



Culligan[®]

THE FUTURE OF THE OFFICE:

What will the workplace look like post-pandemic?

CULLIGAN INSIGHT REPORT

2022





What does our new office life look like in a post-COVID world?

As one of our core focuses is providing drinking water solutions to offices, we were curious about **how the shift to working from home due to COVID-19 had affected people's attitudes to the workplace.** We also wanted to find out if people's hydration habits had changed since working remotely, so we conducted a survey of our customers.

Since the first lockdowns in 2020, working from home became a reality for most office workers. This wasn't all bad. Many people reported that they were more productive and preferred not having to do the daily commute into the office.

Fast-forward two years, and in 2022 has the novelty of working from home worn off? Our research found that people miss social interaction, as well as having access to the facilities provided in a normal work environment.

With COVID restrictions ending in the UK, many businesses are reopening their offices. The new working model may be more of a hybrid, with some home working, and then days in the office. What does this mean for employees and what might the new workplace look like?

The future is hybrid

Many businesses in the UK are re-imagining their workspaces as hybrid working becomes more popular.

Over the last two years, we've seen a variety of working models emerge to sit under the 'hybrid working' umbrella. Hybrid has seen some people working remotely for a short while before going back into the office full time once lockdown lifted, whilst others returned to the office part-time or stayed permanently remote.



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Our research has shown that a majority maintain that whilst they enjoyed working from home:

61% missed the social aspects of going into the office

40% missed working as a team

In addition, 34% missed the office amenities, 28% missed the dedicated workspace and 16% missed the office IT equipment.

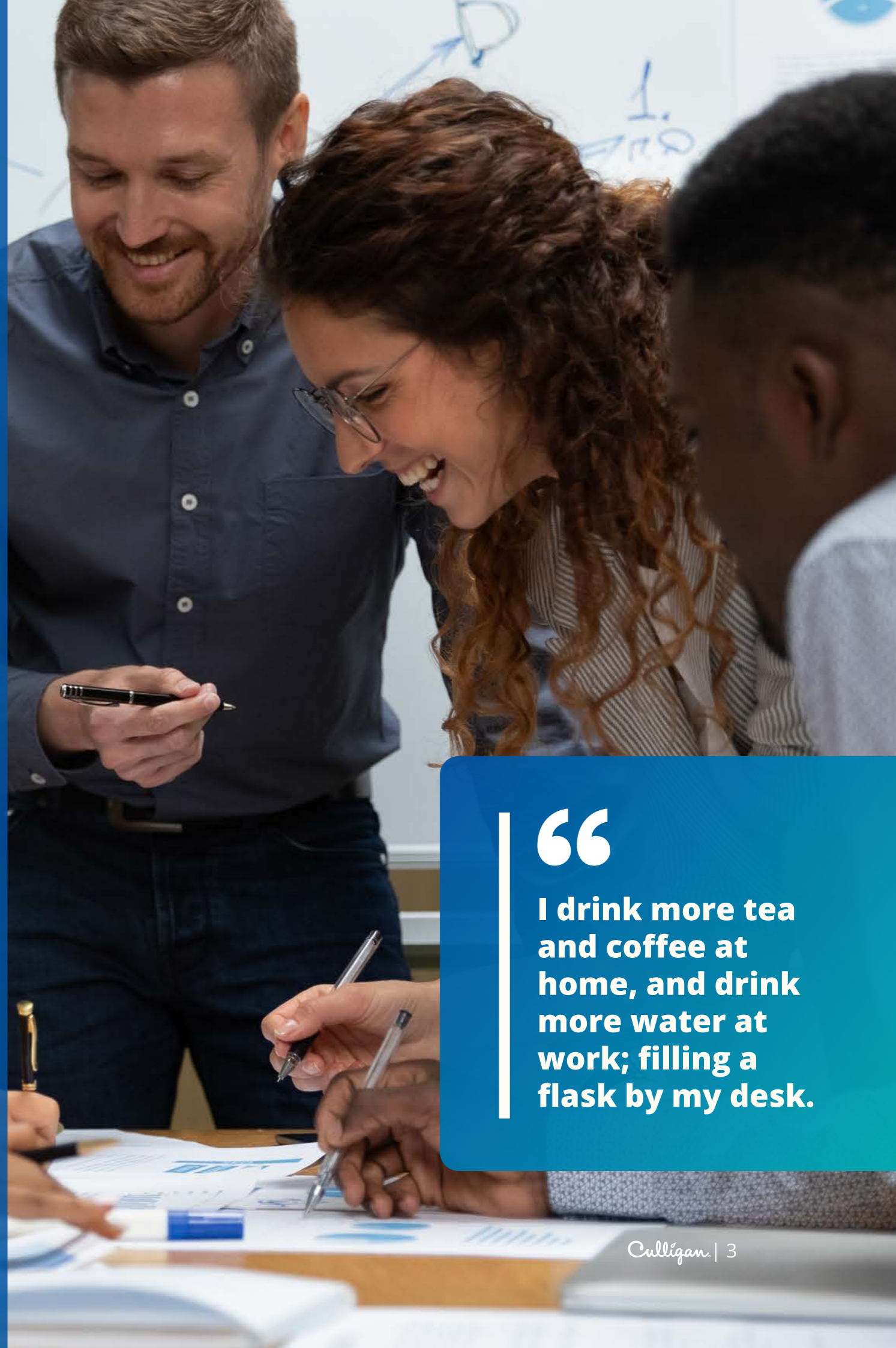
In fact, **78% of them have already returned to work in the office in some capacity.** However, in a recent study by Buffer, 98% of those surveyed wanted to be able to remotely work at least some of the time for the remainder of their careers.





This shows us that **one size does not fit all**, and we should be taking into account the individual needs of our employees. This is why a hybrid office space is key to the future of how we work, with allowances for people to either be permanently in the office, partly remote or fully remote.

With employees yearning for more **socialising and collaboration** in this new, post-pandemic working environment, how can we accommodate their needs whilst still providing a flexible, hybrid model of working?



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I drink more tea and coffee at home, and drink more water at work; filling a flask by my desk.

The hybrid office layout

Under the assumption that we're adopting a hybrid approach for our employees, businesses we still need to have a physical workspace. **What does this look like?**

If you asked someone who worked in the traditional offices of 50 years ago, they would have said that open-plan offices would never work as they were used to cubicles and hierarchical private offices. However, we saw how that changed over time, so anything is possible.



Is hot-desking the solution?

With part of our workforce always working from home, we may not require the traditional office space we were used to before the pandemic hit. Instead of assigned desks for employees that may not even be in the office the majority of the time, **hot-desking could be the ideal solution.**

Hot-desking is where employees don't have assigned desks, instead, they use a free space when they're in the office, leaving it ready for someone else to use on the days that they're working from home. In these hygiene conscious times, however, we'd need to ensure that the spaces are cleaned adequately between different users.



Meeting rooms centred around collaboration

We've been able to conduct meetings remotely, using tools like Zoom and Teams. However, employees want more collaboration with their colleagues when in person too, so this is where innovation is key.

It might be time to redefine what a meeting room is, replacing the traditional space with a collaborative workspace that can include those remote workers as well as those in the office.

The line between remote and in-person collaboration has been reduced with the help of tool-sharing, smarter and faster technology, and connected workspaces. It's not hard to imagine meeting rooms becoming shared environments allowing teams to work productively both from home and in the office.

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Workplace wellbeing is important for us at Culligan. That's why we aim to provide a flexible work environment that promotes a sense of community and collaboration.

Rob Innes

Commercial Director of Culligan UK

Water Cooler Moments:

A SIMPLE STEP TOWARDS STAFF WELL-BEING

The social aspect of staying healthy and hydrated should not be underestimated.

We can all relate to the idea of standing around the water cooler, chatting to our colleagues as we fill up our water bottle, or get a glass of cold water.

In fact, one of the biggest blows to social interaction due to working from home, is the absence of the 'water cooler moment': a chance encounter with a colleague that can range from idle chitchat to the creation of ideas and collaboration.

The provision of safe and hygienic water coolers or drinking stations in a modern office can support this kind of connection with colleagues outside of the formal meeting space.





CASE STUDY: CAMPUS READING INTERNATIONAL

In 2021, Campus Reading International installed drinking water stations, which not only supported their aim to provide health and wellbeing to their users, but also allowed for communal spaces where people could meet, socialise, and share ideas.

Campus is a groundbreaking business park development that is aiming to provide an 'amenity rich community for every type of business' - building the workspaces of the future, with sustainability being a key component of their ethos.

With hands-free water coolers located at Campus, they are now able to provide filtered, hygienic, and refreshing water solutions to the staff of the various businesses based there.

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Hydration Stations

Contributing to WELL requirements

504

Single-Use Bottles

Saved from landfill each work day

3,804
LITRES

Filtered & UV Treated Water

Dispensed each work day



You can read more about how Culligan assisted Campus with their hydration facilities by visiting our website:

www.thewatercoolercompany.com/case-studies-campus-reading-international



Drinking habits and hybrid working

Most people understand the importance of water for their health, however, keeping hydrated often slips people's minds and they fall short at meeting the daily recommended water consumption.

Our research showed that people are not drinking enough water when they're working.

Our survey also showed that people take more breaks to get a drink when working from home, but that they consume more fizzy drinks, and caffeinated drinks rather than water.

When it comes to hygiene in the workplace, our research showed that this isn't a major issue.



33%

drink less than 4 glasses of water per day, **yet the recommended amount is 8 glasses.**

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I consume less water when working from home, as in the office we take turns to offer each other drinks and it reminds me to get a drink.

61% OF OUR RESPONDENTS

said they are not concerned with hygiene in the workplace...



WITH 86% SAYING they will continue to use current drinking water facilities in the office.





As businesses look at **promoting wellbeing and health** for employees they might focus on education about the **importance of hydration**, the benefits of drinking pure water as opposed to sugary drinks, and to remind staff to take regular breaks.

While most offices use traditional water cooler dispensers, an increasing number are installing additional drinking water solutions such as bottle refill stations and multi-function taps.

OFFICE DRINKING WATER AMENITIES:

50%
of people said that their employer did not make them aware of the importance of keeping hydrated when working from home



82%

Water cooler dispenser



24%

Unfiltered tap water



6%

Multi-function filtered tap
(chilled, boiling, sparkling water)



5%

Water filter jug
(e.g. Brita, ZeroWater)



2%

Outside drinking fountain / bottle refill station

Advice on how much you should be drinking during the day isn't the information that employers are currently providing in their workplace health and safety material, which is why water cooler moments are so important.

SOME SIMPLE STEPS EMPLOYERS CAN TAKE:

- 1 Create materials** with key information on hydration and tips for employees to increase their water intake.
- 2 Arrange for employees to get together**, whether in the office or remotely, a couple of times a day. This is where a new meeting space would come in handy.
- 3 They should take the time to grab a drink**, (preferably water!) and check-in with their colleagues. Perhaps for the first few sessions, arrange some ice-breaker topics.

It's a chance to have a chat about things not necessarily work-related, catch up about their lives and get to know each other better, like you would when you bump into people whilst grabbing a drink in the office.



Single-use plastic is still a concern

Here at Culligan Water, we were happy to learn that despite the pandemic, an overwhelming majority of customers we surveyed said that the reduction of single-use plastic was still important for them.

 **OVER 75%** 

of people said that the reduction of single-use plastic was either **very or extremely important**

Drinking water solutions such as a water cooler, drinking station, or multi-function tap can be used to refill reusable bottles, helping to reduce the need for buying single-use plastic bottles.

Back to the Office Top Tips



- ✓ **Do 'chitchat':** Remember the benefits of those 'water cooler moments': promote social interaction, and the opportunities to share ideas, whilst staying hydrated!
- ✓ **Collaborate:** The new meeting room can utilise digital tools to make collaboration seamless between those in the office, and those working remotely.
- ✓ **Stay hydrated:** Drink enough water, both when in the office and when working from home. Healthy hydration helps with wellbeing and productivity and can stop you feeling sluggish throughout the day.
- ✓ **Take regular breaks:** One thing working from home has taught us is the importance of taking short breaks away from our screens. This should be encouraged in the office too. Walk around, get fresh air if you can, and come back refocused.
- ✓ **Respect others:** Whilst some of us will be comfortable mixing again in offices, others may take a while to adjust to life after lockdown. Respect other people's personal space and remember that the office space should be a productive, not stressful, environment.





Culligan is a world leader in delivering premium water services and solutions that improve the health and wellness of consumers.

Committed to sustainable, non-plastic solutions, the company offers some of the most technologically advanced drinking water products available, including bottled and mains-fed water coolers, drinking fountains, bottle-filling stations, contactless products, and instant boiling taps.

With UK businesses navigating what a return to the workplace means for employees, we can help solve the questions around the right drinking water product for your environment. Whether your office is large or small we have the experience and expertise to help you.

Get in touch to find out more about how you can improve your hydration facilities.

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