



Business

How Scotland is set to gain
£7.1 million as it thrives in
the hybrid working world

Bringing digital skills and investment to local communities

The people of Scotland have moved fast to embrace hybrid working and adapt to the effects of Covid-19. Across the country, organisations have brought forward transformation plans and taken decisive action around digital change.

Shifting office-based workers to home, connecting customers with digital services, improving the use of data to create better outcomes for citizens and customers – the innovations put in place by decision-makers helped many businesses to survive and even thrive during the pandemic.

Yet while the Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC) latest quarterly survey found strong growth across most sectors, there are still some concerns around staff shortages, supply chain disruption and rising costs for businesses as Covid-19 continues to impact our lives.

Fortunately, the Scottish Government is actively investing in its digital infrastructure to help future-proof the nation's economy. In March 2021, it launched its new digital strategy, 'A Changing Nation: How Scotland Will Thrive in a Digital World' to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the skills, connectivity and devices required to fully participate in its digital nation.

We recently partnered with the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) to understand the scale of these changes and their impact across the UK.

Our research found that the pandemic has accelerated digital progress by an average of 3 years across the UK. And looking specifically at Scotland, this rises to 3.3 years. This acceleration led to the following increases across the UK, during a time when some might have expected these metrics to fall. We saw a:

4.9%

increase in customer satisfaction

3.6%

increase in employee satisfaction

3.4%

increase in employee productivity

As Scotland looks to bounce back from the effects of the pandemic on industry and society, now's the time for decision-makers to take action to steer the country towards further recovery, competitiveness and long-term sustainable growth.

Our research also found that digital adoption is set to have a significant impact on the UK economy, potentially adding £76 billion to UK GDP by 2025. And that figure could be £236 billion by 2040.

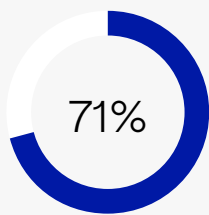
But what do these numbers really mean for you and your organisation? We've created this short Scotland-focused report to help you answer that question.



Key findings

The pandemic accelerated digital progress in Scotland by 3.3 years

Covid-19 has rapidly accelerated digital technology use



of decision-makers said they'd accelerated their use of technology due to Covid-19



Scottish employees are working remotely more than any other region

Scottish employee days per week spent working remotely:



Scotland stands to benefit significantly from potential hybrid working-driven net migration

Potential net movement of employees to Scotland:

238,000

Potential net movement of income to Scotland:

£7.1 million

Hybrid working is unlocking more hours in the day for Scottish employees

Average additional leisure time:

1.7 hours a day

41%

of respondents said they'd use their additional time to exercise

“People sometimes view hybrid working as purely a workplace scenario, but education environments have been using this approach for many years. Through our Connected Falkirk programme, providing 1:1 iPads to primary and secondary school pupils, we are embracing the advantages of anytime/anywhere learning, whilst ensuring digital equity. The provision of modern infrastructure and connectivity in our school estates provides the environment in which our children and young people can gain the confidence, skills and knowledge needed to thrive in an ever-changing, fast-paced digital world.”

Stuart Lennie,
Connected Falkirk Manager, Falkirk Council



Making the most of Scotland's hybrid working enthusiasm

All eyes were on Scotland in 2021 as COP 26 brought the world together in Glasgow to discuss climate change.

And when it comes to environmental impacts, hybrid working has certainly done its fair share to reduce emissions. In fact, our research found that 1.2 billion car trips could be saved annually, as well as 382 million bus and rail trips, if UK citizens decided to work just one extra day per week at home. This is the equivalent of a 0.7% reduction on the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2019.


Our research also found that Scottish organisations and employees are embracing hybrid working more than any other region in the UK.

Before the pandemic, this was only 1.1 days per week. Scottish organisations and employees have seen first-hand the benefits of hybrid working and are now clearly intending to continue this model as restrictions slowly begin to lift.

And it's little wonder that employees are favouring this new way of working. On average, Scottish respondents enjoyed an average additional 1.7 hours of leisure time a day when working remotely, offering them greater control over their work/life balance and more freedom to exercise, relax or spend time with family.

However, for hybrid working to be successful, Scottish enthusiasm needs to be supported by continued investment in the right infrastructure to support staff. 61% of Scottish organisations currently offer no remote management training at all to their line managers, and just 31% have introduced any additional support.

Hybrid working will only continue to evolve and bring further benefits if decision-makers pay close attention to their employees' needs and requirements, and equip managers with the correct tools and training to ensure hybrid working works for all.



Scotland has the highest number of days per week spent working remotely out of any region in the UK – with employees working, on average, 2.8 days a week from home – a rise of 254%.





Attracting and retaining a skilled workforce

The opportunity of hybrid working goes beyond employees and their organisations. Certain areas of Scotland are accustomed to losing skilled workers and vital local economic benefit to the draw of larger cities and even other countries.

Hybrid working is the perfect opportunity for tackling this challenge. By giving people the ability to work from anywhere, employees are no longer obliged to commute and are more likely to remain in local communities or more remote places, where they can inject skills and money into the economy.

Even more importantly, hybrid working is making Scotland an appealing option for skilled workers from the rest of the UK. Our research found that, of those employees who indicated a willingness to relocate thanks to remote working, Scotland could see an influx of 238,000 employees – the second highest out of any region we surveyed behind Wales.

And these people would bring vital skills and income to the country – which could lead to a £7.1 million injection into the Scottish economy, the highest economic uplift out of any region surveyed.

Hybrid working is also a vital function in helping to move around 22,000 civil service jobs out of London – something that'll come as a welcome shift to many of those in Scotland who want to see more key roles available to those outside of England's capital.

It's clear that investment in hybrid working solutions must be a focus for business leaders to boost the Scottish economy and attract and retain top talent to the area. Many organisations are already investing in the hybrid working model in line with the Scottish Government's advice to shift towards a more accessible and balanced work environment.

In fact, across Scotland, 71% of organisations said their use of technology had accelerated due to Covid. But supporting hybrid working needs to go further than investment in technology – business leaders need to focus on instilling the correct workplace culture to ensure no one's left behind in the new world of work.

Introducing the correct hybrid working policies will be equally important to having the right technology and connectivity. Any successful shift to hybrid working must include attention to technology, policy and culture in equal measure.

“We’re excited by the potential benefits of hybrid working for the people of Fife and Scotland more widely. Giving people the ability to work from anywhere means local communities can retain their digitally skilled workers, and even attract new skills and investment to help bolster our local economy and society. This is essential to re-energising areas outside of larger cities such as town, villages and more rural communities. For us as a council, hybrid working forms a crucial part of our ongoing work to digitally enable all of our varied workstyles and roles, as we continue to dedicate ourselves to becoming a digital-first organisation and seek to recruit and retain staff as an employer of choice. This will, in turn, mean we can better serve our citizens and improve the delivery of public services.”

Charlie Anderson, Head of ICT, Fife Council






Next steps

The pandemic's challenges are not behind us yet. Scottish organisations still face restrictions, fast-changing policies and the need to adapt to new ways of working. This means ensuring businesses and organisations are resilient enough to weather any future storms is more important than ever.

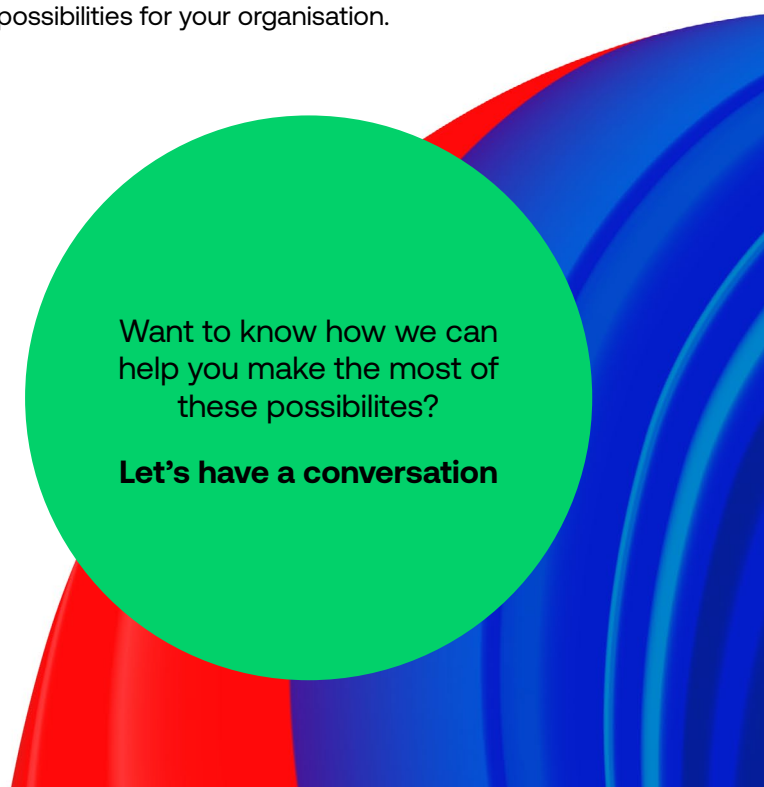
This resilience starts with continued investment in solutions that allow your business to better prepare for the future, while giving employees the tools they need to work from anywhere. Of course, investment needs to go beyond technology. Staff require up-skilling to deal with the new world of work, and retaining employees by investing in their careers and wellbeing is a necessity.

Now, there's an opportunity to:

-  Create clear hybrid working strategies to ensure nobody feels left out or unheard and provide access to work
-  Establish a balanced work/life culture that supports staff's mental and physical wellbeing wherever they choose to work from
-  Continue to roll out improved infrastructure and connectivity across Scotland to help businesses maximise the benefits of new ways of working

If decision-makers can act on these opportunities, the benefits are there for the taking. Employees are at their most productive when they have the right tools, feel supported in their roles and trusted to work from anywhere. And a productive, empowered employee means a better-served and, ultimately, more satisfied customer.

By laying the foundations with a strong, secure network and a trusting relationship with your employees, you can open up a world of possibilities for your organisation.



Want to know how we can help you make the most of these possibilities?

Let's have a conversation





Business

Get in touch



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