

UK Working Lives

The CIPD Job Quality Index



The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation 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 145,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

Survey report

UK Working Lives

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1 Foreword

Work can, and should, be a force for good, for all. But what does good work look like?

As the professional body for HR and people development, we champion better work and working lives. The growing agenda around good work couldn't be more central to that purpose. Good work or job quality has been talked about over many years and was highlighted by Matthew Taylor in his review of *Modern Working Practices* (July 2017) as being a common goal for all forms of working.

Evidence shows that we are not utilising effectively the skills of our workforces, that we have underinvested in the workplace, and that the general quality of people management needs to improve. These are all drivers of slow productivity growth, together with the growing concerns about stress and well-being at work. In the context of the changing world of work – from advances in technology to more choice in where and how we work – and in a post-Brexit economy, how we create more good jobs has never been more important.

However, it's important to have an evidence-based understanding of what defines good work. We worked closely with academics and researchers, including the Institute for Employment Research at Warwick University, to draw together research on good work and define seven dimensions that affect job quality, which have all been shown to be key drivers of productivity, well-being and engagement. Unsurprisingly, many of them are very human in nature, like having a good relationship with your line manager, or feeling part of a community.

That's why we've produced this comprehensive measure of job quality and the *UK Working Lives* survey 2018. This will be an annual survey, against which we can track progress and help inform the debate, in support of the UK Government's intention to raise awareness and understanding of good work across the economy.

While the overall findings suggest reasonable satisfaction with work and the jobs people do, there are significant underlying systemic issues which we need to address. There are clear concerns from workers in lower-skilled jobs, where over 40% don't see opportunities to develop their skills, and from middle and senior managers who feel stressed and overworked. This is a heady mix, with over-stressed managers passing that stress down, which impacts productivity. Our previous research shows that stress is already the biggest source of workplace absence.

We must find ways to work smarter and not just harder. Through policy and practice, we need to encourage more investment in skills, and provide support to businesses to help them understand and manage their people, their workplaces, and their organisations effectively.

We recognise the crucial role that people professionals, from HR to L&D, can and should play in this agenda. This report is as much about helping them to understand what good work looks like in their organisations and where they can have the biggest impact, as it is about understanding the dynamics of what work means in today's market.

The Taylor Review reminded us of the importance of better work for all as a key economic and social driver, and the Government has demonstrated their commitment to that agenda. We hope that the *UK Working Lives* survey will make an important and sustained contribution to improving job quality.



Peter Cheese
Chief Executive
CIPD

2 Introduction

This survey builds on previous surveys of UK employees – including by the CIPD and others – to apply a new Job Quality Index with the aim of encapsulating and assessing the quality of UK jobs today.

Background and rationale

As recognised in the government-commissioned *Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices* (Taylor et al 2017), measuring job quality is a hugely important task. There is a wealth of rich, qualitative research that increases our understanding of working life and a wide range of measurements relating to job quality, but improving job quality systematically requires a cohesive and reasonably comprehensive suite of measures that shed light on and track the health of the jobs market. The nineteenth-century physicist and engineer Lord Kelvin put it thus:

‘When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind; it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely in your thoughts advanced to the stage of science’ (cited in Van der Zee 2001, p5).

At a more practical level, the celebrated management consultant Peter Drucker famously crystallised this idea in the maxim, ‘what gets measured gets managed’ (which is sometimes misinterpreted as saying what can’t be measured isn’t worth attention). Measurement is not the be-all and end-all, and some things – for example, the process of innovation – do not lend themselves to being easily measured. But there is a huge amount we can do to measure human capital and related aspects of work and employment, and it is essential that we do so (Houghton 2017).

To date, there have been many measurements that capture aspects of job quality – these include national statistics (for example from the Labour Force Survey), bespoke funded surveys (such as the Skills and Employment Survey and the Workplace Employment Relations Study) and research consultancies – but there is a great deal of divergence in what should be covered and few attempts to map job quality comprehensively (Warhurst et al 2017).

This survey is designed to fill this gap.

The CIPD Job Quality Index

This survey builds on previous surveys of employees – from the CIPD and elsewhere – to assess the state of job quality in the UK today.

Building a full assessment of job quality will always benefit from piecing together data from different sources, as they have different strengths and limitations. For example, some surveys have random sampling and are more representative than our quota sample, but may be run only every five years or so. This has been the case for the UK Skills and Employment Survey (SES) and the Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS) in the past. On the other hand, official statistics such as the Labour Force Survey have the benefits of both frequency and representation, yet lack the scope of coverage that can be achieved with a survey dedicated to job quality.

We also need to consider data drawn from employers or HR practitioners, as they are often best placed to describe current people management practices. Furthermore, it is

relevant to look at the macro-level impacts that organisations and sectors have on society in creating sustainable, well-paid employment. A range of measures exist at macro national and international levels (Wright et al 2018) and doubtless new sources will evolve. At a meso level, the Good Economy is a recently developed tool giving insight into the quality and sustainability of jobs across sectors (Hepworth 2018).

The *UK Working Lives* survey is designed to plug a current gap in the available data. Applying the CIPD's newly developed Job Quality Index, we map the key dimensions of job quality, assessing how these vary between different groups of workers and exploring the relative importance of different dimensions.

Research approach

Since 2009, the CIPD's *Employee Outlook* has regularly surveyed UK employees about their working lives. To inform this new survey, the CIPD commissioned reviews on the following questions:

- From the perspectives of workers, what constitutes good or poor job quality, and what are the opportunities and pitfalls in measuring it (Warhurst et al 2017, Wright et al 2018)?
- What capacity do workers have to influence their job quality and what can we learn about the balance of power between employers and employees (Dundon et al 2017a, 2017b)?¹

Based on the latter two reviews and in consultation with academics, colleagues and government officials, we have developed a survey of employees that sets out to capture the key dimensions of job quality.

The survey was carried out by YouGov using its UK panel of approximately 350,000 adults in work, being run from December 2017 to January 2018 using an online questionnaire. A targeted sample of 6,009 workers was surveyed. The quota used and subsequent weighting give a sample which, based on the latest ONS figures, is representative of the UK workforce in terms of gender, full- or part-time work status, organisation size within each sector, and industry.

Dimensions of job quality

Our survey covers seven dimensions of job quality, which are summarised in Table 1. For each of these dimensions, we compute a job quality index, summarised at the end of the relevant section. Further detail is presented in the appendix to this report, available at www.cipd.co.uk/workinglives

It is worth noting that the dimensions include some aspects of job quality that are objective – that is to say, what is good for one person will be good for anyone – and others that are subjective – that is, they depend on the person's preferences, situation, or stage of life.

For example, no one would contest that more pay is better than less pay, but is a full-time contract necessarily better than part-time work or irregular hours? The answer to this is likely to vary with one's life stage. The same part-time job could be a poor offer for someone who is a main household earner, or trying to 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 seen their children leave home. Further, there are some aspects of work – such as finding work meaningful – that we would all agree are good, but which will vary according to people's personalities or belief systems.

¹ Each review looks at thematic insights from existing research and assesses existing measures that relate to these areas. They are available at www.cipd.co.uk/jobquality

Table 1: Dimensions of job quality

Dimension	Areas included
1 Pay and benefits	Pay as a percentile and in relation to the Living Wage, employer pension contributions and other employee benefits.
2 Terms of employment	Contract type, underemployment, job security and development opportunities provided.
3 Job design and the nature of work	Workload or work intensity, 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, and how meaningful people find their work.
4 Social support and cohesion	The quality of relationships at work, psychological safety and the quality of people management.
5 Health and well-being	Positive and negative impacts of work on physical and mental health.
6 Work-life balance	Overwork, commuting time, how much work encroaches on personal life and vice versa, and HR provision for flexible working.
7 Voice and representation	Channels for feeding views to senior management, cultural norms on voice and satisfaction with the opportunities for voice.

Source: based on Warhurst et al (2017) and Wright et al (2018).

Most of our indices centre on subjective aspects of job quality. The main objective index is that of pay and benefits; and within the nature of work, we distinguish a separate objective index for job complexity.

It is important to distinguish components of job quality from things that it affects. A primary measure among the outcomes is job satisfaction, but we also consider people's enthusiasm for their jobs, work effort and intention to quit. All of these are important factors for both workers and employers alike, but we distinguish them as outcomes rather than aspects of job quality. In section 10 we look at how they are related to the CIPD Job Quality Index.

Occupational groups

It is also worth noting that, throughout much of the analysis that follows, we refer to occupational groups as an explanatory factor of different levels of job quality. The groups we use are the National Readership Survey (NRS) social grades, summarised in Table 2. This is an established and convenient measure of occupational social class that gives us a set of categories that is meaningful but concise and easy to interpret.

Our survey figures for the different NRS groups are roughly representative of the NRS survey itself, with two exceptions. First, they over-represent senior managers and professionals (grade A), which helps us to do more detailed analysis at this level. Second, because we exclude pensioners and the unemployed, we have very low numbers of grade E. We thus merge this group for our analysis with grade D.

Job centrality

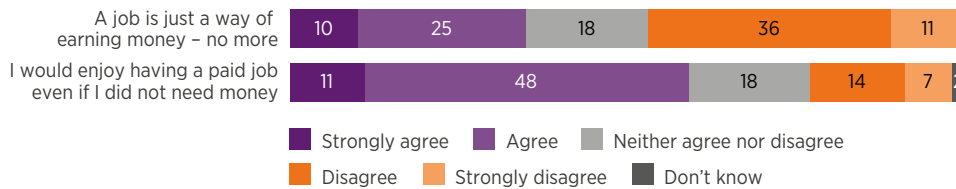
Through most of our adult lives, work takes up the greatest proportion of our waking hours. In this sense, there is no doubting the centrality of work in our lives. But how much importance do we place on our work? Our survey shows that overall, people tend to place a positive value on their jobs, but there is a fair amount of divergence. Almost half of all workers (47%) do not think that 'a job is just a way of earning money' (34% agree) and more than half (59%) say they would enjoy having a paid job even if they did not need the money (21% disagree).

Table 2: Occupational groups (NRS Social Grade)

	NRS 2016* (%)	UKWL 2018 (%)
A – Higher managerial, administrative and professional	4	19
B – Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional	23	23
C1 – Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional	28	30
C2 – Skilled manual workers	20	16
D – Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers	15	11
E – State pensioners, casual and lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only	10	1
N	not available	6,009

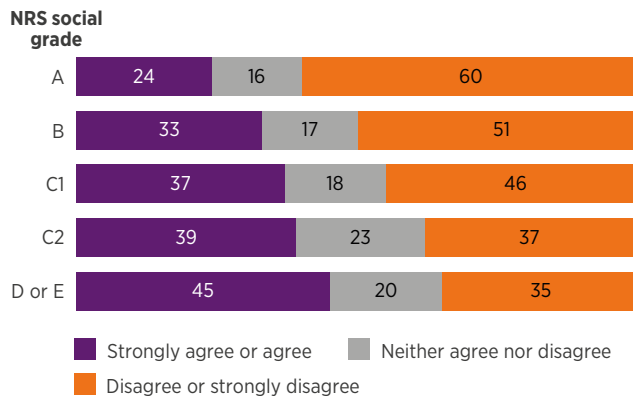
*NRS figures are for January to December 2016. Number of respondents not presented for this data but is typically 34,000 per wave. www.nrs.co.uk/nrs-print/lifestyle-and-classification-data/social-grade/

Figure 1: Work centrality (%)



Base: all employees (including workers and self-employed); n=6,009

Figure 2: ‘A job is just a way of earning money’, by occupational group (%)



Base: all employees (n=1165 (A), n=1386 (B), n=1812 (C1), n=942 (C2), n=704 (D or E))

Perhaps unsurprisingly, those in higher level occupational groups place more importance on their work. They are less likely to see a job as just a way of making money, and slightly more likely to say they would enjoy working even if they did not need the money. The same is true for workers aged 65 or over, 73% of whom say they would enjoy working regardless of financial need (this compares with 58% of those aged 55 to 64). This reflects the fact they have chosen to work beyond state pension age; and indeed, we find that this age group tends to be happier with most aspects of their jobs.

Such variations in work centrality are worth bearing in mind as we look at job quality: not all aspects will be equally important to everyone.

Structure of this report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- The next seven sections present our survey results on each of the main dimensions.
- In section 10, we look across the dimensions at their relative importance for key outcomes.
- In the final section we draw together our conclusions and identify areas for future research.

Separately, appendices are available that present detail on the survey method, the survey questionnaire, detail on the construction of the job quality indices, and tables of analysis. These are available at www.cipd.co.uk/workinglives

3 Pay and benefits

Key findings

- Workers tend to regard themselves as appropriately paid, but more than a third (36%) do not. Strong employee voice is associated with pay that is seen to be fairer.
- Overall, women are slightly more likely to feel underpaid than men, which can be accounted for by occupations and sectors in which they are more likely to work. It will be interesting to see if these perceptions change in the future, as reporting raises awareness of the gender pay gap.
- Most employees saving for a pension with their employer receive a contribution from their employer of 6% or less.
- The most common non-pension benefits are social (for example Christmas parties) and enhanced leave packages. The most valued benefits appear to be health care and insurance benefits and social benefits.

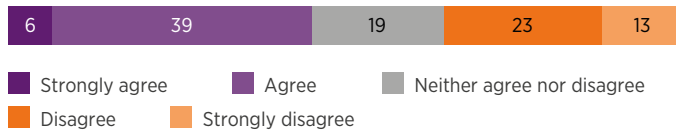
Pay and pensions are distinct from other aspects of job quality in that they concern the exchange value of work rather than the scope and form of work itself. Nonetheless, they are a fundamental aspect of job quality and an obvious place to start. We consider subjective as well as objective measures of pay, and as well as pensions, we look at a range of other benefits.

Objective measures of pay

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) reports that median weekly pay in the UK was £550 in April 2017 (ONS 2017a). For the quality of life that jobs afford us, it is useful to look at pay in relation to the Living Wage. At the time of this survey, the legal National Living Wage (NLW) for those 25 or over was £7.50 per hour (by the time of publication this will have risen to £7.83) and the voluntary or Real Living Wage was £10.20 per hour in London and £8.75 outside. Analysis by KPMG (2017) conducted shortly before the last rate increase showed that 21% of UK workers earned less than the Real Living Wage. Illegal rates of pay below the minimum are far fewer, calculated by the Office for National Statistics as 1.3% of jobs (ONS 2016).

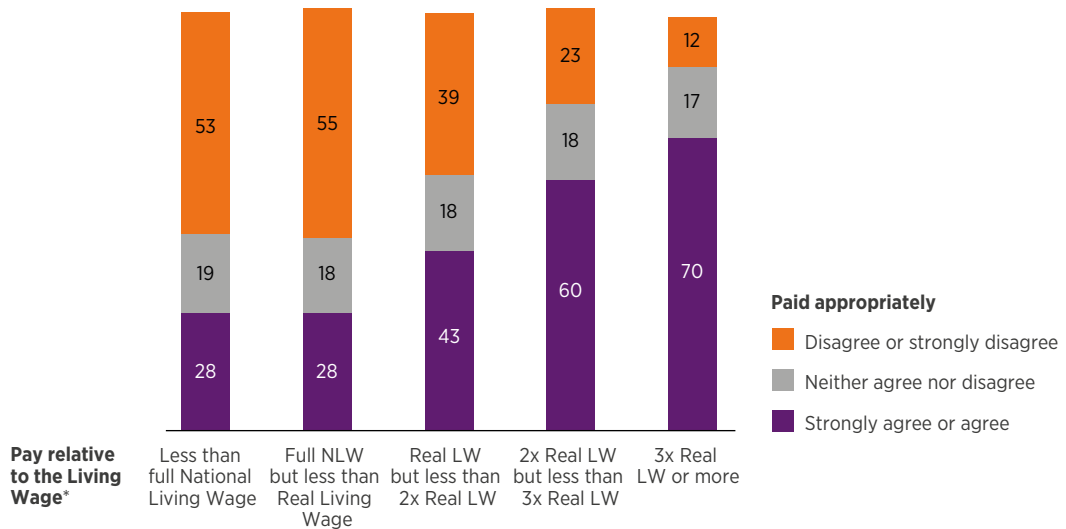
Our data shows a median pay of £511.80 per week (£26,612 per annum), pointing to some bias in our figures. Pay is complex to calculate accurately in a survey, for several reasons: people may know their pay in different terms, including hourly, weekly, monthly or annual; they may not report these figures accurately; and they may not accurately report how

Figure 3: Considering my responsibilities and achievements in my job, I feel I get paid appropriately (%)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 4: Perceptions of pay across pay bands (%)



*Categories based on: £7.50 per hour (full National Living Wage); £10.20 London and £8.75 outside London (Real Living Wage); £20.40 London and £17.50 outside London (2x Real Living Wage); £30.60 London and £26.25 outside London (3x Real Living Wage).

Base: all employees

many hours they work, so robustly calculating one rate from another requires considerable cross-checking and verification. For space we do not take an extensive approach to assessing pay in this survey, so we treat our objective figures on pay with caution and defer to official statistics.

Subjective aspects of pay

There is a strong subjective aspect to pay, as what constitutes good pay for one job, or for someone at one point in their career, may be low pay for another. Thus, we look at people’s perceptions of their pay, asking whether it is ‘appropriate’ given their responsibilities and achievements in their job. There is inevitably some bias within this, as people tend to overestimate their worth in what is termed ‘endowment bias’ (Lupton et al 2015) or the ‘above average effect’ (Kahneman 2011) but it remains a useful indicator of pay.

Our data show that almost half of workers (45%) think their pay is appropriate and just over a third (36%) do not. This is a slightly positive picture, but notably less positive than people’s overall job satisfaction (64% positive; see section 10).

Looking at the interaction between objective (or absolute) and subjective (or relative) aspects of pay, Figure 4 shows that they are clearly related, even though we ask people to assess their pay *in relation to their responsibilities and achievements*.² It is particularly interesting to see how pivotal the Real Living Wage appears to be: above this, people tend

² Our measure of pay in relation to Living Wage is based on hours actually worked and thus includes unpaid overtime. We include workers under the age of 25, who are not eligible for the NLW, nevertheless comparing them against the same rates.

to view their pay as fair; below it they tend to view it as unfair. In short, from high earners to low, employees do not regard the fairness of pay purely in terms of job roles and market forces (that is, the market value of their skills and abilities). The Living Wage rates may not be common knowledge for most employees, but the cost of living seems to be in the back of their minds when gauging their pay; and although different people will have different costs of living, there is some alignment between this and the Minimum Income Standard on which the Real Living Wage is based (CRSP undated).

‘Employees do not regard the fairness of pay purely in terms of job roles and market forces ... the cost of living seems to be in the back of their minds.’

Pay across occupational and other groups

We see very marked differences in pay satisfaction across job types, with senior managers and professionals most satisfied (NRS grade A, 58% reporting they are paid appropriately) and a sliding scale down to those in semi-skilled, unskilled and casual work feeling least satisfied (33%). This may be largely explained by the differences in income levels (see above). Across contract types, the greatest difference is between self-employed (38% of whom do not think they are appropriately paid) and others; those on permanent contracts and those on atypical contracts (including temporary, zero-hours and short-hours contracts) are similarly satisfied with their pay.

We can see further variations in perceptions of pay across demographic groups. A hugely topical question at the moment is the gender pay gap, as UK regulation on gender pay gap reporting has started to come into force. The ASHE data shows that the median UK gender pay gap was 18.4% at April 2017 (ONS 2017a).

Looking at pay satisfaction, we find that overall, women are slightly more likely to feel underpaid (39%) than men (33%). It will be interesting to see if this figure increases over coming years, as more reporting leads to greater awareness of the extent of current disparities.

Perceptions of pay show a slight positive trend across age groups, with workers aged 18–24 more likely to feel underpaid (44%) than workers aged 35–64 (36% to 37%). However, there is a much greater difference among those working beyond state pension age, who are substantially happier with what they earn (24% underpaid). Looking across other personal characteristics, we generally see only small differences. Those without a degree are slightly more likely to feel underpaid (38%, compared with 36% on average), as are those with disabilities (42%).

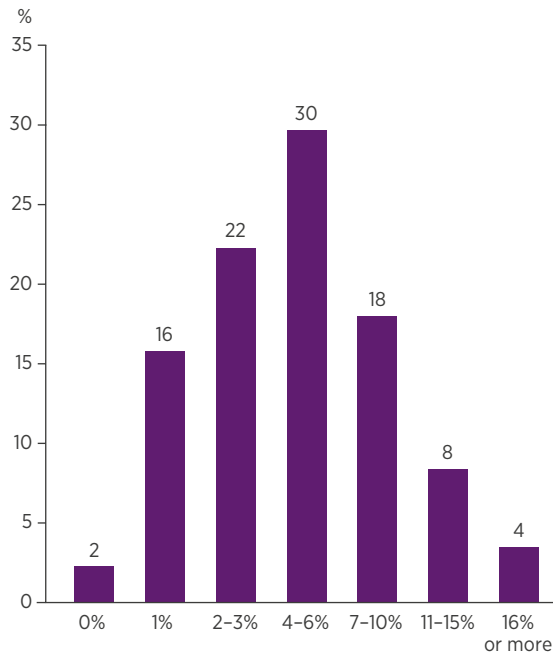
We see that pay satisfaction is slightly higher in the private sector (35% not paid appropriately) than the public and voluntary sectors (both 41%), although as we see next, this is at least partly offset by differences in pension contributions.

Pensions

Our survey shows that 72% of workers (excluding the self-employed) are saving for a pension through their employer. Of those who know, most (70%) receive an employer contribution of 6% of their salary or less; nearly one in five (18%) receive a contribution of 7–10% and nearly one in eight (12%) receive a contribution of 11% or more.

We see clearly marked differences across sectors, with more generous pensions in the public sector. For example, half (50%) of public sector workers receive a pension contribution from their employer of 7% or more, compared with just one in four (24%) in the private sector and 35% in the voluntary sector.

Figure 5: As a proportion of your salary, how much does your employer contribute into your company pension? (%)



Base: employees saving through a company pension plan (n=3,460)

Other employee benefits

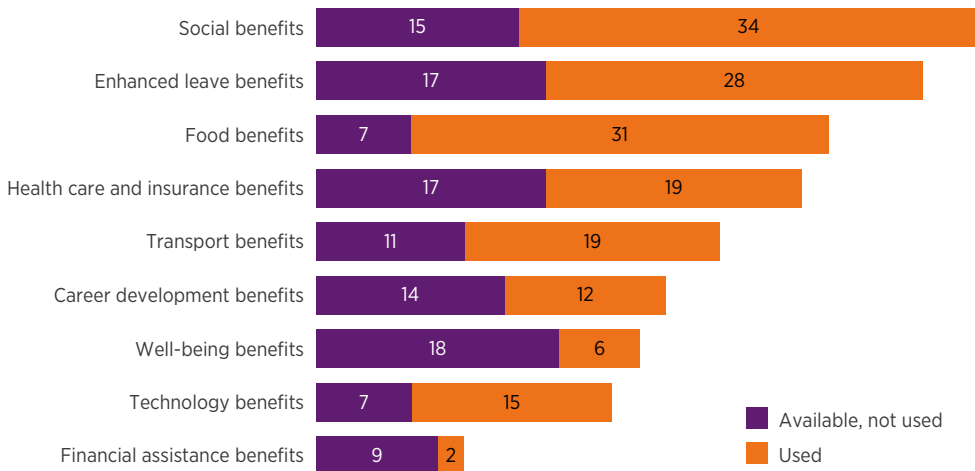
Apart from pensions, a range of employee benefits are offered, although less universally so. The most commonly offered are social benefits, such as Christmas or summer parties (available to 48% of workers) and enhanced leave (45%), which includes paid bereavement leave, emergency eldercare support, or more than 20 days' paid annual leave (excluding bank holidays).

Looking at other benefits, nearly two in five workers are provided free or subsidised food or drink (38%); and similar numbers are offered health care and insurance benefits, such as death-in-service or life assurance, flu jabs, dental or health insurance (35%); or transport benefits, such as free or subsidised on-site car parking, travel season ticket loan, or company car (30%). About a quarter of workers are offered career development benefits, such as paid study leave or having professional subscriptions paid (26%); well-being benefits, such as subsidised gym membership, massage or exercise classes (24%); or technology benefits, such as a mobile phone for personal use, or home computer (22%). The least common in our list was financial assistance benefits – for example, relocation assistance, or homeworker allowance – which are available to just one in ten workers (9%).

All these benefits are more commonly offered to permanent employees than those on atypical contracts (temporary, zero-hours and short-hours contracts; see section 4). The differences here are substantial, typically a factor of two or three. The greatest differences are in health benefits (available to 40% of permanent workers and 10% on atypical contracts) and career development benefits (29% and 8%). The most consistently offered benefits are food and drink (available to 40% of permanent employees and 30% of atypical workers) and social benefits (51% and 32%).

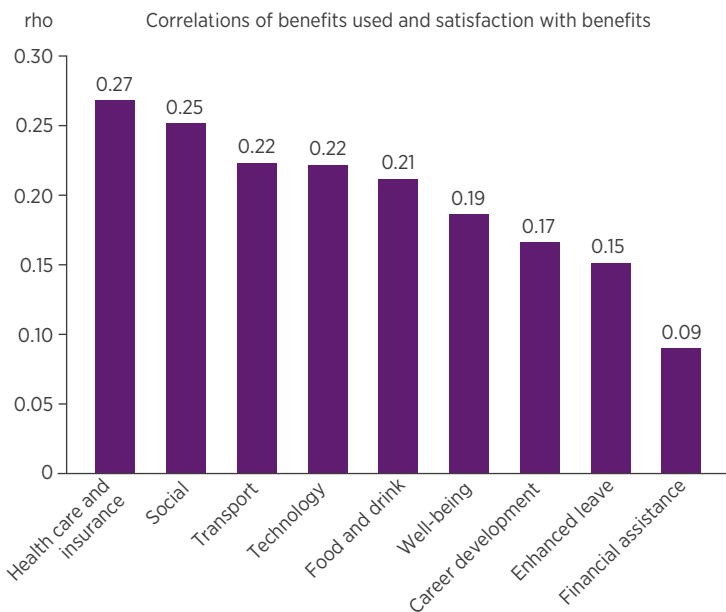
Figure 6: Employee benefits other than pensions (%)

In the last 12 months, have you made use of the following employee benefits, and if not, are they available to you?



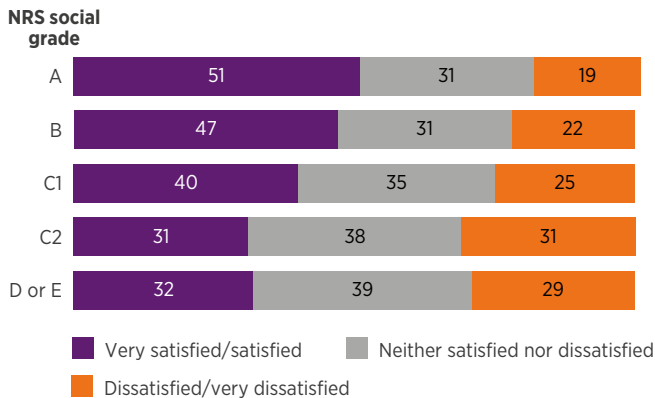
Base: employees in organisations of more than one person (n=4,985)

Figure 7: Which benefits are most important?



Base: employees in organisations of more than one person (n=4,985)

Figure 8: Satisfaction with the range of employee benefits offered, by occupational group (%)



Base: employees in organisations of more than one person

Overall, employees tend to be satisfied with their benefits (41% positive and 25% negative), but this is notably less positive than people's overall job satisfaction (64% positive, as noted above; see section 10).

To gauge which employee benefits are valued most, we correlate each of them with overall satisfaction with employee benefits. The results, shown in Figure 7, suggest that all contribute to satisfaction, but the most valued are health care and insurance benefits and social benefits, followed by transport, technology and food and drink benefits. Financial assistance seems to have the least impact on satisfaction with benefits.

Looking at which groups of employees are most satisfied with the benefits they receive apart from pensions, the clearest differences are across occupation type, with more senior managers and professionals being the happiest with their benefits and manual workers being the least happy. Unsurprisingly, we find that permanent employees are more satisfied with the benefits they receive than those on temporary, zero-hours and short-hours contracts. We see slight differences with satisfaction with benefits across sectors, with lower satisfaction in the public sector (38% 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied', compared with 42% in the private sector and voluntary sector).

Pay and benefits index

We conduct regression analysis to test the relationships between subjective pay (appropriateness) and other variables while controlling for other factors: in other words, to analyse differences while keeping key variables constant.³ The factors, or covariates, we include in this regression and those for the other indices include: occupational group (NRS social grade), contract type (standard permanent, atypical or self-employed), gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, education level, ethnicity, organisation size, sector and region.

When we control for factors including what jobs they do, we find women are no more likely to feel underpaid than men. Thus, the general difference we see in pay satisfaction is because women tend to have different (for example, less senior) jobs. This will be a deliberate choice for some, but due to bias in recruitment or promotion for others. Further analysis is warranted on this area, especially as previous research shows women to have lower pay expectations than men (for example, Smith 2009, Davison 2014). Also, as noted above, it be interesting to see whether gender differences in pay satisfaction change in the future, as better reporting raises awareness of the gender pay gap.

We find that employee voice has a strong relationship with pay satisfaction. The coefficient of 0.26 shows that a shift from the lowest to the highest score in our voice index (that is, a 0 to 1 increase; see section 9) corresponds to a 26% increase in pay satisfaction (also measured by a 0 to 1 index). Although this does not demonstrate a causal relationship, it shows that there is a relationship between the two aspects of job quality. The best interpretation of this is that the ability to express one's voice at work – through channels for voice and receptiveness of managers and open culture – either increases people's pay and/or makes people more satisfied with the pay they have.

³ Detail of the regression analyses are presented in the appendix to this report, available at www.cipd.co.uk/workinglives.

4 Terms of employment

Key findings

- Men, the young and the less educated are more likely to work on atypical contracts (mainly temporary or zero-hours).
- Three per cent of the working population are on zero-hours contracts and just over 1% has their main job in the gig economy.
- One in six workers is underemployed. This problem is most common among atypical workers, who on average are underemployed by five hours per week.
- Jobs typically offer skills development but career progression is more complicated.

The employment contract is a fundamental aspect of job quality as it determines the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers and thus goes a long way to determining the security of work. It informs opportunities for skill and career development and also includes pay – although because this is such a substantial issue in its own right, we consider this separately (see section 3).

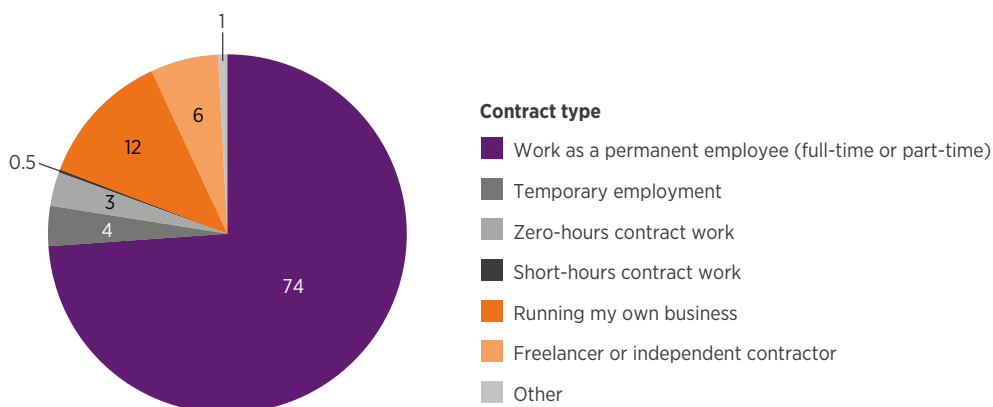
Contract type

Three-quarters of our respondents (74%) have permanent employment contracts, either full-time or part-time. Nearly one in five (18%) of our sample is self-employed, which is an overestimation on the official statistics of 15% (ONS 2018). And 7% work on atypical contracts, be it temporary (3.6%), zero-hours (2.9%) or short-hours contracts, where up to eight hours' work each week is guaranteed (0.5%).

Comparing these three broad groups of employment contracts across different groups of workers, the most marked differences lie across age bands. The youngest workers (18–24) are much more likely to have atypical work contracts, and the oldest (65+) are most likely to be self-employed or have temporary, zero-hours or short-hours contracts.

In line with other research (Beatson 2018), we also see that across occupational groups, the most likely to be self-employed are higher managerial, administrative or professional workers (NRS social grade A) and skilled manual workers (grade C2). We find men are more likely than women to be self-employed or have atypical contracts; and the self-employed tend to have higher levels of education and those on atypical contracts tend to have lower levels.

Figure 9: Working status and contract type (%)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

We discuss self-employment at length in our report, *More Selfies? A picture of self-employment in the UK* (Beatson 2018), including its growth over recent years and potential to explain the UK’s poor productivity performance.

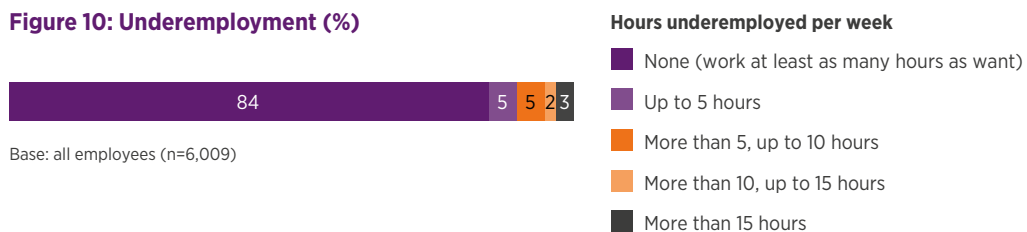
Distinct from contract type, we also ask about the gig economy, which we describe as:

‘...work arranged through an online platform covering a variety of on-demand customer services. These services include (but are not limited to) taxi services and ride sharing (for example Uber, BlaBlaCar, and so on), vehicle rental (for example EasyCar), food or goods delivery (for example Deliveroo, City Sprint), as well as platforms that link people for other services (for example TaskRabbit, Upwork, and so on).’

Whether gig economy workers are self-employed or not is often unclear, with cases being settled in employment tribunals over recent months. Deliveroo’s decision to class riders as self-employed was upheld because they could pass on jobs to other people (Ghosh 2017), whereas Uber lost its case on the same point, being told by a court that it works like a traditional cab firm and must classify its drivers as workers (Shead 2017).

Although a great deal of focus is given to the gig economy, it remains a very small part of the economy. Our survey identifies just 3% of the workforce being gig workers (having done some work in the gig economy in the last year), with half of these (1.4% overall) having their main job in it. This is slightly less than the figure the CIPD (2017a) has identified previously of 4% being gig workers. We cannot tell any definite trend from such small numbers, but it may be that the gig economy has peaked in the UK, as some evidence suggests it already has done in the USA (Beatson 2018).

Figure 10: Underemployment (%)



Underemployment

As well as contract *type*, another source of insecurity concerns not having as much work as one would need. We calculate this by looking at the difference between how many hours they usually work per week and how much they would ideally like to work.

Based on this calculation, we see that underemployment is a problem for about one in six workers (15%). Ignoring overwork, workers are on average underemployed by 1.6 hours per week. A far more common issue than underemployment is overwork, with 63% of employees working more hours than they would like to. However, the two problems are qualitatively quite different, with underemployment having direct implications for people’s pay and living standards and overwork being a question of work–life balance. We thus look at overwork separately in section 8.

Unsurprisingly, the clearest trends in underemployment are across contract types, with atypical workers being much more likely to struggle to find enough work. Our data shows that on average, those on temporary, zero-hours and short-hours contracts are underemployed by five hours per week. Comparing this with Labour Force Survey data

suggests this may be an overestimation,⁴ but it is clearly more than the figure for those on standard permanent contracts (mean of 1.2 hours per week underemployed).

We can also see large differences in age groups, with younger workers more likely to be underemployed (mean 3.5 hours per week); and across occupational groups, with those in unskilled manual or casual work (grade D and E) experiencing the most underemployment (mean 2.9 hours per week). We also find that workers with disabilities are slightly more likely to be underemployed (mean 2.0 hours per week). At a national level, men, private sector workers, and the lower educated are more likely to be underemployed, but these trends may be better explained by occupational group.

Job and labour market insecurity

A substantial minority of workers (13%) thinks that they are likely or very likely to lose their job in the next year. Some employees may see redundancy as a windfall and opportunity to move on to better things, but the broader story that this highlights is one of (at least perceived) insecurity. However, figures from our *Employee Outlook* suggest that this is less than has been the case over recent years following the global financial crisis. For a similar but more specific question, the figure peaked in 2011, when 21% of employees thought they were likely to lose their job *as a result of the economic climate*.

At a broad level, our data suggests that perceived job security is strongly influenced by contract type: 25% of atypical workers see themselves as at risk of losing their job in the next year, compared with 14% of standard permanent employees and 9% of the self-employed. It is also slightly related to sector (16% of public and voluntary sector workers feeling insecure, compared with 13% of private sector workers) but not by other variables, such as occupational group.

Figure 11: Job security (%)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

How likely do you think it is that you could lose your job in the next 12 months?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Don't know

Figure 12: Confidence in the labour market (%)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to find another job at least as good as your current one?

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult

⁴ Our data shows that 57% of those on zero-hours contracts want more hours, but data from the Labour Force Survey (ONS 2017b) shows a figure of less than half of this (27%). The difference may be because of error as a result of the small number of zero-hours contract workers in our sample (177).

We also look at workers' confidence in the labour market, specifically how confident they are that they could find another job at least as good as their current one. This says nothing about people's current job security, but is a good gauge of how serious an issue job insecurity is for them. We see no trends in this across different occupational groups or sector, suggesting the perceived labour market outlook is fairly consistent.

But what of people who feel doubly insecure, both in their current job and in the labour market? We find almost no relationship between these variables (a very small correlation of 0.03), but it is interesting to look at the intersection of these two important factors. We find that one in twelve workers (8%) faces this double whammy of being likely to lose their current job and feeling unconfident in their position in the external labour market.

Another important factor in people's position in the labour market concerns job tenure. Many workers will build up entitlements or pay increments that go with the job over time, and longer-serving employees may be less confident of finding as good a job as their current one because they can't transfer these across. Our data seems to confirm this effect. For example, 39% of workers employed up to one year are confident of finding another job as good, but this figure reduces steadily, down to just 17% for those employed more than 15 years.

Development opportunities

Being able to develop one's knowledge and skills is an important aspect of jobs. Alongside external activities such as studying, learning on the job is central to personal advancement and career progression. It is also important for the wider economy, building a workforce that is more productive in current roles and better able to take on more value-adding roles.

But it is arguably a neglected aspect of UK skills policy, where the dominant focus has been on increasing the supply of skills (Brinkley and Crowley 2017), and where it has focused on the workplace and often been limited to young people and apprenticeships, rather than lifelong learning. And even on apprenticeships, which the new levy introduced in 2017 aims to support further, it appears that many employers may not be making major changes, but instead *'reconfigure their existing training into apprenticeships'* (CBI 2017). Clearly, there are differing views on how much responsibility employers have to help develop workers' skills.

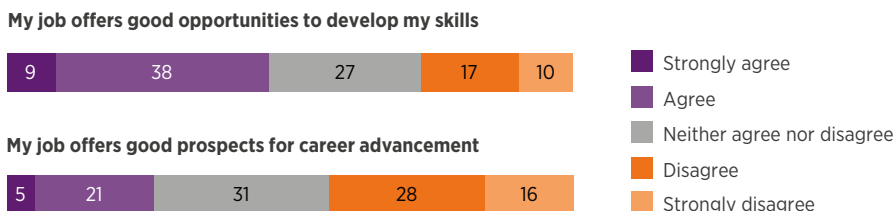
We find that typically UK employees believe their jobs serve them well in helping them develop skills, but not in developing their careers. This is an interesting contrast. It may reflect that people feel there are limited opportunities for promotion in their line of work, so becoming more skilled in the job does not necessarily help people materially. It also gives some weight to the view that in order to progress in one's career, the best bet is often to move jobs, as there are usually more opportunities in the external labour market than in one's current organisation. In either case, it suggests that nearly half of jobs (43%) fail to provide decent career development, with one in six workers (16%) being in jobs that offer little or none at all.

Turning to how opportunities for personal development vary across groups, our main finding is that there are marked differences across occupational groups, with higher social grades consistently faring better. Here, we present figures for net agreement (the difference between 'strongly agree' or 'agree' on the one hand and 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' on the other hand). Among senior managers (NRS social grade A), net agreement that jobs provide good opportunities to develop their skills is +40%, whereas among those in unskilled and casual work (grades D and E), this figure is -13%. Sizable differences also exist for career development opportunities: net agreement of -6% for grade A and -32% for grades D and E.

In short, high-skill, high-responsibility positions help people develop further, whereas those in low-skill jobs have far less adequate routes to develop. As a result, there is a real risk that some may effectively be trapped in low-level jobs, regardless of what other jobs are available in the labour market. Of course, not all workers in lower-skilled jobs may want to progress to more advanced jobs, but it is important that the opportunities are there.

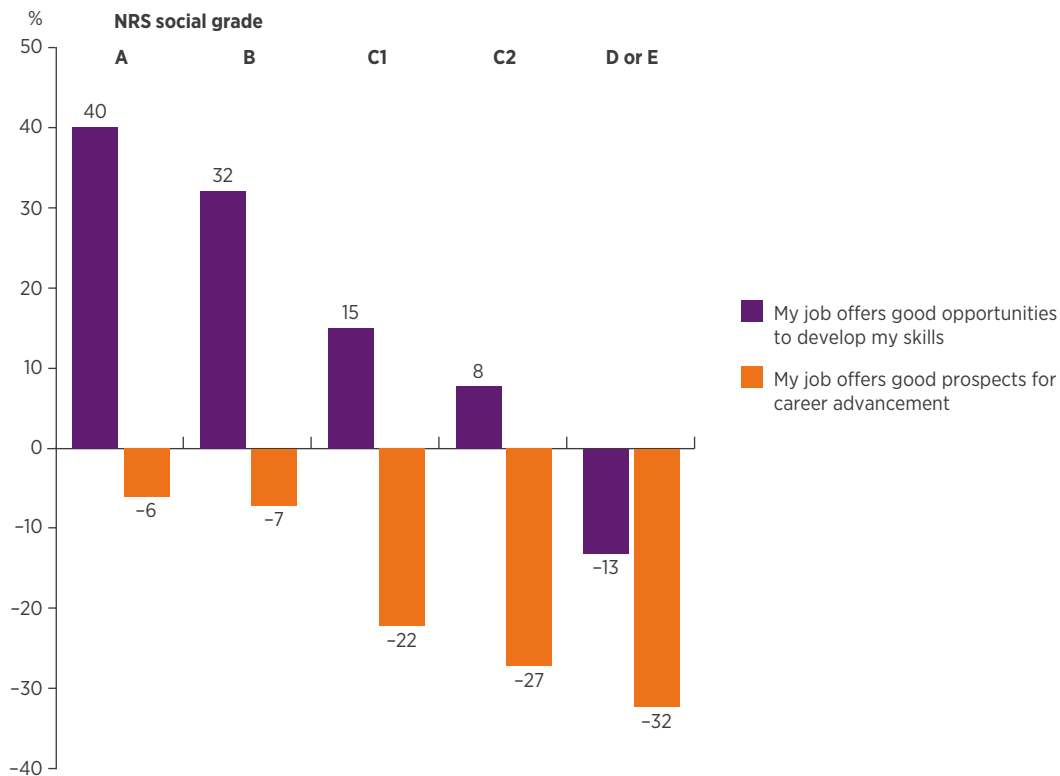
Aside from occupational groups, we also find sectoral differences, with greater opportunities for development in the public sector than private and voluntary sectors. This may be because the public sector has more professional-grade workers than the private sector. It may also be that, in the face of effective pay freezes driven by austerity measures, many public sector employers are boosting options for progression as a recruitment and retention tool.

Figure 13: Personal and career development (%)



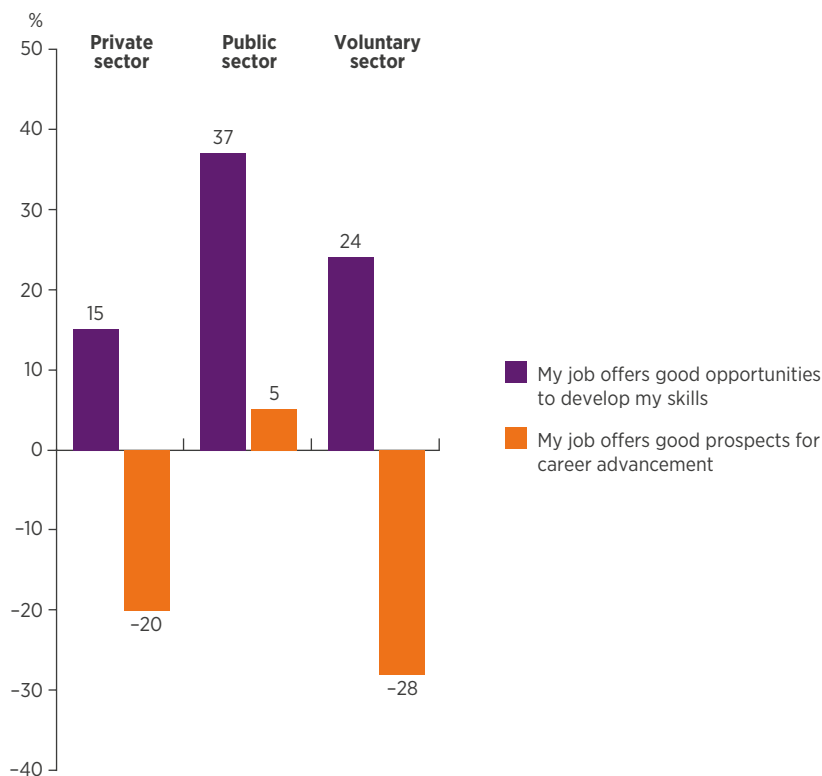
Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 14: Personal and career development, by occupational group (net agreement)



Net agreement: (% strongly agree or agree) – (% disagree or strongly disagree)

Base: all employees

Figure 15: Personal and career development, by sector (net agreement)

Net agreement: (% strongly agree or agree) – (% disagree or strongly disagree)

Base: all employees

Across contract types, standard permanent employees predictably fare better in both skill development and career development (net agreement with the statements, +17% and -14%) compared with those on temporary or zero-hours contracts (0% and -32%). Interestingly, the picture appears especially polarised for the self-employed: their jobs tend to be very good at helping them develop skills (+35%) but very poor at helping them advance their careers (-24%). One explanation for this is that they may develop a range of wider skills as part of running a business, but their options to diversify in the type of work they do may be more limited than for employees working on standard permanent contracts.

It seems there are a number of factors at play in shaping the development opportunities that jobs offer. But one challenge stands out: namely the risk that workers become trapped, in particular, in unskilled and casual work, but also to some extent in lower-level professional jobs and skilled manual work.

The supply of training and development opportunities within the job are clearly an important part of meeting this challenge, as well as careers advice and support to help people to find lines of work that offer better opportunities for progression. However, this is not enough. It is also important to look at the demand for skills, in both job design and the effective application of skills used in the workplace. We look at these issues of job complexity and skills utilisation in section 5.

Figure 16: Personal and career development, by contract type (net agreement)



Net agreement: (% strongly agree or agree) – (% disagree or strongly disagree)

Base: all employees

Terms of employment index

We compute a job quality index (0 to 1) for terms of employment based on contractual stability (contract type and job security), underemployment and development opportunities. We conduct regression analysis on this to look at what is related to terms of employment while controlling for other factors (that is, keeping other things constant).

In particular, we find a moderate relationship between our employee voice index (see section 9) and terms of employment (coefficient 0.15, meaning a 0 to 1 increase in the voice index corresponds to a 15% increase in the terms of employment index). This means that, where there are more channels for voice and greater managerial openness to employee views, workers will have generally better terms of employment. This may be because employee voice influences terms of employment positively, although it may also be that employers who do better in one also do better in the other.

A range of things are weakly related to terms of employment. Across occupational groups, those in unskilled and casual jobs (NRS grades D and E) score 3% lower on the terms of employment index than senior managers and professionals (grade A). Workers with disabilities have slightly poorer terms of employment, scoring 2 percentage points lower in the index. We also see slightly worse terms of employment in micro organisations (fewer than ten employees).

These relationships do not show causal relationships with terms of employment but do give us a better picture of where they tend to be better or worse.

5 Job design and the nature of work

Key findings

- Three in ten workers say that their workload is too much, and mid-level managers and professionals are most likely to be overworked, suggesting a ‘squeezed middle’ in occupational grades.
- Underutilisation of skills and knowledge seems to be a much greater problem than workers being underequipped, and making better use of existing skills may also be a good opportunity to help redress the lack of career development noted by many workers.
- The great majority of employees feel their work is useful for the organisation, but far fewer are motivated by their organisation’s purpose or feel the work they do is useful work for society.
- Employee voice is positively related to the nature of work, but even more closely related is social support and cohesion.

We split the intrinsic characteristics of work into two broad dimensions: first, in this section, we look at job design and the nature of work itself; second, in the next section, we look at the social aspects of work, in particular social support and cohesion. Within job design and the nature of work, we identify six component parts: workload, autonomy, resources, job complexity, skills match, and the meaningfulness of work.

Workload and pressure

We benefit from the security of having as much work as we need to make a living (see section 4), yet also from not spending too many of our waking hours at work (see section 8). But separate from both these points is the question of work intensity; that is, how much we have to do within the working day. Clearly, having too little to do is undesirable, both from the point of view of organisational productivity and the individual’s sense of doing meaningful work, but given the central contribution of stress towards poor health, we consider being overworked as the more serious concern for employees.

One in twenty workers (6%) are overwhelmed by their current jobs, reporting that they have ‘far too much’ work. While not at epidemic levels, this is nonetheless a substantial problem, as over time these workers risk burnout.

More generally, three in ten workers (30%) have workloads that are to some extent unmanageable (either ‘too much’ or ‘far too much’). This shows work pressure to be an important issue. Employers need to ensure people have manageable workloads. This could involve addressing unrealistic targets, poor people management, or indeed poor personal planning, in which case interventions such as coaching and training in self-management may help.

High work pressure is more common among full-time employees (40%) and less common for those on part-time contracts (20%), temporary, zero-hours and short-hours contracts (16%), and the self-employed (15%). This suggests that these latter options can be effective ways for employees to take control of their workloads. Although they are more likely to

be underemployed and can face undue pressure in some cases, in general terms, work intensity is one respect in which atypical workers and the self-employed tend to be in a better position.

It is interesting to see that unmanageable workloads are fairly constant across all occupational groups except for mid-level managers and professionals (NRS grade B), who are much more likely to be overworked. This suggests the existence of a ‘squeezed middle’ in occupational grades, for example because mid-level managers have to grapple with day-to-day challenges in ensuring front-line deliverables, at the same time as engaging with higher-level organisational strategy. Our findings on health and well-being give some further support for this view (see section 7).

It is not uncommon for HR or senior leaders to lament ‘middle management’ as a problem area which, for example, is most resistant to organisational change. Our data points to them having more to deal with, so a lesson for some employers may be to shift their focus to how they can better support these critical links between strategy and operations.

Looking at different work contexts, we find that voluntary sector and especially public sector workers are more likely to have unmanageable workloads than private sector workers. This may be an effect of austerity measures and the constant drive to do more with less public spending.

Figure 17: Workload (%)

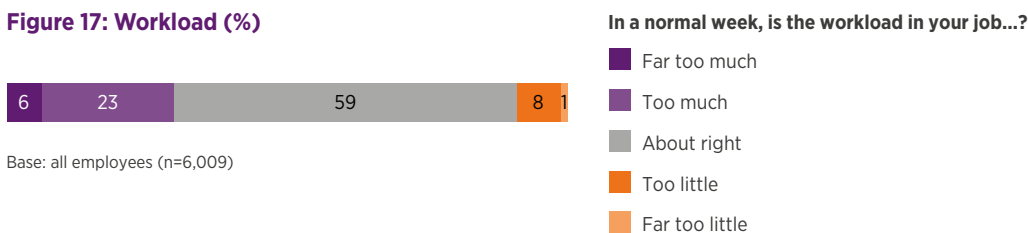


Figure 18: Workload, by sector (%)

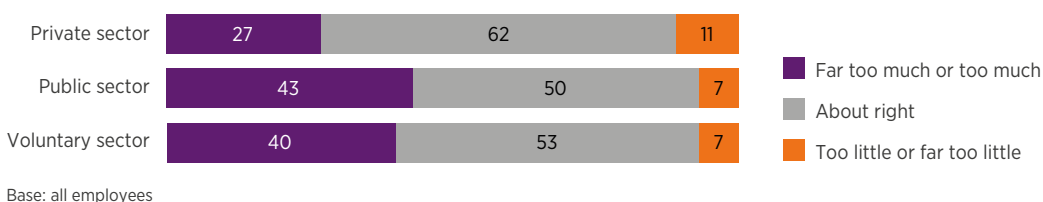
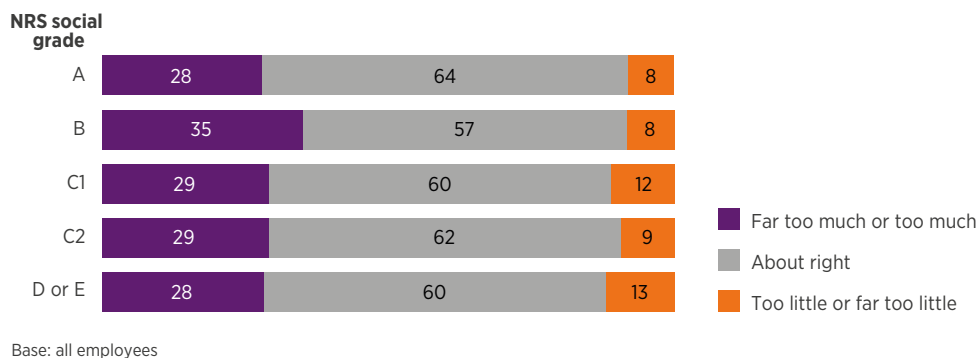


Figure 19: Workload, by occupational group (%)



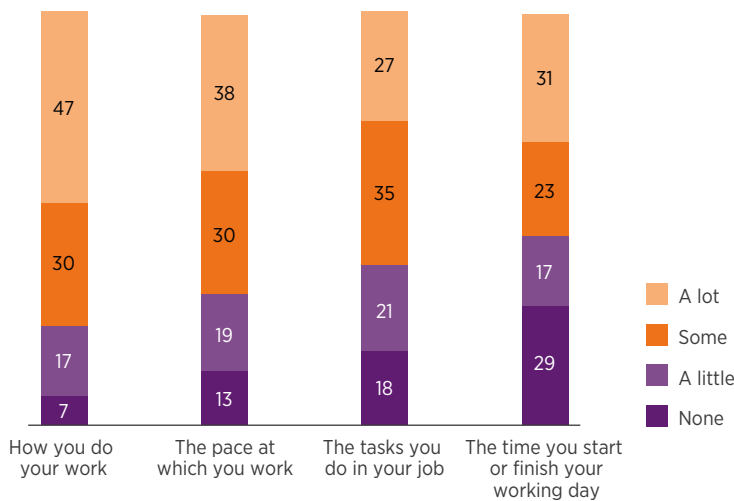
Autonomy and self-determination

Alongside opportunities for voice and representation (see section 9), a central way in which workers can more directly shape their working life is through the autonomy, self-determination, or discretionary decision-making that they are granted.

Overall, employees are reasonably empowered to directly shape their jobs, especially in how they do their work and how fast they work. These aspects are probably the most important for meaningful, enjoyable and manageable work, and in most cases will also be the aspects in which managers have most flexibility. Workers' direct influence over what tasks they do and when they work are less pronounced, but in many cases the scope of the job may make it difficult for it to be otherwise.

Figure 20: Job autonomy (%)

In general, how much influence do you have over the following?



Base: all employees in organisations of more than one person (n=4,985)

The greatest differences in autonomy are across types of contract and types of job. Unsurprisingly, the self-employed and, overlapping with this category, senior managers (NRS social grade A) have the most scope for job autonomy. Computing a 0 to 1 index from the four questions shown in Figure 20, senior managers have a mean score of 0.72, compared with 0.61 on average and 0.47 in unskilled and casual work (grades D and E).

Contract type is also a major factor of influence: using the same index, those on temporary, zero-hours and short-hours contracts score on average a mean of 0.53, whereas standard permanent employees score 0.61 and the self-employed score 0.78. Thus, although those on atypical contracts benefit similarly to the self-employed in having more manageable workloads (see above), they are poles apart when it comes to job autonomy.

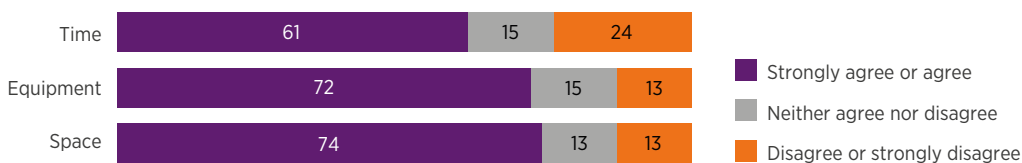
The value of empowerment or job autonomy is well established. In particular, the job demands–resources (JD–R) model highlights the importance of autonomy in enabling employees to cope with greater work demands (Bakker and Demerouti 2007).

However, autonomy and increased discretion to make decisions can also be exposing. A recent meta-analysis finds that, without appropriate support and guidance, too much 'empowerment' can leave people out of their depth (Lee et al 2018a, 2018b). The authors provide evidence that empowering leadership can be interpreted as avoiding work or difficult decisions, and create intensification and increased stress for others, so it is crucial that empowerment goes hand in hand with support. This particularly seems to be the case for routine work tasks, as opposed to creative tasks and organisational citizenship behaviour (that is, discretionary behaviour beyond the defined role, for example helping colleagues).

Resources

As well as being appropriately empowered to shape our jobs, we obviously need the right resources to be able to carry out our work (Bakker and Demerouti 2007). We consider three aspects to this: (1) whether workers have the right equipment to do their job effectively; (2) whether they usually have enough time to get their work done within their allocated hours; and (3) whether they have a suitable space, such as an office or workshop. In all three areas, most workers agree that they have adequate resources, but the picture is notably worse for time resource, on which three in five workers (61%) agree with the question and one in four (24%) disagree. By contrast, about one in eight workers (13%) report that they do not have adequate equipment or space.

Figure 21: Adequate work resources (%)



Base: all employees in organisations of more than one person (n=4,985)

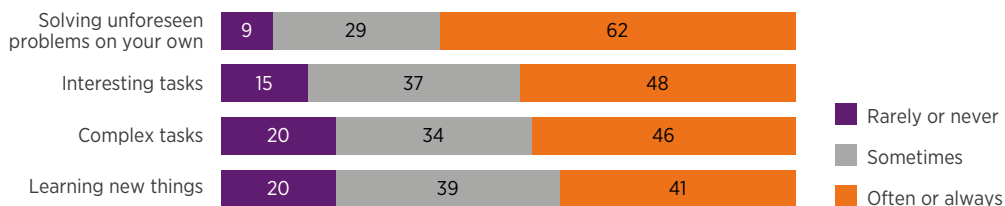
Job complexity and skills

The complexity of a job and skills required to do it are important to job quality for two reasons. First, at a micro level, employees benefit from having a good fit between their skills and knowledge and those required by the job: being overskilled risks boredom and stagnation; being underskilled risks underperformance and stress. Second, at a macro level, there is some consensus that economies benefit from a higher-skilled jobs market, although debates on how this can be achieved and whether the UK is progressing towards it are longstanding and in some respects still unresolved (for example, see Lloyd and Payne 2002, Keep 2003, O'Connor 2015).

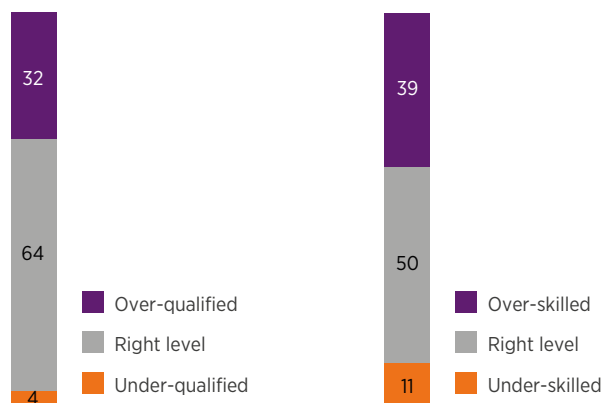
A central point of contention is whether an hourglass labour market is being created, with a hollowing out of mid-level skilled jobs and an increasing divide between the haves and the have-nots. It has been argued that there is a trend of employers either automating mid-level jobs or moving them abroad (for example, Twycross et al 2016, Jacobs 2015). However, there are fairly persuasive arguments that, although there are changes afoot, the hollowing-out argument is overly simplistic: new jobs are created, existing jobs can be paid more (or less) and overall wage distribution is relatively stable (McIntosh 2013, Taylor et al 2017). They may be different, but mid-level jobs remain.

Figure 22: Job complexity (%)

In general, how often does your main job involve the following?



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 23: Person–job match: qualifications and skills (%)

Base: all employees (n=6,009)

We assess job complexity by asking respondents about the type and level of tasks they undertake in their roles. This has the advantage of being simpler to collect than detailed analysis of job content, although as a subjective measure, it will vary to some degree with personal expectations. However, as we would expect, we do see a consistent trend across occupational groups, with senior management jobs being the most complex (mean score of 0.68 from a 0 to 1 index formed from our four question items) through to unskilled and casual work being the least complex (mean 0.49).

At a broader level, employees tend to report moderate levels of job complexity. A little more than one in ten have jobs that are consistently interesting (11%), complex (12%) or involve learning (11%), and 15–20% report that their jobs are rarely or never stimulating in these ways. Having to solve unforeseen problems on one’s own is more common, with nearly one in five jobs (18%) always requiring this.

Regarding person–job match, we see that workers typically consider that they have the right level of qualifications (64%) and skills (50%) to do their job. However, one in three workers (32%) reports being overqualified and three in five (39%) report they have the skills to cope with more demanding duties. The proportion of workers lacking the right qualifications or skills is much lower (4% and 11% respectively).

There is some recent research (CBI 2017) indicating that many employers believe there will be a shortage of the talent needed to fill the higher-skilled jobs over the coming years. While by no means denying a lack of skills shortages, our data from workers themselves suggests there is currently a good deal of untapped talent, and thus opportunities for better skill utilisation and meeting skills gaps. Of course, as already mentioned, people tend to overestimate their ability and market value (Kahneman 2011, Lupton et al 2015), but equally we know that managers’ assessments of workers are also fraught with bias (Gifford 2016), so in this case, employees’ views are as likely to be trustworthy as those of their employers.

In sum, our data suggests that over-qualification and over-skilling is a more significant issue for people in UK workplaces than not having the necessary skills or qualification to do their jobs. Making better use of existing skills will not only help solve lagging productivity (Haldane 2017), but will also provide workers in low-skill jobs opportunities to develop their skills and career – opportunities which are often currently lacking (see section 4).

Meaningful work

Having a clear sense of meaning in our work is widely recognised as important for all workers. This is a view upheld by different schools of thought, including the broadly ‘unitarist’ perspective of employee engagement (Truss et al 2013, MacLeod and Clarke 2009) and ‘pluralist’ sociological perspectives (Edgell 2012, Sennett 2008).⁵

The inverse of meaningful work has been labelled – originally by Karl Marx – as worker alienation (Edgell 2012), whereby people feel disconnected from the fruit of their work or the purpose for which they work. Worker alienation is seen not only to be detrimental for worker well-being (Shantz et al 2014) but also to reduce motivation and effort and make employees more likely to quit (Tummers et al 2015).

Our focus on meaningful work centres on the ‘sense of pride and achievement at a job well done’, in particular when it matters not just to oneself but also to others (Bailey and Madden 2016).

We find employee views here to be very positive regarding their place in the organisation: three in four workers (74%) feel that they do useful work for their organisation or (for the self-employed) their clients. Workers are less convinced about the value they create for society more broadly, although nonetheless generally positive: about half feel they do useful work for society (48%) and, in line with this, that they are highly motivated by the core purpose of their organisation or clients (47%).

Differences across occupational groups are fairly consistent. On organisational value, 82% of senior managers (NRS social grade A) and 65% in unskilled or casual work (grades D and E) feel they do useful work for the organisation. Similarly, 65% (grade A) and 33% (grades D and E) are highly motivated by their organisational purpose. Differences regarding the societal value of work are less consistent, with skilled manual workers (grade C2) having a greater sense of doing useful work (50% agree) for society than supervisory, clerical and junior professional workers (grade C1; 40%), but otherwise the broad trend holds. Net agreement figures are shown in Figure 25.

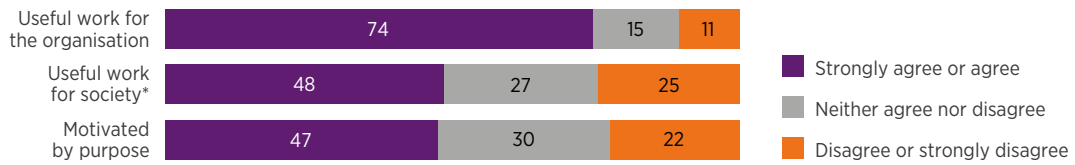
To some extent it is to be expected that senior managers can more tangibly see the contribution their work makes to organisational strategy and purpose, but this does not fully justify the differences we see here.

An often-cited story is that of the janitor sweeping the floor at NASA, who, when asked by John F. Kennedy what he did, answered, ‘I’m helping put a man on the moon.’ This nicely illustrates that even apparently menial jobs can be full of meaning. Where this is not the case, it may be due to a poor job–person match, or indeed a failure of leadership to communicate a clear line of sight between employees’ roles and the organisation’s purpose. But we should also recognise that there can be such a thing as unsatisfying, alienating work, just as there is work that does not serve a clear social purpose.

Understanding the dynamics in meaningful work, the trade-offs that workers make, and the role that employers can be expected to play is an important area for further research. On the one hand it is a higher-order aspect of job quality, at the opposite end from the fundamental basics that must be covered (Warhurst et al 2017) but on the other hand, it is a deeply human aspect of work and should not be considered a luxury.

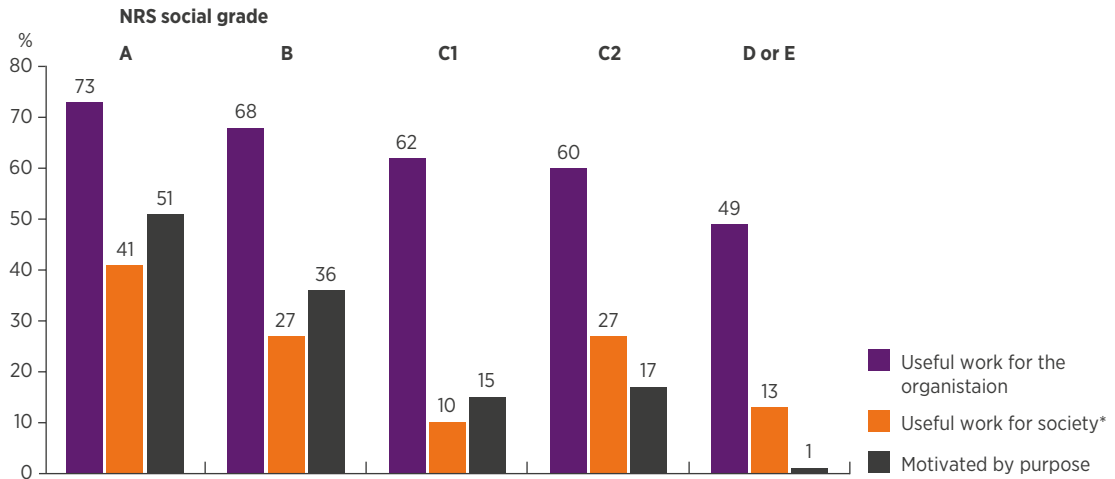
⁵ The unitarist perspective argues that the good of the organisation is for the good of the employee (*we’re all in this together*), whereas pluralism argues that employers and workers have different legitimate concerns (*we can disagree and need to work through our disagreements*).

Figure 24: Meaningful work (%)



Base: employees not running their own business (n=4,998) except *all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 25: Meaningful work, by occupational group (net agreement) (%)



Net agreement: (% strongly agree or agree) - (% disagree or strongly disagree)

Base: employees not running their own business except *all employees

Nature of work indices

We compute two job quality indices for job design and the nature of work. First, our main nature of work index captures subjective aspects that are relative to the individual worker: job demands and resources; meaningfulness of work; and the person-job match for qualifications and skills. This is a question of job-person match. Second, we compute an index for the objective aspect of job complexity; this is more of an economic consideration, relating to how high- or low-skilled a jobs market the UK creates.

We conduct regression analysis to look at what is related to the nature of work while controlling for other factors. One of the strongest relationships is with our employee voice index (an increase of 0 to 1 in this index leading to a 19 percentage point increase in the nature of work). An explanation of this is that strong worker voice helps people to ensure they have appropriate demands and resources, and make better use of their skills.

But even more closely related is our social support and cohesion index (a 0 to 1 increase corresponding to a 44 percentage point increase in the nature of work index). This is interesting, suggesting that work relationships – in particular with line managers but also with others – may be more important in enhancing the nature of work than employees being able to shape their jobs by expressing their concerns, ideas and requests.

However, in both these cases, we must recognise that the relationship may not be causal, and progressive employers simply serve their workers well in both these aspects of job quality.

Looking at other factors we see that, compared with the private sector, public and voluntary sector workers view the nature of their work more positively (coefficient 0.04) and see their jobs as more complex (0.04 for public and 0.03 for the voluntary sector).

Higher occupational groups also fare better than lower – for example, those in unskilled and casual work (NRS grades D and E) score 7 percentage points lower in the nature of work index than senior managers and professionals (grade A) and 10% less in the job complexity index. And partly related to this, atypical workers do less well than standard permanent employees (coefficient -0.04).

However, the trend in education levels is split. For example, workers with degrees unsurprisingly have more complex jobs than those without (coefficients 0.02 for undergraduates and 0.05 for postgraduates), but in other respects the nature of their work seems to be worse (-0.03 and -0.02). This illustrates how the two aspects do not necessarily align: one can have a high-skilled job that is not ideal in job demands and resources, or meaningfulness.

6 Social support and cohesion

Key findings

- Social support and cohesion are important factors that relate closely to other aspects of job quality as well as key outcomes.
- Most people view their work relationships as positive, especially those they have with colleagues in the same team, and feel safe in their work culture – for example, not experiencing a blame culture.
- Employees generally view their line managers positively, but there are important areas of relative weakness, including giving feedback, supporting learning, fostering team cohesion and being trustworthy.
- Social support and cohesion varies across demographic groups (ethnicity, gender and disability) suggesting that, as well as interventions such as team-building activity, employers may do well to try to foster a more inclusive culture at work.

Following on from job design and the nature of work, the second dimension we identify as part of the intrinsic characteristics of work is social support and cohesion. Support includes the practical helpfulness of colleagues and how ‘safe’ people feel in their team environments – for example to express themselves openly or present new ideas. Cohesion essentially relates to how well employees get on with the people they work with, including their boss and colleagues but also clients, suppliers and anyone else. Because of the centrality of this relationship to our working lives, we include specific items on line management.

General views of work relationships

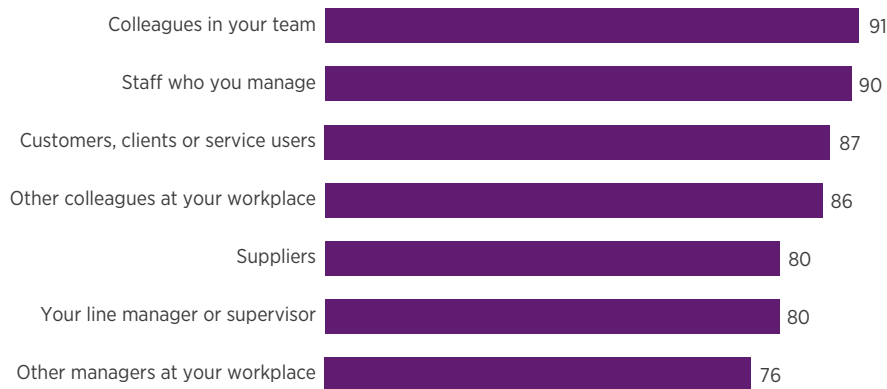
Employees are generally positive about their work relationships. For example, 80% of employees rate their relationship with their managers positively, and 91% do so for their relationships with team colleagues. Poor relationships with line managers (7%) and team colleagues (1%) are rare. We can see from Figure 26 that workers are more positive about colleagues and people they manage than with their boss, and more positive about relationships with people with whom they work more closely.

Psychological safety

The idea of psychological safety can be seen as whether there is a blame culture or some ‘mistake tolerance’. It primarily refers to whether people feel able to take risks within a team, but also relates to other factors such as learning behaviour and ultimately performance (Edmondson 1999). It has received particular attention of late because Google’s Project Aristotle identified it as the primary drivers of team effectiveness (Google 2016).

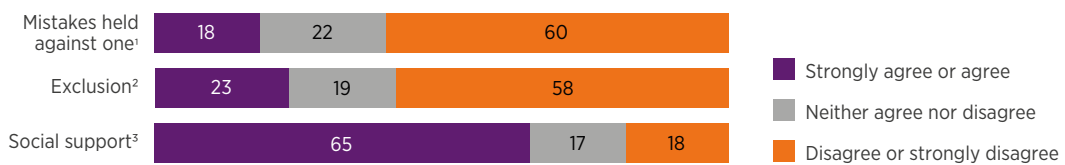
In line with the general views on work relationships, we find that most employees feel psychologically safe. About three in five disagree that their managers would hold their mistakes against them (60%) or that people in their teams ‘sometimes reject others for being different’ (58%); and two-thirds (65%) agree that ‘no one in my team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts’.

Figure 26: Quality of relationships (% very good or good)



Base: employees in organisations of more than one person (n=4,985)

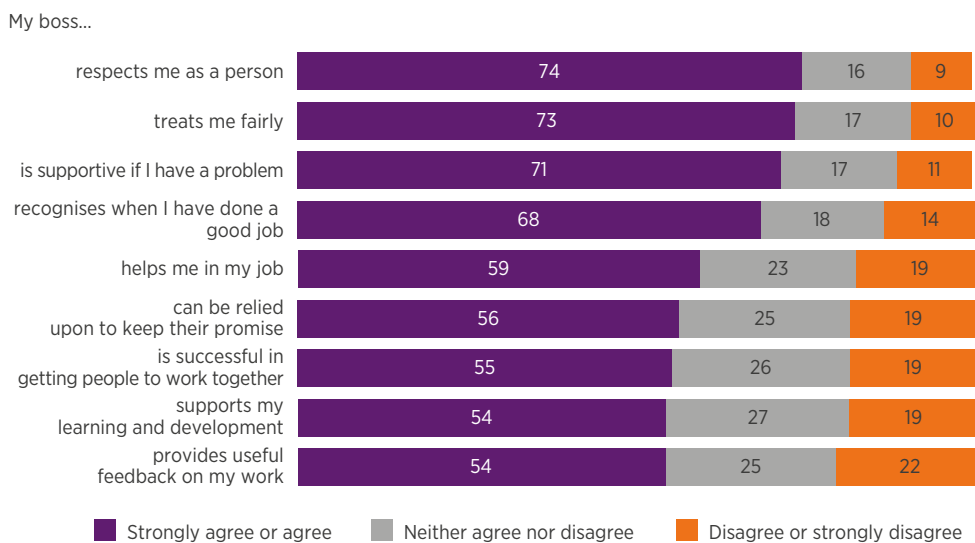
Figure 27: Psychological safety (%)



¹ 'If I make a mistake, my manager or supervisor will hold it against me.'
² 'People in my team sometimes reject others for being different.'
³ 'No one in my team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.'

Base: employees including freelancers with only one client, excluding those running their own business (n=4,998)

Figure 28: Quality of line management (%)



Base: employees including freelancers with only one client, excluding those running their own business (n=4,997)

Line management

Unsurprisingly, the most positive rating on line management is for the basic courtesy of showing respect (74% positive). But we also see very high ratings for bosses being fair (73%); for managerial support, or as it is often termed, ‘perceived supervisor support’ (71%); and for giving recognition of good work (68%). Although generally positive, the greatest areas for improvement in line management lie in giving useful feedback (22% negative), an important factor in performance (Gifford 2016); supporting learning and development (19%); fostering team cohesion (19%); and being trustworthy (19%).

When social support is lacking

Overall, our results show that in most respects, social support and cohesion are normal features of working life. However, there is no room for complacency, as their absence can be palpable. For example, case study research in policing suggests that, as well as tangible managerial support, facilities such as canteens and gyms that facilitate social interaction can help workers cope with what by most standards can be incredibly high-pressure work environments (Hayday et al 2007).

But it is not just in high-pressure environments that social support and cohesion are critical. More widely, there is good evidence that they are major factors that support productivity in knowledge work (AWA 2014). Further, a lack of cohesion and support not only undermines effort and creates stress, but also goes hand in hand with interpersonal conflict (Fevre et al 2012, Gifford 2015). Even a single incident of conflict, or workers feeling undermined, unsupported or disrespected can have a serious impact on working life and amount to a violation of the psychological contract (Aselage and Eisenberger 2003).

Social support index

We compute a job quality index (0 to 1) for social support and cohesion that draws together the quality of work relationships, psychological safety and the quality of line management.

We conduct regression analysis to look at what relates to social support and cohesion while controlling for other factors. Perhaps unsurprisingly, we see stronger social support and cohesion in micro organisations, with organisations of 50 or more employees rating 7% lower on the social support index, and even small organisations (10 to 49 employees) rating 6% less.

Compared with white British workers, other white workers and ethnic minority workers see slightly weaker social support and cohesion (coefficients of -0.03 and -0.04 respectively). We also see that men experience slightly less social support than women; and those with a disability also experience less social support (in both cases a difference of 2 percentage points). Controlling for other factors, we see no differences in social support and cohesion across occupational groups or sectors.

As discussed in section 10 and referenced at the close of various other sections, social support and cohesion is a recurring feature that is related to other aspects of job quality and to key outcomes, such as job satisfaction. Apart from organisation size – with the greatest difference being at the smallest level, above or below ten employees – the main differences are across demographic groups (ethnicity, gender and disability). This suggests that, as well as direct interventions to build cohesion and trust – such as meaningful team-building activity – employers or managers may do well to focus on measures that aim to improve an inclusive culture at work.

7 Health and well-being

Key findings

- Being well is working well: health and well-being is the single most important aspect of job quality in terms of key outcomes.
- Overall, work tends to have a positive impact on people's health and well-being, but substantial proportions of people see negative, potentially quite serious, impacts. The most common conditions are musculoskeletal and anxiety or depression.
- At a broad level, poor well-being at work is most often experienced by middle managers, which may be a sign of the dual pressures of working with organisational strategy and day-to-day deliverables.
- Social support and cohesion is strongly related to health and well-being, suggesting that the state of relationships with bosses and others may be crucial factors in either supporting good well-being or, on the flipside, contributing to health problems.

In the broadest sense of the term, employee well-being lies at the heart of job quality, all dimensions relating to it in one way or another. But it is also relevant to look specifically at how work affects the mental and physical health aspects of well-being.

Impact on mental and physical health

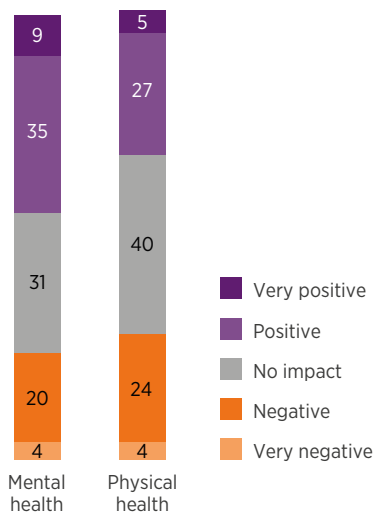
Perhaps the most obvious place to start is to recognise that good work has a positive impact on our well-being. In her influential review of the health of the working-age population, Carole Black wrote, *'For most people, their work is a key determinant of self-worth, family esteem, identity and standing within the community, besides, of course, material progress and a means of social participation and fulfilment'* (Black 2008, p4).

Overall, we see a slightly positive impact from work on people's mental health (44% positive, 25% negative) and an even spread of views of how work affects people's physical health (33% positive, 27% negative). We find, for example, that more people frequently feel 'full of energy' at work (30%) than rarely or never feel this (25%).

However, there are substantial numbers for whom work is toil. More than one in five workers always or often feel exhausted (22%) or 'under excessive pressure' (also 22%). Exhaustion can be physical or mental, but the latter finding is especially pointed, as it reflects the Health and Safety Executive's definition of stress as *'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'* (HSE 2008). Moreover, one in ten workers (11%) reports regularly feeling miserable at work. While this is a small minority, it represents a huge number of people nationally and indicates a serious problem for these people.

The generally slightly positive findings on the impact of work on health do not mask the serious issue that our data points to. Many jobs have occasional points of pressure that people, by and large, cope with well. It is the relentless tension that does the damage, whether this occurs from relationships, workload or alienation. In our forthcoming survey, we look at what employers are doing to support well-being at work and what they believe helps (Suff 2018).

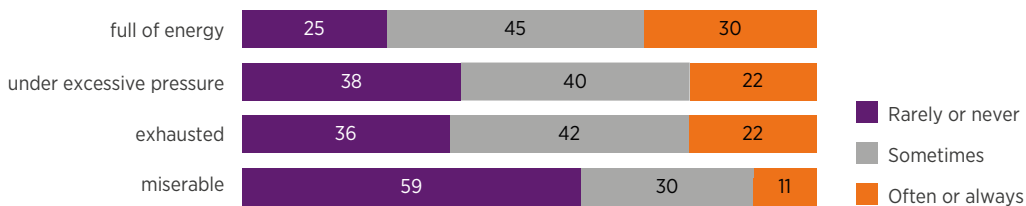
Figure 29: Impact of work on health (%)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

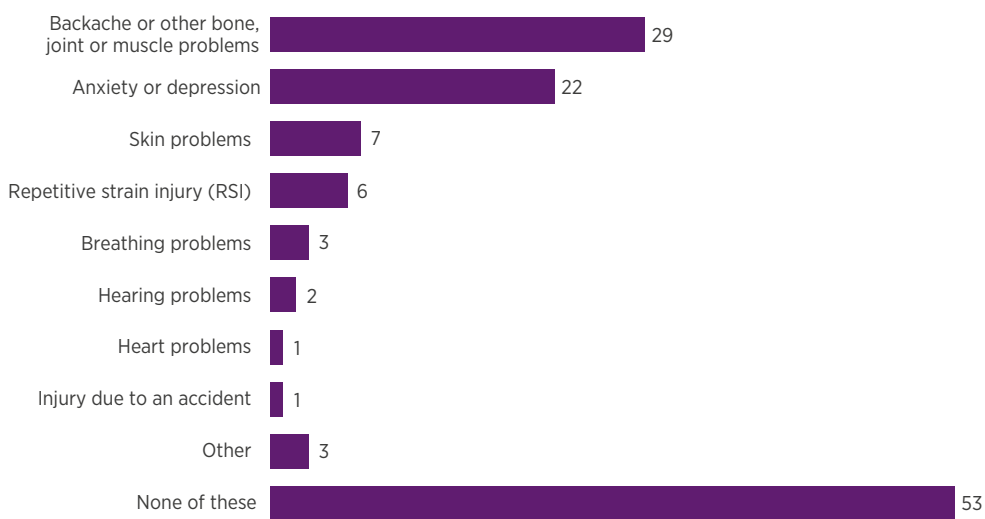
Figure 30: Energy and mental health at work (%)

At my work I feel...



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 31: Health conditions due to work in the last year (%)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Work-related health conditions

The overall impact of work on health is a useful metric, but more specific measures are also important. We thus look at how work has caused or contributed towards a range of health conditions.

Consistent with previous data (Sinclair 2016), we find that musculoskeletal conditions and anxiety or depression are the most common work-related health problems. Respectively, 29% and 22% of workers report that in the last year, they have experienced these health problems ‘due to work or where work was a contributing factor’. Other health conditions are much less common, as can be seen in Figure 31. Just 1% of workers have suffered workplace injuries in the last year (this does not include road traffic accidents while commuting to or from work).

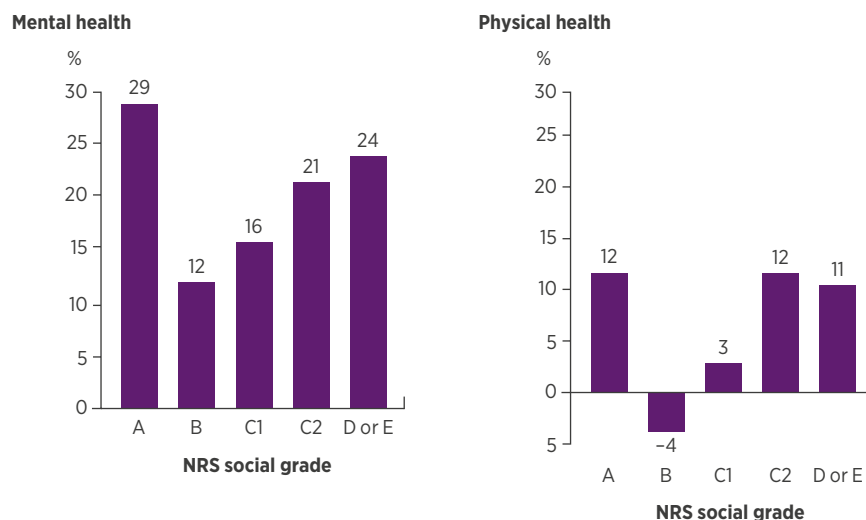
Differences across occupational groups and contract type

There are some clear differences in worker well-being for different occupational groups, but interestingly, the relationship is not linear; rather, we see a u-shaped trend. Thus, senior managers and professionals (NRS social grade A) report the most positive impact of work on mental health (51% positive, 22% negative), those in unskilled and casual work (D and E) see a slightly less positive impact (46% positive, 22% negative), but the worst-off group is intermediate-level managers and professionals (grade B; 40% positive and 28% negative). Similarly for physical health, we see the most positive picture among the top and bottom occupational grades and the worst-off group as middle managers.

This is corroborated by some other trends. In line with our findings on workload (see section 5), we find that levels of stress (‘excessive pressure’) and work-related anxiety or depression are most common among mid-level managers and professionals (grade B). However, as we would expect, we see that musculoskeletal conditions are more common among manual workers (grades C2, D and E). Levels of exhaustion appear to combine these two trends, being more common among mid-level managers and manual workers.

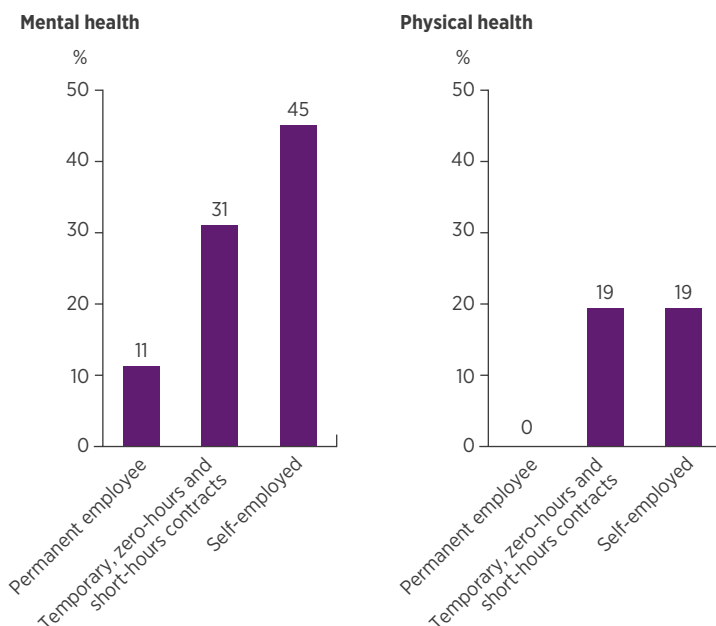
Well-being is an aspect of job quality where temporary workers report much more positive results than permanent workers. For example, temporary workers are significantly more likely to report that work impacts positively on both their mental and physical health than permanent staff. Temporary staff are also much less likely to report they are always or often under excessive pressure than permanent employees.

Figure 32: General impact of work on health, by occupational group (net positive)



Net positive = (% very positive or positive) - (% negative or very negative)
 Base: all employees (n=6,009)

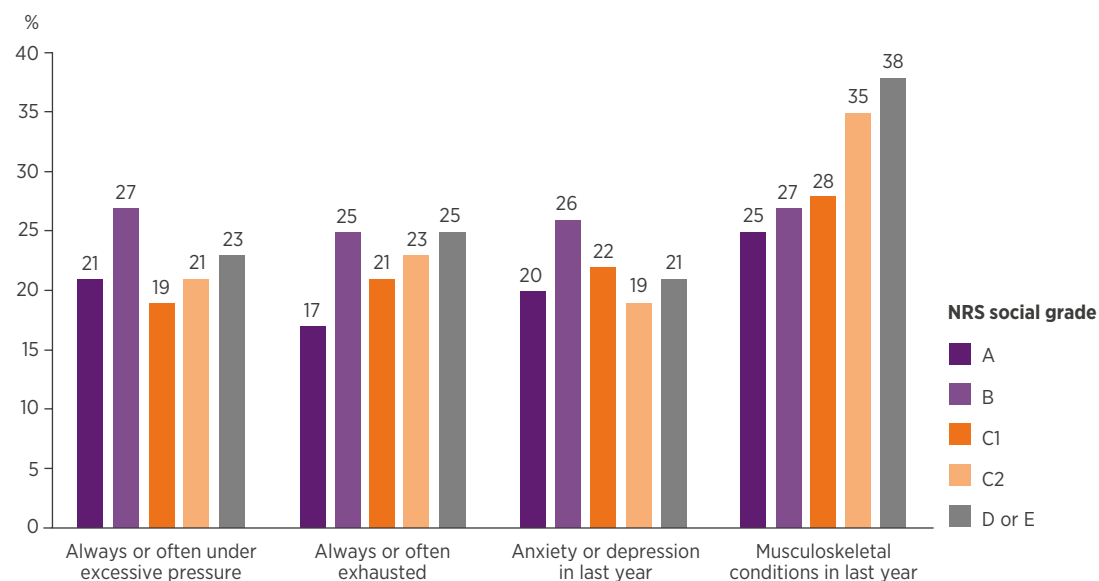
Figure 33: Impact of work on health, by contract type (net positive)



Net positive = (% very positive or positive) - (% negative or very negative)

Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 34: Negative impacts of work on stress and happiness, by occupational group (%)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Health and well-being index

We compute a job quality index (0 to 1) for health and well-being based on mental and physical health – both the incidence of specific work-related health conditions and overall self-assessed impact. As we discuss further in section 10, this is the dimension of job quality that is most closely related to key outcomes, in particular on job satisfaction and day-to-day enthusiasm for the job. This confirms well-being as constituting the heart of job quality.

We also conduct regression analysis to look at how other aspects of job quality and situational and demographic factors relate to health and well-being.

We find that social support and cohesion is by far the most strongly related factor to health and well-being: a 0 to 1 increase in our social support index sees a huge 41 percentage point increase in the well-being index (coefficient 0.41). We also see relationships between health and well-being and employee voice (coefficient 0.08) and autonomy (0.07), but these are much weaker in comparison.

We can't show causal relationships in this data, but a sensible reading is that social support and cohesion makes a more direct contribution to how we feel in mind and body than exercising our voice to influence decisions, or having the autonomy to be able to directly shape aspects of our jobs.

Our analysis here also raises a note of caution over the above findings on occupational group, as differences between mid-level and senior managers become weaker and statistically insignificant when we control for a range of other demographic and organisational factors. This does not deny this general trend in work-related well-being at a broad level, but further analysis needs to be conducted in this area to explore differences between groups and how these differences interact with other factors. It may be, for example, that greater autonomy and better flexibility options ease the pressure that mid-level managers face.

But at an individual and group level, it seems that good line management and supportive relationships in general appear to be the key, potentially both to supporting healthy working lives and avoiding situations that are unhealthy.

8 Work-life balance

Key findings

- UK employees work longer than their European counterparts and typically work five hours per week more than they would like. Commuting time typically adds 3 hours 45 minutes a week to this.
- Formal HR practices supporting work-life balance are relatively commonplace, but less common than a supportive culture that supports work-life balance informally.
- The most overworked group are mid-level managers and professionals, highlighting that all types of jobs can be improved in some respects.
- However, work-life balance is the least important dimension of job quality in relation to key outcome variables.

Work-life balance concerns how we manage competing priorities in our jobs and careers on the one hand, and our leisure time, family and other personal relationships on the other hand. It relates to questions of part-time or full-time work contracts (section 4), job intensity (section 5) and health and well-being (section 7), but is distinct from them.

The idea of work-life balance is also complicated by two factors in particular: first, the recognition of housework and caring for family members as work (Edgell 2012); and second, an observed erosion of the boundary between work and personal life, in particular because of mobile and social technology (Gifford 2013, Whiting et al 2014). We do not cover these aspects of working life in this survey for reasons of space, but they are areas that we recognise as worthy of research in their own right. Still, these factors do not lessen the importance of basic questions of work-life balance: whether we work more hours in the week and days in the year than we would like to, and can fulfil commitments and ambitions for our careers, as well as our personal and family lives.

Hours worked per week

An essential aspect of work–life balance is the amount of time we spend working. Our survey shows that the median number of hours worked per week is 37, slightly lower than government statistics, which puts the figure at 39 hours (ONS 2017a). The UK stands out as having one of the biggest shares of long-hours jobs in the EU and the longest average working week, with a mean figure of 42.3 hours (Eurostat 2018). This compares with 37.8 hours in Denmark, which is the shortest.

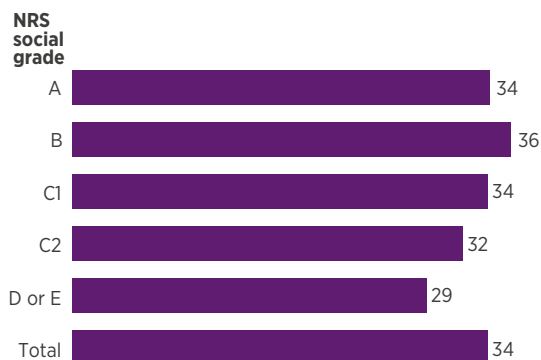
Working hours are fairly consistent across occupational groups, though slightly lower for those in manual or casual work (NRS social grades C2, D and E). We also find that, whereas women tend to work longer hours when they have dependent children at home, men tend to work less. This may reflect a convention, still current for many, for mothers to take time out of work to raise children than fathers. It will be interesting to see whether this dynamic changes over coming years, as regulation supporting men to take more parental leave takes hold.

Hours overworked

To assess work–life balance, we look at how many hours people work in relation to what they would ‘freely choose’ to work ‘while taking into account the need to earn your living’. We focus here only on overwork, not looking at those who work fewer hours than they would like. We look at underemployment separately in section 4.

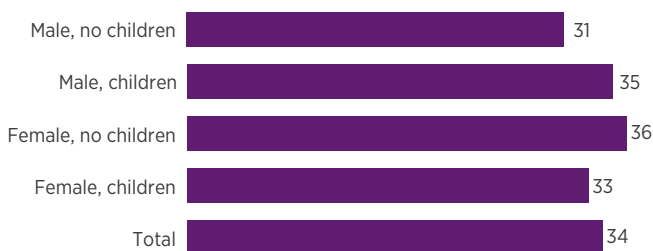
The average (median) employee works five hours per week more than they would like. In total, nearly two-thirds of employees (63%) would like to reduce their hours. Whether this constitutes an epidemic of overwork depends on what we consider reasonable. On the one hand, over half of workers (53%) work no more than five hours per week more than they would like, an amount we can consider manageable if not ideal. On the other hand, one in four people (27%) work ten hours or more per week beyond what they would like, which is a problem worth taking seriously.

Figure 35: Hours worked, by occupation group (mean hours)

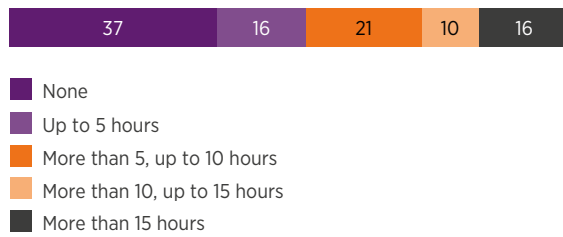


Actual hours usually worked per week, including paid or unpaid overtime
 Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 36: Hours worked, by gender and children at home (mean hours)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 37: Hours overworked per week (%)

Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 38: Daily commuting time (%)

Base: all employees (n=6,009)

As discussed in section 4, working too much is a far more common problem than not having enough work (experienced by 15% of our sample), although the two problems are qualitatively quite different.

We see a general split across occupational groups between professional, administrative and managerial workers (grades A, B and C1), who tend to be more overworked than those in manual or casual work (grades C2, D and E). Within the former groups, the most overworked group are mid-level managers and professionals (grade B), who on average work 8.6 hours per week more than they would like; in contrast, the mean⁶ figure for senior managers (grade A) is 8.0 hours and for junior management and professional workers (grade C1) is 8.1 hours.

Commuting time

We can consider that for most, commuting is similar to overwork, in that it's time we would rather be doing something else. With the median total daily commute at 45 minutes, we see that workers typically spend slightly less time commuting than overworking (3 hours 45 minutes a week, compared with 5 hours). Two-thirds of workers (68%) typically commute for an hour or less a day, while just 7% of workers commute for more than two hours a day and a very small minority (1.5%) usually commute more than three hours a day.

Overall this seems more manageable than the figures for overwork, but there are some variations to note. In particular, workers living in the London area commute markedly more than others: a mean of 84 minutes a day (7 hours a week) compared with an overall mean of 59 minutes. Workers in Wales commute the least, with a mean of 50 minutes a day.

We also see some difference across occupational groups, with those in higher-level jobs commuting more (67 minutes a day for grades A and B) than those in lower-level jobs (44 minutes a day for grades D and E).

⁶ In line with the work-life balance index (see below), to calculate the mean we recode negative values (that is, underemployment) as zero.

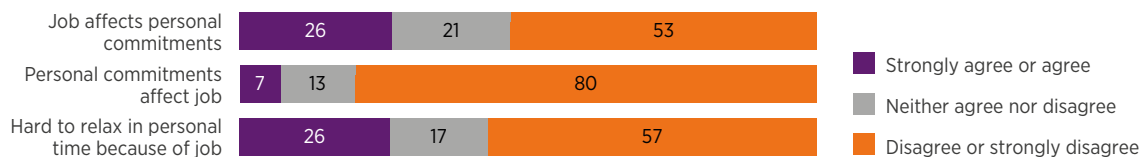
Balance

Perhaps even more important than these objective measures of how much time work takes up is whether people are able to manage the competing priorities of job and personal life. We ask workers about three aspects of this: whether they find it difficult to fulfil their commitments outside of work because of the amount of time they spend working; conversely, whether they find it difficult to do their job properly because of commitments outside of work; and whether they find it difficult to relax in personal time because of work.

The results show that work tends to take priority over personal lives: employees are much more likely to say that their job affects their personal commitments (26% of workers) than the other way round (7%). One in four workers (26%) also finds it hard to relax outside of work because of their job.

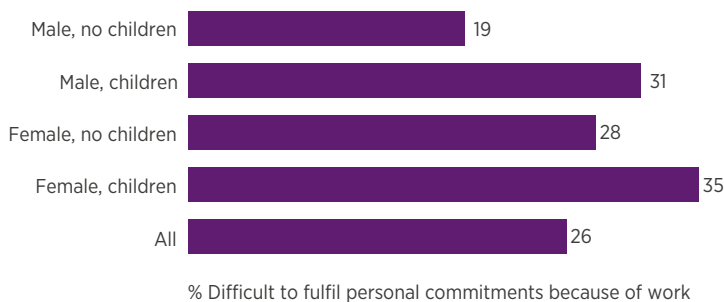
Looking in more detail at the first of our three indicators, predictably, we find that those with children living with them at home are more likely to see work encroaching on their personal lives, mothers (35%) more so than fathers (31%). We also see some variation across occupational groups, with senior and mid-level managers and professionals more likely to see work encroach on their personal lives (29%) and those in unskilled manual and casual work less likely (18%).

Figure 39: Balancing work and personal life (%)



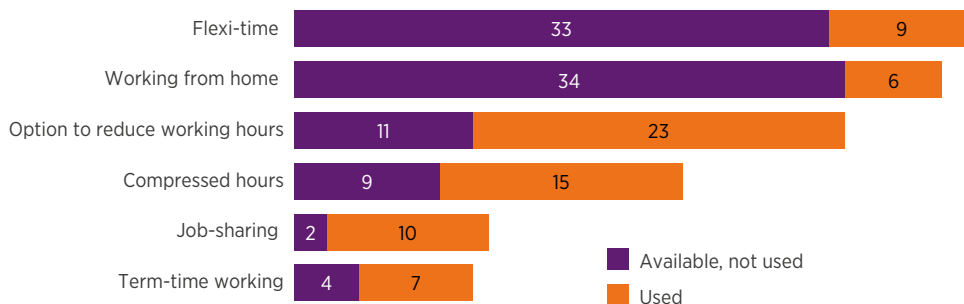
Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 40: Managing personal commitments, by gender and children at home (%)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 41: Flexible working arrangements (%)



Base: employees including freelancers, excluding those running their own business (n=5,215)

Flexible working arrangements

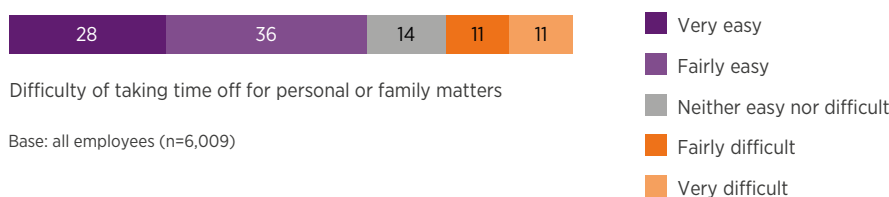
What HR practices do workers have access to help them achieve a decent work-life balance? The most commonly available options are flexi-time (the ability to choose the start and finish time of the working day) (available to 42% of workers) and working from home in normal working hours (40%). One in three (34%) have the chance to reduce their working hours (for example full-time to part-time) and one in four (25%) the option to work compressed hours (the same number of hours per week across fewer days). Job-sharing (sharing a full-time job with someone) and working only during school term times are less common options, being available to 12% and 11% respectively.

Analysis on trend data suggests a stalling of part-time working and support for flexible working over recent years, as well as an apparent growth of always-on working (Beatson forthcoming). It will thus be interesting to see whether and, if so, how these figures change in years to come.

Apart from formal HR arrangements, it is also important to understand informal flexibility; in other words, whether the workplace culture is supportive of work-life balance. To gauge this, we ask people how easy it is for them 'to arrange to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters'. Encouragingly, the clear majority of workers (64%) consider this to be easy in their current jobs, but inflexible jobs are not uncommon, with more than one in five workers (22%) indicating that it is difficult (11% 'very difficult').

Overall, therefore, workers seem to receive more informal support for balancing personal and professional commitments than formal support through established HR processes. Our measure for these two aspects are not comparable, as the informal side only refers to taking occasional hours out of the working day. Nonetheless, the contrast is interesting to note. An area for further research would be how these two interact: for example, to see whether they naturally complement each other as mechanisms for supporting work-life balance, or whether the need for informal arrangements is a sign that formal provision is actually insufficient.

Figure 42: Informal flexibility in working hours (%)



Work-life balance index

We compute a job quality index (0 to 1) for work-life balance based on the number of hours overworked, whether work encroaches on personal life and vice versa, and HR practices supporting work-life balance. We conduct regression analysis to look at what factors are related to work-life balance while controlling for other factors.

We see that work-life balance is slightly worse in the public sector than private (3 percentage points in the work-life balance index). We also see a consistent trend across occupational groups, with senior managers and professionals (NRS social grade A) having the worst work-life balance and those in unskilled and casual work (grades D and E) faring the best in this respect (9 percentage points lower in the index than grade A). Related to this, those working on atypical contracts have better work-life balance (by 10%).

The results are similar to those for health and well-being, in that the greatest influence on health and well-being appears to be the level of social support and cohesion: a 0 to 1 increase in this index corresponding to a 34 percentage point increase in the well-being index (coefficient 0.34). We also see clear relationships with worker autonomy or self-determination (coefficient 0.13). Employee voice is less closely related (coefficient 0.03). Again, we should note that we are not showing causality here, but our findings are consistent with a view that social support and cohesion makes a much greater direct contribution to how we can balance our work and personal lives compared with employee voice and even the scope for self-determination.

Even more so than our findings on work-related well-being, our findings on work-life balance show that job quality can be improved in all types of jobs. Although workers in higher-level occupations fare better in most aspects of job quality, they fare worst in work-life balance. However, as we discuss in section 10, the different dimensions of job quality are not equivalent, and work-life balance seems to be the least consequential in important outcomes of job quality, such as enthusiasm, effort and intention to quit.

9 Employee voice

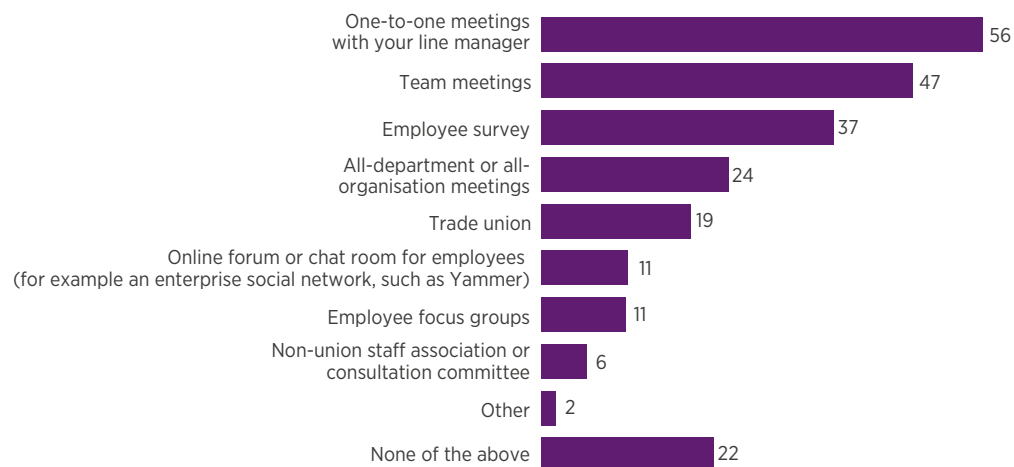
Key findings

- Informal and direct channels for employee voice are most common, especially meetings with line managers and teams.
- Managerial culture tends to be seen as good at inviting employee opinions and slightly worse at responding to those opinions and allowing them to inform decisions.
- Nonetheless, most workers are satisfied with the opportunities they have to express their views to senior management.
- We confirm the importance of employee voice as primarily instrumental – how it affects other aspects of job quality – more than being inherently valuable as part of what makes work human.

Employee voice concerns the opportunities to directly speak to managers or communicating through representatives and the incentives, disincentives and culture that surround these processes. But on what basis is it relevant for job quality? There are two basic justifications or arguments for employee voice.

First, and most usually, it is regarded as having *instrumental* value, being one of the most significant ways that people can influence their employment and ensure a good quality of working life (Wilkinson et al 2014). Second, it can also be seen as having *intrinsic* value, with a degree of self-determination being fundamentally important to us as humans (Erdal 2011). For its intrinsic value, voice sits very clearly as a component of job quality, but for its instrumental value, it can be viewed less as a component and more as a central factor that influences job quality. We discuss our evidence in light of this distinction.

It is also worth noting that employee voice is seen as creating value not just for employees themselves but also for the organisation. First, through suggestion schemes and management processes for continuous improvement, employee ideas can be harnessed to directly inform business operations or strategy. Second, voice is seen to be a major driver of motivation and employee engagement (Robinson and Gifford 2014, Truss et al 2013).

Figure 43: Channels for voice available to workers (%)

Base: employees including freelancers with only one client, excluding those running their own business (n=4,998)

The idea of employee voice is particularly current, yet it relates closely to other established concepts in employment relations, including workplace democracy and employee involvement and participation. Furthermore, although the form of voice can be either direct (speaking with management) or indirect (through employee representatives), it remains an indirect form of influence. As such, it sits alongside ways that workers can directly shape their jobs – that is, autonomy, empowerment or self-determination (see section 5) – and we should look at voice and choice in conjunction.

Employees' capacity for influence depends on a complex mixture of factors (Dundon et al 2017a). In this survey, we centre on two broad aspects of employee voice: the institutional mechanisms or channels that facilitate it; and the behavioural norms or culture that determine how open management is to employee voice and how willing employees are to exercise it.

Channels for voice

We consider a range of channels for employee voice. Looking first at ways workers can engage directly with management and colleagues, the two most common channels are one-to-one meetings with line managers (noted by 56% of employees) and team meetings (47%). These are also the most local or low-level forms of communication. By contrast, all-department or all-organisation meetings are much less common, with one in four employees (24%) being able to attend these.

In-house surveys are a common channel, with 37% of employees being able to express their views through these. Focus groups are notably less common, being available to just 11% of employees.

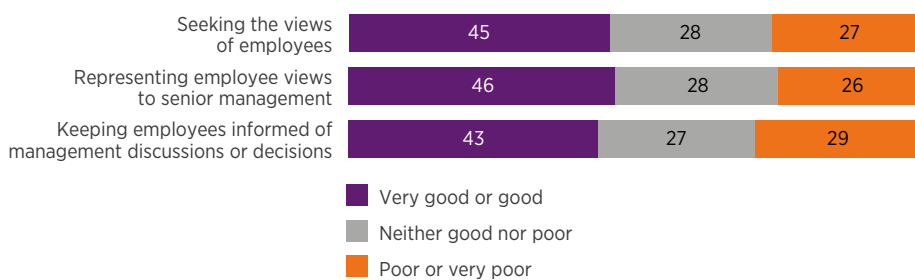
Enterprise social networks – that is, online discussion forums or interactive intranets (Gifford 2014, Silverman et al 2013) – are also available to 11% of employees. While far from ubiquitous, it seems they are becoming more common: in a 2013 survey, we found that just 4% of employees worked in organisations with an enterprise social network (Gifford 2013).

Turning to indirect channels for voice, our survey shows that the most common are trade unions, available to one in five employees (19%). Our survey shows that non-union staff associations or consultation committees are much less common, with 6% of employees having access to these. Comparing this with other data sources, the 2016 Labour Force

Survey shows that 23.5% of UK employees were union members (BEIS 2017); and the Workplace Employment Relations Study (2011 WERS) showed that 22% of workplaces had recognised trade unions and 7% had joint consultation committees (van Wanrooy et al 2013).

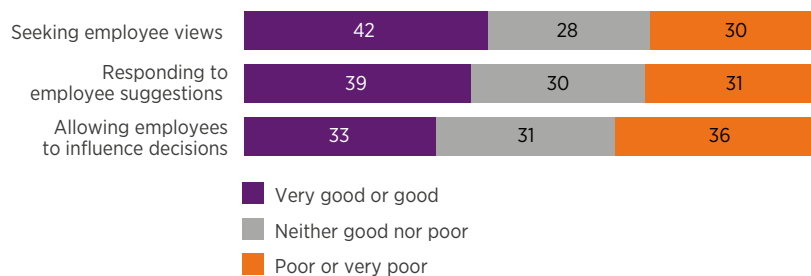
Employees who had union or non-union representatives tended to be consistently positive about how well they performed their role. Nearly half of employees rated them as good or very good at seeking the views of employees (45%), at representing employee views to senior management (46%) and at keeping employees informed of management discussions or decisions (43%), whereas roughly one in four (26 to 29%) rated them as poor or very poor.

Figure 44: Employee ratings of their representatives (%)



Base: employees including freelancers with only one client, excluding those running their own business (n=1,329)

Figure 45: Managerial openness to employee voice (%)



Base: employees not running their own business (n=4,998)

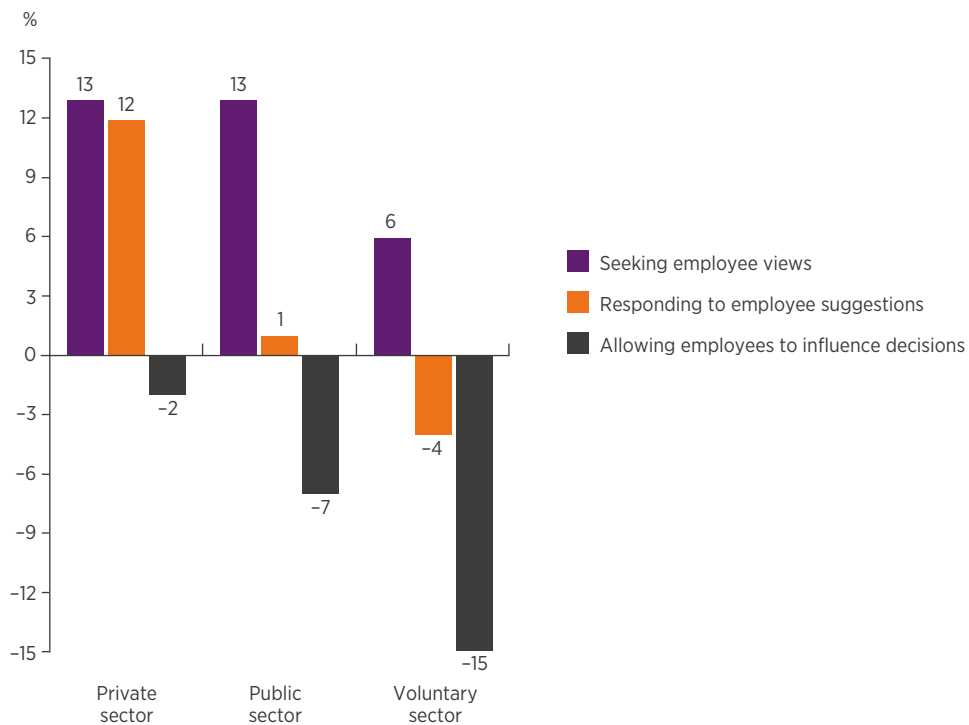
Managerial openness to voice

To examine the culture of employee voice, we draw on questions from WERS on how receptive managers are to employee views (van Wanrooy et al 2013). We find that managers are better at seeking the views of employees or employee representatives (42% very good or good), slightly worse at responding to suggestions (39%) and worse again at allowing employees or employee representatives to influence final decisions (33%). This trend is similar to the last WERS findings (2011) although more negative overall: the comparative WERS figures are 52%, 47% and 35%.

Looking across the three questions, our data shows that the culture of employee voice is most positive in the private sector and least positive in the voluntary sector.

Interestingly, we also find that heterosexual employees tend to have a more positive outlook on the openness of managers to employee voice than gay, lesbian, bisexual and other sexual orientations. This may reflect that they have unmet concerns relating to diversity and inclusion. We do not find significant differences across other demographic groups (gender, disability, or ethnicity) or indeed across contract types.

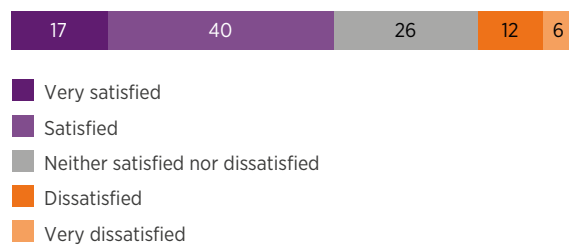
Figure 46: Perceived openness to employee voice, by sector (net positive)



Net positive rating = (% very good or good) - (% poor or very poor)

Base: employees including freelancers with only one client, excluding those running their own business

Figure 47: Satisfaction with opportunities to express views to senior management (%)



Base: employees with channels for voice (n=3,878)

Satisfaction with employee voice

Finally, we take a look at employees’ satisfaction with the opportunities they have to express views to senior management. Excluding the self-employed and workers who have no voice channels, we find that employees tend to be satisfied (56%) with the opportunities they have to express their views to senior management. As we would expect, satisfaction with employee voice decreases as organisational size increases.

Employee voice index

We compute a job quality index (0 to 1) for employee voice based on the number of direct channels available, the availability and quality of representation and the culture of voice (openness of managers). We conduct regression analysis to look at what is related to employee voice while controlling for other factors.

First, looking at factors that may influence employee voice, we find that workers experience better opportunities for expressing their voice if they are working in public sector organisations (coefficient 0.04, or 4 percentage points more in the voice index than

private sector organisations) and higher-level occupational groups (coefficient -0.03 for NRS grades D and E compared with A). We also see that non-white workers experience less opportunity for voice (0.03 compared with white workers).

The strongest relationship we see is between social support and cohesion and employee voice (coefficient 0.48). This should not be surprising in some ways, as we have identified voice as having social and normative aspects. Nonetheless it reinforces the importance of line management and culture, as well as channels of communication and process, in enabling employees to influence management decisions.

As discussed at the close of previous sections of this report, we can see that employee voice appears to be an important mechanism or practice in influencing other aspects of job quality. However, as we discuss in section 10, in several respects voice does not seem to be a key component of what constitutes job quality. This supports the justification of voice for its instrumental value as a lever of job quality, more than its inherent value as a process that makes work a more pleasant or humane experience.

10 Bringing the dimensions together

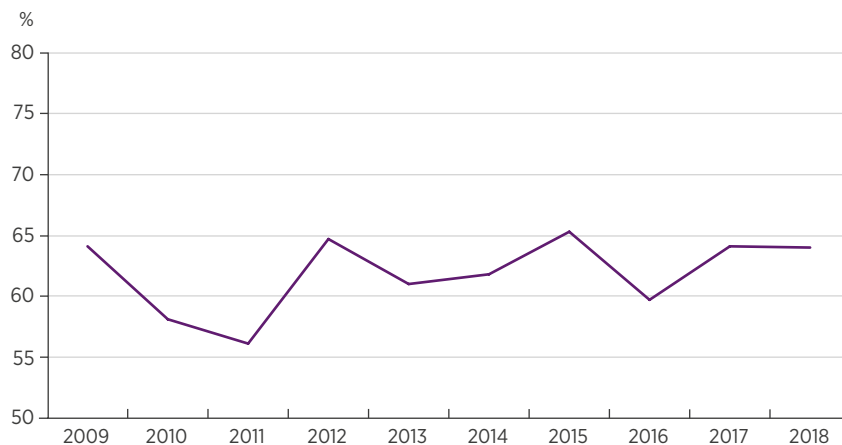
In this final section before we conclude, we look across the seven dimensions of job quality to compare their relative importance for some key outcomes of job quality and comment on some relationships between them.

Outcomes of job quality

We consider four levels of outcomes of job quality that have implications for workers and their employers: job satisfaction, people's enthusiasm for their jobs, work effort, and intention to quit.

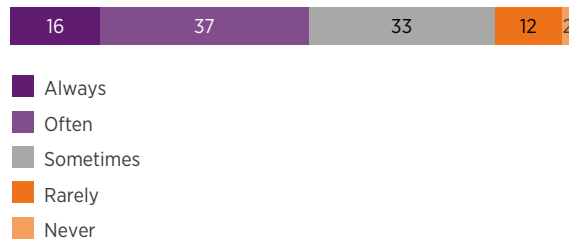
Job satisfaction is included as a fairly standard generic assessment of how happy workers are with their working lives. In line with previous data from the *Employee Outlook*, we find that two-thirds of workers (64%) are satisfied with their job overall (18% 'very satisfied' and 46% 'satisfied'), while just 18% are dissatisfied.

Figure 48: Job satisfaction (% 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied')



Source: CIPD *Employee Outlook* (2009 to 2017); CIPD *UK Working Lives* (2018)
Base: all employees (n=6,009)

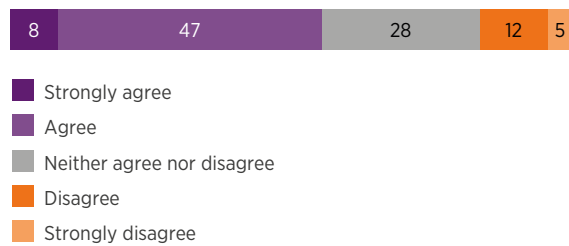
Figure 49: I am enthusiastic about my job (%)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

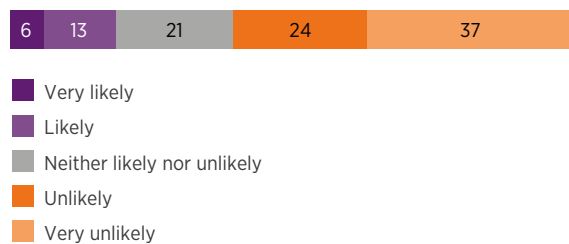
Figure 50: Work effort (%)

I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help my employer or organisation/client(s)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 51: Likelihood of voluntarily quitting in the next year (%)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Enthusiasm gives us a sense of how people feel going in to work day-to-day at an emotional or affective level. Work effort reflects a primary ‘business benefit’ of job quality. Just over half of workers (53%) say that they ‘always’ or ‘often’ feel enthusiastic about their jobs. In most cases, this appears to translate into effort, as 55% of employees report they are willing to work harder than necessary to help their employer or clients.

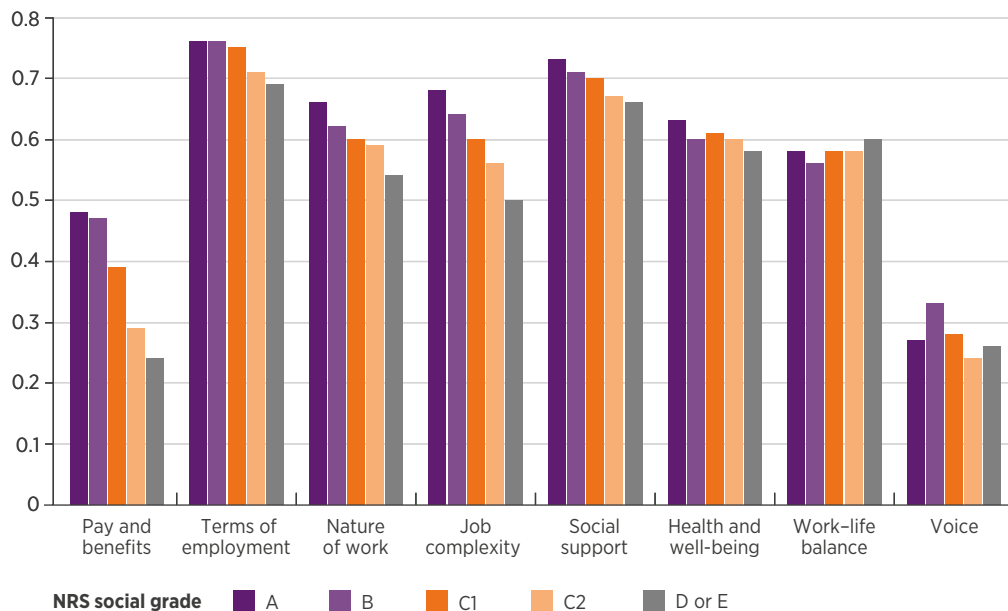
Intention to quit is both a proxy for discontent (in general terms if not always) and something that has direct impact on the employer. The same proportion as those who are dissatisfied say that they are likely to quit their job in the next year (18%). In reality, it seems that a fair number of these won’t actually leave their jobs, as only 13% of workers have tenure of less than a year, but it still highlights an important way in which job quality impacts on people and the organisations they work for.

Job quality across occupational groups

The broad trend in Figure 52 illustrates that jobs tend to be better quality for higher-level occupations, such as senior-level managers and professionals, and lower for more junior workers, manual workers, and lowest in casual and unskilled work. This is a consistent relationship across most dimensions of job quality. The clearest exception is work-life balance, which is worse in higher-level occupations, but in particular for middle managers.

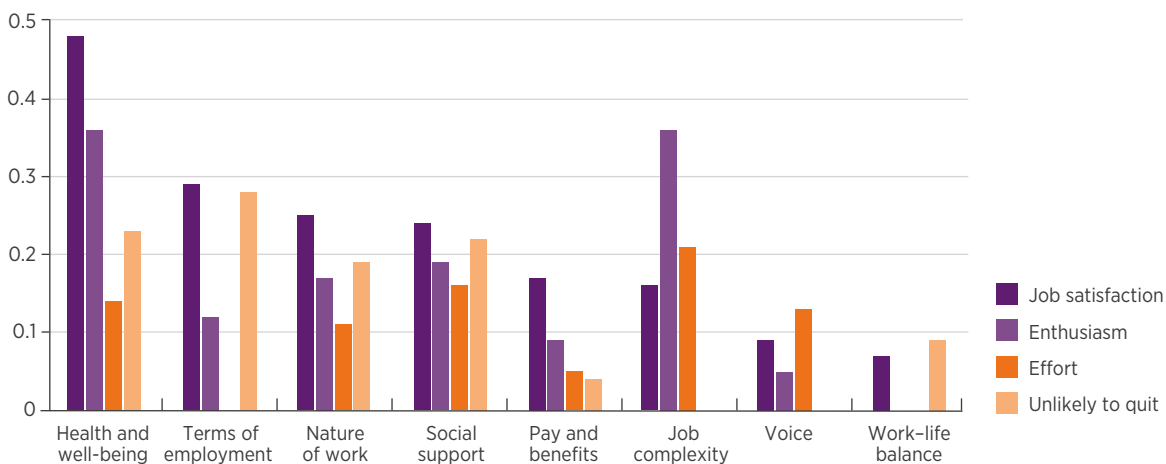
Some aspects of health and well-being – such as stress – and related to this, work pressure, are also worse for middle managers, but this does not translate to our overall index measurements.

Figure 52: Mean scores for Job Quality Index, by occupational group (NRS social grade)



Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Figure 53: Job Quality Index and related outcomes



Regression analysis: coefficients show percentage point increase in outcome for a 0 to 1 change in the dimension index. Results not shown where not significant at p<0.1.

Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Impacts of the seven dimensions

A central question is how important each dimension of job quality is. This should inform not only how we understand job quality, but also how interventions are designed and prioritised. We investigate this question through regression analysis on what factors are related to the outcome measure we identify above.

The results, represented in Figure 53, give in some respects a mixed picture but there are nonetheless some identifiable trends.

Employee health and well-being is confirmed as being at the heart of job quality. It is particularly strongly related to job satisfaction and day-to-day enthusiasm for the job, but also has a clear relationship with intention to stay in the job. Put simply, being well is working well. There may be a number of things that contribute to well-being, including other dimensions of job quality, but if policy-makers, employers, trade unions and employees themselves are to focus on one single dimension, there is a strong case for that being well-being.

Terms of employment receive a great deal of attention, recently in particular in relation to zero-hours contracts and the gig economy. They are strongly related to job satisfaction and intention to leave, but make little difference in how enthusiastic people feel day-to-day and have no significant impact on work effort. Overall, it seems that the terms of employment may have less explanatory power than at times is suggested. Certainly it is not enough for those looking to improve working lives to focus on this area alone.

Job design and the nature of work – including workload, autonomy, resources, skills match and meaningfulness – has fairly consistent relationships with our outcome measures, although slightly less so for work effort. However, the related index for **job complexity** gives a different story. It has strongest relationships with both effort and enthusiasm for the job, yet seems to have less impact on job satisfaction and has no relationship with intention to quit. In essence, Frederick Herzberg's maxim, 'If you want people to do a good job, give them a good job to do' (Dunham 1984) holds well: the most motivating factor is doing work that we find stretching and stimulating. However, being able to manage our own work and finding it meaningful are more likely to keep us happy in our jobs.

Social support and cohesion have even more consistent relationships with our outcome measures, fostering satisfaction, enthusiasm, hard work and commitment to the organisation. We can also see from our previous regressions that they are strongly related to other dimensions of job quality, in particular work-life balance and health and well-being, but also job design and the nature of work.

The picture for **pay and benefits** is more complex and, as a result, we do not control for the other dimensions of job quality (we discuss these methods in the appendix available at www.cipd.co.uk/workinglives). We find a moderate relationship between pay and benefits and job satisfaction – that is to say, paying someone more is likely to make them slightly more satisfied with their job – but relatively weak relationships with enthusiasm, work effort and intention to quit. Although there is a wealth of research to show that reward can strongly motivate specific behaviours (Lupton et al 2015), our analysis here suggests it may be a weaker influence on our day-to-day experience of work and even our career decisions than one might think.

We find that **employee voice** has a moderate relationship with work effort, reinforcing to some extent the theory that it is a major driver of employee engagement. However, the relationships with job satisfaction and enthusiasm are relatively weak, and we find no significant relationship with intention to quit.

Perhaps the most seminal research on voice is that of Hirschman (1970), who contrasted the options of exercising voice, exiting the organisation and (silent) loyalty. Our regression suggests that increased voice is not likely to reduce the intention to quit and help maintain organisational commitment.

It is worth noting that, from our previous regressions, we find further relationships of note between voice and other dimensions of job quality. In particular, voice seems to support good job design. Nonetheless, even here, and also for health and well-being and work-life balance, we see far stronger relationships with social support than employee voice – these comparisons are shown in Figure 54. Overall, on the evidence here, we can confirm that voice has instrumental value (influencing other aspects of job quality) and intrinsic value (contributing to outcomes as a component of job quality in its own right), but it appears to be less important than other factors.

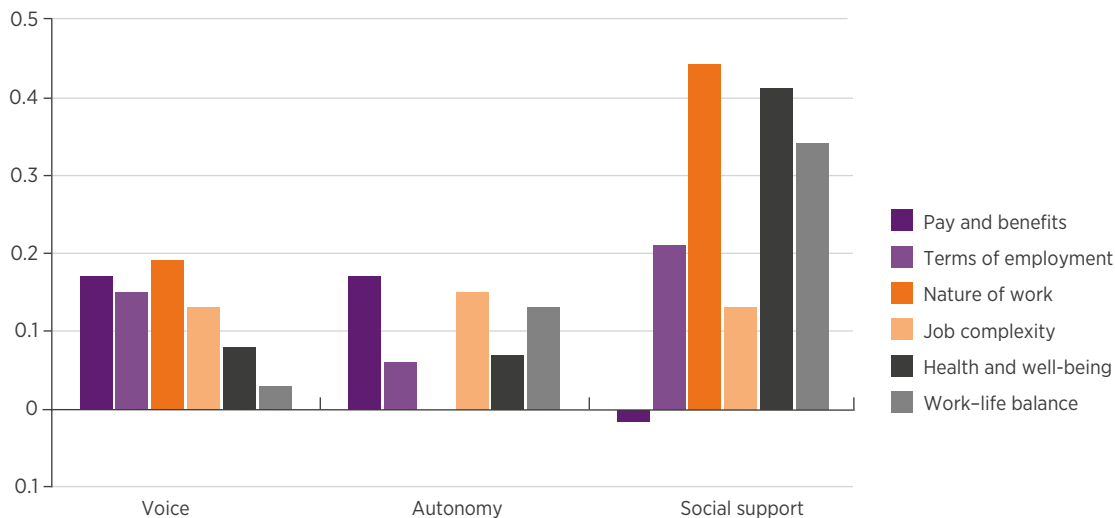
Finally, the analysis represented in Figure 53 suggests that poor **work-life balance** has a moderate influence on whether people consider leaving their job, but controlling for other factors has little influence on job satisfaction and no relationship with enthusiasm or effort. It may be that many workers consider this a price to pay for having jobs that are good in other ways; or that we simply accept as a fact of life that work will encroach on our personal lives.

It is likely that the relationship between job quality and some of these outcomes – especially job satisfaction and likelihood of quitting – changes over time. For example, it may be that during a recession, job security takes on more importance for workers and pay becomes less important than normal, whereas in a buoyant economy the reverse may be true. It will thus be interesting to revisit this analysis in future years.

Trade-offs in job quality

In some respects, employees make trade-offs between different aspects of job quality. One example is the notion of ‘psychic income’, which is used to describe the trade-off workers make between pay and desirable work. Workers can be seen to accept poor or even no pay in exchange for doing work that’s interesting, meaningful, high profile, or a good way to develop their skills or career (for example, Liu and Grusky 2013). However, research by Grugulis and Stoyanova-Russell (2017) shows that although very common in the creative industries, psychic income plays out in different ways at different career stages, often being a genuine choice for established freelancers who are in a position to negotiate, but more typically a form of exploitation for novices starting out.

Figure 54: Relationships between voice, autonomy and social support and other dimensions of job quality



Regression analysis on the main dimensions of the Job Quality Index, except autonomy, which is a sub-index of the nature of work index. Results not shown for relationship between autonomy and nature of work index; *result not significant at p<0.1.

Base: all employees (n=6,009)

Another complication in job quality trade-offs is that some aspects are clearly more important than others. To return to the case of work-life balance, our analysis suggests that it is the least important dimension, in that it is only weakly related to key outcomes of job quality. It seems to be an easier or more acceptable aspect of work on which to compromise. This will vary according to factors such as life stage: priorities often change for parents of young children or older workers. But essentially, we tend to accept that work may encroach on our personal lives more than we would ideally like.

In contrast, compromising on other aspects of job quality is likely to be more serious, either because they have a major direct impact on our lives – for example work-related health and well-being – or because they are likely to have substantial knock-on effects on other aspects of job quality – for example, employee voice. Clearly, while trade-offs between different dimensions of job quality exist, they are far from straightforward.

11 Conclusion

This survey applies a new job quality index to provide a clear, reasonably comprehensive picture of working life in the UK today. As we note in the introduction, this is an important step if we want a truly healthy economy that creates not only more jobs and more productive jobs, but also *good-quality* work and employment. A sustainable vision must look at all of these in consort.

In this section we draw together some central conclusions from this first analysis of the CIPD Job Quality Index. We discuss further policy implications in our companion report, *The Road to Good Work* (Brinkley and Willmott forthcoming).

Fault lines in job quality

We see some general trends across the dimensions of job quality, in particular with lower-level occupational groups faring worse. This trend is not uniform, and all types of jobs have aspects in which they can be improved – for example middle and senior managers tend to struggle more with workloads and work-life balance – but it is clear nonetheless.

In some aspects – most notably job complexity and pay – it may be inevitable that job quality will generally be lower in lower occupational groups, but we can nonetheless challenge the size of the gaps here. For example, our data confirms pay inequality as a problem based on the views of workers themselves.

Moreover, in other aspects, any differences at all in job quality suggest there is a problem. We can see, for example, that manual workers receive less social support and have less of a voice in their organisations. This cannot be right if it is simply because of what jobs they do.

‘While clearly important, it seems the issue of atypical work is not a pervasive fault line in all aspects of working life.’

One interesting finding in our research is that terms of employment appear to be very influential in job satisfaction and intention to leave, but not a major factor in day-to-day job quality, having little impact on people’s enthusiasm for work and no impact on work effort. While clearly important, it seems the issue of atypical work is not a pervasive fault line in all aspects of working life. Indeed on some measures, such as well-being, temporary workers have better job quality than permanent workers.

Prioritising action on job quality

A particular area for all stakeholders to prioritise is work-related health and well-being. This can be directly shaped by people management practices and also influenced by policy interventions and trade union activity. There may be a number of things that contribute to well-being, including other dimensions of job quality, but if policy-makers, employers, trade unions and employees themselves are to focus on a single dimension of job quality, it should be well-being.

‘...if policy-makers, employers, trade unions and employees themselves are to focus on a single dimension of job quality, it should be well-being.’

Debates relating to terms of employment have by no means run their course – especially regarding atypical work contracts, including zero-hours contracts and the gig economy. Yet regardless of the future shape of employment legislation on atypical work, there is a need for workers to have greater clarity on their legal rights so that these can be better implemented. A way to achieve this would be for the Government to lead a high-profile ‘know your rights’ campaign directed at workers (CIPD 2017b).

In addition, better enforcement of existing regulation could also help improve job quality. For example, a powerful way of promoting good job quality could be to equip the Health and Safety Executive with the necessary resources to enforce the existing legal requirement for employers to conduct risk assessments on work-related stress.

‘We may not face a hollowing out of the labour market, but that fact will be of little consequence to workers stuck in low-skill jobs because they have no development and progression opportunities.’

Government policy should also include a clear focus on development opportunities in lower- and mid-level occupations. We may not face a hollowing out of the labour market, but that fact will be of little consequence to workers stuck in low-skill jobs because they have no development and progression opportunities. Income inequality is still high in the UK according to Gini coefficient rankings (OECD 2018), and providing greater opportunities for skill development, skill utilisation and progression must be key to rectifying this. High-quality apprenticeships can serve the young extremely well, but a neglected and important area is lifelong learning for workers beyond the age of 25.

The greatest impact on job quality will come from how employers manage and develop their people on a day-to-day basis. Ensuring manageable workloads, appropriate resources, good utilisation of skills, socially supportive environments and adult-to-adult conversations are all driven by good leadership and people management.

Good people management can only flourish within an organisation which values and invests in its people, more broadly. The high-performance work systems (HPWSs) model groups together a range of practices to increase levels of learning and development at work, boost people’s job satisfaction and well-being and improve employee involvement in decision-making. There also needs to be a good fit between such HR practices and the broader business strategy. This puts employee empowerment and involvement in decision-making at the heart of the business.

Policies and practices on these areas need to be backed up by leadership and organisational culture. Senior leaders need to fully understand the pivotal importance of employee motivation and achieving a partnership between managers and their staff. This needs to be articulated in a clear vision, underpinned by strong values. Managers throughout the organisation must be committed to a participative approach to managing people and equipped with the skills to do so. And beyond the line management relationship, social support and cohesion must be fostered as the norm between all colleagues.

‘It should be remembered that good-quality jobs will benefit organisations and the economy as well as individual workers.’

It should be remembered that good-quality jobs will benefit organisations and the economy as well as individual workers. For example, the chief economist at the Bank of England, Andy Haldane (2017), has argued that while the quality of management in the UK among our best firms is high, the UK has a long tail of mediocre or poorly managed organisations. This, he argues, is a key factor in the country’s low productivity.

Further use of the CIPD Job Quality Index

Job quality is a multidimensional construct and needs to be treated as such, yet a degree of simplification is useful to help make sense of measures at a broad level without getting into a dizzying level of detail. A single metric would gloss over vital detail, but a hundred different measures (or more, as with the ILO’s Decent Work measures) would make it hard to create a cohesive strategy for improving work and working lives. Based on previous research (Muñoz de Bustillo et al 2011, Warhurst et al 2017, Wright et al 2018), we have opted for seven broad dimensions in an effort to strike a reasonable balance between nuanced understanding and broad-level prioritising.

We believe that the dataset generated by the CIPD Job Quality Index gives a wide range of useful insights and warrants further analysis. In a forthcoming short report, we will analyse regional differences (McGurk forthcoming), and there is further potential to investigate other aspects, for example to understand interactions between different dimensions and demographic differences.

Looking ahead, we would encourage employers and representative bodies to replicate the index, either in full or in part, to benchmark against our UK sample and generate more detailed insight into specific industries and occupations. Engaging with employees to understand how their working lives can be improved is something many employers already do, for example through surveys, focus groups and consultation with employee representatives. Framing such activity around the CIPD’s Job Quality Index may be a fruitful exercise.

In its recent response to the Taylor Review, the Government has set out a commitment to measure job quality. We applaud this move. Different surveys and data will have different strengths and, pieced together, will each contribute to the understanding and tracking of job quality.

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