

Connecting to the future of work:

How the Hybrid Workplace emerged from the pandemic



It's safe to say that organisations across the UK faced their fair share of challenges in 2020. The pandemic disruption forced most offices to close their doors and reshape the way they operated, as well as the way they delivered for clients. What's abundantly clear is that rapid transformation has changed how we connect with the workplace, and it's here to stay.

The driving theme of digital transformation has fast become the focus of every business and every industry. While digitisation has been long-recognised as a significant factor in changing the way we live – in everything from banking to education – it's now also clearly reshaping the way we work.

Everyone from business leaders to front-line employees now recognises that the models and systems we relied on previously are not as universally useful as we imagined – many of these systems clearly struggled to cope during the restrictions of a pandemic.

Adaptations born out of necessity for most businesses are now seen as an imperative for future success – but only if they are done right. From providing greater flexibility and containing expenses, to meeting consumer demand by supporting a fully remote workforce, business leaders realise that innovation is key to growth in an unpredictable economy. Embracing modern IT infrastructure and connected devices is no longer a means to a competitive edge – it is now critical for business survival.



“

Two years' worth of digital transformation in two months.

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Satya Nadella,
Microsoft CEO

“

The way in which we work is inherently linked to the way in which we live, and what was once more separate is now very intertwined. As we move from strictly working remote to a hybrid world of work we see an increase in demand for intelligent connected devices that allow for extreme flexibility in our place of work. Devices that are familiar to employees that increase collaboration and boost productivity while keeping organisational data safe and secure IT and business leaders.

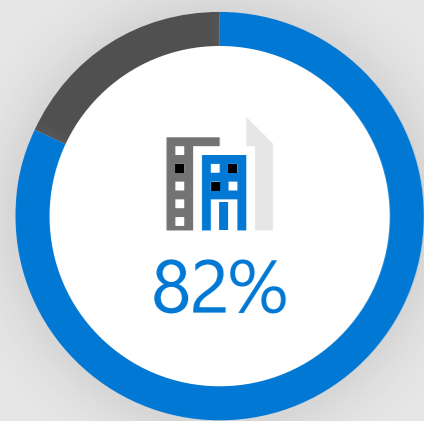
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Chris Lorigan,
UK Portfolio Marketing Manager

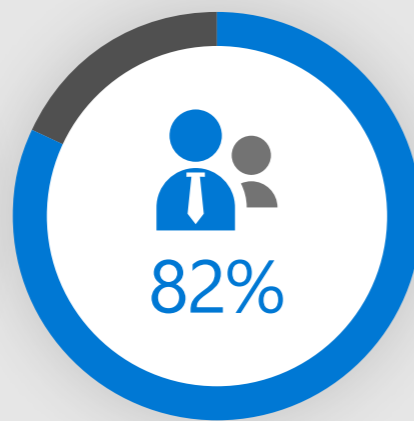
Embracing the Hybrid Workplace

Many workers across the UK have had a glimpse of this new workstyle already. Remote working propelled them into fast-paced collaborative teams, where they had to innovate quickly to keep their companies afloat. Workers have suddenly been empowered to make crucial decisions and shape how they get work done. In many cases, workers have been able to spend more time at home, less time commuting and allocate more time for things they had previously pushed aside.

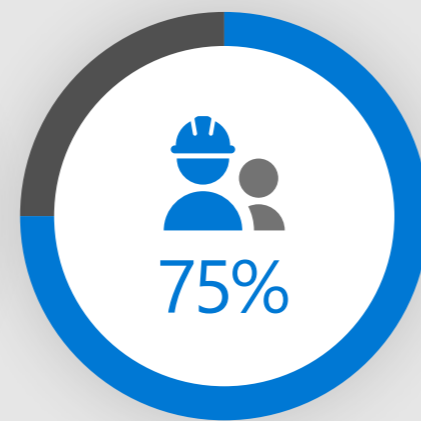
Like many in lockdown, workers grappled with a sense of displacement, over-availability, video fatigue and mental stress. With better policies and processes in place, however, more workers and businesses are identifying the different ways in which flexible working can be successful.



of businesses expect flexible working to be permanent¹



of employees say they don't need to be in an office to be productive¹



of workers are now indicating a preference for a mix of remote and office-based working in the future¹

Given this appetite for flexibility, the Hybrid Workplace Model of part-office, part off-site is fast becoming the way forward. Strategic leaders must first consider that there are vulnerabilities for businesses to overcome before they make the leap to a fully Hybrid Workplace.



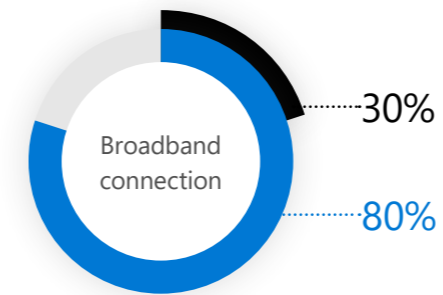
Willmott Dixon is a construction industry leader in innovation. Common to most construction companies, it found a lot of its staff were travelling to different sites, carrying a range of gear. Recognising the need to streamline devices and enhance productivity, it embraced Microsoft 365 and the Surface Go LTE devices.

“ Using the Surface Go LTE, we're able to mark up and annotate drawings and models without all being in the same location, even on sites with no Wi-Fi coverage. ”

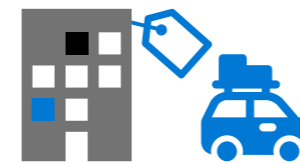
James Ibbotson,
Enterprise Architect, Willmott Dixon

Identifying the risks and challenges of a remote workforce

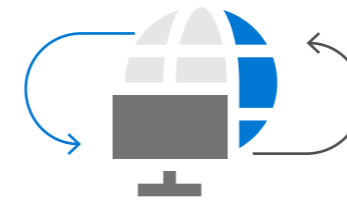
Some challenges stem from the technology being deployed while others are a matter for culture and training. Regardless of the domain, if left unaddressed, these factors can significantly hamper the effectiveness of your Hybrid Workplace strategy:



Although broadband is now generally available, only **80%** of households are connected and **30%** of these experience slow ADSL speeds³



With people looking to move out of cities, the average internet speeds in rural areas are significantly slower than in urban zones³



Remote working becomes a risk to innovation when users are not confident they can overcome technology disruptions⁴



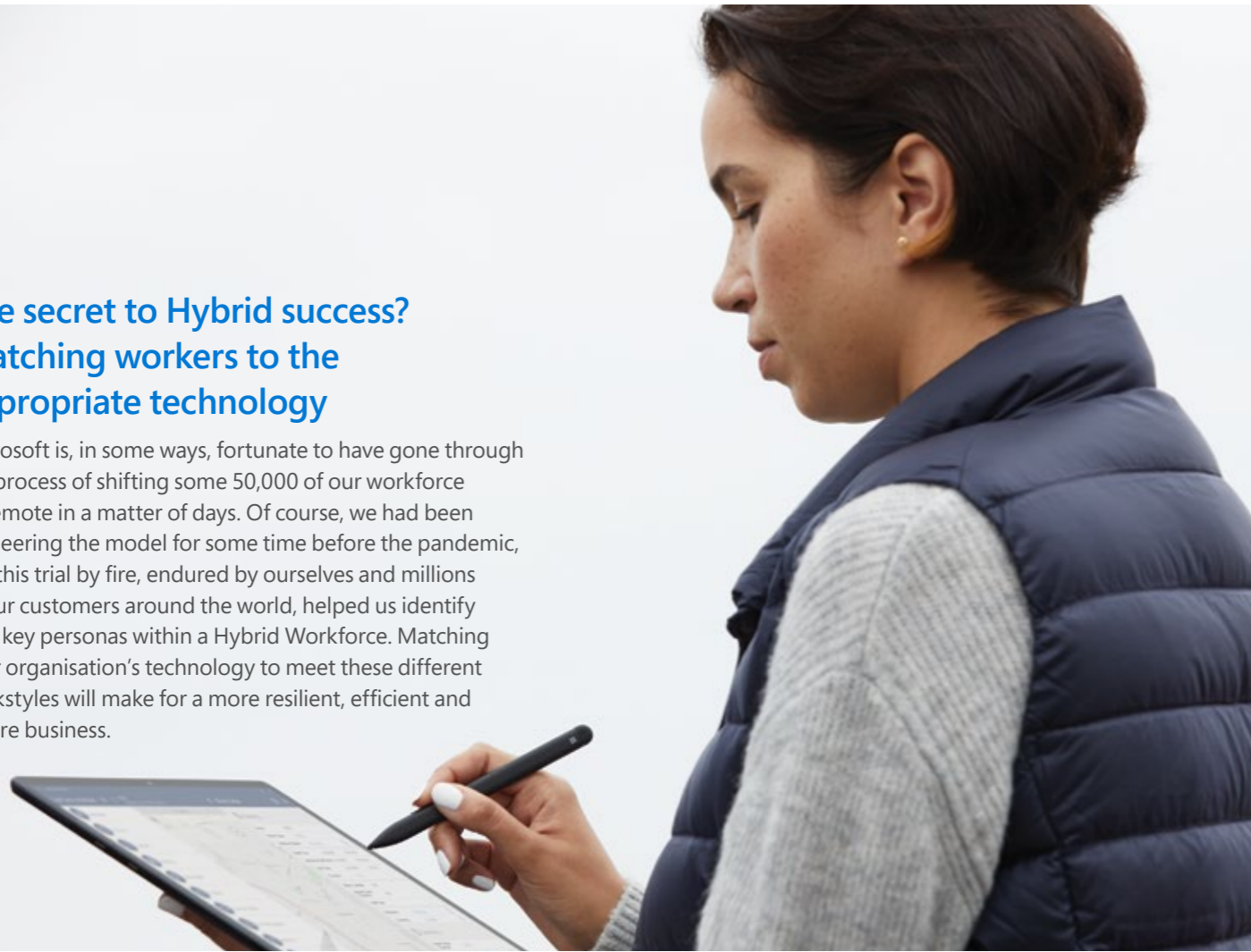
Unsecured public Wi-Fi networks are fraught with data security risks, frequently slow and deliver a poor user experience

Once a business understands these challenges, they can begin to design a solution that utilises genuinely cloud-powered devices and the IT infrastructure required to provide a seamless Hybrid Workplace. The always on Microsoft Surface range of connected devices is versatile, optimised for the most popular tools and software they run, like Microsoft 365, Teams, OneDrive, Windows Virtual Desktop or Dynamics 365 Connected Field Service. They are designed to enable long-term productivity for the business.

As one bonus, sustainability and corporate social responsibility are boosted by the reduced travel and commuting needs of a remote hybrid workforce.

The secret to Hybrid success? Matching workers to the appropriate technology

Microsoft is, in some ways, fortunate to have gone through the process of shifting some 50,000 of our workforce to remote in a matter of days. Of course, we had been pioneering the model for some time before the pandemic, but this trial by fire, endured by ourselves and millions of our customers around the world, helped us identify four key personas within a Hybrid Workforce. Matching your organisation's technology to meet these different workstyles will make for a more resilient, efficient and secure business.



C-Suite and client-facing business builders

Key Industries:
Professional Services, Finance, Public Sector, Manufacturing

These leaders are steering the business strategy and need to ensure their teams are well-supported. As the economy reopens, client-facing Business Builders will return to face-to-face roles that require professional-looking devices to reflect their expertise and professionalism. They also need to remain connected to their teams and organisations while on the move. Given their time is valuable, they need to make decisions quickly and respond to opportunities as they present themselves, without technical disruptions slowing them down.



Front-line workers

Key Industries:
Health, Retail, Financial Services, Emergency Services

Front-line workers are often in high-pressure roles that have important outcomes – they simply cannot afford disruptions or complications, technological or otherwise. They need to find ways to make workloads and communication more manageable, and their hyper-mobile work style presents a significant risk for sensitive data handling.



Managers

Key Industries:
Professional Services, Finance, Public Sector, Manufacturing

Managers are the glue of most organisations, juggling multiple people, processes and projects, often across different geographies and time zones. They depend upon fast, reliable technology to ensure that their teams can access data, process information, collaborate and deliver work effectively.



Mobile workers

Key Industries:
Manufacturing and Resources, Construction, Financial Services

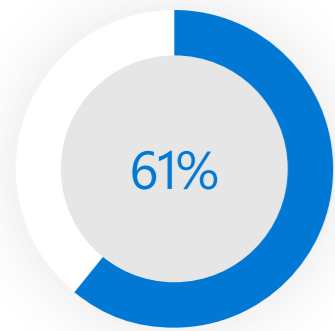
The need for seamless flow of data and information across organisations is nowhere more pronounced than for workers on the move. To meet increasing customer expectations for lightning-fast resolutions and greater transparency, those out in the field must be able to share information and data in real-time. Cloud-enabled business applications like Microsoft 365, Teams, OneDrive, Windows Virtual Desktop or Dynamics 365 Connected Field Services on always connected Surface devices can maximise efficiencies and speed up resolutions, as well as ensure these most distant of workers are always connected to support teams.

Understanding the connectivity and security risks to your business

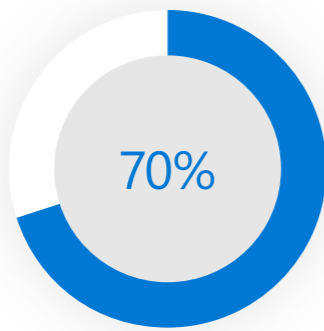
In order to best prepare your business for a successful digital transformation to hybrid working, it is critical to address some of the common vulnerabilities associated with mobile connectivity and security. The first step is to understand the nature and scope of the issue.



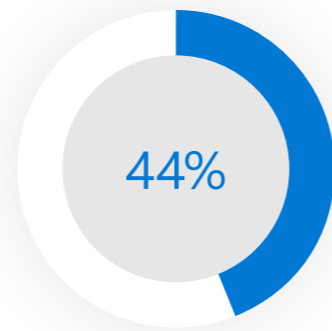
Mobile connectivity is an ongoing problem



of frontline workers feel stress when their job can't be completed due to mobile problems⁵



of workers have reported poor or unstable Wi-Fi or mobile coverage⁵



of workers say they face anger and rudeness if these issues impact their ability to service customers effectively⁵

With an ongoing impact to the business



Loss of productivity: it takes 30+ mins to resolve mobile problems⁵



Increased costs: costs related to mobile concerns over five years are likely 80% or higher of the enterprise's total cost of ownership of mobile devices⁵

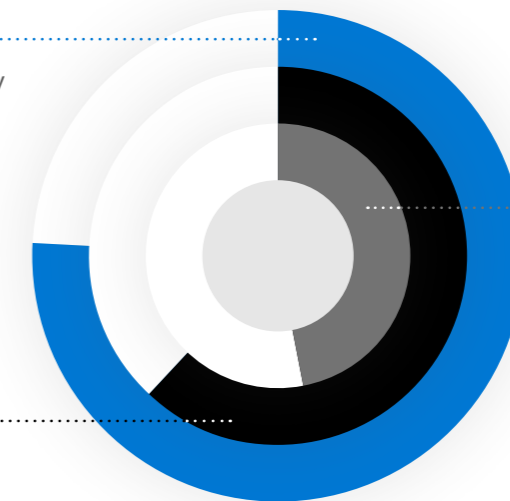


Employee stress: leads to poor wellbeing and increased risk of absenteeism⁵

IT Leaders see mobile security as the #1 threat to the business

76% of executives bypass mobile security protocols to get things done faster²

62% of executives said security limits the usability of their device²



of executives requested network access for an unsupported device²

Adapting your security approach to embrace the Hybrid model

From our work with thousands of global organisations, we see the most successful transformations focus on two key factors, which must work hand in hand: reducing risk and reducing interruption.

As mobile devices become the norm, so too must mobile security – it simply can't be left as an optional extra. A zero-trust approach allows IT departments to reduce risk, supported by an app-to-chip security layer within the devices themselves.

It seems obvious, yet it's worth re-stating that secure devices must be seamless and easy to use, ensuring employees across the whole business can achieve maximum productivity without interruption. Everything from data access to the way an app performs across different devices must appear virtually invisible to the end user.

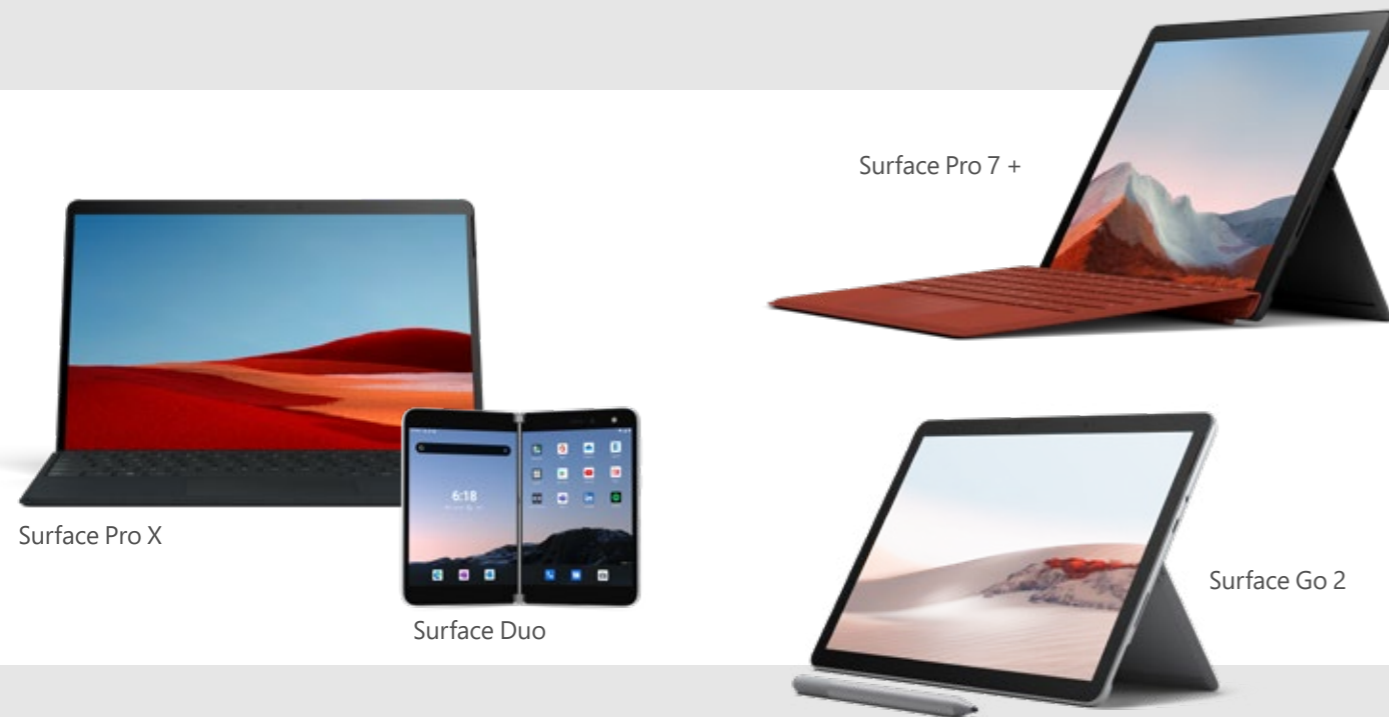
It's these two factors which Microsoft has used as the basis for the continual evolution of the Surface range.

The Microsoft Surface range of connected devices

Our Microsoft Surface range of connected devices has been designed specifically to meet the new ways businesses operate. The need to be always connected – whether at home, on the move, in a customer’s premises or at the primary office location – is the primary guiding principle for both the design and the technology.

What brings the Microsoft Surface range of connected devices together?

All of our Surface devices come with in-built mobile connectivity, allowing users to securely connect over cellular networks without additional hardware, dongles or other configuration, whenever a known, secure broadband connection is not available. These devices are natively more mobile and more connected than any we’ve offered before – strategic enablers for a new way of hybrid working.



Surface devices are the answer to the three main challenges businesses face with Hybrid Models of working:



1. Mobility

How do you stay connected from anywhere without dependence on dongles or public Wi-Fi?



2. Productivity

How do you reduce disruptions and empower collaboration?



3. Security

How do you ensure your organisation’s data remains safe no matter where your workers are?

Empower users to work from anywhere

Remote working has put incredible strain on fixed-line Broadband throughout the UK, while Guest and Public Wi-Fi options come with their own known connectivity and security issues.

Microsoft has advanced its Surface range with built in mobile-connectivity to meet demands as workers seek to stay connected to their cloud-powered applications and data and remain productive from anywhere. That could include your home, office and local coffee shop, as well as building sites, factories, farms and anywhere you have mobile coverage. The extreme flexibility, versatility and lightweight form factor of these devices, plus a range of handy accessories, makes them popular with users.

1. Connectivity no matter the location

Users can remain connected to your business in nearly any place with mobile-connectivity, even when out of range of Wi-Fi networks. This eliminates the need to seek out Guest Wi-Fi or other public networks that often bring connectivity and security challenges.

2. Avoid tethering hassles

Surface connected devices remove users’ dependence on phone tethering, which takes a toll on phone battery and comes with set-up challenges.

3. Reduce interruptions

Users can stay in their work state flow for longer with worry-free connectivity and dedicated bandwidth, even for data intensive workloads while streaming video calls.

4. Consolidated devices

Having everything in one stylish, robust device ensures workers have to carry only what really matters. Less to carry also means less to lose. Another benefit of device consolidation is the reduction of units needing IT management and fewer security endpoints to protect.

5. Reduce demand on home Wi-Fi

The pandemic proved how strained home Wi-Fi could become when you factor in streaming TV, computers, smart speakers, phones and multiple users. Enjoy the ease of built in mobile-connectivity while working at home.



The collaboration tools within Microsoft Office 365 are bringing people together. A lot of our architects and engineers live quite far away. We now connect with them via Teams. We've seen projects that have reduced design time from 12 weeks to eight weeks. That is a true saving to the project.

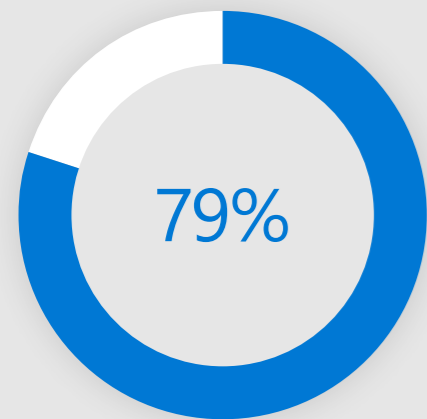
Simon Wilson,
Senior Operations Manager, Willmott Dixon



Boost productivity and foster teamwork

Focus is shifting from where the work is being done to how the work is being done. Businesses are now working with leaner teams with often the same or added workloads – meaning that technology must work even harder to support rather than hamper your goals.

Microsoft's Surface range is versatile, so workers can quickly move between individual productivity and collaborative teamwork with ease. They can also enjoy the benefit of accessories, like the convenience of being able to mark-up changes and comments with a Surface pen while on the road.



of employees indicate they're more productive and focused when working remotely compared to on-site.⁶

1. A Standardised experience

Users can remain productive whether they are working from the office, a coffee shop or their couch, without interruption or translating between apps. Surface devices deliver a standardised experience across the range of devices and apps, so your workers can focus on what really matters.

2. Speed and performance

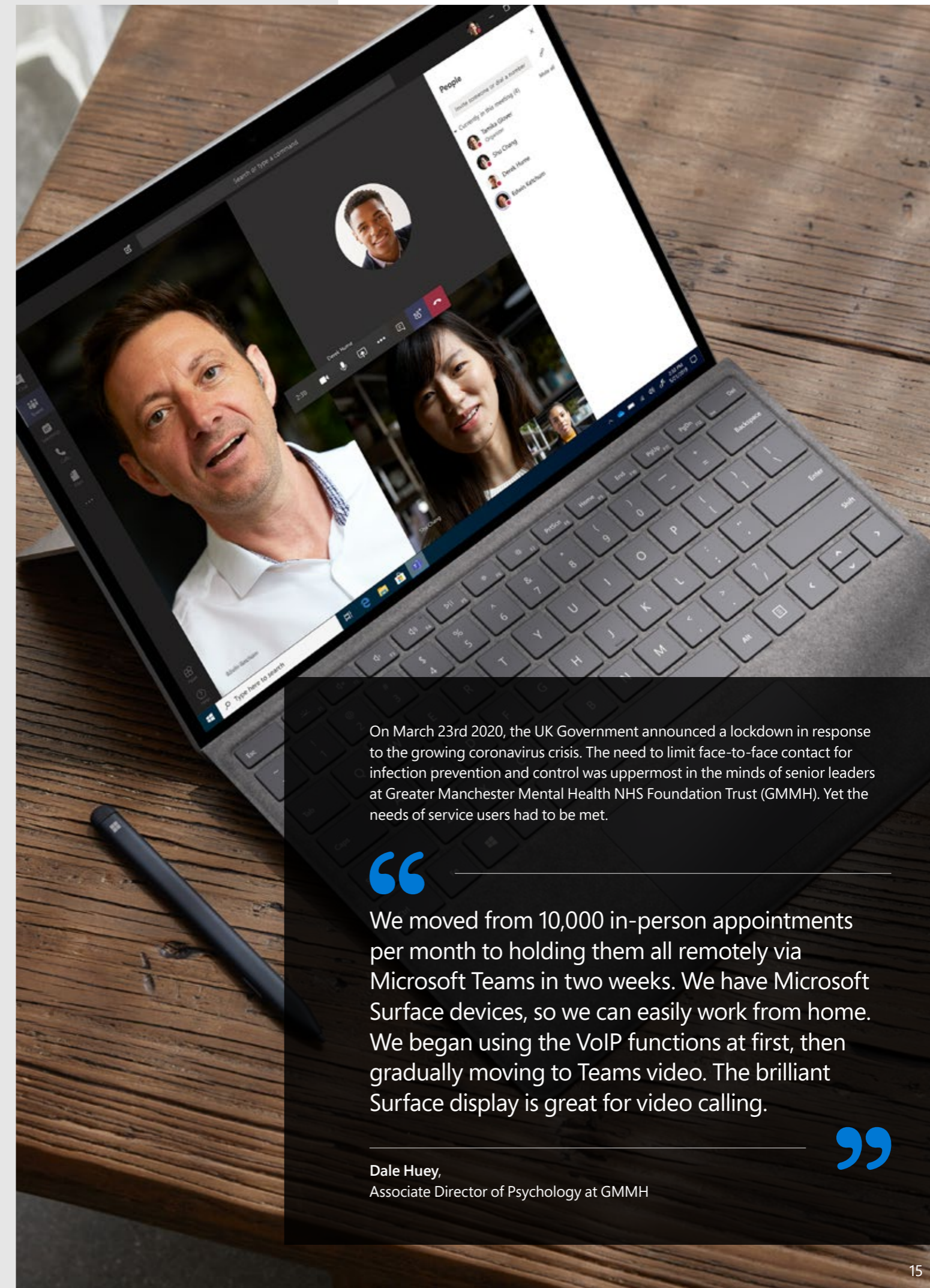
The Surface interface greatly improves productivity – from a faster secure log-in experience with Windows Hello to natural touchscreen gestures. The high-performance processing power evident across the Surface range ensures your team can take on heavier workloads and memory-intensive computing tasks, wherever they are.

3. Devices tailored to meet individual needs across your business

Whether an executive or a frontline worker – or in any role in between – users are able to maximise mobility and adapt to the specific demands of each role as they arise.

4. Running well-known apps and programs

Users are more engaged using apps and programs they are familiar with, which is why all of Microsoft's Surface devices are built to deliver the best experience of Microsoft productivity tools, including Microsoft 365, Teams, OneDrive, Windows Virtual Desktop and Dynamics 365 Connected Field Services. It's easier to collaborate as a team, either in real time or asynchronously with familiar apps.



On March 23rd 2020, the UK Government announced a lockdown in response to the growing coronavirus crisis. The need to limit face-to-face contact for infection prevention and control was uppermost in the minds of senior leaders at Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (GMMH). Yet the needs of service users had to be met.

“

We moved from 10,000 in-person appointments per month to holding them all remotely via Microsoft Teams in two weeks. We have Microsoft Surface devices, so we can easily work from home. We began using the VoIP functions at first, then gradually moving to Teams video. The brilliant Surface display is great for video calling.

”

Dale Huey,
Associate Director of Psychology at GMMH

Safety and Security for your business across the entire tech stack

Security and data protection are key issues for organisations moving to a Hybrid Workplace. Connecting to unsecured networks, using unsupported devices or having users bypass security protocols to get work done faster can all put your organisation at greater risk. The built-in eSIM they have means simple deployment of every Surface device on your selected mobile network. Here's where you need to focus to ensure better risk management.

1. Connection protection

A consistent, secure and dedicated connection on the Surface range ensures that no data is exposed on unsecure public Wi-Fi networks.

2. Biometric authentication

An excellent benefit of Surface devices is that the user is the password. Fast, secure and reliable password-less access while on the go with either one touch or no touch. These fast logins mean less risk of your team taking shortcuts to bypass security protocols.

3. Rock solid security

Surface is Microsoft secure across the stack. From the Microsoft built UEFI (Unified Extensible Firmware Management) that offers boot security to the TPM 2.0 (Trusted Platform Module) which guards against hardware tampering, Surface devices protect user data even before the operating system boots.

4. Simple deployment and decommissioning

At the end of their lifecycle or if a device is lost or stolen, IT administrators can take rapid action from anywhere in the world. Using advanced cloud-based device management tools, Autopilot and Intune, they can remotely wipe and decommission devices to safeguard your data.

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There are many technical reasons for choosing Microsoft Surface but our vision has always been that people should need only one device. The Surface Pro does this: it can replace a desktop, laptop, tablet – a mobile phone, even. Plus, people like using it. The drivers are all inherent which makes it nice and easy. You know everything you rollout is going to be compatible and you have Microsoft support.

”

Andre de Araujo,
Head of ICT at GMMH

Microsoft Surface range of connected devices. Made for the Hybrid Workforce.

The workplace is changing and digital transformation has become a survival imperative for businesses across every industry, reshaping where and how we work. Before your business can embrace the new hybrid way of working, you need to shore up the obvious vulnerabilities associated with mobility and connectivity.

Microsoft's Surface range provides your business with the tools required to thrive in the new age: productivity, mobility, security.

It's part of the reason Microsoft software and Surface devices are used and trusted by more enterprises globally every day.



To learn which of our Microsoft Surface range of connected devices is best suited to different parts of your Hybrid Workforce, [please click here >](#)

[1 The future of work: the good, the challenging and the unknown](#)

[2 Trouble at the Top: Why the C-Suite is the weakest link when it comes to cybersecurity](#)

[3 UK Home Broadband Performance: technical report \(ofcom.org.uk\)](#)

[4 The 'New Normal' is Here to Stay for Some Time: New Survey Reveals Organizations' Security Priorities for 2021](#)

[5 Is your tech failing your frontline workers?](#)

[6 Study says that remote workers are happier and stay in jobs longer](#)

