

A scenic photograph of the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland. The image shows steep, layered cliffs dropping down to a dark blue ocean. Waves are crashing against the base of the cliffs, creating white foam. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. In the distance, a small lighthouse is visible on the cliff top. A large, semi-transparent white arc is overlaid on the right side of the image, partially covering the cliffs and the ocean.

Tourism Careers Research 2025 Update: Summary Report

September 2025



What is this research about?

Background

- Recruitment surveys with businesses and workers in autumn 2021 confirmed recruitment struggles for employers and some unwillingness to work in tourism & hospitality
- This led to Fáilte Ireland working with businesses and government to try and make working in the sector more attractive
- Fáilte Ireland's Labour Market Surveys of Employers and Workers have been repeated annually since 2021

Method

- Using updated previous questionnaires, the surveys were set up online by SRI, an **independent research agency**
- For the **Employers' Survey**, Fáilte Ireland distributed survey link to its trade database, and after de-duping by **business, 569 qualified for survey** (i.e. they employ staff other than proprietors) – vs. 438 in 2024
- Meanwhile, **Jobs.ie hosted and promoted the Workers' Survey between** 29th June and 16th July, resulting in **597 qualifying responses** (last year was 673) – respondents have had to have worked in tourism & hospitality

Section 1

Employers' Survey Recruitment & Retention

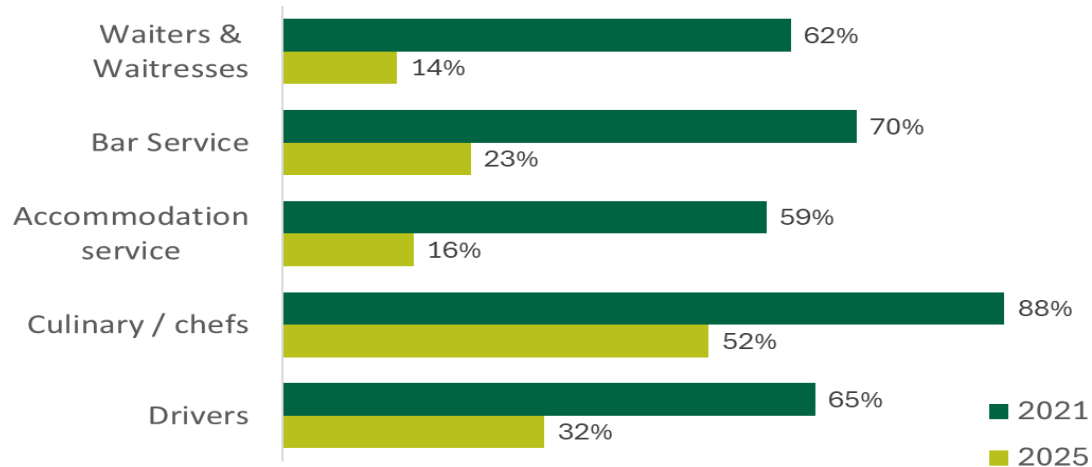


Difficult positions to recruit

Similar results to last year

- Following a few years of good progress, year-on-year change has now plateaued – % answering 'considerable difficulty' is similar to 2024 in every position
- But it is worth recalling how much progress has been made since 2021
- Key position of managers / supervisors has come down from 55% in 2021 to 29% in 2025

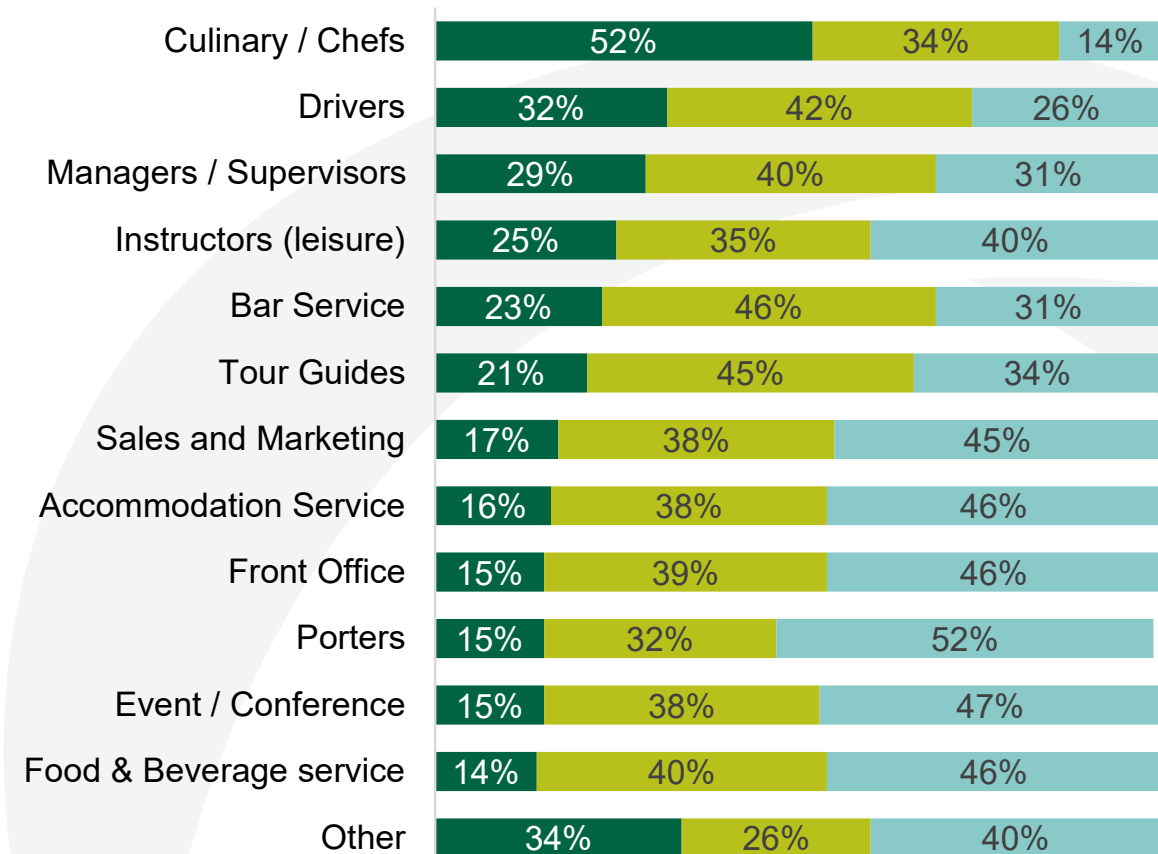
Top 5 largest changes in result since 2021 - % reporting considerable difficulty



Base: variable

Q6 "Do you currently have any difficulty in recruiting the following types of staff?"

■ Considerable difficulty ■ Some difficulty ■ Little or no difficulty



Q6 positions have been routed from answers to Q5

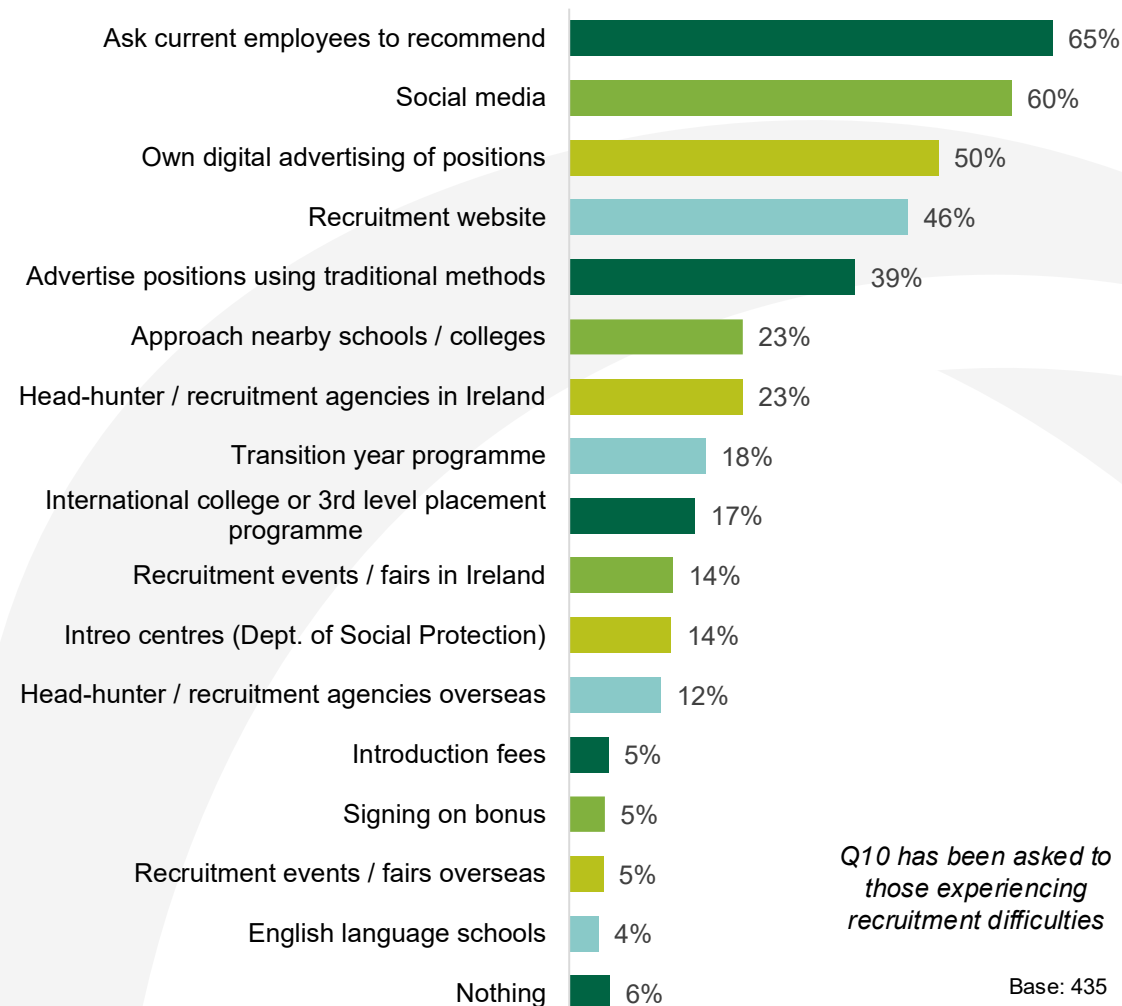
Base: variable

Addressing recruitment challenges

Very similar answers to last year

- Order of answers remains very similar to last year and with similar proportions – this perhaps reflects that the level of difficulty in filling positions is similar to last year
- Top two changes in answers are:
 - Own digital advertising (+7%pts)
 - Ask current employees (+6%pts)
- Among those using social media, three apps/sites dominate: Facebook (172 responses), Instagram (130 responses) and LinkedIn (97 responses); no other site has been specified by more than a few respondents

Q10 "What steps, if any, have you taken to address recruitment challenges?" (prompted)



Q10 has been asked to those experiencing recruitment difficulties

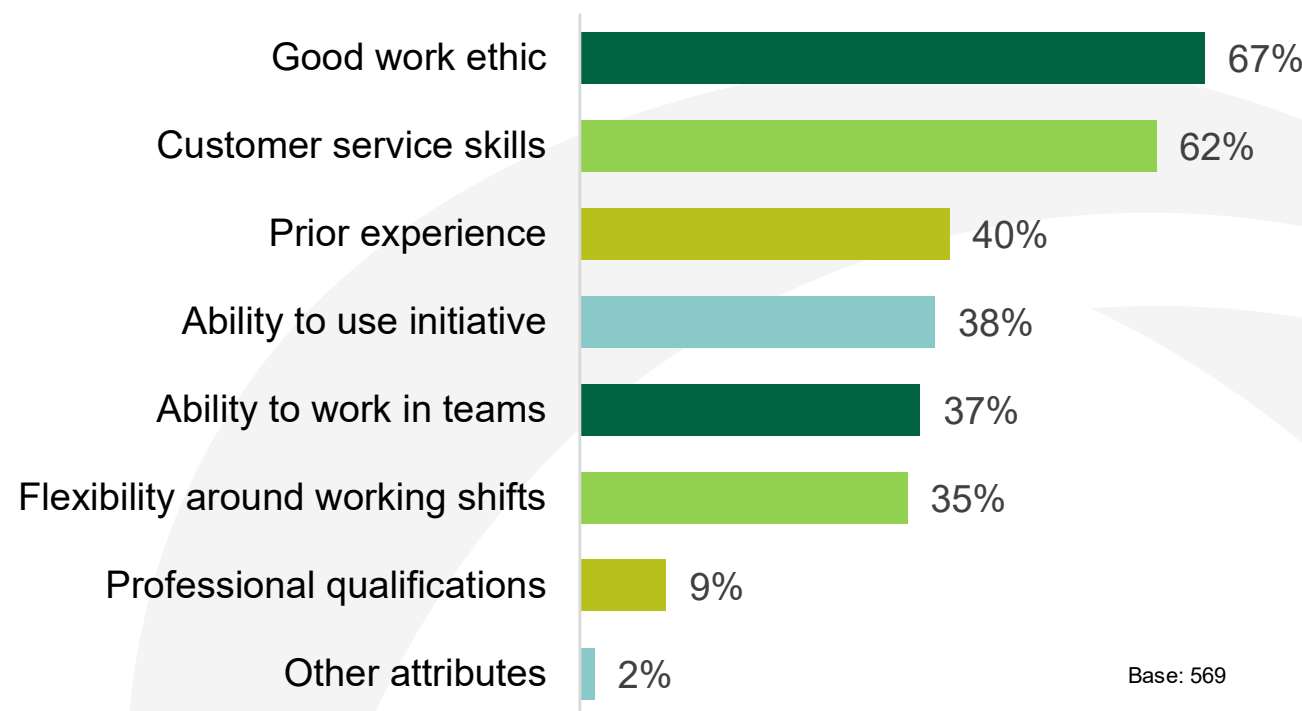
Base: 435

Attributes sought (1)

It's not about qualifications

- **Employers first and foremost seek workers who do the basics well** – have a strong work ethic and give customers a good service
- A number of employers comment that these basics are particularly hard to find among young people because work culture has changed and there is no longer the same willingness to work hard
- The skills are not necessarily difficult – employers seek workers who act like they care about the job and the customers
- Of all the answer options, 'professional qualifications' scores well behind everything else and is particularly low for accommodation providers (2%) compared to non-accommodation (13%); all sizes of business rate it low

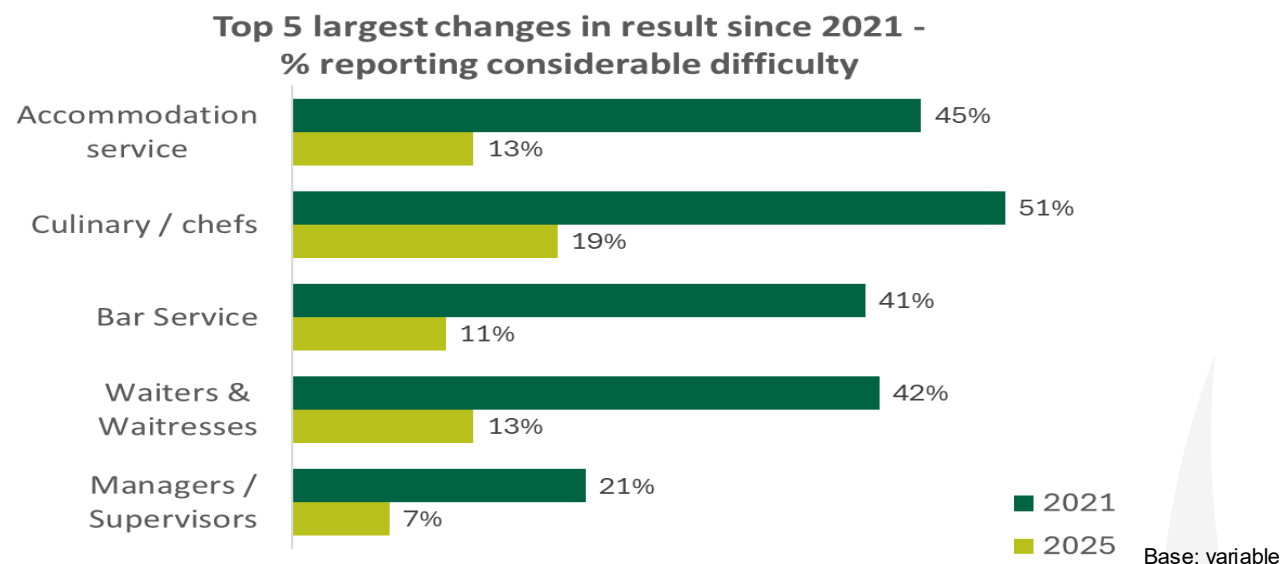
Q11 "What are your top three attributes when recruiting new employees?" (*prompted*)



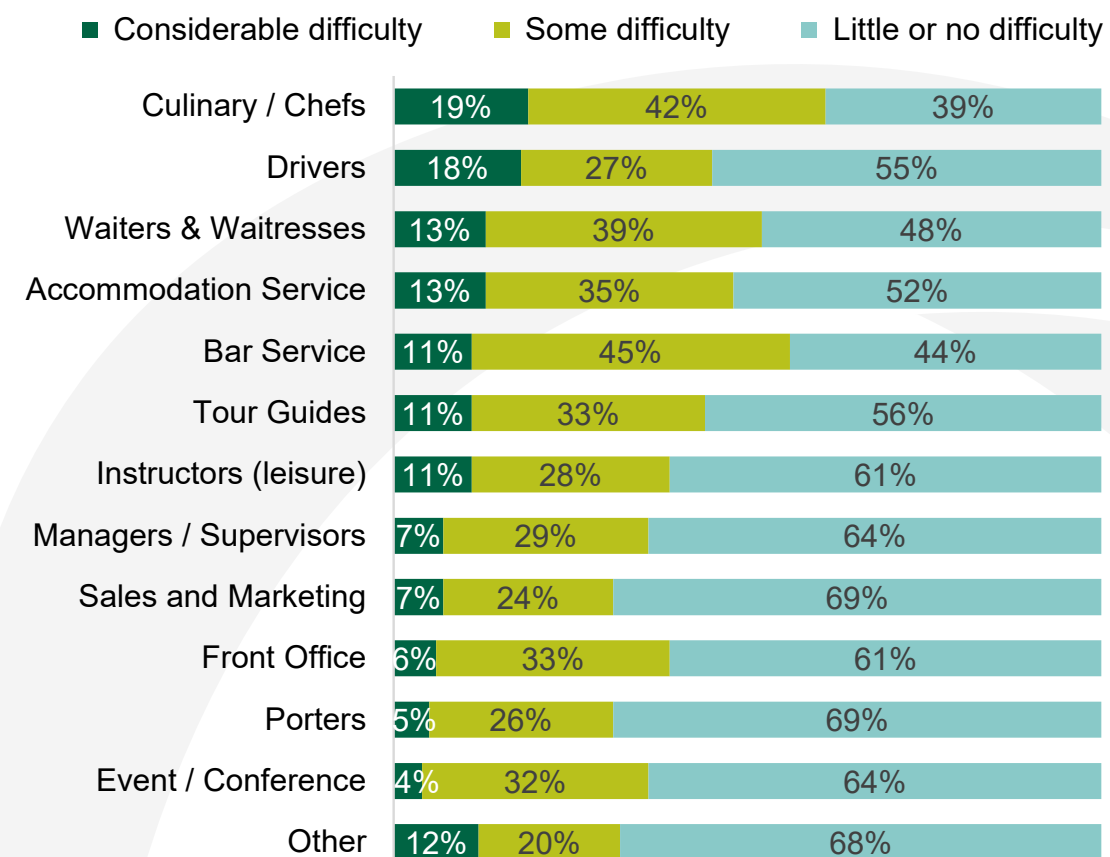
Retention difficulties (1)

Some changes in 'little or no difficulty'

- Significant shifts seen in 'little or no difficulty' for chefs (39%; up from 27%) and porters (69%; up from 47%)
- Otherwise changes in results by position do not differ significantly from last year
- But, again, it is worth recalling how much progress has been made with retention challenges since 2021**



Q12 "Do you currently have any difficulty in retaining the following types of staff?"



Q12 positions have been routed from answers to Q5 Base: variable

Addressing retention challenges

Decline in some measures being taken

- **Retention difficulties have remained about the same since last year but some measures to tackle difficulties have become less common, most notably:**
 - Less unsocial hours (-12%pts)
 - Upskilling and training (-12%pts)
 - Assistance with further / higher education (-11%pts)
- Only measure to increase significantly is performance management systems (+7%pts)
- **Some say they want to reward employees but increased operating costs mean they struggle to afford to do so**
- Proportion giving pay rises does not differ significantly when comparing Dublin vs outside Dublin
- Upskilling and training remains more common among accommodation operators (46%) compared to non-accommodation (34%)

Q13 "What steps, if any, have you taken to address these retention challenges?" (prompted)



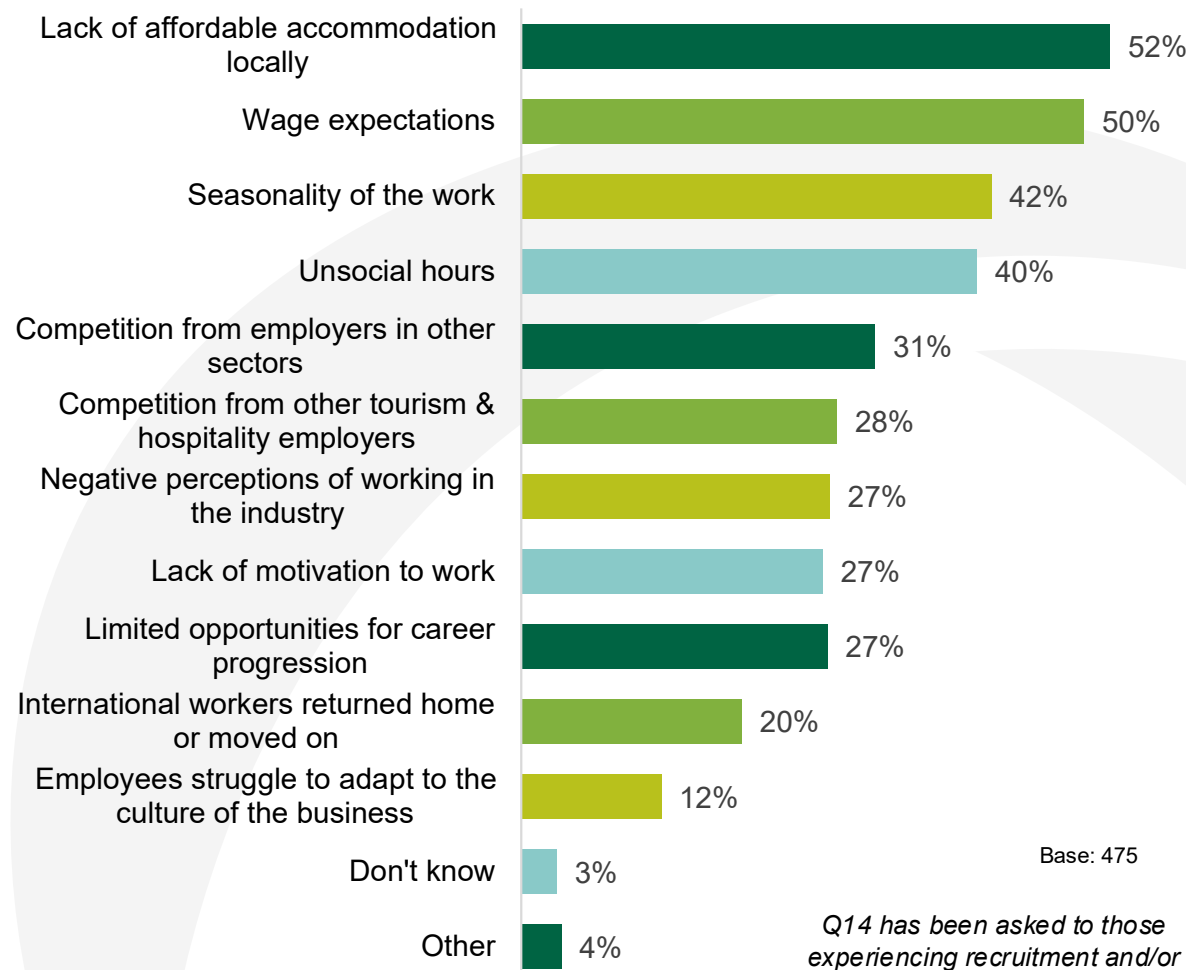
Q13 has been asked to those experiencing retention challenges

Reasons for challenges (1)

Similar results to last year

- **There are no significant differences in answers from last year**
- 'Lack of affordable accommodation locally' is highest in Dublin (where 61% have said this) and in the accommodation sector (65%) – but it still ranks highest among businesses outside Dublin too (50% have cited it)
- 'International workers returned home' is higher in Dublin (30%) than outside Dublin (17%)
- 'Seasonality of the work' is a significant issue outside Dublin (45% have said this)
- Hotels / guesthouses have stated around 5 reasons on average (compared to an average of 3 for other sectors)
- Particular issues for hotels / guesthouses are 'lack of affordable accommodation locally' (76%), 'unsocial hours' (64%) and 'wage expectations' (62%)

Q14 "What are the reasons for your recruitment and/or retention challenges?" (prompted)



Commitment to staff development

Willing, but with reservations

- This is a new question this year
- **Majority of employers are willing to assist with education or training, but they are hindered** by lack of resources and concerns that employees they have invested in will leave*
- Proportion 'strongly agreeing' to assisting is highest among large businesses (41%), hotels / guesthouses (40%) and Dublin businesses (35%)
- Proportion 'strongly agreeing' to lack of resources is highest among small businesses (45%), activity providers (39%), food & drink businesses (38%) and businesses outside Dublin (33%)
- Proportion 'strongly agreeing' to concerns about employees leaving is highest in food & drink sector (50%) and outside Dublin (31%)

Q18 "To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?"



* There is a natural bias towards the 'somewhat agree' option in response to a prompted statement in surveys. The results show that there are valid concerns in the industry which need to be addressed, but at the same time the results need not be as concerning as the percents may suggest at face value.

Section 2

Respondent Background – Workers

Jobs.ie



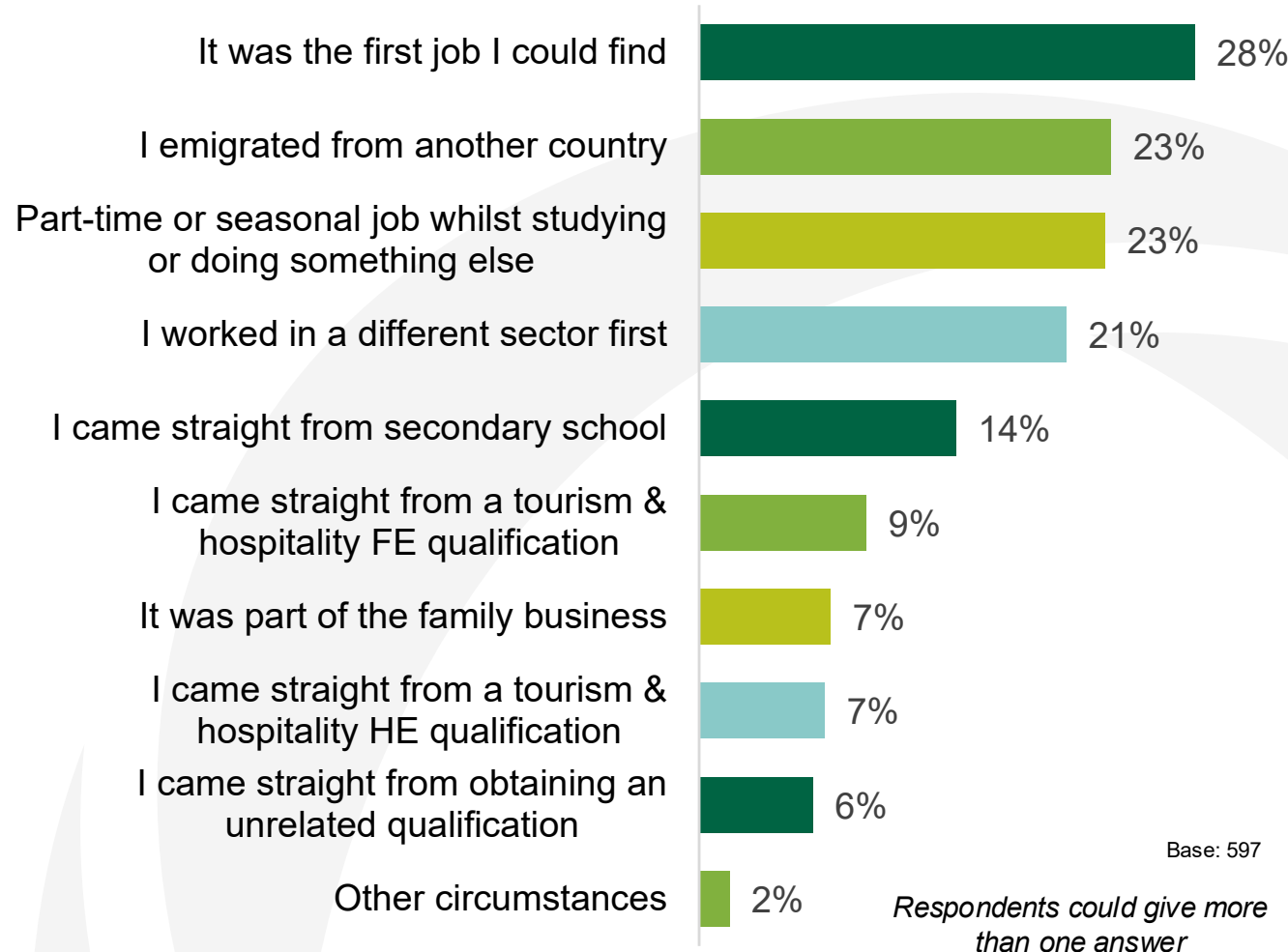
Routes into the Sector



A number of different entry routes

- Workers enter the industry through a wide variety of routes, with no single route standing out as particularly more significant than others
- 9% say they came from obtaining a tourism & hospitality **FE qualification** – this proportion is higher among chefs (20%) than non-chefs (8%) and among non-Irish nationals (12%) compared to Irish nationals (5%)
- 7% say they came from obtaining a tourism & hospitality **HE qualification** – this proportion is higher among chefs (12%) than non-chefs (6%) and among managers & supervisors (15%)
- Results do not differ significantly between those who currently work in tourism & hospitality and those who do not

Q6 "How did you come to take your first tourism & hospitality job?"

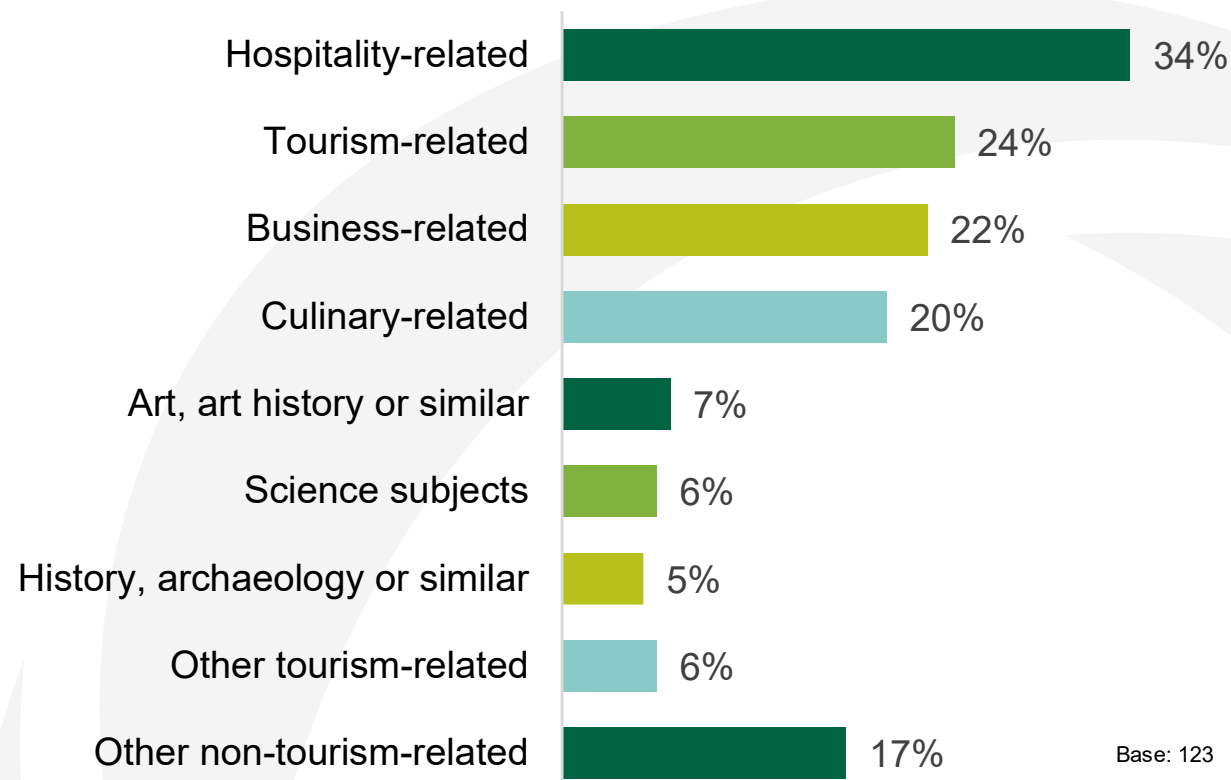


Qualifications

Qualifications are often relevant, but not always

- If workers enter the sector straight from obtaining a qualification then it is most likely to be related to hospitality or tourism – results are similar to last year
- 19 out of 27 chefs in the sample entering straight from obtaining a qualification do so with a culinary-related one
- 11 out of 20 managers & supervisors in the sample entering straight from obtaining a qualification do so with a hospitality-related one
- A third (33%) of those currently not working in the sector have a business qualification, compared to 14% of those currently in the sector
- In terms of who has a tourism or hospitality related qualification, this does not vary significantly by whether they currently work in the sector or not

Q7 "In which subject area did you obtain a qualification(s) before taking your first tourism & hospitality job?"



Q7 has been asked to those entering the sector straight from obtaining a qualification (Q6). Respondents could give more than one answer.

Section 3

Motivation to Work in The Sector – Workers

Jobs.ie



Reasons to Work in the Sector



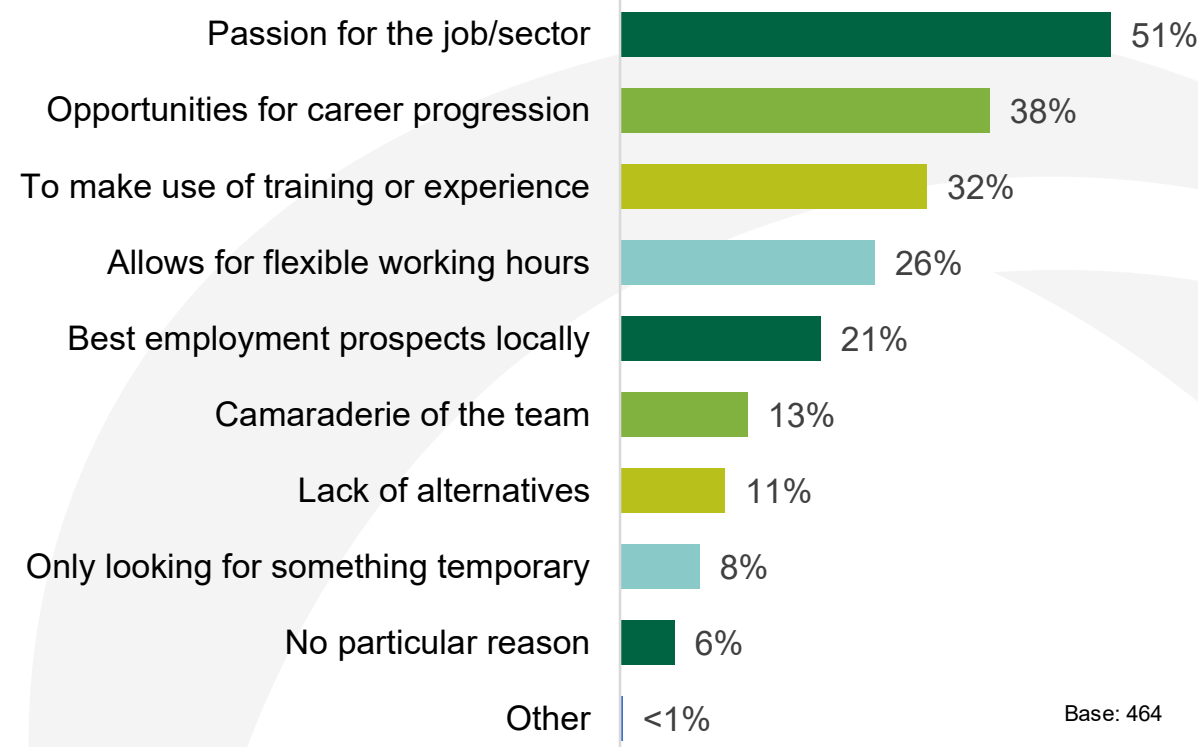
Increase in passion

- **‘Passion for the job/sector’ (51%) is up from 44% and is higher among chefs (72%) and managers & supervisors (63%)**
- Other answers remain similar to last year
- **‘Opportunities for career progression’** – more so among non-Irish (45%) than Irish respondents (19%), but no significant differences between chefs vs non-chefs or managers vs non-managers
- **‘Flexible hours’** – answers no longer differ between men and women

% answering 'opportunities for career progression'



Q9 "Which of these reasons influenced your decision to work / seek work in tourism & hospitality?"



Q9 has been asked to those who are either:

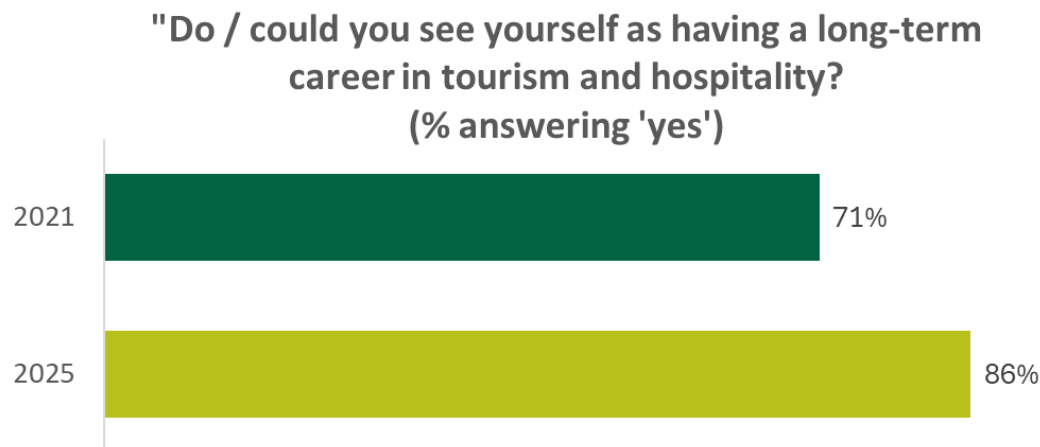
- Working in tourism & hospitality and not looking to leave it
- Not working in tourism & hospitality but looking to join it

Tourism as a Long-Term Career

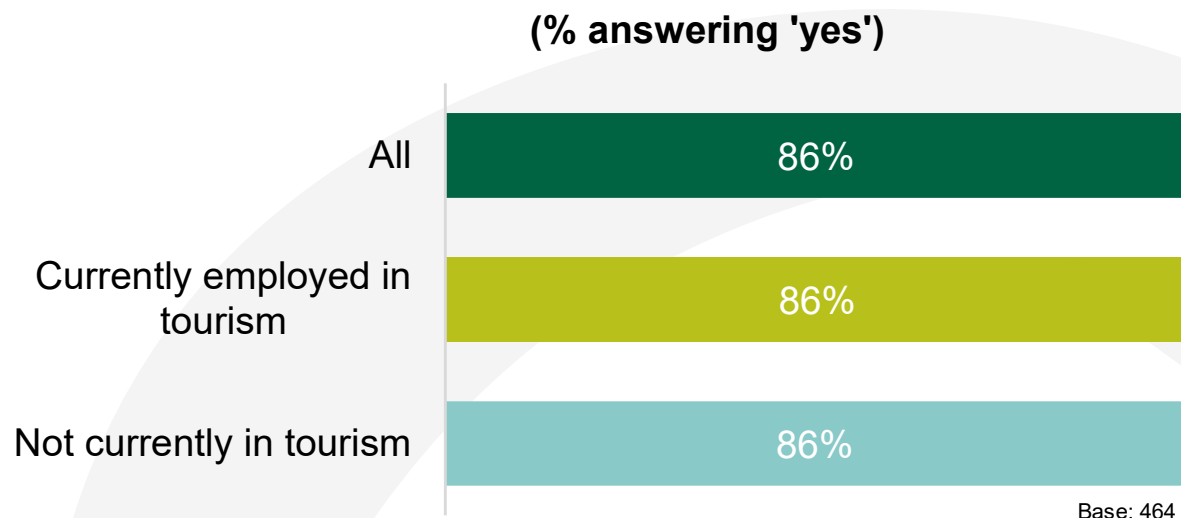


Significant increase in perceptions of tourism

- Many (86%) of those in or looking to get into the sector see it as long-term career – significantly up on last year (76%) and 2021 (71%)
- Shift is largely due to increases among demographic groups which have typically been less likely to view tourism as long-term career: 18 – 34s (82%; up from 67%), women (77%; up from 64%) and Irish (65%; up from 54%)
- 94% of chefs and 94% of managers & supervisors see the sector as a long-term career



Q10 "Do / could you see yourself as having a long-term career in tourism and hospitality?"



Q10 has been asked to those who are either:

- Working in tourism & hospitality and not looking to leave it
- Not working in tourism & hospitality but looking to join it

Section 4

Experiences of Working in the Sector – Workers

Jobs.ie



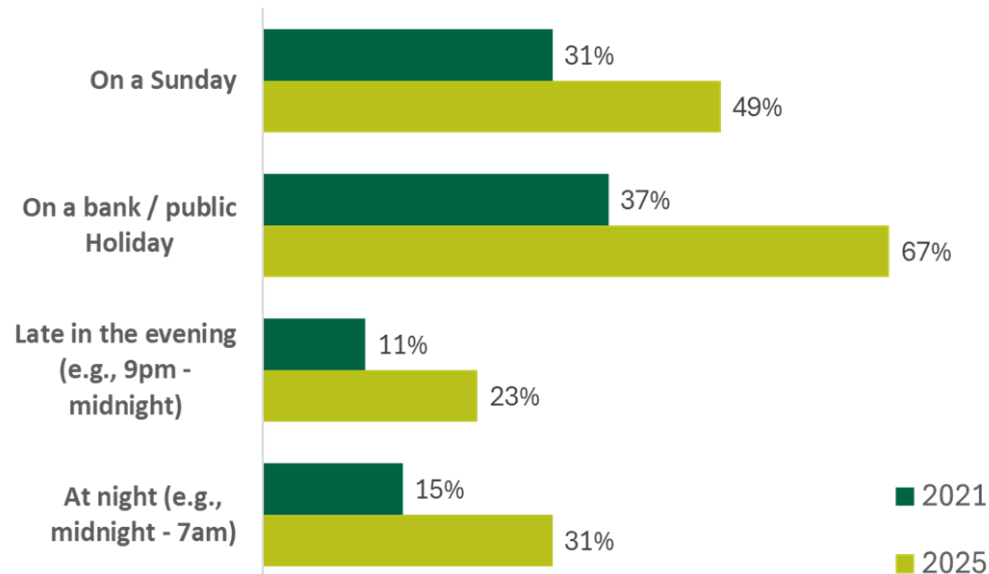
Rewards for Working Unsocial Hours



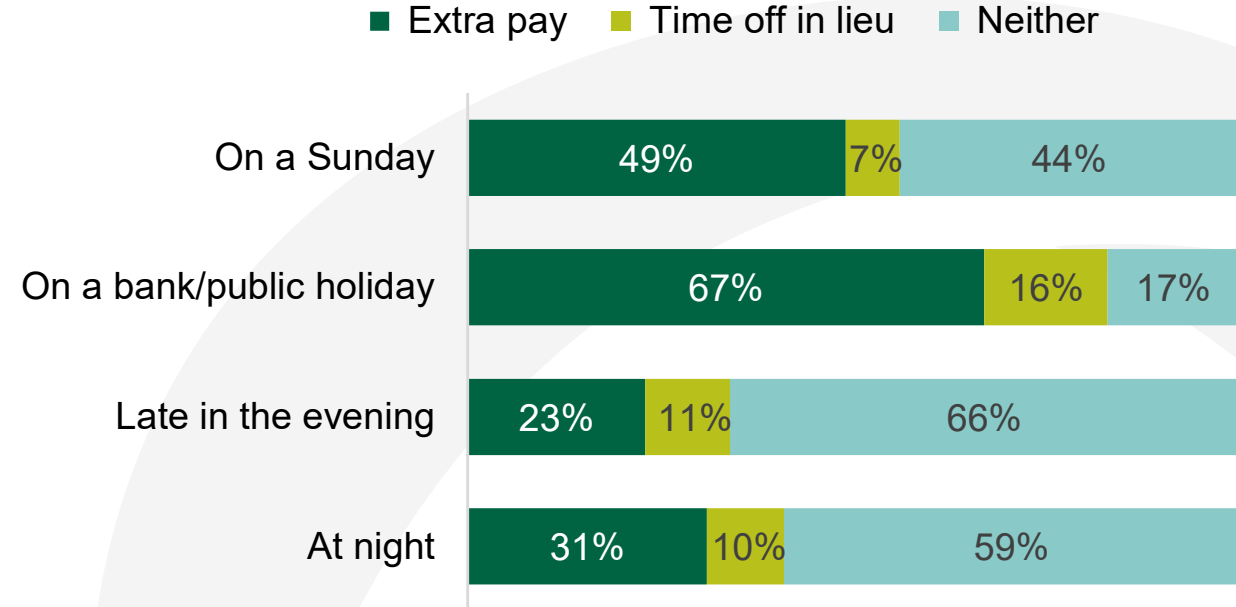
Some positive movements

- The 2024 survey saw a slip in rewards in some situations, but this year sees a reversal, especially for rewards on bank holidays
- Comparisons with 2021 are very positive** (see below)

% workers receiving extra pay for unsocial hours



Q15 "Do you receive extra payment or time off 'in lieu' in any of the following situations?"



Base: variable

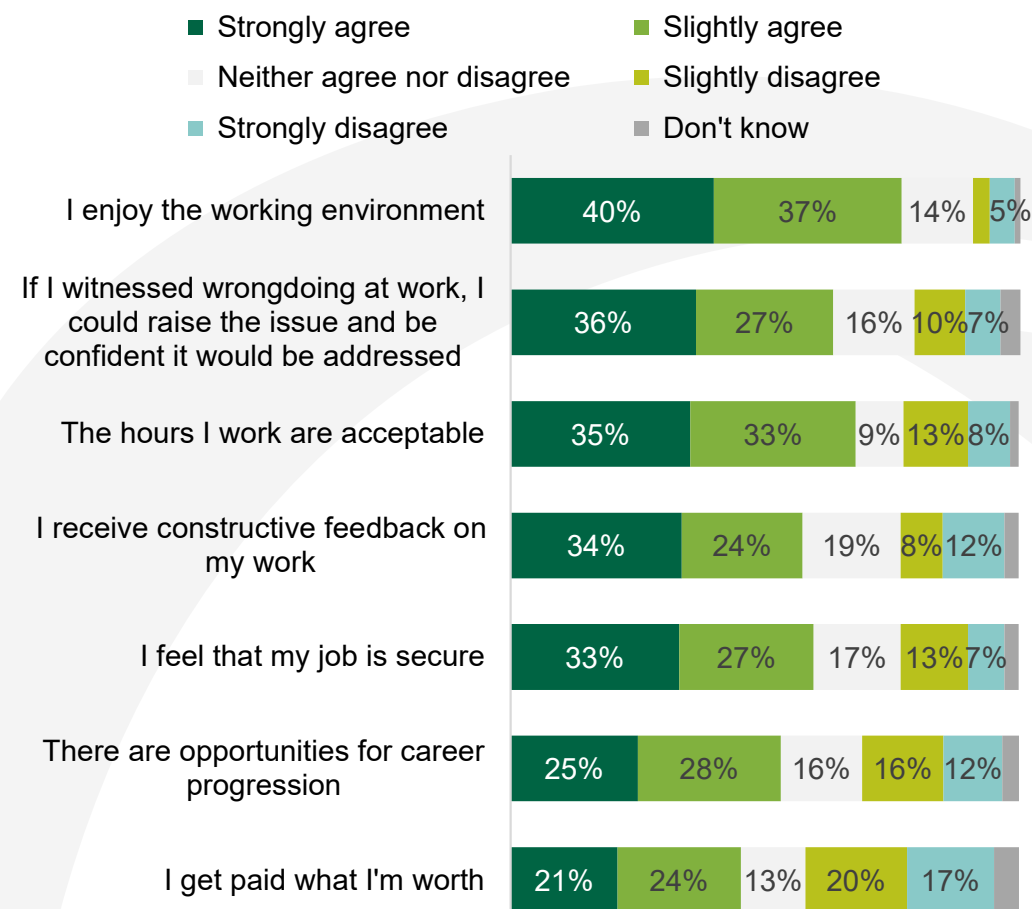
Q15 has been asked to those currently employed in the sector in the Republic of Ireland

Feelings about Working in the Sector

Satisfaction on many points

- **On the whole, workers in the sector enjoy their environment and feel that they have a secure job with acceptable hours**
- Answers are similar to last year
- Paying workers what they feel they are worth is a significant challenge as workers' views on this remain mixed – although answers on this no longer differ significantly by gender as they did in previous surveys
- Sample size is low, but among chefs, 17 out of 28 disagree that they get paid what they're worth
- 'If I witnessed wrongdoing...' is a new statement this year; the majority (63%) agree that they could raise the issue and be confident it would be addressed

Q16 "Looking at your current tourism and hospitality job, how much would you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?"



Base: 181

Q16 has been asked to those currently employed in the sector in the Republic of Ireland

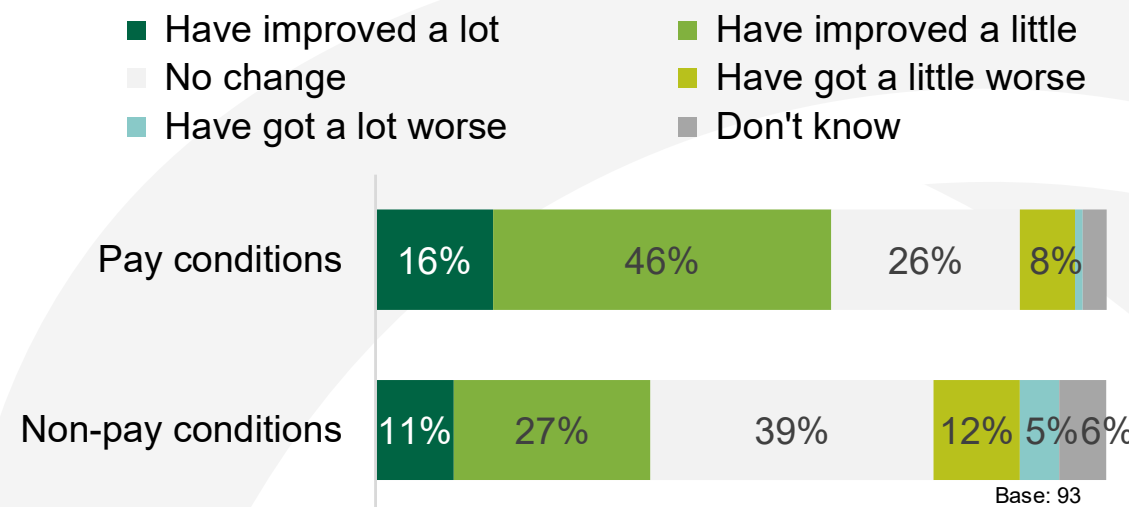
Perceptions of Overall Change



Pay conditions seem to have improved

- **62% perceive that pay conditions have improved**, compared to 26% who say they have not changed and 9% who say they have got worse
- There is also a positive swing in favour of better non-pay conditions, albeit the swing is not as great
- So whilst workers still have some significant issues, **change is moving in the right direction**
- Answers do not vary significantly by gender

Q22 "To the best of your knowledge, have working conditions in tourism & hospitality businesses changed in the last two years?"



Q22 has been asked to those currently employed in the sector in the Republic of Ireland who have been doing their current occupation for at least two years (can be with different employers)

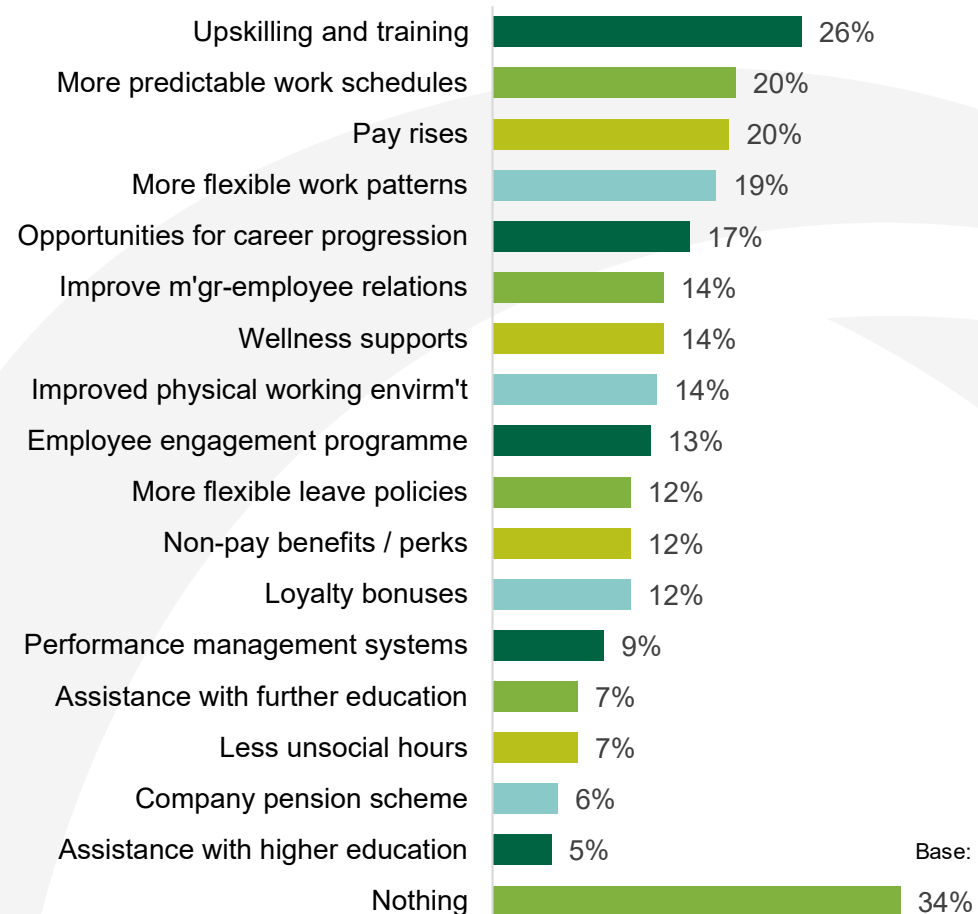
Measures Taken by Employers



A number of measures recognised

- Workers recognise to some extent that their employer has taken measures during the past two years to retain employees
- Most answers do not vary significantly from 2024, but 'pay rises' has fallen from 29% to 20%
- Answers given by workers continue to vary considerably from what the employers themselves have said, shown on the next slide

Q23 "To your knowledge, has your employer taken any of the following measures in the past two years in an effort to retain employees?"



Base: 181

Q23 has been asked to those currently employed in the sector in the Republic of Ireland

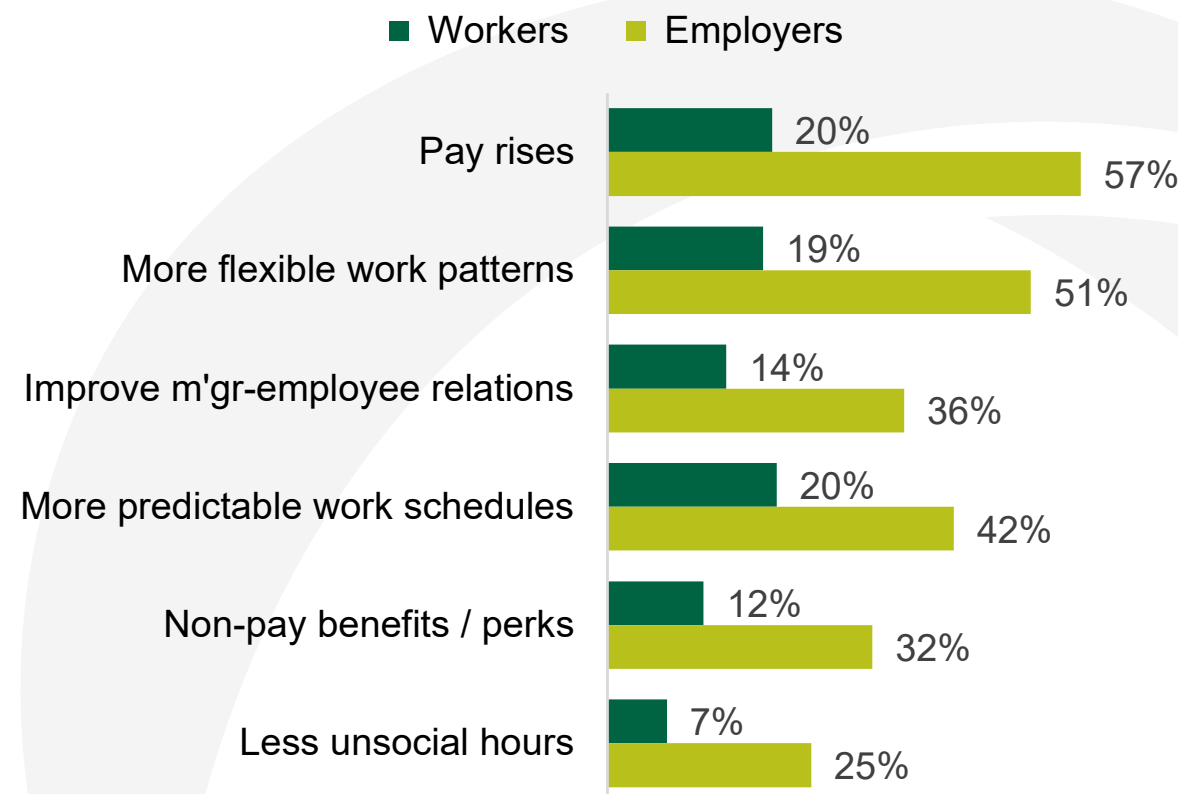
Measures Taken by Employers



Some very large differences in answers

- **Employers are always likely to answer more favourably than workers** about what measures are being taken in an effort to retain staff
- **Workers may not always be aware of measures undertaken**, or they may not feel a measure is effective, which could lead to them not giving credit to the employer for at least trying
- Nevertheless, some of the differences in perceptions are very significant, especially regarding pay and flexible working patterns
- Last year's surveys showed similar sized gaps in answers between employers and workers

Efforts to retain employees: answers by employers vs answers by workers (Top 6 differences shown)



Base: 181 (workers) / 366 (employers)

Section 5

Attracting Workers back into the Sector – Workers

Jobs.ie



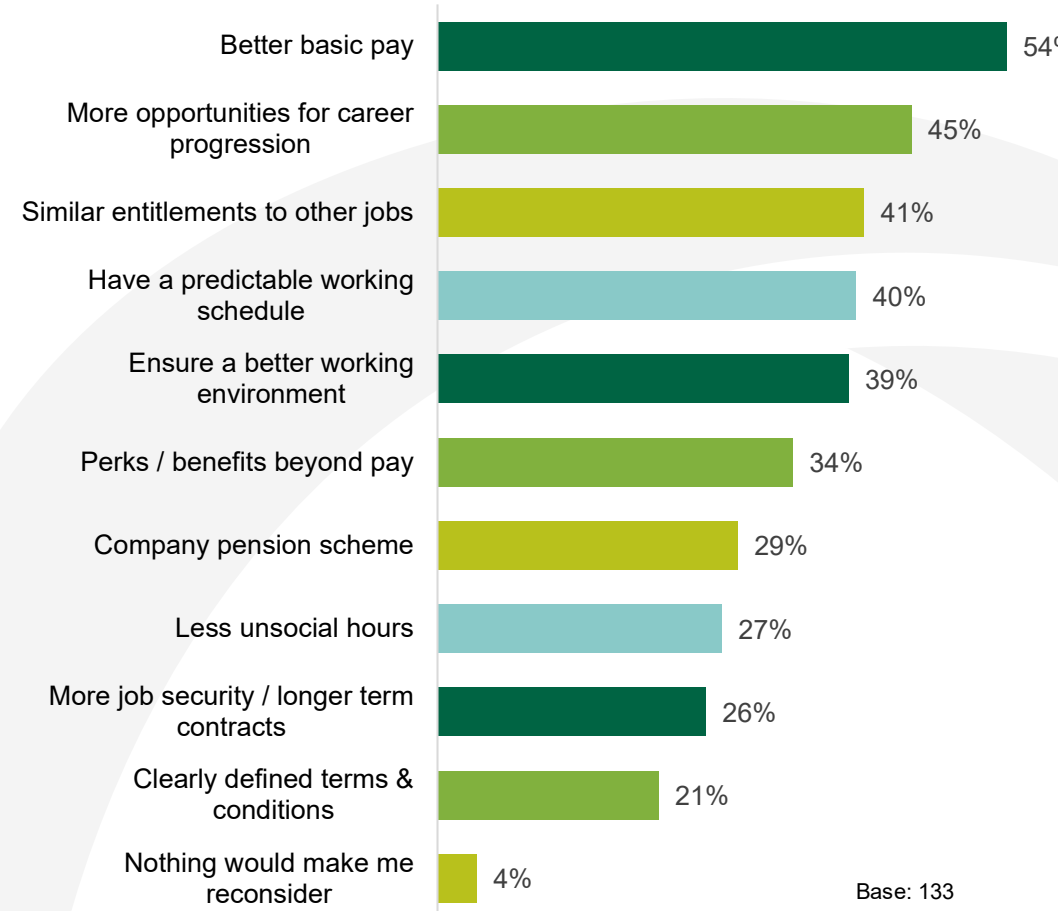
Changing Workers' Minds



Pay continues to top the wish list

- Answers do not vary significantly from last year; **'better basic pay' continues to top the list of improvements** that workers say they want if they are to be attracted to work in the sector
- Irish workers are especially keen for better pay (70%) compared to non-Irish workers (37%)
- Men are more likely than women to answer 'more job security' (35% vs 16% respectively)
- However, there is no longer a difference by gender in answering 'better basic pay'
- **Only a small minority (4%) have answered 'nothing would make me reconsider'** (similar to last year), showing that there is scope to attract workers back into the sector / keep them in

Q25 "Is there anything that a tourism & hospitality employer could do to make you consider working in their business?"



Q25 has been asked to those who do not work in the sector and are not looking to, or they work in the sector but are looking to get out

In Summary

- The research shows measurable progress across job quality, staff recruitment & retention, and worker satisfaction since 2021.
- This has only been possible through stakeholder collaboration.
- Notwithstanding these inroads, the progress has, to some degree, plateaued over the last twelve months.
- Continued progress will depend on further momentum and working together to address remaining challenges.
- Businesses must continue to make the sector a more attractive proposition to incumbent and prospective staff if tourism is to compete with other sectors of the economy in attracting and retaining talent and futureproof the industry.
- Fáilte Ireland remains committed to supporting the sector with initiatives to help pinpoint challenges and tailored supports that allow businesses face them, thus ensuring tourism remains a vibrant, attractive career path.



Thank you