

Research Brief

Scrutiny Committee	PRAP
Scrutiny Topic	Home & Agile Working How the experience of working remotely during the pandemic can inform future policy on autonomy at work, operating within a culture of care and trust
Lead researcher	Therese Gladys Hingco
Project deadline	March 2021
Date of proposal	October 2020

Research Aims

To establish:

- The empirical and perceptual impact of homeworking on Council employees (*those line managed and managers*) during the COVID-19 period
- What learning can be taken from the experience of Council employees
- What arrangements and support would create an effective and successful homeworking experience for Council employees?
- What can we learn externally about home working best practice?

Objectives

More specifically, this research will identify the impact of homeworking by focussing on the following:

- **Employee performance and productivity** and the reason for any variation in performance or productivity.
- **Team related performance** or teamwork, contribution and delivery of team outputs, information exchange i.e. sharing of information and transfer of knowledge
- **General job satisfaction** including the individuals satisfaction with
 - the current homeworking pattern or arrangement,
 - the volume of work,
 - the outputs and outcomes delivered,
 - their control and autonomy over tasks and working arrangements, and
 - their overall attitude and enthusiasm towards their work.
- **Career aspirations** and progression
- **Commitment to organisational values**, ethos and goals
- **Relationships with co-workers** i.e. formal (work related) and social interactions, trust, including impacts of social and professional isolation
- **Work-life balance** - balancing of work and home commitments
- **Individual well-being**, personal/family relationships
- **Individual physical and mental health**

This research will also identify the working arrangements and types of support that would enable effective and successful homeworking. This will include specifically looking into:

- **the role of managers** in promoting effective communication, trust, performance management and supporting individual and team training and development
- access to appropriate technology/equipment and **ICT support**

- support for ensuring effective **work-life balance**
- support for staff **health and well being**

Type of research

Two approaches will be taken for this research:

Literature and document based review looking into past and current research on the impact and effectiveness of home working, as well as the arrangements and the types of support that enable effective and successful homeworking. This will provide information on those aspects that cannot be covered by the surveys.

Quantitative research – Undertake a survey, routed accordingly, to establish the views of home working line managed employees and managers separately. This will provide data to establish the differences in the views of managers and employees on issues and on the effectiveness of home working

Timelines

Timelines for reporting will be :

w/c 7th December 2020 – Desk Based Research Report

w/c 8th March 2021 – Survey Findings

Research sources

Line managed staff from various service areas of the Council.

Managers from various service areas of the Council

Relevant literature on autonomous working

Resources

Additional staffing capacity to assist quantitative analysis i.e. seek available support form staff at members Services

Human resources assistance in identifying and targeting respondents to the survey

Outputs / deliverables and dissemination

What outputs are expected? E.g. written and/or oral reports, presentations, draft reports, debrief. Will records of the interviews/group discussions be available?

Literature based review – Explore current trends and issues around homeworking that cannot be covered by the empirical research. This will also be useful in forming the topic areas that should be covered by the primary research elements of the project. Summary to brief the T&F on key topics.

Primary Research Report – report of quantitative survey findings on the subject areas identified

Presentation to the Task and Finish group

Potential problems

Are there any potential problems that could impact upon the research through the availability of respondents, lack of resources etc.

Agreed

Name & signature	Date
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