# Polygamous working escalates post-pandemic, raising trust and legal concerns



The phenomenon of polygamous working, where employees secretly juggle multiple remote jobs, is gaining traction in today's labour market. Accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, this trend has not only highlighted the flexibility of remote work but has also raised serious concerns regarding productivity, trust, and the ethical implications of such practices.

Employees are increasingly finding it feasible to maintain dual or even multiple full-time roles from their own homes, often without their employers’ knowledge. According to reports, the allure of combining salaries can tempt individuals into undisclosed multitasking, leading to potential burnout and legal complications. While technically legal, engaging in multiple roles without proper disclosure may violate contractual obligations and could severely impact company morale and trust.

The flexibility that remote work provides has changed the employment landscape. As noted by HR Magazine, this shift has the potential to erode workplace trust, with risks including employee burnout and security breaches. For example, one woman, who shared her experience with The Telegraph, managed to earn £87,000 whilst working two full-time jobs simultaneously from her home office. Her success, in part facilitated by tips from platforms like Reddit and TikTok, highlights both the creativity and the risks involved in managing such roles effectively, with some workers even employing tools like mouse jigglers to keep their status active during overlapping meetings.

However, tales of success can obscure the darker side of this trend. The Financial Times has pointed out alarming instances where the practice of overemployment has led to financial discrepancies and investigations into individuals for fraudulent behaviours. One notable case involved a UK government employee found to be working two full-time jobs, culminating in serious consequences that prompted scrutiny from higher authorities. Peter Boolkah, a business coach, has expressed concerns that such situations could undermine smaller businesses, leading to increased absenteeism due to burnout and diminished productivity overall.

The implications stretch beyond the individual, affecting the entire organisation. Experts advocate for proactive measures, such as periodic screenings and transparent communication about secondary employment. Initiatives are essential to ensure that employee performance remains uncompromised and to safeguard against potential conflicts of interest.

Guidance on best practices for those considering overemployment suggests that clear time management and boundaries are paramount. FlexJobs advises prospective dual employees to negotiate schedules with their primary employers to avoid conflicts and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Setting these boundaries can also help in managing any unexpected legal or tax implications that may arise from multiple income streams.

Employers themselves need to reconsider their policies on moonlighting. The Society for Human Resource Management recommends that organizations revisit their guidelines to address the current realities of remote workflows and inflation pressures on household budgets. Creating a transparent dialogue around expectations can help mitigate risks associated with employees holding multiple jobs.

The growing trend of polygamous working serves as a reflection of broader economic realities and shifts in workplace culture, raising critical questions about the sustainability of this model. As more employees opt for multiple roles, ensuring the integrity of workplace relationships and the overall productivity of organisations will require careful navigation through these evolving professional landscapes.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 6
2. Paragraph 3
3. Paragraph 5
4. Paragraphs 6, 7
5. Paragraph 8
6. Paragraph 9
7. Paragraph 10

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.techradar.com/pro/security/polygamous-working-on-the-rise-as-ease-of-cheating-on-employers-blamed-on-wfh-and-remote-working> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.ft.com/content/e3349ea5-50f7-447b-b466-750e038f706b> - The Financial Times article discusses the rise of 'polygamous working' or 'overemployment,' where individuals secretly hold multiple full-time jobs, a trend accelerated by remote work during the pandemic. It highlights cases like a UK government employee working two full-time roles, leading to financial discrepancies and prompting investigations. The piece also explores the ethical and legal implications, including potential breaches of trust and conflicts of interest, and suggests that such practices may signal a generational shift in work culture.
* <https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/working-multiple-remote-jobs-what-you-need-to-know> - FlexJobs provides insights into managing multiple remote jobs, emphasizing the importance of effective time management, negotiating schedules with employers, and setting clear boundaries. The article also outlines disadvantages, such as challenges in achieving work-life balance, potential job performance issues, and unexpected tax implications, advising individuals to carefully consider these factors before taking on multiple roles.
* <https://jobs.washingtonpost.com/article/4-techniques-for-balancing-multiple-remote-jobs/> - The Washington Post offers strategies for balancing multiple remote jobs, including the necessity of disclosing extra work to prevent conflicts, conducting self-assessments to ensure effectiveness, setting firm boundaries to manage time and expectations, and preparing for inevitable conflicts that may arise. The article emphasizes the importance of transparency and careful planning to navigate the complexities of overemployment.
* <https://www.cookbrown.com/moonlighting-employees/> - Cook Brown LLP discusses the legal aspects of moonlighting in California, noting that while employees have a right to engage in lawful off-duty conduct, employers can enforce policies to ensure secondary employment does not interfere with primary job performance. The article outlines potential consequences for employees, including discipline or termination, if moonlighting leads to performance issues or breaches of company policies.
* <https://www.lawyerspages.com/blog/navigating-moonlighting-ethical-legal-and-employer-strategies-for-remote-employees> - LawyersPages explores the ethical and legal implications of moonlighting for remote employees, highlighting concerns such as breach of trust, conflicts of interest, and potential legal consequences like violation of employment contracts or intellectual property infringement. The article also discusses employer strategies to address these issues, including clear policies and open communication.
* <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/employment-law-compliance/review-moonlighting-policies-light-remote-work-inflation> - The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) examines how remote work and inflation are influencing moonlighting practices. It suggests that employers should review and update their moonlighting policies to ensure they address potential conflicts of interest and performance issues, emphasizing the need for clear expectations and communication to manage the risks associated with employees holding multiple jobs.