

Who is going to create the politics that understands th...

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As the [FT has noted](#):

The vast majority of Grant Thornton's UK employees want to spend less than half of the working week in the office after the pandemic, according to the accountant's chief executive David Dunckley.

Apparently, 88 per cent of 4,600 people surveyed wanted to spend most of their time working from home.

It is, unfortunately, not possible to know what the data on this question might have been before coronavirus. No one asked in the same way because no one really took this option seriously in the way that they do now.

What I do know is that I was on Ely station last night when the 16.45 (or thereabouts) out of Kings Cross arrived. In my long experience this was a packed train before March 2020. Last night it was almost empty. Things have changed.

The reality is that we seem in collective denial about this change.

There is still a hankering for two weeks abroad in the sun, as if this defines the good life. There is a denial that Covid is here to stay, not least because we have a government not intent in eliminating it.

And the reality that Covid will change demand for healthcare in the UK, and with that what else we can do, is so far ignored.

It is as if there is a wish that this whole issue will go away. But as the Lancet points out today, one in three COVID19 survivors received a neurological or psychiatric diagnosis within six months of infection, as an observational study of more than 230,000 patient health records published in [The Lancet](#) estimates. That reflects continuing, ongoing and significant need.

The reality is that Covid has now changed a great deal of what we think of as normal.

Much of it is simply not going back to where it was.

I suspect holidays in the sun are going to be as rare as people working full time in offices.

I think the state will have to do a great deal more in coming years, and if the private sector denies it the resources it requires to meet need then tax will increase to restrict market based activity so that public need is met.

And some things we assumed, like steady train travel growth, driven by commuting, will not happen, with big changes coming for public transport, with a bigger focus in local transport becoming much more important, and massive changes for city centres likely, with as many consequences as the online shopping revolution creates.

At the same time, working out how to live with greater isolation - which everything from increased home working for many implies will become the norm - poses challenges we have just not got our heads around as yet (unless, like me, you've done it for 20 years).

The point I am making is a simple one, but essential. If a great deal about our society, way of working, travelling and interacting is going to change - and I think it is - we need to get our thinking straight in what this means and embrace the uncertainty it creates. I see no evidence that the government is anywhere near doing this.

The question is then, who is it who is going to build the politics that understands the new normal?