

FOOTBALL MANAGER DEVELOPER SPORTS INTERACTIVE'S BIG NEW LON DON SIGNINGS

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Football Manager maker Sports Interactive has doubled its office space at London tech hub Here East and taken on more than 50 staff following a lockdown boom in gaming.

The developer - which is currently advertising 30 more roles - has signed 26,320sq ft at the campus in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, and said its move "demonstrates that appetite for office space is still strong" for growing firms.

It comes after recruiting giant Hays told the Standard that its operations in London's tech sector has risen above pre-pandemic levels.

Work will look different once we're back in offices.

Gaming saw player numbers soar around the world in 2020. Activision Blizzard, the video games giant behind Call of Duty, Candy Crush and World of Warcraft, saw revenues shoot up to a record \$8 billion in 2020 and reached more than 400 million players - greater than the population of the US.

Sports Interactive studio director, Miles Jacobson, said: "We've been incredibly lucky that during the global pandemic, our revenues haven't dried up as some businesses have had to face.

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"This has meant that rather than standing still or shrinking, we've found ourselves being in the position of being able to accelerate our growth plans, with our team increasing to over 200 during this period.

"Like many businesses, we also need to plan for a post pandemic future, and we believe that work will look different once we're able to be back in offices."

Other Here East tenants include BT Sport, Bidstack, and Staffordshire University's Digital Institute, which offers the UK's first undergraduate degree in esports.

London is a hub for esports, which Goldman Sachs has tipped to near £2.5 billion in global revenues by 2022.