1	What is the "right" type of employee for a homeworker?	We often say there's no such thing as a 'typical' homeworker. Suffice to say that they are generally people who are prepared/willing to trade the benefits of working in the office, for the benefits of home working. Common reasons for this are work-life-balance, travel cost, or simply to eliminate the time spent travelling to work. Many homeworkers are also unable to take a 'normal' 9-5 office job. 18% of our Sensee colleagues are living with a disability, 8% are carers to people with special needs, and 32% come from disaffected rural areas (typically a long way from city centres). Others simply find working in an office stressful.
2	Paul, what learning solutions do you employ to train new starters?	We train all our new starters virtually using an in house developed platform that enables screen sharing, web cam use, questions and answer pods and multiple break out rooms.
3	What is the recruitment tool Sensée use, or is it something developed in house?	The Sensée recruitment and on-boarding platform is our own, developed to meet specific requirements in managing a homeworking operation.
4	We have never worked from home as a business before the lockdown, we had to implement without being able to fully plan ahead. How do you deal with a number of agents losing broadband connection at the same time, to ensure call pick up is maintained	This is not as much of an issue for Sensée as we are based all over the UK so if there is an location outage it wouldn't affect many people. In the instances that a provider themselves goes down this is a problem. We always refer the agents to contact their ISP for details of resolution and keep checking on this ourselves. To help manage the situation so performance isn't impacted we would reach out to the agents that weren't affected and offer out overtime to help maintain service.
5	What about the right Team Lead/Manager? What skills do they require to tie this all together?	As with HomeAgent recruitment, personality is key. Managers must have the empathy and understanding of the impacts working from home can have on their agents and maintain an approachable style so the agents can reach out to them if needed. They also need to be engaging so they can keep morale high which will naturally lead to happier and better performing agents.
6	What do you feel the percentage of home working will remain in place once we are back in the new 'normal' daily working environment and what are the biggest compliance challenges are we going to see?	Very difficult to tell what the 'new normal' stats will look like post Covid-19. We did a recent poll where almost 50% of companies that are currently homeworking said they saw it as a long term strategy rather than a short term fix http://newsblog.Sensee.co.uk/will-home-working-be-the-new-normal-in-2021/
7	What do you think is the biggest barrier to overcome for a successful Homeworking operation.	Ensuring the right people are in the right jobs. We want to have Team Leaders that lead their teams to success, and agents that want to go on that journey.
9	Do you pay homeworkers for equipment?	Having suitable telephony and computing equipment, as well as broadband and telephone connectivity, are prerequisites of working for the company. There are different models for purchasing home working equipment used within the industry, happy to go through this in more detail outside the seminar if that would be helpful. Please send any requests to marketing@sensee.co.uk
12	Anticipate more people will want to work in a more agile way i.e. working more days per week at home- what do you think?	At Sensée we provide our clients with the ability to request the number of heads in a 30 minute schedule across their full opening hours. We can do this as home working is far more agile than traditional "bricks and mortar". It works for our HomeAgents too, as they can select their own individual shift pattern, that works for them and their lifestyle.
13	How do you ensure the right security measures are in place and adhered to by homeworkers, in terms of GDPR & client confidential information?	Sensée has a comprehensive security and compliance framework. Our technology ecosystem has ISO27001 accreditation and achieved PCI-DSS and GDPR compliance. When used by companies as a short term solution, as homeworking commonly is today, compliance can certainly be a major issue so forward planning is essential.
15	Do you recruit against the personality traits if so can this be shared? What are the personality traits please?	The key personality traits we are looking for are: Open & Honest, Resilient, Self Motivated and Adaptable
16	How do you treat people with life changing events e.g. homeworking May have been suitable today but then children come along or the employee moves home and does not have facilities ...	A high % of our employees are people who choose to work from home for work-life-balance reasons. This includes work-at-home mums, people who live too far away from the office to get in every day, people living with a disability etc. A key benefit that home working delivers is split shifts, enabling people to work around their other daily priorities (such as dropping off and picking up kids from school)

18	Interesting ! What's your attrition like?	Our agents are typically older than is normal for the CC industry - around 40 to 42 - with a high % of people who WANT to work from home. This is reflected in absence and attrition figures which are much lower than is typical in other outsourced contact centre operations
20	Do you notice cultural differences/challenges between the office and home based staff? Any sense of 'them and us'?	This can happen, but by integrating the teams (huddles/peer-to-peer) and making them understand the pros and cons of each others environment this reduces the risk. Get them to know the people rather than the opinion.
22	The engagement activities sound great, it would be great to access these ideas	We regularly run quizzes, competitions and educational initiatives to motivate and engage our homeworker community. Last May, for example, we supported Mental Health Awareness Week sharing information each day about everything from body image, to how to look after your mental health. In June, we supported Carers Week sharing information about, for example, financial support for carers, and how to connect with other carers in your area. And in December, we ran a virtual Christmas Party night with prizes for Best Christmas themed office and even Best Dressed Christmas Pet! The engagement and feedback we receive to these campaigns is a great indication of how well they've been received. As are the requests we get from colleagues to run further initiatives
23	What does a mixed model look like in your opinion? When restrictions start to lift, we could be faced with a scenario of having a split between remote and in house.	There are probably too many options to give a concise answer! As we discussed on the seminar, homeworking suits some people better than others and, in many respects, some services over others. So it really depends on company-specific circumstances and what you are trying to achieve
24	Do you find KPIs need to be different for a home worker and person working in the office?	No, as much as possible they should be the same
26	Broadband is down and can't be fixed for 4 days - how do you treat it? Unpaid leave??	Our advisors are responsible for their own connectivity and equipment. Each advisor has a back up plan in the event of a connectivity issue
27	How do you deal with / address mental health issues your staff may experience. What support do you give them working at home?	Hopefully this was covered extensively during the seminar! Additional tips and advice are provided in this article https://www.ccma.org.uk/insight/looking-after-your-emotional-wellbeing-while-working-from-home/
28	what do you do in disciplinary situations - do you still manage virtually?	Yes, we manage virtually… but disciplinary procedures - and indeed most operational procedures - are as close to those used in fixed location contact centre as possible
29	In the office we are a paperless call centre to customer details etc are not noted on paper, how can this be achieved with home working	We also operate a paperless policy and encourage agents instead to utilise the onscreen notepad/word/blank email to make any notes needed and then delete them after the call has finished as they are not to save or store any notes due to GDPR. Having said that, it's virtually impossible to police every aspect of what an individual homeworker is doing - just as it is for the vast majority of office workers. To be successful, trust must play a massive part in the working relationship. But if there is a risk to confidential data - in any setting - then that risk should be mitigated as much as possible.
31	What do people do around costs incurred by working from home, do you find people ask for contribution to broadband and energy costs.	As they are employed on the basis of working from home they have this expectation from the start and don't yet these types of requests. At recruitment they are given all the pro's of working from home by saving money on commuting/paying for expensive canteen lunches. We also are committed to pay the "real Living Wage" at Sensée which is greatly appreciated
32	How many staff do your team leaders supervise?	Depending on the account requirements it is between 12-18 agents usually. Our TLs also action all and any HR issues as well.
33	Some great insight so far. Any views on the key considerations or "watch outs" for developing a successful WFH Ops Model?	That's a huge question and it's very difficult to generalise. However, here's a piece that we wrote about Practical Tips for implementing homeworking during the Covid-19 crisis, that covers key areas such as comms, scheduling, security and more http://newsblog.sensee.co.uk/practical-advice-and-tips-on-working-from-home/
34	How do you manage staff performance if the HomeAgent can pick and choose their hours. Do you have Team Leaders assigned to specific staff or more flexible?	Team Leaders operate on a flexible schedule so they aren't required to work 8 hours continuously if they choose not to. They can work a few hours then take a few off and return later so they have the chance to be able to fit everyone in and complete all the weekly tasks within their 40 hour week.
35	Hi , what kind of room ? adobe ?	Yes, Adobe Rooms

36	Working from home can be a challenge when is a need for group briefings. Best suggested tools for delivery and assessment of understanding?	Microsoft teams, zoom and our own LiveDesk are ideal for group meetings as you can share screen, documents, hold polls and manage engagement all whilst being on webcam and having the opportunity to record for others to review later.
37	We weren't looking at or considering home working prior to COVID. Therefore we've not put in the recruitment or infrastructure and are learning as we go. We're likely to be like this for a while yet. What would be your number one piece of advice for us to make sure we're	Getting the right personality to match home working as it is very different to office based work. Making sure they are Open & Honest, Resilient, Self Motivated and Adaptable and a little IT knowledge will take them a long way.
40	Do you feel a "floorwalking" approach to answering questions/supporting advisors helps team leaders schedule their time more effectively? We've recently tried a rota approach, with team leaders spending time solely helping with queries and blocking out the remainder of their time for coaching. Would be great to understand best	Our approach is to use virtual floorwalkers. They both answer queries and support advisors - not just for work-related issues but also from a mental health/ potential isolation perspective
42	What monitoring software do you deploy for your homeworkers?	We have developed our own inhouse security suite we call SafeOS. This only allows access to the system when the HomeAgent is scheduled to work, prevents activities such as copy and paste and print screen and provides real time monitoring of the HomeAgents activity.
43	What systems are been used to take calls?	Where possible we will always use the client's telephony platform as this ensures we are fully integrated and they can have a real time view of our activity. IF required we do also have an in-house telephony platform.
46	How do you complete training with new agents?	This is all done via our virtual Classroom. We are able to show presentations and videos, gain understanding, and place new recruits into smaller groups to action role plays.
47	What about home furniture, desks chairs etc do you provide these for most employees? do they ask for them? what is reasonable to by?	HomeAgents are responsible for their own equipment from PC set up to furniture. We give guidelines of what we expect them to have and they also have to pass our H&S policy. We do suggest office desk and chairs but if the HomeAgent has furniture that is safe and secure to use and they are able to use them whilst sitting in the correct position without any strain on their bodies these can be used. As long as the equipment is sturdy, comfortable and safe we will allow furniture to be used that isn't "Office"
48	Will Homeworking agents so you do more background checks like credit checks, basic DBS. as part of the recruitment process	As part of the recruitment journey we complete full Pre Employment Checks
50	Do you have any tips/suggestions for separating home life and work life, whilst working from home?	As mentioned above, these two pieces may help https://www.ccma.org.uk/insight/looking-after-your-emotional-wellbeing-while-working-from-home/ and https://www.ccma.org.uk/insight/looking-after-your-physical-wellbeing-while-working-from-home/