DWP Employer Survey 2024

Flexible working

May 2025

Introduction and Methodology

Background and aims

- The DWP Employer Survey 2024 is the second wave of a cross-sectional representative survey of employers in Great Britain (GB). Wave 1 of this survey was conducted in 2022 and published in 2023.

- The survey is designed to gather evidence from employers on their policies, awareness and attitudes in relation to key topics of interest to DWP. The topics covered by the survey include:

  - Health and disability in the workplace

  - Recruitment, retention and progression of staff

  - Engagement with government employment schemes and wider engagement with DWP

  - Pension provision

  - Groups who may be disadvantaged in the labour market.

- The survey in its current form was commissioned in 2021. It consolidated three different cross-cutting employer surveys that were taking place across the department into one, biennial, modularised survey. This new survey format was intended to streamline DWP's ask of employers, and therefore to reduce the burden on employers in terms of DWP research participation.

- This survey allows DWP to understand how employer attitudes and behaviours have changed since 2022, as well as providing information on new topics of interest to DWP such as menopause and flexible working.

Methodology

- Wave 2 of this survey was conducted between the 28th February and 25th April 2024. It used a mixed mode design (conducted online and via telephone) and reached a total of 8,006 employers in Great Britain.

- The survey questionnaire was modularised so the sample size for individual questions differs from the total number of responses achieved across the survey.

- The data collected has been weighted to make it representative of the underlying population of employers in Great Britain in terms of business sector, size and country. The weighting approach was consistent with wave 1 and used counts from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), a comprehensive list of UK businesses. More information on the survey methodology is detailed in the technical report.

- The mode split for this wave differed slightly to wave 1. Wave 2 consisted of 3,059 telephone interviews and 4,947 online surveys whereas, wave 1 consisted of 4,794 telephone interviews and 3,208 online surveys. The effect of this change in mode on the data collected and comparisons between waves has not been fully explored.

- The definitions used to categorise employers according to organisation size are detailed below.

  - **Large employer:** an organisation with 250 or more employees

  - **Medium employer:** an organisation with 50 to 249 employees

  - **Small employer:** an organisation with 2 to 49 employees*

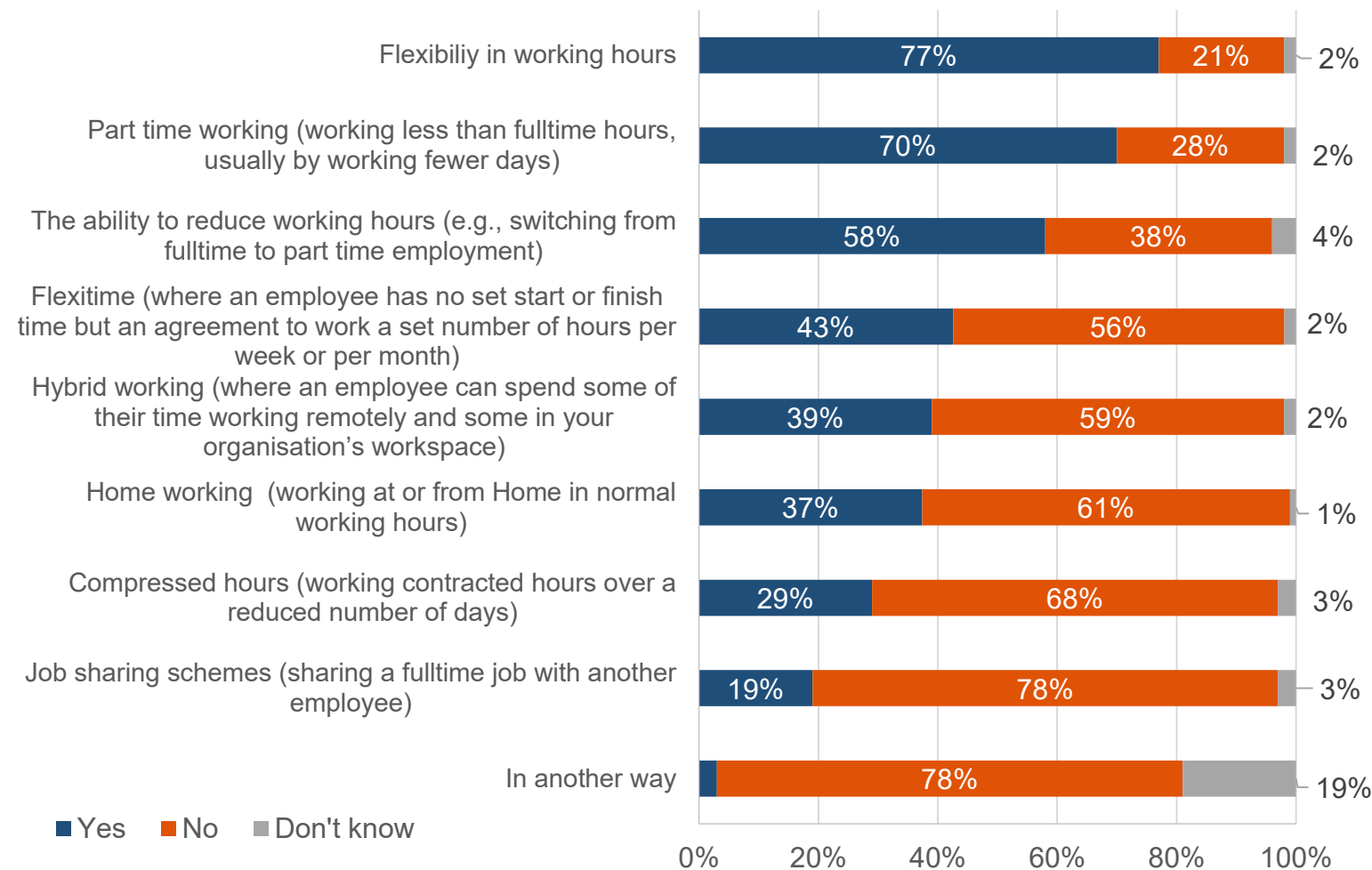 - **Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs):** organisations with 2 to 249 employees

*Note: These definitions are slightly different to the ONS harmonised definitions of employer size, as this survey excluded organisations with less than 2 staff members.

Approach to reporting

- The findings in this slide deck are based on employers' direct experiences of DWP services and policies, and their experiences of a variety of workplace management topics. The survey included a small number of perception and attitudinal-based questions which ask employers about their views of DWP services and policies, and some of these were asked whether or not employers had experienced these services and policies directly. These perceptions and attitudes are important in better understanding how employers view what the Department delivers and to help the department understand and address any concerns from this stakeholder group.

- Where comparisons are made in this slide pack between different population groups or variables, only those differences found to be statistically significant at the 5% level ($p<0.05$) are reported.

- In some cases, it was not possible to include within these slides the data from all respondent sub-groups, however this analysis is available in the accompanying published data tables.

- In this slide pack, key information is provided for each reported question. The number of respondents presented with each question (unweighted) and description of these respondents (Base=N) is provided under each graph. The chart titles contain the corresponding question number.

The most common flexible working time arrangement provided by employers was flexibility in working hours

Chart 1: Employer provision of flexible working time arrangements, Q1, 2024

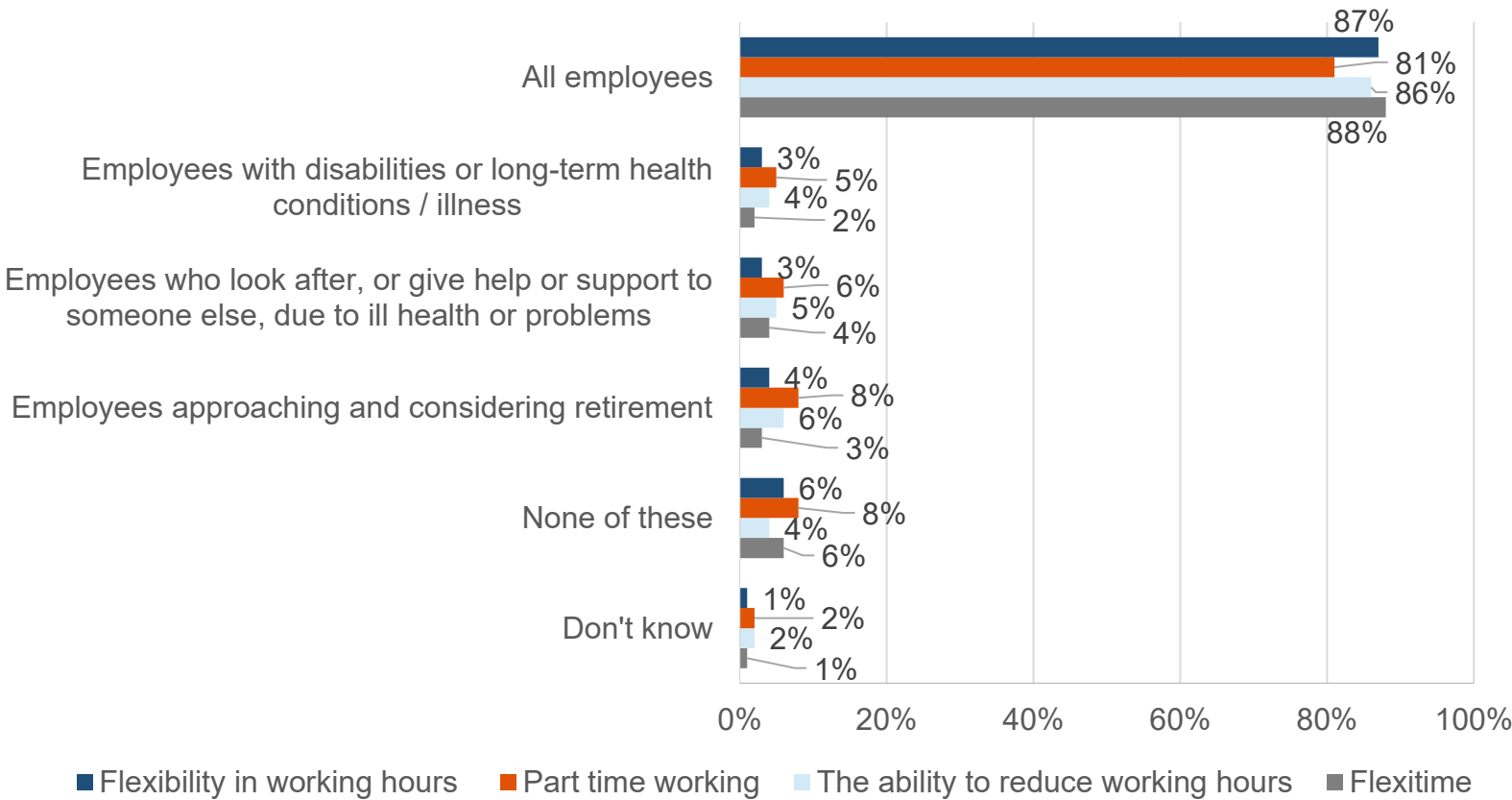| Arrangement	Yes	No	Don't know
Flexibiliy in working hours	77%	21%	2%
Part time working (working less than fulltime hours, usually by working fewer days)	70%	28%	2%
The ability to reduce working hours (e.g., switching from fulltime to part time employment)	58%	38%	4%
Flexitime (where an employee has no set start or finish time but an agreement to work a set number of hours per week or per month)	43%	56%	2%
Hybrid working (where an employee can spend some of their time working remotely and some in your organisation's workspace)	39%	59%	2%
Home working (working at or from Home in normal working hours)	37%	61%	1%
Compressed hours (working contracted hours over a reduced number of days)	29%	68%	3%
Job sharing schemes (sharing a fulltime job with another employee)	19%	78%	3%
In another way		78%	19%

Unweighted base: All employers (2,667)

- The most common working time arrangement offered by employers was flexibility in working hours (77%); but this varied by organisation size. While this was the most common arrangement offered by SMEs, large employers were more likely to say they offered part-time working (98%).

- Overall, 7 in 10 (70%) employers said they offer part-time working. This was followed by the ability to reduce working hours (58%) and flexitime (43%).

- Large employers were more likely than SMEs to say they offer each type of flexible working arrangement, with the exception of flexitime.

- Employers who said they provide working time arrangements 'in another way' (3%) were asked to expand on this; these employers most commonly said that other arrangements were available on request (34%).

Most employers offer flexibility in working hours, part time working, flexitime and the ability to reduce working hours to all employees

Chart 2: Groups that are offered flexibility in working hours, part time working, the ability to reduce working hours and flexitime by their employer, Q2, 2024

Legend:
- ■ Flexibility in working hours
- ■ Part time working
- ■ The ability to reduce working hours
- ■ Flexitime

Group	Flexibility in working hours	Part time working	The ability to reduce working hours	Flexitime
All employees	87%	81%	86%	88%
Employees with disabilities or long-term health conditions / illness	3%	5%	4%	2%
Employees who look after, or give help or support to someone else, due to ill health or problems	3%	6%	5%	4%
Employees approaching and considering retirement	4%	8%	6%	3%
None of these	6%	8%	4%	6%
Don't know	1%	2%	2%	1%

Unweighted base: Employers who offer flexibility in working hours (2,081), part time working (2,074), the ability to reduce working hours (1,823) and flexitime (1,066).
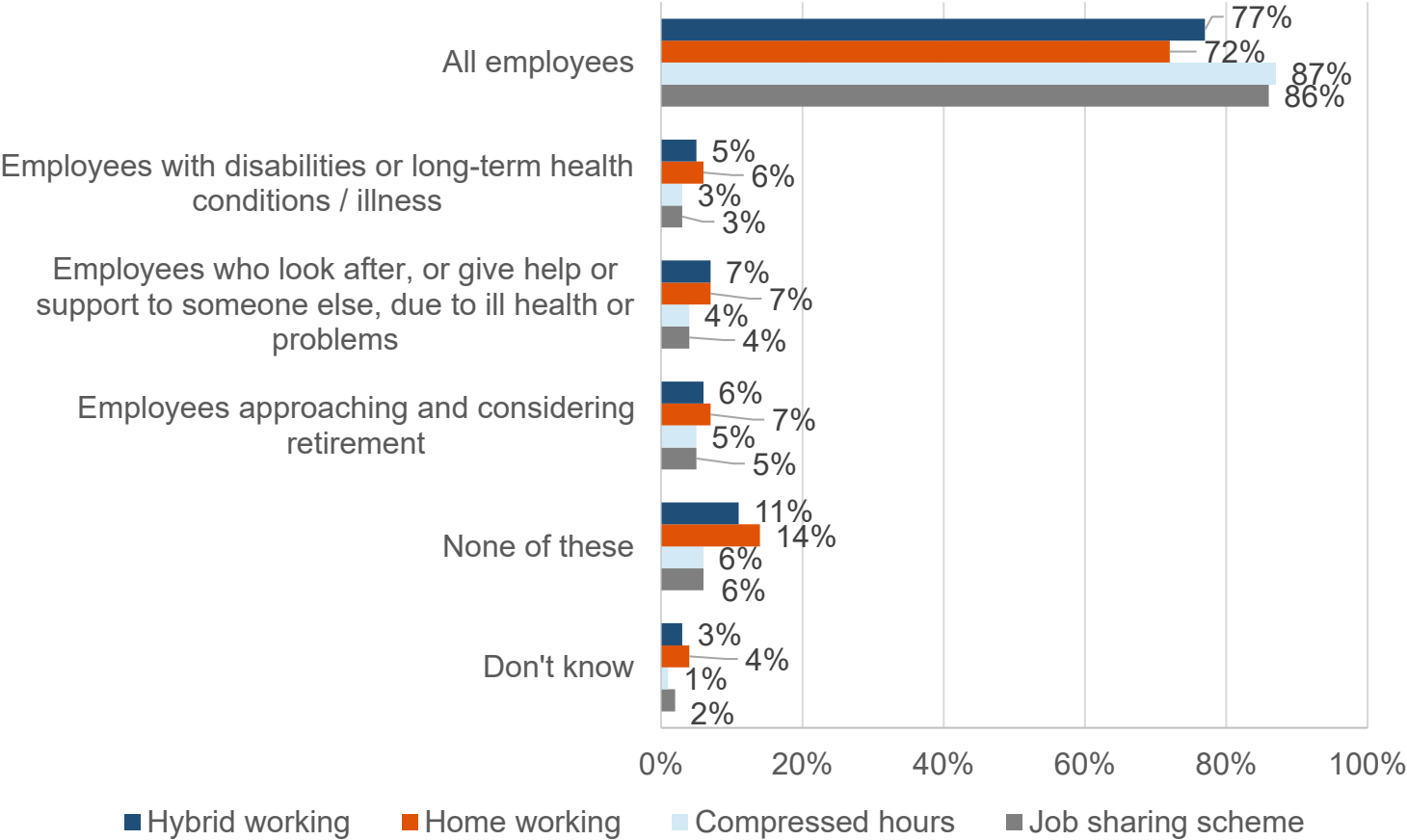
- Employers who said they offered their employees a working time arrangement were asked which groups these are available to.

- For each of the eight working time arrangements, most employers said they offered these to all employees.

- Flexitime was the most common working time arrangement offered to all employees (88%) and home working was the least common arrangement to be offered to all employees (72%, see chart 3).

- There were no clear patterns in terms of which employee groups were more or less likely to be offered these arrangements.

Most employers offer hybrid working, home working, compressed hours and job-sharing schemes to all employees

Chart 3: Groups that are offered hybrid working, home working, compressed hours and job-sharing schemes by employers, Q2, 2024

Bar chart data:

All employees
- Hybrid working: 77%
- Home working: 72%
- Compressed hours: 87%
- Job sharing scheme: 86%

Employees with disabilities or long-term health conditions / illness
- Hybrid working: 5%
- Home working: 6%
- Compressed hours: 3%
- Job sharing scheme: 3%

Employees who look after, or give help or support to someone else, due to ill health or problems
- Hybrid working: 7%
- Home working: 7%
- Compressed hours: 4%
- Job sharing scheme: 4%

Employees approaching and considering retirement
- Hybrid working: 6%
- Home working: 7%
- Compressed hours: 5%
- Job sharing scheme: 5%

None of these
- Hybrid working: 11%
- Home working: 14%
- Compressed hours: 6%
- Job sharing scheme: 6%

Don't know
- Hybrid working: 3%
- Home working: 4%
- Compressed hours: 1%
- Job sharing scheme: 2%

Legend: ■ Hybrid working ■ Home working ■ Compressed hours ■ Job sharing scheme

Unweighted base: Employers who offer hybrid working (1,241), home working (1,080), compressed hours (860) and job-sharing schemes (649)
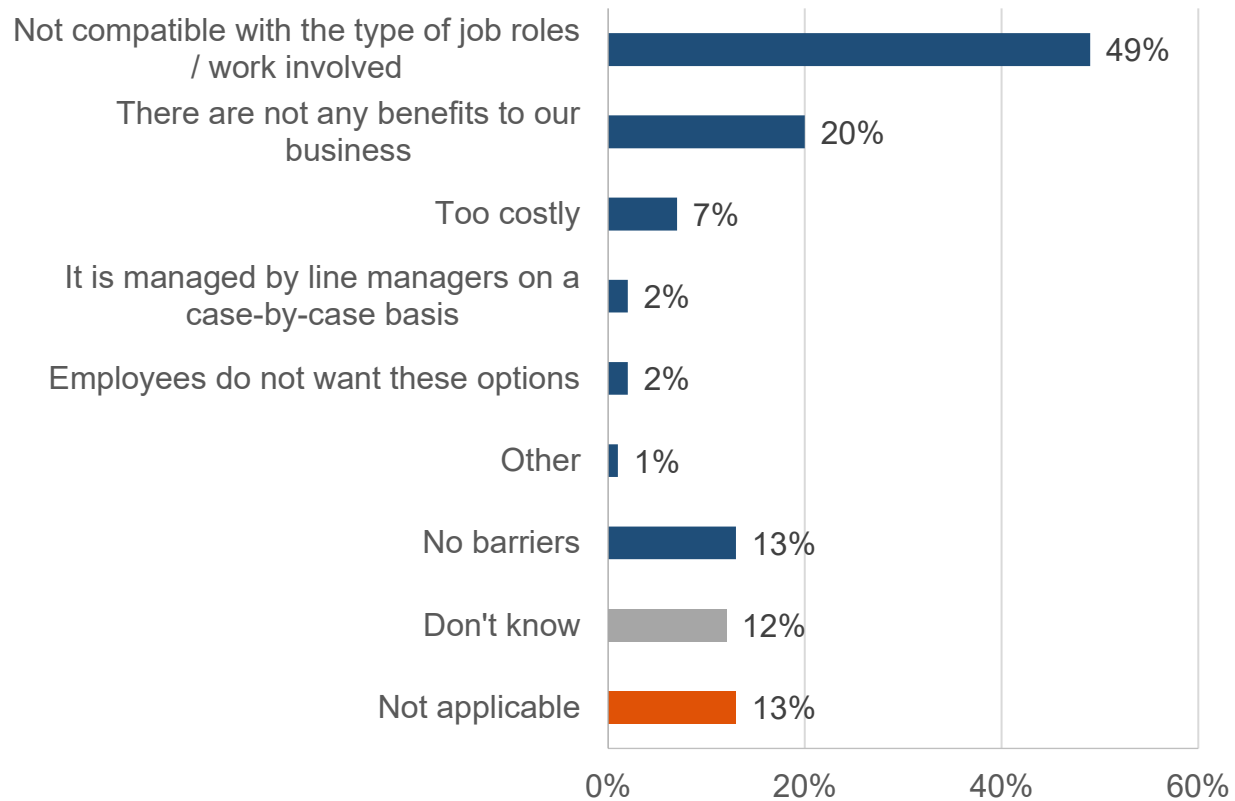
- SMEs were more likely than large employers to say that they offer hybrid working (77% vs 55%) and home working (72% vs 49%) to all employees.

- Over 1 in 10 employers, who said they offer hybrid working or home working to their employees, said they do not offer these to any of the groups they were prompted with (11% and 14%, respectively).

- Large employers were more likely than SMEs to say they did not offer hybrid working to any of the groups they were prompted with (21% vs 11%, respectively).

The most common reason employers do not offer working time arrangements is that they are not compatible with the type of job roles/work involved

Chart 4: Reasons employers do not offer any flexible working time arrangements, Q3, 2024

Reason	Percentage
Not compatible with the type of job roles / work involved	49%
There are not any benefits to our business	20%
Too costly	7%
It is managed by line managers on a case-by-case basis	2%
Employees do not want these options	2%
Other	1%
No barriers	13%
Don't know	12%
Not applicable	13%

Unweighted base: Employers who do not offer any flexible working time arrangements (175)

- Employers who said they do not offer any flexible working time arrangements (9%) were asked if there was anything stopping them from doing so.

- The most common response was that these arrangements are not compatible with the type of job roles/work involved in their organisation (49%).

- One in five (20%) employers said there are not any benefits to their business in having these policies in place. This was followed by the arrangements being too costly (7%).

- Under 1 in 7 (13%) employers said there were no barriers stopping them from having any of these policies in place.

- Under 1 in 7 (13%) employers said that the question was not applicable to their organisation. In some cases, this was because respondents thought their organisation had too few employees for the question to be applicable.