

CIPD Good Work Index 2022

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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Wheatley, D 2022, *CIPD Good Work Index 2022: survey report*. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, London. <https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/good-work-index-survey-report-2022_tcm18-109896.pdf>

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SURVEY REPORT | *June 2022*

CIPD Good Work Index 2022

UK Working Lives Survey

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 160,000 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.

CIPD Good Work Index 2022: survey report

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Acknowledgements

This report was written by Dr Dan Wheatley, University of Birmingham, on behalf of the CIPD.

Publication information

When citing this document, please use the following citation:
Wheatley, D. (2022) *CIPD Good Work Index 2022: survey report*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

1 Introduction

The CIPD Good Work Index is an annual benchmark of good work or job quality in the UK. It measures a wide range of aspects of job quality, including employment essentials, such as contractual arrangements, the day-to-day realities of work as experienced by workers themselves, and the impacts on people’s health and wellbeing.

This survey report is based on the fifth annual *UK Working Lives* survey conducted in 2022, which draws on a representative sample of UK workers. The CIPD Good Work Index measures a wide range of aspects of job quality, including employment essentials, such as pay and contracts, the day-to-day realities of work as experienced by workers themselves, and the impacts on people’s health and wellbeing.

This report is also accompanied by appendices of data tables and methods. These resources and past reports covering the data collected in previous rounds of the survey can be found at cipd.co.uk/goodwork.

What is good work?

The CIPD's purpose is to champion better work and working lives by improving practices in people and organisation development for the benefit of individuals, the economy, and society. The CIPD believes that good work is fundamental to individual wellbeing, supports a strong, fair society, and creates motivated workers, productive organisations and a strong economy.

The CIPD's definition is:

- Good work is fairly rewarded.
- Good work gives people the means to securely make a living.
- Good work gives opportunities to develop skills and a career and gives a sense of fulfilment.
- Good work provides a supportive environment with constructive relationships.
- Good work allows for work–life balance.
- Good work is physically and mentally healthy for people.
- Good work gives people the voice and choice they need to shape their working lives.
- Good work should be accessible to all.
- Good work is affected by a range of factors, including HR practices, the quality of people management and by workers themselves.

Read more about our perspective on good work at the CIPD's viewpoint on job quality.

Employers need to develop an effective people strategy across the following areas:

- values, culture and leadership
- workforce planning and organisational development
- employment relations
- people analytics and reporting.

Background to the CIPD Good Work Index

Measuring good work or job quality is increasingly acknowledged in both policy and organisational spheres as being centrally important to assessing contemporary work and the employment relationship, understanding their impact on lives and productivity, and making sure that improvements can be made where possible.

In the UK context, the 2017 [Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices](#) identified several key concerns of relevance to job quality in the modern labour market. In the same year, the CIPD embarked on a project to review the research on job quality and good work and to 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 and what the opportunities and pitfalls are in measuring it; and second, on the capacity workers have to influence their job quality and the shifting balance of power between employers and workers. This survey is based on this body of work and further consultation with academics, HR experts and government officials. The Measuring Job Quality Working Group, of which the CIPD was a member, adopted the CIPD’s seven dimensions of good work and recommended approximate indicators to them – very similar or identical to the ones reported.

The CIPD Good Work Index provides a key indicator of the current state of work in the UK, giving insight and reference points for those involved in research, policy and practice relating to good work. More specifically, it presents a regular, comprehensive and broadly representative survey of workers across job types, occupations and sectors, complementing other surveys of workers that are less frequent (for example, the UK Skills and Employment Survey) or contain less detail on job quality and good work (for example, the Labour Force Survey).

Seven dimensions of good work

The CIPD Good Work Index captures data on seven dimensions of good work, summarised in Table 1. The index includes both objective and subjective measures. Objective measures capture aspects that in principle should be unbiased: for example, data on contract type and union membership.

Subjective measures reflect an opinion, preference or feeling, for example, how meaningful people find their work, the quality of relationships at work, and measures of satisfaction with job or life.

Further, both aspects of good work that are universal (what is good for one person will be good for anyone) and aspects that are relative (what’s good for one person may not be for good another) are explored. For example, no one would contest that more pay is better than less pay, but part-time work and irregular hours are far less clear as they are likely to vary with one’s personal circumstances. The same part-time job may be a poor deal for someone who is trying to feed a family or tie down their first mortgage, yet ideal for a student who cannot commit full-time, or an older worker who has paid off their mortgage and wants to wind down a little. To give a full view of working life, the CIPD Good Work Index describes both universal and relative aspects of job quality and relies on both objective and subjective measures.

Table 1: Dimensions of good work

Dimension	Areas included
1 Pay and benefits	Subjective feelings regarding pay, employer pension contributions, and other employee benefits
2 Contracts	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 the 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 Employee voice	Channels and opportunities for feeding views to one’s employer and managers’ openness to employee views
7 Health and wellbeing	Positive and negative impacts of work on physical and mental health, often considered as an outcome of job quality

In 2022, the *UK Working Lives* survey had more limited coverage of pay and benefits. As a result, only the subjective pay index can be calculated for the 2022 CIPD Good Work Index. Subjective pay is a useful measure of pay that refers to our feelings about the pay received for our work and its impact on our financial status (Black et al 2017). To enable consistent reporting and comparison, the subjective pay index has been calculated for 2022 and for previous years of the survey. As such, the subjective pay index is referred to in this report rather than the full pay and benefits index.

A set of seven indices are calculated from the survey data, each one representing each of the seven good work dimensions. These indices in turn are derived from a set of 18 sub-indices, which, in turn, are derived from many survey items (detailed in [Appendix 2](#) of 2021's *Good Work Index* report). The seven good work indices are used in this report to explore patterns of change over time and to elaborate on relationships identified.

***UK Working Lives* survey design**

The 2022 *UK Working Lives* (UKWL) survey was conducted in January and February 2022 and provides a total sample of 6,262 (unweighted figure) workers. To make the samples representative of the UK as a whole, quotas are used to target the sample, and subsequent weights based on ONS figures are applied to the dataset. The sample is representative of the UK workforce in: the intersection of gender by full- or part-time work status; organisation size within sector; and industry.

A subsample of approximately 1,000 of the 2019 respondents have since been re-surveyed in 2020, 2021 and 2022, allowing us to observe how the quality of work evolves within jobs.

Focus and structure of the 2022 report

The report begins with analysis of the 2022 CIPD Good Work Index, including comparison of 2022 job quality dimensions with previous years. More detailed analysis is conducted on the work–life balance index and health and wellbeing index based on the identified trends from the analysis.

The focus of the 2022 report then differs somewhat from previous years in that the report sections focus on special themes of investigation. This year the report has four themes, as follows:

- the great rethink /resignation
- hybrid working
- career progression and social mobility
- relationships and the quality of management.

The final section draws together conclusions and identifies areas for future research.

Analysis by occupation in the 2022 report

The analysis in the 2022 CIPD Good Work Index report combines the use of Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) major groups alongside the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) occupational class indicators that have been used in previous years. Both measures are used as they offer differing insights, with the prior providing more of a focus on the types and skill levels of jobs, and the latter usefully incorporating employment status and size of organisation, thus enabling us to separate small employers and own-accounts from large employers and other managerial jobs.

Summary of Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) major groups

Managers, directors and senior officials	Require high levels of skill and experience and involve planning, directing and coordinating, in roles such as chief executives, elected senior officials, and financial managers.
Professional occupations	Require high levels of skill and knowledge and include roles such as legal professionals, architects, teaching professionals, therapists and nurses.
Associate professional and technical occupations	Involve operational responsibility and provision of technical support and include roles such as IT technicians, paramedics and pharmaceutical technicians.
Administrative and clerical occupations	Comprise jobs with administrative, clerical and secretarial duties and includes administrators in government, finance and records.
Skilled trades	Involve complex physical duties and include occupations in construction, electrical trades, and skilled agricultural trades such as horticulturists.

Caring, leisure and other occupations	Involve provision of services to customers, including caring personal services, hairdressers, and cleaning managers.
Sales and customer service occupations	Include occupations involving sales of goods and services, such as sales assistants, retail cashiers and sales supervisors.
Process, plant and machine operatives	Include roles involving operation of industrial machinery, assembling products, and occupations involving driving and transportation.
Elementary occupations	Comprise routine occupations such as labourers, packers, cleaners and security.

National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) occupational class indicators

Higher managerial and professional	Managerial occupations of a more strategic level, often in large organisations, more traditional professional occupations (including freelancers), and large employers (>25 employees), for example, business development managers, chartered accountants, programmers and software development professionals.
Lower managerial and professional	Employees in managerial occupations at a less strategic level, often in smaller organisations, newer professional occupations (including freelancers and smaller employers (<25 employees), such as sales executives and finance and investment analysts and advisers.
Intermediate occupations	Employees in routine clerical and office support occupations, some higher-level supervisory technical occupations, and some associate professional occupations, including administrative and clerical roles.
Small employers and own-accounts	Small employers (<25 employees) in any kind of occupation and sole traders with no employees working in non-professional occupations.
Lower supervisory and technical	Employees with supervisory status in routine and manual occupations, but not managers involving more strategic-level duties, as well as some technical occupations, including sales and retail supervisors, electricians and electrical fitters, and metal workers.
Semi-routine occupations	Employees in routine and manual occupations with more opportunities for prospective benefits and advancement than those in routine occupations, including sales and retail assistants and care workers.

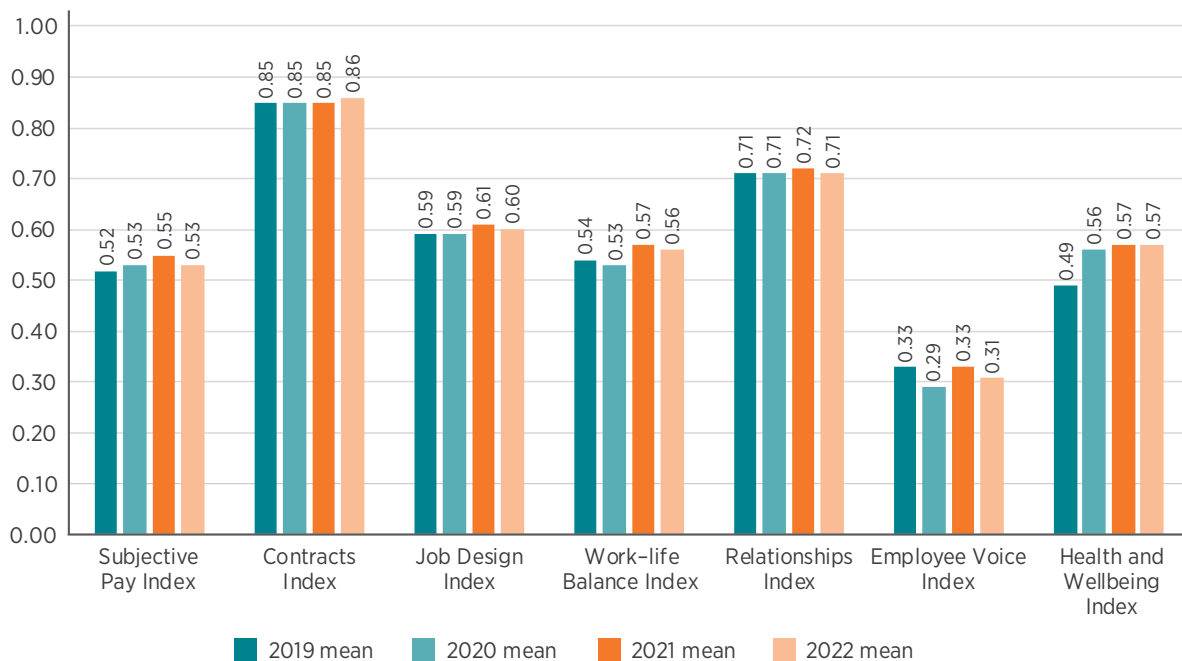
Routine occupations	Employees in routine and manual occupations with limited opportunities for prospective benefits and advancement, such as taxi drivers.
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2 The CIPD Good Work Index 2022

In this section we consider the scores for the seven dimensions of the CIPD Good Work Index, offering comparison with previous survey years and delving deeper to explore differences across sub-groups of the survey sample.

The CIPD Good Work Index has been calculated for 2022 and is summarised in Figure 1 alongside mean scores for the previous three years – 2019, 2020 and 2021 – with the subjective pay index replacing the pay and benefits index for all years, as already noted. Exploring the mean scores, we find a continued level of stability overall across the seven dimensions of the CIPD Good Work Index when we compare 2022 with previous years. That said, we do find differences in the overall means of some of the job quality dimensions that require further investigation, including the work–life balance index and health and wellbeing index. In both cases there appears to be an increase in mean scores in 2021 and 2022 compared with the earlier years of the survey.

Figure 1: Overall *Good Work Index* mean scores, 2019–22



Exploring the indexes

While many of the job quality dimensions appear relatively stable on aggregate year-on-year, we do find differences in the overall means of the CIPD Good Work Index 2022 across different sub-groups of the survey sample. We find that males tend to report higher levels of satisfaction with pay, reflected in higher mean scores (male = 0.54, female = 0.51) of the subjective pay index. Male workers also have higher health and wellbeing index scores (0.59) compared with female workers (0.55); however, the opposite is found for the relationships index (male = 0.71, female = 0.72).

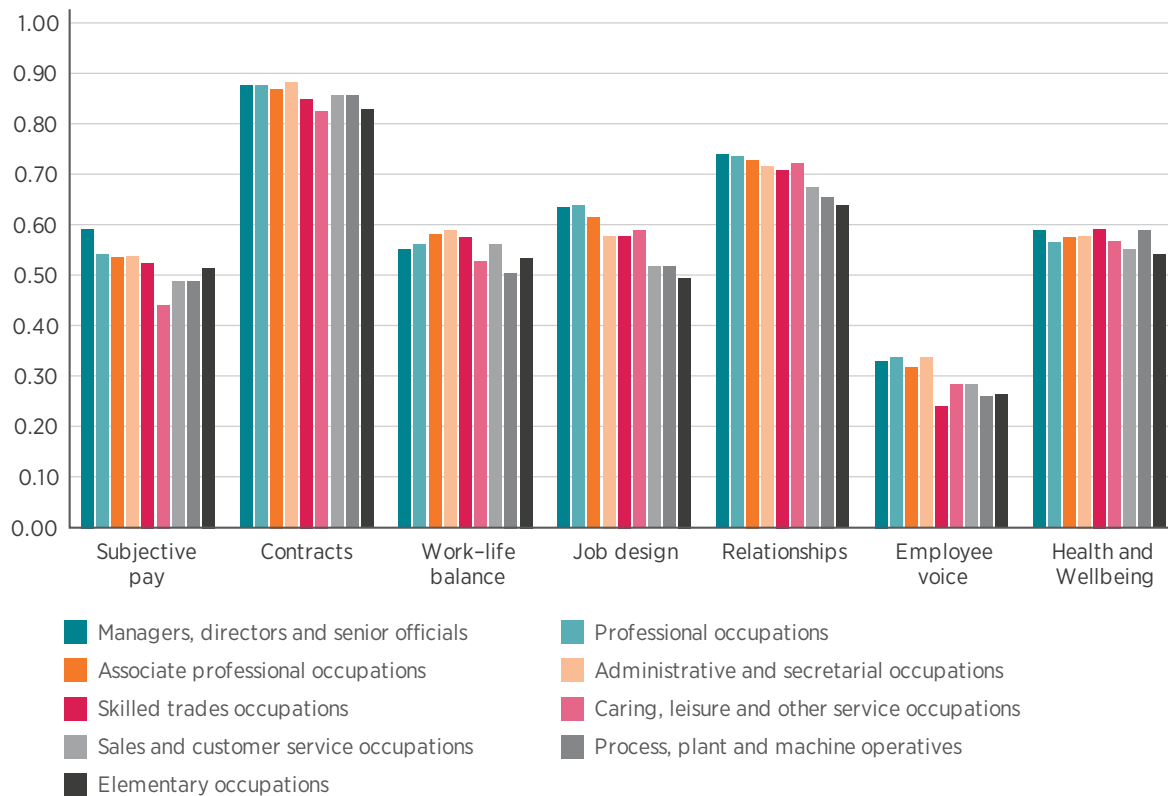
Differences by age evidence the impact of the stage in the life course on our working lives. Younger workers report lower scores in the contracts index (0.78), likely impacted by their greater propensity to be engaged in more insecure flexible forms of employment. Meanwhile, workers in the 34–45 age group report the lowest scores in the work–life balance index (0.54), consistent with the impacts of the presence of young children in limiting leisure time and adding complexity to management of work and life (Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir 2021). Workers in this age group are also more likely to be mid-career in roles that may involve middle-level management and similar responsibilities, shown in previous studies to face intense working routines that negatively impact work–life balance (Wheatley and Gifford 2019). We also note differences in the health and wellbeing index across age groups, as younger workers have lower scores. The drivers of these differences are explored in more detail later in this section.

Figure 2 summarises the mean scores for each of the seven job quality indexes using Standard Occupational Classification (SOC20) major occupation groups. We find that both the job design index and relationships index evidence a clear pattern of higher mean scores in more highly skilled occupations, suggesting that these elements of job quality, at least, are more common in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations, and this is consistent with findings in existing research (Wheatley 2021).

Scores for the contracts, work–life balance and health and wellbeing indexes do not vary in the same way in line with occupational hierarchy. We do, though, find a series of further key differences across occupations. We find that the subjective pay index, contracts index, and work–life balance index scores are notably lower among workers in caring, leisure and other service occupations. The scores in this case could be indicative of difficult working conditions in this sector that have been evidenced in prior research, and that have been exacerbated in recent years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Ravalier et al 2019; McFadden et al 2021).

Workers in skilled trades occupations tend to score lower on the employee voice index, as do process, plant and machine operatives and those in elementary occupations. The latter two occupation groups score low in most indexes, emphasising the lower job quality encountered in these occupations.

Figure 2: CIPD Good Work Index, mean scores by SOC20 major occupation group, 2022



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

Turning to occupational class provides us with further insights into differences in job quality (see Figure 3). We find, in particular, that small employers and own-accounts stand out from other occupational classes in their mean scores, with higher scores in the subjective pay index, work-life balance index, job design index and health and wellbeing index.

The score for subjective pay provides an interesting result, as analysis of the UKWL in previous years using the full pay and benefits index incorporating objective pay measures generated a lower overall mean score. This finding suggests that while these workers may be paid less in absolute terms, they do self-report relatively higher levels of satisfaction with pay than other occupational classes, perhaps influenced by the intrinsic job qualities, work-life balance and wellbeing benefits that appear to be present in these roles. Small employers and own-accounts score lower, however, in the contracts index and in particular the employee voice index, as we might expect, given the often less secure nature of these jobs and the lack of access to voice channels when compared with individuals working for an employer.

Aside from the self-employed we find a consistent pattern of job quality being higher among higher-level occupations – higher managerial and professional and lower managerial and professional – and being generally lower in lower-level occupations.

Figure 3: CIPD Good Work Index, mean scores by occupational class, 2022



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

In focus: work–life balance index

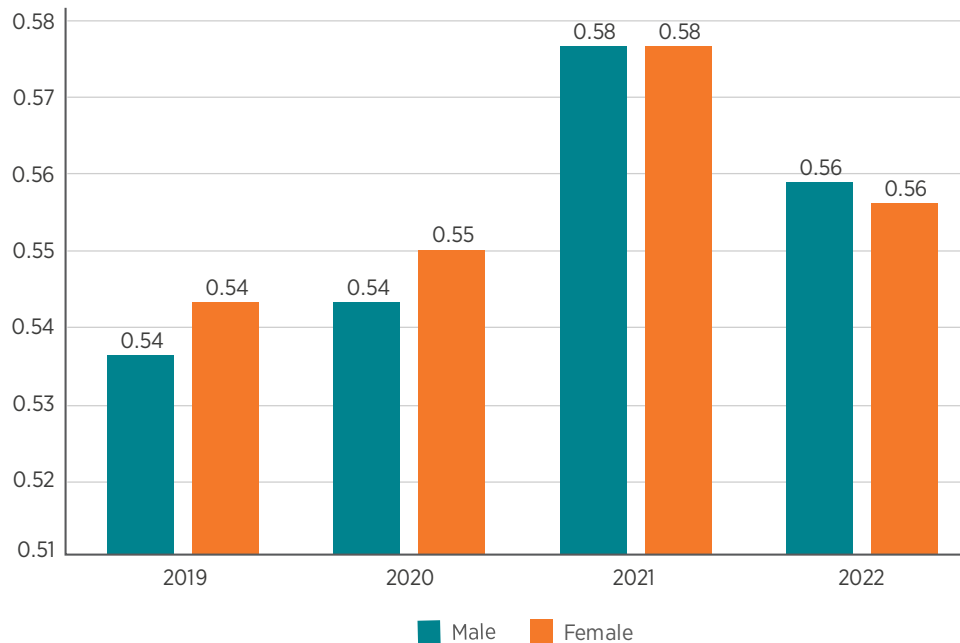
The work–life balance index incorporates measures of achieved work–life balance – measures that take account of the impact of paid work on our lives and vice versa. It also includes the presence of both formal and informal flexible working arrangements, and levels of overwork.

We find an increase in mean scores for the work–life balance index in 2021 and to a lesser extent in 2022 when compared with 2019 and 2020. Given the wider context of the growth in remote and hybrid working patterns in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic (ILO 2020; Milasi et al 2020), these differences are of particular interest. However, while the overall mean scores year-on-year only show an increase, it is worth noting that within this average we find more notable change, and differential experiences, across groups of workers.

We find an interesting change when we consider the mean scores for the work–life balance index by sex. Figure 4 shows that female workers scored higher on the work–life balance index in both 2019 and 2020. However, in the 2021 survey round this difference had diminished, and in 2022 they actually score marginally lower. This

could be a quirk of the UKWL sample; however, this finding is consistent with the purported impacts of the pandemic in creating more a challenging household–work interface, which has had particular impacts on the working lives of female workers (Chung et al 2021; Fares et al 2021). We do not, though, find statistically significant differences within the UKWL sample in the mean scores for the work–life balance index when we compare those workers who report the presence of caring responsibilities with those who do not.

Figure 4: Work–life balance index by sex, 2019–2022



Differences by occupation group are summarised in Figure 5. Across occupations we observe that work–life balance increased substantially in 2021 among most, but importantly not all, occupation groups. Increases in work–life balance were particularly noteworthy in managerial, professional, associate professional, and skilled trades occupations. In 2022 we then see a reduction in work–life balance scores, with some remaining higher than pre-2021 levels, specifically in higher skilled occupations, and others returning to pre-2021 levels, including skilled trades occupations.

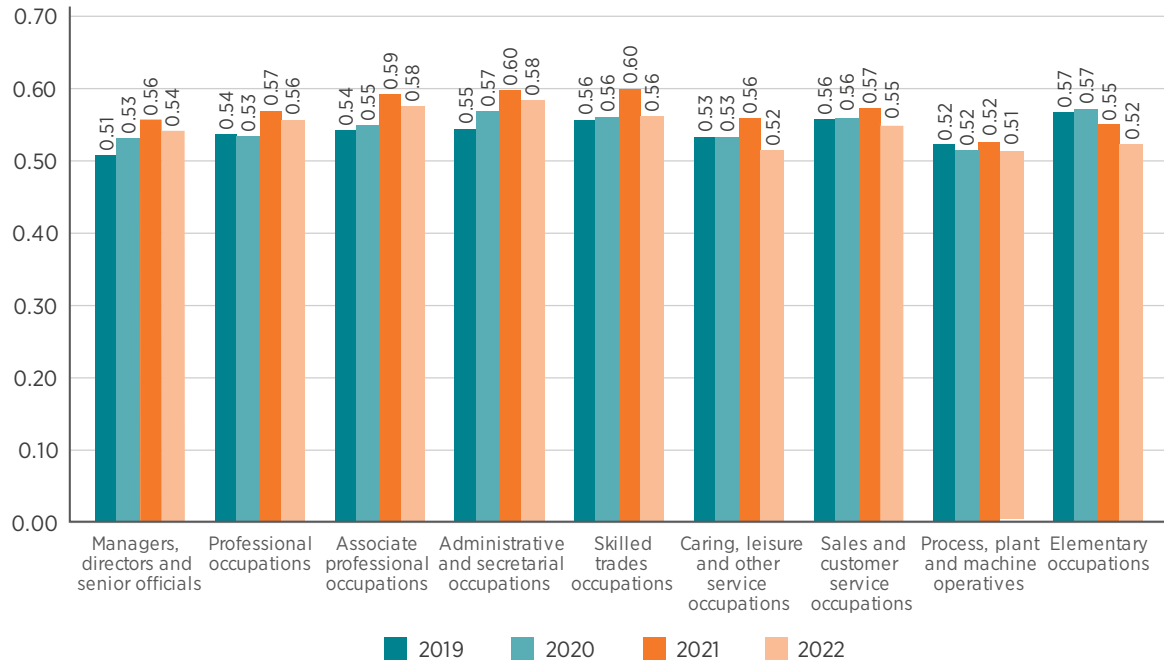
Also, key to draw out here is that work–life balance has seen an overall decrease during this period in some occupations. Caring, leisure and other service occupations, sales and customer service occupations, process, plant and machine operatives, and elementary occupations have all seen reductions in work–life balance scores, with the overall change particularly large among elementary occupations.

When we disaggregate by NS-SEC occupational class, we observe a similar pattern: with the highest mean scores for work–life balance in 2021, with a marginal overall increase in mean scores during this period for the work–life balance index among higher managerial and professional, lower managerial and professional, intermediate

occupations, and small employers and own-accounts, but an overall reduction among lower supervisory and technical, semi-routine occupations, and routine occupations. We also recognise the high mean scores for the work–life balance index among small employers and own-accounts, as already outlined in reference to Figure 3. Overall, the findings are in line with those of the SOC20 major occupation groups and highlight an occupational-level split in work–life balance, with higher-level occupations enjoying more work–life balance and lower-level occupations experiencing lesser work–life balance.

Aligning with these findings, key worker status is also relevant to realised levels of work–life balance. Key workers are defined here according to the UK government definition, which incorporates health and social care, education and childcare, key public services, local and national government, food and other necessary goods, public safety and national security, transport and utilities, communication, and financial services. We find that respondents classed as a key worker have lower mean scores in the work–life balance index of 0.53 compared with 0.59 for non-key workers. While we find lower mean scores for key workers across all sub-indexes of the work–life balance index, the greatest degree of difference is found in the HR practices sub-index, where the mean score for key workers (0.48) is considerably lower than that of non-key workers (0.62), evidencing lesser access and use of formal and informal flexible working arrangements.

Figure 5: Work–life balance index by SOC20 major occupation group, 2019–22



In focus: health and wellbeing index

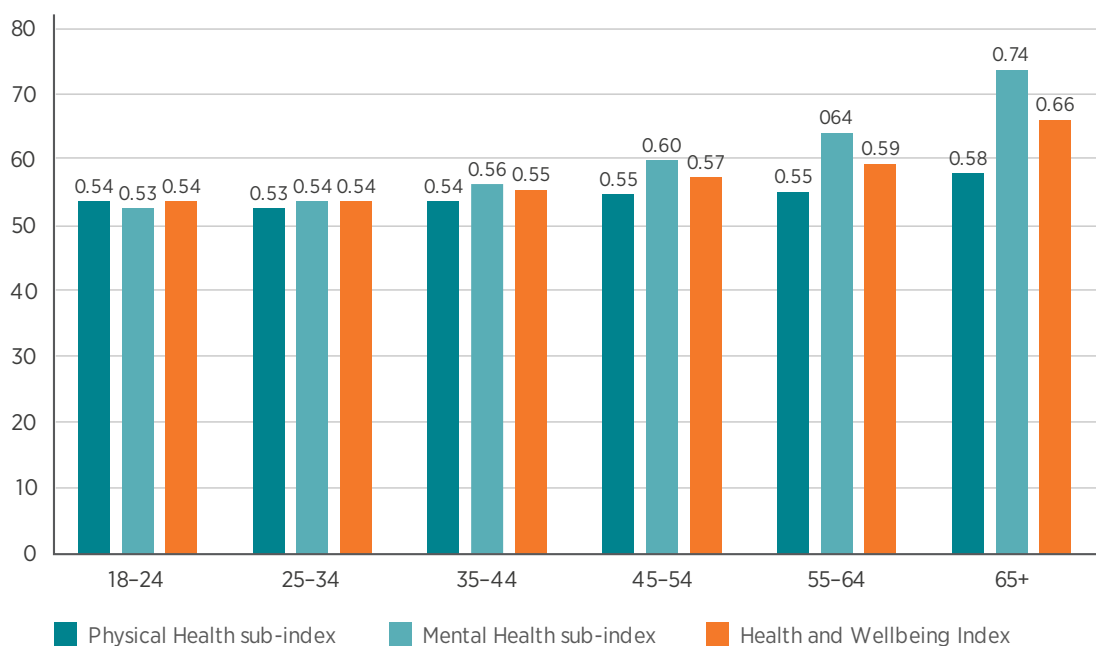
The health and wellbeing index is constructed using measures of both physical and mental health. It incorporates subjective measures of how work affects physical and

mental health as well as measures of health conditions, levels of energy and exhaustion, whether workers feel miserable, and work-related stress.

We identify considerable differences across sub-groups of the *UK Working Lives* survey in the scores for the health and wellbeing index. Differences are identified by sex, as already noted, with higher scores among male workers, and these differences are found to be fairly consistent in both physical and mental health sub-indexes. Broad evidence on wellbeing by sex is inconclusive, as existing studies have found conflicting evidence, with some finding higher levels of wellbeing among men and other studies finding that women report higher levels of wellbeing (Batz-Barbarich et al 2018). As the UKWL sample is of working women, this may explain the lower mean scores among women in the survey, as evidence has highlighted the impact on wellbeing of challenges faced by working women in combining paid work with unpaid household work, including caring (Wheatley et al 2018).

Differences by age are particularly noteworthy and are summarised in Figure 6. Younger workers have lower scores in the health and wellbeing index overall. This is driven, though, by quite stark differences in the scores for the mental health sub-index. Workers aged 18–24 (0.53) and 25–34 (0.54), in particular, have lower scores in respect of their mental health than those of workers in older age groups.

Figure 6: Health and Wellbeing Index by age group, 2022



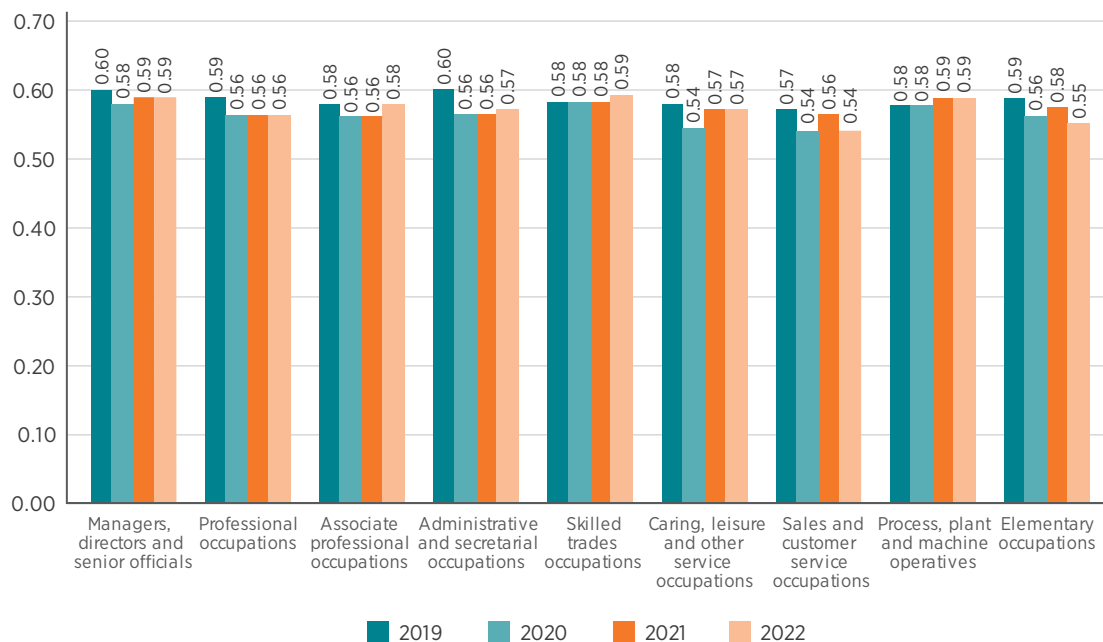
Base: all workers (n=6,291).

When we look across the health and wellbeing index scores by occupation, we find reductions in 2020 and 2021 from 2019 levels across most occupations, with some recovery recorded in 2022, although differences are relatively marginal in most cases (see Figure 7). We also note that differences between broad occupation groups are relatively small for the most part, with sales and customer service and

elementary occupations with lower mean scores in 2022, but with a degree of volatility in the prior years of the survey. When we consider NS-SEC occupational class, we similarly find no distinct changes in mean scores of the health and wellbeing index over the period. We do observe differences across occupational class, with the highest mean score among small employers and own-accounts (0.62) and the lowest among semi-routine occupations (0.54).

Consistent with the findings from the 2021 CIPD Good Work Index, we also observe lower mean scores among key workers (0.55) for the health and wellbeing index compared with non-key workers (0.59). These mean scores are driven by lower scores in both the physical health sub-index (0.52 for key workers, 0.56 for non-key workers) and mental health sub-index (0.57 for key workers, 0.60 for non-key workers).

Figure 7: Health and Wellbeing Index by SOC20 Major Occupation Group, 2019–22



3 The ‘great rethink’

Key findings

- The ‘great rethink’ is an alternative alias for the ‘great resignation’, which describes the reported exit and/or migration of people in the labour market, and the changing attitudes and expectations of workers. We find some evidence to support the overall argued movement of workers from job to job. However, we also find that, consistent with other sources, this change appears to be more of a delayed movement of labour, and levels of job moves in the 2022 survey are returning to pre-pandemic levels recorded in the 2019 survey.
- Around half of workers reporting a recent job change have done so into a higher-paying job (53%).

- Better pay is highly correlated with occupational level with recent job changes delivering higher pay among managers, directors and senior officials (73%), professional occupations (62%) and associate professional occupations (60%) compared with around one in three workers in caring, leisure and other service occupations, sales and customer service occupations, process, plant and machine operatives, and elementary occupations.
- Most workers reporting a job move in the last 12 months report their new jobs as offering greater levels of fulfilment, with this reported by around three in five workers aged 18–54 (see figure 11).
- Around half of workers (48%) who have moved jobs in the last 12 months report more work–life balance in their new role. Work–life balance improvements are reported most among workers aged 65 and over (62%), likely reflecting movements out of career employment and/or partial retirement. At the other end of the age spectrum, only around one in five (22%) workers aged 18–24 report work–life balance benefits.
- Age is a standout factor in intention to leave, but with peaks at either end of the age spectrum. A substantial portion of workers in the 18–24 bracket (44%) and those aged 65+ (32%) report it likely or very likely that they will voluntarily quit their job in the next 12 months, with the latter likely reflecting plans around retirement.
- The prospect of better pay and benefits elsewhere appears to be a primary driver of intention to quit their job, selected by over a third (34%) of those who reported that it is likely or very likely they will quit their job in the next 12 months. The pursuit of increased job satisfaction (26%) and better work–life balance (23%) appear also to be highly relevant in driving intention to leave. These findings are indicative of both a focus on remuneration, and of the pursuit of different pathways to career success in the form of psychological success and balance.
- Measures of meaningfulness of work have a statistically significant negative correlation with likelihood of voluntarily quitting their job, evidencing that meaningfulness has an important relationship with relative intention to leave.
- Workers in sales and customer service occupations (38%) and elementary occupations (40%) feel they have few options should they quit their job, further confirming the lower bargaining power they have present in their jobs.
- The mean scores for job quality are significantly lower across all of the seven dimensions of the CIPD Good Work Index among employees reporting that it is either very likely or likely that they will quit their job in the next 12 months. Importantly, when we consider employees that have moved jobs in the last 12 months, we do not find differences in job quality between those who have moved and those who have not, suggesting that job moves may be used to address experiences of lower job quality that had prompted intention to leave.

The great rethink: step-change or misnomer?

Following the rapid changes in employment witnessed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 was witness to a suggested growth in employees leaving their jobs. Captured in the moniker the ‘great resignation’ (Lufkin 2021) or, alternatively, the ‘great rethink’, much debate has been generated around this argued movement of labour, including whether employees are rethinking their careers and broader

relationship with paid work. The causality for this potential relationship remains unclear, and research has begun to investigate the degree to which employees are actually leaving their jobs and whether this reflects an actual step-change in employment, stated intentions to leave, or a lag effect of the pandemic delaying latent labour movements.

Recent analysis conducted by the CIPD (Boys 2022), drawing on data from the ONS, offers some initial insight. It identifies a record high rate of job-to-job moves in the second quarter (April to June) of 2021, which stood at 3.2%. However, preceding this was a significant drop throughout 2020, which reflected the impact of the pandemic and has been suggested as having been caused by two mechanisms: first, that employees would have delayed or avoided job moves during this time as this would leave them ineligible for furlough and thus presented an increased risk at this time; second, job vacancies dipped significantly in the early part of the pandemic as business confidence and demand for many goods and services dropped, and as the economy has emerged from the pandemic and confidence increased, so have job vacancies and moves.

The *UK Working Lives* survey usefully includes several lines of questioning that enable the further investigation of patterns and drivers of recent changes in employment as well as stated intentions to leave.

Who has changed jobs?

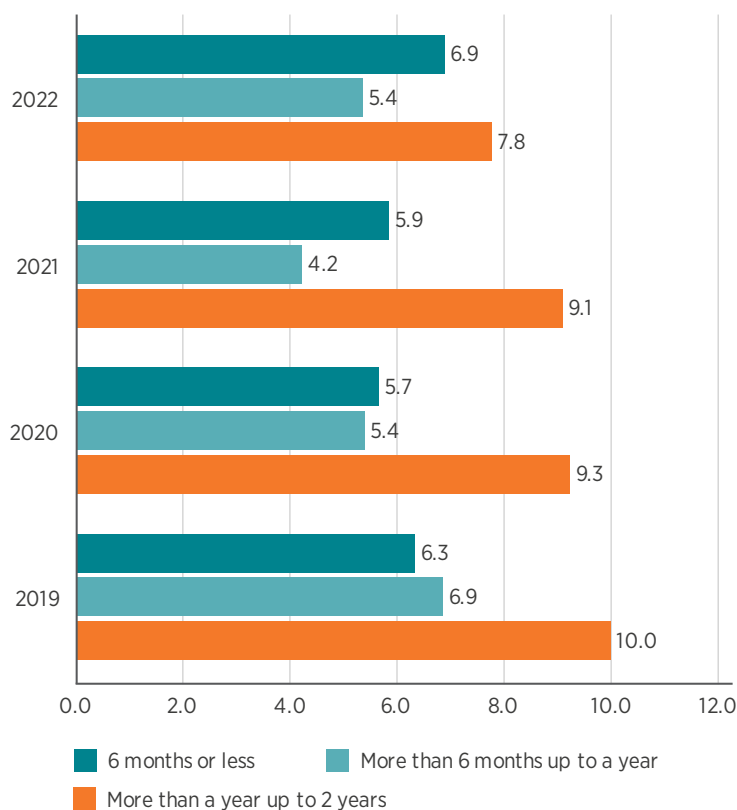
Across the UKWL sample, around one in eight workers report having changed their job to one with a new employer in the last 12 months. Recent job moves are much more common among younger workers, with 46% of those aged 18–24 and one in five (20%) of those aged 25–34 reporting having been with their current organisation for less than 12 months. This compares with only 8% of those aged 55–64 and 4% aged 65 and over. These patterns are likely to reflect the career stage of young workers, and for those in the youngest age category, this will also be capturing recent moves into the labour market from education. Females (14%) are marginally more likely to have changed employer in the last 12 months compared with males (11%).

With respect to occupation, we find that recent job changes are more common among workers in associate professional occupations (15%), administrative and secretarial occupations (14%), caring, leisure and other service occupations (14%), and especially elementary occupations (18%). Findings are consistent when disaggregated by NS-SEC occupational class, with job changes in the last year most common in routine occupations (17%), intermediate occupations (15%) and semi-routine occupations (13%), and least common among small employers and own-accounts (8%).

Recent job changes vary considerably by contract type. We find only around one in ten permanent employees (12%) report having moved jobs in the last 12 months, but figures are much higher in less secure forms of employment.

Within the UKWL we find some evidence to support the overall argued movement of workers from job to job. Figure 8 summarises job moves for the UKWL for the last four years, 2019 to 2022. In comparison with the 12 months prior to the January 2021 survey, recent job moves appear to have increased in the 12 months prior to the January 2022 survey, with 7% of workers reporting a move in the last six months, and a further 5% a move between six months and one year prior to the survey. However, we also find that, consistent with other sources, this change appears to be more of a delayed movement of labour and levels of job moves in the 2022 survey are simply returning to pre-pandemic levels recorded in the 2019 survey.

Figure 8: Percentage reporting job move in last two years, 2019–22 (%)



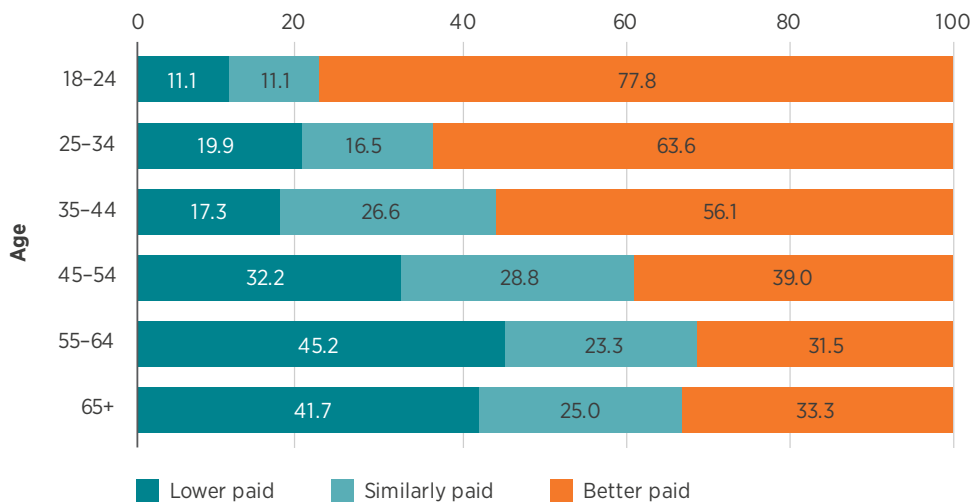
Base: all workers.

Comparing new and previous jobs

The characteristics of new jobs differ across groups of workers, including by age and occupation type. Differences by gender are relatively small and statistically insignificant. Changes in pay are a common factor: around half of workers reporting a recent job change have done so into a higher-paying job (53%), with the remainder split between similar pay (22%) and less pay (25%). Figure 9 summarises pay comparisons by age groups. Large portions of younger workers – over three-

quarters of 18–24-year-olds – report better pay as an outcome of recent job moves, whereas this is only present among around one in three workers aged 45 and over. Better pay is highly correlated with occupational level, with recent job changes delivering higher pay among managers, directors and senior officials (73%), professional occupations (62%), and associate professional occupations (60%), compared with around one in three workers in caring, leisure and other service occupations, sales and customer service occupations, process, plant and machine operatives, and elementary occupations.¹

Figure 9: Comparison of pay in current job to last job, 2022 (%)

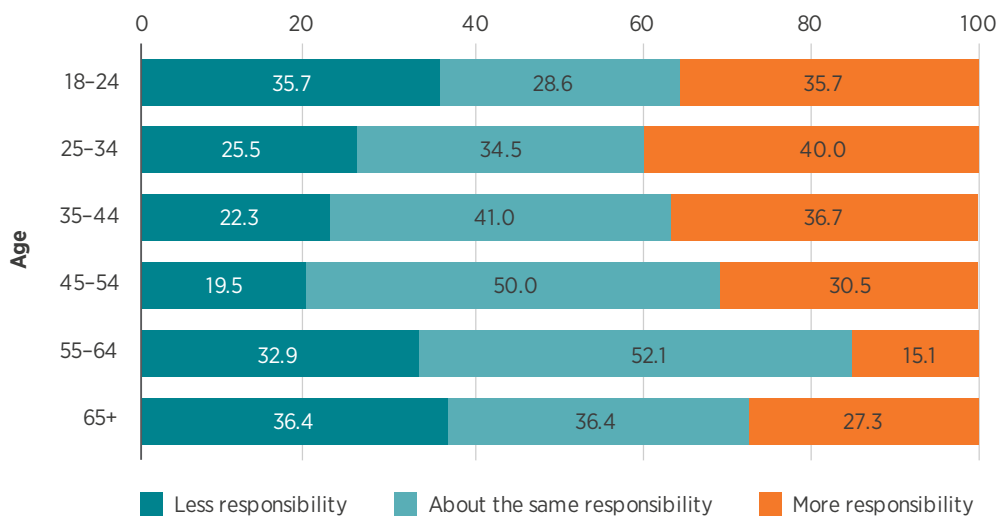


Base: workers reporting change in job in the last 12 months (n=605).

Approximately a third of workers (34%) who have changed jobs in the last 12 months report responsibility levels at their current job as having increased (see Figure 10), while around one in four report it having decreased (25%). Responsibility levels are relatively evenly distributed across age groups. Differences are found at either end of the labour market, as 59% of managers, directors and senior officials report increases in responsibility from their recent job move, but this is only reported by 11% of workers in elementary occupations.

¹ Pearson’s R correlation tests results compared responses with the question comparing pay in current job with last job and SOC20 major occupations groups (Pearson’s R = 0.265, p-value 0.000).

Figure 10: Comparison of levels of responsibility in current job to last job, 2022 (%)

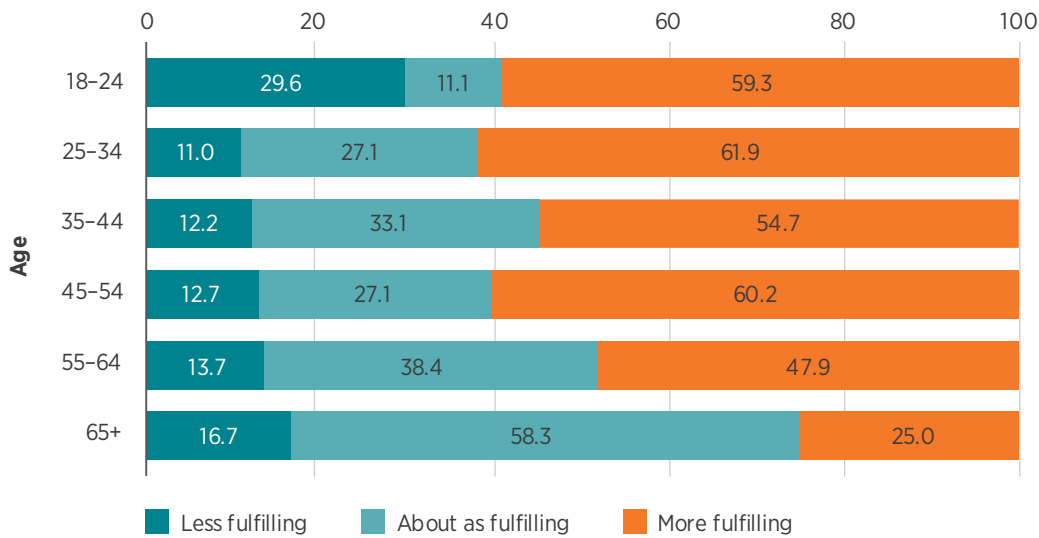


Base: workers reporting change in job in the last 12 months (n=605).

Most workers reporting recent job moves report their new jobs as offering greater levels of fulfilment, with this reported by 58% of workers who have moved jobs in the last 12 months compared with 54% of those who have been with their organisation longer than one year. Interestingly, within the group of workers who have been with their current organisation for more than one year, we actually find that three in five (61%) workers who have been with their organisation between one and two years report greater levels of fulfilment, suggesting that benefits may extend over a lengthier period, but that those with tenures of more than two years report lower levels of fulfilment, with the lowest proportion of workers reporting greater fulfilment (52%) reporting tenures of 10–15 years.

Younger workers are more likely to report greater fulfilment, with this reported by around three in five workers aged 18–54 (see Figure 11). The exception is workers aged 55–64 (48%) and, in particular, those aged 65 and over, where we find only one in four (25%) report their new job as being more fulfilling. Movement into higher-skilled occupations generally appears to provide greater levels of fulfilment, especially for managers, directors and senior officials (72%) and associate professionals (68%). This compares with less than half of workers in caring, leisure and other service occupations (46%) and elementary occupations (46%). When we consider NS-SEC occupational class, we find an overall consistent pattern by occupation level, but with additional insight into self-employment, as we find that among small employers and own-accounts, almost three in four (73%) report that their current job offers more fulfilment than their last.

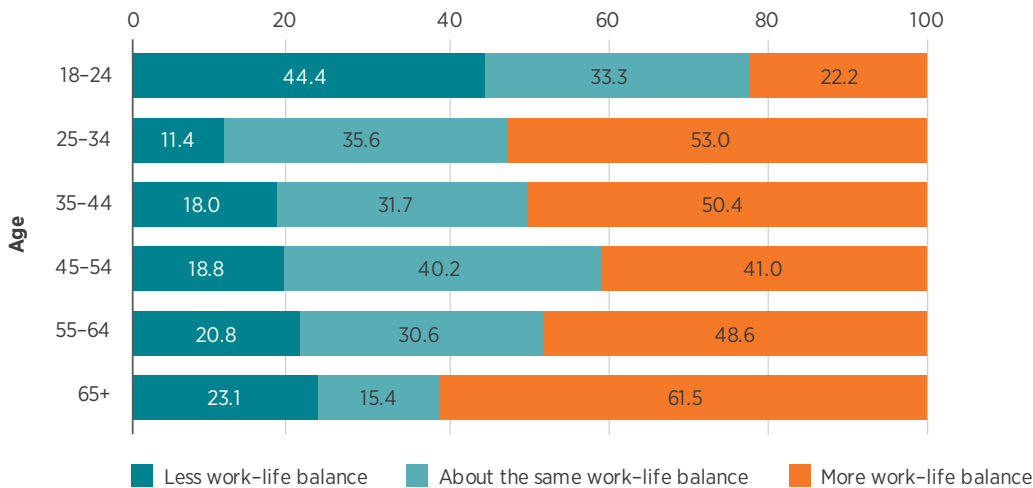
Figure 11: Comparison of levels of fulfilment in current job to last job, 2022 (%)



Base: workers reporting change in job in the last 12 months (n=605).

Around half of workers (48%) who have moved jobs in the last 12 months report more work–life balance in their new role, with only 17% reporting less work–life balance. Figure 12 summarises comparison of work–life balance in old and new jobs by age group. Work–life balance improvements from recent job changes are reported most among workers aged 65 and over (62%), likely reflecting movements out of career employment and/or partial retirement (Lawton and Wheatley 2018). In comparison, at the other end of the age spectrum, around one in five (22%) workers aged 18–24 report work–life balance benefits from recent job changes. Occupational differences are found. Almost two-thirds of workers (64%) in sales and customer service occupations report more work–life balance, while almost half (47%) of process, plant and machine operatives report less work–life balance in their new job. Notably, managers, directors and senior officials report relatively lesser work–life balance benefits from their job moves, with only around a third (36%) reporting more work–life balance in their new job. Similar patterns are found across NS-SEC occupational class categories, but with small employers and own-accounts again an outlier, with much higher proportions (77%) reporting more work–life balance in their current job compared with their last.

Figure 12: Comparison of work-life balance in current job to last job, 2022 (%)



Base: workers reporting change in job in the last 12 months (n=605).

Intention to leave and perceptions of future employment

The UKWL captures a series of measures that offer an indication of perceptions around future employment, including, ‘How difficult or easy do you think it would be for you to find another job at least as good as your current one?’, ‘How likely do you think it is that you could lose your job in the next 12 months?’, and ‘How likely do you think it is that you will voluntarily quit your job in the next 12 months?’.

A key demographic factor is age. Younger workers are much more likely to report that they feel it will be easier to find a job as least as good as their current job, with almost half (47%) of workers aged 18–24, and 44.7% of those aged 25–34 feeling it would be easy or fairly easy to find another comparable job. In part, this is likely to reflect the career stage of these workers. In addition, younger workers have a much greater perception that they are likely to lose their job, with over one in five workers aged 18–24 (21%) stating it is likely or very likely, compared with only around one in eleven (9%) workers aged 45 and over.

Age is also a standout factor in intention to leave, but with peaks at either end of the age spectrum. A substantial portion of workers in the 18–24 bracket (44%) and those aged 65+ (32%) report it likely or very likely that they will voluntarily quit their job in the next 12 months, with the latter likely reflecting plans around retirement. Differences by gender are found; however, they are small and not statistically reliable.

Occupational differences are found in intention to leave, with workers in relatively lower-skilled occupations more likely to report an intention to voluntarily quit their job in the next 12 months. Workers in elementary occupations, for example customer service roles, are those most likely to report an intention to leave their job, with this reported by one in four (25%) individuals in this broad occupation group compared with 18% of managers, directors and senior officials, 19% of professionals and 18%

of associate professionals. While patterns by broad occupation group suggest lesser intention to leave among higher-skilled workers, it should be acknowledged that within certain sectors increases in employees leaving their jobs or stating intention to do so have been recorded, such as in information technology and in specific roles where skills are in high demand and low supply (Gartner 2022). We also note when disaggregating by NS-SEC occupational class that only around one in nine (11%) small employers and own-accounts state an intention to leave this form of employment in the next 12 months.

Reasons driving intention to leave

The 2022 survey included additional lines of questioning enabling more detailed analysis of the drivers of intention to quit a job. Figure 13 summarises responses regarding the main reasons that workers are likely to leave their job. The prospect of better pay and benefits elsewhere appears to be a primary driver of intention to quit, selected by over a third (34%) of those who reported that it is likely or very likely they will quit their job in the next 12 months. The pursuit of increased job satisfaction (26%) and better work–life balance (23%) appear also to be highly relevant in driving intention to leave. These findings are indicative of both a focus on remuneration, and on the pursuit of different pathways to career success in the form of psychological success and balance (Hall et al 2012).

Movements for a different type of work are strongly correlated with age, as we find that more than two in five (45%) workers aged 18–24 report this as a main reason they are likely to leave their current job, whereas this is only reported by around one in four middle-aged workers, and only a marginal portion of those aged 65 and over (4%). Access to better training and development opportunities is also strongly correlated with age, with this being much more of a driver for younger workers, accounting for one in six aged 18–24 (17%), whereas only 4% of those aged 55–64 and none of those aged 65 and over reported this as a main reason for a future job change. Better training and development is also reported as a main reason of potential job moves by 12% of females, compared with only 6% of males. Better pay and benefits is particularly important to younger workers aged 18–24 (46%) and 25–34 (51%). Similarly, opportunities for promotion are more central to earlier and mid-career workers, reflecting their career stage, peaking at almost one in five among those aged 25–34 (18%) and 35–44 (18%).

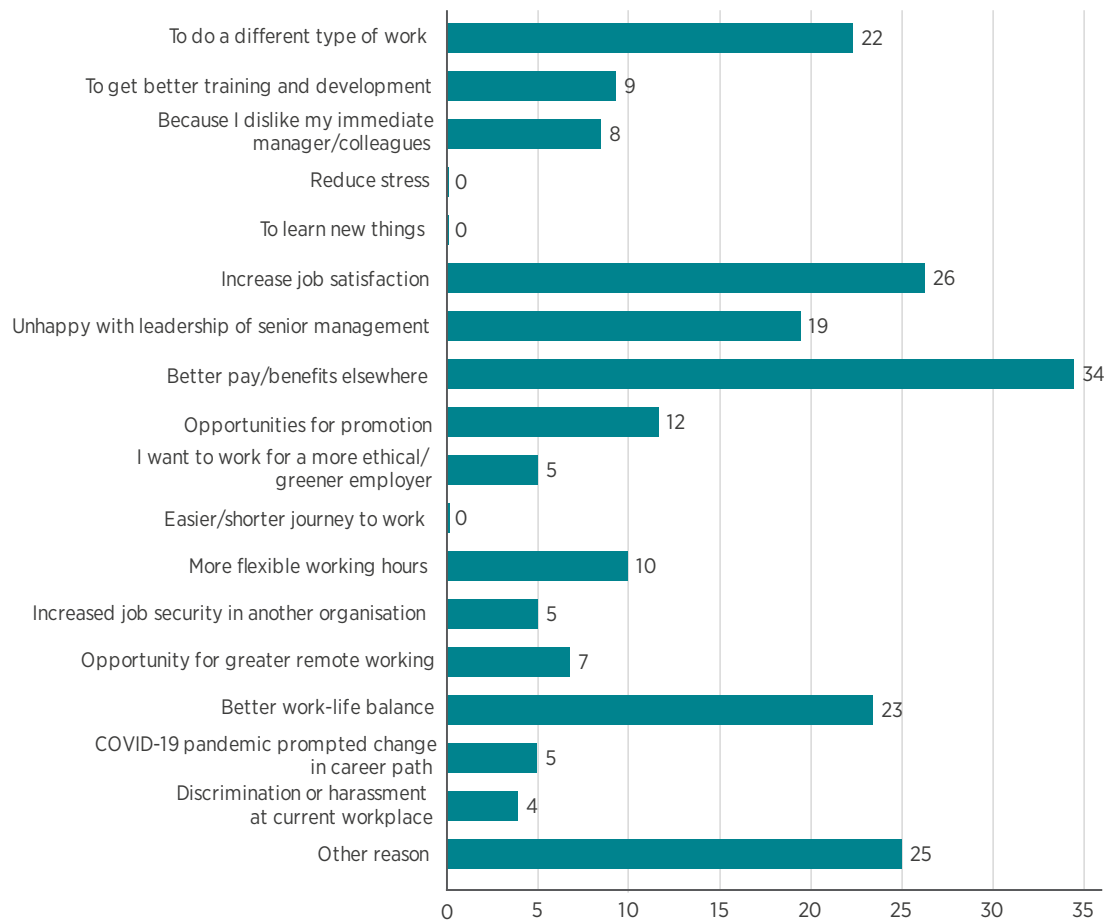
Increases in job satisfaction is a particular driver for those aged 25–34 (34%) and 45–54 (35%), although around three in ten of all workers under 55 identify this as a main reason. Middle-aged workers between 45 and 54 are those most likely (31%) to identify being unhappy with the leadership of senior management as a reason they intend to leave their job.

More flexibility over working hours is a more prominent driver among females (13%) than males (7%). Flexibility over working hours is also important to workers aged 25–34 (13%) and 35–44 (15%). Together these patterns are likely to reflect the impact of

dependent children and associated caring responsibilities, which research continues to show more often fall on mothers (Hjálmsdóttir and Bjarnadóttir 2021). Other aspects of flexibility can act as a driver for potential future job moves, as we find almost one in ten workers in middle-aged brackets report access to remote working as a main reason. Better work–life balance is most prominent (32%) among those aged 45–54, while it is a much lesser driver among those aged 65 and over (4%). Among the middle-aged this again is likely to reflect the impact of dependent children and associated difficulties encountered in balancing work and life.

Turning to differences by occupation, we find that leaving to do a different type of work is most commonly reported as a driver of intention to leave among employees in skilled trades (31%), sales and customer service occupations (32%) and especially elementary occupations (38%). The pursuit of increased job satisfaction is reported most prominently by associate professional occupations, which accounts for more than a third of these workers (36%), with almost three in ten sales and customer service occupations (29%) also reporting this as a particular driver of intention to leave. Better pay and benefits is a prominent driver reported among sales and customer service occupations (43%) and elementary occupations (39%), but to a lesser degree in administrative and secretarial occupations (28%) and process, plant and machine operatives (16%). Finally, better work–life balance is most common as a driver at either end of the labour market, with this reported by managers, directors and senior officials (27%), process, plant and machine operatives (30%) and elementary occupations (29%).

Figure 13: Main reasons you are likely to leave your role, 2022 (%)



Base: workers reporting it likely or very likely they will voluntarily quit their job in next 12 months (n=1,175).

Respondents choose up to three main reasons.

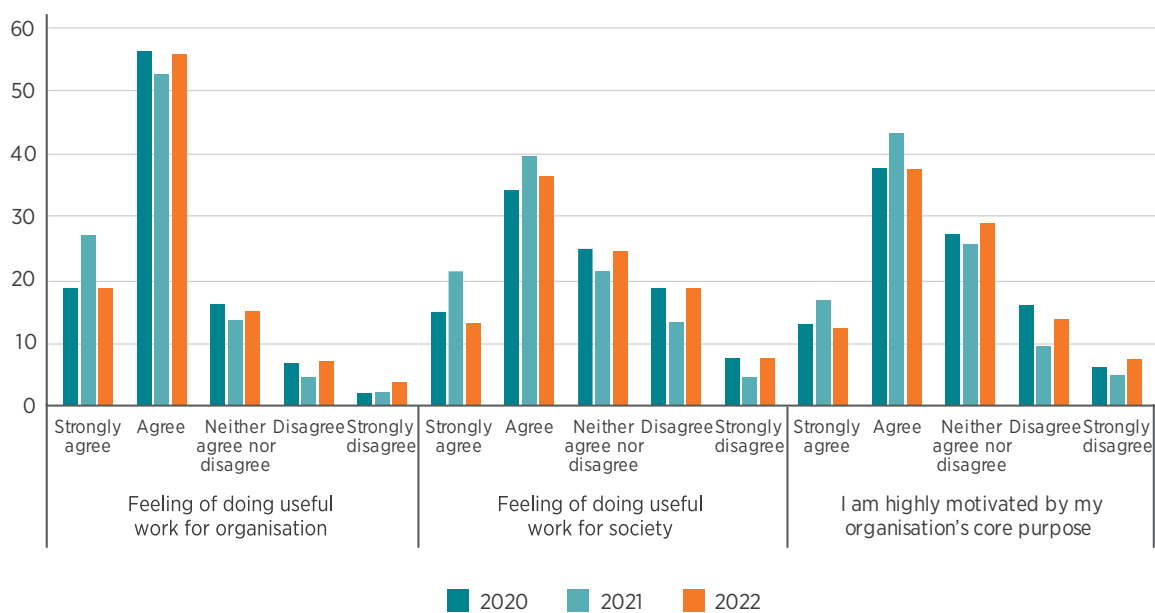
Meaningfulness and measures of commitment

Measures of meaningfulness of work have a statistically significant negative correlation with likelihood of voluntarily quitting a job, evidencing that meaningfulness has an important relationship with relative intention to leave. Correlations are particularly strong for feelings of doing useful work for the organisation, being highly motivated by the organisation’s core purpose, whether the work serves a satisfying purpose, and whether workers feel inspired at work.²

² Pearson’s R correlation test results compared responses to the question, ‘How likely do you think it is that you will voluntarily quit your job in the next 12 months?’ with measures of meaningfulness in work, including, ‘I have the feeling of doing useful work for my organisation’ (Pearson’s R = -0.275, p-value 0.000), ‘I am highly motivated by my organisation’s core purpose’ (Pearson’s R = -0.299, p-value 0.000), ‘The work I do serves a satisfying purpose’ (Pearson’s R = -0.273, p-value 0.000), ‘I feel inspired at work’ (Pearson’s R = -0.286, p-value 0.000).

Interestingly we find that in 2021 there was a short-term boost to levels of reported meaningfulness in work, perhaps spurred on by the extraordinary circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 14 summarises measures of meaningfulness for 2020, 2021 and 2022 for employees who have moved jobs in the past twelve months. We find that in 2021 four in five employees either agreed or strongly agreed that they were doing useful work for their organisation (80%), and three in five felt they were doing useful work for society (61%) and were highly motivated by their organisation’s core purpose (60%). In comparison, in both 2020 and 2022 around three-quarters reported feeling they do useful work for their organisation, and around half felt they were doing useful work for society and were highly motivated by their organisation’s core purpose.

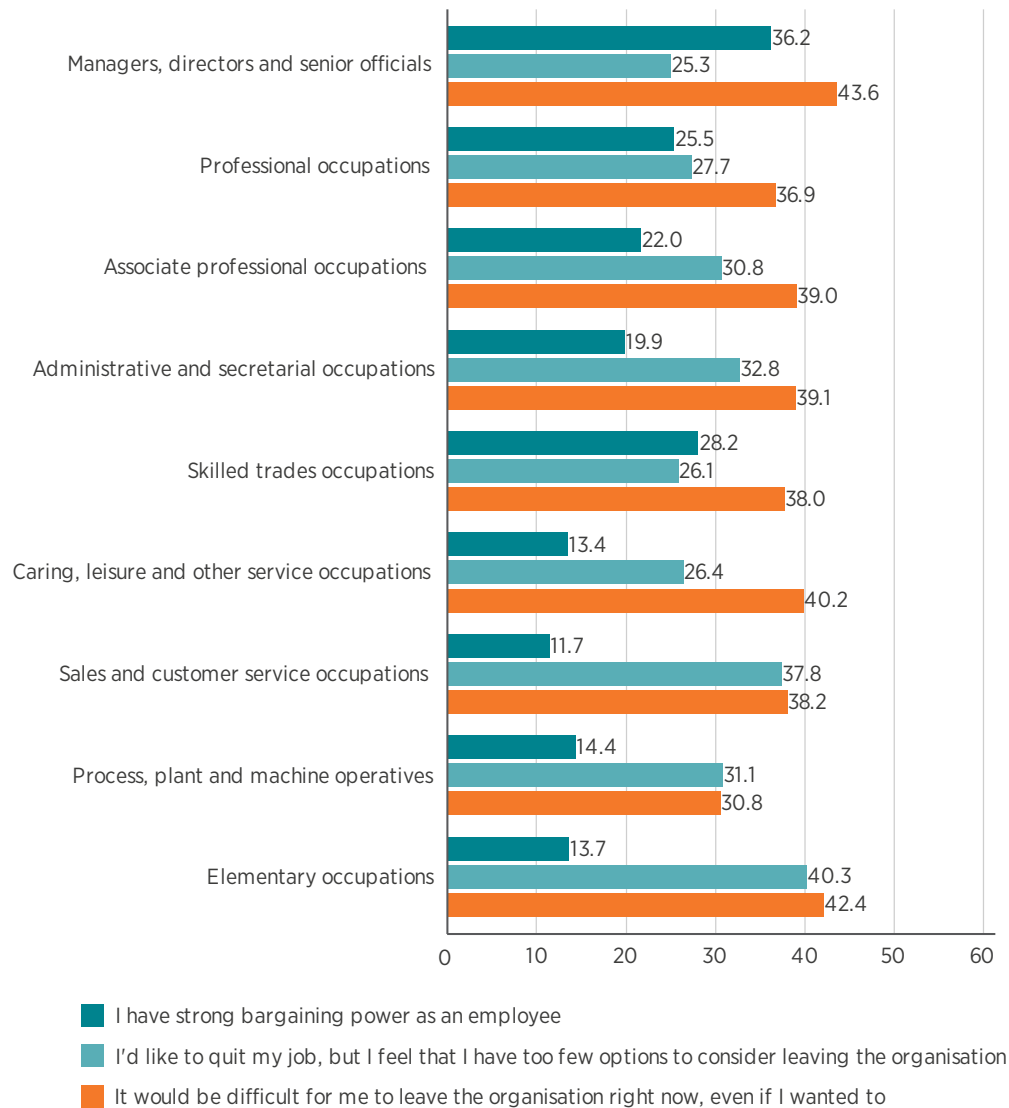
Figure 14: Measures of meaningfulness of work, 2020–2022 (%)



Base: all employees who have moved jobs recently.

Intention to leave is also closely related to reported levels of job satisfaction. Just under half (47%) of those reporting that they are highly likely to quit their job in the next 12 months report being dissatisfied with their job (either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied). In comparison, dissatisfaction with one’s job is only reported by around one in ten (10%) and one in twenty (6%) workers, respectively, who report being unlikely or very unlikely to quit their job. Differences in life satisfaction follow similar patterns, although with lesser differences.

Figure 15: Measures of commitment, 2022 (%)



Base: all employees (n=5,297).

Measures of commitment offer further insight into the position of different groups of workers with respect to potential labour market mobility. Figure 15 summarises three measures of commitment by occupation group. It reveals that relative bargaining power differs considerably by broad occupation group, with workers in lower-skilled occupations, including sales and customer service occupations (12%), reporting much lower levels of bargaining power compared with higher-skilled groups, especially managers, directors and senior officials (36%). Workers in sales and customer service occupations (38%) and elementary occupations (40%) feel they have few options should they quit their job, further confirming the lower bargaining power they have present in their jobs. Interestingly, managers, directors and senior officials (44%) and elementary occupations (42%) are most likely to report that it would be difficult to leave their current organisations even if they wished to, in the

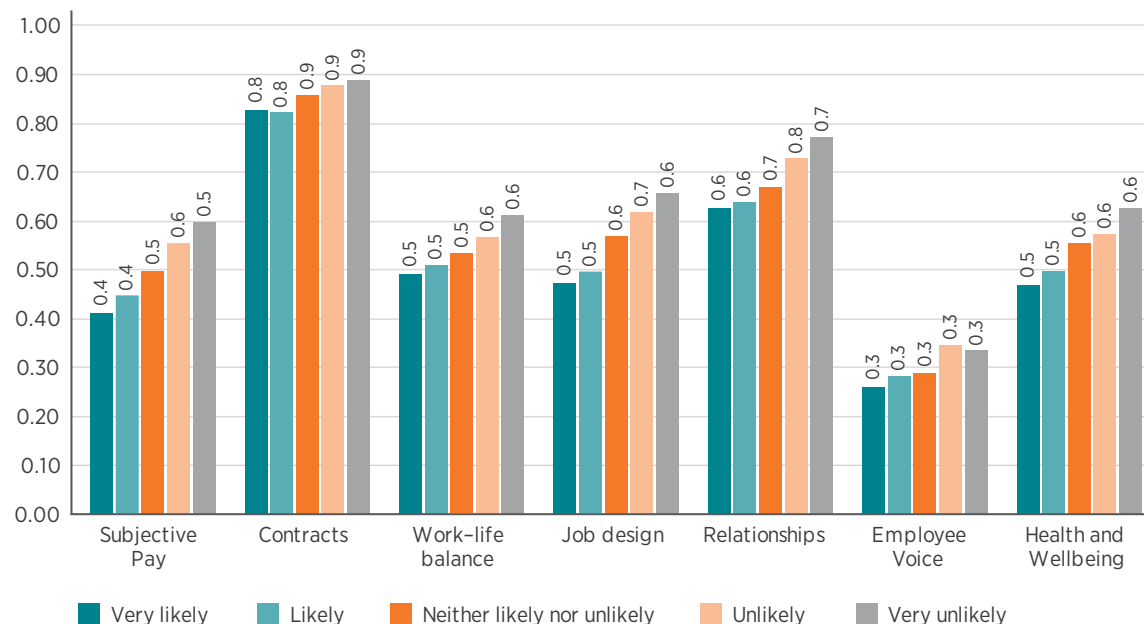
prior case perhaps reflecting difficulties finding comparable roles and in the latter a lack of alternative labour market opportunities.

Intention to leave and job quality

It is useful to consider levels of job quality relative to stated intentions to leave. To this end, Figure 16 summarises mean scores for the CIPD Good Work Index by self-reported likelihood that an employee will leave their job in the next 12 months. The mean scores for job quality are significantly lower across all of the seven dimensions of the CIPD Good Work Index among employees reporting that it is either very likely or likely that they will quit their job in the next 12 months. These relationships hold for all but the employee voice index, where we observe smaller variation in the mean index score in Figure 16, when we control for demographics including age, gender and ethnicity and SOC20 major occupation group using an ordinal probit regression model.³

Importantly, when we consider employees that have actually moved jobs in the last 12 months, we do not find significant differences in the mean scores for the dimensions of job quality between those who have moved and those who have not moved jobs. This finding may be indicative of job moves being used to address experiences of lower job quality that had prompted a prior intention to leave.

Figure 16: Good Work Index by likelihood of leaving job in next 12 months, 2022



Base: all employees (n=5,297).

³ Ordinal probit regression (-2 Log Likelihood = 15080.95, Chi-square = 978.56, p-value = 0.000). Full results in Appendix.

Summary

There has been much debate in the last year regarding a suggested increase in workers leaving their jobs, captured in the moniker ‘great resignation’, or alternatively the ‘great rethink’, and the causality involved in this movement of labour, including whether employees are rethinking their careers and broader relationship with paid work.

While we find some evidence of an increase in job-to-job moves in the last 12 months, we find little evidence for any substantial shift in employment trends as suggested by the great resignation or great rethink. Job moves may well reflect delayed moves caused by the pandemic, as overall levels of job moves appear more in line with earlier years of the UKWL survey. However, we do find several important differences in the experiences of employees that may act to drive both intention to leave and actual job moves.

It should be noted that increases in employees leaving their jobs or stating intention to do so have been shown in certain sectors, such as information technology and in specific roles where skills are in high demand and low supply (Gartner 2022), and as such the great resignation/rethink may be manifest in these cases, but it is somewhat more context-specific than the broader narrative around this phenomenon would suggest.

Combined, our evidence shows that workers in lower-skilled roles face a situation in which they are more likely to feel they will lose their job and more likely to want to leave their job but have low bargaining power and a lack of alternative employment options, leaving them somewhat ‘trapped’ in their current occupations.

Differences in job quality, as measured by the job quality index, further emphasise the impact of lower-quality work in driving employee intentions to leave their current job. The lack of significant differences in mean scores for job quality among workers who have recently changed jobs when compared with those who have not suggests that job moves may lead to improvements in experienced job quality.

4 Flexible and hybrid working

Key findings

- The changes to work location since the onset of the pandemic continue to be reflected in how time is split between workplace locations. In total across the 2022 UKWL sample, two-fifths of work time (43%) was spent working at home.
- However, employer/business premises remain the primary work location for the majority of workers. A third of the UKWL sample (34%) reported working at their employer/business premises all of the time in the last 12 months. In comparison, only one in seven (15%) workers reported working at home all of the time.

- Workers in professional and associate professional occupations have spent a much greater proportion of their work time, on average, at home, amounting to 63% and 57% respectively in these occupations.
- Workers engaged in sales and customer service occupations (82%) and elementary occupations (90%) are those who spend the most time, on average, at employer/business premises.
- Key workers also report much lower incidence of working from home, consistent with their front-line roles.
- There remain evident gaps in availability and awareness of formal flexible working arrangements, with occupation a key factor, although there are notable increases in the use of flexitime and working from home.
- Informal flexibility is unevenly distributed across occupations with managerial (34%), professional (33%), associate professional (32%) and skilled trades occupations (35%) benefiting from substantially greater flexibility than is present among caring, leisure and other service (12%) and elementary (10%) occupations.
- Workers that make use of the flexibility to work from home also report higher levels of control in various aspects of their jobs, although this may primarily reflect occupational differences in flexibility.
- The adoption of hybrid routines is associated with higher levels of job quality compared with workers who report no time spent working from home. More time spent at home aligns with higher mean scores in several job quality dimensions.
- However, hybrid workers appear to face the biggest difficulties in balancing work and life, including work–life spillover and longer working hours than would be preferred.
- Workers reporting the home as their only location of work experience lower job quality in some dimensions compared with hybrid workers, including subjective pay, contracts, job design and employee voice. However, they equally have higher means scores in both the work–life balance index and the health and wellbeing index, reflecting many of the documented trade-offs associated with working from home.

Recent changes in workplace

The concept of good work is of more relevance than ever to our working lives given the impacts of the global pandemic. There has been a rapid expansion of remote working, but one that reflects necessity rather than flexibility in working patterns, as around two-fifths of the workforce moved to homeworking 100% of the time at peak in mid-2020 (Sostero et al 2020). That said, a majority of the workforce have continued to work at employer/business premises or client sites, resulting in quite mixed experiences in work routines throughout the last two years.

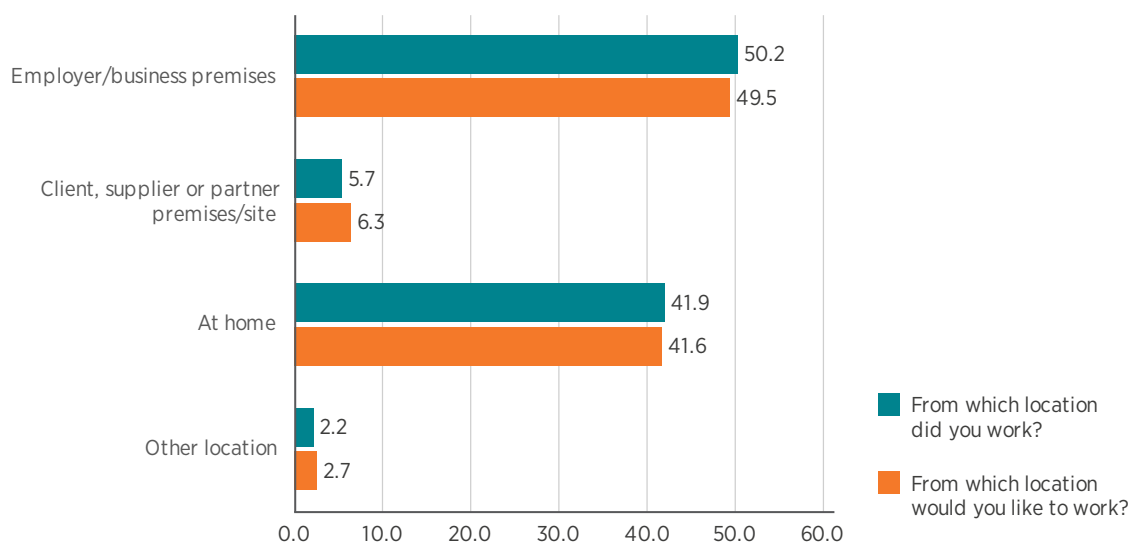
A measure of the proportion of work time spent at different work locations was included in the 2022 survey rather than a measure of main place of work. Main place of work has become problematic as a measure since the onset of the pandemic, as many workers who would consider their main place of work to be an employer/business premises have actually been working from home for the majority, and in some cases all, of their work time. This change has strengthened debates that

were already calling for alternative measures which take account of the relative split between different workplace locations, which can be aggregated to provide a probability space, that is, an estimate of the probability of work being performed in a specific location (Shearmur 2021). As such, collecting data on the proportion of actual work time spent in different workplace location offers a more accurate representation of current locations of work.

The effects of the pandemic were still being felt at the time of the January 2022 survey data collection, and this is shown in how time is split between workplace locations. In aggregate across the UKWL sample, we find that two-fifths of work time (42%) was spent working at home, with the remainder at either employer/business premises or client sites (see Figure 17). The majority of responses to the ‘other location’ category report working at ‘various’ locations, ‘on the move’ or ‘anywhere’, and this captures driving/travelling jobs and forms of mobile working. Substantive differences are not found in the preferences relating to where individuals would like to work compared with their current working location split. Note that these figures are averages across the UKWL sample and that individual workers will have differing routines of work that may involve splits between locations that are not directly referred to here.

Exploring in more detail we can observe that a third of the UKWL sample (34%) reported working at their employer/business premises all of the time in the last 12 months. In comparison, only one in seven (15%) workers reported working at home all of the time. More common is the adoption of a hybrid working pattern involving a combination of working at employer/business premises and at home, although the time spent at each location varies across workers. More than two in five workers (43%) reported spending at least three-quarters of their work time at an employer/business premises, while around a third of workers (37%) reported spending at least three-quarters of their work time at home.

Figure 17: Proportion of work time spent at different work locations, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

Who is working where in 2022?

Working at home is least common among younger workers, with only 31% of work time, on average, being spent working at home among those aged 18–24.

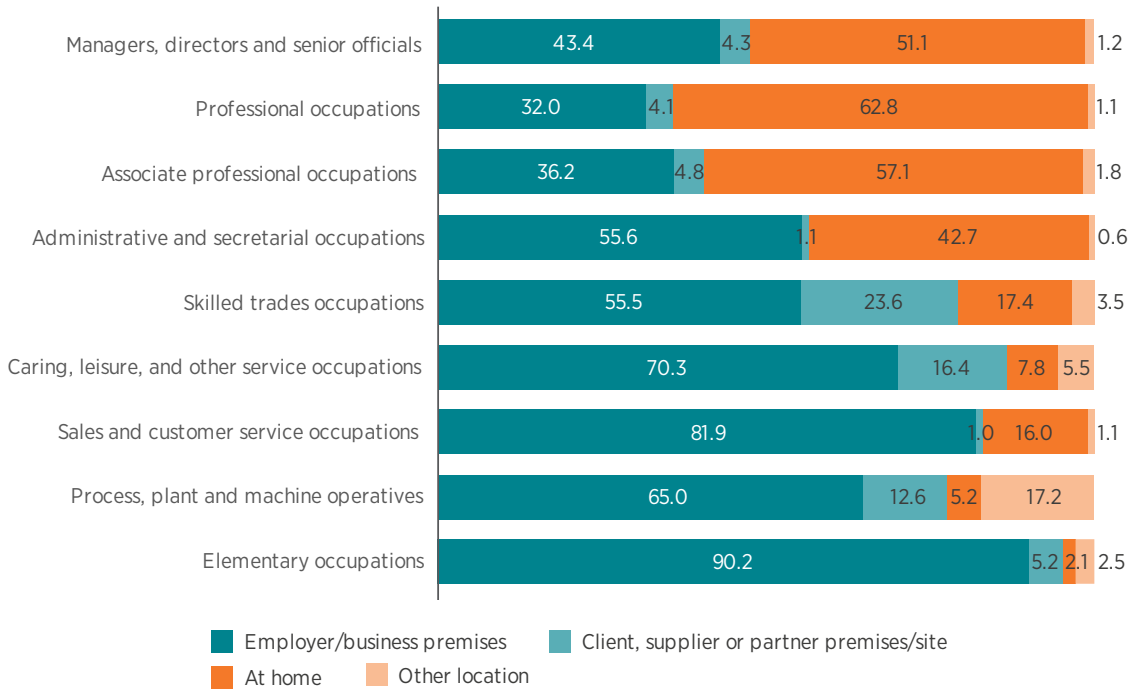
Interestingly, we do not find a notable gender split in levels of hybrid and homeworking. We do, though, find that male workers are likely to spend a greater portion of their time at client sites (male = 7%, female = 4%) or in other locations, including working on the move (male = 3%, female = 1%). This finding is a product of the gendered patterns of employment that continue to exist in certain skilled trades, logistics and other occupations.

When we consider work location by occupation in Figure 18, we find quite stark differences that are driven by the nature of work. In the last year, workers in professional and associate professional occupations have spent a much greater proportion of their work time, on average, at home, amounting to 63% and 57% respectively in these occupations. A fifth of these workers (20% of professionals and 22% of associate professionals) reported working from home all of the time. In many cases these occupations were switched to homeworking in 2020 in response to government guidance to ‘work from home where possible’ during the pandemic, and these patterns of work have continued into 2022.

Skilled trades and caring, leisure and other service occupations are those that involve the most client site working, accounting for around a quarter of work time in skilled trades (24%) and a sixth of work time (16%) in caring, leisure and other service occupations. As well as large portions of time being spent at employer/business premises (65%), process, plant and machine operatives have the highest proportion of time spent, on average, in ‘other’ locations (17%), as this broad occupation group captures those working in occupations involving driving and travelling around.

Workers engaged in sales and customer service occupations (82%) and elementary occupations (90%) are those who spend the most time, on average, at employer/business premises. Indeed, 74% of workers in sales and customer service occupations and 85% in elementary occupations reported working at an employer/business premises all of the time.

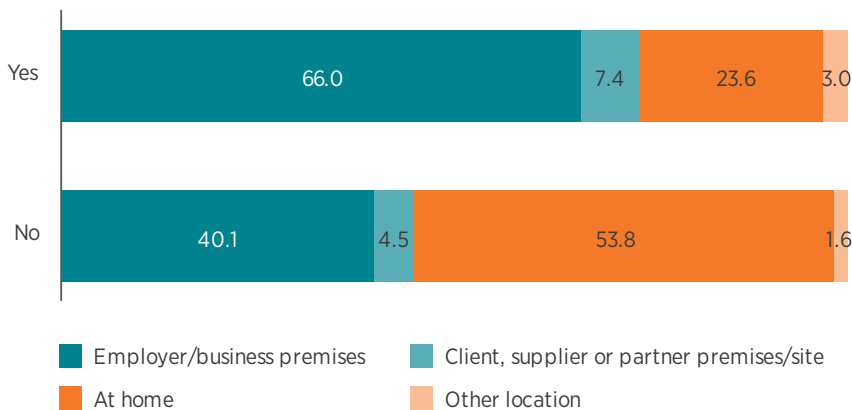
Figure 18: Proportion of work time at different work locations by SOC20 major occupation group, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

Further occupational differences in work location can be identified by exploring whether an individual is classed as a key worker. Figure 19 summarises proportions of work time at different work locations by whether the respondent is a key worker. We find a much larger proportion of work time (66%) spent at employer/business premises among key workers, consistent with the front-line nature of these roles. Indeed, over half of key workers report (56%) spending all of their work time at employer/business premises.

Figure 19: Proportion of work time at different work locations by key worker status, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

It is additionally worth acknowledging differences in work location by employment status, that is, whether someone is an employee or self-employed. It is well

documented that the self-employed have a higher propensity to work in locations outside of business premises, including the home (Wheatley 2021). Across the UKWL we find evidence consistent with this assertion, as the self-employed, on average, report spending around 57% of their working time at home, compared with 40% among employees. The self-employed also spend more time, on average, at client, supplier or partner premises/sites (18%) compared with employees (5%), and much less of their working time at business premises (18%) compared with employees who spend, on average, around half of their working time (53%) at an employer premises.

Flexible working arrangements

Formal flexible arrangements have increased in both availability and use in the last two decades since the Flexible Working Regulations were first introduced into the UK in 2003. Although only applicable to certain groups of employees with caring responsibilities at inception, the Regulations have since been expanded in their coverage to cover all workers following 26 weeks of service.

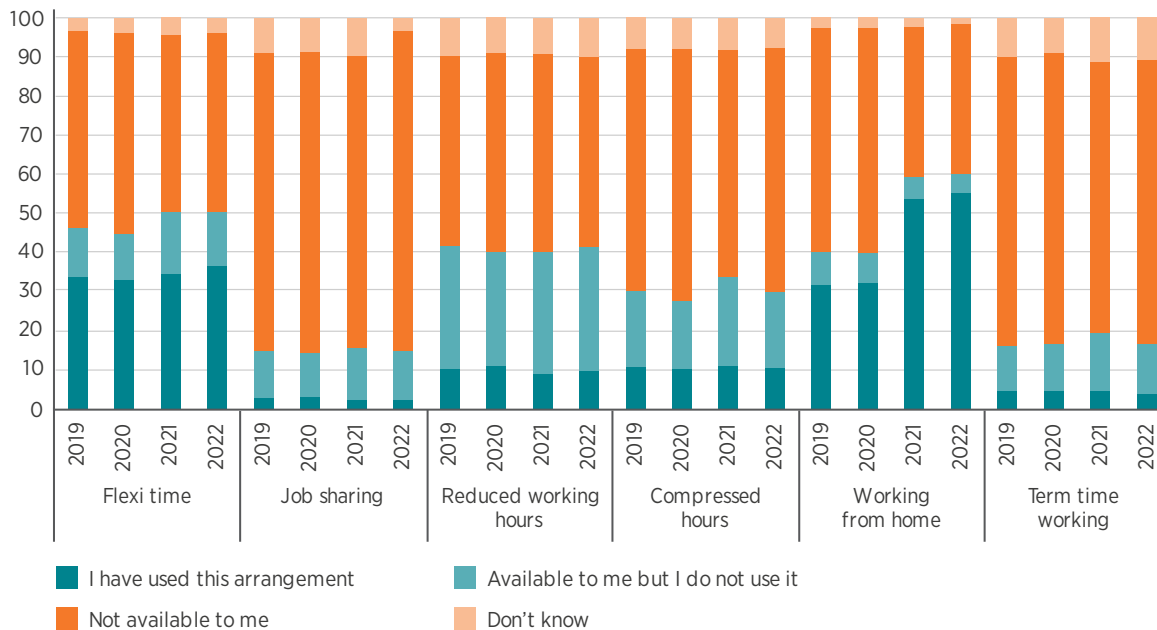
Past evidence has shown significant gaps in awareness and use of different flexible working arrangements (Wheatley 2017). The data from the UKWL summarised in Figure 20 is consistent with this finding, although some notable change is present in the 2021 and 2022 surveys in the use of flexitime and working from home. We find that flexitime has increased in use and reported availability in the last two years, with just under two in five workers (26%) reporting using this flexible working arrangement in 2022. Use of working from home has increased substantially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this change is observed in the UKWL sample. Over half of workers reported making use of working from home in both 2021 (54%) and 2022 (50%). Other arrangements remain lesser in their availability, including job-sharing, compressed hours and term-time working. It is also worthy of note that more than one in ten workers report not knowing whether certain arrangements are available to them, evidencing a continued lack of awareness of some forms of flexible working arrangements.

Use of flexitime is most common in managerial (46%) and professional (49%) occupations, whereas it is only used by around one in ten process, plant and machine operatives (10%). As already noted in regards to work location, working from home is much more common in highly skilled occupations, with managers, directors and senior officials (64%), professionals (76%) and associate professionals (70%) all reporting high use of working from home arrangements.

In addition to these more formal arrangements, the availability of informal flexibility is often highly valued by workers (Hall and Atkinson 2006). Within the UKWL sample, just under two-thirds (65%) of workers report it as being easy or very easy to take a few hours off work should they need to for caring or other household responsibilities. This proportion has remained relatively static over the period 2019–22. Informal flexibility is unevenly distributed across occupations, with managerial (34%),

professional (33%), associate professional (32%) and skilled trades occupations (35%) benefiting from substantially greater flexibility than is present among caring, leisure and other service (12%) and elementary (10%) occupations.

Figure 20: Availability and use of flexible working arrangements, 2019–22 (%)



Base: all workers except those running own business (n=5418).

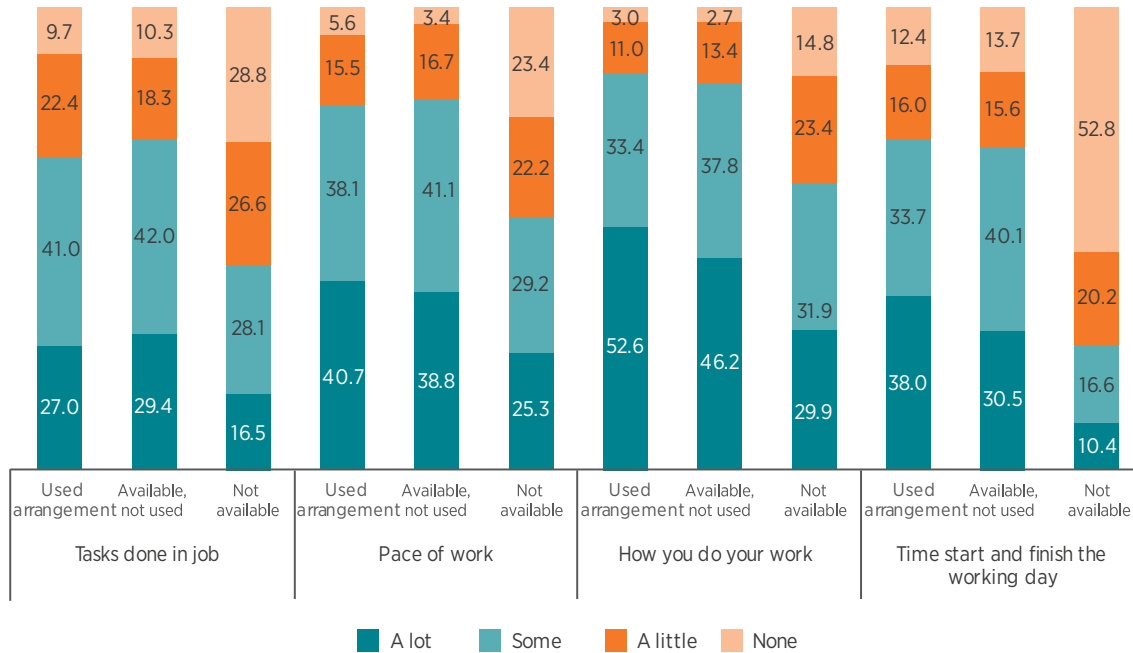
Autonomy in work and workplace

The UKWL includes a series of measures of autonomy at work. These can be divided into two forms: measures that capture job control, that is, control over aspects of the job itself, and those that capture schedule control, that is, autonomy over the timing of work (Glavin and Schieman 2012). Job control is measured through control over the tasks completed, the pace of work and the manner of completing tasks, and schedule control is captured using a measure of control over the start and end of the working day.

We find that workers that make use of the flexibility to work from home also report higher levels of control in various aspects of their jobs (see Figure 21). Importantly we also find that availability is linked to levels of autonomy, as those who report the flexibility to work from home but do not use this arrangement report substantially higher levels of both job and schedule control compared with workers who report this option is not available to them. This is especially pronounced with respect to how work is done, where over half of workers (53%) making use of homeworking report ‘a lot’ of control over the manner in which they complete tasks. Control over the pace of work and over the timing over the working day are also greater among workers reporting use of work from home. Interestingly, we find that workers reporting use of homeworking actually report marginally lesser control (27% report ‘a lot’) over the tasks they complete in their jobs than those who have this arrangement available to

them but do not use it (29% report 'a lot'). These patterns are likely to be heavily driven by occupation and relative differences in availability of flexible working arrangements, noted earlier in this section.

Figure 21: Autonomy measures and use of work from home, 2022 (%)



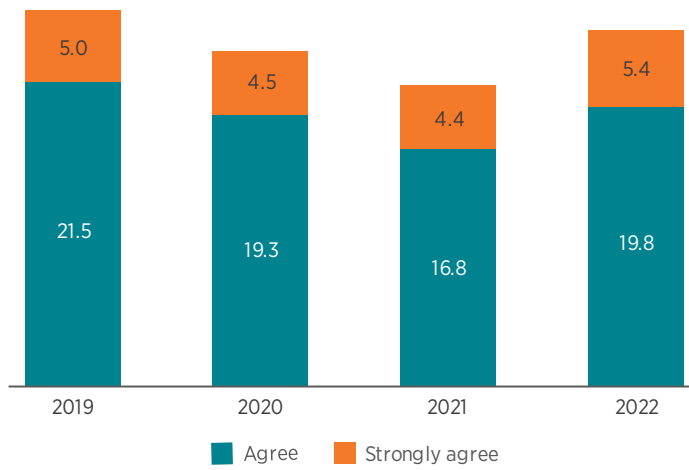
Base: all workers except those running own business (n=5,499).

Balancing work and life

The UKWL includes three measures that offer insight into the management of boundaries between work and personal life. These comprise a measure that captures work–life spillover, that is, the degree to which a job makes it difficult to fulfil commitments outside of work, one that captures life–work spillover, that is, the degree to which commitments outside of work make it difficult to do the job properly, and a measure of how work impacts relaxation. Responses for the period 2019–22 are summarised in Figures 22–24.

We find that in the years prior to 2022, there was a reduction in the proportions of workers stating that they felt their job affects their personal commitments, suggesting some improvement in work–life balance between 2019 and 2021. In 2022, however, a quarter of workers (25%) stated some difficulties in managing their personal life due to their job, returning levels to be more consistent to those of 2019. Meanwhile, we find that a much smaller portion of workers consider that their personal commitments affect their job, totalling only 6–7% across the period 2019 to 2022. Responses to the measure of work impacts on relaxation also suggest some increase in difficulties in managing work–life balance, although increases are relatively marginal (see Figure 24).

Figure 22: Job affects personal commitments (agree or strongly agree), 2019–22 (%)



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

Figure 23: Personal commitments affect job (agree or strongly agree), 2019–22 (%)



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

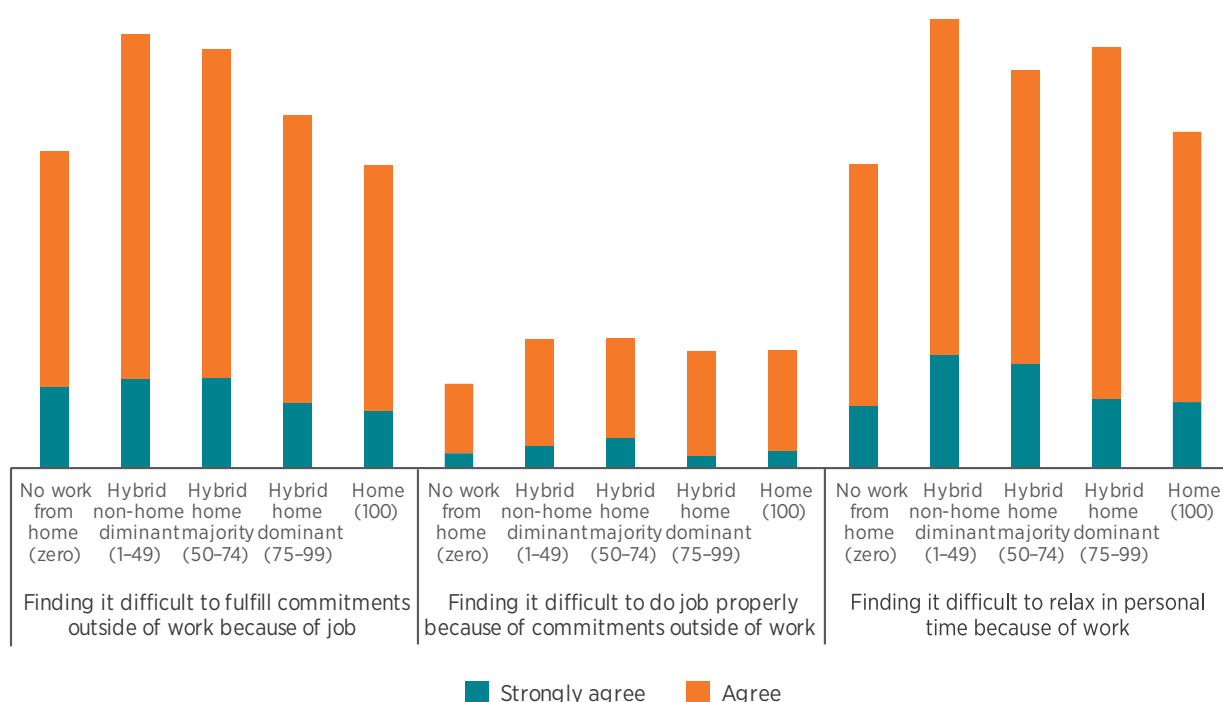
Figure 24: Hard to relax due to work (agree or strongly agree), 2019–22 (%)



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

Figure 25 considers differences in balance relative to workplace location using a measure of the relative levels of hybrid and remote working from home, which ranges from no work from home, that is, 0%, through to all work time spent at home, that is, 100%. We find that workers adopting a hybrid routine combining time spent at home with that at employer/business premises and/or other locations report higher levels of difficulty in balancing work with the rest of their lives. In particular, jobs are reported as making it difficult to fulfil commitments outside of work and making it difficult to relax in personal time. These findings could be indicative of the impact of work–life spillover in blurring boundaries and leaving workers finding it difficult to switch off from work as their job follows them from location to location (Green and Riley 2021).

Figure 25: Work–life balance measures by levels of hybrid and remote working from home, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

Job quality and work location

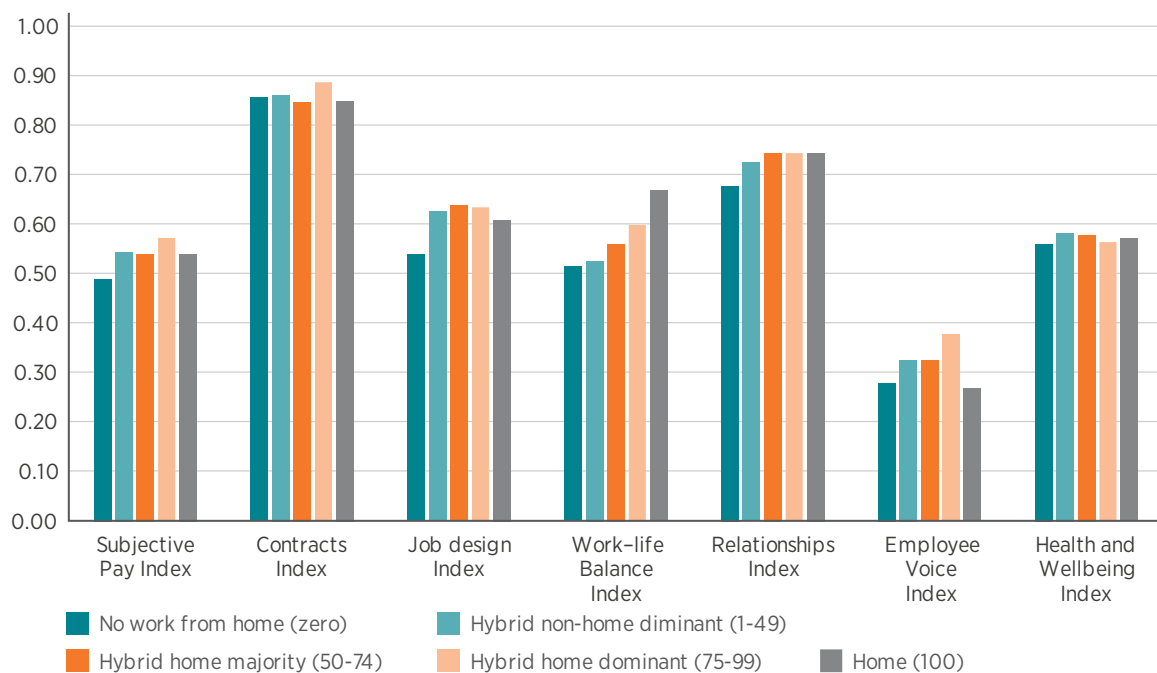
To consider in more detail the impacts of levels of hybrid and remote working from home, we construct a measure of the relative use of homeworking in the last 12 months. This comprises individuals who do not work from home, that is, zero work time at home, those engaging in different hybrid routines that are more or less homeworking dominant, and finally those who report having worked from home all of the time, that is, 100% of work time at home.

Figure 26 summarises the differences in experienced job quality by levels of working from home. Here we find that, consistent with existing recent evidence (Wheatley 2022), the adoption of hybrid routines is associated with higher levels of job quality

when compared with workers who report no time spent working from home. We also note a trend of more time spent at home aligning with higher mean scores in several of our job quality dimensions, with this most pronounced for the work–life balance index. It should be noted that some of the differences will be driven by levels of availability to work from home, which we have already observed varies significantly by occupation and employment status, with managerial, professional and associate professional occupations and the self-employed more spending more of their work time, on average, at home.

We also find that workers reporting the home as their sole location of work actually experience lower job quality in several dimensions compared with hybrid workers, including subjective pay, contracts, job design, and employee voice. However, they equally have higher mean scores in both the work–life balance index and the health and wellbeing index. These findings are consistent with homeworking offering benefits in the management of work alongside family and other responsibilities, and in offering associated wellbeing benefits (Wheatley 2017). The lower mean scores in other areas may capture a trade-off of sorts, as existing evidence has highlighted various impacts of working from home, including potentially slowing career progression and being less visible within the organisation, which could be manifest in lower scores in employee voice (Bentley et al 2016; Green and Riley 2021; Virick et al 2010).

Figure 26: The Good Work Index by levels of hybrid and remote working from home, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

We also note that employee voice appears marginally lower in Figure 26 among those working from home all of the time (0.27) compared with those who never work from home (0.28). However, the differences recorded with respect to employee voice

here are actually driven by the combined effect of the previously noted lower employee voice scores among the self-employed (see Figure 2) and the higher proportions of the self-employed who work from home all of the time noted earlier in the report. If we separate employees from the self-employed, we actually find that among employees mean scores for the employee voice index are higher among those homeworking all of the time (0.35) compared with those who never work from home (0.29). When considering employees only, mean scores remain lower than among those reporting hybrid routines, though, as per the overall patterns observed in Figure 26.

To add further robustness to the observed relationships, we conduct a series of linear regression models that control for demographics including age, gender, ethnicity, SOC20 major occupation group, and employment status. We also run separate regression models for employees only to confirm identified relationships in our analysis, including around employee voice.⁴ We find a positive relationship between routines of hybrid working and working from home all of the time when compared with never working from home for the subjective pay index, work–life balance index, job design index and relationships index confirming the overall patterns observed in Figure 26. More mixed results are found for the contracts index, with only a statistically significant positive result found between mean scores for the index and home-dominant hybrid working compared with never working from home. Confirming our earlier analysis, when we control for employment status we find a positive relationship between the mean scores of the employee voice index and working from home all of the time in comparison with never working from home. Finally, for the health and wellbeing index we find a positive relationship between mean scores for the index and hybrid routines that are workplace-dominant compared with never working from home. Differences are not statistically significant, however, for other hybrid routines and solely homeworking individuals compared with those who never work from home.

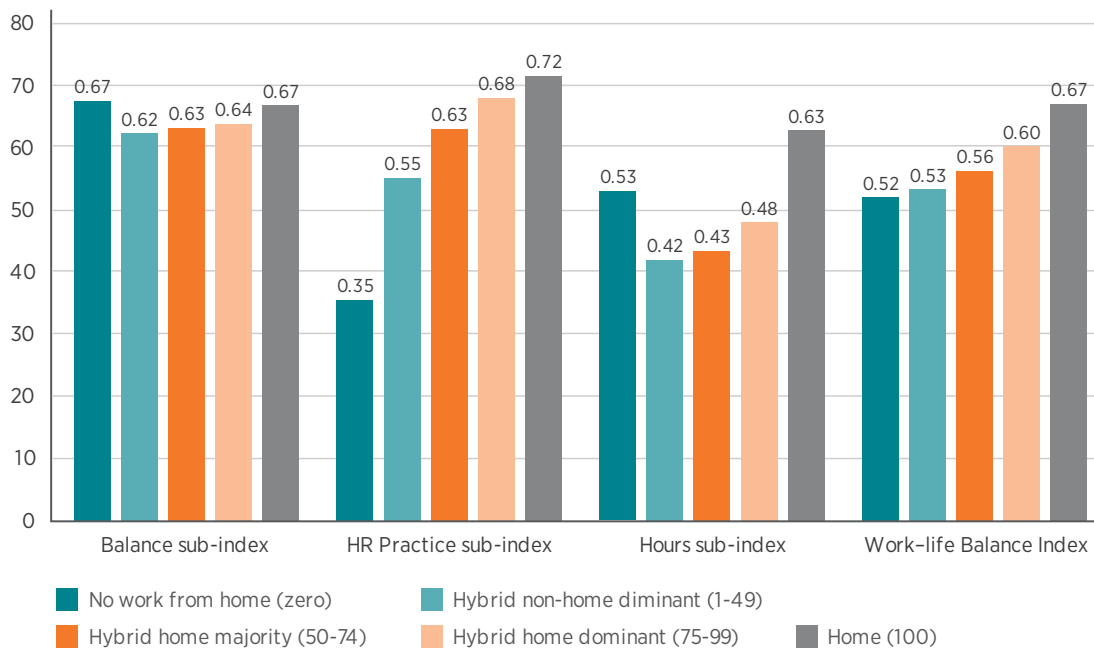
While we find an overall positive correlation between the mean scores of the work–life balance index and levels of work from home we do also note the earlier identified work–life spillover difficulties that, in particular, non-home-dominant hybrid workers, that is, those working at home for less than half of their work time, face that impact on work–life balance. As such Figure 27 breaks down the work–life balance index into its constituent sub-indexes to provide a more detailed insight into the relationship between levels of hybrid and remote working from home and sub-dimensions of work–life balance.

The balance sub-index confirms our earlier analysis, suggesting that work–life spillover impacts on hybrid workers and that this is most pronounced among non-home-dominant hybrid workers. The HR practice sub-index, which accounts for the presence of formal flexible working arrangements and informal flexibility over working hours, is strongly correlated with higher proportions of time spent working from home, as we might expect given this captures the relative flexibility present in

⁴ Linear regression model results available in Appendix.

jobs. Finally, the hours sub-index again shows some of the trade-offs that can be encountered when working flexibly, with hybrid workers scoring much lower, indicating that these workers are experiencing longer working hours than would be preferred. Interestingly, we find that those working from home all of the time score particularly highly, likely evidencing the control that is afforded to these workers to mould their work time.

Figure 27: Work-life Balance Index by levels of hybrid and remote working from home, 2022



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

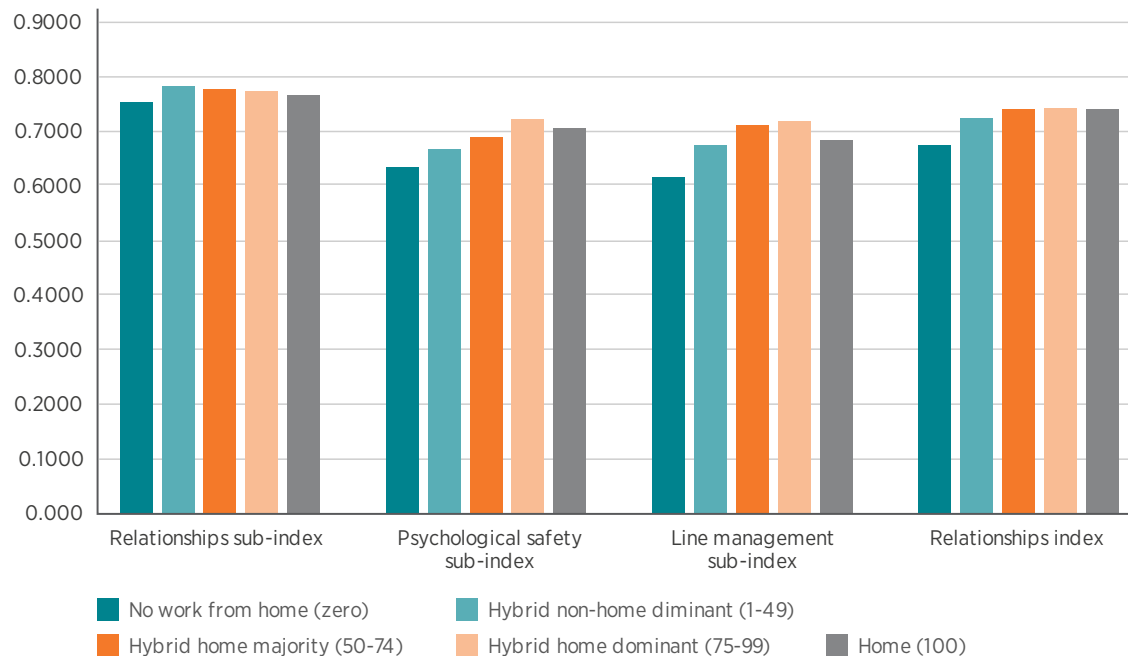
We are also interested in exploring in more detail the constituent sub-indexes of the relationships index to provide further insight into how relationships at work are affected by differing levels of remote and hybrid working, given that existing evidence has highlighted the potential challenges that can be faced when working remotely and in different flexible arrangements (Bentley et al 2016; Green and Riley 2021). Figure 28 summarises mean scores for the sub-indexes of the relationships index.

We find that relationship quality is higher for workers engaged in some level of remote or hybrid working. That said, as the reported proportion of work time tends more toward the home, we find lower mean scores in the relationship sub-index, potentially reflecting the impact of more time spent at home in reducing the ability to build and maintain good-quality relationships at work (Green and Riley 2021; Wheatley 2022).

Mean scores for the psychological safety and line management sub-indexes are higher for hybrid workers than for those not spending any time at home, and scores increase as hybrid working involves more time spent at home. Importantly, though, we also observe that scores are lower among those working from home all of the time, potentially reflecting the lack of visibility in the organisation that can result from

solely homeworking routines (Bentley et al 2016, Virick et al 2010). Combining the sub-indexes into the relationship index has an overall levelling effect among hybrid and homeworkers that masks some of the differences we have observed through exploring the sub-indexes.

Figure 28: Relationships Index by levels of hybrid and remote working from home, 2022



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

Summary

High levels of working from home and home-dominant hybrid working, that is, spending most work time at home, is reported among the 2022 UKWL survey sample. These levels are higher than those prior to the pandemic, albeit the majority of workers continue to work primarily at employer/business premises. The self-employed offer a distinct case, as we find patterns of work location consistent with prior evidence, with a greater proportion of time, on average, spent working from home and at client, supplier or partner premises/sites.

Location of work varies significantly across different occupations. Workers in managerial, and especially professional and associate professional occupations, report large proportions of work time spent at home, while workers in sales and customer service occupations and elementary occupations are those who spend the most time, on average, at employer/business premises. Skilled trades, caring and other leisure occupations and process, plant and machine operatives report the highest levels of working at other locations, including client sites and on the move. Key workers also report much lower incidence of working from home, consistent with their front-line roles.

The adoption of hybrid routines is associated with higher levels job quality compared with workers who report no time spent working from home. More time spent at home aligns with higher mean scores in several job quality dimensions. However, hybrid workers appear to face the biggest difficulties in balancing work and life, including work–life spillover and longer working hours than would be preferred. Workers reporting the home as their only location of work experience lower job quality in some dimensions compared with hybrid workers (but not those who never work from home), including subjective pay, contracts, job design and employee voice. However, they equally have higher mean scores in both the work–life balance index and the health and wellbeing index, reflecting many of the documented trade-offs associated with working from home.

5 Career progression and social mobility

Key findings

- We find that workers whose parents were employed as managers, directors and senior officials, professionals and associate professionals are all distinctly more likely to also be engaged in these same types of occupations.
- Almost two in five (38%) workers currently employed in professional occupations had parents or guardians who also worked in professional occupations.
- Workers whose parents were employed as process, plant and machine operatives and in elementary occupations are those least likely to themselves be working in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations. That said, we nevertheless find that more than two in five workers (43%) whose parents were employed as process, plant and machine operatives are themselves engaged in highly skilled managerial and professional occupations.
- Workers whose parents were employed in a skilled trade are those most likely to also be in a skilled trade occupation, consistent with existing research of parents passing on a trade to their children and/or viewing this type of occupation as a positive aspiration for their children.
- A greater proportion of workers whose parents were in managerial (49%) and professional occupations (48%) report that their own career has met their expectations. Just under a third (32%) of workers whose parents were engaged in caring, leisure and other occupations report their own career having met their expectations.
- A range of factors are identified as influencing career progression, including access to training and development programmes, quality of line management, opportunities to develop skills, defined organisational or professional career pathways, and relationships and networks.
- The relational component of work has a particular relevance when we consider the role of parental occupation to realised career progression. A higher proportion of workers whose parents were engaged in professional (33%) and associate professional occupations (39%) report that relationships and networks have helped their career progression to date, compared with less than a quarter of those whose parents were in caring, leisure and other service occupations (23%) and elementary occupations (24%).

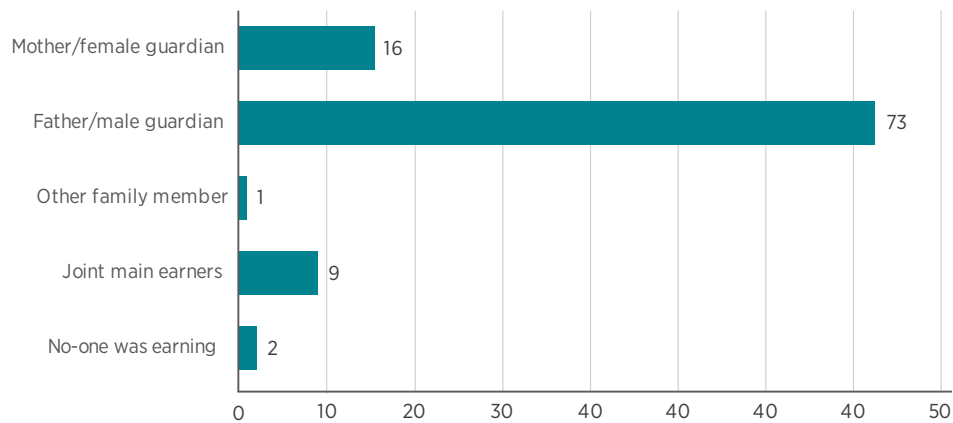
- Lack of access to coaching and mentoring is identified as a barrier to career progression among workers whose parents were employed in associate professional occupations (30%), process, plant and machine operatives (26%) and elementary occupations (35%).
- Workers whose parents were employed in caring, leisure and other service occupations are those least likely to value work as an activity above its function in generating income.
- We find that reported job quality differs across dimensions, including subjective pay, job design, relationships, and employee voice relative to parents' occupation, with this primarily reflecting the differences in the current occupations reported by our worker sample. Statistically significant differences are not found in the contracts index, work–life balance index and health and wellbeing index.
- Findings suggest that the occupation of parents/guardians may act as an influence on an individual's career and attitudes towards work; however, we do not find evidence to suggest that social mobility is limited significantly by parents' occupation.

Evidence of social mobility

Social mobility refers to the movement between class positions in society (Präg et al 2022). It is important to understand social mobility as social theory has long argued that downward social mobility has a detrimental impact on individual wellbeing, and similarly that upward social mobility is positively related to higher levels of wellbeing. Policy in the UK in recent years has had a focus on achieving upward social mobility through targeted interventions with, and for, vulnerable families and breaking barriers faced by disadvantaged children and young adults (Irwin and Elley 2013).

The 2022 *UK Working Lives* survey includes an expanded series of questions that aim to provide insight into social mobility, including through capturing the employment status and occupation of parents when survey respondents were aged 14. To gather initial understanding of household dynamics, we consider who respondents reported as the main earner in their household at age 14. Across the UKWL sample we find that more than seven in ten workers (73%) reported their father or male guardian as the main earner in the household when they were aged 14 (see Figure 29). Around one in seven (16%) report their mother or female guardian as the main earner, while one in eleven (9%) state that they had joint main earners in their household.

Figure 29: Work-life balance index by occupation (index scores), 2022 (%)



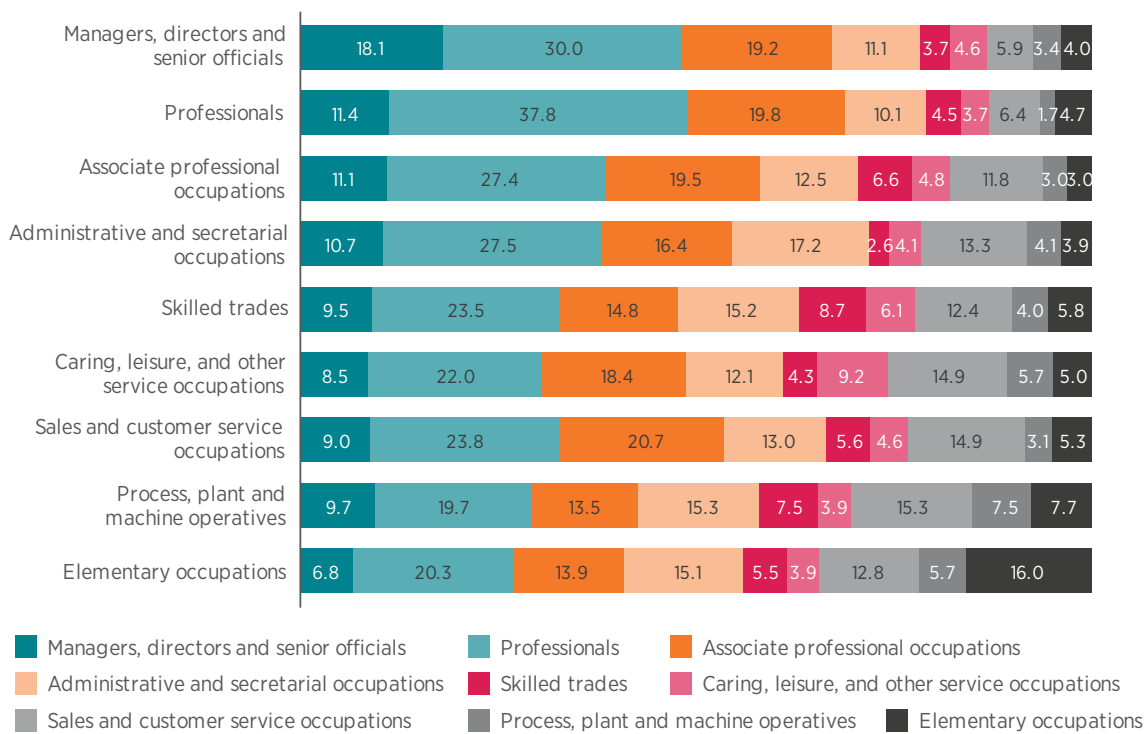
Base: all workers (n=6,291).

To offer an indication of social mobility we compare the occupation of respondents in the 2022 UKWL survey with the stated occupation of their parents at age 14, and this is summarised in Figure 30. We find that workers whose parents were employed as managers, directors and senior officials, professionals and associate professionals are all distinctly more likely to also be engaged in these types of occupations. Indeed, almost two in five (38%) workers currently employed in professional occupations had parents or guardians who also worked in professional occupations.

Workers whose parents were employed as process, plant and machine operatives and in elementary occupations are those least likely to themselves be working in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations. That said, we nevertheless find that more than two in five workers (43%) whose parents were employed as process, plant and machine operatives are themselves engaged in highly skilled managerial and professional occupations.

Workers whose parents were employed in a skilled trade are those most likely to also be in a skilled trade occupation; we find that one in eleven (9%) workers whose parents were in a skilled trade themselves report this type of occupation. This offers some evidence, consistent with that found in existing research, of parents passing on a trade to their children and/or viewing this type of occupation as a positive aspiration for their children (Irwin and Elley 2013, p118).

Figure 30: Respondent's SOC20 major occupation group by parents occupation at age 14, 2022 (%)

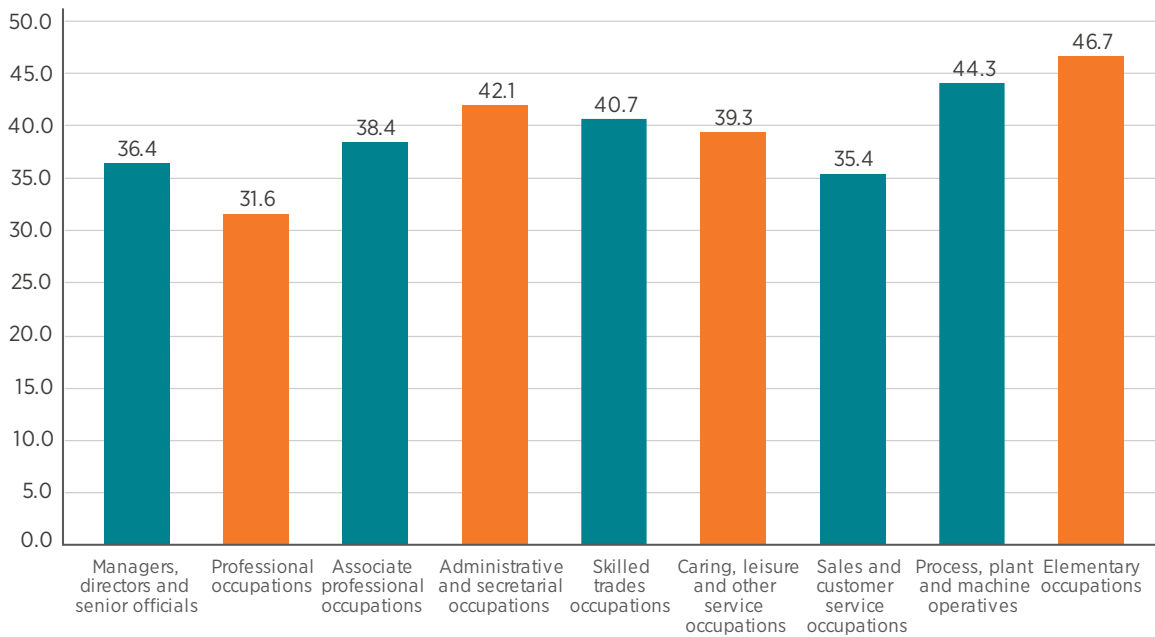


Base: all workers reporting working parents at age 14 (n=6,112).

We explore the role of occupation further by considering key worker status relative to parents' occupation at age 14. Here we find that propensity to be a key worker is higher among those whose parents were employed in process, plant and machine operative (44%) and elementary occupations (47%), and to a lesser degree, administrative and secretarial occupations (42%).

Overall, the findings suggest that the occupation of parents/guardians may act as an influence on an individual's career; however, we do not find evidence of rigid barriers to social mobility, at least not in relation to parents' occupation. Our data does not enable understanding of the effect of parental unemployment, however, which past evidence has shown to have a more direct impact on realised socio-economic status (Major and Machin 2018).

Figure 31: Key worker status by parents occupation at age 14, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers reporting working parents at age 14 (n=6,112).

Career development and progression

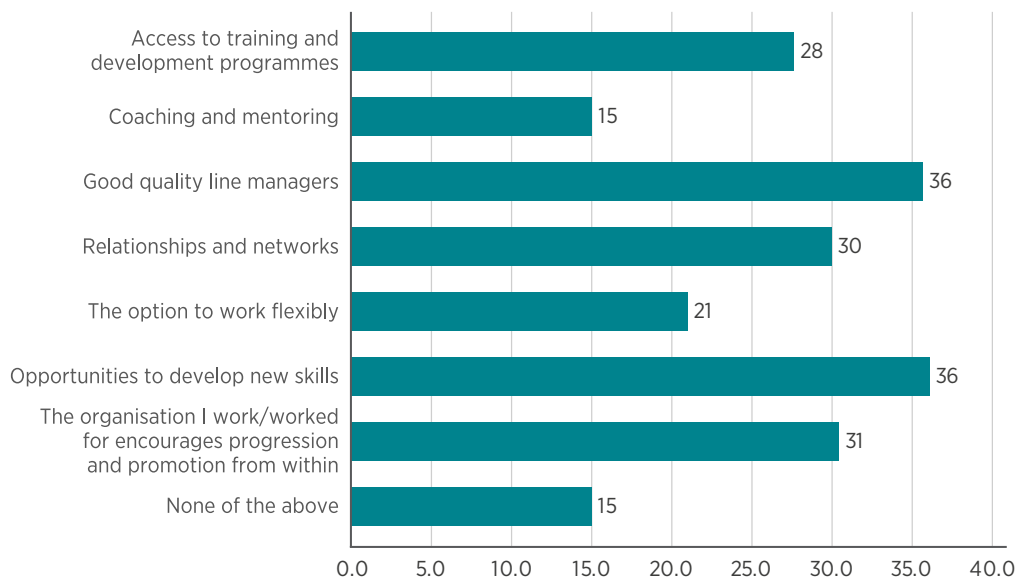
Reflecting on the link between careers and social mobility, we find that a greater proportion of workers whose parents were in managerial (49%) and professional occupations (48%) report that their own career has met their expectations. Just under a third (32%) of workers whose parents were engaged in caring, leisure and other occupations report their own career having met their expectations.

Individuals whose parents were in lower-skilled occupation groups, including caring, leisure and other occupations (35%), process, plant and machine operatives (31%), and elementary occupations (28%) are much more likely to state that they do not have any career expectations.

Perceptions regarding enablers and barriers to career progression also offer useful insight into experiences of work. Figures 32 and 33 provide an overview of these enablers and barriers. Enabling factors are summarised in Figure 32 for workers who report that their careers have met or exceeded expectations, while barriers are summarised in Figure 33 for workers who feel that their careers have not met expectations.

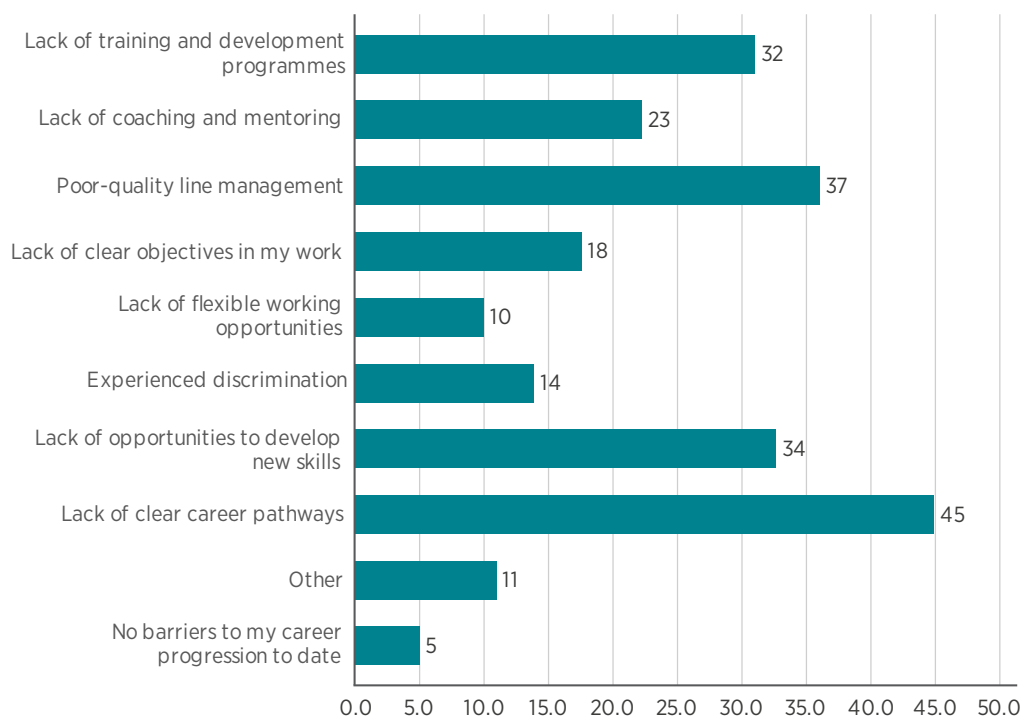
We find a number of common factors that act as enablers (when present) or barriers (when absent), including access to training and development programmes, quality of line management, opportunities to develop skills, defined organisational or professional career pathways, and relationships and networks.

Figure 32: Workplace factors that have helped career progression to date, 2022 (%)



Base: workers whose careers have met or exceeded expectations (n=2,943).

Figure 33: Workplace factors that have acted as a barrier to career progression to date, 2022 (%)



Base: workers whose careers have not met expectations (n=1,299).

The presence of relationships and networks as an enabler of career progression is a particular differentiator. A higher proportion of workers whose parents were engaged in professional (33%) and associate professional occupations (39%) report that relationships and networks have helped their career progression to date, compared

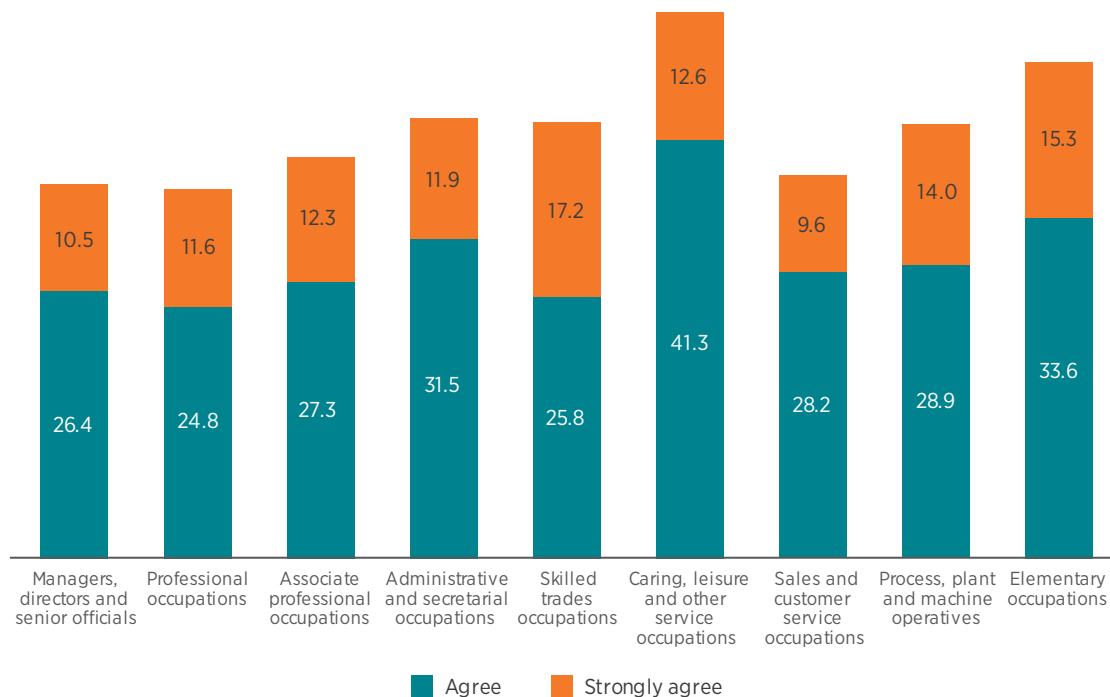
with less than a quarter of those whose parents were in caring, leisure and other service occupations (23%) and elementary occupations (24%).

Consistent with the relational component of work having relevance to career progression, lack of access to coaching and mentoring is identified as a barrier among workers whose parents were employed in associate professional occupations (30%), process, plant and machine operatives (26%) and elementary occupations (35%).

Attitudes towards work

To round out our investigation of the links between parental occupations and social mobility, we explore reported attitudes to work using measures of work centrality. To capture the relative importance that is given to work, the UKWL includes two measures of centrality: whether the respondent considers a job to be just a way of earning money and whether the respondent would enjoy having a paid job even if they did not need money. Exploring responses to the measure of whether ‘a job is a way of earning money, nothing more’, in Figure 34 we find that work appears to be a much less central component of life among workers whose parents were employed in caring, leisure and other service occupations and elementary occupations, with 54% and 49% agreeing or strongly agreeing that work only serves a function as a way of earning money.

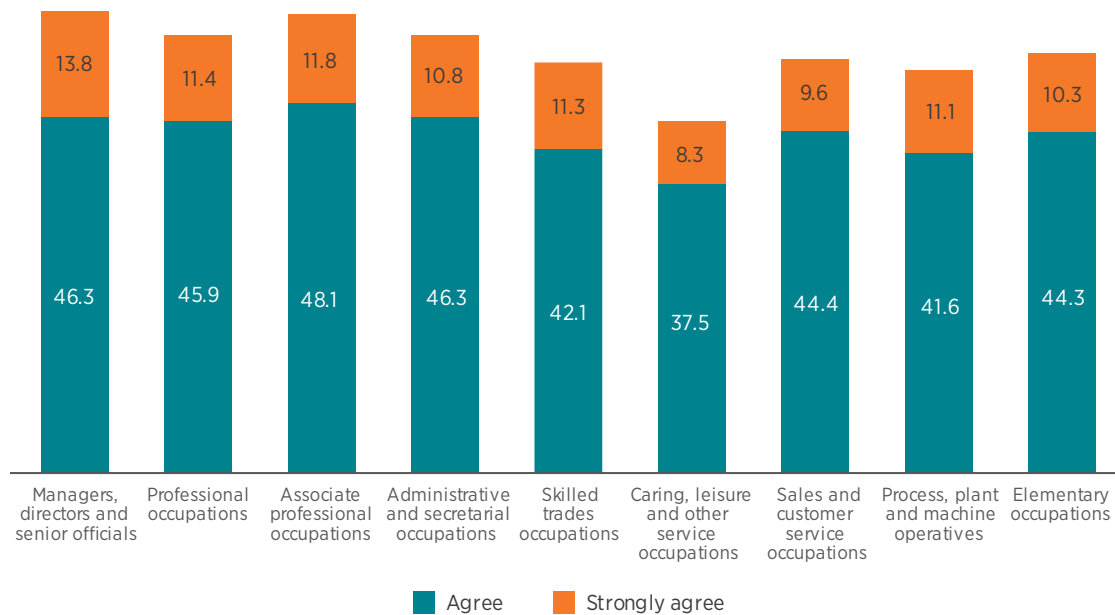
Figure 34: A job is a way of earning money, nothing more by parents occupation at age 14, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers reporting working parents at age 14 (n=6,112).

Our second measure, summarised in Figure 35, is consistent in showing that workers whose parents were employed in caring, leisure and other service occupations are those least likely to value work as an activity above its function in generating income. In contrast, around three in five workers whose parents were employed in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations consider work to hold an intrinsic value.

Figure 35: I would enjoy having a paid job even if I did not need money by parents occupation at age 14, 2022 (%)

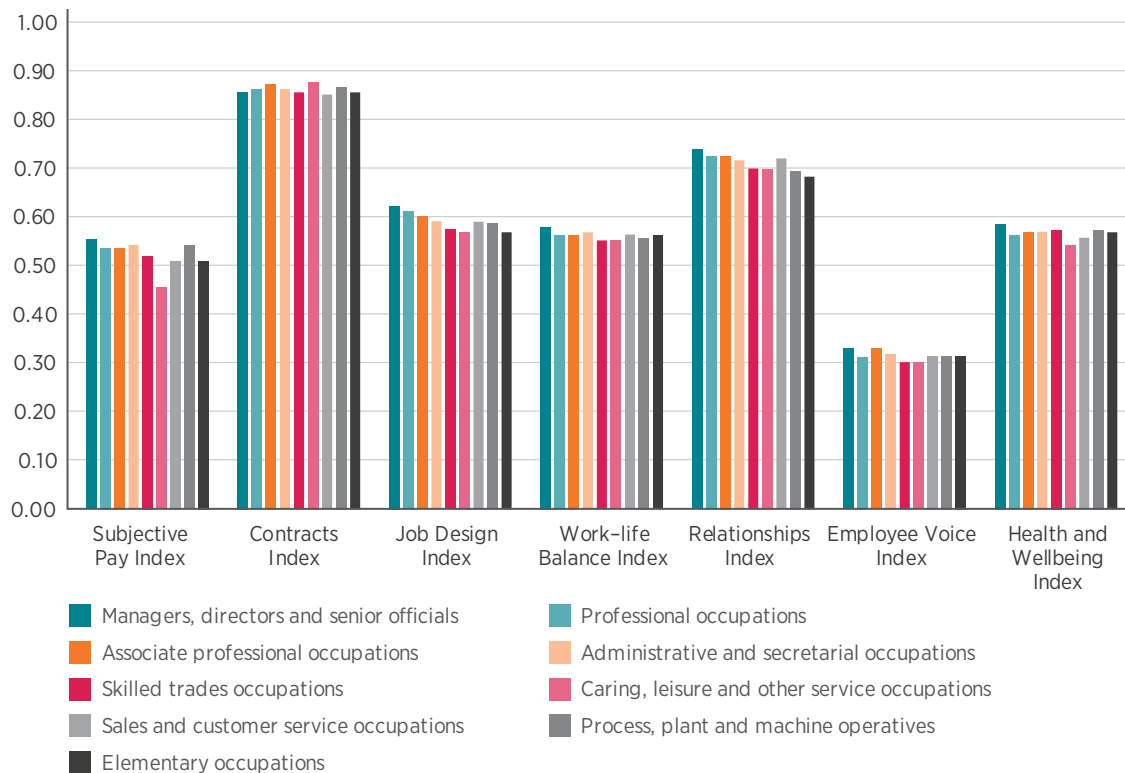


Base: all workers reporting working parents at age 14 (n=6,112).

Parents' occupation and job quality

Comparing the dimensions of the CIPD Good Work Index relative to parents' occupation reported at age 14 in Figure 36, we find that reported job quality differs across dimensions, including the subjective pay index, job design index, relationships index and employee voice index. This is likely to primarily reflect the differences in the current occupations reported by our worker sample. Statistically significant differences are not found in the contracts index, work–life balance index and health and wellbeing index.

Figure 36: Good Work Index by parents' occupation at age 14, 2022



Base: all workers reporting working parents at age 14 (n=6,112).

Summary

Social mobility is important to understand given its impact on wellbeing inside and outside of work. The 2022 UKWL survey included an expanded set of measures to enable insight of social mobility through capturing the employment status and occupation of parents when survey respondents were aged 14.

From our analysis we find that workers whose parents were employed as managers, directors and senior officials, professionals and associate professionals are all distinctly more likely to also be engaged in these types of occupations. Workers whose parents were employed as process, plant and machine operatives and in elementary occupations are those least likely to themselves be working in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations. That said, we nevertheless find that more than two in five workers (43%) whose parents were employed as process, plant and machine operatives are themselves engaged in highly skilled managerial and professional occupations. Workers whose parents were employed in a skilled trade are those most likely to also be in a skilled trade occupation, consistent with existing research of parents passing on a trade to their children and/or viewing this type of occupation as a positive aspiration for their children.

A greater proportion of workers whose parents were in managerial (48.9%) and professional occupations (48%) report that their own career has met their

expectations. Just under a third (32%) of workers whose parents were engaged in caring, leisure and other occupations report their own career having met their expectations. A range of factors are identified as influencing career progression, including access to training and development programmes, quality of line management, opportunities to develop skills, defined organisational or professional career pathways, and relationships and networks. Relational components of work, including networks and access to mentoring, may have particular relevance when we consider the role of parental occupation to realised career progression.

Overall, the findings suggest that the occupation of parents/guardians may act as an influence on an individual's career and attitudes towards work; however, we do not find evidence to suggest that social mobility is limited significantly by parents' occupation. The UKWL survey data does not enable understanding of the effect of parental unemployment, however, which past evidence has shown to have a more direct impact on realised socio-economic status (Major and Machin 2018).

6 Relationships at work and the quality of management

Key findings

- Relationships with colleagues in the same team are predominantly reported as being good or very good (88%).
- Overall, just under four in five workers (79%) report good or very good relationships with their line manager or supervisor. Interestingly, we find that those who have management responsibilities are even more likely to report good-quality relationships with their subordinates, as nine in ten (89%) report good or very good relationships with the staff that they manage.
- On average, less than one in five employees (18%) agree or strongly agree that a mistake they make would be held against them by their manager or supervisor.
- While on average similar proportions of employees, around one in five (20%), indicate that they witness people being rejected for being different within their organisation, it does appear more common in certain occupations, with higher levels of discrimination at lower occupational levels.
- Lack of trust, reflected in perceptions that others would deliberately act in a way that undermines efforts, is less commonly cited, with only 17% of employees overall indicating that this may occur in their organisation.
- Incidence of conflict at work is more often reported by female workers (9%) compared with their male counterparts (6%).
- Younger workers are similarly more likely to report having encountered conflict, with more than one in ten 18–24-year-olds (11%) and 25–34-year-olds (10%) reporting conflict compared with around one in twenty of those aged 55–64 (6%) and 65 and over (4%).
- We find a much larger incidence of conflict in elementary occupations, standing at around one in seven workers (13%), compared with around half of this amount reported by most other occupation groups.
- Differences in the incidence of conflict are also found across other protected characteristics. Around one in five workers reporting a disability (17%) have

encountered conflict compared with nearer one in twenty (6%) of those reporting no disability. More than double the proportion of gay, lesbian or bisexual workers report incidence of conflict (15%) compared with heterosexual workers (7%), and one in eight (12%) non-white workers report incidence of conflict compared with only 7% of white workers.

- Overall, around one in seven cases (14%) are reported as being fully resolved within 12 months and a further 26% partially resolved.
- The proportion of cases that are fully resolved is broadly the same by gender. However, female workers are more likely to report a case as being partly resolved (30%) than their male counterparts (21%), possibly reflecting more complex cases requiring greater time to resolve.
- Resolution of cases is lower among those reporting other protected characteristics, including disability and sexuality.
- Patterns of conflict are indicative of greater incidence of conflict being experienced by workers who report a protected characteristic, and lesser resolution to this conflict.
- We find that employees generally agree or strongly agree that their line manager, supervisor or boss gives them respect (77%), recognises them when they do a good job (70%), will provide support should they encounter a problem (74%) and treats them fairly (77%).
- Employees are generally less positive about the career and developmental support that they receive from leaders (useful feedback on work (55%), supports learning and development (57%) and longer-term career progression (48%)), with levels higher in higher-level occupations and lower in process, plant and machine operative and elementary occupations.
- Levels of trust in leaders also vary by occupational level.
- The reported quality of management varies by occupational level. Higher mean scores are found among higher-level occupations for the line manager sub-index, which is constructed from the lines of questioning around the quality of management.
- After controlling for occupation and demographics, we find a positive relationship between the quality of management, relationship quality and the psychological safety climate, and both the work–life balance index and the health and wellbeing index.

Relationships at work

Good-quality relationships are a significant source of satisfaction and fulfilment at work (Robertson and Cooper 2011). They can act to offset the impact of work stressors, engender positive work attitudes among workers and increase levels of commitment (Chiaburu and Harrison 2008). Colleagues that have closer relationships can also provide support to each other when difficulties are encountered at work. The quality of various relationships at work, including with colleagues and line managers/supervisors, is summarised by occupation in Figure 37.

Figure 37: Quality of relationships at work, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers (those with no line manager do not answer questions about line manager relationships).

Relationships with colleagues in the same team are predominantly reported as being good or very good, with the lowest incidence of good or very good relationships among process, plant and machine operatives (82%). Fewer workers overall report good or very good relationships with other colleagues, but this still accounts for just over four-fifths of workers in total (81%), and occupational differences are only marginal.

Turning to relationships between employees and their leaders, we find that, overall, just under four in five workers (79%) report good or very good relationships with their line manager or supervisor. A consistent proportion, around four in five workers, in managerial (82%), professional (81%), associate professional (81%) and administrative and secretarial occupations (81%) report good or very good relationships with their line manager or supervisor. In comparison, only around two-thirds (67%) of workers in elementary occupations report good or very good relationships with their line manager or supervisor.

Fewer workers report that the quality of relationships with other managers at their workplace are good or very good (74%). The exception to this pattern is workers in managerial occupations, where we find a higher proportion (85%) report good or very good relationships, perhaps simply reflecting that these workers interact with other managers at their workplace more often and in turn build relationships with them. The quality of the relationships with other managers at the workplace is lowest among process, plant and machine operatives (59%).

Interestingly, we find that those who have management responsibilities are even more likely to report good-quality relationship with their subordinates, as nine in ten (89%) report good or very good relationships with the staff that they manage.

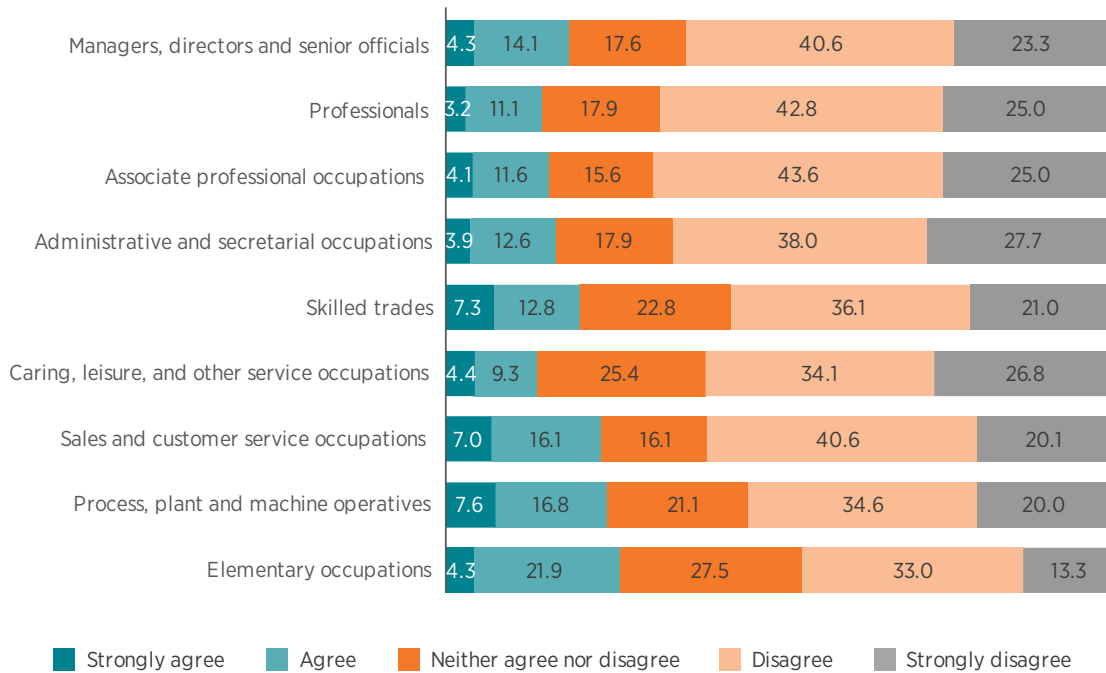
Customer, client and service user and supplier relationships are reported as being good or very good by around four in five workers overall (83% and 77% respectively).

Psychological safety climate

Psychological safety refers to perceptions of the potential outcome of taking interpersonal risks at work (Edmondson and Lei 2014). An environment that offers psychological safety enables workers to present themselves in the workplace, that is, communicating their own perspectives, without fear of negative repercussions (Kahn 1990). The psychological safety climate within an organisation affects the willingness of employees to share ideas and knowledge, raise concerns and suggestions for change, and use initiative. It is influenced by perceived levels of support, trust in colleagues and leaders, and incidence of conflict at work. The UKWL includes three measures of psychological safety focusing on: (1) the presence of blame cultures, through a measure capturing whether mistakes are held against employees by managers/supervisors; (2) discrimination, through a measure of whether team members reject others for being different; and (3) trust, captured through a measure of whether team members would deliberately act to undermine each other. Figures 38–40 summarise responses to these measures by occupation.

We find that, on average, less than one in five employees (18%) agree or strongly agree that a mistake they make would be held against them by their manager or supervisor (see Figure 38). Across occupations there are differences, with one in seven workers in professional (14%) and in caring, leisure or other occupations (14%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that a mistake they make would be held against them by their manager or supervisor, compared with around one in four of those in sales and customer service (23%), process, plant and machine operatives (24%) and elementary occupations (26%).

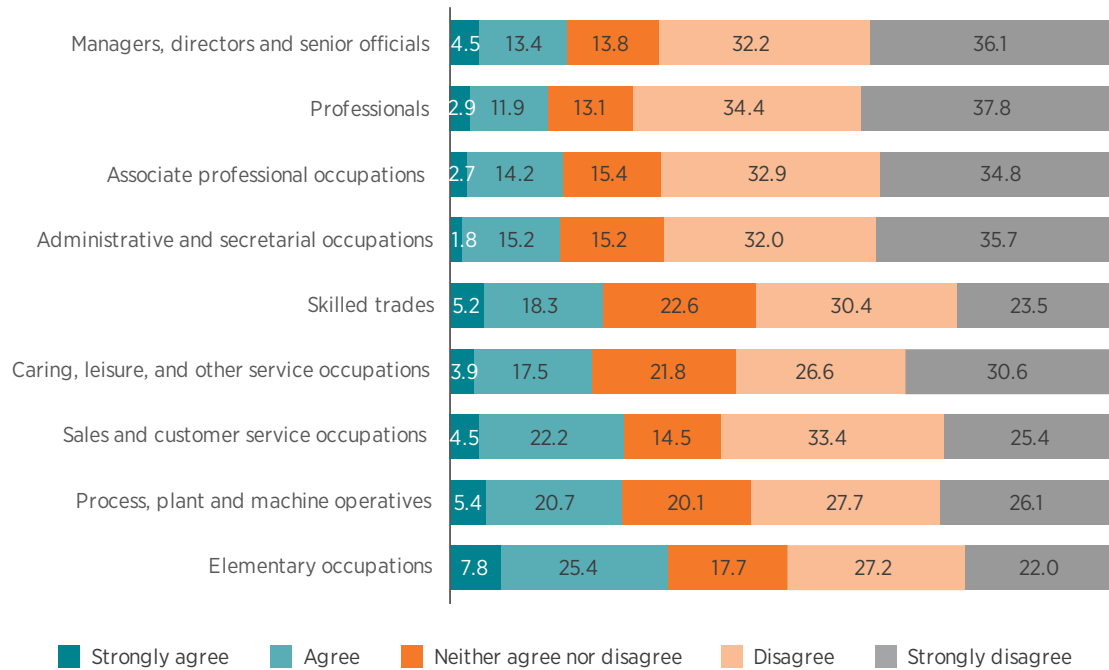
Figure 38: Mistakes held against employee by manager or supervisor by SOC20 major occupation group, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers except those running own business or working as a freelancer/contractor for multiple clients (n=5,184).

While on average similar proportions of employees, around one in five (20%), indicate that they witness people rejected for being different within their organisation, it does appear more common in certain occupations. Again, the pattern follows that of overall occupational level, with employees in sales and customer service (27%), process, plant and machine operatives (26%) and in particular elementary occupations (33%) more likely to report that they agree or strongly agree that team members sometimes reject others for being different (see Figure 39).

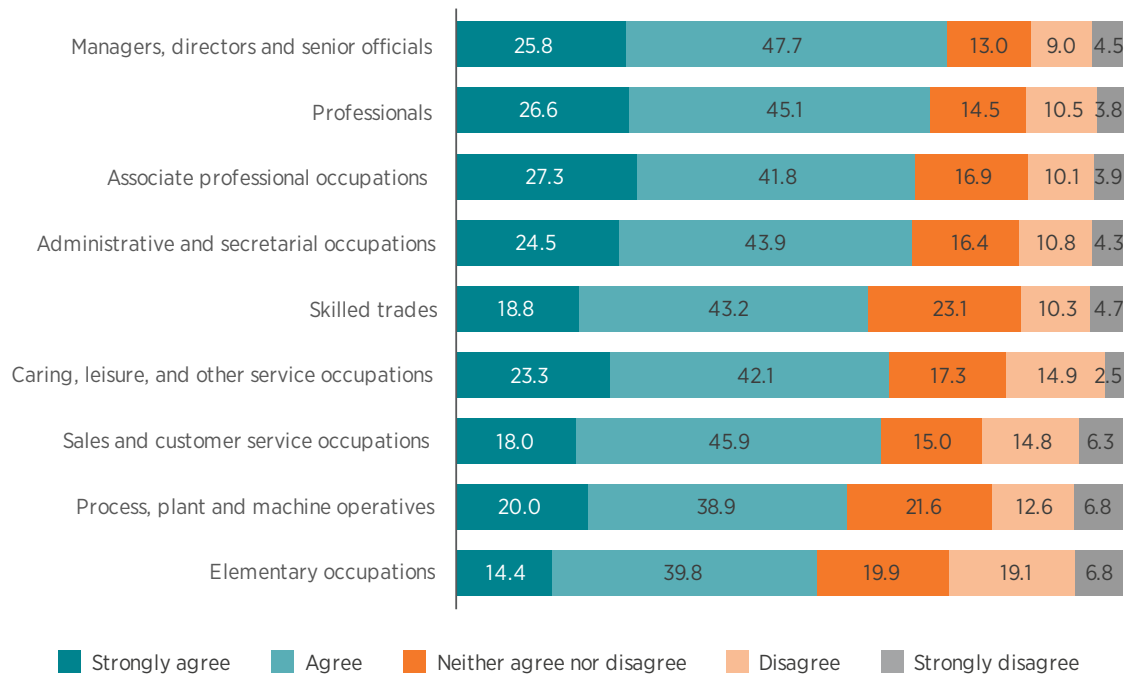
Figure 39: People in team sometimes reject others for being different by SOC20 major occupation group, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers except those running own business or working as a freelancer/contractor for multiple clients (n=5,184).

Lack of trust, reflected in perceptions that others would deliberately act in a way that undermines efforts, is less commonly cited, with only 17% of employees overall indicating that this may occur in their organisation. Differences are again found across occupations and are summarised in Figure 40, with those employed in managerial occupations (14%) least likely to cite this type of behaviour and those employed in sales and customer service (21%) and elementary occupations (26%) most likely to indicate the presence of this type of negative behaviour.

Figure 40: No one in team would deliberately act in a way that undermines efforts by SOC20 major occupation group, 2022 (%)



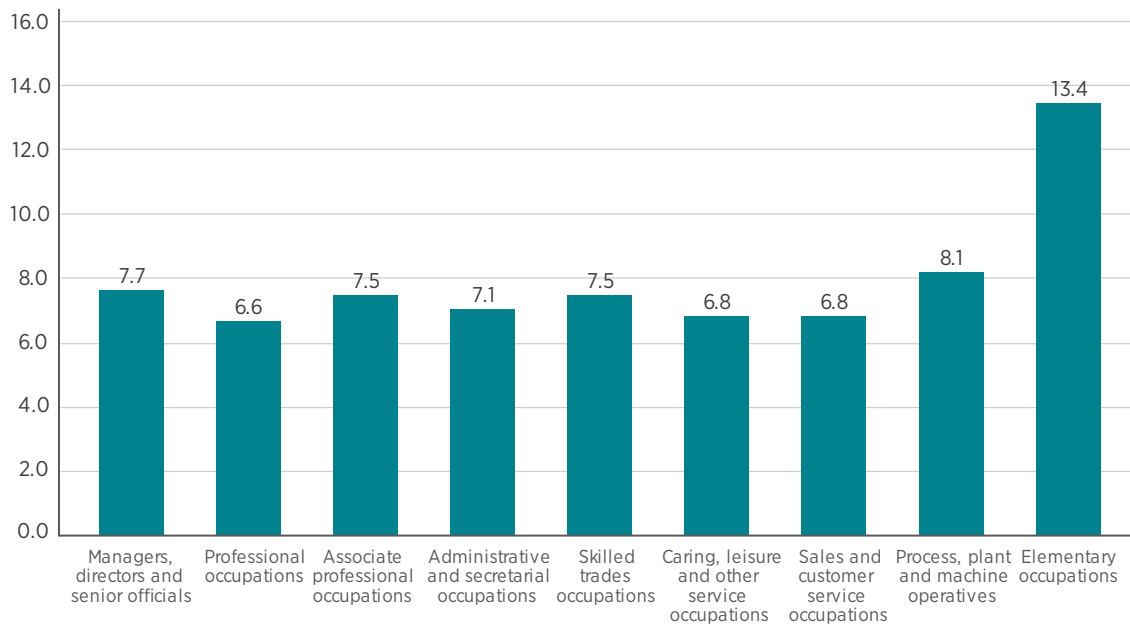
Base: all workers except those running own business or working as a freelancer/contractor for multiple clients (n=5,184).

Conflict at work

Conflict at work can take many forms and it is important to note that not all conflict is inherently negative. Conflict over task can have a positive effect in progressing tasks and problem-solving. However, both relationship and non-task organisational conflict, and any conflict involving discriminatory behaviours, can generally be considered as problematic and have several negative outcomes, including work-related stress and burnout, which increase intention to leave and reduce worker wellbeing (Meier et al 2014). Measures of conflict involving discriminatory behaviour on the basis of a protected characteristic and whether conflict experienced has been resolved are collected in the UKWL and provide further insight, building on the psychological safety measure of discrimination explored in the last section.

Incidence of conflict involving discriminatory behaviour is more often reported by female workers (9%) compared with their male counterparts (6%). Younger workers are similarly more likely to report having encountered conflict, with more than one in ten aged 18–24 (11%) and 25–34 (10%) reporting conflict compared with around one in twenty of those aged 55–64 (6%) and 65 and over (4%). Part of the reported differences by age will be explained by occupation (see Figure 41), given the greater propensity of younger workers to be engaged in elementary occupations, where we find a much larger incidence of conflict, standing at around one in seven workers (13%), compared with around half of this amount reported by most other occupation groups.

Figure 41: Incidence of conflict involving discriminatory behaviour by SOC20 major occupation group, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

Differences in the incidence of conflict involving discriminatory behaviour are also found across other protected characteristics, with incidence higher among those who report the presence of a protected characteristic, including disability, sexuality and ethnicity. Around one in five workers reporting a disability (17%) have encountered conflict in the last 12 months compared with nearer one in twenty (6%) of those reporting no disability. More than double the proportion of gay, lesbian or bisexual workers report incidence of conflict (15%) compared with heterosexual workers (7%). Meanwhile, one in eight (12%) non-white workers report incidence of conflict compared with only 7% of white workers.

Resolution of conflict is a further important indicator of the quality of relationships at work. Overall, around one in seven cases (14%) are reported as being fully resolved within 12 months and a further 26% partially resolved. When we consider occupational differences in conflict resolution, we find that skilled trades (26%) and sales and customer service occupations (27%) are those that report the lowest levels of conflict resolution (either resolved or partially resolved). In comparison, workers in managerial (45%), professional (44%), caring, leisure and other occupations (56%) and process, plant and machine operatives (47%) all report substantially higher proportions of conflicts having been resolved or partially resolved.

The proportion of cases that are fully resolved is broadly the same by gender. However, we find that female workers are more likely to report a case as being partly resolved (30%) than their male counterparts (21%), which could reflect more complex cases that require greater time to resolve. Interestingly, while we already noted the greater incidence of conflict involving discriminatory behaviour among

younger workers, we also find that a greater proportion of this conflict, three in five cases (60%), are resolved or partially resolved within 12 months. Comparatively, around two in five cases are reported as having been resolved or partially resolved within 12 months among other age groups. This perhaps indicates that a greater portion of the conflict encountered by younger workers may be of a more straightforward nature and, as such, is more likely to be addressed rapidly.

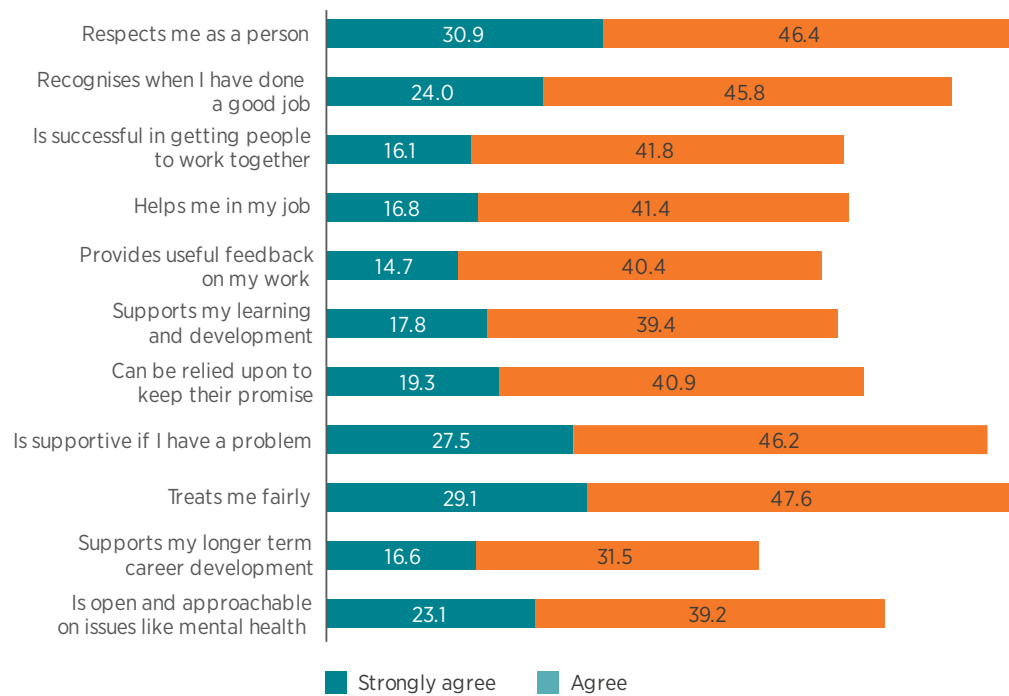
More workers reporting a disability (67%) report conflict experienced as having not been resolved compared with those who do not report a disability (57%). We also find that a marginally higher proportion of gay, lesbian or bisexual workers (66%) report their conflict as having not been resolved compared with heterosexual workers (60%). Differences by ethnicity are more marginal and statistically insignificant. Together these patterns by protected characteristics are indicative of greater incidence of conflict being experienced by workers who report a protected characteristic, and lesser resolution to this conflict.

Quality of management

The quality of management has a significant impact on experiences of work. Good line management and positive employee–leader relationships can create a positive and empowering work environment, which can counteract some of the negative impacts employees encounter from high job demands (Bakker and Demerouti 2007). Good relationships between employees and their leaders have been found to be associated with greater reported control and autonomy, environmental clarity, opportunities for development and progression, and occupational self-efficacy or feelings of competence (Schermyly and Meyer 2016; Syrek et al 2013).

The 2022 UKWL included a series of 11 measures exploring perceptions of various aspects of line management, summarised in Figure 42. Overall, we find that the large majority of employees generally agree or strongly agree that their line manager, supervisor or boss gives them respect (77%) and recognises them when they do a good job (70%). Similarly, employees are largely positive that their leaders will provide support should they encounter a problem (74%) and treats them fairly (77%). More than three in five workers also feel that their line manager, supervisor or boss is open and approachable on issues like mental health (62%), although far fewer workers in process, plant and machine operative (48%) and elementary occupations (47%) agree or strongly agree with this statement.

Figure 42: Quality of line management, 2022 (%)



Base: all workers with a line manager (n=5,303).

Employees are generally less positive about the career and developmental support that they receive from leaders. A little over half of employees agree or strongly agree that their line manager, supervisor or boss provides useful feedback on work (55%) and supports learning and development (57%), and just under half feel that their line manager, supervisor or boss supports their longer-term career progression (48%).

The fewest workers in agreement that their line manager, supervisor or boss provides useful feedback on work are employed in process, plant and machine operative (40%) and elementary occupations (43%). Only a third of workers employed as process, plant and machine operatives (33%) agree that their line manager, supervisor or boss supports their learning and development. Around three in ten process, plant and machine operatives (28%) and elementary occupations (30%) agree or strongly agree that their line manager, supervisor or boss supports their longer-term career development.

Approximately three in five workers (60%) report trust in their leaders. Levels of trust are correlated with occupational level, as we find that over three in five workers in managerial (64%), professional (66%), associate professional (62%) and administrative and secretarial occupations (63%) report that their line manager, supervisor or boss can be relied upon to keep their promise, compared with only around half of workers in sales and customer service (50%), process, plant and machine operatives (51%) and elementary occupations (49%).

Differences in the reported quality of management by gender are marginal and, in some cases, statistically insignificant. We do find some differences in perceptions of the quality of management by age. Younger workers are more likely to agree or strongly agree that they receive help in their job (70%) compared with other age groups, with more experienced workers aged 55–64 (51%) reporting receiving the least help in their jobs. Further emphasising the supportive and developmental role of management for younger workers, we find that seven in ten workers aged 18–24 (71%) and around two-thirds (66%) of workers aged 25–34 agree or strongly agree that their line manager supports their learning and development, while three in five aged 18–24 (62%) feel that their line manager, supervisor or boss supports their longer-term career development. Comparatively, only 38% of workers aged 55–64 and 40% of workers aged 65 and over agree or strongly agree with this statement. These responses could simply reflect the career stages of these older workers, especially among the 65 and over category. However, the responses could also indicate a perception of a lack of support among some of these workers, potentially reflecting management assumptions about their career stage rather than a lack of desire to further develop.

Relationship quality and the CIPD Good Work Index

Overall relationship quality is summarised using the relationships index and its constituent sub-indexes by occupation in Figure 43. We observe an overall pattern of mean scores following occupational level for all sub-indexes pertaining to relationship quality, with higher-level managerial, professional and associate professional occupations recording higher scores.

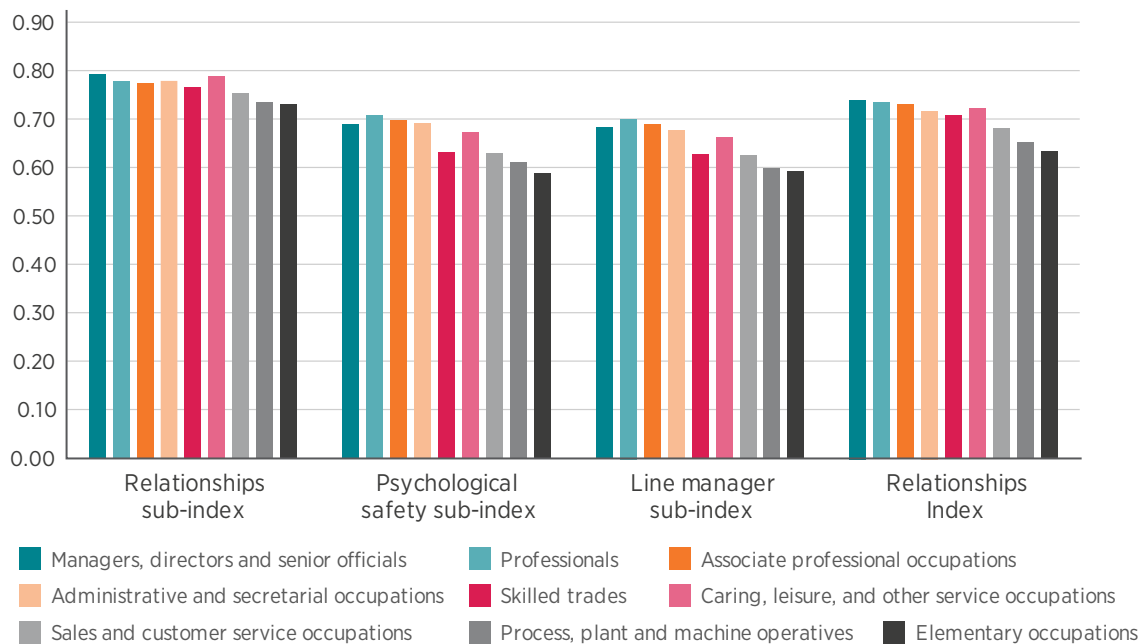
Caring, leisure and other occupations stand out as having high mean scores for the relationship sub-index. This sub-index is constructed from the questions around relationship quality explored in the first part of this section of the report, comprising relationships with colleagues, line managers, clients and suppliers. Caring, leisure and other occupations also score relatively highly in the other sub-indexes, generating an overall relationship index that is relatively comparable with managerial and professional occupations. This finding has relevance given that these occupations exhibit a number of lower quality characteristics that are manifest in lower scores in the subjective pay index, contracts index and work–life balance index compared with most other occupation groups.

The line manager sub-index, which is constructed from the lines of questioning around the quality of management explored in the previous section, generates higher mean scores among higher-level occupations, and in particular professional and associate professional occupations. The lowest scores are recorded in process, plant and machine operative and elementary occupations, as per the more detailed analysis in the previous section.

We also observe notably lower mean scores for skilled trade occupations in both the psychological safety and line manager sub-indexes compared with all but the sales

and customer service, process, plant and machine operative and elementary occupations.

Figure 43: Relationships Index and sub-indexes by SOC20 major occupation group, 2022



Base: all workers (n=6,291).

Given that management quality has been shown to have several potential impacts on the working lives and wellbeing of workers (Bakker and Demerouti 2007; Schermuly and Meyer 2016; Syrek et al 2013), we gather further insight by comparing mean scores for both the work–life balance index and the health and wellbeing index relative to reported management quality in each of our 11 measures. Here we find a consistent relationship with a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between the reported quality of management and scores of the work–life balance index and health and wellbeing index.⁵ It should also be noted that we find similar patterns across the other dimensions of the CIPD Good Work Index, with higher reported quality of management correlating positively with higher mean index scores.

After controlling for occupation and demographics, including age and gender, using linear regression models, we find a positive relationship between the quality of management, relationship quality and the psychological safety climate, and both the work–life balance index and the health and wellbeing index.

⁵ Pearson’s R correlation tests confirm a positive relationship between scores of the work–life balance index and health and wellbeing index (results available in the Appendix).

Summary

Relationships at work, including those with line managers, supervisors and other leaders, can have a significant impact on experiences of work. Relationships comprise several dimensions that all have relevance to job quality, including relationships with colleagues and others we interact with at work, the psychological safety climate, experiences of conflict at work, and the quality of management.

We find evidence that relationships with colleagues, clients and line managers/supervisors are predominantly positive. Interestingly, we find that those who have management responsibilities are even more likely to report good-quality relationships with their subordinates. Employees generally also report the presence of psychological safety in their jobs, with less than one in five agreeing or strongly agreeing that a mistake they make would be held against them by their manager or supervisor, that they witness discrimination within their organisation, and that others would deliberately act in a way that undermines efforts.

Patterns of conflict at work are indicative of greater incidence of conflict being experienced by workers who report a protected characteristic, and lesser resolution to this conflict. Conflict is more often reported among female workers, younger workers, those reporting a disability, gay, lesbian or bisexual workers, and non-white workers. We also find a much larger incidence of conflict in elementary occupations, standing at around one in seven workers, compared with around half of this amount reported by most other occupation groups. Overall, around one in seven cases are reported as being fully resolved within 12 months and a further quarter partially resolved. The proportion of cases that are fully resolved is broadly the same by gender. However, female workers are more likely to report a case as being partly resolved than their male counterparts, possibly reflecting more complex cases requiring greater time to resolve. Resolution of cases is lower among those reporting other protected characteristics, including disability and sexuality.

The quality of management is likely to have considerable impact on experiences of work, and good relationships between employees and managers have been shown to have several positive impacts on dimensions of job quality. We find that employees generally agree or strongly agree that their line manager, supervisor or boss gives them respect, recognises them when they do a good job, will provide support should they encounter a problem, and treats them fairly. Employees are generally less positive about the career and developmental support that they receive from leaders, including provision of useful feedback on work, support for learning and development, and longer-term career progression, with levels higher in higher-level occupations and lower in process, plant and machine operative and elementary occupations. Levels of trust in leaders also vary by occupational level.

We find that the reported quality of management varies by occupational level. Higher mean scores are found among higher-level occupations for the line manager sub-index, which is constructed from the lines of questioning around the quality of management. After controlling for occupation and demographics, we find a positive relationship between the quality of management, broader relationship quality and the psychological safety climate, and both the work–life balance index and the health and wellbeing index.

7 Conclusions

The 2022 CIPD Good Work Index report has provided analysis of the fifth year of the *UK Working Lives* survey conducted in January and February 2022. As well as analysis of the seven dimensions of the CIPD Good Work Index, and comparison with previous years, in the 2022 report we had four special themes of investigation which formed the primary focus, comprising (1) the great rethink/resignation, (2) flexible and hybrid working, (3) career progression and social mobility, and (4) relationships at work and the quality of management.

The CIPD Good Work Index 2022

Across the seven dimensions of the CIPD Good Work Index we find relative overall stability in mean scores when we compare 2022 with previous years. That said, we do find differences in the overall means of some of the job quality dimensions, including the work–life balance index and health and wellbeing index.

We observe a switch in mean scores for the work–life balance index by gender, with scores higher among women prior to the pandemic and lower in the 2022 survey, although it should be noted that differences are marginal. Across occupations we observe that work–life balance increased substantially in 2021 among most, but importantly not all, occupation groups. Increases in work–life balance were particularly noteworthy in managerial, professional, associate professional, and skilled trades occupations. In 2022 we then see a reduction in work–life balance scores, with some remaining higher than pre-2021 levels, specifically in higher-skilled occupations, and others returning to pre-2021 levels, including skilled trades occupations. Caring, leisure and other service occupations, sales and customer service occupations, process, plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations have all seen reductions in work–life balance scores, with the overall change particularly large among elementary occupations. When we disaggregate by NS-SEC occupational class we observe a similar pattern, with the addition of identifying the high mean scores for the work–life balance index among small employers and own-accounts. Together these findings highlight an occupational-level split in work–life balance, with higher-level occupations enjoying more work–life balance and lower-level occupations experiencing lesser work–life balance.

With respect to the health and wellbeing index we find noteworthy differences by age, with younger workers recording lower scores, driven by quite stark differences in the scores for the mental health sub-index. When we look across the health and wellbeing index scores by occupation, we find reductions in 2020 and 2021 from 2019 levels across most occupations, with some recovery recorded in 2022, although differences are relatively marginal in most cases. We also note that differences between broad occupation groups are relatively small for the most part, with sales and customer service and elementary occupations with lower mean scores in 2022, but with a degree of volatility in the prior years of the survey. When we consider NS-SEC occupational class, we similarly find no distinct changes in mean scores of the health and wellbeing index over the period. We do observe differences across occupational class, with the highest mean scores among the self-employed and the lowest among semi-routine occupations.

The great rethink

Following the rapid changes in employment witnessed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 was witness to a suggested growth in employees leaving their jobs. Captured in the moniker the 'great resignation' (Lufkin 2021) or, alternatively, the 'great rethink', much debate has been generated around this argued movement of labour, including whether employees are rethinking their careers and broader relationship with paid work.

We investigated this phenomenon using both patterns of actual job-to-job moves and reported intention to quit a job. While we find some evidence of an increase in job-to-job moves in the last 12 months, we find little evidence for any substantial shift in employment trends as suggested by the great resignation or great rethink. Job moves may well reflect delayed moves caused by the pandemic, as overall levels of job moves appear more in line with earlier years of the UKWL survey. However, we do find several important differences in the experiences of employees that may act to drive both intention to leave and actual job moves.

While we do not find direct evidence to support large-scale shifts in employment, it is important to acknowledge that increases in employees leaving their jobs or stating intention to do so have been recorded in certain sectors, such as information technology, and in specific roles where skills are in high demand and low supply (Gartner 2022), and as such the great resignation/rethink may be manifest in these cases, but is somewhat more context-specific than what the broader narrative around this phenomenon suggests.

Combined, the evidence shows that workers in lower-skilled roles face a situation in which they are more likely to feel they will lose their job and more likely to want to leave their job, but have low bargaining power and a lack of alternative employment options, leaving them somewhat 'trapped' in their current occupations.

Differences in job quality, as measured by the job quality index, further emphasise the impact of lower-quality work in driving employee intentions to leave their current job. The lack of significant differences in mean scores for job quality among workers who have recently changed jobs, when compared with those who have not, suggests that job moves may lead to improvements in experienced job quality.

Flexible and hybrid working

High levels of working from home and home-dominant hybrid working, that is, spending most work time at home, are reported among the 2022 UKWL survey sample. These levels are higher than those prior to the pandemic, albeit the majority of workers continue to work primarily at employer/business premises. The self-employed offer a distinct case, as we find patterns of work location consistent with prior evidence, with a greater proportion of time, on average, spent working from home and at client, supplier or partner premises/sites.

Location of work varies significantly across different occupations. Workers in managerial, and especially professional and associate professional, occupations report large proportions of work time spent at home, while workers in sales and customer service occupations and elementary occupations are those who spend the most time, on average, at employer/business premises. Skilled trades, caring and other leisure occupations and process, plant and machine operatives report the highest levels of working at other locations, including client sites and on the move. Key workers also report much lower incidence of working from home, consistent with their front-line roles.

The adoption of hybrid routines is associated with higher levels of job quality compared with workers who report no time spent working from home. More time spent at home aligns with higher mean scores in several job quality dimensions. However, hybrid workers appear to face the biggest difficulties in balancing work and life, including work–life spillover and longer working hours than would be preferred. Workers reporting the home as their only location of work experience lower job quality in some dimensions compared with hybrid workers (but not those who never work from home), including subjective pay, contracts, job design and employee voice. However, homeworkers equally have higher mean scores in both the work–life balance index and the health and wellbeing index, reflecting many of the documented trade-offs associated with working from home.

Career progression and social mobility

Social mobility is important to understand given its impact on wellbeing inside and outside of work. The 2022 UKWL survey included an expanded set of measures to enable insight of social mobility through capturing the employment status and occupation of parents when survey respondents were aged 14.

From our analysis we find that workers whose parents were employed as managers, directors and senior officials, professionals and associate professionals are all distinctly more likely to also be engaged in these types of occupations. Workers whose parents were employed as process, plant and machine operatives and in elementary occupations are those least likely to themselves be working in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations. That said, we nevertheless find that more than two in five workers whose parents were employed as process, plant and machine operatives are themselves engaged in highly skilled managerial and professional occupations. Workers whose parents were employed in a skilled trade are those most likely to also be in a skilled trade occupation, consistent with existing research of parents passing on a trade to their children and/or viewing this type of occupation as a positive aspiration for their children.

A greater proportion of workers whose parents were in managerial and professional occupations, approximately half, report that their own career has met their expectations. Just under a third of workers whose parents were engaged in caring, leisure and other occupations report their own career having met their expectations. A range of factors are identified as influencing career progression, including access to training and development programmes, quality of line management, opportunities to develop skills, defined organisational or professional career pathways, and relationships and networks. Relational components of work, including networks and access to mentoring, may have particular relevance when we consider the role of parental occupation in realised career progression.

Overall, the findings suggest that the occupation of parents/guardians may act as an influence on an individual's career and attitudes towards work; however, we do not find evidence to suggest that social mobility is limited significantly by parents' occupation. The UKWL survey data does not enable understanding of the effect of parental unemployment, however, which past evidence has shown to have a more direct impact on realised socio-economic status.

Relationships at work and the quality of management

Good-quality relationships, including those with colleagues and leaders, are a significant source of satisfaction and fulfilment at work that can act to offset the impact of work stressors, engender positive work attitudes among workers and increase levels of commitment.

We find that workers generally report good-quality relationships at work, including those with colleagues, clients and line managers/supervisors. Most workers also report working environments that provide psychological safety. That said, conflict is reported by an important minority of workers, and conflict is both more common and less often resolved among those with protected characteristics.

The quality of management is likely to have considerable impact on experiences of work, and good relationships between employees and managers have been shown

to have several positive impacts on dimensions of job quality. Workers generally report experiencing good-quality management in several respects, with a large majority agreeing or strongly agreeing that their line manager/supervisor gives them respect, recognises them when they do a good job, will provide support should they encounter a problem, and treats them fairly. Employees are generally less positive about the career and developmental support that they receive from leaders, including provision of useful feedback on work, support for learning and development, and longer-term career progression. Moreover, career and developmental support is closely tied to occupational level, with lower-level occupations reporting low levels of support.

Overall, we find that the reported quality of management varies by occupational level. Higher mean scores are found among higher-level occupations for the line manager sub-index, which is constructed from the lines of questioning around the quality of management. After controlling for occupation and demographics, we find a positive relationship between the quality of management, broader relationship quality and the psychological safety climate, and both the work–life balance index and the health and wellbeing index.

Implications for people management

The four special themes of investigation in the 2022 CIPD Good Work Index report provide several implications with relevance to people management.

While we do not find strong evidence of job-to-job movements in our investigation of the ‘great rethink’, we do find patterns in intention to quit jobs that are indicative of lower-quality work acting to drive employee intentions to leave their current job. Our evidence also suggests that job-to-job moves may well be used by workers to address issues of job quality, further emphasising the importance of employers adopting a holistic approach to people management that considers all dimensions of job quality. It is also vital that organisations address the predicament faced by workers in lower-skilled roles who face a situation in which they are more likely to feel they will lose their job and more likely to want to leave their job, but have low bargaining power and a lack of alternative employment options, leaving them somewhat ‘trapped’ in their current occupations.

The location of work continues to reflect the impact of the changes prompted by the global pandemic, with high proportions of workers, especially in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations, reporting remote working from home and hybrid working. It is nevertheless central to recognise that the majority of workers continue to work outside of the home, at employer or business premises, client sites and other locations. It is also important to recognise that the self-employed have long had a more complex relationship with the location of work and display more varied routines, including time spent working at home, client sites, business premises and on the move, and as such we may be able to learn from their experiences to inform future routines of work.

We find that the adoption of hybrid working routines is associated with higher levels of job quality compared with workers who report no time spent working from home. However, hybrid workers face the biggest difficulties in balancing work and life, including work–life spillover and longer working hours than would be preferred. Meanwhile, workers reporting the home as their only location of work experience lower job quality in some dimensions compared with hybrid workers, but higher work–life balance and health and wellbeing, reflecting many of the documented trade-offs associated with working from home. Our findings are consistent with the benefits of employers continuing to provide workers with the flexibility to work in hybrid ways to maximise the benefits of both remote and face-to-face working. They also highlight potential risk areas that organisations should address, including the potential for work–life spillover, overwork and difficulties in building and maintaining relationships, leading to isolation.

The socio-economic background of a worker, including parents' occupation, has an influence on realised career trajectory and outcomes, although we do not find evidence that suggests a significant limiting effect of parental occupation alone. A range of factors are identified as influencing career progression that highlight the role of good people management in career success, including access to training and development programmes, opportunities to develop skills, defined organisational or professional career pathways, relationships and networks, and the quality of line management.

Relationships at work have impacts across job quality, including influencing career progression and development as noted above, and it is important to acknowledge that most workers report generally positive relationships at work. We do, though, continue to find incidence of conflict and slower resolution among workers who report the presence of a protected characteristic, suggesting that current organisational processes may not be adequately addressing conflict for some groups of workers.

The quality of management clearly has impacts on experiences of work, closely tied to relationship quality, but also with implications for work–life balance and health and wellbeing. Good-quality management is positively related to better work–life balance and wellbeing, emphasising the benefits of good people management. Greater effort needs to be made, however, in the provision of good-quality career and developmental support, as the majority of workers cite this as an area where management is less effective.

Implications for policy stakeholders

The findings from the report this year present a number of implications for policy and practice. First, we do not find evidence that supports a substantial labour movement, as suggested by the 'great resignation' or 'great rethink'. We do, though, find that many workers indicate an intention to quit their job where they encounter lower job

quality, and that actual job-to-job moves may successfully help to address job quality. However, those encountering some of the lowest job quality may to some extent be 'trapped' in their occupations due to low bargaining power and lack of alternative job opportunities, raising real concerns about the experiences of work among some workers in UK society.

Stakeholders and employers should also continue to pay attention to the potential benefits that can be realised for workers, organisations and society from the application of flexible remote and hybrid working, while also recognising that not all workers can or will want to work at home, and that good-quality work is not a product of location but rather that any location of work can be good or otherwise, depending on a range of dimensions of job quality.

The findings also emphasise the importance of good people management in both creating good-quality relationships at work and in influencing work–life balance and health and wellbeing at work. The role of relational components of work in career outcomes that we explored in our investigation of career progression and social mobility also has an important people management dimension, and one where we find a discrepancy between the expectations of workers and what is currently being delivered by managers and their organisations.

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Issued: June 2022 Reference: 8252 © CIPD 2022

