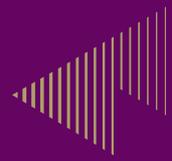




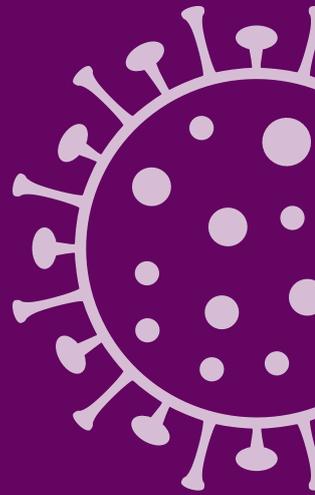
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Remote working during Covid-19

Ireland's National Survey:
Phase II Report | October 2020



Whitaker
Institute



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Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank sincerely the **5,639** respondents who took the time to complete the second national remote working survey.

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Further Information

Further information about the first and second national surveys and the remote working project can be found on the Whitaker Institute [website](#) and the Western Development Commission [website](#).

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Executive Summary

This report presents the headline findings from Phase II of the Remote Working during COVID-19 National Survey conducted in Ireland. The data were collected from employees across a wide range of industries and sectors over a one-week period at the start of October 2020. A total of **5,639** responses were received.

The key findings are as follows:

- 68% of respondents are working completely remotely since the outbreak of COVID-19 and 24% are working a mix of remotely and onsite.
- Just under half of respondents (49%) never worked remotely before COVID-19.
- The vast majority (94%) indicated that they would like to work remotely after the crisis:
 - 27% indicated they would like to work remotely on a daily basis
 - 54% indicated they would like to work remotely several times a week
 - 13% indicated they would like to work remotely several times a month.Only 6% indicated that they do not want to work remotely after the crisis is over.
- The top three challenges of working remotely are:
 1. loneliness/isolation
 2. staying motivated
 3. physical workspace
- The top three advantages of working remotely are:
 1. no traffic and no commute
 2. greater flexibility as to how to manage the working day
 3. reduced costs of going to work and commuting
- 52% indicated that they work more hours, on average, when working remotely compared to onsite; 41% indicated that they work the same hours; and 7% reported that they work less hours.

- 36% indicated that they do not respond to emails and work communications outside of working hours. 64% do respond to emails and communications mainly citing that they choose to or because of workload.
- 62% either agreed or strongly agreed that working remotely increases their productivity while 14% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.
- 78% either agreed or strongly agreed that it is easy to work effectively when working remotely.
- Respondents were asked if they would consider relocating to another location in Ireland due to their experience of remote working since COVID-19.
 - 23% said they would consider relocating and 16% said they may consider relocating. The top three regions respondents would move to are:
 1. West: Galway, Mayo, Roscommon
 2. South-West: Cork, Kerry
 3. Mid-East: Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow
 - 7% indicated that they have already relocated due to their experience of remote working since COVID-19. The top three regions they have relocated to are:
 1. West: Galway, Mayo, Roscommon
 2. South-West: Cork, Kerry
 3. Mid-West: Clare, Limerick, Tipperary
- Respondents currently living in the Dublin region reported the highest proportion of those saying they would consider relocating compared to the other regions. This is followed by respondents living in the Mid-East region (Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow).
- In terms of workplace location, for those who would like to work remotely after the crisis is over:
 - 63% would like to work from home
 - 25% would like a mix of home, hub or onsite
 - 10% would like to work in a mix of home and hub
 - 2% would like to work solely in a hub.

Introduction & Background

The national remote working project is undertaken by NUI Galway and the Western Development Commission (WDC).

This report sets out the findings of Phase II of the Remote Working during COVID-19 National Survey conducted in Ireland in October 2020 during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report presents the experiences of employees across Ireland who are continuing to work remotely six months after the national lockdown.

The report follows on from the first national survey conducted in April-May 2020 immediately after lockdown (McCarthy, Ahearne, Bohle Carbonell, Ó Síocháin and Frost, 2020). The first national remote working during COVID-19 report is available [here](#).

Survey Methodology and Response

Phase II of the Remote Working during COVID-19 National Survey was conducted in Ireland the first week of October 2020 using the online Qualtrics survey platform.

The survey was designed by the research team at NUI Galway and the Western Development Commission. The survey included a mix of quantitative questions, Likert-scale questions, and open-ended free-text qualitative questions.

A total of **5,639** usable responses were received. A small number of responses (48) were removed from the database as they were completed by respondents outside of the island of Ireland, were incomplete, or respondents did not consent to participate.

Note: some percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

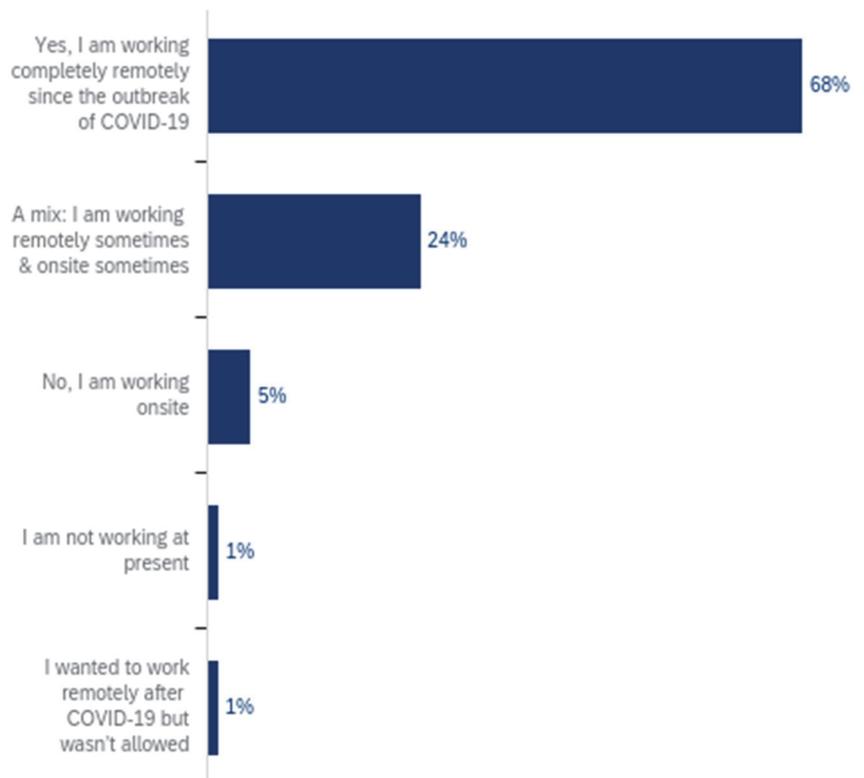
Current Remote Working Status

68% of respondents indicated they were working remotely because of the outbreak of COVID-19.

24% were working remotely sometimes and working onsite sometimes.

A small percentage were either not working, working fully onsite or wanted to work remotely since COVID-19 but were not allowed to do so.

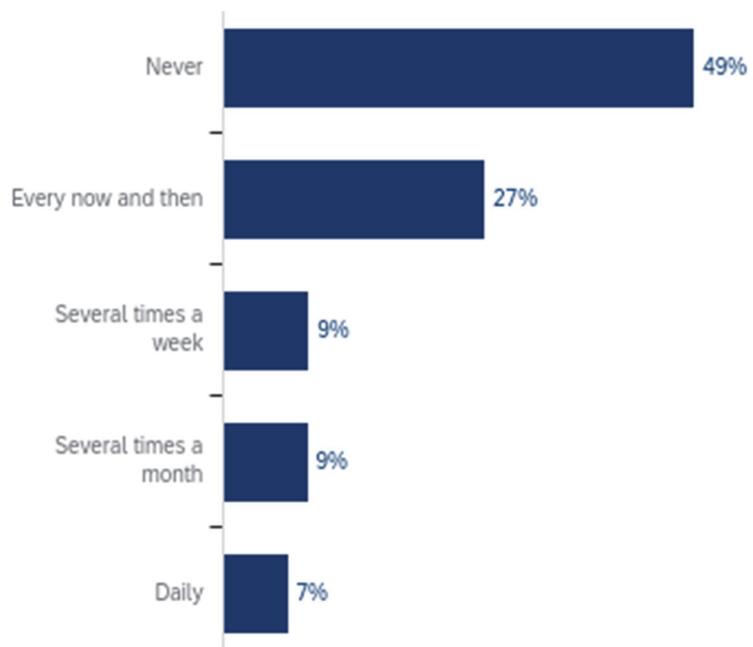
Respondents who were not working at present or only working onsite did not complete the remainder of the survey questions about remote working and were guided to the end of the survey.



Frequency of Remote Working Before COVID-19

Just under half of respondents (49%) never worked remotely before COVID-19.

27% worked remotely every now and then; 9% worked remotely several times a week; 9% worked remotely several times a month; and 7% worked remotely on a daily basis.

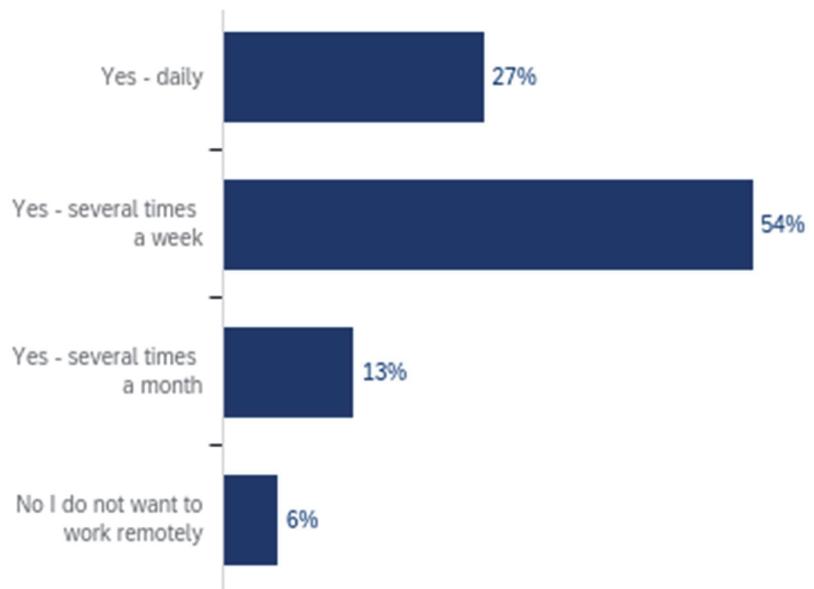


Remote Working Preferences Post-COVID-19

Respondents were asked if, given the choice, they want to continue working remotely after the crisis is over.

The vast majority (94%) indicated that they want to **work remotely after the crisis:**

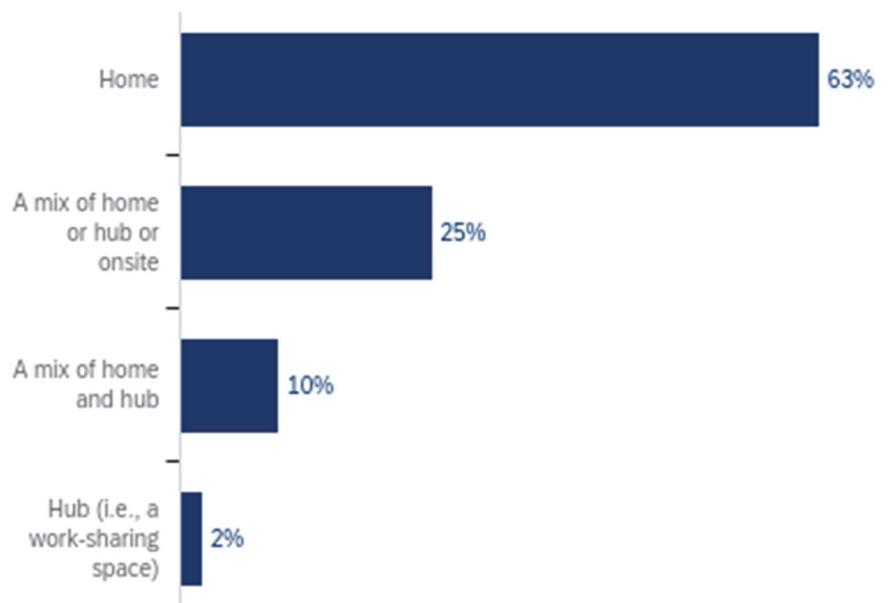
- 27% indicated they would like to work remotely on a daily basis
- 54% indicated they would like to work remotely several times a week
- 13% indicated they would like to work remotely several times a month
- 6% indicated they do not want to continue working remotely after the crisis is over.



6% indicated they do not want to continue working remotely after the crisis is over.

In terms of **location**, for those who would like to work remotely after the crisis is over:

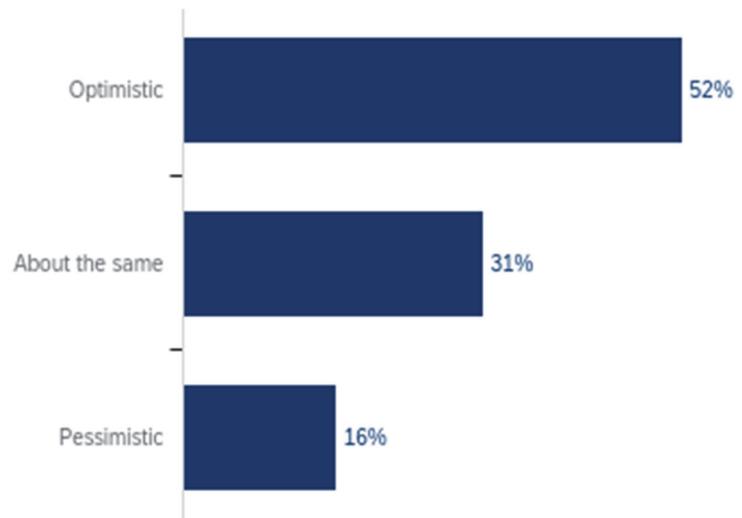
- 63% would like to work from home
- 25% would like to work a mix of from home, hub (i.e., work-sharing space) and onsite
- 10% would like to work in a mix of home and hub
- 2% would like to work solely in a hub.



Optimism/Pessimism about Remote Working

Respondents were asked if they were more optimistic or more pessimistic about working from home since they started doing so because of COVID-19.

Just over half of respondents (52%) indicated they are more optimistic, 31% indicated they are about the same, and 16% indicated they are more pessimistic about working from home since the COVID-19 outbreak.



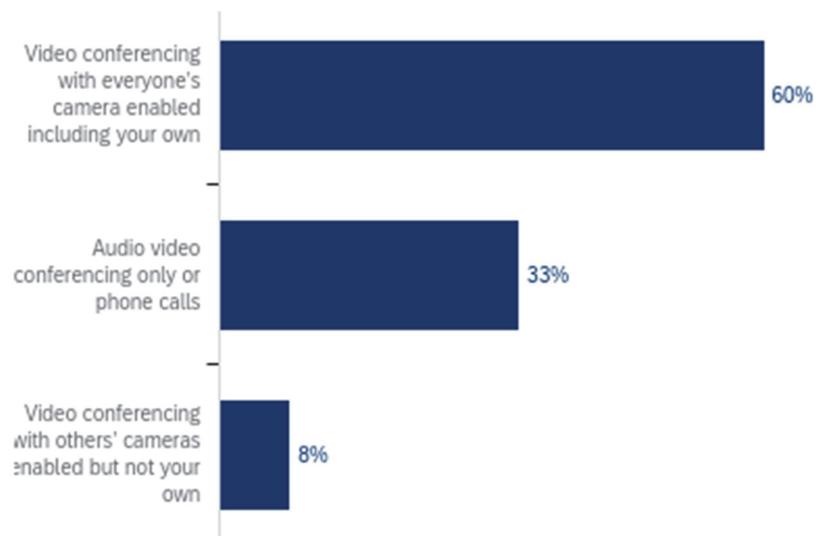
Virtual Communication Preferences

Respondents were asked what their preferences were when communicating virtually for work.

60% indicated that they prefer video conferencing with everyone's camera enabled including their own.

33% indicated that they prefer audio only during video conference calls or prefer phone calls.

8% indicated that they prefer to leave their own camera off when video conferencing with others.



Challenges of Working Remotely

The top three challenges of working remotely are:

1. Loneliness/isolation
2. staying motivated
3. physical workspace.

Some additional open-ended qualitative comments were provided by respondents in the survey regarding the challenges of remote working.

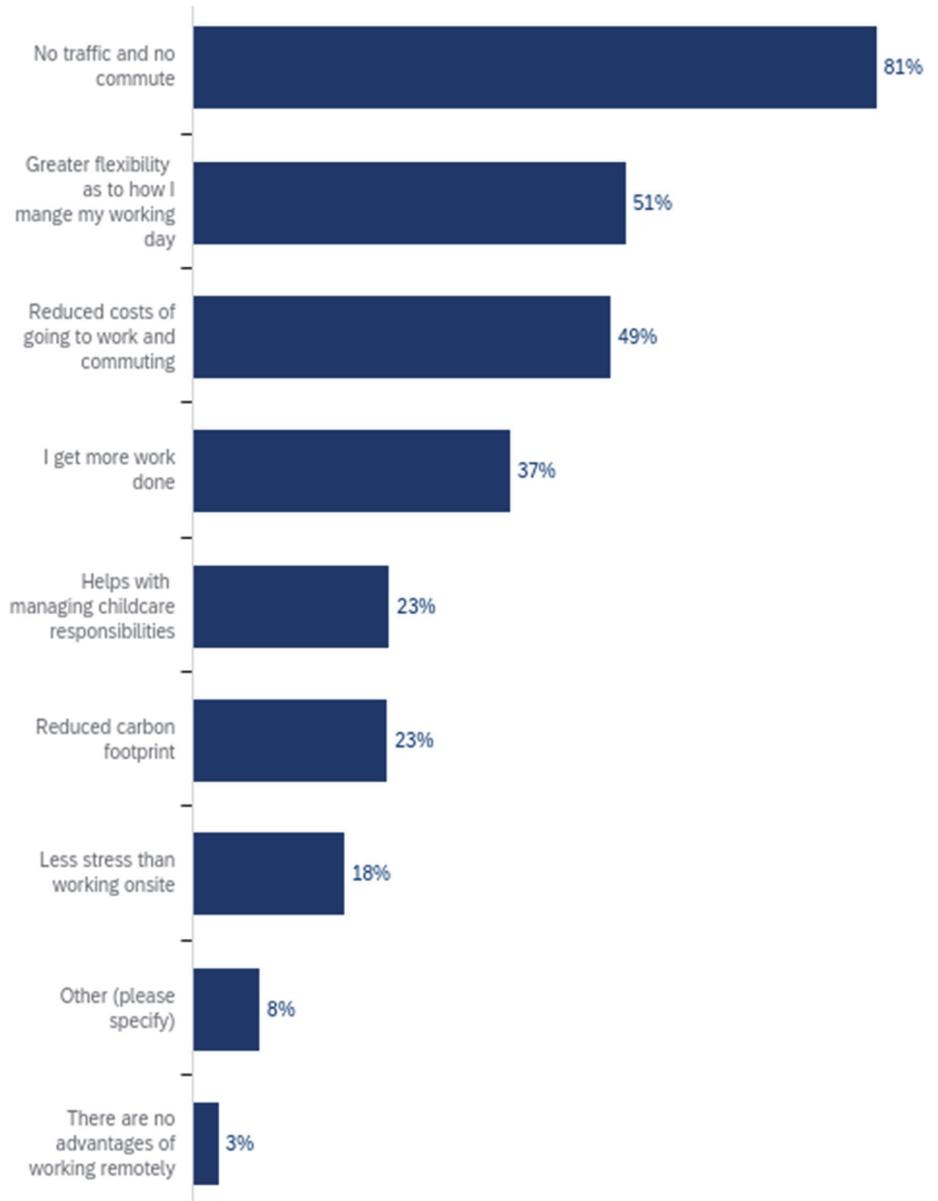
- The top recurring theme relates to the loss of the social aspect of work: respondents are missing the human interaction that happens when working onsite and being physically present with colleagues and customers.
- The second key theme to emerge from the qualitative comments refers to challenges with home workspace and office: respondents miss the proper office set-up which they had onsite.
- The third key theme relating to challenges as set out in the open-ended comments relates to broadband issues and poor connectivity.

Advantages of Working Remotely

Respondents were asked what are the top three advantages of working remotely.

The top three advantages reported are:

1. No traffic and no commute
2. Greater flexibility as to how to manage the working day
3. Reduced costs of going to work and commuting.



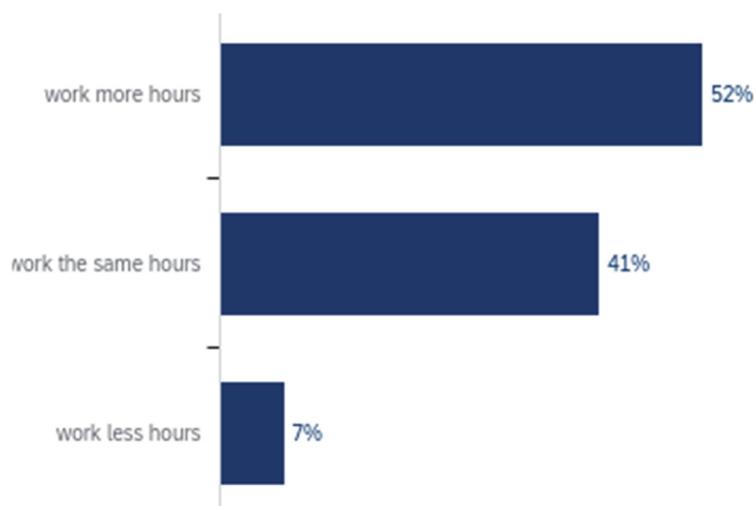
Some additional open-ended qualitative comments were provided by respondents in the survey regarding the advantages of remote working.

- The top recurring theme was better work-life balance. People have more time for other things in life as a result of remote working.
- The second key theme from the open-ended comments provided by respondents is the ability to better manage childcare and elder care when working remotely.
- The third key theme in the open-ended comments regarding advantages relates to the impact that remote working can have on more affordable housing and addressing the housing crisis in large urban areas.

Remote Working and Hours of Work

Respondents were asked about the impact of remote working on their hours of work.

52% indicated that they work more hours, on average, when working remotely compared to onsite; 41% indicated that they work the same hours; and 7% reported that they work less hours.



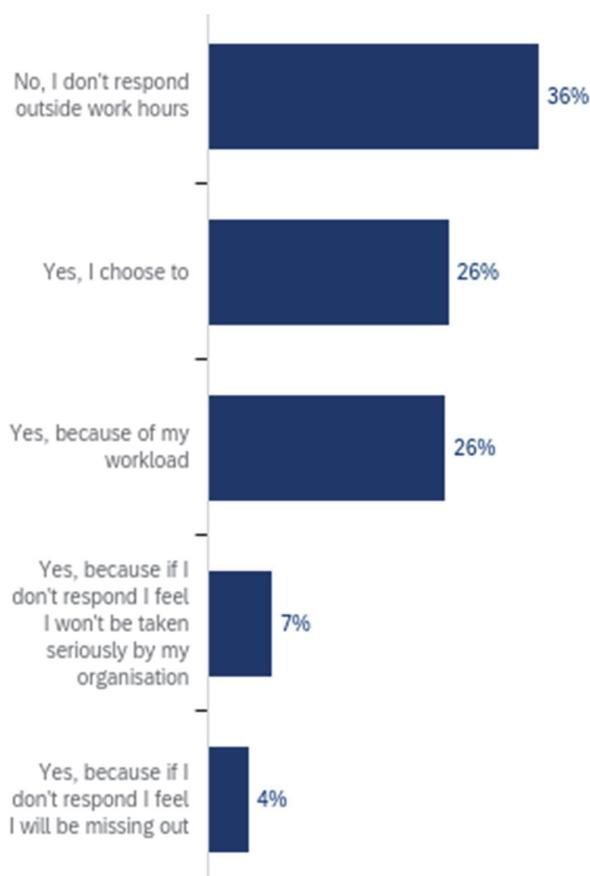
Emails and Communications Outside of Working Hours

Respondents were asked if they respond to emails and work communications outside of working hours.

36% indicated that they do not respond to emails and work communications outside of working hours.

64% do respond citing the following reasons:

- they choose to
- because of workload
- if they don't respond, they will not be taken seriously by their organisation
- they have a fear of missing out.

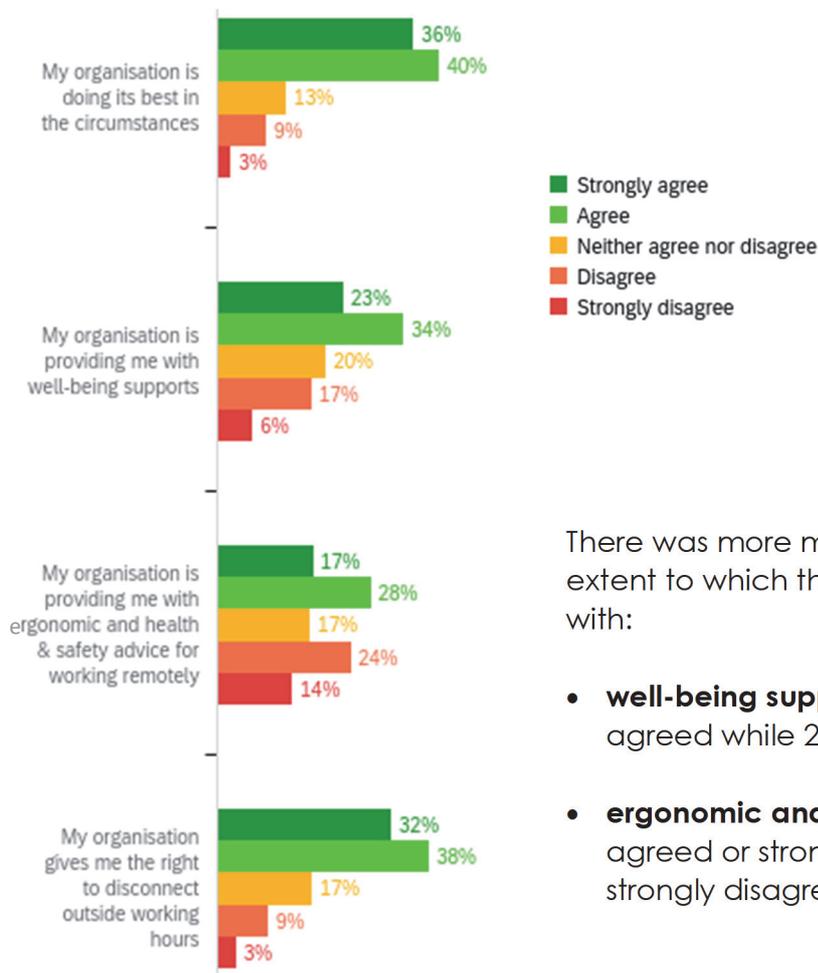


Organisational Support

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a range of statements about the support they receive from their organisation and how it is managing remote working.

The majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their organisation is:

- regularly **communicating** with them (80%)
- keeping them **informed** (78%)
- **supporting** them (67%)
- making them feel part of the **team** (66%)
- **doing its best** in the circumstances (76%)
- giving them the **right to disconnect** outside working hours (70%).



There was more mixed levels of agreement with the extent to which their organisation is providing them with:

- **well-being supports** where 57% agreed or strongly agreed while 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- **ergonomic and health & safety** advice where 45% agreed or strongly agreed while 37% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Factors Facilitating Remote Working

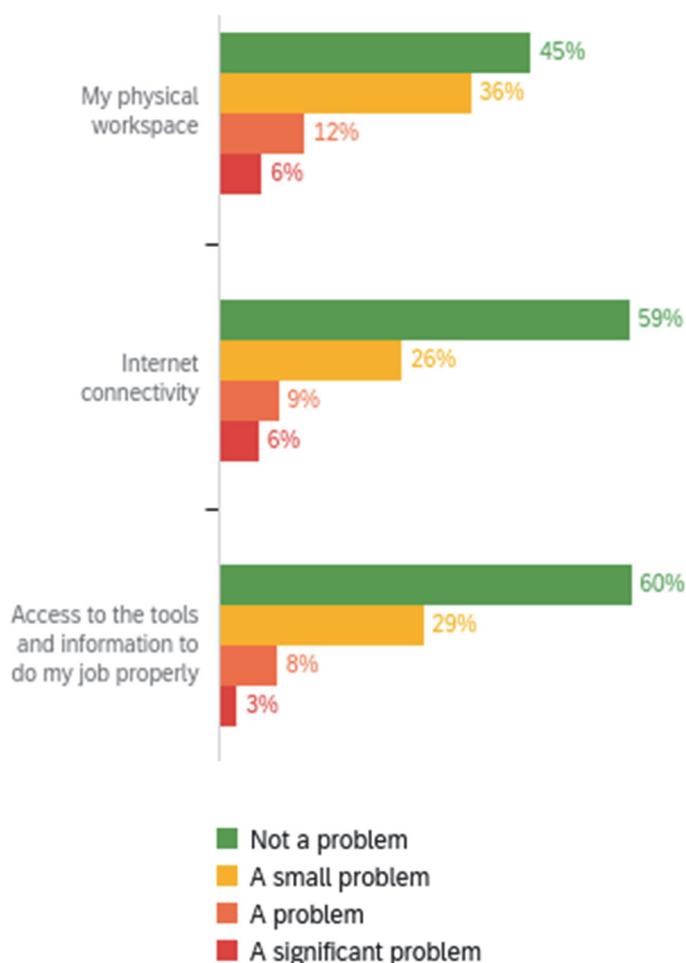
Respondents were asked about a range of factors that can act as challenges or problems that impact work, performance and productivity while working remotely.

Workspace, Connectivity & Tools

Physical workspace: 45% of respondents indicated that their physical workspace while working remotely was not a problem; 36% indicated it was a small problem; and 18% indicated it was a problem or a significant problem.

Internet connectivity: 59% of respondents indicated that their internet connectivity was not a problem; 26% indicated it was a small problem; and 15% indicated it was a problem or a significant problem.

Tools and information: 60% of respondents indicated that access to the tools and information to do their job properly while working remotely was not a problem; 29% indicated it was a small problem; and 11% indicated it was a problem or a significant problem.



Training and Supervisory Management

Technology support: 62% of respondents indicated that getting technology support when working remotely was not a problem; 25% indicated it was a small problem; and 14% indicated it was a problem or a significant problem.

Training: 62% of respondents indicated that getting training while doing their job remotely was not a problem; 23% indicated it was a small problem; and 14% indicated it was a problem or a significant problem.

Supervisory Management: 57% of respondents indicated that a *lack of managerial support* was not a problem; 25% indicated it was a small problem; and 19% indicated it was a problem or a significant problem.

The majority of respondents (77%) indicate that *micro-management* is not a problem while working remotely; 12% indicated it was a small problem; and 11% indicated it was a problem or a significant problem.



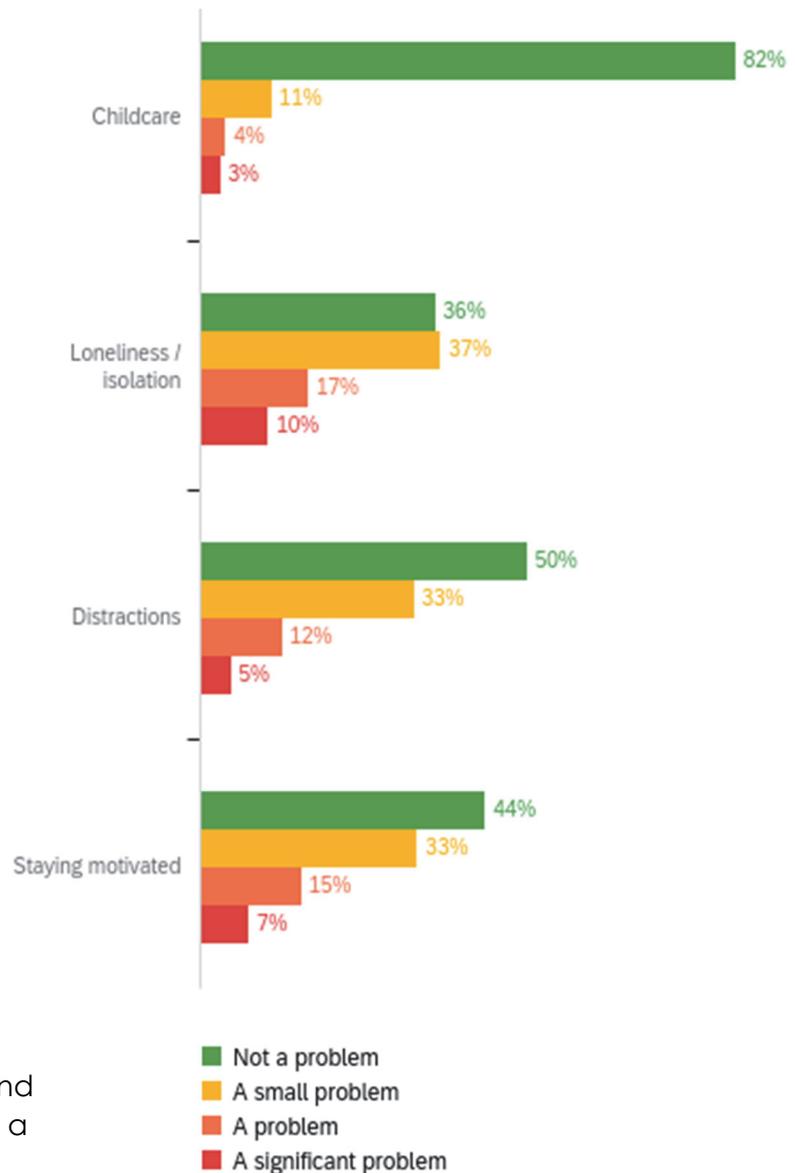
Personal and Individual Factors

Childcare: 82% of respondents indicated that childcare was not a problem while working remotely; 11% indicated it was a small problem; and 7% indicated it was a problem or a significant problem.

Loneliness/isolation: 36% of respondents indicated that loneliness/isolation is not a problem while working remotely. However, 37% indicated it was a small problem; and 27% indicated it was a problem or a significant problem.

Distractions: 50% of respondents indicated that distractions are not a problem while working remotely; 33% indicated that distractions are a small problem; and 17% indicated that distractions are a problem or a significant problem.

Staying motivated: 44% of respondents indicated that staying motivated while working remotely was not a problem; 33% indicated it was a small problem; and 22% indicated it was a problem or a significant problem.



Productivity & Adjusting to Remote Working

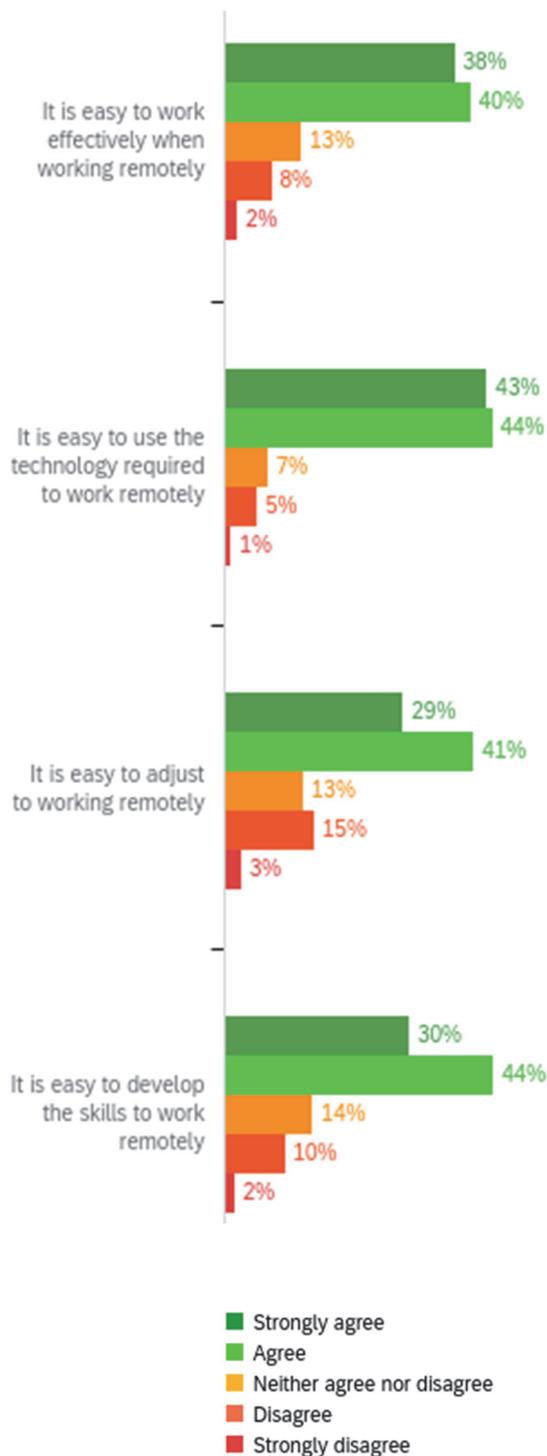
Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with a range of statements regarding productivity and adjusting to remote working.

78% either agreed or strongly agreed that it is easy to **work effectively** when working remotely.

87% either agreed or strongly agreed that it is **easy to use the technology** required to work remotely.

70% either agreed or strongly agreed that it is easy to **adjust** to working remotely.

74% either agreed or strongly agreed that it is easy to develop the **skills** required to work remotely.



47% either agreed or strongly agreed that working remotely **makes their job easier** while 23% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

57% either agreed or strongly agreed that working remotely enables them to **accomplish tasks more quickly** while 19% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

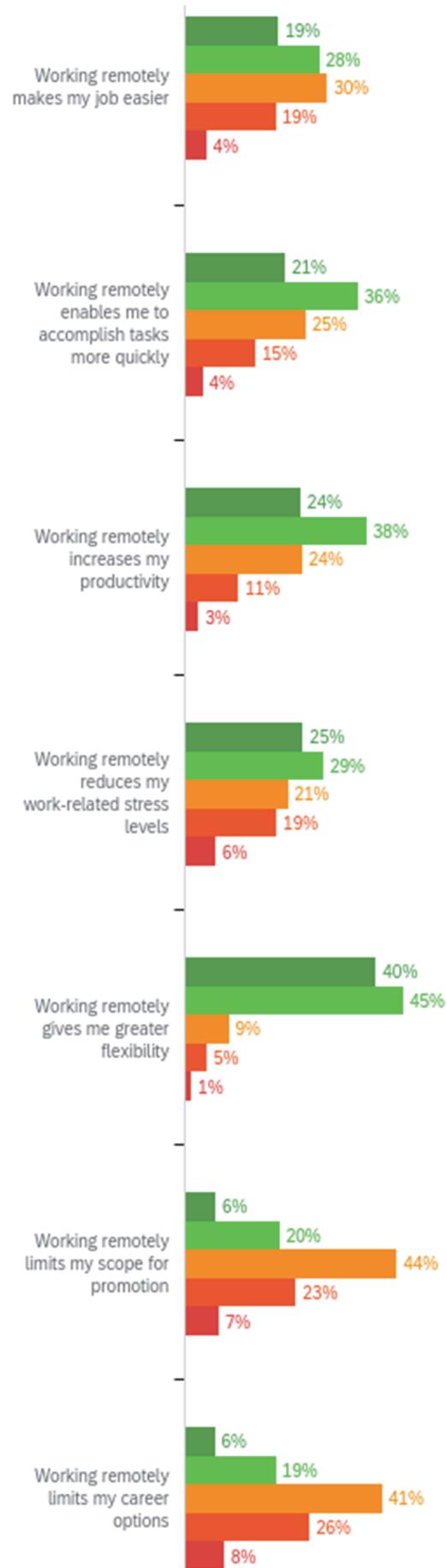
62% either agreed or strongly agreed that working remotely increases their **productivity** while 14% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

54% either agreed or strongly agreed that working remotely reduces their **work-related stress** while 25% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

85% either agreed or strongly agreed that working remotely gives them more **flexibility**.

26% either agreed or strongly agreed that working remotely limits their scope for **promotion** while 30% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

25% either agreed or strongly agreed that working remotely limits their **career** options while 34% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Relocation and Remote Working

Respondents were asked if they would consider relocating to another location in Ireland due to their experience of remote working since COVID-19.

- 54% indicated that they would not consider relocating
- 23% said they would consider relocating
- 16% said they may consider relocating
- 7% indicated that they have already relocated due to their experience of remote working since COVID-19.

		Where are you living?									
		Total	Border – Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo	Midlands – Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath	West – Galway, Mayo, Roscommon	Dublin – Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin	Mid-East – Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow	Mid-West – Clare, Limerick, Tipperary	South-East – Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford	South-West – Cork, Kerry	Northern Ireland
Would you consider relocating in Ireland?	Yes	23%	14%	21%	18%	29%	25%	21%	16%	17%	14%
	No	54%	64%	53%	61%	47%	51%	52%	58%	58%	57%
	Maybe	16%	9%	14%	12%	21%	18%	13%	14%	14%	18%

The table above indicates that 29% of respondents in the Dublin region said they would consider relocating, the highest across all regions. This is followed by the Mid-East region (Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow).

Respondents who indicated **they are considering or may consider** relocating due to their experience of remote working since COVID-19 were asked what regions they would consider relocating to.

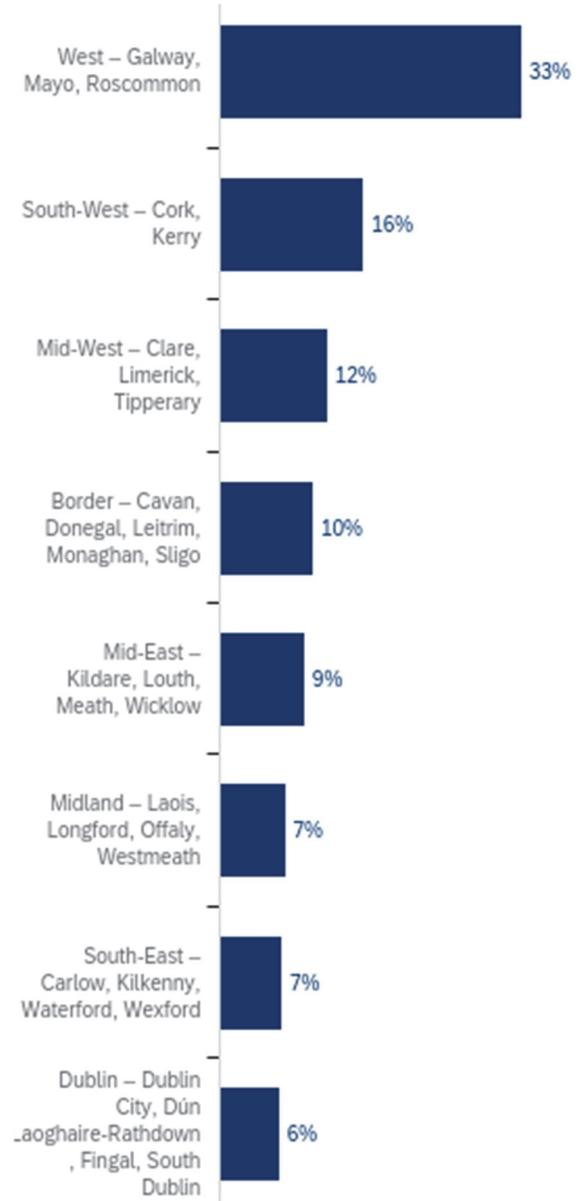
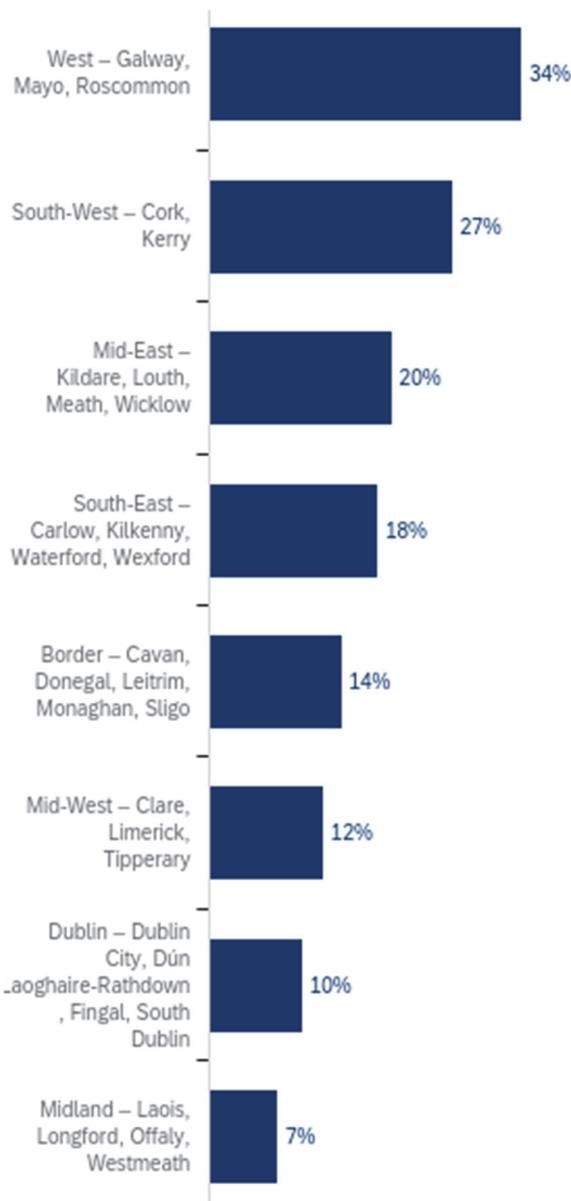
The top three regions chosen are:

1. West: Galway, Mayo, Roscommon
2. South-West: Cork, Kerry
3. Mid-East: Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow

Respondents who indicated **they have already relocated** due to their experience of remote working since COVID-19 were asked what regions they relocated to.

The top three regions are:

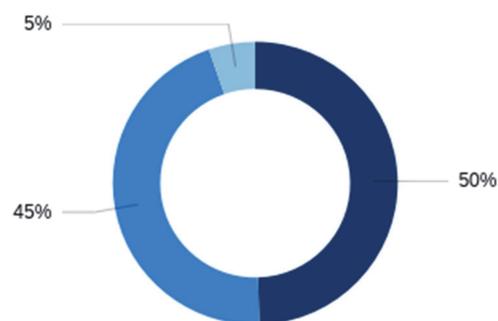
1. West: Galway, Mayo, Roscommon
2. South-West: Cork, Kerry
3. Mid-West: Clare, Limerick, Tipperary



Demographics and Respondent Profile

Sector

- 50% of respondents work in the private sector
- 45% of respondents work in the public sector
- 5% of respondents work in the third sector



■ Private sector ■ Public sector ■ Third sector - charity

Industry

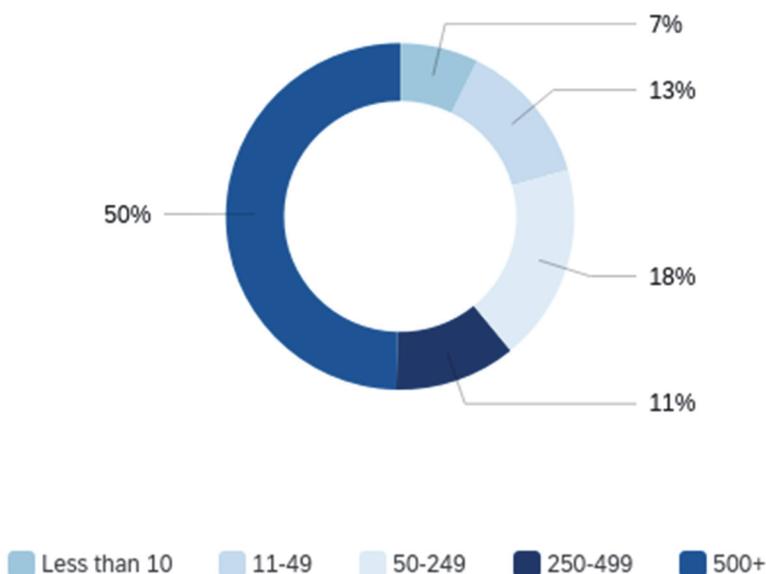
The following table sets out the percentage of respondents working across different industry categories.

1	Administrative and support services including travel agents	3.8%
2	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.9%
3	Arts, entertainment and recreation including sport	1.5%
4	Construction	1.8%
5	Education	17.2%
6	Financial, banking and insurance activities	12.8%
7	Health and social work activities	7.1%
8	Hospitality (accommodation, hotels, restaurants and food service)	0.7%
9	Information, communication and telecommunications	12.1%
10	Manufacturing	4.0%
11	Mining and quarrying	0.1%
12	Professional, scientific and technical activities including consulting	9.8%
13	Public and civil service administration and defence	13.5%
14	Real estate activities	0.4%
15	Retail and wholesale (clothes, goods, motor etc.)	1.5%
16	Transportation, postage, courier and storage	0.9%
17	Utilities (electricity, gas, water supply; sewerage, waste management)	3.5%
18	Other	8.4%

Organisation Size

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of employees in their organisation:

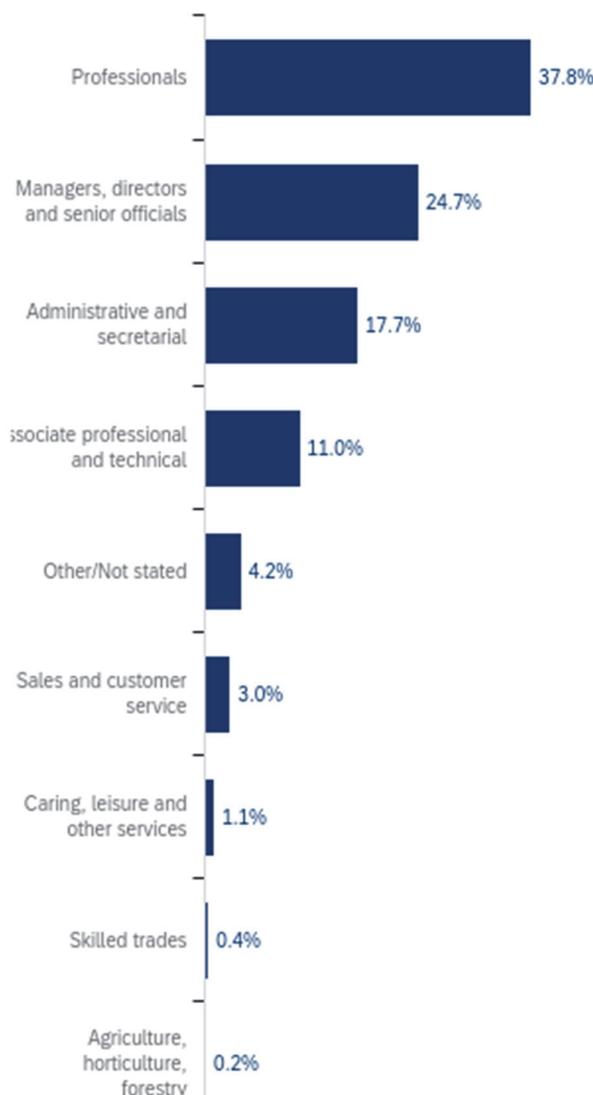
- 50% worked in organisations with 500 or more employees
- 11% worked in organisations with 250-499 employees
- 18% worked in organisations with 50-249 employees
- 13% worked in organisations with 11-49 employees
- 7% worked in organisations with 10 employees or less.



Occupation

The majority of respondents described themselves as professionals (38%).

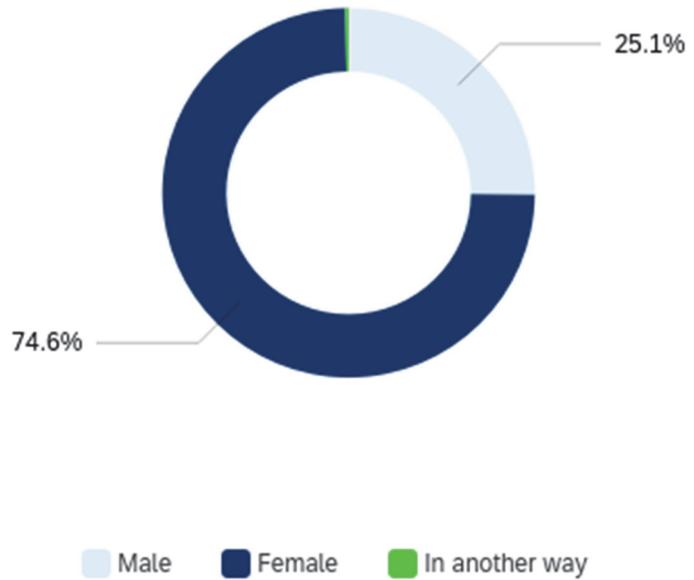
Managers, directors and senior officials were the second highest occupational category (25%) followed by administrative and secretariat (18%).



Gender

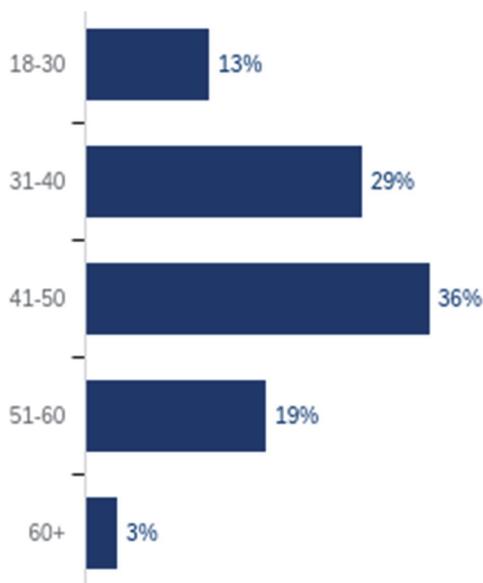
Respondents were asked how they would describe their gender.

- 74.6% were female
- 25.1% were male
- 0.3% describe themselves in another way.



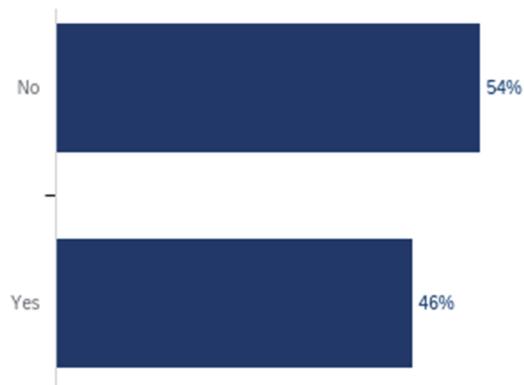
Age

13% were aged between 18-30
 29% were aged between 31-40
 36% were aged between 41-50
 19% were aged between 51-60
 3% were aged over 60

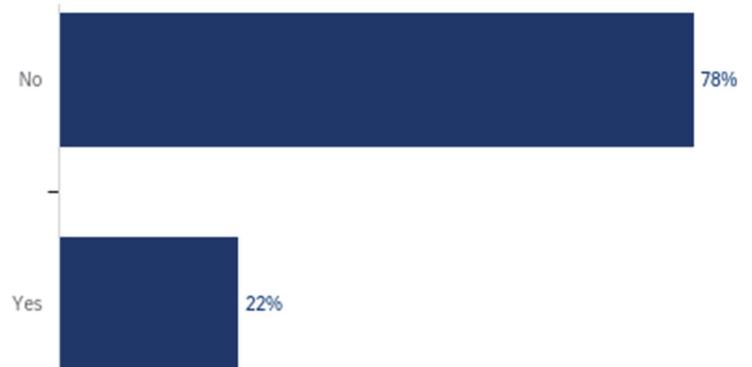


Dependent Children & Eldercare Responsibilities

54% had no dependent children and 46% had dependent children.

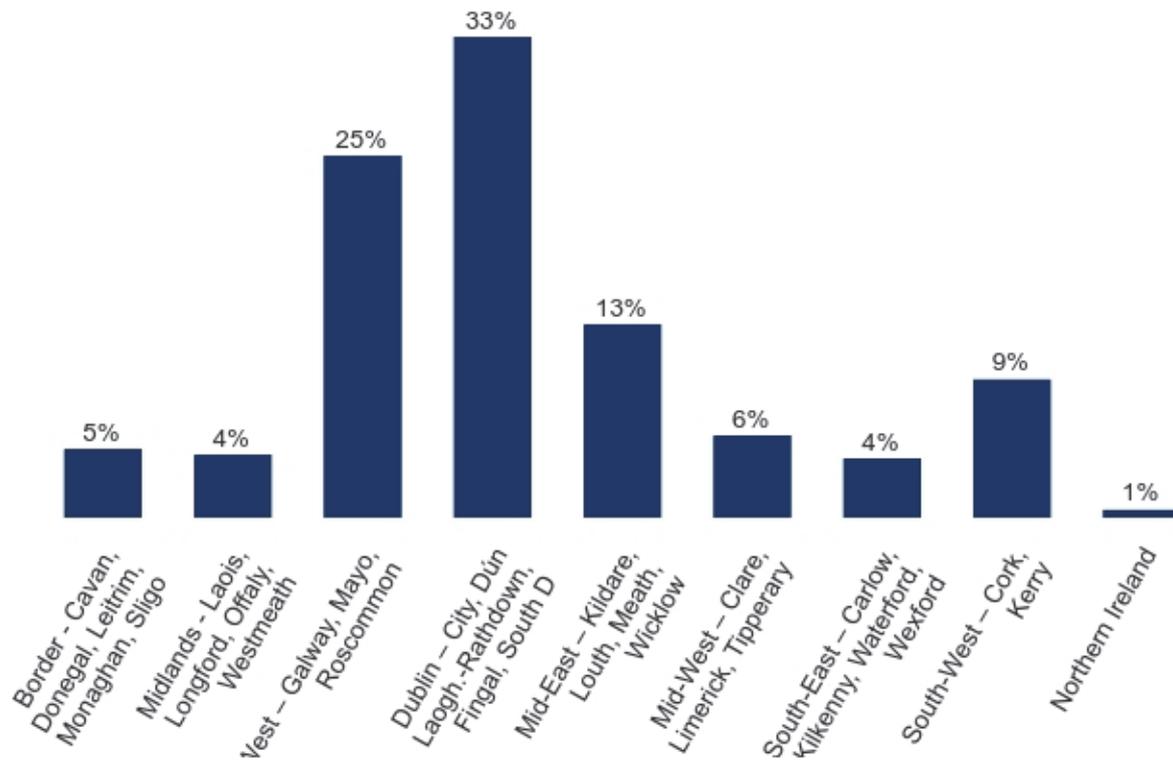


78% had no elder care responsibilities and 22% had elder care responsibilities.



Region

The figure below presents the regions where respondents were living.



Appendix: Additional Analysis & Statistics for Future Remote Working Preferences

Cross-tab of Future Remote Working Preference and Previous Remote Working Experience

		How frequently did you work remotely before the outbreak of COVID-19?					
		Total	Daily	Several times a week	Several times a month	Every now & then	Never
If you have the choice, would you like to continue working remotely after the crisis is over?	Yes – I would like to work remotely daily	26.8%	49.4%	33.5%	29.6%	22.5%	24.3%
	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a week	54.3%	36.4%	57.2%	55.2%	58.5%	53.7%
	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a month	13.4%	8.3%	5.3%	13.5%	15.9%	14.2%
	No – I do not want to work remotely	5.6%	5.9%	4.0%	1.8%	3.2%	7.8%

Cross-tab of Future Remote Working Preference and Sector

		Are you working in the:			
		Total	Private sector	Public sector	Third sector - charity
If you had the choice, would you like to continue working remotely after the crisis is over?	Yes – I would like to work remotely daily	26.8%	30.6%	22.8%	23.1%
	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a week	54.3%	51.8%	58.5%	57.4%
	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a month	13.4%	13.2%	13.0%	13.6%
	No – I do not want to work remotely	5.6%	4.4%	5.8%	5.8%

Cross-tab of Future Remote Working Preference and Gender

		Gender			
		Total	Male	Female	In another way
If you had the choice, would you like to continue working remotely after the crisis is over?	Yes – I would like to work remotely daily	26.8%	32.1%	25.1%	38.5%
	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a week	54.3%	50.8%	56.4%	30.8%
	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a month	13.4%	12.1%	13.5%	23.1%
	No – I do not want to work remotely	5.6%	5.0%	5.1%	7.7%

Cross-tab of Future Remote Working Preference and Age

		Age					
		Total	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
If you had the choice, would you like to continue working remotely after the crisis is over?	Yes – I would like to work remotely daily	26.8%	25.8%	27.3%	28.2%	24.8%	26.9%
	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a week	54.3%	49.4%	57.5%	55.2%	54.2%	49.0%
	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a month	13.4%	16.6%	11.3%	12.3%	15.7%	13.1%
	No – I do not want to work remotely	5.6%	8.1%	3.9%	4.3%	5.4%	11.0%

Cross-tab of Future Remote Working Preference and Dependent Children and Elder Care Responsibilities

		Total	Do you have a dependent child/children?		Do you have eldercare responsibilities?	
			No	Yes–	No	Yes
If you had the choice, would you like to continue working remotely after the crisis is over?	Yes – I would like to work remotely daily	26.8%	27.2%	26.7%	27.5%	24.8%
	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a week	54.3%	52.9%	57.0%	54.4%	56.6%
	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a month	13.4%	14.0%	12.2%	12.8%	14.8%
	No – I do not want to work remotely	5.6%	5.9%	4.0%	5.4%	3.7%

Cross-tab of Future Remote Working Preference and Industry

Industry	Total			
	Yes – I would like to work remotely daily	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a week	Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a month	No – I do not want to work remotely
Administrative and support services including travel agents	28%	56%	10%	6%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	23%	59%	16%	2%
Arts, entertainment and recreation including sport	33%	53%	13%	1%
Construction	23%	58%	12%	6%
Education	22%	57%	13%	8%
Financial, banking and insurance activities	29%	53%	14%	4%
Health and social work activities	22%	57%	15%	6%
Hospitality (accommodation, hotels, restaurants and food service)	27%	58%	12%	4%
Information, communication and telecommunications	38%	48%	10%	4%
Manufacturing	26%	57%	12%	5%
Mining and quarrying	50%	25%	25%	0%
Professional, scientific and technical activities including consulting	27%	52%	15%	5%
Public and civil service administration and defence	22%	62%	12%	4%
Real estate activities	28%	50%	22%	0%
Retail and wholesale (clothes, goods, motor etc.)	28%	53%	13%	6%
Transportation, postage, courier and storage	26%	60%	7%	7%
Utilities (electricity, gas, water supply; sewerage, waste management)	25%	61%	10%	3%
Other (please specify)	27%	52%	16%	5%

If you had the choice, would you like to continue working remotely after the crisis is over?



Cross-tab of Future Remote Working Preference and Region

If you had the choice, would you like to continue working remotely after the crisis is over?	Region										
	Border – Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo	Midlands – Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath	West – Galway, Mayo, Roscommon	Dublin – Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin	Mid-East – Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow	Mid-West – Clare, Limerick, Tipperary	South-East – Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford	South-West – Cork, Kerry	Northern Ireland		
Total	29%	36%	25%	24%	32%	28%	30%	26%	36%	36%	
Yes – I would like to work remotely daily	48%	52%	54%	55%	57%	51%	55%	53%	54%	54%	
Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a week	15%	11%	15%	15%	8%	16%	13%	13%	7%	7%	
Yes – I would like to work remotely several times a month	8%	2%	6%	6%	3%	5%	2%	7%	4%	4%	
No – I do not want to work remotely											

References

McCarthy, A., Ahearn, A., Bohle Carbonelli, K., Ó Síocháin, T. and Frost, D. (2020). **Remote Working During COVID-19: Ireland's National Survey Initial Report**. Galway, Ireland: NUI Galway Whitaker Institute & Western Development Commission. ISBN: 978-1-908358-79-0.

