

Low Pay Commission:

Perceived barriers and risks of job mobility and progression of low-paid workers

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Executive Summary

Background and Methodology

It is largely understood that changing jobs or moving firms can have a positive impact on workers' pay growth – the Office for National Statistics (ONS) found that those who move job typically experience greater hourly wage growth, and this is higher still among those who also changed industry, occupation, or region¹. However, the Low Pay Commission, from its interviews with low-paid workers and their representatives, understands that many perceive significant risks or barriers when looking to move jobs. This has implications for the low-paid labour market and, in turn, the impacts of minimum wage increases on workers and employers. Accordingly, the Low Pay Commission commissioned YouGov to explore the views of low-paid workers relating to changing roles, employers, or hours of work, and the barriers they face in doing so.

The aim of this research is to understand:

- Low-paid workers' views on moving jobs in more depth
- The risks and barriers associated with moving jobs
- The impact of the National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage on these views
- Methods that low-paid workers use to search for jobs
- Perceptions of job searches and low-paid workers' ability to do so

In order to achieve these objectives YouGov conducted a three stage approach, constituted of a qualitative stage of 15 in-depth interviews with low-paid workers, and two quantitative surveys with low-paid, and medium- and high-paid workers.

At the time when this research was conducted, the minimum wage rates (effective 1 April 2023) were as follows:

- National Living Wage (aged 23+): £10.42
- 21-22 Year-Old Rate: £10.18
- 18-20 Year-Old Rate: £7.49
- 16-17 Year-Old Rate: £5.28
- Apprentice Rate: £5.28

¹ ONS - Job changers and stayers, understanding earnings, UK: April 2012 to April 2021 (2022)

At the time of the fieldwork, it was projected that in April 2024, the National Living Wage (NLW) will increase to £11.16.

Qualitative Phase

In the qualitative stage of the project, we conducted 15 online in-depth interviews via Zoom with low-paid workers who are earning £12 per hour or less. Fieldwork took place between 26th June - 5th July 2023.

The sample frame involved a mix of the following characteristics: age (23 and above), ethnicity, gender, full-time/part-time workers, and those who had or not had changed job in the past two years.

Quantitative Phase

The first stage of the quantitative approach was an online survey of 1,000 low-paid employees in the UK aged 16+. Fieldwork took place between 2nd to 22nd August 2023

For the purposes of this survey 'low-paid workers' refers to all employees paid £12 and under per hour. To ensure a large enough sample size for analysis, the proportion of minimum wage workers was boosted during fieldwork, and then re-weighted to be representative at the data analysis stage. The results are representative of low-paid workers. The sample was weighted by age, gender, ethnicity, region, work status, wage level, industry, sector, and organisation size.

The second stage of the quantitative stage was an online survey of 1,000 medium- and high-paid employees in the UK aged 16+. Fieldwork took place between 20th September to 3rd October 2023.

For the purposes of this survey 'medium- and high-paid workers' refers to all those paid £12.01 and more per hour. The results are representative of medium- and high-paid workers. The sample was weighted by age, gender, region, work status, wage level, industry, sector, and business size.

Please see Appendix 1 for a description of the weighting procedures and sources used.

Notes for interpretation

Throughout the report, the quantitative sample of low-paid workers has been split into 'minimum wage workers' and 'low wage workers above minimum wage'. These have been

allocated based on workers' hourly pay. All those referred to as 'low wage workers above minimum wage' are paid more than the minimum wage for their age group but less than £12.00 per hour. As stated above, 'medium- and high-paid workers' are those earning £12.01 or more per hour.

Where respondents currently have more than one job, their responses refer to the job in which they work the most hours.

The quantitative findings throughout the report are presented in the form of percentages, and all differences highlighted between sub-groups are statistically significant at an alpha level of 0.05 unless otherwise indicated. In some instances, apparent differences between figures may not be considered 'statistically significant' due to sample sizes.

Where percentages do not sum up to 100, this is due to rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say' responses, or because respondents could give multiple answers.

Where relevant, quotes from open ended questions in the quantitative phase have been coloured as purple. Quotes from the interviews in the qualitative phase have been coloured as blue.

Key findings

The Low Pay Commission (LPC) hears consistently from low-paid workers about their worries about moving jobs. Labour market data show that moving jobs is associated with improving workers' pay. A job market where workers are discouraged or prevented from moving between employers is a bad outcome for everyone. Employers find it harder to fill vacancies. Poor employers have less incentive to change their practices. Workers are less likely to progress into higher pay.

The LPC commissioned this research to establish how widespread these concerns are and who they might affect. We find that a combination of factors makes low-paid workers feel moving job is a substantial risk even though they are dissatisfied with their pay and opportunities to progress within their current roles.

Around two in five low-paid workers say they are likely to apply for another job in the next 12 months. This is a higher share than their better-paid counterparts. It leaves a majority of low-paid workers who are unlikely to apply for a new job.

Pay – by a significant margin – is the most important motivation for low-paid workers when applying for new jobs. The majority of low-paid workers report feeling capable, experienced, and qualified enough to apply for new jobs and that they have access to the right resources and support. But only half agree there would be value to them moving jobs. In qualitative interviews, some workers were less willing to move job for higher pay because they might end up in a worse situation. Overall, attitudes among low-paid workers are risk-averse and focus largely on what could be lost if they were to move job.

The most common worries among low paid workers are that if they move jobs they might have a bad manager, not enjoy the job, or have poor working relationships. These fears are similar among higher paid workers. Low paid workers worry more about uncertainty about the hours flexibility a new employer might offer, not being paid fairly and having an unreliable employer.

Some feel they lack the time and financial resources to search and apply for other jobs. Many workers have restricted time and money to devote to moving jobs. Although the majority feel they live in an area where they have reasonable access to job opportunities, some say the opportunities just aren't there locally. Allied with a lack of motivation and

worries that other jobs will not fit their situation and responsibilities, this means they are less likely to invest time in searching and applying for other opportunities.

Promotion and progression

A majority of low-paid workers state it is important for them to work in a role where there are opportunities for progression. Despite this, they tend to have little experience of progression and promotion in their current workplace. Three-quarters of our sample report not having received a promotion in their current role. A higher proportion still feel this is unlikely to happen to them in this role in the future.

Counterintuitively, nearly half the workers in our sample stated it was unlikely they would accept a promotion if one was offered. The reasons for this are varied. Reasons gathered via the survey include that some are concerned that additional responsibility could lead to worse work-life balance, or conflict with caring responsibilities. In these cases, many feel that any changes in pay as a result of promotion or progression would not be able to offset these consequences. Some have low confidence in their own skills and low expectations of their ability to progress. Older workers are much less likely to expect or say they would accept a promotion.

Job satisfaction

Overall, there are high levels of dissatisfaction among low-paid workers when it comes to pay. By a wide margin, pay is the aspect of work most likely to be thought of as a disadvantage by low-paid workers. The majority of low-paid workers believe they deserve to be paid more in their current job, and a large minority feel that they are paid worse than others in similar jobs elsewhere.

Low-paid workers' perceptions of other areas of their jobs can be more positive. Aspects such as the location of their job, relationships with colleagues and their work-life balance drive low-paid workers' overall job satisfaction. These factors are also commonly cited as key benefits of their current job.

The number and predictability of working hours and flexibility sit a tier below this – around three in ten low-paid workers cite these as benefits of their role. These are still more likely to be considered a benefit than a disadvantage.

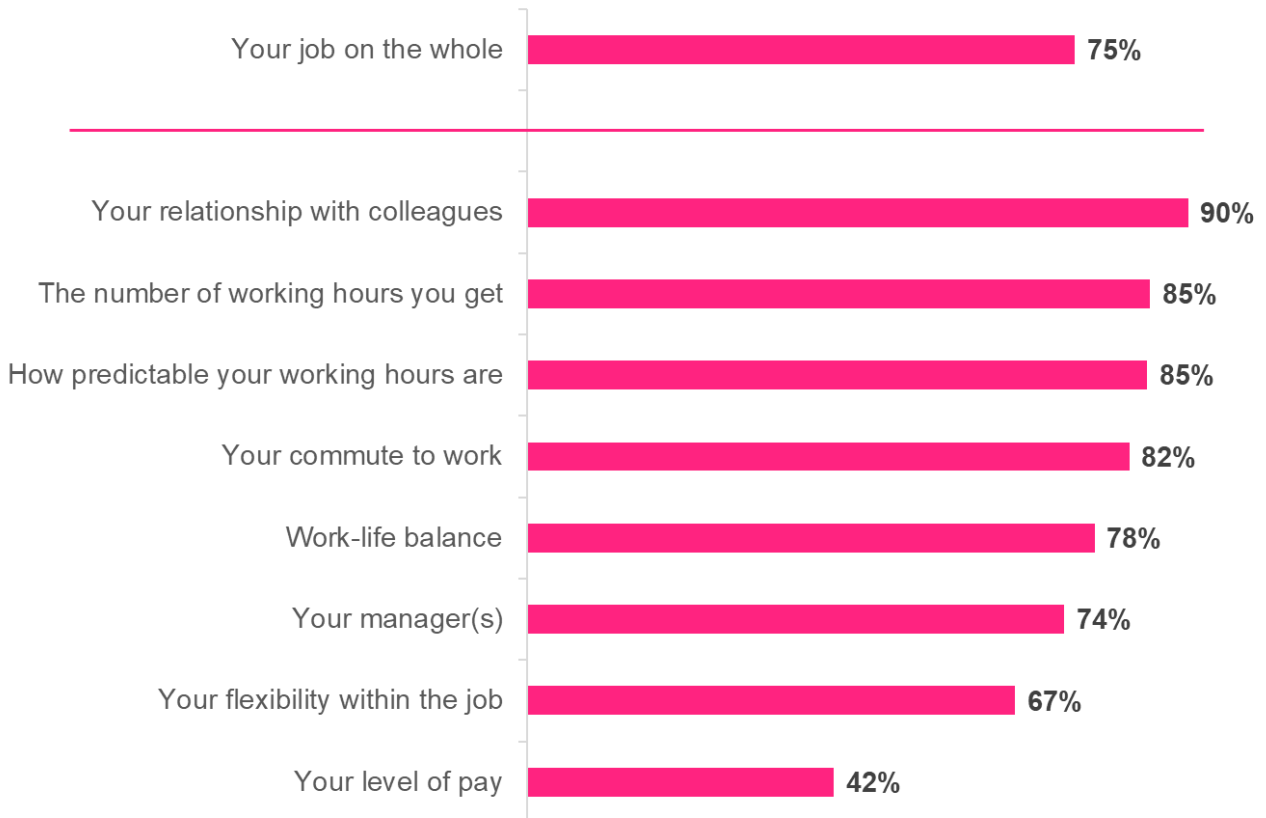


Dissatisfaction with pay is not unique to low-paid workers – indeed, medium- and high-paid workers also commonly state that their level of pay is a disadvantage of their current job. But this negative sentiment is much stronger in low-paid roles. Low-paid workers more commonly identify pay as a disadvantage of their current job. They more frequently identify concerns around unreliable employers and lack of fair pay if they were to change jobs than those in higher paid roles. The next most common disadvantage is a lack of opportunities for promotion or progression – particularly for low-paid workers in their thirties and forties.

Low-paid workers' attitudes towards their current job

Overall, there are strong levels of job satisfaction among low-paid workers. The majority (75%) report they are satisfied with their job on the whole, with one fifth (22%) reporting they are very satisfied.

Figure 1. Satisfaction with current job – all low-paid workers (net: satisfied)



Base: All low-paid workers (n=1,001)

How satisfied or dissatisfied do you feel with the following aspects of your job?

Looking at specific elements of their job, satisfaction is highest when considering their relationship with work colleagues (90%), followed by their number of working hours (85%) and the predictability of working hours (85%). Comparatively, satisfaction is lowest – by a significant margin – when thinking about their level of pay (42%). Generally, these feelings are consistent across the wage levels, with the only difference occurring when about it comes to the number of work hours, where those on minimum wage (79%) are significantly less likely to be satisfied compared with those on a low wage but paid above minimum wage (87%).

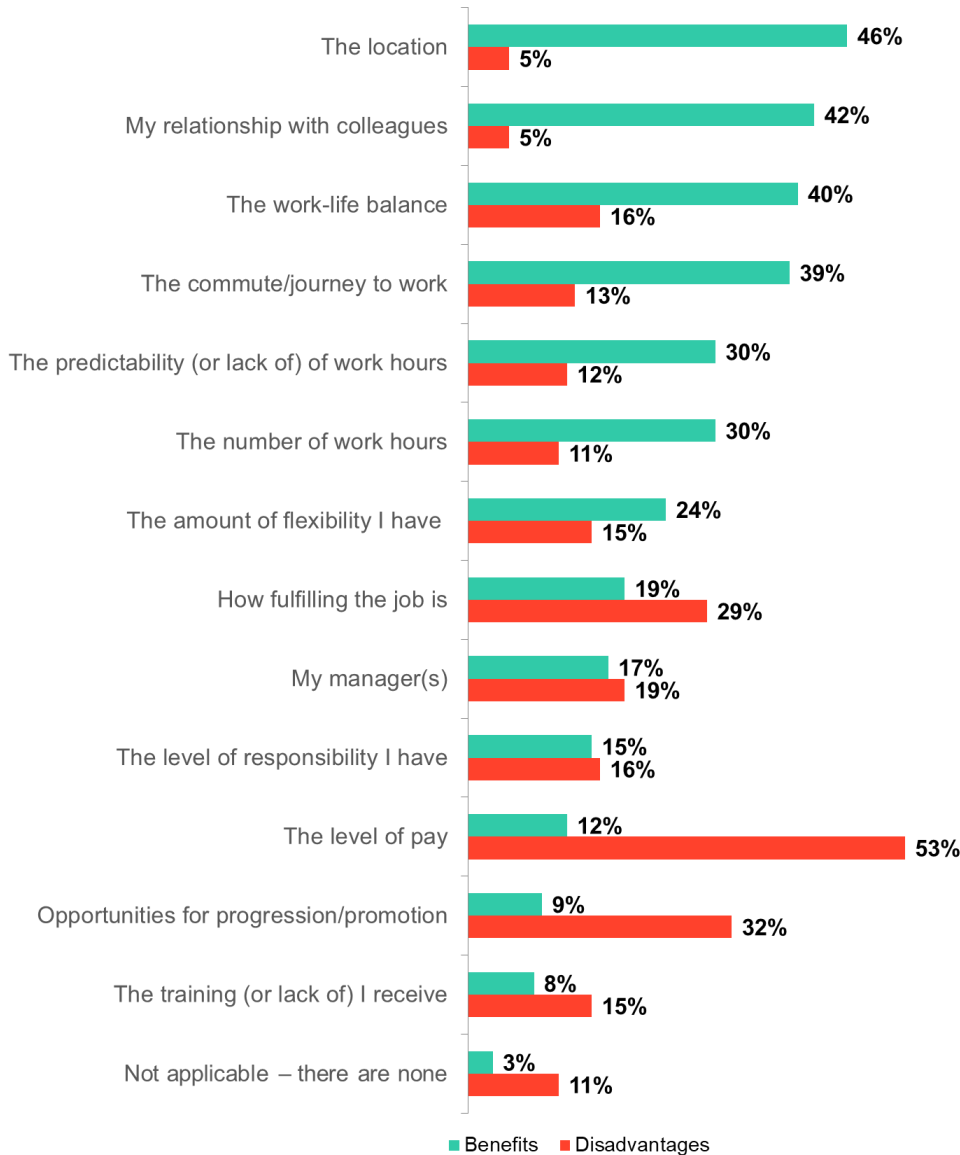
Comparatively, medium- and high-paid workers (81%) are slightly more likely than low-paid workers (75%) to be satisfied with their job on the whole. In particular, they are more satisfied with their level of pay (66% vs 42%) and the flexibility they have within their job (78% vs 67%). In most other ways, however, their reported levels of satisfaction with specific aspects of their job such as relationships with colleagues, work-life balance and commute are very similar to those expressed by low-paid workers.

When low-paid workers are considering aspects of their current job, environment-focused attributes, relationship with colleagues, and work-life balance tend to be rated most commonly as benefits, whereas practical considerations, such as level of pay or opportunities for progression and promotion are most commonly seen as a disadvantage of their current job.

The importance of colleague relationships continues to be evident when thinking about the key benefits of jobs; close to two in five (42%) low-paid workers identify this as a benefit, and this is an attitude which is consistent across the low-paid workers surveyed. While workplace location is most commonly identified as a benefit (46%), slightly smaller proportions identify their current commute or journey to work (39%). Those living in town or fringe locations are much more likely to report that their commute is a benefit (52% vs 36% of those in urban areas), although there are no statistically significant differences between these groups when it comes to how they see the location of their work.

Caring responsibilities are a large determinant of how people perceive their job's benefits and disadvantages. Overall, two in five (40%) low-paid workers identify work-life balance as a key benefit, but this is driven by respondents who have wider caring responsibilities in their personal lives (53%). This group is also more likely to identify practical attributes such as commuting (52%) as a benefit compared with those without caring responsibilities (35%). This group is twice as likely as those without caring responsibilities to identify the predictability of work hours as a *disadvantage* (22% vs 11%), and a similar proportion (23%) state the same when thinking about the lack of flexibility in their role, compared with 14% of non-carers.

Figure 2. Main benefits and disadvantages of current job – all low-paid workers



Base: All low-paid workers (n=1,001)

Which, if any, of the following do you feel are the main [benefits/disadvantages] of your current job? Please select up to five options.

In line with the low levels of satisfaction with current pay, the level of pay is most commonly seen as a disadvantage of their job by low-paid workers. Over half (53%) identify it as a main disadvantage, compared with 12% who identify it as a benefit.

In contrast, among medium- and high-paid workers, level of pay (26%) falls roughly in the middle in the rank order of benefits they associate with their current job. It is more often seen as a benefit than their manager (23%) or level of responsibility (21%), for example. Notably, however, much like low-paid workers, level of pay (36%) is the top ranked disadvantage of their current job, even though its separation from other perceived

disadvantages is somewhat less pronounced. Interestingly, location (34%) is acknowledged less often by medium- and high-paid workers as a benefit of their job than by low-paid workers (46%), with it ranking fourth on the list of benefits, indicating that prioritising this as a top benefit is unique to low-paid workers.

Possibly unsurprisingly, workers earning the minimum wage are more likely to identify level of pay as a key disadvantage of their job (61%), although it is still cited by a majority (51%) of other low-wage workers. Those in full-time roles are also more likely than those in part-time contracts to state their level of pay is a disadvantage (60% vs 46%). Those in full time roles also drive the proportion who state that the lack of opportunities for progression and promotion is a disadvantage (38% of full-time low-paid workers vs 26% of part-time workers), possibly due to differing expectations around progression compared with part-time workers.

Clear differences emerge when comparing age groups; those aged 29 and under are more likely than any other age group to identify the lack of predictability in hours as a disadvantage (19%), and they also drive the response rate when thinking about the number of hours they work, as they are more likely to identify this as a disadvantage (15%). While close to a third of low-paid workers overall identify the lack of opportunities for promotion and progression as a disadvantage (32%), this is led by those aged 30 to 39 (38%) and 40 to 49 (36%). Likewise, the appetite among these groups for a more senior role can be seen elsewhere: one in ten (10%) of those aged 30 to 39 state that there is not enough responsibility in their current role, and one fifth (22%) state there is a lack of training.

Similarly, results from the qualitative research indicate that job satisfaction among low-paid workers is most frequently linked to a good working environment, good management, stable hours, and good work relations, along with being paid fairly. For mothers with younger children or others who have caring responsibilities, flexibility tended to have a particularly high importance when it comes to job satisfaction. These factors were also often valued more than job progression and development. However, job progression was often valued more among those who have higher qualifications or are exposed to training and development opportunities in their current job.

“They're not keen to have part-time workers. But they were really lovely and flexible with me... if I hadn't been able to go back to work part-time... I would've had to have quit.” –

Female, 36, retail (qualitative interviews)

“Although we’ve got a little team, I do like going off on my own and I’m able to just put my headphones in and listen to podcasts... you are just sort of your own boss really.” –

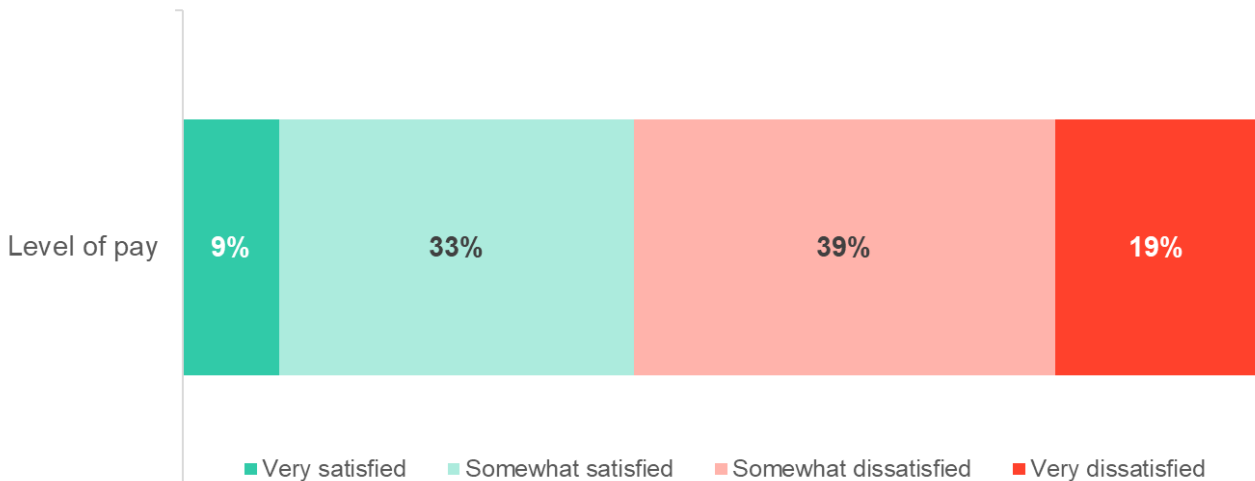
Female, 47, hospitality (qualitative interviews)

Perceptions of pay

Current pay

As shown in Figure 1, out of all aspects measured, low-paid workers report the lowest satisfaction in relation to their level of pay (42%). Only one in ten (9%) report they are very satisfied, while two in ten (19%) report they are very dissatisfied. Largely, this attitude is consistent across various sub-groups of low-paid workers, with the exception of the younger age group. The majority (62%) of those aged 16 to 20 years old state that they are satisfied with their current level of pay, with two in ten (20%) reporting that they are very satisfied. This is in line with earlier findings on page 10 when looking at the benefits of the job; those aged 16 to 20 are much more likely than all other age groups to identify level of pay as a benefit (42%).

Figure 3. Satisfaction with level of pay – All low-paid workers



Base: All low-paid workers (n=1,001)

How satisfied or dissatisfied do you feel with the following aspects of your job? – Your level of pay

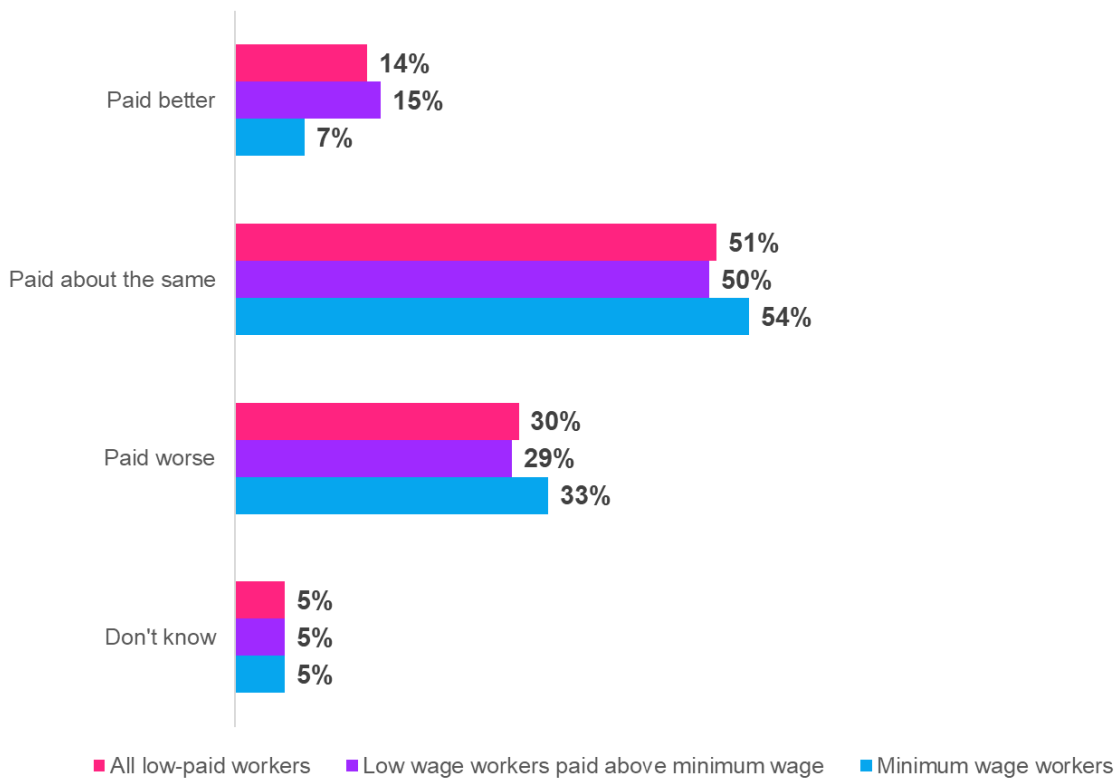
It follows that the vast majority (82%) of low-paid workers believe that they deserve to be paid more for their current job, while 17% think their level of pay is about right. Only four percent of those who previously stated that they were dissatisfied with their pay feel that their current pay level is about right. Of those who believe that they deserve to be paid more for their current job, 42% state that they deserve to be paid much more.

As stated previously (page 9), medium- and high-paid workers (66%) are significantly more satisfied with the level of pay in their job than low-paid workers (42%). In addition,

they less often feel they deserve to be paid more in their current job than low-paid workers (73% vs 82%), although a strong majority still do hold this sentiment. Instead, a higher proportion relative to low-paid workers say they think their current pay is about right (27% vs 17%). These findings indicate that although pay is an area lacking in satisfaction among workers in the UK across all pay levels, the extent of this dissatisfaction is particularly pronounced among low-paid workers.

In order to understand general perceptions around pay, workers were asked as part of the survey whether they believed they were being paid better, worse or about the same as someone else doing a similar job. Overall, half of low-paid workers (51%) believe they are being paid the same as someone in a comparable role. The smaller minority (14%) think they are being paid better, a perception which is significantly lower among those being paid minimum wage (7%), while three in ten (30%) believe they are being paid worse than their counterparts.

Figure 4. Perception of pay level in relation to others in a similar job – All low-paid workers, low wage workers paid above minimum wage and minimum wage workers



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001; low wage workers paid above minimum wage n=628; minimum wage workers n=373

Compared to other people doing a similar job to you for other employers, do you think you are better paid, about the same, or paid worse?

This perception can also be linked to workers' previous perceptions around their deserved level of pay; over a third (35%) of those who previously reported that they feel they deserve to be paid more think that they are paid less than others, compared with only eight percent of those who think their level of pay is about right. It follows that those who reported that they are dissatisfied with their pay are also much more likely to think they are being paid less (44%) than among those who are satisfied (10%).

Interestingly, there are no differences in these perceptions of pay by work sector. Despite the fact that pay benchmarking is more common in the public sector, these workers are equally as likely as those in the private and voluntary sectors to report that they think there are differences in levels of pay for someone working in a similar role.

There is little difference between medium/high-paid and low-paid workers when it comes to believing that they are paid better (18% vs 14%) or worse (29% vs 30%) than others doing similar work for other employers. Equivalent proportions (50% and 51% respectively) feel they are paid about the same as others in similar jobs.

Low-paid workers who believe they are being paid less than others in similar roles were then asked² why they continued to remain in their role rather than changing jobs. Most frequently, the benefits highlighted in the previous chapter, such as their current role's flexibility, workplace relationships and job location, were cited:

"It's close to home and works well around my childcare"

"Location to workplace and flexibility of hours"

"I am happy and comfortable in my current job. I have a good relationship within the office and it's a relaxed environment. It would make me unhappy to leave"

"I have just gotten use[d] to my routine, the hours I work fit my life, the commute to work isn't far and I know my colleagues and managers"

Likewise, there was a common emphasis on their happiness in their role, despite lower levels of pay, and a fear of the unknown:

² Verbatim data from the quantitative survey

“We hear constant horror stories from our competitors’ staff, and I suppose I’d rather be an underpaid but happy than probably still slightly underpaid but working in a harsh environment”

“Job flexibility and security makes it worth staying where I am. I could get paid more for what I do through an agency but wouldn’t be contracted guaranteed/consistent work”

However, some also stated that they would not feel confident in being able to get a similar job elsewhere, either due to lack of confidence or not having the appropriate qualifications. For some, concerns around age were also mentioned:

“I have been promoted to a role in my company after being in the right place at the right time and it’s a role I really enjoy. However, most people need qualifications for this role or at least a good amount of experience. I don’t have faith that I could get a role as good as my current one with my ‘on paper’ skills”

“Difficult to find an open job elsewhere as market is saturated, my role is perceived as low skilled so can be difficult to convince employers of my qualities and experience”

“Don’t have the confidence to leave and worry about job security”

“I am nearly 63, I’m very lucky to have any job. It took several years having been made redundant at 52 to find any employer who would even look at me”

A small proportion mentioned the additional benefits they receive from their employer that they may not receive elsewhere:

“Been in the NHS for over ten years so I get extra holiday and redundancy (if it were to happen). Blue Light discount.”

“Long term employee benefits”

Findings from the qualitative interviews show that while many are not satisfied with their pay, they feel they do not have opportunities to increase it through other means, such as job progression and mobility. Meanwhile, others feel that job progression, job mobility and higher pay carry certain risks and trade-offs— factors such as increased work responsibilities, less flexibility or having to commute for longer, as well as the potential for a poor work environment, mean some are less willing to seek out opportunities for higher pay due to a perception that they might end up in a worse situation as a result.

Many participants in the qualitative research mentioned that their satisfaction with pay would be higher if it was in line with inflation. Satisfaction with their pay often also appeared to be dependent on other factors, such as their work responsibilities or whether they get any additional benefits. In general, those who are paid above the minimum wage, even if the difference is small, or who have other benefits, such as pension, free lunch, or tips, appeared more satisfied with their pay. However, those who work in more demanding public sector jobs, such as schools, nurseries, and hospitals, tended to feel less satisfied. This was mainly linked to the high demands of their work, such as working long shifts or additional hours that they do not feel being rewarded for.

“The way everything’s going up in price, but the wages don’t match it. So, [I’d be happy] for us to get what it should be, the national average.” – Male, 44, hospitality (qualitative interviews)

“The salary itself is not, not the best ... because you can get better money in other places for doing less work.” – Male, 32, healthcare (qualitative interviews)

“We’ve had a pay rise and then it has gone up when the national minimal wage went up ... I’m quite happy with it.” – Female, 44, retail (qualitative interviews)

“For what we do...we’re quite low paid really. I think at the moment, what I get a year is... £20,000. I was looking the [average] national wages, it’s £24,000 a year. So, if I [was] to get it, I’d be happy with it.” – Male, 44, hospitality (qualitative interviews)

Future pay

The majority of low-paid workers believe that their pay will increase in the next 12 months if they stay in their current role (61%). Among this group, 28% believe it will increase by 50p or less, 22% believe the increase will be between 50p and £1 and 12% think it will increase by more than £1. Interestingly, those in low wage roles who are paid above minimum wage are more likely to think that their pay will increase (64%) than those being paid the minimum wage (50%), although this is still stated by the majority of this group. A similar proportion (46%) of those currently being paid minimum wage think that their wage will stay the same, highlighting a lack of knowledge among these workers surrounding the annual minimum wage adjustments.

Figure 5. Expectations for hourly wage in the next 12 months – All low-paid workers, low wage workers paid above minimum wage and minimum wage workers



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001; low wage workers paid above minimum wage n=628; minimum wage workers n=373

Assuming you are still working at your current job in 12 months, at this time next year how do you expect your hourly wage will have changed, if at all?

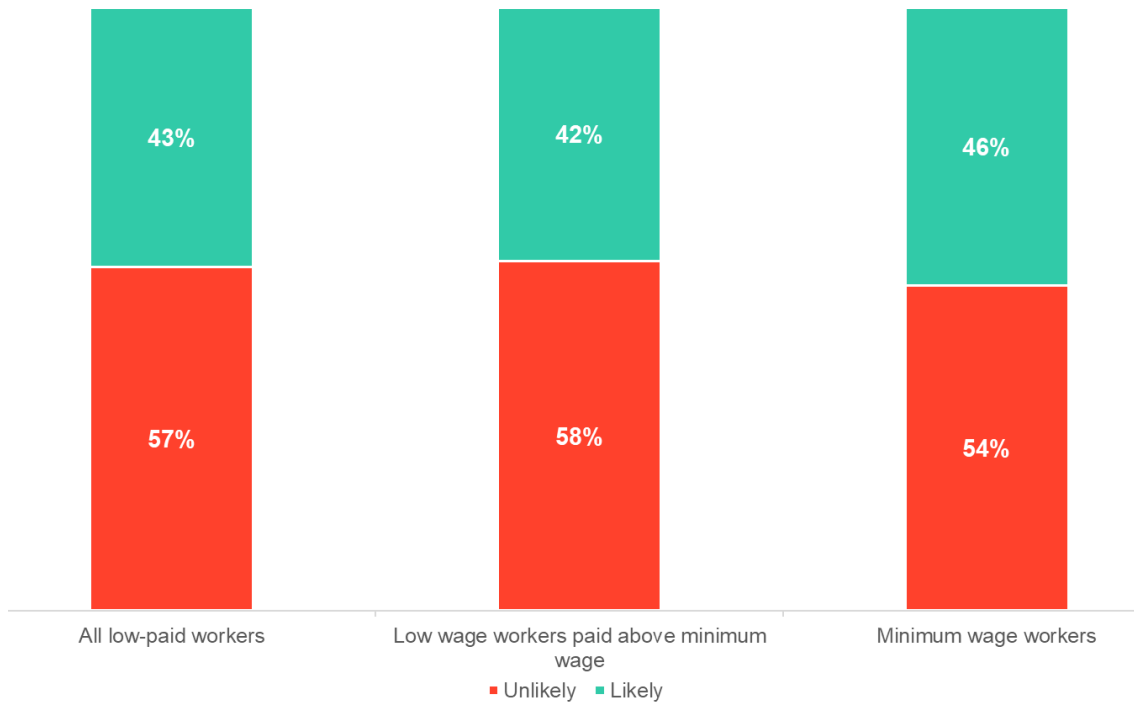
Those working for large organisations (250 or more employees) show more confidence that their wage will increase in the next year than those in organisations of 2 to 249 employees (68% vs 54%), with the latter being more likely to expect that it will stay the same (41% vs 29%). When looking at industry, there are no differences in expectations over future pay increases or decreases, although those in professional services more commonly expect to see a wage increase of more than £3 compared with all other industries (11%).

When considering future pay increases, low-paid workers are also more likely to feel staying in the same job for a longer period increases their likelihood of earning more than moving jobs regularly (58% vs 42%). This perception may be a driving factor to staying in the same job; three in five (63%) of those who say they are unlikely to apply for another job in the next year believe staying in the same job is better for increased pay, compared with half (52%) of those who are likely to apply elsewhere.

Changing jobs

Reflecting this, despite their dissatisfaction with pay, the majority of low-paid workers state that they would be unlikely to apply for a job with a different employer in the next 12 months (57%), with one fifth (22%) stating they would be very unlikely. Comparatively, two fifths (43%) report they would be likely, with one sixth (16%) stating they would be very likely.

Figure 6. Likelihood to apply for a new job with a different employer in next 12 months – All low-paid workers, low wage workers paid above minimum wage and minimum wage workers



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001; low wage workers paid above minimum wage n=628; minimum wage workers n=373

How likely are you to apply for a new job with a different employer in the next 12 months?

Medium- and high-paid workers (32%) are less likely than low-paid workers (43%) to apply for a new job in the next 12 months. This indicates that although it is a minority of low-paid workers who are likely to attempt moving jobs soon, intentions for job mobility are in fact higher for them than among the higher paid workforce.

Although reported likelihood of changing jobs is broadly consistent among all low-paid workers, it does increase for low-paid workers who are from an ethnic minority background (61%) and among those from younger age groups (57% of 16 to 29 year-olds).

Despite differences in pay expectations in their current role in the next 12 months, there are no statistically significant differences between those paid minimum wage and those who are low wage workers but paid above minimum wage when thinking about their likelihood to change jobs.

However, there is a link between dissatisfaction with pay and likelihood to apply elsewhere, with half (51%) of those who previously reported being dissatisfied with their current pay stating they would be likely to do so, compared with a much smaller proportion (32%) of those who are satisfied with their pay. Nevertheless, it remains that there is still a large proportion (49%) of those who are dissatisfied with their level of pay reporting they unlikely to apply elsewhere, compared with 68% of those who are satisfied.

In line with the overall findings regarding likelihood to change employers, those who are dissatisfied with their pay but unlikely to apply for a new job are predominantly from a white ethnic background (51%), compared with a third (34%) of those from an ethnic background who are unlikely to apply elsewhere. It is also a sentiment largely driven by those from older age groups who are dissatisfied with their pay and is especially evident among those aged 60 and over (76%). This possibly links to the earlier findings on page 17 around fear of age discrimination or being unlikely to be able to find a job as workers get older. Comparatively, of those aged 16 to 29 who are dissatisfied with their pay, nearly seven in ten (68%) report they would be likely to apply for a new job – much higher than the 51% overall figure among those dissatisfied.

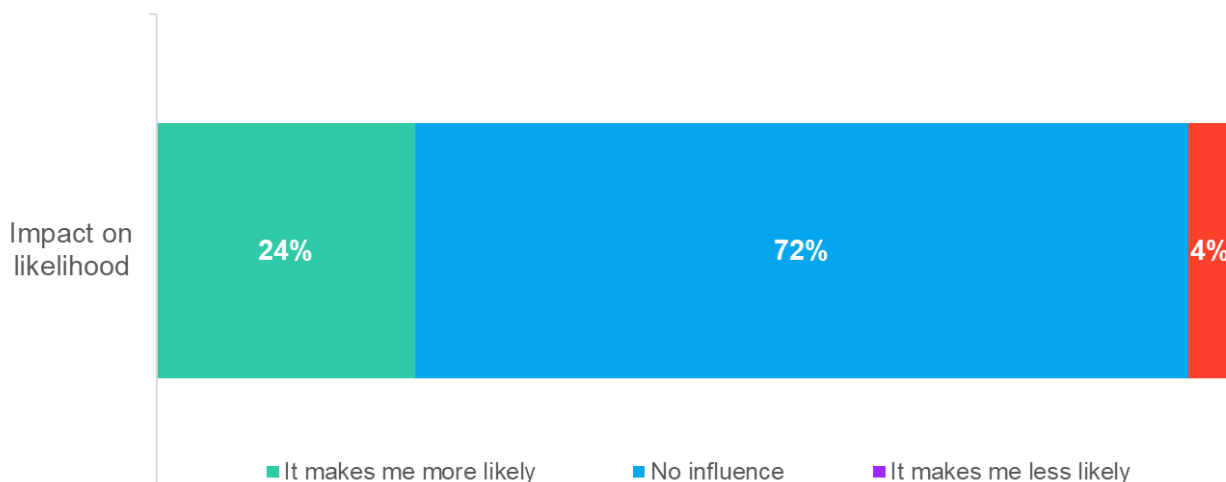
Likewise, it is further evidenced that the environmental factors relating to their current job may take precedence over pay. Those who are dissatisfied with their pay but satisfied with the flexibility of their current job more commonly report that they would be unlikely to apply for a new job (57%). The same is true when looking at those who are dissatisfied with pay but satisfied with their work-life balance (55%) or with their relationships with colleagues (52%).

Impact of minimum wage increases on likelihood to apply for new jobs

The projected 2024 minimum wage increase has minimal impact on workers' self-reported likelihood to pursue new opportunities; the majority (72%) of minimum wage workers say

this information has no influence on how likely they are to apply for a new job in the next year. This is higher among older workers (88% of those aged 60 and over), who also more commonly report that they would be unlikely to apply for a job generally in the next year (82%).

Figure 7. Impact of NLW increase on likelihood to apply for a new job with a different employer – All low-paid workers



Base: All minimum wage workers n=373

This year the National Living Wage rose from £9.50 an hour to £10.42 an hour, a 92 pence (9.7%) increase. Next year, current projections suggest it will increase to £11.10-£11.30 (a 6.5% to 8.5% increase) and will be extended to include all workers aged 21 and over. This question refers to the National Minimum Wage, which is a legal requirement for all employers in the UK. There is a National Living Wage in place for the majority of workers (age 23 or over), and otherwise National Minimum Wage rates apply for younger age groups and apprentices. To what extent, if at all, does this expected increase in the National Minimum/Living wage affect how likely you would be to apply for a job with a different employer in the next 12 months?

Comparatively, a quarter (24%) report this information makes them more likely to apply for a new job with a different employer and 4% say it makes them less likely. It is important to note that the profile of those who state it makes them more likely to apply for a job is reflective of those who were already intending to look for new work; among those who previously said they are unlikely to apply for a job in the next year, the figure decreases from 24% to 10%.

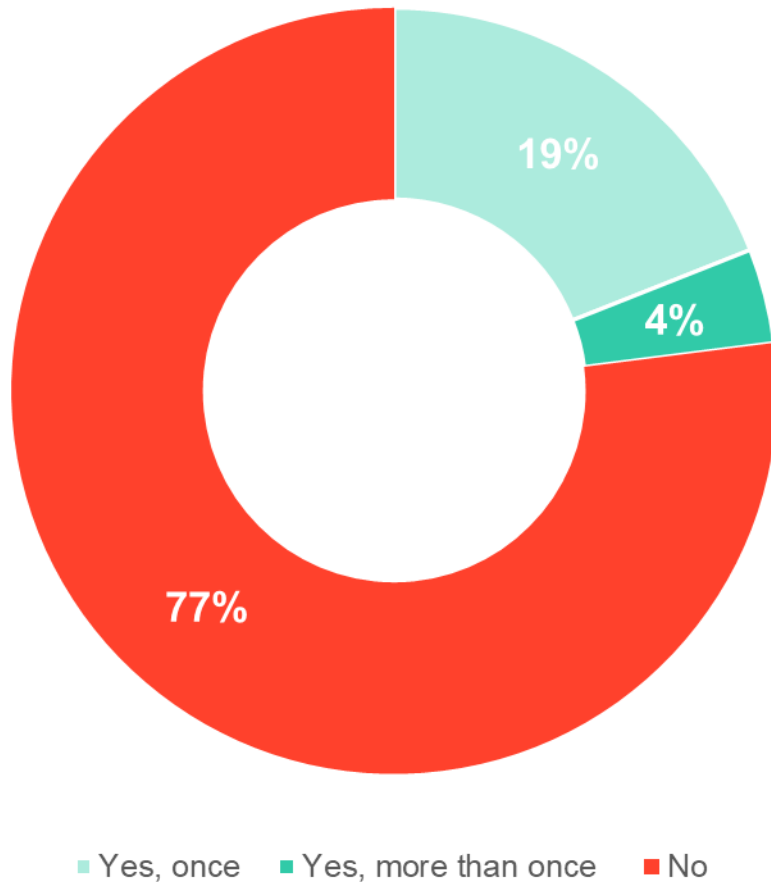
Experiences of progression

Earlier findings revealed that a third (32%) of low-paid workers feel the lack of opportunity for progression is a disadvantage of their job (Figure 2). Reflecting this, the majority report having experienced limited progression with their current employer; three quarters (77%) have not had a promotion or moved to a more senior position. Comparatively, only one in five (19%) have been promoted once and 4% have been promoted more than once.

Possibly unsurprisingly, likelihood of receiving a promotion increases with tenure. For example, a third (32%) of those who have been with their employer for more than five years have had a promotion compared with one in ten (11%) who have been there for less than two years. However, it remains that the majority (68%) of those with more than five years of tenure have not had a promotion.

There is a correlation between promotion and satisfaction: those who have had a promotion with their current employer display higher levels of overall job satisfaction than those who have not (83% vs 72%). However, there is no statistically significant difference between those who have experienced a promotion and those who have not in regard to satisfaction with their level of pay (39% vs 43%). This suggests that promotions for low-paid workers may increase job satisfaction for reasons other than pay.

Figure 8. Experience of promotion or moving to a more senior position



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

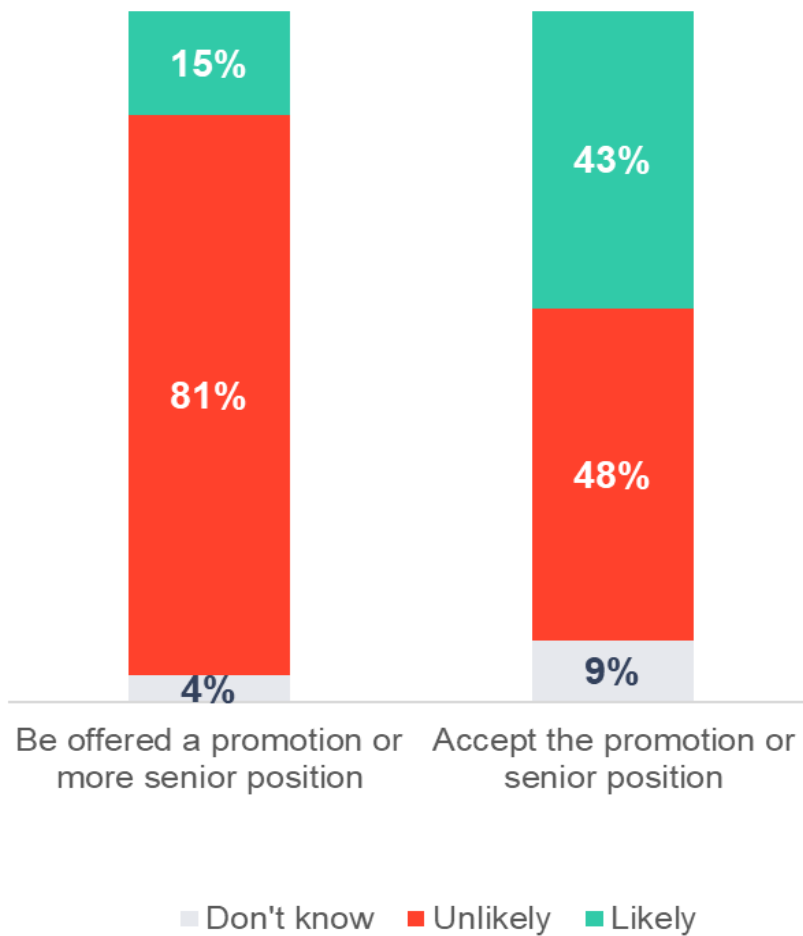
Thinking about the time you've spent working for your current employer, have you ever been promoted or moved to a more senior position?

In addition to low levels of promotion experience, low-paid workers have lower expectations when thinking about the possibility of being promoted. The majority (81%) of low-paid workers feel it is unlikely they will be offered a promotion or more senior position with their current employer, compared with only one sixth (15%) who believe it to be likely. Unlike experiences of promotion, perceived likelihood is higher among those who have spent less time working for their current employer, with nearly a quarter (23%) of those who have spent less than two years believing it is likely compared with 6% of those with more than five years of tenure. This could suggest that low-paid workers with more tenure have an increased likelihood of feeling they have hit a ceiling with progression at their current employer.

Notably, nearly half (48%) of low-paid workers feel they would be unlikely to accept a promotion with their current employer if offered one, while a slightly smaller proportion

(43%) say they would be likely. Even among those who said they are likely to be offered a promotion in the next year, a fifth (20%) still feel they would be unlikely to accept it. There is a disparity in likelihood to accept a promotion when looking at wage levels; nearly half (45%) of those who are on a low wage but paid above the minimum wage would be likely to accept a promotion compared with a smaller proportion (36%) of those who are on minimum wage.

Figure 9. Likelihood to be offered or accept a promotion or more senior position



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

For this question, we are interested in how likely or unlikely you think the following circumstances are:

Younger low-paid workers are more likely to feel they will be offered a promotion within the next year, with one quarter (24%) of 16 to 29 year-olds reporting this compared with 6% of those aged 50 and over. This pattern is also observed when looking at likelihood to accept one if offered, with nearly six in ten (59%) 16 to 29 year olds stating they would do so,

compared with only a quarter (24%) of those aged 50 and over. In addition to age, there are also differences when looking at ethnicity. Two in five (38%) of those from an ethnic minority background believe they are likely to be offered a promotion compared with one in ten (11%) from a white background. As with age, this also translates to likelihood to accept a promotion if they are presented with the opportunity (57% vs 41% respectively).

A considerably higher proportion of medium- and high-paid workers (48%) have been promoted or moved to a more senior position with their current employer than low-paid workers (23%). Further demonstrating the distinction, medium- and high-paid workers more often feel it is likely they will be offered a promotion in the next 12 months (24% compared with 15%). However, although they also more often say they would be likely to accept a promotion if offered one than low-paid workers (53% compared with 43%), there remains a large minority (40%) who feel they would be unlikely to do so.

Low-paid workers were asked why they would be unlikely to take a more senior position³. For many, common reasons included not wanting the additional responsibility or pressure, increased hours, or worse work life balance. They also sometimes assumed that the pay increase offered for a more senior position is not enough to justify the additional responsibility and workload.

“Too much expected of low level managers. Employer moves managers to alternate sites with no say on the junior managers part.”

“Too much responsibility not worth the small amount of extra pay.”

“Too much responsibility for very minimal pay”

Some low-paid workers felt that they do not have enough time or resources to take on extra responsibility. For example, some low-paid workers have caring responsibilities such as disabled family members or young children which restrict them from working additional hours. Other workers cite having a chronic illness themselves which limits their workload. Other reasons included the potential impact on childcare or other benefits due to an increase in pay.

“Too many other responsibilities away from work (disabled child) and lack of affordable care / childcare options for him”

³ Verbatim data from the quantitative survey

“I have a chronic illness and I would find it difficult to manage if I took on more hours/ responsibility”

“I have a 1 year old and it would need to fit in with him. My current role has the perfect hours”

“I’d pay too much tax and wouldn’t receive some benefits meaning that it would actually be a pay cut for more work.”

Further reasons provided by low-paid workers as to why they would not take a more senior position included there not being a more senior position available or feeling content with their current role. Some low-paid workers also described their current job as a retirement job, hence decreasing motivation to receive a promotion.

“There isn’t one available in my current role, I would have to change departments or roles”

“There is no other senior position in the area I do. I’m the only one that does the role.”

“This a job taken after stepping down from several senior management positions with other employers. At this stage in life, and as my financial position allows it, this works well for me”

The qualitative research reveals that many of those who have been employed in low-paid and low-skilled positions for several years feel they have limited opportunities to progress in their current role, mostly due to the perceived lack of experience or skills. Others felt that their current employer does not offer sufficient progression opportunities. As a result, they valued other factors more, such as job stability and a good working environment.

Some participants also felt that job progression would result in longer hours, more responsibilities, and less flexibility, which means they were less willing to take on these opportunities. This was especially evident among mothers with younger children and people with caring responsibilities, as they felt that job progression could potentially have negative impacts on their work-life balance and the ability to forgo childcare costs.

People with higher qualifications or those who have been able to acquire new skills appeared more willing to progress in their current job and more open to undergoing some of the potential risks associated with this.

“I don’t feel like I’ve got any skills to get a higher paid job... I’m set in a skillset, retail, and cleaning, I’m not really up on computers, so I probably haven’t got the skills to get a higher paid job.” – Female, 47, hospitality (qualitative interviews)

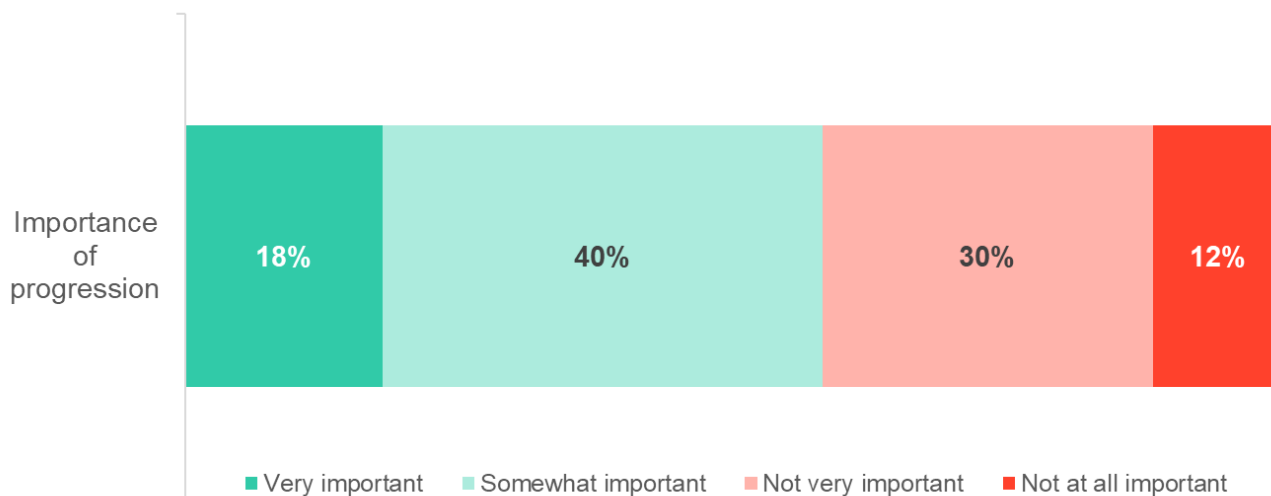
Despite the majority of low-paid workers having not experienced a promotion with their current employer and feeling it is unlikely they will be offered one, the majority (58%) feel it is important to work in a job that allows for progression. However, it remains that a strong minority (42%) feel it is unimportant. Perceptions of importance are driven by low-paid workers paid above minimum wage, with six in ten (60%) stating this, compared with 48% of those on minimum wage who report it is important.

Reflective of their higher expectations in likelihood to be offered and accept a promotion, four in five (79%) of those aged 16 to 29 feel this is important, compared with a much smaller proportion (29%) of those aged 50 and over. And a similar pattern emerges when looking at ethnicity; over eight in ten (85%) of those from an ethnic minority background state they think it is important, compared to just over half (53%) of those from a white background.

However, as evidenced in the verbatims, conflicting responsibilities plays a role in low-paid workers’ perceptions and value of progression. Two in five (42%) workers who have caring responsibilities view being in a job that allows for progression to be important, while perceptions of importance are much higher among those without caring responsibilities (57%).

It could be that progression works as a driver to changing jobs, seven in ten (72%) of those who are likely to apply for a new job in the next year view progression as important compared with just half (48%) who are unlikely to apply elsewhere.

Figure 10. Importance of working in a job that allows for progression



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

How important or not is it for you to work in a job that allows for progression or the ability to move into a more senior position?

Medium- and high-paid workers (28%) are more likely than low-paid workers (18%) to say it is *very* important to them to work in a job that allows for progression. This aligns with the earlier findings on page 26 indicating that medium- and high-paid workers have an increased likelihood of experiencing progression as part of their job. It demonstrates that expectation and reality align to a certain extent.

Experiences of job mobility

It is more common than not that low-paid workers have changed jobs from one employer to another during their working lives, and this was typically done voluntarily.

The majority (65%) have at some point in the past moved from one organisation to another, while it is less common to have changed jobs within the same organisation, with two in five (38%) having experienced this. Further, the majority of those who have changed jobs, regardless of whether it was within an organisation or from one to another, did so voluntarily (84%). Meanwhile, a quarter (23%) of those who changed jobs by moving from one organisation to another state that this was forced, although this lessens to 16% among those who changed jobs within the same organisation.

Figure 11. Experience changing jobs within the same or a different organisation



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001
Have you ever...

Low wage workers paid above the minimum wage are more likely to have moved to another organisation than those who are minimum wage (66% vs 56%), potentially reflecting a relationship between moving jobs and increasing pay.

As with progression, medium- and high-paid workers are more likely to report either changing jobs within the same organisation (59%) or moving from one job to another (74%) compared with low-paid workers (38% changed jobs in the same organisation and 65% moved from one organisation to another). This could be linked to this group's higher awareness that moving jobs regularly could mean you are more likely to earn more money (54%) in comparison with low-paid workers (46%).

Findings reveal that movement and progression within an organisation often increase in likelihood alongside tenure. Low-paid workers who have been with their current employer for more than five years are more likely to have changed jobs within their organisation compared to those with less than two years' tenure (47% vs 29%), while the reverse is true when looking at those more likely to have changed jobs by moving to another organisation (52% vs 73%). This change of role within an organisation may have been the result of a promotion, with three in five (57%) of those who have experienced one reporting having changed jobs within their organisation compared with a third (32%) of those who have not been promoted by their current employer.

There is also a correlation between previous job change behaviour and future intentions. Those who are likely to apply for a new job in the next 12 months are more likely to have changed jobs in the past by moving organisation (73%) than those who are unlikely to seek out new employment (58%). This suggests that previous job changes are not a barrier to applying to a new job.

Younger people are less likely to have changed jobs within their organisation, with 8% of 16 to 20 year-olds reporting this compared with 47% of 30 to 39-year-olds. Similarly, a third (32%) of 16 to 20 year-olds have moved to a different organisation in the past, while this increases substantially among 21 to 29 year-olds to 72% who have done so.

Those from a white background are also more likely to have changed jobs within their organisation, with two in five (40%) having done so compared with one in five (22%) from an ethnic minority background. However, there is no difference by ethnicity when looking at changing roles between organisations.

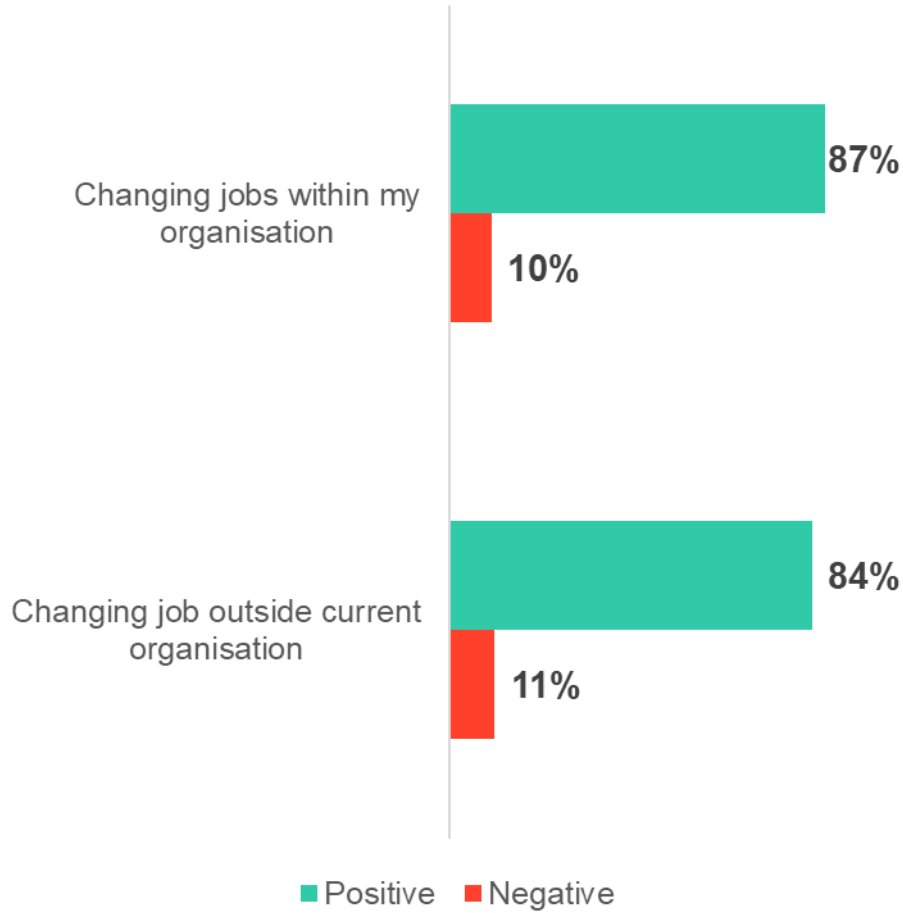
Low-paid workers with caring responsibilities are more likely to have changed jobs within their organisation (48%) than those without caring responsibilities (34%), potentially

highlighting that this is easier than moving externally when considering other priorities that those with caring responsibilities may have. For example, commute time is more likely to be perceived as a benefit of their current job by workers with caring responsibilities (52%) compared with low-paid workers without caring responsibilities (35%).

Workers with a disability or long-term health condition are more likely to report being forced to change jobs than those without. This is consistent whether they report being forced to change jobs within the same organisation (27% vs 13%) or to another organisation (33% vs 21%).

Notably, the vast majority of low-paid workers who have changed jobs – whether within their organisation or from one to another – feel the outcome was positive. This is true for 87% of those who have changed jobs within their organisation and 84% of those who moved to another organisation. These proportions increase among those who are satisfied with their current job, with 90% who feel the outcome of changing jobs to another organisation was positive compared with 70% of those who do not feel satisfied. There is little variation by demographics.

Figure 12. Outcome of previous job change



Base: Low-paid workers who have changed jobs within their organisation (n=400) and low-paid workers who have changed roles outside of their current organisation (n=610)
 Overall, would you say that the outcome of changing jobs previously was positive or negative? If you have changed jobs multiple times, please think about the most recent time.

Despite the prevalence of changing jobs being lower among low-paid workers compared with medium- and high-paid workers, there are no differences when looking at their perceptions of the outcome of the move. The same proportion in both groups report that changing jobs either within or outside of their organisation had a positive outcome.

The qualitative findings show that while many participants had previously moved jobs across industries, they tend to remain in similar level positions and at a similar wage. The industries that participants often mentioned having worked in include hospitality, catering, manufacturing, and retail. Only a few have moved into a job that they felt could lead to progression opportunities in the future. This was either because they had higher qualifications and wanted to progress in their career, or due to factors outside of their

control, such as moving cities or having been made redundant. An example is someone who started a new job in a nursery following over 20 years in retail, leading to higher job satisfaction, mostly due to being exposed to more development opportunities and being able to gain new skills.

When thinking about moving jobs, factors linked to a better working environment, stability and fair pay are especially important, particularly for those who had previously been in jobs with poor working conditions, hours, or management. For those who have moved jobs, their satisfaction with the current job also tends to be higher if the current work conditions are better than in their previous roles, even if they do not have the opportunities to progress and their pay stays the same.

“In the sandwich shop, they were always ringing in sick. You would get last minute phone call when you are at home, [asking to] come in ... You had to wait days for [the payment] because it was paid in cash and if they didn't have it, you had to wait for it.” – Female, 35, manufacturing (qualitative interviews)

“There were times in the job where you were a bit unhappy because you had a late shift ... When you get home, everyone's asleep in bed. And then you're trying to get to see them for an hour or two in the morning before everybody else goes to school or work.” – Male, 44, hospitality (qualitative interviews)



Case study – Female, 47, Nursery assistant

Current job

She currently works at a nursery and finds the job rewarding – she feels she is learning all the time, and continuously sees a positive impact of her work. Initially, she struggled finding a job despite years of experience in retail, and feels she was only able to get this job due to her employer being open to candidates with no previous experience in a nursery setting. While she is satisfied with her job in general, she feels that the pay does not sufficiently reflect the level of her responsibilities. However, she likes that there are personal development opportunities, along with a pay increase each year.

Previous roles

Previously, she worked in retail for 26 years and was made redundant during Covid. While she enjoyed working in retail, she felt there was no work-life balance or growth. Progression was difficult as it required changing locations, which she could not do due to having children.

Initially, she struggled finding a job, as despite her experience she was being continuously rejected and felt that most online applications were targeted at younger people due to very narrow specifications, such as needing to have certain qualifications.

“They put the adverts out and it is only a select people they’re looking for...But I think with equal opportunities with age, race, sex, I think they write what people want to see and hear.”

“Everything is now online... they wanted up-to-date CVs, and they wanted A-levels, they wanted degrees. I don’t have all that. It just seemed like everything was aimed at younger people.”

Views on changing jobs

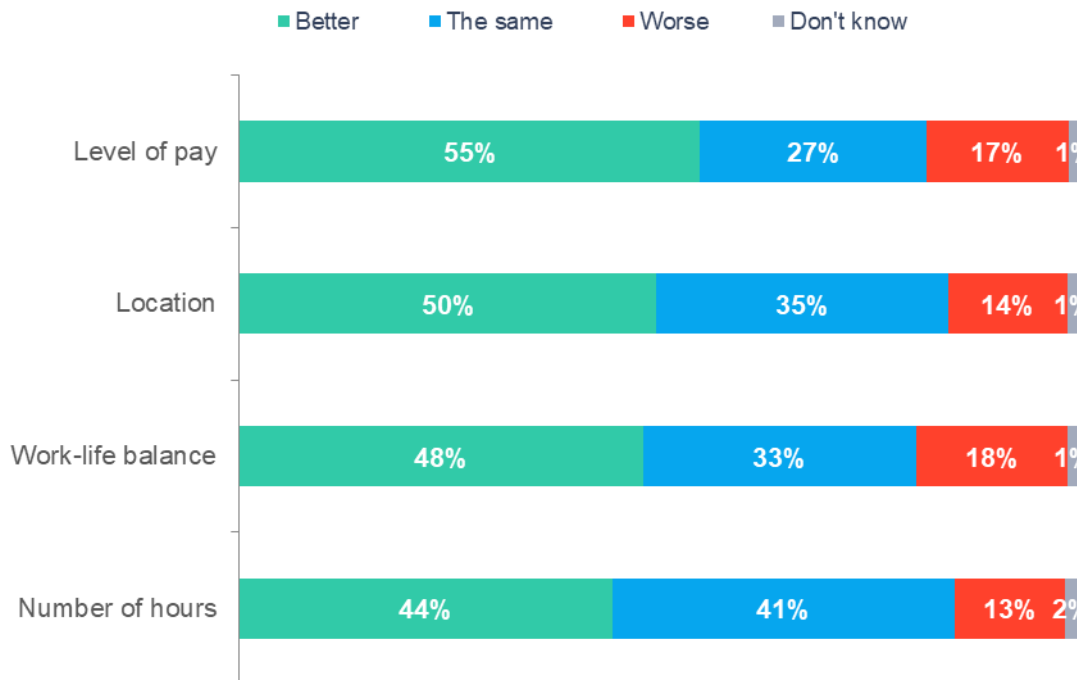
While she would not want to change her job anytime soon, she would be open to progression opportunities. She feels that the current role has given her the confidence, skills, and experience to be able to apply for a better paid job or seek out progression in the future.

“This one experience opened so many doors and it does give me more confidence. It has made me think for the future that I would like to branch out somewhere else, get a bit more experience.”

Importantly, the dominant narrative among low-paid workers who have previously moved from one employer to another is that their level of pay improved as a result of doing so. The vast majority also feel that other key factors – location, work-life balance, and number of hours – either got better or stayed the same.

Despite less than half (42%) of low-paid workers stating that they think moving jobs regularly is more likely to increase overall pay trajectory compared to staying in the same job, the majority (55%) of those who have moved jobs feel their level of pay got better. Meanwhile, half (50%) feel location got better and the plurality say the work-life balance (48%), or number of hours (44%) improved as a result. Notably, low-paid workers who do not feel these factors improved are more likely to say they stayed the same as opposed to getting worse, with less than one in five who said each had got worse.

Figure 13. Individual outcomes of moving job after changing from one organisation to another



Base: Low-paid workers who have changed roles outside of their current organisation (n=610)

After changing jobs by moving from one organisation to another, was each of the following

better or worse? If you have changed jobs multiple times, please think about the most recent time.

Low wage workers paid above the minimum wage are more likely to state that their pay improved after changing jobs (57%) compared with those on minimum wage (46%), possibly as a result of minimum wage workers moving from one minimum wage role to another. There are no other differences by low-paid wage level.

Overall, the reported outcomes of moving jobs are largely consistent between low-paid and medium- and high-paid workers, with the only difference occurring when looking at their level of pay. Two thirds (66%) of medium- and high-paid workers state that their level of pay got better, with one third (33%) stating it got much better. This could be reflective of the fact that many minimum wage workers move between jobs of the same pay level but could also be linked to medium- and high-paid workers' higher awareness that changing jobs can increase earnings.

Low paid workers who are satisfied with their current pay are more likely to say their level of pay (67% vs 47%), work-life balance (56% vs 43%) and number of work hours (51% vs 40%) got better with a job move compared with those who are dissatisfied, and there is a similar pattern among those satisfied with their job in general. Low-paid workers who work full-time are also more likely to say their level of pay got better (60% vs 51% of part-time workers), while those working part-time are more likely to say their work-life balance improved (53% vs 43%).

Women (53%) are more likely than men (41%) to feel that their work-life balance got better, while those aged 21 to 29 are more likely than older workers to feel their level of pay (64% vs 49% of those aged 60 and over) and location (59% vs 46% of those aged 60 and over) improved.

People with a long-term health condition or disability are more likely to state their level of pay got better (64%) compared with those without a disability (53%), however the impact on other aspects of their job are less positive. Those with a disability are less likely to say their work-life balance got better (40%) compared with those without a disability (50%) and more likely to say their number of hours got worse (21% vs 11%).

The qualitative interviews uncovered that most participants who were satisfied with certain experiential aspects of their job, such as their team, managers, commute, hours of work and work-life balance, would be unlikely to change their job unless offered a significant increase in pay that would justify their decision to move.

Those living close to their workplace felt that moving jobs might lead to a significant increase to their commuting costs, meaning that they could be either losing money, or not feeling the increase in their pay due to the additional costs. Some of those who live in small towns also felt they are limited by the number of options they have locally. This was especially the case if they do not drive, as many do not want to rely on the public transport that is often considered to be limited and unreliable.

“The buses are terrible like every two hours and then they get stuck in a town, in a small village somewhere, and it's very unreliable.” – Female, 43, retail (qualitative interviews)

Others who have young children or caring responsibilities and feel they are given flexibility in their current job said they would be unlikely to move jobs, as they would worry that another employer might be less flexible. Most felt that they are being offered a good deal that they are not willing to compromise.

“[It] would've been quite difficult really to go into a new company and say first thing through the door, I want a job here, but you've got to let me do this, that and the other to look after my son.” – Male, 53, manufacturing (qualitative interviews)

For others, the concern was rooted in the risk of having a bad team and management, especially if they had previous negative experiences. They felt that a small increase in their pay would not justify working in a place where they would not be satisfied with the work environment. Even if they had experienced a positive change with moving to their current role, there was a sense among many that they would not be able to get a better role, which was due to either fear of the unknown, negative past experiences or feeling that they do not have sufficient qualifications or experience to get a significantly better or higher paid job.

“I'd probably still have to think about [changing jobs] because you've got to be happy in your work. You could be getting paid the best but hating every minute that you're there.” – Female, 47, hospitality (qualitative interviews)

“Realising that the grass isn't always greener, I guess [I worry about] giving up and looking back and thinking, actually no, what I had wasn't that bad at all... And then thinking, now I'm stuck here.” – Male, 29, hospitality (qualitative interviews)

Case study – Female, 43, Pre-school Assistant & Shop Assistant



Current job

Currently, she works two part-time jobs – 10h a week in a shop and 15h a week at a pre-school. While she qualified as a teaching assistant many years ago, she was unable to find a job in her field until recently, due to living in a small town with a small number of schools.

Her preference is working at the pre-school, as she enjoys being with children, however, she would be concerned about losing benefits she gets from the shop where she works, including slightly higher pay, school uniform discounts and Christmas bonuses. While she does not like doing double shifts, having the additional benefits and flexibility provided by the shop is mostly what keeps her working there.

Previous roles

She worked in retail for many years and in her last role she did not like the management, who were often unreliable and would sometimes pay late, and she also felt there was a lack of flexibility.

When she started looking for a new job, her main concern was that due to living in a small town, her employer would find out about her job search, leading to a possible retaliation. She also felt that in her area there were not enough job opportunities, and due to poor transportation and not being able to drive, she felt it further limited her reach.

“*I don't drive, there are very few schools around here. So, I just sat with this qualification for eight, nine year and was not able to do anything with it.*”

Views on changing jobs

She enjoys her job in pre-school and would not want to change it. Instead, she hopes to get more hours at the pre-school, so that she could quit her other job, as she does not like doing double shifts. However, her key consideration would be losing the benefits from the shop and is also concerned that her pre-school contract is zero hours, which would not guarantee job security.

“*[To move jobs] it would have to be a permanent role... The preschool is actually a zero-hour contract, which is why I second guess leaving the [shop] and being a bit unsure [about] the hours.*”
“*You have got a lot of benefits working at the [shop], which is why I'm second guessing leaving and not wanting to give the benefits up.*”



Case study – Male, 29, Duty Manager in a pub

Current job

He started working as a bar worker at a local pub and has now progressed to a duty manager. Since the promotion, his hourly wage has increased by £1 and he is satisfied with his pay, as he sometimes gets an additional £70-80 a month in tips, along with free lunch or dinner and discounts on drinks.

Previous roles

Prior to this role, he worked in retail and coffee shops for many years. He also worked in a pharmacy for a short period of time but left it as he found it too stressful. His main reasons for leaving previous roles were mostly linked to having poor management, poor team structure, or sometimes wanting to take up a new challenge.

Views on changing jobs

He enjoys his current job and likes that he has a good team and managers, is treated fairly, and can often feel like he is making a difference to people's days, which are all important aspects for him in a job. He would only consider moving into a different role if significant changes happened, such as his current manager leaving. However, if he was to change his current job, his key concern would be moving into a worse work environment and therefore regretting that decision later. He also feels that due to only having experience in the hospitality sector and not having higher qualifications, he would not be able to move into a significantly higher paid job.

As he currently lives within walking distance from his workplace and stays with parents, he also feels that a small increase in pay might not justify moving into a different job, particularly if it means that it will lead to an increase in travel expenses or having to pay for housing.

“*The only thing that would make me change [the job] is if there was a massive shuffle of staff [and] especially if my manager was to leave.*”

“I can't really see how I'd get a house share and travel to work and have some disposable income every month. I think all my money would just go on housing and travel and food.”

“[My concern about changing jobs would be] giving up and looking back and thinking – actually, what I had wasn't that bad at all.”

Searching for jobs

Most low-paid workers say they would feel comfortable job searching, particularly if doing so using online sources. However, the dominant perspective is that it would be difficult to find a job that meets their needs.

Despite the majority (57%) of low-paid workers saying they are unlikely to apply for a job with a new employer in the next 12 months, the vast majority (90%) report feeling comfortable with job searching using online sources such as LinkedIn. This decreases when thinking about offline sources (69%) such as newspaper adverts, although the majority remain comfortable with this. Comfort using online sources is higher among those aged 16 to 20 (97%) than those aged 50 to 59 (81%). Comparatively, the inverse is true for offline sources, where comfort is higher among older adults, with nine in ten (90%) of those aged 60 and over stating this compared with two in five (40%) of those aged 16 to 20.

Importantly, despite the majority feeling comfortable with job searching, over half (57%) feel it would be difficult to find a job that meets their needs, while a smaller proportion (43%) feel it would be easy. Younger low-paid workers are more likely to feel it would be easy to find a job that meets their needs, with 58% of 16 to 20 year-olds reporting this compared with 29% of those aged 51 to 59.

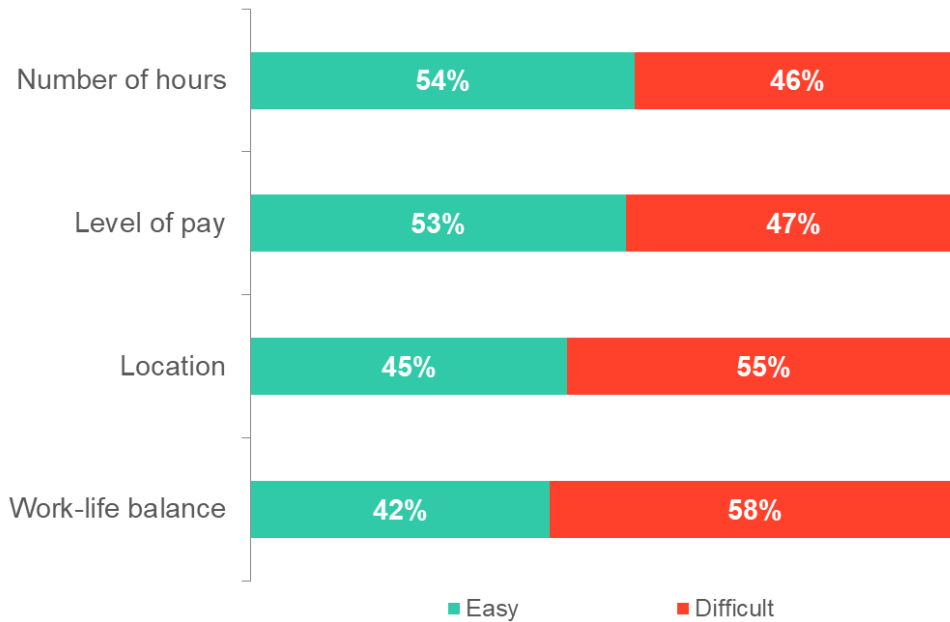
When considering different expectations of a new job, low-paid workers are most likely to feel work-life balance (58%) and location (55%) would be difficult needs to meet. These are also key components that are frequently cited as a benefit of workers' current jobs. Following this, nearly half feel level of pay (47%) and number of hours (46%) would be difficult areas for needs to be met.

Despite being more likely to be dissatisfied with their pay, minimum wage workers more often feel it would be easy to find a job that meets their pay requirements (63%) compared with those who are paid above the minimum wage (51%), while work life balance is perceived as easier to achieve among those who are paid above the minimum wage (44% vs 35%).

Overall, medium- and high-paid workers are more likely to think it would be easy for them to find a new job that meets their needs (51%) than low-paid workers (43%). In particular, medium- and high-paid workers more often feel it would be easy to find a job that meets

their needs in terms of work-life balance (47% vs 42% of low-paid workers) and number of hours (65% vs 54%). Notably, there is no difference in their perception of it being easy to find a job that meets their needs for level of pay. These heightened perceptions of ease could be influenced by their increased experience in moving jobs as well as other factors such as differing expectations around flexibility.

Figure 14. Perceptions of ease of finding a new job that meets specific needs



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

And how easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to find a new job that meets your needs in the following areas?

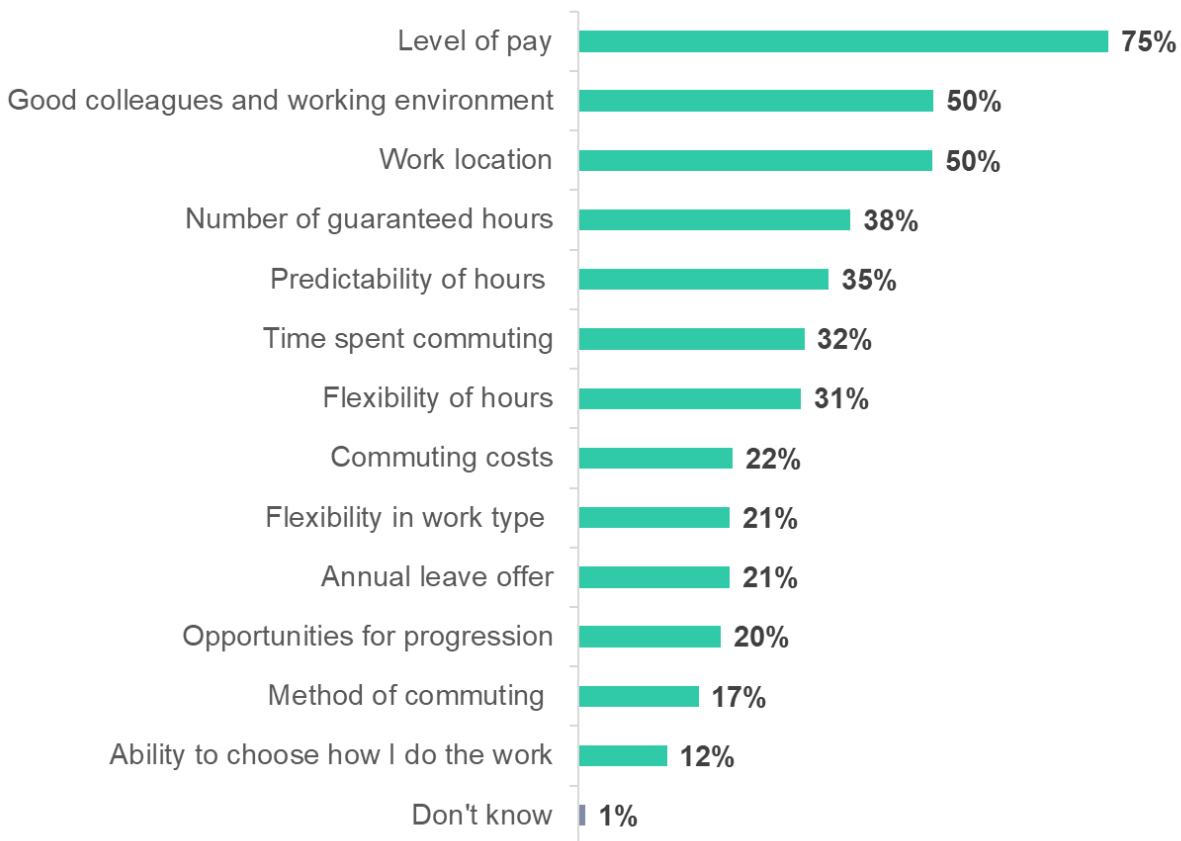
This can vary in line with workers’ differing requirements. For example, those with caring responsibilities are more likely than those without to feel it will be difficult to find a job that meets the number of hours (67% vs 44%), work life balance (68% vs 56%) and location (70% vs 58%) they need. People in rural areas are also more likely to think it would be difficult to find a job that meets their location needs (66%) than those in urban areas (54%). Meanwhile, people who work part-time feel that number of hours (55% vs 35%) and work-life balance (65% vs 50%) needs will be more difficult to find compared with those who work full-time.

Work-life balance is more of a concern among older workers, with two-thirds of those aged 50 to 59 (68%) compared with one third of those aged 16 to 20 (36%) stating that they think it would be a difficult requirement to meet in a new job.

Current job satisfaction also influences perceptions around finding a new job, with those who are satisfied with their current job being more likely to feel it would be easy to find a new job that meets their needs in all areas.

When thinking about the most important factors to consider when applying for a new job, pay is identified as most important, with three quarters (75%) selecting this, potentially driven by the majority (58%) of low-paid workers who feel dissatisfied with their current level of pay. Following this, half (50%) feel that good colleagues, working environment and work location are important. Nearly four in ten (38%) feel that number of guaranteed hours is important, while just over a third think the same about predictability of hours (35%). Comparatively, three in ten feel time spent commuting (32%) and flexibility of hours (31%) are important. Reflecting the low perceived likelihood for promotion, opportunity for progression is relatively low on the list, with one in five (20%) who feel it is important, although this increases among those who are likely to leave their job in the next year (28% vs 14% who are unlikely) and those from an ethnic minority background (37% vs 17% from a white background).

Figure 15. Most important factors when applying for a new job



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

Which, if any, of the following do you think would be the most important factor(s) to consider when applying for a new job? Please select up to five options.

Despite lower satisfaction with pay, minimum wage workers are less likely to feel level of pay is an important factor to consider when applying for a new job (64% vs 77% low wage but paid above minimum wage), although still the majority. This suggests that although they are less satisfied with their pay, they may feel that level of pay is somewhat less of a priority relative to others when seeking out new work or that they have limited ability to change it. Part-time low-paid workers are more likely to feel flexibility of hours (40% vs 22% of full-time workers) and predictability of hours (43% vs 26%) are important.

Potentially reflecting their higher likelihood to work part-time, women are also more likely than men to feel flexibility of hours (36% vs 25%) and flexibility in work type (25% vs 16%) are important.

Reflecting the higher comfort low-paid workers feel towards online job searches in comparison with offline, the majority (77%) would look at job searching websites when starting to search for a new job. Following this, half (50%) would look at job adverts and careers information on company or business websites, while two in five (39%) would use a recruiter or agency. Offline approaches are less popular, with one in five (20%) who would look at job adverts in newspapers and one in eight (13%) who would visit a job centre.

Figure 16. Potential methods when searching for a new job



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

Which, if any, of the following would you do when starting to search for a new job? Please select all that apply.

There is little variation between sub-groups when looking at expected methods of searching for a new job, however, minimum wage workers are more likely to use offline sources compared with those who are on a low wage but paid above the minimum wage. For example, they are more likely to use job adverts in newspapers (27% vs 19%) and seek information from friends and family (37% vs 30%). This also varies by age, with those who are older being much more likely to look at job adverts in newspapers when starting to search for a job (36% of those aged 50 and over vs 8% of 21 to 29 year-olds) and visit a job centre (26% of those aged 50 and over vs 1% of 16 to 20 year-olds).

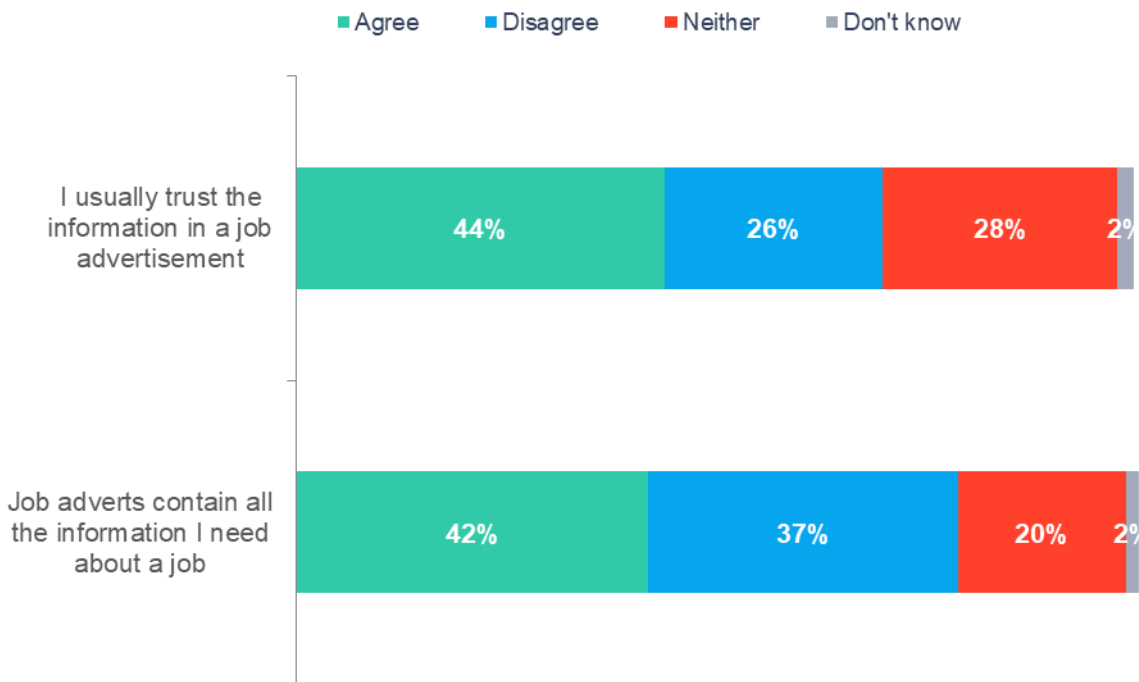
Men are more likely than women to use a third party such as a recruiter (48% vs 33%) or a job centre (18% vs 9%). Potentially due to increased flexibility in work hours, people who work part-time are also more likely to visit business locations in person (22%) compared with 13% of those who work full-time.

When considering perceptions towards job adverts, two in five low-paid workers (42%) feel the ads generally contain all the information they need about a job and a similar proportion (44%) agree that they usually trust the information in a job advert. This is higher than the

proportion who disagree that job adverts contain all the information (37%) and that they trust the information (26%), due to fairly high levels of those who say they neither agree nor disagree (20% and 28% respectively). This can vary depending on industry, with those in hospitality being more likely to disagree that job adverts contain all the information they need, increasing to 47% compared with 27% of those working in education.

Agreement is also higher among those who have been with their current employer for less than two years, with half (49%) who agree that they trust the information in a job advert compared to a third (35%) of those with more than five years of tenure. This is due to those who have been with their employer for longer being more likely to neither agree nor disagree as opposed to disagreeing with the statement, however, it still could suggest that recency of job searching increases positive perceptions.

Figure 17. Job advert statements



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

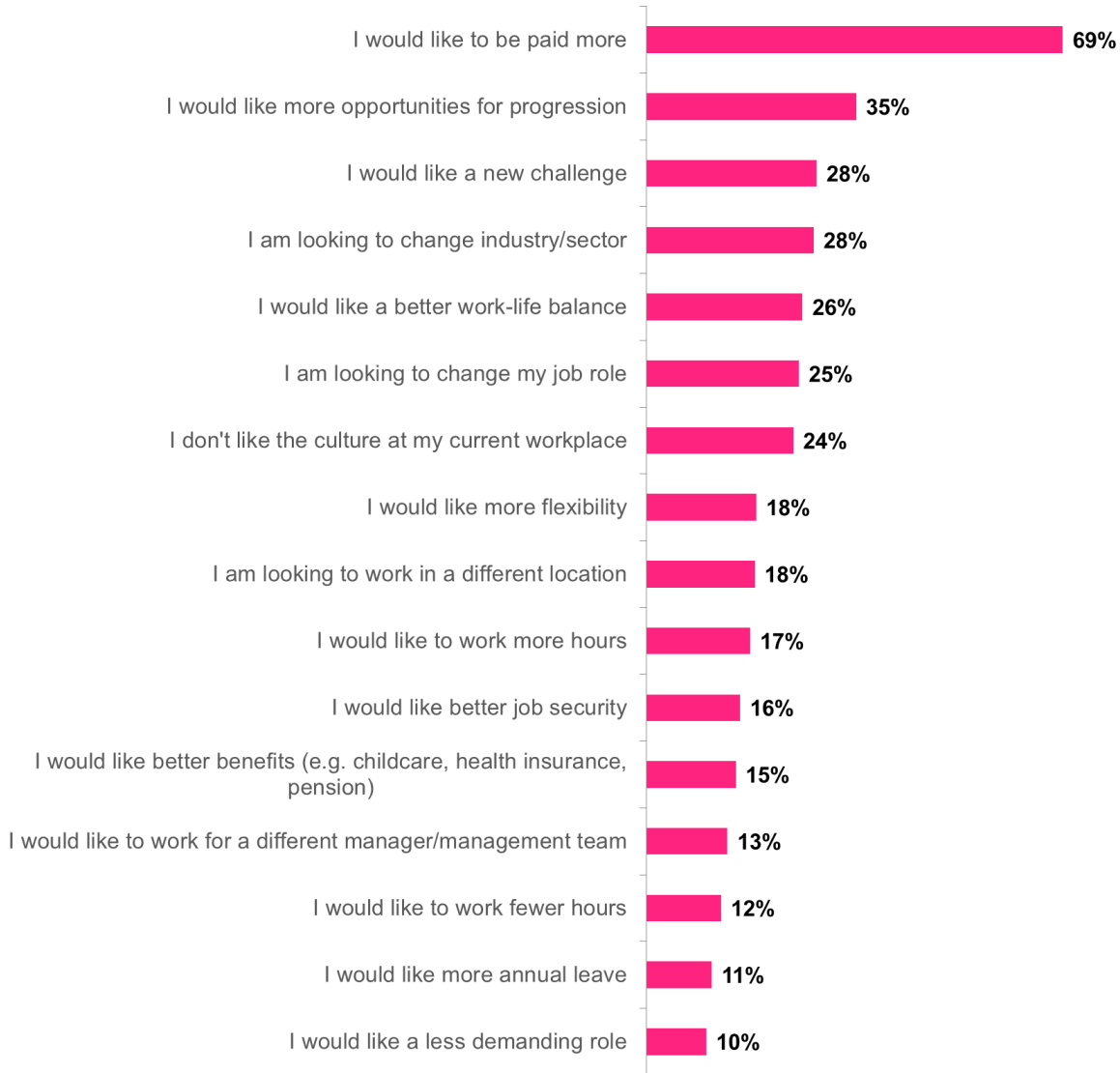
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Barriers to job mobility

Motivators and inhibitors to moving jobs

Overall, low-paid workers are reluctant to change jobs. As previously discussed, the majority (57%) report that they would be unlikely to apply for a job with a new employer in the next 12 months, compared with 43% who report they would be likely (Figure 6). Of those who would be likely, their reasons for wanting to change jobs largely reflect the earlier findings on page 10 on perceived disadvantages of their current role; the majority cite pay as a motivator, with nearly seven in ten (69%) stating they would like to be paid more. Reasons for development then follow this, with opportunities for progression (35%) or a new challenge (28%) being the next top reasons for applying elsewhere, although they are cited by a comparatively smaller proportion of workers.

Figure 18. Reasons for being likely to apply for a new job with a different employer in the next 12 months – All low-paid workers who are likely



Base: All low-paid workers who reported they would be likely to change jobs in the next 12 months (n=387)

You previously said you would be likely to apply for a new job in the next 12 months. Which, if any, of the following explain your reasons for this? Please select all that apply.

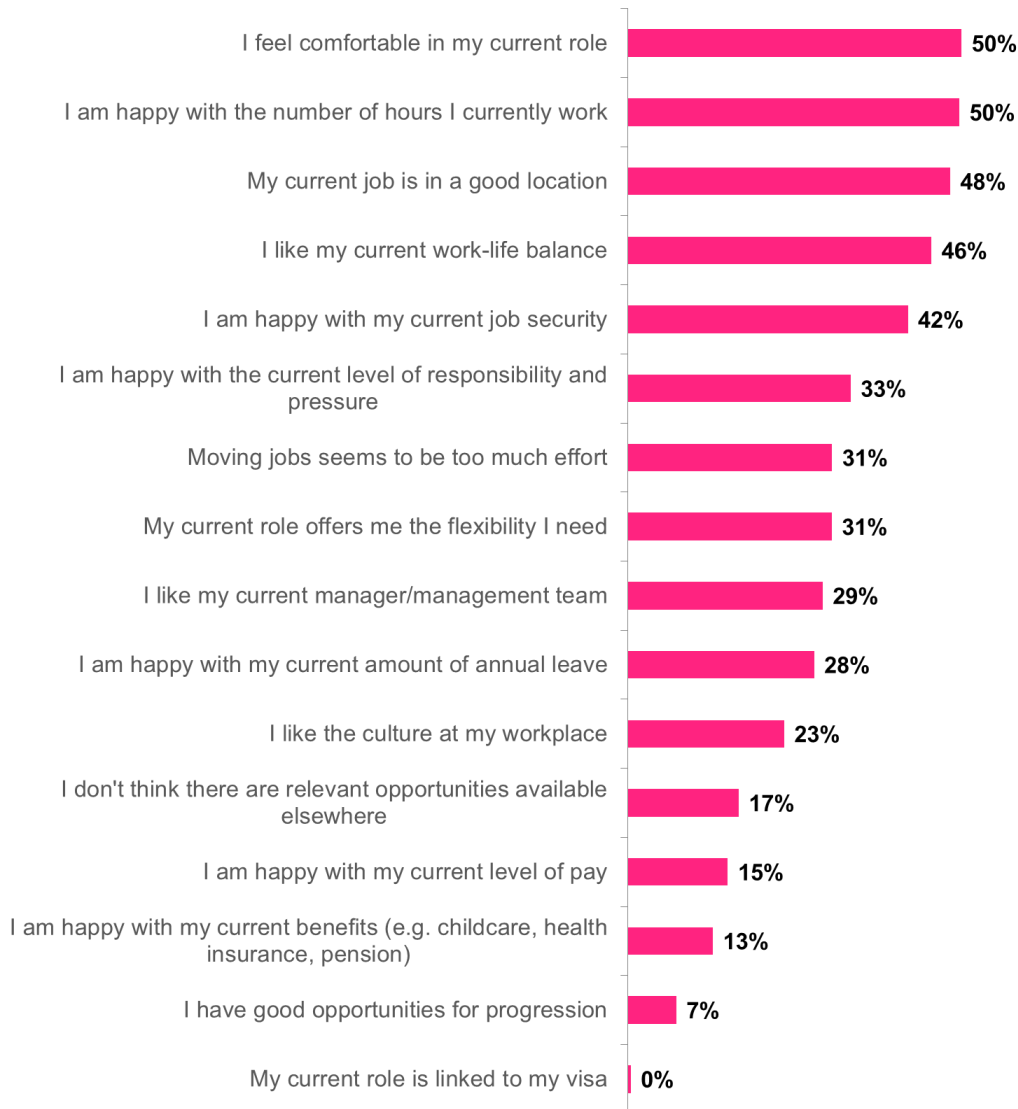
These opinions appear to be widely held by most low-paid workers, with no differences when looking at different sub-groups. Unsurprisingly, those who previously reported they are dissatisfied with their pay drive the response around wanting to be paid more (80%), although this is still selected by a strong minority (46%) of those who previously reported that they are satisfied. This could be linked with the understanding that you earn more if you move jobs regularly, two fifths (42%) reported that they believe this to be true, and of

this group, over three quarters (77%) state that they would be likely to apply for jobs in the next 12 months in order to be paid more.

Culture and work-life balance are key considerations for those who are working in large organisations (those with 250 or more employees). One third (34%) report that they would apply elsewhere because they would like a better work life balance, and three in ten (31%) report that they don't like the culture at their current workplace. Comparatively, both of these reasons are of lower importance to those in small and medium- sized organisations (2 to 249 employees), 18% would like a better work life balance and 17% don't like their current workplace culture.

When thinking about reasons for wanting to stay at their current workplace, again the most commonly identified factors reflect earlier findings regarding the importance of workplace environment. Half (50%) of low-paid workers report this is because they feel comfortable in their current role, a similar proportion report it is because it is in a good location (48%), or they have good work-life balance (46%). As previously discussed, those living in rural areas are more likely to think it would be difficult to find a job that meets their location needs (page 42), and these findings are evident here, with two thirds (67%) reporting they would be unlikely to leave their current job as it is in a good location, compared with only 45% of those in urban areas who report the same.

Figure 19. Reasons for being unlikely to apply for a new job with a different employer in the next 12 months – All low-paid workers who are unlikely



Base: All low-paid workers who reported they would be unlikely to change jobs in the next 12 months (n=614)

You previously said you would be unlikely to apply for a new job in the next 12 months. Which, if any, of the following explain your reasons for this? Please select all that apply.

The number of work hours also continues to be an important factor for those in low-paid roles. Previously 85% reported that they are satisfied with the hours they work in their current job, and among low-paid workers who are unlikely to apply elsewhere, half (50%) report it is because they are happy with the number of hours they work.

While work-life balance is a key consideration, slightly fewer cite workplace flexibility, possibly due to the lower likelihood of flexibility in their role; three in ten (31%) state that

their current role gives them the flexibility they need. This is particularly evident when looking at those who work part-time (36%) compared with full-time (24%).

Among those who are unlikely to apply elsewhere, pay is rarely considered a factor in this decision; only 15% report that they are happy with their current level of pay, a perspective that is most common for those aged 60 and over (24%), but largely consistent for all other age groups. Likewise, while opportunities for progression is commonly stated when thinking about reasons to leave, only 7% report this as a reason they would stay in their role. This is largely identified by those aged between 16 and 29 (17%), which is significantly higher than all other age groups.

Largely, there is consistency between medium- and high-paid workers and low-paid workers when looking at reasons for wanting to move jobs. However, when considering reasons why they would not want to move jobs, some differences emerge. Medium- and high-paid workers are more likely to report being happy with their current job security (50% vs 42%) or their level of responsibility (41% vs 33%). Possibly unsurprisingly, they are more likely to report being happy with their pay (27% vs 15%), although this does not translate when looking at reasons to move jobs, with both groups equally citing wanting to be paid more.

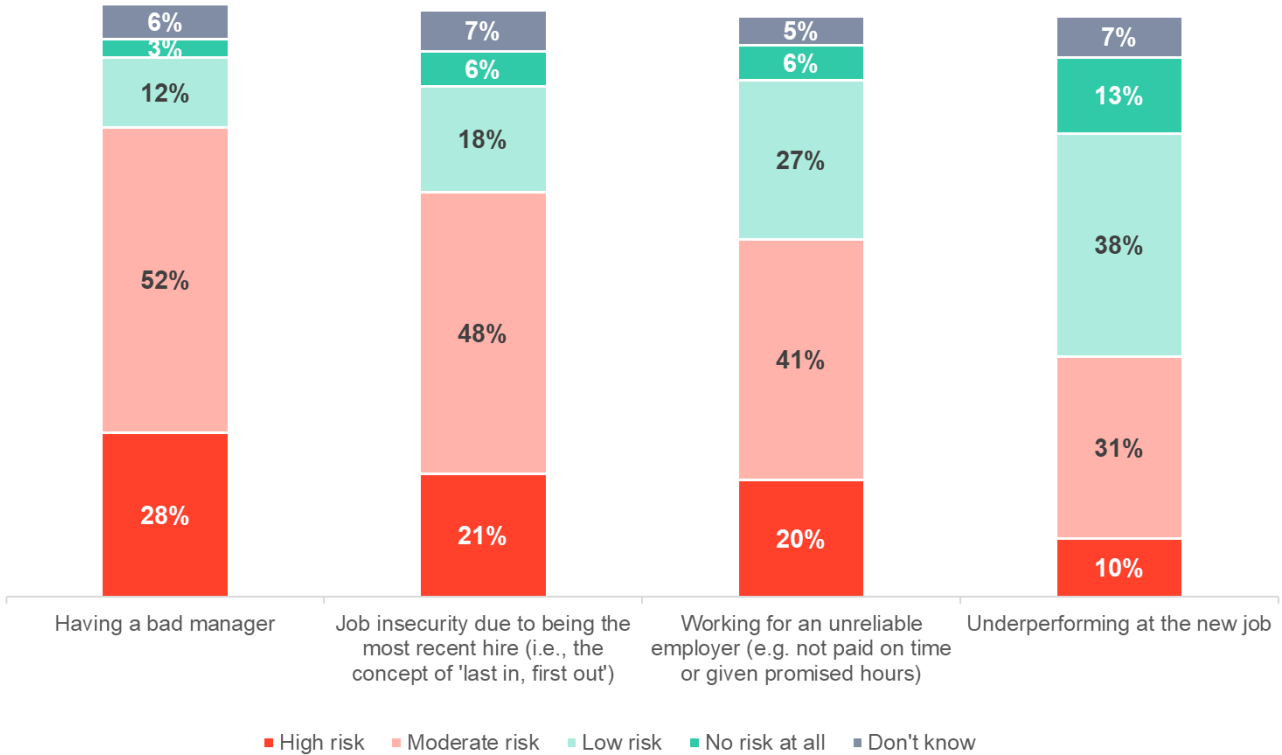
Risks in moving jobs

It remains that working relationships have a large influence over low-paid workers' perceptions of jobs. When asked to consider the greatest risks when taking a job with a new employer, low-paid workers most commonly identify having a bad manager, with four fifths (80%) identifying this as a risk, including 28% reporting it as high risk. Overall, this is a universal concern across low-paid workers, with no one sub-group driving identification of this risk. This evidences not only how important interpersonal factors are in employment, but also possibly links to the earlier identified desire on page 29 among low-paid workers for opportunities around professional development and progression.

Following this, job insecurity is cited as a moderate or high risk when starting a job with a new employer by seven in ten (69%) low-paid workers. This refers to the "last in, first out" concept and is a perspective that is largely driven by those working in manufacturing and construction (76%) and wholesale and retail trade (73%). Overall, a comparatively smaller proportion identify this as a risk compared with having a bad manager, which is due to lower levels saying it is high risk (21% vs 28% respectively). Levels of those identifying it

as a moderate risk are fairly consistent, at close to half stating this for both (48% vs 52% respectively).

Figure 20. Perceived risks if taking a new job with a different employer – All-low-paid workers



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

How much of a risk, if any, do you think each of the following would be to you if taking a job with a different employer?

Six in ten (61%) low-paid workers state that working for an unreliable employer could be a risk to moving jobs, specifically when thinking about not being paid on time or not being given promised hours. This is stated to be high risk by a fifth of respondents (20%) and is a particularly prevalent opinion among those with caring responsibilities; three quarters (75%) believe it to be a risk generally, with 38% reporting it to be high risk, possibly reflecting the impact of their wider priorities outside of work.

Once again, prior experience plays a role in low-paid workers' perceptions: those who have had a bad experience with these practical aspects of employment are also more likely to identify them as a risk; those who previously stated they are dissatisfied with the number of working hours they get are more likely to report it as a risk (70%), compared with those who are currently satisfied (60%).

The possibility of an unreliable employer is perceived as less of a risk to those in medium- and high-paid roles (50%) compared with those in low-paid roles (61%), possibly due to the nature of their work; those in medium- and high-paid roles are less likely to report they are on a zero hour contract (4% vs 8% respectively) and the vast majority (70%) are contracted to work 35 hours or more a week. There is also lower concern among this group when thinking about the possibility of underperforming (34% vs 41%), possibly as a result of being more established in their career; those in higher paid roles tend to be older and report working at their current employer for longer.

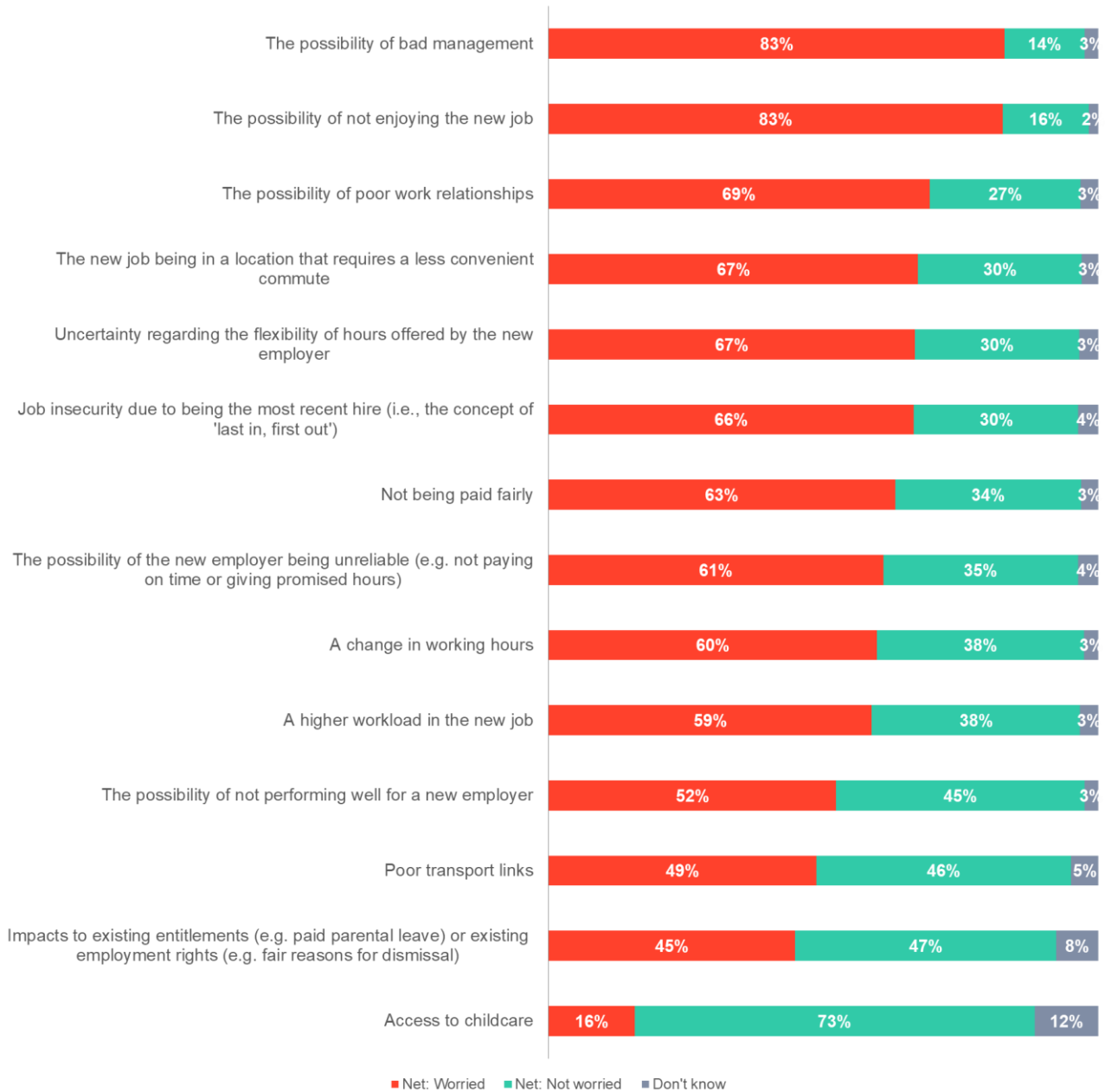
Finally, low-paid workers less often attribute risk to elements that are in their control, such as underperforming at the new job. A minority identify this as a risk (41%), with only 10% reporting this as high risk, compared with 13% who state it would be no risk at all.

However, there are differences evident here depending on industry. This is more of a concern among low-paid workers working in hospitality and leisure; over half (53%) identify this as a risk, although this is mainly due to workers stating it is a moderate risk (41%) rather than high risk (12%). Confidence in ability to perform in their role increases with age; while only 11% of those aged 16 to 29 state there is no risk at all of underperforming, this increases to 21% of those aged 50 to 59, and 27% of those aged 60 and over. This could possibly be due to having increased experience with different employers and job settings, leading to increased confidence in being able to adapt accordingly.

Perceived barriers

To gauge a better understanding of potential barriers, workers were then asked to what extent they would worry about certain things if they were to take a job with a new employer. It continues that interpersonal relationships remain top of mind for workers; over eight in ten (83%) worry about the possibility of bad management and seven in ten (69%) worry about poor work relationships. As seen previously, there are lower levels of concern among low-paid workers when thinking about their own ability (Figure 20); around half (52%) report they are worried about performing in the new job, while comparatively, increased worry is attributed to the possibility of not enjoying the job (83%).

Figure 21. Level of worry if taking a new job with a different employer – All low-paid workers



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

How worried, if at all, would you be about each of the following if thinking about taking a job with a different employer?

Concerns around pay are comparatively lower, although not being paid fairly is still mentioned by a strong majority (63%), with one fifth (19%) reporting they would be very worried about this. However, this concern is particularly prevalent among those from an ethnic minority background (80%), in comparison with those workers who are white (60%).

Interestingly, there are limited differences when looking at wage level and the proportion who report they are worried. While worry is largely consistent between those who are paid minimum wage and low wage workers who are paid above the minimum wage, minimum wage workers are more likely to report that they are *not* worried (41%) than low wage workers paid above minimum wage (32%). This is possibly due to the standardisation of minimum wage, and so these workers have more established expectations around pay.

It is again evidenced that previous experience has an impact on workers' attitudes; of those who previously reported that they are dissatisfied with their current level of pay, seven in ten (68%) report they are worried about not being paid fairly, compared with just under six in ten (57%) of those who are currently satisfied.

Still thinking about pay-related concerns, similar levels of worry are attributed to the possibility that the new employer could be unreliable, for example not paying workers on time or not giving promised hours, with six in ten (61%) stating this. As seen before, this is a more common concern among those from an ethnic minority background (74%). Those who previously reported that they deserve to be paid more for their current role are also more likely to state this as a concern (64%), compared with a minority (46%) who feel their level of pay is about right.

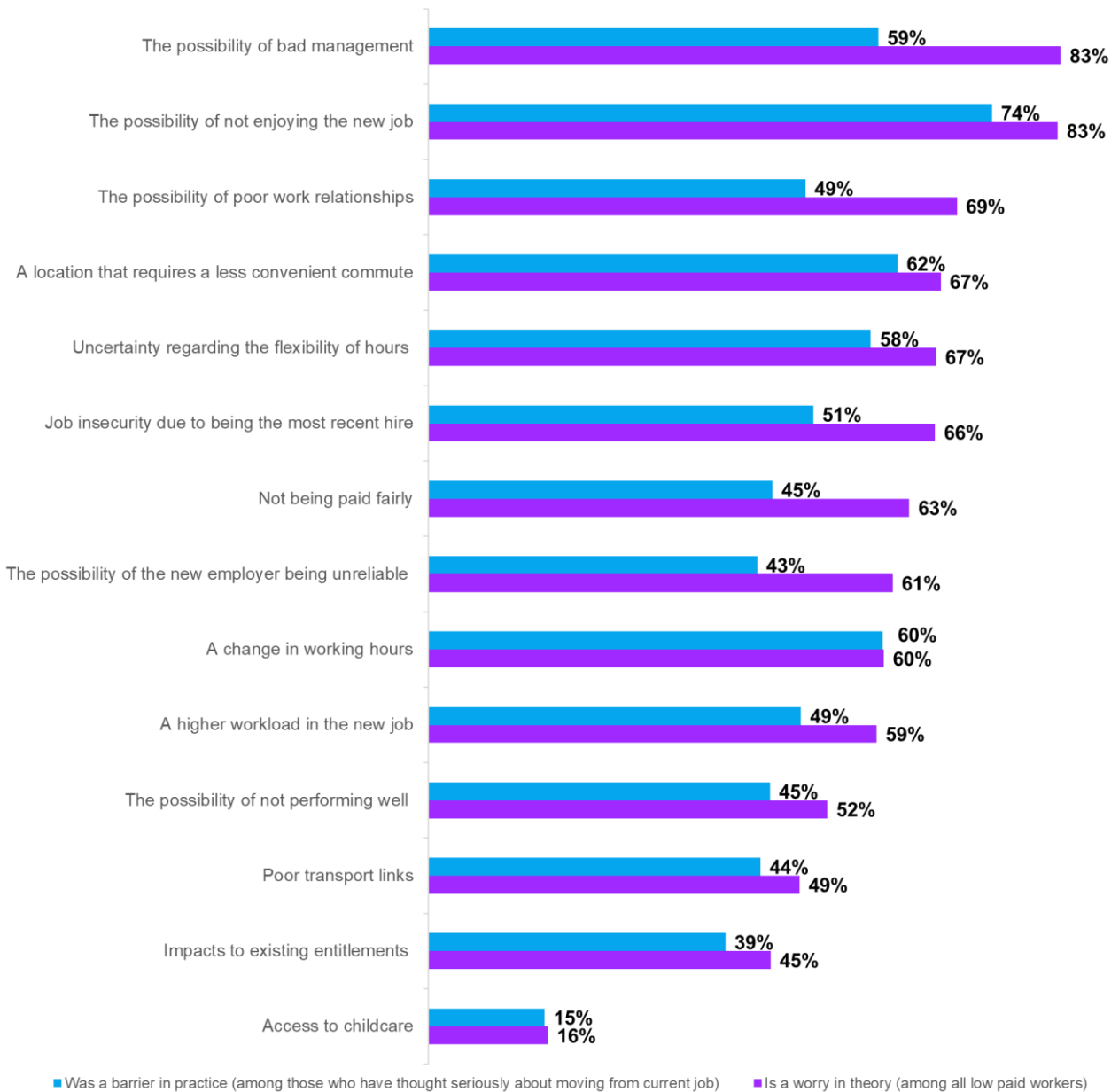
For both pay-related risks, concerns are much higher among those who have not moved roles before, with seven in ten who say they would be worried about not being paid fairly (70%) or that their employer is unreliable (70%). Comparatively, close to two in five of those who have changed jobs from one organisation to another state that they are not worried about either risk (38% are not worried about fair pay and 41% are not worried about unreliable employers), again evidencing the importance of prior experience in low-paid workers' perceptions.

Medium- and high-paid workers are less likely to report concern around pay-related risks when applying for a job with a new employer. Half (52%) state they are worried about not being paid fairly and concerns around an unreliable employer are lower still (44%). The level of worry around fair pay is driven in part by younger medium- and high-paid workers aged 16 to 29 (66%), while this age trend was not evident when looking at low-paid workers only. Interestingly, ethnicity also plays a role among medium- and high-wage workers, with 73% of those from an ethnic minority background reporting they would be worried about not being paid fairly, compared to 50% of those who are white.

Barriers in practice

In order to ascertain the impact of these risks in practice, a similar question was asked to only those who have seriously considered leaving their current job in order to understand how much each acted as a barrier in practice when they were considering moving. For those who have considered moving, the commonly cited hypothetical worry of poor work relationships (49%) is proven to be lower in importance than the practical changes to their life, such as their commute (62%) or work hours (60%).

Figure 22. Worries in theory if taking a new job with a different employer compared with barriers in practice for those when considering moving on to a new job



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

How worried, if at all, would you be about each of the following if thinking about taking a job

with a different employer?

Base: All low-paid workers who have seriously considered leaving current job n=512

To what extent, if at all, did the following act as a barrier when you were considering moving to a new job from your current one?

Thinking about the pay-related elements, these also appeared to be less of a barrier in practice than when thinking hypothetically. Over two fifths (45%) state that not being paid fairly was at least somewhat of a barrier in practice, compared to 63% overall who were worried. Likewise, a similar proportion (43%) report that the possibility of an unreliable employer was a barrier for them in practice.

Although the sample size for those from an ethnic minority background is too low for in-depth analysis, this group are directionally more likely to state that both pay-related concerns continued to be a barrier for them when they considered moving.

While access to childcare is the least commonly cited worry when thinking about moving jobs (16%), a similar proportion (15%) report this to be barrier in practice. Possibly unsurprisingly due to life stage, for both of these questions this is driven by those aged 30 to 39 (27% worry; 31% barrier in practice) and 40 to 49 (22% worry; 17% barrier in practice). It is also more commonly stated as a worry by women (20%) than men (10%), and a similar proportion for both groups identify these as a barrier in practice (19% women; 10% men). Possibly linked to this, the same proportion report changing work hours as a worry and also a barrier in practice (60%), and again this is driven by those aged 30 to 39 (69% worry; 70% barrier).

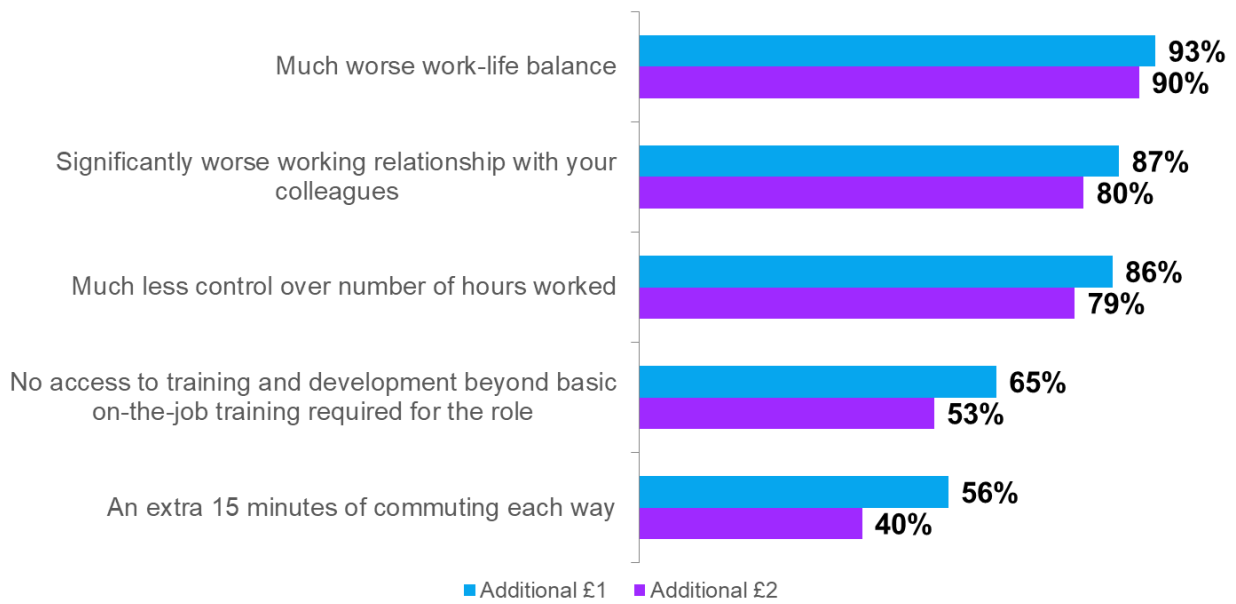
Interestingly, although overall worry about not being paid fairly is lower among medium- and high-paid workers (52%) compared with low-paid workers (63%), when thinking about it being a barrier in practice, reported levels of impact are relatively level, with 43% of medium- and high wage-earners identifying it as a barrier. This could mean that when thinking hypothetically, low-paid workers are attributing too much worry to pay, when in reality the impact is consistent across pay levels.

Pay related trade offs

This report has evidenced that for many low-paid workers, pay is less of a priority when thinking about their job compared with other factors such as colleague relationships or work-life balance. In order to understand how pay interacts with these priorities, workers

were asked whether they would accept or turn down a pay rise of either £1 or £2⁴ if it meant the worsening of another attribute of their work. Across nearly all trade-offs, the majority of low-paid workers state that they would turn down the pay rise if it meant making another element worse, with responses being consistent between low-paid workers earning and minimum wage or above.

Figure 23. Pay related trade-offs – the proportion who would turn down the pay increase - All low-paid workers



Base: All low-paid workers shown £1 n=501; All low-paid workers shown £2 n=500
 For the following question, please imagine you have been offered a new role by another employer paying [£1/£2] more an hour than you currently earn. In each of the following scenarios, would you accept the new job for an extra [£1/£2] per hour or stick with your current job at its current hourly rate?

This is most evident when looking at the attributes of work that have been already identified as key benefits such as work-life balance and relationships with colleagues. Nine in ten state that they would turn down any the pay rise if it meant a worse work-life balance (93% £1 increase, 90% £2 increase), and a similar proportion (87%) would turn down a £1 increase for worsening colleague relationships. Somewhat fewer, but still a large majority (80%) would turn down a £2 increase. These sentiments are particularly high among those

⁴ Sample was split in two – one half was shown the £1 trade off and the other was shown the £2 trade off

who are currently satisfied with these elements in their current role: of those who are satisfied with their work-life balance, 94% state they would turn down a £1/£2 pay rise, and 85% of those who are currently satisfied with their work relationships say the same.

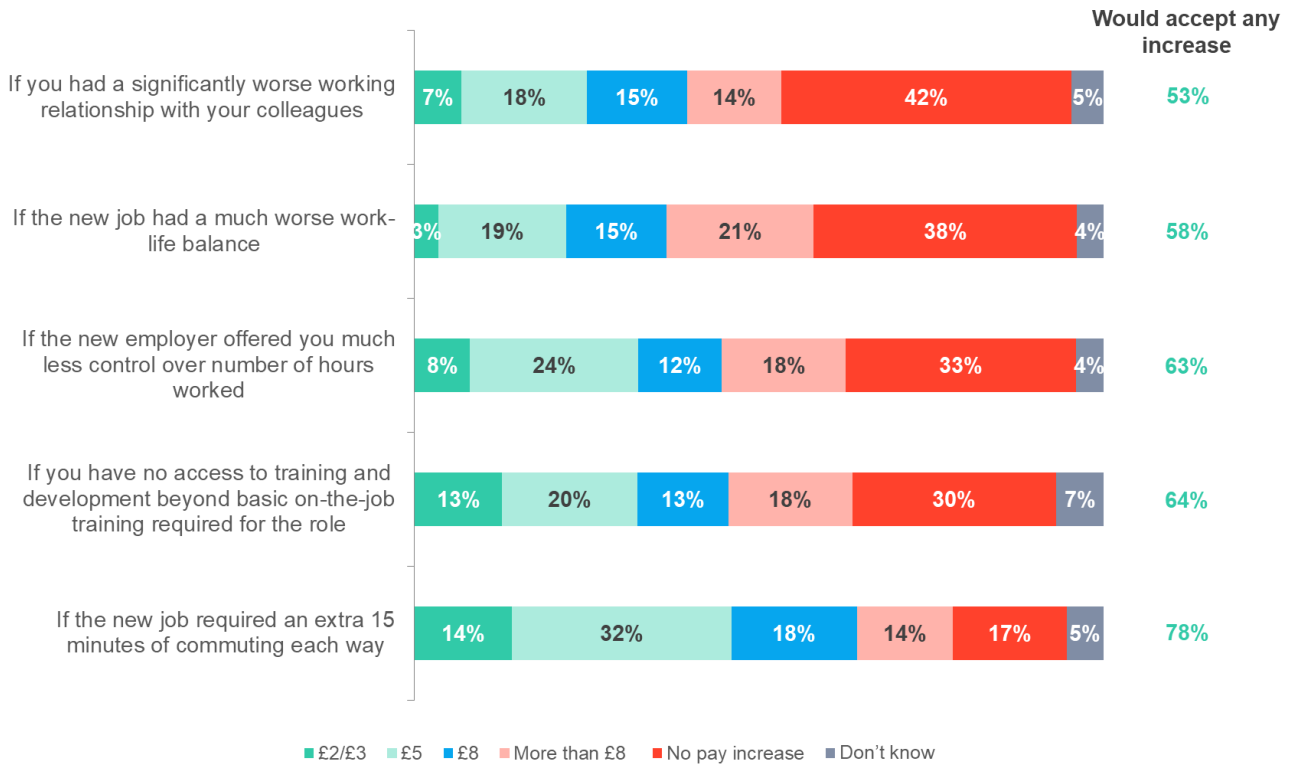
However, low-paid workers are less likely to turn down a pay rise if it meant a longer commute, especially for those who were shown the £2 pay rise option – a minority of this group (40%) report they would turn it down. This could possibly be due to the monetary value that can be placed on an increase in commuting, while this is not as clear cut on other attributes. At an overall level, low-paid workers aged 16 to 29 are most likely to accept any pay rise if it meant a longer commute (62%), while those aged 60 and over are most likely to turn down a pay rise of £1 or £2 (60%).

Across all attributes, medium- and high-paid workers are more likely to accept a pay rise⁵ compared with low-paid workers, although a strong majority would still turn down an increase if it meant worsening work-life balance (86% overall).

Indeed, for many low-paid workers, they would not be willing to accept any pay rise if it meant significantly worsening another aspect of their job. Two fifths state that they would not accept any pay rise if it meant a worse relationship with their colleagues (42%) or a worse work-life balance (38%). Meanwhile, a third (33%) state the same in relation to having less control over their hours worked and three in ten (30%) state they would not accept any pay rise if it meant no access to on-the-job training. As seen before, a worse commute is the least unacceptable trade-off to low-paid workers, with only a sixth (17%) stating they would not accept any pay rise.

⁵ Possible pay rises were increased for the medium- and high-paid sample. Half of the sample were shown a £5 increase, and half were shown an increase of £8.

Figure 24. Pay increase willing to accept for worsening aspect – All low-paid workers



Base: All low-paid workers who stated they would turn down the following trade-offs: longer commute n=495; worse work-life balance n=906; less control over hours worked n=822; worse working relationships n=839; no access to on-the-job training n=592

In the previous question, you said you would not accept a new job for an extra £2/£3 per hour if this new job meant the following. In order to accept the new job under each of these scenarios, how much of an increase in hourly pay would you require?

Although medium- and high-paid workers are more likely initially to accept a pay increase if it meant a worsening of another attribute, those who turned the initial pay increase down are generally more likely than their low-paid counterparts to accept any pay increase. This is especially evident when thinking about their working relationships, where half (51%) of medium- and high-paid workers who had turned down an increase of £5 or £8 state they would not accept any wage increase if it meant a worse relationship with their colleagues.

Interestingly, low-paid workers on minimum wage are generally less likely to accept a pay rise if it meant worsening another aspect of their job. This is especially evident when thinking about having no access to basic training; only 50% who previously turned down an increase state they would accept an increase of any amount, compared with two thirds (66%) of those who are low wage above minimum wage. This is largely driven by the discrepancy in the proportion who would accept either a £2 or £3 increase – 14% of low wage workers state they would accept this compared with 4% on minimum wage.

Minimum wage workers are also more likely to report uncertainty here compared with low wage workers paid above minimum wage (12% vs 6% respectively).

This trend can also be seen when thinking about a worsened relationship with colleagues; 55% of low-paid workers would accept a pay increase compared with 44% of minimum wage workers. As seen previously, this is in part due to the higher proportion of low wagers above minimum wage stating they would accept a £2 or £3 increase (8% vs 3% minimum wage workers), however this attribute also sees higher numbers of minimum wage workers reporting that they would not accept any increase (50%) compared with low wage workers above minimum wage (44%). This is despite similar levels of both groups stating that their workplace relationships were a benefit of their current job.

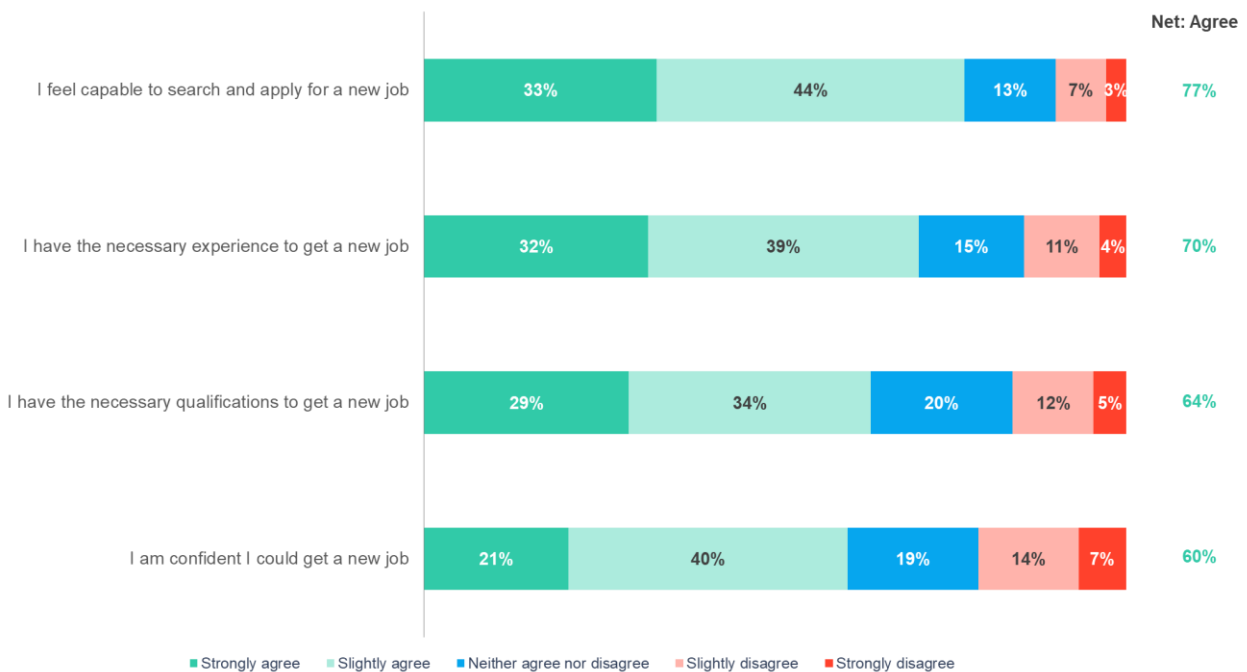
Job mobility: changing behaviour

In order to ascertain low-paid workers’ proclivity to change jobs in the future, they were presented with questions tied to their perceptions of their capability, opportunity, and motivation to do so.

Capability

Generally, low-paid workers’ perception of their capability to change jobs is strong. Three quarters (77%) agree that they feel capable to search and apply for a new job, with a third (33%) stating that they strongly agree. While seven in ten (70%) think they have the necessary experience, a comparatively smaller proportion (64%) think they have the necessary qualifications, which echoes the earlier verbatim findings on page 17 in relation to why some low-paid workers are not applying for jobs elsewhere, despite thinking they can receive higher pay. Agreement that they are confident they could get a new job is comparatively lower, although still shared by a majority (60%).

Figure 25. Capability to apply for a new job – All low-paid workers



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? – Capability

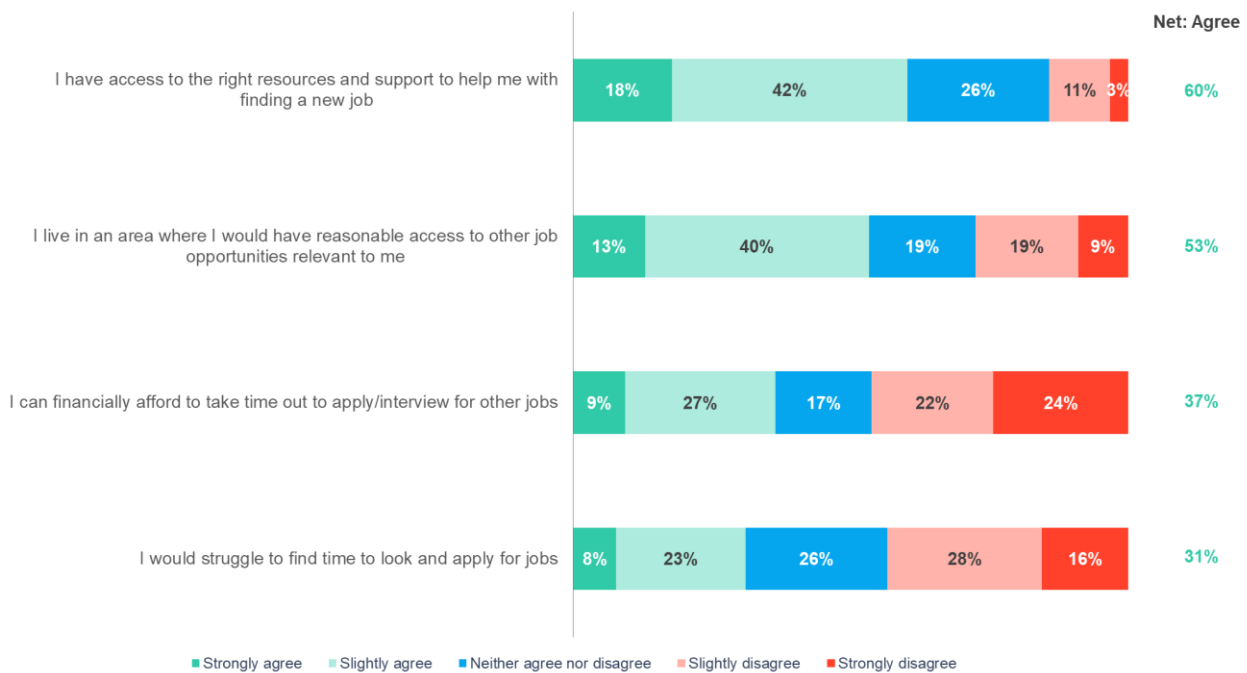
Overall, agreement surrounding capability is broadly consistent between minimum wage and low wage workers above minimum wage – the only difference occurs when thinking

about having the necessary experience, where those who are paid minimum wage are more likely to disagree (21%) than low-paid workers above minimum wage (13%).

Opportunity

Despite strong conviction in relation to capability, low-paid workers show weaker levels of agreement when thinking about opportunity to change jobs. This is particularly evident when thinking about the costs of applying for a new job, where slightly over a third (37%) agree that they can financially afford to take time out to apply or interview for other jobs compared with 46% who disagree. Despite differences in their level of pay, there are no differences in level of agreement when comparing those who are on minimum wage compared with low wage workers above minimum wage. Likewise, while it is reported by a minority, three in ten (31%) agree that they would struggle to find the time to apply for jobs, an attitude which is particularly prevalent among those aged between 21 and 29 (48%).

Figure 26. Opportunity to apply for a new job – All low-paid workers



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? – Opportunity

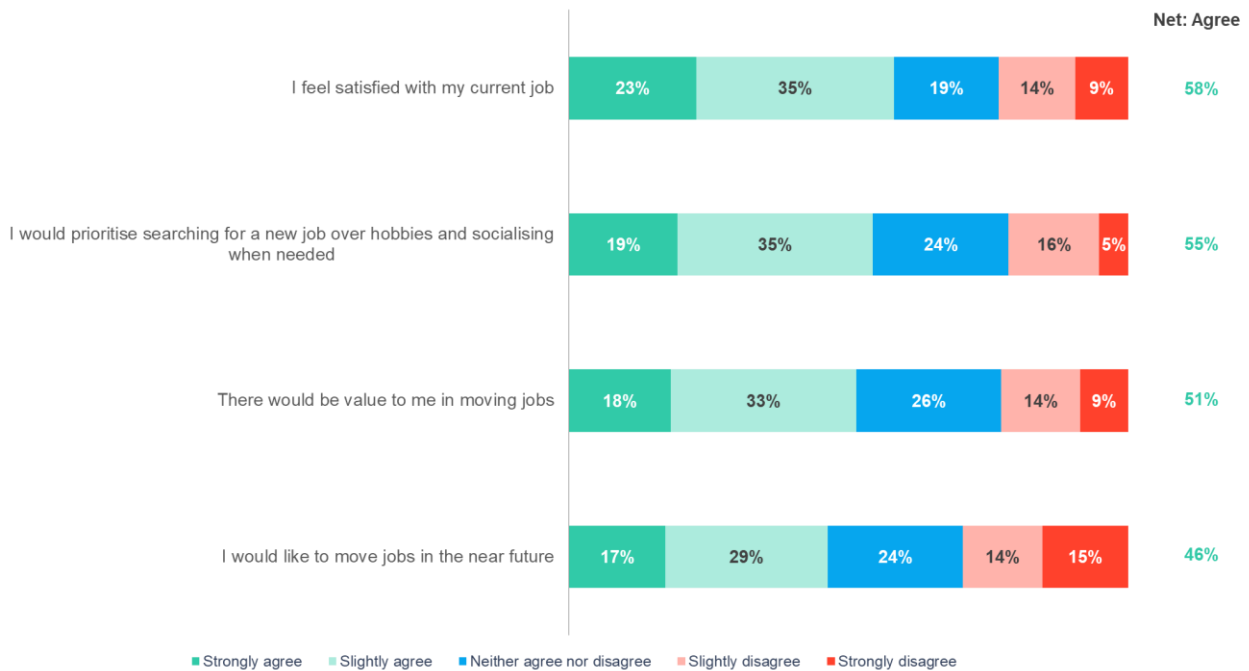
That being said, there is higher agreement (60%) when thinking about having the access to resources and support to find a new job, which reflects earlier findings on page 41 that the majority would be comfortable using online (90%) or offline (69%) means to search for a job. Agreement in relation to geographical access to a job, however, is somewhat lower,

with just over half (53%) agreeing that they live in an area where they would have reasonable access to other opportunities. This is driven by those who are currently living in urban locations (57%) compared with those in rural locations (35%), where the majority disagree that they have reasonable access (51%). Additionally, this is also a particular barrier for low-paid workers living with a disability or long-term health condition; this group are significantly less likely to agree that they have reasonable geographical access (38%) compared with those without a disability (57%).

Motivation

Finally, despite strong perceptions of capability overall and good levels of confidence in having the opportunity to access resources and support, there are generally lower levels of motivation to make a change. Only half (51%) of low-paid workers agree that there would be value to them moving jobs in the future, possibly reflecting the earlier findings on page 19 that lower proportions of low-paid workers believe that moving jobs can improve pay levels (42% previously stated they believe this to be true). Indeed, 44% of those who believe you earn more if you stay in the same job agree that there would be value in them moving, compared with 61% who believe that you earn more if you move jobs regularly.

Figure 27. Motivation to apply for a new job – All low-paid workers



Base: All low-paid workers n=1,001
 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? – Motivation

Likewise, less than half (46%) state that they would like to move jobs in the future. This is possibly due to the high proportion who also agree that they are satisfied in their current job (58%). While there are no differences in perceptions when looking at those who earn minimum wage or a low wage above minimum wage, those who believe they deserve to be paid more are more likely to agree that they would like to move jobs in the future (50%), compared with those who believe their level of pay is about right (28%).

Driving behaviour change

It is important to note that perceptions around capability, opportunity and motivation are cyclical – a poor experience in one aspect can impact later opinions elsewhere. In order to drive behaviour change, perceptions in all areas need to be targeted.

Overall, low-paid workers' strong perceptions of capability could be leveraged, with specific targeting focused on increasing confidence and perceptions of qualifications that are required for other jobs. However, findings indicate that a main focus should be applied to increase motivation and opportunity-related perceptions. Many workers do not currently see the value in moving jobs, and perhaps most importantly, close to half feel they do not have the time and/or money to devote to doing so. These could be considered key barriers to low-paid workers seeking out new employment opportunities. Greater communication around the pay-related benefits of changing jobs and the most effective and efficient ways of doing so could be meaningful responses to overcome these barriers, however it is important to do so within the context of other key workplace benefits, such as colleague relationships and work-life balance, as these are often awarded greater importance.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample profile: quantitative survey

YouGov uses RIM (Random Iterative Method) weighting as its standard approach. RIM is used when there are a number of different standard weights that all need to be applied together. This weighting method calculates weights for each individual respondent from the targets and achieved sample sizes for all chosen variables.

We reviewed the achieved samples of low and medium/high-paid workers against their population profiles. Where differences existed, RIM weighting was used to correct for these differences to ensure representative samples were achieved.

Low-paid workers

The sample of low-paid workers was weighted by age, gender, ethnicity, region, work status, wage level, industry, sector, and organisation size. The tables below detail the weighting applied for each variable. The population statistics were sourced from ASHE 2022 and Low Pay Commission estimates using LFS microdata⁶.

Table 1: Breakdown of the sample by wage level

Wage level	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
Minimum wage	373	180	18%
Low wage above minimum wage	628	821	82%

Table 2: Breakdown of sample by work status

Sector	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
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⁶ Most breakdowns of coverage are available in the LPC National Minimum Wage report, found [here](#) and ASHE data on low and high pay in the UK, found [here](#). For certain breakdowns (business size and sector) we used additional data provided to us by the LPC

Working full-time (30 or more hours per week)	536	465	46%
Working part-time (8-29 hours a week)	427	504	54%
Working part-time (less than 8 hours a week)	38	32	

Table 3: Breakdown of sample by industry

Industry	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
Manufacturing, construction, production, transportation, and storage	124	99	11%
Wholesale and retail trade	274	216	25%
Hospitality and leisure	162	262	26%
Professional services (IT, finance, real estate, professional and business and scientific services)	108	81	6%
Education	85	76	7%
Human health and social work activities	122	121	12%
Administrative and support, public admin, and defence	41	70	13%
Other service activities	85	77	

Table 4: Breakdown of sample by age

Age	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
16-29	289	336	59%
30-39	195	255	
40-49	175	149	15%
50-59	191	150	15%
60+	151	111	11%

Table 5: Breakdown of sample by gender

Gender	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
Male	334	403	40%
Female	667	598	60%

Table 6: Breakdown of sample by work region

Region	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
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North-west England	125	116	12%
North-east England	51	49	5%
Yorkshire and Humberside	106	109	11%
West Midlands	92	98	10%
East Midlands	81	80	8%
Eastern England	60	80	9%
London	133	125	8%
South-west England	86	90	8%
South-east England	106	84	12%
Scotland	79	82	17%
Wales	53	67	
Northern Ireland	29	21	

Table 7: Breakdown of the sample by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
White	904	852	85%
Non-white ethnic minority	68	123	12%
Prefer not to say	29	26	3%

Table 8: Breakdown of the sample by sector

Sector	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
Private	817	744	74.3%
Public	100	175	17.5%
Voluntary	68	81	8.1%
Missing / N/A	16	1	0.1%

Table 9: Breakdown of the sample by organisation size

Organisation size	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
Micro (2-9 employees)	185	165	16.5%
Small (10-49 employees)	228	174	17.4%
Medium (50-249 employees)	127	145	14.6%
Large (250+ employees)	413	516	51.5%
Missing / N/A	48	1	0.1%

Medium- and high-paid workers

The sample of medium/high-paid workers was weighted by age, gender, region, work status, wage level, industry, sector, and organisation size. The tables below detail the weighting applied for each variable. The population statistics were sourced from ASHE 2022, the Annual Population Survey 2022, and Business Population Estimates 2022⁷.

Table 10: Breakdown of sample by work status and wage level

Sector	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
Full time and £20,000 to £24,999 per year	839	787	5%
Full time and £25,000 to £34,999 per year			31%
Full time and £35,000 to £49,999 per year			31%
Full time and £50,000 per year and over			10%
Part time and £5,000 to £9,999 per year	162	214	4%
Part time and £10,000 to £14,999 per year			9%
Part time and £15,000 to £19,999 per year			3%
Part time and £20,000 to £24,999 per year			3%
Part time and £25,000 per year and over			3%

⁷ Industry and sector statistics based on total employed population as a proxy

Table 11: Breakdown of sample by industry

Industry	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
Manufacturing, construction, production, transportation, and storage	200	189	19%
Wholesale and retail trade	93	120	12%
Hospitality and leisure	54	34	5%
Professional services (IT, finance, real estate, professional and business and scientific services)	302	232	19%
Education	127	150	15%
Human health and social work activities	132	160	16%
Administrative and support, public admin, and defence	43	70	12%
Other service activities	50	46	2%

Table 12: Breakdown of sample by age

Age	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
16-29	155	200	20%
30-39	259	250	25%
40-49	246	240	24%
50-59	233	220	22%
60+	108	90	9%

Table 13: Breakdown of sample by gender

Gender	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
Male	500	521	52%
Female	501	480	48%

Table 14: Breakdown of sample by work region

Region	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
North-west England	116	100	10%
North-east England	39	40	4%
Yorkshire and Humberside	76	80	8%
West Midlands	88	80	8%
East Midlands	50	60	6%
Eastern England	169	160	9%
London	139	140	16%
South-west England	82	90	8%
South-east England	91	80	14%

Scotland	81	90	9%
Wales	46	40	4%
Northern Ireland	24	40	4%

Table 15: Breakdown of the sample by sector

Sector	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
Private	729	751	75%
Public	198	180	18%
Voluntary	74	70	7%

Table 16: Breakdown of the sample by organisation size

Organisation size	Unweighted count	Weighted count	Weighted percentage
2-49 employees	241	290	29%
50-99 employees	72	60	6%
100-249 employees	107	80	8%
250+ employees	581	571	57%