

## London office staff to work from home in long term

By Tim Wallace

LONDON is braced for a long-term blow from Covid as offices prepare to make home-working permanent.

More than three quarters of office-based businesses expect their staff to spend at least one day a week working from home after the pandemic, according to a survey by the London Chambers of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), with almost one in five predicting no return to the office at all.

Among the businesses that can operate remotely, just 9pc said they expected

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The proportion of businesses which can operate remotely that expect all staff to return to the office full-time

all staff to return to the office full time. Richard Burge, chief executive of the LCCI, said: "The pandemic will deliver a remote working legacy in London. Eventual lifting of the work-from-home guidance will of course increase

commuter footfall in the centre, but seemingly many businesses have already made decisions regarding their premises and ways of working."

Andrew Goodacre, chief executive of the British Independent Retailers Association, warned a permanent shift to home working would mean "a loss of what were perfectly good businesses prior to the pandemic".

Data from Springboard revealed retail footfall fell 3.1pc last week from a week earlier and by 22.8pc compared with 2019. Footfall in central London is still less than half its pre-Covid levels.