

## Office Attendance surges year-on-year, according to New CBRE Research

1 year ago



Efforts to bring employees back to the office over the past year have generated high degrees of success, according to [CBRE](#)'s 2024 European Office Occupier Survey\*.

According to the research, the proportion of companies reporting average building utilisation of 41-80% has risen to 61%, up from 48% in 2023. Conversely, the proportion of companies reporting lower utilisation has fallen, with only a third of companies reporting utilisation of 40% or below, compared with nearly half of the companies surveyed last year.

The largest companies (5,000 employees or more) are achieving more success, with nearly two thirds of this cohort reporting utilisation of 41% or higher, a result of both natural momentum and the increased use of mandates.

The proportion of employees going to the office three or more days a week has risen to 43%, compared with 37% in 2023, reflecting the increase in average utilisation. This suggests that the higher utilisation rates are mainly due to employees visiting the office more frequently, instead of stemming from companies reducing their portfolio size.

Although operating at lower overall levels of utilisation, smaller companies are seeing improved rate of high-frequency attendance. According to the findings, companies with less than 5,000 employees have seen an 18% increase in the four-to-five-day group. This is even more pronounced for companies with less than 1,000 employees, with 31% of this cohort achieving four-to-five-day attendance.

In parallel to rising utilisation rates, the implementation of mandates also continues to grow. CBRE's research found that more than three quarters (76%) of companies have some form of attendance policy in

place, although only 40% said that the policy is mandatory. A further 17% of respondents said that office attendance decisions are made within individual teams, indicating that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to monitoring and enforcing mandates.

Richard Holberton, Senior Director, Research, Europe, CBRE, said: "The findings of our survey tell us that offices are returning to vibrancy and, while many see the current levels of utilisation as stable, 30% of companies expect further increases. The general acceptance of hybrid working is widespread, but the challenge remains of matching employers' expectations with that of their employees over the long-term."

Despite increased momentum and higher levels of office attendance, further consolidation is expected. Just over half (57%) of companies plan to decrease their portfolio size over the next three years, likely due to larger companies carrying surplus space and the need to reduce real estate costs.

Nevertheless, portfolio consolidation is not a universal view. A number of companies (17%) plan to maintain their current portfolio size and according to CBRE's research, a further 24% said that they plan to expand, with almost three quarters (74%) of this group citing anticipated business growth as the key driver.

Most of those looking to reduce their footprint plan to do so by exercising lease expirations. However, 58% of respondents said they are likely to renew existing leases where they remain fit for purpose, as landlords increasingly show a willingness to negotiate and offer more flexibility

Anna Esteban, Managing Director, Advisory & Transaction Services, Europe, said: "Landlords have seen occupiers demanding, and expecting, better quality offices in recent years and if solutions can be achieved ahead of lease events, existing space can be just as desirable and efficient as a newly-developed office. Whichever approach occupiers decide on, the office can present as a brand showroom, armoury in the war for talent, a tool to optimise productivity and a platform to reinforce culture and collaboration."