

WHAT WORKERS WANT 2023

Different ways of working



[Introduction ▶](#)

[How do employees want to work? ▶](#)

[Is flexitime common? ▶](#)

[Do employers know how their staff prefer to work? ▶](#)

[Are flexible working policies accessible and transparent? ▶](#)

[Meeting restrictions ▶](#)

[How to support hybrid and remote workers ▶](#)

[How to encourage staff back to the workplace ▶](#)

[Key takeaways ▶](#)

[About us ▶](#)

INTRODUCTION

From hybrid to remote working, the four-day working week through to the traditional 9-5 in the workplace, organisations are now spoilt for choice when it comes to different ways of working.

Leaders across the UK continue to try and strike the right balance between what workers want in a new age of work, against maintaining productivity and a strong organisational culture.

As part of our 2023 What Workers Want series, we surveyed nearly 9,000 professionals to find out what they really want when it comes to different ways of working. Through our research, we uncovered interesting insights into how employees prefer to work, how organisations can better support their staff working in a hybrid or remote way, and what incentives could tip the scales to encourage professionals back to the workplace.

Read on to discover these insights as well as recommendations on how to make your organisation's working approach a success, whatever it may be.



SIMON WINFIELD
CEO,
Hays UK & Ireland



Methodology

These findings are based on our survey carried out between 13th April to 9th May 2023 that received 8,853 responses from across the UK.



HOW DO EMPLOYEES WANT TO WORK?

The debate about staff working in a hybrid or a remote way versus being fully in the workplace is still being widely discussed. Meanwhile, new approaches to working, such as the four-day working week, are becoming more widely known and trialled following recent pilots.

But all that said - how do employees prefer to work?

How would employees prefer to work?



29% of employees working in an **SME** prefer to work **fully in the workplace** compared to **18%** working in **large organisations**

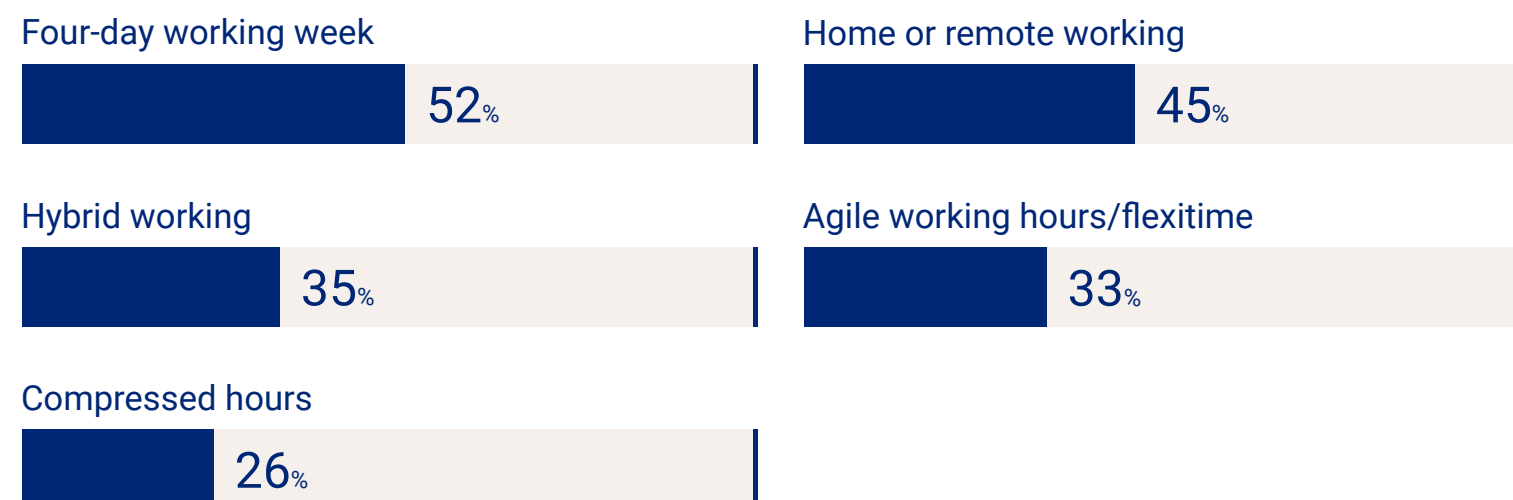
64% of employees under the age of 30 would prefer to work in a **hybrid way** compared to **51%** of those over the age of 50

Who are flexible working options offered to?

■ All staff ■ Each role is assessed individually



Top five flexible working options that would tempt employees to move job:



68% of employees would be tempted to move to an organisation that offered a nine-day fortnight, where they compress ten days' work into nine and have an extra day off every two weeks

The swift uptake of remote and hybrid working as a result of the pandemic has not necessarily been formally introduced into employee contracts.



IS FLEXITIME COMMON?

Flexitime, or the scope to change work hours outside of “core” business periods, can be a valuable benefit for employees, and can contribute to a more inclusive workforce.

Who is flexitime offered to?

■ All staff ■ Only some employees



56% of employees don't have the autonomy to work the hours they choose and must work within their contracted hours

76% of employees would be tempted to move to an organisation that offered greater autonomy in the hours they choose to work



DO EMPLOYERS KNOW HOW THEIR **STAFF PREFER TO WORK?**

Employee feedback surveys are a useful and important way for business leaders to understand staff sentiments and act accordingly. To get the most out of internal surveys, clear communication at all stages is vital, from the very start when requesting staff complete feedback surveys, all the way through to sharing results and the actions being taken.

Failure to do so could leave employees feeling unheard and discentivised from engaging in future feedback surveys.

Do organisations ask for employee feedback on preferred ways of working?

■ No ■ Yes, once a year ■ Yes, more than once a year



51% of SME organisations ask for employee feedback compared to 63% of large organisations

Less than a quarter of employers check in with staff regularly on their preferred ways of working

Do employees think their organisation shares the feedback from employee surveys with staff?

■ Always ■ Sometimes ■ Never



Less than half of employees say their employer always shares the feedback from internal surveys with staff



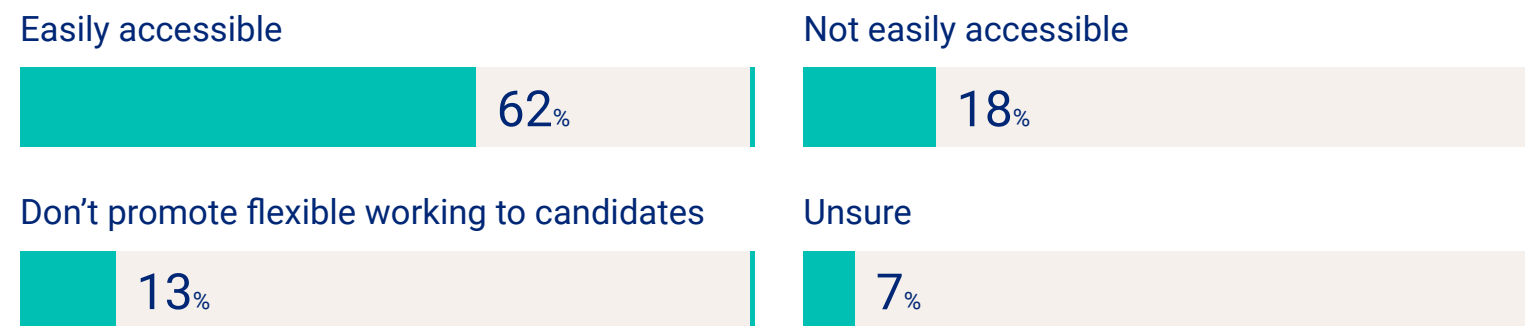
ARE FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICIES **ACCESSIBLE AND TRANSPARENT?**

With flexible working so highly sought after and valued by many employees, information about an organisation's flexible working policies needs to be readily available to prospective candidates during the hiring process. Transparency around flexible working is also crucial to attract and retain staff.

Accessibility

90% of employees think it's important to have **easy access to an organisation's flexible working policy** when looking for a new role

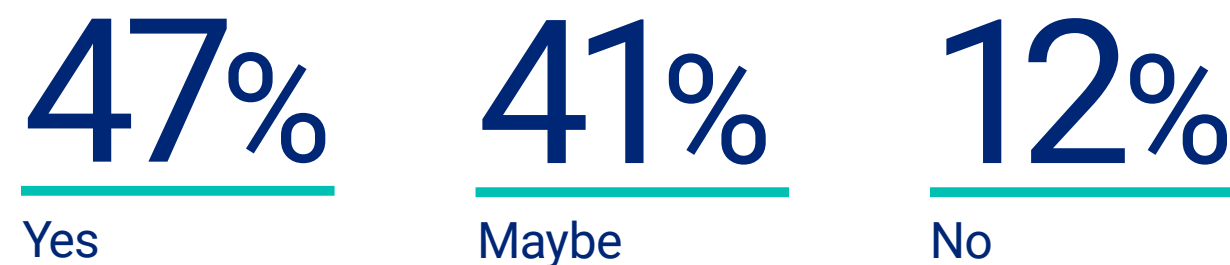
How accessible do employers think their flexible working policy is to job candidates?



Transparency

93% of employees think it is **important** for their organisation to be transparent about its approach to flexible working

Would employees be tempted to move to an organisation that was more transparent about their flexible working opportunities?



Upgrade your talent acquisition campaigns and enhance your employee value proposition with our **digital solutions service**

[Find out more ▶](#)

MEETING RESTRICTIONS

A common complaint and hangover from the pandemic has been the increase in the number of meetings individuals are invited to attend, either online or face-to-face. Employers could consider implementing some restrictions or boundaries to help reduce time spent in meetings.

70% of employers **do not have any restrictions on meetings**

Meeting restrictions employees would find beneficial versus employers that have implemented them:

Beneficial for employees

Implemented by employers

No meetings during lunch hours/certain hours during the day



Limit on duration of meetings



Meeting-free days



Remove recurring meetings



HOW TO SUPPORT **HYBRID AND REMOTE WORKERS**

Many employers are still figuring out how to best support hybrid and remote workers, with a noticeable disconnect between the support employees want compared to what's being offered.

Support employees want

Clear training and development opportunities



Regular career progression reviews



Hardware to undertake job



Mental health and wellbeing support



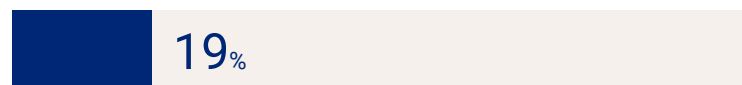
Provide and train staff in productivity software to facilitate remote collaboration



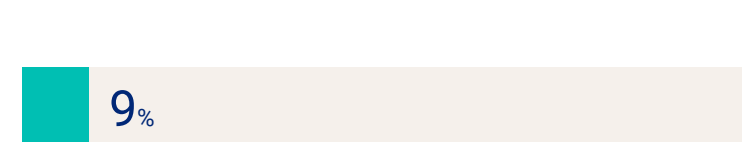
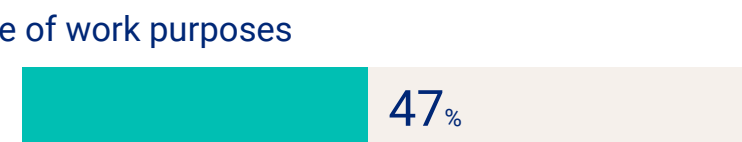
Organise opportunities to meet colleagues outside of work purposes



Reduce online meetings



Support offered by employers



Check out our free online training portal designed to **upskill your workforce** in the skills they need to thrive

[Learn more ▶](#)

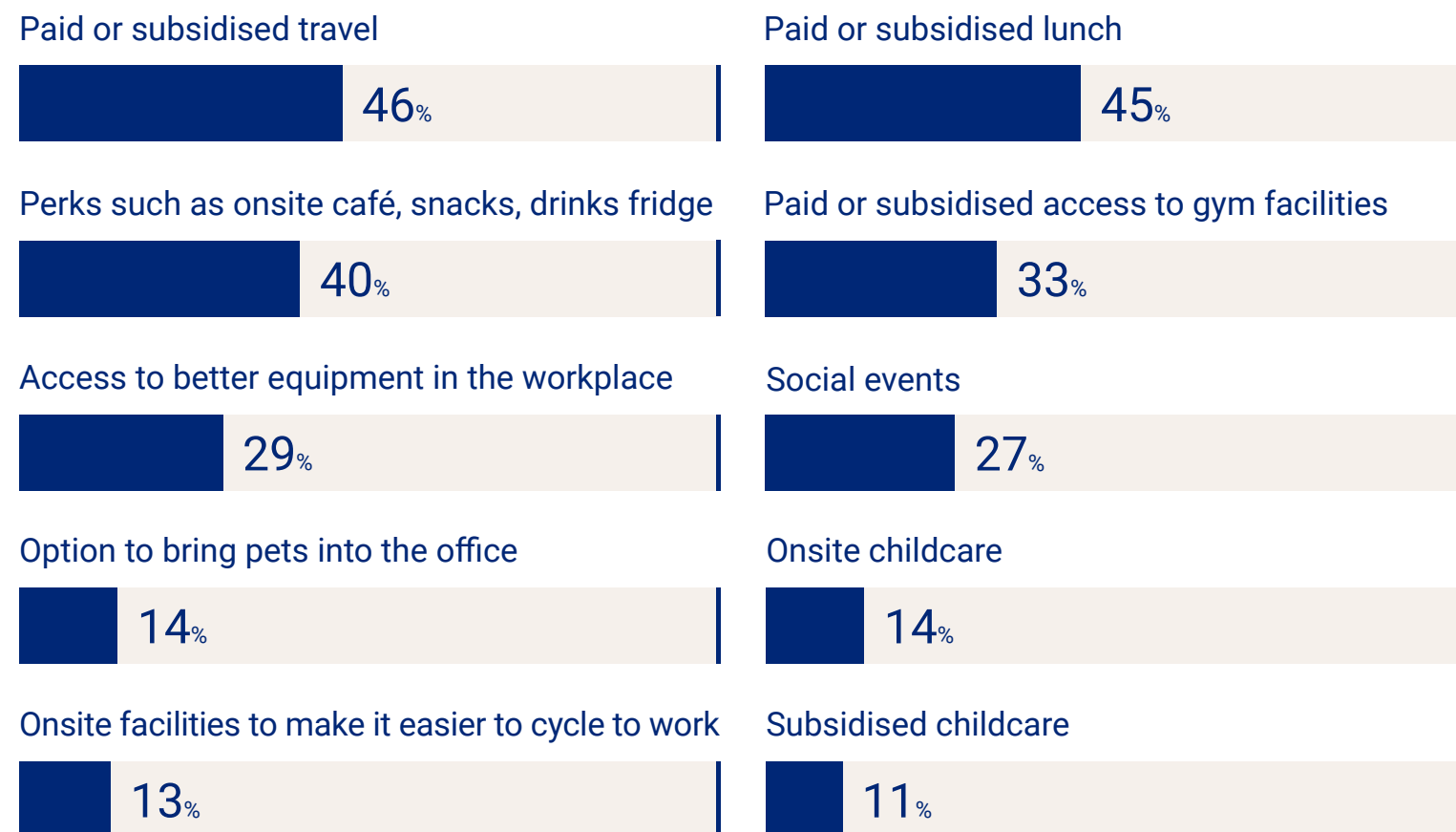


HOW TO ENCOURAGE STAFF BACK TO THE WORKPLACE

Offering incentives is one way for organisations to encourage their staff back into the workplace more frequently. One size doesn't fit all, so consider a variety of incentives to appeal to a range of demographics.

73% of organisations are **not offering or considering offering staff incentives** to encourage them to return to the workplace

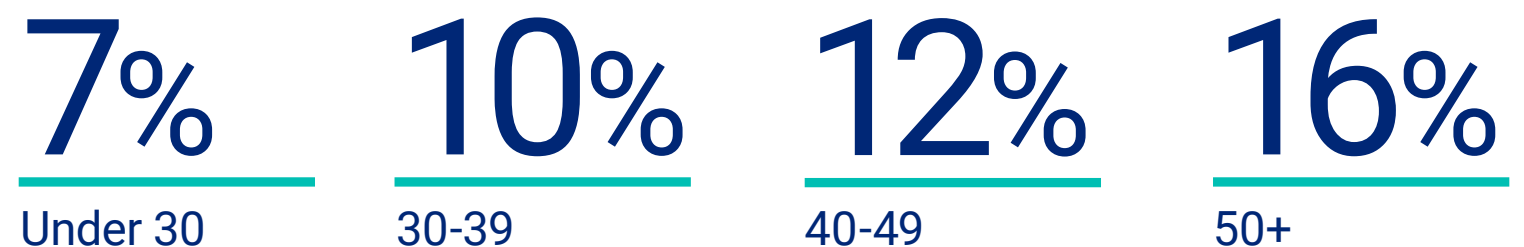
What incentives would encourage employees to return to the workplace?



The majority of these incentives appeal most to those under the age of 30, declining in popularity by age group.

12% of employees say **no incentive could tempt them to spend more time in the workplace**

Employees who couldn't be tempted to spend more time in the workplace, by age:



KEY TAKEAWAYS



When it comes to ways of working there are lots of variables to consider in order to strike the right balance for both organisations and employees. Read on for key questions to consider as an employer or employee around different ways of working.

Key questions for employers

Do you know how your employees want to work? Understanding how your staff prefer to operate will help you build a working approach that meets both organisational and employee needs and improves staff retention. Internal surveys are a good way to get tangible data to base your decisions on.

Do your flexible working options consider different needs? From hybrid and remote working to flexitime, the four-day working week or nine-day fortnight, one size doesn't fit all when it comes to flexible working, so consider what options you can offer that will appeal to most people.

How accessible and transparent are your flexible working policies? Almost all employees say it's important for an organisation's flexible working options to be easily accessible and transparent. A large proportion could be tempted to move elsewhere if this isn't the case, so ensure your policies are as clear as possible, not just to existing staff members, but to job seekers too.

Are you supporting different ways of working in the right way? Hybrid and remote staff want increased training opportunities and regular career progression reviews. If you want to encourage staff into the workplace more often, you could consider offering incentives such as subsidised travel or lunches. Implementing certain restrictions on meetings can benefit all your employees, wherever they're based.

Key questions for employees

Are you getting the right support from your employer? Whether you're working remotely, in the workplace full-time or somewhere in between, you need your organisation to provide the right support. Whether it's access to training opportunities, wellbeing support or having regular career progression reviews, speak to your manager to put in place the tools you need to succeed in your role.

Could restrictions on meetings make you more productive? Our research shows that most employers don't have any restrictions on meetings, such as limiting the duration of meetings or prohibiting meetings at certain times of the day such as lunchtime. Speak to your manager and make suggestions if you feel certain restrictions on meetings would be beneficial to your productivity.

Is your organisation flexible enough? If you want more flexibility in how you work, such as spending more time working remotely or having the option for flexitime, you may want to consider a new job elsewhere. Talk to one of our recruitment experts who speak to hundreds of organisations every day and are on hand to help you find the next role that's right for you.

ABOUT US

To help you meet ever-changing customer demands, we bring the people, the technology and the partnership you need to achieve your goals, now and in the future.

We're ready to deliver against your immediate hiring needs, but also have the scale, insight and understanding needed to shape your future workforce management strategy. Using a customer-first and insight-led approach to meet your business needs, we make it easy for you to deliver against the complex talent and recruitment landscape you need to navigate.

It's not just people we provide – whatever your hiring needs, we're always challenging the status quo, so our suite of services delivers the right outcomes for your organisation.

Permanent recruitment ▶

- Find passionate people to transform your business
- Fill positions to meet both immediate and future skills needs

Outsourced permanent recruitment ▶

- Reduce time-to-hire with access to ready-made, quality talent pools through Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO)
- Leverage progressive talent strategies and mechanisms to ensure you have the right talent in place – for today, and tomorrow

Executive recruitment ▶

- Navigate organisational change and steer your organisation to success by finding those inspirational leaders
- Build success through diversity with bespoke job ads and transparent interview processes

Temporary recruitment ▶

- Achieve instant impact and access niche skillsets with quick hires and reduce long-term costs
- Cut out lengthy admin and processes with externally managed pay and timesheets

Fully managed temporary recruitment ▶

- Gain clarity and control over your contingent headcount through a Managed Services Programme (MSP)
- Combine expertise and insights with proven processes to shape the future of your workforce

Assessment & Development ▶

- Acquire the right skills for your business needs
- Accelerate time-to-hire with tailored end-to-end support
- Cut costs with bespoke selection solutions

Salary Benchmarking ▶

- Use real-time data for that competitive edge
- Be insight-led for relevant remuneration strategies
- Gain long-term cost savings

Career Transition Services ▶

- Give your employees the right outplacement and transitional support
- Deliver safe spaces to employees for those honest and open conversations
- Manage restructuring processes with effectiveness, agility and speed

Employer Branding ▶

- Stand out as a top employer brand with a proven USP
- Leverage engaging employer branded recruitment solutions
- Enhance your Employer Value Proposition with a people-first approach

Subscription-based hiring for start-ups and scale-ups ▶

- Gain access to tech talent, skills and content as a service
- Dedicated expert recruitment consultant and account management team
- Branded multi-channel campaign to enhance your Employer Value Proposition

Online training platform, Thrive ▶

- Online training to help your team learn new skills
- Training is available to access wherever your team is working
- Access to our Learning Management System

Diversity, equity & inclusion ▶

- Embed conscious inclusion into every aspect of the employee lifecycle
- Access learning to transform your approach to DE&I

To speak to your local recruiting expert, find your nearest at hays.co.uk/offices

Stay up-to-date with Hays insight into the world of work.

 Hays  @HaysNews  HaysUK  @Hays_UK

 Hays UK & Ireland  Market insights

Rely on us to deliver today and help you **plan for tomorrow**