

## Action needed to improve job quality for Northern workers

2 years ago



New research from the CIPD suggests the quality of jobs in the North of England needs to be improved, following a negative shift in how employees think about work, and the impact on their health. The research also highlights the growing discontent among public sector workers, who are unhappy with their pay and heavy workload.

In response, the CIPD – the professional body for HR and people development – is urging employers and policy makers to improve the quality of jobs for Northern Workers.

The CIPD Northern Good Work Index report surveyed over 950 workers – across Yorkshire and Humber, the North East and North West – on seven key dimensions of good work: pay and benefits, contracts, work-life balance, job design and nature of work, relationships at work, employee voice, and health and wellbeing.

The findings revealed that workers in the North today are less enthused about work, compared to 2019. Just under half (46%) of employees in the region view their job as transactional – simply a way of making money – this year, up from 36% in 2019, and just 27% of workers say they feel full of energy at work.

Workers also remain wary of the effects of work on their health, with only 23% of employees in the North saying work impacts their physical health positively and around one-third (34%) of respondents feel their work affects their mental health positively.

### Public sector vs private sector

The CIPD's findings also demonstrate the stark gap between the quality of working life in the public sector

versus the private sector. The UK-wide data reveals that public sector workers are less satisfied with pay than private sector workers.

Employees in the North's public sector are also more likely to say they have an unmanageable workload, and that work has a negative impact on their wellbeing.

Specifically:

- Over a third (35%) of public sector workers in the North said work has a negative effect on their mental health, compared to 25% of private sector employees.
- 43% of public sector workers in the North have a workload they consider too great, compared to 31% of private sector employees in the region.

In response, the CIPD is calling on employers in the North, and the Government, to renew their focus on providing good work and improving job quality, citing three recommendations to support better working lives in the North:

- A renewed policy focus on 'good work' and improving job quality.
- Narrowing the gap between the quality of working life in the public sector versus the private sector to address current challenges and attract future workers.
- Work must become more flexible and more attractive if there is to be a sustainable solution to major labour supply challenges.

The report concludes with a number of practical recommendations for employers to improve job quality, including:

- Improve access to flexible working options and financial wellbeing support.
- Identify and manage skills mismatches to engage, satisfy and develop staff.

Daphne Doody-Green, Head of CIPD in Northern England said: "This research demonstrates that workers – and particularly those in the public sector – are becoming increasingly dissatisfied and disengaged with work. Employers need to assess the quality of their jobs and consider implementing changes that will create a happier, healthier and more productive workforce.

"To help, we are working with the Northern metro mayors – in Greater Manchester, Liverpool, North of Tyne and West Yorkshire – to support and develop their Good Work Charters, which provide a framework for employers, and access to resources, to help improve their employment practices."

"Work can, and should be, a force for good, and while not all jobs can be transformed; significant improvements in areas such as flexibility, development and people management can play a huge part in improving job quality."

[Read the report](#)

[Story from CIPD website](#)