

# Renew London

## Hybrid working

Developed with





# Foreword

Like many employers, in a matter of days EY had to move more than 18,000 employees across the UK, and 11,500 in London, from working on-site to working from home.

This unique enforced experiment in remote working enhanced and accelerated approaches to flexible working that were already underway throughout the firm.

Before COVID-19 we were seeing greater remote working, and an increasing use of technology to promote collaboration across teams and across geographies.

As the UK begins to move cautiously out of Covid-19 restrictions, and remote working becomes a combination of personal choice and business need, rather than a matter of public health, there is an opportunity to build on some of the positive outcomes which have developed.

Flexibility and, for some, a better work-life balance have stood out. However, it is also vital to keep the things we value, like the creativity of doing things “in the room” and the sense of belonging that is often sparked by those “water cooler” moments.

This will require a new approach to working where individual preferences align with business and client needs.

We have worked with our employees and clients to explore options for the future of the workplace, fully aware that these will continue to evolve as we learn lessons and client demands develop in the new working world. In recent months there has been a lot of heat, but very little light, on the topic of “the future of work”.

What is needed is a vision and data-led approach which is then tested through thorough employee engagement to identify and assess future ways of working.

EY’s UK senior leadership have worked with experts throughout the firm on six months of research to understand the implications and feasibility of the options available, and how these might help us deliver on the expectations and needs of our clients, employees and partners.

In-depth preference surveys and a remote viability assessment provided the necessary data. Employee focus groups, external expert interviews and team workshops also helped bring the post-pandemic work vision to life.

What emerges from this work is a picture of new hybrid working models that have the potential to improve the work-life balance of individuals, enhance productivity and have

a positive impact on wider societal goals like sustainability, with potentially profound implications for the way we work and the cities we live in.

While we initially began this work to help EY plan the future of its own business, there are observations that we hope will spark conversations for business in London, the UK and beyond.



**Caroline Artis**  
London Senior Partner, EY



**David Storey**  
EY EMEA Workforce Advisory Leader



# London First's role in recovery

Recovery from the pandemic is at the heart of London First's work through this year and beyond.

Data-led thinking, such as this analysis by EY of their people's attitudes and ambitions, gives a critical insight for all London's businesses and employees as they plan their return to the workplace.

We know that London's recovery will be more robust and rapid the more quickly more people return to their workplace.

This is partly because we are all missing the place-based working-together activities that just aren't the same over Zoom: whether the casual but inspiring conversation in the kitchen, the buzzy team meeting where collaboration fosters creativity or the insights into our businesses, our people and our clients we get from a casual coffee or after work drink.

And it is partly because the eco-system which supports this interaction needs us back: our cafes, pubs, restaurants, theatres and galleries, to name but five, all need our custom. If we're not back to give it soon, they might not be there when we do. It is an eco-system that needs footfall to survive.

Office working patterns were complex before the pandemic and will be more so over the coming months. We didn't start from a world of 9-5, five days a week, so we won't be returning to it; and the experience of being away from the office over much of the past year has surely opened up new and effective ways of working. But the more people who come back the more often, the swifter we will get the benefits of face-to-face interaction and the more robust will be the recovery of our city. We need a new balance.

EY's research helps paint a picture of a new type of hybrid working, and sets out the different needs that different groups will have from their office. The office of 2021 will be different: used more for collaboration, communication and learning, with the option to do more deep, thoughtful work in the office, at home or in other locations, depending on what works for each group. Done right, flexible working will bring many benefits, from work-life balance to productivity, which will work to London's competitive advantage.

There are also a number of key interventions needed to support this return set out at the end of this report: a well-funded and central-government supported campaign to bring people back, selling the sizzle of the city; a long-

term sustainable funding approach for TfL; supporting a reskilling revolution for those whose roles have been displaced by the pandemic; and balancing the long-term needs of the centre of the city (both office space and residential) when thinking about future planning policy.

As the old cliché goes, predictions are difficult: especially about the future. Data-led work, like this analysis by EY of their staff's views and their business needs, are critical in helping us all plan our return to post-pandemic new ways of working.



**John Dickie**  
CEO, London First



# The pandemic has created a seismic shift in the way we work

The insight gathered by EY gives us a glimpse of what a hybrid working future might look like, with takeaways for businesses throughout the capital and beyond.

In March 2021, the Government signalled both its commitment to the future of offices and also its intentions to consult on future rights around flexible working; thus a hybrid model is here to stay.

As we consider the forms these might take, what emerges is a picture of new hybrid working models in which employees will go to the office for specific purposes, but where being office-based may well not be the default expectation for each day of the week.

EY do not envisage that any employees will be forced to work remotely full time, and don't expect that employers will restrict their staff from being in the office, but estimate that new ways of working will likely result in almost three quarters of their employees spending close to 50% of their time working remotely. EY also intends to offer its own employees more flexibility regarding their scheduled working hours.

In its research, EY also found that certain employee life circumstances are important in determining preferences and barriers to remote and flexible working, more so than age and gender.

Those in shared accommodation tended to express a strong preference not to work remotely full time, due to a lack of privacy and inability to concentrate, while those with caring responsibilities generally expressed stronger support for greater levels of remote working as it enables them to better meet their caring responsibilities.

The office will still matter – it is certainly not dead, despite the many headlines to the

contrary - but what we do in the office and how we use the space will be different, requiring careful design and new ways of thinking about creating office spaces.

It also presents challenges regarding how best to use the office to enable collaboration between those there in person, and those working from home.

Managing diverse employee preferences and ensuring that co-location in the office and on client sites is productive will require a carefully considered approach to team orchestration and scheduling that balances employee choice with business needs. Hybrid working will have profound implications and should intentionally avoid creating further inequalities, either in opportunity or pay. It is vital that the blurring of life and work does not have negative impacts on wellbeing.

Instead, greater flexibility should promote diversity by increasing opportunities for employees to be included and engaged, wherever they are and whenever they are working. How people live and work in London may be changing, but much of this has simply accelerated existing trends. The key is for the capital to harness these opportunities so that London remains an excellent place to do business, from home, in the office or from somewhere in between.

As the capital looks towards recovery, we need to reignite the engine that is the central activity zone (CAZ). Greater flexibility for office workers has expanded London's labour market, which means the benefits of the capital's success can flow out across the nation, as they rightly should. Fewer 9-5, five-day-a-week workers could also see more people overall working and doing business in the CAZ, as they choose to spend more time taking advantage of all it has to offer on the fewer days they are in the centre of the city.

## Benefits of hybrid working in the capital



**Locks-in positive impact** of remote working, such as a better work/life balance, improved well-being and productivity



**Strengthens London's continued importance as a meeting place,** by recognising that people still value connection and sense of belonging



**Balances business needs** with client needs and employee preferences



**Marks the end of the 1950's office,** and identifies what work, tasks and rituals are best performed at the office versus remotely, reimagining old processes for an online world



**Reflects changing societal views** on the impact of travel and sustainability

### Hybrid Working



### Example summary of a team's hybrid work pattern

|     | M | T           | W           | T           | F |
|-----|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|---|
| wk1 |   | Person icon |             | Person icon |   |
| wk2 |   | Person icon | Person icon |             |   |
| wk3 |   | Person icon |             | Person icon |   |
| wk4 |   | Person icon |             | Person icon |   |



**Busy Season**  
An extra day in the office from January to March



**Schools Holidays**  
More time spent working remotely during holidays



**Seasons**  
No major change between seasons (summer and winter)

### EY's initial analysis using its remote viability assessment process supported its development of an ambitious hybrid working model

**0%** will become full time remote

**75%** of employees could spend close to 50% of their time working remotely

**100%** of employees able to work flexible hours



# Some key features of EY's new way of working

## Work will become less time and location-bound, and more outcome-orientated

Work will happen across a combination of offices, client sites and remotely – for EY, this is likely to be either in client sites, at home, on the move or in a local shared office type environment. Actual time spent working in the office versus remotely will depend on the task at hand. Key insight from EY's research indicates different preference for the type of activities that will be done in person, remotely or both.

## Reimagined work environment

The office will still have an important role in connecting people. People are unlikely to commute into offices to sit at banks of desks, rather the office will become a place for specific tasks and activities. We can expect a greater focus on the office as a place for collaboration with teams, brainstorming, socialising and interacting with colleagues to create those water cooler moments and ad-hoc interactions that support agility and entrepreneurial

thinking. A small private office may offer opportunities for quiet and deep-thinking time, superior to remote working.

Scheduling will be critical to ensure this interaction, and the office environment will have to facilitate new ways of working.

### New ways of working:



#### In person

- Client relationship building
- Pursuits / bid preparation
- Socialising and team building
- 1-1 talent meetings
- Experiential/on the job learning
- On boarding



#### Both

- Client relationship building
- Project management meetings
- Pursuits / bid preparation
- Team meetings
- Internal stakeholder meetings



#### Remote

- Shallow individual work e.g. admin/ emails
- Deep individual work e.g. report writing
- Administration
- Team updates



### Hub

Individual spaces for employees to work whilst on-site/in the office (these could include individual pods or a fixed desk).



### Club

Collaborative spaces for teams to work when in the office (this could include café style tables, lounges or meeting rooms with interactive whiteboards).



### Roam

The ability to work whilst on the road, travelling, or at client sites (using cloud services).



### Home

The ability to work from home in a home office, which has been set up with assistance by the employer.



# Super-charged flexible working through team scheduling

EY believes that remote working is the key to unlocking greater flexibility. New ways of working will come with greater employee choice, but this needs to be balanced with business need to ensure productivity is maintained, requiring a carefully considered approach to orchestration – team work patterns and core hours..

## Core hours

### What is it?

A defined period, during a flexible working day, when employees are expected to be either present (when in the office) or responsive (when working remotely).

### Why is it important?

- Provides some structure within a more flexible working day and aligns teams' expectations of level of responsiveness
- Promotes the consolidation of collective team meetings and creates more focus time outside of the core hours
- On days where employees are in the office, raises the potential for productive team density and interaction
- On days when employees are working remotely, it makes it easier for them to plan within flexible hours and reduces the potential for "virtual presenteeism"
- Leaders can manage teams more effectively

### Examples

- 09:30-14:30 (5 core hours)
- 10:00-12 and 13:00 - 15:00 (4 core hours)
- 10:00-14:00 (4 hours)

EY's research suggests a work model where work is increasingly thought of as a percentage of time spent on tasks rather than days of the week. It may become the norm for there to be different scheduling over summer and winter, school holidays or during busy periods, aimed at improving quality of life and boosting productivity.

Having the ability to seamlessly switch between a physical and online work environment creates opportunities to radically redesign the way jobs are offered and contracted. For example, working split shifts – three hours in the morning and four in afternoon – is not possible if a commute is required between them. EY's insight indicates that job-sharing was often difficult to make work, but on a remote basis it could be possible to have job shares passing activities over to each other seamlessly over a day, week or even hourly period.

## Example of Team Scheduling Approaches

Three scheduling approaches for teams to put hybrid working into practice



### Orchestrated rotation

**Alternate by roster:** Teams (or portions of teams) rotate according to a roster of which days/weeks/months they should be on-premises. ('weeks' or 'months' the week could = <5 days in office)

### Busy period

Schedules might change depending on busy seasons e.g. tax filing season for tax professionals



### Orchestrated scheduling

**Schedule time for teams:** Teams should be in the office on fixed days/weeks/months, but do not rotate

### Seasons

Schedules might change depending on season e.g. summer or winter



### Orchestrated minimum flex

Team leaders set the minimum number of days team members must be in the office in a given week/month. Scheduling within that is ad-hoc according to team need

### Holidays

Team schedules may be adjusted for school holidays



# Remote working viability model and employee types

Although COVID-19 enforced remote working has demonstrated that much of our work can be delivered remotely, it does not mean that we should take that as the default. As we move towards a point where returning to the workplace will be more of an option for more people, businesses are working through what the balance of in/out of office work might look like.

EY developed a **Remote Work Viability Assessment** to understand the degree to which various team activities could effectively be completed remotely. The results of the assessment were used to identify different employee types and these were used to better understand the overall implications of the hybrid work vision.




## Low

*“Whiteboard sessions in the open spaces are really important, drawing on the board you just understand what someone is saying. Remote you’re just getting pictures of people’s scribble on WhatsApp and you need to try and interpret it.”*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Viability Score</b>                  | Low                                     |
| <b>Est. time in the office:</b>         | 50–80%                                  |
| <b>Est. time remote or client site:</b> | 20–50%                                  |
| <b>Likely scheduling:</b>               | Orchestrated Scheduling or Minimum Flex |
| <b>Hours:</b>                           | Flexible working hours                  |

### How they work

- Highly collaborative, instruction led, or office dependent (e.g. confidentiality) work activities are best completed making use of dedicated office space with their colleagues
- Many require close managerial control and guidance, so are best supported by co-locating with leadership in the office for most of the time – which will also enable the on-the-job learning central to their development
- When in the office they do deep, collaborative, client and talent management work
- The few days outside of the office are spent completing individual tasks that don’t require immediate collaboration with their team and to connect with clients at their premises or remotely



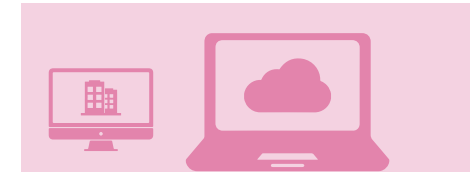
## Medium

*“In some ways it’s good to work from home if you need to focus and concentrate. In the office you can be face-to-face with the team and be more efficient on collaborative tasks - so the balance is helpful.”*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Viability Score</b>                  | Medium  |
| <b>Est. time in the office:</b>         | 30–60%  |
| <b>Est. time remote or client site:</b> | 40–70%  |
| <b>Likely scheduling:</b>               | Orchestrated Rotation, Scheduling or Minimum Flex |
| <b>Hours:</b>                           | Flexible working hours                            |

### How they work

- Primarily uses the office for structured teamwork activities and when co-location with colleagues makes communication more efficient, such as when pursuing new business or undertaking structured brainstorming with colleagues
- They also make use of EY space to build their social and professional network through team and cross-service line events
- When in the office they mostly do collaborative, client, and talent development work
- They can effectively complete most of their work remotely and also prefer to learn in this mode



## High

*“I don’t need to be in the office to be productive but it’s good to connect with my colleagues outside video calls. I think building that connection is important for my career and for the firm”*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Viability Score</b>                  | High                                   |
| <b>Est. time in the office:</b>         | 10–40%                                 |
| <b>Est. time remote or client site:</b> | 60–90%                                 |
| <b>Likely scheduling:</b>               | Orchestration Rotation or Minimum Flex |
| <b>Hours:</b>                           | Flexible working hours                 |

### How they work

- Mainly comes into the office to connect with colleagues or for meetings with internal stakeholders and to build their social and professional network and mix up their work experience
- They co-locate extensively at client sites but may also use the office for team collaboration on big pursuits or deliverables
- When in the office they do mostly collaborative, client, and talent development work
- They are highly productive working remotely across all types of work tasks and prefer to regularly connect with their team remotely, but will use the office as a 3rd interaction mode



## Hybrid Personas

Hybrid Personas are another key tool EY developed when exploring new ways of working by enabling team leaders to test their emerging thinking, for example on intended scheduling, against differing employee needs and preferences.

The personas created encourage thinking about hybrid working models in a data-led way, and raise interesting questions about future trends which may be helpful for

firms thinking about their own business's approach. The personas were not intended to represent individuals, and many will recognise elements of themselves in multiple options.

For example, EY found that those in shared accommodation tended to express a strong preference against extensive home working, reporting a lack of privacy and inability to concentrate as key barriers.

In contrast, single parents showed understandable support for increased remote working as it enables them to better meet their caring responsibilities.

Each persona was developed with their own drivers, barriers and needs to assess against future hybrid working options.



### Team Builder

This persona is based on someone with more professional experience and managerial responsibilities.



### Career Builder

This persona is characterised by someone with less professional experience and no managerial responsibilities.



### Joiner

This persona is based on an internal or external joiner – who is new to the team.



### Carer

This persona is based on those who have caring responsibilities, such as childcare or eldercare.



### Sharer

This persona encompasses employees living with friends or family in shared accommodation.





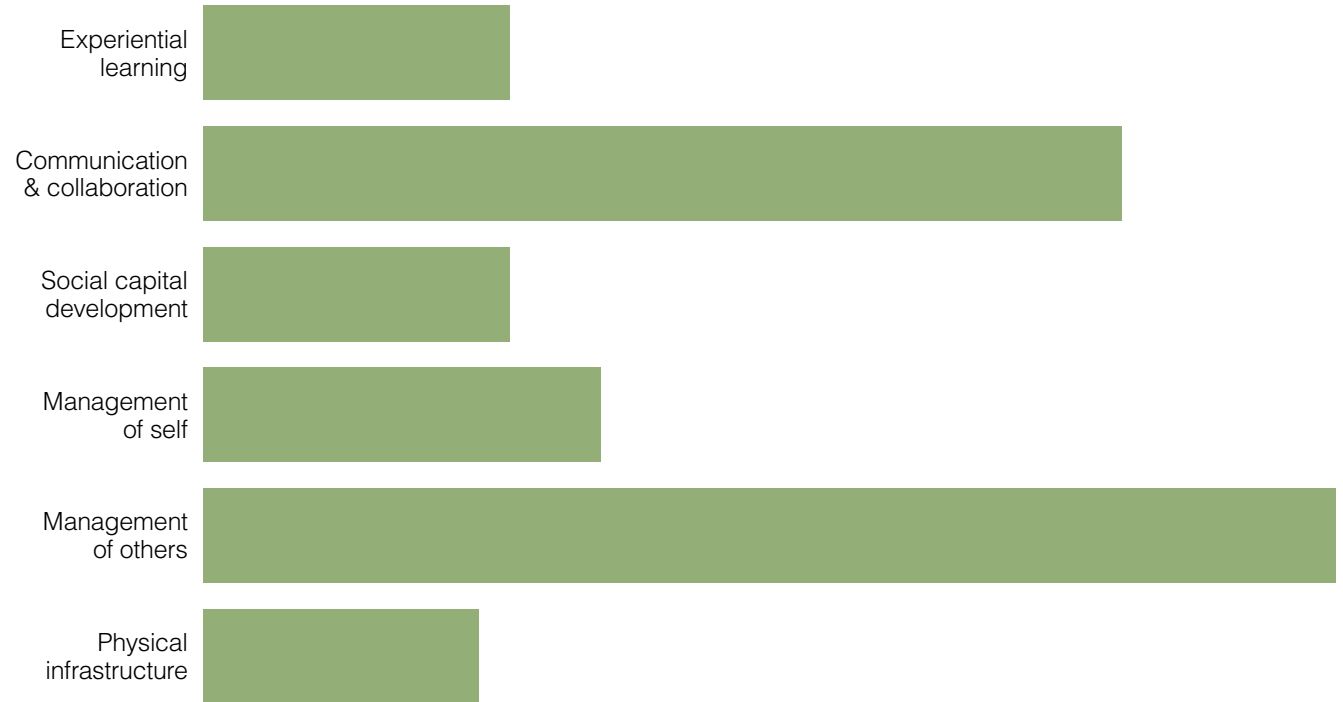
# Team Builder

**This persona is based on someone with more professional experience and managerial responsibilities.**

*“I am productive whilst working remotely, but going into the office can make it easier to connect with colleagues, as well as collaborate and communicate effectively with other members of the team”.*



## Salma Needs for the future work model



## Drivers for going into the office

- Meeting in person with her team
- Collaborating on group objectives
- Close proximity to team members and being able to offer managerial guidance/support
- Pursuing new business opportunities or delivering an RFP

## Barriers for going into the office

- More productivity working remotely
- Commute time
- Better work/life balance working remotely
- Increased flexibility working remotely
- Desire to move further away from office
- If team members are working remotely



# Career Builder

**This persona is characterised by someone with less professional experience and no managerial responsibilities.**

*"I think it's important for people in the early stages of their career to be able to go into the office to build networks within and outside of their team, learn and receive the necessary guidance they need".*



## Julien Needs for the future work model



## Drivers for going into the office

- Communicating with his team
- Close proximity to leaders and to receive managerial guidance
- Relationship building and team bonding
- Learning on the job
- Training and development

## Barriers for going into the office

- Commute time and cost
- Increased flexibility working remotely
- Completion of individual tasks that don't require collaboration
- If team leader primarily works remotely
- If team are working remotely



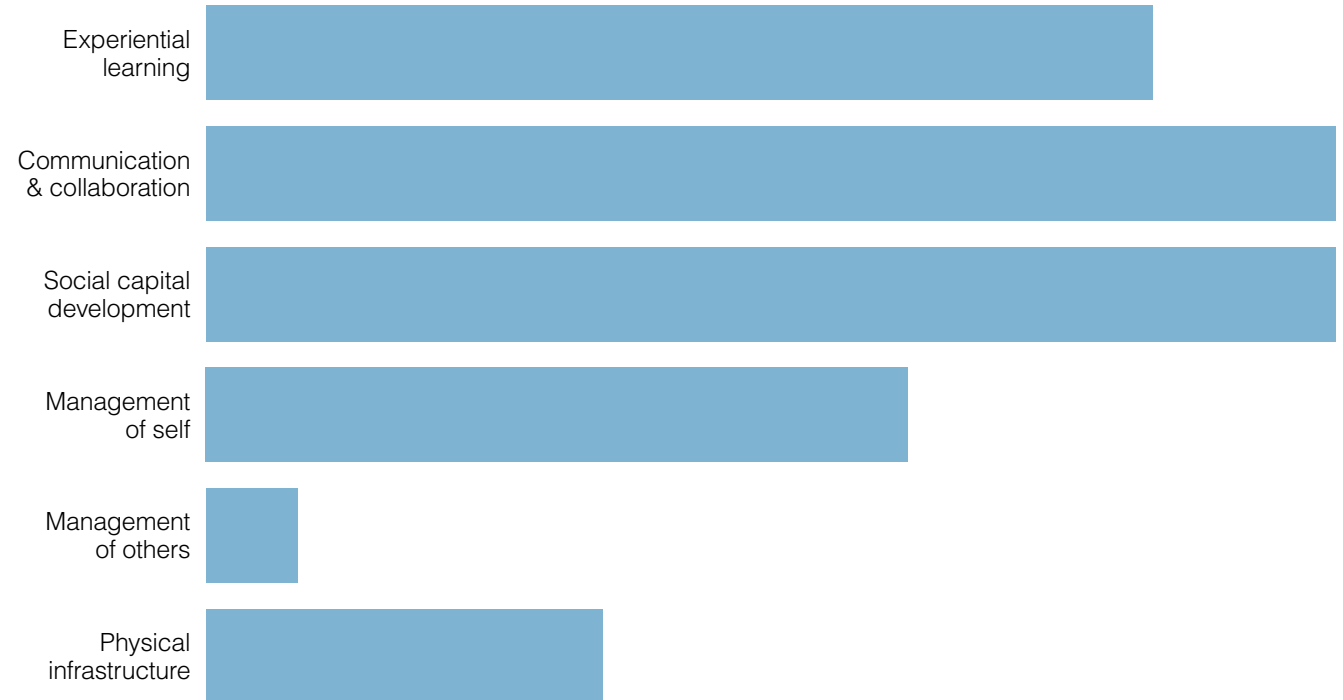
# Joiner

**This persona is based on an internal or external joiner – who is new to the team.**

*“I want to go into the office in order to properly get to know other members of my team, build a network, learn more about my service line and EY’s ways of working”.*



## Rita Needs for the future work model



## Drivers for going into the office

- Communicating with her team
- Close proximity to her manager
- Learning on the job
- Onboarding and other training
- Networks, relationship building and team bonding

## Barriers for going into the office

- Commute time and cost
- If team leader primarily works remotely
- If other team members primarily work remotely



# Carer

**This persona is based on those who have caring responsibilities, such as childcare or eldercare.**

*"I want to work for a company that is understanding and provides me with flexibility to manage my responsibility as a carer with those of my job, and have a good work/life balance".*



## Rodrigo Needs for the future work model



## Drivers for going into the office

- Communicating with his team
- Collaborating on group objectives

## Barriers for going into the office

- Childcare or eldercare responsibilities
- Primary care giver
- More productivity working remotely
- Better work/life balance working remotely
- Increased flexibility working remotely
- Commute time and cost



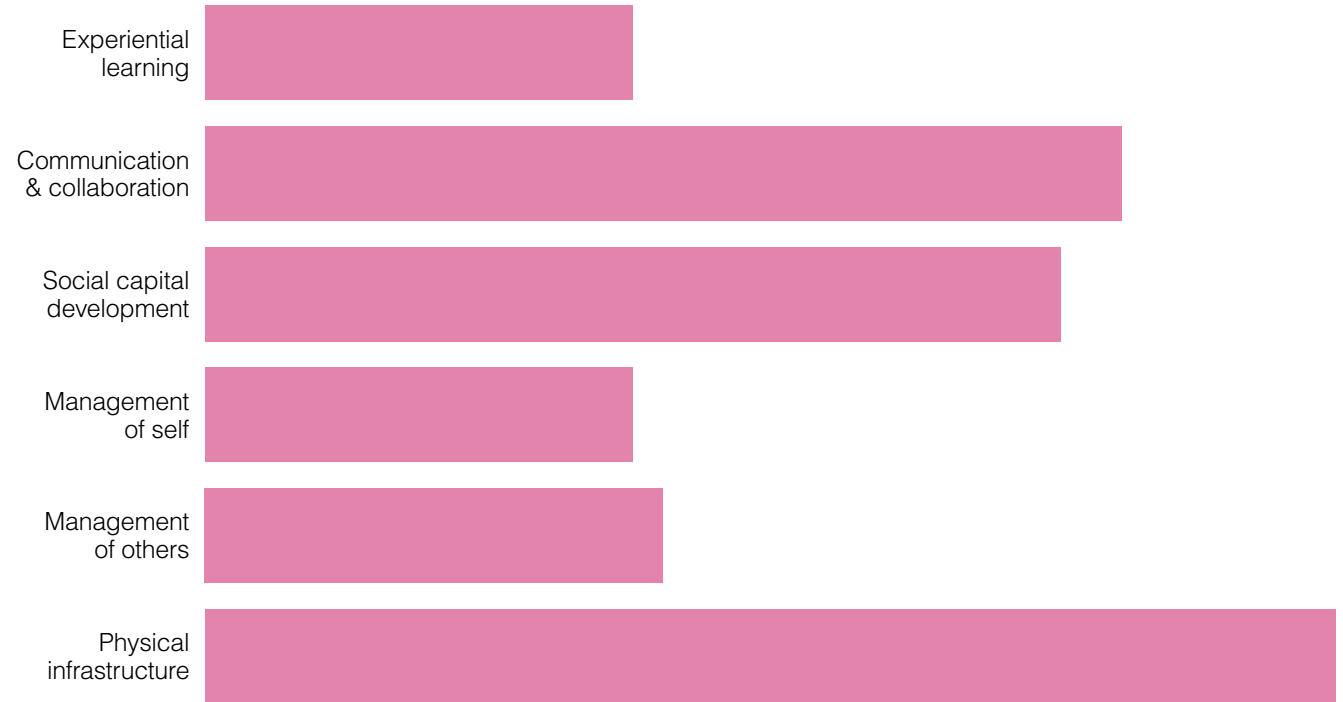
# Sharer

**This persona encompasses employees living with friends or family in shared accommodation.**

*“Working remotely is extremely difficult when you live in shared accommodation. I prefer working in the office as I have a better workstation and can concentrate and be more productive”.*



## Olivia Needs for the future work model



### Drivers for going into the office

- Access to physical infrastructure and tools
- Better working environment
- Higher productivity (more space and fewer disruptions)
- Diversity of working experience

### Barriers for going into the office

- Commute time and cost
- Increased flexibility working remotely



# ReNew London: Recovery Priorities



London First is grateful to EY for sharing their insights to help other businesses in the capital plan what the future of work might look like for them.

The pandemic has had a huge impact on London. The last year has changed how and where we work and how our work/life balance operates. Our research shows that we don't expect to go back to the way it was, we are entering a phase where decisions will be taken about the future that will have a material impact on the recovery. Beyond the considerations shaping hybrid working from within each organisation, we've drawn out three key insights into how the decisions made in one area shape the future of another part of the capital's economy.

## Support for the Central Activity Zone (CAZ)

The CAZ suffered from a sudden and rapid reduction in footfall due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but is well placed to recover strongly, with world-leading sectors and its arts and cultural offer. Hybrid working could create opportunities around new peak workdays and office hours with the potential to support a restoration of footfall to the retail, hospitality, and cultural sectors. It is critical that a coordinated campaign, well-funded and supported by central government, to bring people back to the city is in place, both to support the return to the office and to boost confidence in using public transport.

## Supporting the return to public transport

The data from EY suggests that length and type of commute are key drivers of preferences for working remotely. A well-functioning transport system is an important component of facilitating choice on when and how to work. In the short-term, maintaining TfL service levels is vital, as those who have a good experience of public transport when they return are more likely to use the system with confidence again. This requires adequate funding from central government and, in due course, a long-term sustainable deal that allows TfL to invest in the public transport that London needs.

## Support for reskilling

Hybrid working potentially increases the talent pool of people able to work in London, and gives those already in the labour market more flexibility to manage a better work/life balance. This should support a diverse workforce in London but does not diminish the need for turbo-charging re-skilling to support growth in new sectors and manage the dislocation of those in sectors going through structural changes, such as retail. The Government should implement an ambitious programme of devolution of further skills, powers and funding to enable London to establish an Adult Retraining Scheme and an all-ages London careers service.

## Get involved and find out more

Our Renew London campaign [londonfirst.co.uk/renew](https://londonfirst.co.uk/renew) calls for three critical interventions: a coordinated, well-funded campaign to bring people back to the city, a cohesive plan to reskill Londoners and support for the transport system needed to keep the capital world class. If you'd like to find out more about the campaign or how to get involved contact:

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EY is working with clients to help them develop hybrid work strategies. For more information about the process and methodology involved in developing this hybrid working model contact:

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**London First is a membership group which campaigns to make London the best city in the world to do business.**

Our membership comprises over 175 leading employers across a wide range of sectors.

We convene and mobilise business leaders to tackle the key challenges facing our capital.

We have been instrumental in establishing a Mayor of London, pioneered Teach First, driven the campaign for Crossrail, and achieved a win for business when Government announced a review of the Apprenticeship Levy.

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**EY exists to build a better working world, helping to create long-term value for clients, people and society and build trust in the capital markets.**

Enabled by data and technology, diverse EY teams in over 150 countries provide trust through assurance and help clients grow, transform and operate.

Working across assurance, consulting, law, strategy, tax and transactions, EY teams ask better questions to find new answers for the complex issues facing our world today.

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