

How hybrid working has transformed payroll forever



Introduction

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The impact of COVID-19 on the way we work is one that can be seen across almost every business type and within every department. Payroll is no different, and since the pandemic, it has evolved and adapted to the new working conditions we've found ourselves in. During the crisis, keeping up to date with the ever-changing furlough scheme and other wage support measures put in place by the UK government took centre stage for payroll processors. Workloads became a lot heavier as a result and our everyday life was profoundly affected by the impacts of the pandemic.

One of the biggest changes we have seen in the workplace in recent times is the move to remote working. Remote working is a type of working arrangement whereby the employee is not required to attend a central workplace and can perform work duties from their home or from another location. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, remote working has been normalised and employees now have a legal right to request to work remotely for at least part of the time that they are working. Employers can only refuse a request if they have a good business reason for doing so.

Now that employees are allowed to return to their workplaces, many have begun hybrid working arrangements. Hybrid working is where the employee spends part of their working week at a central workplace and the other part working from home or from another remote location. As hybrid working gives employers and employees the best of both worlds, this arrangement has become very popular post pandemic. **Taking stock of the changes that hybrid working has brought to how we do business and preparing for the future can help improve the efficiency and profitability of your practice going forward.**



Remote Working

How payroll technology can help your practice adapt to remote working

Since the start of the pandemic, employees have noticed the advantages that remote working can have. A better work/life balance and no longer having to commute are two of the main ways employees have benefited from remote working. Employers have also reaped the rewards as 57% of remote workers admitted to being more productive while working from home. Many businesses have even decided to permanently close their offices and save on rent and other expenses by allowing employees to work remotely full time.

Once employees had gotten a taste of remote working, **surveys found that 92% expected to be able to work from home for at least one day per week, after the pandemic.** As it now looks likely that remote working will be around for the foreseeable, it is important that payroll processors have access to their client's payroll data, wherever they may be.

Having access to payroll data from any location

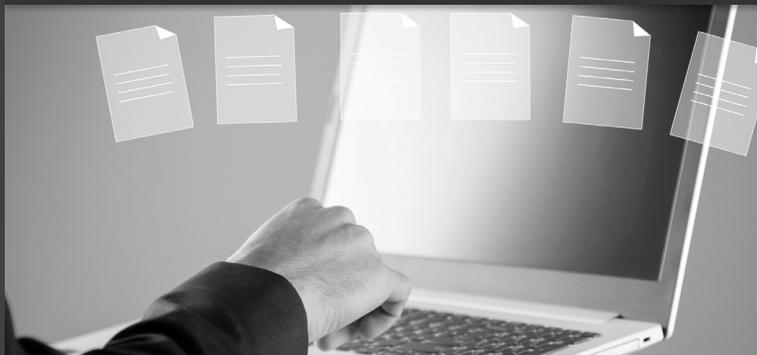
While [BrightPay Payroll software](#) remains desktop-based, all BrightPay licences come with ten activations, meaning payroll can be processed by ten different users or from ten separate locations. BrightPay's optional cloud add-on, [BrightPay Connect](#), provides a secure, automated way to backup and restore your payroll data on your PC, to and from the cloud. **When BrightPay is used in tandem with BrightPay Connect it allows for a completely seamless "working from home" solution** where there are multiple individuals who work on or require access to the same employer files. When you use BrightPay Connect, all payroll data is automatically backed up online every fifteen minutes or every time an employer file is closed.



Multiple Users & Data Security

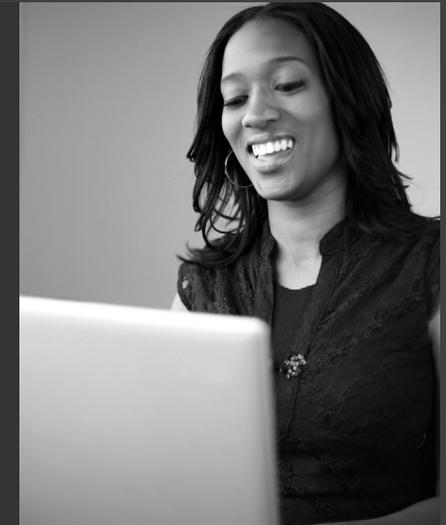
No conflicting copies

When there is more than one person working on the same employer file at the same time, it is important that no conflicting copies are created which could result in mistakes in the payroll. When you open an employer file, BrightPay Connect will check to see if there is a more up-to-date version of that file. In other words, where someone else in your organisation worked on that employer or where you, from a different computer, worked on the employer. If a more up-to-date version is detected, you will be given the option to download the most up-to-date version or to continue with the version you are working on. You will also be notified if another user is currently working on the file you are trying to open. You then have the option to continue anyway (which will notify the other user) or to be notified when the other user has finished.



User Permissions

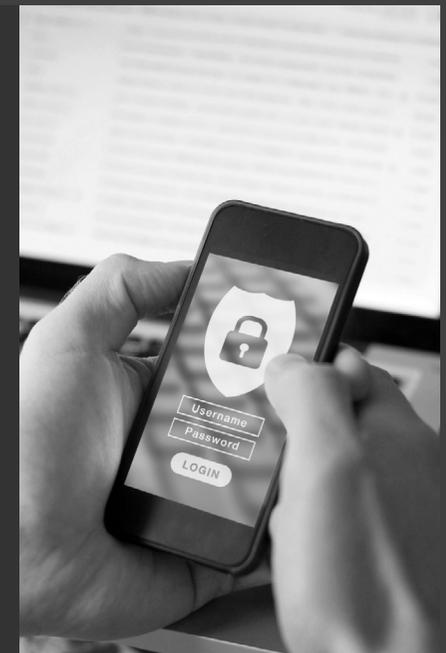
It is strongly recommended that you password protect your employer files so that only those authorised to do so can access sensitive employer data. In BrightPay, each employer file can be password protected. With BrightPay Connect, bureaux have the option to add as many users as they wish at no additional cost. When adding a new user, you can either give the user access to one client's data (e.g. the client themselves) or to multiple clients' data (e.g. colleagues).



Two Factor Authentication

Two Factor Authentication is when two different methods of identification are used to log in to a platform or to access data. It is a second layer of protection to re-confirm the identity of users which helps improve security, protect against fraud and lower the risk of data breaches.

Two Factor Authentication can be enabled as a feature for users logging into BrightPay Connect through an internet browser or through BrightPay. This means that the person logging in will need to confirm their identity using a one-time code sent to their mobile or email.



Communicating with Clients

Improving how you communicate with clients

Remote and hybrid working has forced us to explore communication tools which we otherwise may not have considered. Video calls, instant chat and other online collaboration platforms have become the norm and how we communicate at work will never be the same again. Many of us have found that these new ways of communicating have allowed us to save time, money and be more efficient. We can use what we've learnt from this experience and apply it to how we communicate with our clients. **Accountants and payroll bureaus are now, more than ever, considering new client communication tools which can help their practices save time, money and become more efficient.**

Cutting down on unnecessary client emails

Communicating with clients during COVID-19 became a challenge for many accountants and payroll bureaus. Your clients understandably had more questions than ever before and some just needed your support and reassurance as they navigated their businesses through a challenging time. While this extra communication was warranted, email inboxes became flooded and replying to clients may have felt like a full-time job in itself. **One thing accountants and bureaus can take from this experience is the importance of cutting down on any unnecessary email communication with clients.** This is especially true when it comes to questions or requests in relation to payroll as they can be one of the most time-consuming to reply to, but also one of the easiest to eliminate completely.

Common payroll client emails may include:

- Requests to make changes to the payroll (e.g. add a new starter, add holiday pay for an employee etc.)
- Requests for payroll documents (e.g. historic payslips, payroll reports etc.)
- Enquiries about amounts due to HMRC

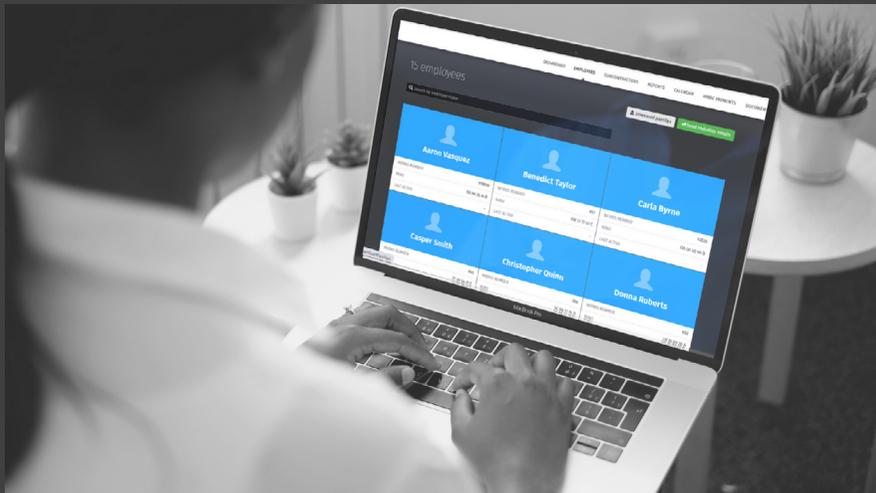
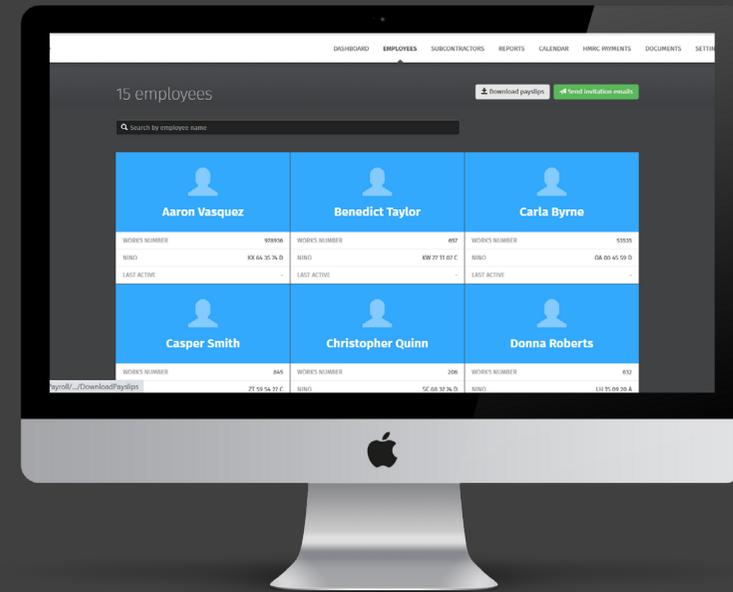


An Online Employer Portal

Give clients access to their own online employer portal

Luckily, for accountants and bureaux, you now have the ability to give clients direct access to the information they need without them having to contact you. By giving your clients access to their own online **employer portal**, it means **bureaus can put the power in their clients' hands to take care of these requests themselves**. Filtering out these types of emails from clients means a cleaner inbox and more time to spend on other areas of the business.

Through BrightPay Connect you can give your clients online access to payroll data, anytime, anywhere. All they need to do is log in to their employer portal from any computer or tablet device.



From the online dashboard your client can:

- View all their employees' current and past payslips
- View other employee documents (e.g. P45s, P60s etc.)
- View a breakdown of amounts due to HMRC
- View real-time employee reports in relation to employee pay, pension information, employee contact details and much more

Having quick and easy access to these functions means that you no longer need to waste time retrieving this information and forwarding it to your clients.



Client Payroll Entry

Through the BrightPay Connect bureau dashboard, you can send clients a '[Payroll Entry Request](#)' where your client will be asked to confirm employees' payments for that pay period. If needed, the client can quickly and easily enter details of any changes for that pay period, such as new starter details or adding bonus pay for an employee. Where the client's employees work variable hours, the client also has the option to upload the timesheets through their secure online portal.

This function means that the onus will be on the client to ensure all payroll information is correct. It also serves as a reminder to them to add any payroll details which they may otherwise have forgotten. **Using this direct method of retrieving payroll data from the client means that you will no longer need to go back and forth with your client over email to get the payroll ready to be finalised.** Once the information is reviewed by the payroll processor, the information is automatically updated on the payroll software, cutting down on data entry mistakes and saving you a lot of time overall.



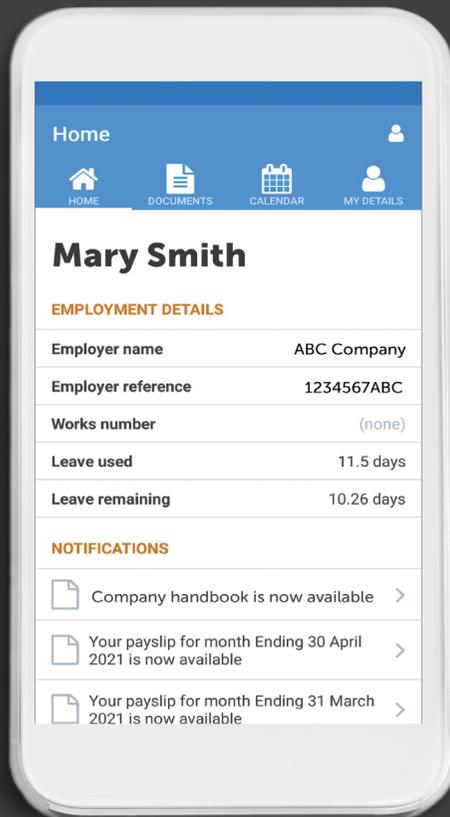
Offer new services to clients that will help them adjust to remote working

As your practice has changed due to COVID-19, so have the workplaces of your clients. It is important that you respond to these changes and the new needs they may bring. While remote and hybrid working has many advantages, it can uncover new challenges for employers. It is always easier to manage staff when they are all in the same place, at the same time. However, **by introducing your clients to BrightPay Connect, they will be able to manage staff while they are working from different locations and on different schedules.** This is a great opportunity to offer new services to your clients that will help them adjust to the new working world they have found themselves in.

Employer and Employee Self-Service

An employee app that can help your clients manage their employees

As well as giving your clients access to an [employer portal](#), employees can also be invited to their own employee portal that can **help your clients with adjusting to remote and flexible working**. BrightPay Connect includes an employee app that gives employees secure self-service access anytime, anywhere, using their smartphone or tablet. They can also access the employee portal online through an internet browser.



When the employee app is used in conjunction with the employer portal, your clients will be able to do the following:

- **Share HR and other employment documents** with employees through the app and monitor who has read these documents
- **Approve or deny annual leave requests** which employees have made through their employee app
- **Approve or deny changes to the employee's personal contact details** that the employee has requested to make through their employee app
- **Access a real-time company-wide calendar** which can help employers monitor and track which employees are working, which are on leave and the type of leave they are on

All of these functions can be performed anytime, anywhere, making the adjustment to remote and flexible working easier for your clients. Any changes made to payroll data, annual leave or employee details in BrightPay Connect are automatically synchronised with BrightPay Payroll. As well as this, by [linking payroll data and access to the cloud](#), you can avail of significant online benefits to enhance your payroll services, strengthen client relationships and increase profits.

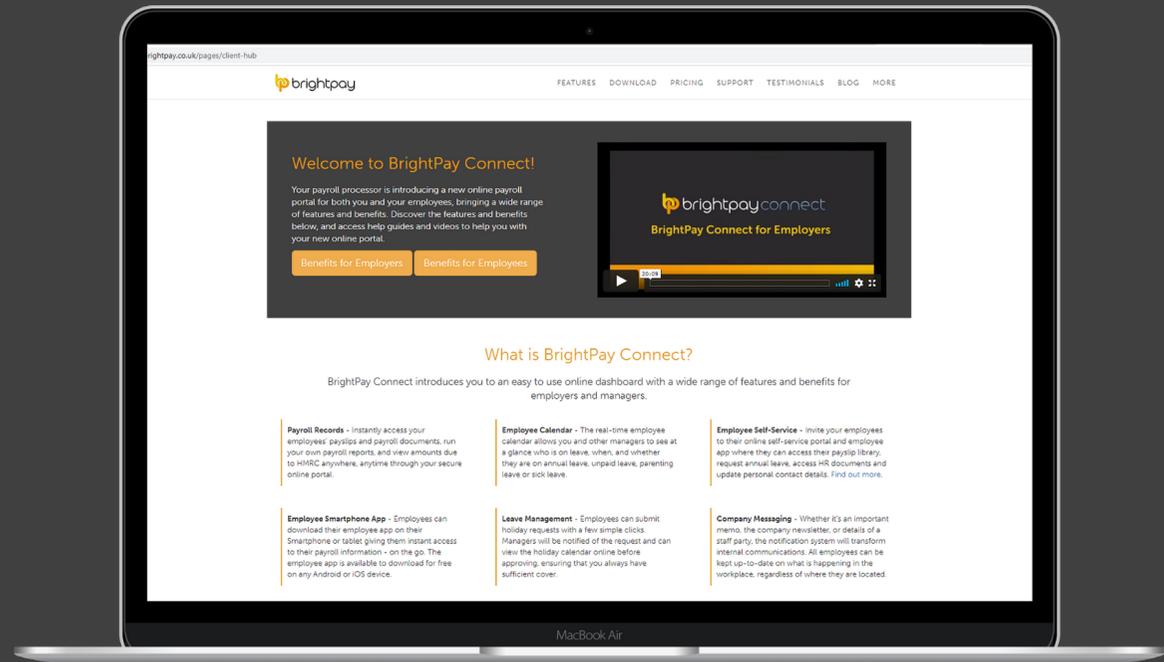
Educate your Clients

Educate Clients on the Benefits of BrightPay Connect

Introducing new services won't be effective if you do not communicate the benefits of the new services being offered. **Educating your clients on the full benefits of the new service and giving them instructions on how to use it means they will be able to get the most out of it, improving customer satisfaction.**

You may understand how much you, your clients and your clients' employees can benefit from using BrightPay Connect but what's the easiest way to inform clients of these benefits?

[Visit the Client Hub](#)



Direct them to the Client Hub on the BrightPay Website

To bring clients up to date on your new services simply send them a link to the [Client Hub](#) on the BrightPay website. **This webpage outlines all of the benefits for clients and their employees, and also includes client-focused demo videos and step-by-step guides.** There is no information about pricing on this page.

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Client Hub PDF

Send them the Client Hub PDF

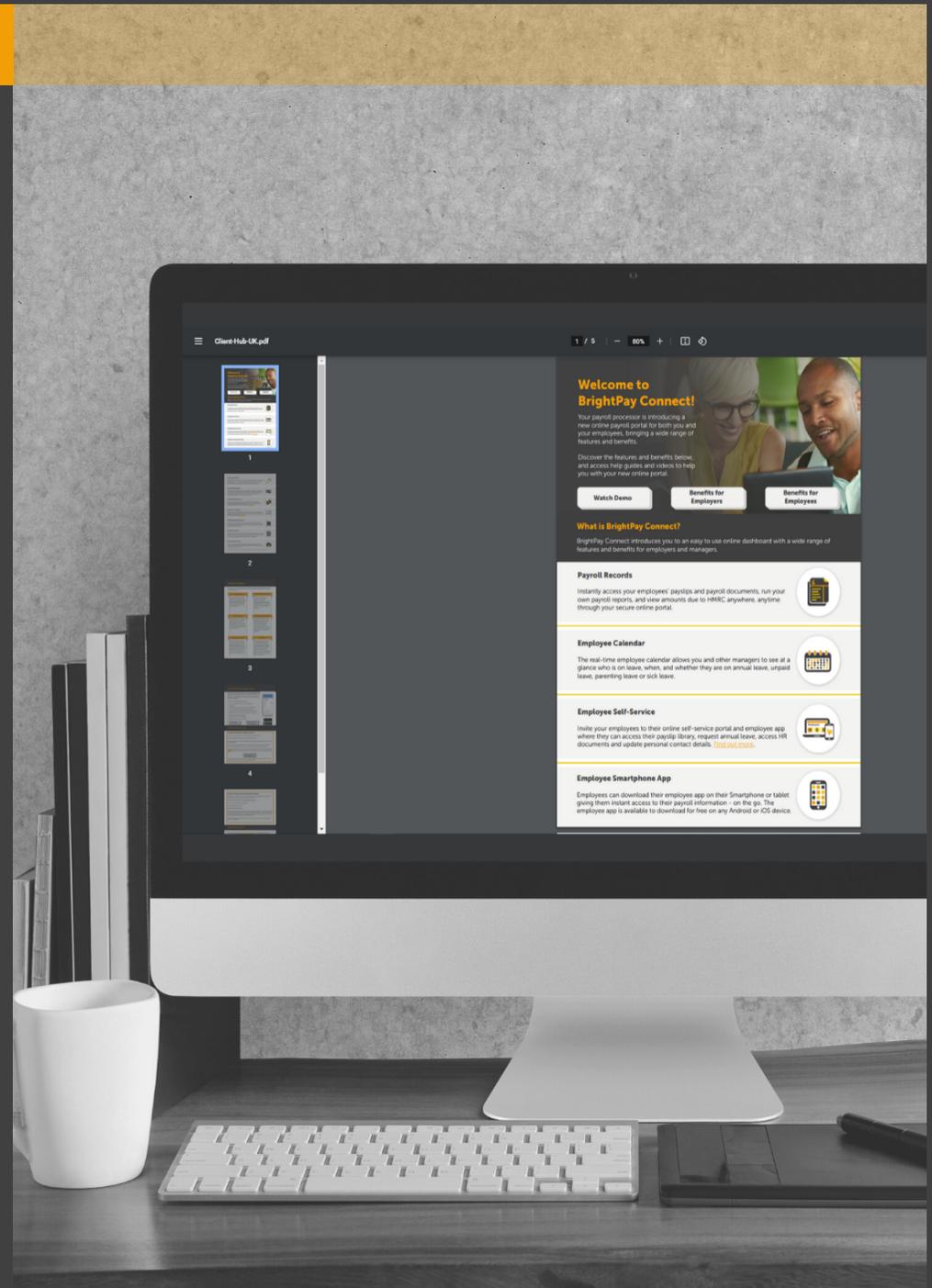
Rather than sending your clients directly to the BrightPay website, you can send them our [Client Hub document](#) instead. **The document contains all the same information as the webpage and can be downloaded and read anywhere, on any device.** The document could also be attached to emails being sent out to clients as a way of promoting this new range of services.

Embed our Client Hub document on your own website

Creating a page on your own website where you can display all the information your clients need on BrightPay Connect is easier than you think. **You can create a simple webpage where you have all your information on the new service you are offering and how much it costs etc.** On the same page you can embed our Client Hub PDF, by simply pasting the code below into the HTML on your website:

```
<p><iframe src=" https://www.brightpay.co.uk/guides/Client-Hub-UK.pdf " width="640" height="480"></iframe></p>
```

[View the Client Hub PDF](#)



Your Next Steps

Thanks to technology, accountants and payroll bureaus were able to maintain normal business operations during the pandemic. While the effects of the pandemic brought about a lot of changes, how payroll processors reacted, and continue to adapt to these changes, could determine the future of their practices. **The move to remote and hybrid working has helped to accelerate digital transformation within payroll while creating new opportunities for bureaus to diversify.**

The pandemic has also given bureaus the unique opportunity to connect with clients in a way that we never had before, and the relationships built during this time are a testament to the compassion and patience shown as many clients faced uncertainty about the future of their businesses. Nurturing these relationships and catering to the new needs of your clients can help to safeguard the future of your bureau.

Book a Demo

Attend a free online demonstration of BrightPay

Discover more ways that BrightPay and BrightPay Connect can help your business adjust to the new normal of hybrid working.

Download Free Trial

Start a 60-day free trial of BrightPay

If you don't feel ready to commit just yet, then why not start a free 60-day trial to get to experience BrightPay for yourself and get to know its features.

Register Now

Join our free webinars

Hear from the payroll experts on how the latest updates are impacting payroll and how you can best support your employees.

