

# Paper, Paper Everywhere... UK workers spend over two working weeks every year dealing with paperwork.

Submitted by: Re-Flow

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Re-flow national research reveals that UK workers are spending a significant proportion of their time dealing with paperwork. Other frustrations from communicating and collaborating with colleagues highlight the need for better digital tools to manage mobile working.

<https://re-flow.co.uk/>

- Workers in the North East spend the most amount of time reading, completing and locating documents at almost 90 hours per employee every year.
- Medical and health services (102 hours) Education (97 hours), and Construction (90 hours) professionals spend the most amount of time dealing with paperwork each year.
- 58% of all workers always have a smartphone with them at work, but only 39% often carry digital copies of information instead of paper copies
- 21% of UK workers spend more than 7 hours per month reading paper work.

## Other insights

- 24% of UK workers say they are often unconvinced that people are completing work when they say they are.
- 33% of UK workers think that life at work is too bureaucratic.

Re-flow is a UK based workforce tool that eliminates the need for physical paperwork and enables companies to schedule, track, optimise and audit their mobile workforce.

Managing Director of Re-flow, Mike Saunders said "Physical paperwork and the associated frustrations that go with it are hampering efficiency in the UK economy at a time when we need to be optimising our business processes to protect thinning profit margins." "Many companies are so entrenched with their traditional ways of working that they are blinkered to the loss in productivity that operating with a paper-based system is causing them."

## Regional Rundown

### Scotland

Workers in Scotland believe life at work is the most overly bureaucratic in the country with 43% of workers stating that they think life at work is overly concerned with procedure at the expense of common sense. Furthermore, 20% feel that they often don't have easy access to the right information and instructions to do their jobs well, which is the worst rating in the UK.

### North East

Workers in the North East spend the most amount of time managing paperwork in the UK at almost 90 hours a year on average. They are also the most likely to be stressed about losing important forms, with 17% of workers getting stressed about this and a massive 26% get stressed about interpreting other people's handwriting.

#### North West

Administration is a concern for workers in the North West as they spend the most amount of time looking for lost paperwork at almost 11 hours a year on the hunt. They are also the most stressed in the UK about keeping related paperwork together stressful. (13%)

#### Northern Ireland

Workers in Northern Ireland aren't best pleased at the moment, spending the most amount of time form filling in the UK at 36 hours a year, the highest numbers of people getting stressed about explaining technical subjects to people (21%), not being able to easily change plans after they've been made (16%) and providing evidence of what work they've completed (22%).

#### Yorkshire and the Humber

Trust levels are the lowest in the UK with 30% of workers doubting that people are completing work when they say they are. Despite being currently the most unlikely region to carry digital copies of information (33%), they believe they would gain a boost to their confidence at work with the introduction of digital forms to guide them (12%).

#### East Midlands

Things are pretty chilled in workplaces around the East Midlands, with workers being the least likely to be stressed (10%) about being asked to show when and what work they have completed, and least stressed about dealing with software inconsistencies on different devices (10%)

#### West Midlands

In the West Midlands, only 1 in 4 workers (24%) find the workplace overly bureaucratic, they are also least stressed about having to complete lots of paperwork (16%) and least likely feel that they are reading irrelevant information (12%).

#### Eastern England

Workers in Eastern England are the most likely to be stressed about their amount of paperwork, with 26% saying it causes them stress and the highest number of people lacking confidence that they are filling it out correctly (11%).

#### London

Most likely to be stressed when things don't meet their specifications, such as not having instant WIFI signal to access information (29%), being unable to communicate with people who work different hours (21%) and using software that doesn't look the same across all devices and browsers (17%).

#### South East

Workers in the South East of England are almost twice as likely than the rest of the UK to continue using outdated software than learn something new, even if a better alternative is available. (8% against a national average of 5%)

#### South West

Most likely to believe they are wasting time in the UK reading irrelevant information in paperwork, with

one in five feeling this way.

## Wales

The least likely to avoid reading for pleasure due to amount they have to read at work and are among the least likely to be carrying a smartphone at work with only 53% saying they always bring it with them.

Mike Saunders continued "It's time that we as a leading digital nation took steps to adapt our antiquated methods of communication in the workplace to reduce unnecessary stress, misunderstandings and poor flexibility in planning, scheduling and amending work."

## Information Irritations

Which of these situations do you find stressful at work?

1. Signal failure, 22% - When I don't have signal/WiFi on my work device when I need to access information outside of the office.
2. Pen pushing, 21% - When I have to read and complete lots of paperwork. (online or offline)
3. Haphazard Handwriting, 18% - Trying to interpret other people's handwriting.
4. Staying in the loop, 17% - When I can't communicate with colleagues who work different hours/ locations to me.
5. Technically speaking, 17% - When I have to verbally explain complicated technical situations to colleagues and/ or customers.
6. Bugs and glitches, 14% - When software I use for work appears differently on different devices (e.g. laptop, smartphone, tablet etc.)
7. Checking in, 14% - When I'm asked to provide evidence of work I have completed and when this was complete.
8. Rescheduling, 13% - When I can't easily make changes to plans once they have been shared with other people (e.g. meetings, deadlines, instructions etc.).
9. Bad form, 13% - When I lose important forms.
10. Filing, 10% - When I try to keep related paper information together.

Re-flow is committed to assisting UK companies to Get Good Form, by banning bad forms in 2019. Eliminating inefficient paperwork and ensuring people only see what they need to read reduces stress, saves time and increases productivity. Going digital keeps all project information, documents and photos together forever and provides an indisputable audit trail.

Ends

## Re-flow Notes

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4172 adults of which 2265 were workers. Fieldwork was undertaken between 5th - 7th February 2019. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

All yearly average were calculated by Re-flow based on YouGov's figures.

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