

Work & Salary Report for the L&D Sector

2023/24

blue eskimo



Welcome

Welcome to the 2023/24 Blue Eskimo Work & Salary Report for the L&D Sector.

Blue Eskimo is the leading specialist recruitment company for the L&D industry, helping clients recruit all disciplines within Learning and Development for the last two decades.

This year's Work and Salary Report is based on our 12th annual survey, conducted in the closing weeks of 2023. We collected quantitative survey data from over 900 learning and development professionals based in the UK or working remotely with UK based companies.

We have used this data combined with our observations and experience of what is happening in the industry and compared it with the results from our 2022 survey to bring you our latest findings and outline our expectations of what lies ahead for L&D in 2024.

We hope you enjoy it,

The Team at Blue Eskimo.

Where are we now?

In our 2022 report we said that we were living in uncertain and turbulent times, and this hasn't changed. The world is increasingly war-torn and unpredictable. In the UK the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite, but inflation started to drop at the end of 2023, so we will hopefully see some growth in the economy for 2024 and continue to move away from the edge of recession.

After the boom L&D experienced over the last two years external circumstances caught up with the industry this year, and we are entering a more cautious and muted trading environment. In some ways, this signifies a return to more normal conditions. The massive growth of 2021-2022 was unprecedented and the tech crunch has shown us that it may have also been unsustainable with some companies over-hiring during the peak only to reduce headcount once the tide turned.

The continuing pattern of a reduction in L&D vacancies is reflected in some recent research by Fosway Group,

which found that L&D budgets are feeling the biggest pinch since their survey began in 2016. Their research found that the number of L&D teams who expect to see their overall budgets decrease has risen from 8% to 22%. This tallies with our survey, but the number is even higher, with 38% of our respondents expecting L&D budgets to decline in the next 12 months.

2023 has also been a settling in period and an adjustment to new ways of working that formed during the pandemic. This year has seen a move towards formal hybrid working and a move away from fully remote work - with many companies actively encouraging more time in the office to bolster team morale, improve collaborative working, and increase productivity.

Overall, the current situation in L&D mirrors the wider economic slowdown, however there is still demand within the sector - particularly for highly skilled and experienced candidates and we expect demand for revenue generating roles in sales and marketing to continue to grow in 2024 is already proving to be another interesting year.





2023 proved to be a challenging year for many people in L&D. We experienced an increase in redundancies which was also borne out by our survey findings, with 15% of respondents being made redundant last year, compared with just 6% in 2022. Hiring activity was muted as the economy stagnated, however we expect this to increase from a relatively low base as we move further into 2024, with the economy widely predicted to grow, albeit modestly (between 0.5% and 1%).

Huge advances in Generative AI and the impact this will have on the L&D profession proved to be a major topic of debate last year. For the first time our survey asked respondents for their opinions on this, with the majority believing it will have a positive impact on their jobs.

Nick Bate, Director Blue Eskimo

Section

01

Your Work

In this section of the survey, we asked respondents about their role within L&D, their working model (hybrid, remote or office based), qualifications and how their employment had changed over the last 12 months.

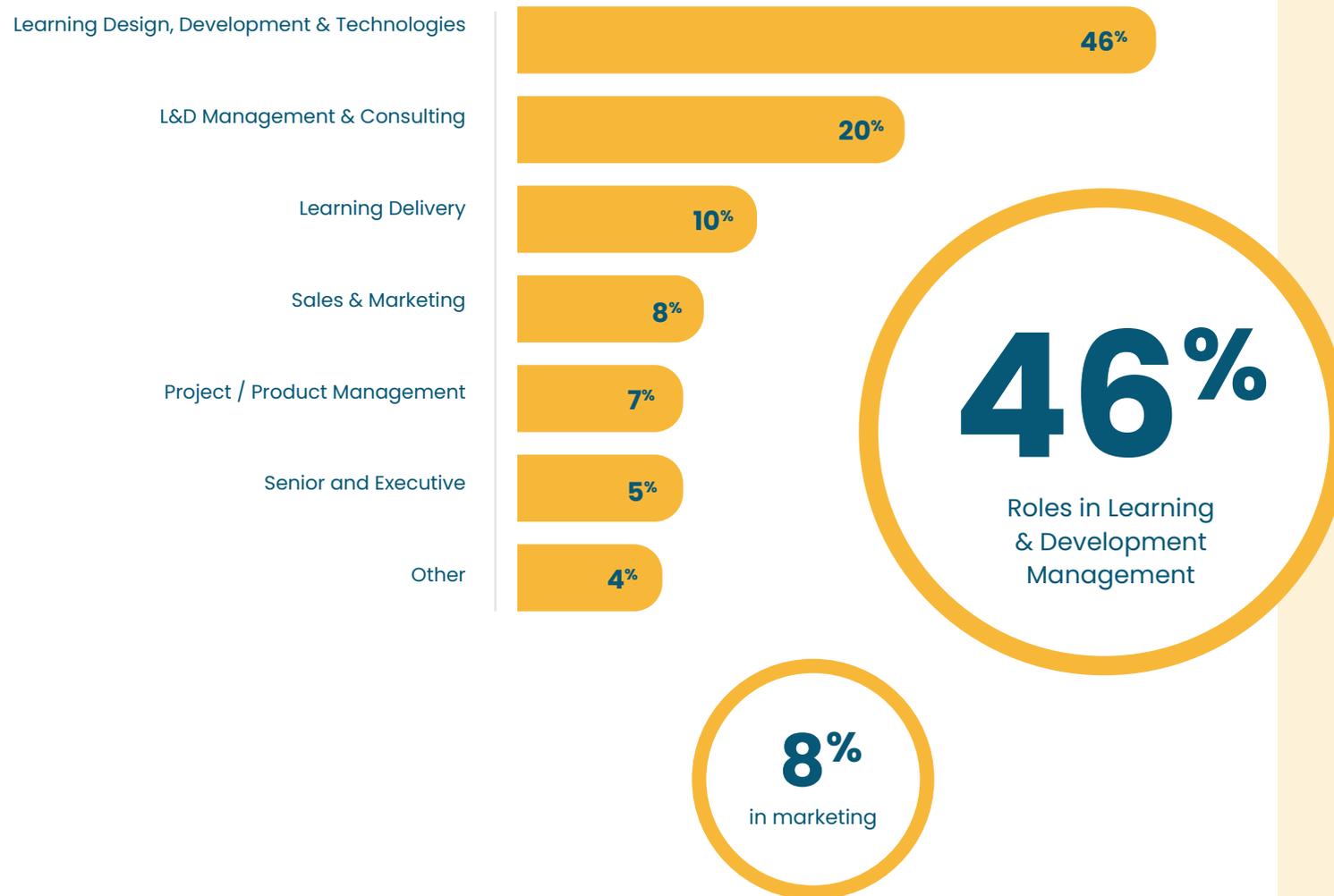


What is your job title?

There are a myriad of job titles within L&D so to give a representation of those entered within the survey, we have included a word cloud. The most popular titles were Project Manager, Global L&D Lead and Instructional Designer. After a difficult economic year in 2023 we expect revenue-generating roles in sales and marketing to grow in 2024. In our Q3 L&D barometer we found small decreases in vacancies across all categories except for Learning Content Development Design and Learning Technologies, which increased by approximately 20%. We expect demand for these skills to remain consistent in 2024.



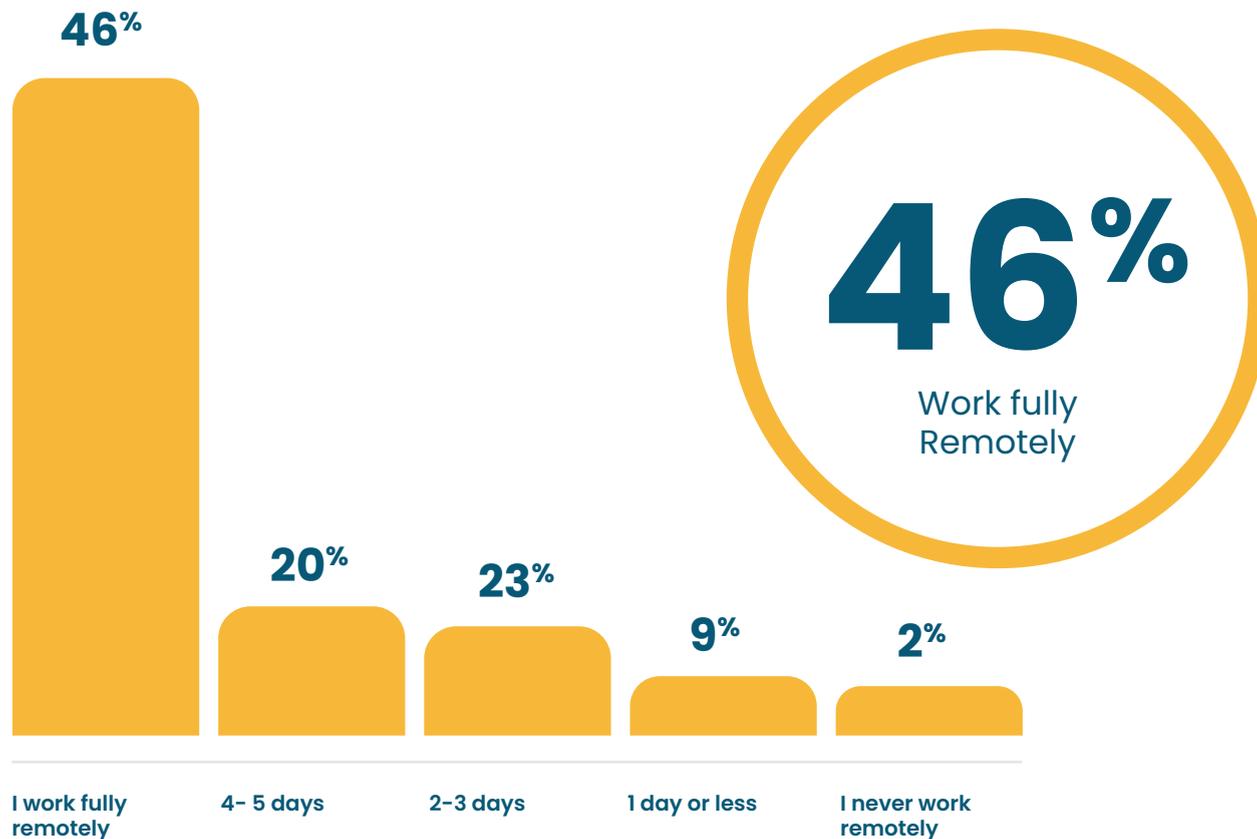
Which of these areas does your role mainly focus on?



Comments

Looking at roles areas is more insightful than job titles and from this we can see that the majority (46%) of respondents are focused on learning design/development/technologies and L&D management and consulting.

In your typical working week, how much time do you spend working remotely (typically home-based)?



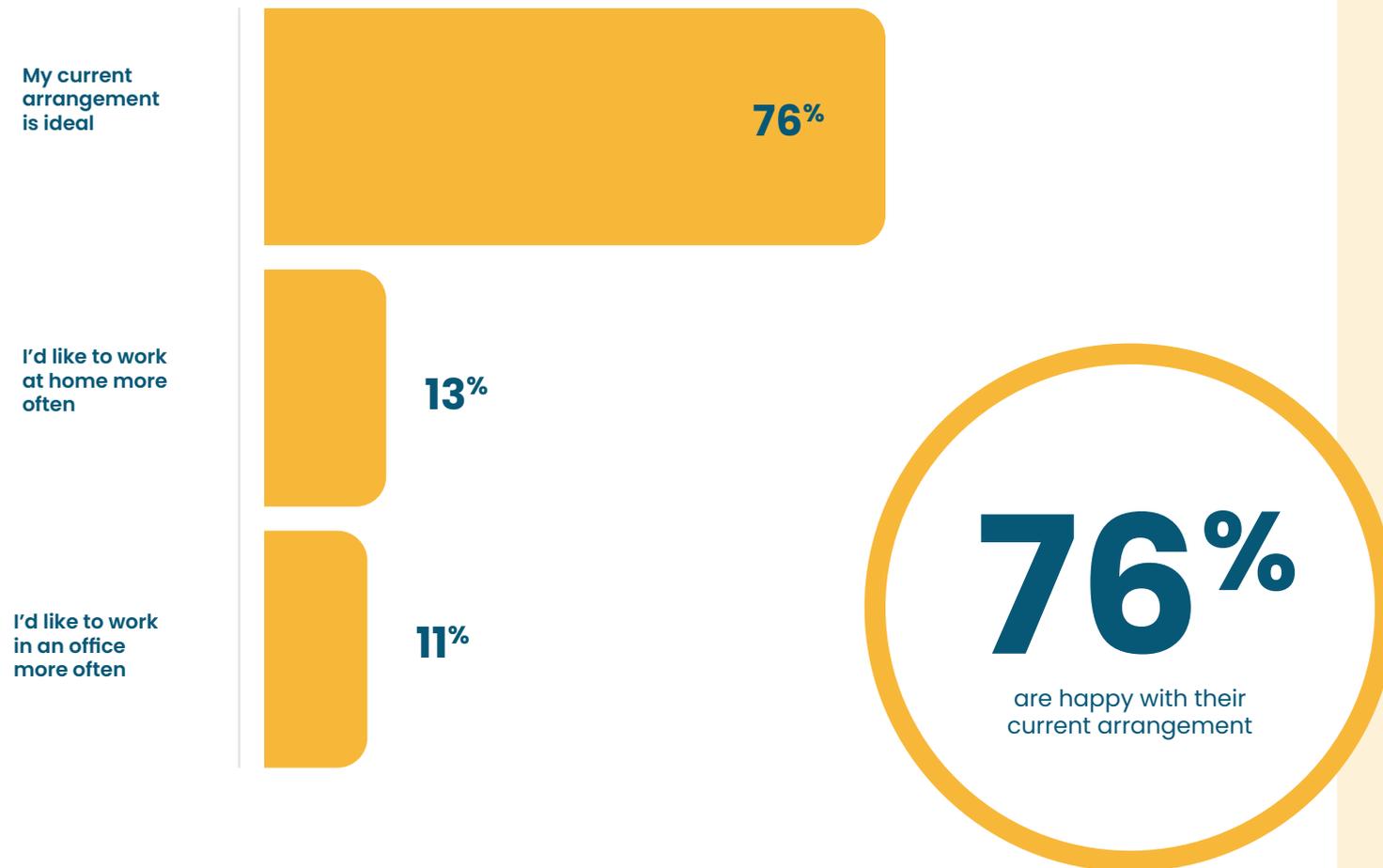
Comments

We can see that a large section of our respondents (46%) work remotely, only 2% are fully office based and the remaining 52% have some sort of hybrid arrangement.

2%

Only 2% never work remote

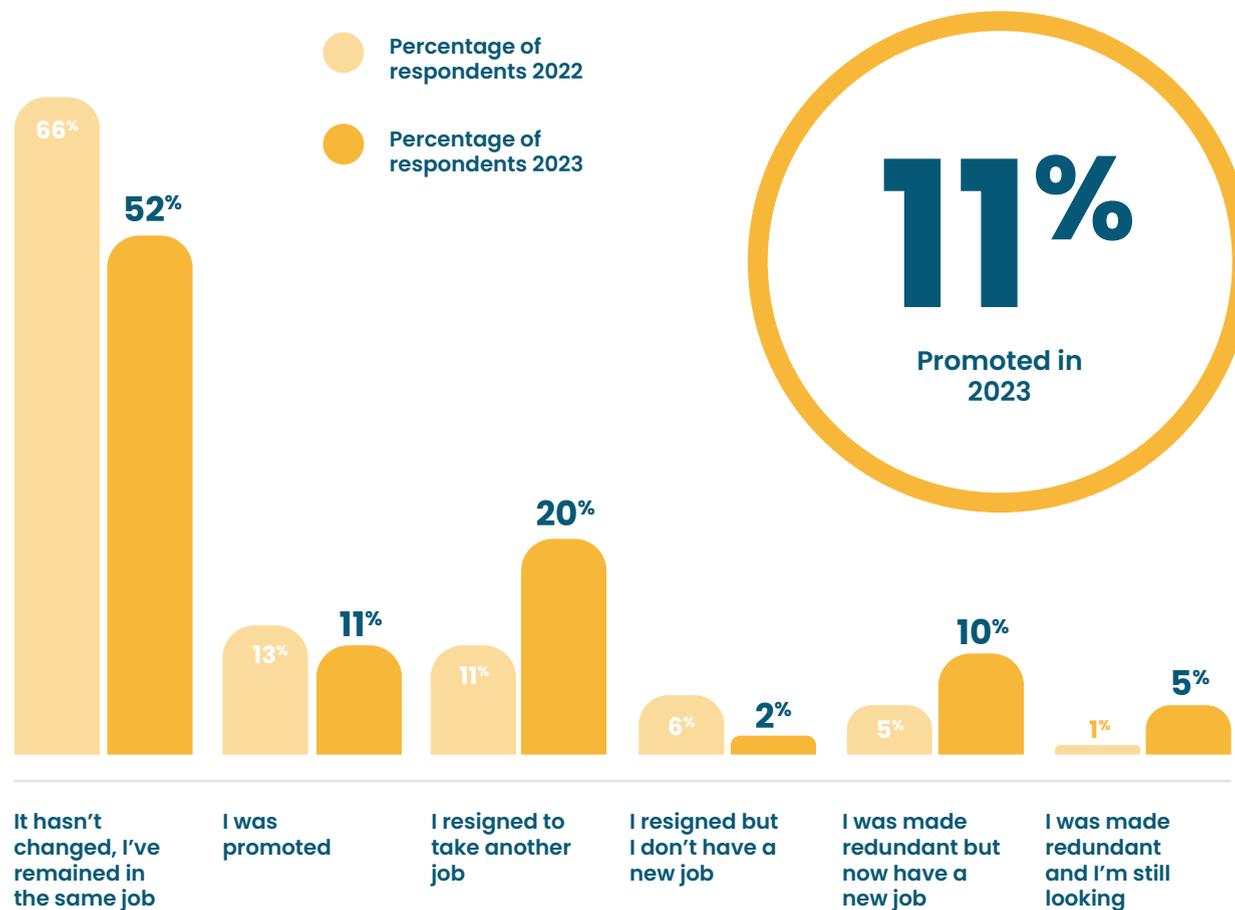
What would your ideal working arrangement be?



Comments

Overall, 76% of respondents said they were happy with their current working arrangement. This change in working patterns is significant over the last few years, but most people seem to have found a good balance that works for them.

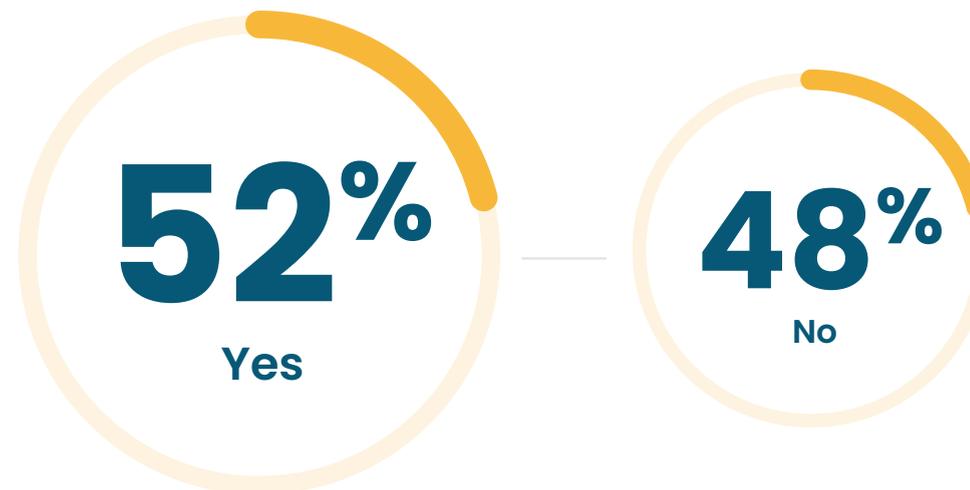
How has your employment changed over the last 12 months?



Comments

We saw a lot of movement in the market in 2023, with less people staying in the same job over the last 12 months. This was down to 52% from 66% last year. This can be attributed in part to the rise in redundancies - up from 6% to 15%. We also saw an increase in resignations as people took new jobs, up from 11% to 20%. 2023 saw plenty of flux in the market as people moved jobs voluntarily and through redundancy.

Do you have any L&D related qualifications?

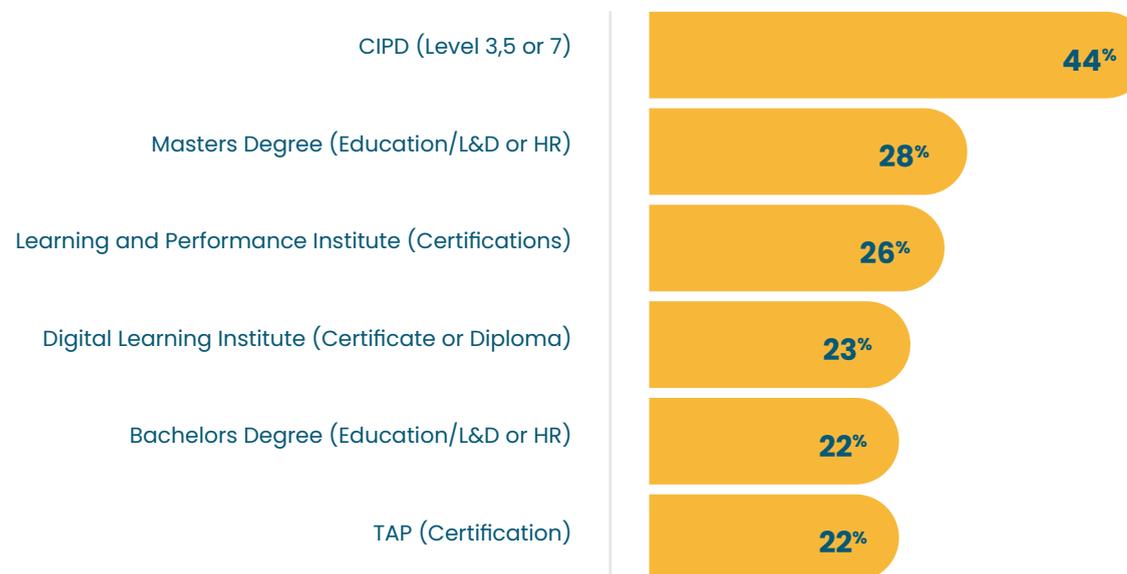


Comments

This year we also asked about industry qualifications and 52% of respondents had a qualification with many people having more than one. Attitudes to formal qualifications were positive with 81% of people feeling that their qualifications had helped them somewhat, or a lot, in their career. As the market cools, we would expect more people to seek out education and training to improve their skills and differentiate themselves, new technologies like AI are also demanding more upskilling and re-skilling.

As we can see from our sample many of our respondents have more than one qualification with CIPD being the most popular category.

If yes, what sort of L&D qualifications do you have?



Have these qualifications helped your career?

There is a positive attitude to education with only 2% of those who have gained a qualification feeling that it has not helped them at all compared to 21% who feel it has helped them a lot.



Yes, alot



Yes, somewhat



No, not much



No, not at all

Summary

Section

01



Job titles and roles:

Still a lot of different job titles across L&D but the main focus areas are learning design/development/technologies and L&D management and consulting.



Working arrangements:

Most people have a hybrid working arrangement and are happy with this.



On the move:

Still a lot of flux in the market with only 52% of respondents still in the same job as last year.



Qualifications:

Just over half of our respondents (52%) have a formal qualification in L&D, but of those who do (81%) feel that it has helped them in their career.

Section

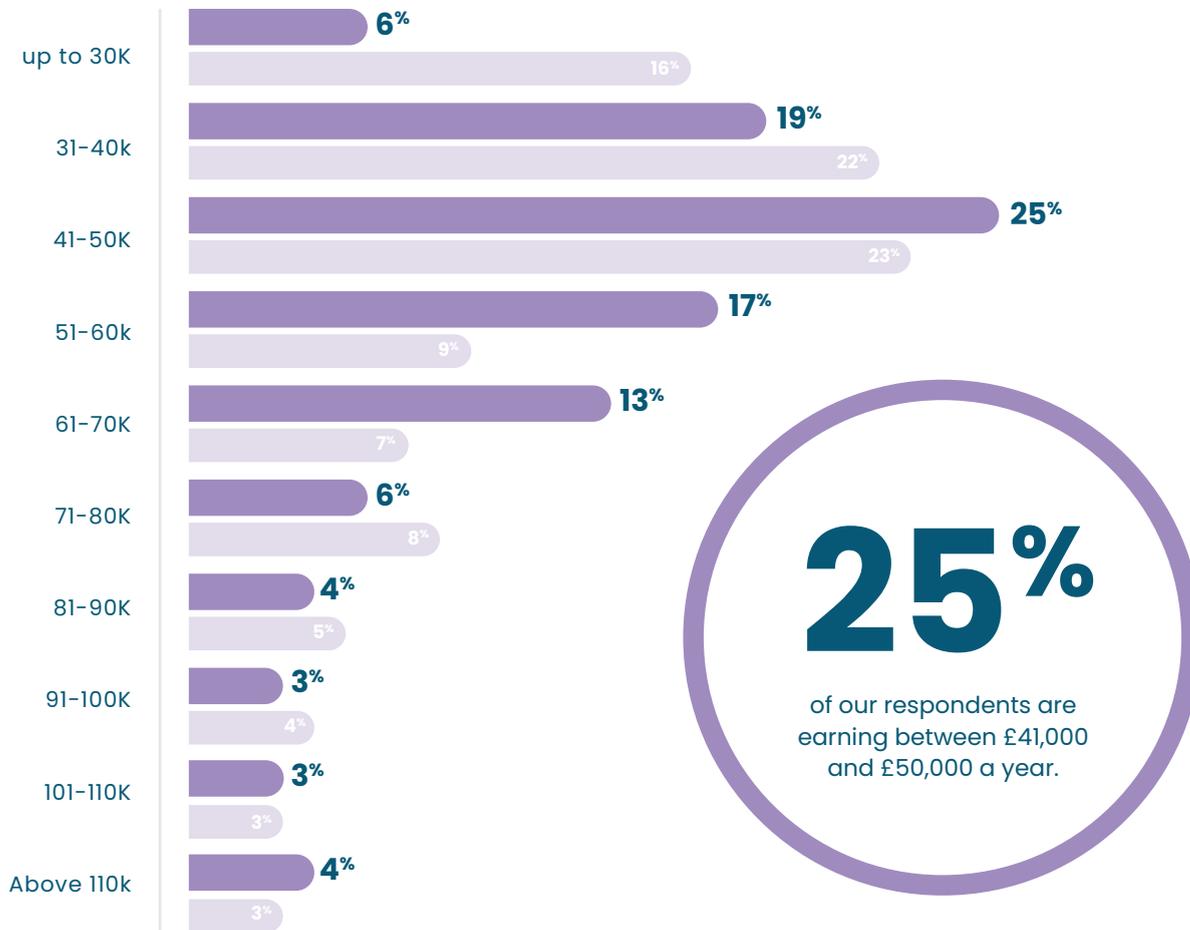
02

All about the money!

This is the salary section of our survey. We asked respondents how they felt their salary compared to the industry average, what their salary was, and if it had changed in the last 12 months.



What is your current basic annual salary?



Comments

The salaries within L&D cover a broad range of distinct roles from leadership roles to entry-level opportunities, but as an industry, we compare well with the average UK salary of £35,000.

The majority of our respondents report annual earnings of between 31-70K. Compared to last year there is a big decrease at the lower end of the earning scale with those earning up to 30K down from 16% to 6%, not surprising given the increase in the cost of living and the pressure it has put on salary expectations. The L&D industry offers good opportunities for progression into high level and high earning roles with 10% of 2023 respondents earning over £91,000 a year.

6%
up to £30k



Median gross annual earnings for full-time employees was £34,963 in April 2023, which is a 5.8% increase over the £33,061 in April 2022.

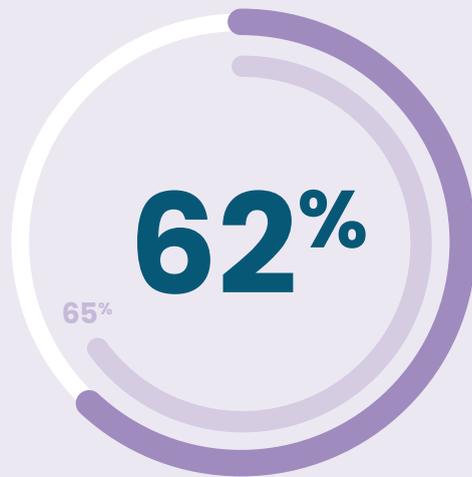
**Office of National Statistics Annual
Survey for Hours & Earnings, UK:
November 2023**

How do you feel your salary compares with the industry average?

This table shows a decrease in salary satisfaction this year with 28% of respondents feeling that their salary is lower than the industry average, compared to 21% last year. However, given the economic circumstances of 2023, there hasn't been as big of a drop as we anticipated with 11% still feeling that they are paid more than the industry average and 62% feeling they are paid about the right amount.

● Percentage of respondents 2022

● Percentage of respondents 2023



About right



Lower than average



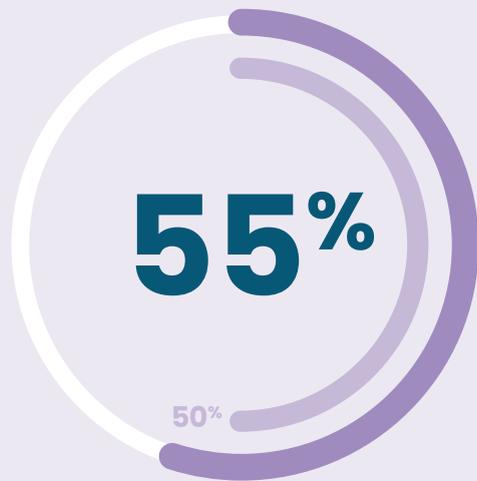
Higher than average

Over the last 12 months, has your salary increased, decreased, or remained the same?

This section is also more optimistic than we might have expected with the percentage of people getting a salary decrease dropping when compared to last year. However, this should be taken in the context of a year with high inflation, when many people effectively took a pay cut if they didn't get a pay rise.

● Percentage of respondents 2022

● Percentage of respondents 2023



Increased

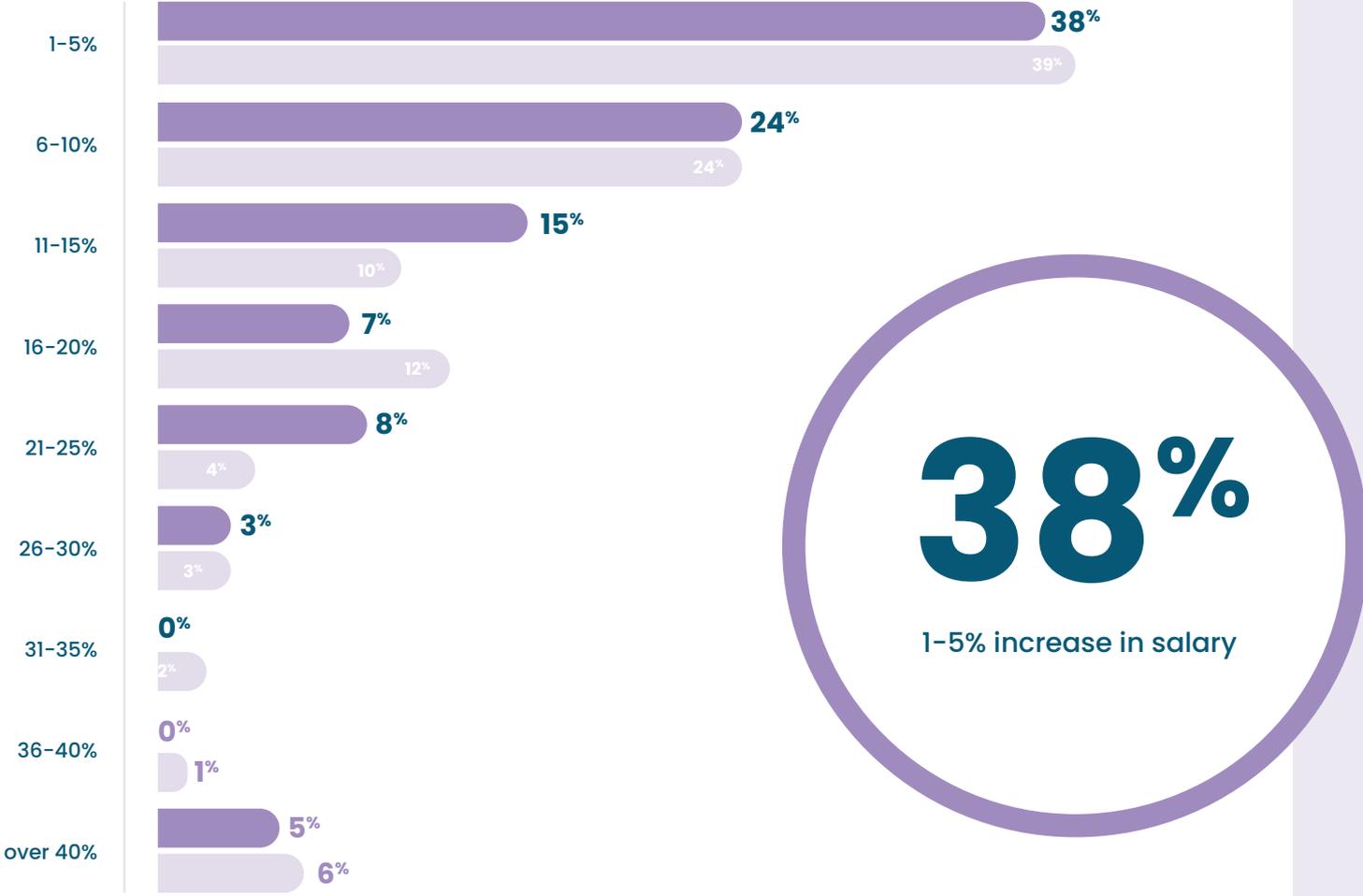


Remained the same



Decreased

If your salary increased what was the percentage increase in salary?



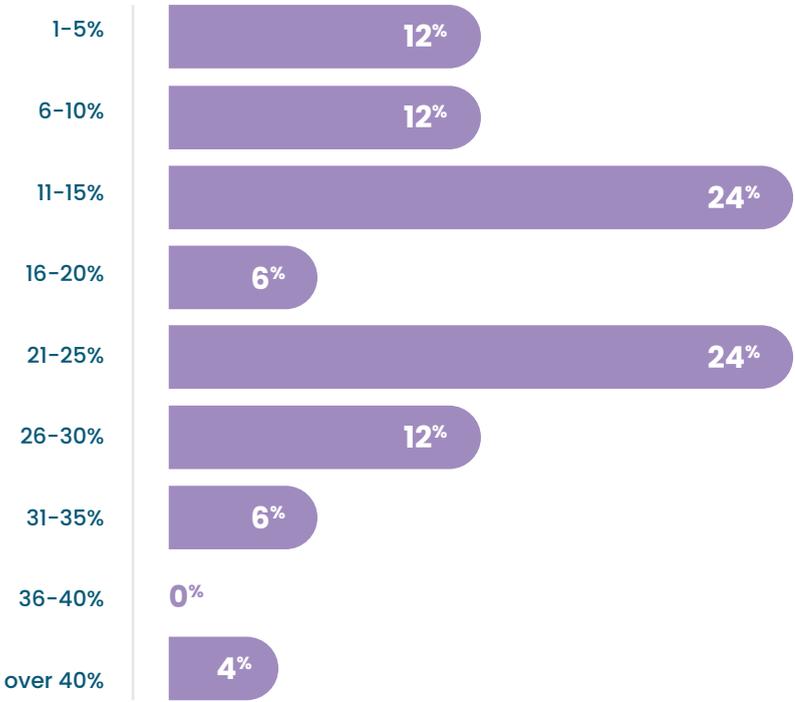
Comments

Where increases in salary occurred, they were broadly in line with last year's results, with many increases being between 1-5% and a significant 24% being in the more generous range of 6-10%. The annual rate of inflation for 2023 was 4.2%.

38%
1-5% increase in salary

5%
Over 40% increase in salary

If your salary decreased what was the percentage decrease in salary?



4%
Over 40% decrease in salary

Comments

Only 5% of our respondents reported a decrease in salary this year and the majority of those saw a cut in salary of 1-5%. We haven't asked about redundancies in this section, but we can assume some of the larger drops in salary may have been a result of redundancies and changing to a lower-paid role.

Summary

Section

02



We saw salary satisfaction decrease slightly this year. 62% of respondents felt their salary was about right compared to 65% last year, however this is still better than previous years, 57% of respondents in 2021 reported that their salary 'was about right'.



We have seen big increases in salaries since 2021 but the cost of living will have eaten into some of these advances this year and with high inflation the 40% of respondents whose salary remained the same will have effectively experienced a pay cut.



Where increases in salary occurred, they were broadly in line with last year's results with many increases being between 1-5% and a significant 24% being in the more generous range of 6-10%. The annual rate of inflation for 2023 was 4.2%.

Section

03

Job Satisfaction & Happiness

In this section we look beyond salary expectations to examine other factors that indicate job satisfaction and happiness including length of tenure, employer treatment and working hours.



Do you regularly work longer hours than you are paid for?



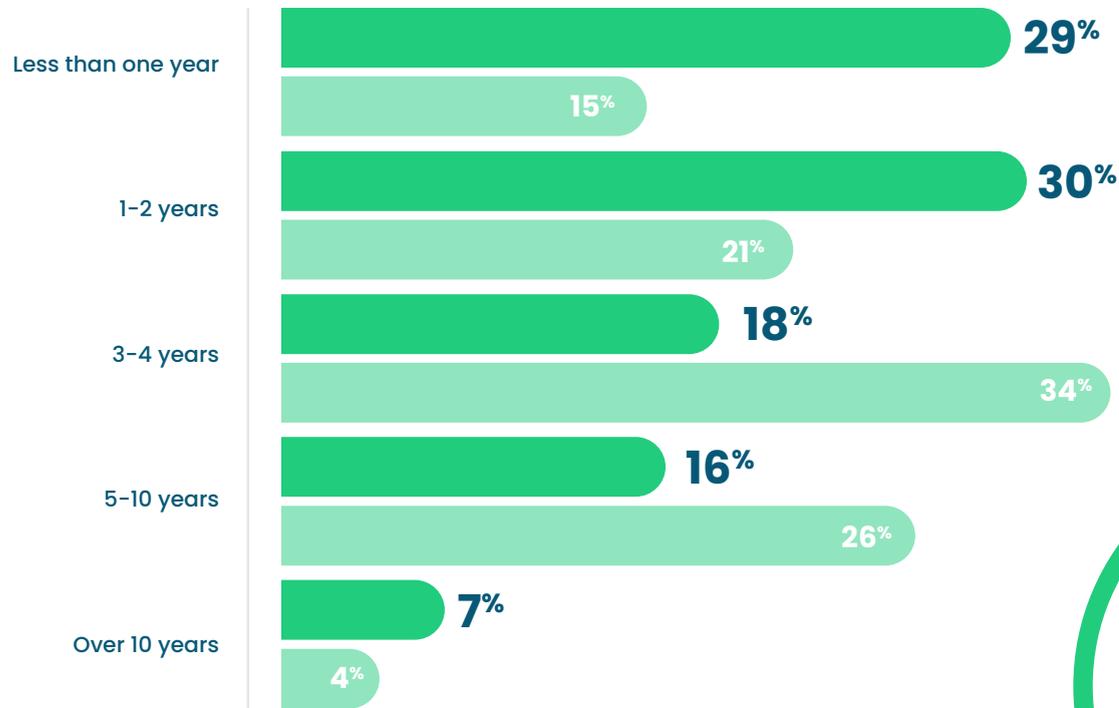
53% of respondents said they worked longer hours than they were paid for compared to 56% in last year's survey.

Comments

There was a drop from 56% to 53% of respondents who reported working longer hours than they are paid for, but this is still a significantly high figure and has implications for work life balance.

Having overworked employees doesn't necessarily benefit employers. According to a CIPD report employee absenteeism hit a 10 year high at the end of September as the long-term impact of Covid on mental and physical health became apparent. Clearly work life balance is still an area needing attention within L&D.

How long have you been at your current company?



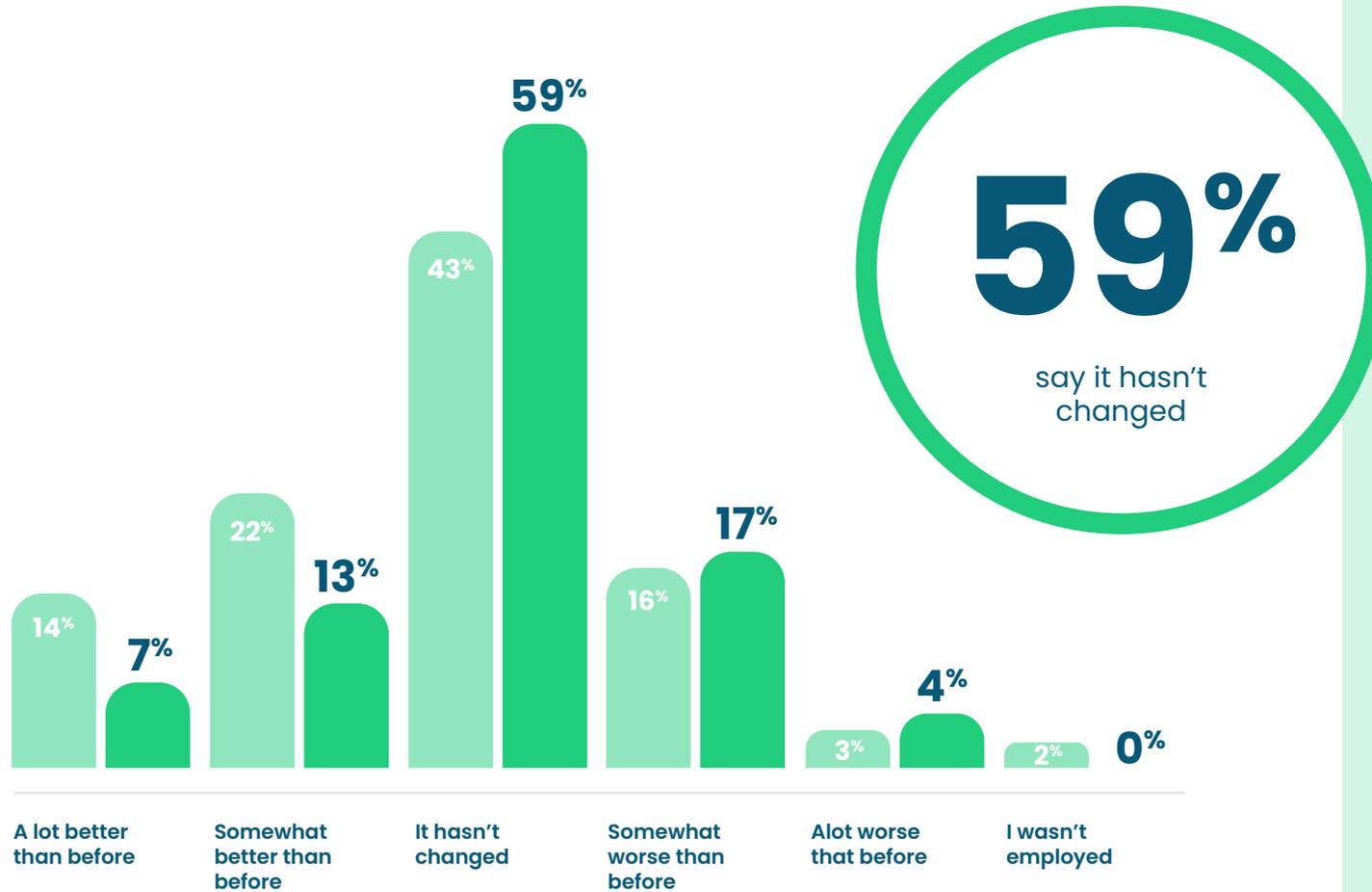
29%
Less than one year

7%
Over 10 years

Comments

There was still a lot of employee movement in 2023. An increased number of respondents had been in their job less than a year in 2023, up from 15% to 29% and those in their jobs 3-4 years had dropped from 34% to 18%. This reflects the turbulence of the last couple of years and we would expect this churn to slow down in 2024, as many companies have now reduced headcount and employees may be more inclined to stay where they are in a cooler economy.

Has the treatment from your Employer changed over the last 12 months?

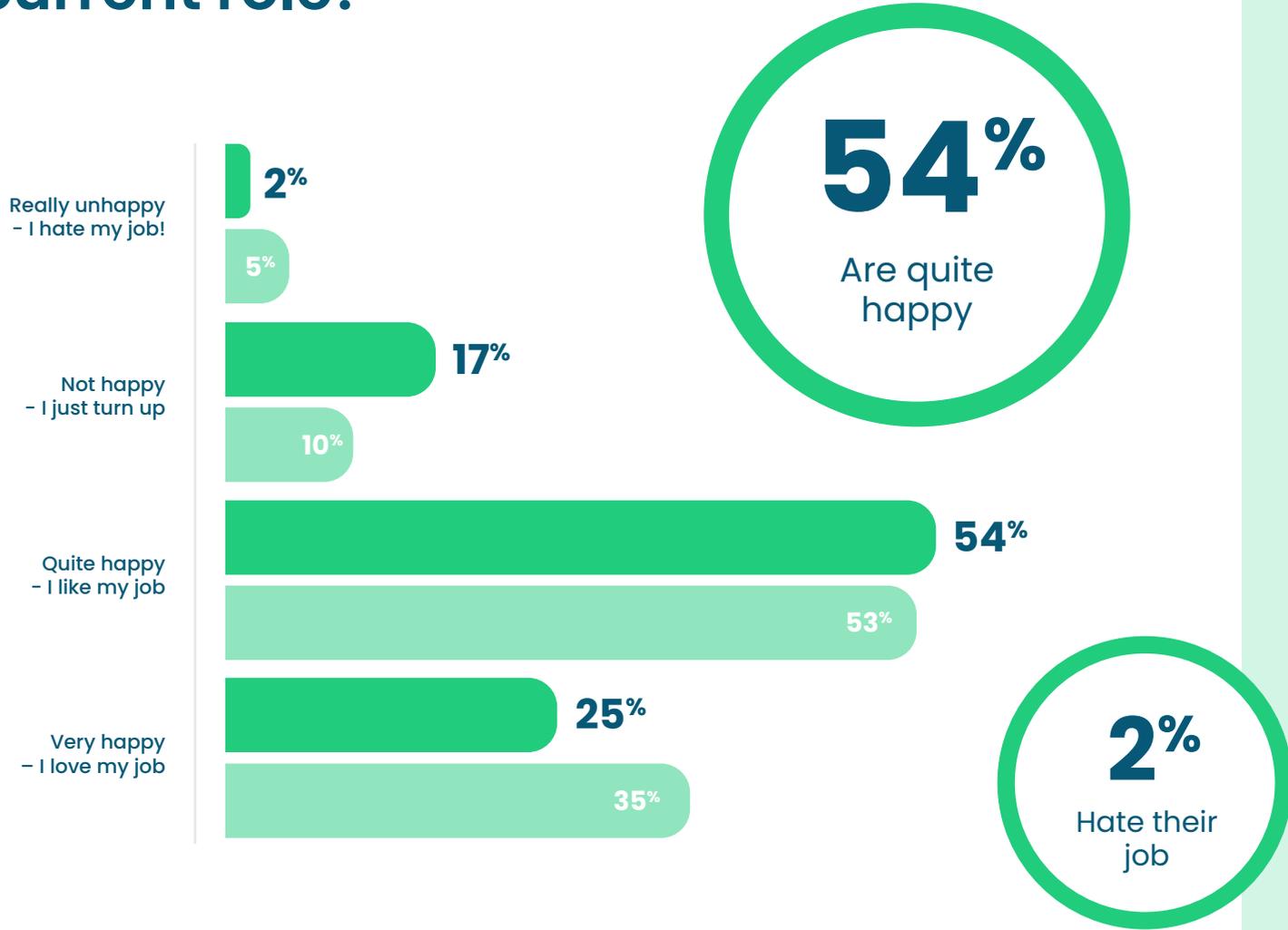


Comments

Employee's views on how they are treated by their employers has stabilised this year with 59% of employees reporting that it stayed the same, up from 43% previously. However, there has been an overall decline, with a 50% decrease in employees who think they are treated 'A lot better' than the year before, coupled with minor increases in the numbers who think that it's 'Somewhat worse' or 'A lot worse' than in 2022.

We would expect that the slowdown in salary hikes and the increase in redundancies has affected levels of job satisfaction and happiness.

How happy are you in your current role?

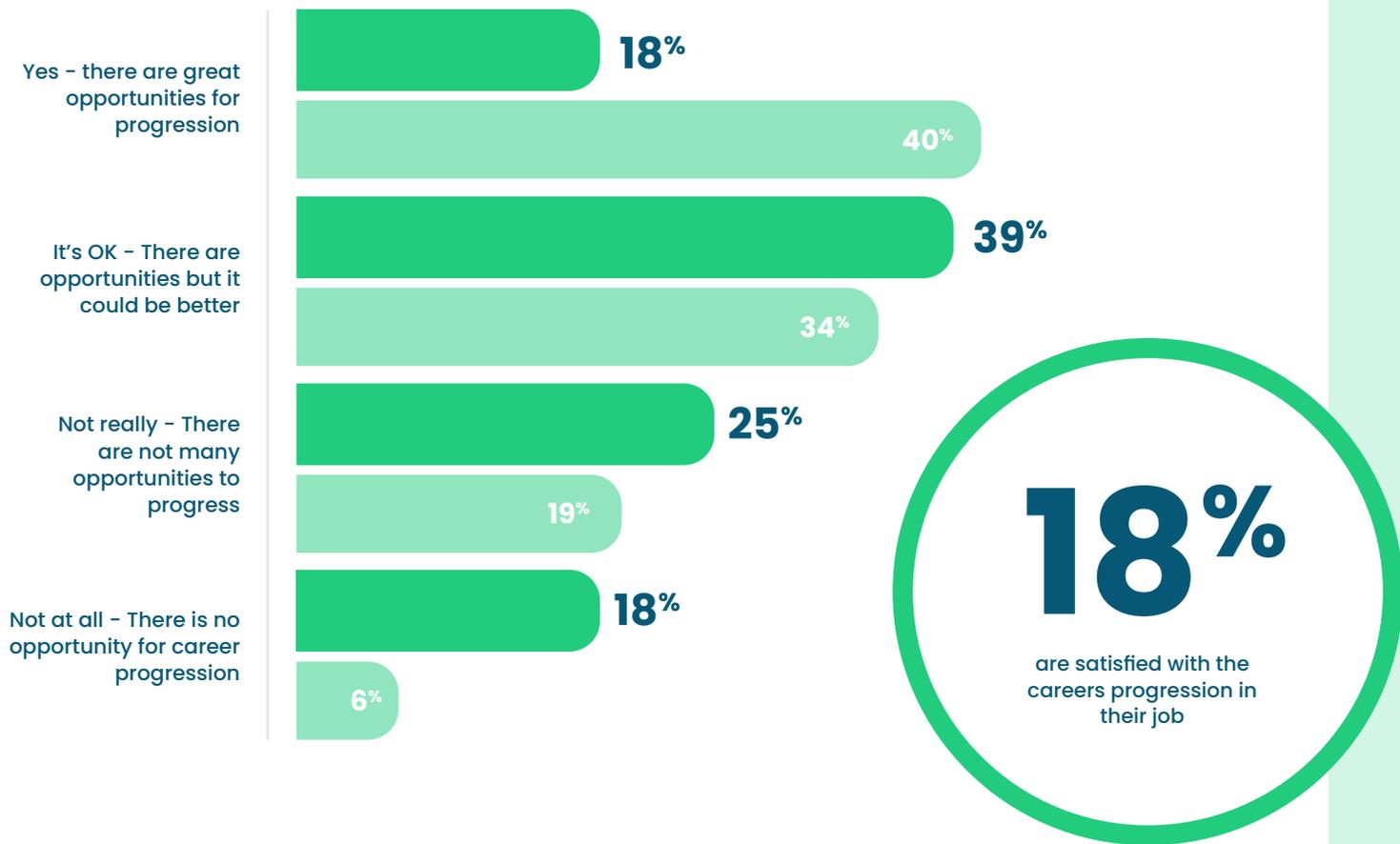


Comments

2023 saw an overall decline in our 'Happiness Index', with an increase of nearly 27% in the number of L&D professionals who reported being either 'really unhappy' or 'not happy and just turning up for work' (19% of the total compared to 15% the previous year).

Despite this, the clear majority (79%) of respondents said they were 'quite happy' or 'very happy' with their job, compared to 88% last year, although the number who are very happy decreased from 35% last year to 25% this year.

Are you satisfied with career progression?



Comments

Satisfaction levels regarding opportunities for career progression have fallen quite significantly this year. In the top tier, those having 'great opportunities' fell from 40% to 18%. Again, this is unfortunately a sign of the times and budget tightening in L&D. However, in the mid-tier of 'its ok but could be better' we see a broadly similar outlook to last year, 39% compared to last year's 34%. We can assume that some of last year's top tier companies have fallen back, which accounts for the rise in this category.

A cause for concern is the increase in those who feel that they have no opportunity for career progression, with this percentage trebling from 6% to 18% of total respondents.

To retain staff employers really need to offer and communicate opportunities for progression - as we will see in the next section that a lack of opportunity to progress is a top reason for people leaving their current job.

Summary

Section

03



We are still working too hard!

There was a drop from 56% to 53% of respondents who reported working longer hours than they are paid for, but this is still a significantly high figure and has implications for work life balance.



There was still a lot of employee movement in 2023

An increased number of respondents had been in their job less than a year in 2023, up from 15% to 29%.



Overall job satisfaction and happiness less than last year

With respondents showing particular concern about opportunities for career progression. This should be seen as part of a broader picture of a challenging year, however, despite the increased gloom 25% of our respondents still love their job!

Section

04

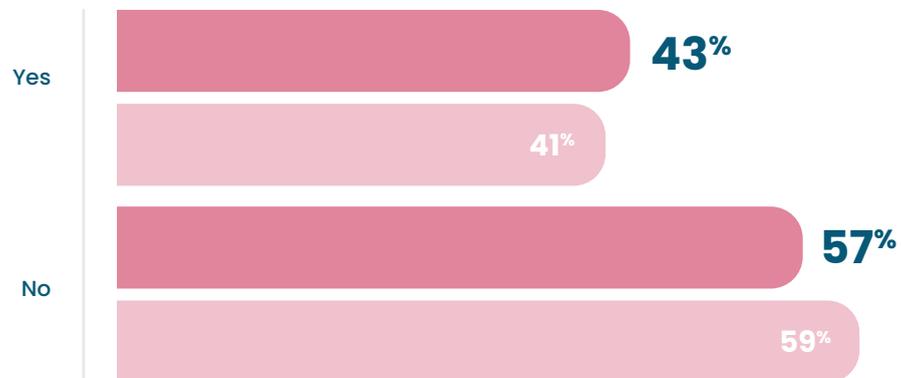
Your Work

In this section we asked respondents if they were likely to change jobs in the next 12 months and if so, what would be their primary reason for changing jobs.



Are you **likely** to change jobs in the next 12 months?

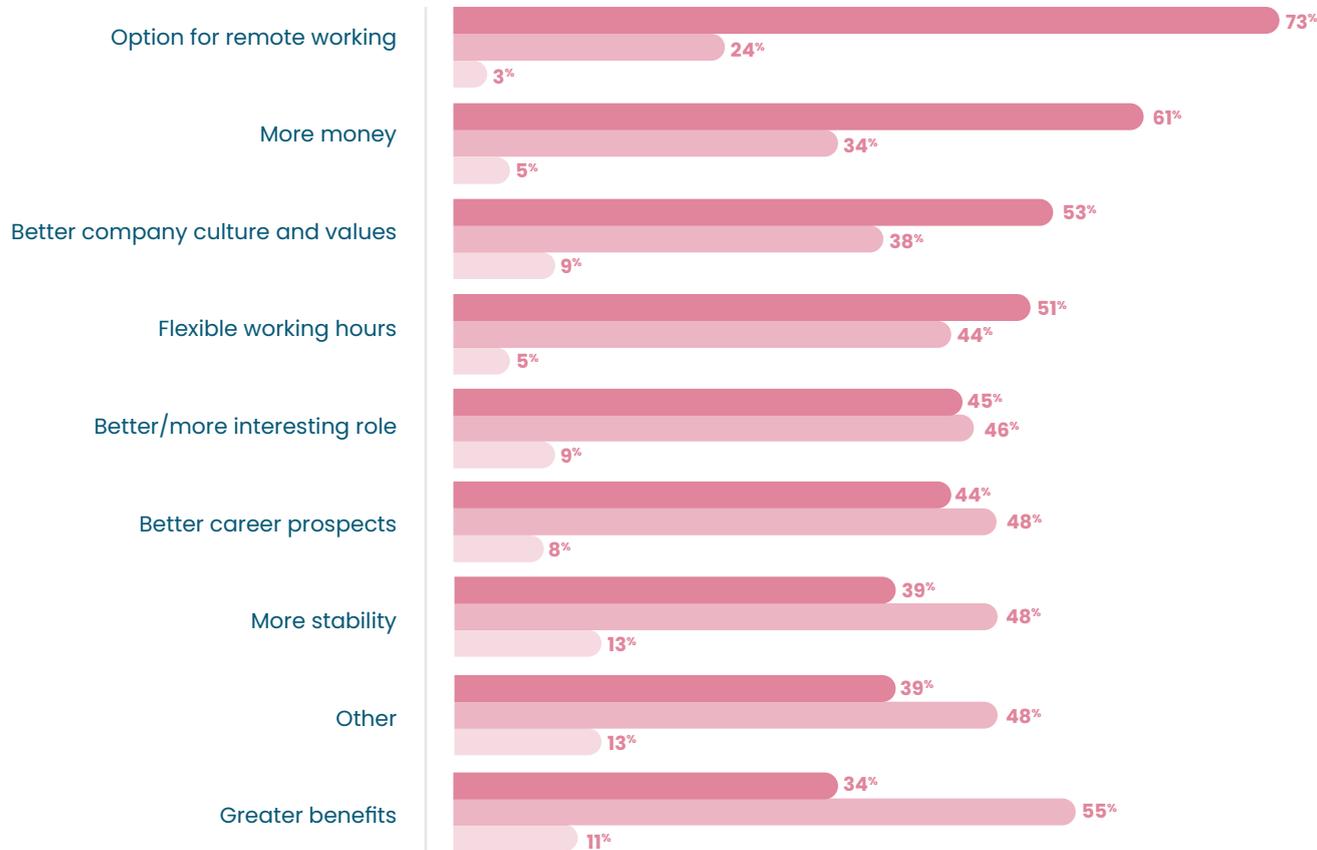
Despite being consistent with last year, predicted job movement in the L&D arena remains high, with 43% of respondents saying that they are likely to change jobs in the next 12 months compared to 41% last year.



43%

likely to change jobs in the next 12 months

What would be your primary reason for changing jobs?

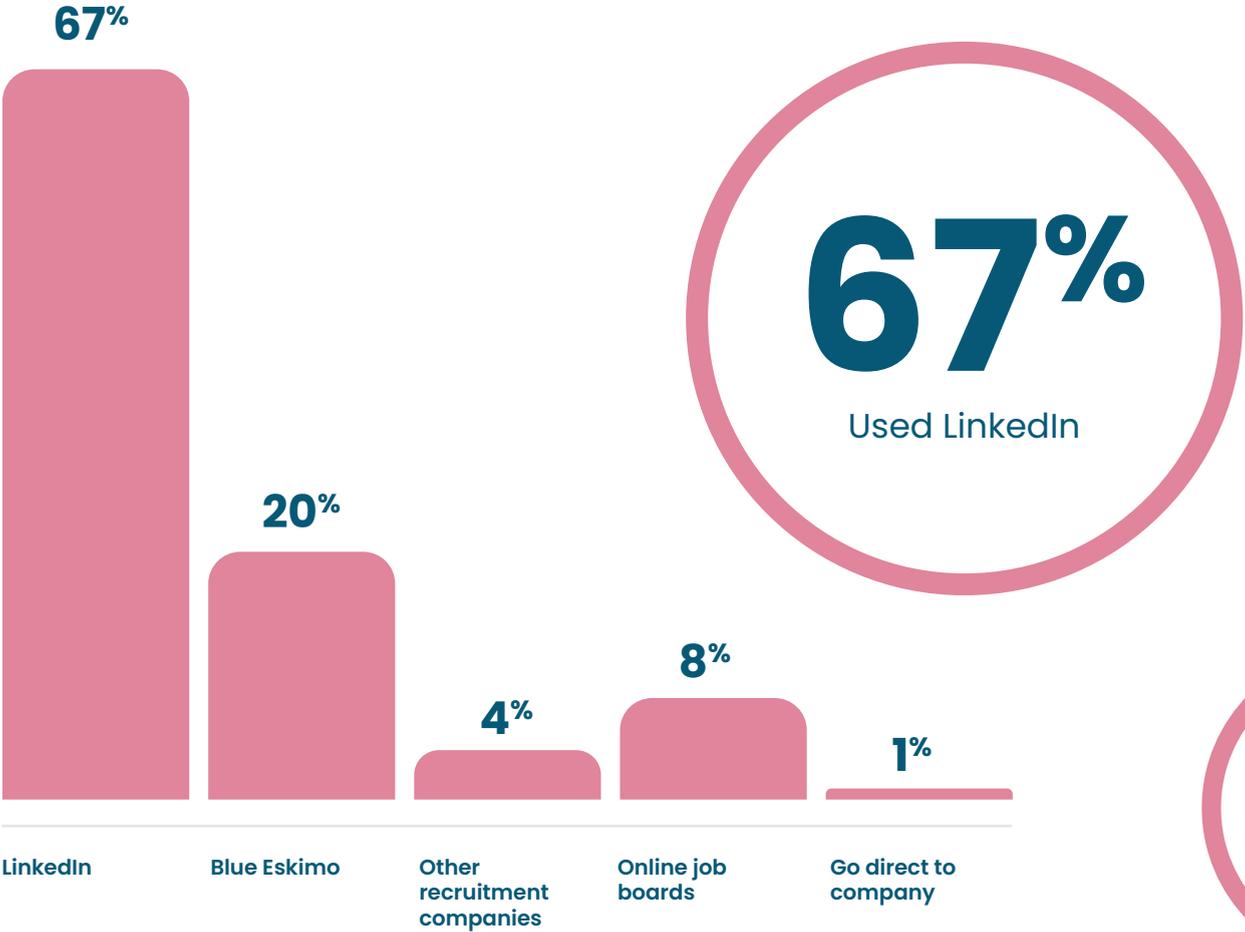


Comments

43% of our respondents said they expected to change jobs in the next 12 months, so it looks like 2024 will be another year of change for many. Remote working ranked highly as a very important factor in choosing a new job which suggests it is very much here to stay and that hybrid is a compromise.

Money is always a key factor when considering a job move but 'a better company culture and values' also ranked highly in third place.

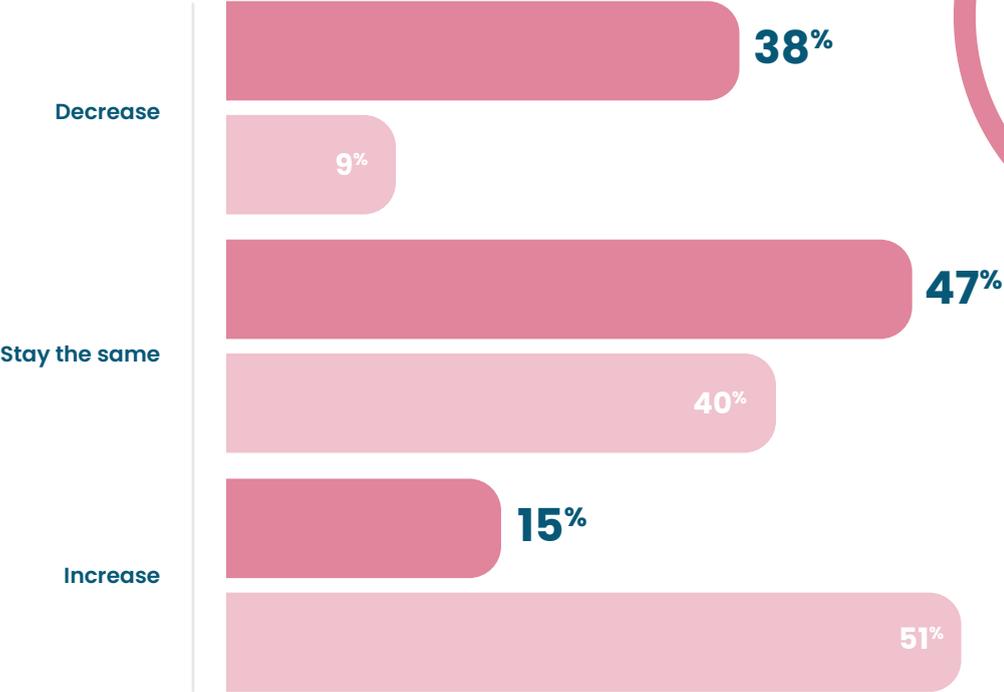
When looking for a new job, which sources would you use?



Comments

LinkedIn remains a very popular tool for job hunting. This survey is shared widely with our network so it's no surprise to see that Blue Eskimo also feature highly followed by other recruitment companies and online job boards. Very few people approach companies directly probably because for many companies HR and recruitment have become much more formalised and are often outsourced entirely, although direct contact may still prove very valuable if you have the right contacts, especially if not many people use this approach.

Over the next 12 months do you think that L&D budgets in general will decrease, stay the same, increase?



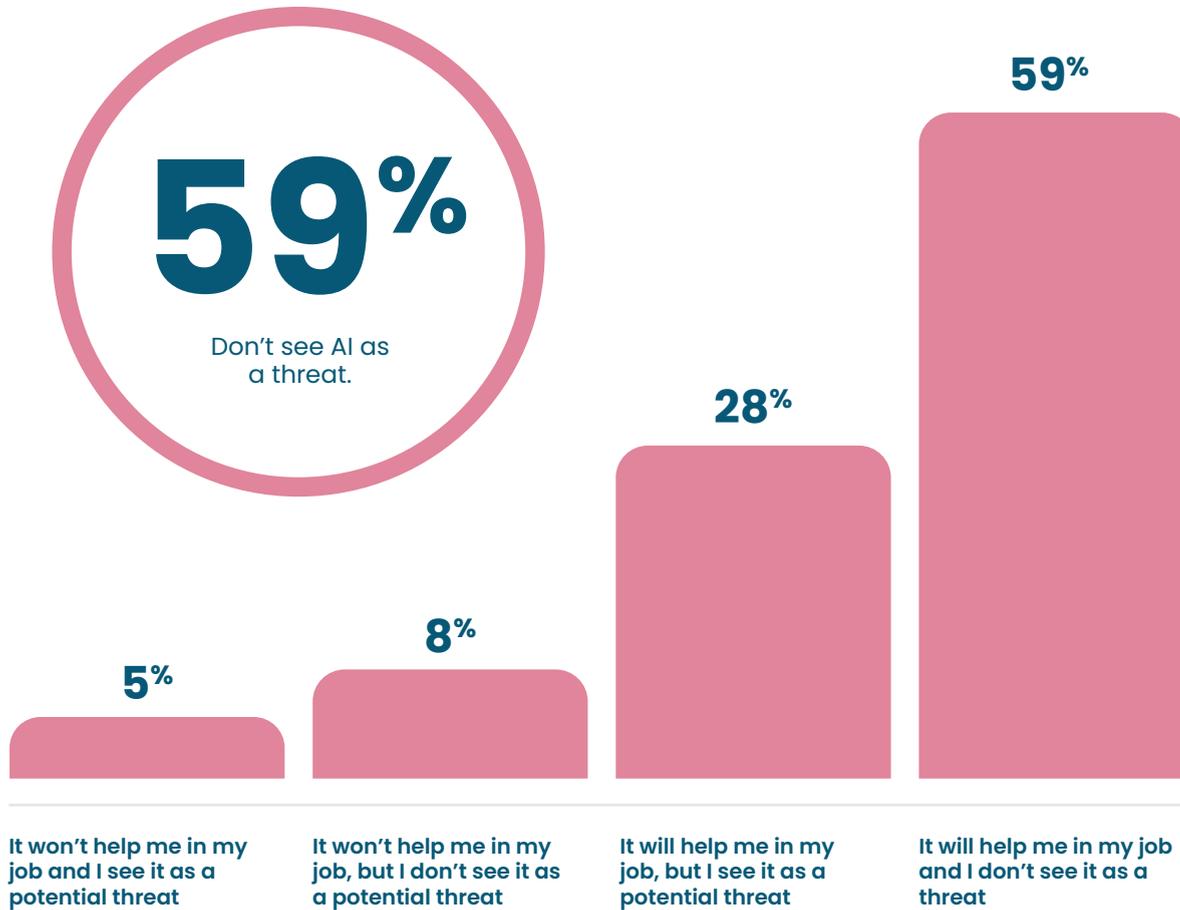
38%
think L&D budgets will decrease

Comments

This is the question where we see the most dramatic difference year on year, last year the question was phrased slightly differently as 'thinking about your current employer, how do you think the business will grow over the next 12 months.' Although the phrasing is different both questions are about confidence in future growth of L&D.

Last year there was a more optimistic expectation of growth with 51% of respondents feeling that their employer's business would grow, but this has not come to pass. When looking specifically at L&D budget 38% of this years respondents are expecting L&D budgets to decline over the next 12 months. This highlights two things: a decline in confidence for growth in the sector, and that the challenge and slowdown of this year was not anticipated by many.

What impact do you think Generative AI will have on your job?



Comments

The overall sentiment is positive in terms of the impact that AI will have on L&D roles, with 59% of L&D professionals believing that it will help in their jobs and they don't see it as a threat. However, this positive viewpoint is diluted somewhat as 33% of respondents see it as a 'potential threat'.

5%

Do see AI as a threat.

Section
05

Conclusion

Conclusion

2023 was a challenging year for L&D. We saw demand cool within the market and increases in redundancies, however there is still demand for senior and strategic roles to lead L&D forward and we expect revenue generating roles related to sales and marketing to be growth areas for 2024.

Hybrid working has gone from the 'new normal' to just normal and in general L&D professionals seem happy with their current working arrangements.

Work life balance continues to be a challenge. Even though most people reported being happy with their working arrangement, many are still working more hours than they are paid for. In general, we saw a decrease in happiness and job satisfaction in 2023 but this should be taken in the context of a tough economic year and an industry going back to more normal trading conditions after a boom.

According to research by Indeed only one-third of UK workers are generally happy in their jobs most of the time. In contrast, 79% of our respondents reported being quite or very happy, with 25% being very happy and loving their jobs, the industry can take pride in this. Although job satisfaction levels dropped slightly this year in our survey, the ONS has reported a post-pandemic drop in all measures of personal well-being across the population with average rates of wellbeing decreasing and anxiety increasing, leading some to refer to 2023 as the great gloom, so in this context L&D still looks quite sunny!

2024 looks like another year of flux in the market. 43% of our respondents said they expected to change jobs in the next 12 months. Remote working ranked highest as a very important factor in choosing a new job, so those companies who are keen to get people back in the office may need to consider a compromise if they want to retain and attract staff.



Conclusion

The outlook for the next 12 months is mixed among our sample of respondents but veering on the cautious side: 47% thought L&D budgets would stay the same and 38% felt they would decrease. There were just 15% of optimistic respondents who felt they would rise.



This was the first year we asked about generative AI and how people felt it would impact their work. Despite a lot of media coverage that may have us believe otherwise, in general L&D professionals seem positive about its impact. The majority (59%) feel that AI is not a threat and will help them with their work. It will be interesting to see if this opinion changes over the next 12 months as we see a further (and likely rapid) development of AI in 2024.

The L&D industry continues to evolve and despite a difficult year our survey shows that there are still good opportunities in the sector and that it scores above the average as an enjoyable and rewarding industry to work in. We have already navigated challenges and changes in L&D working practices through a global pandemic and now there is the opportunity to innovate the industry with AI. No doubt 2024 will prove to be another interesting year in the L&D and learning technologies job market, with roles evolving and new ones being created, as we adapt to technological advances.

Resources

<https://www.businessinsider.com/employees-back-to-the-office-what-the-data-really-says2023-9?r=US&IR=T>

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2023/sep/26/number-of-workers-taking-sick-leave-hits10-year-high>

<https://www.fosway.com/> <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-net-zero-20-september-2023>

<https://standout-cv.com/job-satisfaction-statistics>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/november2023>

<https://thehappinessindex.com/blog/workplace-trends/>

<https://www.bamboohr.com/resources/guides/employee-happiness-h1-2023>

<https://cy.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/april2022tomarch2023>

blue eskimo

**Thank
you**

Register for
job alerts



Hire a
person



Find a job

