

CIPD

Report
July 2025

Flexible and hybrid working practices in 2025

The CIPD has been championing better work and working lives for over 100 years. It helps organisations thrive by focusing on their people, supporting our economies and societies. It's the professional body for HR, L&D, OD and all people professionals – experts in people, work and change. With over 160,000 members globally – and a growing community using its research, insights and learning – it gives trusted advice and offers independent thought leadership. It's a leading voice in the call for good work that creates value for everyone.

Report

Flexible and hybrid working practices in 2025

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1 Introduction

More than a year on from the implementation of the UK Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023, this report explores the current state of flexible and hybrid working practices from both an employer and employee perspective. It builds on previous CIPD survey findings, providing the latest insights on flexible and hybrid working practices and the wider impact on performance, employee engagement, wellbeing, organisational culture, and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Employers and people professionals are grappling with a particularly challenging climate – including rising National Insurance Contributions and increases in the National Living Wage, while also preparing for future changes in employment regulation that include the potential strengthening of flexible working provisions. There are also growing global uncertainties that organisations have to contend with.

Our spring *Labour Market Outlook* data finds that as some of these measures are being brought in, business confidence continues to fall. The net employment balance (the difference between the number of employers planning to increase their workforce and those planning to decrease it) has fallen to +8, its lowest level on record outside of the pandemic. However, despite overall reductions in vacancies and recruitment intentions, organisations continue to grapple with hard-to-fill vacancies in key areas and will increasingly need to focus efforts on retention.

Our findings suggest that flexible working is pivotal to the attraction and retention of talent. Flexible working remains important to employees and has a positive impact on their quality of life. In fact, around 1.1 million employees say they have left a job in the last year due to a lack of flexible working, and this is particularly the case for younger employees. At a time of substantial economic inactivity and a UK Government focus on this area through the *Get Britain Working* and *Keep Britain Working* reviews, it is worth emphasising that flexible working can help to support people facing a range of circumstances into, and to remain in, work.

According to our employer survey, hybrid working practices remain commonplace, with around three-quarters having some kind of provision. Some of the wider advantages of hybrid working reported by employers include attraction and retention of a broader, more diverse talent pool, increased employee wellbeing, a positive impact on the environment, and business resilience. But there are also key challenges to be navigated, particularly the ability of managers to lead teams effectively, the connection of employees to organisational purpose and the impact on organisation culture.

While media headlines have been dominated by announcements of 'return to office' mandates, we find that just over one in 10 say their organisation is looking to either introduce or mandate further returns to the office in the next 12 months. However, half of organisations that offer hybrid working have put in place incentives to encourage employees to be in the workplace more often, and more than half of employees believe there is pressure to spend more time in the physical workspace. Overall, perceptions of organisation productivity and efficiency have remained positive for those experiencing an increase in home/hybrid working.

Access to flexible working is not equal. Most organisations provide some kind of flexible working arrangements, but a quarter believe senior employees are more likely to work flexibly than more junior staff. Employees also point to an unmet demand for certain types of flexible working. A continued focus is also needed on flexibility for those in frontline and non-remote roles – around three in five say they provide some kind of flexibility to this group, with flexibility in scheduling shifts and flexibility in start and finish times most frequently provided.

Around a fifth say their organisations are more likely to grant flexible working requests, following the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 and the day one right to request flexible working. Employers are also more likely to say the legislation has had a positive rather than negative impact for both their employees and their organisation. If the legislation is strengthened in the Employment Rights Bill, more than a third also expect an increase in the number of flexible working requests their organisation accepts.

You can find background information on the surveys on [page 31](#).

2 Implications and recommendations

For organisations

- 1 Prepare for any strengthening of the existing Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023. The new proposal in the Employment Rights Bill means employers (where appropriate) must assume and accommodate flexible working from day one (apart from when it is not reasonably feasible). Any refusal of a flexible working request must be reasonable, but the eight business reasons listed in legislation will remain the same. Practical steps that can be taken ahead of potential changes in this area include:
 - updating policies and processes on responding to flexible working requests
 - revising recruitment processes to reflect earlier conversations about flexible opportunities
 - providing training and support for line managers in managing flexible workers.
- 2 Raise awareness of different forms of flexible working, such as compressed hours and job-sharing, and explore how they can be effective in roles that have traditionally been seen as non-flexible.
- 3 Develop mutual trust between line managers/senior management and employees in flexible working arrangements. Support these arrangements with appropriate people management systems and processes.
- 4 Consult and collaborate with employees when designing hybrid working practices. Develop clear and transparent policies and principles about eligibility for – and access to – hybrid working, and establish systems to monitor decision-making and access. Develop ways of creating a stronger connection between employees and organisation purpose and culture (as this tends to

be most impacted by hybrid working). Consider ways of creating an attractive workspace offering and access to financial support and flexibility to support commuting costs such as season ticket loans, cycle-to-work schemes and subsidised travel. Continue to review, adapt and improve approaches.

- 5 Provide training to managers on how to manage flexible and hybrid teams effectively and fairly and give support around performance management, remote communication, collaboration and relationship-building, and employee development and progression.

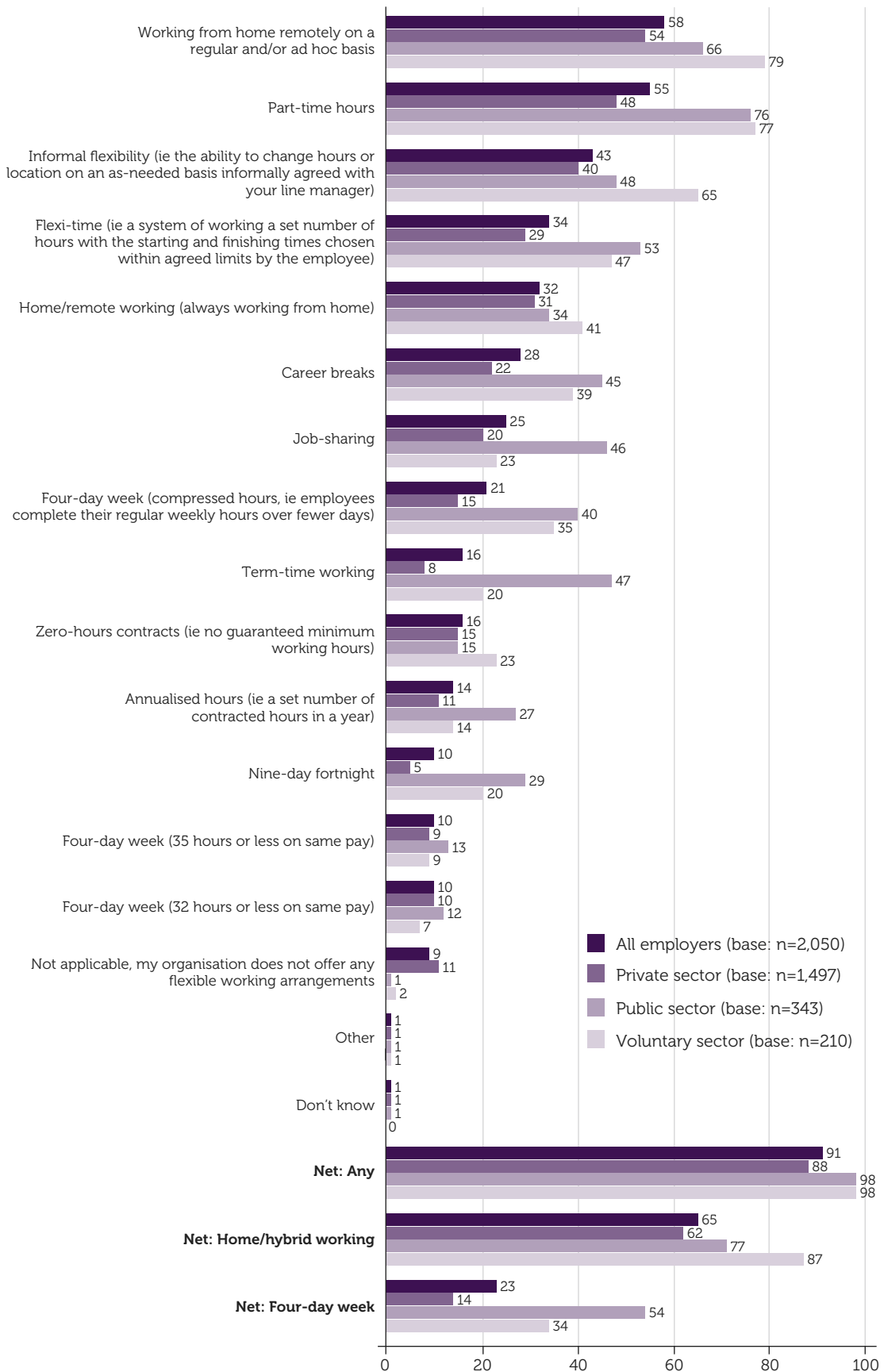
For policy-makers

- 1 Provide guidance and support to organisations on any strengthening (through the Employment Rights Bill) of the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023.
- 2 Reconvene the Flexible Working Taskforce or incorporate a focus on flexible working as part of a broader workforce commission, to share good practice examples on hybrid and broader flexible working for different-sized organisations and sectors.
- 3 Work with organisations (such as the CIPD) on myth-busting around flexible working to dispel the notion that it cannot work for certain employees or job roles that are traditionally not considered flexible.
- 4 Establish a flexible working challenge fund for businesses with non-office and frontline workers to trial and promote different forms of flexible working and their benefits for business and employees.
- 5 Highlight, through guidance, the organisational factors that support better adoption and performance of home and hybrid working, such as training for line managers and effective inductions, and ensure that organisations have well-communicated health and safety policies that cover remote working.

3 Employer perspectives

Availability of flexible working

- When it comes to flexible working arrangements, the vast majority of organisations (91%) offer some kind of arrangement, with the most common on offer being:
 - working from home/remotely on a regular or ad hoc basis (58%)
 - part-time hours (55%)
 - informal flexibility (43%).
- These findings are broadly reflective of a similar CIPD 2023 survey. However, as Figure 1 illustrates, there are a wide variety of arrangements offered, and these vary by sector.
- Interestingly, 28% offer some kind of four-day week, with the most common being compressed hours (with employees completing their regular weekly hours over fewer days).

Figure 1: Which flexible working arrangements, if any, does your organisation currently offer? (%)

Three-fifths believe advertising a role's flexibility is important for attraction

- Some 61% of organisations believe it is important to provide flexible working as an option when advertising jobs, as a means of attracting staff and addressing skills or labour shortages.
- Employers in the public (72%) and voluntary (73%) sectors are significantly more likely to say this than those from the private (57%) sector. And larger organisations of 250+ employees (71%) are also more likely to say this than those working in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (2–249 employees) (48%).

More than half say that all or most employees are able to work flexibly

- Over half (58%) of respondents say that all (26%) or most (33%) employees are able to work flexibly in their organisation. But that leaves two-fifths (40%) who say that just some (28%) or only a few (12%) employees are able to work flexibly. This could potentially cause divisions and perceptions of unfairness across workforces.
- SMEs are most likely to say that all/most (65%) employees are able to work flexibly, compared with larger organisations (53%), as are those from the voluntary sector (67%), compared with the private (58%) and public (55%) sectors.

Figure 2: Employees who are able to work flexibly (%)

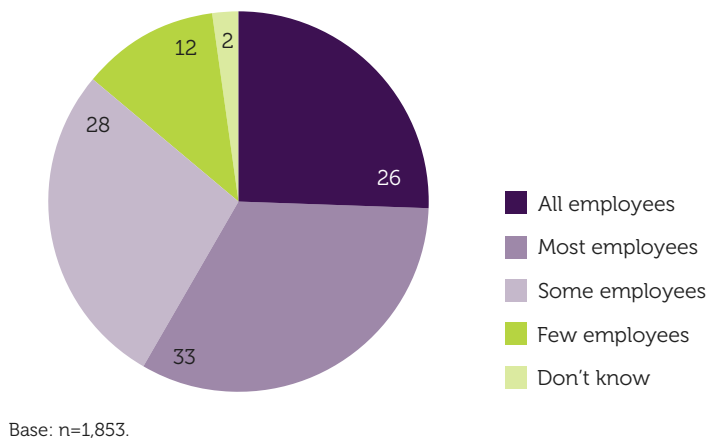
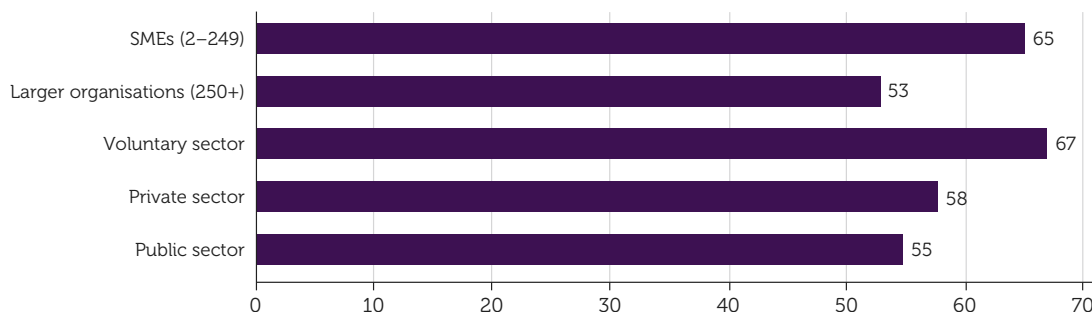


Figure 3: All or most employees are able to work flexibly (%)

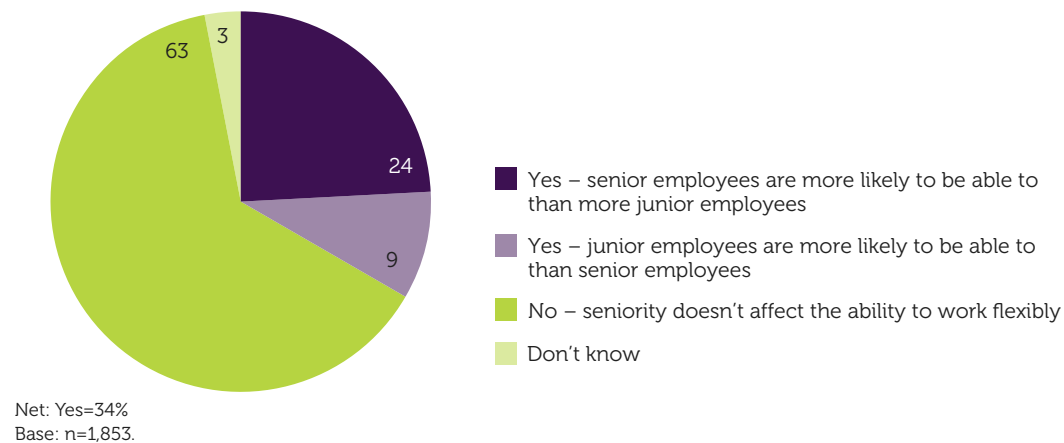


Base: SMEs (n=1,090); 250+ (n=763); private sector (n=1,311); public sector (n=337); voluntary sector (n=205).

Most believe that seniority doesn't affect ability to work flexibly in their organisation

- Over three-fifths of organisations (63%) believe that seniority doesn't affect the ability to work flexibly in their organisation.
- However, a quarter (24%) say that senior employees are more likely to be able to work flexibly than more junior employees. Younger respondents (18–34: 45%) are more likely to say this than any other age group. Those in the private sector (27%) are also more likely to say this compared with the public (16%) and voluntary (17%) sectors.
- On the other hand, almost one in 10 (9%) say junior employees are more likely to be able to work flexibly than senior employees, and this is more likely in the public sector (16%) compared with the private (8%) and voluntary (5%) sectors.

Figure 4: Senior employees are more likely to be able to work more flexibly than more junior employees (%)



To ensure greater fairness in access to flexible working, it could be helpful to map out what different types of flexible working might be possible for different roles across organisations. While in many cases it might not be possible to offer the same types of flexibility, it is important to work towards some kind of parity of opportunity for flexibility and to explore alternatives that might work (see also '[Flexibility for frontline workers](#)').

Around a fifth plan to take steps to increase wider forms of flexible working

Almost a fifth (19%) say their organisation will be taking steps over the next 12 months to increase the provision/uptake of wider forms of flexible working, besides home and hybrid working. This is broadly reflective of a similar [CIPD 2023 survey](#).

The top reasons for increasing flexible working are to:

- improve an organisation's ability to attract and retain staff (64%)
- support employee work–life balance (62%)

- support staff motivation/productivity (56%)
- support employees' mental health and wellbeing (55%).

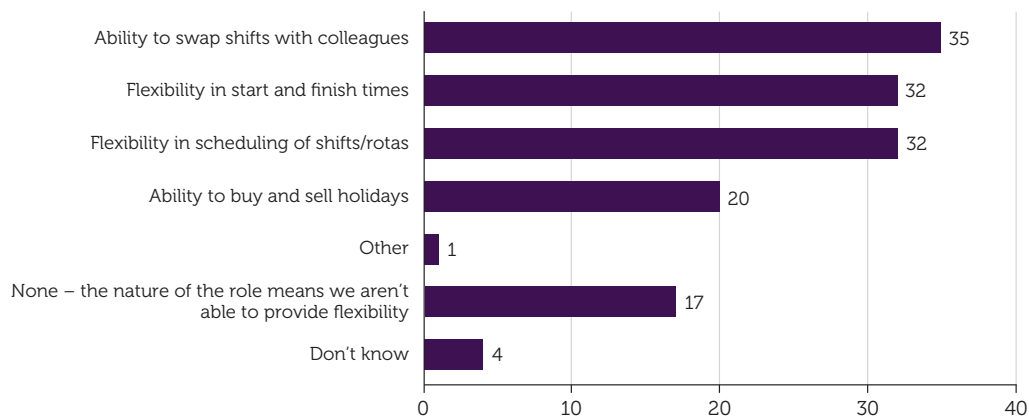
The top reasons for why employers are not planning to increase the availability and uptake of wider forms of flexible working are:

- they already have sufficient flexible working arrangements in place (28%)
- some of the jobs in the organisation require specific hours, and flexible hours would be perceived as unfair if not available to all (24%)
- not a business priority right now, given the challenges facing the organisation (23%)
- concerns that an increase in flexible working will reduce productivity (20%).

Flexibility for frontline workers

- Importantly, we also explored the prevalence and type of flexibility afforded to workers in frontline roles that are unable to work from home or remotely. This includes frontline roles in a range of sectors, such as education, healthcare, transport, hospitality, retail, manufacturing and construction.
- Three in five (59%) offer some kind of flexibility, with the most popular forms being: the ability to swap shifts with colleagues (35%); flexibility in start and finish times (32%); and flexibility in scheduling shifts/rotas (32%). A fifth (20%) also offer the option of buying and selling holidays.
- These responses are broadly comparable with our [similar survey in 2023](#).

Figure 5: Flexibility for frontline workers (%)



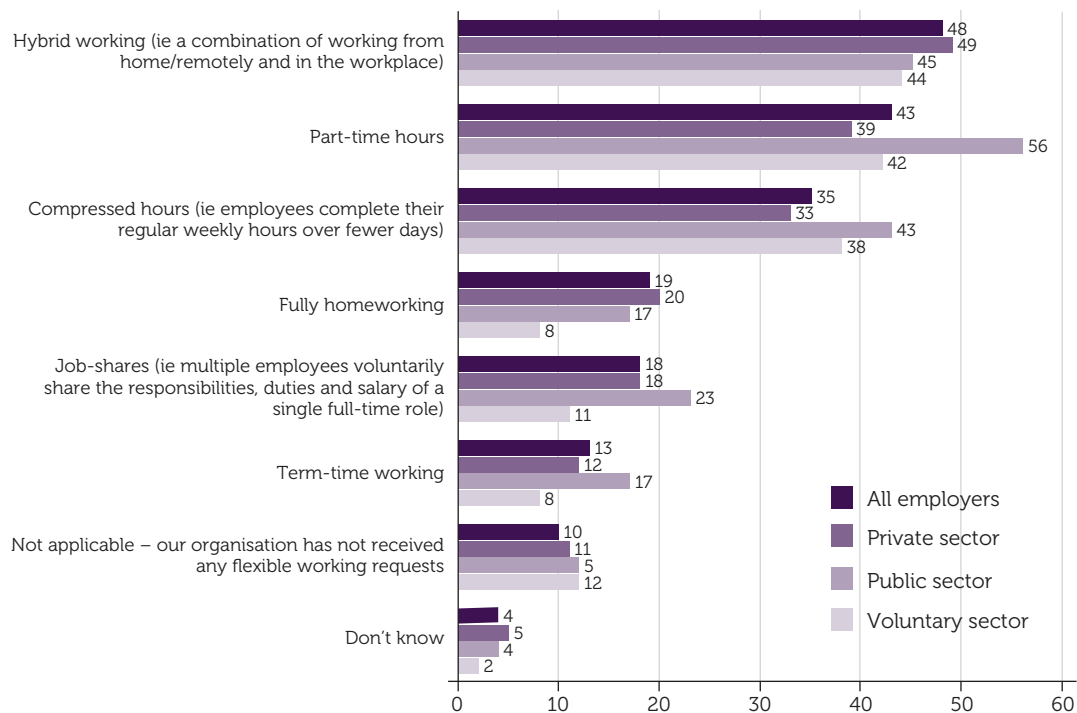
Base: all employers (n=2,050).

According to evidence from [Timewise](#), the gap between desk-based and frontline workers is widening when it comes to having control over working hours and patterns. Since 2019, 1.3 million more people in higher-paid desk-based jobs gained access to flexible working hours, while the number of shift-based workers with access to flexible working hours saw no growth at all.

Impact of the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 and the day one right to request flexible working

- Almost a fifth (18%) of organisations have experienced an increase in flexible working requests since the introduction of the day one right to request flexible working, with those in the public (21%) sector most likely to say this compared with the private (17%) and voluntary (12%) sectors. Almost half (45%), though, say the levels of requests have remained the same.
- While these flexible working requests have tended to be for hybrid working and part-time hours, it is also interesting to see quite a wide variety of requested arrangements, including requests for compressed hours, job-shares and term-time working. Requests for part-time working are more common in the public sector, as are requests for compressed hours, job-shares and term-time working.

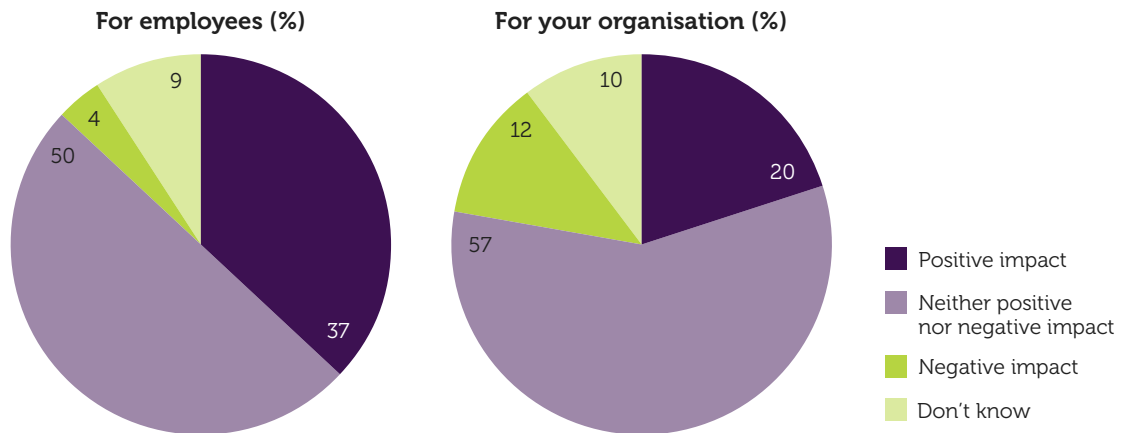
Figure 6: Flexible working requests (%)



Base: all employers who recall requests for flexible working (n=1,283); private sector (n=907); public sector (n=236); voluntary sector (n=140).

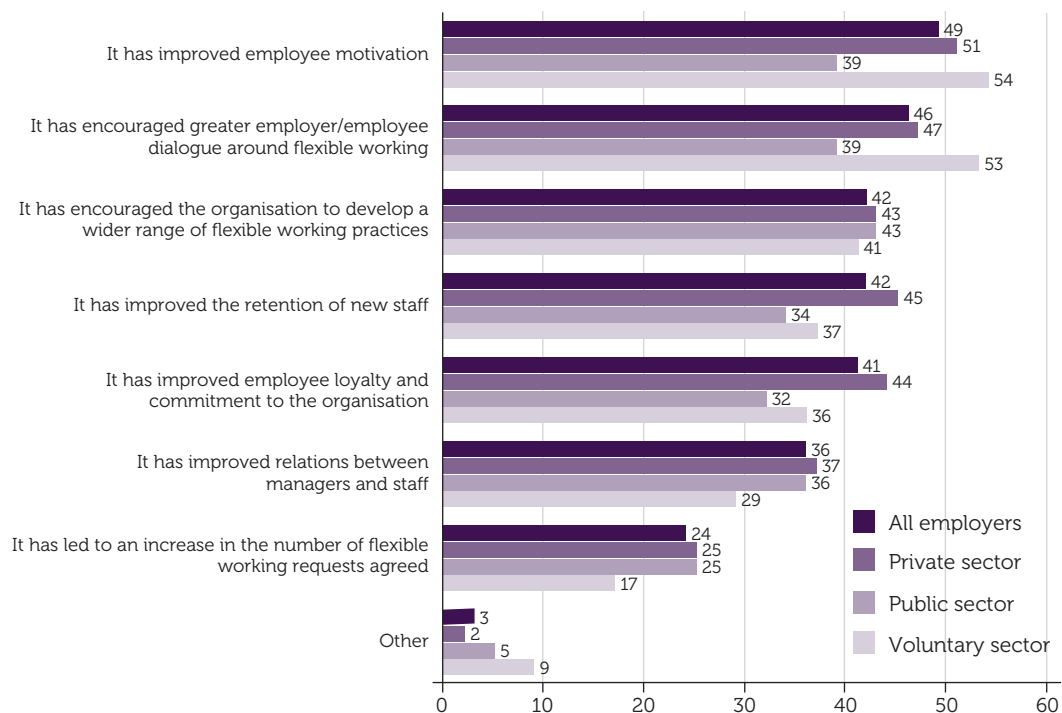
Around a fifth are more likely to grant requests compared with before the legislation change

- Around a fifth (22%) say their organisations are more likely to grant flexible working requests following the April 2024 legislation change, with a small proportion (8%) saying they are less likely to. However, for most (71%), this has remained the same. Use our flowcharts to respond to and manage flexible working requests.
- Organisations are more likely to say the change in legislation has led to a positive rather than negative impact for their employees (37% positive, 4% negative) and for their organisation (20% positive, 12% negative). However, at least half suggest it has had neither a positive nor negative impact for either employees or the organisation.

Figure 7: Impact of change of legislation

Base: all employers (n=2,050).

- In terms of the positive impact of the legislation, organisations cite improved employee motivation, greater employer and employee dialogue around flexible working, and the fact it has encouraged the organisation to develop a wider range of flexible working practices. Organisations also feel it has improved the retention of new staff and employee loyalty and commitment to the organisation. Those in the private sector are more likely than those in the public sector to point to improved employee motivation (51% v 39%), improved retention of new staff (45% v 34%) and improved loyalty and commitment to the organisation (44% v 32%).

Figure 8: Positive impact of the legislation (%)

Base: all employers reporting a positive impact (n=708); private sector (n=515); public sector (n=129); voluntary sector (n=64).

For the smaller number of organisations that felt the legislation had resulted in a negative impact, they cited:

- creation of conflict, where requests cannot be agreed (56%)
- damage to employee morale, where some requests cannot be agreed (44%)
- damage to employee relations, where some requests are approved and some are not (34%).

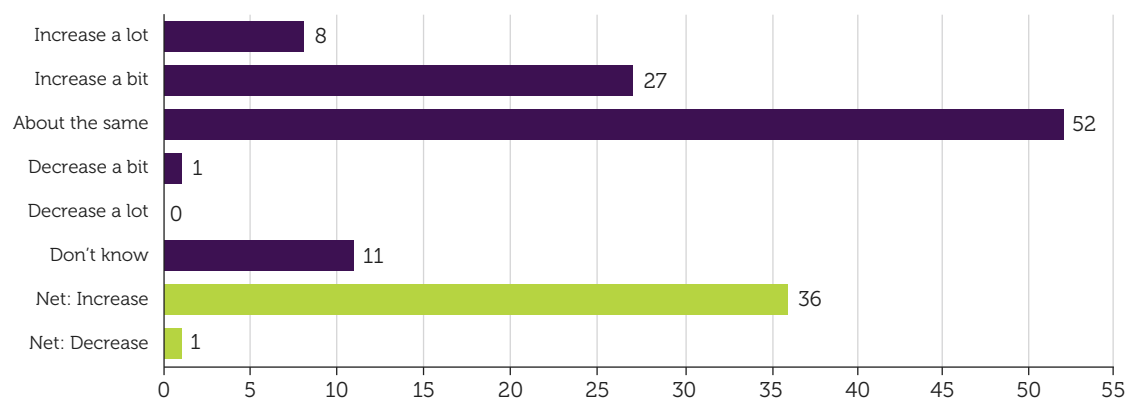
Three-fifths are aware that the government is proposing to strengthen legislation

- Before this survey, more than three-fifths (64%) were aware that the government is planning on strengthening the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 through the Employment Rights Bill. This means that any refusal of a flexible working request must be reasonable, but that the eight business reasons listed in legislation will remain the same. It is also proposed that an employer must explain in writing the reason for any refusal and why their refusal is considered reasonable.
- While this shows positive awareness, it still leaves over a third (36%) who were unaware of this proposal. With around 28 provisions and potentially many further amends to the Employment Rights Bill, the government will need to do more to clearly communicate these changes, phase the implementation and properly support organisations, particularly SMEs.
- Awareness is lower in SMEs (2–249), with 41% saying they were unaware of this proposed change (compared with 33% in 250+ organisations).

More than a third expect a further increase in accepted flexible working requests

- If the legislation is strengthened in the Employment Rights Bill, more than a third (36%) expect an increase in the number of flexible working requests their organisation accepts. Just 1% expect a decrease in accepted requests.
- Organisations in the private (37%) and public (37%) sectors are more likely to indicate they expect an increase in the number of accepted requests compared with the voluntary sector (25%), as are larger organisations of 250+ employees (42%) (compared with 26% in SMEs (2–249)).

Figure 9: Organisations' expectations of a further increase in accepted flexible working requests (%)



Base: all employers who offer flexible working (n=1,853).

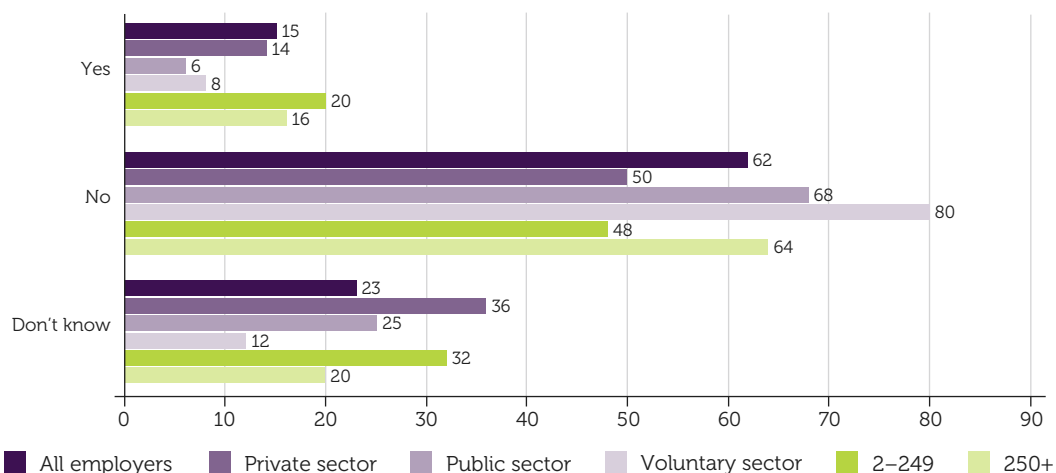
This could suggest that the potential strengthening of legislation is likely to increase access and uptake of flexible working arrangements across organisations, although attention still needs to be paid to ensuring parity of opportunity around flexible working – given this report’s findings around current availability by proportion of workforce and seniority.

Support for carers

With a substantial number of unpaid carers in work, we also explored the impact of the Carer’s Leave Act 2023 and wider support available to working carers:

- Over half (52%) of organisations have a policy or procedure for employees to request carer’s leave, while 29% don’t and 19% don’t know. This is despite the Carer’s Leave Act 2023 introducing a right to a week unpaid leave for employed informal carers in Great Britain from April 2024.
- Public sector organisations (75%) are more likely to have a policy or procedure in place than those in the private (46%) and voluntary (59%) sectors, as are those from larger organisations of 250+ (67%) (compared with 33% in SMEs).
- Since the introduction of the Carer’s Leave Act 2023 in April 2024, just 15% say they have seen an increase in requests for time off to manage caring responsibilities, raising questions about employee awareness or affordability of the unpaid leave. Requests are more likely in the private (16%) and public (14%) sectors compared with the voluntary sector (6%), and within larger organisations of 250+ employees (20%).
- The CIPD, along with other organisations, including Carers UK and the Centre for Care, have called for the existing carer’s leave provision of five days to become paid leave. From an affordability perspective, we know that working carers often have to reduce their hours to enable them to fulfil their caring responsibilities and that many have had to remortgage or take out loans to cover the cost of the care they provide ([Carers Week report, 2025](#)). Our [own research with Sheffield University](#) also shows that carers overwhelmingly point to paid leave as the most helpful way of supporting them with their caring responsibilities.

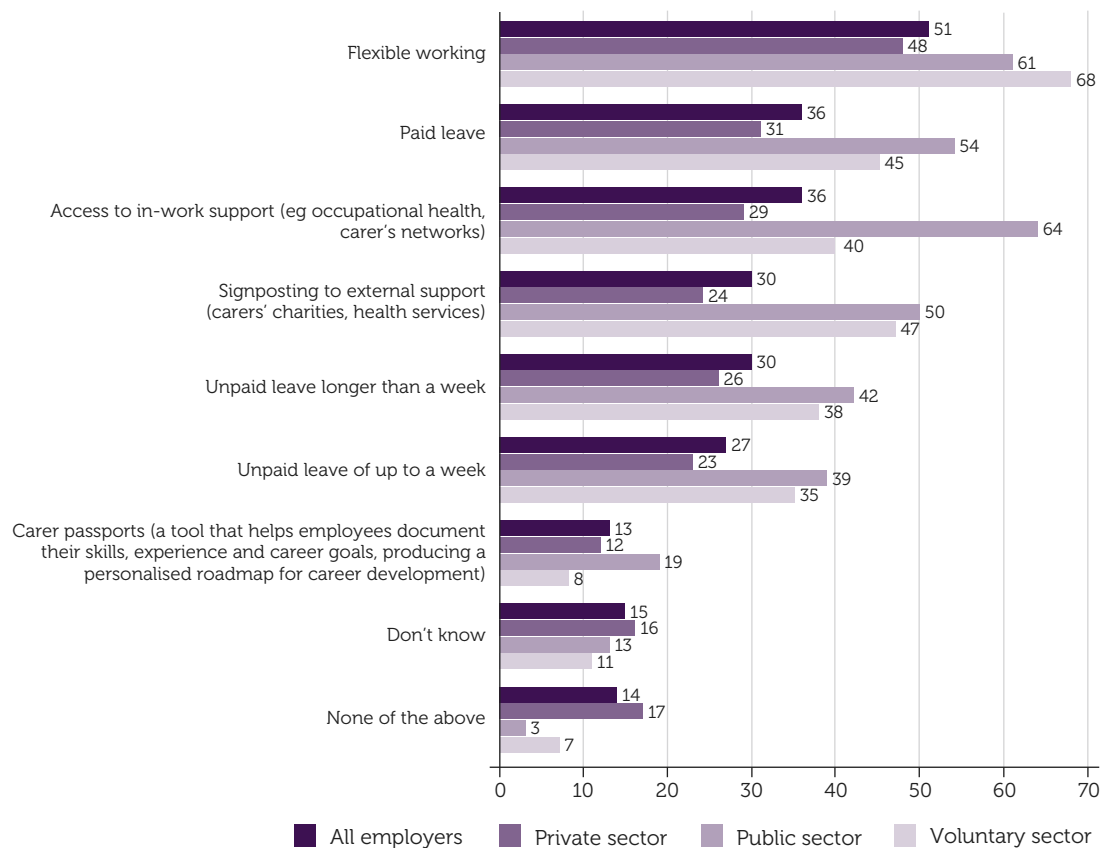
Figure 10: Increase in requests for time off to manage caring responsibilities, following Carer’s Leave Act (%)



Base: all employers (n=2,050); private sector (n=343); public sector (n=210); voluntary sector (n=1,258); 2-249 (n=792); 250+ (n=1,497).

- The most popular forms of support for carers include flexible working, paid leave and access to in-work support (such as occupational health or carers' networks). Other popular provisions are signposting to external support, granting unpaid leave longer than a week, and unpaid leave of up to a week (in line with the Carer's Leave Act 2023).
- Organisations in the public and voluntary sectors are more likely than those in the private sector to offer most forms of support shown in Figure 11, other than carer passports, which respondents in the voluntary sector are less likely to provide. Those in larger organisations are also more likely to offer all of the support forms compared with those in SMEs.

Figure 11: Available support for carers (%)



Base: all employers (n=1,429); private sector (n=974); public sector (n=289); voluntary sector (166).

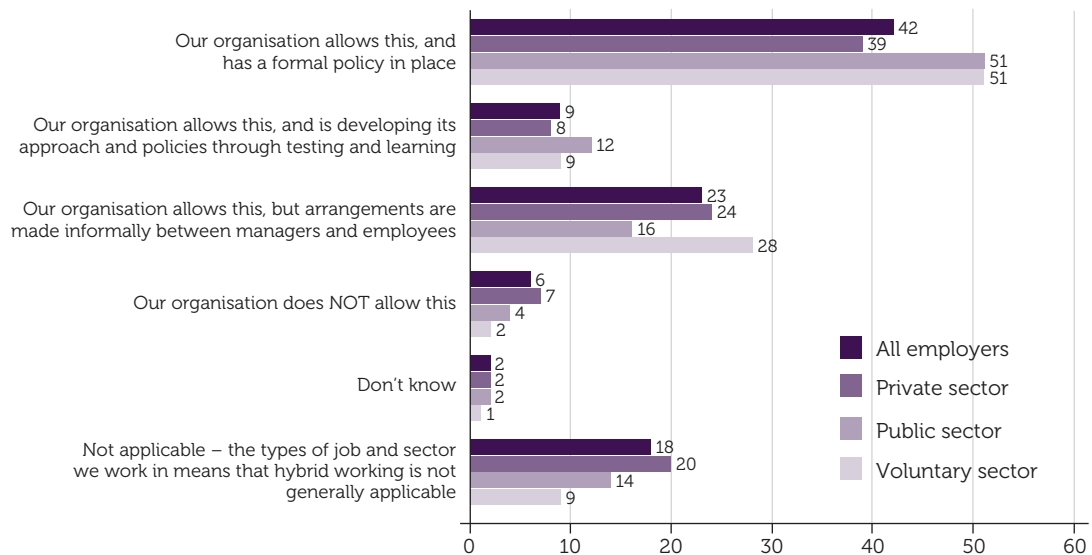
- When it comes to the support most requested by carers or carers' networks, flexible working (41%), paid leave (25%) and access to in-work support (25%) are the most popular provisions.
- In terms of support provided to line managers, respondents are most likely to say they provide guidance on supporting employees with caring responsibilities (35%), they signpost to specialist support for managers (28%) and they provide manager training to support employees with caring responsibilities (24%).

Hybrid working

Approaches to hybrid

- 74% of organisations have hybrid working in place. This has reduced slightly from 84% reported in a similar [CIPD survey in 2023](#) and 77% in [2022](#).
- 42% of organisations have a formal policy, while 23% have an informal approach where arrangements are made between managers and employees. A further 9% are developing their approach and policies through testing and learning.
- Public (51%) and voluntary (51%) sector organisations are more likely than those in the private sector (39%) to have a formal policy in place, as are larger organisations (54%) compared with SMEs (26%).

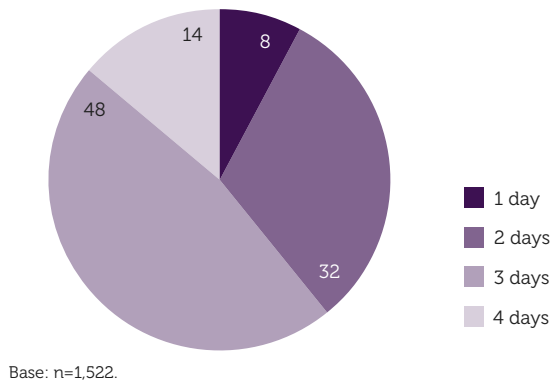
Figure 12: Approach to hybrid working (%)



Base: all employers (n=2,050); private sector (n=1,497); public sector (n=343); voluntary sector (n=210).

Time spent in the workplace

- More than two-fifths (65%) of organisations require employees to be in the workplace a minimum number of days per week/month.
- This requirement has increased from our survey findings in 2023, when 52% required hybrid working employees to be in the workplace for a minimum number of days in the working week/month.
- This requirement is more likely in larger organisations, while those in the voluntary sector (43%) are more likely than those in the private (31%) and public (29%) sector not to have a minimum office attendance requirement.

Figure 13: Minimum number of days per week employees are required in the workplace (%)

- For those that require employees to be in the workplace for a minimum number of days per week, the most common requirement is three days (48%), followed by two days (32%), four days (14%) and one day (8%).
- For those that require employees to be in the workplace for a minimum number of days per month, the most common requirement is five to 10 days (26%), followed by just one to four days (18%) and 11 to 15 days (16%).

Mandatory workplace plans

- Overall, 14% of all employers that allow hybrid working are planning to either introduce or increase the number of mandatory days in the workplace over the next 12 months.
- 10% of all employers who allow hybrid working and don't currently have mandatory days plan to introduce mandatory office days over the next 12 months. This is more likely in the public (12%) and private (11%) sectors, than in the voluntary sector (1%).
- 13% of all employers who allow hybrid working and already mandate days plan to increase the number of mandatory days employees are required to be in the workplace over the next 12 months.

Implications and recommendations

- There is no one-size-fits-all model. Every organisation should decide what approach works for them, ensuring that any flexibility provided to staff does not undermine the needs of the business.
- Organisations in different sectors will face different challenges and will need to adapt their flexible working and hybrid working policies accordingly. However, it is important that any decisions made around 'return to office' approaches are based on evidence and a clear rationale is communicated to employees for the approach taken. Organisations should look to put in place ways of tracking the impact of different ways of working on a range of areas, including attraction, retention, performance, job satisfaction, health and wellbeing, and collaboration.

- It is worth noting that much of the latest international evidence suggests that mandated returns to the office may not be effective in supporting better business or employee outcomes – they can lead to the exit of employees, particularly more experienced employees, and a reduction in positive employee sentiment. Research by [King's Business School](#) also shows that the proportion of workers saying they would look for a new job with homeworking opportunities if their employer imposed a 'return to office' mandate increased between early 2022 and the second quarter of 2024. If implementing such approaches, organisations should prioritise a clear rationale and communication, flexibility and a positive workplace experience, focusing on ways of boosting collaboration and workplace learning.

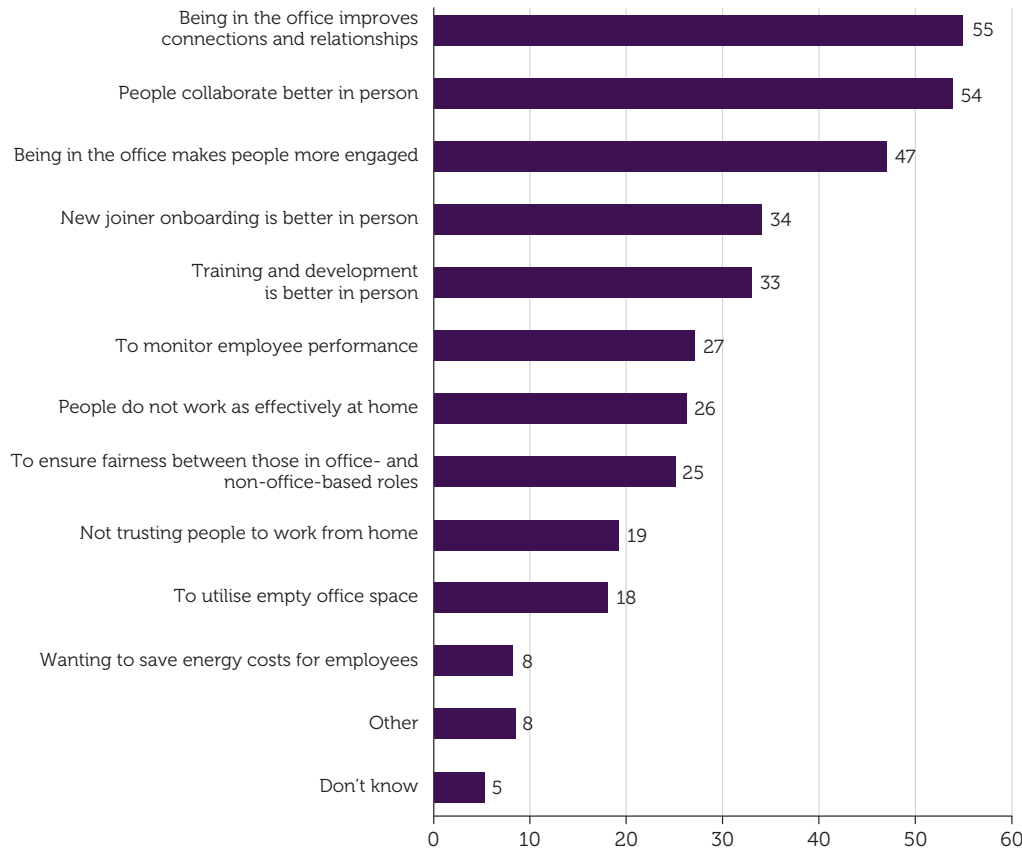
Respondents are split on whether there is pressure for employees to spend more time in the workplace

- Almost two-fifths (38%) of employers say there is a great deal/fair amount of pressure for employees to spend more time in the physical workspace, while a similar proportion (40%) say there is not very much pressure or no pressure.
- As we will discuss in more detail later in the report, employees themselves are more likely to report (53%) a great deal/fair amount of pressure to spend more time in the physical workspace.
- Pressure is higher, as you might expect, for those in larger organisations (250+ employees), who are more likely to report experiencing a great deal or fair amount of pressure compared with those in SMEs (2–249) (48% v 26%). Those in the public (42%) and private (39%) sectors are also more likely to report a great deal or fair amount of pressure compared with the voluntary (26%) sector.

Where there is pressure to spend more time in the workplace, this is most likely to be coming from senior leaders

- Around three-fifths (69%) who say there is pressure for employees to spend more time in the workplace say this is coming from senior leaders. Respondents also cite line managers (37%), customers/clients (22%) and employees themselves (18%).
- The top three reasons for exerting pressure to spend more time in the workplace (as given by employers in Figure 14) are thinking that connections and relationships are improved when people are in the office (55%), that people collaborate better in person (54%), and that being in the office makes people more engaged (47%). There are also beliefs that certain activities are better in person, such as onboarding and training and development (33%).
- There are very few differences by sector; however, private sector (29%) respondents are more likely than those in the public sector (21%) to give the reason of monitoring employee performance and more likely (10%) than respondents in both the public (5%) and voluntary (2%) sector to give the reason of wanting to save energy costs for employees.

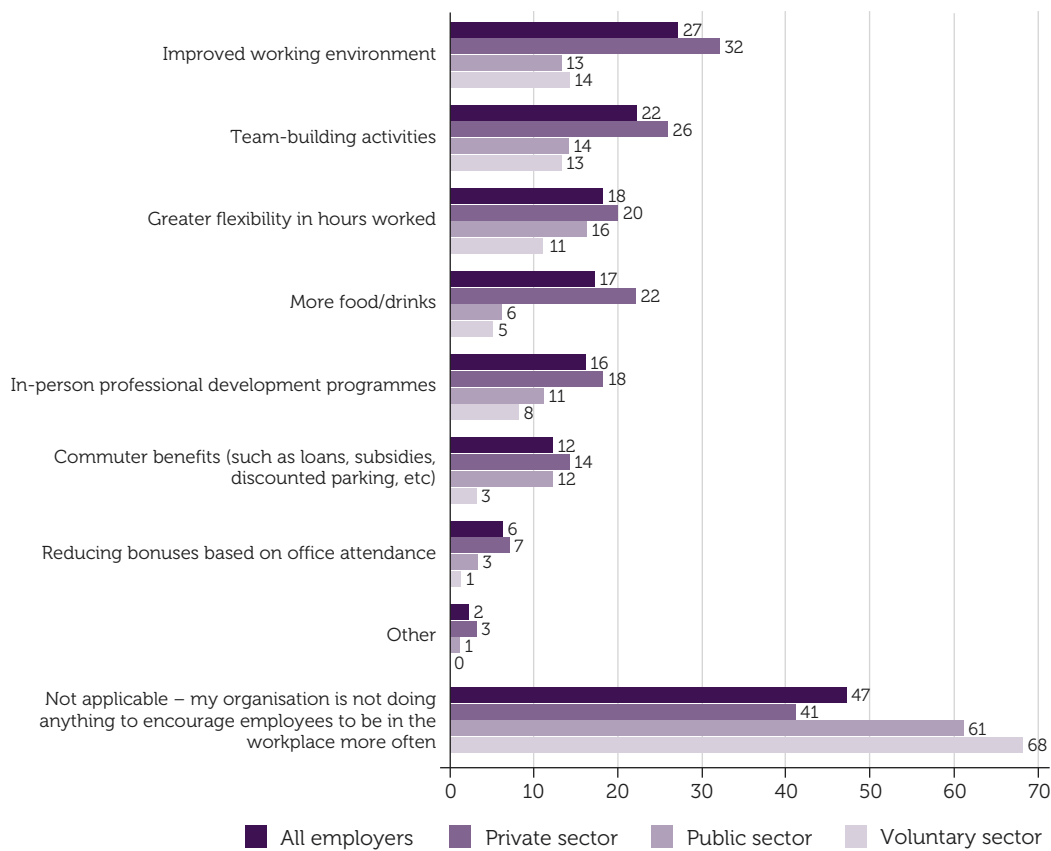
Figure 14: Reasons for wanting more employees to spend time in the physical workplace (%)



Base: all employers saying there is pressure to spend time in the workplace (n=1,226).

Over half (53%) of organisations that allow hybrid working have put in place incentives to encourage employees to be in the workplace more often

- Organisations are most likely to reference incentives such as an improved working environment, team-building activities, greater flexibility in hours worked, more food/drinks and in-person professional development programmes.
- Organisations from the private sector are more likely to have introduced a range of these incentives than those from the public and voluntary sectors.

Figure 15: Incentives to encourage workplace attendance (%)

Base: all employers whose organisation allows hybrid working: all employers (n=1,522); private sector (n=1,080); public sector (n=258); voluntary sector (184).

Impact on pay and benefits

A potentially divisive issue for the future of hybrid working is whether those who have to attend the workplace should attract a pay premium to compensate for additional commuting costs. The CIPD believes there are significant inclusion and equality risks associated with differentiating pay for hybrid and office-based staff.

Many organisations seem to recognise these challenges, since 64% of organisations have not reduced pay and/or benefits for employees who are predominantly working from home and do not intend to do so. However, 4% have reduced pay and/or benefits and a further 11% plan to do so in the future.

Respondents from the private (5%) and public (4%) sectors are more likely to have reduced pay and/or benefits than those from the voluntary (0%) sector and are also more likely to be planning to (private: 11%; public: 13%; voluntary: 4%).

Thirteen per cent of organisations report they have not reduced pay and/or benefits and have provided a contribution to cover the costs faced by employees who are predominantly working from home.

Tensions between those who can and can't work remotely highest in the public sector

- Almost a third (29%) of those from organisations that allow hybrid working say they have experienced or heard about tensions between employees who can and those who can't work remotely.
- This is particularly the case for respondents from the public sector (46%) (private: 26%; voluntary: 25%).

Additional measures to support hybrid working

- 15% of respondents say their organisations are planning to put in place additional measures or investment to enable more hybrid or homeworking in the next 12 months.
- The most popular additional measures to support hybrid working include a greater investment in both the quality (45%) and quantity of technology (39%), as well as more online guidance for line managers in managing and supporting homeworkers (35%). Respondents also point to more line manager training in managing and supporting workers (33%).

Perceptions of organisational productivity remain positive

- Around two-fifths (41%) believe that an increase in home/hybrid working has led to increased organisation productivity/efficiency in their organisation, while 16% believe it has decreased organisation productivity/efficiency.
- This is consistent with a similar [CIPD survey from 2023](#), which had the same net productivity score of +25 (see Table 1).
- This is fairly consistent across sectors and size of organisation, although respondents from the public sector (23%) are more likely to say it has decreased productivity/efficiency compared with those from the private sector (13%).

Table 1: Impact of hybrid working on an organisation's productivity and efficiency (%)

| Source of support | 2025 | 2023 | 2021 | 2020 |
|--|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Has increased productivity | 41 | 38 | 41 | 33 |
| Neither increased nor decreased productivity | 43 | 49 | 41 | 38 |
| Has decreased productivity | 16 | 13 | 18 | 23 |
| Net productivity score | +25 n=776 | +25 n=1,186 | +23 n=775 | +10 n=1,493 |

- At the same time, perceptions of employee productivity when working from home/in a hybrid way remain more positive (36%) than negative (22%) but have decreased somewhat from previous similar CIPD surveys (2023: 46%; 2021: 43%).
- These findings are consistent across sectors, with respondents from larger organisations more likely to rate employee productivity higher (40%) than those from SMEs (29%).

This overall positive view of perceptions of organisation and employee performance is supported by [Stanford University research](#). In the largest study yet of hybrid working, Stanford economist Nicholas Bloom and colleagues found that employees who work from home two days a week are just as productive, likely to get promoted, and far less prone to quit than colleagues working in the physical workspace.¹

However, [several studies](#) find that fully remote work yields lower productivity than on-site work. These studies suggest, in various ways, that fully remote work can slow communications, impede the diffusion of knowledge within an organisation, and narrow the scope of collaborative efforts.

There are other ways of measuring the business benefits and productivity of hybrid working, such as positive employee outcomes (like increased job satisfaction or reduced absenteeism) that influence organisational performance. It is important to also take these into account when looking to assess the impact of ways of working.

Wider impact of hybrid working

When looking at the wider impact of hybrid working, employers are most likely to say it has brought a positive impact for:

- attraction and retention of talent (+62)
- ability to recruit from a wider geography in the UK (+60)
- employee financial wellbeing (+56)
- the environment (+52).

They are most likely to say it has brought a negative impact for:

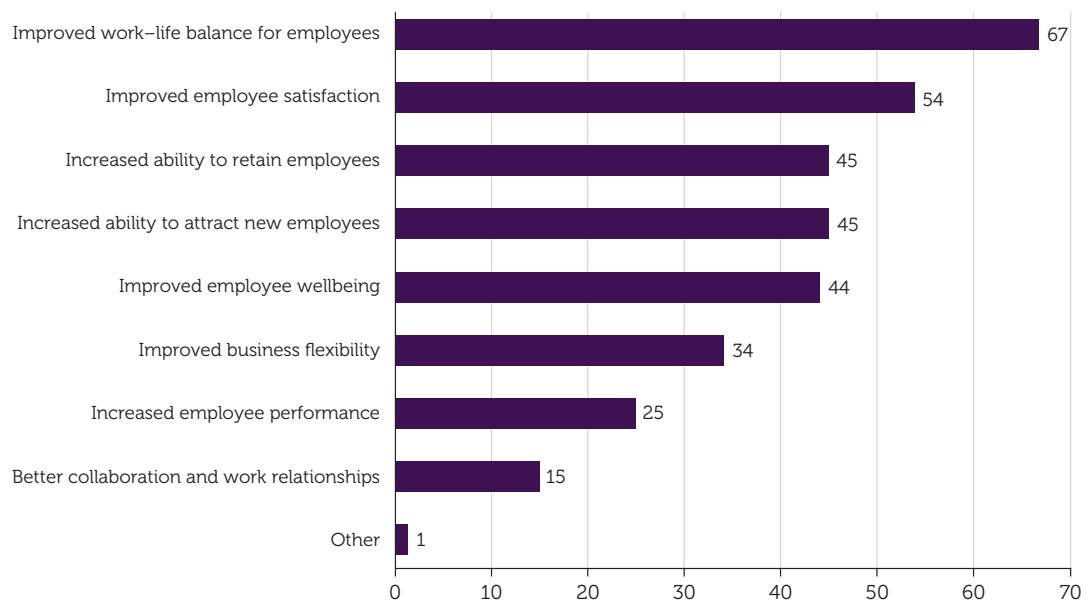
- ability of managers to lead teams effectively (–13)
- employee connection to organisation purpose (–10)
- the culture of the organisation (–2).

¹ This was based on a six-month randomised control trial investigating the effects of hybrid working from home on 1,612 employees in a Chinese technology company in 2021 and 2022.

Figure 16: Wider impact of hybrid working

Benefits and challenges of hybrid working

When it comes to the key benefits of shifting to increased hybrid working, respondents point to improved work–life balance for employees (67%) and improved employee satisfaction (54%), but, as shown in Figure 17, there are a range of benefits experienced.

Figure 17: Benefits of increased home/hybrid working (%)

Base: all employers who say that homeworking has increased (n=776).

Some of the top issues faced as a result of the shift to increased home or hybrid working include:

- getting people back into the office when needed (26%)
- managers managing remote teams from a wellbeing and performance perspective (25%)
- negative impact on collaboration and creativity (24%)
- technology and/or connectivity difficulties (23%)
- negative impact on culture (19%).

Continued concerns about inclusion risks

- Almost a third (32%) of employers are concerned about inclusion risks if employees move to home or hybrid working. By 'inclusion risks' we mean whether those working remotely/from home, either through choice or necessity, might be treated differently from those in the physical workplace in relation to things like project work, career development and progression, and so on.
- This figure has reduced from similar CIPD surveys in 2023 (39%) and 2021 (48%). Those in the voluntary (66%) and private sectors (60%) are more likely to say they are not concerned about inclusion risks, compared with those in the public sector (54%). Respondents in larger organisations (39%) are more likely to be concerned about inclusion risks than those in SMEs (23%).

It's important to build inclusion into hybrid working implementation and evaluation and ensure equality of opportunity for learning and development and reward and recognition, regardless of where and when people work.

Changes to office space

- 5% of respondents say they have closed all of their office space, with a further 8% considering making this change in the next 12 months.
- 18% have reduced their office space and a further 14% are considering reducing space in the next 12 months. Those from the public sector (26%) are more likely to have made this change, compared with those in the private (16%) and voluntary (18%) sectors.
- Almost a quarter (23%) have introduced shared working space, with a further 12% considering making this change. Again, those in the public sector (37%) are more likely to have made this change, compared with those in the private (20%) and voluntary (23%) sectors.

4 Employee perspectives

Range of flexible and hybrid working arrangements

When it comes to flexible working arrangements, employees are most likely to make use of working from home in normal working hours (50%) and flexi-time (38%). They also make use of a wider range of patterns, although to a lesser extent (see Figure 18).

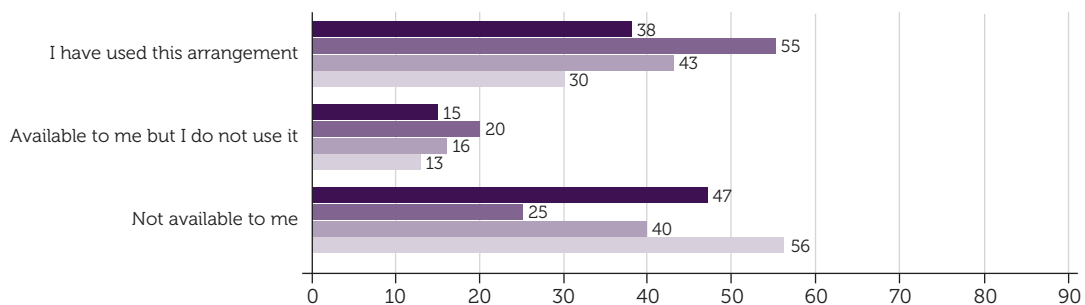
However, Figure 18 also shows that fairly high proportions of employees say that certain flexible working arrangements are not available to them – particularly job-sharing (80%), term-time working (80%), the four-day week without a reduction in pay (75%), annualised hours (73%), compressed hours (62%) and career breaks (61%).

Men (50%) are more likely than women (41%) to say the possibility to reduce working hours is *not* available to them. And women (47%) are more likely than men (43%) to say that working from home in normal hours is *not* available to them.

Figure 18 also shows that management level makes a difference to availability across most types of flexible working, with employees without management responsibility more likely to say arrangements are not available to them. This ties in with the employer perspective findings earlier in this report, where a quarter (24%) of respondents say that senior employees are more likely to be able to work flexibly than more junior employees.

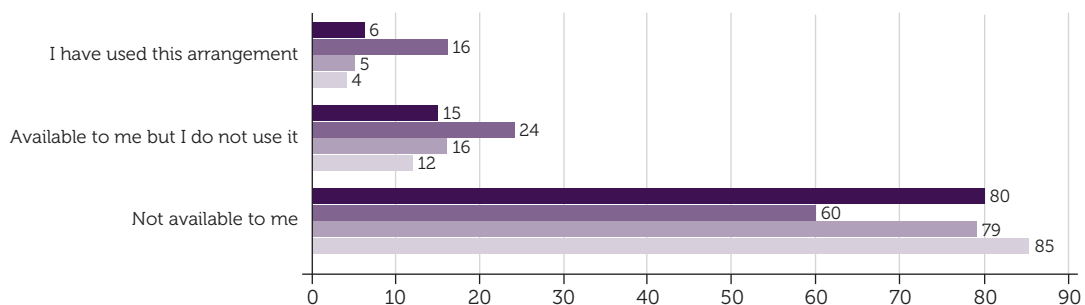
Figure 18: Availability and uptake of different forms of flexible working (%)

Flexi-time (ability to choose the start and finish time of the working day)



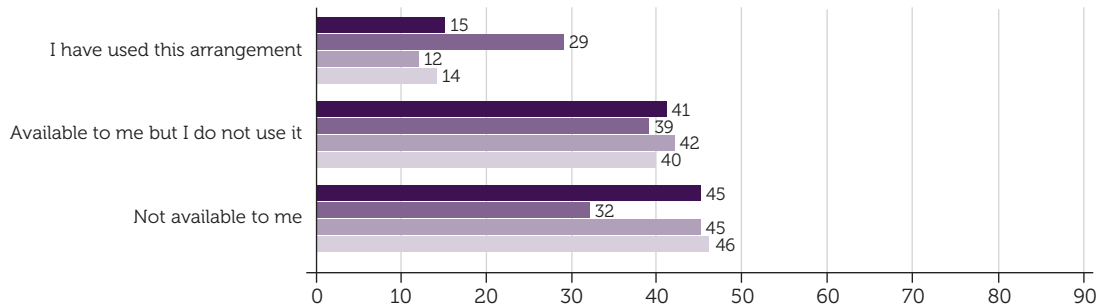
Base: all employees (n=4,410); board level (n=347); senior/other management (n=1,887); no management responsibility (n=1,983).

Job-sharing (sharing a full-time job with someone)

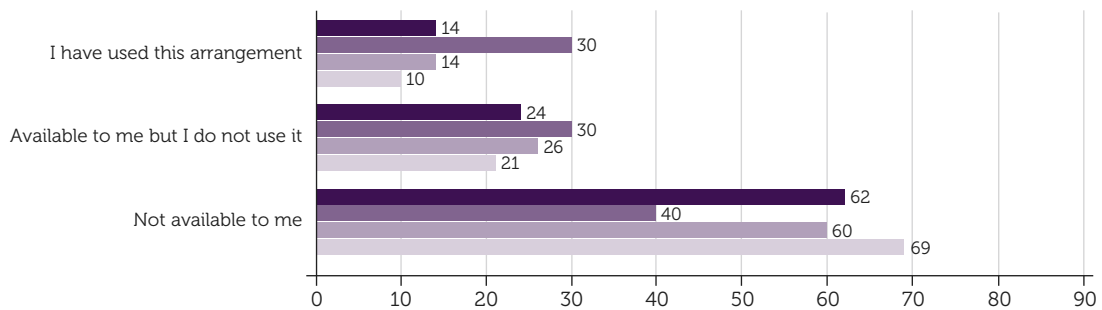


Base: all employees (n=4,127); board level (n=341); senior/other management (n=1,767); no management responsibility (n=1,841).

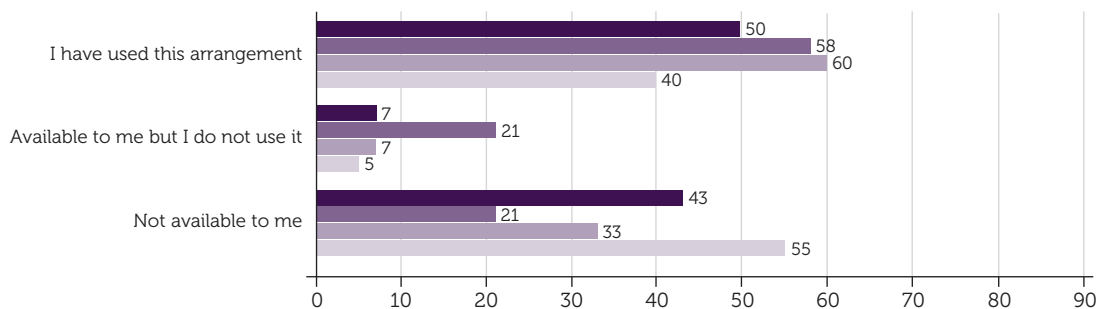
■ All employees ■ Board level ■ Senior/other management ■ No management responsibility

Figure 18: Availability and uptake of different forms of flexible working (%) (continued)**The possibility to reduce your working hours (eg full-time to part-time)**

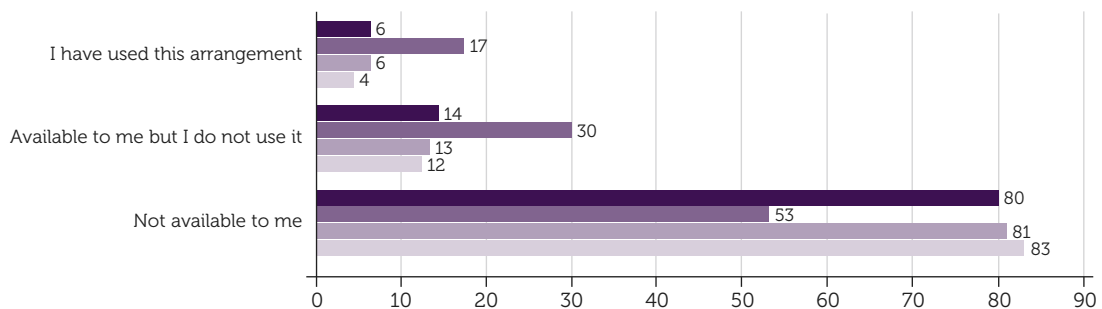
Base: all employees (n=4,157); board level (n=341); senior/other management (n=1,783); no management responsibility (n=1,851).

Compressed hours (working the same number of hours per week across fewer days, eg 37 hours in four days instead of five)

Base: all employees (n=4,220); board level (n=337); senior/other management (n=1,820); no management responsibility (n=1,877).

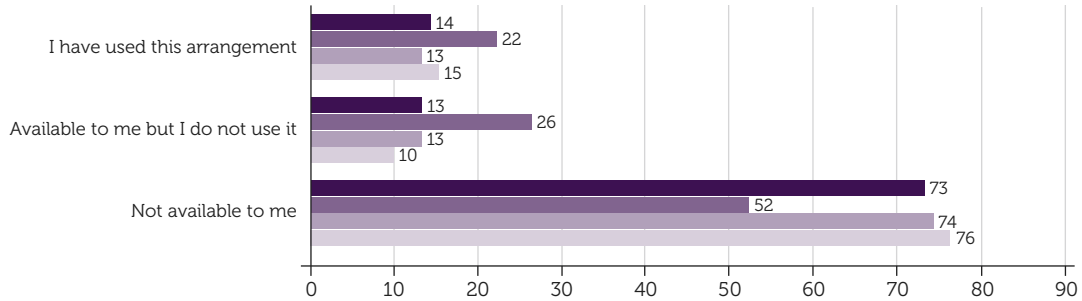
Working from home in normal working hours

Base: all employees (n=4,507); board level (n=352); senior/other management (n=1,919); no management responsibility (n=2,045).

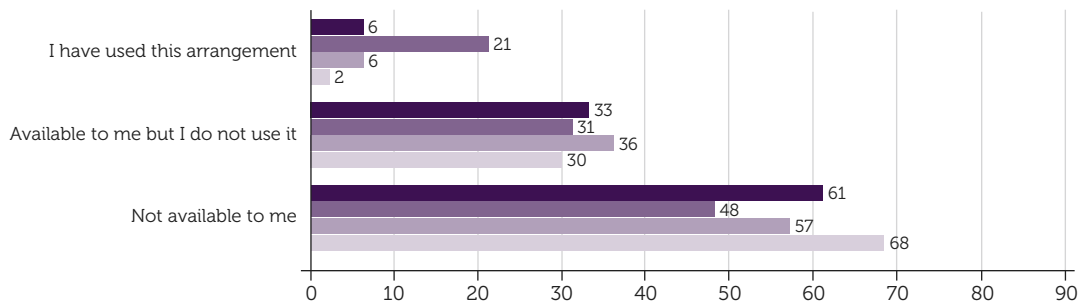
Working only during school term times

Base: all employees (n=4,090); board level (n=334); senior/other management (n=1,744); no management responsibility (n=1,831).

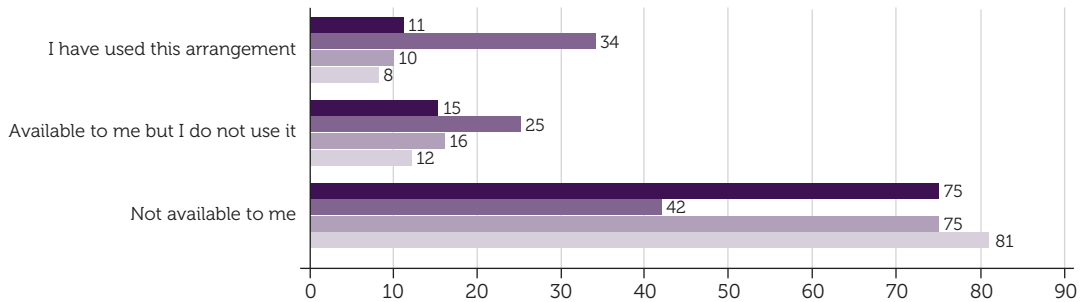
■ All employees ■ Board level ■ Senior/other management ■ No management responsibility

Figure 18: Availability and uptake of different forms of flexible working (%) (continued)**Annualised hours (a set number of contracted hours in a year)**

Base: all employees (n=3,802); board level (n=332); senior/other management (n=1,653); no management responsibility (n=1,642).

Career breaks

Base: all employees (n=3,877); board level (n=336); senior/other management (n=1,679); no management responsibility (n=1,688).

Four-day week (working a reduced number of hours per week without a reduction in pay)

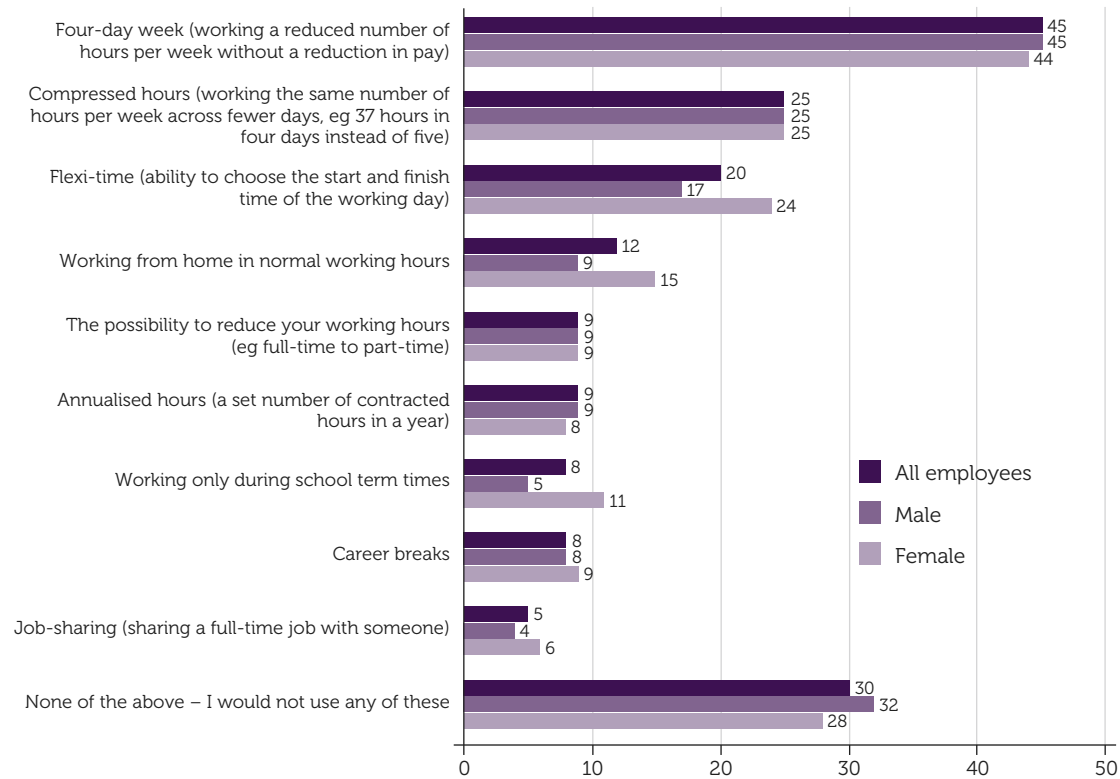
Base: all employees (n=4,292); board level (n=343); senior/other management (n=1,839); no management responsibility (n=1,926).

All employees
 Board level
 Senior/other management
 No management responsibility

Unmet demand for some types of flexible working

There is also some unmet demand. When asked about the types of flexible working arrangements they would use if available to them, employees point to a range of flexible working arrangements, particularly the four-day week without a reduction in pay (45%), compressed hours (25%) and flexi-time (20%). It is likely that these options are more popular with employees because they enable flexibility without loss of pay.

As shown in Figure 19, there are also differences between men and women regarding the types of arrangements they would use if available to them.

Figure 19: Types of flexible working arrangements that would be used if available in current role (%)

Base: all who said they have used at least one flexible working arrangement: all employees (n=4,221); male (n=2,256); female (n=1,965).

Three in 10 wouldn't feel comfortable requesting formal or informal flexible working

Despite the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 allowing employees to request flexible working from day one of employment, three in 10 say they wouldn't feel comfortable requesting formal flexible working (a change to a contract), with 59% feeling comfortable.

This shows the importance of culture, role-modelling and creating a supportive culture where people feel empowered to discuss their needs and come to an agreement that works for them and the organisation.

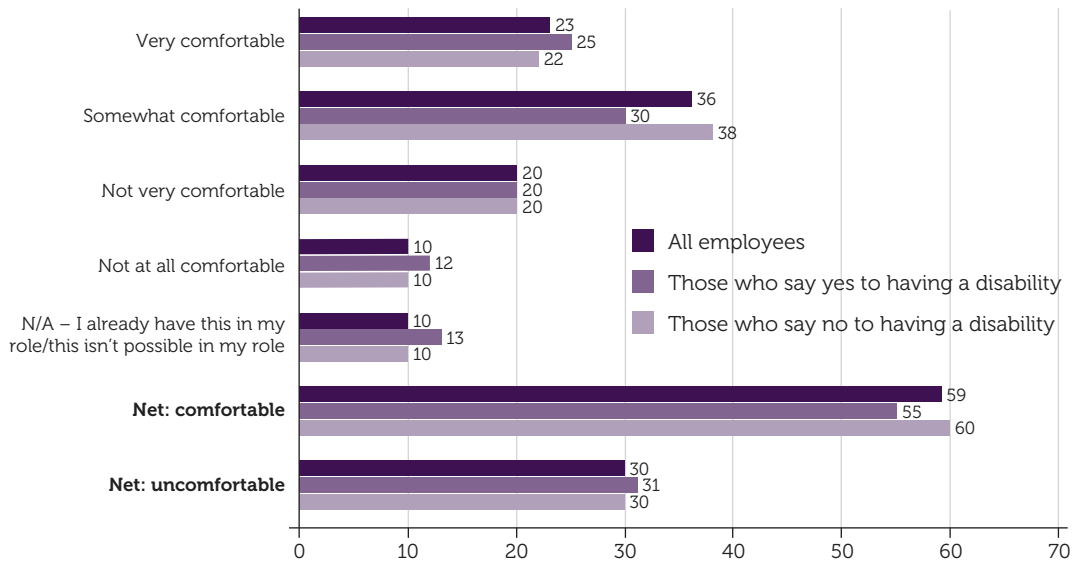
Concerningly, those with a disability are significantly less likely to feel comfortable than those without when requesting formal flexible working. This is despite employers having a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments, outlined in the Equality Act 2010, to remove or reduce any disadvantage a disabled person faces, which could include flexible working. Those with a physical (34%) or non-physical health condition (36%) are also more likely to feel uncomfortable requesting formal flexible working than those without (25%).

The findings are similar for comfort levels requesting informal flexible working, with 31% saying they wouldn't feel comfortable requesting informal flexibility (without a change to contract). Often informal flexibility can help support employees with ad hoc issues that occur as well as support a sense of control and work-life balance. Those with a physical or non-physical health condition are also more likely to feel uncomfortable requesting informal flexible working than those without.

Overall, these figures do, however, show some improvement since a similar CIPD survey in 2023, where 47% said they would feel comfortable requesting a formal flexible working pattern (with 28% feeling uncomfortable) and 53% said they would feel comfortable requesting informal flexible working (with 21% feeling uncomfortable).

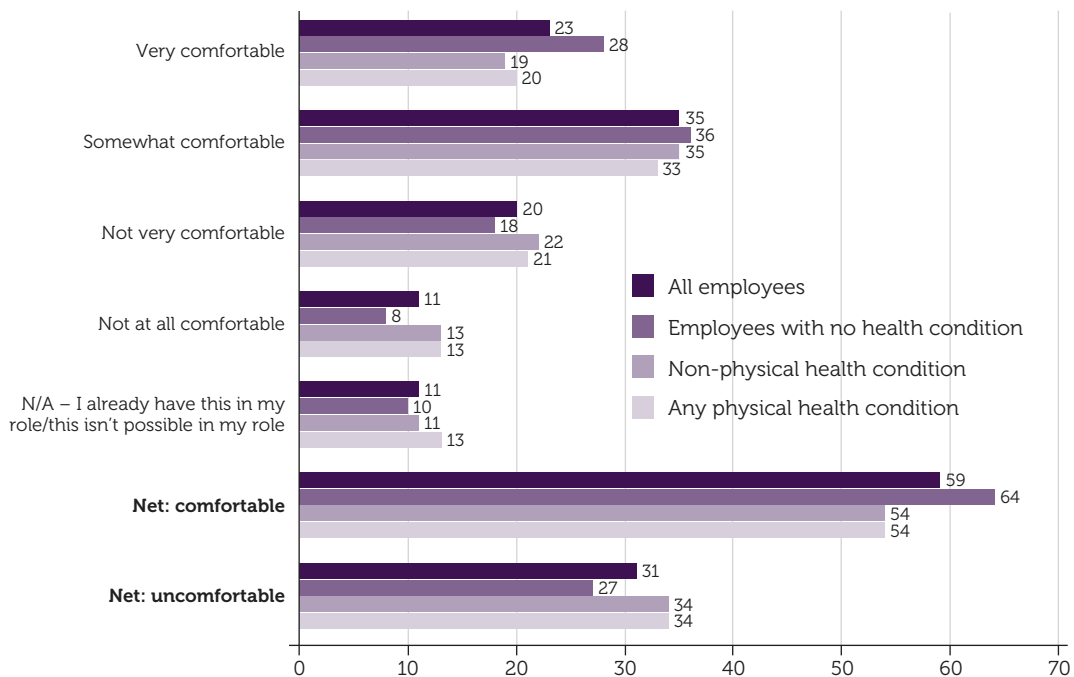
Figure 20: Comfort levels in requesting flexible working (%)

Formal flexible working (eg a change in your contract)



Base: all employees (n=4,257); yes to having a disability (n=711); no to having a disability (n=3,502).

Informal flexible working (eg without a change in your contract)

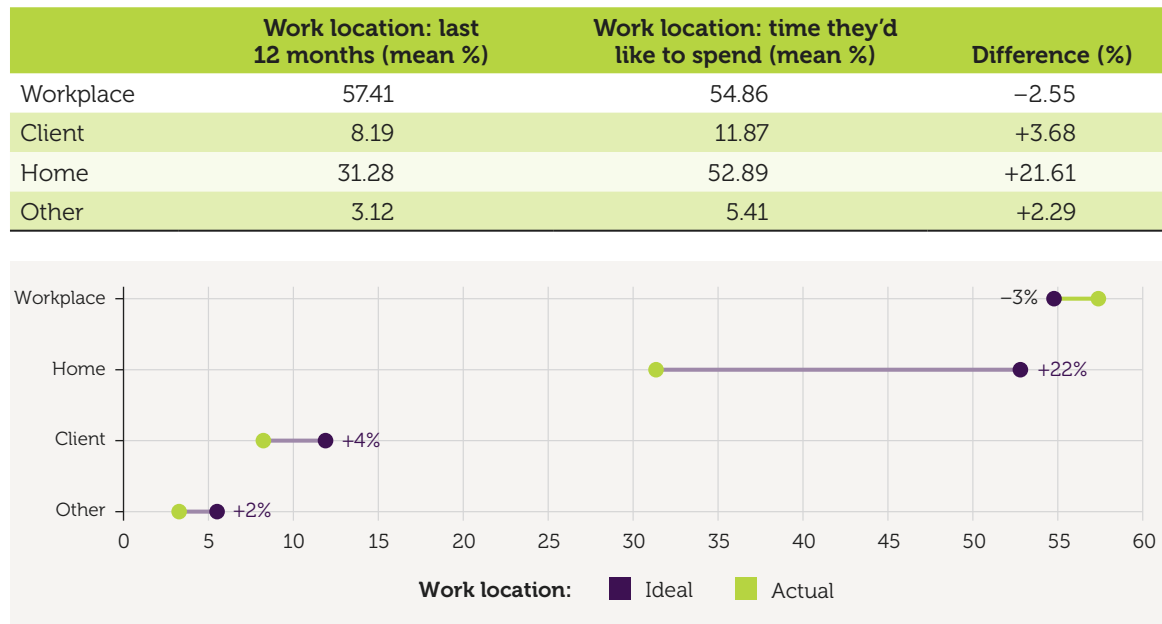


Base: all employees (n=4,178); no health condition (n=1,548); non-physical health condition (n=1,723); any physical health condition (n=1,852).

Hybrid working and returning to the office

Employees typically spend over half of their time in the workplace and almost a third of their time working from home, with less time spent with clients and in other locations. However, when it comes to where employees would like to spend their working time, there is a clear desire to split their time more evenly between working from home and in the workplace.

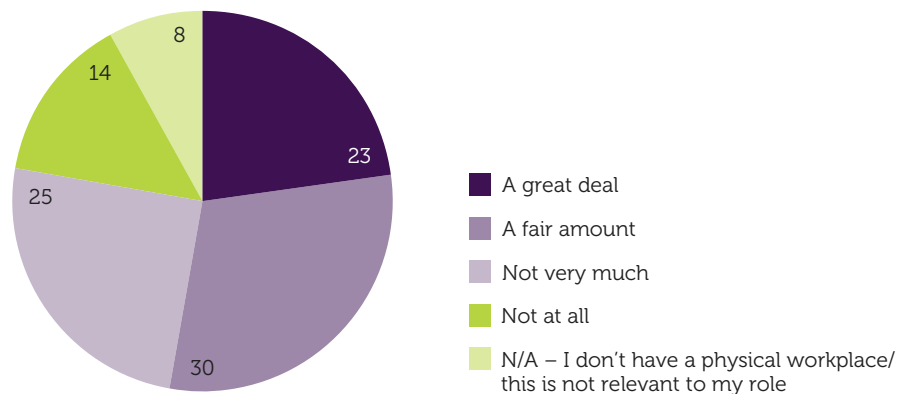
Figure 21: Time spent at work location in last 12 months versus preference



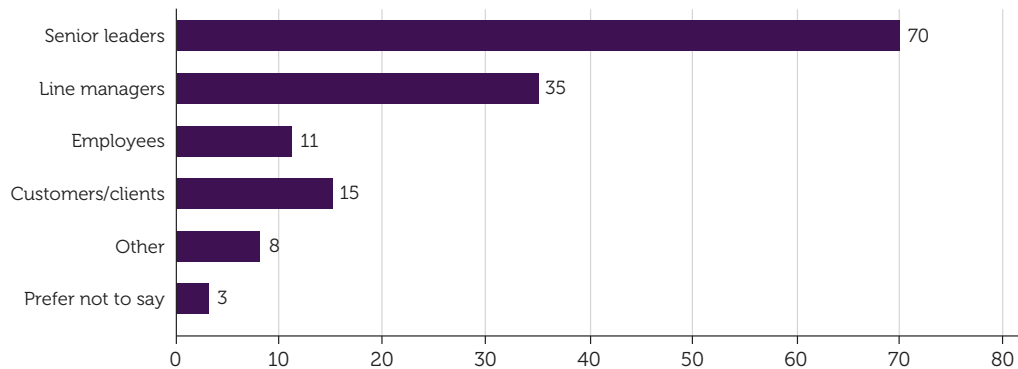
More than half of employees believe there is either a great deal (23%) or a fair amount (30%) of pressure for employees to spend more time in the physical workplace, while 39% say there is no pressure or not very much. This compares with 38% in the employer survey who felt there was a great deal/fair amount of pressure.

Many (70%) believe this pressure is coming from senior leaders, with over a third pointing to line managers (35%), 15% suggesting pressure is coming from customers/clients and 11% from employees themselves.

Figure 22: Pressure for employees to spend more time in the physical workspace (%)



Unweighted base (n=4,323).

Figure 23: Source of pressure (%)

Unweighted base (n=2,958).

When it comes to the reasons for this, they are most likely to say:

- thinking being in the office improves connections and relationships (45%)
- thinking employees collaborate better in person (44%)
- thinking being in the office makes employees generally more engaged (40%).

Working flexibly has had a positive impact on quality of life and career prospects

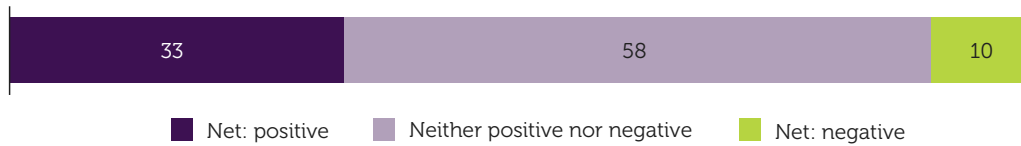
Eighty per cent of employees say that working flexibly has had a positive impact on their quality of life; just 4% say it has had a negative impact.

While a third believe that working flexibly has had a positive impact on their career, just one in 10 (10%) believe it has had a negative impact. This represents a significant improvement from 2022 (22%) and suggests that flexible working is increasingly accepted by employees as part of work and progression.

Men (33%) are more likely than women (26%) to say that working flexibly has had a positive impact on their careers, and employees with a disability are more likely to say it has had a negative impact (13% v 9%) as are those with a physical (11%) or non-physical (13%) health condition (compared with 7% without).

Figure 24: Impact of working flexibly on quality of life (%)

Base: all who work flexibly (n=3,281).

Figure 25: Impact of working flexibly on career prospects (%)

Base: all who work flexibly (n=3,205).

Lack of flexibility prompting job changes for some

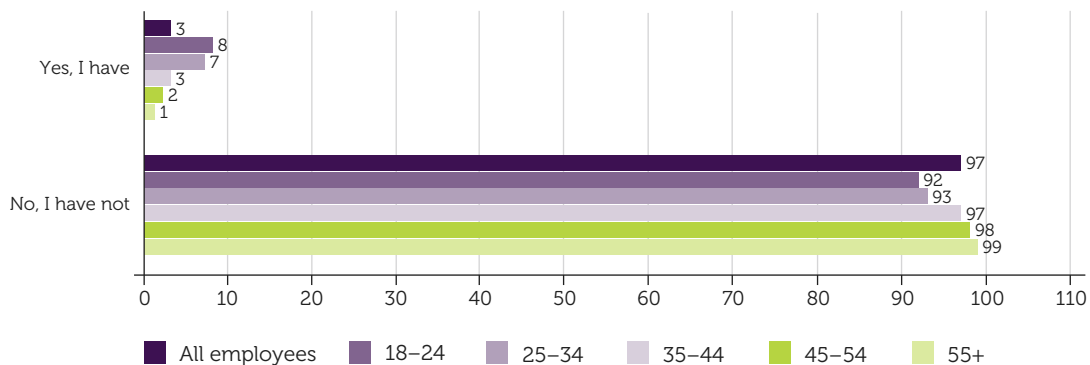
Three per cent of employees say they have left a job in the last year (since January 2024) due to a lack of flexible working. That represents around 1.1 million workers in total.²

This figure has reduced somewhat from a similar [CIPD survey in 2023](#), where 6% of employees said they had left a job in the last year specifically due to a lack of flexible working, potentially reflecting a more challenging labour market.

As shown in Figure 26, younger workers are more likely than older workers to have left a job in the last year due to a lack of flexible working. There is also a difference by employee ethnicity, with non-white employees (5%) more likely to have left a job for this reason than white employees (3%).

In terms of roles, employees in the voluntary sector (6%) are more likely to have left a job in the last year due to a lack of flexible working (private: 3%; public: 2%), and those at board level (9%) are also more likely to have left a job for this reason than senior managers (3%) or non-managers (3%).

Clearly, flexible working is important to retention and employers need to think about how they can prioritise this as part of their overall employee value proposition.

Figure 26: Those who have left a job in the last year due to a lack of flexible working (%)

Base: all employees (n=4,504); 18-24 (n=261); 25-34 (n=994); 35-44 (n=1,088); 45-54 (n=1,069); 55+ (n=1,092).

² This figure is based on CIPD calculations: 3.38% (employees surveyed who said they had left a job in the last year since January 2024 due to lack of flexible working) x 33,995,710 (people in employment in the UK at the time of the survey) = 1,149,055.

5 Background to the surveys

Employer survey 2025: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. The total sample size was 2,050 HR professionals. Fieldwork was undertaken between 14 April and 5 May 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of senior decision-makers.

Employer survey 2023: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. The total sample size for this survey was 2,049 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 1 February and 3 March 2023. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of senior decision-makers.

Employer survey 2021: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. The total sample size for this survey was 1,196 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 27 October and 15 November 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of senior decision-makers.

Employer survey 2020: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. Total sample size was 2,133 senior decision-makers in UK businesses. Fieldwork was undertaken between 10 December 2020 and 4 January 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of the UK business population by size, sector, industry and nation.

Employee survey 2025: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. The total sample size was 5,017 working adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 8 January and 18 February 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK working adults (aged 18+).

Employee survey 2023: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. The total sample size was 2,005 employees. Fieldwork was undertaken from 1–22 February 2023. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted by work sector, business size and region. It is representative of UK employees.

Employee survey 2022: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. The total sample size for this survey was 2,166 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 27 January and 3 February 2022. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

Employee survey 2020: All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. The total sample size was 2,127 GB employees. Fieldwork was undertaken from 22–31 December 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

Changes to the method for the surveys year on year mean that direct comparisons can't be made; however, broad changes/trends have been analysed.



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