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EMPLOYEE

OUTLOOK

EMPLOYEE
VIEWS ON
WORKING LIFE

April 2016

FOCUS

*Commuting and
flexible working*

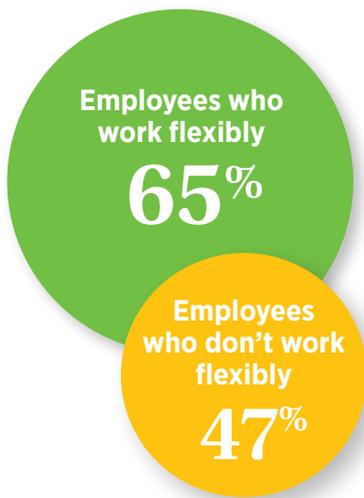
The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has 140,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

Commuting and flexible working

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Key findings



The use of flexible working has a big impact on employees' attitudes to work-life balance, with 65% of flexible workers satisfied or very satisfied with their work-life balance compared with 47% of employees who don't work flexibly.

Causes of stress among working people

Overall, across the UK, the top three causes of stress in people's lives are money worries (22%), the nature of their job, for example, pressure or working hours (22%), and family and relationship issues (20%).

London commuters are most likely to regard commuting to and from work (19%) and career failing to meet expectations (19%) as top three causes of stress compared with those living in London (14% and 17% respectively) and the UK average (10% and 12%).

Job satisfaction

Men are significantly less likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs (54%) than women (59%) and also more likely to be dissatisfied (23% compared with 19%).

People who use flexible working options are by some way more likely to say they are satisfied (60%) with their jobs than those who don't work flexibly (53%) and less likely to be dissatisfied (18% compared with 24%).

Pressure at work

Flexible workers are much less likely to report being under excessive pressure than people who don't work flexibly, with 29% of flexible workers saying they are under excessive pressure every day or once or twice a week compared with 42% of people who don't work flexibly.

Work-life balance

People living in London (55%) and London commuters (53%) are marginally less likely to be satisfied with their work-life balance than the average for all employees (56%). Respondents living in London are more likely to report being dissatisfied with their work-life balance (24%) than London commuters (17%) and the average for all employees (20%).

The use of flexible working has a big impact on employees' attitudes to work-life balance, with 65% of flexible workers satisfied or very satisfied with their work-life balance compared with 47% of employees who don't work flexibly.

Range of flexible working options provided by organisations

Employees report that the forms of flexible working most commonly provided by their employers are part-time working (62%), flexi-time (34%) and working from home on a regular basis (24%). The other most frequently cited forms of flexible working offered by employers are compressed hours, career breaks, mobile working and job-shares, with about a fifth of respondents citing all of these.

Use of flexible working

Part-time working is by some way the most commonly used form of flexible working, with just under three in ten employees reporting

they work in this way, followed by flexi-time (19%) and working from home on a regular basis (14%).

Other forms of flexible working are rare, with the next most commonly used forms of flexible working mobile working (7%) and compressed hours (3%).

Flexible working options such as term-time working (1%), job-share (1%) and annual hours are hardly used.

The benefits of flexible working

The top three benefits of flexible working most frequently cited by employees are that it helps them reduce the amount of stress/pressure they feel under (29%), it enables better work-life balance (54%) and it has been a factor in them staying with their current employer (28%). A quarter of respondents say being able to work flexibly enables them to be more productive at work and to pursue hobbies/personal interests outside work.

Just over a fifth of respondents say that flexible working helps them to reduce the amount of time they spend commuting (23%), manage caring responsibilities for children (22%) and invest more time in friends and family (22%).

Obstacles to flexible working

The main obstacles to employers providing or increasing the use of flexible working arrangements identified by respondents are the nature of work employees do at their organisation (27%), negative attitudes among senior managers (15%) and negative attitudes among

line managers and supervisors. A further 14% say that flexible working is of limited relevance to the sector they work in.

Commuting to work

The most commonly used ways of getting to work are driving (63%), walking (19%) and by bus/tram (11%). In all, about one in ten people travel by train, while 4% cycle and 3% use the Underground.

London commuters (34%) and people living in London (30%) are more likely to say that they walk as part of their commute to work than the average for all employees (19%).

How far employees commute to work

Four in ten employees nationally commute five miles or less each way to work, with a further quarter (24%) commuting between six and ten miles a day. In all, 16% of employees commute more than 21 miles each way to work. People living in London are least likely to commute 21 or more miles, with London commuters most likely to travel 21 miles or more each way to work. In all, 16% of London commuters travel 41 or more miles each way.

How long employees spend travelling to work

The average travel-to-work time for all employees is 31 minutes, compared with 47 minutes for people living in London and 56 minutes for London commuters. In all, two-thirds of employees nationally spend 30 minutes or less each way travelling to work compared with 35% of London commuters and 32% of employees living in London.

The role of government in reducing commuting time and cost

When asked what government priorities should be to reduce commuting time and cost, the most common response among all employees is reduce public transport fares, with four in ten respondents citing this. A further 23% believe government should prioritise reducing fuel taxes and 22% say government should invest more on bus routes. A fifth of employers nationally think government should campaign to encourage employers to allow people to work from home or more flexibly.

Causes of life stress

Overall, across the UK, the top three causes of stress in people's lives are money worries (22%), the nature of their job, for example, pressure or working hours (22%), and family and relationship issues (20%). However, the survey shows that where people live has an impact on the weight they place on the different causes of stress in their lives. People living in London are most likely to identify

money worries and debt as one of their top three causes of stress, with 28% of these respondents saying this, compared with 24% of London commuters who mainly live outside the capital and 22% of all employees. Those living in London (26%) are also more likely than London commuters (20%) and the UK average (22%) to find the nature of their job stressful.

London commuters are most likely to regard commuting to and from work (19%) and career failing to meet expectations (19%) as top three causes of stress compared with those living in London (14% and 17% respectively) and the UK average (10% and 12%).

Table 1: The biggest causes of stress in working people's lives (%)

	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London
Money worries/debt	22	24	28
The nature of my job	22	20	26
Family relationships/issues or concerns in my family life	20	17	23
Personal physical/mental health issues or concerns	19	16	19
Pressures between work and home life	19	16	17
Career failing to meet expectations	12	19	17
Commuting to and from work	10	19	14
Relationships at work	7	5	10
Impact of new technology, internet, social media	4	5	3
Other	7	6	5
None of these – nothing is causing stress in my life	25	23	16
Don't know	1	1	1
Net at least one stress	74	76	83

Base: All employees (n=1,051); London primary region of work (n=121); live in London (n=411)

Job satisfaction, pressure at work and work-life balance

Job satisfaction

People living in London are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (61%) than London commuters (57%) and the UK average (57%).

Men are significantly less likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs (54%) than women (59%) and also more likely to be dissatisfied (23% compared with 19%).

People who use flexible working options are by some way more likely to say they are satisfied (61%) with their jobs than those who don't work flexibly (53%) and less likely to be dissatisfied (18% compared with 24%).

The survey also shows that people living in London that work flexibly are significantly more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (69%) than those living in London that don't work flexibly (52%). Flexible workers living in

London (11%) are also less likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs than those that don't work flexibly (29%).

Pressure at work

Overall, where people live seems to make little difference to the frequency with which they report being under excessive pressure, with about a third of employees saying they are under excessive pressure either every day or once or twice a week. See Table 3.

Table 2: Proportion of respondents satisfied/dissatisfied with their job (%)

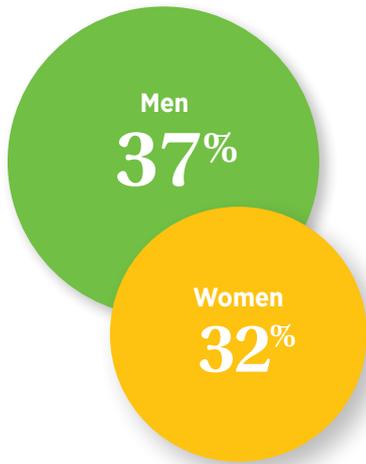
	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London	Use flexible working options?	
				Yes	No
Very satisfied	15	21	16	19	10
Satisfied	42	36	45	42	43
Neither satisfied/nor dissatisfied	22	24	19	21	23
Dissatisfied	14	12	15	12	15
Very dissatisfied	7	8	4	6	9
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0
Net satisfied	57	56	61	60	53
Net dissatisfied	21	20	20	18	24

Base: All employees (n=1,051); London primary region of work (n=121); live in London (n=411)

Table 3: How often employees feel under excessive pressure (%)

	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London	Use flexible working options?	
				Yes	No
Every day	11	8	8	9	13
Once or twice a week	24	26	25	20	29
Once or twice a month	22	20	30	25	19
Less frequently than once a month	29	28	29	33	24
Never	13	13	8	13	13
Don't know	1	1	1	0	0

Base: All employees (n=1,051); London primary region of work (n=121); live in London (n=411)



Women (32%) are less likely than men (37%) to report being under excessive pressure either every day or once or twice a week.

Flexible workers are much less likely to report being under excessive pressure than people who don't work flexibly, with 29% of flexible workers saying they are under excessive pressure every day or once or twice a week compared with 42% of people who don't work flexibly.

Women (32%) are less likely than men (37%) to report being under excessive pressure either every day or once or twice a week.

Flexible workers living in London are less likely to be report being under excessive pressure every day or once or twice a week (24%) compared to non-flexible workers living in the capital (42%).

Work-life balance

People living in London (55%) and London commuters (53%) are marginally less likely to be satisfied with their work-life balance than the average for all employees (56%). Respondents living in

London are more likely to report being dissatisfied with their work-life balance (24%) than London commuters (17%) and the average for all employees (20%).

Again, women are more likely to say they are satisfied with their work-life balance (64%) than men (49%) and less likely to be dissatisfied, with 16% of women reporting this is the case in contrast to 24% of men.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the use of flexible working has a big impact on employees' attitudes to work-life balance, with 65% of flexible workers satisfied or very satisfied with their work-life balance compared with 47% of employees who don't work flexibly.

Those living in London who work flexibly are significantly more likely to report satisfaction with their work-life balance (61%) than employees who don't work flexibly (27%).

Table 4: Proportion of respondents satisfied/dissatisfied with their work-life balance (%)

	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London	Use flexible working options?	
				Yes	No
Very satisfied	15	15	17	20	10
Satisfied	41	38	38	45	37
Neither satisfied/nor dissatisfied	23	30	21	21	26
Dissatisfied	15	11	20	11	20
Very dissatisfied	5	6	5	2	7
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0
Net satisfied	57	53	54	66	46
Net dissatisfied	20	17	24	14	27

Base: All employees (n=1,051); London primary region of work (n=121); live in London (n=411)

Flexible working

Availability of flexible working options

Employees report that the forms of flexible working most commonly provided by their employers are part-time working (62%), flexi-time (34%) and working from home on a regular basis (24%). The other most frequently cited forms of flexible working offered by employers are compressed hours, career breaks, mobile working and job-shares, with about a fifth of respondents citing each of these.

London commuters are more likely than respondents who live in London or the UK average to say the opportunity to work from home regularly is an option, with 40% saying this is the case, compared with respondents who live in London (36%) or the UK average (24%).

Employees living in London are more likely to say their organisation provides flexi-time (45%) as an option compared with London commuters (35%) and all employees (34%).

Employees living in London (25%) and London commuters (24%) are more likely to say mobile working is an option in their organisation than the average for all employees (19%).

Uptake of flexible working

In all, 54% of employees nationally use at least one form of flexible working. Part-time working is by some way the most commonly used form of flexible working, with nearly three in ten employees reporting they work in this way (29%). The

Table 5: The range of flexible working options employees report are available in their organisation (%)

	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London
Part-time working	62	52	56
Term-time working	11	7	11
Job-share	18	15	16
Flexi-time	34	35	45
Compressed hours	20	26	26
Annual hours	7	6	12
Working from home on a regular basis	24	40	36
Mobile working	19	24	25
Career break sabbaticals	20	23	27
Secondment to another organisation	9	14	13
Time off to work in the community	10	7	13
Other	1	1	1
None of these – my organisation does not provide flexible working	18	17	16
Don't know	5	10	5
Net offers at least one	76	73	80

Base: All employees (n=1,051); London primary region of work (n=121); live in London (n=411)

next most commonly used forms of flexible working are flexi-time (19%), working from home on a regular basis (14%) and mobile working (7%). Options such as term-time working (1%), job share (1%) and compressed hours (3%) are very rarely used.

Employees who live in London are least likely to be part-time workers (16%) and most likely to use flexi-time (23%). Respondents that report their primary region of work is London are most likely to say they work from home on a regular basis (22%) and are more likely than the national average to say they use mobile working (11%).

There is a big difference between the flexible working options that are most commonly used by women compared to men. In all, 44% of women work part-time compared to 13% of men. Men (17%) are more likely to work from home than women (10%). Overall 63% of women employees use one or more forms of flexible working compared to just 44% of men.

The survey shows that management seniority has a significant impact on the type of flexible working arrangements that employees use. Employees with no managerial responsibility are by some way most likely to work part-time (38%) but are less likely to use most other forms of flexible working than those with management responsibilities.

Senior (31%) and middle managers (24%) are most likely to report being able to work from home regularly compared to just 12% of junior managers and 9% of employees with no management responsibility. Similarly, senior managers and middle managers are more likely to use flexi-time (26% and 25% respectively) than junior managers (18%) and those with no management responsibility (16%).

Junior managers are least likely to work flexibly. In all, 42% of junior managers use at least one form of flexible working compared to 58% of senior managers, 55% of middle managers and 57% of employees with no management responsibility.

Table 6: The range of flexible working options employees use (%)

	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London
Part-time working	29	19	16
Term-time working	1	1	0
Job-share	1	1	1
Flexi-time	19	20	23
Compressed hours	3	4	3
Annual hours	2	4	3
Working from home on a regular basis	14	22	20
Mobile working	7	11	11
Career break sabbaticals	1	2	1
Secondment to another organisation	1	1	1
Time off to work in the community	1	*	1
Other	1	*	1
None of these – I don't work flexibly	23	19	28
NA – organisation does not offer flexible working	24	27	20
Net use at least one	54	54	52

Base: All employees (n=1,051); London primary region of work (n=121); live in London (n=411)

Table 7: The range of flexible working options employees use, by seniority/management responsibility (%)

	No management responsibility	Junior manager team leader/supervisor	Middle manager	Senior manager or above
Part-time working	38	19	22	13
Term-time working	1	0	1	1
Job-share	1	0	2	0
Flexi-time	16	18	25	26
Compressed hours	4	2	2	8
Annual hours	1	2	3	1
Working from home on a regular basis	9	12	24	31
Mobile working	4	4	15	19
Career break sabbaticals	1	0	2	0
Secondment to another organisation	0	0	2	0
Time off to work in the community	1	0	4	3
Other	1	0	0	0
None of these – I don't work flexibly	22	25	29	16
NA – organisation does not offer flexible working	21	33	16	27
Net use at least one	57	42	55	58

Base: All employees (n=1,051); London primary region of work (n=121); live in London (n=411)

Benefits of flexible working

Respondents were asked to identify the five biggest benefits to them of flexible working. The top three most frequently cited benefits are that it helps employees reduce the amount of stress/pressure they feel under (29%), it enables better work-life balance (54%) and it has been a factor in them staying with their current employer (28%). A quarter of respondents say being able to work flexibly enables them to be more productive at work and to pursue hobbies/personal interests outside work.

Just over a fifth of respondents say that flexible working helps them to reduce the amount of time they spend commuting (23%), manage caring responsibilities for children (22%) and invest more time in friends and family (22%).

In total, 33% of respondents report that flexible working helps them manage caring responsibilities of some description, either for children, parents or grandparents, spouse or partner, or others outside of the family.

Men are more likely than women to say flexible working helps reduce the time and cost of commuting, while women are more likely to say working flexibly enables them to manage caring responsibilities.

Employees nationally are significantly more likely to cite managing caring responsibilities of different descriptions (36%) as key benefits of flexible working than those living in London (29%) or London commuters (19%).

Table 8: Employees' views on the biggest benefits to them of flexible working (%)

	National average	London primary region of work	Live in London
It helps me achieve a better work-life balance	54	48	53
It helps reduce the amount of pressure/stress I feel	29	35	30
It has been a factor in me staying with my current employer	28	33	22
It helps me be more productive at work	25	23	30
It helps me pursue hobbies/personal interests outside work	25	24	17
It helps reduce the amount of time I spend commuting	23	31	32
It helps me manage caring responsibilities for my children	22	16	16
It helps me invest more time in friends and family	22	20	19
It helps reduce the cost of commuting	15	17	16
It helps me stay healthy by allowing more time to exercise/make healthy choices over lifestyle	14	14	17
It helps reduce the amount of time I take off work sick	13	7	9
It helps me manage caring responsibilities for my parents/grandparents	8	3	7
It helps me stay on top of my financial affairs	7	3	8
It has helped me/is helping me return to work following ill health	5	1	3
It helps me manage caring responsibilities for my spouse/partner	5	3	6
It helps me manage caring responsibilities for others outside of my family	1	2	2
Other	3	7	3
None of these	7	12	13
Net - helps manage caring responsibilities	33	19	29

Base: All employees who work flexibly (n=519); employees who work flexibly and whose primary region of work is London (n=60); employees who work flexibly and who live in London (n=214)

In contrast, employees living in London (32%) and London commuters (31%) are much more likely to say that reducing the time they spend commuting is a top five benefit of flexible working.

Obstacles to flexible working

The main obstacles to employers providing or increasing the use of flexible working arrangements identified by respondents are the nature of work employees do at their organisation (27%), negative attitudes among senior managers (15%) and negative attitudes among line

managers and supervisors. A further 14% say that flexible working is of limited relevance to the sector they work in.

In all, 13% of employees cite an engrained working culture that places an emphasis on being seen at their desk, while 9% say lack of trust is an obstacle to providing or increasing the use of flexible working.

In all, just 26% of respondents say there are no obstacles in their workplace to providing or increasing the use of flexible working.

London commuters and respondents who live in London are more likely than the national average to cite negative attitudes among senior and line managers and engrained workplace cultures which place an emphasis on being seen at their desks as obstacles to providing or increasing flexible working.

In all, 34% of employees who live in London cite negative attitudes by senior managers (17%) and junior managers (17%) as key obstacles to providing or increasing the use of flexible working. A third (33%) of

Table 9: Employees' views on the obstacles in their organisation to providing or increasing the use of flexible working arrangements (%)

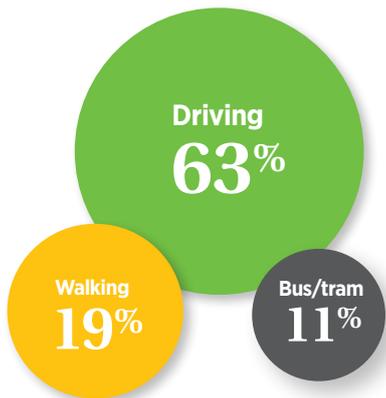
	All (UK)
The nature of the work employees at my organisation do	27
Negative attitudes among senior managers	15
Flexible working is of limited relevance to the sector I work in	14
Negative attitudes among line managers/supervisors	14
An engrained workplace culture that places an emphasis on being seen at your desk even when it's not practical or necessary	13
Lack of trust	9
Employees not asking because they are worried about the effect on their career	9
Poor communication of what flexible working is available	8
Negative attitudes to flexible working among other employees	7
More pressure on people to be seen to be at work as a result of the economic downturn	6
Lack of access to the resources employees need to do their job remotely	6
Lack of technology	4
Other	2
Net - negative attitudes of colleagues (any level)	28
None of these - I don't feel there are any obstacles in my workplace	26
Don't know	6

Base: All employees (n=1,051); London primary region of work (n=121); live in London (n=411)

London commuters cite negative attitudes by senior managers (19%) and junior managers (14%) as obstacles.

Negative engrained work cultures are identified as a top five obstacle to introducing or increasing flexible working by 19% of London commuters, 17% of respondents who live in London and 13% of employees nationally.

Commuting to work



The most commonly used ways of getting to work are driving (63%), walking (19%) and by bus/tram (11%).

Respondents were asked to say how they most often get to and from work.

The most commonly used ways of getting to work are driving (63%), walking (19%) and by bus/tram (11%). In all, about one in ten people travel by train, while 4% cycle and 3% use the Underground.

London commuters (34%) and people living in London (30%) are more likely to say that they walk as part of their commute to work than the average for all employees (19%).

London commuters are most likely to use the train when they commute to work, with 40% of these respondents saying this is the case compared with 29% of employees who live in London and 9% of all employees.

Not surprisingly, employees who live in London (28%) and London commuters (29%) are more likely to say they use the Underground as part of their commute than the national average.

Table 10: How employees travel to work (%)

	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London
Walk	19	34	30
Run/jog	*	*	1
Cycle	4	4	6
Train	9	40	29
Bus/tram	11	25	28
Underground	3	29	28
Drive	63	30	24
Other	4	1	2
Not applicable – I always work from home	4	1	2

Base: All employees (n=1,051); London primary region of work (n=121); live in London (n=411)

Four in ten employees nationally commute five miles or less each way to work, with a further quarter (24%) commuting between six and ten miles a day. In all, 16% of employees commute more than 21 miles each way to work. People living in London are least likely to commute 21 or more miles, with London commuters most likely to travel 21 miles or more each way to work. In all, 16% of London commuters travel 41 or more miles each way.

The average travel-to-work time for all employees is 31 minutes, compared with 47 minutes for people living in London and 56 minutes for London commuters. In all, two-thirds of employees nationally spend half an hour or less each way travelling to work compared with 35% of London commuters and 32% of employees living in London.

Three in ten (29%) London commuters face a journey to work of more than an hour each way in contrast to 20% of those living in London and 8% of employees nationally.

The average monthly cost of an employee's commute to work is £87.75, rising to £130 per month for employees living in London and £220 for London commuters.

Table 11: How far employees travel to work each way (%)

	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London
1-5 miles	42	32	37
6-10 miles	24	23	31
11-20 miles	16	14	21
21-30 miles	6	6	4
31-40 miles	4	6	1
41-50 miles	2	6	1
51-100 miles	3	8	2
More than 100 miles	1	2	0
Net - 21+ miles	16	29	8
Don't know	1	2	3

Base: All employees who commute to work (n=1,014); employees whose main region of work is London and who commute to work (n=121); employees who live in London and who commute to work (n=405)

Table 12: How long it takes employees to travel to work each way (%)

	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London
1-30 minutes	66	35	32
31-60 minutes	24	34	46
61+ minutes	8	29	20
Don't know	2	2	2
Mean	31	56	47

Base: All employees who commute to work (n=1,014); employees whose main region of work is London and who commute to work (n=121); employees who live in London and who commute to work (n=405)

In all, 16% of employees nationally are able to travel to work for free, compared with 13% of London commuters and 18% of respondents living in London.

About four in ten employees nationally say they spend between 1% and 5% of their salary on their monthly commute, with 11% of all respondents saying they spend between 6% and 10% of their salary on their monthly commute.

In all, 14% of London commuters report they spend 11% or above of their salary on their commute each month, compared with 7% of employees nationally and 5% of those living in London.

On average, employees nationally and those who live in London spend about 7% of their monthly salary on their commute to work. This rises to 9.7% for London commuters.

When asked what government priorities should be to reduce commuting time, the most common response among all employees, is reduce public transport fares, with four in ten respondents citing this. A further 23% believe government should prioritise reducing fuel taxes and 22% say government should invest more on bus routes. A fifth of employees nationally think government should campaign to encourage employers to allow people to work from home or more flexibly.

Table 13: How much employees' commute to work costs them each month (%)

	National average	London primary region of work	Live in London
0	16	13	18
£1-50	34	12	18
£51-100	15	17	17
£101+	15	43	36
Don't know	20	16	11
Mean £ (excluding 0)	£87.75	£220	£130

Base: All employees who commute to work (n=1,027); employees whose main region of work is London and who commute to work (n=107); employees who live in London and who commute to work (n=405)

Table 14: The proportion of employees' salary that goes on commuting (%)

	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London
0%	17	16	19
1-5%	39	36	39
6-10%	11	15	17
11+	7	14	5
Don't know	26	19	19
Mean %	7.2	9.7	7.1

Base: All employees who commute to work (n=1,027); employees whose main region of work is London and who commute to work (n=107); employees who live in London and who commute to work (n=405)

Employees living in London are most likely to identify reducing public transport fares as a government priority (44%), followed by investing more in the rail and tube network (37%) and government to campaign to encourage employers to allow people to work from home or more flexibly (20%).

London commuters are also most likely to say government should prioritise reducing public transport (49%) followed by investing more in the rail and tube network (35%) and campaign to encourage employers to allow workers to work more flexibly (28%).

Table 15: Employees' views on government priorities to reduce commuting time and cost (%)

	All (UK)	London primary region of work	Live in London
Reduce public transport fares	40	49	44
Reduce fuel taxes	23	14	11
Invest more on bus routes	22	10	18
Campaign for/encourage employers to allow people to work from home/more flexibly	20	28	20
Invest more in rail/tube network	17	35	37
Invest more in affordable housing to enable people to live closer to their workplace	12	16	18
Invest more in cycle routes	9	8	10
Introduce congestion charging outside London	1	1	2
Other	3	2	4
None of these – I don't think government should do anything to reduce commuting time/cost	10	7	6
Don't know	6	3	5

Base: All employees (n=1,051); London primary region of work (n=121); live in London (n=411)

Conclusions

The use of flexible working appears to have a significant impact on the quality of people's working lives. The survey finds that flexible workers are more satisfied with their jobs and report better work-life balance and less exposure to excessive pressure at work.

Other benefits of flexible working reported by employees include that it helps their productivity, enables them to manage work and caring responsibilities and reduces the time they spend commuting.

However, the survey shows there is significant scope for greater use of flexible working and more use of different forms of flexible working. Just over half of employees on average use at least one form of flexible working. However, most flexible working is either part-time or flexi-time unless you are a middle or senior manager when you are more likely to be able to work from home or remotely.

In addition, the survey shows that while many employers have policies on things like job sharing and term-time working, in practice, these are hardly ever used. Previous research from the CIPD shows that part-time working can effectively mean career death for too many employees – particularly for women. This means there is a need for more innovative ways of flexible working to become more common and changes to

the attitudes of managers through training to address this. Options such as job sharing can require more time and effort on the part of HR and line managers to set up and get the right match, but they can more than return this investment in terms of retaining key talent and the innovation and creativity that two people can bring to one role.

Of course, some people are restricted in their ability to work flexibly because of the nature of their job, but many employees report that the attitudes of managers and engrained work cultures that require people to be at their desks are the major obstacles to increasing the uptake of flexible working.

Addressing this requires employers to recognise the strong business case for increasing the use of flexible working which includes the chance to reduce office space, as well as the positive effect it will have in terms of recruiting, engaging and retaining employees. Employers that promote the use of flexible working will also support the well-being of their workforce which will help them meet their duty of care to their employees.

Flexible working can also reduce the burden of the daily commute to work many employees face, with the survey showing that the average commute for UK workers takes half an hour each way, and considerably longer for those living and working in London.

Employers should review their flexible working practices by consulting with staff over the type of flexibility that would be of most benefit and then balance this against what type of flexible working will work for the business. To be sustainable, flexible working needs to be a win-win for both the organisation and the individual. The attitudes of managers are key to unlocking the full potential of flexible working and organisations need to ensure that senior and line managers understand their role in shaping organisational culture and enabling more flexible ways of working.

Government too has a role and the survey suggests there would be considerable support for a government-led campaign, working with employers and bodies such as the CIPD to increase the range of flexible working options available to staff and create a step change in uptake over the next few years.



CIPD

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