

BUILDING **THE** **BUSINESS CASE** **FOR FLEXIBLE** **WORKING**

flexibilityworks>

Making the case for flex

Whether you're curious about the business benefits of flex yourself, or you need to convince someone else, you're in the right place.

This resource is all about proving, with robust research data, that flexible working isn't just about being 'nice' to workers. It really is good for businesses too.

We've collated our latest Scottish research findings that show nine distinct benefits of flexible working for employers. Our findings tally with numerous national and international studies by well-renowned institutions, and we've added just a few of the most compelling data findings from other research sources too.

How to use this resource?

You can read about all nine business benefits, or click straight into specific topics from our menu page.

If you're putting together a business case for greater flex in your organisation...

You're welcome to use as much of this as is helpful. You will also want to add data from your own workplace. For example, what do your workers think? If some people already work flexibly, are they more positive? What do staff surveys say?

Next, think about your key organisational challenges. For example, do you have a high sickness and absence rate? Do you have staff shortages? Would you like more diversity in senior roles? Could flex help address some of these? Gather all your data in one place and share it widely. If you're still stuck, get in touch and we'll give you a hand, or help you present to your board.

We believe some flexible working is possible in almost every role, and that greater flex can help all workers and businesses to thrive. Getting buy-in from senior leaders is the first step. Good luck.

Business benefits of flex menu



71%

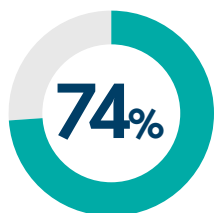
of Scottish employers
say flex has a positive
impact on their
organisation

Just 4% of Scottish employers say flex has had a negative impact.

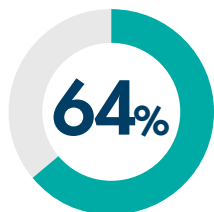


Productivity

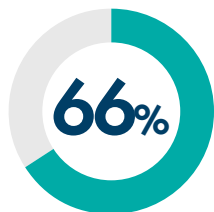
Our research with 250 Scottish employers shows flex has...¹



Enabled us to **maintain** overall business productivity



Enabled us to **increase** overall business productivity

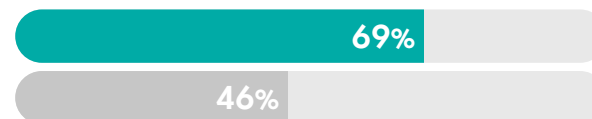


Encouraged staff to go above and beyond their role

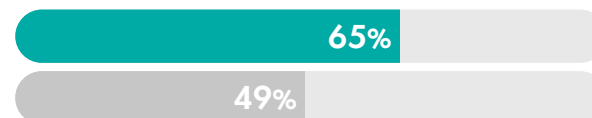
Our research with 1,000+ Scottish workers shows how flex impacts their ability and attitude to work

■ Flexible workers ■ workers without flex

I feel calm and focused at work



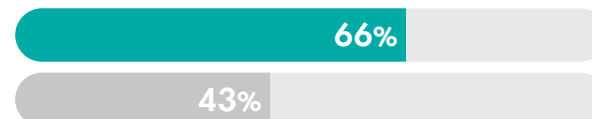
I am enthusiastic about my job



I feel trusted by my line manager



I feel valued at work



American firms with more flexible working policies grew sales **4x more** than companies with rigid hybrid or fully onsite workforces, according to an analysis by Boston Consulting Group of 554 companies employing 26.7million workers collectively.²



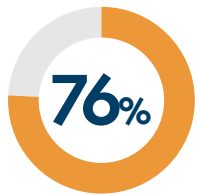
Home working, which allows 'quiet work' and savings in commuting time, results in a **3% to 5%** improvement in productivity, according to research by Stanford University economics professor Nicholas Bloom.³

¹ All figures, unless otherwise stated, were commissioned by Flexibility Works in the form of online surveys carried out by global research firm Panelbase between 6/11/23 and 20/11/23. A total of 1016 Scottish workers, 262 Scottish employers (senior leaders) and 216 unemployed Scottish adults looking for work were surveyed. Figures originally published in *Flex for Life 2024* in March 2024. ² The Flex Report. Q4 2024. Scoop, 2024. www.canva.com/design/DAFwaFvbYas/1_Maguz8DmUAPGkfYS4wxg/view?utm_content=DAFwaFvbYas&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink#5 ³ The Evolution of Working from Home. Jose Mario Barrero, Nicholas Bloom and Steven J Davis, 2023. [SIEPR1.pdf \(wfhresearch.com\)](https://siepr.berkeley.edu/publications/the-evolution-of-working-from-home)

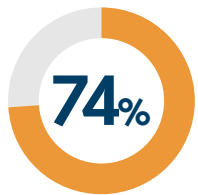


Health and wellbeing

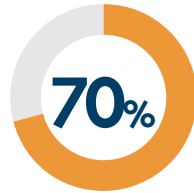
Our research with 250 Scottish employers shows flex has...¹



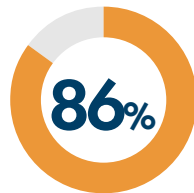
Improved work life balance for workers.



Improved mental health and wellbeing for workers.



Business owners reported their business was happier since introducing a hybrid work model, according to analysis of 2,026 UK workers by the Hybrid Work Commission in 2023.²



UK flexible workers said their flex improved their work life balance, according to the UK Government's analysis of data from nearly 6,000 employees.³



55% of workers say hybrid working has reduced their stress levels, and another **55%** believe that hybrid working is more relaxing and helps them feel less pressure according to Cisco survey data from 28,000 workers globally.⁴



77% of Scottish flexible workers are happy with their work life balance

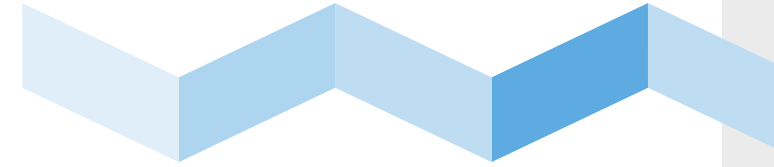


Compared with **47%** of workers without flex

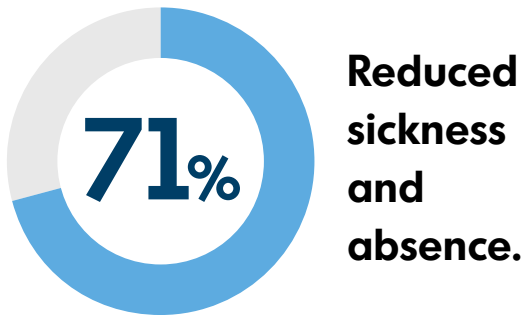
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Sickness and absence



Our research with 250 Scottish employers shows flex has...¹

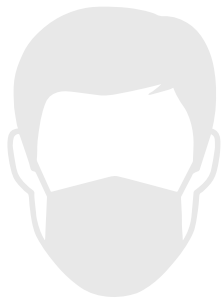


Our research with 1,000+ Scottish workers shows flex makes a small impact on sickness absence.

I have taken fewer than 5 days off sick in the last year



The UK's four-day working week trial found a **65% reduction** in the number of days employees were off sick or absent during the trial.²



Sickness absence fell all at four construction firms taking part in a flexible working trial led by Timewise.

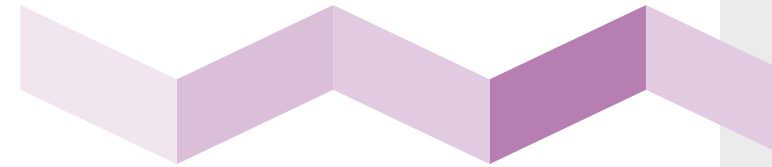
Rates fell between a tenth and more than half.³



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Recruitment



Our research with 250 Scottish employers shows flex has...¹



According to research by the CIPD...



71% of workers say a **flexible working pattern** is important in a new role



69% say the ability to **work remotely** is important.²

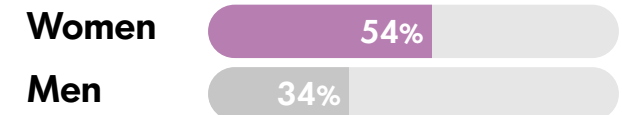


Only **33%** of Scottish job adverts mention flex.³

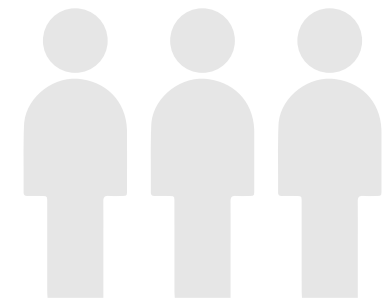


50% of Scottish workers say they feel 'stuck' in their role because they can't see the flex they need elsewhere to progress

Among unemployed people looking for work, the following won't apply for a role if it doesn't mention flex.



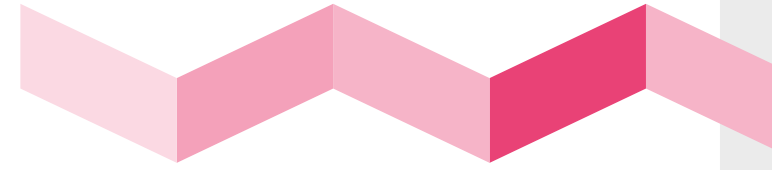
66% Unemployed Scottish women say being able to work flexibly is 'essential' and without flex, it would be impossible to work at all.



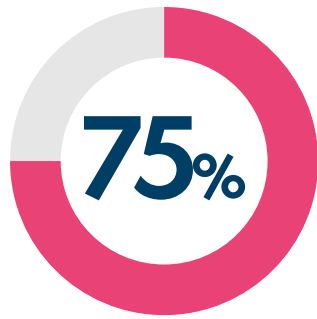
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Retention



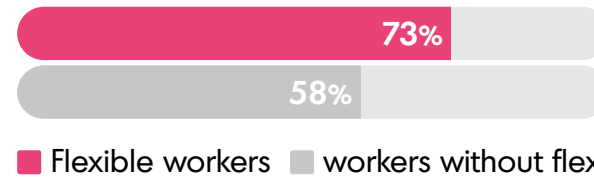
Our research with 250 Scottish employers shows flex has...¹



helped us retain good staff

Our research with 1,000+ Scottish workers suggests flex makes a big impact on retention.

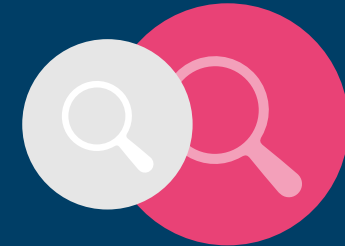
I would like to stay with my employer



Flexible workers workers without flex



Employees value working from home as equivalent to a **4% to 8%** salary increase, according to research by Stanford University economics professor Nicholas Bloom.²



Employees with rigid work schedules say they are **2.5 times** more likely to 'definitely' look for a new job in the next year, according to a Future Forum survey of more than 10,000 desk workers globally.³

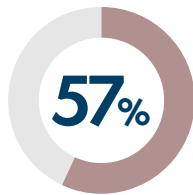
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³ Winter Pulse Survey, Future Forum, 2023 <https://futureforum.com/research/future-forum-pulse-winter-2022-2023-snapshot/>



Inclusion and diversity

Our research with 250 Scottish employers shows flex has...¹



Helped us to have a more diverse workforce

According to survey of 2,016 adults by the Hybrid Work Commission, UK businesses say offering hybrid has increased their ability to hire:²



51% people from different regions



53% parents or caregivers



42% people with a disability



Inclusive companies are **1.7 times** more likely to be innovation leaders, according to global HR and professional learning specialist Josh Bersin.³

Ethnically diverse companies and gender diverse companies are 36% and 25% more likely, to financially outperform organisations of average diversity, according to McKinsey & Company.⁴



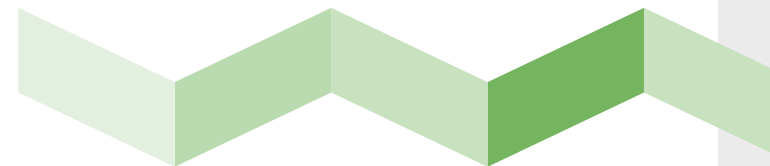
Research from McKinsey found that among workers who prefer hybrid, **71% are likely** to look for another job if their current hybrid working is taken away. But some groups are more likely to leave than others:⁵

- ⚙️ **LGBTQ+ employees were 24% more likely to leave than heterosexual workers.**
- ⚙️ **Black employees were 14% more likely than their white peers.**
- ⚙️ **Employees with disabilities were 14% more likely to leave than employees without a disability.**
- ⚙️ **Women were approximately 10% more likely than men, and employees who identify as nonbinary were 18% more likely than men and women.**
- ⚙️ **Younger employees (18–34 years old) were 5-9% more likely to leave than older ones (55–64 years old).**

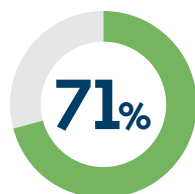
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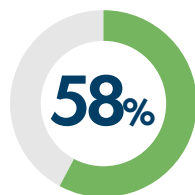
Brand reputation



Our research with 250 Scottish employers shows flex has...¹



Helped us build a positive employer brand



Made us a more attractive organisation to clients

Three-quarters of employers (75%) say their organisation has taken action to improve its employer brand over the last year. The most common actions taken (by 34% of employers) were to increase flexible and hybrid working opportunities, according to the CIPD.³



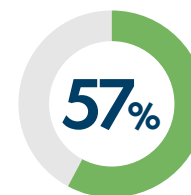
Who'd recommend their employer?



65% of flexible workers



42% of workers without flex



Remote and hybrid workers are 57% more likely to say their company culture has improved over the past two years. They cite flexible work policies as the number one factor behind the improvement, according to a survey of more than 10,000+ desk workers by Future Forum.²

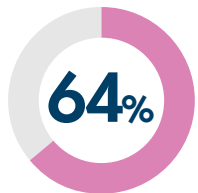


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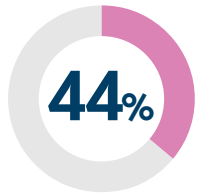


Financial improvements

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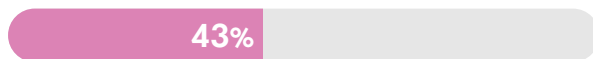


Reduced costs to the business



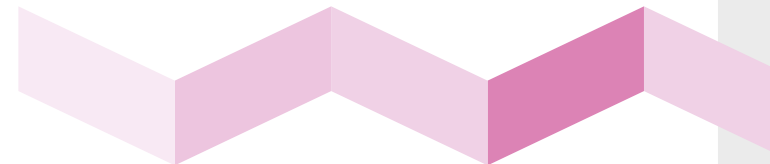
Enabled us to make more profit

43% of employers using some home working permanently say this is because of reduced overheads, according to ONS data.²



Only modest improvements are needed in either reduced **sickness absence** or reduced **staff turnover** for the benefits of flexible working to outweigh the costs within three years, according to analysis by Timewise.³

Employers that offer flexible working could see a gain to their business worth **up to 20%** of their annual payroll costs, according to analysis by Business in the Community and Bain & Company in 2024. The gains are from increased productivity, boosting recruitment and retention, employees opting for flexible working over increases in pay, reduced absenteeism, and lower real estate costs.⁴



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Environment

Our research with 250 Scottish employers shows flex has...¹



Helped us meet environmental goals



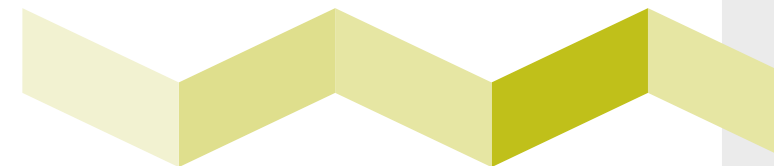
UK businesses with 1,000+ employees could save an average 534 tonnes of CO₂ per year, based on employees working from home two days a week, according to research by telecoms company o2.²

The same research from o2² found that if full time workers spent just one day less at the office each week, they'd travel an average 1,526 fewer miles a year.

That's about the same as driving from John o' Groats to Land's End and back.



1 tonne of CO₂ is equal to the emissions produced by driving 6,000km in a diesel car



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