

Loneliness in the hybrid workplace

Your practical guide

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What impact has remote working had on our mental health?

The pandemic has forced many of us to adapt our working habits but it definitely comes with its challenges. That's why we studied the impact that hybrid working has had on our mental health, combining a survey with insight from industry experts to answer some of the key questions around loneliness in the digital workplace. We'll also provide you with practical tips on how to adapt your internal comms strategy to help employees feel more connected.

Half (50%) of remote workers feel more isolated and lonely working from home, with young workers (those aged 16-24) most likely to be affected.

Over a third of remote workers (35%) admit that working from home has dramatically affected their mental health.

Half (50%) of remote workers feel disconnected from the rest of the business working from home.

42% aged 16-24 fear being overlooked for pay rises in favour of people who work in the office.

42% of employees are concerned with workplace exclusion.

What are the top challenges employees are facing?

- 28% work-life balance
- 24% loneliness
- 24% isolation
- 20% increase in virtual meetings
- 19% lack of communication

How can we combat these challenges and make employees feel more connected?

1. Create a positive work environment

Lisa Seagroatt, Workplace Culture Expert, Lecturer and Author said:

“Every single one of us has both mental as well as physical health needs. The only difference is that physical health needs are often more obvious so it’s important for employers to create a culture where employees feel able to seek support when they need to. Business leaders and people managers play a key role here in ensuring they create working environments where employees feel ‘safe’ to raise any issues linked to mental health. A healthy workplace culture of openness, transparency and good communication from the top down helps to create safe working environments.”

“Recognition is a key motivator and provides people with a sense of accomplishment. Appreciation makes employees feel more confident and improves productivity, a simple thank you goes a long way. Initiatives such as days without meetings and mental health days also play a huge part in creating a positive working environment. We offer holidays whenever people need them and ‘Oak Bank Holidays’ to ensure employees are getting the rest they deserve.”

Will Murray, CEO at Oak Engage

2. Encourage flexible working

Aoife O’Brien, Employee Engagement & Retention Expert and Podcast host comments:

“People are looking to work in organisations that are doing good in the world, with a clear purpose. Employees are also seeking out a greater deal of flexibility in their work – to be able to spend more time doing the things they enjoy. Companies that are offering some sort of remote working or hybrid working option are fairing the best in this difficult situation – this will be the future of office-based work.”

“Employees should be able to design their own working patterns based on what works for them, this will play an important role with organisations looking to be more outcome based as opposed to hours based and breaking free from the ‘9-5’ culture. Flexible working arrangements that give workers more choice and control over their workplace are likely to have a positive impact on people’s wellbeing and mental health.”

Will Murray, CEO at Oak Engage

3. Open communication

The key to ensuring that a lack of workplace visibility doesn’t have a negative impact as a result of remote working is communication.

“Strong leadership and good communication are more critical to creating healthy workplace cultures in a physical and digital sense. The key to ensuring that a lack of workplace visibility doesn’t have a negative impact as a result of remote working is communication. Anyone managing a team of people remotely needs to ensure that they ‘check in’ regularly with their team members no matter how ‘remote’ they might be.”

Lisa Seagroatt, Workplace Culture Expert, Lecturer and Author

“Employees need better communication tools now more than ever. With employee updates, news and culture stories, modern social mentions and likes and interactions to engage everyone in the conversation, we can ensure a constant stream of two-way communication. Good communication is crucial. If management isn’t communicating with their workforce about key objectives and how well they’re performing, it can often lead to confusion. Furthermore, if your company doesn’t have an effective means of communication, employees will struggle to connect with you.”

Will Murray, CEO at Oak Engage



Suzanne Benoit, Behaviour & Social Dynamics Expert adds:

“Every manager/employee interaction should include check-ins. They should factor in how the employee is doing with their work, barriers, frustrations, alongside wins and feeling proud of their results. In addition, a check-in for feelings about the company and their work is essential. Do they feel heard? The most important factor for a successful communication system is for leadership to hear from and listen to employees about their concerns and needs relative to their work. Employee communication platforms are a helpful tool to foster these conversations.”



4. Embrace technology

Will Murray, CEO at Oak Engage said:

“The current tools that businesses are using to connect with their staff just aren’t cutting it. That’s why organisations are looking for new solutions to engage their employees. 2021 was a difficult year for everyone and as working from home continues, not only are employees feeling isolated, they can also feel anxious, stressed and burnt out. Products like Oak Engage’s intranet can help businesses connect their people by using adaptive intelligence to boost employee engagement and promote wellbeing. Today’s teams need a new way to communicate that reduces noise and avoids duplication which is what we’re focussed on.”

Methodologies

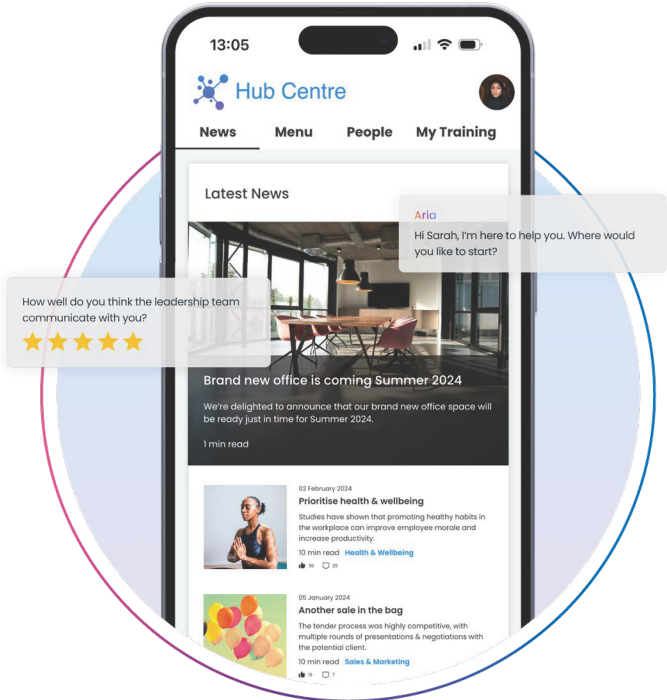
The research was conducted by Censuswide on behalf of Oak Engage, with 1,253 remote workers from a nationally representative sample of UK adults aged 16+ across the UK between 16/12/2021 - 20/12/2021.

An award-winning employee app and intranet solution

Oak Engage empowers your teams to get the right message, to the right people, at the right time.

We're here to make communication simple. We believe there is a better way to use technology to engage employees, cut through the noise, and inspire action that puts people at the heart of organisations.

The customer is at the heart of Oak Engage, with an attentive support team on hand to help with any customer queries.



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