

Christmas Party Cancellations: 45% of Brits will no longer attend due to Omicron



We've been asking Brits what they usually get up to at their Christmas parties, from drinking too much, to being "amorous" with a work colleague, it's clear that the work party is anything but a quiet get together. Check out the results of our study and find out why this time of year can be a nightmare for HR managers up and down the country who have the job of picking up the pieces when so many of us misbehave at the Christmas do.

It may be the case that much of this behavior will be avoided this year however, as Cartridge People can reveal that 45% of UK workers will now skip the work Christmas party due to fears around Omicron.

Check out the results of our study below and find out why this time of year can be a nightmare for HR managers up and down the country who have the job of picking up the pieces when so many of us misbehave at the Christmas do and how the emergence of the new coronavirus variant is causing millions of Brits to stay at home.

What Brits Get Up To At Christmas Parties

- **Over a third of Brits embarrass themselves on the dancefloor**
- **More than one in four had to leave due to being drunk**
- **Almost a quarter of Brits have snogged a work colleague**
- **One in 10 confessed to shouting at their boss**
- **Almost one in 10 got into a punch-up**
- **One in 20 have drink drove after the party**

Businesses are being urged to prepare for a potential HR nightmare as it's revealed what workers get up to at Christmas parties.

The coronavirus pandemic meant that work Christmas parties didn't go ahead last year but as many events look set to take place over the coming weeks, new research has found out what Brits get up to when the drinks start flowing.

Over a third of Brits have admitted to embarrassing themselves on the dancefloor whilst more than one in four had to leave a party early due to being drunk. The research, conducted by Cartridge People, found that almost a quarter of people have snogged a work colleague at their Christmas party.

There are further worries for HR Managers with one in 10 confessing to having shouted at their boss during the bash and almost one in 10 said they'd got into a punch-up. According to the research by the office supplies retailer, the 18-24 age group are more likely than any other to get involved in a fist fight and men are twice as likely to shout at their boss compared to women.

One other huge concern as the festive season approaches is that the research uncovered that one in 20 had knowingly driven home from a work Christmas party over the limit.

The research also uncovered what would prevent workers from attending an event organised by their employer. One in three stated that a dislike of their colleagues would keep them at home. A quarter of people put their reluctance to attend down to costs. The study learned that almost half of workers will spend at least £50 attending a work Christmas party.

What Brits Get Up To At Christmas Parties

- 45% of UK workers say they won't attend a work party due to Omicron
- Half of women and 41% of men will avoid parties due to variant
- In London, over half say they won't go to an event compared to just a third when asked in November
- In the north west, Omicron means that nearly half will stay at home
- One in three won't attend a Christmas party due to disliking colleagues
- A quarter say the cost of attending puts them off going
- More than one in seven (16%) are anxious about seeing people in person
- More than one in 10 don't want to embarrass themselves
- Nearly one in 10 won't go because of limited food options

Cartridge People spokesperson, Andy Davies, commented: "These findings highlight that whilst the return of the Christmas party will be welcomed by businesses and employees this year, it doesn't come without its risks. There are obvious HR issues that can arise from the behaviour that occurs according to our evidence. With this year being perhaps the first time many colleagues would have seen each other due to social distancing measures, making sure staff don't get too carried away will be a message with added importance.

"In particular, the deeply concerning statistics around drink-driving after a Christmas party mean that employers should ensure they do everything they can to see that their events are safe and that staff aren't putting themselves and others in danger."

Table of Stats from Survey

Here's a breakdown of our findings from our study. Those who took part in the study were asked what they'd done at a work Christmas party and were allowed to tick more than one answer. Respondents were also given the opportunity to submit an additional answer.

What have you done at a work Christmas Party?	% of Brits who said "yes"
Embarrassed yourself on the dancefloor	34%
Had to leave early due to being too drunk	28%
Kissed a colleague	23%
Shouted at your boss	10%
Got into a fight	8%
Knowingly driven over the limit	5%

How many people drink-drive at a work Christmas party?

The fact 5% of Brits have knowingly driven over the limit following their work Christmas party is a shocking statistic considering that 70,000 people are caught drink-driving every year and you're three times more likely to be breathalysed in December than any other month. In August, it was reported that drink-drive deaths were at their highest rate for almost a decade.

Road safety charity, Brake, offers the following advice to drivers...

Plan ahead: Planning ahead to get home safely will help you avoid getting into an awkward or risky situation, such as having to refuse a lift from a driver who has had alcohol. Leaving the decision until the pub, when you've already been drinking, is looking for trouble.

Speak out: You don't have to be confrontational to speak out to someone who's thinking about drink or drug driving. You can talk to them in a friendly way, explaining why it's a bad idea to get behind the wheel. You could offer to call them a taxi, walk them to the bus stop or walk them home. If they are insistent on driving you might have to be more firm, take their keys or even call the police.

Morning after: Make sure you've completely got rid of any alcohol or drugs from your system before driving. Many drink and drug drivers are caught the next day. Drinking coffee, sleeping, or having a shower doesn't help you sober up, only time.

What's the UK drink-drive limit?

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the drink-drive alcohol limit for drivers is:

- 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood
- 107mg of alcohol per 100ml of urine
- 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100ml of breath

In Scotland, the drink-drive alcohol limit is reduced to:

- 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood
- 67mg of alcohol per 100ml of urine
- 22 micrograms of alcohol per 100ml of breath

HR and "Angry Britain"

The high proportion of Brits choosing to vent their anger at the boss may be a surprise to many but not to those who work in HR. Cartridge People spoke to Julie Gimblett, an HR Manager with over 25 years experience who commented:

"These shocking statistics highlight what HR Managers up and down the country have to face at this time of year when staff have too much to drink at their Christmas parties. Whilst this is, of course, a time for staff to let their hair down, for those in HR it's important to remember that even at a Christmas party, the company still has a responsibility and duty of care for employees. The fact that such a high proportion of Brits seemingly use a work party to vent their frustration at their boss is alarming for us in HR who are always left to deal with the fallout from incidents of bad behaviour at work functions."



Download our "Christmas Party Survival Guide" for HR Managers and employees below.

[Christmas Party Survival Guide](#)

Passion at the Christmas Party?

With almost one in four of us confessing to having kissed a work colleague at a Christmas party, it's clear that this annual event can offer the chance for either an office romance to blossom or perhaps for the alcohol to cloud a person's judgement. Whatever the reason, it could still make for an awkward moment in the office when you return after the Christmas break.

(The Cartridge People study was conducted by surveying 1,500 people in the UK in December 2021)

Information For Journalists

Cartridge People's study was conducted from the responses of 1,500 via an online survey.

Full dataset available on request.

For more information or to arrange an interview regarding the research, contact marketing@h2ecommerce.com

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