

'Rise in staff working from home' as cost of living bites

More than a third of bosses have reported an increase in staff working from home compared to last year.

Acas, which carried out the research, said it believed the rising [cost of living](#), including the price of commuting, was likely a major factor.

The government-funded arbitration service said its survey of more than 1,000 employers found 36% had experienced an increase in staff working from home in 2023.

Around half – 51% – said there had been no change.

The study suggests the trend of staff gradually returning to offices and other workplaces in the aftermath of [COVID](#) lockdowns may be slowing or even reversing.

Previous research has also found an [increase in home working compared to before the pandemic hit](#).

Acas chief executive Susan Clews said: “The cost of living pressures are impacting many people and it is unsurprising that over a third of employers have seen an increase in staff working from home.

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“For some workers, the cost of commuting is eating into their budgets, while for others, going to their workplaces saves on home energy costs.

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“It’s important for businesses to work with staff to agree suitable ways of working for specific roles, taking account of individual circumstances and regularly reviewing arrangements.”

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It comes ahead of a change in the law which [aims to make it easier for staff to request to do their job from home](#) or work under other types of hybrid arrangement.

Currently, employees must wait 26 weeks before making a request for [flexible working](#). But, under the rule change, which is expected to come into force next year, they can ask from day one and bosses must also respond quicker.

Acas has urged firms to make clear what their policy is to staff and to be transparent about the reasons for rejecting any such requests.