

Workplace Wellness Report 2023



About the authors

Southern Cross Health Insurance

Southern Cross Health Insurance (Southern Cross) opened for business in 1961 as New Zealand's first health insurer. Today, the not-for-profit Friendly Society is New Zealand's largest health insurer with more than 930,000 members.

As at 30 June 2022*, Southern Cross has paid out \$5.03 billion in claims out of \$5.82 billion received in premiums, across the previous five years. This represents more than 86 per cent of premiums returned to members in claims, compared with the rest of the New Zealand health insurance sector averaging 65 per cent of premiums returned in claims over the same period**.



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BusinessNZ

BusinessNZ is New Zealand's largest business representation group, providing a wide range of services for member businesses.

BusinessNZ undertakes analysis and advocacy on behalf of the wider business, manufacturing, importing and exporting sectors, making representation to Government, local government and other decision makers on issues important to business.

BusinessNZ Network organisations EMA, BusinessCentral, Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Business South provide services and advocacy on behalf of thousands of businesses in all parts of New Zealand.



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*Southern Cross Medical Care Society, Annual Report 2022
**Based on data provided by the Financial Services Council



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Foreword

Nick Astwick

CEO, Southern Cross
Health Insurance



Kia ora koutou

Welcome to the sixth edition of the Workplace Wellness survey, which celebrates a decade of partnership between BusinessNZ and Southern Cross Health Insurance and in-depth analysis on health and wellbeing in the workplace.

I have no doubt that over the years the data has been useful to countless organisations as it has been to ours – helping to shape our approach to supporting our people.

At Southern Cross we're in the business of optimising health – we want more New Zealanders to live healthier years so they can be productive and great contributors in their homes, communities and while they are at work. That Southern Cross is seeing exceptional growth in the number of people we support with health insurance through their employers, is testament to the importance business leaders place on their teams' health and wellbeing.

The Workplace Wellness survey enables all of us to get an understanding of what's driving issues like absence, the cost of absence, what's top of mind for our team members and what we can do to relieve stress. We all benefit when our people are engaged.

Good health is priceless, and I'm encouraged by the study findings which indicate business leaders are taking a proactive stance on workplace wellness in their day-to-day operations. And they are doing so in very challenging times, where the cost of living and inflationary pressures throughout the economy are almost universally at the centre of New Zealanders' concerns.

You will see some startling headlines as you read this report about an increase in absence, its cost, and the effect this has on our collective bottom line. However, you will also see unceasing improvement in the way businesses and organisations are seeking to care for their teams.

We are nothing without our people.

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

Kirk Hope

CEO, BusinessNZ



The BusinessNZ Network is pleased to again partner with Southern Cross Health Society to produce the 2023 Workplace Wellness Survey.

Over the last decade the survey has provided valuable data on issues relating to health, wellness, injury, illness and absence in enterprises and organisations around New Zealand.

The survey provides a detailed picture of the current environment for health and safety, while tracking long-lived wellness factors and uncovering new developments in health and safety practice – important information for employers, employees, health professionals and others involved in the workplace.

This sixth edition of the Workplace Wellness Survey reveals significant changes following the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath, including trends in remote working and working from home, and the effects of new statutory sick leave provisions.

This edition also highlights employers' increasing recognition of the importance of employee wellness, and of sending the right signals to employees about taking legitimate absences and breaks and taking time to recuperate at home if unwell.

The data gained in the Workplace Wellness Survey helps towards the development of improved health and safety practice, and it is pleasing to see enterprises' concern for and support of employee wellness becoming ever more evident during the decade that the survey has been operating.

BusinessNZ appreciates the cooperation of Southern Cross Health Society and business members of the BusinessNZ Network in providing this valuable data in pursuit of the goal of healthy New Zealand workplaces.



Southern Cross Health Insurance – BusinessNZ

Key findings from the Workplace Wellness Report 2023



89%

Nearly all organisations proactively endorse staying at home if unwell

Respondent organisations employed a total of...



135,742

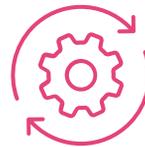
 people, including

114,104

 permanent staff


\$1,235

The annual cost of absence for a typical employee



The impact of staff wellness on productivity has grown in importance with organisations consistent in their views that it matters.



5.5

The average rate of absence per employee by days

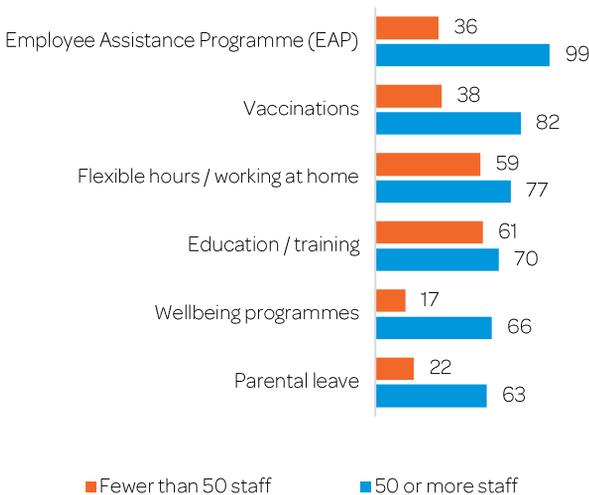


No effect

Mean

Significant impact

Top six benefits provided to improve well being



62%

Financial concerns main cause of non-work related stress



22%

The percentage of organisations reporting instances of 'quiet quitting'

Research for the Southern Cross Health Insurance–BusinessNZ Workplace Wellness Report 2023 was carried out between March and May 2023. Respondents were asked to report on data for the period 1 January to 31 December 2022. In total, 137 enterprises responded, representing 135,742 employees (6.5 per cent of all NZ employees).

Understanding health and wellbeing in the workplace

The Southern Cross Health Insurance– BusinessNZ Workplace Wellness Survey shows where New Zealanders stand in terms of health and wellbeing in the workplace. The research can help employers and the wider business sector in several ways:

- by providing a benchmark for workplace wellness
- providing insights into some of the ways businesses can better support their people and in turn lift productivity
- and by offering insights into how employers can improve their people’s health and wellbeing.

The Workplace Wellness Survey, now in its sixth edition, takes place on a biennial basis.

Since the first edition was released in 2013, the research has provided a valuable time series for tracking New Zealand’s progress towards an effective workplace health, wellbeing and safety system. The survey also scopes how progress can be measured—looking at key issues such as absence rates, costs, and drivers of absence over time.

It can also show how broad policy changes and one-off events move the needle on workplace wellbeing.

For example, the 2015 Health and Safety at Work Act, has seen employers recognise how addressing health issues affects their employees. The survey has also highlighted the effect of external factors such as the pandemic.

It should also be noted that the current report represents 10 years of data. Comparisons between the 2013 and 2023 surveys show sizeable differences in findings and focus. These highlight ongoing transformation in the workplace wellness landscape as businesses adapt to evolving trends, regulation, emerging technologies, and the growing recognition of the importance of this area in the employment environment.

The sudden emergence of Covid-19 in 2020 and its swift step-change in the daily working life of many New Zealanders had an effect on enterprises and workplace wellness which cannot be understated. The pandemic heightened change in thinking around workplace wellness and the effects are still being worked through. Workplace wellness continues to evolve to a more comprehensive and holistic approach.



A number of results from this year's survey reinforce the changes since 2020, while others highlight new challenges that employers will need to consider in future. In particular, when examining some of the key metrics around absence time and cost, there has been a clear and significant lift in a number of these metrics compared with previous years. To understand why this has occurred, it is important to note some key developments since 2020.

First, during 2022 the Government set out a mandatory seven day at-home isolation requirement for anyone who tested positive for Covid-19, or who was a close contact. While this may not have interfered too significantly with those who could work from home, this would have had a considerable effect on lifting absences overall, particularly for a large proportion of manual workers.

Second, New Zealand's sick leave entitlements experienced a significant change when, from July 2021, minimum sick leave entitlements were doubled from five to 10 days per year. 2022 saw the first full calendar year of that entitlement. The relationship between increasing sick leave provision and absence rates is not straightforward and can be influenced by factors such as an organisation's culture, employee attitudes, enforcement of policies, and the overall work environment. However, the findings in this year's report on the main drivers of absence are worth further consideration.

Finally, as mentioned above, a lift in overall workplace wellness that we were beginning to see develop in the 2020 research has continued. This is in part related to employers increasingly recognising the importance of sending the right signal to employees about taking legitimate absences and breaks and taking time to recuperate at home if unwell. If employers are clear around staying at home if unwell, the end outcome will inevitably lead to increased days of absence.

Another key area where the dust has yet to settle is around working from home, which was not a theme that was top of mind for workplace wellness prior to Covid-19. While the current findings again show it has largely been viewed as a positive move, there are still unintended consequences that need to be addressed by employers including:

- boundaries around working at home while sick
- supporting the health and safety of workers while at home
- and the right balance between working from home versus at a workplace.

In addition, labour constraints that have developed for many sectors in recent years (and are likely to continue in the future) may mean other employment options such as working remotely become more prevalent.

Overall, the findings show employers are increasingly conscious of the importance of workplace wellness in their day-to-day operations, which involves taking a regular and proactive stance in addressing how employee wellbeing can be improved.

It is clear there are challenges posed by genuinely doing the right thing by employees and society, by having people stay home if unwell, and the fact that this does increase absence and may decrease productivity. It is a paradox employers need to wrestle with and balance. One could ask if increased sick leave is actually a bad thing, if it follows the community overall could therefore be healthier.

This report aims to help businesses grapple with issues such as absence and its effects, whether 'quiet quitting' is prevalent in New Zealand, and what are the increased employee expectations about working flexibly, let alone how workplaces operate with a workforce they can no longer physically see, regularly.



1. Background to the survey

Purpose and overview

This is the sixth time the biennial Southern Cross Health Insurance – BusinessNZ Workplace Wellness Survey has been carried out in New Zealand.

The survey is designed to help employers improve the health and wellbeing of their people, benchmark absence levels and identify ways to increase attendance, and to provide policy makers with data on occupational health practice and workplace absence.

This report outlines the main results of the 2023 Workplace Wellness Survey.

The research for this report was conducted between March and May 2023. Participants included business members of BusinessNZ Network divisions including the Major Companies Group, Gold Group, Affiliated Industries Group, Business Central, Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Business South, and a number of government departments.

Respondents were asked to report their absence data for the 12-month period from 1 January to 31 December 2022, and to provide details of their policies and practices for supporting employee wellbeing and managing employee attendance.

In total, 137 responses were received from organisations in the private and public sectors, up from 116 responses in 2021 and 99 responses in 2019. Respondent organisations employed a total of 135,742 people, including 114,104 permanent staff. This was up from 95,488 and 77,238 employees respectively in 2021.

The 2023 dataset represents the highest number and percentage of total and permanent staff over the history of the survey. The 2023 sample represents 6.57 per cent of all employees in New Zealand. This is the highest representation of employees since the survey began; the next-highest was 6.52 per cent in 2015.

Overall, the 2023 survey represents the largest number of employees for any such survey to date in New Zealand.

Notes on survey comparisons

Workplace Wellness reports have been published in 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and now 2023. For each survey, respondents were asked about their absence data for the previous year; i.e., 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2022, respectively. For reporting purposes, comparisons between surveys reference the calendar year the data represents.



1. Based on 1,709,000, 1,781,300, 1,874,800, 1,953,100, 2,005,100 and 2,065,400 filled jobs during the June 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2022 quarters respectively (Quarterly Employment Survey, StatisticsNZ).

2. Respondent demographics

Respondents by workforce size

While New Zealand has a large proportion of micro and small-sized enterprises, official data from StatisticsNZ shows that most employees are employed by relatively large-sized businesses (Figure 1).

Given the make-up of New Zealand's enterprises by size and number of employees, the survey more strongly targeted medium to large enterprises in order to cover a higher proportion of employees.

Figures 1 and 2 show that the 2022 survey sample had a broadly similar breakdown of employees to the New Zealand workforce in relation to organisation size.

The share of very large organisations represented in the Workplace Wellness Survey was at its highest in 2022 (46 per cent), a further incremental lift compared with 45, 44 and 43 per cent in 2020, 2018 and 2016, respectively. It is important to note that any overarching hourly or monetary value changes between the various time periods should be treated with caution.

Table 1 shows the average and median number of workers by size of enterprise that responded to the 2022 survey. There was a lift in the number of enterprises with fewer than 50 staff, as well as those with 50 or more staff for 2022. While the average and median results for organisations with fewer than 50 staff were broadly similar to previous years, there was a pick-up in the average number of staff for those with 50 or more for the latest results. In contrast, the median result was broadly similar to 2020.



Figure 1: New Zealand workforce: Proportion of employees by organisation size (Feb 2022)

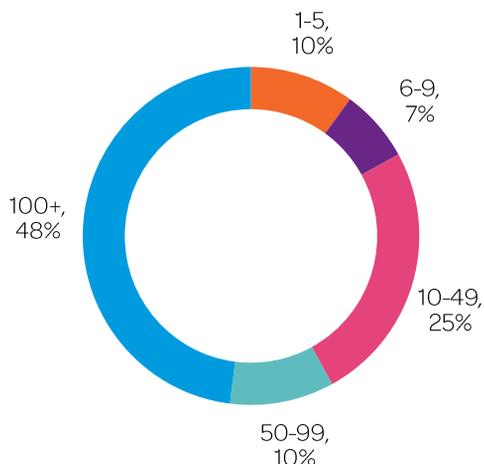


Figure 2: Workplace Wellness Survey: Proportion of employees by organisation size (2022)

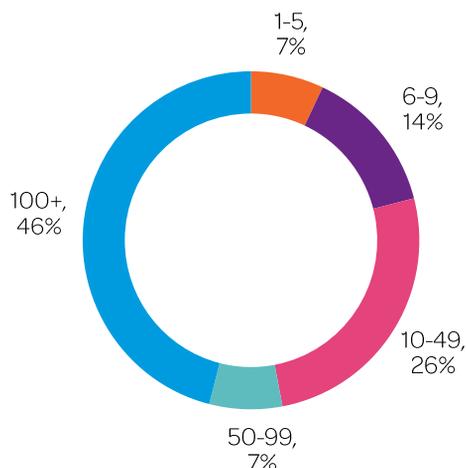


Table 1: Average and median count of employees by business size (2020)

EmployeeCount	Number	Average	Median
1-5	9	3.2	3.0
6-9	19	7.5	7.0
10-49	36	22.2	20.0
50-99	10	74.1	77.5
100+	63	2127.5	1004.0
Fewer than 50	64	15.2	11.5
Great than 50	73	1846.2	726.0
All	137	990.8	75.0

Respondents by industry

Figure 3 shows that those responding to this survey continue to represent a broad range of sectors, with the largest share from the business, finance, and property sectors, followed by the wholesale, retail, accommodation, café, and restaurant sectors.

In addition to the 129 private sector enterprises represented, eight large public sector departments participated in the survey (up from six in 2020) employing a total of 27,471 people, which was up from 26,247 people in 2020 and 26,880 in 2018.

Respondents by region

As the questionnaire was distributed by a number of nationwide and regional industry associations, responses represent all parts of the country (Figure 4).

While Auckland, Wellington and Canterbury had good representation, there was also a strong showing in the bottom half of the South Island.

Figure 3: Share of respondents by industry (2022)

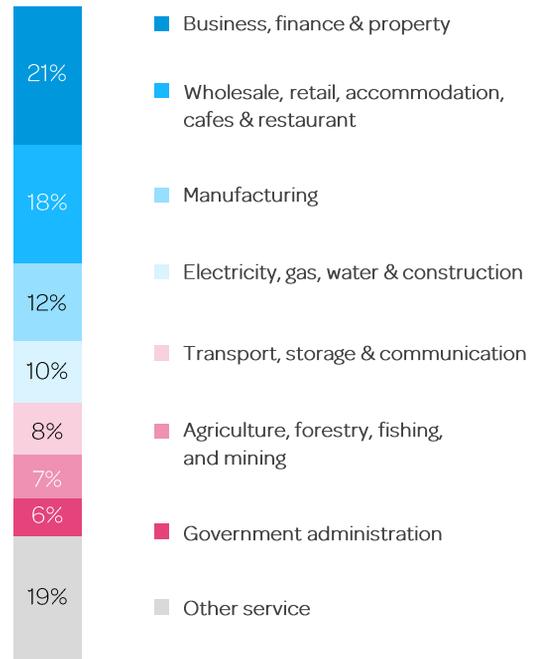
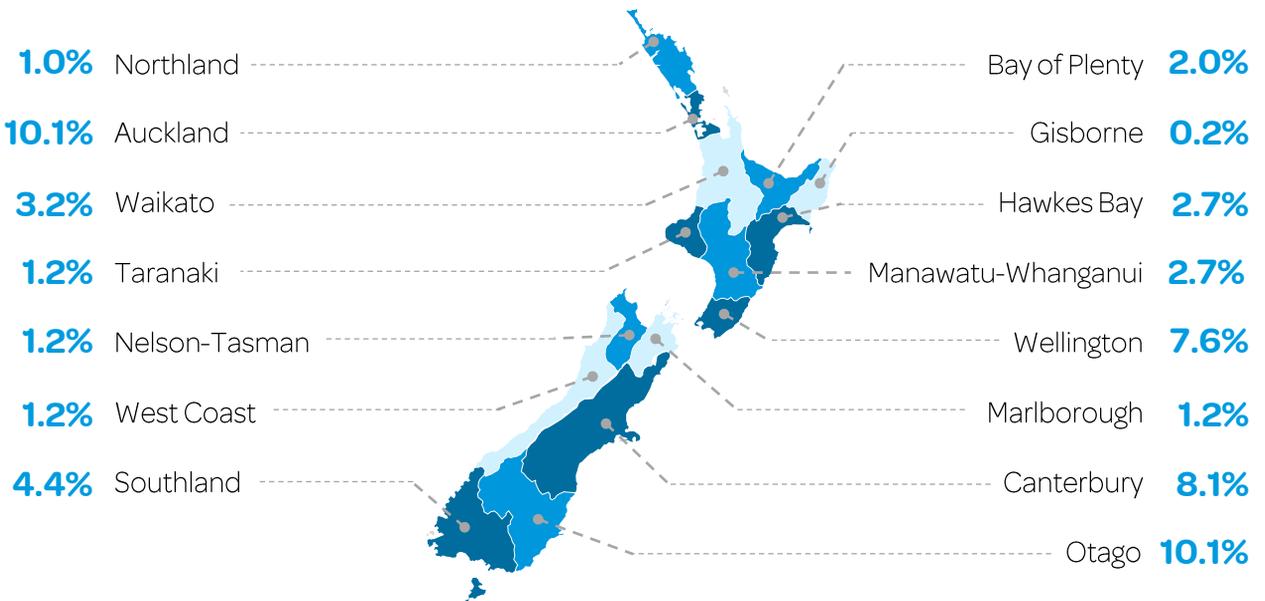


Figure 4: Share of respondents by region (2022)



3. Absence rates in 2022

Key findings



Covid-19 continues to influence absence results, although it may not be the only influence for the 2022 findings, given a key change in sickness entitlements introduced in 2021.



The average rate of absence in 2022 was the highest ever at 5.5 days per employee. This compares with a range of 4.2 to 4.7 days for 2012-2020.



The average number of days off for manual workers (7.1 days) and non-manual workers (4.6 days) were the highest recorded for the survey. Also, the difference in average number of days off between manual and non-manual workers widened to its highest at 2.5 days.



When projected across the entire New Zealand workforce, the sharp increase in average days lost per employee and the ongoing lift in total number of employers combined, meant the time lost due to absence in 2022 was close to 10 million working days. This was significantly up from 7.3 million in 2020 and 7.4 million in 2018.



Although turnover of permanent staff was at its lowest since the survey began, the largest share of employers believed their level of turnover was higher than they would like. This is perhaps due to the current challenging labour market conditions for finding replacement staff.

Time lost to absence averaged 5.5 days per employee in 2022

Employers were asked about the average number of days of absence per employee. Survey results in [Table 2](#) show that overall absence was 5.5 days on average per employee in 2022. This is the highest recorded since the survey began and the first time the overall result has been more than a working week. The next closest result was 4.7 days in 2014 and 2018. The lowest recorded was 4.2 days in 2020.

Table 2: Absence levels: average days lost per employee (2022)

	Total	Private sector	Public sector
Manual	7.1	7.2	5.8
Non-manual	4.6	4.5	6.6
All	5.5	5.4	6.5

A number of factors should be considered when examining this result. First, Covid-19 restrictions had a significant impact on results in 2020; including national and regional lockdowns, a national focus on social distancing and staying at home if unwell. Combined with employers allowing more employees to work from home, this contributed to overall employee absences reaching their lowest recorded level.

The change from the lowest average absence level in 2020 to the highest in 2022 likely reflects the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions and lockdowns. As well, broader Covid-19 impacts are likely surfacing, with an increasing view by employers about the desirability of employees staying home if unwell (discussed in more detail below) and the impact of the Government issuing a 7-day stay-at-home edict for anyone testing positive for Covid-19.

Average absence rates in 2022 were the highest since the survey began: **5.5 days per employee**

Another contributing factor to the lift in overall time lost to absence may involve recent changes to New Zealand's sick leave entitlements. From July 2021, minimum sick leave entitlements were doubled from five to 10 days per year. 2022 would have been the first full calendar year of the new entitlement. The full effect of this significant change is discussed in more detail below.

The rise in average time lost in 2022 shows a corresponding increase in the total number of days lost across the country. Around 9.95 million days in total were lost to absence in 2022. This was a significant increase from previous results, which have ranged between 6.1 million and 7.4 million between 2013 and 2020. The sharp increase in average days lost per employee and the ongoing lift in the total number of employees combined to boost overall days lost across the economy.

The time lost due to absence in 2022 was close to 10 million working days

The manual / non-manual gap

The 2022 results continue the trend seen in previous years where higher average levels of absence are recorded for manual employees compared to non-manual employees. Given the often highly physical nature of manual work, especially in jobs involving lifting, injury can be more prevalent, offering an explanation for the higher rate of absence.

However, given the overall average of days of absence in 2022 was the highest recorded since the survey began, this is also reflected in the breakdown by manual and non-manual workers. The results for 2022 (Table 2) show that for manual employees, the average number of days lost per employee was 7.1 days, up from its next highest result of 5.3 days in 2020. For non-manual employees, the 2022 result of 4.6 days overtook the previous highest of 4.1 days recorded in 2018.

Despite the rise in the non-manual result for 2022, the two current average scores still represent the largest discrepancy between manual and non-manual employees. The previous largest gap stood at 1.9 days in 2020, which was surpassed by 2.5 days in 2022.

Overall, the lift in manual workers' absence is significant, taking it to just over one full week. While the lift in the non-manual result was also sizeable, the 2022 result still remained under five days, and only half a day more than its previously highest result.

Again, there are a few points worth noting when examining the 2022 results in comparison with previous years. While a disparity between manual and non-manual workers has existed since the survey began, we

are likely seeing the effect of Covid-19 and its related long-term impacts.

It is possible that since more non-manual workers can work from home, a higher proportion continue to work while unwell. In contrast, manual workers may be refraining from going into work due to increased employer communications or policies telling employees to stay home if unwell, along with the mandatory stand-down of seven days when contracting Covid-19 that was in place at the time of the survey.

Size of enterprise differentials

Table 3 shows the average days of absence for manual/non-manual workers across enterprises with fewer and greater than 50 employees. Despite the ongoing influence of Covid-19 and other changes in the workplace wellness environment, the 2022 findings continue two trends that have been evident throughout the survey's history. First, manual workers working in large enterprises have the highest average amount of absence per year. Second, non-manual workers in enterprises with fewer than 50 employees have the lowest average level of absence.

Table 3: Absence by size of business (2022)

Employee Count	AVERAGE DAYS OF ABSENCE		
	Total	Manual	Non-Manual
Fewer than 50	5.0	6.5	4.4
50 or more	5.9	7.7	4.8

Notwithstanding ongoing trends in this area, average days of absence for all six metrics recorded their highest results in 2022. In the context of factors discussed above, this is not surprising.



Private/public sector comparisons

The difference between private and public sector absence levels in Table 2 shows the public sector (both central and local) has more absences than the private sector for non-manual and permanent staff, consistent with previous years' findings. However, the 2022 results show for the first time that absence for manual workers in the private sector is higher than for the public sector, by 1.1 days..

Turnover of staff

Organisations were again asked on a scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high), what level of turnover in permanent staff they experienced in 2022.

The 2022 results in Figure 5 show a mean value of 2.58, which was the lowest-ever recorded for the survey. This was down from 2.68 in 2020, and significantly down on 3.11, 3.36, 3.09 and 3.32 for 2018, 2016, 2014 and 2012, respectively. The median value remained at 3.

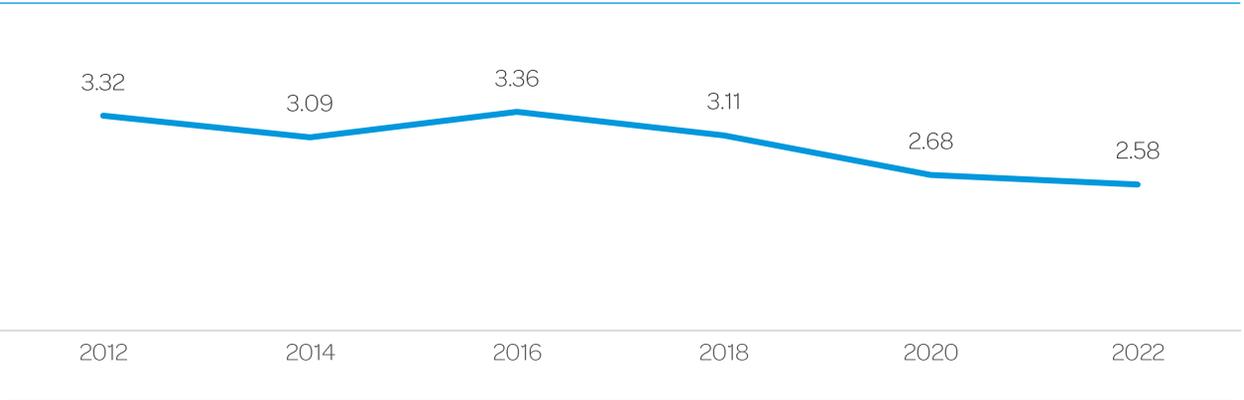
Enterprises were also asked whether the level of turnover outlined was higher or lower than desired, or at a comfortable level. Table 4 shows a marked shift in views in 2022 compared with the previous two time periods. In 2022, the largest proportion of employers believed that their level of turnover was higher than they would like, a far higher proportion than in 2020 and 2018.

This result along with the turnover levels in permanent staff in 2022, indicates how challenging even a relatively small turnover of staff can be for organisations, given the current tight labour market and difficulties finding adequate replacements.

Table 4: Comfort level of turnover in permanent staff (2018, 2020, 2022) – %

Level	2022	2020	2018
Higher	55.9	21.7	28.0
Comfortable	42.5	74.5	71.0
Lower	1.6	3.8	1.0

Figure 5: Level of turnover in permanent staff (2012 – 2022) - mean value



4. Costs, drivers and factors around absence

Key findings



Due to a number of factors including cost price pressures and labour shortages, the cost to an employer for a typical employee's absence in annual terms now stands at \$1,235.



The post Covid-19 landscape has seen an entrenchment of the notion of employees staying at home when sick. This again corresponds with businesses clearly encouraging their staff to stay home when they are ill.



The direct costs of absence amounted to \$2.86 billion across the economy in 2022, up from \$1.85 billion in 2020. This was symptomatic of increased absence rates and rising costs of labour.



There are still mixed results around employees who are unwell continuing to work at home rather than take a sick day.



Non work-related illness (including Covid-19) remains the most common cause of absence, followed by 'caring for an unwell family member or dependent.'

Costs of absence

Since the Workplace Wellness Survey began, an absent employee has typically cost their employer \$600 to \$1,000 per year. However, the 2022 results indicate that figure is now starting to climb.

The survey has consistently asked respondents to quantify the total cost each absent employee represents to their business, including the salary cost of absent individuals and replacement costs, e.g., through temporary staff or overtime worked by other employees.

Results in Table 5 show each absent employee costs a median total of \$1,235, a figure indicative of the cost savings to be achieved if employers can reduce the extent and duration of employee absences.

Absence costs in 2022 are the highest recorded. The median annual cost per absent employee of \$1,235 in 2022 is a significant increase on the previous highest result of \$1,007 in 2018. The lowest result recorded was \$616 in 2014.

Table 5: Absence costs by workforce size (\$) (2022)

Employee Count	Median cost per absent employee (\$)	Total median cost by size of business (\$)
1-5	500	3,000
6-9	575	5,000
10-49	1,423	30,000
50-99	1,607	143,513
100+	1,473	693,120
Fewer than 50	1,000	12,800
50 or more	1,487	537,154
All	1,235	98,016

As has been pointed out in previous reports, it is important to take into account a few factors when examining these figures.

First, the results are indicative, rather than substantive, as changes to the make-up of respondent organisations (particularly by size) will cause the figures to shift. For example, the 2022 survey included a larger number of organisations with 50 or more staff (73), compared with 61 in 2020.

Absence costs in 2022 are the highest recorded

Second, the 2022 and 2020 results may represent a shift towards a 'new normal' following the various effects Covid-19 has had on New Zealand's working and economic environment.

Other findings for 2022 highlight the continuing importance of productivity, given the recent tightening of the labour market, indicating that absences from work may be leaving enterprises with few or no alternatives when seeking to maintain standard day-to-day work output.

Additionally, significant inflationary impacts that New Zealand has not experienced since the survey began have brought rising costs for business, including input costs and salaries/wages for staff.

Absence costs rise above 50 staff

A consistent finding in all Workplace Wellness surveys since 2012 has been higher absence costs in larger organisations. Enterprises with more than 50 employees consistently bear higher costs per absent worker than enterprises with fewer than 50 employees. Table 5 shows 2022 was no different, although both groups experienced their highest cost per absent worker over the history of the survey, with those with fewer than 50 staff in the four-figure category for the first time.

Costs across the economy

As in previous years, extrapolating the direct costs of absence over the entire economy provides a macro-economic picture of the level of direct costs New Zealand faces due to absence.

For 2022, the average absence level per employee of 5.5 days amounts to a cost of around \$2.86 billion for the total economy². This compares with \$1.85 billion in 2020, \$1.79 billion in 2018, \$1.51 billion in 2016, \$1.45 billion in 2014 and \$1.26 billion in 2012.

As mentioned in previous reports, New Zealand's increasing national cost is in part due to an expanding workforce and a natural rise in income. For example, New Zealand's workforce has increased by over 30 per cent since 2012 and income has increased by 38.5 per cent over the same period.

However, even with those historical increases, the lift in total cost for 2022 is a notable step up from previous years – up around \$1 billion from 2020. As mentioned

above, the flow-on effects of increased average days of absence have been the primary catalyst for this sizeable rise. Given any reduction or levelling out of the national cost would most likely come from a sustained decrease in average absence time lost, the 2022 results may represent a resetting of the 'new normal' in the post-Covid environment.



Main causes of absence

Respondents were asked to list the three main causes of absence during 2022 for manual and non-manual employees. Because of the ongoing impacts of Covid-19, the options for 2022 continued to take into account related effects of Covid-19.

Figure 6 shows that once again, 'non work-related illness (including Covid-19)' is the most common cause of absence. This is followed by 'caring for an unwell family member or dependent due to illness or injury'.

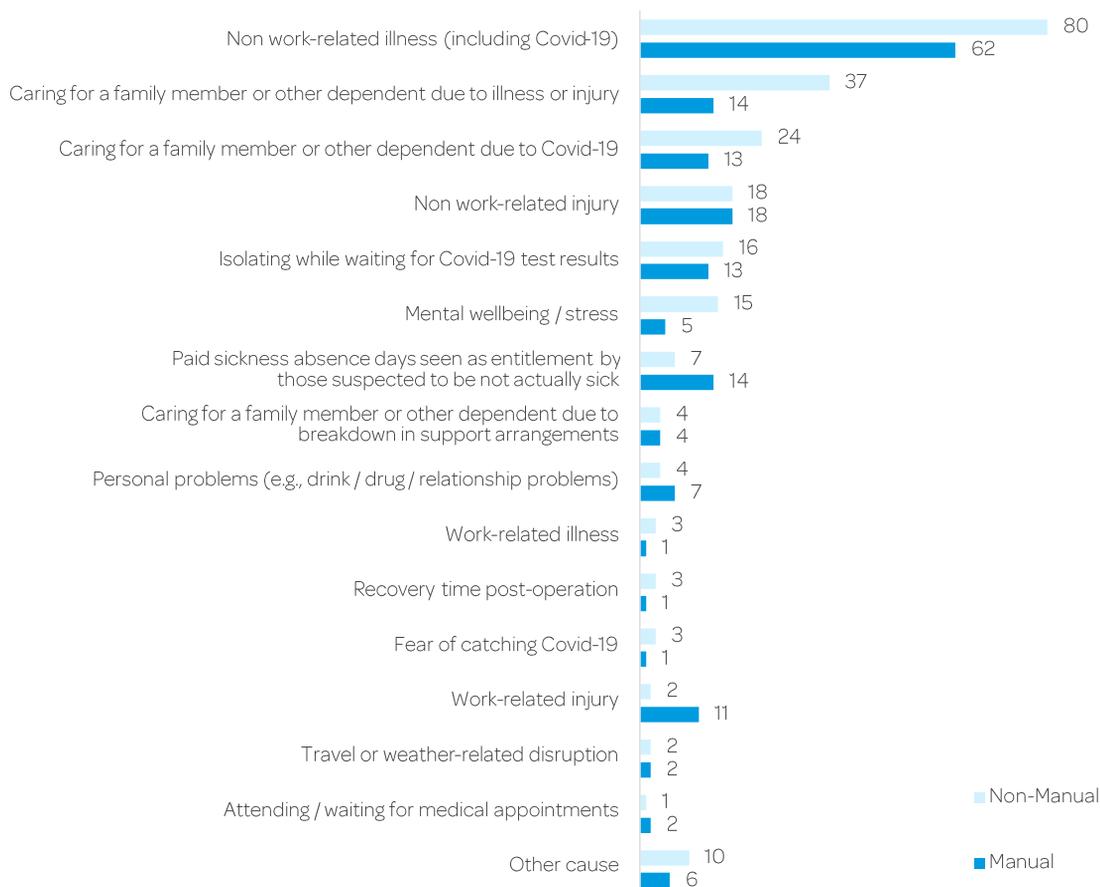
Of the remaining drivers of absence, 'caring for a family member or other dependent due to Covid-19' has moved up the rankings, which again may be influenced by the ongoing seven-day isolation requirements. Overall, the top six drivers for 2022 are the same as 2020, although with some differences in their placement.

One driver that was near the bottom in 2020 which is now placed in seventh spot is 'paid sickness absence days being viewed as an entitlement by those suspected to be not actually sick'. Historically, this has been more prevalent for manual workers, but the 2022 results show an increase for both manual and non-manual workers. As discussed above, the doubling of entitled sick leave from five to 10 days in 2021 may be a contributing factor here, given some staff may seek to maximise this time away from work.

While Covid-19 continues to have some effects on causes of absence, it is important to remember that the key reasons for absence remain firmly in place, especially given non-work-related illness was already the main reason for absence.

2. Based on the Quarterly Employment Survey (SNZ) average weekly earnings for FTEs at \$1,438.09 and total employed FTEs of 1,808,900. All figures were taken from the June 2022 results.

Figure 6: Main drivers of absence (2022) – %



Shift in gear for sick days

For 2022, respondents were again asked about their most common approach to sick days. However, changes to minimum employee sick leave entitlement in 2021 meant the range of options differed from previous years.

Table 6 shows that of the revised options available, the most common approach is ten days per year (accumulated up to a maximum of 20 days) at 80.5 per cent. This was followed by more than ten days per year, at 12.2 per cent.

Compared to the findings in 2020 and 2018, the 2022 results show the clear impact of the increase in sick days available to staff per year. Whereas the 2020 and 2018 data showed more of a spread in sick day approaches, the 2022 results show a clear steer toward the legislated minimum.

Table 6: Common approach to sick days (2022) - %

Approach	%
Ten days per year (accumulated up to a maximum of 20 days)	80.5
More than 10 days per year	12.2
Other	4.1
Unlimited leave	3.3



Annual leave – more dust to settle

While the 2020 survey focused on the impact Covid-19 had on annual leave taken by employees, the 2022 survey simply asked about changes in booking annual leave by staff.

For 2022, 42 per cent did not see any noticeable change, 32.8 per cent reported more annual leave taken, and 25.2 per cent said less annual leave had been taken.

Without previous years to compare with, it is difficult to draw any strong conclusions about the 2022 data. However, the fact that only four out of ten enterprises saw similar leave patterns to previous years tends to suggest there is still some way to go for the dust to settle around what a revised picture of annual leave will look like.

Attitude shift continues

Enterprises were again asked on a scale of 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always), to what degree their staff typically turned up for work with some form of illness, when they should have stayed at home.

The 2022 results were an exact match for 2020, again with a mean value of 2.68, and again with a median value of 3. This compares with a mean value of 3.11, 3.36, 3.09 and 3.32 for 2018, 2016, 2014 and 2012, respectively. The 2020 results indicated a much clearer message from enterprises to their people about staying home when sick, which has continued through to the 2022 result.

Figure 7 provides a further breakdown of the 2022 results compared with previous years. First, the combined proportion of employees who typically stay at home stands at 49 per cent, up from 46 per cent in 2020. At the other end, the proportion of those who responded with a value of 4 or 5 was largely similar to 2020. Last, there was a further decrease in the proportion of those who waver between turning up or not, reducing to 27 per cent in 2022, which was down from a peak of 41 per cent in 2018.

Although the proportion of employees who almost always turn up to work despite being sick increased only slightly from 21.7 per cent in 2020 to 24 per cent in 2022, these two most current results show a marked improvement compared with previous years, especially in light of a greater proportion of enterprises indicating staff are indeed staying home when ill.

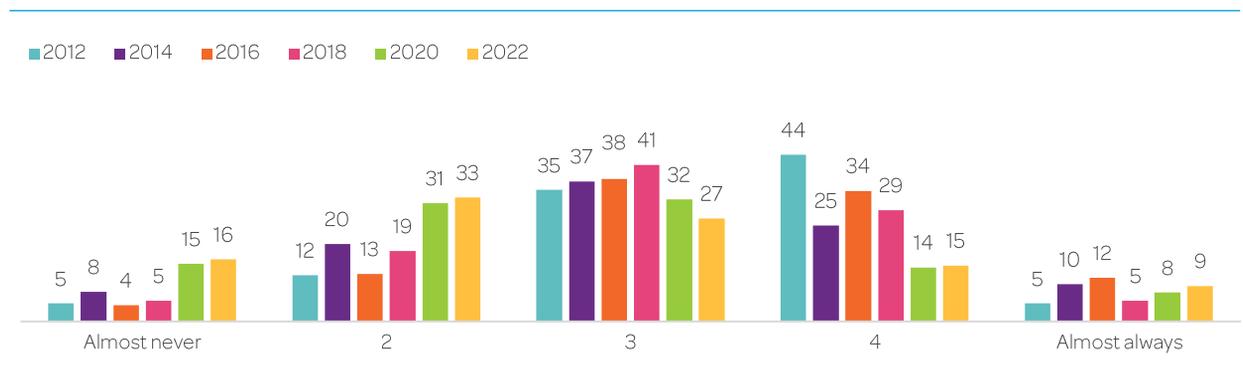
By size of enterprise, Table 7 shows smaller-sized businesses continuing to see more employees coming to work who should be at home. In comparison with 2020, the 2022 results also show a widening of the gap between enterprises with fewer than 50 and those with 50 or more employees with regard to turning up to work with an illness.

Overall, the 2022 results provide some reassurance that attitudes to turning up to work while ill have not returned to pre Covid-19 levels.

Table 7: Degree to which staff typically turn up for work even though they should stay home due to illness (2022) - %

Size of enterprise	Mean	Median
1-5	3.56	5
6-9	2.89	3
10-49	2.97	3
50-99	2.33	2
100+	2.36	2
Fewer than 50 staff	3.03	3
50 or more staff	2.36	2.5
All	2.68	3

Figure 7: Degree to which staff typically turn up for work even though they should stay home due to illness (2012 – 2022) - %



Ongoing encouragement to stay home

Enterprises were again asked whether they thought the culture of their business encouraged employees to stay home when they were ill. Figure 8 shows the overall result for the six years observed, with an ongoing culture of encouraging employees to stay home since Covid-19 became prevalent. The mean result stood at 4.55, which was slightly down from 4.62 in 2020. However, it was still significantly up on 4.21, 3.89, 3.66 and 3.32 for 2018, 2016, 2014 and 2012, respectively.

The 2020 results showed a very clear and positive link between expectation and reality with regard to employers sending a message about staying home if unwell, and employees heeding that message. Therefore, it is pleasing to see this continuing in the 2022 findings in Figure 7, given 89 per cent of organisations ensure at least some proactive steps are taken towards creating a culture that endorses staying at home if unwell.

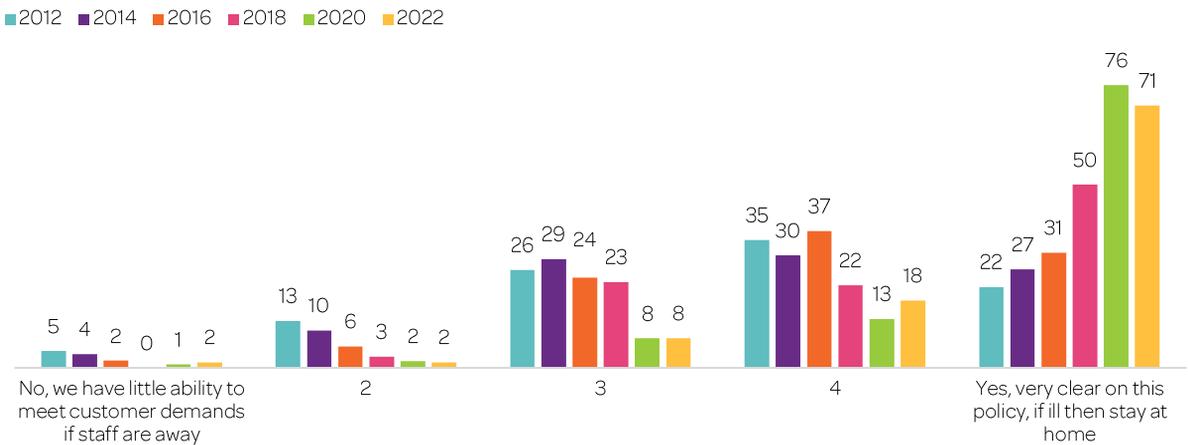
Table 8 shows that a culture of businesses encouraging employees to stay at home when unwell is again evident

throughout all sizes of business. While it continues to be stronger for larger enterprises, all mean scores for 2022 were 4.0 or above and all median scores were 5.0.

Table 8: Culture of respondent business encouraging employees to stay home if they are unwell (2022)

Size of enterprise	Mean	Median
1-5	4.11	5.00
6-9	4.00	5.00
10-49	4.50	5.00
50-99	4.80	5.00
100+	4.78	5.00
Fewer than 50 staff	4.30	5.00
50 or more staff	4.78	5.00
Private sector	4.54	5.00
Public sector	4.75	5.00
All	4.55	5.00

Figure 8: Culture of respondent business encouraging employees to stay home if they are unwell (2012 – 2022) - %



Types of illness / injury when coming to work

The 2022 survey asked what forms of illness/injury employees typically had when turning up to work. Table 9 shows mainly minor illnesses as the key type of illness, followed by physical pain. In comparison with 2020, work-related anxiety/stress/depression has dropped from 23.3 per cent to 18.2 per cent, yet non work-related anxiety/stress/depression has picked up from 23.3 per cent to 27.7 per cent.

Table 9: Types of illness/injury that staff typically have when they are turning up to work (2022) - %

Type	2022 (%)
Mainly minor illness (e.g. cold, flu, tummy bug, headache)	88.3
Physical pain (e.g. sore back, neck, knee, arthritis, musculoskeletal disorders etc)	35.0
Non work-related anxiety / stress / depression	27.7
Work-related anxiety / stress / depression	18.2
Injury	10.2
More Major illness (e.g. heart, blood pressure, respiratory, cancer, bowel problems)	4.4
Other	3.6

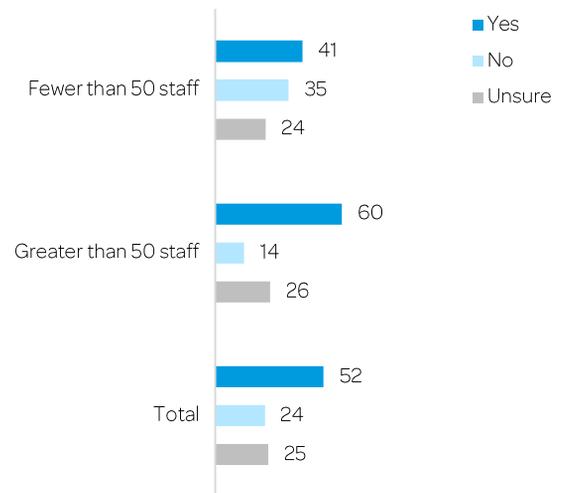


Home, sick, but working less

Organisations were asked if unwell employees were more likely to continue working at home rather than take a sick day.

Figure 9 shows that this tends to be the case for around half of employees across all organisations, although this is down from over 60 per cent in 2020. When comparing smaller and larger enterprises, there are two points to note between the 2020 and 2022 results.

Figure 9: Are employees now more likely to continue working rather than take a sick day when unwell and working from home? (2022) - %



First, for those with fewer than 50 staff there has been a clear improvement in numbers of those staying home sick and not working, given that option increased from around a quarter to over a third in 2022.

Second, while the proportion of staff working from home and sick has decreased, this has not translated into an equivalent increase for those taking a sick day when unwell. Instead, organisations are now more unsure if this is the case.

Overall, these results represent two steps forward, one step back, with regard to outcomes for workplace wellness.

As pointed out in previous reports, not all illness prevents someone from working (e.g. a minor cold). Therefore, a message from employers to stay home if unwell can mean employees continuing to work, as doing so from home ensures the illness does not spread to other employees.

For many, the key point is knowing when to draw the line between working from home if slightly unwell to ensuring a proper sick day is taken to fully rest and recover.

5. Working from home

Key findings



Working from home is now a standard feature of the working environment in organisations where it is a possibility, with more than half of organisations allowing more people to do so since 2021.



One to two days per week continues to be the most common option for working from home, although three to four days is showing increased use. However, many small enterprises are simply unable to offer working from home.



While enterprises believe working from home has been a positive move, employee feelings of isolation and a reduction in collaborative activities are still evident.



Tight labour market conditions over 2022 led a number of enterprises to consider more options around flexible working arrangements.



In addition to working from home, working remotely is also now a consideration for a sizeable proportion of organisations, particularly larger enterprises.

The new norm of working from home

One of the step changes in working arrangements post Covid-19 has been a significant increase in working from home offered to employees across various enterprises. While working from home was available for some enterprises pre-Covid, many employers now see it as a fundamental part of their organisation's operations, with many existing and prospective employees expecting it. Such a swift and significant move in workplace organisation poses unique challenges for employee management and team morale.

Working from home is now a **standard feature** of the working environment

The other aspect of working from home that needs to be examined is working remotely, where employees are not required to be physically present in the workplace and are able to work from any location. Like working from home, remote working may not be suitable for all industries or job roles. However, for knowledge-based jobs that can be performed digitally, remote working is becoming an increasingly popular and viable option.

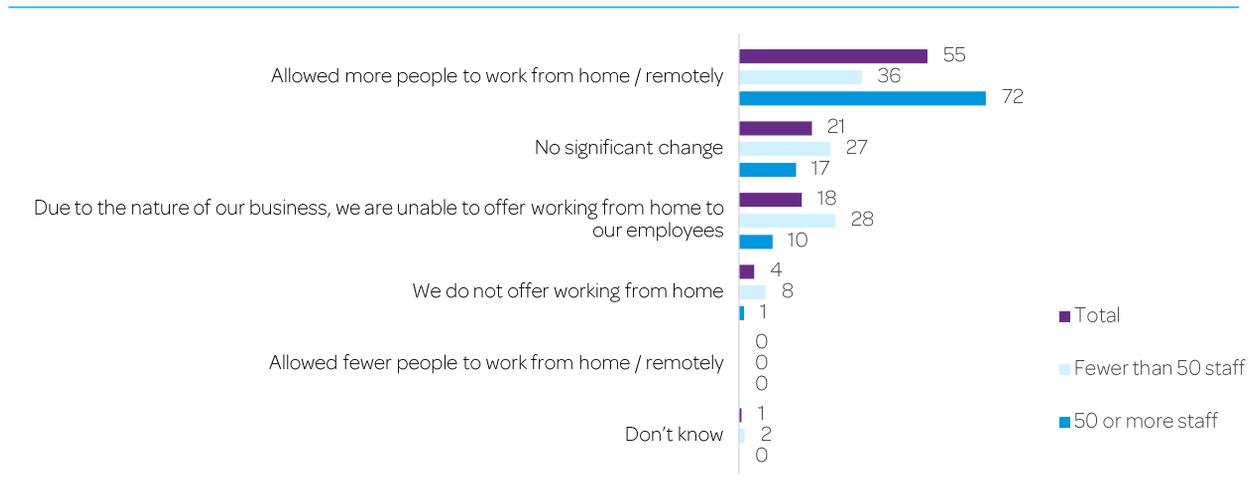
Like working from home, remote working allows employers the ability to choose from a wider pool of talent, along with cost savings and possible productivity benefits. However, this must be balanced against potential impact on team collaboration and communication.

Enterprises were asked how much they had changed their view on employees working from home/remotely compared with 2021. [Figure 10](#) shows that over half of respondents have allowed more people to work from home/remotely, although there is a clear difference based on size of business. Larger enterprises have a greater capacity to provide this option, while a significant proportion of smaller enterprises are simply unable to offer working from home.

As a result, for many small enterprises it is not worth having a formal policy in place if the option is not feasible to begin with. Of those that can offer working from home/remotely, only a small percentage choose not to.



Figure 10: Degree to which enterprises have changed their view on employees working from home / remotely compared with 2021 - %



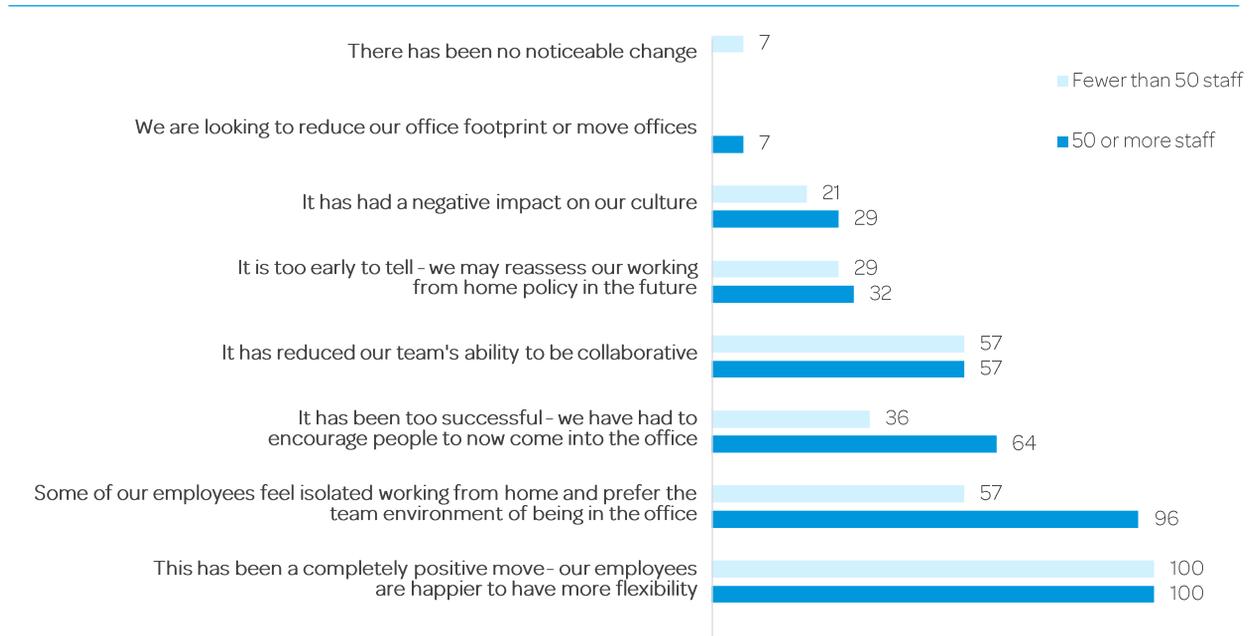
Of those who have made changes around allowing staff to work from home or remotely, respondents were asked how this had impacted their organisation. Figure 11 shows that all respondents saw it as a completely positive move, as employees are happier to have more flexibility.

At the same time, almost all large enterprises and around half of smaller enterprises report some employees feeling isolated, along with issues around collaboration, and the move being 'too successful.'

This shows that the overall picture of working from home/remotely is not uniform. While flexibility is a key positive outcome for staff, there are costs and issues to be addressed in a way which works for a particular enterprise and its employees.



Figure 11: The main impacts on enterprises from allowing more people to work from home or remotely (2022) - %



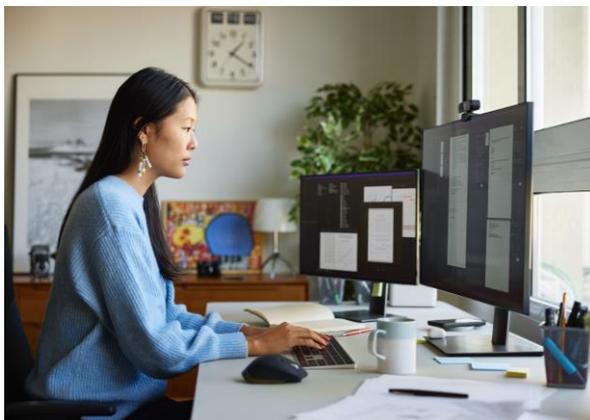
Days working from home

Table 10 shows that one to two days a week (47.4 per cent) is again the most common frequency for working at home. However, this was down from 59.3 per cent in 2020, while three to four days a week has more than doubled from 7.1 per cent in 2020 to 16.8 per cent in 2022. This pattern is evident for both smaller and larger enterprises, which would suggest more time overall is spent with staff working at home. Still, 43.8 per cent of smaller enterprises do not provide any days working from home, although this is down from 49.1 per cent in 2020.

Table 10: Approximate number of days per week that employees now work from home or work remotely (2022) - %

Number	All (%)	Fewer than 50 staff (%)	50+ staff (%)
1-2 days a week	47.4	34.4	58.9
3-4 days a week	16.8	12.5	20.5
Full-time	2.9	6.3	0.0
Never	27.0	43.8	12.3
Don't know	5.8	3.1	8.2

The overall continued shift to more days working from home is also evident when enterprises that did offer this option were asked how much of a change this was from 2021. 50 per cent saw an increase from 2021, while 39.1 per cent noted it was roughly the same. Only 9.8 per cent saw a decrease. Of the enterprises reporting an increase, there was not a considerable difference between those with greater than 50 staff (51.7 per cent) and those with fewer than 50 staff (47.1 per cent). However, 12.9 per cent of larger enterprises saw a decrease compared with 5.9 per cent of smaller enterprises.



Labour market tensions and options

Enterprises were also asked whether tight labour market conditions at the time led to them consider more options around flexible working arrangements. Table 11 shows that more than half did not consider it an option, although just over a third did. For those with 50 or more staff, it was relatively even between considering it or not, while smaller enterprises were around three times more likely not to consider it.

Table 11: Have present tight labour market conditions led to your enterprise considering more options around flexible working arrangements (i.e., working from home) (2022) - %

Employee Count	Yes	No	Unsure
Less than 50	22.2	65.1	12.7
50 or more	46.6	49.3	4.1
All	35.3	56.6	8.1

Similarly, enterprises were asked whether they were more willing to employ people who would need to work from home due to living in another region or overseas. Table 12 shows results roughly similar to Table 11, where larger enterprises were considerably more willing to do so compared with smaller enterprises. Overall, the ability for larger businesses to provide more flexibility than smaller businesses is well known, although approximately one fifth of smaller enterprises are still looking at this as a viable option to employ the best people for their organisation.

Table 12: Has your business increased its willingness to employ people who would need to work from home due to living in another region or overseas (2022) - %

Employee Count	Yes	No	Unsure
Fewer than 50	20.8	72.9	6.3
50 or more	47.8	47.8	4.5
All	36.5	58.3	5.2

6. Stress, fatigue and mental health in the workplace

Key findings



The 2022 results saw organisations reporting greater stress / anxiety levels among their staff.



When asked about the change in direction of general stress levels, a net 49.7 per cent of firms observed an increase in stress in 2022. Although this was down from 2020, it was still the second highest reading in the survey's history.



Around one in five enterprises reported instances of quiet quitting, while a similar proportion of enterprises were unsure.



General workload remained the biggest work-related stress issue reported by businesses of all sizes, while for non-work-related stress it was now financial concerns, with relationships outside work dropping to second place.



The proportion of smaller enterprises without any practices in place to identify mental wellbeing / stress has dropped significantly over recent years.

Stress and fatigue in the workplace

While implementing workplace health and safety practices to prevent injuries is commonplace, until recently, safeguarding the overall wellbeing of employees has traditionally been of lesser concern. In recent years more organisations have begun offering programmes to reduce stress and fatigue, however the survey shows the shadow cast by the post-Covid environment has led to continuing stress in the personal and professional lives of many employees.

Table 13 shows the current stress / anxiety levels among employees, using a scale of 1 (almost never stressful for most staff) to 5 (highly stressful for most staff). Overall, the 2022 figure of 3.14 was up on 2020 (3.09) and 2018 (3.08). As in previous years, the larger the business, the greater the stress levels reported. The 2022 survey shows that businesses are observing higher levels of stress among their staff compared to those surveyed in previous years. In 2014, the figure was considerably lower at 2.69.

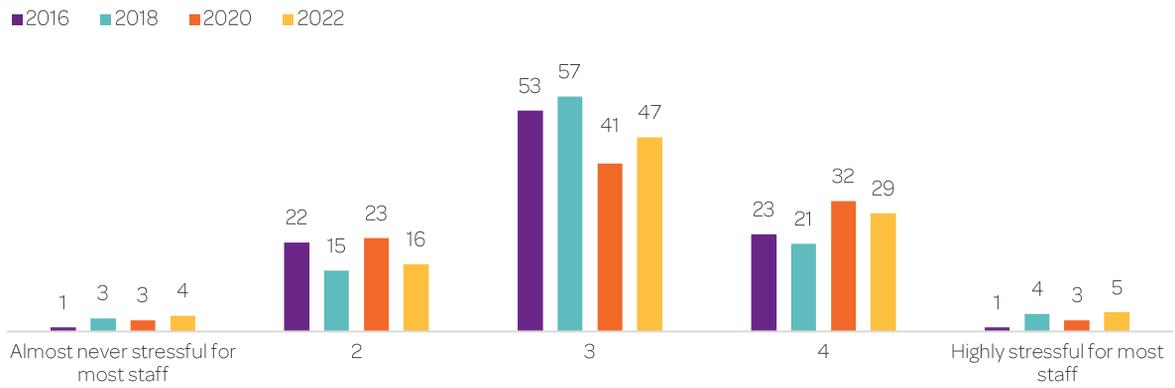
The shadow cast by the post-Covid environment has led to **continuing stress** in the personal and professional lives of many employees



Table 13: Rating general stress / anxiety levels among staff (2022)

Employee Count	Stress / anxiety levels amongst staff (mean)
1-5	3.13
6-9	2.56
10-49	3.14
50-99	3.56
100+	3.25
Fewer than 50	2.97
50 or more	3.29
All	3.14

Figure 12: Rating the general stress / anxiety levels amongst staff (2016, 2018, 2020, 2022) - %



When examining the last two surveys, it can be seen that Covid-19 played a key part in the 2020 experiences of stress, fatigue, and anxiety. Figure 12 shows that Covid-19 had a sizeable impact on the make-up of results in 2020, particularly the decline in the share of respondents taking a middling view of the general observed stress/anxiety levels of staff. For 2022, there was a decrease in the proportion providing ratings of '2' and '4,' although just over one third of all enterprises provided a rating of '4' or '5,' slightly down from 34.2 per cent in 2020.

Regarding a change in direction of stress levels, the results in Table 14 show a net +49.7 per cent of enterprises reported an observed increase in stress. While this was down from +64.7 per cent in 2020, it was still significantly up from +23.5 per cent in 2018, +22.9 per cent in 2016 and +14.3 per cent in 2014.

Table 14 also shows that for those with 50+ staff, the net result was +52.1 per cent, a result broadly similar to those with fewer than 50 staff (+46.9 per cent). This was not the case in 2020, with net result values of +77.1 per cent and +50.9 per cent, respectively. Overall, the net drop in stress from 2020 is largely attributed to a reduction in observed stress levels in larger enterprises.

Table 14: Change in direction of general stress levels staff experienced (2022) - %

Option	All (%)	Fewer than 50 staff (%)	50+staff (%)
Increased	57.7	56.3	58.9
Stayed roughly the same	32.1	32.8	31.5
Decreased	8.0	9.4	6.8
Net result	49.7	46.9	52.1

Table 15 shows that the tightening of the labour market was seen as at least partially responsible for around two thirds of respondents reporting an increase in staff stress levels.

Table 15: Tightening of the labour market causing existing staff taking on more responsibility a partial reason for an increase in general stress levels (2022) - %

Option	All (%)	Fewer than 50 staff (%)	50+ staff (%)
Yes	64.6	66.7	62.8
No	26.6	33.3	20.9
Unsure	8.9	0.0	16.3

WHAT IS MENTAL WELLBEING?

We define mental wellbeing as a state of wellbeing where a person can realise their own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their community.



Productivity matters

Staff wellness can profoundly impact the productivity of an organisation. Table 16 uses a scale of 1-5, where 1 = almost no effect and 5 = significant impact and shows that organisations of all sizes say wellness impacts the productivity of their employees to a significant degree.

Table 16: Wellness of staff impacting the productivity of organisations (2022)

Size of enterprise	Mean	Median
1-5	4.22	4.00
6-9	4.32	5.00
10-49	4.29	4.00
50-99	4.44	5.00
100+	4.36	4.00
Fewer than 50 staff	4.29	4.00
50 or more staff	4.37	4.50
All	4.33	4.00

The impact of staff wellness on productivity has grown in importance during recent surveys. The overall score of 4.33 for 2022 was considerably higher than for 2020 (3.91), which was up on 3.80 for 2018 and 3.82 for 2016. In addition, the 2022 results show minimal difference between organisations with greater than 50 staff and those with fewer than 50 staff. Overall, no matter their size, organisations are consistent in their view of the impact of wellness on the productivity of their workers.

A growing impact of staff wellness on productivity

Quiet quitting in New Zealand?

In relation to productivity, a relatively new phenomenon in the workplace has emerged: 'quiet quitting' a term which describes employees signalling their intentions to work within defined work hours and engage solely in activities within those hours.

This concept has likely existed for a long time, but it may not have been referred to by this specific term. However, in recent years as employment dynamics have evolved, factors such as increased mobility, the rise of working

from home/remote working and a stronger emphasis on employee wellbeing and job satisfaction may be influencing employee motivation. This has led to a greater awareness and discussion of silent resignations as a phenomenon in the modern workplace.

One in five organisations say 'quiet quitting' is occurring

Respondents were asked whether they were seeing moves by some employees towards quiet quitting. Table 17 shows that while the majority thought this was not the case, one in five enterprises were noticing this occurring, while a similar proportion were unsure. Given this is the first time this question has been asked, it is difficult to know what proportion of the workforce would likely have been doing this before. However, given the 2022 results it is essential that employers create a supportive work culture encouraging engagement, open communication, and feedback, to address any concerns promptly and minimise the likelihood of quiet quitting.

Table 17: Seeing moves by some employees towards quiet quitting (2022) - %

Option	All (%)	Fewer than 50 staff (%)	50+ staff (%)
Yes	21.5	19.4	23.3
No	60.0	70.1	50.7
Unsure	18.5	9.7	26.0



Main causes of stress and approaches to it

Figure 13 outlines the main causes of stress in the workplace for those organisations surveyed. 'Workload' remains the leading cause of stress/anxiety reported by all enterprises, with relatively similar results compared with 2020. However, unlike in 2020 when the second and third places were different for small versus large enterprises, 2022 saw 'long hours' as clearly the second main cause of work-related stress across both business sizes. It was also interesting to note that 'job uncertainty/redundancies' went from the top four to the bottom half of causes chosen. This is likely because the current tight labour market is easing staff concerns around potential redundancies.

Workload the leading cause of stress in the workplace



Figure 13: Main causes of work-related stress (2022) -%

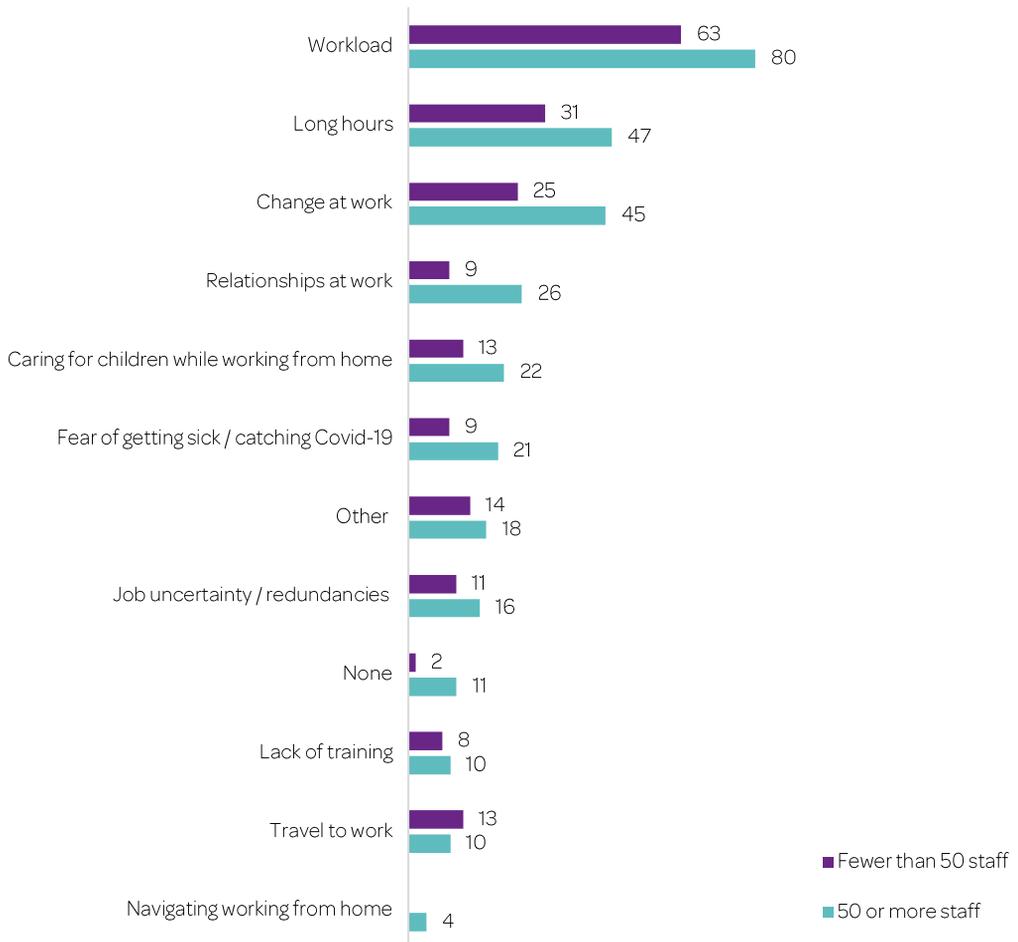


Figure 14 shows that for the main causes of non-work-related stress, 'financial concerns' is now the main contributor to stress, with 'relationships outside work' dropping to second place. In 2018, 'financial concerns' stood at 41.3 per cent across all enterprises, then at 54.3 per cent in 2020 and now at 62.0 per cent in 2022. This ongoing increase is likely due to increased cost of living pressures experienced by many households in recent times. Of the remaining non-work causes, Covid-19 remains in the mix, although understandably down from 2020.

Figure 14: Main causes of non-work-related stress (2022) - %

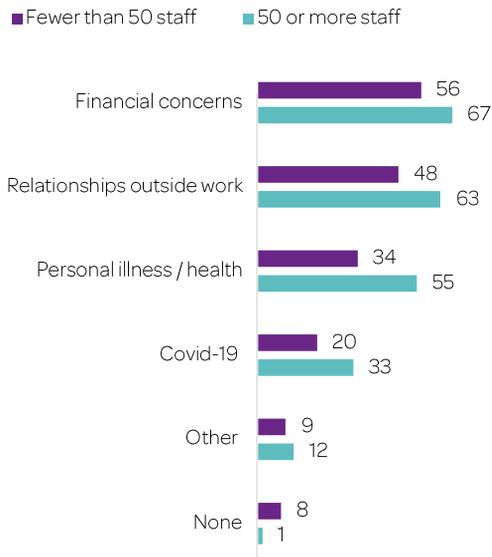
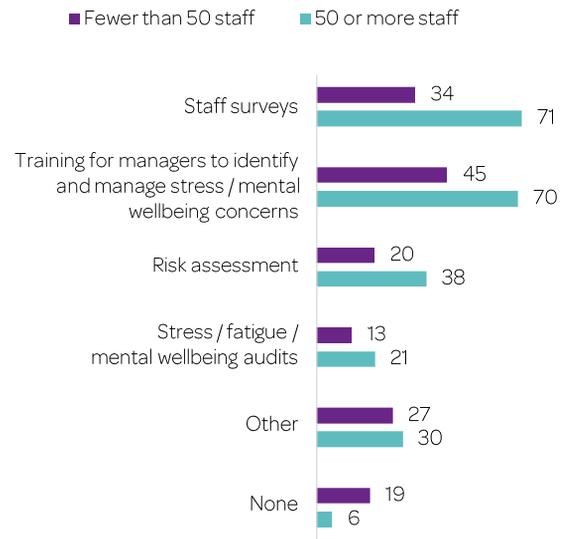


Figure 15 outlines the main practices businesses have in place to identify mental wellbeing/ stress. For all sizes of business, the top two spots were again 'staff surveys' and 'training for managers.' Compared with 2018, a higher proportion of smaller enterprises are now putting these top two practices into place, which is encouraging to see. Furthermore, prior to 2020 the share of smaller enterprises that did not have any practices in place to identify mental wellbeing/ stress ranged between 36.0 and 53.2 per cent. In 2020 this stood at 27.3 per cent and dropped further to 18.8 per cent for 2022.

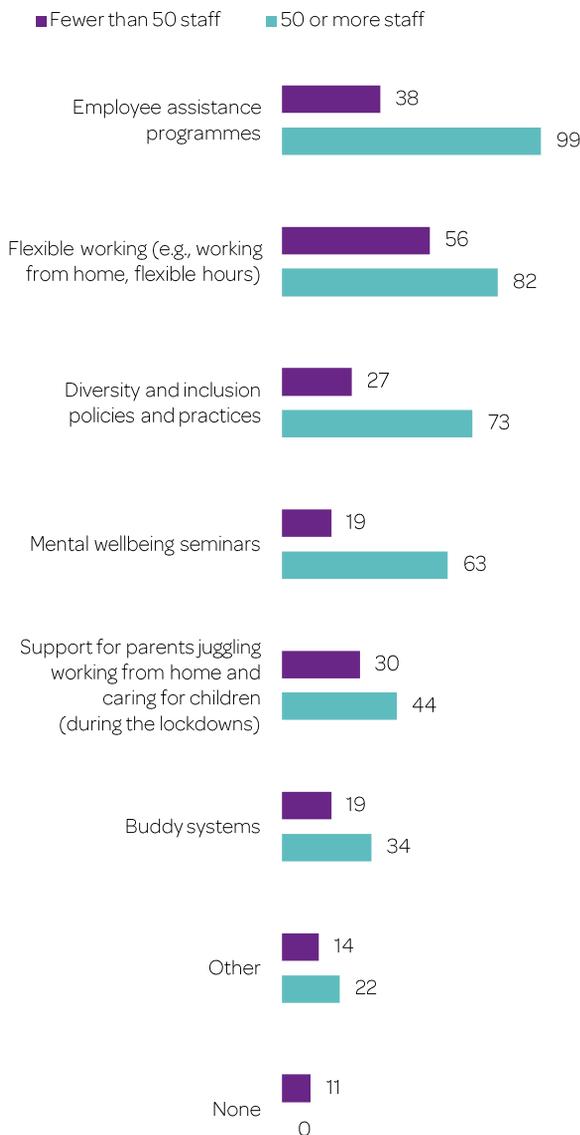
Figure 15: Practices in place to identify mental wellbeing / stress (2022) - %



It is still evident that larger businesses are more likely to have processes in place to identify stress and fatigue given their ability to implement such processes, and especially since, given their size, they are less able to have a close relationship with their larger number of workers. While any matching of key options between size of business is not expected, the fact that an ongoing increasing proportion of smaller businesses are undertaking one or more practices is encouraging to see.

Regarding approaches to support the mental wellbeing of employees, in Figure 16, 'employee assistance programmes' and 'flexible working' were tied for the most common approach across all enterprises at 70.1 per cent.

Figure 16: Approaches to support mental wellbeing of staff (2022) - %



Similar to the results in Figure 15, which show a drop in the proportion of smaller enterprises without any practices to identify mental wellbeing or stress, Figure 16 also shows a further drop in the proportion of smaller enterprises with no approaches in place to support mental wellbeing, standing at 10.9 per cent in 2022, compared with 14.5 per cent in 2020 and 24.0 per cent in 2018.

More organisations now have systems to support employee mental wellbeing

Table 18 shows on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (significantly) the rating organisations give to their role relating to the health and wellbeing of their people. In comparison with 2020, there are two things to note. First, the 2022 mean score of 4.33 across all sized enterprises shows a sizeable lift from 2020 (3.74). Also, whereas the mean score of small and large enterprises was almost identical in 2020, there is a larger difference in 2022, with both showing an improvement from 2020.

Table 18: Rating organisation's role in the health and wellbeing of staff (2022)

Staff Count	Role in health/wellbeing of staff (mean)	Role in health/wellbeing of staff (median)
Fewer than 50	4.16	4.00
50+ Staff	4.47	5.00
All	4.33	4.00

Enterprises were further asked how their rating of their role regarding staff health and wellbeing had changed in the past year. Overall, 43.4 per cent mentioned an increase, while 55.1 per cent indicated it had stayed roughly the same.

7. Relationships and communication with staff

Key findings



Over a quarter of organisations take a clearly defined and coordinated approach to gathering non work-related data, although this was down slightly on 2020. However, for those with some form of approach, there was another noticeable lift in how proactive they were with the data in 2022.



One in five private sector enterprises provide some form of process by which employees can own a stake in the business. By size of business, this was more weighted towards larger enterprises with over one in four having this option.



Larger enterprises focused on Employee Assistance Programmes and vaccinations as benefits to improve wellbeing, while smaller enterprises focused on education / training and flexible hours / working at home.



60.9 per cent of enterprises do not provide any form of health insurance for their staff but say a decrease in the cost of health insurance would prompt them to consider providing it.



The majority of enterprises take into account a duty of care for the wider family members of their employees, especially smaller enterprises where the relationship between employer and employee is often more personal.

Data to improve wellbeing

Enterprises typically collect a variety of work-related data on their employees, including bank account details, home addresses and emergency contact numbers. However, operating in a Covid-affected world with deeply changed ways of working means a clearly defined and coordinated approach to collecting non-work wellbeing-related information may be increasingly important.

Table 19 shows that in 2022, 26.5 per cent of enterprises took a formal approach to gathering non-work data. This was down from 27.6 per cent in 2020, but still up from 17.2 per cent in 2018, 22.9 per cent in 2016 and 19.5 per cent in 2014. The proportion of organisations that said they did not take a formal approach to gathering non work-related data lifted from 25.0 per cent in 2020 to 30.1 per cent in 2022.

Table 19: Enterprises having a clearly defined and coordinated approach to collecting non-work-related information of staff (2022) - %

Type	Yes	Sometimes	No	Don't know
Fewer than 50 staff	11.1	54.0	31.7	3.2
50 or more staff	39.7	27.4	28.8	4.1
All	26.5	39.7	30.1	3.7

When broken down by size of enterprise, the results showed a combination of different and matching movements in comparison with 2020. The proportion of both larger and smaller businesses that did not take a formal approach to data-gathering increased from 2020. However, while there was a drop in the proportion of smaller enterprises taking a formal approach, for enterprises with 50+ staff there was a slight increase from 2020. In addition, while just over half of smaller enterprises sometimes collect information (almost the same result as in 2020), a large drop in data-gathering by larger businesses was recorded, down from more than a third to more than a quarter over that time period.



Despite the relative drop in a clearly defined and coordinated approach to data-gathering by respondents in 2022 compared with 2020, there was another noticeable lift in how proactive they were with the data in 2022. [Table 20](#) shows that on a scale of 1-5 where 5 is 'very proactive' and 1 is 'hardly ever used,' the mean value in 2022 was 3.33. This was the highest value recorded over the history of the survey, given previous scores of 3.11 (2020), 2.79 (2018), 3.03 (2016) and 2.92 (2014). In particular, the mean score for larger enterprises of 3.43 for 2022 was noticeably higher than in 2020 (3.07).

Table 20: How proactive are those that collect non work-related data in improving the wellbeing of their staff (2022)

Type	Mean	Median
Fewer than 50 staff	3.21	3.00
50 or more staff	3.43	3.00
All	3.33	3.00



Wider family matters

For the first time in the survey, respondents were asked to what extent their organisation takes into account a duty of care towards the wider family members of its employees. [Table 21](#) shows responses on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (significantly). The results show that most enterprises take this into account, especially smaller enterprises where the relationship between employer and employee is often more personal. More than half (57.3 per cent) of all respondents selected a score of 4 or 5 for this question.

Table 21: Extent of taking into account a duty of care for wider family members of their employees (2022)

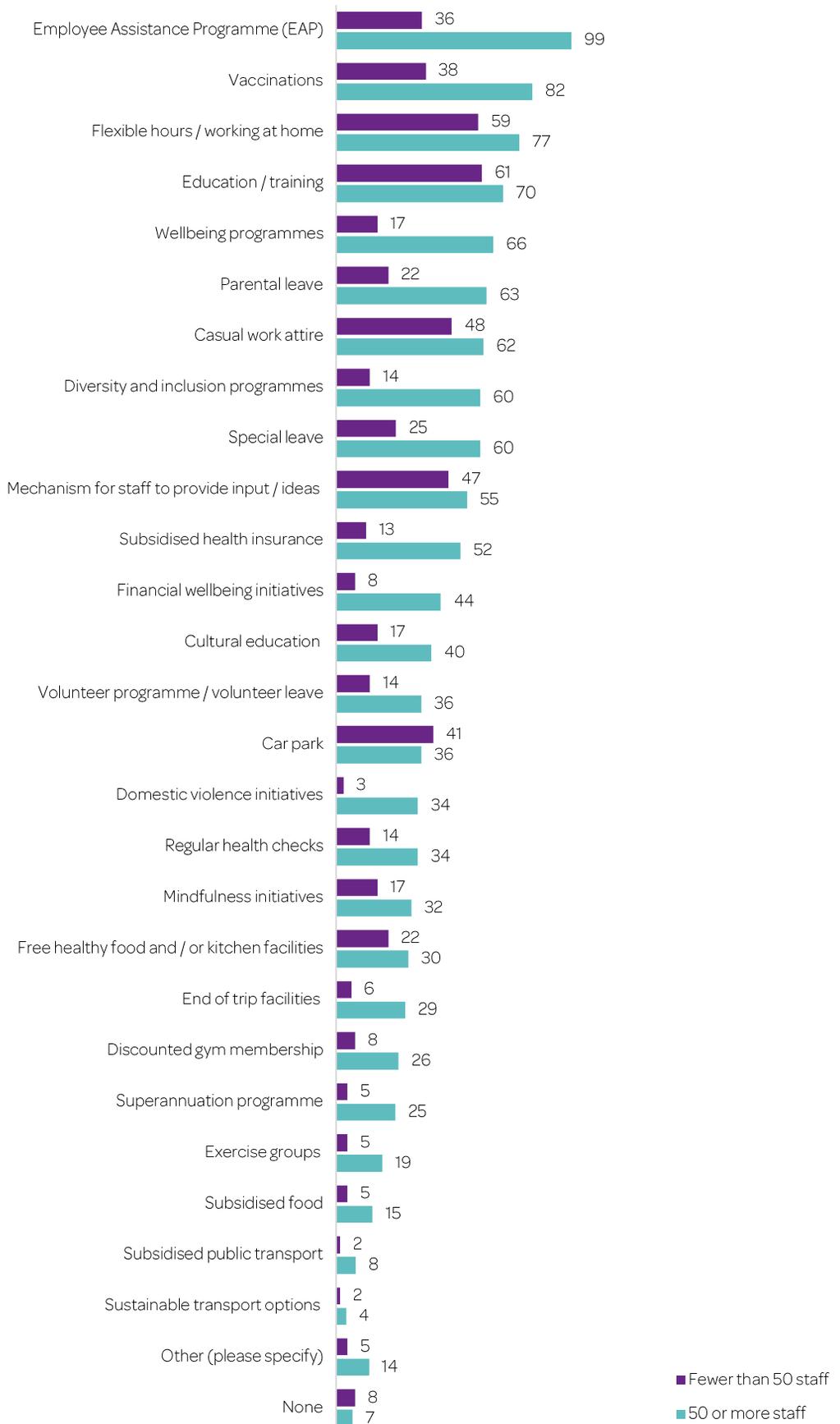
Option	Mean	Median
1-5	3.67	4.0
6-9	3.94	4.0
10-49	3.24	3.0
50-99	3.56	4.0
100+	3.52	4.0
Fewer than 50 staff	3.51	4.0
50 or more staff	3.53	4.0
All	3.52	4.0

Benefits to improve wellbeing

Larger organisations are typically more likely than smaller ones to use other options alongside flexible hours as part of their family friendly policies.

[Figure 17](#) shows the general benefits enterprises provide to improve the wellbeing of their staff. A shift in focus away from more direct Covid-related benefits has meant some obvious differences in 2022 compared with 2020, although the results are broadly similar to patterns in previous years.

Figure 17: Benefits provided to improve the wellbeing of staff (2022) -%



While the overall top four benefits stayed the same in 2022 as in 2020, there continues to be a clear difference between small and large enterprises in terms of the priorities assigned among the top four. Again, this is not unexpected given that the larger the business, the more resources it can direct to various initiatives. While Employee Assistance Programmes and vaccinations were ranked first and second respectively for larger enterprises, the same benefits did not even feature in the top five for smaller enterprises during 2022.

The other noticeable difference for smaller enterprises in particular was a lower overall level of benefits provided in 2022 compared with 2020. Six options for 2020 were undertaken by more than half of smaller businesses, which compares with only two in 2022. Given only one benefit was provided by more than half of smaller enterprises in 2018, the 2022 results may reflect more of a return to prior patterns given the Covid-19 effect on businesses during 2020.

A share of the pie

Another new question for the 2022 survey was whether enterprises have a formal process through which they can own a stake in the company, through shares or profit-sharing opportunities. Excluding public sector respondents that are unable to provide such options, Table 22 shows that around one in five private sector enterprises provides some form of process by which employees can own a stake in the business. By size of business, this was more weighted towards larger enterprises with over one in four having this option.

Table 22: Employees have a formal process through which to own a stake in the company through shares or profit-sharing opportunities (2022) - %

Type	Yes	No	Don't know
Fewer than 50 staff	11.1	88.9	0.0
50 or more staff	27.7	70.8	1.5
All	19.5	79.7	0.8

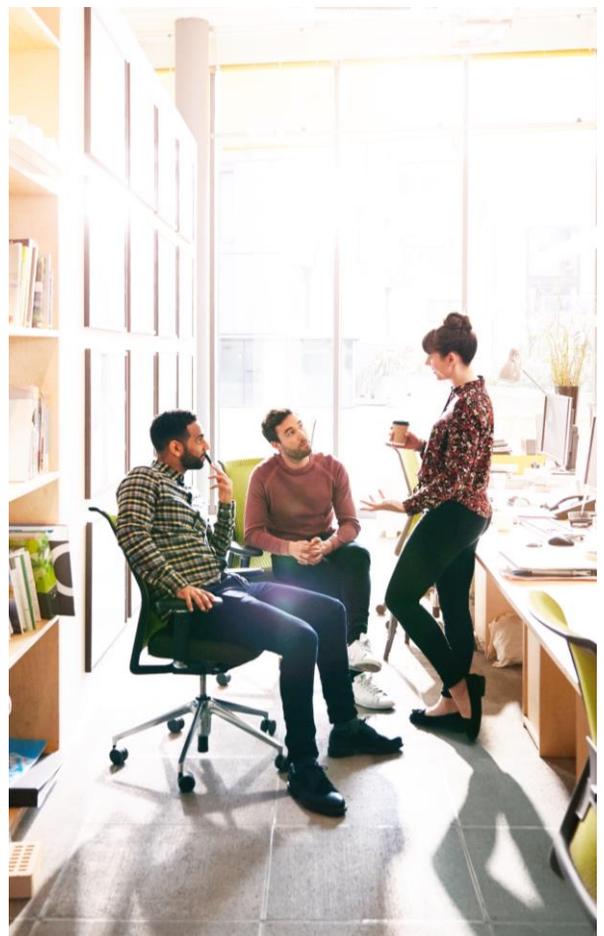
A clear break

Respondents were again asked whether they actively encourage staff to take breaks. The 2022 results in Table 23 show a lift in such encouragement from 2020, although the combined options of 'every day' and 'most days' was almost identical compared with 2020 and 2018.

By size, those with 50+ staff showed very similar patterns with 2020, while in 2022 smaller enterprises saw a clear lift in 'every day' encouragement to take a break.

Table 23: Extent to which business actively encourages staff to take breaks (2022) - %

Option	All (%)	Fewer than 50 staff (%)	50 or more Staff (%)
Every day	69.9	68.8	70.8
Most days	15.4	14.1	16.7
Some days	8.8	9.4	8.3
Never	2.2	4.7	0.0
Don't know	3.7	3.1	4.2



Health insurance as a benefit for employees

For the first time since 2016, respondents were asked whether they provided health insurance for their staff. Table 24 shows overall 60.9 per cent answering in the negative, which was up on 58.7 per cent in 2016.

As in previous years when specific questions on health insurance were asked, larger businesses are more likely to have some form of health insurance for their staff, while smaller businesses do not and do not intend to for the future.



Table 24: Do you provide health insurance for your staff? (2022)

	Fewer than 50 staff	50+ staff	All
Yes, fully subsidised for all employees	8.1	29.6	19.5
Yes, fully subsidised but only a proportion of them	0.0	5.6	3.0
Yes, partially subsidised for all employees	8.1	18.3	13.5
Yes, partially subsidised but only a proportion of them	1.6	4.2	3.0
No, but would consider it in the future	37.1	28.2	32.3
No, we do not see it as something we would provide now or in the future	45.2	14.1	28.6

Provision of health insurance – cost is key

Employers who do not provide health insurance were asked what would prompt them to consider providing it. Table 25 shows that a decrease in the cost of health insurance was the clear factor across enterprises, with more than half selecting that option. This was followed by the removal of fringe benefit tax (FBT) on employer-subsidised health insurance and evidence that it assists in retaining staff.



Table 25: Factors that would cause an enterprise to consider providing health insurance for their employees (2022)

Option	Fewer than 50 staff	50+ staff	All
A decrease in the cost of health insurance	52.7%	54.1%	53.4%
Removal of FBT on employer-subsidised health insurance	34.5%	42.6%	38.8%
Evidence that it assists in retaining staff due to perceived value as a benefit	25.5%	37.7%	31.9%
Contributes to building employer brand	10.9%	36.1%	24.1%
Evidence that it reduces absenteeism	21.8%	32.8%	27.6%
An approach by a health insurer to discuss the fundamentals of health insurance, policies, benefits, and wellness programmes	10.9%	18.0%	14.7%
Other	18.2%	16.4%	17.2%



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