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Working from home has many benefits, including greater focus

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Sir, – Gerard Howlin’s argument that remote working is undermining the public service relies more on assertion than evidence (“[Scaling back remote working should be on the agenda as payback for public sector pay rises](#)”, Opinion, July 20th).

Large-scale surveys of public servants and managers show consistent results. Most report that productivity is maintained or improved in hybrid arrangements, with fewer interruptions and greater capacity for focused work.

A recent Fórsa survey of almost 20,000 staff found fewer problems meeting deadlines, collaborating and communicating when working remotely, a view shared by more than 5,000 managers. Where problems arise, managers report they are more often unrelated to remote working.

Crucially, hybrid working has become a central factor in recruitment and retention, particularly for early-career workers navigating a housing crisis. This is the very cohort from which future leaders will emerge. If leadership capacity is the concern, retaining talent must be part of the answer.

None of this is to suggest hybrid work is without challenges. It requires active management. But uneven management is not an argument against the model itself, nor should work practices be treated as a concession in pay talks.

The real risk lies not in adapting to modern work patterns, but in failing to do so. – Yours, etc,

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