

TELEWORKING AND TRUST: KEY FINDINGS FROM AN OECD SURVEY OF EMPLOYEES IN SEVEN COUNTRIES

Among the various short-term responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, teleworking appears to have evolved into a more permanent change in working practices. However, much remains unknown about its impact on employment relationships within organisations. A new OECD policy brief, based on a survey run in collaboration with LiveTiles, helps fill this gap by presenting new evidence on:

1. workplace teleworking policies,
2. trust between managers and teleworkers,
3. the interaction between policies and trust,
4. and the impact on employees' teleworking experiences.

The OECD/LiveTiles online survey was run in the third quarter of 2022 in collaboration with LiveTiles which collected **1'514 responses from employees in Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.**

The final sample, after removing respondents who failed an attention test or rushed through the survey, is made up of 805 fully and properly completed surveys. Contrary to previous research the survey had a precise focus on teleworking i.e. work in a physical location that is different from the default place of work and using information and communications technology to connect to the people, tools and resources of the employer organization, and on hybrid work which we define as a particular mode of teleworking that combines telework some of the time, and working physically the rest of the time in the employer's premises.



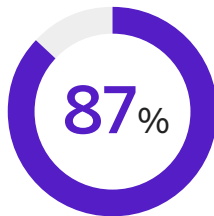
Responses were collected from employees teleworking all the time, some of the time, or not at all.

The goal of the survey was not to quantify or to paint a representative picture of the hybrid workforce, but rather to dig deeper into the experiences of a particular group known to telework frequently. Indeed, bias in online data collection is common and the respondents to the survey were more likely to be managers and highly educated. While these may not be representative of the wider population of employees, they form a group particularly likely to engage in telework and so their views and experiences are highly relevant from a policy perspective.

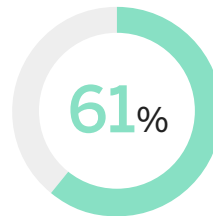


- **Telework is more common when firms have teleworking policies in place**

For example:



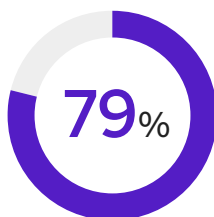
of employees in firms which consult their employees on teleworking do telework



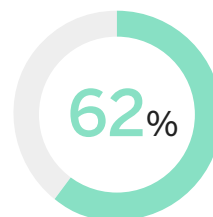
of employees in firms who have no policy of consulting workers engage in telework

- **In turn, teleworkers report better work experiences when they are covered by workplace policies, such as the right to disconnect or being consulted on telework.** Average levels of satisfaction with one's job, work-life balance, mental and physical health are all higher among teleworkers covered by such policies.

For example:



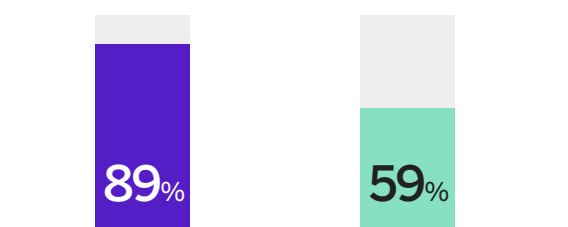
of teleworkers who are consulted about teleworking are satisfied with their work-life balance



of employees who are not consulted are satisfied with their work-life balance.

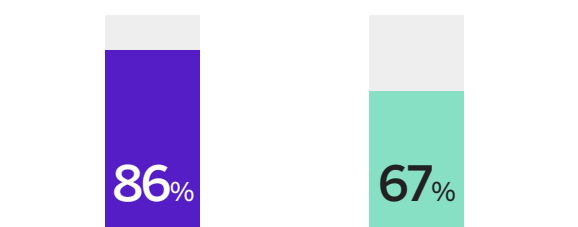
- **Workplace teleworking policies are also associated with higher levels of trust between teleworkers and their managers**

Teleworkers who are most likely to report they feel workspace trust:



of teleworkers consulted about teleworking report that they feel workspace trust

of those not consulted do so



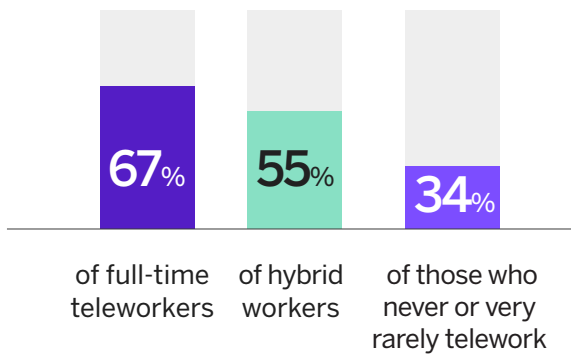
of those who have a right to disconnect report that they feel workplace trust

of those who do not have a right to disconnect do so

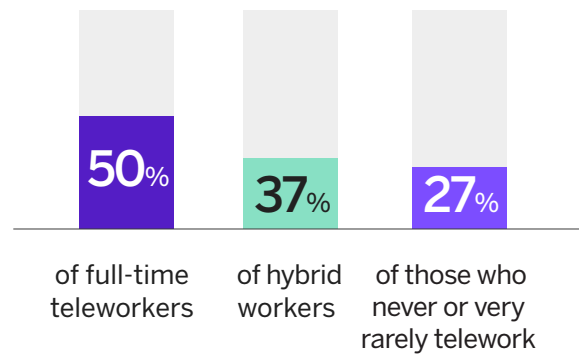


- **Teleworking policies, workplace trust and teleworking take-up appear to be mutually reinforcing**

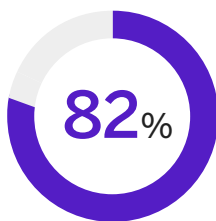
Who says that teleworking fosters workplace trust:



Who reports that there's a great deal of trust in their firm:

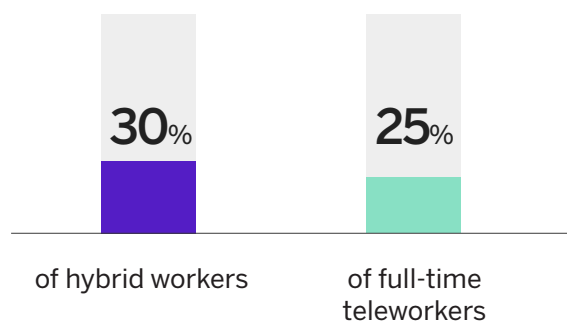


- **Employees highly value the ability to telework**



of those who are currently teleworking said that they were prepared to quit their jobs should they no longer be allowed to telework.

- **Despite these positive associations, many workplaces still lack teleworking policies**



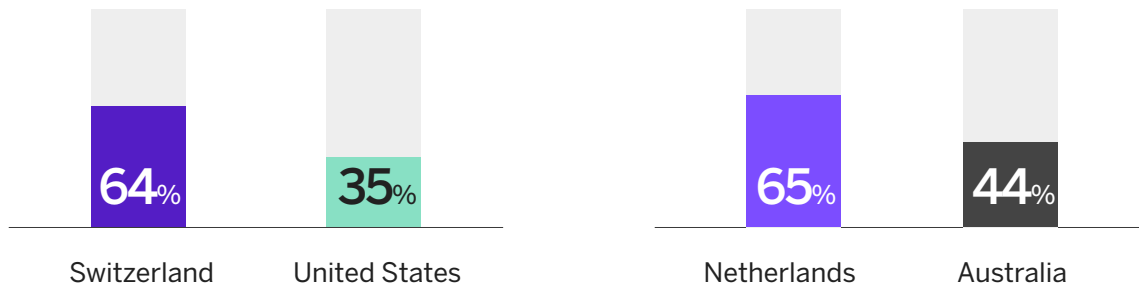
say that there is no worker consultation on teleworking in place in their firm



- **Despite these positive associations, many workplaces still lack teleworking policies (cont). Coverage also varies by country:**

Share of employees who say they have a right to disconnect

Share of employees who say they receive financial support for relevant IT equipment



- **While women tend to work from home more often than men, women who telework report lower levels of policy coverage than men**

Can telework from abroad

Have a right to disconnect



- **Policy makers could play a role in promoting the adoption of workplace teleworking policies.** Possible avenues include: dedicated legislation at the national level to ensure that teleworkers have a right to disconnect, or that employers bear part (or all) of the IT costs associated with teleworking; collective bargaining to help establish or clarify teleworking policy frameworks; and workers' consultation on the subject to raise awareness of existing national level policies. In addition, the public sector could set an example by mainstreaming teleworking policies for public sector workers.

