

Facilities Managers are playing an increasing role in worker, as well as workplace, emissions reporting and reduction initiatives new Mobilityways research finds

2 years ago



A new study of facilities managers working for large UK companies employing more than 500 staff, found that 74 per cent of their firms had already started reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions linked to employees commutes to and from their workplaces.

Looking deeper, 71 per cent of facilities managers were already collecting data on the modes of transport which employees use in their commutes to work, and over half (53 per cent) already know the average distance each employee commutes in a typical working week. A further nine per cent plan to start collecting this sort of data before the end of this year.

The same study found that facilities managers were highly active in the race to make both working practices and workplaces themselves more sustainable. For example, more than half (52 per cent) of them confirmed that they already see primary data on emissions generated by business travel.

Nearly half, 45 per cent, see emissions data linked to waste generated in the operation of their firm; 43 per cent already have sight of primary emissions data associated with purchased goods and services, and the same percentage could view emissions data associated with upstream transportation and distribution.

Of the facilities managers that had already started sustainability-driven initiatives to reduce emissions across their workplaces, 48 per cent had already put in Electric Vehicle charging stations on company premises; 44 per cent had offered financial incentives to use lower emissions alternatives to get into work; and just under 40 per cent had led on advocating higher Work From Home (WFH) ratios in post-pandemic hybrid working arrangements.

Finally, 44 per cent had brought in an outside data/service provider to help them gather employee travel emissions data and help stimulate staff to explore greener travel alternatives.

However, despite facilities managers driving these sustainability-driven changes, many still have concerns about the accuracy and transparency of their employers' emissions reports for key categories detailed in Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions reporting. For example, only 48 per cent of facilities managers felt emissions data from waste generated in operations was accurate and complete enough. Less, 42 per cent of facilities managers felt they had accurate numbers for emissions from purchased goods and services, and 39 per cent felt that they had accurate emissions numbers from both employee commuting and capital goods.

Scope 3 environmental reporting is focused on collecting emissions from companies' suppliers in their 'value chain' including those supplying power and equipment into companies' office buildings and manufacturing facilities.

Facilities managers took the view that, on average, 44 per cent of total GHG emissions of their firms were coming from indirect upstream and downstream Scope 3 emissions. By contrast, transport and corporate fleet management senior decision-makers estimated that Scope 3 category emissions were responsible for just 33 per cent of total emissions.

This finding verifies that, from all decision-makers questioned¹ for this study, facilities managers come closest to an accurate understanding of the importance of tackling Scope 3 emissions levels, as emissions reporting specialists estimate that Scope 3 emissions are in fact likely to be responsible for at least 70 per cent of a typical corporate's total emissions.

According to industry analyst Frost & Sullivan, 40 per cent of CO₂ emissions, 50 per cent of electricity consumption, and 35 per cent of waste production comes from our places of work, so perhaps it is not surprising that facilities managers are front and centre in the struggle to reduce emissions across every aspect of work, as well as across all corporate buildings.

Julie Furnell, Managing Director of Mobilityways, commented: "Facilities managers have been right at the forefront of seismic changes in working practices and behaviours during and immediately post-pandemic. Many have been involved in the right-sizing and re-designing of workplaces to fit the new hybrid-dominated work patterns.

"They've led the reinvention of workplaces to ensure office buildings are smarter, more energy efficient and higher performing; whilst simultaneously making sure the experience they offer staff and visitors is both more comfortable and healthier – promoting higher productivity by doing so. Naturally, they've had to lead on application of new Building Management Systems and other proptech solutions to help optimise the use of these new workplaces.

"Their work has naturally extended from enabling smart and sustainable buildings, to ensuring staff can

explore and select less carbon intensive ways of travelling into those offices. In this way, offices throughout the UK can hope to increase occupancy levels post-pandemic without increasing their Scope 3 emissions output simultaneously.”