Job quality in Ireland

First findings from the UCD Working in Ireland Survey, 2021

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Section 1: Introduction

Our jobs are a central feature of our lives. They provide us with an income, an opportunity to acquire new skills, to advance our careers, and occasions to work with and learn from other people. They may also grant us the autonomy to decide when and how to perform our work, and they may permit us flexible work schedules so that we might better balance the relation between our personal lives and our working lives. Where our jobs possess these attributes, we are likely to regard them to be 'good jobs' and, where they are absent, we will probably view them to be 'poor jobs'.

It is reasonable, then, to claim that the more good jobs there are, the better for everyone. Having a good job not only enhances a person's well-being and life satisfaction, but happy healthy workers enjoying their work are also more productive workers and are less likely to go sick or leave their jobs. This is a win for businesses and customers who benefit from dealing with contented workers (Layard and De Neve, 2023; Teeney *et al.*, 2016). It is also a win for the state: good jobs enhance the productive performance of an economy that, in turn, contribute to creating yet more higher-paying jobs and to generating higher tax revenues.

Yet, large numbers of people are unhappy at work, or at least many people are least happy spending time at work when compared to any other activity they might routinely be engaged in (Layard, 2020, ch.7). However, we know, too, this is not the case for everyone. Some people have really good jobs and they enjoy being at work. Why is this? How is that some people have good jobs and others do not? What are the attributes of a 'good job' and a 'poor job' and who are those who have the good and poor jobs?

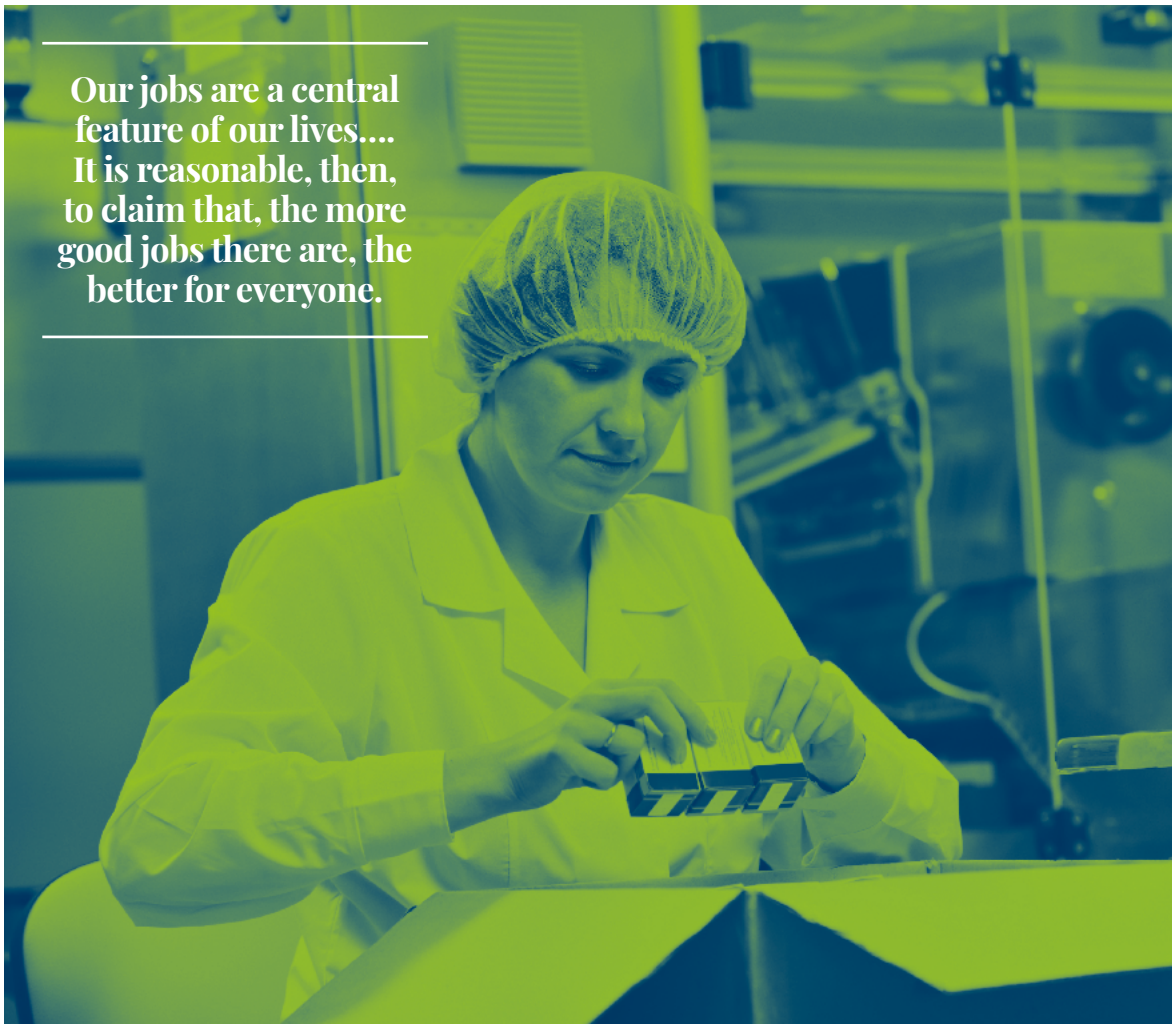
Pursuing answers to these questions provides us – as researchers – with an imperative to study job quality. Employers, too, have a keen interest in knowing the answers, particularly in respect of identifying the attributes of a good job and the links in turn with employee productivity and retention. As will trade unions for whom answers to these questions will help inform them in their role in guarding against the degradation of the quality of people's jobs and employment. Politicians and public servants, too, will benefit; meeting people's needs at work is not the sole responsibility of employers. The State also has a central role through implementing laws and regulations in respect of how people's jobs might be governed, and also in its role as an employer and – if somewhat more indirectly - in establishing the tenor of what is acceptable as to how people should be treated in their jobs.

In this report, we examine the quality of people's jobs in Ireland. We draw from data collected in UCD's Working in Ireland Survey (WIIS), which was administered in the summer and early autumn of 2021. This was a period during which the State was wrestling with controlling the spread of the COVID-19 virus. It follows two previous reports, the first of which looked at the work circumstances of essential workers and their well-being during COVID-19 (Belizon, Geary and MacFlynn, 2023), the other

examined the consequences of remote working for those workers who were compelled to work at home during the pandemic (Geary and Belizon, 2022). The current report's focus is to assess the quality of jobs in the Irish labour market. We identify where the good and poor jobs are and who occupies them. We also estimate the proportion of the workforce that occupies jobs in either of these categories and other jobs in between of varying levels of quality.

An analysis of this depth and rigour has never been undertaken before in Ireland. It is critically important that it is conducted given the links, as we mentioned above, between job quality and workers' health and well-being as well as the productive performance of an economy. Relatedly, our findings are important because they will help employers and policy-makers to better appreciate what actions need to be taken to improve people's job quality. The report also provides us with a statistical and analytical rigorous benchmark against which future changes in the quality of people's jobs in Ireland might be assessed.

We begin our analysis with a consideration of why and how job quality is seen to be important.



Section 2: Job quality is important

The quality of people's work is not a new concern, although interest among policymakers has tended to wax and wane depending often on the state of the labour market and of the power of those actors who advocate for better quality jobs. In recent years, however, governments and policymakers have come increasingly and consistently to endorse the creation of good quality jobs. They do so because good jobs are identified as one of the principle means for resolving many of the challenges countries confront, including the requirement to generate strong, sustainable and inclusive growth; to provide necessary revenues to support a nation's tax base; to sustain people's quality of life and well-being; and to underpin democratic institutions and governance.[1] The ILO's 2019 ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work declares: 'It is imperative to act with urgency to seize the opportunities and address the challenges to shape a fair, inclusive and secure future of work with full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all' (p2).

In Ireland, the importance of job quality has been recognised recently with the National Economic and Social Council's publication of a secretariat paper on what it refers to as the "good jobs agenda" (NESC, 2021). The paper reviews an extensive literature on various conceptualisations of "good jobs" motivated by a policy ambition to improve job quality as a means to increase productivity, performance and innovation and, ultimately, to reduce labour market inequality, improve living standards and personal well-being in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Drawing on interviews with key stakeholders, the report finds strong support for an all-island approach to the creation of "good-jobs".

In Northern Ireland, a report, entitled "Good Jobs in Northern Ireland", which was prepared by the New Economics Foundation for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, argued for a new focus to be placed on the creation of "higher quality jobs" that provide a decent wage as well as decent quality work as a means of addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality in NI (NEF, 2015). One of its recommendations included developing a composite measure of good jobs that would include measures of job quality and well-being. More recently again the Northern Ireland Executive has also given focus to the Good Jobs Agenda and in the New Decade New Approach agreement (2020) there is a focus on work quality, and the creation and development of better jobs and protecting workers' rights. So, too, in the Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework (2021) there is a commitment to creating and sustaining better jobs by addressing job insecurity, low wages and flexibility and by giving employees a voice. This ambition to create good jobs is linked to two strategic outcomes: first, that everyone can reach their potential; and second, that it acts as a means of retaining and attracting skilled workers to Northern Ireland.

While the Irish Government has not explicitly endorsed or committed itself to adopting a national job quality framework, it has committed itself to advance policies which will increase the number of both "quality jobs" and "sustainable jobs" in the creation of what has come to be referred to as "Building a Good Jobs Economy" (Government of Ireland, 2020).[2]

There is a long tradition of state funding for survey research of work, employment and job quality in Britain, most especially the Workplace Employment Relations Surveys (WERS) conducted over many decades that include employer, employee and employee representative surveys, as well as the Skills and Employment Survey (SES) series (Felstead et al., 2015) which, since 1986, has been conducted on seven occasions. Further, the UK Government commissioned the Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices with the stated objective of making all work in the UK 'fair and decent with realistic scope for development and fulfilment' (Taylor, 2017: 6). In addition, the devolved administrations of Wales and Scotland have pursued a number of initiatives to promote the creation of "fair work". In Wales, this has involved the collection of data to inform public policymaking as well as the establishment of the Fair Work Commission (2019). The Fair Work Convention (2016) in Scotland has also recommended conducting various research projects to measure job quality. The Fair Work Commission defined fair work as including fair reward; employee voice and collective representation; security and flexibility; opportunity for access; growth and progression; safe, healthy and inclusive work environment; and legal rights given substantive effect. The Scottish Fair Work Convention similarly emphasised the need for effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect. However, as noble as these policy ambitions are, in lacking legislative power over employment, both regions' aspirations for job quality have seen limited translation into practice (Warhurst et al., 2022).

Various international organisations have highlighted the importance of high-quality jobs. For example, the attainment of "decent work" was endorsed by the United Nations in 2015 as an integral element of its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[3] In the same year, the G20 group of nations signed a declaration to actively strengthen job quality by promoting the quality of earnings, reducing labour market insecurity, and fostering good working conditions and healthy workplaces. The ILO, too, over many decades has advocated for better jobs. For it, "decent work" was defined as a set of principles that engendered "productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity". Elaborating further, its Director General stressed: "The goal is not just the creation of jobs, but the creation of jobs of acceptable quality. The quantity of employment cannot be divorced from its quality. All societies have a notion of Decent Work, but the quality of employment can mean many things. It could relate to different forms of work, and also to different conditions of work, as well as feelings of value and satisfaction."[4]

Since the early 2000s, the promotion of better-quality jobs has been a central objective of the European Union's employment strategy (European Council, 2000; European Commission, 2003; 2012). EU policymakers have been particularly concerned with creating sustainable employment which in turn is identified as the basis for developing a skilled workforce, promoting job quality and lifelong learning (European Commission, 2010). There has also been a growing realisation at EU level of the social costs associated with poor job quality and, in addition, of the requirement to pay it greater attention if, in a context of prolonged life-expectancy, an ageing workforce is to be persuaded to remain active in the workforce for longer (Green and Mostafa, 2012). More recently, the European Pillar of Social Rights, endorsed by the EU in 2017, commits to achieving fair working conditions and has prompted a number of initiatives such as EU legislation on transparent and predictable working conditions (2019), work-life balance (2019) adequate minimum wages and collective bargaining (2022), and the 2021 proposal for a directive on improving working conditions in platform work amongst others.

In parallel with this growing interest in job quality, a diverse range of statistical indicators to monitor job and employment quality have been developed using various survey instruments, including the Commission's funding of a large-scale survey series called the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS). [5] The data provided by this survey has been of enormous benefit in tracking job quality, identifying trends over time and differences across countries.

The European Trade Union Confederation, too, has pushed hard to have job quality positioned as a primary concern. Its research arm, the European Trade Union Institute, developed a synthetic job quality index based on a variety of dimensions (wages, non-standard forms of employment, working time and work-life balance, working conditions and job security, skills and career development and collective interest representation) which it uses to measure job quality across the EU over time (Leschke and Watt, 2008; Piasna, 2023).

In line with the priority now accorded to job quality, various countries have developed measures of their nation's well-being, which include dimensions of work and employment, that can then be placed alongside traditional economic indicators like growth in gross domestic product. To aid countries in this task, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) developed a set of guidelines for national statistics offices in the collection of data.

Informed by the OECD framework, Ireland's Central Statistics Office developed a Well-being Information Hub which reports on a range of well-being indicators. However, only two – mean weekly earnings and whether people work long hours – could be said to relate to job quality. The others include the labour utilisation rate and the employment rate and relate more to a 'more' jobs criterion. On their own, however, the job quality indicators are too few to provide any kind of comprehensive measurement of job quality in Ireland and, as such, are not likely to have any discernible policy implications.

Section 3: Defining job quality

By and large, many people would, if asked, define a good quality job as one that pays well and provides its incumbents with personal fulfilment and job satisfaction. At one level this understanding is adequate, and indeed measures of earnings and job satisfaction are widely used, particularly by economists, as proxies or surrogate indicators of job quality.

Unfortunately, however, they are of limited value and do not get us very far, certainly when used on their own. Measures of job satisfaction are particularly problematic indicators of job quality as they are shaped by adaptive preferences, personal expectations, societal norms and points of reference (Green, 2006; Muñoz de Bustillo *et al*., 2011; Piasna *et al*., 2017). To put it prosaically, a bad job may be willingly accepted by its incumbents, and they may even report high levels of job satisfaction (Brown *et al*., 2012). They may even be more likely to report being satisfied if the alternative is even worse again (Green, 2021). To report levels of employees' levels of job satisfaction, then, tells us little of the objective features of a job and its quality and, moreover, renders comparisons across occupations, companies, sectors, and countries, as well as over time particularly difficult and problematic.

The requirement, as we see it, is first to recognise the multi-faceted nature of job quality and accordingly to use multiple measures of job attributes; and second, to use objective constitutive indicators of job quality. The latter are of two forms. The first are 'traditional' economic indicators that include pay levels, contract terms, job security and prospects, working hours and other pecuniary benefits such as the provision of paid sick leave, an employer-contributary pension and medical insurance coverage. These features equate to extrinsic features of a job. The second are non-economic indicators that are derived from workers' own assessment of the attributes of their job. Many of these relate to intrinsic aspects of the job. We desist from describing these as subjective assessments. They are derived from workers' own objective evaluation – and they are best placed to provide such a judgement – of their work conditions. Our non-economic intrinsic indicators are drawn from previous work in this area in economics and sociology. They include measures in respect of the organisation of work, working time quality, job security and prospects, skill acquisition and training, employee voice and representation, and social supports (Blanchflower et al., 2022; Green and Mostafa, 2012; Holman, 2013; Holman and Wall, 2002; Parker and Wall, 1999). In combining both objective economic and non-economic indicators of job quality we follow the example of seminal work in the field (Green, 2006; Kalleberg, 2011; Muñoz de Bustillo *et al*., 2011).

Our understanding of what constitutes a good or a bad job is guided in part too, by research in organisational psychology and, in particular, by the job demands-control (JDC) model (Karasek, 1979), later reformulated as the job demands-control-support (JDCS) model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Karasek and Theorell, 1990). Central to this model's conceptualisation is that a job is composed of a combination of demands and

resources. With this formulation, then, all jobs are made up of both positive and negative attributes. The combination and interaction of negative and positive attributes, it is argued, determines the overall quality of a job, with good jobs being primarily comprised of 'positive' or good attributes, and bad jobs the opposite. The model postulates that where a worker encounters a demanding work context that includes, for example, high workloads, time pressure, long working hours, and an inability to disconnect from work, their potential negative effects can be mitigated by the provision of specific job resources that enhance workers' control and autonomy over their work, and that provide for training and supportive work relationships. However, without the presence of such "buffers"; that is, the discretion to make decisions about the conduct of one's work and/or in the absence of good working relations with colleagues and management, the demands of a job are likely to lead to yet more stress and ill-health, such that then we can talk about the existence of poor jobs that are characterised by "high strain" (Green, 2006; Warr, 2007).

From our reading of this very diverse and complex literature, our conceptualisation of job quality prioritises, for the main part, the characteristics of a job that are held to meet the needs of a worker and have the potential to enhance or impair their health and well-being. While it is accepted that the needs workers choose to prioritise will vary, a good job is one that allows for a wide range of needs to be met (Green and Mostafa, 2012). We can define a good job, then, as one that: pays well; the demands are not excessive; provides employment security; offers opportunities for career development and advancement; affords discretion over how work is organised; provides social support from management and co-workers, as well as union representation; permits participation in organisational decision-making; is safe to undertake; and provides for work-life balance. The presence of such job attributes is then conducive to maintaining or improving a person's health and well-being (Albin et al., 2022; Green, 2008; Green *et al*., 2016).

By corollary, a poor job is defined as one that does not possess the attributes that constitute a good job. So, the pay is poor, the work is excessively demanding, the hours of work are long, there is little job security, there is little opportunity to have a say in how one's work is performed, there are few training opportunities and there are few social supports, and limited opportunities to rest and recuperate (Green and Mustafa, 2012; Muñoz de Bustillo *et al*., 2011).

In between these polar points of good and poor jobs are a range of types of jobs which possess a mix of good and poor job attributes. Indeed, most jobs are likely to occupy such in-between positions. Thus, the measurement task – as opposed to a conceptual requirement – is to reveal the variable ways in which good and bad job characteristics combine within particular job types or across particular sections of the occupational structure. By pursuing such an analysis that goes beyond a simple binary classification of good and bad jobs we intend to provide an estimate of the overall quality of a particular job; that is, by examining and revealing the various ways in which job resources and demands may mix within particular occupations and sectors of the economy. This a key motivation for us – to identify what job types exist and whether there may be different

types of high- and low-quality jobs as it has been with others (Holman, 2013; Karasek and Theorell, 1990; Valeyre *et al.*, 2009).

In sum, then, conceiving of and measuring job quality is not simply a matter of enquiring of people whether they are satisfied with their job, or whether their job preferences are being met or at what level they are paid. It is much more than that. The requirement, we argue, is to recognise the multi-faceted nature of job quality and to use a variety of objective indicators of the characteristics of a job to see whether they meet workers' needs. Importantly, too, the assessment of workers' job quality is undertaken independent of workers' personal circumstances and the state of the external labour market. Where workers occupy jobs where good job characteristics are absent or minimal, we can then, expect that those workers will have, or to be at risk of acquiring, poor health and well-being when compared to workers employed in high-quality jobs.

The requirement, we argue, is to recognise the multi-faceted nature of job quality and to use a variety of objective indicators of the characteristics of a job to see whether they meet workers' needs

Section 4: Our framework of job quality

In this section we provide an account of the framework we use to assess job quality in the current study. The framework, as summarised in Table 1 below, includes five dimensions, split into 13 sub-dimensions. The dimensions are listed in the first column. The first is an extrinsic dimension and refers to earnings and other features of the compensation system. The remaining four dimensions are all intrinsic dimensions. Each dimension has a number of sub-dimensions or job attributes that are detailed in the second column. Each one provides a measure of a specific aspect of job quality. A further thirty-nine indicators are used in the operationalisation of the job quality framework. The latter are detailed in the right hand columns of Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Table 1: Overview of Job Quality Dimensions and Sub-dimensions

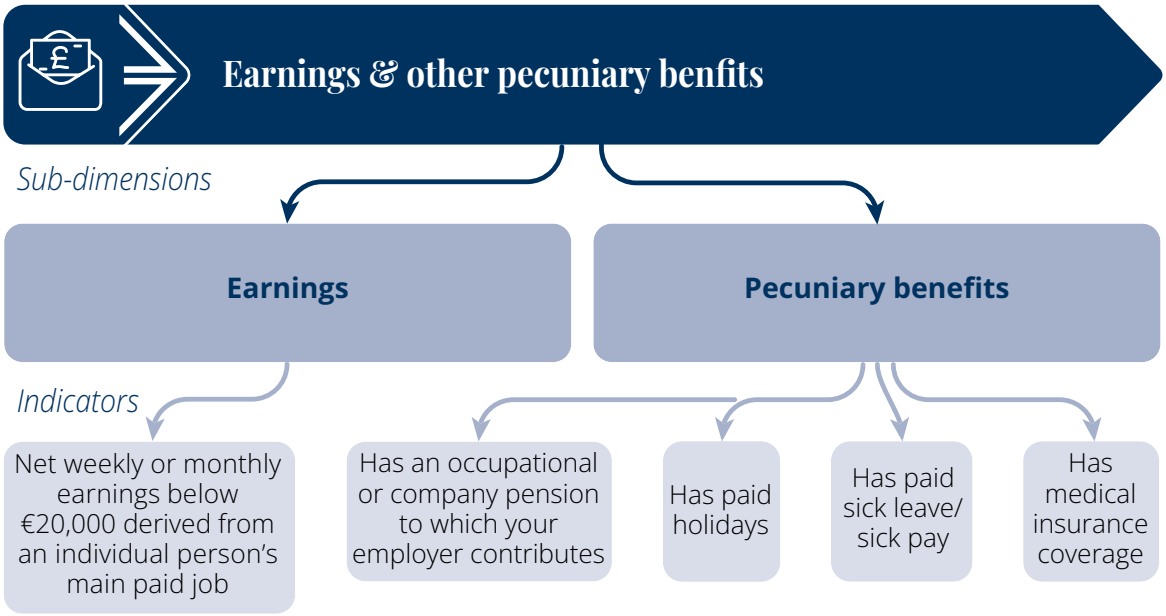
Job Dimension	*Job Sub-dimensions*
Earnings & other pecuniary benfits	• Earnings • Pecuniary benefits
Security & prospects	• Present security of employment and earnings • Prospects for future employment and earnings
Work organisation & support	• Work effort and intensity • Work autonomy • Trade union representation • Support of line management & quality of employee-management relations
Skills & training	• Job training provision • Skills utilisation and development
Work-life balance	• Duration of working hours • Duration of working days • Work-life autonomy • Work-life spillage/conflict

A number of analytical decisions were made to construct the various sub-dimensions. While the specific details in terms of the thresholds and cut-offs used in combining the different indicators to create summary measures capturing each sub-dimension will be detailed under each of the sub-headings below, the following criteria were applied across all. For each sub-dimension, the indicators were allocated to their thematic dimension and assigned as either a demand or a resource. This involved two steps. First, each job

quality indicator was converted into a binary variable (0/1) based on respondents' answers, with consideration given to the substantive meaning of the indicators. Second, a demand or resource summary indicator was created for each sub-dimension by compiling the binary indicators and establishing a cut-off point for workers' being assigned as exposed to a particular demand or being provided with a particular resource. We now turn to go through the various dimensions and sub-dimensions in turn and detail how indicators and sub-dimensions were operationalised to measure job quality.

Earnings and other pecuniary benefits

Table 2a: Earnings and Pecuniary Benefits: Sub-dimensions & Indicators



Earnings

WIIS's pay data were captured via earnings bands as the net monthly or weekly earnings derived from an individual person's main paid job. Respondents were advised that their reported earnings data should include all earnings from their main paid job, including any additional payments derived from overtime, tips, bonuses, etc., but minus tax and social security contributions. Table 2b below shows the range of earnings bands which were provided to respondents.

Table 2b: Earnings bands

€599 or less per month, or €139 or less per week
€600 - €829 per month, or €140 - €192 per week
€830 - €1,649 per month, or €193 - €384 per week
€1,650 - €2,469 per month, or €385 - €575 per week
€2,470 - €3,299 per month, or €576 - €767 per week
€3,300 - €4,124 per month, or €768 - €959 per week
€4,125 - €5,369 per month, or €960 - €1,248 per week
€5,370 - €7,429 per month, or €1,249 - €1,729 per week
€7,430 to €10,319 per month, or €1,730 - €2,400 per week
€10,320 or more per month, or €2,401 or more per week

The decision to collect earnings data in this way was based on a consideration of a number of competing factors, including the prioritisation of acquiring objective job quality data, cost implications, and respondent burden. Our primary aim was to collect data that captured a worker's monetary return from work, rather than to use subjective measures, such as level of satisfaction with earnings.

However, a shortcoming of our earnings data derives from their having been collected via a range of earnings bands and, as such, do not provide a specific earnings figure for each individual worker. Whilst the implications of this for the lay reader may not be immediately clear, it does pose statistical limitations in terms of identifying the median or mean earnings. It also restricts us from identifying hourly earnings for workers, as the survey respondents provide their earnings in weekly or monthly earnings' bands.

Further, our earnings data is not comparable to data collected via surveys designed specifically to gather such information, such as the Central Statistics Office's Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs survey or the Structure of Earnings survey. These surveys utilise multiple questions and have various checking procedures in place (such as the respondent providing evidence via a payslip) to confirm the accuracy of reported earnings. Collecting earnings data at this level of accuracy in a survey such as WIIS where multiple other issues are examined would however impose considerable respondent burden and would also be considerably more expensive to administer. That said, it is worth noting that an assessment of the proportions of workers found to have earnings below the living wage in WIIS is broadly in line with other recent studies that examine earnings quality via concepts such as the living wage and which use EU-SILC Irish data, such as Doris *et al* (2022).

For the purposes of the WIIS, we define poor earnings quality as those who earn under €20,000 net per annum. We select this threshold because it aligns closely with the net earnings which a full-time employee working for the minimum wage would earn. A person aged 20 or more earning the 2021 minimum wage of €10.20 per hour, working full time (39 hours per week) before deductions of income tax, USC and PRSI can expect to earn €20,685 per annum. Total deductions in a year amount to €1,671, made up of

€837 in income tax, €600 in pay-related social insurance and a Universal Social Charge of €234. Take-home pay after deductions is then €19,014 per annum, €1,584 a month or €366 a week. Our measure roughly correlates, too, to the Central Statistics Office (CSO) minimum wage measure of €20,685 per annum gross, which amounts to €19,014 net. The Living Wage in 2020/21 was €12.30 an hour, which over a 39-hour week and over 52 weeks comes out at €24,944 gross and €21,832 net per annum. This wage level is also close to our threshold figure below which we regard to constitute poor earnings.

Pecuniary benefits

Here we enquire whether respondents have access to various pecuniary benefits other than pay that include an occupational or company pension scheme, paid sick leave, paid holiday leave or medical insurance coverage.

At the time we conducted our fieldwork, an employee had no legal right to be paid while they were on sick leave from work. This has since changed; an employee is now legally entitled to three days' sick pay per annum and rising to five days on 1 January 2024. However, there is no legal obligation on an employer to set up or contribute to a pension scheme or to provide medical insurance. All employees, be they full-time, part-time, temporary or casual, however, are legally entitled to paid annual leave. Whether they receive paid holiday leave in practice may be another issue.

The benefits of sick pay are self-evident: it provides a (replacement) income while one is unable to attend work. An employer contributory pension is often identified as a form of deferred income. If one is established, and is contributed to by an employer, the employee receives a tax-free lump sum (within certain limits) and pension income upon retirement. With respect to medical insurance, an employer may pay the total cost or a percentage of their employees' health insurance. While this is a taxable benefit for employees, the tax liability is a relatively small amount compared to the benefit employees enjoy from having health insurance coverage. Each of these benefits are substantial contributions to the financial needs of employees and provide peace of mind when they retire or should they fall sick.

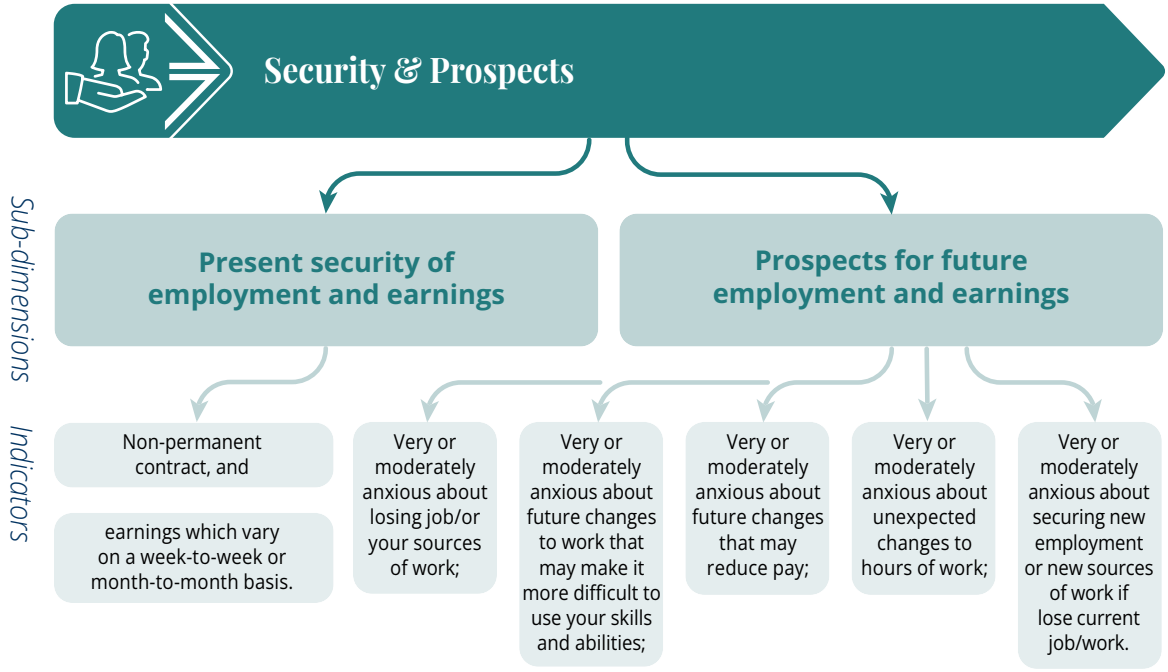
We define good pecuniary benefits as the presence of two or more of these payments, and poor pecuniary benefits as the absence of all these payments or where only one of the four are provided.

If the respondent indicated that they were either very anxious or moderately anxious across three of the five indicators, they were considered to have 'insecure prospects for future employment'

Security and prospects

Present and future employment and earnings security is our second job quality dimension. As detailed in Table 3 below we identify two sub-dimensions: (1) present security of employment and earnings and (2) prospects for future employment, each of which we capture via a range of indicators.

Table 3: Security and Prospects - Sub-dimensions & Indicators



Present security of employment and earnings

The first indicator under this sub-dimension focuses on the form and status of a worker's contract of employment; that is, whether they possess a permanent contract or not. The second looks at their degree of income security – whether their wages are predictable and stable or whether they vary from week-to-week or month-to-month. Both indicators are used to capture the extent to which a worker's job and income are secure or precarious. We define insecure work as being when a worker does not have a permanent contract and/or their earnings vary over the defined time periods.

Prospects for future employment and earnings

The second sub-dimension 'prospects for future employment and earnings' provides data on workers' fears in respect of employment and job status loss. Respondents are asked how anxious they felt about: losing their job/or sources of work; future changes to their work that may make it more difficult to use their skills and abilities; future changes that may reduce their pay; unexpected changes to their hours of work; and securing new employment or new sources of work if they lose their current job/work. Response options across the indicators included very anxious, moderately anxious, not very anxious, not at all anxious.

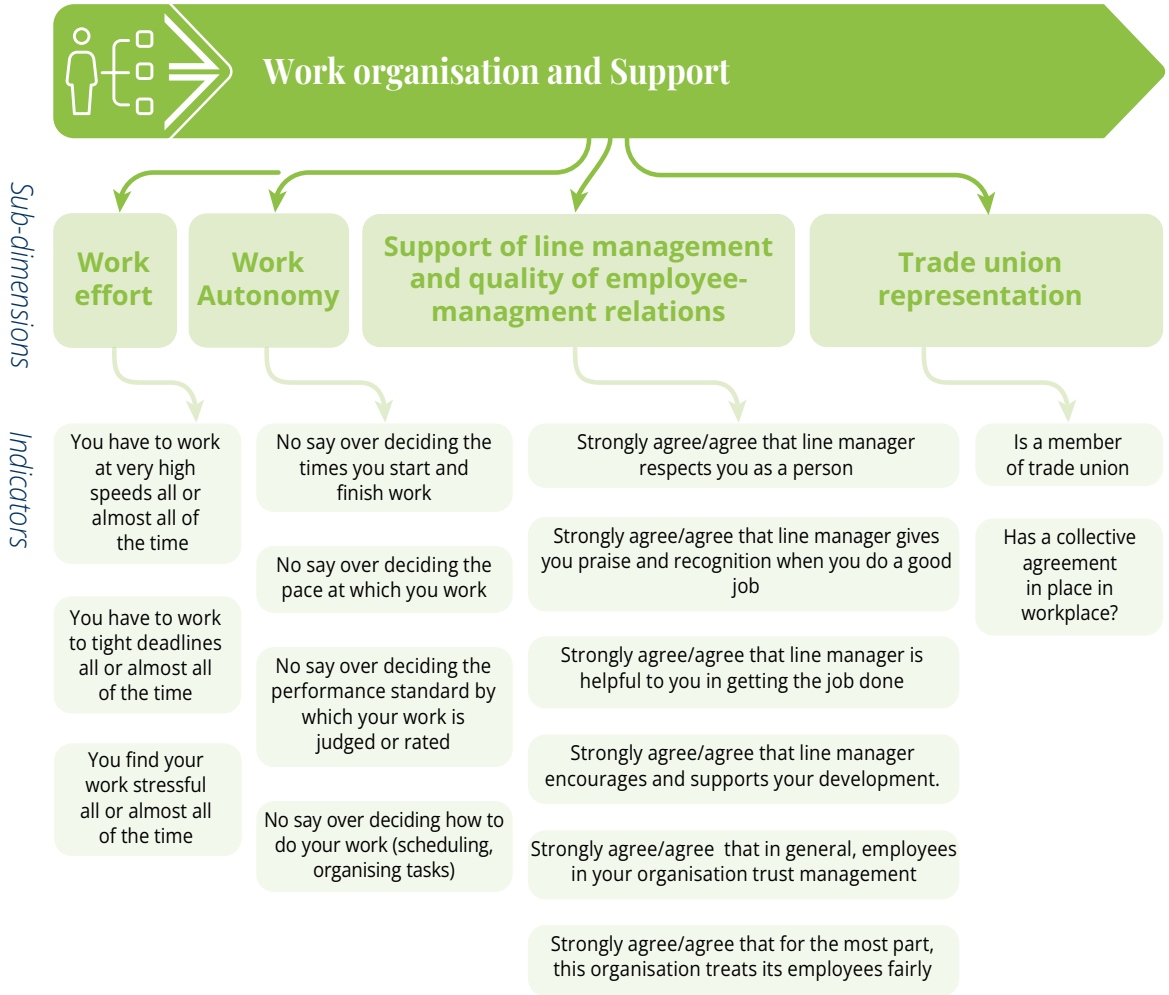
If the respondent indicated that they were either very anxious or moderately anxious across three of the five indicators, they were considered to have 'insecure prospects for future employment'.

While it might be objected that this sub-dimension does not relate solely or directly to features of a job and as such lies outside our definition of a good job (Green, 2011), we include it here as we believe there are several reasons as to why anxiety about future changes to one's employment or earnings could negatively impact a worker. For example, constant worry about future job prospects is likely to lead to increased anxiety, depression, and burnout, which is likely in turn to spill over into affecting an employee's morale and motivation to work, and their commitment to an organisation. Anxious employees may also find it difficult to disconnect from their work, further impairing their health and personal relationships (See Sonnentag, 2012).

Work Organisation and Support

Work organisation and social supports has a number of attributes or sub-dimensions. They include work effort, job autonomy and employee relations and representation. We treat each one in turn below.

Table 4: Work Organisation and Social Supports - Sub-dimensions & Indicators



Work effort

Work effort captures the intensity of the labour process; that is, the physical, cognitive and emotional demands placed on workers. The evidence in the literature points to high work effort levels being associated with an impairment in workers' well-being (Albin *et al*., 2022; Green, 2008; Green *et al*., 2016).[6] We use three indicators to capture the intensity of work effort: 'you have to work at very high speeds', 'you have to work to tight deadlines', and 'you find your work stressful'. To be classed as working in a job requiring highly intensive work effort, respondents needed to respond 'all of the time' or 'almost all of the time' to two of the three indicators.

Work autonomy

The next sub-dimension, work autonomy, is concerned with the discretion or say workers possess over the conduct of their work. This attribute of a job is seen widely in the international literature as being one of the key factors in influencing workers' well-being and health (Layard and De Neve, 2023). In examining levels of job autonomy, respondents were asked to assess the degree of influence they exercised over specific aspects of their jobs. They included the pace at which they work, how they do their work (scheduling, organising tasks), deciding the times they start and finish work, and deciding the performance standards by which their work is judged or rated, and deciding their wages or service fees.

Response options ranged from 'complete say', 'a great deal', 'just a little' to 'none at all'. To be defined as having autonomy over one's work a respondent needed to say that they had at least a little or a greater degree of say over at least one of the following three indicators: deciding the times you start and finish work; deciding the pace at which you work; and deciding how to do your work (scheduling, organising tasks).

Employee relations and representation

We label the third sub-dimension employee relations and representation. It has two elements: the first refers to the support provided to employees by line management and the quality of the employee-management relationship in the organisation in which they work; the second refers to whether employees are union members and if their terms and conditions of employment are covered by an employer-union collective agreement. Both these elements are a measure of the social supports available to workers in the conduct of their work. Social relationships at work are seen in the international literature to be the among, if not the most important, predictors of worker well-being, and relations with one's manager is among the most consequential (Layard and De Neve, 2023; 187). We know, too, that employees working under good managers are found to be both more productive and less likely to leave their jobs (Sanders *et al*., 2011).

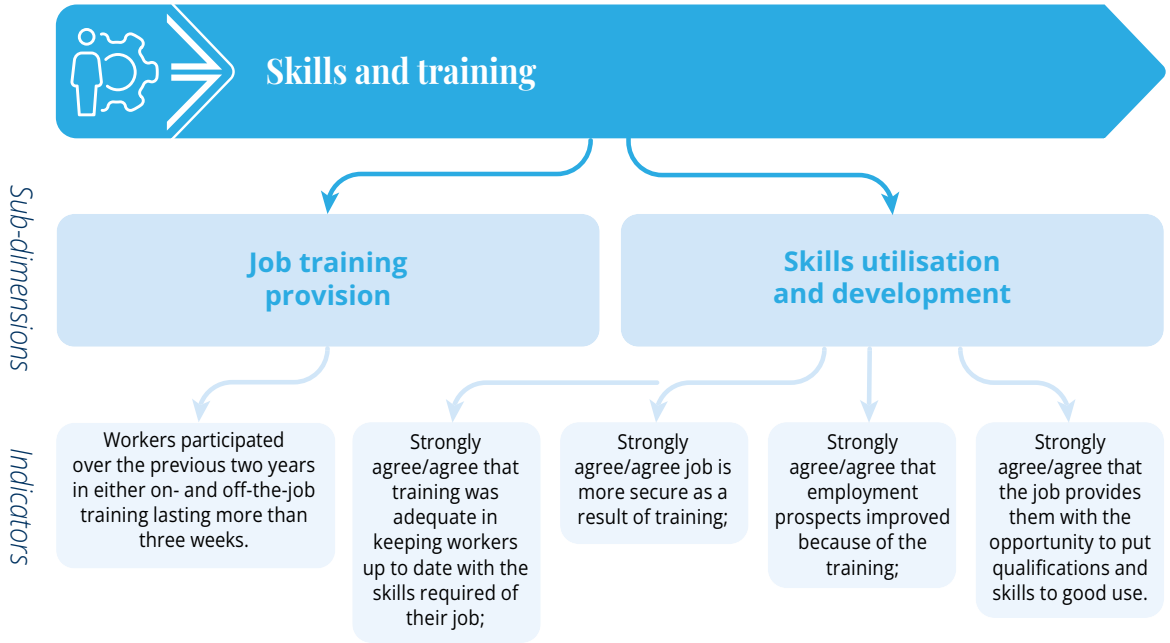
Our inclusion of collective voice relates to the presence of worker representatives in organisational level decision-making. Such participation meets people's needs to have a say – through the support provided by their representatives – in the determination

of their job quality. It is sometimes proffered that, as not all workers feel a 'need' for independent collective representation, it might be better not to include it as an attribute (Green and Mustafa, 2012). Along with others (Leschke *et al*., 2014; O'Brady and Doellgast, 2021; Piasna, 2017; Simms 2021), we disagree. Some years later, Green (2021) conceded that the matter of whether collective representation might or might not be deemed an essential element of job quality is better settled empirically. Intriguingly, there are theoretical and empirical arguments to suggest that unions are both associated with positive job quality effects (Freeman and Medoff, 1984; O'Brady and Doellgast, 2021) and with poor job quality outcomes (Green *et al*., 2013; Holman, 2013). These starkly alternate findings sometimes arise from the crude binary ways in which union effects are measured – unions are either present or they are not – together with the simple operationalization of employee well-being as merely equating with job satisfaction, or indeed depend on which countries are being looked at (Donegani and McKay, 2012). They may also arise simply because unions represent workers in multiple work contexts that include situations where the organisation promotes high job quality to those where job quality is neglected by management. There are also differences in findings depending on when such studies were conducted. For example, Blanchflower and Bryson (2020) examination of large-scale longitudinal data in the United States and Europe found a negative relationship between union membership and job satisfaction in data collected between 1960 to 1990 but thereafter unionised workers were significantly more satisfied with their jobs than non-unionised workers. Union members were also found to encounter less stress, worry, sadness, depression and loneliness.

Support from line management/organisation was captured using six indicators and responses were ranked on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The items included whether their line manager 'respects you as a person', 'gives you praise and recognition when you do a good job'; 'is helpful to you in getting the job done', 'encourages and supports your development'; and then in respect of the quality of employee relations whether 'in general employees in your organisation trusts management', and whether 'this organisation treats its employees fairly'. Poor levels of support from line management/organisation is defined as those cases where respondents indicate that they strongly agree/agree in respect of only two or fewer of the six indicators. Union representation is covered via two items, whether the respondent is a member of a trade union and whether there is a collective agreement in their workplace. Poor employee relations and representation is captured by those who are not a member of a trade union and/or by those whose workplace is not covered by a collective agreement.

Skills and Training

Table 5: Skills and Training - Sub-dimensions & Indicators



Job training provision

We assess the volume of training by asking workers whether they participated over the previous two years in either of two explicitly stated forms of training, on- and off-the-job training, excluding health and safety training. The stated reference period of two years is generous, but this is to allow for the consequences of the pandemic which might have curtailed training provision. We enquired also of the length of training which might vary from a few hours to more than three weeks. Training (either on/off-the-job training or both on/off-the-job training) that lasted for more than three weeks is categorised as 'substantial training'.

Skills utilisation and development

To assess the quality of training received and the extent to which one's job provides an opportunity to utilise existing skills and develop new skills we use a variety of indicators under the sub-dimension of skill utilisation and development. Drawing from Green and Mustafa (2012), skill utilisation is understood as the capability to understand the labour process so that workers are enabled to make decisions about the organisation of their own work tasks. Skill utilisation and autonomy, although often presented as separate sub-dimensions of job quality, are connected and together they are important indicators of the extent to which the organisation of work fulfils a need for doing good work. The utilisation of skills is an end in itself, with intrinsic value, for the worker. Engagement in work such that it requires both conception and execution of tasks (i.e job autonomy) is the means by which people acquire the potential for self-fulfilment via their work (Green, 2006).

The various attributes of this indicator are listed in the right-hand column of Table 6 above. Respondents were asked to detail on a five-point Likert scale the extent to which they agreed with the adequacy of their training in keeping them up to date with the skills required of their job; whether their job is more secure; whether their employment prospects improved because of their training; and whether their job provides them with the opportunity to put their qualifications and skills to good use. High skills utilisation/development is captured by those who responded strongly agree/agree to three of four of these indicators, whereas low skills utilisation/development captures all of those who do not meet this threshold.

Work-life balance

The final sub-dimension is work-life balance. It refers to the relation between people's working lives and their domestic/personal lives. To put it in other words, working time is inextricably linked with being at work and is demarcated from non-work time. While the boundaries between the two can sometimes be fixed through a definitive contractual stipulation, they are often fluid and, with the availability of modern communication technologies, work is often facilitated to invade the realm of our formerly private lives. Thus, for how long workers undertake their work, where they perform it and the drawing of the attendant boundaries between their working and private lives is rarely straight-forward. As a consequence, we can speak of our work as encountering our non-work (private) lives at the level of two domains: location and time, but, to repeat, the lines are rarely drawn definitively by temporal and spatial boundaries. Hence the concept of work-life balance. In turn, work-life balance practices include those work attributes that permit workers the autonomy to co-ordinate, synchronise and integrate the work and non-work aspects of their lives (Felstead *et al*., 2002).

We include a number of sub-dimensions and indicators under work-life balance. Some are straight-forward such as the duration of working time, i.e., whether a person works standard hours or long working hours, together with the number of days they work in any given working week. Work-life autonomy refers to the extent to which workers have

the autonomy to deal with personal or family matters during regular working hours. Work-life spillage or conflict relates to the 'balance' and control workers have over the time spent at work and outside work. It might be objected that our conceptualisation of the last sub-dimension of work-life balance is confounded by it not being exclusively an aspect of job quality (Green and Mostafa, 2012; Warr, 2007). That is, while in part it relates to features of a job, it is also linked to a worker's personal life outside their paid employment, and it is this latter feature which takes it beyond – stricto sensu – an attribute of a job. To address this difficulty, in our operationalisation of the concept we enquire specifically whether features or demands of a job spill-over and conflict with other (personal) aspects of workers' lives, and not the reverse where aspects of their private lives conflict with their ability to do their job.

Table 6: Work-life balance sub-dimensions and indicators

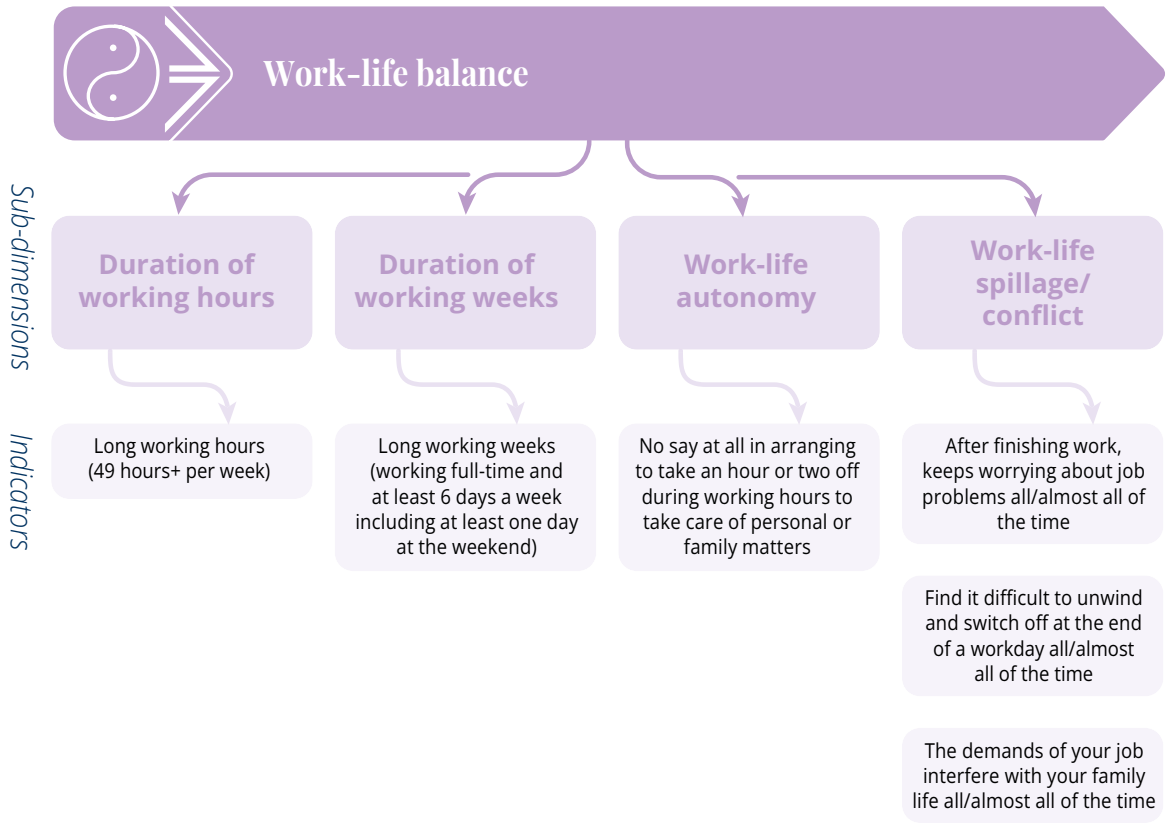


Table 6 details the four sub-dimensions and the related indicators used to capture work-life balance in this study.[7] They are in turn:

Duration of working hours

Working hours are used to capture working time length, with long hours being used as an indicator of poor job quality. We used the following cut-off criterion in the analysis of long working hours: employees who worked 49 or more hours per week were classed as having a long work week (=1) and employees who worked less hours per week than this as not having a long work week (=0).

Duration of working weeks

If an employee stated that they worked six or more days a week they were coded as having long working weeks (=1) and 0 otherwise.

Work-life autonomy

Work-life autonomy is captured using a single indicator which asked the respondent about their ability to take an hour or two off during working hours to deal with personal or family matters. Response options ranged from 'complete say', 'a great deal', 'just a little' to 'none at all'. Those who responded that they had no say at all were categorised as lacking work-life autonomy.

Work-life spillage

Work-life spillage is addressed by asking respondents about the frequency with which they experience the following: after finishing work, you keep worrying about job problems; find it difficult to unwind and switch off at the end of a workday; and the demands of your job interfere with your family life. To be classed as experiencing work-life spillage/conflict a respondent would have needed to respond that 'all of the time' in respect of two of the three indicators.

Section 5: The context of the Covid-19 Pandemic

In this section, we provide a brief description of the labour market and business supports in place during the period when we undertook the survey fieldwork for this study, from May to August 2021.

In an effort to mitigate the effects of the restrictions imposed on the economy and society, the Government introduced a number of supports to protect businesses and the material living standards and health of workers in "non-essential" sectors of the economy. These measures were four-fold and included job retention schemes, substantially more generous unemployment support payments for those who lost their job owing to the pandemic, reductions in VAT payments, and enhanced illness benefit. The job retention scheme was initially introduced as the Employer Refund Scheme before being superseded by the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS), and then later the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS). It was made available to employers who kept employees on the payroll, with the intention that employers could retain links with their employees when their business reopened after the crisis. Employees could be temporarily not working (laid off) or on reduced hours and/or reduced pay. An employee who received a TWSS payment and whose work was reduced to 3 days or less per week, could also apply for Short Time Work Support which was a form of Jobseeker's Benefit (JSB) to supplement their income. The TWSS/EWSS supported 664,000/745,700 employees across 66,500/51,800 employers at a cost of €2.9bn and €7.7bn respectively.

The principal unemployment support was paid through the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP). It was introduced with great speed and efficiency. It was a universal income support available to all workers – employees and self-employed, permanent and temporary, part-time and full-time – who had lost their employment or trading income as a result of Covid-19. No social insurance contribution history was required to claim it (unlike the JSB) and the payment was not subject to a means test, as is the case with the non-contributory Job Seekers Allowance (Fitzgerald, 2022; Thomas, 2020). Its payments ranged from €203 to €350 per week and were widely regarded to be generous and were certainly more generous that the standard personal unemployment payments paid under Jobseekers' supports. The scheme lasted from March 2020 to March 2022, it supported almost 900,00 people over its lifetime and cost close to €9.2bn. The standard rate of VAT was cut from 23% to 21% from September 2020 until February 2021 as a further aid to businesses. VAT reductions charged on hospitality and hairdressing business were more substantial (from 13.5% to 9%). The introduction of a new Enhanced Illness Benefit for Covid-19 abolished the former waiting period for illness benefit of six days for those who contracted the virus and/or were required to self-isolate. The benefit increased from €203 to €350 per week to equal the highest rate of the PUP (Doorley et al., 2022). In total, it is estimated that the State spent approximately €48bn from 2020 to 2022 on Covid-related expenditure of which approximately a fifth was paid in PUP payments and a further fifth to protect employment, prevent business closures and retain the economy's productive capacity (Fitzgerald, 2022).

In all, it is estimated that the effects of the State's policies enacted to cushion the worst effects of the pandemic had a significant effect: income losses suffered at the household level were halved, on average, and were lower again – and were sometimes a gain – among low-income households (Doorley et al., 2020). On average household incomes fell by 3%. The losses were larger for those who lost highly paid jobs. Findings derived later in the pandemic and from other sources found that over one third of households reported that their incomes had fallen a lot or a little since the start of the pandemic (Smyth and Murray 2022).

The context for the period in which we undertook the fieldwork.

We conducted our survey fieldwork in the intervening period; that is from 24th May to 22nd August 2021.

By May 2021 the Government announced that the country had moved to the early stages of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and that it would lift the restrictions imposed on people's lives on a staged basis throughout the coming summer. This included the reopening of retail and personal services, an increase in the number of people who could meet in outdoor settings, and an end to restrictions on domestic travel. However, the detection of the Delta variant on June 24th slowed the further easing of restrictions through the summer, most notably the government extended the closure of hospitality through to the end of July, following which customers were required to have proof of being fully vaccinated or having recovered from COVID-19 to gain entry to hospitality settings, alongside a continuation of a range of other restrictions on maximum table numbers and the wearing of facemasks.

Beyond this and throughout the data collection period, the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) continued to express its concern with the epidemiological situation.[8] It advised that people should continue to work from home, unless it was necessary to attend the workplace in person. From May 2021 through to August 2021 (this is the period in which our survey was administered) the disease's incidence was recorded to be low and stable, albeit there was considerable uncertainty as to how it might progress. The number of those testing positive with the disease continued to fall through the early months of the summer and the numbers of confirmed cases in hospital and in intensive care units continued to decrease steadily. The numbers of deaths related to COVID-19 also began to fall significantly between May and July and remained low throughout the period of our fieldwork, although they began to increase again in August.

The improvements in the epidemiological situation were also echoed in declining levels of concern and fear among the population as measured by the Department of Health's monitoring of public sentiment by means of a so-called Quantitative Tracker. The Tracker surveyed a nationally representative sample of 2,200 people on a rolling basis. It found that the level of worry among respondents fell from 5.4/10 in May 2021 to 5.2 in June 2021 and declined yet further to 4.8 in August 2021, which was among the lowest levels recorded throughout the period of the pandemic. During this period as well (May – August

2021) about two-thirds of respondents believed the worst of the pandemic was behind them. There was also a significant increase in the reported numbers of people visiting the workplace. As social restrictions eased in the spring and summer of 2021 people's mental well-being was also found to have improved substantially, albeit it tended to be lower among younger age cohorts (Lunn and Timmons, 2021).

Public policy advice and protocols for employers and employees

To support and guide employers and employees several Government departments published various guidelines and protocols on managing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in respect of different aspects of job quality. For those working from home, for example, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment (DETE) published a document entitled Guidance for Working Remotely during COVID-19 (see Geary and Belizon, 2022). These guidelines were reviewed, adapted, and continually updated following consultations with the social partners and other interested parties during the pandemic. In parallel, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) published its Guidance on Working from Home which alerted employers and employees to their duties and responsibilities. It gave particular attention to the risks associated with working at home, including over-working, stress and isolation, and difficulties in retaining cooperation among work colleagues and maintaining productivity levels (HSA, 2020).

For essential workers who were required to continue to attend their workplace a range of policy protocols were introduced and updated throughout the pandemic in an attempt to protect their physical and mental health. The primary one was titled the 'Return to Work Safely Protocol' which was initially published in May 2020. It was developed following discussion and agreement at the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF).[9] In parallel with these policy developments, the Government also introduced a new code of practice on the right to disconnect from work in April 2021 (see Geary and Belizon, 2022).

During this period ... there was also a significant increase in the reported numbers of people visiting the workplace

Section 6: Data source

The data used in this study are derived from the UCD Working in Ireland Survey (WIIS), 2021. It is a unique data set. It is the first major survey to examine people's work and employment in Ireland since O'Connell et al.'s (2010) study of The Changing Workplace. WIIS is also the only representative survey to comprehensively examine the content of people's jobs, including both their extrinsic and intrinsic features, and their quality during the Covid-19 Pandemic, apart from the European Working Conditions Telephone Survey (EWCTS). It draws from a nationally representative sample of 2,076 people of working age in paid employment across the country. This is larger than that obtained by the EWCTS (1,785) and larger than the 1,000 cases it has achieved in past iterations of its survey. While the EWCS and the EWCTS provide exceptionally rich data sets that are ideally equipped to enable comparisons across countries, their more restricted sample sizes, certainly in the past, have made analysis at the level of sector, gender, and occupation, for example, more difficult and unreliable. Moreover, another advantage of the WIIS is its inclusion of some additional analytical variables which are not available elsewhere, such as firm ownership type and region. Both employees and self-employed workers were eligible for inclusion in the UCD study. The survey was conducted between May and August 2021. The data are weighted for age, gender, region and economic sector to agree with the then most recent population estimates as derived from the Labour Force Survey (Q1 2021). Ipsos MRBI was commissioned by UCD to carry out the fieldwork for the survey.

Section 7: Survey design and administration

WIIS was conducted by means of a telephone survey. This placed limits on the number of questions and range of measures we might have used but which otherwise can be successfully adopted in surveys conducted in person such as those of the EWCS (Eurofound, 2017) and SES (Felstead et al. 2018). SES, for example, takes 60 minutes to complete. Our survey instrument took on average 22 minutes to administer which is widely viewed in survey research as being close to the maximum time length before respondents' interest and attention (on the phone) starts to decline.

The analysis is derived from cross-sectional data and while we are in a position to examine whether particular independent variables are associated with particular outcomes for workers' job quality and well-being, we cannot – as one would be able with data derived from a longitudinal research design – determine the temporal or causative order of the events underlying these associations (i.e. which came first and which is cause and which is effect). We also cannot show how the presumed "outcomes" have changed across time and whether this change can be ascribed to (changes in) the alleged "independent" variables (Taris and Kompier, 2014).

Beyond this, while our study provides the most detailed assessment of job quality ever undertaken in Ireland and our survey instrument captures a broad and detailed range of information on job quality, its various dimensions and outcomes, there is room for a number of improvements that could be made to specific indicators to enhance the data collected.

First, our measure of earnings could be better, as discussed above. Earnings data were collected via a single indicator capturing earnings bands of net weekly or monthly earnings. Whilst this single indicator provided us with the means to be able to collect earnings data within cost and survey length constraints, it is, as a result, imprecise. The unit of data collection, which is the working week or month rather than a working hour, presents further analytical difficulties in terms of being able to assess low pay on an hourly basis, and thus removes the impact of hours worked on pay levels. That said, there are advantages in measuring earnings in the way we do here. They include simplicity, lower administrative costs, reduced response burden and anonymity which can increase a respondent's likelihood of responding to the question.

The data are weighted for age, gender, region and economic sector to agree with the then most recent population estimates as derived from the Labour Force Survey (Q1 2021)

Second, there is a considerable amount of missing data, with 22% respondents not providing data, for example, on the earnings question. This gap could technically be filled by imputing the missing values from the non-missing data on other items, but this would require some quite strong statistical assumptions. We decided not to do this for this report. That said, however, the extent of the missing values for our earnings data, is a relatively common feature of research of this type.[10]

Finally, while we have a number of measures of employee well-being, they might be more varied and richer. The scale developed by Warr (1990) which measures the extent to which a person's job energises and gives them pleasure provides one suitable means of assessing the links between the attributes of a person's job and their well-being (Felstead et al., 2019).

Section 8: Analysis of findings

Approach to the presentation of our findings

In the analysis of our findings, we undertake the following analytical tasks:

1. We begin by presenting the results for the manner in which the different indicators of job quality from the various sub-dimensions are distributed across different groups of workers. The results are provided via a series of detailed dashboards in Appendix 1. We do not discuss the results here as they are quite detailed. Again it needs to be borne in mind that the results are in respect of all 39 indicators and are presented across 9 different biographical and organisational variables. While we think it is important that they be made available to readers of the report who may want to dig deeper into specific results for particular indicators, we are mindful of the implications of presenting data at this level of detail and disaggregation. First, as indicated, they can be overwhelming and complex for users to interpret. Without a summary measure, stakeholders may struggle to grasp the overall picture of job quality at a glance. This can potentially lead to confusion or misinterpretation. We overcome this challenge by presenting a summary review in Table 7 below. Second, from a policy perspective, it can be challenging to identify the most critical aspects of job quality that require attention or improvement. In essence, different aspects of job quality may compete for policy action as some readers come to view some indicators of job quality to be more important than others and so may lean in their interpretation of the results to confirm prior biases or preferences. Third, as a result of the scale of information being presented, it becomes difficult to compare and benchmark job quality across different sub-dimensions or indicators. Finally, when job quality data is analysed or communicated via very detailed dashboards, the inter-relationships across dimensions are not immediately visible, nor is it apparent how different groups of workers come to experience the totality of job quality based on their experience across the different aspects (Alkire *et al.* 2015).
2. To overcome these handicaps, we provide a descriptive dashboard summary of job quality across the various sub-dimensions, identifying a high-level summary of how different jobs and different groups of workers perform across the range of aspects of job quality.
3. Following this, we produce a summary or aggregate measure of job quality, based on summing the score of each respondent across the range of sub-dimensions. The measure is based upon workers' total exposure to demands and/or the lack of job resources across the various sub-dimensions. This allows us to examine the distribution of jobs across a continuum of good quality to poor quality jobs.
4. Following this we present a summary or aggregate score of job quality, and the distribution of average/overall job quality across various worker and job characteristics.

5. We then turn our focus to 'job types' and assess the quality of jobs in Ireland through a clustering approach. This brings workers together in specified clusters or cohorts based on similarities in the characteristics of their jobs. For this we use latent class analysis to examine whether there are distinct groups of occupations that share similar job attributes.
6. We finish the analysis of this paper by examining where these different job types exist and who occupies them.

Job Quality, A Data Dashboard Summary: The distribution of demands and resources across the job quality dimensions

We begin first, then, with documenting the results using a dashboard summary approach, whereby we present single summary scores across each of our 14 sub-dimensions of job quality. The results are derived from compiling a single summary binary statistic for each of the sub-dimensions. Each one is categorised as being either a job demand or a job resource, and the results presented provide an estimate of the overall share of workers who experience each in their job. We look too at how these various demands and resources are distributed based on worker and job characteristics. In doing so, we are able to see at a higher level than the disaggregated results reported at an indicator level (see appendix 1) how different demands and resources are dispersed across workers and jobs.

The results are presented below in Table 7. With regard to some dimensions it is relatively straight-forward to label them as a resource or as a demand in line with the specifications provided by the job demands-control-support (JDCS) model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Karasek and Theorell, 1990). Where a sub-dimension is identifiable as a demand we place a (D) after it and an (R) in the case of a resource. However in other cases it is considerably more difficult. The JDCS model does not categorise earnings and pecuniary benefits as being either a resource or a demand. We thus faced a choice as to whether and how we might do so. We chose to report earnings that fall below the threshold of €20,000 as 'low earnings'. Our identification of this threshold is explained above in section 4. In doing so, we argue that low earnings place a demand on workers. They are certainly not 'resourced' to be able to afford a decent standard of living. The same logic applies to the absence, or the poor provision, of additional pecuniary benefits. That is, their absence, like low earnings, places a demand on workers.

Table 7: Dashboard summary of job quality scores by sub-dimension based on exposure to particular demands (D) and the availability (R)'.

The results discussed below for each of the sub-dimensions and their associated indicators should be read in association with the statistical results presented in Table 7 above and in Tables 8 and 9 below. The latter two tables use colour (heat) codes to illustrate the quality of a particular job attribute for any given category of worker. Green indicates that the scores are 'very good' and red indicates that the scores are 'very poor' with variation in between illustrated by the colour gradations or shades used. Tables 7 and 8 present the results in respect of worker and job characteristics respectively.

Table 8: A dashboard summary: distribution of job quality by worker characteristics

		Gender		Age category				
		Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Earnings & Renumeration	Low earnings	17.7	32	65.6	20.7	19.5	18.3	20.2
	Low additional renumeration benefits	26.4	22.6	33.7	21.7	20.4	20.6	26.2
Security & Prospects	Insecure work	23.5	20.8	49	21.4	15.3	15.4	19.8
	Anxious about future prospects	14.6	22.3	22.4	17.9	18.8	18.8	15.5
Work-Life Balance	Long working weeks	9.4	4.2	6.5	4.8	5	7	9.4
	Long working hours	21.6	7.2	5.5	12	15.8	17.6	17.2
	Lacks work life flexibility	8.7	11.2	9.5	12	8.9	9.9	10.2
	Experiences work into life spillage/ conflict	10.2	10.9	5.5	12.2	13.7	8.7	9.6
Work organisation	Autonomy over work/work tasks	89.2	84	80.3	85.7	88.9	86.3	88.3
	Highly intensive work effort	7.6	11.2	6.9	11.8	11.5	7.9	8
	High support from management/ organisation	72.9	65.8	75.1	73.7	68.7	66.5	64.9
	Trade union representation	41.1	48.8	37.2	33.7	41.6	53.7	60.9
Skills and Training	High skill utilisation and development	68	66.7	81.9	70.5	65.5	61.1	63.5
	Substantial on-job or off-job training provision	14.9	14.4	15.9	19.5	13.9	15	9.3

Educational Attainment			Region							
Primary or secondary or below	Below Degree	Degree level or above	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-west	South east	South west	Mideast
38.9	28.8	16.8	23	28.6	31	22.4	25.9	26.5	25.3	19.8
38	31.1	16.5	35.5	24	27.3	20.1	25.1	31.3	23.1	22.8
30.7	23.5	18	25.9	21.8	21.4	21.8	23.5	21.7	23.8	19.2
17.9	20	18.7	14.1	14.8	15.6	20.7	21.6	14.7	16.9	19.8
13.5	9.4	3.86	10.2	8.1	10.7	5.5	6.4	10.8	8.6	7.4
15.6	16.2	14.2	20.5	12.8	13.9	13.3	19.3	13.9	15.1	14.5
12.5	8.9	9	12	8.8	10.2	10	9.4	7.8	10	10.6
7	8.9	12	11.4	4	8.6	11.7	11.8	6.6	10	12.9
80.3	86.7	89.4	85.2	81.1	90.7	87.8	85.1	85.3	87.3	86.6
5.4	8.5	11.1	10.2	5.6	5.9	10.4	10.2	6	8.6	9.6
69.4	68.2	70.2	35.9	33.3	24.5	30.6	31.7	25.9	28.5	32.5
37.6	46.4	47.1	47.6	59.1	50.9	41.5	48.2	48.3	39.8	41.7
72.2	67.7	65.9	60.2	65.8	66.4	70.2	65.9	67.9	68.9	66.3
9	13.6	17	8.5	18	10.4	16.6	13.8	12.9	14.2	13.4

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Table 9: Distribution of Job Quality Demands & Resources by Job Characteristics

		Sector						Occupation							Working hours		Firm ownership			
		Industry	Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food	Information, comms, financial, insurance	Professional, scientific, technical, admin	Public admin, health, education	Arts, entertainment, recreation, other	Managerial, Professional & Associate Professional	Administrative and secretarial	Skilled trades	Caring, leisure and other service	Sales and customer service	Process, plant and machine operatives	Elementary	Full-time	Part-time	Public sector	Not for profit (charity, NGO)	Private sector Irish-owned	Private sector foreign owned
Earnings & Renumeration	Below €20000	19.9	41.3	9.9	14.2	23	35.1	12.7	12.7	29.5	56.2	53.6	25	61.7	14.2	66.3	20.2	17.6	26.9	13.8
	Low additional renumeration benefits	32.7	34.9	11.7	20.9	13.5	47.4	14	9.2	52.1	40.9	32	40.1	45.5	20.1	43.1	8.4	7.2	35.6	7.5
Security & Prospects	Insecure work	24.4	24.5	13.6	21.2	20.2	39.3	16.6	10.4	32.9	33.6	28.7	34.8	33.8	17.4	39.8	17.5	17.4	17.6	11.3
	Anxious about future prospects	14.2	22	20.4	19.2	16.5	33	17.2	14.3	18.4	24.7	23.1	16.2	23.5	17.9	22.2	17.2	21	19.8	18.8
Work-Life Balance	Long working hours	25.8	13	10.2	12.3	9	17.1	16.3	5.9	22.5	8.2	4.2	19.6	8.1	17.4	1.7	10.4	12.9	13.5	15.2
	Long working weeks	14.3	7.2	1.2	2.8	4	18.8	3.8	1.5	19.7	12.7	2.8	20.1	7.4	7.4	5.5	4.1	2.9	5.7	1.2
	Lacks work life flexibility	7	10.4	2.1	8.5	16	12.8	8.2	7.4	5.2	23.6	12.6	14.1	14.2	9.3	12.7	15.3	6.1	8.6	6.3
	Experiences work into life spillage/ conflict	12.7	9.8	8.1	8.1	11.8	10.1	12.3	9.2	12.2	10.8	7.9	6.9	5.8	11.4	5.5	9.3	13	9	13
Work organisation	Work organisation	87.9	83.9	93.9	92.3	83.8	81.9	91.1	93.2	84.2	77.2	83.9	79.6	76.8	88.3	80.1	85.3	89.4	83.7	90.6
	Highly intensive work effort	7.9	8.1	9.7	10.4	10.8	6.7	11.7	7.9	4.6	11.8	6.3	5.4	8.8	10	6.5	9.8	8.8	9.5	10.3
	High support from management/ organisation	72.1	68.4	74.8	70.9	65.6	65.1	71	73.4	73.1	60.2	67.2	69.6	60.5	70.2	67.5	65.4	73.9	70.6	74.5
	Trade union representation	37.6	26.1	27.1	35.1	75.5	35.8	49.2	54.9	36.6	45.8	31.6	39.1	31.3	45.4	42.5	79.7	43.5	23.6	26.5
Skills and Training	High skill utilisation and development	69.3	70	64.6	67.4	66	71.4	66	64.8	79.7	83.1	63.4	75	61.4	66.6	72.8	65.7	69.4	70.9	64.1
	Substantial on-or-off job training	14.6	12.3	18.7	15.4	13.4	15.1	17.2	13.6	14.6	13.5	10.1	10	7.8	16.2	8.2	13.2	14.6	13.2	19

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Earnings & Pecuniary benefits

Earnings

As detailed in our framework of job quality, low earnings in this study is defined as an annual net income of below €20,000. Overall, low pay is a significant feature of the labour market with just under one in four earning below €20,000 net per year. Females are disproportionately affected, with 17% of them experiencing low pay, compared to 32% of males.

Low pay is a feature in the majority of younger workers lives, with almost two-thirds of those aged 16-24 earning below €20,000 net per annum. The extent of low pay does significantly drop off beyond this age group, however, it still continues to affect around one in five workers across all of the other age cohorts. This demonstrates that low pay is not confined to younger workers, but persists as a significant feature across different age cohorts, affecting individuals across different life stages.

In terms of the prevalence of low pay across workers with different levels of educational attainment, the results indicate that at 38.9% workers with primary or secondary education or below, have the highest likelihood of being in low paid employment. This compares to 28.8% of those with below degree level qualifications and 16.8% of those with degree or above level qualifications. Part-time workers are also much more likely to be low paid than full-time workers, 66.3% versus 14.2%.

As to where people live, the highest proportion of low pay is observed in the Dublin region, where 31% earned below €20,000 net per annum. This is followed by the West region at 28.6%, and the Southeast region at 26.5%. At 19.8% the Mideast region has the lowest percentage of individuals with low pay.

The sector with the highest percentage of low pay is the 'Wholesale, Retail, Transport, Accommodation & Food' sector, where approximately 41.3% of workers receive low pay. This category includes businesses involved in selling products, transportation, accommodation services, and food-related services, indicating a significant prevalence of low pay in these industries. Following closely in terms of the prevalence of low pay is the 'Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Other' sector, where 35.1% of workers earn low pay. In the 'Public Administration, Health, Education' sector some 23% of workers face low pay. In contrast, in the 'Information, Communications, Financial, Insurance' sector, the percentage of low pay is comparatively lower at 9.9%.

Prevalence of low pay varies substantially by occupation. The majority of workers in 'Elementary' occupations (61.7%), 'Caring, leisure and other service' occupations (56.2%), and 'Sales and customer service' occupations earn below €20,000 net per annum. Skilled trades show a notable 29.5% of workers earning low wages, while process, plant, and machine operatives have 25% falling into the low pay range. Low pay is much less common in 'Managerial, Professional & Associate Professional' (12.7%) occupations and 'Administrative and Secretarial' (12.7%) occupations.

The distribution of low pay by firm ownership type is as follows: in the public sector, approximately 20.2% of workers receive low pay. Not-for-profit organisations, including charities and NGOs, show a lower but still notable percentage of 17.6% facing low pay. Moving to the private sector, Irish-owned companies have a higher proportion of workers with low pay at 26.9%, while private sector foreign-owned companies have a comparatively lower percentage of 13.8% of workers who are low paid.

Poor additional renumeration benefits

Moving now to pecuniary benefits, we find that one quarter (24.6%) of workers have poor additional renumeration benefits. Poor additional renumeration benefits refers to those who have zero or only one of four additional renumeration benefits including paid sick leave, paid holidays, an occupational pension, or medical insurance coverage.

Certain demographic groups, particularly younger individuals, and males, and the lower educated tend to experience lower levels of additional compensation benefits.

There are substantial variations in terms of the experience of poor additional renumeration benefits by sector and occupation. The 'Industry' and 'Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food' sector have approximately one-third of workers (32.7% and 34.9% respectively) who have poor additional renumeration benefits. In contrast, the 'Information, communications, financial, insurance' (11.7%) sector and the 'Public administration, health, education' (13.5%) sectors fare relatively better. The 'Arts, entertainment, recreation, and other' sector stands out as the worst sector in this regard, with 47.4% of these workers having zero or only one of four additional renumeration benefits including paid sick leave, paid holidays, an occupational pension, or medical insurance coverage.

In terms of occupation, the majority of those working in 'skilled trades' occupations (52.1%) have poor additional renumeration benefits. Similarly, those in 'Caring, leisure and other service', 'Process, plant and machine operatives' and 'Elementary' jobs report relatively high levels of poor additional remuneration benefits, with percentages of 40.9%, 40.1% and 45.5% respectively.

Security & Prospects

The dimension 'security and prospects' is comprised of two sub-dimensions including 'insecure work' and 'anxiety about future prospects'.

Insecure work

Just over 1 in 5 workers are classed as experiencing insecure work which is defined as being employed in a non-permanent job or/and having wages which vary from week to week. The results detailed in Table 8 show that young workers have the greatest likelihood of working in an insecure job. Almost half of 16–24-year-olds experience insecure work. Having a low level of education also significantly increases the likelihood

of experiencing insecure work. There is a 12-percentage point increase in the experience of insecure work for those with primary or secondary or below level (30.7%) education compared to those with degree level or above qualifications (18%).

The results also show the importance of where you work, what you do, and how you work on one's likelihood of being in insecure work. In terms of the importance of where one works those working in the Arts, Entertainment sector face amongst the highest likelihood of doing so, with two in five workers classified as having insecure work. This compares to around 1 in 5 in the 'Wholesale, retail, transportation, accommodation, and food sector, 1 in 7 in the 'Information, communication, financial insurance activities' sectors, and 1 in 6 in 'Industry'.

The data on insecure work by occupation highlights significant disparities. Notably, around 1 in 3 of those in 'Skilled Trades, 'Caring, Leisure and Other Service', 'Elementary' and 'Process, Plant and Machine Operatives' report are in insecure work. These results are in contrast to those working in 'Administrative and secretarial' occupations where 1 in 10 are in insecure work.

Insecure work is around twice as prevalent in part-time roles as it is in full-time roles. Close to 4 in 10 of those in part-time work are in insecure work, compared to less than 2 in 10 of full-time workers. Further details on how this breaks down by the two indicators comprising this dimension are available in Appendix 1.

Insecure work is about as prevalent in the public sector (17.5%) as it is in NGO's (17.4%) and Irish owned private sector (17.6%). Insecure work is, however, less prevalent in the foreign owned private sector at 11.3%.

Anxiety about future prospects

Turning to the sub-dimension 'anxiety about future prospects' the Working in Ireland Survey found that just below 1 in 5 workers (18.8%) have anxiety about their future work prospects. Those who were defined as anxious about their future prospects included those who responded that they were very or moderately anxious across four of the following five items: Losing your job/or your sources of work; Future changes to your work that may make it more difficult to use your skills & abilities; Future changes that may reduce your pay; Unexpected changes to your hours of work; Securing new employment or new sources of work if you lose your current job/work.

Looking at the distribution across different job and worker characteristics the results indicate that women were significantly more likely to experience anxiety about their future work prospects, with over a 7-percentage point difference between men and women. Younger workers also faced a higher likelihood of experiencing anxiety about future prospects. The results did not show any clear relationship in terms of the prevalence of anxiety about future prospects and level of educational attainment, and those with degree level or above level qualifications (18.7%) were just as (slightly more) likely to report being anxious about their future prospects than those with primary or secondary or below level qualifications (17.9%).

In terms of sector, those working within the 'Arts, Entertainment and Recreation' sector (33%) were among the most likely to express anxiety about their future job prospects, while those employed in 'Industry' were the least likely (14.2%), followed by those in 'Public administration, health and education' (16.5%).

As to differences across occupations, those in 'Caring, Leisure and Other Service' roles exhibit the highest level of concern with just under 1 in 4 having significant worries about future career paths. Similarly, those in 'Elementary' and 'Sales and Customer Service' roles express substantial anxiety at 23.5% and 23.1% respectively. Comparatively, workers in 'Managerial, Professional & Associate Professional' and 'Process, Plant and Machine Operatives' roles display relatively lower anxiety levels, at 17.2% and 16.2% respectively.

In terms of firm ownership type, those employed in the public sector (17.2%) are the least anxious about their future prospects and those working in NGO's are among the most anxious (21%). There are no differences in variation between foreign-owned and Irish-owned private sector firms in terms of anxiety about future prospects. In any case, across all firm ownership type it is notable, however, that there is not huge variation by firm ownership type.

Work organisation

Work organisation is assessed via the sub-dimensions work effort; work autonomy; and employee relations and representations.

Intensive work effort

Here we look at the experience of highly intensive work effort. To be classed as working in a job requiring highly intensive work effort respondents needed to respond 'all of the time' or 'almost all of the time' to two of the following three indicators: You have to work at very high speeds; You have to work to tight deadlines; You find your work stressful.

Just under 1 in 10 workers work in jobs which involve highly intensive work effort, with females and workers aged 25-44 having a significantly higher likelihood of doing so than others. There appears to be a linear relationship between higher levels of educational attainment and work intensity, with those with a degree or higher levels of education (11.1%) being twice as likely to experience high work intensity as those with primary or secondary level (5.4%) qualifications. Interestingly, the analysis does not show evidence of a statistically significant relationship between experience of highly intensive work and sector, whereas there is a statistically significant relationship with the occupation. Those in 'Caring, Leisure and Other service' (11.8%) jobs and those in 'Managerial, Professional and Associate Professional' (11.7%) jobs are among the most likely, where around 1 in 10 experience highly intensive work. This compares to close to 5% or 1 in 20 of those in 'Skilled Trades', 'Process, Plant and Machine operatives' and 'Sales and customer service' occupations.

Autonomy over work/work tasks

To be defined as having autonomy over one's work a respondent needed to say that they had at least a little or a greater degree of say over at least one of the following three indicators: deciding the times you start and finish work; deciding the pace at which you work; and deciding how to do your work (scheduling, organising tasks). Of the employees surveyed in WIIS, 87% possess autonomy over their work or their work tasks. More women than men were found to have autonomy over their work (89% vs. 84%), as were middle aged workers (80.3% of 16–24-year-olds have autonomy). This compares to 89% of 35–44-year-olds.

There was also evidence of a relationship between the level of educational attainment and work autonomy, whereby those with lower levels of educational attainment had less autonomy. Specifically, the data shows that 80% of those with 'Primary or secondary or below' levels of education lack work autonomy, compared to 86.7% of those with 'Below degree' and 89.7% of those with 'Degree or above' level qualifications. Autonomy over work/work tasks was also significantly less likely to be associated with part-time employment (80.1%), than with full-time employment (88.3%).

In terms of sector, workers the 'Information, communications, financial, insurance' and 'Professional, scientific, technical, administration' sectors had the highest likelihood of having autonomy over their work/work tasks. This compares to those in the 'Arts, Entertainment and Recreational', 'Wholesale, Retail, Transportation, Accommodation & Food', 'Public Administration, Health and Education' sectors who experience a lower than average autonomy over their work/work tasks.

Those working in manual occupations had significantly less work autonomy compared to those across other occupations. Specifically, more than three-quarters of those in 'Elementary' (76.8%), 'Caring, leisure, and other service' (77.2%), and 'Process, plant and machine operative' (79.6%) occupations have autonomy over their work. Perhaps not surprisingly, those in 'Managerial, Professional and Associate Professional' (91.1%) were among the most likely to have autonomy over their work, although those in 'Administrative and Secretarial' (93.2%) occupations had the highest levels of autonomy over their work/work tasks.

In terms of firm ownership type/sector, those working in the foreign-owned private sector were most likely to have autonomy over their work/work tasks (90.6%). This was followed by those working in the voluntary sector (89.4%) Irish owned private enterprises (83.7%) were most likely to have autonomy over their work/work tasks, followed by those in the public sector (85.3%).

Employee relations and representation

High levels of support from line management/organisation

Large proportions of workers said that they received high levels of support from line management, with over two-thirds of workers indicating as such. To be classified as having high levels of support from line management one needed to respond that they strongly agree or agree to four of the following six items: your line manager respects you as a person; your line manager gives you praise and recognition when you do a good job; your line manager is helpful to you in getting the job done; your line manager encourages and supports your development; in general, employees in your organisation trust management; for the most part, this organisation treats its employees fairly.

Males were significantly more likely to acquire high levels of support from line management, as were younger workers. In fact, with each older age category a lower proportion of workers responded that they had high levels of support from line management.

Those working in 'Information, communications, financial, insurance' (74.8%) and 'Professional, scientific, technical, administration' (72.1%) sectors indicated they received relatively high levels of support. In contrast, those in the 'Public administration, health, education', 'Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food' and 'Arts, Entertainment and recreation' sector had significantly lower levels of support from their management/ organisation.

Trade union representation

Less than half of workers had access to trade union representation in their workplace (44.9%). Included in this figure are those who either were a trade union member themselves or who worked in a workplace in which there was an employer-union collective agreement. Female workers were significantly more likely to be in union membership and to have their conditions of employment covered by a collective agreement than were male workers. There is an almost linear relationship between trade union representation with age, with older workers being increasingly more likely to be covered by such collective arrangements. The differences here are stark, with just over one third of those aged between 16-34 covered by such, compared to just under two-thirds of 55–64-year-olds.

There are notable sectoral differences in terms of trade union representation. The 'Public administration, health, education' sector exhibits the highest representation at 76%, indicating strong union involvement. Meanwhile, the 'Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food' sector shows moderate representation at 26.1%. The 'Professional, scientific, technical, admin' and 'Information, communications, financial, insurance' sectors have relatively low representation rates also, at 35.1% and 27.1%, respectively.

In terms of firm ownership type, trade union representation is concentrated in the public sector with more than three-quarters of all workers covered by such provisions. In contrast, trade union representation is significantly lower in the private sector, and particularly low in the Irish-owned private sector where under one in four are covered.

Skills & Training

Skills and training is denoted here as resources under the sub-dimension headings of 'substantial training provision' and 'high skills utilisation and development'. The former was defined as training that was either on- or off-the-job training or both on/off the job training that lasted for more than three weeks.

Substantial training provision

Almost 15% of all workers received substantial training of 3 weeks or more, with 2.7% receiving substantial on-the-job-training and off-the-job training. There is a significant relationship between age group and the completion of substantial training. Those aged 25-34 were among the most likely to receive substantial training with 1 in 5 having obtained training of this extent. This compares to less than 1 in 10 (9.3%) of those aged 55-64. There is a statistically significant relationship between training and educational attainment: there is an increasingly higher likelihood of having completed substantial training the higher the level of educational attainment: 9% of those with primary or secondary level education responded that they had completed substantial training, compared to 17% of those with degree level or higher qualifications.

Occupations with a higher likelihood of receiving such training include 'Managerial, Professional & Associate Professional' roles at 17.2%, 'Skilled Trades' at 14.6%, and 'Administrative and Secretarial' roles at 13.6%. On the other hand, 'Caring, Leisure and Other Service' and 'Elementary' jobs exhibit relatively lower likelihoods at 13.5% and 10.1% respectively. 'Sales and Customer Service' as well as 'Process, Plant and Machine Operatives' roles have the lowest likelihood of individuals receiving substantial training, both at 10%.

Completion of substantial training varies significantly by working hours. Part-time workers (8.2%) are significantly less likely to have received substantial training, compared to full-time workers (16.2%).

In terms of the proportions of workers who have received substantial training by firm ownership/sector those who worked in the foreign-owned private sector were most likely to receive substantial training, with just under 1 in 5 having completed such. This compares to just under 1 in 8 of those in the Irish owned private sector (13.2%) and the public sector (13.2%).

High levels of skills utilisation and development

More than two-thirds of all workers are classified as having high skills utilisation and development. High skills utilisation/development is captured by those who responded strongly agree or agree to three of four of the following indicators: adequacy of their training in keeping workers up to date with the skills required of their job; whether their job is more secure because of their training; whether their employment prospects improved because of their training; and whether their job provides them with the opportunity to put their qualifications and skills to good use.

Among individuals aged 16-24, a significant percentage (81.9%) have high levels of skills utilisation. Thereafter the proportions fall. 70.5% of those aged 25-34, enjoy high skill utilisation. For individuals aged 35-44 it is 65.5%, and it decreases further among those aged 45-54 and 55-64, with percentages of 61.1% and 63.5% respectively. These findings indicate that younger individuals tend to be more likely to have high levels of skills utilisation than older age groups.

There are also differences in the utilisation of skills by sector. Those in the 'Arts, Entertainment and recreation' (71.4%) sector have among the highest level of high skills utilisation, compared to those in the 'Public administration, health and education' sector where 66% have high levels of skills utilisation and development.

In terms of occupations, 'Caring, Leisure and Other Service' have the highest level of skills utilisation at 83.1%, underscoring the skill-intensive nature of these jobs. This finding is particularly interesting given the observed relatively low levels of completion of training for workers in these occupations. Similarly, those in 'process, plant and machine operative' and 'skilled trades' occupations also have high levels of skills utilisation. Conversely, 'Sales and Customer Service' occupations exhibit a relatively lower utilisation of skills at 63.4%. 'Managerial, Professional & Associate Professional', 'Administrative and Secretarial', and 'Elementary' roles fall within the mid-range, with utilisation rates of 66%, 64.8%, and 61.4% respectively.

The results for skills utilisation and development are particularly interesting when interpreted in conjunction with the findings in terms of training provision, as presented above. In this regard, when one reviews the results by sector or occupation, workers with the highest levels of skills utilisation and development are those with the lowest levels of having received substantial training. For example, those in 'Caring, leisure and other service' occupations had among the highest levels of skills utilisation, but they also recorded the lowest levels of substantial training. The same is true when we look at the results for those working in the 'Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food' sector and those working in the Irish-owned private sector. The implication of this finding is somewhat paradoxical in that those who utilise their skills the most are the ones who have received the least training.

Work-life balance

Work-life balance is captured via the exposure to four demands: long working hours, long working weeks, the lack of work-life flexibility, and the experience of work-life spillage.

Duration of working hours

14.9% of workers worked long hours, defined as working 49 or more hours per week. There are marked gender differences with 21.6% of males working long hours compared to 7.2% of females. There are also significant differences by age, with middle aged workers having the highest likelihood of working long hours. Whether or not one worked long hours also varied substantially across jobs, and was significantly more prevalent in some sectors, some occupations and obviously those who worked full-time were substantially more likely to work long hours, with only a very small percentage of those formally employed on a part-time contract working more than 48 hours per week.

In terms of sectors, those working in the 'Industrial' sector have a much higher prevalence of long working hours compared to all other occupations, with 1 in 4 working more than 49 hours per week. This is in contrast to the sectors with the lowest prevalence of long working hours, namely, the 'Public administration, education & health' sector and the 'Information, communication, financial and insurance' sector.

Mapping across from the occupational distribution of long working hours 'Skilled trades' workers and those working in 'Process, plant and machine operatives' jobs are most likely to work long hours. Beyond this, those in 'Managerial, Professional or Associate professional' jobs have an above average likelihood of working long hours. Very low proportions of workers in 'Administrative and Secretarial' and 'Sales and Customer Service' occupations work long hours.

Long working hours are more common in the foreign-owned private sector than any of the other firm ownership types, with an almost five percentage points higher likelihood of working long hours in this sector compared to the public sector. The difference, however, when compared with the Irish-owned private sector, at 13.5%, is not as stark.

Duration of working weeks

Duration of working weeks concerns the number of days normally worked in a week. Long working weeks refers here to those who work full-time and at least 6 days a week including at least one day at the weekend. Close to 1 in 10 workers had working weeks of this duration. Males (9.4%) had more than twice the prevalence rate of long working weeks compared to females at 4.2%. The data also indicates that those aged 16-24 and 45-54 are more likely to experience long working weeks, with percentages of 6.5% and 7% respectively. Interestingly, those falling within the 25-34 and 35-44 age brackets reported slightly lower percentages at 4.8% and 5% respectively.

Those with degree level or above levels of educational attainment had a much lower likelihood of working long weeks at 3.6%. This compares to respondents with primary or secondary education where 9.4%, and 13.5% of those with below degree level education usually worked 6 or more days per week.

In terms of sector, long working weeks was largely concentrated within the 'Industry' (16.1%) and the 'Arts, entertainment and recreation' (19.7%) sector. 7% of those in the 'Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation and food' sector did usually work more than six days per week.

The results in terms of occupation show similarly that long working weeks are concentrated in particular types of jobs. For example, while only very small proportions of 'Managerial, Professional or Associate professional' and 'Administrative and secretarial' workers work long weeks, more than 1 in 5 'skilled trades' workers and 'process, plant and machine operatives' work more than 6 days per week.

The difference in the prevalence of long working weeks between those engaged in full-time and part-time employment was not that stark, being 8% and 6.1% respectively.

Lacks work-life autonomy

Just under 1 in 10 workers report that they lack work life flexibility, with females being worse off than males. Across all age cohorts around 1 in 10 report that they experience a lack of work life flexibility, although it is worth noting that those aged 25-34 face the highest prevalence of this issue.

In terms of sector, there is substantial levels of variation in terms of a lack of work-life flexibility. Those in the 'Public administration, education and health' sector are the most likely to report (16%) a lack of work life flexibility. This compares to 2% in the 'Information, communication, financial and insurance' sector. A lack of work-life autonomy is also concentrated in particular job types, being particularly pronounced in 'Caring, leisure and other service' occupations (23.6%).

Experience work-life conflict/spillage

We turn now to look at the results for work-life conflict. To be classed as experiencing work into life spillage/conflict a respondent would have needed to respond, 'all the time' to two of the three following indicators: 'After finishing work, you keep worrying about job problems'; 'Find it difficult to unwind and switch off at the end of a workday'; 'The demands of your job interfere with your family life'.

10.5% of workers experienced work into life conflict. While there is no significant gender, occupational, or sectoral differences in the experience of work-life spillage, they are significant differences based on full-time/part-time status and age with those working full-time being twice as likely to experience work-life spillage compared to those working part-time. Similarly, those aged 25-44 were more than twice as likely to experience work-life spillage compared to the youngest workers (16-24).

A summary of the distribution of job quality attributes by worker and job characteristics

This section synthesises the findings presented above. It does so by illustrating how the various identified job attributes are distributed across the workforce. The intention is to examine whether particular job quality characteristics are distributed equally across the workforce or whether there are significant variations depending on the biographical and organisational characteristics of workers.

Gender

An examination across the full suite of components of job quality by gender illustrates that females score worse on 10 of the 13 sub-dimensions of job quality. Females are more likely than males to have low earnings; to be anxious about their future prospects; have long working hours; lack work life flexibility; experience work into life spillage/conflict; lack autonomy over work/work tasks; have jobs that require highly intensive work effort; be less likely to have high support from management/organisation; have lower levels of trade union representation/ collective bargaining coverage; have lower levels of high skill utilisation and development; and to be less likely to have substantial levels of on-job or off-job training provision.

Age category

An assessment across the components of job quality by age category shows that younger workers and older workers fare worse. Workers aged 16-24 score the worst in six out of the fourteen sub-dimensions. Young workers score particularly poorly in terms of risk of low earnings and have a much higher likelihood of being in insecure work. Older workers face difficulties in utilising their skills, receiving training and also report the poorest levels of support from their line management/organisation.

Educational attainment

Although there is an evident relationship between job quality and level of educational attainment, it is not the case that having a primary degree or above degree-level qualification insulates workers from having bad components to their job. However, possessing only a primary or secondary school level qualification or below a degree third level qualification significantly increases a worker's likelihood of scoring poorly across many of the job quality components.

Region in which worker lives

While poor job quality scores are not necessarily concentrated in any particular region in which a worker lives, workers in some regions have poorer job quality. Most particularly, the 'Border' region scores worst in five of the fourteen sub-dimensions and the 'Midlands' scores worst on three of the fourteen.

Industrial sector

On the whole job quality in the 'Information, Communication and Technology' sector is superior to that in all other sectors. This sector scores the best in nine of the fourteen sub-dimensions. That being said, there are a number of areas in which this sector does not perform well. Relatively speaking, jobs in this sector require highly intensive work effort levels and are characterised by an underutilisation of existing skills. At the other end of the spectrum, however, those in the 'Arts, Entertainment, and other recreation' sector face particularly acute poor job quality which ranges across a broad range of sub-dimensions.

Occupation

Those workers employed in 'caring, leisure and other service' occupations exhibit poor job quality across a very broad range of aspects of job quality. Beyond this, those in other manual occupations such as those working in 'Process, plant and machinery operative' positions or 'Elementary' occupations do not fare well across a broad range of sub-dimensions of job quality.

Full-time/part-time status

While part-time workers score worse in 8 of the 13 sub-dimensions of job quality, full-time workers are by no means free from poor quality jobs and have poorer scores in 6 of the sub-dimensions. Full-time workers are more likely to score poorly in terms of length of working day and week. They also are more likely to experience highly intensive work effort and work-into-life conflict. On the other hand, part-time workers tend to have inferior outcomes in terms of pay, renumeration benefits, job security, future prospects, social support, and training provision.

Firm ownership type

There is often an assumption in Ireland that the quality of jobs in the foreign-direct investment sector is better than in indigenous industrial and service sector firms. The evidence presented in this report largely – but not wholly – supports that assumption. While there are a number of areas of job quality where the foreign-owned private sector scores well, in six of the fourteen sub-dimensions – working hours, intensity of work, utilisation of skills, social support from management and organisation, and trade union representation – it scores less well when compared to the scores for those workers working in the indigenous-owned sector.

Job Quality, An Aggregate Summary: The distribution of job quality on a continuum of 'good' to 'bad'

In this section of our report we continue to reduce the detail provided above in our analysis of the data findings. We do so by providing an aggregate single measure of job quality in Ireland. The measure works by combining the scores across the various indicators and dimensions of job quality. We present our results along a continuum where lower values indicate higher job quality to lower values indicating poorer job quality. See Figures 1 and 2 below.

The benefits of using an aggregate single measure

As discussed earlier in the report, the benefit of providing an aggregate summary score is that it allows for easy comparison and ranking of different jobs based on their overall quality as well as providing a simple method to benchmark job quality across different sectors, regions, and, with longitudinal data, across timeframes. To put it more prosaically, an aggregate summary score is helpful in distilling a complex set of measures into a relatively simple 'direction of travel' message and in establishing 'relative positions' of jobs in relation to one another. A unitary index is also appealing to policy makers as it reduces, simplifies, and summarises an otherwise complex reality and is seen to resonate with other single index measures that are well-understood such as gross domestic product. Its simplicity can also serve as an excellent communications tool for sparking interest and debate in job quality. Another benefit in providing an aggregated summary score of job quality, is that it helps to prevent the fashioning of tunnel vision where a single aspect of job quality is focused upon to the detriment of others.

The limitations of using an aggregate single measure

These benefits notwithstanding, aggregate summary measures have a number of limitations, and they need to be borne in mind when reading our results below. These limitations include, first, the *simplification of a complex reality*: By condensing a wide range of dimensions into a single score, the complexity of job quality is potentially oversimplified. The approach contrasts starkly with the detail and specific insights that the multi-dimensional scoreboard provides above. Second, there is the issue of *weighting*. Since job quality is a multi-dimensional concept, deciding whether one should or should not apply differential weights to each dimension is not a straight-forward or unproblematic exercise (De Bustillo et al., 2022). Determining appropriate weights, if at all, is sometimes subjective and can be influenced by the opinions and biases of the researchers creating the aggregate measure. Different stakeholders, too, might have varying views on the importance of different dimensions. In saying that, in general, there are various justifications for most applications choosing equal weights a priori. These include: (1) simplicity of construction, (2) a lack of theoretical structure to justify a differential weighting scheme, (3) no agreement between decision makers, (4) inadequate statistical and/or empirical knowledge, and, finally, (5) alleged objectivity

(Freudenberg 2003; OECD 2008; Maggiano and Ruviglioni 2009; Decancq and Lugo 2013). Nevertheless, these reasons have also been criticised by those who pertain that these justifications are not adequate (Greco *et al*. 2017). Then, there is the risk of *masking the role of drivers*. While this criticism does not pertain to the current analysis it does deserve to be mentioned. It relates to using summary scores derived from surveys conducted at different points in time. When used thus they obscure whether any shift in the overall score is attributable to a uniform change in the scores of all the various individual attributes or whether one or two features are driving the change. As a consequence, they need to be used with great caution when it comes to identifying the correct policy levers that governments might focus on to improve job quality.

Statistical approach employed

The aggregate measure of job quality was calculated by summing an individual's scores across each of the fourteen sub-dimensions detailed in the previous section. Equal weights were applied to each of the sub-dimensions. Scores from each of the sub-dimensions were based on binary scores of 0/1 which captured whether a respondent had (0) or was lacking (1) a resource, or was (1) or was not (0) exposed to a demand, such that the aggregate measure of job quality ranged between 0 and 14. (See Table 7 above and the associated discussion for an explanation of whether the various sub-dimensions constituted resources or demands). From this coding, then, the lower the score the higher the level of job quality, whereas higher scores correspond to lower levels of job quality.

To be included in the aggregated multi-dimensional measure of job quality, respondents had to provide responses for nine of the fourteen sub-dimensions, allowing for missing values in up to four sub-dimensions. The decision on handling missing values may seem arbitrary, but excluding all respondents with any missing values would be overly strict, discarding valuable information. Conversely, including respondents with too few responses would compromise the accuracy of assessing overall job quality. Our approach strikes a middle ground, maximizing data utilization and ensuring a comprehensive yet rigorous analysis.

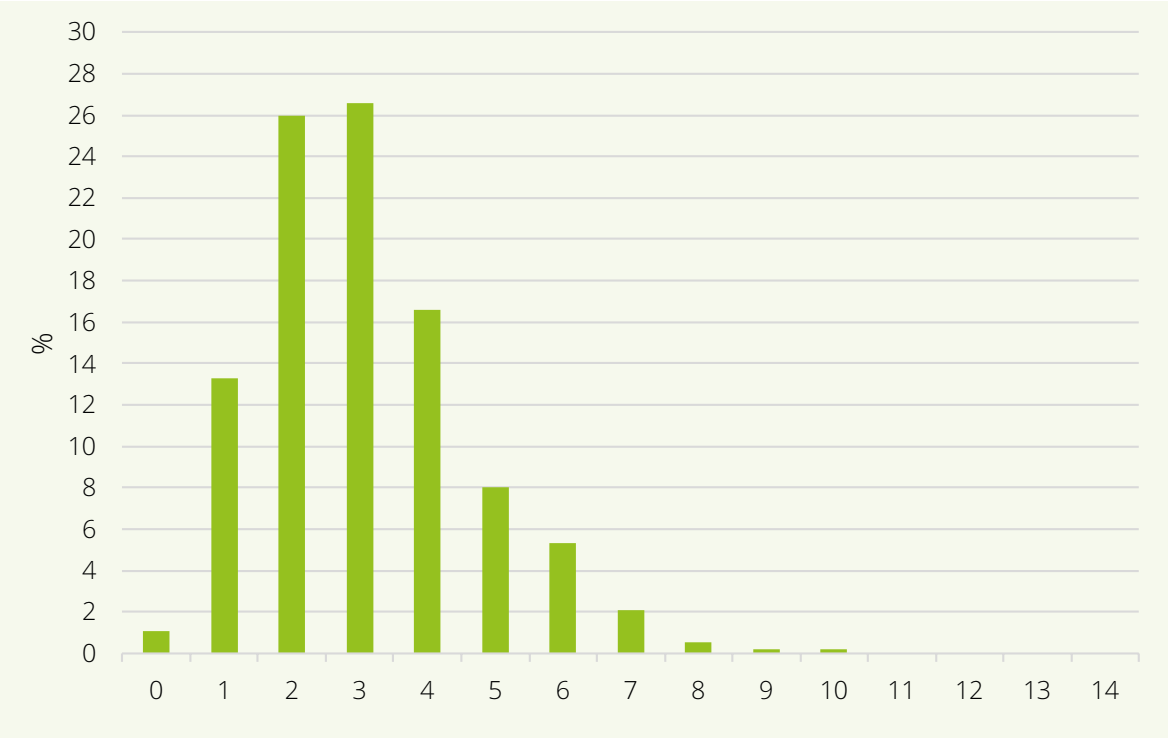
Job Quality: An aggregate summary

Figure 1 below presents the aggregate summary of job quality based on individual workers combined total scores across the various sub-dimensions of job quality. Thus, a score of 0 represents cases where workers have all the necessary job resources and do not experience any of the identified job demands across all the sub-dimensions. For each of the 14 sub-dimensions a worker can obtain a score of either 0 or 1. Thus taken together a worker will have a score ranging from 0 to 14.

A score of 1 represents cases where the worker experiences either one demand or lacks one resource. A score of 2 represents cases where the worker experiences two demands or lacks two resources, or a combination of experiencing one demand and lacking one resource. At the other end of the figure, a score of 14 indicates circumstances where a worker is exposed to all the demands and enjoys none of the resources. Thus, lower scores equate with a higher quality job, while a higher score equates with a poorer quality job. A score between these two polar points represents cases where workers are either exposed to some demands or lack some of the resources. Since each sub-dimension of job quality is weighted equally, the quality of one's job as presented here is based on the cumulative experience of presence or absence of demands and resources across the various sub-dimensions.

At 1.1%, only a very small share of Ireland's workforce enjoy what we might term an ideal job where they possess all the resources they require without being exposed to any intolerable pressures or demands. At the same time and at the other end of the spectrum, only a very small share of workers is exposed to a large combination of multiple demands and a lack of resources. None of the sample experience poor-quality on eleven or more of the 14 sub-dimensions. Less than 1% experience poor-quality on 8 or more of the 14 sub-dimensions.

Figure 1: Overall Level of Job Quality: An aggregate summary



Note: Low scores = higher quality job. High score = poorer quality job.

The majority of workers experience poor quality in respect of two to three of the sub-dimensions (26% experience poor quality on 2 sub-dimensions and 26.6% experience poor quality on 3 sub-dimensions). This suggests that even where we have 'good jobs' (i.e., for those on the far left hand side of the figure) – and notwithstanding our reservations below in denoting good and bad jobs from this figure – these jobs also have some negative features or that good jobs come with at least some trade-offs. However, it is a moot point whether all trade-offs are equal and this is an area of considerable debate, for instance, within the feminist literature (Rubery *et al.*, 1998; Rubery, 2015; Wilson and MacFlynn, 2018; Wilson, 2017).

The percentages having more than 'two or three' poor quality aspects to their job starts to decline quite rapidly beyond this point. 16.6% experience poor quality in 4 aspects of their job. 8% experience poor quality in 5 aspects of their job. 5.3% experience poor quality in 6 aspects of their job. 2.1% experience poor quality in 7 aspects of their job. Almost 1% of workers have a negative score across eight or more sub-dimensions.

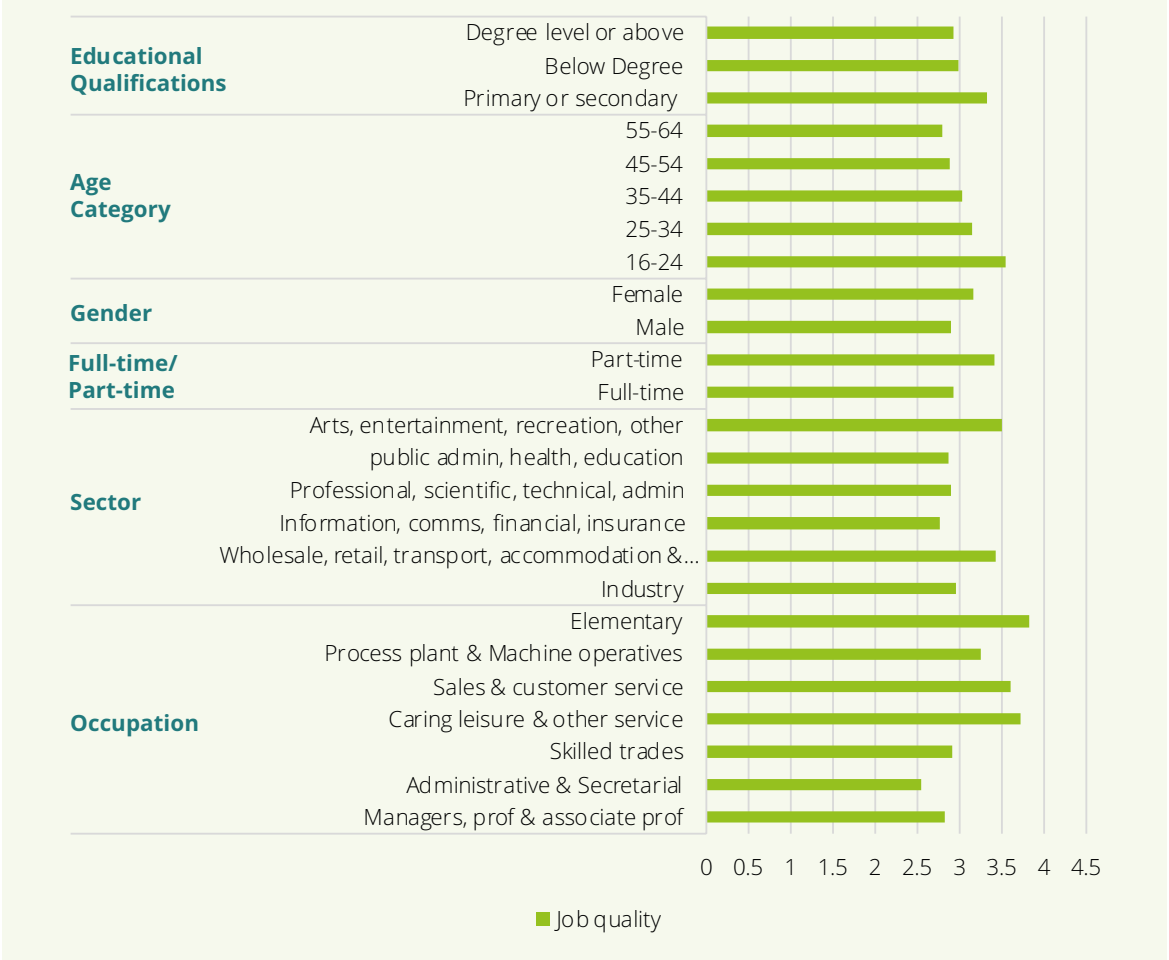
While it might be alluring to draw conclusions about the ratio of 'good' jobs to 'bad' jobs based on the extreme data points shown above, it is reasonable to assert that Figure 1 visually highlights the inherent arbitrariness in determining the threshold at which we can differentiate 'good' jobs from 'bad' jobs. How bad does a job have to be across all aspects to be classified as 'bad', or the corollary how good does a job have to be classed as a 'good' job? At the positive end of the spectrum if we decided on a strict threshold of 0, which captures those who are exposed to zero demands and lack zero resources we might identify 1.1% of jobs as 'good', whereas if we put the threshold at one (where they are exposed to one demand or lack one resource) we might identify that 14.4% of workers are in a 'good' job.

At the other end of the spectrum, in terms of attempting to quantify the proportion of 'bad' jobs, the analyst again is faced with choosing a threshold to distinguish the 'bad' jobs from the rest. Choosing a threshold of 4+ would identify 33% as experiencing a poor-quality job, 5+ would identify 16.3 per cent, a threshold of 6+ would identify 8.3 per cent, whereas a threshold of 7+ identifies 3% as experiencing poor job quality.

The distribution of average job quality

Figure 2 below sets out the distribution of average job quality based on a range of worker and job characteristics. The results are presented so that lower scores indicate higher average job quality, and higher scores indicate poorer average job quality. The interpretation of the results is the same as Figure 1, whereby scores are based on the combination of exposure of demands and a lack of resources across multiple aspects of job quality. There is considerable variation in the scores. In broad terms, younger workers, female workers, part-time workers, and those with primary or secondary level qualifications have relatively poor average job quality. In terms of sector, the results show that those in the 'Arts, entertainment, recreation' sector have amongst the poorest average job quality, followed by those in the 'Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation and food' sector, followed by those in 'Industry'. When we look at differences across occupations, the results show that those in 'Elementary' occupations followed by those in 'Caring, leisure and other service' occupations have the poorest average job quality. In contrast, those in 'Administrative and Secretarial' occupations enjoy the highest average job quality, followed by those in 'Managerial, Professional and Associate Professional' occupations.

Figure 2: Average job quality score by worker/job characteristics (higher score = poorer quality)



To sum up then: the statistics presented in Figures 1 and 2 above provide a visual illustration of the variable ways in which the various number of job resources and demands are distributed and combine within jobs. Some jobs are weighted towards having more resources and fewer demands while within other jobs the demands or lack of resources exceed the resources available to workers and in-between there are variations on the complexions in the mix of resources and demands. While this analysis is revealing it does not help us to understand how good and bad attributes of a job combine (demands and resources) such that they can be identified as constituting distinct types of jobs; that is, how are particular job types configured and how they might be classified. To undertake this form of analysis we require a different statistical and analytical approach. For this we use cluster analysis, which we turn to now.

A clustering approach: identifying job quality clusters in Ireland

Cluster analysis is a sophisticated multivariate statistical technique which permits us to determine whether and how different aspects of job quality combine across different groups of workers. That is, it is designed to determine whether the job attributes of different groups of workers are similar enough to fall into distinct categories or clusters and by corollary that those workers occupying any one cluster are sufficiently different from those workers occupying other clusters. Thus, we use it to develop a taxonomy of job types in Ireland.

Statistical approach employed

To develop a taxonomy of job types, a two-step cluster analysis was conducted using the sub-dimensions of job quality as outlined in Section 4. Two-step cluster analysis is specifically designed for clustering data, which is categorical, continuous, or mixed in nature. Unlike some other clustering methods that require theoretical specification of the number of clusters in advance, two-step cluster analysis uses a statistical criterion (e.g., Schwarz's Bayesian Information Criterion; hereafter BIC) to automatically determine the optimal number of clusters. This helps avoid the need for subjective decisions on the number of clusters and allows the data to 'load' freely onto the most appropriate cluster.

Two-step cluster analysis uses a two-step process that first creates a preliminary clustering solution on a subset of the data. This assignment is determined based on whichever option maximizes a log-likelihood function. In the second stage, a conventional agglomerative clustering algorithm is employed to group these pre-clusters into various cluster solutions.

The cluster solution is validated using the silhouette coefficient, which indicates average separation and compactness of the clusters. An average silhouette score of 0.1 was found which indicates that there is some degree of separation between the clusters, suggesting discernible patterns in the data. While the separation is not overly

pronounced, it still demonstrates a level of clustering structure within the data which was the basis on which further exploration of the model was undertaken. Our analysis then explored the optimum numbers of clusters and evaluated their fit using the BIC. This process involves two stages of evaluation. In the first stage, the BIC is used to assess the fit of various solutions with different numbers of clusters. The goal is to find a solution that represents the data well while avoiding overfitting or underfitting. In the second stage, the focus is on the change in distance between the two closest clusters. This distance is a measure of how distinct or separate the clusters are from each other. The larger the change in distance, the more well-defined the clusters are.

We included 13 of the 14 sub-dimensions in the cluster analysis. The sub-dimension quality of training provision (as distinct from quantity of training) was excluded from the analysis, given that only those who received training were asked the series of questions included about the quality of training. Just over one-third of workers received no on-the-job training and under two-thirds (62%) received no off-the-job training. Consequently, there is no quality of training provision data for these workers.

Since cluster analysis is a joint analysis of the job quality covariates, missing values are excluded on a case wise basis. As a result, 30% of all cases are excluded from the cluster analysis. The final cluster analysis is therefore based on the remaining 1453 cases or respondents. Most missing values were found in non-response to the question capturing earnings, which had a 22% non-response rate. The remaining missing values were a result of non-response by the self-employed on questions related to the sub-dimensions of training provision, social support from management or trade union/collective bargaining representation.

In examining who has the different job types we were faced with a number of options. One possible approach would have been to use multinomial logistic regression. While this statistical technique has the benefit of being able to handle at once the effect of the different explanatory factors in determining membership in the different job types, it has one main weakness. That is, it requires us to pick one job type as a reference point and subsequent logistic regression models are conducted for each job cluster and compared to the reference category. While such an analysis would provide detail on whether the various characteristics influenced the likelihood of being in a given job type, this would always be in comparison to the reference category. This is disadvantageous because it does not allow us to see the results for each cluster in its own right as the result for each cluster (job type) is always in comparison to the reference category. Similarly, it limits our ability to compare results between clusters.

In preference, we decided to use another approach - binary logistic regression - to estimate the effect of different job and worker characteristics in determining membership in each of the different job clusters. In this case, five separate binary logistic regression models are conducted across each of the different job types identified. Each model examines whether being in (or not in) a particular job cluster is dependent upon the set of job and worker characteristics examined. By

separating out the analysis in this fashion and in conducting a separate binary logistic regression across each of the five different job types, we obtain more detail about the independent influence of the worker and job characteristics in determining membership in each specific job type category.

In assessing the results of the binary logistic regression models a number of different statistical estimates are used. To evaluate the overall performance and fit of the model; that is, how well the model predicts the observed outcomes by comparing the observed and predicted probabilities, we estimate its goodness-of-fit. For this we report both the Nagelkerke R^2 and the Cox and Snell R^2 statistics at the foot of Table 11. In our commentary, however, we just consider the Nagelkerke R^2. Both statistics are broadly similar in that they both provide a measure of the substantive significance of the model. Their values range from 0 to 1. Higher values indicate a better fit of the model to the data, whereas values close to 0 indicate the predictor variables in the model are of little use in predicting the outcome variable.

The odds ratios, coefficients, and p-values were calculated to determine the strength and significance of these associations. If the odds ratio is 1.0, there is no relationship between the variables; if it is less than 1.0, it suggests a negative association between the two variables. In other words, the occurrence of the event is less likely in the reference group compared to the group being considered. By contrast a value of greater than 1.0 indicates a direct or positive association.

Finally, the cell size is important because it affects the stability and reliability of the estimated coefficients and statistical tests. Larger cell sizes ensure that there are enough data points to estimate the model parameters reliably and avoid issues such as overfitting.

Job Quality Types: What types of job exist?

The two-step cluster analysis identified five distinct clusters, each of which contains a unique combination of job attributes and provides a good balance between cluster separation and model complexity. The five clusters that comprise the taxonomy and their characteristics are detailed below in Table 10 and their distribution is displayed in the pie-chart in Figure 3 below. The clusters contained 217 (14.9%), 305 (12.1%), 382 (26.3%), 373 (25.7%), 305 (21%) cases. In interpreting the common characteristics and patterns within each cluster we assigned the following descriptive labels to the 5 clusters:

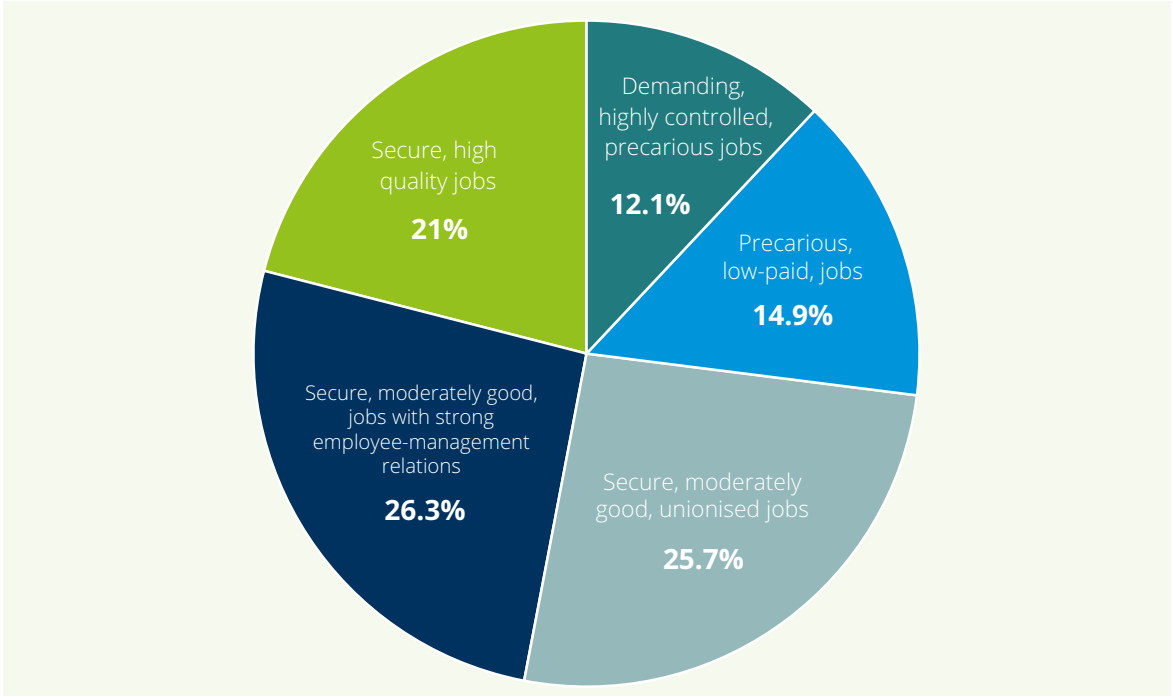
1. Demanding, highly controlled, precarious jobs;
2. Precarious, low-paid jobs;
3. Secure, moderately good, unionised jobs;
4. Secure, moderately good, jobs with strong employee-management relations; and
5. Secure, high-quality jobs.

A more detailed description of each cluster is provided in Table 10 below and Table Appendix 2.1 provides yet further detail on the specifics of how different attributes are clustered in each of the job types.

Table 10: An overview of the taxonomy of job types

Job type	% of work force	Description
Demanding, highly controlled, precarious jobs.	12.1	Workers in this group face significant **job insecurity**, with 26% experiencing instability in their employment. The **wages are low to average** with a majority share of these workers (55%) earning net salaries between €20,000 and €40,000. A further quarter (23%) earn below €20,000. In many respects, workers in this cohort share job attributes with those in 'low paid, precarious jobs'. They face significant **job insecurity**, with 26% experiencing instability in their employment. They are also anxious about their future work and employment. Their **wages are low to average** with a majority share of these workers (55%) earning net salaries between €20,000 and €40,000. A further quarter (23%) earn below €20,000. They are distinguished from those in 'precarious, low paid jobs, however by their **highly intensive effort levels and lack of autonomy** over their work tasks, their long working hours, and **poor work-private lives flexibility**.
Precarious, low paid, jobs.	14.9	These job types are characterised by **precarious work and low wages**. A significant percentage of workers in this cluster, approximately 40%, face insecurity in their jobs with 10% facing insecurity in terms of both their employment and their wages. These workers also receive relatively **poor levels of additional renumeration benefits** such as sick pay or private health insurance – close to 2 in 3 of these workers receive only 1 of 4 additional renumeration benefits. Additionally, most workers, 87%, earn less than €20,000 net.[11] 69% of workers in this cluster are not trade union members nor are covered by a collective agreement. These jobs provide **few job resources, little job discretion, little training, limited management supports** and few work benefits. On the 'plus' side, they experience little work-private life spillage and effort levels are generally low or modest.
Secure, moderately good, unionised jobs.	25.7	This job type offers **relatively secure employment**, with only 14% of workers experiencing wage or employment insecurity in this cluster. Most jobs here are **full-time and permanent** jobs. **Pay levels are low to average** (the majority - 83.5% - earn between €20,000 to €40,000 net) and 8 out of 10 workers have **access to several additional** renumeration benefits; that is, 3 of 4 additional benefits including paid holidays, paid sick leave, an occupational pension, medical coverage. These are, for the main part, **unionised jobs**. Workers in these jobs are **most likely to receive substantial levels of training**. While these jobs' working hours tend to be long, they offer **high levels of work-life flexibility, good job autonomy**, and work demands tend not to generate work-life conflict.
Secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations.	26.3	There are similarities between the characteristics of this job cluster and the previous cluster, the 'secure, moderately good, unionised jobs', particularly in respect of earnings and employment security. However, the workers in this current cluster are considerably less likely to have union representation and/or enjoy collective bargaining coverage. Both these elements are a minor feature with less than 1 in 10 workers (8%) being able to avail of these arrangements. Earnings are **low to average** with the majority of workers (79%) earning between €20,000 and €40,000 net. The vast majority have access to **additional renumeration benefits**, albeit not as extensive as in the secure, moderately good, unionised jobs cluster. However, workers in this cluster enjoy good social support from their managers. More than half (63%) work between 31 and 40 hours per week and enjoy moderate levels of job autonomy. Workers in this cluster also possess relatively poorer work-life flexibility when compared to workers in other job types.
Secure, high-quality jobs	21	These are secure, **relatively well-paid jobs**. A majority, 74%, earn annual net salaries ranging from €40,000 to €60,000, with 20% earning over €65,000) with good benefits. More than half of these workers have paid sick leave, paid holidays, an occupational pension, and medical coverage. Incumbents **enjoy high levels of job discretion, good work-private life flexibility** and **relatively good training provision**. Working hours tend to be **long** (64% work in excess of 41 hours per week). Most (82%) enjoy good social supports from their organisation or line manager and few (5%) express anxieties about their future. Less than half (44%) have employee representation via a union or collective agreement. One in 10 of these workers experience high levels of work effort intensity.

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of job types in Ireland



Job types: Who has them and where are they?

In the previous section we identified five discrete job clusters or job types. We turn now to examine where these various job types exist, and which workers occupy them.

Demanding, highly controlled, precarious jobs.

The regression model for 'demanding, highly controlled, precarious jobs' estimated a Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.080. This means that the model accounts for approximately 8% of the variance in the outcome variable, indicating a low level of explanatory power. Many of the characteristics included in the model do not significantly predict the likelihood of having a 'demanding, highly controlled, precarious' job. However, we need not disregard the model as some of the predictors at least are statistically significant. The nationality of an organisation and its broad sectoral categorisation (public, private or not for profit organisation) was found to be statistically associated with the likelihood of a worker being in this job type. Workers in the public sector, voluntary sector and the private-owned Irish sector were all significantly more likely to be in this job type than those working in foreign-owned firms, with odds ratios of 2.3, 3.8 and 2.8 respectively.

Most other variables, as said however, were non-significant in determining the likelihood of being in a demanding, precarious, highly controlled job. Level of educational attainment was not found to be a statistically significant determinant. As with those workers occupying precarious, low paid, routine jobs, the results for the present model suggest that higher levels of educational attainment do not necessarily protect individuals from being employed in a 'demanding, highly controlled, precarious' job.

With respect to gender, while the odds ratio for males indicated a lower likelihood of having a demanding, precarious job than females, the results were not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, age did not play a statistically significant role in explaining whether workers occupy 'demanding, highly controlled, precarious jobs.

The results in terms of occupation, on the whole, do not show evidence that occupation is an important determinant of being in a 'demanding, precarious, highly controlled' job. One exception to this was for those in 'Administrative and Secretarial' occupations who have statistically significant lower odds of being in a 'demanding, precarious, highly controlled' job when compared to those in 'Professional' occupations.

The fact that few of the characteristics included in this model are helpful at predicting the likelihood of having a 'demanding, precarious, highly controlled' job indicates that other factors which we do not account for matter considerably more. It would be a speculative exercise to say what those might be, but a future WIIS would be well advised to include other variables which might ostensibly help explain the presence of this job type.

Precarious, low paid, routine jobs

The regression model for 'precarious, low paid jobs' estimates a Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.431. This means that the regression model accounts for approximately 43.1% of the variance in the outcome variable. This result is very acceptable and suggests a good level of explanatory power; that is, the included characteristics collectively account for a substantial portion of the variation in the likelihood of being in a 'precarious, low-paid, routine' job.

In terms of the characteristics included in the model the results show the primary importance of gender, age, occupation, industry, and firm size in determining one's likelihood of being in a 'precarious, low paid, routine' job.

Firstly, in terms of worker characteristics. Males exhibit a negative association with precarious, low-paid, routine jobs compared to females. The odds of males having such jobs were significantly lower (odds ratio = 0.196, $p < 0.001$) than that of females, even when all of the other characteristics are controlled for. For age, the analysis indicates that individuals in the younger age group (16 to 24) are more likely to have precarious, low-paid, routine jobs compared to those in the reference category (35-44). The odds ratio of 4.623 suggests that individuals in the younger age group are 4.6 times more likely to have precarious jobs compared to those aged 35 to 44 years. Those with a degree were statistically significantly less likely to have such jobs, with an odds ratio of 0.526.

Turning now to job characteristics the results in terms of occupation show that individuals working in 'elementary', 'caring, leisure and other service' and 'sales and customer service' occupations were significantly more likely to occupy 'precarious, low-paid, routine' jobs (odds ratios = 4.925, 3.095 and 4.431, respectively) than those in professional occupations. In terms of industry, the results show the significant negative effect of having a job in 'Public administration, health or education' in likelihood of having a 'Precarious, low paid, routine' job.

On the influence of firm size, those in small firms are more likely to have a 'precarious, low paid, routine' job than those in larger firms. The results show that individuals employed in firms with 0-49 employees were more likely to have precarious jobs compared to those in firms with 250+ employees (odds ratio = 2.721, $p < 0.01$).

Beyond the characteristics which were found to have a statistically significant influence upon the likelihood of being in a 'precarious, low paid, routine' job, it is informative to comment on some of the results for which there was not statistically significant effect. The nationality of an organisation – that is, whether it is an indigenous or foreign-owned firm – and its broad sectoral categorisation (public, private or not for profit organisation) was not found to be statistically associated with the likelihood of a worker being in this job type. This suggests that the ownership or sector of the employing firm are not the determining characteristics of the likelihood of having a poor-quality job.

All in all, the results on this suggest that the type of job you have (occupation and industry) matters for whether you have this job type. Those who are involved in elementary jobs such as hospital porters or care work are the most likely to have a 'low paid, precarious, routine' jobs.

Secure, moderately good, unionised jobs

As the regression model for 'secure, moderately good, unionised jobs' estimates a Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.362 we can be reasonably confident that the variables in this model are good predictors of which workers occupy this job cluster.

Age was found to be a significant factor. Individuals in the age groups of 16 to 24 were significantly less likely to have a secure, moderately good, unionised job compared to those in the reference category of 35 to 44, with an odds ratio of 0.434. In contrast, the associations for the other age groups (25 to 34; 45 to 54 and 55 to 64) were not statistically significant from the reference category (35 to 44).

Interestingly, region and firm ownership type showed a significant impact on the likelihood of having a secure, moderately good, unionised jobs. In particular, those who live in the 'Border', 'Midlands', 'West', 'Mid-west', 'South-west' and 'Mid-east' had a significantly higher odds of having this job type when compared to those who live in Dublin. In terms of firm ownership type, those who worked in the public sector ($p<0.001$) had more than a six times higher likelihood of having a secure, moderately good, unionised job when compared to those in the private foreign-owned sector. There was no statistically significant difference between the other firm ownership types.

Firm size also played a role in having a secure, moderately good, unionised jobs. Individuals employed in firms with 0-49 employees had significantly lower odds of having a secure, moderately good, unionised job compared to those in firms with 250+ employees (odds ratio = .364, $p < 0.01$).

The characteristics which did not have a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of having a secure, moderately good, unionised jobs, included gender, educational

qualifications, the occupation in which a person worked and whether one worked from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Overall, the regression results indicate that sector and, in particular, working in the public sector, age, occupation, firm size are important factors in determining the likelihood of having a 'secure, moderately good, unionised jobs'. Those in specific occupations such as associate professionals and administrative roles, and those employed in larger firms had a higher likelihood of having this job type.

Secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations

An Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.28 in respect of this cohort of workers is also acceptable suggesting a relatively good level of explanatory power in the model.

Age emerged as a significant factor. Individuals in the age group of 25 to 34 had significantly higher odds of having a secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations compared to those in the reference category of 35 to 44. In contrast, those aged 45 to 54 had significantly lower odds of being in this job type when compared to the reference category of those aged 35 to 44.

In terms of occupation, 'Managers', those in 'Elementary' occupations and those in 'Caring, leisure and other service' occupations had a lower likelihood of being in this cluster when compared to 'Professionals. However, only 'Elementary' occupations was statistically significant ($p<0.005$). In contrast, those in 'Administrative and Secretarial' occupations had a statistically significant higher likelihood of having a secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations.

Firm size showed a significant association with individuals employed in firms with 0-49 employees having significantly higher odds of having a secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations compared to those in firms with 250+ employees (odds ratio = 2.578, $p < 0.001$). Those in firms with 50 to 249 employees also had higher odds of having this job type (1.545, $p<0.005$). Additionally, individuals employed in the public sector had significantly lower odds of being in a job of this type compared to those in private foreign-owned firms (odds ratio = 0.306, $p < 0.001$).

Educational qualification and sector were non-significant. Similarly, the location of a worker's residence was not found to be a significant determinant.

In summary, the results here indicate that age, occupation, firm ownership type, firm size are important factors in determining the likelihood of a worker having a secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations job. Younger individuals and those in specific occupations such as elementary occupations had lower odds of occupying this job cluster. Additionally, working in smaller firms increased ones likelihood of having a 'secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations' job.

Secure, high-quality jobs

The Nagelkerke R^2 is again acceptable here. It would suggest that the included characteristics in the model account for approximately 38.6% of the variation in the likelihood of individuals having a 'secure, high-quality' job.

Several factors including gender, level of educational attainment, age, occupation and region are important influences in determining whether a worker occupies a 'secure, high-quality' job. The odds ratio of 2.799 ($p<0.001$) for males compared to females suggests that being male is associated with significantly higher odds of being in a 'secure, high-quality' job. Possessing a degree or above qualifications is also found to be a statistically significant determinant of being in this job cluster (odds ratio of 2.071, $p<0.001$).

Individuals in the age group of 16 to 24 had significantly lower odds of having secure, high-quality jobs compared to the reference category of 35 to 44 (odds ratio = 0.321, $p<0.01$). Similarly, individuals in the age group of 25 to 34 also have lower odds of having a 'secure, high-quality' job (odds ratio = 0.421, $p<0.01$).

Individuals working in the 'Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food' industry have significantly lower odds of having a 'secure, high-quality' job compared to those in the reference category of 'Professional, Technical, Scientific, Administration' industry (odds ratio = 0.434, $p<0.01$). The other industry categories did not show significant association differences with the reference category.

With respect to occupation , we find that individuals working as 'managers' have significantly higher odds of occupying a 'secure, high-quality' job compared to our reference category 'professionals' (odds ratio = 3.192, $p<0.001$). Professionals in turn have a higher likelihood of holding a 'secure high-quality' job than those in elementary and administrative/secretarial positions, but interestingly not so in respect of all other occupational categories.

The region in which the worker lives also plays a role, but not everywhere. Individuals living the Border counties have a statistically significant lower likelihood of having a secure, high-quality job. While workers from all of the other regions also had lower odds of having a 'secure, high-quality' job when compared to those in Dublin, the differences were not statistically significant.

Lastly, the size of the company one works for is important in determining likelihood of having a 'secure, high quality' job. Smaller companies (0-49 employees) are less likely to offer 'secure, high quality' jobs compared to larger ones (250+ employees). Individuals employed in firms with 0-49 employees had significantly lower odds of having 'secure, high-quality' jobs compared to those in firms with 250+ employees (odds ratio = 0.532, $p<0.001$).

Among firm sector locations, individuals in the public sector and Irish-owned private sector had significantly lower odds of possessing a 'secure, high-quality' job compared to those working in private foreign-owned firms (odds ratio = 0.590, $p<0.05$ and 0.532, $p<0.05$ respectively).

Table 11: Logistic binary regression model results across the five different job types identified

	Demanding, highly controlled, precarious jobs.			Precarious, low-paid jobs		
	Co-efficient	Odds Ratio	p value	Co-efficient	Odds Ratio	p value
Constant	-1.622	0.198	***	-2.721	***	0.066
Gender *Reference category: Female*						
Male	-0.258	0.772	ns	-1.630	0.196	***
Age *Reference category: 35 to 44*						
16 to 24	-0.206	0.814	ns	1.531	4.623	***
25 to 34	0.172	1.187	ns	-0.838	0.433	*
45 to 54	-0.216	0.806	ns	0.372	1.452	ns
55 to 64	-0.400	0.670	Ns	-0.023	0.977	ns
Educational qualification *Reference category: Primary or secondary*						
Below degree	-0.261	0.771	ns	-0.413	0.662	ns
Degree or above	-0.269	0.764	ns	-0.642	0.526	*
Industry *Reference category: Professional, Technical, Scientific, Administration*						
Industry	-0.179	0.836	ns	-0.400	0.671	ns
Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food	-0.113	0.893	ns	0.389	1.475	ns
Information, Comms, Financial, Insurance & Real Estate	-0.022	0.979	ns	-0.357	0.700	ns
Public Administration, Health & Education	-0.117	0.890	ns	1.312	3.712	**
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Other service activities	0.181	1.198	ns	1.129	3.093	ns
Occupation *Reference category: Professionals*						
Managers	-0.092	0.774	ns	-2.414	0.089	*
Associate Professional	-0.353	0.255	ns	0.146	1.157	ns
Administrative & Secretarial	-0.796	0.703	*	0.084	1.087	ns
Skilled trades	-0.631	0.451	ns	0.502	1.652	ns
Caring, leisure & other service	0.132	0.532	ns	1.130	3.095	*
Sales & customer service	-0.768	1.143	ns	1.489	4.431	**
Process plant & Machine operatives	0.048	0.464	Ns	0.427	1.532	ns
Elementary	0.317	1.049	ns	1.594	4.925	***
Regions *Reference category: Dublin*						
Border	0.252	1.286	ns	0.346	1.413	ns
Midlands	-0.884	0.413	ns	0.845	2.329	*
West	-0.549	0.578	ns	0.161	1.175	ns
Mid-west	-0.223	0.800	ns	0.528	1.695	ns
Southeast	-0.333	0.716	ns	0.752	2.121	ns
Southwest	-0.267	0.766	ns	0.167	1.181	0.653
Mideast	0.044	1.045	ns	-0.321	0.725	ns
Firm size *Reference category: 250+*						
0-49	-0.551	0.576	*	1.001	2.721	***
50-249	-0.006	0.994	ns	0.211	1.235	ns
Organisational type *Reference category: Private foreign owned*						
Public sector	0.836	2.307	**	-0.528	0.590	ns
Not for profit (charity, NGO)	1.335	3.800	**	0.583	1.792	ns
Private sector Irish owned	1.039	2.828	***	0.583	1.792	ns
Covid working location						
Worked from home	-0.265	0.767	ns	-0.372	0.690	ns
Model Fit statistics						
Nagelkerke R2	0.080			0.431		
Cox and Snell R2	0.042			0.222		
N	176			217		

Note: *** = p<0.001 ** p = <0.001 * p = <0.05.

	Secure, moderately good, unionised, jobs			Secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations			Secure, high-quality jobs		
	Co-efficient	Odds Ratio	p value	Co-efficient	Odds Ratio	p value	Co-efficient	Odds Ratio	p value
Constant	-2.524	0.080	***	-0.688	0.503	ns	-1.432	.239	**
Gender *Reference category: Female*									
Male	0.012	1.012	ns	0.005	ns	1.005	1.029	2.799	***
Age *Reference category: 35 to 44*									
16 to 24	-0.835	0.434	*	-0.121	0.886	ns	-1.135	0.321	*
25 to 34	-0.017	0.983	ns	0.730	2.074	***	-0.864	0.421	**
45 to 54	0.127	1.135	ns	-0.581	0.559	***	0.376	1.456	ns
55 to 64	0.173	1.189	ns	-0.297	0.743	ns	0.401	1.494	ns
Educational qualification *Reference category: Primary or secondary*									
Below degree	0.313	1.368	ns	-0.081	0.923	ns	0.513	1.671	ns
Degree or above	-0.167	0.847	ns	0.141	1.152	ns	0.728	2.071	**
Industry *Reference category: Professional, Technical, Scientific, Administration*									
Industry	0.080	0.728	ns	-0.051	0.950	ns	0.303	1.354	ns
Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food	-0.317	0.728	ns	0.317	1.373	ns	-0.834	0.434	**
Information, Comms, Financial, Insurance & Real Estate	0.161	1.175	ns	-0.365	0.694	ns	0.343	1.409	ns
Public Administration, Health & Education	0.761	2.140	*	-0.946	0.388	**	-0.844	0.430	**
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Other service activities	0.322	1.382	ns	-.223	0.800	ns	-0.475	0.622	ns
Occupation *Reference category: Professionals*									
Managers	-1.266	0.282	***	-0.380	0.684	ns	1.161	3.192	***
Associate Professional	0.072	1.075	ns	0.310	1.364	ns	-0.226	0.798	ns
Administrative & Secretarial	0.084	1.088	*	0.717	2.048	**	-0.457	0.633	ns
Skilled trades	0.425	1.530	ns	0.202	1.224	ns	-0.312	0.732	ns
Caring, leisure & other service	-0.781	0.458	ns	-0.095	0.909	ns	-1.592	0.204	ns
Sales & customer service	-0.404	0.668	ns	0.194	1.214	ns	-1.325	0..266	**
Process plant & Machine operatives	0.626	1.870	ns	0.326	1.386	ns	-0.808	0.446	*
Elementary	0.058	1.060	ns	-0.700	0.497	*	-3.171	0.042	**
Regions *Reference category: Dublin*									
Border	0.687	1.988	*	-0.190	0.827	ns	-0.923	0.397	**
Midlands	0.814	2.257	**	-0.145	0.865	ns	-0.592	0.553	ns
West	0.575	1.777	ns	-0.055	0.947	ns	-0.297	0.743	ns
Mid-west	0.880	2.411	**	-0.481	0.618	ns	-0.257	0.774	ns
Southeast	0.378	1.460	ns	-0.169	0.844	ns	-0.344	0.709	ns
Southwest	0.706	2.026	**	0.019	1.019	ns	-0.433	0.648	ns
Mideast	0.880	2.411	**	-0.039	0.962	ns	-0.401	0.669	ns
Firm size *Reference category: 250+*									
0-49	-1.011	0.364	***	0.947	2.578	***	-0.645	0.525	**
50-249	-0.367	0.693	ns	0.435	1.545	*	-0.074	0.928	ns
Organisational type *Reference category: Private foreign owned*									
Public sector	1.832	6.244	***	-1.183	0.306	***	-0.527	0.590	***
Not for profit (charity, NGO)	0.905	2.471	ns	-0.178	0.837	ns	-0.848	0.428	**
Private sector Irish owned	0.207	1.231	ns	-0.215	0.807	ns	-0.632	0.532	**
Covid working location									
Worked from home	0.007	1.007	ns	-0.116	0.891	ns	0.389	1.476	ns
Model Fit statistics									
Nagelkerke R2	0.362			0.279			.386		
Cox and Snell R2	0.241			0.196			.252		
N	373			382			305		

Section 9: Job quality, worker health and living standards

Many of the measures of job quality that we use in this study have been shown to be empirically and theoretically linked to worker psychological well-being and physical health in prior research. Among the most important studies are Bakker and Demerouti (2007), Cottini and Lucifora (2013), Felstead and Green (2017), Gallie (2013), Gallie et al. (2017), Gonzalez-Mulé and Cockburn (2017), Green (2006), Green et al. (2016), Kalleberg (2011), Karasek (1979), Karasek and Theorell (1990), Muñoz de Bustillo et al. (2022), Parker and Wall (1999), Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), Warr, 2007 and Williams et al. (2020). Many of these studies also use the JDCS analytical framework. Furthermore, the evidence internationally is remarkably clear and consistent and confirms one of the basic premises of the JDCS model: high job demands are positively related to poor health and well-being in circumstances where workers have low job resources and supports.

We use one indicator of people's health and one for their living standards to examine whether there is any association with workers' job quality. People's health was measured with a single item that asked respondents to rate their health at the present time on a 5-point scale from excellent to poor. We coded the item so that lower scores indicate greater subjective health. A person's living standards was measured using a single indicator that asked respondents about their ability to make ends meet. Response options included 'Very easily', 'Easily', 'Neither easily or with difficulty', 'With some difficulty', 'With great difficulty'. For present purposes we recode these two variables into a 3-point scale.

From our reading of the literature, then, we anticipated that there would be links between the objective features of people's jobs and their health and standard of living. We need to enter a number of qualifications, however. In our analysis we do not, nor can we, ascribe any causal relationship between these two elements; our data is cross-sectional derived from a one-point-in-time survey.[12] Furthermore, a worker's health is the outcome of many different factors of which job quality is one. We also need to bear in mind our measures are provided by the same individuals who are reporting on their job quality. We cannot, then, discount the possibility that particular personality traits and dispositions may give rise to associations in the data between aspects of job quality features and workers' health and standard of living which may not reflect the predicted causal chains (Green and Mostafa 2012). While it is important to raise these possibilities, we nonetheless do not believe in throwing the baby out with the bath water for at least one important reason, certainly with respect to health: self-evaluations of health have merit in that they have been shown to be reliably associated with objective measures of health, including being a good predictor of mortality (Green and Mostafa, 2012; Idler and Kasl, 1991; Mackenbach et al., 2002).

In our analysis, we focus solely on the 5 job clusters reported above. We carried out bivariate analysis and chi square statistical testing to examine the relationship between

job quality types and workers' health, and separately job quality types and living standards. Our prior expectation was that workers occupying 'demanding, precarious, low paid jobs' to report the poorest health and standards of living. This indeed was the case. There is a statistically significant relationship between job quality types and health and job quality types and living standards. Those in 'secure, high-quality' jobs are more likely to have excellent or good health and good living standards. In contrast, those in 'demanding, highly controlled precarious jobs' are least likely to have excellent or good health. Workers in this job type are also most likely to rate their health as only fair or poor, with 17.5% of such workers doing so. This is in contrast to 6.7% of those in 'Secure, high quality' jobs. When it comes to living standards, interestingly, but not surprising, it is those in 'precarious, low paid' jobs that were most likely to say that they make ends meet with some or great difficulty.

These findings underline the links between job quality on both the health and the living standards of workers and, in particular, that those workers occupying poorer quality jobs with higher demands and fewer resources, do not possess the same living standards or good health as those who occupy better jobs with fewer demands and/or better resources.

Table 12: Relationship between job quality types and health/living standards

		Demanding, highly controlled, precarious jobs	Precarious low-paid jobs	Secure, moderately good, unionised jobs	Secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations	Secure high quality jobs
Health *	Excellent or very good	53.2	59.6	59.2	66.4	66.8
	Good	29.2	29.4	30.9	25	26.5
	Fair or poor	17.5	11	10	8.6	6.7
Living standards (Ability to make ends meet) ***	Easily or very easily	56.8	56.1	69.1	65.0	89.7
	Neither	17.5	18.1	15.3	22.0	6.7
	With some or great difficulty	25.4	25.9	15.6	13.0	3.5

Note: *** = p<0.001 ** p = <0.001 * p = <0.05.

Section 10: A Summary Review of Findings: What can be said about the quality of jobs in Ireland?

In our analysis we draw upon three different statistical techniques that include a dashboard approach, an aggregate summary method, and cluster analysis.

For the dashboard approach, our analysis focuses both on assessing the demands workers encounter in their work and the job resources available to them. With respect to demands, we find that just under one quarter of workers have low earnings (24.3%) and poor renumeration benefits (24.6%). We find that job insecurity was a prominent feature, affecting 22.2% of workers. A further 18.8% felt anxious about their future prospects within their employment organization. Long working hours were cited by 14.9% of respondents, and a further 7.7% experienced long working weeks in that they usually worked at least six days per week. 1 in 10 workers or 9.8% reported a lack of work-life flexibility, and 10.5% experienced work spill-over into their personal lives. A lack of autonomy over work and work tasks was a concern for 13.1% of individuals and almost one-in-ten (9.3%) work in jobs which require highly intensive work effort levels.

With regard to job resources, the study found that 69.7% of respondents received high support from their line management and organization, and 44.9% reported that they enjoy representation from trade unions either as union members themselves or having unions negotiate collective agreements in their workplace. The facility to use one's skills and being afforded development and training opportunities were also notable with 67.6% of workers benefiting from such opportunities. Still, however the provision of substantial on/off-the-job training is not widespread with only 14.3% of workers having received substantial on- and off-the-job training in the two years prior to the survey.

These results show diverse patterns of job quality across sectors, occupations, firm types, and socio-demographic groups such as gender, age, and education profile. For instance, while part-time workers have poorer job quality scores in respect of 8 of the 14 sub-dimensions, full-time workers are by no means insulated from poor job quality. They are more likely to score poorly in terms of the duration of their working day and working week. They also are more likely to experience highly intensive work effort and work-life conflict. On the other hand, part-time workers tend to do worse in terms of pay, renumeration benefits, job security, future prospects, social support, and training provision.

A similarly variable picture emerges in respect of the broad firm ownership type in which people work. Whilst those working in the Irish-owned private sector score poorly across a majority of the sub-dimensions, workers in the foreign-owned private sector score poorest in four of the fourteen sub-dimensions including having long working hours, work-life spillage, highly intensive work and an underutilisation of skills.

Notwithstanding this variable picture, a very clear and consistent picture emerges when we look at job quality at the level of occupation. Those working in 'caring, leisure and other service' occupations exhibit poor quality across a very broad range of features of job quality as do those workers occupying manual occupations (process, plant and machinery operatives) and 'elementary' occupations. When it comes to individual sectors, those in the 'Arts, Entertainment, and other recreation' sector have particularly poor job quality.

When we used a summary aggregate approach to assess job quality we found that only a very small percentage of workers have what might be termed an "ideal" job wherein they have all the resources they need and are not exposed to any demands. Similarly at the other end of the scale, only a very small percentage have jobs with a high combination of demands and a lack of resources; that is, what we might refer to as very poor quality jobs. Not surprisingly, most workers level of job quality resides between these two poles. That said, however, it is also clear most workers experience poor scores in respect of two to three attributes (i.e., where particular demands are placed upon them and/or they are devoid of certain resources). Thereafter, the percentages of workers who encounter more than three poor job attributes decreases rapidly. However, determining a strict threshold to differentiate "good" from "bad" jobs is very difficult and can, we argue, amount to an arbitrary exercise.

The clustering approach identified five distinct job quality types in Ireland as well as the share of the working population occupying each type. About 21% of all workers occupy what we term 'secure, high-quality' jobs. These are the 'good jobs'. A little over a quarter of the workforce have 'poor quality' jobs with 15% in 'precarious, low paid' jobs and 12% in 'demanding, precarious, highly demanding' jobs. In-between, the remaining half (52%) of the workforce are distributed equally across two job types which we label 'secure, moderately good unionised' jobs and 'secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations'. The latter two job clusters shared a number of attributes, particularly in respect of earnings and employment security hence the similar titles but were different from one another in one key respect – whether or not they had union representation and/or enjoyed collective bargaining coverage.

To determine who occupies each of these job types we employed a series of binary logistic regression models. We found that 'precarious, low paid jobs' are occupied primarily by women. Women are more likely to be in part-time or temporary positions, which are inherently more precarious and offer lower pay. Age is another critical determinant, with younger individuals, particularly those aged 16 to 24, being more susceptible to low-paid precarious jobs. Additionally, occupation plays a substantial role, as certain job categories like 'elementary,' 'caring, leisure and other service,' and 'sales and customer service' are more prone to offering low pay and precarious employment conditions. Moreover, educational qualification influences job outcomes, with those without a degree more likely to find themselves in low-paid, precarious positions. Finally, firm size is a significant driver, as individuals employed in smaller firms, typically those with 0-49 employees, are more likely to have low-paid precarious jobs.

For 'demanding, highly controlled, precarious' jobs our statistical model was not as robust as we might have liked in predicting who occupied this job type. This would suggest that the characteristics we included in the model do not determine to any considerable degree who occupies this job type. For example, gender is not important, suggesting that both men and women are equally likely to find themselves in demanding, precarious roles. Age, however, might be a factor but here it is wise to remain tentative in drawing any firm conclusions. Young workers aged 16 to 24 years are slightly more likely to occupy these jobs, although the association is not statistically significant. In contrast, those aged 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 show lower odds of being in demanding, precarious roles, but again the results are not statistically significant. Neither are educational qualifications, firm size, and firm ownership type/sector important determining factors. This would indicate, for example, that jobs requiring a degree in a large firm do not insulate a worker from entering a demanding, highly controlled, precarious position. The only factor that is important is occupation. Those working in 'Administrative and Secretarial' positions have significantly lower odds of being in these jobs as compared with all other occupations. In summary, it appears that 'demanding, highly controlled, precarious jobs', which account for one-in-eight jobs, are randomly or evenly distributed across the labour market and are not particular to any one job type or job sector.

With respect to 'secure moderately good, unionised jobs' we found that overall the model was good at determining which workers occupied this job type. Notably, age, played a significant role. Younger individuals (aged 16 to 24) were less likely to have these jobs compared to those aged 35 to 44. Region had an influence with residents outside Dublin being more likely to hold these job types. Working in the public sector also significantly increased the likelihood of working holding this kind of job. Firm size also mattered with larger firms being associated with this type of job. Educational qualifications, occupation, and sector of employment did not emerge as significant determinants, however.

For 'secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations' the model was also quite effective. In particular, age was found to be important. People between 25 and 34 are more likely to have these jobs compared to those aged 35 to 54,

but if you're between 45 and 54, your odds of having such a job decrease. Occupation is also important here. This job type is much more likely to include those in managerial positions than those, for example, working in 'elementary' jobs. Working in a small company (0-49 employees) also increases one's chances of having a secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations, and this effect is even stronger in firms with 50 to 249 employees. Surprisingly, education level and sector does not make a significant difference in determining membership in this job type, although private sector workers are more likely to have such jobs than those in the public sector.

Finally, 'secure, high-quality jobs' were more likely to be held by males, those with higher levels of educational qualifications, in managerial positions, and those aged between 35 to 44 years. These workers are also more likely to live in Dublin and least likely to live in the "Border" counties. These jobs were also considerably more prominent in larger firms with 250 or more employees.

The clustering approach to understanding job quality allows for a classification of the manner in which similar or different aspects of job quality come together and, in turn, are distributed across the workforce. This is important because job quality is not only about one's experience of individual attributes or sub-dimensions of job quality. It is also about how all of the sub-dimensions come together in the round and how they interact and come to bear upon or enhance a person's job quality. Understanding these interrelationships leads to a more nuanced analysis than might otherwise be the case. This is particularly useful for policy formulation. We turn to this matter now.

Section 11: Concluding thoughts: implications of findings for policy

In this section of the paper, we turn to the policy implications of our findings and identify where and how there might be room for improving job quality across the labour market. A number of issues are identified under a series of questions. We stress this is not a complete list of possible policy interventions but these are ones, we believe, are important.

1. *Who has the 'good' jobs in Ireland and what might be done to ensure more do?*

Both our aggregated and disaggregated results show a consistent picture. On many indicators and measures of job quality women do not fare as well as men, and more than that: there is a marked pattern of occupational gender segregation. Significantly more women than men occupy jobs of relatively poor quality. These are precarious, low-paid jobs that often times demand high effort levels from their incumbents. Twenty-seven per cent of jobs in Ireland are of this form, which is more than one in four jobs. (This is the 'Low paid, precarious' job cluster and the 'Demanding, highly controlled precarious jobs' combined). Women also occupy relatively fewer of the high quality jobs. In between these job types, the jobs which we label moderately good quality jobs and which comprise a little over half the jobs, there is less evident gender segregation. The inequality then is located at the bottom of the labour market where the jobs are of poor quality and at the top of the labour market where the jobs are of high quality.

Can anything be done about this? We address the matter of high quality jobs below in point number two. Here, we focus on the poor quality jobs. We know that gender inequality in respect of job quality is deeply-rooted and multi-faceted. It is likely to be influenced by the distribution of domestic roles and by the choices men and women make in terms of balancing their work and private lives. But it is also related to how we value particular occupations. One broad occupational category – care and service work – is associated with precarious, low-paid employment and this work is highly feminised. For this to change requires government, employers and unions to work together to increase pay levels and the quality of jobs in this broad professional category. This, too, is ever more important with Ireland's ageing population which will require an increase in the number of care workers.

To achieve such a change, however, will necessitate a paradigm shift. Care work is often deemed to be peripheral, to be performed by low-skilled, cheap labour, often female and increasingly migrant labour. This characterisation of care work and care workers is, of course, premised on highly gendered notions of orientations to work: work involving care and nurture is identified to be more appropriate to

female personality traits than male attributes. Such a model of care work is no longer sustainable if it ever was. Change will require centring care work as valued work, essential for service quality and central to the productive and sustainable performance of an economy, and whose occupants will be appropriately recognised and rewarded both financially and in terms of opportunities for further training and promotion prospects.

Models of employment will also need altering. Very often and increasingly care work is contracted out to employment agencies and private firms (Power and Dashdondog, 2022). Much of this work is provided in the form of insecure contracts of employment and justified on the basis of the achievement of cost efficiencies. Efficiencies, it must now be realised, have costs.

2. *How good and fair are 'secure, high quality jobs'?*

It is national policy to promote the growth of high-quality good jobs. The evidence from WIIS suggests, however, that these 'good jobs' have certain negative attributes. Long working hours are a prominent feature and are likely to be a normalised attribute of these jobs. Jobs of this type can be thought of as "greedy institutions" in the sense as conceived by Coser (1974) where there is an expectation imposed by an employer or the profession in question that the job becomes the primary investment of an employee and that they are expected to make personal sacrifices if they are to prosper in the job. In such circumstances, the job can be said, in Coser's (1974: 1, 6) words, to "compete for the limited time and libidinal energies of the individual" but in a manner that presents to the worker a style of life that is "highly desirable".

Whilst one could argue that these 'secure, high quality' jobs inevitably involve a trade-off between long working hours and being able to enjoy other aspects of job quality (good pay, job autonomy, etc.), this position needs to and can be challenged as there is no a priori reason as to why one needs to exchange particular aspects of a job to be in a position to enjoy other attributes. For to concede to such a position denies many workers, particularly women, the opportunity to enter such jobs without compromising on other commitments in their lives such as providing childcare or elderly care. Where workers are not prepared to work such long hours, they are then forced to accept other jobs that are inferior in other respects, perhaps in terms of pay or career advancement. In sum, the point is therefore this: good/greedy jobs recognise the competing obligations for workers' time and allegiance, but they do not respect them in that they violate the normative boundaries that protect the private and personal lives of the individual. They are therefore oftentimes unfair to women. But there are ways in which these good/greedy jobs can be made more accessible to women and in a manner that creates less work life conflict. The policy choices are in terms of job design and staff resourcing. If workers work in teams they may be substitutable and therefore can cover for one another (so that clients, patients, etc. can be transferred seamlessly from one employee to another). Increased staffing levels also help to reduce long working hours. This is achievable. The example of the

pharmacy profession in the United States, as studied by Claudia Goldin, the recent recipient of the Nobel memorial prize in economics, is instructive (Goldin and Katz, 2016). This study reveals how the adoption of such practices, as well as structural changes in the sector from the 1970s on, enabled females to remain within this high-paying profession to the extent that they now constitute the majority, have greater temporal flexibility with little or no wage penalty relative to comparable professions, and there is a low gender earnings gap and low earnings dispersion. In sum, it is the most egalitarian and woman/family-friendly of professions in the United States.

3. *Does working in a foreign-owned enterprise insulate workers from having poor jobs?*

In our discussion of our findings above we found that one of the most salient factors associated with a worker having a secure high-quality job was their being employed in a foreign-owned enterprise. Turning the coin over, we wondered too whether being employed in a foreign-owned firm also insulated workers from occupying poor-quality jobs. The answer is largely yes, but not completely. This is an important finding given the considerable store that is often placed in public policy and public commentary on the desirability of growing the foreign-direct investment (FDI) sector.

To reflect on these points some more we first consider the case of demanding, highly controlled, precarious jobs albeit in doing so we are mindful that the statistical results for this job category need to be treated with some caution (see discussion above in section 8). The results suggest that workers employed in the foreign-owned sector are less likely to occupy a demanding, highly controlled, precarious job when compared with workers employed in the Irish-owned private sector or public sector.

The results in respect of the other poor quality job cluster – the precarious, low paid-jobs – are less equivocal in that these jobs are evident across all sectors of the economy, including the foreign-owned sector.

There is another caveat to our argument here that holds that job quality is better in the FDI sector. This is derived from our disaggregated results. Workers in the FDI sector are more likely than those workers employed in other sectors to work long hours, to experience work-life spillage, and to encounter highly intensive work effort levels.

So, in brief, while the picture for job quality in the FDI sector is largely a positive one, in that many jobs therein are of good quality, our analysis of the findings would also urge caution; many are intensively demanding jobs and this would need to be attended to if people's quality of working life is to improve in this sector of the economy.

4. What of job quality and workers' health and well-being?

The links between job quality and worker's health and well-being are well-established as considered in previous sections of this paper. While our measures of workers' health are limited, our data do show an association between poor job quality and people's health. The costs of poor job quality are endured by the individual worker, but they are also borne by their employer, families and by society more broadly through increased health care costs and social security payments. However, we do know that these costs can be mitigated in a number of ways. Providing workers with more resources at work through, for example, giving them a greater say in the conduct of their work and increased skills training helps. Facilitating enhanced social supports channelled through colleagues, line management and union representation also have a positive impact, as does decreasing workers' effort levels and working hours. In the absence of such resources and supports, the detrimental effects of poor job quality spill out from the firm to be absorbed by the public purse.

What then might the state do? It has a number of options. It could establish a set of minimum standards across a series of job quality dimensions. While this is not without difficulty, there is precedent for doing so. For example, we already have a national minimum wage and we are working towards the achievement of a living wage. Workers have rights in respect of sick pay and maternity leave, and there is the forthcoming code in respect of the right to request flexible working. There are many other such laws that affect people's job quality. Regulations however require oversight and enforcement. While this can be achieved, it requires additional resources. Another approach is for the state to enhance the role of sectoral collective negotiations between unions and employers. In this respect, it should be noted that the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages, which must be transposed into Irish law by November 2024, sets out a framework for promoting collective bargaining. This too can provide a means for establishing minimum job quality standards where all parties have a stake in eliminating the use of poor job quality as a method of gaining competitive advantage. The negotiation of sectoral minimum standards creates the business space within which those employers who provide good quality jobs can continue to do so. Finally, the state can support large scale comprehensive research of workers' job quality so as to measure and monitor standards across the labour market. It has a stake in doing so. Good jobs enhance the productive capacity of an economy. Poor jobs do not and worse they lead to negative spill overs where the state – to put it prosaically – is compelled to pick up the tab.

5. Conclusion

There are substantial numbers of jobs in Ireland that are good to reasonably good quality jobs. There are many others that are poor quality jobs. These latter jobs pay poorly, provide little training, afford their incumbents little scope to use their discretion or initiative, and offer little opportunity for career advancement or development. In brief, they offer workers little opportunity to demonstrate engagement and commitment to their work and their employer. Yet, many of these workers work hard and long hours no doubt to retain their employment and to obtain the financial rewards necessary to sustain their livelihoods. But their jobs could be so much better: they could be more interesting, more intrinsically rewarding and provide a greater means of self-actualisation. We (employers, unions, the state, researchers) need to get better at identifying how we might address this problem and improve poor quality jobs.

A vital part of any good jobs strategy is to recognise the variation in the ways in which the good, the bad and the mediocre facets of a job combine within particular occupations or across certain sectors so that targeted interventions can be pursued. Priority also needs to be accorded to improving job quality in key sectors such as health and social care, and education. And finally, there is an imperative on any policy response to see that work and jobs are not separate spheres from our private and domestic lives; both are intimately connected. To ignore these connections is to deny women, in particular, an equal right to access good jobs alongside men. Men, too, have an obligation to share the work of domestic care. However, to achieve both – greater female access to good jobs in the labour market and men sharing the duties of domestic responsibilities – requires greater support from organisations and public institutions.

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Appendix 1: An overview of the different aspects of job quality

This Appendix provides the results for the different indicators of job quality which comprise each dimension, including how the different attributes are distributed across different groups of workers based on their gender, age, educational attainment, as well as across different jobs including sectors, occupations, and full-time and part-time jobs.

Appendix Table 1.1: Earnings and Pecuniary benefits across worker characteristics

		All	Gender		Age category				
		%	Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Earnings	Below €20000	24.3	17.7	32	65.6	20.7	19.5	18.3	20.2
Pecuniary benefits	Has an occupational or company pension to which your employer contributes	56.3	56	56.6	24.1	56.2	63.2	64.4	60.9
	Has paid holidays	86.8	84	90.1	78.4	90.8	92.2	88.7	83.8
	Has paid sick leave/sick pay	69	65.6	73	60.5	70.5	71.9	76.1	66.6
	Has medical insurance coverage	33.2	37.5	28.3	28.1	36.2	37.9	29.9	26.4

Educational Attainment			Region							
Primary or secondary level	Below degree	Degree or higher	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-West	South east	South west	Mideast
38.9	28.8	16.8	23	28.6	31	22.4	25.9	26.5	25.3	19.8
37.3	50.8	66.4	49.4	54.8	58.8	59.1	51.9	50.9	63.1	53.1
80.3	82.4	91.3	81.9	87.9	81.2	90.2	86.6	86.1	85.2	88.8
53.9	61.4	78.2	59	68.5	65.8	73.8	67.7	65.7	69	70.7
28	26.9	37.9	31.3	27.2	29.9	36.6	36.9	25.9	34.4	32.1

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Appendix Table 1.2: Earnings and pecuniary benefits across job characteristics

		Sector					
		Industry	Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food	Information, comms, financial, insurance	Professional, scientific, technical, admin	Public admin, health, education	Arts, entertainment, recreation, other
Earnings	Below €20000	19.9	41.3	9.9	14.2	23	35.1
Pecuniary benefits	Has an occupational or company pension	54.8	33.4	73.3	60.2	69.6	35.5
	Has paid holidays	79.8	86.2	92.7	86.8	92.8	69.3
	Has paid sick leave	57.3	57.3	83.4	70.8	84.1	46.1
	Has medical insurance coverage	41.5	27.7	56.7	43.4	18.1	26.3

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Appendix Table 1.3: Security and prospects across worker characteristics

		All	Gender		Age				
			Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Insecure work	Insecure wage	13	15.3	10.3	23.6	9.9	7.3	10.7	14.2
	Insecure employment	11.3	10.8	12.1	34.2	12.5	9.9	5.3	6.9
Anxious about prospects for future employment	Losing your job/or your sources of work	32.3	29.6	35.5	41.5	34.6	34.2	30.2	25.2
	Future changes to your work that may make it more difficult to use your skills & abilities	30.1	27.1	33.6	34	29.1	29.5	30.5	27.9
	Future changes that may reduce your pay	37.6	36.1	39.5	46.2	37.8	38.7	36.4	30.9
	Unexpected changes to your hours of work	26.2	22.3	30.5	33.5	27.5	25.7	24.5	24.9
	Securing new employment or new sources of work if you lose your current job/ work	42.7	38.2	46.5	50.5	46.2	43.9	43.6	34

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

	Occupation							Working Hours		Firm sector location			
	Managerial, Professional & Associate Professional	Administrative and secretarial	Skilled trades	Caring, leisure and other service	Sales and customer service	Process, plant and machine operatives	Elementary	Full-time	Part-time	Public	Voluntary	Private sector Ireland owned	Private sector foreign owned
Earnings	12.7	12.7	29.5	56.2	53.6	25	61.7	14.2	66.3	20.2	17.6	26.9	13.8
Pecuniary benefits	70.4	69.9	36.5	38.7	33	40.6	25.6	62	33.5	76.2	49.3	38.4	75.2
	90.7	95.9	69.3	84.9	89.9	76.4	80.6	90.1	73.5	95.1	95.7	92.4	98.3
	80.9	87.8	40.7	55.9	55.6	48	49	73.7	50	88.4	91.3	56.2	85.3
	40.3	24.9	30.9	17.2	28.1	31.7	16	36.4	20.6	21.5	8.7	26	66.5

	Educational attainment			Region							
	Primary or secondary level	Below degree	Degree or higher	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-west	South east	South west	Mid east
Insecure work	20.4	17.4	8.2	18.7	10.5	12.3	11.6	13.9	13.2	14.1	12.5
	13.9	9.2	11.3	9	12.9	10.2	13	10.7	9.6	12.7	9
Anxious about prospects for future employment	31.9	35.4	31.3	28.9	29	27.3	36.5	36.6	28.1	34.5	28
	31.9	29.3	29.7	28.2	27.6	31.2	30.2	39.9	21.8	31	28.4
	39.7	40.7	35.6	38	29.3	38.5	39.1	43.4	34.1	32.4	40
	26.6	29.5	24.6	30.1	21.8	26.1	26.4	22.8	23	26.2	27.7
	38.9	41.2	43.7	39.8	40.3	38	44.3	45.6	32.5	43.6	43.9

Appendix Table 1.4: Security and prospects across job characteristics

		Sector						Occupation							Working Hours		Firm Ownership			
		Industry	Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food	Information, comms, financial, insurance	Professional, scientific, technical, admin	Public admin, health, education	Arts, entertainment, recreation, other	Managerial, Professional & Associate Professional	Administrative and secretarial	Skilled trades	Caring, leisure and other service	Sales and customer service	Process, plant and machine operatives	Elementary	Full-time	Part-time	Public	Voluntary	Private Ireland owned	Private foreign owned
Insecure work	Insecure wage	19.4	15.5	6.1	10.4	7	31.6	7	3.6	28.6	24.7	15.1	26.1	20.5	10	25.2	5.8	4.3	9.5	5.1
	Insecure employment	7.3	10.2	10.5	13.2	14.8	17.1	10.4	6.6	6.4	14	17.4	13.4	18.7	8.5	23.3	13	16.2	9.8	6.7
Anxious about prospects for future employment	Losing your job/or your sources of work	30.3	37.5	33.3	36.8	25.8	46.7	30.6	25.5	27.7	41.9	43.5	33.2	39	31.1	37.2	26.2	36.2	34.1	36.9
	Future changes to your work that may make it more difficult to use your skills & abilities	24.4	32.5	33.1	31.8	30	39.5	29.9	27.6	26.3	38.7	32.2	27.6	34	28.8	35.1	31.4	26.5	29.1	29.7
	Future changes that may reduce your pay	37.7	40	33.6	38.4	36.3	44	35.6	31.1	42.9	44.1	45.1	38.7	39.6	37	40.4	35.5	42	41.1	31.1
	Unexpected changes to your hours of work	23.7	29.9	22.4	19.1	28.3	33.3	23.6	19	28	41.9	34.6	23.6	34.2	24.9	31.1	27.6	20.6	28	22.3
	Securing new employment or new sources of work if you lose your current job/work	34.2	45.8	51.2	46.9	38.6	52	42.6	37.5	32.1	47.3	53.9	34.9	48.4	40.6	47.8	39.5	52.2	41.4	50.1

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Appendix Table 1.5: Skills and training sub-dimensions and indicators by worker characteristics

		All	Gender		Age group				
			Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Quantity of training provision	3 weeks or more of internal training	10	10.6	9.1	12.8	12.8	9.4	10.1	5.5
	3 weeks or more of external training	6.7	6.4	7	5.5	8.2	5.9	7.8	5.1
Skills utilisation & development	Strongly agree/ Agree job provides me with the opportunities to put my qualifications and skills to good use	82.9	82.6	83.3	71.2	83.4	85.9	83.6	82.3
	Strongly agree/ Agree the training was adequate for keeping me up to date with the skills required	86.6	86.2	87	89.9	88.7	84.3	84.6	87.8
	Strongly agree/ Agree feel that my job is more secure because of my training.	58.6	63.2	54	76.3	58.7	55.4	52.9	58.3
	Strongly Agree/ Agree I feel my prospects for future employment are better because of my training	65.6	65.7	65.4	82.7	70.8	65.3	58.2	53.7

			Educational attainment			Region							
			Primary or secondary or below	Below Degree	Degree level or above	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-west	South east	South west	Mideast
Quantity of training provision	3 weeks or more of internal training	10	7	10.5	10.8	7.7	12.6	7.4	11.4	7.8	10.9	9.2	9.9
	3 weeks or more of external training	6.7	2.4	5.1	8.9	0.7	8.1	4.3	8.7	9.6	2.7	7.3	5.3
Skills utilisation & development	Strongly agree/ Agree job provides me with the opportunities to put my qualifications and skills to good use	82.9	75.4	82.6	85.44	84.9	86.1	86.2	83.7	81.6	82.6	79.4	81.3
	Strongly agree/ Agree the training was adequate for keeping me up to date with the skills required	86.6	85.2	86.9	87	77.2	91.3	86.2	89.7	84.1	83.5	90.5	82.2
	Strongly agree/ Agree feel that my job is more secure because of my training.	58.6	71.9	63.3	53.2	54.8	58.2	56.9	58.3	57.9	67.9	58.9	58.7
	Strongly Agree/ Agree I feel my prospects for future employment are better because of my training	65.6	67.2	69.1	64.2	61.3	67.5	62.1	66.7	63.2	62.4	68.3	67.3

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Appendix Table 1.6: Skills and training sub-dimensions and indicators by job characteristics

		Sector						Occupation							Working Hours		Firm ownership			
		Industry	Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food	Information, comms, financial, insurance	Professional, scientific, technical, admin	Public admin, health, education	Arts, entertainment, recreation, other	Managerial, Professional & Associate Professional	Administrative and secretarial	Skilled trades	Caring, leisure and other service	Sales and customer service	Process, plant and machine operatives	Elementary	Full-time	Part-time	Public	Voluntary	Private sector Irish owned	Private sector foreign owned
Quantity of training provision	3 weeks or more of internal training	10.2	9.2	15.6	10.6	8	11.8	11.1	9.4	11.6	9.9	7.8	8.2	7.5	11.3	4.3	8.1	8.8	8.7	15.2
	3 weeks or more of external training	5.8	4.2	6.6	7	9.1	7.5	8.7	7.3	3.9	9.9	2.9	2.5	3.4	7.2	4.9	7.8	7.4	5.8	6.8
Skills utilisation & development	Strongly agree/ Agree job provides me with the opportunities to put my qualifications and skills to good use	83.7	77.6	83.8	83.3	86.6	74.3	88	75.4	91	89.8	68.5	76.2	69.3	83.8	79	83.4	87.8	81.8	83.3
	Strongly agree/ Agree the training was adequate for keeping me up to date with the skills required	81.1	89.7	85.5	87.9	88.2	82.9	86.4	90.1	86.1	93.3	86.2	86.5	79.3	86.4	87.6	87.6	91.7	85.7	85.8
	Strongly agree/ Agree feel that my job is more secure because of my training.	63.6	66.5	51.7	52.3	55.1	57.1	52.4	57.7	79.7	76.3	64.1	72.4	57.5	56.7	68.4	53.8	57.1	65.3	54.5
	Strongly Agree/ Agree I feel my prospects for future employment are better because of my training	71.6	69	59.8	62.1	62.6	71.4	62.9	61.3	73.1	83.3	67.2	71.4	67	64.7	70.2	62.1	59.2	71	63.5

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Appendix Table 1.7: Work organisation & support by worker characteristics

		All	Gender		Age category				
			Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Work effort	You have to work at very high speeds	34.9	29.9	40.7	43.5	39.6	41.3	28.9	24.5
	You have to work to tight deadlines	41.2	40.3	42.3	33.7	43.3	48.3	40.5	32.5
	You find your work stressful	16.3	13.2	19.8	14.5	20.3	17.4	15.2	13.2
Work autonomy	No say over Deciding the times, you start and finish work	33.4	30	37.3	47.5	33.5	31.9	30.2	35.5
	No say Deciding the pace at which you work	13.9	12.4	15.6	17.7	15.4	12.8	13.5	11.8
	No say over Deciding how to do your work (scheduling, organising tasks)	7.9	7.3	8.6	17.2	7.7	5.5	7.7	7
Support of line management/ organisation	Strongly agree/agree that line manager Respects you as a person	90.5	92.1	88.9	91.4	91.3	92.1	89.5	88
	Strongly agree/agree that line manager gives you praise and recognition when you do a good job	79.3	80.7	77.9	80.2	80.9	80.1	78	76
	Strongly agree/agree that line manager is helpful to you in getting the job done.	81.3	82.4	80.1	86.1	83.8	80.1	81.4	76.4
	Strongly agree/ agree that line manager Encourages and supports your development.	78.3	80.3	76.3	82.4	85.3	77.6	74.5	73.3
	Strongly agree/ agree that in general, employees in your organisation trust management	68.5	71.5	62.3	72.2	72.2	68.8	65.1	63.6
	Strongly agree/agree that for the most part, this organisation treats its employees fairly	80.9	83.4	78.4	78.2	81.2	81	81.2	81.4
Trade union representation	Is a member of a trade union	28.2	25	31.5	14.4	16.2	25.2	39.1	45.3
	Has a collective agreement in place in workplace	43.1	39.6	46.8	35.3	32.6	40.4	51.5	57.4

Educational qualificaitons			Region							
Primary or secondary	Below Degree	Degree level or above	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-west	South east	South west	Mid east
30.4	31.3	38	27.7	29.6	26.7	39.9	34.2	33.1	37.8	32.2
35.9	36.8	45.1	41.6	40.8	31.6	44.5	43.9	40.4	37.1	41.8
12	15.3	18.5	14.5	11.2	11.8	18.8	16	14.5	17.5	15.8
40.8	34.8	29.7	41.8	39	32.3	28.8	36.4	39.2	33.4	32.8
17.6	13.2	12.4	11	16.1	10.8	13.7	17.3	10.3	14	17.2
13.2	9	5.3	7.8	12.9	4.3	7.6	7.1	11	7.6	8.4
89.9	89.5	91.1	80.3	91.9	93.9	93.3	86.8	94.6	90.4	86.9
75.2	78.9	81	73.2	75.7	84	80.1	80.2	78.2	78.2	80.2
80.7	78.2	82.5	76.1	82.9	83.4	82.4	84.4	83	81.5	76.3
77.8	76.3	79.2	72	73	79.8	80.1	77.7	83.7	80.1	74.2
68.4	69.5	68.2	64.8	62.2	70.6	68	66.9	73.5	69.6	68.2
80.7	79.2	81.5	77.5	81.1	80.4	79.6	80.8	87.8	80	82.7
24.1	28.8	29.5	28.9	38.7	34.4	24.4	34.7	32.4	25.8	25.1
36.1	44.2	45.3	45.8	58.2	47.9	39.7	47.3	46.3	37.3	41

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Appendix Table 1.8:Work organisation & support by job characteristics

		Sector					Occupation								Working hours		Firm sector location			
		Industry	Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food	Information, comms, financial, insurance	Professional, scientific, technical, admin	Public admin, health, education	Arts, entertainment, recreation, other	Managerial, Professional & Associate Professional	Administrative and secretarial	Skilled trades	Caring, leisure and other service	Sales and customer service	Process, plant and machine operatives	Elementary	Full-time	Part-time	Public	Voluntary	Private sector Ireland owned	Private sector foreign owned
Work effort	You have to work at very high speeds	28.8	40.3	36.4	36.3	34.9	34.2	37.5	31	31.4	35.5	38.5	25.2	34.8	35.3	33	33.6	33.8	37.2	38.1
	You have to work to tight deadlines	42.9	39	48.2	44.3	37.7	40.8	46	43.4	40.2	35.9	28.5	37.6	30.8	43.7	31.3	40.2	39.1	41.3	47.2
	You find your work stressful	15.3	13.9	15	17.5	19.5	13.3	18.8	12.7	12.8	22.6	12.3	9.9	16.8	16.7	14.6	17.5	20.3	15.9	17.8
Work autonomy	Deciding the times, you start and finish work	28.5	39.9	21.2	19.4	42.6	33.8	27.5	26.5	33.9	44	49.2	43.6	44.8	31.8	39.5	41.4	23.5	37.4	24.9
	Deciding the pace at which you work	10.8	17.3	6.5	10.6	17.5	20	11.3	11.3	12.9	24.7	16	18.5	20.4	12.7	18.7	16.7	11.8	15.4	11
	Deciding how to do your work (scheduling, organising tasks)	8.2	13.6	4.5	3.8	7.2	7.8	4.5	3.5	12.4	11	13.3	16.8	14.3	6.5	12.6	7.6	3.7	9.8	6.8
Support of line management/ organisation	Strongly agree/agree that line manager Respects you as a person	93	90.3	93.9	90.4	87.8	90.6	91	91.2	90	90.2	89.7	89.4	89.1	90.9	89.1	87.4	91.3	90.2	95.2
	Strongly agree/agree that line manager gives you praise and recognition when you do a good job	78.2	76.7	87	81.9	78.3	79.6	81.9	84.5	80.2	73.5	76.4	69.6	72.1	79.5	78.7	76.7	88.4	78	84.3
	Strongly agree/agree that line manager is helpful to you in getting the job done.	82.7	81.3	81.7	81.4	80.2	81.1	81.5	87.6	80.8	78	81.6	82	73.5	81.5	80.5	79	84.1	82.2	82.4
	Strongly agree/agree that line manager Encourages and supports your development.	78.1	76	79.5	79.3	79.3	79.2	80.5	80.7	78.5	78.3	72.4	75.8	70.1	79.4	73.8	78.5	78.3	76.8	80.2
	Strongly agree/agree that in general, employees in your organisation trust management	72.9	72.3	70.3	68.6	62.2	62.3	67.3	66.7	75.6	63.4	71.3	70.4	68.7	68.2	69.7	59.7	72.5	74	72.8
	Strongly agree/agree that for the most part, this organisation treats its employees fairly	84.9	79.2	83.8	82.4	78.6	70.4	81.8	88	80.8	70.7	77.6	83.9	72.8	81.4	78.7	79.7	79.7	80.5	84.1
Trade union representation	Is a member of a trade union	18.8	14.5	13.9	22.9	53.7	17	30.6	33.7	22.1	32.9	19	24.2	21.1	29	24.5	57.5	23.5	11.2	11.8
	Has a collective agreement in place in workplace	36.6	24	26.5	33	73.2	33.3	47.6	53.9	33.6	43.9	29.3	37.9	28.6	43.7	40.2	78.2	37.7	22.1	24.8

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Appendix Table 1.9: Work-life balance across worker characteristics

		All	Gender		Age category				
			Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Long working hours	6 + days per week	7.7	9.4	4.2	6.5	4.8	5	7	9.4
	49 + per week	14.9	21.6	7.2	6.5	12	15.8	17.6	17.2
Lacks work-life flexibility	No say at all in arranging to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters	9.8	8.7	11.2	9.5	12	8.9	9.9	10.2
Work-life spillage/ conflict	After finishing work, you keep worrying about job problems all/almost all the time	13.4	12.8	14.1	5.5	16.1	15.6	12.1	13.2
	Find it difficult to unwind and switch off at the end of a workday all/almost all the time	17.5	16.8	18.2	14.1	21.9	19.6	15.4	13.9
	The demands of your job interfere with your family life all/almost all the time	10.2	10.8	9.6	8.5	10.1	12.3	9.3	8.6

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Educational attainment			Region							
Primary or secondary	Below degree level	Degree level or above	Border	Midlands	West	Dublin	Mid-west	South east	South west	Mid east
13.5	9.4	3.6	10.2	8.1	10.7	5.5	6.4	10.8	8.6	7.4
15.6	16.2	14.2	20.5	12.8	13.9	13.3	19.3	13.9	15.1	14.5
12.5	8.9	9	12	8.8	10.2	10	9.1	7.8	10	10.6
9.8	13.5	14.9	12.7	12.8	13.4	15.3	10.2	8.4	12.4	16
13.1	17.4	19.4	20.5	7.3	12.4	20.1	18.7	13.9	14.4	20.9
7.5	9.6	11.6	10.2	6.4	9.7	9.3	15.6	11.4	9	10.3

Appendix Table 1.10: Work-life balance across job characteristics

		Sector						Occupation							Working hours	
		Industry	Wholesale, retail, transport, accommodation & food	Information, comms, financial, insurance	Professional, scientific, technical, admin	Public admin, health, education	Arts, entertainment, recreation, other	Managerial, Professional & Associate Professional	Administrative and secretarial	Skilled trades	Caring, leisure and other service	Sales and customer service	Process, plant and machine operatives	Elementary	Full-time	Part-time
Long working hours	6 + days per week	16.1	7.2	1.6	2.8	3.8	19.7	3.7	2	20.6	11.8	3.4	22.8	8.3	8	6.1
	49 + per week	26.6	12.2	10.9	12.3	9.4	18.4	17.5	6.1	23.8	7.5	3.9	19.8	8.3	18.2	1.5
Lacks work-life flexibility	No say at all in arranging to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters	6.7	10	2	9	15.6	13.2	8	7.6	5.3	24.7	12.8	13.3	13.5	9.2	12.2
Work-life spillage/ conflict	After finishing work, you keep worrying about job problems all/ almost all the time	15.1	11.5	14.2	13.7	12.8	13.2	15.8	10.7	15.3	11.8	10.1	9.4	8.4	14.8	7.8
	Find it difficult to unwind and switch off at the end of a workday all/almost all the time	17.7	17.4	15	17.5	18.1	20	20.2	13.7	16.4	17.2	15.7	12.9	13.5	18.8	12.2
	The demands of your job interfere with your family life all/ almost all the time	11.7	10.2	6.9	7.6	10.9	13.3	11.2	6.6	12.8	7.5	11.2	8.4	7.7	11.2	6.6

Note: Traffic light heat map. Red means poorer quality. Green means higher quality.

Appendix 2

Table Appendix 2.1: Job Quality clusters detailed characteristic profiles.

	Cluster 1: Demanding, highly controlled, precarious jobs	Cluster 2: Precarious, low paid jobs	Cluster 3: Secure, moderately good, collectively unionised jobs	Cluster 4: Secure, moderately good jobs with strong employee-management relations	Cluster 5: Secure, high -quality jobs
	N: 176 (12.1%)	N: 217 (14.9%)	N: 373 (25.7%)	N: 382 (26.3%)	N: 305 (21%)
Insecure employment	26% insecure	40% insecure on one of two (9.5% insecure on both)	9% insecure wage or employment	14% insecure wage or employment	4% insecure
Earnings	54.5% between 20-40k, 23% below 20k, 22% 40-60k	87.1% Below €20,000	79% between 20-40k	83.5% between 20-40k	74% 40-60k, 20% over 65k
Working hours	44% 31-40 hours (majority of rest longer than this)	41.9% 17-24 hours, 14.3% 11-16, 22.5% 25-30	63.6% 31-40 hours	66.5% 31-40 hours (almost everyone else works more)	36% 31-40 hours, 34% 41-48, 30% 49+
Trade Union Representation	47% not covered	68.7% not covered	8% not covered	92% not covered	44% not covered
Additional remuneration benefits	38.6% have 3, 26.1% have 2, 20.5% have 1.	29% have 1, 33.2% have 2, 20% have 3.	72.9% have 3, 17% have 4.	24.8% have 1, 35.1% have 2, 15.2% have 3, 25.21% have 4	55% have 4, 33% have 3, no one has none
Work-life spillage	37% have high levels of w-l spillage	13% have high levels of w-l spillage	15% have high levels of w-l spillage	16% have high levels of w-l spillage	13% have high levels of w-l spillage
Working days	64% 5 days, 15% 4 days	32.7% 3 days, 19% 2 days, 23.5% 4 days	73% 5 days, almost everyone else 3/4	90.8% 5 days, rest even split on 4/6	95.5% 5 days
Social support manager	22% poor social support	30% poor social support	38% poor social support	16% poor social support	18% poor social support
Anxiety about future prospects	48% anxious about future	20.7% anxious about future	16% anxious about future	13% anxious about future	5% anxious about future
Work autonomy	30% poor work autonomy	23% poor work autonomy	19% poor work autonomy	9% poor work autonomy	Less than 1% poor work autonomy
Training quantity	90% did not receive substantial training	92% did not receive substantial training	90% did not receive substantial training	78% did not receive substantial training	84% did not receive substantial training
Work life flexibility	25% poor work-life flex	12.4% poor work-life flex	18% poor work-life flex	5% poor work-life flex	0% poor work-life flex
Work effort	53% high work effort intensity	1% high work effort intensity	3% high work effort intensity	2% high work effort intensity	10% high work effort intensity

Endnotes

1 For a discussion of the possible links between the decline of good jobs and the rise of popular political disaffection see O'Reilly et al. (2016), Rodrik (2021) and Rodrik and Sabel (2021).

2 For examples of strategic initiatives in this domain outside of Ireland, see Taylor (2017) and HM Government (2017 and 2018) for the UK (see also the critique of Bales et al., 2018); for Wales, see Fair Work Commission (https://gov.wales/fair-work-wales); for Scotland, see Fair Work Convention (https://www.fairworkconvention.scot/the-fair-work-framework/). In Northern Ireland (NI), too, the NI Executive has given increased focus to the requirement to create "good jobs" and to collect statistics on the quality of jobs (NISRA, 2020). This commitment to create good jobs in Northern Ireland was also endorsed jointly by the UK and Irish governments (UK Government & Irish Government, 2020).

3 https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda. See especially 'Goal 8'.

4 Decent Work. Report of the Director-General, International Labour Conference, 87th Session, 1999, International Labour Organization, Geneva; page 4 (accessed on 27/09/2022)]. Available online: https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09605/09605(1999-87).pdf . Emphasis added.

5 The EWCS is conducted generally every five years by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. It was first administered in 1990/1991 and currently includes over 30 countries within and beyond the EU. See: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-working-conditions-surveys-ewcs

6 We are aware of a literature, although we do not pick up on it in our operationalisation, which suggests that low demands may also contribute negatively to job quality. The rationale here is that in placing few if any demands on a worker, a low intensity job could lead to stress and poor well-being where it fails to meet a need for challenge and engagement (Green and Mostafa, 2012).

7 Beyond the actual length of working time, poor working-time arrangements such as those associated with unsocial work schedules have been shown to bear negatively on workers' family relationships, social life and psychological well-being. The Working in Ireland survey data did not however collect any such data.

8 For this account we rely on the minutes from NPHET's standing meetings, available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/691330-national-public-health-emergency-team-covid-19-coronavirus/. (Accessed 6th December, 2022).

9 The LEEF is the forum for high level dialogue between government, trade unions and employer representatives on matters of strategic national importance.

10 The most recent Quality report for the CSO Earnings and Labour costs survey details that across the quarters of 2021 there was between a 22% and 27% imputation rate for missing employee earnings data. Available online at: https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/methods/earningsandlaborcostsquarterly/Quality_Report_EHECS_2021.pdf

11 Reported earnings include overtime payments, bonuses, tips, etc. They are reported here as net earnings; that is, after all taxes (PAYE, PRSI, and USC) are deducted.

12 Causal links have been established in prior research. See, for example, Cottini and Lucifora (2013), who, using three waves of the EWCS, 1995, 2000, and 2005, found that poor job quality is causally associated with a higher probability of workers reporting mental health problems at the workplace.

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The UCD Working in Ireland Survey Website:

www.smurfitschool.ie/facultyresearch/jobqualitystudy/overviewofstudy/

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