

Survey: Younger workers reconsidering WFH life to combat rising utility costs

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[Emburse](#), the global leader in spend optimisation, announces the findings of its latest YouGov survey of British office workers, aiming to understand how living cost increases could influence work location preferences.

A sample of 1,015 British employees were asked a range of questions covering hybrid working patterns and employer financial support in light of the cost of living crisis and increasing utility bills.

Emburse has commissioned research with the aim of understanding the impact of increased living costs on British workers, to understand whether employees are being financially supported by their employer under these new circumstances, and to explore any shifts in work pattern behaviour as a result of the energy bills price increase.

The data suggests that the majority (42%) of employees would opt for financial support from their employers to cover heating, electricity and mobile phone bills rather than commuting costs (35%), indicating employees are still leaning towards WFH life. However, younger employees' responses suggest that office space was still important to them, with an equal number (42%) saying they would prefer a subsidised commute.

Key findings:

- No financial support on the horizon from employers:
 - 69% of respondents said their employer has never provided financial support related to energy costs and does not plan to do so in the future (base: 529)
 - The anticipated financial squeeze is felt by younger workers in particular; almost a quarter

(23%) of under 35s who can work from home say they would consider coming into the office more due to rising energy prices

- Expensing WFH utilities > expensing the commute:
 - Given the option, a slight majority (42%) of workers would choose to expense utilities bills related to working from home, compared with 35% opting to expense commuter costs (base: 745)
 - The option to expense the commute becomes less popular with age
 - Under 35: 44%
 - 55+: 26%
- Enterprise vs. SME discrepancies:
 - The likelihood of employees saying their employer will help with utilities bills lowers as the company size increases. Microbusinesses (10 or fewer employees) are more than twice as likely as large businesses to provide support for utility bills (14% vs 6%), with a further 8% of both sizes of business planning to add support in future

Additional findings: Base: GB office workers who *can* work from home: (527)

- 63% of respondents spend 3 days or more WFH
- Overall, 17% of those surveyed said their working preferences between the office and home may need to change as a direct result of rising living cost

Peter Smith, Director of Policy and Advocacy at [National Energy Action](#) said: “As energy bills rise from October and again in January, we are going to see more and more workers thinking about how they can spend as little as possible on energy. They will look for warmth in other places, such as a library or going into work when they would normally work from home. The UK government urgently needs to upgrade its energy bill support package to protect those on the lowest incomes from cost-of-living emergency across the board.”

Kenny Eon, GM and SVP, EMEA at Emburse commented: “There is clearly a growing concern amongst home-based employees about the cost of keeping the heating on during the work week. Only 9% of the people we surveyed are receiving support from their employers to pay for their utility bills, with just another 7% saying that their employers are planning to provide support. This is particularly impacting younger employees, and almost a quarter of them have said that they are likely to return to the office as a result of skyrocketing bills. Spending more time at the office may not be the preferred option for all employees. But when you add the financial benefit of doing so to the culture and collaboration benefits that many employees experience, this could provide a more compelling reason for employees to return to the office.”