‘Premature’ to lift WFH policy

Employees raise concern as country has not yet achieved herd immunity

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PETALING JAYA: Employees in the private sector have voiced concerns over the government’s move to revoke the 30% work from home (WFH) policy for management staff just as new workplace clusters are being reported every day.

Though some are opposed to the idea, others are more accepting of it but want measures in place to further curb Covid-19 infections.

An executive in the finance sector, who only wanted to be known as Rina, said it was premature for the government to revoke the WFH policy, especially when the country has not yet achieved herd immunity against Covid-19.

“If people can work from home, why must the policy be lifted?” she said.

Rina further questioned the move, saying that complaints seem to be heard loudest from the manufacturing sector, which she believes also has the most workplace clusters and suggested that the policy be implemented in a more targeted manner.

“If a certain sector is seen as the most problematic, then more governance and stricter methods of management should be applied there,” she said.

Meanwhile, accounts director Jasmine Hau is more welcoming of the move, "provided that companies are responsible in imposing standard operating procedure including physical distancing".

“I am looking forward to going back to the office but I don’t think I can do it yet, I am not sure if it is a good idea,” she said.

Hau further explained that the move could be better to gradually increase the number of people back in the office, she said.

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The sector said the policy posed difficulties as operations, especially those that are complex and technical, could not be done remotely and require the presence of different teams comprising management and supervisory staff.

The 30% WFH policy for industries under the International Trade and Industry Ministry, imposed in October last year, will be lifted from today.

The Health Ministry reported on Tuesday that there were 369 active clusters including nine new ones, five of which were linked to the workplace.

Meanwhile, Cuesacs (Congress of Union of Employees in the Public and Civil Service) urged employers in the private sector not to be too hasty in recalling their employees back to the office after the 30% WFH policy has been lifted.

“Many employees may be too anxious and hesitant to return to the office as they have been working from home for more than a year,” said Adnan‘.

He also said a well-managed workforce would not affect service delivery in the public sector, even if a fraction of them work from home.

Adnan added that for the WFH policy in the civil service to continue until Covid-19 no longer poses a health threat.

“We cannot afford to take risks, seeing that many have yet to be vaccinated,” he said.