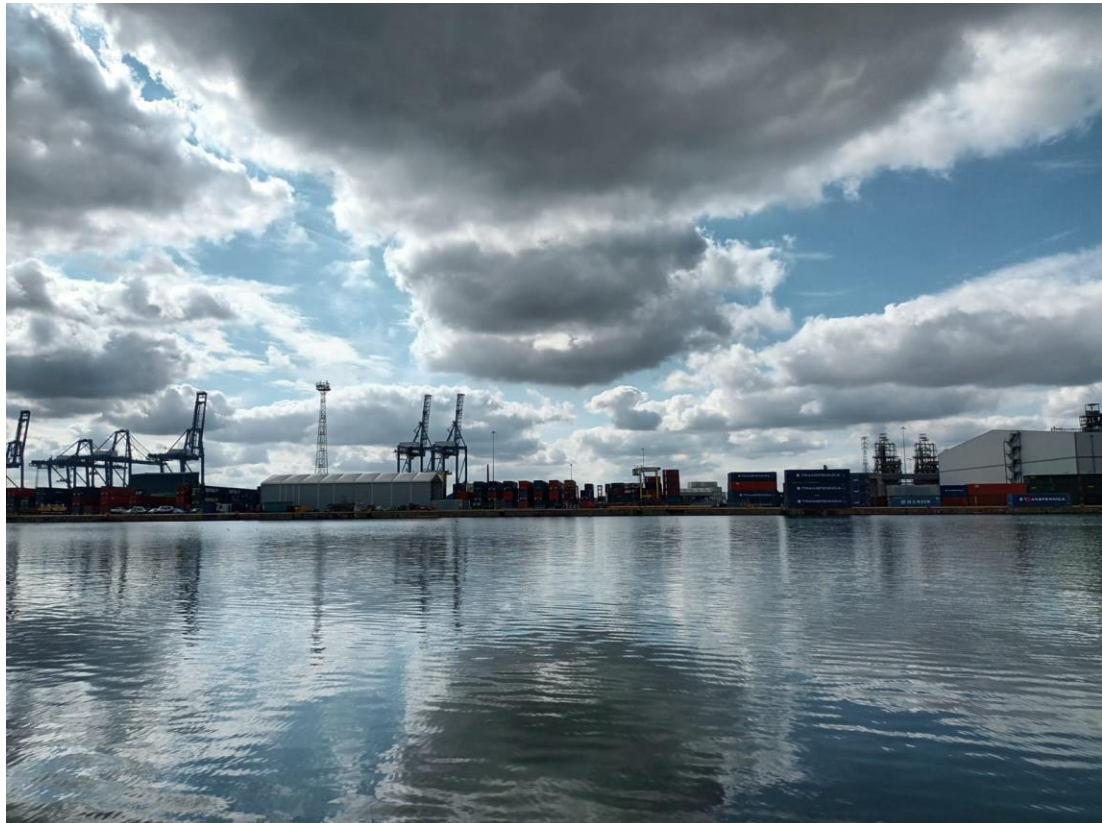


PORT SKILLS & SAFETY

IMPROVING STANDARDS THROUGH COLLABORATION

Port Happiness Survey 2023



Introduction

Good mental health is a vital component of all round health and affects people's ability to perform their jobs to the best of their ability. It therefore has clear implications for ports operating in a safe and effective manner.

Good workplace mental health policies and practices are more important than ever, with the cost-of-living crisis, economic uncertainty and the rate of global change, many people are going to work with a lot of their minds. This can have a serious impact on the safety of all port workers as team members may be distracted or suffering from the physical impacts that poor mental health can have.

The PSS Happiness Survey assesses the overall mental wellbeing of port workers to establish what more, if anything, needs to be done to support good mental health for port workers.

The results provide a clearer picture of all aspects of port workers' mental well-being and its effect on workplace safety and job satisfaction.

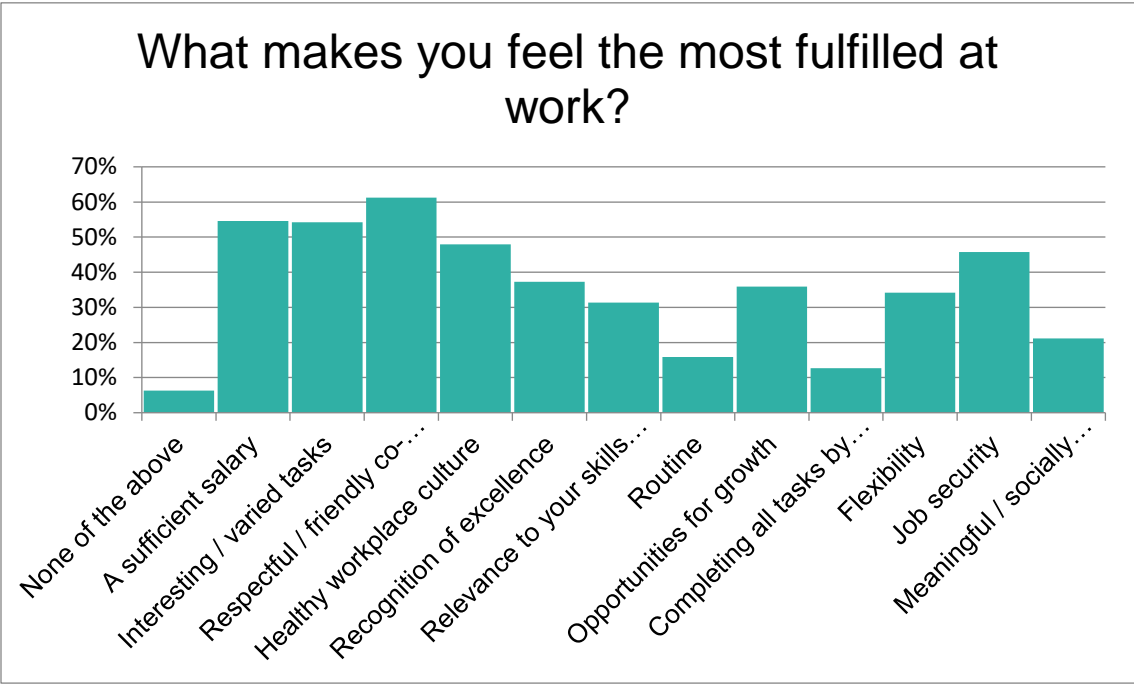
Responses

The survey was completed by nearly 300 port workers, 75 per cent of whom gave their gender as male, reflecting the current makeup of the industry. Just over 20 per cent said they were female and one per cent were non-binary.

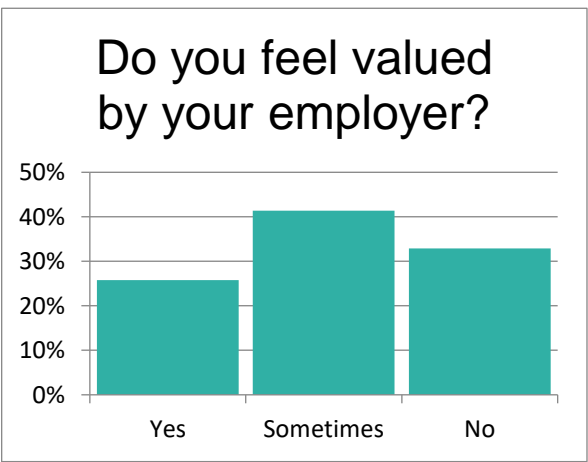
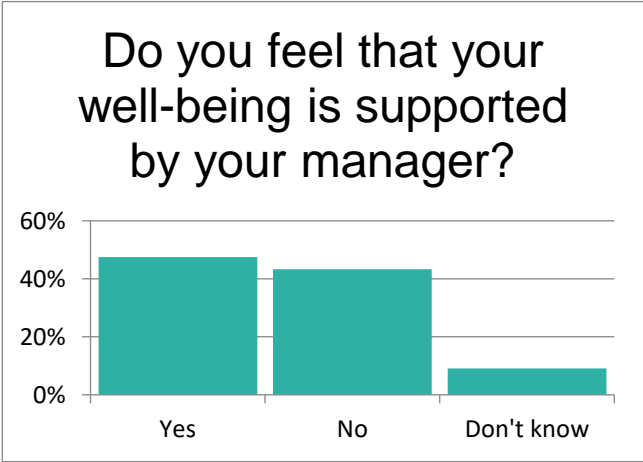
Over half of respondents were aged between 35 and 54 with 20 per cent under 34 and nearly 30 per cent over 54. It is noted that a recent study, men between the ages of 25 and 40 are more likely to experience mental health issues than any other age group. The study, conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health, found that these men are more prone to depression, anxiety, and substance abuse than their older or younger counterparts. As well as the pressures of every-day life, societal norms often dictate that men should not show their emotions, which may prevent them from seeking help when they need it.

Results

The survey revealed that a respectful and friendly culture, sufficient salary, and interesting and varied tasks, contribute the most to port workers feeling fulfilled in their jobs. However, it also revealed that nearly half of port workers often felt unsupported by their managers and only a quarter felt fully valued by their employer.



The survey revealed a worrying feeling of lack of well-being support from managers, with less than 50% advising that they felt their manager supported their well-being. Participants also shared that they were happy in work less than 60% of the time – to put that in simple terms, the workforce are unhappy on average two days out of five.

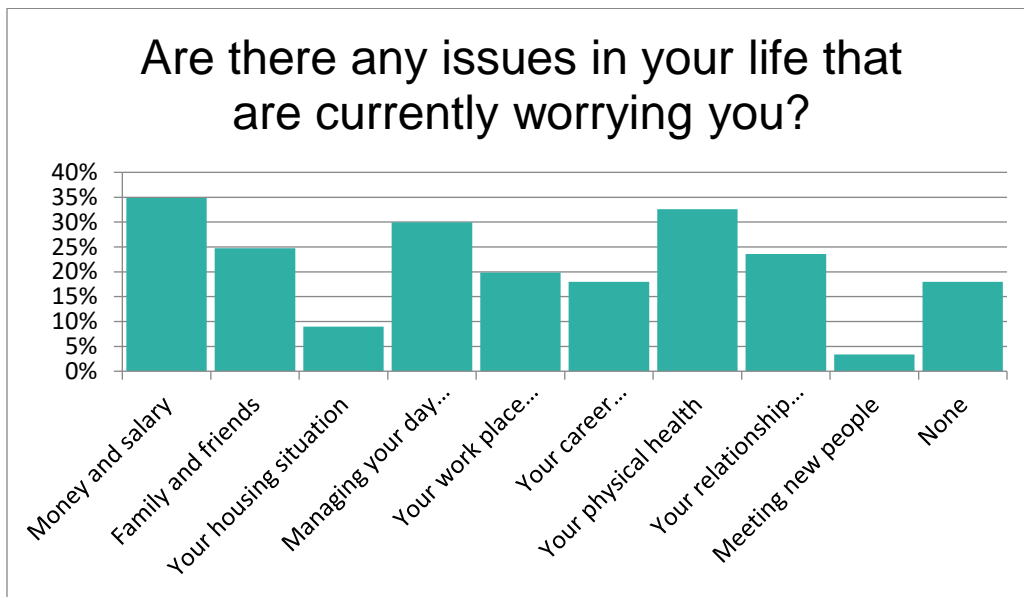


The positive news is that around half of the workforce stated they are happy with their salary and their workload; and nearly three quarters had good relationships with their colleagues.

An important part of keeping mentally healthy, is looking after physical health, especially for those with largely manual jobs, or those who have to work shift patterns and therefore part of the survey looked at this aspect. The results showed that port workers felt they were generally able to keep fit and healthy.

Where respondents reported they were not able to keep fit and healthy, a large proportion put this down to shift work; with long hours, short notice and shift changes making getting into a proper fitness routine. Many noted that the port working environment does not allow for taking walks during breaks at work.

A third of respondents said that their physical health was causing concern, and alongside money worries, was the top reason for stress outside of the workplace.



Over the six months prior to the survey being issued, two out of three people advised that they had ended up eating or sleeping either too much or too little and nearly 60 per cent had experienced having low or no energy. Just under half also said they were aware they had pulled away from people and usual activities because of this.

Conclusions

The results of the survey demonstrate that a healthy workplace, with supportive colleagues and managers, is essential for maintaining good mental health. The results show that there is still a need for managers to do more to support port workers to ensure they are able to work to their full potential and ensure the safety of others.

General feedback from port workers highlighted that whilst mental health and wellbeing is a topic that is discussed more frequently, in a number of cases it is perceived to be an administrative or 'tick-box' exercise. Over 70 per cent of respondents reported that they would be happy for a colleague to talk to them about their mental health but less than 20 per cent said they would reach out to a colleague to discuss their own mental health issues.

The survey shows that whilst progress is being made, it is clear that there is so much more that can be done. PSS will continue to promote Mental Health Week annually and work towards an environment where everyone understands the effect mental health can have on general health and safety and that it is OK to not be OK.