

Building Control Workforce Insights

Written by the Team at Kinetiq
Lead Researcher: Dr Martin Reddington

1. Executive Summary	3	6. Key Drivers - Employee Contribution	22
2. Discussion	6	- Job Security	
3. Workforce Composition	8	- Satisfaction	
- Benefits Comparison		- Workplace Culture	
- Salary Comparison		- Investment in Development of Skills	
- Age of Workforce		- Valuing Accomplishments	
- Length of Service		7. Key Drivers - Desire to Stay	23
4. Sentiment Analysis	13	- Advocacy	
- Best Thing		- Satisfaction	
- Biggest Challenges		- Career Prospects	
- Organisational Personality		- Wellbeing	
- Recruitment Process Issues		- Job Security	
- Obtaining Registration Issues		Appendix 1 - Survey Methodology	24
5. Workplace Experience	19	Appendix 2 - Additional Demographic Data	26
- The Employment Deal			
- Survey Questions			
- Key Driver Analysis			

1.Executive Summary

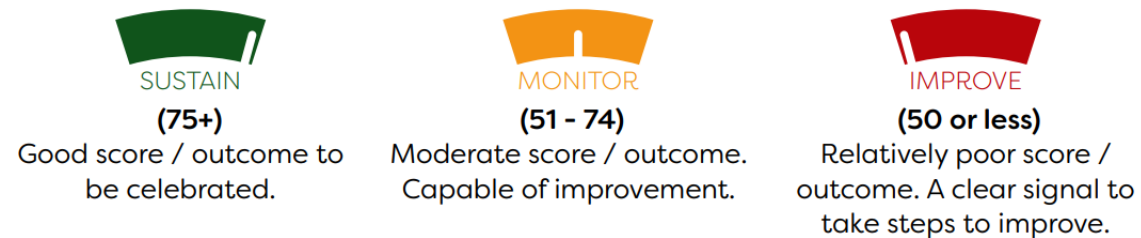
This timely report examines a number of critical questions about the state of the Building Control workforce in the UK:

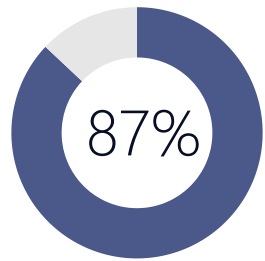
- ▶ What is the overall composition of the workforce?
- ▶ How do employees perceive their working environment?
- ▶ What factors influence them to remain engaged with their work and 'minded' to stay with their organisations?

These questions help to inform a national debate about the health of the profession, as it adapts to the imminent introduction of the *Building Safety Act*, designed to ensure consistency across the building control profession and drive-up standards. This new Act sees the creation of the *Building Safety Regulator (BSR)*, headed up by the Chief Inspector of Buildings, who will be responsible for the oversight of *Building Control Bodies (BCB's)*. The new regime will see the introduction of a register for all building control professionals undertaking restricted activities and / or functions and the new Operational Standard Rules underpinned by Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

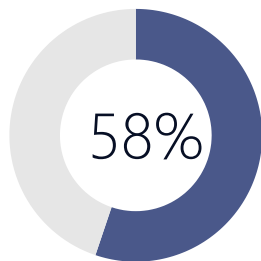
The ordering of the information reflects that of the research questions. In each case, the insights are grouped in terms of the national (overall) picture. The main body of the report is set out in an easy-to-read format, with maximum use of graphics to provide at-a-glance presentation of the data.

Throughout the document, you will see many questions whose answers are colour-coded. The mean values are calculated using the techniques in Appendix 1 and are grouped into the three main categories detailed below:

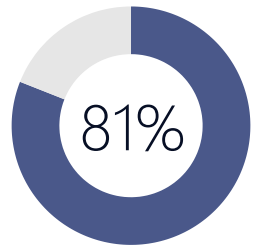




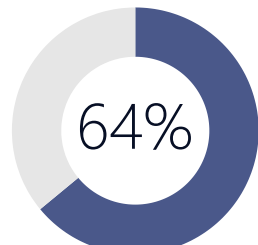
White



15-25 Years+ Length of Service



Male



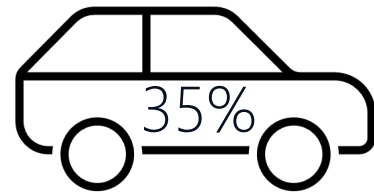
Aged 45+



£30k-45k Salary



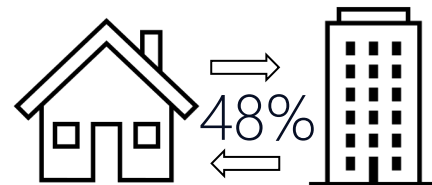
Pension Scheme



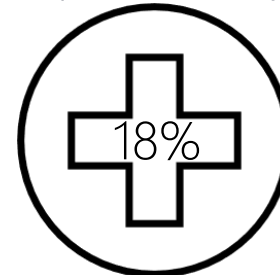
Car Allowance



Annual holiday (Up to 30 Days)

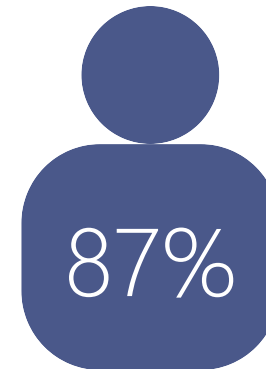


Flexible Working

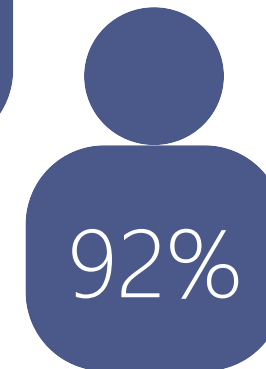


Healthcare

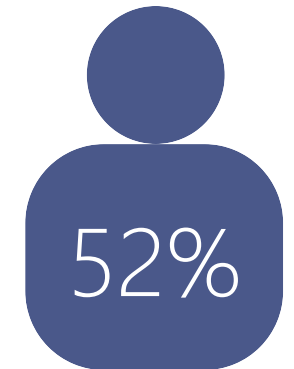
1172
Total Responses



Full Time



Permanent



Building Control Surveyor

Analysis of the free text responses collected from the survey reveal a number of themes, summarised below. More detail can be found on pages of this report.

Best Thing

- ➔ Feeling Valued
- ➔ Job Autonomy
- ➔ Work/Life Balance

Biggest Challenges

- ➔ Lack of Resources
- ➔ Staff Retention
- ➔ Cost of Living

Organisation Personality

Positive: Supportive Honest caring	Negative: Challenging Disorganised Slow
---	--

Recruitment process Issues

- ➔ Financial Constraints
- ➔ Lack of Experience
- ➔ Pay and Benefits

Challenges to registration

- ➔ Support
- ➔ Training/Development
- ➔ Policy/Procedures/Processes

This report establishes new data regarding the state of the Building Control workforce in the UK: In essence, it reveals a predominantly white, male dominated and ageing but experienced workforce. It also reveals the *best things* (such as feeling valued, work/life balance) experienced by the profession, and the most *difficult challenges*, (such as recruitment and registration).

The need to address these is amplified by the age skew in the workforce. Effective recruitment is required to offset the large proportion of the workforce that could be expected to leave through natural retirement in the coming years. And the need to obtain registration to practice under the new Building Safety Act, arguably adds further challenges to retaining the right people.

Respondents' views expressed via free text responses have been thematically analysed and summarised in the main body of this report. In essence, recruitment into the profession is hampered by a lack of suitably qualified applicants. Financial constraints are a contributing factor – potential applicants compare their expected overall financial package with opportunities elsewhere in the 'broader careers market'.

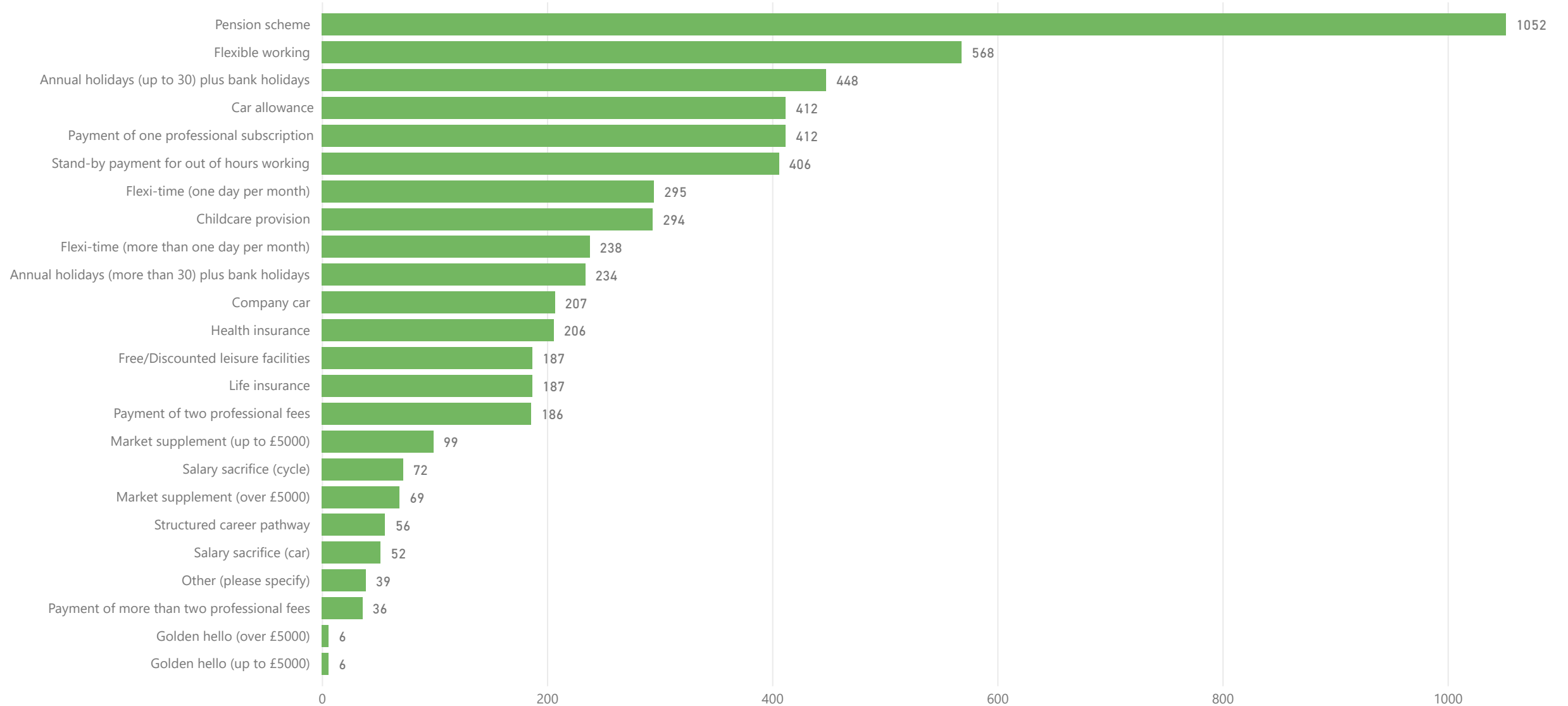
The need to obtain registration to practice is recognised by those considering joining the profession but arguably more keenly experienced by those already in post. Respondents reported concerns about the level of support they were already receiving or expected to receive in relation to preparing for and undertaking the 'onerous' registration process. The achievement of registration was also seen as a context for an enhancement to pay and conditions, in line with greater responsibilities.

These concerns are reflected, to a greater or lesser extent, in the body of evidence collected about the workplace experience (the employee experience), which provides a personal relationship dimension that cannot be ascertained from census-type data alone.

The insights reveal that the most *potent driver or predictor of employee contribution* or engagement in the workplace is the *level to which employees perceive their job is secure*. This can be boosted by a sense of feeling valued in the workplace and an employer's investment in training and development.

In terms of *encouraging employees to stay in their organisations*, the most potent driver or predictor is *advocacy* - the extent to which employees speak well of their organisation both inside and outside. Employees who demonstrate high levels of advocacy feel that their contributions in the workplace are matched or 'balanced' by contributions from their employer. Satisfied employees comment about their employer treating them well – such as good pay and benefits, including access to health and wellbeing services, role autonomy and good relationships with their supervisor/manager. Dissatisfied employees remark about senior management failing to engage with issues like pay, pensions and workload, which can lead to burnout.

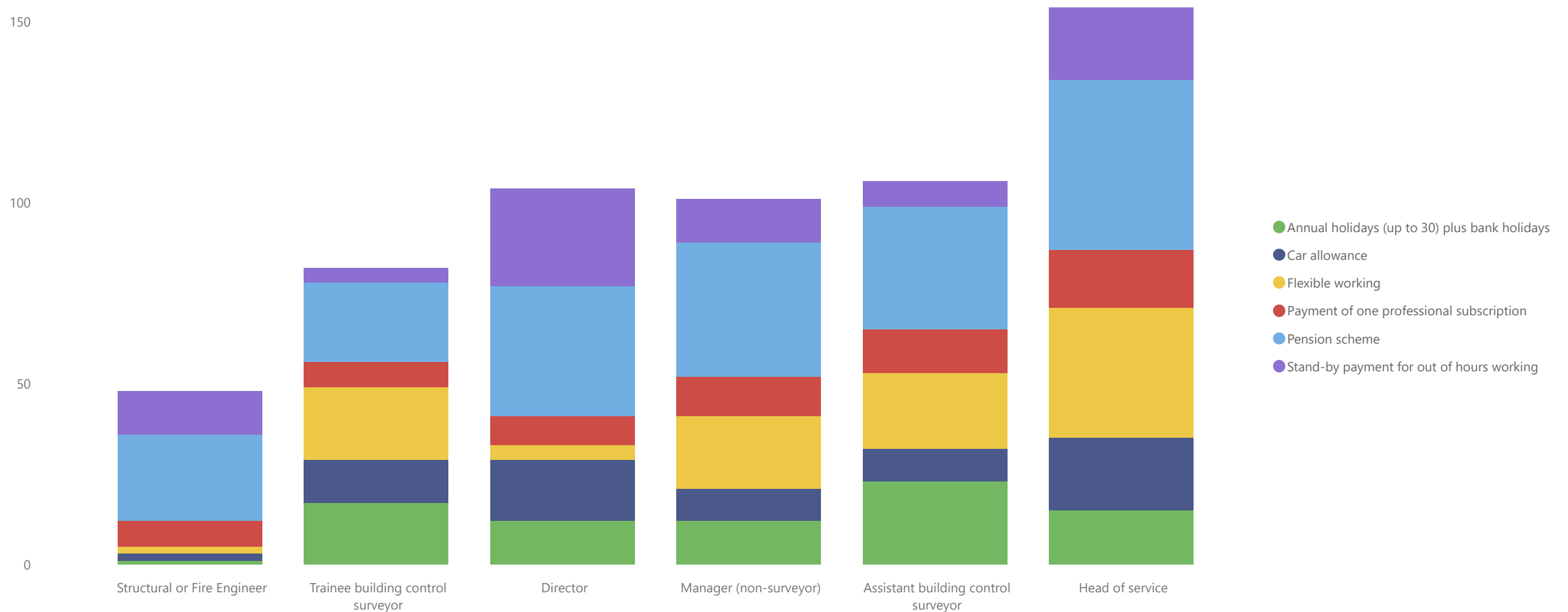
Employers should take note of these findings and look at the overall *employment relationship*. Concerns about pay can be offset by a commitment to training and development, job security and workplace autonomy. It is genuinely understood that organisations who offer such things and continually strive to improve will be more resilient in the face of challenges. They will create working environments that encourage good levels of sustainable employee contribution - employees giving their best each day – whilst also retaining staff.



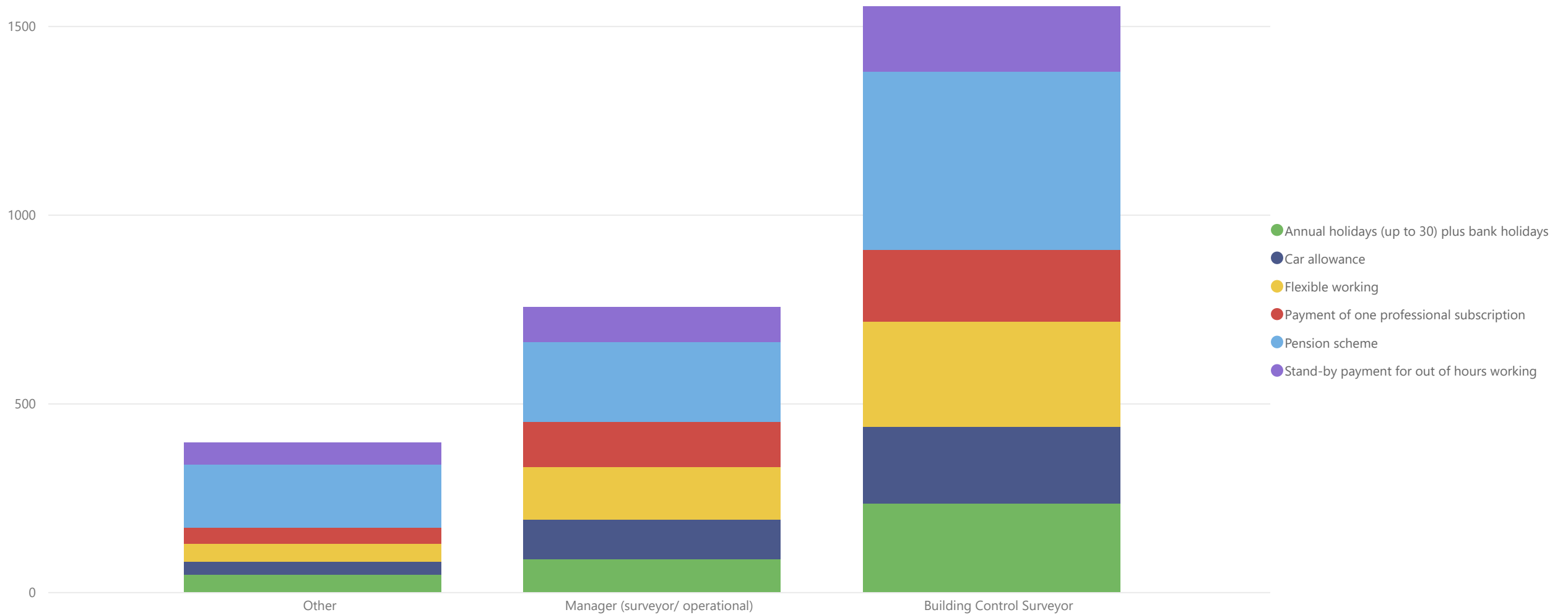
Workforce Composition

Benefits Comparison by Role ^{9-A}

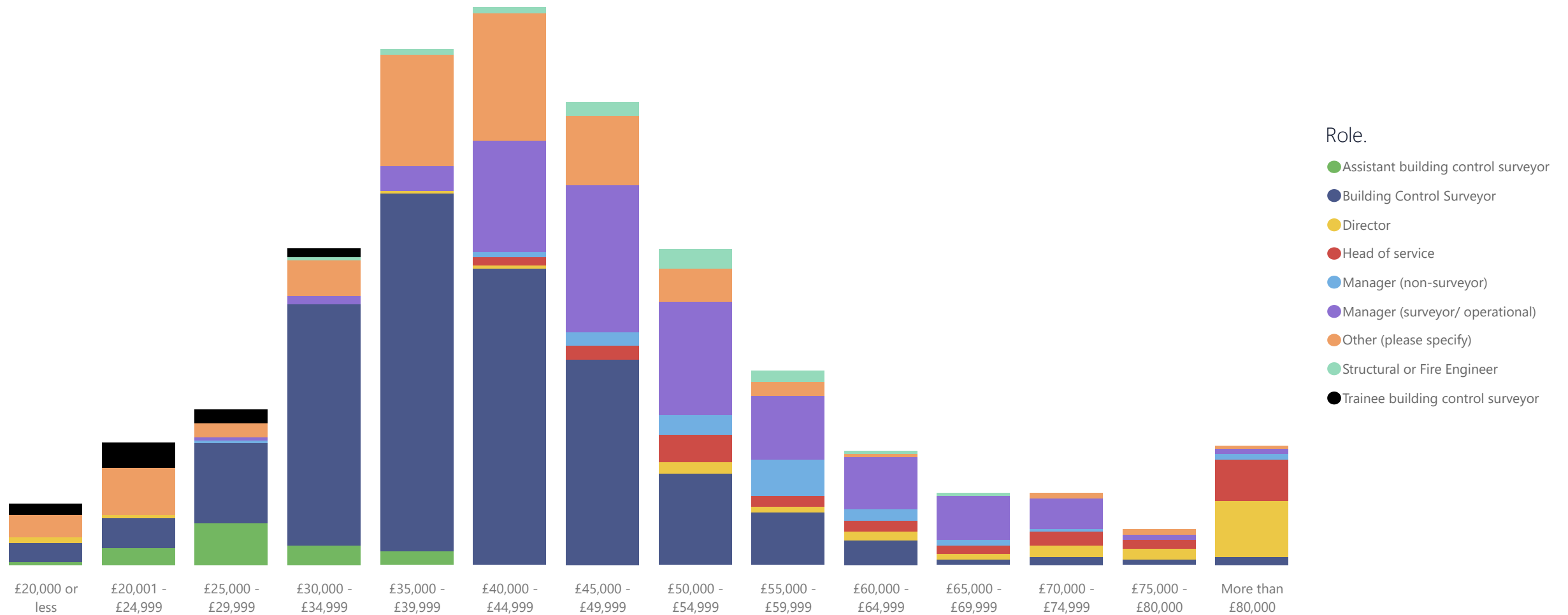
Top Six Benefits (by frequency)



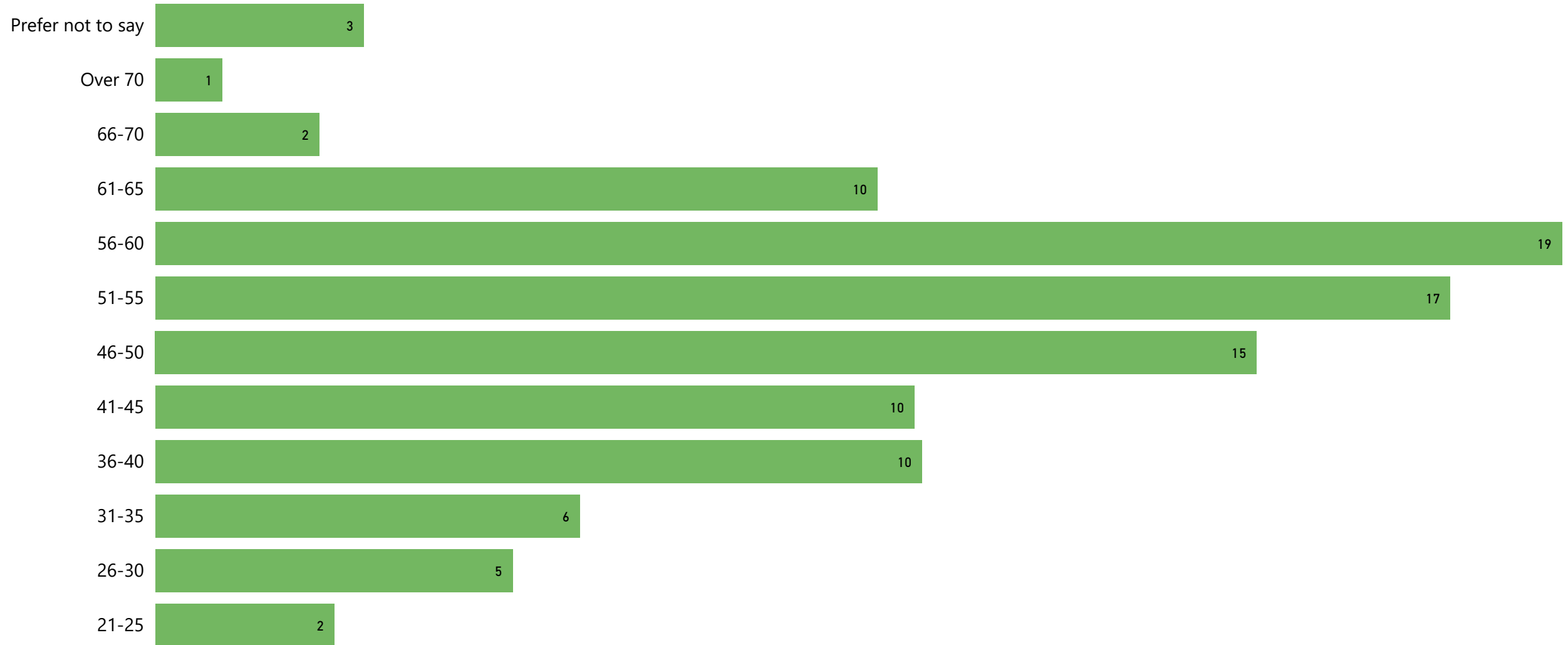
Top Six Benefits (by frequency)



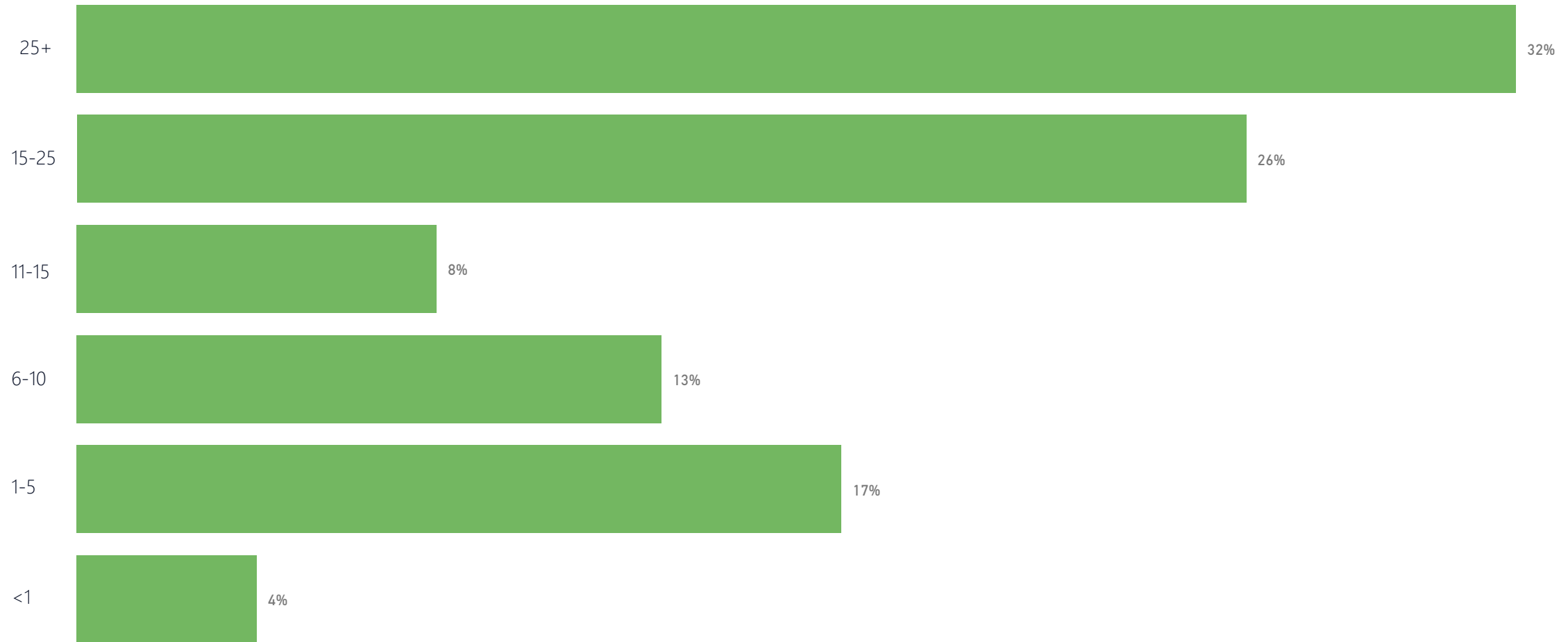
Salary Comparison by Employment Type



Age of Workforce (%)



Length of Service (years)



4.Sentiment Analysis

Survey respondents were invited to express their views via free text to a number of key questions, a selection of which are set out below:

- 1) What is the best thing about working for your organisation?
- 2) What is the biggest challenge you are currently facing at work?
- 3) If your organisation came to life as a person, what word would you use to describe it?
- 4) What issues have you faced during the recruitment process?
- 5) What challenges do you think you will face in ensuring your staff will obtain registration?

The free text responses were analysed and sentiment weighted and in each case key themes emerged, based on the frequency of the narratives. These are now set out with accompanying free text examples, that represent the essence of the theme.

Theme

Feeling Valued

Feel valued by Building Control Management (and by relevant other management in some respects). If any issues, encouraged to engage and help sought, especially with excessive workload at times.

Job Autonomy

Freedom and the sense of responsibility I am given without being micromanaged

Level of Support

I am supported by and generally my employer treats employees decently

Work/Life Balance

Good flexible working hours and can work from home regularly

Management

I have a good manager who has raised the profile of building control within the organisation and in difficult times has improved the service we provide.

Theme

Lack of Resources

Lack of staff or time to complete the work within the timeframes and to the best standard

Training&Development

Trying to complete training, carry out inspections and learn everything as quickly as possible, which sometimes feels a bit overwhelming, basically juggling so many balls and trying not to drop any.

Volume of Work

Coping with workload and meeting the expectations of users of their service

Staff Retention

Lack of funding and investment in the people which will affect retention and therefore employment

Cost of Living

Cost of living impacting my mental health.

Survey respondents were given an opportunity to sum up the atmosphere of their working environment by answering the question, 'If your organisation came to life as a person, what one word would you use to describe it?' The figures below depict 'word clouds' of the most common responses, both positive and negative.

Natural Language Analysis - Most Frequent Positive Responses



Natural Language Analysis - Most Frequent Negative Responses



Theme

Financial Constraints

Financial constraints have stopped recruitment

Lack of Applicants

Lack of interest/available candidates in team leadership roles

Lack of Experience

No suitably experienced applicants

Pay and Benefits

Difficulty finding qualified and competent surveyors for the salary offered

Policy/Procedures/
Processes

When external recruitment has been carried out, numbers of applicants has been low, completion of application forms has been of poor quality... and candidate has not met expectations.

Theme

Training/Development

Standard of training and motivation of an ageing work force some although capable will retire

Support

Confidence and focus. BC officers need more guidance and help on how to become validated

Lack of Resources

The challenge will be having enough staff at the required level due to poor terms and conditions.

Pay and Benefits

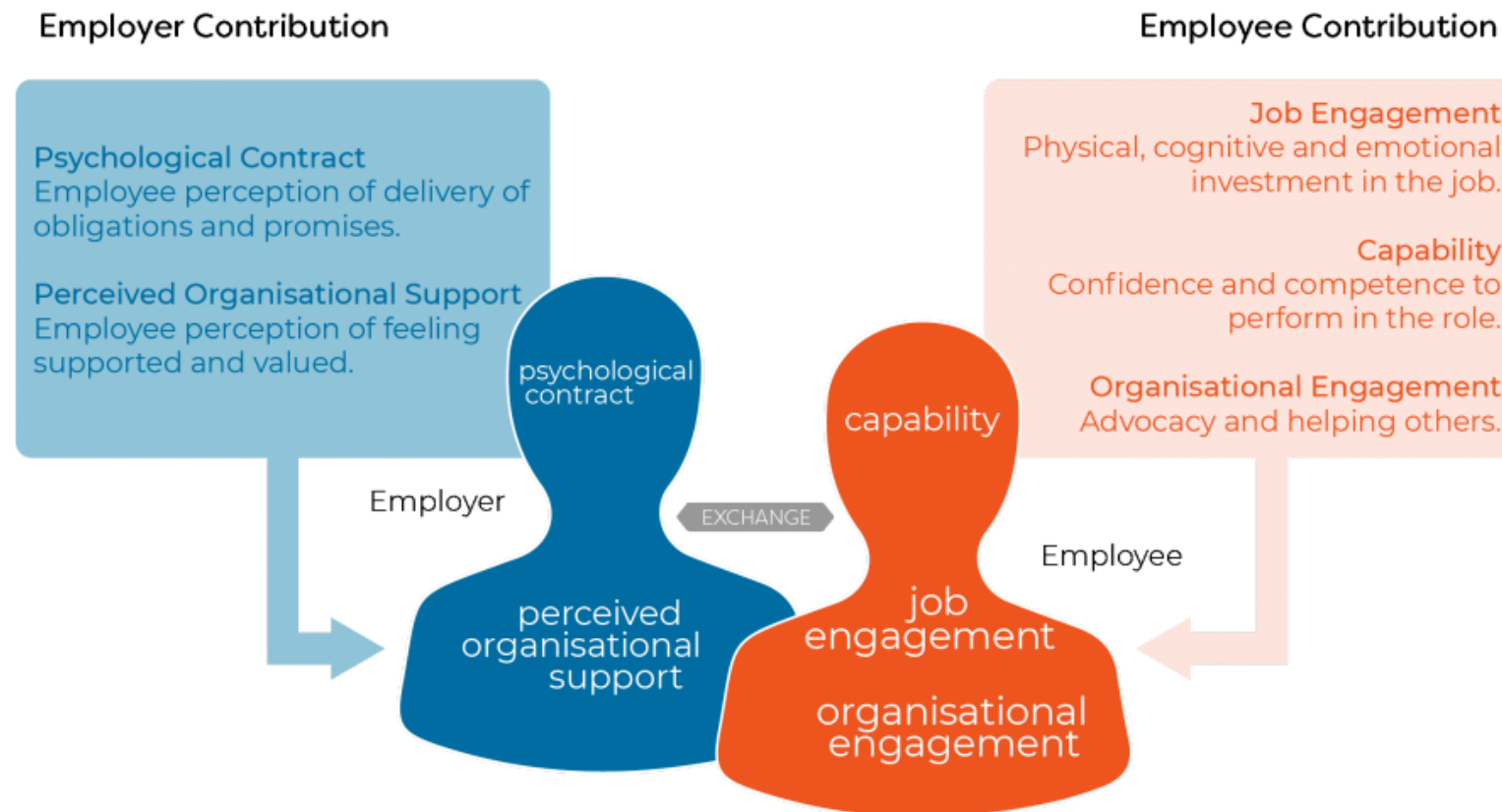
The wages we are offering against the responsibility they will have




Policy/Procedures/
Processes

Some have decided that they will stop working in BC industry, others feel the validation process is too onerous, current JD's do not reflect the competency requirements.

5. Workplace Experience

The workplace experience is represented by the Social Exchange model shown below. A variety of contributions are measured that allow a sense of how employees perceive their working environment and their overall satisfaction with the 'deal' - how what they are expected to contribute compares with their employer. The values of the main contributions, and associated job pressure and workplace tension, are shown on the next page.



	Mean%	
● I am confident carrying out my role	89	 <p>SUSTAIN (75+) Good score / outcome to be celebrated.</p>
● I often 'go the extra mile' to get my job done	93	
● I feel a sense of pride about my job	86	
● I feel secure in my job	76	
● I feel my pay and benefits are reasonable for what I do	41	 <p>MONITOR (51 - 74) Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.</p>
● I feel my pay and benefits are reasonable in comparison with other employee groups in the sector	39	
● My line manager recognises that speaking openly about problems in the workplace provides an opportunity to improve things	75	
● My employer invests in building my capabilities through learning and development	70	
● My employer provides me with good prospects for career progression	60	
● My employer values my accomplishments at work	65	
● My employer demonstrates a genuine concern for my well-being	66	
● There is a 'no blame' culture - mistakes are talked about freely so we can learn from them	70	
● I would recommend my employer to a friend	67	
● I am often required to do more with fewer resources*	79*	
● Overall, I am satisfied with my employment 'deal' - what my employer provides for me and what I am expected to provide in return	54	 <p>IMPROVE (50 or less) Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.</p>
● I feel empowered to challenge dutyholders for non-compliance	71	
● As I currently see things, I do not intend to leave my current employer within the next three years	55	
● As I currently see things, I do not intend to leave the building control profession within the next three years	60	
● As I currently see things, I do not intend to leave my employer within the next 12 months	68	<p>Note: (*) means reverse logic i.e. high score is poor</p>

Key: ● Employee ● Employer ● Workplace Tension ● Overall Satisfaction

Key driver analysis of the statistical data reveals the following *drivers or predictors* of *employee contribution* (investment of effort, skill and emotional commitment) and *desire to stay* (mindedness to remain with their organisations or the profession). More information about these can be found in pages 22 and 23

Employee Contribution

-
- 1) I feel secure in my job

 - 2) Overall, I am satisfied with what my employer provides for me and what I am expected to provide in return

 - 3) There is a 'no blame' culture - mistakes are talked about freely so we can learn from them

 - 4) My employer invests in building my capabilities through learning and development

 - 5) My employer values my accomplishments at work

Desire To Stay

-
- 1) I would recommend my employer to a friend

 - 2) Overall, I am satisfied with what my employer provides for me and what I am expected to provide in return

 - 3) My employer provides me with good prospects for career progression

 - 4) My employer demonstrates a genuine concern for my wellbeing

 - 5) I feel secure in my job

Key Drivers

1. Job security is the most potent predictor of employee contribution. A good perception of job security will encourage engagement of employees, whereas a poor perception will do the opposite, and fuel workplace tensions and job pressure.
2. The second most potent factor concerns satisfaction with the employment 'deal' – the contributions provided by the *employer* and what *employees* are expected to provide in return. This represents the overall perception of the balance of contributions – a sense of fairness in the workplace.
3. The third most potent factor affecting employee contribution centres on the presence of a 'no blame' culture, where mistakes are talked about freely so that employees can learn from them. This describes a workplace environment in which employees can explicitly surface tensions, with good intent, in the knowledge that this is seen as an opportunity to improve things.
4. The investment in improving the skills of employees through learning and development provides the fourth most potent predictor of employee contribution. Offering employees developmental opportunities to enhance their skills and capabilities is a signifier of their value to the organisation. In response, employees will be encouraged to respond with higher contributions.
5. The fifth most potent factor in predicting employee contribution concerns an organisation's acknowledgement of employee achievements. This key driver captures the extent to which employees believe the organisation values their contributions. When employees are valued and recognised for their efforts, they feel encouraged to reciprocate by way of their own contribution.

I feel secure and not excessively pressurised by current management.

Introduction of new regulatory framework & requirement for BCOs to be registered practitioners is an unfair imposition & one which many are extremely unhappy with, not enough hours in the day - no motivation to "go the extra mile" as it is never recognised.

We cannot recruit new staff to such a difficult and highly technical job with threats of jail if you make a mistake, apprentices try it and leave after a short time to do general practice surveying or less challenging roles.

My top managers, my line manager are very helpful and supportive, providing us with any available training to deliver a good service and for my own personal development.

My line manager is very helpful and supportive and values my contribution at work.

Key Drivers

1. Advocacy – speaking well of an organisation both inside and outside – is an employee's response to the overall perception of their workplace experience. This was the Key Driver with the greatest impact on employees' desire to stay within their organisations.
2. The second most potent factor concerns satisfaction with the employment 'deal' – the contributions provided by the *employer* and what *employees* are expected to provide in return. This represents the overall perception of the balance of contributions – a sense of fairness in the workplace.
3. The third most potent predictor of an employee's desire to stay in their organisation concerns their career prospects: Having clear, transparent processes for accessing high quality professional development opportunities, both inside and outside the organisation.
4. The extent to which employees feel the organisation genuinely cares about their welfare provides the fourth most important predictor of employee retention within an organisation. These considerations can create a trusting, supportive work climate helping employees to perform better.
5. The fifth and final Key Driver which impacts upon an employee's willingness to remain part of their organisation is about Job Security. A good perception of job security will encourage engagement of employees, whereas a poor perception will do the opposite, and fuel workplace tensions and job pressure.

I enjoy the job itself, the varied nature of it. I also have colleagues that I like working with and would recommend to others.

We have excellent remote working solutions, good flexi-time, good leave, and are supported when needed

I was interested in buildings and construction, which is why I joined. Progression in my career has now stopped.

Resources can sometimes be an issue and impact my wellbeing, but recently these problems have been overcome with good team collaboration and help

I like the element of security provided by my employer, and I value benefits such as sick pay, compassionate leave, flexibility, etc.

Appendix 1 - Survey Methodology

The quantitative (numeric) data was exposed to a variety of statistical analysis techniques:

- Cronbach's Alpha – a test for internal consistency and reliability of the responses.
- Test for Significance – a formal procedure for assessing the confidence of claims made from the analysis of the data
- Multiple Regression - a formal procedure to predict the value of a variable based on the value of two or more other variables. This is the basis of key driver analysis.

The results for the rateable items were calculated using mean values, as illustrated on the next page. The thematic analysis of the qualitative data (free text) was conducted individually then collectively by the research team. Numeration (i.e. the frequency in which a theme appears within the data) was used to pull together the final set of themes, since numeration is one way of indicating their relative importance (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) and is widely used by researchers where this type of evidence is a significant source. The other technique used was sentiment weighting. Employees' responses to the free-text questions were analysed using NVivo (a qualitative software analysis package), which helped to identify and extract opinions, emotions and attitudes from the qualitative data.

The research team were then able to blend statistical and free-text data to provide an enriched interpretation, with the relative importance of the different themes revealed when matched with the key drivers.

Appendix 1 - Survey Methodology

Example Survey Question				
I feel a sense of pride about my job				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
100	75	50	25	0
Respondents 1	✓			
Respondents 2				✓
Respondents 3			✓	
Respondents 4	✓			
Respondents 5		✓		
Respondents 6			✓	

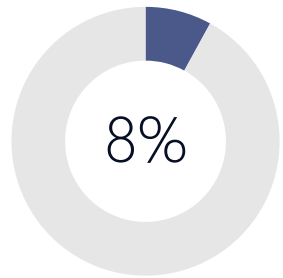
Total = 350

Divided by the total number of respondents

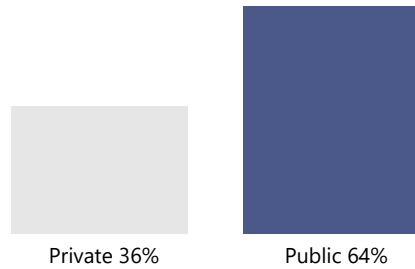
(6)

$350/6 = 58$ (rounded)

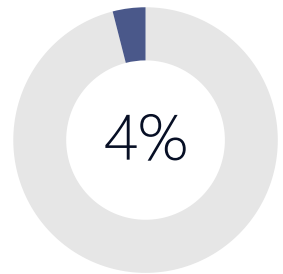
Appendix 2 - Additional Demographic Data



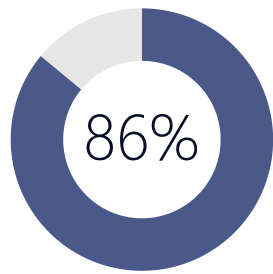
With Disability



Survey Responses



Disability limits Day-2-Day activity



Heterosexual

Percentage by Ethnicity (Non White)

