



CIPD

*Championing better
work and working lives*

SURVEY REPORT | *June 2020*

Working Lives Scotland

The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The registered charity champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has more than 150,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

Survey report

Working Lives Scotland

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1 Foreword

As we face up to another recession, governments and employers are already working hard to avoid redundancies. Recently, the UK Government announced that it will extend its furlough scheme to protect jobs during the COVID-19 lockdown and make it more flexible. These changes will give businesses the breathing space they need to bring people back to work gradually, yet they are clearly not the end of the story. Just as the pandemic and its ramifications have developed rapidly, we will surely see further change and a need for new responses.

Job creation and protecting jobs from redundancy are crucial, but it is not enough to look at the bare numbers of people in work. Now as much as at any time, government, employers, the HR profession, trade unions and other actors also need to understand the quality of the jobs people do and, where necessary, find ways to improve them. As the Taylor Review called out in 2017, '*All work in the UK economy should be fair and decent with realistic scope for development and fulfilment.*'¹

Job quality lies at the heart of the CIPD's purpose, which we summarise as *championing better work and working lives*. It matters directly for the wellbeing of individuals and society, and we firmly believe it is a lifeblood of productive organisations and a strong economy.

Working Lives Scotland is our first dedicated report on job quality in Scotland. It presents findings from the third *UK Working Lives* survey, which for the first time included a boosted representative sample of Scottish workers. Conducted just before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, it gives a rich picture of how the jobs market looked up to then. Already we are monitoring changes since then with further surveys, which will be published periodically.



The report analyses employment essentials, the day-to-day experienced realities of work and the impacts on people's lives. It is written around the five fair work dimensions as conceptualised by the Fair Work Convention in Scotland: respect, security, opportunity, fulfilment and effective voice.

Work can and should be a force for good for all. The *Working Lives Scotland* report is a valuable tool for understanding the current state of play and prioritising areas for improvement.

Peter Cheese, CEO CIPD

2 Key findings

Working Lives Scotland (WLS) adapts the CIPD Good Work Index to fit the Scottish Fair Work Framework. The survey seeks to provide a snapshot of job quality across Scotland – in a pre-COVID-19 world – to help shape the debate over possible public policy interventions and improved practice.

The results suggest that job quality is not universal and there are both inequalities and trade-offs between elements of it. For example, while salary levels are a good indicator of job satisfaction, some of the better-paid occupational classes identify poorer work-life balance. The survey also identifies occupations with a higher incidence of poor mental health and others with poor physical health impacts – sometimes both. It also highlights differences in job quality elements by gender, age and disability.

Respect

- 30% of employees feel their work impacts negatively on their mental health, with 25% reporting negative impacts on their physical health.
- A worrying 55% of employees reported going to work despite not feeling well enough.
- There is good correlation between flexible work and job satisfaction.

Security

- Data shows correlation between life satisfaction and pay levels and (to a slightly weaker extent) job satisfaction and pay levels.
- We find a correlation between job security and salary bands, with those on higher salaries reporting higher levels of job security.
- 64% of employees are reporting some levels of overwork, with 15% of employees saying they work 15+ more hours than they would like to.

Opportunity

- Only 29% of employees believe their job offers good prospects for career advancement, while 52% believe their job offers good opportunities to develop their skills.
- Both personal and career development opportunities differ (often significantly) by gender, age, sector and occupational class.
- We find higher levels of presenteeism (working when not fully fit) amongst employees with disabilities.

Fulfilment

- 34% of all employees report their workload as too high in a normal week. This is worse across some industries, but not substantially different across salary bands.
- Employees in better-paid jobs report higher levels of job autonomy.
- Employees in the public sector are more likely to feel they are in meaningful jobs, compared with private sector employees, and there is a strong correlation between job satisfaction and meaningful work.

Effective voice

- 19% of employees say they have no voice channel at work at all.
- We find a significant difference in managerial openness to responding to employee suggestions, with the public sector comparing unfavourably with the private sector in this regard.
- Our findings suggest that while larger employers are more likely to put in place formal voice arrangements, they perform poorly in responding to feedback.

3 Introduction

Job quality is at the heart of the CIPD's purpose to champion better work and working lives. We believe that good work is fundamental to individual wellbeing, supports a fair society and creates motivated workers, productive organisations and a strong economy. Policy-makers, employers and people professionals across Scotland need to act if they are to improve job quality for the whole of the workforce – not only aiming for more jobs, but better jobs. This report aims to support them in this work.

Background to the survey

This is the first iteration of the *Working Lives Scotland* report, which builds on work carried out by the CIPD over the last few years through our Good Work Index, which uses the *UK Working Lives* (UKWL) survey to present annual measures for seven dimensions of job quality. As far as we can tell, this is the first survey of its kind in Scotland, despite the fact that the Scottish Government has been leading the way on the job quality agenda UK-wide for years.

The purpose of this report is to provide a snapshot of job quality in Scotland. Through analysis of our own survey data, we are able to look at and cover issues ranging from health and wellbeing of the workforce, through to the availability of flexible work, and skills and career development opportunities. Where we can, we highlight statistically significant differences in gender, age or sector and occupational class.²

Unlike the CIPD's *Good Work Index*, the *Working Lives Scotland* report is based around the five fair work dimensions as conceptualised by the Fair Work Convention in 2016. Each main chapter is dedicated to one dimension, with analysis of survey questions to provide insight into the relevant aspects of fair work.

Our goal in releasing this report is that it can be used as a basis for recommendations for both practitioners and public policy-makers. We hope the evidence presented here is used to drive fair work practices throughout Scotland's labour market.

Survey design

In 2017, the CIPD embarked on a project to review the research on job quality and develop a tool to measure the main dimensions of job quality. To this end, it commissioned two reviews: first, from the perspectives of workers, on what constitutes good or poor job quality in addition to the opportunities and pitfalls in measuring it; and second, on the capacity workers have, to influence their job quality and the shifting balance of power between employers and employees. This survey is based on this body of work and further consultation with academics, HR experts and government officials.

The 2020 *UK Working Lives* survey (UKWL) drew on the same YouGov UK panel of approximately 1 million adults in work as the first survey in 2018 and gave a sample of 6,681 workers. This year, for the first time, we have boosted the sample in Scotland to allow a dedicated report to be written for Scotland. This expanded Scottish sample size was 1,078 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 8 January and 4 February 2020 and the figures have been weighted and are representative of all Scottish working adults (aged 18+).

Since this is the first time we have boosted the sample in Scotland, the report does not contain trend data. It is our intention to conduct the survey with a boosted sample regularly, and as a result, we will be able to draw out trends in future iterations of *Working Lives Scotland*.

The survey was conducted before the COVID-19 outbreak, which is set to have a significant impact on the world of work for months, if not years, to come. The findings in this report are interesting in their own right, but it will be fascinating to compare this year's results with next year's to better understand the ways a pandemic can affect job quality.

Good work and fair work

Job quality has become an increasingly important area of public policy in the UK, especially following Matthew Taylor's *Review of Modern Working Practices* published in 2017. Since its publication, numerous initiatives have been launched across the UK, seeking to improve job quality among businesses, including the Good Work Standard in London and the Good Employment Charter in Manchester.

However, it is Scotland that has been at the forefront of this debate. The Scottish Government set up the Fair Work Convention – bringing academics, business and union leaders together – as far back as 2015. Its Fair Work Framework was published a year later and has served as the basis for policy-making since then. Most recently, the Scottish Government has begun implementing Fair Work First, which ties fair work principles to financial assistance from the Government where possible.

This report remoulds the CIPD's seven dimensions of job quality or 'good work' into Scotland's five fair work dimensions. The two frameworks have a good degree in common, and the differences between them are not insurmountable. Both build on a significant body of research and differ primarily in emphasis rather than substance.

In the CIPD's view, good work:

- is fairly rewarded
- gives people the means to securely make a living
- gives opportunities to develop skills and a career and ideally gives a sense of fulfilment
- provides a supportive environment with constructive relationships
- allows for work-life balance
- is physically and mentally healthy
- gives employees the voice and choice they need to shape their working lives
- should be accessible to all.

The survey we are analysing in this report has been developed with this perspective in mind. It analyses both objective and subjective measures as well as universal and relative aspects of work. This is important, because job quality is not static – what works for some employees will be anathema to others.

Objective measures look at things that should be unbiased, for example, how much people earn or types of contract. Subjective measures, on the other hand, include things that reflect opinions or feelings – meaningful work, job satisfaction or quality of relationships. In addition, we also look at measures that are universal and will improve job quality for anyone (for example health), but also at aspects that are relative and will differ between employees (for example part-time employment). To get an accurate picture of job quality we need to look at all of these in the round.

Table 1: The CIPD's seven dimensions of job quality

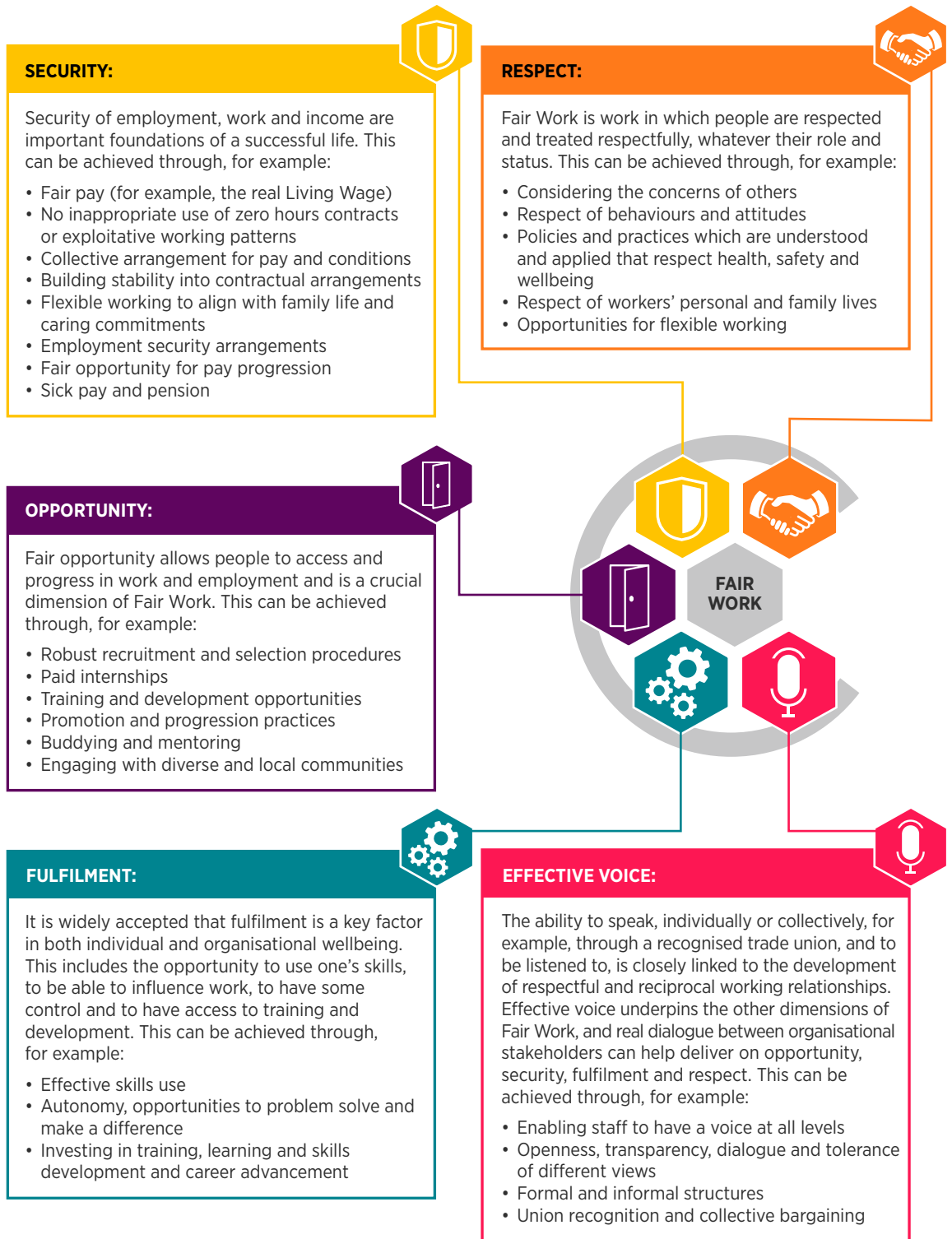
Dimensions	Areas included
1 Pay and benefits	Pay as a percentile and in relation to the Living Wage, subjective feelings regarding pay, employer pension contributions and other employee benefits.
2 Contracts	The terms of employment. Contract type, underemployment and job security.
3 Work-life balance	Overwork, commuting time, how much work encroaches on personal life and vice versa, and HR provision for flexible working.
4 Job design and nature of work	Workload or work intensity, autonomy or how empowered people are in their jobs, how well resourced they are to carry out their work, job complexity and how well this matches the person's skills and qualifications, how meaningful people find their work, and development opportunities provided.
5 Relationships at work	Social support and cohesion. The quality of relationships at work, psychological safety and the quality of people management.
6 Voice and representation	Channels for feeding views to senior management, cultural norms on voice and satisfaction with the opportunities for voice.
7 Health and wellbeing	Positive and negative impacts of work on physical and mental health. Often considered as an outcome of job quality.

The Fair Work Convention conceptualised job quality on academic research pulled together primarily by the [Scottish Centre for Employment Research](#), University of Strathclyde. The Convention defined fair work through five dimensions: effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect. The dimensions cover a broad range of issues – from how employees are treated at work, to pay and conditions, and whether they can have their voice heard and influence change.

Every single one of the CIPD's good work dimensions can be found in some form across the Fair Work Convention's framework too. *Pay and benefits* and *Contracts* are both key parts of the **Security** dimension in fair work. *Health and wellbeing*, *Relationships at work* and *Work-life balance* are all incorporated in the **Respect** dimension. *Job design and the nature of work* is a key part of the **Fulfilment** dimension, with *Employee voice* directly translatable to **Effective voice**. The survey also includes questions around career and skills development opportunities, which sit at the heart of the **Opportunity** dimension. In addition, some of the findings suggest that aspects of job quality aren't being distributed equally and some of us face tougher barriers.

Ultimately, it does not matter whether we refer to good work, better employment, fair work or any other variation of the concept. What matters is that there is an increasing body of research on job quality that provides policy-makers and practitioners with evidence on what works, what can be done better and how boosting job quality benefits employees and employers alike. We hope this report can be a useful contribution to this debate in Scotland.

Figure 1: Summary of the Fair Work Framework



Source: from the Scottish Government's [Best Practice Guidance on Addressing Fair Work Practices, including the Real Living Wage, in Procurement](#)

The labour market in Scotland and current context

COVID-19 poses the greatest economic challenge the world has faced in decades. As the unwinding of restrictions begins over the remainder of this summer, and the restarting of the economy begins, there are going to be big challenges in the labour market through the rest of 2020 and beyond.

Many people have been supported to remain attached to their employers through the COVID-19 lockdown as a result of the UK Government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). However, with the CJRS winding down through the rest of this year, firms will be making difficult decisions about what their future labour force needs are. This is going to be a period of great challenge for those who lose their jobs. Unemployment is going to rise sharply in the near future, with most scenarios suggesting that the unemployment rate will rise above 10%, and new opportunities will be scarce for a period.

We know that even relatively short periods out of work can have long-lasting consequences for individual careers, particularly for younger workers. This is one reason why it is so important that we see new initiatives to support people to get back into work, whether that be through retraining, upskilling or addressing the wider social challenges that individuals will be facing, not least in childcare.

For those kept on by their employers, the outlook is challenging too. Emerging from the financial crisis a little over a decade ago, we saw a series of changes in the labour market. Most notably an increase in self-employment (some of which was low-earning and precarious), but also a rise in fragile working arrangements (for example via zero-hour contracts) and in underemployment. For those in work, hours-based underemployment has receded from its high of 10% in 2012 closer to 7%, but nearly 70,000 people in Scotland remain on zero-hour contracts. While growth in self-employment tailed off in recent years, there were still 60,000 more people in Scotland self-employed in 2019 than in 2008.

In the months ahead, we will likely see a re-emergence, at least on a temporary basis, of more short-term and less secure forms of work and a rise in underemployment. Individuals may also be drawn into low-paid forms of self-employment. Firms unsure of their immediate and future business prospects – and absent a vaccine there will be continued uncertainty about another lockdown – will be hesitant to provide permanent opportunities. Businesses will also be adapting to new guidance on workplace safety and developing new working practices – again, this is likely to make them cautious about creating new permanent employment opportunities in the short term.

With much higher rates of unemployment than we have seen in recent times, individuals are likely to grasp even temporary employment opportunities to prevent gaps in their CVs and help make ends meet. While offers of employment in the immediate period ahead may be shorter term, it is important that these are nevertheless quality employment opportunities.

Looking ahead over the next year or more, much greater support from the Government will be required for workers looking to transition jobs, and indeed careers, as we see the mothballing of whole sectors of the economy through 2020, and the acceleration of longer-term declines in other sectors. While this is undoubtedly a challenging period, there is a real opportunity for government to work in partnership with businesses to drive improvements in job quality and fair work.

Professor Graeme Roy
Director of the Fraser of Allander Institute



4 Respect

The first fair work dimension we look at is **Respect**. This dimension includes crucial job quality aspects like health and wellbeing at work, interpersonal relationships and relationships with managers. It also looks at issues in relation to work-life balance. The Fair Work Framework stipulates that *'respect at work comprises respect for the person, in terms of health, safety and wellbeing; respectful treatment in interpersonal relations; respect for family life, in terms of work-life balance; an appreciation of rights in relation to conflict resolution and due process; and respect for a person's value and contribution'*.³

Key findings

- 57% of employees experienced a health-related physical condition, while 52% reported experiencing a non-physical one.
- 30% of employees feel their work impacts negatively on their mental health, with 25% reporting negative impacts on their physical health.
- For the most common reported non-physical conditions (sleep problems, anxiety and depression), the majority of employees said their job was a contributory factor.
- A worrying 55% of employees reported going to work despite not feeling well enough.
- There is good correlation between flexible work and job satisfaction.

Work and its impact on mental and physical health

The importance of good mental and physical health goes beyond individual wellbeing. There is a clear relationship between poor health and work engagement and job satisfaction – for example, the CIPD's previous *UK Working Lives* reports have shown health and wellbeing as having the strongest relationship with job satisfaction and job enthusiasm out of all job quality dimensions. In addition, research also shows that poor wellbeing increases healthcare costs. For instance, the Thriving at Work report commissioned by Theresa May shows that 300,000 people with long-term mental health problems drop out of the labour force each year, costing the UK economy between £74 billion and £99 billion – £9 billion for Scotland on a pro rata basis.

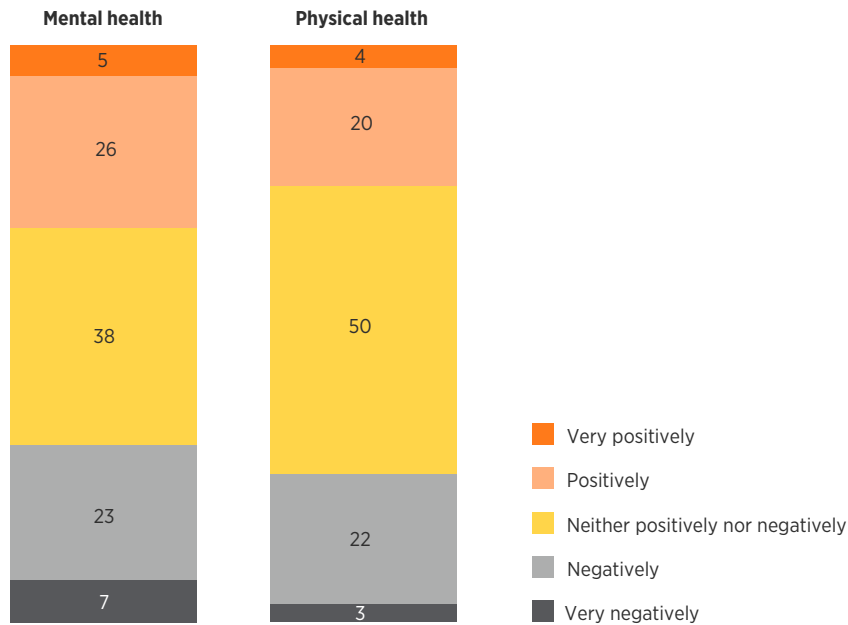
Our survey asked employees a raft of questions about physical and mental health. It asked individuals whether they had experienced health problems, such as backache or other bone, joint or muscle problems. This also encompassed problems relating to breathing, the heart, hearing, the skin, as well as road traffic accidents during commuting, injury due to work accidents and repetitive strain injury. In addition, it asked about the level of exhaustion at work and whether workers thought their work had a positive or negative impact on their physical health. With respect to mental health, individuals were asked whether they felt miserable, stressed, anxious or depressed as a result of their work.

The survey also asked people to describe their current physical and mental health, and to state whether their work affects these positively or negatively. These two overarching questions were particularly revealing. Sixty-one percent of employees describe their mental and physical health as good, whereas 16% of employees describe their mental health as poor, with 15% describing their physical health as poor.

As for how work impacts on health, the survey found 30% of employees believe their work impacts negatively or very negatively on their mental health, with 25% reporting the same for their physical health. Our [UK-wide survey](#) shows that this has been worsening over recent years. As expected, there are quite significant differences between occupational classes. 'Managers and senior officials' report better mental health (70% vs 61% average),

with ‘sales and customer services’ considerably below average (49%). Twenty-four percent of these employees report poor mental health (against a 16% average) and 43% of them believe their work is negatively affecting this. ‘Skilled traders’ and ‘sales and customer services’ are reporting poorer physical health too (22% and 23% vs a 15% average). The complete breakdown is displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Work’s impact on mental and physical health (%)



Based on the conditions reported, 57% of employees have experienced some form of physical health condition, while 52% have had a mental health condition over the last 12 months. The most common reported conditions were:

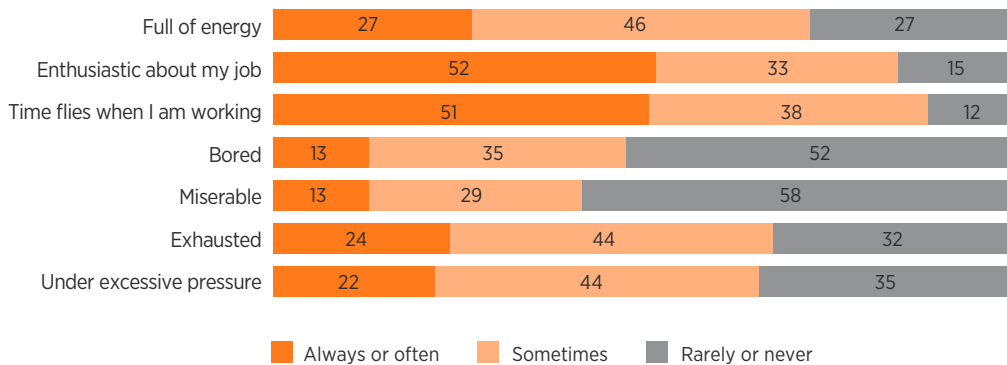
- backache or other bone, joint or muscle problems (43%)
- sleep problems (38%)
- anxiety (30%)
- depression (21%).

The survey asked whether people believed their job contributed negatively towards their health condition. For those with reported physical conditions, such as repetitive strain injury, the response was relatively obvious. However, the findings also revealed that the majority of those with common non-physical ailments – for example, anxiety, sleep problems and depression – considered their job a negative contributing factor and, in the case of anxiety, this figure is a staggering 66%.

The survey also shows some considerable differences by gender. Anxiety was reported by 37% of women vs 23% of men, sleep problems by 43% of women vs 34% of men, as well as musculoskeletal problems, where the difference is 49% of women vs 37% of men.

In addition to reporting physical and non-physical conditions, the survey also looked at the subjective feelings workers have in jobs. These can be a good indication of the impact work has on individuals’ mental health in particular. Figure 3 summarises the answers to the question of how employees feel at their work. It shows, for example, that 24% of employees always or often feel exhausted at work, with 22% under excessive pressure and 13% saying they are bored and miserable.

Figure 3: How workers feel at work (%)



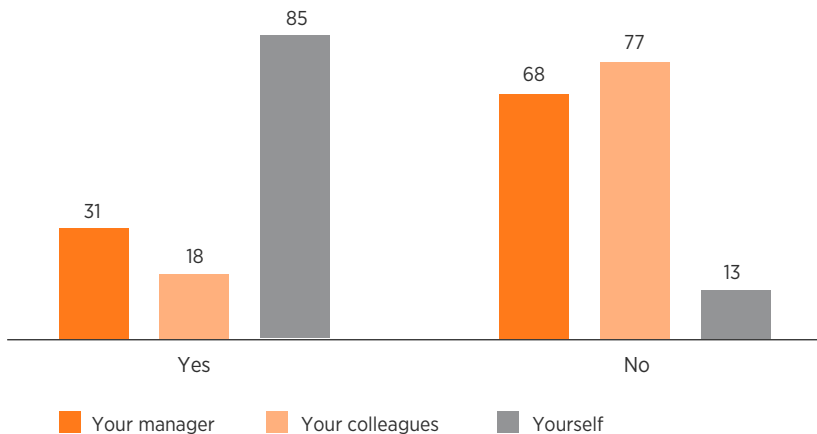
Presenteeism

One of the CIPD’s particular main areas of research interest is the problem of presenteeism – going to work despite not feeling well enough to do so. Our previous research has found this to be a very common problem, with significant impacts on employee wellbeing as well as company performance.⁵

The WLS finds that a worrying 55% of employees answered positively to the question: ‘In the last three months, have you ever worked in your main job despite not feeling well enough to perform your duties?’ When looking at differences across occupations, the worst percentages of presenteeism were recorded by employees in the ‘associate professional and technical’ and ‘sales and customer services’ categories (58% and 59% respectively).

There can be various reasons for presenteeism. The survey aims to uncover any key contributing factors, by asking employees to specify where the pressure to work – when they are not well enough – comes from (for example their manager, colleagues or themselves). Figure 4 shows that 85% of employees who worked despite being unwell felt pressure from themselves, 31% from their manager and 18% from their colleagues.

Figure 4: Pressure to work when not well (%)



Relationships at work

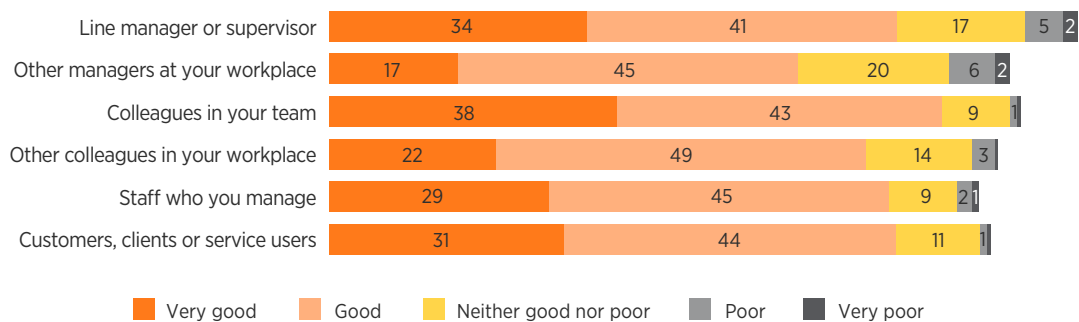
The relationships we forge, both in our working and personal lives, are a key part of our overall quality of life. They impact how we treat each other, how we share knowledge and how we accomplish group-based tasks. Good relationships at work improve the way organisations function, with bad relationships negatively affecting performance. This can result in demotivation and a sense of alienation. Furthermore, research shows that

positive social relationships protect people from a multitude of physical and mental health problems, ranging from cardiovascular diseases and cancer to suicidal tendencies. One of the most intriguing studies on the subject is the Harvard Grant Study. It tracked the lives of over 200 people for 75 years and found social relationships to be the single most important determinant of long, happy and healthy lives, trumping the effect of income, education and social class background.⁶

The WLS asks employees to rate their relationships with a range of people at work. In line with previous findings, the vast majority of employees report very good or good relationships with those the survey asks about – managers and colleagues, as well as managed staff or clients (where applicable). The most positive relationships reported are with colleagues in their own team, with 81% reporting very good or good relationships. As expected, there is a strong correlation between job satisfaction and good relationships at work. Those who say they are satisfied with their job are more likely to report better work relationships than those who say they are dissatisfied – this is true for every relationship we asked about.

Figure 5: Quality of relationships at work (%)

Note: Does not add up to 100% as 'N/A' answers aren't shown



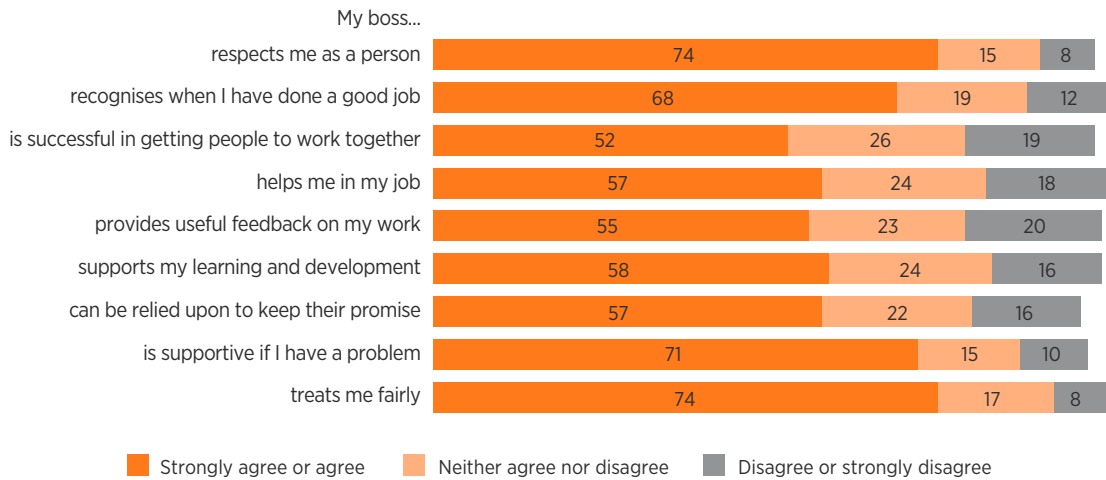
Relationship with managers

In addition to the quality of relationships in the workplace, the WLS asked a series of questions that focus specifically on the relationship with managers. Figure 6 shows a summary of the findings.

Over 70% of employees believe that their boss respects them as a person, treats them fairly and is supportive if they have a problem. The highest percentage of negative responses were associated with the question about feedback, with a fifth of employees disagreeing with the statement that their boss provides useful feedback on their work.

Across all of the questions, managers are rated better in the higher-level occupations ('managers and senior officials' and 'professionals'), with the starkest differences in 'respects me as a person', where 85% of professionals are positive about their boss vs a 74% average, and in 'supports my learning and development', where the difference is 68% vs 58%.

Figure 6: Relationship with manager (%)

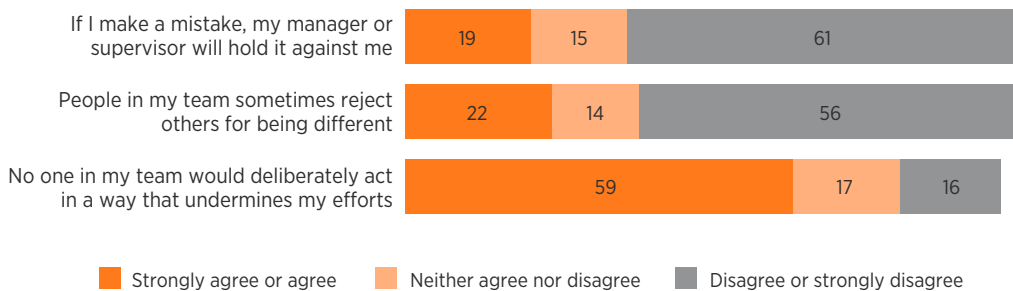


Psychological safety

Participants were also asked about their psychological safety at work. This sought to uncover whether a ‘blame culture’ exists – where people are fearful about making mistakes or expressing their opinions because of negative consequences.

The research says that almost a fifth (19%) of employees feel their boss would hold it against them if they made a mistake. Over a fifth (22%) believe that people in their team sometimes reject others for being different. Another 16% disagree with the statement that no one in their team would deliberately act in a way that undermines their efforts.

Figure 7: Psychological safety at work (%)



Work-life balance

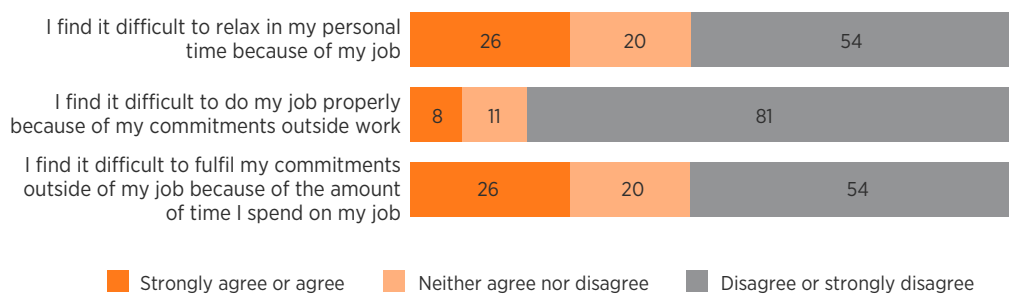
Work-life balance is at the heart of the job quality debate. The spread of technology has changed most workplaces, just as it has changed our day-to-day lives. One of the negative impacts of the third (and fourth) industrial revolution has been the emergence of the so-called ‘always-on’ culture, which sees emails and messages dealt with outside of regular office hours. This has increasingly blurred the line between work and leisure time. Finding the right balance is crucial to our wellbeing. These are subjective measures that are teased out through a series of questions.

Over a quarter (26%) of all employees say they find it hard to relax in their personal time because of their job. The same proportion are saying they find it difficult to fulfil commitments outside of their job because of the amount of time spent on the job. This would suggest that there is some spillover of paid work into our personal lives. Conversely,

8% of employees said that they find it difficult to do their job due to commitments outside of work. There are discernible differences in responses across the occupations. ‘Managers and senior officials’, ‘professionals’ and ‘skilled traders’ are, for example, finding it harder than average to relax (for managers, in particular, it is 34% vs the 26% average). The measure of overwork, which is examined in the **Security** chapter, is also of relevance here.

Another factor explored in the survey is commute time, which is often seen as ‘lost time’ during the day. The results suggest a median of 40 minutes per day (with a mean of 46), which translates to a significant 3 hours and 20 minutes spent commuting per week. Over a tenth (11%) of employees are reporting commutes of more than 90 minutes per day.

Figure 8: Work-life balance (%)



Availability of flexible working

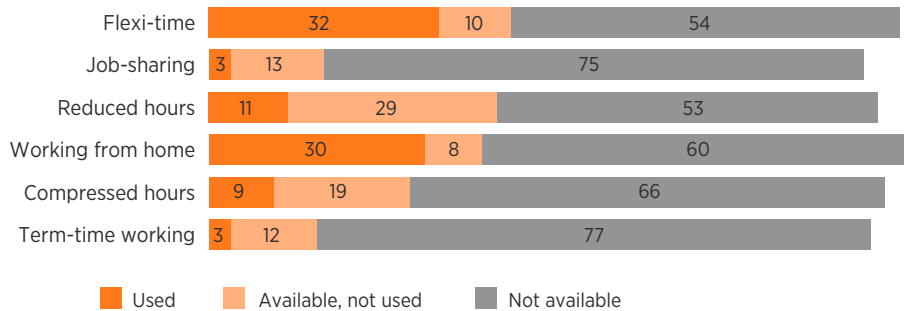
The CIPD has long been investing in research into varying forms of flexible working. The COVID-19 pandemic has unexpectedly boosted interest in this area; however, we don’t yet know whether the temporary increase in homeworking will change how employers operate in future. Due to limited childcare options, many employers have had to be more flexible. As a result, we may see workers re-evaluate their post-pandemic work patterns. Past research has shown that the incidence of flexible working has been increasing very slowly, despite government intervention, so it will be interesting to see how the pandemic impacts on this.

There are, of course, many different forms of flexible working. Our survey looked at formal arrangements, but also at so-called informal flexibility, which we know is a lot more common. On the formal side, we looked at six types of arrangements. Flexi-time (choosing the start and finish time of each day) and compressed hours (working the same number of hours per week but over fewer days) are flexible working arrangements that focus on the organisation, rather than reduction, of work time. Reduced hours, job-sharing (one full-time job shared between part-time workers) and term-time working are arrangements that focus on the reduction of work time. Finally, working from home or teleworking focuses on flexibility in work location.

The survey results show how the availability and usage of each flexible working arrangement varies. In total, just under 53% of those asked work flexibly in some form. The most available arrangements are flexi-time (available to 42%), reduced hours (40%) and working from home (38%). The most used forms are flexi-time (used by 32%) and working from home (30%).

Figure 9: Availability and use of flexible working arrangements (%)

Note: Does not add up to 100% as 'don't know' answers aren't shown



There are quite notable differences in the availability of flexible working between the public and private sectors, with greater availability in the public sector overall. In line with past surveys, the findings also show a significant gender difference in the usage of reduced hours, which may be due to childcare responsibilities.

Figure 10: Use of flexible working arrangements, by gender (%)

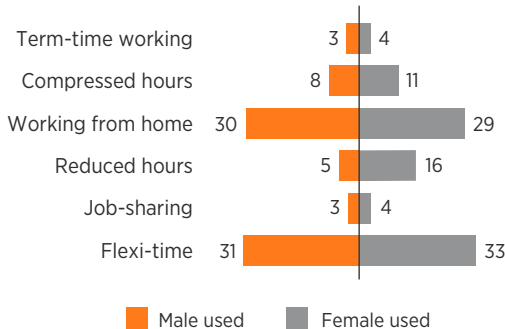
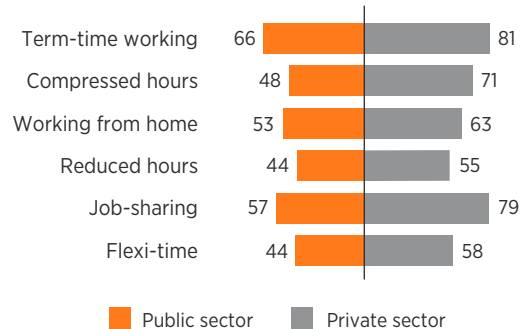


Figure 11: Unavailability of flexible working arrangements, by sector (%)



Informal flexibility

The survey shows that formal flexible working arrangements are relatively rare, with even the most popular ones used by less than a third of employees. However, we also know that employees don't always rely on formal arrangements for flexibility. Informal forms of flexibility enable greater control over the way work interacts with the rest of our lives, without requiring formal requests and approval (and associated changes to contractual status). Informal flexibility was analysed by asking employees how difficult they would find taking some time off for personal or family matters.

The survey finds that over half of all employees report good informal flexibility in their jobs, with 58% saying they would find it easy to take time off for personal or family matters. Unsurprisingly, the survey found a direct correlation with salary bands – employees in better-paid jobs reported more informal flexibility. This is due to lower-paid occupations generally reporting lower flexibility, with employees in 'caring, leisure, and other services' and 'sales and customer services' finding taking time off the most difficult.

Figure 12: Difficulty of taking time off for personal or family matters (%)

Note: Does not add up to 100% as 'don't know' answers aren't shown

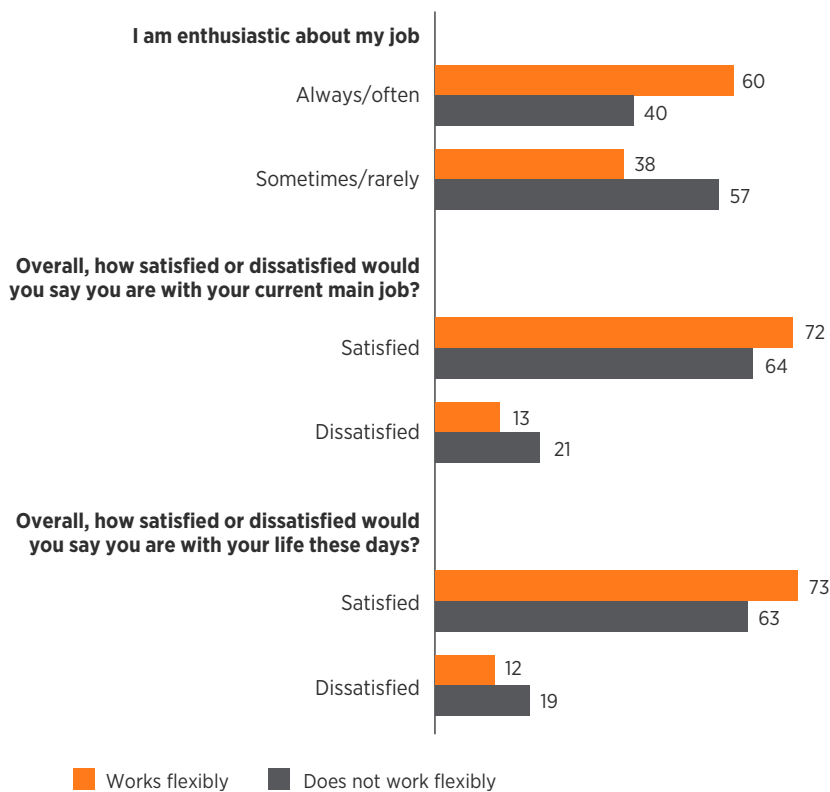


Flexible work and job quality

The relationship between flexible working and job/life satisfaction overall is very positive. Figure 13 shows a breakdown of answers given to three qualitative questions by those who work flexibly and those who do not.

Our survey shows that those who work flexibly are more likely to be enthusiastic about their job (60% vs 40% of those who don't work flexibly), are more likely to be satisfied with their job (72% vs 64%) and are more likely to be satisfied with their life (73% vs 63%). This may be due in part to occupational differences – with certain jobs both being more likely to allow for flexible working and giving more satisfaction, for example – so we can't conclude that switching to working from home will necessarily make someone happier. But that job satisfaction could be improved if workers are offered the flexibility to fit work around life should not be discounted.

Figure 13: Flexible working and job satisfaction (%)



5 Security

The second fair work dimension the survey explores is **Security**. This dimension primarily covers employee pay, benefits and contractual arrangements. Having secure and stable employment, as well as a predictable and secure fixed income, are important components of fair work – they allow us to plan for the future, contribute to family stability and make us less reliant on the welfare system.⁷

Key findings

- Data shows correlation between life satisfaction and pay levels and (to a slightly weaker extent) job satisfaction and pay levels.
- Public sector employees are reporting higher levels of job security as well as a lower likelihood to quit.
- There is also a correlation between job security and salary bands, with those on higher salaries reporting higher levels of job security.
- 64% of employees are reporting some levels of overwork, with 15% of employees saying they work 15+ more hours than they would like to.

Pay and benefits

For most people, pay is fundamental to assessing the quality of work – it can be central to their family’s quality of life. Yet it is important to distinguish between so-called objective and subjective measures of pay and how these relate to job quality. Objective measures are straightforward – what is an employee’s hourly wage or annual salary? However, this doesn’t take into account how an employee feels about how they’re remunerated for the work they do, which is known as subjective pay. Measuring objective pay using a survey like this has limitations, where pay can include complex reward schemes or an employee’s reluctance to disclose information, for example. This is perhaps reflected by 32% of employees choosing not to respond to this question.

Out of those who did respond, the survey found a median gross annual salary of £26,404, which is just over the median of £24,486 recorded in the latest official statistics.⁸ The survey results show a significant gender pay gap in the median gross annual salary, in line with official statistics. Furthermore, if the statistics are broken down by occupation (SOC 2010), there is consistency with official statistics, which show ‘admin and secretarial’, ‘caring, leisure, and other services’, ‘sales and customer services’, ‘process, plant, machine operatives’ and ‘elementary’ all record lower than median salaries, whereas ‘managers and senior officials’, ‘professionals’, ‘associate professional and technical’ and ‘skilled trades’ all record above-average median salaries.

When looking at the correlation between pay and life/job satisfaction, the results are self-evident – both life and job satisfaction are higher for those earning £40,000 and above per year compared with those earning up to £20,000. While there is good correlation between salary and job satisfaction, some highly paid jobs exhibit several qualities that may be considered negative – especially around workload, work-life balance and stress.

The results also highlight the difference between the levels of job and life satisfaction for those earning less than £20,000 – while 69% report being satisfied with their job, only 61% say they are satisfied with their life. This suggests that job quality is only a partial factor in the quality of one’s life.

Figure 14: Life satisfaction (%)

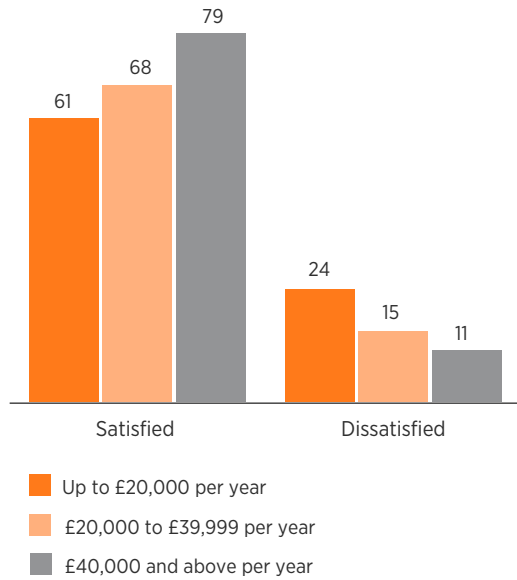
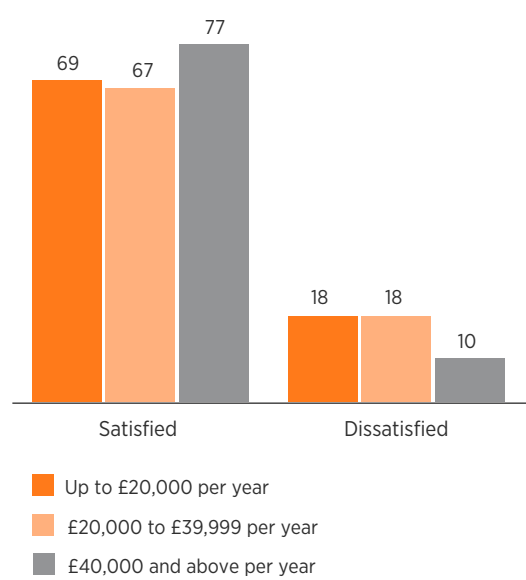


Figure 15: Job satisfaction (%)

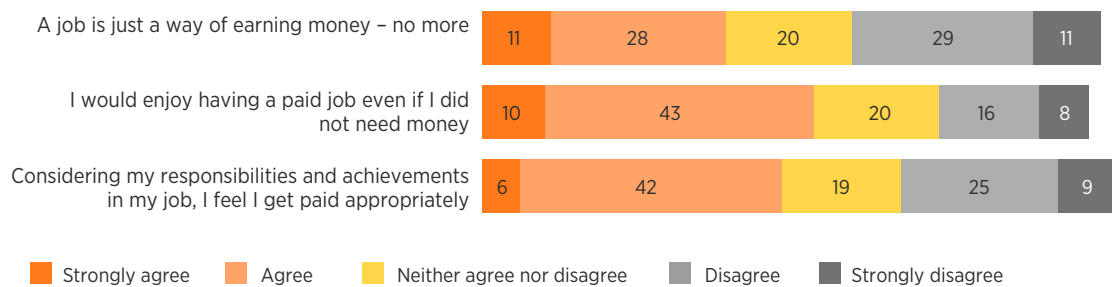


Subjective measures of pay

In addition to objective measures of pay, the WLS also considers subjective measures of pay and ‘work centrality’. Results show that 47% of employees feel they get paid appropriately for the work that they do. There is a positive correlation between this and reported salary levels – the higher the salary, the higher the percentage of employees saying they are paid appropriately. The findings also show that public sector workers are more likely to be satisfied with their pay than private sector employees, since they report higher median salaries.

Our two work centrality questions measure the relative importance of work in our lives. Over half (53%) of employees stated they would enjoy having a paid job even if they did not need the money and 39% say that a job is just a way of earning money. On the question of enjoying a paid job without needing the money, the survey finds an inverse U relationship between the answers and salary bands – the highest percentages of those agreeing with the statement are found in the lowest (under £20,000) and highest (over £60,000) salary bands.

Figure 16: Subjective measures of pay and work centrality (%)



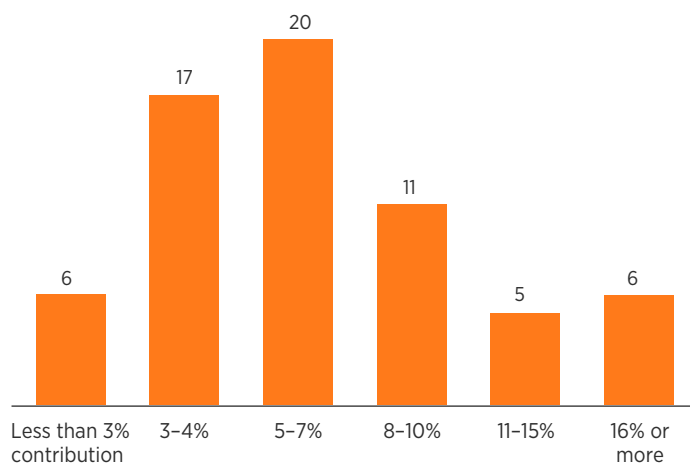
Pensions and other employee benefits

While pay is the most important financial form of reward in employment, our survey also looked at employer pension contributions and other employer benefits that may be

available. Turning to pensions first, Figure 17 shows the reported employer contributions across the survey. Even though 3% is now the legal minimum for employer contributions, 6% of respondents reported receiving less than that.

Drilling into the data we see that higher salary bands tend to attract higher contributions, which is probably a reflection of employers, particularly large employers, incentivising higher employee contributions from those on higher salaries. We also find much more generous contributions for public sector employees (median 10% vs 5% for the private sector), with 14% of public sector employees reporting contributions of 16% or more, compared with only 2% of private sector employees.

Figure 17: Employer pension contributions (%)



The WLS also examined a range of employee benefits other than pensions. In particular, it asked employees about the availability of the following nine types of benefits:

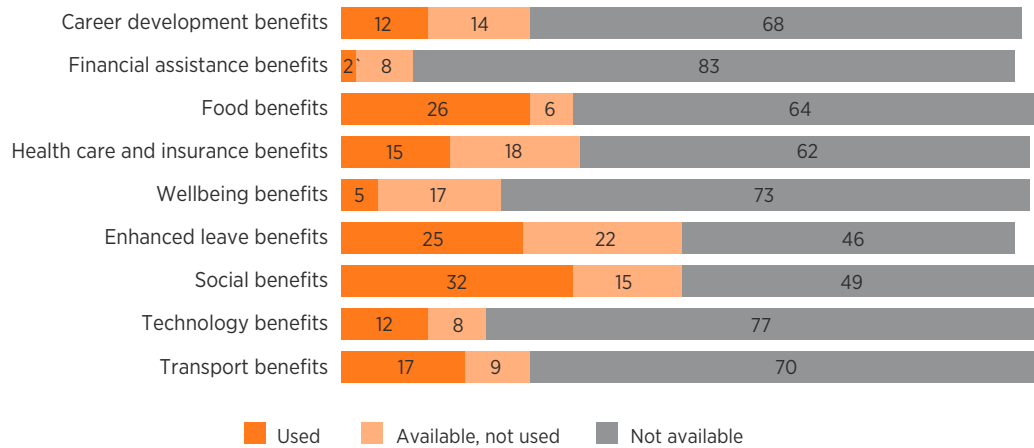
- social benefits, which include parties and other social events
- enhanced leave benefits, including paid bereavement leave, emergency eldercare support, or more than the legal minimum of 20 days' paid annual leave (excluding bank holidays)
- food benefits (free or subsidised food or drink)
- transport benefits, such as free or subsidised parking, rail season tickets and/or a company car
- health care and insurance benefits, which include death in service or life assurance, flu jabs, dental or health insurance
- career development benefits (for example paid study leave or professional subscriptions paid)
- financial assistance benefits (for example relocation assistance or homeworker allowance)
- wellbeing benefits (for example subsidised gym membership, massage or exercise classes)
- technology benefits (for example mobile phone for personal use or home computer).

The availability of other employee benefits varies, as summarised in Figure 18. The survey found that employees report the highest availability of enhanced leave benefits (47%) and social benefits (47%), with financial assistance benefits and technology benefits the least available (83% and 77% unavailable respectively).

It also showed that benefit options are more readily available to employees in the public sector, with the exception of food, social and health care and insurance benefits, which are less likely to be available to them.

Figure 18: Employee benefits other than pensions (%)

Note: Does not add up to 100% as 'don't know' answers aren't shown



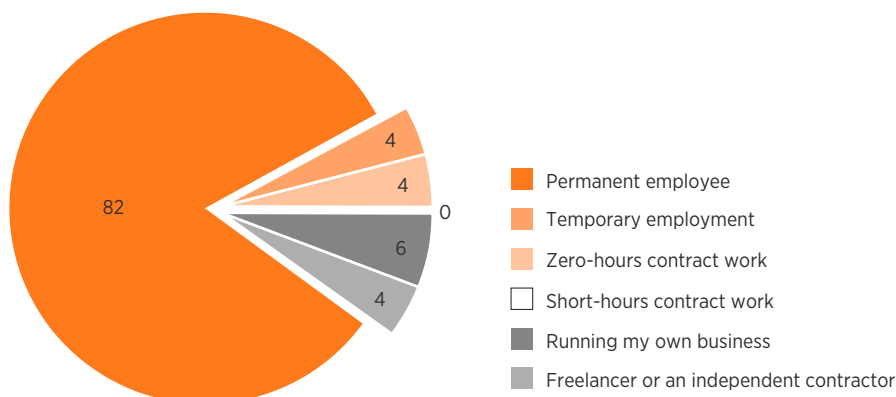
Types of contract

Contractual working arrangements and the related issues of job and hours insecurity, as well as underemployment, are aspects of job quality that have risen within the public policy agenda in recent years. In particular, the issue of so-called one-sided flexibility, with non-standard contracts benefiting employers, but not employees, has been at the heart of Matthew Taylor’s *Review of Modern Working Practices* and subsequent policy change. The UK Government has, for example, pledged to introduce legislation that would allow workers to request more predictable and secure contractual arrangements.

The WLS included questions on contractual type, which were used to tease out differences across various job quality dimensions where possible. The sample size for non-standard contracts is relatively small, so the level of analysis for Scotland is somewhat limited. Past iterations of the UK Working Lives/Good Work Index reports use a larger UK-wide sample and provide interesting insight into UK-wide job quality in relation to non-standard contracts.

The WLS report covers an array of contract types to give a clear and accurate representation of work in Scotland. The breakdown of those surveyed in the report is presented in Figure 19 – it shows that 82% of employees are in permanent employment, 6% run their own business and 4% are on zero-hours contracts. In line with previous research, results show the highest incidence of non-standard contracts, and zero-hours contracts, in particular, in the ‘caring, leisure and other services’ occupational class, where 13% are on zero-hours contracts.

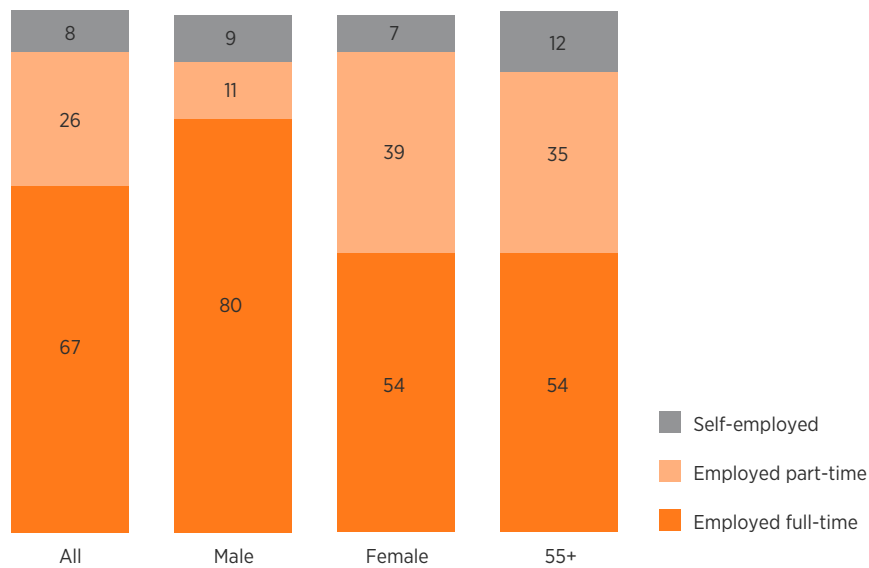
Figure 19: Types of contract (%)



Looking at both full-time and part-time employment helps to determine significant differences. In line with ONS labour market data, the research shows that women are much more likely to work part-time than men – this has widely been attributed to childcare and elderly care responsibilities, which remain significantly gendered despite policy interventions around shared parental leave.

Furthermore, the distribution of full-time and part-time employment amongst the 55+ age category is roughly the same as for women. There is also a slightly higher percentage of self-employment amongst those aged 55+.

Figure 20: Employment status (%)



Job security

In addition to pay levels, pension contributions and contractual arrangements – primarily objective measures – the WLS asked two questions to assess perceived job security. It asked employees whether they think they are likely to lose their job in the next 12 months and whether they are likely to quit their job in the next 12 months (Figures 21 and 22). It is important to note that this survey was carried out before the COVID-19 outbreak. The results would likely be very different had this been carried out during lockdown. Nonetheless, the differences found by sector and salary band point to a trend that is likely to survive the pandemic too.

The overall numbers show that most employees feel quite secure in their employment. Fifty-eight percent of those surveyed said they think it was unlikely they would lose their job, and 57% thought it was unlikely they would quit. A slightly higher percentage (19%) said they were more likely to quit than lose their job (13%). This is strongly linked to overall levels of job satisfaction, with over half (51%) saying they are dissatisfied in their job, expressing a likelihood to quit over the next 12 months.

Breaking the numbers down, the findings show that public sector employees feel significantly more secure in their employment – both with respect to the likelihood of losing their jobs or quitting – with an almost 20% difference to employees in the private sector. Job security also increases with higher salary bands, which is in line with past research on insecure low-paid employment.

Figure 21: Likelihood of losing job in the next 12 months, by salary (%)

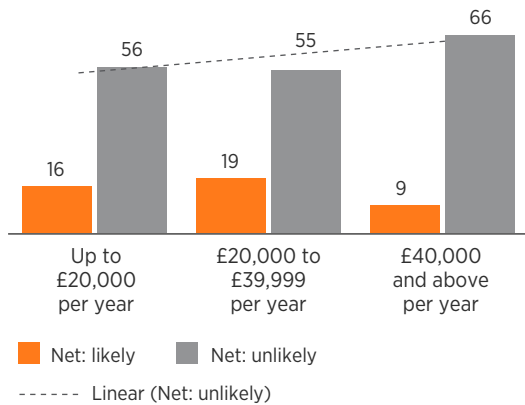
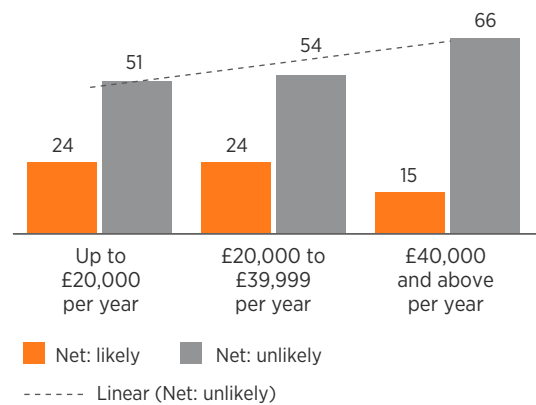


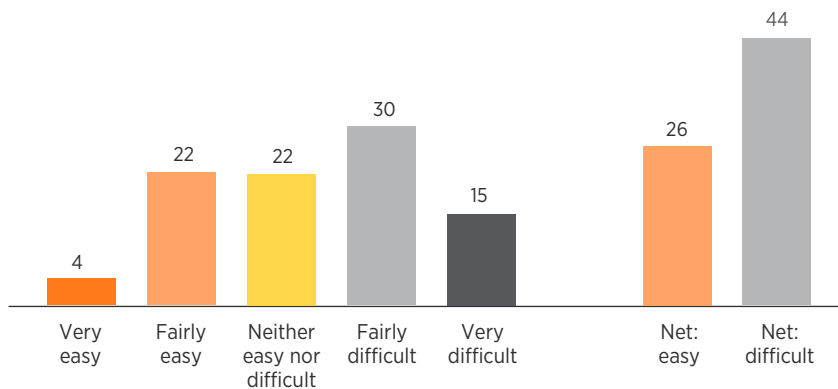
Figure 22: Likelihood of quitting job in the next 12 months, by salary (%)



Confidence in the labour market

Another aspect of job security measured in the survey is employees’ confidence in the labour market. It asked: ‘How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to find another job at least as good as your current one?’ This is another question to which the answers will likely be very different following a period of economic recession.

Figure 23: Difficulty in finding a job at least as good as your current one (%)



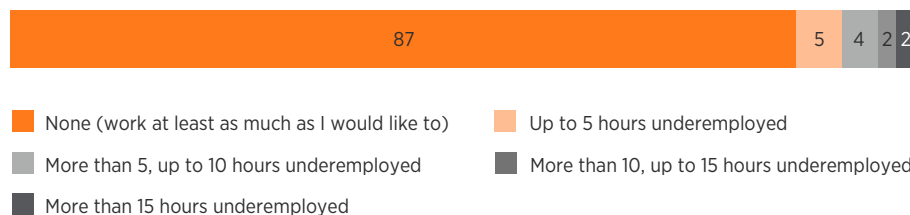
Underemployment and overwork

In addition to the objective measure of hours worked, the survey asked employees to subjectively report how many hours they would like to work, while ‘taking into account the need to earn a living’. This gives an indication of underemployment and overwork, which are elements of job quality.

Underemployment, where employees are not working as much they would like, is a source of insecurity in the labour market. This inevitably has financial repercussions on living standards. The survey calculated this by looking at the difference between the number of hours usually worked per week and how much an individual would like to work per week. Where workers report preferences for more hours, this is counted as underemployment.

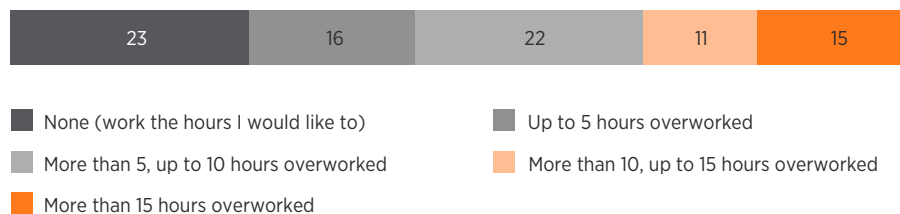
Results show that 87% of people work at least as much as they would like to, with around 8% saying they would like to work at least five hours per week more than they currently do. This is roughly in line with ONS data, which estimates underemployment at around 10% across the UK.

Figure 24: Underemployment (%)



Conversely, levels of overwork can be estimated by measuring the difference between reported usual hours of work and preferred hours of work. The presence of overwork is likely to impact negatively on how people balance work with the rest of their lives. The survey finds that only 23% of employees work at least the hours they would like to, with 64% reporting some levels of overwork. Fifteen percent of employees say they work 15 or more hours more than they would like to.

Figure 25: Overwork (%)



6 Opportunity

One of the key features of any job quality concept is the importance of high-quality work to be available to everyone. For work to be fair, opportunities must be made available for everyone regardless of race, age, gender or disability. In addition, fair opportunities once in work – to develop skills or to progress one’s career – are an important element of fair work. The WLS asked existing employees about their experiences in work, so our focus is on fair opportunities once in the workplace rather than when seeking work. It allows us to expose some differences in opportunities available to groups of employees, with a particular focus on workers with disabilities.

Key findings

- Only 29% of employees believe their job offers good prospects for career advancement, while 52% believe their job offers good opportunities to develop their skills.
- Both personal and career development opportunities differ (often significantly) by gender, age, sector and occupational class.
- We find higher levels of presenteeism amongst employees with disabilities.
- Employees with disabilities also report poorer relationships with their managers.

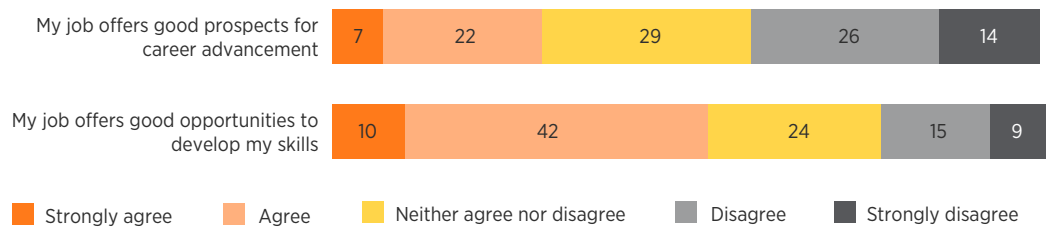
Personal and career development

The survey asked employees two questions to ascertain the levels of opportunity in the workplace – whether their job offers good prospects for career advancement and whether it offers good opportunities to develop skills. Career development opportunities form an important part of future job prospects, while at the same time having clear links with skills and several other job quality dimensions (discussed in the **Fulfilment** chapter). Alongside education outside of work, training and career development is central to personal and

career advancement. While increasing the skills levels of the workforce is beneficial to the individual employee, it is also linked to productivity and associated business and wider economy benefits.

Figure 26 summarises the answers received across the two questions. Interestingly, only 29% of employees believe their job offers good prospects for career advancement. More encouragingly, 52% believe that their job offers good opportunities for skills development. Nonetheless, almost a quarter (24%) of employees report lack of skills development in their workplace and 40% feel that they have poor career advancement prospects.

Figure 26: Personal and career development (%)



The survey sample allows us to look for any differences in the perceived levels of opportunity across different employee groups. First, on career advancement, results show that women are more likely to feel they lack the opportunities to advance than men (44% vs 36%), even though there is no difference in the skills opportunities they report. This may point to the existence of a perceived glass ceiling for female employees.

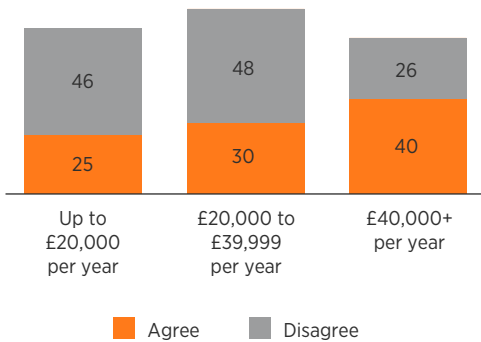
Figure 27: Development opportunities, by gender (%)



There is also a positive relationship between rising salary levels and reported opportunities for career advancement. This translates to management level, with those in a senior or other management role reporting better career advancement opportunities (35% agree) than those without any management responsibility (24% agree). The highest percentage of those who disagree or neither agree nor disagree is found amongst board-level managers (69%), which is probably a reflection of employees in later stages of their careers sitting on company boards.

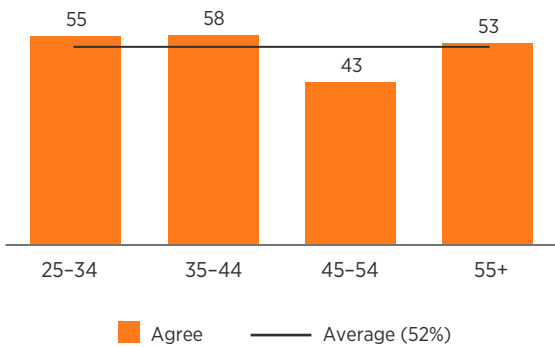
Similar differences are borne out when looking at occupational classes. The three highest-level classes by SOC 2010 ('managers and senior officials', 'professionals' and 'associate professional and technical') all report above-average career development opportunities, with the remaining six classes below average.

Figure 28: Prospects for career advancement, by salary level (%)



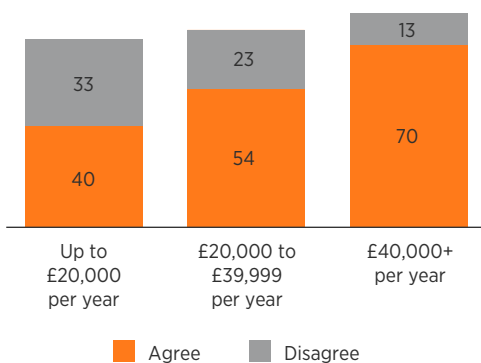
On skills development opportunities, there are some interesting differences. Most notably, there is a significant gap in the perceived skills development opportunities for the 45–54 age bracket. This could simply reflect the stage of the employees’ careers, but it could also point to a gap in the provision of training courses by employers, as well as a poorer public policy skills infrastructure for these workers.

Figure 29: Prospects for skills development, by age (%)



In addition to the above-mentioned gap, there are significant differences between different salary levels and skills development opportunities – they improve exponentially towards the higher end of the salary scale. While only 40% of those earning less than £20,000 per year agree their job offers good opportunities to develop skills, this increases to 54% for those earning £20,000–£39,999 and 70% for those on £40,000 or more. This indicates a lack of skills development for lower-paid occupations. Employees in higher occupational classes in the survey report above-average skills development opportunities, with the opposite true for lower classes. The only exception here is ‘caring, leisure and other services’, which includes some staff working in health and education, where continuous professional development is a crucial part of the job.

Figure 30: Prospects for skills development, by salary (%)



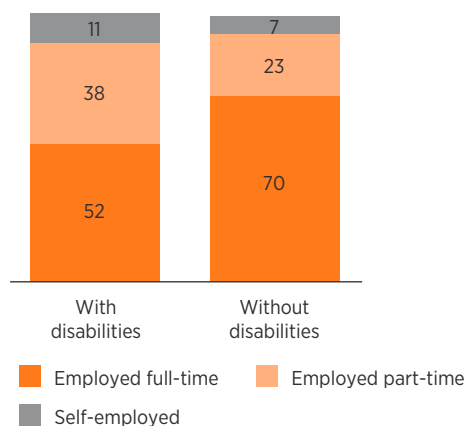
Employees with disabilities and job quality

The survey also highlights differences in the opportunities available to employees with a reported disability. This is an area of public policy interest, with both the UK and Scottish Governments putting in place plans to boost the so-called disability employment gap (the difference in employment rates of people with and without disabilities). Improvements will only be possible if fair opportunities to access work exist and working conditions also accommodate people with disabilities.

One of the things that stands out immediately is the stark difference in employment type. Figure 31 shows that employees with disabilities are much less likely to work full-time (52% of them do) than those without (70% of whom are employed full-time). While some of this may be down to preference, UK-wide survey data suggests that workers with disabilities are more likely to be underemployed.

When it comes to labour market confidence, 55% of workers with disabilities say they would find it difficult to find a job at least as good as their current one. The equivalent figure is only 42% for those without disabilities. This points to lower employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the labour market, with additional barriers to overcome.

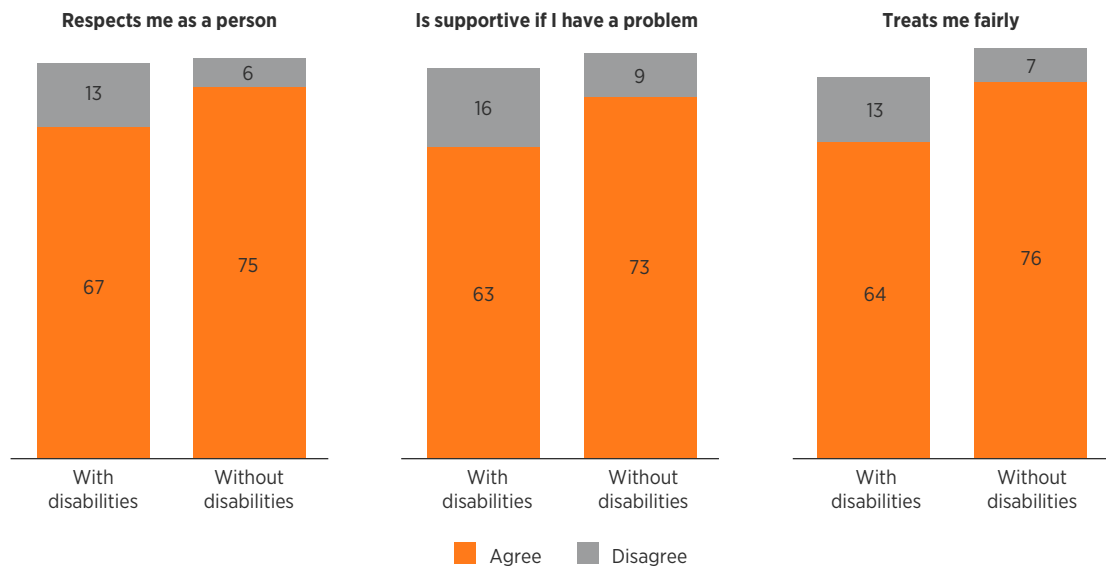
Figure 31: Disability and employment type (%)



One particularly concerning finding is the higher levels of presenteeism among people with disabilities. Sixty-three percent say they have worked in their main job despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties, whereas the equivalent figure for employees without disabilities is 52%. Looking at the reasons for presenteeism, we see that people with disabilities are more likely to report feeling pressure from colleagues than those without (26% vs 16%).

The first chapter on **Respect** looked at employee–manager relationships. Data from the survey shows that employees with disabilities report poorer relationships across all nine questions. Figure 32 highlights the three questions, with the biggest differences between employees with and without disabilities. These findings suggest that line manager training should be a part of the public policy effort to reduce the disability employment gap.

Figure 32: Aspects of work relationships showing the biggest difference between those with and those without disabilities (%)



7 Fulfilment

The first three chapters of this report looked at issues ranging from health and wellbeing in the workplace, work–life balance and personal development opportunities, to pay and contractual arrangements. The data gathered also showed that the nature of a job is also a key component of job quality. The Fair Work Framework calls this dimension **Fulfilment**.

Having jobs that are matched to our skills is clearly linked to performance. Work that is fulfilling, that an employee feels is aligned to a valuable purpose, is associated with job satisfaction. Control over aspects of one’s job, or job autonomy, can also be a driver of productivity. There is a substantial body of research which shows that encouraging learning, growth and self-determination at work leads to higher performance and wellbeing, whereas monotonous and demeaning jobs are associated with boredom, passivity and loss of productivity.

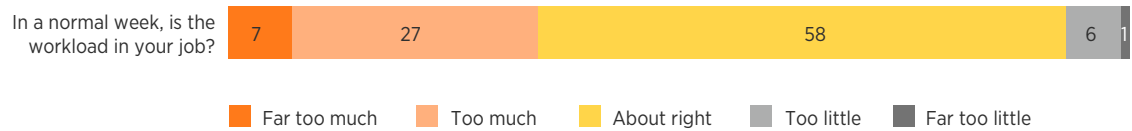
Key findings

- 34% of all employees report their workload as too high in a normal week. This is worse across some industries, but not substantially different across salary bands.
- Most employees report having adequate resources to do their jobs, as well as the right equipment and the training they require to do their job well.
- Employees in better-paid jobs report higher levels of job autonomy.
- Employees in the public sector are more likely to feel they are doing meaningful jobs, compared with private sector employees, and there is a strong correlation between job satisfaction and meaningful work.

Workload

The **Security** chapter looked at working hours, overwork and underemployment. However, in addition to concerns over the length of time spent in work, the relative intensity of work (how hard someone has to work in order to complete their tasks in a given time period) has become of increasing significance to our understanding of the quality of work. The WLS asked employees to rate their workload in a normal week. Figure 33 summarises the results and shows that for over a third (34%) of employees, their workload is too much or far too much.

Figure 33: Workload (%)



Workload, just like other job quality elements, varies across occupational classes. We find that employees who identify as ‘professionals’ or who work in ‘caring, leisure, and other services’ and ‘sales and customer services’ report the highest workload. This shows that high workload is not confined to lower- or higher-paid sectors only – indeed, no significant differences can be seen between salary bands – and it is the nature of jobs that is to blame.

Looking beyond occupational classes and at differences within industries, the data shows that 41% of senior or other managers are reporting too much workload, compared with 23% of board-level managers and 30% for those without managing responsibility. The CIPD’s *2018 UK Working Lives* discussed this phenomenon, saying this could reflect the existence of a ‘squeezed middle’ of middle-level managers and professionals performing supervisory tasks alongside a number of other core responsibilities.

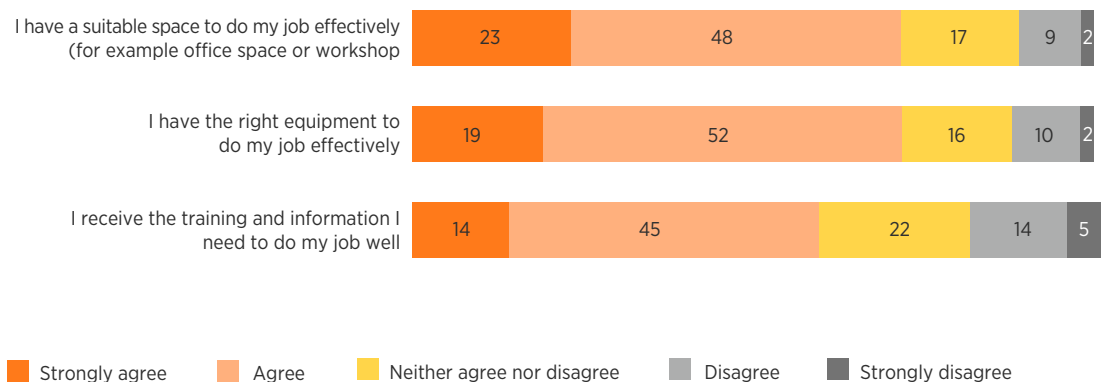
Adequate work resources

Our performance at work is also impacted by having access to the right resources, the right equipment, the right training and suitable premises to do the job effectively. The survey therefore asks employees to answer three questions in relation to adequate work resources. Most employees report good access to premises, equipment and training, summarised in Figure 34.

The biggest gap seems to be in the last of the three, with almost a fifth (19%) of employees saying they don’t receive training and information to do their jobs well. There are no significant differences by occupational class, although the data suggests that those without any management responsibility are more likely to report inadequate training than managers.

When it comes to a suitable space to do their job effectively, there are bigger differences between occupational classes, with those on higher levels more likely to report adequate resources than those in lower occupational classes.

Figure 34: Adequacy of work resources (%)



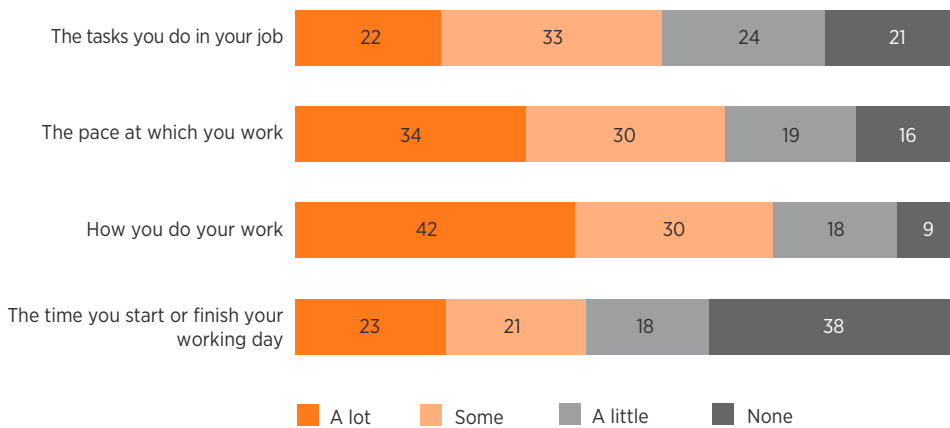
Job autonomy and complexity

The presence of autonomy – the level of control over one’s job – is an intrinsic component of the nature of work. The aspects of control measured in the survey are the time employees start or finish their day, how they do their work, the pace at which they work and the tasks in their job. The presence and level of autonomy forms an important part of job quality. It potentially enables employees to cope with greater work demands, boosts productivity and impacts on the wellbeing of employees.

Figure 35 summarises the findings in relation to job autonomy. Unsurprisingly, employees are found to have less autonomy when it comes to starting and finishing their working day. This mirrors the flexible working data mentioned in the **Respect** chapter, which found 54% of employees did not have flexi-time available to them.

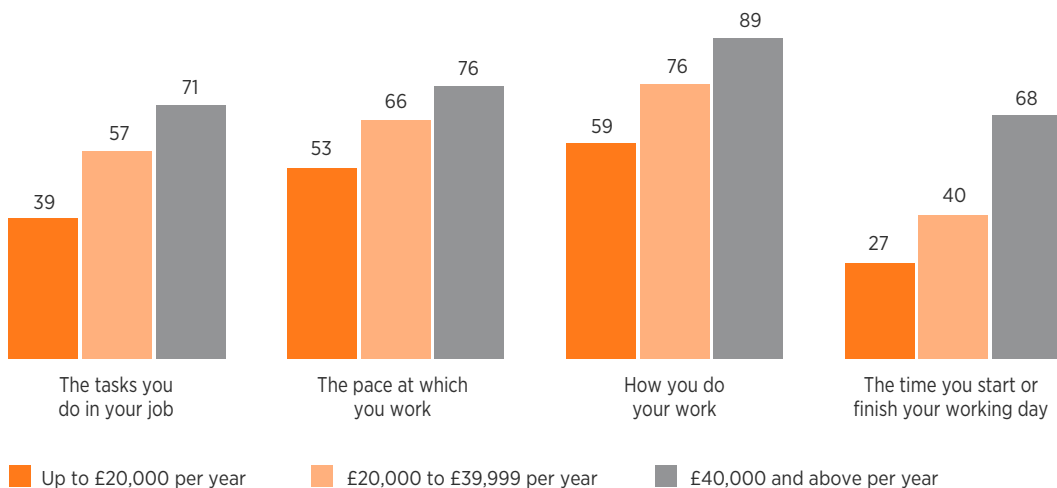
Figure 35: Influence over aspects of work (%)

Note: Does not add up to 100% as 'don't know' answers aren't shown



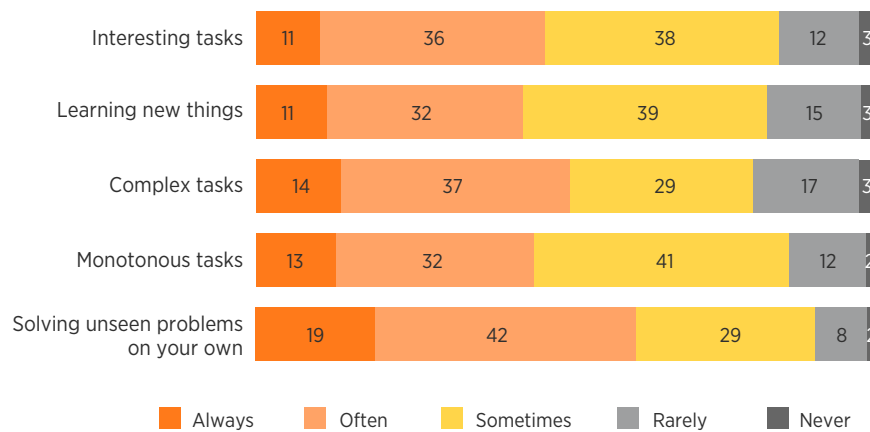
Public sector employees report more autonomy across all four survey questions. In addition, there is also a direct correlation between salary bands and all elements of job autonomy. For example, 75% of those earning over £60,000 say they have a lot/some autonomy over their working hours, in contrast with just 27% of those earning under £20,000. This correlation is the same when looking at the data by occupational class.

Figure 36: Influence over aspects of work, by salary (%)



Linked to job autonomy is the issue of job complexity. This looks at the nature of an employee’s job and whether it involves interesting or monotonous tasks as well as problem-solving. Figure 37 summarises the findings. Here, as with job autonomy, the main differences sit with salary band and occupation. The presence of monotonous tasks is most reported by those working in ‘admin and secretarial’ and ‘sales and customer services’ roles. Conversely, these are also occupations least likely to report complex tasks and learning new things.

Figure 37: Types of tasks (%)

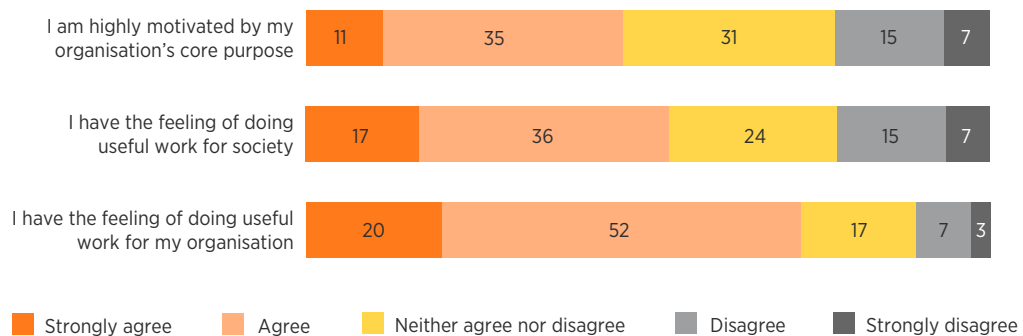


Meaningful work

When thinking about fulfilment at work, job autonomy and complexity are not the only two aspects. Another subjective measure explored in the survey is meaningful work. This signifies jobs in which employees feel they make a useful contribution – be it to the organisation or to society as a whole. It also asks employees to say whether they feel motivated by their organisation’s core purpose, which is also an indicator of fulfilling work.

Figure 38 shows a significant majority (72%) of employees feel they are doing useful work for their organisation, although only 46% feel highly motivated by the organisation’s core purpose. On the broader question of doing useful work for society, 53% agree or strongly agree with the statement.

Figure 38: Feelings on meaningfulness of work (%)



Perhaps unsurprisingly, employees in the public sector are more likely to feel they are in meaningful jobs compared with private sector employees. There is a significant difference in response to the question about useful work for society in particular, with 76% of public sector employees agreeing, compared with 45% of private sector employees.

In line with previous research, the findings show a strong correlation with job satisfaction across all three questions, with those who are satisfied in their jobs at least twice as likely to agree with the statements compared with those dissatisfied in their work.

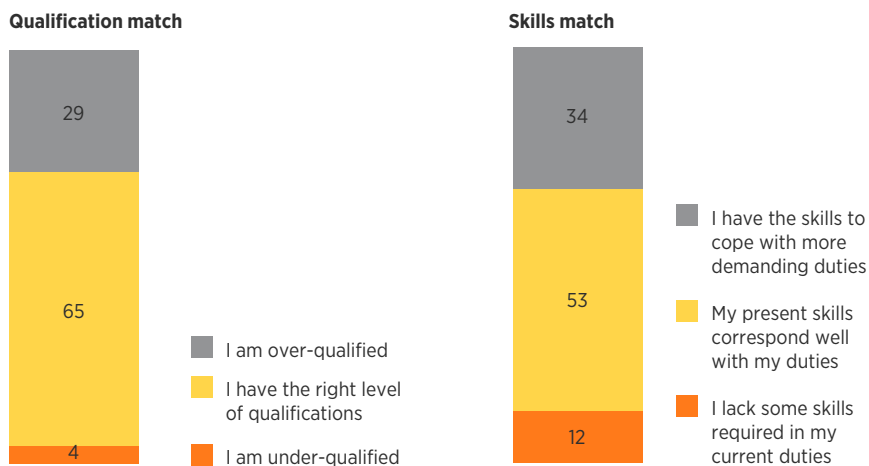
The data also reveals some interesting differences between occupational classes. On the question of doing useful work for society, the two occupational classes that stand out are ‘professionals’ and ‘caring, leisure and other services’, both of which record much higher levels of agreement (69% and 74% respectively) than the average (53%). This is understandable since these occupational classes include health and teaching professionals as well as scientific researchers. The same two classes record higher levels of agreement in response to the ‘useful work for my organisation’ question too. On the last question – ‘being motivated by their organisation’s core purpose’ – the ‘managers and other senior officials’ are in higher agreement than average (60% vs 46%), presumably since this includes those defining the organisation’s core purpose in the first place.

Skills and qualification match

The last set of questions that comes under the **Fulfilment** dimension relates to qualification and skills match. The chance to use one’s skills to their full extent in employment is a crucial element of fair work. Recent public policy attention has also been dedicated to the issue of over-qualification, especially around the number of degree-educated employees in lower-skilled jobs and the impact of this on productivity. Over-qualification points to inefficiencies in the relationship between the labour market and our skills development system, but it also impacts on individual motivation and wellbeing.

The WLS asked employees whether they feel they have the right qualifications for their job and whether they have the skills to cope with their current duties. The survey data shows that almost two-thirds (65%) of employees feel their qualifications match their job well, with 29% feeling over-qualified. A slightly higher percentage (34%) of employees feel they have the skills to cope with more demanding duties, with just over half (53%) saying their skills match their current duties well.

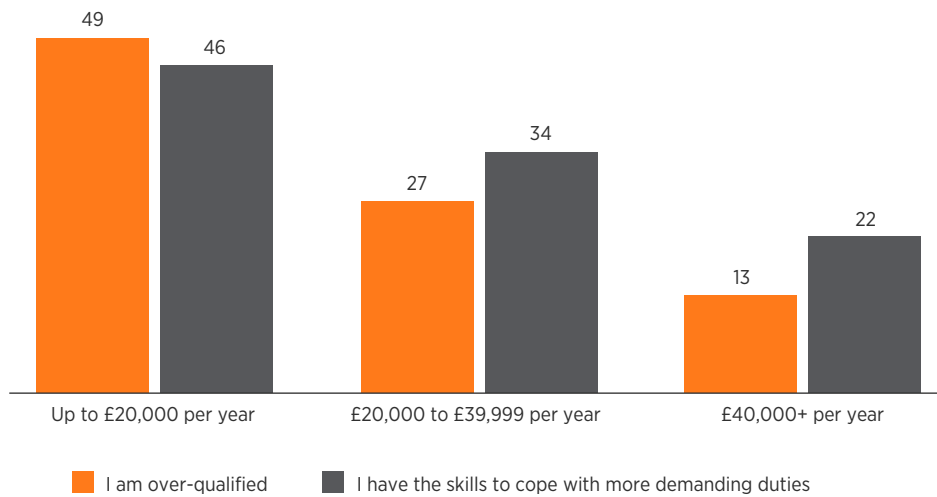
Figure 39: Qualification and skills matching (%)



Fulfilment

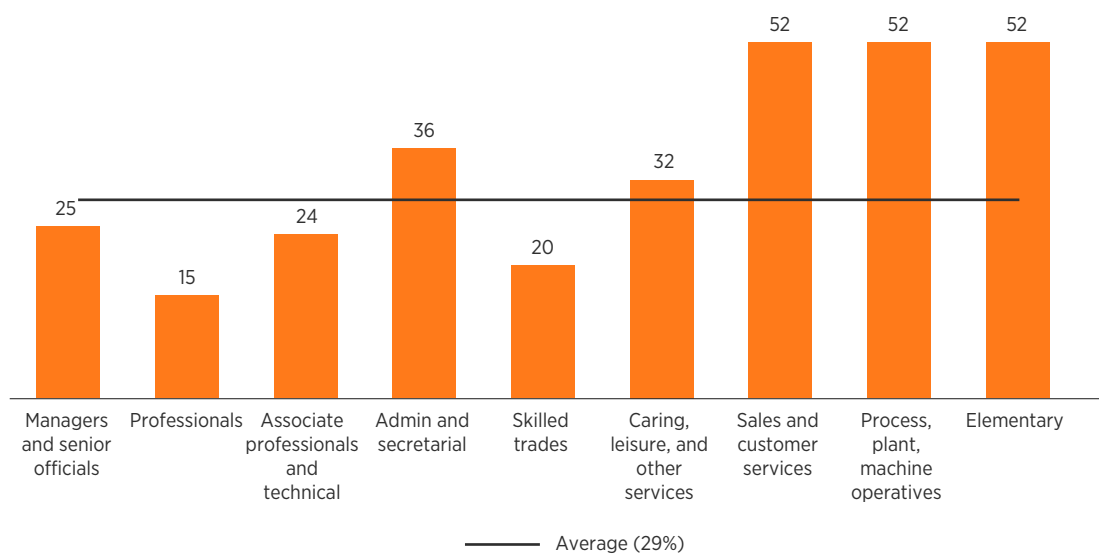
As expected, there are significant differences in the answers between occupational classes as well as salary bands. On the latter, there is a clear gradual drop in perceived over-qualification towards the high end of the salary scale. Almost half (49%) of those earning less than £20,000 per year feel over-qualified, compared with only 13% of those earning over £40,000 per year. A similar pattern can be found in response to the skills question too.

Figure 40: Over-qualification and underuse, by salary (%)



Breaking the results down by occupational class shows, unsurprisingly, the incidence of over-qualification is much higher in lower classes of occupation. Reported over-qualification amongst employees in ‘sales and customer services’, ‘process, plant, machine operatives’ and ‘elementary’ classes is over twice as high than for employees in the ‘managers and senior officials’ class. Figure 41 summarises the differences by SOC 10.

Figure 41: Over-qualification, by occupation class (%)



8 Effective voice

The last dimension of fair work is **Effective voice**. This refers to the opportunities available to employees to engage with their employers. Past research has looked at various forms of employee voice, with emphasis on forms of individual or collective voice. It can mean direct engagement with managers or indirect engagement through a representative (union or non-union).

Having a voice and a way to engage with one’s manager or employer is intrinsically important to job quality – having a meaningful voice is part of what makes us human, regardless of whether it leads to actual change. Employee voice also has an instrumental value in enabling workers to enact change, by being able to communicate concerns, provide feedback and make a difference.

Key findings

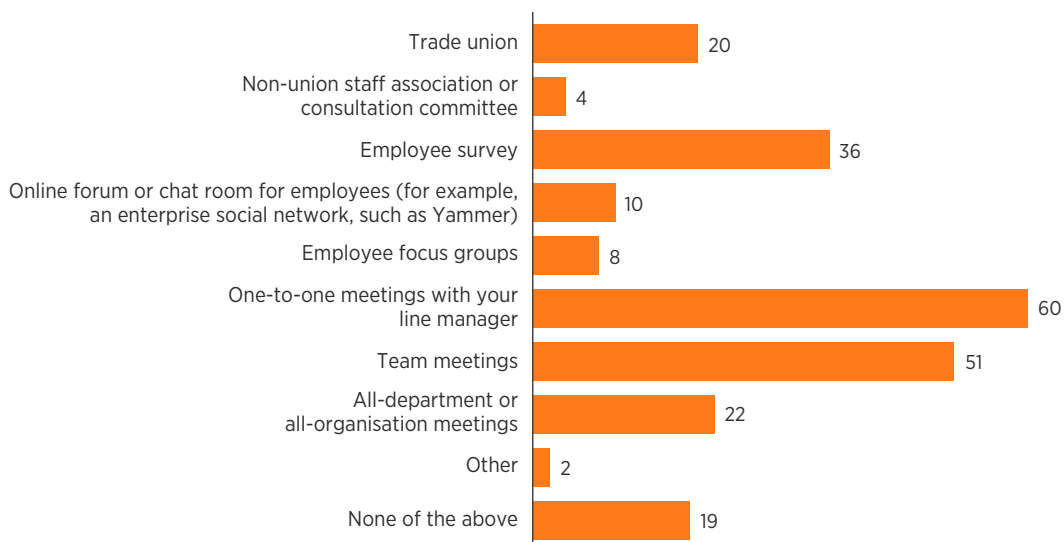
- 19% of employees say they have no voice channel at work at all.
- One-to-one meetings with managers and team meetings are the most commonly reported forms, available to 60% and 51% of employees respectively.
- The availability of voice channels differs significantly between the public and private sectors in Scotland.
- We find a significant difference in managerial openness to responding to employee suggestions, with the public sector comparing unfavourably to the private sector in this regard.
- Our findings suggest that while larger employers are more likely to put in place formal voice arrangements, they perform poorly in responding to feedback.

Voice channels

The WLS asked employees to select from a range of voice channels to ascertain their availability across workplaces. Figure 42 shows that the most common channels are one-to-one meetings with managers and team meetings, available to 60% and 51% of employees respectively. A fifth of employees report the availability of a trade union in their workplace.

Slightly less than a fifth (19%) of employees say they have no voice channel at all. This is linked primarily to organisation size, with 37% of all employees working for organisations with 1–9 employees saying they had no voice channel at all, compared with 12% of those in 250+ organisations and only 8% in 1,000+ organisations.

Figure 42: Voice channels available to workers (%)



The availability of voice channels differs significantly between the public and private sectors in Scotland, with 22% of private sector employees reporting no voice channels at all, compared with 11% of public sector employees. All bar one (non-union staff association or consultation committee) of the channels examined have better availability in the public sector. The biggest differences in availability of the individual types of channel are observed in trade union channels (50% public sector vs 10% private sector) and employee surveys (58% public sector vs 30% private sector).

Figure 43: Voice channels, by sector (%)



Results show that the availability of voice is linked to organisation size too, with employees working for organisations with 250+ employees reporting better availability for each type of channel, compared with those working for organisations with fewer than 250 employees. As above, the differences in trade union availability and the employee survey channel are the starkest – 34% vs 4% and 57% vs 14% respectively. To some extent, this reflects the number of employees in large public sector organisations (for example the NHS), but it also suggests that larger organisations focus more on putting formal channels of communication, such as surveys or focus groups, in place to gather feedback.

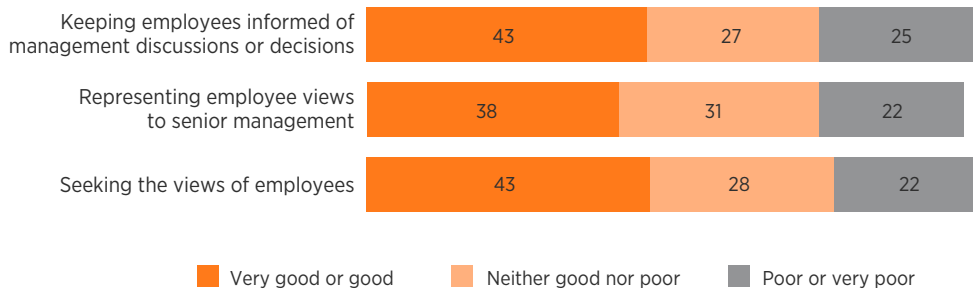
Employee rating of their representatives

For those employees who report having an employee representative at work – just over a fifth in the survey – their representatives’ performance is crucial to the effectiveness of their voice. The vast majority of employee representatives will be trade unions, but the survey also includes employees with works councils in their organisations.

The majority of employees rate their representatives relatively well, with 43% saying they keep employees informed of management discussions or decisions, 38% saying they represent employee views to senior management and 43% saying they seek the views of employees.

Figure 44: Employee ratings of voice representatives (%)

Note: Does not add up to 100% as 'don't know' answers aren't shown



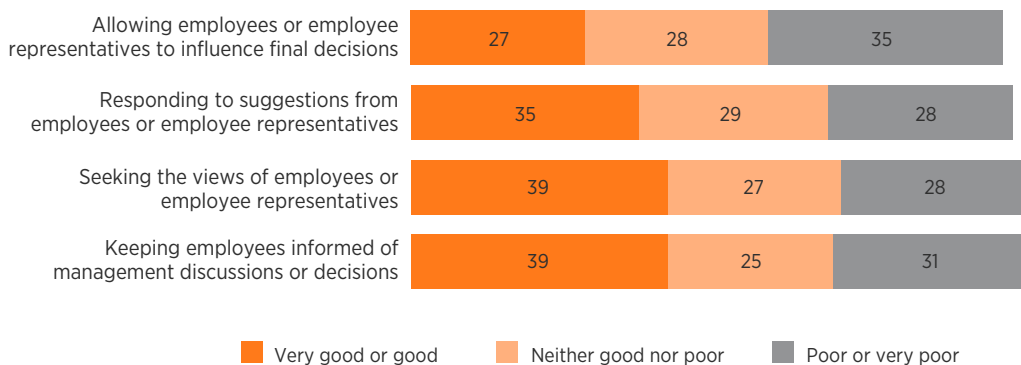
Managerial openness

For all employees (with or without any representatives), the openness of their manager to employee views is a useful indicator of effective voice. Employees were asked to rate the performance of their manager across four different questions – whether they allow employees (or employee representatives) to influence final decisions, whether they respond to suggestions, whether they seek employee views and whether they keep employees informed.

Figure 45 summarises the findings, which are quite mixed. Managers are rated the poorest in the first of the questions, with only 27% of employees rating their managers as good or very good in allowing influence over final decisions. Over a third (35%) rate them poor or very poor. The splits are more even across the remaining three questions, with seeking views and keeping employees informed rated as good by 39% of employees and responding to suggestions at 35%.

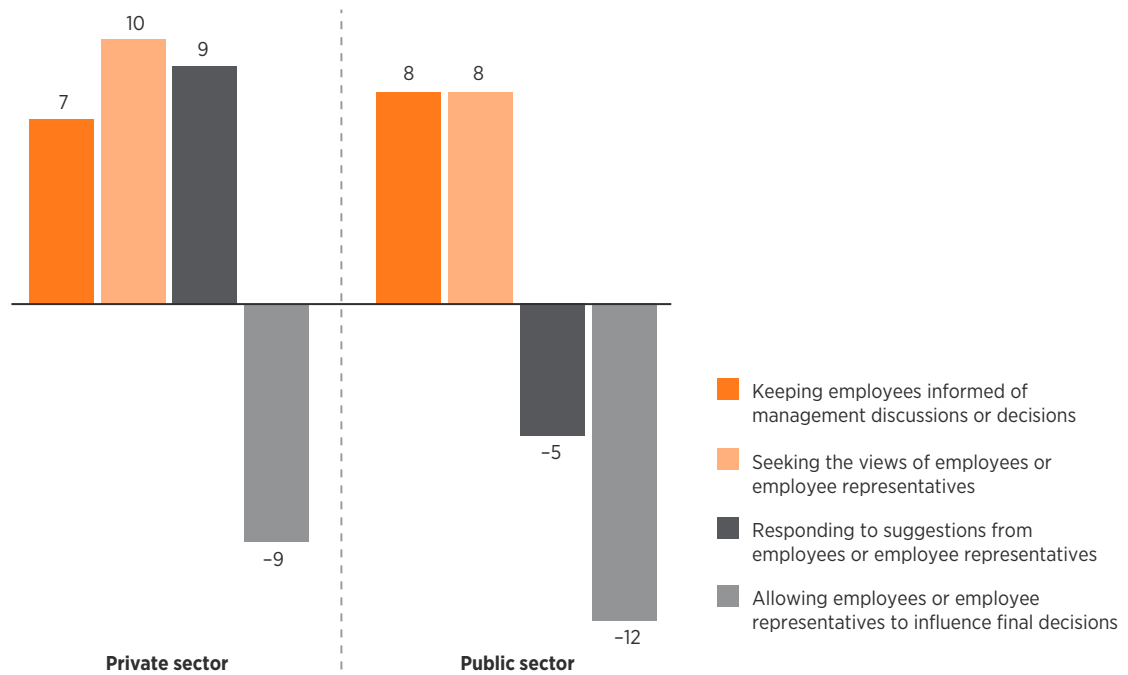
Figure 45: Employee ratings of their managers (%)

Note: Does not add up to 100% as 'don't know' answers aren't shown



When looking at how these percentages differ across sectors, occupational classes and organisation size, we find that, interestingly, public sector employees rate their manager more poorly across all bar one of the questions. Figure 46 shows the net difference between very good/good and poor/very poor ratings across the public and private sectors.

Figure 46: Managerial openness, by sector (%)



The biggest difference is recorded in the responding to suggestions element. As with some of the findings around types of voice, the rating seems associated with organisation size – organisations of 250+ employees record a net rating of -4%, with those under 250 employees a net rating of +19%. This suggests that while larger employers may be more likely to put in place formal voice channels (for example employee surveys), they perform poorly in responding to the feedback.

The differences by occupational class are relatively minor across all, with one notable exception. Employees in ‘sales and customer services’ report significantly worse levels of managerial openness than average, recording a net negative score for all four elements of the survey.

9 Conclusion

Scotland has been at the forefront of the job quality debate on a political level, with Scottish Government support leading to the establishment of the Fair Work Convention and the conceptualisation of fair work. The CIPD has led job quality research across the UK, aided by the insights of our members, who sit at the heart of delivering better-quality jobs. This report aimed to take the best of both these worlds, combine and build on the work that has been done in the past, and add a useful contribution to the debate.

Working Lives Scotland (WLS) takes the CIPD’s good work concept and remoulds it to the Scottish Fair Work Framework. The survey this report is based on was created through meticulous job quality research and serves as a good basis for an analysis of fair work dimensions. It does not seek to quantify job quality at an overall level across different occupations or sectors. It purely seeks to provide a snapshot of job quality across Scotland – in a pre-COVID-19 world – to help shape the debate over possible public policy interventions and improved practice.

The results suggest that job quality is not universal and there are both inequalities and trade-offs between elements of it. For example, while salary levels are a good indicator of job satisfaction, some of the better-paid occupational classes identify poorer work-life balance. The survey also identifies occupations with a higher incidence of poor mental health and others with poor physical health impacts – sometimes both. It also highlights differences in job quality elements by gender, age and disability.

There are interesting findings across all five chapters. In the **Respect** chapter, over half of all employees have experienced a health-related non-physical condition, the majority of whom believe their job was a contributory factor. Additionally, half of all employees report going to work despite not feeling well enough to do so – feeling pressure to do so from themselves rather than their colleagues or managers. Our analysis of flexible working options provides a good overview of the available types across Scotland's workplaces and finds that there are significant gaps in provision.

The **Security** chapter focuses primarily on pay, benefits and contractual arrangements. It finds that there is good correlation between life satisfaction and pay levels as well as job security and pay levels. The findings identify other differences between sectors, for example showing that public sector employees are reporting higher levels of job security. Looking at the difference between hours worked and desired hours of work, almost two-thirds of employees report some levels of overwork.

The survey also examines skills and career development opportunities. The **Opportunity** chapter shows that both personal and career development opportunities differ (often significantly) by gender, age, sector and occupational class. Women, for example, are much less likely to report good prospects for career advancement. Evidence also suggests that employees with disabilities face unique challenges, such as higher levels of presenteeism and poorer relationships with managers.

Looking at meaningful work and job design, the **Fulfilment** chapter finds that over a third of employees report their workload as too high in a normal week. It shows that employees in better-paid jobs report higher levels of job autonomy and job complexity. The findings identify a strong correlation between job satisfaction and meaningful work, with public sector employees more likely to feel they are in meaningful jobs.

Lastly, the survey highlights some interesting differences in voice channels in the **Effective voice** chapter. It shows significant differences between the public and private sectors, broadly aligned with the differences between organisational size. The data suggests that while larger employers are more likely to put in place formal voice arrangements, they perform poorly in responding to feedback.

The WLS was conducted before the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic and it is important to acknowledge the associated changes in working lives – be it temporary or permanent. The challenge of these months will be not to lose sight of the importance of fair work. In fact, job quality should become more important than before, as the conversation shifts to how to return to relative normality following a period of economic recession. Employee wellbeing, work-life balance and job security are all terms that have quickly gained new layers of meaning and importance.

The 2020 Working Lives Scotland survey is hopefully just the first in a series of efforts to measure – and track – job quality across Scotland. We hope its findings will further back the growing evidence base on the importance of fair work to individual wellbeing, business performance and economic productivity.

10 Notes

- 1 Taylor, M., Marsh, G., Nicol, D. and Broadbent, P. (2017) *Good work: the Taylor review of modern working practices*. London: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- 2 We define occupations using the Office for National Statistics' Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010).
- 3 Fair Work Convention. (2016) *Fair work framework*. p47.
- 4 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658145/thriving-at-work-stevenson-farmer-review.pdf
- 5 CIPD. (2018) *Health and well-being*. Survey report. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- 6 Vaillant, G.E. (2012) *Triumphs of experience*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- 7 Fair Work Convention. (2016) *Fair work framework*. p38.
- 8 2019 Annual Survey for Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

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