As we emerge from lockdown, the Covid-19 pandemic has certainly created a very different working environment across sectors of industry over the last three months on a global scale.

While frontline healthcare workers and the emergency services joined forces to keep our communities safe, not to mention those who provided other 'essential' services to keep the country in operation, 'remote working' became the new norm for many employers and their employees, as they had to rapidly adjust to a new workplace.

During the early stages of the pandemic, working from home created concerns over the impact of social distancing and isolation, worries about the health of one's self or loved ones, childcare priorities, not to mention a fear of job and financial insecurity as well as the challenges posed by working differently to normal.

Now as the economy gets back on track, led by the Roadmap to Reopening, the phased return to work will not automatically see a return to health and wellbeing, according to Dr Kara McGann, Ibec's Head of Social Policy, and she claims that for many it is likely to exacerbate the strain being experienced.

In this issue of 'Health & Safety Times', Dr McGann points to a shift in the approach by employers to mental health even before the pandemic, and says this must be continued to preventatively and proactively help employees to get through this time of uncertainty.

And in the opinion of Tom Beegan, safety consultant (and a former CEO of the Health and Safety Authority: 2001-2006), the increasing practice of working from home may be turned into a catalyst that delivers a culture where we are all actively caring for each other.

We have admirably showed this very spirit of community and compassion to people in need during the crisis, and there's no reason why this cannot prevail in the workplace, as we get back to some form of normality in the weeks and months ahead.

Grace Heneghan
grace@oceanpublishing.ie

CONTENTS

ISSUE 48

CONTENTS ISSUE 48

'FOLLOW' Health and Safety Times on Twitter at www.twitter.com/healthsafetymag

and 'LIKE' our Facebook Page www.facebook.com/healthandsafetytimes