



MAY 2024

ENGAGE
FOR
SUCCESS



UK EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY 2023

EXPLORING THE CURRENT
STATE OF EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT IN THE UK

Prepared in collaboration with:



FOREWORD

As we present the findings from the second annual Engage for Success (EFS) engagement survey, we find ourselves at a critical juncture. Our inaugural report in 2022 revealed significant drops in employee engagement, with only minimal recovery. Findings from the 2023 survey show a troubling stagnation in engagement levels, mirroring concerning trends seen across reports on productivity, wellbeing, and economic activity. Reports from leading think tanks continue to underscore declining levels of trust and heightened employee unrest, painting a concerning picture for the future.

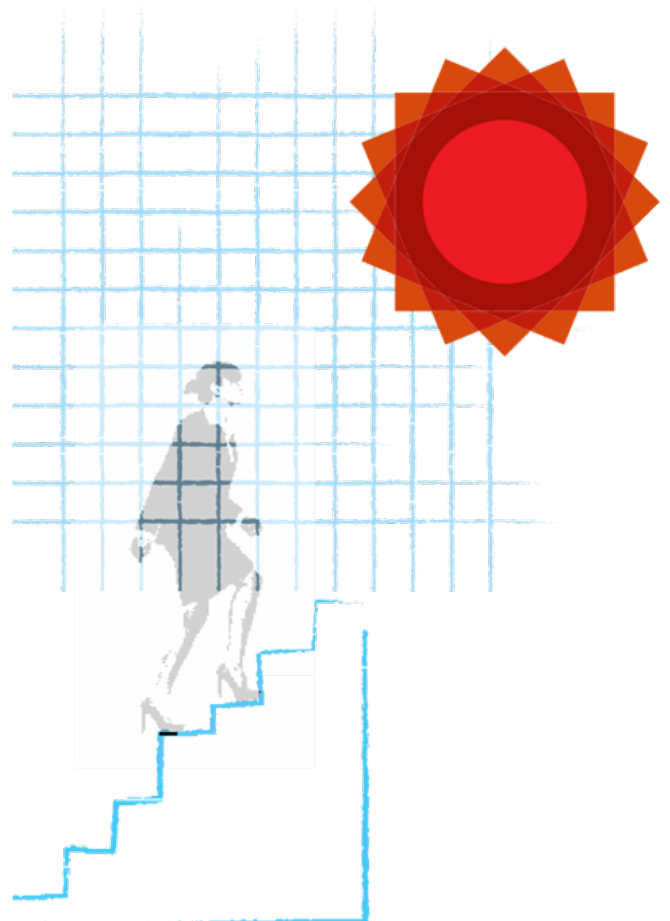
Despite the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, engagement levels have not improved, remaining significantly below pre-pandemic levels. It is clear that the UK workforce is facing persistent challenges and that is impacting organisational performance. This stagnation is alarming as we know that it is engaged employees who are more likely to contribute innovative ideas, collaborate effectively with colleagues, and deliver good work consistently. They are also more resilient in the face of challenges demonstrating greater commitment and adaptability.

These issues are important to understand, especially when set against the backcloth of the challenges the UK economy faces, and this report sheds some light on how we can change this picture. With responses from over 3,000 respondents, the survey provides a unique insight into employee engagement from a representative sample of the UK working population. Data was gathered using an independent online survey platform, providing an unbiased and authentic representation of employee sentiments and experiences.

Our data highlights a critical issue; the importance of senior leaders and managers prioritising the people issues in their decision-making process. Respondents who felt that their leaders and managers adequately prioritised their understanding of the people, their needs and challenges, and the support they need to give their best reported

significantly higher engagement scores. This demonstrates that fostering a culture of care and responsiveness can lead to improved organisational outcomes.

Organisations that prioritise wellbeing and offer positive wellbeing resources and support, foster flexible working environments, and invest in the development of their employees, tend to see higher engagement scores. However, data also reveals troubling disparities across respondents and a clear connection between low engagement scores and higher levels of unmanageable job stress and presenteeism. The cost-of-living crisis further exacerbates these challenges, with over a third of respondents distracted at work due to personal financial concerns. This financial strain contributes to increased job stress and highlights the interconnectedness of economic stability and employee engagement.



For the UK to achieve the growth levels it aspires to, it is critical that we unlock the potential of all our employees, and the research findings indicate what we must do to achieve this. We must ensure our leaders and managers sufficiently prioritise the people issues when making important decisions.

We know from the original Engage for Success report to the government and the subsequent decade's worth of experience, that organisations need to address the four 'enablers' of higher levels of employee engagement - there must be a strategic narrative that employees 'own', line managers need to treat their people as human beings, not human resources, employee voice must be sought and acted on, and finally, there must be a sense of integrity in the workplace where the values on the wall are reflected in the day-to-day behaviours of leaders and employees alike. It is critical in these rapidly changing and uncertain times, that by investing in their workforce, businesses can build resilience and adaptability and promote sustainable growth.

Addressing these challenges does not need to involve significant expenditure for individual organisations or indeed for our country, rather it requires a belief and a commitment. A belief that employees are indeed the most valuable asset and viewing them as solutions to challenges rather than problems to be managed. This commitment involves sufficiently prioritising the people issues when making big decisions.

It is important to address efforts to increase levels of employee engagement through the lens of the four enablers¹. By doing so, we can unlock the full potential of the UK workforce, driving both economic and social progress. However, this responsibility does not rest solely on the shoulders of organisations. Policymakers must also prioritise strategies that foster a culture of engagement and empower employees to thrive.

We encourage you to study this important research and to decide for yourselves how it might apply to your organisation and more importantly what it might encourage you to do.



David MacLeod OBE
Co-Founder Engage for
Success



Nita Clarke OBE
Co-Founder Engage for
Success
Director Involvement and
Participation Association



Peter Cheese
Chief Executive CIPD
Chair Engage for Success
Advisory Board

¹ For information about the four enablers of engagement, go to www.engageforsuccess.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the UK grapples with economic challenges, including flatlining productivity, a cost-of-living squeeze, and eroding trust, engaging our workforce has never been more urgent.

Launched in 2022, the Engage for Success (EFS) engagement survey explored the impact of Covid-19 on UK employee engagement levels. Findings showed a dramatic decline in self-reported levels of engagement during the pandemic. Given the unprecedented nature of the crisis, a decline was not unexpected. However, the concern is the sluggish recovery in engagement levels since Covid restrictions were eased.

The 2023 UK engagement survey shows no improvement, suggesting stagnation in UK engagement levels. Data from a representative sample of the UK workforce (n=3,030 respondents) shows that engagement levels still lag significantly below pre-pandemic levels. Notably, the 2023 EFS Engagement Index score remains the same, at 62%. Although it's not unusual for engagement metrics to show minimal annual fluctuations, the lack of increase since the pandemic is worrying.

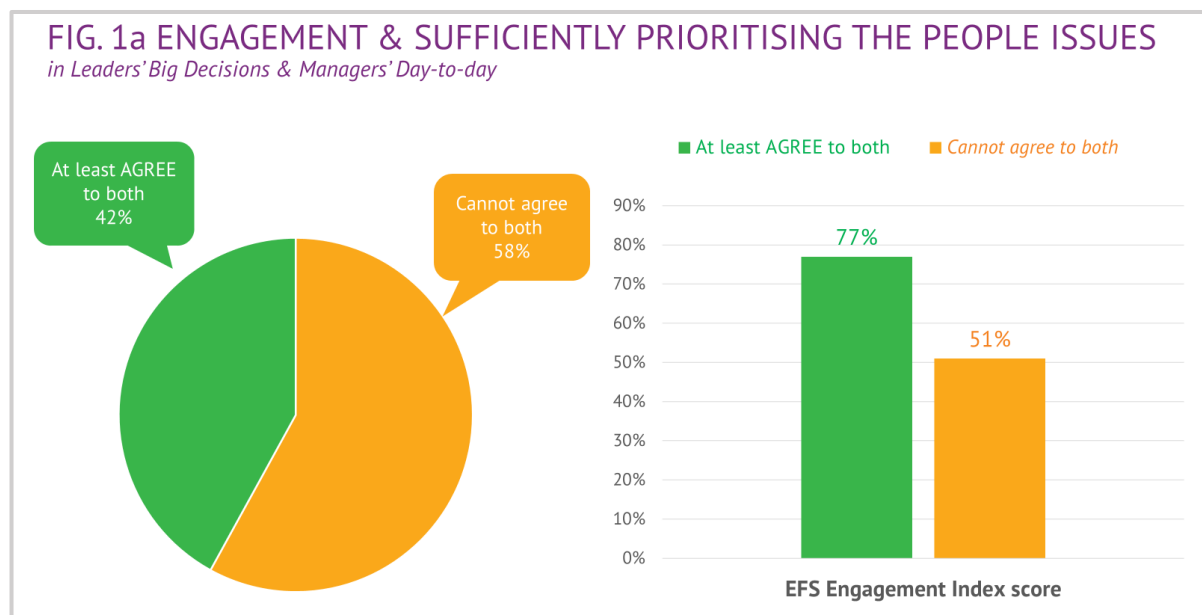
The EFS Engagement Index was initially developed to offer a 'good enough' measure of

engagement for organisations struggling to measure employee engagement and to provide a benchmark for engagement in the UK. The 2023 survey tested the EFS Engagement Index and found it highly correlates to other practitioner and academic indices². Our straightforward measure holds up strongly to others.

The EFS Engagement Index score is calculated using three questions that assess satisfaction, advocacy, and loyalty. Each question is rated on a scale from 1 to 5, and the average response is then converted into a percentage to make it easier to understand. The 2023 EFS survey data showed an average response of 3.47 for the three index questions. This average converts to an Index score of 62%. To put this in perspective, UK employees are not enthusiastic enough about their work to rate it a 4, nor unhappy enough to rate it a 2. They fall in the middle, showing up but not fully engaged.

Despite these troubling statistics and the worrying backdrop of stagnation, the survey sheds light on variations in engagement, offering organisations a chance to act.

A significant finding from the 2023 survey highlights the importance of senior leaders and managers prioritizing people issues when making decisions. Respondents were asked whether senior leaders sufficiently prioritised



² The EFS Index was tested and highly correlated with the NHS Engagement Index, the Civil Service

(People Survey) Engagement Index, and the UWES 3.

the people issues when making the big decisions and whether managers sufficiently prioritised the people issues when making the day-to-day decisions.

Respondents who could at least agree that both senior leaders and managers adequately prioritized people issues showed significantly higher engagement scores (see Fig 1a). They were also more likely to hold positive views about their organization's culture, ethics, honesty, openness, and change management capabilities. Additionally, they felt valued regarding their wellbeing, professional development, and psychological safety. However, two in five respondents did not feel this way, leading to negative views of the organisation and higher levels of unmanageable job stress.

As evidenced in the 2022 and 2023 annual surveys, the number of practices offered by organizations impacted engagement. Respondents who experienced multiple complementary practices supporting employee needs showed significantly higher EFS Engagement Index scores than those experiencing no initiatives. When looking at the four sets of practices examined in the survey, the more practices provided, the higher the EFS Engagement Index score. For example, respondents who reported having no access to wellbeing resources had an EFS Engagement Index score of 55%, compared to those who reported having five or more wellbeing resources available achieved an EFS

Engagement Index score of 73%. This pattern was consistent across all bundles.

The data highlights differences in engagement levels across sectors, organizational sizes, people management approaches, and individual circumstances. Notably, respondents whose employers supported hybrid working and

those who used engagement champion networks experienced higher engagement scores.

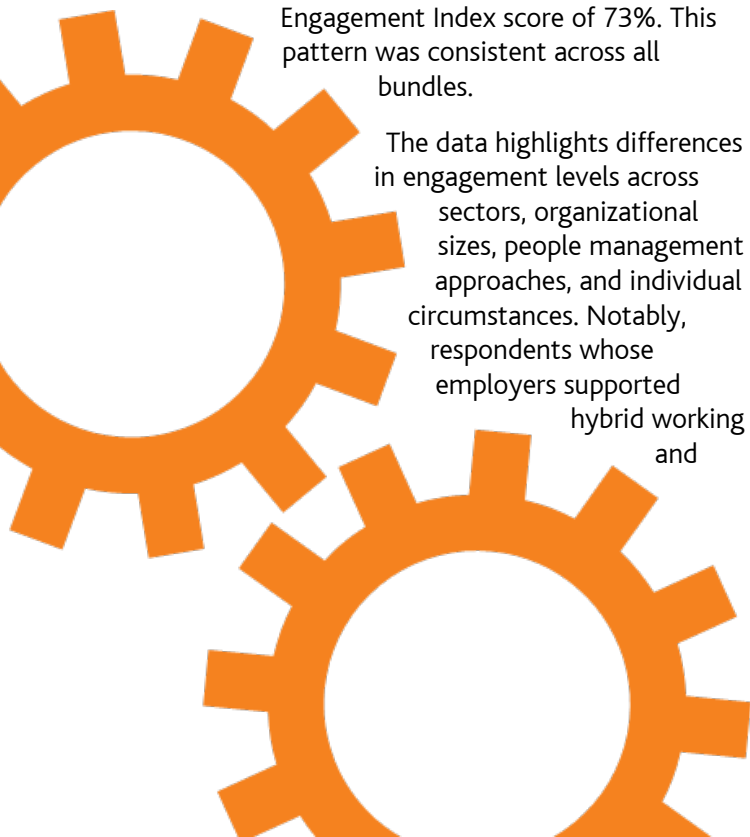
Examining respondent demographics and issues of presenteeism and unmanageable job stress, those with long-term health conditions reported higher levels of unmanageable job stress compared to those with no long-term health condition. They were also more likely to have worked while ill in the past three months.

Variations in health and wellbeing were observed based on sexuality. LGB+ respondents reported higher levels of unmanageable job stress, were more likely to work while ill, and were more likely to do so due to managerial pressure. Most notably, LGB+ respondents were twice as likely to have a long-term health condition.

Findings from the 2023 survey highlight the impact of the current UK cost-of-living crisis. Over a third of respondents stated they were distracted at work due to their personal finances; they were also more likely to report unmanageable job stress.

As evidenced in the 2022 and 2023 annual surveys, the number of practices offered by organizations influenced engagement scores. Respondents who experienced multiple, complementary practices supporting their needs showed significantly higher EFS Engagement Index scores than those who experienced none. Examining four key bundles of organisational practices (i.e. wellbeing, voice, learning and development, and social engagement), the survey showed the greater the number of practices offered in each bundle, the higher the EFS Engagement Index score. For example, respondents with no learning and development (L&D) opportunities had an EFS Engagement Index score of 47%, while those with five (or more) L&D opportunities had an EFS Engagement Index score of 75%. Employees at organisations that recognised trade unions and staff associations also reported higher engagement scores.

The survey findings also emphasize the critical role of line managers and workplace relationships in fostering and nurturing engagement levels. Line managers are the primary link between the employee and the



employer, significantly influencing how employees perceive their work environment and their overall engagement. However, there are ongoing issues of training, accountability, and responsibility that are hindering the positive impact of line managers. Addressing these issues can help line managers better support their teams, leading to higher engagement levels and a more positive workplace culture.

To address the issues highlighted in the survey, a fundamental shift in the employer-employee relationship is essential. Organisations must prioritise individual wellbeing, adopt a human-centered approach to employee experience, and reevaluate organisational purpose. Investing in their workforce will help businesses build resilience during economic uncertainty and promote sustainable growth.

It is clear from the data that organisations need to recognise that prioritising employee engagement isn't just a moral imperative – it's a strategic necessity.



CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT LEVELS IN THE UK.....	7
3. PRIORITISING THE PEOPLE ISSUES.....	11
4. ORGANISATIONAL STANCE ON HYBRID WORKING	14
5. ENGAGEMENT CHAMPION NETWORKS...	16
6. COLLECTIVE VOICE.....	18
7. ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES AND VARIATIONS IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT..	19
8. WELLBEING RESOURCES	21
9. EMPLOYEE VOICE METHODS	24
10. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.....	27
11. SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES	29
12. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL	31
13. LINE MANAGERS.....	37
14. SUMMARY	39
APPENDIX 1: HOW TO CONVERT YOUR MEAN (AVERAGE) SCORE INTO A PERCENTAGE	42
APPENDIX 2: HOW TO CALCULATE THE EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX.....	43

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by Dr Sarah Pass (Nottingham Business School and Engage for Success Advisory Board), James Court-Smith (Stillae Ltd and Engage for Success Advisory Board), Nita Clarke OBE (co-founder of Engage for Success and Director Involvement and Participation Association), David MacLeod OBE (co-founder of Engage for Success) Dr Yu-Ling Liu-Smith (Nottingham Business School), and Serban Popescu (Stillae Ltd).

The project was jointly funded by Engage for Success and Nottingham Business School (Nottingham Trent University).

We want to thank the following people for their valuable guidance and feedback on the data: Jo Dodds, Jo Causon (Institute of Customer Services), Peter Cheese (CIPD), Luke Fletcher (University of Bath), Nick Green (CNWL NHS Foundation Trust), Francis Goss, Sarah Hood (BUPA), Lorna Leeson (Little Tent), Geoff Lloyd, Jo Moffatt (Woodreed), Mick Poundsfound (Couravel Ltd), Frazer Randell (e-Trinity), Brad Shuck (University of Louisville), Stefan Stern, Peter Thomas, Damian Welsh (Mars).

We would also like to thank members of the Involvement and Participation Association (IPA) Working Insights Group for their feedback on the data.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

When citing this report, please use the following citation:

Pass, S., Court-Smith, J., Clarke, N., MacLeod, D., Liu-Smith, Y-L., and Popescu, S. (2024) Engage for Success UK Employee Engagement Survey 2023: Exploring the current state of employee engagement in the UK. Engage for Success, <https://doi.org/10.17631/rd-2024-0007-drep>



1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY 2023

Engage for Success (EFS) launched its employee engagement survey in 2022 to explore the impact of the pandemic on employee engagement in the UK and to establish an engagement benchmark. At the time, terms like 'great resignation', 'great retirement', and 'quiet quitting' were frequently discussed. As we emerged out of COVID-enforced restrictions, there was a sense that employees were feeling 'disengaged, disconnected, and disillusioned by work' (Pass & Ridgway, 2002: 255). The impact on engagement was evident, findings from the 2022 EFS annual survey showed a 12% drop in self-reported engagement scores. While the drop was understandable, the lack of increase as restrictions were lifted was concerning. In 2022, self-reported levels of engagement had only increased by 3%, leaving the UK employee engagement levels 8% lower after the pandemic than before. In addition to exploring self-reported levels of engagement, the 2022 survey aimed to develop an engagement index. The purpose of the index was to establish a benchmark for measuring engagement that was simple and easy to use.

Since its launch by the UK Government in 2011, Engage for Success has worked closely with organisations across sectors and sizes. Measuring engagement has been a challenge for all organisations. While some have had the resources to develop and implement large-scale surveys, many have struggled with data analysis and actionable insights. Others have lacked the resources to develop, or purchase, survey tools. In response to these challenges and numerous requests, the EFS Engagement Index was created.

The report presents findings from a representative sample of the UK working

population (n=3,030) gathered as part of the 2023 EFS annual engagement survey³.

Data was collected from an independent sample via Prolific (an online survey platform used by researchers from universities and academic institutions). As a result, it offers a distinct perspective on UK employee engagement levels since respondents are not linked to their respective organisations, allowing them to express themselves freely. This approach differs from many other engagement surveys where data is obtained directly from client organisations. Consequently, the survey offers an impartial and more genuine portrayal of employee sentiments and experiences. The independence enhances the reliability of the findings by eliminating potential biases that may arise from employees feeling restricted or influenced by their organisation's involvement in the survey process.

The 2023 annual survey aimed to explore any changes in engagement scores since 2022, examine the key factors that most significantly influence employee engagement within organisations, and assess the reliability and validity of the EFS Engagement Index by comparing it with other established indices. The report aims to assist organisations in developing more effective strategies to promote employee engagement and encourage organisational success.

The report and analysis were conducted by volunteers of the Engage for Success movement.



³ Data was collected in December 2023

FOCUS AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report highlights the key findings and statistically significant relationships from the 2023 survey. It is structured around the following topics:

- ▶ **Section 2** reviews the current levels of employee engagement in the UK, discussing the **EFS Engagement Index Score** and self-reported levels of engagement.
- ▶ **Section 3** examines the importance of the people issues and discusses the impact of the senior leaders and managers **prioritising the people issues** when making decisions.
- ▶ **Section 4** explores data on **hybrid working** and how the organisational stance influences engagement and wellbeing.
- ▶ **Section 5** discusses **engagement champion networks** and their impact on engagement scores.
- ▶ **Section 6** examines the relationship between **collective voice** and engagement.
- ▶ **Section 7** reviews organisational practices and how **complementary practices**, known as bundles, impact employee engagement scores. The section gives an overview of the four

bundles of practices examined in the survey (i.e. wellbeing, voice, L&D, and social activities).

- ▶ **Section 8** focuses on **wellbeing resources** examining available practices and their impact on engagement.
- ▶ **Section 9** considers different **employee voice methods** and their importance in employee engagement.
- ▶ **Section 10** explores the impact of **learning and development opportunities** on engagement.
- ▶ **Section 11** examines the role of **social engagement** activities and their influence on employee engagement.
- ▶ **Section 12** provides an in-depth discussion around employee engagement at an **individual level**, exploring **variations in engagement** scores and employee demographics.
- ▶ **Section 13** reflects on the role of the **line manager** and the impact of training.
- ▶ **Section 14** offers a **summary** of the main findings presented in the report.



2. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT LEVELS IN THE UK

The Engage for Success (EFS) Engagement Index was developed to offer a clear measure of engagement and serve as a benchmark for employee engagement levels in the UK. The goal of establishing a national measure was to assist organisations in understanding employee engagement metrics and identify areas for improvement.

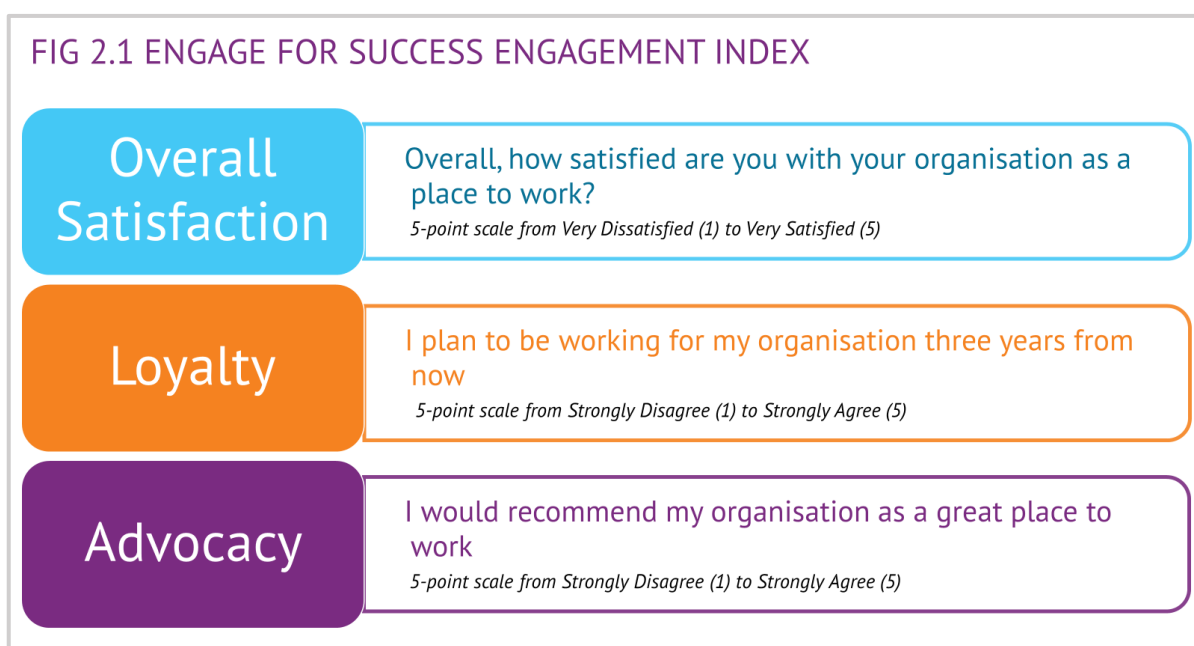
The index was not designed to replace existing models and approaches to measuring engagement. Engage for Success remains model-agnostic. This stance has been supported by findings from the 2023 survey comparing the EFS Engagement Index with alternative engagement indices, specifically the NHS Engagement Index, the Civil Service Engagement Index, and the Utrecht Work Employment Scale (UWES-3). These indices were chosen because they were deemed the most widely used.

Analysis of the data showed a close correlation between the EFS Engagement Index and the NHS⁴, Civil Service⁵ and UWES-3⁶ engagement indices.

The following section examines the EFS Engagement Index in more detail and discusses current engagement levels in the UK.

EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX

The EFS Engagement Index consists of three simple questions that focus on overall satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy (see Fig 2.1). The three questions combined provide the engagement score, a benchmark that can be used for comparison when exploring variations in the data. It is important to note, that engagement indices offer a starting point in measuring engagement, they do not provide an understanding of what is driving engagement. However, when used with other data, indices can provide an understanding of the factors influencing engagement.



⁴ Correlation coefficients, spearman's rho = 0.7

⁵ Correlation coefficient, spearman's rho = 0.8

⁶ Correlation coefficients, spearman's rho = 0.6

There are multiple ways to analyse and report engagement scores (e.g. average scores, eNPS, percent positives, etc). As a result, this often makes it difficult for organisations to compare their engagement levels with other organisations and for policymakers to understand national engagement levels.

When comparing indices, it is important to understand *what* is being reported. For example, one approach is to report the percentage of actively engaged employees. This is calculated by reporting the percentage of respondents above a certain threshold (or cut-off). However, how, or why the threshold point is determined is not always provided. This makes it hard to compare data. For more details and a deeper discussion, see the 2022 EFS annual survey report.

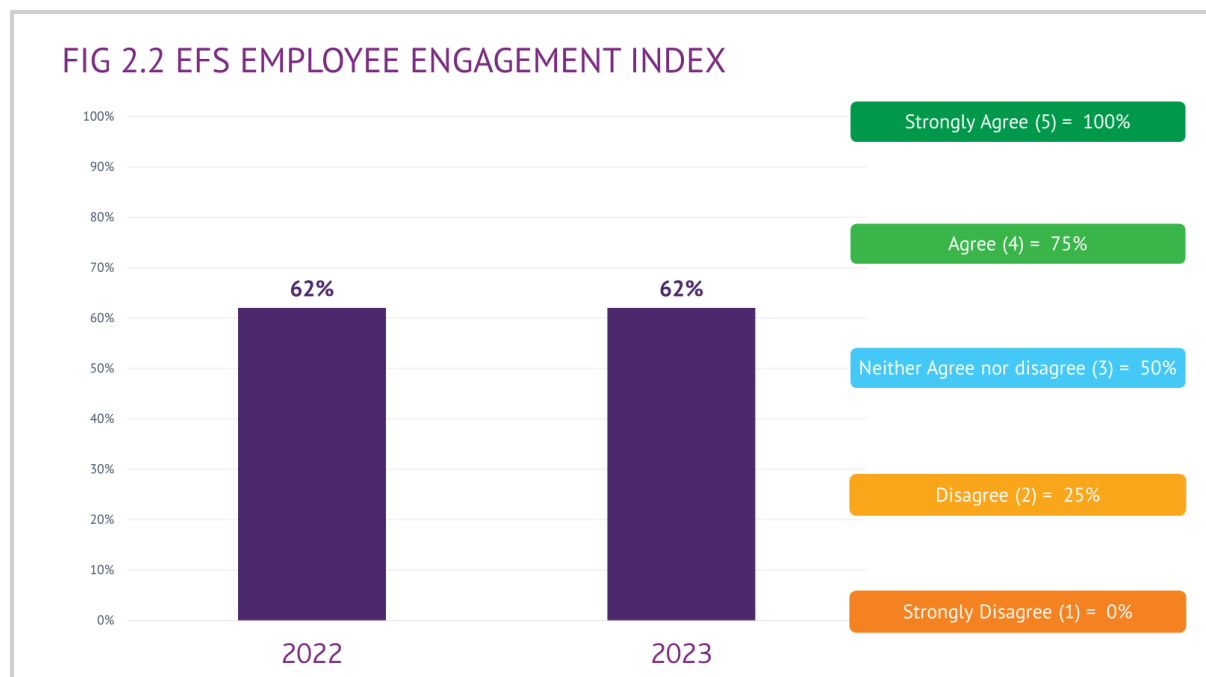
The EFS Engagement Index focuses on the average (mean) score. The average score is calculated using every response and finding the middle point. This ensures all responses are included as given and counted equally. The focus of the EFS Engagement Index is to ensure all voices are heard and this can only be achieved by reporting the mean (i.e. average) score.

The EFS Engagement Index is measured by taking the average response to each question using a 5-point scale. No weighting is required (the three questions count equally).

To make it more intuitive, the average score is then converted into a percentage⁷. Percentages are often easier to discuss than average scores. It is converted into a percentage only for this reason. Converting the score does not change the result. In essence, it is like discussing Celsius vs Fahrenheit, or kilometres Vs miles. The result is the same.

THE 2023 UK EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX

Data was collected from a representative sample of the UK working population (n=3,030) in December 2023. The average response to the three engagement questions was 3.47 (on a scale of 1 to 5). To make it easier to discuss and compare, the score was then converted into a percentage. This converts to an EFS Engagement Index score of 62% (see Fig 2.2).



⁷ For full details explaining how to calculate the score, see Appendix 1.

To put the score into context, UK employees are neither sufficiently enthusiastic to simply agree that they are satisfied at work, plan to stay, and would recommend the organisation, nor are they discontent enough to disagree. The current score implies that, on average, employees are despondent.

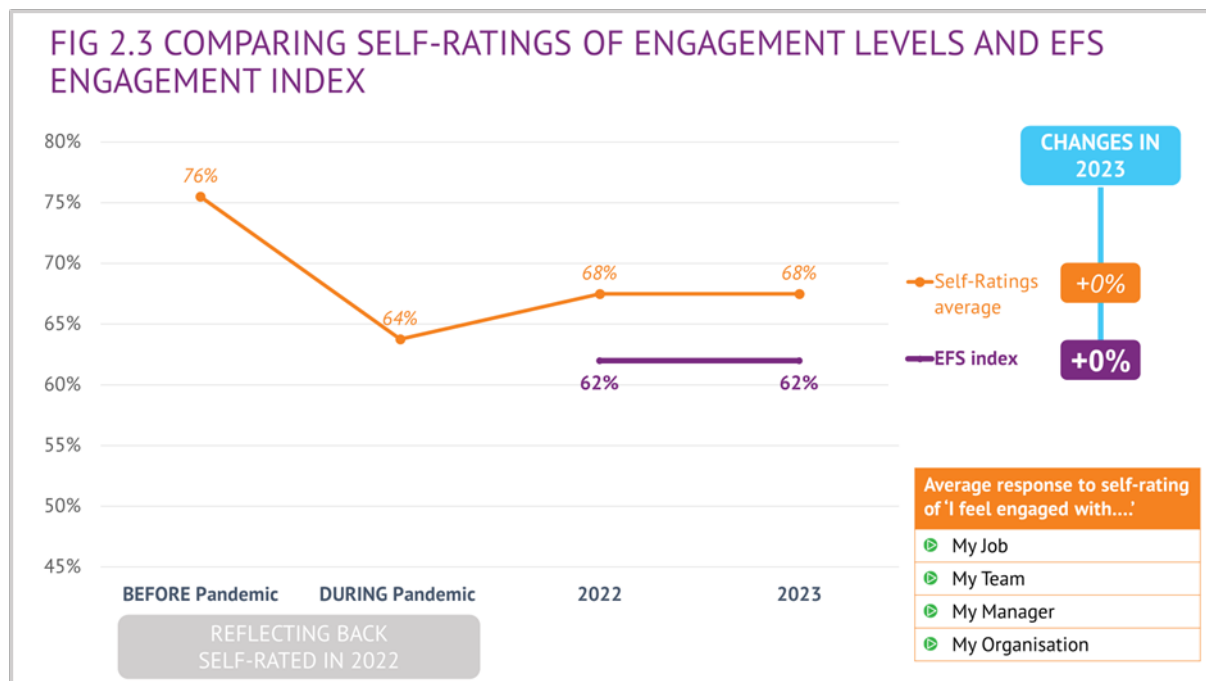
Significant implications can arise from employees feeling indifferent or apathetic about their work. Feelings of indifference can lead to lower productivity levels and decreased overall organizational performance. It can also affect morale, motivation, collaboration, and culture, and ultimately impact innovation and employee wellbeing.

As shown in Fig 2.2., the engagement score remains stagnant. Although it is not unusual for engagement metrics to show minimal fluctuations annually, the lack of improvement in engagement levels since COVID-19 is concerning, especially given the dramatic drop in engagement experienced during the pandemic⁸.

THE 2023 EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX SCORE REMAINS AT 62%

SELF-REPORTED LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

The 2022 Engage for Success annual survey asked respondents to self-report their levels of engagement, reflecting on before the pandemic, their feelings of engagement during the pandemic, and their engagement at the time of data collection in 2022. Respondents were asked to self-report how engaged they felt with their job, their line manager, their team/colleagues, and their organisation.



⁸ See 2022 Engage for Success UK Engagement Survey at: <https://engageforsuccess.org/employee-engagement-news/pandemic-impact/>

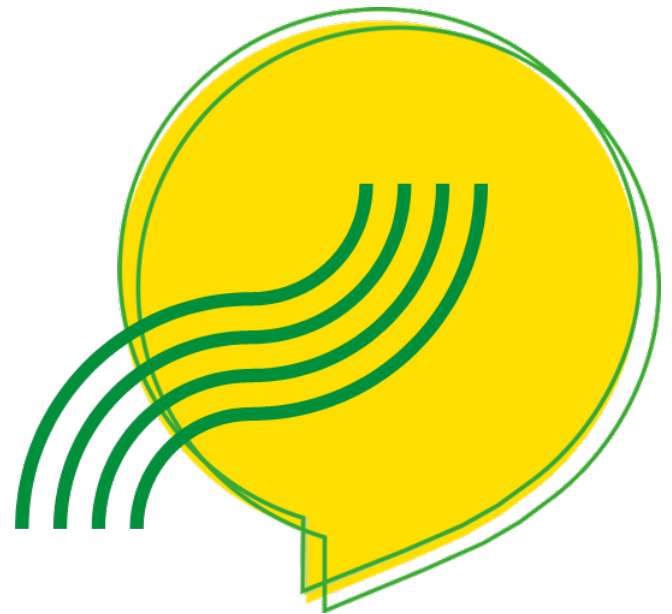
Combining the responses to self-reported questions on engagement (i.e. engaged with job, manager, colleagues, and organisation), the impact of Covid-19 on engagement is evident (see Fig 2.3). As the graph shows, there was a significant decrease (-11%) in self-reported engagement levels during the pandemic and only a partial recovery in self-ratings of engagement (+3%) by 2022.

In 2023, survey responses showed average self-ratings of engagement had not changed and remained at the same level as in 2022. This means that self-ratings of engagement are still 8% lower than pre-pandemic levels. As seen in Fig 2.3, when comparing both self-ratings of engagement and the results of the EFS Engagement Index score, engagement levels are flatlining, and remain significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels.

Although the figures imply a sense of despondency across the UK workforce, it is important to note that experiences differ significantly. It is apparent when exploring the drivers of engagement, that employee

engagement varies considerably and is influenced by the action (or in-action) of their organisations.

The following sections of this report examine the variations in engagement and explore the drivers that influence engagement scores.



THE EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX SCORE REMAINS THE SAME.
NO CHANGE FROM 2022 TO 2023.
NO CHANGE IN SELF-REPORTED ENGAGEMENT LEVELS.
UK REMAINS 8% LOWER THAN PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS.
DATA SUGGESTS UK EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IS STAGNANT.

3. PRIORITISING THE PEOPLE ISSUES

are sufficiently prioritised in the day-to-day decisions taken by my manager (5-point scale from Strongly Disagree 1 to Strongly Agree 5)

From 2022 to 2023, the research team organised a series of workshops and interviews with influential thinkers and business leaders to examine the current state of employee engagement⁹. A key observation from these discussions is the need for organisations to prioritise the people issues when making decisions. To further explore these concerns, questions regarding the prioritisation of the people issues by senior leaders and managers were included in the 2023 annual survey.

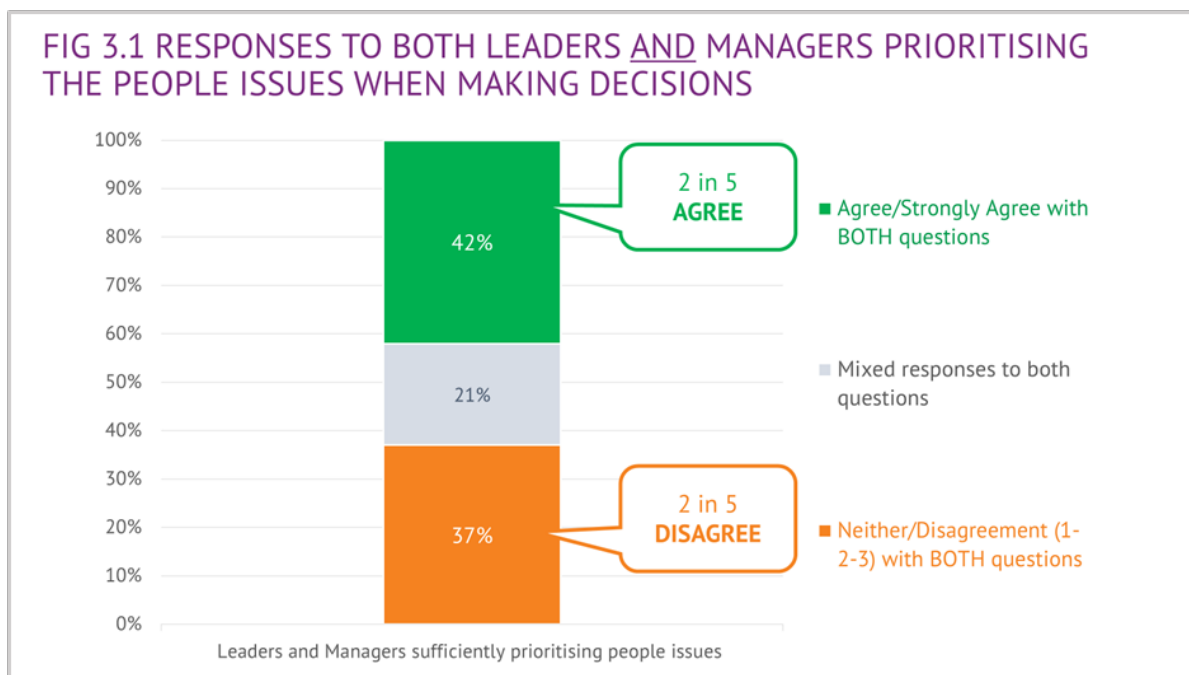
The following questions were used:

- ▶ Senior leaders: The people issues (like engagement, culture, and wellbeing) are sufficiently prioritised when my organisation’s leaders make the big decisions (5-point scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)).
- ▶ Managers: The people issues (like engagement, culture, and wellbeing)

Combining responses to the two questions, 42% of respondents could at least agree to both questions (i.e. that the people issues were sufficiently prioritised by both their organisation’s leaders and their managers). This contrasted with 37% of respondents who could not even agree with either question. The remaining respondents (21%) held mixed opinions across the two questions (see Fig 3.1).

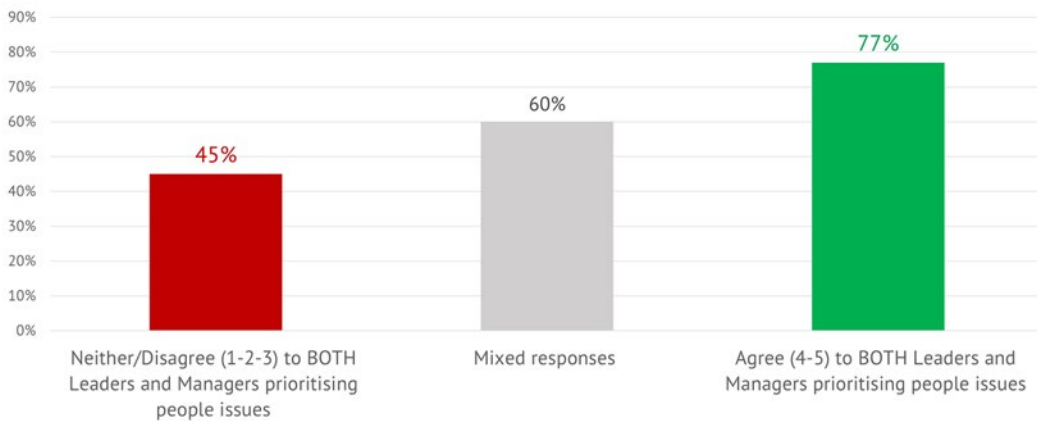
In other words, two in five respondents agreed that both their leaders and managers sufficiently prioritised the people issues when making decisions, while two in five respondents disagreed.

Fig 3.2 shows the impact of the people issues on the EFS Engagement index score. Respondents who could at least agree that both their leaders and managers sufficiently prioritised the people issues had an EFS Engagement Index score of 77%. This is fifteen percentage points higher than the current average index score.



⁹ The project was funded by the Institute for Knowledge Exchange Practice (IKEP), Nottingham Trent University

FIG 3.2 EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX AND COMBINED RESPONSES TO LEADERS AND MANAGERS PRIORITISING THE PEOPLE ISSUES



Respondents who could not agree that both their leaders and managers sufficiently prioritised the people issues had an EFS Engagement Index score of 45%. This is seventeen percentage points lower than the national average score.

The impact of the prioritisation of the people issues is evident in Fig 3.3. Statistically significant relationships exist between the prioritising of the people issues by leaders and managers and key organisational measures. Consistently across all measures, respondents who agreed with both questions had significantly higher scores than those who disagreed with both questions.

Although findings show a positive impact on key outcomes, the belief that leaders prioritised the people issues lagged behind other measures. For example, 23% of respondents could strongly agree that their organisation took positive action on health and wellbeing, whilst only 11% of respondents could strongly agree that leaders sufficiently prioritise the people issues when making big decisions. A similar pattern was evident when exploring the prioritisation of day-to-day decisions by managers.

FIG 3.3 IMPORTANCE OF SUFFICIENTLY PRIORITISING THE PEOPLE ISSUES

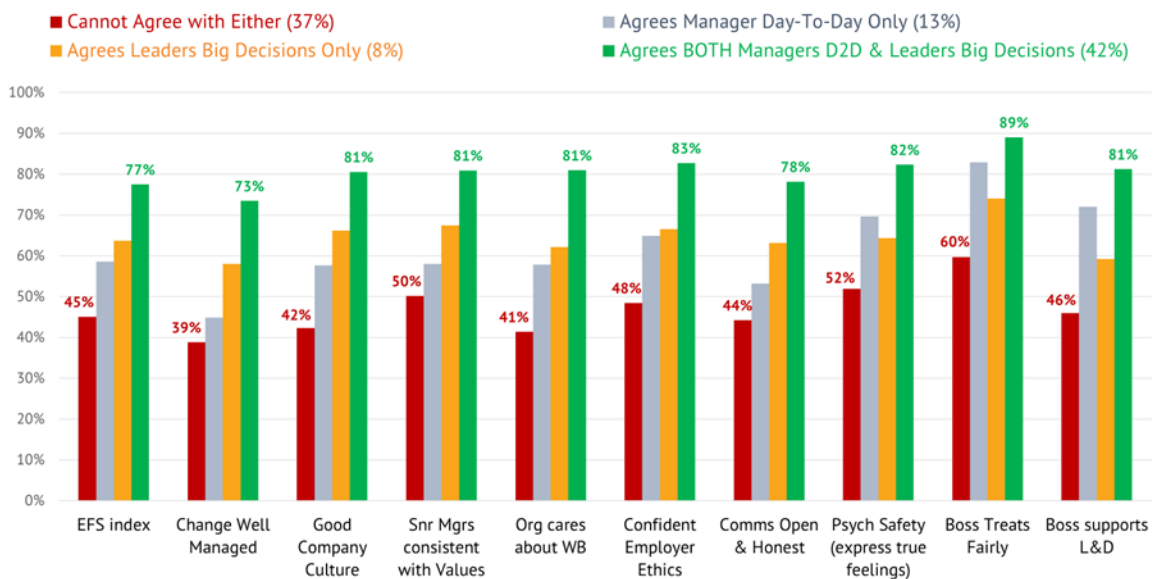
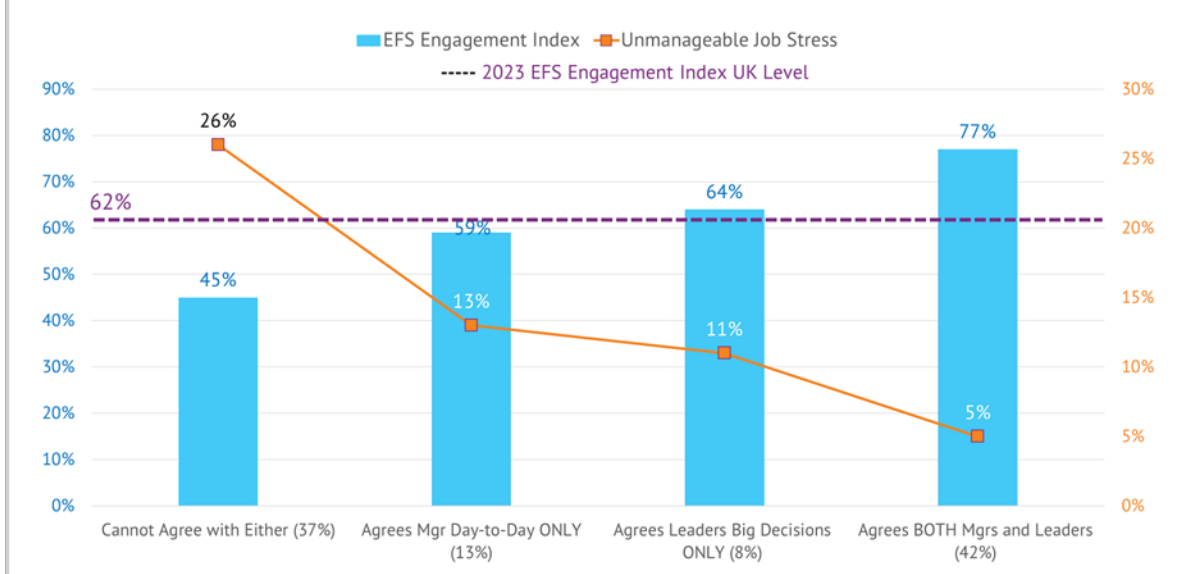


FIG 3.4 IMPACT PRIORITISING PEOPLE ISSUES ON EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX AND UNMANAGEABLE JOB STRESS



In addition, the prioritisation of the people issues had a significant impact on wellbeing. Levels of unmanageable job stress were five times higher for respondents who could not agree to either their manager or leaders prioritising the people issues compared to those that could agree (see Fig 3.4).

As highlighted by Fig 3.4, respondents who agreed that both their organisations leaders and their managers sufficiently prioritised the people issues when making decisions had significantly higher levels of engagement and lower levels of unmanageable job stress than respondents who felt that neither their managers nor their leaders sufficiently prioritised the people issues.

It is important to note that the questions regarding leaders and managers sufficiently prioritising the people issues were assessed based on the respondent's perception and awareness of the decision-making process. Prioritising people issues in decision-making needs to be transparent and visible (i.e. this highlights the potentially significant role of Internal Communications in facilitating this transparency).

The impact of leaders and managers prioritising the people issues was evident across various measures examined in the survey. For instance, hybrid working, engagement champions, sexuality, and long-term health conditions. These are discussed in other sections of the report.

2-IN-5 RESPONDENTS AGREED THEIR LEADERS AND MANAGERS PRIORITISED THE PEOPLE ISSUES WHEN MAKING DECISIONS WHILE 2-IN-5 DISAGREED. RESPONDENTS WHO AGREED HAD A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER ENGAGEMENT INDEX SCORE (77%) AND LOWER LEVELS OF UNMANAGEABLE JOB STRESS (5%)

RESPONDENTS WHO DISAGREED HAD A SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER ENGAGEMENT INDEX SCORE (45%) AND HAD 5 TIMES HIGHER LEVELS OF UNMANAGEABLE JOB STRESS (26%)

4.ORGANISATIONAL STANCE ON HYBRID WORKING

Although the concept of hybrid working is not new, for the majority, it was not the norm until the COVID-19 pandemic. Owing to government restrictions, organisations were forced to work remotely (where possible). Due to the development and roll-out of the covid vaccination programme, restrictions were lifted. At the time, there was considerable debate around the potential of remote, or hybrid working, becoming the 'new-norm'. During the pandemic, many organisations had even stated that they would continue working in a remote or hybrid manner. However, the lifting of COVID restrictions did not lead to a significant return to the office. As a result, organisations started looking to actively encourage employees back.

In 2023, several well-known organisations issued mandates ordering employees to return to their place workplace for at least part of the week, followed by a subsequent mandate for a full return. The rationale behind these mandates is subject to extensive debates.

Fig 4.1 compares the location of work for respondents from the 2022 annual survey with the 2023 annual survey. Both surveys used a representative sample of the UK population.

Considering the current focus on hybrid working, respondents were asked about their organisation's position on the matter. As shown in Fig 4.2, most respondents worked at organisations that supported hybrid working. Currently, 21% of respondents were mandated back to their place of work.

Respondents were asked where they preferred to work, with the majority (60%) stating that their preference was at home. However, when asked where they felt they worked best, opinions were divided. A 1/3 of respondents stated they felt they worked best at home, a 1/3 stated their place of work, and a 1/3 stated a combination of home and place of work.

Organisational stance on hybrid working varied by sector, with the private sector more likely to support hybrid working and less likely to mandate a full return to the place of work compared to the public sector.

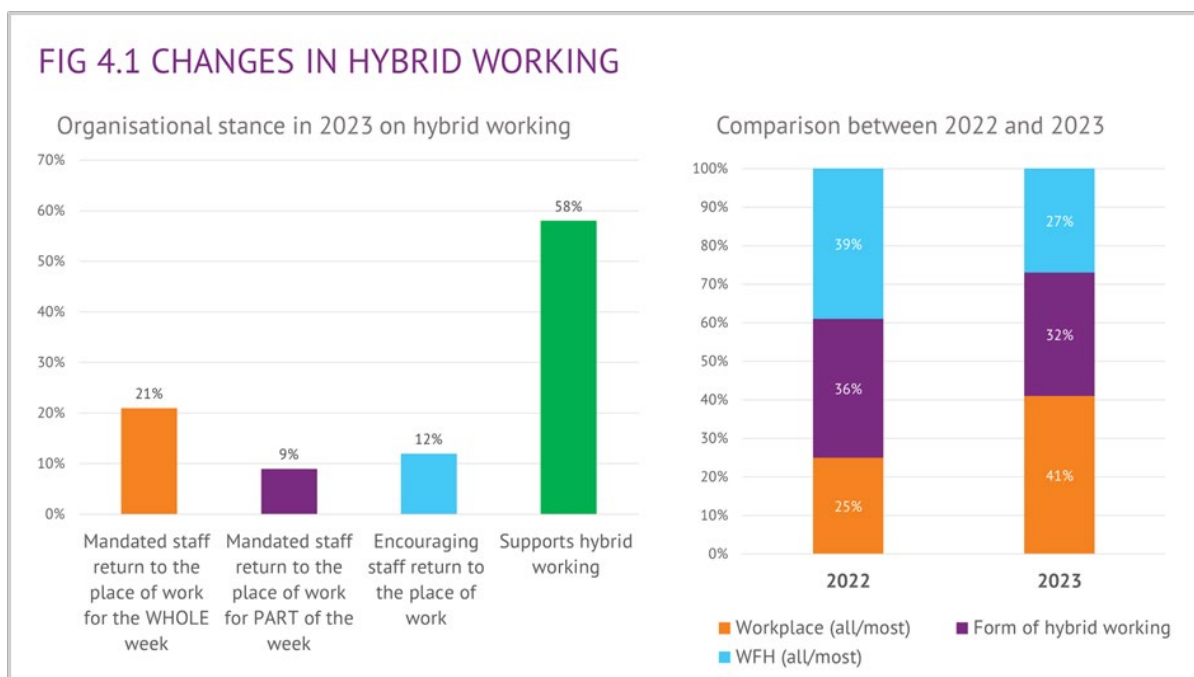
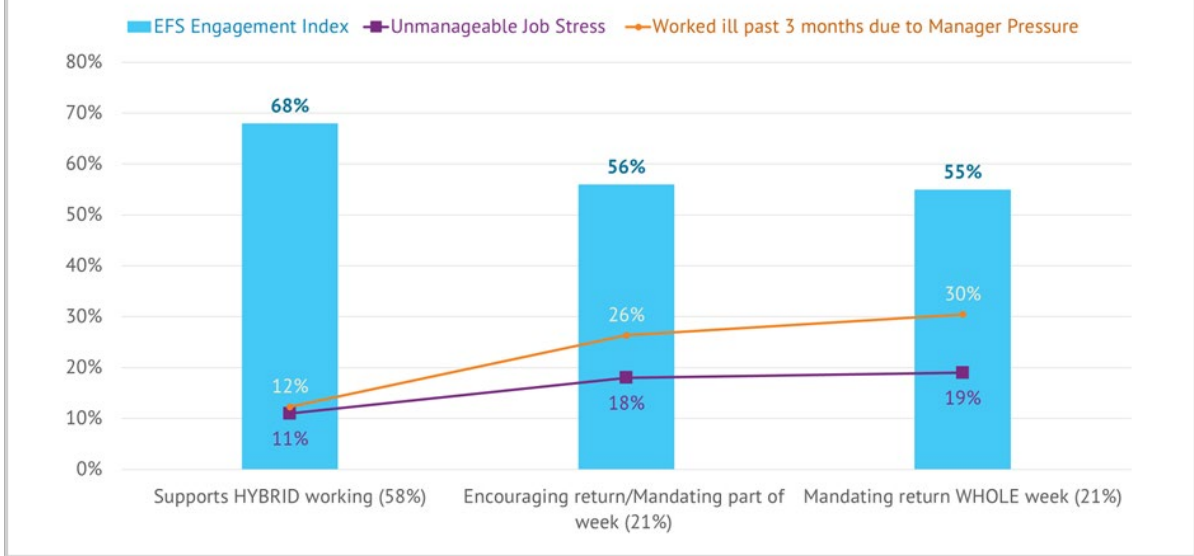


FIG 4.2 STANCE ON HYBRID WORKING AND IMPACT ON ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING



The organisational approach to hybrid working had a significant impact on the EFS Engagement Index score of respondents (see Fig 4.2). Those working at organisations supporting hybrid working had a 6% higher EFS Engagement Index score than the UK average (currently at 62%). In contrast, respondents who were mandated to fully return to the workplace had an EFS Engagement Index score 7% lower than the UK average. There was very little difference when examining the impact of respondents who were encouraged to return to the office and those who were mandated to return part of the week.

Comparing the organisational stance on hybrid working to unmanageable job stress, respondents who were mandated to fully return to the office had an 8% higher level of

unmanageable job stress than respondents who worked in organisations that supported hybrid working. They were also twice as likely to have worked whilst ill in the past three months due to manager pressure than those who worked in organisations that supported hybrid working.

It is clear from Fig 4.2 that respondents who worked in organisations that supported hybrid working had higher engagement and lower levels of unmanageable job stress and instances of presenteeism than those who worked at organisations mandating a full return to work.

For those working in organisations that were either encouraging a return or mandating part of the week, the results were similar to mandating a full return.

THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS WORKED IN ORGANISATIONS THAT SUPPORTED HYBRID WORKING.

RESPONDENTS WORKING IN ORGANISATIONS THAT SUPPORTED HYBRID WORKING HAD HIGHER EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX SCORES

RESPONDENTS WORKING IN ORGANISATIONS THAT HAD MANDATED A FULL RETURN TO THE OFFICE SHOWED HIGHER LEVELS OF UNMANAGEABLE JOB STRESS AND PRESENTEEISM.

5. ENGAGEMENT CHAMPION NETWORKS

Engagement champion networks are groups within an organisation, dedicated to promoting and enhancing employee engagement. Working closely with key stakeholders, engagement champions connect engagement initiatives and activities with local needs. Although roles and activities vary across organisations, the key responsibilities of champions may include:

- ▶ Advocating for employee needs
- ▶ Implementing engagement initiatives
- ▶ Providing feedback
- ▶ Supporting change and improvement
- ▶ Fostering collaboration and communication

Engagement champions are usually enthusiastic and motivated individuals from various levels who are passionate about improving engagement. The size and scope of champion networks can significantly vary across organisations. In addition, the time and resources for champions to fulfill their role varies. For some, they work voluntarily, others

are provided hours within their workload, whilst some are in a paid role.

Respondents were asked whether their organisation used employee engagement champion networks (i.e. staff networks) to promote engagement in the organisation. A quarter of respondents said they had engagement champion networks. There were variations across organisational size and sector. Similar numbers were seen between the public and private sectors, whilst third-sector organisations (i.e. voluntary sector) were the least likely to use champion networks. The larger the organisation, the more likely they were to use champion networks.

There was a significant relationship between the use of engagement champions and the perception that the people issues were prioritised by their leaders and managers (see Fig 5.1). Respondents who stated that their organisations used engagement champion networks were more likely to agree that both leaders and managers prioritised the people issues. Respondents who worked in organisations that did not use engagement champion networks were more likely to either disagree that both leaders and managers prioritised the people issues or have a mixed opinion on the prioritisation of the people issues in their organisation.

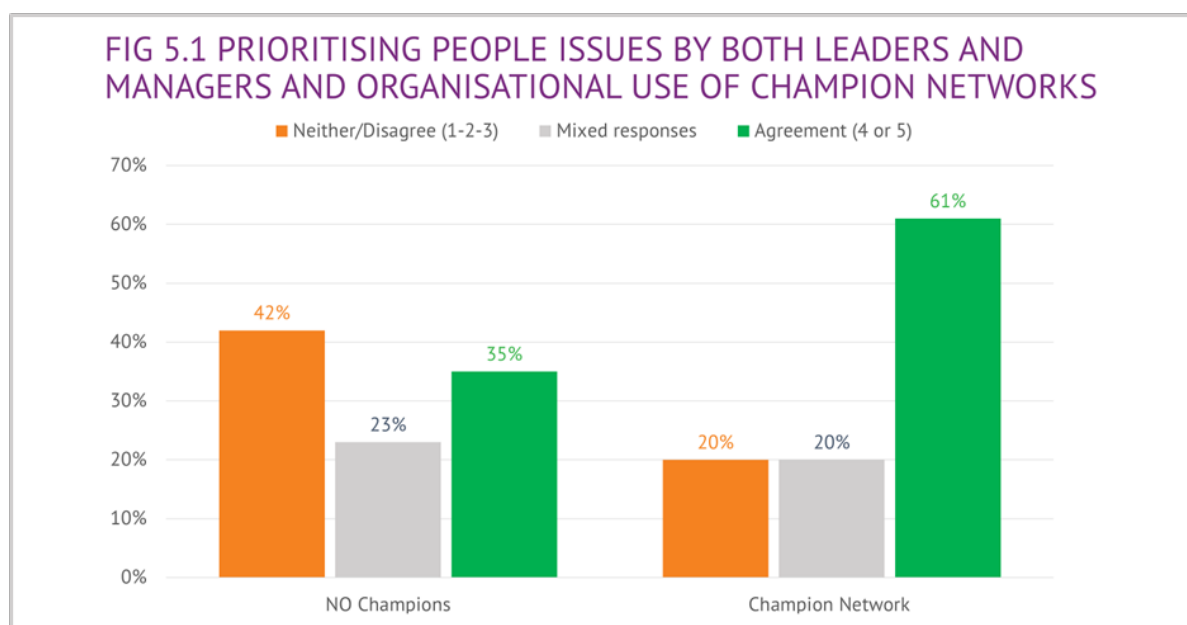
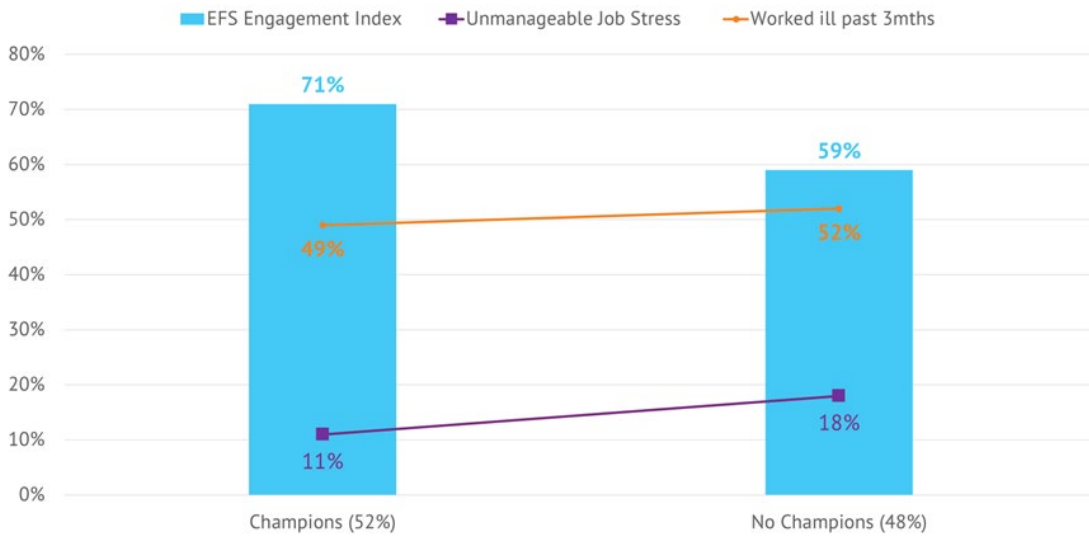


FIG 5.2 ENGAGEMENT CHAMPION NETWORKS AND IMPACT ON EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX AND WELLBEING



The impact of engagement champion networks on engagement and wellbeing is evident in Fig 5.2. Respondents who were aware that their organisation used engagement champion networks had a 9% higher EFS Engagement Index score than the national average¹⁰. Respondents in organisations without champion networks, had an EFS Engagement Index score 3% lower than the national average. In essence, there is a 12%-point difference in the EFS Engagement Index score between respondents working at organisations with champions networks, compared to those that do not.

Variations in levels of unmanageable job stress and presenteeism were also evident. Where engagement champion networks were used, levels of unmanageable job stress and presenteeism were lower. In organisations where engagement champion networks were present, unmanageable job stress was 7% lower than then if a champion network was not used.

ENGAGEMENT CHAMPION NETWORKS POSITIVELY INFLUENCED ENGAGEMENT INDEX SCORES.

ENGAGEMENT CHAMPION NETWORKS WERE RELATED TO LOWER LEVELS OF UNMANAGEABLE STRESS AND PRESENTEEISM.

RESPONDENTS WERE MORE LIKELY TO AGREE THAT LEADERS AND MANAGERS PRIORITISED THE PEOPLE ISSUES IN ORGANISATIONS WHERE ENGAGEMENT CHAMPIONS WERE PRESENT.

¹⁰ The current EFS Engagement Index score is 62%

6. COLLECTIVE VOICE

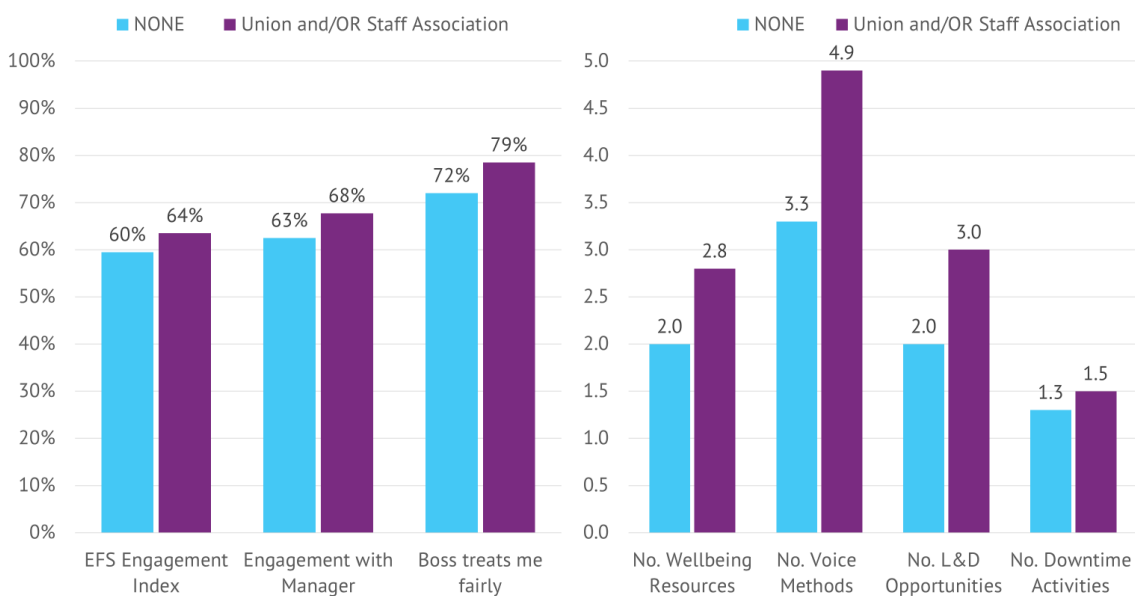
Most respondents (78%) were not trade union members, although the majority worked in organisations where trade unions were recognised. A quarter of respondents were unaware if their organisation recognised a trade union. Recognition of trade unions was highest in the public sector (67%) and lowest in the private sector (23%). Lack of awareness regarding trade union recognition was higher in the third and voluntary sectors. Only 17% of respondents said their organisation recognised non-union staff associations or consultation committees, while 42% admitted they did not know if they were recognised or not.

Recognition of trade unions and/or staff associations was higher in public sector organisations and organisations employing over a thousand employees. Private sector organisations and micro-organisations were less likely to recognise trade unions and/or staff associations.

Findings show a clear relationship between recognition of trade unions and/or staff associations with key areas (see Fig 6.1). In addition, recognition led to a more positive relationship with line managers.

Respondents were also more likely to work at organisations where bundles (i.e. groups) of practices were used to support employee needs, most notably to support health and wellbeing, learning and development, and employee voice (see following sections for more details).

FIG 6.1 IMPACT OF UNION AND STAFF ASSOCIATION RECOGNITION



RESPONDENTS WHO WORKED AT ORGANISATIONS WHERE TRADE UNIONS AND/OR STAFF ASSOCIATIONS WERE RECOGNISED HAD HIGHER EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX SCORES.

RESPONDENTS WERE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR MANAGER IF A UNION OR STAFF ASSOCIATION WAS RECOGNISED

7. ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES AND VARIATIONS IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The 2023 annual survey examined various organisational practices and their impact on engagement. The survey specifically investigated wellbeing resources, employee voice methods, learning and development (L&D) opportunities, and social engagement activities (See Table 7.1). The data confirmed the findings established in the 2022 annual survey.

Findings show that implementing multiple, complementary practices to support employees' needs has a greater impact on employee engagement compared to offering no practices (see Fig 7.1).

Examining the four bundles of practices explored in the survey, it is evident that the greater number of practices offered in each bundle, results in higher EFS Engagement Index scores. For example, respondents who said no wellbeing resources were available had an EFS Engagement Index score of 55%, while those who said five or more wellbeing resources were available had an EFS Engagement Index score of 73%. This pattern is consistent across all the bundles (see Fig 7.1).

Respondents with high EFS Engagement Index scores were experiencing a wide variety of 'highly active' bundles of practices. Highly active bundles of practices consisted of:

- ▶ 3 or more Voice methods
- ▶ 3 or more L&D opportunities
- ▶ 3 or more Wellbeing resources
- ▶ 2 or more Social engagement activities

However, only one-in-four respondents experienced three (or more) highly active bundles of practices, and a third of respondents experienced no highly active bundles.





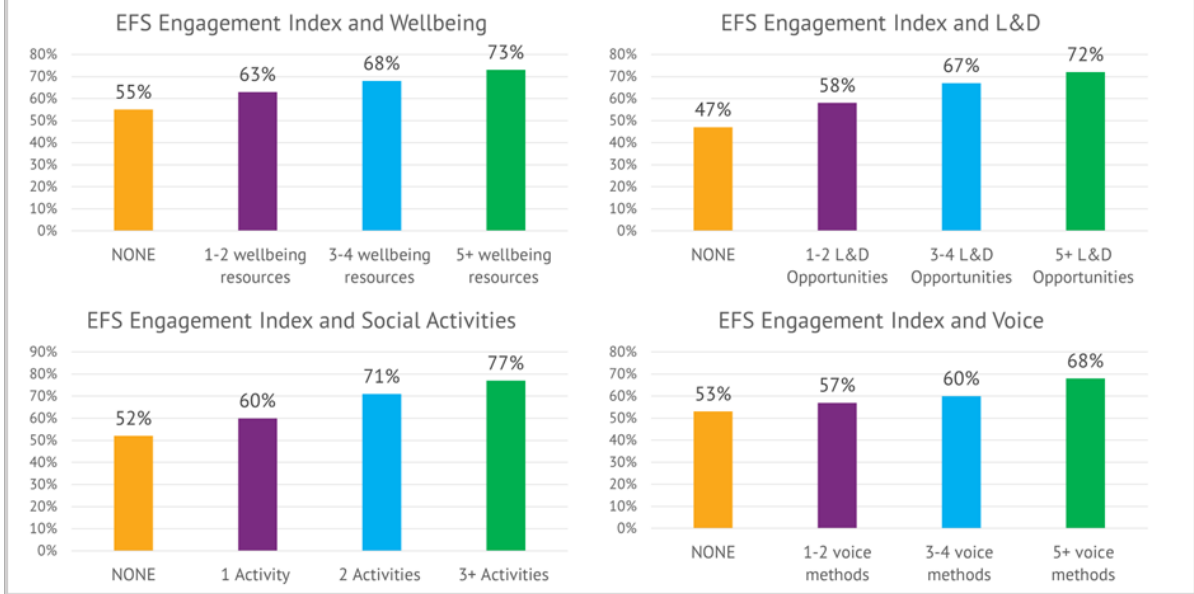
Category	Practices
WELLBEING RESOURCES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Employee Assistance Programme ▶ Occupational Health ▶ Mindfulness Tools ▶ Wellbeing site with resources developed for staff (e.g. available via a SharePoint etc) ▶ Access or support for physical activities (e.g. discount for local gyms etc) ▶ Online therapy platforms (e.g. Silver Cloud)
EMPLOYEE VOICE METHODS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ One-to-one meetings with line manager ▶ Team meetings ▶ Departmental meetings ▶ Annual Survey ▶ Pulse surveys ▶ Employee focus groups ▶ All employee meetings with senior managers ▶ Anonymous feedback mechanisms to raise issues ▶ Community groups ▶ Online forum or chat room for employees
L&D OPPORTUNITIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ E-learning sessions provided by internal teams ▶ E-learning sessions provided by external organisations ▶ Face-to-face seminars and workshops provided by internal teams ▶ Webinars ▶ Face-to-face seminars and workshops provided by external organisations ▶ LinkedIn Learning/Externally provided online learning resources
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Social events held outside my organisation ▶ Social events held at my organisation ▶ Staff clubs (e.g. cooking, book, craft) ▶ Other activities ▶ Staff clubs (e.g. cooking, book, craft) ▶ Other activities

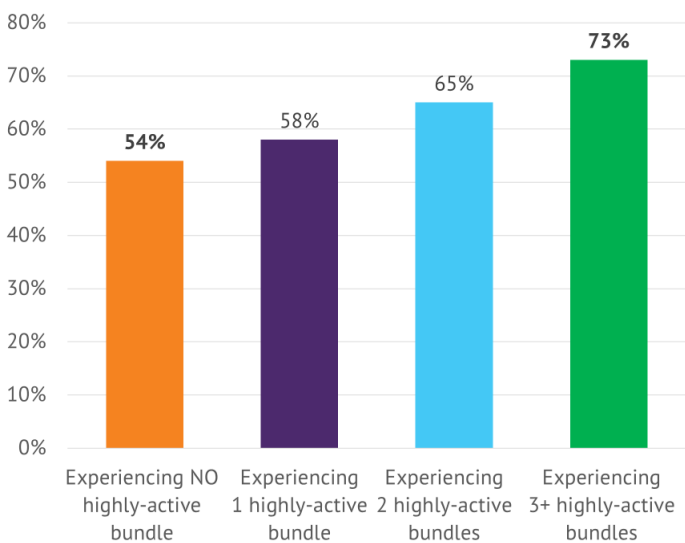
FIG 7.1 NUMBER OF PRACTICES AND IMPACT ON EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX



Respondents who experienced three (or more) highly active bundles of practices (e.g. three or more wellbeing resources, three or more employee voice methods, three or more L&D opportunities, or two or more social engagement activities) had an average EFS Engagement Index score of 73%, while those who experienced no highly active bundle had an EFS Engagement Index score of 54% (see Fig 7.2).

The findings show that organisations employing a comprehensive set of practices, or bundles, experienced higher levels of employee engagement compared to those using fewer or isolated practices. This highlights the importance of an integrated approach to developing and implementing policies and practices.

FIG 7.2 EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX LEVEL AND HIGHLY ACTIVE BUNDLES OF PRACTICES



GROUPS OF PRACTICES HAVE A SIGNIFICANTLY BIGGER IMPACT ON ENGAGEMENT THAN SINGLE PRACTICES

GROUPING COMPLEMENTARY PRACTICES IS OFTEN REFERRED TO AS BUNDLES

8. WELLBEING RESOURCES

Findings show a correlation between the EFS Engagement Index and responses to the question 'my organisation cares about my overall wellbeing'. Over half of the respondents with high EFS Engagement Index scores believed their organisation cared about their wellbeing. Only 2% of those with low EFS Engagement Index scores believed the organisation cared about their wellbeing. Put simply, believing your organisation cares about your wellbeing has a significant impact on engagement.

Looking at wellbeing in more detail, the survey explored various wellbeing resources by asking respondents about the presence of each practice within their organisation. Respondents were asked about the following practices:

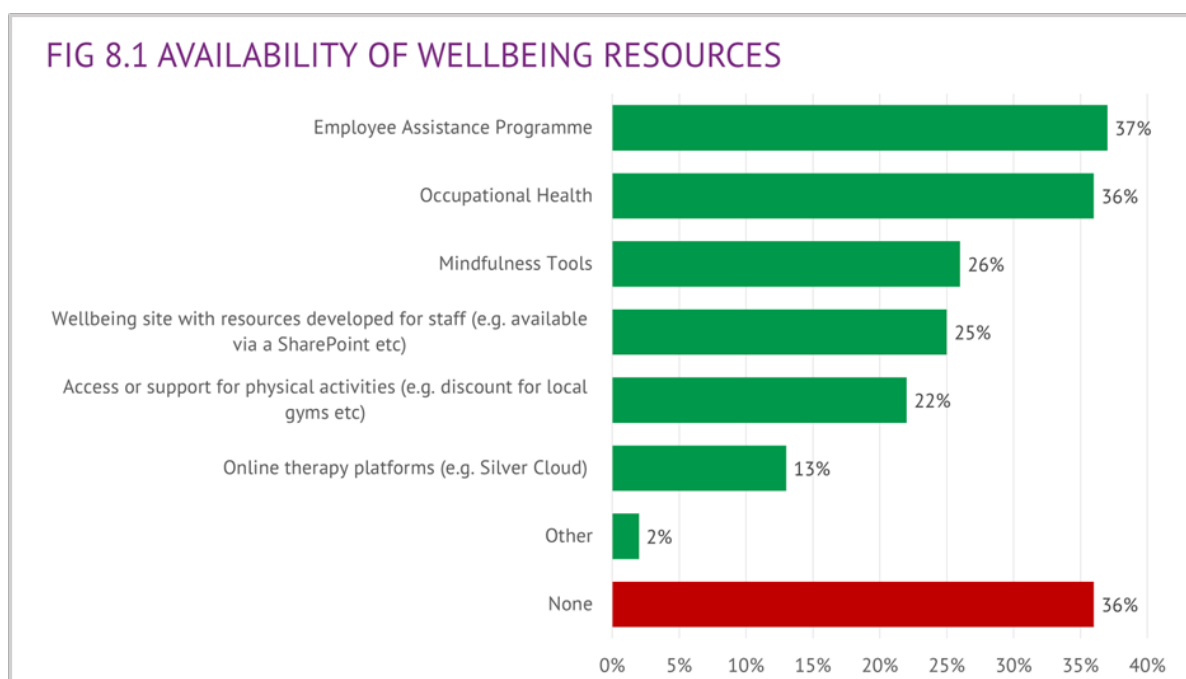
- ▶ Employee Assistance Programmes
- ▶ Occupational Health
- ▶ Mindfulness Tools
- ▶ Wellbeing site with resources developed for staff (e.g. available via SharePoint etc)

- ▶ Access or support for physical activities (e.g. discount for local gyms etc)
- ▶ Online therapy platforms (e.g. Silver Cloud)

Employee assistance programmes and occupational health were the most available wellbeing resource (see Fig 8.1). Notably, approximately one-third of respondents reported that they did not have access to any wellbeing resources at their organisation.

Comparing each practice, respondents who stated that no wellbeing resources were available showed an -11% drop in the EFS Engagement Index score. Access or support for physical activities (e.g. discounts for local gyms etc) was one of the least used practices (22%, see Fig 8.1), yet the availability of this practice had the biggest impact on EFS Engagement Index scores (see Fig 8.2).

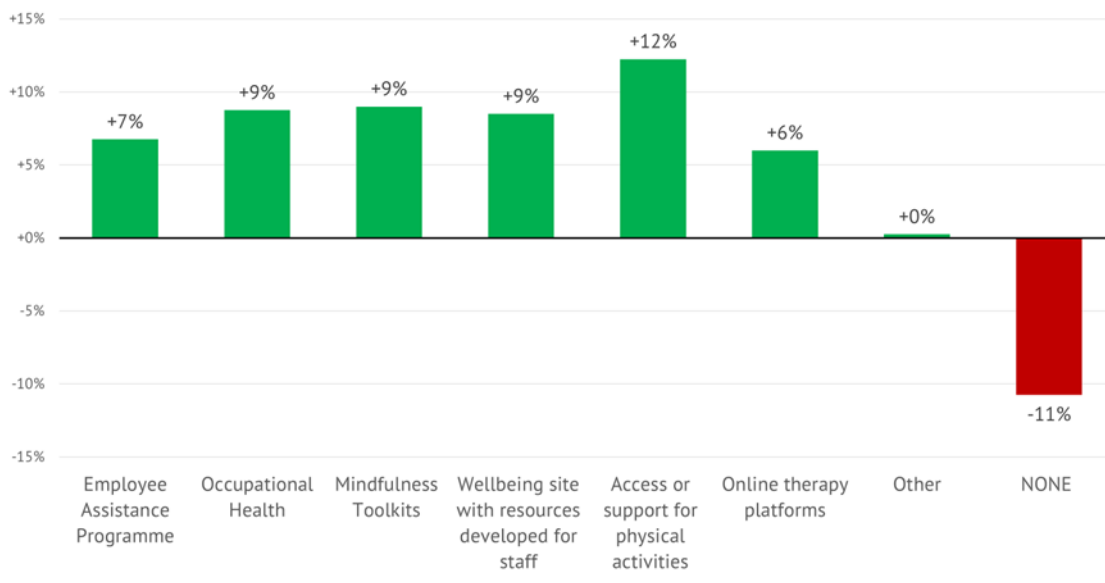
Reviewing the availability of wellbeing resources and organisational size, a consistent pattern was evident. The availability of practices increased with the size of the organisation. For example, 54% of respondents from large organisations¹¹ stated that employee assistance programmes were available, this compared to just 13% of respondents from micro-organisations¹². The



¹¹ E.g. over 1,000 employees

¹² E.g. less than 25 employees

FIG 8.2 COMPARING AVAILABILITY OF WELLBEING RESOURCES TO THE EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX

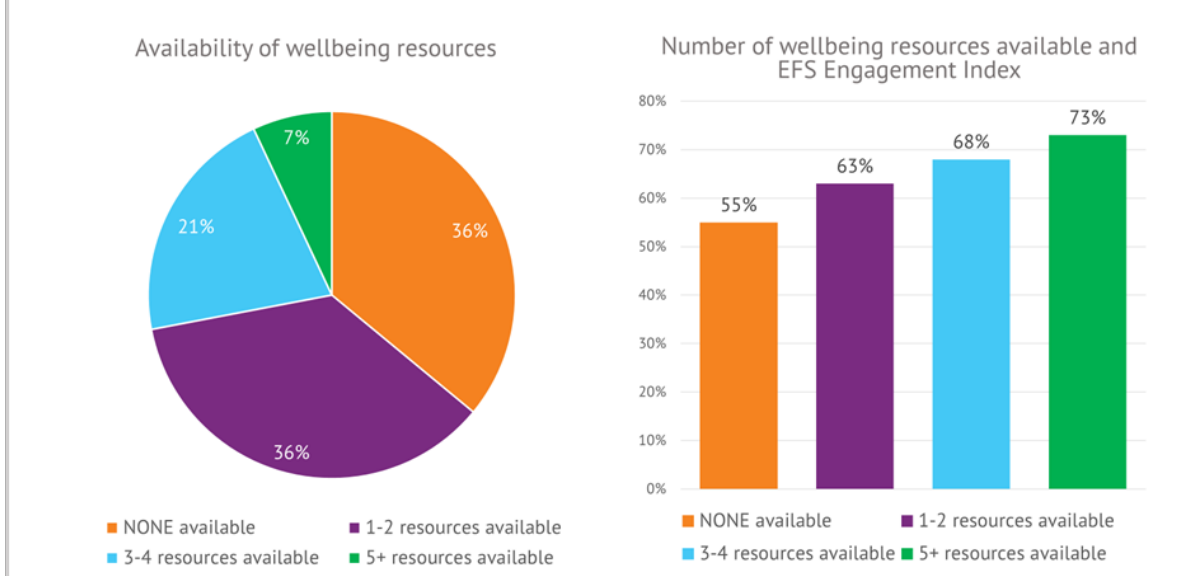


reverse pattern was evident for respondents who stated no wellbeing resources were available. For example, 64% of respondents from micro-organisations stated that no wellbeing resources were available, compared to just 19% in large organisations. It is clear that the size of an organisation influenced the number of wellbeing resources available.

There was a slight variation across the availability of wellbeing resources and organisational sector. Public sector organisations were more likely to have each practice available compared to the private

sector. Respondents in the public sector were twice as likely to have access to occupational health compared to the private sector. Respondents from the private sector were 13% more likely to say that no wellbeing resources were available compared to those in the public sector. Due to low numbers, no comparison with the third sector and wellbeing resources is available.

FIG 8.3 NUMBER OF WELLBEING RESOURCES AND IMPACT ON EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX

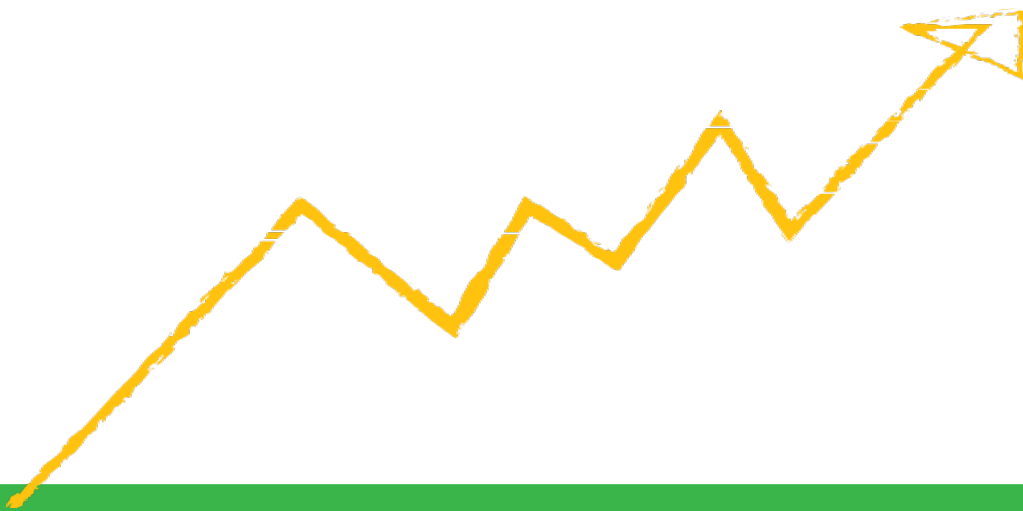


As highlighted in the previous section, the number of wellbeing resources available had an impact on the EFS Engagement Index score (see Fig 8.3). Only 7% of respondents stated that they had access to five or more wellbeing resources. This group of respondents had an EFS Engagement Index score of 73%. In comparison, 36% of respondents stated that they did not have access to any of the wellbeing resources examined in the survey. Those who stated no wellbeing resources were available had an EFS Engagement Index of 55%. This is 7% lower than the national average¹³.

The number of wellbeing resources, rather than the specific type of practices, influenced engagement scores. It is clear from the findings

that at a minimum, offering at least one or two wellbeing resources can have a positive impact on engagement.

The relationship between the number of wellbeing resources available and their impact on the EFS Engagement Index was also apparent when comparing across organisational size and sector. The number of resources available also had a positive impact on perceptions that the organisation cared about a respondent's wellbeing and that their organisation took positive action on health and wellbeing.



EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX SCORES VARIED ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF WELLBEING RESOURCES AVAILABLE. OVER A THIRD OF RESPONDENTS DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO WELLBEING RESOURCES AT WORK. ORGANISATIONAL SIZE AND SECTOR INFLUENCED THE AVAILABILITY OF WELLBEING RESOURCES. AS ORGANISATIONAL SIZE INCREASED, MORE WELLBEING RESOURCES WERE AVAILABLE. PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS WERE MORE LIKELY TO PROVIDE WELLBEING RESOURCES.

¹³ The 2023 average EFS Engagement Index level is 62%.

9. EMPLOYEE VOICE METHODS

- ▶ Anonymous feedback mechanisms to raise issues
- ▶ Community groups
- ▶ Pulse surveys
- ▶ Employee focus groups
- ▶ Online forum or chat room for employees

Voice is one of the four enablers of engagement identified by Engage for Success (EFS) and considers voice evident 'where an organisation sees its people not as the problem, rather as central to the solution, to be involved, listened to, and invited to contribute their experience, expertise, and ideas'¹⁴.

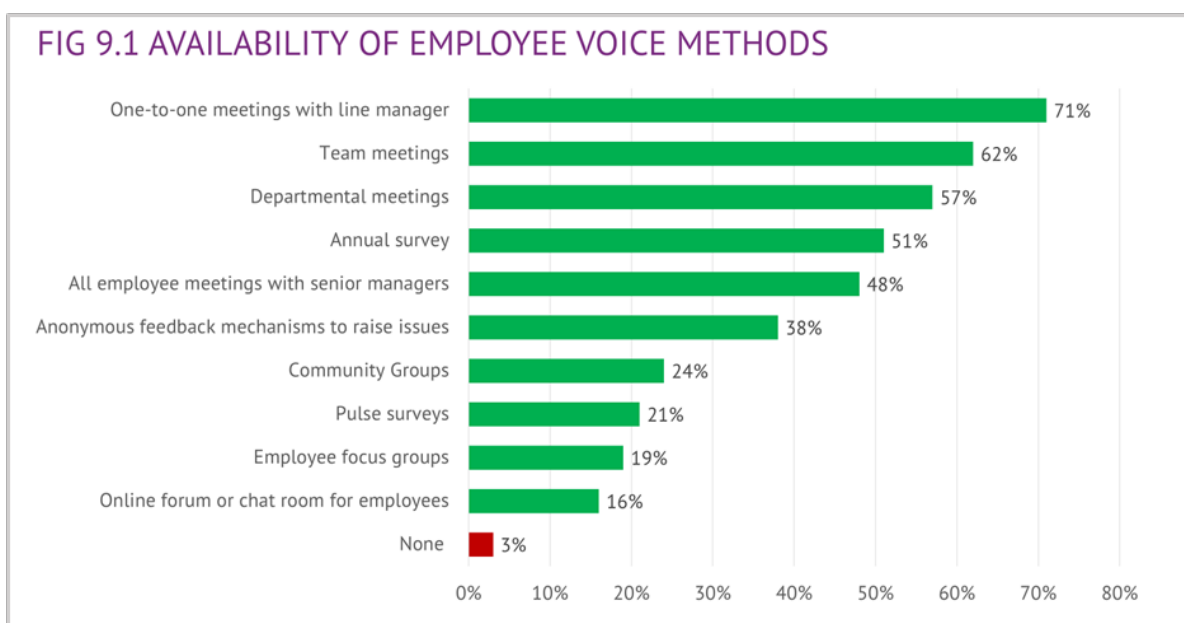
Findings from the 2022 annual survey showed that the employee voice methods used by organisations during the pandemic had a significant impact on engagement. The 2023 annual survey examined additional voice methods commonly used by organisations and supports previous findings; employee voice methods have a positive impact on engagement.

The survey examined the following individual employee voice methods:

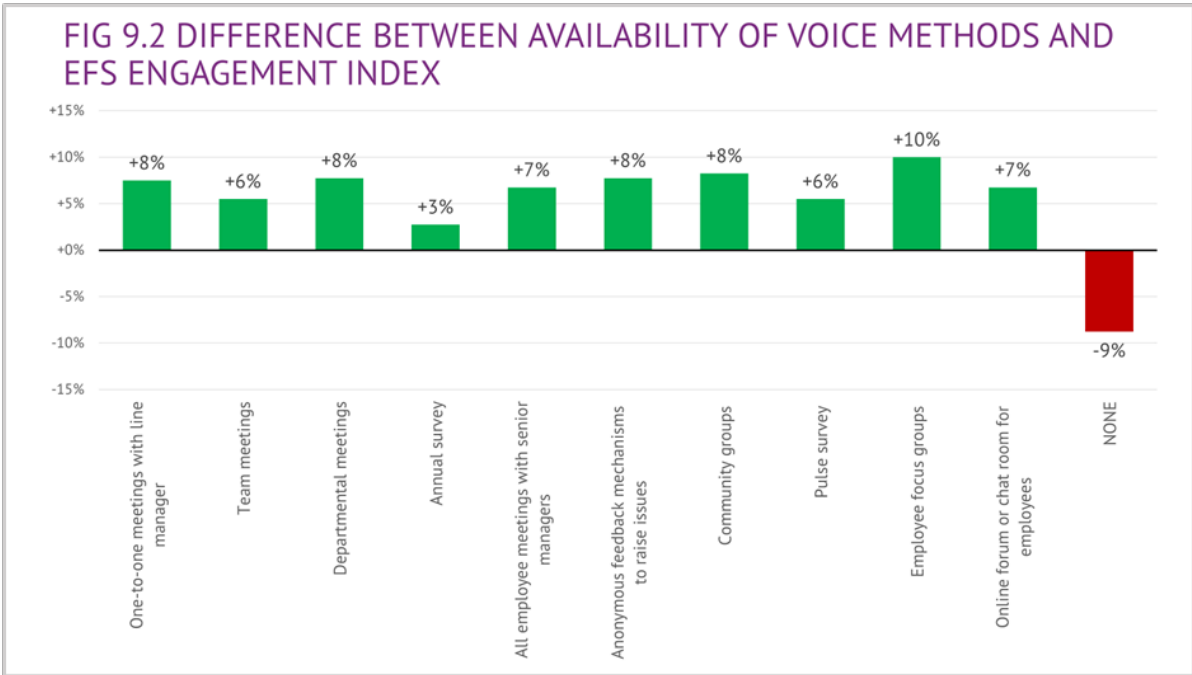
- ▶ One-to-one meetings with the line manager
- ▶ Team meetings
- ▶ Departmental meetings
- ▶ Annual Survey
- ▶ All employee meetings with senior managers

The most common method of employee voice was one-to-one meetings with the line manager, followed by team and departmental meetings (see Fig 9.1). Over half of the respondents indicated that their organisation used annual surveys, whereas only one-fifth mentioned the use of pulse surveys. Notably, only 3% of respondents reported that their organisation did not use any employee voice methods.

Comparing the impact of employee voice methods with the EFS Engagement Index, it is evident that experiencing no voice methods negatively impacted engagement scores (see Fig 9.2). Interestingly, employee focus groups had the highest positive impact on engagement, yet they were one of the least used methods by organisations.



¹⁴ <https://engageforsuccess.org/employee-voice/>



As highlighted in Fig 9.3, using a combination of methods to enable employee voice had the biggest impact on the EFS Engagement Index score.

The majority of respondents experienced five or more voice methods at work (40%), and those in this group had an average EFS Engagement Index score of 68% (6% higher than the current average score). Respondents who experienced one or two voice methods (27% of our respondents) had an EFS

Engagement Index score of 57% (5% lower than the current average score).

Examining organisational size and sector revealed variations in the type of voice methods used. Larger organisations were more likely to employ both survey mechanisms and meetings, while smaller organisations tended to rely more on meetings. The public sector and the third sector were more likely to use both direct and indirect voice methods, whereas the private sector showed a greater tendency to use only meetings.

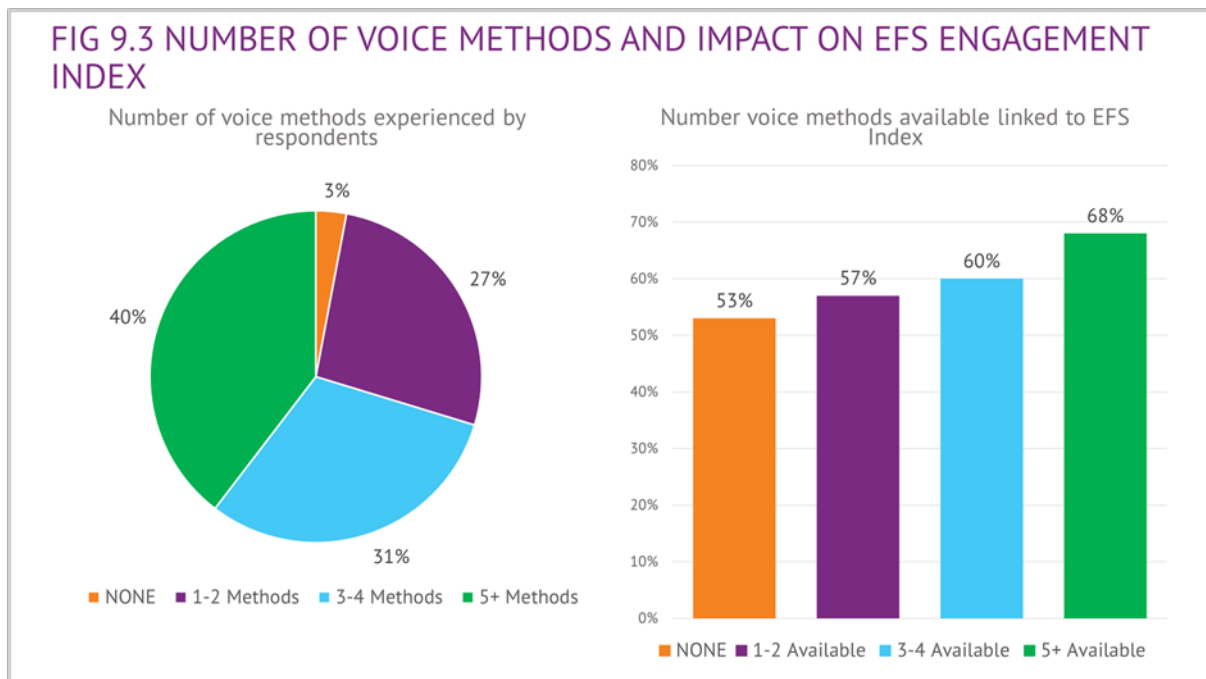
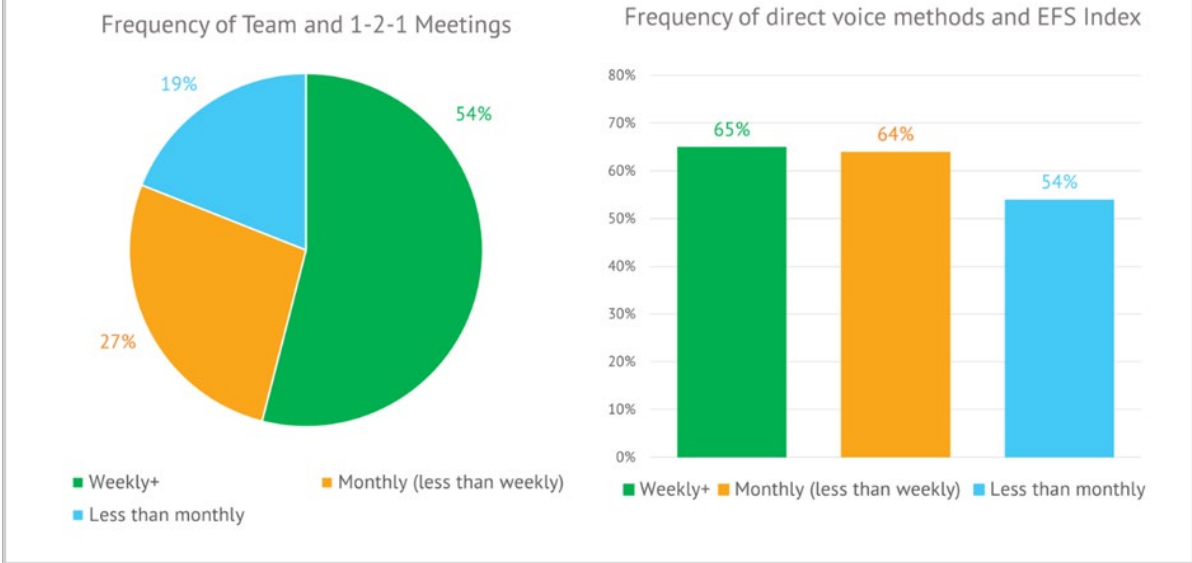


FIG 9.4 DIRECT EMPLOYEE VOICE METHODS AND IMPACT ON EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX



There were variations in the frequency of direct voice methods experienced by respondents. The majority of respondents had weekly one-to-one meetings with their line manager (67%) and weekly team meetings (64%). On average, town hall meetings were one to three times a month (67%). Comparing the frequency of direct employee voice methods and the EFS Engagement Index scores, it is evident that regular contact through one-to-one meetings with line managers and team meetings has a positive impact on employee engagement, with a balance between weekly and monthly being the most positive. Responses were consistent across organisational size and sector.



EMPLOYEE VOICE METHODS ARE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTOR TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT.

MOST RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCED EMPLOYEE VOICE METHODS.

EXPERIENCING A VARIETY OF METHODS HAD THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON THE EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX

A COMBINATION OF WEEKLY/MONTHLY 1-2-1 LINE MANAGER MEETINGS AND TEAM MEETINGS HAD THE HIGHEST IMPACT ON ENGAGEMENT.

10. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The 2022 annual survey revealed a relationship between the availability of L&D opportunities and employee engagement. The 2023 annual survey findings support this correlation.

The following opportunities were explored in the survey:

- ▶ E-learning sessions provided by internal teams
- ▶ E-learning sessions provided by external organisations
- ▶ Face-to-face seminars and workshops provided by internal teams
- ▶ Webinars
- ▶ Face-to-face seminars and workshops provided by external organisations
- ▶ LinkedIn Learning/Externally provided online learning resources

Access to e-learning sessions provided by an internal team was the most frequently available L&D opportunity for respondents. Only 6% of respondents said that no L&D opportunities were available (see Fig 10.1).

The availability of L&D opportunities impacted EFS Engagement Index scores. Examining each opportunity, all methods had a positive impact on engagement, but face-to-face seminars and workshops provided by external teams had a slightly greater impact. This contrasts with the findings from the 2022 annual survey which showed internally delivered sessions had the biggest impact. The absence of L&D opportunities had a detrimental effect on the engagement index score, as illustrated in Fig 10.2. Employees who lacked access to L&D resources reported significantly lower engagement levels, highlighting the importance of providing L&D opportunities to foster a more engaged workforce.



FIG 10.1 AVAILABILITY OF L&D OPPORTUNITIES

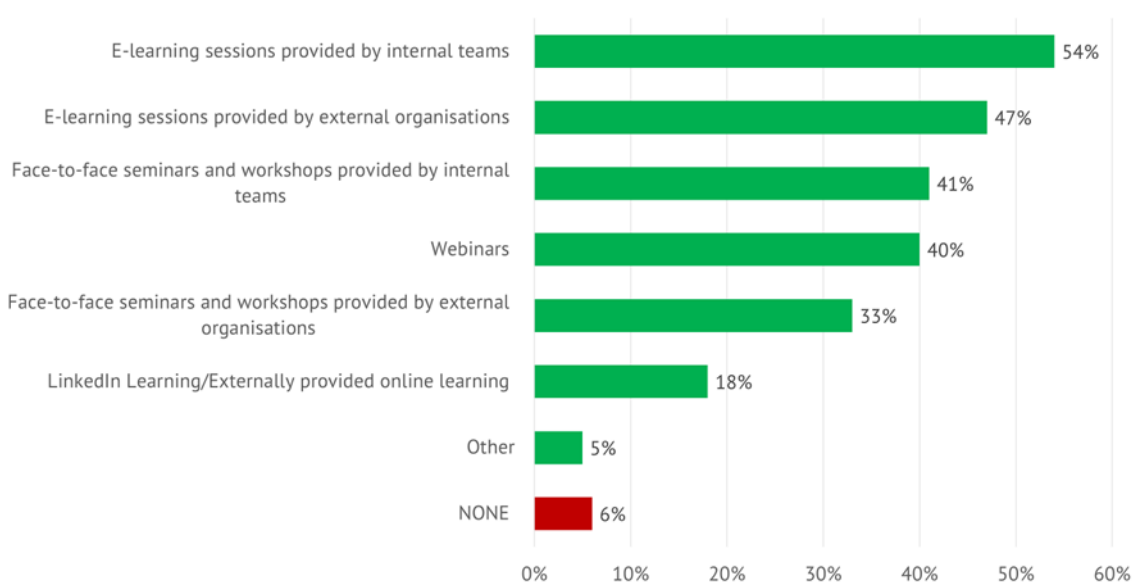
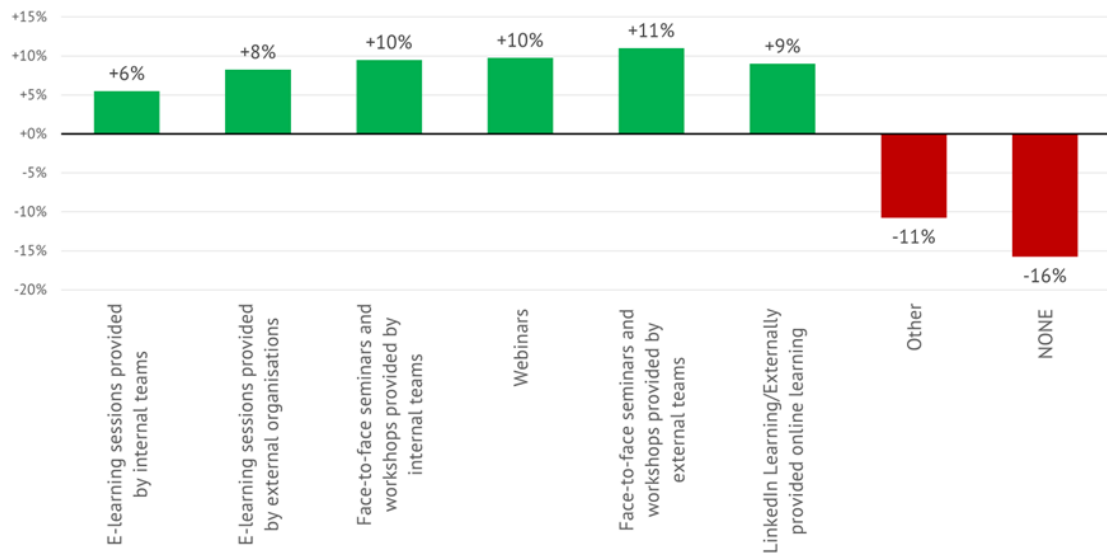


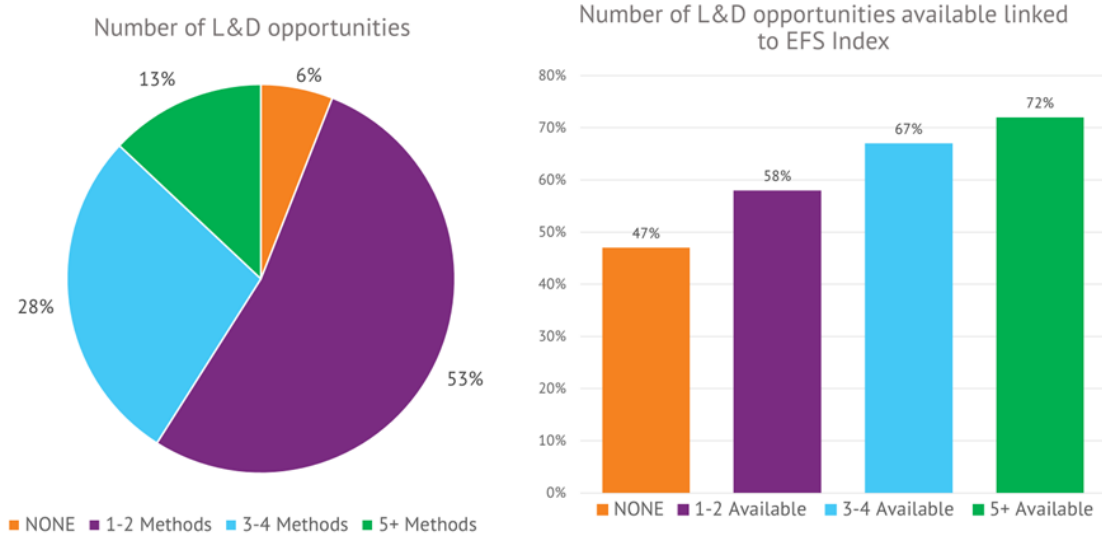
FIG 10.2 AVAILABILITY OF L&D OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPACT ON EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX



The number of L&D opportunities available had an impact on the EFS Engagement Index score. Respondents who had access to five or more opportunities (13% of respondents), had an EFS Engagement Index score 25% higher than

respondents who had no access to L&D opportunities (see Fig 10.3). Three or more L&D opportunities resulted in a higher-than-average EFS Engagement Index score.

FIG 10.3 NUMBER OF L&D OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPACT ON EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX



L&D OPPORTUNITIES HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX

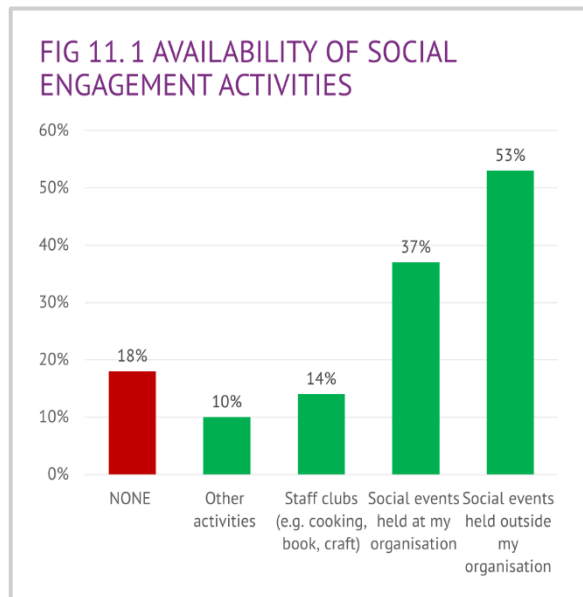
3 OR MORE L&D OPPORTUNITIES RESULTED IN HIGHER LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

11. SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in shaping employee engagement. Establishing a sense of connection with colleagues and team members can enhance an attachment to both the organisation and job responsibilities. Workplace relationships can impact absenteeism, turnover rates, and the inclination to seek alternative employment opportunities.

The following social engagement activities were explored in the survey:

- ▶ Social events held outside my organisation
- ▶ Social events held at my organisation
- ▶ Staff clubs (e.g. cooking, book, craft)
- ▶ Other activities



The majority of respondents experienced social engagement activities at work, with social events held outside the organisation the most frequently experienced (see Fig 11.1).

The availability of social engagement activities had a positive impact on EFS Engagement Index scores. Staff clubs (the least frequently used social engagement activity) had the biggest impact on the EFS Engagement Index score (see Fig 11.2). Having no social engagement activities available, had a negative impact.

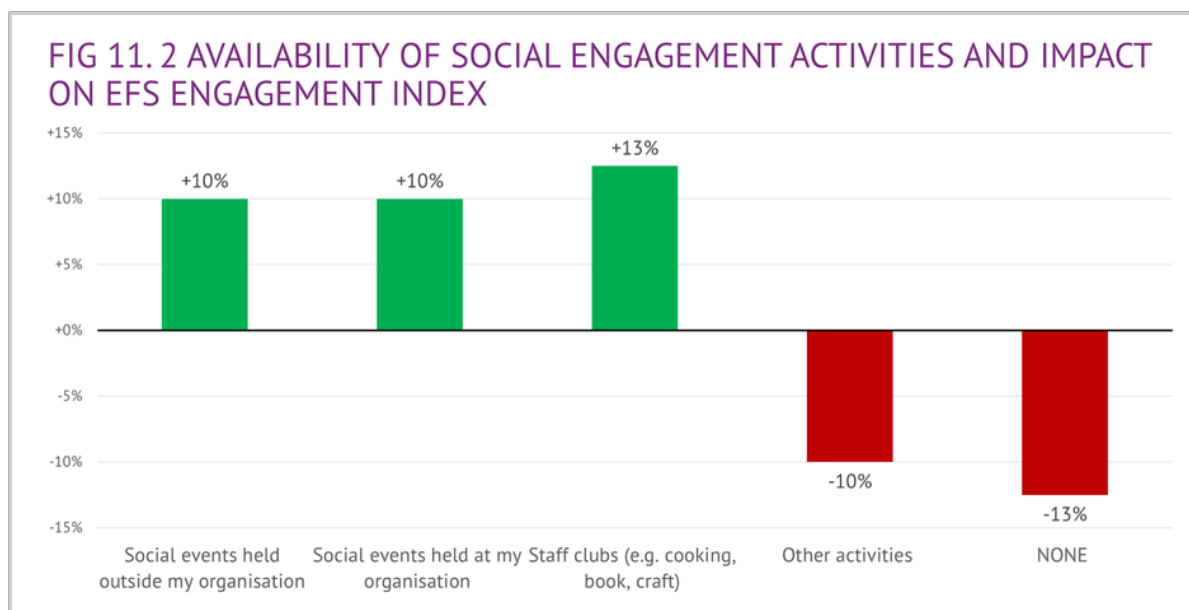
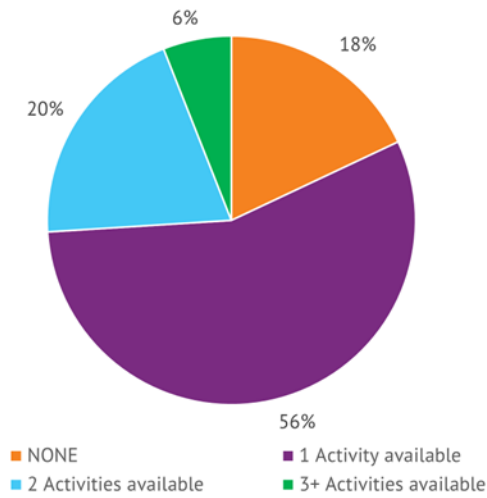
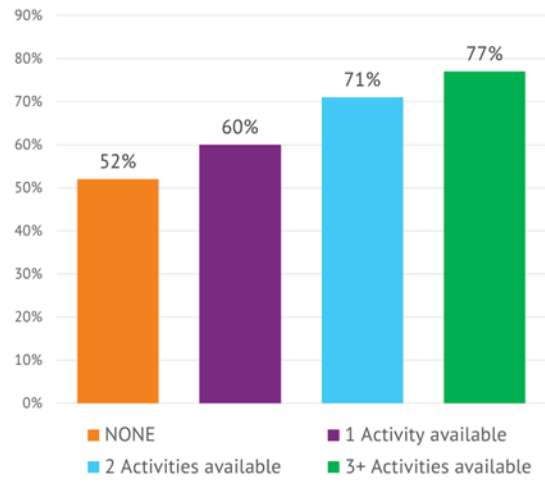


FIG 11.3 NUMBER OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE AND IMPACT ON EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX

Number of social engagement activities available



Count of social activities available linked to EFS Engagement Index



The majority of respondents experienced one or more social activities. Those who experienced three or more (6% of respondents) had the highest EFS Engagement Index (77%). There is a 25% difference in the EFS Engagement Index score between respondents who experienced no social engagement activities and those who experienced three or more (see Fig 11.3).



SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AT WORK HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

MOST RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCED AT LEAST ONE ACTIVITY.

THOSE THAT EXPERIENCED 3 OR MORE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES HAD SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER ENGAGEMENT SCORES THAN THOSE WHO DID NOT.

12. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

A key objective of the 2023 annual survey was to explore employee engagement at an individual level. In the 2022 annual survey, slight variations in engagement scores were noted for sex and ethnicity, but due to the sample size (n=814), more analysis was not possible.

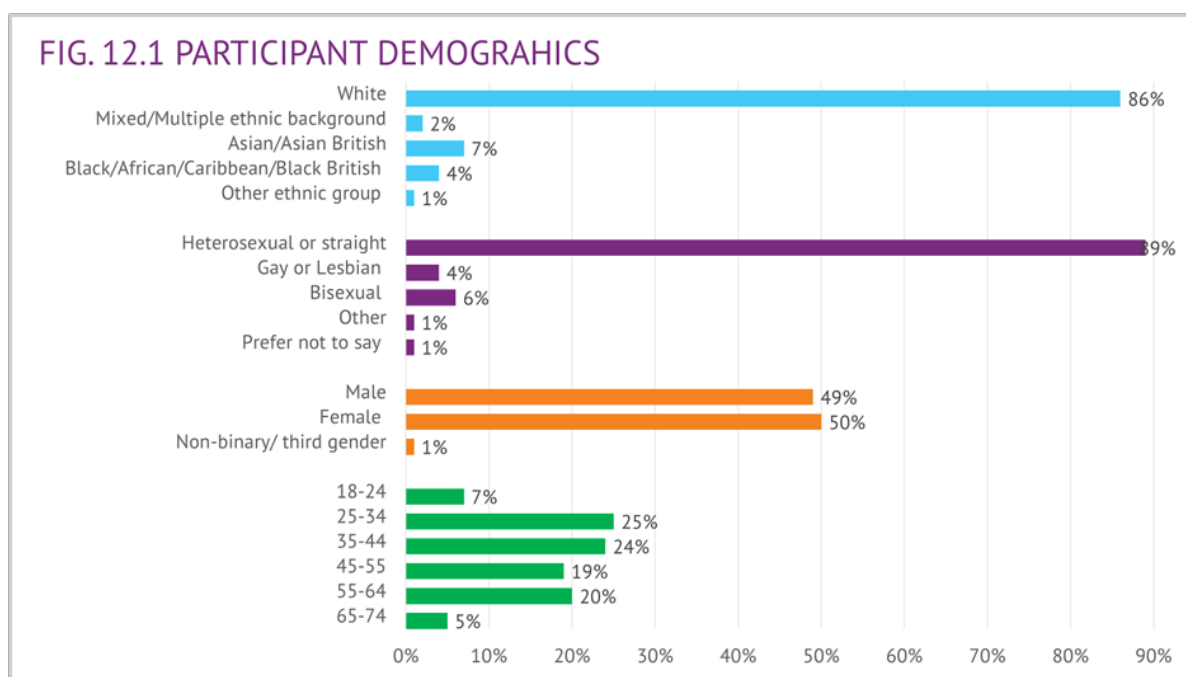
The 2023 annual survey had a sample size of 3,500 respondents from a representative sample of the UK population (across age, sex, and ethnicity) gathered through Prolific¹⁵ (an online research platform providing access to vetted respondents) and collected using Qualtrics.

For the survey to provide a representative sample of the workforce, students, currently unemployed, and retired respondents were

excluded from the sample. This provided a total sample of 3,030 respondents.

In line with the 2022 annual survey, the 2023 survey results are reported at an individual level. Whilst individual employees complete the survey, organisations can not report the results at an individual level without breaching respondent confidentiality. The most granular reporting of organisational surveys is at the team or departmental level (depending on the number of respondents). As a result, they report it by averaging responses across a team or department, which may provide a more positive perspective.

A review of ONS figures for age, gender, and ethnicity at the time of data collection showed that our sample closely matched the ONS workforce levels for ethnicity and gender. However, there were slight discrepancies in age. This was largely due to the age categories reported by ONS differing from the age categories used for our survey. Specifically, ONS does not report on the age of employees beyond 64 years, whilst the EFS annual survey has no age cut-off, with 5% of respondents aged 65 years+ (see Fig 12.1).



¹⁵ Prolific representative sample: intended sample size is stratified across three demographics (age, sex and ethnicity) using census data from the UK Office

of National Statistics to divide the sample into subgroups with the same proportions as the national population.

12.1 RESPONDENT BACKGROUND

Respondent backgrounds are shown in Fig 12.1. To promote inclusivity, official websites were reviewed to ensure the use of appropriate terminology. At the time of data collection, the terms used were considered appropriate.

The majority of respondents were white, heterosexual, and were balanced across sex. A third (33%) of respondents had caring responsibilities for children (aged between 0-17), while 18% had caring responsibilities for adults.

Analysis was conducted across different demographic groups and compared against the EFS Engagement Index. There were no statistically significant relationships across the index with age, sex, ethnicity, or caring responsibilities. However, variations were evident across sexuality and long-term health conditions. While the 2022 survey showed variations in ethnicity and sex, data from the 2023 did not show a statistically significant relationship.

12.2 RESPONDENT FINANCIAL WELLBEING

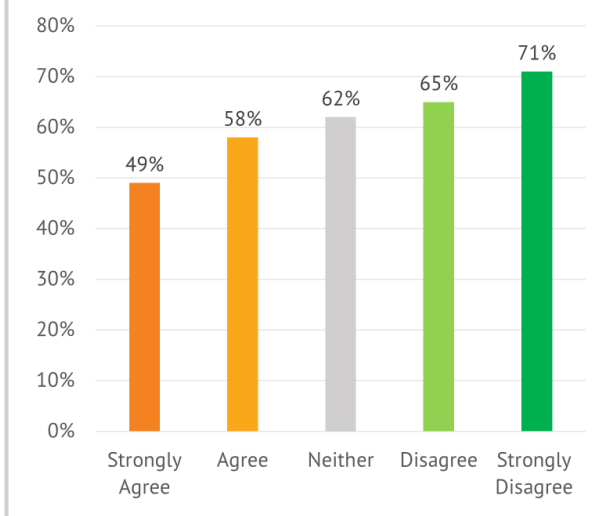
During the period of data collection, the UK was experiencing a cost-of-living crisis with organisations urged to support employee financial wellbeing (CIPD 2023¹⁶).

The majority of respondents were employed full-time (72%), with a quarter of respondents working part-time (26%). The remaining respondents worked on an hourly contract basis (2%). Almost all respondents (91%) were classed as employees, rather than self-employed. Most worked one job (87%). Most respondents believed they were paid fairly for the work they did (54%).

Personal finances were a distraction at work for 39% of respondents, compared to 42% of respondents who said they were not.

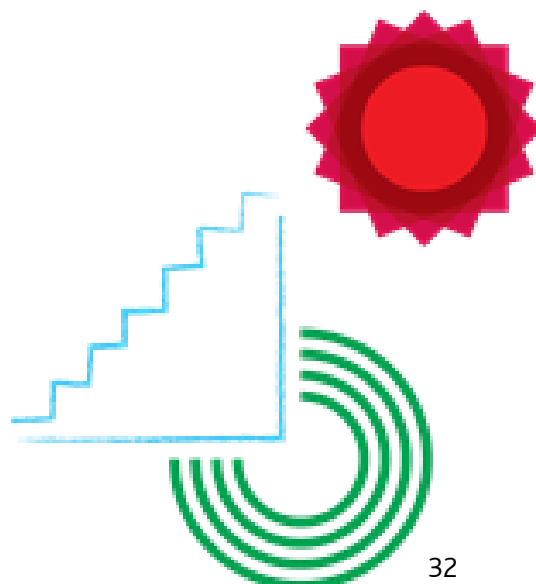
As demonstrated in Fig 12.3, financial wellbeing had an impact on the employee engagement of the respondents who agreed

FIG 12.2 PERSONAL FINANCES A DISTRACTION AT WORK AND IMPACT ON EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX



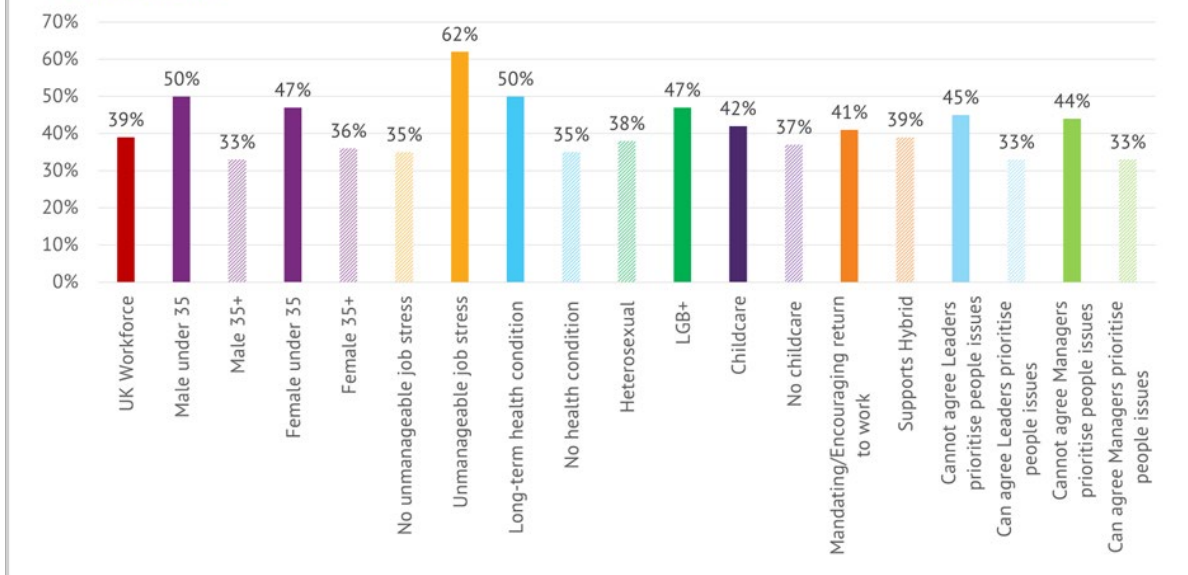
that their personal finances distracted them at work. Over half of respondents who had low EFS Engagement Index scores agreed that their personal finances distracted them at work (54%). This is compared to a quarter of respondents with high EFS Engagement Index scores. In other words, respondents with the highest EFS Engagement Index scores were least likely to be distracted at work by personal finances.

When exploring the background of respondents who agreed that their personal finances were a distraction at work, variations are evident (see Fig 12.3). Males and females under thirty-five years, LGB+ respondents, respondents with long-term health conditions, and those with childcare were more likely to agree that their



¹⁶ [Employee financial wellbeing | CIPD](#)

FIG 12.3 PERSONAL FINANCES A DISTRACTION AT WORK AND RESPONDENT BACKGROUND



personal finances were a distraction at work. Most significantly, respondents experiencing unmanageable job stress were also more likely to agree that they were distracted at work due to personal finances.

Variations were also evident when comparing financial wellbeing and organisational culture. Respondents who could not agree that leaders or managers prioritised the people issues when making decisions were more likely to be distracted at work due to personal finances (see Fig 12.3).

There was no difference when comparing respondents who had agreed their personal finances were a distraction and the sector or size of the organisation.

12.3 RESPONDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Respondents were asked whether the amount of stress in their job was manageable, whether they had gone to work in the past three months despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties (presenteeism), and if so

whether this was influenced by pressure from their manager.

Over half of respondents had worked whilst being unwell in the past three months (51%). This was slightly higher for those in the public sector (56%) compared to the private sector (49%). There was little variation in presenteeism and organisational size.

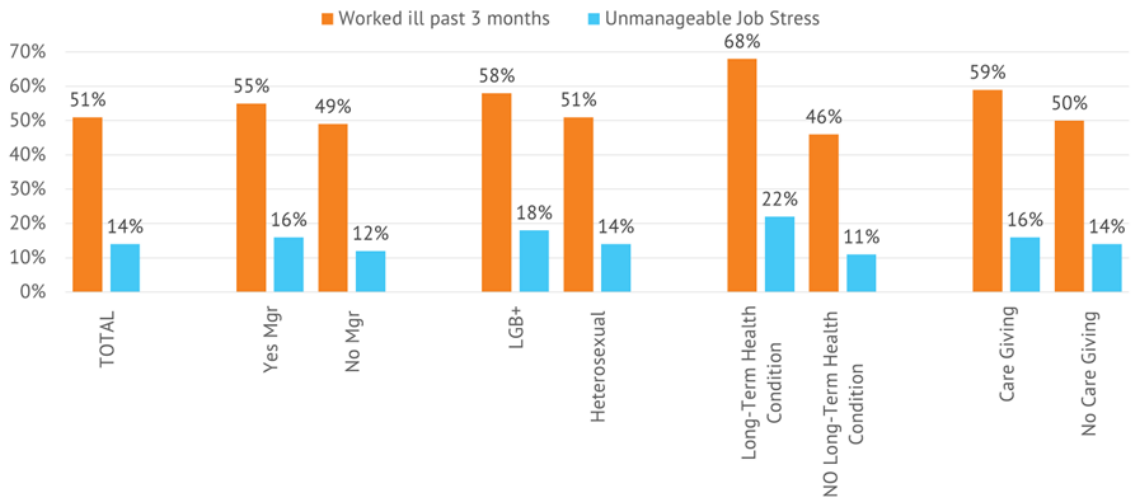
Exploring feelings of unmanageable job stress, 14% of respondents agreed that their levels of job stress were unmanageable. This percentage was higher among respondents working in the public sector (18%) and in large organisations (17%).

Examining respondent demographics and issues of presenteeism and unmanageable job stress (see Fig 12.4), respondents with long-term health conditions had higher levels of unmanageable job stress compared to those with no long-term health condition. They were also more likely to have worked whilst ill in the past three months.

Levels of unmanageable job stress and presenteeism¹⁷ were higher for LGB+ respondents.

¹⁷ Presenteeism refers to employees going to work while physically, mentally, or emotionally unwell, but unable to fully function.

FIG 12.4 RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS, PRESENTEEISM AND UNMANAGEABLE JOB STRESS

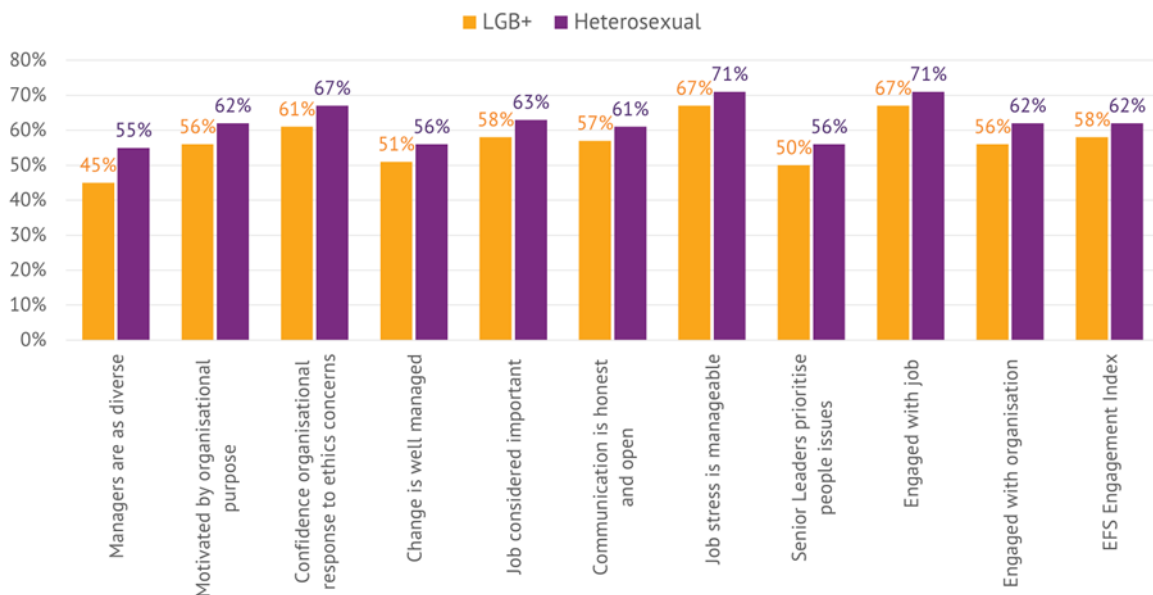


As noted earlier in the report, presenteeism and unmanageable job stress are linked to engagement levels, organisational culture (i.e. the prioritisation of people-related issues), the availability of engagement champion networks, hybrid working arrangements, and financial wellbeing.

12.4 LGB+ RESPONDENTS

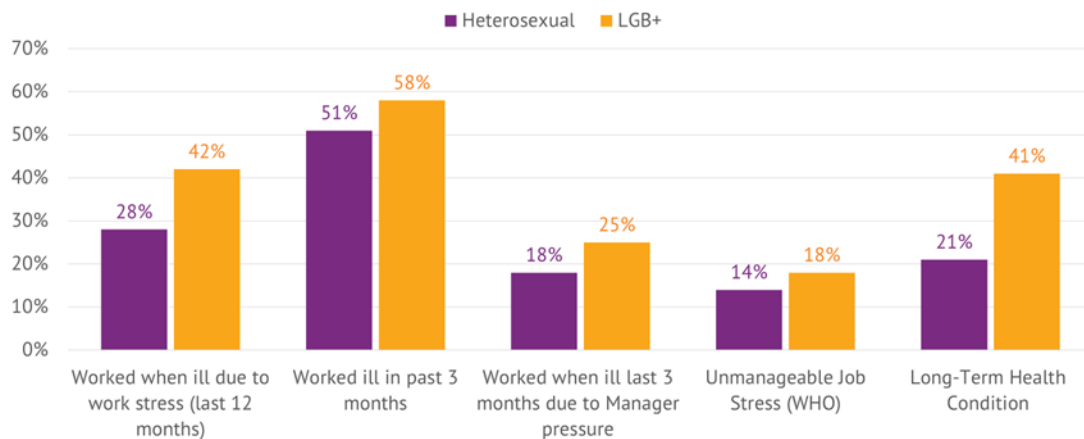
Self-classification of sexuality¹⁸ by respondents showed variations between heterosexual respondents and LGB+ respondents. Sample sizes were not large enough to compare sexual

FIG 12.5 LGB+ PERCEPTIONS OF EXPERIENCES OF WORK



¹⁸ Classifications were taken from official website sources. All terminology will be reviewed in any subsequent surveys to promote inclusivity.

FIG 12.6 WELLBEING OUTCOMES AMONG LGB+ RESPONDENTS



orientation¹⁹. The variations discussed are statistically significant.

Variations in experiences of work were evident when comparing heterosexual respondents and LGB+ respondents (see Fig 12.5). The EFS Engagement Index score was 4% lower for LGB+ respondents compared to heterosexuals. Self-ratings of engagement with the job and with the organisation were lower for LGB+ respondents. Significant relationships were also found when comparing sexuality with engagement using other engagement indices e.g. Civil Service (-3%), NHS (-4%), and UWES (-4%).

As highlighted by Fig 12.5, LGB+ respondents were less likely to say their stress at work was manageable and that communication was honest and open. In addition, LGB+ respondents were less likely to say change had been managed well and that they had confidence in their organisation response to ethical concerns. Most significantly, managers were perceived as less diverse by LGB+ respondents. However, in our sample, LGB+ representation among manager respondents was similar to heterosexual representation. The only difference was in 18–24-year-olds, but this was likely due to a small sample of 18-24-year-old managers. In general, managers were older and male.

There were no significant differences between psychological safety at work, work being

meaningful, or opinions of company culture between LGB+ and heterosexual respondents. In addition, there were no differences between self-ratings of engagement with the manager or engagement with the team, or the belief that managers prioritise the people issues whilst making day-to-day decisions. No difference was found when comparing responses to questions related to the line manager.

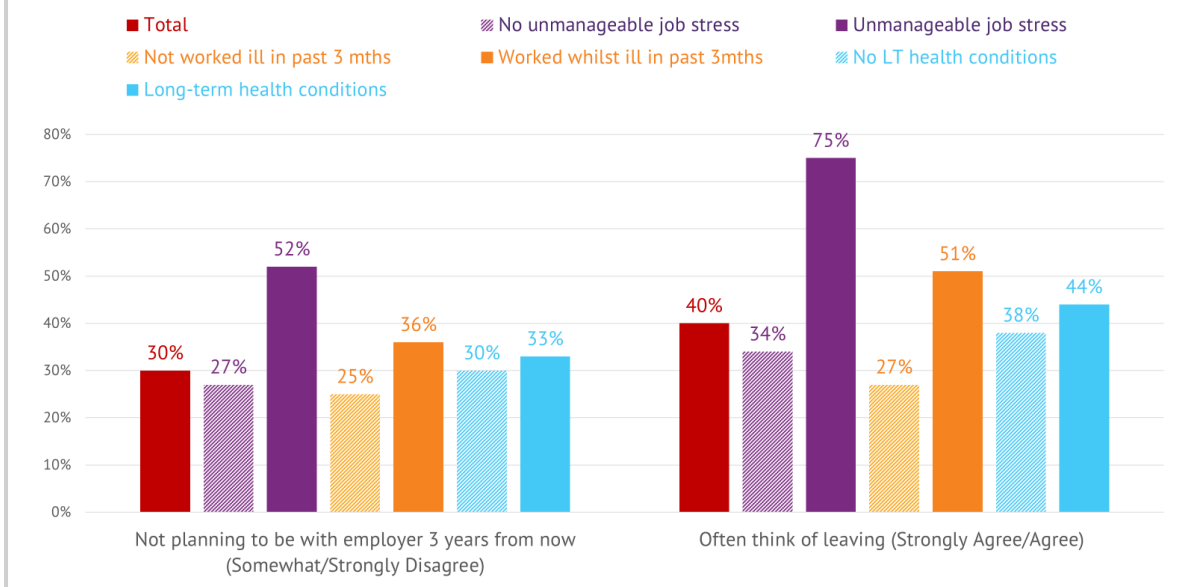
Variations in health and wellbeing were observed based on sexuality (see Fig 12.6) with LGB+ respondents reporting higher levels of unmanageable job stress and presenteeism (e.g. working while ill) because of managerial pressure. Most notably, LGB+ respondents were twice as likely to have a long-term health condition.

12.5 LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

Throughout this report, variations in the experiences of respondents with long-term health conditions have been discussed. Particularly, variation in responses to leaders and managers prioritising the people issues when making decisions, financial wellbeing, sexuality, unmanageable job stress, and issues of presenteeism. For example, respondents

¹⁹ We use the term LGB+ due to sample size and terminology used. This will be reviewed and reconsidered in future surveys.

FIG 12.7 INTENTION TO STAY AND WELLBEING



with long-term health conditions were less likely to agree that leaders and managers prioritised the people issues when making decisions compared to those with no long-term health condition.

In our representative sample of the UK working population, 23% of respondents self-classified themselves as having a physical or mental health problem lasting for longer than twelve months (i.e. a long-term health condition).

Long-term health conditions were highest amongst 18–24-year-olds (27%) and respondents aged 55-64 years old (25%). Intentions to remain with the organisation were related to levels of unmanageable job stress and long-term health conditions (see Fig

12.7). Respondents experiencing unmanageable job stress, presenteeism, and long-term health conditions were more likely to indicate they did not intend to stay with the organisation for the next three years.

Respondents who indicated they did not plan to stay with their organisation for the next three years were more likely to experience unmanageable job stress (52% compared to the average response of 30%). Additionally, they were nearly twice as likely to consider leaving their organisation (75% compared to the average response of 40%).

¼ OF RESPONDENTS REPORT LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS.

FINANCIAL WORRIES, UNMANAGEABLE JOB STRESS, LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS, AND PRESENTEEISM NEGATIVELY IMPACTED ENGAGEMENT.

LGB+ RESPONDENTS REPORTED HIGHER LEVELS OF JOB STRESS AND WERE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE PRESENTEEISM

UNMANAGEABLE JOB STRESS AND PRESENTEEISM SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE INTENTIONS TO STAY

13. LINE MANAGERS

Respondents with line manager responsibilities were asked if they had received training (either mandatory or non-mandatory) when first taking on a line manager role. Responses were equally divided between having received training and those who had not received training (see Fig 13.1). Respondents who had received training had a higher EFS Engagement Index Score than those who had not received training (68% compared to 57%), they were also more likely to consider their work important, and meaningful, and have greater confidence in their management skills.

The level of training for line managers differed from the findings of the 2022 survey, where 63% of respondents with line manager responsibilities had received training (either mandatory or non-mandatory). Comparing the two surveys, mandatory training decreased from 44% to 28%, while non-mandatory training increased from 19% to 22%. Among those who reported not receiving any training, there was an increase in the number citing a lack of availability of training, rising from 33% to 39%.

Line managers in larger organisations were more likely to have received training (either mandatory or non-mandatory) compared to those in micro-organisations (60% versus 39%). Additionally, public sector line managers were more likely to have received training than those in the private sector (55% versus 47%) (see Fig 13.2).



FIG 13.1 IMPACT OF TRAINING ON THE LINE MANAGERS

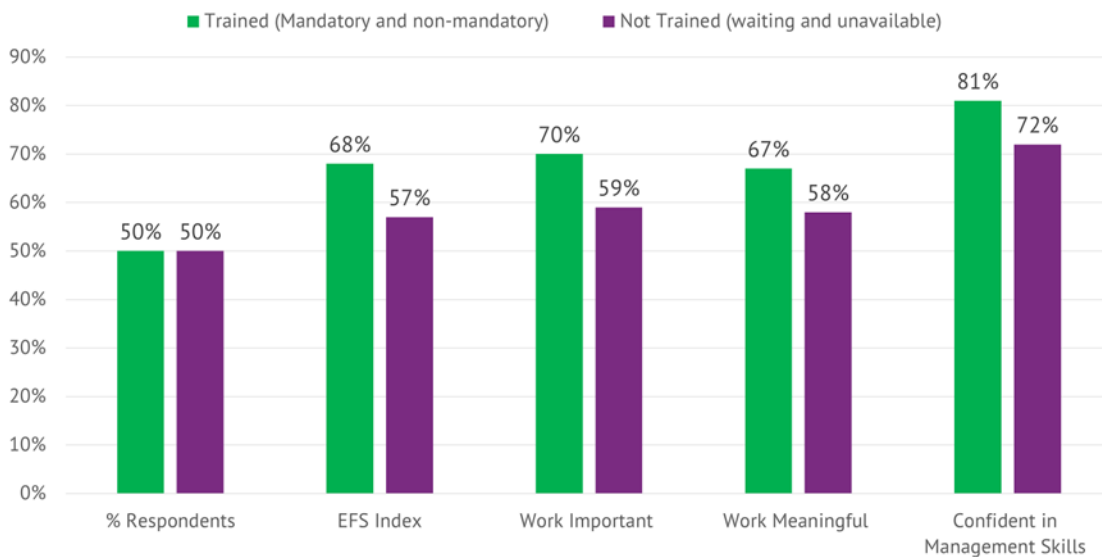
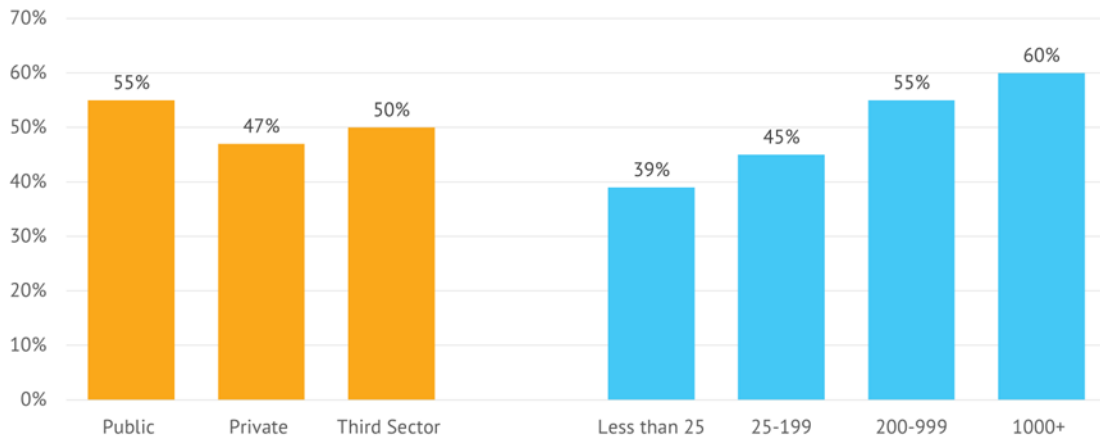


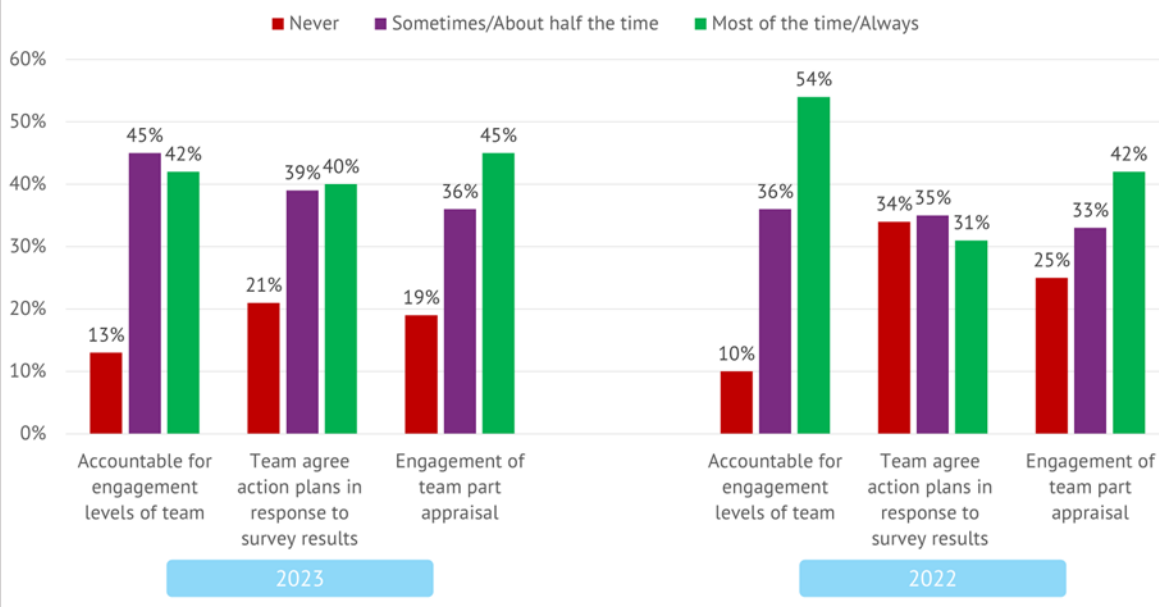
FIG 13.2 LINE MANAGER TRAINING (MANDATORY AND NON-MANDATORY) AND ORGANISATIONAL SECTOR AND SIZE



In the 2022 survey, issues of line manager accountability in engagement scores were explored. The same questions were repeated in 2023 (see Fig 13.3). While the data shows an increase in team involvement in developing

action plans in response to survey results, there is a 12% decrease in line manager accountability for the engagement of their team (54% in 2022, compared to 42% in 2023).

FIG 13.3 LINE MANAGER ACCOUNTABILITY



LINE MANAGER TRAINING HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE EFS ENGAGEMENT SCORES OF LINE MANAGERS.

LARGER ORGANISATIONS WERE MORE LIKELY TO PROVIDE LINE MANAGER TRAINING.

LEVELS OF LINE MANAGER TRAINING AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE ENGAGEMENT OF THEIR TEAM HAS DECREASED SINCE 2022.

14. SUMMARY

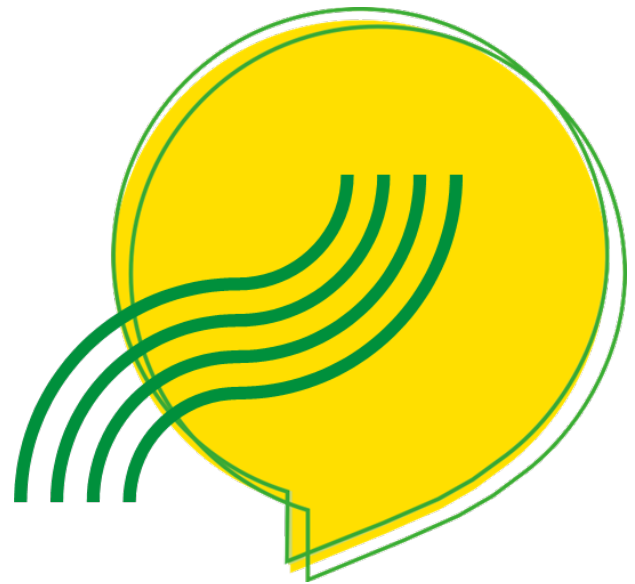
The 2023 EFS Engagement Index score remains unchanged at 62%. While minor fluctuations in engagement metrics annually are common, the lack of increase post-pandemic is concerning. A representative sample of the UK working population (n=3,030) shows no change in the EFS Engagement Index score or self-reported levels of engagement. UK employees are despondent. Present, but not engaged.

To put this into context, the index score represents the average response to three questions focusing on satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy. Rated on a scale of one to five, the average response is 3.47. Converted to a percentage, 62%. In essence, UK employees are in the 'neither agree nor disagree' area. While these statistics are troubling, they are a call to action.

A key finding from the 2023 survey highlighted the importance of senior leaders and managers prioritizing the people issues. Respondents who could agree that both senior leaders and managers sufficiently prioritised the people issues exhibited significantly higher EFS Engagement Index scores (77%) compared to those who could not agree (45%).

Fostering a culture where the people issues are a priority at all levels of decision-making can be a powerful strategy for boosting engagement. Respondents who perceived their senior leaders and managers as adequately prioritizing people issues were more likely to hold positive views about their organization's culture, ethics, honesty, openness, and change management capabilities. They also felt valued in terms of their wellbeing, professional growth, and psychological safety. However, a considerable portion of respondents did not share these sentiments, resulting in negative perceptions of the organization and higher levels of unmanageable job stress. Prioritising the people issues drives better outcomes.

Although insights from the 2023 UK engagement survey emphasized the importance of prioritizing people issues at both senior and managerial levels, it was evident that the people issues do not hold as much



prominence compared to other factors. This presents a significant challenge for organizations. Enhancing engagement requires integrating people issues into leadership and managerial decision-making processes.

The data highlights disparities in engagement across sectors, organizational sizes, people management approaches, and individual circumstances. Notably, organizations supporting hybrid working and utilizing champion networks experienced higher EFS Engagement Index scores.

The survey highlighted the impact of the number of practices offered by organizations and their subsequent influence on engagement. Organizations that prioritize employee development, encourage involvement, provide support, and communicate effectively experience higher engagement levels.

Examining four bundles of practices (e.g. wellbeing, voice, learning and development, and social activities) it was evident that the greater the number of practices offered, the higher the EFS Engagement Index score. For example, respondents who said no wellbeing resources were available had an EFS Engagement Index score of 55%, while those who said five or more wellbeing resources were available had an EFS Engagement Index score of 73%. This pattern is consistent across all bundles of practices and provides organisations with clear guidance on how to positively impact engagement levels.

Findings showed respondents with long-term health conditions had higher levels of unmanageable job stress compared to those with no long-term health condition. They were also more likely to have worked whilst ill in the past three months. Variations in health and wellbeing were observed based on sexuality. LGB+ respondents reported higher levels of unmanageable job stress, were more prone to presenteeism (e.g. working while ill), and were more likely to do so because of managerial pressure. Most notably, LGB+ respondents were twice as likely to have a long-term health condition. Variations in engagement levels across respondent demographics highlight the need to consider the varying needs of employees. By doing so, it can lead to more inclusive and supportive work environments.

The 2023 survey highlighted the impact of the current UK cost-of-living crisis. Over a third of respondents stated they were distracted at work due to their personal finances; they were also more likely to suffer from unmanageable job stress. The results highlight the need for organisations to recognise and address current financial pressures experienced by employees. By implementing supportive measures, organisations can help alleviate financial concerns and demonstrate their commitment to employee welfare, improving overall engagement.

Line manager training was positively linked to their EFS Engagement Index scores, yet the number of line managers receiving training has decreased since 2022. Findings show that training enhanced line manager belief in the importance and meaningfulness of their jobs, as well as their confidence in their management skills. Notably, line manager training is less prevalent in the private sector and smaller organisations compared to other sectors and larger organisations. The reduced levels of training in these areas may have significant implications for employee engagement and organisational effectiveness, highlighting the need for increased focus on training initiatives in these settings.

Variations in engagement levels present organisations with an opportunity to tailor their engagement strategies. By understanding the specific needs and drivers of engagement, companies can implement targeted

interventions to improve overall engagement. This tailored approach can help address the unique challenges faced by different employee groups.

The 2023 EFS annual survey highlights a concerning stagnation in employee engagement, particularly when considered alongside the current economic challenges and flatlining productivity in the UK. However, findings offer organisations an opportunity and suggestions on how to improve engagement levels. Namely, organisations need to prioritise the people issues and embed them into the core of their culture, ensuring they receive the same level of attention as other strategic decisions. It is essential to implement a comprehensive set of practices that prioritise employee wellbeing, voice, learning and development, and social activities. In addition, developing engagement strategies through a strategic engagement champion network can help address local needs and support variations in individual engagement levels.

In the ever-evolving landscape of the UK economy, one crucial factor stands out as both a challenge and an opportunity: employee engagement. Engaged employees are more likely to contribute innovative ideas, collaborate effectively with colleagues, and deliver high-quality work consistently. They are also more resilient in the face of challenges, demonstrating greater adaptability and problem-solving skills. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that the UK has both poor levels of employee engagement and dormant productivity. As a result, it has never been more vital that we recognise the pivotal role that engaged employees play in driving productivity and fostering economic growth.

For more guidance and support, visit www.engageforsuccess.org



RESEARCH TEAM

DR SARAH PASS (CO-PROJECT LEAD)

JAMES COURT-SMITH (CO-PROJECT LEAD)

NITA CLARKE OBE

DAVID MACLEOD OBE

DR YU-LING LUI-SMITH

SERBAN POPESCU

The survey was jointly funded by Engage for Success and Nottingham Business School, with statistical support from Stillae Ltd.



Anonymised survey data and associated documentation are available upon request from the NTU Data Achieve for research purposes, at <https://doi.org/10.17631/rd-2023-0002-ddat>



APPENDIX 1: HOW TO CONVERT YOUR MEAN (AVERAGE) SCORE INTO A PERCENTAGE

HOW TO CONVERT YOUR MEAN SCORE INTO A PERCENTAGE

Discussing a percentage can often be more intuitive than using a mean score. It is also easier to compare. To convert your mean score into a percentage, requires a straightforward equation. There are several online resources that will explain the theory behind how to do this, but just shows you how.

If using a rating scale of 1-5, your mean (average) score will be a number between this range - for example, 4.20. To convert this figure, you need to minus the number by 1 (3.20), then divide that number by 4 (0.80). Finally, multiply the number by 100 to change it into a percentage (80%).

Fig 13.1 shows the different scale points and the equivalent percentage. For example, your mean score of 4.00 would be reported as 75%.

FIG 13.1 EXAMPLE: MEAN SCORE AS A PERCENTAGE FIGURE

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Scale#	1	2	3	4	5
	Minimum possible		Mid-point		Maximum possible
MEAN	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00
%	=0%	=25%	=50%	=75%	=100%

To convert mean scores (using a scale of 1-5) into a percentages, use the following equation:

For example: A mean score of 4.20 converts to a percentage as follows:

The above example is for a 1-5 point scale. If using a 7-point scale (e.g. 1 to 7), the equation is (Mean – 1), then divided by 6. Then convert this figure into a percentage by multiplying by 100. There is nothing to remove in step 1) for scales beginning at zero such as with eNPS. To convert a mean score that used such a 0-10 scale into percentages, the equation is: mean divided by 10 (displayed as %).

APPENDIX 2: HOW TO CALCULATE THE EFS ENGAGEMENT INDEX

The overall Employee Engagement Index is calculated using the average score of each of the three questions. This can be done using the mean score or the percentage.

The following example shows how to calculate the EFS Engagement Index

$$\frac{\text{Overall Satisfaction \%} + \text{Loyalty \%} + \text{Advocacy \%}}{3} = \text{EFS Engagement Index}$$

For example:

- ▶ 68% (overall satisfaction) + 55% (loyalty) + 63% (advocacy) = 186.
- ▶ Divided by 3 to get an average across all three questions = 62%

This gives an Employee Engagement Index of 62%.

Alternatively the mean scores can be averaged first, with the result then converted to a percentage.



Engage for Success

c/o CIPD, The Broadway,
London, SW19 1JQ, UK

info@engageforsuccess.org