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Dear Baroness Scott,

Thank you again for inviting me to give oral evidence to the Home-based Working Committee as part of your ongoing inquiry into the effects and future developments of remote and hybrid working in the UK. I valued the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's work and to support its efforts to build a comprehensive and well-informed understanding of this transformative shift in working practices.

As agreed during the session, I am pleased to provide the following supplementary information:

1. Examples of government sharing good practice on home-based working, p3
2. Cabinet Office policies and guidance on line management, p3
3. Overview of flexible working measures within the Employment Rights Bill, p4
4. Summary of available evidence on productivity and home working, p6
5. Overview of DBT collaboration with ONS, p9
6. Data on specific demographics, p9
7. Government investment commitments on digital infrastructure, p11
8. Further Government plans on cybersecurity guidance for businesses, p12
9. Government plans for transport infrastructure in the context of changing work patterns, p13

This has been provided by the Cabinet Office, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, the Department for Transport as well as the Department for Business and Trade. I hope the information provided here is helpful and addresses all outstanding questions.

I await the Committee's final report with great interest. The inquiry represents an important contribution to our collective understanding of this evolving phenomenon, and I look forward to considering its findings carefully.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Justin Madders', with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end.

JUSTIN MADDERS MP

Minister for Employment Rights, Competition and Markets
Department for Business and Trade

1. Government People Group suggestions on how the Civil Service could share good practice on home working/flexible working with other employers

Within government, Government People Group already work closely with the flexible working policy team in DBT to share Civil Service practice and experience in supporting home-based and hybrid working. This includes taking part in employer fora facilitated by DBT.

In the context of increased use of remote and hybrid working, the Government property Agency also facilitates a number of groups that include employers from public and private sectors to explore and share leading practice on estate use and smarter working.

Additionally, we would be happy to build on our existing working relationships with TUC to explore if there are any trade union fora on the topic of home working/flexible working that we could join. This would allow us to access a wide range of employers.

Another route to share leading practice has been the civil service blog, which provides open access information on a range of topics, including information on working practices. For example, a series of blogs have been posted promoting the use of job-sharing arrangements across the civil service.

A further channel for influencing employer practices is through public procurement. The Cabinet Office is currently consulting on reforms in this area, including a new public interest test, which is designed to ensure outsourcing decisions take into account a full range of factors including working conditions and standards.

2. Government People Group to share Cabinet Office model policies and guidance on line management capabilities

The Civil Service Line Management Capability programme was developed to improve the quality of line management across the Civil Service, recognising managerial capability is directly linked to increased productivity and employee engagement. With the Civil Service Code at the centre, the aim is to achieve a consistent standard, giving line managers the skills to effectively manage geographically dispersed hybrid teams (including homeworkers).

The programme has delivered [line management standards](#), which have been externally endorsed by the Chartered Institute for Professional Development and the Chartered Management Institute. The standards have been supported by a line management development toolkit; a line management induction programme for new line managers; a digital line management development diagnostic tool; and a university accredited pathway for Senior Civil Servant Band 1 line managers. Additionally, the programme is embedding these standards within employee policies, covering recruitment, performance and skills development.

3. Overview of Flexible Working Measures within the Employment Rights Bill

Summary of Flexible Working (Clause 9) Employment Rights Bill Measures

(Employment Rights Act 1996 80F-G)

Employees currently have the right to request a flexible working arrangement from their first day in a job. Employees can ask their employer for a flexible working arrangement up to two times in every twelve-month period, and their employer must give their decision within two months.

Employers can refuse a flexible working request for one (or more) of eight possible business reasons set out in legislation, and they must consult with the employee before rejecting a request. However, the current legislation provides no detail on how this consultation should be conducted. Equally, there is no requirement for employers to explain their decision. Employment Tribunals can currently consider whether a request was handled in a reasonable manner, but cannot consider the reasonableness of a decision to refuse a flexible working request in itself.

Changes being delivered through the Employment Rights Bill

We are retaining the approach of the existing legal framework for flexible working, where an employee makes a request and an employer can agree or reject. But we are making some important changes to make it more likely that flexible working requests are accepted. The Employment Rights Bill will amend existing legislation so that:

- Employers can only reject a flexible working request where it is reasonable to do so on the grounds of one (or more) of the eight business reasons already set out in primary legislation
- If an employer wants to reject a request, they will need to consult with the employee (as they currently do), but in doing so follow a specified process, to be set out via secondary legislation.
- If an employer rejects a request, they must explain to the employee why their decision is reasonable.

Taken together, these measures will mean that employers should accept a flexible working request where it is reasonably feasible to do so. Employers will still be able to refuse requests that aren't feasible or reasonable in line with the existing eight business reasons for rejection.

Secondary Legislation

The detail of the consultation process required before an employer can refuse a flexible working request is not set out on the face of the Bill. This will be set out in regulations using a power taken through the Bill, and following a full consultation.

That is because it is important to take account of a range of views and to develop the detail of the approach only following full consultation in partnership with business, trade union and third sector bodies. We intend to consult in early 2026.

Code of Practice

Alongside these Bill measures, there will be new statutory guidance which will help employers to understand and meet their obligations under the new reasonableness test, and will set out how employers can draw on the eight business reasons for rejecting a request.

A Code of Practice on requests for flexible working already exists, managed by Acas. The Department for Business and Trade recommends that new guidance is delivered through an updated Code. We will work with Acas on this and provide further detail in due course.

4. Summary of available evidence on productivity and homeworking

Overall Evidence Picture

Many studies and surveys report productivity gains, provided remote working is well-managed and aligns with individual and organisational needs. Others have found more mixed or negative impacts, particularly where homeworking is not well-managed or universally suitable. Given the evidence base in this area is still at an emerging stage, the Committee's work to consolidate data on productivity and highlight areas where additional research is needed is particularly valuable.

ONS Data

Homeworking in the UK, work from home status (2021) - [ONS Dataset](#)

This dataset, based on the Annual Population Survey, includes breakdowns by hours worked, pay, sickness absence, occupation, industry, and qualifications. It also contains regression outputs on outcomes for homeworkers. This source is particularly useful for productivity analysis because it provides direct measures of work output and attendance, allowing comparisons between homeworkers and non-homeworkers.

Coronavirus and Homeworking in the UK (2020) - [ONS Statistical Bulletin](#)

This bulletin provides insights into short-term shifts in productivity during the pandemic. It reports on changes in hours worked among those working from home, with breakdowns by sex, industry, and occupation. This is helpful for understanding how homeworking affected immediate work output and labour allocation during a critical period.

Homeworking hours, rewards and opportunities in the UK: 2011- 2020 (2021) - [ONS Article](#)

This article explores long-term trends in hours worked, pay differentials, and job quality between homeworkers and non-homeworkers. It is valuable for productivity analysis as it highlights structural differences in work patterns and compensation, offering insights into the sustainability and efficiency of homeworking arrangements.

Working From Home: Comparing the Data (2021) - [ONS Blog](#)

This blog compares data from multiple ONS surveys including the Labour Force Survey, Annual Population Survey, and Business Insights and Conditions Survey. It discusses the strengths and limitations of each for measuring working hours, work location, and employment patterns. This comparative overview is useful for selecting the most appropriate data source for productivity-related research.

Other Sources

Flexible and Hybrid Working Practices in 2025 (2025) - [CIPD Report](#)

This report presents findings from employer and employee surveys on the adoption and impact of flexible and hybrid working arrangements in the UK. It includes a dedicated section on organisational performance, where employers report on the effects of flexible working on productivity, quality of work, and service delivery. This makes it directly relevant for productivity research, as it provides both quantitative and qualitative evidence on how different working models influence output, efficiency, and business outcomes.

Academia

The following are examples of relevant research on homeworking and hybrid working that have contributed to the evidence base.

Kaduk, A., Genadek, K., Kelly, E.L. and Moen, P. (2019) Involuntary vs. voluntary flexible work: insights for scholars and stakeholders. *Community, Work and Family*. Vol 22, No 4.

This study explores the distinction between voluntary and involuntary flexible work arrangements, particularly in the context of schedule variability and remote work. Drawing on survey data from a U.S. Fortune 500 IT workforce, the authors found that involuntary flexibility such as being required to work variable schedules or from home without choice is linked to; higher work-to-family conflict, increased stress and burnout, greater turnover intentions, lower job satisfaction.

Van der Meulen, N. (2017) Does remote working really work? *RSM Discovery*. Vol 29.

This study found that remote work is often associated with positive outcomes like increased productivity and job satisfaction, but it also presents challenges like potential social isolation and difficulty in knowledge sharing. The study highlights that remote work can be a strategic asset when managed effectively, but it requires a shift in management style and a focus on building strong remote work cultures.

Chung, H., Seo, H., Forbes, S. and Birkett, H. (2020) *Working from home during the COVID-19 lockdown*. University of Birmingham / University of Kent.

The University of Kent and the University of Birmingham conducted a survey of UK employees to understand how widespread working from home has influenced a range of work-life issues during the COVID 19 pandemic. The research found that the experience of the Covid-19 lockdown has shifted attitudes and preferences around flexible working of managers and workers, and also has the potential to impact cultural norms around the gendered division of housework/care.

Bloom, N., Liang, J., Roberts, J., & Ying, Z. J. (2015). Does Working From Home Work? Evidence From a Chinese Experiment. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol 130, No 1.

This research reports findings from a work from home experiment at a Chinese travel agency where call centre employees were randomly assigned either to work from home or in the office for nine months. Home working led to a 13% performance increase, of which 9% was from working more minutes per shift (fewer breaks and sick days) and 4% from more calls per minute (attributed to a quieter and more convenient working environment).

5. Overview of DBT collaboration with ONS, and the consideration of demographic groups within homeworking data.

As part of our ongoing work to support labour market participation, we pay particular attention to the experiences of specific demographic groups who face barriers to work, including disabled individuals and those with caring responsibilities.

The Department for Business and Trade maintains regular engagement with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and makes extensive use of its data sources, such as the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey and the Business Insights and Conditions Survey.

We also remain in close contact with the ONS to stay informed about upcoming analysis releases and to proactively consider what updates or new data would be most useful to support departmental priorities.

6. The consideration of demographic groups within homeworking data

In response to Baroness Featherstone's specific question, in recent iterations of the [Business Insights and Conditions Survey](#) (editions 133 and 135), the Department for Business and Trade has worked to include questions relating to flexible working and individuals with caring responsibilities. However, we have not yet collaborated on including questions specifically about *homeworking* and demographic groups.

International work is also considered where relevant, although comparability between countries can be challenging due to differences in legislative frameworks, labour market structures, and economic contexts.

Nonetheless, there is a broad and growing body of evidence demonstrating that access to flexible working arrangements, including homeworking, can significantly enhance labour market participation among groups that often face barriers to employment, such as disabled people, carers, parents, and older workers.

	Summary of data available on homeworking and specific demographics
Carers	63% of Carers UK survey respondents said that working from home helps them to combine work and care (State of Caring, Carers UK, 2024, p.22). 95% of respondents to the CIPD's 2019 Survey of Working Carers indicated that their caring role was made easier through the ability to work from home on some days as well as the ability to use flexitime (Supporting Working Carers, CIPD, 2020, p.27).
Disabled workers	Working from home had a positive impact on 80% of those surveyed in fully remote roles when it came to managing their health. This proportion reduces to 38% for those who work remotely less than half of the time, suggesting that the benefits decline if people are expected to work onsite very regularly. 85% of disabled workers report that access to remote and hybrid work is essential or very important when looking for a new job. (Beyond the Office? How remote and hybrid working can help close the disability employment gap, Work Foundation, 2025).
Women	40% of women who aren't currently working said that access to flexible work would mean they could take on more paid work (32% of men who aren't working and 37% of people overall said the same). (Fawcett Society's 2023 Equal Pay Day briefing) In April - June 2021, 12.1% of parents reported mainly working from home in their main job; mothers were more likely to report homeworking (13.4%) than fathers (10.7%) (ONS, 2022 – annual data release)
Older workers	Research has shown that flexible working is a factor in enabling older workers to remain in the labour market for longer; in June and July 2020, older workers working entirely from home were more likely to say they were planning to retire later compared with those not working from home (ONS, 2021). 72% of older workers either work flexibly already or want to do so (Flexible After Fifty, 50PlusChoices, 2024, p.8). The number of workers aged over 50 who work from their own home has rapidly increased from 10% in 2020 to 22.4% in 2023 (Flexible After Fifty, 50PlusChoices, 2024, pp.30-31).

7. Investment commitments on digital infrastructure

Building Digital UK (BDUK) is an executive agency of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), responsible for the delivery of two of the Government Major Programmes - **Project Gigabit** and **Shared Rural Network** infrastructure programmes. Both programmes are key enablers for kickstarting economic growth and break down barriers to opportunity, reducing the digital divide.

Project Gigabit delivers gigabit-capable broadband to UK premises that are not included in suppliers' commercial plans. Over 98% of UK premises have access to superfast broadband with speeds of more than 30 Mbps, and over 88% of UK premises have access to a gigabit-capable connection. (from independent website ThinkBroadband).

Through Project Gigabit, more than £2.2 billion of investment has been signed with suppliers to deliver gigabit capable connectivity to premises that will not be reached through commercial delivery, including with many smaller, independent broadband providers. Project Gigabit spend is reported in BDUK's annual report and accounts. The total capital spend to support gigabit connectivity in 2022/23 and 2023/24 was £133.1 million.

The government has recently reconfirmed its commitment to achieving nationwide gigabit coverage and the government now expects 99% of premises to have access to a gigabit-capable connection by 2032. BDUK is refreshing its delivery plans for the remaining premises across the UK and will set out its approach in due course

BDUK is also working with the mobile industry to deliver government's Shared Rural Network programme to upgrade existing masts, as well as building new masts, to cover areas with no or partial mobile connectivity. This has seen 4G mobile coverage from at least one Mobile Network Operator lifted to 96% of the UK's geographic landmass, from 91% when the programme began in 2020.

The Shared Rural Network, which has attracted £532 million of private investment in the UK's mobile infrastructure, continues to deliver coverage through publicly funded upgrades to the Emergency Services Network across the UK, as well as the delivery of new masts in Scotland.

8. Further Government plans on cybersecurity guidance for businesses

Cyber security should be factored into homeworking arrangements to ensure the protection of an organisation's data, operations and finances. Good cyber security can enable effective homeworking where used, enabling organisations to innovate, grow and operate efficiently.

Boards and directors should manage cyber risk in order to protect their businesses and organisations from cyber attacks. This may include looking at the risks presented by home working, where applicable. The government's new [Cyber Governance Code of Practice](#) sets out the actions boards and directors should take to govern cyber risk. The government's [Cyber Essentials](#) scheme also sets out the technical measures organisations should have in place to prevent common cyber attacks, including ensuring that user devices have appropriate security measures in place and up to date software.

The National Cyber Security Centre - the government's lead technical experts on cyber security - offer a range of free guidance to help organisations improve their cyber resilience. This includes [guidance for organisations on homeworking](#), such as using strong passwords and two-step verification when setting up new accounts, communicating with staff about new software and working arrangements, ensuring data can be encrypted if devices are lost or stolen, and using Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to allow remote users to securely access the organisation's IT resources.

Does the Government plan to step up support for employers in this area in the context of heightened risks as more employees work remotely?

There is already a wide range of free, high quality government guidance and support on cyber security available for businesses. The key challenge the government faces is encouraging employers to access this advice and adopt it.

Despite widespread industry acknowledgement of the cyber threat, action is lagging behind. The government's [Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2025](#) found over a third (36%) of businesses with a cyber security policy do not include remote or mobile working in that policy, while only 31% businesses use a VPN for staff connecting remotely.

The government carries out extensive industry engagement to drive up levels of action on cyber security, including through the National Cyber Security Centre, law enforcement and a range of campaigns and communications activity. The government will continue to deliver and expand this activity. The forthcoming Cyber Security and Resilience Bill demonstrates the government's intent to improve UK cyber resilience. The government has also said it will publish a new national cyber strategy that will set out how government intends to further drive up levels of cyber resilience across the economy.

9. Long-term transport infrastructure, particularly outside city centres

The Committee asked about the impact of remote working on transport infrastructure. The emergence of home working is still relatively recent, particularly the rapid increase resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are in the early days of understanding emerging trends and their impacts. However, the Department for Transport is actively thinking about the challenges and opportunities these changes bring. There are processes embedded in the Department, such as using futures and horizon scanning techniques, to ensure that the Government identifies, plans for and adapts to upcoming changes.

The Department has an ongoing programme of research to ensure that transport modelling and appraisal are based on the latest evidence, including changes in working patterns and travel behaviour. This includes research exploring the interaction of transport and economic activity, understanding how increased home working may have impacted the valuation of travel time, and ensuring transport models continue to reflect the latest travel behaviour.

Changes in how and when people travel bring both opportunities and challenges for the transport network, both in how it is currently run, but also how we plan and build future infrastructure.

Increased remote and hybrid working could reduce pressure on already congested road and rail routes (congestion which is forecast to worsen over time). It could also allow for greater flexibility in how people use public transport, such as travelling at off-peak times when services are less busy. However, remote and hybrid working could mean lower usage of public transport if people opt not to travel as frequently, which would affect fare revenue.

These impacts became apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic when we saw a dramatic decrease in travel demand. Public transport usage is still lower now than pre-pandemic, with rail usage slightly below pre-pandemic levels (97%), and bus (79%) ([DfT Statistics, 2025](#)) and London Underground (82%) usage significantly lower ([TfL, 2024](#)). In contrast, motor vehicle usage has surpassed pre-pandemic levels (108%), and road mileage is expected to rise by 10% by 2035, suggesting that its recovery may be less impacted by the increase in homeworking.

It is also important to note that remote working is not the only driver of changing travel patterns; some initial evidence suggests that increases in cost-of-living and transport affordability now have a bigger influence ([Transport for the North, 2025](#)).

Travel patterns vary across regions, as does the profile of the jobs market and therefore the scale and shape of changing working patterns. These differences are not just between rural and urban areas, but between different cities as well.

Local leaders are best placed to plan infrastructure and services that suit the needs of their areas. We are therefore devolving more power and funding to local authorities across the country. The Spending Review confirmed £15.6bn in funding to provide Transport for City Regions (TCR) settlements for nine major city regions until 2031/32. This is in addition to the £5.7bn already allocated for 2022-23 to 2026-27 via the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements programme. £2.3bn is being provided via the Local Transport Grant for areas outside of London and not in receipt of TCR settlements (£2.2bn of capital funding over four years, and over £100m resource funding over 3 years).

The English Devolution White Paper, published in December 2024, sets out how we will give more powers to local authorities and mayors to deliver on local priorities, including on transport. This includes through the Bus Services Bill, which empowers local authorities to control their bus services and shape routes to work better for local people.

Nevertheless, there is an important role for central government in coordinating and improving transport services, including by creating the right legal frameworks, and inter-urban and cross-regional infrastructure.

The Department is taking action to drive public transport usage by improving bus and rail services, and investing to improve reliability. We are providing £900m a year to maintain and improve bus services, and extending the £3 bus fare cap until March 2027 to ensure bus travel is affordable to all. This will have an immediate impact on services, while also boosting confidence in the longer-term, helping to attract more passengers.

We are also overhauling rail services through the creation of Great British Railways. This will make rail travel simpler, more flexible and passenger focused. Unifying track and train under one body will help to reduce delays and cancellations and deliver a better experience for passengers.

We are looking beyond just when and where people choose to travel, but also what they do while travelling. For example, we are investing in improvements to digital connectivity on the railway to ensure that people can work while they travel. At the Spending Review, we announced £74m in funding to introduce low-earth-orbit satellite connectivity on all mainline trains, significantly improving both the availability and internet data connection speeds for Wi-Fi connected passengers.

The 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy, published in June, sets out the Government's long-term plans for infrastructure investment. This includes ensuring people have access to the right transport options they need, giving them reliable and resilient connections to jobs, housing, neighbourhoods and public services. The Infrastructure Strategy takes an integrated approach, covering digital infrastructure as well as transport and social infrastructure. It also sets out how the Government will move to a more spatial approach to planning infrastructure, joining up across different sectors and geographies to address both national and local needs.