



## Casey Leaver: loving our new working arrangements

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Casey explains what she's gaining from not working in the office

The past six months have not been a bed of roses. It's been difficult emotionally. Amongst others things, I've learnt to communicate more at home, and to try and limit my access to the news and social media.

But, on balance, I've found **a lot to enjoy about not being in the office** - and I certainly haven't felt as though my productivity has suffered.

In fact, today (1 October) is my Ofwat one-year anniversary, and I've now worked at Ofwat out of the office for longer than I've worked in an Ofwat office.

Capacity-wise, I'm in the lucky minority of not having any children or significant caring responsibilities - lucky in that I've not had to worry about home schooling or childcare during school holidays. We've just had to watch out for each others' wellbeing and mental health. And the Resilience course has had a huge impact on my practices - I've kept a daily 'What Went Well' log and am focussing on mindful breathing.

### **Quality time - quality of life**

I'm also loving the **extra three hours a day** gained by cutting out my (fairly average) commute. I only live in Coventry, but by the time I've walked to the station, waited for the standing-room-only train, and got to New St, it's an hour and a half each way.

I'm also having an **actual lunch break** every day - saving an incredible amount of money by eating lunch at home and eating better lunches. I realised that (because I'm lazy about packed lunches) I was spending about a tenner a day on grab and go lunches from Grand Central. Now I mostly have leftovers from the previous night's dinner, or a quick omelette or lentil pouch.

I've dramatically **cut down my caffeine intake** - to one single freshly-ground cup of coffee each morning. So much better for my wellbeing and it's turned that cup into a treat that I often take out to the garden for a moment of decompression. (I've also cut right down on alcohol because daily evening aperos and nibbles were featuring a bit too heavily in April and May!)

In the extra time that we've gained in the mornings I've **started Yoga** with Adriene and I've become an enormous fan - I like her relaxed and compassionate style. It's yoga for every body (which is just as well!). Over the summer I've often popped out after breakfast to do a bit **veg harvesting** - we've made a real effort to grow lots this year - my partner has done amazing things in germinating some extremely old seeds left over from our allotmenting days.

In the evenings I'm cooking proper meals again - and a far greater variety (except when we've had to use up various garden gluts). I'd fallen into a time-pressured rut of a few boring, but quick and easy, standards.

We've started a Sunday Walk club with two close friends and neighbours - we've now covered the whole of the Coventry Way and most of the Coventry Way circular walks. And we're all now investing in winter walking gear so we can carry on as the weather turns. Having a fixed social point in the week has made a big difference, we finish each walk with cake and tea and have a snack halfway - and it's even replaced our Saturday night Zoom Pub calls from earlier in lockdown.

## Virtual Productivity

Workwise, having a routine has also been key - daily huddles with the internal comms team, and frequent catch ups with my Sixth Gear team mates.

I've also found a lot of the Lean15 techniques valuable for productivity - a special mention for time blocking and pomodoro technique, and my 'second brain' that I've started in One Note and refer to daily.

Each morning I set up my work station on the dining room table, check my inbox and Yammer, and then fill in the IC Huddle board before our meeting, and each evening I update my 'second brain' and do my What Went Well listing before packing my work station away again. Getting these routines in place has been crucial.

Also, I've learnt a huge amount about [making teams and meetings productive and inclusive virtually](#), including using Liberating Structures and other exercises - and this knowledge has really meant that I've been able to be as efficient and productive as I would be in the office. In fact, possibly even more so, because it's now much easier to block out focus time and get my head down.

That said, I couldn't do this if I didn't have the necessary counter-balance of Yammer, Tiny Talks, Gilda's coffee meetings (I've met people that I've never met in the office), and the Corporate Enablers huddles and socials (special mention for Through the Keyhole).

All in all, I'm very much enjoying working at Ofwat away from the office - and what with the trains and the Birmingham local measures I am not in any hurry to get back to City Centre Tower.

## Things I've found useful

If you'd like a chat about any of the things I've mentioned then shout - otherwise here is my list of top links. I've also posted a little [photo album of March - October](#) on Yammer.

### Personal

- [Yoga with Adriene](#)
- [Couch to 5k](#) and my fantastic running club (we've even been doing weekly video core fitness sessions)
- [A Coventry Way](#)
- [Secret Sofa](#) - now sadly finished
- [Growing veg](#)
- [What Went Well](#) - resilience technique
- [The breathing app](#) - resilience technique (profilactic)
- [Layered bulb planting in pots](#)

### Work

- [Pomodoro technique](#) (Lean15)
- [Second brain](#) (Lean15)
- [How to Huddle](#) (Perform)
- [Making teams and meetings productive and inclusive](#)
- [Setting up teams and clusters](#)
- [Liberating Structures](#)
- [Yammer](#)
- [Gilda's coffee catch-ups](#)
- [TinyTalks](#)

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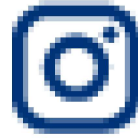
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