



HM Government

HM Government Public Appointments



Suzanne Baxter, Commissioner for Equality and Human Rights shares her reflections on remote working in a public role.

We invited Suzanne to share her thoughts on the challenges and advantages that can present themselves when working remotely.

First public appointment

I took up my first public appointment two years ago. My role as Commissioner for Equality and Human Rights is far reaching and fascinating, covering topics as diverse as mechanisms that protect the most vulnerable, public value for money and fair treatment in the workplace. These topics have changed and in many cases increased in relevance in the face of Covid-19.

Working remotely

Like many, I and my Commission colleagues are working remotely as we consider and respond to a changed social and economic landscape. My work has been rapidly absorbed into a set of new routines; I have had no option but to rapidly navigate new technology, to make more effort to stay in touch and to change plans - frequently. My annual appraisal still took place - but on Webex. I've shared, discussed and signed off projects and held Board meetings with our dedicated teams across a range of backdrops. And new plans and strategies to target emerging issues have happened at a speed, ironically aided by our new-found individual accessibilities. Meetings are now shorter, more focused and more frequent. But I miss the chatter, laughter, and the space to get to know people. There are merits of efficiency in this new way of working, but as many have agreed, the constancy of life on a screen can be exhausting. And more than ever, a real discipline is required on when to stop, and switch off.

Personally....

At a personal level, this finds me at home with my immediate family with time no longer lost to a commute. Lost A Levels, a university first year cut short and grandparents at a distance have been considerations for us. In this regard, I am fortunate and under no illusion that for many this pandemic has brought deep heartbreak, loneliness, worry, threat and uncertainty.

Opportunity

My public appointment continues to give me the opportunity to contribute to the national debate on the important topics of human rights and equality protection at this critical time, with considered input and new perspectives from leading experts bringing a depth of thinking and healthily challenging my own ideas. I enjoy working across sectors but holding a public role, with its impact and breadth of remit, is unique. And there has never been a better time to contribute.

If you want to find out more about the work of the Equality and Human Rights Commission please visit their website [here](#).