

# The Psychology of Remote Working

Your Practical Guide



## What impact has the pandemic had on our mental health & happiness?

With huge changes to the way in which we work, we studied the impact that working from home has had on people's [mental health](#), combining a survey with insight from an esteemed psychologist to answer some of the key questions around [remote working](#) and how people feel about going back to work.



**45%** of those returning to work are experiencing return to work anxiety

Over **two thirds** of Brits agree that UK businesses should give workers the choice to work from home or not and of those 41% say that it would improve the population's mental health. 50% also said people may not feel safe returning to the office.



**76%** of office workers do not wish to return to the office full-time and a third reported that if they had to go back permanently they would look for other roles.

Over **23%** indicated that if they had to go back to the office permanently, they would consider leaving or resigning.



## Why are we feeling anxious about returning to work?

Dr Mario Weick, Associate Professor of Quantitative Social Psychology at Durham University said: "Many people have found the lockdown challenging and their mental health has suffered as a result. The survey shows that there may be a link between poor mental health and return-to-work anxiety. This makes sense because social withdrawal is a common consequence of poor mental health."

Mario adds: "Also, the poorer respondents' current work/life balance, the more respondents were inclined to experience return-to-work anxiety. Having a better work/life balance helps cope with stressors."

## How should people prepare for going back to work?

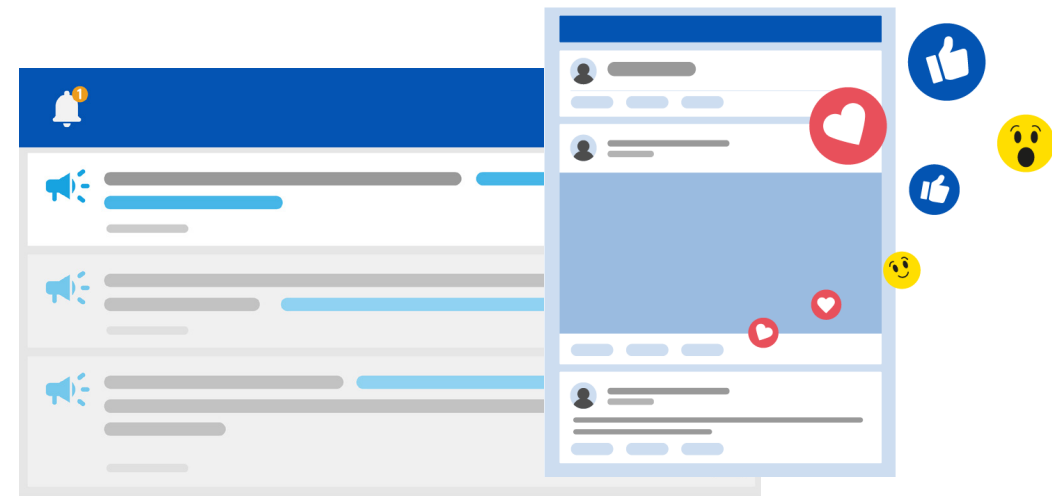
So what can we do to combat the worry? Mario says: "People should familiarise themselves with any current health and safety measures that take into account latest changes in response to the pandemic. Knowing what exactly is happening can increase one's sense of control, which in turn reduces anxiety."

"It can also help to focus on the benefits of going back to work. For example, the workplace can provide an opportunity to connect with other people. Being physically present may help those who have struggled with isolation during the pandemic."

## Should people be given the choice about hybrid working?

"There is evidence that increasing workers' choice can lead to positive mental health outcomes. However, for this to translate into higher productivity, employees also need to have the right tools that allow them to be productive when working from home."

Mario adds: "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. They may also increase organisational level performance. However, flexible working is not without its challenges and can have drawbacks when the lines between work and one's personal life become blurred."





I think the future of working will be more connected. Lines between the physical and the virtual world will become more blurred with new communication technology.”

“I also think the future of work will be a place where people are more content and have a better work/life balance. In order to attract tomorrow’s talents, organisations will have to make sure the work they offer is purposeful and advances the common good.”

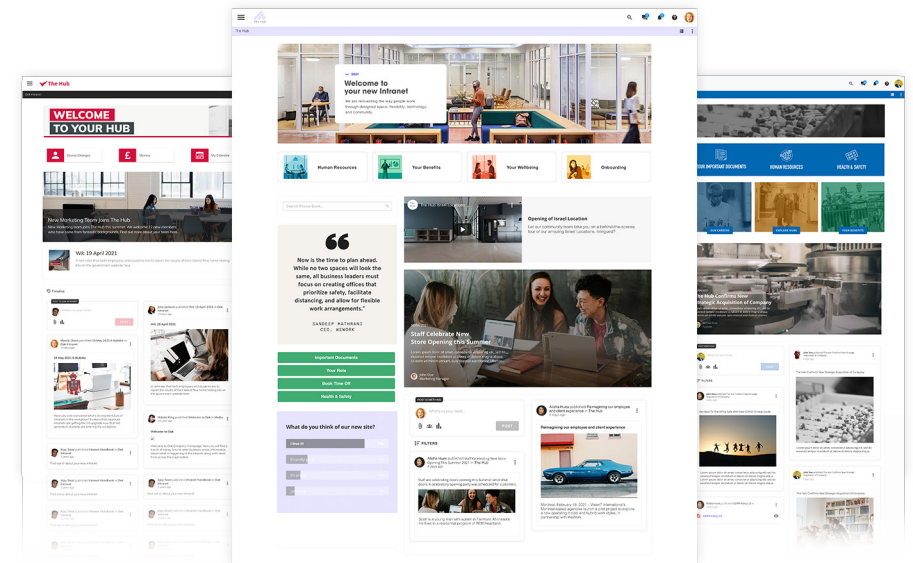
- Dr Mario Weick, Associate Professor of Quantitative Social Psychology at Durham University

## The Importance of Engagement & Staying Connected

Through our research we wanted to highlight the importance of [staying connected](#) and the need for businesses to engage their people and empower them with the choice of whether they want to return to the office full-time or not.

Mario comments: “Work [engagement](#) is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is associated with positive mental health outcomes and work satisfaction. [Engaged employees](#) are less likely to suffer from burnout, and they benefit from better relationships inside and outside of work when compared to employees who are not engaged.”

Products like our intranet software can help businesses connect their people, boost employee engagement and promote wellbeing, [giving everyone a voice](#) at a time when they need it most. This will be key now that the majority of people will want some sort of flexible working situation going forwards.



### Methodologies

The research was conducted by Censuswide on behalf of Oak Engage, with 2,016 participants from a nationally representative sample of UK adults aged 16+ across the UK between 26/03/2021 - 29/03/2021.

## About Oak Engage

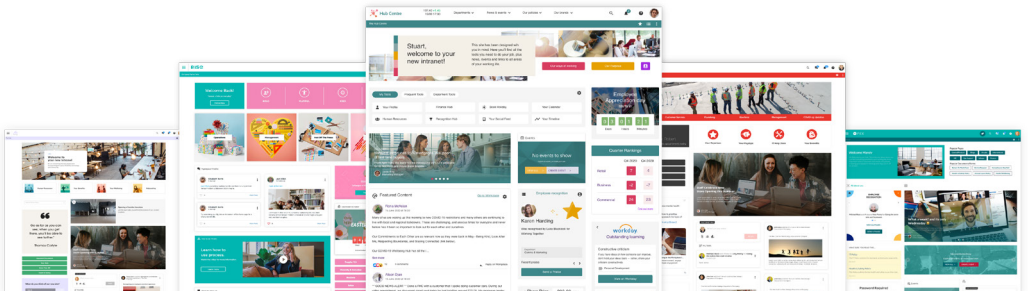
[Oak Engage](#) is the all-in-one intranet software for the workforce of today. We are cloud based, designed to keep your teams engaged, connected and productive, no matter where they are.

Our team of experts draw upon years of experience within the [internal communications](#) and intranet software industries to help customers overcome engagement obstacles and achieve their business goals.

We believe that for any successful business maintaining employee communication and business connectivity is key. This is why our platform gives your people the tools to do so. With Oak, your people can stay connected and engaged at any time, from anywhere, on any device.

As a leading intranet provider, we work with some of the most successful businesses from around the world to help them increase engagement, improve collaboration and transform internal communications.

If you'd like to find out more about us, or how we can help you improve your people engagement, please [get in touch](#).



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