

**The Changing Workplace:
A Survey of Employees' Views and Experiences**

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Preface

In 2003 the Irish government requested the National Centre for Partnership and Performance to establish the Forum on the Workplace of the Future. The Forum compliments existing efforts to support and develop national competitiveness and helps to realise Ireland's broader social and economic objectives. Focusing on internal capabilities, it is developing a clearer picture of the changes needed to meet the challenge of building Ireland's knowledge and innovation-driven economy.

A critical obstacle has been the lack of comprehensive data available in an Irish context. Unlike other countries there is simply no accurate picture available of the Irish workplace, its management and of employees' approach to and experience of change.

Therefore, the National Centre for Partnership and Performance commissioned the Economic and Social Research Institute to carry out this survey among over 5,000 employees. Complementary surveys of employers in the public and private sectors relating to their experiences of and attitudes to changes in the environment and in the workplace were also conducted and are published in a separate volume.

The employee survey provides the first, large, nationally representative study of Irish employees specifically devoted to exploring worker experiences and attitudes and is an integral part of the analytical work of the Forum on the Workplace of the Future.

International research suggests that employees will become the thinking core in the workplace of the future. This means that organisations and policy makers must listen carefully to the experiences of employees. This survey suggests a largely positive experience of work among employees. However, there is no room for complacency. The report shows that urgent action is required in relation to information and consultation, access to opportunities and training, pressure and stress and the positive management of change.

I would like to acknowledge each of the 5,198 employees who kindly gave of their time to participate in this survey. This was a demanding and challenging questionnaire and I am grateful to all those who responded.

I would also like to acknowledge the valuable assistance and direction provided by the Chair of the Forum, Mr. Peter Cassells.

The project has been a collaborative effort among staff within the ESRI and the Centre. I would like to thank all the staff involved, in particular James Williams, Philip O'Connell, Helen Russell, Sylvia Blackwell and Deirdre Whitaker from the ESRI; and Larry O'Connell, Julia Kelly, Lorraine Glendenning, Edna Jordan, Damian Thomas and Cathal O'Regan from the Centre.

Throughout the project various individuals and organisations provided inputs and assistance. The Centre's council and in particular Philip Kelly (Department of An Taoiseach), Tom Wall (ICTU), Brendan McGinty (IBEC) and Professor Bill Roche (UCD); and members of the Centre's Research Panel, in particular Professor John Geary, offered detailed feedback and very useful direction.

Lucy Fallon-Byrne

Director
National Centre for Partnership and Performance

Authors' acknowledgments

We wish to thank the respondents, without whose co-operation this Survey would not have been possible.

We wish to express our gratitude to our colleagues Professor Bill Roche and Professor John Geary, both of the Michael Smurfit Graduate School of Business, University College Dublin, who contributed their expertise in this field to developing the questionnaire on which this survey is based. Both made a very substantial contribution to the development of the instrument, and, thus, to the success of the survey.

We also wish to thank Lucy Fallon-Byrne and Dr. Larry O'Connell of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance for their many contributions throughout the project.

Finally, we wish to thank the staff of the Survey Unit and Print Room at the ESRI for their work in preparing, administering and processing the Questionnaires and Deirdre Whitaker and Julia Kelly (NCP), who patiently and painstakingly copy-edited our rough manuscript.

Executive Summary

Introduction

Irish workplaces are changing in response to a range of pressures that include intensification of competition in the international marketplace, rapid changes in the organisation and technology of production and service delivery, as well as changes in the composition, needs and preferences of their workforces.

This report presents the first results of a major national survey into the experiences and attitudes of Irish employees. The survey provides us with the first large nationally representative study of Irish employees specifically devoted to exploring worker experiences and attitudes. The results provide us with a unique insight into the way in which Irish workers experience the workplace and the changes occurring within it. It also provides an important guide for developing policies and employment practices to respond to the pressures for change in shaping the workplace of the future.

The survey was conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute on behalf of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance. Complementary surveys of employers in the public and private sectors relating to their experiences of and attitudes to changes in the environment and in the workplace were also conducted and are published in a separate volume.

The results of this survey provide the most comprehensive information to date on changes affecting Irish workplaces. They provide direct insight into how Irish workers are experiencing their workplaces and the changes occurring within them. The survey confirms that organisations in both the private and public sectors are experiencing strong pressure for change. However, while the results suggest that there has been substantial organisational change in Irish workplaces in recent years, they also cast doubt as to the speed of adjustment and the extent of workplace change.

The survey finds some strong positive features in Irish workplaces. There are high levels of job satisfaction, high levels of commitment to work and high levels of organisational commitment. There is also evidence of substantial change over the past two years and of a willingness to change. The evidence also shows the positive role of communication and consultation in gaining employees' support for change. The survey shows that employees attach considerable importance to opportunities for learning and training in the workplace.

However, a number of key strategic areas arise.

1. There are low levels of information and consultation with employees.
2. There is evidence of an opportunities divide in the workplace linked to educational attainment and social class.
3. There is evidence of significant levels of pressure and stress.
4. The results indicate that there is much that organisations can do to manage change in a positive manner.

Work attitudes and experiences

In general, Irish workers express high levels of satisfaction with work and high levels of commitment to the organisations in which they work. Over 90% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that "in general" they are satisfied with their job. In line with international employment research there are high levels of expressed satisfaction. Satisfaction is lowest in relation to earnings although even in relation to this about 70% of employees are satisfied.

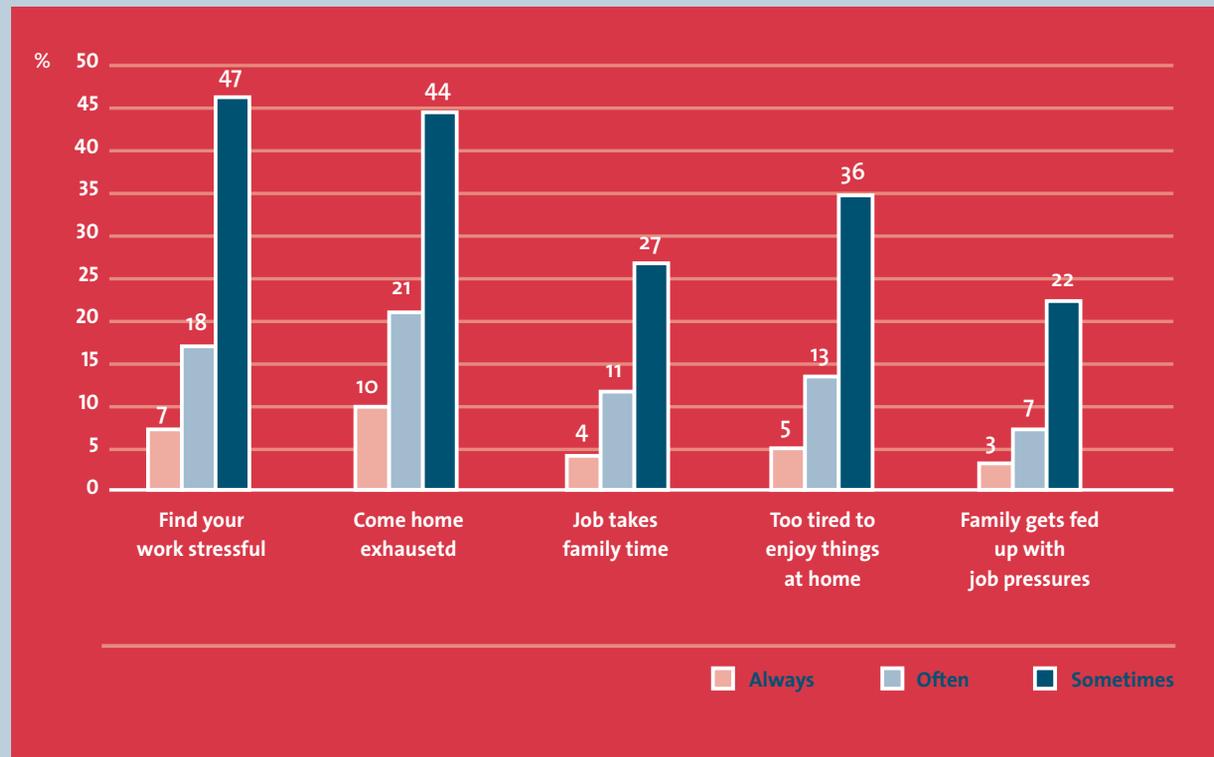
The survey also reveals considerable organisational commitment among employees. Some 80% or more of respondents indicate that they are willing to work harder, that they are proud of the organisation and have similar values to those of the organisation. However, responses are quite nuanced in respect of other aspects of organisational commitment. For example, less than 40% indicate that they would turn down another job with more pay in order to stay with their organisation and about a quarter would take almost any job to keep working for this organisation.

An important aspect of employees' experience in the workplace is the extent of autonomy or control over their work. The findings in relation to autonomy are mixed: 27% of employees have low levels of control, around half (46%) have some level of discretion, but only 27% have a high degree of control over their time and work tasks.

The survey also finds significant levels of work pressure in Irish workplaces: over half of all employees experience some measure of work pressure.

- 82% agree or strongly agree that their job requires them to work very hard
- 51% agree or strongly agree that they work under a great deal of pressure
- 38% agree or strongly agree that they never have enough time to get everything done in their job
- 47% agree or strongly agree that they often have to work extra time over and above their formal hours to get through the job or help out.

Figure 1 Measures of work stress and family/work conflict



Further, as Figure 1 illustrates, a significant minority of workers in Ireland also report that they find work to be stressful.

These results suggest that there is substantial room for developing policies and employment practices to reduce stress levels among employees and to facilitate greater work/life balance. There is also significant potential to improve the level of control that employees have over their day-to-day working lives. There is a negative relationship between stress and autonomy, so that those with less control experience more stress. Indeed the inter-relationships between stress, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment mean that efforts to reduce employee stress may well increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

The study includes a multivariate analysis focusing on the determinants of work stress and job satisfaction, paying particular attention to the role of worker involvement, organisational change and new

work practices in influencing or moderating these outcomes (Chapter 8). While some factors outside the workplace are important for determining work stress, for example family commitments and gender, it is clear that organisations can make a difference. The first area of organisational influence is in the arrangement of working hours. Increasing hours of work are clearly linked to greater stress even when a range of other job characteristics is controlled for. Offering employees the opportunity of flexitime is associated with lower stress levels, but working from home and job sharing have the opposite impact. The presence of family friendly policies is also associated with lower stress. This may reflect a greater understanding of employees' external commitments among those employers who put such policies in place.

Giving workers greater control and discretion over their jobs is also a key way of reducing stress. Involvement of workers in decision making has a positive impact on work stress if this is done through direct and regular consultation. Sharing of information with employees is also associated with lower levels of stress.

Organisational practices are also found to influence employee satisfaction. Greater consultation or direct involvement through participatory work practices, regular information exchange, greater employee discretion (including working from home as an extension of this discretion), and the provision of training all increase employee satisfaction. Reducing work stress and work pressure also have a strong impact on satisfaction so the results relating to work stress are also crucial for employee satisfaction.

The finding that these communication and consultation strategies have positive impacts is important to organisations wishing to implement change, since change is found to increase employee stress and dissatisfaction (even if this change may have long term benefits for employees). Keeping employees informed and participating in decisions that affect them are key to managing change in a positive way.

Workplace practices

The survey asked a series of questions relating to the extent to which various practices are used in Irish workplaces. There is some variation in the extent to which non-traditional working arrangements are implemented:

- About 14% of employees report that working from home is used in their workplace, but only about 8% of all employees are personally involved in working from home.
- Almost 43% of employees work in workplaces that use flexible working hours or flexitime, and almost one quarter of all employees are personally involved in such flexible hours.
- Just under 30% of employees work in workplaces that use job-sharing and about 6% of all employees are personally involved in job-sharing. Women are much more likely than men to be involved.
- Well over half of all employees report that their workplaces use part-time hours and over one fifth of all employees are personally involved in part-time working. About 35% of women are involved in part-time working, compared to 9% of men.

The survey also investigated work-practices relating to performance monitoring and rewards.

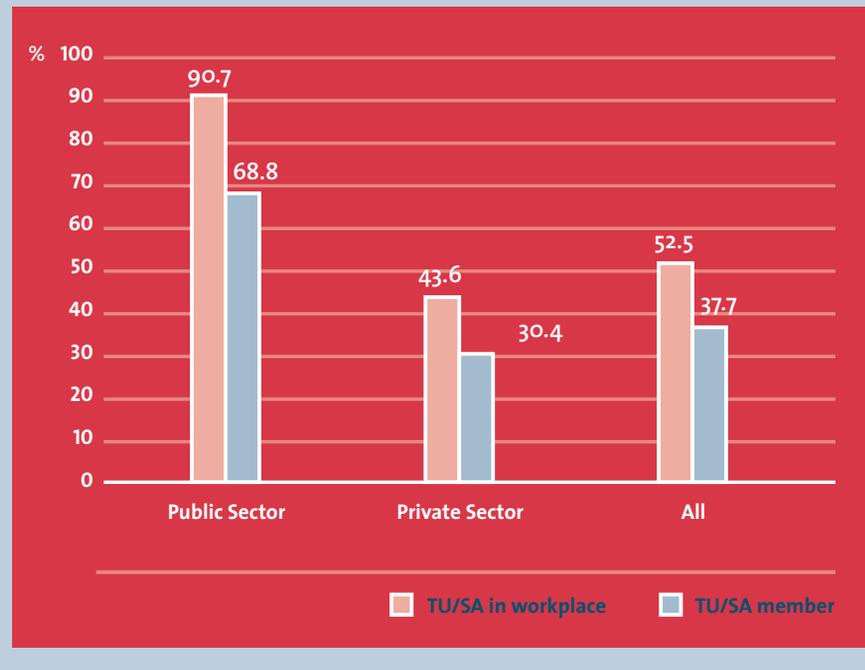
- Overall, just under half of all employees are employed in workplaces that conduct regular performance reviews or appraisals and over 40% of all employees are personally involved in the practice. There are no discernible gender differences in these patterns.
- Less than a quarter of workers are employed in workplaces that use performance related pay and less than 20% of all employees are involved themselves. Men are more likely than women to encounter this practice (23% versus 15%).
- Just under 16% of workers are employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing or share options, although less than 12% of all employees themselves receive these types of rewards. Among those who do work in workplaces that implement these reward systems, well over 70% are personally involved in the practice. This suggests that while the practice of offering profit or gain sharing is rare in Irish workplaces, it has broad coverage within the companies where it is implemented.

Overall about two-thirds of all employees report that there is a formal explicit policy on respect and dignity in their workplace. Three quarters of all workers are employed in workplaces where there is an explicit policy on equal opportunities in the workplace. Policies in relation to respect and dignity as well as equality are more commonly found in the public than the private sector.

Trade unions

Over half of employees say there is a union or staff association in their workplace and 38% of all employees are member of a union. There are marked differences between the public and private sectors. Over 90% of public sector employees have a union in their workplace compared to only 44% of those in the private sector. Union density is similarly divergent across these two sectors: more than two-thirds of public sector workers are union members compared to less than a third of private sector workers.

Figure 2 Trade union presence and membership



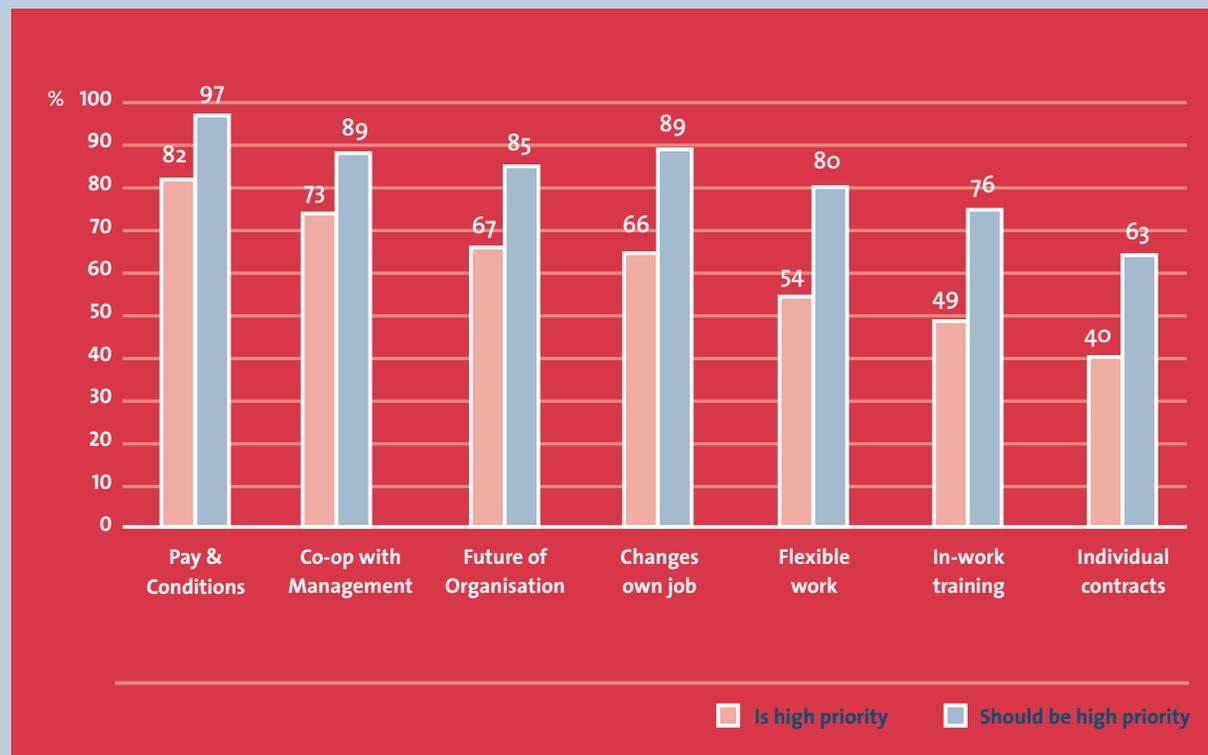
- The presence of unions and union density increases with establishment size. Only 14% of workers in very small firms are union members while membership rises to 55% in establishments with over 100 employees
- Full-time workers are much more likely to be union members: about 40% of full-time employees are union members, compared to just under 30% of part-timers.
- About 41% of employees with permanent contracts are union members, compared to only 22% of casual workers or those with temporary contracts.

In general, trade unions are rated positively by both members and non-members alike. Over 60% of members (62%) feel that the union is very or fairly good at representing their interests. A further 22% of members give neutral answers and only 16% give a negative rating.

Union members are moderately committed to their unions/staff associations: over 70% feel there is a lot to gain from membership, are proud of their involvement, and feel the union record is good. However, for the great majority of union members (78%) loyalty to the union does not supersede loyalty to their work, and more than half of union

members agree that they could work just as well in a non-unionised organisation. There is a belief among members that unions share their sense that pay and conditions are a high priority, however members believe that flexible working conditions and training should be a higher priority for their unions than they currently are.

Union members are more likely than non-members to be employed in workplaces that implement regular performance appraisal, but they are less likely to be employed in workplaces that use performance related pay. Union members are more likely to work in workplaces that offer profit or gain-sharing or share options. They are also more likely to have participated in employer-sponsored education or training in the past two years. In these respects unionised organisations appear to implement more progressive work practices. However, there are no significant differences between union members and non-members in work satisfaction, nor in the strength of commitment to the organisations that they work for. Moreover, union members also display higher levels of work pressure and stress than non-members.

Figure 3 Priorities of trade union / staff association

Note: Excludes those not a member of a TU or staff association

A central point to emerge from the employee survey was that employees expect their unions to be proactive in co-operating with management to better the performance of their organisations. Members also want unions to participate actively in decisions about the future of the organisation. As shown in Figure 3 these issues were cited as a priority by between 85% and 90% of employees surveyed.

Employees also want their unions to provide a broader range of representation. While the traditional concerns of pay and conditions remain a high priority, union members believe that negotiating more flexible working conditions and better in-work training should be higher priorities for unions than they currently are.

These findings suggest that while unions are likely to be essential partners in change in the public sector, their role in many private sector workplaces may be more marginal. The implications of this divergence in terms of the relative pace of change in the public and private sectors, how change is

managed and securing mutual gains for employers and employees remain to be worked out. However, it should be noted that the report also shows that the presence of a trade union in the workplace has no significant positive or negative effect on employees' willingness to accept change at work.

Training

Overall, 48% of employees report that they participated in education or training provided by their employer over the past 2 years. Table 1 shows that training participation is closely linked to previous educational attainment: those with third level qualifications are nearly twice as likely to have participated in training as those with no qualifications. Training incidence is also strongly related to social class: almost two-thirds of higher professionals received training, compared to about one-third of semi-skilled manual workers, and a little over one-quarter of unskilled manual workers.

Table 1 Participation in employer sponsored training in past two years

	trained
	%
Men	49.4
Women	46.1
No Qualification	34.2
Junior Certificate	38.0
Leaving Certificate	49.3
Third Level	59.4
Higher Professionals & Managers	63.4
Lower Professional	61.2
Other Non-manual	50.8
Skilled Manual	48.8
Semi-skilled Manual	34.9
Unskilled Manual	27.9
All	47.9

The terms of employment are also important: full-time workers receive more training than part-timers, permanent workers receive more training than those on temporary contracts.

Training is much more common in the public than the private sector. Training incidence is highest in Public Administration and Defence, followed by Transport and Communications. Training is also strongly influenced by establishment size: those working in establishments with 100 or more employees were twice as likely to have participated in training than those in establishments with 1–4 employees (61% versus 30%, respectively).

Almost 80% of all education and training undertaken by employees with employer sponsorship was general in nature, considered by respondents to be “Of use in getting a job with another employer”. Only about 20% of training was considered to be specific and “of use only in current job.” This pattern, whereby most training is general in nature is similar to that found in other countries.

The vast majority (94%) of those who participated in training consider that it has been of use to them in carrying out their current job. Training was also found to be associated with higher levels of job satisfaction.

Gender

The workplace in Ireland remains highly gendered. There is a high level of gender segregation across the workforce in terms of the type of jobs that men and women do (Fahey et al., 2000). Moreover there are gender differences in pay and conditions, hours of work and contract types (e.g. Barrett et al. 2002). Given these differences we would expect gender to be a significant factor in our study of employee attitudes and experiences.

In the current study we find that gender has a significant effect on work pressure, work stress, autonomy, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Female employees were found to experience lower levels of work pressure but higher levels of work stress. The latter result was found when factors such as occupation, sector and hours of work are held constant. This result may arise because women have greater responsibility for caring and domestic work, since the stress scale incorporates stresses between family and work commitments. Women have less control and discretion in the workplace, which is consistent with gender differences in occupational profile. However, women are found to express higher levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of organisational commitment despite their disadvantaged position in the labour market relative to men. There is no gender difference in general employment commitment.

The survey reveals some well-established and some less well known gender differences in working patterns. Female employees are more likely to be involved in part-time work, flexible hours and job-sharing. However, male employees are more likely to have the option of working from home, which perhaps follows from the greater control male employees have over the organisation of their work.

In terms of organisational practices and features, women are just as likely as men to have regular performance reviews but are less likely to receive performance related pay and profit-shares/share options. These differences may well contribute to the persistent gender pay gap.

Men are slightly more likely to receive training than women, which could have consequences for promotional prospects. Women are less likely to be in workplaces with partnership or participation arrangements than men, and are less likely to be personally involved in such arrangements. However, there is no gender difference in consultation, which suggests that this informal method of involving workers is more successful at including female workers. Female employees are less likely to be willing to accept change in the future even controlling for factors such as occupation, sector and earnings, therefore strategies to include these workers in decision making, which improves openness to change, becomes all the more important.

The effects of social class and education

Social class and level of educational attainment are associated with important differences in relation to key aspects of day-to-day work as well as access to opportunities for training and development at work. Both class and education strongly influence the quality of employees' working life as well as their attitudes to change in the workplace. These differences relate to:

- Job satisfaction and work commitment
- Levels of information and consultation
- Levels of discretion and autonomy
- Levels of partnership and participation
- Levels of training.

Job satisfaction and work commitment: Those in higher occupational groups record substantially higher levels of job satisfaction than those in less skilled occupations. Job satisfaction also increases with educational level, which is likely to reflect the job conditions experienced by more highly educated employees. Occupational status also influences both employment commitment and organisational commitment. In general, employees in higher non-manual occupations are most committed to their organisations. Moreover, the survey found a strong association between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, suggesting that taking steps to address either of these issues will have mutually beneficial effects.

Levels of information and consultation: The survey found that there is quite a strong relationship between the amount of information employees say they receive from managers and level of education, with more highly educated employees reporting the most communication. Occupational class is also strongly correlated with communication in the workplace, with managers and professional groups reporting much higher levels of communication than those in manual occupations, particularly unskilled manual workers. Workers with lower educational attainment and in less skilled occupations also report much less consultation about decisions and changes affecting their work. The higher the level of educational attainment and occupational class, the higher the perceived level of consultation. The overall picture that emerges from these findings is that education and social class or occupation play a dominant role in determining the level of information and consultation that employees perceive they are receiving at work.

Levels of discretion and autonomy: Job discretion and autonomy are strongly related to occupation and level of education. Those in managerial, professional and technical occupations have a high level of autonomy and low levels of monitoring in their jobs. Discretion declines continually with each occupational group with the lowest levels experienced by plant/machine operators who tend to have highly routine tasks which allow little opportunity for discretion either in the pace or the nature of the work. Those with higher levels of educational attainment, especially third-level

graduates, report substantially more autonomy than those with lower levels of education. Women report lower levels of discretion in the workplace than men, reflecting the high levels of vertical gender segregation in the Irish labour market.

Levels of partnership and participation: Professional and other non-manual workers are much more likely than manual workers to report the presence of partnership arrangements in their workplaces. Professionals and managers are much more likely than other workers to report the presence of participation arrangements. Semi- and unskilled manual workers are most likely to report that they do not know of partnership or participation arrangements in their workplace. However, in workplaces where such arrangements are reported to exist, there are high levels of involvement among skilled and unskilled manual workers as well as among professionals. Nevertheless, more highly educated employees are more likely to be involved in participation structures than those who are less well educated.

Levels of training: Participation in employer-provided training is closely linked to educational attainment and occupational class. Only 35% of those with no educational qualifications report participation in employer-sponsored training within the last two years, compared to almost 60% of those with third level qualifications. Only 28% of unskilled manual workers and 35% of semi-skilled manual workers received training compared to 63% of higher professionals. The survey also found that younger workers are more likely than older ones to receive training and the incidence declines substantially among those aged 55 or over. These findings suggest that workers who are least well equipped to deal with workplace change – older workers and those with lower skills and less education – are the very groups who are receiving less access to training.

Communications in the workplace

The majority of workers regard formal communication channels as the most important source of information. Nearly 70% of employees cite management and supervisors as the most useful source of information concerning their workplaces. Another 21% cite “the grapevine” as the most important information source, and 6% cite the union or staff association.

Surprisingly high percentages of employees indicate that they are “hardly ever” provided with information in key areas such as product/service innovation; introduction of new technology; levels of competition; changes to work practices (Figure 4). As many as 36–42% of private sector employees respond that they “hardly ever” receive information in such areas. Even higher percentages of private sector employees report hardly ever receiving information on areas such as sales; profits or re-organisation of the company. Provision of information by management to public sector employees is perceived to be somewhat better than among private sector workers.

The survey also examines employees’ experience in relation to consultation. Employees were asked about the level of consultation before decisions were taken, if reasons are given and the level of feedback received. Figures 4a and 4b show that substantial numbers of employees indicate a lack of prior consultation on major decisions regarding their work.

Substantial numbers of employees also indicate lack of prior consultation on major decisions regarding their work: only 25% report that they are “almost always” consulted; 21% that they are consulted “sometimes” and as many as 27% of workers feel they are consulted “rarely” or “almost never”. We also found that surprisingly high levels of employees (22%) feel that they are “rarely” or “almost never” provided with feedback on why decisions are made. Finally, the same proportion of employees indicated that even when they are consulted prior to decisions being made little attention is paid to their views.

Figure 4a Percentage of private sector employees “hardly ever” receiving information from management in 6 areas of work

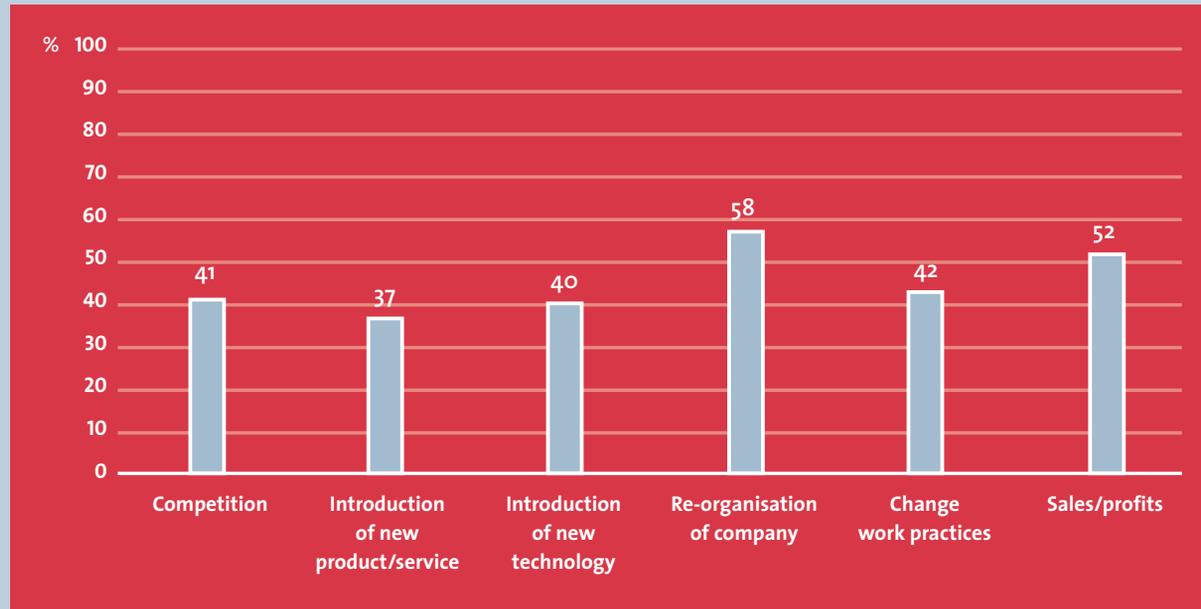
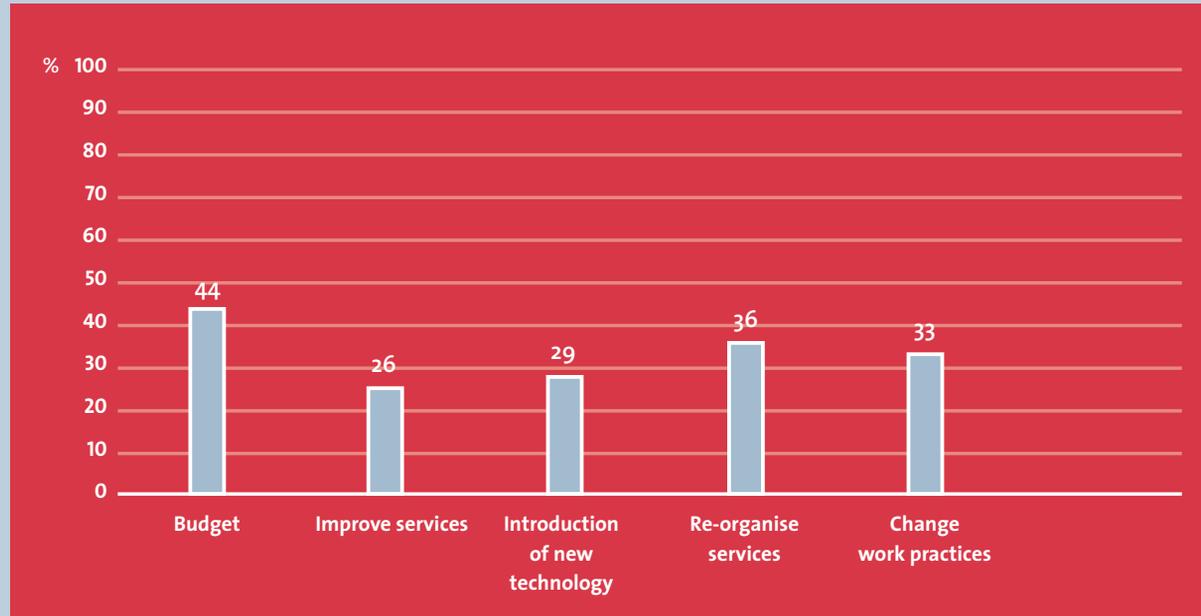


Figure 4b Percentage of public sector employees “hardly ever” receiving information from management in 5 areas of work



As already noted, the models assessing the simultaneous effects of both organisational and individual-level characteristics on perceived levels of information flows and consultation in the workplace show that two factors in particular exert immense influence on information and consultation: social class and educational attainment. Professional and managerial workers report more regular receipt of information from management than other non-manual workers, and much more regular information flows than manual workers, even when other organisational and individual factors are taken account of. We find a similar pattern with respect to consultation about decisions that affect people's work: the higher the social class position, the greater the degree of consultation, even when other relevant factors are taken account of. Educational attainment is also highly influential: the higher the level of educational attainment, the greater the regularity of information from management and the greater the extent of consultation.

Partnership, participation and consultation

Two different modes of employee involvement in the workplace can be distinguished. Partnership refers to collective organisation in which employee representatives work with management to promote partnership and co-operation, or to improve the organisation's performance. Participation refers to modes of direct involvement and consultation over the way in which work is organised and carried out in work teams, problem solving groups, project groups; quality circles; or continuous improvement programmes or groups.

Overall, 23% of all employees indicate that partnership committees involving management and unions exist at their workplaces. And among those employees that report the presence of partnership institutions, about one-quarter are personally involved in partnership committees.

About 38% of all employees report that there are arrangements for direct participation in their workplaces. Within workplaces that implement arrangements for direct participation, the extent of employee involvement is high: over 70% of employees in such workplaces indicate that they are personally involved in such participation groups.

Partnership institutions are much more common in the public sector: about 45% of workers in public sector organisations report the presence of partnership institutions in their workplaces, compared to 18% of those in the private sector.

Participation arrangements are more widely dispersed: about 47% of workers in public sector organisations, and 35% of those in the private sector, report the presence of participation arrangements.

Both forms of employee involvement are more prevalent in large than in small organisations. They are both more likely to be encountered by full- than part-time workers, and by permanent, rather than temporary employees.

Both forms of employee involvement are also closely linked to social class: incumbents of higher social class positions are more likely to report that they work in an organisation where both such modes of employee involvement are present. For example, 25% of higher professionals and managers report the presence of partnership arrangements in their workplaces, compared to about 12% of unskilled manual workers. Moreover, almost 30% of higher professionals and managers are personally involved in partnership committees, compared to 19% of unskilled manual workers. Almost 60% of higher professionals and managers report the presence of participation arrangements in their workplace, compared to less than 20% of unskilled manual workers. However, among those working in organisations where participation arrangements are present, personal involvement is widespread, irrespective of social class.

The pattern of responses regarding consultation was similar across both the public and private sectors, indicating that large proportions of employees feel excluded from the decision-making process and from information and consultation in the workplace. Overall, a substantial proportion of employees (39%) report that their workplace has no formal partnership institutions, no participation arrangements and low levels of consultation. Only 6% of employees work in "high involvement" organisations which are characterised by the presence of all three forms of involvement.

Table 2 Respondents' opinions on the effects of partnership and participation arrangements

	Partnership Positive Effect	Participation Positive Effect
	%	%
Job satisfaction	72	91
Productivity or performance	67	89
Pay and conditions	71	52
Employment Security	70	57
Employees willingness to embrace change	73	86
Confidence with which employees co-operate with management	76	88

In general, respondents perceive the effects of partnership institutions in a very positive light (Table 2). Two-thirds or more of respondents see partnership arrangements as having positive effects on issues of direct interest to employees – job satisfaction, pay and conditions and employment security – as well as of importance to the organisation - performance, willingness to embrace change, and the confidence with which employees co-operate with management.

The perceived impact of participation arrangements is even more positive than that of partnership, particularly for organisational performance and functioning. Over 85% of respondents consider that participation has a positive effect on productivity or performance, on the confidence with which employees co-operate with management, and on willingness to embrace change. However, when the effects of partnership institutions and participation arrangements on both satisfaction and willingness to change are assessed in multivariate models, while participation increases job satisfaction, both partnership and participation are neutral with respect to willingness to change.

Respondents' subjective assessment of the impact of participation on their own jobs is more mixed. While the vast majority consider that participation has a positive effect on job satisfaction, only about half consider that it has a positive effect on employment security, and on pay and conditions. This positive effect of participation is confirmed in the model of work satisfaction.

Change in the workplace

Our survey of employees reveals that there has been substantial organisational change in Irish workplaces in recent years. Change has been particularly frequent with respect to the introduction of new technology and appears to have been particularly prevalent in the public sector.

There has also been substantial change in aspects of workers' own jobs over the last two years, particularly with respect to increased responsibilities, pressure, use of technology and skill demands, but also increased rates of pay. Irish workers have experienced some intensification of pace, pressure and responsibility at work in recent years. When we derive a summary index of changes in the past two years we find that public sector workers report higher rates of change in their own jobs than do private sector workers. Job change also appears more prevalent in larger organisations.

Table 3 Willingness to accept change in aspects of employment over the next 2 Years

	Willing	Neither willing/unwilling	Unwilling
	%	%	%
Increase in the responsibilities you have	74	12	14
Increase the pressure you work under	44	19	37
Increase in technology involved in your work	75	15	10
Being more closely supervised/ managed	41	23	36
Increase in level of skill necessary to carryout your work	79	13	8
Having to work unsocial hours	31	18	51

Workers respond in a very nuanced manner to questions regarding their willingness to accept change at work over the next two years (Table 3). About three-quarters of all employees are willing to accept increased responsibilities in their jobs, increased technology or computers in their work, and to increased skill needs to carry out their jobs. On the other hand, half of all employees are unwilling to accept unsocial hours. Other areas where workers have reservations about change include increased pressure, and being more closely supervised or managed.

The multivariate statistical model of employees' willingness to change allows us to assess the factors that determine willingness to change while controlling for the effects of other influential variables. The model shows that males, younger workers, those with higher education, those in higher socio-economic classes, and those with shorter job tenure are more willing to accept change at work. Public sector employees and workers in hotels, restaurants and bars, and in other services are less willing to change, but workers in public administration are more open to change. The presence of formal partnership structures is neutral with respect to willingness to change. However, less formalised forms of employee partnership and

involvement are influential. Employees who report higher levels of consultation relating to decisions that affect their work are more likely to be willing to accept change, even when other factors, including personal, job and organisational characteristics are taken into account. These findings are significant because they suggest that those employers that engage in systematic consultation with their workers may find that their workers are more receptive to change.

The report suggests that there is much that organisations can do to manage workplace change in a positive way. Employee involvement is critical for gaining the support of the workforce for change. The critical factor here appears to be the extent to which employees are consulted and informed about decisions that affect their work, as well as the extent to which attention is paid to the views of employees. Employees who report higher levels of consultation relating to decisions that affect their work are more likely to be willing to accept change.

Organisational practices can contribute to successful management of change in other ways. The survey found that greater consultation or direct involvement through participatory work practices, regular information exchange and greater employee discretion all increase employee satisfaction. Reducing work stress and work pressure also have a strong impact on satisfaction and the survey found that here again organisations can make a difference through flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies, giving workers greater control and discretion over their jobs and sharing of information with employees. The impact of these practices is especially important to organisations wishing to implement changes, as the positive effects on employee satisfaction and reduction of work stress can act to counter the stress and dissatisfaction that are often associated with workplace change. The inter-relationships between stress, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment mean that efforts to reduce employee stress may well increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Survey of Employees

In this report we analyse the first results of a major national survey into the experiences and attitudes of Irish employees. While there have been a number of studies of Irish employees in the past these have either focused exclusively on managers or have involved rather small samples and response rates.¹ Therefore, this survey provides us with the first, large, nationally representative study of Irish employees specifically devoted to exploring worker experiences and attitudes. It collates the views of over 5,000 employees. The results provide us with a unique insight into the way in which Irish workers experience the workplace and the changes occurring within it. It also provides an important guide for developing policies and employment practices to form the workplace of the future.

¹This is the case in the Irish elements of European-wide surveys such as the European Values Survey, the Eurobarometer Surveys and the European Survey on Working Conditions.

1.1 Introduction

As a small open economy Ireland has experienced very considerable change in its competitive environment and in the labour market over recent years. In the last two decades we have shifted from an economy with extremely high levels of unemployment to one with exceptional levels of growth and employment creation, with levels now slowing to more average levels. The National Centre for Partnership and Performance's Consultation Paper (2003) identifies a wide range of factors driving change in the world of work. These include increasing international competition; changing industry boundaries; technological change; international legislative and regulatory changes; increasing consumer awareness and demands for better quality; changes in the profile of the workforce and the changing needs of employees. These changes in the external and internal environment are likely to have very significant implications for the nature of the Irish workplace.

There is widespread consensus that to deal with this continually changing environment Irish industry must adopt a strategy to produce high value-added products and to deliver services, in both the private and public services sector, of the highest quality. Pursuing this type of strategy has implications for the type of human resource management practices implemented at workplace level. The structure of work, the adaptability of training systems and the climate of employee relations are identified as key competitive levers. Thus talk of high performance work systems, employee involvement, workplace partnership, family-friendly practices, and performance related pay systems figure prominently in national discussions.

However, while most parties to the debate can agree on the conditions necessary for securing Ireland's competitive position in international markets, there are doubts as to the true extent of such innovations in the Irish workplace and as to whether Irish employees are adequately prepared

and trained (Roche and Geary, 1998). We simply do not have an accurate picture of the Irish workplace, its management and of employees' responses and expectations. In this respect Ireland compares unfavourably to countries such as the UK, Australia and the US which all conduct regular surveys of employees and employment relations.

The great benefit of these studies is that they focus on the views and experiences of people at work. As Gallie et al. (1998, p.24) have emphasised, "...they provide the most direct and reliable information on the lived experiences of those who have been subject to change... If there are elaborate managerial policies, with respect to the organisation and regulation of work, that employees are unaware of, then there must be doubts about whether they are likely to be efficacious. If we wish to know whether conditions of employment have improved or deteriorated, the direct knowledge of employees about the changes they have experienced remains by far our surest guide".

The results of the survey reported here provide the first and critical step in understanding how employees experience work in Ireland and whether the Irish workplace is well positioned to realise the vision of competing in a "high-value high skills" regime.

The results also provide a guide of how to develop a model, or models, of the "desired workplace" wherein a shared capital of loyalty and trust exists to underpin employees' co-operation with workplace change. The task therefore is to examine the preconditions, in respect of the nature of work and its management, for eliciting employees' commitment to cooperate with organisational upgrading.

The report is structured in the following way. The remainder of this chapter briefly outlines the methodology used in undertaking the survey, including the questionnaire design, sampling procedures, interviewing techniques and weighting procedures. It also reports the response rates achieved. Chapter 2 investigates the attitudes and subjective experiences of employees. In relation to attitudes it considers the levels of job satisfaction, employment commitment and organisation commitment of workers, and the examination of experiences focuses on the key issues of discretion/control, work pressure and work stress. It explores

how these factors relate to respondents work characteristics and their personal characteristics. This provides important information on the features of employment that enhance employee satisfaction and commitment and minimise the negative stresses (including work/family conflict). This analysis also provides important contextual information on employees readiness for change.

Chapter 3 focuses on employment practices. It investigates the current incidence of flexible employment practices (such as working from home, flexitime, job-sharing, part-time hours) and new work practices (such as performance appraisal, performance related pay, profit sharing/share options). The chapter investigates the types of workplaces and workers who are most likely to be covered by these arrangements. Flexible working arrangements are extremely important in integrating certain groups into the labour market and in reducing the work/life conflicts highlighted in the chapter. The new work practices investigated here are often heralded as increasing workers' stake in their organisation and therefore enhancing productivity. The results show us how common these practices currently are and where their use is most extensive.

Chapter 4 examines the incidence of trade union presence involvement and commitment. Trade union membership is used as an explanatory variable in our discussion of a range of issues relating to the workplace. Therefore, this chapter provides the necessary context to interpreting those results. We examine how trade union presence varies by organisational characteristics and membership rates among employees with different occupational and personal characteristics. We then consider members' rating of the effectiveness of their unions, their commitment to the union and their views on union priorities.

Chapter 5 looks at the issue of training. Widespread access to appropriate training is a key element of any proposed transformation to a high-skilled, knowledge-based economy. Here we examine the incidence of employer provided training among workers with different educational backgrounds and personal characteristics. We also consider the incidence of training across different types of organisations.

In Chapter 6 we examine the current level of consultation and communication in the workplace, these issues are likely to be crucial in managing change in the workplace and encouraging employee support for change. It looks at the type of information currently distributed in the workplace and the extent to which workers views are elicited and acted upon.

In Chapter 7 we address the central issue of worker involvement. This is seen as another important factor in initiating workplace change (O'Connell, 2003). The chapter considers three modes of worker involvement. First, it examines the prevalence of indirect involvement through trade union representation or staff associations. Second, it measures more direct involvement through groups such as work teams, problem-solving groups, quality circles etc. Finally, it looks at involvement through regular and extensive consultation with workers. The chapter also examines workers' knowledge of such arrangements and examines their perception of their effectiveness.

Chapter 8 concentrates on two worker outcomes – work stress and job satisfaction. We consider how the workplace practices, forms of employee involvement and organisational change outlined in previous chapters, impact on employee satisfaction and stress. We adopt a multi-variate modelling approach, which allows us to test the independent impact of firm characteristics, personal characteristics and organisation issues while controlling for all the other relevant factors. The models also examine some of the inter-relationships between job satisfaction and work stress, pressure and autonomy.

The final Chapter addresses the critical issue of change in the workplace. It investigates employees' recent experience of change and their expectation of change in the future. It addresses changes in working conditions (hours, pay, job security, supervision) in work demands (skill levels, use of technology, discretion, responsibility, pressure) and in the competitive environment. It investigates employees' willingness to accept changes going forward and assesses their knowledge/perceptions of the sources of pressure for change.

Appendix A provides an overview of the methodology and sampling process used in this study.

Chapter 2

Work Attitudes and Experiences

In the context of the workplace of the future it is important to identify the factors associated with enhanced employee satisfaction and commitment.

This chapter explores a range of work attitudes and experiences. It taps into a series of different factors which shed light on the quality of employees' experiences in the workplace.

2.1 Introduction

The first set of issues examined in this chapter are worker attitudes. We focus on employees' job satisfaction, work commitment and organisation commitment. The study of work attitudes have formed a central part of sociological and social-psychological research on the workplace. As Rose (1994, p.244) points out "It is widely accepted....that work attitudes are important for understanding the work behaviour of employees and workplace social relations, and even for grasping long-term trends in social relations and cultural values."

The second set of issues examined in this chapter relate to employees subjective experience of work. Here we examine the level of autonomy, work intensity and work stress experienced by workers. The level of autonomy or discretion that people exercise in their work has long been considered a central element on the quality of work and has played a central role in the sociological debates

about upskilling versus deskilling of the workforce. Braverman (1974) argued that workers have been stripped of control so that the execution of tasks has become increasingly separated from their conception, resulting in alienation for workers. Others have contested this account arguing that changes in the occupational structure, in technology and in work practices have resulted in the upskilling of employees (e.g. Gallie, 1991) nevertheless these authors also recognise the centrality of control and task discretion in defining skill.

Finally, we turn to the issues of work intensity and work pressure, which are also central issues in peoples' quality of life and their experience of employment. Our examination of work pressure places a specific focus on the issue of work-life balance. This issue has become an increasing focus for policymakers as evidenced by the setting up of the National Framework Committee on Policies for Work/Life Balance. Here we consider the extent to which employment pressures impinge upon respondents' home and family life.

Figure 2.1 Satisfaction with current job

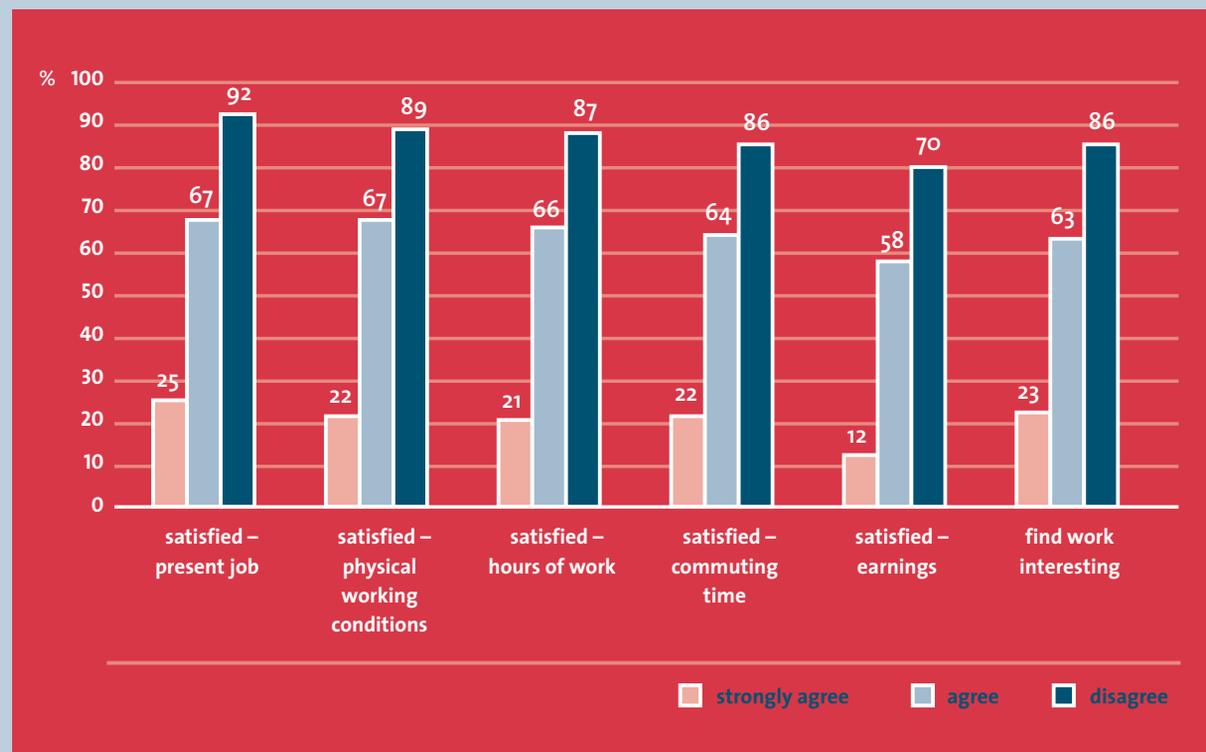


Table 2.1 | Mean job satisfaction by hours of work

	All	Men	Women
Part-time	0.96	0.86	0.98
Full-time	0.88	0.88	0.87
Sig.	P<.001	n.s.	P<.001

2.2 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured in a variety of ways. First respondents were asked about their overall job satisfaction, then we focused on satisfaction with a number of important aspects of employment. These were mainly extrinsic factors such as the physical working conditions, hours of work, commuting time and earnings but included an item on intrinsic job interest. In general, we see that Irish employees express a high level of satisfaction with their current job (see Figure 2.1). Over 90% of respondents say that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that “in general” they are satisfied with their job.¹ When we move from this global measure to more detailed job components we see that satisfaction levels decline marginally but remain very high, with between 86% and 89% of employees expressing satisfaction with physical working conditions, hours of work and commuting time. While 86% also agree or strongly agree that their job is interesting. Given the increasing length of the average commute to work, the high level of satisfaction on this aspect of work is somewhat surprising.² The lowest satisfaction levels are recorded on earnings where 30% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that they are satisfied with their earnings.

These high levels of expressed job satisfaction are a common feature of employment research and are not altogether unsurprising. First, we would expect that those who are relatively dissatisfied with their job will seek to change it (within the constraints of available job opportunities), while those who are

satisfied will remain longer in that job. Second, there may be some response bias, as to admit to tolerating high dissatisfaction levels may appear irrational or humiliating (Rose, 1994, p.250). A satisfaction scale was constructed based on respondents’ average scores on each of the six questions outlined above, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction.³ The high overall satisfaction levels expressed on these type of measure means that it is often more meaningful to examine the relativities between groups as we do in the following tables rather than concentrating on the overall scores.

The relationship between job/organisational characteristics and job satisfaction

Here we examine the relationship between job satisfaction and a range of job and workplace characteristics, these are – hours of work, temporary/permanent contract, occupational class, sector, and size of organisation.

We look first at the influence of contractual arrangements i.e. hours of work and nature of contract. Those working part-time (defined as less than 30 hours per week) are found to express higher levels of job satisfaction than those working full-time. Further analysis shows that this effect is confined to female employees. Male part-time employees are no more or less satisfied than men working full-time.

The remaining job and organisational characteristics are examined in Table 2.2. In terms of security of contract those with permanent contracts are

1. The response categories for each of these questions were strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

2. Further analysis shows that satisfaction with commuting time is somewhat lower in Dublin (77%) than elsewhere (89%) a similar score is found if we include the surrounding counties Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow (79% satisfied). Satisfaction with commuting time among respondents in Cork City and Limerick City are not significantly different to the rest of the sample. However, this regional breakdown can provide only a very rough proxy for people’s actual commuting time.

3. The responses were scored 2 for “strongly agree”, 1 for “agree”, -1 for “disagree” and -2 for “strongly disagree”, the scale therefore ranges from minus 2 to plus 2. Those recorded as missing on any item are excluded from the final index. This is how missing values are treated in all of the scales unless otherwise stated.

Table 2.2 Mean job satisfaction by job and organisational characteristics

	Satisfaction Score ¹
Permanent	0.91
Temp/Casual	0.82
Occupation²	
Legislators/Senior Officials/Managers	.96
Professionals	1.00
Technicians/Assoc Professionals	.95
Clerks	.94
Service Work/Shop Mkt Sales	.84
Skill agriculture/fishery	.79
Craft & related trades	.93
Plant/machine operators	.79
Elementary Occupations	.74
Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector	
Construction	.89
Wholesale Retail	.89
Hotel Restaurants	.72
Transport Storage Communications	.85
Finance & Other Business Services	.90
Public Administration & Defence	.94
Education	1.09
Health	.92
Other Services	.89
Public Sector	
Private (& Commercial Semi-State)	.88
Size of Workplace (Local Unit)	
1-4	1.01
5-19	.94
20-99	.92
100+	.89
Total	
¹ The scale ranges from -2 to +2. Higher scores indicate greater satisfaction.	
² ISCO classification.	

significantly more satisfied with their jobs than those on casual, temporary or fixed-term contracts. Occupation also has a significant impact on job satisfaction. Those in higher occupational groups record substantially higher levels of job satisfaction than those in less skilled occupations. For example, the average score for professionals is 1.00 while for those in elementary occupations (which includes unskilled manual and non-manual occupations) the mean score is only .74. In general, those in manual jobs have lower job satisfaction than those in white collar occupations.

The sector in which one is located also influences satisfaction score. Those employed in the public sector are more satisfied than employees in the private sector. The satisfaction rates across industrial sector are consistent with this finding as the highest levels of satisfaction are recorded in Education, Health and Public Admin./Defence the three sectors which are predominantly public sector. By far the lowest satisfaction levels are recorded in the Hotel/Restaurant Industry. Satisfaction levels in the remaining industries are clustered quite closely together.

Our analysis found that working in a very small organisations with less than 5 employees was found to enhance job satisfaction but the differences between the other size categories was not significant.

Relationship between individual characteristics and job satisfaction

In this section we consider whether job satisfaction levels are influenced by individual level characteristics. We split these characteristics into two groups; personal and family. Gender does not significantly effect job satisfaction at the general level, but as we saw with part-time hours, it may interact with other variables.

Age is significant. Our analysis found that the two younger age groups have significantly lower satisfaction levels than those aged 40 and over.

We then consider two central “human capital” characteristics – education and tenure which are found to have a strong impact on objective labour market outcomes such as pay, occupational level etc. Job satisfaction levels increase with educational level

Table 2.3 Job satisfaction by personal characteristics

	Mean Satisfaction Score
Male	.88
Female	.91
Age	
Under 25 years	.85
25-39 years	.88
40-54 years	.92
55 years & over	.99
Education Level¹	
No qualifications	.81
Junior/Inter cert level	.87
Leaving Certificate	.89
Third Level or Equivalent	.96
Tenure	
Less than 1 year	.85
1-5 years	.86
Over 5 years	.94
Union membership	
Union member	.89
Non-union member	.90

¹ PLCs are included with Leaving Cert, and Diplomas are included in the third level or equivalent category.

which is likely to reflect the job conditions experienced by these groups. Job tenure also has a positive relationship with job satisfaction but only at the five-year point (which is consistent with the arguments outlined above that those who are more satisfied are more likely to remain in the job and perhaps those who cannot move adjust their expectations). Trade Union membership has no significant impact on overall job satisfaction.

Finally we look at the relationship between job satisfaction and family status. We looked at two measures, one which was based on parental status only and another which included partnership status. Neither has an influence on job satisfaction. Further tests showed that there was no effect for either men or women.

Employment commitment and organisational commitment

A common means of measuring people's general work commitment is to examine whether employment is valued in itself, rather than simply as a source of income (Warr, 1982). This measure incorporates both those for whom employment is some form of social or moral duty as well as those who look to employment as a source of self-fulfilment. This definition does not imply that those who attach importance to pay are uncommitted to their work: only those with a purely instrumental approach to employment are defined here as uncommitted. To measure non-financial employment commitment respondents whether:

If you were to get enough money to live as comfortably as you would like for the rest of your life, would you continue to work, not necessarily in your present job, or would you stop working?

Our survey found that over two-thirds (68%) of employees would want to work even if there was no financial necessity. This is somewhat higher than the level of non-financial commitment found in the 1996 Eurobarometer survey for Ireland, which asked the same question. Then it was found that 62% of those in work would continue to do so irrespective of financial necessity (Gallie, 1997). That survey also included the self-employed who tend to be more committed to work than employees (Russell, 1998), which suggests that work commitment has increased in the intervening period.

Table 2.4 Job satisfaction by family status*

	Satisfaction Score
No Children < 18 years	.89
Youngest < 5 years	.89
Youngest 6-17 years	.89
Family Status	
Couple & children (< 18 years)	.90
Couple no children (< 18 years)	.93
Single & children (< 18 years)	.88
Single no children (< 18 years)	.87

The satisfaction score ranges from -2 to +2.
* note further analysis controlling for gender showed that neither family status measure was related to job satisfaction for women or men.

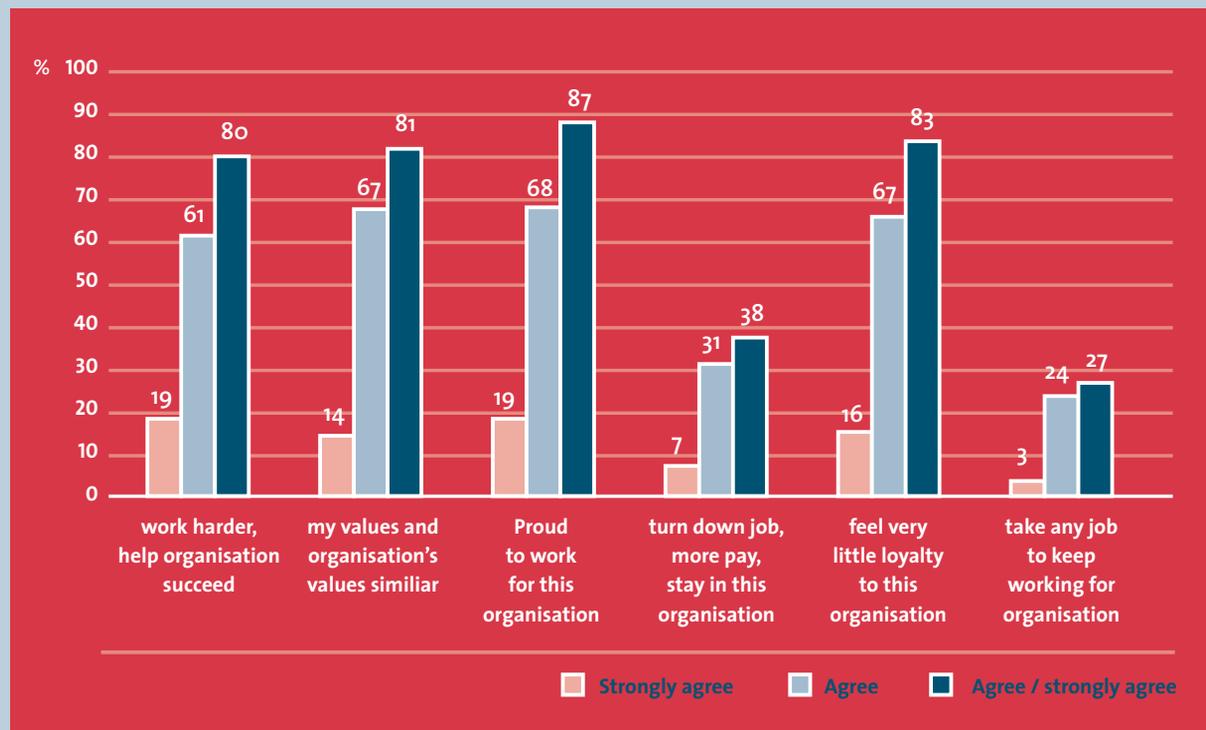
Commitment to work in general can be distinguished from the second aspect of work orientation examined here – organisational commitment. This involves a person’s loyalty to a particular organisation and the extent to which he or she shares its goals and values (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990). To assess organisational commitment respondents were asked to agree or disagree with six statements:

- I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation succeed
- I am proud to be working for this organisation
- I would turn down another job with more pay in order to stay with this organisation
- My values and the organisation’s values are very similar
- I feel little loyalty to the organisation that I work for
- I would take almost any job to keep working for this organisation.

Responses to these six items were combined to form an index of organisational commitment based on respondents’ average across the six items. The scale ranges from –2 to +2 and higher scores indicate higher levels of organisational commitment.

Organisational commitment is found to vary significantly by contract status, not surprisingly those on non-permanent contracts are significantly less committed to the organisations for which they work. This result has also been found in a range of EU countries (Russell, 1999) and is a trade-off which employers must consider in deciding on contract types. This low organisational commitment does not reflect a low work commitment among those on temporary contracts as they are more likely to say that they would continue to work even if there was no financial necessity. A number of authors have argued that job insecurity in the form of unemployment can underline the intrinsic importance of work in people’s lives and therefore increase non-financial employment commitment. A similar process may be behind these results for non-permanent workers.

Figure 2.2 Organisational commitment



* The response categories presented for this variable are disagree and disagree strongly as the statement is phrased negatively.

Table 2.5 Work commitment and organisational commitment by job characteristics

	% would work without financial need	Organisational commitment score ¹
Part-time	67.5	.44
Full-time	67.8	.40
Permanent	66.4	.42
Temp/Casual	74.9	.29
Manufacturing Industry & Primary	63.2	.35
Construction	66.9	.37
Wholesale Retail	64.0	.41
Hotel Restaurants	71.7	.22
Transport Storage Communications	63.2	.32
Finance & Other Business Services	70.0	.35
Public Administration & Defence	74.5	.54
Education	72.3	.61
Health	70.3	.49
Other Services	72.3	.52
Public Sector	73.0	.53
Private Sector	66.5	.37
Size Local Unit		
1-4	72.7	.56
5-19	69.9	.40
20-99	65.8	.37
100+	65.8	.37
Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers	64.8	.53
Professionals	76.5	.48
Technicians/Assoc Professionals	68.9	.46
Clerks	70.7	.45
Service work, Shop & Sales	68.5	.36
Skilled Agriculture & Fishery	90.7	.21
Craft & Related Trades	67.6	.38
Plant/machine operators	59.4	.28
Elementary Occupations	57.6	.27

¹The organisational commitment scale ranges from -2 to +2 and higher scores indicate higher commitment.
²armed service occupational group not reported because of small numbers.

Part-time workers are no less committed either to employment or to their employing organisations than full-time workers, which contradicts those who conflate hours of work and commitment (e.g. Hakim, 1998).

The industrial sector has a strong influence on organisational commitment and again the main split is between public and private sectors. Overall, public sector workers have a commitment score of .53 compared to .37 for private sector workers. The highest organisational commitment levels are recorded for those in the education sector, followed by the public administration/defence sector, other services and health sectors. As with job satisfaction those in the hotel/restaurant sector record exceptionally low levels of organisational commitment.

Non-financial employment commitment also varies among employees in different sectors but the gaps between sectors are not as wide. For example, general commitment among those in the hotel/restaurant and the financial services/business sector is as high or higher than employees in the health sector.

The size of the workplace is found to be related to both general employment commitment and organisational commitment. In both cases it is those in smaller organisations/firms that are most committed, particularly those in workplaces of less than five people.

Finally, occupational position is found to influence both employment commitment and organisational commitment. In general employees in the higher non-manual occupations are most committed to their employing organisations. Those with the lowest organisational commitment are skilled agricultural workers (which is a small group $n=45$), plant/machine operators and workers elementary occupations. This is likely to reflect the poorer working conditions in these occupations. The relationship between general employment commitment and occupation follows a somewhat similar pattern, however, here it is professionals and skilled agricultural workers who record the highest levels of commitment.

It is interesting that many of the job characteristics that were associated with high job satisfaction are also associated with higher organisational commitment. Indeed there is a high correlation between respondents' job satisfaction score and organisational commitment score (Pearsons' $R = .61$). This suggests that taking steps to address either of these issues will have mutually beneficial effects.

Personal characteristics and commitment

Male and female employees are found to have the same level of non-financial employment commitments, however, women record a somewhat higher level of organisational commitment. There are different age trends for employment and organisational commitment: employment commitment decreases with age especially among those approaching retirement (a result also found in international research, Loscocco and Kalleberg, 1988). However, organisational commitment increases with age. This may be associated with increased tenure or differential rewards associated with seniority or may reflect attitudinal differences due to age or cohort.

Employees with third level education express the highest levels of employment commitment and organisational commitment. However, the relationship between education and the two commitment measures is non-linear. So for example the difference in organisational commitment between those with third level education and no qualifications is not significant. This result may be confounded by age effects (as older employees have lower education levels and higher commitment). Multivariate models would be needed to separate these effects.

Table 2.6 Employment commitment and organisational commitment by personal characteristics

	% Work if no financial need	Organisational Commitment ¹
Male	68.4	.39
Female	67.1	.42
Age		
Under 25 years	71.2	.31
25-39 years	70.2	.38
40-54 years	65.1	.46
55 years & over	58.5	.54
Education Level		
No qualifications	62.4	.40
Junior/Inter cert level	58.1	.37
Leaving Certificate	68.8	.39
Third Level or Equiv.	75.6	.47
Tenure		
Less than 1 year	75.1	.31
1-5 years	68.6	.37
Over 5 years	64.7	.46
Union membership		
Union member	65.1	.41
Non-union member	69.3	.40

¹ The organisational commitment scale ranges from -2 to +2 and higher scores indicate higher commitment.

Tenure also has opposing effects on employment commitment and organisational commitment. Those with the shortest tenure have the highest levels of employment commitment but they have the lowest level of organisational commitment. Given that tenure will at least partly reflect loyalty to one's organisation it is not surprising that there is a strong relationship between these two variables.

Employees who are not members of trade unions have a slightly higher level of employment commitments than members, however this may reflect the occupational and sectoral distribution of union membership. Union membership does not affect organisational commitment.

Finally, we examine whether commitment levels of employees – to work in general and to their firms – is related to family circumstances. We found no relationship overall, however there was a significant effect for women only. Female employees with children under 18 years show lower non-financial work commitment than women with no dependent children. The differences between men with differing family responsibilities are not statistically significant. Organisational commitment does not vary significantly by parental status for either women or men (Table 2.7).

Table 2.7 | Commitment by family status

	% would work if no financial need		Organisational Commitment Score ¹	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
No dependent children	67.1	69.8	.38	.44
Youngest child <5yrs	72.6	62.1	.42	.39
Youngest child 6-17yrs	69.2	63.3	.39	.41
	68.4	67.0	.39	.42

1. The scale ranges from -2 to +2 and higher scores indicate higher commitment.

2.4 Employee autonomy

We now move on to an important aspect of employee experience that is his/her level of autonomy or control. This may well be linked to issues of partnership and participation discussed in Chapter 7. As mentioned in the introduction discretion and control are central to definitions of skill and have been found to vary substantially across occupational groups.

We included six measures of autonomy which have been widely used and validated in previous surveys:

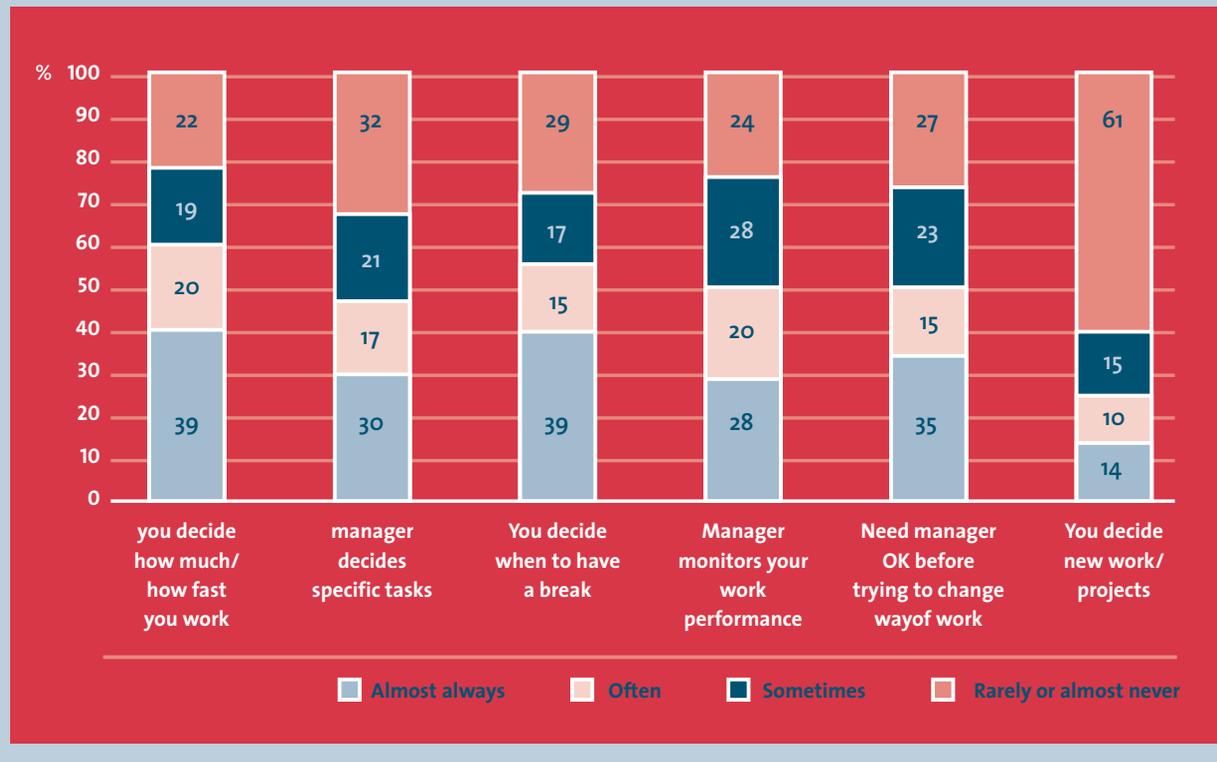
- You decide how much work you do or how fast you work during the day
- Your manager decides the specific tasks you will do from day to day
- You decide when you can take a break during the working day
- Your manager monitors your work performance
- You have to get your manager's OK before you try to change anything with the way you do your work
- You can decide to take on new work or new contracts or initiate new projects.

The response set was “almost always”, “often”, “sometimes”, “rarely/almost never”. We can see from the responses in Figure 2.3 that discretion on these items is quite variable. Almost 40% of workers almost always control their pace of work and the timing of breaks, but less than 30% control the tasks they do (i.e. manager never decides) but only 24% never have their performance monitored and only 14% can “almost always” initiate new work/contracts.

The autonomy scale was constructed using responses to these six items. For positively worded statements i.e. those that “You decide....” a score of 0 is given for “rarely/never”, 1 for “sometimes”, 2 for “often” and 3 for “almost always”. The scoring was reversed for the other three items, which means that greater autonomy leads to higher scores. Scores on the six items were then averaged for each respondent. The scale therefore ranges from 0 to 3 and the average score was 1.43.

For descriptive purpose we grouped this scale into three categories low medium and high. We found that 27% of employees have low levels of control, around half (46%) have some level of discretion, but only 27% have a high level of control over their time and work tasks.

Figure 2.3 Measures of autonomy



Autonomy and job/organisation characteristics

Levels of autonomy do not differ between part and full-time workers but those who are permanent are entrusted with more discretion over their work activities than non-permanent staff. Job discretion is strongly related to occupational position as anticipated. Those in managerial, professional and technical occupations have a high level of autonomy and low levels of monitoring in their jobs reflecting the different nature of the employment relationship for these occupational groups. Discretion then declines continually with each occupational position with the lowest levels experienced by plant/machine operators who tend to have highly routinised tasks which allow little opportunity for discretion either in the pace or the nature of the work.

Levels of autonomy also vary across sectors although it is likely that this will largely reflect the occupational composition of the workforce in these sectors rather than purely sectoral differences in work practices. It is interesting that this is one of

the few dimensions of work experiences/attitudes examined in this chapter where there is no difference between the public and private sectors. The bureaucratic and hierarchical structures that often prevail in the public sector may mean that there is less discretion for white-collar employees at lower levels of the hierarchy (further multivariate analysis would be needed to investigate this issue further). In fact there is significant variation within the public sectors with the education sector showing higher levels of autonomy than the civil service (public admin) and the health sector.

Finally, we find that employee discretion varies with organisational size. Those in the smallest units have the greatest autonomy while those in large organisations of 100 or more have the least discretion. There is no difference between employees in the two mid-categories (5 to 99 employees).

The relationship between job autonomy and personal characteristics

Both gender and age are significantly related to job autonomy. Women are found to exercise less discretion in the workplace than male employees, this reflects the high levels of vertical gender segregation in the Irish labour market (Hughes, 2002) which means that women are concentrated at the lower levels of occupations where they have less control over their time and tasks. Levels of discretion are found to increase with the age of employees which is likely to reflect increasing responsibility associated with greater experience and seniority. This pattern is also reflected in the higher levels of autonomy experienced by workers with longer job tenure. Those with over five years experience on the job have an average score of 1.58 on the job autonomy scale compared to 1.23 among new job entrants.

Levels of task and time discretion increase with educational qualifications, the effect is particularly noticeably for graduates, which would be expected due to the higher skill levels of jobs occupied by this group. Trade union members have a significantly lower level of discretion in employment than non-union members. It is likely that some of this effect is due to the occupational composition of union members rather than union membership per se, however further analysis would be needed to confirm this.

Table 2.8 Job autonomy by job/–
organisation characteristics

	Autonomy Score
Part-time	1.41
Full-time	1.44
Permanent	1.49
Temporary/Casual	1.16
Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers	2.06
Professionals	1.70
Technicians/Assoc Prof	1.72
Clerks	1.48
Service Work, Shop & Sales	1.28
Skilled Agriculture & Fishery	1.31
Craft & related trades	1.20
Plant/machine operators	1.08
Elementary Occupations	1.12
Manufacturing Industry & Primary	1.33
Construction	1.24
Wholesale Retail	1.46
Hotel Restaurants	1.36
Transport Storage Communications	1.47
Finance & Other Bus Services	1.61
Public Admin & Defence	1.42
Education	1.60
Health	1.41
Other Services	1.56
Public Sector	1.45
Private Sector	1.43
Size Local Unit	
1-4	1.64
5-19	1.46
20-99	1.42
100+	1.34
All	1.43

The scale ranges from 0 to 3. Higher scores indicate greater autonomy.

Table 2.9 Job autonomy by
personal characteristics

	Autonomy Score
Male	1.47
Female	1.39
Under 25 years	1.07
25-39 years	1.42
40-54 years	1.60
55 years & over	1.76
Education Level	
No qualifications	1.28
Junior/Inter cert level	1.22
Leaving Cert	1.43
Third Level or Equiv.	1.70
Tenure	
Less than 1 yr	1.23
1-5years	1.34
Over 5 years	1.58
Union member	1.32
Non-union member	1.50

The scale ranges from 0 to 3. Higher scores indicate greater autonomy.

Figure 2.4 Measure of work pressure

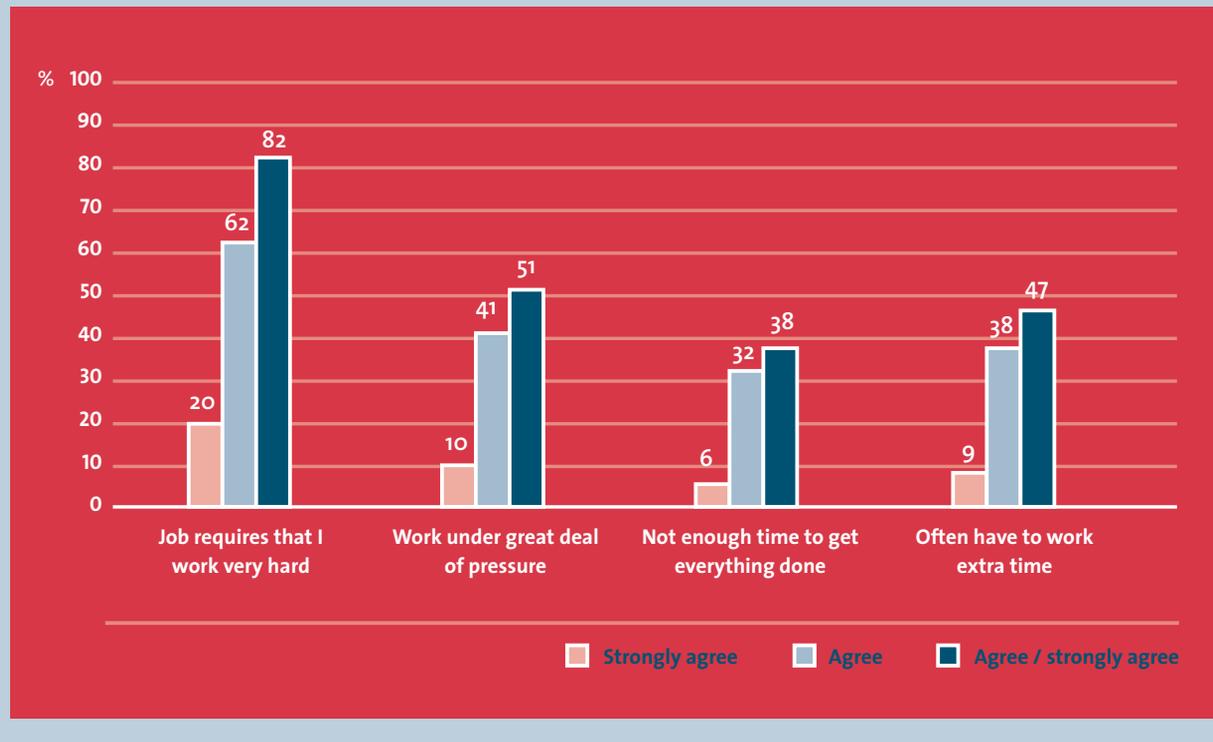
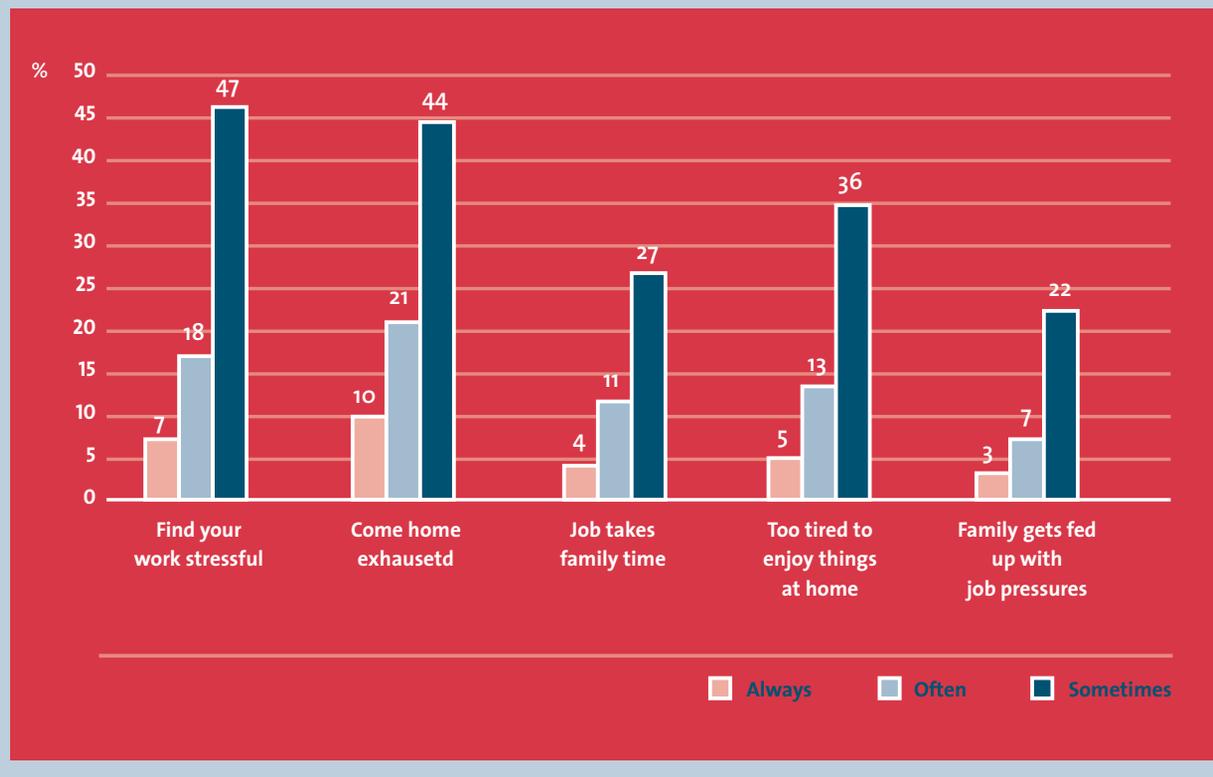


Figure 2.5 Measures of work stress and family/work conflict



2.5 Work intensity/pressure and work stress

In this section we consider workers' experience of work pressure or intensity. There is growing international literature on the intensification of work and the extent to which workers are being put under increasing pressure. As our data relate to only one point in time we cannot comment on the extent to which work has intensified, nevertheless we can see that a significant proportion of Irish employees report experiences of work pressure (see Figure 2.4).

- 82% agree or strongly agree that their job requires them to work very hard
- 51% agree or strongly agree that they work under a great deal of pressure
- 38% agree or strongly agree that they never have enough time to get everything done in their job
- 47% agree or strongly agree that they often have to work extra time over and above their formal hours to get through the job or help out.

These four items are combined to form a work pressure scale with higher scores indicating greater pressure. The scale ranges from -2 to +2 with an average score of .17 for all employees. As this result is positive this indicates that the average worker experiences some work pressure.

While work intensity may well lead to stress for the individual employees this is not axiomatic therefore we also consider a number of more direct measures of stress. Within these measures we focus in particular on the issue of work/life balance and the extent to which the effects of work spill over into people's home and family life. Respondents were asked how often they experienced the following:

- Find your work stressful
- Come home from work exhausted
- Find that your job prevents you from giving the time you want to your partner or family
- Feel too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home
- Find that your partner/family gets fed up with the pressure of your job.

The response set allowed was "always", "often", "sometimes", "hardly ever", and "never" (scored from 4 to 0). A composite scale was made based on respondents' mean score over the five items.⁴ The overall results on these five items are reported in Figure 2.5. We see that a quarter of employees always or often find their work stressful, and a higher proportion (31%) frequently come home from work exhausted, 18% are often or always too tired to enjoy things outside work which suggests there is a work/life balance problem for significant minority of workers. On the two work/family conflict items, we see that between 10 and 15% of respondents record such problems.

These results are similar to the EU wide findings from the 2001 Eurobarometer surveys. Gallie & Paugam (2002) report that 31% of respondents across the EU always/often found their work stressful, 25% of workers regularly came home from work exhausted, 19% reported that their job always/often prevented them from giving the time they want to their family, 20% were often/always too tired after work to enjoy the things they would like to do at home, and 10% reported that their partner/family gets fed up with the pressure of the respondents' job.

In the following analysis we examine employees' responses to the work pressure and work stress scales together as the two issues are strongly related. We focus first on their relationship with job characteristics.

⁴ Some of those not living with a partner or family did not respond to the last two items, therefore where there was missing information we averaged respondents scores on the items which they did answer.

Table 2.10 | Work intensity and work stress by job characteristics

	Work Pressure Score	Work Stress Score
Part-time	-.03	1.33
Full-time	.22	1.67
Permanent	.21	1.64
Temp/Casual	-.02	1.45
Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers	.65	1.89
Professionals	.52	1.80
Technicians & Assoc Professionals	.24	1.61
Clerks	.02	1.44
Service Work & Shop /Sales	.00	1.53
Skilled Agriculture & Fishery	-.37	1.78
Craft & related trades	.22	1.56
Plant/machine operators	-.01	1.67
Elementary Occupations	-.06	1.49
Manufacturing Industry & Primary	.09	1.65
Construction	.28	1.60
Wholesale Retail	.03	1.47
Hotel Restaurants	.19	1.79
Transport & Communications	.21	1.74
Finance + Other Bus Services	.24	1.59
Public Administration & Defence	.27	1.62
Education	.31	1.55
Health	.22	1.67
Other Services	.05	1.46
Public Sector	.33	1.69
Private Sector	.14	1.59
Size Local Unit		
1-4	.02	1.38
5-19	.15	1.57
20-99	.21	1.63
100+	.22	1.72
All	.17	1.61

The work pressure scale ranges from -2 to +2, higher scores indicate more pressure. The stress scale ranges from 0 to 4, higher scores indicate greater stress.

Table 2.11 | Work intensity and work stress by personal characteristics

	Work Pressure Score	Work Stress Score
Male	.21	1.64
Female	.14	1.57
Under 25 years	.07	1.45
25-39 years	.19	1.69
40-54 years	.24	1.65
55 years & over	.08	1.44
No Dependent Children (<18 years)	.15	1.53
youngest child <5 years	.24	1.80
Youngest child 6-17 years	.19	1.68
Education Level		
No qualifications	.00	1.59
Junior/Inter cert level	.08	1.54
Leaving Certificate	.13	1.58
Third Level or Equiv.	-.44	1.74
Tenure		
Less than 1 year	-.02	1.45
1-5 years	.12	1.58
Over 5 years	.27	1.68
Union member	.24	1.70
Non-union member	.13	1.55

*The work pressure scale ranges from -2 to +2, higher scores indicate more pressure.
The stress scale ranges from 0 to 4, higher scores indicate greater stress.*

Job characteristics, work pressure and work stress

Work pressure is lower among those on non-standard employment contracts, this is true for part-timers and those on non-permanent contracts. A similar pattern is noted for work stress with those in permanent full-time jobs experiencing greater stress. Given that part-time work is one of the main methods of reconciling work and family demands it is reassuring that stress levels are somewhat lower for this group.

Work pressure and work stress is highest among those higher up the occupational hierarchy, especially among professionals and senior officials/managers. The association between increased responsibility and greater job pressure and stress is well established. Work pressure is also high amongst skilled craft workers and skilled agricultural workers although in the latter group the

small numbers mean that there is a large error attached to this estimate. The relationship between stress and occupational position is not as clear-cut as for work pressure, which confirms that sources of stress can be varied across employees – lack of control can be equally stressful as having too much responsibility, similarly some sources of stress may be related to a clash between work and other demands rather than the nature of work itself (see below).

The experience of work pressure and work stress is more common in the public sector than the private sector. Although public sector workers are not subject to competitive pressures, demands for greater work intensity may arise from other sources for example, from the demands of the general public, labour shortages, or change processes. Our discussion of change in Chapter 9 and in the survey of public sector employers addresses some of these issues. It is somewhat unexpected that public sector workers experience greater stress than private sector workers as the public sector is usually believed to have better policies to reconcile work-life balance issues. Across industrial sectors the highest levels of work pressure are experienced by employees in the Construction Industry, Public Administration/Defence and Education Sectors. The lowest levels of pressure are experienced by those in the Wholesale & Retail Industry, Other Services and Manufacturing Sectors. These results may be partly explained by the occupational composition of workers in these sectors, however, further analysis is needed to assess this.

The results for work stress/work/family conflict are rather different. It is employees within the Hotel/Restaurant Industry and the Transport & Communications sector who experience the highest levels of work stress. This may reflect the greater tendency for workers in these sectors to work unsocial hours which has implications for family life. Stress levels are also high in the Health sector.

Finally, our survey found that work pressures and work stress both increase with organisational size but only up to 20 employees. Those in workplaces with less than 5 employees experience least work intensity while those in workplaces of 20 or more experience the highest levels. Those in workplaces of more than 100 employees are most likely to experience stress. Again this may be somewhat counter-intuitive in terms of work-life balance as small and medium size enterprises have been found to have a low level of family friendly policies (Equality Authority, 2002).

Worker characteristics, work intensity and work stress

Here we consider how work intensity and work stress are related to personal and family characteristics. As a number of the items in the work stress scale particularly relate to conflicts between the demands of work and family/home life we would expect that personal characteristics will have a strong effect here. This is less the case with work pressure which considers only internal work demands, in this the impact of personal characteristics is likely to be more indirect (i.e. in influencing the nature of the occupation you are selected into).

The results in Table 2.11 show that male employees experience more work pressure and stress than female employees. Although men tend to take on less responsibility for caring/household work than women, the greater inflexibility of their jobs and longer hours of paid work may well lead to higher levels of work/life conflict.

Work pressure is found to increase with age until it peaks among the 40-54 year age group, older workers (55 plus) experience low levels of pressure. In contrast, work stress peaks in the 25-39 age group, the period of family formation and key career development.

The effects of family are shown more directly by the figures for those with and without children under 18 years. Those with pre-school children are found to experience the highest levels of work stress and work pressure. Perhaps the inability of parents with young children to manage work pressure through long hours leads to an increase in the subjective experience of work pressure.

Those with third level education experience higher levels of work pressure and work stress than other groups but below this there is little difference by education level. The experience of graduates is likely to reflect the pressure associated with higher level jobs with greater responsibility as discussed earlier.

A similar explanation is likely to lie behind the results for tenure. However, it is worth noting that work pressure is more strongly related to tenure than work stress. Finally, we find that union members experience higher levels of work pressure and work stress than non-union members.

2.6 Conclusions

This chapter has undertaken two main tasks. First to describe the work attitudes and experiences of Irish employees. Second to examine how these attitudes and experiences are influenced by worker and job characteristics. In relation to the first task we have seen that, as in other European employee surveys, workers generally express a high level of satisfaction in their jobs. When we look at different aspects of employment, satisfaction is lowest in relation to earnings, but, even on this, 70% of employees are satisfied. On another positive note, there is a high level of organisational commitment among the workforce although in general this loyalty would not go as far as turning down better offers or tolerating demotion to stay with one's current company.

The results on the level of autonomy are somewhat more mixed: 27% of employees have low levels of control, around half (46%) have some level of discretion, but only 27% have a high degree of control over their time and work tasks. Nor do the results on work pressure and work stress leave room for complacency. Over half the employee workforce experience some measure of work pressure, while a quarter regularly find their work stressful and another half (47%) sometimes find their work stressful. There is also evidence of work/family clashes for around a quarter of employees. These results suggest that there is substantial room for developing policies and employment practices to improve stress levels among employees and to facilitate greater work/life balance. There is also significant potential to improve the level of control that employees have over their day-to-day working

Table 2.12

	Stress	Work Pressure	Organisational Commitment	Autonomy	Job Satisfaction
Stress Scale	1	0.506	-0.193	-0.036	-0.315
Pressure	0.506	1	0.068	0.102	-0.030
Organisational Commitment	-0.193	0.068	1	0.242	0.608
Autonomy	-0.036	0.102	0.242	1	0.206
Job Satisfaction	-0.315	-0.030	0.608	0.206	1

All correlations are significant at the 5% level.

lives. As the results in the appendix table show there is a negative relationship between stress and autonomy, so that those with least control experience more stress. Indeed the inter-relationships between stress, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment (see Table 2.12) mean that efforts to reduce employee stress may well increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment. These issues are explored in greater detail in Chapter 8 when we construct regression models of job satisfaction and work stress.

The results of investigation of the relationship between work attitudes/experiences and job/worker characteristics were too many to summarise here. Our main conclusions are that employees' attitudes and experiences are highly stratified by their occupational position, industrial sector, length of tenure, size of organisation and the permanency of their contract. The hours worked had a less consistent influence, there was no difference between part-timers and full-timers on employment commitment or organisational commitment, nor did these two groups differ on level of autonomy. Only among female employees did part-time hours effect satisfaction (increasing it) which may be related to the lower work pressure and fewer family/work stresses experienced by part-timers.

Personal characteristics also proved influential with education, age and job tenure having particularly strong influence on employee attitudes and experiences. Gender emerges as significant in relation to subjective experiences (autonomy, work pressure and work stress) but not in relation to most of the attitude measures (satisfaction, employment commitment) the exception being organisational commitment where women were slightly more committed. Family status was found to influence employment commitment, work pressure and work stress but not job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The influence of trade union membership is also mixed, having more influence on experiences than attitudes.

Chapter 3

Workplace Practices

This chapter examines the extent to which various employment practices are used in the workplace. We turn first to workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work. We then investigate the use of performance appraisal and reward systems. Finally, we look at the extent to which workplaces have adopted formal policies relating to dignity and equality at work.

TABLE 3.1 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by gender and age group

	Working from home	Flexible hours/ Flexitime	Job-sharing/ Week on-off	Part-time hours
	%	%	%	%
Men	16.0	38.5	21.7	39.0
Women	10.9	48.0	38.4	69.6
≤ 24 years of age	7.9	41.0	24.6	52.7
25–39 years of age	31.7	40.5	28.1	50.6
40–54 years of age	16.9	47.0	35.0	56.5
≥ 55 years of age	15.3	44.0	27.9	56.5
All	13.6	42.9	29.5	53.4

3.1 Location and hours of work

We begin by looking at the frequency with which employees work in establishments in which various non-traditional working arrangements with respect to the location and hours of work are used, including working from home, flexible hours, job-sharing arrangements and part-time working.

Table 3.1 shows that overall, about 14% of employees report that working from home is used in their workplace. Men are more likely than women to report that their workplace uses working from home. Those in the 25–39 year age group are more likely to be employed in a workplace using home-working than any other age group.

Overall 43% of employees work in workplaces that use flexible hours. Women are more likely than men to be employed in workplaces with flexible hours. Workers over the age of 40 are somewhat more likely than younger age groups to work in workplaces with flexible hours.

Just under 30% of employees work in workplaces that use job-sharing. Women (38%) are much more likely than men (22%) to report that their workplace uses this work practice. There is no clear age-related pattern in relation to this work practice.

Well over half of all employees report that their workplaces use part-time hours. Women (70%) are much more likely than men (39%) to report that their work place uses this work practice. There is no clear age-related pattern in relation to the use of part-time hours.

Table 3.2a shows the extent to which those employees who responded that their workplaces used home-working were themselves personally involved in the practice. Table 3.2b shows the percentage of all employees involved in each of the work practices. In workplaces that utilise home working men are more likely than women to be involved. Overall, about 10% of men are involved in home-working, compared to less than 6% of women. The incidence of being involved in home-working, in workplaces that use the practice, increases with age: from 36% among those under age 24 to more than 80% of those aged 55 or over.

About 57% of those who report that their workplaces use flexible working hours are personally involved in the practice, and there is no difference between men and women. Younger workers, particularly those under the age of 24 are somewhat more likely than their older colleagues to be personally involved.

Table 3.2a Extent to which employees are personally involved in workplace practices relating to location and hours of work by gender and age group
As % of employees in workplaces that use the practices

	Working from home	Flexible hours/ Flexitime	Job-sharing/ Week on-off	Part-time hours
	%	%	%	%
Men	67.5	56.4	16.3	24.2
Women	52.6	57.4	25.9	50.5
≤ 24 years of age	35.5	51.9	28.2	45.3
25–39 years of age	58.1	56.3	20.1	34.4
40–54 years of age	67.4	58.7	22.8	41.0
≥ 55 years of age	83.8	63.1	17.4	50.6
All	61.6	56.9	22.2	40.3

Table 3.2b Extent to which employees are personally involved in workplace practices relating to location and hours of work by gender and age group
As % of all employees

	Working from home	Flexible hours/ Flexitime	Job-sharing/ Week on-off	Part-time hours
	%	%	%	%
Men	10.8	21.7	3.5	9.4
Women	5.7	27.6	9.9	35.1
≤ 24 years of age	2.8	21.3	6.9	23.9
25–39 years of age	18.4	22.8	5.6	17.4
40–54 years of age	11.4	27.6	8.0	23.2
≥ 55 years of age	12.8	27.8	4.9	28.6
All	8.4	24.4	6.5	21.5

We noted above that job-sharing arrangements are relatively rare in Irish workplaces. Overall, only 6.5% of workers are involved in the practice and even within workplaces that utilise such arrangements, only 22% of all employees report that they are personally involved in the practice. Women and younger workers are more likely to be so involved.

Just over 40% of employees in workplaces that use part-time working are personally involved in part-time working. Women are about twice as likely as men (50% and 24% respectively) to work part-time. While there is little evidence of a clear age related pattern, older workers appear to be more likely to be personally involved in part-time work.

Table 3.3 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by education

	Working from home	Flexible hours/ Flexitime	Job-sharing/ Week on-off	Part-time hours
	%	%	%	%
Used in workplace				
No Qualification	7.9	33.8	16.3	50.7
Junior Certificate	6.0	40.4	23.2	52.2
Leaving Certificate	13.4	44.6	30.0	52.5
Third Level	23.2	45.3	39.6	57.8
All	13.6	42.9	29.5	53.4
Respondent personally involved as % of employees in workplace				
No Qualification	75.7	56.6	26.3	52.0
Junior Certificate	62.3	55.1	25.5	48.1
Leaving Certificate	56.6	56.3	23.6	40.3
Third Level	65.0	59.2	17.8	29.4
All	61.6	56.9	22.2	40.3
Respondent personally involved as % of all employees				
No Qualification	6.0	19.1	4.3	26.4
Junior Certificate	3.7	22.3	5.9	25.1
Leaving Certificate	7.6	25.1	7.1	21.2
Third Level	15.1	26.8	7.0	17.0
All	8.4	24.4	6.5	21.5

Table 3.3 shows workplace practices in relation to location of work and working hours by education. More educated workers are more likely to report that their workplace uses home-working, but there is no evident relationship with personal involvement in this practice. There is little evidence of any strong relationship between education and the use of either flexible hours or part-time hours in the workplace. However, those with higher levels of education are more likely to be employed in workplaces that use job-sharing. This is likely to be related to sectoral effects: those with higher education are more likely to work in the public sector, and, as we show below, job-sharing is more common in public sector workplaces.

Full-time and permanent workers are more likely than part-timers or temporary or casual workers to report that their workplaces utilise working from home (Table 3.4). However, among those who do report that their workplace uses home-working, there are no differences between employees in terms of either working hours or contract in the extent to which they are personally involved in the practice. Part-time workers are more likely than full-timers to report that their workplace uses flexible working hours, although there is no significant difference between temporary and permanent employees. As might be expected, part-time employees in workplaces that use flexible working hours are more likely than their full-time counterparts to be involved in flexible working hours.

Table 3.4 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by nature of contract

	Working from home	Flexible hours/ Flexitime	Job-sharing/ Week on-off	Part-time hours
	%	%	%	%
Used in workplace				
Part-time	10.8	47.7	37.0	85.8
Full-time	14.3	41.8	27.8	46.1
Permanent	14.3	43.0	29.6	50.7
Temporary	10.3	42.4	28.7	66.9
All	13.6	42.9	29.5	53.4
Respondent personally involved as % of employees in workplace				
Part-time	68.1	74.3	45.1	85.7
Full-time	60.6	52.5	15.4	21.0
Permanent	60.4	56.3	20.1	33.0
Temporary	70.4	60.3	33.2	68.6
All	61.6	56.9	22.2	40.3
Respondent personally involved as % of all employees				
Part-time	7.4	35.4	16.7	73.5
Full-time	8.7	21.9	4.3	9.7
Permanent	8.6	24.2	5.9	16.7
Temporary	7.3	25.6	9.5	45.9
All	8.4	24.4	6.5	21.5

As shown in Table 3.4, part-time workers are more likely to be employed in workplaces that use job-sharing, and those that do work in such establishments are substantially more likely than their full-time counterparts to be engaged in job sharing. There are no differences between permanent and temporary employees in the use of job-sharing in their workplaces.

Part-time workers are very substantially more likely to be employed in workplaces that use part-time hours (86% versus 46%), and among those that do work in such establishments there is a very high incident of part-time working (86%). Temporary workers are also more likely than permanent workers to report that their workplace uses part-time working, and those who are employed in such workplaces are also more likely to be personally engaged in part-time work.

Workers with longer tenure with a current employer (i.e. 5 or more years) are more likely to report that their workplace uses home-working, and longer-term employees in workplaces that do use the practice are more likely than shorter-term employees to report that they are personally engaged in home working. The latter effect, relating to personal involvement is to be expected: longer-tenure workers are more likely to be governed by flexible working and supervision arrangements. However, the former, utilisation pattern, is likely to be a compositional effect, related to occupation and sector.

Table 3.5 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by tenure

	Working from home	Flexible hours/ Flexitime	Job-sharing/ Week on-off	Part-time hours
	%	%	%	%
Used in workplace				
< 1 year	11.5	40.2	23.8	54.9
1 to 5 years	11.4	42.9	25.9	52.8
> 5 years	16.4	44.5	34.5	53.2
All	13.6	42.9	29.5	53.4
Respondent personally involved as % of employees in workplace				
< 1 year	57.4	53.5	27.9	52.4
1 to 5 years	61.0	65.7	22.3	42.9
> 5 years	65.3	57.9	20.7	34.0
All	61.6	56.9	22.2	40.3
Respondent personally involved as % of all employees				
< 1 year	6.6	21.5	6.6	28.8
1 to 5 years	7	28.2	5.8	22.7
> 5 years	10.7	25.8	7.1	18.1
All	8.4	24.4	6.5	21.5

Table 3.6 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by union membership

	Working from home	Flexible hours/ Flexitime	Job-sharing/ Week on-off	Part-time hours
	%	%	%	%
Used in workplace				
Union Member	12.7	45.5	43.6	53.2
Non-union	14.2	41.3	20.8	53.5
Respondent personally involved as % of employees in workplace				
Union Member	49.4	50.7	17.8	28.7
Non-union	68.3	61.1	27.8	47.2
Respondent personally involved as % of all employees				
Union Member	6.3	23.1	7.8	15.3
Non-union	9.7	25.2	5.8	25.3

Workers with longer tenure are also somewhat more likely to be employed in workplaces that use flexible hours and job-sharing, and, again, this is probably due to occupational and sectoral effects (Table 3.5). There is no evident relationship between workplace use of part-time hours. However, within workplaces that use part-time hours, workers with short tenure, less than 1 year, are more likely to report that they are personally engaged in part-time working. This is likely due to the fact that part-time jobs are more accessible to new entrants to employment (O'Connell and Gash, 2003).

Table 3.6 shows that union members are less likely to report that home-working is used in their workplace, and they are also less likely to be personally involved in home-working in workplaces that do use it. There are few if any differences between union members and non-members in the extent of utilisation of either flexible or part-time hours in their workplaces. Union members are more likely to be employed at a workplace that uses job-sharing. However, within workplaces that do use job-sharing, a higher proportion of non-members than union members report that they are personally involved in job sharing.

Higher professionals and managers are much more likely to be employed in workplaces that use working from home than any social group, and manual workers of all types are least likely. Within workplaces that do use home-working, however, the incidence of manual workers who are actually involved in the practice is high, and generally higher than among the non-manual classes.

higher professionals and managers are also more likely to report that flexible hours are used in their workplaces, although the variation in this by social class is more muted. Unskilled manual workers who are employed in workplaces that use flexible hours are more likely to be personally involved in the practice than other social classes. Lower professionals are more likely than any other social class to be employed in workplaces that use job sharing, followed by other non-manual workers.

About half or more of all social classes, with the exception of skilled manuals (19%) report that part-time hours are used in their workplaces. Within workplaces that use part-time working, the extent to which respondents are involved increases from less than 20% among higher professionals and managers to 40% among other non-manual workers, and to over 50% among Semi- and unskilled manual workers.

There is substantial variation by economic sector in the use of working from home, from about 7% in construction, wholesale and retail and other services, to 15% or over in manufacturing, transport and communications, public administration and defence, and education. Finance and other business services shows the highest incidence. Use of working from home is somewhat more common in the public than in the private sector. These data relate to the extent to which working from home is reported as used or available in the workplace. Respondents were also asked whether they were personally involved in the practice. About 62% of those who were employed in workplaces which use working from home did in fact engage in this practice, and there was limited variation across economic sectors.

Table 3.7 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by social class

	Working from home	Flexible hours/ Flexitime	Job-sharing/ Week on-off	Part-time hours
	%	%	%	%
Used in workplace				
Higher Prof. & Managers	38.5	53.5	33.2	50.6
Lower Professional	17.1	44.8	45.9	63.5
Other Non-manual	15.2	47.8	37.6	61.8
Skilled Manual	7.7	30.1	9.5	18.6
Semi-skilled Manual	4.0	44.3	24.8	64.4
Unskilled Manual	6.4	31.4	18.7	48.2
All	13.6	42.9	29.5	53.4
Respondent personally involved as % of employees in workplace				
Higher Prof. & Managers	68.5	58.9	12.2	19.4
Lower Professional	61.6	57.9	23.9	29.7
Other Non-manual	47.7	57.8	24.8	40.4
Skilled Manual	72.7	54.9	22.3	29.4
Semi-skilled Manual	65.4	51.1	18.8	50.1
Unskilled Manual	83.1	69.1	31.3	66.5
All	61.6	56.9	22.2	40.3
Respondent personally involved as % of all employees				
Higher Prof. & Managers	26.4	31.5	4.1	9.8
Lower Professional	10.5	25.9	11.0	18.9
Other Non-manual	7.3	27.6	9.3	25.0
Skilled Manual	5.6	16.5	2.1	5.5
Semi-skilled Manual	2.6	22.6	4.7	32.3
Unskilled Manual	5.3	21.7	5.9	32.1
All	8.4	24.4	6.5	21.5

Overall, about 43% of respondents work in establishments where flexible hours, or flexitime arrangements, are available, and about 57% of these respond that they themselves are involved in such arrangements. Flexible hours are most common in public administration and defence (59%), and common also in hotels and restaurants, transport

and communications, finance and business services, and in the health sector. Only 20% of employees in construction report that their workplace uses flexible hours. Flexible hours are more common in public than in private sector workplaces.

Table 3.8 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by economic sector

	Working from home	Flexible hours/ Flexitime	Job-sharing/ Week on-off	Part-time hours
	%	%	%	%
Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector	15.0	40.2	23.3	42.1
Construction	6.8	19.2	3.0	11.7
Wholesale & Retail	7.5	43.1	18.3	61.6
Hotels & Restaurants	3.8	52.7	22.7	82.1
Transport & Communications	17.2	49.9	29.5	41.4
Finance & Bus. Services	27.8	49.6	33.2	60.6
Public Admin & Defence	19.7	58.5	58.3	48.4
Education	17.7	33.0	39.5	63.6
Health	9.1	51.8	59.9	75.2
Other Services	7.0	35.7	18.7	53.9
Public Sector	15.0	47.7	58.0	61.3
Private Sector	13.3	41.8	22.7	51.5
All Sectors	13.6	42.9	29.5	53.4

In general, the extent of job-sharing is relatively rare. Just under 30% of respondents work in establishments which offer job-sharing arrangements, and only 22% of those report that they are personally involved in job-sharing. The main exceptions to this are public administration and defence, and health, where almost 60% of employees work in establishments with job-sharing. Job-sharing is much more common in public (58%) than in private sector (23%) workplaces.

Over half of all employees report that part-time hours are used in their workplace, and 40% of these are personally involved in part-time working. Part-time hours are very widely available in hotels and restaurants and in health (both over 75%). They are least common in construction (12%). Part-time working is more common in public than in private sector workplaces.

Workers employed in the smallest establishment size-category, 1–4 employees, are most likely to report that their workplace uses home-working, and the vast majority of employees in those workplaces are personally involved. The use of flexible working hours appears to be most common in the largest size-category, 100 or more employees. However, the coverage, i.e. the proportion of workers in those workplaces that do use flexible hours within workplaces declines with workplace size, as might be expected.

Table 3.9 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by size of local establishment

	Working from home	Flexible hours/ Flexitime	Job-sharing/ Week on-off	Part-time hours
	%	%	%	%
Used in workplace				
1-4 employees	18.4	40.0	13.8	46.7
5-19 employees	9.6	38.1	22.5	51.6
20-99 employees	13.2	39.8	31.0	54.6
>100 employees	15.4	51.6	40.9	56.7
All	13.6	42.9	29.5	53.4
Respondent personally involved				
1-4 employees	89.9	72.3	53.8	64.5
5-19 employees	71.5	55.5	21.2	46.5
20-99 employees	57.7	58.0	24.5	36.8
>100 employees	45.7	51.4	15.9	30.1
All	61.6	56.9	22.2	40.3

Work-sharing is also more common in larger workplaces, and, again, its coverage declines with establishment size. There is some tendency for the proportion of workers responding that their workplace uses part-time working to increase with firm size.

3.2 Performance and rewards

In this section we look at the extent to which employees experience performance reviews, and the extent to which various forms of flexible reward systems are used, including performance-related pay, and profit sharing, share options or gain sharing. Table 3.10 shows that overall, just under half of all employees are employed in workplaces that conducted regular performance reviews or appraisals. Among those that are so employed, almost 87% are personally involved in the practice. There are no discernible gender differences in these patterns.

Table 3.10 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by gender

	Performance Reviews	Performance -related pay	Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing
	%	%	%
Used in Workplace			
Men	48.3	27.9	18.1
Women	49.0	19.7	13.1
All	48.6	24.1	15.8
Respondent personally involved - in workplace			
Men	86.3	80.9	75.1
Women	87.1	77.7	70.0
All	86.7	79.7	73.2
Respondent personally involved - % of all employees			
Men	41.7	22.6	13.6
Women	42.7	15.3	9.2
All	42.1	19.2	11.6

Less than a quarter of workers are employed in workplaces that use performance related pay. Men are more likely than women to encounter this practice (28% versus 20). Among those who are employed in workplaces that implement the practice, about 80% are personally involved, irrespective of gender.

Just under 16% of workers are employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing or share options, and men are somewhat more likely than women to report this practice. Among those who do work in workplaces that implement these reward systems, well over 70% are personally involved in the practice. This suggests that while the practice of offering profit or gain sharing is rare in Irish workplaces, it has broad coverage within the companies where it is implemented.

There is little variation by age group in the extent to which workers are employed in workplaces that use performance review, although those in the 40–54 year age group are somewhat more likely than other age groups to report this practice. Coverage of this practice within workplaces that do use it appears to be widespread.

There is no clear age-related pattern in the extent to which employees report that their workplaces use performance-related pay, although those aged between 25–54 years show a somewhat higher incidence than in either the younger or older age groups. The same pattern is evident in relation to profit and gain sharing.

Table 3.11 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by age-group

	Performance Reviews	Performance -related pay	Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing
	%	%	%
Used in Workplace			
< 24 years of age	45.7	21.9	11.8
25-39 years of age	46.9	25.7	17.3
40-54 years of age	49.7	24.5	17.4
> 55 years of age	46.0	20.1	12.3
All	48.6	24.1	15.8
Respondent personally involved – in workplace			
< 24 years of age	81.4	75.9	52.1
25-39 years of age	88.7	86.5	72.9
40-54 years of age	87.3	75.6	84.4
> 55 years of age	85.3	72.2	69.5
All	86.7	79.7	73.2
Respondent personally involved – all employees			
< 24 years of age	37.2	16.6	6.1
25-39 years of age	41.6	22.2	12.6
40-54 years of age	43.4	18.5	14.7
> 55 years of age	39.2	14.5	8.5
All	42.1	19.2	11.6

Experience of performance management varies by education. Table 3.12 shows that the higher the level of educational attainment, the greater the likelihood that an individual will be employed in a workplace that uses regular performance reviews or appraisals. Within workplaces that use these practices, coverage is widespread, and there is limited variation by education.

Those with higher levels of education are also more likely to be employed in workplaces that use performance-related pay, and there is a clear split between those with a Leaving Certificate, or higher education and those with lower qualifications. Within workplaces implementing this reward system, there is no clear relationship with education, although those with no qualifications are least likely to be personally involved in performance-related pay.

Table 3.12 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by age-group

	Performance Reviews	Performance -related pay	Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing
	%	%	%
Used in Workplace			
No Qualification	35.6	13.0	7.3
Junior Certificate	37.1	17.0	12.3
Leaving Certificate	51.1	26.3	17.1
Third Level	58.0	29.7	19.6
All	48.6	24.1	15.8
Respondent personally involved – in workplace			
No Qualification	84.6	64.9	55.4
Junior Certificate	86.1	83.3	66.5
Leaving Certificate	85.2	79.3	72.1
Third Level	89.2	78.9	78.8
All	86.7	79.7	73.2
Respondent personally involved- all employees			
No Qualification	30.1	8.4	4.0
Junior Certificate	31.9	14.2	8.2
Leaving Certificate	43.5	20.9	12.3
Third Level	51.7	23.4	15.4
All	42.1	19.2	11.6

Similarly, those with higher levels of education are more likely to be employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing or share options. Moreover, within workplaces implementing this reward system, coverage is positively related to educational attainment: about 55% of those with no qualifications are personally involved in profit or gain sharing, compared to almost 80% of those with third level education.

Full-time workers are more likely than part-timers to be employed in workplaces that use regular performance appraisal (Table 3.13). However, within workplaces that do implement the practice, part-timers are slightly more likely to be personally involved. Workers with permanent or open-ended contracts are more likely than temporary or casual workers to be employed in workplaces with performance appraisal, but there are no discernible differences in the coverage of this practice across different contract types.

Table 3.13 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by nature of contract

	Performance Reviews	Performance -related pay	Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing
	%	%	%
Used in Workplace			
Part-time	44.0	12.5	7.1
Full-time	49.7	26.6	17.7
Permanent	50.8	26.5	17.4
Temporary	37.4	11.4	7.5
All	48.6	24.1	15.8
Respondent personally involved			
Part-time	90.4	87.3	64.4
Full-time	85.9	78.8	73.9
Permanent	86.9	80.1	76.3
Temporary	85.3	74.2	35.2
All	86.7	79.7	73.2

Table 3.14 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by tenure

	Performance Reviews	Performance -related pay	Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing
	%	%	%
Used in Workplace			
< 1 year	44.0	19.5	8.2
1 to 5 years	49.3	25.0	15.0
> 5 years	50.1	25.3	19.6
All	48.6	24.1	15.8
Respondent personally involved			
< 1 year	82.2	74.3	57.7
1 to 5 years	88.5	81.1	67.4
> 5 years	86.7	80.2	78.8
All	86.7	79.7	73.2

Table 3.15 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by tenure

	Performance Reviews	Performance -related pay	Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing
	%	%	%
Used in Workplace			
Union Member	55.0	22.0	19.8
Non-member	44.7	25.3	13.4
All	48.6	24.1	15.8
Respondent personally involved			
Union Member	85.0	77.9	70.8
Non-member	87.9	80.7	75.4
All	86.7	79.7	73.2

Permanent and full-time workers are much more likely than either part-time or temporary workers to be employed in workplaces that use performance related pay. While coverage of this reward system is widespread within workplaces that use the system, temporary workers are less likely than their other colleagues to be personally involved.

Permanent and full-time workers are much more likely than either part-time or temporary workers to be employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain-sharing. Within workplaces that use these systems, temporary workers are a great deal less likely than permanent workers, and part timers somewhat less likely than full-timers, to be personally involved.

Employees who have worked for the same employer for more than one year are somewhat more likely than those with shorter tenure to report that their workplace uses regular performance appraisal, although within workplaces that do use this practice, coverage is widespread. This pattern also applies to the use and coverage of performance-related pay.

The longer the tenure with a current employer, the greater the likelihood that an employee will report that profit or gain sharing is used in his/her workplace. Within workplaces, coverage of this reward system also increases with tenure.

Union members are more likely than non-members to report that their workplaces implement regular performance appraisal, although the differences in the extent to which members versus non-members are personally involved in the practice is minimal. Non-members are more likely to be employed in workplaces that use performance related pay. Union members are more likely to be employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing, although within such workplaces, they are somewhat less likely than non-members to be personally involved in this reward system.

In general there is a clear divide between manual versus non-manual workers with respect to being employed in workplaces that perform regular performance appraisal: the non-manual are more likely to report that this practice is a feature of their workplaces. Higher professionals are more likely than any other social class to be employed in workplaces that carry out performance reviews. Within workplaces that perform such reviews, there is little variation by social class.

Almost half of all higher professionals and managers are employed in workplaces where performance-related pay is used, compared to less than a quarter of any other social class, and less than 7% of unskilled manual workers. However, within workplaces that do use this reward system, there is widespread coverage.

Table 3.16 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by social class

	Performance Reviews	Performance -related pay	Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing
	%	%	%
Used in Workplace			
Higher Prof. & Managers	65.8	48.0	32.6
Lower Professional	56.5	25.0	14.5
Other Non-manual	55.7	25.4	17.4
Skilled Manual	36.6	22.0	12.5
Semi-skilled Manual	42.5	18.2	13.7
Unskilled Manual	28.4	6.8	3.1
All	48.6	24.1	15.8
Respondent personally involved – in workplace			
Higher Prof. & Managers	90.1	85.2	82.9
Lower Professional	89.3	82.0	76.0
Other Non-manual	84.6	72.3	69.8
Skilled Manual	82.0	81.0	73.2
Semi-skilled Manual	87.7	82.7	64.6
Unskilled Manual	87.3	81.9	73.3
All	86.7	79.7	73.2
Respondent personally involved – all employees			
Higher Prof. & Managers	59.3	40.9	27.0
Lower Professional	50.5	20.5	11.0
Other Non-manual	47.1	18.4	12.1
Skilled Manual	30.0	17.8	9.2
Semi-skilled Manual	37.3	15.1	8.9
Unskilled Manual	24.8	5.6	2.3
All	42.1	19.2	11.6

Higher professionals and managers are also much more likely to be employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing (33% compared to an average of 16%). Again, however, coverage is widespread across social classes in those workplaces that use this reward system.

There is substantial variation by sector in the extent to which workers report that performance appraisal is implemented in their workplace. About one-third or less of workers in Construction, Hotels and Restaurants and Other Services encounter this practice, compared to about two-thirds in Finance and Business Services and Public Administration and Defence.

Table 3.17 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by sector

	Performance Reviews	Performance -related pay	Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing
	%	%	%
Used in Workplace			
Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector	55.1	35.5	28.6
Construction	33.0	17.0	8.5
Wholesale & Retail	46.2	21.9	13.3
Hotels & Restaurants	30.1	13.4	6.6
Transport & Communications	46.8	25.2	20.5
Finance & Bus. Services	69.4	49.6	36.2
Public Admin & Defence	64.2	13.6	3.0
Education	41.5	10.4	0.4
Health	44.5	6.3	2.0
Other Services	31.7	15.9	5.3
Public Sector	49.5	9.9	1.7
Private Sector	48.4	27.4	19.0
All Sectors	48.6	24.1	15.8

Table 3.18 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by size of workplace

	Performance Reviews	Performance -related pay	Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing
	%	%	%
Used in Workplace			
1-4 employees	32.5	14.6	8.0
5-19 employees	38.7	19.1	10.2
20-99 employees	45.9	22.4	13.3
>100 employees	67.3	34.3	26.6
All	48.6	24.1	15.8
Respondent personally involved			
1-4 employees	88.6	96.6	74.5
5-19 employees	86.6	71.2	77.1
20-99 employees	87.5	79.8	71.8
>100 employees	85.7	79.9	72.6
All	86.7	79.7	73.2

Almost half of those employed in Finance and Business Services report that performance-related pay is used in their workplace, substantially higher than in any other sector. Workers in Education and Health are least likely to report this reward system. Both of these sectors are mainly in the public sector, where the use of performance related pay is relatively rare.

Profit and gain sharing is largely confined to a few sectors, mainly Finance and Business Services, Manufacturing, and Transport and Communications. Less than 2% of workers in the public sector are employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing, compared to 19% in the private sector.

Employees in larger establishments are more likely to be employed in workplaces that perform regular performance appraisal. One third of employees in establishments in the 1-4 size category report this practice, compared to two-thirds of those in the largest size category (100 employees or more). The use of performance-related pay also increases with establishment size, as does profit and gain sharing.

3.3 Respect, dignity and equal opportunity

Respondents were also asked about formal policies relating to respect and dignity at work and on equal opportunities in the workplace. Overall about two-thirds of all employees report that there is a formal explicit policy on respect and dignity in their workplace. Three quarters of all workers are employed in workplaces where there is an explicit policy on equal opportunities in the workplace.

There are no gender differences in regard to formal workplace policies on either respect and dignity or equality. Workers in the 25-54 year age groups are somewhat more likely than younger workers to be employed in workplaces with explicit policies on respect and equality.

While full-time workers are slightly more likely to report that there are formal policies on respect, dignity and equality in their workplaces, these differences are unlikely to be statistically significant. Permanent workers are more likely than temporary workers to be employed in workplaces with explicit policies on these issues.

Table 3.19 Workplace policies in relation to respect, dignity and equality by gender and age group

	Policy on respect and dignity at work	Policy on equal opportunities at work
	%	%
Men	66.7	74.5
Women	69.3	75.8
< 24 years of age	58.2	70.3
25-39 years of age	70.1	74.4
40-54 years of age	71.7	79.0
> 55 years of age	66.7	75.6
All	67.9	75.1

Table 3.20 Workplace policies in relation to respect, dignity and equality by nature of contract

	Policy on respect and dignity at work	Policy on equal opportunities at work
	%	%
Part-time	64.7	73.0
Full-time	68.7	75.6
Permanent	69.9	76.6
Temporary	57.8	67.3
All	67.9	75.1

Table 3.21 Workplace policies in relation to respect, dignity and equality by social class

	Policy on respect and dignity at work	Policy on equal opportunities at work
	%	%
Higher Prof. & Managers	80.4	83.9
Lower Professional	82.0	83.4
Other Non-manual	68.8	78.0
Skilled Manual	55.4	65.4
Semi-skilled Manual	64.8	72.9
Unskilled Manual	54.3	62.0
All	67.9	75.1

Table 3.22 Workplace policies in relation to respect, dignity and equality by sector

	Policy on respect and dignity at work	Policy on equal opportunities at work
	%	%
Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector	67.2	75.6
Construction	53.5	57.5
Wholesale & Retail	61.4	73.4
Hotels & Restaurants	47.2	58.7
Transport & Communications	75.0	80.6
Finance & Bus. Services	73.8	78.8
Public Admin & Defence	88.8	92.9
Education	81.0	85.5
Health	78.5	81.5
Other Services	50.6	64.8
Public Sector	87.3	89.9
Private Sector	63.3	71.6
All	67.9	75.1

Table 3.23 Workplace policies in relation to respect, dignity and equality by establishment size

	Policy on respect and dignity at work	Policy on equal opportunities at work
	%	%
1-4 employees	41.4	55.9
5-19 employees	56.7	66.1
20-99 employees	71.0	77.8
> 100 employees	85.9	87.8
All	67.9	75.1

Professionals and managers are much more likely to report that their workplace has explicit policies in relation to respect, dignity and equal opportunity than other social classes. Unskilled manual workers are least likely to report either of these policies in the workplace.

Almost 90% of workers in public administration and defence report that there is an explicit policy on respect and dignity in the workplace, and 92% report a policy on equality. Sectors in which these policies are less widespread include construction, hotels and restaurants, and other services.

Explicit policies on respect, dignity and equal opportunity, are much more frequent in the public than in the private sector.

Larger establishments are much more likely to implement explicit policies relating to both respect and equality in the workplace. About 41% of workers in establishments with 1-4 employees report that there is a formal policy on respect and dignity, compared to 86% of employees in the largest size category (100 or more employees). Similarly, about 55% of those employed in the smallest size category, compared to 88% of those in the largest, are employed in workplaces that have adopted a formal explicit policy on equal opportunity in the workplace.

3.4 Summary

The survey asked a series of questions relating to the extent to which various workplace practices are used in Irish workplaces. There is some variation in the extent to which non-traditional working arrangements are implemented:

- About 14% of employees report that working from home is used in their workplace, but only about 8% of all employees are personally involved in working from home.
- Almost 43% of employees work in workplaces that use flexible working hours or flexitime, and almost one-quarter of all employees are personally involved in such flexible hours.
- Just under 30% of employees work in workplaces that use job-sharing and about 6% of all employees are personally involved in job-sharing. Women are much more likely than men to be involved.
- Well over half of all employees report that their workplaces use part-time hours and over one-fifth of all employees are personally involved in part-time working. About 35% of women are involved in part-time working, compared to 9% of men.

The survey also investigated work-practices relating to performance monitoring and rewards.

- Overall, just under half of all employees are employed in workplaces that conducted regular performance reviews or appraisals and over 40% of all employees are personally involved in the practice.
- Less than a quarter of workers are employed in workplaces that use performance-related pay and less than 20% of all employees are involved themselves.
- Just under 16% of workers are employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing or share options. While the practice of offering profit or gain sharing is rare in Irish workplaces, it has broad coverage within the companies where it is implemented.

Overall about two-thirds of all employees report that there is a formal explicit policy on respect and dignity in their workplace. Three-quarters of all workers are employed in workplaces where there is an explicit policy on equal opportunities in the workplace. Policies in relation to respect and dignity as well as equality are more commonly found in the public than the private sector.

Chapter 4

Trade Union Involvement and Commitment

In this chapter we focus on the issue of trade union presence and involvement. The chapter provides some context on the rate and distribution of trade union involvement among Irish employees, to allow us to understand the effects of trade union membership discussed elsewhere in the report. In this chapter, we examine trade union membership by personal and job characteristics. We also examine workers' evaluations of their trade unions, the importance they attach to them and their commitment to their unions.

Table 4.1 Trade union presence and membership

	TU/Staff Assoc in Workplace	Member of TU/ Staff Association
	%	%
Yes	52.5	37.7
No	47.5	62.3
Total	100	100

Table 4.2 Trade union presence and membership by organisational characteristics

	TU/SA in Workplace ¹	TU/SA Member
Public	90.7	68.8
Private ²	43.6	30.4
Manufacturing Industry & Primary	59.2	40.0
Construction	43.1	33.7
Wholesale Retail	38.9	28.8
Hotel Restaurants	23.8	13.0
Transport, & Communication	63.3	50.3
Finance & Other Business Services	41.1	27.6
Public Administration & Defence	90.5	72.1
Education	73.8	47.8
Health	67.6	52.8
Other Services	24.8	16.5
Size of Local Unit		
1-4	17.9	14.0
5-19	35.8	26.3
20-99	58.4	40.9
100+	75.0	54.7
All	52.5	37.7

¹ Respondents who said there was no union/SA in workplace but who previously said that their employer recognised a union/SA were recoded to missing.

² Private includes commercial semi-state organisations.

4.1 Introduction

Trade union membership is used as an explanatory variable throughout the report for a number of reasons. First, there is an expectation that union presence will influence working conditions and pay within organisations. For example, there is Irish research which shows that union members enjoy a wage premium compared to non-union members (Callan and Reilly, 1993, Walsh and Whelan, 1976). Second, there is a relationship between modes of employee involvement (specifically partnership) and trade union presence in the work-places. Third, trade unions where they are present, are likely to play a significant role in the negotiation of change in the workplace.

4.2 Trade union membership

Respondents to the survey were asked separately if they were a member of a union or staff association, if there was a trade union or staff association in their workplace and if their employer recognised a trade union. A number of respondents said that there was no union in their workplace even though their employer recognised a union, these have been recoded to missing. Table 4.1 outlines the extent of union presence and membership. Over half of employees say there is a union in their workplace and 38% of all employees are members of a union.¹

Both union presence and union density vary widely with organisational characteristics (Table 4.2). The most decisive factor is public/private sector location. Over 90% of public sector employees have a union in their workplace compared to only 44% of those in the private sector. Union density is similarly divergent across these two sectors: 69% of public sector workers are union members compared to less than a third (30%) of private sector workers. These differences are also reflected in the industrial sector figures. Union presence and membership is highest in Public Administration/Defence and in the public sector dominated health and education sectors. Union membership is also high in the transport and communications sector. Union membership is lowest in Financial Services (28%) and in Other Services (17%).

Table 4.3 Trade union membership by worker characteristics

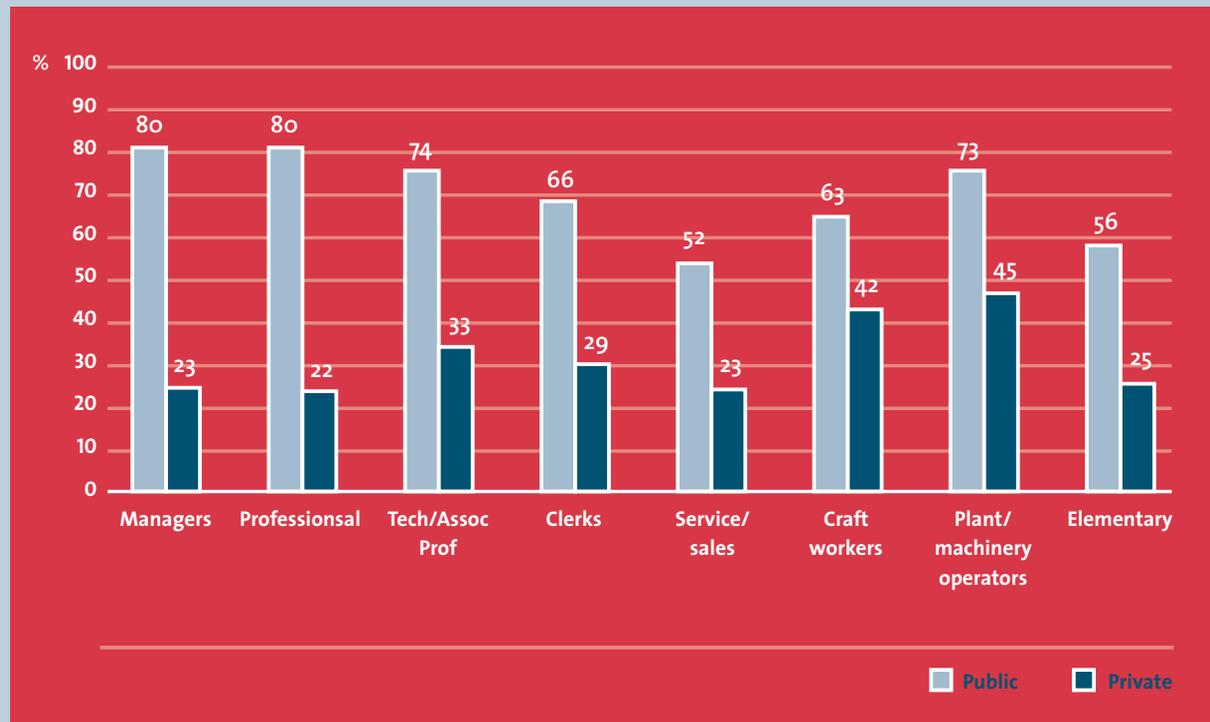
	%
Men	38.0
Women	37.4
Under 25 years	27.8
25-39 years	41.9
40-54 years	39.5
55 years & over	35.5
No qualifications	27.2
Junior/Inter cert level	40.4
Leaving Certificate	37.1
Third Level or Equiv.	42.5
Tenure	
Less than 1 year	17.0
1-5 years	31.9
Over 5 years	49.3
Part-time	29.2
Full-time	39.6
Permanent	40.8
Temporary/casual	22.1

Unsurprisingly, the presence of unions and union density increases with establishment size. Only 14% of workers in very small firms are union members while membership rises to 55% in establishments with over 100 employees.

Union membership also varies strongly with individual level characteristics, including job characteristics. Union membership is lowest among young workers. However, workers in the oldest age category (55 plus) also have below average union membership rates. Union membership is low among those with no educational qualifications, but otherwise there is little variation by educational level.

¹ Union membership is included in the weight construction (see chapter 2). Therefore these membership figures reflect those found in the Quarterly National Household Survey.

Figure 4.1 Union membership by occupation across public and private sectors



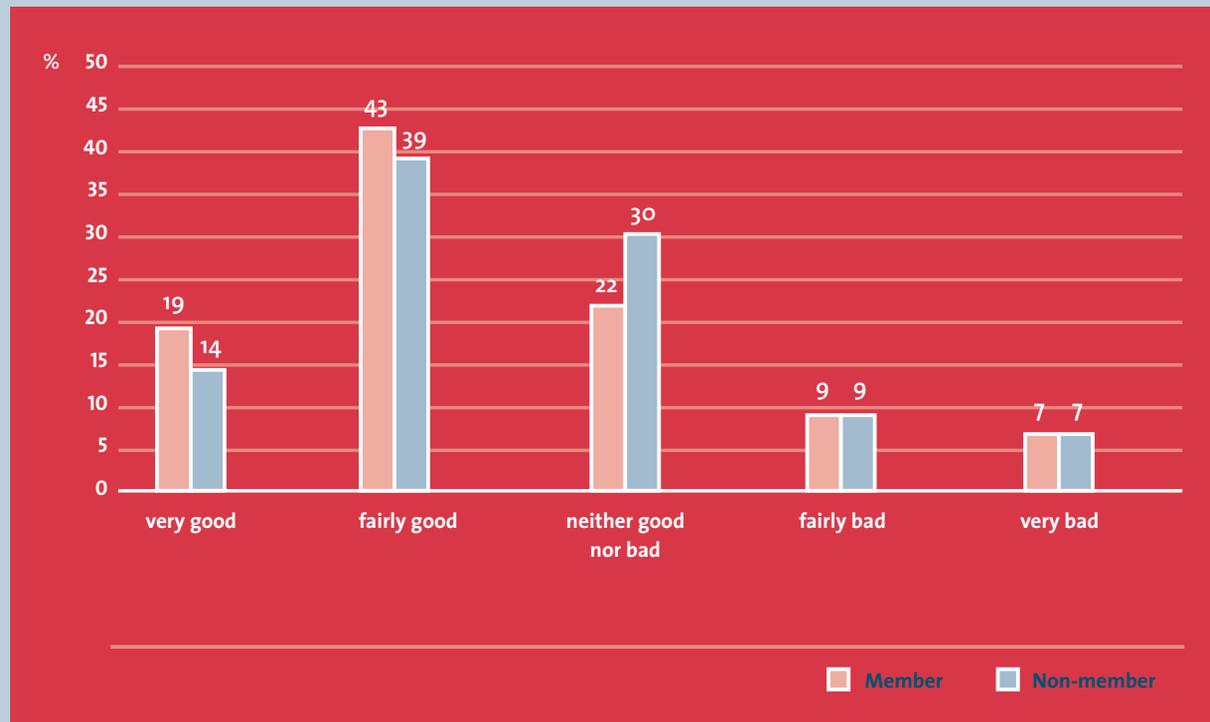
Membership increases with job tenure and is significantly lower among those on non-permanent contracts. Part-time workers are less likely to be union members than full-time workers, however despite this difference membership does not vary by sex. Perhaps women's over-representation in the public sector compensates for any reduction in female membership due to part-time working.

The relationship between occupational position and union membership is strongly influenced by the public versus private sector location (see Figure 4.1). For example, within the public sector managers/senior officials and professionals have the highest rates of union membership (80%) while service workers have the lowest unionisation rate (52%). However within the private sector union membership is lowest among managerial and professional workers.

4.3 Union effectiveness and union commitment

All employees who said that there was a union/staff association in their workplace were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the union in representing their interests. It should be noted that the non-union members in this analysis are not therefore representative of all those who are not in unions, but only of non-members in unionised work places. In general, trade unions are rated positively by both members and non-members alike (Figure 4.2). Over 60% of members (62%) feel that the union is very or fairly good at representing their interests. A further 22% of members give neutral answers and only 16% give a negative rating.

Figure 4.2 Effectiveness of union in representing your interests



Union members were asked a further series of questions about their commitment to the union.

- I feel a sense of pride at being part of the Union or Staff Association
- The record of my Union or Staff Association is a good example of what dedicated people can get done
- There is a lot to be gained from joining the Union or Staff Association
- My loyalty is to my work and not to my Union or Staff Association
- As long as I'm doing the kind of work that I enjoy, it does not matter if I belong to a Union or Staff Association
- I could work just as well in another organisation where there was no Union or Staff Association, as long as the type of work was similar.

The responses show that union members are moderately committed to their unions/staff associations: 75% feel there is a lot to gain from membership, 70% are proud of their involvement and a similar proportion feel the union record is good, and 54% disagree that it does not matter if they belong to a union as long as they are doing work they enjoy. However, for the great majority of union members (78%) loyalty to the union does not supersede loyalty to their work, and more than half (57%) of union members agree that they could work just as well in a non-unionised organisation.

Trade union members were asked both what they believed the priorities of the union to be and what they thought they should be. A central point to emerge was that employees expect their unions to be proactive in co-operating with management to better the performance of their organisations. They want unions to participate actively in decisions about the future of the organisation. These issues were cited as a priority by between 85% and 90% of employees surveyed. The survey also found that employees have a very positive attitude to partnership arrangements.

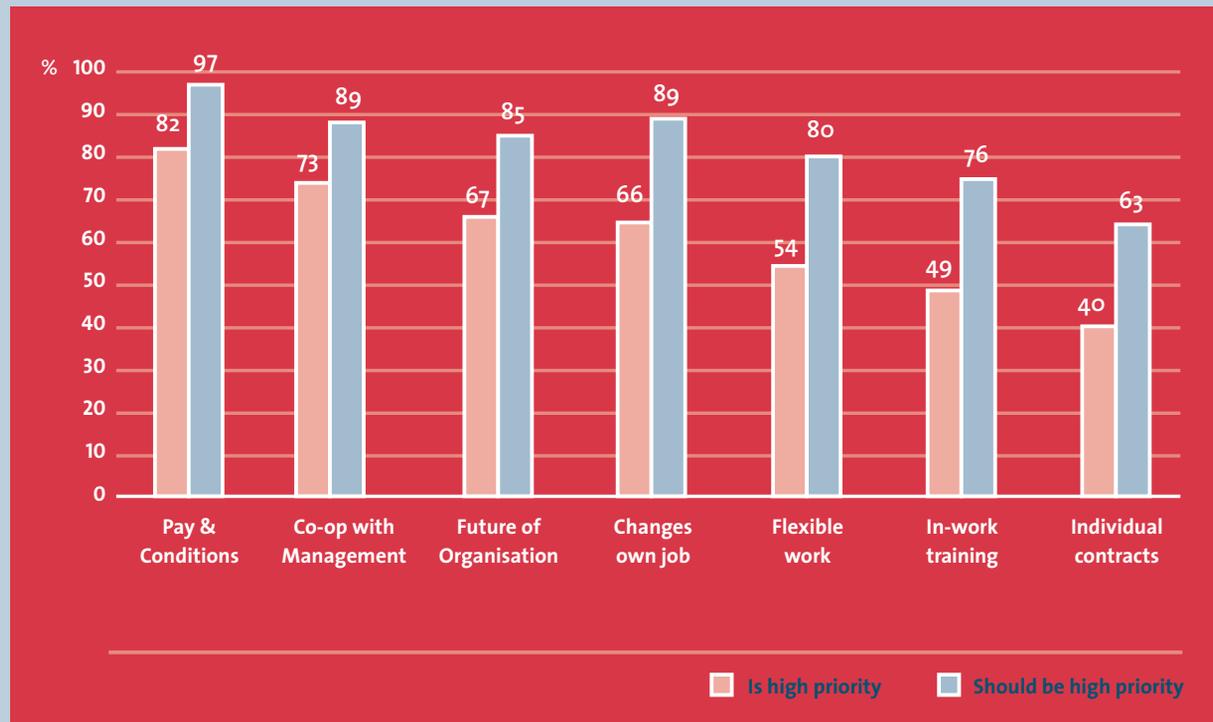
Finally, there is a clear belief that union's main priority is pay and conditions and that the membership are in agreement with the priority placed on this item. However, members put a higher priority on flexible working conditions and negotiating in work-related training than they believe their union do (these two items show the widest gap between "is a high priority" and "should be high priority"). Members are also more likely to mention matters of individual interest/concern as a priority. In interpreting these findings it should be noted that the majority of union members say all seven items should be a high priority so they have not ranked the importance of the items listed.

Figure 4.3 Commitment to union/staff association



Note: Trade union members only

Figure 4.4 Priorities of trade union/staff association



4.4 Summary

The analysis in this chapter has shown that trade union membership is highly stratified by organisational characteristics, particularly industrial sector and public/private ownership. Union density also varies significantly with the size of the organisation. Individual level factors, such as job characteristics, and in particular contract status, part-time working and tenure are highly influential. Age, sex and education are less influential.

In general union members are satisfied with their unions performance and are moderately committed to their unions. However, there are clear limits to this commitment, most members feel loyalty to their work rather than their union and over half of union members say they could work just as well in a non-unionised workplace.

Employees expect their unions to be proactive in co-operating with management to better the performance of their organisations. They want unions to participate actively in decisions about the future of the organisation. These issues were cited as a priority by between 85% and 90% of employees surveyed. The survey also found that employees have a very positive attitude to partnership arrangements.

Finally, there is a belief among members that unions share their sense that pay and conditions are a high priority. However, members believe that flexible working conditions and training should be a higher priority for their unions than they currently are.

A woman with glasses is pointing at a laptop screen. A man is looking at the screen. The background is a blurred office setting. The entire image has a red overlay.

Chapter 5

Training

Training is widely regarded as an essential contribution to the economic well being of individuals, organisations and societies in order to respond to current changes in the organisation and technology of production and service delivery and to counter the socially disruptive effects of increased labour market flexibility. The extent of training activity in Ireland appears to have increased somewhat in recent years (Fox, 2003) and Ireland appears to be close to the European average with respect to the incidence of training of those at work (O'Connell, 1999; Fox, 2003).

This chapter examines participation in training. It identifies the personal and organisational correlates of training.

Overall 48% of employees report that they participated in training provided by their present employer, over the last two years. Table 5.1 shows the variation in training incidence by personal characteristics, and reveals a familiar pattern. Men are slightly more likely to participate in training than women. Workers aged 25-39 are most likely to receive training, and training incidence declines substantially among those aged 55 years and over. Training participation is closely linked to educational attainment: only 35% of those with no qualifications received training, compared to almost 60% of those with third level qualifications. Training incidence is also strongly related to social class: 63% of higher professionals received training, compared to 35% of semi-skilled manual workers, and 28% of unskilled manual workers.

The terms of employment are also important: full-time workers receive more training than part-timers, permanent workers receive more training than those on temporary contracts. Tenure is also important, with all those who have been in a job for more than a year receiving more training than those who have less than a year of job tenure. Those with five or more years with the current employer show a slightly lower training incidence than those with 1-5 years tenure, but this difference is not statistically significant. Finally, union members are substantially more likely to have participated in training than non-members.

Table 5.2 shows the organisational correlates of training. Training is much more common in the public sector: 60% of workers in the public sector, compared with 45% of those in the private sector participated in employer sponsored training in the previous 2 years. Training incidence is highest in Public Administration and Defence (65%), followed by Transport and Communications (56%). Training incidence was lowest in Other Services (38%). Training is also strongly influenced by establishment size: those working in establishments with 100 or more employees were twice as likely to have participated in training than those in establishments with 1-4 employees (61% versus 30% respectively).

Employee involvement is also related to training incidence. Workers in organisations where partnership institutions or participation arrangements are present are more likely to participate in training. Similarly, those working in organisations characterised by high degrees of consultation in relation to decisions affecting workers' jobs are more likely to participate in training.

One of the key distinctions in the economics of training is that between "general" versus "specific" training. General training is defined in terms of its transferability: general training may be of use to both current and subsequent employers, whereas specific training is of use only to the current employer. In the human capital approach employers are less willing to pay for general training, since if they do so, they must recoup the cost by paying a wage below marginal productivity after training, and in a competitive labour market the workers would leave to earn their full marginal product with another employer. This gives rise to the poaching problem whereby non-training employers can pay higher rates to workers who have received general training from a previous employer.

In our survey respondents who indicated that they had participated in employer education or training provided by their employer over the past 2 years were asked:

Do you feel that the skills or knowledge which you have acquired in this education or training would be of any use to you in getting a job with another employer or was the education or training specific to your current job only?

Almost 80% of all education and training undertaken by employees with employer sponsorship was general in nature, considered by respondents to be "Of use in getting a job with another employer". Only about 20% of training was considered to be specific, "of use only in current job." This pattern, whereby most training is general in nature is similar to that found in other countries (see, for example, Booth and Bryan (2002) in the United Kingdom; Pischke (2000) in Germany; and Loewenstein and Spletzer (1999) in the US).

Table 5.1 Participation in employer sponsored training in past two years, by individual characteristics

	trained
	%
Men	49.4
Women	46.1
< 24 years of age	49.2
25-39 years of age	50.3
40-54 years of age	46.9
> 55 years of age	37.5
No Qualification	34.2
Junior Certificate	38.0
Leaving Certificate	49.3
Third Level	59.4
Higher Prof. & Managers	63.4
Lower Professional	61.2
Other Non-manual	50.8
Skilled Manual	48.8
Semi-skilled Manual	34.9
Unskilled Manual	27.9
Part-time	39.6
Full-time	49.8
Permanent	50.0
Temporary	37.0
< 1 year in the job	35.8
1-5 years in the job	51.1
5+ years in the job	49.5
Union Member	58.9
Non-union	41.2
All	47.9

Table 5.2 Participation in employer sponsored training in past two years, by organisational characteristics

	trained
	%
Public Sector	60.0
Private Sector	45.1
Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector	45.5
Construction	49.4
Wholesale & Retail	42.1
Hotels & Restaurants	32.8
Transport & Communications	55.6
Finance & Bus. Services	52.5
Public Admin & Defence	64.8
Education	47.1
Health	53.8
Other Services	38.2
1-4 employees	30.1
5-19 employees	42.7
20-99 employees	47.7
>100 employees	60.6
Partnership institutions	63.5
No partnership	43.2
Participation arrangements	62.7
No participation	39.2
High Consultation	55.7
Low Consultation	44.3
All	47.9

Table 5.3 Proportions of trainees receiving general versus specific training by personal characteristics

	General training	Of use only in current job
	%	%
Men	77.6	22.4
Women	81.5	18.5
< 24 years of age	79.5	20.5
25-39 years of age	82.0	18.0
40-54 years of age	77.2	22.8
> 55 years of age	72.9	27.1
No Qualification	84.6	15.4
Junior Certificate	78.8	21.2
Leaving Certificate	78.1	21.9
Third Level	80.7	19.3
Higher Prof. & Managers	87.6	12.4
Lower Professional	73.2	26.8
Other Non-manual	82.0	18.0
Skilled Manual	80.0	20.0
Semi-skilled Manual	74.6	25.4
Unskilled Manual	76.6	23.4
Part-time	78.1	21.9
Full-time	79.6	20.4
Permanent	79.4	20.6
Temporary	79.3	20.7
<1 year in the job	80.2	19.8
1-5 years in the job	82.9	17.1
5+ years in the job	76.9	23.1
Union Member	75.8	24.2
Non-union	82.5	17.5
All	79.4	20.6

Table 5.4 Proportions of trainees receiving general versus specific training by organisational characteristics

	General training	Of use only in current job
	%	%
Public Sector	70.5	29.5
Private Sector	82.2	17.8
Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector	81.1	18.9
Construction	87.7	12.3
Wholesale & Retail	79.5	20.5
Hotels & Restaurants	93.3	6.7
Transport & Communications	74.3	25.7
Finance & Bus. Services	84.7	15.3
Public Admin & Defence	66.1	33.9
Education	71.5	28.5
Health	76.4	23.6
Other Services	76.1	23.9
1-4 employees	76.9	23.1
5-19 employees	78.9	21.1
20-99 employees	80.7	19.3
>100 employees	79.0	21.0
Partnership institutions	76.4	23.6
No partnership	80.8	19.2
Participation arrangements	80.2	19.8
No participation	78.5	21.5
High Consultation	80.5	19.5
Low Consultation	78.8	21.2
All	79.4	20.6

Women are somewhat more likely than men to report that their training was general in nature, and older workers are less likely than their younger colleagues to participate in general training: for example, 73% of those aged 55 or over who received training in the past 2 years participated in general training, compared to 80% of those aged less than 25. Almost 85% of those with no qualifications who received training reported that they received general training, compared to 80% or less of those with

higher levels of educational attainment. Higher Professionals and Managers are more likely than manual workers to report that their training was general. However, while 88% of Higher Professionals and Managers who were trained considered the training to be general, only 73% of Lower Professionals considered their training to be general, compared to 82% of Other Non-Manual workers and 80% of Skilled Manual Workers.

There were no significant differences in the nature of training between full- and part-time workers, nor between employees on temporary versus permanent contracts, although as noted in Table 5.1 above, full-timers and permanent workers are much more likely to receive training than part-timers and temporary workers. Similarly, union members are much more likely than non-members to receive training, but among those trained, union members are less likely to receive general training than non-members.

Public sector workers are more likely than those in the private sector to have participated in training in the past two years (Table 5.2) and a substantially greater proportion of training in the public sector is specific to the current employer (30%) than is the case in the private sector (18%). There are also marked differences in the nature of training by economic sector. In Hotels and Restaurants 93% of trainees considered their training to be general. Over 80% of workers in Manufacturing, Construction, Wholesale and Retail Trade and in Finance and Business Services who received training reported that it was general training. The share of training that was of use only in the current job was higher in Public Administration and Defence (34%) Transport and Communications (26%) and in Health and Other Services (24%).

The balance between general versus specific training does not vary much by size of organisation. Nor does this vary by the presence of partnership institutions, participation arrangements, or extent of consultation.

Table 5.5 Proportion of those who received training who considered that the training has been of use in carrying out the current job

	%
Men	94.1
Women	93.6
No Qualification	90.7
Junior Certificate	90.0
Leaving Certificate	94.1
Third Level	96.2
Higher Prof. & Managers	95.8
Lower Professional	93.6
Other Non-manual	95.9
Skilled Manual	93.5
Semi-skilled Manual	90.1
Unskilled Manual	90.9
All	93.9

The vast majority of workers (94%) who have received education or training in the past two years consider that it has been of use to them in carrying out their current job. There are no appreciable differences by age or gender in this pattern. Those with higher levels of education are more likely to consider that the training has been useful than those with lower levels of qualification. Similarly, professionals, other non-manual, and skilled manual workers are more likely than semi- or unskilled manual workers to consider that their training was useful in the current job. There were no significant differences by organisational characteristics in the extent to which trained workers consider that the training has been of use in the current job.