

## Office jobs

# The 2020s

VS

# the 1920s

in the UK



## Job titles

**Administrator**

**2023**

The ninth most common job for men and women.

**Clerk**

**1920s**

The second most common job for women, and third for men<sup>1</sup>.

Did you know? Posturite was founded in 1991

## Home sweet home?

**1918-1920**  
Pandemic: Spanish flu

**1920**  
No WFH for office staff

**1981**  
First Personal Computers

**1983**  
Invention of internet

**2020**  
Pandemic: Covid

**2024**  
39% of us now work from home<sup>2</sup>

## Trust me, I'm an office worker

Many of us enjoy more autonomy and trust in 2020s office jobs, sometimes including the chance to work from home.

Whereas in the 1920s, "corporations developed a large bureaucratic structure, with **managers and supervisors overlooking clerical workers**. Designers applied the logic of factory production to the office layout, organising **seas of desks** into a kind of production line."

Melissa Fisher, cultural anthropologist, NYU

## Dressed for success

1920s in the office

2020s in the office



Whereas some of today's workplaces require formal suits, others allow a casual look.

"Define a work fashion that reflects the image and personal brand message you want to portray to the public."

Rachel Wells in Forbes, 2024

## Take a seat

The **ergonomic chair** as we know it, wasn't invented until 1976.

**1920s**

**2020s**



Shop for today's best ergonomic office chairs

Many office workers had a more basic chair than this one.

"In the 1920s, the notion was prevalent that **sitting comfortably made for laziness**, and it was not uncommon to be given backless benches.

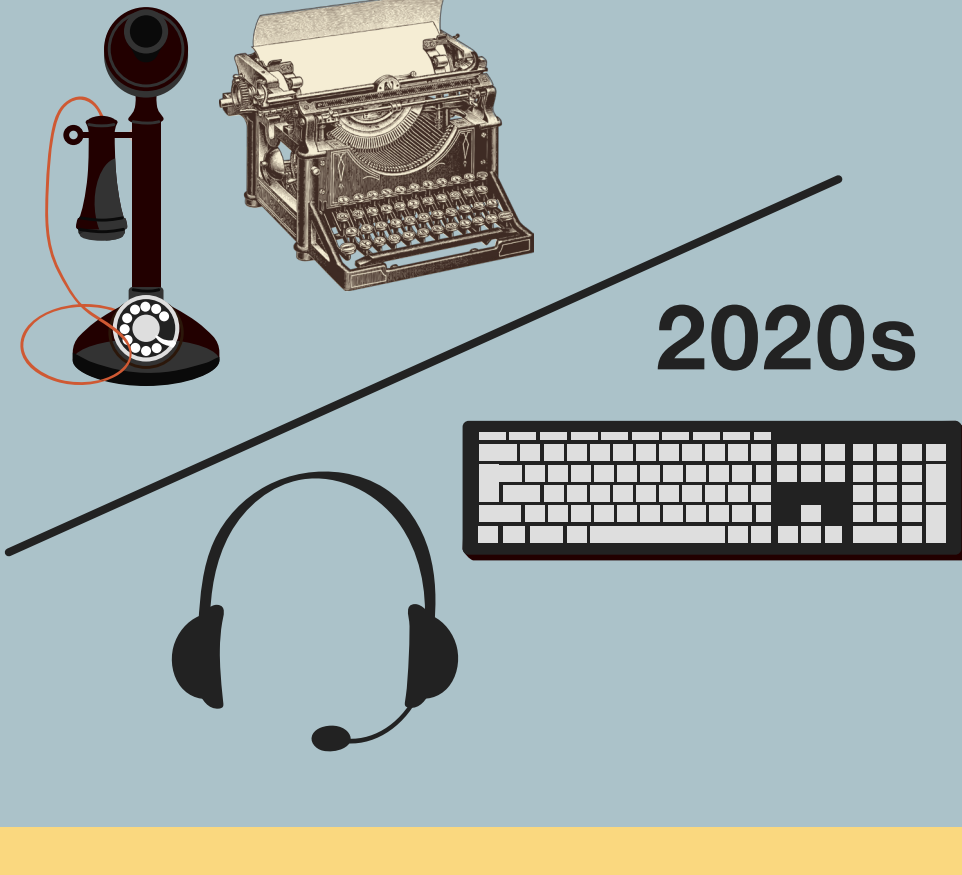
However, reacting to complaints of **declining productivity and illness**, one company marketed a swivelling chair with a curved backrest that could be adjusted to suit the height of each worker."

Heather Murphy, Slate.com

## Equipment

**1920s**

**2020s**



**Taking notes?**

**1920s**

**2020s**



Now our devices can transcribe what's said in the office

Did you know? 8 billion emails are now sent every day in the UK

## Hours and hours

**1929**

**2,257 hours**

worked per year<sup>3</sup>

**2023**

**1,866 hours**

worked per year<sup>4</sup>

## When can we leave education?

**1921**

**Age 14**

**2024**

**Age 18**

## Money, money, money

**1925**

Average annual full-time pay<sup>5</sup>

**2023**

**£260**

**£34,963**

Pint of milk costs

**1p**

(0.2% of weekly wage)<sup>6</sup>

Pint of milk costs

**90p**

(0.13% of weekly wage)<sup>6</sup>

## Unemployment

**1923**

**8%**

**2023**

**3.8%**

The 1920s ended with the **Wall Street Crash** which had a devastating effect on British employment.

## Office design

It wasn't until the 1930s that architect Frank Lloyd Wright pioneered an early model of the open plan design, and aimed for his office building to be:

**"As inspiring a place to work in as any cathedral ever was to worship in."**<sup>7</sup>

"The right environment can improve moods, boost productivity levels and enhance the concentration of employees."

Posturite Projects Team

**Transform your workplace**

## Equality

"The Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries was founded in 1912 to protect British female clerical workers, secure the abolition of 'sex differentiation' in clerical work, and enhance opportunities. They helped women challenge any gender-based hostility they faced."

Dr Nicola Robertson, Sheffield Hallam University

In 1920 it was still 90 years before the dawn of The Equality Act 2010, which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace.

**Explore today's reasonable adjustments**

## Today's office jobs

It's exciting to see our work and our workplaces evolve.

Today's office jobs are often fast-paced and demanding – be sure to pay attention to your physical and mental wellbeing.

For happier, healthier, and more active workspaces, Posturite is here to help.

<sup>1</sup>2021 Census

<sup>2</sup>Sometimes or all of the time. ONS

<sup>3</sup>Average for full-time workers. Our World in Data

<sup>4</sup>Clockify.

<sup>5</sup>Average gross annual full-time salary, all employment, all ages. The Telegraph

<sup>6</sup>ONS

<sup>7</sup>The Washington Post

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