

People who work from home are less likely to get pay rises and promotions, finds research

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People who work from home all or part of the time are less likely to get pay rises and promotions, the first post-COVID research project into the WFH phenomenon has found.

A survey of 937 UK managers found that they were 11% less likely to give a promotion to staff who worked entirely from home than to those who were completely office-based.

Hybrid workers—those working partly in the office and partly at home—were on average 7% less likely to be promoted.

Managers were 9% less likely to give a pay rise to staff working entirely from home than to those who were completely office-based, and 7% less likely to give one to hybrid workers.

The research found a [gender gap](#): managers were 15% less likely to promote men who worked entirely from home than those who were completely office-based, and 10% less likely to give a pay increase. The figures for women were 7% and 8%, respectively.

Agnieszka Kasperska, Professor Anna Matysiak and Dr. Ewa Cukrowska-Torzewska, all from the University of Warsaw, carried out the research, the first study since the lockdowns began in the UK on how working from home affects careers.

They presented 937 managers employed in various businesses and industries within the UK with two profiles of hypothetical full-time staff members who worked either five days at the office a week, five days at home, or three days at the office and two at home. The managers then chose which one they were likely to promote, and also which one they would give a pay rise to.

Agnieszka Kasperska told the British Sociological Association's online annual conference 5 April, 2024 that "the recent COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a substantial shift towards working from home, potentially influencing employers' attitudes and companies' readiness to manage remote employees.

"However, our findings indicate that individuals working from home still encounter career penalties, irrespective of the widespread adoption of this mode of work.

"Both male and female remote workers experience career penalties, but they are substantially larger for men."

They found that in organizations with very demanding work cultures, the managers were around 30% less likely to promote and 19% less likely to give a pay rise to men who worked entirely from home than to men who worked solely in the office. The figures for women were 15% and 19%, respectively. In organizations with more supportive environments, no penalty to staff for flexible working was found.

"In more supportive organizations, so where there is less pressure and long working days and where family-friendly policies exist, we don't find such negative consequences of remote work," she said.

The profiles given to managers also included different characteristics such as gender, age, experience in the sector, [skill level](#) and family situation. The [raw data](#) were adjusted to remove the influence of these from the final results so that the effects of working from home could be studied in isolation.

Provided by British Sociological Association

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