



Microsoft Healthy Computing Survey – UK

August 2013

EMPLOYEE PAIN POINTS

UK workers are uncomfortable at their desks, but don't have the tools to address these physical problems.



A new survey by Microsoft finds that today's employers shouldn't just be worried about job satisfaction or employee turnover when they think about managing their staff. A startling majority of the computing workforce* is uncomfortable on at least a daily basis, with current desk setups and office accessories partly to blame. Comfort at the office is a top priority for workers, especially because it will make them better at their jobs and happier in their personal lives. But unfortunately, ergonomic accessories are absent from many workplaces. What's more, workers don't feel that their employers are invested enough in relieving their pain – but they're not making strides of their own to get better either.

**Online survey of UK residents who work full-time or part-time and spend at least three hours on their computer for work each day*

PERSISTENT PAIN

Uncomfortable workplaces cause pain, and most workers' desk setups are partly to blame.

1 **Regular Pain.** More than four in five (86%) workers report that they experience discomfort at work. And more than one in ten (12%) of these workers reveal that this happens to them for at least half of each day, if not more often.

- *This is more common among 18-34-year-old employees than those who are 35 and older (91% vs. 83%).*

Thinking Ahead. And many of these sufferers are concerned about what this might mean for them in the long run. Almost six in ten (56%) worry more about the impact of these aches and pains on their long-term health than simply having to deal with it on a regular basis.

2 **86% of workers are uncomfortable on the job.**



3

Pointing to Pain. Workers cite the top two sources of their physical distress as spending numerous hours sitting at their desks (67%) and staring at computer screens (67%). Other culprits include typing for long periods of time (31%) and repeatedly using an external mouse (15%).

- *Spending a lot of time typing is more commonly seen as a cause of discomfort by women than men (35% vs. 26%).*
- *Using external mice is more often a cause for discomfort among those whose desktops than laptop and tablet users (18% vs. 9%).*

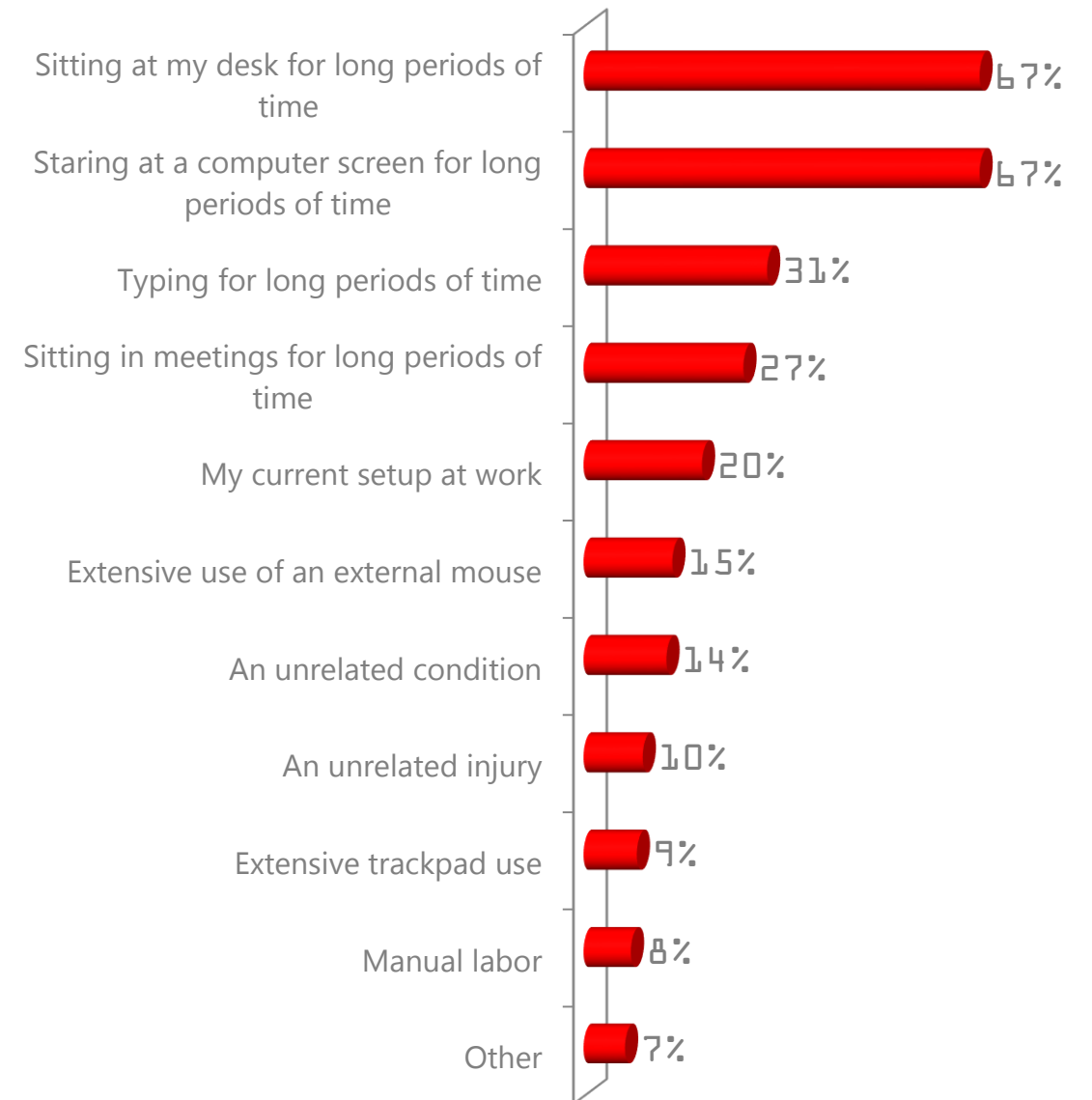
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Setting Themselves Up for Failure. One in five (20%) workers who encounter physical discomfort at work are apt to blame their current setup at work, such as the accessories they use or how things are arranged on their desks.

- *This reason is more likely to resonate among those who work on their computers for 3-4 hours a day (25% vs. 19% of workers who are on computers for work five or more hours a day).*

4

Sources of discomfort at work*



*Among respondents who have experienced discomfort at work

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Not About Time.

Additionally, more than four in ten (42%) say that their discomfort is far more likely to be caused by their current setup at work or the specific office accessories they use than the number of hours spent at the office.



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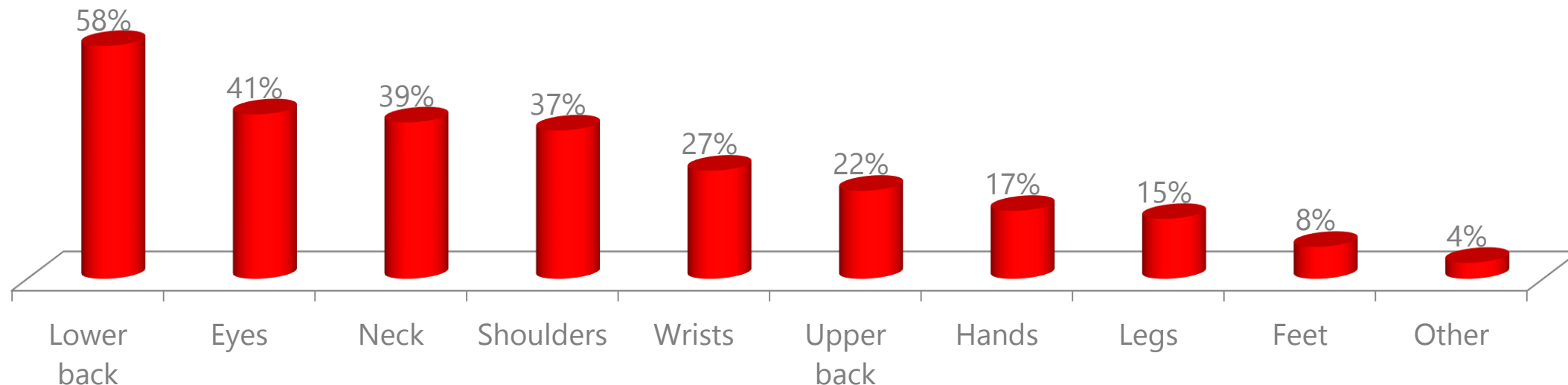
Hurting All Over.

This may be why many report that their discomfort has impacted the areas that tend to be most affected by a poorly set up desk area: the neck (39%), shoulders (37%), wrists (27%), upper back (22%) and hands (17%).

- Workers in the 18-34 age group are more apt than their 35+ colleagues to report that their work-related discomfort occurs in their upper back (28% vs. 18%).

5

Body parts affected by discomfort at work*



*Among respondents who have experienced discomfort at work

SEEKING RELIEF

Most employees value comfort at work, and know that it would make them more productive and happier.

1

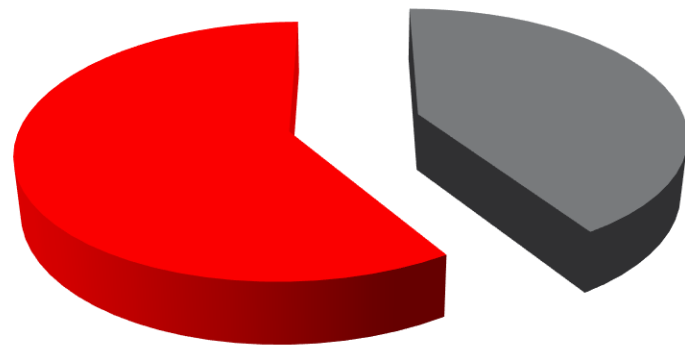
High Priority. There's one thing that workers in the UK value more than peace of mind at the office. Close to six in ten (59%) employees – regardless of whether they encounter discomfort on the job now -- admit that it's more crucial for them to be comfortable than stress-free at work.

#1 Choice. In fact, nearly nine in ten (87%) employees would place comfort as a top priority if they were in charge of selecting the office accessories where they work.

2

At work, is it more important that you are...?

Comfortable
59%



Stress-free
41%

3

Easy Sacrifices. In fact, more than four in ten (41%) of those who experience discomfort would be quick to give up their company holiday party to be comfortable all of the time. And 32 percent would choose constant comfort over free food at the office.

Pain Relief Over Perks. What's more, almost a quarter (22%) of all workers would prefer comfort at work in place of an office with a window.

3 **Building Better Employees.** Many workers know that more comfort equals more productivity. Two in five (40%) employees believe they'd complete most tasks faster if they never felt any work-related pain. Another 20 percent say they would take fewer breaks.

Personal Profit. A more comfortable workspace is likely to yield some benefits outside of the office, too. Over half think they'd have more energy (50%) and feel better when the workday ends (55%). Forty percent might even sleep better.

4 **Worth the Investment.** This is likely why almost three in ten (29%) workers would be willing to chip in some of their own money to ensure constant comfort at work if their employers weren't willing to take care of them in this way. On average, this proactive group would spend £25 each month to make this happen, or £300 per year!

- More workers ages 18-34 than those who are 35+ (35% vs. 23%) and more laptop or tablet users than desktop users (34% vs. 26%) would be willing to dig into their own pockets for such a personal cause.

5

If workers were more comfortable on the job...



55% would feel better when they get home



50% would have more energy



40% would complete tasks faster than usual



40% would sleep better

MISSING PIECES

Even though discomfort repeatedly gets in the way of work, ergonomic accessories are being overlooked.

1



Undesirable Effects. Just as more comfort would bring productivity, discomfort is dealing a serious blow to job performance right now. Because they've been uncomfortable at work, two in five of workers admit they've been unable to focus (41%) and felt like they weren't doing their best at work (41%).

2

Putting in Fewer Hours. What's more, close to three in five (59%) report that they take breaks from their work to deal with their discomfort in the moment; nearly two in ten (19%) confess they take longer breaks due to their pain. And 17 percent are apt to leave work early when discomfort strikes at the office.

- *Leaving work early (23% vs. 13%) to address discomfort is more common among workers ages 18-34 than those who are 35 and older.*

3

59% take breaks the moment they feel uncomfortable at work

19% take longer breaks because of discomfort at work



3

Unfortunate Obstacle. Clearly, a lot of time is wasted in the face of discomfort. More than half (52%) say they have difficulty doing their jobs at least once a month for this reason. On average, this lasts for **four hours** in each month.

- *Lost time due to discomfort has happened in the last month to more 18-34-year-olds than those who are 35+ (58% vs. 48%).*

5

No Support. Yet, close to four in ten (38%) report that not a single ergonomic item can be found at their current workstations. And over one in two (52%) say that outside of their chairs, ergonomic accessories are not present where they work.

Uncomfortable Items. What's more, fewer than one in three are able to say that their external keyboards (23%) or external mice (29%) are ergonomic, or designed to minimize discomfort or fatigue.

4

Which office accessories of yours are ergonomic?

50% Chair



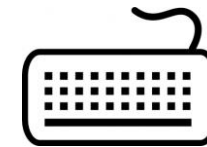
29% Mouse



23% Monitor



23% Keyboard



20% Desk



15% Computer



38% Nothing

ACHING ALONE

Many workers aren't getting the support they expect from their employers.

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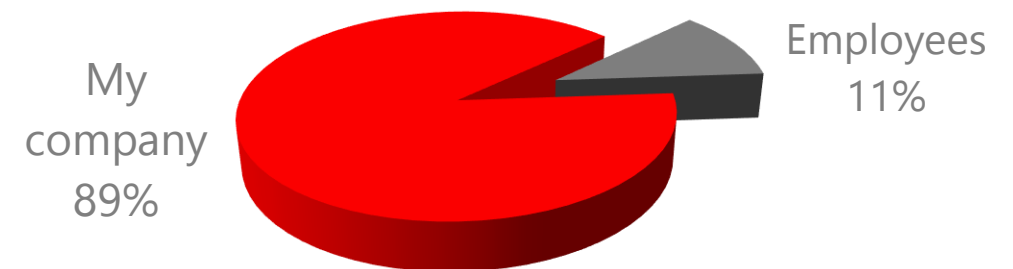
Regular Pain. Perhaps because of the obvious impact of discomfort on efficiency, almost nine in ten (89%) workers believe that their company should be responsible for addressing this issue when it appears, and not the workers themselves.

- *This belief is shared by more desktop users than laptop or tablet users (91% vs. 84%).*



2

Who is responsible for ensuring employee comfort?



3 **Not Enough Support.** But unfortunately, fewer than half of workers feel that the company they work for truly cares about the health (42%) or comfort (30%) of its employees.

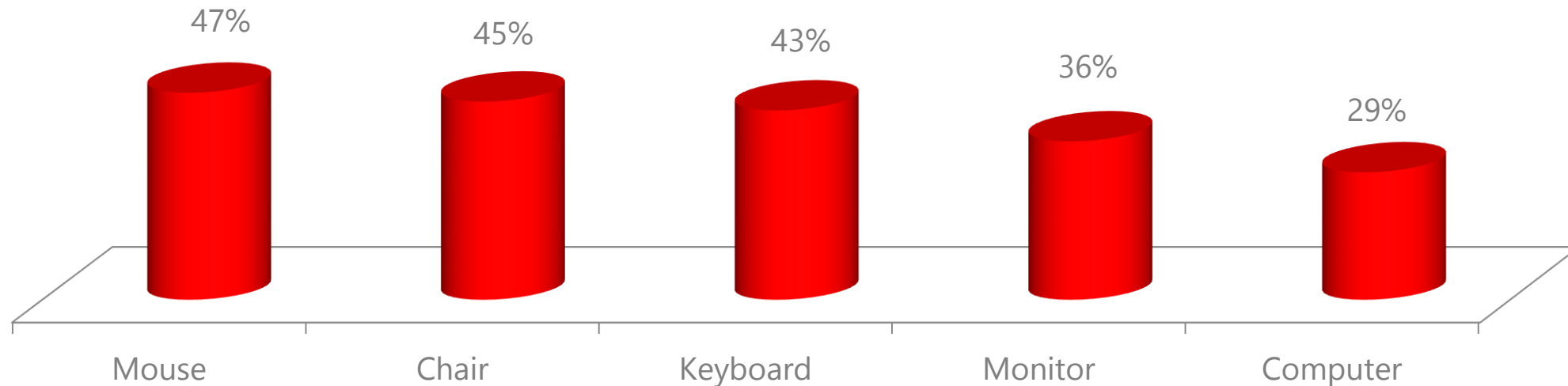
- Fewer employees ages 18-34 than those who are 35+ (37% vs. 46%) feel their employers worry about their health.

Not Enough Support. And more than two in five (44%) don't think this would change even when they encounter discomfort. They believe instead that they'd be the ones to suggest more comfortable office accessories, rather than any of the powers that be – including human resources and IT – or their colleagues.

4 **Unwilling to Ask.** Yet, a minority of workers would actually feel assertive enough to request new office accessories from their employers, such as a new mouse (47%), chair (45%), keyboard (43%) or monitor (36%).

Not Consulted. Many employees probably feel this way because the current items they use were simply handed to them. More than two in three report that their keyboards (68%) were selected for them and more than half had their mice (56%) chosen without their input.

5 **I would feel comfortable asking my employer for a new...**



SLOW TO ACT

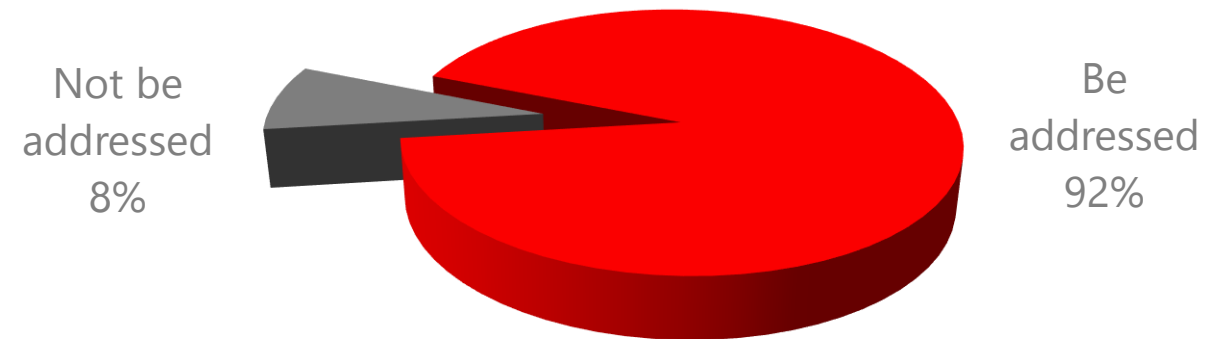
Though they're not always getting the care they want from the powers that be, few employees have taken their comfort into their own hands.

1

An Issue Worth Watching. Whether it's a normal occurrence or not, eight in ten (92%) workers who have experienced discomfort believe that it should be addressed. And 51 percent of this group sees workplace pain as a standard job hazard.

2

Discomfort at work should...*



*Among respondents who have experienced discomfort at work

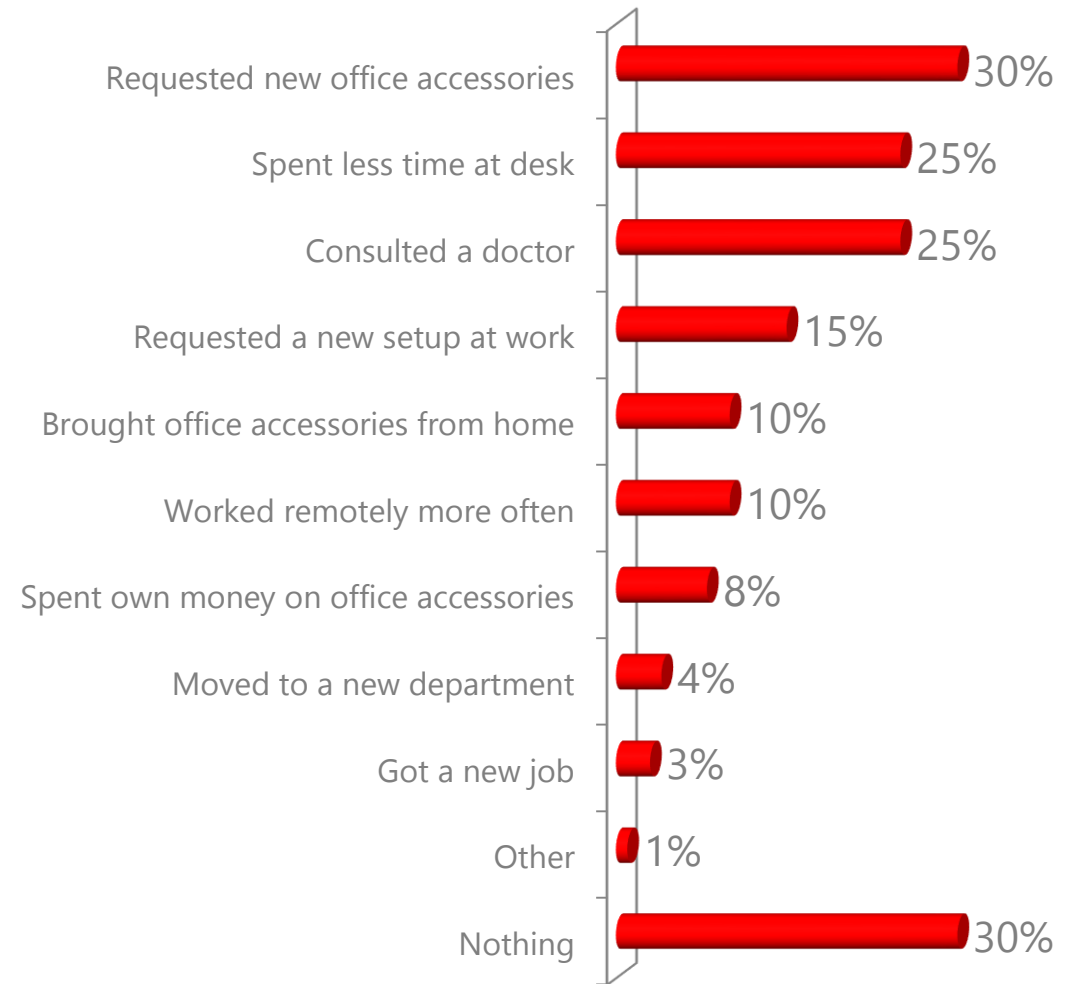
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A Reason to Take Action. More than one in two (65%) also claim that a bout of pain would motivate them to ask for more accommodating office accessories – more so than even a doctor’s recommendation (57%).



4

Actions taken to address long-term discomfort at work*



*Among respondents who have experienced discomfort at work

5

No Follow-Through. Yet, less than a third (30%) have requested new office accessories to address their long-term discomfort.

- Fewer men than women (23% vs. 35%) have taken this simple but important step.

Lack of Faith. Many of these workers might not be taking the initiative because they don’t think their need will be fulfilled in a timely manner. Less than one in five (16%) would describe their employers as a company that addresses employee requests quickly.

Margin of Error = +/- 4.3 Percent
Sample = 525 UK Workers Ages 18 and Over Who Spend at Least 3 Hours a Day on Their Computers for Work

About The Survey The Microsoft PC Accessories Survey was conducted between 11 July and 22 July, 2013 among 525 UK workers (full-time and part-time) ages 18 and over who spend at least 3 hours a day on their computers for work, using an email invitation and an online survey.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results.

In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 4.3 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample. The margin of error for any subgroups will be slightly higher.

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