

## London Workplace Recovery Board Case Study

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| <b>Business Name:</b>  | Hearst   |
| <b>Industry Sector:</b>  | office   |
| <b>Employees Full-Time:</b>  | ?  |
| <b>Employees Part-Time:</b>  | ?  |
| <b>Employees on Furlough:</b>  | None   |
| <b>Main London Office Postcode:</b>  | SW1Y 4AJ   |
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| <b>What problems have you overcome in encouraging a return to the workplace?</b> | <p>We ensured that there was consistent communication throughout the pandemic making sure that our people felt well informed and confident in the decisions the business was making. We continuously surveyed employees to gauge sentiment. People have felt safe and secure in the office knowing that all the health and safety factors relating to the pandemic were being addressed. Together with the 'work from home' government message, transport to work has been the main challenge as many of our people felt fearful of travelling on public transport. Employees were also worried about being 'forced' to return to the office whilst in the midst of the pandemic – we reassured everyone that unless their role necessitates being in the office, we would continue to allow our people to work from home however, if their home was not conducive to homeworking, we would make the office a safe place for them.</p> |
| <b>How have you overcome barriers to returning to the workplace?</b>             | <p>We are clear that the office remains a key and critical part of our business. By surveying employees, the vast majority of our people are looking forward to returning to work for collaboration, creative work and social interactions. Most wish to work on average two days in the office and we will adopt a hybrid work model (details tba) The office will be redesigned to accommodate a more collaborative work style while allowing for social distancing in line with government rules. It is hoped that by going into the office a few days at a time, this will restore confidence in public transport.</p> <p>We will be operating on a test basis from September before encouraging people back on a more full-time basis from January.</p>   |

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| <b>What best practice would you recommend to other companies that are returning to the workplace?</b> | <p>Still too early to recommend specific practices as our people will not start to transition back until September. However, it is beneficial to be aware of how people feel and if you survey them, make sure that their feedback counts and is taken on board.</p> <p>We are keen to make the office a destination – a place our people want to come, and they feel that they can be at their best. Also being clear that the office is no longer a place for purely desk work that can be completed at home. The role of the office is to utilise specialist equipment and to work collaboratively within a team or with other teams and culturally feel part of the Hearst UK business. This is especially the case for new starters joining and for the overall development and learning of all individuals. In addition, bringing people back into the office using insight and information based on role and interdependencies with other teams, for safe, collaborative, creative work.</p> |
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