

Bridging the Gap

Making young people a vital part of every workforce

Cristiana Orlando, Health Foundation Research Fellow

cristiana.orlando@employment-studies.co.uk

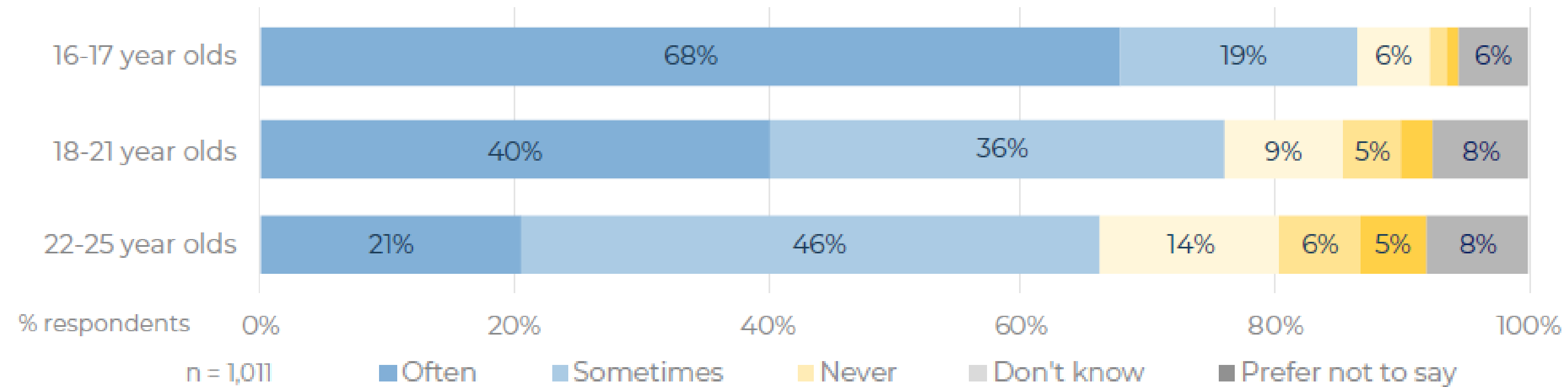
Background to the research

- Part of the Health Foundation's 'Young people future health inquiry'
- Looks at employers' perspective on and experiences of good quality youth employment.
- Complements previous research on young people's views of good work
- Mixed methods research - survey of 1,000 employers across the UK, and interviews with 40 businesses across industries and sizes

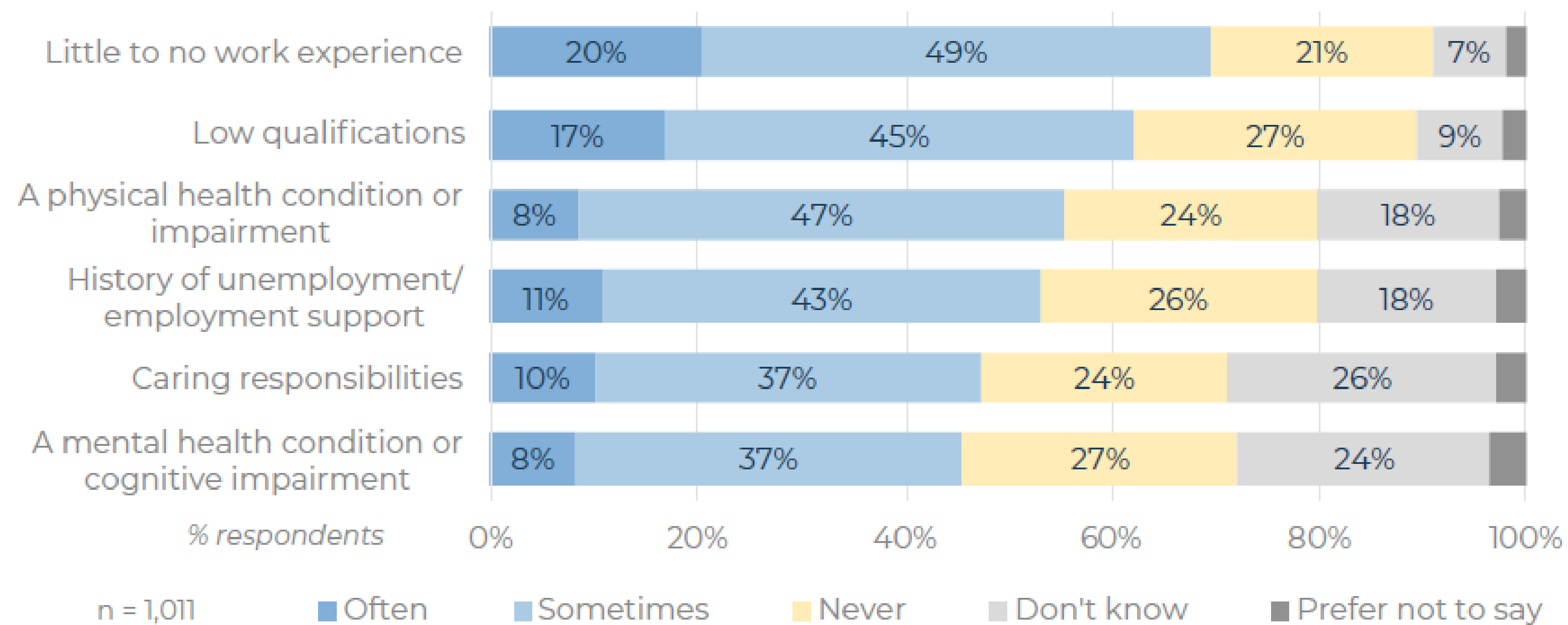


Employers' hiring practices

One in five employers hired no 22 - 25 year olds, two in five did not hire any 18-21 year olds, and over three in five no 16 -17 year olds this past year

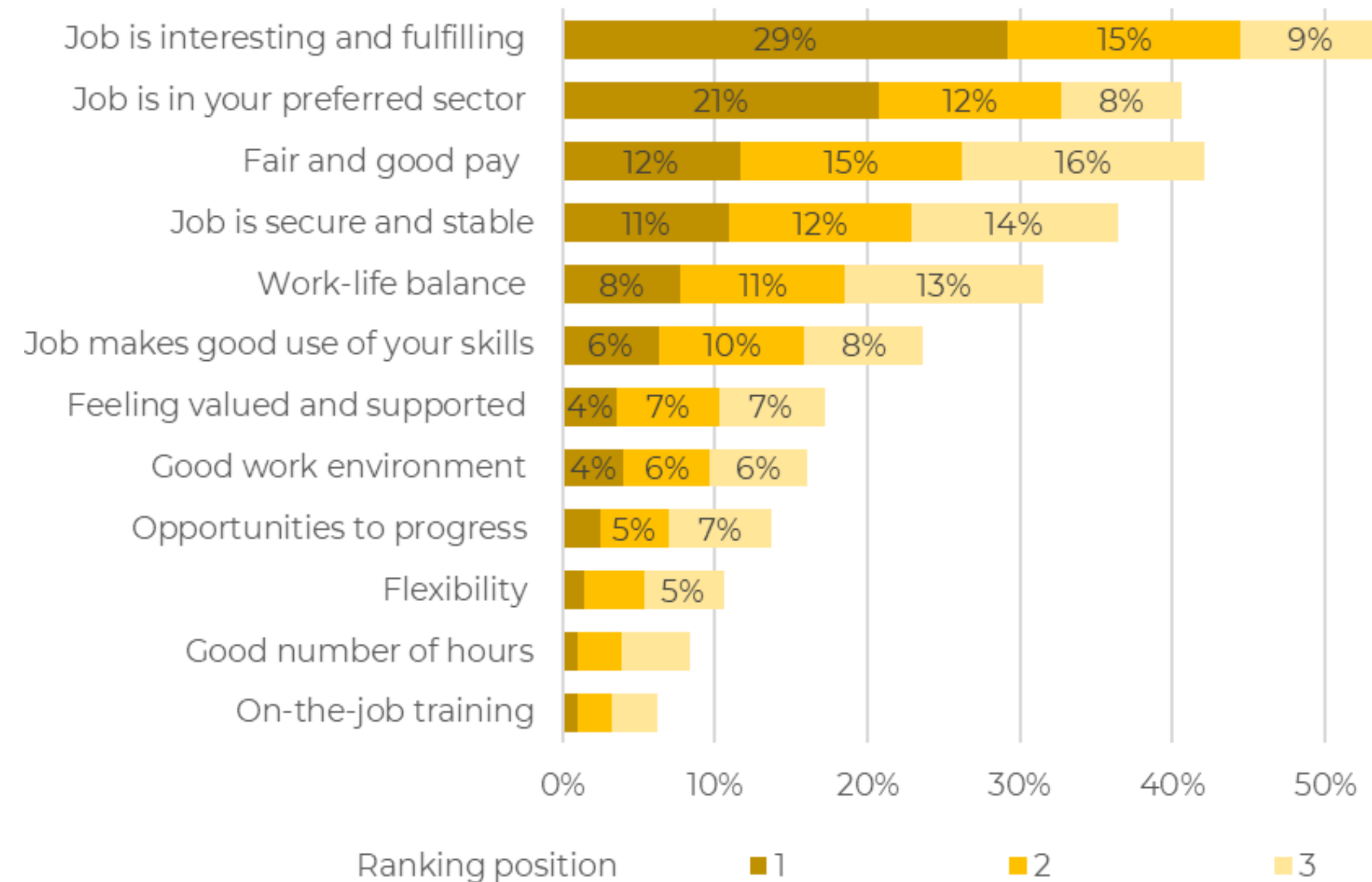


Around a quarter of employers have no experience hiring young people who face disadvantage

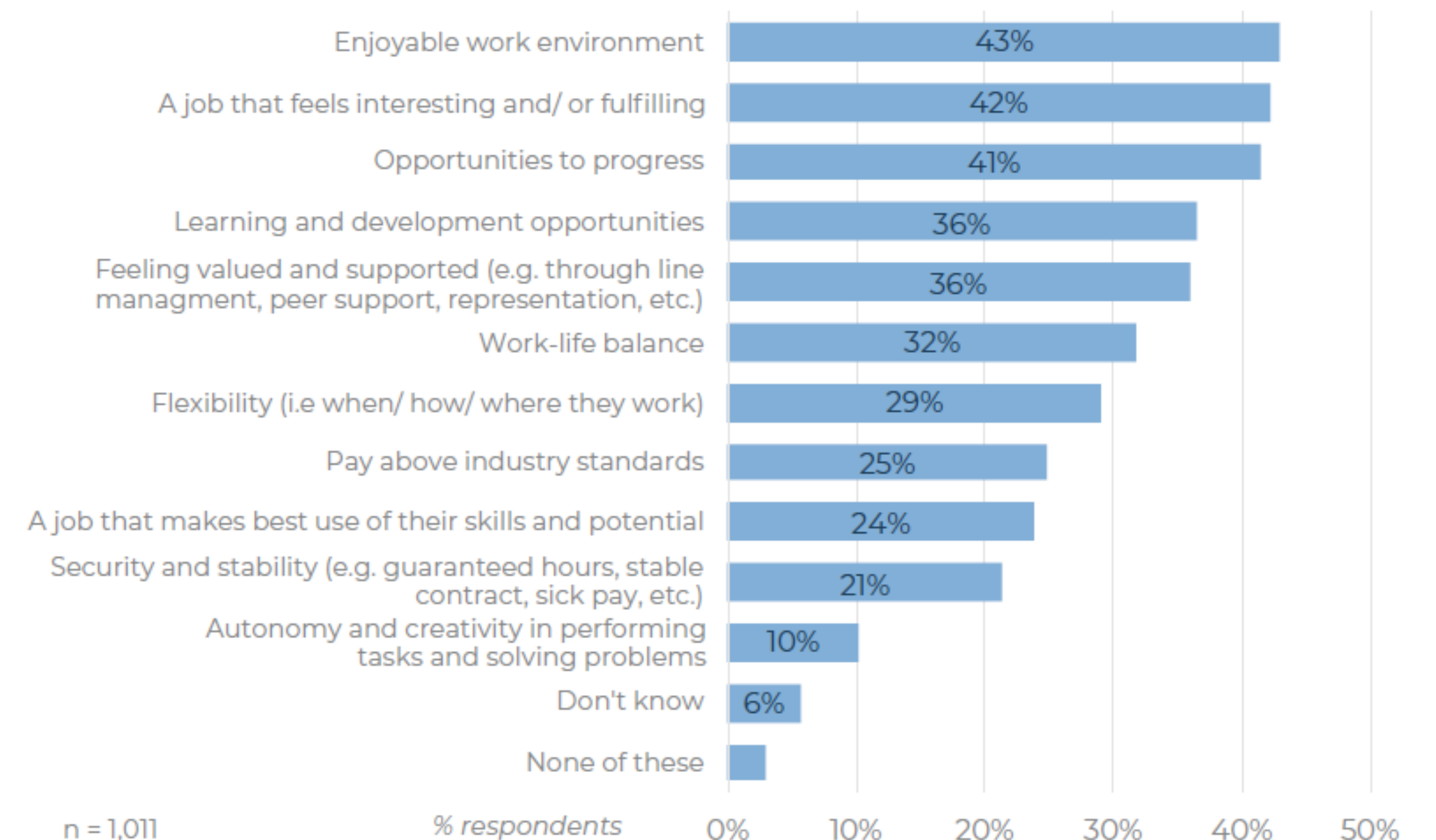


What young people look for in good work

A job which is interesting and fulfilling, is in their preferred sector, and pays fairly are top factors of good work for young people



Only a fourth of employers think pay is key to what young people look for in good work and only a fifth think security is key.



What young people look for in good work



Meaningful work

"What young people want is a clear idea of what is in it for them. And what has changed is that young people are so much more entitled now. You bring them in and if it's not working for them they will tell you and they will go... I think it's because they have a strong sense of their own value."

Marketing Manager, Financial Services, Wales



Training and development

"It's a combination of challenge, making a difference and being given space to be creative. The other aspects are perks, the benefits, the pay – they come in the picture, but not at the initial stage."

Senior IT Manager, IT, England



Progression

"With younger people if they're coming to the workplace and there is a lot of young staff – the transition from being someone new and settling in is a lot easier because there's kids of similar ages, they're peers."

Airport Security Manager, Travel, Scotland



Pay

"You need to ensure managers are good at people managing to bring the quality out. You need to have a good relationship with your manager as a young person, it's huge – there's so much guiding and helping them to become who they are."

Senior Recruitment Consultant, Construction, Scotland



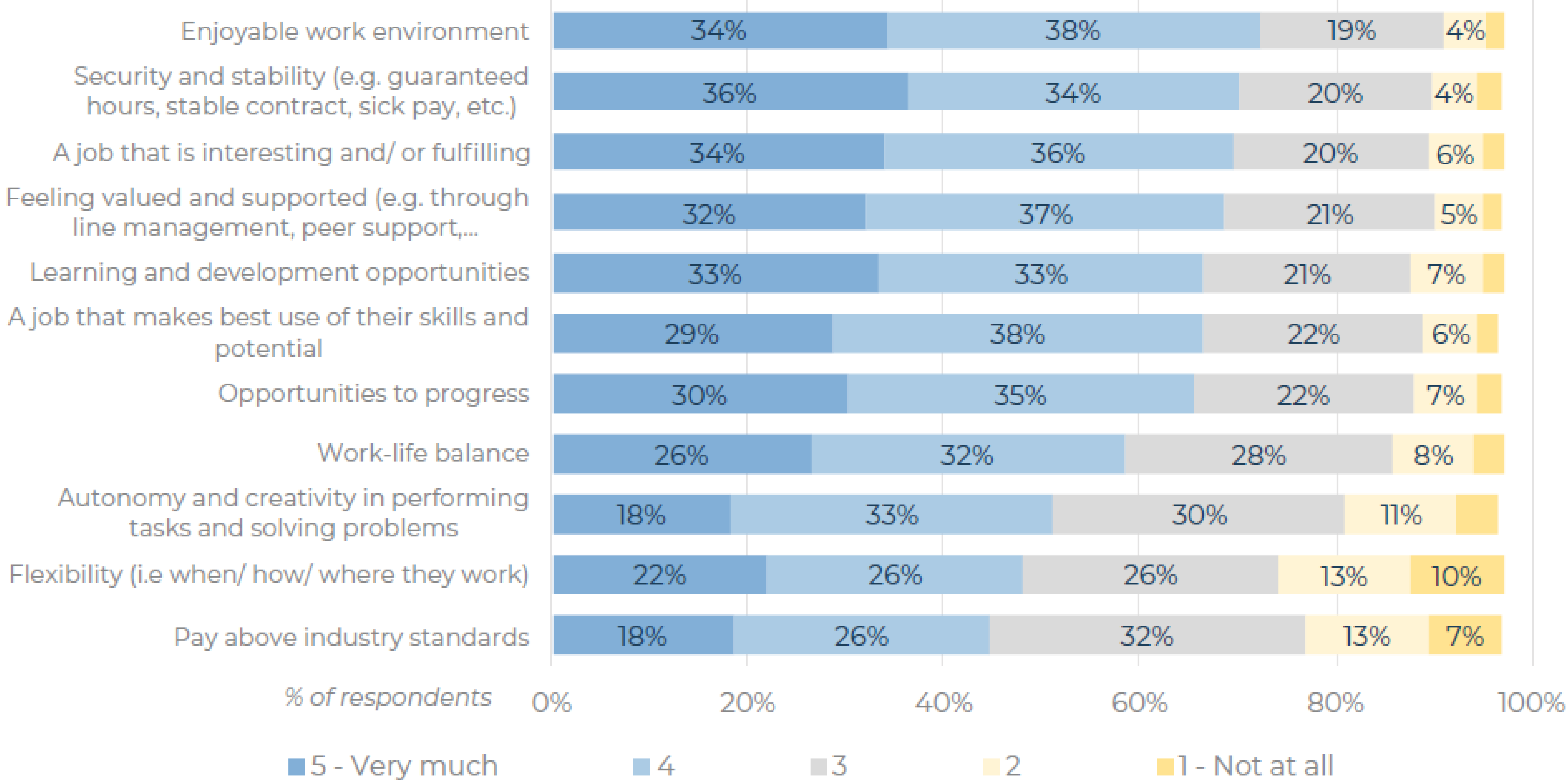
Workplace environment



Management

Employers' offering of good work

The large majority of employers rate themselves highly across most dimensions of good work, except for flexibility (48%) and pay (44%)



Employers' offering of good work



Meaningful work

"Whatever they're doing, they understand that it fulfils a purpose and a need and therefore they are a valuable sort of cog in an overall sort of chain."

Director, Healthcare, Scotland



Training and development

"[Funding training and qualifications] is a risk for the company that is very loss-making if they resign, if they improve their profile they might get a better package elsewhere."

Analyst, Financial Services, England



Pay

"We do offer good salaries, we don't pay below the Living Wage set by the Living Wage Foundation, so the real Living Wage."

HR Officer, Education, England



Workplace environment

"Being remote and distributed - they report they want more socials, they want to connect to the team, socialise out of work. We struggle with it. It's also hard to bridge gap because we hire a lot of older people with families."

HR Manager, Information and Communication, England



Health and wellbeing

"Mental health has become a really big issue and is prevalent all the time, our organisation has put lots of investment in MH first aid. Held lots of MH awareness months and drop ins."

Head of Customer Service, Charity, England



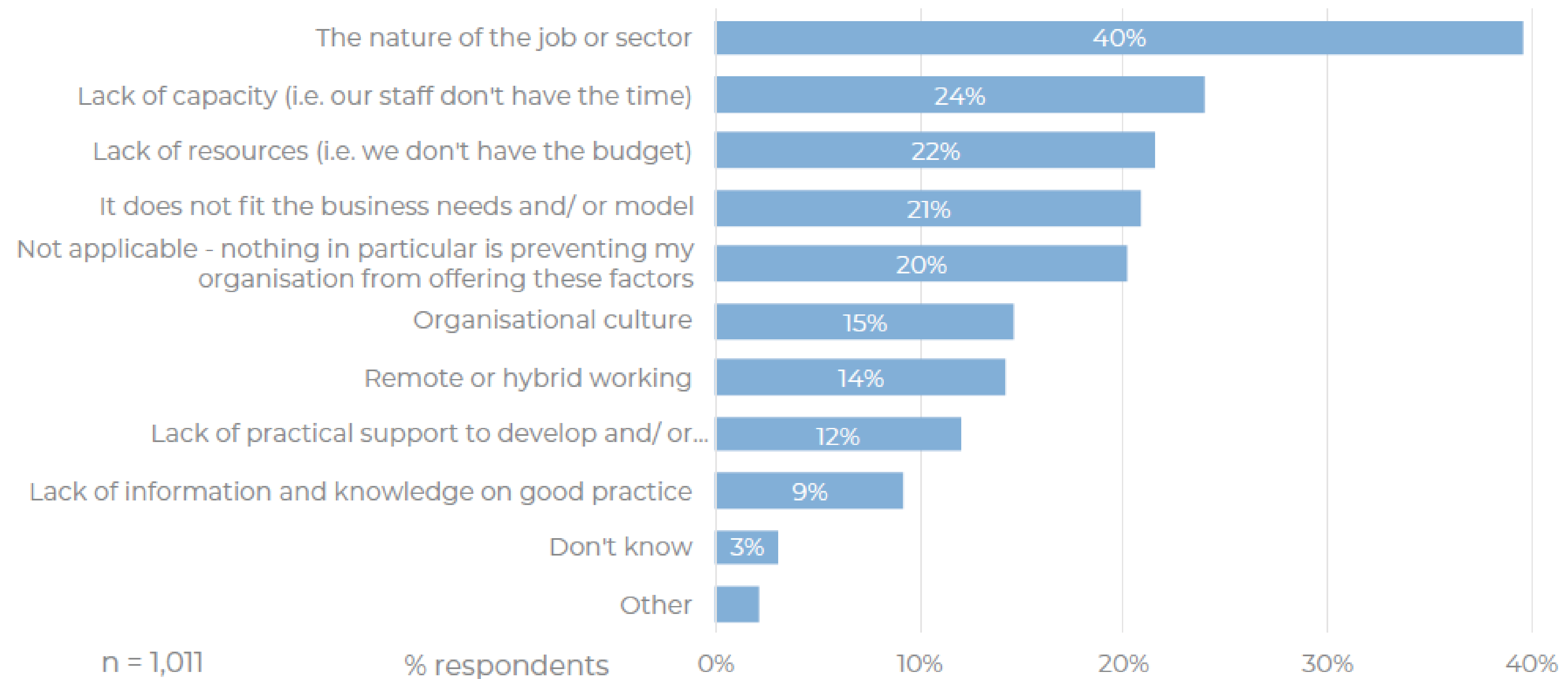
Voice and recognition



Autonomy and creativity

Barriers to offering young people good work

Two in five employers (40%) feel that the nature of the job or sector in which they work act as a barrier to offering young people some elements of good work



Barriers to accessing good work

Employers think key barriers preventing young people from accessing good work are relevant skills (42%), work experience (36%), and confidence (34%)

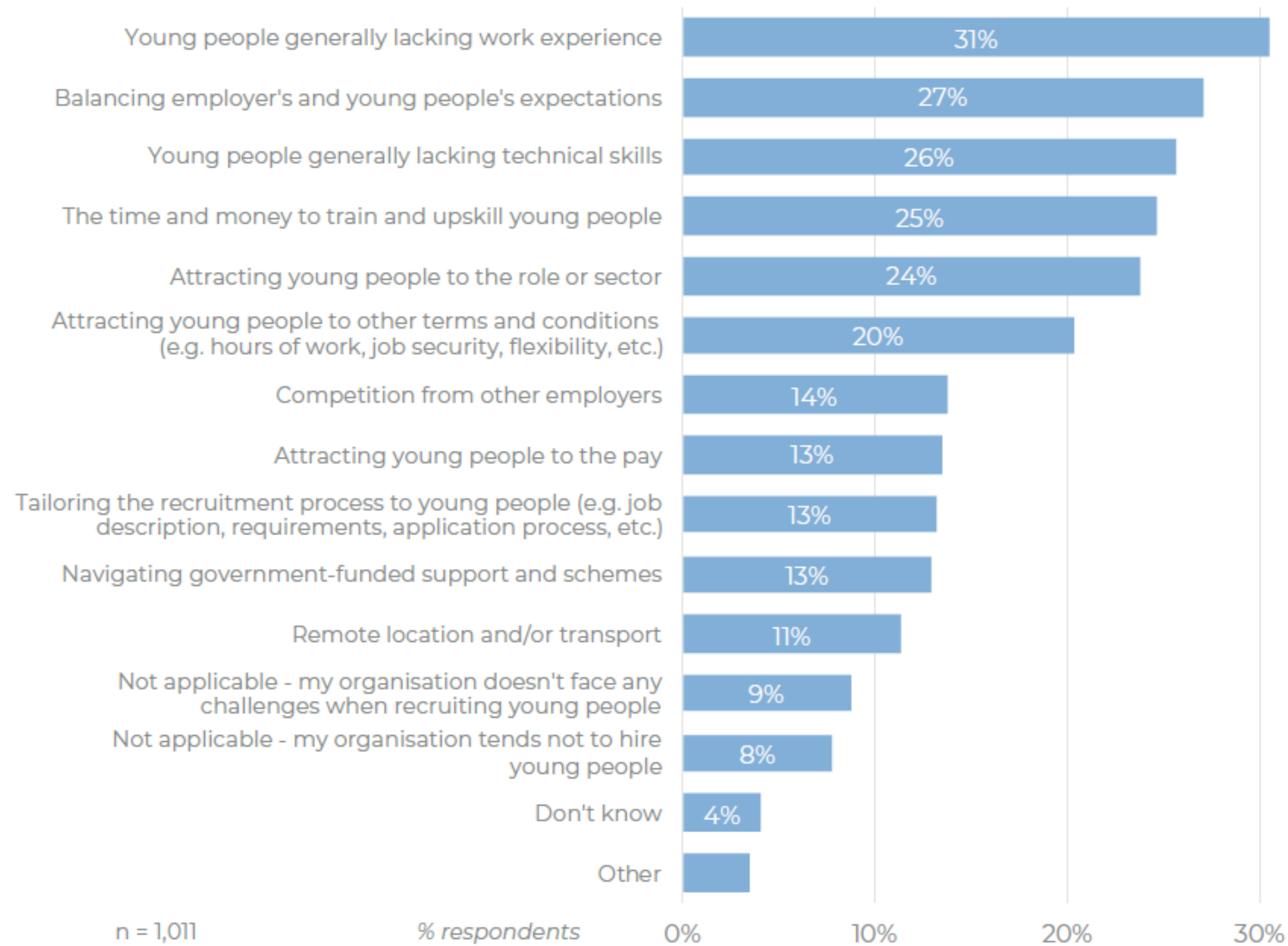


“The challenge is there are so many of them and so little opportunities – I know in general we look for people with experience. If I get 250 applications, I’ll prioritise those with experience, it’s preferable over having to train from the ground up. They need to make their application stand out. Because we have such a saturated environment, where we have so many applications for that one role.”
Project manager, Healthcare, England

“Companies don’t want to take a gamble at times – when recruiting, I was looking at CVs and was happy to look at those without a job, but I don’t think companies are willing to give young people a chance. When you look at a job advert you need experience for anything, even entry level role. You get quite downtrodden by the fact you need experience – you can’t get experience if someone doesn’t give you a chance.”
Team Leader, Financial Services, Wales

Challenges in recruitment

Three in ten employers (31%) say young people's lack of work experience is a key struggle they face when recruiting



"If someone applied from Plymouth then we would absolutely consider them but there is an inherent bias because we have met a bunch of people at the 'Ivy League design schools' before they've even applied because we've been in their lecture halls and end of year shows."

Design Manager, Consultancy, England

"I spent two years working for a premier league football club, they used to have 4,000 staff on match day, 3,000 were young people from the local area and they were very difficult to work with... If you asked me, were there great people in there? It was probably one in 10. It was probably down to their background, what were their parents like, their schooling, their teachers. But they were difficult ones."

Hospitality Manager, HE, England

"We had 12 interviews lined up for an apprenticeship – and only three people turned up. There's an ethic element, a generational divide, it's hard. We ring and text, again and again and they don't get back to us."

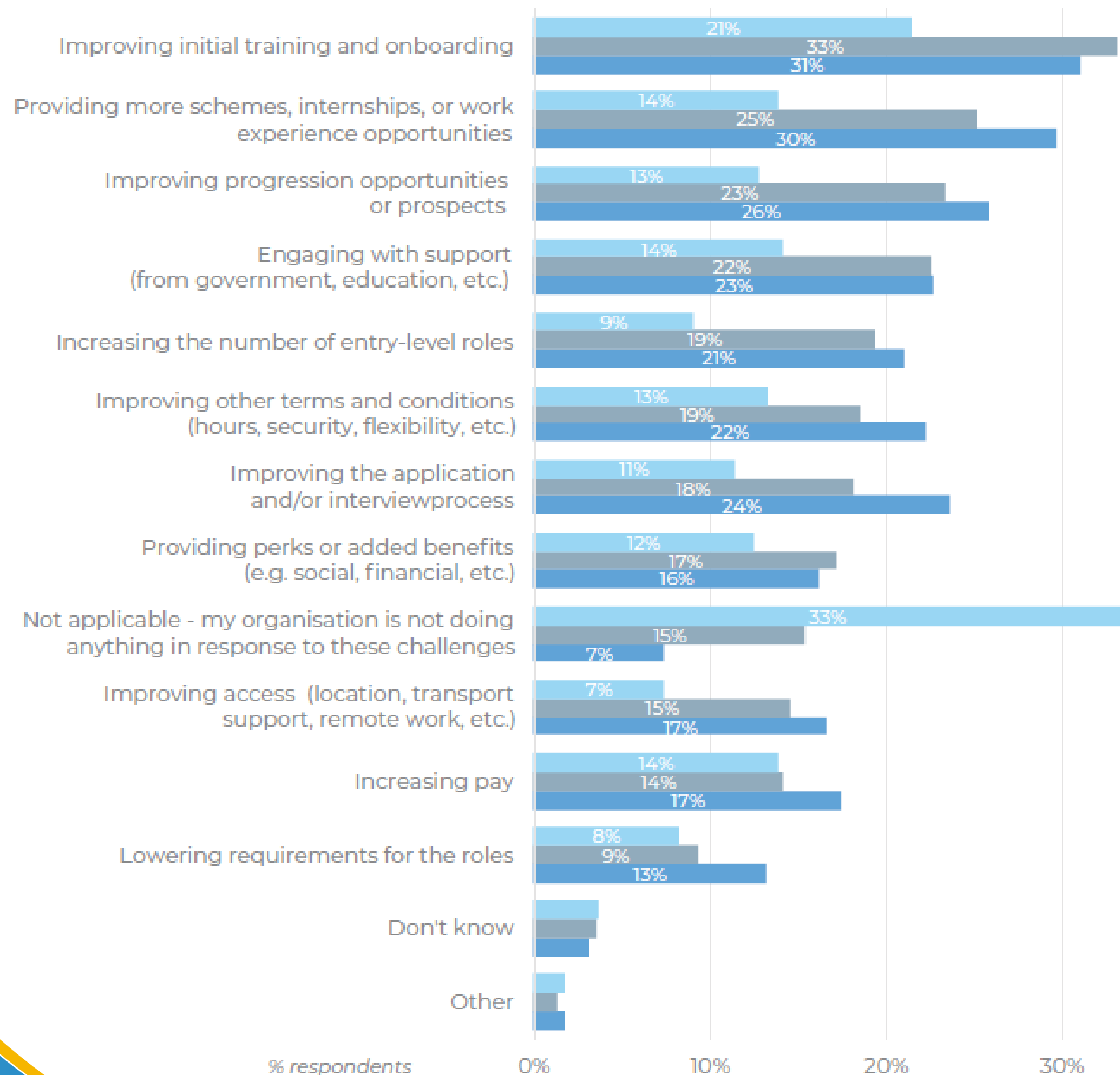
HR/Office Manager, Engineering, England

"They're asking for a lot of money even when they graduated a year or two ago, they want top dollar – they're really pushing on salary which is hard to justify to higher managers."

Senior Recruiting Partner, Information and Communication, England

Responses to challenges in recruitment

Employers in small organisations are more likely to not be doing anything to address recruitment challenges (33%) compared to those in medium (15%) and large organisations (7%)



"We have panel and we keep it diverse. I am a lot for recruiting young talents – but other colleagues quite adamant that they want people with a lot of experience, and it's about changing the mindset around those old school views."
Project manager, Healthcare, England

"I would love to work more closely with universities and schools – how we can increase social mobility and diversity as well and people from under-represented backgrounds can see themselves working in our organisations. I would like to see more mentorship schemes – have mentees come together and share experiences."
Operations Manager, Information and Communication, England

"Internally we have to do unconscious bias training, we anonymise applications, to create more fair process."
Operations Manager, Information and communication, England

Experience of managing young employees



Eagerness to work and learn

"They require a lot of support where they've not previously worked in a corporate environment – even writing a professional email, you have to teach them about the etiquette of emails. Exposing them to hierarchy, knowing your place is important."

Project Manager, Healthcare, England



Needing support to adjust to work

"But young people itch to get ahead, without sometimes understanding the day to day – you've got to understand the basics, build solid foundations to build credibility for whatever else you want to do. People who go way ahead and look for more challenge. Attrition higher if not apprentice – because they want to be promoted and want more money."

Management Consultant, Financial Services, Scotland



Managing expectations

"As an employer it's a bit difficult [dealing with mental health issues] – it makes things more difficult for us - how do we cater for this? I'm not a day care. But everything they bring up is very valid, the world of work needs to shift to them. They make a lot of sense but at the same time there's a lot of dealing with emotions. It's difficult – we're relatively lean on resources and we're on growth mode so do not have as many resources."

Senior Recruiting Partner, Information and Communication, England



Health and Wellbeing

Good practice when managing young people



Additional support

“When people come in, they’re not really prepared for the world of work. Most of them have university degrees. But that doesn’t prepare you to come in the workplace. There’s lot of handholding.”

Senior Recruiting Partner, Information and communication, England



Regular communication

“Biggest enabler is line managers having regular one to ones with the individuals – help individuals avert going down a spiral.”

Head of Organisational Resilience, Healthcare, England



Supporting development

“Something that worked well – giving them creativity and freedom around using tools, using social media, for marketing. Leading on projects in their areas of interest – these are things we have no knowledge on, they can lead on it and can come back and teach us. I’m learning while you’re learning great two-way street.”

Operations Manager, Information and communication, England



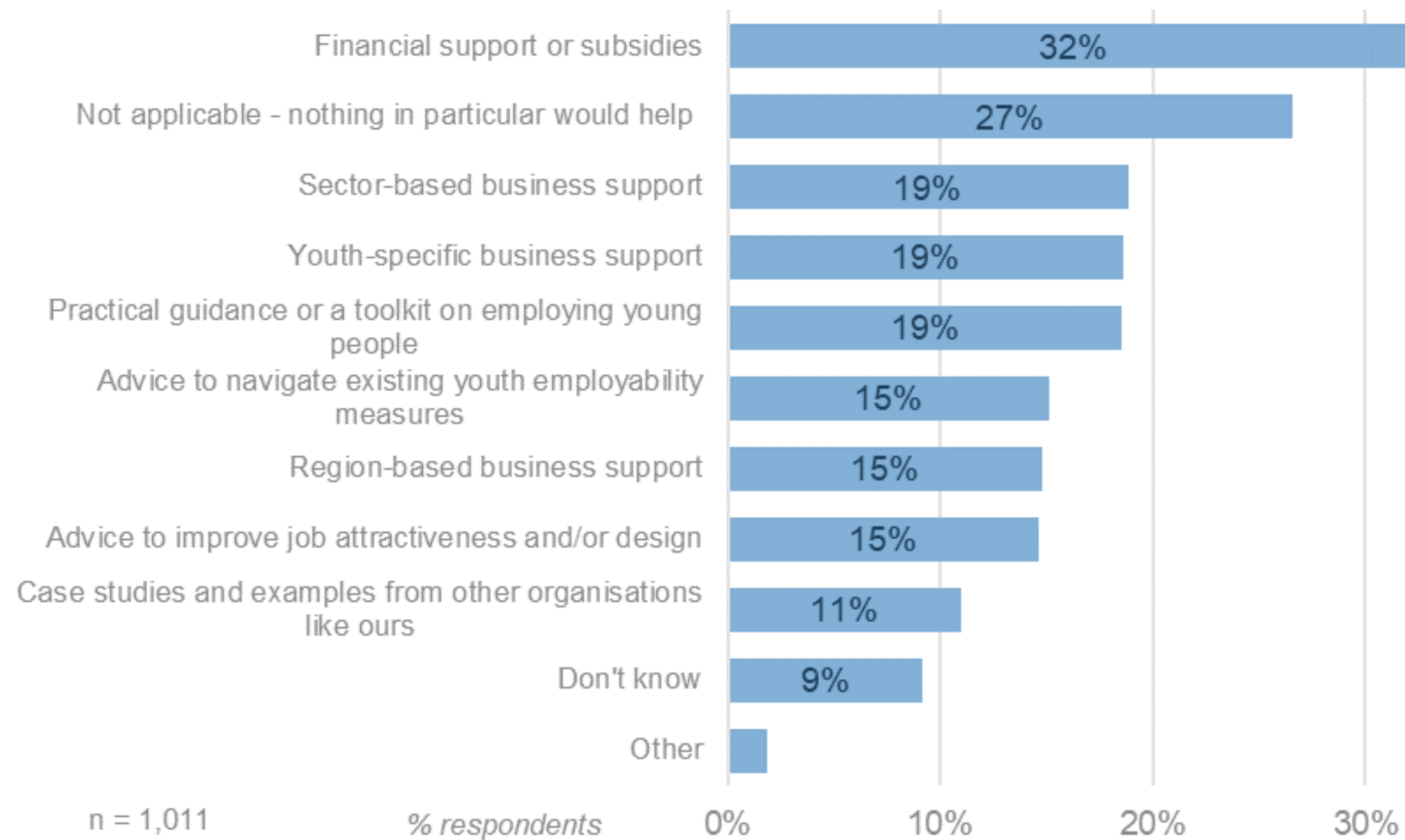
Young managers

“There’s not that much to get out of bed for at the moment for a lot of young people, a lot of prospects are quite bleak with the environment, the financial crisis and austerity, and there’s been a little bit of exposure of terrible working practices, but it still goes on. But we are being told that we’re lazy and been told that we can’t be bothered. And I just think that’s such an inaccurate representation of what we’re like.”

24-year-old Deputy Restaurant Manager, Hospitality, Wales

Support needs and policy asks

A third of employers would like financial support or subsidies (32%) to help them provide good work to young people, but over a quarter think there is no support they would find helpful (27%)



"Russell Group universities are looking to prep people for further study rather than going into the workplace – there is lots to be done around managing people's expectations."

HR Manager, HE, England

"More needs to be done to convince employers to use apprenticeships a lot more to provide structure and support around career development. Still probably the traditional view that apprenticeships are for younger people even though they no longer are now... if it was a government scheme then yes there would be more legitimacy to it, difficult to do it as an organisation without seeming you're giving preferential treatment to one group over other."

HR Manager, HE, England

"There are a lot of disabilities now – we need to accommodate them, but as an individual I might not know how to do that. Now we have a lot of young people who have something – it can be really wide ranging, on paper we need to accommodate everybody but in reality, we are not doing it – we don't have the knowledge and experience. And some situations are so difficult, it's impossible no matter how willing you are."

Finance Manager, Pharmaceuticals, Scotland

Recommendations



Promoting a shift in mindset and practice among employers

Incentivising employers to hire young people

Building better pathways from education to work

Strengthening the role of intermediary organisations

Leveraging the potential of local development.



Addressing discrepancies in culture, perceptions, and expectations

Improving standards of pay for young people

Strengthening young people's voice and involving them in decision-making

Developing strategies for the employment of young people

Supporting youth-friendly business cultures.



Supporting employers to implement good practice

Learning from good practice

Improving mental health literacy

Supporting inclusive practices

Investing in health and wellbeing support.



Scaling up support for small organisations

Supporting small organisations to access existing support

Establishing local 'Employer Hubs'

Reforming and increasing financial support for small organisations.

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