



In depth: How workplaces need to evolve

Workplace culture in a post-2020 world

Workplace culture will need to be flexible and inclusive as we rebuild

In depth: How workplaces need to evolve

Employee expectations of company culture are changing and new challenges are emerging around how to maintain a sense of culture when the majority of employee interaction is moving online. The conversation on inclusion has evolved to be seen as a critical function of culture, and it is central to our core philosophical belief in inclusive capitalism.

2020 put workplace culture under the spotlight as social inequalities became more starkly apparent.

The forced shift to remote working dissolved the boundaries between work and home. For some, it was an opportunity to rebalance priorities from the comfort of home. For others, the shift to working at home wasn't easy, productive or even possible. Meanwhile, the murder of George Floyd and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement raised collective consciousness of racial inequity in our society. The outsized impact of the pandemic on black and minority ethnic communities was symptomatic of the structural inequality that exists in the UK and beyond. These issues speak to SDG 8 with its focus on inclusive economic growth and decent work for all – outcomes that are core to our vision of inclusive capitalism.



Creating and maintaining workplace cultures that are inclusive and fit for the future will require a highly nuanced and person-centred approach. Our response has been to listen carefully to our people. The 'L&G Listens' project gathered personal perspectives and stories from a diverse range of employees to provide a balanced view of our culture. It told us what we are doing well and where we can do better. The insights have shaped our thinking on how we can build a more employee-centric, diverse and inclusive workplace.

Listening also characterised our response to the challenges of remote working. By consulting employees on what worked, what didn't and their preferences for the long term, we involved them in shaping a future workplace culture and ways of working that are genuinely based on their needs.

Whatever the post-Covid workplace looks like, it must balance the needs of people and the needs of business. This isn't easy and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. That is why we don't subscribe to the extreme positions of 100% remote working or 100% office working as a future model. Remote working isn't a cultural panacea: presenteeism can flourish as the lines between 'working' and 'not working' blur and inequalities in people's home lives are exposed. Meanwhile, time spent in offices can be either productive or unproductive for many reasons – from employee engagement to building design.

We advocate for a move away from offices as 'clerical factories' and towards flexible spaces where collaboration is the focus. As a major commercial landlord, we see a place for the office in the future economy, including as an employer. But we acknowledge that thoughtfulness of design must characterise the office of the future, with employee wellbeing, environmental gains and flexibility at its core. Workplace culture can only flourish when we have 'workplaces' in which it can happen. Striking the right balance between in-person and remote work will be a learning process and weighing up the needs of employees against those of the business will be key. ■

SDG 8

decent work and economic growth