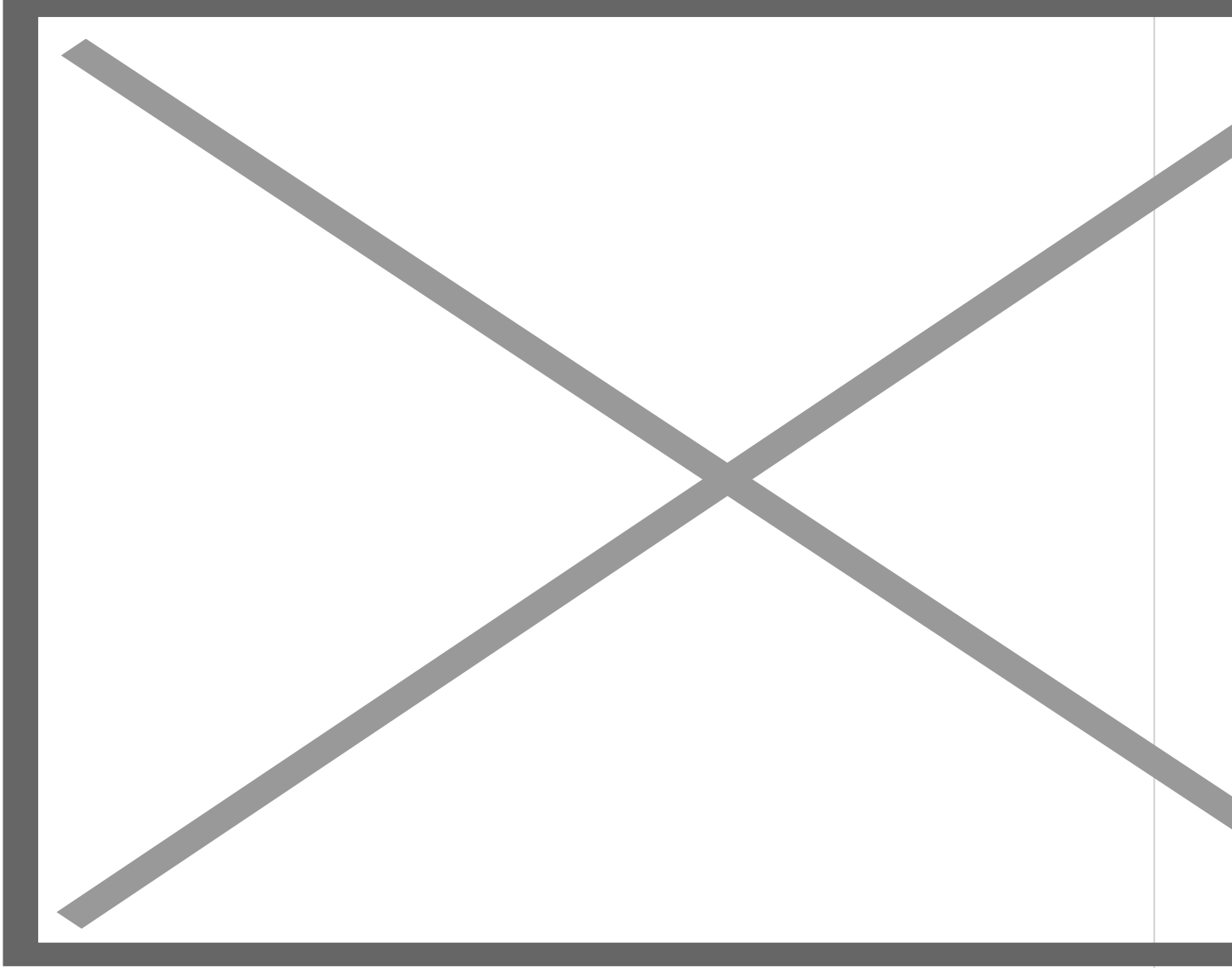


# *UK survey says working from home likely to continue beyond pandemic*

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**One-third of employers surveyed in the December-January poll say home working boosted productivity, up from 28 percent in June. (Photo: Stefan Wermuth/Bloomberg)**

London, April 2 (RHC)-- Home working is likely to remain after the pandemic finishes, according to a survey of 2,000 companies the U.K., most of which are planning to allow employees greater flexibility on where and when they do their jobs.

CIPD, the professional group for human resources staff, said two-thirds of companies are developing a hybrid work model where people spend only part of the time in the office. About 71% of employers said having staff at home either boosted productivity or made little difference.

The findings add to the debate about what the workplace will look like once the U.K. drops its request for people to do their jobs from home if they can. After previous lockdowns, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government was aggressive in encouraging a return to office. Since then, the habit for home working has become more entrenched, with many saying they want more flexibility.

"The pandemic has shown that ways of working that previously seemed impossible are actually possible," Claire McCartney, senior policy adviser for resourcing and inclusion at CIPD, said in statement.

The future of office work will have a big impact on how the economy rebounds from the biggest recession in three centuries, since city center shops and restaurants along with thousands of jobs rely on people going into the office. Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey has said some amount of home working will continue. Another member of the bank's monetary policy committee, Jonathan Haskel, says it's only media and technology workers that maintain productivity outside of the office.

A separate survey from the flexible working platform Flex showed workers stepping up their job searches, anticipating the end of lockdown during the two weeks through March 12. In many cases, they're unlikely to go back to the job they were doing before.

While there was a 98% surge those looking for work as bar staff, a third those using the platform switched their career out of hospitality and into industrial or facilities management. Searches for "picker" jobs working in warehouses and preparing items for shipment more than doubled.

"COVID-19 slammed the brakes on the U.K. job market and left many people wondering where to turn to next," said Jack Beaman, chief executive officer of Flex. The CIPD study was based on interviews with 32 senior managers and two separate surveys of senior decision makers and employees in December and January. It also found:

\* Part-time hours including working four days a week or less are now used by 19% of workers, though 28% desire that flexibility

\* A third of employers say home working boosted productivity, up from 28% in June

The portion of employers saying home working made people less productive dropped to 23% from 28%

\* Almost half of employers plan to make working hours more flexible, allowing changes to start and finish times



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