

'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'm looking forward to going back to the office but I don't think totally cancelling the 30% WFH policy is a good idea for now.

"Maybe it would be better to gradually increase the number of people back in the office," said Hau, who works in communications.

However, regardless of the government's policy, Hau said the onus ultimately was on workers to be responsible for following the SOP while they were at work.

On Tuesday, Senior Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob announced that the WFH policy on management staff would be cancelled to accommodate the manufacturing sector.

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, Cuepacs (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.

"They must always remember to comply with SOP as we have seen how non-compliance has led to the increase in workplace clusters," its president Adnan Mat said, adding that the same rules should apply to the civil service.

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 called 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.