

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

Summary report

CIPD Good Work Index 2020

UK Working Lives Survey

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1 Foreword

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

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

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

The CIPD Good Work Index is our annual benchmark of good work or job quality in the UK. This year's report presents findings from the third UK Working Lives survey, which again went out to a representative sample of workers. Conducted just before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, it gives a rich picture of how the jobs market has progressed up to then. Already we are monitoring changes since then with further surveys, which will be <u>published</u> <u>periodically</u>.

The index measures employment essentials, the day-to-day experienced realities of work and the impacts on people's lives. It covers seven dimensions of jobs: pay and benefits; contracts and the terms of employment; work-life balance; job design and the nature of work; relationships at work; employee voice; and health and wellbeing.

Work can and should be a force for good for all. The CIPD Good Work Index is a valuable tool for understanding the current state of play and prioritising areas for improvement.

Peter Cheese, CEO CIPD

2 Foreword

2 Introduction

A changing world of work

Ernest Hemingway famously had a character describe how he went bankrupt as: 'Two ways... Gradually, then suddenly.' The same might be said for how the world of work is changing.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a huge impact on the economy and the labour market at one level, and on society and working lives at another. Changes have come incredibly rapidly, with some of these potentially long lasting. But beneath the pandemic and its effects sits the wider landscape of job quality in the UK. What is the make-up of the UK jobs market? What are the longer-term trends that might accelerate as a result of the current crisis? Which workers are thriving or struggling more generally?

The coming months and beyond will be difficult to navigate. Throughout this unprecedented time, our hope is that the Government, employers and other actors protect not only the quantity of jobs, but also the quality of them. Full employment is an important objective, but it is not enough – healthy economies and healthy societies also rest on jobs that provide both financial stability and a decent quality of working life. HR and other people professionals have a vital role in this, as experts in employment and people management. But so do workers themselves, who can create change by voicing their concerns and priorities with their managers and representatives, exercising autonomy in their roles and ultimately changing jobs.

Good work

The CIPD's purpose is to **champion better work and working lives** by improving practices in people and organisational development for the benefit of individuals, the economy, and society. We believe that good work not only contributes to individual wellbeing and is a mark of a fair society, but also that it is fundamental for motivated workers, productive organisations and a strong economy. Our view is that **good work**:

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

Across each of these areas of activity or influence, employers need to develop an effective people strategy that takes into account: values, culture and leadership; workforce planning and organisational development; employment relations; and people analytics and reporting.

About the CIPD Good Work Index

The CIPD's Good Work Index consists of a detailed set of measures that weigh each of these factors to provide an understanding of job quality or good work,² showing differences across occupations, industries and groups of people, and trends over time. The index groups these 'good work' measures into seven core dimensions, which we present in section 3.

Introduction

The index is based on our annual UK Working Lives survey of workers, now in its third year – but under the previous form of our *Employee Outlook*, dates back over ten years. This year's survey, carried out by YouGov in January 2020, takes the CIPD Good Work Index up to immediately before the COVID-19 outbreak. It includes a nationally representative sample of over 5,000 UK workers.

This summary report presents the insights and main findings drawn from the full survey report, and identifies the implications for policy-makers, employers, people professionals and workers themselves.

Further resources:

- The full, detailed analysis is presented in the main survey report.
- The data tables can be found in <u>Appendix 1</u> and survey method in <u>Appendix 2</u> of the survey report.
- An <u>ongoing survey of UK workers</u> on issues relating to the COVID-19 crisis will apply the CIPD Good Work Index to track trends and provide understanding of how good work and working lives are being impacted by the pandemic.



What are the core dimensions of good work and how well does the UK perform in them?

Pay and benefits

Pay is a fundamental measure of good work, being the major means to improve material standards of living and life chances. The distribution of pay is highly uneven in the UK compared with other developed countries. This, most importantly, means we have more low-paid jobs than one could reasonably expect. As discussed in section 4, there are clear trends in pay across occupational classes.

According to our survey, one in three workers say they are not paid appropriately for the jobs they do. Nonetheless, over the last few years it seems that workers have become slightly more satisfied with pay.

Employment contracts

The CIPD Good Work Index looks at contract types, employment security and underemployment (that is, not having as many hours of work as one would like). For many, these aspects of their jobs stack up to provide stability even if they may be taken for granted. But for others they can amount to precarious employment, generating anxiety and economic hardship. It will be worth noting how attitudes may change as we now enter another recession.

Four out of five workers surveyed are permanent employees. Almost three in ten of these work part-time. Non-permanent employees and the self-employed report being more task-focused in their jobs and less focused on helping outside their core role ('contextual performance') than permanent employees.

We cannot assume that 'non-standard' working arrangements are all bad. For example, as previous CIPD research has found, many workers on zero-hours contracts <u>want the flexibility</u> that these bring and have <u>normal levels of job satisfaction</u>. Nonetheless, there is a valid concern that they are often one-sided, benefiting employers but not workers. The Government has pledged legislation to give all workers rights to move towards more predictable and stable contracts – this would be an important step in giving them the choice they need to shape this aspect of their working lives.³

Work-life balance

Our focus on work-life balance includes overwork (working more hours than you want), commuting time and the options to work flexibly. We also asked people directly to what extent their work encroaches on their personal lives and vice versa. Overall, we see a positive picture for the majority, but there is a sizable group of people who are restricted.

Some researchers have argued that the traditional barrier between work and personal lives is eroding or unrealistic and that greater integration is a good thing.⁴ Yet, achieving a reasonable degree of work-life balance remains a central focus for many workers. Perhaps unsurprisingly, when work and personal lives do clash, work tends to take precedence: one in four workers (24%) find their work interferes with personal commitments, whereas just 7% say the reverse is true.

HR policies and practices play a huge part in helping employees manage their work-life balance, but these need to be culturally acceptable in an organisation if people are going to use them in practice. We find that while 63% of workers find it easy to 'take an hour or two off during working hours' for personal matters, 23% are in jobs in which it is difficult. The latter may be due to the inherent nature of jobs, rather than inflexible employers, but all the same, informal arrangements can be influential in helping workers maintain their work-life balance.

Job design and the nature of work

Perhaps the most central part of 'good work' comes down to the nature of the work that people do. To borrow the title of the classic children's book by Richard Scarry, it is the question: 'What do people do all day?' It is also the first part of what are termed 'intrinsic characteristics' of job quality. Are jobs designed in a way that creates interesting, enriching and enabling work?

The main areas we consider here are skills, workload, autonomy and meaning. For example, we find that workload is appropriate for most workers (60%) but too much for a third of us. The degree of autonomy or empowerment people have is more split, with two in five workers having none or only a little.

We also find a clear split for job-skill mismatch, with about half of workers either lacking skills they need for their job (11%) or having underused skills (37%).

We see a mixed picture for advancement within the job, which is reasonable for skill development (48% 'good') but poorer for career prospects (29%). How problematic this is, however, is unclear, given that people also progress by moving jobs.

In terms of meaning, the clear majority (73%) find their work meaningful in terms of being useful for their organisation, but only about half believe their work is useful for society.

Relationships at work

The second part of the intrinsic characteristics of job quality concerns relationships at work, including social cohesion, psychological safety and management support.

Most of us report positive relationships at work, especially with our immediate boss (76%) and colleagues (77%). In general, this translates to psychologically safe teams, although a sizable minority do not find this to be the case – for example, one in five workers sees a lack of inclusiveness (colleagues 'sometimes reject others for being different').

Having strong relationships and teams are vital. It's hugely beneficial for our wellbeing (we notice their absence most when conflict rears its ugly head) and keeping work relationships productive goes hand in hand with high performance.

Clearly, people management capability is crucial in this. We again find a generally positive picture here, but with nuances. A clear majority of workers think their managers get the basics right – in particular, being respectful (74%), fair (74%) and supportive when people have a problem (73%). Relatively weaker areas of people management include fostering teamwork (54% positive), giving useful feedback (53%) and giving recognition (66%).

Employee voice

Workers who have voice and choice can influence and directly shape their working lives. This is especially important because what constitutes good work is often subjective, varying from person to person. There are also direct benefits for employers, as meaningful voice helps employees to actively support their organisations.

Our survey shows that most UK workplaces have adopted direct employee participation schemes, while representative participation is much less common. We also see generally positive attitudes of management towards employee voice and generally effective employee representatives where these exist. There are, however, substantial variations in employee voice and representation by organisational size and ownership sector. The opportunity to shape one's working life is not available equally to all.

Health and wellbeing

Physical and mental wellbeing is often seen as an outcome of job quality rather than a component of it, but it is undeniably important. The cost to the economy of people dropping out of work due to poor health can be considerable – in the UK it is estimated to be somewhere between £74 billion and £99 billion for mental health issues alone. Employee health and wellbeing is also associated with performance inside the organisation; our analysis shows this relationship holds even after a range of employee and workplace characteristics are taken into account.

The CIPD Good Work Index shows a concerning level of work-related poor health. About one in four workers report that their job has a negative impact on their mental or physical health (the majority of others say it has no effect). One in five say that they always or often feel 'exhausted' at work, a similar proportion say they are under 'excessive pressure' and one in ten say they are 'miserable'. These point to substantial problems.



4) Occupation and class differences

How does the quality of work and employment vary between types of jobs? To explore this, we use a combined measure based on employment relations (see Table 1) and the more detailed Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) coding, which groups occupations according to the tasks and skills required in a job.

Table 1: The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) 6

Categories	Example occupations		
Higher managerial and professional occupations	Medical practitioners; marketing and sales managers (large organisations) management consultants, actuaries, economists and statisticians		
2 Lower managerial and professional occupations	Nurses; primary and nursery education teaching professionals; marketing and sales managers (small organisations)		
3 Intermediate occupations	General office assistants/clerks; nursing auxiliaries and assistants; civil service administrative officers and assistants		
4 Self-employed routine and manual workers	Carpenters and joiners (self-employed); electricians, electrical fitters (self-employed); painters and decorators (self-employed); small employers and own-account workers		
5 Lower supervisory and lower technical occupations	Electricians, electrical fitters (supervisor); sales and retail assistants (supervisor); routine inspectors and testers		
6 Semi-routine occupations	Sales and retail assistants; care assistants and home carers; educational assistants; kitchen and catering assistants		
7 Routine occupations	Cleaners, domestics; van drivers; bar staff		

Life is often easier at the 'top'

Several dimensions of good work show a clear broad trend, with managerial and professional occupations generally better and routine and manual occupations worse. We see this most consistently for pay and benefits, employment contracts and employee voice.

Pay and benefits

Our survey shows that pay and job benefits are unevenly distributed across occupational classes. In general, we find a clear trend, with managerial and professional occupations generally faring better in pay and benefits, and routine and manual occupations worse.

About two in five routine manual workers are low-paid. Low pay is also very gendered, with one in five women overall being low-paid, compared with one in seven men. Looking at the intersection of occupation type and gender, we can see that low pay is particularly common for women in routine and manual jobs.

Despite these differences, attitudes towards pay are fairly similar across occupational class, with the exception of higher managerial and professional occupations, who tend to be more positive.

Contracts

The overall trend of managerial and professional occupations faring better and routine and manual occupations worse can also be seen in more detail. For example, those in routine and manual occupations are more likely to report wanting to work extra hours, with as many as one in four wishing to work more hours than they do currently. But this trend is not the case across all aspects of employment contracts. In particular, job insecurity – the perceived likelihood of losing one's job – shows no clear pattern across occupational classes.

Voice

The greatest difference in voice across occupational class is in the direct channels people have to express their views. This is unsurprising, as employees in higher positions have more involvement in organisation decision-making. However, there is little evidence of class inequality when it comes to either indirect representation or workers' view of how open their managers are to employee voice.

Relationships

Employees in higher occupational classes report better relationships at work than those in lower classes. In particular, we find that poorer workplace relationships are disproportionately concentrated in elementary occupations.

Job design: self-employed buck the trend

Job design follows the above pattern – higher-grade jobs doing better – with the exception of small employers and own-account workers. Normally classed in the middle, they can be an outlier. We see this when it comes to the nature of the work they do, in which they score similarly to the higher-level groups.

Despite being more likely to not have enough work, these self-employed workers generally have better workloads than other groups. They are also likely to have the freedom to work autonomously and have the right resources in their job, do work that matches their skillsets and find their work meaningful.

Small employers and own-account workers also report the best work-related health and wellbeing.

A deeper dive into occupational differences

Using a more detailed list of 75 occupations, we take a more specific view of differences in job quality, focusing on the top- and bottom-scoring ten.

In job design and the nature of work, for example, we find that along with senior managers, some of the workers with the most enriching and enabling jobs or work that's most suited to their abilities include therapists, fitness instructors, health professionals and construction supervisors (Table 2).

Table 2: Job design and the nature of work for selected occupations (SOC 3-digit)

Top ten occupations for job design			Bottom ten occupations for job design		
1 The	erapy professionals	1	Elementary sales occupations		
2 Chi	ef executives and senior officials	2	Elementary storage occupations		
3 Spc	orts and fitness occupations	3	Textiles and garments, printing trades		
4 We	lfare professionals	4	Elementary administration occupations		
5 Hea	alth associate professionals	5	Sales assistants and retail cashiers		
6 Hea	alth professionals	6	Elementary process plant occupations		
	lding finishing trades, construction d building trades supervisors	7	Other elementary services occupations		
8 Leg	gal professionals	8	Road transport drivers		
9 Nui	rsing and midwifery professionals	9	Elementary security occupations		
10 Nat	tural and social science professionals	10	Customer service occupations (Bottom listed first)		

Table 3: Relationships at work for selected occupations (SOC 3-digit)

Te	n most social occupations	Te	n least social occupations
1	Animal care and control services	1	Elementary storage occupations
2	Agricultural and related trades	2	Elementary security occupations
3	Therapy professionals	3	Elementary process plant occupations
4	Sports and fitness occupations	4	Assemblers and routine operatives, construction operatives
5	Building finishing trades, construction and building trades supervisors	5	Sales supervisors
6	Chief executives and senior officials	6	Elementary administration occupations
7	Artistic, literary and media occupations	7	Customer service occupations
8	Managers and proprietors in other services	8	Leisure and travel, hairdressers and related services
9	Elementary agricultural occupations, elementary construction occupations	9	Road transport drivers
10	Functional managers and directors	10	Caring personal services (Least social listed first)

We can also see how occupations differ in the quality of work relationships (Table 3). As already mentioned, higher occupational classes generally fare better, but when we look more specifically we see very different jobs that also tend to have strong work relationships: animal workers, agricultural tradespeople and again therapists are among the top-ranked occupations.

Our interactive <u>CIPD Good Work Index graphic</u> shows how occupational groups vary across all seven dimensions of job quality.

Homeworking: preserve of the privileged?

Working from home has been <u>steadily rising</u> over the last 20 years. This trend has escalated dramatically during the COVID-19 outbreak, and this may give employers and employees more impetus to work remotely in the future, post-pandemic.

Recent <u>research</u> has put a spotlight on the haves and the have-nots of remote working during the lockdown period. The contrast is huge, with some being able to continue working perfectly well from home and others unable to work at all, while some are furloughed or put at risk of redundancy. Added to the fact that those who can't work at home tend to be paid less and have less stable employment, it paints a stark picture of secure versus insecure jobs.

Outside these extraordinary times, a better way of viewing homeworking is through the broader lens of work-life balance. The benefits of not having to commute are obvious and, along with other forms of flexible working, such as flexitime, homeworking is an important way for many workers to fit their jobs around their personal lives.

In normal times, flexible working is not a panacea: despite its promise, it does not correlate with better work-life balance. Although those in managerial and professional occupations tend to have more opportunities to work flexibly, they typically work longer hours, including unpaid overtime. And when they do commute – for many people mix homeworking with being on-site – they have longer journeys. Indeed, work-life balance is the most obvious trade-off that workers can make in job quality. It is to this that we turn next.

The great job quality trade-off?

Managers and 'professionals' have the worst work-life balance and are more likely to find it hard to relax in personal time because of their job. Despite the fact that better-paid workers have more options for flexible working, there is a clear trade-off between these two dimensions of good work, which correlate negatively.

When we look at specific occupations, we again gain more insight into the diversity in the jobs market, especially when we consider the intersection between pay and wellbeing. Overall, there is no clear correlations between these two dimensions of good work, but there are a number of jobs in which a trade-off exists (Table 4).

On the one hand, various occupations that are low-paid see good wellbeing and work relationships. These include jobs in animal care, housekeeping, cleaning, and sports and fitness occupations. On the other hand, some professional occupations are high-paid but have some of the poorest work-life balance and poor health and wellbeing. These include jobs in legal services, health, and conservation and environment professionals, and research and development managers.

Table 4: Discrepancies between pay and wellbeing for selected occupations (SOC 3-digit)

Go	od wellbeing but low pay: 'top' ten occupations	Hig	gh pay but poor wellbeing: 'top' ten occupations
1	Animal care and control services	1	Legal professionals
2	Housekeeping and related services, cleaning and housekeeping managers and supervisors	2	Health professionals
3	Elementary agricultural occupations, elementary construction occupations	3	Research and development managers
4	Elementary cleaning occupations	4	Conservation and environment professionals
5	Other administrative occupations	5	Quality and regulatory professionals
6	Agricultural and related trades	6	Legal associate professionals
7	Sports and fitness occupations	7	Engineering professionals
8	Administrative occupations: finance	8	Electrical and electronic trades, skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades supervisors
9	Metal forming, welding and related trades	9	Architects, town planners and surveyors
10	Childcare and related personal services	10	Teaching and educational professionals

In essence, there are two stories here. The general trend is that, although there are some trade-offs in job quality, more often aspects of good work cluster. This means greater differences between the better and worse jobs, the haves and the have-nots. In particular, better-paid jobs are not only more likely to be highly skilled, interesting and autonomous, but they are also more likely to give stability and voice or influence.

However, a more detailed view of occupations is also important, and presents some interesting and even surprising examples. To understand the makeup of our jobs market more fully and identify strengths to build on and weaknesses to address, government, employers and trade unions need to consider both broad trends and more detailed groups. The UK Working Lives data is a useful tool to explore this.

5) Dynamics of good work

Finally, we consider some of the dynamics of good work - in particular, evidence on how people are progressing as they change jobs and emerging evidence on general trends over time.

Job progression and mobility

In the 2020 survey, a new panel component was introduced to the UK Working Lives survey. Over 2,000 respondents from the 2019 survey were surveyed again, enabling us to track how these individuals' jobs changed in the intervening year. This is a limited timeframe and as we continue the panel, we will gain more insight into job progression.

Our first findings centre on the 12% of respondents who changed jobs from 2019 to 2020. They confirm that moving jobs, and especially changing organisations, is an effective way perhaps the most effective way - for workers to improve their job quality.

'Job movers' previously had worse job quality than 'job stayers', suggesting it was a factor in the decision to move. The least likely workers to move jobs were those who already scored highly on job design and work relationships, followed by those with very good work-life balance, opportunities for voice and work-related wellbeing. Pay made little difference in whether people stayed or moved.

Those who did change jobs tended to see improvements in their job design, satisfaction with their line managers and pay. Those who moved organisations also saw improvements in their employee voice and health and wellbeing. In contrast, the good work indicators hardly changed for those who stayed in their jobs.

Trends over years

Being based on an annual survey, the CIPD Good Work Index allows us to track broad changes in UK jobs over time. In line with longer-term survey research, we see a slight decline in job autonomy, an important aspect of job design. We also see some decline in workers' views of their opportunities to have a voice at work. Taken together, these point to a current decline in workers' ability to shape their working lives inside their organisations. A risk for employers is that dissatisfied workers will turn to another option namely, to exit the organisation in search of better jobs.

Most worryingly, we can see a decline in work-related health and wellbeing. For example, in 2018, 43% of respondents believed work had a positive impact on their mental health, but this slipped to 38% in 2019 and 35% in 2020. These differences hold when controlling for individual and workplace characteristics. Whether they show a genuine trend rather than fluctuation is too early to say, but it does tally with other longitudinal research.

Concluding comments

The CIPD Good Work Index highlights that some jobs are undeniably better than others. It brings into sharp focus the occupations which lead to particularly poor experiences for workers. Some of these jobs may be improved relatively easily through progressive people management and employment practices. Others may be harder to improve. Nonetheless, as well as shedding light on the make-up of UK jobs, the CIPD Good Work Index gives some basis on which to target initiatives to improve job quality, so that they can help reduce inequality.

We continue to analyse the data and collect further data, including through surveys of employers and a current survey of employees focusing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope this contributes to discussions and decisions that improve people's working lives.

6 Notes

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- 4 Friedman, S.D. (2014) *Leading the life you want*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press; Smit, B.W., Maloney, P.W., Maertz, C.P. and Montag-Smit, T. (2016) <u>Out of sight, out of mind? How and when cognitive role transition episodes influence employee performance</u>. *Human Relations*. Vol 69, No 11. pp2141–68.
- 5 Stevenson, D. and Farmer, P. (2017) <u>Thriving at work: the Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers</u>. London: Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Health and Social Care.
- 6 For more detail, see Appendix 2: Methodology. See www.cipd.co.uk/workinglives

12 Notes



CIPD

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
151 The Broadway London SW19 1JQ United Kingdom
T +44 (0)20 8612 6200 F +44 (0)20 8612 6201
E cipd@cipd.co.uk W cipd.co.uk

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