

SWAA December 2021 Updates

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20 December 2021



Latest survey wave included: November 2021

To sign up for regular results updates, please sign up [here](#).

- **Source of all data (unless noted):** Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes (SWAA), see www.wfhresearch.com

- **When referring to these results please cite:**

Barrero, Jose Maria, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven J. Davis, 2021. “Why working from home will stick,” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 28731.

www.wfhresearch.com

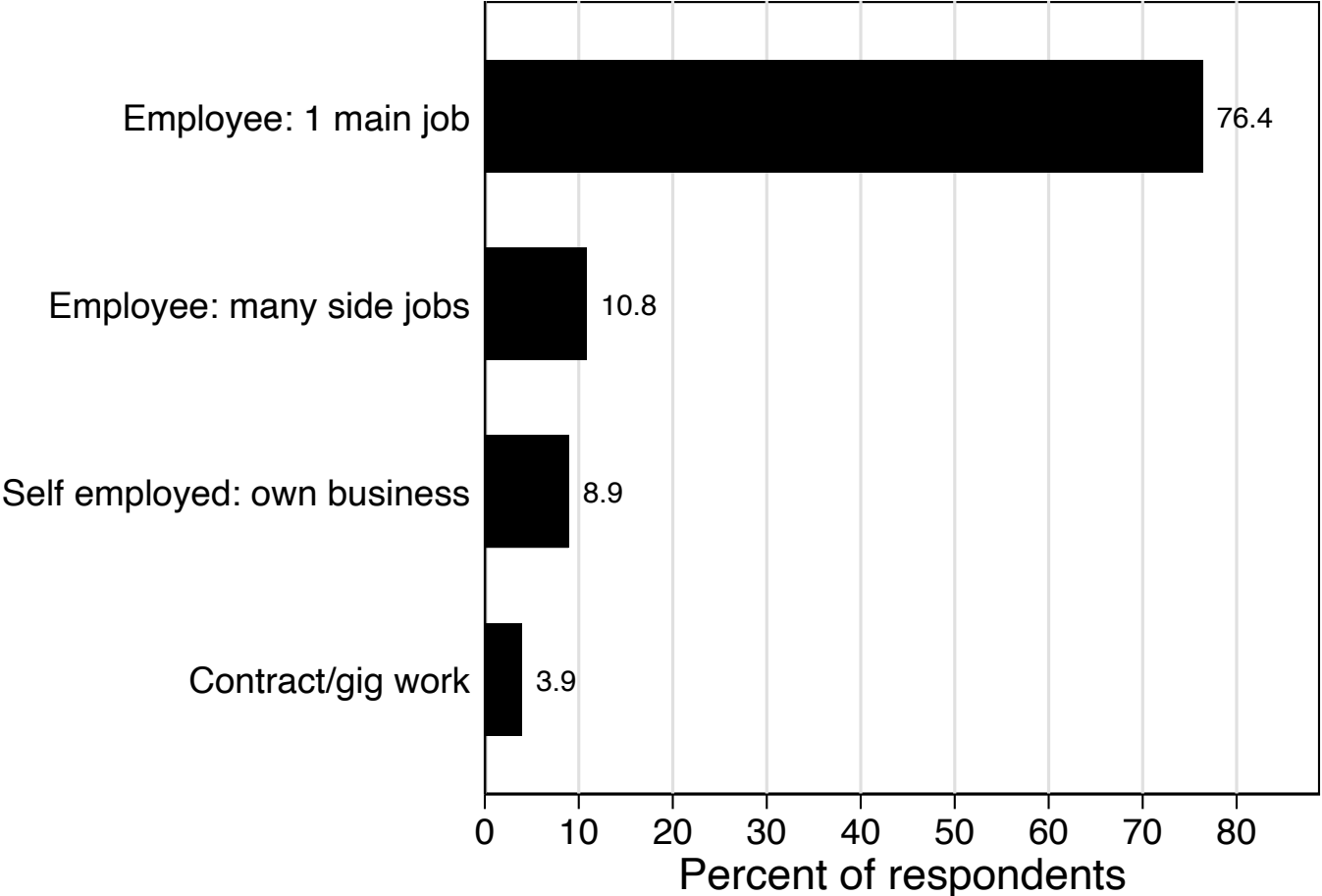
Introduction & Methodology (2/2)

- **Target population:** US residents aged 20 to 64 who earned \$20k or more in 2019. Between April and September 2021 we gradually moved to include individuals who earned \$10k to \$20k in 2019.
 - Each survey wave goes into the field on the 3rd Tuesday of the month and data collection typically takes 10 to 12 days.
 - Each wave collects 2,500 or 5,000 responses.
 - April 2021 and later waves collect 5,000 responses
 - Prior to April 2021 most waves collected 2,500 responses, but August 2020, December 2020, and January 2021 collected 5,000.
 - We drop respondents who “speed” through the survey, so the actual usable number of responses in each wave is somewhat less than the number we collect.
- **Representativeness:** Commercial providers field the survey on our behalf, drawing from a variety of sources for potential respondents.
 - We reweight the raw survey data to match the share of the population in a given {age x sex x education x earnings} cell in a pooled sample of 2010-2019 Current Population Survey data. See Figure 2 in Barrero, Bloom, and Davis (2021).
 - Unless noted, all statistics and charts use reweighted data.

Most of our employed respondents are wage and salary employees with a single main job



Employment status of working respondents



Responses to the question:

- Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?
 - I am a **wage and salary employee**, and my main job accounts for most of my earnings
 - I am a **wage and salary employee** who also earns a lot of extra income from side jobs
 - I am **self-employed** and run my own business
 - I earn most of my income as an **independent contractor, freelancer, or gig worker**.

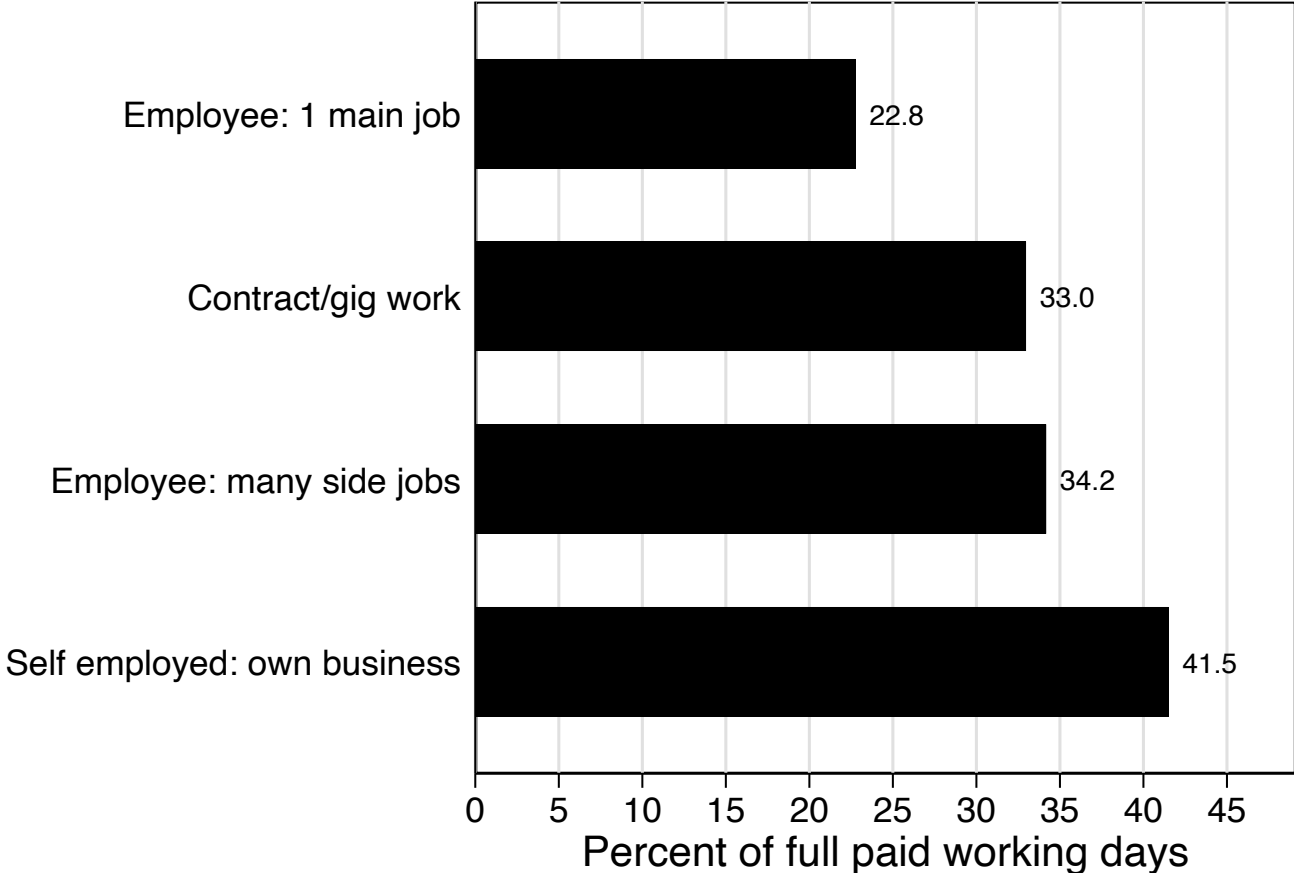
Notes: Data are from the March to November 2021 waves of the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes and include all respondents who worked during reference week. **N = 32,111**

Projected post-COVID working from home is lowest for employees with a single main job.



It is highest self-employed small business owners.

Post-COVID work-from-home plans by employment status



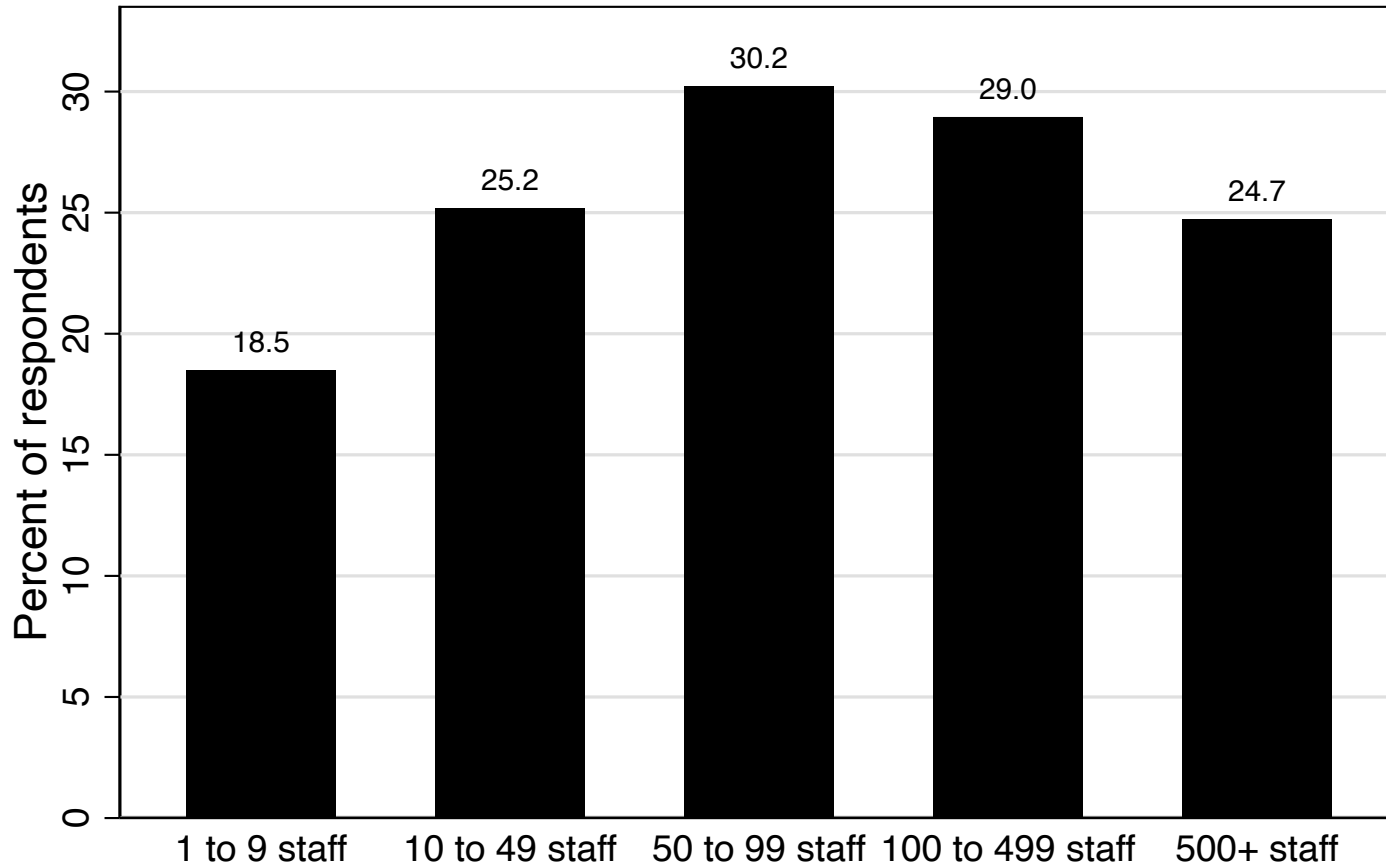
Responses to the questions:

- Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?
 - [See previous slide for response options]
- After COVID, in 2022 and later, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?

Notes: Data are from the March to November 2021 waves of the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes and include all respondents who worked during reference week. **N = 30,519**

Among wage and salary employees, post-COVID work-from-home will be highest at medium-sized firms (50 to 499 workers) and lowest among small firms (less than 10 workers)

Post-COVID work-from-home plans by firm size
Sample: Wage/Salary Employees



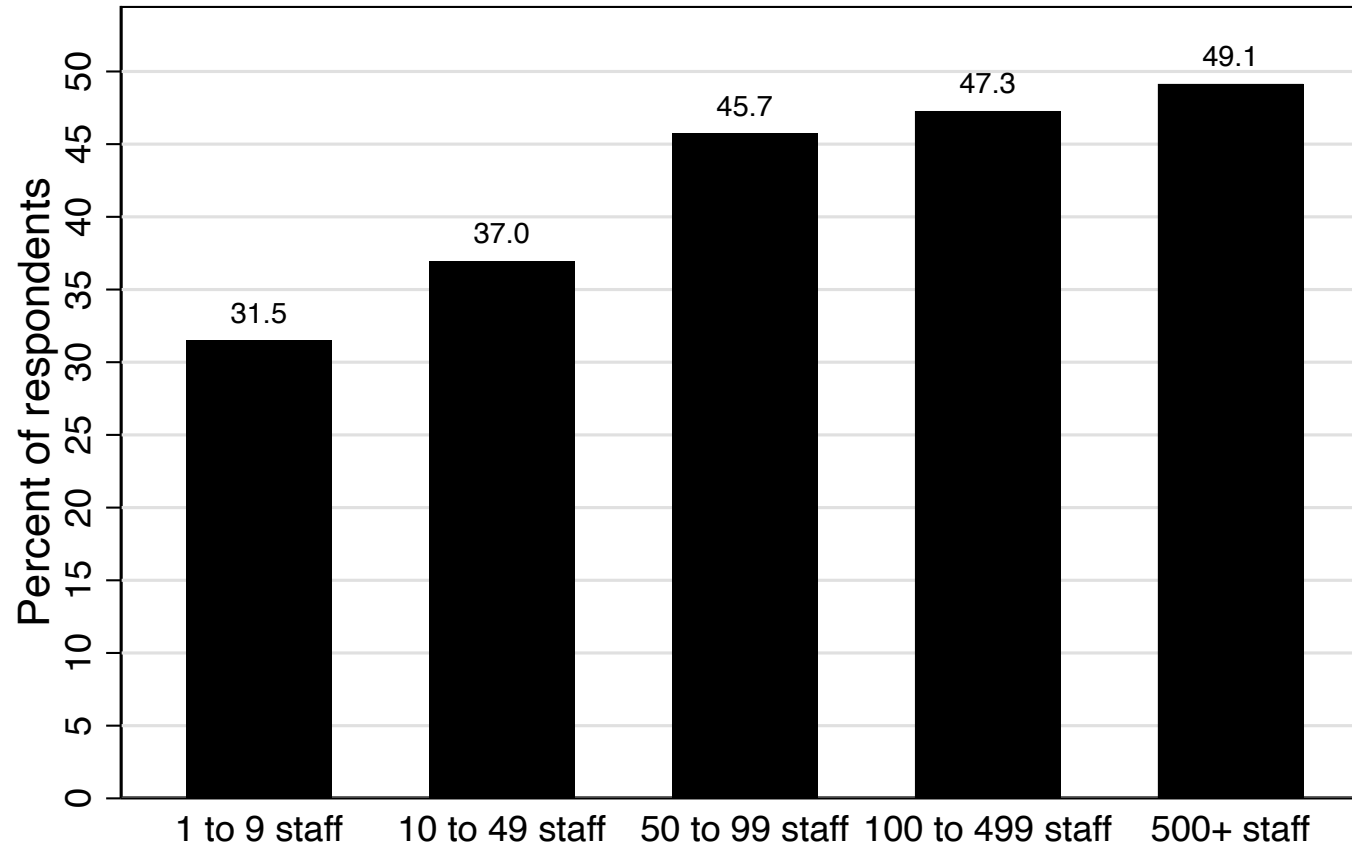
Responses to the questions:

- *Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?*
 - *[See slide 4 for response options]*
- ***After COVID, in 2022 and later, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?***
- *Counting all locations where your primary employer operates, what is the total number of persons who work for your employer?*

Notes: Data are from the March to November 2021 waves of the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes and include all respondents who worked during reference week. **N = 30,519**

However, among wage and salary employees, preferences for work-from-home increase steadily with the size of the firm.

Post-COVID work-from-home desires by firm size
Sample: Wage/Salary Employees



Responses to the questions:

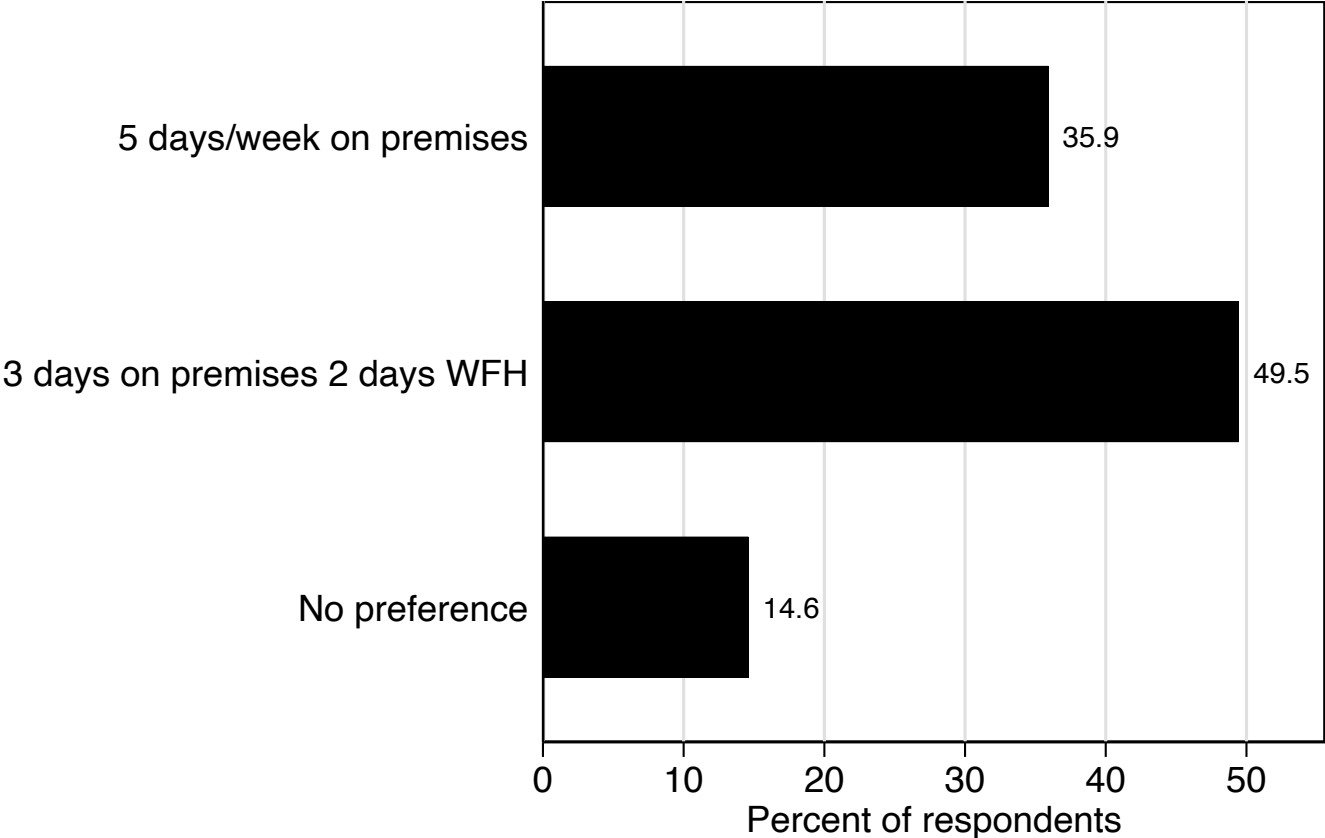
- Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?
 - [See slide 4 for response options]
- **After COVID, in 2022 and later, how often is your employer planning for you to work full days at home?**
- Counting all locations where your primary employer operates, what is the total number of persons who work for your employer?

Notes: Data are from the March to November 2021 waves of the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes and include all respondents who worked during reference week. **N = 30,519**

Respondents who worked from home at some point during COVID prefer “hybrid” working arrangements to working on business premises full time



Which working arrangements would you prefer after COVID is under control?



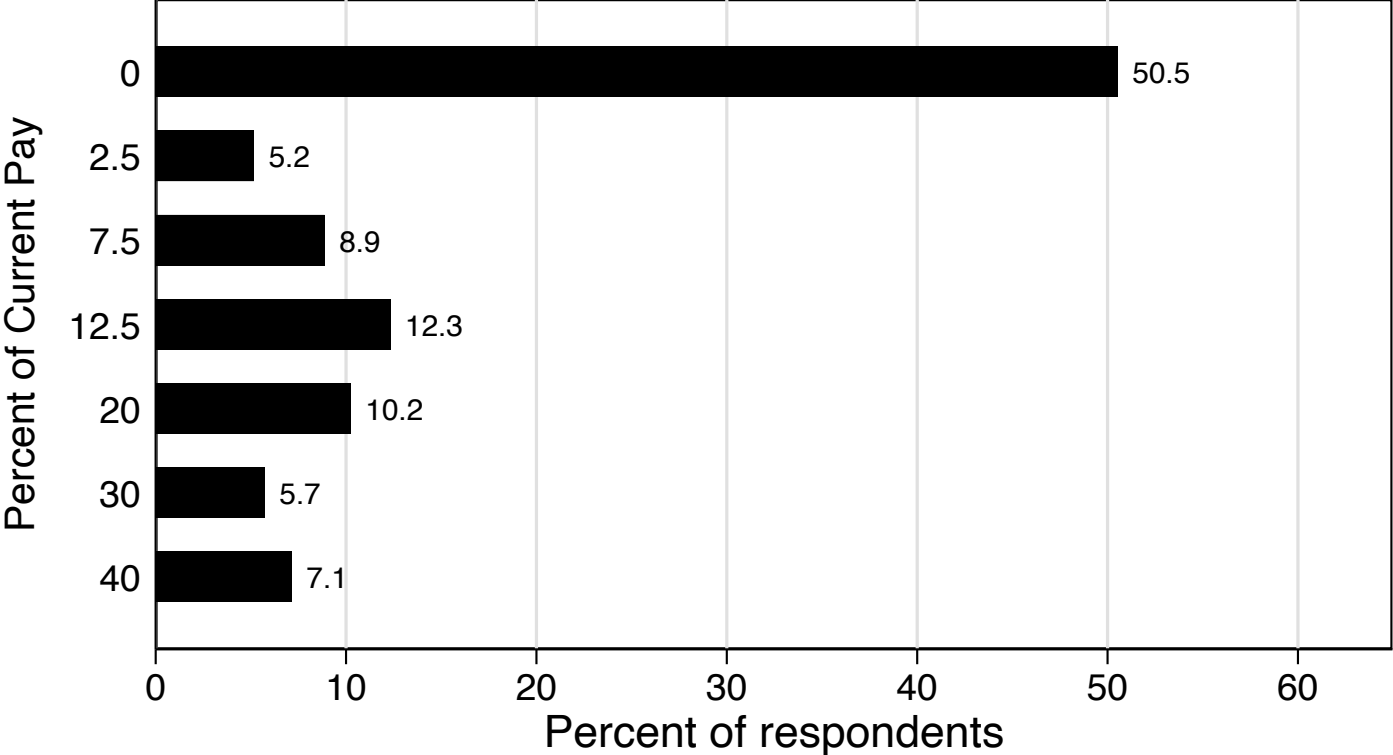
Sample: All respondents who worked 5+ days in the reference week and worked from home at some point during COVID.

Notes: Data are from the March to November 2021 waves of the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes. **N = 13,507**

Firms would need to raise pay by 9% to get the average worker to prefer full-time in-person work over hybrid



How much extra pay would it take for you to prefer working 5 days/week on your employer's premises?



Respondents get a zero if they prefer 5 days/week on premises over 2 days/week WFH and 3 days on premises

Sample: Respondents who worked 5+ days in the reference week and who have worked mainly from home at some point during COVID

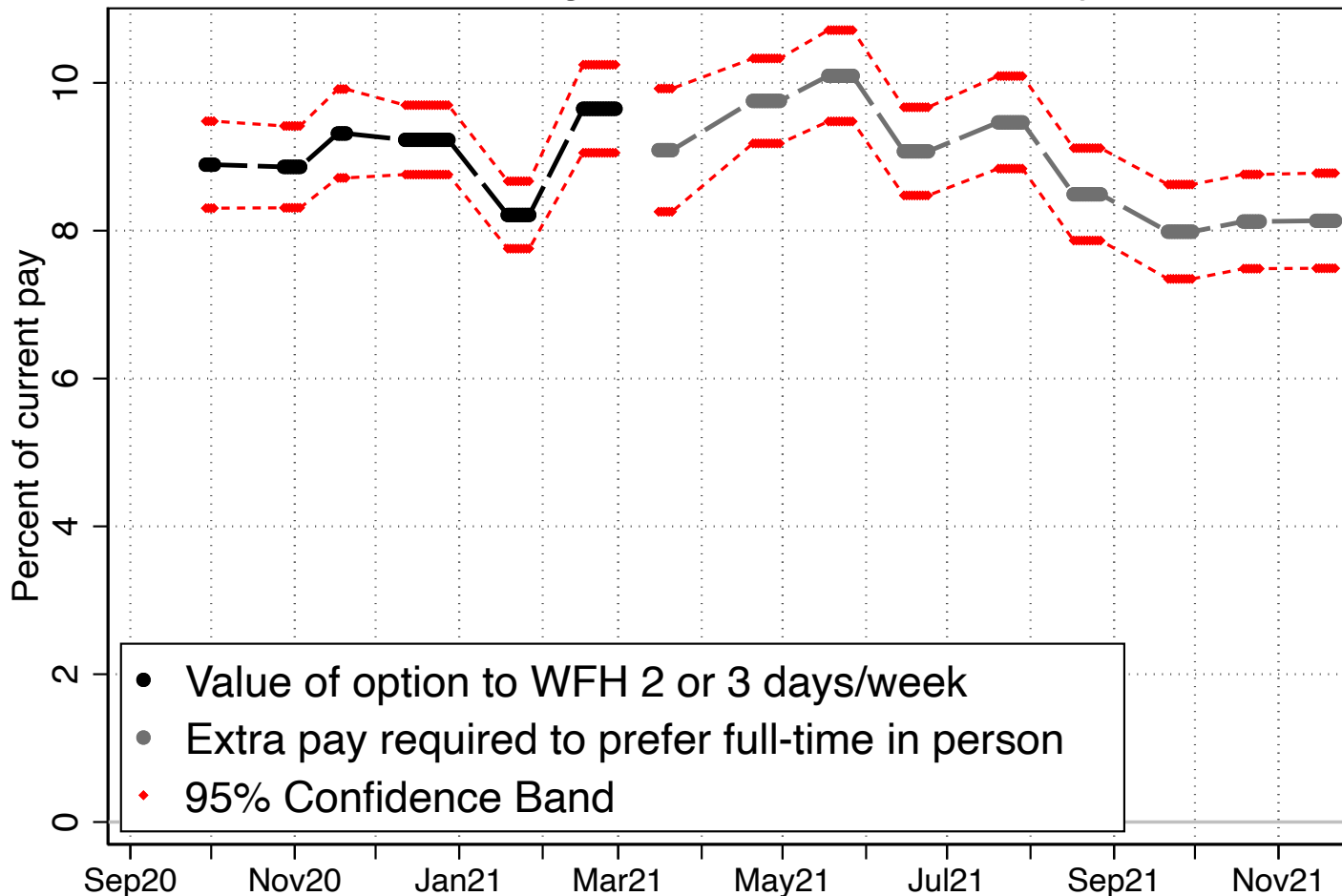
Mean (SE): 9.0 (0.1) %

Mean among those preferring hybrid: 18.1 (0.1) %

Notes: Data are from the March to November 2021 waves of the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes. Respondents get a zero if they are indifferent between hybrid and full-time in-person work, or if they already prefer full-time in-person work. **N = 13,459**

The value of working from home 2 or 3 days per week diminished slightly in the second half of 2021 but remains above 8% of current pay

Value of Working From Home 2 to 3 days/week



Responses to the questions:

- Which working arrangements would you prefer after COVID is under control?
- After COVID, in 2022 and later, how would you feel about working from home 2 or 3 days a week?

Sample: September 2020 to November 2021 waves: all respondents with work-from-home experience during COVID. March 2021 and later: respondents who worked 5+ days in the reference week and work-from-home experience during COVID.

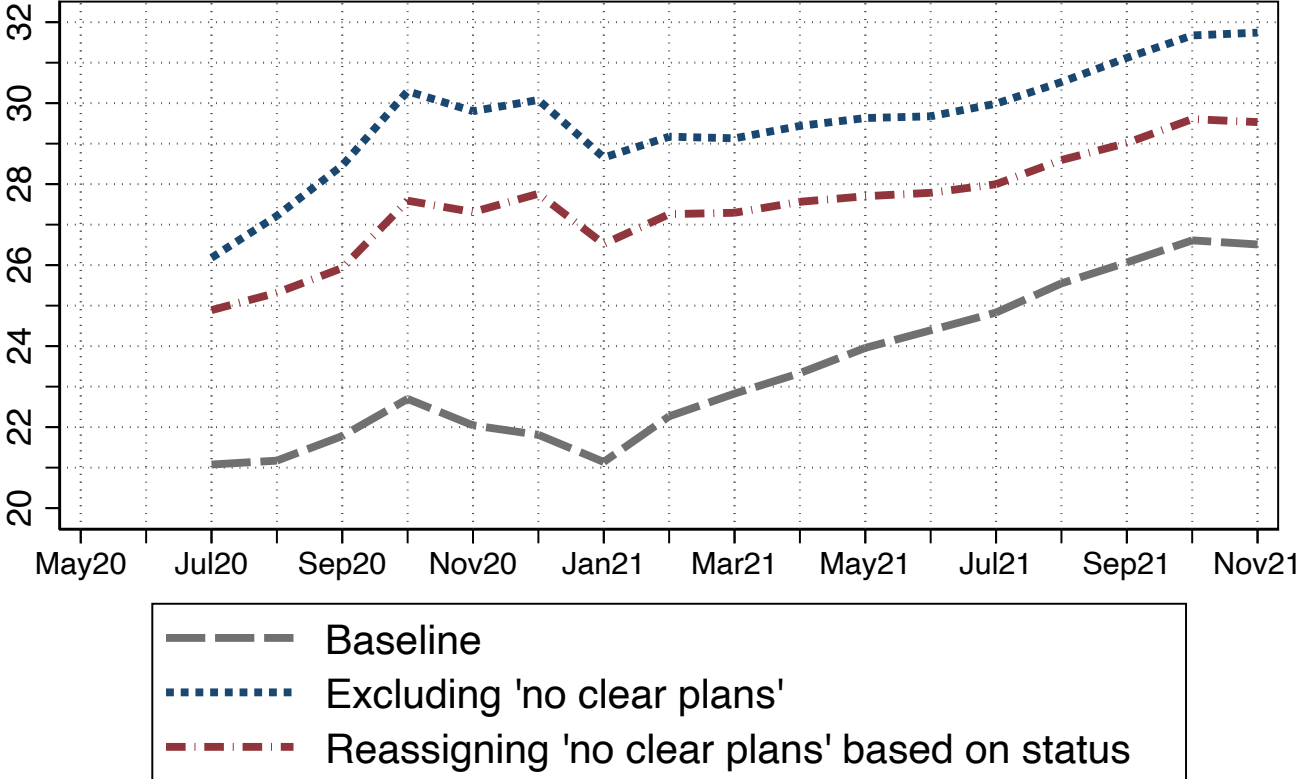
Notes: Data are from the September 2020 to November 2021 waves of the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes. For the March 2021 and later waves, respondents get a zero if they are indifferent between hybrid and full-time in-person work, or if they already prefer full-time in-person work. **N = 28,201**

How much of the rise in projected post-COVID work-from-home days comes from:



- Fewer workers reporting “no clear plans” from their employer?
- More post-COVID work-from-home days among those reporting employer plans?

Average % of Full Paid Working Days Working From Home After the Pandemic Ends: Employer Plans



Under our **baseline** approach, projected post-COVID work-from-home days have increased by **5.7 p.p.** over the course of 2021. This approach assumes respondents will not work from home at all if they report receiving “no clear plans” from their employer. So, as more employers articulate their plans, and those plans include *some* working from home our projection will rise.

The increase **conditional on providing days (i.e., excluding respondents who report “no clear plans” from their employer)** is **3.1**, which accounts for 54% of the increase.

If, instead, we give respondents with “no clear plans” the **average work-from-home days or zero depending on current working status** we get an increase of **3.0 p.p.**, which accounts for 53% of the increase during 2021.

Notes: The sample includes data from employed respondents to the July 2020 thru November 2021 survey waves. The dotted blue line excludes respondents who report “no clear plans. **N = 52,592.**

References



- Barrero, Jose Maria, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven J. Davis, 2021. “Why working from home will stick,” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 28731.