

Wellbeing in the Workplace

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, with increased pressure on public services while rapidly adopting teleworking practices.

Driven by the evolving demands on public services, the response 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.

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.



Richard Johnstone
Executive Editor, Global Government Forum
August 2023

The survey explored the following themes:

- Canadian public servants' perception of their work-life balance.
- The level of managerial support in harmonizing work and personal life.
- The potential incidence of burnout among public servants in the past year.
- Managers' comprehension of staff mental health and well-being.
- Key priorities for enhancing work-life balance.

Despite high work-life balance ratings, 57% of public servants face burnout, with female leaders most affected

Respondents were asked to rate their work-life balance, and if they had experienced symptoms of burnout over the last 12 months.

A good work-life balance isn't translating to a low risk of burnout at work



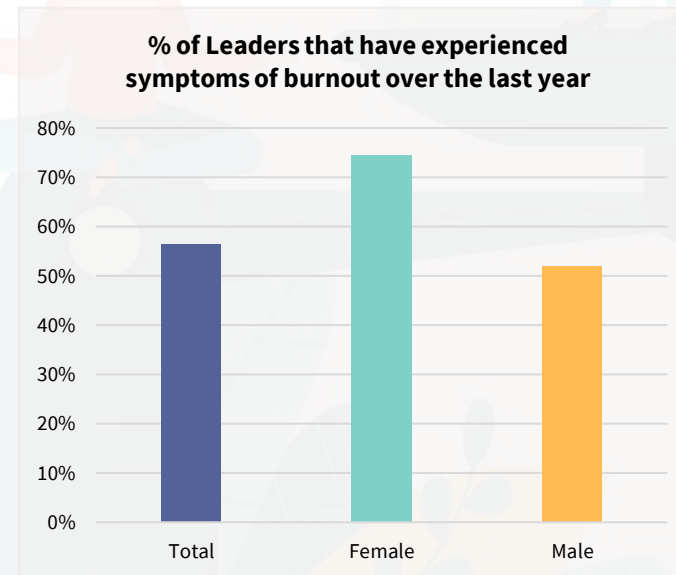
58% of public servants rate their work-life balance as good or excellent

...yet 57% have experienced symptoms of burnout in the last year

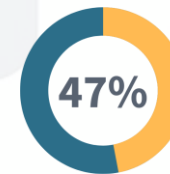
Over half of public servants say that their work-life balance has been good (40%) or excellent (18%) over the last 12 months. However, the proportion saying it was good or excellent fell for respondents who managed staff (52%) and fell below 50% for leaders.

Male respondents were more likely to say they had a good or excellent work-life balance – 64%, compared to 57% for females.

Despite over half of respondents indicating they have a good or excellent work-life balance, a similar proportion agree or strongly agree they have experienced burnout in the last year. This rises to nearly two-thirds (65%) of both leaders and managers across the public service, and more females (59%) than males (53%) say they experienced burnout. Over half of public service leaders also say their mental health and wellbeing was being negatively affected by the workload – including one-third who strongly agree.



Total: n=69; Female n=39 Male n=27

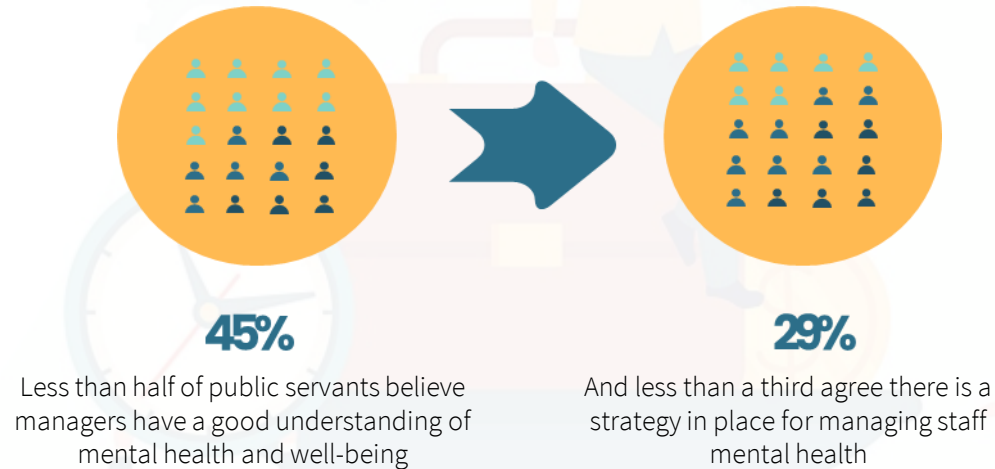


Though only part of the bigger picture, workload plays a part - nearly half of public servants believe that their mental health and well-being has been negatively impacted through their work-load in the last two years

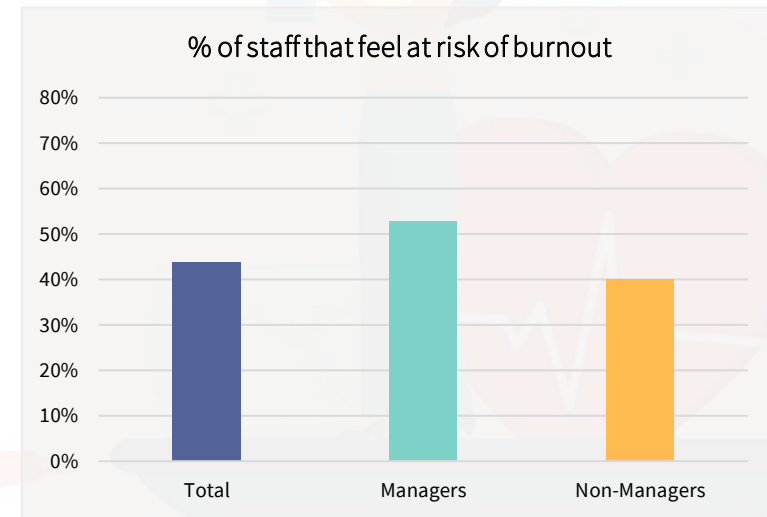
Staff feel that the public service can do more to improve mental health

Respondents were asked to rate their work-life balance, and if they had experienced symptoms of burnout over the last 12 months.

...and staff feel the public service can do more to manage mental health



Under half of all public servants think managers have a strong understanding of staff mental health and wellbeing – including under half of both leaders and managers. And less than one-third of respondents (29%) say that their organisation has a specific strategy in place for managing employee health and wellbeing in their organisation – falling to only 18% among respondents from Generation Z and 21% of Millennials.



Total: n=1,320; Managers n= Non-managers n=942

As well as 57% of officials having experienced symptoms of burnout in the last year, 44% also say they are at risk of burnout, with over half of both leaders (56%) and managers (52%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing. A majority of respondents (58%) agree that colleagues or members of their team have experienced burnout in the last year, rising to 79% of leaders.

Public servants value remote working flexibility and focus on productivity, over increased pay

Canada Public Servants were asked to prioritise a series of options that they feel would contribute to a better work-life balance

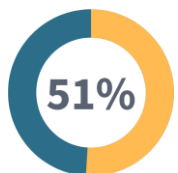
Top 4 priorities for a better work-life balance...

- 1** Flexibility in the days you are allowed to work from home
- 2** Greater focus on productivity rather than hours worked
- 3** Increased paid leave
- 4** Increased pay

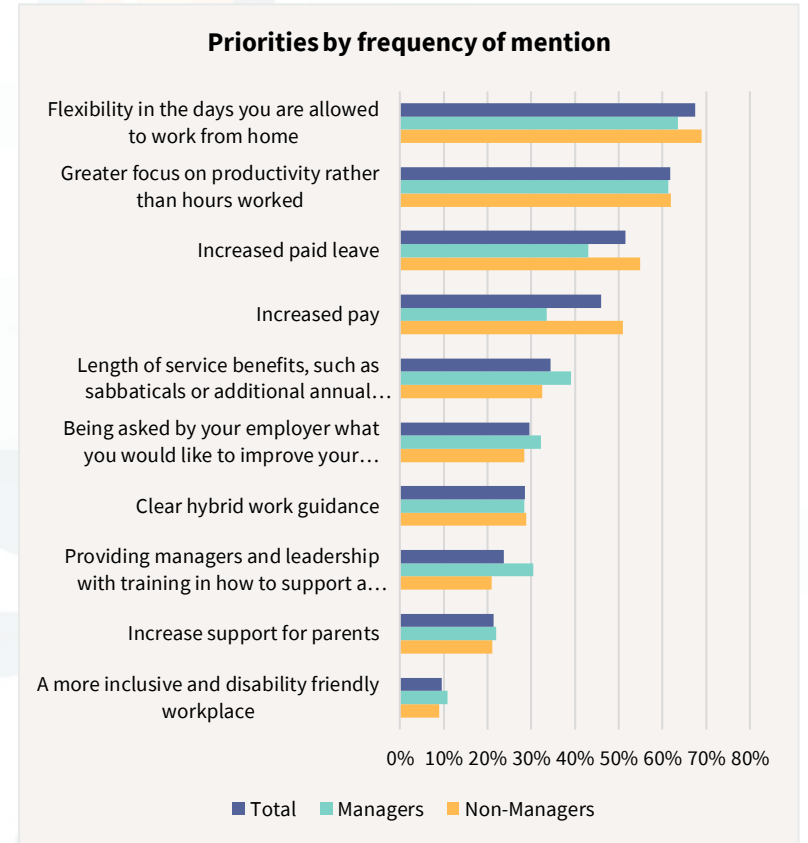
Flexibility over how officials can work at home or in the office is the top priority for public servants in Canada looking to achieve a better work-life balance.

When asked to name the top options, two-thirds (67%) chose this as a priority, with over half also selecting a greater focus on productivity rather than hours worked and increased paid leave.

Respondents who manage staff were also keen on training in how to support a work life balance for managers and leaders, which was supported by nearly one-third (30%), compared to 21% of non-managers.



While over half of non-managers see increased pay as one of their top 4 priorities, only one third of managers did so



Total: n=1,320; Managers n=378 Non-managers n=942

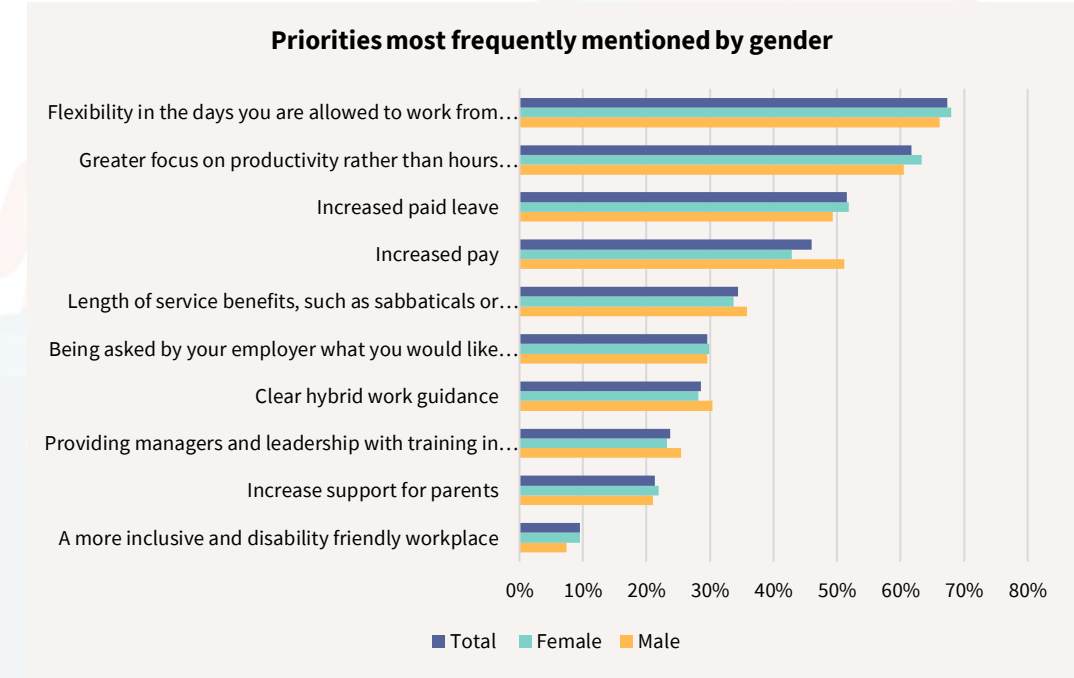
Leaders value focus on productivity rather than hours worked highest, with a lower focus on increased pay

Canada Public Servants were asked to prioritise a series of options that they feel would contribute to a better work-life balance

The views and perceptions of leaders differed in some of their priorities on how to achieve a work life balance. They were keener on elements including length of service benefits, as well as being asked by your employer what steps would help improve your work-life balance, as well as being keen on training on work-life balance. However, they were less keen on increased pay or increased paid leave, and on increased support for parents. A majority of public servants prioritise remote working, but male respondents were keener on increased pay to improve work-life balance.



Total: n=1,320; Leaders n=69



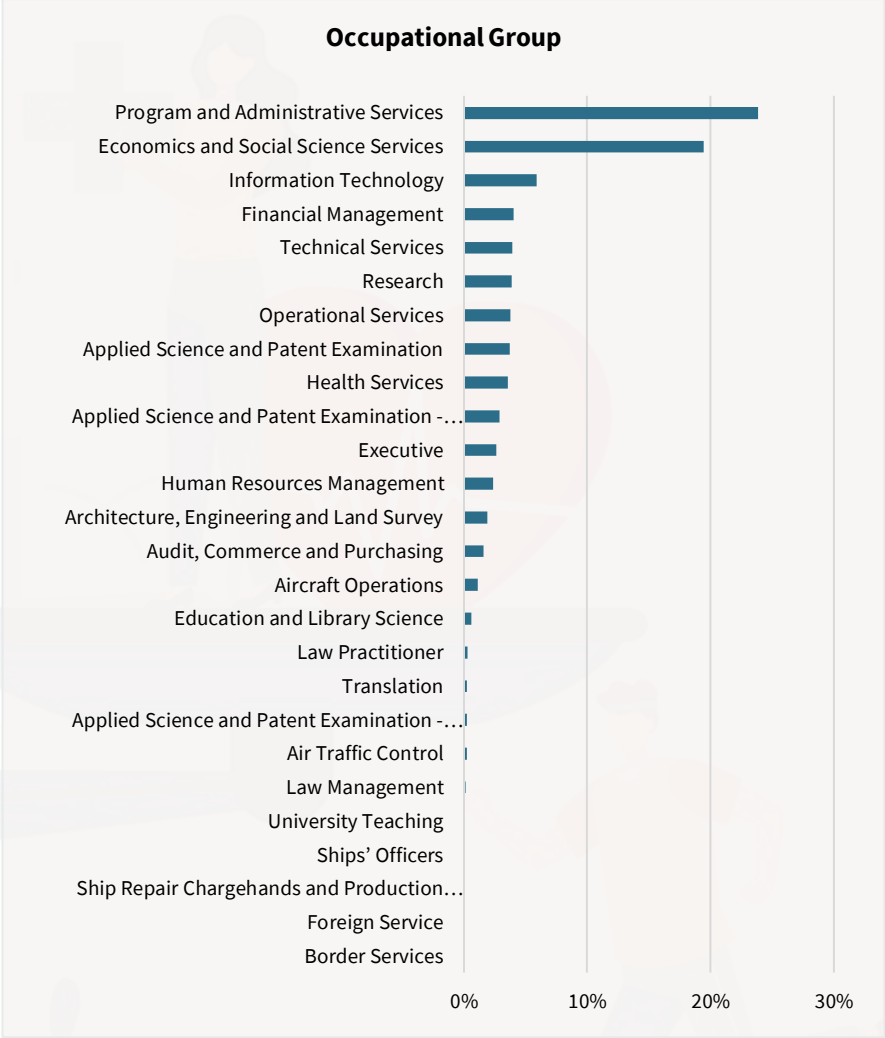
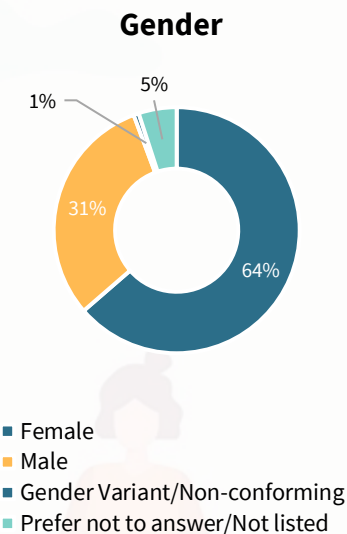
Method and Sample

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

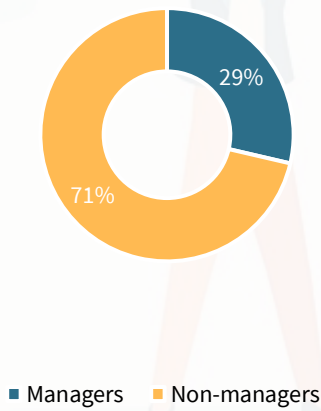
Fieldwork took place online between June 5th to June 22nd, 2023, and attracted 1,320 responses. The survey was disseminated via email to Global Government Forum’s Canada Public Service readers, and respondents were self-selecting. Unavoidably, respondents may be skewed towards those public servants whose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

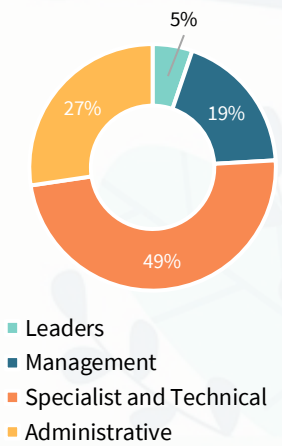
Overall, the findings are statistically significant with a margin of error of +/- 2.69 points for the full dataset. Statistical calculations use the 95% confidence level, which means that we can be 95% confident that the results are within 2.69 points of the value given.



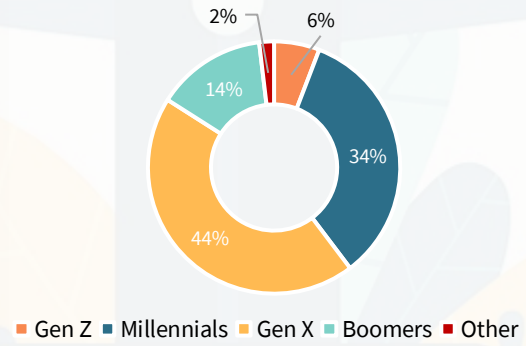
Managers vs Non-Managers



By Seniority



By Generation



More information...

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

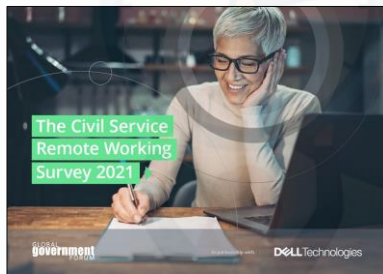
chris.punch@globalgovernmentforum.com

If you would like to explore ways that you can become a research knowledge partner, please contact our Commercial Director, George O'Grady:

g.o'grady@globalgovernmentforum.com or call +44 (0) 20 7661 7810

Explore more Global Government Forum Research:

REMOTE WORKING TRENDS IN THE UK CIVIL SERVICE



GLOBAL RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT SURVEY



UK CIVIL SERVICE DIGITAL SKILLS SURVEY



GLOBAL CITIZEN EXPERIENCE SURVEY



ATTITUDES TO AI IN THE CANADA PUBLIC SERVICE



THE GLOBAL DIGITAL LEADERS STUDY



Legal Notice

© Pendragon International Media Ltd 2023.

All rights reserved

The information contained with the document is given in good faith and is believed to be accurate, appropriate and reliable at the time it is given, but is provided without any warranty of accuracy, appropriateness or reliability. The author does not accept any liability or responsibility for any loss suffered from the reader's use of the advice, recommendation, information, assistance or service, to the extent available by law.

Global Government Forum is part of Pendragon International Media Ltd

Registered address: The Old Vicarage, 10 Church Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1BS, United Kingdom

www.globalgovernmentforum.com
www.pendragonim.com

Cover and background image by Freepik

GLOBAL
government
FORUM