

CIPD

Survey report
September 2023

Health and wellbeing at work 2023

Views of employees

The CIPD has been championing better work and working lives for over 100 years. It helps organisations thrive by focusing on their people, supporting our economies and societies. It's the professional body for HR, L&D, OD and all people professionals – experts in people, work and change. With over 160,000 members globally – and a growing community using its research, insights and learning – it gives trusted advice and offers independent thought leadership. It's a leading voice in the call for good work that creates value for everyone.

Survey report

Health and wellbeing at work 2023: Views of employees

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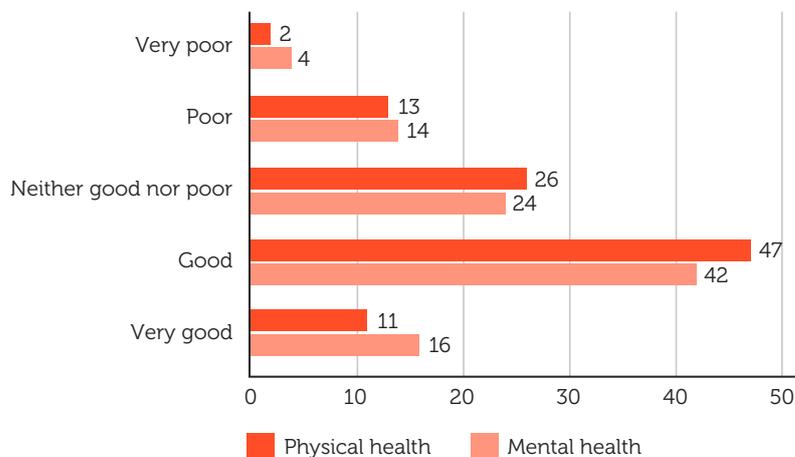
This report highlights the views of employees on health and wellbeing using data from our *CIPD Good Work Index 2023* survey report.

This report is based on data from 5,139 UK workers, collected between 9 January and 9 February 2023. The figures are weighted and representative of UK working adults. We also refer to longitudinal data from previous years of the *CIPD Good Work Index*.

1 How employees feel about their physical and mental health

Employees generally feel positively about their mental and physical health in 2023, with over half reporting this to be good or very good (Figure 1).

Figure 1: In general, how would you describe your physical and mental health at the moment? (%)



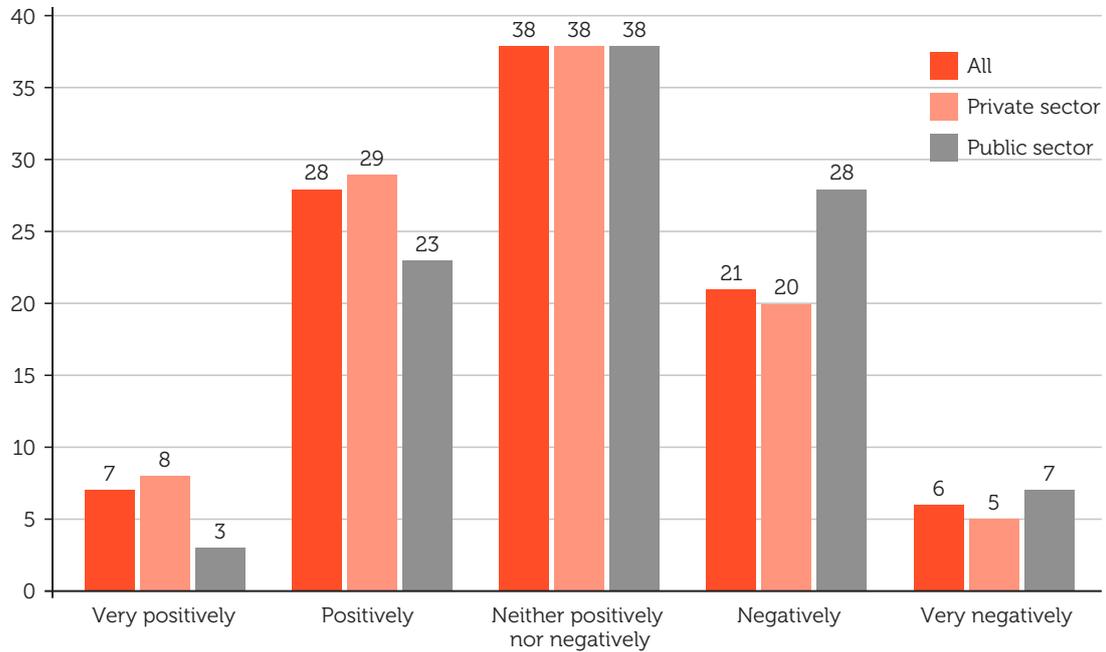
Base: mental health (n=4,987); physical health (n=5,006).

How employees feel work affects their physical and mental health

Employees have mixed feelings on how work affects their wellbeing. Over a third feel work neither positively nor negatively affects their mental health, while just over a quarter think work affects their mental health positively. Over a quarter report the impact is negative.

Discontent in the public sector, explored in more detail in our *Good Work Index* report, is prevalent, with public sector workers more likely to say work affects their mental health negatively than their private sector counterparts (Figure 2).

Figure 2: To what extent does work positively or negatively affect your mental health? (by sector) (%)

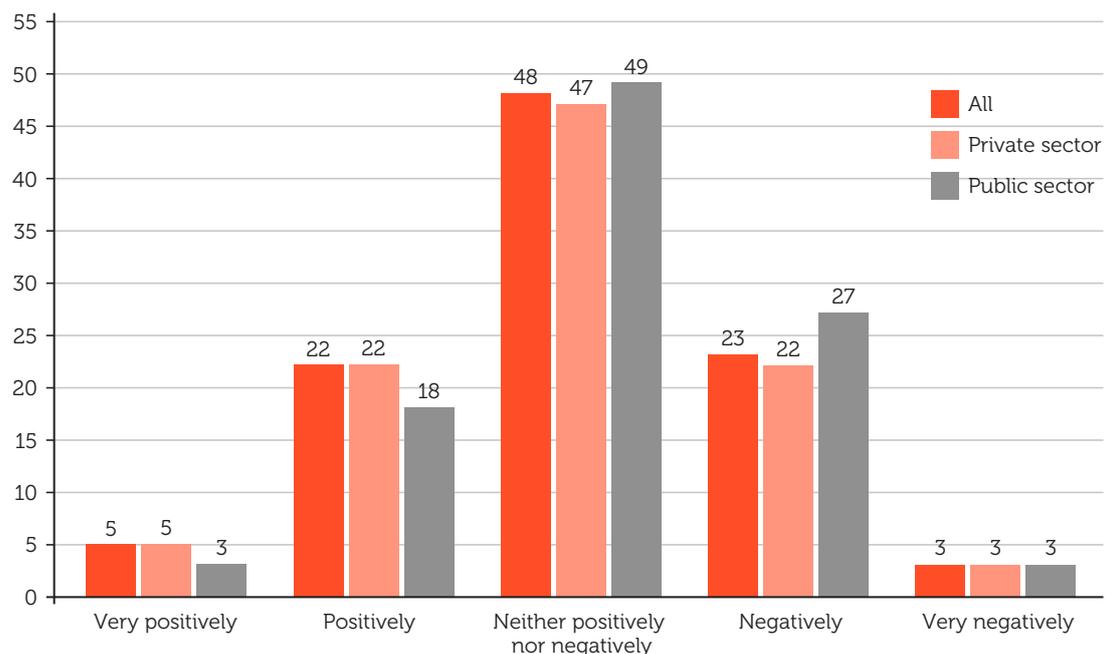


Base: all (5,020); private sector (n=3,921); public sector (n=789).

There is even greater uncertainty around how work affects physical health, with nearly half suggesting the effect is neither positive nor negative.

Again, public sector workers are more likely than private sector workers to feel their physical health is negatively impacted by work (Figure 3).

Figure 3: To what extent does work positively or negatively affect your physical health? (by sector) (%)



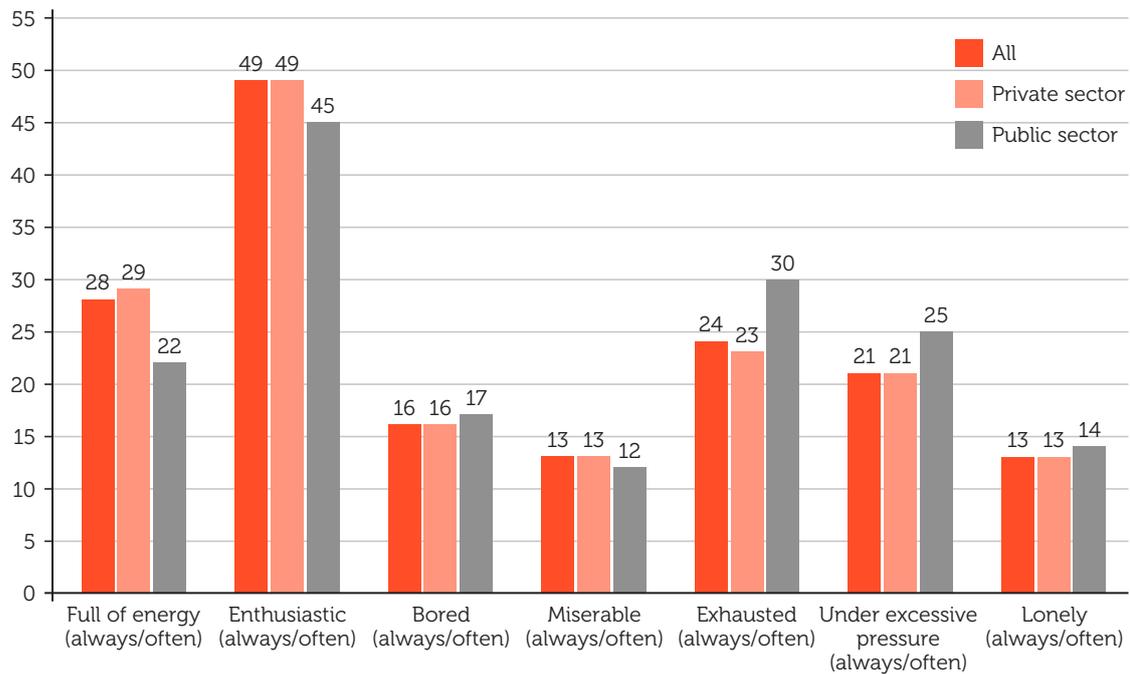
Base: all (5,026); private sector (n=3,933); public sector (n=787).

How employees feel at work

Looking at how people feel when they are at work, two of the most common feelings are enthusiasm and high energy. However, the third most common feeling is exhaustion.

Discontent among public sector workers is highlighted once again – they are less likely than private sector employees to feel full of energy and enthusiastic, and more likely to feel exhausted and under excessive pressure (Figure 4).

Figure 4: At my work I feel... (by sector) (%)



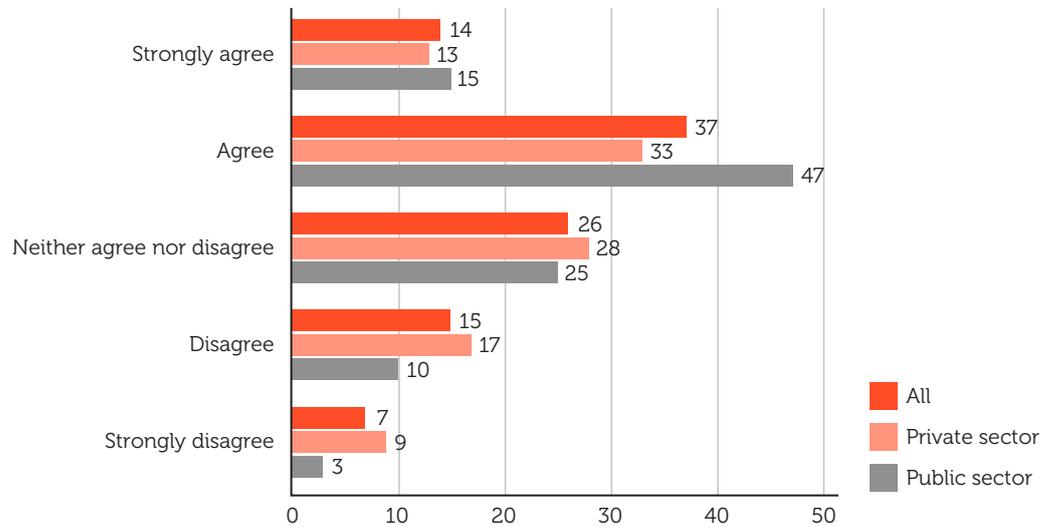
Base: all (n=5,139); private sector (n=4,010); public sector (n=809).

How employees feel about the workplace climate and mental health

Staff have mixed feelings about whether or not their organisation encourages people to talk openly about mental health. They are more likely to agree than disagree that it does. Over half agree or strongly agree and over a fifth disagree, yet a quarter feel neither one way nor the other.

Positively for public sector workers, they're more likely to agree than private sector workers (Figure 5).

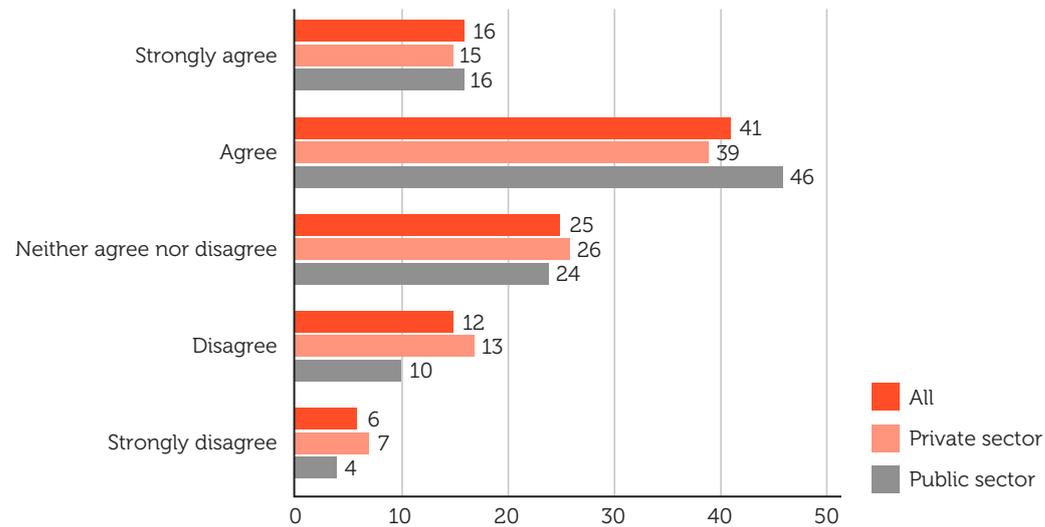
Figure 5: My organisation encourages staff to talk openly about mental health (by sector) (%)



Base: all (n=4,453); private sector (n=3,378); public sector (n=783).

Employees are slightly more positive when it comes to the perceived mental health support they receive from their organisations. Well over half agree or strongly agree that their employer is supportive of people’s mental health, while just 18% disagree or strongly disagree. Once again, public sector workers are more likely than private sector workers to agree (Figure 6).

Figure 6: My organisation is supportive of people’s mental health (by sector) (%)

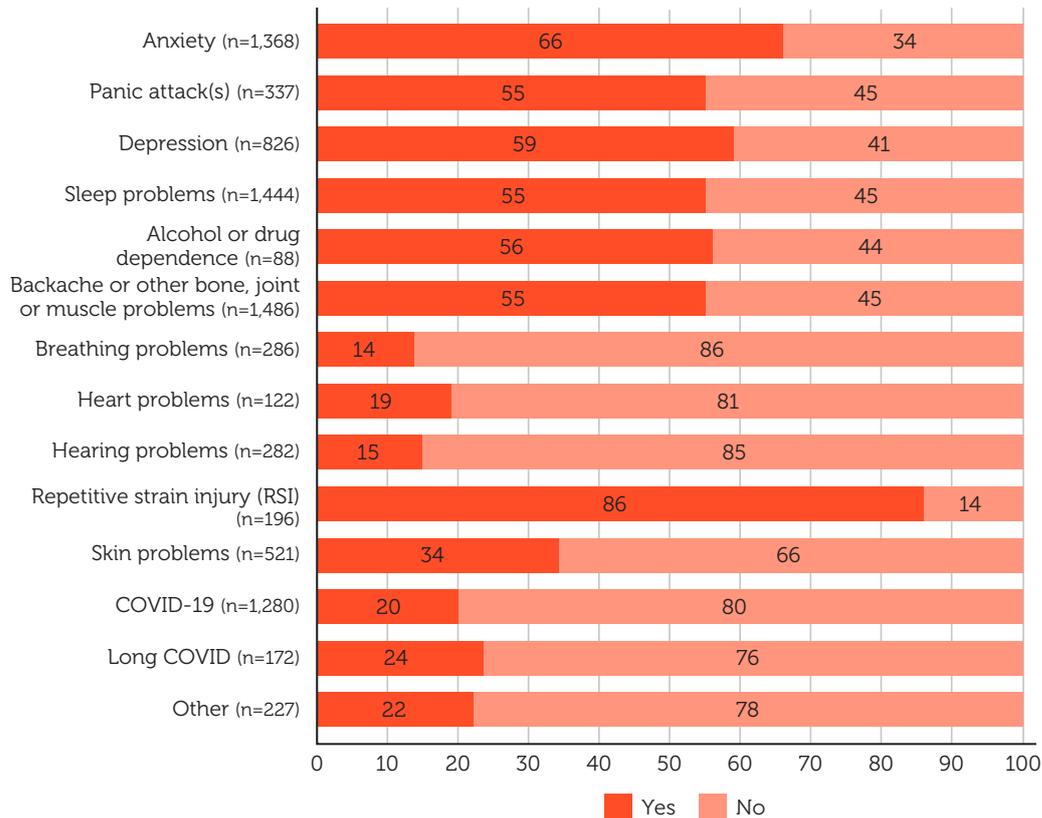


Base: all (n=4,413); private sector (n=3,345); public sector (n=775).

2 How employees feel work contributes to health-related conditions

The contribution of work to employees' experiences of health-related conditions is mixed. Some conditions, like repetitive strain injury (RSI), anxiety and depression, are felt to be strongly influenced by work. Work is perceived to make only a small contribution to many other conditions, however, most notably breathing, hearing and heart problems (Figure 7).

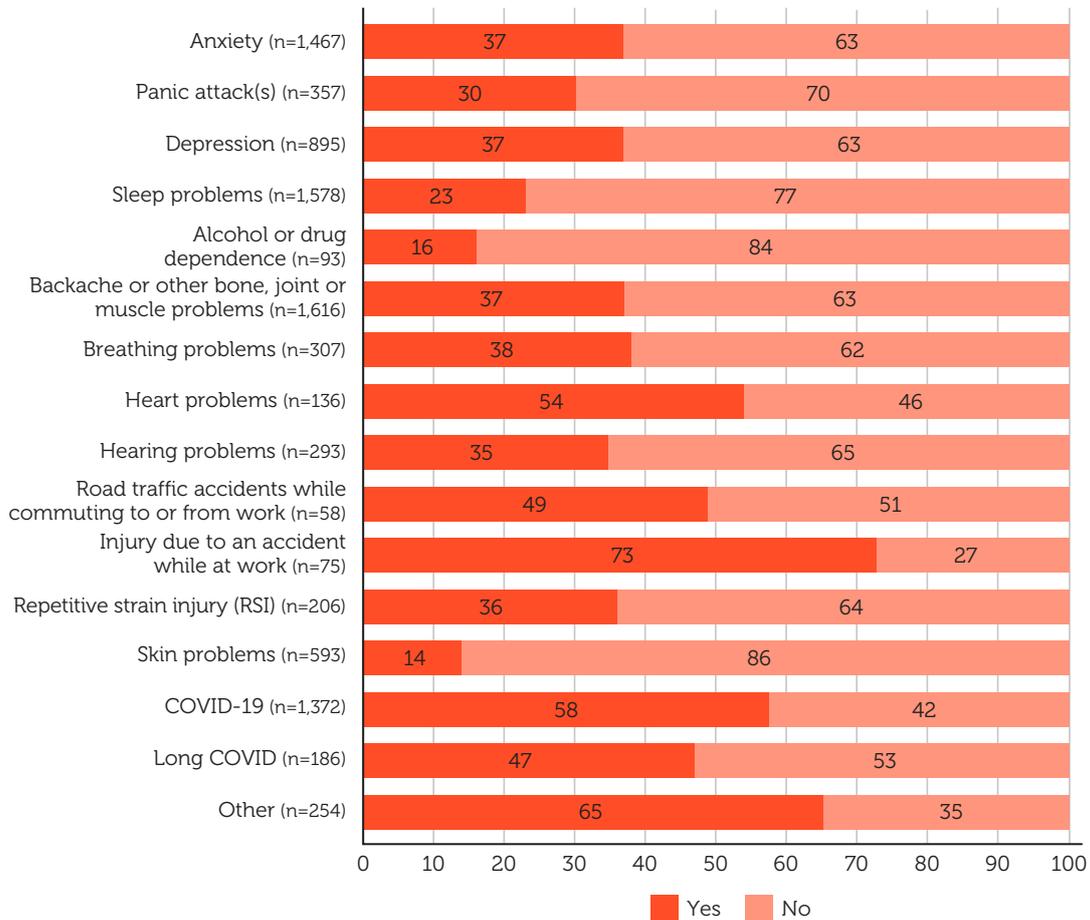
Figure 7: Was your job a contributing factor to experiencing this health-related condition? (%)



Discussing health issues

Employees tend not to discuss their health issues with their boss or employer. Our findings show that only in cases of an injury due to an accident at work, COVID-19 and heart problems have over half of workers ever done so (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Have you ever discussed your health issue(s) with your current boss or employer? (%)



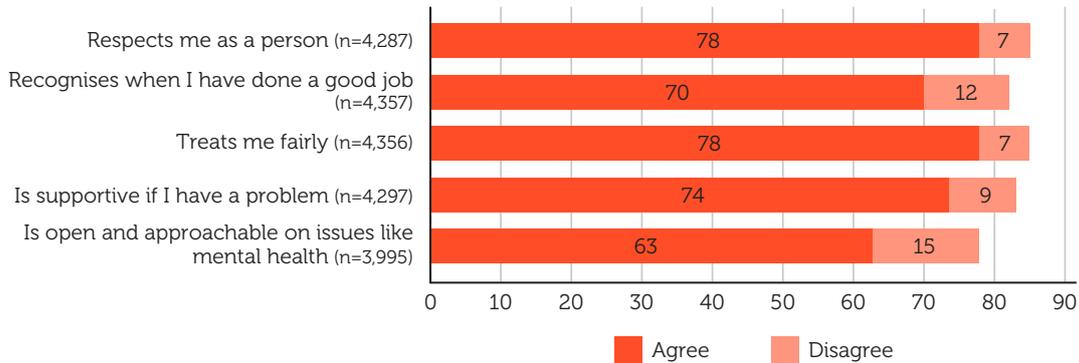
3 How employees feel about line managers

Line managers are perceived very positively when it comes to their behaviour towards staff, the majority of whom feel respected, recognised for their contribution, fairly treated, supported and able to approach their supervisor on issues like mental health.

This is in contrast with the findings from the survey of people professionals, where a 'lack of line manager skills and confidence' is rated as the top challenge for health and wellbeing over the next year (43% of respondents). People professionals also report 'management style' as the second main cause of stress-related absence in their organisation (37%).

The perceptions of people professionals aren't surprising given that well under half of organisations (43%) train line managers to support staff with mental ill health. Nonetheless, employees' perceptions of their line manager are considerably better than the level of confidence that people professionals have in line management capability in supporting people's health and wellbeing (Figure 9).

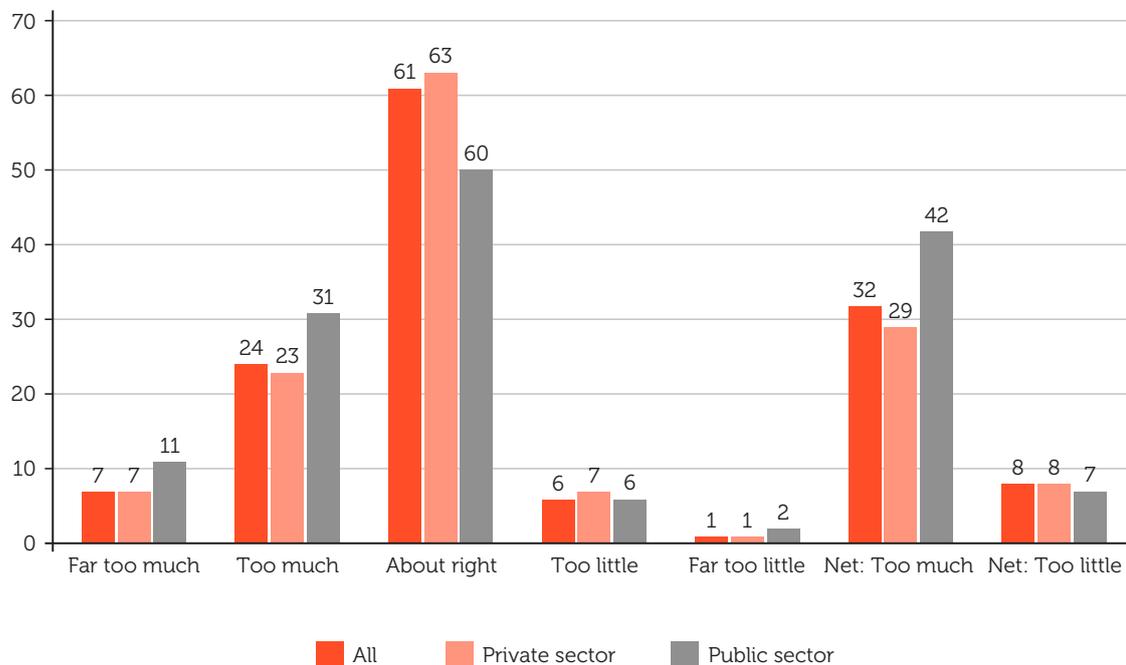
Figure 9: My immediate supervisor, line manager or boss... (%)



4 How employees feel about their workload

Nearly a third (31%) find their workload is too great in a normal week. This is a greater issue for public sector workers (Figure 10).

Figure 10: In a normal week, is the workload in your job... (by sector) (%)

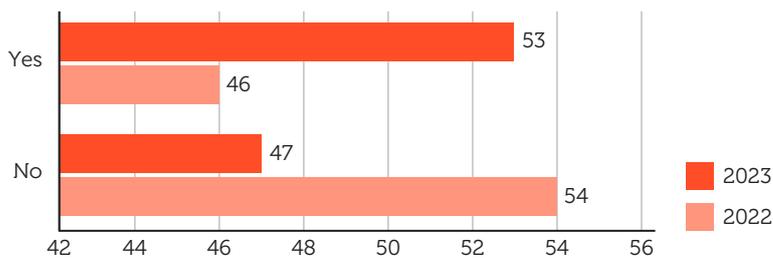


Base: all (n=5,044); private sector (n=3,934); public sector (n=796).

5 How employees feel about presenteeism (working when ill)

Over half of employees (53%) have worked in their main job in the last three months despite not feeling well enough to do so. This has increased from 46% in 2022 (Figure 11). This increase is not surprising given that an even higher proportion (87%) of people professionals in our *Health and wellbeing at work* survey (supported by Simplyhealth) said they had been aware of presenteeism in their organisation over the past 12 months.

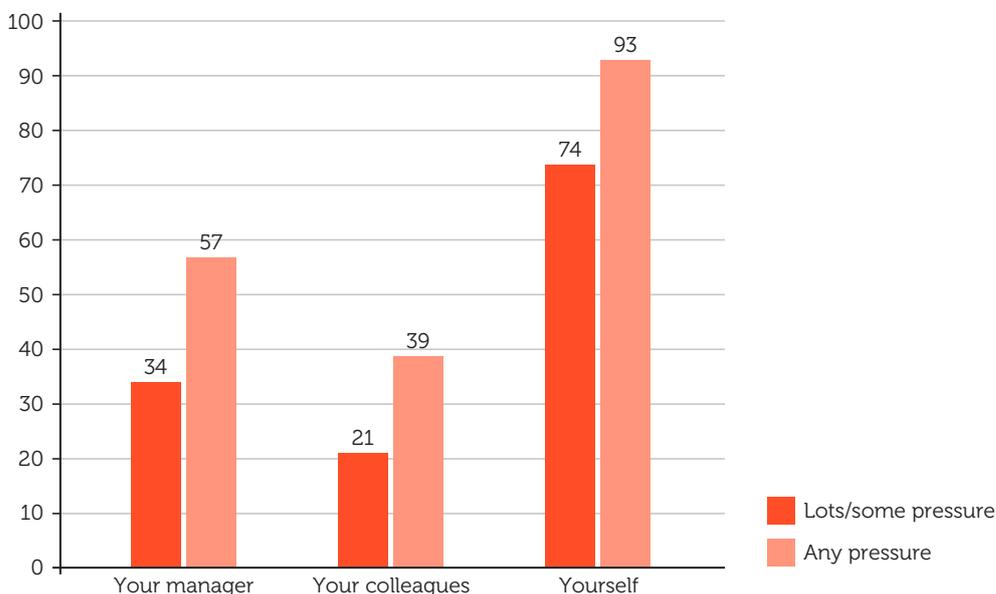
Figure 11: In the last three months, have you ever worked in your main job despite not feeling well enough to perform your duties? (by year) (%)



Base: 2023 (n=5,139); 2022 (n=6,262).

Pressure to work despite not feeling well often comes from within, with employees feeling less pressure from their manager or their colleagues (Figure 12).

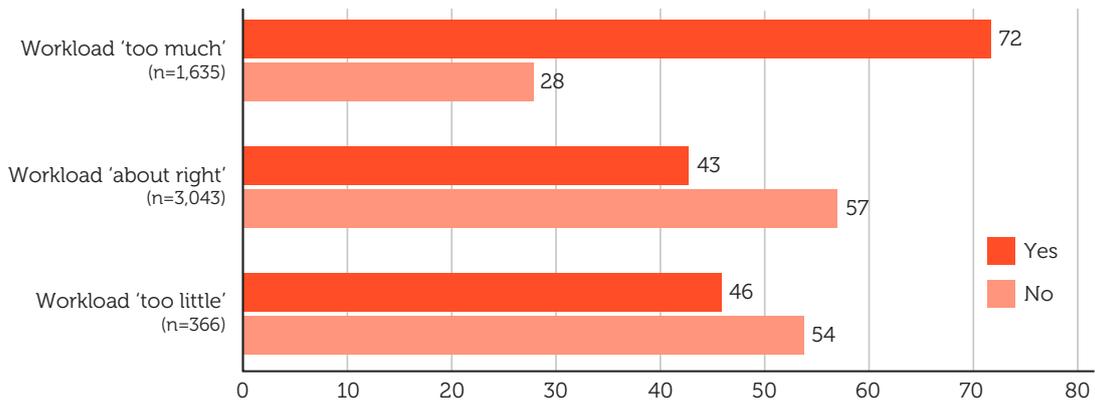
Figure 12: Thinking about the last time you worked despite not feeling well enough to perform your duties, to what extent did you feel pressure, if at all, from the following... (%)



Base: all (n=2,748); all with a manager (n=2,423).

Unsurprisingly, a greater workload is linked to greater presenteeism, with those whose workload is perceived as too great more likely to work despite not feeling well than those whose workload is about right or too little (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Presenteeism by workload: In the last three months, have you ever worked in your main job despite not feeling well enough to perform your duties? (%)



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