

PHIND employer focus group 1

[Transcription starts at 0:10:00].

AN: There's growing evidence that the working at home environment is a high risk setting for sitting. So, we really would like to hear your input, to help us understand the challenges while working from home. And help us identify where there are opportunities to break up sitting while working at home, and support teams in order to do that. Next slide, please, Sarah. So we're looking to structure our discussion, really around three questions. And I'm going to hand over to Claire, to kick-start with the first question, is that okay, Claire?

CF: Yeah, thanks, Ailsa. Yeah, so just following on from what Ailsa's just been saying. We're going to work through three questions with you, now. And the first of those is just in relation to the information that you got in the infographic. And thinking about your experiences of, you know, managing a team, and working with the team, who may be working at home. Just getting your thoughts at this stage on that information, really. So as Ailsa said, you know, feel free to raise your hand in the toolbar at the top, type into the chat, or even, you know, just physically raise your hand, and then we'll hopefully get everyone's contribution. Anyone brave enough to kick us off with their thoughts? Yeah, go for it, Rory.

Rory: I was just going to ask if you could put the infographic back on for a second? I don't know if it's possible, or if it's possible to split the screen so we can see both at the same time? Sorry if that's...

CF: Yeah. Sarah, are you able, even, to scroll back up again to that slide? I think that's a good idea. So just, any immediate thoughts, from looking at this information, in the context of working with your team? Yeah, Charlotte, come on ahead.

Charlotte: Yeah, I'm quite happy to go first. I think because my team are an operational team, if they were traditionally in the office, there's a lot of moving around, you know, they're going to site, they're visiting properties, they're, you know, doing all the normal kind of office stuff as well, about printers, and meetings, and what have we. So I'm very conscious that the days they work from home have been reclassified, almost, as admin days, and kind of, you know, project days, and things that are all very PC based. So, whereas, in the past format, there was a lot more movement. Now, almost by definition, working from home means that they don't move from behind the screen. So, it's very clear that there's a divide between the kind of activities that would normally happen for them on campus days, compared to the work from home days.

CF: So, your team have had quite a big transformation, then, like maybe, from quite a lot of movement on campus, to quite a radical transformation, then, from working at home?

Charlotte: Absolutely. And you know, I think, prior to COVID, there was always a few that, it wasn't possible for an operational team of managers to work from home, you know, by definition, they were operational, and therefore they had to be on the ground, you know, and be at the coal-face all the time. So there's been a massive change of attitudes, and understanding that there is a large part of the job that can be delivered from home, because it is PC based.

CF: Great, thank you. Anyone else want to follow up on those thoughts from Charlotte? Yeah, Aria, go on ahead.

Aria: Yeah, I think, like my work is mostly like an office based, kind of, computer based job, to a large extent, before COVID anyway. But I think, even in that context, like, nothing on the infographic surprised me. Because we've talked about that in my team before, that even at the very start of the pandemic we were noticing, like, you know, even just kind of walking between meetings, and like you say, walking to the printer, walking to the kitchen to make a cup of tea. Like, all of that activity was just so much less. And you know, we would potentially travel quite a lot to kind of visit the offices of the organisations we work with, or they would come here. And I think, there's definitely kind of a lot more, like, back to back video calls, without the kind of excuse to get up and move in-between, which is literally kind of walking back to your desk, or walking to the meeting room. So, yeah, it's an interesting dynamic, even in the context of a fairly sedentary context to start with.

CF: But your team obviously had an awareness, like you've developed an awareness that things have changed in terms of your movement patterns?

Aria: Yeah, I mean, we all, like, literally felt it in our bodies, really quickly. So, that we were all commenting on kind of being like achy, and having a sore back, and these kinds of things, like, very early on in the pandemic, so yeah.

CF: That's really interesting, thank you. I think, Sophia, were you next with your hand up there, do you want to come in?

Sophia: Yeah, I'm more than happy to. I agree with all of what's being said, as well. I think there's a bit of a distinction, though, between my role, and also my team's role. So we're all office based, anyway, in a teaching office. So quite a lot of the work is just sitting at a PC, anyway, so we've just moved that from being in the office, to being at home for that. So I would say, my team, what's changed for them is, obviously not having a commute in the morning, where they're active. And then also, not having the lunch break, or the walk to the kitchen. They tend to find at home – like, I'm currently sitting in my kitchen just now, so I've not got very far to go if I want anything. Whereas, in the office, you had to walk along the corridor, same going for

the loo, or whatever. So we found that, just through chatting, that that's been quite a difference. It's a smaller, your home environment is smaller than your working environment.

What we also did, pre-COVID, was we organised some classes that staff could join into as well, in conjunction with some staff at *[organisation name removed]*. So that's obviously had to stop as well, because we're not all on campus. So I would say that was a really nice, working together in a social kind of way, rather than talking work with your colleagues, which was really nice, which we've lost. So, otherwise, I would say that they kind of probably sit for about the same length of time as previously, other than the moving around for making coffee, going to the loo, commuting, et cetera. However, I'd say, my job has changed a lot more, because I used to travel to meetings, which I no longer do. I sit in the same position.

You don't, you also don't factor in travel time between meetings, anymore. Where, I was based at *[location removed]*, and quite a lot of my meetings were at *[location removed]*. In the summer, I had to go to *[location removed]*. So I had to factor in travel time. I don't do that. So I end up, some days, in back to back meetings, which is quite wearing, because you don't move, and you just sit in the same position. So, yeah.

CF: Yeah, so your experience as an individual is maybe slightly different from your team, at the minute?

Sophia: Yeah, I think so.

CF: Uh-huh.

Sophia: But just because they don't go to many meetings, so their job is, their job has not changed hugely, where my job has, where I'm just sitting on Teams calls, rather than seeing people, and moving around, room to room.

CF: Okay, great, thank you. I think it was Lily, was next?

Lily: I'm happy to go, but I don't think it was me, actually.

CF: Oh, right, okay. Was it you were next, then, Rory, do you want to come in? Just keeping track of all the hands.

Rory: Yeah, sure, yeah. You know, again like some of the other comments, I'm not surprised by the infographic. I think, you know, because me and my team, we work in health care, I think perhaps we possibly have a slightly raised awareness of some of these conditions, and illnesses, and diseases. And certainly, the *[organisation name removed]* is trying to combat that, and was trying to combat that before COVID. I suppose, the biggest change for us, I mean, we are, we're a small team, I manage a team with only two other people in it. But we used to spend a lot of time travelling, because we try and cover all of *[organisation name removed]*, all the different boards, and go and meet clinicians in those boards. So, although COVID meant, for us,

we were all working from home, in a funny way it actually reduced the amount of sitting time.

Because we used to spend a lot of time sitting in cars, and on buses, and on trains, travelling to these meetings and appointments, and we don't have to do that anymore. And I suppose instead, we're sort of sitting at a desk all day. And it would be interesting to know, I suppose, if I tried to calculate what the difference is between the two, whether it was actually better or worse before COVID. I suppose, maybe that's a whole other research project. I guess for us, you know, the way the team's adapted is...my other two team members are both very sporty, I mean, one of them coaches kayaking at the weekend, the other one goes to the gym all the time. And in a strange sort of way, being in lockdown meant they were able to do more of that, because they could fit it in more easily.

So, one of my colleagues, she used to go to the gym, maybe once a week when we were based in the office, because she couldn't fit it in during the day. But now, she goes to the gym, or goes for a long walk, in the middle of the day, instead. So she probably doesn't sit as much. And the same for the other one. I think, so there's kind of pluses and negatives on both sides, if you see what I mean, and it would be interesting to see how it balances out, you know. Maybe there's actually less sitting time before COVID, or maybe there's more, yeah.

CF: Yeah, I think those are really interesting points, Rory. And just, like, we're obviously focusing on the working day, but the influence of what you do during the working day, and your time, obviously also has an impact on your leisure time, which you know, you're finding with your team. Can I just come back to what you said at the very start about *[organisation name removed]* awareness of these messages, and so on? Like, do you think, within the *[organisation name removed]*, is there much awareness of the topic of sitting, and sedentary behaviour? Or is it the kind of broader health conditions that you were eluding to?

Rory: I think there is an increased awareness in sitting behaviour, because even before COVID, I can think of, you know, a good dozen people who, either with the support of the *[organisation name removed]*, or because they'd taken matters into their own hands, had tried to change their sitting, I don't know, regime. So I know one who'd brought in one of those big exercise balls, and he was sitting on that. And I know, other people had started to ask for standing desks, and the *[organisation name removed]* had started to receive a lot more requests for standing desks, even before COVID. I mean, I work in the sort of innovations side of *[organisation name removed]*, and I suppose, perhaps people there have more of a mindset about trying things that are new, and experimental, and you know, taking a risk. As opposed to somebody like a staff nurse on a ward, who, I don't know, is probably on their feet all day, anyway, and probably doesn't sit enough, in fact.

So I think it varies in different parts of the [organisation name removed], I don't think there's a joined-up message coming from the top down for all [organisation name removed] staff that, you know, you should think about these, you should think about these illnesses and conditions, think about how much you sit. I don't think we're there yet.

CF: Great, okay, that's really interesting, thank you. Lily, over to you, now.

Lily: Hi there. Yeah, no, so fascinating just to hear what people were saying. Sophia, I really agree with the travel time in-between, I've really noticed not having that travel time in-between meetings. And also for my line report, also her not having that travel time in-between meetings, as well. The thing that I wanted to pick up, with what I can see in the infographic there, is about the mental health impact of sitting more. And that concerns me, because what I do is, when I'm, if I'm feeling concerned for my line report, I'll put in an online meeting with her. Where I will sit, and we'll both sit and talk, and I'm like, I want you to feel better, cognitively, whilst I don't necessarily think about kind of the physical impact of sitting, and you know. So I think there's something for me around how we connect with each other, and how we share we care, around the connection.

Again, we've got a team meeting next week, and we're going to sit for two hours to show we care, rather than physically showing we care, in a different way. So it's very real, this, I would say, for me, around all of this stuff.

CF: Great, thank you. And Charlotte, do you want to quickly come in, and then we'll move onto the next question?

Charlotte: Yeah, sure. I really just wanted to throw something in that I've become aware of, and that is, because you know, we are now a Teams society, if you like, there's almost an expectation that if you're working from home, you're always available. So, in the past, if you went to speak with someone and they weren't in their office, you would just assume that they had another meeting, or you know, they were out for lunch, or whatever. But there's almost a cultural thing that I'm seeing where, well you know, you're expected to be at the end of that call, and accept all these meetings, or Teams calls, at any time. So, you know, that's something that I'm quite conscious of is, well where are they, you know, it's that kind of attitude.

CF: Yes, the pressure has gone up a notch, I think...

Charlotte: Yes.

CF: ...throughout this process, yeah, I think that's definitely something we all need to be mindful of. Ailsa, just in the interests of time, will I pass back to you, now, for the next question? Thanks, everyone.

AN: Thanks, everyone. I think you may well have done my job here, in terms of the next question, in terms of, what influences this. I'll just summarise some

of what I've heard, and then if anyone has anything else, that would be great to hear. Charlotte, you highlighted that there's actually been a sort of change of attitude in your area, and that working at home is okay, and that's an acceptable part of our working processes. And I think that's something that we're definitely hearing elsewhere, as well. But we're losing that incidental movement, and teams are not necessarily getting up and moving, and getting their commute at the beginning of the day. And travelling to meetings, if we're on campus, moving around the campus has been lost.

Back to back meetings, and an expectation that we're at the end of our camera, or on Teams, if we're needed. And the other thing I picked up, I think, Rory, you talked about how some of your team were almost compensating for sitting all day, by being able to be more active, at different points of the day, whether it's in the middle of the day, or the end of the day. So you guys have done a brilliant job of almost answering the second question, already. But is there anything anyone else wanted to bring around what's influencing, and particularly your team, who you work with, and their experiences, what do you think is influencing whether they're sitting, their sitting behaviour?

Charlotte: I have had some feedback from the team saying that, their working day has stretched, as well, because it's just kind of, there's not a home time anymore. So there is a bit of an inclination to work longer hours, or to go back in, in the evening, after tea, and this sort of stuff. So, you know, that's another message that we've seen from the work from home groups, is that there's less definition of start and finishing times.

AN: Yeah. And I can see your hand is up, Rory, but I'm just going to do a wee follow-up question on that. Because it's really interesting, because we're hearing that as well from team members, and those who are being line managed. I'm just wondering where that expectation is coming from, that the day is elongated, and that you're available all the time? Does anyone have a sense of where that could be coming from?

Charlotte: Certainly, for my area, it's purely down to the pressure of the job. As it happened throughout COVID, so at the moment we've got an enormous spike of positive cases within student accommodation. And so the emails are coming in 24/7 saying, there's another positive case, there's another positive case. And, you know, there's just this incredible pressure to try and manage the fallout from all of that. So it has come because of a whole raft of new requirements, as we've worked through the pandemic.

AN: Uh-huh. And we keep saying it's going to lessen off and end, but it certainly isn't, and we're constantly in that reactive response at work, isn't it?

Charlotte: Yes.

AN: Thanks, Charlotte. Aria?

Aria: Yeah, sorry, I was just going to come in on that question of the kind of, where's the pressure coming from. I don't know if it's necessarily additional pressure so much as, kind of the blurring of spaces. I think, having your work being in your, like, home space, means that it's much less noticeable. I think, like, when you're in an office, you're like, right okay, I need to go home to have my dinner, or like, you know, there's a change of space. And I think, when it's all in the same place, that kind of line between, like, okay, when do I close my laptop and decide I'm not looking at the screen again, it's like, it's a much finer line. So, you know, I think, yes, there's additional work, potentially, for some teams, but I'm not sure that's the main reason why it's harder to, like, cut it off.

AN: Thanks, Aria, yeah, that's really interesting. Rory, can I bring you in here?

Rory: Yeah, I was just going to kind of echo Charlotte point, there, you know, about the day being elongated. I think we really need to look and see whether people are actually sitting for longer, because the day is longer, or whether people are simply sitting at times of days when they wouldn't normally sit. Like, half seven in the evening, you're sat at your desk doing emails, when you wouldn't normally do that when you're in the office, because you'd have left long since. I think the pressure thing is important, too, I mean, I know, we started to use Zoom, even before COVID, we were using it to keep in touch with each other. But it's so tempting on Zoom to go on, and you can see with the sort of traffic light system, which of your colleagues are actually online, and it's really tempting to just jump into a quick call with them, or message them, because you know they're sat by their computer.

Whereas before that, you know, I wouldn't have dreamt of contacting anyone during the day like that, I would have emailed at the end of the day, because I know most of them will be out on the road somewhere, or in meetings, or doing something else. So yeah, you get a little bit, a bit too familiar, if you like, you know, and you're able to see where people are. And I don't think it's a good thing, necessarily, that you can sort of check on each other all the time, and feel that you can pull people in just whenever you want to talk to them.

AN: Thank you. And we'll go on in a second to try to think about, well how can we support teams to overcome some of these issues. I think it was Sophia, and then, Lily?

Sophia: Yeah, just to quickly follow in from that. I totally agree, and I think as well, a lot of people have changed the hours that they worked, to fit in with their lifestyle, if they've got caring responsibilities, et cetera. And I feel that, I had conversations with my team early on about this, because they were getting emails later on and feeling that they needed to respond to them. But then, I was saying, no you don't, you know, that is, your working day is your working day, and that's not the same for everybody. So I was trying to be quite, I've been trying to be very firm with my team, that they work their hours, and they don't do extra, because I thought it was really important for

their own wellbeing. That, yes, we're getting extra pressures, but sometimes we actually have to say, no we can't do it. Because there's no point in then impacting their own wellbeing, and then it has a bigger knock-on effect, that you have that member of staff off for longer.

So, yeah, and also, just to add onto that as well. At the start of COVID, it was starting to transition into Spring/Summer, so I actually encouraged a lot of staff to take extra time off at lunchtime, if they wanted to extend their hour, just so they could go a longer walk at lunch, or do some sort of activity, while it was actually daylight, because I thought that was actually nicer. But yeah, I've been very adamant about sticking to your working hours, and not doing more to look after yourself, because I think that's very important.

AN: Thanks, Sophia. And we will, I'll bring in Lily, then Aria, and then we'll move onto the solutions. But it's really interesting, that sort of open communication, expectation, being clear about expectations, and supporting the wellbeing of your staff. Lily?

Lily: Yeah, so I think, mine kind of builds on that to say, I think what we don't have at the moment is, a policy. And I don't mean just an organisational policy, but you know, a national policy as well, of what do we mean by, working from home, now, what are the expectations. I think managers have an important role to play, but most of my meetings are not with my line report, most of my meetings are with colleagues in other departments, and outside of the *[organisation name removed]* as well. So I think that there's a need to support managers have good conversations, like it sounds like Sophia is. But I think there's also something that has to be a wider piece around that cultural element.

And I'm furiously trying to find it, but I think there was some work by someone called, Evan DeFilippis, who looked at, that actually there's been more meetings put in people's diaries since lockdown, than pre-lockdown. And it just makes you go, are we creating more job demands for people, than we had before, as well. I'll try and put it in when I find it.

AN: That sounds really interesting. And I think the perception that we're hearing from everyone is, they do feel like they're having more meetings, and looking at a computer screen. Aria, please?

Aria: Yeah, I just wanted to kind of echo the point that was raised earlier about, like, the kind of back to back meetings, and the lack of travel time, meaning, like, you don't have a break, because it's not, it's kind of like almost, you don't have an excuse to make it shorter, or start later, or give yourself that half hour in-between. But I think the point on, about having more meetings, like interestingly, I definitely feel that for myself, but I think also, there was an element of, especially at the start of lockdown, of us putting in more connection points with each other. Because people were feeling isolated, and they were feeling like, okay, well I'm not crossing paths with someone in the corridor, I'm not seeing them across the office, so I need to, like, put

in, even if it's like a 15 minute tea-break, like, that's my way of connecting with my colleagues.

So, actually, that kind of, the organised nature of, like, having to structure your connection points, meaning, again, that you're, yeah, having more meetings, and doing those sitting down, quite a lot of the time. So, yeah, I think that kind of, it's kind of a double impact of, the isolation, and the lack of the incidental connections, meaning that there's an increase in that as well.

AN: Yeah. And we don't want to lose that connection, but I guess it's thinking about other ways to have that connection, that maybe take us away from our desk, or take us away from the screen. Can we go, move onto the final question, and I'm going to just pass back to Claire, if that's okay?

CF: Thanks, Ailsa. Yeah, I think we've already had some ideas in the discussion about, you know, how you would support your team to break up your sitting. And I guess it's, you know, is it from the very broad, like what Lily suggesting, you know, potentially some national level policies, or institutional level policy, or you know, are there more local ideas. And is there anything else you want to bring in at this point that you think you may have already tried, or something that you might try going forward, that you think, just based on what we've been discussing, might be an idea? Yeah, go ahead, Lily.

Lily: So I'm maybe going to use info that I heard from you guys, which was...so I've been involved with this project before...I think something that you'd come up with was, talking about the guilt of stepping away. And I've used that expression with colleagues, now, and also with my line report, trying to just acknowledge that people feel guilty, sometimes, about sitting, and needing to sit, and sitting between meetings, as well. And I found that really powerful, just using that word in that way, as well. So I wonder if it's a kind of behavioural element of that kind of discussion of culture, that we need to be using, and building on, as well.

CF: Great.

Lily: But I'm totally poaching that from you guys, so I can't take credit for that.

CF: That's absolutely fine. No, it's nice to hear that you're considering that now. And I think, it's a strong emotion that, as people are working at home, just as you say, that stepping away, and not feeling guilty. Sophia, do you want to come in? And I see, Aria is putting in a comment.

Sophia: Yeah, I definitely think there is a guilt from walking away, because it feels like Big Brother is watching you all the time, you know, as your little icon is showing green, that you're available. So, one thing I also did at the beginning was made sure that everyone took a lunch break. Because I know that we were all very bad for that. And pre-COVID, a lot of people, including myself, just sat in the office for that lunch break, didn't go

anywhere. So I tried to encourage everyone, put that time in your diary, you're entitled to it, you don't get paid for your lunch break, so go use it, and encourage them. And that was the point where, at the beginning, we weren't really allowed out much, everything was shut, so use that as an opportunity to go for a walk at lunchtime, or just get some fresh air, even if you don't want to walk very far.

And I found it, I think they're slowly stopping doing this, over the months, but it's trying to say, like, you are allowed to go away, and reinforcing that, take your lunch break. And it's, you're allowed a break in the afternoon, go for a walk again if you want, or go get some fresh air. I'm a firm believer of getting fresh air, that's probably come across. Yeah, I think that's, I've also invested myself in a standing desk. I know that they can be quite expensive, so it's maybe not something that everyone can do. But I've found that revolutionary. So I spend half of my day standing, and half of my day sitting. Which, even though you're still at your computer, it makes a huge difference, that you're not sitting down.

CF: And do your team use standing desks, like is that an option?

Sophia: It's not an option at home. I guess if they wanted to get one, we could go through the process. But I don't think our department would be in a position to fund standing desks for everybody.

CF: Okay.

Sophia: But, yeah.

CF: Great, thank you. And Aria is just saying about, you know, the use of a single device, and using the same laptop at work and at home. And again, I guess, just blurring the lines. And presenteeism, like we've definitely heard a lot about that, feeling the need to prove they're working. And yeah, I think that's really a recurring theme that we're definitely hearing. Rory, do you want to come in there?

Rory: Yeah, just the point about standing desks. I mean, you know, I've been very fortunate, the organisation I work for isn't very big, and our chief exec has been incredibly supportive in buying things, you know, for us to keep us going. Everything from sort of coffee and tea survival packs, and things like that, to house plants, you know. The first lockdown, there was a news article saying, house plants, you know, help with your mental health, so he said, if anyone wants a house plant, just buy one, put it on expenses. And he offered to buy standing desks for people, and anything else ergonomic that you might need to support your home working. And that's what I've got now, I'm standing up doing this.

That offer was made to everyone, and I put it to my team, I said, do you want a standing desk as well, and they said, yeah, we like the idea, but they take up a lot of space, and we don't really have the space. Because they're sitting at a kitchen table. So I think they would have it, if they had the space

to do it, and I think that's a problem a lot of people have. You know, you're working at a tiny kitchen table, or a dining table, you don't have a home office, necessarily. So it's not that people don't want to use it, or try them, it's more that it doesn't fit in, or you know, they don't have the space for it, I guess.

CF: Yeah, that's interesting feedback, and it just depends on individual circumstances, really. But yeah, I definitely want a house plant on expenses, I like that idea. Anyone else want to come in with any other solutions that you think might work, or something that you've tried and it didn't work? I'm just looking, Charlotte is typing – I think we should be specific about some of the things that are okay to do, go and hang out the washing, let the dog out. Yes, I would agree, Charlotte, and I think that's what we're definitely looking towards, is giving people some of those ideas, that it doesn't necessarily have to be exercise. So those are great. And Aria, do you want to come in there, and just give us a little bit of your feedback?

Aria: Yeah, I was just going to comment on the things that have worked, and this was in the very specific context of, I was delivering a training course, and it was a whole day. And so we were, like, really conscious of the fact that that would be really intense for people. So we kind of put in quite a lot of breaks, but we actually made some of them, like, disco breaks. So we had, like, music, and we encouraged people to turn their cameras off, and get up, and like, move their bodies. And, you know, we don't know if anyone did actually do that, but like, it was kind of a fun way of just saying, like, we acknowledge the fact that people need to move their bodies, because they're going to be sitting at a screen all day. And this is kind of like, you know, a little hint to, like, nudge them towards doing that. And people fed back that they really enjoyed that. Even like, as I say, I don't know if they did go and dance round their living rooms or not.

But, you know, that's much harder to do, I think, in a day to day setting. But I think, I guess the thing that I really wish I could implement as like a kind of policy across, even like my office, is like, 45 minutes, or something that, like, encourages that gap. Because at the moment it feels like, I don't have an excuse, I don't have a reason to say, no, I don't want to have an hour meeting with you, because I've got another hour meeting, and then another hour meeting. You know, it's kind of, it's much harder to do that on an individual basis.

CF: Uh-huh. And do you feel that pressure to have those hour long meetings is coming from your employer, or...?

Aria: It's just a cultural thing, I think. It's just like the default option is, half an hour, or an hour. And you know, there's not necessarily, we're not, like, planning it to be like a full 60 minutes, necessarily, but it's just like, that's the default, it's the easy, that's what Outlook sets up for you.

CF: Uh-huh, yeah, why does it have to be like that, yeah, definitely. And Lily, do you want to come in there, and then we'll move on?

Lily: Yeah, so just a couple of things. I know the *[organisation name removed]*, for example, I believe that they have a day where – it's maybe a Friday – where they don't encourage meetings. And I know some departments do that, so *[organisation name removed]* try and have a break where they say, no meetings please across these hours. So I think there's things that departments can do. I think the other thing is, it's trying to encourage thinking, and how, where you can do good thinking. So in our role, I can be in a meeting, and responding to emails, but actually, I really need to do quite a lot of thinking as well, and where do I do that – can I get up and walk, can I encourage my line report to do that, can we do that in, you know, in Teams, and just come back at the end and talk about what our thoughts have brought us to as well. So I think there's some structural things, but I think, yeah, behavioural, I suppose, still.

CF: Uh-huh. So there's definitely examples of good practice, that we need to be aware of, I guess. And then, yes, I like that idea of, thinking time. Like, no one has really mentioned that before, that we all need time to reflect and process, and having that time, and how to integrate that time, I think is really interesting. So thank you, that's good comments from everyone. Right, I think, will we move on? Sarah, can you move me onto the next slide. So, over the last couple of months we have been working on looking at some of the literature around working in the office that's been published. And we've drawn out some things that worked in the office setting, and now we're trying to explore if they might work for people who are working at home. So we're interested to know, in your organisation, do you think these particular examples – and I'll talk through them – would work at home, with your teams?

So if we just start at the top. The first one about education, about sedentary behaviour, and health consequences, how do you think that would work for your team, as they're working at home? Anyone got any particular thoughts? Yeah, Rory, go on ahead.

Rory: I guess this makes me sort of slightly think of the, when you buy a packet of cigarettes, and it has those images on of the diseases that can happen to you if you smoke. I mean, it's shocking the first once or twice that you do it, but you become a bit immune to it. So I think, if you're going to educate people it has to be sort of, little and often. A bit like the prompts to break up sitting, you have to kind of jab, jab, jab. If you just dump information onto people, they'll take it in and they'll do it for a while, and then it'll probably slowly taper off. I think, but I'd be interested to know what other people think, if that's fair.

CF: Okay, thank you. Aria, do you want to come in?

Aria: Yeah, I think I'd kind of echo what Rory just said there. I think maybe the more powerful stuff is around, like, how much more people are sitting, now,

than they used to, and kind of being able to see that. Because I think, I mean, for my team at least, quite a lot of them, like, know instinctively that it's not, it doesn't feel good for them. Like, it's not so much that, like, a kind of stat around the increase in various diseases, or whatever, would necessarily have an impact on their day to day. And I think it's maybe more about the kind of regular prompts, and the kind of structural, cultural habit side of it, that would make the difference.

CF: Okay, great, thank you. Charlotte, do you want to come in?

Charlotte: Yeah, I was going to say, one of the things that I personally became aware of was, how few steps that I do when I'm working from home. So, have a Fitbit, and you know, you get your recognition for 250 steps in an hour, and how many of the nine hours in the day do you achieve. And some of my working from home days, I get zero. And my husband's retired, so he'll bring me a cup of tea, and I still don't need to get up. And, you know, I think, then when I come into the office and I see how many more steps I get done, and how many stars I get, then that becomes quite a visual thing. And I think, you know, we could encourage people to use pedometers, and use, you know, devices, to chart actually what's happening to them during the day, and how many steps they are or are not taking.

And sort of start to put a visual together, just to show what is happening, and try and tie that into the education that you've described. So that they understand that, actually, you've maybe had a very productive day, but all those hours sitting has been at a price.

CF: Yeah, I think those are great comments, Charlotte. And you're kind of covering all three points that we have on the slide. You know, thinking about giving people feedback, and in your case, in relation to steps, but you have an awareness from that of your sitting. And then, how we might sort of integrate some kind of regular prompting system, that does encourage people to break up their sitting. Does anyone have any other comments they want to bring in? I'm just looking at Aria comment – so using office health challenges to bring people in, around their commutes to work, and having a team target. And yeah, I think a lot, there's a lot to be gained from that, you know, collectively supporting each other, and coming together, I think is a really nice idea. Any other comments people want to bring in, in relation to prompting, or feedback, and how you could see it working with your team? Yeah, Rory, go on ahead.

Rory: It's just an idea. I mean, we've never actually done this, but I'd be interested to do this with my team, now, after this, you know, actually ask them, maybe on a weekly basis, you know, can you estimate how long you're sitting for. And maybe do, even like a little bit of a questionnaire, perhaps, and get them to give a weekly, or a daily figure, if it's possible. I don't know how easy that would be to do, but I think it would encourage people to think about it, even if they weren't logging the times all that accurately. That kind of sort of, you know, asking for feedback, I think that's a good idea, yeah.

CF: Yeah, I think it can be quite a big scary number, so yeah, it's interesting to think, like, do we think of it that way, or what, was it Charlotte was saying, about thinking about movement, and how best to get people to be aware of their behaviour. So, I think there's lots to think about there. Any other comments, or anything people want to bring in, in relation to any of these three? Yeah, go on ahead, Aria.

Aria: Yeah, I think for me, the regular prompt. That somehow, a kind of structural thing, that at least everyone in my immediate office was also sharing, in terms of how we set up meetings, and how we think about, kind of collectively, having regular prompts, would really help. Because I think one of the challenges is, when it comes down to the individual, it's hard to then kind of push back to other people that are asking for your time. Whereas, if it's something that we said, okay, the whole *[organisation name removed]* are doing this, or the whole of *[organisation name removed]* are doing this, then that makes it much more acceptable for everyone to kind of have that, like, breaking up the time thing.

CF: Yes, and I guess that links into what Rory saying about, you know, getting people aware. But also, that you're doing it collectively, as a team, and yeah, supporting each other with it. I think, any last comments, or shall we move on? Great. I think, Ailsa, will I hand back over to you at this stage?

AN: Thanks, Claire. Thanks, Sarah. Just really, to wrap up and let you know what our next steps are. And this has been a really fascinating discussion, and really great to hear your insights. You're our first group, we've been sort of looking at those who are managing teams, and it's really interesting to hear some of the initiatives that you've been having, and some ideas to take forward. We still have some more focus groups to do, and we're continuing to the end of February with that. And then, we will take some time to collate the findings from that, with a plan to run a workshop to bring anyone who would like to come back, to share some of the findings, and some of the proposed solutions. And I think we're looking at end of April, beginning of May, for that.

So we will keep in touch with you with updates around the work that we're doing. Unless you decide that you would rather we didn't, and please just get in touch with Sarah, if you don't want to be contacted again. But we'll sort of assume you're still interested, and keep you informed with what we're doing as we're moving it forwards. Next slide, please, Sarah. Yeah, just really again, a massive thank you, we appreciate, and can hear how busy everybody is, so thank you for giving us this hour. We are still recruiting participant for some of our focus groups, so if you have any colleagues who are also managing teams, who you think may be interested, it would be great to hear from them, please do pass on, probably, Sarah's details, is the best way to do that.

And we have a couple of minutes, I'm happy for you to go and take that time to stand up, stretch, and move around. And we've got some exciting things happening. We've just found out we've got some funding that we're

going to use. I'll just tell you briefly about this, because it came out of some of the discussions we've had with colleagues. Looking at developing a plug-in for...thank you, Sarah deserves all the applause...for teams, to sort of prompt consideration about whether we do need to schedule an hour long meeting. So, not stopping you from doing that, but just prompting that, okay you have a back to back meeting, could you make this 50 minutes and make use of that time. So, that's one of the initiatives we're going to take forward, and we'll keep you guys informed in relation to that as well.

So, please do take the last couple of minutes to...unless anyone wants to say anything, please...hopefully, you don't have a meeting at three, but get a chance to move around. And thank you, again, this has been such a great focus group, we really appreciate your time, and your input, so, thank you.

Participant: Thanks very much, bye, bye.

Participant: Thank you.

CF: Thanks, guys, bye.

Participant: Bye.

Participant: Thanks, everyone, bye, bye.

End of transcript