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Home:Work?

## Achieving digital dependability

An Asurion Europe research note on the
growing criticality of tech support in the home

Winter 2024-2025

Hybrid's here to stay

The lines between home life and work life have blurred, mainly as a result of the rapid rise of hybrid working. A recent Forbes Advisor survey showed that, of 1,100 respondents, 63% worked remotely either all or some of the time.[1] Data from the Office of National Statistics tells us that for those earning over £50,000/year, over half have a hybrid work arrangement.[2] Other studies reveal more. Once we eliminate those who have to be onsite for their job (retail, manufacturing, etc.), 81% of (usually) office-based professionals in the UK are working from home, at least part of the time. And with only 2% of them stating they have always worked remotely, it's clear there's been a huge shift among working from home habits.[3]
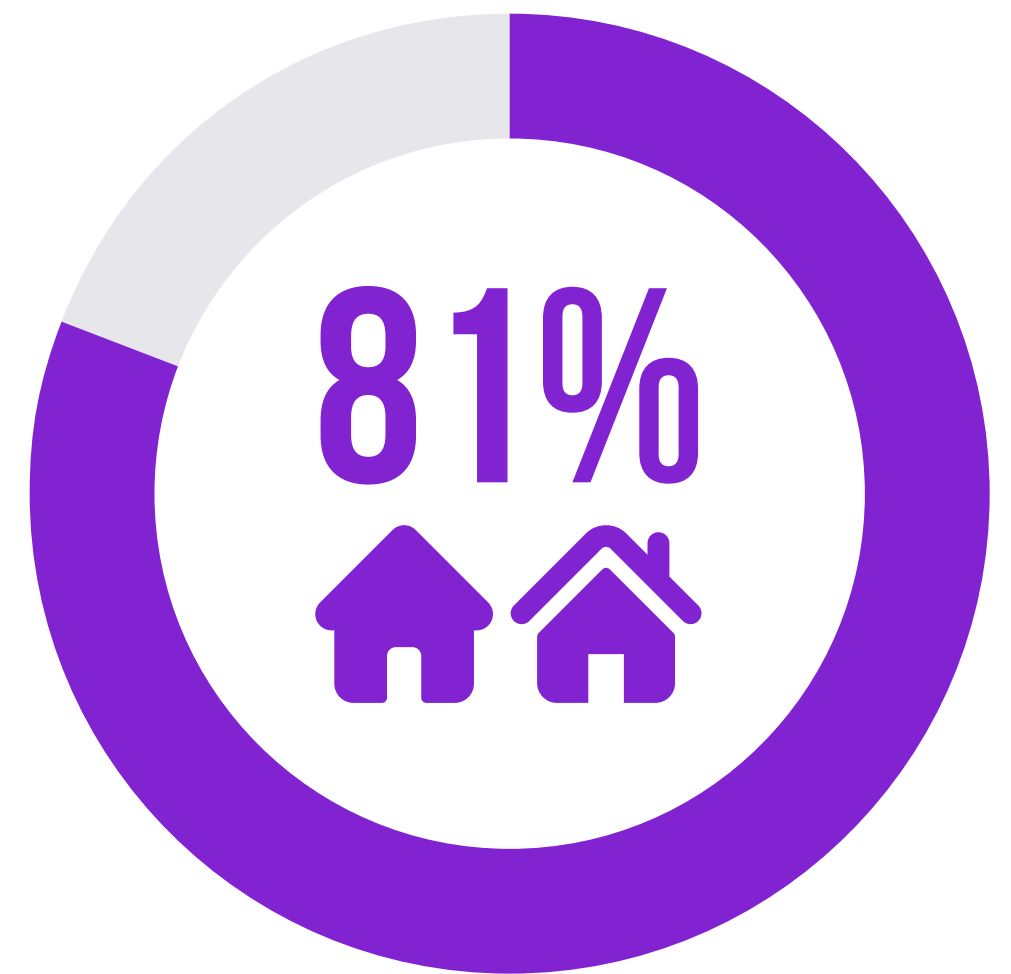
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The home office debate

Of course, the debate continues around the pros and cons of working from home versus office time.[4] Who knows how it will play out in future, but there are certain realities of the current picture. For companies, their commercial floorspace requirements have dropped by some 30%. For us as employees, some remote working eliminates commuting time, can enhance work-life balance, satisfaction, productivity and more.[5] At the same time, we hear complaints about lack of personal interaction, inability to learn from the example of senior colleagues, and potential loss of energy and momentum. Clearly the jury remains out.

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Critical convergence

At all events, embedded hybrid working patterns have certainly driven convergence between home and office digital technology. Research tells us that levels of support from employers for home working tech varies. 40% of those working for companies with more than 500 employees said their employer supplied them with the appropriate equipment for working from home, compared to just 29% of those working for companies with less than 10 employees.[6] Some of us prefer to have all our work and personal communications and apps to be on one single device, leading to the whole issue of 'bring your own device' (BYOD). BYOD has inspired data protection organisations to set out best practice security frameworks.[7]

Double dependency: strengthened support

It's not just a matter of professional technology when working from home. Digital dependency (phone, laptop, games console, connected home, etc) in our personal lives is well documented as on the rise. A whole study on this subject has been researched and published by Asurion Europe, for instance. Add in the hybrid working trend, and the reliance on digital devices in the home increases exponentially.

Latest Asurion Europe research among UK consumers shows that concerns about technological problems with digital tech in the home is a major issue for the younger age cohort, unsurprisingly those digital natives spanning Gen Y and Gen Z. Nevertheless, a strong minority of middle-aged workers are also worried to secure 'uptime' and functionality from their digital platforms — both personal and professional.

	TOTAL	18–34	35–54	55+
Because I **work at home** at least some of the week, I feel I now have much greater need of tech support in case of problems and failures	33%	54%	39%	12%
I think insurance and tech support for the electronic devices in my home is an **essential service** to help me manage accidents, breakdowns, failures, IT issues, software problems, etc.	60%	67%	64%	51%

As a result, fully two thirds of us, **consistent** across **all** age groups, feel it **essential** to have effective support for the digital tech they have in the home – repair, resolve, replace. Everyone understands that technical issues will occur. These might be set-up challenges, connection problems, device malfunction, software glitches, or even being unaware how to perform a given digital task or process.

What does good look like?

This research note therefore asked respondents what good tech support and recovery should look like. This was focused primarily on response times, which had emerged in various qualitative research groups as the primary consideration when tech problems occur.

There are now many 'sticking plaster' solutions to digital tech problems. Most obviously, connectivity issues can be temporarily managed by going to a local café. One can move ones mobile SIM to an alternative emergency device for a short while. However, few of us would want to continue for much longer than an emergency period with such measures. Full restoration is what we are after.

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	TOTAL	18–34	35–54	55+
With all the dependency I have on electronic devices in the home, a service which would **restore and solve most problems within 24 hours** would be worth buying	67%	73%	70%	58%
With all the dependency I have on electronic devices in the home, a service which would **restore and solve most problems within 48 hours** would be worth buying	64%	69%	67%	57%

Interestingly, consumer sensitivity was hardly differentiated between a 48 hour resolution service and a 24 hour fix. The availability of emergency workarounds, such as those we have mentioned, may explain this answer. Clearly, **quality** of home tech service and support is more important to us than hyper-rapidity. It is also significant to note that all the way through to respondents' mid-fifties, a two thirds majority of us appreciate an effective tech support service.

Leisure time: the games console

Setting up a games console, especially if children are to have access, can be complex and time-consuming.

First the technical aspects have to be covered – hardware connections, software set-up, personal profile. Then security settings are vital to manage properly in a world where gaming is experiencing increasing cyberattacks.[8]

Next comes parental controls, covering screen time restrictions, age-appropriate access to online resources, limits for in-game purchasing, and so on.

Finally, data protection routines need to be put in place, given that major breaches of gamer data have occurred, and the level of personal data exposed needs to be minimised.

All through this process, a service that guides you through set-up and is then available for ongoing technical support is invaluable, not only saving time but also ensuring that all controls are set to suitable standards and no corners cut.

Work time: the notebook

Although we use multiple devices, most of us do not want different machines for work and for leisure.

However, setting up synchronization safely and securely can be challenging.

The main device for working from home – usually a notebook – will first need its software effectively installed, observing distinction between work, personal and leisure applications.

Collaboration applications require security protocols across multiple devices, particularly laptop and mobile. Cloud email similarly.

Employers may demand levels of data protection and security which are more rigorous that those you would install for personal applications.

An effective technical support service should be able to help manage multiple device co-ordination, cyber security, collaborative applications, both for initial set-up and for the inevitable adaptation which are needed over time as work requirements develop.

Key Takeaways

- Current hybrid work patterns are putting pressure on the home tech and devices environment.

- 18-34 year-olds (digital natives) are most vocal about the increased tech pressure resulting from hybrid work.

- However, two thirds of working adults — broadly consistent across all age groups — see effective tech support for all devices and platforms in the home (work and leisure) as 'essential'.

- Two thirds of us see resolving and remediation home tech issues in 24-48 hours as the standard for good service and practice.

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