

The 2020 UK HomeAgent Survey

A UK CONTACT CENTRE FORUM WHITE PAPER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - REPORT 1 OF 3



Supported by:



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. PARTICIPANTS	4
3. SURVEY FINDINGS	5
Do You Employ Homeworkers?	5
Agent Profile	5
Employee Satisfaction	6
Distance from office	7
Why Homework?	8
Working Hours	9
Training	10
Technology and Homeworking Equipment	11
Communication	12
Corporate Benefits of HomeAgent Working	13
Perceived barriers to implementation	14
4. CONCLUSION	15
5. SPONSOR PROFILES	16
6. ABOUT THE UK HOMEAGENT FORUM	19



Confidentiality Statement

All information contained in this document is provided in confidence, and shall not be published or disclosed wholly or in part to any other party without UK Contact Centre Forum (UKCCF) Limited's prior written authority and consent, and therefore this document should be held in safe custody. These obligations shall not apply to any information contained in this document that is published or becomes known legitimately from some source other than UKCCF.

Copyright © 2020 UK Contact Centre Forum Limited

The survey was conducted between November 2019 and the middle of March 2020, prior to the Covid-19 lockdown in the UK. It is the second time the survey has been run, the first was in 2016.

300 Managers/ Directors and HomeAgents took part in the 2020 UK HomeAgent study by completing online questionnaire surveys.

The 2020 UK HomeAgent Forum set out to deliver the most exhaustive research to date amongst:

- Contact Centre Agents
- Contact Centre Employers
(i.e. contact centre managers and directors responding on behalf of their organisations)

and covers:

- Organisations who currently deploy work-at-home models (at least partially)
- Organisations who only have fixed location contact centres
- Homeworkers
- Fixed location contact centre employees.

The survey was conducted online and promoted via advertisements, direct emails and in partnership with members for the UK HomeAgent Forum.

To encourage participation, individuals that completed the survey were entered into a free prize draw to win £500 of Argos vouchers.

We'd like to thank our sponsors



for their support in making this important research project happen.

2. PARTICIPANTS

A total of **300 responses** were collected online via surveys run on the Survey Monkey website between November 2019 and March 2020.

93

Directors and Managers answered the Employer questionnaire

207

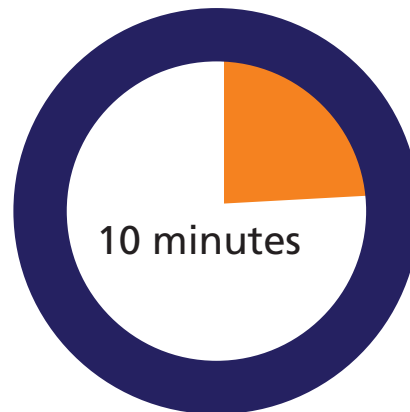
Contact Centre Agents answered the Agent questionnaire

The Employer survey took participants an average of



to fill in and **89%** completed the entire survey.

The Agent survey took participants an average of

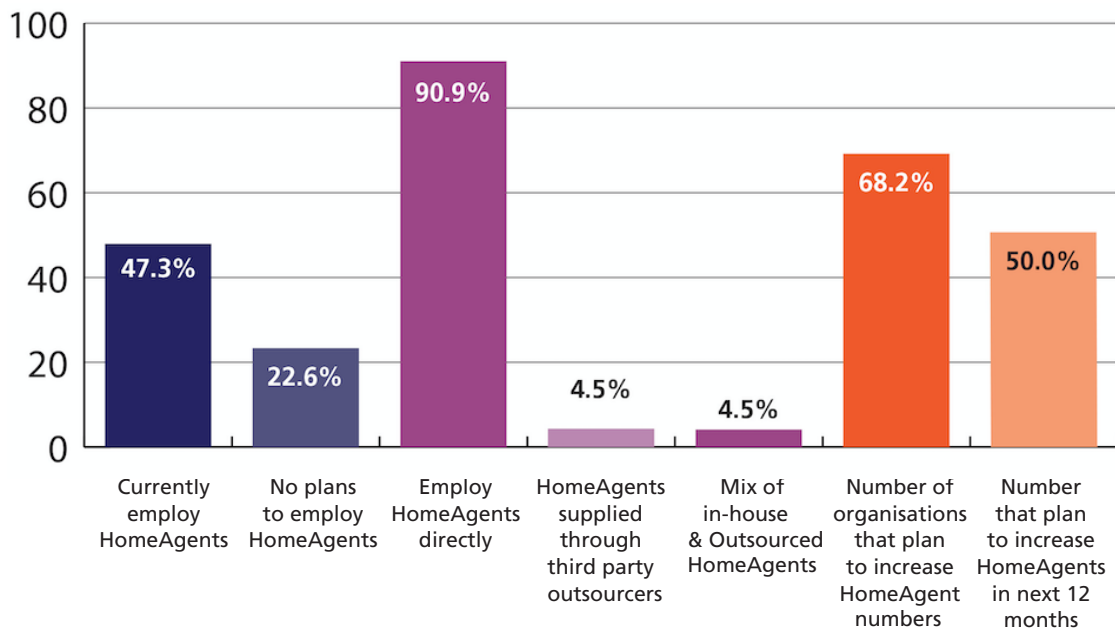


to fill in and **93%** completed the entire survey.

Special thanks to SYKES, the AA and Sensée for their help in collecting multiple responses from their managers and contact centre agents.

Do You Employ Homeworkers?

Figures apply to contact centres responding to the study



Respondents to survey have from 0 to 600 HomeAgents

Agent Profile

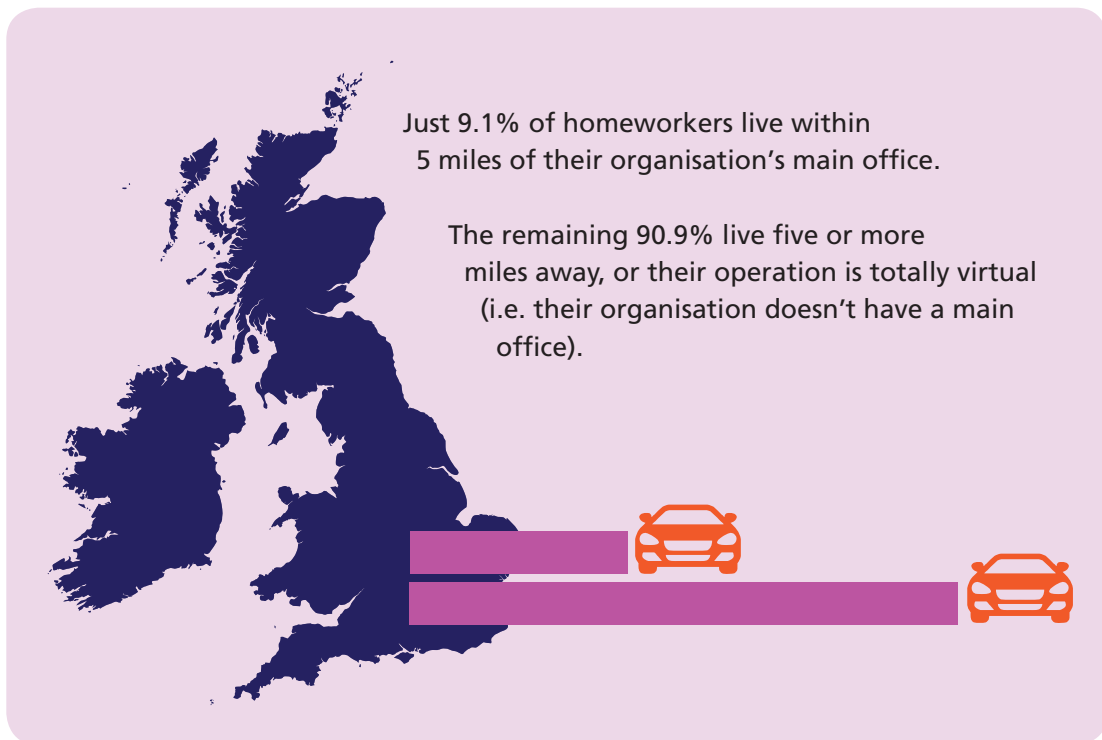
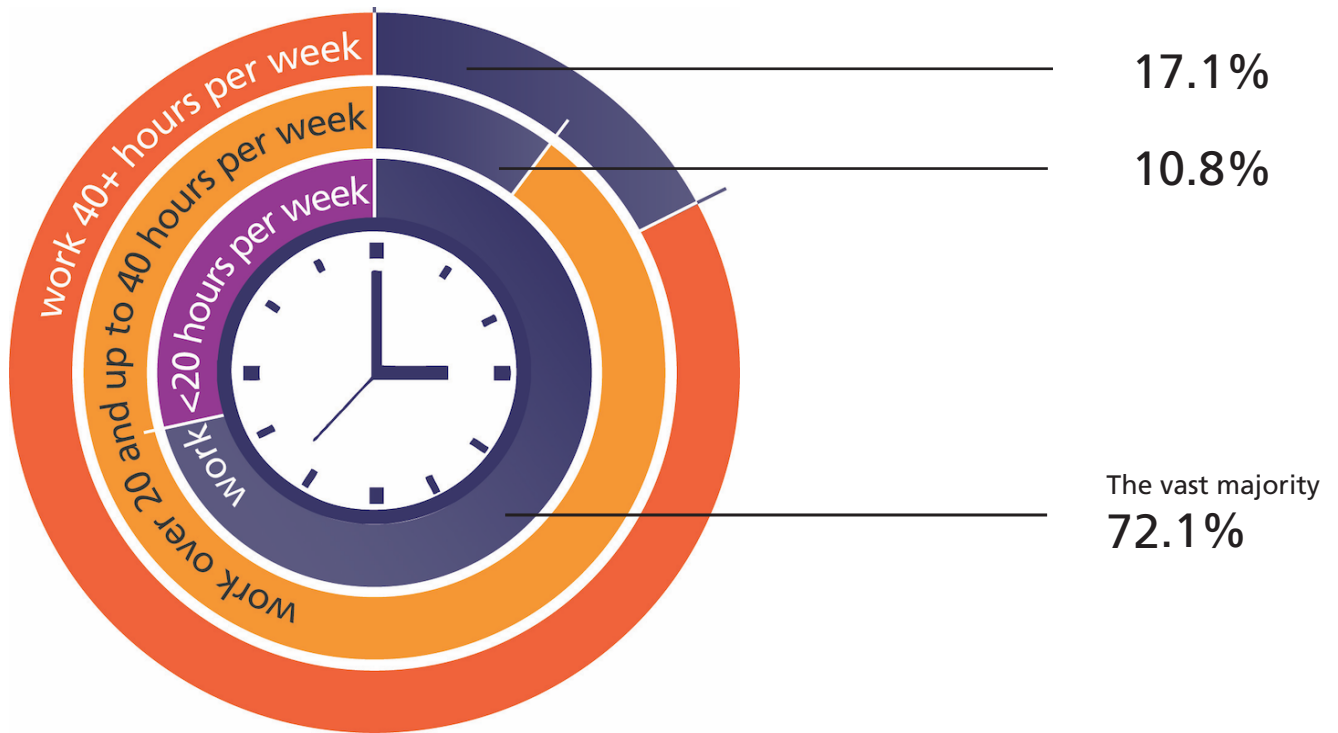


97.1%
of survey respondents are work-at-home agents

74.7%
are aged 35 or over

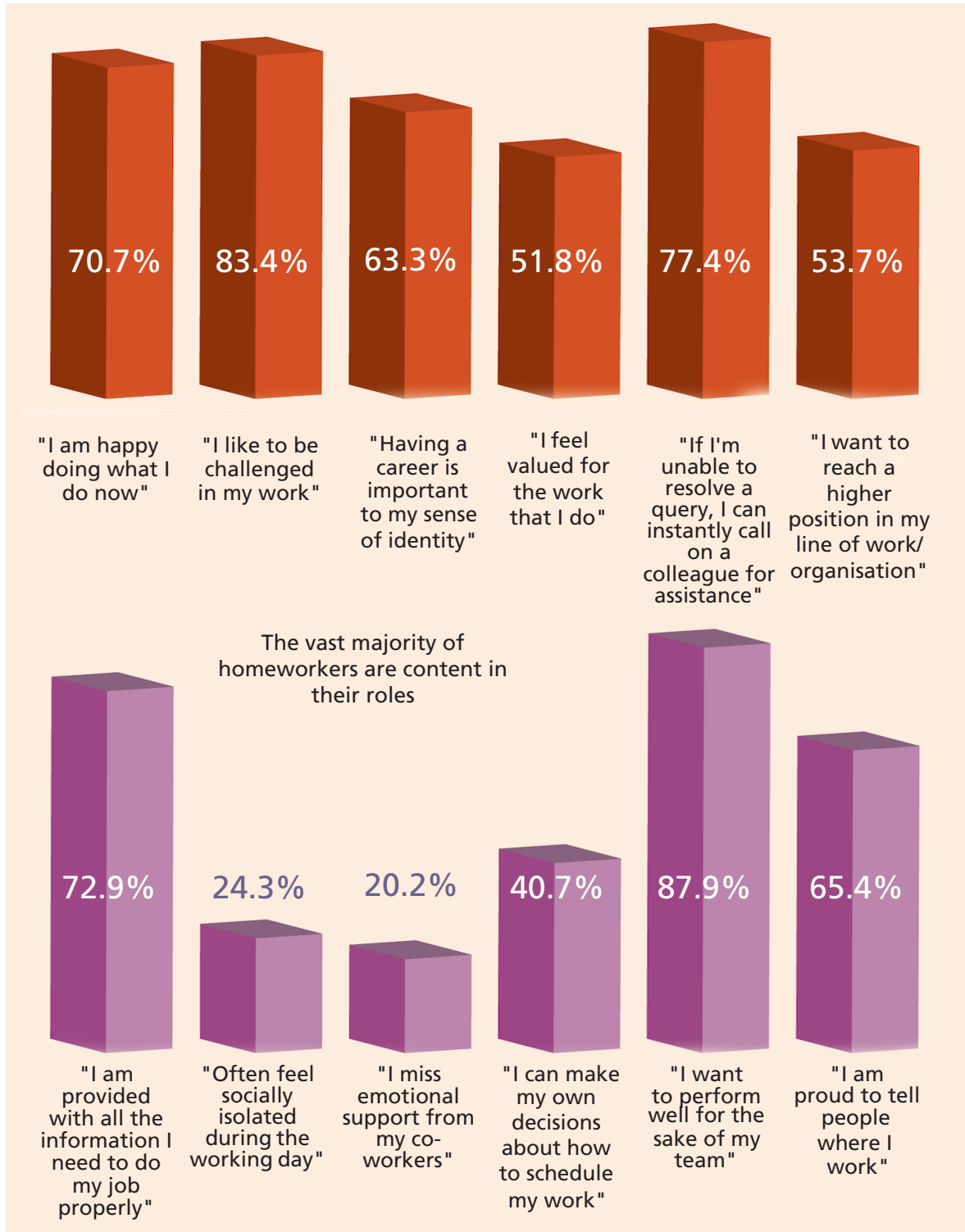
61.8%
work full time at home

60.7%
have over 10 years experience in customer contact roles



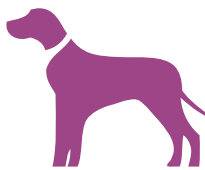
Employee Satisfaction

% of HomeAgents 'agreeing' with the following statements (other options provided were 'disagree' and 'neither agree nor disagree')



Why Homework?

70.7% chose to work from home for a better work-life-balance



68.2% wanted to homework to avoid travel to work



34.3% CHOSE to work from home to reduce their carbon footprint



When asked about the main benefits that homeworking has ACTUALLY delivered



74.2% of homeworkers highlight a better work-life-balance



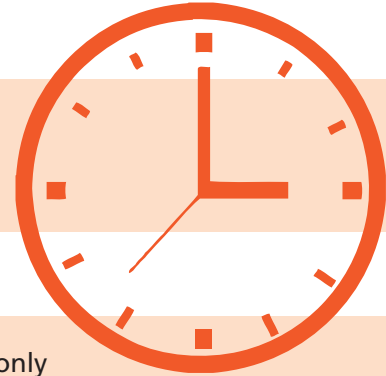
85.9% say they incur no travel-to-work costs



80.8% say they have removed time wasted travelling to work

Working Hours

Over a half of HomeAgents (**50.5%**) said that they are able to work multiple shifts during the day.



According to **43.2%** of Employers, HomeAgents can only work a minimum shift of Over 5 hours..... suggesting that, for these cases, they can only work 'normal 'office days.

48.6% of Employers allow homeworkers to work multiple shifts on a single day....

... which correlates closely with our finding that **50.5%** of HomeAgents report working multiple shifts during the day

43.9% of survey respondents say that they can self-select their working hours.

83.8% of organisations have real time visibility of HomeAgent activity across all media, and the ability to intervene in conversations in real time.



Training

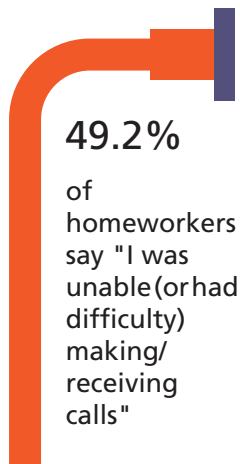
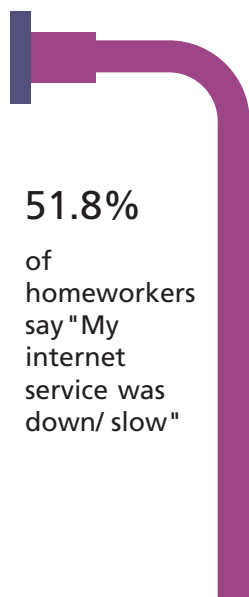


Technology and Homeworking Equipment

59.5% of homeworkers say that they supply/buy their own laptops



When asked about issues that have recently impacted their ability to work:



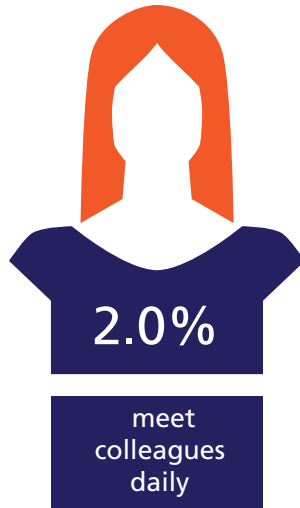
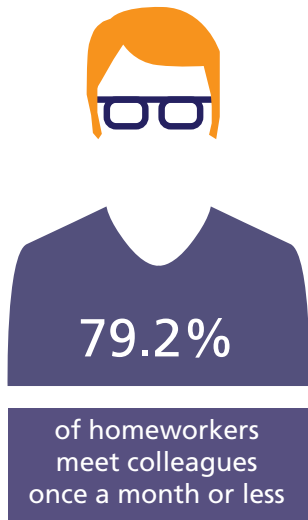
VoIP/IP Telephony is the most popular choice for enabling HomeAgent working.

81.1% of all respondents say they use VoIP/IP Telephony.

The remaining 18.9% still use Traditional PSTN Telephony or a mix of Traditional and VoIP.

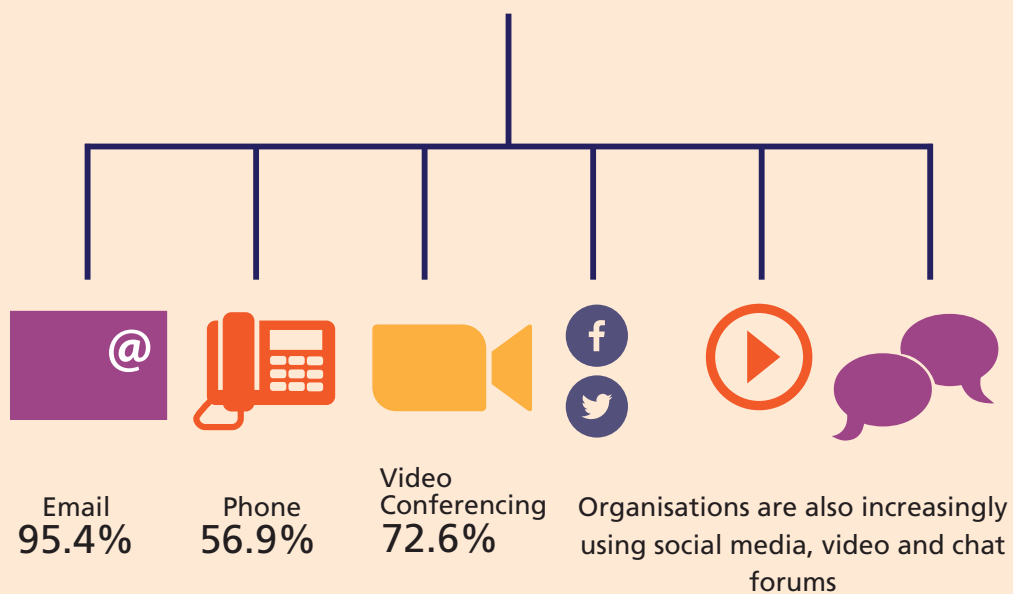


Communication



Many organisations with HomeAgents deploy multi-channel employee communication solutions to resolve Communications and Technology problems.

Organisations communicate with their homeworkers by:



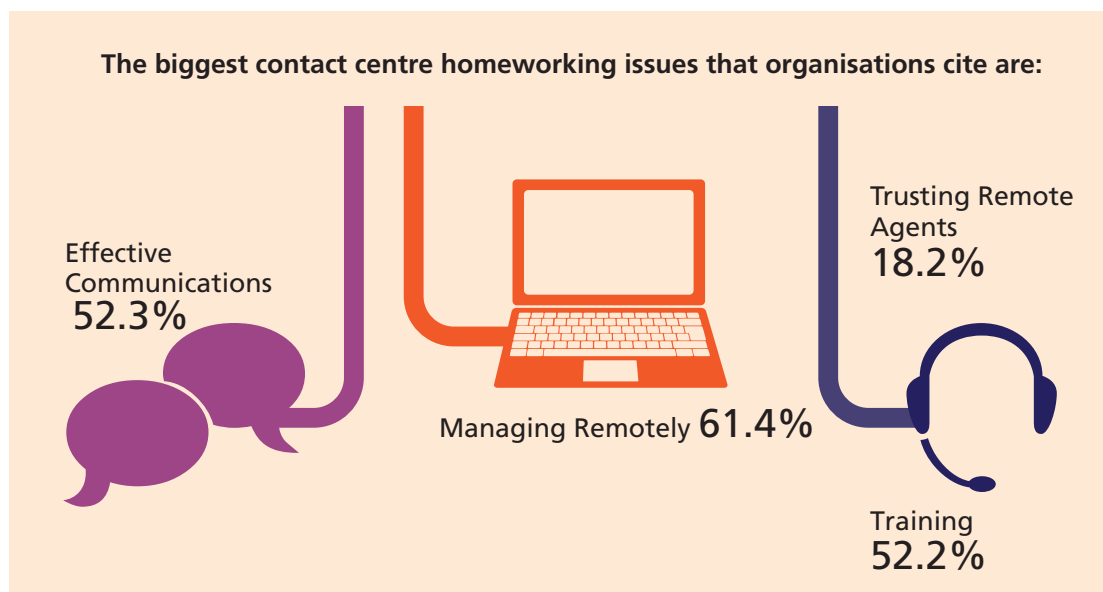
Corporate Benefits of HomeAgent Working

65.9% Business Continuity Options

61.4% Happier and more productive employees

61.4% Improved scheduling flexibility

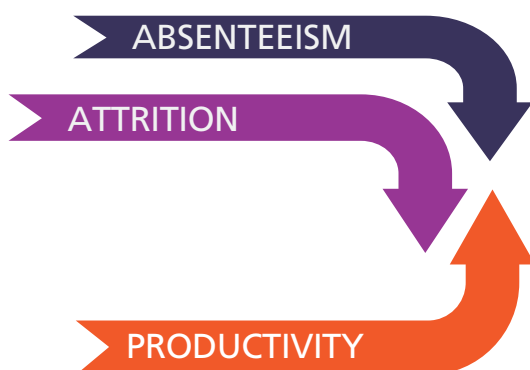
47.7% Lower carbon footprint



75% of organisations considered 'Attrition' to be better (i.e. lower) amongst HomeAgents than amongst office-based workers.

61.5% considered 'Productivity' to be better (i.e. higher), while 54.2% considered 'Absenteeism' to be better (i.e. lower).

40.0% of organisations considered 'Customer Satisfaction', 'Quality of Service' and 'Average Handle Time' to be better amongst HomeAgents than amongst office-based workers, while 35.0% considered 'Customer Experience Score' to be better, and 33.3% 'Net Promoter Score'.



HomeAgents can sometimes be more difficult to manage than in-house employees according to organisations responding to our survey.

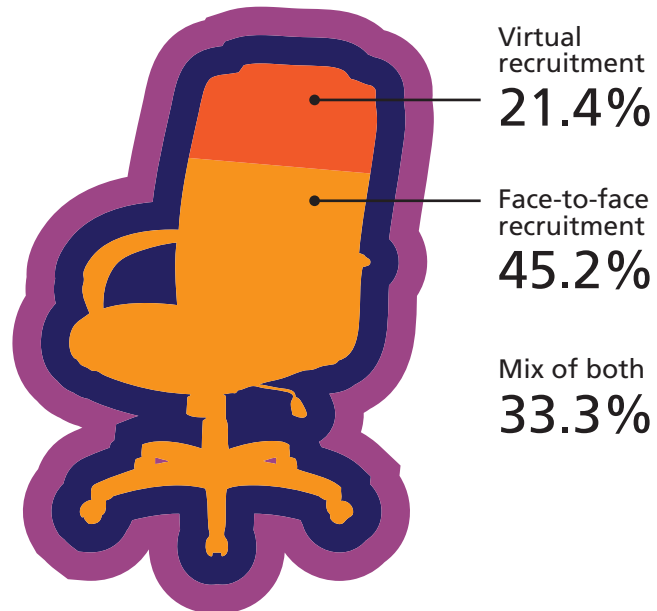
34.5% of organisations say it is more difficult to 'Monitor the Work Quality' of HomeAgents and 45.2% say it is more difficult to 'Manage Performance'.

The main areas where organisations experience more difficulties in managing HomeAgents are: Training (with 59.5% saying it is 'more difficult') and Monitoring Data Security (with 48.2% saying it is 'more difficult').

56.8% of organisations have enhanced their IT, or Information Security, to enable HomeAgent working.

Recruitment

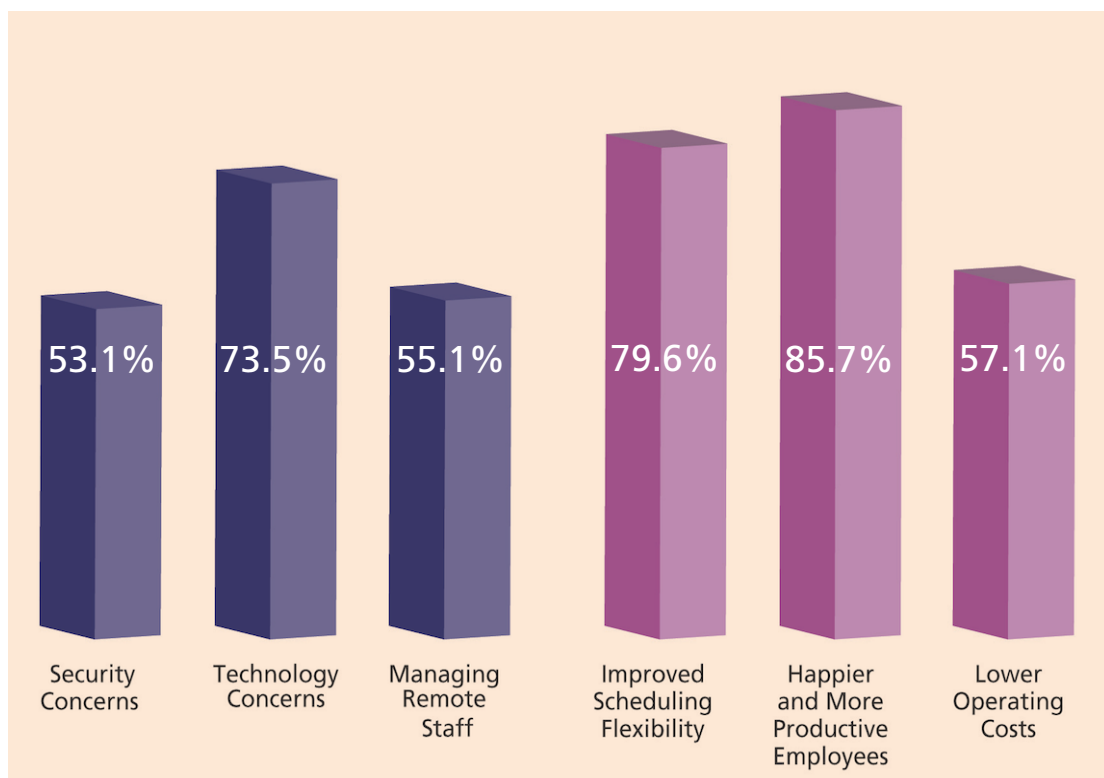
More organisations recruit HomeAgents face-to-face albeit virtual methods are growing in popularity.



Perceived barriers and benefits:

The most common barriers cited by organisations who currently don't have HomeAgent teams are :

When asked about the key benefits contact centre homeworking brings, organisations who currently don't have HomeAgent teams say:



More and more UK contact centres are turning to homeworking as they discover its huge potential financial and productivity benefits.

When comparing work-at-home with office-based contact centre operations, 75 per cent of organisations responding to the survey say that Attrition is lower, 61 per cent say Productivity is better, and 54 per cent say Absenteeism is better. By comparison, in the 2016 study, the figures were 42, 46, and 58 per cent respectively.

As well as delivering significant advantages to businesses, homeworking is also delivering huge benefits to contact centre agents. 74 per cent of HomeAgents say that they have a better work-life-balance. 86 per cent say they they have no travel-to-work costs, while 81 per cent say that they have removed the time wasted travelling to work. By comparison, in the 2016 study, the figures were 65, 73, and 68 per cent respectively.

Other key findings from the 2020 survey include:

- 75 per cent of HomeAgents are aged 35 or over; 61 per cent have over 10 years experience in customer contact roles
- 71 per cent of HomeAgents say that they are happy (at least some of the time); 65 per cent are proud to tell people where they work
- 50 per cent of organisations allow HomeAgents to work multiple shifts on a single day
- 97 per cent of HomeAgents experience virtual training; 70 per cent of these think it is just as effective as office-based training
- 59 per cent of HomeAgents supply/buy their own laptops; 76 per cent supply their own broadband/internet
- 79 per cent of HomeAgents meet colleagues once a month or less

These survey results reveal that interest in contact centre homeworking has never been higher. Compared with our 2016 Survey, an even greater number of HomeAgents are reporting that they're enjoying a better work-life-balance, have no travel-to-work costs, and have removed the time wasted travelling to work, with Employers reporting greater gains in terms of lower Attrition and Absenteeism, and higher Productivity.

Subsequent to this research concluding, Covid-19 changed the contact centre homeworking picture significantly. However, this doesn't change the significance of our research. In fact, quite the opposite. As companies emerge from lockdown, this research can provide them with the confidence that homeworking is a sound option from an ethical, financial and employee engagement perspective.



A leader in cloud communications, Content Guru supplies mission critical Customer Engagement and Experience solutions for hundreds of large organisations across the globe.

Content Guru's cloud-first platform, storm®, offers virtually limitless scalability, unmatched integration capabilities and industry-leading AI. Content Guru ensures contact centres meet the needs of every customer, seamlessly. storm is used by hundreds of organisations across Europe, the US and Asia-Pac, in sectors ranging from finance and government through to travel and utilities.

Customers relying on storm for mission-critical services include Sodexo, NHS 111, UK Power Networks, G4S, Serco and Rail Delivery Group.

Content Guru provides the vital cloud communications platform that connects millions of people every day to the major organisations they need.

From power companies and airlines, through to NHS 111 and DWP Universal Credit, Content Guru's storm® platform is used by hundreds of large organisations across the globe to ensure that their contact centres meet the needs of every customer, whether their enquiry is spoken or written.

www.contentguru.com

For further information, contact:

+44 (0) 1344 852 350

sales@contentguru.com



Sensée is a provider of flexible and homeworking services.

We help clients address key customer service issues including: service improvement, sales improvement, cost reduction, volatility and flexibility, disaster recovery & business continuity, and corporate social responsibility. Our services include:

- HomeAgent-based contact centre outsourcing services: We help leading UK brands (such as Allianz, Bupa and Hastings Direct) improve their business performance, provide brilliant customer service and create accessible careers. Our award-winning team of 700+ service advisors (as well as support and management staff) are employed and work entirely from home - handling all types of customer interaction (service, sales, retention, tech support etc.) enquiries over the phone as well as via email, web chat, text and social media. Sensée is ISO27001 accredited and has achieved PCI-DSS and GDPR compliance.
- Consulting and Best Practices: We've been the leading home working only customer service provider in the UK for 15 years, and we're happy to share knowledge and best practices via our Benchmarking, Consulting, Discovery and Workshop services.
- The Lab: Our Lab services enable clients to develop, test and rollout new business models, resource plans, ways of working and technologies.
- CloudWorks™: Sensée's CloudWorks™ technology ecosystem gives organisations all the tools necessary to operate a home-based contact centre operation. It provides technology tools to assist with the remote management, training and co-ordination of staff working from home, communication and collaboration tools to keep remote workers supported and engaged, and safeguards to ensure the most rigorous Infosec compliance. The CloudWorks ecosystem supports the entire Employee Lifecycle - from recruitment and on-boarding to scheduling, training and management - and is fully compliant with UK Employment Law.

Further information about our Disaster Recovery, Business Continuity and Peak Management services can be found at <http://bit.ly/3d2Go9a>

www.sensee.co.uk

For further information contact:
+44 (0)208 996 5842
marketing@sensee.co.uk



The Digital Partner You Can Grow With

A pioneer in exceptional customer care and support, SYKES is a leading provider of multichannel customer engagement and demand generation services for Global 2000 companies. We help brands optimise the lifetime value of customer relationships by building intelligent experiences that attract, convert, engage and retain customers.

SYKES achieves a singular mission: to help people, one caring interaction at a time. The innovative members of our business family share our mission and core values, and their expertise uniquely positions SYKES to help brands stay ahead of competition and create a connected, intelligent customer experience. Through our 50,000+ people, across every region, we have the skills, capacity and experience to make differences count.

From classic in-centre customer service outsourcing to 5,000+ work-at-home agents, and beyond to digital self-service and business process automation, SYKES provides the teams, expertise, and technology necessary to streamline and optimise all phases of your customers' journey.

www.sykes.com

For further information contact us:
info.emea@sykes.com

6. ABOUT THE UK HOMEAGENT FORUM

The UK HomeAgent Forum was founded in 2014 by the UK Contact Centre Forum (UKCCF) as a Special Interest Group to promote best practice in contact centre homeworking.

The Forum supports a range of activities:

- **Special Interest Group meetings:** Over 50 UK companies regularly contribute to our bi-monthly roundtable discussions, where members can share experiences and exchange views about homeworking.
- **Networking Seminars:** The UKCCF runs regular Homeworking networking seminars, giving members the opportunity to learn from the experiences of seasoned professionals.
- **The UK HomeAgent Forum LinkedIn Group:** An online initiative that enables members to ask questions and receive advice from other Group members about virtual recruitment, training, management and technology. The Group has attracted over 250 members.
- **Industry research studies.** Recent studies have included research into Contact Centre HomeWorking, Proactive Customer Service, GDPR and Compliance, Omnichannel working, and Customer Service 2029.

For information about the UK HomeAgent Forum please contact:

Trevor Butterworth
CEO
UK Contact Centre Forum
10 Pigott Road
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1PY

M: 07932 669 299
W: <http://www.uk-ccf.co.uk>
E: info@uk-ccf.co.uk



Comprising six regional user groups, the UKCCF provides a platform for call centre and customer service professionals to meet and share ideas at a local level.

Monthly Executive Club meetings and Networking Seminars present the latest customer contact thinking and strategy – and in just a few years, the forum has come to be respected as a valuable resource for members.

As part of its commitment to providing the latest information and advice, UKCCF has recently launched Contact Centre Monthly as an online resource for the customer service community.

The website features the latest industry news, incentive ideas, events listings, team and individual profiles, as well as articles on strategy and technology.