

Research reveals the pandemic has seen men find a better work-life balance

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A study by global workplace leader Unispace has found that the pandemic and associated work-from-home guidance saw more men than women find a better balance between the office and home. This underscores the need for companies today to create spaces and flexible working approaches that drive equity across all genders.

According to the Unispace study of 3,000 employees working across Europe, male office workers found a better work-life balance when working from home during lockdown than women (71% vs. 68%). When participants were asked if they feel they can prioritise family and loved ones more after the pandemic exactly the same proportion - 87% - of both groups said yes. That's according to the new paper, *Shifting the Gender Discussion* (<https://www.unispace.com/reluctant-returner/shifting-gender-discussion>), published by Unispace.

When looking at those who were hesitant to go back to the office, the top concern expressed by male respondents was a preference to be at home to work around child and carer arrangements, with almost a third (32%) citing this explanation. Fewer women (29%) indicated the same sentiment.

Levelling the playing field

Unispace's research also revealed that before the pandemic, female employees were more likely than their male counterparts to be completely office based (73% vs. 69%). Men were more likely to be working in a predominantly office-based hybrid way (25% vs. 18%), suggesting a pre-pandemic inequality in flexible working approaches among genders.

Interestingly, when participants were asked about where they are likely to work in the future, exactly 31% of both groups foresaw themselves working from the office full-time, suggesting that there is an immediate opportunity for employers to create spaces and flexible working approaches that drive equity across all genders.

Chely Wright, Chief Diversity Officer at Unispace comments:

"While the Covid pandemic had catastrophic consequences for communities across the globe, it has also been a chance to press reset and shift the norm on many aspects of society – the conversation on work-life balance included.

"When we know better, we do better. Our data shows that we have an opportunity to advance the discussion about equity in the office environment and flexible working policies from a gender-based lens.

"The employers and companies today that are able to attract and retain the best and most diverse talent will be those that ensure their workforce strategies, working policies and office spaces provide the flexibility and equity needs of all genders. This is a chance for employers to reframe how people of all

genders are encouraged back to work and experience their office environments.”

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