

Time is Money

There has been a lot of talk about staff being unwilling to return to the office full-time. Having enjoyed the flexibility of working from home during Covid.

Companies have taken different approaches to encourage staff to return, with some choosing to make office working mandatory and others leaving notes on desks letting staff know they were sorry to have missed them and expressing hope that they would see them at their desk soon (a note of genuine sentiment or a thinly-veiled dig?)



One law firm situated in London has opted for a more direct approach, deciding to put a price on the perk of working from home by offering staff the opportunity to work exclusively from home in exchange for taking a 20% cut in salary. While that may seem straightforward on the face of it, it's not without issues.

Many people prefer working from home as it makes their caring responsibilities easier, be that for their children or dependant adults. For those people, it's less about cutting the commute and more about being able to meet their out-of-work duties. More women than men traditionally have caring responsibilities so requiring them to take a pay cut to work from home is potentially discriminatory and while it's understandable that some employers want staff to return to the office, it's important to remember that not all home working arrangements are Covid related.

While homeworking may seem like a perk for some people it is not necessarily the cheap option it is touted to be. Working from home does save staff the cost and time of commuting, but it requires costs in other areas, financially in terms of increased fuel bills at a time when those costs are already skyrocketing and timewise, working from home often results in staff working longer hours as the lines between home and work become blurred. While the cost of working from home vs the office varies from employer to employer and employee to employee, one bill nobody enjoys paying is the one that comes from a solicitor. So before adopting any work in the office incentives, it is always a good idea to check that whatever policy you opted for is not inadvertently discriminatory and the first step on a potentially protracted and costly road to the tribunal!