



**CIPD**

Summary report  
and practical guidance  
June 2024

**CIPD Good**  
**Work Index 2024**

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.

Summary report and practical guidance

# CIPD Good Work Index 2024

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## Acknowledgements

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## Publication information

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# 1 Introduction

In 2024, the UK labour market has continued to demonstrate resilience despite challenges related to increased living costs and ongoing geopolitical tensions. Levels of employment remain relatively high, as do unfilled vacancies. Nevertheless, concerns over productivity and the quality of jobs remain as acute as ever. While most people benefit from engaging, meaningful work, there are still large majorities who feel disillusioned with their contribution to their organisations and regard a job as little more than a pay cheque. The responsibility for employers to support their people remains paramount.

The *CIPD Good Work Index* (now in its seventh year) is an annual benchmark of good work, or job quality, in the UK. It measures different aspects of job quality, including employment essentials, such as contractual arrangements, the day-to-day realities of work as experienced by workers themselves, and the impacts on people's health and wellbeing.

This report is an abridged version of the *CIPD Good Work Index 2024* survey report and distils the key findings in summary form. This report also provides clear, practical guidance for employers, people professionals and people managers to take forward in their organisations and to improve job quality among their staff.

Last year's *Good Work Index* reports focused on the high levels of industrial disputes, mostly in the public sector, where employees showed particular dissatisfaction with both pay- and non-pay-related workplace issues. It also highlighted the limited role work plays in many people's lives, and the subsequent risk of a slow slide away from enriched work and towards mediocre jobs.

This year's key area of focus is interpersonal conflict. While the frequency of conflict has broadly weakened since the *Good Work Index* began, it remains particularly damaging for certain groups in the workplace. The report explores the impact of conflict on organisational outcomes and how it is resolved. As well as conflict, this report shares insights from more than 5,000 UK workers' responses and provides recommendations for practice on key issues, such as:

- designing jobs to create meaningful, engaging work for employees who may feel a lack of attachment to their work
- providing employees with emotional resilience to cope with challenging job demands
- reducing skills mismatches and improving opportunities for skills development
- using work autonomy as a buffer against the risks of digital and homeworking
- retaining an engaged workforce and attracting a diverse pool of potential new employees.

## 2 What is good work?

At the CIPD, we believe that good work:

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

Importantly, good work should be accessible for all, regardless of job type or someone’s background. It may not be realistic to make all jobs great in all ways, but employers should ensure that they are thinking creatively about how they can improve job quality with job design and HR practices.

The seven dimensions of job quality<sup>1</sup> cover important subjective and objective aspects of work. Despite changes in the world of work, the fundamentals of good work remain constant. People professionals need to focus on getting the basics right, as well as tackling emerging issues that shift how or where work is done.

### **About the CIPD Good Work Index**

The data in this summary report comes from the CIPD/YouGov *UK Working Lives* survey. This report is based on data from 5,496 UK workers, collected between 8 January and 15 February 2024. 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*.

You can find further information about the *CIPD Good Work Index* below:

- The *CIPD Good Work Index 2024* survey report, written by Ian Brinkley, explores the data in more detail.
- Our archive of [CIPD Good Work Index reports](#) since 2018 includes data from previous years and details on how the survey was developed (please note, as the report was formerly known as *UK Working Lives*, the 2018 and 2019 report titles reflect this).
- The CIPD reports [Understanding and measuring job quality](#) and [The road to good work](#) informed the development of the Good Work Index.

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<sup>1</sup> Pay and benefits; contracts; work–life balance; job design and the nature of work; relationships at work; employee voice; health and wellbeing.

# 3 What does good work look like in 2024?

This year, employee experiences of conflict emerged as the central focus of analysis. This covers the most commonly reported incidents of conflict: being shouted at, undermined or humiliated, and verbally abused. Also included are false allegations, discrimination related to a protected characteristic and harassment, all of which are less frequently reported. Serious incidents, such as sexual and physical assault, remain extremely rare in 2024.

The headline result is positive, with 25% of respondents in 2024 reporting at least one form of conflict in the last 12 months, down from 30% in 2019. However, rather than an improvement in workplace relations or conflict management, this may be attributed to the rise in homeworking since 2019. With staff spending less time in physical proximity with each other, experiences of conflict have fallen.

Those with protected characteristics are more severely impacted by interpersonal conflict, which is associated with a number of poor organisational outcomes, notably lower job satisfaction, poorer mental health and higher levels of exhaustion. Experiencing conflict is also linked to poorer perceptions of senior leaders and managers' roles in encouraging employee voice, suggesting a lack of an open, honest workplace climate.

Elsewhere, many other indicators of job quality show little change from previous years. Most people feel satisfied with their job and their pay, and feel their work provides value for their organisation, but fewer feel inspired by their own work or by the wider organisational purpose. One key trend from 2023 continues in 2024, where increasing numbers of workers view work as transactional – simply for the money. While not a major problem on its own, combining this trend with other findings does suggest a risk of a wider issue. With employees less likely to work harder than needed to help their organisation, and a large minority still feeling the negative effects of work on their mental and physical health, the slide into mediocre work with demotivated, uncommitted and unproductive staff cited in last year's reports remains a distinct risk.

More positive news comes from the area of skills, training and development, with staff feeling able to acquire useful skills in their roles and access good career opportunities. However, many still feel overqualified for their roles.

While the majority of respondents feel they have a strong degree of autonomy in how they do their work, this has seen no significant change over the last five years. Contrary to expectations, the rise in homeworking since 2019 has had almost no impact, suggesting that those most likely to have shifted to homeworking already had the highest level of autonomy in their roles, irrespective of their location.

This leads to a more general conclusion. With most indicators of job quality showing only small changes over the years, it follows that increased homeworking has had little impact on them, too. Homeworking is unsurprisingly popular among those who are able to do it and there is unmet demand from those who do not. But it is not in itself a panacea. Job design, opportunities to develop and strong workplace relationships are more likely to support better working lives than geographical location.

## 4 Conflict

Conflict has emerged as the major focus of this year's analysis, and we look to explore the most common forms of interpersonal conflict at work, who it most strongly impacts, how it is resolved, its effect on organisational outcomes and how it has changed over time.

A quarter of respondents report experiencing at least one form of conflict over the last 12 months, the most common of which are being humiliated or undermined at work, being shouted at or being involved in a heated argument, or being verbally abused (see Table 1). These are also cited by employees as causing them or their organisation the greatest consequences. Experiences of discriminatory behaviour due to a protected characteristic and false allegations also have a major impact on employees, relative to their comparative infrequency.

**Table 1: All reported conflicts and most important conflict**

	All reported (% of all respondents in work)	All reported (% of respondents who report any conflict)	Most important (% of respondents who report any conflict)
Undermined/humiliated	12	48	25
Shouted at/heated argument	9	35	15
Verbal abuse or insult	8	34	11
Discriminatory behaviour	5	20	11
False allegations	4	18	11
Intimidation (non-sexual)	3	12	6*
Unwanted sexual attention	2	9	2*
Physical threat	2	8	4*
Physical assault (non-sexual)	1*	3*	1*
Other behaviours	1*	3*	2*
Sexual assault	–	2*	1*
Prefer not to say	3	–	11

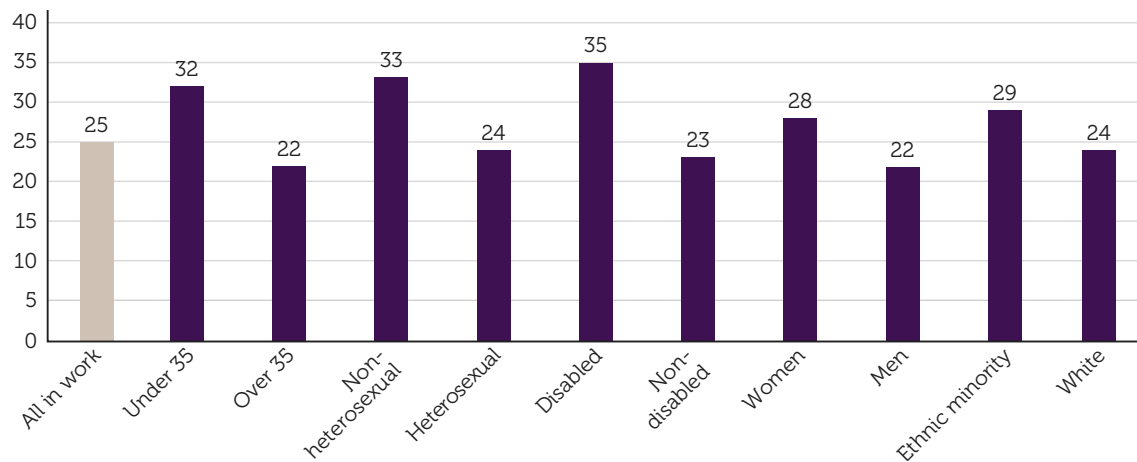
Base: all (n=5,496).

Note: \* small sample size, n<50.

### Employees with protected characteristics are more likely to experience conflict

Those with protected characteristics are particularly likely to report conflict at work. Women, ethnic minority employees, those with a disability, those who identify as non-heterosexual and staff under 35 report more frequent experiences than men, white employees, non-disabled, heterosexual and those over 35 (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Employees reporting conflict at work in last 12 months (%)**



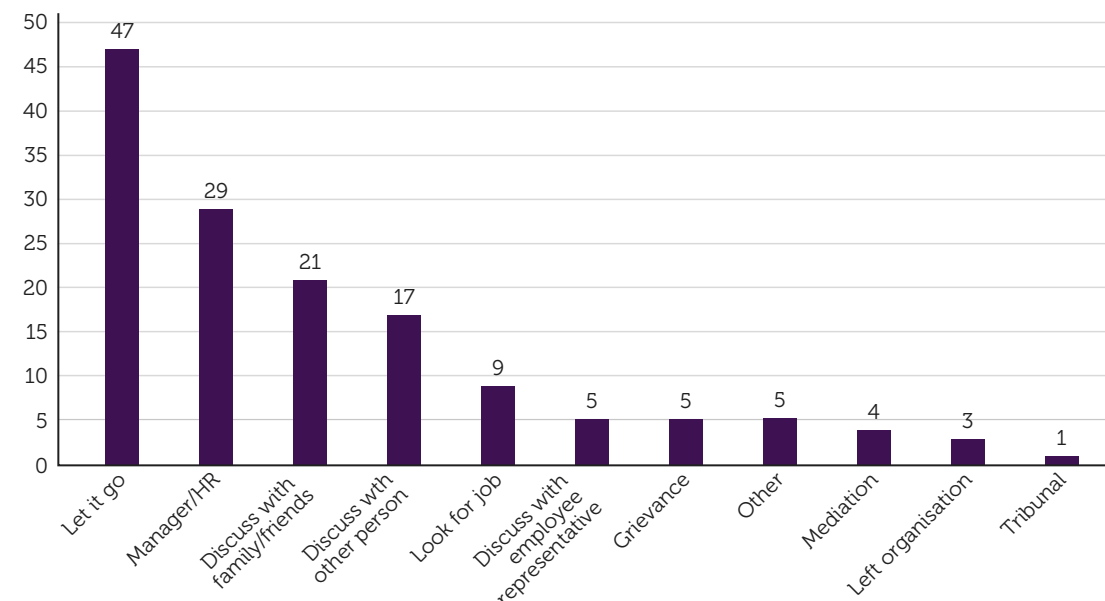
Base: all (n=5,496); under 35 (n=1,499); over 35 (n=3,997); non-heterosexual (n=658); heterosexual (n=4,654); disabled (n=912); non-disabled (n=4,532); women (n=2,625); men (n=2,871); white (n=4,982); ethnic minority (n=398).

Note: 'Non-heterosexual' combines survey categories of gay and lesbian, bi-sexual and other because of sample size constraints. Under 35 combines under 25 and 25-34 age categories for the same reason.

### Most incidents of conflict are simply let go

By far the most common response to conflict is to let it go, with nearly half of our sample choosing to do this over other options, such as having a discussion with a manager or with HR, or discussing it with family/friends outside of work (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: How people try to resolve conflict (%)**



Base: all who report having experienced any conflict in the last 12 months (n=1,365).



### Interpersonal conflict has many negative consequences for employees

Unsurprisingly, experiencing conflict is associated with a number of negative organisational outcomes. First, those who have experienced conflict are less likely to be satisfied with their job. They're also more likely to feel exhausted, under pressure and struggle with their workload, all of which leads to a negative impact of work on their mental health (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Impact of conflict on mental health**

	Any conflict	None
I feel satisfied with my job (% satisfied)	54	77
My pay is appropriate given my responsibilities (% agree)	38	55
Workload in a typical week (% too much)	46	24
Feel exhausted at work (% always/often)	42	18
Feel under pressure at work (% always/often)	37	15
Impact of work on mental health (% positive)	28	43
Impact of work on physical health (% positive)	25	32

Base: all (n=5,496); all who report having experienced any conflict in the last 12 months (n=1,365).

### Conflict is linked to poorer perceptions of senior leaders and managers, but general relationships remain unaffected

Looking more widely at conflict, interpersonal relationships and perceptions of others, it follows that those who experience conflict at work may view senior leadership less favourably, which may play into their decision to simply let conflict go. Indeed, those with experience of conflict feel much less confidence in senior leaders, have less trust in their integrity, and are less likely to perceive them as having a clear vision for the organisation, compared with those who have not experienced conflict (see Table 3).

Nevertheless, wider relationships do not appear to suffer as a result of experiencing conflict. Relationships with teammates, colleagues and line reports remain high among all respondents. It appears that employees make a distinction between general working relations and specific actions. For example, although relationships at work are rated highly, those who experience conflict rate their managers poorly when it comes to treating them fairly, with respect, supporting them and recognising their achievements, compared with employees with no experience of conflict.

The association between conflict and lack of voice is more clear, with employees who experience conflict less positive about their manager's ability to seek their views, respond to suggestions, keep them informed, allow them to influence decisions and their pay, compared with other colleagues. Alongside the perceptions of senior leaders, this finding suggests that employees don't feel confident or comfortable raising an issue with their superiors because they feel it may have little positive impact, so they prefer to let it go.

**Table 3: Impact of conflict on workplace relations and perceptions of senior leaders and line managers**

	Any conflict	None
<b>Senior management and directors</b>	<b>% agree</b>	<b>% agree</b>
Senior managers have a clear vision for the organisation	46	62
I have confidence in senior managers/directors' ability	39	57
I trust senior managers/directors to act with integrity	36	60
<b>Working relations with line managers and colleagues</b>	<b>% good</b>	<b>% good</b>
Team colleagues	80	81
Staff I manage	79	83
Other colleagues	71	73
Line managers	67	86
Other managers	59	75
<b>My line manager/supervisor...</b>	<b>% agree</b>	<b>% agree</b>
Respects me as a person	63	86
Treats me fairly	60	86
Is supportive if I have a problem	60	84
Recognises when I have done a good job	56	77
Is open and approachable on mental health	53	74
Is successful in getting people to work together	47	67
Leads by example	46	64
Supports my learning and development	46	64
Can be relied on to keep their promise	45	70
Helps me perform well in my job	45	67
Provides useful feedback on my work	45	64
Supports long-term career development	38	55
<b>Voice in the workplace – managers at my workplace...</b>	<b>% good</b>	<b>% good</b>
Seek employee views	36	51
Keep employees informed on discussions and decisions	35	51
Respond to employee suggestions	32	50
Allow employee influence on final decisions	27	42
Recognise employee role in pay negotiations	25	41

Base: all (n=5,496); all who report having experienced any conflict in the last 12 months (n=1,365).

### The workplace has become less conflicted

A comparison between 2019 and 2024 throws up a positive finding: reporting of any conflict has fallen from 30% to 25% (see Table 4). There are only small differences among groups, but the greatest falls are seen among male, white, over-35s without a disability in higher socioeconomic groups (ABC1). Non-heterosexual employees have also seen an encouraging drop in conflict, albeit from a high level in 2019.

**Table 4: Changes in reported workplace conflicts by group, 2019–24**

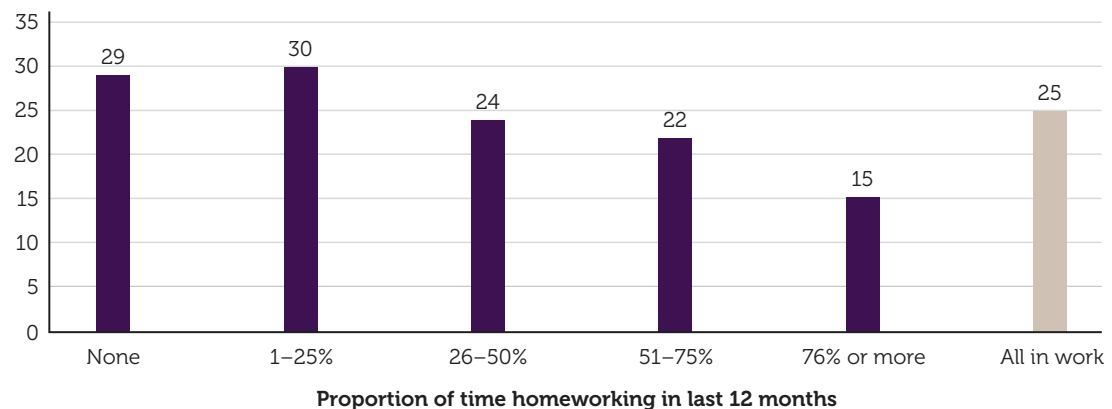
	2019 (%)	2024 (%)	% change
All in work	30	25	-5
Male	29	22	-7
Over 35	29	22	-7
Non-heterosexual	39	33	-6
White	30	24	-6
Permanent employee	32	26	-6
Socioeconomic group ABC1	30	24	-6
Heterosexual	29	24	-5
Non-disabled	28	23	-5
Female	31	28	-3
Ethnic minority	32	29	-3
Disabled	37	35	-2
Socioeconomic group C2DE	30	28	-2
Under 35*	33	32	-1
Atypical employee contract*	35	38	+3

Base: 2019 (n=5,136); 2024 (n=5,496).

Note: \*these results should be used with caution due to sample size issues.

The fall in conflict appears to be mostly driven by the rise in homeworking since 2019, rather than any underlying improvement in workplace behaviour or climate. This year, the greater the time spent at home, the less likely people are to report conflict (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Working at home and any conflict (%)**



Base: all (n=5,496).

**Recommendations for practice**

Interpersonal conflict at work is clearly a complex issue that can't be solved by one organisational group making one set of decisions alone. Conflict affects people throughout the organisation and takes many different forms. Our [\*Bullying and incivility at work evidence review\*](#) builds on findings from this report. It finds that workplace incivility, which can include rude behaviour, undermining, bullying and harassment, among other things, is linked to higher levels of anxiety, depression and burnout, and increased absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover.

While this report shows that the frequency of conflict has decreased over the years, it is still particularly impactful for certain groups at work.

One thing that's clear is that there is more to do for senior leaders and line managers to reduce the potential negative impacts of conflict by more effectively creating a workplace environment in which employees feel able to raise their concerns without fear of judgement or being ignored. This requires work from employers, leaders and people professionals to not only encourage and demonstrate openness and honesty, but to provide training for line managers to have difficult conversations with their people.

Our [\*Trust and psychological safety evidence review\*](#) provides a number of recommendations for organisations to improve trust and psychological safety among employees, increasing their confidence to take risks and speak up without fear of judgement or ridicule:

- Leaders should aim to strengthen trust and psychological safety through encouraging people to speak up and be open, and by demonstrating these behaviours themselves. Using one's voice should be embraced and rewarded, rather than punished.
- Managers should pay full attention when team members speak, showing empathy and understanding. They should avoid interrupting, jumping to conclusions or passing judgement. They should lead by example, sharing their own vulnerabilities and concerns with the team.
- Leaders and people professionals should provide line managers with the skills they need to become an important voice in managing interpersonal conflict, rather than a sticking point.
- Leaders should ensure policies related to conflict are fair, easy to understand and available to everyone they may affect, in order to make employees feel respected and treated with dignity.

# 5 Job design, work centrality and meaningful work

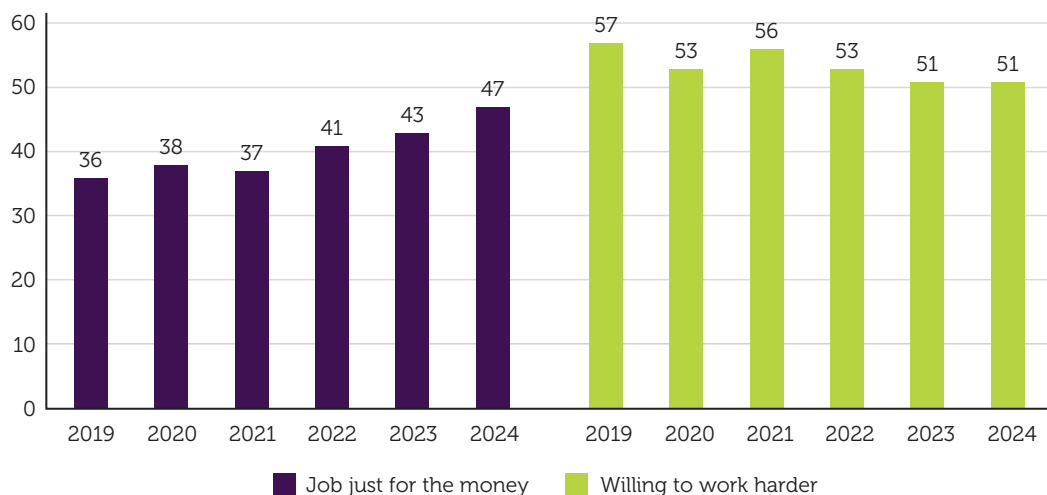
This year, we explored a range of quality-of-work indicators which focus on how people feel about work and their jobs. How jobs are designed is key to providing employees with meaning and fulfilment within their roles and ensuring they have the resources to perform.

## Lack of work centrality and discretionary effort remain an issue

While most indicators of job quality show very modest change over the last five years, 'work centrality' – or how central people feel work is to their life – has shifted significantly. The trend of more respondents feeling that a job is just about money and nothing else was highlighted in 2023 and has risen further in 2024 (as shown in Figure 4). Nearly half of respondents feel this in 2024, compared with just 36% in 2019. This change appears to have shifted following the COVID-19 pandemic, when work became a lower priority for many amid uncertainty and upheaval.

Another indication of work playing a less central role in people's lives is lower discretionary effort, or willingness to work harder than needed to help one's employer or organisation. In 2024, 51% are willing. While this has stayed the same since 2023, it is lower than the 57% recorded in 2019 and shows no sign of returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 4: Work centrality and discretionary effort, 2019–24 (% agree)



Base: all (n=5,482).

Looking at differences by group, men are more likely than women to view work as transactional. Unsurprisingly, workers in the C2DE socioeconomic groups are also more likely than those in ABC1 groups to feel this way, as are private sector workers, compared with those in the public sector.

Since 2019, the feeling of work as transactional has grown for many different groups, in particular those under 35, ethnic minority employees and those in atypical work contracts (see Table 5).

**Table 5: A job is just about the money, 2019–24 (% agree)**

	2019 (%)	2024 (%)	% change
Men	40	52	+12
Women	31	42	+11
Under 35*	34*	52	+18
55 or older	32	35	+ 3
CDE2 socioeconomic group	45	51	+ 6
ABC1 socioeconomic group	33	45	+12
White	36	45	+ 9
Ethnic minority	38	58	+20
Disabled	40	46	+ 6
Non-disabled	35	47	+12
Atypical contract*	26	46	+20
Permanent contract	39	49	+10
All in work	36	47	+ 11

Base: all in work (2019: n=5,113; 2024: n=5,482); men (2019: n=2,696; 2024: n=2,863); women (2019: n=2,417; 2024: n=2,619); under 35 (2019: n=1,041; 2024: n=1,491); 55 or older (2019: n=1,628; 2024: n=1,441); ABC1 (2019: n=3,684; 2024: n=4,001); C2DE (2019: n=1,317; 2024: n=1,397); white (2019: n=4,495; 2024: n=4,970); ethnic minority (2019: n=489; 2024: n=396); disabled (2019: n=989; 2024: n=909); non-disabled (2019: n=3,998; 2024: n=4,522); atypical contract (2019: n=226; 2024: n=253); permanent contract (2019: n=4,222; 2024: n=4,615).

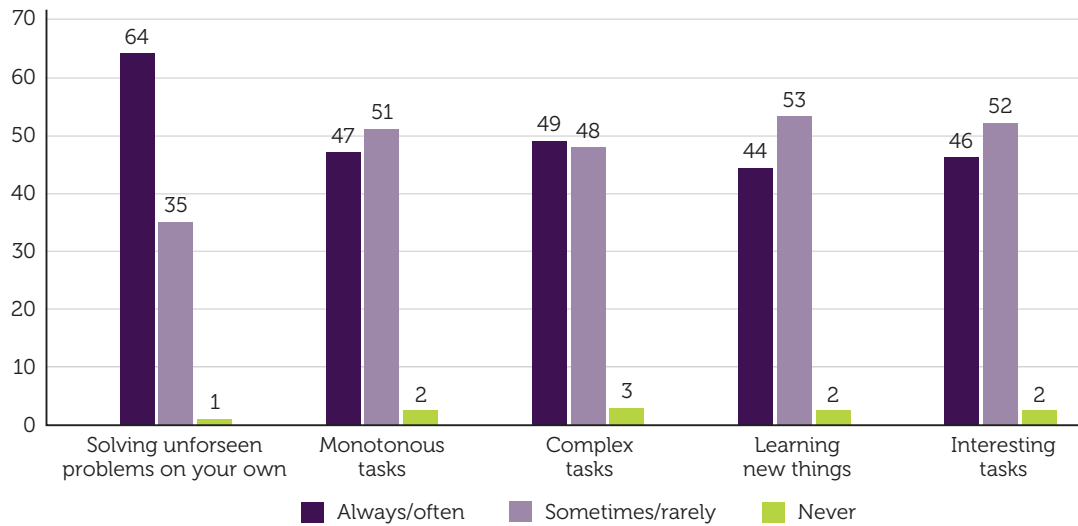
Note: \* small sample sizes in at least one survey. Atypical contracts combine temporary, zero-hours and short-hours contracts. Most of these contracts are also permanent. Sample sizes for those in atypical contracts who agreed that a job was just for the money were n=58 in 2019 and n=118 in 2024.

### Employees have mixed feelings about their jobs

Perceptions of job tasks are mixed in 2024. Over two-thirds of employees' roles always or often involve solving unforeseen problems on their own. This figure could be viewed in a positive or negative light – most staff are afforded responsibility and autonomy for solving job tasks themselves, but regularly dealing with unforeseen problems, particularly on their own, may lead to key, pre-planned job tasks being deprioritised.

Other findings are just as mixed. On one side, nearly half of respondents' jobs always or often involve interesting, complex tasks and learning new things, but, on the other side, the same number face monotonous tasks (see Figure 5). None of these figures have seen significant changes over the years.

**Figure 5: Types of tasks experienced in main job (% agree)**



Base: all (n=5,496).

### Most employees are engaged at work

Employees in 2024 once again generally feel positively engaged at work, with half being always or often enthusiastic, immersed in their work and feeling like time flies (see Table 6). However, just under a third always or often feel full of energy at work, and nearly the same number never feel this. More positively, low numbers feel miserable, lonely or bored at work, and while feelings of excessive pressure and exhaustion are higher, only a quarter of employees report experiencing this. None of these numbers have shifted dramatically in recent years, and it's promising that we've seen no downturn, given the changing landscape of work over the last half-decade. However, yet more needs to be done to engage and motivate staff.

**Table 6: How I feel about my job (%)**

	Always/often	Sometimes	Rarely/never
Enthusiastic	51	34	16
Time flies	50	38	13
Immersed	49	36	14
Full of energy	30	45	26
Lonely	14	26	61
Miserable	13	28	60
Bored	16	34	50
Excessive pressure	21	37	41
Exhausted	24	42	33

Base: all (n=5,496).

### Employees have mixed feelings about meaningful work

This year, staff feel positive about gaining meaning through their work, mainly through their contribution to their organisation. The vast majority of staff feel their work is important and useful for their employer. More widely, however, findings are mixed. Under half are inspired by their organisation's purpose, and similar numbers of respondents feel they do useful work for society, serve a greater purpose and make the world a better place through their work. Nevertheless, for such idealistic questions, these responses are fairly positive.

At a more personal level, two-thirds of employees gain a sense of achievement at work. Around half feel work aligns with their values, matches their interests and contributes to personal growth. Again, these are ambitious questions, so the mixed responses are no surprise. One negative is that only 41% feel inspired at work – similar to the number inspired by their organisation's purpose (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Meaningful work (%)**

	Agree	Disagree
My work is important to the organisation	82	5
My work makes a valuable contribution to the organisation	78	7
My work is useful to the organisation	73	11
I am inspired by my organisation's purpose	43	25
I am doing useful work for society	51	25
My work serves a greater purpose	49	24
My work makes the world a better place	43	26
I have a sense of achievement	67	14
My work fits what I value in life	55	17
My work matches my interests	54	22
My work contributes to my personal growth	51	21
I feel inspired at work	41	28

Base: all (n=5,496); all who are not freelance workers (n=5,218).

### **Recommendations for practice**

Designing jobs for the benefit of employees is of course hugely important; a job that is interesting, enjoyable and meaningful to staff helps them feel engaged and motivated at work, more committed to their organisation and more closely aligned to the values and goals of the business. Lower work centrality is in itself not necessarily a problem; after all, being able to enjoy time away from work and create a healthy balance between work and home life is vital for employees' wellbeing. However, lower attachment to one's organisation and being less willing to go the extra mile could pose a risk if we see levels of engagement and motivation also reduce.



Our *Employee engagement evidence review* outlines the impact of having an engaged and motivated workforce: notably staff who are more satisfied at work, experience better wellbeing and see improved performance.

Developing feelings of engagement, commitment and motivation among employees requires positive behaviour from staff at all levels of the organisation. Several factors are consistently cited as important:

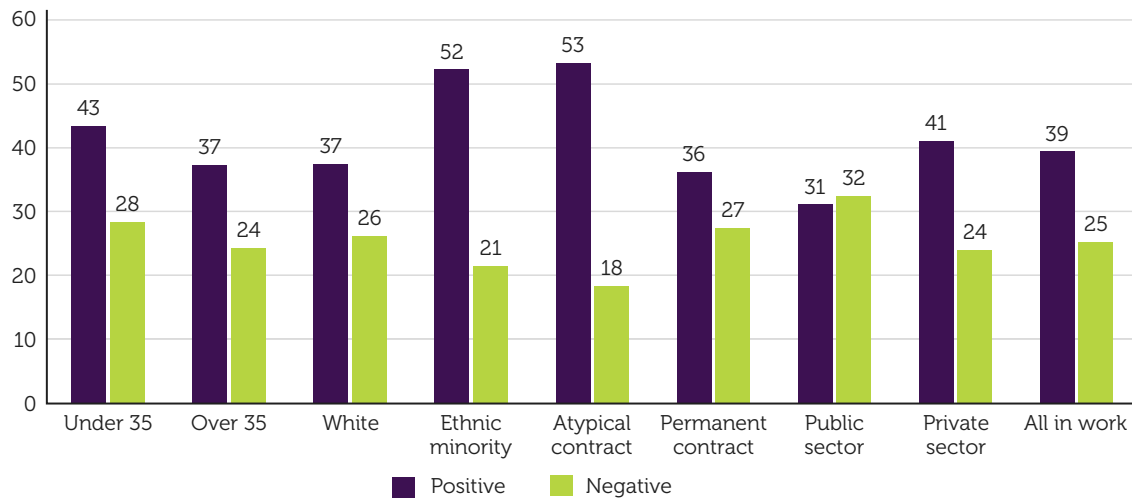
- Providing employees with the resources to do their job properly, such as supervisor and colleague support and feedback, helps prevent the demands of their job from becoming overwhelming.
- Employers should provide their staff with sufficient support to ensure they feel cared for and valued in their jobs. This is likely to increase their identification with the organisation and leave them feeling more engaged and committed.
- Jobs need to be clearly defined so employees have an acute understanding of their role expectations. They also need to make full use of their skills and sufficiently challenge them in order to be meaningful.

## 6 Workplace wellbeing

The perceived impact of work on people's health is extremely mixed and varies among different groups. Thirty-nine per cent of employees feel that work impacts their mental health positively, with 31% feeling the positive effect of work on their physical health. In terms of both physical and mental health, a quarter of employees feel the negative impact of work.

Focusing on the effect of work on mental health, there are no significant differences by gender or disability. Where we do begin to notice changes are by age, with under-25s and over-55s most likely to benefit mentally from work. Surprisingly, those in atypical contracts report a greater positive impact on mental health than those in permanent contracts. However, this may be down to a greater number of young workers having such contract types. As with many indicators of job quality, public sector workers are worse off here, with only 31% reporting a positive impact of work on mental health, compared with 41% of private sector staff (see Figure 6).

Looking over time, the changes among these different groups over the last several years have been modest at best.

**Figure 6: The impact of work on mental health (%)**

Base: all in work (n=5,384); under 35 (n=1,450); over 35 (n=3,934); white (n=4,893); ethnic minority (n=382); atypical contract (n=246); permanent contract (n=4,535); public sector (n=852); private sector (n=4,254).

### **Recommendations for practice**

At the CIPD, we believe that work should be physically and mentally healthy for everyone, if possible. In reality, however, there are always workplace stressors that inevitably get in the way of achieving that ideal. We regularly see organisations making changes to how they operate, and staff are required to adapt to new ways of working alongside their changing personal lives. We know that during financial hardship, work pressure can easily increase as the drive to do more with less becomes even more intense. In 2024, rising costs continue to put this strain on businesses and those within them.

During such challenging times, the ability of staff to cope with adversity is paramount. Our *Employee resilience evidence review* outlines the importance of showing resilience through turbulent times, and being able to thrive, not just survive, during uncertainty. Resilient employees are more likely to be more committed and engaged and are therefore likely to perform better at work, while being less likely to suffer from disorders such as anxiety and depression.

People managers – and subsequently senior leaders, HR professionals and anyone who supports and develops them – have a role in helping their staff to be resilient. Simply expecting employees to toughen up and be more resilient isn't good enough; their behaviour affects an employee's resilience. Leaders who set motivating goals, celebrate success within the team and foster supportive work environments are likely to benefit from engaged and resilient staff:

- Managers should communicate and manage work and resources in such a way that people know what to expect and what is expected of them in their roles, so they can cope with unplanned or adverse events.

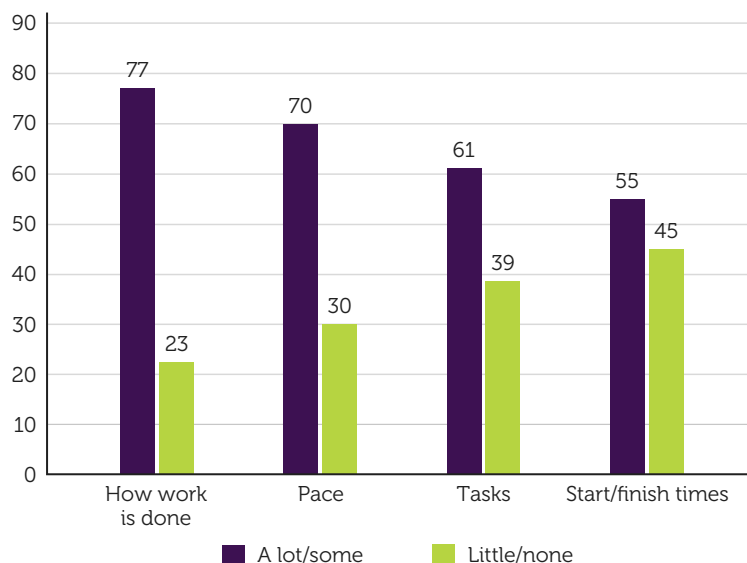
- Managers can develop self-efficacy among their staff through smart goal-setting, coaching and shining a light on the success of employees and their colleagues.
- Senior leaders must shape supportive work environments through their decisions, communication and role-modelling.
- HR and L&D professionals must be given the backing they need to effectively equip people managers with the right capabilities to develop resilience among their people.

## 7 Employee autonomy

The way jobs are designed also determines the level of autonomy employees have over ways of working. Employee autonomy is important because it is consistently linked to important organisational outcomes, such as higher wellbeing and performance. Management control, on the other hand, is often seen as stifling autonomy. In reality, however, these two concepts exist on a spectrum. We sought to explore how these two factors interact under different circumstances.

As with previous years, employees in 2024 feel relatively positive about their influence over aspects of their job. Notably, over three-quarters feel they have a lot or some control over how they do their work, while around two-thirds feel similarly about the pace at which they work and the tasks they do. Staff are, however, more mixed about their ability to influence when they start and end their working day (see Figure 7).

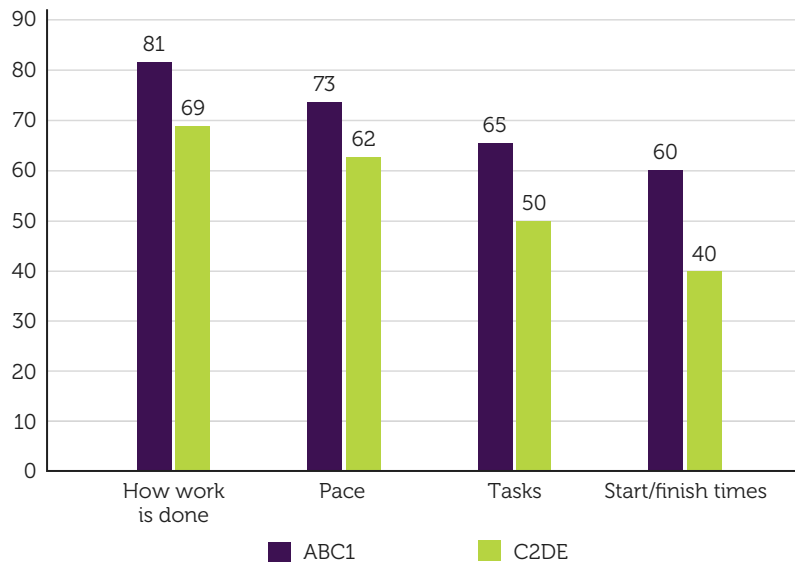
**Figure 7: How much control people have over their work (% agree)**



Base: all who are not self-employed (n=4,928).

While there are limited differences in perceived autonomy between different groups, socioeconomic groups vary dramatically, with much higher levels of autonomy reported by those in ABC1 social classes than those in C2DE classes (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Autonomy by type of job (% who have a lot/some autonomy)**



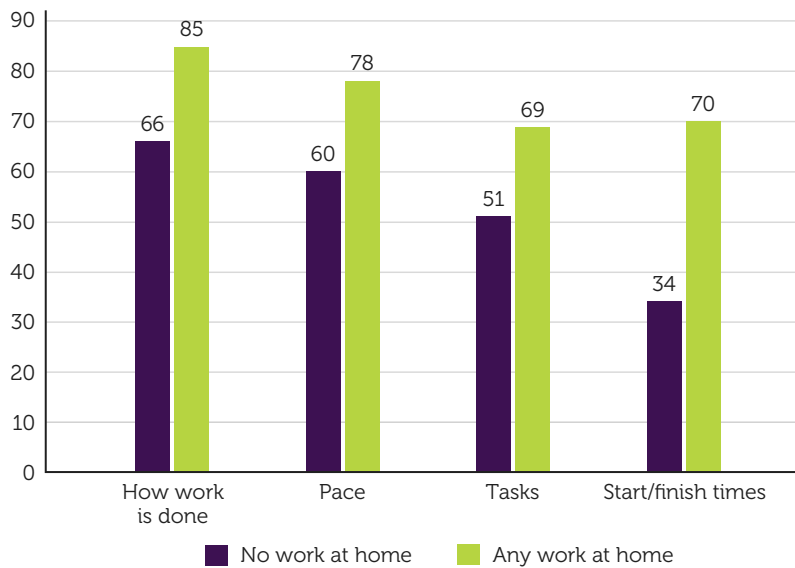
Base: ABC1 (n=3,623); C2DE (n=1,225).

Note: ABC1 are mostly higher-skill, white-collar jobs. C2DE are mostly manual, skilled work, and manual and non-manual semi- and less skilled work.

### **Autonomy is more greatly influenced by type of job, rather than homeworking**

Our evidence shows a clear association between working at home and increased employee autonomy (see Figure 9). This is no surprise; greater autonomy is often cited as a key benefit of home and remote working. We found that how much time employees spend working from home is less important than giving them the freedom to do so: those who are able to work from home have more influence than those who aren't over their job tasks, how they work, the speed at which they work, and start and end times, in particular.

However, we should approach these findings with caution, and we suggest that these differences are down to the types of jobs homeworkers do, rather than homeworking itself. Levels of reported autonomy among all workers have shown little change since 2019. Those in ABC1 socioeconomic groups have driven the increase in homeworking since the COVID-19 pandemic, but these employees were already regularly working flexibly and remotely.

**Figure 9: Homeworking and autonomy (% who have a lot/some autonomy)**

Base: all who spent no time working from home in the last 12 months (n=2,103); all who spent some time working from home in the last 12 months (n=2,825).

### ***Recommendations for practice***

Employee autonomy is clearly an important aspect that, while anecdotally enjoyed by a lot of homeworkers, may actually help protect against some of the potential risks of working digitally. Our *Mental wellbeing and digital work evidence review* states that, while remote working isn't *in itself* damaging to people's wellbeing, it poses a number of risks to health if not managed sensibly. Notably, the feeling of needing to be 'always on', 'digitally tethered' to one's workstation and struggling to switch off and gain separation between work and home life, is an issue of working digitally. Working long hours and creating excessive job demands is a result of this, so empowering people to handle these demands is an essential aspect of management. Work autonomy is one way of doing this:

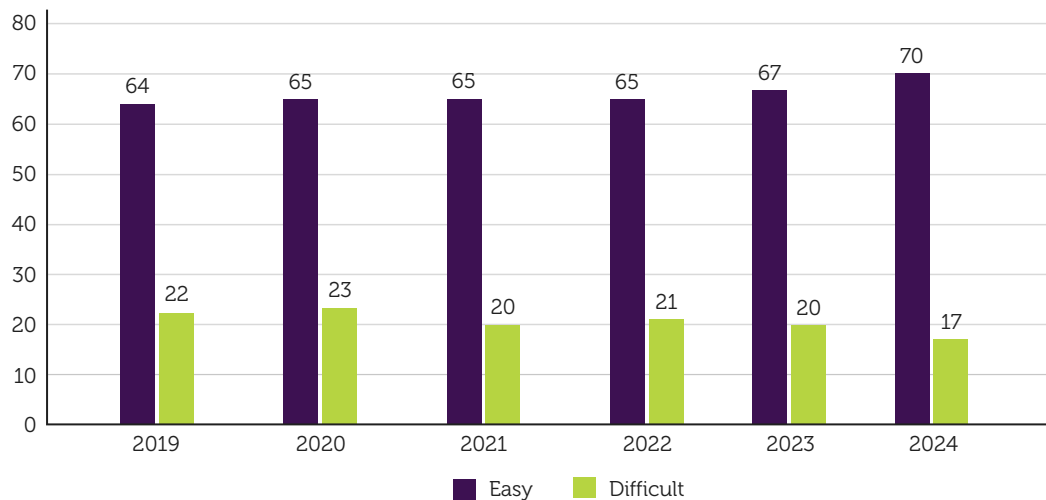
- Employees need to feel they genuinely have permission to control as much of their work environment as possible, so creating a manifesto or template that normalises using autonomy throughout the organisation can help legitimise this.
- Leaders should set an example by encouraging and demonstrating flexible working, for example by taking physical breaks during the day.
- Employees should take advantage of digital technology to facilitate their own autonomy, such as by blocking out time in their calendars and setting automatic email replies outside of their normal hours.

## 8

# Work–life balance and flexible working

While not a major area for analysis in 2024, some interesting, positive findings have emerged on informal flexibility. This year, 70% of employees report finding it easy to take an hour or two away from work to deal with a personal or family issue. This figure has been rising slowly since 2019 and has now peaked (see Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Easy or difficult to take some time off (% agree)**



Base: 2019 (n=5,136); 2020 (n=6,681); 2021 (n=6,257); 2022 (n=6,262); 2023 (n=5,139); 2024 (n=5,496).

### **Recommendations for practice**

As mentioned above, providing staff with autonomy over how they work is key to ensuring they are not at risk of the potential strains of working remotely or digitally. This also follows for flexible working opportunities. Our *Flexible working, teleworking and diversity evidence review* illustrates that flexible working arrangements (FWAs) not only lead to staff feeling more satisfied, but help them reduce any conflict between competing work and family roles. Nevertheless, simply providing employees with time outside of work is not enough; only through allowing them to influence how their time is distributed are the positive effects of FWAs felt.

Our recent report, *Flexible and hybrid working practices in 2023*, encourages employers to make the most of flexible working in several different ways:

- Implement policies that allow staff to request flexible working from day one of their employment, and share this in job adverts to attract a wider pool of candidates.

- Raise awareness of different types of flexible working, like job-sharing and compressed hours, and explore how they can be implemented in traditionally non-flexible roles.
- Allow employees to have influence on how flexible and hybrid working looks in your organisation by collaborating with them to design new working practices.
- Provide training to managers on how to manage flexible, hybrid and remote teams effectively.

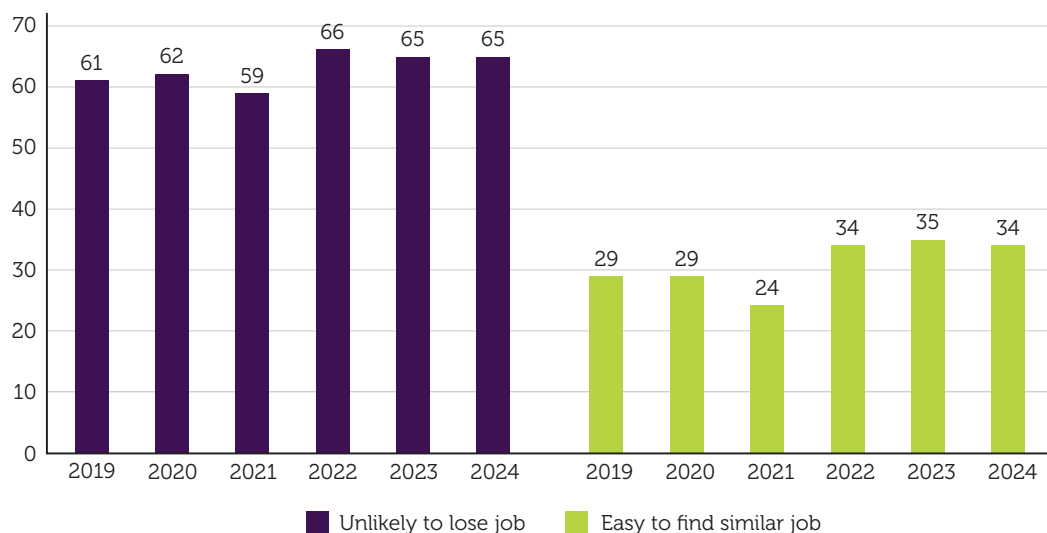
## 9 Job security

In 2024, employees feel a fairly high level of job security, which is comparable with previous years. Two-thirds feel they are unlikely to lose their job in the next 12 months. However, they are more mixed on the perceived ease of finding a new job at least as good as their current one, with 34% saying it would be easy, 43% saying it would be difficult, and 23% being in between (see Figure 11).

We must interpret the second finding with care. Those most likely to find getting a new job as good as their current one tend to be older workers in permanent, long-tenure jobs, while those least likely are younger workers with shorter tenures. Long-tenure workers may have built up a repertoire of benefits in their roles, which may be unachievable in a new job, and may fear rejection due to their age.

There are only small changes in these findings over the years, but they do suggest modest improvements in job security post-pandemic, perhaps reflecting increased availability of unfilled vacancies.

**Figure 11: Job security indicators, 2019–24 (%)**



Base: 2019 (n=5,136); 2020 (n=6,681); 2021 (n=6,257); 2022 (n=6,262); 2023 (n=5,139); 2024 (n=5,496).

**Recommendations for practice**

Our [Resourcing and talent planning report](#) highlights several ways in which employers can help create an engaged workforce and retain their most valuable people, while also making themselves more attractive to potential new recruits. These practical recommendations should help organisations recruit and retain against a challenging backdrop, and help them navigate any future ups and downs of the labour market and economic outlook:

- Be proactive in widening talent pools by varying recruitment outreach approaches and channels, and ensure your brand is attractive and well communicated to a diverse group of candidates.
- Engage and attract candidates throughout the recruitment process to help them perform once they're in the role. This means removing barriers to work when possible by adopting inclusive recruitment and selection practices, such as flexibility, removing unnecessary qualification from job adverts, and providing financial support to those who need it.
- Review not only pay but your overall benefits package, being realistic about what is positioned as a benefit to most effectively attract recruits.

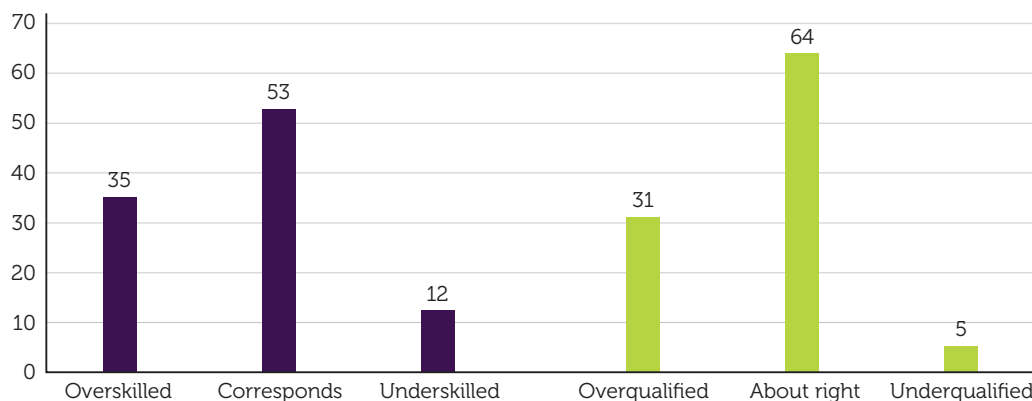
## 10

## Skills and training

There is still a mismatch of skills and qualifications among employees in 2024, with around a third of respondents feeling they have the skills to do more than their job demands, and that their qualifications exceed those required by the job.

While larger numbers of respondents do feel their skills and qualifications are well matched to their job, these numbers have remained stable since 2019, suggesting there is still work to be done to provide employees with enough complexity and challenge at work (see Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Skills and qualifications mismatch (%)**



Base: all (n=5,496).



Perceptions of training and development opportunities are more positive, with over half of respondents feeling they receive the training and information needed to do their job well and have opportunities to develop their skills in their role, while a similar number of managers agree that they have the training and information to manage staff well. However, only around a third of respondents rate the prospects for career advancement as good, with just as many rating them poorly. While there is still room for improvement in these areas, it is positive that all measures have improved since 2019 (see Figure 13).

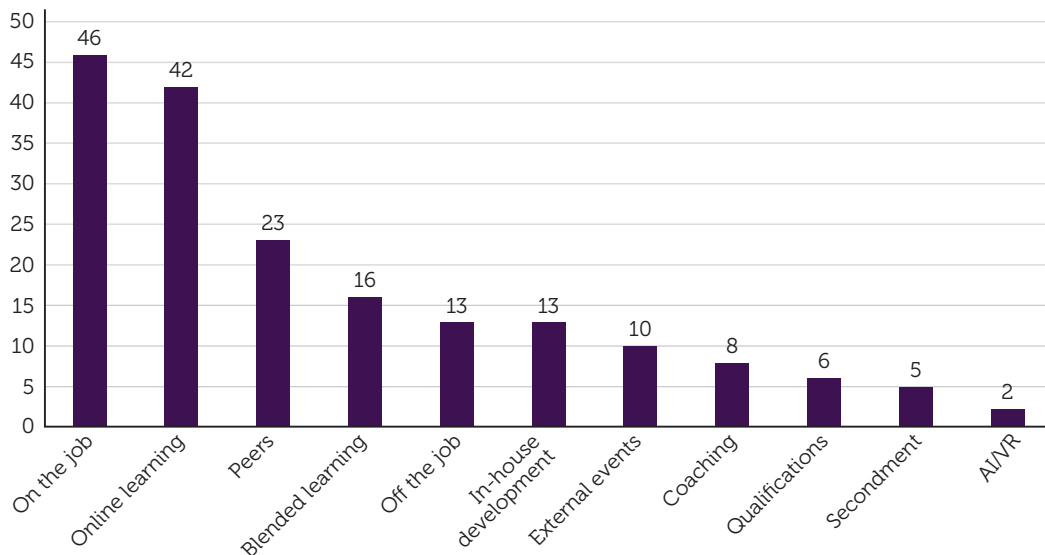
**Figure 13: Skills, training and careers 2019–24 (% agreeing)**



Base: 2019 (n=5,136); 2024 (n=5,496).

This year, most employees (74%) have received some form of training in the last 12 months. The most commonly undertaken forms are on the job, informal learning, online training, or learning from peers (see Figure 14). The vast majority of respondents (typically over 90%) perceive any form of training they have received as useful.

**Figure 14: Forms of training and learning (all that apply) (%)**



Base: all (n=5,496).

**Recommendations for practice**

Our report, *Devolution and evolution in UK skills policy*, examines trends in skills investment and skills use across the four UK nations. It indicates skills gaps, mismatches and underutilisation as key issues that point to inefficiencies between the labour market and the skills development system. Our report, *Over-skilled and underused: Investigating the untapped potential of UK skills*, outlines the consequences of mismatched skills, notably psychological distress, lower job satisfaction and greater desire to quit their role. On the other hand, when people are able to use their skills fully, they're more engaged, have better relationships with managers and are more likely to want to stay put.

There are several steps employers and managers can take to reduce skills mismatches and improve development opportunities in the workplace:

- Conduct a skills audit: knowing and understanding the skills of the workforce is key to making better use of those skills, particularly in high-demand areas.
- Rethink recruitment practices: if certain qualifications are irrelevant for the role in question, remove them from the job criteria.
- Review how jobs are designed and look at team structures to identify areas where the use of skills can be optimised.

## 11

## Conclusion

The *Good Work Index 2024* shows that most employees in the UK continue to be generally satisfied with their jobs, with little change occurring. However, such a broad view of job quality could undermine some nuances that are key to understanding and improving good work.

Notably, we find that conflict in the workplace negatively impacts almost every aspect of work measured in the *UK Working Lives* survey. Twenty-five per cent of our survey – or 8 million people at work in the UK – are affected by some form of interpersonal conflict at work. To improve work quality, we must tackle conflict, particularly for those with protected characteristics, who are more severely affected by conflict and have seen little improvement over the last five years.

The role of line managers and the people function is key, as it is at the workplace level that most conflicts arise, where the impacts are felt, and where resolution takes place. Thankfully, few incidents of conflict escalate to formal grievances or industrial tribunals.

Nevertheless, there is a clear feeling that conflict is often let go because employees feel their voice is not encouraged, it will have little impact or they

will not be listened to by leaders. There is a clear need for an organisational shift, whereby an environment in which openness is encouraged and role-modelled by senior leaders is developed. This also requires investment in line management training to better understand conflict and feel empowered to deal with it more effectively.

There is a great deal of positive practice to build on in 2024 – many employees feel engaged in their jobs and enjoy the benefits of flexible working and work autonomy. And, while skills mismatches are still present, people continue to feel more positive about their opportunities to develop and progress at work.

However, we still see that there has been limited progress on raising job quality since the UK Government's Good Work Plan was established in 2018, with large minorities of people continuing to experience negative effects of work. Continuing to measure and analyse job quality is vital, not only to benefit the lives of employees, but to support efforts to boost labour participation and help address skill and labour shortages, making good work more accessible to everyone.



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