

Aviva boss: time to end the “hokey cokey” and head back to the office

THE chief executive of one of the biggest institutions in the [City](#) today said it is time for [workers](#) to get back to [offices](#).


Amanda Blanc, the boss of the £16 billion [Aviva insurance giant](#) which has 20,000 staff based in London, said the “hokey cokey” of staff coming in to offices as Covid cases fell, then being sent back home must end.

“My view is that we would like people to be in the [office](#) three days a week, though there will be flexibility around that,” she said.

“I am really keen that we do have some physical presence in the office even though the way we work will be different.”

She told Radio 4: “It has been like the hokey cokey, and I think that is difficult for our colleagues.”

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Figures this week show that tens of thousands of commuters

poured back into Central London this week in the days since working from home guidance was ditched.

On Monday there were more than 800,000 entry and exits on the Tube by 9am, up 14% on a fortnight earlier.

City bosses suggest the return to the office will be gradual, however.

Blanc is concerned that working women who take on the brunt of childcare duties don't lose out.

She said: "We need to think about if what you see is that all the men come back to the office and the women don't, then they could miss out on opportunities. I don't want that to happen."

Under her Aviva will try to "create the right environment to make sure everyone flourishes".

Figures from office tech group Freespace show that the average office occupancy across the UK was 35% yesterday.

Raj Krishnamurthy, Freespace CEO, comments: "Even before Omicron, our data was showing that Thursday was clearly the busiest day of the week for offices visits, and it seems that trend is continuing as people look to extend their weekends at home. We had a feeling that come the end of January, workers would use this time to reconvene and collaborate. Again, this data is a really positive step forwards in terms of office occupancy but also for the businesses based across the capital, not least in the hospitality sector, that rely on this footfall to survive."