

Working from Home (WfH) environments to enhance well-being and productivity

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Abstract:

Purpose: We conducted a scoping online survey to answer these two research questions: What are the best solutions to space design for working from home (WfH) to enhance well-being and productivity? What changes to their home spaces have knowledge workers and public administrators in the East Midlands made to enable WfH during COVID-19 lockdown?

Approach: we surveyed knowledge workers and public administrators from the East Midland Region in 2021 with a total of 98 valid responses recruited through a combination of purposive and convenient sampling. The online survey was shared via Leicester-based employers: De Montfort University, Leicester City Council, and East Midlands chamber. We designed the survey to capture both qualitative and quantitative experiences. We analysed the survey using these methods: descriptive analysis, conceptual content analysis, and correlation analysis.

Key findings: our survey identified a dedicated workspace as a significant contributor to comfort and wellbeing while WfH. Surveyed employees prioritised environmental control, comfortable furnishings, and adequate space in WfH environments.

Implications: WfH is here to stay and it will need comprehensive considerations from both employees and employers to ensure that subjective well-being is integrated. Employee-centred environments design and solutions will enhance wellbeing and productivity.

Keywords: COVID-19 lockdown, knowledge workers, productivity, public administrators, well-being, and working from home (WfH) environments.

Main highlights:

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- A dedicated workspace enhances well-being in WfH environments
- Employees value environmental control, comfort, and adequate space when WfH
- Employee-centred design supports well-being and productivity
- WfH requires joint employer–employee design considerations customised to work activities.

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