

Home Office Share

What is it?

Proportion of employed individuals who work entirely from home on a given day.

⚠️ **Definition note:** "daily or majority of time" ≠ "entirely from home on a given day."

Always check the denominator before comparing figures across countries.

18.2% percent of employees work from home all day and have no commute to work on that day.

Source: SrV Berlin 2023

Three ways "home office share" gets measured and why it matters



On a given day:

Trip generation models use per-person rates to estimate future transit demand: This is essential for sizing fleets, frequencies and infrastructure.



Regular basis:

Works from home most days. Structural indicator as it shows long-run shift in demand.



Hybrid mix:

Works from home some days. Harder to model as it creates irregular peak loads and PT ridership uncertainty.

Always specify which variant you are using.



Home Office Share

Why transport planners care

Peak-hour load redistribution: Each percentage point increase in home office share removes commute trips from the AM/PM peak and thus reduces crowding, but may also reduce PT revenue from fare-paying passengers.

Spatial reorganisation of activity: City centres lose footfall; residential and suburban areas gain it. This shifts demand for local PT, active travel infrastructure, and neighbourhood retail, all of which require different investment than commuter-focused networks.

Emissions: Removed commute trips reduce transport emissions, but home energy use may rise, non-commute car trips can increase. Net impact depends on housing energy mix and whether PT or car trips are being suppressed.

Gender perspective:

Remote work for women and for men are often not the same experience. Women working from home are significantly more likely to simultaneously carry care responsibilities like childcare, elder care, household management. This means their "working from home" frequently involves interrupted work, not the productivity-optimised remote work that drives employer adoption. Aggregate home office share statistics obscure this entirely.

Who works from home and who cannot

Aggregate home office share is a class indicator in disguise. The ability to work remotely is almost entirely determined by occupation which correlates strongly with income, education, gender, and ethnicity.

Home office share by sector, Example Germany

Occupational categories	in %
Managers	40.5
Professional and academics	48.9
Technicians and associate professionals	26.3
Clerical support workers	26.2
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	24.2
Service and sales workers	5.5
Craft and related trades workers	5.0
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	1.5
Elementary occupations / unskilled workers	1.9

Definition: Share of employed persons aged 15 years or more who, in their main job, work usually (= daily or more than half of the working time) or sometimes (= less than the half of the working time) in home office.

Home Office Share

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Country variation reflects occupational mix, broadband access, management culture, and labour law — not just worker preference.



The commuter who cannot stay home. The nurse, the bus driver, the warehouse worker, the cleaner – these workers cannot work remotely.



They are disproportionately lower-income, more likely to be women and people of colour, and more likely to depend on public transport. Transport policy benefits from remote work



(reduced peak load) accrue to high-income car commuters. The burden of peak crowding stays with essential workers on PT.

Gender and sector segregation

Occupational segregation means remote work access is itself gendered. Women are overrepresented in healthcare, education, retail, and care – sectors with low or zero remote-work capacity.

Men are overrepresented in finance and tech – sectors with the highest home office share. The post-COVID "remote work revolution" may have primarily benefited higher-income men, while women in essential sectors continued commuting throughout.

Transport system impacts

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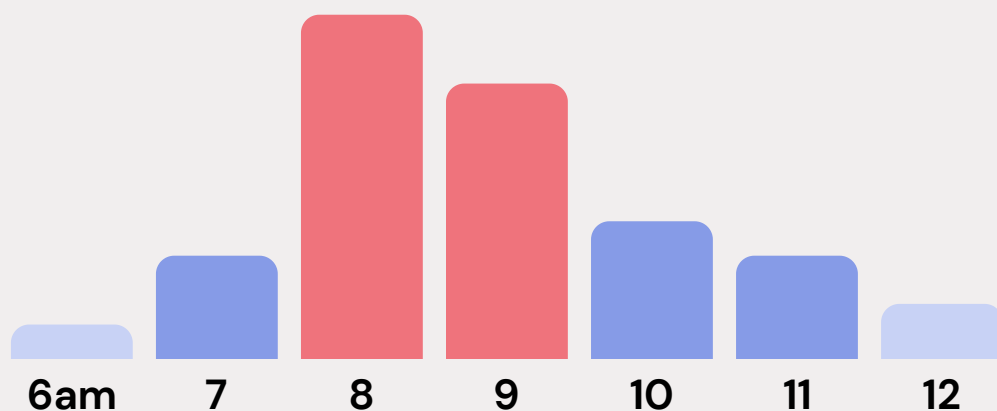
Home office share directly reshapes peak demand, PT revenue, spatial footfall, and urban real estate with effects that are neither uniformly positive nor equitably distributed.

Peak-hour load – Pre vs. Post Work Adoption (illustrative)

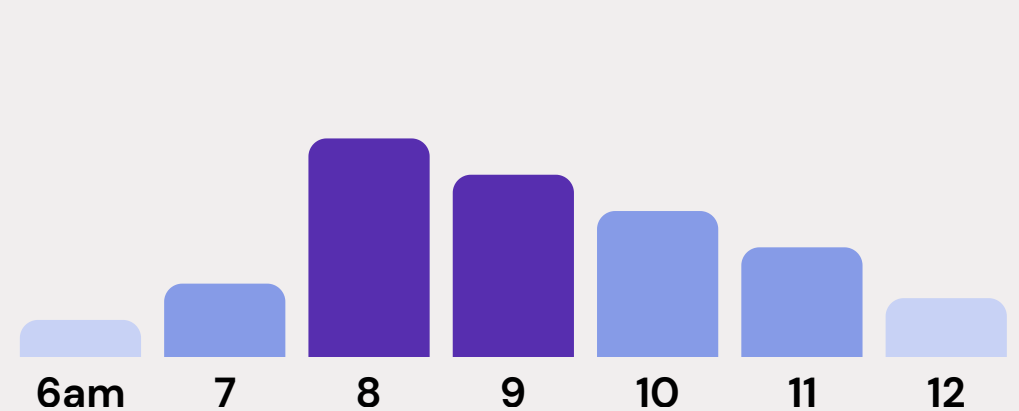
Schematic AM peak profile – same city, different home office share

Pre-2020 (~5% HO share)

Post-2023 (~25% HO Share)



Sharp, concentrated peak.
Infrastructure sized for this —
and straining.



Lower peak, flatter profile. Better for
crowding, worse for revenue models.



Transport system impacts

Four downstream effects for transport systems:

PT revenue:

Fewer commute trips = fewer fare-paying journeys on the most expensive-to-run services. Many PT operators saw 15–30% ridership drops post-COVID that have not fully recovered. Depends on ticket types (passes vs single ticket)

Financial risk

City centre retail:

Fewer office commuters means fewer lunchtime customers for city centre food, retail, and services. Suburban and residential neighbourhood retail gains instead.

Spatial shift

Real estate:

Reduced commute frequencies shifts housing preferences outward and thus results in increasing demand for suburban and peri-urban housing with local amenities but longer PT access.

Planning risk

Active travel:

Remote workers often replace commute trips with local walking and cycling for errands. This is an opportunity: neighbourhood active travel infrastructure sees higher use.

Opportunity

Measuring it right — and responding as planners

Four questions to ask before using any home office figure

Home office share is only useful as a transport indicator if it is collected with consistent definitions, disaggregated properly, and linked to the right policy levers.

1. Definition:

Entirely from home, or hybrid included? Hybrid workers still make some commute trips. Conflating the two inflates suppressed demand estimates.

2. Denominator:

Share of all workers, or only eligible workers? Excluding presence-required sectors dramatically raises the rate and misrepresents structural change.

3. Frequency:

On a reference day, or self-reported typical? Self-reported typical frequency overstates actual remote working days by 15–30% in most studies.

4. Disaggregation:

By sector, income, gender, and geography? An aggregate figure obscures the class and gender divide entirely and may produce wrong transport forecasts.





How transport planners should respond



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1. Update peak-demand models annually:

Home office share has continued shifting post-COVID. Static 2019 baselines produce wrong infrastructure sizing.

2. Introduce time-of-day pricing to manage hybrid peaks:

Hybrid workers create mid-week clustering. Congestion pricing and PT fare incentives for shoulder hours can redistribute demand more efficiently than infrastructure expansion.

3. Invest in neighbourhood-scale active travel:

Remote workers' local trip patterns increase demand for walking and cycling infrastructure near residential areas. This is a genuine opportunity mismatched with current commuter-focused investment.

4. Protect PT service for essential workers:

As high-income commuters shift to remote work, resist cutting off-peak and cross-suburban PT. These routes serve the workers who cannot work from home and who most depend on public transport.





What a good approach looks like



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Misleading

"Remote work has reduced commuting: We can cut peak PT capacity by 20%."



Rigorous

"Since 2019, the share of knowledge-sector workers in the inner city working from home has increased from 8% to 31%, contributing to an estimated 14% reduction in AM peak public transport boardings at central stations. In contrast, demand on cross-suburban routes has remained stable. Accordingly, cross-suburban services will be maintained, while fare incentives for travel outside the peak period will be introduced on central corridors to further spread demand and reduce peak congestion.."

Track home office share separately by gender and sector. Ensure that neighbourhood active travel investment (which benefits remote workers) is designed for caregivers too: safe routes to schools, clinics, and markets, not just to coffee shops and co-working spaces. And protect PT routes used by women in essential work, which are disproportionately cross-suburban, off-peak, and first to face cuts.



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Sources:

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- DeStatis (2021): Quality of employment. Employed persons working from home. Available: https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Labour/Labour-Market/Quality-Employment/Dimension3/3_11_homeoffice.html

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