



The Better Work Report 2023:

**Making flexible, fair, fulfilling
work *possible***

The world can work *better*.

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Introduction

The past few years have been a tumultuous time for employers and employees, and the way we work is barely recognisable from before the pandemic.

Lockdowns gave way to pent up hiring sprees, worker shortages sprung up or widened and the cost of living shone a spotlight on worker pay and conditions.

Caught in the middle of these historic and unpredictable times were people for whom Covid-19 and its aftermath triggered a deep realisation: work might not be working for them.

Even in today's cooling labour market where the level of vacancies has dipped below 1 million for the first time in two years, opportunities exist for jobseekers to connect to better work. Jobs that provide more than just a paycheck and ultimately lead to better lives. After all, 76% of workers believe that having better work results in having a better life, according to our own research.

So what type of work do people seek? And what should employers expect jobseekers to demand in today's jobs market?

These are the questions we sought to address in a survey of 5,000 workers from across the country, from sole traders and start-up employees to senior managers at enterprise-scale businesses.

Their insights reveal a clear picture of what better work means to UK workers with two key features standing out: flexibility and fair pay.

As we shall see, while private sector salaries are now increasing above the rate of inflation according to the ONS, wages are far from the only motivating factor. People are chasing better work, on their own terms. Jobseeker interest in flexible shift work has increased, suggesting that workers are looking to set their own hours, even as budgets are squeezed and some businesses try to mandate a return to the office.

The results also underline that jobseekers still face barriers getting the type of work that will lead to a better life and for employers accessing the right person remains complicated and slow.

It doesn't have to be this way. Offering better work is a win-win for everyone: it secures better talent for employers and provides a better balance for workers, who will be more likely to stay and thrive.

Ultimately, understanding what a better job looks like now and in the future helps design better work today that helps connect with tomorrow's talent as well.

Key Findings

69%

69% say looking for a job is a full time career.

More than a quarter say they lack the confidence to apply for a new job, but over two thirds (69%) say that looking for a job is a job in itself.

+6%

Women and parents still want more flexibility in their jobs.

63% of women are looking for more flexible work opportunities in their next role, compared to 57% of men, a swing of +6%.

Defining features of a “good” job

- 1 I am paid fairly
- 2 Flexible hours
- 3 Job security
- 4 I feel comfortable being my authentic self
- 5 It is a well respected profession

Being paid fairly for flexible work defines a good job

When asked what makes their job good, 39% cited fair pay while 36% pointed to flexible hours. It is these two themes that define better work today.

Fair pay for all (37%), flexible hours being the default (33%) and four day work week being the norm (30%) are key elements of the *future of better work*.

Fully remote work is not a sign of better work.

Remote workers are the least satisfied with almost one in five (17%) saying they don’t have a good job, compared to 8%/12% for hybrid and office workers respectively.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				X

38% want a four day week.

Almost two fifths say they are interested in working a reduced week, while nearly a third (29%) say a four day week is the future of better work.

11% do not have a good job.



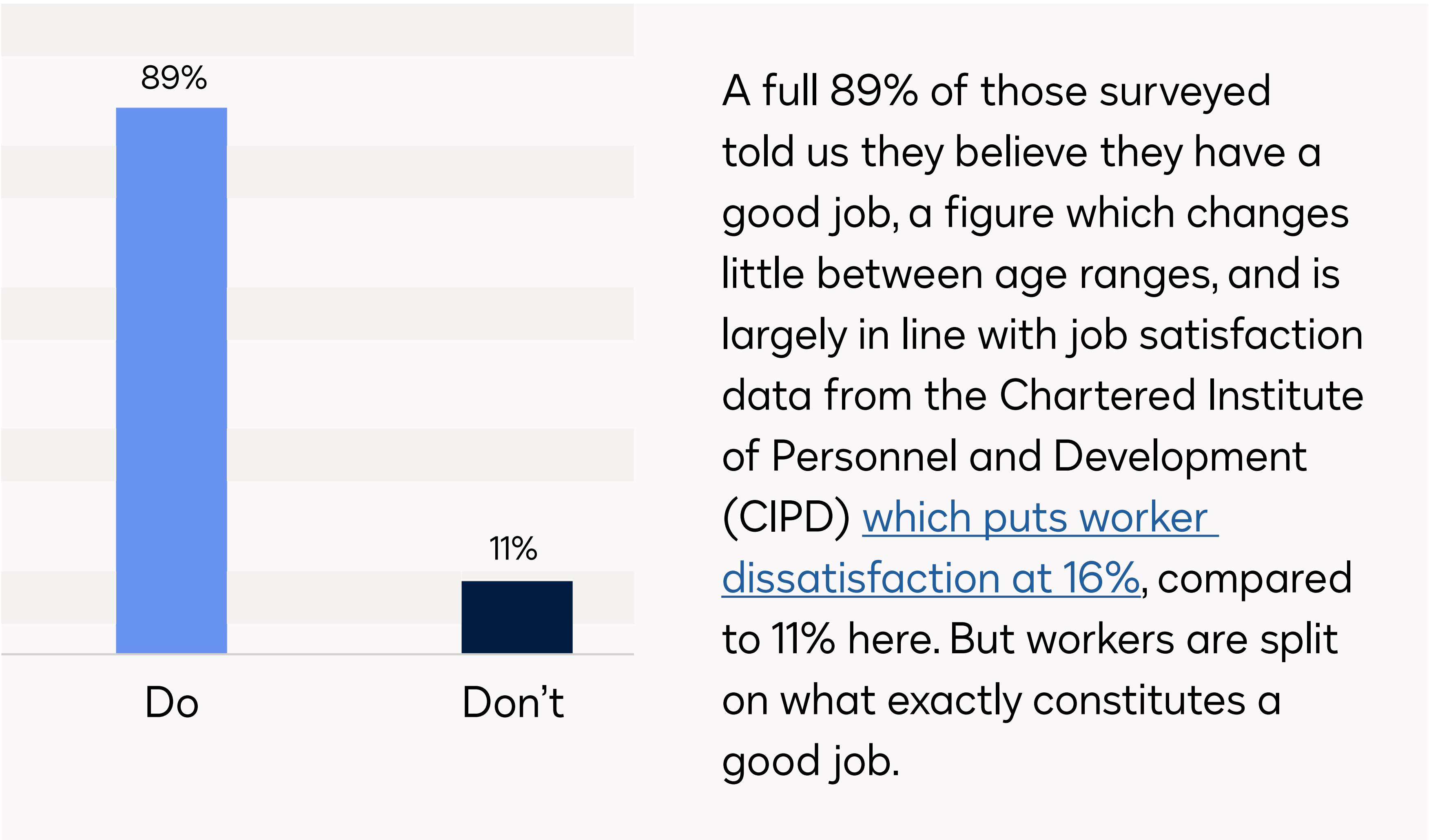
Over one in ten British workers (almost 3.3 million people, [based on 2023 labour market data](#)) believe that they don’t have a good job.

Part One

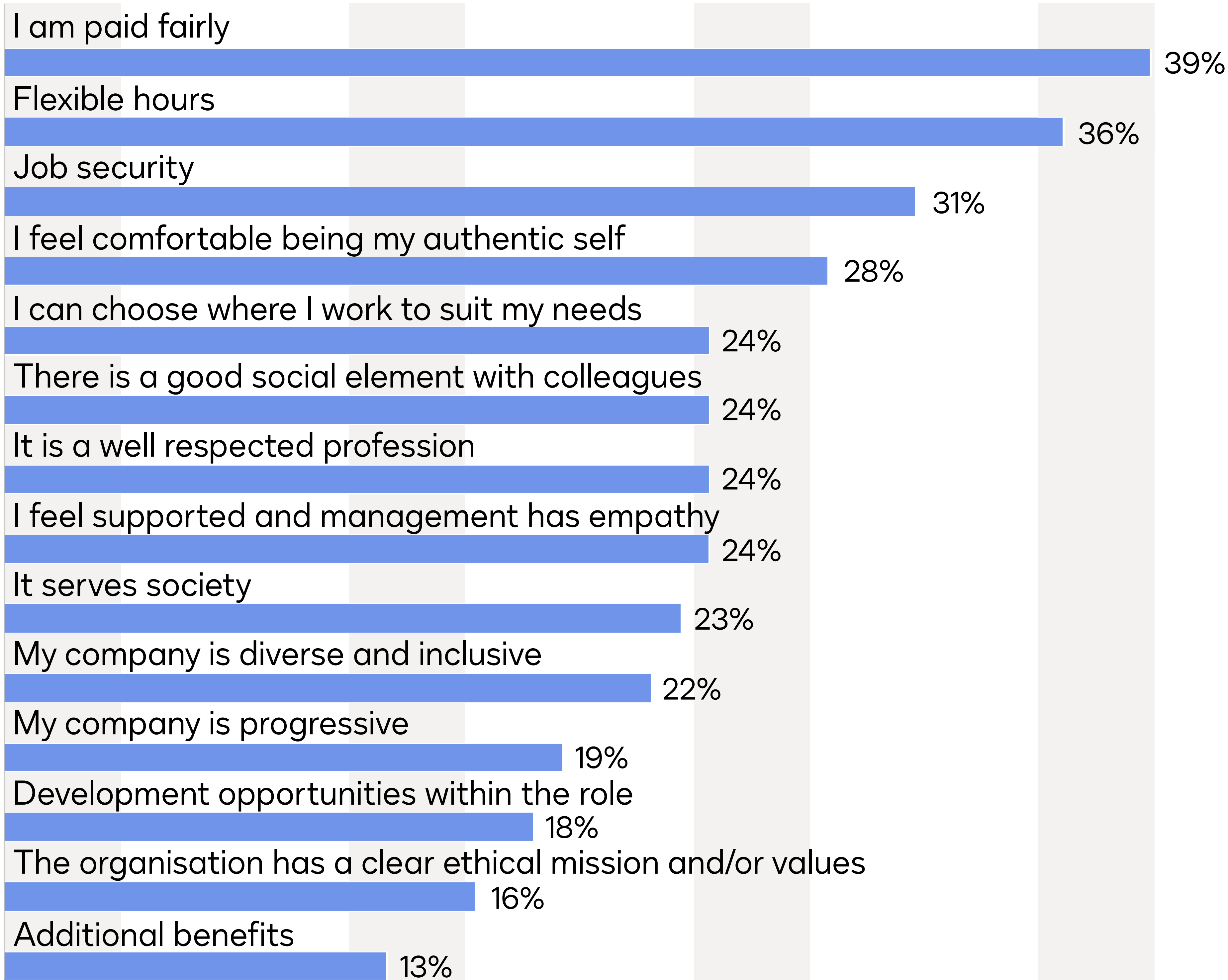
What makes good work today?

A tapestry of factors - none crucial, but together critical

Do you think your current job is good?



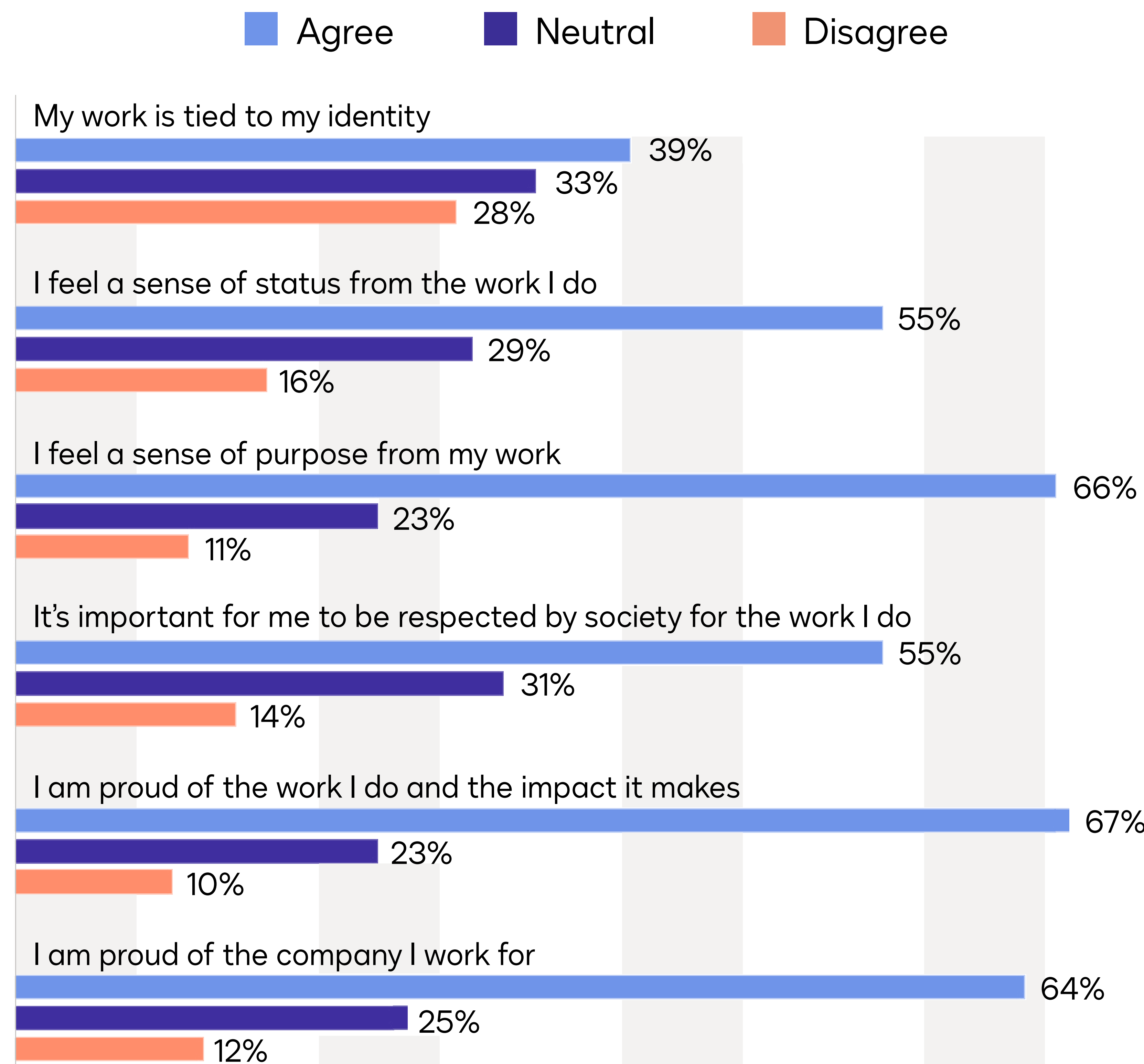
Defining features of a “good” job



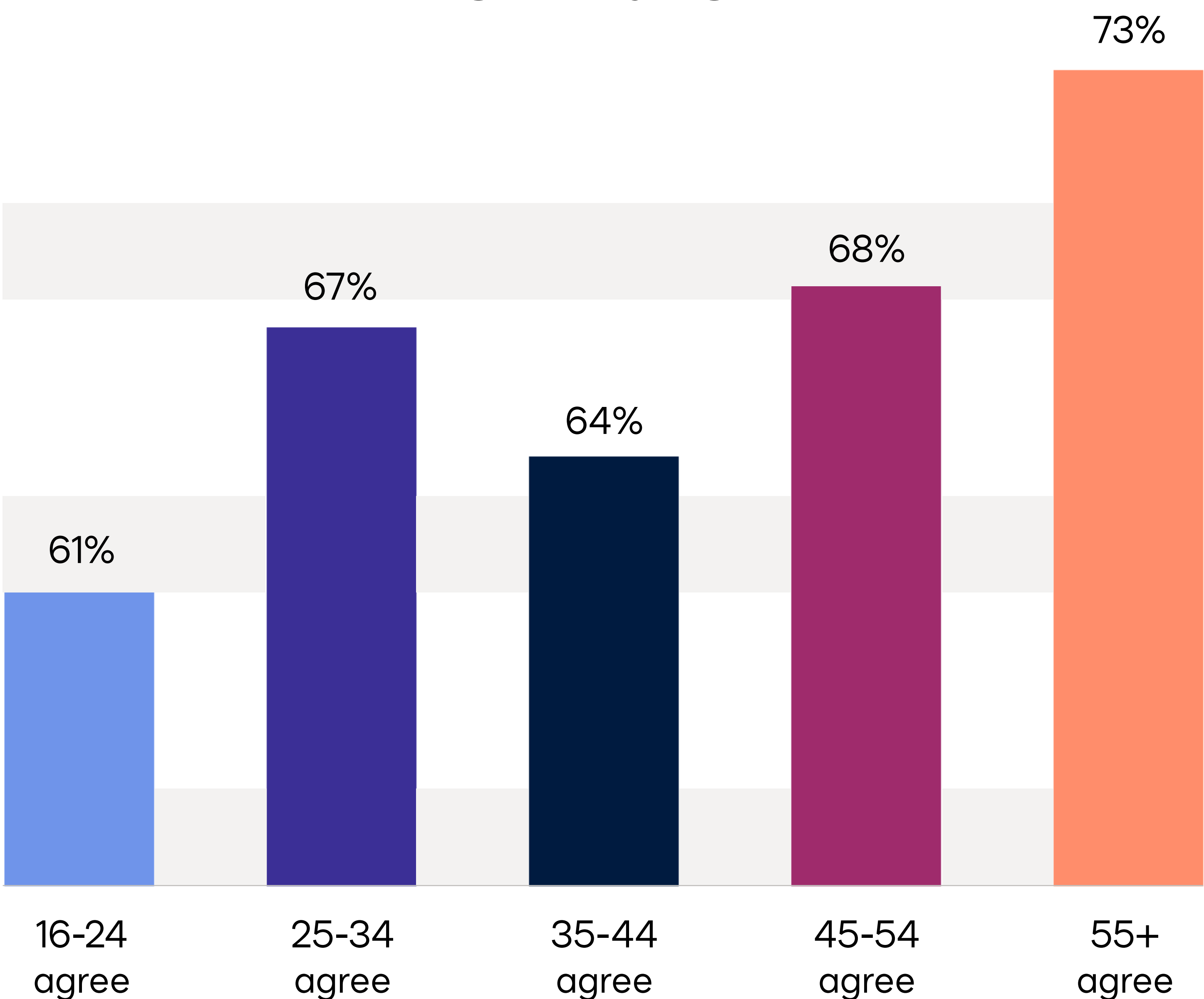
The average worker believes *fair pay, flexible working hours and job security* are the three most important factors that determine a good job. These are followed by feeling comfortable being their authentic self and working in a respected profession. Despite the cost of living, difficult economic headwinds, rising redundancies and fewer vacancies, the desire to work for employers making an impact remains strong.

We also find that 39% think work is tied to their identity and thus a huge part of what defines them. Over half (55%) say it's important for them to be respected by society for the work they do, while two thirds (66%) say they feel a sense of purpose from the work they do.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to identity?



I feel a sense of purpose from my work
Agree by age:



This sense of purpose varies by industry, however; those in education and healthcare are most likely to admit to this at 76% and 74% respectively, 10% above average. However, it also rises significantly for older workers; nearly three quarters (73%) of those 55 or older agreed with this statement.

I feel a sense of purpose from my work (Industry)

Industry	Agree
Education	76%
Healthcare	74%
Travel & Transport	71%
Arts & Culture	67%
Finance & insurance	66%
Construction	64%
HR	64%
Legal	64%
Other	64%
Architecture, Engineering	63%
Manufacturing & Utilities	63%
IT, Telecoms and Technology	63%
Hospitality & Leisure	62%
Retail	61%
Sales, Media & Marketing	60%



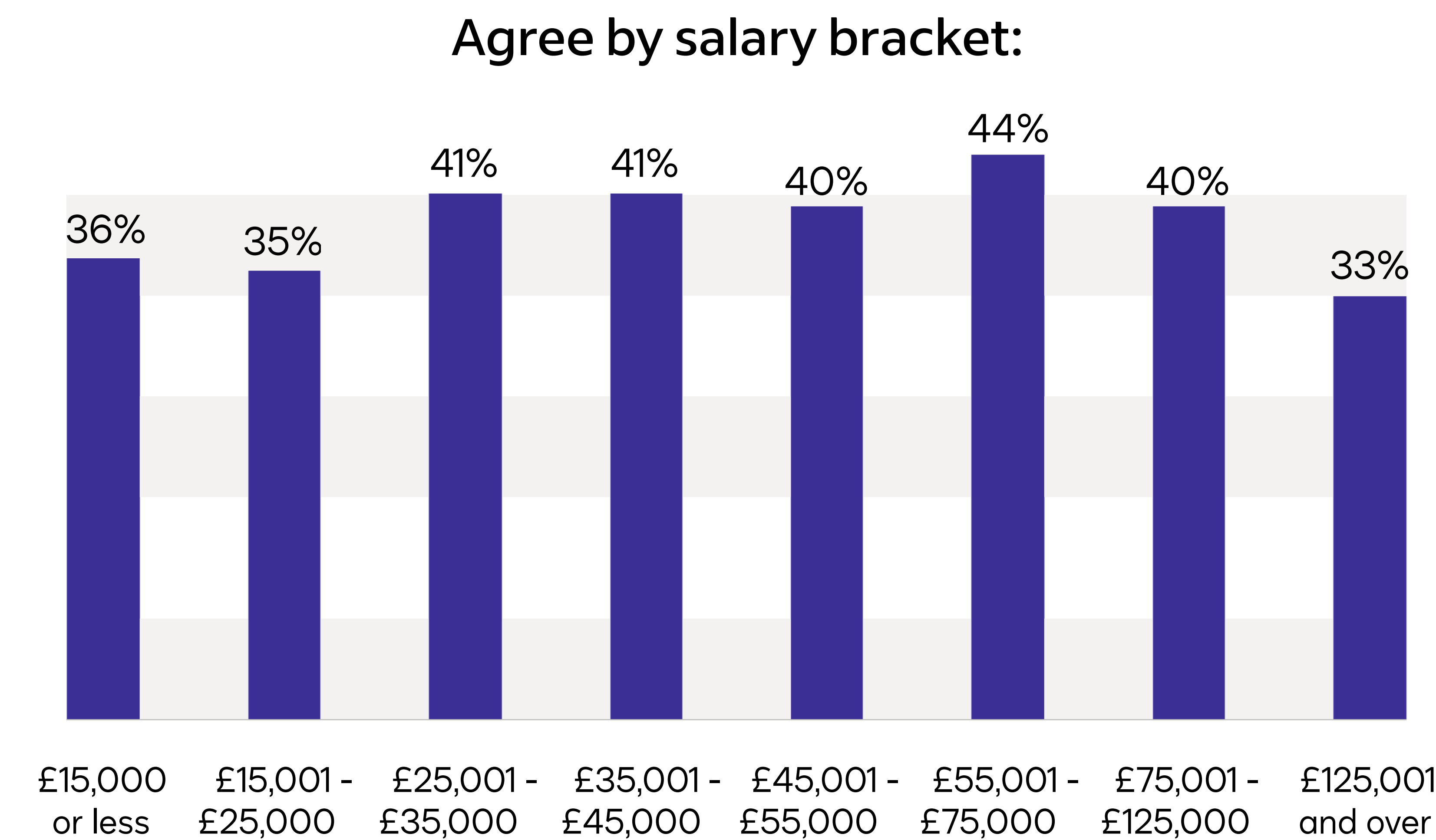
Flexibility and Fair Pay transcend wage brackets and industries

When asked what makes their current job “good”, two themes emerge: fair pay, and flexible hours, selected by far more respondents (39% and 36% respectively) than any other option. Answers including “the organisation has a clear ethical mission” (just 16%) meanwhile ranked near bottom.

It is perhaps not surprising that pay is front of mind for workers right now.

But fair pay is not quite the same as better pay. And interestingly, it is a concept whose importance bridges demographics surveyed. It was top for both men and women (41%/37%), and does not correlate particularly to pay brackets at all:

I am paid fairly



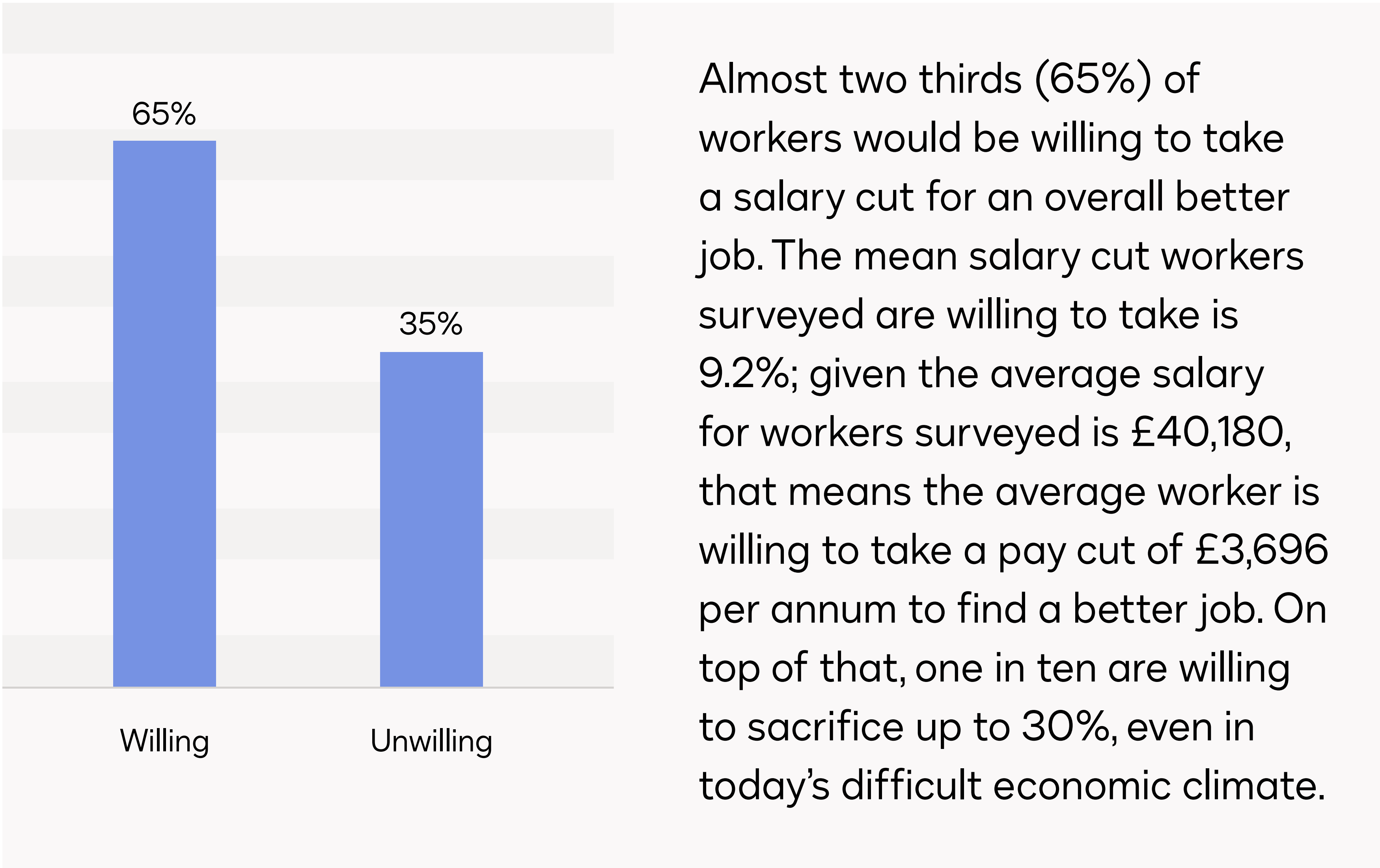
There are more noticeable variations by industry however: fair pay was not the top response for those in arts and culture, healthcare, IT, retail or hospitality, which suggest both a sense of purpose, or a desire for less rigid ways of working, matter in these industries.

- Transgender and non-binary people say being able to be their authentic self is the top reason for thinking their job is good (31%/ 26%) over pay (15%/16%).
- Ethnic minority workers value their company being diverse and inclusive (30%) over their own job security (24%), whereas for white respondents, only one in five (20%) say diverse and inclusive company is a top reason for thinking their job is good, while 32% value job security and even the social element to their job more (24%).
- Gay and lesbian workers also value a diverse and inclusive company (32%) over their own job security (24%).

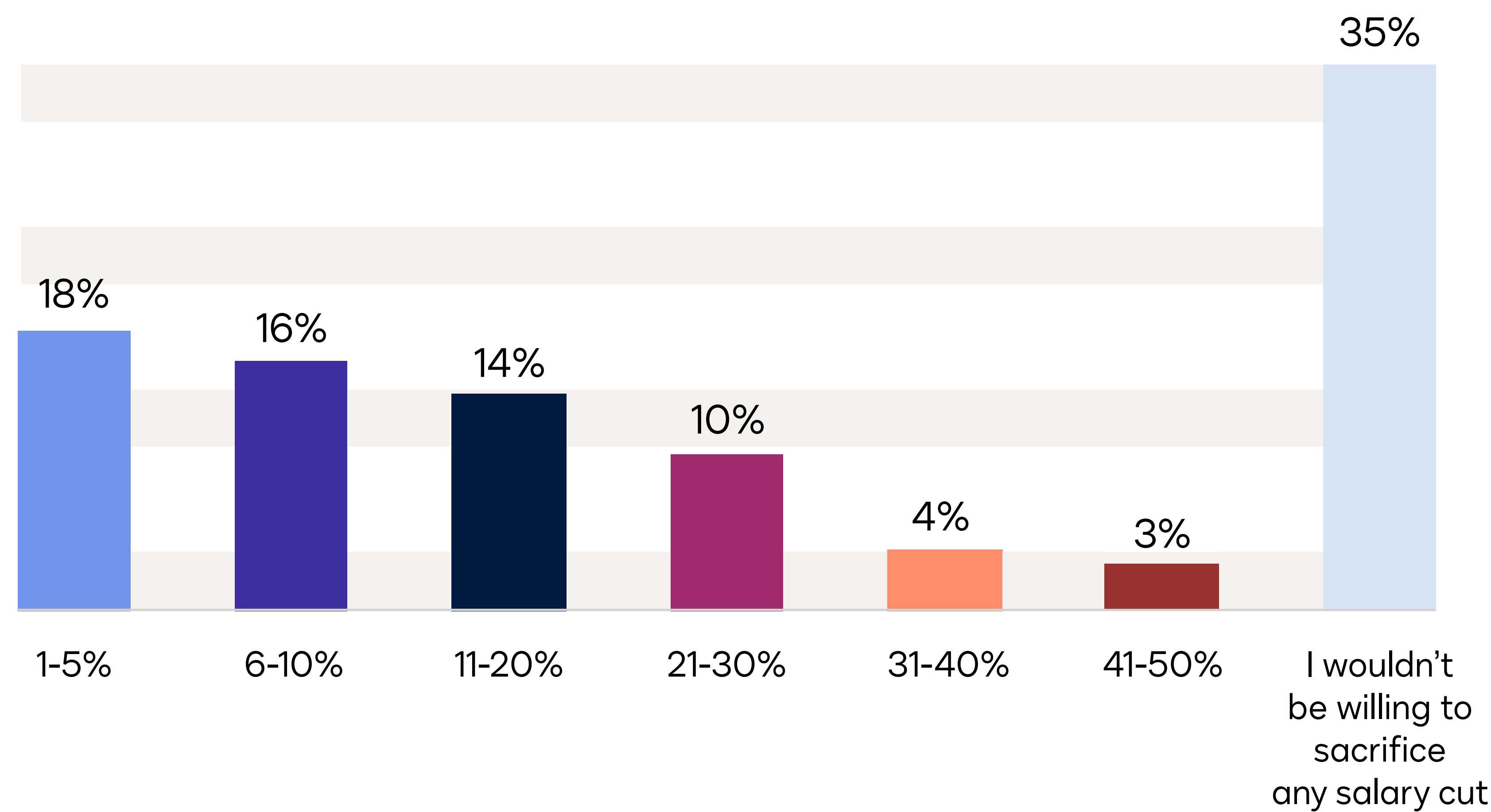
Today’s economic climate is tough, and there is a clear desire for financial security among respondents. But things are changing, slowly; there are signs the cost of living could finally start to ease after record annual pay growth drove pay above inflation for the first time in over one-and-a-half years in [August 2023’s ONS figures](#).

At the same time, the balance of power is tipping towards employers, with fewer vacancies and fewer hybrid opportunities than a year ago [according to Indeed’s own real time job posting data](#). It is perhaps this context that explains that the willingness of workers to take a pay cut for a better job is also high:

Willingness to take any salary cut to secure a better job



% pay cut to secure a better job



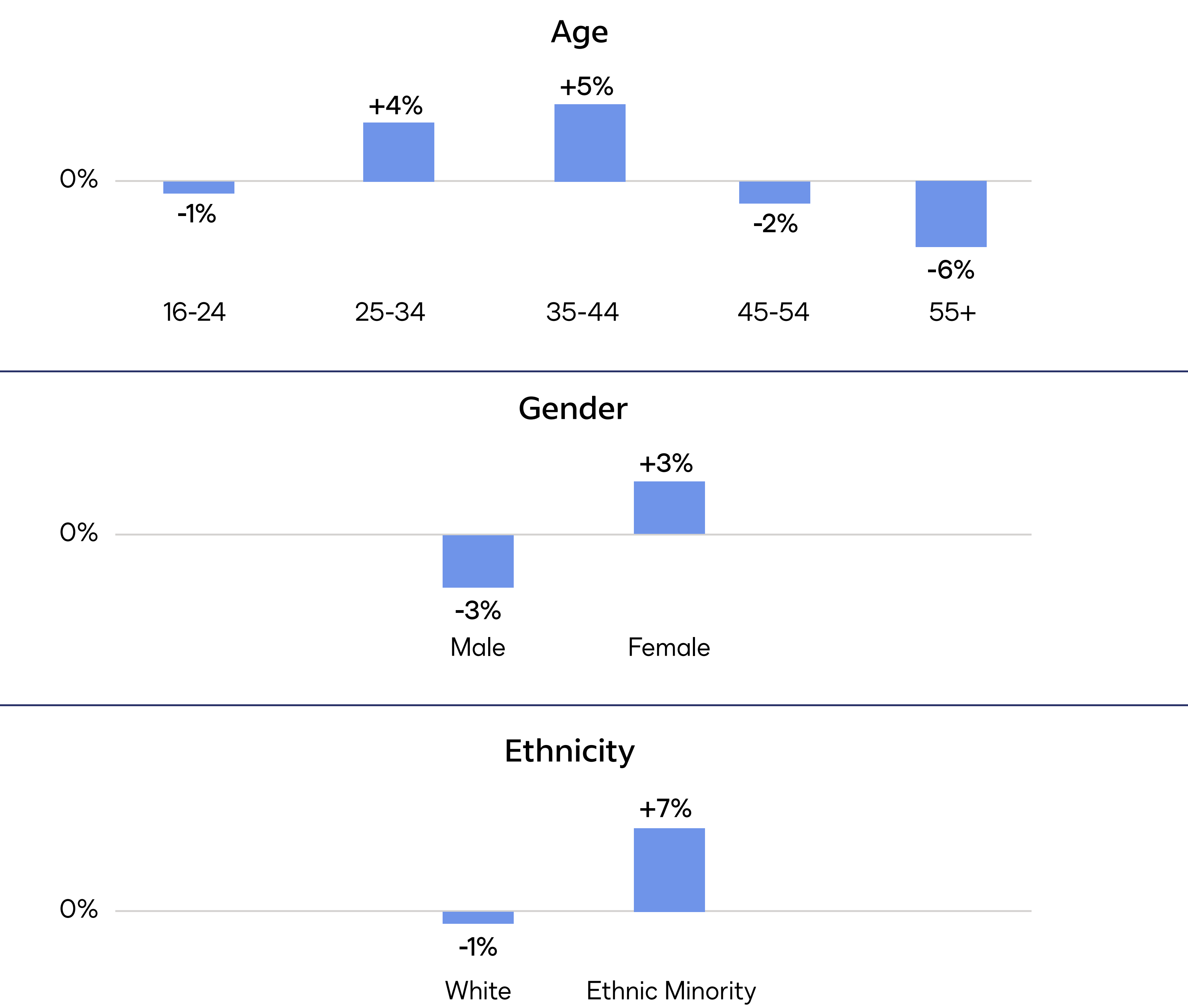
What this means for employers: Workers are looking for the promise of job satisfaction in their next moves, but also a sense of equity in pay. They want to know their compensation is fair, be that through clear communication of roles and expectations, or explanation of the impact of any other perks your business offers.

The downturn has made workers closely evaluate salary and their value, but not necessarily made a pay increase urgent. Certainly, it is clearly not the only factor to a good job anymore. Flexible working hours are also crucial.

The clear demand for flexibility is being driven by several demographics: women are more likely to say it is now more important than men (63% to 57%), as are those with children under 18 (63%) compared to those with grown or no children (55%/59%), and millennials aged 25-34 and 35-44 (64%/65%).



Flexible working opportunities are more important, variance from average by:



Perhaps most strikingly, workers of an ethnic minority are more likely to feel the need for flexible working options than white respondents (+8%).

This may reflect demographics working in industries that traditionally have not offered flexible working, or different expectations around caring for other generations within the home, but at the very least also highlights how businesses can hope to reach a more diverse talent pool.

However, our survey data makes clear that flexible working options and remote working options are no longer the same thing.



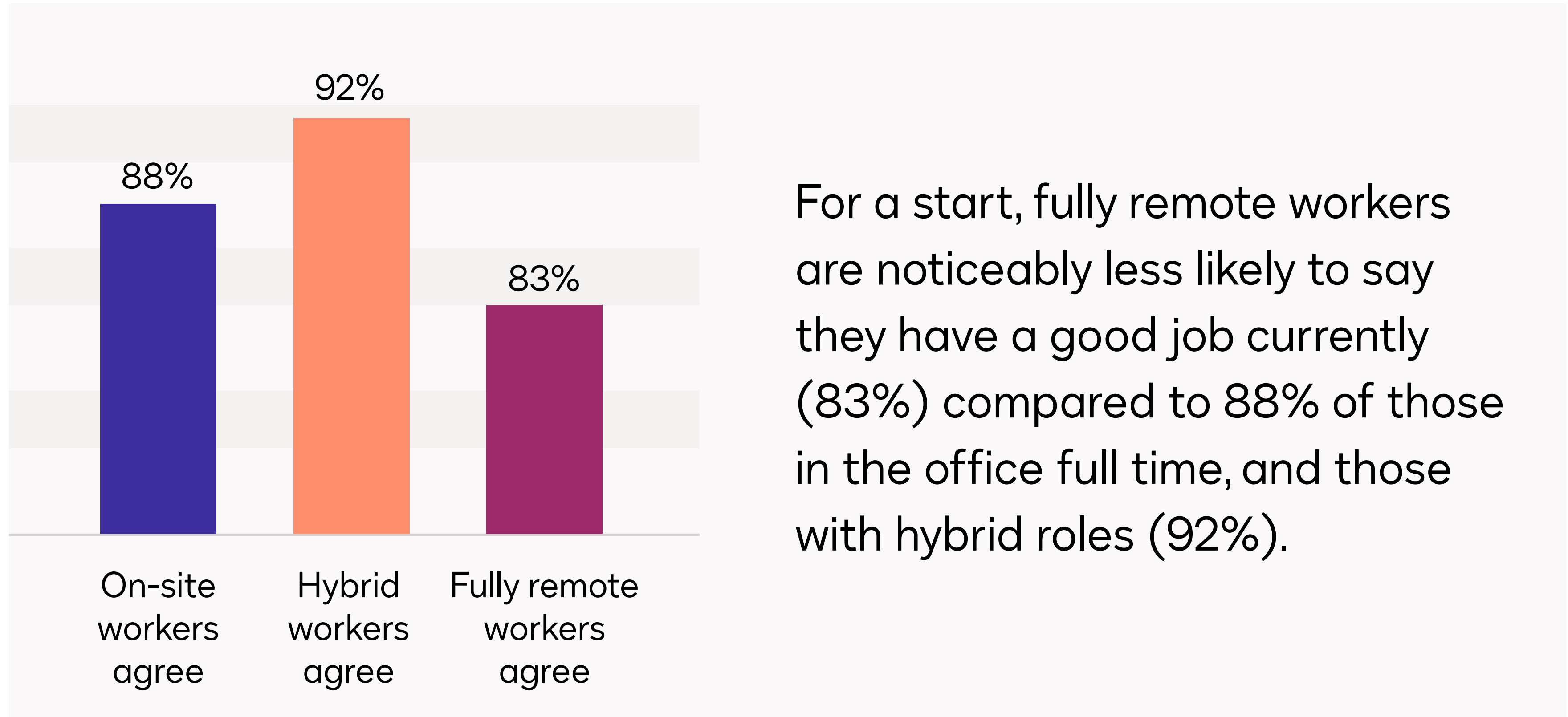
In-office vs remote working: The reality in 2023

There has been a clear shift to new modes of working wrought by the pandemic. But while we have seen some employers attempt to course-correct by mandating a partial or full return to the office, workers are still interested in remote or hybrid roles.

Searches on Indeed for remote and hybrid work have increased by 900% since the pandemic, but only 14.6% of jobs in the UK offer hybrid options (as of April to June 2023), a figure that has fallen from 16.0% from the previous quarter.

Whether workers deem these to be better jobs, nor whether those in them already consider them good, however, is not quite so clear. Deep dive into the split between fully remote and in-office workers, and some trends emerge in our data:

Do you think your job is good?



More remote working opportunities are not a priority for those surveyed either; in fact, they only ranked tenth of all factors as to what would make someone’s next job better than their current one, and are cited by only 14% of respondents. As you can see, there is little variation by age or sex, and nor do those working in the office full time state it as a factor above the overall average.

What would make your next job better than your current one (more remote work opportunities)

Average: 14%	
Age	Agree
16-24	15%
25-34	18%
35-44	16%
45-54	12%
55+	9%

Gender	Agree
Male	13%
Female	15%

Ethnicity	Agree
White	13%
Ethnic Minority	18%

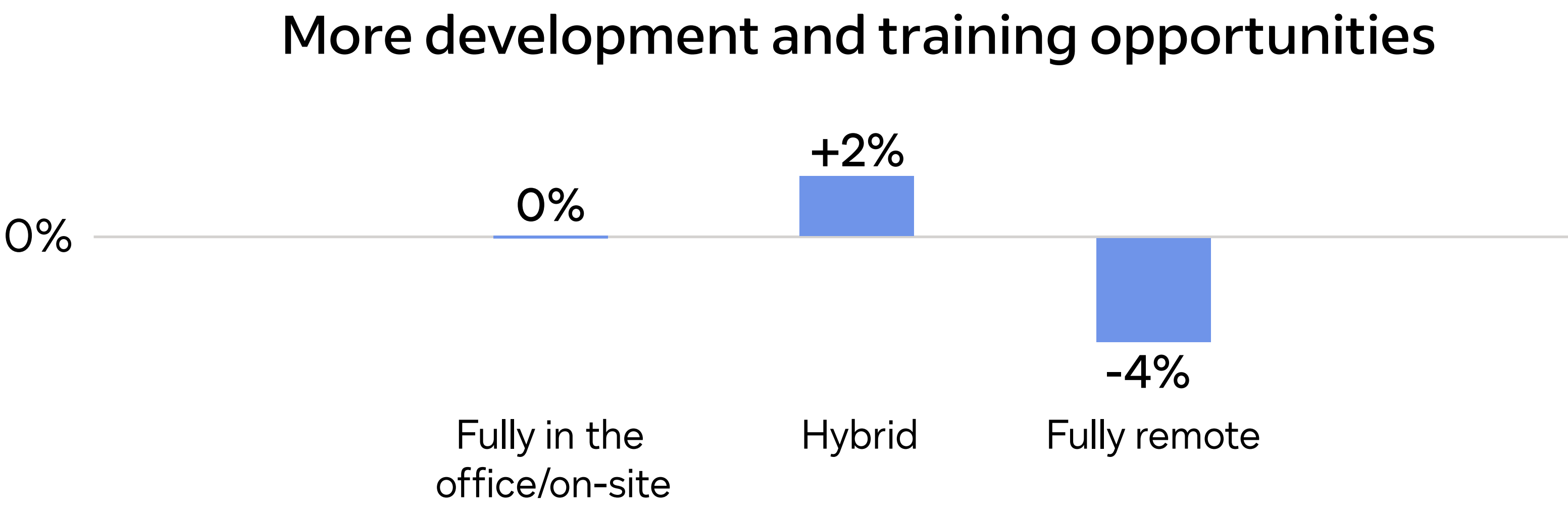
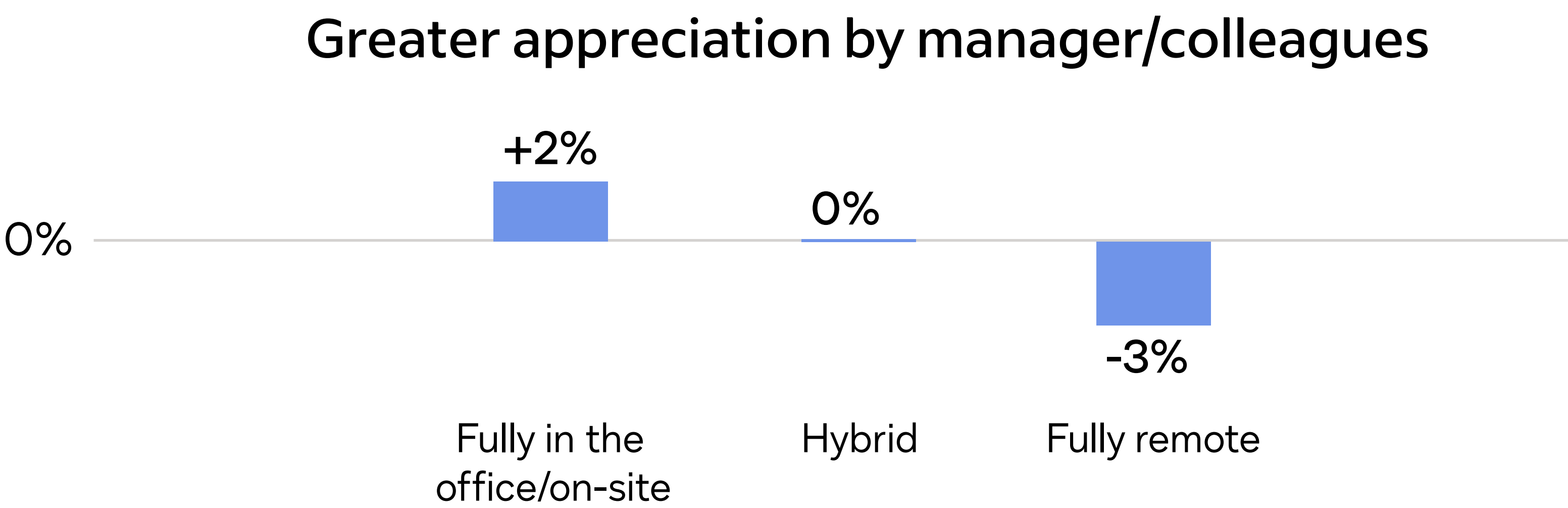
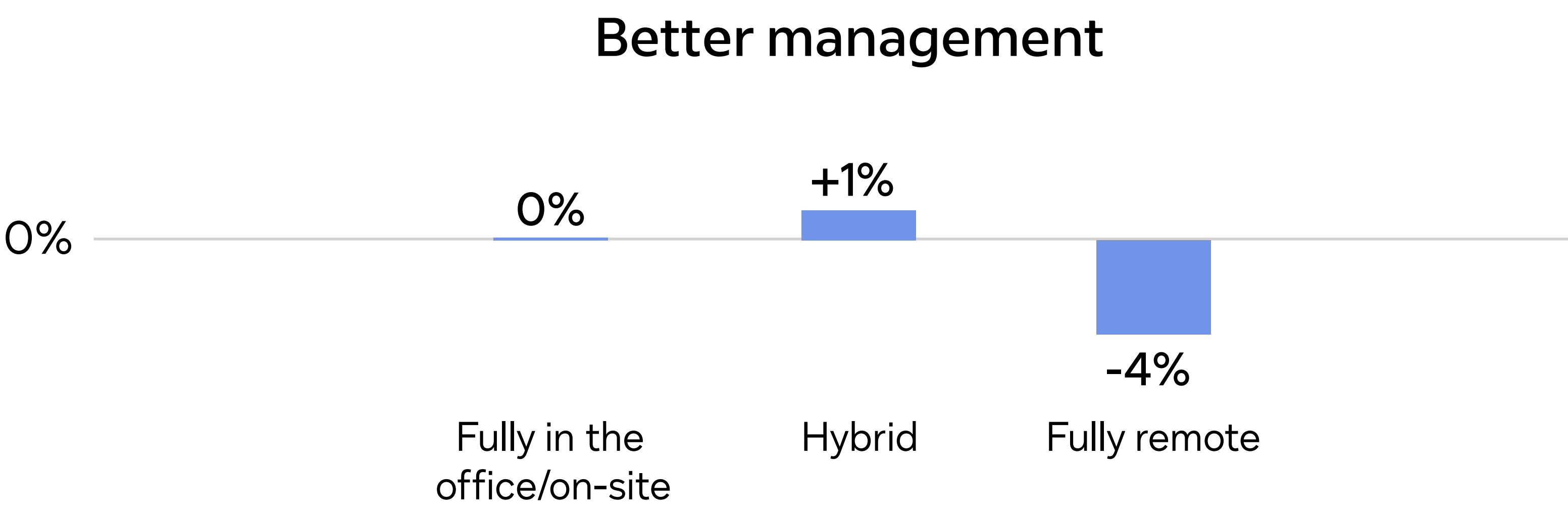
Working arrangements	Agree
Fully in the office/on-site	14%
Hybrid	16%
Fully remote	9%

Salary	Agree
£15,000 or less	12%
£15,001 - £25,000	15%
£25,001 - £35,000	14%
£35,001 - £45,000	15%
£45,001 - £55,000	14%
£55,001 - £75,000	14%
£75,001 - £125,000	16%
£125,001 and over	24%

Nonetheless, there are clearly some workers to whom a better job is a remote one; remote work affords greater flexibility, and for many, flexibility will mean being permitted to sometimes work remotely. Remote workers are noticeably less likely to say that greater appreciation by manager/colleagues and better management, along with opportunities to develop their career, would make their next job better.

What would make your next job better than your current one

Agree, variance from average



Remote workers are also substantially less likely to say that having more autonomy has become more important to them when seeking a better job at just 32% compared to 42% overall.

It appears that British workers who would appreciate a fully remote job may already have one; furthermore this more autonomous style is in the end not always a priority for them.

Those in hybrid roles are happier overall, but as we shall see in the next section, what tomorrow's better work looks like involves a broader definition of flexibility than simply where a worker logs on.

What this means for employers: Even as hybrid roles become less common, to attract the best talent, it is vital to advertise flexible work options that are not connected to location, whether that is movable hours, extra leave or opportunities to work from other offices.



Part Two

What makes for *better* work tomorrow?

The future is flexible

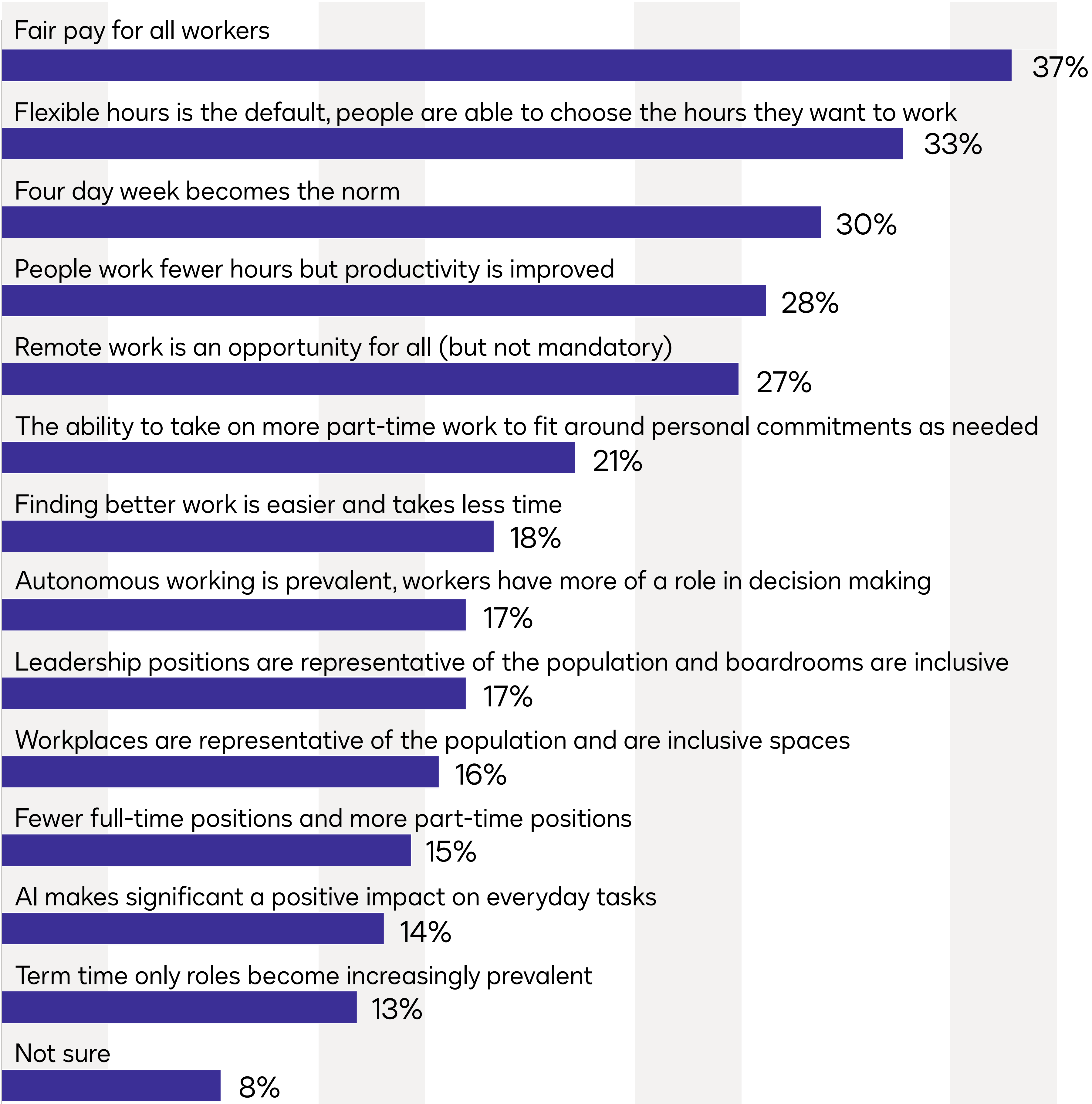
Salary and flexibility are clearly front of mind in what makes a “good” job now, and these features look set to continue to define the future of better work.

While a better work-life balance is something that connects employees across demographics, our survey also reveals what form that might take.

A third (33%) think flexible hours will become the default meaning people are able to even better fit their work around their personal lives.



What do you think the future of Better Work looks like?

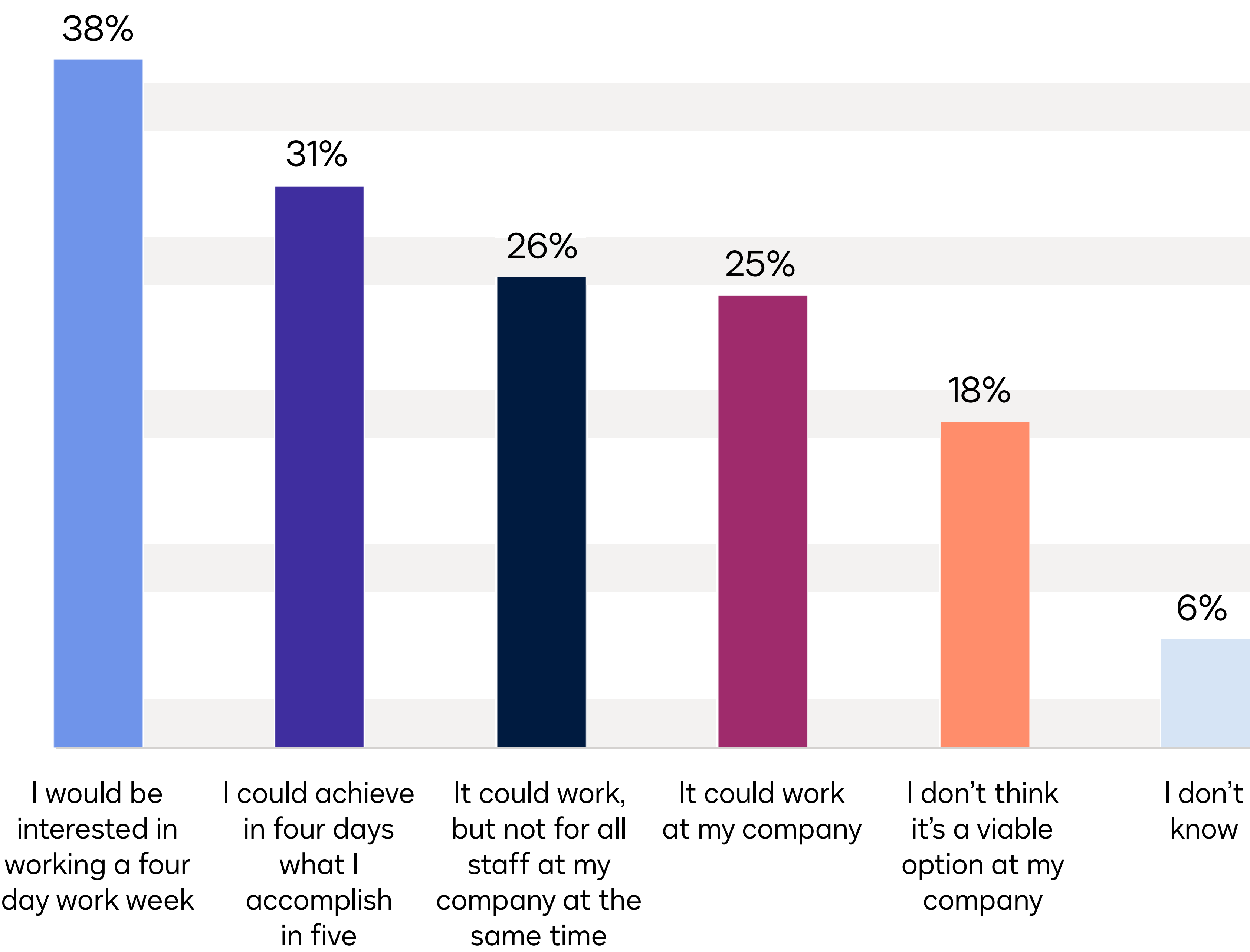


The four day week:
More value, less time worked

While flexible hours are a key theme for the future of better work, so too for many are condensed hours. 28% believe that fewer hours will be worked as productivity is improved, with 30% thinking that the four-day week will become the norm.

Right now almost two-fifths (38%) say they are interested in working a four day week. Almost a third (31%) believe they could achieve in four days what they accomplish in five.

What do you think about the four-day work week?



Specific industries are split on the topic, though, with 43% of those in technology, telecoms and tech, and almost half (48%) of all those in sales and marketing saying they would be interested in working a four-day week, compared to only 34% of those in retail, hospitality and architecture.

Interested in a four-day work week by industry

Industry	Interested
Sales, Media & Marketing	48%
Finance & insurance	43%
IT, Telecoms and Technology	43%
HR	43%
Construction	40%
Manufacturing & Utilities	40%
Arts & Culture	37%
Legal	37%
Education	37%
Healthcare	37%
Other	36%
Travel & Transport	35%
Hospitality & Leisure	34%
Retail	34%
Architecture, Engineering	34%

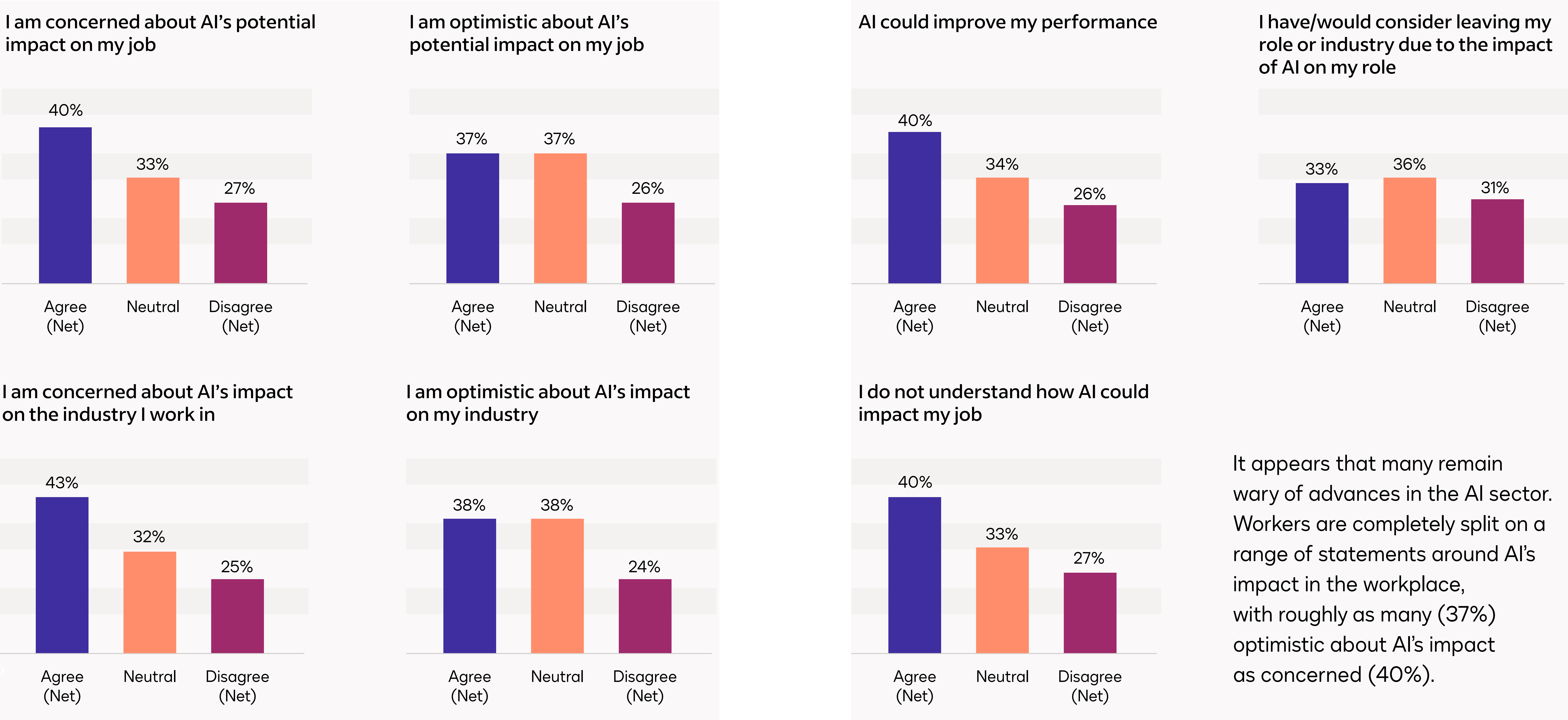
We see this preference for a new working week across almost all demographics. Men and women are equally likely to say they are interested in working a four day week (38%) and there is little variation between age groups.

What this means for employers The four day week is a trend to watch. Indeed data shows that an increasing number of employers are offering a four day week. While still only less than 1% (0.8%) of job postings on Indeed mention a four day week, this has risen 166% from just 0.3% in 2018. If competitors shift to offering more workers a four day week, you risk losing access to talent who value this option above other perks or better pay alone.



Workers still wary of AI impact

Perhaps surprisingly, the explosion of AI tools into public discourse in the last year does not play a large part in people’s concerns or considerations. Though it is seen by experts as a potential enabler, it is not ranked as a high concern or means of unlocking that value by most workers polled here. Just 14% think that “AI makes a significant positive impact on everyday tasks” is where the future of better work lies.



The only noticeable trend across demographics uncovered: concern about AI’s impact on someone’s job rises sharply with income, meaning that skilled and high value workers are no less worried about automation than anyone else - more so, in fact.

I am concerned about AI’s potential impact on my job

Salary bracket	Agree	Neither	Disagree
£15,000 or less	34%	34%	32%
£15,001 - £25,000	38%	33%	29%
£25,001 - £35,000	42%	31%	27%
£35,001 - £45,000	42%	32%	27%
£45,001 - £55,000	41%	32%	26%
£55,001 - £75,000	45%	29%	26%
£75,001 - £125,000	47%	34%	19%
£125,001 and over	52%	23%	25%



The challenge: Successful job hunting

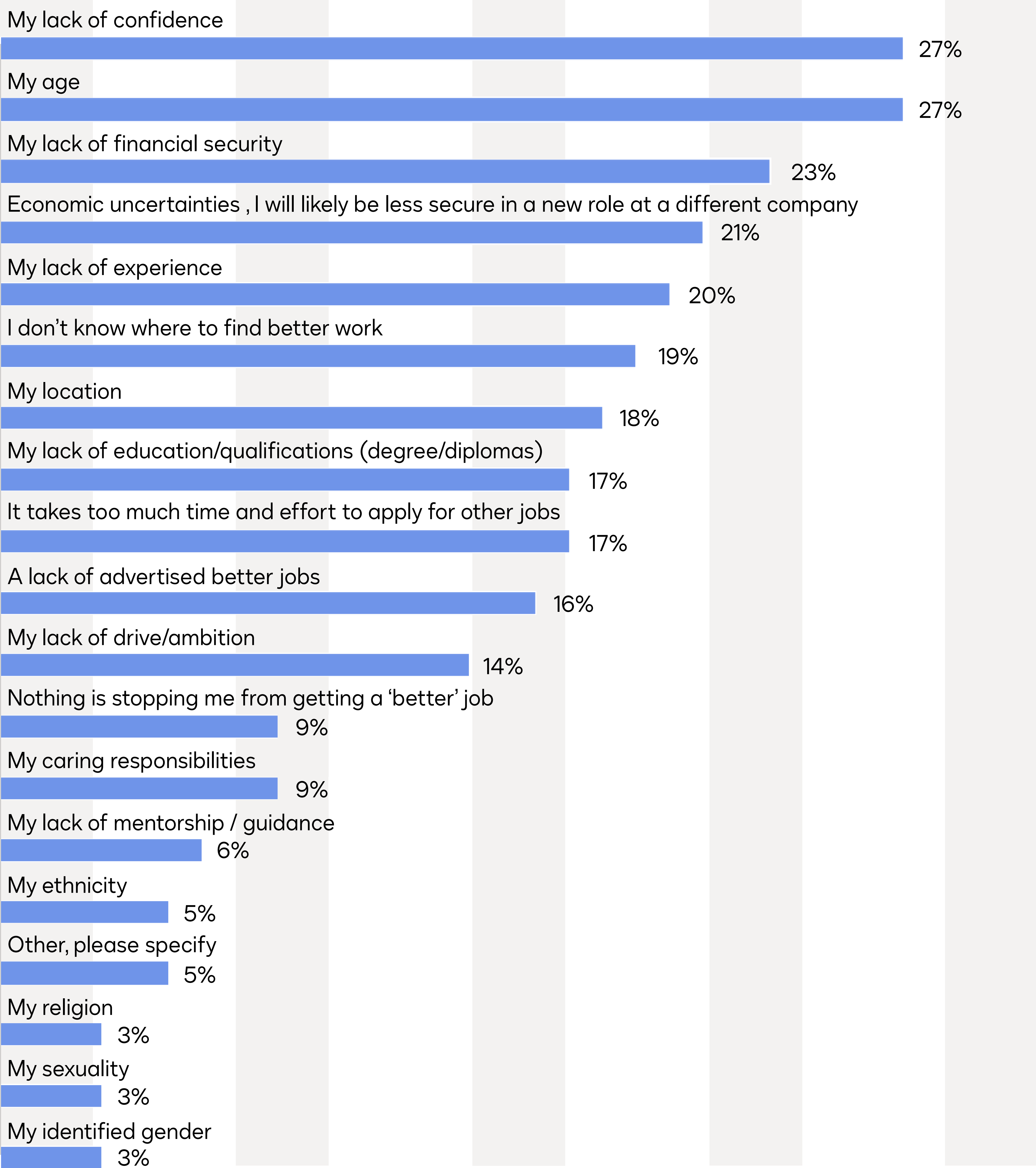
We have a clearer sense of what a better job looks like now, but a challenge remains. While workers see a more flexible way of working underpinned by a four day week as a new gold standard, they are less optimistic about their ability to find that new role role.

When it comes to finding a better job for those who are currently unsatisfied with their own, over a quarter cite a lack of confidence (27%), as many again their age (27%), and personal lack of financial security (23%).

Our findings show confidence as being a key barrier to better work. But with Indeed, it doesn't need to be such a leap of faith. Indeed's tools are there to help jobseekers connect with the work and employer that matters to them. Whether that's by helping them understand average salaries for the role and experience level they're interviewing for with the Salary Tool, or to find out more about the company's culture and whether it could be a good fit through millions of reviews on the Company Page.

Even if workers aren't actively looking for a new role, Indeed is able to notify them if there is one that could be a good fit, so taking the work out of finding work and ultimately helping to build confidence that there are relevant jobs to apply for.

What, if anything, is stopping you from getting a “better” job?



Women in particular are more likely to cite a lack of confidence (30%) compared to men, while 16-24s and those in lower wage brackets also feel this more keenly than average.

Complicating things further for those who already find applying for a better job daunting are common perceptions around how off putting the application process can be.



Lack of confidence is stopping me from getting a “better job”	
Gender	Agree
Male	24%
Female	30%
Age	Agree
16-24	33%
25-34	27%
35-44	28%
45-54	23%
55+	26%
Salary	Agree
£15,000 or less	35%
£15,001 - £25,000	34%
£25,001 - £35,000	33%
£35,001 - £45,000	23%
£45,001 - £55,000	20%
£55,001 - £75,000	17%
£75,001 - £125,000	11%
£125,001 and over	25%

Almost two thirds of all surveyed (62%) believe finding a job is largely down to luck of timings, even more say that looking for a job is a job in itself (66%) while a full 69% say looking for a job is overwhelming and time consuming, with only a few relevant jobs to apply for.

What this means for employers: Consider the process used by hiring platforms, not just their reach. What is the model? Those that offer a targeted or more efficient approach to candidate matching may prove better than those that simply bring in the most applicants.



With Indeed, employers can accelerate time to hire quality candidates through Indeed's matching engine. Every day, on average, Indeed uses more than 140M qualifications and preferences that are voluntarily shared by job seekers and employers, to better connect them to each other. They do this by using their large data sets to learn and experiment, to offer better matches than anyone else in the industry. Making job seeking and finding the right candidate quicker, easier and more accurate.

Not only does the platform have data on what makes a good match, it also has insights into what doesn't. Indeed sees what happens the moment a job seeker applies or an employer posts a job, to the moment a match is made, and can use that to filter out unsuitable roles and unsuitable candidates. This helps employers to skip the busy work and connect directly with candidates within hours instead of days or weeks.

To help employers further cut time consuming tasks and better spend it where it matters - engaging with great candidates - Indeed has combined the benefits of OpenAI's GPT with Indeed's own proprietary AI to help employers quickly create compelling job descriptions, with Indeed's AI Job Description Generator. This tool is just one of more than 100 AI-powered job search and hiring features across Indeed which are improving outcomes for employers and jobseekers.

These latest iterations are making an impact. 23 hires a minute happen on Indeed's matching and hiring platform, more than double the figure three years ago, meaning employers are finding better candidates more often than ever before.

Conclusion

While financial security is a pressing concern in today's economy, Indeed's Better Work Report 2023 makes clear that Brits' sense of what a good job is nuanced, constantly evolving and motivated by fair pay and flexibility.

A better job is one that offers a sense of fulfilment, if not pride, and a chance to progress. It is probably hybrid. It definitely recognises the value of talent, capable of working flexibly, and moving towards the goal of a better work life balance defined by a four day week as the norm.

Right now, a higher salary is top of mind for many, but this demand for a better job will become disconnected from pay alone as we come out of this downturn, and workers consider moves that provide that better balance, even with a pay cut.

For employers to stay agile and attract the best and brightest, they must recognise and adopt these ways of working, and focus on how they are communicated in marketing and job descriptions.

However, businesses will not stand to gain unless they are able to change the hiring system, the role they play in it, and potential employees' perceptions of it.

Workers must be persuaded that finding a new job is not intimidating, nor time consuming. That can only come through a more streamlined application process that is better targeted and focuses on making quality connections between potential employees and employers. Better work starts with better hiring.



Methodology

The research was conducted by independent market research consultancy, Censuswide, with 5,012 workers in the UK between 27.07.23 - 11.08.23. Quotas were applied to achieve robust data across the following demographics: age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status, location, company size, seniority of position at work, remote working status, and industry sector. Censuswide abide by and employ members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles and are members of The British Polling Council.

About Indeed

More people find jobs on Indeed than anywhere else. Indeed is the **#1 job site** in the world (Comscore, Total Visits, June 2023) and allows job seekers to search millions of jobs in more than 60 countries and 28 languages. Over 3 million employers use Indeed to find and hire new employees. More than **330 million unique visitors** use Indeed each month to search for jobs, post resumes, research companies and more.

The world can work *better*.