

# CIPD

*Championing better  
work and working lives*

REPORT | *February 2023*

# People Profession 2022

International survey report



The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The registered charity champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has almost 160,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

## Report

# People Profession 2022: International survey report

## Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Aims of this report	4
Survey participants	5
The people profession 2022: An international comparison	6
What are the top workforce priorities for organisations?	6
What's driving change in organisations?	7
How are people teams operating across European and MENA regions?	9
How do people professionals feel about their careers?	14
How does the wellbeing of people professionals differ across regions?	23
The people profession 2022: Individual country findings	25
Egypt	25
Germany	36
Ireland	46
Italy	56
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)	67
The Netherlands	77
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	87
United Kingdom	97
Conclusion	107
Methodology	108
Endnotes	109



## Acknowledgements

The CIPD would like to thank the 2,945 people professionals that participated in this international survey. We would also like to acknowledge the supportive partnerships with colleagues from the [AIDP](#) (Italian Association for People Management), [NVP](#) (The Dutch Network for HR Professionals) and CIPD colleagues in the [Middle East](#). Our research partners were key to distributing the survey within their regions and elevating awareness of this research project.

We would also like to thank Jane Rowe and Matthew Stoker at YouGov for their continued support throughout the People Profession research programme.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge Louisa Pattison for her contribution to the data analysis for this research.

## Author profiles

Rebecca Peters, CIPD research adviser, is the author of this report.

Claire McDermott, CIPD content lead.

## Publication information

Peters, R. (2023) *People Profession 2022: International survey report*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.





## 1 Foreword

Since the 2020 global edition of CIPD's People Profession survey report, the context for people management, particularly in Europe has shifted. We've had significant political changes in Germany and Italy, and fractious political paralysis in the UK. The world succumbed to nearly two years of intermittent lockdowns to stem the spread of a pandemic. And for the first time in 70 years, the European continent is witness to the destructive power of war and all the implications for the economy and human security.

These developments have huge implications for people and people management. There was the challenge of keeping economies afloat during COVID-19, with borders closed and supply lines broken. While a minority embraced flexible hybrid work arrangements, many also succumbed to poorer physical and mental health.

This report is therefore a chance to reflect on how the people profession has responded to these externalities in a few select countries. The immediate concerns were recruitment, retention and turnover. The strategies to address these concerns varied, with Italy focused on upskilling and reskilling, the UK and Ireland focused on addressing diversity and inclusion, and in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions, the outsourcing of HR activities.

While it is potentially too early to call, the pandemic appears to have firmly shifted the dial towards more flexible ways of working and the hybrid approach, certainly in more privileged white-collar environments. Labour market conditions more favourable to employers may moderate this revolution but it does appear that the switch towards more flexible work arrangements has convincingly arrived – notwithstanding the call of many transnationals to lure their staff back into offices.

There are sample limitations in our survey, so the findings here are not representative, but rather, illustrative. The aim is to examine the practices and priorities raised in each country sample and to helpfully explore the similarities and differences, and to consider the implications. We hope to revisit these countries regularly over the next few years so that we can all take a more varied, informed view of what shapes professional practice and its development.

We look forward to sharing the findings with you. We hope this will help your dialogue with us and with your fellow professionals.



**Dr Wilson Wong**  
Head of Insight and  
Futures, CIPD

## 2 Introduction

The 2020s have thrown up some unprecedented and exceptional circumstances. Appropriately, [Collins Dictionary 2022 word of the year](#) was ‘permacrisis’, defined as an extended period of instability and insecurity, especially one resulting from a series of catastrophic events. Undoubtedly this is an accurate description of recent experiences for many. The majority of European countries are feeling the rippling aftermath of the pandemic and slow economic recovery as well as the ongoing war in Ukraine and subsequent economic impact.

But how do we move forward while grappling with continuous uncertainty? What role will HR play in that future scenario?

This important question is frequently debated among leaders within the HR community. *Harvard Business Review* asked 100 chief HR officers and vice presidents to share their vision of [future HR roles](#) and the skills that practitioners will need to be successful in these roles. The CIPD has also looked at the trends that will influence the future world of work in our [People Profession 2030 report](#). But to understand the future, we need to understand the shape and sentiment of the people profession today.

By taking an annual pulse of the profession, the CIPD is able to grasp the challenges and opportunities faced by practitioners in their day-to-day roles, and therefore support the profession to be one that is future-fit. It enables us to understand how we best work together and apply targeted approaches to developing HR functions across different regions and markets. Globalisation and the removal of geographic barriers means there are plenty of opportunities for businesses and people to work more closely together than ever before.

### Aims of this report

Following our [People Profession survey: 2020 global results](#), this report shares the opinions of people professionals from eight countries across the UK/Ireland, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions. It provides insights on current HR practice and the sentiment of people professionals on their career and working lives.

Section 1 provides a global comparison for the people profession by asking the following questions:

- 1 What are the top workforce priorities for organisations?
- 2 What’s driving change in organisations?
- 3 How are people teams operating across European and MENA regions?
- 4 How do people professionals feel about their careers?
- 5 How does the wellbeing of people professionals differ across regions?

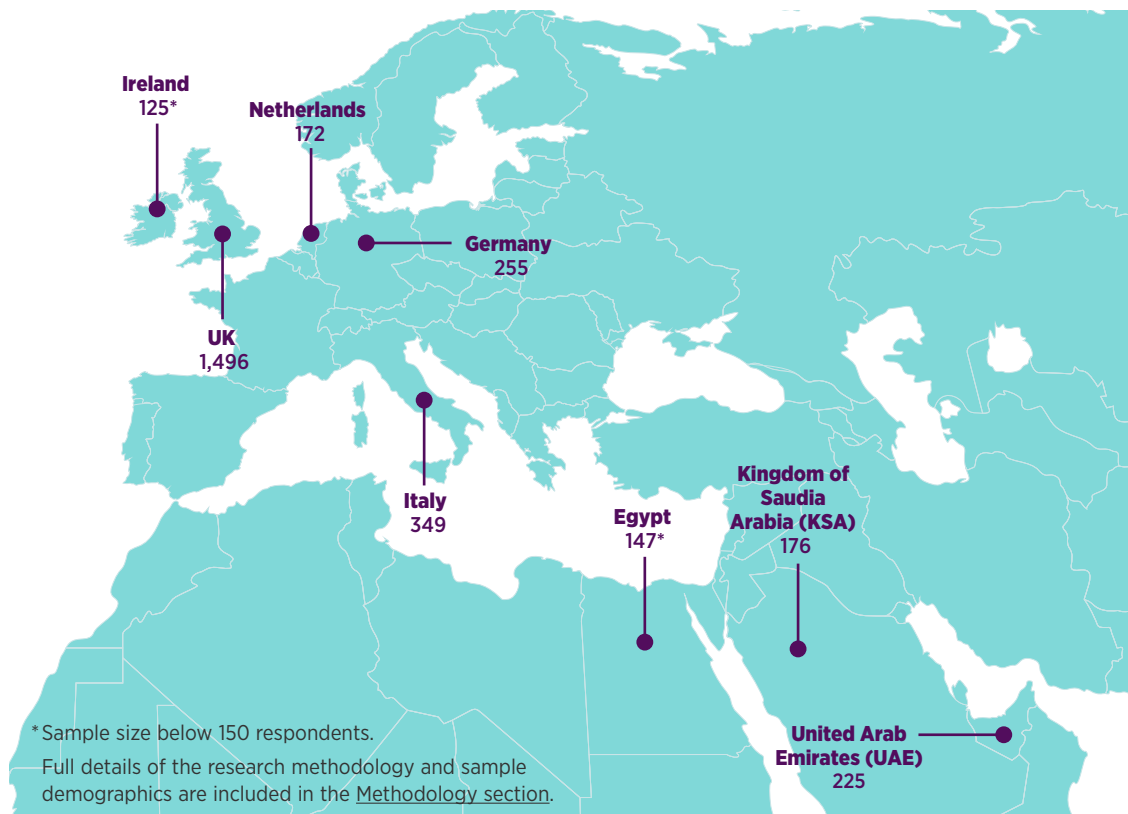
Section 2 looks at each country individually, to investigate the in-region variations on the following:

- 1 At an organisational level:
  - What are the most common organisational cultures?<sup>1</sup>
  - How are people teams operating?
  - How has hybrid working affected HR practices?
  - What are the priorities for improving HR capability?
  - What is the perceived strategic value of the profession?
  - How have people professionals developed their skills post-pandemic?



- 2 At an individual level:
- How do people professionals perceive their career progression to date?
  - What are the perceptions of a career in the people profession?

### Survey participants



#### A note on the survey findings

- We refer to the ‘people profession’ throughout this report, which refers to a range of people-related roles, such as human resources (HR), learning and development (L&D), organisational development (OD), employee relations and other HR specialisms. It does not include people managers.
- Reported percentage figures are rounded up and therefore the total may be above 100%.
- The data collection for this survey was carried out across eight countries; therefore the sample is diverse and each country sample will have different contextual factors influencing the findings. We make some global comparisons for interest and explore the data from each country in more detail within the individual country chapters.
- When we refer to the ‘global average’, we are referring to the percentage figure across all regions, that is, the entire sample of 2,945 participants in most cases. We refer to this figure as global, in the sense of including all participant responses.
- The previous global survey was the [People Profession survey: 2020 global results](#).



# 3 The people profession 2022: An international comparison

## What are the top workforce priorities for organisations?

### At a glance

**Table 1: Across all markets, organisational culture and recruitment, mobility and turnover are the biggest priorities for organisations right now**

*The top three workforce priority areas for businesses across all international markets*

UK	Ireland	Germany	Italy	Netherlands	Egypt	KSA	UAE
Organisational culture <b>31%</b>	Recruitment, mobility and turnover <b>26%</b>	Health and safety <b>28%</b>	Cost management <b>29%</b>	Health and safety <b>29%</b>	Productivity and financial performance <b>29%</b>	Cost management <b>26%</b>	Health and safety <b>30%</b>
Recruitment, mobility and turnover <b>30%</b>	Upskilling, reskilling and capabilities <b>24%</b>	Organisational culture <b>25%</b>	Upskilling, reskilling and capabilities <b>28%</b>	Recruitment, mobility and turnover <b>29%</b>	Health and safety <b>29%</b>	Upskilling, reskilling and capabilities <b>24%</b>	Productivity and financial performance <b>28%</b>
Inclusion and diversity <b>26%</b>	Cost management <b>24%</b>	Recruitment, mobility and turnover <b>24%</b>	Health and safety <b>22%</b>	Absence management <b>23%</b>	Upskilling, reskilling and capabilities <b>24%</b>	Health and safety <b>23%</b>	Cost management <b>26%</b>

Base: UK: n=1,496; Ireland: n=125; Germany: n=255; Italy: n=349; Netherlands: n=172; Egypt: n=147; KSA: n=176; UAE: n=225.

Question: Which, if any, of the following are your organisation's workforce priorities? Please tick up to three responses.

### In detail

Recruiting and retaining talent appears to be challenging for many organisations, especially with some economies experiencing looming recessions. Our most recent [Labour Market Outlook report](#) shows that 46% of UK employers who are recruiting have hard-to-fill vacancies. As we look ahead to the future, predictive data anticipates [lower working-age populations](#) are on the horizon, suggesting that the recruitment challenges are likely to persist. It's therefore unsurprising that a quarter of our global sample said recruitment, retention and turnover is a top workforce priority right now.

Another immediate priority area for businesses is organisational culture, a key area of focus for 25% of our global sample. The shift and rise of remote and hybrid working requires a new approach to tackling organisational culture and keeping employees engaged – an area that is also intrinsically linked to the retention of employees in a tough, candidate-driven labour market. Our data suggests this is high on the agenda for organisations and will therefore be a key area of focus for the profession.

Looking at organisational priorities at the country level, we find some interesting differences across our international sample:

- **Absence management:** For people professionals in the Netherlands, absence management (such as the impact of COVID-19) was more commonly selected as a workforce priority compared with other countries, with nearly a quarter (23%) saying this, versus a global average of 13%.
- **Upskilling, reskilling and capabilities:** A higher proportion of respondents in Italy said this was a priority (28% compared with other countries). In the Netherlands, for example, only 17% said this was a priority area for their organisation (against a global average of 21%).





- **Inclusion and diversity:** This was more commonly selected as a priority in the UK (26%) compared with the Middle East and wider Europe (each at 12%).
- **Health and safety:** This was more likely to be prioritised in MENA (28%) and wider Europe (26%) compared with the UK/Ireland (13%).
- **Organisational culture:** A significantly lower proportion of respondents in MENA said this is a workforce priority (Egypt: 10%, KSA: 9%, UAE: 17%) compared with other countries. The highest proportion of respondents who said organisational culture is a priority were in the UK (31%).
- **Innovation:** This was more likely to be selected as a priority by respondents in Italy (20%), Egypt (18%) and KSA (19%), compared with a global average of 10%.
- **Cost management:** Respondents in Italy (29%), KSA and the UAE (each 26%) were more likely to say this was a workforce priority, compared with a global average of 20%.

## What’s driving change in organisations?

### At a glance

**Table 2: Demand for flexible and hybrid working is the largest driver of change across the international sample**  
*The top three drivers of change across all regions*

UK	Ireland	Germany	Italy	Netherlands	Egypt	KSA	UAE
Demands for flexible and hybrid working <b>36%</b>	Demands for flexible and hybrid working <b>35%</b>	Changing workforce demographics <b>27%</b>	Digital transformation <b>32%</b>	Demands for flexible and hybrid working <b>32%</b>	Demands for flexible and hybrid working <b>30%</b>	Digital transformation <b>34%</b>	Demands for flexible and hybrid working <b>19%</b>
Economic change <b>26%</b>	Economic change <b>34%</b>	Mobile technologies <b>23%</b>	Demands for flexible and hybrid working <b>25%</b>	Digital transformation <b>21%</b>	Digital transformation <b>29%</b>	Demands for flexible and hybrid working <b>28%</b>	Industrial change and organisational agility <b>26%</b>
Digital transformation <b>25%</b>	Mobile technologies <b>23%</b>	Digital transformation <b>22%</b>	Changing workforce demographics <b>19%</b>	Demand for social responsibility <b>17%</b>	Economic change <b>24%</b>	Industrial change and organisational agility <b>24%</b>	Digital transformation <b>25%</b>

Base: UK: n=1,496; Ireland: n=125; Germany: n=255; Italy: n=349; Netherlands: n=172; Egypt: n=147; KSA: n=176; UAE: n=225.  
Question: Which of the following, if any, are drivers of change in your organisation? Please tick up to three responses.

### In detail

During the last couple of years, changes to social restrictions, health, and business operations were experienced at a global level. For many, this collective experience of fast-paced enforced change required rapid responses from businesses and people teams. But two years on, what continues to drive change in organisations?

Globally, the top three drivers of change for organisations were demands for flexible and hybrid working (31%), digital transformation (26%), and economic change (24%).

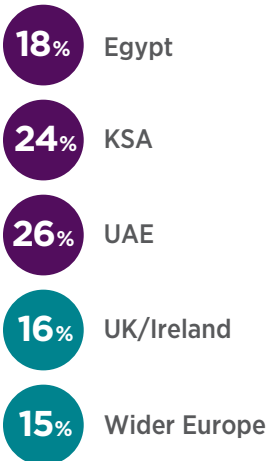
Economic change appears to be a more prominent driver across the UK/Ireland and MENA regions (26% and 23% respectively) compared with those in wider Europe (18%).

Looking at key drivers of change at a country level, we find some interesting differences between MENA, the UK and wider Europe.



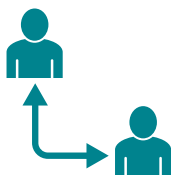
Figure 1: Key drivers of change in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

**Industrial change and organisational agility**



In the Middle East, a higher proportion of respondents said industrial change and organisational agility was a key driver that was influencing change, compared with the UK/Ireland and wider Europe.

**Employment relationships**



Across the MENA regions, changing employment relationships is more likely to be seen as a driver for change, with 1 in 5 or more respondents in these countries citing this, compared with the global average.

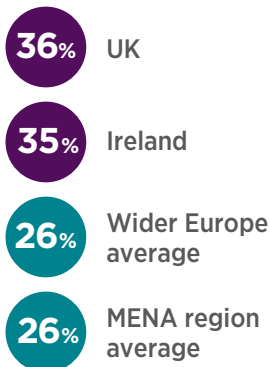
**Social media**



Social media and how people consume content was much more likely to be seen as a driver of change in MENA regions, with around 1 in 5 respondents in each of these countries saying this, versus a global average of just 13%.

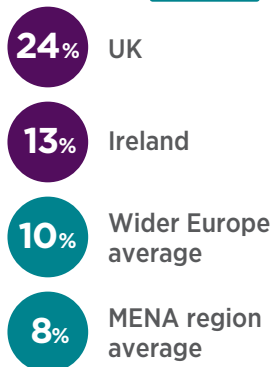
Figure 2: Key drivers of change in the UK and Ireland

**Demand for flexible working**



Demand for flexible working was the top influencing driver of change in the UK and Ireland, compared with just a quarter of respondents in both MENA and European regions.

**Other external disruptors**



Other external disruptors, such as COVID-19 and political change, were more likely to be prominent drivers for respondents in the UK and Ireland compared with MENA regions and Europe.



## How are people teams operating across European and MENA regions?

To better understand the nuances of the people profession within each of the regions included in this survey, we examined:

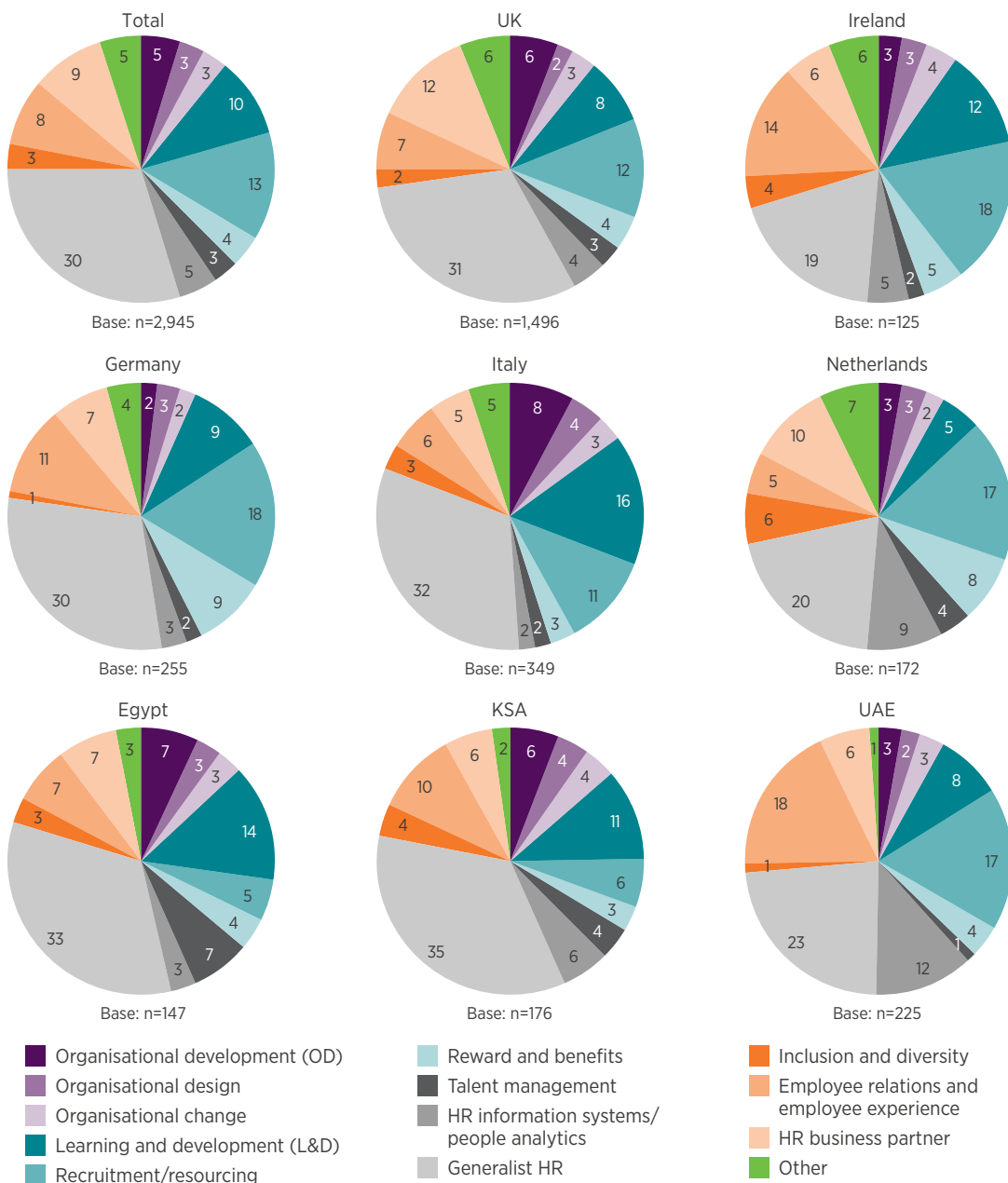
- the composition of people teams
- HR-to-employee ratios
- experience within the profession
- operating models.

### The composition of people teams

#### At a glance

**Figure 3: Some of our samples comprised of more specialist roles in recruitment/resourcing and employee relations (in particular Ireland and the UAE)**

*The composition of people teams across regions*



Question: Please indicate which ONE of the HR/people profession areas listed most accurately reflects your decision-making responsibilities.

### In detail

Taking a closer look at HR specialisms gives us a sense of the demand for specialist skills within the profession and how this differs across regions. Across the entire sample, 30% of respondents said they work in a generalist HR role. However, there are some regions with proportionately fewer respondents working in a generalist HR role, for example in Ireland (19%), the Netherlands (20%) and the UAE (23%).

In terms of HR specialisms, there were a number of country differences that we noted:

- There is a higher proportion of L&D specialists in Italy (16%) and Egypt (14%) compared with other countries, with a global average of 10%.
- There is a lower proportion of respondents specialising in recruitment/resourcing in Egypt (5%) and KSA (6%) compared with a global average of 13%. However, there were more talent management specialists in Egypt (7%), compared with a global average of 3%.
- There is a higher proportion of professionals specialising in employee relations and employee experience in Ireland (14%) and the UAE (18%), compared with those across other countries (global average 8%).
- There is a higher proportion of HR information systems/people analytics specialists in the UAE (12%) than globally (5%).

Although we cannot directly compare with our [global sample in 2020](#), it's interesting to note that we found 45% of the sample operating in a generalist HR role, with all but one of the countries stating higher proportions of HR generalists than the current finding of 30%. This suggests that the demand for specialist HR knowledge and expertise is shifting, perhaps driven by economic pressures, labour market changes and evolving business needs. And we've seen evidence of this elsewhere. Our [People profession in numbers data](#) shows that, within the UK, recruitment manager roles have grown significantly within the last year alone.

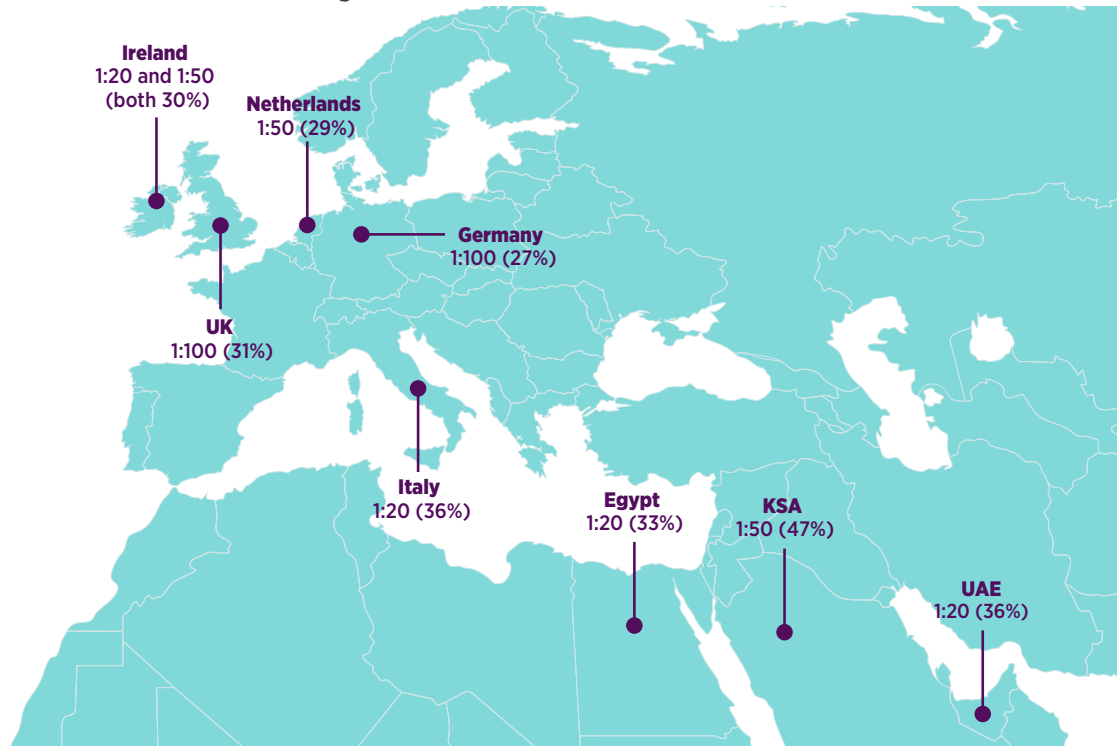
### HR-to-employee ratios

#### At a glance

To understand the operational demands of people professionals across our regions, we examined the HR-to-employee ratios. Calculating what a 'suitable' HR-to-employee ratio is will be influenced by [many factors within the organisation](#), for example, the prevalence of HR technology systems in place to support self-service of HR functions. Another factor is business size (we look at the impact of business size on the HR ratio findings below).



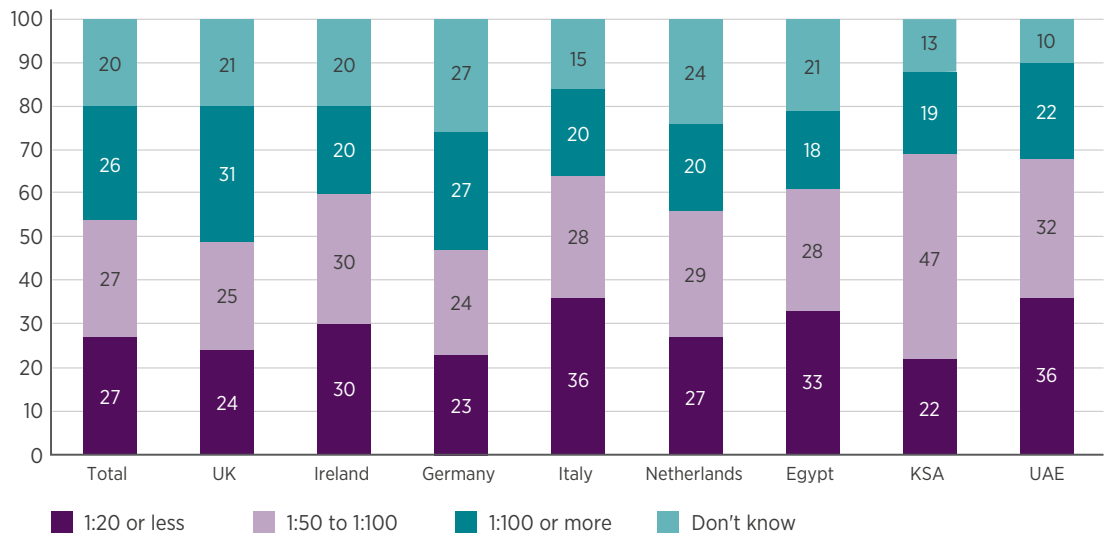
**Figure 4: HR-to-employee ratios varied considerably across our surveyed markets**  
**Predominant HR ratios across regions**



**In detail**

As expected, HR-to-employee ratios differ wildly dependent on business size. We found that 42% of small to medium enterprises (SMEs) have an HR-to-employee ratio of 1:20 or less (compared with only 15% in large organisations). On the other hand, 37% of large organisations operate with a 1:100 ratio (compared with only 12% of SMEs). Although there are a number of variables impacting on HR ratios, it's useful to understand what the regional HR ratios are as a benchmark in region. At a country level, we note some key differences (full details can be found in Figure 5):

**Figure 5: Nearly half of KSA practitioners operate between a 1:50-1:100 HR-to-employee ratio**  
**HR-to-employee ratios across the global sample**



Base: Total: n=2,945; UK: n=1,496; Ireland: n=125; Germany: n=255; Italy: n=349; Netherlands: n=172; Egypt: n=147; KSA: n=176; UAE: n=225.  
 Question: What is the approximate ratio of HR/people department staff to employees in your organisation?



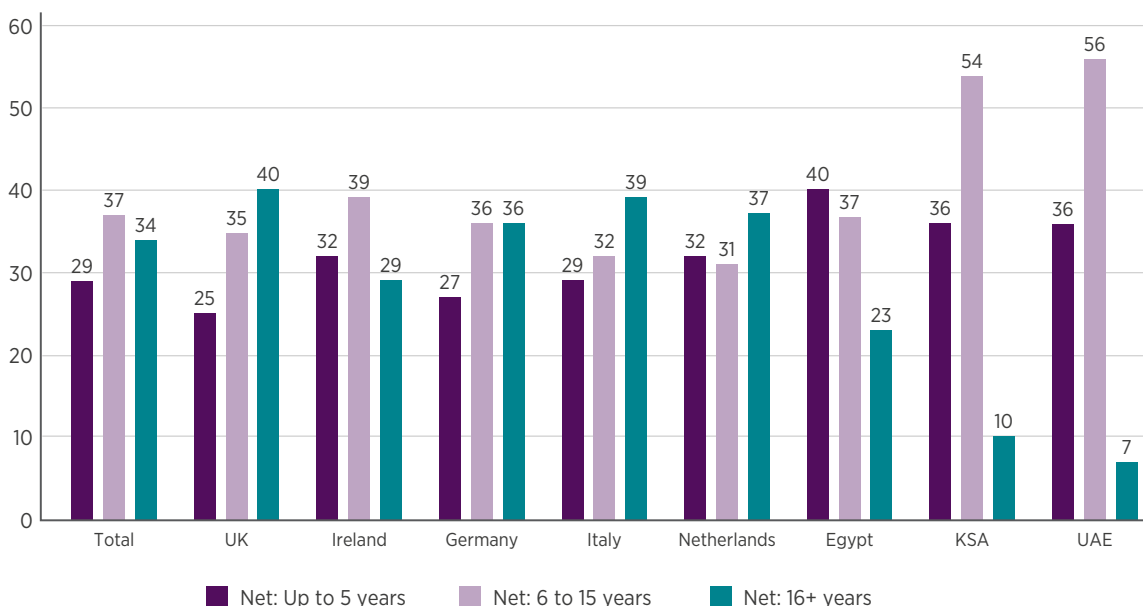


### Experience within the profession

Within our survey, we asked professionals the number of years of experience they have had within the people profession to gauge the maturity and experience level of HR across the regions. Responses were grouped as either early career (up to five years), mid-career (6–15 years) and senior career (16+ years).

#### At a glance

**Figure 6: Proportionally, the UK has the most senior sample of HR professionals**  
*Years of experience within the HR profession across all regions (by % of senior career professionals)*



Base: Total: n=2,945; UK: n=1,496; Italy: n=349; Netherlands: n=172; Germany: n=255; Ireland: n=125; Egypt: n=147; KSA: n=176; UAE: n=225.  
 Question: How many years of work experience do you have in the HR/people profession?

#### In detail

We found:

- MENA had the greatest proportion of respondents with early-career-stage respondents, with significantly more practitioners in Egypt, KSA and the UAE having up to five years of experience in the people profession, compared with a global average of 29%. This is likely to be influenced by the younger median age within these countries.<sup>2</sup>
- In KSA and the UAE, there were vastly more mid-career respondents compared with other countries. In Italy and the Netherlands, for example, just under a third of respondents were at this level, with six to 15 years of experience in the profession. The UK and Italy had the highest proportions of respondents with 16+ years of experience in the profession, compared with a global average of 34%. For KSA and the UAE, one in 10, or less, hold 16+ years of experience. Given the working population is younger within these countries (and also within our sample), less tenure within the profession is expected.

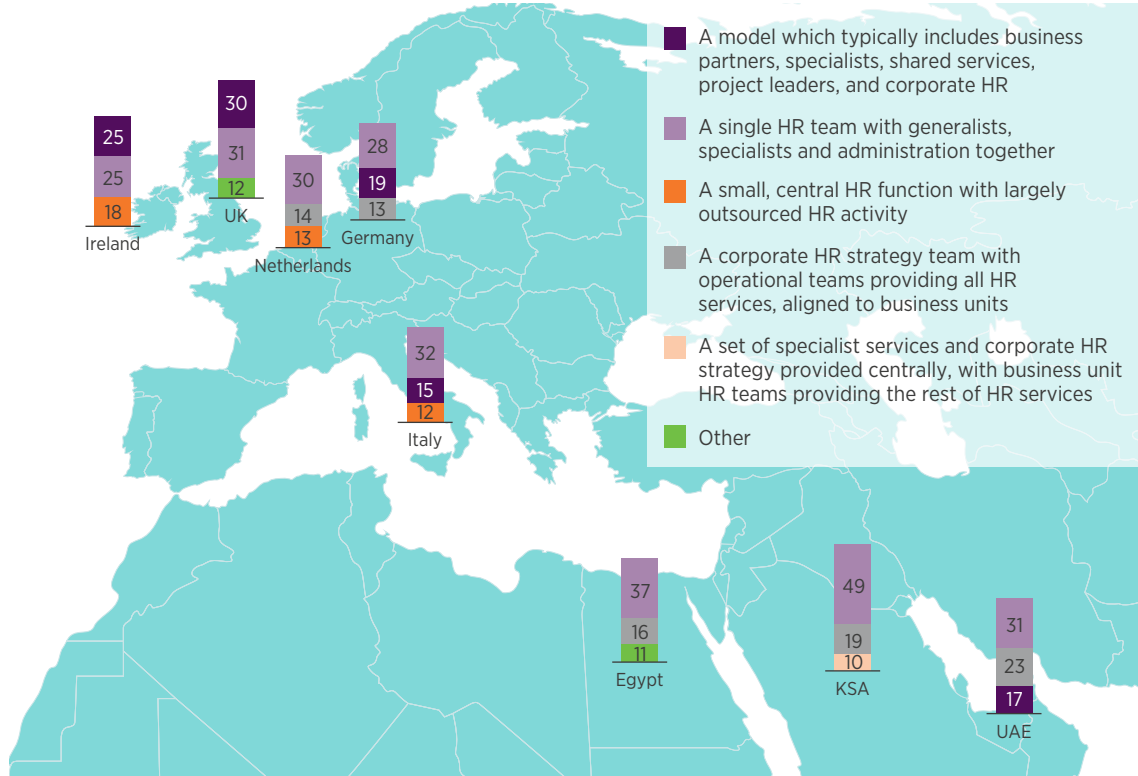
#### Operating models

There is no one agreed operating model that will be applicable and equally beneficial to all people functions – instead, appropriate operating models will depend on the optimal delivery of HR within an organisation and how the people function aligns with the wider organisational strategy. However, for interest, we have noted the most common operating models for HR functions. We also discuss operating models and dominant outsourced functions in the individual country chapters.



**At a glance**

**Figure 7: The three most common operating models vary considerably across regions**  
**The top three HR operating models per country**



Base: Global: n=2,945; UK: n=1,496; Italy: n=349; Netherlands: n=172; Germany: n=255; Ireland: n=125; Egypt: n=147; KSA: n=176; UAE: n=225.  
 Question: Which ONE of the following structures, if any, best describes your organisation's HR/people model? Please tick one option only.

**In detail**

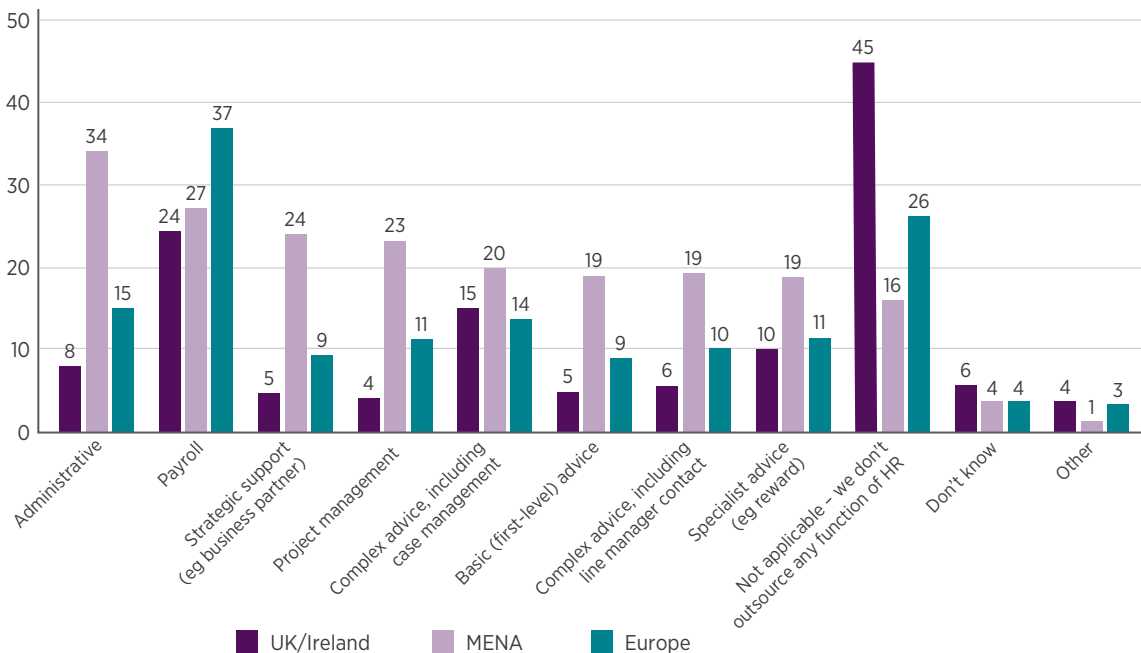
Globally, the highest proportion of respondents worked in a single HR team that includes specialist, generalist and administration colleagues (32%). Those in Egypt (37%) and KSA (49%) were more likely than other countries to have this HR/people model in their organisation, whereas there was a significantly lower proportion of Irish respondents who reported this type of model (25%).

People professionals in Ireland (18%), Italy (12%) and the Netherlands (13%) were more likely to have a small, central HR function with largely outsourced activity in their organisation, compared with a global average of 8%.

When we asked respondents about the HR activities that they outsource, we found significant difference from MENA respondents, who were generally more likely to outsource across all the areas of HR activity covered within this survey (see Figure 8). Given the variation between outsourced HR activities, we cover this in more detail within the individual country chapters.



**Figure 8: MENA respondents were more likely to say they outsource a number of HR functions**  
**Outsourced HR activities by region**



Base: UK/Ireland: n=1,621; MENA: n=548; Europe: n=776.  
 Question: Which elements of your HR function do you outsource, if any?

### How do people professionals feel about their careers?

To gather insights on how people professionals feel about having a career within HR, we asked six questions relating to:

- career prospects
- HR as a meaningful career
- entry into the profession
- HR as a career stepping stone
- earning potential
- career expectations, and enablers and barriers to progression.



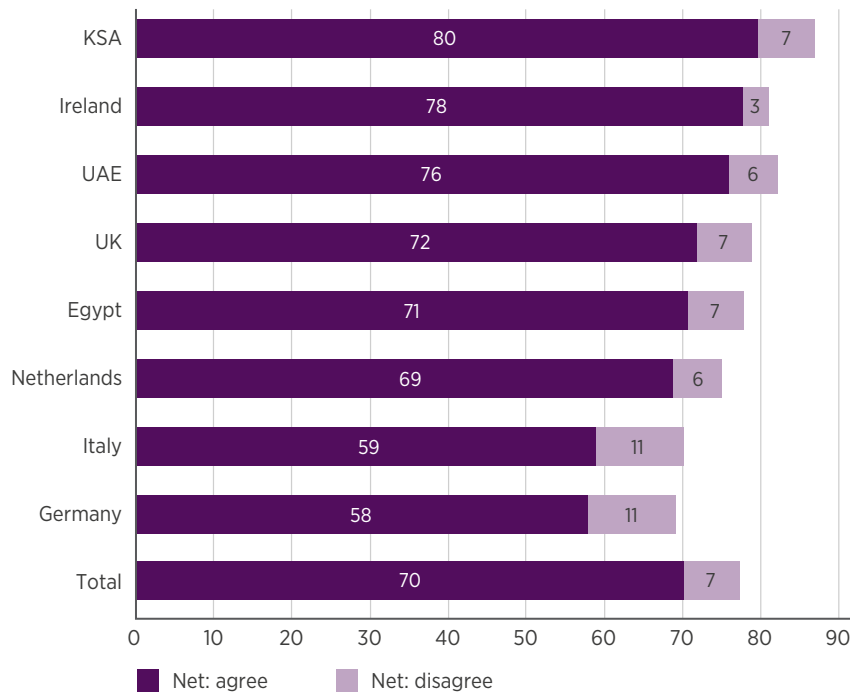
The figures below show the findings for all eight countries.

### Career prospects

#### At a glance

**Figure 9: Respondents from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are most likely to believe the HR profession offers positive career prospects**

*Beliefs that the profession offers good career prospects (% of respondents)*



Base: KSA: n=176; Ireland: n=125; UAE: n=225; UK: n=1,496; Egypt: n=147; Netherlands: n=172; Italy: n=349; Germany: n=225; Total global sample: n=2,945.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the profession offers good career prospects?

#### In detail

On average, the vast majority of respondents said that the people profession offers good career prospects (70%).

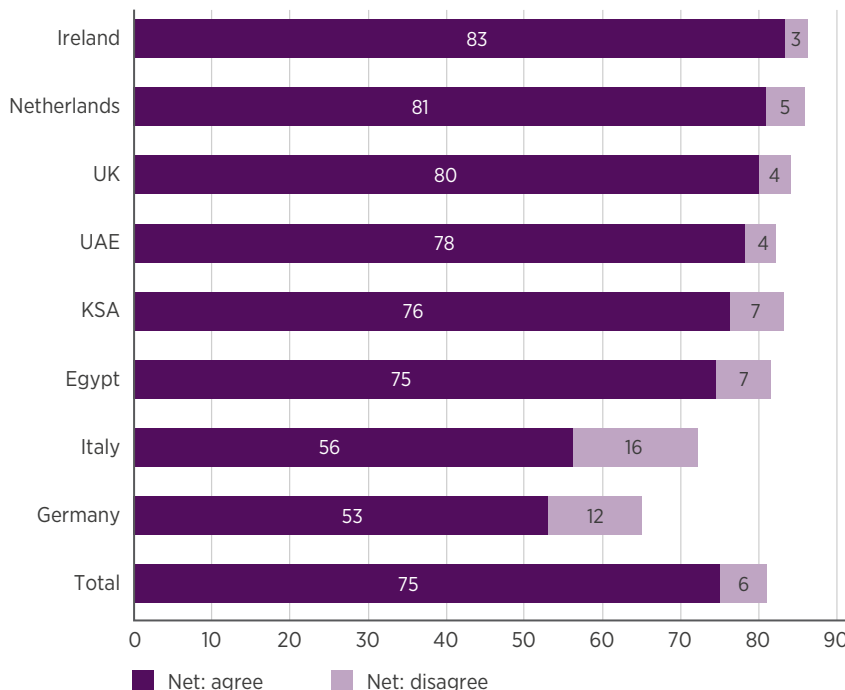
Respondents in KSA, Ireland and the UAE were most likely to agree that the profession offers good career prospects. This was considerably different in Germany and Italy, suggesting perceptions of career growth and opportunity varies considerably across the sample.



## HR as a meaningful career

### At a glance

**Figure 10: Respondents from Ireland are most likely to believe a career in the profession is a meaningful one**  
*Beliefs on whether the profession offers a meaningful career (% of respondents)*



Base: Ireland: n=125; Netherlands: n=172; UK: n=1,496; UAE: n=225; KSA: n=176; Egypt: n=147; Italy: n=349; Germany: n=225; Total global sample: n=2,945.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?  
 The profession offers a meaningful career.

### In detail

For six out of the eight countries, the vast majority (75% or more) felt that the people profession offers a meaningful career. Respondents in the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands were the most likely to agree. However, respondents from Germany and Italy were significantly less likely to agree.

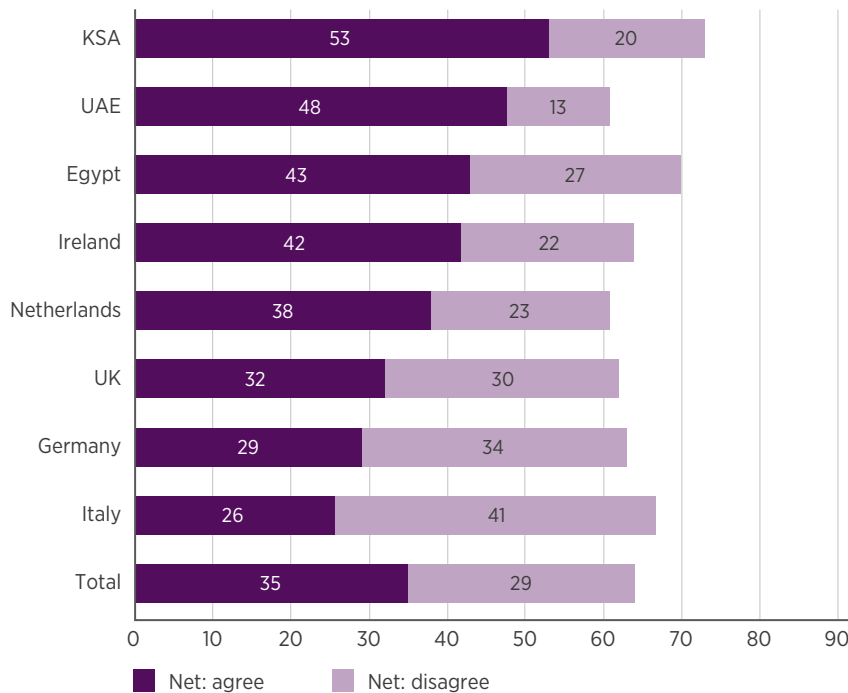




## Entry into the profession

### At a glance

**Figure 11: Respondents in Italy, Germany and the UK believe entry into the profession isn't easy**  
*Beliefs on the ease of entry into the profession (% of respondents)*



Base: KSA: n=176; UAE: n=225; Egypt: n=147; Ireland: n=125; Netherlands: n=172; UK: n=1,496; Germany: n=225; Italy: n=349; Total global sample: n=2,945.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession? The profession is easy to get into.

### In detail

When we asked respondents about whether it was easy to enter into the profession, we found much higher levels of disagreement, particularly in Italy and Germany, and findings were considerably varied across the whole sample. However, those in MENA countries were much more likely to agree that the profession was easy to enter.

Although there are many individual and organisational variables that could impact on this, employment law and recruitment practices will also have implications on entry into the profession. For example, a [2005 law in KSA](#) legislates that positive discrimination towards KSA nationals is acceptable, in a bid to increase numbers of KSA nationals within the workforce. Unfortunately, we aren't able to investigate whether being a national or not changes career perceptions, but it's likely that there would be some variation between nationals and expatriates.

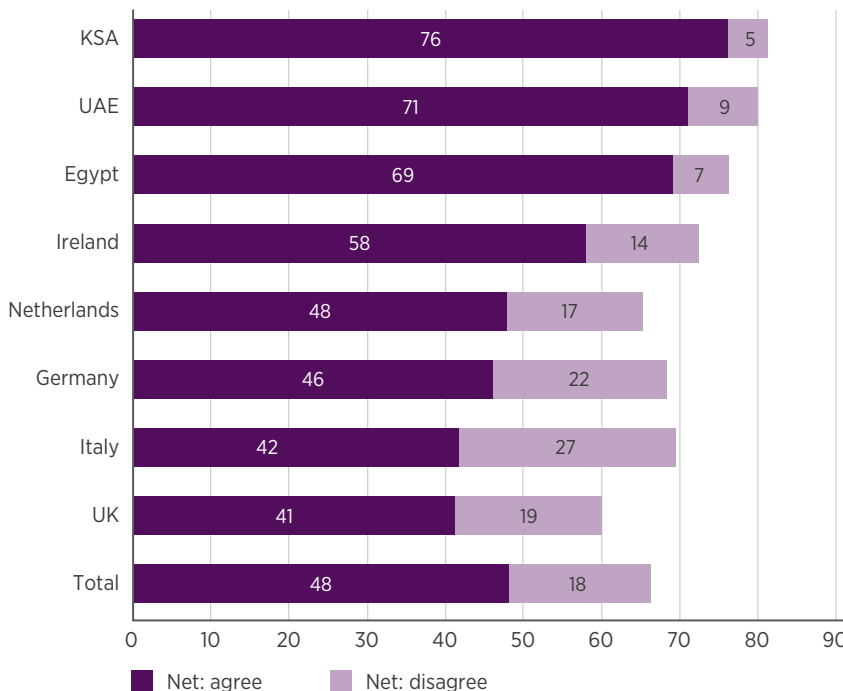


## HR as a career stepping stone

### At a glance

**Figure 12: Respondents from the MENA regions were most likely to believe a career within HR/the people profession can act as a stepping stone into other business areas**

*Beliefs that a career in the profession acts as a stepping stone into other areas of business (% of respondents)*



Base: UAE: n=225; KSA: n=176; Egypt: n=147; Netherlands: n=172; Italy: n=349; Germany: n=225; Ireland: n=125; UK: n=1,496; Total global sample: n=2,945.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?  
The profession is a stepping stone into other business areas.

### In detail

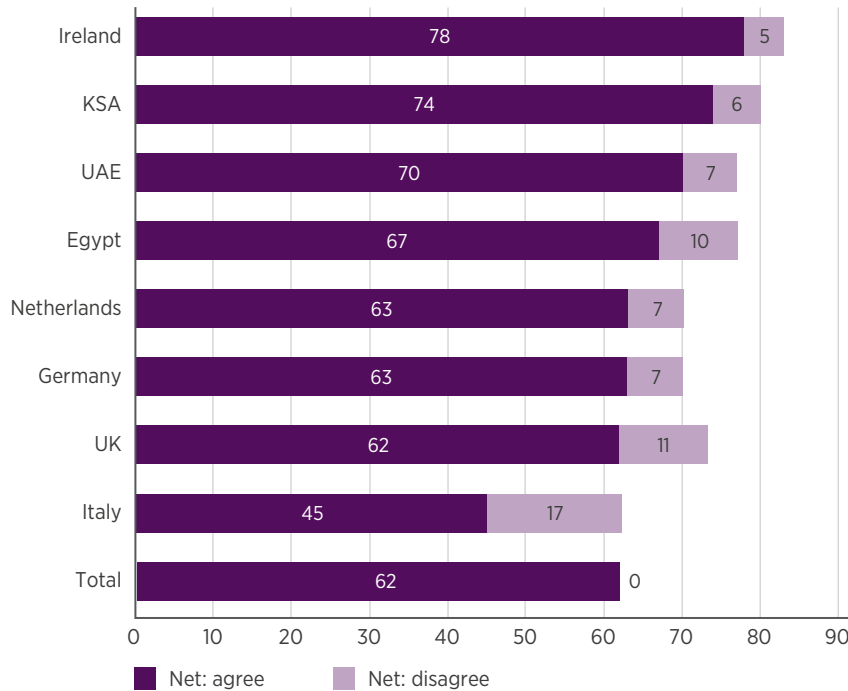
Just under half of respondents across all countries said that the profession is a stepping stone into other business areas (48%). Again, MENA respondents were much more likely to agree with this compared with other countries (with an average of 72%).



## Earning potential

### At a glance

**Figure 13: Irish respondents were most likely to believe there is good earning potential within the profession**  
*Beliefs that a career within the profession offers good earning potential (% of respondents)*



Base: Ireland: n=125; KSA: n=176; UAE: n=225; Egypt: n=147; Netherlands: n=172; Germany: n=225; UK: n=1,496; Italy: n=349; Total global sample: n=2,945.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?  
 The profession offers good earning potential.

### In detail

Just over three in five respondents said that the profession offers good earning potential, especially those in Ireland, KSA and the UAE. People professionals in Italy, meanwhile, were the least likely to agree with this statement.

The findings outlined above give us some insight into the sentiment of HR professionals across different regions, particularly where there are some considerably more negative (or positive) perceptions around a career within the people profession. As mentioned above, there are numerous variables that will impact upon career perceptions. Beyond the workplace, one should also consider that political and societal influences, such as employment legislation and recruitment practices, as well as cultural norms within the industry, will have implications for practitioners’ perceptions.



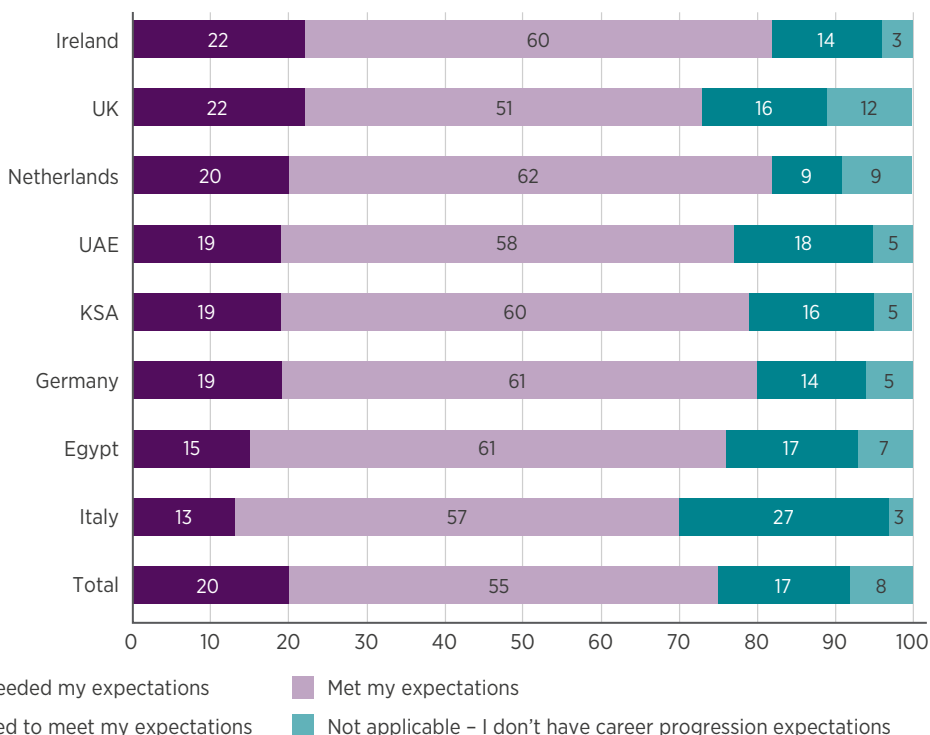
### Career expectations

The term ‘people professional’ encompasses both HR generalist and specialist roles. Given the various number of specialist roles and career paths within HR, there are many career pathways and development routes. But how do people professionals feel about advancing their career within HR? What are the expectations, enablers and barriers to progression?

#### At a glance

**Figure 14: People professionals from Ireland and the UK are most likely to say their progression has exceeded expectations**

*Career expectation across the international sample (% of respondents)*



Base: Ireland: n=125; UK: n=1,496; Netherlands: n=172; UAE: n=225; KSA: n=176; Germany: n=255; Egypt: n=147; Italy: n=349; Global: n=2,945. Question: Has your career progression to date met, exceeded or failed to meet your expectations?

#### In detail

In terms of career expectations, three-quarters of our sample said that their progression had met or exceeded their expectations (global average of 75%). Among the countries sampled, we found that respondents in the Netherlands and Ireland were most positive about their career advancement meeting or exceeding expectations (each 82%).

A minority (fewer than one in five respondents across all countries) said their career progression has failed to meet their expectations (17%). This is especially true of respondents in Italy (27%).

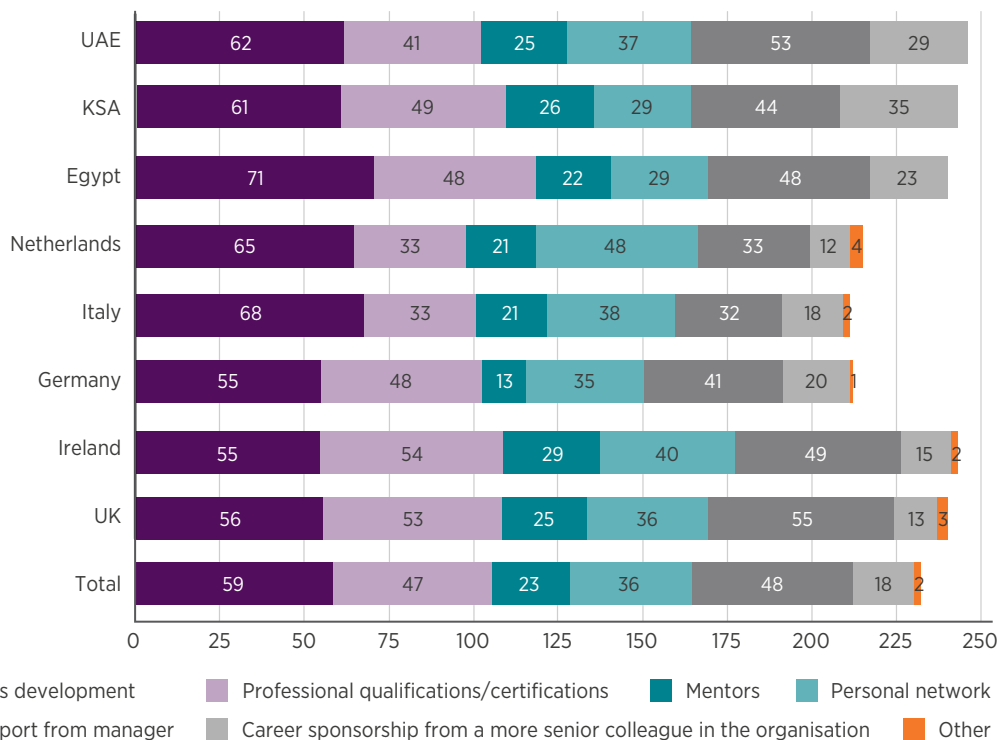
#### What factors are impacting on people professionals' career development?

People professionals were asked about the factors that they believe positively influence their progression. The most commonly cited factors were skills development (59%), manager support (48%) and professional qualifications/certifications (47%). Skills development was recognised universally as the most influential factor when it comes to supporting career progression within the people profession – it was recognised as the top enabler in all markets (see Figure 15).



**Figure 15: Skills development is consistently recognised as a key factor influencing career progression within the people profession**

**Enablers for career progression across the global sample (% of respondents who agreed their career had met or exceeded expectations).**



Base: UK: n=1,087; Ireland: n=103; Germany: n=205; Italy: n=245; Netherlands: n=141; Egypt: n=112; KSA: n=140; UAE: n=174.

Question: If your career progression to date has met or exceeded your expectations, which of the following, if any, have helped you to achieve career advancement? Please tick all that apply.

We identified some key differences across the countries sampled:

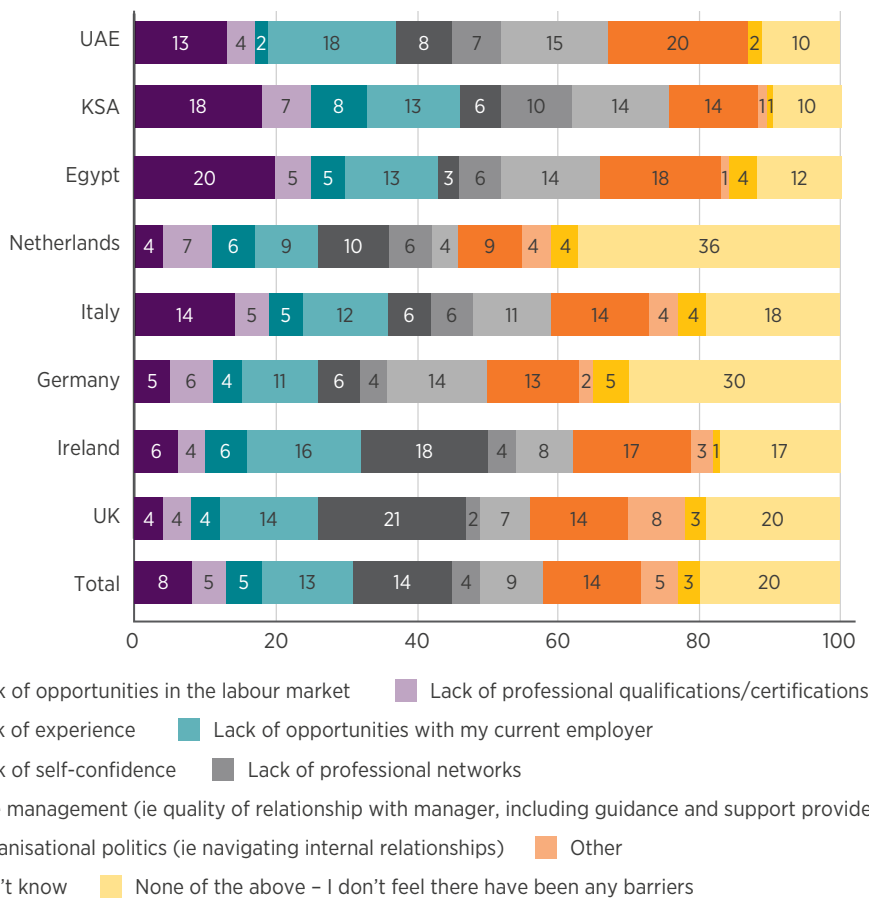
- Respondents in Italy and Egypt were the most likely to cite skills development as helping them achieve career ambitions, compared with those in other countries.
- Personal network was a much more important factor for career advancement in the Netherlands compared with other countries.
- Manager support was more commonly mentioned by respondents in the UK and the UAE, compared with other countries.
- Career sponsorship was more likely to be mentioned by respondents in KSA and the UAE as a helping factor, compared with other countries.
- Respondents in the UK and Ireland were the most likely to cite professional qualifications/certifications as a key factor.

When we asked practitioners about the most common barriers to career advancement, the top barriers were lack of self-confidence (14%), organisational politics (14%), and lack of opportunities with current employer (13%) (see Figure 16).





**Figure 16: A lack of self-confidence appears to be a prevalent barrier for individuals in the UK and Ireland**  
**Perceived barriers to career progression across the global sample (% of respondents)**



Base: Total: n=2,945; UK: n=1,496; Ireland: n=125; Netherlands: n=172; UAE: n=225; Italy: n=349; Germany: n=255; KSA: n=176; Egypt n=147.  
 Question: Which one of the following, if any, has been the single biggest barrier to advancing your career to date? Please tick one only.

When we consider career barriers at a country level, we found some key differences among the sample:

- Respondents in Italy and the MENA countries were more likely to cite lack of opportunities in the labour market as a barrier, compared with a global average.
- A smaller proportion of people professionals in the Netherlands cited lack of opportunities with their employer as a barrier, compared with the global average. The highest proportion of respondents who reported this barrier was in the UAE.
- The UK/Ireland had a much higher proportion of respondents who cited lack of self-confidence, at one-fifth, compared with 6% in the Middle East and 7% in Europe.
- Line management was more commonly mentioned as a barrier by respondents in Germany, Egypt, KSA and the UAE compared with other countries.
- Interestingly, one-fifth of respondents said they have not faced any barriers to advancing their career. Respondents in the Netherlands were the most likely to report this (36%), whereas only 10% of those in MENA felt there have not been any barriers.

However, as barriers to career progression vary considerably by region (see Figure 16), we include more detail within each country chapter.



## How does the wellbeing of people professionals differ across regions?

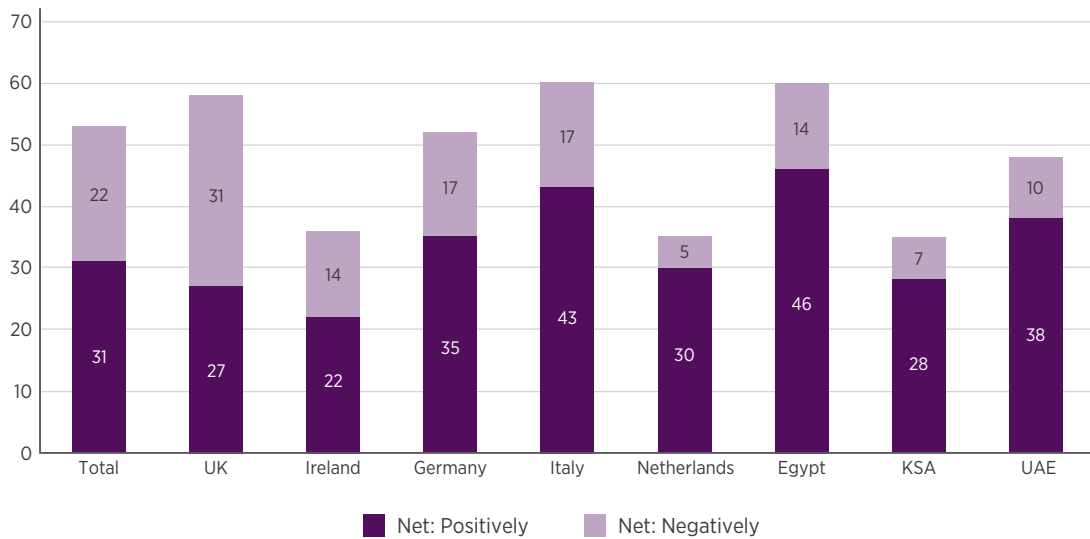
There's no doubt that the 'permacrisis' we've experienced in recent years has had a tremendous impact on the world of work. HR professionals have felt a heavy sense of responsibility for the people within their organisation, and this is bound to have an impact on both the profession as a whole and the individuals working within it.

To gain a sense of the impact on people professionals, we asked our sample about their mental and physical health.

### At a glance

**Figure 17: People professionals from the UK are most likely to say that their work impacts negatively on their mental health and wellbeing**

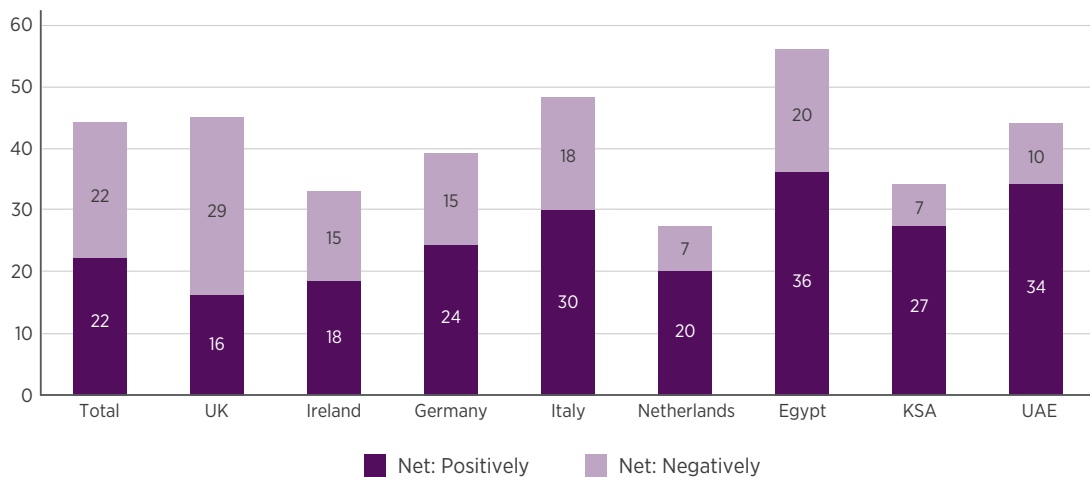
*The impact of work on mental health across all markets (positive and negative net scores)*



Base: Egypt: n=147; Italy: n=349; UAE: n=225; Germany: n=255; Netherlands: n=172; KSA: n=176; UK: n=1,496; Ireland: n=125; Global: n=2,945. Question: To what extent does your work positively or negatively affect the following? Your mental health.

**Figure 18: Countries in the MENA regions are most likely to say their work positively impacts their physical health**

*The impact of work on physical health across all markets (positive and negative net scores)*



Base: UAE: n=225; KSA: n=176; Egypt: n=147; Netherlands: n=172; Italy: n=349; Germany: n=255; Ireland: n=125; UK: n=1,496; Global: n=2,945. Question: To what extent does your work positively or negatively affect the following? Your physical health.



### In detail

Around three in five respondents across all countries reported that their mental health was good or very good (57%), while this was slightly less for physical health (53%). On the other hand, a minority (13%) described their mental health as either poor or very poor, while this was around 14% for physical health.

Across the sample we found some notable differences:

- Respondents in Germany (66%), Italy (66%) and Egypt (77%) were more likely than those in other countries to describe their mental health as good. KSA and Ireland had the lowest reported good mental health (41% and 42% respectively).
- The UK had the highest proportion of respondents reporting poor mental health (20%). In comparison, only 2% of people professionals in the Netherlands and KSA described their mental health as poor.
- Similar to the findings on mental health, respondents in Germany (61%), Italy (61%) and Egypt (69%) were more likely to describe their physical health as good. Ireland and KSA again had the lowest reported good physical health (38% and 41% respectively).
- The UK also had the highest proportion of respondents reporting poor physical health (21%). In contrast, only 3% of people professionals in KSA said their physical health was poor.

### How does work impact on the mental and physical health of people professionals?

As shown in Figure 18, when it comes to the impact of work on health and wellbeing, we found that under a third of respondents globally said their work positively (or very positively) affects their mental health (31%). Sadly, just over one-fifth said work negatively (or very negatively) affects their mental and physical health (net scores 22% for both).<sup>3</sup>

Again, we found some notable differences across the sample:

- Respondents in Italy (43%), Egypt (46%) and the UAE (38%) were more likely to report that work positively affects their mental health compared with those in other countries. Irish professionals were the least likely to report this, at one-fifth (22%).
- UK respondents were more likely than those in other countries to feel their work negatively impacts their mental health, at just under one-third (31%). In comparison, only 5% of respondents in the Netherlands and 7% in KSA reported this.
- Globally, the same proportion of respondents said their work positively versus negatively impacts their physical health, each at just over one-fifth (22%).
- Italy (30%), Egypt (36%) and the UAE (34%) had higher proportions of respondents who said that work positively impacts their physical health, compared with other countries. Only 16% of UK respondents said this.
- The UK had the highest proportion of respondents reporting that work negatively affects their physical health (29%). Meanwhile, only 7% of respondents in the Netherlands and KSA said this.

Given the negative impact of mental and physical health reported by UK people professionals, the average global findings are skewed to this effect (due to the larger sample numbers for the UK).

The rest of this report is designed to be used as an index-style report that gives details on the individual country findings, per country chapter.



## 4 The people profession 2022: Individual country findings



### Egypt

#### Current economic climate

With a diversifying economy, Egypt has avoided the economic downturn that many other neighbouring markets have faced with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, proving its resilience by being the only MENA region to achieve GDP growth in 2020.

Predicted increasing GDP, stable consumer spending, significant investment across a diversified economy and a large, youthful and educated workforce has contributed to the continued development of the country's economic state.<sup>4</sup>

#### Key findings

- Egyptian people professionals were more likely to outsource the majority of HR activities, compared with the global sample. Despite payroll being the most commonly outsourced HR function across the global sample, it was the only function that Egyptian respondents were less likely to outsource. High levels of HR outsourcing are also reflected within the other MENA countries (KSA and the UAE), who outsource at an even greater level than Egypt.
- Supporting line managers to manage their teams, building organisational culture and values, and managing performance were the most common aspects of HR management that respondents felt had become easier to manage under a hybrid setting.
- Egyptian people professionals are focusing on working more collaboratively across the business, demonstrating the value of HR as a credible business partner and building organisational development and change management skills. Seventy per cent of people professionals said they have upskilled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Egyptian professionals were more positive about a career within the profession compared with the global average – specifically around the ease of entry into the profession and HR being a stepping stone into other business areas.

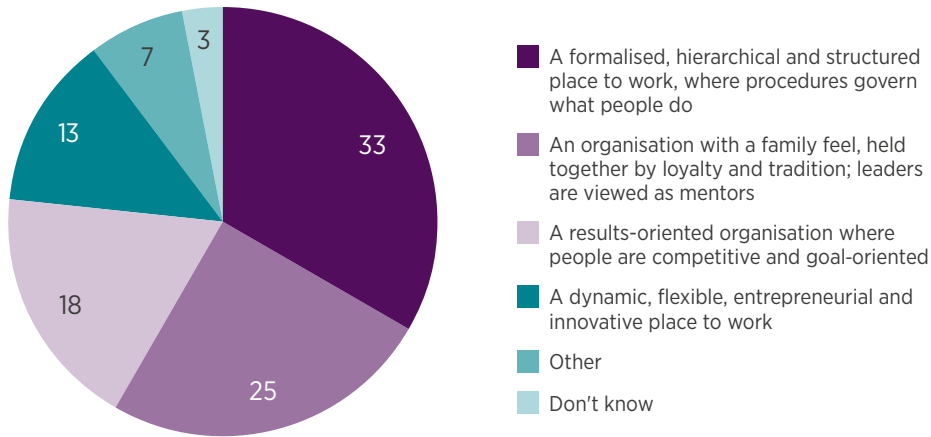
#### What are the most common organisational cultures?

For Egyptian HR professionals, we found the prevailing organisational culture was one based on hierarchy, with formalised and highly structured processes. Beyond this, a quarter worked in an organisation with a family feel, held together by loyalty and tradition, and a fifth of respondents worked in a results-oriented organisation (see Figure 19).



**Figure 19: A third of Egyptian people professionals work within a business that has a structured, formal and hierarchical nature**

**Common organisational cultures in Egypt (% of respondents)**



Base: n=255.

Question: Which one of the following, if any, best describes the prevailing culture in your organisation?  
Please select one option only.

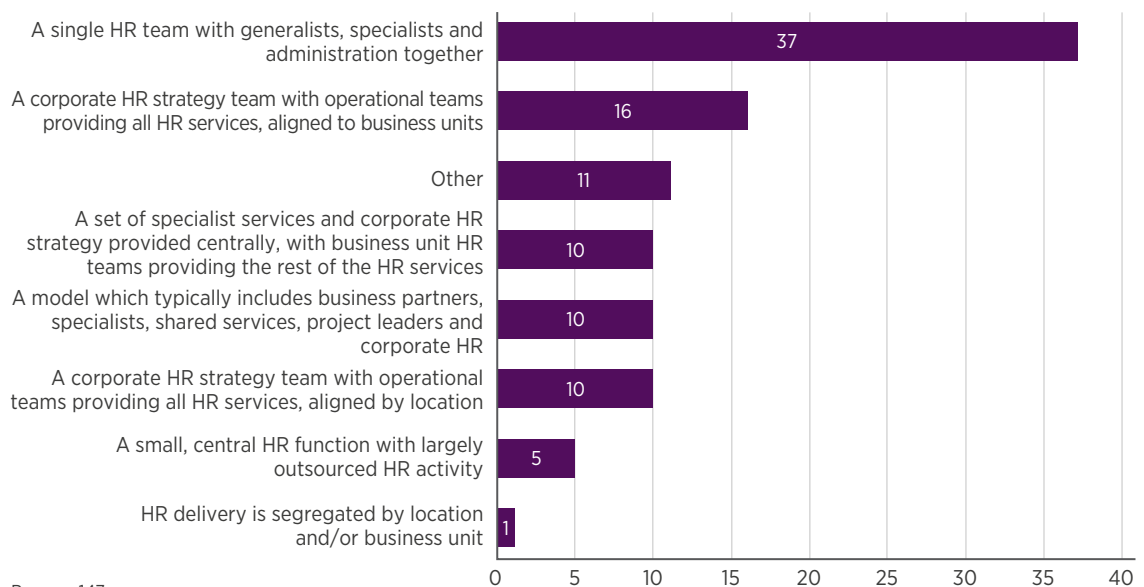
Compared with the global sample, people professionals in Egypt were more likely to operate within a business that was results-oriented and competitive (18% versus 13% globally), but less likely to work within a dynamic, entrepreneurial and innovative type of organisation (13% versus 18% globally).

**How are people teams operating?**

Most commonly, respondents said that their HR operating model was a single HR team with generalists, specialists and administration together, with nearly two-fifths reporting this. In comparison, Egyptian respondents were much less likely to have a business partner/shared services people model, compared with the global average (23%). Around one in ten also stated that they operate under a model that was not included within our response options.

**Figure 20: A single, mixed HR team was most common amongst the Egyptian sample**

**HR operating models in Egypt (% of respondents)**



Base: n=147.

Question: Which ONE of the following structures, if any, best describes your organisation's HR/people model? Please tick one option only.

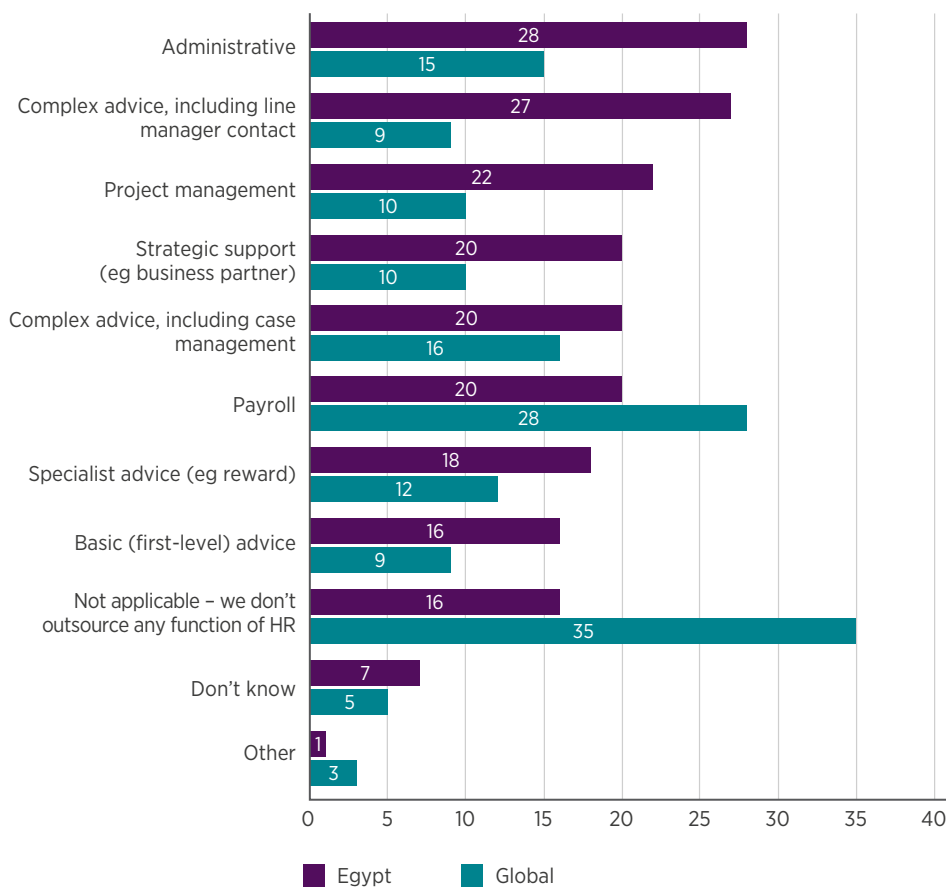




Across the board, Egyptian HR professionals were more likely to outsource all but one of the HR activities captured in our survey, compared with the global sample averages (see Figure 21). Specifically, administrative duties and complex advice, including line manager contact, were both significantly more likely to be outsourced compared with the global average. General project management and strategic support were also more likely to be outsourced, again significantly more than the global averages.

Although payroll is the most commonly outsourced HR function across the global sample, it is the only function that Egyptian respondents are less likely to outsource compared with the global average. For regional comparisons on payroll and other HR outsourcing, see Figure 22.

**Figure 21: Outsourcing of HR functions is much more common in Egypt than across the global sample**  
**Outsourced HR functions in Egypt (% of respondents)**

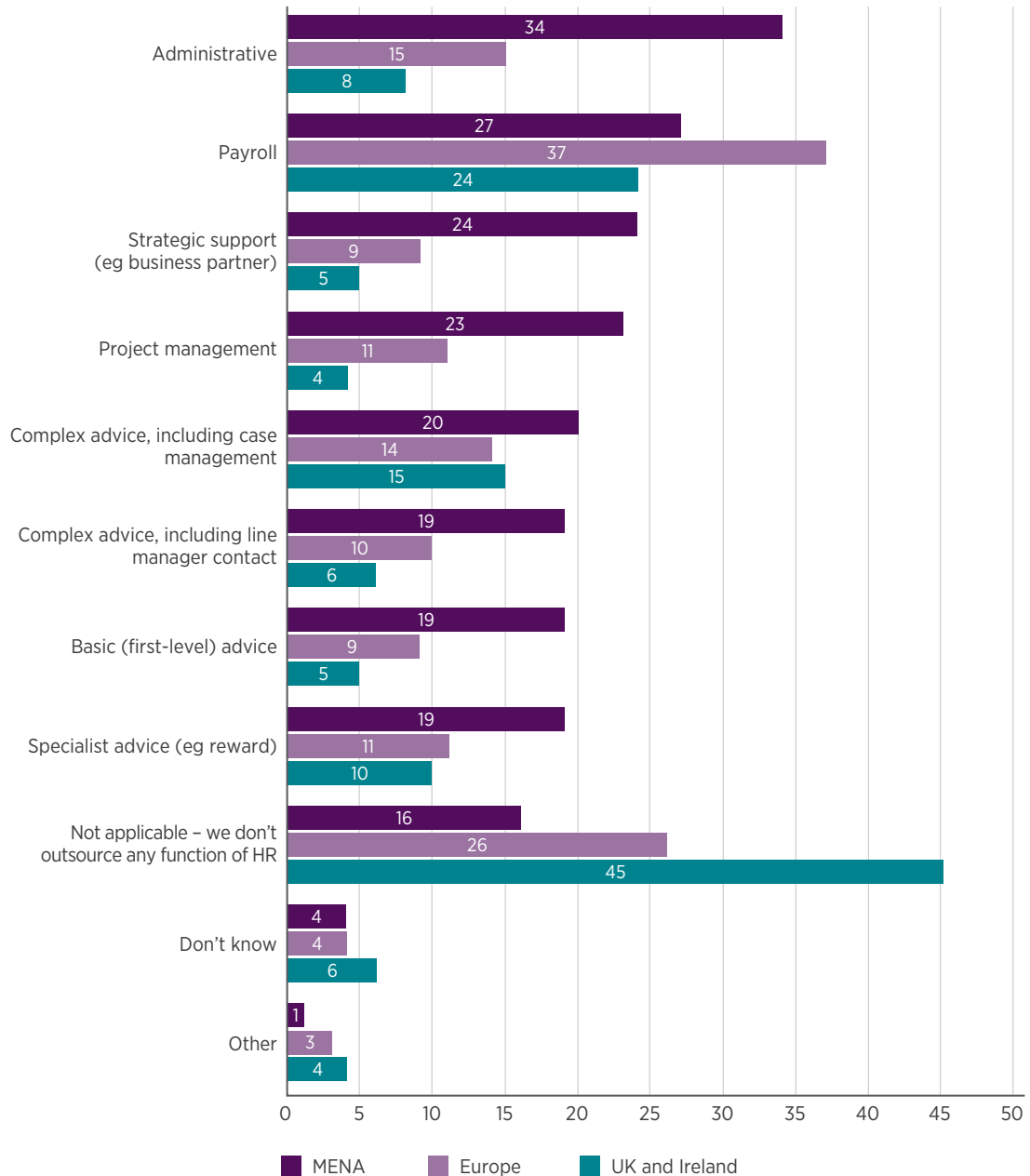


Base: Egypt: n=147; Global: n=2,945.  
 Question: Which elements of your HR function do you outsource, if any?

People professionals in Egypt appear to rely on HR consultancy much more than the majority of the UK/Ireland and European regions. However, we see similar outsourcing patterns within our other sampled MENA countries (KSA and the UAE), who outsource at an even higher level.



**Figure 22: Only 16% of HR professionals in MENA regions say they don't outsource any function of HR**  
**A comparison of outsourced functions across MENA, Europe and the UK and Ireland (% of respondents)**



Base: MENA: n=548; Europe: n=776; UK and Ireland: n=1,621.  
 Question: Which elements of your HR function do you outsource, if any?

**How has hybrid working affected HR practices?**

Working in a more remote or hybrid environment will have an impact on people management and HR delivery. In some cases, HR activities undertaken in a more hybrid setting will require different skills and approaches to implementing HR management. When we asked respondents to rate whether certain aspects of HR had become more difficult, easier or had no change, we found that Egyptian respondents were more likely to say that their work had become easier, compared with the global sample. We also saw this trend occur across the other MENA countries included in our sample (KSA and the UAE).



**Figure 23: Activities that have become easier in a hybrid working world**



Around two-fifths of Egyptian respondents said that almost all aspects of their work as a people professional referenced in the survey had become easier since the shift towards hybrid working. For example, across the global sample, attracting, recruiting and retaining talent was cited as the HR area that had become most difficult for people professionals to navigate – with 39% of people professionals saying this. However, in Egypt (and across our MENA samples), HR practitioners were much less likely to say this (20%).

**What are the priorities for improving HR capability?**

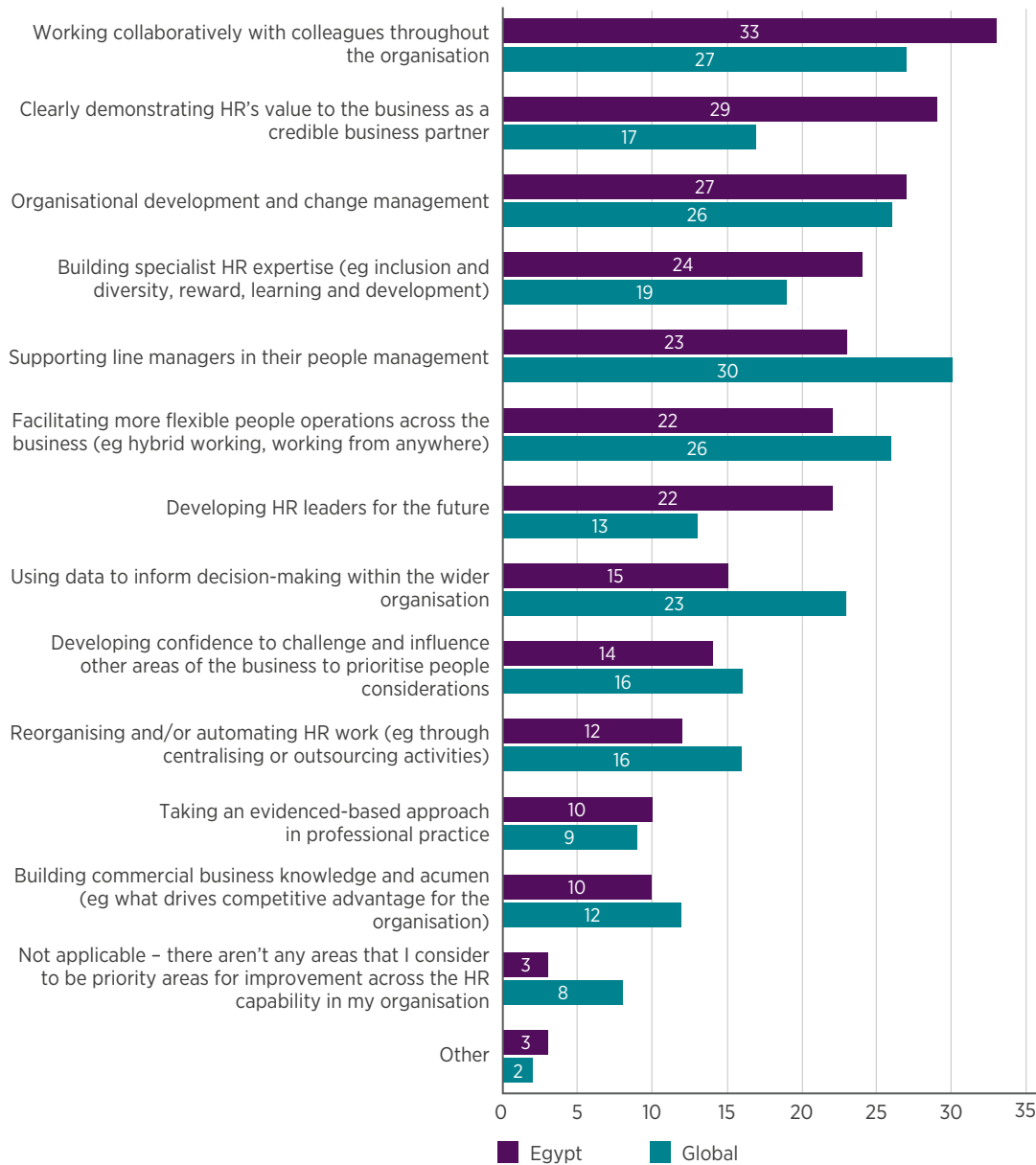
The top three priority areas cited by Egyptian respondents for HR capability improvement are:

- working collaboratively with colleagues throughout the organisation
- clearly demonstrating HR’s value to the business as a credible partner
- organisational development and change management.

Interestingly, respondents in Egypt were less likely than those across other countries to cite using data to inform decision-making and supporting line managers in their people management as HR capability priorities. However, Egyptian professionals were more likely than those globally to believe that developing HR leaders for the future and demonstrating HR’s value to the business were priority areas for HR capability improvement. See Figure 24 for a comparison between capability priorities in Egypt against the global sample.



**Figure 24: Improving HR capability differs significantly between Egypt and the global sample**  
**Priority areas for building HR capability in Egypt and globally (% of respondents)**



Base: Egypt: n=147; Global: n=2,945.

Question: In your opinion, which of the following, if any, are priority areas for improvement across the HR capability in your organisation? Please tick up to three responses.



### What is the perceived strategic value of the profession?

Figure 25: Top three perceived strategic values of the profession in Egypt



\* This is significantly higher than the global average of 64%.

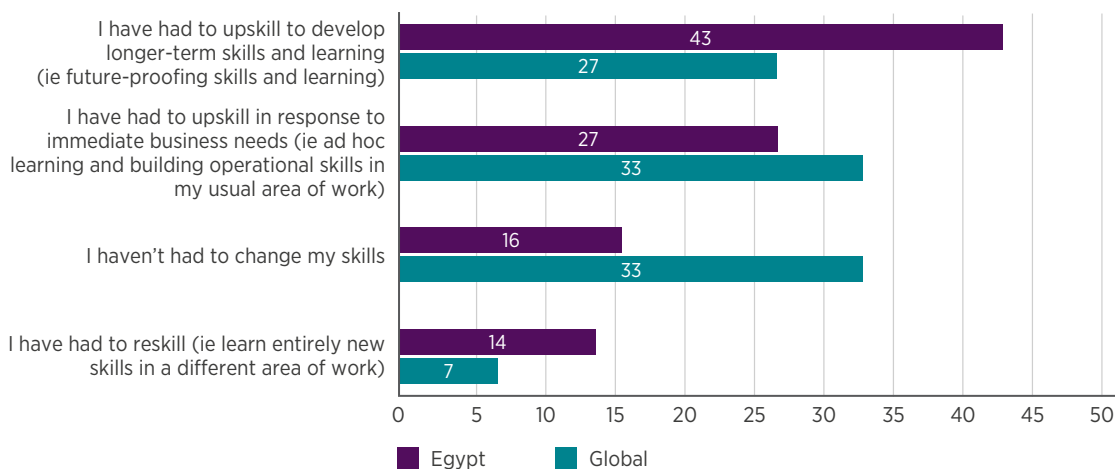
Respondents in Egypt were more likely than those across other countries to agree that the profession is strategically aligned to the business and agreement was generally higher across the MENA countries. Around three in five Egyptian respondents also said that the role of the people function is changing significantly in their organisation (57%).

### How have people professionals developed their skills post-pandemic?

We found that more than two-fifths of Egyptian people professionals say they have had to upskill to develop longer-term skills and learning since the pandemic. This was significantly higher than the global average and generally higher across all MENA regions. Only a small minority said they haven't had to change their skills, much lower than the average across the global sample, showing a dedicated focus to skills development across HR professionals within the region.

Figure 26: There has been a significant focus on building longer-term skills in Egypt, compared with the global sample

Skills development in response to COVID-19 (% of respondents)



Base: Egypt: n=147; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which of the following statements best describes how your HR skills have changed, if at all, as a result of your organisation's response to COVID-19? Please tick one.

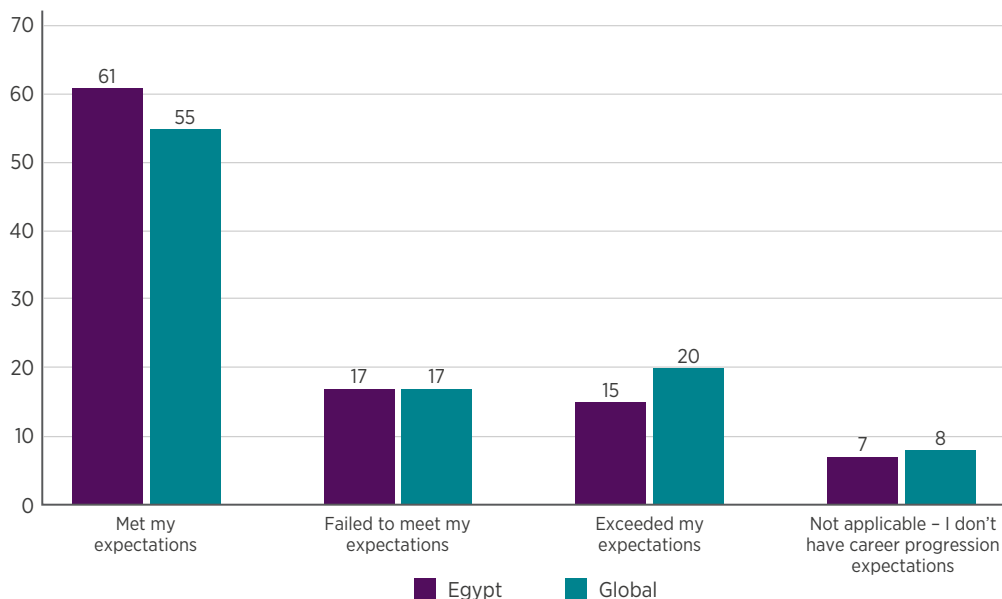


**How do people professionals perceive their career progression to date?**

Understanding the sentiment around career progression at a localised level is important, as it helps us to recognise regional differences and reflect on the nuances of the HR career journey. We found that Egyptian HR professionals were more likely than the global sample to agree that their career progression had met their expectations (61% versus 55% globally).

**Figure 27: The majority of Egyptian respondents say that their career progression has lived up to expectations**

*Expectations of career progression in Egypt (% of respondents)*



Base: Egypt: n=147; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Has your career progression to date met, exceeded or failed to meet your expectations?

When we asked what factors positively influenced respondents' career progression, we found that, as with all the countries, skills development was key. In fact, across our sample, Egyptian HR professionals were most likely to say this, with 71% citing skill development as a contributing factor to progression. This finding is in line with the prioritisation of skills development mentioned above (see Figure 26).

The second and third most important factors were having line manager support and obtaining professional qualifications (both 48%).

In terms of the biggest perceived barrier to career progression, people professionals in Egypt cited a lack of opportunities within the labour market, with 20% reporting this – significantly higher than the global average of 8%. Organisational politics were seen as the second most common barrier. Interestingly, as well as an enabler of progression, it appears that line managers also act as a barrier (14%) where there is a lack of support and perhaps a negative relationship between employee and manager.

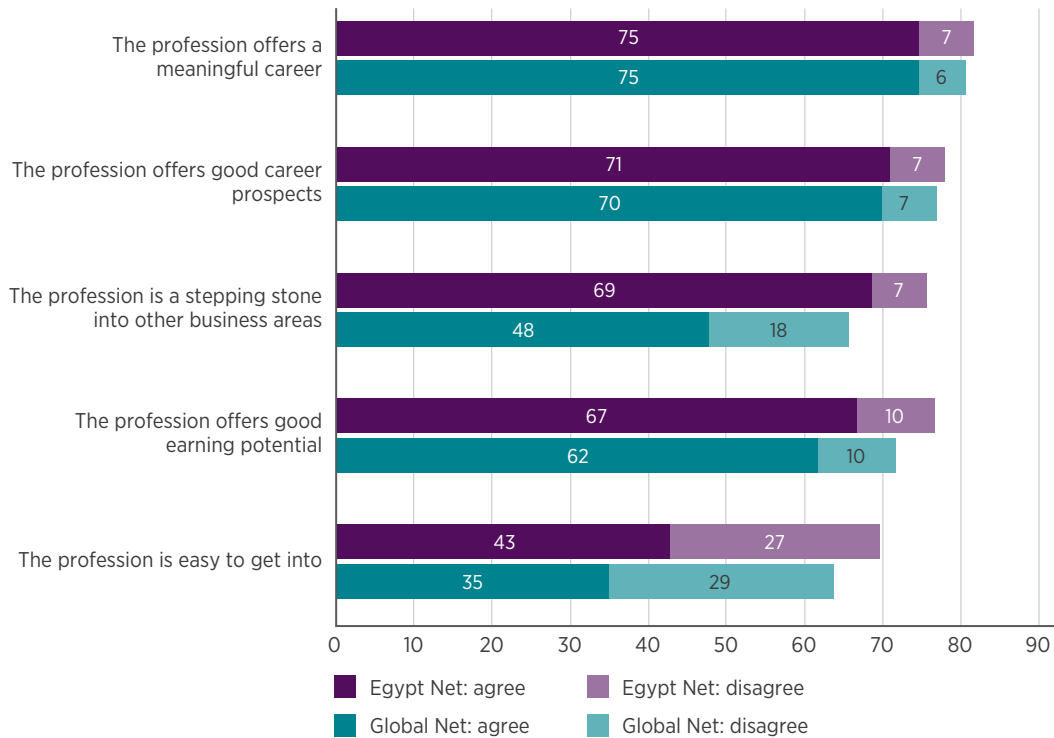
**What are the perceptions of a career in the people profession?**

In terms of HR career perceptions, Egyptian professionals were more positive than the global average, particularly around the ease of entry into the profession and HR being a stepping stone into other business areas. Additionally, the vast majority felt that a career within HR was a meaningful one, and offers good career prospects and a good earning potential.





**Figure 28: Egyptian career perceptions are more positive on all aspects, compared with the global sample**  
**Egyptian perceptions about a career in the people profession (% of respondents)**

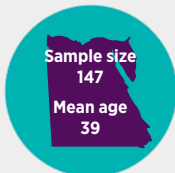


Base: Egypt: n=147; Global: n=2,945.

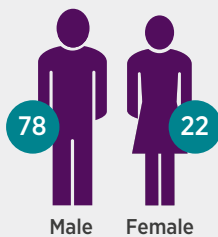
Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?

As a reminder, by the 'HR/people profession' we are referring to HR, OD, organisational change, L&D and related disciplines.

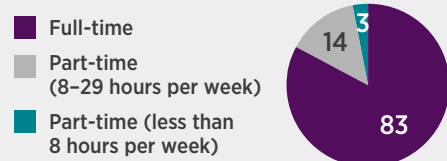
### Egyptian sample demographics



#### Gender split (%)



#### Full-time/part-time split (%)



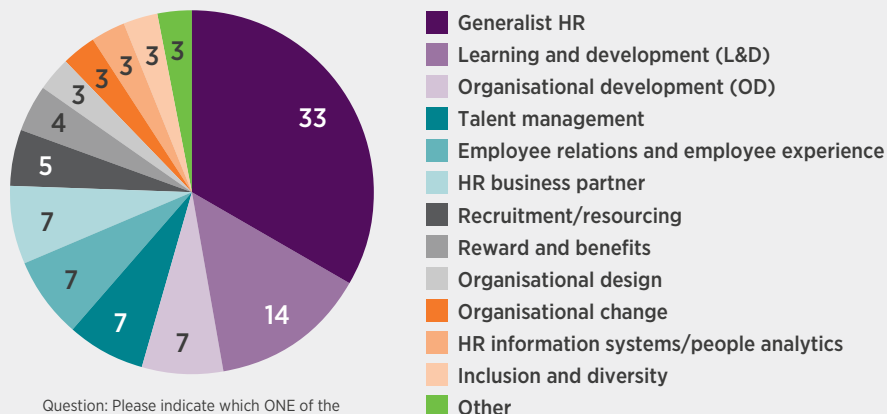
#### Employment status split (%)



#### Respondents' organisational split (%)



Type of role (%)



Question: Please indicate which ONE of the HR/people profession areas listed most accurately reflects your decision-making responsibilities.

Years in current organisation (%)



Years in the people profession (%)

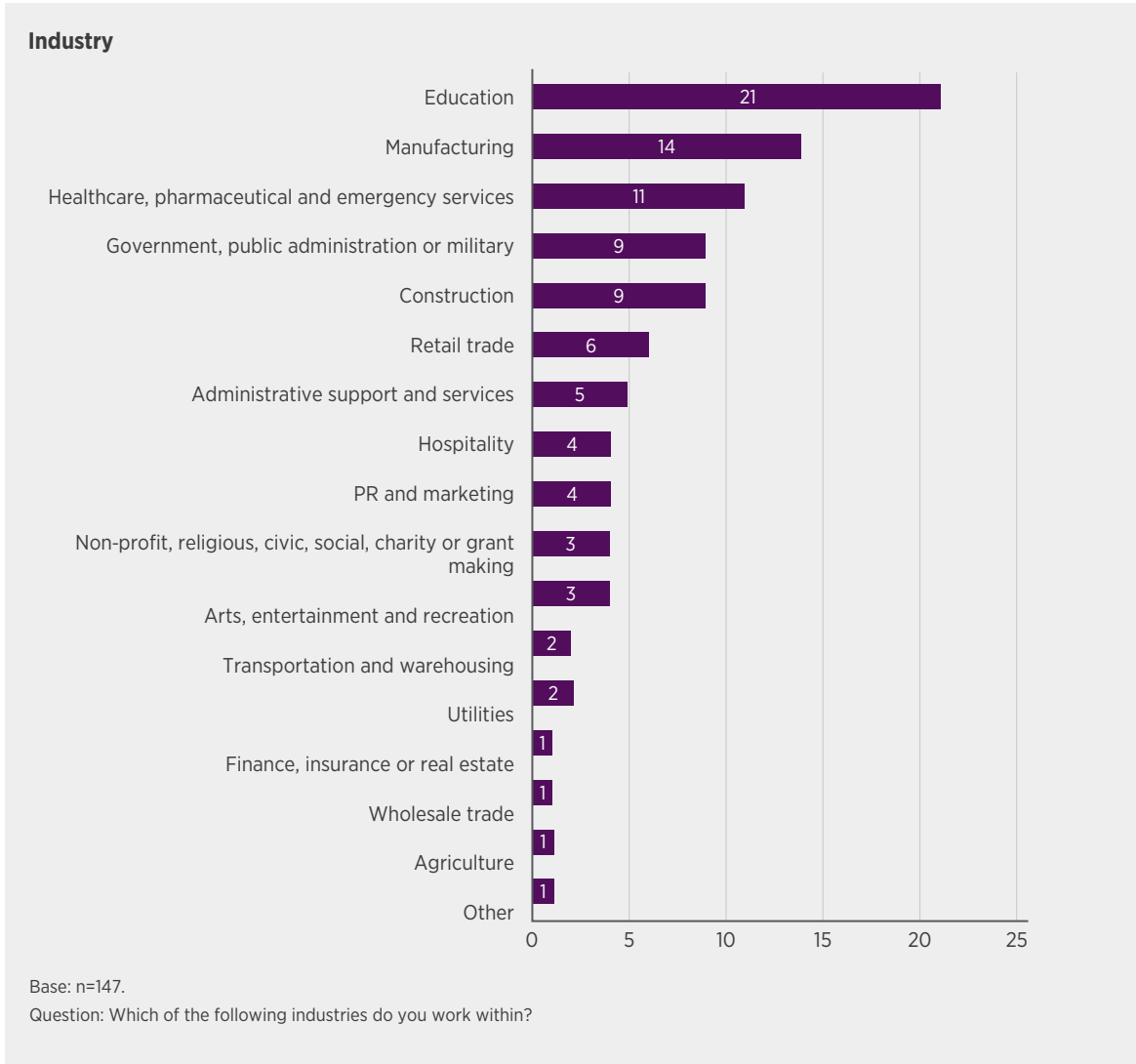


Ways of working in the last 12 months split (%)



Country samples are not representative of the wider HR population within that region and the findings within this report reflect the opinions of HR professionals who participated in the survey.







## Germany

### Current economic climate

Germany is Europe's largest economy and the fourth largest economy worldwide.<sup>5</sup> However, economic growth and recovery post-pandemic has been stunted by the ongoing war in Ukraine and the embargo on Russian oil. As with much of Europe, inflation is rising, household spending is reduced and there are increasing supply chain bottlenecks and a tight labour market, although 77.4% of the working-age population is employed.<sup>6</sup>

### Key findings

- German respondents said they operate under two predominant organisational cultures: a formalised and highly structured workplace, and one with a traditional family feel.
- The prevailing HR model among German respondents was a single HR team with generalists, specialists and administration together, and they were more likely than the global average to say that they don't outsource any function of HR. Out of all functions, payroll is the most commonly outsourced, on par with the global average.
- A significant proportion of German respondents reported that attracting, recruiting and retaining talent had become more difficult in a hybrid workplace. This was also identified as the top hybrid working challenge globally.
- We found that significantly fewer German respondents agree their HR/people function works collaboratively across business functions, compared with people professionals in other countries. Working more collaboratively with colleagues was also noted as a priority area for building HR capability within people teams.
- Collectively, the vast majority of German practitioners feel positive about their career progression to date and were more likely to say there had not been any barriers in relation to career progression, compared with the global sample.

### What are the most common organisational cultures?

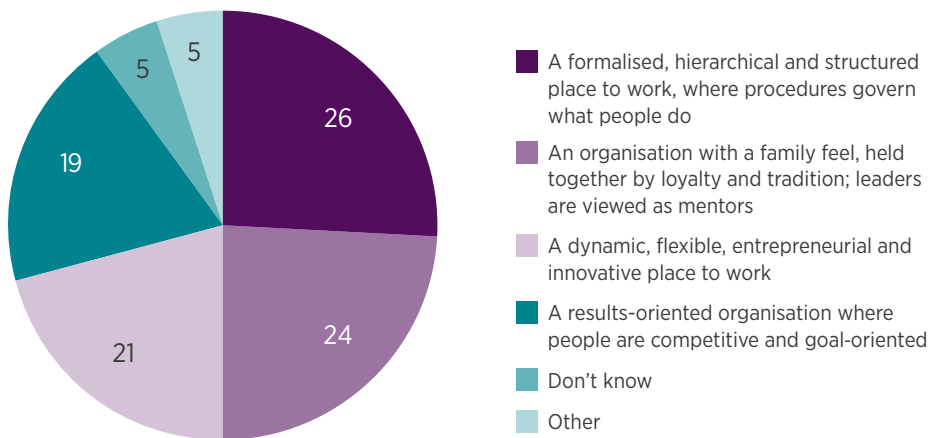
We found a relatively even split across the sample: around a quarter of respondents described their culture as formalised, hierarchical and structured, another quarter said that their organisation had a family feel, and a fifth described a dynamic, flexible, entrepreneurial and innovative place to work.

Additionally, 19% said they worked in a results-oriented organisation where people are competitive and goal-oriented, which was higher than the global average of 13%.



**Figure 29: German respondents were most likely to say they operate within a culture that is formalised, structured and hierarchical**

**Common organisational cultures in Germany (% of respondents)**



Base: n=255.

Question: Which one of the following, if any, best describes the prevailing culture in your organisation?  
Please select one option only.

Although there was a fairly even split across the sample, we note some organisational culture differences between sectors. Specifically, private sector respondents were significantly more likely to describe their organisation as results-oriented (28%) compared with those in the public sector (5%).

**How are people teams operating?**

The prevailing model in German organisations was a single HR team with generalists, specialists and administration together, with nearly three in 10 reporting this. The second most common model was one which typically includes business partners, specialists, shared services, project leaders and corporate HR. Twelve per cent of German people professionals said that HR delivery is segregated by location and/or business unit in their organisation, which was higher than the global average (4%).

**Figure 30: German respondents say they most commonly operate from a single HR team that includes generalists and specialists working together**

**HR operating models in Germany (% of respondents)**



Base: n=255.

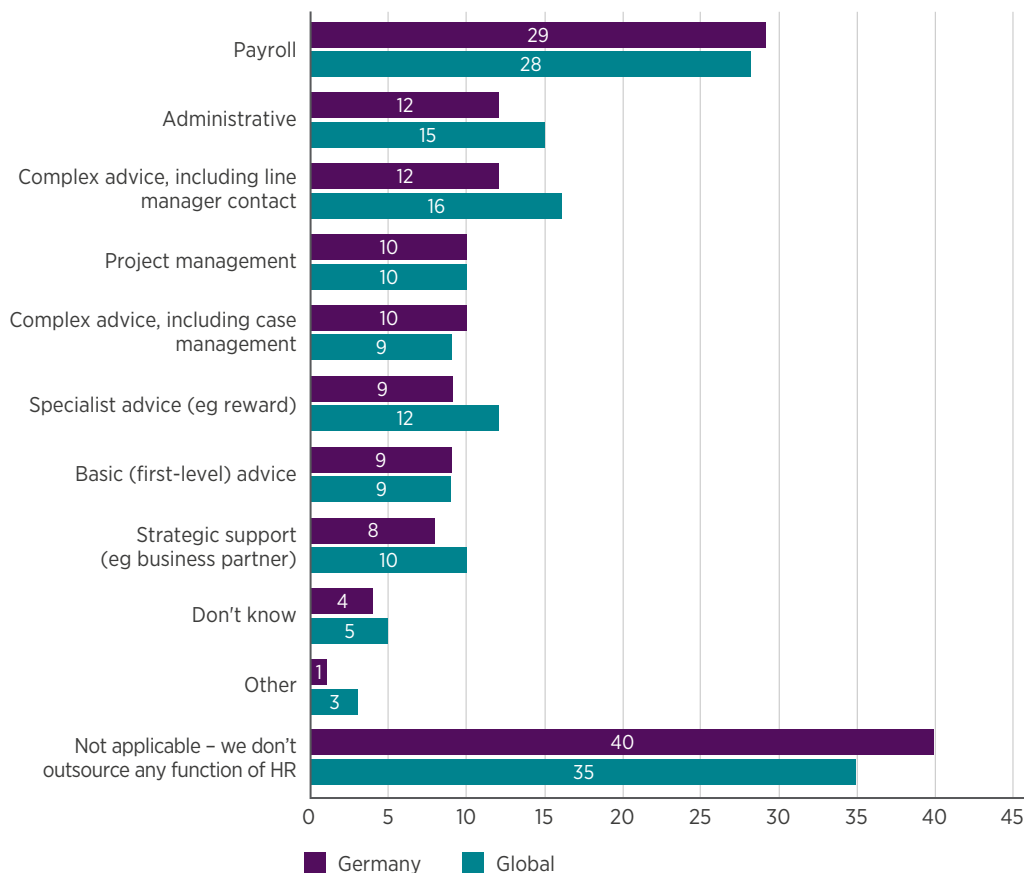
Question: Which ONE of the following structures, if any, best describes your organisation's HR/people model? Please tick one option only.



When we consider outsourcing models, German respondents were more likely to say that their organisation doesn't outsource any function of HR (40%), compared with a global average of 35%. However, out of all functions, payroll is the most commonly outsourced, on par with the global average (28%). Strategic support was the least outsourced function, with only 8% of our sample citing this.

**Figure 31: German people professionals were more likely to say that their people team does not outsource any function of HR**

*Outsourced HR functions in Germany (% of respondents)*



Base: Germany: n=255; Global: n=2,945.  
Question: Which elements of your HR function do you outsource, if any?

### How has hybrid working affected HR practices?

**Figure 32: Top areas of HR delivery that remain unaffected by hybrid working**





A significant proportion of German respondents report that attracting, recruiting and retaining talent had become more difficult in a hybrid world (40%). This was also identified as the top hybrid working challenge globally (39%) and is a continuing priority for all our surveyed markets.

However, the majority of HR practices are stable, regardless of hybrid operations, suggesting that German respondents perceive HR delivery as remaining effective under hybrid settings. For six out of the eight HR areas we surveyed, over half of the sample, or more, agreed there had been no impact on HR delivery. Additionally, compared with the global average, significantly fewer German professionals believe that the role of the people function is changing significantly in their organisation (40% versus 51% globally), suggesting that people operations and the role of the people function are stable despite recent events and external pressures.

**What are the priorities for improving HR capability?**

The most commonly cited priority for improving HR capability was working collaboratively with colleagues throughout the organisation. Interestingly, significantly fewer German respondents said their HR/people function works collaboratively across business functions to meet business needs, compared with people professionals in other countries (57% versus a global average of 74%). Perhaps cross-function collaboration has partially been impacted by the changes in remote and hybrid business operations.

Building specialist knowledge and HR expertise (24%) and developing HR leaders for the future (23%) were also among the top cited areas for improvement, with higher proportions of German professionals citing these areas compared with the global average (19% and 13% respectively). Clearly for this sample, specialised skills and leadership development within people teams are likely to be on the agenda for learning professionals.

**Figure 33: Working collaboratively across the business is a key focus area for improvement within people teams in Germany**

**Priority areas for building HR capability in Germany (% of respondents)**



Base: n=255.

Question: In your opinion, which of the following, if any, are priority areas for improvement across the HR capability in your organisation? Please tick up to three responses.



Proportionally, German people professionals were more likely to believe there were no areas that they consider to be a priority for improvement across their organisation’s HR capability (13%) compared with those globally (8%). Additionally, professionals were also more likely to say they haven’t had to develop their skills as a result of the organisation’s response to COVID-19 (43% compared with the global average of 33%).

**What is the perceived strategic value of the profession?**

**Figure 34: Top three perceived strategic values of the profession in Germany**



Just over half of people professionals in Germany agreed or strongly agreed that their HR/people function has clear measures of success for organisational outcomes (51%) and has HR practices that are clearly linked to organisational outcomes (55%).

German respondents were more optimistic about the people function being recognised by senior leaders when it achieves its measures of success, as well as being widely acknowledged in the organisation as having an important impact, with around three in five agreeing with each of these statements (60% and 63% respectively). Furthermore, 71% believed the people function makes a valued, strategic contribution to the organisation.

**How have people professionals developed their skills post-pandemic?**

A significant proportion of German respondents noted that they hadn’t developed their skillset in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 10% higher than the global average. Apart from one other European country (the Netherlands), German people professionals were less likely to have either developed long-term-type skills or more immediate/responsive skills compared with the rest of the sample.



**Figure 35: Proportionally, German people professionals were more likely to say their skillset hasn't changed in response to the pandemic**

**Skills development in response to COVID-19 (% of respondents)**



Base: Germany: n=255; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which of the following statements best describes how your HR skills have changed, if at all, as a result of your organisation's response to COVID-19? Please tick one.

Despite the findings around stalled upskilling, German professionals believed they implement their learning and development in other ways. For example, 71% said they had applied their learning in their work often or very often, in the past six months, which was higher than the global average of 66%. Thirty-nine per cent of German people professionals had identified their own L&D needs often or very often, planned how to achieve their development goals (39%), and acted on their L&D plan (36%).

Interestingly, we found some differences across age groups. Respondents aged 45 and over were more likely than younger age groups to report that they had applied their learning in their work often or very often (83% versus 59% of those aged 34-44 and 58% of those aged 18-34).

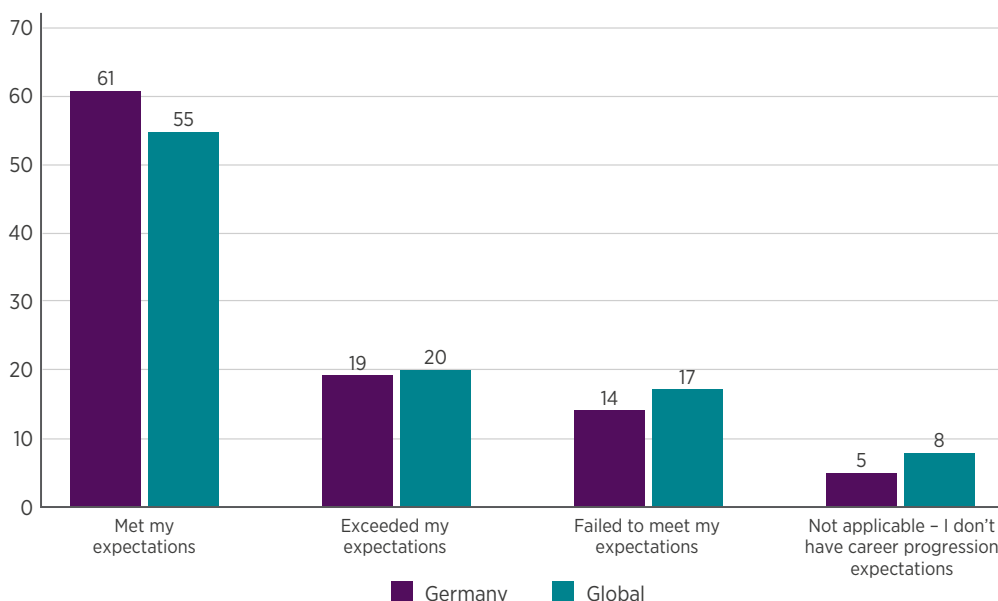
**How do people professionals perceive their career progression to date?**

Collectively, the vast majority of German practitioners feel positive about their career progression to date. Nearly a fifth said their career progression has exceeded expectations, while the majority said their career progression expectations had been met.



**Figure 36: Generally, career expectations are more positive amongst German HR professionals than the international average**

**Expectations of career progression in Germany (% of respondents)**



Base: Germany: n=255; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Has your career progression to date met, exceeded or failed to meet your expectations?

German people professionals felt that their career progression had been helped mainly by skills development (55%) and professional qualifications (48%).

However, unlike the international sample, having mentors (13%) and manager support (41%) were seen as less valuable for career development, compared with a global average of 23% and 48% respectively.

While the main barrier to career advancement was seen as line management (14% – significantly higher than the global average of 9%), German respondents were more likely to say there had not been any barriers in relation to career progression (30%) than the global average (20%). Organisational politics and a lack of opportunities with their current employer were the next most common barriers to career progression, with 13% and 11% saying this.

Interestingly, we found some significant differences across age groups. Those aged 45 or over were more likely than younger age groups to report that they don't feel there have been any barriers to their career advancement (42%, versus 20% of those aged 35–44 and 15% of those aged 18–34).

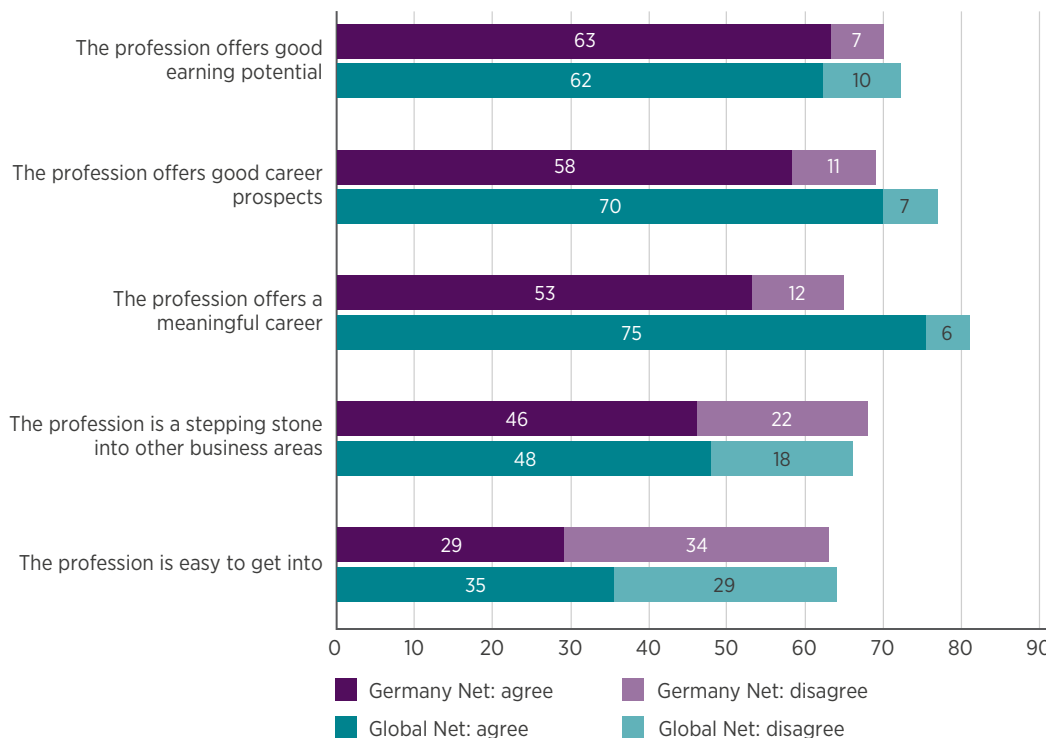
**What are the perceptions of a career in the people profession?**

These were somewhat more negative than the global perceptions, with entry into the profession being one area where German respondents were less positive than other countries. German people professionals were also less likely than those globally to feel that the profession offers good career prospects and that it offers a meaningful career. Less than half said the profession is a stepping stone into other business areas, but more than three in five agreed a career within the people profession offers a good earning potential (63%).



**Figure 37: German HR professionals were most positive about the earning potential within the HR industry**

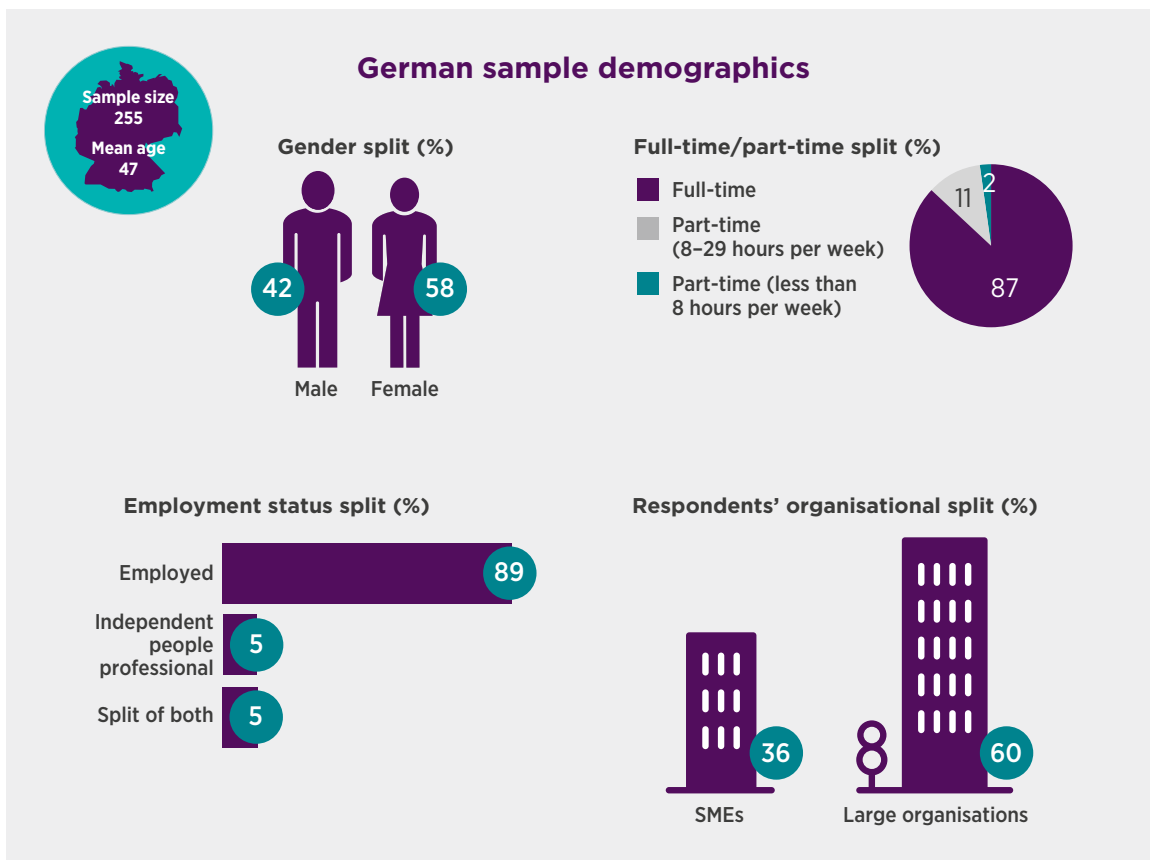
*German perceptions about a career in the people profession (% of respondents)*



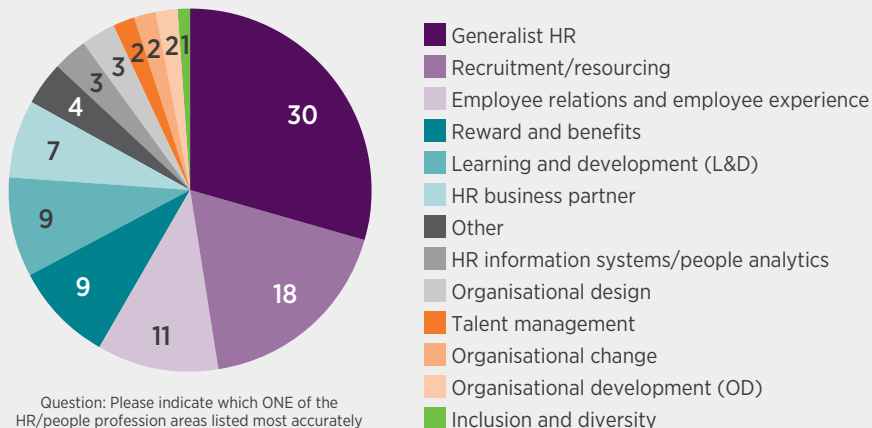
Base: Germany: n=255; Global: n=2,945.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?

As a reminder, by the 'HR/people profession' we are referring to HR, OD, organisational change, L&D and related disciplines.



Type of role (%)

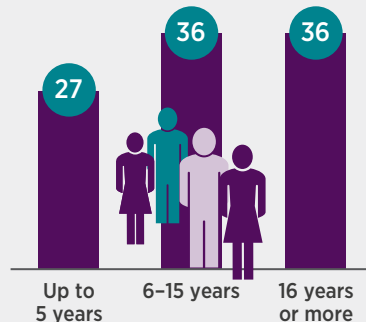


Question: Please indicate which ONE of the HR/people profession areas listed most accurately reflects your decision-making responsibilities.

Years in current organisation (%)



Years in the people profession (%)



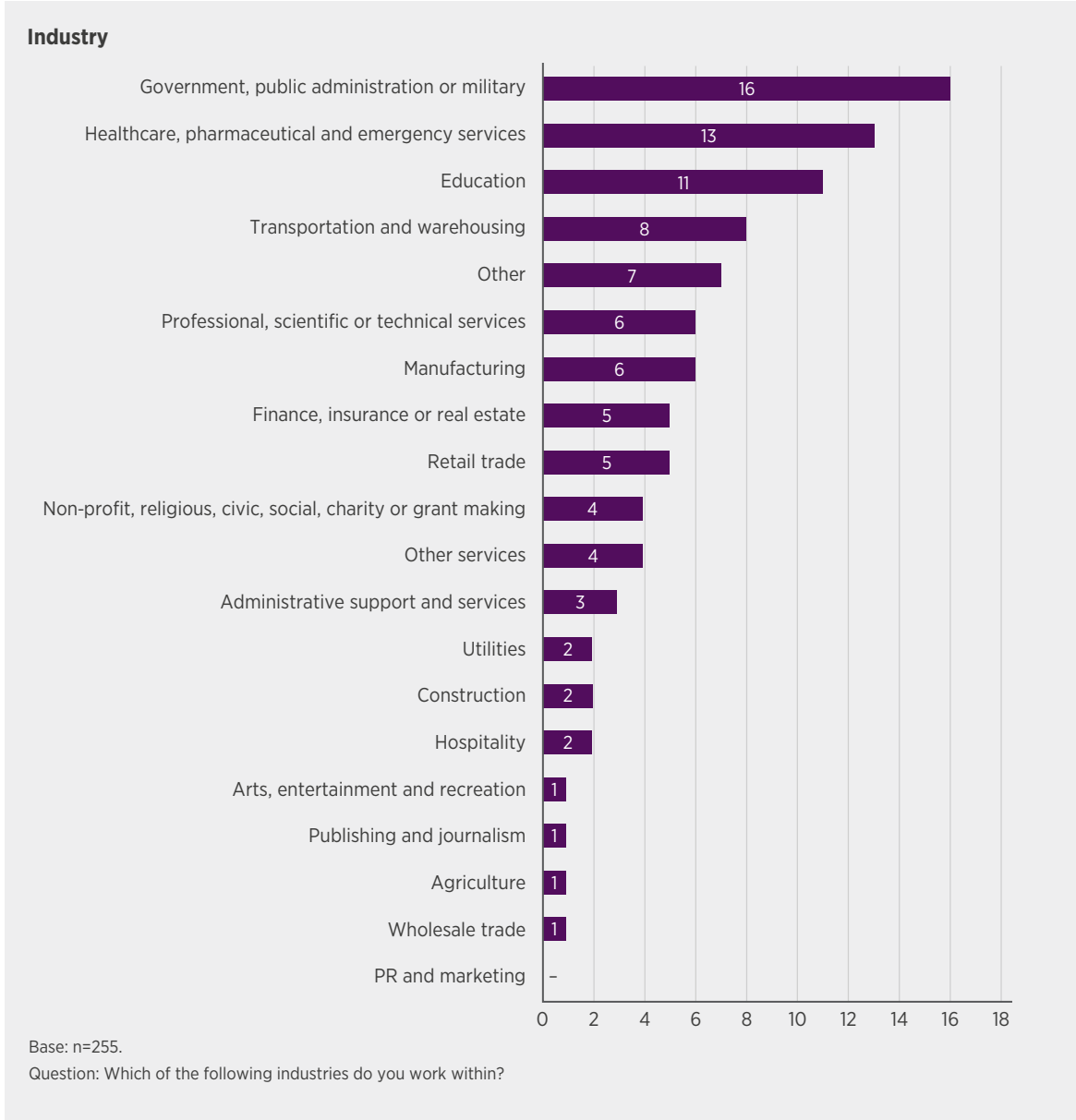
Ways of working in the last 12 months split (%)



Country samples are not representative of the wider HR population within that region and the findings within this report reflect the opinions of HR professionals who participated in the survey.









## Ireland

### Current economic climate

Whilst inflation rates were expected to peak in 2022 before reducing gradually in 2023/2024, Ireland's economic growth appears resilient thanks to the exporting capabilities of multinational corporations.

The Irish labour market is tight with employment rates at a record high in 2022 and greater participation of women in the workplace

being facilitated by increased flexible working arrangements. Labour and skills shortages remain prominent but somewhat relieved by the uptake of inward migration.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to note the small sample size for Ireland of 125 respondents. This means we are limited in the analysis, interpretation and comparison of this data due to the small number of respondents from this region. The findings included here are not representative of the wider HR population, but showcase the opinion of HR professionals who participated in the survey.

### Key findings

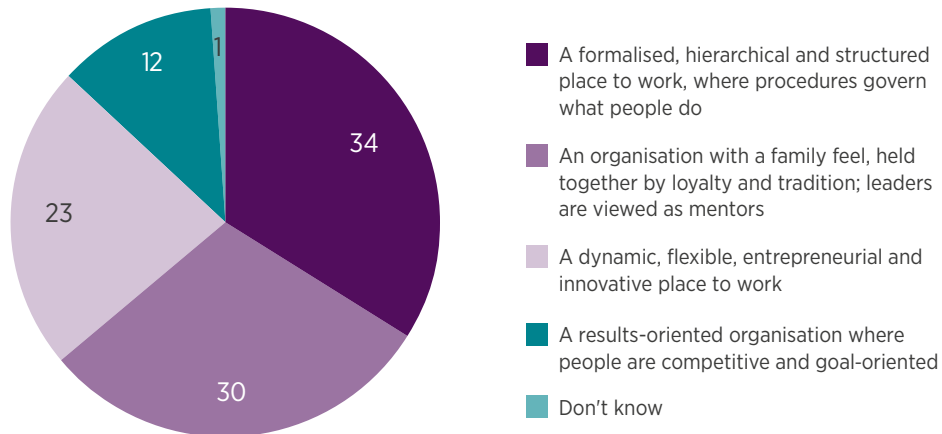
- There were two prominent HR operating models: a quarter said they operate under a single HR team that included generalists and specialists, and another quarter adopt a business partnering model with shared services, project leaders and corporate HR.
- There were several areas that people professionals cited as more challenging while operating in a hybrid working environment; these were supporting employees' mental health and wellbeing, building organisational culture and supporting line managers with their people management.
- Irish respondents are focusing on building capability to support flexible people operations across the business, supporting line managers, and developing organisational development and change management skills.
- Irish respondents had more positive views on the strategic alignment of the people function to the business, the reputation of the function and the perceived value-add of the people team, compared with the global average.
- In general, people professionals were more positive about career opportunities within the profession compared with the global sample, specifically towards the earning potential within the profession. Respondents were least positive about entry into the profession, suggesting that breaking into the profession is considered to be challenging to some degree.

### What are the most common organisational cultures?

Irish respondents cited two common cultures that people professionals operate within. The predominant organisational culture is one that is highly structured and formalised, with a hierarchical nature, stated by over a third of respondents. The second most common culture was an organisation that had traditional family values, with three in 10 saying that this culture resonated with them.



**Figure 38: Findings show two dominant cultures cited by professionals in Ireland**  
**Common organisational cultures in Ireland (% of respondents)**



Base: n=125.

Question: Which one of the following, if any, best describes the prevailing culture in your organisation?  
 Please select one option only.

Irish people professionals were also more likely to say their organisational culture was one that is dynamic, flexible and entrepreneurial in nature (23%), comparatively higher than the UK (14%) and global sample (16%). We also found this as a prominent organisational culture across our European country samples.

**How are people teams operating?**

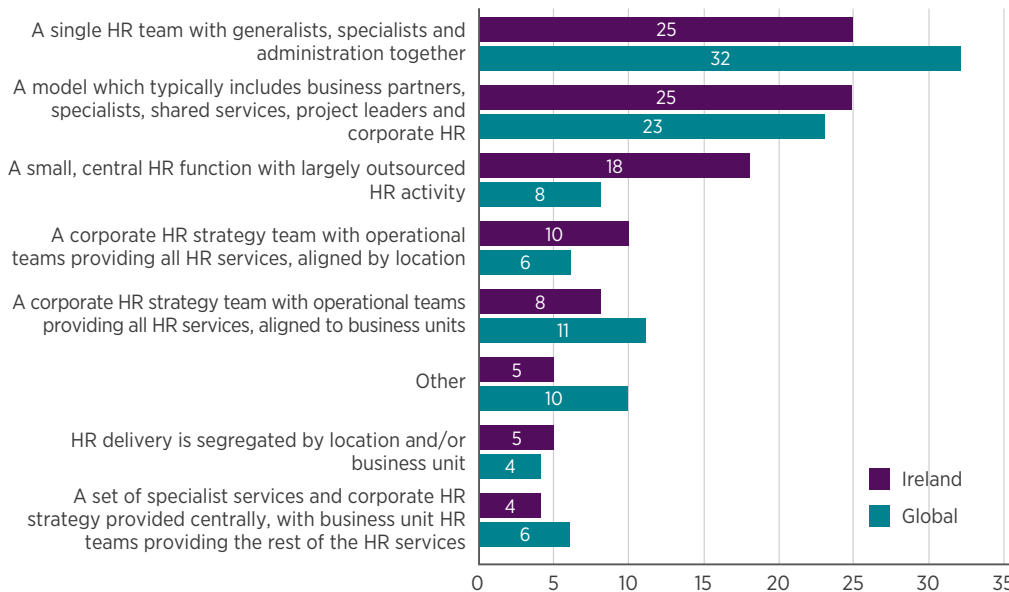
For respondents in Ireland, there were two prominent HR operating models. A quarter of our sample said they operate under a single HR team that included generalists and specialists. Comparatively, respondents in Ireland were less likely to cite this model compared with the global average. The second most common model was a business partnering model with shared services, project leaders and corporate HR, with a quarter of the sample citing this.

Beyond these two most common operating models, Irish respondents were the most likely to say they operate within a small, central people function that outsources the majority of its HR activity, compared with the rest of the sample (18% versus a global average of 8%).



**Figure 39: There are two prominent HR operating models in Ireland – a single team with generalists and specialists, and a business partnering model**

**HR operating models in Ireland (% of respondents)**



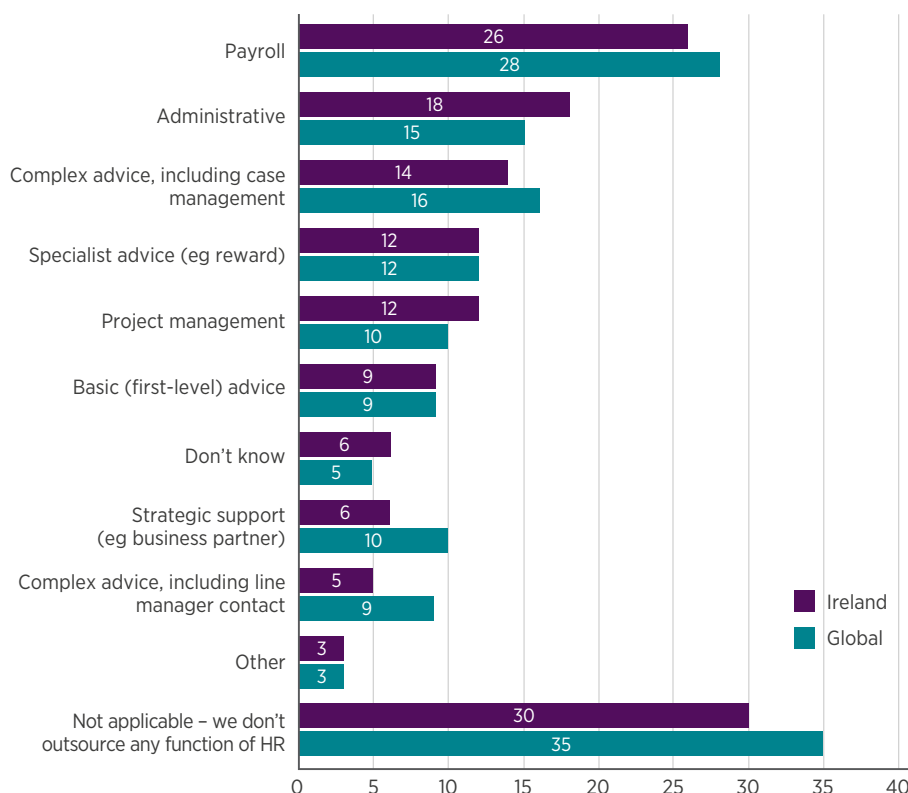
Base: Ireland: n=125; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which ONE of the following structures, if any, best describes your organisation's HR/people model? Please tick one option only.

Interestingly, three in 10 practitioners in Ireland say they don't outsource any elements of their HR function, slightly less than the global average. Beyond this, over a quarter of the sample say they outsource their payroll function, which was on par with the global average.

**Figure 40: Payroll is the most commonly outsourced HR function across the Ireland sample**

**Outsourced HR functions in Ireland (% of respondents)**



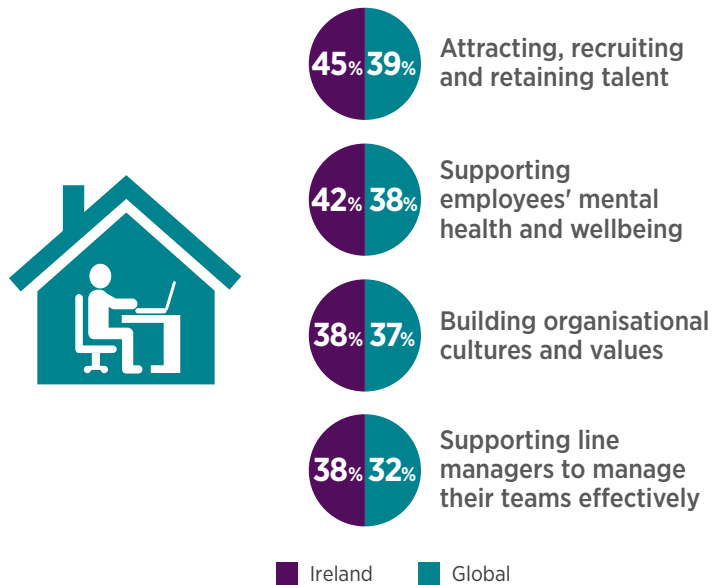
Base: Ireland: n=125; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which elements of your HR function do you outsource, if any?



## How has hybrid working affected HR practices?

Figure 41: Top four hybrid working challenges in Ireland



While there were several areas that were found to be more challenging for people professionals, there were also some HR areas that had not been impacted by hybrid working, either positively or negatively. In particular, 46% of practitioners in Ireland said that managing performance was unchanged, and contributing to organisational effectiveness was also viewed as fairly stable by 42%.

Encouragingly, we also found that half of the sample felt that addressing inequality and discrimination in a hybrid environment had remained unchanged, suggesting that people professionals felt able to address this area effectively.

### What are the priorities for improving HR capability?

For Irish respondents, there is a clear focus on building capability to support flexible people operations across the business, with significantly more citing this as a priority area compared with the global average. In the [People Profession 2022: UK and Ireland report](#), we also found that Irish respondents are more likely to state that they have been working fully on-site. Given that the top capability improvement area is enabling flexible people operations, our data suggests that practitioners may be working on-site due to inflexible business models and processes, which inhibit opportunities for remote and hybrid working.

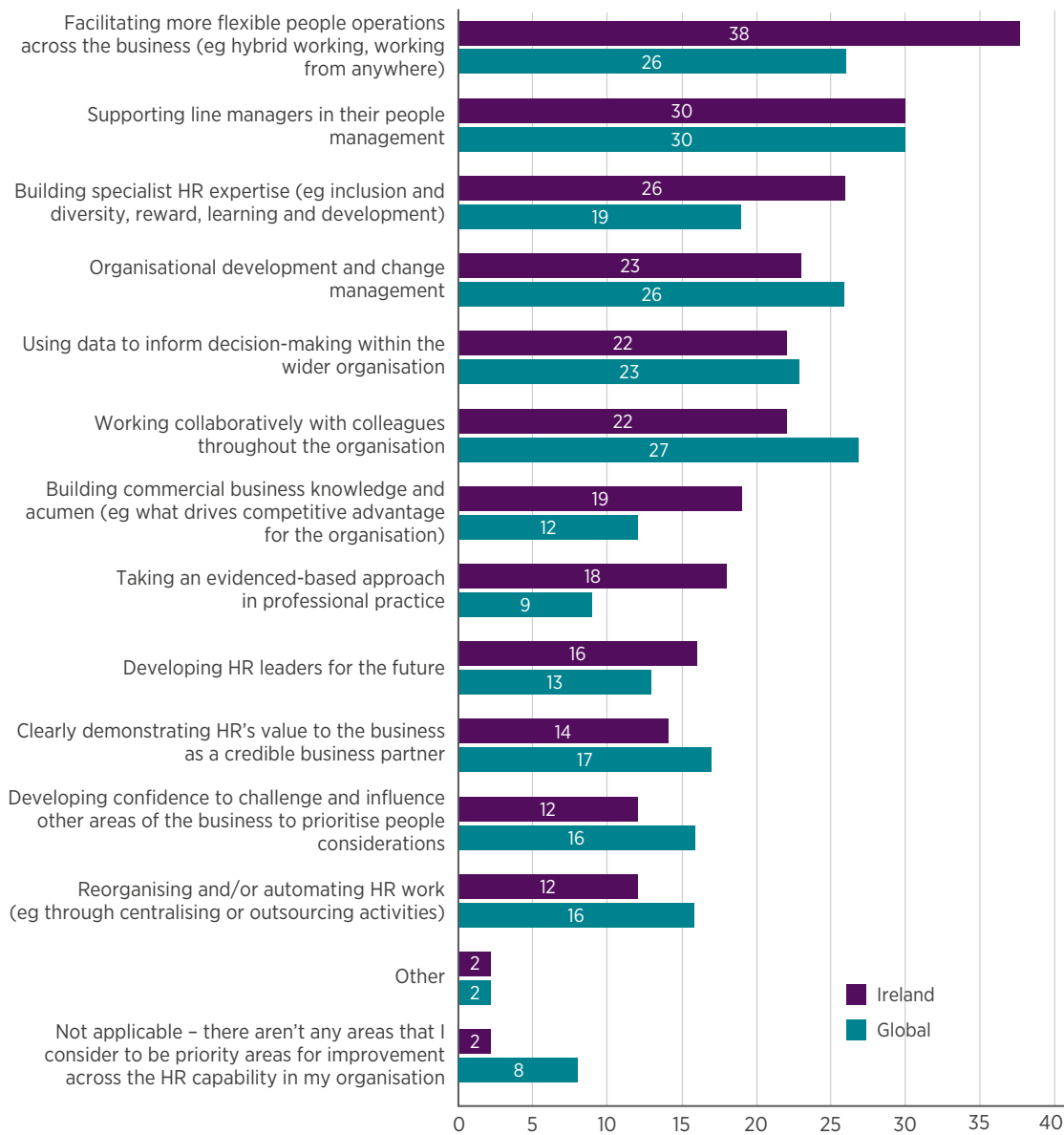
Other areas that were noted for building HR capability were supporting line managers (30%) and developing organisational development and change management skills (23%), both of which are consistent with the capability priorities in the UK.

We also note that building specialist HR skills was recognised as an area of improvement for 26% of practitioners in Ireland, while this figure was lower for the global average (19%) and UK respondents (16%).



**Figure 42: A significant focus for Irish respondents is facilitating flexible people operations across the business**

**Priority areas for building HR capability in Ireland (% of respondents)**



Base: Ireland: n=125; Global: n=2,945.

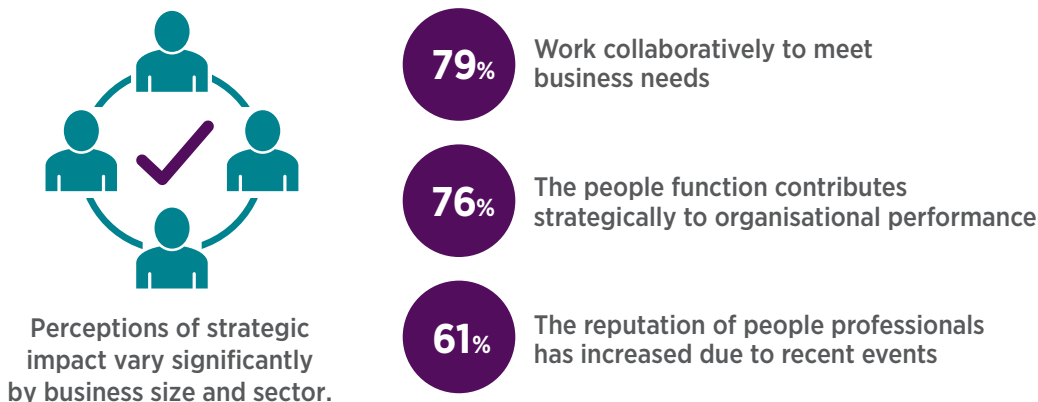
Question: In your opinion, which of the following, if any, are priority areas for improvement across the HR capability in your organisation? Please tick up to three responses.





### What is the perceived strategic value of the profession?

Figure 43: Top three perceived strategic values of the profession in Ireland



Irish respondents had more positive views on all the statements about strategic alignment of the people function to the business, the reputation of the function and the perceived value-add of the people team, compared with the global average. This suggests that they were generally more positive about the overall contribution and value that the people team provides to businesses, and feel that their reputation and the recognition that they receive from internal stakeholders also reflects this.

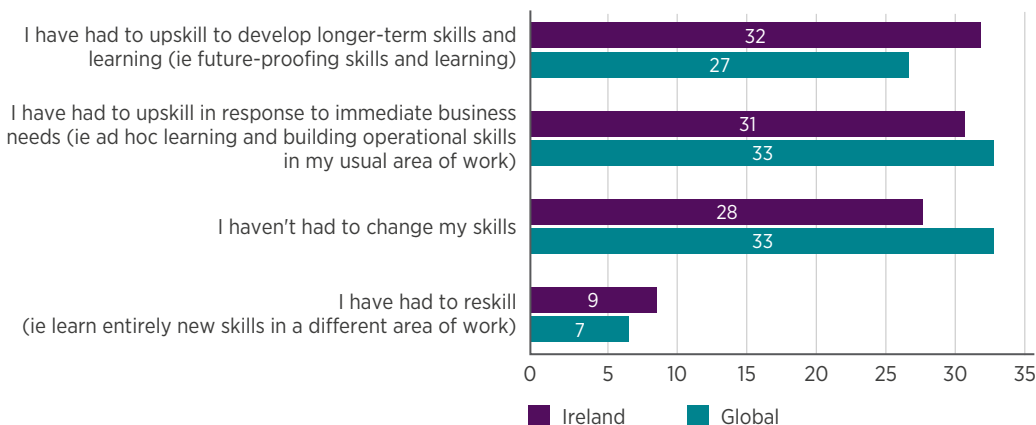
### How have people professionals developed their skills post-pandemic?

Just under three-quarters of our Irish sample said that they have either upskilled or reskilled, an increase on the previous year where this figure was 67%. This suggests that people professionals in Ireland continue to prioritise their skills development, even more so than during the pandemic.

In terms of the type of upskilling undertaken, this was much more balanced for the Irish sample, compared with the UK, with similar proportions focusing on upskilling in response to immediate business issues and others focusing on building longer-term skills. We also found that just over a quarter said they haven't needed to develop their skillset, much less than the global average (33%) and UK sample (39%) (see Figure 44).

Figure 44: Irish respondents were more likely to focus on upskilling or reskilling compared with the global sample

Skills development in response to COVID-19 (% of respondents)



Base: Ireland: n=125; Global: n=2,945.

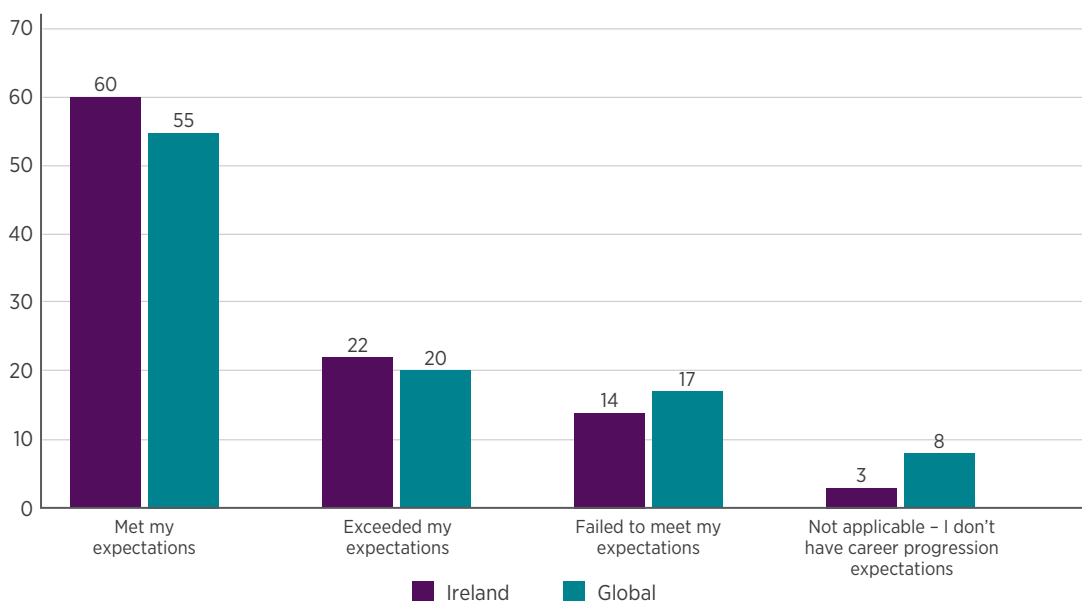
Question: Which of the following statements best describes how your HR skills have changed, if at all, as a result of your organisation's response to COVID-19? Please tick one.

### How do people professionals perceive their career progression to date?

When asked about whether their career progression had met, exceeded or failed to meet their expectations, respondents in Ireland were overall more positive about their advancement compared with the wider global sample, with 82% saying they were satisfied with their progression (net scores for met and exceeded expectations). Across the entire sample, Ireland and the Netherlands appeared most satisfied with their career progression in comparison with the other countries included in this research.

**Figure 45: Professionals in Ireland were more likely to have positive views towards their progression than the global sample**

*Expectations of career progression in Ireland (% of respondents)*



Base: Ireland: n=125; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Has your career progression to date met, exceeded or failed to meet your expectations?

As with the rest of the global sample, skills development was the most popular key enabler for progressing a career within the people profession, with well over half of the sample stating this (55%). However, this was closely followed by professional qualifications (54%) and support from a line manager (49%). Professional qualifications were particularly valued by respondents in Ireland, who cited this more often than the rest of the sample as a career enabler.

In terms of barriers to career progression, respondents were most likely to say self-confidence was an issue and something they felt impacted upon career development, with nearly two-fifths saying this. We note that this barrier was particularly significant in the UK and Ireland compared with the rest of the sample; self-confidence was not perceived as a prominent career barrier by other respondents within the sample.

Organisational politics and lack of opportunities with their current employer were two other most common barriers according to Irish respondents.

### What are the perceptions of a career in the people profession?

In general, Irish people professionals were more positive about having a career within the profession, compared with the global sample (see Figure 46). For example, respondents were significantly more likely to agree that there is good earning potential within the profession (78% versus 62% globally). Although salaries will vary considerably across

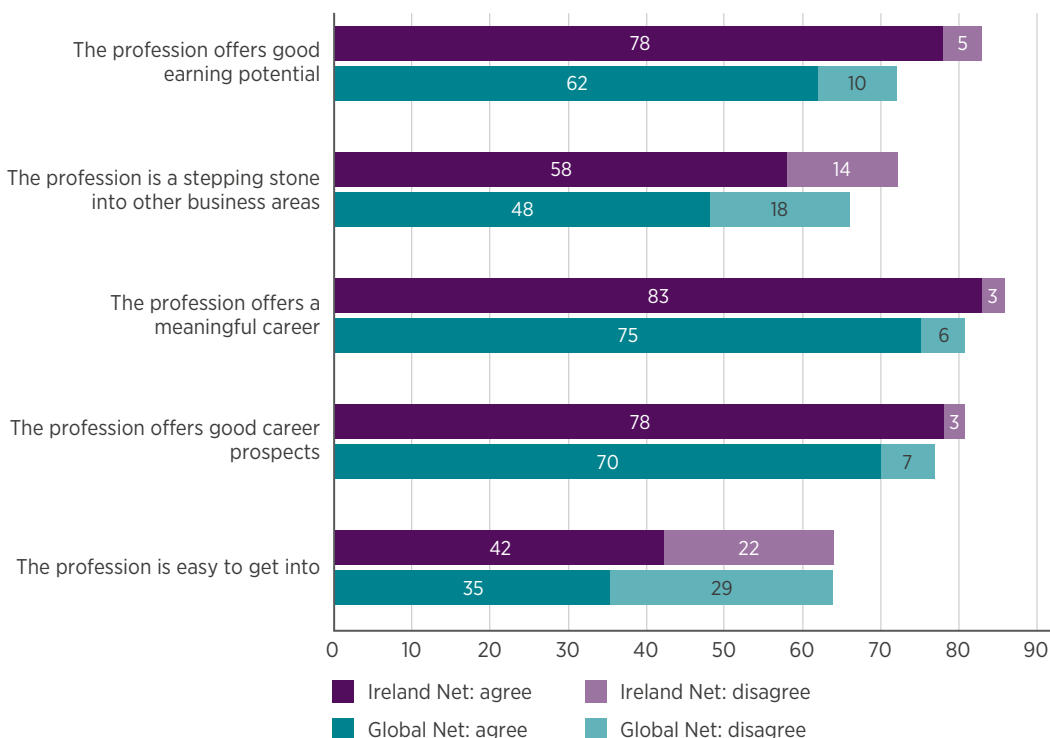


markets and will be highly dependent on experience and specialisms, it’s useful to get a general sense of how satisfied people professionals are within the different regions. Given the small sample size, we are not able to investigate whether there were significant differences within the sample on perceptions around salary potential.

For Irish respondents, it appears that they are least positive about entry into the profession, with only 42% agreeing that entry into the industry is easy. However, this was still comparatively more than the global average who agreed (35%).

**Figure 46: Significantly more Irish professionals believe the profession offers a good earning potential (compared with the global sample)**

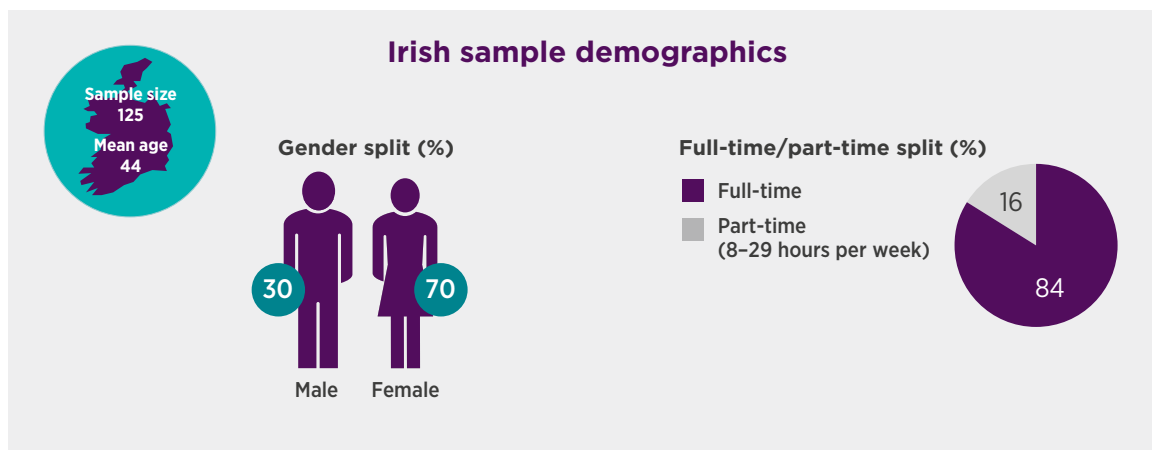
*Irish perceptions about a career in the people profession (% of respondents)*



Base: Ireland: n=125; Global: n=2,945.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?

As a reminder, by the 'HR/people profession' we are referring to HR, OD, organisational change, L&D and related disciplines.



**Employment status split (%)**



**Respondents' organisational split (%)**



**Type of role (%)**

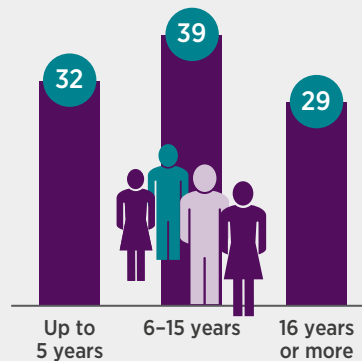


Question: Please indicate which ONE of the HR/people profession areas listed most accurately reflects your decision-making responsibilities.

**Years in current organisation (%)**



**Years in the people profession (%)**

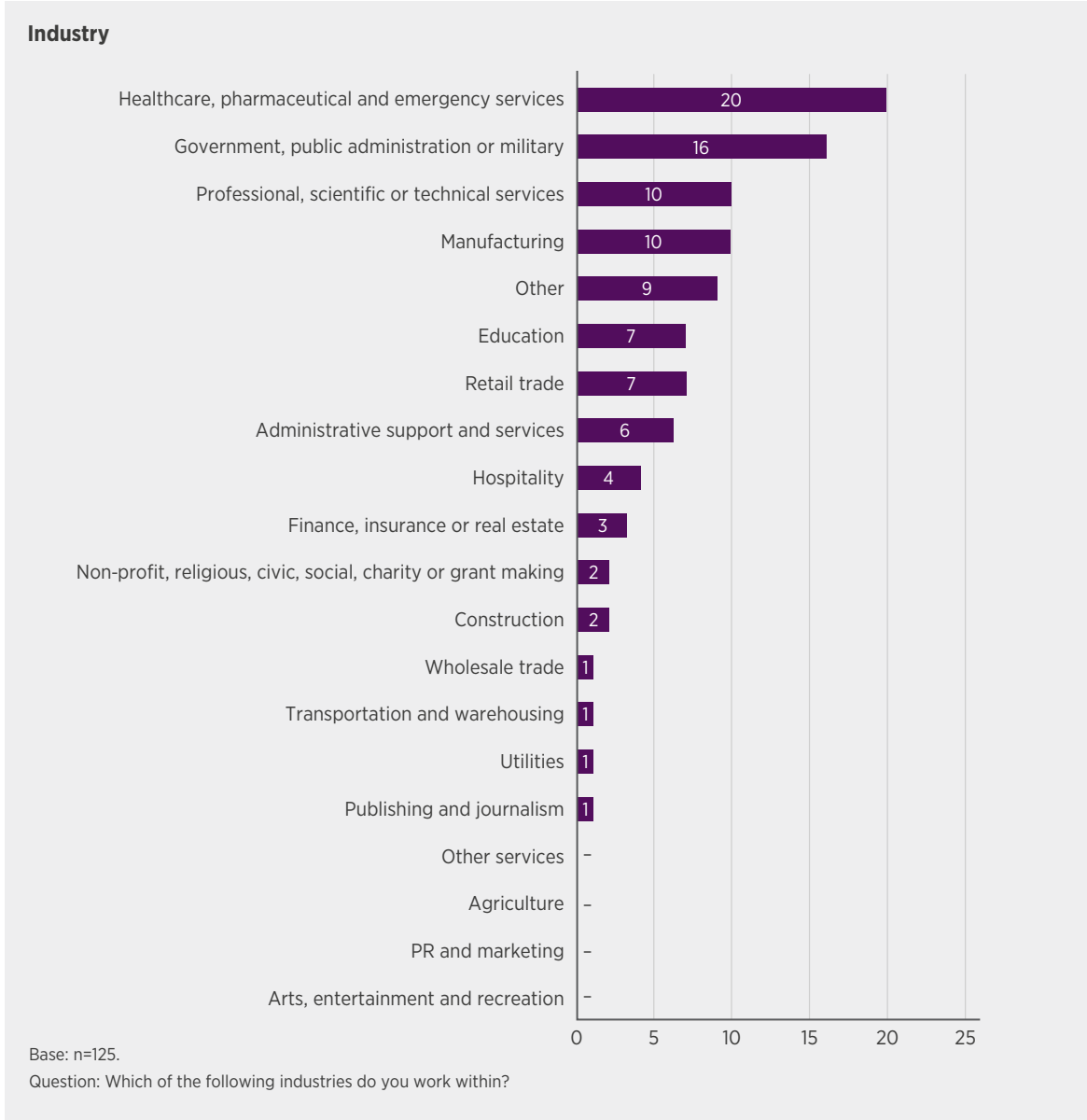


**Ways of working in the last 12 months split (%)**



Country samples are not representative of the wider HR population within that region and the findings within this report reflect the opinions of HR professionals who participated in the survey.







## Italy

### Current economic climate

The current Italian economic situation is deeply influenced by the pandemic and the Ukrainian war. Italy is experiencing double-digit increases in the cost of several commodities and energy – with a direct impact on the inflation rate. Unemployment is expected to rise and labour market participation is decreasing in 2023.<sup>8</sup>

### Key findings

- Forty-four per cent of Italian respondents said their people team outsources their payroll function, significantly higher than the global average. The outsourcing of payroll was significantly different between sectors, with private sector organisations more commonly outsourcing payroll (54%) compared with the public sector (12%).<sup>9</sup>
- Building organisational culture, supporting the mental health and wellbeing of employees, and attracting, recruiting and retaining talent were areas that were said to be difficult to navigate within a hybrid working environment.
- For Italian people professionals, organisational development and change management skills were a key priority area for improving capability within people teams. We also found that respondents from the private sector were more likely to cite this capability as a priority area compared with those working in the public sector.
- A small majority of Italian people professionals (57%) said their career progression has met their expectations, as opposed to 27% who said it has not. Skills development was cited as the top influencing factor when progressing a career in the profession.

### What are the most common organisational cultures?

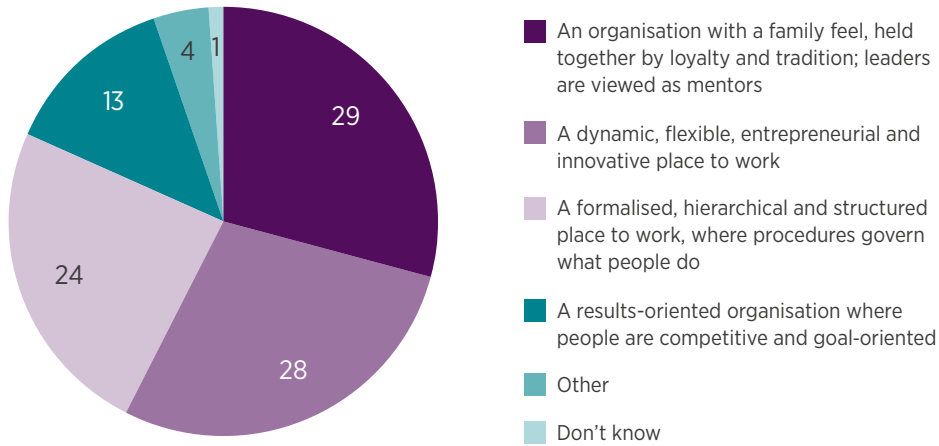
The three most prevalent working cultures in Italy are:

- an organisation with a family feel (29%)
- an organisation with a dynamic, flexible, entrepreneurial and innovative culture (28%), higher than the global average of 18%
- a formalised, hierarchical and structured culture (24%, compared with the global average of 35%).



**Figure 47: Family-feel-type organisations and dynamic and innovative businesses are the most common organisational cultures in Italy**

**Common organisational cultures in Italy (% of respondents)**



Base: n=349.

Question: Which one of the following, if any, best describes the prevailing culture in your organisation? Please select one option only.

On the whole, organisational cultures do not vary greatly across business size. However, we found large organisations were more likely to operate within a formalised, hierarchical and structured culture (34%) compared with professionals operating within SMEs (19%).

**How are people teams operating?**

A third of Italian people professionals described their organisation’s people model as a single HR team with generalists, specialists and administration together. Compared with the global average, a higher proportion of Italian respondents indicated that they have a small, central HR function with largely outsourced HR activity, compared with those across other countries (12% versus 8%). This model was also more commonly adopted by SMEs (14%) compared with large organisations (6%).

**Figure 48: Italian respondents most commonly say they operate within a single HR team that includes generalists and specialists under one team**

**HR operating models in Italy (% of respondents)**



Base: n=349.

Question: Which ONE of the following structures, if any, best describes your organisation’s HR/people model? Please tick one option only.

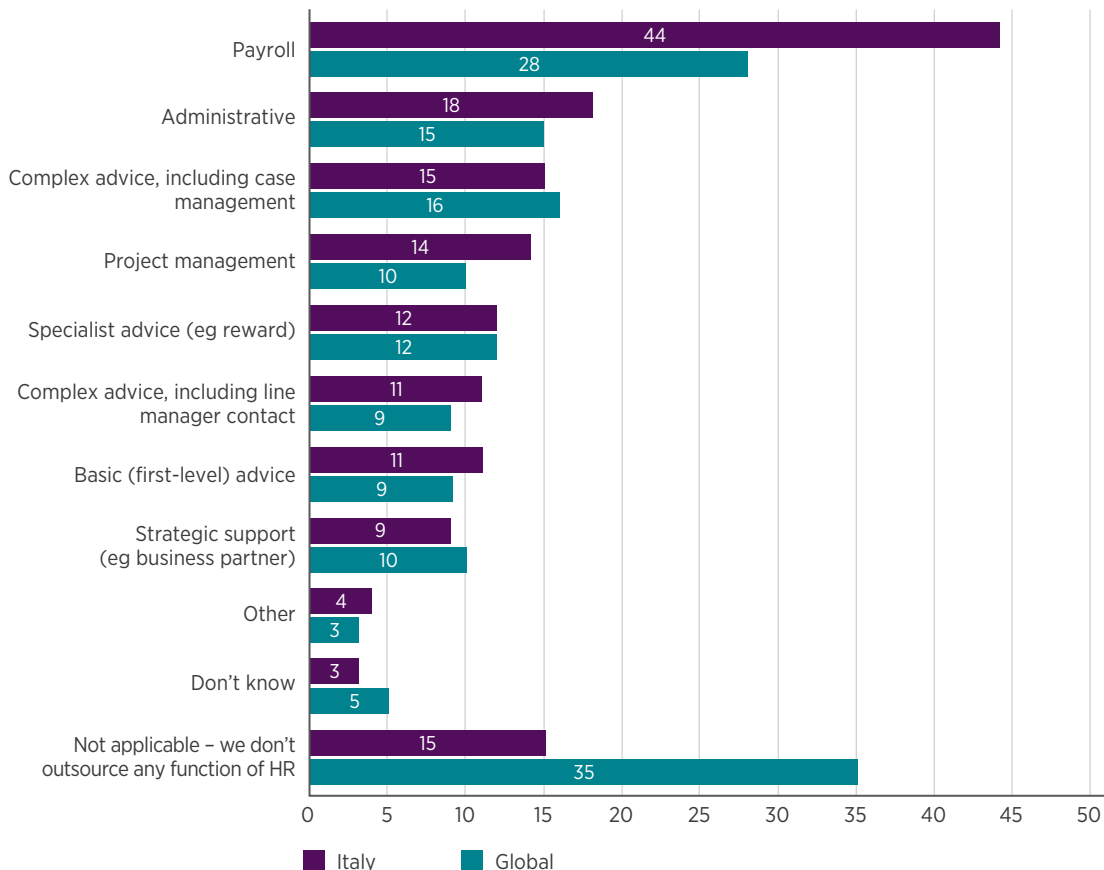




In terms of outsourcing HR functions, 44% said their people team outsources their payroll function, which was significantly higher than the global average. Outsourcing this function was significantly different between sectors, with private sector organisations more commonly outsourcing payroll (54%) compared with the public sector (12%).<sup>10</sup>

Compared with the global average of 35%, a much smaller proportion (15%) said their organisation carries out all HR functions in-house.

**Figure 49: Italian HR professionals most commonly outsource their payroll function**  
**Outsourced HR functions in Italy (% of respondents)**



Base: Italy: n=125; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which elements of your HR function do you outsource, if any?



## How has hybrid working affected HR practices?

Figure 50: Top hybrid working challenges for people professionals



Despite the challenges shown above, Italian respondents felt that most HR practices were stable, despite operating in a hybrid manner. For example, over half of the sample agreed that addressing inequality and discrimination (53%) was no different in a hybrid setting. Additionally, managing performance (41%) and supporting line managers to manage their teams were also seen as stable.

### What are the priorities for improving HR capability?

Organisational development and change management was the most commonly cited priority area for building capability among Italian respondents (35%), which was significantly higher than the global average (26%). This was followed by working collaboratively with colleagues across the organisation (29%) and facilitating more flexible people operations across the business (26%). These were consistent with the global averages of 29% and 26% respectively.

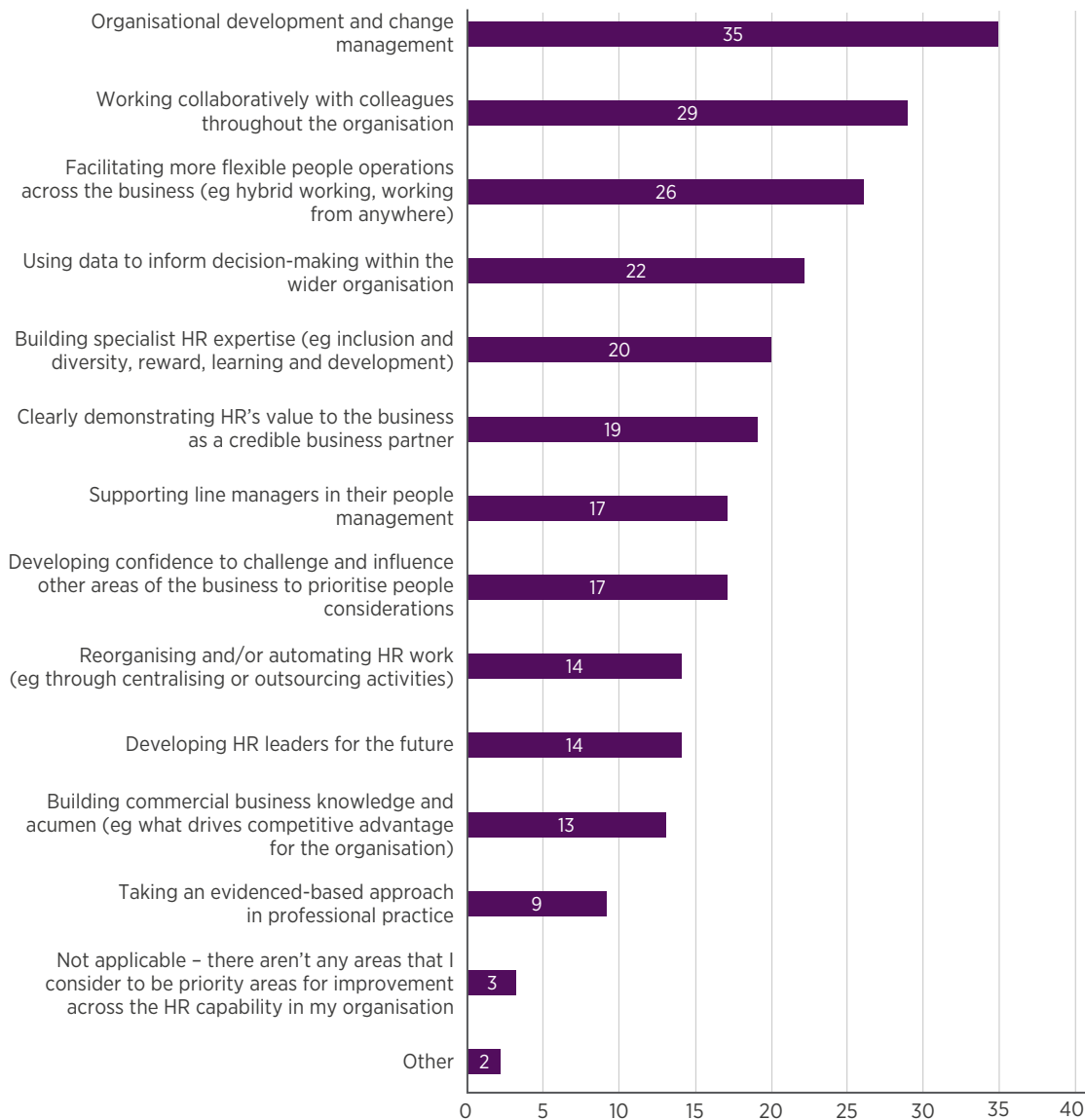
Private sector respondents were more likely to cite organisational development and change management as a priority area (39%) compared with those working in the public sector (17%).

Only 3% of people professionals in Italy said there aren't any areas that they consider to be priority areas for HR capability improvement in their organisation, compared with 8% of respondents globally.



**Figure 51: Building capability in organisational development and change management skills is a key priority for HR professionals in Italy**

*Priority areas for improving HR capability in Italy (% of respondents)*



Base: n=349.

Question: In your opinion, which of the following, if any, are priority areas for improvement across the HR capability in your organisation? Please tick up to three responses.



## What is the perceived strategic value of the profession?

Figure 52: Top three perceived strategic values of the profession in Italy



Over half of Italian respondents agreed that the role of the people function is changing significantly in their organisation (51% versus 13% who disagreed) and that the reputation of people professionals has increased due to recent events (53% versus 9% who disagreed). These findings suggest that people functions are evolving and adapting as necessary, whether that be in response to changing stakeholder needs, or due to external pressures and demands. Either way, respondents appear positive about the impact these changes have had on the reputation of HR professionals. It was also felt by the majority that people functions work collaboratively with other business functions to meet business needs (81%). This was a higher proportion compared with a global average of 74%.

Respondents in Italy were aligned with those across the other countries in their views on how their people function contributes to the organisation. Sixty-one per cent of Italian people professionals said the function has HR practices which are clearly linked to organisational outcomes (versus a global average of 63%) and is recognised by senior leaders when it achieves its measures of success (58% versus a global average of 60%). Seventy-five per cent agreed that the function makes a valued, strategic contribution to the organisation (versus a global average of 73%), but 17% both in Italy and globally disagreed that the function has clear measures of success for organisational outcomes.

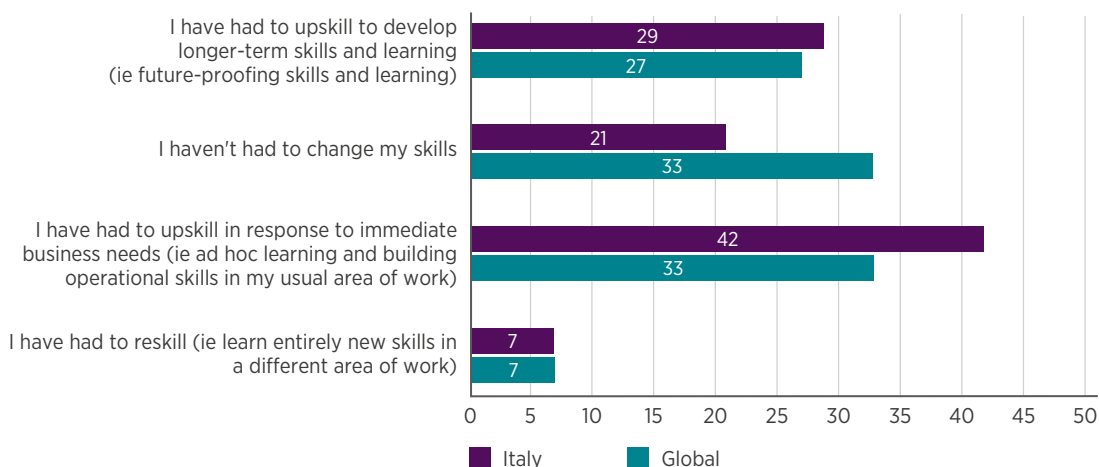
There were differences in views on the people function by sector, with respondents working in the private sector more commonly agreeing that their function works collaboratively across business functions (88%) and that the role of the people function is changing significantly (58%) compared with those in the public sector (65% and 39% respectively).

### How have people professionals developed their skills post-pandemic?

Overall, Italian respondents were significantly more likely to say they have had to upskill in response to immediate business needs as a result of COVID-19 (42%), compared with the global average (33%). This suggests that upskilling has been more reactive, ad hoc and driven by the needs of the business, as opposed to personal development. Twenty-nine per cent said they have had to upskill to develop longer-term skills and learning, a similar proportion to respondents across the other countries (27%). A smaller minority (21%) said they haven't had to change their skills, compared with 33% globally.



**Figure 53: Italian people professionals were significantly more likely than the international sample to say they have been focusing on longer-term skills and learning**  
**Skills development in response to COVID-19 (% of respondents)**



Base: Italy: n=349; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which of the following statements best describes how your HR skills have changed, if at all, as a result of your organisation's response to COVID-19? Please tick one.

In terms of learning and development, around half of Italian respondents have engaged in online learning (48%) and conferences and webinars (51%) in the last 12 months. When it comes to more formal learning, a lower proportion undertook formal qualifications/certifications (13%), in-house development programmes (15%), or learned from peers (25%) compared with those across the other countries (20%, 21% and 34% respectively).

We also found some differences across business size, with professionals working in SMEs more likely to have engaged with job rotation opportunities (13% versus 3% in large organisations). However, respondents working in SMEs were less likely to have attended conferences and webinars (43%) compared with those in large organisations (61%).

Early-career people professionals (with less than five years of experience) were more likely to have received coaching (26%) compared with those with 16 years' experience or more (10%).

**How do people professionals perceive their career progression to date?**

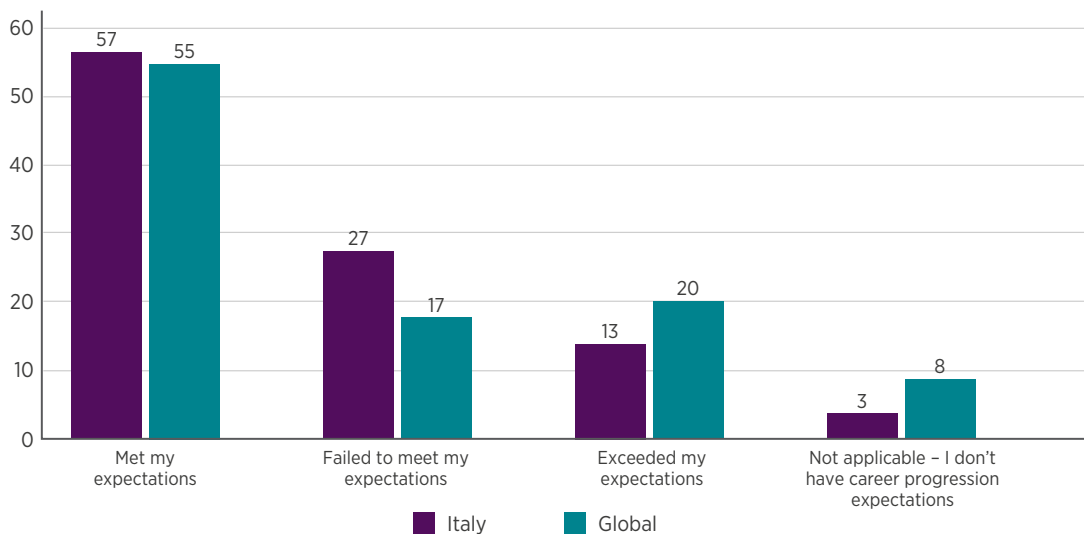
Fifty-seven per cent of Italian people professionals said their career progression to date has met their expectations, as opposed to 27% who said it has not.

Comparatively, the proportion of respondents who said their career progression had failed to meet their expectations was significantly higher than the global average (17%). The proportion that said it had exceeded their expectations was also much lower than the global average (13% versus 20%). Both findings suggest that overall, Italian perceptions around their progression was fairly negative when compared with the global sample.



**Figure 54: Italian respondents were more likely to say their progression had failed to meet their career expectations than the international average**

**Expectations of career progression in Italy (% of respondents)**



Base: Italy: n=349; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Has your career progression to date met, exceeded or failed to meet your expectations?

Italian people professionals felt that their career progression had been helped by:

- skills development (68%), significantly higher than the global average (59%)
- professional qualifications/certifications (33%) and manager support (32%), both of which were lower than the global average (47% and 48% respectively).

In terms of barriers to advancement, Italian professionals were:

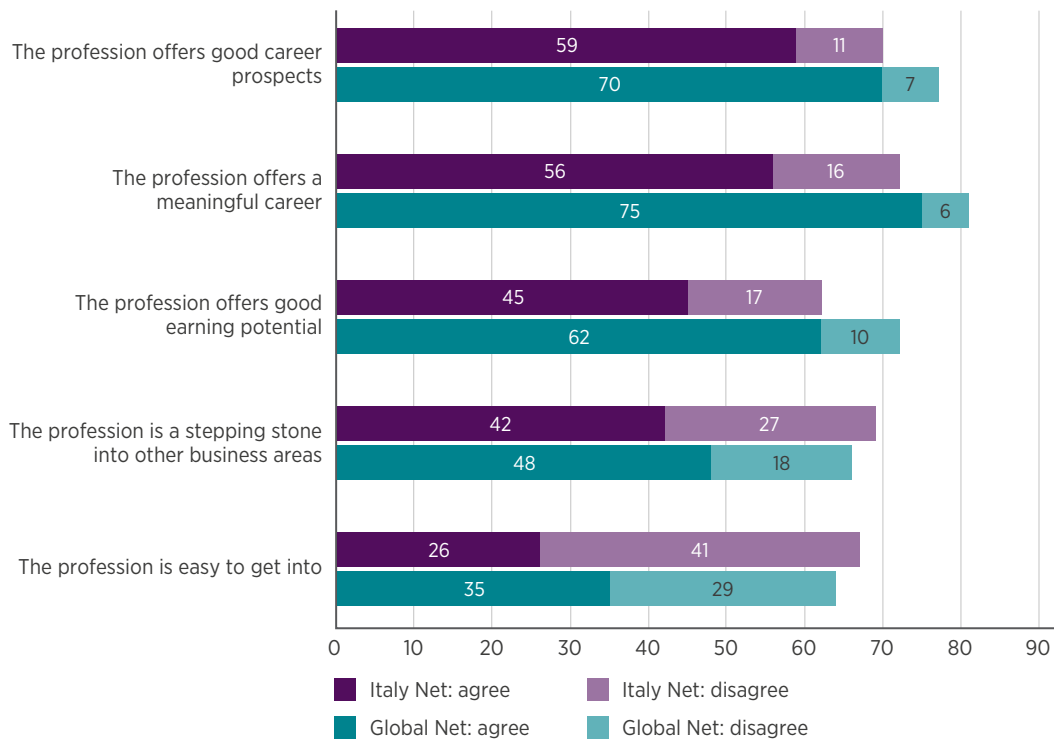
- more likely to cite lack of opportunities in the labour market as a barrier (14% versus 8% globally)
- less likely to say lack of self-confidence had been a barrier to their career advancement than their global peers (6% versus 14% globally).

**What are the perceptions of a career in the people profession?**

We found that Italian respondents held more negative career perceptions compared with the global average, as shown in Figure 55. For example, only a quarter of respondents in Italy said the profession is easy to get into, the lowest proportion across the sample (global average 35%). Comparatively, Italian respondents were significantly less likely to believe the profession offers good career prospects and good earning potential.



**Figure 55: Overall, Italian professionals were less positive about holding a career within HR**  
**Italian perceptions about a career in the people profession (% of respondents)**

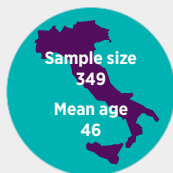


Base: Italy: n=349; Global: n=2,945.

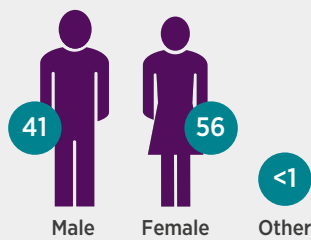
Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?

As a reminder, by the 'HR/people profession' we are referring to HR, OD, organisational change, L&D and related disciplines.

### Italian sample demographics



#### Gender split (%)



#### Full-time/part-time split (%)



#### Employment status split (%)

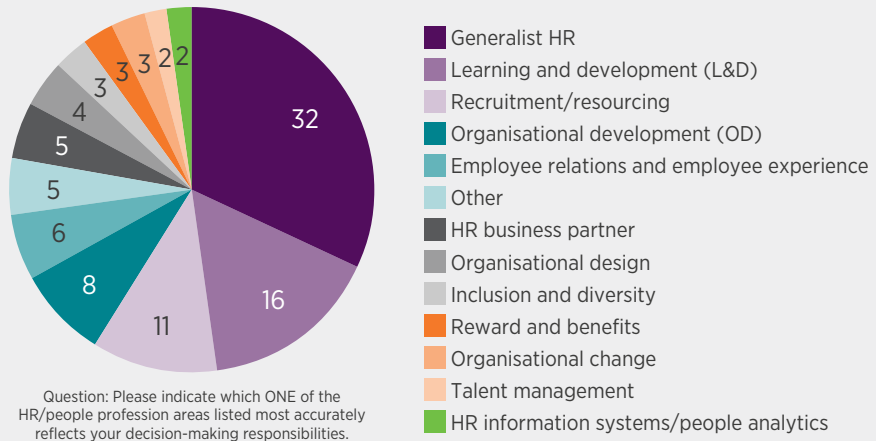


#### Respondents' organisational split (%)





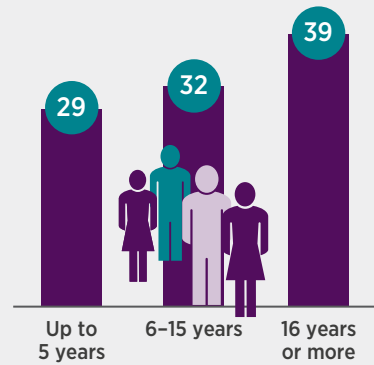
**Type of role (%)**



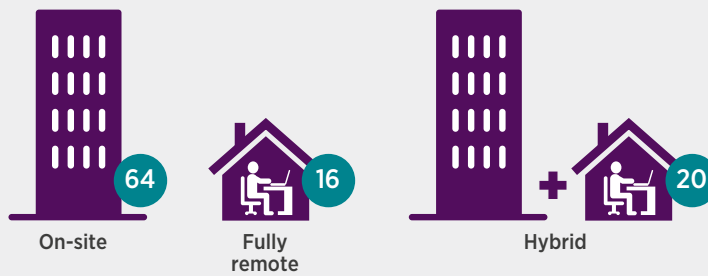
**Years in current organisation (%)**



**Years in the people profession (%)**

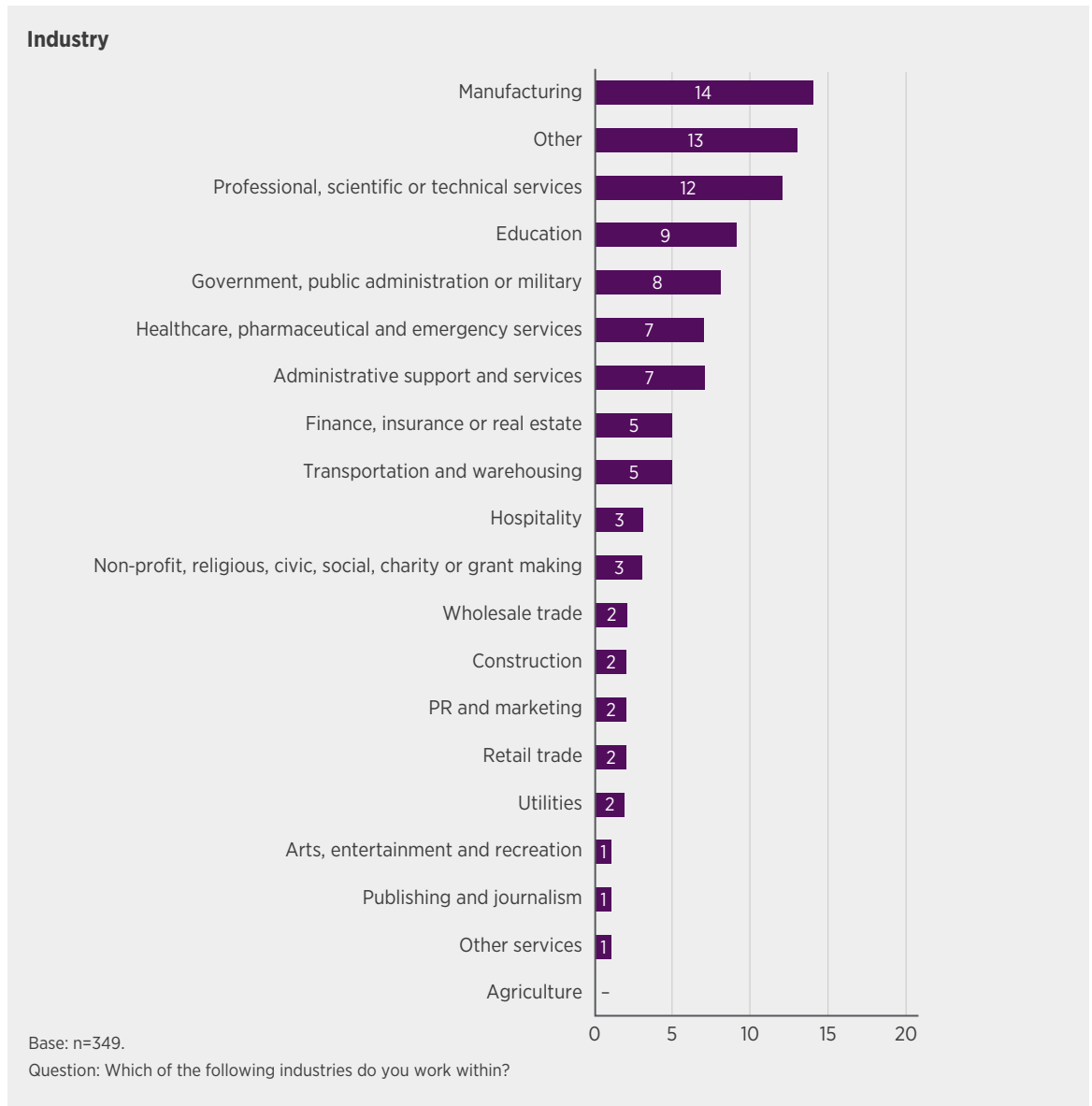


**Ways of working in the last 12 months split (%)**



Country samples are not representative of the wider HR population within that region and the findings within this report reflect the opinions of HR professionals who participated in the survey.







## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

### Current economic climate

Said to be the fastest growing G20 economy in 2022, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has been hitting record trading levels, due in part to the rising oil and gas prices and developing non-oil sector. Alongside this, plans to implement KSA's economic plan, Vision 2030, means significant changes to the country's policy frameworks.<sup>11</sup>

### Key findings

- Thirty-nine per cent of KSA people professionals operate within an organisation that is a formalised, hierarchical and structured place to work. Half of the sample operate under a single HR team with generalists, specialists and administration together, which was much higher than the global average (32%).
- We found relatively higher proportions saying they outsource all elements of HR activity included in the survey. Only a small minority (13%) said their organisation did not outsource any function of HR, significantly lower than the global average of 35%. We also found significant differences between business size and HR outsourcing.
- KSA people professionals were much more likely to feel that all aspects of HR management mentioned in the survey had become easier as a result of the shift towards hybrid working.
- The top priority areas for building HR capability were improving organisational development and change management skills, working collaboratively with colleagues throughout the organisation, reorganising and/or automating HR work, and building specialist HR expertise.
- Seventy-nine per cent of respondents in KSA said their career progression had met or exceeded expectations and that skills development and formal qualifications were key drivers for supporting career development.

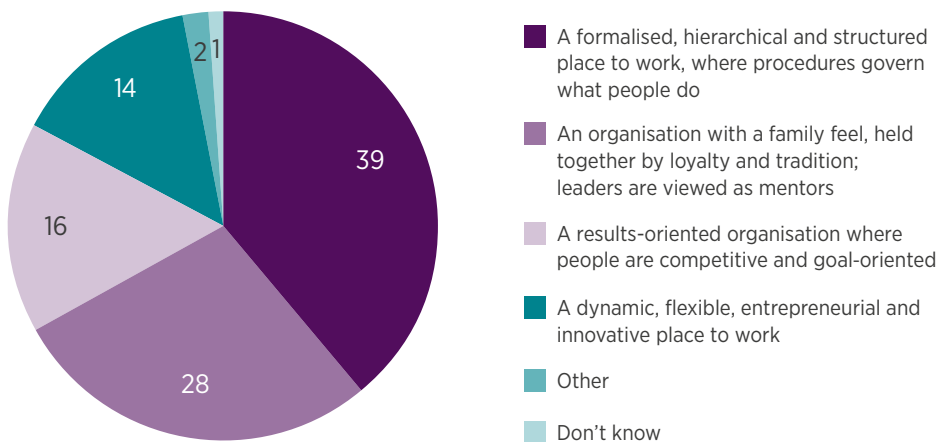
### What are the most common organisational cultures?

In terms of the organisational cultures that KSA people professionals operate within, the prevailing one was a formalised, hierarchical and structured place to work, with two-fifths reporting this. Nearly three in 10 worked in an organisation with a family feel, with relatively fewer describing their culture as dynamic, flexible, entrepreneurial and innovative, or results-oriented.



**Figure 56: The prevailing culture for people professionals working in KSA is a highly structured, hierarchical and formalised place of work**

**Common organisational cultures in KSA (% of respondents)**



Base: n=176.

Question: Which one of the following, if any, best describes the prevailing culture in your organisation? Please select one option only.

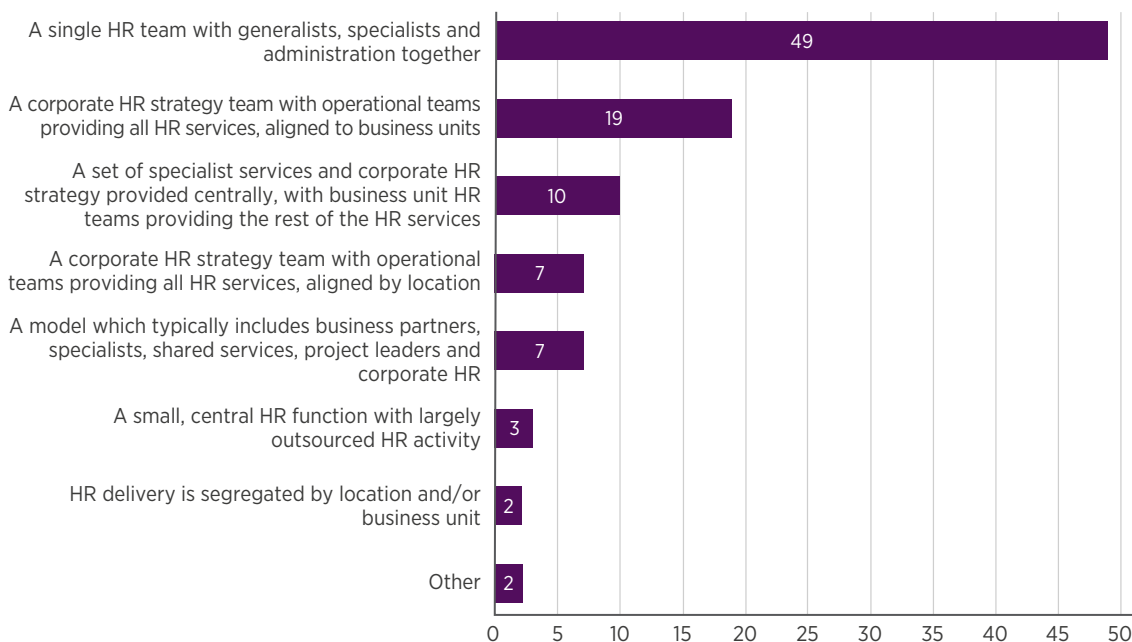
**How are people teams operating?**

Half of the KSA sample operate under a single HR team with generalists, specialists and administration together (49%), which was much higher than the global average (32%).

On the other hand, KSA respondents were less likely to say their organisation’s HR/people function operates under a business partnering model, with only 7% stating this compared with the global average of 23%.

**Figure 57: The most common operating model for KSA HR professionals is one that involves generalists, specialists and administrative colleagues working in a single team**

**HR operating models in KSA (% of respondents)**



Base: n=176.

Question: Which ONE of the following structures, if any, best describes your organisation’s HR/people model? Please tick one option only.

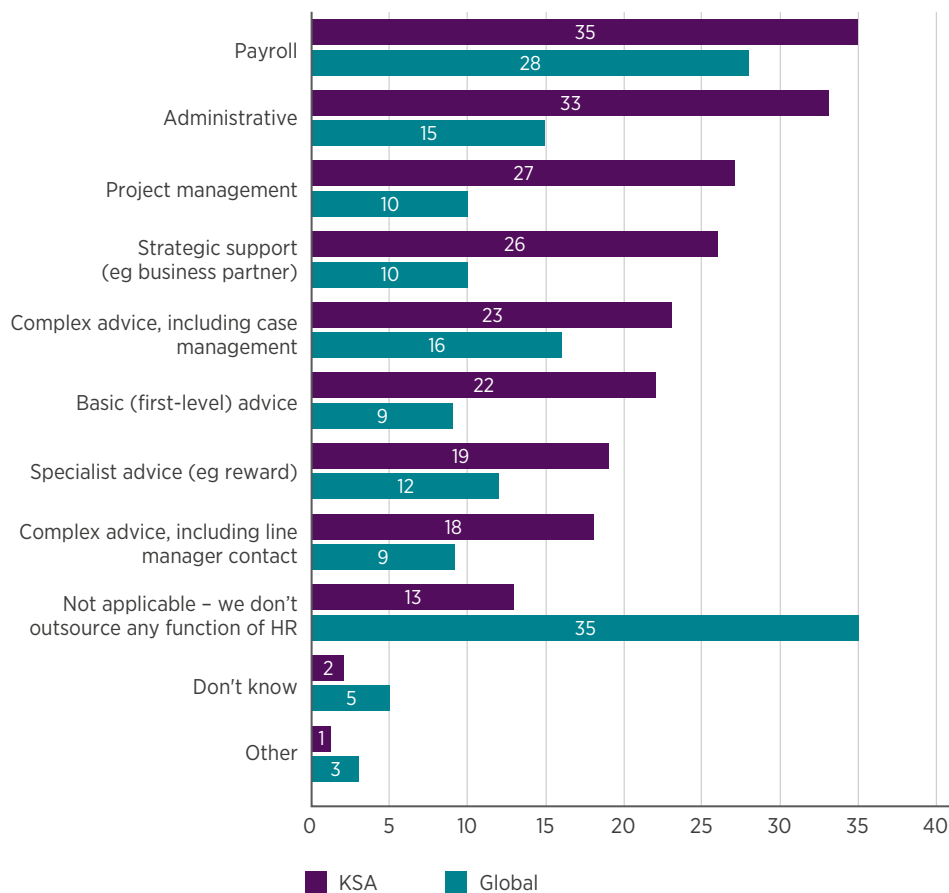


As noted in the [international comparison section](#) of this report, there were significant differences between regions and the HR functions that are outsourced. For KSA respondents, we found relatively higher proportions of outsourcing all elements of HR included in the survey. Only 13% of KSA respondents said their organisation did not outsource any function of HR, which is significantly lower than the global average of 35%.

We also found significant differences by business size for HR outsourcing, with large organisations being more likely to outsource administrative activities (42%) and specialist advice (26%), compared with SMEs (21% and 7% respectively).

**Figure 58: KSA professionals are more likely to outsource all elements of HR activity compared with the global sample**

***Outsourced HR functions in KSA (% of respondents)***



Base: KSA: n=176; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which elements of your HR function do you outsource, if any?



### How has hybrid working affected HR practices?

KSA people professionals were much more likely than those globally to feel that all aspects of their work mentioned in the survey had become easier as a result of the shift towards hybrid working. We also found this to be true across the other MENA regions, suggesting a clear difference of opinion on the impact of hybrid working on HR delivery.

Figure 59: Activities that have become easier in a hybrid world



### What are the priorities for improving HR capability?

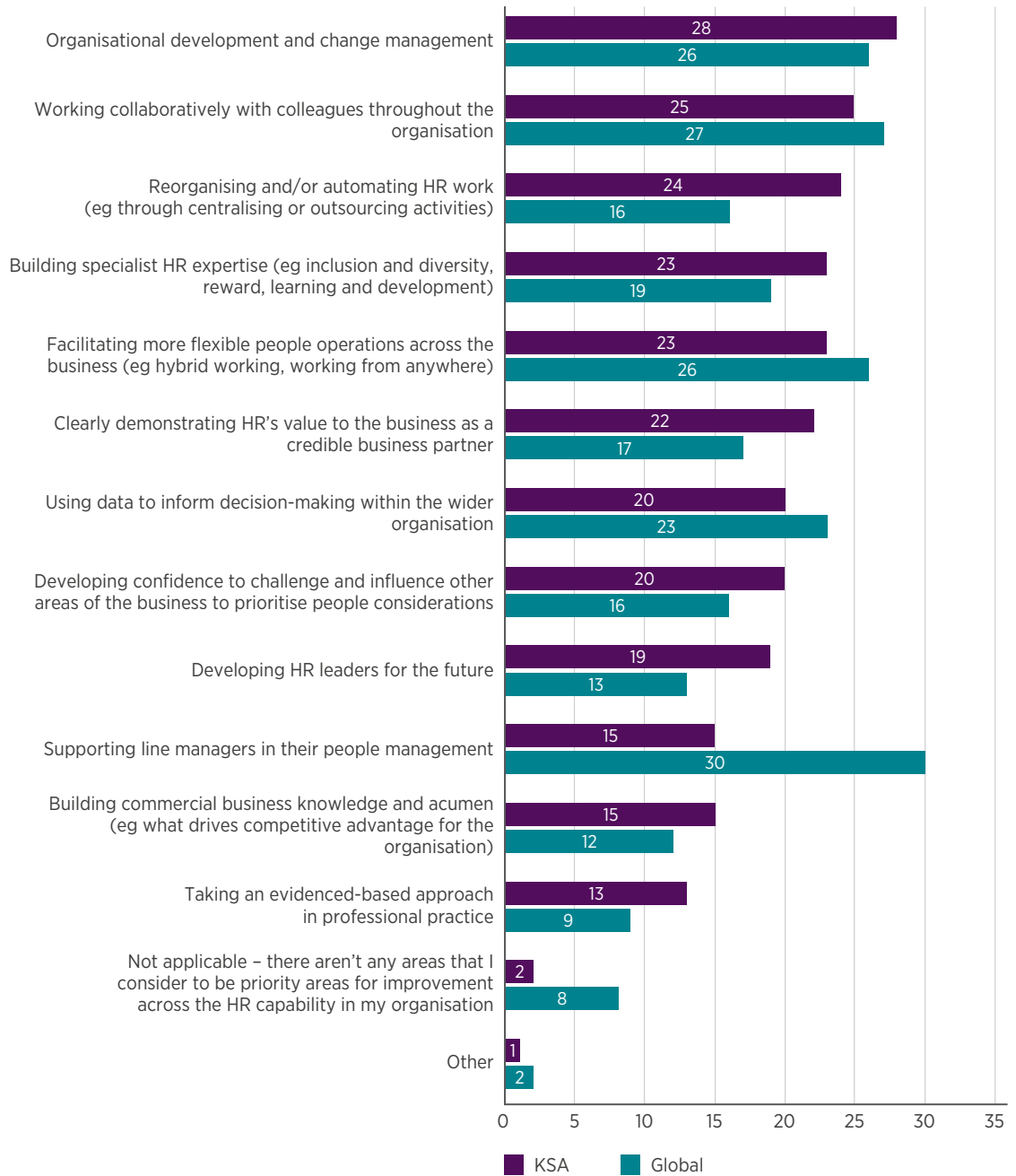
In KSA, the top priority areas for HR capability were improving organisational development and change management skills, working collaboratively with colleagues throughout the organisation, reorganising and/or automating HR work, and building specialist HR expertise. KSA respondents were also more likely to cite reorganising and/or automating HR work as a priority area (24% versus global average of 16%).

On the other hand, KSA respondents were less likely to prioritise support for line managers in their people management (15% versus the global average 30%).



**Figure 60: Automating HR work appears to be more of a priority for HR professionals in KSA, compared with the global sample**

*Priority areas for improving HR capability in KSA and globally (% of respondents)*



Base: KSA: n=176; Global: n=2,945.

Question: In your opinion, which of the following, if any, are priority areas for improvement across the HR capability in your organisation? Please tick up to three responses.





## What is the perceived strategic value of the profession?

Figure 61: Top four perceived strategic values of the profession in KSA



People professionals in KSA were also more likely to agree that the role of the people function is changing significantly in their organisation compared with the global sample (58% versus 51%).

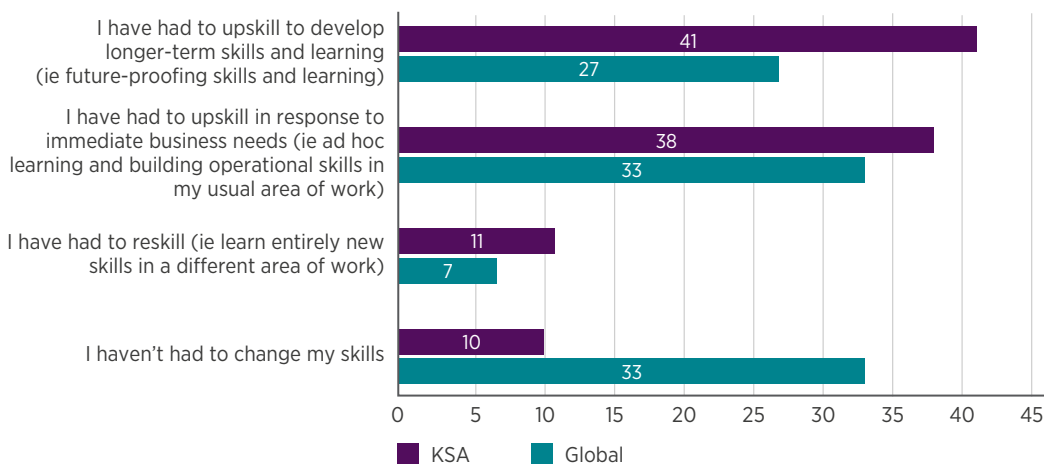
## How have people professionals developed their skills post-pandemic?

Across the board, KSA respondents were more likely to say they had upskilled recently, with 79% of respondents saying they have had to upskill in response to the pandemic. Thirty-eight per cent of people professionals upskilled in response to immediate business needs, while 41% upskilled to develop longer-term skills and learning, a higher proportion compared with the global average.

Only a small minority said they have not had to change their skillset. Comparatively, this was far less than the global average (33%) and the UK average (39%).

Figure 62: The vast majority of KSA people professionals said they had focused on some aspect of skills development

Skills development in response to COVID-19 (% of respondents)



Base: KSA: n=176; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which of the following statements best describes how your HR skills have changed, if at all, as a result of your organisation's response to COVID-19? Please tick one.

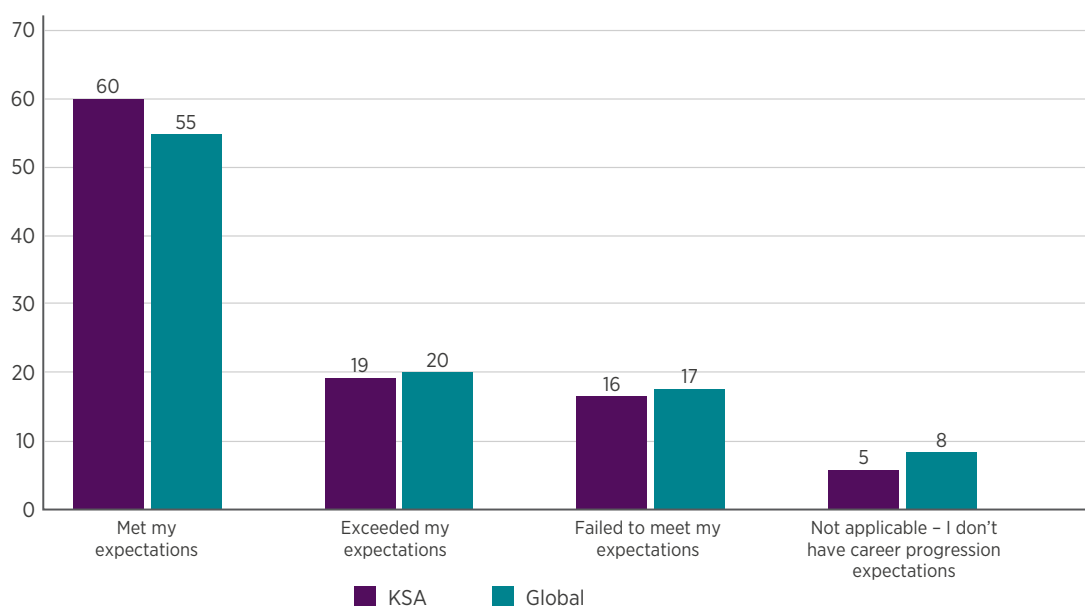
When asked about how they had been learning and developing their skills within the last year, KSA respondents were more likely than those across other countries to have received on-the-job training (48% versus 36%), formal qualifications/certifications (29% versus 20%), instructor-led training delivered off the job (26% versus 16%), and job rotation (22% versus 9%).

**How do people professionals perceive their career progression to date?**

Three-fifths of KSA professionals reported that their career progression had met their expectations and one-fifth said it had exceeded their expectations. Only a small minority said their progression had failed to meet expectations.

**Figure 63: Seventy-nine per cent of respondents in KSA said their progression had met or exceeded expectations**

*Expectations of career progression in KSA (% of respondents)*



Base: KSA: n=176; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Has your career progression to date met, exceeded or failed to meet your expectations?

A majority of KSA people professionals said skills development has played a key part in their progression (61%). Around half also noted formal qualifications as a key driver to supporting career development.

Compared with the global average, KSA professionals were less likely to feel that their personal network had helped them in their careers (29% versus 36%). Meanwhile, they were more likely than those across other countries to say career sponsorship had helped them achieve advancement (25% versus 18%).

In terms of barriers to career advancement, KSA professionals were:

- more likely to cite lack of opportunities within the labour market (18%) compared with the global average (8%)
- more likely to cite lack of professional networks (10%) and line management (14%) compared with those across other countries (4% and 9% respectively)
- less likely than those globally to cite a lack of self-confidence (6% versus 14% globally).

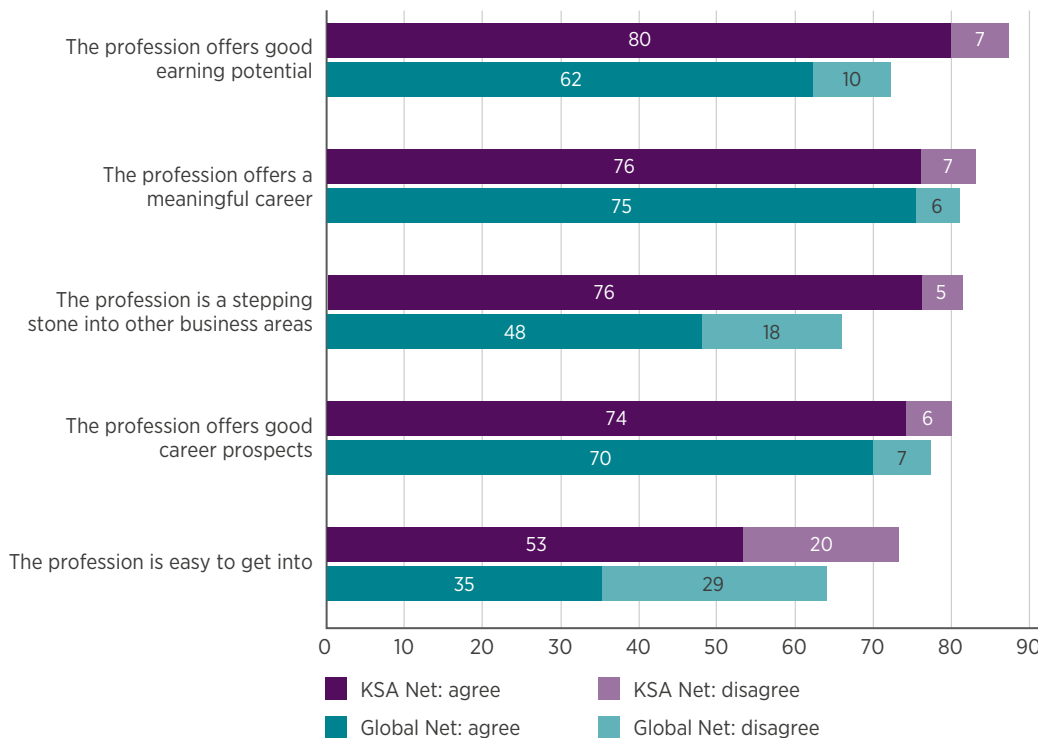


**What are the perceptions of a career in the people profession?**

Compared with respondents globally, those in KSA were more likely to have positive views about the prospects that a career within the people profession can offer. For example, they felt that the profession offers good career prospects, good earnings potential, a meaningful career and is a stepping stone into other business areas.

**Figure 64: Respondents from KSA had more positive views on career prospects within the profession, compared with the global sample**

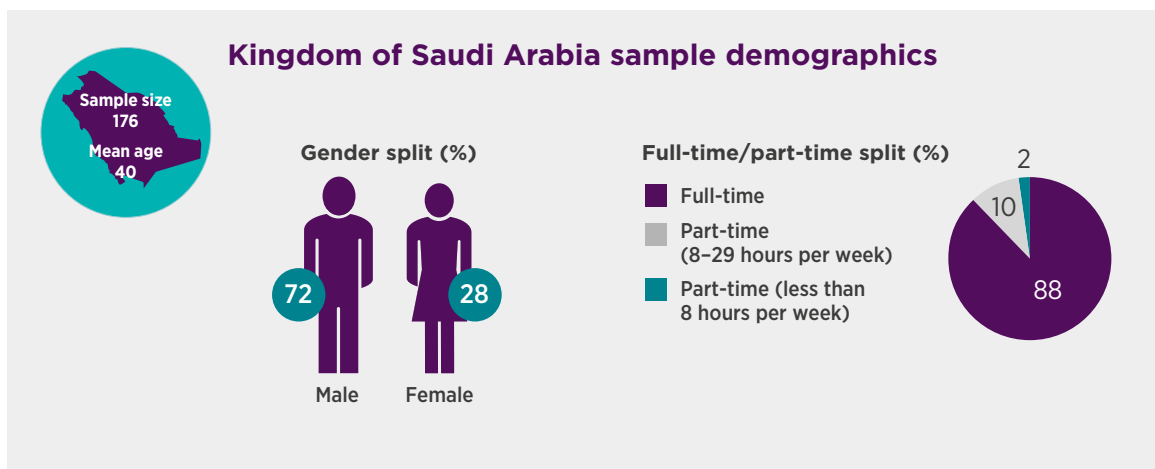
*KSA perceptions about a career in the people profession (% of respondents)*



Base: KSA: n=176; Global: n=2,945.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?

As a reminder, by the 'HR/people profession' we are referring to HR, OD, organisational change, L&D and related disciplines.



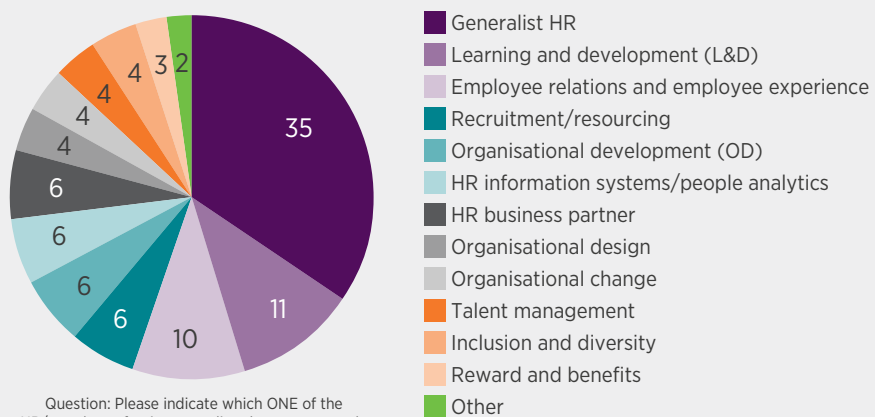
**Employment status split (%)**



**Respondents' organisational split (%)**



**Type of role (%)**

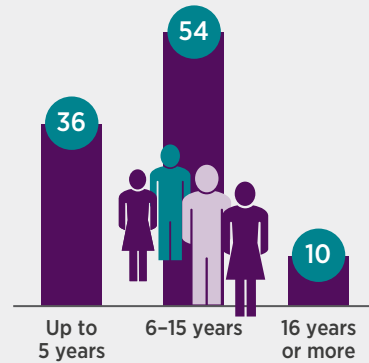


Question: Please indicate which ONE of the HR/people profession areas listed most accurately reflects your decision-making responsibilities.

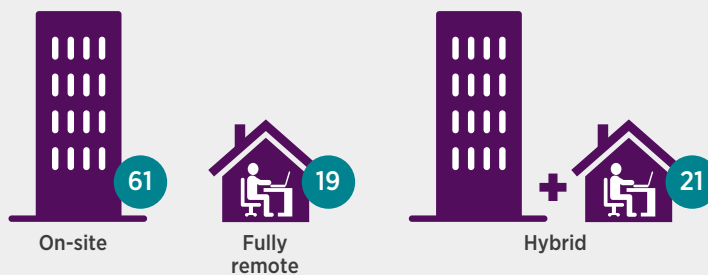
**Years in current organisation (%)**



**Years in the people profession (%)**

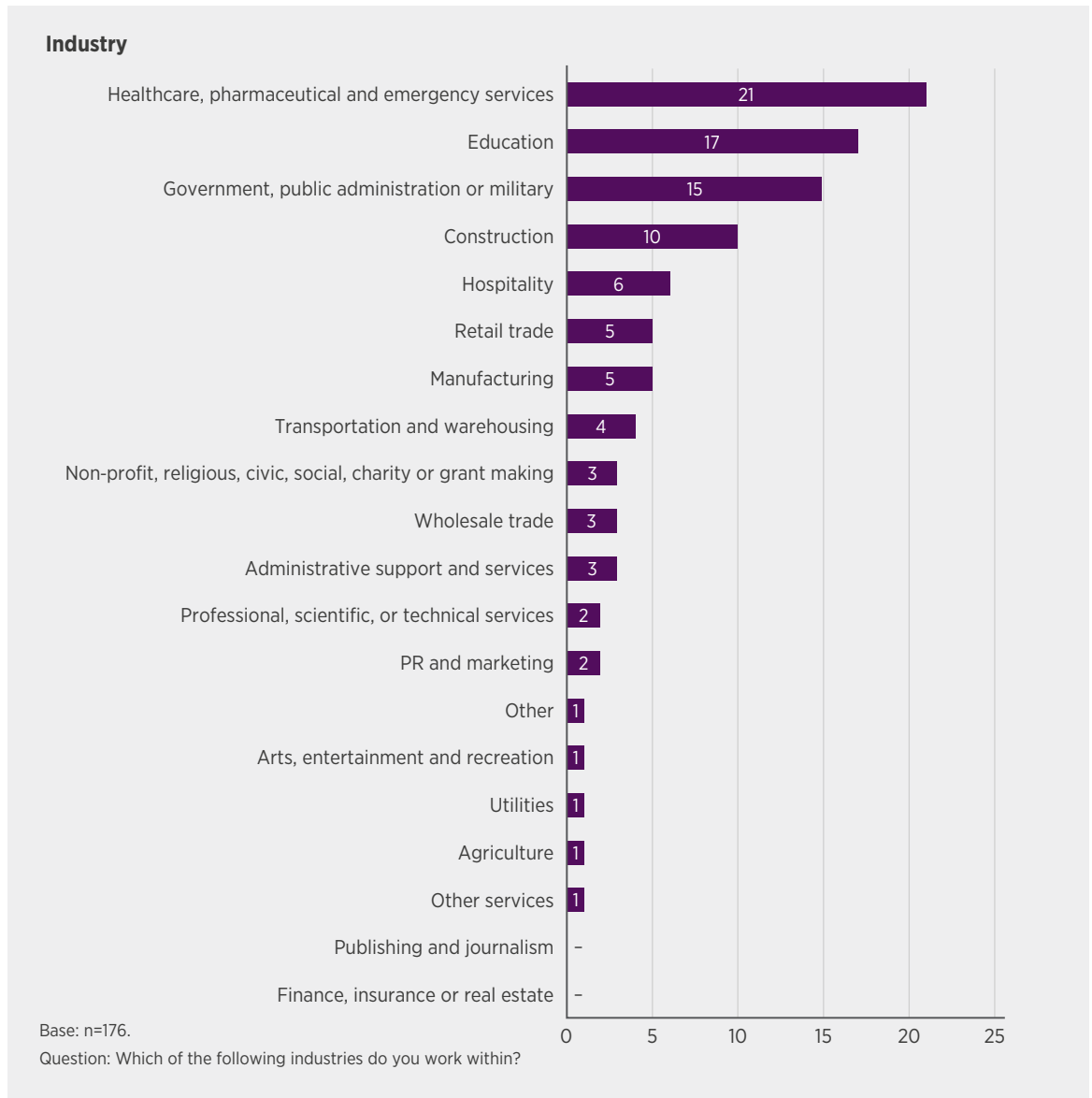


**Ways of working in the last 12 months split (%)**



Country samples are not representative of the wider HR population within that region and the findings within this report reflect the opinions of HR professionals who participated in the survey.







## The Netherlands

### Current labour market

According to a report by Intelligence Group (2022),<sup>12</sup> there are currently 127,400 HR professionals within the Netherlands, the vast majority of whom are employed in-house (around 110,700). Around 4.2% of HR and recruitment specialists within this region are unemployed, higher than the average unemployment rate of 3.8% (data from the last quarter of 2021). We also know that around 60% of the HR profession is 40+ years old, higher than the general Dutch workforce, which is 46%. The gender split across the HR industry is 69% female and 31% male.

### Key findings

- We found two prevailing organisational cultures among the Dutch sample: a family feel/traditional culture, and a dynamic and innovative culture based on having a flexible mindset. Comparatively, Dutch respondents were far less likely to say they operate within a culture that is highly formal and hierarchical compared with the global average.
- The most common HR operating model was one of a single HR team that included generalists, specialists and administration together under one function. Compared with the global sample, Dutch respondents were much less likely to adopt a business partnering model.
- Nearly half of Dutch respondents said supporting employees' mental health and wellbeing, and attracting, recruiting and retaining talent had become more of a challenge within a hybrid context.
- We found that the majority of respondents (63%) have not had to change their skills in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is much higher than the proportion of global respondents who reported this.
- Collectively, 82% of Dutch respondents felt positive about their career progression, saying it had either met or exceeded their expectations. Skills development was a key factor to achieving career advancement, as well as developing a personal network of colleagues to support career progression.

### What are the most common organisational cultures?

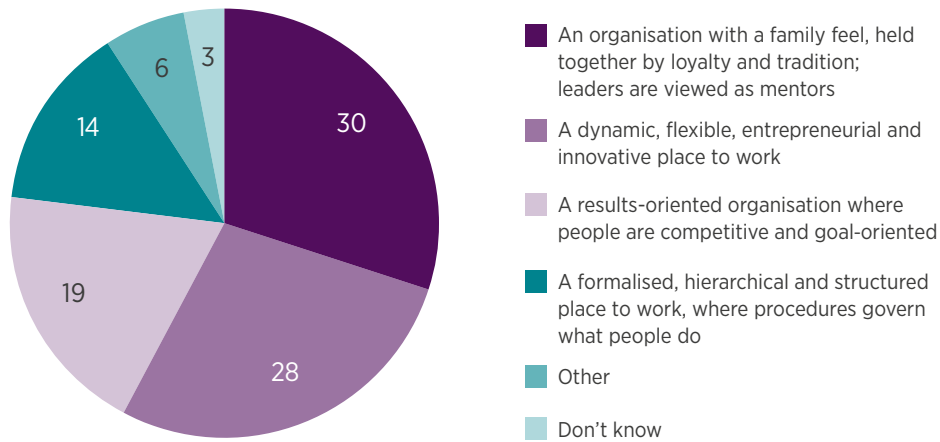
Within our sample of Dutch people professionals, the prevailing organisational culture is one with a family feel, held together by loyalty and tradition (30%). In addition, 28% of Dutch respondents worked in a dynamic, flexible, entrepreneurial and innovative organisation, which was higher than the global average (18%).

Comparatively, Dutch respondents were far less likely to say they operate within a culture that is highly formal and hierarchical (14%) compared with the global average (35%).



**Figure 65: People professionals in the Netherlands are most commonly operating under either a traditional, family-feel-type culture or an innovative and dynamic culture**

**Common organisational cultures in the Netherlands (% of respondents)**



Base: n=172.

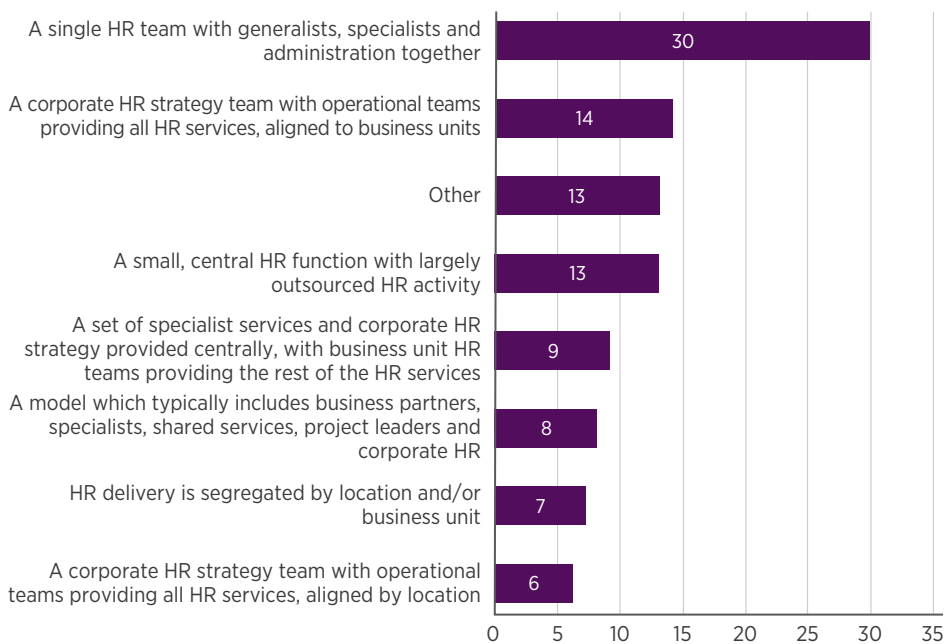
Question: Which one of the following, if any, best describes the prevailing culture in your organisation? Please select one option only.

**How are people teams operating?**

Among Dutch professionals, 30% described their organisation’s HR/people model as a single HR team with generalists, specialists and administration together. Compared with the global sample, they were much less likely to have a model which typically includes business partners, specialists, shared services, project leaders and corporate HR (8%) compared with those globally (23%). On the other hand, organisations in the Netherlands were more likely than the global average to have a small, central HR function with largely outsourced HR activity.

**Figure 66: Most commonly, Dutch HR professionals are operating under a single HR team**

**HR operating models in the Netherlands (% of respondents)**



Base: n=172.

Question: Which ONE of the following structures, if any, best describes your organisation’s HR/people model? Please tick one option only.

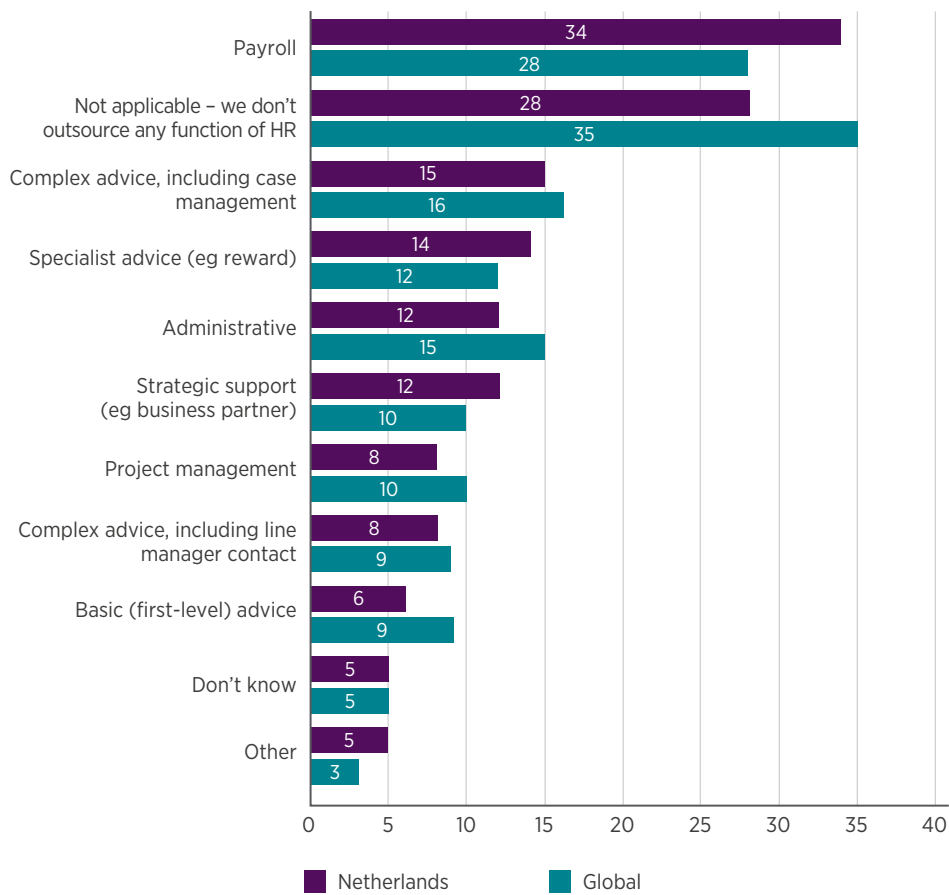




In terms of outsourcing HR functions, nearly three in 10 Dutch professionals said their organisation does not outsource any function of HR, which was lower than the global average. One-third of people professionals in the Netherlands reported that their organisation outsources payroll, slightly higher than the global average.

Across other elements of the HR function, Dutch responses were consistent with those in other countries in terms of what they outsourced. For example, 14% said they outsourced specialist advice and 8% outsourced project management, both similar to the global averages.

**Figure 67: Comparatively, payroll is more commonly outsourced amongst Dutch HR professionals**  
**Outsourced HR functions in the Netherlands (% of respondents)**



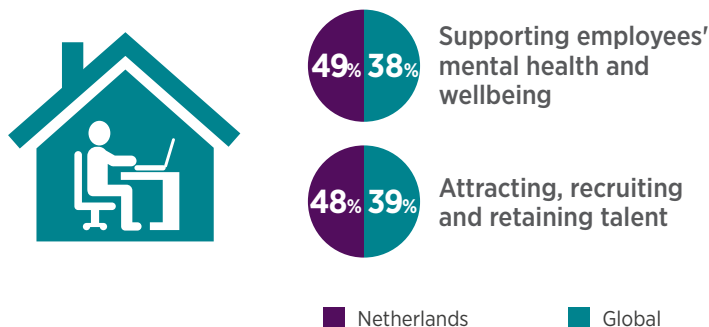
Base: Netherlands: n=172; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which elements of your HR function do you outsource, if any?



## How has hybrid working affected HR practices?

Figure 68: Top hybrid working challenges for people professionals



Nearly half of Dutch professionals felt that supporting employees' mental health and wellbeing had become more difficult in a hybrid setting. A similar proportion also felt that attracting, recruiting and retaining talent had become more of a challenge.

However, relatively high proportions of respondents in the Netherlands felt there was no change to delivering most aspects of their work as a people professional within a hybrid working environment. For example, nearly three in five said there had been no change in building organisational culture and values (55%), managing performance (58%), and supporting line managers to manage their teams effectively (59%). These were higher figures compared with the average responses across other countries (40%, 45% and 43% respectively).

### What are the priorities for improving HR capability?

The most commonly cited priority areas for HR capability improvement were working collaboratively with colleagues throughout the organisation and facilitating more flexible people operations across the business. These were both consistent with the global average.

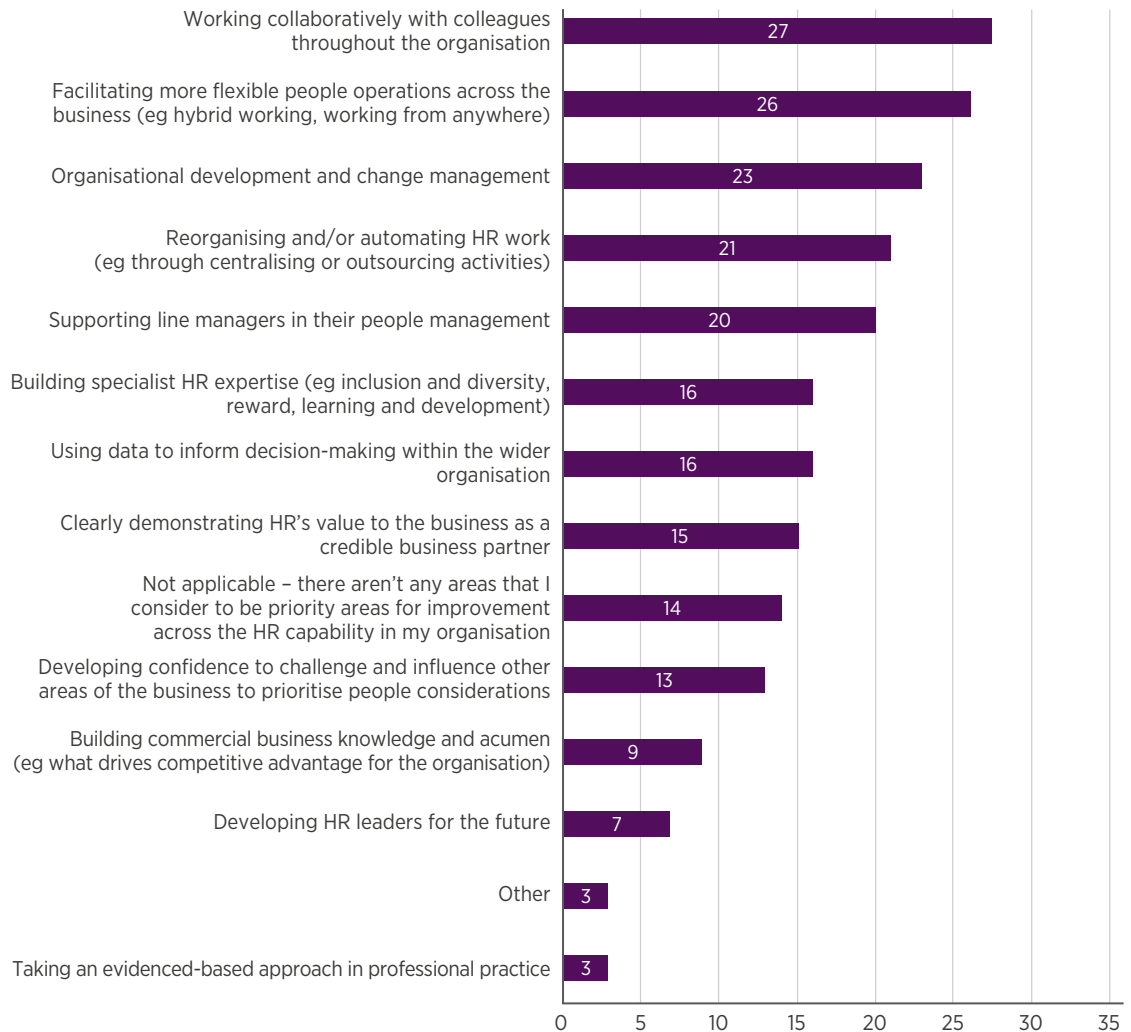
Twenty-one per cent of Dutch people professionals said reorganising and/or automating HR work was a priority area for capability improvement, which was higher than the global average of 16%.

A smaller proportion of respondents in the Netherlands cited using data to inform decision-making within the wider organisation (16%), supporting line managers in their people management (20%), and developing HR leaders for the future (7%) as key HR capability areas for improvement, compared with professionals across the other countries (23%, 30% and 13% respectively).



**Figure 69: Cross-functional working is a key priority area for building capability amongst Dutch HR professionals**

*Priority areas for improving HR capability in the Netherlands (% of respondents)*



Base: n=172.

Question: In your opinion, which of the following, if any, are priority areas for improvement across the HR capability in your organisation? Please tick up to three responses.

**What is the perceived strategic value of the profession?**

**Figure 70: Top four perceived strategic values of the profession in the Netherlands**



Perceptions of strategic impact vary significantly by business size and sector.

\*This is in comparison with 51% of the global sample saying this.

- 72%** The people function works collaboratively across business functions to meet business needs
- 63%** The people team is widely acknowledged in the organisation as having an important impact
- 62%** The people function makes a valued, strategic contribution to the business
- 42%\*** The role of the people function is changing significantly

When it comes to performance, only around half of the Dutch sample said their people function has HR practices that are clearly linked to organisational outcomes (50%) and even fewer respondents agreed that their function has clear measures of success for organisational outcomes (44%).

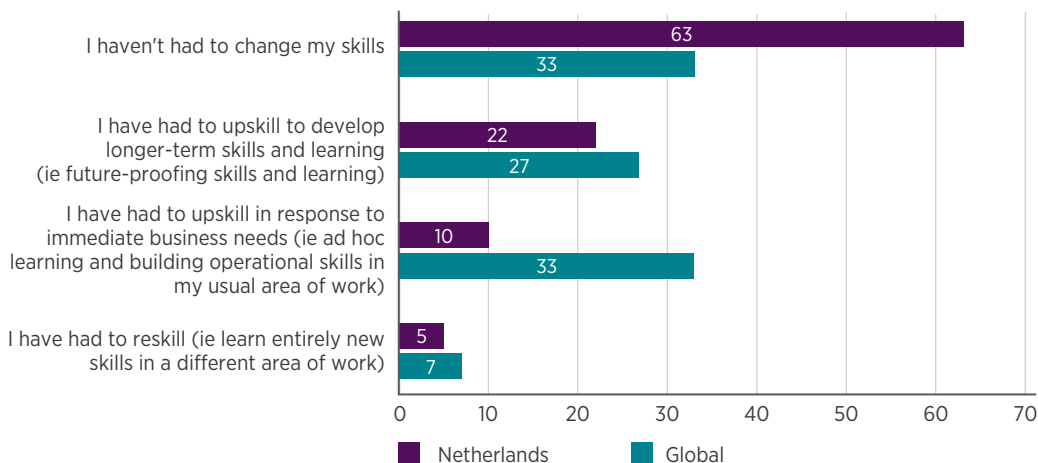
Less than half felt recognised by senior leaders when the people team achieves its measures of success (48%), which was significantly lower than the global average.

**How have people professionals developed their skills post-pandemic?**

We found that the majority of respondents (63%) have not had to change their skills in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is much higher than the proportion of global respondents who reported this (33%). Thirty-seven per cent of professionals in the Netherlands reported that they have either upskilled or reskilled as a result of their organisation’s response to COVID-19, significantly lower than the global average of 67%. In fact, only a small minority, 10% of Dutch respondents, said they have had to upskill in response to immediate business needs (versus a global average of 33%).

**Figure 71: Dutch professionals were significantly more likely to say they haven’t needed to change their skills in response to recent events**

**Skills development in response to COVID-19 (% of respondents)**



Base: Netherlands: n=172; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which of the following statements best describes how your HR skills have changed, if at all, as a result of your organisation’s response to COVID-19? Please tick one.

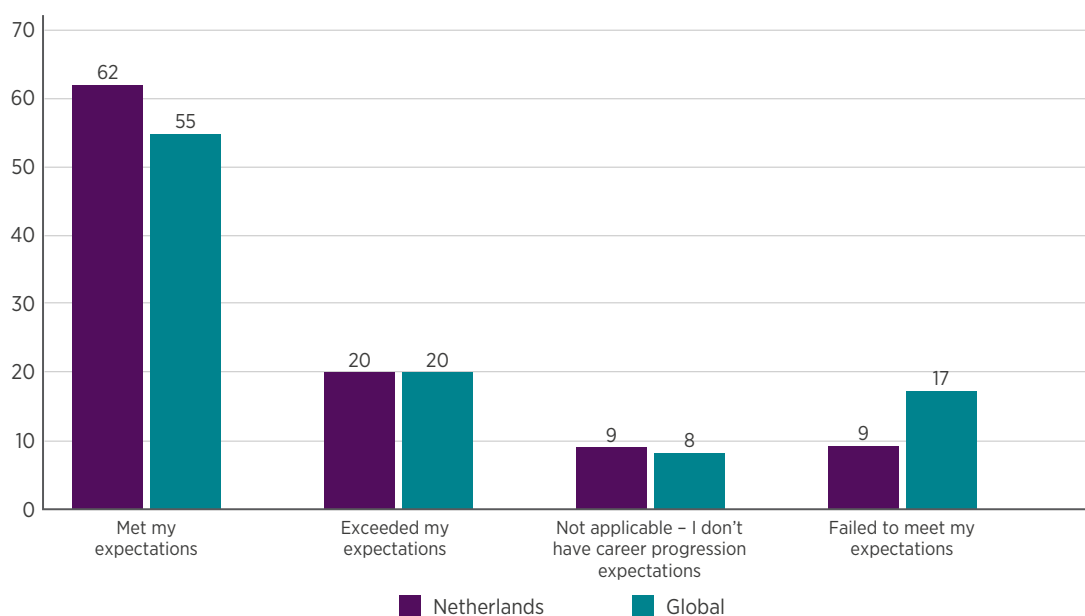


### How do people professionals perceive their career progression to date?

Dutch HR professionals are more likely to feel positive about their progression compared with the global sample. The majority felt their progression to date had met their expectations, which was higher than the global average. Additionally, 20% said their career progression had exceeded their expectations, while only 9% said it had failed to meet expectations (compared with the global average of 17%).

**Figure 72: Dutch respondents were more positive than the international sample about their progression meeting or exceeding their expectations**

*Expectations of career progression in the Netherlands (% of respondents)*



Base: Netherlands: n=172; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Has your career progression to date met, exceeded or failed to meet your expectations?

For Dutch respondents, skills development was a key factor to achieving career advancement (65%), which was higher than the global average (59%). Building a personal network was the second most commonly cited factor, with nearly half of respondents mentioning this (48%) compared with 36% of those across other countries. On the other hand, professional qualifications/certifications and manager support (both 33%) were perceived as less important with supporting career advancement (global averages 47% and 48% respectively).

Over a third of Dutch respondents reported that they had not faced any barriers to career progression (36%), which is significantly higher than the global average of 20%. Interestingly, compared with the wider sample, respondents in the Netherlands were less likely to cite line management (4% versus 9%) or organisational politics (9% versus 14%) as a barrier to progressing their career.

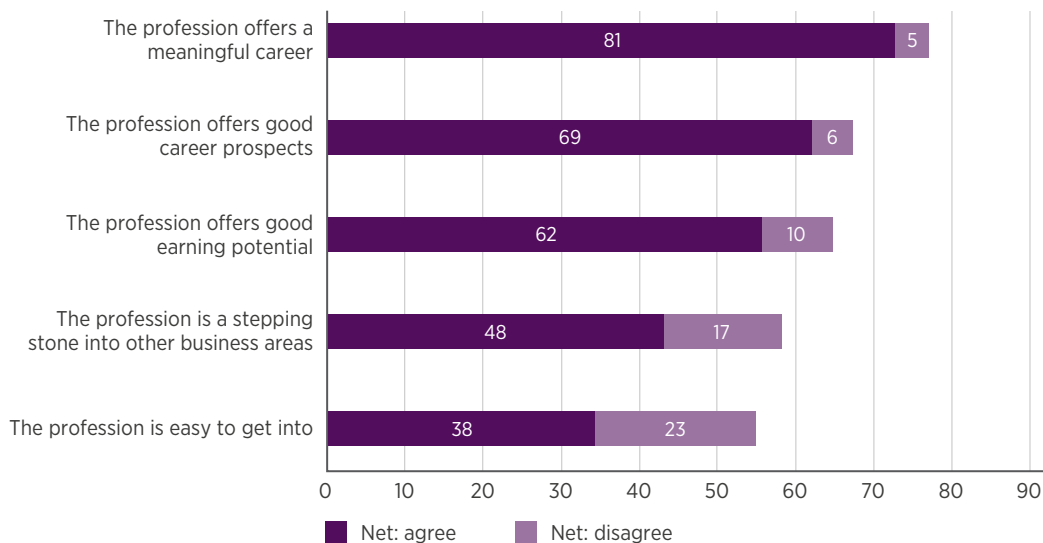
### What are the perceptions of a career in the people profession?

Encouragingly, the vast majority of Dutch respondents believed that the people profession offers a meaningful career, good career prospects and earning potential.

However, entry into the profession and moving out of the profession was seen in a less positive light. Only 38% believe the profession is easy to get into and less than half said a career in the profession can act as a stepping stone into other business areas. Generally, perceptions of having a career in the profession were in line with the global average.



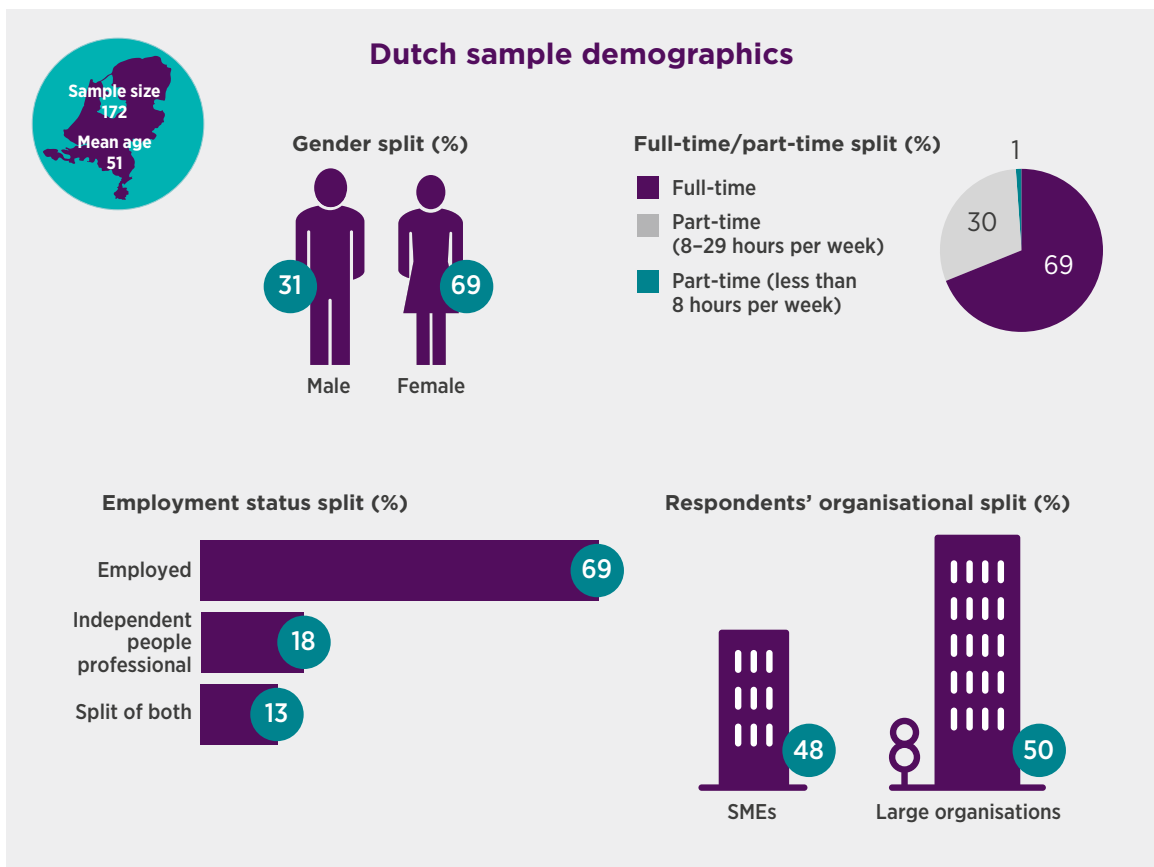
**Figure 73: The vast majority believe a career within the people profession is a meaningful one**  
*Dutch perceptions about a career in the people profession (% of respondents)*



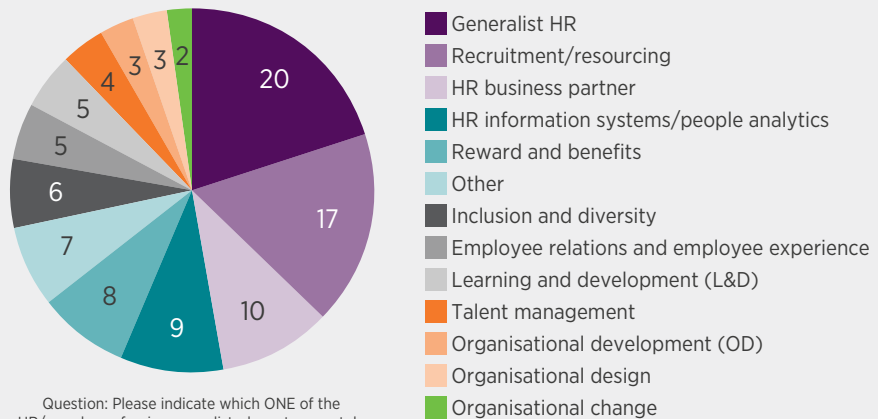
Base: n=172.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?

As a reminder, by the 'HR/people profession' we are referring to HR, OD, organisational change, L&D and related disciplines.



**Type of role (%)**

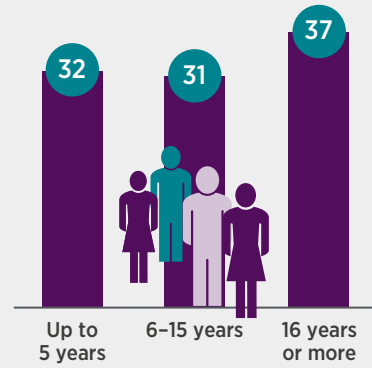


Question: Please indicate which ONE of the HR/people profession areas listed most accurately reflects your decision-making responsibilities.

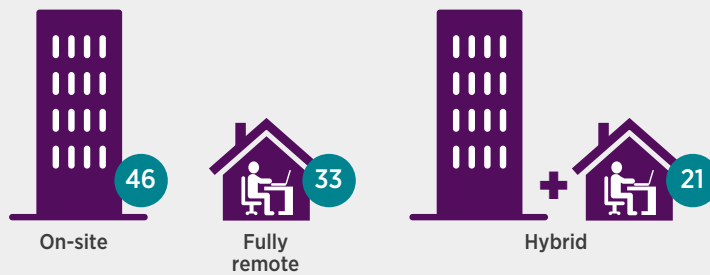
**Years in current organisation (%)**



**Years in the people profession (%)**



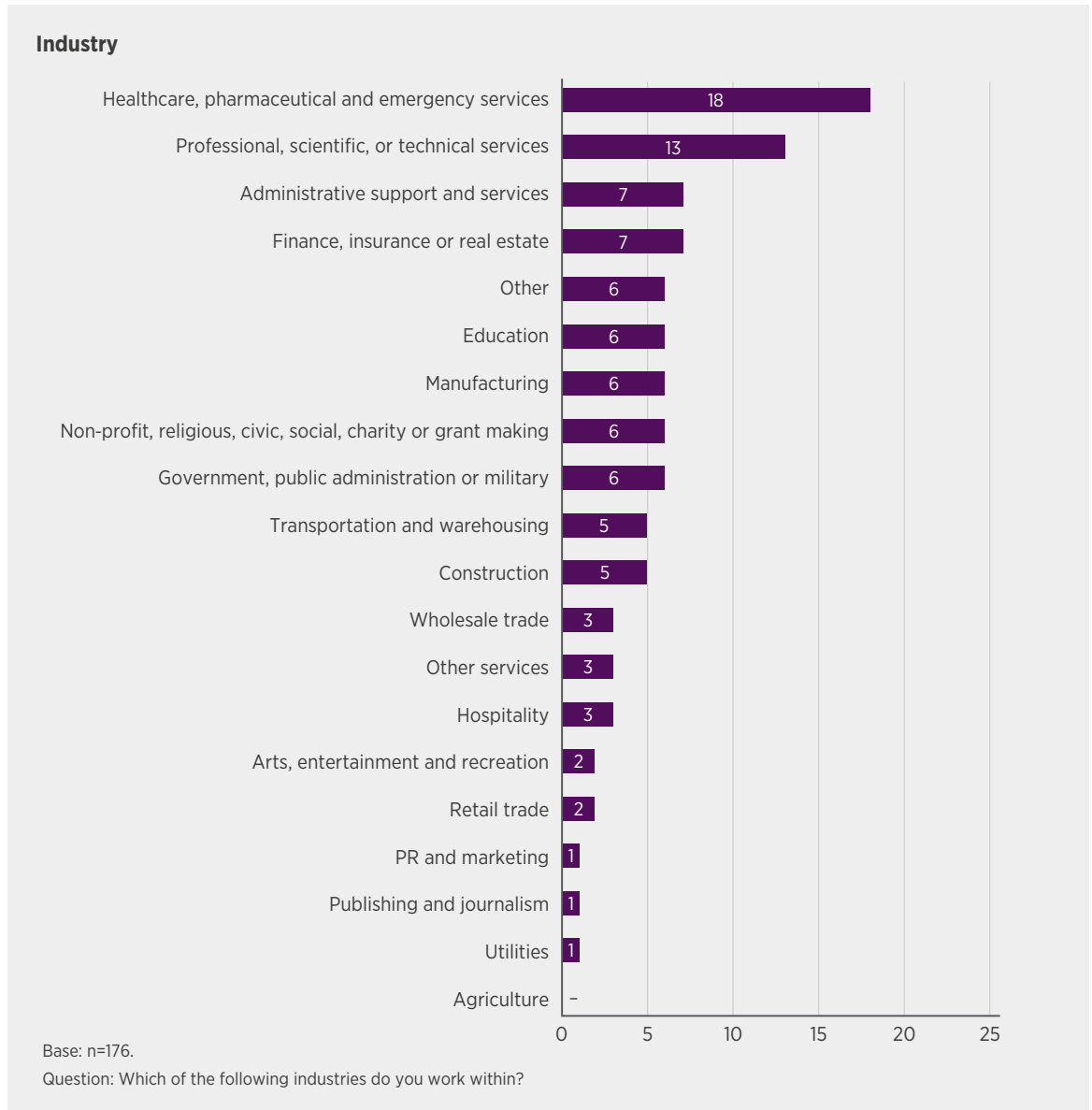
**Ways of working in the last 12 months split (%)**

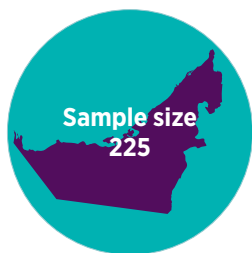


Country samples are not representative of the wider HR population within that region and the findings within this report reflect the opinions of HR professionals who participated in the survey.









## United Arab Emirates

### Current economic climate

Currently, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) focuses on the expansion and diversification of its economy, with non-oil trade and exports reported to be growing steadily. Given the growing IT sector, the country has pledged significant investment plans to develop its IT operations.<sup>13</sup>

### Key findings

- For UAE professionals, there were four common main organisational cultures, with a relatively even split. The most common of these was an organisational culture with a family feel, held together by loyalty and tradition.
- Thirty-nine per cent outsourced administrative HR activities, which was significantly higher than the global average (15%). We also found small to medium-sized businesses were more likely to outsource administrative HR activities compared with large organisations.
- On the whole, it appears that UAE professionals found hybrid working to be a positive influence over their work and that HR management had become easier – significantly higher than the global average in all aspects of HR activity.
- The top priority areas for HR capability improvement were working collaboratively with colleagues throughout the organisation, developing organisational development and change management skills, building specialist HR expertise and facilitating more flexible people operations.
- The vast majority said they have had to upskill in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We found that there was an even split between professionals upskilling in a reactive manner and those upskilling in a more planned and measured way.

### What are the most common organisational cultures?

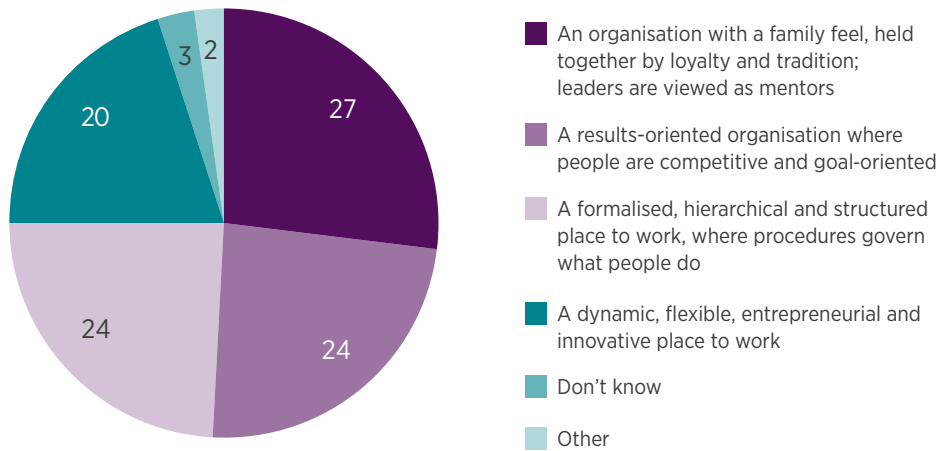
The organisational cultures that our United Arab Emirates (UAE) people professional respondents operate within are fairly evenly split across four main types. The prevailing culture is of organisations with a family feel, held together by loyalty and tradition. A quarter of respondents said they worked in a results-oriented organisation and a further quarter in a formalised, hierarchical and structured workplace. Finally, one-fifth said they operate within an organisation that is dynamic and entrepreneurial.

A comparison with respondents globally found that a higher proportion of UAE professionals said they worked in a results-oriented organisation (24% versus 13% globally). On the contrary, UAE professionals were less likely than global respondents to work in a formalised, hierarchical and structured workplace (24% versus 35%).



**Figure 74: There is a fairly even spilt across four of the most common organisational cultures in the UAE according to people professionals**

**Common organisational cultures in the UAE (% of respondents)**



Base: n=225.

Question: Which one of the following, if any, best describes the prevailing culture in your organisation? Please select one option only.

**How are people teams operating?**

Most commonly, UAE people professionals were operating in a singular team that included generalists, specialists and administration together, with three in 10 saying this. We also found that HR professionals in the UAE were more likely to operate within a corporate HR strategy team with operational teams providing all HR services. Around a quarter of respondents reported this compared with only 11% around the entire sample. People teams in the UAE also differed in their likeliness to adopt a business partnering model within their HR function, with 17% citing this compared with the global average of 23%.

**Figure 75: Nearly a third operate within a singular HR team, consisting of generalists, specialists and administrative support together**

**HR operating models in the UAE (% of respondents)**



Base: n=225.

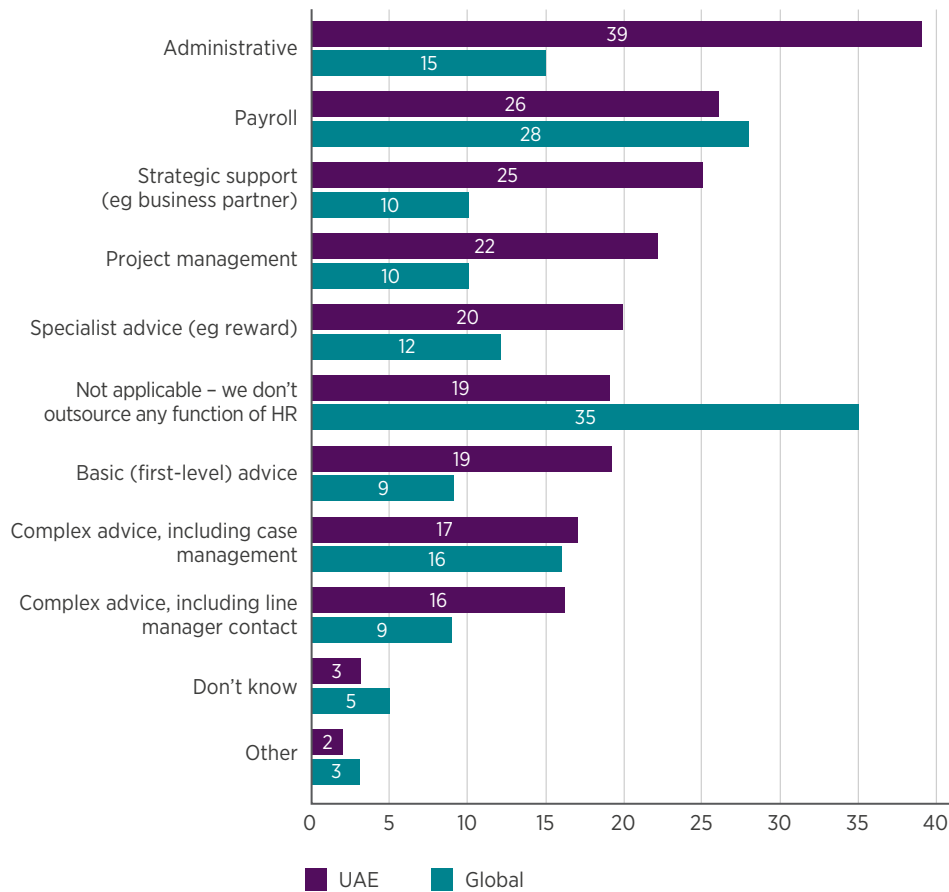
Question: Which ONE of the following structures, if any, best describes your organisation's HR/people model? Please tick one option only.



In terms of areas of HR that are outsourced, we found the following:

- Thirty-nine per cent outsourced administrative HR activities, which was significantly higher than the global average (15%). Using the UK as a benchmark, only 7% outsourced administrative HR.
- UAE respondents were also more likely than those across other countries to outsource basic advice, project management and strategic support.
- A fifth of UAE professionals reported that they don't outsource any function of HR, compared with nearly half of UK respondents who reported this.
- SMEs were more likely to outsource administrative HR activities (49%) compared with large organisations (30%) in the UAE.

**Figure 76: People teams in the UAE are more likely to outsource their HR functions than the global sample**  
***Outsourced HR functions in the UAE (% of respondents)***



Base: UAE: n=225; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which elements of your HR function do you outsource, if any?



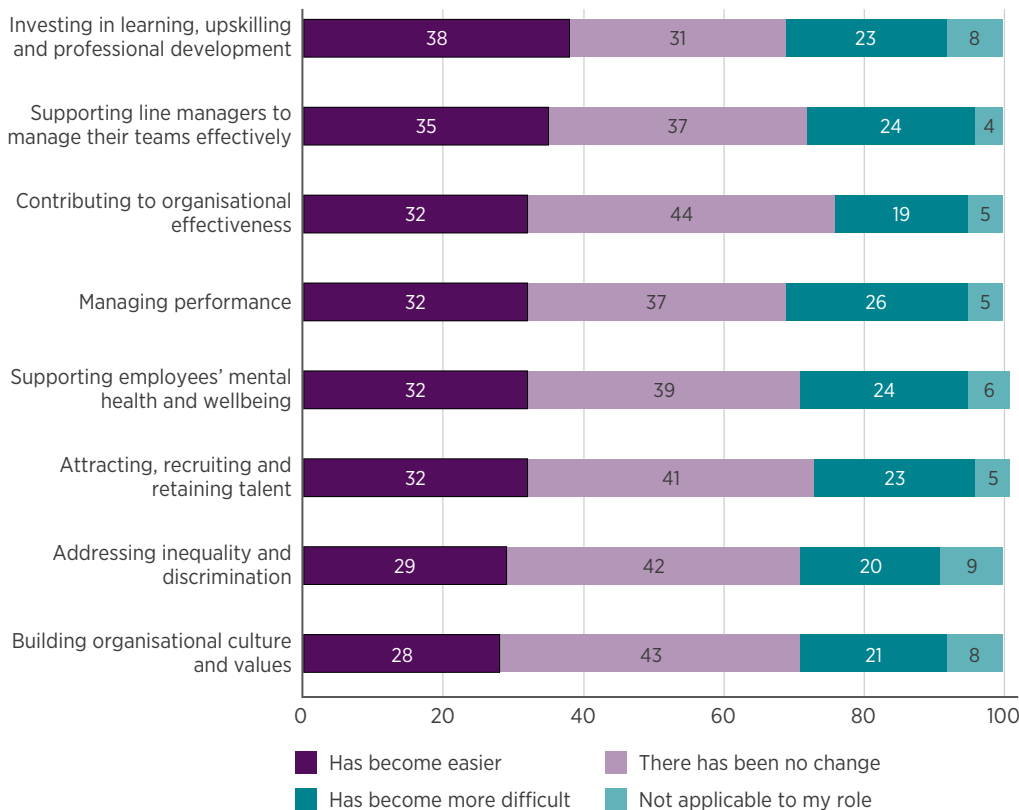
### How has hybrid working affected HR practices?

Proportionally, UAE respondents were more likely to say that core areas of HR activity had become easier in the shift towards hybrid working – significantly higher than the global average. On the whole, it appears that UAE professionals have found hybrid working to be a positive influence in their work.

Additionally, we do not observe the challenges that are felt by the rest of the global sample; for example, attracting, recruiting and retaining talent has become more difficult in a hybrid world globally (39%) but has been less so in the UAE (23%). UAE professionals said that managing performance is the area perceived as most challenging within a hybrid setting, although this was still lower than the global average (32%).

**Figure 77: Respondents from the UAE are more likely to believe that all areas of people management are easier for people professionals to manage in a hybrid working world**

*Areas of people management affected by hybrid working (% of respondents)*



Base: n=225.

Question: We are now going to ask you about some aspects of working as an HR/people professional. Please indicate how, if at all, these have changed due to the shift towards 'working from anywhere' and hybrid working.



**What are the priorities for improving HR capability?**

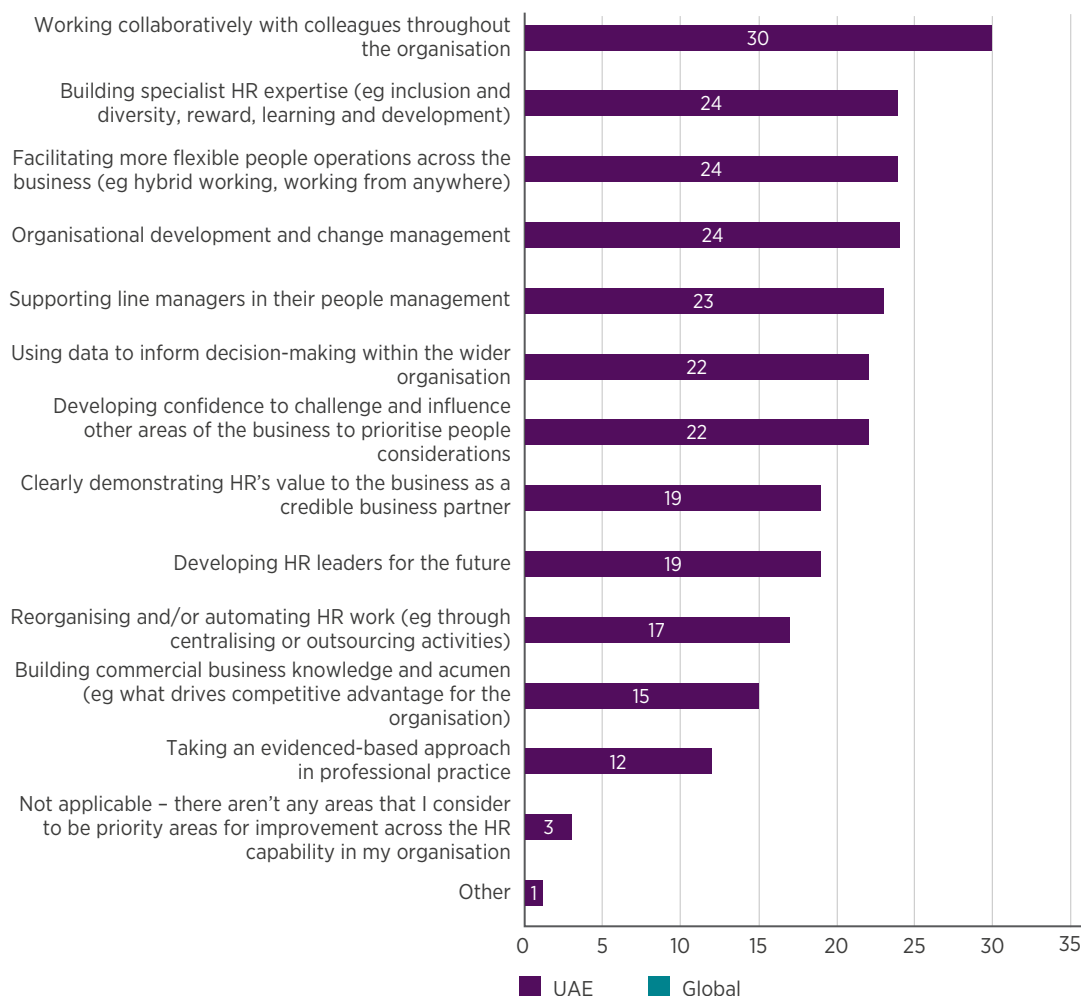
Among UAE respondents, the top priority area for HR capability improvement was working collaboratively with colleagues throughout the organisation, followed by organisational development and change management, building specialist HR expertise, and facilitating more flexible people operations across the business.

Compared with the global sample:

- A lower proportion of UAE respondents mentioned supporting line managers in their people management as a priority area compared with those across other countries (23% versus 30%).
- UAE people professionals saw developing confidence to challenge and influence other areas of the business to prioritise people considerations (22%) and developing HR leaders for the future (19%) as HR capability priorities, compared with the global average (16% and 13% respectively).

**Figure 78: Working collaboratively and building specialist HR capability are amongst the top priority areas for building capability in UAE people teams**

*Priority areas for improving HR capability in the UAE (% of respondents)*



Base: n=225.

Question: In your opinion, which of the following, if any, are priority areas for improvement across the HR capability in your organisation? Please tick up to three responses.



## What is the perceived strategic value of the profession?

Figure 79: Top four perceived strategic values of the profession in the UAE



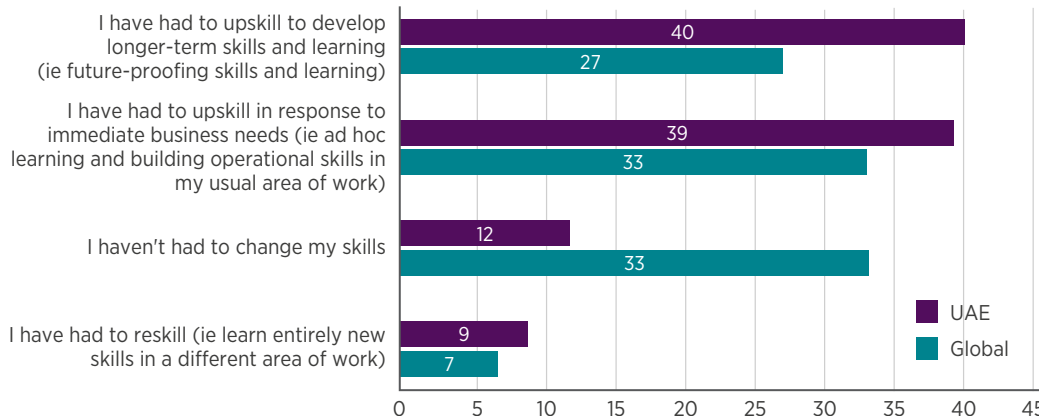
Well over half of respondents in the UAE agreed that the role of the people function was changing significantly in their organisation, and that the reputation of people professionals has increased due to recent events. Interestingly, UAE respondents were more likely than those across other countries to feel that the reputation of people professionals had increased in their organisation due to recent events (56% versus a global average of 48%).

## How have people professionals developed their skills post-pandemic?

Overall, the vast majority of UAE respondents said they have had to upskill in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We found that there was an even split between professionals upskilling in a reactive manner and those upskilling in a more planned and measured way (see Figure 80).

A small minority (12%) said they hadn't needed to develop their skills, while we found this figure to be almost three times higher across the global sample (33%). This suggests that skills development and learning within HR functions has been a key priority for the majority of UAE people professionals.

Figure 80: An even amount of UAE people professionals say they focused on upskilling to plug an immediate business need and those saying they focused building the skills required to be future-fit  
Skills development in response to COVID-19 (% of respondents)



Base: UAE: n=225; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Which of the following statements best describes how your HR skills have changed, if at all, as a result of your organisation's response to COVID-19? Please tick one.

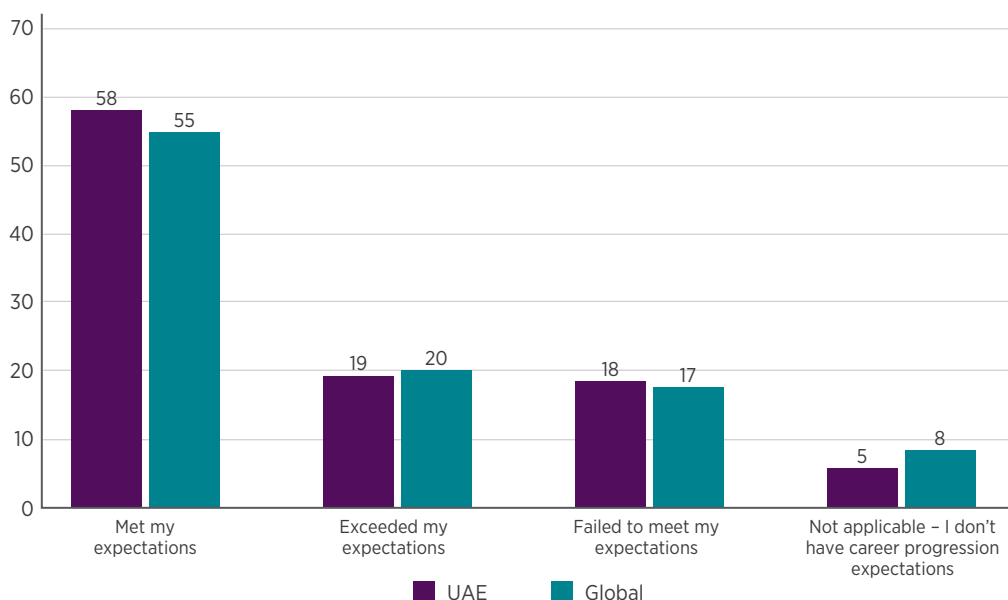


Among UAE respondents, the most common type of learning and development received in the past year was online learning (45%). A quarter had received in-house development programmes (25%), job rotation (25%), blended learning (25%), learning from peers (26%) and coaching (26%). A lower proportion of professionals in the UAE had engaged in learning from peers (26%) and conferences and webinars (31%) compared with the global average (34% and 44% respectively). However, compared with professionals globally, those in the UAE were more likely to have received formal qualifications/certifications, job rotation and blended learning in the last 12 months.

**How do people professionals perceive their career progression to date?**

Three in five UAE professionals said their career progression within HR had met their expectations. Nearly one in five reported that their progression had exceeded or failed to meet their expectations.

**Figure 81: Expectations of advancing a career within the profession are on par with the global perceptions**  
**Expectations of career progression in the UAE (% of respondents)**



Base: UAE: n=225; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Has your career progression to date met, exceeded or failed to meet your expectations?

Respondents highlighted skills development as the top factor helping them advance in their careers (62%), followed by manager support (53%) and professional qualifications (41%).

In terms of barriers to career advancement, organisational politics was most commonly cited (20%, higher than the global average of 14%). UAE professionals were more likely than those at a global level to mention lack of labour market opportunities (13% versus 8%), lack of self-confidence (8% versus 14%) and line management (15% versus 9%) as barriers.

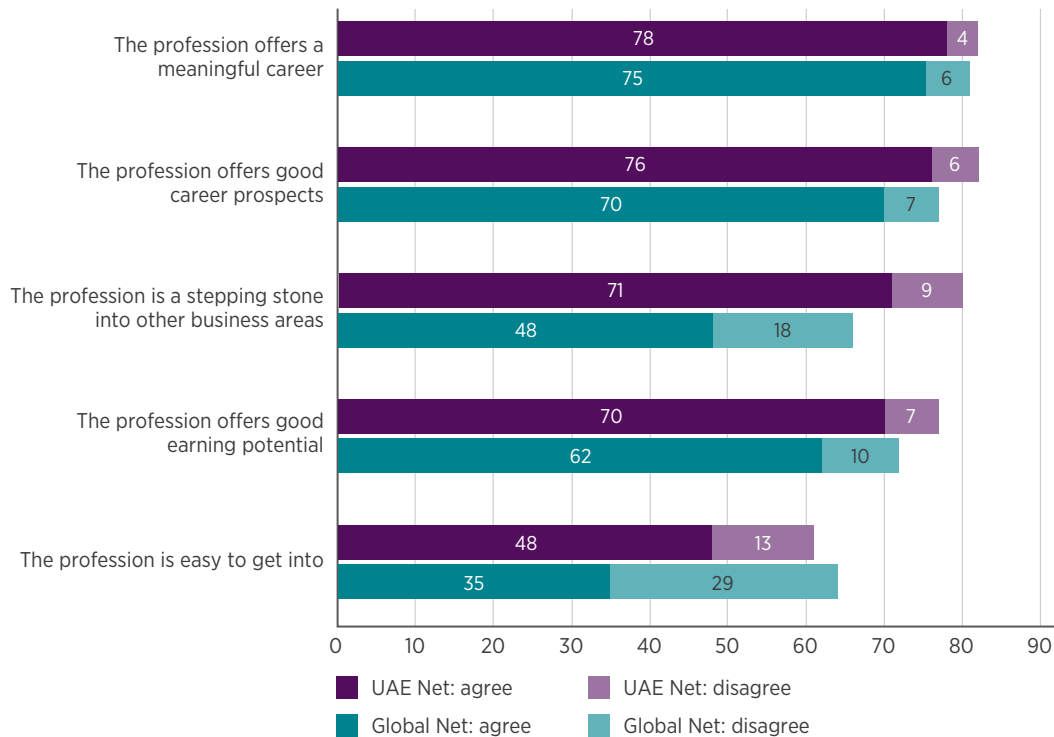
**What are the perceptions of a career in the people profession?**

People professionals in the UAE have positive perceptions about a career in HR, more so than across the global sample. Seven in 10 agree or strongly agree that the people profession offers good earning potential and is a stepping stone into other business areas. Comparatively, they were significantly more likely to agree with these statements than respondents across other countries (62% and 48% respectively).



Entry into the profession appears more difficult, with less than half of the UAE sample agreeing that the profession is easy to get into. However, this figure is still higher than the global average (35%).

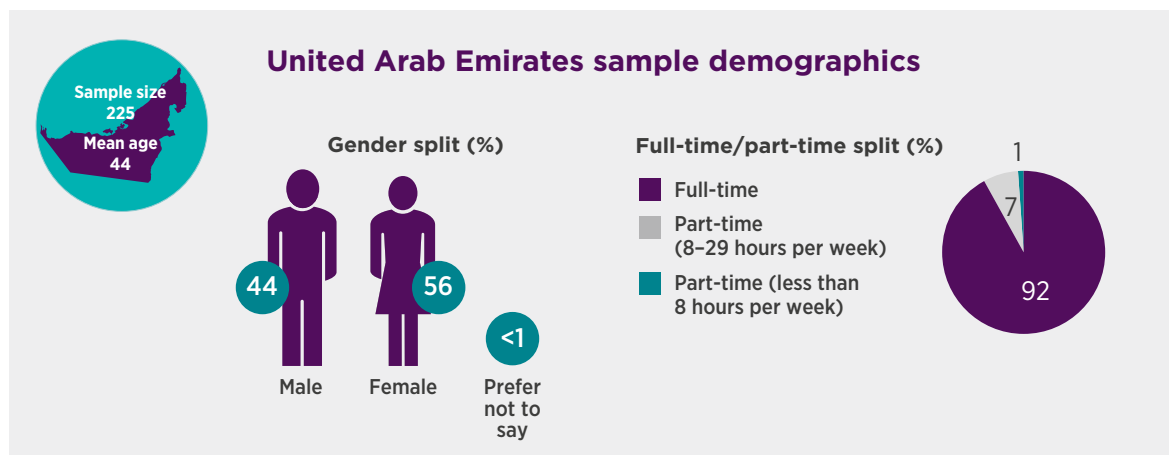
**Figure 82: Less than half of UAE respondents agree that entry into the profession is easy**  
**UAE perceptions about a career in the people profession (% of respondents)**



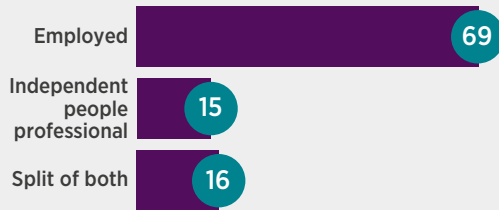
Base: UAE: n=225; Global: n=2,945.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?  
 As a reminder, by the 'HR/people profession' we are referring to HR, OD, organisational change, L&D and related disciplines.

Interestingly, we found that perceptions around salary potential within the industry differed significantly across business sizes. A higher proportion of respondents working in large organisations said that the profession offers good earning potential (80%) compared with those in SMEs (59%).



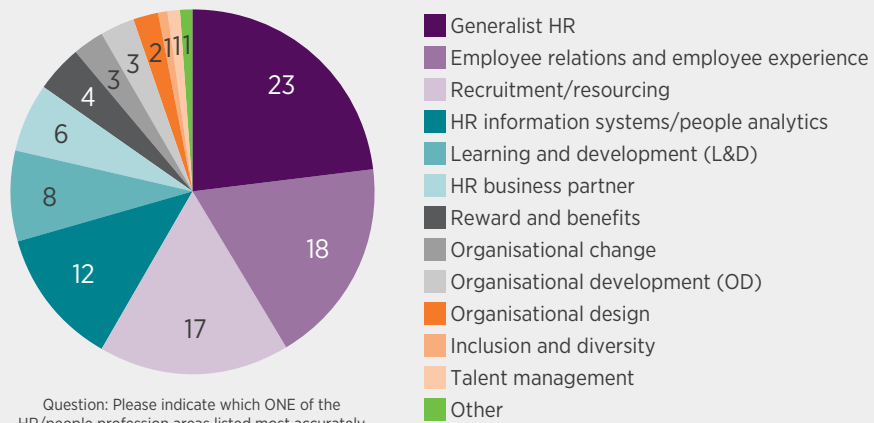
**Employment status split (%)**



**Respondents' organisational split (%)**



**Type of role (%)**

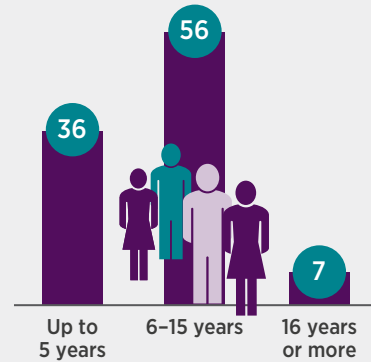


Question: Please indicate which ONE of the HR/people profession areas listed most accurately reflects your decision-making responsibilities.

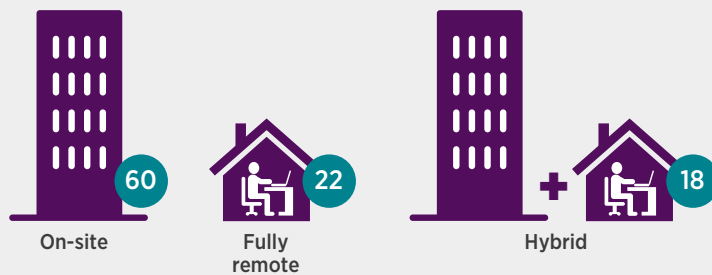
**Years in current organisation (%)**



**Years in the people profession (%)**

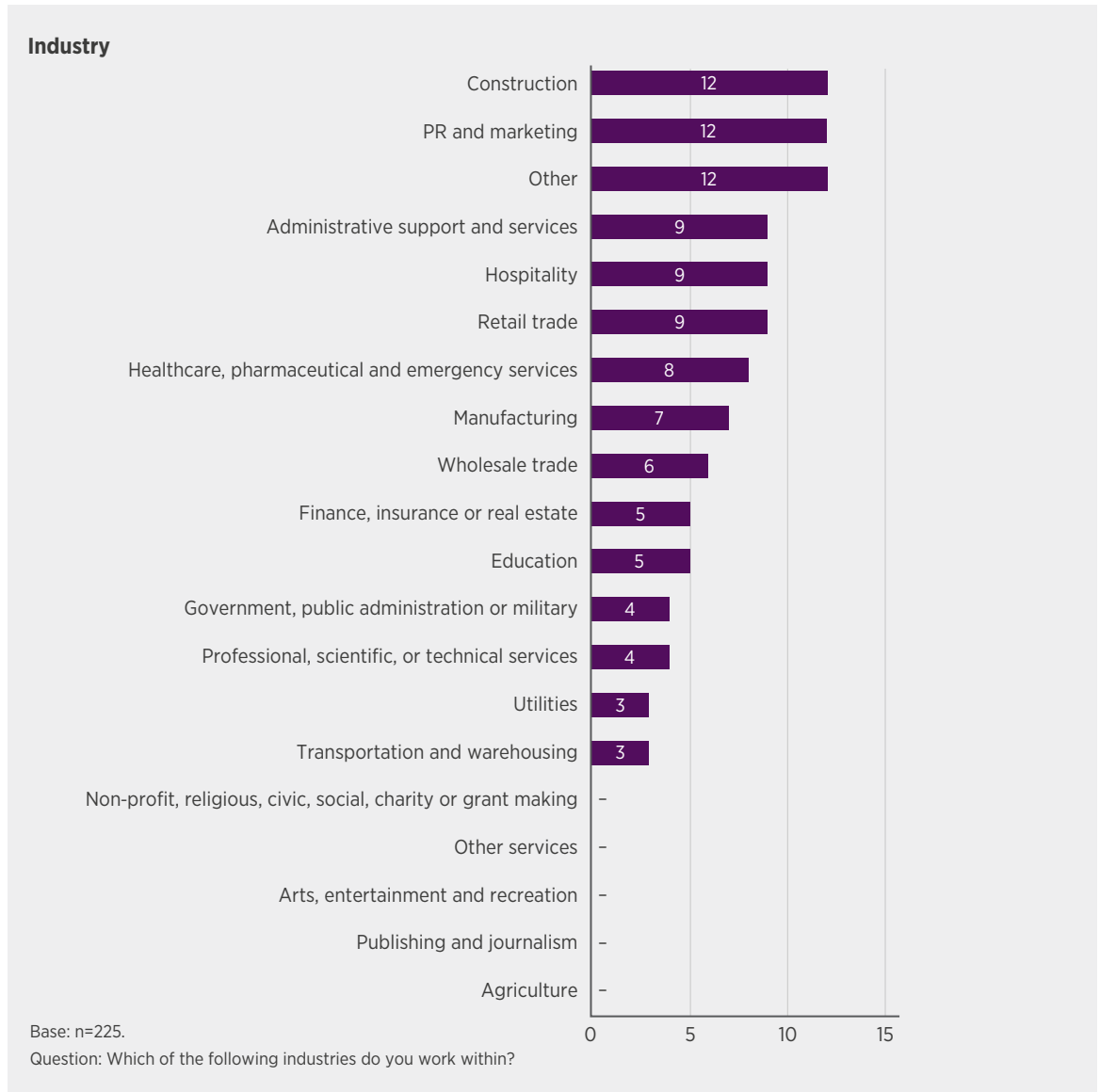


**Ways of working in the last 12 months split (%)**



Country samples are not representative of the wider HR population within that region and the findings within this report reflect the opinions of HR professionals who participated in the survey.







## United Kingdom

### Current economic climate

In summer 2022, the UK economy shrank and the country experienced an imbalance of regional growth, with some areas stalling at less than pre-pandemic levels. GDP growth looks bleak, with a recession on the horizon and slow, possibly negative, growth predicted for the next two years. UK inflation is at a 40-year high and geopolitical tensions, alongside the rising cost of living, means the current economic situation will be a difficult period for individuals and businesses.<sup>14</sup>

### Key findings

- The dominant organisational culture was a formalised one with a hierarchical and structured nature, with 43% of the UK sample reporting this – significantly higher than the global average (35%). We also found organisational culture to vary significantly across business size and sector.
- UK people teams use two prominent operating models: a business partnering model with specialists and shared services, and a single HR team that includes generalists, specialists and administration all together. People teams in the UK were more likely to adopt a business partnering model compared with the global sample (30% versus 23%).
- Nearly half of the UK sample said they do not outsource any of their HR activity, significantly more than the global sample. Beyond this, payroll was the most commonly outsourced HR function in the UK.
- The general sentiment of UK people professionals is that hybrid and remote working has made several people practices more challenging. The most challenging HR management areas included building organisational culture and values, supporting employees' mental health and wellbeing, and attracting, recruiting and retaining talent.
- UK people professionals saw supporting line managers in their people management as the top priority for capability improvement across people teams.

### What are the most common organisational cultures?

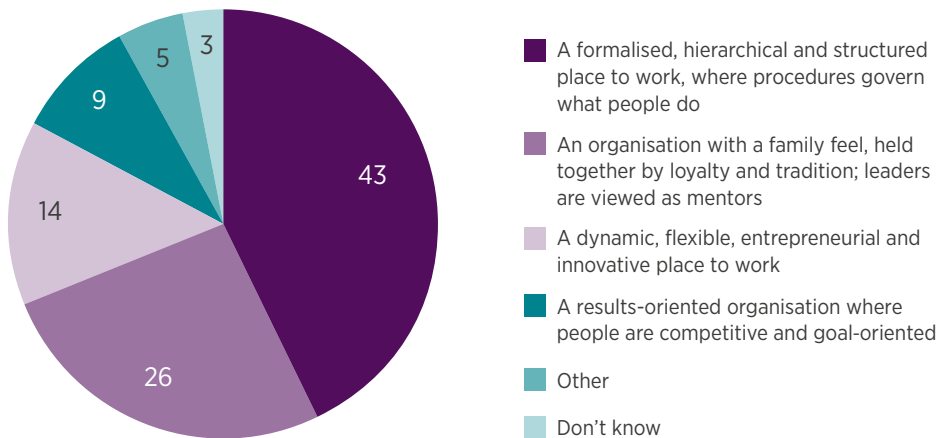
The predominant organisational culture cited by UK respondents was a formalised one with a hierarchical structure; 43% of the UK sample reported this – significantly higher than the global average (35%). Additionally, around a quarter of UK people professionals said they worked in a traditional business that had a family-feel-type culture.

Organisational culture varied significantly across business size and sector (see Figure 84). For example, public sector professionals were much more likely to say they worked in a formal and highly structured place of work (73%) compared with voluntary (36%) and private (25%) sector workers.



**Figure 83: The prominent organisational culture in the UK is one that is formal, structured and a hierarchical place to work**

*Common organisational cultures in the UK (% of respondents)*

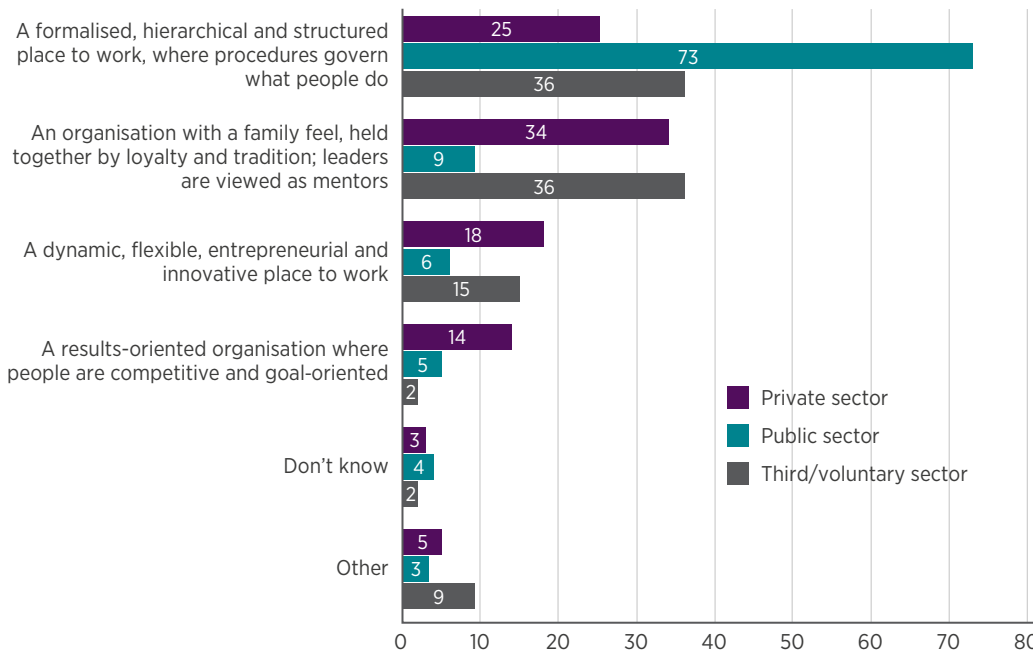


Base: n=1,496.

Question: Which one of the following, if any, best describes the prevailing culture in your organisation?  
Please select one option only.

**Figure 84: Organisational culture differs significantly across sectors**

*Common organisational cultures within UK organisations by sector (% of respondents)*



Base: Private sector: n=786; Public sector: n=478; Voluntary sector: n=205.

Question: Which one of the following, if any, best describes the prevailing culture in your organisation? Please select one option only.

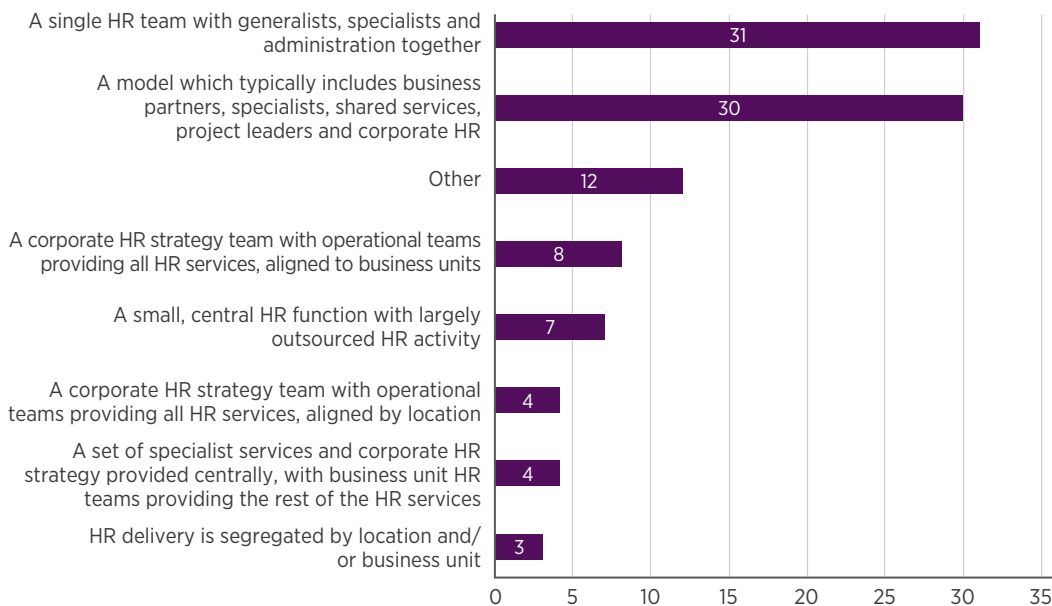


### How are people teams operating?

UK people teams use two prominent operating models: a business partnering model with specialists and shared services, and a single HR team that includes generalists, specialists and administration all together. Compared with the global sample, the UK was more likely to adopt a business partnering model (30% versus 23%).

Interestingly, the next most common model of HR operations was undefined, as 12% cited their model was not covered in the survey response options, suggesting more than one in 10 HR functions operate under different models.

**Figure 85: The majority of UK HR functions are operating under one of two prominent models**  
**HR operating models in the UK (% of respondents)**



Base: n=1,496.

Question: Which ONE of the following structures, if any, best describes your organisation's HR/people model? Please tick one option only.

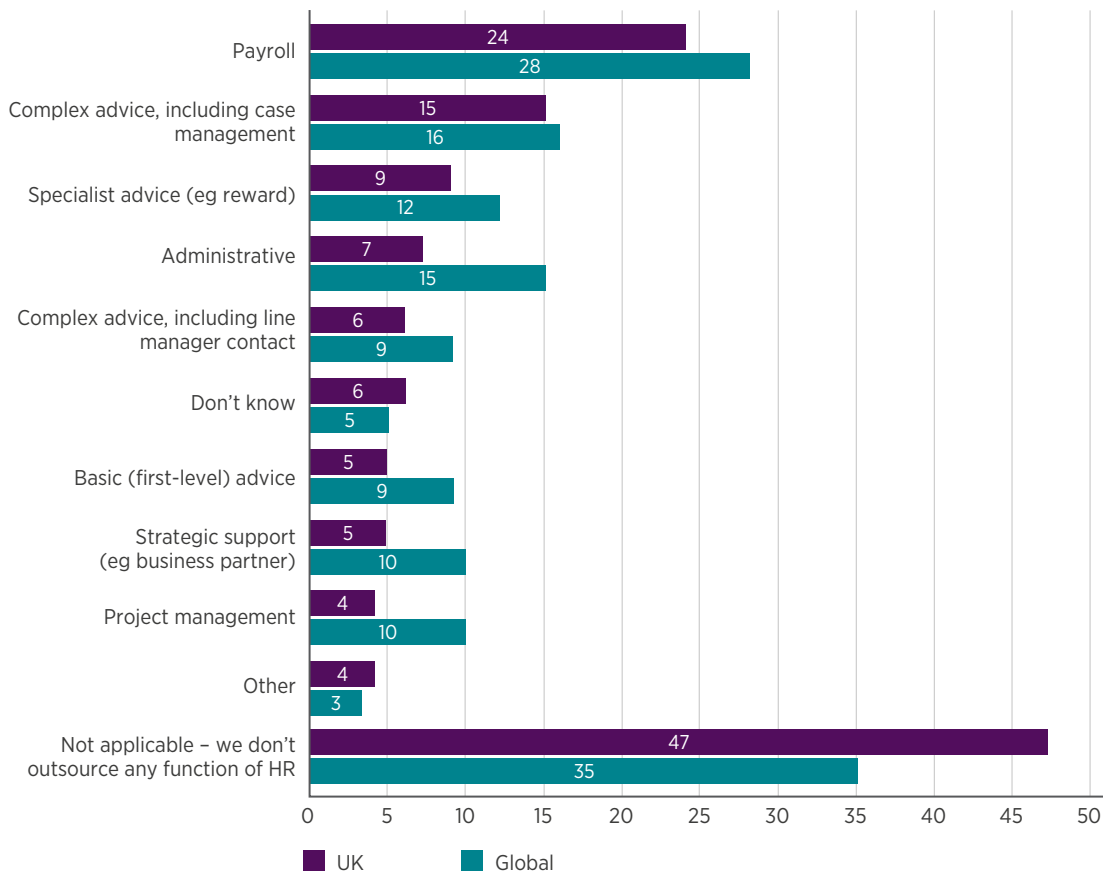
In terms of outsourcing HR functions, the UK sample was significantly more likely to say they didn't outsource any of their HR activity compared with the global sample, as shown in Figure 86. As a European comparison, Italian people professionals were least likely to say they don't outsource any HR activity, with only 15% citing this.

Where UK people professionals do outsource HR activity, this is at a lower rate than the global sample in all areas of HR activity. Therefore, UK people teams are less likely to outsource their various HR functions, suggesting the majority of HR delivery is undertaken in-house.





**Figure 86: Payroll is the most commonly outsourced HR function in the UK**  
**Outsourced HR functions in the UK (% of respondents)**

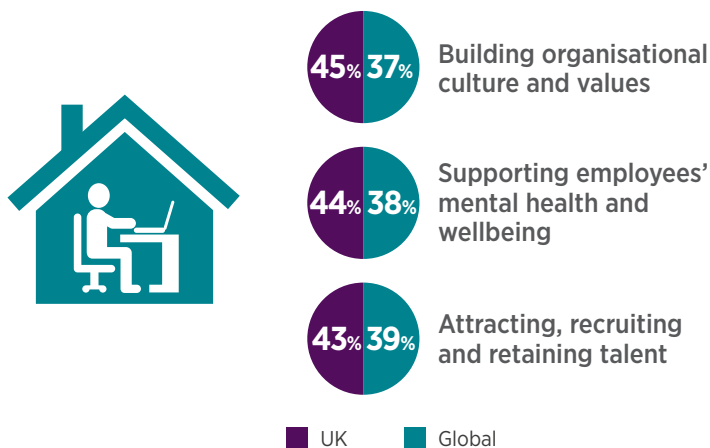


Base: UK: n=125; Global: n=2,945.  
 Question: Which elements of your HR function do you outsource, if any?

**How has hybrid working affected HR practices?**

The general sentiment of UK people professionals is that hybrid and remote working has made several people practices more challenging. Compared with the global sample, a higher proportion of UK people professionals said various aspects of HRM were more difficult to manage, highlighting six out of the eight people areas.

**Figure 87: The top three areas viewed as most challenging in a hybrid/remote environment**



Despite these findings, there were some crucial areas where around half the sample felt there was no change to HR delivery; for example, managing performance (45%), contributing to organisational effectiveness (50%) and addressing inequality and discrimination (54%).

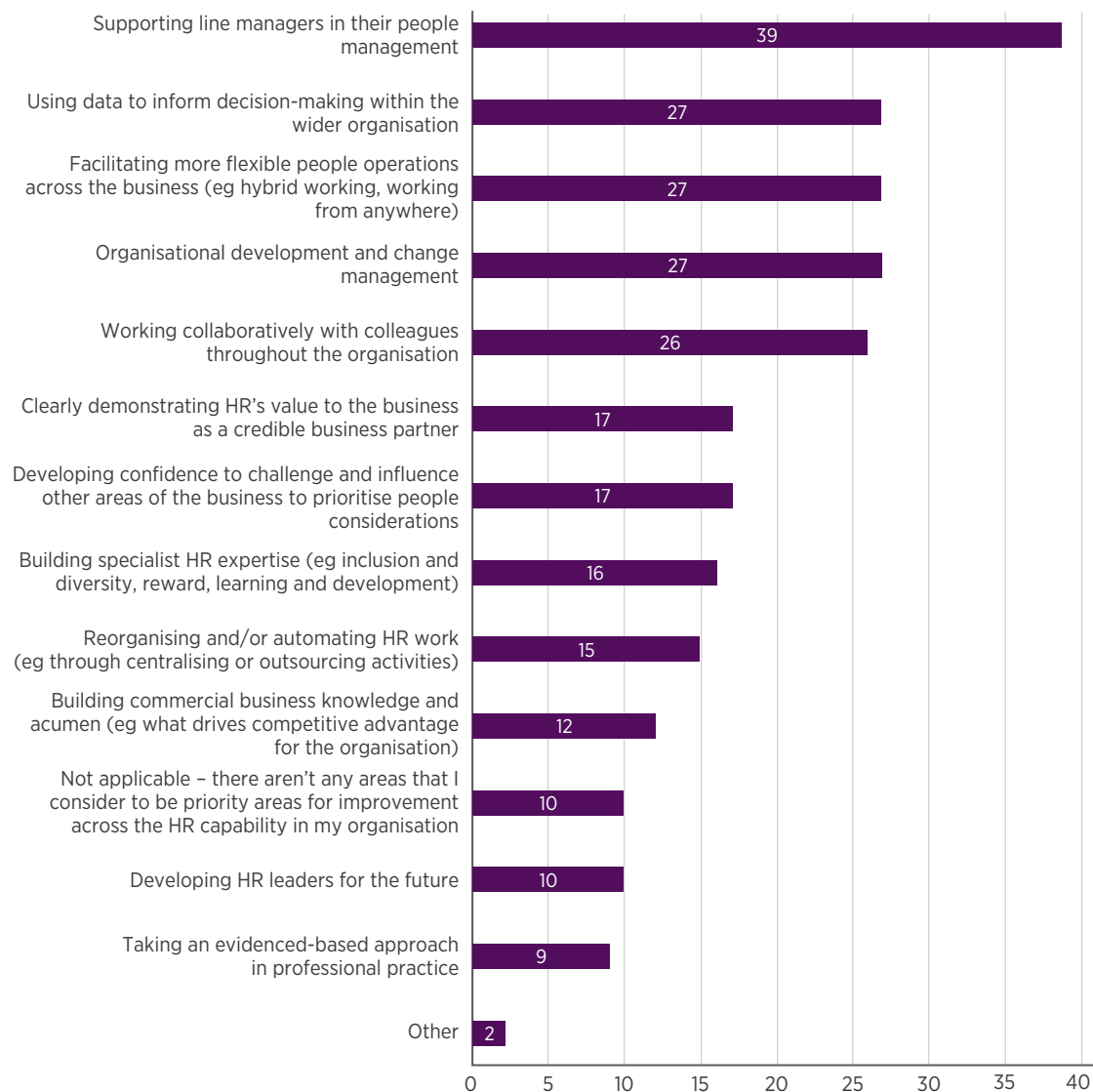
**What are the priorities for improving HR capability?**

UK people professionals saw supporting line managers in their people management as the top priority for capability improvement (39% compared with 30% globally).

Another priority area was to improve organisational development and change management skills. This finding was particularly significant among public (29%) and voluntary sector respondents (35%).

A similar proportion of people professionals said using data to inform decision-making throughout the organisation was also another key area for improving capability. Enabling flexible people operations continues to be an area of interest, specifically in facilitating flexible ways of working. Again, this capability focus was more prominently highlighted by public (33%) and voluntary sector respondents (31%).

**Figure 88: Supporting line managers is the number one priority for building capability within the HR function**  
*Priority areas for improving HR capability in the UK (% of respondents)*



Base: UK: n=1,496.

Question: In your opinion, which of the following, if any, are priority areas for improvement across the HR capability in your organisation? Please tick up to three responses.



### What is the perceived strategic value of the profession?

Figure 89: Top three perceived strategic values of the profession in the UK



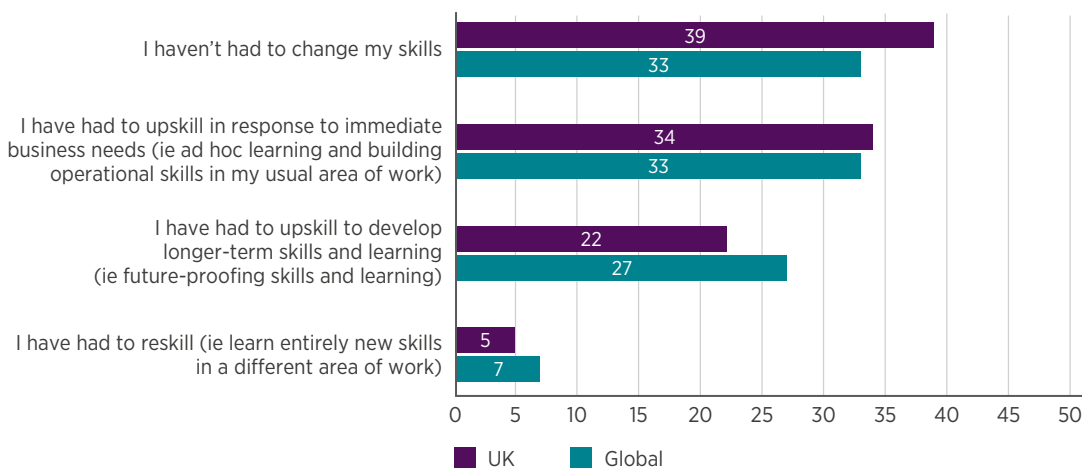
However, less than half of UK respondents agreed that the reputation of the function has increased in response to recent events. We also found that a similar proportion of both the global and UK sample agreed that the role of the HR function is changing significantly, with over half agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Generally, perceptions around how strategically aligned the HR function is with the wider organisation was similar for UK and international respondents. However, we found fewer UK respondents agree that their function is acknowledged for having an important impact throughout the organisation (58%, compared with a global average of 64%).

### How have people professionals developed their skills post-pandemic?

Overall, the majority of UK people professionals said they had either upskilled or reskilled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (61%). The more prominent focus tended to be on immediate/responsive upskilling to support the operational needs of the business, with over a third saying this. Perhaps surprisingly, this left a substantial proportion of UK people professionals who said they hadn't needed to upskill or reskill in response to COVID-19 (39%), 6% higher than the global average.

Figure 90: A sizeable two-fifths of UK respondents said they have not needed to upskill or reskill recently  
Skills development in response to COVID-19 (% of respondents)



Base: UK: n=1,496; global: n=2,945.

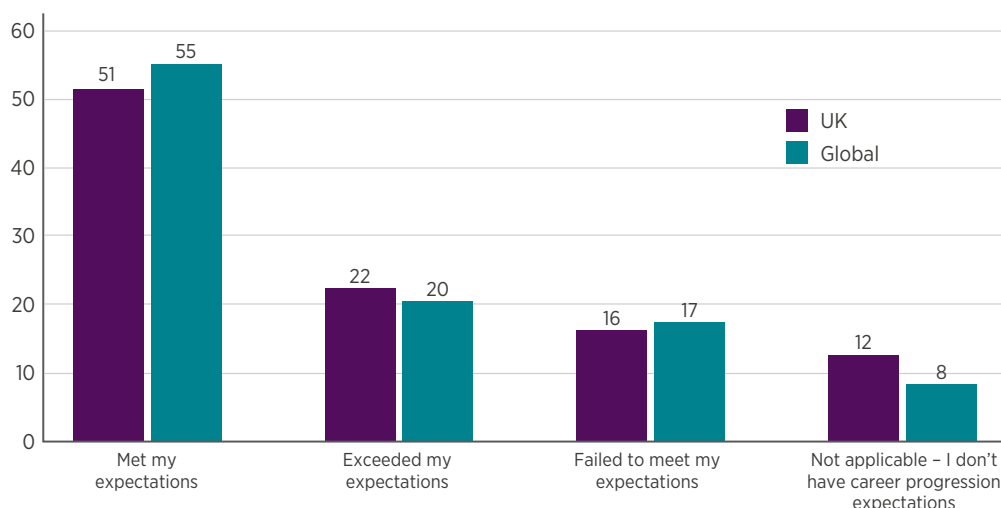
Question: Which of the following statements best describes how your HR skills have changed, if at all, as a result of your organisation's response to COVID-19? Please tick one.

For more details on the skills and personal development of people professionals within the UK and Ireland, see the [full UK and Ireland report](#).

### How do people professionals perceive their career progression to date?

Nearly three-quarters of the UK sample felt that their career progression expectations were met, or had been exceeded. A small minority, in line with the global average, felt disappointed by their career progression not living up to expectations.

**Figure 91: In total, 73% say their career progression has met or exceed expectations**  
**Expectations of career progression in the UK (% of respondents)**



Base: UK: n=1,496; Global: n=2,945.

Question: Has your career progression to date met, exceeded or failed to meet your expectations?

To understand which factors were considered to positively influence career progression within HR, we asked people professionals what had helped them along their career journey. Well over half of respondents (56%) said that skill development was crucial, suggesting that upskilling was key to gaining the next step up in their career. In second and third place was line manager support (55%) and professional qualifications (53%), both of which were higher than the global averages.

On the other hand, we also asked HR practitioners about the biggest barriers that prevented them from progressing their career in the profession. Interestingly, 21% said that a lack of self-confidence held them back – this finding was significantly higher in the UK than anywhere else. Comparatively, other markets cited external barriers (for example, lack of opportunities within the current labour market), or organisational barriers (for example, organisational politics) as factors that hinder career progression. A lack of self-confidence is perceived as the biggest barrier among UK people professionals. By building greater confidence, practitioners can alleviate this barrier and support their career progression and professional growth.

### What are the perceptions of a career in the people profession?

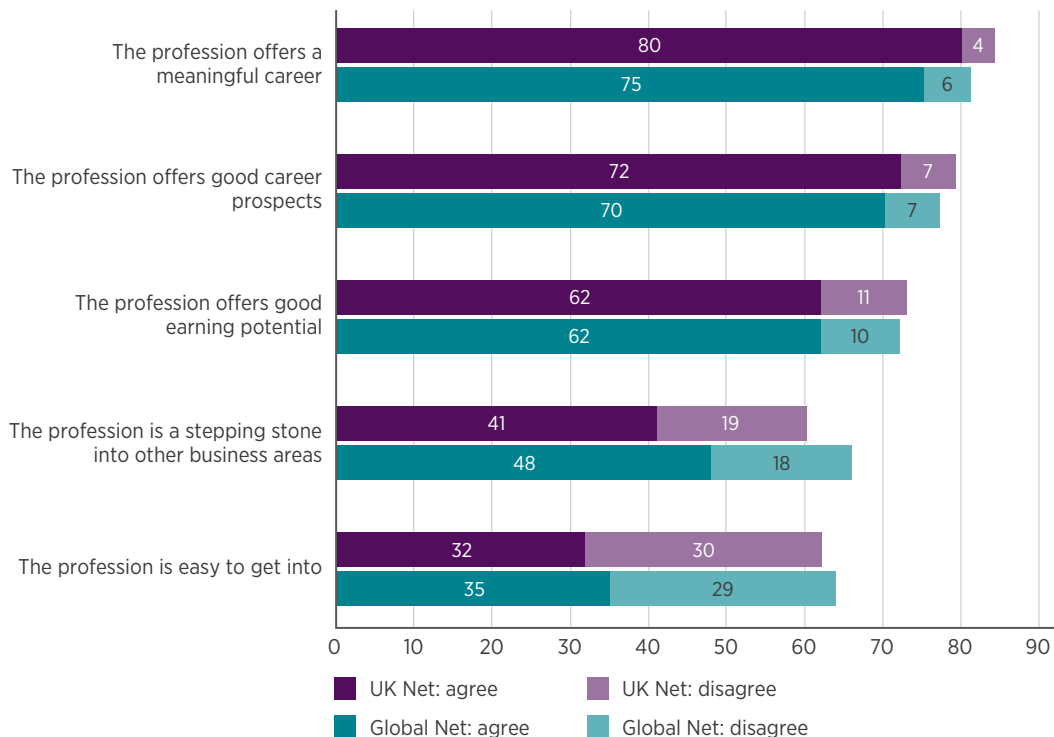
A large majority of people professionals in the UK believe a career within the profession is meaningful (80%), slightly more than the global average.

Perceptions around entry into the profession tend to be less positive, with far fewer respondents agreeing that the profession is easy to get into and that it offers a stepping stone into other business areas and professions. Comparatively, UK professionals were less likely to agree with both statements compared with the global average (see Figure 92).



**Figure 92: UK respondents were more likely to say the profession offers a meaningful career compared with the global average**

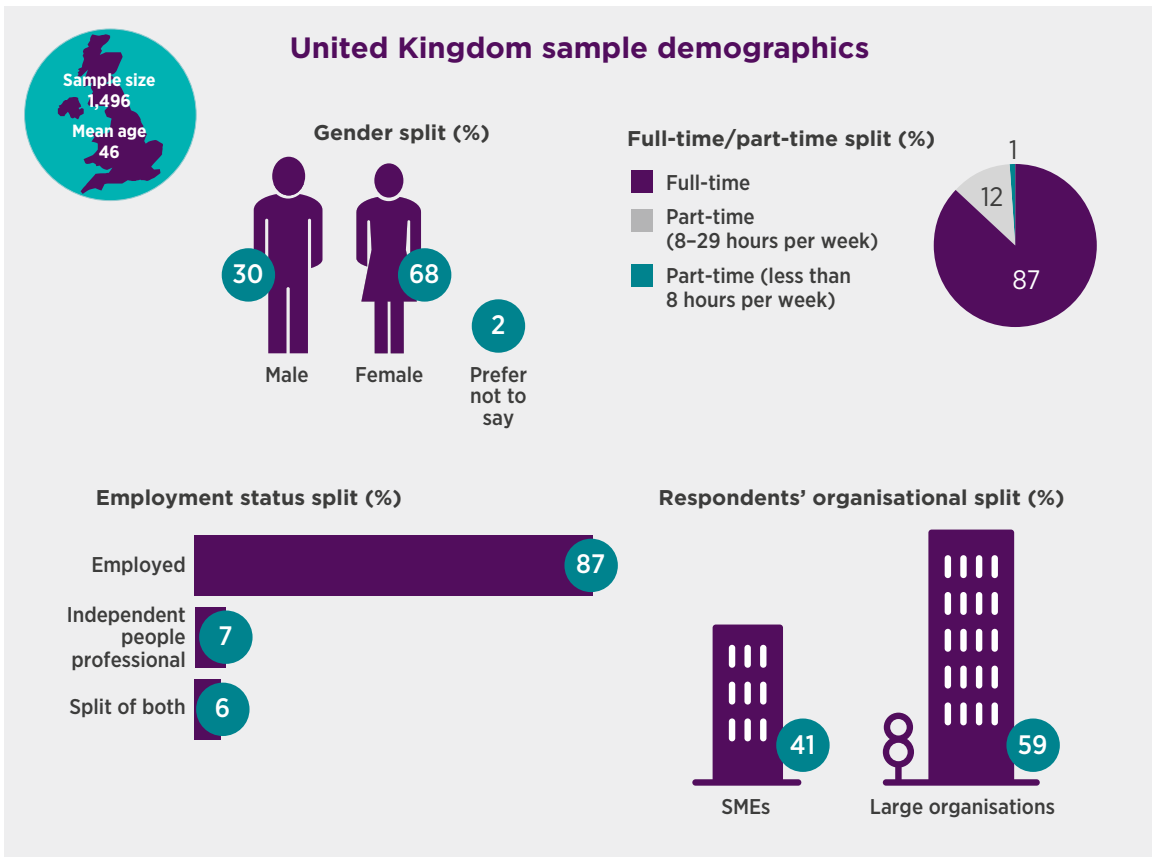
*UK perceptions about a career in the people profession (% of respondents)*



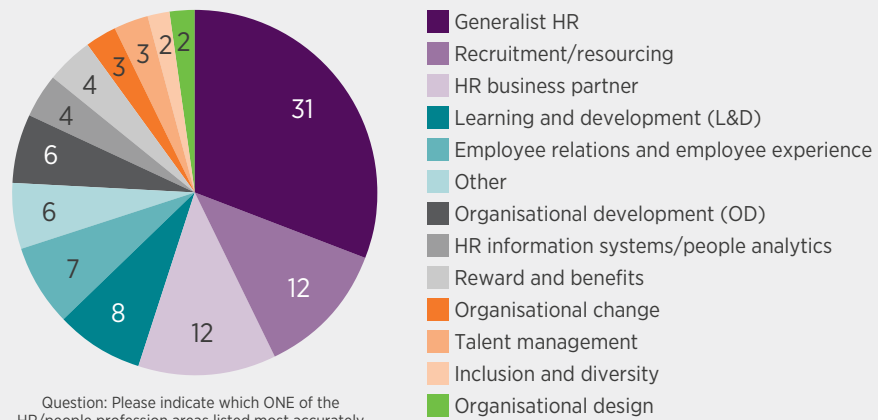
Base: UK: n=1,496; Global: n=2,945.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people profession?

As a reminder, by the 'HR/people profession' we are referring to HR, OD, organisational change, L&D and related disciplines.



Type of role (%)

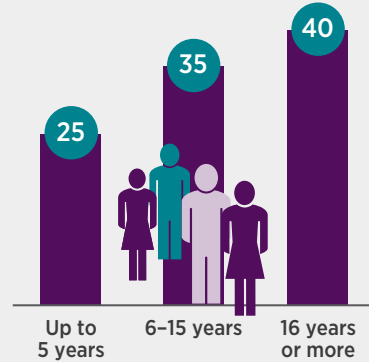


Question: Please indicate which ONE of the HR/people profession areas listed most accurately reflects your decision-making responsibilities.

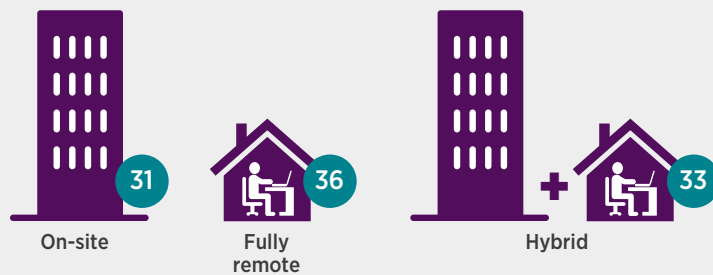
Years in current organisation (%)



Years in the people profession (%)



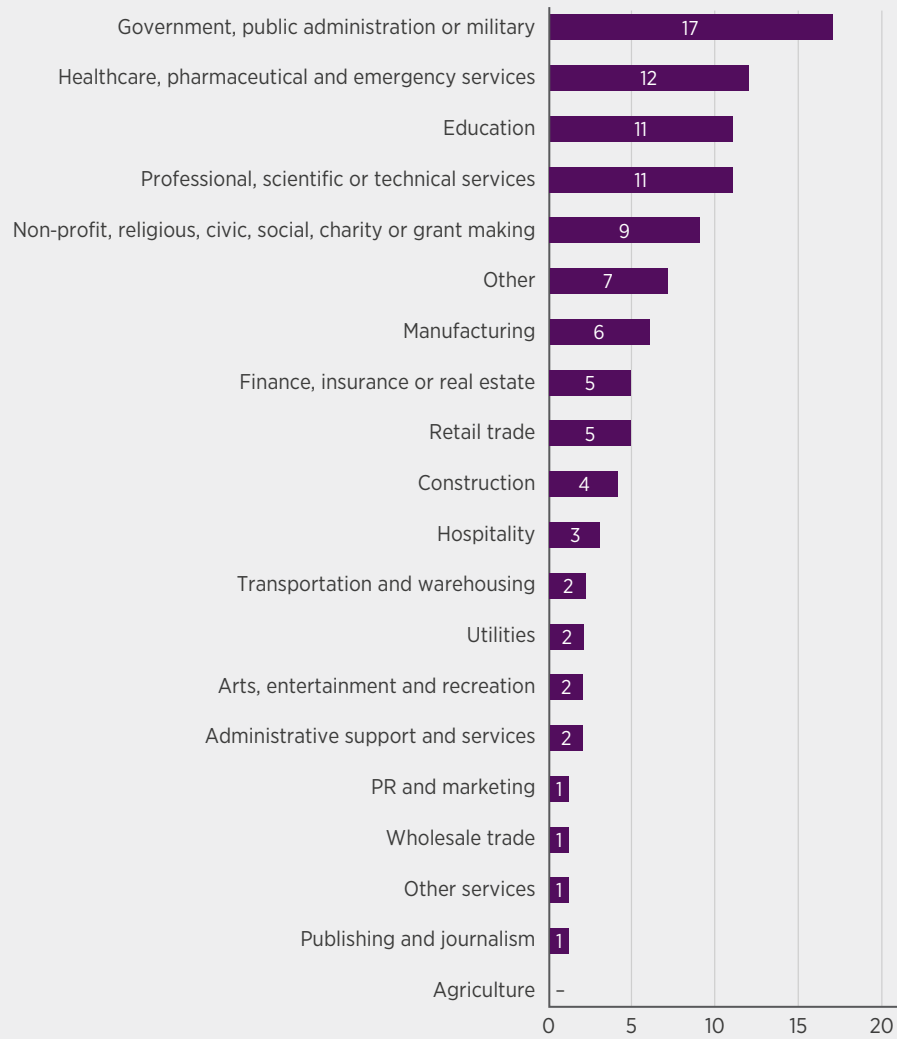
Ways of working in the last 12 months split (%)



Country samples are not representative of the wider HR population within that region and the findings within this report reflect the opinions of HR professionals who participated in the survey.



**Industry**



Base: n=1,496.

Question: Which of the following industries do you work within?





## 5 Conclusion

There are some big challenges on the horizon for the people profession. While some of these will be widespread and impact at a global level, as our report suggests, there will also be areas of business and people operations that are more nuanced across different regions.

Below we outline some key findings from this research.

### Key findings

- **Recruiting and retaining talent is a key priority for businesses in the UK/Ireland and European regions:** this finding has also been evidenced elsewhere. For example, a global report by [Adecco](#) found that 27% of employees (across 25 countries) plan to quit their jobs within the next year and 45% say they are actively keeping an eye on the job market and applying for new roles.
- **Building organisational culture and engaging employees ranks highly for UK/Ireland and European businesses:** this is no doubt impacted by the change in remote and hybrid working behaviours, the challenging labour market, looming recession and difficult economic climate in these areas. Health and safety and cost management are a bigger priority amongst MENA businesses.
- **Flexible and hybrid working is the biggest lever of change within businesses:** experts suggest long-term hybrid and remote working will require more training and support for employees and managers and will have a wider impact on the environment and energy consumption ([UK parliament post brief, 2022](#)).
- **Economic change is impacting differently across regions:** it appears to be more prominent across the UK/Ireland and MENA regions compared with those in wider Europe.
- **The digital transformation ripple continues to impact all regions:** digital HR and being hands-on with digital change will be key skills for people professionals in order to become future-fit. We found digital transformation to be a key trend in our [People Profession 2030](#) research.
- **HR maturity and professional experience vary considerably across our surveyed countries:** MENA countries had the greatest proportion of respondents with early-career-stage respondents and were also more likely to outsource their HR functions.
- **Skills development is the biggest contributor to advancing a career within the profession:** we found this to be the case across all regions.
- **People professionals from the UK say that their work impacts negatively on their mental health and wellbeing:** the impact of work on mental health differed greatly across regions, with some saying their work negatively impacts their wellbeing and others saying there was a positive impact.
- **HR in a digital world reveals some divided opinions:** the impact of hybrid working on HR functioning and delivery was perceived more positively in MENA regions, with these countries citing HR delivery to be easier under hybrid settings.

For people professionals, particularly those working at a multinational level (either operationally or commercially) or those that have supply chains across regions, these findings matter greatly. The insight from this report highlights areas that are important for businesses, and therefore for HR, and enables practitioners to reflect on how to position themselves as a strategic and credible business partner. The variability of our



results, specifically the differences in the challenges ahead and HR delivery within a hybrid world, proves that future demands and business needs will vary regionally. It is vital that businesses and people teams develop their horizon-scanning capabilities and look beyond the organisation to anticipate the pressures and opportunities that each business and industry will face within the context that they operate from.

As the professional body for HR, the CIPD recognises the importance of understanding the sentiment of the people profession. This report is part of our ongoing commitment to listen to and reflect on people professionals' working lives and develop our global insight and voice to support the profession and, ultimately, champion better work and working lives.

Access the CIPD's [UK and Ireland report](#) for key findings from these markets.

## 6 Methodology

This survey is part of the CIPD's long-standing commitment to taking an evidence-based approach to building our international insights and viewpoint on people professionals' working lives and career perceptions. In 2020, working alongside the World Federation of People Management Associations (WFPMA), the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Australian HR Institute (AHRI), we piloted our *People Profession* survey instrument internationally for the first time, resulting in the [People Profession Survey: 2020 global results](#). Since then, we have refined the survey further to develop a set of questions that aims to capture the sentiment of the profession across additional regions and markets.

### Survey instrument and method

The 2022 sample includes both in-house and independent people professionals, across a range of people specialisms, within eight countries: the UK, Ireland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The data was collected by YouGov, commissioned by the CIPD, between 5 April and 25 May 2022 via an online survey. The survey was translated into the official language of each country to ensure the questions were accessible and correctly interpreted within each region. The data analysis was conducted by the CIPD.

We surveyed a total of 2,945 people professionals and include the sample sizes for each region below. The data is unweighted and therefore the sample of respondents is not representative of the total HR population. Our findings from this data represent the perspectives of all the people professionals that participated in the survey.

**Table 3: Sample sizes of the countries surveyed in this report**

Country	Sample size
UK	1,496
Ireland	125*
Germany	255
Italy	349
Netherlands	172
Egypt	147*
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	176
United Arab Emirates	225

\*Sample size below 150 respondents



Given that some countries have considerably smaller sample sizes, we are limited on the depth of analysis within some regions. Demographic details of each country sample are included within the individual country chapters in [Section 4](#).

### Survey questions

Each year, the survey instrument is reviewed and adapted where changes are appropriate, or where there are new research questions to be explored. For the 2022 survey, we added new questions on wellbeing (specifically around mental and physical health and how work impacts mental and physical health), and a new question relating to hybrid, on-site and remote working.

The questions this survey report aims to answer are set out in the [Introduction](#).

Where sample sizes were large enough, the findings were cross-tabulated by business size and sector.

Note: The sample of respondents included within this report is not representative of the total HR population within our focused markets. The findings derived from this data represent the perspectives of the 2,945 people professionals that participated in the survey.

Given the larger UK sample in comparison with other regions, the global average percentages will be skewed towards the UK findings.

## 7 Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Organisational culture is a complex and multi-faceted concept, and therefore measuring culture is challenging to say the least. In a diverse sample of this size and variance (in terms of regional differences, industries and cultural norms), it is difficult to measure culture in a meaningful way that considers the nuances of the various businesses involved in this study. However, to get a broad sense of organisational culture, we used [Quinn and Cameron's culture typology](#), which involves four types of high-level common cultures: clan culture, hierarchy culture, market culture and adhocracy culture.
- <sup>2</sup> KSA is 31.8 and the UAE is 32.6 years, compared with 40.3 in the UK. Data is accessed from the following sources:
  - [Saudi Arabia's Median Age](#). World Economics.
  - [United Arab Emirates's Median Age](#). World Economics.
  - [Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2019](#); Census 2021. Office for National Statistics.
- <sup>3</sup> Net scores include respondents who said their work negatively or very negatively impacts their mental and physical health.
- <sup>4</sup> Oxford Business Group. (2022) '[Economy](#)', in *The Report: Egypt 2022*.
- <sup>5</sup> Statistics Times. (2021) [List of European countries by GDP](#).
- <sup>6</sup> OECD. (2022) [Employment rate \(indicator\)](#).
- <sup>7</sup> European Union. (1995–2023) [Economic forecast for Ireland](#).
- <sup>8</sup> OECD. (2022) [Italy projection note](#). OECD Economic Outlook November 2022.



<sup>9</sup> Voluntary/third sector sample sizes were too small to report any differences.

<sup>10</sup> Voluntary/third sector sample sizes were too small to report any differences.

<sup>11</sup> Oxford Business Group. (2022) *The Report: Saudi Arabia 2022*.

<sup>12</sup> Intelligence Group. (2022) *Labour Market: HR in figures*.

<sup>13</sup> GlobalData. (2023) *UAE: Macroeconomic country outlook*.

<sup>14</sup> PwC. (2022) *UK Economic Outlook*.



# CIPD

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development  
151 The Broadway London SW19 1JQ United Kingdom  
**T** +44 (0)20 8612 6200 **F** +44 (0)20 8612 6201  
**E** [cipd@cipd.co.uk](mailto:cipd@cipd.co.uk) **W** [cipd.co.uk](http://cipd.co.uk)

Incorporated by Royal Charter  
Registered as a charity in England and Wales (1079797)  
and Scotland (SC045154)

Issued: February 2023 Reference: 8325 © CIPD 2023

