

Cartridge People Office Christmas Party Survey Report 2025

Insights into how UK workers feel about
festive workplace events today

Introduction

The office Christmas party has long been a staple of workplace culture, offering teams a chance to celebrate the year's successes, unwind, and get into the Christmas spirit. But as working patterns evolve, budgets tighten, and employee expectations shift, the festive workplace event is no longer as straightforward as it once was.

In 2025, Cartridge People revisited its 2022 Christmas Party Survey to understand how UK workers feel about office events today. Our research captures attitudes toward attendance, spending, past experiences, and perceived risks — providing a comprehensive view of what drives participation and what might hold employees back.

This report presents the findings from our survey, exploring:

- How many employees plan to attend office Christmas parties this year
- Key barriers to attendance, including cost, travel, and timing
- Typical behaviours and memorable moments at past parties
- Employees' perspectives on risk, safety, and comfort measures
- Insights for HR teams and event organisers on planning successful, inclusive celebrations

Whether you're an HR professional, team leader, or business owner, this report provides actionable insights to help make your 2025 Christmas party both enjoyable and safe — while reflecting the needs of today's workforce.

All data was collected from 18 November, 2025
from 500 responses.

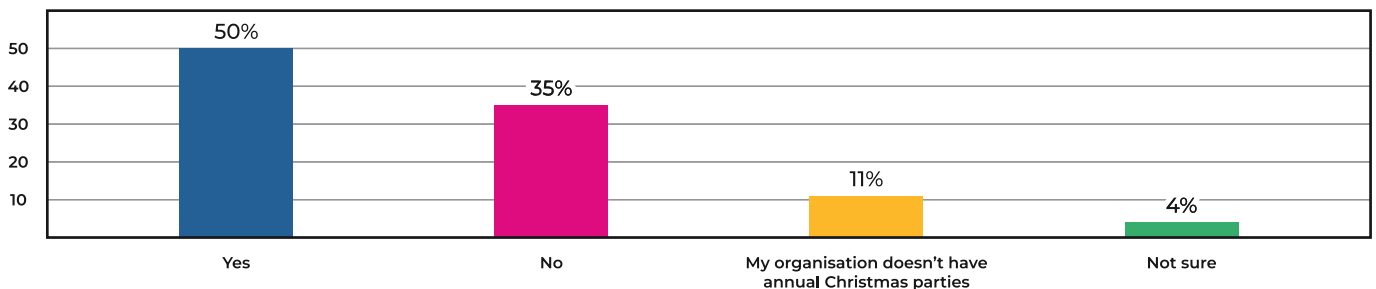
Executive Summary

- 50% plan to attend a Christmas or end-of-year party this year.
- Cost remains the biggest deterrent (43%) for non-attendance.
- The majority (71%) are willing to spend only up to £50 on attending.
- Over one-third (41%) say they have over-indulged in food or drink at a past party.
- HR risk perceptions: reputation (23%) and inappropriate behaviour (22%) top the list.
- Practical support measures such as pre-booked transport (38%) and the ability to leave discreetly (37%) rank high for making employees feel comfortable.

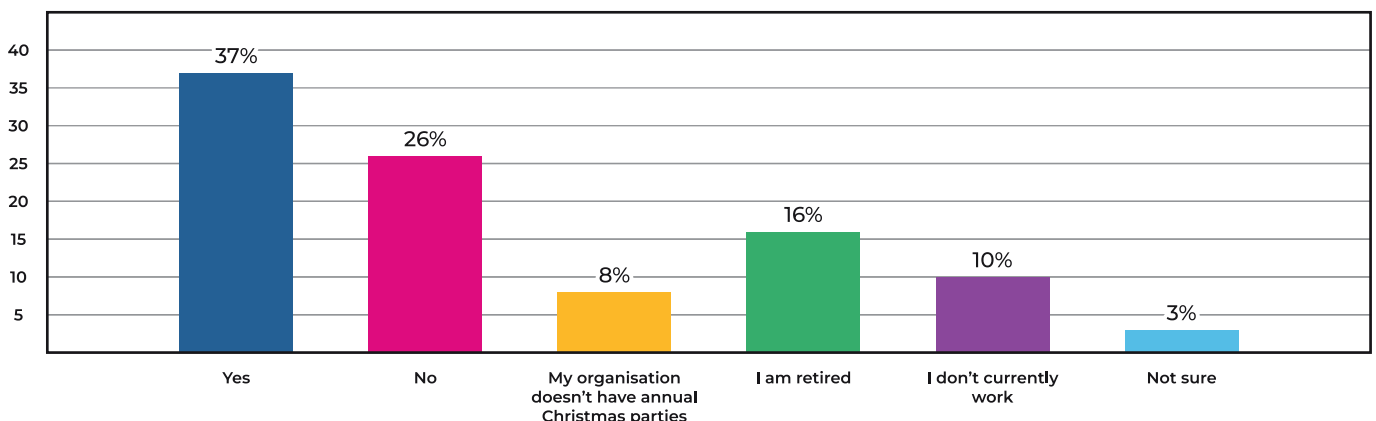
Are People Still Attending Office Christmas Parties?

The survey results highlight that the modern workplace has evolved — hybrid working, dispersed teams, increased personal commitments, and rising living costs have reshaped how employees interact socially. However, many people still wish to attend their work Christmas party, with only 35% opting out, compared to 45% in our 2022 survey.

Question: "Do you plan to attend and office Christmas (or end-of-year) party in 2025 if invited?"



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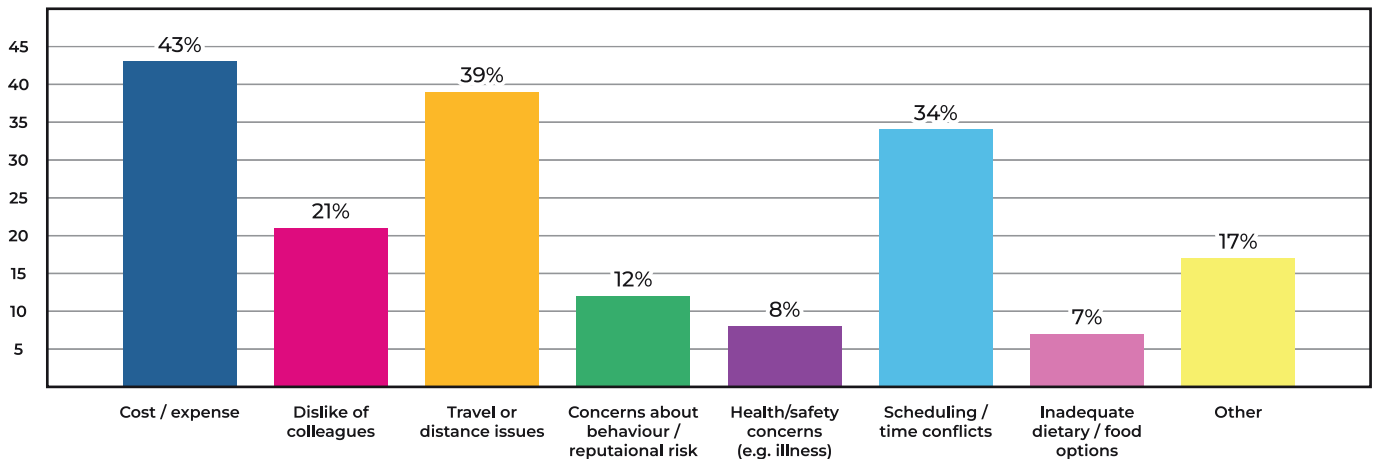
Note: Two versions of this question are presented. The first version shows percentages of respondents who are currently in work only. The second version shows the original percentages of all respondents, including those not in employment, for a complete overview.

Barriers to Attendance

Cost-of-living pressures remain a major concern for many UK workers, and this is reflected in the high percentage citing expenses as a barrier. Travel issues rank nearly as high, suggesting that centrally located venues or late-night events may deter a significant portion of staff, particularly those living outside city centres or reliant on public transport.

Interestingly, social discomfort or distrust in colleagues plays a smaller role than logistical barriers. This indicates that employees generally feel comfortable with their teams, but external factors prevent them from attending. Event planners should therefore view attendance not as a reflection of company culture, but of practical accessibility.

Question: "If you would not attend (or are unsure), which of the following would discourage you?" (Select all that apply)



Willingness to Spend on Attending

Cost-sensitivity is a crucial takeaway for employers. Employees prefer events that do not put financial pressure on them, especially during a time of year already associated with increased personal spending. Those most willing to attend are also those least willing to pay for the privilege, meaning cost barriers strongly correlate with attendance decisions.

For companies considering ticketed events, black-tie dinners, or destination parties, this data signals that more accessible formats may deliver better turnout and satisfaction. Free or heavily subsidised events — or low-cost options like in-office gatherings — are likely to see significantly higher engagement.

Question: "What is the maximum amount you would be willing to spend (e.g. on tickets, travel, attire) to attend a Christmas party?"



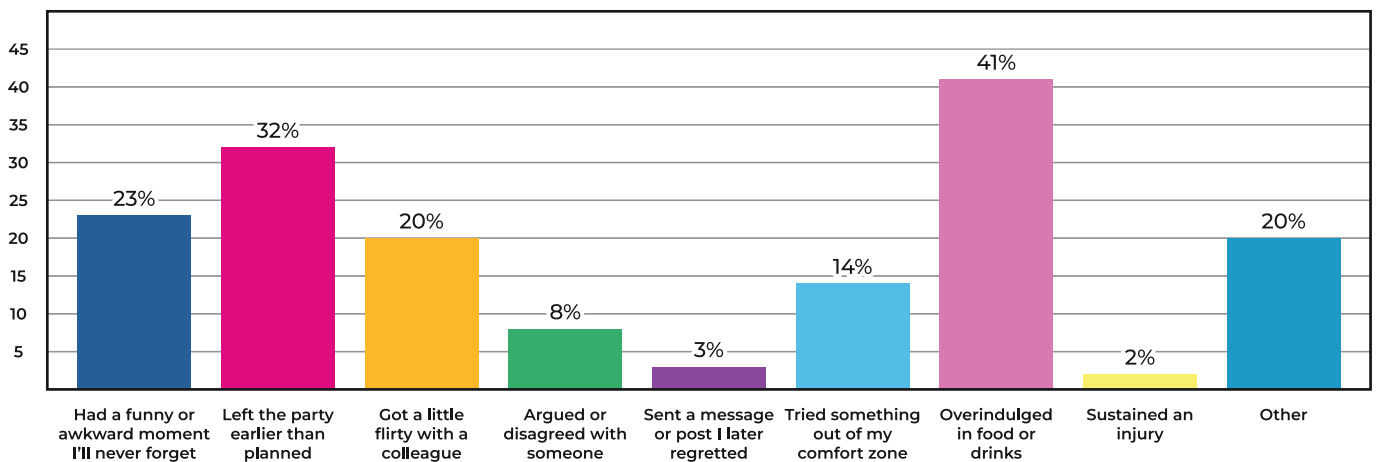
Past Christmas Party Experiences

Overall, respondents report mostly harmless, sometimes humorous experiences. Overindulgence is common but typically manageable. Serious misconduct or harm appears rare, countering some stereotypes of office parties being rife with HR disasters.

Leaving early — selected by almost a third — is noteworthy. This suggests that long, unstructured events may not suit everyone’s preferences or energy levels. Offering transport options, flexible end times, or venues with quieter spaces could support more inclusive attendance.

The small percentages reporting negative behaviour showcase that the majority of employees conduct themselves responsibly at such events. For HR teams, this may help reduce anxiety around organising celebrations, though caution and safeguards remain important.

Question: “Which of these things have ever happened to you at a work / office Christmas party?” (Select all that apply)

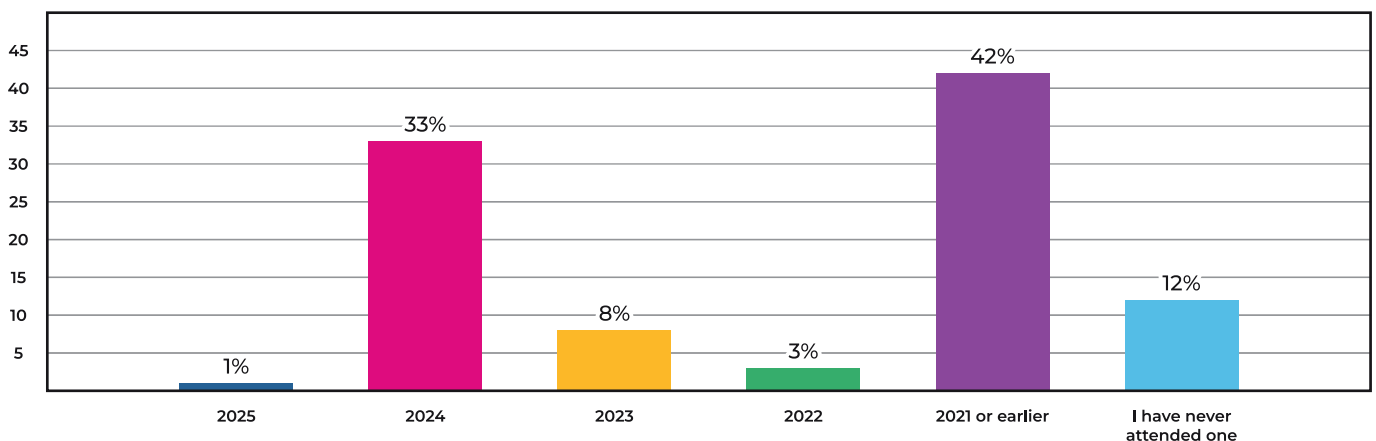


Most Recent Year Attended

The fact that such a high percentage have not attended in over three years suggests ongoing post-pandemic shifts in workplace culture. Many organisations reduced or eliminated Christmas parties during COVID-19, and some never reinstated them. For example, a study back in 2024 found that 42% of companies decided against hosting an office Christmas party for their employees.

Others may now operate with a largely remote or hybrid workforce, making traditional in-person celebrations more challenging or less relevant.

Question: “In which year did you most recently attend a work Christmas / end-of-year party?”

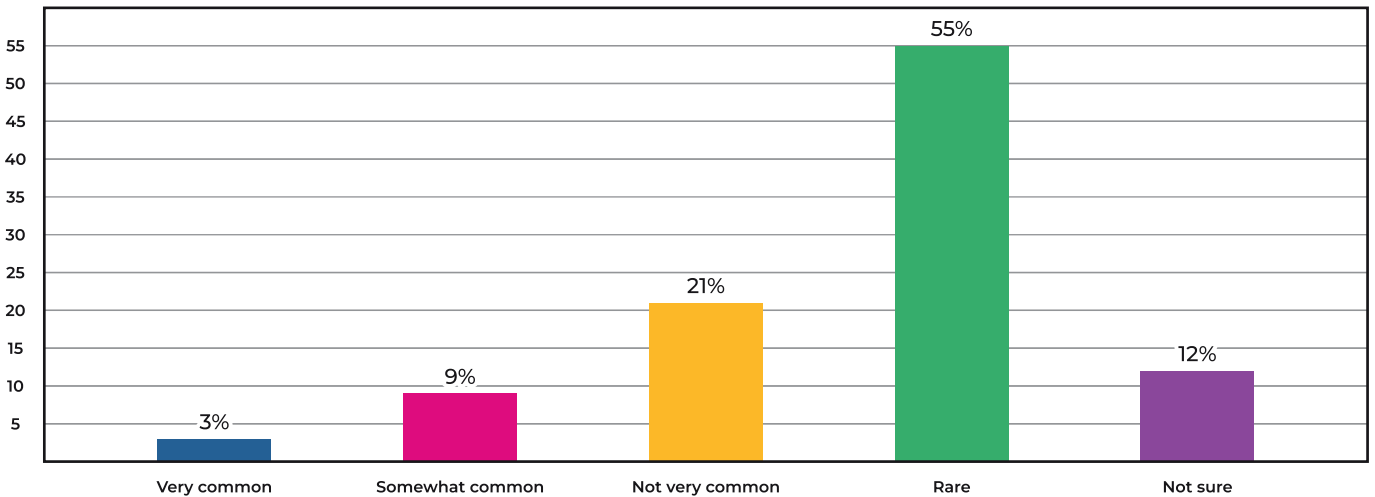


How Common Is Regret After Christmas Parties?

While there is a perception that Christmas parties often lead to regretful behaviour, in reality, most employees feel comfortable with how they have acted at past events. This should provide reassurance to HR departments concerned about reputational or behavioural risks.

It also suggests that for many workers, the fear of embarrassment may be greater than the likelihood of something going wrong. Reassuring staff through clear guidelines, alcohol moderation policies, and supportive environments could ease lingering concerns and improve participation.

Question: "From your experience, how common is it that you regret your behaviour after a work Christmas party?"



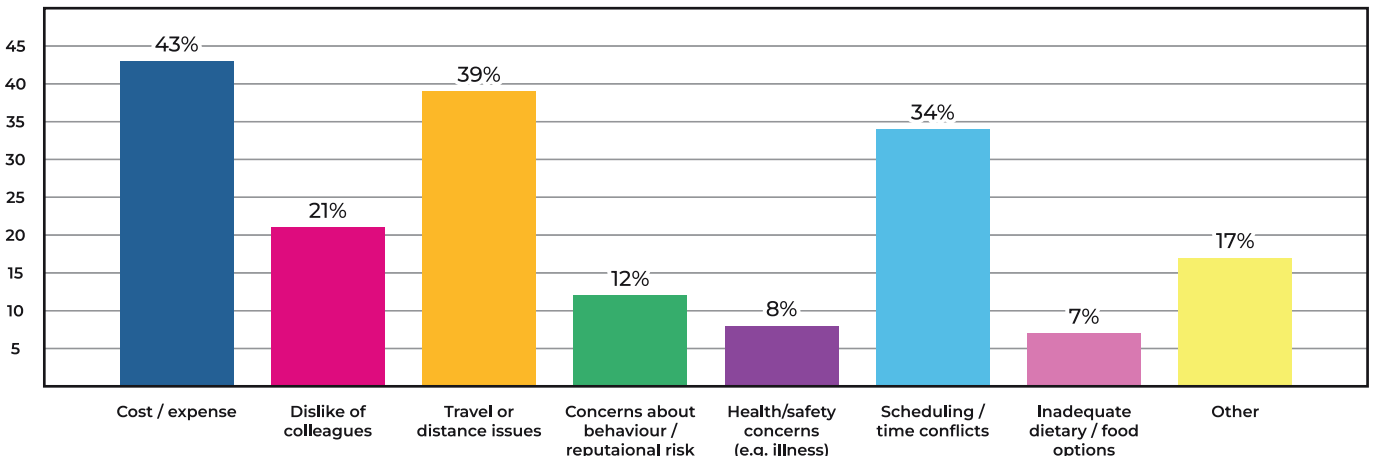
Perceived Biggest Risk for HR/Organisers

Employees appear acutely aware of HR's perspective when it comes to office parties. Reputational harm — both internal and external — is mentioned slightly more often than harassment or intoxication, showing that staff understand the broad implications of workplace events.

The close clustering of these top three concerns suggests that employees and HR share similar priorities: ensuring the event remains professional, inclusive, and safe. These perceptions also align with trends seen in our 2022 survey, indicating that employer concerns have remained consistent even as workplace dynamics have changed.

Drink-driving concerns highlight the need for proactive planning around transport — a recurring theme across multiple questions.

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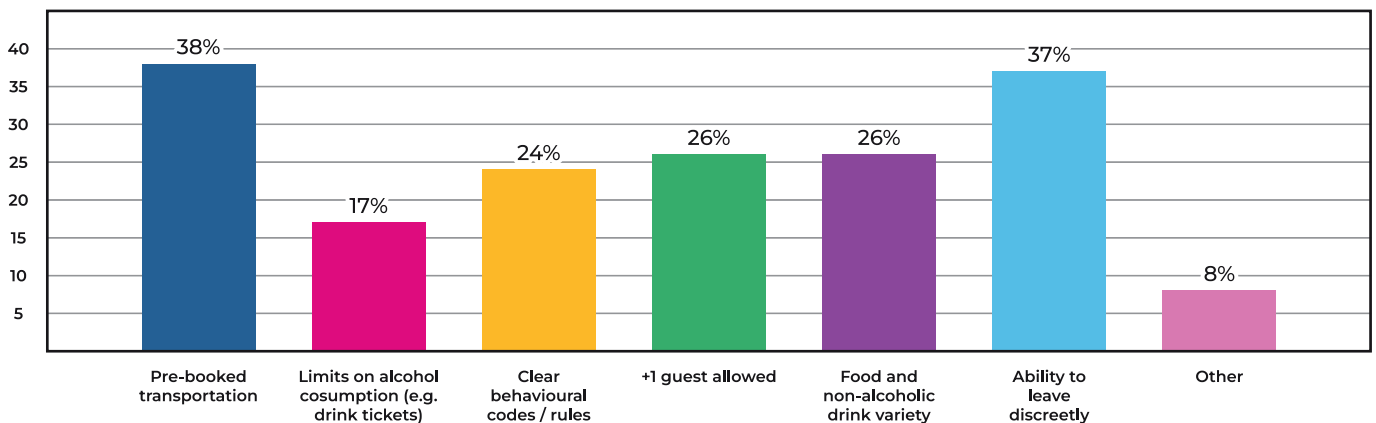
Making Employees Feel Safer

The preference for transport support strongly links back to the barriers of cost and travel difficulty. Ensuring employees can get home safely without needing to drive or rely on expensive late-night options can significantly increase comfort and attendance.

The desire for a discreet exit option is telling. It suggests that not all employees want to commit to a full evening, stay late, or make a social “show” of leaving. Allowing people to come and go freely can make events feel more relaxed and respectful of individual preferences.

Food and drink variety highlights a growing awareness of inclusivity, especially for those who do not drink alcohol or have dietary needs and avoid the anxiety of having limited options for those employees.

Question: “Which of the following measures would make you feel safer or more comfortable attending a Christmas party?”



Conclusion

The findings of Cartridge People’s 2025 Office Christmas Party Survey offer a clear picture of how workplace celebrations are evolving in today’s professional landscape. While Christmas parties remain a valued tradition for many, attendance is no longer an automatic expectation.

Despite this shift, the research also highlights that when workers do attend, their experiences are overwhelmingly positive or light-hearted. Serious incidents are rare, and regret about behaviour is uncommon.

Employees generally feel comfortable at these events, but value thoughtful measures that prioritise inclusivity, safety, and flexibility.

Successful Christmas parties in 2025 won’t necessarily be the most elaborate or expensive; they will be the ones that are accessible, welcoming, and considerate of diverse needs.

Ultimately, this year’s survey shows that the office Christmas party isn’t disappearing but is simply adapting. By understanding and responding to employee expectations, businesses can continue celebrating the festive season in ways that strengthen culture, morale, and connection across the workforce.