



Rebuilding for a New Better

The Dublin Work Travel Convene Coalition
March 2021





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Coalition Overview

The past year has undoubtedly been extremely challenging for society, governments and businesses. Leaders have had to address unprecedented challenges with no roadmap or historical data to assist them. Overnight, innovative strategies were devised to deal with imposed lockdowns which forced non-essential workers to work from home. This new operational environment and associated risks are raising numerous issues for organisations.

The pandemic has triggered a real-time, real-life, critical experiment for all parts of society. Organisations in the public and private sector have had to create functioning, virtual offices overnight, while continuing to remain operational and effective, manage talent virtually, devise new wellbeing offerings to meet the changed remote working needs, while at the same time innovate, collaborate, recruit, manage redundancies and make decisions at an unparalleled pace.

Coalition Overview

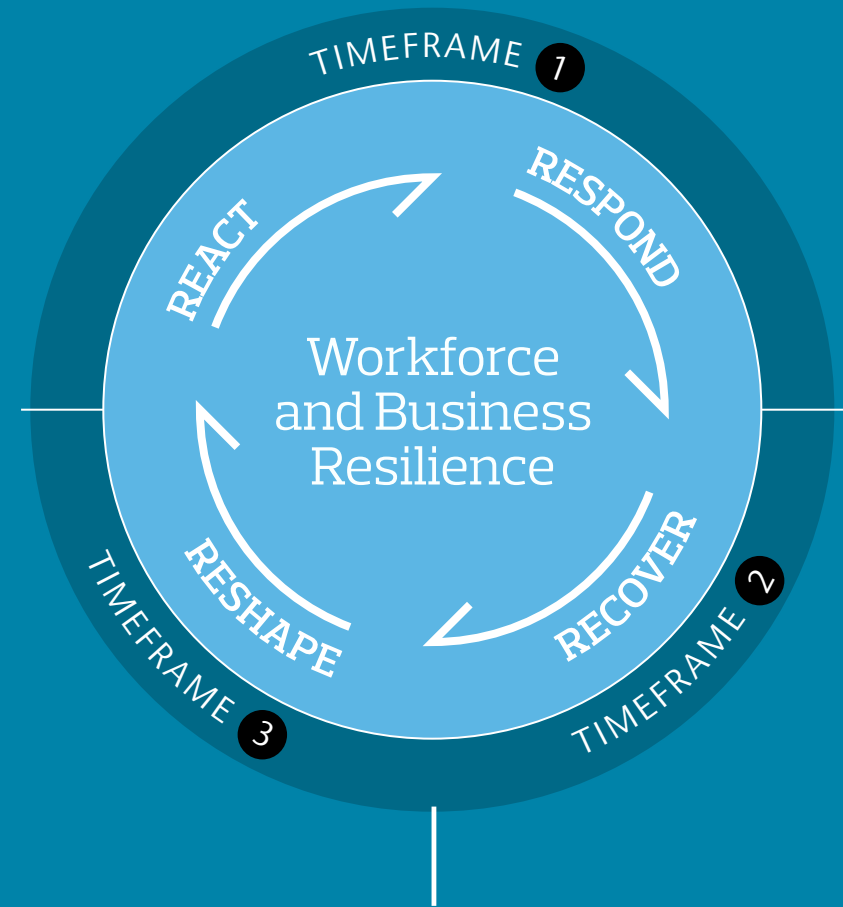
In Aon's May 2020 paper **Decision Making In Complex & Volatile Times: Keys to Managing COVID-19** we referenced 'The Black Swan Decision Framework' and outlined three distinct timeframes for **Aon's COVID-19 Crisis Management Model – React and Respond, Recover, and Reshape.**

By Q2 2020 most organisations had navigated the React and Respond phase. It was at this point they found themselves at a crossroads – looking to the future and wondering what next. At a global level Aon decided to examine the issues that were being faced by all worldwide, explore how we could learn from each other and share solutions to navigate three fundamental areas of the economy: Working, Traveling and Convening.

With that purpose in mind, in August Aon brought together over 100 leading companies, across four continents from 10 major cities and a broad range of sectors, to share knowledge and explore some of the issues we were facing.

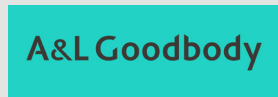
In Ireland, Aon set up a Coalition made up of leading Irish based employers and Ibec, Ireland's largest business representative group, to explore their perspectives on the dynamic shift that was taking place across their operations.

The Coalition's aim was to investigate and understand the challenges the pandemic had required organisations to face, and to share current and developing arrangements as they planned for the safe return to workplaces – with dynamic and evolving timelines. The Coalition also aimed to explore the sustainable approach required to managing and rewarding a remote workforce and preparing for the future of work in a post pandemic environment.



Coalition Overview

We were delighted to be joined by Coalition members from Accenture, AIB, Aon, A&L Goodbody, Bord Bia, Citi, KPMG, ICON plc, Irish Life and Ibec as we carried out this important work over the past number of months. We would like to thank them all for their involvement and valuable contributions.



The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that organisations around the world have had to tackle a set of once-in-a-lifetime challenges. Building resilience against other massive unexpected risks is a complex process – but one that can be achieved by convening people, ideas and outlooks. What follows is a collection of insights and learnings that can help define and navigate the path forward to a new better.

Peter Brady, Chief Executive Officer
Commercial Risk Solutions, Health Solutions & Affinity, Aon





Executive Summary

The global COVID-19 pandemic has underscored how we are living and working in extraordinary and unprecedented times. The decisions made during this crisis by organisations in both the public and private sectors – no matter their size, location or industry – carry immense weight. Every organisation in the world is reacting to this unparalleled challenge.

The Coalition's aim was to investigate and understand the challenges the pandemic had led organisations to face and to share current and developing arrangements as they planned for the safe return to workplaces – with dynamic and evolving timelines. The Coalition also aimed to explore the sustainable approach required for managing and rewarding a remote workforce and preparing for the future of work in a post pandemic environment.



Executive Summary

At the time of launching the Coalition in August 2020, **Aon's Fourth Global COVID-19 Pulse Survey** showed that **6 out of 10 organisations** thought that less than half their workforce would return to the office in the next 3-6 months and just 30% thought the majority of the workforce would return to physical locations within 12 months. As cases of COVID-19 across Ireland started to rise again additional restrictions were re-introduced which forced organisations to delay plans for the return to office with the timeline becoming increasingly less clear.

While the Coalition work started out as a discussion about the return of workforces to offices safely, in response to the evolving situation with the pandemic, it evolved and quickly became a discussion around designing and managing an agile and resilient workforce – regardless of where they are located.

Resulting from this collaboration, this report has been compiled by Aon to bring together the insights and learnings which have come from the experience of the past year.

At the time of launching the Coalition, Leo Varadkar, TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Business, Enterprise and Jobs **welcomed its formation and acknowledged that companies working together and sharing information was a necessary strategy for the uncharted territory that organisations were facing. At the time of launch the Tánaiste said:**

"COVID-19 has had a profound impact on the way we work and will continue to present really difficult challenges for businesses as they navigate the next few months. It's great to see companies working together on how they are managing these challenges and sharing information on what has worked best".

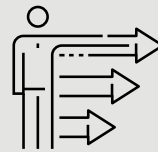
Executive Summary

To help frame discussions Aon carried out bespoke Return to Work Assessment Surveys with Coalition members. This quantitative assessment focused on numerous operational areas that needed to be considered before bringing employees back to the physical workspaces in a safe way. The assessment included themes ranging from crisis and recovery management and communications; environmental, health and safety issues to human resources considerations, to security and risk management.

In parallel, Coalition members took part in three virtual roundtable discussions under the umbrella theme of Work, Travel and Convene.

Three core themes emerged through these sessions:

1. Navigating volatility on the road to recovery



There is a need to place added emphasis on identifying new areas of risk within businesses and put in place strategies which mitigate future challenges. Companies will need to continue embracing digital transformation at speed, so they have the ability to maintain a remote workforce into the future. In support of this, enhanced cyber security training and modern privacy guidelines will need to be put in place.

2. Building a Resilient Workforce



This emerged as a core business priority and will become ever more prevalent as organisations restructure how and where their employees work. Initially this will require additional training for team leaders on effectively managing employees remotely, monitoring productivity, maintaining employee engagement and managing performance. Evolving health and wellbeing strategies are also key to support

colleagues not just through this challenging phase but on into a post pandemic future. Communication is also vital and senior leaders will be required to communicate the values that shape a company's culture while line managers will play an ever more important role in understanding and addressing the individual needs of employees.

3. Preparing for the Future of Work Now



The Future of Work is quickly becoming a reality. This has been confirmed recently with the publication of the **National Remote Working Strategy** which could see remote working becoming a preference for many in the years to come.

From individualised approaches to management and nurturing evolved models of leadership through to the integration of remote hiring and onboarding within a company's HR practices, organisations are already involved in a process of transformation.

This changed environment will have significant implications on the future role of the physical office which will no longer be a single place of work, but rather a space to facilitate collaboration and spark innovation.

The findings and insights gathered through the work of the Coalition can help to inform decision making by organisations of all sizes, across all industries - using them to inform how they map out their risk management strategies, the future of work for their workforce whether they are navigating the return to office space, a hybrid approach or the continuation of a remote working model.





Insights and Learnings

As a Coalition we set out to understand the challenges organisations are facing as a result of the pandemic, and also to gain insight into the opportunities it has presented and the learnings that can be taken and applied to other organisations, helping them to chart a course to a new better.

What started as a discussion focused on the return to the office evolved to a broader discussion about the future of work and all the elements relating to it from leadership and governance to resilience, wellbeing, and the role of the office in the future.

This was further investigated and explored through the roundtable discussions in addition to the data and findings from the Return to Work Assessment Surveys. The next section outlines the key insights the Coalition gained.



Navigating Volatility on the Road to Recovery

Smart business leaders are future-focused, and it was evident in our coalition roundtable discussions that leaders are thinking about the post-pandemic business environment. Ireland is an open economy with a strong track record of attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and there was consensus that continuing with this strategy is critical. Equally important is the strength and growth potential of Ireland's indigenous businesses. The priority areas that emerged on the topic of strengthening business resilience that were addressed during the roundtable discussion are set out in the following pages:

Navigating Volatility on the Road to Recovery

Business Leadership

As we first faced the ferocity of the COVID-19 storm, business leaders were operating in a very frenetic environment, and it was difficult to take a longer-term approach to decisions as the environment required quick responses to obstacles that the lockdown restrictions imposed.

In the early stages of the pandemic business leaders were faced with limited information as it was unclear what the progression and spread of the virus would be, what a lockdown would accomplish and how soon normality could resume.

Leaders learned to make business decisions quickly with the information available to them as they only had one choice, and that was to mobilise quickly to limit disruption to their operations.

Learning lessons from past crises is important as those organisations who remain focussed on future growth and the big bets are the organisations who succeed in the longer term.

Change Management

The crisis management situation forced senior management teams, previously focused on developing opportunities for future growth, to pivot to business continuity. A mindset change took place and now organisations recognise how to be better positioned for future challenges; while dealing with crisis and change, leaders need to remain focused on long-term sustainable growth underpinned by strong governance and a comprehensive risk strategy.

Organisations reacted and responded to function remotely. As we move into the Recover and Reshape phases, business leaders are formulating a new pathway to long-term strategic success with the virus as a backdrop.

The pandemic has presented organisations with a unique opportunity to develop plans to address other challenges, including the rapid acceleration of digital transformation, sustainability and climate change. While devising strategies for the new normal, we have the chance to build a new better and plan for a more sustainable future.



Navigating Volatility on the Road to Recovery

Managing & Mitigating Risk

The current pandemic has certainly changed the overall risk landscape for organisations, and this has been confirmed by many of the Coalition members. Going forward organisations will need to review their overall risk appetite and amend their risk registers more frequently to reflect how risks change during the different waves and stages of the pandemic and ultimately reflect on the impact on operations.

In recently published [Aon research, Reprioritising Risk & Resilience for a Post-COVID-19 Future](#), one of the key findings was that in the future business leaders must reprioritise risk - broadening their perspective of what risks their operations could face. Elevating risk managers to a strategic role in the organisation will be central to achieving this.

Organisations are now more than ever faced with a myriad of known and as yet unknown risks driven by external events or inadequate internal processes, that have the ability to cause significant disruption to their business. Companies cannot stop such events but can ensure they are prepared and in a position to mitigate such risks when they arise.

The pandemic has encouraged many organisations to re-examine both their risk and insurance strategies and recognise the need for a dynamic approach to risk. Of particular interest today is whether insurance programmes will adequately respond to losses associated with the pandemic, specifically business interruption, employers' liability, public liability, and cyber risks. In the majority of cases, what is covered and how that cover applies is clearly defined. However, organisations should consider seeking advice and clarification from their insurance intermediary and/or insurer(s).

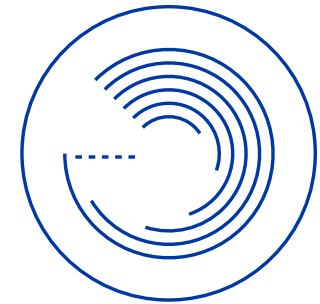


37.5% of respondents had not identified the risk management resources available in policies and had not reviewed insurer recommended risk improvement actions or reprioritised them according to cost and resource availability.

Return To Work Assessments Survey

Over the last few months organisations have successfully implemented risk mitigation initiatives including maintaining key facilities and services to ensure that there is no inadvertent breach of policy conditions. This process has provided the bandwidth for leaders to identify new risk areas that have emerged since the outbreak of the pandemic and put processes in place to ensure they can be addressed going forward.

With remote working now becoming a more permanent feature and Government introducing a [National Remote Working Strategy](#) this will need to be considered in future risk and work design strategies. Working remotely either on a temporary or long-term basis means that organisations now have a responsibility to provide safe working environments which are outside of their direct control. Coalition members considered the responsibility they had in creating a safe remote working environment for their workforces while also supporting overall health and wellbeing of employees. In a similar vein the Coalition discussed the need to protect corporate information and the increased cyber risks remote working presented to their organisations.



Accelerating Digital Transformation

Although many businesses had sought to adopt technology within the organisation in advance of the pandemic, the response to COVID-19 has resulted in the rapid acceleration in digital transformation with firms relying on digital solutions to connect with key stakeholders including suppliers, customers and employees.

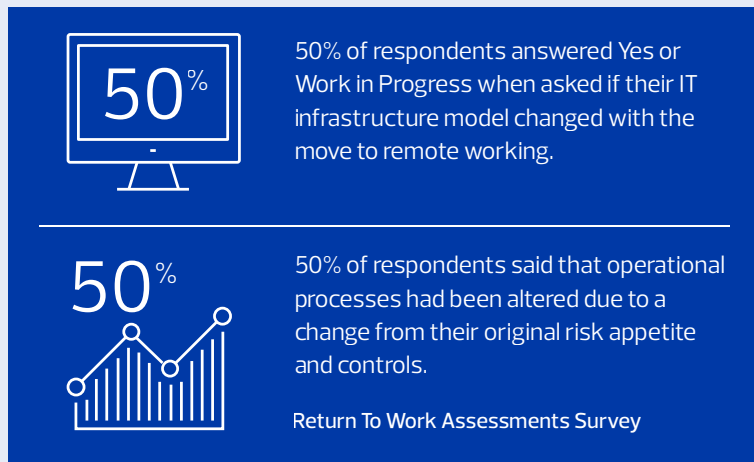
Access to technology increased across organisations so that every employee could perform their role remotely. Some members of staff had to be rapidly redeployed in different functions required by the new setup. These far-reaching changes have brought new thinking to the long-term future of work and how teams operating remotely or in the office can effectively collaborate and innovate.

Navigating Volatility on the Road to Recovery

Cyber Security

The overnight switch to remote working meant that operational processes have changed, and most IT infrastructure models have had to transform, which may have resulted in additional security and reliability risks. Many organisations were unaware of these risks and the vulnerabilities within the organisation, but the pandemic has helped to highlight these issues.

Aon's Cyber Security teams have observed a significant increase in attempted malicious third-party attacks on IT systems since moving to remote working, which has been confirmed by some of the Coalition participants:



Comprehensive security risk assessments to evaluate vulnerabilities and determine defence measures and readiness to respond will help improve an organisation's cyber resilience.

Every employee, from the CEO to the new hire, is vulnerable to a cyber breach. Attackers' methods are always evolving in order to target and tailor scams to specific victims. Unfortunately, many breaches result from a lack of employee awareness of the IT security risks that their actions online, on social media, at work and at home can cause.

Frequent employee training is vital to highlight and, where required, change online behaviours. Providing education on everything from password security, data protection, cyber-attacks, data encryption and how to report an incident, to name but a few, is worthwhile. A cyber breach could interrupt business operations, supply chains, products, and beyond. Best practice advice is to consider methods to mitigate the risks and potential financial impact of a cyber incident.

Risks, such as cyber attacks, will become more apparent as companies work in virtual environments and rely heavily on digital infrastructure. The actions organisations take during the recover stage can help define an effective response to both the current pandemic crisis and future shocks¹.

¹ Aon's Reprioritising Risk & Resilience for a Post-COVID-19 Future Report





Building a Resilient Workforce

During the roundtable discussions, there was consensus from Coalition partners that there is an increased acceptance of uncertainty in business, and a sense of 'we'll get through this together'. As business leaders grappled with the challenge of making important decisions under time pressure, and often with limited information, it is clear that protecting employees was front of mind as a key priority. The Coalition considered the following areas with a focus on protecting and empowering people.

Building a Resilient Workforce

Communication & Leadership

Navigating the initial pandemic restrictions required organisations to innovate at pace and pivot rapidly. Effective communication was crucial to supporting colleagues working from home, so they could continue to contribute and ensure they did not feel isolated.

As the crisis unfolded, centralised messaging from senior leadership provided consistent, valid reassurance, helped to maintain an organisation's culture and ensured that team members continued to feel valued.

As organisations realign their focus towards the return to office, direct communication from team leaders is more relevant and engaging for employees.

Tailored communication from direct line managers is particularly beneficial for new employee members, many of whom have not, as yet, had the opportunity to set foot in the office, or meet any colleagues face to face.

Environmental, Health and Safety

In early May 2020 the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment released the Return to Work Safely Protocol which provided a comprehensive and clear framework. This allowed businesses to react quickly to meet all health and safety requirements and is reflected in the responses to our survey.



Most organisations already had good health and safety structures in place and were able to leverage this to react quickly to the ever-changing risks posed by the pandemic. Health and safety management systems by their very nature are risk based and constantly evolving. Organisations with good programmes in place will be better equipped to react and evolve their risk control programmes as we progress to the next stage of this outbreak.

The role of public transport was a topic that arose for many as part of this discussion. Without doubt the Government's strategy to encourage people to walk and cycle has been helpful. However, as public transport is a core component of commuter movement it was felt that users must receive clear and consistent communication on how busy travel times will be facilitated safely.

It was found that many organisations have controls in place for communicating with and managing employees, visitors and contractors under crisis conditions.

As we slowly rebuild and move to the recovery phase it will be important to consider the medium and long-term plans, and devise more formal and sustainable strategies to maintain health and safety standards while gradually returning and adapting to the new workplace.

Building a Resilient Workforce

HR Protocols

Coalition members early reaction to the pandemic involved putting the basics in place to successfully return to the office in the August / September timeframe last year before the course of the pandemic changed and the possibility of this was delayed further. This included health screening, safety and social distancing rules as well as protocols if employees became ill at work.

Most organisations have new structures such as sign-in systems, email approvals or more formal online application forms, apps or fob systems to track scheduling and attendance at the work site.

During the period when the research was conducted, some organisations had already successfully brought back in the region of 5-20% of their employee base using these processes. This was relatively short-lived, as Government guidelines now require all non-essential workplaces to remain closed with workforces working remotely where possible. Coalition members agreed that when the time came, it would be increasingly hard to manage the full return of the workforce to the office while following the safety protocols outlined by Government. It was agreed that a hybrid approach to the return to office would have to be taken in many cases.

There are many challenges that will need to be addressed for employees, including training on how to work from home successfully, ergonomics, taking breaks and separating work life from home life.



100% of respondents had successfully implemented protocols for returning to the office and 75% have developed COVID-19 specific safety protocols for training managers and supervisors in new methodologies and compliance training.

100% of respondents had implemented solutions that will allow them to schedule and track which employees have returned to a physical work site including using staggered start times or shifts to allow for social distancing, etc.



Return To Work Assessments Survey



Building a Resilient Workforce

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

According to **Aon's fifth Global COVID-19 Pulse Survey** for HR professionals, 86% of respondents believe attracting and retaining a diverse workforce and creating an inclusive culture is key to an agile workforce and critical to the future of work.

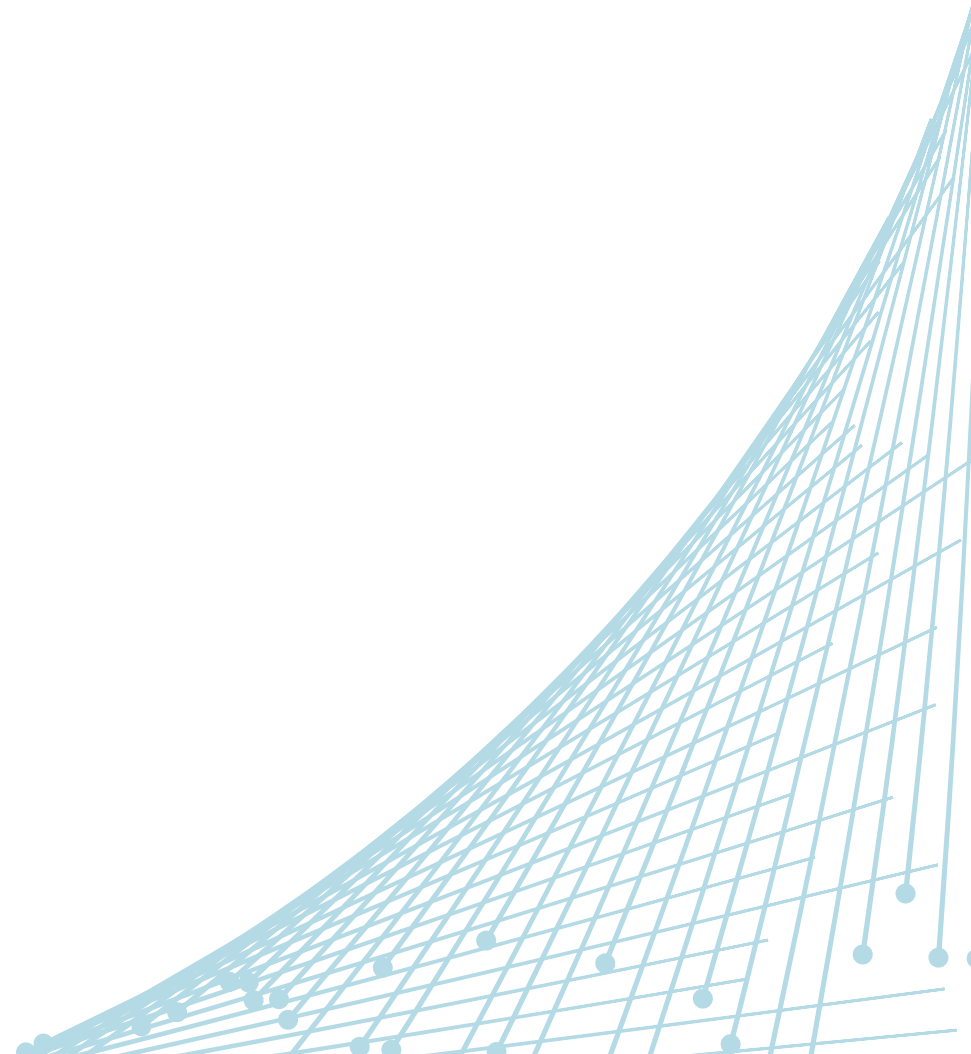
86%



This sentiment was endorsed by the Coalition members with an agreement that a diverse organisation that draws on the strengths and talents of all its team members is a more successful one. The experience of Coalition members was that an inclusive environment improves employee enrichment, problem solving and decision-making processes.

It was acknowledged that remote working was presenting employees with new and different challenges and there was an understanding that some may thrive better than others. It was also acknowledged that the out of office working environment could adversely affect some employees more than others – for example younger members of the workforce less established in their careers, parents, carers and women.

As remote working will remain for most of this year, if not the future, it is important to acknowledge the specific difficulties some employees may face and assist them appropriately to ensure they can achieve and progress within an organisation. Moreover, as with all strategic organisational changes, leadership must take the opportunity to ensure that everyone is visible and recognised and inequalities are not reinforced.



Preparing for the Future of Work Now

Cultural Transformation

Culture is a manifestation of an organisation's core values and senior leadership's commitment to business culture is imperative to empowering colleagues.

Some team leaders are not comfortable leading in a remote environment, but Coalition members all agreed that empowering them to offer support to their colleagues can help to create an effective team culture. Informal conversations with colleagues were also deemed important in assisting with maintaining company culture in a virtual environment but also helped in building strong and resilient relationships.

Through discussions it was noted that those that were successful in leading their teams this year were able to empathise with their teams, understanding the environment they were working in whether that be in their bedroom or in addition to minding children at home. Understanding the strains that employees were under this year was critical to helping to empower teams to succeed and ultimately enhancing the overall performance of the organisation.

As we continue to navigate the 'Future of Work' it is worth considering adapting talent management models to acknowledge the significant diversity in colleagues' adjustment to remote working. Other issues front

of mind include hiring in a virtual environment and the onboarding, and assessment of new team members in that same scenario.

A more individualised approach to management, including defining the skills and behaviour that help employees to succeed remotely, can also be beneficial for an organisation.

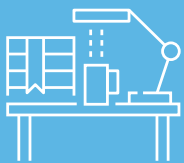
Tools that the Coalition members had explored and recommended to help develop remote management skills included leadership coaching; team assessment and feedback forms; establishing realistic and challenging goals for teams and giving employees guidelines. These tools assist managers to differentiate their team members and set parameters to maintain accountability despite operating in a virtual environment.

Coalition members called out that performance management in a remote environment may be challenging, as it is often relationship-based and varies depending on employee. For this reason, organisations have utilised the pandemic as an opportunity to encourage staff members to revisit and reassess their goals. Leaders have been challenged to re-calibrate performance evaluation to ensure that it is equitable, and that the challenging home working environments of some colleagues can be acknowledged, understanding that this is not a reflection of their performance or commitment.

The competencies of our leaders have been tested and it has emerged that leaders who are succeeding today are leaders with strong emotional intelligence. This is a substantial shift from just 12 months ago when successful leadership was often achievement based.

A virtual workplace raises different issues. Leaders must show empathy and empower their teams, which requires taking a more holistic view of their team members.

These insights are key as we review our future people strategies and talent development cycles and reimagine our organisations.



It is worth considering adapting talent management models to acknowledge the significant diversity in colleagues' adjustment to remote working. Other issues front of mind include remote hiring, onboarding, and assessment.

68%



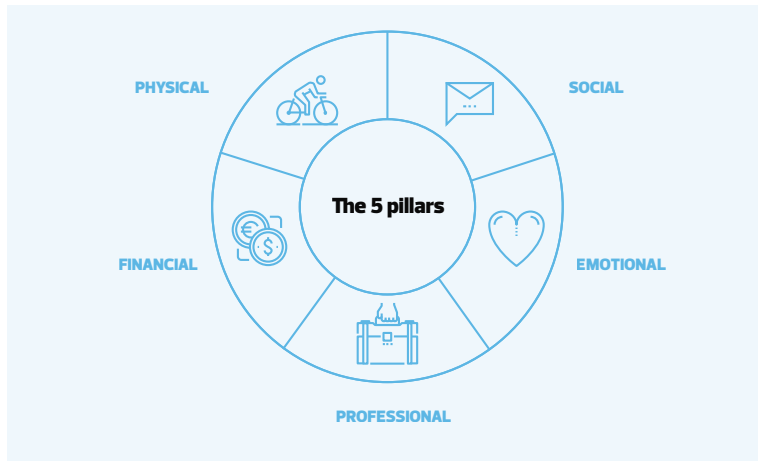
68% of respondents said they were putting a greater emphasis on continuous feedback and manager communication as part of their organisation's performance management process.

Return To Work Assessments Survey

Preparing for the Future of Work Now

Future of Health & Wellbeing

Over the course of the past year it was agreed by Coalition members that there has been a renewed focus on employee wellbeing ranging from an increase in communications from the leadership team to an enhanced package of wellbeing support provided by organisations focused on the core areas such as emotional, social, physical, professional and financial wellbeing. At the onset of the pandemic employers were concerned about their employees' physical and financial health and the focus later shifted to emotional and social health, due to the nature of the various stages of restrictions and the impact remote working was having on employees and their families.



This increased attention to employee health and wellbeing can be evidenced by the rise in communication efforts on existing benefits to ensure employees avail of them, as well as increased access to services such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) and telemedicine.

100%



100% of respondents plan to enhance wellbeing programmes to focus on emotional and mental wellbeing as a result of the pandemic.

50% of respondents are considering the expansion of EAPs and those that answered no believe that their current programme is sufficient.



50%

75%



75% of respondents have a virtual GP or other virtual health services available to employees.

Return To Work Assessments Survey



Preparing for the Future of Work Now

Building a more Resilient Workforce for the Future

In our discussions Coalition members all agreed that as we look to the future the focus is shifting from employee wellbeing to employee resilience. With organisations experiencing a rapid pace of change and facing continued uncertainty organisations are realising they now need to build more resilient workforces.

A resilient workforce is equipped to weather storms, can adapt to uncertainty and demonstrates agility when faced with change. This requires organisations to adapt and invest in their approach to employee wellbeing which was perhaps historically ad-hoc, lacked funding and was not always focused on preventive measures, addressing underlying health conditions or changing health behaviours of the workforce.

Aon's Rising Resilient Study which was conducted during the beginning of the pandemic, found that there was a shift in mindset to resilience both from an employee but also from an employer perspective. Additionally, it showed employers' current approaches to wellbeing were not having an impact and were falling short of the employees' expectations.

As part of this research Aon has developed a model which illustrates how the top factors that drive resilience are aligned to the pillars of wellbeing. In order to embed this into an organisation effectively, there needs to be strong leadership, values and purpose that are aligned to improving health, but also a robust practice of communication between leadership and employees.





Preparing for the Future of Work Now

New Ways of Working

Organisations have also been devising a longer-term view on the future of work and long-term logistics including understanding colleagues' preferences for the return to the office as well as remote working.

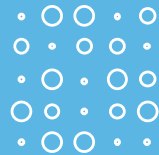
100%



100% of respondents had determined which roles can continue in a remote or flexible environment as well as identifying which roles must be done in a physical worksite (either their own site or a client's site.)

86% of respondents were in the process of devising a plan around the future of work for their organisation, including ascertaining roles that could be automated, identifying suitable locations for operations as well as appropriate digital experiences for employees and customers.

86%



Return To Work Assessments Survey

Government protocols and advice are critically important in informing and guiding businesses on the operational environment but won't support ongoing efforts in areas such as compliance. They will provide a signpost but not a full roadmap to recovery for all organisations. This is where collaboration with other Coalition members is beneficial. Sharing knowledge, experience and learnings can help build a picture of what the future workplace could look like and how to put best practice in place.

Role of the Office

On a practical level there was general agreement from Coalition members that it is likely that employees will return in phases, with certain cohorts such as new hires, those who collaborate to innovate, and younger employees who may have challenges with remote working returning first. It was clear from our discussions that certain tasks, such as workshops or brainstorming sessions have been more challenging to recreate remotely. Although these processes need to be nurtured in a virtual environment out of necessity during the pandemic, there was consensus that they benefit hugely from in-person initiatives.

One of the biggest changes in society in the past year has undoubtedly been the transformation of the meaning of the word 'work' from a place you went to, to now being more focused on what you do. The role of the office is evolving and into the future it was generally agreed that it's function would be transformed.

COVID-19 has forced employers to re-examine the office from the ground up, how it is utilised and its future role. It has provided the time for organisations to reimagine workplaces and discover how they can be even more effective as planning for the future of work continues. It was concluded that different teams will utilise the office in a variety of ways and the set-up of the physical space would need to be adapted to reflect these future needs.

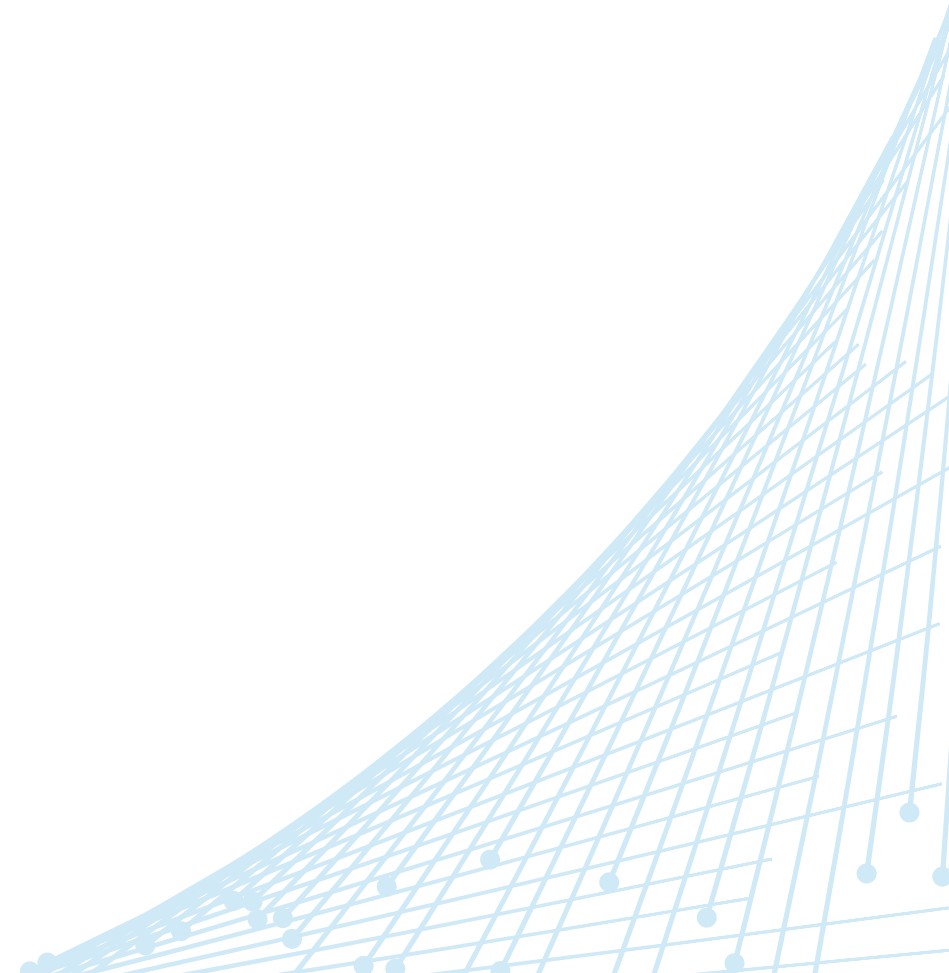
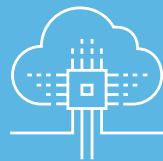
Preparing for the Future of Work Now

Fostering Collaboration and Innovation

We have all interacted differently during this pandemic and many organisations have successfully adapted to remote working models. This has involved developing agile approaches to some of the new challenges faced by all organisations.

Through our roundtable discussions it became clear that some elements of collaboration required additional nurturing and preparation to recreate the experience of having everyone under the same roof. Although there are software solutions that can assist the process, a virtual environment only allows participants to use two of their senses as opposed to five. Sparks of creativity or ideas that emerge when working remotely can be more difficult to share and develop in a virtual environment.

Remote working has however provided an opportunity for organisations to examine processes and methods of engagement with teams at every level of the organisation and in some cases has led to the fast-tracking of decisions. It has provided opportunities to ignite transformational change across organisations helping them to adapt for the future of work and fuel future growth.





Conclusion

The Coalition's aim was to investigate and understand the challenges the pandemic had required organisations to face, and to share current and developing arrangements as they planned for the safe return to workplaces – with dynamic and evolving timelines. The Coalition also aimed to explore the sustainable approach required for managing and rewarding a remote workforce and preparing for the future of work in a post pandemic environment.

The key findings from the Coalition are set out in the following pages:



Conclusion

Navigating Volatility on the Road to Recovery

-  Place added emphasis on identifying new risk areas within the businesses and develop a strategy which will help to reduce exposure to future pandemics, natural disasters or other unforeseen events.
-  Make change management an integral aspect of the development and training of managers across an organisation.
-  Continue to embrace digital transformation at speed in order to put in place the tools and supports required to support a remote workforce over the long-term.
-  Understand an organisation's cyber position and exposures. Rollout frequent cybersecurity training for all employees in order to reduce potential exposure to cyber breaches and ensure modern privacy guidelines are in place to govern the use of company devices by employees.
-  Business leaders should seek to use the COVID-19 recovery framework to develop growth strategies that enhance business agility while also helping to combat common societal challenges such as climate change.
-  Devise new long-term strategies to maintain health and safety standards that can be applied whether an employee is working remotely or in an office environment.

Conclusion

Building a Resilient Workforce for the Future









The Coalition considered the following areas with a focus on protecting and building resilience among colleagues.

-  Ensure effective communications from the very top with senior leaders speaking to the values and culture which shape the company.
-  In addition to centralised communication from senior leaders, greater emphasis should be placed on tailored and one to one communications from direct line managers who know and understand the specific needs and concerns of employees on their team.
-  Streamline current protocols governing access to the office so that the numerous tracking and reporting restrictions now required to be put in place can be adhered to by all staff who will return to the office to work.
-  Provide training for managers to help them effectively manage employees remotely, monitor productivity and maintain employee engagement.
-  Ensure wellbeing strategies are flexing to support the core pillars of emotional, social, physical, professional and financial wellbeing in this changing environment. Devise a phased approach which frames the return to office, and which gives consideration to those who may disproportionately benefit from an earlier return to their workplace, for example younger members of the team living in shared accommodation.
-  Maintain focus on equality, diversity and inclusion ensuring visibility, support and opportunity is equally available to all.

Conclusion

Preparing for the Future of Work Now

While we have gained huge insight into remote and flexible working throughout the pandemic it should not be underestimated how much planning is needed to shape an organisation's strategy for how they will work best in the future – the real work starts now.

-  Review working models to understand how they fit with the business strategy, the types of roles involved, how they are currently performed and how they could be performed in the future.
-  Introduce a more individualised approach to management helping to define the skills and behaviour that can help a workforce succeed in a remote environment.
-  Re-calibrate employee performance evaluation to ensure that it is equitable, and that challenging remote working setups of some colleagues can be acknowledged.
-  Adapt talent management models to acknowledge the diverse ways in which employees work.
-  Integrate remote hiring, onboarding and assessment into an organisation's talent acquisition framework.
-  Continuously evolve health and wellbeing offerings, as well as benefits packages, in order to meet the future needs of employees who may work at home, in the office, or in both locations.
-  Recognise that with the continued evolution of a multigenerational workforce comes a need to diversify the range of wellbeing supports on offer.
-  Start to think differently about the office and how the space is used. Take employee opinion into account and learn as a team in terms of how the office space can be used into the future with more focus on areas for in-person collaboration to spark creativity and innovation.

What is the Dublin Work, Travel, Convene Coalition?

The Dublin Work, Travel, Convene Coalition launched in August 2020. It brings together large employers in Dublin to share key learnings and insights related to planning and operations, to assess impact and measurement of efforts and to evaluate the latest technologies. The coalition's aim is to develop a set of guidelines to help navigate the challenges businesses face as society re-opens throughout the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Founding members of the coalition include Accenture, AIB, Aon, A&L Goodbody, Bord Bia, Citi, KPMG, ICON plc, Irish Life and Ibec.

Other coalitions worldwide include Chicago and New York, London, and Singapore.

If you would like to find out more about the coalition, please contact [The Dublin Work, Travel & Convene Coalition Team](#)

About Aon

Aon plc (NYSE: AON) is a leading global professional services firm providing a broad range of risk, retirement and health solutions. Our 50,000 colleagues in 120 countries empower results for clients by using proprietary data and analytics to deliver insights that reduce volatility and improve performance.

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