Search results - Supreme Court

May 19

When I was in New York, I stayed next to Penn station/Madison Square Gardens. Needless to say there was some amazing Art Deco such as the Chrysler building, Empire state, Grand central etc... Penn station however was like a claustrophobic rat maze. I was surprised therefore to find out that between around 1910-60 Penn station had actually been a stunning station, surpassing Grand central, which could have fitted into the Penn station grand hall, such was the scale. Somewhat tragically when rail passengers dipped due to introduction of motorcars, they sold it for commercial purposes and it got knocked down for Madison square garden. Afterwards it led to the equivalent here of the listed buildings act being set up. Even then they almost knocked down Grand central ten years later to build some non descript high rise, but they campaigned against it, with Jackie Kennedy a figurehead in the campaign, and won a supreme court ruling to save it. The Penn station that got knocked down, was largely inspired by a Paris station which is now the Musee d'orsay, the most popular gallery in France after the Lourve.

Search results - Transgender

Mar 31

Trans Day of Visibility - 31st March 2025

Trans Day of Visibility (TDoV) is an international event held on the 31st March each year. It is dedicated to recognising the resilience and accomplishments of the transgender community. It also helps to raise awareness of the struggles faced by trans people and to advocate for more protected rights.

TDoV was founded in 2009 by U.S-based trans activist Rachel Crandall to raise awareness for the discrimination faced by the trans community in every setting imaginable. The only other trans-centric day is Trans Day of Remembrance, which mourns trans people who have lost their lives, but there was no day to honour those living. 2014 saw people in Scotland and Ireland observing, and by 2015 there were many people engaging in social media campaigns and posting personal stories.

TDoV is an extremely important day for us all to celebrate, and to share love and cherish the many trans folk within our lives, and the wider LGBTI+ community. Challenging intolerance, hate, discrimination and harassment towards the trans community is central to TDoV. The message at the heart of Trans Day of Visibility is that trans rights are human rights.

Here are some useful inks for further reading and how you can help us achieve an inclusive workplace:

Why we should start using pronouns | Prospect - Pronouns are for everyone, not just the LGBTI+ community.

How to be a good trans ally at work | TUC - Find out what you can do to support your trans and non-binary colleagues.

Trans Resources – LGBT Foundation - These resources are for people who are trans and non-binary, but also for allies who want to learn and support.

Trans and non binary equality and inclusion policy - The Scottish Government's official policy for trans and non binary colleagues, and their line managers and colleagues.

Feb 3

LGBTI+ History Month 2025 - Icons

As part of LGBTI+ History Month 2025, there will be a post every Monday highlighting 3 people, current or historical, who are icons of the LGBTI+ community. This Monday, we are celebrating Carol Ann Duffy, Audrey Tang, and Janelle Monae!

Carol Ann Duffy

“If I am a lesbian icon and a role model, that’s great, but if it’s a word that is used to reduce me, then you have to ask why someone would want to reduce me.”

Scottish poet Carol Ann Duffy (she/her) was born in Glasgow on 23 December 1955, her family moving to Stafford when she was 6. In 2009 at 53 years old, Duffy was appointed Poet Laureate of Britain, a position previously held by men such as Alfred Tennyson, William Wordsworth, and Ted Hughes. She became the first LGBTI+ Poet Laureate, as well as first female and first Scot in the role’s 400 year history. Her term expired in 2019.

It was widely speculated that Duffy was considered for Poet Laureate in 1999, but was ultimately surpassed by Andrew Motion over concerns about how Duffy’s sexuality would go over with the public.

Audrey Tang

“One of the most important things is to design with the people not for the people.”

Audrey Tang (they/them) was born in Taipei, Taiwan on 18 April 1981. A prolific software developer, they're also the youngest and first transgender and non-binary member of the Taiwanese Government’s cabinet.

Learning to code at just 8 years old, Tang dropped out of school at age 14 and continued their education on their own through reading out-of-copyright books online. At 15, they started their own IT business leading a team of developers and hackers as chief technical officer.

Tang came out as a trans woman in 2005, changing their name and starting hormone replacement therapy. In 2010 they began to publicly identify as non-binary.

From 2010 to 2016 Tang was a consultant and digital adviser to Apple and helped develop virtual assistant Siri, retiring from the private sector at age 33 due to their success.

In 2024 Tang was part of a group of student protesters who opposed proposed laws on trade with China. They helped to co-ordinate a public debate through online technology, gaining attention from the head of Taiwan's Parliament. The Taiwanese Government offered them position of digital minister in 2016.

Janelle Monáe

"I'm non-binary, so I just don't see myself as a woman, solely… I feel like God is so much bigger than the 'he' or 'she'. And if I am from God, I am everything."

Black American singer and rapper Janelle Monáe (they/them, she/her) was born in Kansas City, USA on 1 December 1985. Their musical career began in 2003 with demo album The Audition. Since then, they have received 10 Grammy nominations, a Screen Actors Guild Award, and a Children's and Family Emmy Award.

Monáe publicly came out as pansexual in a Rolling Stone cover story in 2018, stating "Being a queer Black woman in America, someone who has been in relationships with both men and women – I consider myself to be a free-a** motherf***er."

In 2022 they came out as non-binary on Jada Pinkett Smith's Red Table Talk, but they also discussed that although they no longer identify as solely as a woman, their commitment to furthering feminism and female liberation has not changed.

Monáe has a non-profit, Fem The Future, whose mission is to build a fem-forward future by creating opportunities for under-resourced girls and non-binary youth of colour in music, the arts, and education.

Feb 10

LGBTI+ History Month 2025 - Icons

Wendy Carlos, Ncuti Gatwa, and Caroline Cossey

Wendy Carlos

"As human beings we do change, grow, adapt, perhaps even learn and become wiser."

Wendy Carlos was born on 14 November 1939 in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, USA. She studied physics and music before moving to New York City to study music composition at Columbia University in 1962. Carlos helped in the development of the Moog synthesiser, Robert Moog's first commercially available keyboard.

Carlos rose to fame in 1968 with Switched-On Bach, an album of Bach's music played on a Moog synthesiser. This album won her 3 Grammy Awards and popularised the Moog in the 70s. She later went on to compose the score for Stanley Kubrick's A Clockwork Orange (1971) and The Shining (1980), and Walt Disney Productions' Tron (1982), as well as releasing further studio albums.

Carlos began hormone replacement treatment in 1968 which began to alter her appearance, which created some social issues for her following the unexpected success of Switched-On Bach, released under her birth name. Prior to a live performance of excerpts from the album,

she cried in her hotel room before putting on fake sideburns and a man's wig, drawing on facial hair with a make-up pencil. She did the same again when meeting Stanley Kubrick.

The commercial success of her first album generated the funds for her to undergo gender reassignment surgery in 1972, but she still released 2 further albums under her birth name for marketing reasons. In an interview issued in Playboy magazine in 1979 Carlos discussed her transition, stating she had "always been concerned with liberation, and I was anxious to liberate myself."

Ncuti Gatwa

"There doesn't need to be a label. I believe that fully: that's why I don't like to label myself – and I don't owe it to anyone."

Ncuti Gatwa was born on 15 October 1992 in Nyarugenge, Rwanda. His family fled Rwanda in 1994 due to the genocide against the Tutsi and settled in Scotland in Oxgangs, Edinburgh. In 2013 he graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with a Bachelor of Arts in acting.

Gatwa graced our screens in 2019 in Netflix's comedy-drama series Sex Education as the charming and witty Eric Effiong, gifting us with the iconic line "wash your hands, you dirty pig!". Prior to this casting, he was homeless and couch surfing for 5 months. In 2020, he won a BAFTA Scotland Award for Best Actor in Television, and went on to receive 3 further BAFTA nominations for Best Male Comedy Performance.

2022 was a big year for Gatwa; He was cast in Greta Gerwig's Barbie, topped the Radio Times TV 100 power list, and became the first Black actor to be cast as The Doctor in Doctor Who. His debut came in December 2023 as part of the series' 60th anniversary celebrations.

In June 2023, Gatwa appeared in British Vogues's Pride issue, but had not officially "come out" as queer at that point. This sparked online conversation and speculation, but Gatwa himself said "not to come for anyone, but I was like, you know, two plus two equals four. I can't be louder about this."

Caroline Cossey

"Times have changed so much that it's amazing. I knew over the years when I'd see shows with gay characters that one day there would be more visibility for trans people."

Caroline Cossey was born on 31 August 1954 in Norfolk, England. She was assigned male at birth, but through puberty was described as distinctly 'feminine' in appearance due to an intersex variation, which she didn't know about at the time. This led to bullying from her peers, which she discusses in her autobiography My Story.

Cossey left school at 15, and moved to London when she was 16. She started transitioning at 17 while working as an usherette in London's West End, then going on to receive hormone therapy and working as a showgirl. She received gender reassignment surgery in 1974, where her XXXY chromosome syndrome was discovered.

Cossey began modelling under the name Tula, and won a part on game show 3-2-1 in 1978. A tabloid journalist contacted her stating they discovered she was transgender and planned to write about it. This led to Cossey ending her contract early and maintaining a low profile until 1981, when she was cast in Bond film For Your Eyes Only. She was then outed by tabloid News of the World. Cossey responded by releasing her first autobiography I Am A Woman.

Cossey campaigned for changes to the UK's anti-trans laws, which included that she wasn't legally allowed to marry a man. She took her petition against the British Government to the European Court of Human Rights. Following this, she married businessman Elias Fattal, but the tabloids outed her once again, and he annulled their marriage after returning from their honeymoon, as his parents were unaware Cossey was trans.

In 1991, she posed for Playboy magazine as their first transgender model. In 1992 she married David Finch, and they currently live near Atlanta, Geogria, USA. Finally, in 2005, the Gender Recognition Act came into force in the UK, allowing people to change their legal gender.

Search results - Netflix

Feb 24

LGBTI+ History Month 2025 - Icons

This is the final instalment of Icons for LGBTI+ History Month 2025 - thank you to everyone who has read and interacted with these posts!

Oscar Wilde, Anne Lister, Alice Oseman

Oscar Wilde

"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."

Oscar Wilde (16 October 1854 – 30 November 1900) was an Irish poet and playwright born in Dublin, Ireland. He attended Trinity College, Dublin and Magdalen College, Oxford, before moving to London to pursue his literary career.

It was at Oxford that Wilde earned his reputation for his flamboyance and decadence. These were characteristics of Aestheticism, a movement promoting "art for art's sake" and importance of beauty over meaning. In 1882 he lectured in the US and Canada for 12 months, and upon his arrival at customs in New York City stated he had "nothing to declare but my genius."

In 1884 Wilde married Constance Lloyd, with whom he had two children. He published his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* in 1891. He also wrote multiple comedic plays, his final two plays (*An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being* Earnest) were produced in 1895, mere months before his imprisonment.

Many of his works focused on the exposure of secret sins, indiscretion, and consequent disgrace. Around the time of his second son's birth, he began a sexual relationship with Canadian journalist and art critic Robert Ross, this first of a series of affairs he would have with other men. This culminated in his affair with Lord Alfred "Bosie" Douglas.

Douglas's father accused Wilde of being a sodomite, and Wilde sued the marquess for criminal libel. The case went to trial in April 1895, but the case collapsed within 3 days. Wilde's own writings were used as evidence against him, particularly the homoerotic themes of *The picture of Dorian Gray.* Wilde dropped the suit, but the evidence made him vulnerable to arrest for violating Britain's Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, which criminalised sexual acts between men (though not women).

Wilde was arrested and ordered to stand trial for acts of gross indecency. He testified brilliantly, and drew applause following an eloquent speech about "the love that dare not speak its name", an expression found in Douglas's poem *Two Loves*. The jury failed to reach a verdict, but in the retrial Wilde was found guilty and sentenced to two years at hard labour in May 1895. During his sentence, he wrote *De Profoundis*, a letter to Douglas, though the version published in 1905 was drastically censored.

Wilde's wife, Constance, moved to the European continent and the two corresponded often through letters. Wilde was released in May 1897 and moved to France, hoping to regenerate himself as a writer. He published his final work *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* in 1898. He died of meningitis in November 1900. He was posthumously pardoned in 2017 along with 50,000 other men under the Turing Law, introduced to exonerate those who had been unjustly convicted of the 'crime' of homosexuality.

Anne Lister

Anne Lister (3 April 1791 – 22 September 1840) was an English diarist and independent landowner, born in Halifax, England. Her family owned Shibden Hall, a Tudor-style home in Halifax, West Yorkshire. Inheriting the hall and its estates upon the death of her uncle James in 1826 allowed Anne to flourish as a businesswoman, producing income from its reserves of coal, water, stone and timber.

From the age of 15, Lister began writing personal diaries which she continued for many years of her life, up until her death. Her diaries were incredibly detailed, with a total of over 4 million words. One of her earliest entries documented her first love, a fellow school pupil, Eliza Raine. One-sixth of her diaries were written in code, a combination of algebra and the Greek alphabet. These sections documented passionate love affairs with other women, and her free expression of her sexuality.

Lister was the 19th century equivalent of a "butch" lesbian, dressing always in black without indulging in the feminine frills like other women. Locals knew her as "Gentleman Jack", and her lesbian lifestyle was one of the best kept secrets of her time. She had 5 well-documented relationships with women throughout her life.

In 1834, Lister finally met a woman who met her social aspirations – Ann Walker. Lister and Walker succeeded in marrying in the form of a blessing from the Church. The two travelled far and wide together, including a trip to Russia, which ended in Lister's untimely death at the age of 49 in 1840. She contracted a virulent fever in Tblisi, Georgia, and died at the foot of the Caucasian mountains.

Lister's diaries would not be discovered until the mid 1890s by a descendant of the family, John Lister. He broke the code and discovered Anne's sexuality, and quickly re-buried the diaries. John himself was gay, and did not want to draw attention to his own sexuality by revealing the diaries he had found. Anne's diaries would not be de-coded and read again until 1983 by Helena Whitbread, a historian who graduated for university at 52 and was looking for a research project.

Whitbread decoded every word of Lister's diaries, and soon realised how important the stories were. She published the first volume of Lister's journals in 1988, *I Know My Own Heart* (no longer in print). The second volume, *No Priest But Love* (1993), covers Lister's life from 1824-1826, and boldly includes more revelations of her romantic and sexual encounters than the

first. The final book, *The Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister,* covers her life from 1816-1824. Whitbread is currently working on Lister's biography.

Alice Oseman

"The world is obsessed with sex and romance. And if you don't have that, you feel like you haven't achieved something that's really important."

Alice Oseman is an English author and illustrator of young adult fiction. She was born on 16 October 1994 in Chatham, Kent. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English literature from Durham university in 2016.

Oseman wrote her first novel *Solitaire* when she was 17 and secured a publishing deal for it at 19. The novel explores themes such as friendship, depression, eating disorders, and LGBTI+ relationships. Following on from its success, she published 2 e-novellas based on characters from *Solitaire – Nick and Charlie* (July 2015) and *This Winter* (November 2015).

Oseman wasn't finished with characters Nick and Charlie, and began *Heartstopper,* an online webcomic series, in 2016. The series was picked up by Netflix and made into a live-action adaptation, premiering in April 2022. The second season was released in 2023, and the third in 2024. The series received high praise for tackling serious issues while maintaining an optimistic feel, and for respectful discussion of mental health and relationship struggles.

In 2020, Oseman published her fourth novel, *Loveless.* The book discusses asexuality, identity, and discrimination within the LGBTI+ community. While not an autobiography, Oseman has said that the novel draws a lot from her own experiences growing up and discovering asexuality. The novel received praise for its intersectional and diverse depiction of sexuality, and received the YA Book Prize in 2021.

She publicly stood up for *Heartstopper* star Kit Conner, who felt he was forced to come out as bisexual following online pressure from fans. On the matter, she tweeted "I truly don't understand how people can watch Heartstopper and then gleefully spend their time speculating about sexualities and judging based on stereotypes."

Feb 17

LGBTI+ History Month 2025 - Icons

Fern Brady, Alan Turing, James Barry

Fern Brady

"I didn't think it was a taboo or hard to talk about mental health, but it was clear that whatever was wrong with me wasn't remotely part of the mainstream conversation."

Fern Brady, born 26 May 1986 in Bathgate, is a Scottish comedian and writer. She has appeared on Channel 4 shows Taskmaster and 8 Out of 10 Cats, but achieved fam in stand-up comedy at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Her memoir, Strong Female Character, won a Nero Book Award. It focuses on her late diagnosis with autism, and growing up working class in Scotland.

Brady appeared on BBC's Live at the Apollo in 2018, being the first Scottish female to do so. It was during this set that she publicly came out as bisexual. This set also helped increase her popularity, and she also said "the amount of engagement I've got from just mentioning it has encouraged me to talk about it a lot more. I'm just really basically interested in identity."

Before starting out in stand-up comedy doing her own gigs, Brady was an intern at Fest Magazine, a free magazine covering the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. As part of her assignments, she had to write an article about a comedy critic trying stand-up. She described this as "the push I needed to realise it was what I wanted to do," and her first professional gig was in May 2010.

Brady has since hosted, co-hosted, and been a guest on multiple podcasts. She has an upcoming show – I Gave You Milk To Drink - in Kings Theatre, Glasgow on Sunday 23 March 2025. A recording of a previous show - Autistic Bikini Queen - is currently available to stream on Netflix.

Alan Turing

"Sometimes it is the people no one can imagine anything of who do the things no one can imagine."

Alan Turing (23 June 1912 – 7 June 1954) was an English mathematician and computer scientist. He studied at Sherborne, a boarding school in Dorset, and went on to study mathematics at the University of Cambridge in 1931, graduating in 1934. He was then elected to a fellowship at King's College for his research in probability theory. He then moved to Princeton University, USA, in 1936 to study for a PhD in mathematical logic, completing this in 1938.

Upon his return to the UK, Turing joined the Government Code and Cypher School, moving to the organisation's wartime headquarters at Bletchley Park when the Second World War began in September 1939. There, with other mathematicians and crucial information regarding the Enigma machine passed on by the Polish Cipher Bureau, a new machine called the 'Bombe' was developed. It was capable of breaking Enigma messages on an industrial scale.

In 1941, Turing's section 'Hut 8' had mastered the German submarine communication system that was vital in the battle of the Atlantic. In 1944 he was working on a system to encrypt and decrypt spoken telephone conversations, although it was never used in action. This work led to Turing being recruited at the National Physical Laboratory in 1945. In March 1946 he produced a detailed design for the Automatic Computing Engine, a digital computer capable of storing programs in its memory. Turing left in 1948 before the pilot version of the computer was made in 1950.

In 1950, Turing published a paper which included the idea of an 'imitation game' for comparing human and machine outputs, which became known as the Turing Test, and has been a key contribution to the field of Artificial Intelligence. In 1951 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for his work.

However, things changed for Turing in 1952. Male homosexual activity was illegal in England and Wales until 1967, and Turing was prosecuted after an affair with another man came to the notice of police. Rather than going to prison, he accepted probation on the condition of hormonal treatment, in effect chemical castration. His security clearance was revoked, ending his work with the government code breaking department.

In 1954, Turing was harassed by police surveillance as he was deemed a security risk. He was found dead in his bed on 8 June, a partly eaten apple next to his body. It was ruled that he had died by suicide. In 2013, 59 years after his death, he was granted a royal pardon for his 1952 conviction. In 2014 The Imitation Game, a film inspired by the team that built the machine that deciphered the Enigma codes and highlighting part of Turing's life, was released. On 23 June 2021, new Bank of England £50 notes went into circulation featuring a portrait of Turing.

James Barry

James Barry (9 November 1795 – 25 July 1865) is widely considered to have been a trans man, who is best known for his unprecedented medical skills. Barry took on his identity in 1809, enabling him to enrol in Edinburgh University's prestigious medical school. His slight build, short stature and high voice led to many people to suspect Barry was a child, but he wavered and gained his degree in medicine at the age of 22 and then enlisted in the army as a medical officer.

Barry was sent to South Africa a year later, and this is where he carried out the first successful Caesarean section in 1826, where both mother and infant survived. He became a distinguished army surgeon, moving around from Cape Town, St Helena, Trinidad, and Tobago, ending his career in Canada as Inspector General of military hospitals.

Barry was a dedicated social reformer and spoke out against the unsanitary conditions and mismanagement of prisons and asylums. Throughout his career he continued to fight for better food and proper medical care for prisoners and soldiers. He was known to be bad-tempered, and was even hated by none other than Florence Nightingale, who described him as a "brute". Despite this, Barry was considered an excellent doctor with a sympathetic bedside manner regardless of the patient's background.

Barry lived as a man in both public and private for his entire adult life. When he died in 1865, his last wish was for his body to remain unaltered before burial. However a post-mortem examination revealed his anatomy to the attending nurse, who took her story to the press. When the subject was brought to Barry's friend and physician, Major D.R. McKinnon, he replied "whether Dr Barry was male or female…I do not know, nor had I any purpose in making the discovery as I could positively swear to the identity of the body as being that of a person whom I had been acquainted with"

Search results - Work from home

May 1

Hybrid Working

Yesterday, I received an email about hybrid working, prompting me to reflect on my experiences over the years and the changes unfolding around us.

The year was 2015, and the doors of opportunity opened for me at the marine lab in Aberdeen. It was a job that suited me well, a steady rhythm of research and discovery, but as time passed, a new ambition stirred within me. Three years later, a policy role in Edinburgh caught my attention. The prospect intrigued me—I was eager to step into a broader role, to engage in the complexities of governance and decision-making. Without hesitation, I picked up the phone.

I spoke openly with the hiring manager, laying my cards on the table. "I'm very interested in the role," I said, "but my family circumstances—my children's schooling, my partner's work—make it impossible for me to relocate fully to Edinburgh." A pause followed, and then his response came like a reassuring anchor. "I'm looking for the right person," he said, "not the right address."

With renewed confidence, I pursued the role and, after an interview a month later, secured the position. For three years, I worked remotely, commuting when necessary. Most days were spent at the Aberdeen office, a few from home, but the arrangement worked seamlessly.

Then, another transition—a new opportunity, another move. Once again, the conversation surfaced. "I'm deeply interested in this role," I told my new manager, "but relocating to Edinburgh full-time isn't feasible." By then, COVID had shifted the landscape of work entirely. The once rigid norms had softened; remote work had become commonplace. We agreed: I would work from home and travel to Edinburgh when required.

For those who remember the SG's stance pre-pandemic, flexibility was already a priority. A culture of well-being and family balance had been encouraged long before COVID redefined the workplace. Yet despite the goodwill, there was an unspoken rule—no agreements would be written down. Everything remained verbal, leaving uncertainty lingering in the air. And now, despite reassurances from senior management, I can't help but feel unsettled. The progress we made, the adaptability we embraced—it seems to be slipping away.

I won't delve into details, but the impact of remote work was widely acknowledged—less stress, improved family life, fewer cars on the road, reduced congestion, lower emissions. Many questions swirl in my mind. Has an impact assessment been conducted on how these new working arrangements will affect these aspects?

Now, I find myself wondering: where do we stand, and where are we headed? As new workplace policies take shape, do employees have a say in the decisions that affect us? Were we consulted about the changes? If not, is our employer willing to discuss these concerns? Are our perspectives being considered as work continues to evolve? Do we truly matter to them?

May 6

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] well said.

Even with employee passports and reasonable adjustments, this whole issue has caused considerable uncertainty and anxiety amongst disabled colleagues. Overriding the mechanisms to protect these colleagues, by some managers, will only see the managed attrition of disabled staff within the Scottish Government.

It is disappointing that we are in a situation where the issue being presented is that some people work from home for convenience - when truly for some of us, it is because the impact on a health condition or disability is no choice at all.

May 6

After experiencing a lifetime of mental health issues, [redacted S.38(1)(b)].

That's a few years ago now, but it's permanently knocked my confidence. I don't feel comfortable using any of the disability schemes here because of it, even if we allegedly go by the social model of disability where adjustments are provided based on need, not on diagnosis. Of course, local arrangements within my team have always proven enough and my line managers have always been fantastic, but if I were in a situation where I was forced to come back into an office X amount of times a week then my mental health would be absolutely destroyed. Working is only accessible to me because I can work from home so much of the time. The irony of working in the [redacted S.38(1)(b)] - is not lost on me. Mandatory in office days are just asking me to pick between my health and my job.

May 16

While I fully appreciate limited office attendance presents difficulty for some staff (and in these circumstances their needs must be fully considered) I must put forward a different perspective on this issue.....many of our young people (and not exclusively young people) live in shared / cramped accommodation and simply don't have the facilities to work from home. Attending a largely deserted office, with no opportunity for face to face collaboration , mentoring , networking, support etc is a dispiriting start to an early career. Most older staff benefited from the in-person early career experience; the reluctance of many to attend the office and in so doing provide much needed face to face early career support (which simply is not the same as screen-sharing on Teams) seems to me an element of some more established staff 'pulling up the ladder behind them'. The Scottish Government's terms and conditions are second to none, to find 'like for like' in the private sector would be virtually impossible; that said any one of us is free to leave public sector at any time if opportunities for more flexible working/ better terms conditions / security of employment and pension can be found elsewhere.

May 8

This Harvard Business Review article came up in my suggested news stories yesterday and I found it very timely.

"The battle between companies pushing for a return to office (RTO) and employees who increasingly claim a right to work from home if they choose can easily be dismissed as overreaction on both sides: out-of-touch senior executives who don't understand that the world has changed versus pampered, entitled, and unmotivated employees. But the fury the debates produce suggests that there is a deeper problem.

In this article, we suggest that the outrage over workplace policies reflects a larger breakdown in the unspoken psychological contract employees thought they had with their organization—and specifically a growing divergence between employers and employees in their understanding of what is fair. To close this gap, we believe that employers need to move away from establishing formal workplace policies based on what's called the ethics of justice—a rational and one-size-fits-all way of thinking about fairness—to a more flexible, personalized approach based on the ethics of care."

The Workplace Psychological Contract Is Broken. Here's How to Fix It.

~20 minute read.

Mar 13

Unsure on the first point but on the second point I'd suggest:

Flexibility - Things like a 35 hour week, flexi time, ability to work from home etc are real incentives

Making a difference - No matter where you work in the public sector you're contributing to improving things (hopefully!) for the public.

Exposure to different roles/functions - Particularly important for younger people who maybe haven't decided what they want to do yet.

Dec 13, 2024

You're spot on [redacted S.38(1)(b)]. All SG buildings have been fully operational as per pre-pandemic for a long time now and therefore all the usual security protocols and procedures apply. I am still amazed at the number of SG staff that for some reason are under the impression that the SG estate is being run on some sort of casual open-house basis. For a while we used to have SG staff turn up at SH wanting to gain access without a pass. Often, their response to being asked why they didn't have a pass would be, "Because I work from home". I was oh so tempted to counter that with, " You haven't really thought that one through, have you?"

Search results - WFH

May 6

It's heartening reading these comments, as so often the loudest voices in hybrid working conversations come from the people who want to spend all their time in the office (to which I'll say: nobody is stopping you! go in, have a lovely time!). Like so many other folk here in the

comments, the opportunity to spend most of my time working from home has been completely life-changing. I've been doing so since 2018, prior to covid and prior to working at SG, so for me, it's a non-negotiable working condition. If they decide to put in mandatory in-office targets, I'll immediately be finding a new job, as there are plenty available (especially in the third sector) that don't have these arbitrary requirements.

There are no studies that I've seen (and as someone who implemented the 100:80:100 four-day working week and a WFH policy at my last job, I've read A LOT of them) that show that forcing people into an office increases productivity - in fact, it often has the opposite effect, especially when the team isn't based out of the same location so people are schlepping into an office just to sit on Teams calls.

I also really don't think you can call yourself a modern, inclusive, person-centred workplace and then force your employees into an office for no reason other than "we have expensive buildings."

May 6

I know some colleagues who don't actually live in Scotland anymore, so are they going to be still WFH full time? If so, we should be given that option too. They are not going to travel up for England a few times a week to come into the office are they. As already stated WFH means less traffic on the roads, less green house gases and omissions and less travel expenses too. What is not to like?!

May 7

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] it is basic logic that I can work longer and achieve more when WFH. The time spent commuting is "dead" time of zero value.

May 7

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] Thank you. I see from the new PCS email that it only applies to core SG and public bodies are exempted for now, but this is as I feared: the aim is to slowly roll back WFH until we're back in the office 100%. Covid forced employers to give up control and now they want it back.

[redacted S.38(1)(b)], yes I can see the update from NRS in the Noticeboard regarding this.

May 16

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] the current policy is centred around "business need and the need of the individual".

(links are included below but no doubt subject to change)

Hybrid working

If someone prefers to work in the office, e.g. shared/cramped accommodation, then they can do so. The current policy actively encourages the individual to work with their team to find their balance.

Hybrid working

And Managers are actively encouraged to discuss with and support their team, for example on: how the workplace is to be used, for example for one-to-ones and team events

Hybrid working

So, if a member of the team feels there is a need for them to have someone in the office with them, that is a point of discussion. It could be a "business need". A failure on the part of their Line Manager or wider Team to support that individual is something that should not be tolerated.

I would be very surprised - and annoyed - if there are new starts in the Scot Gov who are being abandoned to WfH with no support from their LM or wider Team. But if that is happening it's a situation that is unacceptable and should be dealt with.

But what isn't necessary is for someone in VQ to attend in-person for two days a week just in case someone else elsewhere in the building has no one to talk to.

We shouldn't have a hybrid working policy change driven by, e.g.:

Karen complaining that she's "lonely in the office with no one to talk to"; or.

Cecil saying "I miss being able to overhear people's comments in the open plan office"; or

Farquaad lamenting "it makes me sad to walk through my work area and see all the empty desks".

AFAIK, no one has ever said "see thon Jimmy, and his WfH, he never get's his work done, never answers an email, and never comes in to the Office to satisfy a Business Need". But if Jimmy is the problem, deal with him.

May 16

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] It's an interesting thought you have on the topic. Im not sure I have heard staff members in SSS say that the office is quiet! I find open plan office working difficult, but do enjoy seeing colleagues, although equally I like to face to face on teams with colleagues too so I have never felt lonely when WFH. Full time working in the office is open to negotiation by every staff member as it stands. I think the issue is for both long standing employees and new ones that there was a very different approach to hybrid working for us all by necessity. My mental health was in great shape and my sick leave was down to nil as I was able to hunker down avoiding bugs [redacted S.38(1)(b)]. There are many colleagues I know who enjoy the workplace and come in more often than the ask, there are others who struggle deeply. Any change should

be thoroughly thought through with negotiation and consideration that we dont have to return to pre pandemic working - presenteeism does not make a happy and productive work force if you can do the job with less stress and more productively from home. :-)

May 16

Also, in case some people didn't know it exists, there is currently a "Hybrid working conversation template" to help teams with their own arrangements.

One of the standing pieces of guidance is:

"Your manager will set out the business requirements for your role detailing which tasks are capable of being done from home and when, for what purposes and how frequently you will be required to attend an SG workplace, e.g. accompanying ministers on visits or to Parliament; meeting face-to-face with stakeholders; collaborating with the team face-to-face on a regular basis; supporting new staff in their induction or in training."

So no one in the area should be feeling excluded, forced to WfH if they didn't want to, and should definitely not be missing out on any face to face collaboration, mentoring, networking, or support.

May 20

Truly sad to learn this terrible news. I was [redacted S.38(1)(b)] line manager when he first joined SG in [redacted S.38(1)(b)] and he was a big part of our team as we battled lockdown and WFH for the first time. I was so pleased when he moved on from our team for [redacted S.38(1)(b)] which was delighted with. A terrible shame for [redacted S.38(1)(b)] to have passed away at such a young age

May 22

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] I had the honour of being [redacted S.38(1)(b)] line manager in [redacted S.38(1)(b)] after you. His knowledge and experience of WFH was such an asset and he really helped the team connect and come together socially and as well as through work. As others have said, he cared about people. His colleagues attending his [redacted S.38(1)(b)] is testament to the friends he made and the impact he had across all the teams he worked with. I managed to see [redacted S.38(1)(b)] but unfortunately not [redacted S.38(1)(b)].

Dec 12, 2024

Restart number 2 seems to have a positive effect for me. Hearing from my team that its affecting people wfh as well as in office

Jan 24

Is anyone aware of any guidance regarding WFH and risks such as power cuts out?

Jan 20

Question

Does VQ run a central stationery store like AQ5?

A WFH colleague is needing a couple of notepads and as Lyreco orders have to be £30 minimum and don't deliver to home addresses, i was wondering if there was any store of notepads in VQ where he could pick up some.

Can you buy your own and reclaim on expenses?

Feb 27

https://engage.cloud.microsoft/main/org/gov.scot/groups/eyJfdHlwZSI6Ikdyb3VwIiwiaWQiOiI1OTc0NDIwNjg0OSJ9

Join the Hybrid Lunch Time Walk!

A new group created to encourage the people of SG to get moving, and encourage an active and healthy lifestyle, particularly when WFH.

May 9

This was a great read, [redacted S.38(1)(b)] - thanks for sharing. It really encapsulates how I feel about the situation. That transactional contract of "I show up and work and you pay me for it" hasn't really ever been in place for millennials, in a sense, as we have a far lower standard of living than our parents. If we spend 35+ hours a week at work, but still have no disposable income and will likely not be able to retire until we're above 70 (if the retirement age keeps going up and up, as it likely will), and many of us still can't purchase a house with our salary, then why is it so unreasonable for employees to ask for something like WFH, a 4 day week, etc etc, which makes life a tiny bit less miserable for us? (And that's not even delving into how vital the option to WFH is for our disabled colleagues, colleagues with caring responsibilities, etc).

The responses to the hybrid working questions in the Ask ET session yesterday, which essentially amounted to "we hear what you're saying, but ¯_(ツ)_/¯," were really disappointing. I went from feeling like I worked for a company that cares about its employees to doubting that it's true.

Mar 3

3% of the total workforce doesn't sound that much to me, specially when it includes people who might be in the process of moving house, plus marine workers who don't need to have a permanent address in Scotland to work on a boat based here. Plus there'll be people who may WFH or hybrid and have a partner and/or children or other caring responsibilities that can't just be uprooted for their job. Sounds like a storm in a teacup to me!

Apr 28

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] one of the good things about WFH is that sometimes I just open my kitchen door and stand there for a bit feeling the breeze and soaking up the outside world! A real reset!

Search results - Working from home

May 8

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] Thanks that saved me typing a lot of text.

It is kind of a joke tbh. So much money is wasted on contractors and failed IT projects. Even when they don't outright fail, they are rarely on time, on budget and fit for purpose [redacted S.38(1)(b)]. Yet senior managers are worried about people working from home? Makes no sense to me. Let me check the data and the reasons.... Oh wait. Just some management speak which I couldn't disagree with more. Great.

May 7

I joined SG in 2022. I made it clear when offered the role that I was concerned about being forced to go into the office regularly in the future. I was given assurance at the time that this would not happen. I explained that commuting to Glasgow regularly would cause a financial strain and create major childcare issues for me and again, I was given reassurance this would not happen. I have [redacted S.38(1)(b)] and associated [redacted S.38(1)(b)] and it is not a coincidence that since I started working from home my mental health and wellbeing has never been better. I am really concerned about being forced to go into the office on a regular basis, even more so as I am in a team of 3, and both my colleagues are based in Edinburgh. Therefore,

forcing me to go to Glasgow is essentially pointless. I am so stressed out about this already and there hasn't even been an official announcement yet

May 16

To be honest [redacted S.38(1)(b)], it feels quite glib to say "well, leave the public sector and go find a different job if you're so upset" when we're seeing hundreds and hundreds of colleagues present their very valid concerns about this new policy (and that's just the ones who feel secure enough in their position to voice their concerns!). It's absolutely not the response we should have when fighting for better working conditions as it doesn't hold employers to account. ScotGov should be striving to be an inclusive, modern workplace, and in 2025, when the majority of us have been largely working from home for over five years, that means it shouldn't be imposing arbitrary rules about presenteeism.

Most of us are here because we want to be public servants. Telling people to leave rather than fight for slightly better, more flexible working conditions will result in a haemorrhaging of talent that I frankly don't think ScotGov can afford.

Dec 17, 2024

Looking for advise on ordering home working monitor?

Hi All,

Looking to order a Monitor for a member of my team to use working from home. The recommended equipment - HP Elite E24 G5 Monitor is about £89.00 but it is out of stock on the oracle system. The next model closest to that is the HP E24u G5 but it is £145.00.

There is a few other options between the £80-£90 region but can anyone advise if these are suitable and /or recommend any others models that you may have previously ordered or used?

Feb 13

Its not my habit but working from home means that my Furry Little HR advisor checks in on me in the morning and then has his afternoon nap next to me in the afternoon :-) Really helps me to maintain focus and mental health in the workplace...

Attached image of cat

May 14

This week is M.E Awareness Week!

We encourage everyone (especially if you manage someone with an energy limiting condition like M.E) to have a look at our presentation, which includes useful links to further resources.

While this week of awareness is not about hybrid working, in light of the ongoing discussions about hybrid and the impact this has on members lives, here are some statistics gathered from the energy limiting conditions network that colleagues living with M.E are part of:

- 90% of individuals with energy limiting conditions say hybrid working is very important to how they manage their energy limiting conditions
- 76% said working from home has a positive impact on their health
- 84% said office working has a negative impact.

The majority of comments indicate that an increase in office working would be detrimental to people with energy limiting conditions health, life and ability to work, including common comments reflecting a need to leave the workforce, reduce their hours and be less social/ do activities outside of work with family (important to note this is not just social activities like partying, this could mean having a conversation, playing with a child etc) , having an impact on their mental health and risk of core morbidities.

In a world where you can be anything, be kind and inclusive

Feb 11

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]. Your Line Manager or management chain does not need to be in the building to gain access.

We have permission to use TEAMS. So for example - if you came to SAH and your manager is working from home or in another building. My team would TEAMS call your manager (via video call). Once connected. My colleague would ask if you can come beside him / her so your manager can confirm who you are.

We would complete our paper work indicating that the confirmation was done through TEAMS.

Jan 6

I am personally benefitting from the 35 hour week by taking a slightly longer lunch, which allows me to take some time away from my desk to go for a walk (weather permitting), particularly when working from home. I come back after my break, feeling refreshed & ready to face whatever the afternoon has in store for me. The shorter working week is terrific as far as I am concerned.