

A woman with curly hair is shown in profile, looking at a laptop. The image is overlaid with a large green semi-transparent shape that covers the left side and bottom. The text is white and positioned on the green background.

# The effects of remote working on stress, wellbeing and productivity.

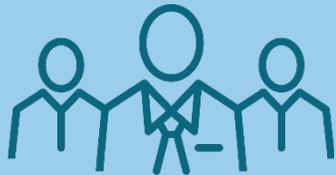
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Nuffield Health

# Context.

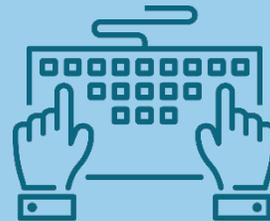
Remote working is on the rise.

**74% Jump in the number of people working from their own home between 2008 and 2018**  
(Office of National Statistics).

**4.2 million people regularly worked from home in 2015**  
(Office of National Statistics).



Allows employees to more cohesively integrate work and home demands.



Remote working + 'hot desking' saves employers space and overhead costs.



Improved technology allows employees to remain connected to work from remote locations (e.g. email, skype etc.).

# Where does the debate lie?

"To become the absolute best place to work, communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side by side. That is why it is critical that we are all present in our offices."  
(Chief executive of Yahoo – 2013)

"It's easier to attract top talent when you are open and flexible - It's not effective or productive to force them to behave in a conventional way." (Richard Branson – Virgin Group founder)

# Why investigate remote working?

Remote working can influence a number of factors relating to the performance, wellbeing and longevity of employees.



Health.



Wellbeing.



Productivity.



Job satisfaction.



Turnover intention.



Pleasing the 'talent'.

# Aim.



To systematically review the published literature that has examined the associations between remote working and stress, wellbeing, health and productivity.



To arrive at some practical recommendations that you may not typically see from similar work.

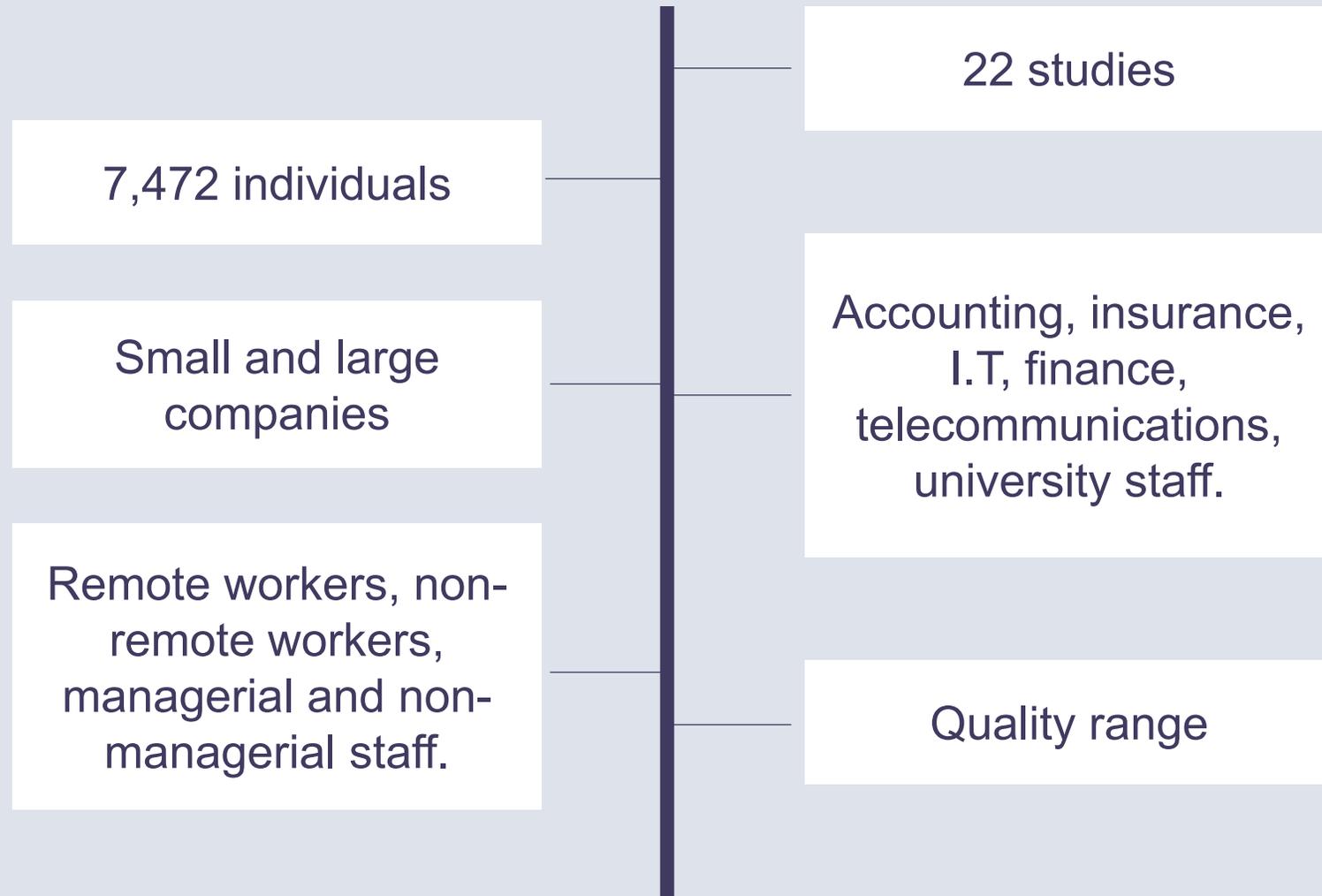
# Methods.

Systematic search of the literature.



- Participants work remotely, defined as: spending at least one day a week of their working time away from their office (e.g. home, another company site, hotel or train).
- Study uses a validated measure of stress (defined as a state of psychological distress or suffering, including depression and anxiety), and/or wellbeing (including loneliness) and/or productivity and/or uses a measure of health as an outcome.

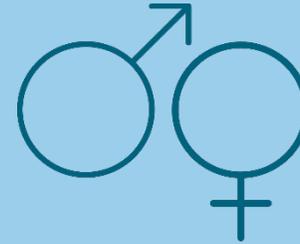
# Methods.



# Demographic breakdown.



**Ages range from  
18 to 60.**



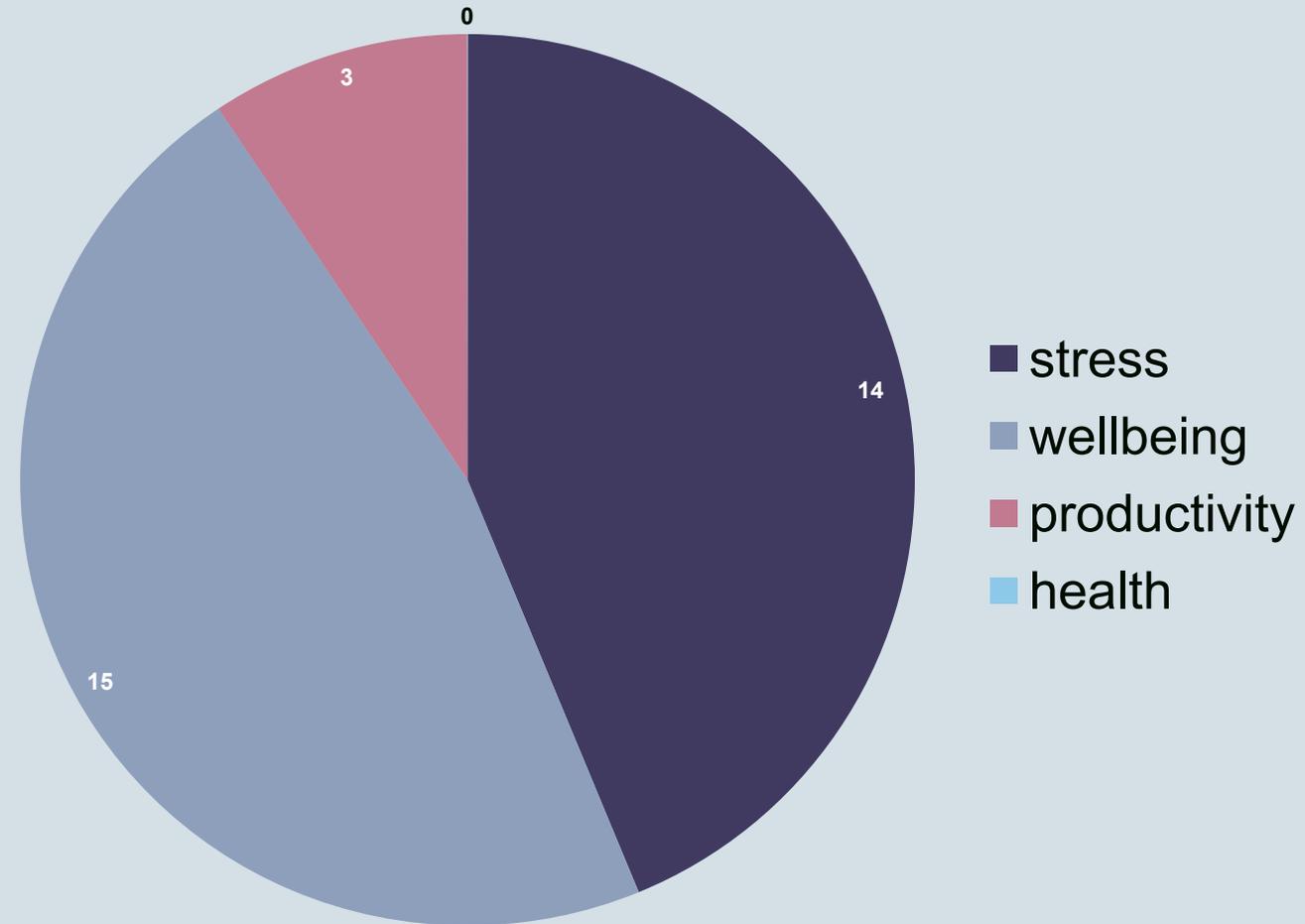
**All studies bar one included both men  
and women (one study with women  
solely).**

**Data from:** US Federal agency, Telecommunications, IT, Finance, Government, Education, Business services, Accountancy firms, University, Supply chain management, Insurance, Consultancy Services.



# Results.

Study outcomes.



# Effects of remote working on wellbeing.

1

Outcomes measured included job satisfaction, need for recovery and work/life balance.

2

Overall the effect of remote working on wellbeing was positive.

3

Increased job satisfaction and work/life balance, reduced turnover intentions.

4

Effects mediated by relationships with managers, co-workers and family.

# Factors to consider.

1

Use of technology in appropriate ways can improve communication.

2

Possible U-shaped relationships between amount of remote working and job satisfaction.

3

Use of advanced technology reduced turnover intentions.

4

With greater autonomy the association between remote working and wellbeing may be more positive.

5

In some circumstances home is seen more as a place of demand and less of restoration.

6

Social connectedness moderates wellbeing in remote workers.

# Effects of remote working on stress.

1

Outcomes measured included job stress, exhaustion and psychological strain.

2

The relationship between remote working and stress is mixed.

3

Remote working could lead to reduced work stress, work exhaustion and turnover intentions.

4

Remote working could be associated with work overload and role ambiguity added to worker strain and increased work/family conflict.

# Factors to consider.

1

Sufficient organisational support found to reduce isolation and strain and mediate the impact of exhaustion.

2

Adequate support from the organisation can buffer exhaustion and reduce turnover intentions.

3

Role ambiguity and invasion of privacy are factors in the remote working stress relationship.

4

In some studies the associations between stress and remote working varied depending on intensity of remote working.

# Effects of remote working on productivity.

1

Outcomes measured were job performance and concentration.

2

Part-time teleworkers reported higher levels of concentration at home compared to the office.

3

Isolation negatively associated with job performance.

4

No effects of homeworking on concentration.

# Factors to consider.

1

Only three studies measured productivity with conflicting results.

2

Cannot draw conclusions based on this.

3

Further work is needed.

# Individual differences.

## Rumination

If you have high rumination then remote working may be bad for your wellbeing.

## Isolation

Professional isolation is negatively associated with job performance.

## Openness

People high on openness may adapt well (increased positive affect) to remote working

## Connected

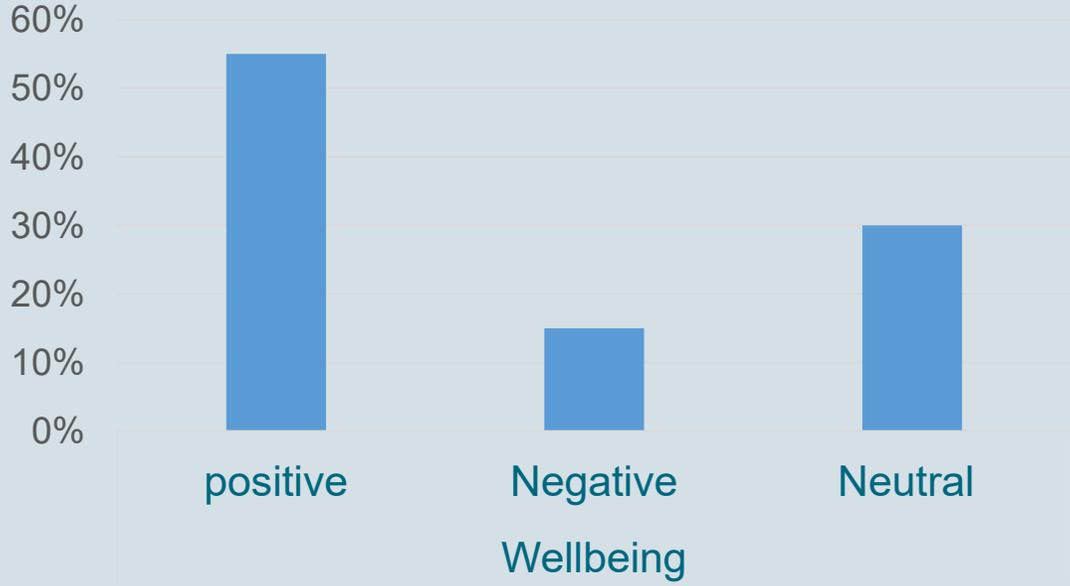
If you are more socially connected you benefit more from working at home.

# Where the greatest positive impact is created from remote working

Impact of remote working on stress



Impact of remote working on wellbeing



# Practical guidelines.

- Remote working will change the workplace dynamic.
- Remote working is likely to continue to increase.

“10–15 years ago at interviews people asked about salary and the company car, now the number one question I get asked is about the company's approach to flexible working”

– Dawn Moore, Director of Human Resources at Morgan Sindall.

# Thought piece for the future.



No obvious perfect ratio of remote working/non-remote working.

Potential for development of training for home workers to reduce work/life conflict.

Individual differences around remote working should be considered.

Given the potential positive and negative effects of remote working, what will your company's approach to remote working look like?

Thank you.  
Any questions?