

MAJORITY OF EMPLOYEES FAVOUR WORKING REMOTELY

More than 95 per cent of employees in Ireland prefer to continue with some form of remote employment once the coronavirus pandemic ends, according to the findings of a new survey, which revealed that close to one in 10 people has already relocated or moved house, since working from home gave them more options.



The national remote working survey in Ireland, led by researchers from NUI Galway and the Western Development Commission, revealed that among those who could work remotely, 95% were in favour of working from home on an ongoing basis to some extent.

The majority of those (53%) said they would like to work remotely several times a week, 32% would like to work fully remotely with 10% favouring to work from home several times a month.

And furthermore, those who would like to work fully remotely (32%) represents a substantial increase on the first national survey conducted in April 2020, when it was then 12% in the immediate aftermath of the lockdown.

The overwhelming majority (95%) is a significant increase from the 83% in last year's survey who wanted to continue to work remotely for some or all of the time.

The number of respondents working fully remotely fell from 87% in April 2020 to 75% at the end of April 2021, due to a greater mix of onsite and remote working in the latest survey.

Led by the Whitaker Institute at NUI Galway and the Western Development Commission, the second annual national remote working survey in Ireland once again gained huge interest, and gathered responses from more than 6,400 employees.



"Appetite for fully remote or hybrid working is the preference of the vast majority of respondents," noted Prof Alma McCarthy, NUI Galway.

It was also the first survey to attain the views of managers' on the impact of remote work on their teams, with over 2,100 managers sharing their views and plans for remote work post pandemic.

The study revealed that managers felt differently to their employees when it came to remote working – 44% said it was more difficult to manage their team

remotely, while 12% believe that remote working negatively impacted their team's productivity; 47% per cent of managers found no difference between managing their team remotely compared to onsite.

In relation to worker productivity, 44% of team managers believed that remote working positively impacts the productivity of their team, and the same



"The roll-out of more than 400 hubs under the National Hubs Network will offer a suitable workplace close to home. A key challenge for leaders in organisations is to ensure that people who choose to work remotely are treated equally in terms of development and promotional opportunities" – Tomás O Síocháin, CEO of the Western Development Commission.

proportion believe that remote working makes no difference to the team's productivity.

TOP THREE ADVANTAGES

The most popular relocation destinations are in the West (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon), the South-West (Cork and Kerry) and the Border Region (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan and Sligo).

According to the survey's findings, the top three advantages of working remotely by employees were greater flexibility, the belief that 'life is made easier' and an increase in productivity. However, within the context of work-life balance, 51% of respondents said that they work more hours when they work remotely compared to working onsite, while 45 per cent said they work the same hours.

Three-quarters of the organisations surveyed have not decided how their teams will work once the pandemic ends. Of the 25% who had decided, 78% will work to a hybrid model.

The study also found that 45% of team managers believed they did not get the training required to manage their team remotely.

NATIONAL HUBS NETWORK

The survey was led by Prof Alma McCarthy and Noreen O'Connor from NUI Galway, and Tomás Ó Síocháin and Deirdre Frost at Western Development Commission.

Prof McCarthy, Head of the J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics at NUI Galway, said: "We added a new module to ask questions about managing teams remotely for those who have people management responsibilities.

"To our knowledge, the latter forms the first national survey to gather information about team manager perspectives. It is interesting to see that the appetite for fully remote or hybrid working is the preference of the vast

majority of respondents."

Tomás Ó Síocháin, CEO of the Western Development Commission, said: "The findings indicate a clear appetite to continue to work remotely. This will mean significant change for the way in which people work and the way that organisations support that work.

"The roll-out of more than 400 hubs under the National Hubs Network will offer a suitable workplace close to home. A key challenge for leaders in organisations is to ensure that people who choose to work remotely are treated equally in terms of development and promotional opportunities."

