

**TITLE :** “Working from home and employee wellbeing”

### **Abstract**

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused businesses to implement a complete or partial “lockdown” to protect their employees and customers (e.g. PwC, 2020). Although most governments have gradually started relaxing this lockdown, social distancing measures remain a top priority within the policy agenda with respect to public and business concerns. To this end, information and communication technology (ICT) have been mobilised to help main economic activity at local and international levels during the pandemic by offering virtual interactions among employers, employees and customers as well as online services, sales and support (e.g. Richter, 2020).

Homeworking or mobile working levels vary considerably in different national settings and are most common in countries such as Denmark (37%) and the Netherlands (33%), but are used more rarely in Greece (9%) and Italy (7%). However, this is likely to change as digitalisation and automation become more prominent in the current government policy stimulus packages, and business investment plans for innovation. These measures are designed to shield themselves from a potential new wave of COVID-19 or similar pandemics that may occur in the future. Hence, there is an increasing effort to move from a traditional office-based work operation to work from home (WFH) arrangements together with computer based assisted technology, also referred to as telecommuting, telework or remote working (van der Lippe and Lippenyi, 2020). These can potentially generate a boost to firms’ technological innovation, ICT capability infrastructure together with Research and Development (R&D), enhanced employees’ technical skills and abilities, improved efficiency of public services and stimulation of new and smart job creation. However, the crucial question is whether it matters where employees work in terms of their productivity and wellbeing.

### **Bio**

Professor Vladlena Benson is an industry-recognised expert in cybersecurity risk management. She is a Head of the IS Group at Aston Business School. She has successfully led the Cybersecurity and Criminology Centre, University of West London. Vladlena’s research is in the field of Computer Security, Compliance, Risk, Reliability and Information Systems. She is a Board member of the Information Systems Audit and Control Association Central UK and holds several cybersecurity industry awards.