

Home & business productivity, Social services

2023 Public Sector Modern Working Survey: Cut the admin burden with speech recognition

[Nuance Communications](#)

April 4, 2023



Whether they're working from home or the office, many public sector professionals spend a lot of their day completing routine tasks—time that could be better spent on higher-value activities. The key to unlocking productivity is the right technology: tools and workflows that are designed to reduce the admin burden. We surveyed 100 public sector professionals to see what the world of modern work looks like for them, and how they manage documentation today.

What does the modern world of work look like for public sector employees? Increasingly, their focus is shifting to rebalancing their lives, finding ways to work productively and flexibly while taking time back for themselves after several years of major disruption and heightened pressure for public services.

To find out what that means for everyday working practices, Nuance partnered with Censuswide to survey 100 professionals working in the public sector. We explored the challenges of hybrid working, how to manage the ever-growing pile of admin work, and what they need to make the most of their day. Here's what they had to say.

Most professionals don't come into the office every day

One of the biggest changes driven by the pandemic—shifting to working from home—has fundamentally changed the way many organisations operate. Over half of the public sector professionals we surveyed now work partially or fully remotely, and embracing the flexibility of hybrid working is delivering real benefits:

- 59% say they can manage their days better
- 38% say they're more productive
- 34% say they're more motivated

Champions of the hybrid approach say they're achieving a better work/life balance, and that's reflected in their increased enthusiasm and productivity. But for others, there are downsides to working separately from their colleagues; almost half said they struggled with the lack of in-person conversations, and many can't access the full range of tools they need for their jobs at home.

The long-term sustainability of hybrid working relies on employees and organisations collaborating to find the right mix of technology and working practices that will allow everyone to perform at their best, wherever they work.

There's a significant admin burden—and it's holding people back

According to a [2019 independent review of the Australian Public Service \(APS\)](#), 40% of an APS employee's time was taken up by basic tasks that could be simplified or automated. But has anything changed since the pandemic?

The disruption of the past few years has piled pressure on public services, which means there's been little time to focus on improving repetitive workflows. Our survey respondents reported spending an average of four hours every day on typing tasks, with over a quarter spending between four and six hours per day typing.

And that's keeping them from more hands-on public service work: half of respondents said typing prevents them from adding further value for their clients. All this time at the keyboard is taking a physical toll too, with nearly a third saying their hands hurt at the end of their working day.

Simplifying the admin workload is key to relieving the burden of typing and digital paper-pushing, freeing up time for the areas of public sector work that really benefit from a professional's undivided attention. While most public sector organisations are yet to take on this challenge, 20% are addressing the issue using one technology in particular: speech recognition.

The power, speed, and practicality of speech recognition

It's no secret that many people find speaking easier than writing, especially when it comes to explaining complex ideas or expressing their opinions in detail. According to our respondents:

- 66% find it easier to explain concepts, thoughts, and responses by speaking
- 53% say their thoughts are more comprehensive when spoken
- 51% miss more key details when typing versus speaking

Most people speak at around 120 words per minute, but type less than 40 words per minute. Speech recognition takes advantage of this natural skill, enabling professionals to work faster, more efficiently, and virtually hands-free using their voice. And with the right solution, such as [Dragon](#), there are even more opportunities for productivity wins. People can use spoken commands to navigate their desktop and dictate directly into email drafts, Word documents, and even complex management systems with forms and fields.

Built on a speech engine 25 years in the making, Dragon delivers highly accurate, exceptionally fast speech-to-text and intuitive voice command capabilities. Secure encryption takes care of sensitive, private, and financial information to ensure all documentation meets regulations and confidentiality rules. And because it can be based in the cloud, public sector professionals can access its powerful features wherever their role takes them.

Finding a more valuable way to work with speech recognition

In our survey, respondents already using speech recognition reported saving an average of one hour every day—with almost a third saving up to four hours. And those hours are being put to good use, with our respondents spending more time communicating directly with clients, developing new ideas for their service, and focusing on their own career development.

With more people recognising the need to maintain a healthy balance between work and home, it's vital that the tools and workflows professionals use help them switch off on time every day. A third of our survey respondents said working with speech recognition has allowed them to spend more time with friends and family.

Public sector teams are under a lot of pressure: to do more with less, to serve citizens and local businesses effectively, and continuously meet the ever-growing demands of civil service. Introducing a tool like Dragon Professional Anywhere can revolutionise the working day for teams that are office-based, at home, or out in the community by giving them a more practical, efficient way to complete core tasks.

Tags: [Dragon Professional Anywhere](#), [Documentation burden](#)