

PA ENTERPRISE

DeskDemon's Magazine for Executive PAs, Office Managers and Secretaries

March 2018

Can't get to work due to bad weather – what are your rights?

Are you one of the UK's happiest workers?

Pointless meetings costing UK business billions

**Is a colleague trying to sabotage your career?
You are not alone**

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As an office worker, where do you go for information, advice, tutorials, vital tools, training and relaxation?

DeskDemon is the world's largest resource, information and community site for Administrative Professionals, Executive PAs, secretaries, Administrators and Office Managers. Providing essential information, resources, tips, tricks, tools, quick links, templates, editorial features and best practice on all the daily tasks the secretarial community perform – from travel, meetings, conferences and events to managing technology, office supplies, people and their careers.





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If the weather is bad can I refuse to go to work?

It may look beautiful but the heavy snow which recently affected large swathes of the UK made it tough for many people to get to work. So what are your rights if bad weather means you can't make it into work?



Do I still get paid?

In most cases you're not automatically entitled to pay if you are unable to get to work because of travel disruption or bad weather.

But that doesn't necessarily mean you will lose out.

If your employer normally provides your travel to work and this has been cancelled because

of the bad weather then you should still be paid, according to the employment advice and conciliation service Acas. Some jobs may also have a specific clause written into their contracts, or have a collective agreement in place, that an employer will pay you if you cannot get to work due to circumstances beyond your control. Some employers might also make discretionary, informal arrangements. For example, they may let

you work from home, or agree that you can make up the missed time at a later date. However, they are not obliged to do this.

Can my employer force me to take a day off as holiday?

Yes your employer can ask you to take a day of paid holiday but only if they give you sufficient warning.

The law states that you must be given a warning period of "at least" double the length of annual leave which you are being asked to take.

So, if your employer wants you to take one day's annual leave, for example, they would need to give you two days notice.



What if my workplace is closed?

In these circumstances, you are entitled to be paid.

In addition, your employer cannot require you to take the time as annual leave.

But don't rush out to make snow angels or have a snowball fight just yet. Your employer can still ask you to work from home, or ask you to go to another workplace that is open if the business has one, according to government advice website Gov.uk.

My child's school is closed due to snow, can I take the day off?

Employees have the right to take unpaid time off to deal with emergency situations for their children or other dependents.

Lawyers suggest that a school being shut at short notice is likely to be considered an emergency.

Strictly, the day would be unpaid but not all employers would take this approach.

Acas advises you talk to your employer as soon as you can to explain that you need to take time off and the likely length of the absence. It says one

option is that you jointly agree to take the day as annual leave so you do not miss out on pay.

My office is freezing - can I go home?

Not necessarily.

The Health and Safety Executive recommends a minimum temperature of 16C for offices where the work is deskbound and fairly sedentary. If the work requires physical effort, the minimum recommended temperature is 13C. These temperatures are not a legal requirement but your employer has a duty to provide a "reasonable" temperature in the workplace. But as anyone who's had a row over the office thermostat knows, what feels reasonable to one person may require another to wear their coat in the office. If low temperatures make it unsafe for workers, then Acas says you should be allowed to wear warmer clothing, take extra breaks to make hot drinks and also be allowed to bring in extra heating options such as portable heaters. However, if you are vulnerable in any way, for example are pregnant, then you may be sent home to protect your health, and this would usually be on full pay.

By Katie Hope, BBC News

Are you one of the UK's happiest workers?

Older male workers employed by microbusinesses within marketing, communications or advertising are happier at work than any other age group, according to new research. The average British worker rates their happiness as 6.8/10

A survey of 1,024 UK workers, by workplace incentives and rewards provider, One4all Rewards, and published in The 2018 Happiness Survey, surveyed employees from different age groups, genders and industries, asking them to score how happy they are in their current roles out of 10.

Interestingly, workers in one of the oldest age brackets - aged 55 and over - were happier than any other age group, scoring 6.91. Meanwhile, men rated their happiness at work higher than women (6.85 vs. 6.78).

The data revealed that the marketing, communications and advertising industry currently boasts the happiest employees – with

staff in this sector rating their happiness as a glowing 8.13 out of 10.

Interestingly, workers within the smallest of UK companies - micro businesses, employing less than four members of staff – reported being happier than those at companies of any other size.

While the average UK employee rates their morale at work as 6.81 out of 10, just 13% scored fewer than 5 out of 10 and in fact, almost 1 in 4 (22%) rated their happiness as 8 out of 10 –



suggesting, on the whole the British workforce is pretty positive about work.

Unsurprisingly, respondents felt it was the remuneration they receive for the work they do – such as salary and wages – that plays the most important (38%) role in their happiness.

But softer factors such as the relationships workers have with their colleagues (37%) and the nature of the work that they do (34%) followed in second and third place.

Alan Smith, UK Managing Director at One4all Rewards, said: "It is interesting to see how happiness levels vary between the different demographics. For example, those aged 55 and over are happier than any other age group - but interestingly they are also amongst the most likely to believe that the nature of the work they do plays the most key role in their morale at work – putting more emphasis on this than salary, bonuses, annual leave or anything more tangible.

"This is a factor for other age groups, but its only those aged 45 and over who prioritise this above salary. Clearly, the UK workforce recognises that money is not everything – but one size definitely doesn't fit all. In order to maintain or significantly improve morale, it is important for employers to take note of what drives the different kinds of individuals in their workforce."

Flexible working (29%) – such as the ability to work from home or leave early – and the

relationships they have with management (25%) completed the top five aspects that have the biggest impact on UK employees' happiness at work.

One4all Rewards are industry experts in benefits and rewards. Working with over 6,000 businesses of all sizes nationwide, One4all Rewards helps to transform customer and employee relationships through successful rewards and incentive schemes.

For more information and to read The 2018 Happiness Survey, www.one4allrewards.co.uk/categories/workplace-happiness-report-uk.html

Top 10 factors that play a key part in workers happiness

- 1 Salary or wages - 38%
- 2 Relationships with colleagues - 37%
- 3 The nature of the work – 34%
- 4 Flexible working – 29%
- 5 Relationships with management – 25%
- 6 The physical working environment – 21%
- 7 Annual leave allocation – 20%
- 8 The workload - 20%
- 9 Training opportunities – 18%
- 10 Financial based bonuses – 13%



Unnecessary meetings costing UK business more than £191bn a year

New research reveals office workers are spending more than 10 hours each week on meetings, with almost an entire working day spent on unnecessary meetings



UK office workers are spending almost an entire working day every week attending and preparing for unnecessary meetings, according to new research from meeting governance technology firm eShare out today.

The average office worker spends 10 hours 42 minutes every week, preparing for and attending 4.4 meetings, with 2.6 of those deemed unnecessary. With the average meeting revealed to have 6.8 attendees, this equates to annual staff costs for unnecessary meetings per business of £35,395.36, based on ONS average earnings data. With 5.4 million businesses in the UK, this means the total staff cost per year of unnecessary

meetings is more than £191bn.

“Even as an approximate figure, £191bn is an astonishing amount to be wasted in staff costs, time and resource that could clearly be much better spent elsewhere,” said Alister Esam, CEO, eShare. “The template for smarter meetings must start at the top – board level meetings must be efficient, essential and better managed, so that meetings elsewhere can follow that lead.”

The research also revealed that 70% of office workers believe there are too many meetings in a working week, with 24% saying that often the same results could be achieved with a few quick emails. 81% say meetings need a 21st century makeover, with 83% saying the meeting process has not changed since they first entered the workplace. It is this lack of modernisation that has resulted in such meeting inefficiency, according to eShare CEO, Alister Esam:

“We’ve all been in meetings that took scores of emails to confirm, that have a paper agenda, where people can’t recall exactly what the previous actions were and with meeting materials that have been amended at the last minute – these problems could all be addressed by a more digital approach. It’s a waste of money and resource and is hugely frustrating for all concerned. Addressing such inefficiencies



could be the biggest single boost to productivity in UK business, whilst also improving areas such as governance and transparency, especially at board level.”

79% of respondents say they could get much more work done with fewer inefficient meetings, and 45% believe that meetings prevent them from actually getting on with their job. The lack of digitisation around business meetings was highlighted by 52% saying they still receive a printed agenda and materials for most meetings, despite the ubiquity of smartphones and tablets. 59% say that after most meetings they just throw away the agenda and printed materials.

“Whether it’s board meetings in a major corporation, SME all-company meetings or departmental catch-ups, meetings are an essential element of business,” said Alister Esam. “Yet most of us would agree that many meetings are inefficient and ineffective, and can be managed far better than they are currently. Throwing meeting materials away for example, is potentially a major security concern, and all aspects of meetings need to be dragged into the 21st century. The benefits of doing so will be felt in boardrooms all over the UK.”

In other research, Deliveroo for Business polled 2,000 full time employees found a quarter of adults dread one to one sessions with their boss about their progress, 26% hate awkward catch-up lunches with clients and 17% said they loathe annual general meetings.

Of those polled, 17% claim they have completely clammed-up in a meeting, 26% said they have not listened to one word that was said and 27% said they spent the duration of the meeting thinking about what they were going to have for dinner.

Almost one in ten pass the time by flirting with colleagues over the meeting table, while 20% admit they text their other half to get through the boredom.

Rising stress levels demand greater focus on workplace efficiency

A new survey brings to light the attitudes of employees across Europe, sparking concern for business leaders. It shows that 33% of UK workers have gone as far as looking for a new job due to frustrations around operational efficiency.



and ultimately businesses. Nearly a third (29%) of UK workers say that they have become disengaged due to inefficiencies at work. Of those who were feeling most stressed, 66% said that over the last two years they've seen increased expectations around the speed at which they must deliver work. Added to that, 59% of all UK workers said that their workload had gone up since 2016, with a negative impact on stress levels (69% said it had increased).

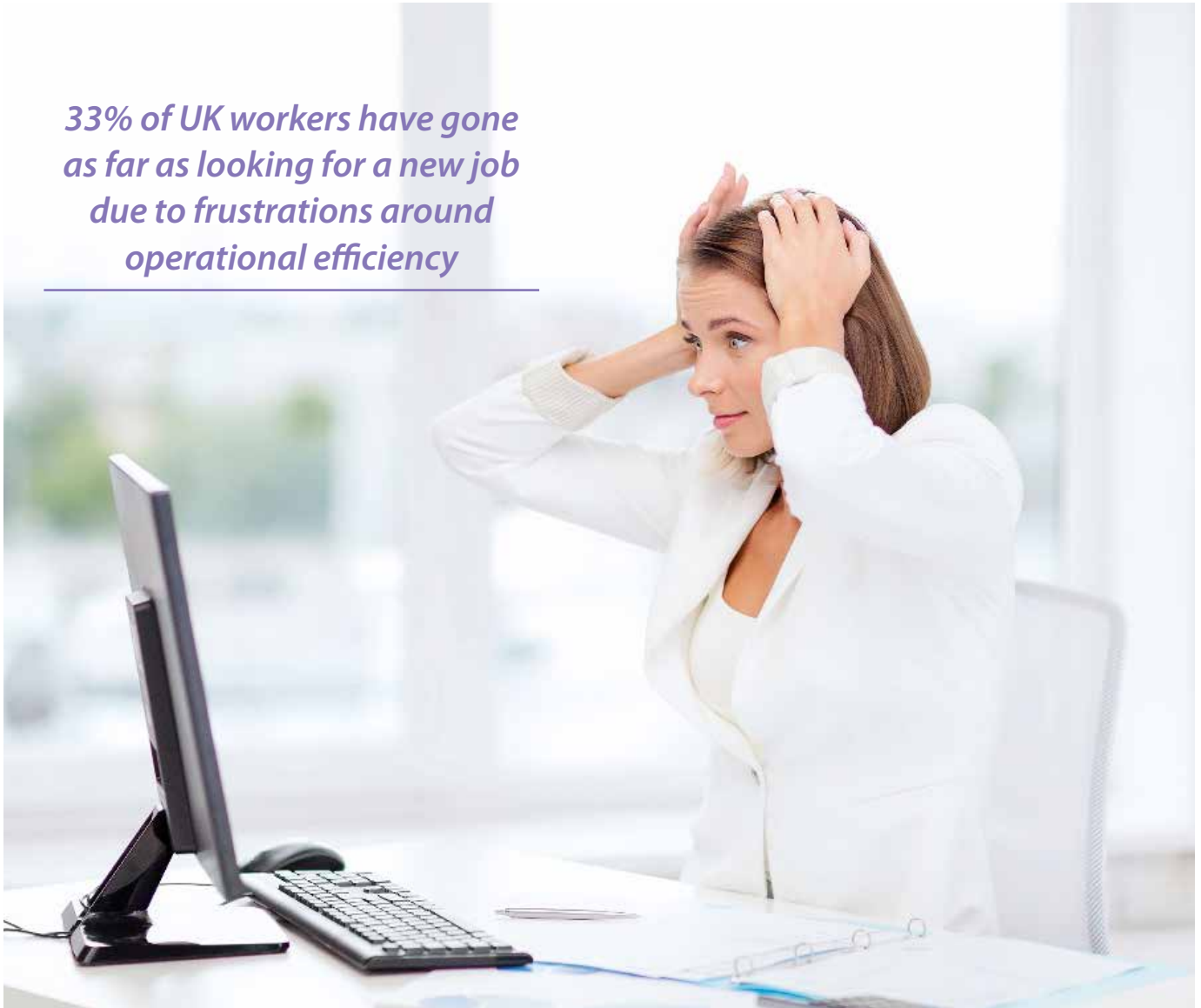
The Digital Work Survey 2018 was commissioned by the work management platform company, Wrike, and surveyed 3,000 workers from across the UK, France and Germany. The findings highlight frustrations over inefficiencies at work and the worrying impact this is having on how engaged, productive and happy employees are in their roles.

Wrike wanted to understand the knock-on effect of operational inefficiencies on workers,

With an ever-increasing workload and a seemingly endless desire to have worked completed 'yesterday', what are the reasons UK workers are citing for their frustrations? They include:

- **No clear direction on projects or tasks (31%)**
- **Using slow or outdated technology (38%)**
- **The company's way of working demonstrates outdated thinking (39%)**

33% of UK workers have gone as far as looking for a new job due to frustrations around operational efficiency



- **New processes and changes to processes spark anxiety (34%)**
- **For those who are already stressed, lengthy approval cycles are a key frustration (45%)**

In addition to these functional frustrations, 50% of the most stressed UK workers said that they felt undervalued by their boss, despite the fact that 67% of them are doing more hours in the office, 46% are working more on weekends and 56% are taking fewer breaks. 47% of the most stressed respondents believed, given the opportunity, they could do a better job than their managers.

Andrew Filev, founder and CEO of Wrike comments: "Demands on businesses to offer

top-rate services or products, personalised to individual requirements, and delivered in real-time are the reality of today's business environment. It's down to leadership within companies to figure out how to keep up with these demands without burning their employees out. We need to find solutions that are relevant to today's market, with new processes that suit customer demands, and use the powerful technology available to us."

Of UK workers who've admitted to looking for another job, 81% also experienced rising stress levels (this figure was 77% in France and 76% in Germany) suggesting there is clearly an emerging issue that needs addressing urgently.

Employee recognition: time for a change

When it comes to recognition, a picture says a thousand words – OneHub Recognition to transform the meaning of being recognised



Goodbye, carriage clocks, annual voucher-giving, and clunky experiences: OneHub Recognition is changing the way people can express their appreciation at work. Benefex have launched a brand-new social app which allows colleagues to give each other immediate thanks, wherever they are, whatever they're working on.

Many organisations have found they're being held back by outdated technologies which lead to them being reactive rather than proactive to employee wants and needs. Benefex's OneHub platform delivers exceptional employee experiences for over a million employees, worldwide. Now, with the launch of Recognition, employers will be able to embrace truly social

recognition that reinforces culture and values, anywhere around the globe.

Matt Macri-Waller, Founder and CEO of Benefex says "We have had huge demand from our clients to innovate and transform the recognition market. When we looked at the existing solution in the middle of last year, we realised that there was a significant gap emerging for a truly consumer-grade, social experience for employees. With OneHub Recognition, organisations can now build social media into the core of their employee experience."

Employee frustrations within the workplace are too often derived from using legacy technology which slows down day-to-day processes,



meaning employees' outputs don't mirror their potential. Like social applications outside of work, the new product enables users to send immediate, personalised social recognitions using video, photos and memes, all directly from the OneHub app. Developed with Benefex's clients and partners, this is the first step in their plan to re-write organisations' expectations of a recognition product.

Matt Nathanielsz, Product Manager for Recognition, says "We wanted to create a product that was flexible and able to align with any company's culture and values. OneHub Recognition's capabilities mean that every user gets an experience that's joined up with all other aspects of their time at work. The platform is built around delivering a great employee experience, and its effortless usability matches the way in which OneHub delivers employee reward and benefits, wellbeing programmes and education. Being recognised for day-to-day achievements is a key component of the employee experience, and so we've built OneHub Recognition to slot in perfectly with any organisation's offering."

Macri-Waller continues "Performance in our beta trials has been simply astonishing, with daily active users and employee engagement both well over 75%, the new way of recognising employees leverages social media in way not seen in the market before. So many recognition applications have become crowded with features which have accumulated over years, but no one really remembers why they're there, and employees are negatively impacted by that experience. Our goal with OneHub Recognition was to enable employers to deliver a recognition experience that makes everyone feel like they belong. We also have a few more tricks up our sleeve but you'll have to get in touch to see those!"

To get hands-on with OneHub Recognition, visit www.benefex.co.uk/book-a-demo



come to blows with colleagues because they both wanted to book the same holiday and 13% fell out with team mates as they were going for the same position.

But 23% refuse to be intimidated and said they have tried to get their own back by setting a colleague up for a fall.

A whopping 70% of those studied said they have colleagues they don't trust, with seven% claiming to distrust every single person they work with.

And a cynical 58% reckon most companies are riddled with office politics and back stabbing.

Seven in ten of those polled said they strongly believe in the old saying 'Keep your friends close and enemies closer' and 19% said they don't count any of their colleagues as friends.

In fact, the average Brit moans about another colleague at least four times a day and 22% have been pulled aside by their boss due to their prickly relationship with one of their team mates.

Of those studied, 69% said constant battles with their colleagues wore them down, but a pushy 31% said rivalry in the office was a good thing as it made you more competitive and successful.



Four in ten Brits are currently locked in a bitter power struggle with a work colleague or their boss, according to new research.

Health and fitness in bite-sized chunks

A small group of fitness pros and business owners are launching a new concept in health and fitness to get everyone more active, even if they are complete novices. New website launch shows how to keep fit and healthy starting with 5 minutes a day.

Keep Fit Eat Fit Ltd is a new website that has been nearly 2 years in the making, and it offers a unique membership model providing video based exercise routines to people of all levels, including complete beginners and those who don't have access to gyms.

As well as the paid fitness memberships, all visitors to the website have access to a constantly expanding library of healthy cooking shows and recipes, as well as a wealth of written information which informs people about all aspects of health and fitness. There is also an online shop selling a range of high quality food products, branded clothing and environmentally friendly vacuum water bottles.

This website was conceived after the founders realised that huge amounts of people spend



large chunks of their life sitting down, and not doing any exercise at all – or the frequency is so random due to their busy lifestyles that it has no sustained benefit.

They also realised that there is a limited supply of high quality websites offering information in an easily digestible form, and decided that production values were key in order to clearly show people what to do, how to perform exercise properly, and to encourage people to get involved with healthy eating. To this end, the partners have set up their own film and photographic studio which they have built for the

, in the office

, at home

, in the kitchen

, at the park





like, so could piece together a longer workout if they have time and want to up the pace.

Another exciting option is the 'For Mums' module, which operates on a similar principle, with exercises specifically for pre and post-natal mums. The pre-natal membership is completely free of charge, and the post-natal one offers 10-minute videos 3 times a week in a similar way to the 'For Fitness' module, but with specific exercises tailored to post-natal mums.

Other modules are in development and will follow later in the year.

purpose of content creation, as well as hiring to external clients.

Angela Knox, Marketing and Commercial Director of Keep Fit Eat Fit Ltd, said: "There is a massive problem in both the UK and internationally when it comes to real accessibility of practical information on health and fitness, especially for people who haven't got into the exercise habit or learned how to cook healthily. We think we are really plugging this gap and helping people to change their lives in a cost-effective and straightforward way."

The main module within the fitness area of the website, 'For Fitness' offers a membership plan which consists of 3 videos a week being delivered to the member, with a reminder emailed to them to go to their portal to view the videos and carry out the exercises. All the videos are demonstrated by professional fitness trainers who are specialists in their field.

The exercises in this module can be done anywhere, with no equipment – so if you are at your desk, at the kitchen sink, in the park, or waiting for a bus, you can practise all the movements and increase your fitness. There are 3 options with this membership – 5 minutes a day, 10 minutes a day, and 15 minutes a day. And members can repeat the videos as often as they

The cooking show videos demonstrate a range of quick and healthy recipes which are free to view, and also allow people to purchase some of the products which are available in our shop. These are provided by Ritter Courivaud Ltd, a company with a royal warrant, who are a high class provider of fine foods and ingredients from across Europe which are usually only available to trade customers.

There is also a corporate option which allows companies to provide memberships for their staff – either funded by the company itself or their employees, however it is a great perk for the HR manager or company owner to offer given the need for corporate responsibility for the welfare of employees, and the need for offering something extra to their staff which differentiates them from other employers.

Women who are 'apple-shaped' at higher risk of heart attacks than those who are 'pear-shaped'

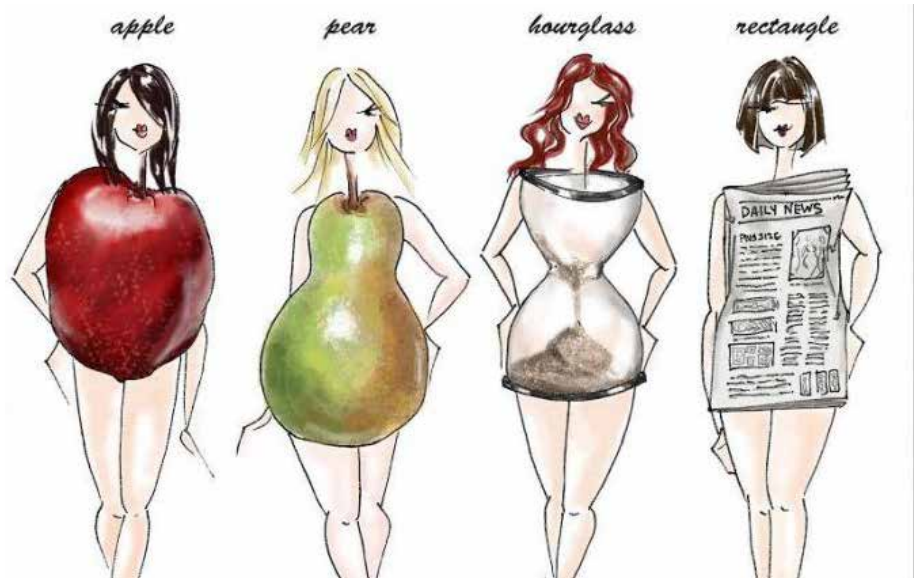
Higher waist and hip size are more strongly associated with heart attack risk than overall obesity, especially among women, according to new research.

Researchers at the University of Oxford found that those who carried fat on their waists were more at risk than those who carried it on their hips.

The waist-to-hip ratio was also a better indicator of the likelihood of a heart attack than a person's body mass index (BMI), they said.

In a study of nearly 500,000 adults aged 40-69 from the UK, researchers found that while general obesity and obesity specifically around the abdomen each have profound harmful effects on heart attack risk in both sexes, women are at greater risk from a higher waist circumference and waist-to-hip ratio than men.

Dr Sanne Peters, who led the study, said: "Our



findings show that looking at how fat tissue is distributed in the body – especially in women – can give us more insight into the risk of heart attack than measures of general obesity.

"Our findings also suggest that differences in the



“Having proportionally more fat around the abdomen (a characteristic of the apple shape) appears to be more hazardous than more visceral fat which is generally stored around the hips (the pear shape).”

Dr Sanne Peters, University of Oxford

way women and men store fat may affect their risk of heart disease.

“Understanding the role sex differences in body fat distribution play in future health problems could lead to sex-specific public-health interventions that could address the global obesity epidemic more effectively.”

According to the study, the waist-to-hip ratio was an 18% stronger predictor of heart attack than BMI in women, and a 6% stronger predictor of heart attack in men.

“We need further research to try to disentangle the different ways women and men store body fat and understand how, and why, this is linked to different health risks,” added Dr Peters.

Latest figures from the Office for National Statistics and NHS Digital show that 58% of women and 68% of men are overweight or obese.

Obesity prevalence increased from 15% in 1993 to 27% in 2015 leading to a corresponding rise in disease such as diabetes and other weight-related conditions. Obese people are also at higher risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and certain cancers.

The research team said further studies on sex differences in obesity could lead to sex-specific interventions to treat and halt the obesity epidemic.

The study, which involved data from nearly 500,000 men and women, has been published in the Journal of the American Heart Association.