THE STATE OF WORKPLACE HAPPINESS 2020
The data in this report shows a number of positives in spite of the difficulty and uncertainty the pandemic brought to employers and employees across the country. Although, there are clear warnings for employers, when it comes to the ‘ethnicity gap’ in the workplace. Here are our key findings:

- When it comes to pay white male and female respondents are happier with their remuneration compared to all other ethnicities
- Men have become happier over lockdown compared to women
- People feel more empowered at work compared to the pre-covid period
- People are happier in their working lives compared to the pre-covid period
- People are more anxious and depressed compared to the pre-covid period
- More people feel that their employer cares for their wellbeing
- The kitchen table trumps the office – people are more happy with their working environment
- 19-24 year olds have benefited least during lockdown
- Managers have become happier at work over lockdown
- The hospitality and retail industries have been hit hard by Covid-19 so those working in the industries feel less happy in their job right now.
- Hospitality is the least happiest sector to work in this year.
- The healthcare sector saw a significant increase in their average happiness score.
- Technology saw the biggest increase in happiness going from 73% to 87%. This is the happiest industry
- Black, female employees are the least likely to feel empowered
- Male black respondents feel less trusted to make decisions. They also feel less happy at work and enjoy their job less compared to their peers of other ethnicities.
- Asian / British Asian employees became happier than any other ethnicity during the pandemic
Foreword - Andy Haldane

This year has seen the biggest transformation in working practices for several decades, perhaps ever. It has affected almost every worker in almost every country around the world. For some it has meant a transformation in their existing working practices and environment. For others, the working environment has itself shifted from the office to home.

We are still coming to terms with what this transformation means for us as workers, businesses, communities, economies and societies. How have these changes affected our productivity in the workplace? Our sense of empowerment? Our sense of well-being? And how do these effects differ across different cohorts of society who are clearly being affected in differing ways and to differing degrees?

This timely report begins to provide some answers to these fundamental questions – fundamental to the functioning of our economies but also fundamental to the well-being of our citizens. Has the great transformation in working practices been for better or worse?

The truth, it seems, appears to lie somewhere in between. The report tells a good news/bad news story. On the upside, it suggests these shifts in working practice may, on average, have improved our levels of happiness and our sense of empowerment in the workplace. And these improvements, in the grand scheme of things, have been material.

To the downside, however, these gains have not been evenly spread nor universally felt. Young people, black people, females and those working in the worst-affected sectors (such as retail and hospitality) have benefited least. They have also faced heightened levels of anxiety.

It is too early to be reaching definitive judgements on such a seismic shift in how we work. Further research and experience will be needed to assess whether the well-being benefits persist and the downsides dissipate. This paper nonetheless provides an excellent starting point for a policy debate that affects almost every one of us, most days of our lives.
When we look back on 2020 will we see it as a pivotal year for change in the workplace? I believe we will and there’s certainly a lot employers can learn from how employees have adapted and changed - perhaps even improving due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Annual Report analyses the happiness of thousands of people at work and aims to provide a review of the workplace in 2020 in the UK and indeed around the world. By analysing how happy people are at work and asking what can be done to help improve how they work we hope to help businesses and organisations increase employee retention and importantly improve workplace happiness. This report provides a detailed breakdown of how happiness at work has changed throughout the year and how the pandemic has impacted everyone’s workplace happiness.

2020 will not only be the year remembered for working from home. This year has been pivotal in terms of society reflecting on race and diversity. The Black Lives Matter Movement has been influential for businesses and employees to reflect on how well they support and understand ethnic minorities in the workplace. This report looks at the problems people from black and ethnic minorities face at work and we reflect on how we can all do better.

There’s no doubt that young people have been hit hard by the impact of the lockdown restrictions with many starting their career in an era of rising unemployment and uncertainty. This report delves into how happy young people are at work and we compare this with the older generations.

The wellbeing movement had momentum pre-covid and this report looks at how our mental health and wellbeing have been impacted by the pandemic and indeed how employers can support their employees.

We also look ahead to next year and predict what trends we will see as the world comes to terms with a new way of working.

**Methodology**

The data used in this report is from WorkL’s Workplace Happiness Test which, by the end of the year, more than 100,000 people will have taken. This test gives participants a score based on six key areas. In this analysis, ‘post-covid’ is simply all the results collected after the 23rd of March 2020, when UK legislation and restrictions were fully implemented and had a significant impact on the workplace.
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The way we live has changed dramatically in 2020 and that includes work. People who could work from home during the pandemic did and many still are as government policy continues to evolve. This has brought benefits (dropping the commute) but also brought difficulties with many struggling to draw a line between home life and work when working at their kitchen table. Employers have had to make a monumental effort to adhere to Government guidelines to make sure they keep employees safe whilst many having to adapt or change their business.

So how has work and our wellbeing at work changed in 2020?

Before the pandemic the average workplace happiness score was 64%. 6 months after lockdown we have seen people’s happiness at work increase on average to 72%. This jump could be down to a number of factors such as dropping the commute and being able to manage their own time and work in a comfortable space. Being able to roll out of bed five minutes before work has definitely been beneficial to some but others have struggled with a lack of structure. But it seems that with 6 months of working from home, people have become comfortable and happier at work.

72% is the highest happiness score we have seen and when compared to 2019’s average of 58% it shows that despite our working lives having been turned upside down, perhaps this has shaken up the workforce and most, where they can, are enjoying the benefits of flexible working.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019 Overall Score</th>
<th>63.9%</th>
<th>2020 Post COVID-19 Score</th>
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Empowerment

People are feeling more empowered to make decisions whilst working from home with a score of 73% compared to 65% pre Covid. They also feel that they are recognised when they do something well with a score of 68% compared to 60% pre-covid. It seems the workforce also feel they are allowed to make decisions more, when compared to the beginning of 2020 with a score of 73% compared to 64% pre-covid.
If we focus on wellbeing at work we don’t get such a positive picture. It seems life during covid has taken its toll on our working lives with people feeling more anxious and depressed about their work. We’ve seen a rise from 58% to 61% in people saying they feel anxious. This could be a result of the overall impact of covid on people’s work- worried about job security and also feeling safe to do their jobs.

However, looking at the question ‘Do you feel happy at work?’, we have seen a positive increase with people scoring an average of 60% pre-covid and today scoring 67%. In some respects, covid has given us all some perspective and people may lower their expectations when it comes to what they want in a job and simply are happy to have job security.

More people also think that their employer cares for their wellbeing when compared to pre-covid results. 60% of people thought their employer cared for their wellbeing but this jumped to 72% during the pandemic. Have employees seen a new side to their employers during covid? Businesses are increasingly aware that they must keep their employees safe whilst at work and we can see the impact of this with a markedly increased score.

The office or the kitchen table?

If we look at the working environment there has been a 6% increase in people content with where they work. We’ve seen a jump from 63% pre-covid to 69% post-covid.

Does the kitchen table now trump the office in terms of feeling happy at work?

Key findings

+7%

Improvement on employees happiness from pre to post-covid.

+12%

Increase on employees feeling that their employer cares for their wellbeing from pre to post-covid.
We have seen an improvement in happiness scores across most age brackets since the COVID-19 outbreak, with an average increase of **+8.21%**. Though, 19-24 year olds have benefited the least over lockdown. Although they have a good average score of **66%**, they had the lowest increase (**+4.92%**) of overall happiness score out of all demographics. Lockdown has brought with it many changes, including a reduction in socialising - are 19-24 year olds missing the interaction they had at work and the after-work drinks they once enjoyed?

Notably, those aged between 25-34 and 35-44 years-old have benefited the most from lockdown, experiencing a **+10.95%** and **+10%** increase in scores between pre and post COVID. 25-34 year olds have seen a **13%** jump in their average happiness score over lockdown. Post-lockdown, 35-44 year olds scored much higher than before the pandemic when judging whether their manager looks after their wellbeing.

In terms of age, the happiest demographic before the COVID-19 outbreak was those aged 45-54 years old, scoring **65.5%** overall, with the unhappiest being those aged between 25-34 years old, scoring **59.3%**. A **6.2%** score difference between the two age demographics is considerable.

During the pandemic the happiest demographic goes to the 55-64-year-olds with **72%** and the least happy is the 19-24-year-olds, averaging **68.22%**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Pre to Post COVID-19 Scores</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>+4.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>+10.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>+10%</td>
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<td>55-64</td>
<td>+7.85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>+8.48%</td>
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Overall, those of white ethnicity have a happiness score of 68.92%. Given that the overall score for the entire sample population is 68.62%, it is clear that they are very much average. As seen throughout the analysis, the vast majority of the data we have collected illustrated a considerable improvement when the UK was faced with COVID-19, and this is very much the case for those in this ethnic demographic. White employees scored 63.76% overall before Covid-19 which rose by +8.58% to 72.34% during the pandemic. This clearly indicates that white employees have been far happier since the pandemic, than they were prior to it.

For white employees, their overall strongest scoring aspects of workplace happiness are; their relationships with their managers (74.5%), being happy with the hours they work (73.1%) and doing something worthwhile (72.66%) - all presenting very credible scores.

Their worst performing questions overall were; feeling anxious/depressed about work (59.5%), being developed (62.7%) and recommending their organisation to friends and family (64.7%).

Before Covid-19, white employees were happiest with; the hours they worked (70.9%), their relationships with their managers (70.4%) and having enough information to do their job well (67.5%). As we can see, the relationship with their line manager and being happy with the hours they worked remained as the happiest overall, signalling that they scored very well within the pre pandemic period.
Before the pandemic white employees were unhappiest with; being developed (56.7%), feeling anxious/depressed (57.2%) and recommending their workplace (58.2%).

The highest percentage increase from the period before covid-19 to the pandemic illustrates the benefits that the dramatic change in the working world brought to our happier white employees. The following questions received the highest percentage increase; my employer cares for my well-being (+13.3%), I am fairly paid (+12.7%) and I would recommend my friends and family to work for my organisation (+10.9%).

It is extremely promising to see that employers’ are taking greater care for their employees’ well-being. This is a major issue within the working world, as demonstrated by the consistently low scores for white employees anxiety/depression rates. Pre-covid, the question scored 59.6% which is poor but rising to 72.9% once the move to working from home was established. This is good news, and offers hope for the future - employers need to carry on this process of checking in on their employees when we do eventually go back to a new way of working which might include being back in the office more.

Elsewise, being fairly paid had a substantial percentage rise in the white demographic, going from 60.8% pre-covid to 73.54%, which is a strong score. Employees most likely feel like this as they undeniably saved a much higher proportion of their wages compared to pre-covid, not only on work related expenses but because social activities in and out of work were prohibited. The perception of having a higher disposable income will undeniably make employees feel better paid, never mind that they are not able to spend it, so their savings dramatically benefit too.
Overall, the Black, African, Caribbean ethnicity demographic scored 64.5%. Pre-covid they were averaging 61.8%, which increased by +4.7% to 66.6% post-covid, which is a fair improvement.

Overall, their top scoring questions were: I do something worthwhile (72.6%), I feel proud to work for my organization (69.6%) and I have enough information to do my job well (69.2%). Given that their average is 64.5%, these questions scored very well - doing something worthwhile and feeling proud to work for your organisation go hand in hand, so it is no surprise these are the two highest scoring questions. Having enough information to do your job well enhances your work life significantly and may contribute to a feeling of pride for working for your organisation.

The lowest scoring questions overall were: I rarely feel anxious or depressed about work (58.5%), I am being developed (58.8%) and I am fairly paid (59.9%).

This group’s highest scoring questions pre-covid were: I do something worthwhile (69.2%), I have enough information to do my job well (68%) and I feel proud to work for my organization (66.4%). We again see a clear correlation between doing something worthwhile and feeling proud to work for your organization - these are the same three answers as seen in the overall top scores.

There were no differences once we felt the impact of the pandemic.

The lowest scoring pre-covid answers for this group were; I am being developed (55.5%), I am fairly paid (55.7%) and information is freely and openly shared with me (57%). What is interesting is the introduction of information not being freely and openly shared.
Since the pandemic the lowest scoring answers were; I rarely feel anxious/depressed at work (58.8%), I am being developed (61.2%), I am recognised when I do something well (62.2%). This immediately displays an improvement from the pre-covid period, where the lowest scores were all below 57%. I am being developed still remains, having only gone up by +5.6% - but this does offer some positive signs. Anxiety and depression were the joint 4th lowest pre-covid and it slipped into the lowest scoring question as it only went up by +0.73% once the pandemic arrived.

It should be noted that being recognised for doing something well is critical to an employee's well-being, general performance and overall happiness. Although it improved by +4.1% pre to post-covid, it is still low with an overall score of 60.4%. The only other ethnic bracket lower is ‘other’ (57.5%) - all the others were at least +4%.

Some positives to look at for those of Black/African/Caribbean descent are the largest percentage increases:

- Information is freely and openly shared with me (+9.4%)
- I am fairly paid (+7.1%)
- I am happy with my working environment (+7.07%)

Of particular significance is the fairly paid question, as it was the 3rd lowest overall question for this ethnic group, moving to 5th lowest in the post-covid question scores. Information being freely shared is also a huge benefit.

Questions that received the lowest percentage increase:

- I rarely feel anxious and depressed about work (+0.7%)
- I have a good relationship with my manager (1.9%)
- I have enough information to do my job well (+2.1%)

Development

A key issue found across all three of the discussed ethnicities (White, Asian and Black/African/Caribbean) has been the development of employees.

The question "I am being developed" scored in the bottom three overall questions for all three ethnic groups, with White employees scoring 62.77%, Asian employees scoring 65.93% and Black/African/Caribbean employees scoring the lowest with 58.82%.

Development is at the heart of employees’ job satisfaction. When offered, it motivates employees as it recognises the good work they have done, but it also offers a change of routine. Adding new skills and enriching employees with knowledge not only benefits them, but ultimately the employer.
Overall, Asians/Asian British employees scored 69.7% for their overall happiness – meaning they are the happiest ethnic group.

They, like 5 out of 6 ethnic groups, experienced an increase of happiness from pre-covid to pandemic, going from 62.9% to 76.2% (+13.3% increase).

Overall, Asian/Asian British employees are happiest in the following questions: I feel proud to work for my organisation (73.6%), I do something worthwhile (73.4%), I am happy with the hours I work (73.3%).

Alternatively, this group’s overall unhappiest scores were: I rarely feel anxious or depressed at work (62.3%), I am fairly paid (64.6%), I am being developed (65.9%).

As seen previously there is a strong correlation between feeling proud to work for your organisation and feeling like you are doing something worthwhile. It’s also good to see that they are happy with the hours they work; this has been boosted by their post-covid score in this question of 77.5% (which didn’t even make their top 3 scoring post-covid question scores) - an +8.6% increase from their pre-covid score of 68.9% which is significant and the highest pre-covid score.

Their pre-covid overall score was 62.9%. Their highest results in this time period came from; I am happy with the hours I work (68.9%), I have a good relationship with my manager (68%) & I do something worthwhile (67.5%).

Asian/British Asian employees also scored highest post-covid in the following questions: I feel proud to work for my organisation (80.3%), I enjoy my job (79.3%) & I do something worthwhile (79.1%).
When comparing the pre-covid period with the period once the pandemic arrived, only one question scored highest in both brackets - I do something worthwhile, coming third in both. What we learn from this is that this ethnic group have a great relationship with their managers and were very happy with the hours they worked before covid altered the working environment - however, this did not change - they actually became happier with both, with a +8.6% increase in happiness with hours to 77.5% and a +9.9% increase with their relationships with their managers to 78% - both very high scores, coming in at 4th and 5th highest for post-covid questions.

Further good news for this bracket is the two new entries in; I feel proud to work for my organisation, scoring a huge 80.3% and I enjoy my job, scoring an equally impressive 79.3%. These two questions made the rise with respective percentage increases of +13.6% and +13.88%, showing that covid related changes have benefited these happiness aspects greatly. Even more promising for this ethnic group is that neither of these percentage increases, despite being so significant, made it into the top 3 highest changes from pre to post.

Alternatively, if we now look at this group's lowest scoring questions pre-covid, these are:

- I am fairly paid (56.7%)
- I rarely feel anxious or depressed about work (57.2%)
- I would recommend my family and friends to work for my organisation (59%)

Post-covid lowest scoring questions were as follows;

- I rarely feel anxious or depressed about work (67.3%)
- I am being developed (71%)
- I am fairly paid (72.3%)

The scores are higher than the vast majority of questions we have analysed.

What aspects of happiness benefited the most from the impacts of the pandemic? Our data shows that this ethnic group benefited the most by far from the impact of covid on their working lives.

Questions that saw significant increase in scores includes:

- My employer cares about my well-being (+18.9%)
- I would recommend my family and friends to work for my organisation (+16.4%)
- I am happy with my working environment (+15.6%)

The growth in recommendation comes as no surprise with the general happiness score going up by +13.3%. It is great to see employers taking more care of their employees' well-being, and it is anticipated that this question receives a large percentage increase as of the pandemic. Being happier with their working environment is good news considering most people moved to working from home or their environment changed significantly because of the lockdown measures.
Something to note is that Asian communities in the UK spend a large amount of time with their families, compared to other ethnicities, and this may be why this question has now scored so highly.

What aspects of happiness benefited the least from covid?

- I am happy with the hours I work (+8.6%)
- I have a good relationship with my line manager (+9.9%)
- I rarely feel anxious or depressed about work (+10.1%)

Having a +8.6% increase for you least benefited aspect of Workplace Happiness clearly illustrates the significant impact working from home and covid had upon Asian employees - for the better. Given the considerable improvements seen across all three questions, it would be unjustifiable to criticise or even to suggest further improvements.

‘Prefer not to say’

Inevitably within our data, there are employees who prefer to keep their ethnicity undisclosed. This group performed strongly overall, scoring 69.5%. Their pre-covid score was 71%, however, for this demographic were the only ethnic group to become less happy from pre to post, as they had an overall post score of 67.19% which is a -3.81% drop. Although the decrease is not majorly significant, it does show that not every employee has come happier with their working lives.

A key discussion is these employees’ anxiety and depression feelings. They scored 62.33% pre-covid, which is better than a lot of post covid scores which were aided by managerial care and well-being policies being introduced into the workplace. Development dropped to 61.54% post covid from 65.25%. Where others have improved, this group has sadly suffered.

Furthermore, recommendation of these employees’ workplaces dropped by -9.78% which is hugely alarming for employees, given that this question experienced significant % growth across the other ethnic groups, and is very important to an organisation’s reputation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest overall scoring question</th>
<th>Overall score 2020</th>
<th>Lowest overall scoring question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77.47%</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a good relationship with my line manager.</td>
<td>+0.88% to overall Workplace Happiness score</td>
<td>I rarely feel anxious or depressed about work.</td>
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</table>
Gender

It seems that the covid pandemic has seen men become happier than women at work with a marked increase of over 10% when compared to the period before the pandemic. Men scored an average of 61% which has now jumped to 72%. Women on the other hand went from 63% to 70%. Women have become much happier at work and by sitting in the 70th percentile they clearly have improved their overall happiness score.

One of the highest scoring questions during the pandemic for men is that they do something worthwhile and are trusted to make decisions.

Since lockdown has commenced, they scored highest in; doing something worthwhile, being trusted to make decisions and having a good relationship with their line manager. They also scored highly in feeling proud to work for the organisation and being happy with the hours they work.

However, men continually to score poorly when asked if they feel that they are being developed—this hasn’t changed over lockdown.

One of the highest scoring questions for women is during lockdown has been ‘my employer cares for my well-being’ – with an average of and an 73% increase of 11% compared to before covid. We also saw an increase in women feeling that they are paid fairly, feeling they are treated with respect and that they are being developed.

Management

Could the pandemic have been a turning point for management? There is good news for managers with them feeling more empowered than ever before, scoring 80% compared to a pre-covid average of 71%. Has the new way of working enabled managers to do their jobs better? As people seem to be more available at work than ever and probably working longer hours whilst at home without a disruptive and long commute, have managers benefited? Organising meetings online with a click of a button rather than dragging people into meeting rooms could be an upside managers are enjoying.

When it comes to empowerment and trust, people who don’t manage and millennials score poorly when compared to managers. They also feel that their views are not heard at work as much as their managers.

If we look closer at people’s relationships with their managers there has been an increase in people saying they have a good relationship when compared to the period prior to the pandemic. This has gone from 70% up to 76%. Managers have clearly had an important role to play as we all moved to working from home and it seems that for some this has paid off with people acknowledging the help and support, they’ve been given.
Industries

A wide range of factors will influence how happy people are at work including which type of industry they work in. The hospitality and retail industries have been hit hard by Covid-19 so those working in the industries feel less happy in their job right now.

Overall, we have seen most industries increase their average happiness score however when it comes to hospitality this sector saw a decrease in their score when compared to the period before the pandemic. Hospitality fell a percentile to 58% this year and it comes overall as the least happiest sector to work in this year.

Retail has struggled for some time partly due to the instability in the sector. Even before the pandemic retail has been grappling with a move to online shopping and a struggling high street. Comparing the happiness of the industry we have seen a small decrease in happiness, scoring 64% pre-lockdown and 62% post-lockdown.

Interestingly the healthcare sector saw a significant increase in their average happiness score. People working in healthcare were on average 62% happy at work in Spring 2020 and 6 months later we have seen an increase to 66%. Could the focus on the NHS during the pandemic and the ‘clap for carers’ have made a difference to their happiness despite the increased pressure put upon those who work in healthcare?

Technology saw the biggest increase in happiness going from 73% to 87%. Indeed, this is the happiest industry. We have seen a burst of innovation in the tech sector with a range of new ideas and apps designed to help navigate our new world and way of working. From apps which bring together people to socialise to health tech apps to help us stay safe– we’ve seen increased innovation and an opening up of the sector which has led to people becoming happier in their jobs.
Nothing more points to workplace happiness than staying in the job. Employee retention is a big problem in some industries and we can look to the importance of line managers in helping to retain staff. A staggering 83% of people leave a job because of their line manager.

We have identified key types of people:

**Enthusiastic remainers** are those employees who scored 9-10 in both the reward and relationship question, meaning that they believe they are very fairly paid and they have a very good relationship with their line manager. Pre-covid, 17.7% of the sample population sat in this category. During the pandemic, 23% of people sat in this bracket - a +6% increase compared to before the pandemic. This is a very encouraging sign, suggesting that employees’ perception of fair payment has increased, as well as the relationship between managers and employees strengthening.

**Apathetic remainers** are those employees who scored 6+ in both questions - meaning that they could very well have scored between 9-10 in one of the questions, but they did not for both. Pre-covid, 37% of respondents were categorised as apathetic remainers, the highest percentage of all the pre COVID categories. Together with enthusiastic remainers, over half of the sample population was categorised as ‘happy’ (scoring over 6) equating to 54%. Post COVID, a staggering 49% of employees declared themselves as apathetic remainers - a +11% increase from what was already the highest populated category pre COVID, falling just short of 1 in 2 employees. Together with Enthusiastic remainers, 72% of people during the pandemic are happy with both their pay and their relationship with their manager. This is a +17% increase from before the pandemic and is encouraging news.

**Absolute exiters** are those employees who scored between 2-0 on both the reward & relationship question, meaning that they feel they are very underpaid and they have a very poor relationship with their line manager. Pre-covid, 6.3% of the respondents fell into this category. However we have seen a big drop during the pandemic with a mere 1.9% of people falling into this category, a -4.3% drop.

**Determined exiters** are those that fell below 6 in both questions, scoring between 0-5. Likewise with apathetic remainers, those in this category still can score between 0-2 in a question, but they did not score between 0-2 and for both. Pre-covid, 3% of respondents are determined exiters, meaning that they do not feel fairly paid and they do not have a good relationship with their line manager. Moreover, we can conclude that 19.3% of respondents fall below the happiness level (6) for both reward and relationship. 5.9% of employees during the pandemic are determined exiters; a -7.17% drop which again is nothing but good news for workplace happiness. This allows us to conclude that now only 7.8% of employees are unhappy with BOTH their ‘reward’ (wage) and their relationship with their manager; a -11.5% reduction compared to Pre COVID essentially showing that again, we are becoming happier since the pandemic.
Reluctant remainers are those employees who do not feel fairly paid (0-5), but do have a good relationship with their line manager (6-10). Pre-covid, 18.5% of respondents classified into this division - the second highest percentage of any of the categories. 10.7% of employees during the pandemic are reluctant remainers, a -7.8% decrease. This drop will obviously be due to people feeling like they are now being more fairly paid, which could be for a host of reasons; major ones being no more spending on travel, lunches out and unexpected work related costs.

Soft Exiters are those who feel fairly paid (6-10) but do not have a good relationship with their line manager (0-5). Pre-covid, 7.1% of respondents fell into this category. 9.2% of people during the pandemic are Soft Exiters. Interestingly, this is the only category that has ‘negatively’ seen an increase from Pre COVID; +2.19%. Although minimal, it is showing that for some employees, their relationship with their line manager has actually decreased.

So, what does this mean?

From the ‘reluctants’ and the ‘softs’ we can determine that before the pandemic people are more than 2.5 times likely to be influenced by a good relationship rather than being fairly paid. It is no surprise that those who feel fairly paid also have a good relationship with their line manager, as it is one major barrier of conflict eliminated in the workplace - hence why 54% of employees are happy in both.

What is not good to see is that 1 in 16 employees are extremely unhappy with their wage and have an extremely poor relationship with their line manager - but good to see that 1 in 6 are extremely happy with both.

From the reluctants and the ‘softs’ we can determine that, pre-covid, people are now essentially 1 for 1 on whether payment or relationship is more influential - a big drop from the 2.5 times we saw before the pandemic.

When employees do eventually go back to the office it can be predicted that the happiness rates for both will drop back to previous rates, but more likely drop even further down as people have experienced the joys of flexible working and many will want to continue working from home.

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<tr>
<th>Total Pre vs Post</th>
<th>‘Enthusiastic remainers’</th>
<th>17.75% Vs</th>
<th>23.02%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Apathetic remainers’</td>
<td>37.21% Vs</td>
<td>49.14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Absolute exiters’</td>
<td>6.31% Vs</td>
<td>1.94%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Anarchist index is based upon employees’ likelihood of recommending their workplace to their family and friends and how happy they feel whilst at work. When combining these two factors of Workplace Happiness, we have identified the following types of people:

Apostles are those employees who score between 9-10 for both the Recommendation and Happiness questions, meaning that they are extremely likely to recommend their organisation as well as feeling very happy at work. Pre COVID, 21.8% of employees are identified as Apostles. This is more than 1 in 5 employees. During the pandemic, 29.7% of employees asserted themselves as Apostles. This was a +7.8% increase from pre COVID. Given our data, it would appear that the large quantity of people who were on the fringe of Apostle classification (previously being ‘Indifferent’) have become happier and therefore more likely to recommend.

The Indifferent are those that scored between 6-10 for both questions, meaning that they could very well have scored between 9-10 in one of the questions, but they did not for both. They are considered to be likely to recommend their organisation as well as feeling happy at work. 30.2% of employees were ‘Indifferent’ pre COVID - the highest percentage within the pre time frame. This is a very good sign, as together with the Apostles, 52.1% of employees are classified as being happy for both recommendation and happiness. 41.7% of employees during the pandemic have identified as Indifferent. This is a +11.5% increase from pre COVID, and unsurprisingly remains the most populated category.

Absolute Anarchists are those employees who scored between 0-2 on both the recommendation & happiness question, meaning that they are extremely unlikely to recommend their organisation to their friends or family and they are extremely unhappy at work. The total for this section is 13%. This is quite a significant proportion of the employee sample population who are extremely unhappy and unlikely to recommend and it indicates the strong correlation between the two factors. During the lockdown, 4.86% of employers are absolute anarchists. This is a reduction of -8.6%. Given the increase of happy employees, this is no surprise. It’s very good news to know that less than one 1 in 20 employees are extremely unlikely to recommend and extremely unhappy at work.

Anarchists are those that fell below 6 in both questions, scoring between 0-5, meaning that they are unlikely to recommend their organisation and they are not happy at work. Similarly to the Indifferent, those in this category still can score between 0-2 in a question, but they did not score between 0-2 and for both. 18.8% of the respondents are classed as Anarchists. Together with Absolute Anarchists, we know that 32.31% of employees are unlikely to recommend their organisation and are unhappy at work, just short of a third (1 in [3.09] 4 people). 6.41% of employees during the pandemic are anarchists. This is a 12.39% reduction from pre COVID, again highlighting the positive steps in employers being more likely to recommend and happier with their working lives.
**Martyrs** are employees who are likely to recommend their organisation (6-10), but do not feel happy at work (0-5). **6.7%** of respondents contribute to this category. **7.8%** of employees during the pandemic established themselves as Martyrs. This is a **+1.1%** increase from pre COVID.

**Individualists** are employees who are not likely to recommend their organisation to their friends or family (0-5) but are happy at work (6-10), suggesting that the role they carry out, or the industry they work in is suited for specific personalities, or that the industry or job role does not have a future, or requires too specific set of skill for example. **8.86%** of employees are established individualists. **9.42%** of employees are classified as Individualists during the pandemic. This is a **+0.56%** increase from pre COVID.

So, what does this mean?

It is clear that employee’s recommendation rates have increased, most likely due to an increase in their happiness. This will most likely be because their employer has allowed them to work from home, they are experiencing better work-life balance - more time with children and family, higher disposable incomes as they have dramatically reduced work related expenses and they may have dropped the long commute.

To see a **-8.65%** drop in those employees who scored between 0-2 for both recommendation and happiness at work is good news for everyone. It is a clear indication that employees are becoming happier, but more specifically that the **unhappiest** employees are experiencing a significant improvement in their working lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Pre vs Post</th>
<th>‘Apostles’</th>
<th>‘The Indifferent’</th>
<th>‘Absolute Anarchists’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>21.86%</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.24%</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.51%</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vs</td>
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<td>Vs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>29.71%</strong></td>
<td><strong>41.79%</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.86%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative data

The qualitative data we collected pre and post-covid inevitably differed, as employees around the world were facing new challenges and carrying out different roles. However, there were clear themes across the whole period that remained. When asked “What three changes would improve your workplace happiness”, employees sought an improvement of their pay, development opportunities and more respect within their working environments. These changes remained constant throughout the year.

There was a considerable influx of employees seeking flexible working and improved work life balance since the start of COVID-19. The majority of employees were forced to work from home for the first time, which came with its difficulties - in the months of April and May the request for better resources and communication soared as many were left without their office supplies and were adapting to the wide use of video calls. However, as time went on the focus shifted towards continuing on working from home, as many employees came to terms with the benefits it brings - spending more time with family, a higher disposable income and having flexible hours. These are changes we have seen employees wish for consistently over the last two years and it would appear that it is only accelerating further.

Other key themes are that employees are now seeking included less meetings, as they have had successful and positive experiences with video call platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet. There have been significant improvements with employee to manager relationships, as the rate of employees seeking more care and better communication from their managers dropped considerably since the start of lockdown.
Workplace Happiness Map of the World

Our 2020 data is based on entries from 95 different countries across the world. Of those countries who passed the benchmark for minimum entries, we have ranked the top 10 in the map below.

This year our data has shown that Switzerland employ the happiest workers, scoring 75.2%, with India coming close behind in second place, scoring 73.05%. The UK sits in third place with a score of 69.29%, an improvement of +4.59% from our 2019 findings.

European countries performed well, securing three of the top four rankings. Ireland, however, did not follow suit, coming in at tenth with a score of 54.41%. Although marginal, this is a -0.09%

Top 10 Happiest employees in the world:

1. Switzerland = 75.2%
2. India = 73.05%
3. United Kingdom = 69.29%
4. Spain = 68.3%
5. Australia = 64.53%
6. New Zealand = 63.76%
7. United States of America = 59.69%
8. Canada = 58.16%
9. United Arab Emirates = 54.65%
10. Ireland = 54.41%

Elsewhere in the world, Australia and New Zealand displayed positive signs for the Oceania region scoring 64.53% and 63.76% respectively.

Alternatively, USA employees and their Canadian neighbours scored below 60%, indicating that there is room for improvement, as so with the United Arab Emirates, who sit just above Ireland with 54.65%.
The generation gap - who is happiest at work?

WorkL’s data shows that the older you get, the happier you feel in the workplace. When it comes to young people in work, they don’t feel rewarded or recognised and feel that their views are not heard at work. They are also more likely to suffer anxiety in the workplace.

Although it is middle aged people who are struggling the most at work, admitting that they feel the least developed. They also feel that they have a poor feeling of wellbeing at work and that they don’t have enough information to do their job. Older people (aged 65+) have happier relationships with their line managers, scoring 84% compared to people aged 19-24 who scored just 73%.

Other findings show:

- Middle aged and older people feel they are doing something more worthwhile than younger people (35+ scored 77% vs. 19-34 scored 63%)
- The older you get, the more respected you feel at work (65+ scored 81% vs. 19-24 scored 67%)
- People aged 19-44 are the least likely to feel that their employer cares for their wellbeing (60%) compared to those aged 45+ who scored 68%
- Younger people (19-44) are more likely to feel anxious at work, scoring 60% compared to those aged 45 and over who scored 65% when asked if they rarely feel anxious in the workplace
- People aged 45+ are happiest with their working environment scoring 72% compared to 19-44 who scored 65%
- Middle aged and older people feel they are doing something more worthwhile than younger employees; 35+ scored 77% vs. 19-34 who scored 63%.
Women close the gender gap

Over the lockdown period we have seen men become increasingly happy at work indeed overtaking women slightly. When comparing men and women in the workplace, men aged 19-24 are happier (62%) than women of the same age (59%) with women from this age group feeling least heard at work compared to all other age groups.

Overall, women score 65% when asked if they feel empowered to make decisions compared to men who score 67%.

Women and men score roughly the same when asked they feel their views are heard at work with 63% and 64% respectively.

It’s good to see men and women on par however we should note the unhappiness of young women aged 19-24 who have said their feelings are not heard at work. We would also like to see women’s sense of empowerment increase to that of men’s. With only 2% difference it’s marginal but illustrates that society and business owners must not think the ‘gender gap’ has been fixed. The strive for true equality in pay and happiness in the workplace must continue, particularly in light of the impact the pandemic will have on work.
What role does ethnicity play in Workplace Happiness?

The role of ethnicity in determining workplace happiness is important and we’ve found a number of issues that we should take note of.

Our survey has revealed that black women are the least likely to feel empowered to make a decision in the workforce, scoring the lowest across ethnicities and gender with just 57%.

With the average being 66%, white women score below average with 61%, whereas both white men and black men score above average with 72% and 68% respectively.

Arab women top the scoreboard with 76% when asked if they feel empowered to make decisions at work. Asian men also feel empowered, scoring 71%, just below Hispanic males with 72%.

When it comes to pay white men and women are happier with their remuneration compared to all other ethnicities. This is striking and one which businesses must reflect and act upon.

White men and women also feel more trusted to make decisions and have a better self-reported relationship with their line manager.

Respondents identifying as white are better informed to do their job well. They also feel more positive with regards to whether their views are heard at work and feel more trusted and allowed to make decisions. White respondents are also happier with their working environment. Lastly, white respondents have a better relationship with their line manager and feel more respected at work.

Some key focus points have been highlighted below:

- Asian men report feeling more anxious at work than their female counterparts. They also feel less respected at work
- Black men feel less trusted to make decisions. They also feel less happy at work and enjoy their job less, which may explain why they are less likely to recommend their organisation to a friend or a family member
- White men feel more anxious at work than their female peers but report a greater sense of pride and feel more developed
- When comparing genders across ethnicities, black men are more positive when asked whether they have the resources to do their job well.
- White women feel that information is shared openly with them to a greater extent and feel more positive about whether their views are heard at work. Furthermore, white women feel more that they are treated with respect and feel pride in their job
Overall, white women enjoy their job more compared to their female peers of other ethnicities. Again, this is something businesses and organisations must act upon.

This report praises managers in seeing their happiness ratings soar but black managers report lower satisfaction with both their working environment and work hours. They also do not feel that their views are heard at work, nor do they feel treated with respect.

Lastly, they have a less positive self-reported relationship with their line-manager, unlike white managers who have a significantly better relationship with their line-managers. In addition, and supporting our other data on pay, white managers feel more respected, recognised and fairly remunerated. They also have more agency from the perspective of being heard as well as trusted and allowed to make decisions.

There is clearly much to do when it comes to addressing the differences across ethnicities in terms of pay, happiness, empowerment and respect. We encourage businesses to engage with their employees and develop an open conversation about diversity and happiness at work.

Black men reported positively when asked if they have the right resources to do their job well, but feel the least trusted and enjoy their jobs less than males of other ethnicities.

White women enjoy their jobs more than their female counterparts of other ethnicities.

White employees hold better relationships with their managers, feel they are heard more often, are given more decision making power than those of other ethnicities.
The happiest and unhappiest industries

It’s hard to find an industry that has not been impacted by the covid-19 pandemic. Here’s a round-up of how the industries have fared so far in 2020:

- Hospitality is the least happiest industry and Technology is the happiest. Compared to last year where Technology lagged down the table in 5th place, it seems we’ve seen the Technology sector become a place for wellbeing and happiness at work.

- People working in Architecture and Engineering, Education, Financial Services, Healthcare and the Public Sector are the least empowered.

- People in the Automotive, Retail and Travel Industries feel their views are not heard at work.

- People in Technology, Marketing & Advertising, Fast Moving Consumer Goods and Business & Management Services all feel empowered.

If young people are interested in finding a job in a happy industry, they should look for jobs in Transportation and Logistics, Technology, Not for Profit, Entertainment and Media, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing. The unhappiest industries for the same age group include; Wholesale, Public Sector, Financial Services, Energy, Education, Construction and Building materials, Automotive and Engineering, Architecture and Engineering, Aerospace and Defence.

Millennials (25-34) appear to be happiest working in; Technology, Marketing and Advertising, Business and Management Services. The unhappiest industries for millennials include; Telecommunications and Publishing, Retail, Real Estate, Rental and Leasing, Public Sector, Legal Services, Healthcare, Financial Services, Entertainment and Media, Architecture and Engineering.

Those aged 45+ are happiest working in; Wholesale, Travel and Leisure, Technology, Retail, Not for Profit, Marketing and Advertising, FMCG. The same age group are the unhappiest working in; Transportation and Logistics and Chemicals.

As we look ahead to an unknown future in terms of the pandemic and when life will, if ever, return to normal, it will be interesting to see the impact the pandemic has had on industries such as hospitality and retail. Will our high streets in towns and villages thrive as more people work from home and shop locally? The future is uncertain for hospitality, but as more and more people feel safer eating and drinking outside, will town centres change and encourage pubs and restaurants to serve in the street or town squares?

There’s much to do when it comes to turning around the happiness of these industries. But when it comes to the Tech sector, we have seen it thrive and score in the 80th percentile for happiness. Can tech be our knight in shining armour and help us all adapt to a new way of life?
How happy are the people in charge? An analysis of management happiness

If we focus on how managers have fared during 2020, we have seen the majority of those who are currently homeworking intending to make it a permanent part of their weekly routine.

75% of managers in England currently working from home want to remain working from home in some form, post-pandemic. 59% of managers want to work from home a couple of days a week, making home working a significant feature of the UK’s ‘new normal’.

Since January 2020, overall workplace happiness has increased across all managers, regardless of whether they are working from home or in the workplace. On a scale of 0 to 100, managers reported:

- an overall Happiness score of 72%
- an Empowerment score of 74%
- an Instilling Pride score of 74%
- a Job Satisfaction score of 73%

Among managers who were working from home, those with caring responsibilities were significantly more likely to want to continue working from home. 64% of managers with children expressed a desire to work remotely for a couple of days each week compared to 57% of managers home working without caring responsibilities.

21% of home working managers expressed a desire to return to their place of work. This may be attributable to those who miss the opportunity for workplace social networking and the irregular working hours associated with home working - both of which scored low on the happiness index (52 and 53 out of 100 respectively).
Future of the workplace - Predictions for working in 2021

If we were to predict what 2020 would bring us in terms of working, no-one could have predicted the sudden move to working from home. So, what will next year hold in terms of workplace happiness and what could we prepare for?

- Could we see an increase in demand for homes with a separate office space as people work from home more?
- Workers moving out of cities to more rural locations?
- Could we see regional hot desking become more popular?
- Will a ‘wellbeing hour’ each day become more popular amongst employers?
- Will employers see retention rates increase as unemployment levels rise?
- Will people be inclined to embrace their side hustles in 2021?
- Will returning to the office come with the demand for more flexible working hours?
- Could we see organisations paying to kit out employees home office or working space?
- Could organisations appoint dedicated mental health professionals to support staff?
- Will it be the end of traditional working hours/clocking on and off, just 4-5 core hours each day?
- Will bosses provide work safe subscription boxes being sent to employees each month replacing the round of drinks bought after work?
Six Steps to Workplace Happiness

Recruit and Retain the best.

At Engaging Business we help organisations recruit and retain the best people, improve Workplace Happiness and drive business performance. We do that through offering:

- Engagement surveys to measure, track and improve Workplace Happiness
- Recruitment surveys to find the best-fit candidates for your organisation
- Improved communication with our business messenger apps

What makes our survey different?

- Employees receive personal feedback and areas for development
- Managers receive actions plans to implement improvements
- Results are instantaneous and anonymous
- Industry and global comparative data
- Survey takes a short time to complete
- Excellent value: our costs are typically half of others offering engagement surveys
- Fully customisable: we can add and remove questions, add branding, filters, data from previous surveys and more
How to get happier at work - Top tips from our podcast guests

WorkL has spoken to a number of people across a range of jobs to find out their top tips for getting happier at work and working from home:

- **Ashley James**, “Happy music! Think of the songs that make you happiest and listen to them.”
- **Jamie Laing**, “We need to live before we work rather than work before we live. Have flexible working and manage your own time if possible. Have balance.”
- **Jo Elvin**, “I try to have structure and I work in my dining room but on a Friday I clear it out and it’s my dining room again. Get up at the normal time you would go to work and have breaks which keep your sanity.”

**Hannah Whitton:**

“Don’t worry about things you can’t control”

**Jacqueline De Rojas:**

“Failure is an opportunity to learn something. Having a growth mindset means that anxiety can dissipate.”
Social platforms

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#EBsummit2020

#workplacehappinessreport