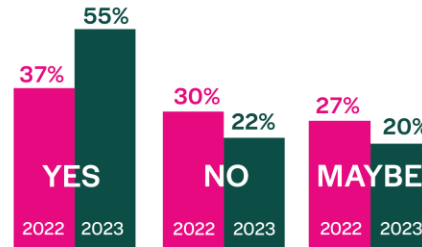


If remote
working
preferences
are not
facilitated

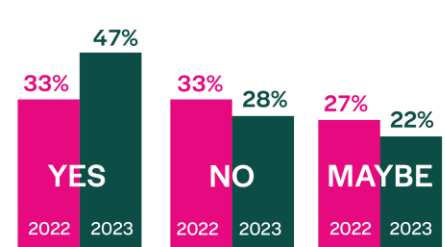
Change job even if it means a **pay cut**



Change job even if it means
less promotion opportunities

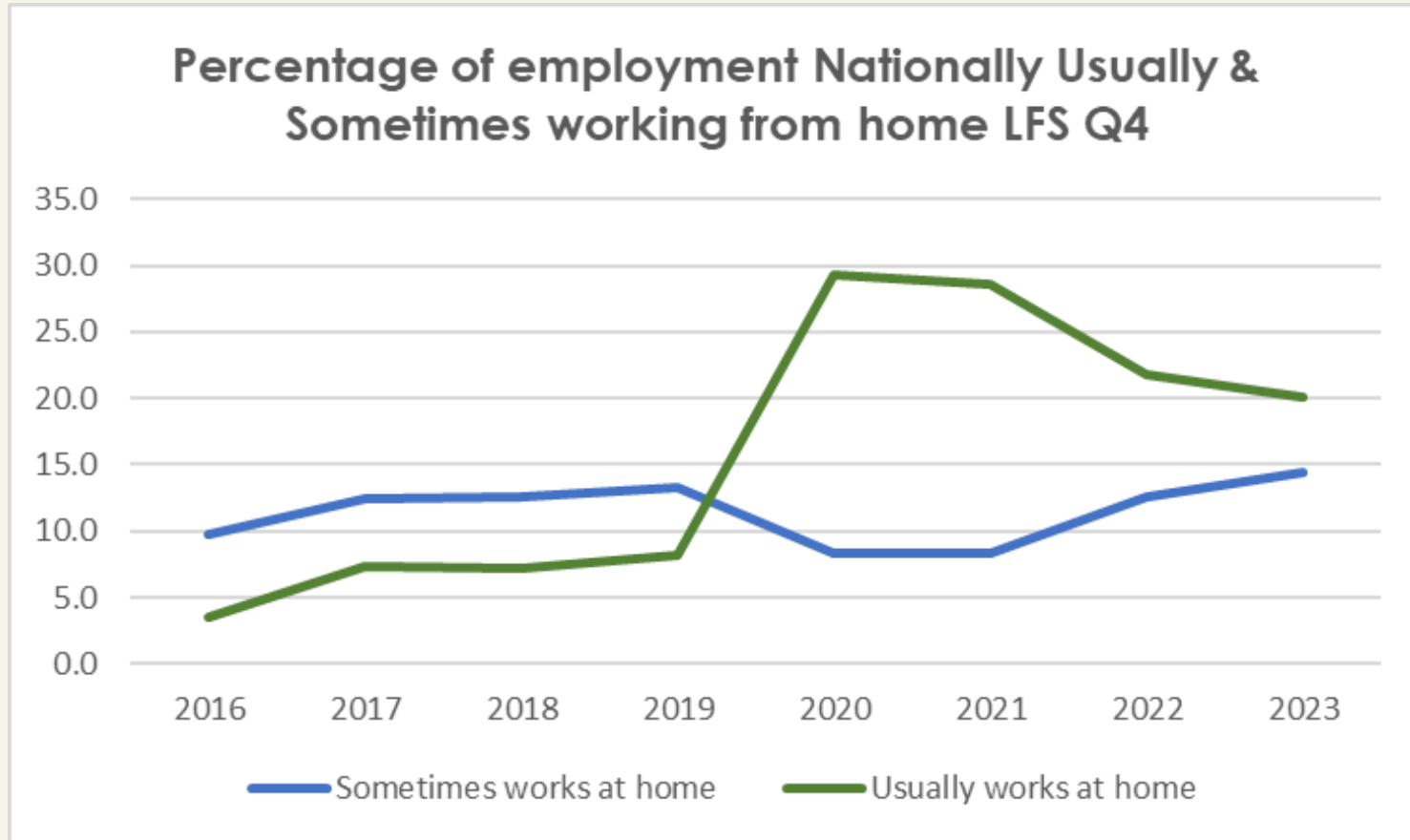


Change job even if it
reduces career opportunities

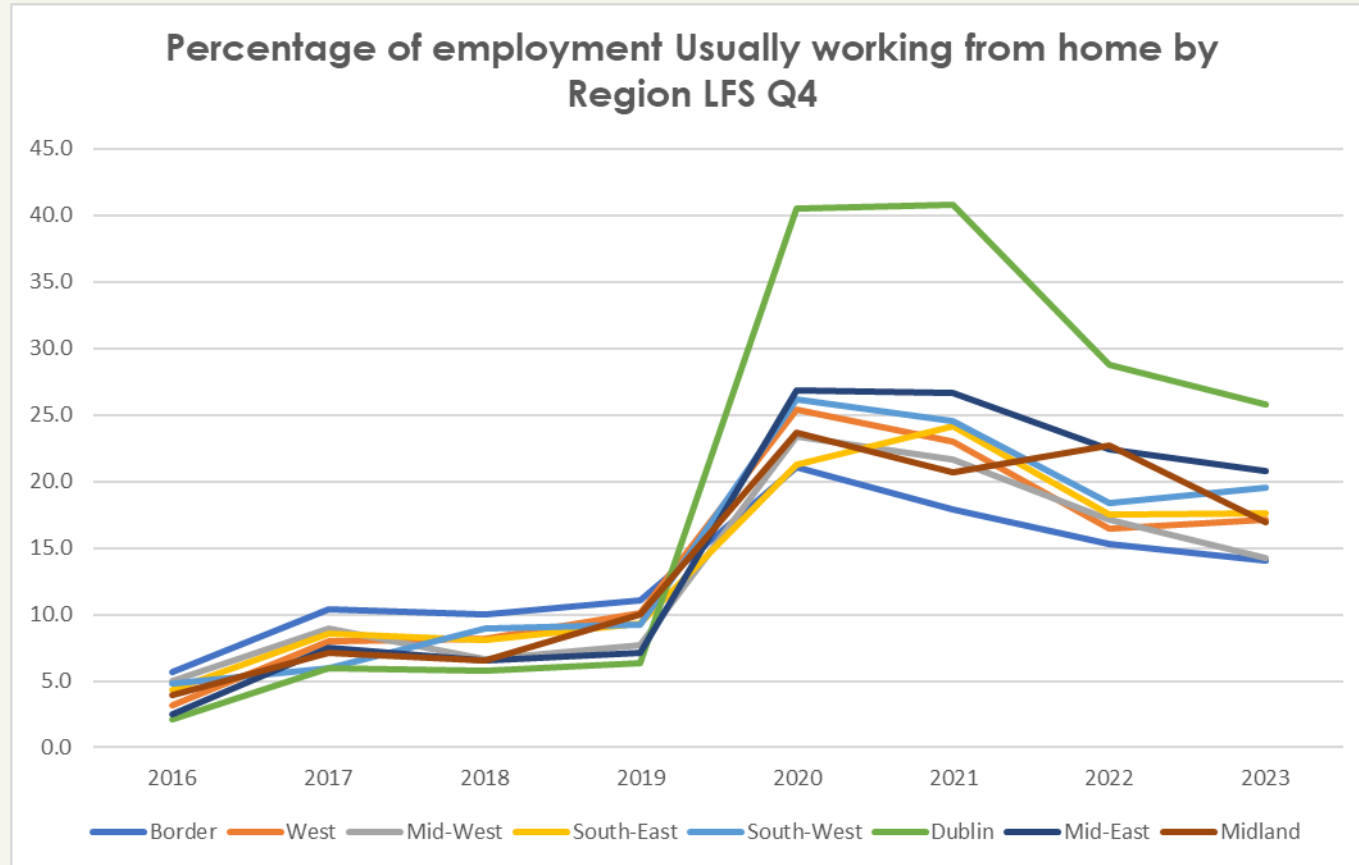


*Annual comparisons are only indicative as they are based on different populations and weights are applied in 2023.

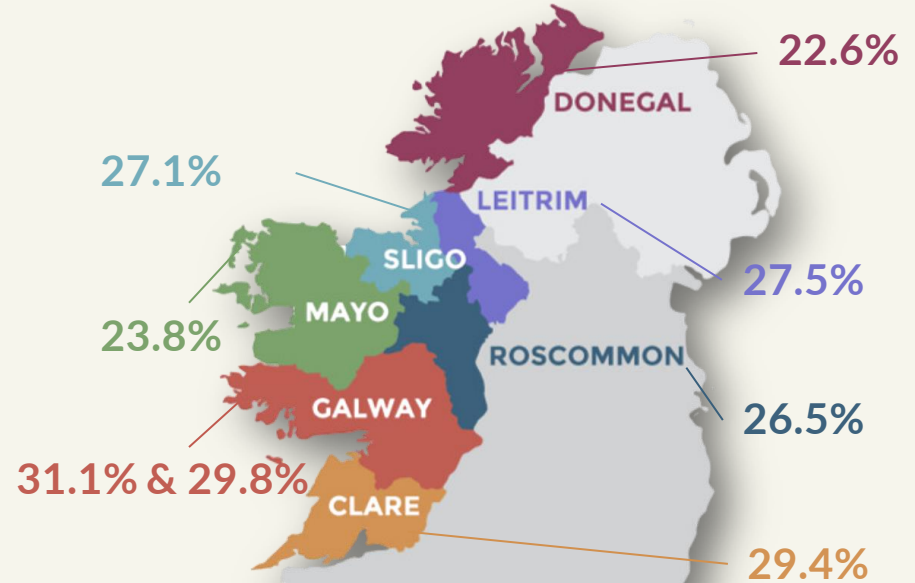
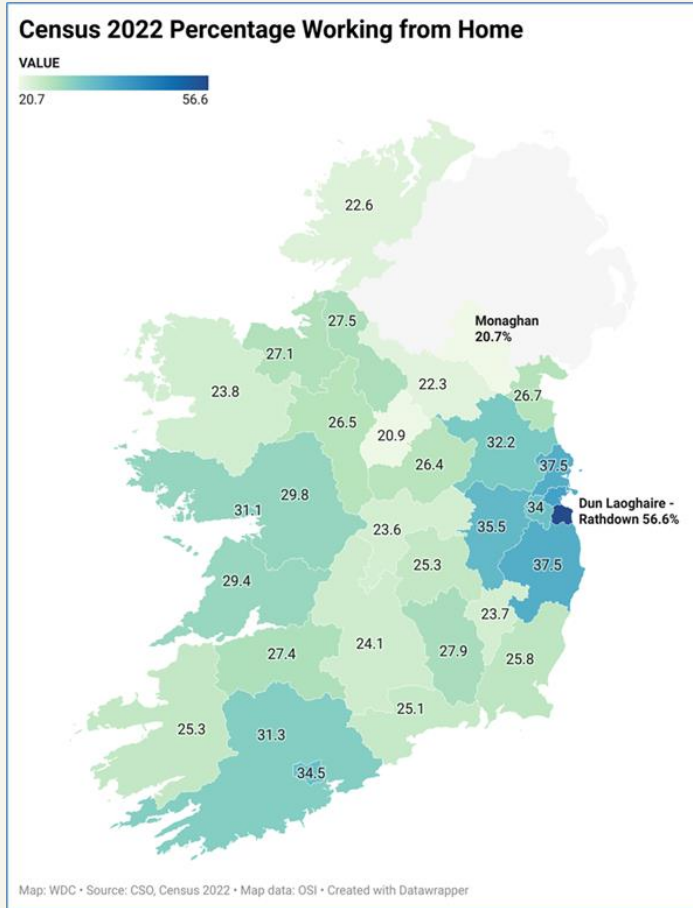
Since Covid! Percentage of Employment Usually & Sometimes WFH 2016-23



Percentage of Employment Usually WFH by Region 2016-23

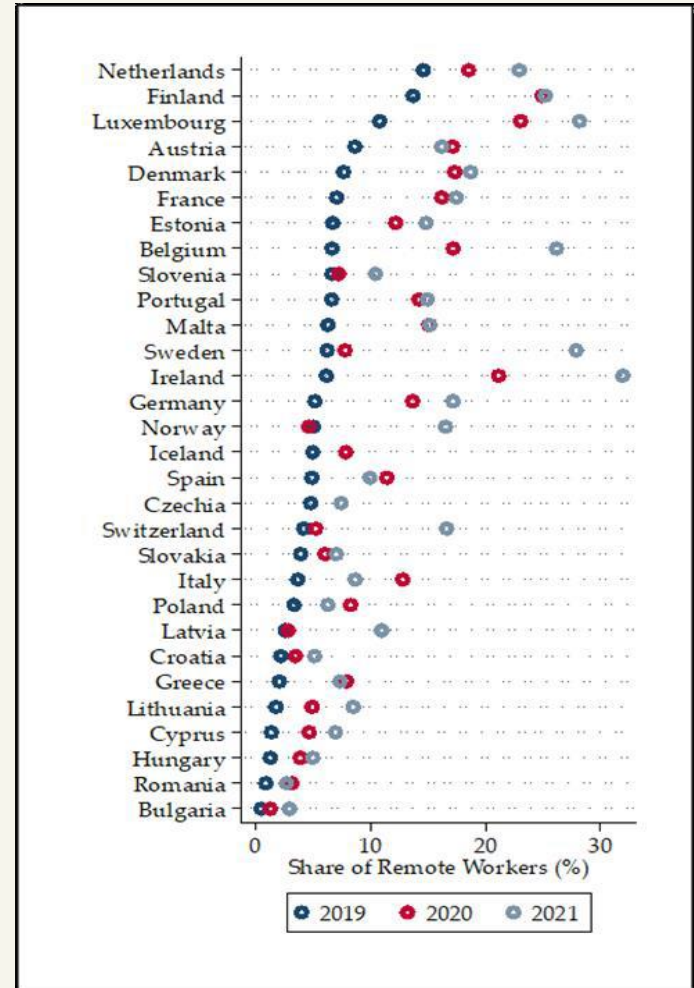


Census 2022: Percentage working from Home by County



Remote Work across Europe

- Ordered by 2019 share=blue, 2021=grey
- Ireland the highest in 2021 33%
- Some occupations & industries more suited to WFH.
- Research Dingal & Neiman (2020) which suggests that that 37 percent of jobs in the US can be performed entirely at home.
https://bfi.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/BFI_White-Paper_Dingel_Neiman_3.2020.pdf
- Nordic research 37% also. OECD research
- Where are these occupations? Urban & Regional/Rural regions



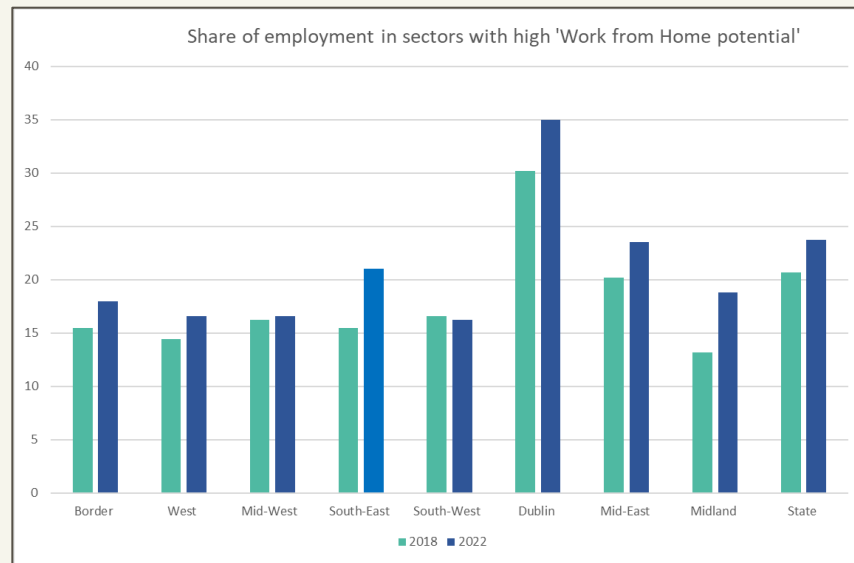
Regional Sectoral Employment and Working from Home

- 4 sectors have the highest work from home potential

1. Information and communication (J)
2. Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)
3. Public administration and defence, compulsory social security (O)
4. Financial, insurance and real estate activities (K,L)

- 2018-2022 growth in occupations with high work from home potential

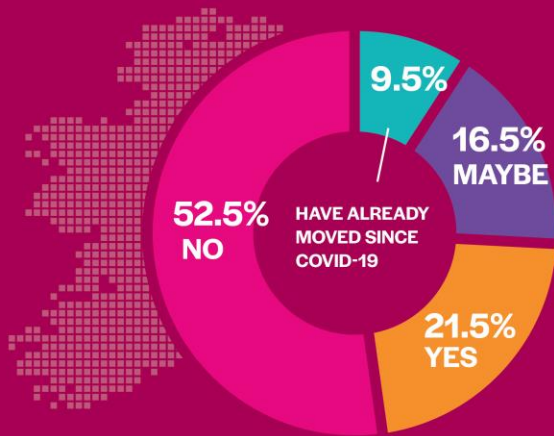
- Source. [WDC 2022 Policy Briefing Working from Home Pre and Post Pandemic](#)





APRIL 2022

BASED ON YOUR
EXPERIENCE OF
REMOTE WORKING
SINCE COVID-19,
WOULD YOU
CONSIDER
RELOCATING?



FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY
MOVED, TOP LOCATIONS MOVED TO:

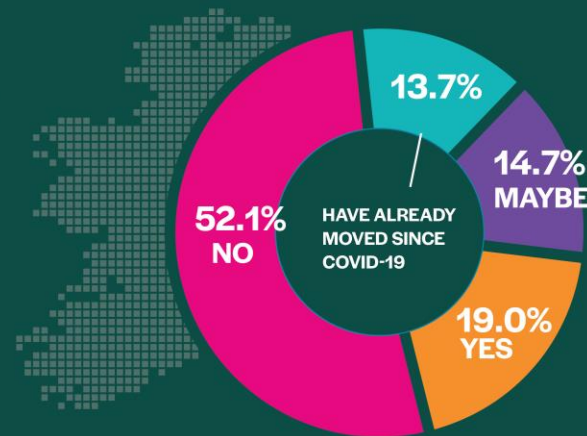
- West: Galway, Mayo, Roscommon
- Mid-East: Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow
- South-West: Cork, Kerry

FOR YES AND MAYBE ABOVE,
TOP LOCATIONS WOULD MOVE TO:

- Outside Ireland
- Mid-East: Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow
- West: Galway, Mayo, Roscommon and South-West: Cork, Kerry (joint 3rd)

OCTOBER 2023*

BASED ON YOUR
EXPERIENCE OF
REMOTE WORKING
SINCE COVID-19,
WOULD YOU
CONSIDER
RELOCATING?



FOR THOSE
WHO HAVE
ALREADY MOVED,
TOP LOCATIONS
MOVED TO:


- Cork
- Galway
- Kildare
- Mayo
- Donegal

FOR YES AND
MAYBE ABOVE,
TOP LOCATIONS
WOULD
MOVE TO:

- Outside of Ireland
- Galway
- Cork
- Kerry
- Wicklow

WDC Policy Briefing No 12 – Remote Work and Relocation (2024)

- Profile of those relocated – higher education & income
- Numbers relocating to rural/regional areas has a relatively greater impact on those regions
- Not just about employment – growth of local communities
- Employment should be diverse across different sectors incl ‘work remotely’ occupations.
- Diversity of employment has added benefit of reducing impact of sector specific shocks e.g. Covid & Brexit impacted heavily on tourism & agriculture



WESTERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Policy Briefing No. 12
Remote Working and Relocation
Evidence from the 2023 National Remote Working Survey
Deirdre Frost, January 2024

The Western Development Commission promotes economic and social development in the Western Region of Ireland (counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon, Galway and Clare). WDC Policy Briefings highlight and provide discussion and analysis of key regional policy issues.

Introduction

The WDC has been researching remote work in the context of regional and rural development for over two decades and some of this research is available [here](#). In 2019, before the pandemic, Government published [Remote Work in Ireland](#), which identified remote work as a policy tool to promote regional and rural development. It is only now however, due to the extensive remote working prompted by Covid-19, that we have considerable data on relocation enabled by remote working. This policy briefing presents new data and analyses specifically on relocation collected as part of the 2023 National Remote Working Survey, available [here](#).

National Remote Working Survey 2023

The WDC, in partnership with the University of Galway, have conducted annual national remote working surveys since the start of the pandemic. The previous national survey reports are available [here](#). Last year we published detailed data on the relocation patterns identified in the 2022 Survey, see [here](#).

The methodology of the 2023 Survey was similar to previous surveys. The survey is explicitly designed to capture employees views on remote working. Those whose work can be conducted fully remote or hybrid are the target respondents. As only some occupations are amenable to remote working, the survey findings are not intended to generalise to the entire working population.

It was an online survey with a self-selected sample and was open to those aged 18 years and over. The survey was conducted in September 2023. A total of 5,929 usable responses were received. Table 3 in the Appendix provides detail on the resident profile of survey responses.

Respondents were asked if they would consider relocating due to their experience of remote working since COVID-19. The responses for the last three years are presented in Table 1 below. There is a degree of consistency across the different relocation preferences over the three years suggesting a relatively stable pattern.

Table 1 Percentage of respondents indicating relocation preferences

Based on your experience of remote working would you consider relocating	2021	2022	2023
Would not consider relocating	52.9	52.5	52.1
Would consider relocating	24.3	21.6	19.0
May consider relocating	14.2	16.5	14.7
Already relocated within Ireland	8.2	9.3	13.7
Already relocated outside Ireland	0.3	0.2	0.5

Remote Working – Regional and Rural Regions: Conclusions

- The new normal – Hybrid?
- Census 2022 – some evidence that hybrid patterns may influence relocation closer to urban centres – counties close to Dublin, other urban centres & (OECD 2023)
- Implications for relocation destinations? Nearer urban centres?
- But regional locations are still preferred locations.
- Need to support remote/ hybrid employment in regional locations for workers **and** for regional resilience and growth



Further Information

deirdrefrost@wdc.ie

<https://westerndevelopment.ie/policy/publications/>

Sign up to WDC Insights blog mailing list: <https://westerndevelopment.ie/insights/>

www.westerndevelopment.ie



A scenic landscape featuring a large body of water, likely a lake or reservoir, surrounded by rolling hills and mountains. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. In the foreground, a small wooden boat is beached on a sandy shore. A decorative graphic of vertical lines of varying heights is positioned on the left side of the image, partially overlapping the water and the hills.

**WESTERN
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

Thanks for Listening