

Health impacts of working from home: Report of a health impact scoping workshop

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**Scottish Health and Inequalities
Impact Assessment Network (SHIAN)**

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The Scottish Health and Inequalities Impact Assessment Network (SHIAN) is open to anyone working or planning to work on health impact assessments (HIA) and health inequalities impact assessments in Scotland.

The network aims to promote a Health in All Policies approach in Scotland, and to increase the use and quality of health impact assessments and improve consideration of health issues in other assessments, in order to contribute to improvements in policies and plans that will enhance population health and reduce health inequalities.

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Introduction

This is the report of a scoping workshop held to inform a health impact assessment (HIA) of Working from Home, coordinated by the Scottish Health Inequalities and Impact Assessment Network (SHIAN). The workshop was held in September 2020. It aimed to identify potential impacts, to help clarify the scope of evidence to review in the next steps of the HIA. It is not the aim of scoping to identify evidence and make evidence based recommendations; rather the scoping workshop is the first step in the HIA leading on to a review of the literature and the review either allows to draw conclusions from the literature or identify evidence gaps.

Participants included public health professionals and Masters level students. The following people participated in the workshop:

- Matthias Rohe, SHIAN (facilitator)
- Margaret Douglas, SHIAN
- Elaine Young, NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- Amanda Palmer, Changeworks
- Louise Stuart, Public Health Scotland
- Michael Tornow, Public Health Scotland
- Ying Wan, University of Edinburgh
- Jane Gordon, University of Edinburgh
- Shariva Phanse, University of Edinburgh

Prior to the workshop the attendees were sent a checklist detailing population groups, and health determinants to help identify potential areas of impact. During the discussion participants drew on their own experiences of working from home and their professional knowledge as public health professionals. The draft report was shared with the

participants to check it was an accurate record of the discussion. We are grateful to all participants for giving their time.

Structure of report

In the report we will present the topics and themes from group discussions, this is not a verbatim minute of the meeting. Furthermore we will present research questions developed to understand these impacts and the preliminary recommendations that arose during the discussion.

Working from home and Covid19

Working from home has become the norm for many through the need for physical distancing during the Covid19 pandemic. The scoping meeting was designed to gather the ideas and views of professionals on the health impacts of working from home in general. But it was difficult to completely separate the impacts of working from home from the impacts of other measures to control Covid19, such as school closures and remote delivery of services. This is reflected in some of the discussion below.

Affected populations

The group identified the following populations that could be affected by working from home:

- Individual workers who work from home, including
 - Older workers
 - Individuals on a low income
- Individual workers who are unable to work from home
- Families of workers
- Local communities

- Individuals working in town centres and local centre economies
- Delivery drivers and similar
- Carers and those they care for
- Students and children
- Disabled people
- People who experience violence and abuse
- Ethnic Minorities
- People in rural areas
- People who are digitally excluded

Key impacts identified in the scoping workshop

Individual workers

Who can work and who cannot work from home?

The group noted that ability to work from home is connected to the socioeconomic status of the person. Certain low paid roles such as delivery jobs and caring roles, can only be done while working out with the home.

Work is more than a job, it enriches life.

Participants noted that work is more than being paid for doing something. Humans are social creatures, and when working from home, the softer side of going to work can be lost. A commute can offer time to read, and enable simple pleasures such as going to a shop on the way. Therefore the "practice of going to work" is not only associated with working at a certain workplace but it also offers a plenitude of small experiences

associated with the working day. The day to day experience can be poorer without those small experiences.

Working from home requires a suitable space.

Working from home requires a suitable space with the correct ergonomics. This comprises a workspace with a suitable set up and brings some minimum requirements for the home which may have additional costs. Competing for workspace may create friction with household members, affecting relationships within the family.

Working from home could lead to an acceleration of work.

The group identified that working from home may lead to increased intensity of work. It is easier to schedule long meetings and the time between meetings is reduced because there is no travel involved. Furthermore, people may work extra hours, because they are digitally connected to their work. When working in an office, leaving the office means leaving work behind. With all work tools now constantly in reach of the worker, emails can be picked up when people would have previously rested. This brings the danger of never being disconnected and subconsciously the expectation can develop to be available for extended times, beyond normal working time and possibly all the time. All this can lead to an acceleration of work and increased workload, putting additional pressure on workers.

Boundaries between work and private life can be blurred.

If both work and private life of the workers happen at home then the boundaries can be blurred and a healthy work-life balance can be threatened. The group discussed the ways in which working digitally and being connected to work at home could mean that switching off from work can be more difficult, natural commuting breaks are missing and this can affect mental health.

Older workers

The group identified several ways in which older people may be negatively affected by working from home.

The additional requirements for IT skills might be a barrier particularly for older people.

On average, older people may be less likely to have IT experience. Additionally they are more likely to lack Wi-Fi or internet at home than younger people.

With age the likelihood increases that workspaces with special accommodations are needed.

With increasing age, people have a higher burden of musculoskeletal problems and adaptations for working become more important. Workplaces in offices are often routinely and adequately assessed following health and safety regulations, but for working from home the provisions are less stringent. This is discussed further below.

Remote working can increase isolation.

Another area where older people can be more vulnerable is that they are more likely to live alone. Thus working from home can add to isolation and loneliness because of the reduced contact with co-workers. This can have a detrimental effect on their mental health and well-being.

People of low income

One of the biggest inequalities in relation to working from home is connected with deprivation or poverty. People on low incomes were considered to be least likely to be able to work from home, and also more likely to experience other impacts from working from home.

Working from home has costs for the worker.

Participants identified that even when people with low income are able to work from home, there are several financial constraints that can make it more difficult. High quality broadband attracts a certain cost, but is often a digital necessity and prerequisite for working from home. People of low incomes might not have a fast Internet connection or will struggle with the cost associated. Similarly, people working from home spend more on heating their home. Therefore people on low income who work from home are more likely to be affected by fuel poverty and energy debts.

Recipients of online services might miss the quality of face-to-face support.

Working from home does not only affect the people working from home. Participants identified impacts for people who require social and other support services. Some people might find it easier to get the support they need in face-to-face encounters and feel they do not receive the same quality of support when delivered remotely. Picking up cues from vulnerable clients can be difficult using remote communication methods. This may have been compounded in Covid19 lockdown, when clients may have lost other support structures. Therefore vulnerable people might be hungrier for human interaction and they have a need for longer conversation, placing longer time requirements on professionals and volunteers supporting people.

Students and children

Remote teaching has reduced face to face social experience.

Several members of the group were students and reflected on the change towards online teaching. This brings fewer opportunities for social interaction. Previously, students could interact informally with each other and with lecturers before, during and

after face-to-face teaching. The change is felt as a lack of normal student life experience and this could negatively affect their well-being, development, and learning.

Children

Working from home can create tension between home-workers and their playing children.

The group recognised that children may be affected when their parents are working at home. There may be a conflict between children wanting to play and disrupting parents' work environment, and the adults who require a quiet place to concentrate and have remote meetings. In times of lockdown due to Covid19 this was particularly compounded when childcare was unavailable, but many parents were required to work from home.

Parents can be present but are unavailable for children.

For small children it can be difficult to understand that their parent is present but not available for interaction. Group members described examples of how toddlers can then start to resent the work of their parents and express this e.g. by trying to close the laptop with the words "no work".

Parents' work can trigger creative play.

On the other hand, words and actions connected to the work of parents can make their way into the play of children. Therefore aspects of the work of adults can inspire creative play of children with procedures or acts of work being reflected in the children's world of play.

Ad hoc childcare for sick children has less clear guidance for working from home.

The potential of a Covid19 diagnosis means that children even with a mild new cough would be required to stay at home to isolate and so would their parents. If parents were working in the office then parental leave could be requested for episodes of child illness, however rules are less clear when parents are working from home. Therefore childcare will be an additional factor to consider and a potential stressor while working from home, particularly in the winter period, when children have frequent coughs and colds. Similarly to childcare in general, women would be affected more often by children having to stay at home and taking over this kind of care.

Disabled people

Working from home can be both good and bad for disabled people.

The group identified several potential positive and negative impacts of working from home for disabled people, which depend on individual circumstances.

Disabled people may need a well-adapted workplace at home.

Disabled people may find it easier to ensure their environment meets their needs when working in their own home. However, some may require an assessment regarding reasonable adjustments for their home office. Sensory impairment may necessitate specific adaptations because video conferencing and other platforms may not be accessible, and this requires consideration when using such digital solutions.

Difficulties commuting due to disabilities might be overcome through remote working.

Working from home may help with difficulties in traveling to an office and reduce the need for preparations or carers before leaving the home. Some disabled people need to

organise medication or other support for the day, which will be at hand in their own home. Others may find that working from home reduces fatigue caused by commuting.

Without a regular commute, guide dogs can lose their skills.

For people relying on a support animal, working from home can result in a de-skilling of their guide dog or similar animal. The animals of home-workers do not get the regular challenges of an unpredictable environment which commuting can produce, which might make it more difficult to rely on the support animal when such environments have to be navigated.

People with agoraphobia might find it easier working from home.

People with certain mental health problems such as agoraphobia or other anxiety disorders might find it easier to work remotely. The well-known and familiar environment and more freedom in structuring work can reduce some of the pressures of working in an office.

Families and relationships

More opportunity for domestic violence.

The group discussed the potential for working from home to put a strain on families and relationships. This can exacerbate domestic or gender based violence or coercive behaviour. Through the increased presence at home of both partners, there is more opportunity for harmful behaviour and less opportunity for the vulnerable partner to have spaces such as the workplace that are not controlled by an abusive partner.

People can change through working from home and therefore partnerships can change.

Additionally, working from home can affect the partnership by affecting how a person perceives themselves. The practice of work as a way of gathering daily experiences was mentioned above. A partner working from home might not have the same experience of work at the workplace as they might have had before in an office. Similarly there could be fewer opportunistic communications with other people and experiences outside home. Fewer outside experiences might reduce the topics that can be discussed and shared between partners, and the quality of conversations can suffer. This might change the view of the person on their work and their view of themselves. This in turn can affect their related identity and their self-image and how they interact in the relationship. Therefore the dynamic in families or partnerships can change, creating conflict or straining a relationship. Alternatively, partners could actually spend more time together such as sharing their lunch time, which might have a positive effect on mutual understanding and relationship.

A partner working from home and a partner furloughed can begrudge each other's situation.

The group also identified a potential for relationship problems brought on when the partners have different working arrangements. If one works from home and the other is furloughed then this might generate resentment or critical comments. The furloughed worker might fear for their job while begrudging their partner the opportunity to work from home and whilst having to witness how the partner is busy and in employment, whereas the home-working partner might feel unsympathetic to a furloughed or unemployed partner and perceive their situation as free of the pressures of work. This lack of understanding of the opposite position could put significant strain on a relationship.

Caring responsibilities can add stress to working from home, particularly for women.

A number of tasks within the home environment can also affect relationships. As noted above, childcare may be more prominent when working from home and very often is gendered, being most often done by women. Working from home and childcare can place competing demands and add to the stress for women working from home. These effects have been exacerbated during Covid19. Caring for other family members may be easier when people are working at home, but there may be greater expectations placed on them to provide a higher level of care.

Household chores need to be negotiated while being mindful of working from home.

Similar to childcare, other household tasks can affect partners in different ways and create tensions in relationships. Even comparatively small demands such as dog walking can be perceived as an annoying task or it can be viewed as an opportunity for physical activity. If it is perceived as an annoying task, then there might be an expectation that the home-worker deals with it, possibly creating resentment between partners.

Dog walking is also an example of a service that might previously have been done by a third person, a dog walker, but through new home-working arrangements the service is no longer required. This could mean less income for someone else in the local community. This is an example how working from home can have an effect on the local economy, as discussed below in the economy section.

Ethnic minorities

People of black and ethnic minority background may have less opportunity to work from home.

The section on poverty and deprivation discussed how low paid jobs often do not offer the possibility to work for home. People of black and minority ethnic background are more likely to work in such low paid jobs and therefore may be less likely to be able to work from home. This can produce additional stress in times of Covid19, as on the one hand they cannot work from home and on the other hand they belong to a group disproportionately affected by this infectious disease.

Working from home can be positive for multi-generational households.

The group noted that some ethnic minorities are more likely to live in multi-generational households. If they are able to work from home, this may mean that assistance and care can be more easily given to family members requiring help, such as children or older family members.

A family member having to work with the public increases the risk for Covid19 infections for individuals and their family.

Working from home has an additional benefit for people from multi-generational household. In times of Covid19, it decreases the risk that the virus is introduced into the household. Conversely, if people in multi-general households are unable to work from home at time of Covid19, then this increases the risk of infection for themselves and for their household contacts, creating additional worry.

Mental well-being

The group discussed a range of potential pathways through which working from home could affect workers' mental well-being.

Working from home can increase isolation.

Working from home can add to isolation because of the reduced contact with co-workers. This is particularly the case for people who live alone.

Working from home can be empowering.

On the other hand, working from home can be positive for mental well-being, because it has the potential to increase the sense of control for workers. Individual workers can have more freedom to arrange their work such as deciding when in the day they work or arrange how their workplace is set up. Some personality types, such as introverts, may benefit more from working at home.

People with certain mental health problems might profit from working from home.

As noted above, people with certain mental health problems might find it easier to work remotely. The well-known and familiar environment and more freedom in structuring work can reduce some of the pressures of working in an office.

Active commuting can add to mental well-being.

Active commuting can have a positive influence on well-being, as it contributes to physical activity and physical activity is known to improve mental well-being.

Time freed up from commuting can be used for physical activity.

On the other hand, the lack of a commute opens up the possibility of using the saved commuting time for sport or other physical activities. The overall impact on physical activity depends how the time gained is used.

Supervision of the well-being of workers can be more difficult.

In terms of safeguards for individual workers' well-being, it can be more difficult for line managers to see how workers at home are doing. It requires a more proactive approach by both the manager and the staff compared to the situation where all staff is present in one location at the same time.

Work-life balance may be more fragile

One other way that well-being can be negatively affected by work has to do with the colocation of work and home. Both the work and private life of the workers happens at home, and the boundaries of both can be blurred. A healthy work-life balance requires a conscious effort. Similarly working digitally and being connected remotely via computer and mobile devices means switching off can be more difficult. Managers and other co-workers may expect responses after normal office hours or on weekends. Furthermore, meetings can be organised quickly and without much warning. Travel times between meetings no longer offer the opportunity to reflect and mentally briefly relax. All this can lead to an acceleration of work or even increased workload, which puts additional pressure on workers.

When working from home is considered better, workers without this option can feel left behind.

The focus on working from home could worsen the mental health and well-being of workers unable to work remotely. Particularly during the pandemic, working at a fixed place of work or with members of the public places added stress for those workers

conscious of the increased infection risk, which is exacerbated because working from home is promoted as the better way of working.

Health-related behaviour

The group noted that working from home can have both positive and negative impacts on health-related behaviour, depending on the individual and their circumstances.

Health-related behaviour like physical activity and diet can change while working from home.

For example, as noted above, people may become less physically active because there is no longer an opportunity for active travel for at least some part of the commute. Or alternatively, they may use time previously dedicated to commuting in other forms of physical activity. Similarly, eating habits can improve or worsen through the shift to working from home. If working from home leads to fuel poverty, this may reduce the money available to support a good diet. People may be less likely to eat out and cook more home cooked meals, but also may snack more during the day. The balance of these factors might depend on individual circumstances and further work is needed to understand these impacts.

Without the structure and social control of an office, there may be increased risky behaviours.

Finally, working from home can possibly have other negative aspects on health-related behaviour. A day in the office provides regular social interactions and clear external structures. This may inhibit use of alcohol or other addictive substances. Conversely, people may be less likely to go out after work and drink socially. The group identified this as an area of uncertainty.

Housing

Working from home makes the home more important.

The group noted that the quality and features of the home plays a larger part in the lives of people working from home, as they spend both work and leisure time at home. This also means that the quality of housing can affect their work as well. As well as internal space, the local external environment is important to support well-being, for example access to high quality private or public greenspace. People in rented housing may find it more difficult to make any changes required to enable home-working.

Building work can make it difficult to work from home.

Home renovations or nearby building or road works can bring noise and poor air quality. This is likely to have a disrupting effect on concentration, work and physical health. There may be more potential for conflict with neighbours who cause noise during working hours.

A workplace in the home should be suitable and ergonomic.

More generally speaking the home needs to be appropriate for working from home, the work area needs to be well lit and satisfy other conditions of ergonomics to enable good working conditions. This is relevant for all workers, but particularly those with musculoskeletal or other disabilities.

General poor housing impairs working from house.

Living in poor housing might impair the possibility to work from home. Poor standards in terms of lighting, space, furniture and noise reduce productivity and can have negative health effects. This particularly affects people on low incomes. If the home that can be afforded is of poor quality and heating is too expensive to have a conveniently warm workspace, then working from home will be a bigger strain.

Challenges for organisations and managers

Organisations need to find new ways to look after their workers and ensure their well-being.

The group discussed impacts for organisations and specifically for people with line management responsibility for home-workers. Working from home places additional leadership requirements on managers. In the office with everyone present and with opportunistic face-to-face interaction between managers and individual workers, it is easier to get an overview how individuals in the team are getting on. With home-workers removed from direct contact with their managers, other ways need to be developed to see how team members progress with work and how they do.

Working from home requires more trust.

However, monitoring through managers cannot be done as closely while working from home, and workers have greater flexibility. This change in working arrangements requires a certain amount of trust.

Fair distribution of workload may be more difficult.

With less monitoring of individual team members it may be more challenging to distribute the workload evenly as it is more difficult to see where workers are stretched or capacity is underused.

Face-to-face learning events are more difficult.

For learning organisations, constant development is important to adapt to ever changing challenges. Training and learning has traditionally taken place in many organisations in face-to-face meetings due to their flexibility. The close interaction in such training makes it easier to tailor it on an ad hoc basis. To change this completely to online learning

would be a large shift. Possibly blended learning combining online and presence-training can help in future to bridge this gap.

Team building requires more attention.

Managers and organisations also face the challenge of maintaining cohesion within the team. One tool to achieve this could be the use of extra meetings for this purpose to keep the team members connected. This requires extra effort for something that in a normal office environment is more likely to happen naturally. This demands more time from both managers and staff.

Local community

Working from home may reduce informal encounters but could increase the potential for social support from neighbours.

The group discussed some potential broader impacts that could arise for local communities as a result of more people working from home. Reduced commuting could reduce the number of every day encounters people have, which might reduce the sense of community. Conversely if people spend more time in the home, they might be more available to help out their neighbours therefore possibly strengthening the local community. There is potential for social connection and building social capital. However if people use more of the space in their home for work, they may have less space for social activity at home.

Working from home potentially reduces opportunistic burglaries.

Working from home changes the social environment. Through working from home dwellings are visibly occupied during the day which can reduce the likelihood of opportunistic burglaries.

Rural communities might attract new members.

Some rural communities might have found it difficult to attract new members and to sustain the number of residents previously. Part of this struggle might have been the lack of jobs in the local economy. Through the possibility of remote working, it is possible for people to move into rural communities, because there is no longer a need to have a job within a commutable distance. This might have positive influences by keeping up the number of residents necessary to sustain key services, but it might also have negative influences such as driving up local property prices.

Built and natural environment

Exposure to a varied built environment is beneficial for cognition.

Contrasting with the above, one downside of working from home can be the lack of variety in the built environment, which is beneficial for cognition. Without encountering a varied environment day to day, work efficiency can decrease. Additionally, a varied built environment helps mental well-being and a lack of such stimulation may increase anxiety. Therefore a commute which encompasses a stimulating built environment is good for work and mental well-being.

Access to local green environment becomes more important.

Spending more time locally while working from home increases the importance of the local built environment generally and the accessibility of green environment specifically. In order to improve local environment where work and living is combined, requires consideration when planning new areas.

Economy

Less footfall in city centres, potentially more in local areas.

The group discussed potential impacts on local economies. If more people work from home, this will reduce footfall in the city centre but might actually increase footfall near residential areas. Therefore shops in local centres might see an increase in business from people spending time for breaks locally. On the other hand, some jobs that would have been carried out locally such as dog walking can now be done by people working from home. There could also be adverse impacts on some services, for example reduced commuting could threaten the viability of some public transport services. The overall impact of working from home on local and city centre economies requires further investigation.

Ecology

Reduced commuter traffic will be positive for the environment.

The group identified that working from home is likely to bring considerable changes for the environment. Overall working from home is likely to decrease greenhouse gases and improve air quality, mainly through reduced emissions related to commuting. A reduction in traffic due to less commuting would also bring wider benefits including fewer injuries, less noise and less community severance.

Overall effect on greenhouse gases is mixed but likely to be positive.

In contrast to the reduction in emissions from commuting, there could be increased emissions from heating homes. In the summer when heating is hardly required this impact is small. But in the winter months it is more efficient to heat an office where more people are gathered and the building is often better insulated. The group highlighted some research that has quantified these and found that calculating these together, the

overall balance is that greenhouse gases are lower from workers who work from home even in the winter period.

Outcomes of scoping workshop

Suggestions/recommendations

The following recommendations arose from the discussion in the scoping workshop:

- Employing organisations should ensure workers are given clear instructions about work specification and working hours.
- Employing organisations should ensure reasonable adjustments are made for workers working at home as they would be for an office workplace.
- Employing organisations should offer the support needed for remote working, and ensure staff and managers have sufficient time to support it.
- Line managers should make sufficient time to check in with home-workers and keep them involved in the team.
- Housing providers should ensure homes are suitable for working from home with sufficient space, ventilation and light.
- Planning authorities should ensure community resources and local environments are high quality.
- Service providers offering online services should ensure clients have the support needed to access and use online services.

Research questions

In the scoping workshop the following research questions were identified:

- Who can and who cannot work from home?

- What financial costs and benefits are offered by working from home?
- What is the impact of working from home on work patterns?
- What is the association between working from home and mental health and well-being?
- What is the association between working from home and health related behaviour, especially diet and physical activity?
- What is the association between working from home and use of alcohol and other substances?
- What are the effects of working from home on relationships and families?
- What is the impact of working from home on local economies or on city centre economies?
- What is the balance of working from home in terms of greenhouse gases and environmental cost for commuting and heating homes or workplaces?

Discussion

Discussion of observations from the workshop

Working from home and issues of Covid19 entangled in 2020

It is difficult to disentangle the topic of working from home and the Covid19 pandemic. Working from home gained importance because of the need of social distancing. Additionally, a number of issues related to lockdown or other restrictions interact with working from home. Therefore the experience of working from home currently is closely related to Covid19 and it is not possible to completely disentangle those two topics. It would require a lot of imagination and analysis to present what would be the influence of working from home in a counterfactual world without Covid19.

Many areas affected by working from home are connected.

One of the observations from the scoping discussion is that many areas are interconnected. Similarly some groups are affected on multiple levels, e.g. women from BME background with low income in less suitable accommodation would be affected by additional expenses of working from home, increased risk of Covid19 because of ethnicity and they might be also under additional pressures because of the need for childcare. Therefore these issues offer examples of intersectionality, with certain groups being affected in multiple ways by working from home.

Even without being part of a group affected in multiple ways, working from home cuts across multiple policy areas, and therefore no single policy intervention can help to boost positive health outcomes or mitigate negative outcomes that are associated with working from home. Employers, transport, and planning regulations are just some areas where possible interventions are likely to help to improve health outcomes.

Overall effect on economy or ecology need to take into account a number of variables.

Economic impacts are influenced by mixed impacts of working from home, with local economies possibly seeing an increase of turnover and city centres noting a decline. Furthermore some economic activity might move online. The overall impact warrants further investigation and review of the evidence.

The overall environmental impact is likely to be positive, because of reductions in commuting and despite increases in greenhouses gases due to increased heating of individual homes for work. However there is also a possibility of people doing a “blended working” from very long distances, working mostly from home but doing extraordinarily long commutes for minorities of days. The overall balance of such working arrangements would again require further investigation.

Issues particular to Covid19 and only peripherally connected to working from home.

Working from home might be the only possibility of work for people required to shield.

There are several issues brought on by Covid19, such as the issue of shielding. Shielding required people thought particularly vulnerable to Covid19 to remain at home. Due to the need to stay at home, the only way of working for these groups was working from home.

There is a risk that people might experience additional stigmatisation because of their disability or ethnicity if they are required to commute during Covid19 lockdown.

Some disabled key workers experienced difficulties commuting to work during lockdown when shielding was recommended for vulnerable groups. Some people were abusive towards people with visible disabilities who were in public and travelling, saying they should be shielding at home. Working from home can protect from such experiences.

But similarly, some people with an East Asian appearance were exposed to harassment when traveling to work; they also could be protected from this by working from home. However one should argue that a better solution of these uncomfortable experiences should be an increase of tolerance and acceptance of various groups and a push to overcome labelling in a time of general, public anxiety.

Next steps

This scoping workshop is one of the first steps in the process of a health impact assessment, helping to clarify the issues and to formulate the resulting research

questions. Follow up work such as a literature review then helps to identify evidence, or it identifies a lack of evidence as the case may be. While writing this scoping report we became aware that the Wales Health Impact Assessment Unit (WHIASU) is also completing an HIA on working from home and agile working. This collates relevant literature to address the research questions identified above. Rather than repeating this work, we intend to draw on this to produce a summary, acknowledging the WHIASU report, with relevant Scottish data.

Other formats of this publication are available on request at:



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