CIPD

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work and working lives

EMPLOYEE
OUTLOOK

EMPLOYEE
VIEWS ON
WORKING LIFE

Autumn 2015

The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has 140,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

Contents

Foreword from the CIPD

We are delighted to once again be working in partnership with Halogen Software on our *Employee Outlook* research series. Our *Employee Outlook* autumn 2015 findings bring a new and very important perspective on the UK's battle to boost productivity – that of employees themselves.

Our findings reveal that it doesn't take rocket science to boost employee productivity, rather simple changes to the content of job roles and the control employees have in their day-to-day jobs could make a real difference. Top of employees' wish lists when it comes to boosting productivity is work that they find interesting and being able to use their own initiative. As you might expect, the things that prevent employees from being as productive as they would like are unnecessary rules and procedures and not having the resources needed to do the job.

There is also an important message coming through from the findings about the importance of matching employee skills to roles. A quarter of employees believe that they would be more productive if they were given tasks that complement their skills. Currently a third of employees believe that they are overqualified for their current job. This increases further for women and part-time workers, and, following on from our recent research into overqualification in the graduate labour market, employees with a university degree are more likely to say they are overqualified than those with A levels or other qualifications. And, overqualification has serious repercussions in the workplace when it comes to engagement. Our

Employee Outlook Engagement Index shows that overqualified employees are more likely to be disengaged or neutral than engaged.

All of these findings point to the importance of having regular and effective development and career conversations with employees. More work certainly needs to be done in this area, with nearly a third believing it is unlikely or very unlikely that they will be able to fulfil their career aspirations in their current organisation – and this is especially the case for young people aged 18–24 years old. Regular development and career conversations can help empower employees to help shape their workloads so they broaden the scope of both interesting work and overall responsibilities, to make better use of their skills and experiences.

Claire McCartney
Research Adviser, Resourcing and Talent Planning
CIPD

Foreword from Halogen

Halogen is pleased to release the latest Employee Outlook in partnership with the CIPD. What's particularly important to our team is that these findings reflect the direct sentiment of employees themselves, in important talent management areas such as performance, career development, manager relationships and what makes them feel most productive and satisfied on the job.

As the global workforce is changing, with expectations at work increasing, employees clearly feel most productive when they are enabled to use their initiative, are given goals and development opportunities that best align to their skills, and when they have a strong relationship with their managers.

And because productivity, engagement and job satisfaction are closely linked, it is important for organisations to consider how they can increase the amount of autonomy employees have at work to use their skills and ideas through more empowering leadership and line management, as well as improved job design.

In order to support increased engagement, employee innovation and ongoing development, employers should focus on creating a culture of trust.

The latest survey results show a strong need for organisations to focus on developing leaders and line managers who empower their staff, and providing jobs and goals that enable autonomy and connection to their organisations. Career development, growth and stimulation are keys to creating a culture of trust, while increasing job

satisfaction and retention. Investing in employee development not only expands the employee's capacity and ability to contribute, it can translate into improved business outcomes.

When career planning discussions are tied to regular, ongoing feedback it has a tremendous impact on employee productivity and engagement. HR plays a critical role in giving line managers the guidance, tools and systems that enable them to help their employees succeed, be more productive and focus on the things that matter most to them, and to their organisations.

Nick Kemp
Regional Director, EMEA,
Halogen Software

Key findings

53%

Just over half (53%) of employees feel fairly well/fully informed about what is happening in their organisation.

Job satisfaction

Net job satisfaction has increased slightly from spring 2015 (+47) and now stands at +48. Private sector employees continue to be the most satisfied (+50) and are significantly more likely to be satisfied than public sector employees, whose net satisfaction is +38. Net job satisfaction has increased for employees in the voluntary sector (to +48 from +43 in spring 2015).

Employee engagement

The Employee Outlook Engagement Index comprises a set of measures which are important to understanding the level of engagement an employee feels towards their organisation. The Engagement Index highlights that the proportion of engaged employees has dropped in this survey from 39% in spring to 36%. The number of employees who are neutral when it comes to engagement has increased once again in this survey and now sits at 61%. Overall, men are significantly less likely to be disengaged than women.

Attitudes to senior managers and line managers

Attitudes to senior managers have worsened in this survey. We measure employee satisfaction with senior managers across five areas: consultation, respect, trust, confidence and clarity of vision. Scores have worsened across each of these areas and

are approximately back to spring 2014 levels. The biggest drop in scores are for clarity of vision (6 net percentage points), confidence (5 net percentage points) and consultation (4 net percentage points).

Three-quarters (76%) of employees have a line manager or supervisor they report to as part of their job. When it comes to satisfaction with line managers, this sits at a net score of +44.

Communication, employee voice and advocacy

Just over half (53%) of employees feel fairly well/fully informed about what is happening in their organisation. However, that leaves just under half (46%) who feel that they receive either limited information or hear very little about what is happening in their organisation.

When it comes to opportunities for upward feedback/employee voice, the net satisfaction score is +10 (with 38% satisfied and 29% dissatisfied). Private sector and voluntary sector employees are significantly more likely to be satisfied with upward feedback opportunities than employees in the public sector. Finally, when it comes to advocacy, just over half (51%) of employees would recommend their organisations to others.

Work–life balance and pressure at work

Overall, there has been a slight increase in employees' ability to achieve the right balance between their work and home lives. The net agreement score has increased from +37 in spring to +38 in autumn. We also asked employees whether their manager and their organisation provides support to help them manage their work–life balance. The results show a contrast. Employees are much more likely to agree that their manager (+6) provides them with support than their organisation (0) as a whole.

Almost two-fifths (38%) of employees are under excessive pressure at work at least once a week. This figure is the same as spring 2015.

Performance management and career progression

Three-fifths (60%) of employees say that their organisation has a performance management process, with nearly a third (32%) saying their organisation does not. Nearly half (46%) believe that they are very or somewhat fair, while a fifth believe that they are somewhat or very unfair.

Employees were fairly split on whether they felt able to fulfil their career aspirations in their current organisation, with a third (33%) saying very likely or likely and almost a third (32%) saying unlikely or very unlikely.

Employee productivity

When asked what things help employees to be productive, top of the list is work that they find interesting (40%) and being able to use their initiative (39%). Other important enablers of productive work are having the resources needed to do the job (31%) and being given tasks that complement their skills (25%).

When asked about the things that prevent them from being as productive as they would like to be, unnecessary rules and procedures (28%) and not having the resources needed to do the job (28%) top the list. Office politics (24%) also distract from productivity as well as work that employees don't find interesting (20%).

Skills shortages and mismatches

The press is currently awash with reports of severe skills shortages across most sectors. However, just under a third of employees (30%) are aware of vacancies that their organisation is currently finding difficult to fill due to a lack of people with the right skills. Senior and middle managers are more likely to think the difficulty in finding the people with the right skills for the job is a result of a lack of experience (65% think this to a large or some extent) as opposed to a lack of qualifications (55% think this to a large or some extent).

We also wanted to get a sense of whether employees believe their organisations are investing in training and developing people internally to fill roles that are hard to recruit for. Views were fairly divided on this issue, with 46% saying this happened very often or fairly often and nearly as many, 45%, saying it happened not very often or not at all.

While three-fifths (63%) of employees believe they have the right level of qualifications for their current job, almost a third (29%) of employees believe that they are overqualified.

Job-seeking

A fifth of all employees are currently looking for a new job with a different organisation. This has fallen from 23% in spring 2015. Of those employees who are currently looking for a new job in a different organisation, just over half (51%) have actually applied for a new job in the last six months. Of those respondents who have either applied for, or are looking for, a new job, the top reason for doing so is to increase their job satisfaction (54%), followed by achieving better pay/benefits elsewhere (52%). Interestingly, around two-fifths (41%) point to the fact that they would like to do a different type of work altogether.

1 Job satisfaction and employee engagement

55+
13%

18–24
26%

25–34
22%

18–24-year-olds (26%) and 25–34-year-olds (22%) significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs than those aged 55+ (13%)

In each *Employee Outlook* survey we measure and track employees' satisfaction with their individual jobs and their overall engagement at work. Job satisfaction is just one part of the measures used to gauge overall engagement levels.

Job satisfaction

Net job satisfaction (the proportion of employees who say that they are satisfied with their jobs minus those who are dissatisfied) has increased slightly from spring 2015 (+47) and now stands at +48. Private sector employees continue to be the most satisfied (+50) and are significantly more likely to be satisfied than public sector employees, whose net satisfaction is +38. Net job satisfaction has increased for employees in the voluntary sector (to +48 from +43 in spring 2015). In terms of specific industries, those

working in the construction sector are significantly more likely to be satisfied than any other sector in this survey.

Employees in micro businesses report the highest levels of job satisfaction at +76, which as a trend is consistent across the last few surveys. There are also some differences in job satisfaction when it comes to age, with 18–24-year-olds (26%) and 25–34-year-olds (22%) significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs than those aged 55+ (13%).

Employee engagement

The Employee Outlook Engagement Index comprises a set of measures which are important to understanding the level of engagement an employee feels towards their organisation. The

Table 1: Employee net satisfaction, by sector and size of organisation

	Autumn 2015	Spring 2015	Autumn 2014	Spring 2014
Overall	+48	+47	+47	+42
Private sector	+50	+50	+44	+42
Public sector	+38	+41	+40	+37
Voluntary sector	+49	+43	+51	+48
Micro business	+76	+75	+67	+64
Small business	+35	+42	+41	+34
Medium business	+48	+38	+40	+33
Large business	+39	+41	+36	+36

Base: Autumn 2015: 2,043; Spring 2015: 2,226; Autumn 2014: 2,754; Spring 2014: 2,523

Figure 2: **Employee job satisfaction trends (2010–15)**

| | Net job satisfaction | Private | ..... Public | Voluntary |

Index consists of 16 items, weighted and aggregated together to give an overall score (see Table 4).

The Engagement Index highlights that the proportion of engaged employees has dropped in this survey from 39% in spring to 36%. The number of employees who are neutral when it comes to engagement has increased once again in this survey and now sits at 61%. Overall, men are significantly less likely to be disengaged than women.

When it comes to sector difference, engagement scores have dropped in the voluntary and private sectors but have increased in the public sector. Voluntary sector employees remain the most engaged (46%) overall, followed now by public sector employees (38%) and finally private sector employees (35%). In relation to size of organisation, employees in micro organisations are significantly more satisfied than those in small, medium and large businesses.

The breakdown of the Employee Engagement Index helps to clarify which factors are carrying the lowest scores and contributing to higher levels of disengagement. As shown in Table 4, the highest average scores (which represent greater disengagement) are found with regards to 'attitudes to senior managers', 'work–life balance' and 'satisfaction with line manager/ advocacy'. In comparison with spring 2015, attitudes to senior managers (now 3.0 from 2.9) and alignment to organisation purpose (now 2.2 from 2.1) have worsened.

Table 2: **The extent to which employees are engaged at work, by gender, sector and size of organisation (%)**

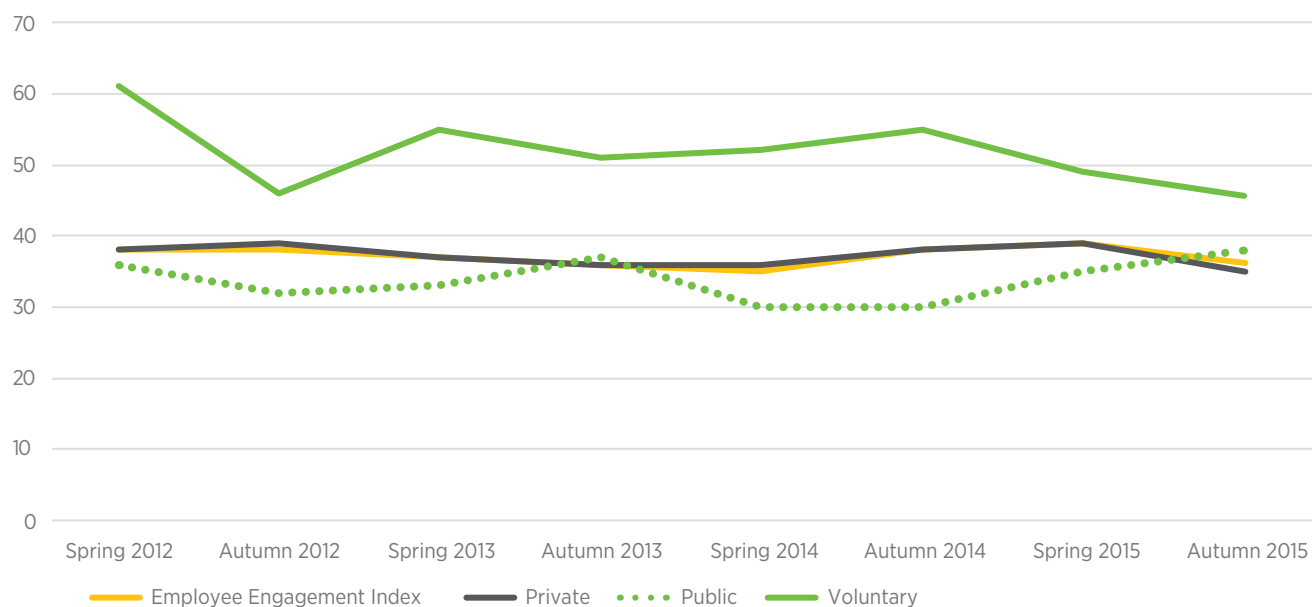|	Engaged	Neutral	Disengaged
All	36	61	3
Men	35	61	4
Women	37	61	2
Private sector	35	62	3
Public sector	38	57	5
Voluntary sector	46	52	1
Micro business	60	40	0
Small business	38	56	6
Medium business	33	62	5
Large business	34	63	4

Base: All: 2,043; Men: 1,148; Women: 895; Private sector: 1,360; Public Sector: 482; Voluntary sector: 124; Micro: 247; Small: 219; Medium: 232; Large: 1,065

Table 3: The extent to which employees are engaged at work (%)

	Autumn 2015	Spring 2015	Autumn 2014
Engaged	36	39	38
Neutral	61	59	61
Disengaged	3	3	4

Base: 2,043

Figure 2: Employee engagement trends (2012–15)

Employee Engagement Index — Private · · · · Public — Voluntary

Table 4: Employee engagement, mean scores by factor

Factor	Items included in the factor	Mean score (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree)
Attitude to senior managers	I have confidence in the directors/senior management team of my organisation. I trust the directors/senior management team of my organisation.	3.0
Work–life balance	I achieve the right balance between my home and work lives. Approximately how much of the time do you feel under EXCESSIVE pressure in your job?	2.8
Satisfaction with line manager/advocacy	Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied, are you with the relationship you have with your immediate supervisor, line manager or boss? How likely or unlikely would you be to recommend your organisation as an employer? I don't think my employer treats me fairly.	2.8
Going the extra mile	I will often take on more work to help relieve my colleagues' workloads. I will often work for more hours than those I am paid or contracted to do.	2.5
Satisfaction with role	My job is as challenging as I would like it to be. My organisation gives me the opportunities to learn and grow. I am satisfied with the content of my job role. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied would you say you are with your current job?	2.5
Alignment to organisation purpose	I know very clearly what the core purpose of my organisation is. I am highly motivated by my organisation's core purpose.	2.2
Relationships with colleagues	I have positive relationships with my colleagues.	2.0

Question in index G was removed and replaced with another question in Wave 3 autumn 2015.

2 Employee attitudes towards senior leaders and line managers

Attitudes to senior managers

Attitudes to senior managers have worsened in this survey. We measure employee satisfaction with senior managers across five areas: consultation, respect, trust, confidence and clarity of vision. Scores have worsened across each of these areas and are approximately back to spring 2014 levels. The biggest drop in scores are for clarity of vision (6 net percentage points), confidence (5 net percentage points) and consultation (4 net percentage points).

When it comes to sector, there have been big drops in voluntary sector scores, particularly in relation to respect (20 net percentage points), confidence (16 net percentage points) and trust (12 net percentage points). Private sector scores have worsened but to a lesser extent across each area, with the biggest drop in relation to clarity of vision (7 net percentage points). The public sector has seen some areas of improvement (respect and trust) but also a noticeable drop in attitudes around consultation (9 net percentage points).

Attitude to line managers

Three-quarters (76%) of employees have a line manager or supervisor they report to as part of their job. When it comes to satisfaction with line managers, this sits at a net score of +44. Satisfaction levels are similar across sectors (private sector: +44, public sector: +47, voluntary sector: +45). Those employees who work in micro organisations are more satisfied than those who work in small, medium and large organisations, while younger employees aged 18–24 are more likely to be satisfied than more mature employees of 45–54 and 55+ years.

Table 5: Senior manager net agree score

	Autumn 2015	Spring 2015	Autumn 2014	Spring 2014
They have a clear vision of where the organisation is going.	+25	+31	+26	+25
They treat employees with respect.	+13	+17	+15	+12
I have confidence in them.	+5	+10	+9	+3
I trust them.	+3	+6	+4	+1
They consult employees about important decisions.	−27	−22	−24	−26

Base: Autumn 2015: 1,826; Spring 2015: 1,998; Autumn 2014: 2,412; Spring 2014: 2,193

Table 6: Senior manager net agree scores, by sector

	Private sector		Public sector		Voluntary sector	
	Autumn 2015	Spring 2015	Autumn 2015	Spring 2015	Autumn 2015	Spring 2015
They have a clear vision of where the organisation is going.	−29	−36	−13	−15	−29	−38
They treat employees with respect.	+15	+20	+3	0	+17	+37
I have confidence in them.	+12	+16	−18	−13	+8	+24
I trust them.	+10	+13	−18	−19	+8	+20
They consult employees about important decisions.	−24	−20	−40	−31	−15	−18

Base: Autumn 2015: 1,826; Spring 2015: 1,998

3 Communication, employee voice and advocacy

> 'Employees in micro organisations are significantly more likely than employees in small, medium and large organisations to feel fully informed.'

This section of the *Employee Outlook* looks at how well informed employees feel about what is going on in their organisations, whether there are opportunities for upward feedback/employee voice and whether they would recommend their organisation to others.

Just over half (53%) of employees feel fairly well/fully informed about what is happening in their organisation. However, that leaves just under half (46%) who feel that they receive either limited information or hear very little about what is happening in their organisation. As you would expect, employees in micro organisations are significantly more likely than employees in small, medium and large organisations to feel fully informed and there are no significant differences by sector.

Table 7: Extent to which employees feel informed about what is happening in their organisation (%)

I feel fully informed	10
I feel fairly well informed	42
I receive only a limited amount of information	33
I get to hear very little about what goes on	13
Don't know	1
Net: Fairly well/fully informed	53

Base: 1,639

When it comes to opportunities for upward feedback/employee voice, the net satisfaction score is +10 (with 38% satisfied and 29% dissatisfied). Private sector and voluntary sector employees are significantly more likely to be satisfied with upward feedback opportunities than employees in the public sector and employees in micro businesses significantly more likely to be satisfied than employees working in small, medium and large businesses.

Finally, when it comes to advocacy, just over half (51%) of employees would recommend their organisations to others. Employees in the voluntary sector are significantly more likely than employees in the private and public sectors to say that they are very likely to recommend their organisation to others.

51%

Just over half (51%) of employees would recommend their organisations to others.

Table 8: Net satisfaction with opportunities to feed views/issues/ideas upwards

All	+10
Private sector	+12
Public sector	+1
Voluntary sector	+14
Micro business	+55
Small business	+14
Medium business	+8
Large business	+2

Base: All: 1,639; Private sector: 1,027; Public sector: 467; Voluntary sector: 112; Micro: 130; Small: 189; Medium: 218; Large: 1,043

Table 9: Likelihood of employees recommending their organisation to others (%)

	All	**Private sector**	**Public sector**	**Voluntary sector**
Very likely	19	18	20	28
Likely	32	31	34	34
Neither likely nor unlikely	23	23	23	22
Unlikely	13	13	12	13
Very unlikely	11	12	10	3
Don't know	2	2	1	0

Base: All: 1,826; Private sector: 1,263; Public sector: 379; Voluntary sector: 102

4 Work–life balance and pressure at work

> '*There has been a slight increase in employees' ability to achieve the right balance between their work and home lives.*'

This section of the *Employee Outlook* tracks employees' work–life balance and experiences of excessive pressure at work.

Work–life balance

Overall, there has been a slight increase in employees' ability to achieve the right balance between their work and home lives. The net agreement score has increased from +37 in spring to +38 in autumn. This increase has come from employees in the private sector, whose net agreement score has increased from +36 to +40. Employees in the public and especially the voluntary sector, however, have seen their work–life balance decrease.

In this survey, women's work–life balance has increased, while men's has decreased. And women are significantly more likely than men to say they achieve the right balance between their work and home lives.

We also asked employees whether their manager and their organisation provides support to help them manage their work–life balance. The results show a contrast. Employees are much more likely to agree that their manager (+6) provides them with support than their organisation (0) as a whole. Employees in the voluntary and public sectors are significantly more likely to agree than those in the private sectors that both their managers and their organisation provide them with support. Women are also significantly more likely than men to agree that their *organisation* provides them with support to achieve the right balance between their work and home lives.

Table 10: Net agreement scores for achieving the right balance between work and home lives (%)		
	Autumn 2015	**Spring 2015**
All	+38	+37
Men	+30	+32
Women	+47	+42
Private sector	+40	+36
Public sector	+35	+38
Voluntary sector	+37	+40

Base: Autumn 2015: 2,043; Spring 2015: 2,226

Pressure at work

Almost two-fifths (38%) of employees are under excessive pressure at work at least once a week. This figure is the same as spring 2015. Employees in the public sector are significantly more likely than employees in the private and voluntary sector to say they are under excessive pressure at work at least once a week. Those employees working in micro organisations are significantly more likely than employees in small, medium and large organisations to say that they never experience excessive pressure at work.

38%

Almost two-fifths (38%) of employees are under excessive pressure at work at least once a week.

Table 11: Net agreement scores for 'my manager and my organisation provide support to help me manage my work–life balance'		
	My manager	**My organisation**
All	+6	0
Men	+4	−6
Women	+8	+5
Private sector	+3	−3
Public sector	+14	+6
Voluntary sector	+20	+12

Base: All: 2,043; Men: 1,148; Women: 895; Private sector: 1,360; Public sector: 482; Voluntary sector: 124

Table 12: Proportion of employees saying they are under excessive pressure at work (%)						
	All	**Men**	**Women**	**Private sector**	**Public sector**	**Voluntary sector**
Every day	12 (0)	12	11	11	16	7
Once or twice a week	26 (0)	27	24	25	29	25
Once or twice a month	27 (0)	28	26	27	25	35
Less frequently than once a month	26 (+4)	25	28	26	24	28
Never	10 (−3)	8	11	10	7	4

Base: All: 2,043; Men: 1,148; Women: 895; Private sector: 1,360; Public sector: 482; Voluntary sector: 124

5 Performance management and career progression

60%

Three-fifths (60%) of employees say that their organisation has a performance management process.

Performance management

We explore here, amongst other things, employee perceptions of the fairness of their performance management systems, the most important aspects of the process and the effectiveness of their line managers in communicating goals and expectations.

Three-fifths (60%) of employees say that their organisation has a performance management process, with nearly a third (32%) saying their organisation does not. Employees in private sector organisations are significantly less likely to say their organisation has a process than employees in the public and voluntary sectors.

We also wanted to examine employees' views with regards to fairness of performance management processes. Nearly half (46%) believe that they are very or somewhat fair, while a fifth believe that they are somewhat or very unfair. Private and voluntary sector employees are significantly more likely to say that their performance management processes are fair compared with employees in the public sector.

Table 13: How fair do you believe your organisation's performance management system to be?

	All	Private	Public	Voluntary
Very fair	14	15	12	20
Somewhat fair	31	33	28	37
Neutral	29	27	34	19
Somewhat unfair	13	13	12	12
Very unfair	8	8	11	3
Don't know	4	4	4	9

Base: All: 1,157; Private sector: 675; Public sector: 389; Voluntary sector: 79
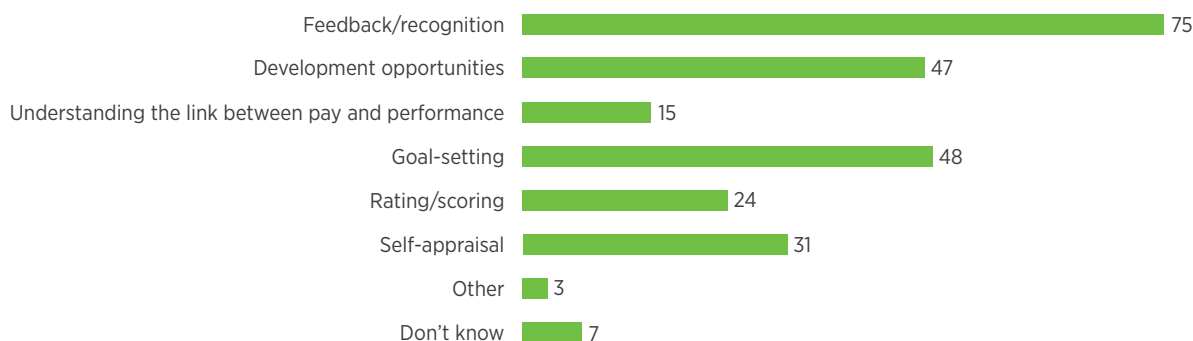
Almost two-fifths (37%) believe that their pay is linked to their performance, while over half (58%) do not. Employees in the private sector are significantly more likely to say that their pay is linked to their performance than employees in the public and voluntary sectors, and men are significantly more likely to say this than women.

We asked employees what they feel are the three most important aspects of their performance management process. The top response was feedback/ recognition (75%), followed by goal-setting (48%) and development opportunities (47%). The rating/scoring (24%) and understanding the link between pay and performance (15%) were seen to be the least important aspects for employees. Women are significantly more likely than men to say feedback/recognition is an important part of their performance management process and men are significantly more likely than women to say understanding the link between pay and performance. Employees in the public and voluntary sectors are more likely than those in the private sector to highlight the importance of development opportunities. Employees in the private sector are more likely than employees in the public and voluntary sectors to highlight the importance of rating/ scoring and understanding the link between pay and performance.

'Employees in the private sector are significantly more likely to say that their pay is linked to their performance.'

Figure 3: **The most important aspects of performance management processes**

Aspect	Value
Feedback/recognition	75
Development opportunities	47
Understanding the link between pay and performance	15
Goal-setting	48
Rating/scoring	24
Self-appraisal	31
Other	3
Don't know	7

Base: 1,157

Over half (54%) of employees who have a performance management process believe their line managers are very effective or fairly effective at communicating goals, objectives and expectations.

We also asked respondents about the current trend to replace annual reviews with more regular review conversations throughout the year. More employees would like to see this (39%) than their current annual review process (38%), although the figures are fairly split and almost a quarter (23%) don't know either way.

Career progression

We asked employees about whether they feel able to fulfil their career aspirations in their current organisation. Employees are fairly split on this question, with a third (33%) saying very likely or likely and almost a third (32%) saying unlikely or very unlikely.

Men are significantly more likely than women to believe they will be able to fulfil their career aspirations in their current organisation, and younger employees aged 18–24 are significantly more likely than any other age group to say it is unlikely or very unlikely that they will be able to fulfil their career aspirations in their current organisation.

Table 14: **How effectively do you think your line manager communicates your goals, objectives and expectations to you?**

	All
Very effectively	14
Fairly effectively	40
Neither	19
Fairly ineffectively	16
Very ineffectively	9
Don't know	2

Base: 1,157

Table 15: **Likelihood of being able to fulfil career aspirations in current organisation (%)**

	All	Men	Women	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55+
Very likely	11	13	10	5	10	9	9	16
Likely	22	24	20	18	29	26	23	17
Neither likely nor unlikely	30	27	32	17	21	26	36	33
Unlikely	15	15	15	23	18	17	13	13
Very unlikely	17	16	18	27	17	17	15	17
Don't know	5	5	5	10	6	5	4	4

Base: All: 1,826; Men: 1,020; Women: 860; 18–24: 116 25–34: 233; 35–44: 399; 45–54: 460; 55+: 618

6 Employee productivity

We included some topical questions in this survey regarding employee productivity. With UK workplace productivity currently lagging behind many of our European neighbours, we wanted to bring a new perspective to the debate – that of employees themselves. So in this set of questions we take a look at employees' perspectives on their own current productivity levels and what things both help them and prevent them from being productive at work.

We asked employees to think about their work productivity in relation to their colleagues. Almost half (49%) believe they are as productive as their colleagues, a third (33%) believe that they are more productive and a tenth believe that they are much more productive.

Just 5% believe that they are less productive or much less productive. There are no significant differences for this question by gender or size or sector of organisation.

When asked what things help employees to be productive, top of the list is work that they find interesting (40%) and being able to use their initiative (39%). Other important enablers of productive work are having the resources needed to do the job (31%) and being given tasks that complement their skills (25%). Women are significantly more likely to say flexible working than men, while men are more likely to say technical innovations than women. Employees in the public sector are significantly more likely

to say training and development than employees in the private and voluntary sector, and employees in the public and voluntary sector are significantly more likely than employees in the private sector to point to a supportive line manager.

When asked about the things that prevent them from being as productive as they would like to be, unnecessary rules and procedures (28%) and not having the resources needed to do the job (28%) top the list. Office politics (24%) also distract from productivity as well as work that employees don't find interesting (20%).

Women are significantly more likely than men to point to an unsupportive manager and men are significantly more likely than women to point to unnecessary rules and procedures. Sector differences show that public sector employees are significantly more likely to point to a lack of skills and development, technology, unnecessary rules and procedures and having an unsupportive manager. Employees in the voluntary sector are significantly more likely than employees in other sectors to highlight an unsecure employment status and employees in the voluntary and public sectors are significantly more likely than employees in the private sector to highlight lack of empowerment.

Table 16: We would like you to think about your work productivity in relation to your colleagues. Would you say you are more, less or as productive as your colleagues...? (%)	
	All
Much more productive	10
More productive	33
As productive	49
Less productive	4
Much less productive	1
Don't know	3
Net: More productive	42
Net: less productive	5

Base: 1,826

Figure 4: **Work factors that help employees to be productive (%)**

Which, if any, of the following do you think help you to be productive? (Please select up to three answers)

Factor	%
Working as part of a team	22
Having the resources I need to do my job	31
Training and skill development	13
Flexible working	21
When I am given tasks that complement my skills	25
Being able to contribute new ideas	11
Being able to use my initiative	39
Technological innovations	7
Having a supportive line manager	19
Work that I find interesting	40
A secure employment status	18
Other	3

Base: 1,826

Which, if any, of the following do you think prevent you from being as productive as you would like to be? (Please select up to three answers)

Factor	%
Lack of teamwork	15
Lack of training and skill development	12
Not having the resources I need to do my job	28
Lack of empowerment	12
Office politics	24
Having an unsupportive line manager	17
Lack of flexible working	6
Work that I don't find interesting	20
Mismatch between my skills and my role	11
Unneccessary rules and procedures	28
Technology	9
An unsecure employment status	10
Other	5
N/A Nothing stops my productivity	18

Base: 1,826

7 Skills shortages and mismatches

We also included some topical questions in this survey around employees' perceptions about skills shortages, how they felt their organisations were trying to fill such shortages and how well matched employees' jobs are to their qualifications and experience.

The press is currently awash with reports of severe skills shortages across most sectors. However, just under a third (30%) of employees are aware of vacancies that their organisation is currently finding difficult to fill due to a lack of people with the right skills. Employees in the public sector are significantly more likely to say this than employees in the private and voluntary sectors. As you might expect, employees in health and social work are significantly more likely than employees from any other sector to say their organisation has vacancies that are hard to fill, with almost half (46%) doing so. Employees from micro and smaller organisations are significantly less likely than employees from medium and large organisations to say their organisation has vacancies that are hard to fill.

Senior and middle managers are more likely to think the difficulty in finding the people with the right skills for the job is a result of a lack of experience (65% think this to a

large or some extent) as opposed to a lack of qualifications (55% think this to a large or some extent). However, over half identify both lack of experience and lack of skills to a large or some extent as a potential reason. Only 8% believe the reason is that candidates are overqualified.

We also wanted to get a sense of whether employees believe their organisations are investing in training and developing people internally to fill roles that are hard to recruit for, rather than just looking to the external labour market. Views were fairly divided on this issue, with 46% saying this happens very often or fairly often and nearly as many, 45%, saying it happens not very often or not at all. There are no significant differences by sector or size of organisation for this question.

While three-fifths (63%) of employees believe they have the right level of qualifications for their current job, almost a third (29%) of employees believe that they are overqualified. Women are significantly more likely to say that they are overqualified than men and part-time workers are also significantly more likely to say that they are overqualified than full-time workers. Employees in large organisations are significantly more likely than employees in micro organisations to say they are overqualified.

Employees who have a university degree are more likely to say they are overqualified than those with A levels or other qualifications. Employees who state they are overqualified are more likely to be neutral (34%) or disengaged (44%) than engaged (21%).
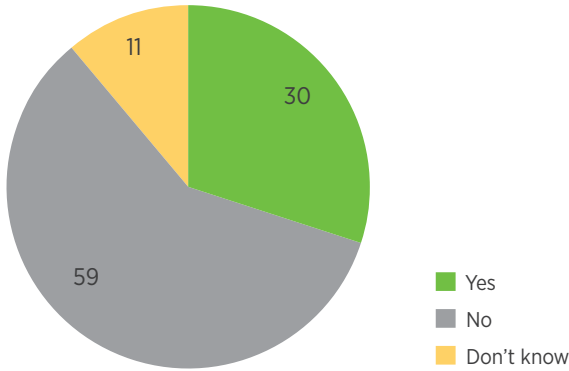
For those few employees (4%) who say they are underqualified for their jobs, over three-fifths say that their organisation does not provide them with adequate training and support to help them address this.

For those employees who say they are overqualified for their job, three-fifths (61%) believe that their current job role and responsibilities could be broadened to a large extent/some extent to make better use of their skills/experience.

Eight per cent of employees have applied for vacancies that they feel better match their skills and experience in the last six months. Employees in the public and voluntary sector are significantly more likely to have done this than employees in the private sector. Of those employees, around a third (34%) were successful, just over a third (37%) say the role went to another internal candidate, 15% say it went to an external candidate and 8% say that it is still in process.

Figure 5: **Vacancies that are difficult to fill due to a lack of people with the right skills**

Are you aware of any vacancies that your organisation is currently finding difficult to fill due to a lack of people with the right skills?

- ■ Yes — 30
- ■ No — 59
- ■ Don't know — 11

Base: 559

Table 17: **Investment in training internally to fill roles that are hard to recruit for (%)**

Very often	12
Faily often	34
Not very often	33
Not at all	11
Don't know	9

Base: 559

Figure 6: **Reasons for difficulty in finding people with the right skills for the job**

Lack of qualifications

4	18	23	37	18

Lack of experience

5	11	20	36	30

Overqualified

8	69	15	7	1

- ■ Don't know
- ■ Not at all
- ■ A small extent
- ■ Some extent
- ■ A large extent

Base: 164

Table 18: **Qualification match to job, by gender, full-time and part-time, and engagement (%)**

	All	Men	Women	Full-time	Part-time	Engaged	Neutral	Disengaged
Overqualified	29	26	33	25	38	21	34	44
Right level of qualification	63	66	60	66	56	71	58	50*
Underqualified	4	5	3	5	2	5	3	3*
Don't know	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3*

Base: All: 1,826; Men: 1,020; Women: 806; Full-time: 1,421; Part-time: 405; Engaged: 682; Neutral: 1,034; Disengaged: 66

8 Job-seeking

In this final section, we explore employees' job-seeking intentions and their reasons for looking for new jobs.

A fifth of all employees are currently looking for a new job with a different organisation. This has fallen from 23% in spring 2015. The number of public sector employees looking for a new job has remained the same (23%), while the number from the voluntary sector continues to rise (31%) and the number from the private sector has decreased in this survey (19%). Younger employees, aged 18–24, are significantly more likely to be looking for a new job than employees 35–55+ years.

Of those employees who are currently looking for a new job in a different organisation, just over half (51%) have actually applied for a new job in the last six months.

Of those respondents who have either applied for, or are looking for, a new job, the top reason for doing so is to increase their job satisfaction (54%), followed by achieving better pay/benefits elsewhere (52%). Interestingly, around two-fifths (41%) point to the fact that they would like to do a different type of work altogether. Around a third (31%) of employees looking for a new job are looking for opportunities for promotion and looking to learn new things (31%). Two areas of concern are that nearly a third (30%) are looking to move jobs to reduce stress and more than a quarter (28%) are looking to move jobs because they are unhappy with the leadership of their senior management team.

Women are significantly more likely than men to cite their reasons for potentially moving organisation to increase their job satisfaction, to get

> *'A fifth of all employees are currently looking for a new job with a different organisation.'*

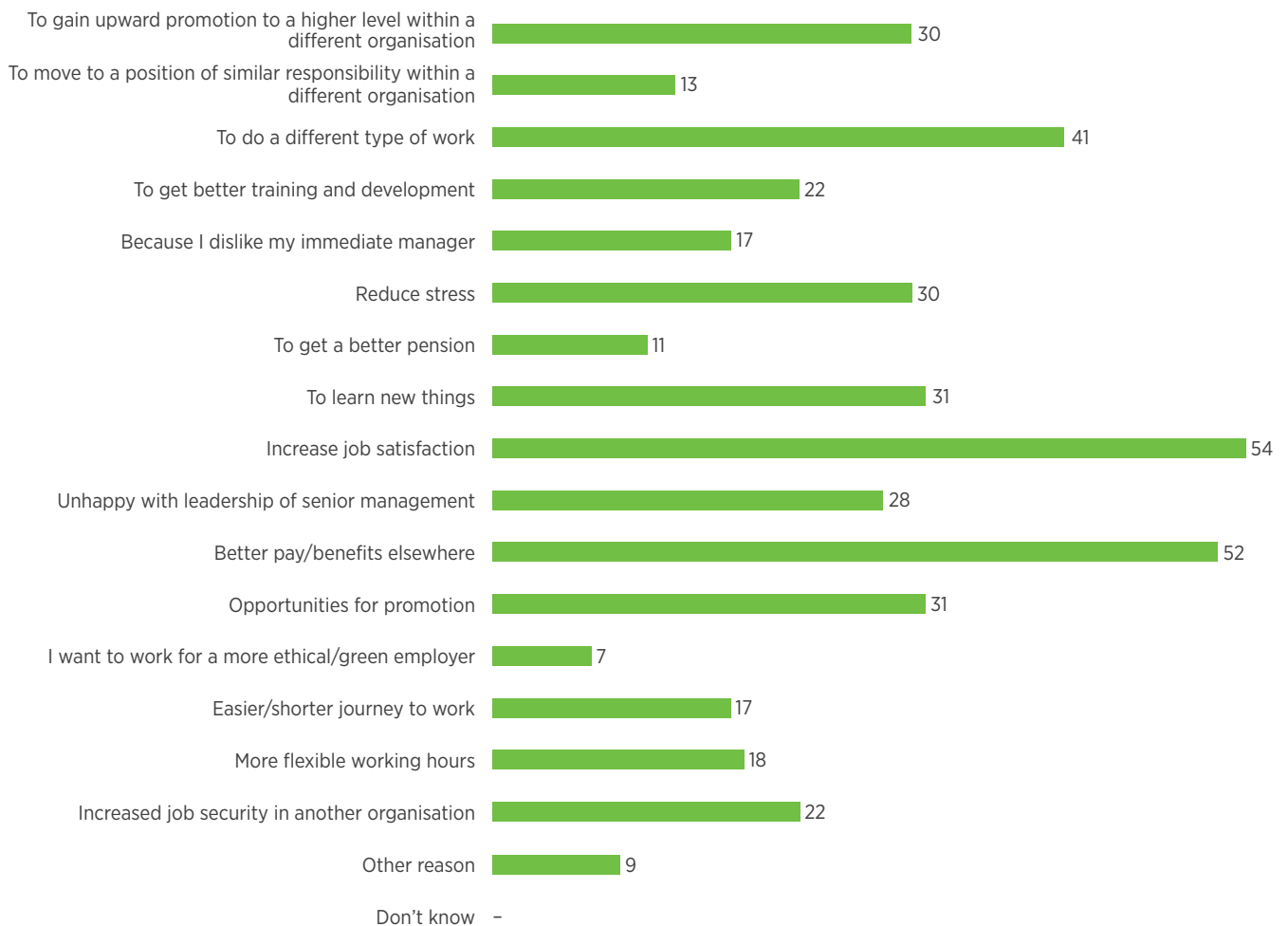| Table 19: Proportion looking for a new job, by sector (%)				
	Autumn 2015	**Spring 2015**	**Autumn 2014**	**Spring 2014**
All	20	23	22	22
Private sector	19	23	21	22
Public sector	23	23	26	20
Voluntary sector	31	29	26	27

Base: Autumn 2015: 2,043; Spring 2015: 2,226; Autumn 2014: 2,754; Spring 2014: 2,523

better training and development and because they dislike their immediate manager.

Sector differences show that employees in the private sector are significantly more likely than employees in the public sector to say that they want to improve their pension and work for a more ethical/green employer. Employees in the public sector are significantly more likely than employees in the private sector to say that they are looking for promotion opportunities. Finally, employees in both the private and public sector are significantly more likely than employees in the voluntary sector to say that they would like to do a different type of work.

Figure 7: **Reasons for looking/applying for a new job in a different organisation (%)**

Reason	%
To gain upward promotion to a higher level within a different organisation	30
To move to a position of similar responsibility within a different organisation	13
To do a different type of work	41
To get better training and development	22
Because I dislike my immediate manager	17
Reduce stress	30
To get a better pension	11
To learn new things	31
Increase job satisfaction	54
Unhappy with leadership of senior management	28
Better pay/benefits elsewhere	52
Opportunities for promotion	31
I want to work for a more ethical/green employer	7
Easier/shorter journey to work	17
More flexible working hours	18
Increased job security in another organisation	22
Other reason	9
Don't know	–

Base: All who are looking or applied for a new job in a different organisation: 435

Conclusion: Empower, stimulate and match employee skills to roles to boost workplace productivity

With all the media hype surrounding the issue, it's easy to forget the most important perspective on the productivity debate – that of employees. There is a clear message coming from our survey findings – we need to do all we can to empower and stimulate employees at work. We also need to ensure that employees' skills are matched to their roles if we want to boost workplace and UK productivity.

When asked what things help them to be productive at work, employees themselves point to work that they find interesting and being able to use their own initiative. Other important enablers of productive work are having the resources needed to do the job and being given tasks that complement their skills.

The things that prevent employees from being as productive as they would like to be are unnecessary rules and procedures and not having the resources needed to do the job. Office politics also distract from productivity as well as work that employees don't find interesting.

And, when it comes to matching employees' skills to their roles, almost a third of employees believe they are overqualified for their current job. This increases further for women and part-time workers. Building on our recent research *Over-qualification and Skills Mismatch in the Graduate Labour Market*, employees with a university degree are more likely to say they are overqualified than those with A levels or other qualifications.

Being overqualified has serious repercussions in the workplace when it comes to engagement levels, with overqualified employees more likely to be disengaged or neutral than engaged. But the good news is that there is an opportunity to do something about this. Overqualified employees point to a potential solution themselves, with three-fifths believing that their current job role and responsibilities could be broadened to make better use of their skills and experience.

More could be done to help employees in general fulfil their career aspirations, with just under a third saying it is unlikely or very unlikely that they will be able to fulfil their career aspirations in their current organisation. Young employees aged 18–24 are least likely to be able to do so.

Finally, the findings also show that there is more work needed in the area of information-sharing and opportunities for employee voice, both of which can help to empower employees in their day-to-day roles. Nearly half of all employees say that they receive limited or very little information about what is going on in their organisation and almost a third are dissatisfied with opportunities for upward feedback. Scores have also worsened further in this survey when it comes to consultation by senior managers.

Background to survey

The CIPD has commissioned a twice-yearly survey among UK employees (including sole traders) to identify their opinions of and attitudes towards working life today.

YouGov conducted the latest survey for the CIPD of 2,043 UK employees in September 2015. This survey was administered to members of the YouGov Plc UK panel of more than 350,000 individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. The sample was selected and weighted to be representative of the UK workforce in relation to sector and size (private, public, voluntary), industry type and full-time/part-time working by gender. Size of organisation was classified in the following way: sole trader (one-person business), micro business (2–9), small business (10–49), medium (50–249) and large (more than 250).

Emails were sent to panellists selected at random from the base sample. The email invited them to take part in a survey and provided a generic survey link. Once a panel member clicked on the link, they were sent to the survey that they were most required for, according to the sample definition and quotas. The sample profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry-accepted data.

Net scores refer to the proportion of people agreeing with a statement minus those disagreeing.

CIPD