

# Hybrid and Remote Working in the Canada Public Service

A survey of the Canada  
Federal Public Service  
2023



# Introducing the survey

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Canadian Public Service underwent a significant transformation, rapidly adopting teleworking practices.

This response, driven by the evolving demands on public services, has likely instigated a permanent shift in the workplace experience, and crucial factors such as workplace wellbeing and work-life balance for Canada Public Service employees have come to the forefront.

The flexibility of remote working has become a burning issue for Canadian Public Servants, mirroring a global trend.

To delve deeper into these issues, Global Government Forum conducted an online study in June 2023, surveying its Canadian Federal Public Service audience.

With a robust sample of 1,320 completed responses, we gained valuable insights into their perspectives on work-life balance and workplace well-being.

**This data snap-shot presents the key findings from the study, shedding light on the emerging trends in the Canadian public service.**

The survey explored the following themes:

- The current remote working status of public servants across the Canada Public Service
- Factors that public servants would prioritise in applying for their next role
- The perceived benefits, and downsides of remote or hybrid working
- Benefits and downsides to teams and organisations of remote or hybrid working



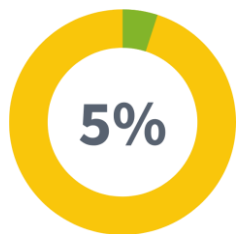
**Richard Johnstone**  
Executive Editor, Global Government Forum  
August 2023

# Over three quarters of public servants are working remotely at least part time, with less than 5% unable to carry out their role remotely

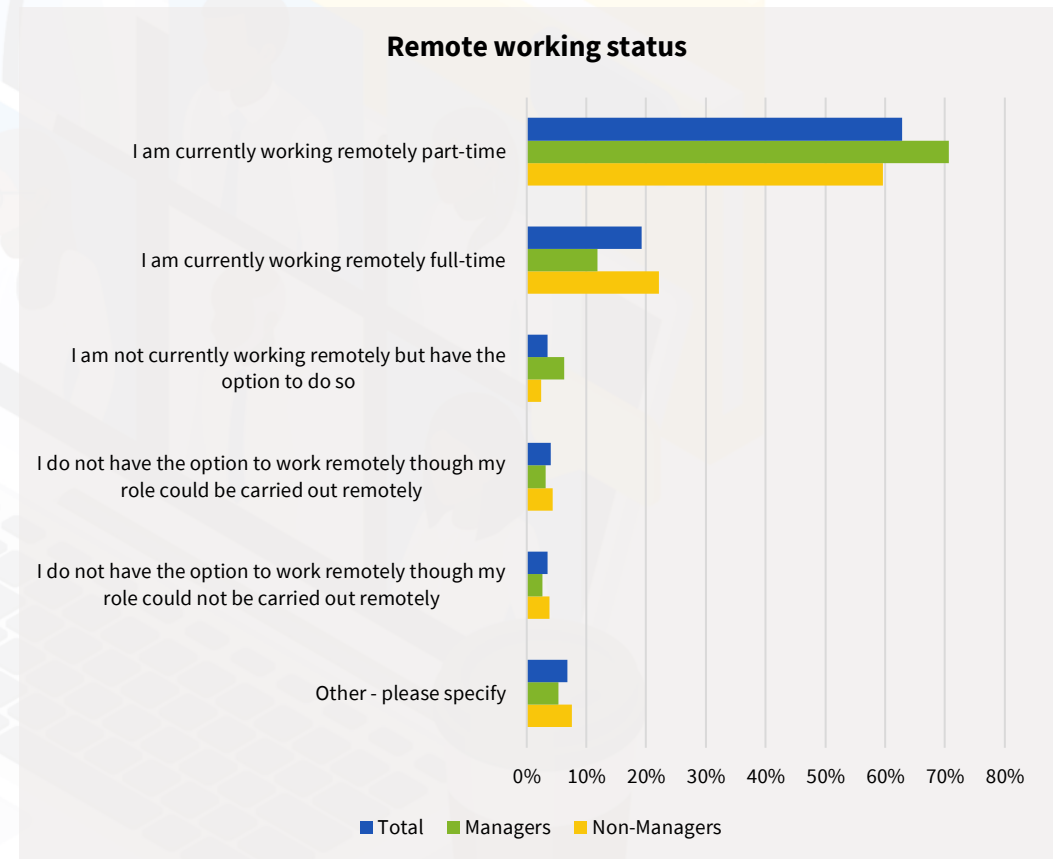
Canada Public Servants were asked their current remote working status

82% of public servants across the Canadian public service are working remotely for at least part of their working week, including 1 in 5 who are working remotely full-time.

The proportion of those working remotely full time is slightly higher among female workers than male employees. Those who manage staff are also less likely to work remotely full time – only 13% if managers work remotely full time.



5% of public servants are unable to carry out their role remotely; however fewer Leaders and Managers report that they are unable to carry out their role remotely (1.5% and 1.6% respectively)



# Public servants value remote working and an attractive salary over an above-average annual leave allowance

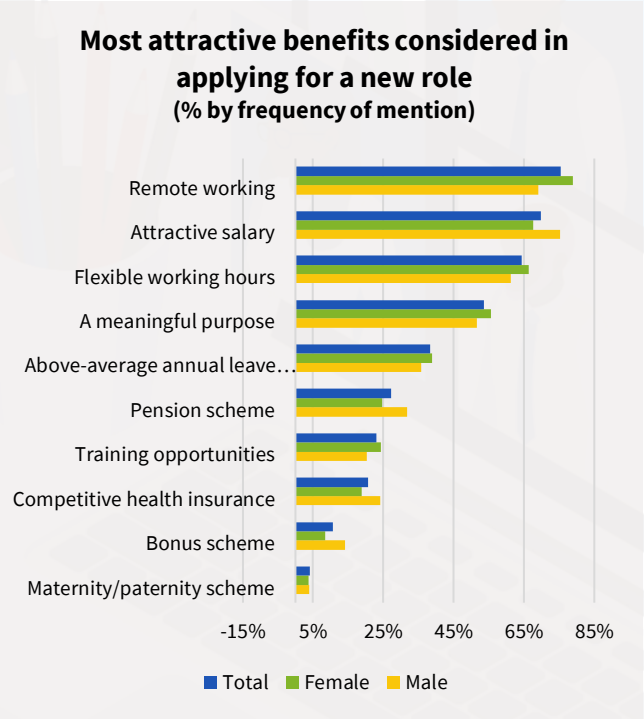
Canada Public Servants were asked to prioritise a series of options that they feel would attract them most in applying for their next role

## Top 4 most attractive benefits when looking for future employment...

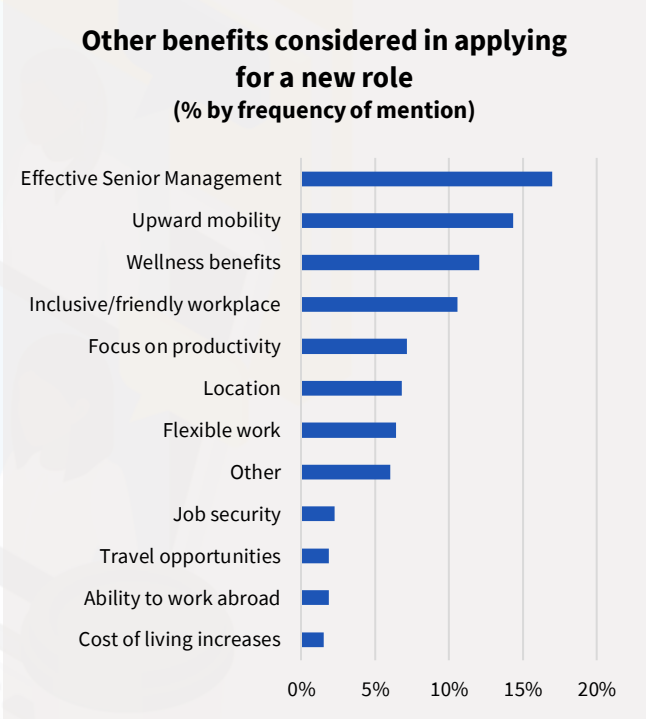
- 1 Remote working
- 2 Attractive salary
- 3 Flexible working hours
- 4 A meaningful purpose to the role



While over three quarters of women see remote working as the most attractive benefit when considering new roles, only 69% of men do



Total: n=1,230; Female n=840 Male n=405

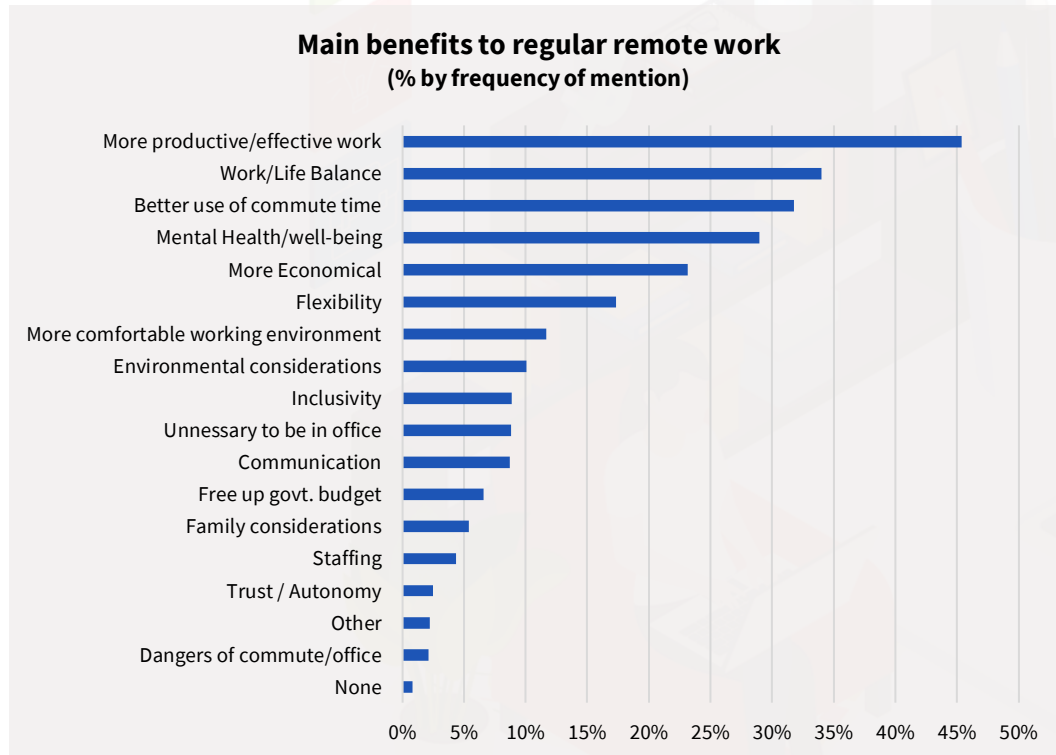


Total: n=1,230

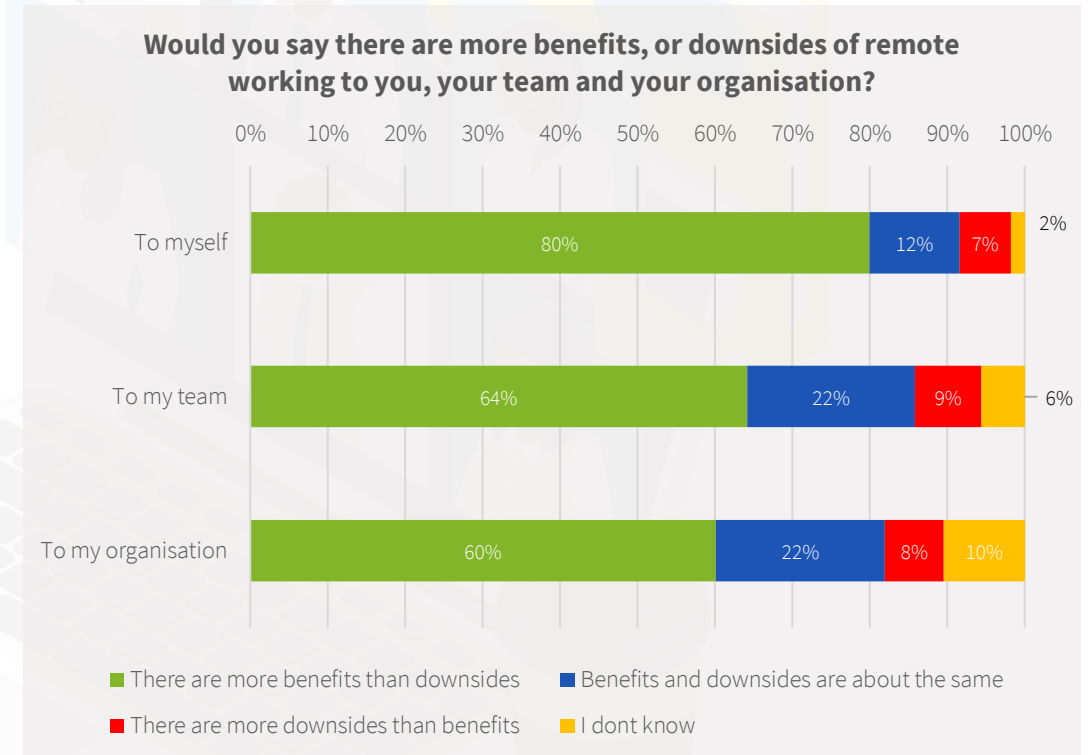


# Public servants feel regular remote/hybrid working increases productivity and enhances work-life balance

A majority of public servants say that working remotely has more benefits than downsides for them as individuals, as well as to their team and to the broader organisation.



Total: n=1,230



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In particular, officials say that they are more productive working remotely, as well as having a better work-life balance.

# While 28% of public servants don't see any negatives to remote working, a third see the loss of face-to-face interaction with colleagues as the main downside

The survey asked respondents to name the main downsides to remote working.

Over one in four public servants do not see any negatives in remote working, and there was a positive response from officials about the impact of remote working on their work-life balance.

Of those who did highlight specific downsides, the most frequently cited drawback was a lack of face-to-face interaction with colleagues, followed by difficulty collaborating or maintaining an office culture due to the organisation's hybrid working model.

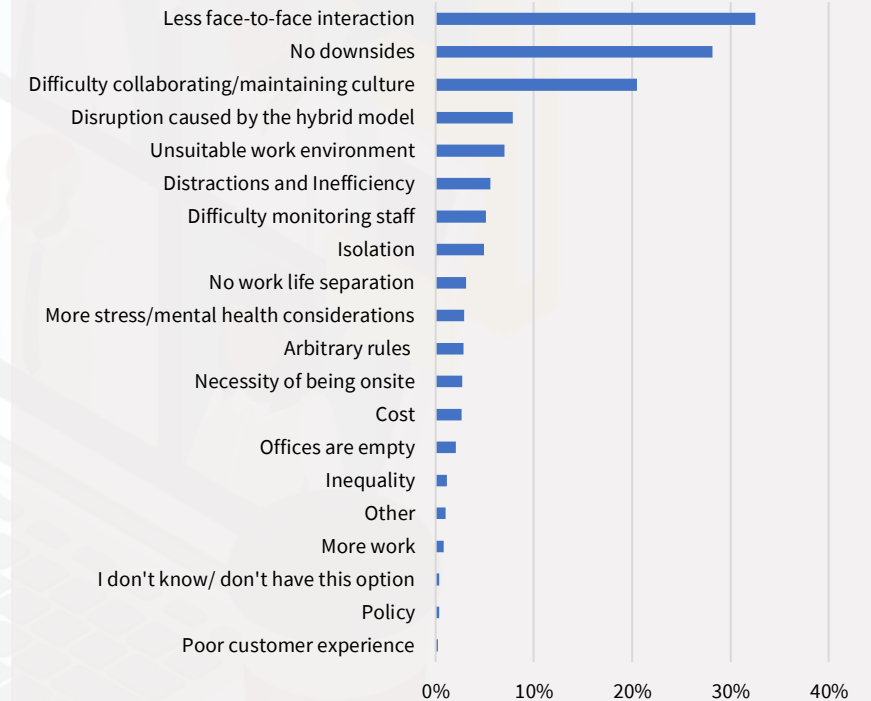
“The lack of serendipitous connections that bring people together in unexpected ways; it's harder to build morale and a strong corporate culture with less shared experience, and it's harder for experienced staff to mentor newer/less experienced staff”

Director-General, Transport Canada

“I put in more hours at my home office and [am] able to concentrate and think more clearly on my tasks allowing me to provide more thoughtful advice and recommendations”

Deputy Director, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

**Main downsides to regular remote work**  
(% by frequency of mention)



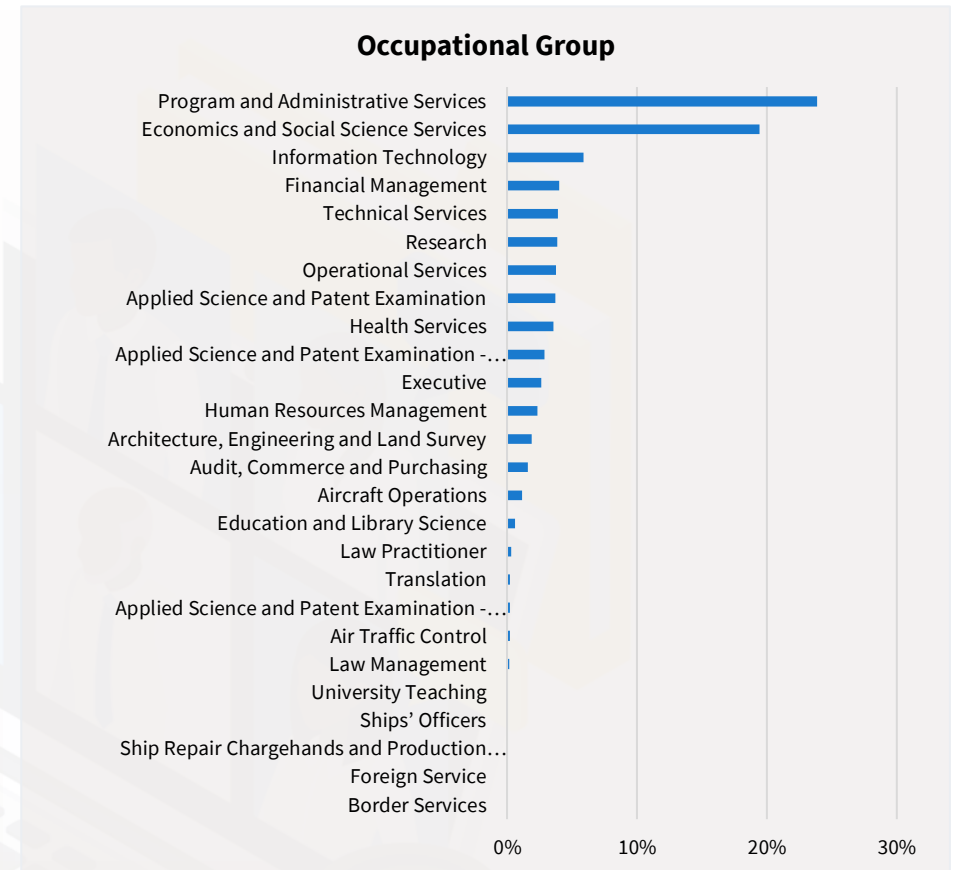
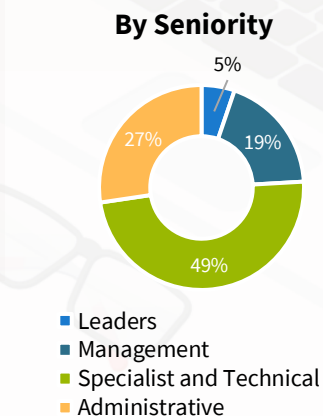
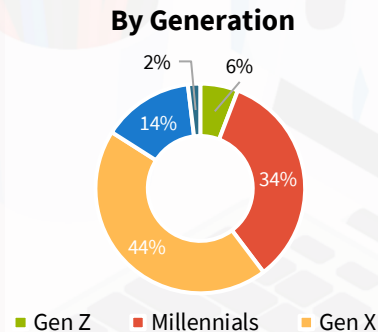
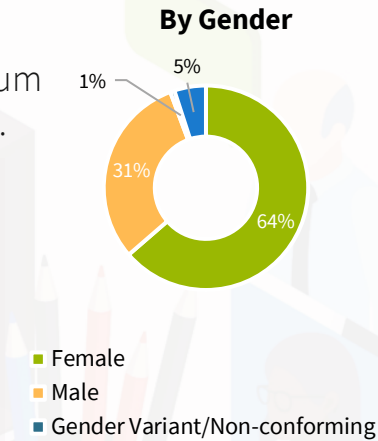
# Method and Sample

The survey was designed and carried out by Global Government Forum – the publishing house for civil and public servants around the world.

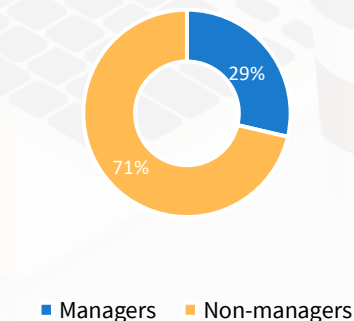
Fieldwork took place online between June 5th to June 22nd 2023 and attracted 1,320 responses. The survey was disseminated via email to Global Government Forum's Canada Public Service readers, and respondents were self-selecting. Unavoidably, respondents may be skewed towards those public servants whose roles involve computer use.

The survey was anonymous, and appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that no individual can be identified based on their responses. The results have not been weighted, and percentages have been rounded. The survey received a proportionately higher response from female public servants than across the population, and care should be taken when making comparisons.

Overall, the findings are statistically significant with a margin of error of +/- 2.69 points for the full dataset. Statistical calculations use the 95% confidence level, which means that we can be 95% confident that the results are within 2.69 points of the value given.



**Managers vs Non-Managers**



# More information...

Further information on the findings of the survey can be obtained by contacting Chris Punch, Research Director at:

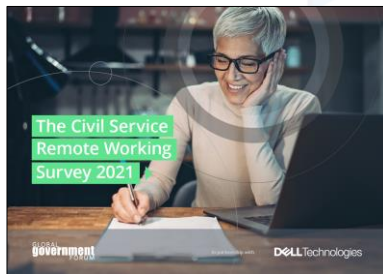
[chris.punch@globalgovernmentforum.com](mailto:chris.punch@globalgovernmentforum.com)

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