

Back to office

A year-on-year look
at how UK businesses
have returned to
the office following
pandemic restrictions.



JUST EAT
for business



Contents

Introduction

A message from Matt Ephgrave, Managing Director of Just Eat for Business

The survey

An overview of our survey and demographics

The results

A year-on-year comparison

Conclusion

Summary of findings

About us

Who is Just Eat for Business?



Introduction

Just over two years ago, many of us started working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this period, many have become attached to the flexibility that remote and hybrid work offers.

We ran a survey in 2021, asking questions on companies' predicted return to office date, expected office headcounts and plans regarding flexible working, as well as how their workplace benefits might change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's survey looks to compare the predicted results with the true reality.

No matter where or how we've been working over the last two years, one thing has undeniably come into the fore: the importance of employee wellbeing. Based on both our surveys, many organisations across a wide range of industries are focused on providing a system and a company culture that works well for all employees, ensuring they still feel connected and happy with the new approach to working.

Over the last year, we've seen the 'new normal' for the majority of businesses is centred around hybrid and flexible working. This means that teams can once

again come together and reconnect with each other, all while making sure that each individual's needs are being considered.

At Just Eat for Business, we have decided to opt in to our company-wide hybrid policy, which means that teams are encouraged to return to the office two days a week, with flexibility still being at the forefront of our policy. By championing this hybrid working approach, we also ensure that we're providing a fully-flexible solution to our customers regardless of whether their staff are in the office or working from home - whatever their business set-up, we have a solution.

Many companies are still adjusting to this new working environment, and finding ways that work for them. However, by communicating clearly with your team, encouraging open conversation and supporting each other, you will be able to create a strong sense of culture that benefits everyone.

Matt Ephgrave, Managing Director at Just Eat for Business

The survey

An overview of our 2022 survey and demographics

What?

At the beginning of 2021, we ran a survey on 180 UK workers from over 100 companies to understand their plans and predictions for their return to the office, as well as the impact they've observed to their colleagues and company culture during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, we wanted to compare these predictions with what actually happened. Earlier this month, we ran a new survey on over 200 UK employees asking questions surrounding changes in company culture, hybrid working patterns and the pros and cons of returning to the office.

Why?

Over the last two years, our lives, lifestyles and ways of working have changed drastically. Almost everyone from individual employees to businesses has had to adapt their way of working to fit with the 'new normal'.

Last year, our survey revealed that the predictions made by UK businesses were cautious ones, with many citing the challenges and concerns surrounding safety, team wellbeing and company culture.

This year, results have shown a more positive outlook towards returning to the office, especially under a hybrid model. People are still most-looking forward to seeing their colleagues and being able to socialise and collaborate with them.

We undertook this new survey to gain a better understanding of what the reality of returning to the office looks like for UK businesses in 2022, and how their approach to maintaining employee wellbeing has adapted to this new standard way of working.

WHO DID WE SURVEY?

Mid-level manager

32%

Junior/ Executive

31%

Senior manager

19%

Director

12%

Founder/CEO

7%

WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT WORKING ENVIRONMENT?

Hybrid working

50%

Full-time in office

42%

Full-time remote working

8%

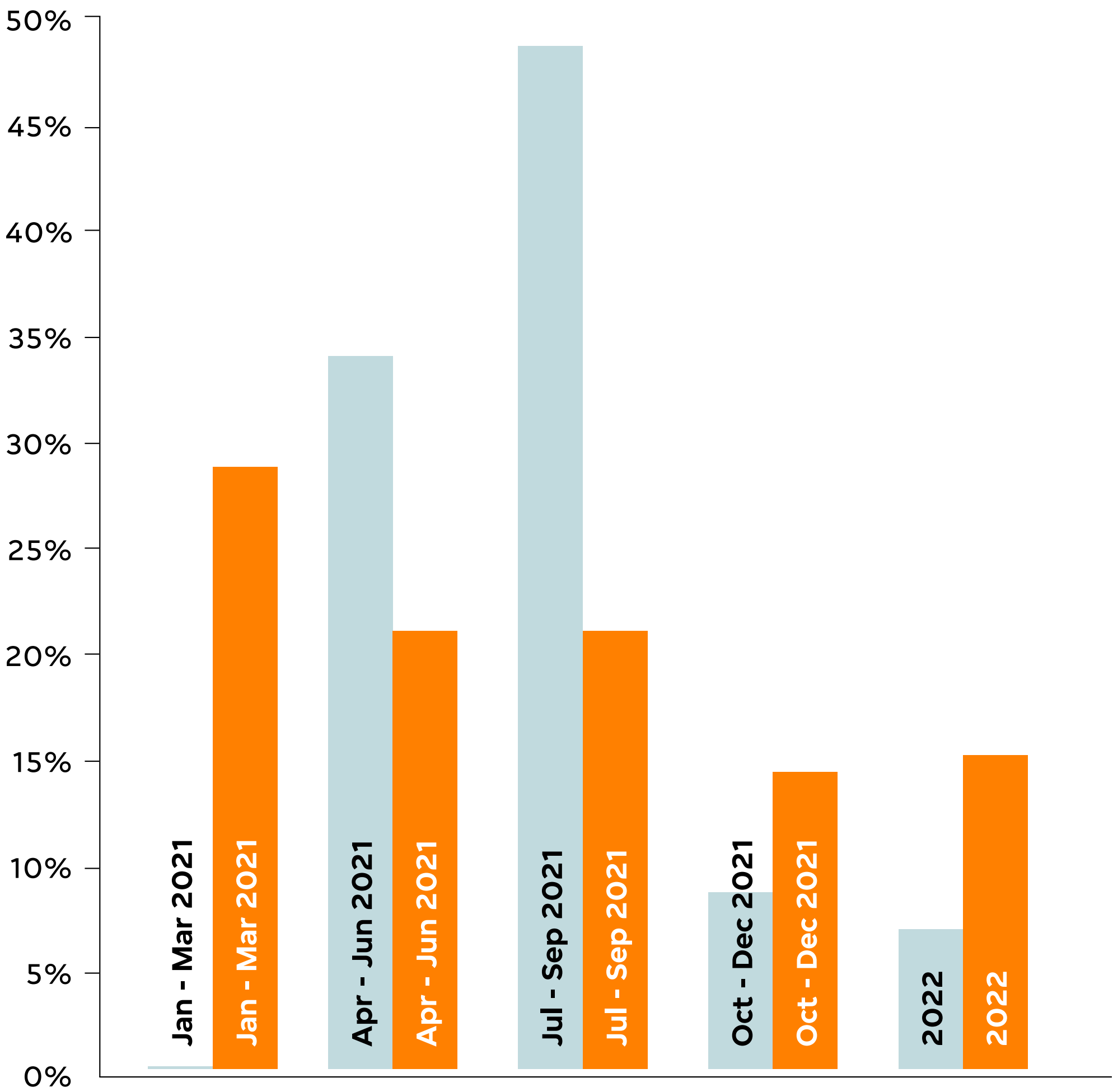


The results

A year-on-year comparison



WHEN DID YOUR OFFICES REOPEN?



In our original survey, 35% of respondents expected to reopen their offices by the end of June 2021. TThis year, 50% of businesses ended up returning by July of 2021 with 86% back in the office by end of that same year.

2021 office opening prediction

2022 office reopening

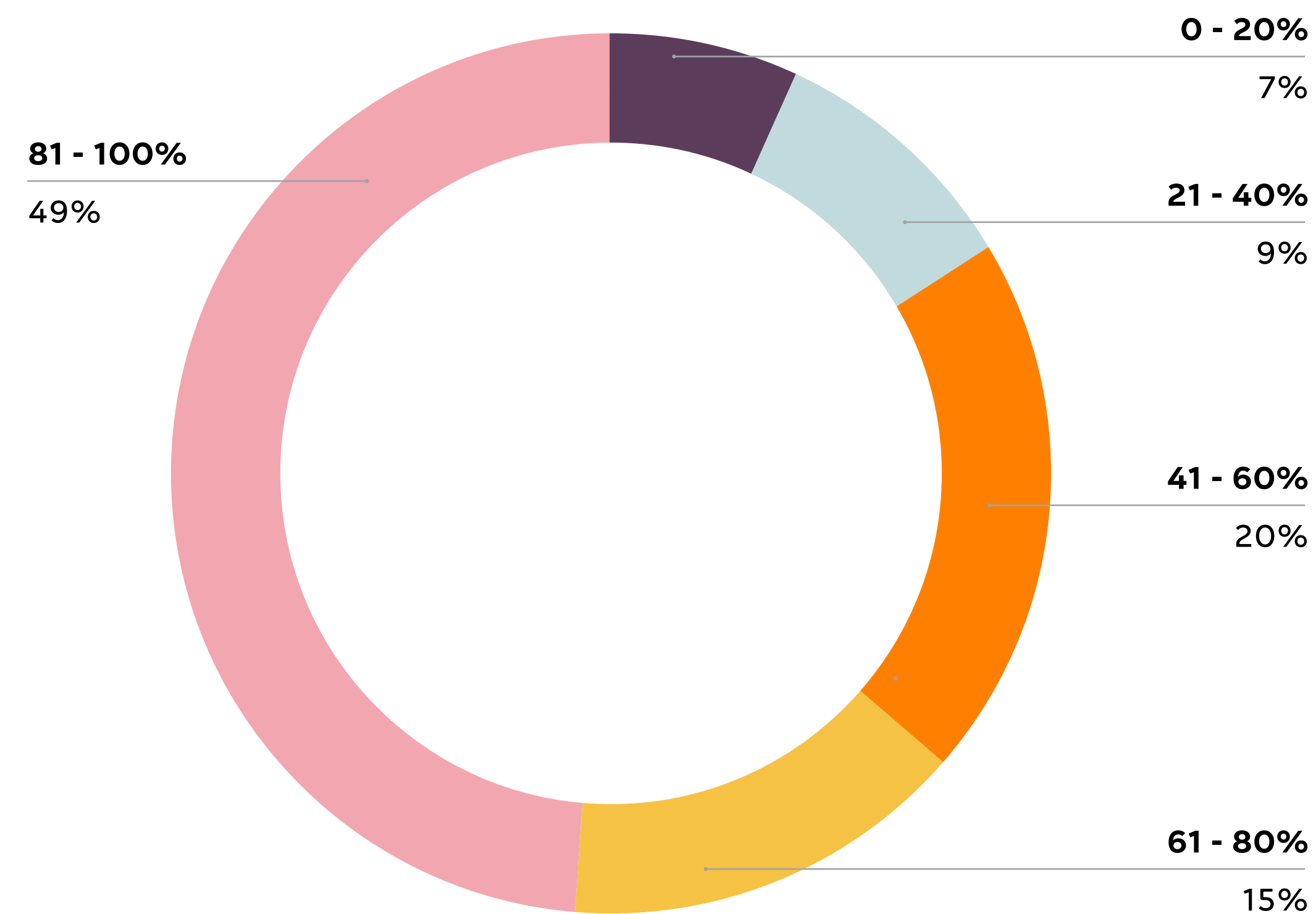
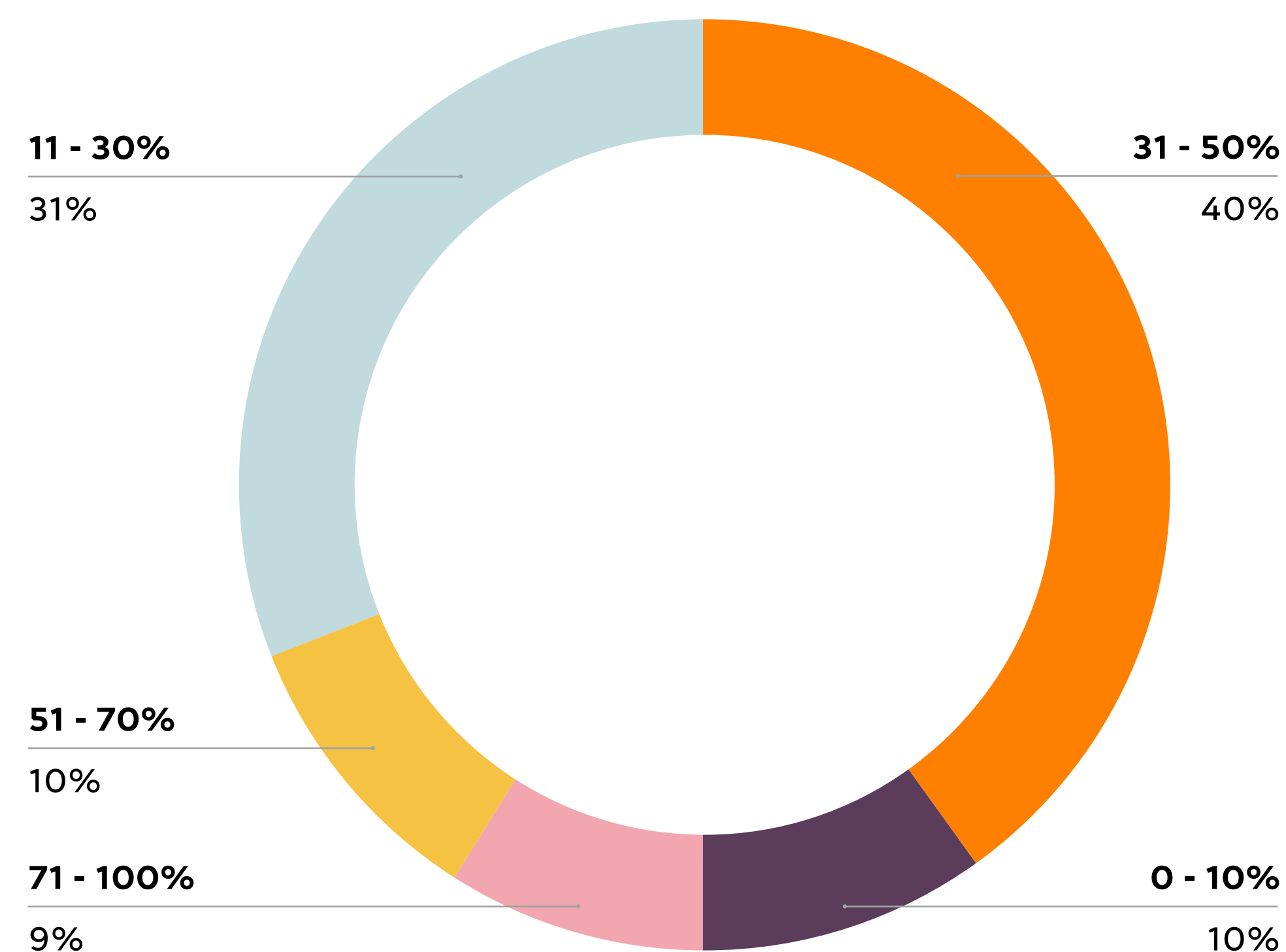


The COVID pandemic has unequivocally changed the way we work. In our original survey, 7% of respondents predicted that they'd be back by 2022. In reality, more than double that number (15%) didn't return to the office until 2022.

WHAT % OF YOUR ORGANISATION HAS RETURNED TO THE OFFICE?

Compared to last year's predictions, our 2022 survey has shown almost half of respondents seeing at least an 80% headcount capacity returning to the office.

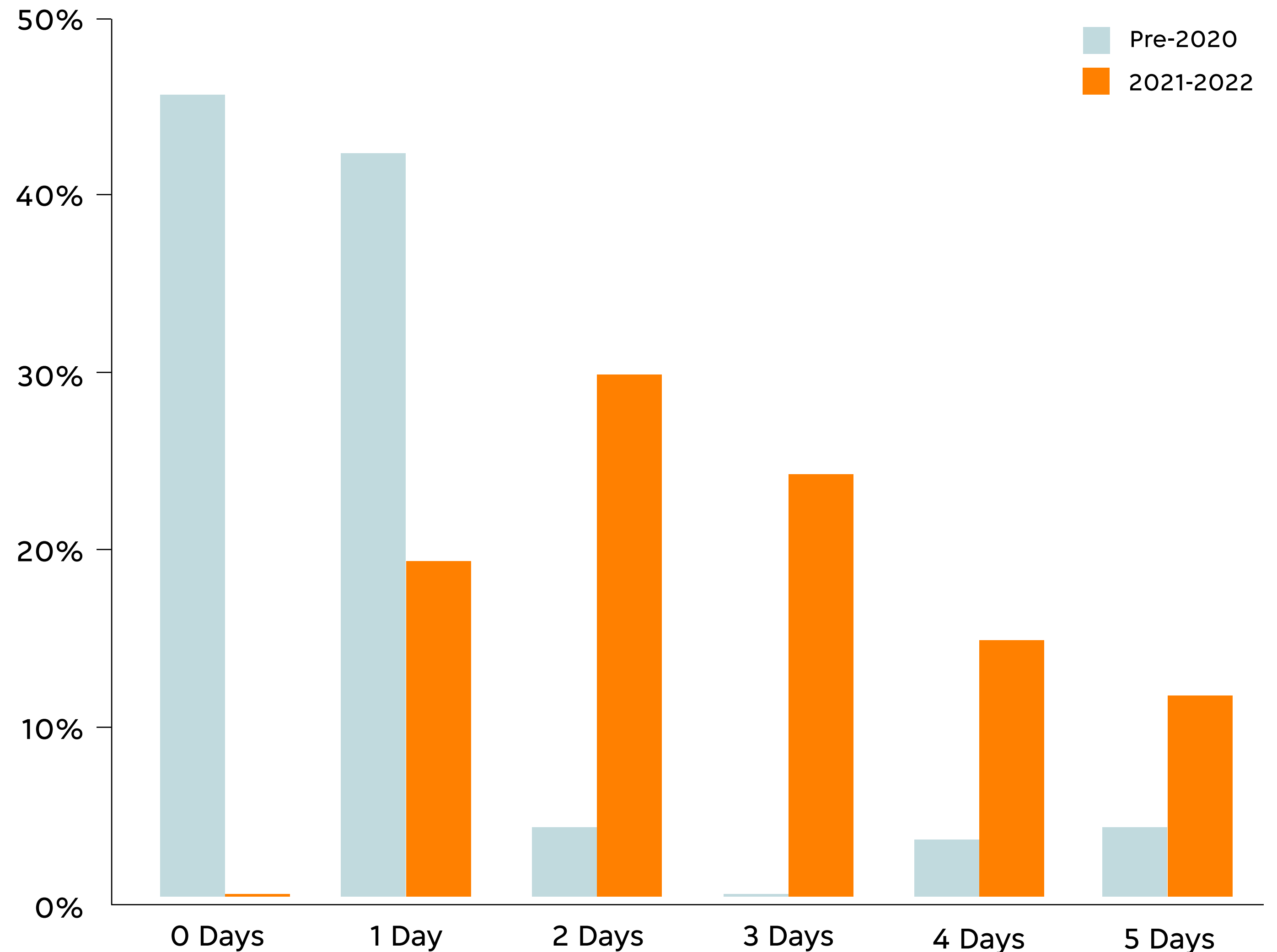
This confirms that the role of the office has changed - people value the social connections that come with working together, and so businesses need to keep ensuring their offices are places people want to visit, not have to visit.



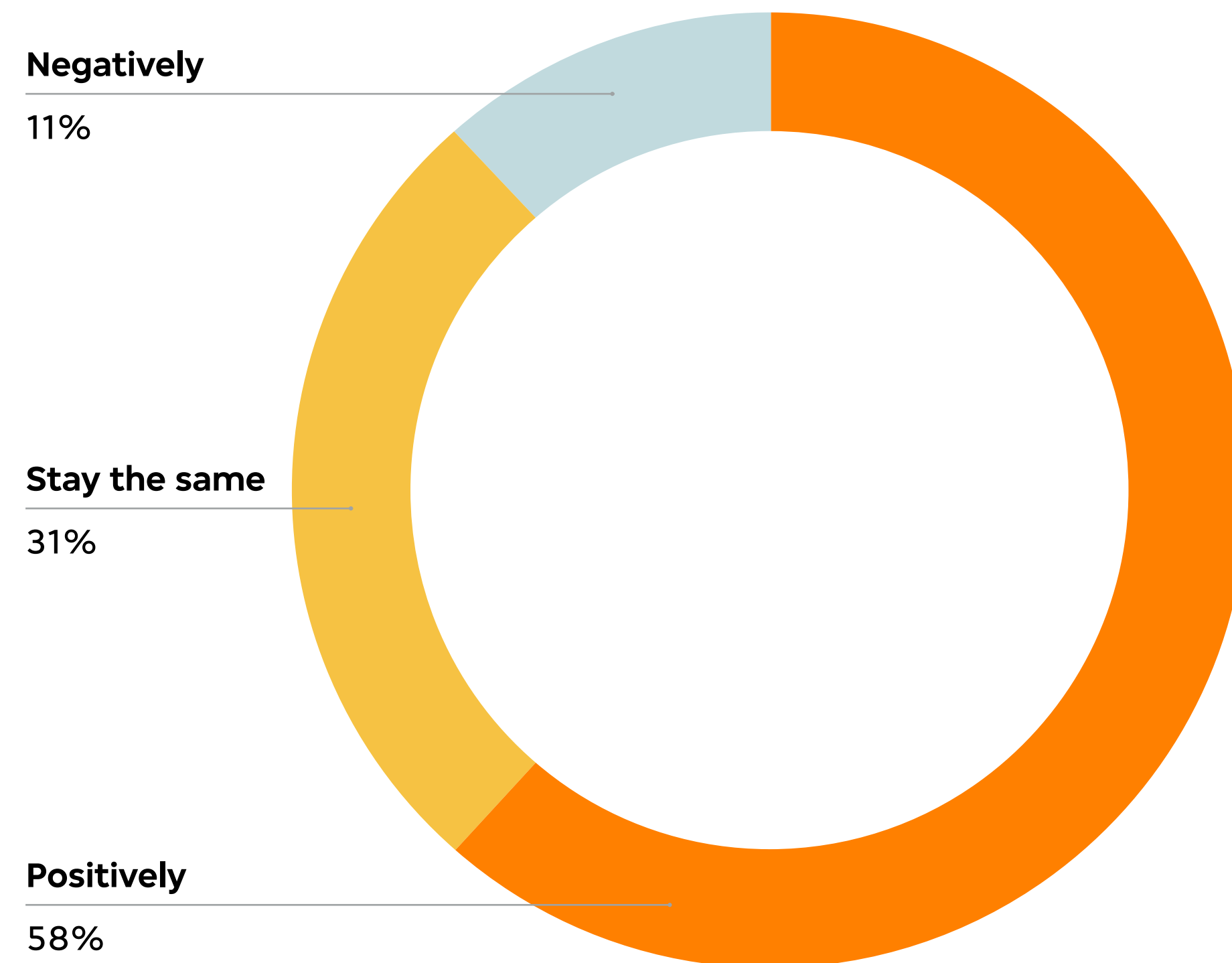
HOW MANY DAYS DO EMPLOYEES WORK FROM HOME? - PRE & POST-COVID LOCKDOWN

Our 2021 survey revealed that over half of respondents thought that they would continue to work from home at least 3 days a week, even after offices reopen.

Our 2022 survey showed that 73% of people are currently working from home at least 3 days a week, emphasising that flexible and hybrid working is here to stay.

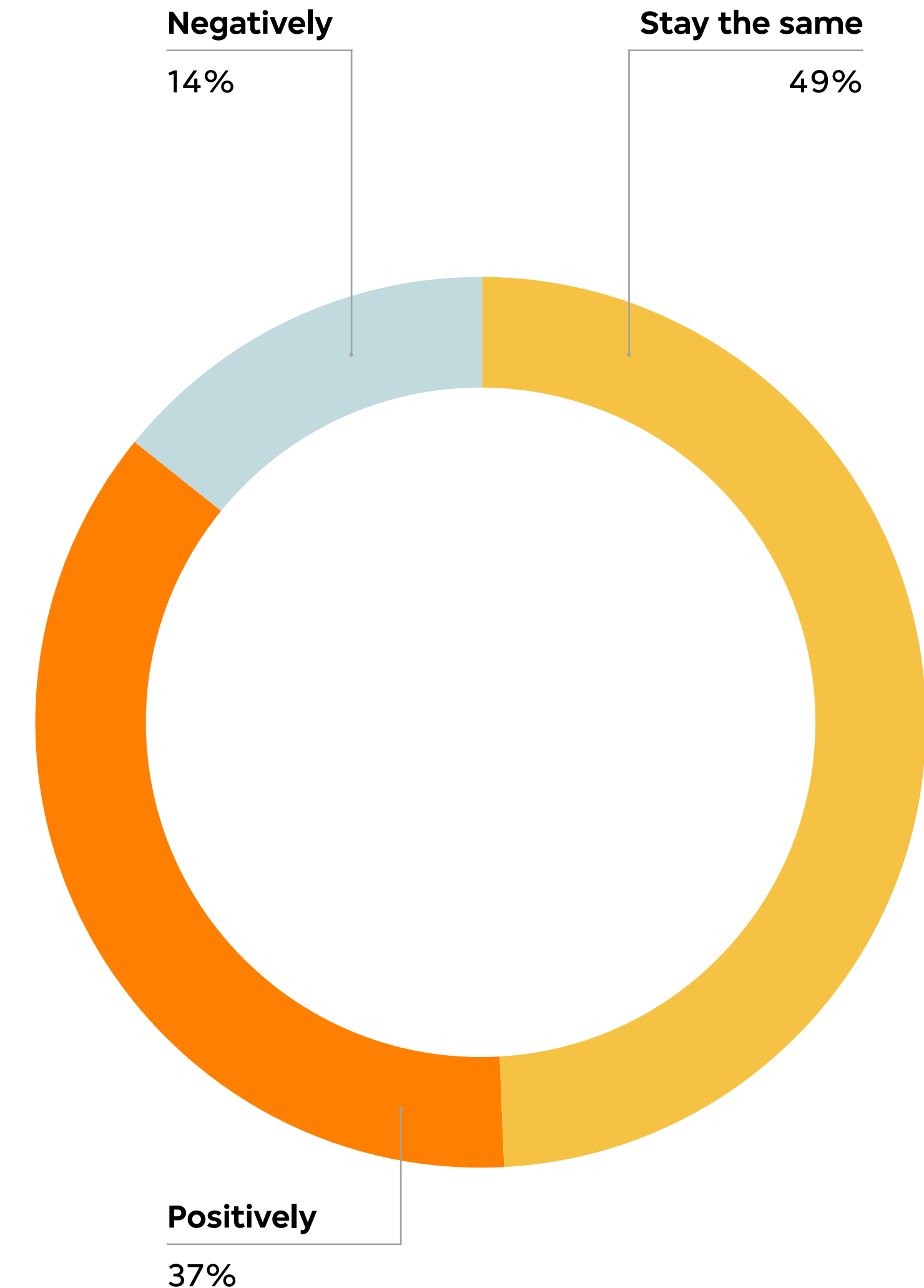


HOW HAS YOUR COMPANY CULTURE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE OFFICE REOPENING?



In both 2021 and 2022, maintaining and fostering a strong company culture was at the forefront of employee wellbeing.

This year, 49% of people felt company culture has stayed the same since the office reopening. This could be attributed to companies' focus on team engagement and boosting morale during various lockdowns as well as pivoting their employee experience to provide parity for all employees, in the office or at home.



WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT RETURNING TO THE OFFICE?

Although there were some concerns about returning to the office in our 2021 survey, respondents said that being around colleagues can improve employee morale by 40%. This sentiment was echoed in our 2022 survey, with two-thirds of respondents ranking the social aspects of office life as key positives of returning to the office.

“Seeing colleagues”, “collaboration and productivity” and “social events” all help contribute to favourable sentiments around return to the office.

This paints a clear picture of the need for companies to invest in things that encourage teams to bond and socialise, as well as activities that support colleagues with work-related collaboration.



Seeing my colleagues

31%

Collaboration & productivity

23%

Easier to focus

15%

Social events (team lunches, work drinks)

12%

Office tech (internet, screen monitors)

12%

Free communal food

3%

WHAT DO YOU LEAST ENJOY ABOUT RETURNING TO THE OFFICE?

Commuting

37%

Less flexibility

18%

Office politics

16%

Working hours

11%

Using communal spaces

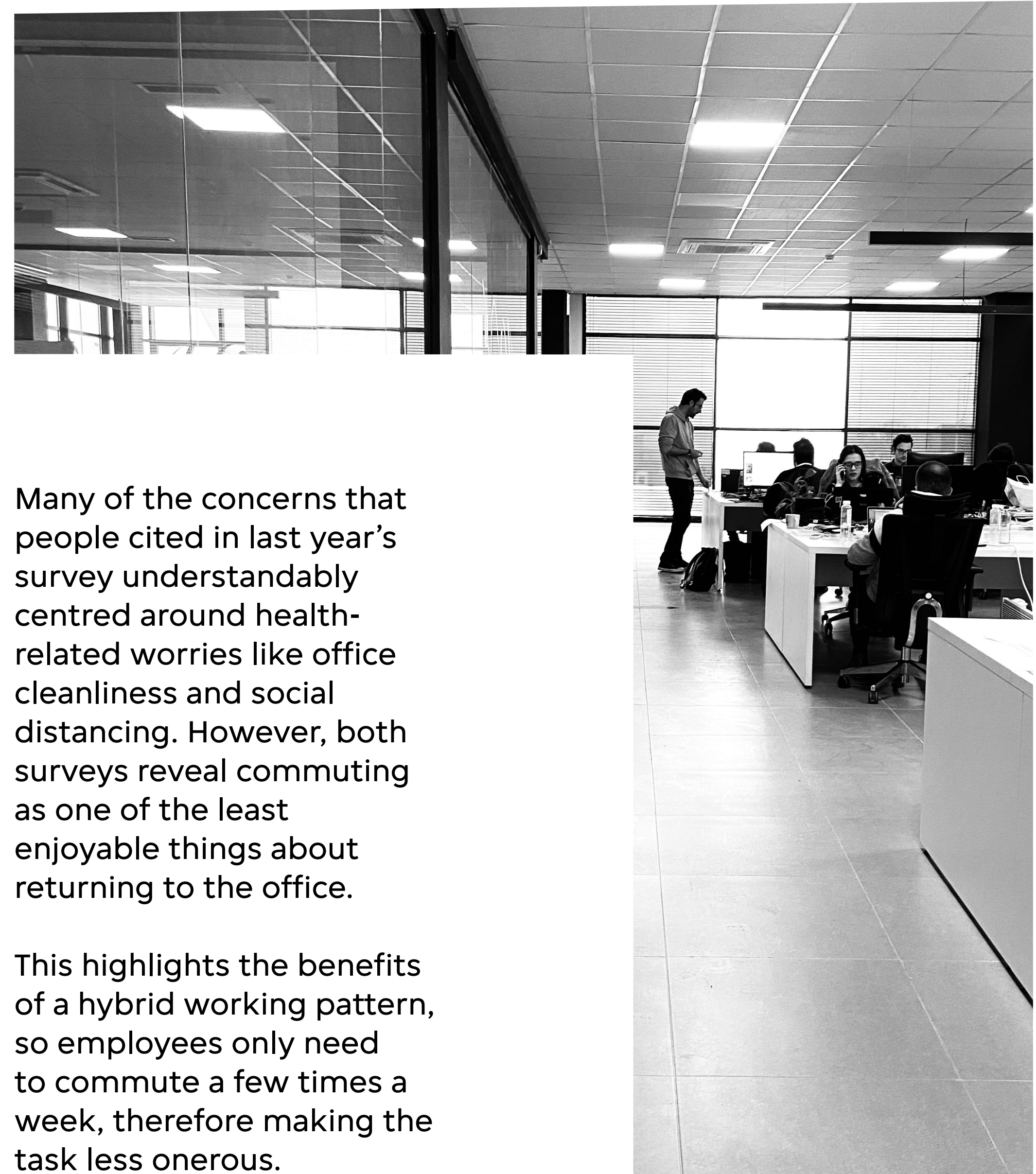
11%

More meetings

7%

Many of the concerns that people cited in last year's survey understandably centred around health-related worries like office cleanliness and social distancing. However, both surveys reveal commuting as one of the least enjoyable things about returning to the office.

This highlights the benefits of a hybrid working pattern, so employees only need to commute a few times a week, therefore making the task less onerous.

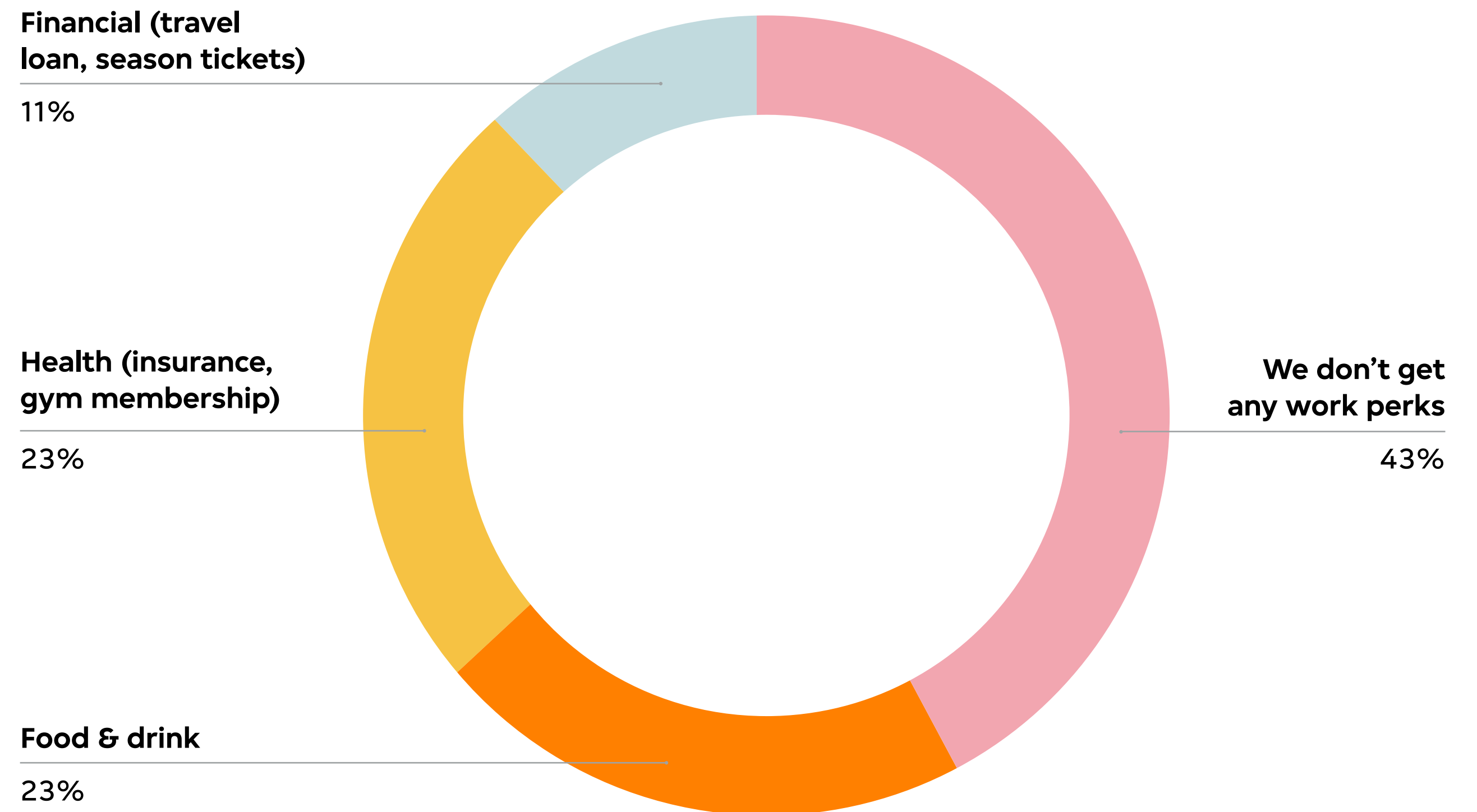


WHAT WORKPLACE PERKS DO YOU RECEIVE?

The provision of work perks and benefits seems to have shifted somewhat. In last year's survey, just over 10% of respondents said they received no perks compared to 43% in 2022.

This may be as a result of the pandemic - many businesses are choosing not to offer workplace perks as they may struggle to provide parity with those working in the office and those working from home.

It is also worth noting, however, that there might also be a discrepancy between employee expectations & what employers are offering. With the effects of the Great Resignation being felt worldwide, employees are more determined than ever to make work suit them - and receiving work benefits plays an integral part in this.



Conclusion

Summary of our findings
and key takeaways

Businesses and employees returned more quickly and in higher numbers

This year's survey showed that the return to office was managed slowly and cautiously. The data revealed that half of businesses ended up returning by July 2021 (compared to a predicted 35%). However, 2022 looked brighter, with 86% back by the start of the year.


In our 2021 survey, just over half of our respondents thought that they would continue to work from home for at least 3 days a week, but this year's survey showed that 73% of people are currently working from home at least 3 days a week, emphasising that flexible and hybrid working is here to stay.

Peer relationships are still a key driver for successful company culture

Two thirds of businesses are seeing over 60% headcount capacity in the office, and one in three respondents in our 2022 survey said the thing they most enjoy about returning to the office is seeing their colleagues. Additionally, over two-thirds of respondents ranked the social aspects of office life (“seeing colleagues”, “collaboration & productivity” and “social events”) as key positives of returning to the office.

This confirms that fostering and maintaining peer relationships at work is paramount for supporting employees and helping to promote a successful company culture.

In order to feel happy and connected to their colleagues, people need an environment where they’re encouraged to socialise and collaborate, through things like team days, social occasions and work lunches.

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a grey knit sweater and headphones, is seated at a wooden table in a modern kitchen. She is looking at a laptop screen. The kitchen features a white subway tile backsplash, a black range hood, and wooden shelves with various plants and kitchen items. Large windows in the background provide natural light.

Making the ‘new normal’ work for you means focusing on employee wellbeing

In our 2021 survey, we saw a shift in the way that wellbeing perks were provided, especially where all teams were remote working. In 2022, in order to suit a new hybrid working model, this has changed.

It appears that perks like gym memberships and health-related benefits are ever popular, as well as shared team meals and social occasions. However, the focus on employee wellbeing needs to go further. Companies need to ensure they are listening to employees, and, as much as possible, implementing working policies that are based on what works for them.

About us

Who are Just Eat for Business?

Just Eat for Business is the UK's leading corporate food delivery service and part of the Just Eat Takeaway.com group, the largest food delivery company globally. We offer a range of simple and flexible solutions that make it easy for you to order great food for any occasion, in the office or at home.

We connect corporate customers to 600+ of the best restaurants and caterers around to provide their employees with delicious food, drinks, and snacks.

Whether their teams are back in the office or working from home, we have solutions to suit every company. With safe, contact-free delivery available nationwide, Just Eat for Business helps companies keep their staff well-fed and connected, however far apart they may be.



JUST EAT
for business

just-eat.co.uk/business

020 3893 3500

