

# MEMBER VIEWS

## WorkLife Central Survey Reveals Juggling Work and Childcare is the Leading Source of Stress and Anxiety

In the Autumn of 2025, WorkLife Central surveyed\* its members to understand current levels of mental wellbeing, work / life balance, and the influence of flexible working arrangements.

Worryingly, wellbeing has not recovered since the Covid-19 pandemic. Nearly half of respondents continue to rate their mental and physical health as either average or poor—a near-identical result to our 2020 survey (42% in both years).

The pressure of combining work with caring responsibilities emerged as the most significant contributor to stress in 2025, followed closely by concerns about children's wellbeing.

Despite these ongoing pressures, respondents report a marked improvement in work / life balance. In 2020, just over half (51%) rated their work / life balance as very good or excellent. By 2025, this figure had risen sharply to 88%.



### TOP SOURCES OF STRESS AND ANXIETY

1

Juggling work with childcare and/or eldercare

2

Children's happiness and wellbeing

3

Heavy workload

4

Division of domestic responsibilities

5

Anxiety about the future

\*WorkLife Central surveyed 185 of its members in September and October 2025

# A Growing Culture of Flexibility

Qualitative feedback underscores the pivotal role that flexible working plays in the improved harmony between work and home life. Respondents described flexible arrangements as a critical enabler of better balance: reducing commuting time, allowing greater autonomy over work and home routines, increasing sleep and energy, and easing the challenge of coordinating of childcare and eldercare alongside work.

Some respondents acknowledged downsides, including blurred boundaries and a tendency to work longer hours, particularly during evenings and weekends. However, most felt these compromises were outweighed by the broader benefits.

Survey data confirms that flexible working options have continued to expand, even as some employers encourage a greater return to the office.

## FLEXIBLE WORKING TAKE UP

2020

34% HOURS  
67% LOCATION

2025

86% HOURS  
96% LOCATION

## TOP FIVE BENEFITS OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

1

**Improved work / life balance**

2

**Support with caring responsibilities**

including childcare, eldercare, school logistics, and caring for neurodivergent children

3

**Enhanced wellbeing**

less stress, better support for health conditions, more time for self-care

4

**Elimination of commuting**

time and cost savings, increased productivity

5

**Family connection**

more quality time and the ability to be present for key moments

# Employers Stepping Up Support

Louisa Symington-Mills, CEO, WorkLife Central commented:

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We also asked respondents to rate employer support across several personal and identity-based factors: sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, religion, gender identity, family structure, socio-economic background, disability, and neurodiversity. Overall, the results paint a broadly positive picture, with most employees feeling adequately supported. However, socio-economic background and neurodiversity attracted the highest proportion of low-support ratings.

Additional gaps remain. While many respondents feel their employers recognise and accommodate home-life pressures, 23% still do not feel comfortable discussing their personal circumstances at work, or feel that support, when offered, remains superficial.

It's encouraging to see such an improvement in work / life balance, driven by the expansion of flexible working across sectors. At the same time, our data shows that people are still struggling to cope with the competing pressures of work and home and it is taking its toll on mental wellbeing. We hope these findings inspire organisations to keep building supportive, empathetic cultures where people feel comfortable sharing their needs and confident that meaningful support will follow.

To find out how WorkLife Central can help instill a supportive culture in your organisation, please contact Louisa at [louisa@worklifecentral.com](mailto:louisa@worklifecentral.com)

[worklifecentral.com](http://worklifecentral.com)

