

# Homeworker Wellbeing Survey

Interim results – 7 April 2010

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# Background to the Survey

- The COVID-19 crisis has obliged many thousands of employees to become homeworkers, raising issues about the impact of this change on their physical & emotional wellbeing, their morale and their motivation
- In March 2020 IES launched an online survey of homeworkers to measure their wellbeing and this slide deck presents interim results from the first 500 responses

# Who are the respondents so far?

- 71% working at home as a result of COVID-19
- 70% female, average age 46 years in professional, managerial and administrative roles in mainly service sector and public sector organisations
- 72% living with a partner, 30% with dependent children & 17% caring for older relatives
- 73% have mortgages or rent to pay
- 46% manage people in their jobs & are working up to 5 hours longer than they are contracted each week
- 81% have company-provided computer and 52% have Smartphone provided by company

# Looking after homeworker wellbeing

- 75% say their employer has not carried out a health and safety risk assessment of their homeworking arrangements
- 73% have access to Occupational Health support and 64% have access to an EAP
- 42% share their workspace with other adults working from home
- 83% have contact with their boss up to 5 times a week

## Physical Health – *‘how often have you had this condition in the last 2 weeks compared to normal’?*

- 64% lost sleep from worry
- 58% aches/pains in neck
- 56% aches/pains in shoulder
- 43% aches/pains in elbow
- 47% aches/pains in wrist or hand
- 48% aches/pains in hips
- 49% aches/pains in knees
- 55% aches/pains in back
- 55% eye strain
- 55% headaches or migraines
- 33% chest pains
- 37% leg cramps
- 39% heartburn or indigestion
- 60% fatigue

## Emotional Health – *‘% saying they have felt this for less than half the time (last 2 weeks) or not at all’*

- 32% not cheerful & in good spirits
- 40% not calm & relaxed
- 60% not active & vigorous
- 40% not waking up fresh & rested
- 45% not having day filled with interest
- 23% worried about family finance
- 21% worried about job security
- 41% anxious about family member health
- 20% lonely & isolated

# Using the WHO5 Mental Health Measure -

## Mental health is poorer for:

- Younger workers (MH much better for over 60s)
- Those looking after elderly relatives (but parents are no different to non-parents)
- Those living with parents or renting
- Those new to homeworking (compared with those with long experience)
- Those working more than 10 hours longer than contracted hours per week
- Those in less frequent contact with their boss

# Other Health Concerns

- 20% say alcohol consumption has increased
- 60% worry they are taking less exercise
- 33% eating less healthily in lockdown
- 48% working long & irregular hours
- 26% have continued working despite illness in last 2 weeks
- 36% feel under too much work pressure
- 43% don't have enough time to get their work done

# Morale, Motivation & Homeworking

- 37% say homeworking is motivational
- 33% frequently feel isolated
- 67% enjoy the autonomy
- 75% are clear of what's expected of them
- 65% feel valued by their employer
- 62% speak highly of their employer to friends
- 77% feel trusted by their employer
- 71% say their boss is good at staying in touch
- 70% intend to stay with their employer
- 34% worry that decisions are taken without them
- 80% get feelings of accomplishment from their job
- 50% not happy with current work-life balance

# Takeaway Messages

- Significant decline in musculoskeletal health in 2 weeks
- Poor sleep & increased fatigue a concern
- Alcohol, diet & exercise declining for many
- Emotional concerns over finance, isolation, energy, work-life balance & family health
- Work motivation holding up for most, especially if in regular contact with boss

# Actions for Employers

- Make sure home 'office' set-up is safe and ergonomic & that employees are mobile & take exercise
- Provide mental health support via informal messaging groups, virtual coffee mornings, access to EAP's and regular contact with bosses & colleagues
- Focus on 'high risk' groups – financial concerns, eldercare, those struggling to adjust, those prone to feelings of isolation, those at risk of domestic abuse
- Rethink performance targets & monitoring, involve employees in decisions about reorganising work and reallocating tasks & priorities

# What Next for the Survey?

- Survey will stay open during April
- More detailed analysis by demographic sub-groups and using WHO5
- Monitor results over time to track changes in wellbeing patterns
- Dissemination of findings to policy & corporate audiences

# Further information:

[www.employment-studies.co.uk](http://www.employment-studies.co.uk)

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