

Cartridge People Office and Home Office Workers Report 2026

Insights into how UK workers feel about
their work environment

Introduction

The nature of work has changed dramatically over the past few years, and organisations are continually adapting to meet the evolving expectations of employees. At Cartridge People, we set out to explore how these changes, particularly the rise of hybrid and remote working, are shaping productivity, wellbeing, and overall employee satisfaction.

This report presents the findings from our comprehensive survey of office and home-based workers, providing insight into how modern working arrangements are experienced on a day-to-day basis. From understanding the benefits and challenges of home working to uncovering what employees truly value in the office, the results highlight the growing importance of flexibility, balance, and meaningful social connection.

Whether you are an employer seeking to optimise workplace strategy, a HR professional aiming to support staff wellbeing, or simply interested in the future of work, this report offers helpful insights to help navigate the modern workplace.

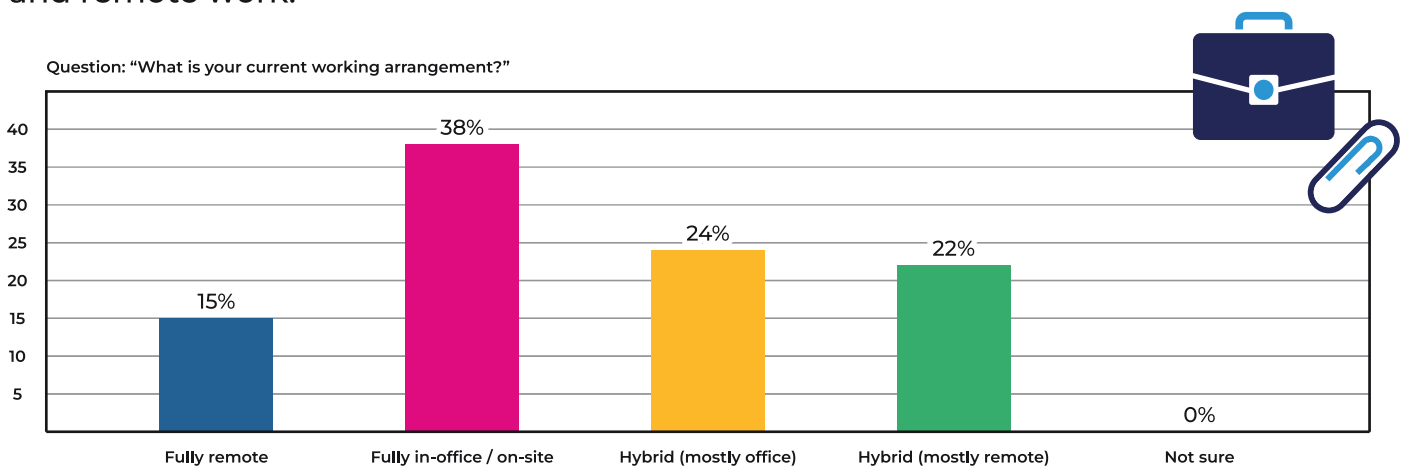
Executive Summary

- 45% of hybrid employees feel most productive at home
- 52% report working longer hours at home
- 76% say home working has a positive impact on mental wellbeing
- 83% are satisfied with their current working arrangement
- 56% value social interaction as the top benefit of office/on-site work

All data was collected on 23rd December, 2025
from 500 responses.

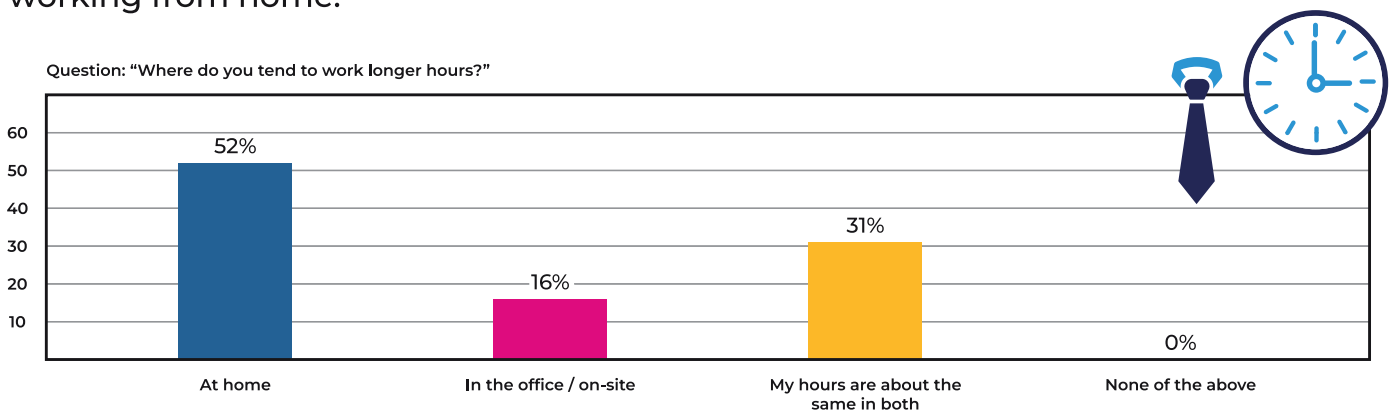
Current Working Environment

Hybrid working has become firmly established in office-based employment, with nearly half of employees now following a mixed approach (46%). While traditional office-based work remains significant, flexibility is clearly a priority for many employees. Organisations are recognising that hybrid models are no longer transitional and should have long-term strategies around this new reality, including appropriate technology, policies, and cultural practices that support both in-office and remote work.



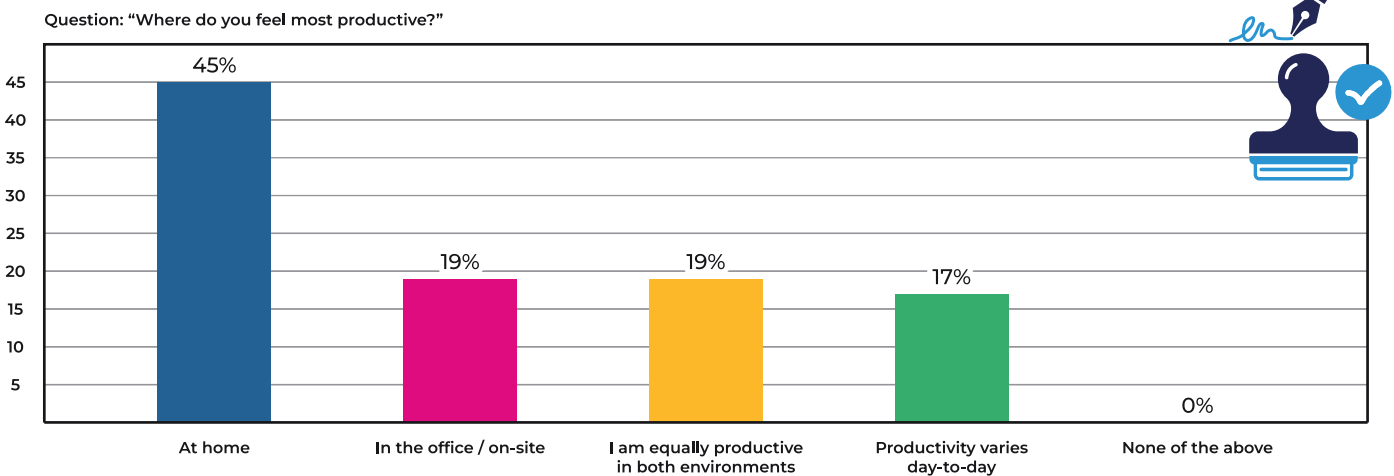
Where Do People Work Longer Hours?

For those who work hybrid, the majority of respondents report working longer hours at home (52%), which may reflect higher levels of focus or the absence of commuting and other office distractions. However, this also highlights the potential for blurred boundaries between work and personal life. Employers should establish clear expectations, encourage regular breaks, and promote well-being initiatives to mitigate the risk of overwork and burnout in remote settings. While it's difficult to check whether remote employees are taking advantage of such initiatives, regular check-ins will help managers foster a healthy work/life balance when staff is working from home.



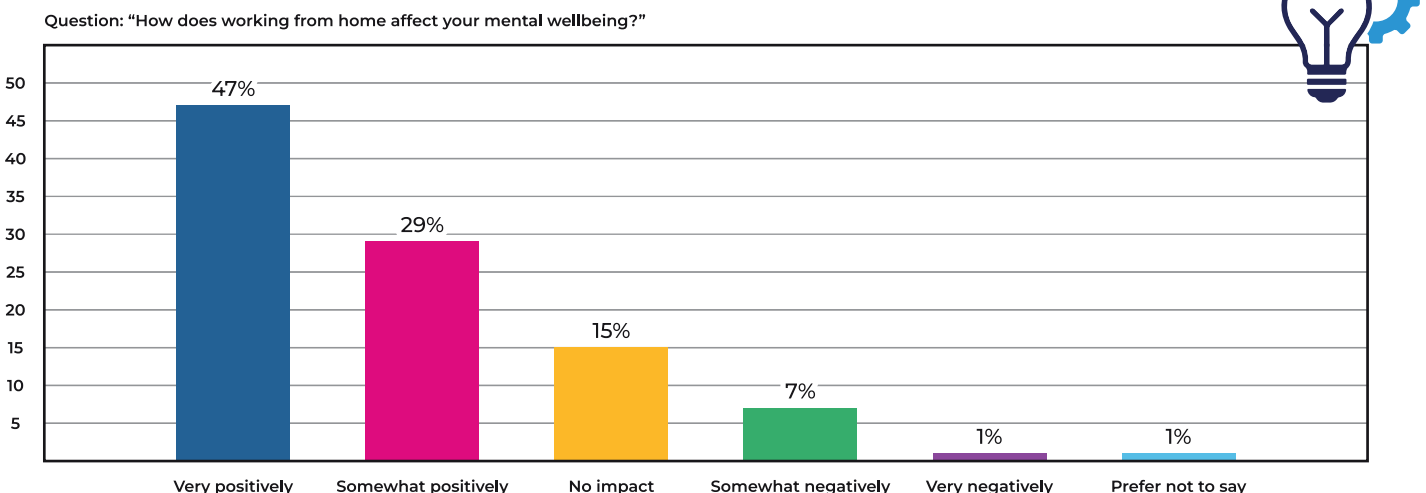
Where Do You Feel Most Productive?

Home working is seen as the most productive environment for almost half of hybrid workers (45%), suggesting that the ability to control their workspace, reduce interruptions, and work independently where possible has a strong impact on output. Of course, the reality of which environment is more productive can be quantified by employers based on output when at home versus the office and may differ from an employee's own opinion. The office remains important for collaborative tasks and those requiring immediate communication. Organisations should continue to optimise both remote and office environments to match the needs of different tasks and working styles.



The Effect of Working from Home on Mental Well-being

The majority of employees in this survey perceive that flexible home working arrangements have a positive effect of their mental well-being (76%). The small proportion experiencing negative effects suggests that some employees may struggle with isolation or other challenges. Organisations can enhance wellbeing by providing targeted support, regular check-ins, and access to mental health resources to ensure all employees benefit from flexible working arrangements.



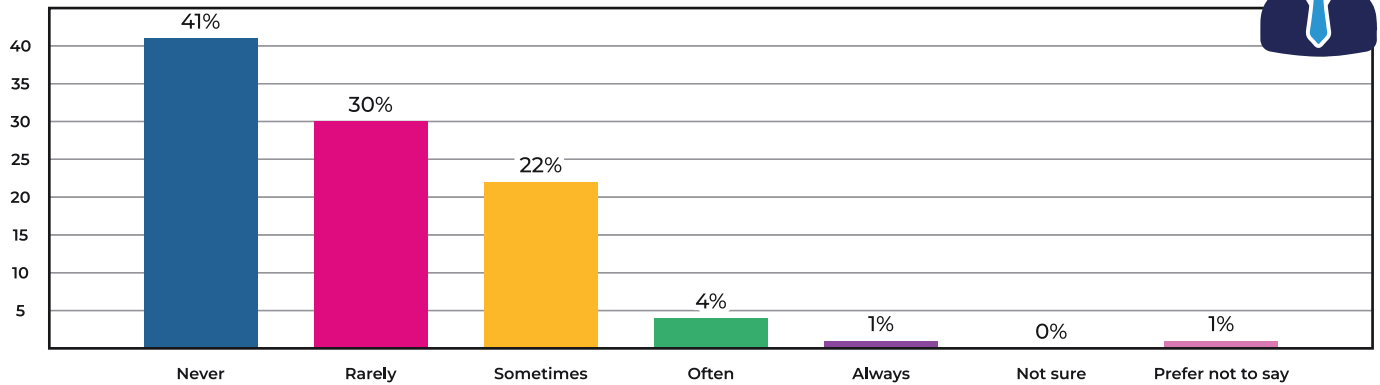


Loneliness When Working from Home

While most employees do not report experiencing significant loneliness, over a quarter report feeling lonely at least sometimes when working remotely (22%). This underlines the importance of structured social interactions, team engagement activities, and opportunities for face-to-face collaboration. Maintaining social connectivity is crucial for morale, cohesion, and employee retention.



Question: "Do you experience loneliness when working from home?"

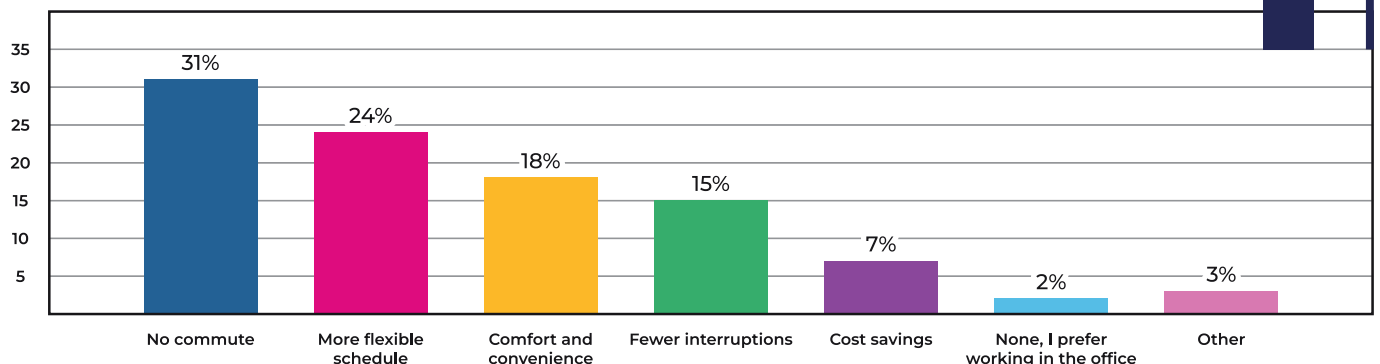


Main Benefits of Working from Home

Time savings, flexibility, and comfort are the key advantages employees associate with home working. These factors contribute directly to employee satisfaction and engagement, and can be leveraged by organisations to improve recruitment and retention. Highlighting these benefits in internal and external messaging can reinforce the value of flexible working policies, which many people look for when approaching a new role.



Question: "What do you feel is the main benefit of working from home?"



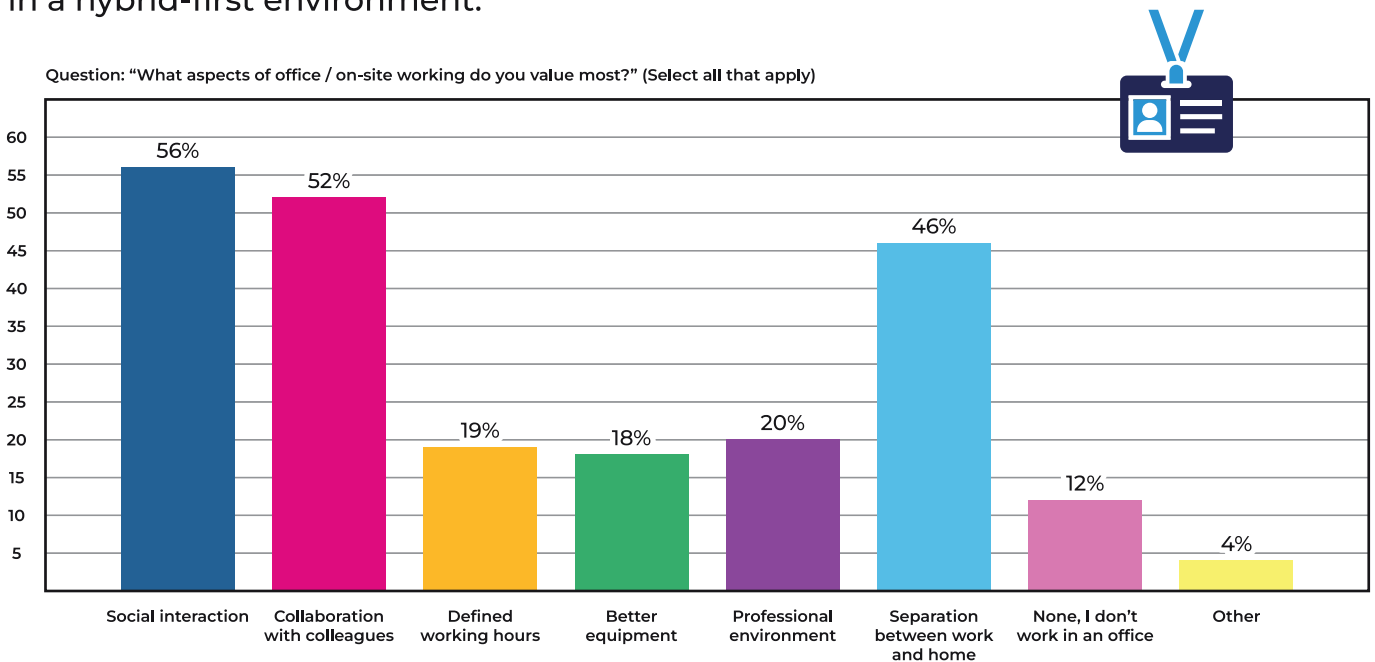
Significant 'Other' Answers

- I can be with my husband
- Enables me to work as I am disabled
- Look after my dog
- Mental Health and Introversion



Valued Aspects of Office/On-Site Work

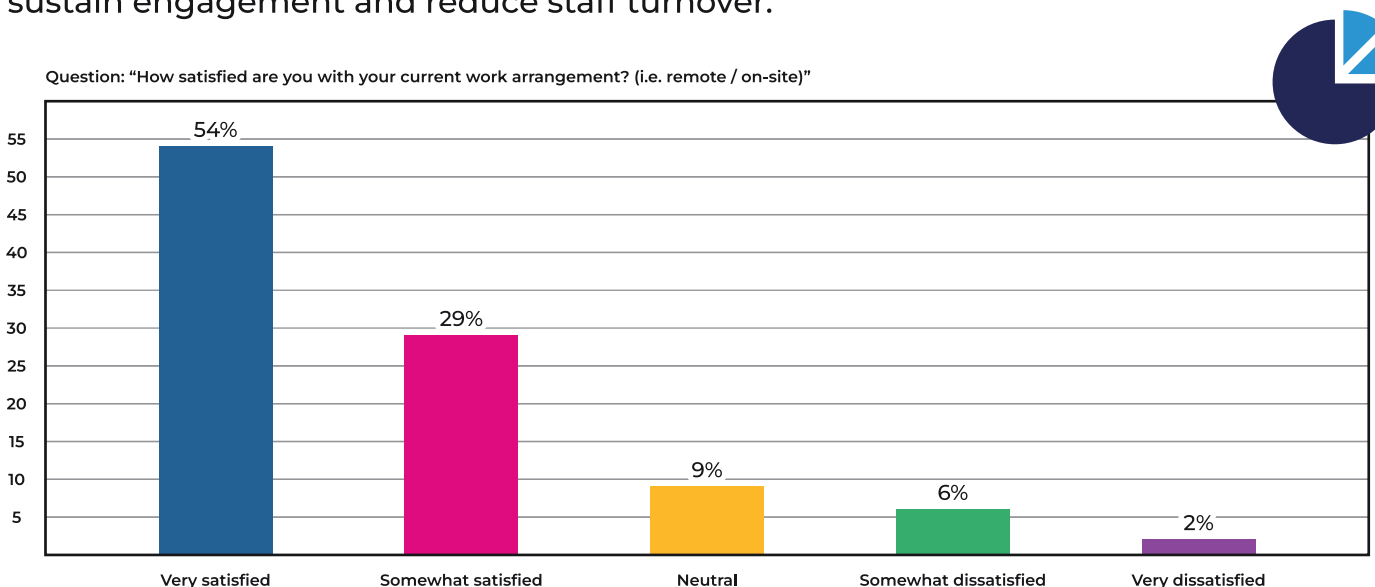
Offices remain essential for fostering collaboration, social connection, and the separation between professional and personal life. Structured office days and collaborative spaces can be used strategically to strengthen culture, facilitate teamwork, and address the social needs that are less easily met remotely. Investment in office design and shared workspaces will remain important even in a hybrid-first environment.



Employee Satisfaction



Overall, employee satisfaction is high when it comes to their work environments, suggesting that current flexible arrangements meet employee expectations. Organisations that maintain or enhance flexibility, provide supportive management, and address the small proportion of dissatisfied employees can sustain engagement and reduce staff turnover.

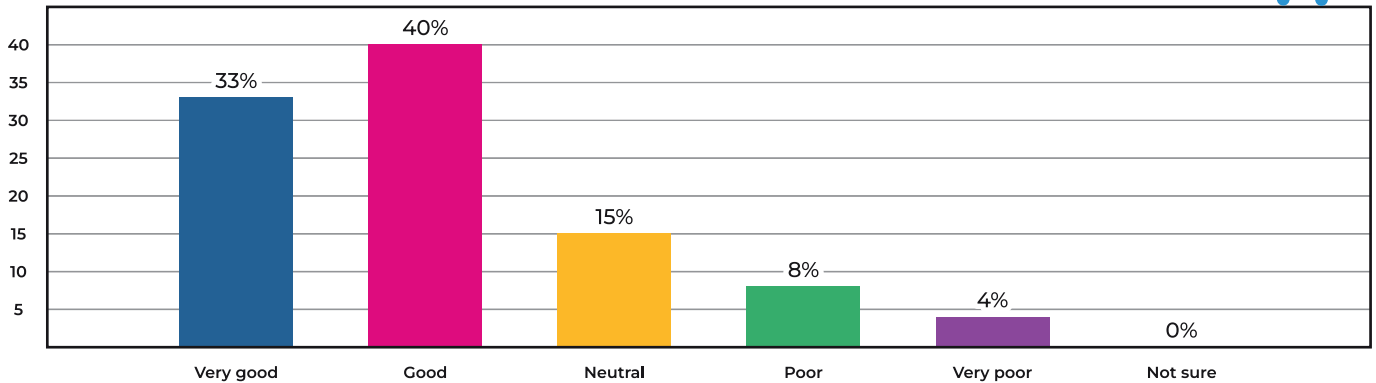


Work-Life Balance

Flexible working arrangements are contributing positively to work-life balance for the majority of employees (73%). For the small percentage reporting poor balance, targeted interventions, such as workload adjustments or wellbeing programs, may be necessary. Promoting practices that support balance will further enhance retention and productivity.



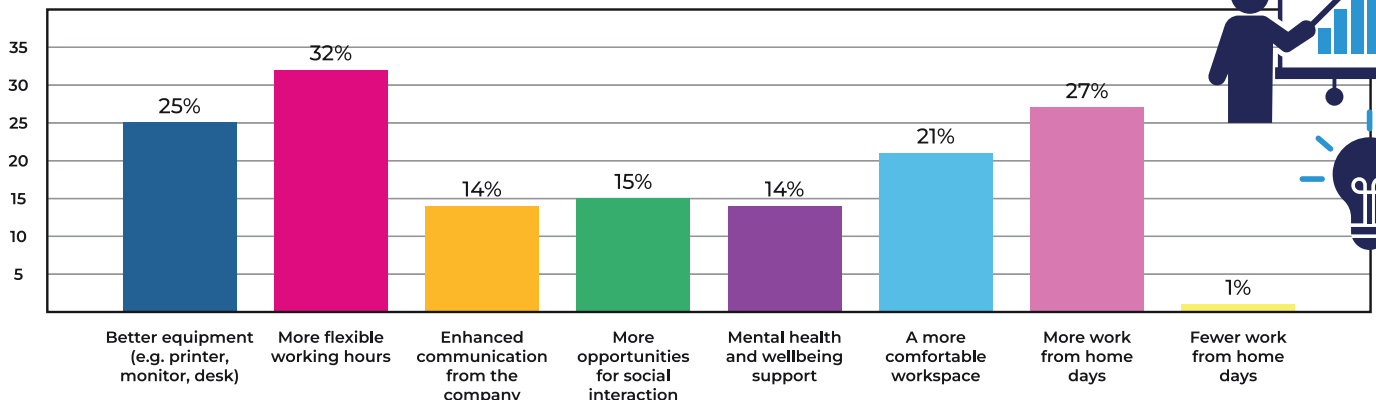
Question: "How do you feel about your current work/life balance?"



Improvements Employees Would Like

Employees are seeking a combination of flexibility, investment in their workspace, and improved communication. Prioritising these areas, especially flexible scheduling and high-quality equipment, which both ranked the highest in the survey, can deliver great returns in employee engagement, performance, and overall satisfaction. Organisations should view these requests as actionable insights to guide strategic planning for both office and remote environments.

Question: "What would improve your working experience (home or on-site)?" (Select all that apply)



Significant 'Other' Answers

- Four day work week
- Travel support
- Ability to look after my dog
- A break room

Conclusion

The 2026 Cartridge People Office and Home Office Workers Report confirms that the nature of work has fundamentally shifted in recent years. Flexibility, autonomy, and choice are now central to the modern employee experience, with hybrid working firmly established as a long-term model. In this report, home working is associated with higher productivity, reduced commuting stress, and positive impacts on mental well-being, while the office remains vital for collaboration, social connection, and maintaining boundaries between work and personal life.

Employees report high levels of satisfaction with their current arrangements and a generally positive work-life balance, but the report also highlights opportunities for improvement. Greater flexibility, investment in equipment and workspaces, and ongoing support for social interaction and wellbeing are key priorities for organisations aiming to sustain engagement and performance.

Ultimately for many, the future of work is not a choice between home and office, but about creating a balanced ecosystem that enables employees to work where they feel is most effective, so they can feel supported and thrive. Organisations that listen to these insights and act strategically are best positioned to attract, retain, and empower their teams, while driving long-term productivity and success.



Cartridge People

Cartridge People is a leading UK online retailer of office supplies and printer consumables. Established in 2001, they've helped businesses and home users across the country print hassle-free, selling tens of millions of printer cartridges from their 60,000 square feet of warehouse space across multiple Cheshire-based locations. They stock an extensive range of office supplies, ink and toner, printers and more from well-known and trusted brands such as Epson, HP, Brother, Canon and many more. They also offer high-quality, affordable Compatible Own Brand alternatives.