

How successfully has your contact centre embraced hybrid working?

In partnership with

SuccessKPI

sensée

PITCH
Content Strategy + Marketing Communications

Welsh Contact Centre Forum

Introduction

The ‘How Successfully has your Contact Centre Embraced Hybrid Working’ Survey paints a picture of the current state of hybrid working in the new world of work.

Topics covered include:

- **Where are organisations on their hybrid working journeys?**
- **What hybrid models are they using?**
- **What are their future WFH plans?**
- **What WFH/hybrid issues are they experiencing?**
- **And what benefits are they realising?**
- **What WFH/hybrid technologies are businesses investing in?**

The survey was conducted by Pitch Marketing Communications in partnership with Sensée, the home and hybrid working specialists, and Success KPI, the insight and action platform provider.

102 Contact Centre Professionals completed online survey questionnaires in November and December 2022.

The ‘How Successfully has your Contact Centre Embraced Hybrid Working’ Survey was conducted online and promoted via social media posts, direct emails and in partnership with the Welsh Contact Centre Forum.

Methodology

To encourage participation, individuals that completed the survey were entered into a free prize draw to win £500 of retail vouchers.

The Survey involved approximately 20 questions and took an average of 5.5 minutes to complete. 91% of all questionnaires started were completed from beginning to end.

Individual responses were treated entirely confidentially and aggregated for analysis purposes.



Executive Summary

In this survey we explored how far organisations - and in particular customer contact centres - are along their home and hybrid working journeys, and what future plans they have to reduce or enhance their reliance on the office.

Survey highlights:

Return to the office?

Over four-fifths of respondents (78%) said that, by November/December 2022, fewer than a quarter of their organisation's contact centre advisers had returned to the office full time post lockdown. Two-thirds (66%) believe that 50% or more of their advisers will be working from home (at least part of the time) by the end of 2023.

Various hybrid models

The most popular hybrid working business model today is 'flexible working between the home and office where EMPLOYEES decide where they work on any given day' (37% of respondents). Other models used include 'flexible working between the home and office where BUSINESSES decide where they work on any given day', 'set days at home and set days in the office' and '(either) 100% from home or 100% from the office'.

Issues and benefits associated with WFH/hybrid

Pastoral Care (68%) and Communicating Effectively (66%) are the two issues cited most often by respondents as key hybrid working issues - with the main benefits cited as Happier and More Productive Employees (72%), Lower Carbon Footprint (61%, Additional Business Continuity (52%) and Traditional Recruitment Barriers Removed (45% of respondents).

Performance of WFH vs office teams

The majority of respondents say that the performance of their homeworking teams is comparable to that of office-based teams against all the criteria given within the questionnaire (including attrition, absenteeism, productivity, customer experience, and quality of service). For EVERY criteria given (apart from Average Handle Time), there is a greater chance of homeworker team performance being better than that of comparable office-based teams.

While most people agree that it is easier to recruit and retain homeworkers than office-based workers, very few say that it is easier to monitor their work quality, manage their performance, or train them.

Are Managers ready for the challenge?

Under half (48%) of respondents think that their organisations have given Managers and Supervisors sufficient training and advice to manage, train and support their work-from-home teams.

Live adviser vs digitally-delivered customer service

When asked about technology channels used, 95% of respondents cite voice, 94% email, and two-thirds (67%) webchat. 89% of respondents say that customer contacts are mainly handled today by live operators. Looking forward, just 40% of respondents believe that the majority of their customer contacts will be handled by digital channels (i.e. not by a 'live adviser' phone call) by 2025.

WFH and self-scheduling hours

79% of contact centre professionals agree with the statement that their organisation 'gives employees the opportunity to work flexibly so they can enjoy a better work life balance'. But 71% say that they can't yet give contact centre employees the freedom and flexibility to self-select their own work schedules.

WFH/hybrid technology

82% of respondents say that they have enhanced IT or Information Security in order to enable home-based working.

Foreward by Sensée

2022 was the year everything was supposed to return to normal. After two years of intermittent Covid-forced lockdowns, organisations were looking to opening their office doors full-time, putting an end to business uncertainly.

Or so they thought. Because, as we now know, that's not what happened.

The Covid lockdown period influenced pretty much everything around us at social, political and economic levels... including how we perceive 'the workplace'. It taught us that business doesn't need to be conducted within traditional office walls. On occasions, and for some people, it can be conducted just as well (if not better) with people working from home. Or, indeed, working partly from home and partly from the office.

As a result, organisations found that the New World of Work can be less about 'bringing people to work'.... and more about 'bringing work to people'. And they've quickly come to realise that making this new workplace effective requires a radically different mindset - not just when it comes to recruitment, training, management, communications and scheduling but also when it comes to how looking after the security and health & well being of colleagues.

The survey has provided a unique opportunity to come together as an industry to reflect on what has been happening around us and prepare for the future ahead.

By Simon Hunter, Chief Commercial Officer, Sensée



sensée

Size of your contact centre

People responding to our survey work in contact centres of all shapes and sizes with around a half (49%) stating that they work in centres with 100 or more seats.

0 - 20 seats
12%



21 - 50 seats
15%



51 - 100 seats
19%



101 - 250 seats
13%



251 - 1000 seats
25%



1000 seats+
11%



We don't have a contact centre
2%



We use an outsourcer
3%



Industry sector

Most common industries people work in are Financial Services (25% of respondents), Public Sector (18%) and Retail (11%).

Utilities
8%



Retail
11%



Financial Services
25%



Public Sector
18%



IT and Telecoms
5%



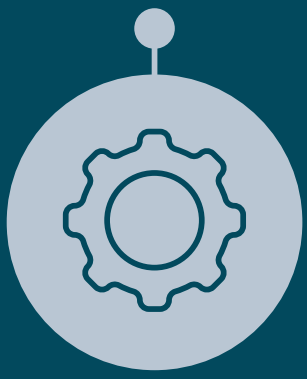
Healthcare
3%



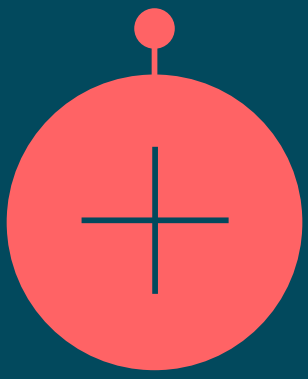
Media
2%



Manufacturing
0%

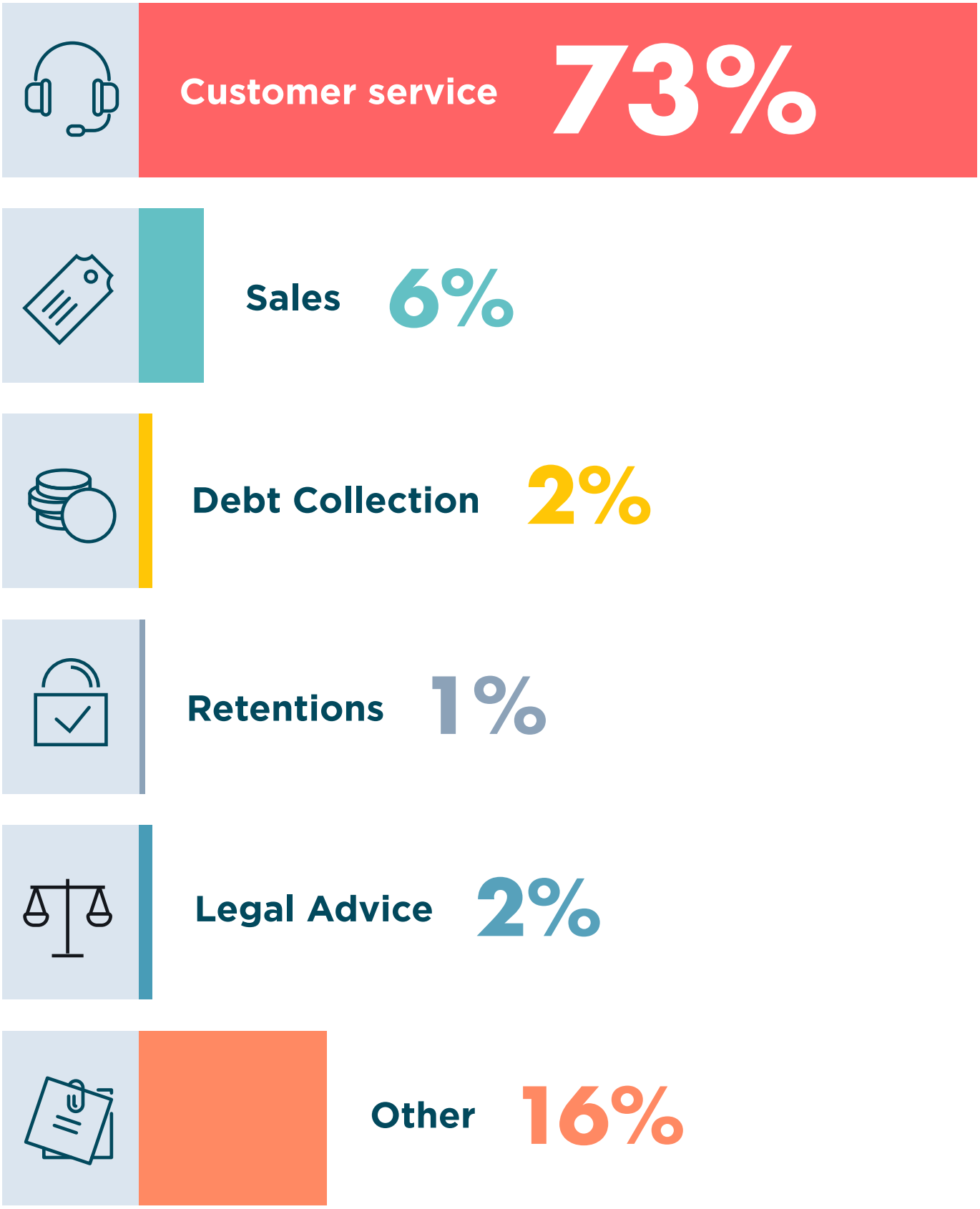


Other
28%



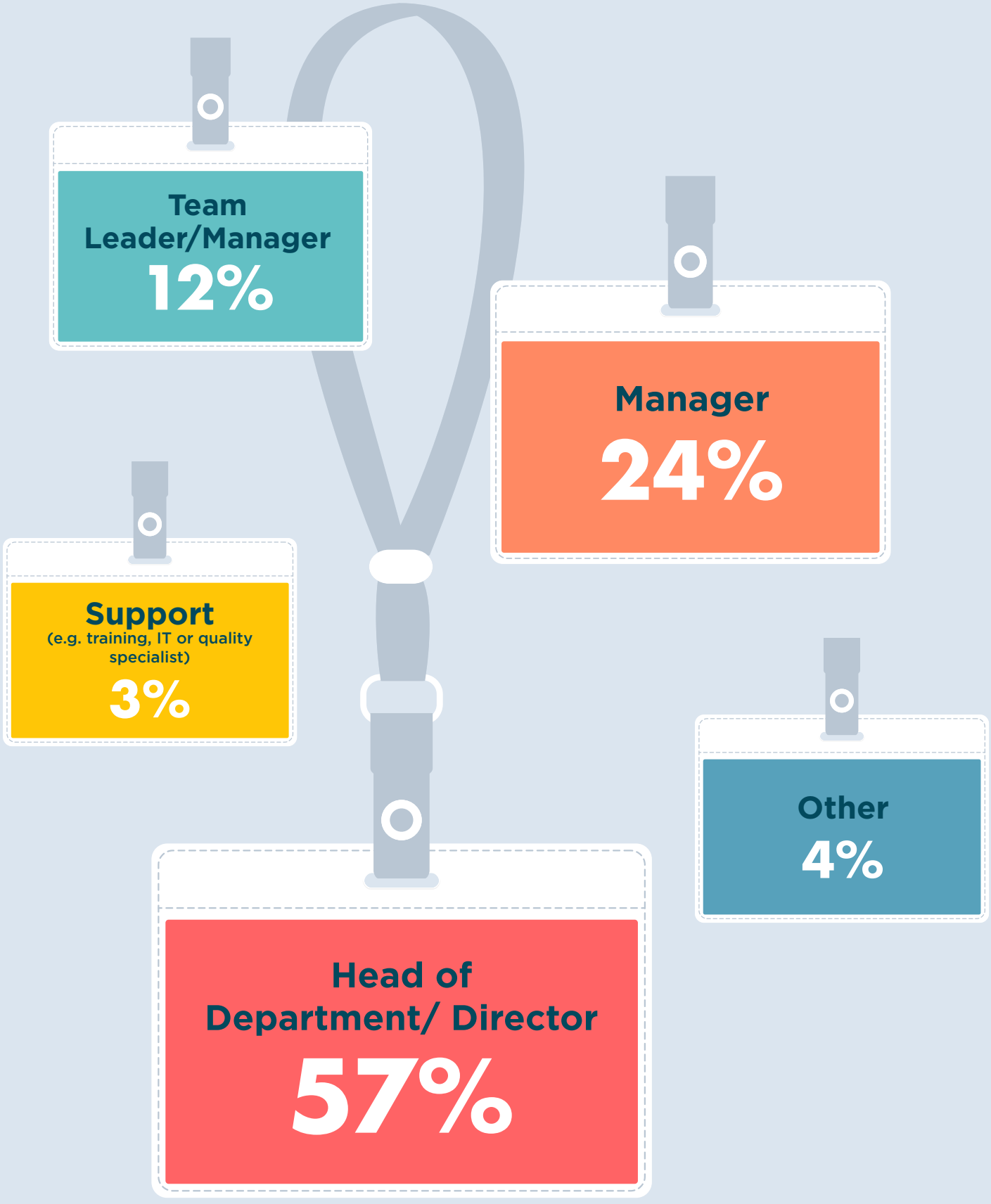
Area of Employment

73% of respondents work in Customer Services and 6% in Sales.



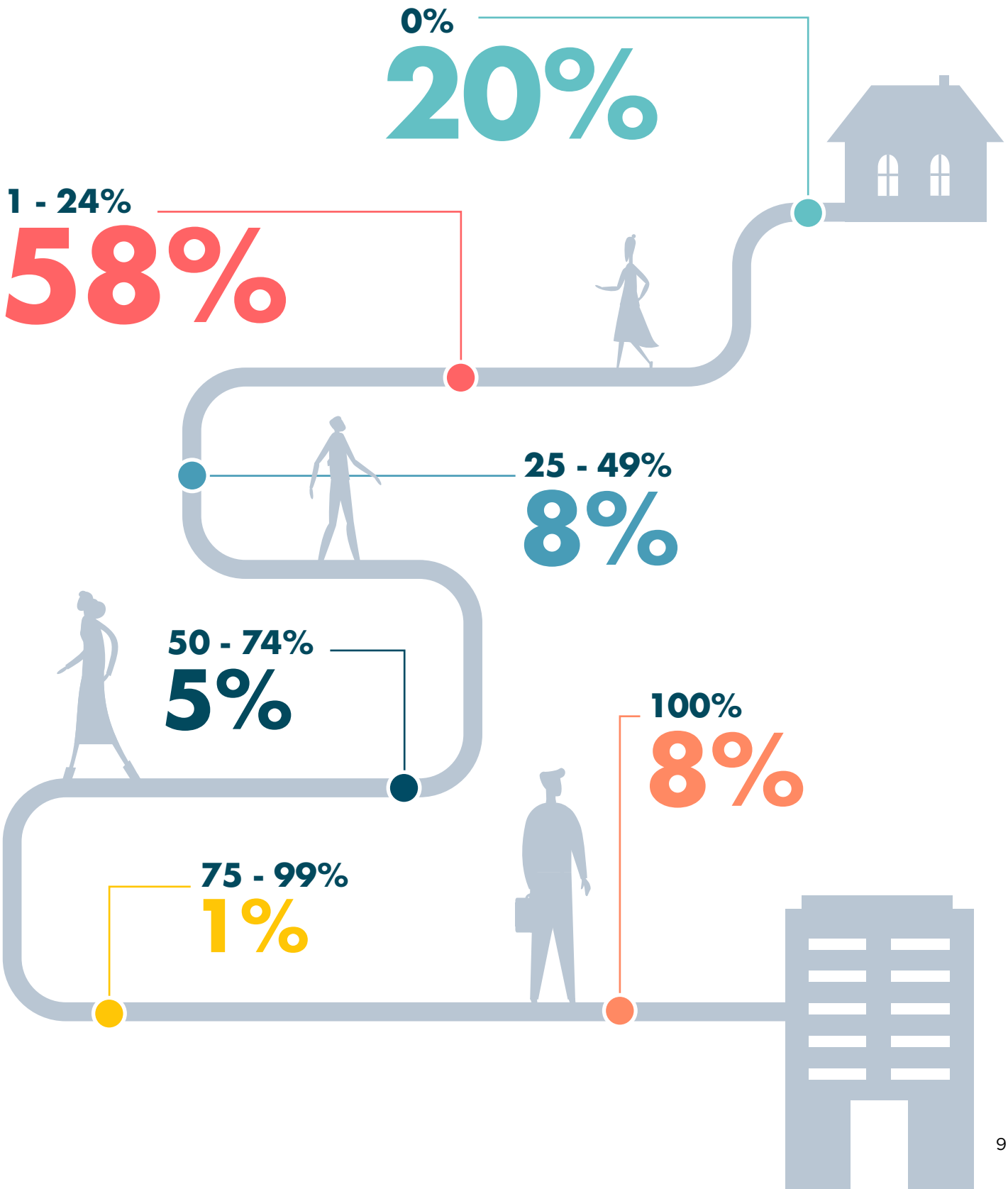
Job Role

57% of respondents describe their position as Head of Department/Director, 24% Manager and 12% Team Leader/Manager.



As of today, what percentage of your adviser population have returned to the office FULL TIME since lockdown ended?

Nearly four fifths of respondents (78%) say that fewer than a quarter of their organisation's contact centre advisers have returned to the office since lockdown ended.



How does your business currently operate hybrid working?

In this question we ask what hybrid working business model contact centres are using. While there is a fair spread of responses, the most popular is 'flexible working between the home and office where EMPLOYEES decide where they work on any given day' (37% of respondents). When we last asked this question of a random sample of 213 contact centre professionals in a 2021 survey*, this option was again the most popular, but selected by just 33% of respondents. This indicates that more employers are now willing to give their employees the final say over WHEN they work at home or in the office.

* Call Centre Helper/Sensée - Oct 2021 'How is hybrid working for your business' survey of 213 contact centre professionals

100% from home or 100% from office

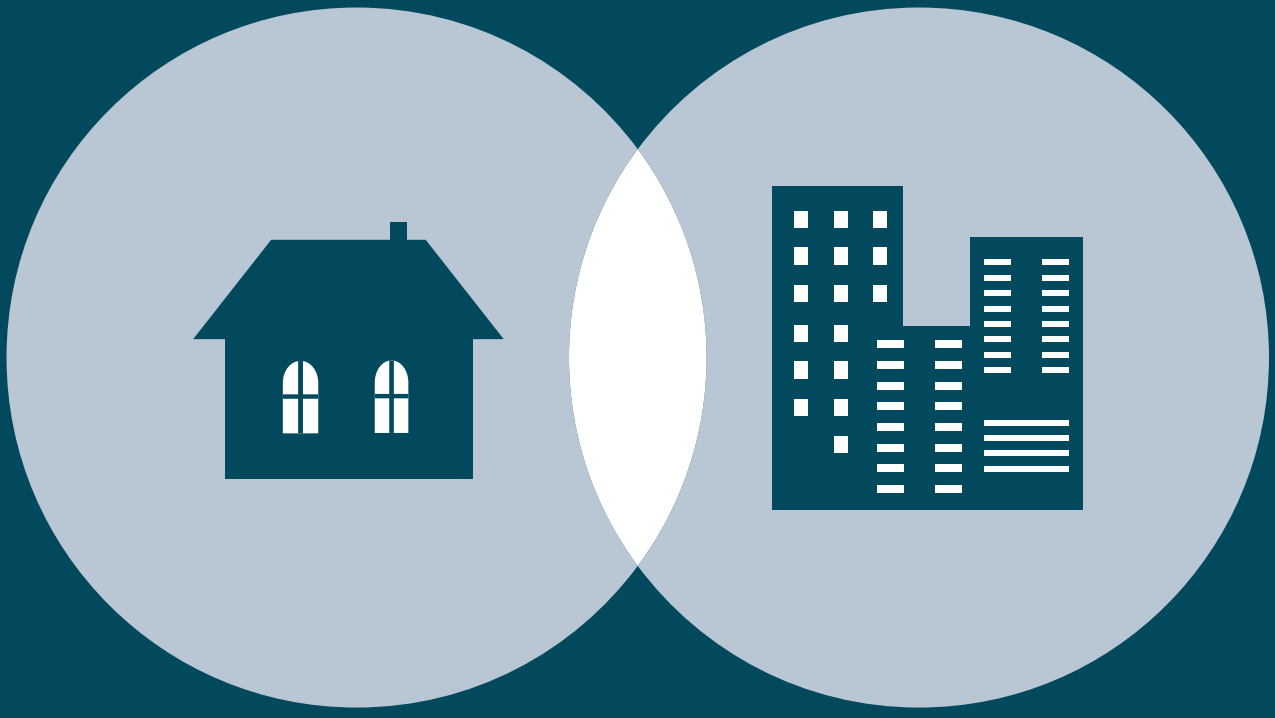
3%

Set days at home and set days in the office

20%

Other

15%



Flexibly between home & office (with EMPLOYEES deciding where they work on any day)

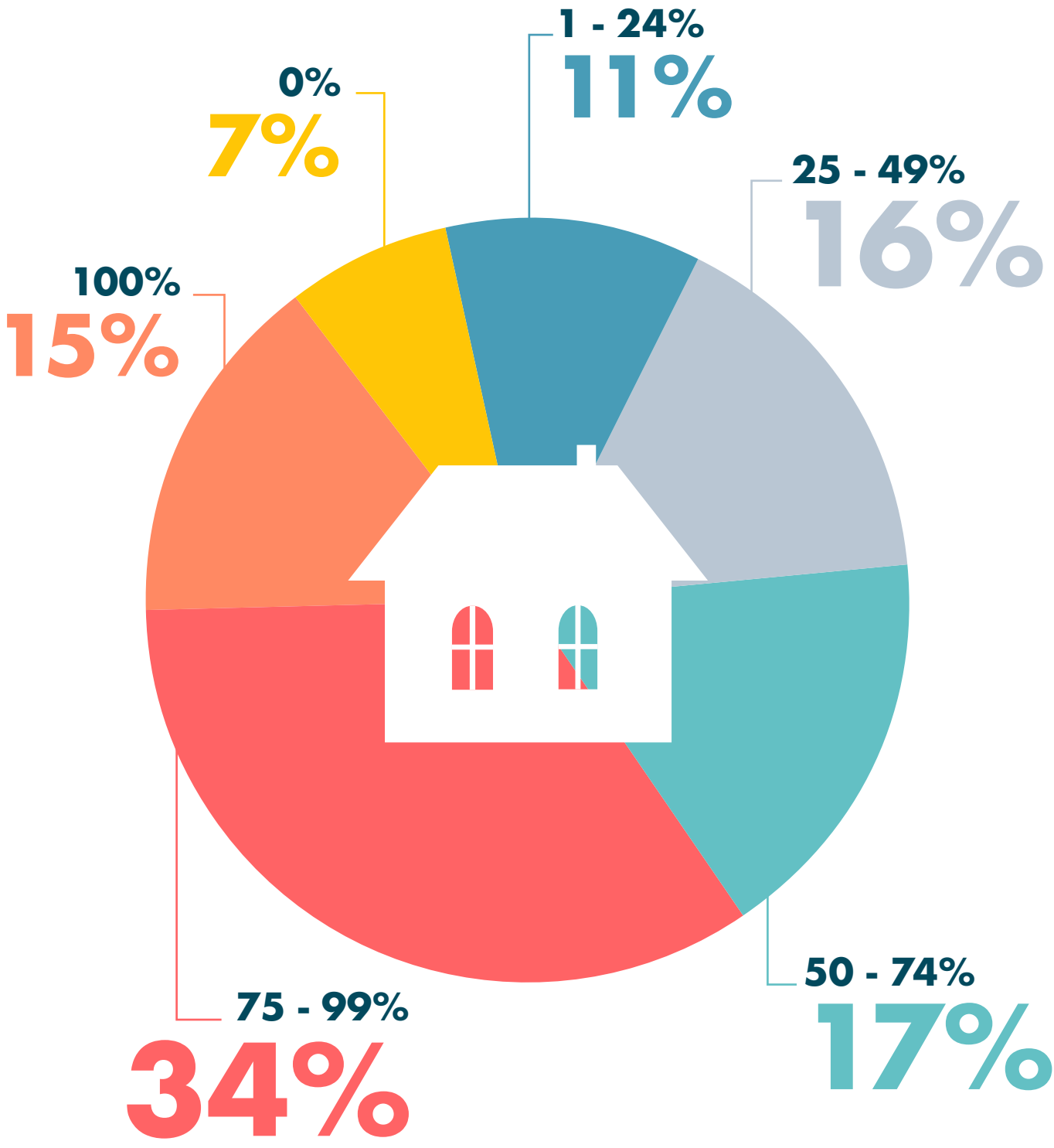
37%

Flexibly between home & office (with THE BUSINESS deciding where they work on any day)

25%

What percentage of your adviser population do you think will be working FULL or PART TIME from home by the end of 2023?

Hybrid working is not a fad - and not going away. Two thirds of all respondents (66%) believe that 50% or more of their contact centre advisers will be working from home at least some of the time) by the end of 2023.



What are the main issues you face with operating home-based teams?

(multiple responses allowed)

Pastoral Care (68%) and Communicating Effectively (66%) are the two issues cited most often by respondents as key hybrid working issues...

Trust
12%

Communicating effectively
66%

Training
47%

Pastoral care
(mental health concerns, isolation worries etc.)
68%



Managing remotely
43%

Recruitment/ attrition
21%

Technology/ security
24%

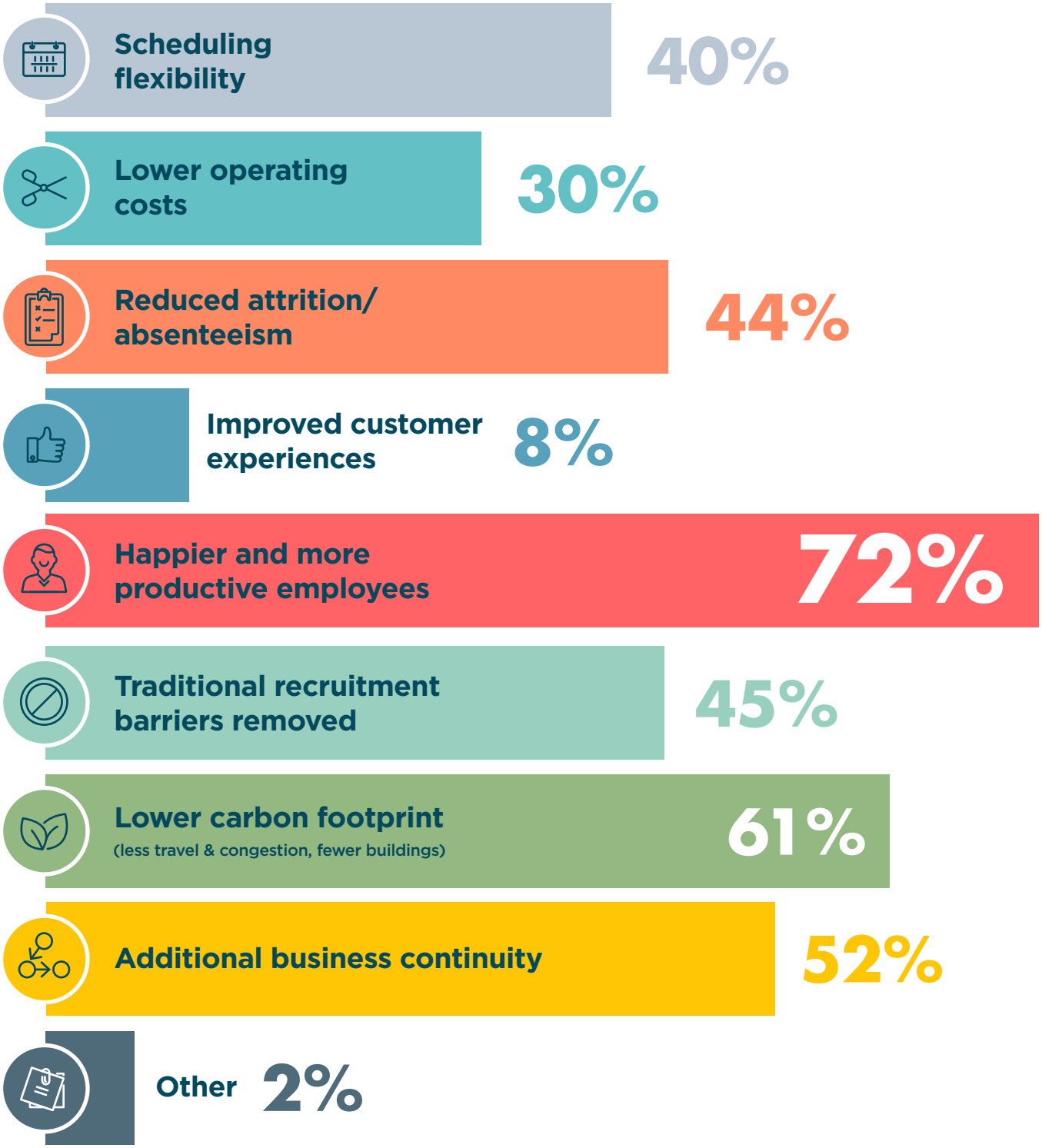
Other
12%



What have been the main benefits of homeworking to your organisation?

(multiple responses allowed)

... with the main benefits cited as Happier and More Productive Employees (72%), Lower Carbon Footprint (61%), Additional Business Continuity (52%) and Traditional Recruitment Barriers Removed (45% of respondents).



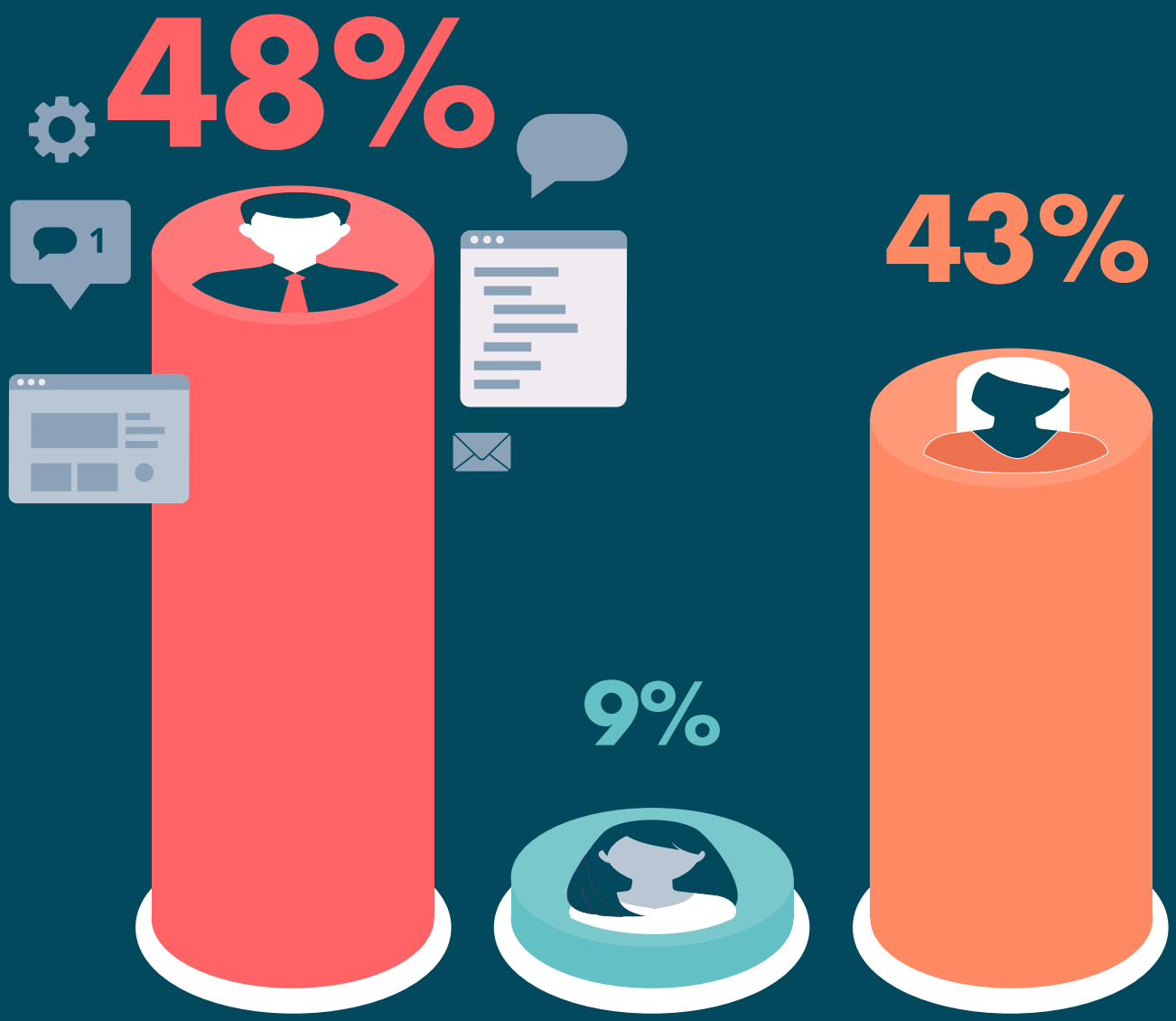
In the last 12 months, how did the performance of your homeworkers compare with office workers with regards:

The majority of respondents say that the performance of their homeworking teams is comparable to that of office-based teams against the criteria given within the questionnaire. With regards Absenteeism however, the performance of homeworking teams is considered to be BETTER. It should be noted that for EVERY criteria given (apart from Average Handle Time), there is a greater chance of homeworker team performance being better than that of comparable office-based teams.

	Worse	About the same	Better
Attrition	8%	**64%**	28%
Absenteeism	7%	**50%**	43%
Productivity	11%	**61%**	28%
Customer Experience	7%	**74%**	19%
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	2%	**79%**	19%
Customer Satisfaction	4%	**75%**	**21%**
Quality of Service	12%	**68%**	20%
Average Handle Time	19%	**69%**	12%

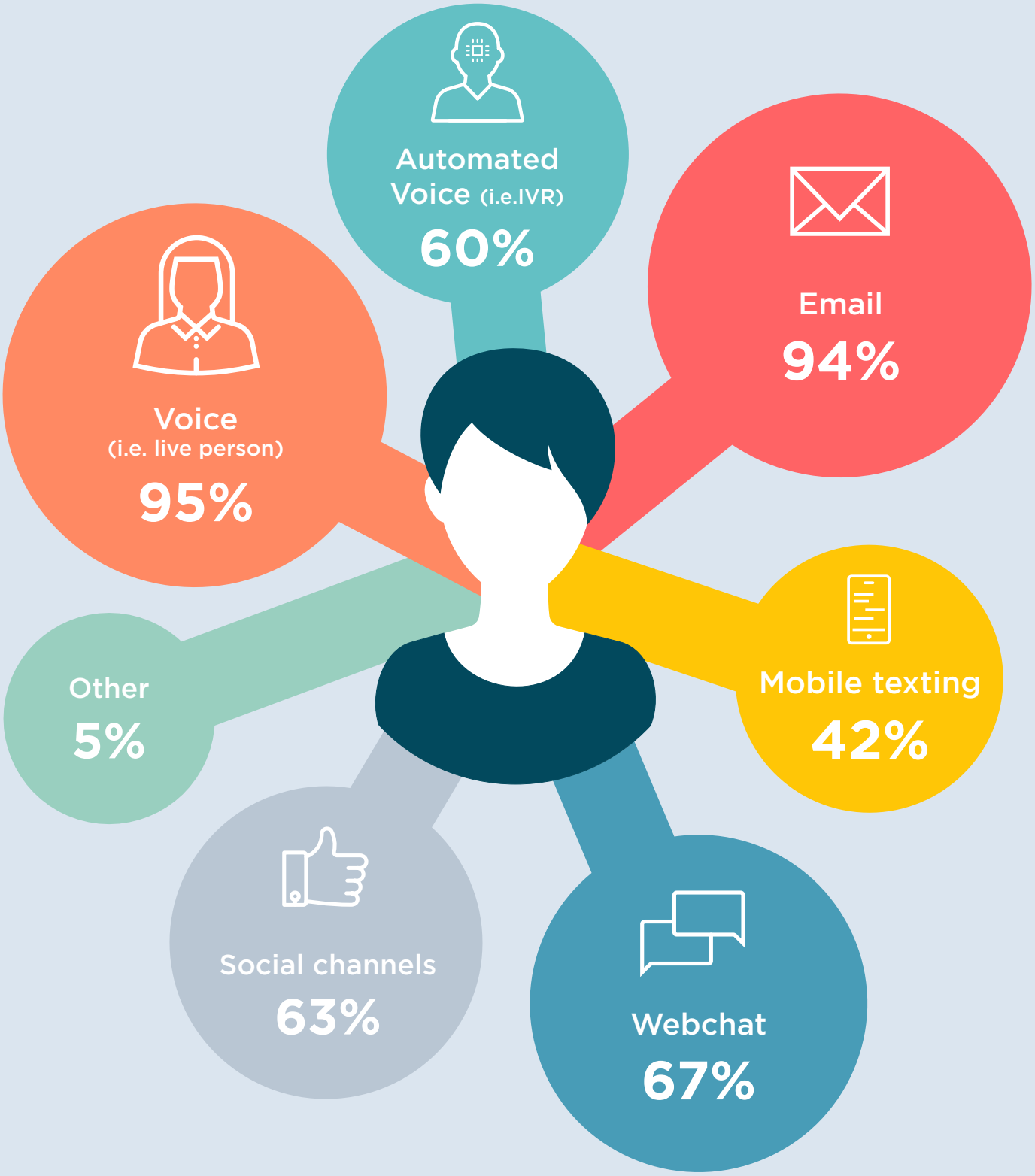
Does your organisation provide its Managers and Supervisors with sufficient training and advice to enable them to manage, train and support work-from-home teams?

Under half (48%) of respondents think that their organisations have given Managers and Supervisors sufficient training and advice to manage, train and support their work-from-home teams.



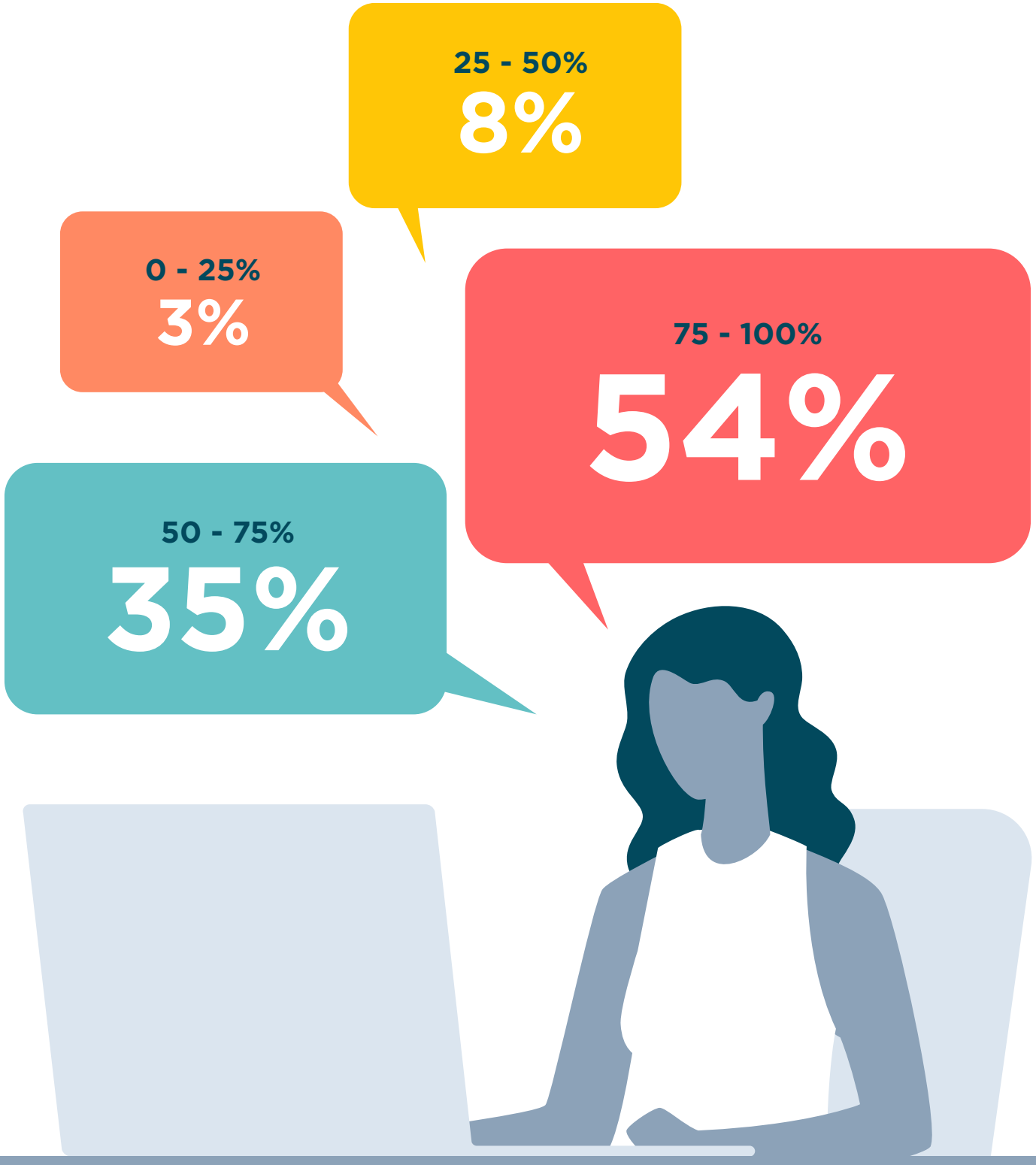
What technology channels do you use for customer communications?

When asked about technology channels used, 95% of respondents cite voice. 94% email, 67% webchat and 63% social channels.



What % of your customer contacts are (mainly) handled by live (human) advisers today?

89% of respondents say that 50% or more of customer contacts are mainly handled today by live operators – emphasising the importance of human interaction in today's service industry.



The majority of our customer contacts will be handled via digital channels (i.e. not by phone) by 2025

The continued importance of live operator service is reinforced by responses to the next question. Looking forward, just 40% of respondents believe that the majority of their customer contacts will be handled by digital channels (i.e. not by phone) by 2025.



Agree

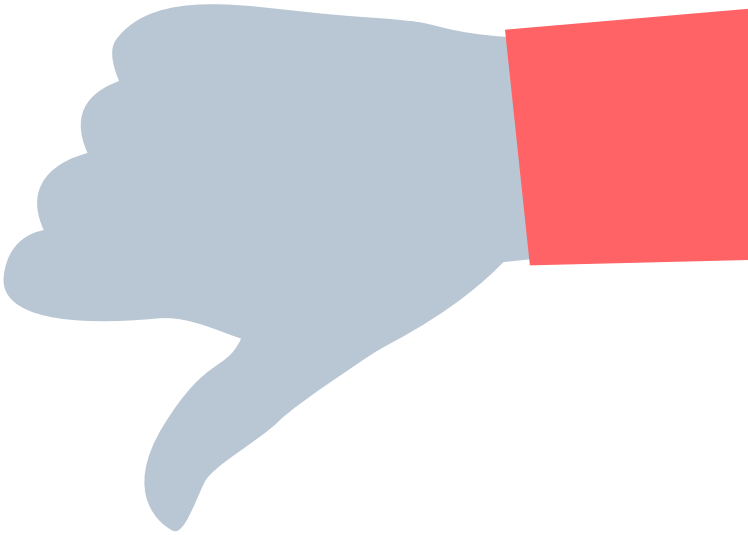
40%

Neither agree or disagree

22%

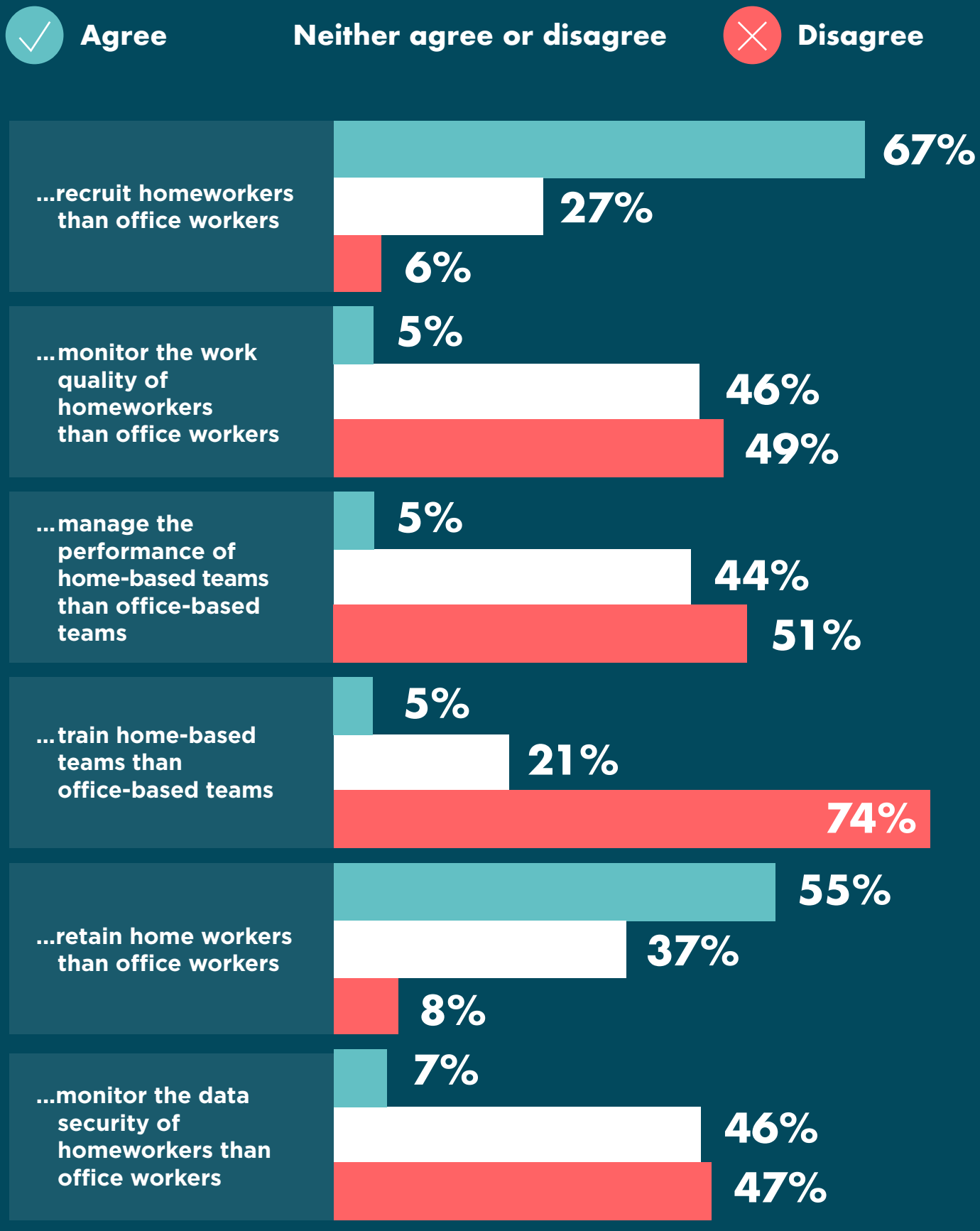
Disagree

38%



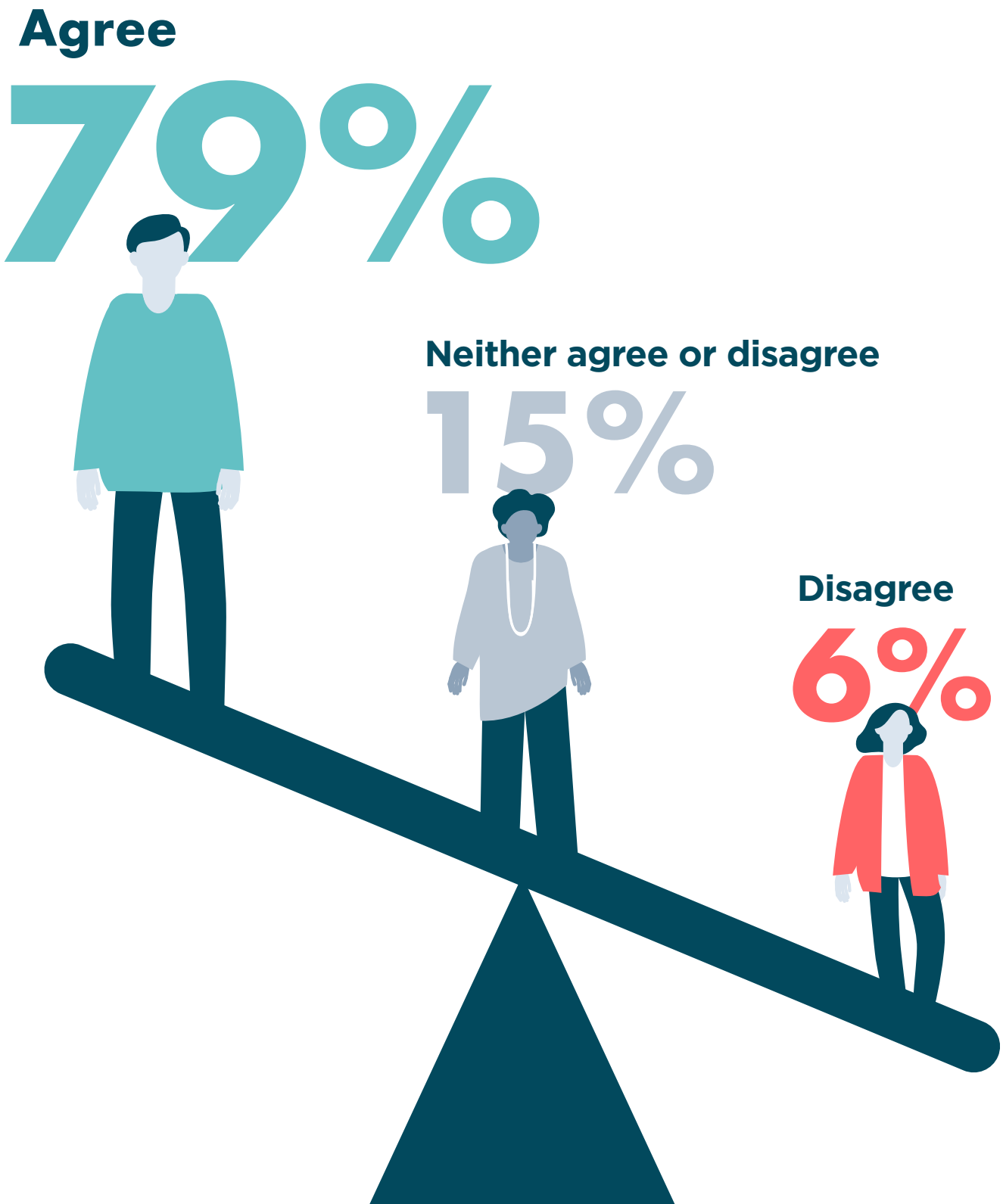
It is EASIER to...

While most people agree that it is easier to recruit and retain homeworkers than office-based workers, very few say that it is easier to monitor their work quality, manage their performance, or train them. There is clearly a lot more work to be done in these areas to bring organisations up to scratch.



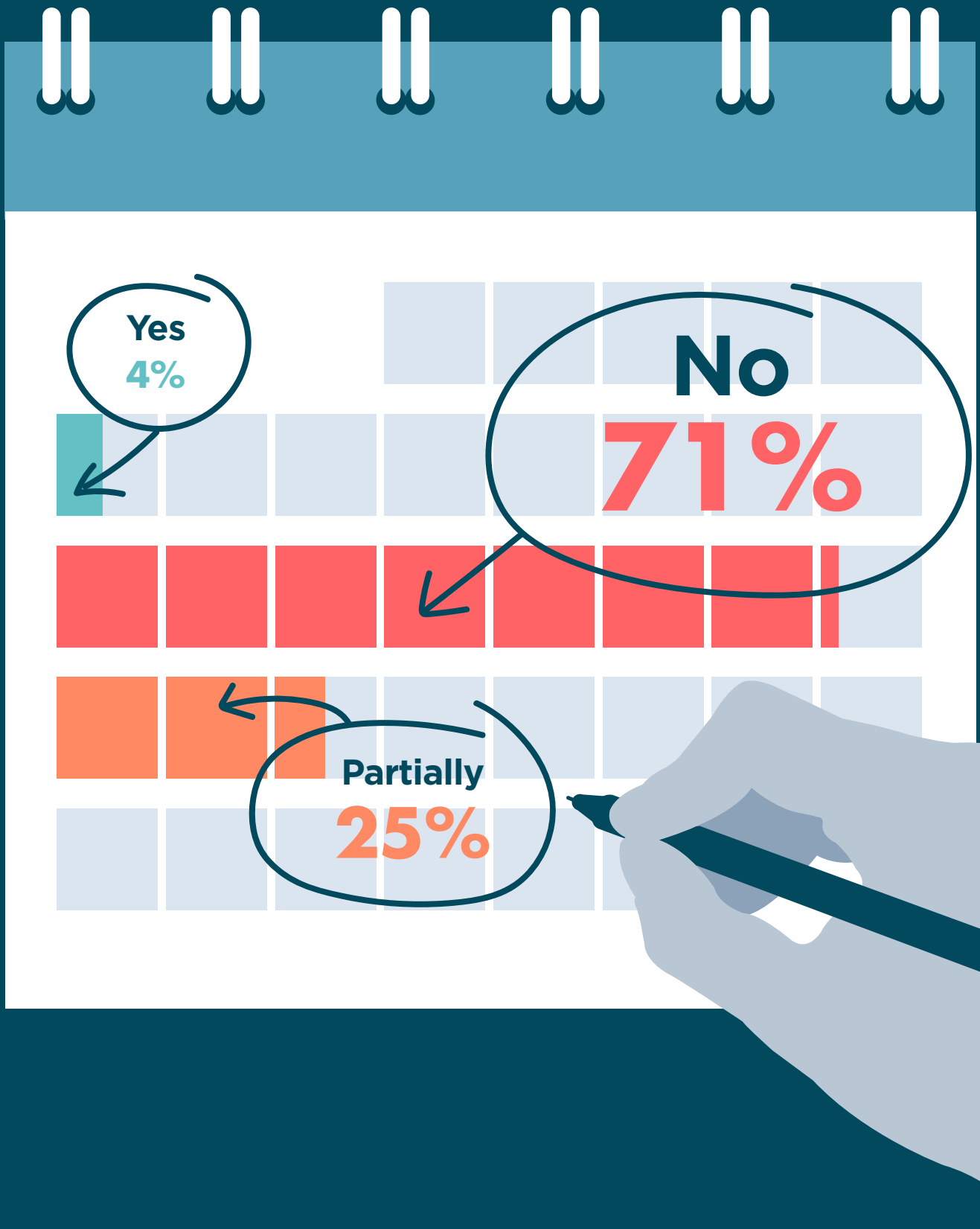
My organisation gives its employees the opportunity to work flexibly so they can enjoy a better work-life balance

The responses given on P10 clearly showed that organisations are committed to putting employees at the centre of flexible working scheduling. This is reinforced by responses to our next question. 79% of contact centre professionals agree with the statement that their organisation gives employees the opportunity to work flexibly so they can enjoy a better work life balance.



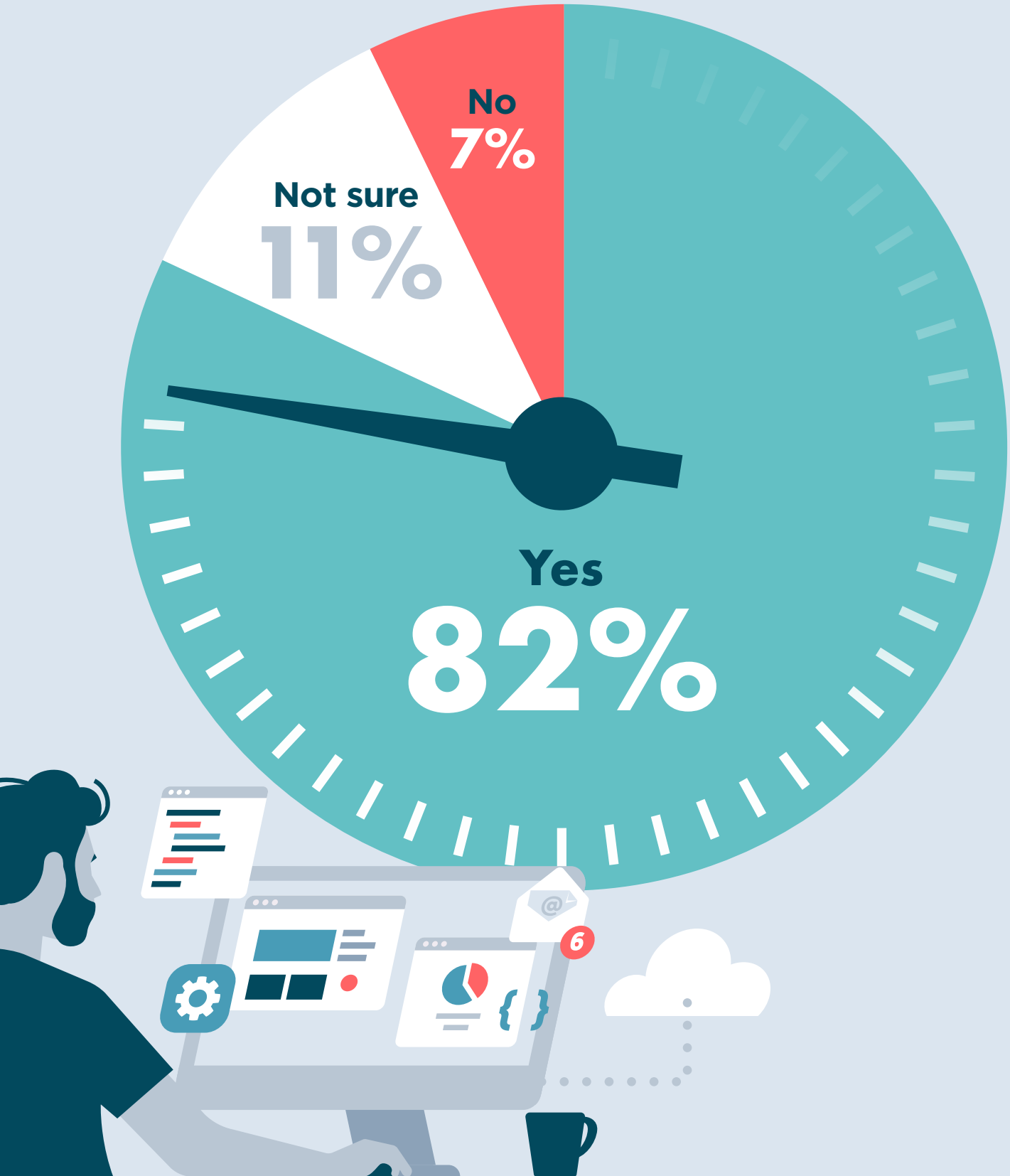
Can your contact centre employees self-select their own work schedules?

Having said that, only 4% of respondents say that their organisations currently give contact centre employees the freedom and flexibility to fully self-select their own work schedules, although 25% say that they do allow them to partially select their own hours.



Has your organisation enhanced its IT, or Information Security, to enable home-based working?

Finally, we asked whether organisations are investing in technology to bring about successful hybrid working. 82% of respondents say that they have enhanced IT or Information Security in order to enable home-based working.



Company Profile

Welsh Contact Centre Forum

Our journey began in 1999, under the direction of Sandra Busby and the creation of the first employer-led contact centre forum, offering strategic direction and support for contact centres in Wales.

Over 20 years later our passion for the industry has developed our knowledge across all sectors and functions including strategy, operations, process management and IT/telephony.

We now feature a strong team of consultants with exceptional experience of the service industry and contact centres in the UK, Europe and worldwide.

We understand the issues and work with you in a collaborative way to ensure a step-change in culture and performance.

The contact centre business function covers a broad spectrum of Welsh life and, in representing the interests of member companies, the Forum works with many different departments of the Assembly Government. This includes inward investment, learning and skills, employment, community development, social inclusion, infrastructure, telecommunications, planning and the environment.

Employment opportunities range from entry level skills, suitable for those otherwise at risk of exclusion, right up to graduate posts and senior management roles.

The Forum has played a key role in facilitating recruitment and training at all levels. This includes schemes to help the long-term unemployed or disadvantaged groups to access jobs and training and relationships brokered between businesses and universities.

Getting In Touch

Let's discuss how we can help your journey:

Call **02920 709 800**

Email **lucinda@wccf.uk**

Follow Us **@welshccf**



Company Profile

SuccessKPI

SuccessKPI is a revolutionary insight & action platform that uses AI, analytics, and automation to remove the obstacles that contact centre agents, managers, and executives face in providing a great customer experience.

Our founders had a vision for building phenomenal experiences for customers and employees. With decades of exposure to unsolved problems in the contact centres, they knew transformation was not just smart, but inevitable.

So they founded SuccessKPI—the first and only experience analytics and action platform—to improve contact centre outcomes from the agent to the CEO. They assembled an incredible team of super smart, hard-working experts to:

- **Knock down data silos**
- **Make analytics easy and actionable**
- **Give businesses, managers, and agents rapid access to accurate information**
- **Enable the actions needed to make the difference between success or failure**

www.successkpi.com



Company Profile

sensée

THE WORK-FROM-HOME SPECIALISTS

Sensée is the UK's only specialist provider of flexible homeworking services using fully-employed advisers and managers.

Our services include:

- **HomeAgent-based contact centre outsourcing**: We help well-known organisations improve business performance, cut costs and provide brilliant customer service. Our award-winning team of 1400 service advisers and support/management delivers service, sales, retention, disaster recovery & tech support services by phone, email, webchat, text & social media. Sensée is ISO27001 accredited and has achieved PCI-DSS and GDPR compliance.
- **Consulting and Best Practice**: Sensée's experienced consultants deliver a broad portfolio of Benchmarking, Consulting, Discovery and Workshop services.
- **CloudWorks™ Ecosystem**: Our tech platforms support your homeworkers' entire Employee Lifecycle - from recruitment and on-boarding to scheduling, training, communication and management - whilst ensuring the most rigorous Infosec compliance.

Sensée's UK-wide recruitment reach and remote employee-centric ecosystem creates accessible careers for people anywhere and sustainability for our planet and communities.

Getting In Touch

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