



ADVANCED
WORKPLACE
INSTITUTE

RETURN TO THE OFFICE





Return to the Office

1. Intro

To gather insights and share knowledge with members, the Advanced Workplace Institute ran a 2-part interactive on-line workshop involving workplace leaders in the UK and US. The session was designed to explore the implications for organisations as they begin to consider how to implement a safe return to the office and effectively adjust to the 'new normal'. This report sets out the findings from the workshops along with insights from the AWI expert team.

Perspective

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has brought about an unprecedented impact on the lives of millions of people across the world, with a third of the global population currently living under some form of lockdown. As a result, working life has dramatically, and almost instantly been transformed – with all but essential workers working from home, and organisations moving to the most extreme agile working model imaginable. Working in this way has presented challenges of course, but also opportunities to test the possible.

Now several European countries, following the lead of many Asian countries, are looking to ease the aggressive lockdown measures that were rapidly implemented. Every country will ease out of lockdown differently, but what is certain, is that the post COVID-19 world will not look or operate in the same way that it did only a few short months ago. The question now is what does the future look like, and how can organisations make an effective return to the office.

Management Summary

Although a challenging time for those managing the workplace, it's also a time when their worth and role is now centre stage and a time for CRE, HR, FM leaders to be bold, re-position themselves as strategic leaders and work with business leaders to develop new strategies based on progressive models of work and workplace.

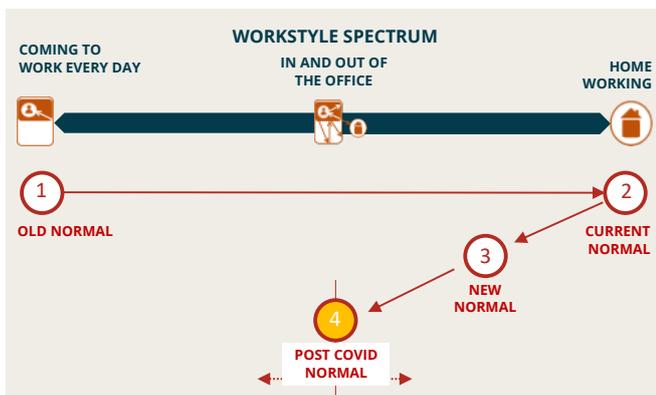
THE CURRENT CONDITIONS ARE ELEVATING THE TOPICS OF 'WORKPLACE' AND 'WORKPLACE STRATEGY' HIGH ONTO THE 'C' SUITE AGENDA.

It's also potentially a time to transition to a holistic Workplace Management model working together with IT, HR, Business Continuity professionals and business leaders to consider how the workplace is managed wherever the workplace exists. Who is responsible for managing the safety and effectiveness of the thousands of home offices now being used by employees as their base? There is unlikely to be a better platform for Workplace leaders to present the links between their roles, business strategy and the value they deliver.

In the short term, the biggest challenges for members are associated with determining what new arrangements need to be made in order to create a safe and hygienic working place, preparing for re-opening, determining who should be invited to return first (and maintaining fairness) and the management of communities working from home for a prolonged period.

To prepare for a return to the office, members are considering new cleaning regimes, touchless operation, re-definition of space and practices to create virus-free environments and ensure 2m social distancing at all times.

An issue outside members control is how to ensure employees have a safe experience on their journeys to the office. Social distancing through the daily commute will be a challenge, and we expect many employees to resist the calls from their organisation's to return. We wonder whether organisations or governments will consider staggering start and end times in order to flatten out demand on public transport and provide PPE.



Given the relatively low numbers of employees that we expect to occupy the office until the lockdown is totally released and the 'dead' workplace experience employees will find when they get to the office, we wonder whether some organisations will decide to maintain a wholly home-based operation. The cost and complexity of re-defining and re-configuring office practices, and spaces may dissuade organisations from opening the office at all until the lockdown is substantially released.

Employees will need to be convinced that they are safe before they return to the office in large numbers. Effective communication, engagement and 'change back' management will be key to ensuring each individual has been able to evaluate the change and come to terms with it emotionally.

Looking to the future, most organisations, teams and individual members are adapting to working from home well, and the experience is clearly opening the eyes of senior leaders to more advanced working models.

COVID-19 HAS CATAPULTED US INTO THE MOST EXTREME MODEL OF AGILE WORKING IMAGINABLE. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER WE'LL SIMPLY GO BACK TO THE OLD WORLD OF WORK OR WHETHER WE CAN USE THE CRISIS TO RE-INVENT THE WAY WE WORK IN ORDER TO CHANGE TO 'NEW NORMAL' ONCE THE CRISIS IS OVER.

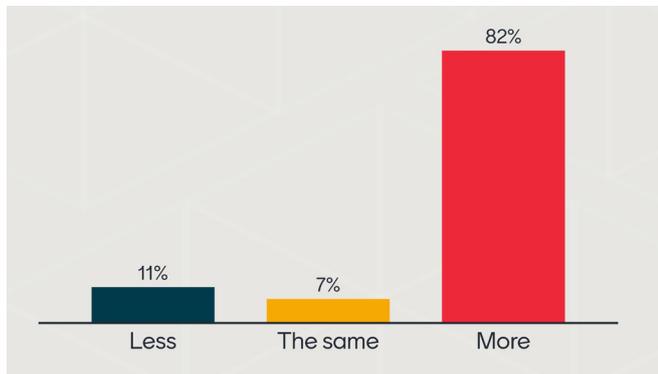
Members think that the fusion of challenging economic conditions and the new-found appreciation of advanced working models by leaders will drive a review of workplace strategies. Leaders are likely to want to consider the purpose of their workplaces forensically and consequently determine their size, location, design and nature taking an evidence-based approach.

Most members expect their organisations to need less office space in the future with the 'home' playing a role 'post lockdown' when we reach what we're describing as the 'new Post Covid normal' state.

The 'Post Covid normal' is more working at home, less office space, more mobility, new workplace designs, greater interest in hygiene and health, less business travel and less carbon. The crisis is creating the conditions for the re-consideration of many issues associated with work and life. It can be a moment for change for those individuals and organisations that can grasp it.

Organisations almost universally expect home working to feature as significant part of workplace strategy post COVID-19

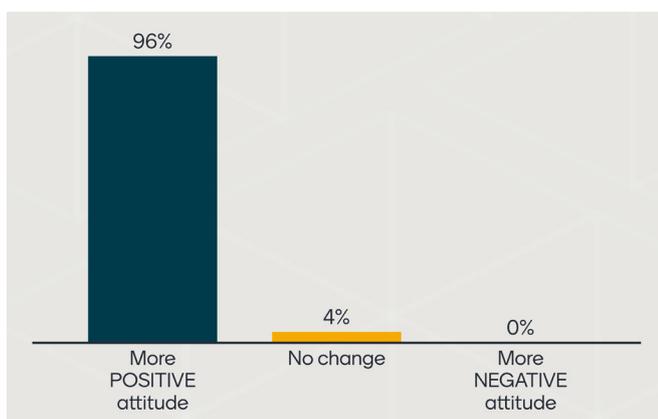
Question: How much do you expect your workforce to work from home post-crisis? (Compared to before the crisis).



We asked our members, given the success of their home-working transition during lockdown, whether they anticipated this would lead to more, the same, or less home working going forward. The vast majority (82%) of the members voted that they believed their organisations would be working more from home, even after the COVID-19 pandemic had passed.

Leaders now view working from home more positively than before the COVID-19 outbreak.

Question: Since lockdown began have you sensed a change in attitudes from your leaders to working from home?

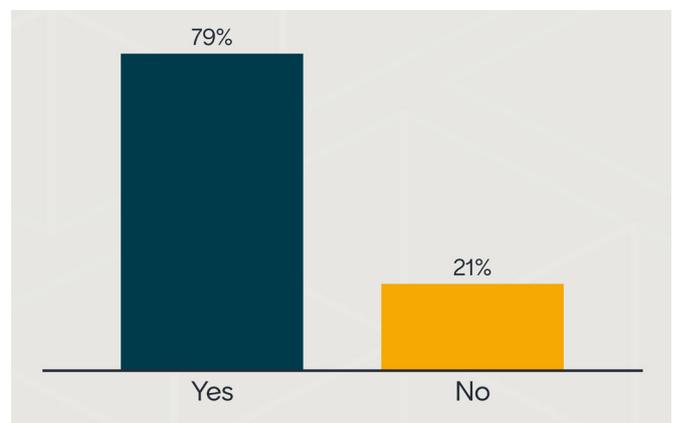


Traditionally the barriers to introducing new models of working have been linked to negative attitudes of some leaders believing that out of sight is out of mind. Leaders attitudes matter because leaders have power to halt a programme or support it with enthusiasm.

To test whether there had been a change, we asked whether members had noticed a change in attitude from their leaders to working from home. From the responses it's clear that many leaders are beginning to think about these models of working in a positive way. 96% of respondents noticed a positive change, while 0% noticed negative change in attitude.

Leaders see the need for less office space in the future

Question: Do you think your leaders may be seeing less of a need for space?



We asked our members if they felt that their leaders were seeing less of a need for office space now that their organisation is operating with all, or most of their workforce out of the office.

79% of members believe that space reduction is on the minds of their leaders. Of course, it is very possible that space would be retained and repurposed to better suit the new ways of working that are being formed during the crisis, and this is reflected by 21% of members who did not expect their leaders to see less of a need for space.

3. The challenge of return

Restarting the economy

While protecting lives is the top priority for most governments, as we move forward, steps will need to be taken to restart economies to avoid a deep global recession. While many office workers will be able to function remotely, it is clear that a proportion may need to re-enter the office. So how do we restart safely, and what do we need to keep in mind as we begin this journey?

Every country will exit lockdown differently, based on their own circumstances. Predicting how the UK or US will move forward is largely guesswork. What is clear however, is that the exit needs to be slow and staggered in order to avoid a second peak of the disease and the likelihood is for a 'stop-start' model as governments work out the impact of slackening lockdown measures on levels on illness and death rates.

While there are many initiatives that organisations can take to make their offices as safe and hygienic as possible, the congestion of the daily peak-time commute will make it almost impossible to maintain social distancing unless government staggers start and end times for different sectors. We believe that as a consequence, many workers will be reluctant to return to the office until they can be guaranteed safety. We expect many workers to ask, 'why do you want me to return to the office when I've been doing my job perfectly well from home for the last ten weeks?'. Taking these factors together, we expect the occupancy of office buildings to be low for the foreseeable future and for many office workers to be working from home for many months.



Given the vast number of questions that workers will need to have answered before they will be prepared to return to work, we believe organisations will need to consider developing effective change management and communications programmes in order to successfully address the questions from professional workers and enable them to become emotionally comfortable to return.

Whatever path we take, individual choices and the risks which individuals will be willing to take will have a considerable impact on the outcome and efficiency of our move back into life after the lockdown.

Are face masks the answer?

To address safety concerns felt by employees, many countries are advising their citizens to wear face masks whilst in public places and some employers are advising employees to wear masks whilst in the office.

"DECISIONS ON RECOMMENDING MASKS TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS FAR FROM BEING A TRIVIAL ISSUE"

If effective, the use of masks could be a potential game changer in getting people to feel comfortable to commute and return to the office, in theory providing a barrier to infection and a psychological comfort blanket.

“EVEN IF THERE WERE ENOUGH MASKS FOR THE ENTIRE POPULATION [...] THERE IS VERY LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT ANY TYPE OF CLOSED MASK PROTECTS AGAINST THE TRANSFER OF THE VIRUS”

AWA's Director of Workplace Science, Colombine Gardair has looked at the pros & cons and myths of wearing face masks.

What is seemingly a straightforward question – should the general population wear masks to mitigate against the spread of the disease – is, it turns out, far from it. The World Health Organization (WHO) says that only two groups of people should wear protective masks; (1) those who are sick and showing symptoms; and (2) those who are caring for people who are sick and showing symptoms. The UK government is not currently advising the majority of people to wear masks but has said it will consider what its scientific advisers say. By contrast, citizens of Hong Kong have been advised to wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded spaces.

So why is there such discord between the UK and HK governments advice, and why has there been such reticence to advise mask-wearing in the UK on a wider scale?

Practical considerations

Primarily there are supply chain and procurement issues. With supplies of PPE (personal protective equipment) for the NHS in an ever-increasing demand in a situation where there is an ever-decreasing supply, there are well-founded fears that issuing masks nationwide will thin the supply for NHS doctors, nurses and other key workers who need them most.

Efficacy of mask-wearing

There is debate in the scientific community as to whether wearing masks is an effective method to prevent the spread of the virus. Much of the received knowledge on mask-wearing is based on studies of the SARS virus, not COVID-19. While the viruses share some similarities, one of their fundamental differences is particle size (COVID-19 being much smaller than SARS), meaning that most masks do not protect against microparticles that may lead to the transfer of the virus.

It is also important to note that not all masks are created equal – broadly there are three types of face-covering that are frequently being referred to throughout the COVID-19 pandemic:

N95 masks

- + Designed to protect the wearer as it creates a tight seal around the mouth, nose and chin
- + Some also protect other people (when there's no valve)
- Expensive
- Most are non-reusable, uncomfortable to wear and need to be test fitted
- Supply chain issues

Surgical masks

- + Designed to protect other people (especially against large particles)
- + Protects against some of the largest particles if someone directly sneezes at you for instance
- Limited protection against smaller particle and airborne virus as not sealed around the face

Non-surgical masks

- not enough evidence that it protects the wearer or other people, especially from small particles
- some evidence that it could be of a vector for contamination if improper use
- not advised to be worn by health professionals

Based on current scientific evidence, it is not possible to make a valid recommendation that mask wearing will have a significant positive impact on reducing the spread of the virus, unless everyone systematically maintains the correct level of hygiene and wears the appropriate type of mask.

Psychological effects of mask wearing

As we move forward and need people to come to the office, they will need to feel safe or they simply won't be prepared to take the risk of travel. The use of masks may create a psychological feeling of safety and provide a sense of comfort that the individual is protected. However, this may have a number of implications.

“IF ONLY VULNERABLE OR DISEASED PEOPLE ARE INSTRUCTED TO WEAR MASKS, THIS CAN CREATE A BIAS IN THE ‘HEALTHY’ POPULATION”

Studies show that if only a proportion of people in society are mandated to wear masks because

they are infected or are suspected to be infected, this could create a bias in the healthy population. Overtly showing who is infected, or possibly infected in this way may lead to discrimination and anti-social behaviour against the masked population.

Alternatively, if *everyone* is mandated to wear a mask, as it is anticipated this will have the positive impact of making people feel safe and more confident, in leaving their homes and returning back to their daily routines.

“PEOPLE MAY FEEL TOO SAFE AND IGNORE OTHER MEASURES, SUCH AS SOCIAL DISTANCING AND HAND WASHING, LEADING TO MORE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS”

There is a negative side to this coin however, in that masks worn in this way give a false sense of security to the public, who, as a result are less vigilant in adhering to other mitigating measures which are proven to work – such as social distancing and hand washing. The overall effect of this is to actually increase the spread of the virus.

Mask Wearing Pros and Cons summary table

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could slightly reduce transmission in community settings if everyone, including people who have been infected but are asymptomatic and contagious, wear them • Could moderately reduce transmission in household settings if everyone in the household wear them • Universal use of face masks could prevent discrimination of individuals who wear masks when unwell because everybody is wearing a mask • Use of face mask could provide a psychological feeling of safety in community settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase supply shortage (price surge, supply constraints) of medical face masks to frontline healthcare professionals • Improper use of face masks, such as not following correct hygiene procedure or not changing disposable masks, could jeopardise the protective effect and even increase the risk of infection • Use of face masks could provide a false sense of safety with the risk of people taking greater risks, practicing social distancing less or being less thorough with other preventative measures that have been showed to have greater efficacy such as regularly washing hands and avoiding touching one's face

4. Lessons from the rest of the world

Different countries and states are at very different stages in dealing with COVID-19, which means there are lessons to learn from the actions being taken by different companies in countries around the world. Our Senior Associates Matthew Atkin and Steve Hargis provided insights into how East Asia and North America are responding to and coping with the COVID-19 crisis.

What is going on and Who is making the decisions?

East Asia: The situation is changing daily, and different parts of China are following different rules. However, in general bars (not in Hong Kong) and restaurants are open with social distancing measures. Domestic flights have also now restarted, and senior schools (open only in Hong Kong for exams), construction sites, govt offices, and the manufacturing industry are all open. Shopping malls and restaurants are also starting to refill. The offices are slowly opening with social distancing measures, and robust safety protocols, most notably occupiers are temperature checking all staff as they enter the building – often using a FLIR (Forward Looking InfraRed) scanner. China is generally using smartphone tracking utilising a coloured QR code to allow or deny access to buildings (e.g. a traveller from Shanghai to Beijing may have a red code and be denied access until it turns green 14 days later). Citizens phones are linked to their national ID cards.

North America: As China is six weeks ahead of the USA, big organisations are learning from their Asian counterparts. The Central government in the USA is not clearly defining what needs to be done, and hence most organisations are turning towards bodies like the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Occupational Safety and Health

Administration (OSHA) for guidelines to follow. The lack of direction from the government has also led to the 50 different states having very different regulations, meaning some Republican states might open imminently.

Schools are closed with no summer school, and most are preparing for virtual sessions even in the fall. Government offices, public safety hospitals, food production, hardware stores, food sales, network security, and other organisations working on COVID-19 related activities are all open. Doctors and banks are using controlled openings requiring prior appointments, while restaurants are currently open only to take away.

How are organisations adapting to working from home? Have there been any changes in attitudes?

East Asia: There has been a considerable change in attitudes towards working from home, as employees find that they are generally managing well with the current situation. There has been an acceptance of the new way of working even in the industries that previously shunned the subject.

North America: Working virtually is not a new concept for many of the organisations in North America, and hence their concerns are different. The main concern in the US is whether they can recreate the social buzz of offices virtually. Previously offices were considered a ‘magnet’ or a ‘hub’ of both business and social activity. Now with so many more people working from home, there they must bring that experience online.

What role is public opinion playing?

East Asia: Less than in the West, as there is a culture of following government advice. Also, since they have already survived SARS, they have been better prepared for this pandemic with better-equipped hospitals and more faith in their government. Public opinion here does not generally revolve around the concern of going back into offices and catching something themselves but is focussed on the fear that they might give the disease to more critical people running the business.

North America: Public opinion has driven significant unrest in some parts of America. Small group gatherings and protests have been used to express the views of minority groups reluctant to continue lockdown due to the impact on jobs, business failure and sense of having civil rights denied. From an organisational point of view, in professional knowledge-based organisations, there is a greater shareholder focus on the 'brand' with companies looking for ways to demonstrate care to their organisations. As the difference between the way organisations treat their people is highly visible in the USA, we believe organisations will pay more attention to their corporate social responsibility plans, their carbon footprint and building a better image to support future staff attraction and retention.

What is going to guide organisations to help towards opening?

East Asia: Because China was the first country into lockdown, it is now releasing restrictions and organisations are dealing well with the return. However, if the numbers of deaths begin to rise again (as they have in Singapore), China may well tighten the restrictions again. So, there may continue to be a pattern of continually adjusting lockdown measures, tightening and weakening them conditional to the circumstances. As of right now, they are continuing to operate in the new 'part office, part home' way of working.

North America: In North America decisions seem more politically motivated, as each state attempts to balance financial hardship and number of infections. The approaches can be very different state to state, with some states opening for business as usual, while others employ strict lockdowns (Georgia is opening on Friday April 24th while California is not). As is the case in China, there is likely to be a flux of lockdown exit and re-entry based on how the circumstances change. The only thing that organisations can really do is contingency plan for different scenarios.

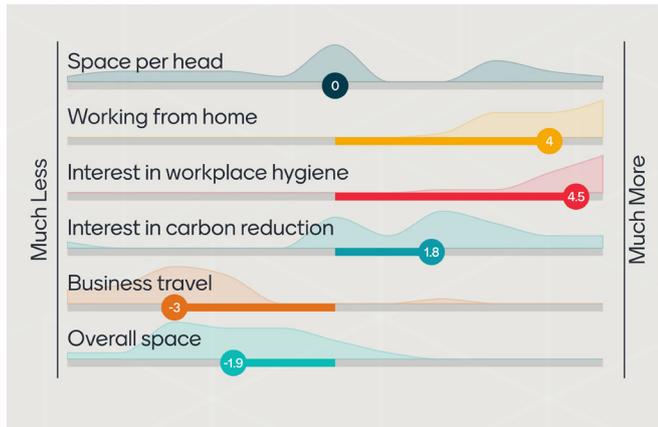
5. Old normal, current normal, new normal

Over the last few weeks employees in office-based organisations have been catapulted into the most extreme model of agile working, ie working from home every day. They went rapidly from the 'old normal' to the 'current normal' and at some point we will return, not to the old normal, but a 'new normal'. It's reported that many business leaders are asking the question 'why do we need offices?' and 'what is the purpose' of the office. So, many are seeking to use the moment to re-evaluate their Workplace Strategies and determining what their 'new normal' end state might look like.

To assess how member organisations were feeling about the general characteristics of 'new normal', we asked our members to predict how this future might look based on their organisational perspectives across a number of factors:

- space per head;
- levels of working from home;
- interest in workplace hygiene;
- interest in carbon reduction;
- business travel; and
- overall space.

The new normal:



Our graph shows our members output on the 6 themes. They were asked to predict the change in the themes from -5 (much less) to 5 (much more). Space per head averaged at 0 (no change) but had a wide range of responses predicting both more and less space needed. In the short term it is clear that the office needs to be safe, and that requires social distancing, which of course means that you will have to provide more space per person in the building. In the long term however, and assuming that the social distancing requirement diminishes, you may see that buildings reduce their size per person, as they focus on amenities, and collaborative spaces.

Working from home had a very high score of 4 (much more change), this was unsurprising given the overwhelmingly positive response we received from members on home working earlier in the session.

Interest in workplace hygiene received the highest score of 4.5 (much more). Again, this is to be expected given the sudden significance that

cleaning, and sanitisation now has, although we might expect this drop off slightly in the coming years as the memories of the virus start to fade.

Interest in carbon reduction was expected to be more (1.8). Carbon reduction is a theme which will remain for the foreseeable future, it was no surprise to see that our members expected the interest to go up going forward.

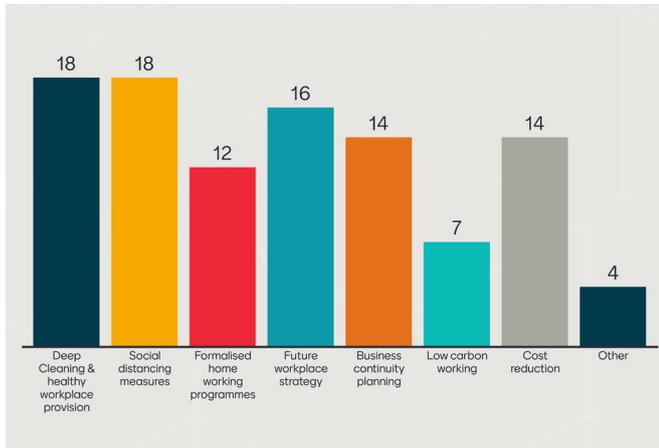
Business Travel was given a score of -3 (much less). With organisations forced to meet digitally, many are seeing that the expense, carbon output, and time spent on Business Travel is very often wasted.

Overall space was also expected to drop -1.9 (less). Our members believe the organisations of the future will by and large be occupying less space, and this was expected given their positive feedback on their leaders attitude to agile/home working, and their leaders attitudes towards their future space needs.

6. What initiatives are you working now linked to a return to 'new normal'

Having heard their experiences of working during lockdown, and their predictions for the 'new normal' after the crisis, we were interested to find what steps our members had planned or were proactively taking for the return to the office and beyond.

What initiatives are your organisation planning for the return to the office and beyond?



We presented our members with 7 broad initiatives (plus other): deep cleaning and healthy workplace provision, social distancing measures, formalised home working programmes, future workplace strategy, business continuity planning, low carbon working and cost reduction. Members were asked to select the initiatives that their organisations were either already doing or was planning to do.

Deep cleaning and healthy workplace (18) and social distancing measures (18) were, as expected, the topics that most organisations were already working on. This was closely followed by the future workplace strategy (16). This was no surprise, as all organisations are affected by the crisis and need to plan for what lies ahead.

Although formalised home working programmes were being developed by many of our members (12), they were not as prevalent as other initiatives. This was attributed to the fact that many already have policies in place and so do not need to make changes to adapt to COVID-19.

Lower scores for Low carbon working could be because the impact of implementing the all other initiatives would be a lower carbon footprint (reduced transport, lesser real estate, less business travel etc).

7. Playback of best practice and group discussions (Day 2)

What we have seen through our exploration into a 'Return to the office' is a need to address four aspects in parallel, namely, the tactical initiatives associated with creating a safe, healthy office and the communications strategies needed to encourage a return to 'new normal', structured support for large long term populations of home-based workers and a refresh of Workplace strategies driven by new attitudes to working from home and the very real financial challenges that many organisations are facing is a consequence of the economic downturn.

To address these and provide members with insights, information and answers to questions, we formed 4 working groups based on member interests.



Social Distancing

In order to maintain the health and safety of employees Social Distancing will be needed for the foreseeable future. In returning to work this poses many questions in relation to employees journeys to work and the creation of a workplace that enables social distancing. Whilst it may be possible to re-define the available space on working floors and re-define the capacity of meeting rooms to limit congestion, there are many challenges in other areas of the building where people typically come into close proximity. Cafeteria, lifts, social spaces, toilets all create challenges to the ability to enable social distancing.

The group developed a list of questions and focused on the high priority topics in order to develop answers. The results are set out in the table below.

TOPIC	INITIATIVES & IDEAS	UNKNOWN/ BLOCKERS
<i>Commuting to the office – what are the rail and train companies doing?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the numbers of staff travelling to the office by encouraging WFH. Provide shift patterns for workers to avoid rush hour times. 	Govt needs to set policies as do the mass transport providers
<i>What physical workplace changes do businesses need to make, who is making the decisions and in what timeframe?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large scale physical changes not generally taking place. Reduced capacity in meeting rooms. Some organisations looking to only have 25% of the workforce in the office at any time. Who comes into the office needs to be based on both business criticality and mental health criticality (ie those who are uncomfortable with WFH). In China staff sit in front of cardboard screens when eating in staff restaurants. Testing measures (generally temperature but may advance to antibody/virus) implemented on entry to buildings. BCP sites being used in Hong Kong for teams to split their work locations and maintain social distancing. Reduced entry points to buildings 	<p>Notice period to return to offices is not known and may be short. Direction will initially come from Central Govt, followed by individual organisation interpretation. Need to understand what the Landlords of multi-tenanted buildings propose</p> <p>The use of BCP sites is not proving popular as staff often prefer to WFH.</p>
<i>How to make sure SD occurs in every area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In catering facilities floor spaces taped out, no self service food. Perspex screens provided in front of servers. In China lifts can be taped out to reduce occupancy. Different staircases dedicated to different groups of staff/ floors. Staggered lunchtimes. 	Lifts, stairs and toilet facilities are often Landlord managed and organisations will need to know/ influence what they are proposing. Controlled use of toilet facilities likely to be challenging in heavily populated offices.
<i>Masks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In HK and China staff are generally expected to wear masks throughout the working day. Masks are distributed on entry to the building 	Availability of masks. Central Govt policy
<i>Do we need to go back to allocated desks?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced desk cleaning and potentially personal keyboards/ mouse should mitigate the risks so no need to move to dedicated desks 	Staff perceptions of hygiene may make desk sharing challenging, however if desks are cleaned before occupation desk sharing should be perceivably safe.
<i>How best to communicate the need to reinforce personal responsibility – clear desk, hand cleaning, storage lockers etc? How do you make sure SD is being achieved without being heavy handed.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication should be based upon providing a clear rational understanding of the requirements as well as the need for personal responsibility 	Different staff will have different perspectives on what is appropriate
<i>How to make sure multi-tenanted buildings operate SD policies and other tenants comply?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants committees and regular dialogue with Landlords to set common practices and standards 	Different tenants may have differing perspectives. Landlords may not wish to incur additional costs or may be indifferent to requirements
<i>How do we help people really understand what 2m is?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some form of physical demonstration on entry to buildings, floor markings/distance pole etc 	As staff operate within an office environment they may forget, become complacent or even have no choice when in smaller environments such as lifts/ meeting rooms
<i>How do we deal with parking spaces?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With less staff in the office less parking spaces will be needed, hence adopt alternate space parking where possible 	May be insufficient spaces to provide alternate parking
<i>How do organisations bring clients back to our offices,? Should they be treated differently?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require pre-attendance health questionnaire. Ensure no unplanned visits 	Client perception may be damaged
<i>How do we make people feel good and take away their worries?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication of the initiative/measures being taken, the accommodations they as individuals will be required to make and why their return to the office (rather than WFH) is appropriate 	Some staff will want to return and others will not.
<i>What will be the appropriate ratio of staff being in the office compared to the capacity available and who actually needs to be in the office? For who are we modelling a return? How to distinguish between those who 'need' to be back in the office and those who strongly 'want' to be back in the office.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A very careful analysis of roles will need to be undertaken to remove any previous conceptions on where a role can be carried out. Some organisations are working on 25%, others on 50% or more. Organisations should carry out a needs based 'zero based' space analysis 	Some staff will have different physical and mental needs regarding being in the office which may not be based on their role and more on them as individuals and their circumstances.

Hygiene

Maintaining a hygienic, virus free workplace has now become a top priority for Workplace leaders and employees given that the virus can remain infectious on a surface for several

days. As well as new, deep and dynamic cleaning regimes designed to make sure spaces are cleaned before occupancy, 'touch free' activation of lifts, doors, toilet flushes could remove the risk of surfaces harbouring viruses.

TOPIC	INITIATIVES & IDEAS	UNKNOWN/ BLOCKERS
Controlling Fiscal Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get competitive pricing to benchmark • Shift monies from reduced services in other areas – catering for instance • Work with suppliers to revise scopes and refine pricing, revise budgeting expectations going forward 	Price gouging
Research new processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decontamination for extended periods • Materials that repel • Overnight 'fogging' products • Time required to research • Service providers for NHS • Self Cleaning application for elevator buttons • Electrically charged methods to repeat • Is there a way to scan to eye infection • Anti-viral paints • Copper or other materials 	<p>Who is innovating?</p> <p>Time required to research</p>
Cleaning scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the 'optics' of cleaning - One or two cleaning professionals VISIBLE during the day • Prior-to-return deep cleaning - opportunity to clean in more drastic ways while building is unoccupied • Day cleaning meshed with WFH schedules • Night cleaning may be safer • Deep clean single event prior to return – or cyclically – three weeks for rest of year • Continue to manage risk 	<p>Day cleaning interrupting the work schedule of users</p> <p>When to schedule – not too early, not too late</p>
Cleaning products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canister clean for deep cleaning overnight • Clorox antibacterial product – shift from consumer products to commercial 	
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep ducts clean • One time system flushing while buildings are empty • Ultraviolet HVAC treatments 	
REW control of behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue protocols, make user expectations known • Coordinate responses with landlords • Elevate status of cleaning staff - Low wages of service providers is a deterrent – potential to elevate status • Elevate conversation to C-Suite • Make process and expectations visible for capacity, hygiene, etc. • Coordination with landlords • Organizations need to prepare but return at their own pace to make sure cleaning is done well 	

Home working

Whilst all organisations have been forced to impose working from home, providing technology and tactical furniture solutions, screens, chairs etc. it is becoming recognised that if home working is to form a key plank in future workplace

strategy, more formalised arrangements need to be put in place to ensure that the employers duty of care for the employee continues to be discharged, even though employees are not within environments owned by their employers.

Points from discussions and guidance.

Before the lockdown, working from home was a luxury, now everyone is doing it, but it's very different to what working from home was/would be like under "normal" circumstances. The enforced working from home has been a great leveller: we are all working under very similar conditions (children aside). It has also forced or fast tracked some programmes, accelerated rollout of technology to enable remote working for all (including some roles where working from home was inconceivable before, e.g. traders), brought the return of home working programmes after these had been 'cancelled' and everyone had been recalled into the office.

Staff expectations about wfh have really changed – people have 'proved' that it works and they can be productive. But when some are back in the office, it will be more difficult to justify virtual meetings as opposed to dragging people into the office. From these observations, two major themes arose: in the short term, how do we decide who goes back to the office first, and in the long term, how do we make sure that we capitalised on what we've learned and formalise our home working practices in a way that is fair across the organisation and not driven by managers' views or desires to have their team in the office.

QUESTION	ANSWER	EXAMPLES
SHORT TERM		
Should the decision be made on which roles need to be in the office because of how critical they are to the business?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some workers have remained in the office because their work couldn't be carried out remotely (lab equipment required and/or part of the COVID-19 response efforts for example). Others have kept themselves busy remotely with other projects, but may need to be able to get back to the office to access equipment (i.e. scientific work) in order to resume the full range of their activities The support roles that are essential to running the offices (cleaning, security, some IT functions, etc.) – but the timing and scale of returning to the office must be communicated early enough to prepare Discussion with leaders should happen now to identify who needs to be available in the office (and why) People need to have a say in whether they return to the office – some really won't want to (fear of not being safe, living with vulnerable people that need shielding, working from home just works better for them for personal reasons, etc.) 	
What about those individuals whose presence in the office isn't business critical but for whom remote working isn't working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about the mental wellbeing of staff working from home – we need to give everyone a chance to voice their difficulties, and for them to feel heard Survey staff population to make sure they have what they need to work from home (training, equipment, support) Budget and catalogue of home equipment (screens, chairs, keyboards, etc.) with HR support to choose which is best suited to their requirements 	<p>\$500 per associate to buy additional equipment for home workers</p> <p>shipping of office chairs to people's homes</p>
Should we implement rotas and how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering short and long term aspects – who is critical to have in the office and who could 'rotate' – taking turns to be in the office 	<p>A third of the organisation back in the office and rotating weekly</p> <p>Blue / Red teams taking turns</p>
What ratio of home vs office workers initially?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressive return mirroring how the organisation transitioned to lockdown 	<p>30% in the office vs 70% at home first</p>
LONG TERM		
How do we demonstrate that we did not lose productivity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different areas of the business will have different measures 	
How do we ensure that wfh is fair and not down to manager discretion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear guidance and policies Managers training about working remotely Have mechanisms in place to maintain social interaction when working apart 	

Thoughts about solutions / process steps:

1. Organisations need to take this opportunity to get their wfh policy and processes in order – so that whenever the lockdown is eased, they know where they want to head and under what framework. Decide your future working policy now – don't wait. Recognise what this period is going to do in terms of expectations, managing responsibilities and risk and giving choice to people to work where it best suits them.
2. They should be actively encouraging regular discussions about how things are doing during lockdown. People need to build up a history of how things have gone, so they can defend their choice about where to work in the future. Managers and individuals need that audit trail, in whatever way, such that in 6 months' time (or whenever) they don't get into the situation of saying – well, this didn't work, that didn't work, so we need to come back into the office. We should actively MONITOR this period.
3. Ensure evidence is gathered about performance / productivity / views of how things are going – don't let a vacuum grow where people form unfounded judgements about how well they are coping
4. Ensure this time is as effective as possible by really trying to make it a success and seize opportunities – not just teeter on the edge waiting for the office to be opened up
5. There is a strategic decision to be made about criticality of ROLES that need to be in the office – and how frequently and why do they need to be physically in the office – what is the justification?
6. AWA suggested steps would be:
 - Review the existing policy and the organisational support for this way of working – what do the leaders want to endorse?
 - Review the basis upon which people agree with their managers the criteria that require them to be in the office and with what frequency
 - They agree a process for deciding which is clear and transparent / fair for all – and role specific, not person specific – the role and the person should be considered separately
 - They discuss on 1:1 basis what the needs of individual / manager / team / organisation are regarding the role and the person's situation / circumstances (the person must be able to advocate for what makes them most effective and productive – and have this heard)
 - They then consider how to accommodate everyone's choices / preferences within the team, to ensure the team works well.
 - Establish working together agreements NOW – don't wait.

Future Workplace Strategy

For leaders and workplace professionals the instant move to home working has brought an awareness that home based working may be a key part of future workplace strategies. New questions are arising: what is the central 'office' workplace actually for? What tasks really require people to get together physically in the same space at the same time that we can't do using technologies like Zoom and Teams? If we do need to get people together, for how long and how often, and with what tools? How much space do we really need? Where does it need to be located? What functions does it need to support and how does it need to be designed? Is there a role for a 'close to home' office for those that prefer not to work at home, but don't wish to travel to a city?

Key business drivers for your organisations



Group Output

The group scored their organisations drivers for the workplace by allocating 100 points against 10 Drivers. Reducing cost of overheads, improving productivity and enhancing business continuity came top. The diagrams below captured the key-points of discussions related to those profiles.

Reducing the cost of overheads

Our familiarity with working successfully away from others will substantially **reduce the amount of future business travel**

We will **reduce our footprint**. We don't need desks for everyone and shared desk scenarios and sharing ratios can be increased

We will **reduce our desk count, increase the collaborative spaces** and improve the furniture selection

We **may increase shift work, expand the work-day** and limit the on-site capacity at any one time

When implementing projects **we will eliminate swing space**- we will just send people home instead

We will deliver a **mind-shift change** about the motives of reducing real estate and real estate cost

We **will investigate whether the trust issues of remote working have been dispelled** during the enforced WFH period

We may **well flatten our organization** and get rid of layers of hierarchy. More self-management

We will **source talent from wider geographies** and not feel limited to local candidates. Perhaps lower cost staff

We will further develop the possibilities of digital togetherness with **on-line festivals** and gatherings to bring our teams together

We will spend more time **contemplating why people need to come into the office** and reimagining the space accordingly

We will **cancel many of our internal FTF conferences** and make them virtual. That way twice as many can attend.

Improving productivity

We will be offering more **choice as to where, when and how people work**

We will be implementing more **activity-based work environments** and will have and improved argument for doing so

We will make sure that people have the **right furniture and technology** for remote working

We will consider **home as important as your office desk**

We will **invest more** in making people **productive at home**

We will be considering more **local co-working** to address the difficulty some have from working at home

We are implementing more tools like **Workplace** to counteract the social loss of working apart

We will be spending more time thinking about noise in the **office-white and pink noise solutions**

We have just brought everyone back to the office. **We have new reason to revisit that decision**

Improve business continuity capability

We will be looking at the future use of home working as part of a future business continuity strategy

We are building **quick-order links to Amazon** for technology and supplies delivered to employee's homes

Today **everyone now understands the need for contingency planning**. We need to take advantage of that awareness

We will be also considering **coworking centres**

We are **decoupling logistics and services from the office-** for example mail

We need to be **more proactive in planning ahead**. We could easily have moved the call centre to home if we had planned ahead

We are **building up our communications infrastructure** to relearn how we all need to connect

We have realized **we can do pretty much anything from a laptop**. It's a universal work anywhere solution

AWI Advisory Team



ANDREW MAWSON AWA MD & FOUNDER

Andrew is a leading pioneer, thinker and speaker on matters 'work and place'. He has the unusual ability to span the worlds of business strategy, organisational design, work strategy, workplace design and change management.



DR COLOMBINE GARDAIR

Colombine is a human factors specialist, her passion is using science and best practice to enable human wellbeing and peak performance. She is a cognitive engineer by training and holds a PhD in human interaction. Prior to joining AWA she worked in the automotive, pharmaceutical, and energy sectors and brings a solid scientific research background and extensive industrial experience.



CHRIS HOOD

Chris is one of the most highly respected workplace professional in the world with a wealth of experience in workplace design, real estate management and workplace transition. He led large scale transition programmes at DEC, Compaq and Hewlett Packard before developing his career as a senior consultant over 8 years with CBRE. Chris is responsible for developing and delivering workplace solutions with AWA's global clients.



PAUL ADAMS

Paul is a highly experienced Workplace Management professional. Prior to joining AWA Paul managed the UK Workplace Portfolio for PWC where he was responsible for designing and delivering hotel style workplace experiences to PWC's 22,000 UK professional. Paul supports AWA's Advanced Workplace Institute where he is a qualified life coach and workshop facilitator.



KAREN PLUM

Karen is AWA's Director of Research and Development. Karen is responsible for leading and developing AWA's change management processes and providing consulting support, coaching and training to the AWA team. Over the last 8 years, Karen has led AWA's research work in the area of Knowledge Worker Productivity and is regarded as an expert in the management of virtual teams.



LISA WHITED

Lisa has a passion for improving workplaces and processes. She is a change management consultant and workplace strategist who is driven to improve the world of work for the 70% of people that are disengaged at work. Lisa works with leaders who want to make positive change for their people and for the planet. She is a trained mediator, master facilitator, certified interior designer and has an M.S. in Organization + Management from Antioch University.



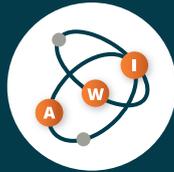
STEVE HARGIS

Steve is AWA's Senior Associate in San Francisco. He is an industry leader in the areas of real estate and workplace consulting with deep experience in the development and deployment of workplace strategies for global corporations. He has developed a strong client-based perspective, adept in grounding strategies and solutions in the needs of the business.



MATTHEW ATKIN

Matthew Atkin is a highly accomplished Senior Associate with AWA. After an initial career in construction, Matthew developed his career in Corporate Services and Facilities Management in the market research and banking sectors ultimately leading Merrill Lynch/Bank of America's operations in EMEA and the Far East.



ADVANCED WORKPLACE INSTITUTE

Advancing our profession since 2009

The Advanced Workplace Institute (AWI) is dedicated to supporting inspirational leaders from all areas of business (including Operations, Corporate Real Estate, Facilities Management, HR and IT) as they journey to a future model of Workplace Management.

Workplace Management is the holistic management of all resources needed to design & maintain appropriate, effective and economical workplace experiences that align to strategic business objectives and support people in doing their best work every day, wherever they are.

LONDON

Workplace House,
69 Turnmill Street,
London EC1M 5RR,
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 207 743 7110

NEW YORK

WorkHouse,
21 West 46th Street,
New York
NY 10036, USA
+1 646 – 585 – 2009

PARIS

Advanced Workplace
Associates Ltd
3 Rue De Stockholm
75008 Paris, France
+33 674794631



<https://www.advanced-workplace.com>