

ADAPTING TO REMOTE WORK - BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES

Remote work has become an increasing trend in modern workplaces due to technological advancement and shifting economic dynamics. COVID-19 further spurred this transformation as companies worldwide adopted remote work to maintain business continuity and protect employee safety.

Although remote work offers numerous advantages, including flexibility and increased productivity, it also presents certain challenges and drawbacks. In this article, we will investigate both the benefits and disadvantages of adopting remote work environments, providing invaluable insight for individuals and organisations navigating this new frontier.

By understanding these aspects, employers and employees can make more informed decisions to optimise remote work while mitigating its drawbacks.

What Is Remote Work?

Remote work (also referred to as telecommuting or working from home) refers to any work arrangement where an employee performs their responsibilities outside a traditional office environment.

Remote workers conduct their tasks away from the workplace at a location agreed with the employer, often from their homes or co-working spaces. Technology advances have made this arrangement possible, including high-speed internet, collaboration tools and communication platforms that enable remote workers to stay in contact with colleagues, access necessary resources, and fulfil their work responsibilities effectively.

Remote work arrangements allow individuals to manage their schedules and environments while using technology to collaborate on contributing to organisations. It gives employees more freedom while remaining productively employed.



Adapting to Remote Work: Benefits

Flexibility

One of the primary advantages of remote work is its flexibility. In contrast to the conventional 9-5 office schedule, individuals working remotely have greater control over their time and work environment; this can in certain circumstances enable employees to tailor their schedules around personal commitments, family responsibilities, and individual preferences more seamlessly than before.

Increased Productivity

One of the greatest advantages of remote work is its potential to increase employee productivity. Remote work

allows individuals to focus more intently on tasks and responsibilities by eliminating distractions and interruptions that typically plague traditional office environments.

Traditional office environments can be filled with interruptions from colleagues, unplanned meetings and other disruptions that impede productivity. Remote work allows employees to create an atmosphere conducive to concentration and deep work by designing their workspace to minimise distractions while tailoring routines for maximum productivity peaks and creating boundaries to provide uninterrupted periods of focused work.

Cost Savings

Remote work provides flexibility and increased productivity while offering significant cost-cutting opportunities to employees and employers.

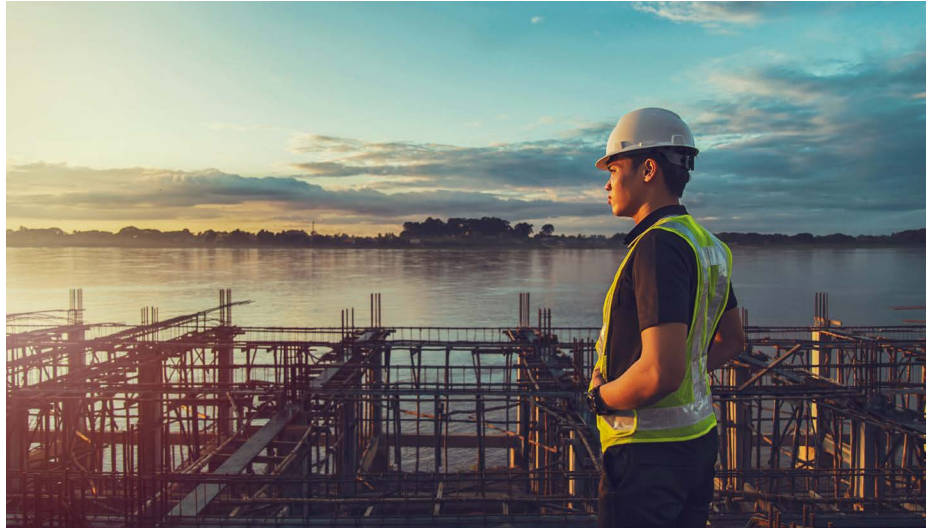
Remote work offers employees substantial cost-cutting advantages by eliminating commuting expenses such as transportation costs, fuel expenses, parking fees and public transit fares that quickly add up over time. This can greatly benefit employers as these savings can be used to attract and retain employees.

Reduced Stress

One of the main advantages of remote work is its potential to reduce the stress associated with commuter and office-based environments. Remote work offers employees numerous advantages that improve work-life balance and lower stress levels by eliminating the need to travel to physical workplaces.

WHAT IS THE MAIN LAW FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE UK?

The United Kingdom greatly emphasises worker well-being and safety, reflected in its robust health and safety legislation. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA) is its cornerstone legislation. HSWA serves as the cornerstone of health and safety regulations, creating a comprehensive legal framework to safeguard employees and others who could be affected by work activities.



Employers, employees and the self-employed all share responsibility for creating safe working environments and preventing workplace accidents, injuries or occupational illnesses. By understanding key provisions and principles of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, individuals and organisations can ensure their compliance with the law while building an environment of safety in the workplace.

What Is The Health and Safety at Work Act?

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA) serves as the main law governing workplace health and safety in the UK, providing a legal framework to safeguard workers' health, safety and welfare and those potentially affected by work activities in Britain. It applies to all workplaces across all sectors - with employers, employees and self-employed having obligations under it to create safe working environments for themselves and their staff.



Why Are UK Health and Safety Laws Important?

UK health and safety laws are important for several reasons:

Worker Protection

Health and safety laws exist to safeguard both the physical and mental well-being of workers. They serve as a legal basis that compels employers to create safe working conditions with reduced risks of accidents, injuries and occupational illnesses.

Accident and Injury Prevention

These laws aid employers in recognising and mitigating potential workplace hazards by implementing safety measures, offering training courses, and conducting risk analyses to mitigate accidents or injuries to workers.

Legal Compliance

Compliance with UK health and safety laws is an absolute legal requirement for employers, and any violations could lead to severe legal consequences, including fines, penalties and even imprisonment for noncompliance. By setting forth clearly defined legal obligations under health and safety law, health and safety legislation encourages businesses to prioritise employee well-being first.

Efficiency and Productivity

An optimal work environment fosters improved productivity and efficiency. When workers feel supported and secure, their performance and output and quality of work increase.

Increased Reputation and Employee Engagement

Demonstrating commitment to health and safety can bolster a company's image as a caring employer, drawing skilled employees who prioritise their well-being as employees who will likely remain engaged and satisfied in their jobs.

Public Confidence

Health and safety laws contribute to public trust in businesses and industries. Customers, clients, and the general public feel comforted to see businesses taking measures to safeguard worker health and safety - which can only enhance its reputation and success for an organisation.

Employers that partner with HR Team can proactively address health and safety challenges, mitigate risks, and confidently maintain compliance with HSWA - freeing them to focus on core business operations while safeguarding employee wellbeing. So, feel free to [contact us](#) today for expert health and safety compliance and additional HR support.

BURNOUT - ILLNESS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

(HOW TO PREVENT IT IN YOUR COMPANY)

In our modern society, work has become an integral and increasingly significant part of our lives. However, it also comes at a cost, and that's burnout. Burnout is a feeling of exhaustion and disillusionment that happens when a person is no longer able to cope with work pressures. It is becoming a severe problem for many employees in the workforce, and more companies should address it. In this blog post, we will look at the different ways in which companies can prevent burnout and how it can improve employee productivity, satisfaction, and mental health.

Provide a Work-Life Balance for Your Employees

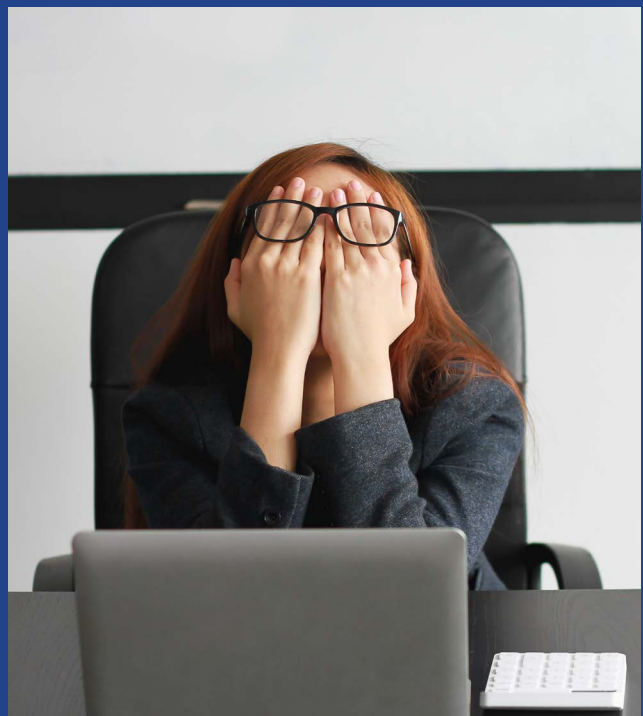
One of the significant contributors to burnout is the lack of work-life balance. With the highly competitive labour market, many employers expect their workers to work more than the regular eight hours of workday. Although employees are sometimes willing to put in extra hours to work, an unsustainable lifestyle can lead to burnout down the line. To avoid this, companies should encourage and provide a work-life balance for their employees. Companies can start by providing regular breaks, reducing the workload, and allowing more flexibility in working hours.

Promote Open and Regular Communication between Employees and the Management Team

Communication can impact the workplace's success or failure, significantly. It is essential that companies have an open-door policy to encourage regular communication between employees and management. By having such a structure, employees can voice their concerns and issues, and management can address them in real time before they turn it into a major problem. Through regular communication and feedback sessions, employees can feel heard, valued, and respected, leading them to become more productive and motivated in their work.

Encourage Your employees to Have Time Off for Rest

While work has an essential role in our lives, it is crucial for employees to get adequate rest. By ensuring employees take their annual leave entitlement, employers can ensure employees are getting adequate rest away from the workplace.. This time off can provide employees with the



opportunity to relax, recharge their batteries, and come back to work refreshed, energised, and ready to tackle new challenges.

Recognise Achievements and Accomplishments

Recognition provides an excellent opportunity for employees to feel appreciated and valued. When employees accomplish tasks to the best of their ability, recognising their hard work can help them feel motivated and fulfilled in their work. By giving rewards for excellent work performance, employees will feel that their hard work has not gone unnoticed. A reward does not have to be financial in fact statistically a simple "Thank You" can be highly effective in ensuring employees feel motivated.

WORK LIFE BALANCE AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS ACT UPDATE

The Government has announced that some provisions under the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 which introduces new workers' rights aimed at supporting a better balance of family life, work life, and caring responsibilities, are effective from 3rd July 2023.

The following provisions will come into effect from 3rd July:

Medical Care

An employee has the right to take unpaid leave for a maximum of 5 days within a 12-month period to care for a person who requires significant care or support due to a serious medical condition.

This includes parents, grandparents, spouses, civil partners, and others.

The employee should notify their employer in writing as soon as reasonably possible about the intended dates, duration, and the reasons that make them eligible for this leave.

It is important to note that this leave cannot be taken in increments of less than one full day, and there is no requirement for a minimum period of service to qualify for this leave.

Furthermore, this medical care leave is separate from Force Majeure Leave, which allows for a maximum of 3 days of leave in any 12 consecutive months or 5 days in any 36 consecutive months. Even a partial day of absence counts as one full day of force majeure leave. The right to force majeure leave is granted by the Parental Leave Act of 1998.

Increased Breastfeeding Breaks

- The Act also amends the Maternity Protection Act 1994
- There will be an extension to the period of time that women can take breaks to breastfeed or express milk in the workplace
- Whilst it is currently within the first 26 weeks, it will increase to 104 weeks
- Employees who are currently breastfeeding are entitled to take up to one hour off work each day, with pay,

for breastfeeding purposes for the first six months after birth, and this is due to increase up until the child is two years old.

- The Act also extends this right to transgender men who have given birth and are breastfeeding.

The following provisions are also due to come into effect this year:

Domestic Violence Leave

Those who are suffering or at risk of domestic violence will be entitled to five days of paid leave per year.

The Right to request flexible working arrangements for caring purposes:

The Act introduces the right to request a flexible working arrangement for caring purposes.

The request may be made by a parent for the purposes of providing care:

- To a child, or
- To a spouse, cohabitant, parent, grandparent, sibling or someone who resides with the employee and is in need of "significant care or support for a serious medical reason".
- Remote working will be defined as one type of flexible working.
- An employee must work for an employer for 6 months before flexible working arrangements can commence.
- The right to request any other type of flexible working will remain limited to Parents and Carers, as defined in the Act.
- There is an obligation on the employer to consider both their needs and the needs of employees when considering a request.

- Employers will also be required to have regard to a Code of Practice.
- A complaint can be taken to the WRC where an employer hasn't complied with the Code of Practice or the other requirements of the Act.
- The Government has also instructed that a review of flexible working should take place after two years.
- This review will include a consideration of whether the right to request flexible working should be extended to all workers.

The right to request remote working

- The legislation will allow any employee to request remote working arrangements.
- Unlike flexible working, there is no requirement that the remote working arrangement be for the purpose of providing care.
- The employee must have 6 months of continuous service before the remote working arrangement can commence.

This Act recognises the importance of family life and improved quality of life for all workers. The introduction of domestic violence leave is particularly important and will support victims of domestic violence to leave abusive relationships.

The government plan to commence the legislative provisions introducing domestic violence leave in the Autumn.

The right to request flexible working for parents and carers will be commenced following the preparation of a Code of Practice by the WRC under Part 4.



BREDA'S EMPLOYMENT LAW TIPS

TOP TIPS FOR MANAGING EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH:

1. Have an open door policy and be approachable
2. Encourage team members to talk about their problems
3. Have regular communication with your team
4. Ensure that employees feel reassured and listened to if they wish to chat about their mental health
5. Ensure confidentiality is adhered to and employees are aware of this
6. Ensure managers/employers are mindful of their own mental health and get support if they feel under more pressure than usual
7. Ensure there is a clear policy for employees that outlines the internal and external support available to staff
8. Consider offering practical help such as signposting to financial advice or bringing advice providers into work.

HR DOCS SOFTWARE DELIVERS 'COMPLIANCE AT A CLICK'

Employers can now ensure employment law compliance more efficiently and cost-effectively than ever before, thanks to new HR software hrdocsonline.com.

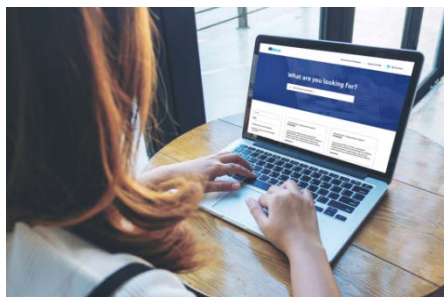
HR Docs is a full library of template documents created by experts at leading UK and Ireland human resources and employment law consultancy, HR Team.

hrdocsonline.com makes human resources best practice easy and affordable by providing instant access for employers to all the professional HR template documentation they'll ever need to achieve employment law compliance in NI, GB or the ROI.

Users of the software can quickly download template letters, policies, scripts, expert explainer guides, and more to handle any given workplace scenario.

Once the templates are downloaded, staff and organisational details can be easily added so that employers are assured they are creating professional and fully compliant documents without the need for immediate HR consultancy or additional expert advice.

Martina McAuley, HR Team Director,



says hrdocsonline.com is designed to drive efficiency in HR management for employers and managers in organisations of all sizes by allowing them "to act quickly and compliantly" when dealing with employee issues.

"HR Docs software has automated the process of day to day HR management by allowing employers and managers to simply login, and instantly locate and download template letters, policies, scripts, and much more, when they need them.

"The full library of template documents has been meticulously compiled by highly experienced employment law and HR professionals at HR Team. The library is

constantly updated to ensure it contains only the most up-to-date and legally watertight documentation. This will not only save only time and money for employers, but also provide peace of mind that any documentation issued to employees is protecting their organisation against costly tribunals."

Ms McAuley revealed that hrdocsonline.com is the first of two human resources software tools to be launched by HR Team, which has its headquarters in Derry-Londonderry.

"We are currently in the final testing phase of HR Leave Hub, a comprehensive leave management tool designed to make managing leave super simple for employers. Many of our clients are very excited about this new software which we plan to launch in early 2023."

[Hrdocsonline.com](https://hrdocsonline.com) offers a 'Try Before You Buy' option by providing access to your first 5 documents absolutely free. For more information visit hrdocsonline.com.



UPCOMING HR TEAM WEBINARS IN 2023

25th July

[How to calculate and manage annual leave in Ireland](#)

15th August

[Statutory Sick Pay](#)

29th August

[Latest Update on Employment Law](#)

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