

Managed human resource solutions that maximise the value of people



Business Practices and Attitudes Relating to Home Working

A Survey of Human Resource Professionals in UK Business

On behalf of



Ceridian Quarterly HR Insight
Putting HR issues in focus

Conducted by Closer to Customers, May 2006

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Foreword

All hail the home working revolution! New technology means we're logging-in from home, flexing our hours round our lifestyle and the daily commute is a thing of the past. Or maybe not.

The hype would have us believe that UK plc is racing to shut offices and give us all laptops but when we spoke to businesses across the UK, only 25% of those we sampled had switched office roles to home working. And while 64% of these companies felt home working was a growing trend, this was generally only relevant to a small number of their employees.

So, more evolution than revolution. What can we learn from these pioneers who are using home working as a formal part of their staffing strategy?

Home working increases productivity – reducing the interruptions and unofficial “downtime” of office life and reducing time wasted on travelling.

Home working can be a valuable recruitment and retention tool – helping companies to compete successfully for particular skills or abilities.

New technology makes home working viable but requires investment – and increasingly devices such as the Blackberry serve to increase work-load rather than enhance productivity.

To harness these benefits in your business, you need to make sure home working is a conscious business decision, not just an easy way to retain or attract particular individuals.

Protecting your business is vital. Health & Safety and duty of care responsibilities equally extend to home-based employees and drafting a formal policy to protect both employees and employer is essential.

Enabling line managers to deliver employee productivity and engagement is also crucial. Line managers need established channels to feedback into HR and training to be responsive to home workers' particular needs. Nearly half of our respondents were not actively monitoring their home workers views, meaning potential for disengagement and “out of sight, out of mind” attitudes.

Even more importantly, 86% of our sample was unable to quantify financial benefits to their business from home working. In order to get the most from home working, it's imperative to coordinate teams around the business, from Finance, IT and Operations as well as HR, to set realistic financial objectives and measure whether or not they are achieved. These metrics need to examine productivity, the cost of replacing staff, reductions in overheads, technological investment and the impact on customers, to ensure that business benefits are real and deliverable.



Key Conclusions

A Minority of Companies Consistently Permit Home Working

Only 25% of the companies we contacted to participate in the survey currently permit home working by our definition (regular spells working from home, in a role that might traditionally have been an office-based function). While the trend is positive, with 64% of companies that do permit home working recognising it is on the increase over the last five years, progress is no better than steady. Even then, it is most likely to be for a small proportion of staff, and most likely for no more than one day week. ▶▶▶▶P6

Ad Hoc Agreement of Home Working Arrangements More Common Than Planned Initiatives.

Very few companies have made an early conscious decision towards widespread home working; usually the situation has crept up on the business as case-by-case decisions are made to permit individuals to work from home. Unplanned, ad hoc development brings problems that a planned initiative might foresee. The main downsides that are highlighted are employees taking advantage of the system and management of health and safety in the home. We note that those companies who have most embraced home working do not cite reduced productivity as an issue. ▶▶▶▶P9

Widespread Recognition of Benefits

There is widespread recognition of the benefits to employer and employee. The four most frequently offered benefits are productivity, greater staff loyalty and commitment and in turn, more motivated staff with a better balance of work and home. ▶▶▶▶P13

A Necessary Component of Employment to Attract Staff

74% of companies admit that, where practical, the opportunity of home-based working is a necessary component of employment to attract and retain the right people, with 75% advising that it gives them an advantage in the job market. ▶▶▶▶P16

But It Brings Management Problems

However, 64% consider that managing home-based workers is harder than managing those in the office. Several respondents have suggested that remote staff management requires a different approach to in-office management, skills for which may have to be learned. The issue of restricted communications is a significant part of this, but we also hear that managers have to “learn the softer elements of management”, ensuring the well-being of the staff. ▶▶▶▶P14

Formal Policies

54% of the companies have no written, formal policy. Home working arrangements are still for a very small minority of staff, possibly considered to be “special circumstances”, where the loss of specific skills would be detrimental to the business. ▶▶▶▶P10

Measurable Benefits?

86% do not attempt to measure the financial benefit to the business of home working. Four out of ten companies admit it was not possible to measure the savings to a business of allowing home working while 31% rely on the judgement of the relevant manager. Only 8% claimed they could measure savings accurately. ▶▶▶▶P18

Expectations Met?

Only 60% say that expectations relating to productivity are largely or completely met; only 10% say expectations relating to financial benefits are largely or completely met. We wonder, given the ad hoc nature of home working arrangements, were the expectations properly defined? ▶▶▶▶P20

Technology is a Key Driver

Technology has been a significant driver of allowing home working: 94% of companies have embraced new technology to allow home workers to work more effectively from home. Broadband, conferencing, handheld technology and more recently VoIP, have among others all had an impact on the efficiency of home working. ▶▶▶▶P22

Limited Support Beyond IT

In many companies, the support for home workers is limited beyond IT. 49% do not actively monitor home workers' views, so judging how effective the arrangement is from the perspective of the employee is that much harder.

The Future

Future growth of home working is likely to remain slow overall despite the recognised benefits. Only half of our respondents indicate that home working will "quite likely" or "definitely" be encouraged in the future. ▶▶▶▶P20

We conclude that this is driven in the main by a lack of understanding of the implications of home working, how to make it as effective as possible, how to benefit from the perceived upsides with as few of the downsides impacting on the business. Neither are many companies looking to learn from the experiences of their home working staff. But there are larger companies in the UK who have reached the stage where policy is formalised and where a generation of management have "grown up" with the concept and are therefore better able to manage in those circumstances, and these companies are reaping the benefit, whether quantifiable or not, from their efforts.

1. Current Practices Relating to Home Working

1.1 Hard Numbers: The Penetration of Home Working in 2006

For the purposes of this study, our definition of home-based working is the practice of some employees spending at least part of their paid employment working at home on a regular basis, in a role that might otherwise be expected to be office-based. We exclude staff who may request the occasional day working from home, and representatives whose primary function is to be “in the field”, though we recognise that the latter is sometimes the catalyst to extended home working arrangements.

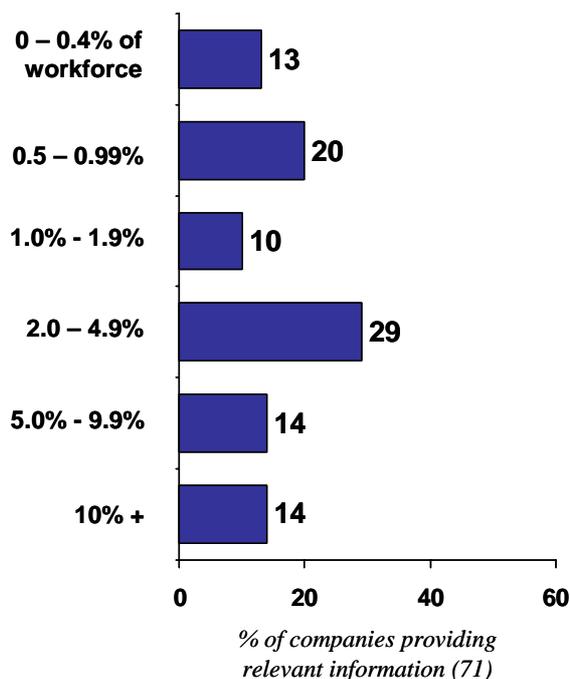
Respondents who felt that their company did not meet this definition were screened out of the survey.

Perhaps one of the most important conclusions from this survey arises not from the questions we asked, but from the experience of seeking out companies that permit home working on a formal basis.

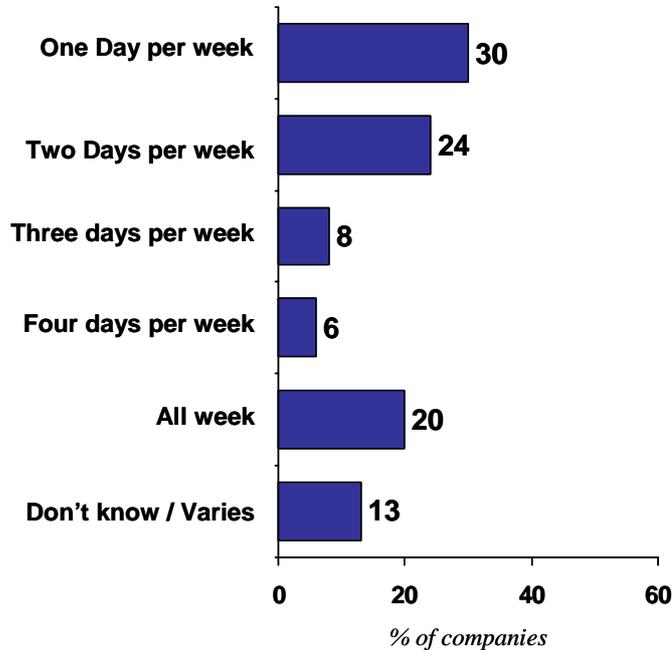
Of the company representatives that agreed to take part in the survey, 297 out of 397 did not qualify on this basis. Only 25% of the companies we spoke to formally permit home working. This in itself suggests that home working is not as widespread as popular belief would have it.

The 100 companies we spoke to in detail employ in the UK approximately 258,000 staff (data provided either by the sample providers or by the respondents themselves). Among those that were able to provide confident figures on the number of staff able and willing to work from home for at least part of their week, the average percentage of staff working from home was 7.8%. Of course, this varies dramatically between companies and types of business, with education the sector with by far the highest proportion of staff with home working arrangements, and manufacturing the lowest.

Percent of Employees Home Working For At Least Part of Their Week



Number of Days Staff Most Commonly Work From Home



On average, across the 100 companies, employees work from home under our terminology for 2.6 days a week, but the spread is very broad.

Our London and South East headquartered companies are somewhat less likely to approve full-time (all week) home working arrangements (only 10% answer “all week” to the above question) than the companies in the rest of the United Kingdom (30% answer “all week”).

We also note a greater likelihood for business services companies to allow full-time home working than other sectors.

We asked respondents for information on the job functions that are most appropriate to be considered for home working arrangements, and those that are least appropriate. The most mentioned functions in each circumstance are listed overleaf. The least frequently cited issues have a degree of logic behind them – site security would be hard to implement from home! However, it is interesting to note that administrative functions top both lists.

We have also noted two different circumstances where our definition of home working applies:

- ◆ Staff located relatively close to the office, but who seek flexibility with or relief from their commute, or need flexibility so that their work and life commitments can both be met.
- ◆ Staff who are located at a considerable distance from the office, but are to some extent peripatetic in their roles, though the majority of their time is spent at the desk, either in the office or at home. Examples we found include a Cheshire-based director with a head office in Oxfordshire who is in the office three days a week; a relatively junior staff member whose personal circumstances changed and, in order to keep his skills in the business, he was allowed



to base himself out of the North East, for a company in the south of England. Business restructuring is often a catalyst for these arrangements.

Most frequently cited as MOST appropriate	Number of mentions	Most frequently cited as LEAST appropriate	Number of mentions
Back office, admin functions, clerical, etc	17	Back office, admin functions, clerical, etc.	25
Project work, document development, proposal development, editorial roles	17	Customer facing roles, customer service functions	20
Financial support, accountancy	14	Factory roles, "shop floor", Warehousing, etc.	19
Online workers, IT support staff	11	Human Resource functions	12
Sales, business development, account management	9	Security	12

We also asked whether seniority of the staff concerned influenced the likelihood of having the opportunity to work from home. While 42% consider that seniority is not the issue, only 8% suggested that it is most appropriate for "junior management" or "supervisors" and a majority – 54% - consider it to be the domain of middle and senior management.

"As the company restructured and on occasion took over other businesses, I suspect that staff are required to move around the business more, so travel becomes an issue for them."

"The initial move was in response to changes in our market. As the customer base consolidated, we found we had fewer but bigger accounts (i.e. European), so sales staff were never in the office. We had a vast area of office space that was empty and devoid of atmosphere. A combination of the need to improve this, plus the introduction of mobile technologies to make it possible, meant we could base sales staff from their homes. A lot of people loved it, immediately seeing the benefits of greater efficiency and freedom to organise themselves as they saw fit. From this position, we extended the arrangements to others and now 60% of non-manufacturing related staff are based out of their homes."

"We operate in the public sector (though we are a private company) where diversity rules are much more advanced, so our customers expect initiatives that reflect diversity. We could even lose business if we cannot demonstrate that arrangements are place."

"One driver of our policy was the changes in which the business delivers service to the customer. With online and telephone-based service now demanded by the customer, we have had to change our operating hours, and flexible working permits us to respond to those demands."

"It is most appropriate to senior and middle management who have the facility and the ability to work from home at no additional cost to the business."

"I think home working is more appropriate when decision making is devolved around a business and where decisions can be made without the full picture, rather than centralised as it is here. There is a need to be where the action is."

“Most frequently it is more junior people who are refused home working arrangements though I disagree with this. It should be about who the person is, provided they have the experience and don’t require supervision.”

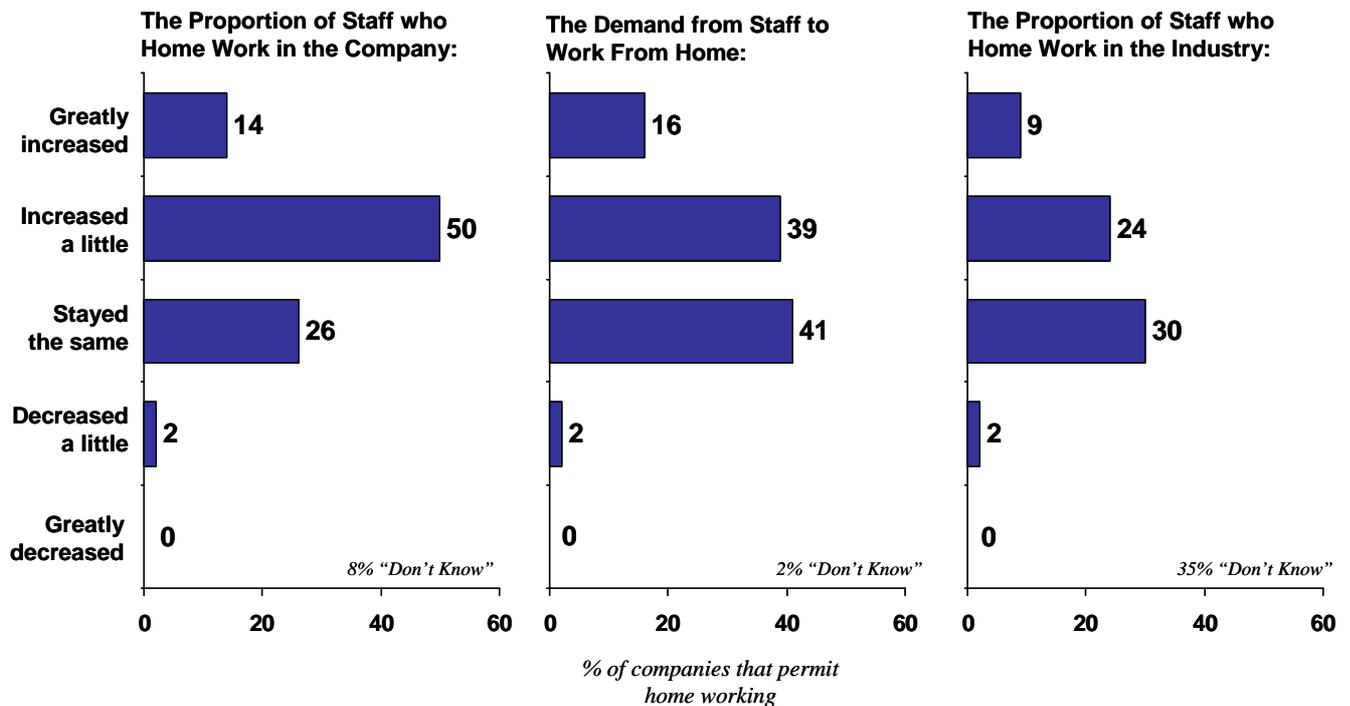
A further theme that arose from interviews with larger companies is planning for the occasion when *everyone* has to work from home, perhaps as a result of a government response to a pandemic. Several of the larger companies we spoke to have plans in place, or are developing plans, to ensure that business critical roles can function from the home environment, at least in the shorter term.

1.2 Trends During The Last Five Years

This analysis shows that both demand for home working and the incidence of home working has increased over the last five years, though usually the increase is not dramatic; progress, if that is what it is, is steady and there appears not to have been a home working “revolution” which many have anticipated over the years. We note that there is a slightly greater propensity for respondents in larger companies (>500 UK staff) to report increases in both the demand for home working and, in response, the proportion of staff who work from home. No significant differences by region are noted.

Where demand from staff for home working opportunities has not increased a great deal, the most usual reason is lack of awareness that such an opportunity exists. Even in companies where sophisticated work flexibility programmes have been in place for some time, the take up of home working has been less than the take up of other options.

Trends in Home Working: The Last Five Years





The following quotes reflect a general view that the shift is reactive rather than proactive:

“The shift is more likely to be driven by employees than by the business, despite the shortage of office space which should be a driver. There are other business priorities to consider as well.”

“The nature of society is evolving, we have to be flexible so we can’t ignore it forever. But it means a change to our whole culture, so it’s a huge project in itself, which would be costly and not everyone would appreciate or benefit from the changes. We are more likely to be forced to make changes, rather than actively look to make changes.”

“Has it taken off? It’s like the so-called paperless society. You should see my desk.”

“As regional demographics change and the work force shrinks, ultimately we will have to do it.”

“Our finance department was experiencing high turnover of staff and loss of skills and experience. It was a case of having to adapt, find a new way of working.”

“We recognise that we are fairly traditional, old fashioned even. We have been trying the obvious, to attract younger, thrusting people, but we train them and they move on to other companies. We have lately realised the need to expand our recruitment range, bring in more mature people, most probably with more stable lives and stronger roots in the area.”

“We have evolved at the market rate, driven by better use of technology and the cost of office space in London, but by contrast there is not an appetite for home working in the business.”

The comments above all reflect slow change in those companies, even some resistance, while recognising that in the future we are likely to see more home working. In contrast, this is a comment from a company that is much further down the road, and indeed was a leading private sector voice in the development of government policy on home working over the years:

“There is strong board commitment to make this work. Our policy allows any member of staff to apply through a clear process to modify their hours and we do not ask them why they need to do this.”

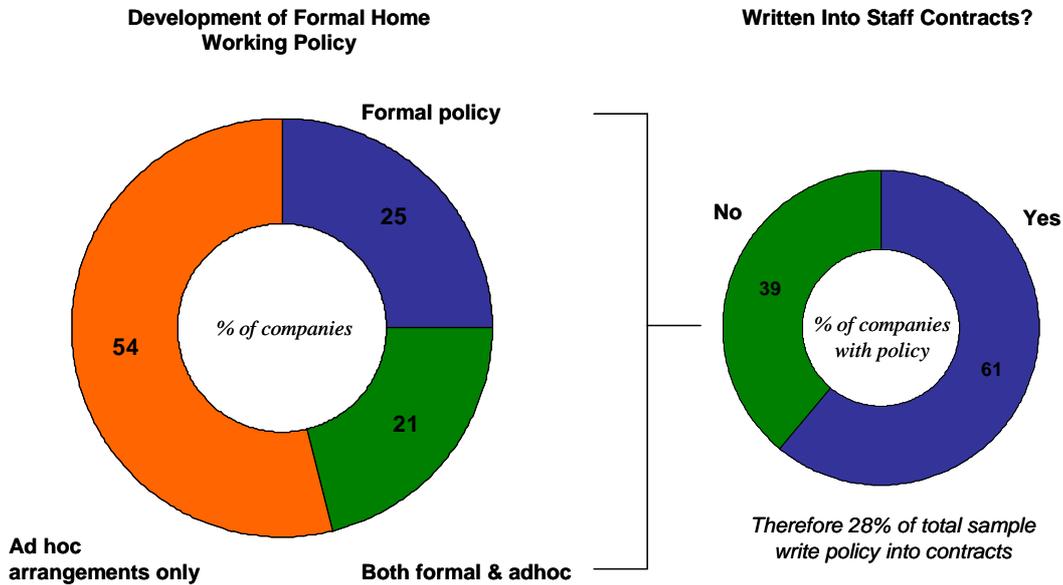
“In the past we have put the benefits to staff above the benefits to the business, which was a mistake. Now there really has to be a strong justification.”

1.3 Development of Formal Policy

Less than half of the companies we contacted have a formal policy on home working, and little more than one quarter actually write this into staff contracts. This is in line with the overall conclusion we reach that the management of home working situations remains loose and relatively unstructured in a business world that becomes more and more structured over time.

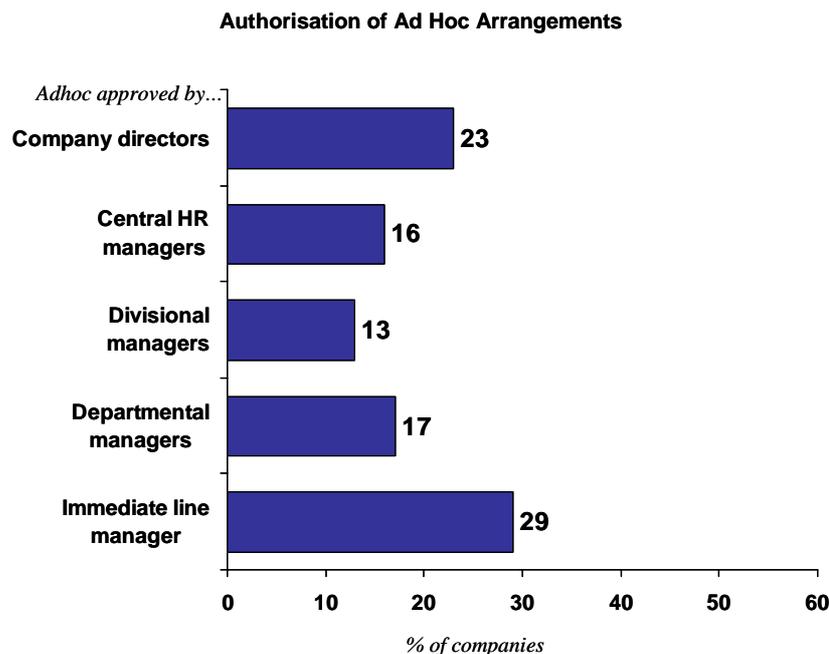
“We like the idea, emotionally and instinctively. We know we have to offer these types of arrangements if we are to attract the right people in a very competitive South East employment market. There is a need to formalise them.”

Extent to Which Home Working is Written Policy



“The larger group of employees are those working on flexible arrangements, but not as a contractual entitlement, ad hoc really. We would like to shift some of these to a more formal footing. But home working is just one component of flexible working, another we are looking at is annual hours’ contracts.”

The majority of companies devolve the ad hoc decisions to middle ranking management, most often the appropriate line manager:





There is a higher likelihood that the decision is devolved to middle management in companies headquartered in London and the South East (69% do so) compared to other regions (42%).

“There are cultural differences to account for. Our work culture here is not appreciated by our non-UK owners, among whom hierarchy and formality is more significant.”

“In Germany and Italy, it has been more difficult for the culture of home working to be accepted.”

“People recognise it is a privilege, but it’s a “grace and favour” situation, not contractual.”

“There are three drivers of whether an individual can work from home; the nature of the activity – an overhead area rather than operational; task driven, perhaps a little more one off; and finally the attitude and personality of the boss!”

2. Company Attitudes Towards Home Working

2.1 Perceived Key Benefits

We asked respondents to identify up to three key benefits derived from a home working policy. It is interesting to note that the greater well-being of staff is among the least frequently mentioned benefits, while enhanced productivity is the number one benefit, though we recognise that one may be a driver of the other. We are also surprised to see that “lower overheads” is relatively low down the list. However, companies in the South East seem more aware of this issue:

“In the South East, office space is phenomenally expensive. We have multiple locations in the region, so minimising the space has a significant benefit for us. The ruling from local authorities that new builds can only accommodate car parking for one-third of employees (to encourage travel to work by other means) also impacts on us.”

Benefits derived from home working	Number of mentions
Higher productivity, ability to work uninterrupted, especially on “project work”	41
Skill retention, greater commitment from staff, greater loyalty	32
Happier staff, higher morale, more motivation, good staff relations	29
Better work/life balance, “family friendly”, fit with domestic arrangements = people able to work for us	29
Contributes to ability to offer flexible working conditions, hours	19
Office space and other facilities go further	16
Continuity for our clients, better customer service	11
Reduced overheads	10
Creates a positive image for the company, dynamic, flexible	7
Lower stress for staff, greater well-being	6
Time not lost travelling (some hints towards environmental benefit)	5
Recruitment costs reduced, easier to find appropriate staff, device to aid recruitment	5
Other	8

“There are many enlightened employers in the region and we have to match what they can offer to win staff over and improve retention. Ultimately, this means lower recruitment costs, hidden or otherwise.”



“Is a big help to staff retention, we have very high levels of retention. We also see the potential benefit to recruitment, but have yet to sharpen up our act.”

“In my case, if I don’t leave home by 07.00am it is at least an hour [along the Thames Valley corridor] to the office. With flexible arrangements, I can work at home until 09.30am and drive in twenty minutes.”

“There is a clear benefit in attracting the better staff. It is only a small minority who don’t sit easy with this type of arrangement.”

“Flexible working, of which home working is a part, is now mainstream in the business. Benefits in terms of staff loyalty and engagement in the business in a way that works for the individual.”

“When office time is dominated by meetings, one day a week at home is incredibly valuable.”

“It is a good arrangement when working on sensitive data and the open plan office arrangement is not appropriate. Also when there is a need to focus on planning, getting away from office distractions.”

“If you can take out two hours travelling a day, that’s a full extra working day created every week.”

“A key stated aim of this business is to be an employer of choice. To be the best to work for. Home working options are part of this.”

On balance, our respondents were more willing to offer up benefits than pitfalls. Two issues dominate the parallel analysis of the pitfalls associated with home working:

Pitfalls associated with home working	Number of mentions
Employees inclined to take advantage, abuse the system, we have to trust them	32
Health and safety issues – appropriate environment in the home	29
Lack of/restricted communications, less continuity of communication, reduced sharing of information	21
Management of tasks, control and overseeing of tasks	21
Management of performance, productivity, ensuring the job is done	21
Perceptions of those not allowed to work from home, having to justify it, lack of equality, some managers allow it, others do not, “manager lottery”	12
Staff not available for meetings when needed, lack of face-to-face contact, inflexible staff	12
Difficulties with IT	8
Increased administration costs and associated time	5



“Trust is not the big issue collectively, though it is for some managers.”

“There is a risk of working much longer, even though you get a lot done.”

“Others’ perception is that the home worker should be locked in the office, no tea, no nothing!”

“Being visible is important. If you need to call someone rather than put your head round the door, you have to remind yourself to do it.”

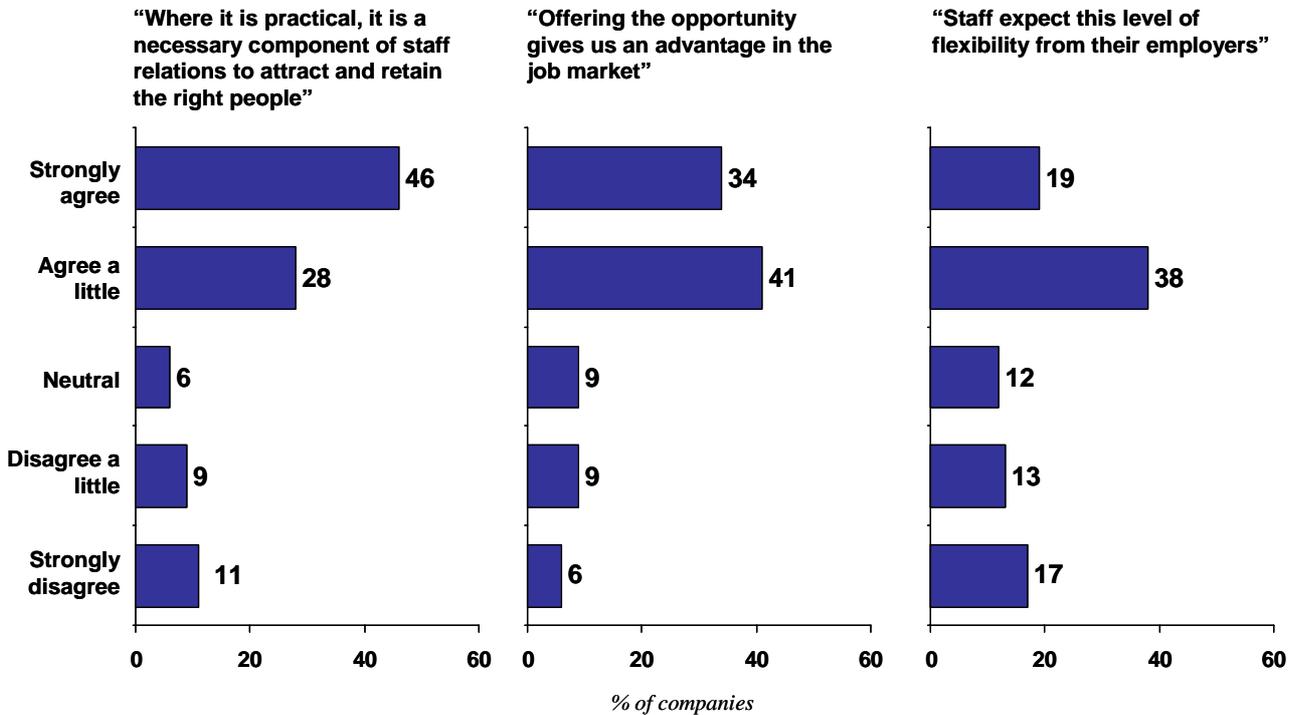
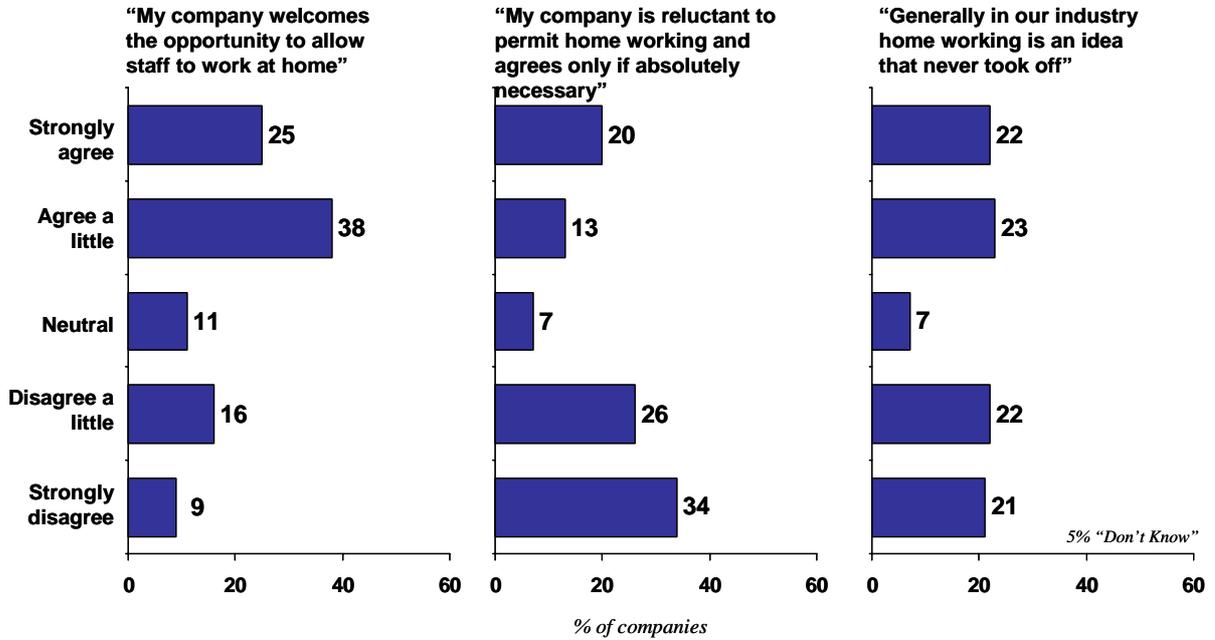
“The lack of opportunity to share information – information acquisition by osmosis as a result of being in the office.”

“No job is a cocoon, stuff gets chucked at you, stuff comes up. If you are managing a team it is easier to delegate small things when people are there.”

“Home working is not right for everyone. Isolation can lead to problems, and if they’re not in the office we can’t spot it.”

Given the assessment outlined above, we then sought to pin down the corporate attitude towards home working. On the charts that follow, we can see that commitment to home working is not exactly unquestioning – there is more likelihood of agreement with statements that reflect home working as something that is necessary rather than desirable – and opinion is almost equally split on whether in their particular industry there has been a significant trend towards home working.

Corporate Attitudes Towards Home Working





We note a number of variations by geography and number of UK staff on this analysis:

The most positive response would be “strongly agree” that “my company welcomes the opportunity to allow staff to home work” and we note that London-based and South and South West-based businesses are somewhat more likely to demonstrate this view than others.

Scottish-based respondents are most likely to strongly agree it is a “necessary component of staff relations to attract the right people” (and demand appears stronger there) and again London-based businesses are more likely to strongly agree here also. Business services’ companies also strongly agree with this statement more frequently than other business types.

Companies of up to 500 staff are more than twice as likely to “permit home working only if absolutely necessary” than are companies with more than 500 staff.

Companies in the South East (not London) are more than twice as likely as those in the Midlands and the North to strongly agree that home working opportunities “gives us an advantage in the job market”.

“The biggest challenge to the business is where home working has developed within a team on an ad hoc basis. With restructuring we have had examples of teams being unable to meet their (internal or external) customer demands because home working arrangements clash. Where it works best is when the team gets together to come to an arrangement rather than the case-by-case scenario.”

“A significant downside is when we bring new staff into the business. It is much harder to incorporate them and teach them our culture. This remains a debate today, after some years of this policy being in place. Should we get new staff to work out of the office for the first few months so that they understand the business better?”

“Some people we think need to be in the office don’t agree, citing technology as their argument and that is a good argument, but we won’t let them.”

“Potentially, perhaps 30% of HO workers could spend some time working from home, but there is pain to be experienced to make this happen, and that has to be shared by all.”

“Our shift wasn’t gradual, it was a big move and the process was initially painful, but the outcome has to be good.”

“There has to be a balance between home and office time, so that team dynamics are not compromised. There still needs to be the opportunity for ad hoc meetings, but then again I seek to protect my day at home as much as I can.”

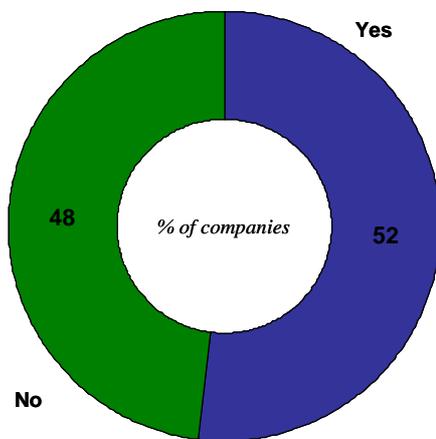
“It remains a leap of faith for many managers. There is no written policy at this stage, most likely it is down to the enlightenment of the manager.”

2.2 Attitudes Towards Productivity and Financial Benefit

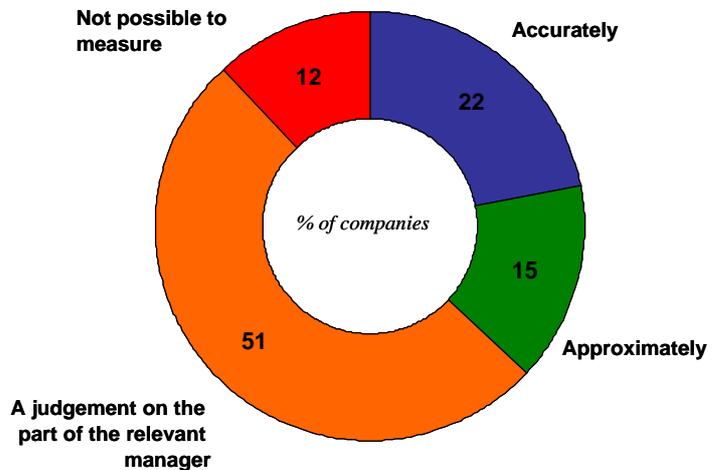
With little more than half of our respondents indicating that productivity is monitored, and only one in five indicating that it is possible to measure productivity accurately, it seems that the judgement on the value of home working in terms of productivity, cited by the most respondents as the most significant benefit, is based on gut feel rather than anything overly scientific.

Monitoring Productivity

Does the company seek to monitor the productivity of staff time spent at home?



To what extent are you able to monitor the productivity of staff time at home compared to staff time in the office?



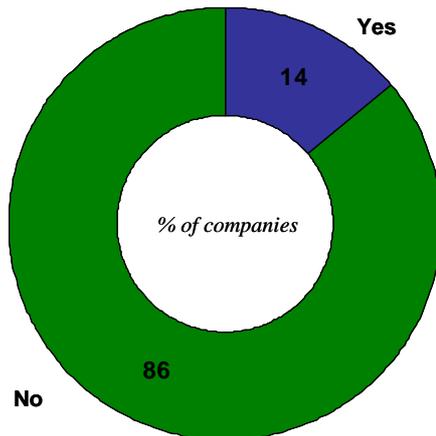
Responsibility:
 Central HR managers 6%
 Divisional managers 4%
 Departmental managers 21%
 Immediate line managers 69%

There is a lower likelihood that London-based companies feel able to monitor productivity accurately than companies locating their HQs elsewhere.

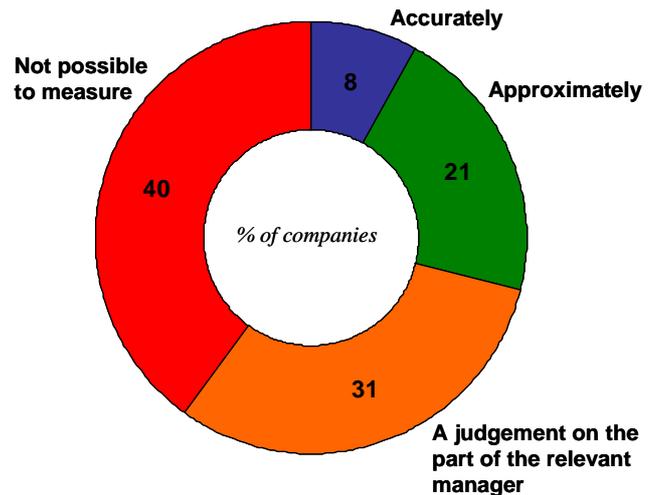
Seeking to put a figure to the financial benefit to the company is even less frequently attempted, though this fits with the position of this issue on the benefit analysis. Only one in seven companies attempt it, and only approximately one-third of respondents consider an “accurate” or “approximate” figure can be reached. In both this analysis and that above, it appears that, just as the decision to allow home working is most frequently devolved to departmental and line managers, so too is the judgement that it is a good idea.

Measuring The Financial Benefit to the Company

Does the company seek to measure the financial benefit to the business that is derived from home working?



To what extent are you able to measure the savings to the business of allowing home working?



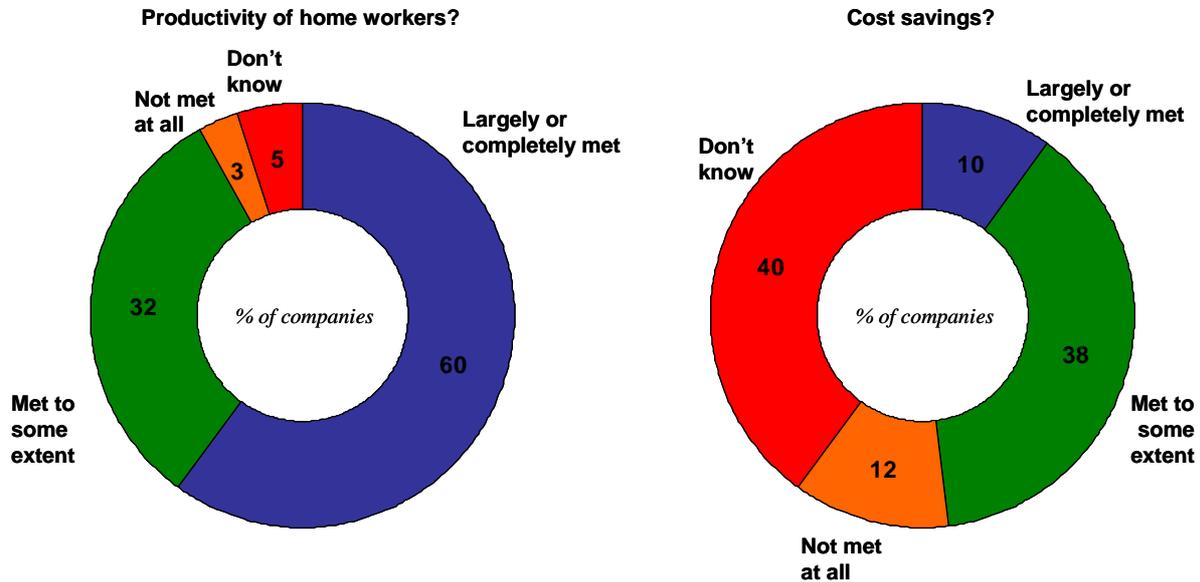
Only one respondent out of 100 was able to provide a figure

“The initiative meant we could close satellite offices in a number of countries in Europe, so the savings we made from that were directly measurable. But we didn’t do it to save money, it was all about productivity and better working conditions, so we haven’t been to great lengths to measure the financial benefit.”

“If the demand was there and we had to respond to it, there would be a high initial cost – home checks, audits, rewriting policy, reviewing contracts. Longer term, the financial benefit would be there, but it is less tangible.”

Companies enter into these arrangements with expectations of the outcome, and the comparison between the extent to which productivity and financial benefits are met make for an interesting comparison. Yes, largely speaking productivity expectations are met, but no, the financial benefit is not met. However, we can see that this is because so few have tried to formalise this analysis.

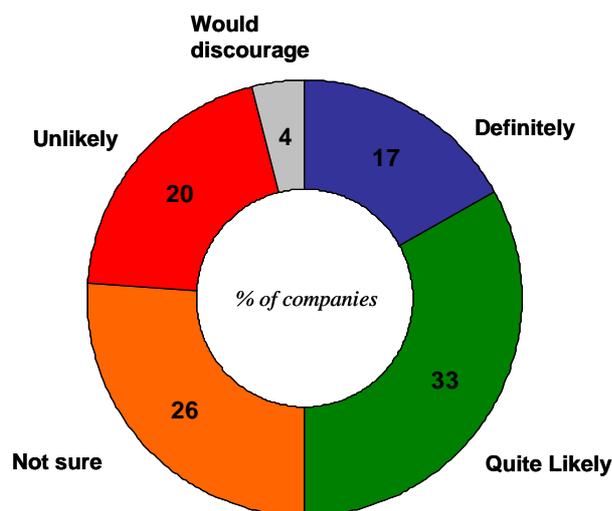
Extent to Which Company Expectations Have Been Met by the Home Working Policy



2.3 The Future for Home Working

Given all of this, what of the future? There is still not likely to be a home working revolution; only one in six respondents have indicated that the proportion of home workers will increase in the immediate future, though a full 50% have given at least a reasonably positive response to this.

Likelihood of the Company Encouraging Home Working in the Future



Larger companies (>500 staff) are somewhat more likely to suggest that they will “definitely” encourage home working in the future.

“We would hope for wider opportunities to work from home, but it is reliant on educating the managers. Policies are great and fine, but managers don’t live and



breathe them. Even senior managers need challenging to ensure they are good role models. There is progress, as second and third generation managers used to teams working at least partly at home are used to such arrangements."

"I anticipate continued slow and steady progress, but people are slow in seeing the benefits to the business and there remain issues of trust and control."

"The perception among management in the business is go where the work is. If you want that job in the West Midlands, then move there."

"At present only regionally-based staff with a need to spend time in the field will be based at home. They may actually work from home two to three days a week. Head office workers do not have that option, though personally I see no reason why many could not."

"We are pushing flexible hours, compressed hours, job shares more than we are home working."

"Every organisation is thinking 'what can we do differently?' in order to retain and recruit, with the emphasis on recruit. Nine to five is not right for many and increasing pressures on travel mean we have to find ways around it."

"Other elements of flexible working are more formalised – reduced hours, term time contracts, staggered shifts, split shifts, career breaks, dual roles. Home working is however supported by a written policy."

3. Support Provided to Home Workers

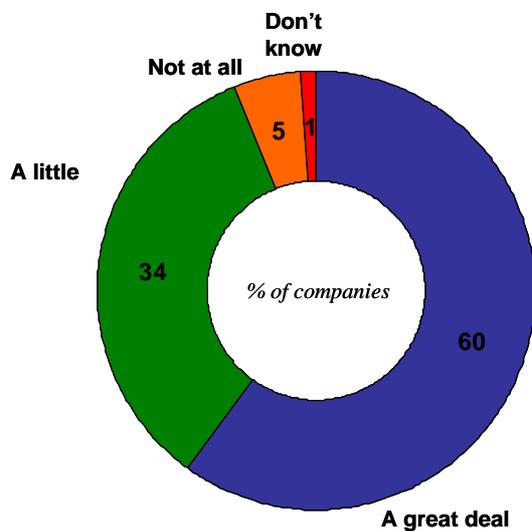
3.1 Impact of Enhanced Technology and Communications

In the last few years we have seen communications technology greatly improve in terms of speed and accessibility. But what impact has it had on home working?

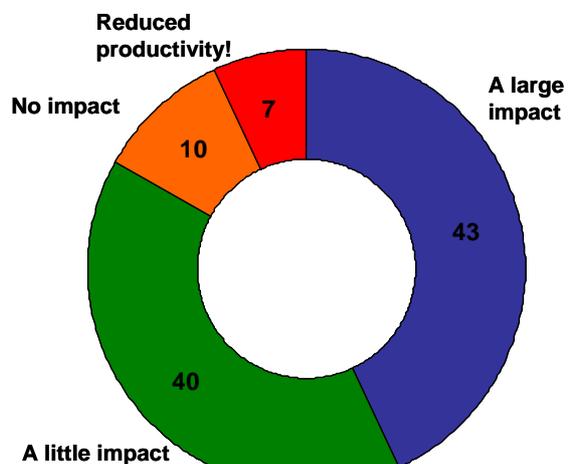
Largely speaking, companies have embraced technology to improve the efficiency of work at home and feel they have reaped the reward:

Impact of Enhanced IT and Communications

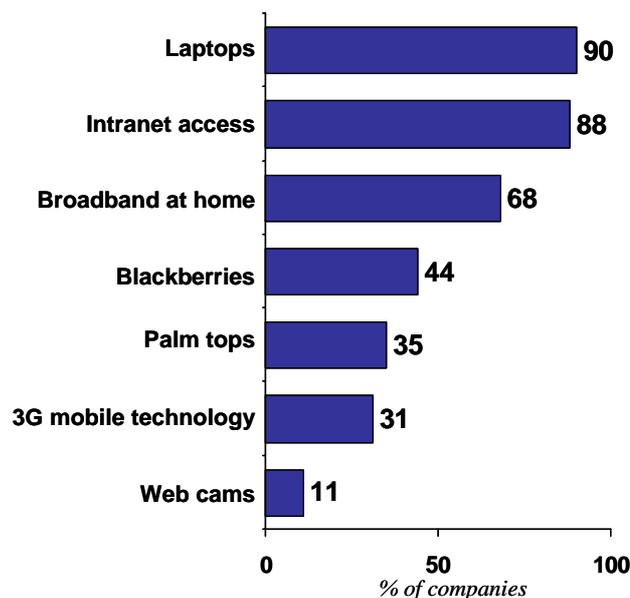
Use of Technology to Improve Effectiveness of Home Workers



Impact of Technology on Efficiency



Use of Technology for Home Workers





“We are just introducing Blackberries to the business, but they are only good for rapid response e-mails, not structured, detailed communications and we seem to have arrived at an informal approach of using the Blackberry to acknowledge communications, but saving a detailed response until the laptop is online.”

“What we saw was we suddenly had an advantage over the competition in that we could respond to customers much more quickly than they could.”

“Our only formal policy relates to IT security – PC use, the storage of paper materials, and recognition that there is a higher risk of losing equipment at the end of an individual’s employment.”

“Broadband access, plus the fact that staff are more likely to get laptops rather than desktop PCs, is opening up the opportunity for home working.”

“Teleconferencing has taken off in a big way and had a positive impact. Meetings have become more focused. Most teams have their own teleconferencing line, there is information on our Intranet to promote teleconferencing. And meeting rooms are like gold dust anyway, so the online booking form for rooms has a reminder that teleconferencing is an option.”

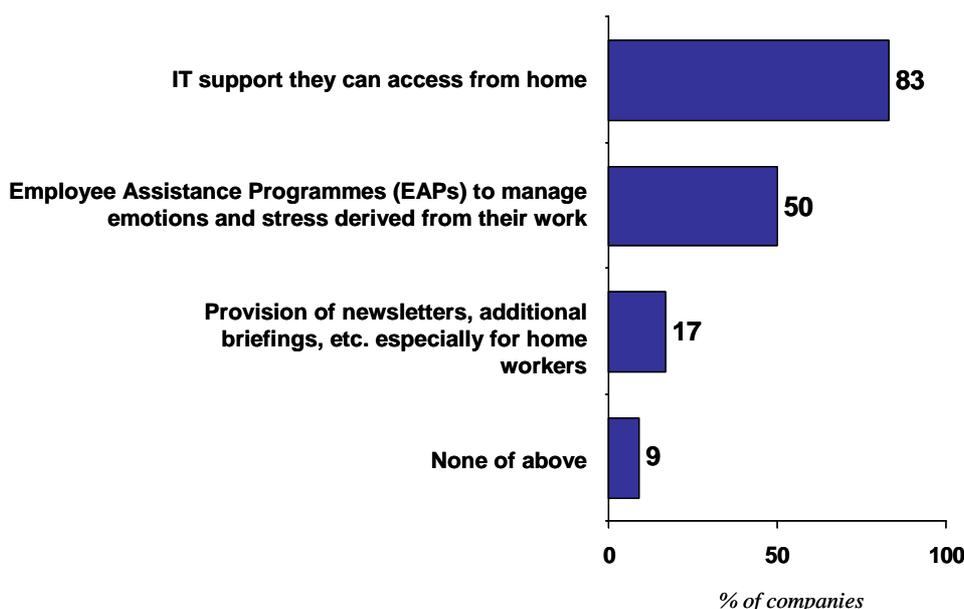
“I’m not sure technology has reached the point where emotional stuff easily translates.”

“Reliability of IT systems is an issue. Supporting remote workers can take longer in instances when systems go down, counters productivity.”

3.2 Other Support Provided to Home Workers

Beyond IT support, there is much more limited support for home workers, certainly less recognition of their deeper, emotional needs. However, recognition of the need for equal opportunity is widespread.

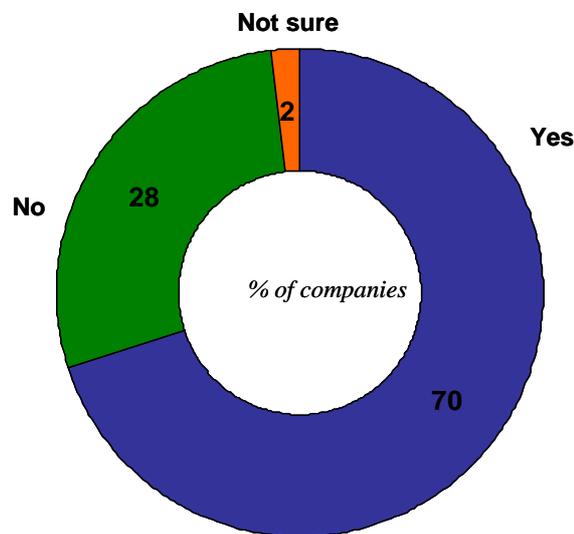
Provision of Support to Home Workers



“On those periodic cycles when cost saving is a priority, what tends to go first is the getting together for the sake of getting together, to build team relationships. We try to do that quarterly, but this can be stretched.”

“We send people to check on health and safety issues, particularly ergonomics. It’s a bigger issue outside the UK, for example in Italy and France where accommodation is relatively small and where there are young families involved, there may be a problem and it is better those staff members are office-based.”

Measures in place to ensure equal opportunities?

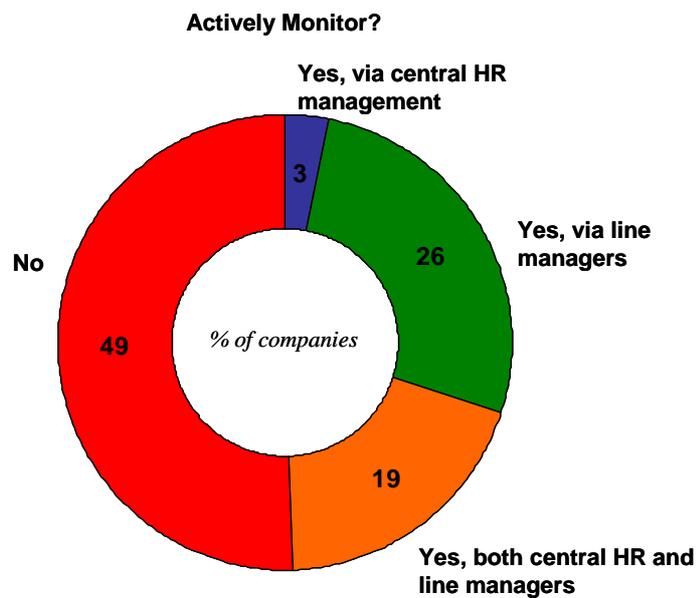


Of the 28% that have no measures in place, 61% indicate it is not necessary and 29% say there are measures designed, but not yet in place

3.3 Corporate Perceptions of the Home Working Experience

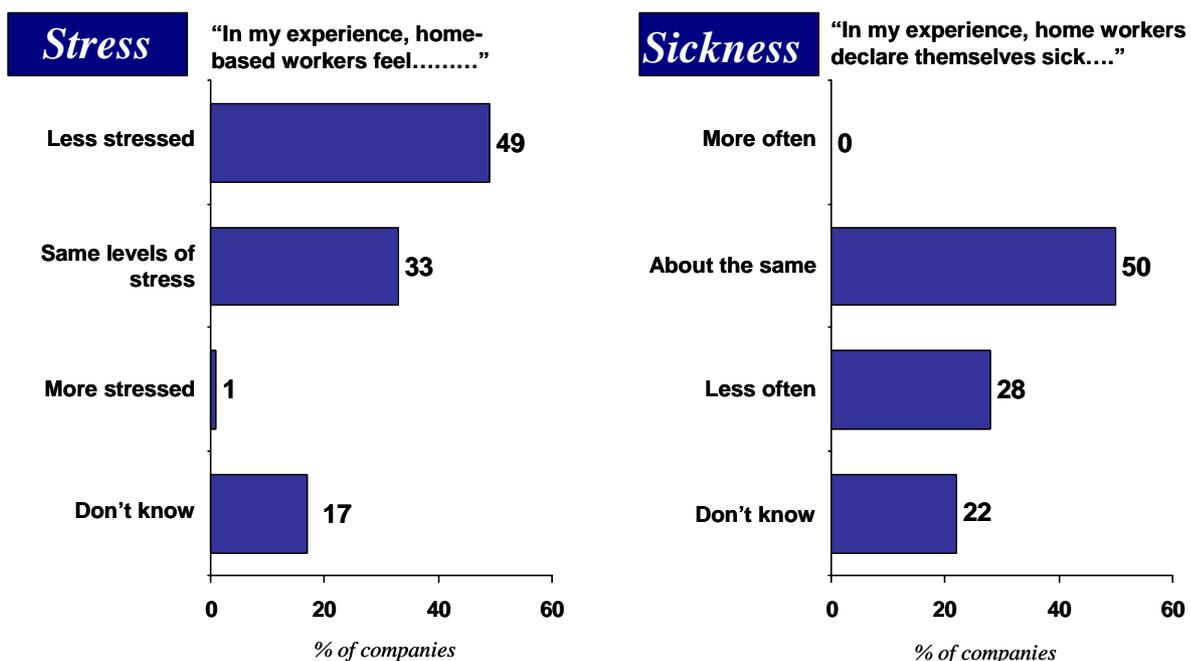
An alarmingly high proportion of our respondents do not actively monitor home workers' views:

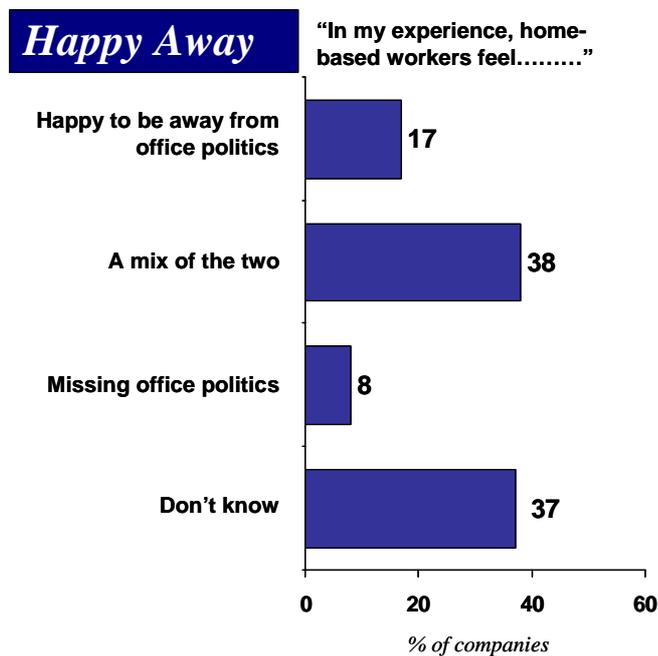
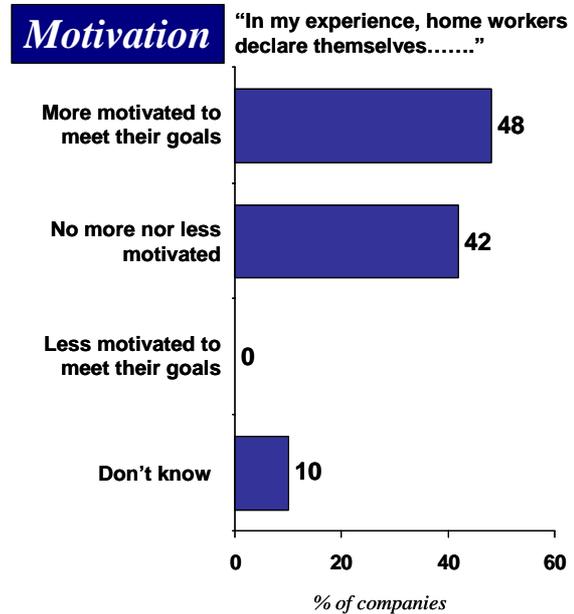
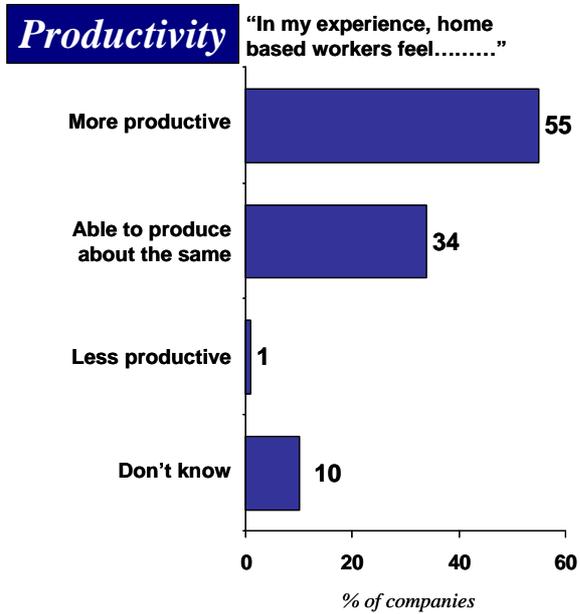
Monitoring Home Workers' Views and Opinions



Most respondents have a (perhaps presumptuous) view of the home working experience – but given the proportion who do not monitor their views, we wonder whether there are assumptions being made based on how they themselves would feel about the experience.

HR Management Perceptions of Home Workers' Experiences





Tracking employee views seems to become a more vital part of the process as home working becomes more embedded in the culture of the business over time. Here are two examples:

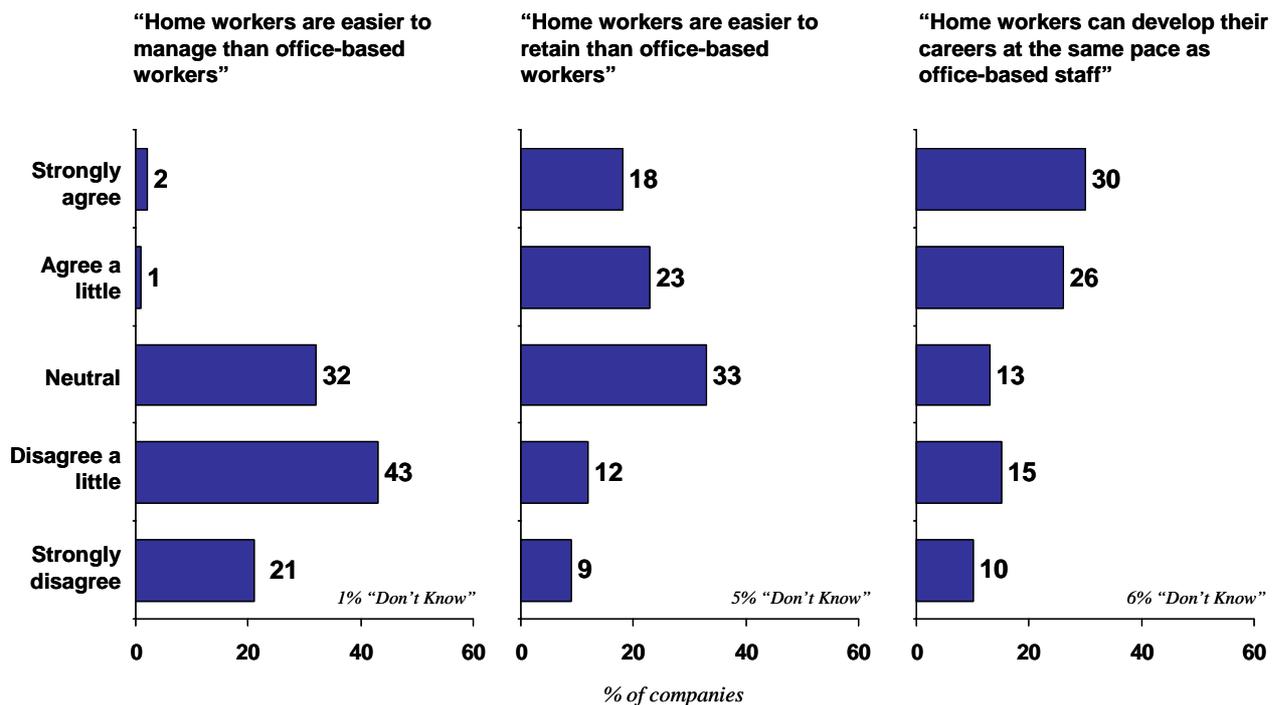
“We track employee views and attitudes through regular surveys so that we can see the high level trends, but it is essential to talk to them as well. Our managers had to learn that the soft stuff needs doing, it cannot be ignored in the face of perhaps more immediate customer and business pressures. We are there now, many of our senior managers have been on the other end of the relationship and see the investment of time in this aspect of employee management is well spent.”

“We regularly survey our staff and conducted a huge survey last year to look at the effectiveness of a wide range of employee benefits and conditions of work. Interesting to note that while men comprise just 36% of staff, 48% of our respondents were men.”

3.4 Management of Home Workers

In the analysis of pitfalls, one issue that is raised is the difficulty of managing home-based staff and this is confirmed in the following analysis, where respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a number of statements regarding management, retention and career development:

Attitudes Towards Management, Retention and Career Development



Appendix: Sample Details

Our intention was to achieve a healthy mix of business types and sizes of business. Below are details of the final mix within the 100 telephone interviews. Interviewers worked from a randomised list of 1800 businesses in the UK; the final mix mainly reflects the likelihood of home-based working being permitted in particular industry sectors as this was a qualification for inclusion.

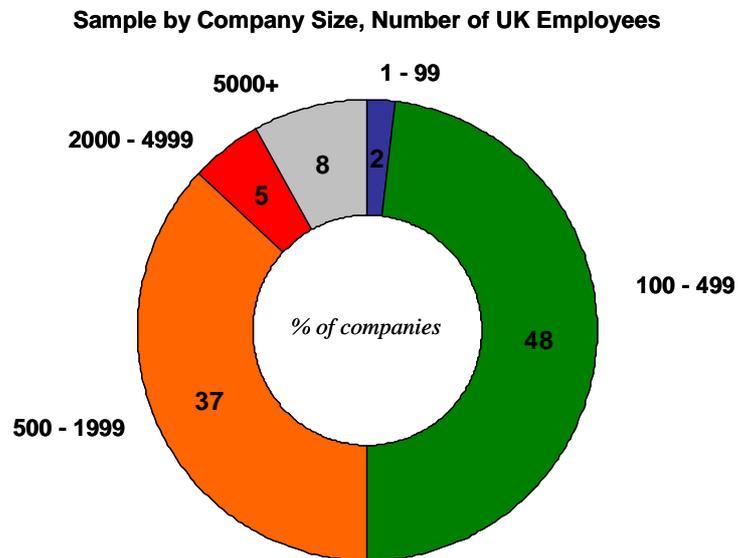
Interviews were conducted on the telephone with HR managers, directors and advisors, having confirmed each has a good knowledge of the HR policy and practices of their company.

These interviews were supplemented by a series of ten open discussions with individuals within companies at various stages of developing home working policies.

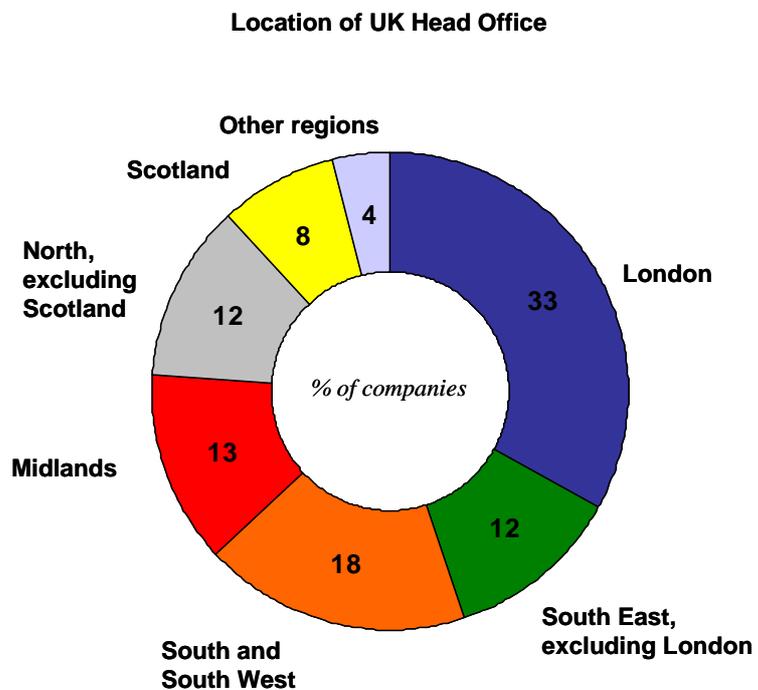
1. Business Sector

Sector	% Interviews
Business services, consultancy, legal, accountancy, etc	18
Educational	12
Manufacturer of electrical and mechanical goods	11
Charities	10
Construction services, inc. property & facilities management	10
Transport	6
Financial services and products	6
Leisure, entertainment, travel and tourism	6
Retail	4
Food and drink manufacture	3
Primary industries, e.g. agriculture, mining, oil, gas	3
IT and telecoms	2
Research establishments	2
Utilities	1
Manufacturing not included above	6

2. Number of UK Employees



3. Location of UK Head Office (Basis of Geographic Analysis)





Thanks go to all respondents who participated in this study for their time and consideration for our questions.

**Copies of this report can be obtained
by visiting our website: www.ceridian.co.uk**

**If you would like to speak to Ceridian about any of the findings in the report in more detail,
please contact Joanna Lait on 020 7335 3395.**

**Report prepared by David Dower
Closer to Customers Ltd
Whitegates
Dalwood
Devon EX13 7ED
01404 831186**