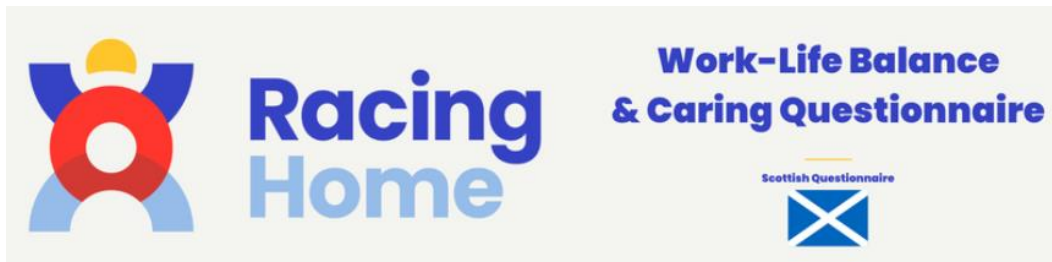


WORK-LIFE BALANCE & CARING IN HORSE RACING

**Scottish Racing: summary of pilot survey
December 2022-February 2023**



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1 INTRODUCTION

Horseracing is a diverse sport attracting individuals from different backgrounds, skillsets and talents. It is important to know the needs of the workforce to understand how they can best be supported. Following on from the [Racing Home](#) project, a need was identified to better understand the extent and nature of issues relating to pregnancy, maternity, caring and family life, and the barriers/enablers to people reaching their full potential. This survey served as a pilot for gaining feedback on these areas, particularly through a lens of work-life balance, and the results are summarised below.

Many thanks to The Racing Foundation and Kindred Group for their support in funding this project, with support from Simply Racing.

2 DISTRIBUTION AND RESPONSES

The content of the questionnaire was developed during November 2022 by the Racing Home team in consultation with Scottish Racing. It was distributed via email and social media (Twitter and Facebook), and available from early December 2022 until early February 2023. It was set up for completion online and could be accessed through a range of devices including laptops, tablets and smart phones to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. Content was designed to collect data related to work and employment, aspects of pregnancy and maternity, caring and family life (relating to responsibilities, family size, childcare arrangements, etc.) and work-life balance. The questions are shown in Annex I.¹ In terms of responses:

- 86 individuals completed the survey, 65% of whom responded as female and 35% as male.²
- The age of respondents spanned the life course from 16 – 65+, with slightly higher participation for the 35-39 (14%) age group.
- The majority (69%) were permanent employees, 11% were self-employed, 4% were temporary employees. 15% were employers.
- Industry experience ranged from less than a year (9%) to 20+ years (25%), with a quarter having 1-5 years and 27% having between 6 and 20 years.

¹ Answers were mainly confined to yes/no and checkbox lists for ease of completion. A small amount of (optional) free-format space was provided for those who wished to elaborate on their answers, with responses listed in Annex II.

² The majority of questions provided an option of 'prefer not to say', and there were a small number of blank responses. Therefore, results may not always add up to 100%.

- Several types of employment were represented, with the majority based at racecourses (51%) and racing yards/studs (36%).
- 57% were primarily desk-based workers (with some of these having additional, more physical duties including yard work and riding). Most of the remainder (26%) identified 'riding' as their key job role. 85% are full-time and 14% part-time.

As part of the survey, and to support good industry practices,³ a full set of personal demographic data was requested including age, gender, gender identity, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and belief and disability status. Where appropriate,⁴ these data have been reported in graph form in Annex III.

Given the fairly low number of responses to the survey, it is not possible to show detailed analysis according to sub-sets of race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and belief, disability status as this may compromise the anonymity of respondents.⁵ Nevertheless, the dataset obtained forms a baseline that can be used for future surveys and to give an indication of diversity characteristics for this population. Collecting this data to feed into longer-term analysis sets an important standard to encourage the inclusion of more diverse family structures and lifestyles for collecting information in future on family life and work-life balance in the industry.

3 SUMMARY RESULTS

The following sections outline a summary of responses to the questionnaire, highlighting key points of interest.

Caring responsibilities and family life

Forty respondents (47%) reported having children, with 32% having two or more. Twenty-five respondents (29%)⁶ have at least one child under 18, with six having at least one child younger than primary school age. Fourteen individuals identified having the main caring responsibilities, which included those who were a primary carer for children, an older

³ Using categories as outlined in the BHA Equality Monitoring template, all of which are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

⁴ I.e., where numbers are not so small as to compromise anonymity.

⁵ Where fewer than five individuals have responded to a category there is a risk that they may be identifiable, particularly within 'closed' communities such as the horseracing sector. In this report, no results are attributed to these small groups to avoid any chance of recognition by either the respondent or others in the industry.

⁶ This is close to the UK average, which is just under 30% - Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2022). Childbearing for women born in different years, England and Wales:2020,

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/conceptionandfertilityrates/bulletins/childbearingforwomenbornindifferentyearsenglandandwales/2020>.

person and/or an adult person with disabilities. An additional six had a secondary carer role. Five of those with caring responsibilities were men. The most common concern for all of those with caring responsibilities was the need for flexibility to manage their family needs. Just over a fifth fed back that they had already adjusted an aspect of their work pattern to fit with caring responsibilities, and this included flexing hours around childcare/lifestyle and reducing their hours. Five of the women (though none of the men) had changed their job roles/taken a less senior role. A significant proportion of respondents overall – 72% - reported having no caring responsibilities, which included some with children who were 18+.

Maternity or parental leave (including adoption leave)

Of those who responded, 17% have taken any type of parental leave of whom the majority (12) had taken their latest period of leave within the last 5 years so could draw on fairly recent experiences. Feedback from respondents who commented on any barriers they had faced varied, with five mentioning factors that included juggling childcare, fitness levels, having no choice but to take a reduced/less senior role with one not returning to work until their children were school age.

Nine others reported no barriers at all when returning, all of whom were full time and (except for two) had ground work or riding roles in yards or racecourses. Being given the option to work from home (where possible) and reduce hours were given as key reasons for a smoother return and feeling supported. When asked about future plans, 62% of all respondents (53 individuals) stated that they would consider adjusting their work pattern to fit with caring responsibilities. Most would reduce their hours (or at least make these more flexible), with just over a third (primarily women) who would consider changing job role (including to a less senior position).

Work-life balance (WLB)

When asked about work-life balance (WLB), over a third (38%) reported their work-life balance to be very good.⁷ The main features of this grouping were that 25 (76%) of them were in a primarily desk-based role (sometimes with other varied tasks), five worked part-time and the rest full-time, and over three quarters had some element of a home-based work arrangement or flexibility which included annualised hours, term-time hours, flexible shifts and staggered hours. 58% of those with high WLB scores were racecourse employees.

⁷ Ranging from 8-10 on a scale of 1 – 10, where 10= "great" and 1= "I have no work-life balance at all".

At the other end of the scale, thirteen (15%) reported their work-life balance to be very poor.⁸ These spanned different types of work, though more were in yard and riding roles (as opposed to desk-based), with eight based in a racing yard with the remainder at a racecourse. There were low rates of flexible/homeworking across this grouping with only three mentioning this as a work pattern. Caring responsibilities did not appear to be a key driver of the low WLB scores as only one of this group identified as a carer.

The average score across all respondents was 6/10, and there appeared to be no differences proportionately between men and women, or for those with disabilities. When asked what might help them achieve a better work-life balance, the most common answer was 'more flexible hours', with a couple also mentioning a reduced workload/hours or more restrictions on weekend working. More affordable accessible caring/childcare support was raised as a factor also. There was recognition of a need to work around the horses' requirements, and appreciation of employers who tried to be as flexible as possible under the circumstances. Others raised particular issues such as a negative impact from 'twilight racing' which is particularly difficult for staff due to the long hours and travel requirements.

Suggestions for change

There were a significant number of free-format comments and suggestions on how things might be improved. These included changes to job structures, such as the introduction of job-sharing, and standardisation of a five-day week (as well as the trialling of a four-day week). There were several appeals for more flexibility in work patterns, a need for more time off was raised, with one reference to only having one day off every 13 days and a lack of the holiday needed to "recharge batteries". The difficulties of affording and combining work with childcare were also emphasised.

In addition, comments were raised about some attitudes within the industry, ranging from the observation that it "needs to change with the times" and that employers need to be more trusting of staff (in relation to working from home). There was also praise for supportive managers and employers, and some recognition that issues such as lack of staff leave little room for change.

Feedback on the pilot process

Using an approximation of potential respondents for racing in Scotland, the potential 'population'⁹ is 400¹⁰ making the response rate 21.5%. It may be useful to explore reasons

⁸ Ranging from 1-3 on the same scale as note 7.

⁹ Based on the 2023 Annual Review, https://www.scottishracing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ANNUAL-REVIEW-Jan-2023_compressed.pdf

¹⁰ i.e., 250 racing staff, 25 jockeys and 25 trainers (assuming an assumed average of five staff per yard).

for low completion rates before rolling out this survey on a wider industry basis. For example, the pilot was issued in December out of necessity, to fit with organisational priorities, but a similar exercise in future survey may, for example, be run at a time that is less busy time for people. The publication of this report on the survey may support further opportunities for presenting the findings/feedback, increasing engagement and opening a conversation that leads to increased participation for future surveys.

In terms of the content of the questionnaire, the process of the survey distribution and data collection all ran smoothly. Just a tiny number failed to complete the entire survey once they had started, indicating that the questions and the subject matter were relevant to them. The 'tick box' question options provided met the majority of their personal scenarios, and we now have sufficient examples to create more comprehensive checklist options for a future survey. This will further streamline the completion process for respondents and data collection. The questions covered provided relevant data to find out more about motherhood, caring and family life in the industry, and with greater numbers of respondents can build a helpful picture. To provide some direction to the industry, it would be helpful to include some additional questions around what businesses/employers can put in place, for example, ensuring staff are aware of maternity/paternity policies, appraisals and availability of feedback mechanisms between employee and employer regarding personal circumstances. These can be explored in a further iteration of a work-life balance questionnaire.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

This survey pilot offers an interesting addition to existing industry studies, and in particular it addresses aspects of caring and carers' needs in the workplace. A key feature of the respondent group is the proportion of 'desk-based' employees involved who may face different types of work challenges to those in yards and/or who work in animal care yet are experiencing some similar issues with regard to caring.

This survey also attempted to measure levels of work-life balance, and showed a significant range of experience which, in the case of this limited study and the words of the respondents, indicates the importance surrounding flexibility and working hours. This may be a cause for concern about retention of both those with and without caring responsibilities. It is an issue being faced by many other industries as indicated by recent government commitments in granting rights to request flexible work from day one of employment.¹¹ This is clearly a feature of the modern workplace for those juggling family and work against a backdrop of cost of living increases and other pressures such as high childcare costs and more 'sandwich' carers (i.e., people caring for an older relative as well as bringing up a family)¹² of whom 68% are women.

It is also notable that a number of those with caring responsibilities would consider reducing their hours or curtailing their careers, indicating potential for future drain on resources and loss of talent. An emphasis on the need for greater flexibility or less demanding hours was also evident for some with no caring responsibilities who gave low work-life balance scores, with one respondent making an interesting comment that "There are more responsibilities than caring for someone". Such responsibilities could, of course, include a number of aspects such as wider responsibilities in the home, self-care or extra-curricular activities, all of which have an important role in a healthy work-life balance and family life.

In terms of survey take-up rate, the number of questionnaires submitted was relatively low (i.e., 21.5%), whereas a rate of 50-60% is generally seen as acceptable for workforce feedback to be representative. However, those who completed the survey came from a diverse demographic in terms of age, employment type, length of experience and types of caring. They gave a good amount of additional information wherever possible (eg, indications of multiple reasons for their plans and completing free-format text), indicating strong engagement from those who took part and therefore giving rich, high-quality data. An important factor is that the messages from this survey were also consistent with all

¹¹ CIPD (2022). <https://www.cipd.co.uk/news-views/news-articles/flex-from-first-flexible-working#ref>

¹² Age UK (2019). Breaking Point. The social care burden on women.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/contentassets/c3dac0771e614672b363c5fe7e6f826e/breaking-point-age-uk.pdf>.

other previous work related to this topic in the industry, both qualitative and quantitative. Overall, the project served as an effective pilot and an insight into the impact of caring on work-life balance for the industry.

Suggestions from the data support the following employer actions for improved employee work-life balance, where these are not already in place:

- Initiating discussions with individual employees regarding job structure and potential to introduce job-sharing, flexitime, some home-working or other flexible working patterns. Ideally, this should also form part of an annual '180' appraisal process.
- Exploration of different working patterns such as a four-day week and ensuring that all employees have regular days off (at least one per week).
- Recognising childcare needs and investigating possibilities for support, for example, through childcare voucher schemes.
- Introducing informal 'check-ins' with each member of staff regarding work-life balance and their current work-life situation (which can change quickly).
- Ensuring all staff have access to the information they need and that they are aware of their employer's maternity and paternity policies.

This approach to dealing with work-life balance in the workforce is endorsed by Scottish Racing as supported by the findings of this and other studies in the industry.

Information relating to all aspects of motherhood, caring and family life in the industry is available for both employers and employees on the [Racing Home portal](#). This gives access to current legal advice, employer best practice guidance and examples of 'lived experience' via podcasts and video. As well as recommending that employers use the portal as a valuable resource, we encourage them to prompt their workforce to do the same. As the recent budget, which focused on childcare spending, has shown the impact of parenting and caring on the workplace is topical and of great importance. By sharing this knowledge and the accompanying resources, we hope to support the industry in meeting the work-life balance needs of its people.

ANNEX I – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Racing Home – survey on work-life balance and caring

Thank you for visiting our survey on work-life balance and caring in Scottish Racing. Horseracing is a diverse sport attracting individuals from different backgrounds, skillsets and talents. It is important for us to know the needs of the workforce to understand how they can best be supported. In particular, we are interested in what can be done to help with work-life balance and family life, not least as many roles in the industry involve long hours, travel and/or hard physical work. This survey will help us identify priorities for the industry, and should take 10 minutes maximum to complete.

Findings will be presented anonymously, and published in a report that will be made available via [website]. No one will be identifiable from what we report. This project is sponsored by The Racing Foundation and Kindred Group, supported by Women in Racing and Simply Racing. By completing and submitting this survey you are confirming that you have read and understand the purpose of the survey. If you have any questions, please contact [email].

About your work

1. Please indicate if you are (tick all that apply): A permanent employee/A temporary employee/An employer/Self-employed/Other (please specify). Tick all that apply [TICK BOX LIST, MAY TICK MORE THAN ONE]
2. How long have you been in the industry in total? Less than a year/1-5 years/6-10years/11-20 years/over 20 years [TICK BOX LIST, ONE RESPONSE]
3. Place of work: is your current, primary role in: Racecourse/racing yard/stud/other (please specify)? Tick all that apply [TICK BOX LIST, MAY TICK MORE THAN ONE]
4. Does your job involve: desk-based work/riding/other (please specify)? Tick all that apply [TICK BOX LIST, MAY TICK MORE THAN ONE]
5. Are you: Part-time/Full-time/other (eg, several part-time roles) – please specify [TICK BOX LIST, MAY TICK MORE THAN ONE]
6. Do you work any sort of flexible pattern? YES/NO

IF YES:

Flexitime/staggered hours/term-time hours/annualised hours/job-share/flexible shifts/compressed hours/homeworking/other (please specify) [TICK BOX LIST, MAY TICK MORE THAN ONE]

Caring and family life

7. Do you have caring responsibilities? This includes if you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age. Please exclude anything you do as part of your paid employment. YES/NO/PREFER NOT TO SAY

IF YES:

Primary carer of a child/children (under 18); primary carer of a disabled adult (18 and over); primary carer of a disabled child/children; primary carer of an older person; secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role); other (please specify) [TICK BOX LIST, MAY TICK MORE THAN ONE]

8. Do you have any children? YES/NO/PREFER NOT TO SAY

IF YES:

What ages are your children? [SUGGEST A GRID WITH CHILD ONE-SIX FOR ROWS AND AGES 0-17 and 18+ ON COLUMNS]

9. Are you currently pregnant or taking parental leave (including adoption leave)?
Yes/no/prefer not to say [TICK BOX LIST, ONE RESPONSE]
10. Have you ever taken maternity or parental leave (including adoption leave) from working in horseracing? Yes/no/prefer not to say. [TICK BOX LIST, ONE RESPONSE]

IF YES:

If yes, give approximate dates [FREE-FORMAT TEXT BOX]

11. If/when you returned to work after maternity or parental leave (including adoption leave), did you face any barriers when returning? [FREE FORMAT TEXT BOX]

Work-life balance and family life

12. Have you ever adjusted your work pattern to fit with caring responsibilities? YES/NO

IF YES:

Have you: Reduced hours/changed job role/taken a less senior job role/other (please specify). Tick all that apply [TICK BOX LIST, MAY TICK MORE THAN ONE]

13. Would you consider adjusting your work pattern in future to fit with caring responsibilities? YES/NO

IF YES:

How? Reduce hours/change job role/less senior job role/other (please specify). Tick all that apply [TICK BOX LIST, MAY TICK MORE THAN ONE]

14. How would you describe your current work-life balance, where 10= I have a great work-life balance and 1=I have no work-life balance at all [LIKERT SCALE]
15. What could help you achieve a better work-life balance? More flexible work hours/Caring support (eg, childcare) that suits my working hours/More affordable caring support (eg, childcare)/More accessible caring support (eg, closer to the workplace)/Other (please specify). Tick all that apply [TICK BOX LIST, MAY TICK MORE THAN ONE]
16. Do you have any further comments or suggestions on work-life balance or caring within the industry? [FREE FORMAT TXT]

Personal details

17. What is your age? 16-17/18-24/25-29/30-34/35-39/40-44/45-49/50-54/55-59/60-64/65+/prefer not to say. [TICK BOX LIST, ONE RESPONSE]
18. What is your gender? Male/female/prefer not to say. [TICK BOX LIST, ONE RESPONSE]
19. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? Yes/No, my gender identity is (eg, trans, non-binary)/prefer not to say. [TICK BOX LIST, ONE RESPONSE]
20. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation? Bisexual/Gay or Lesbian/Straight or Heterosexual/If other or you prefer to use your own term, please specify here/prefer not to say. [TICK BOX LIST, ONE RESPONSE]
21. Which best describes your ethnic group? [TICK BOX LIST, ONE ANSWER ONLY]

Asian/Asian British

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani

Any other Asian background, please specify here:

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

- African
- Black British
- Caribbean

Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please specify here:

Mixed/multiple ethnic groups

- White and Asian
- White and Black African
- White and Black Caribbean

Any other mixed background, please specify here:

White

- British
- English
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Irish
- Northern Irish
- Scottish

Welsh

Any other white background, please specify here:

Arab or other ethnic group

Arab

Any other ethnic group, please specify here:

Prefer not to say

22. What is your religion? [TICK BOX LIST, ONE ANSWER ONLY]

Buddhist

Christian (Including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations.)

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

No religion

Sikh

Any other religion, please specify here:

Prefer not to say

23. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

(This is about health conditions, illnesses or impairments you may have. Consider conditions that always affect you and those that flare up from time to time. These may include, for example, sensory conditions, developmental conditions or learning impairments.)

Yes

- No
- Prefer not to say

If the answer is yes, please select all that apply below: [Participants can select multiple answers.]

- Hearing impairment
- Learning difficulty
- Learning impairment/disability
- Long term illness
- Mental health condition
- Physical impairment - ambulant
- Physical impairment - wheelchair user
- Social/communication impairment
- Visual impairment

If other or you prefer to use your own term, please specify here:

- Prefer not to say

ANNEX II – FREE FORMAT TEXT COMMENTS

Do you have any further comments or suggestions on work-life balance or caring within the industry?

The industry needs to change with the times

More days off 1 day off every 13 days isn't enough

Job sharing

It's a way of life but can be taken advantage of. I don't have this problem but I know plenty do

My boss has been great so far tbh

Additional childcare support for staff would be great

All the above would be amazing if possible

In the future you never know how things change.

For those roles that are desk bound to be more flexible in terms of working from home or location.

There are more responsibilities than caring for someone.

Trying to get holidays when busy is very difficult in the racing world. Recharging your batteries is very important for best performance.

The reality is we live in a world where people want more, they want it faster, they want it cheaper, and they have lost any common sense and appreciation for values and good old service. As a result us that are further up the tree have gotten there by acknowledging these factors but have had to sacrifice our own lives in order to work.

Standardisation of a 5 day working week not 40 hours over 6 days

Some office staff can do all their work from home - except for raceday and team meetings. I am more productive at home, and if I can get on top of the workload it is better for my mental and physical health. Please recognise some people can motivate themselves. Some people just don't understand this as they have no self-motivation or trust in their staff

No I do think that keeping employees happy and allowing them to work in the best possible environment is vital to work-life balance.

Less weekends working

Reduce hours

Less racing would benefit all within the industry

Flexibility is key

Training in understanding by employers and in explaining needs by employees would be huge help. From government level, possible tax breaks/incentives to be more flexible

The hours of racing have been altered to include twilight racing, which is the worst hours for staff as the meetings are quiet and the traffic congestion is awful

To be flexible on hours and not to have split shift days as these do not work well for employees.

The industry are constantly looking at ways to support staff however I think we need to recognise that sometime people chose to shift the work life balance and enjoy the need of working hard and being committed.

My work life balance has improved significantly having moved away from working full time in a yard and taking on an office role and working more 'normal' hours.

Open conversation

My employer is very mindful of my home situation and knows they don't pay enough for me to afford childcare. They know if they want me to work, it has to be inside of school hours in the most part.

Racecourse fixture lists are busy and often include many fixtures within school holidays, Xmas, Easter and summer, this can be challenging and increased flexibility during these windows would be ideal.

WFH options would be much appreciated.

Working a 6 day week isn't always easy. But the lack of staff in the racing industry make it impossible to change this.

Perhaps less of the 13 days a fortnight worked and a day off a week would help a lot of people

Thoroughly enjoy working within the racing industry

I have condensed my hours to work 4.5 days in 4 days, so I can have three days at home with my family. I am worried about money now I have reduced my hours. If I go back up to full time, I will have to give up the nursery run which I find upsetting.

Would like to see a 4-day week trailed outside of season.

Flexible hours and working from home

A busy racing schedule limits the opportunities for consistent time off. The time taken for weekend work, either a race day or planning for one is not fully returned.

Work is a big part of my life and I enjoy it being this way. I love racing and looking after horses and it enriches my life. I am bored at home so would happily work more hours.

Working weekends and anti social hours, i.e. starting at 6am make it either impossible to get childcare or so expensive it results in actually paying to go to work.

There appears to be greater awareness of the need to generate an improved work life balance within the industry which is long overdue but encouraging nonetheless.

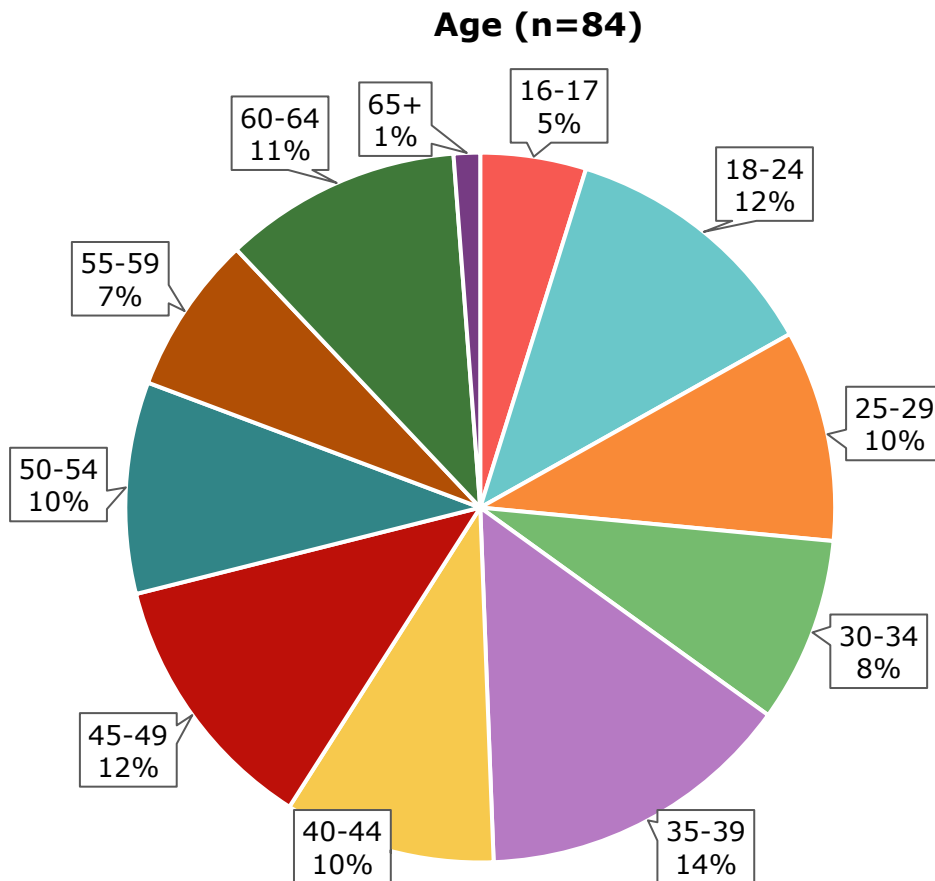
I believe that flexible working hours, where possible, are a major benefit for all staff.

Greater recognition for working women who are juggling work and family life.

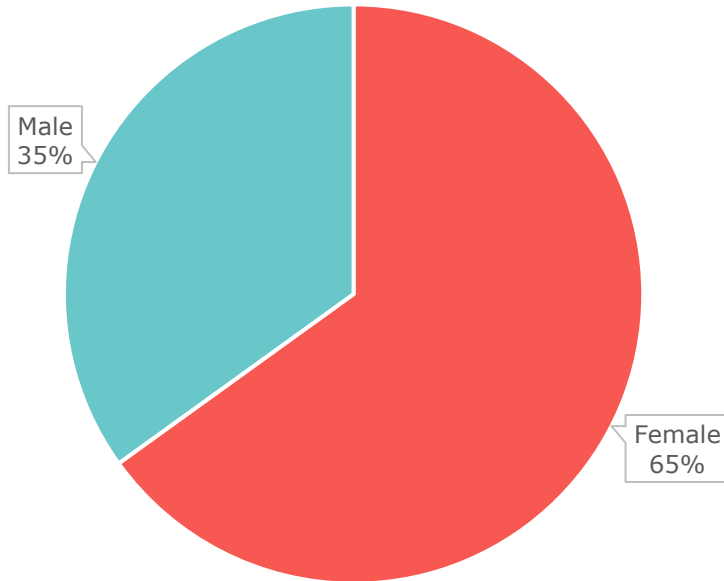
Needs more consideration and childcare decisions need to be made.

ANNEX III – RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

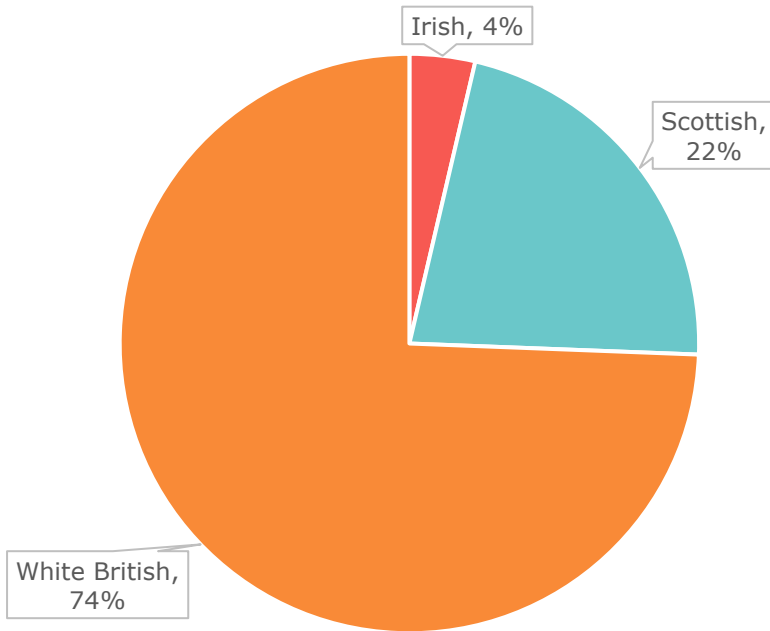
NB: blank and ‘prefer not to say’ responses have been removed for clarity of the graphs; and for ethnic group, sexual orientation, and religion all values <5 have been removed to preserve full anonymity. ‘N’ therefore shows the number of respondents represented in the graph (out of the total of 86).



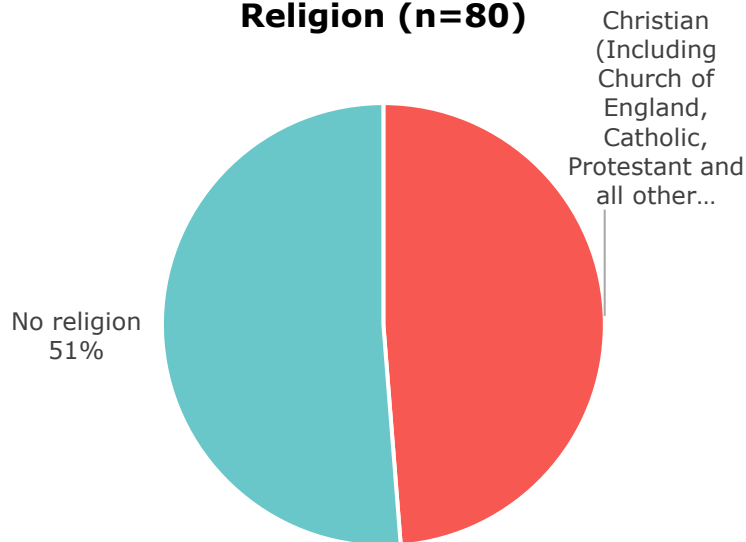
Gender breakdown (n=83)



Ethnic group (n=84)



Religion (n=80)



Sexual orientation and gender identity: The number of respondents identifying as bisexual, gay or lesbian is too low to report upon, with the vast majority identifying as 'heterosexual or straight'. No respondents reported having a gender identity that differed from their sex registered at birth.

Disability (n=81)

