

HOW IS FINLAND DOING? RESEARCH PROJECT:

# Development of well-being at work from summer 2021 to late 2023

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**In this summary of results based on the How is Finland Doing? research project, we present how well-being at work and various work attitudes have developed between summer 2021 and late 2023 in the working Finnish population.**

**MORE INFO  
AND PREVIOUS RESULTS:  
[TTL.FI/EN/RESEARCH/  
PROJECTS/HOW-IS-  
FINLAND-DOING](https://ttl.fi/en/research/projects/how-is-finland-doing)**

# Method used in the summary: cross-sectional data from summer 2021 and follow-up data from summer 2023 and late 2023

The results are based on two sets of population survey data. The first set of data was collected in summer 2021. The second set of data was collected from the same respondents in two phases: in summer 2023 and late 2023.

- The respondents to each of the surveys are employed Finns aged 18 to 65 who were invited to participate in the study through random selection from the Finnish Population Information System and the internet panel of Taloustutkimus. The respondents invited to respond to the survey carried out in late 2023 were those who had responded to the survey carried out in summer 2023.
- In this study, we have examined persons who were working at the time of each of the surveys.
- The results of the statistical analyses are weighted based on age, gender and residential area to strengthen the representativeness of the results.

# Participants

Background information	Responded in Jun 2021	Responded in Jun 2023 and Dec 2023
Employed respondents	N=1,418	N=1,843
Women / men	43% / 57%	53% / 47%
Age (average)	48	46
Under the age of 36 / Aged 36 or older	18% / 82%	23% / 77%
Education: university degree / other higher education / basic or upper secondary education	31% / 35% / 33%	31% / 43% / 26%
In-person work / hybrid / remote work only	54% / 20% / 25%	54% / 34% / 12%
Weekly working hours (average)	37.4 hours	36.5 hours
Supervisor or manager / employee	17% / 83%	15% / 85%
Permanent employment / other employment relationship	86% / 14%	89% / 11%
Sector where employed: public / private / other sector	38% / 54% / 8%	38% / 55% / 7%
Lives in Uusimaa /elsewhere in southern Finland / in western Finland / in northern or eastern Finland	38% / 22% / 22% / 19%	35% / 21% / 23% / 20%

# Different types of employee well-being in our study



## WORK ENGAGEMENT

is a **positive affective and motivational state**, characterized with feeling vigorous, dedicated and absorbed at work (Schaufeli et al. 2019).



## JOB BOREDOM

is an amotivational state due to **under stimulation and lack of challenges at work** characterized with difficulties to concentrate, time passing slowly and sense of meaninglessness (Reijseger et al. 2013).



## JOB BURNOUT

Is a **prolonged stress syndrome** caused by too high job demands and lacking job resources and characterized with exhaustion, mental distance, and cognitive and emotional impairment (Schaufeli et al. 2020).



## JOB SATISFACTION

is a **pleasurable or positive emotional state** resulting from an appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Not so strongly motivational state as work engagement but more about being satisfied how things are now (Wanous et al. 1997).



## WORKABILITY

Self-assessed workability compared to one's lifetime best workability (0-10).

# Job burnout has four key symptoms

Loss of mental and physical strength, difficulty getting down to work, and insufficient recovery.



**Mental distance**



Mental distance from work, which manifests as a cynical work attitude: indifference towards work and possibly towards other people; work feels repulsive instead of being motivating.

**Job burnout**



Thought, memory and attention impairment; difficulty learning new things and concentrating.

**Cognitive impairment**



**Emotional impairment**




Strong and/or sudden emotional reactions (anger, sadness, frustration) without a clear direct cause; inability to control emotions at work.

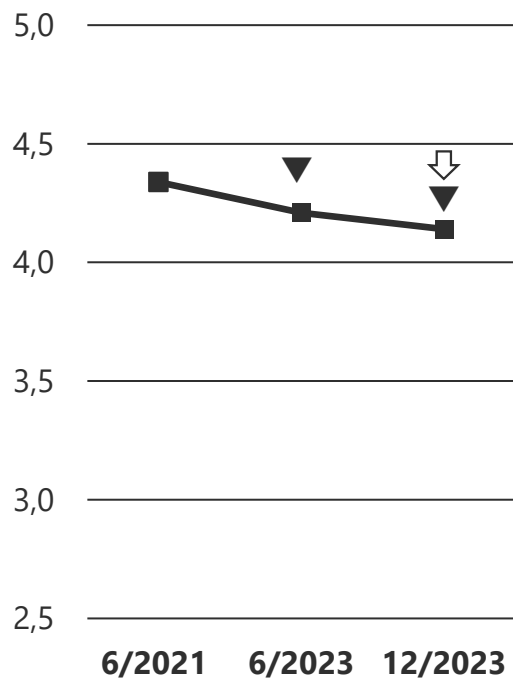
# Key study findings

**Well-being at work has decreased in the last six months. This is partly due to people's reduced job resources. Working while sick has also become more common, and people are more inclined to consider resigning from work.**

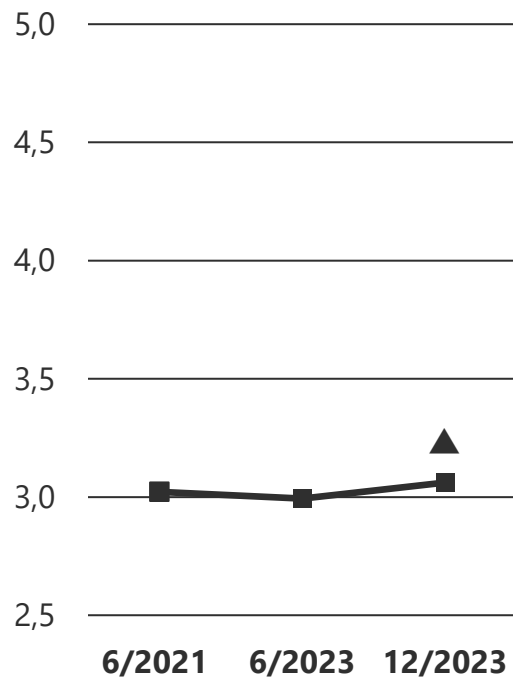


# Work engagement, job satisfaction and workability on the decline. Job boredom has increased.

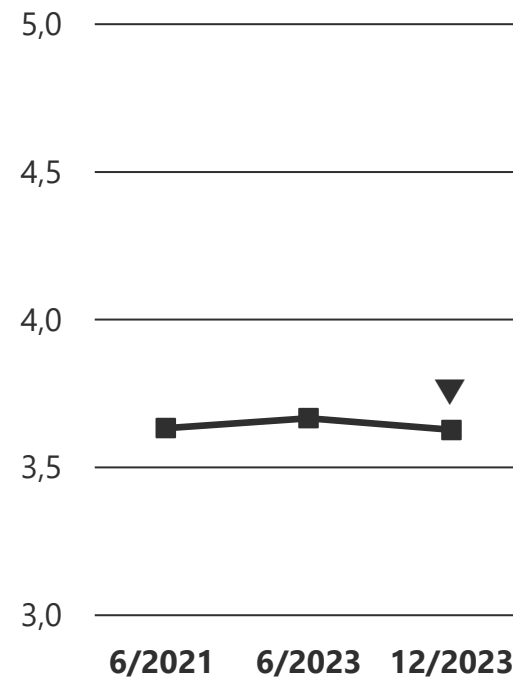
 **WORK ENGAGEMENT**  
(scale 0–6)



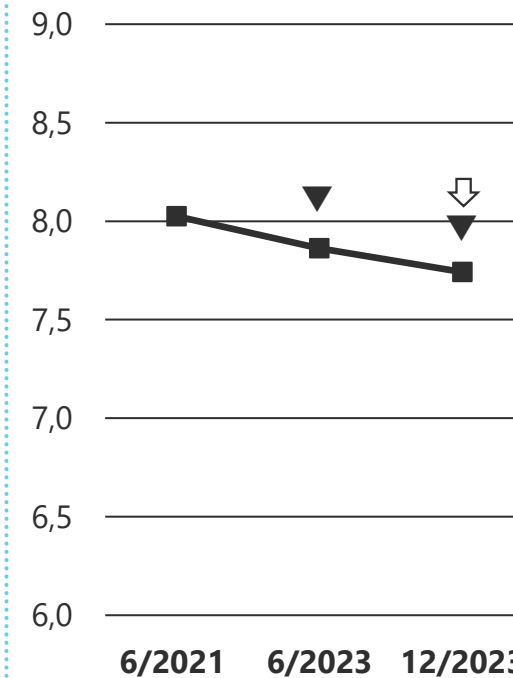
 **JOB BOREDOM**  
(scale 0–6)



 **JOB SATISFACTION**  
(scale 1–5)



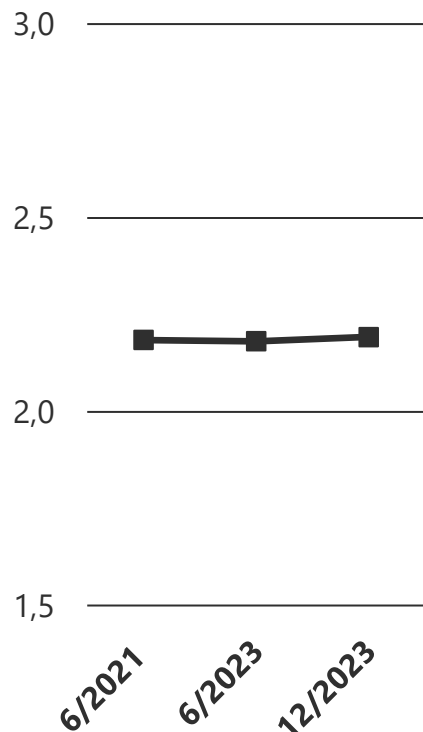
 **WORKABILITY**  
(scale 0–10)




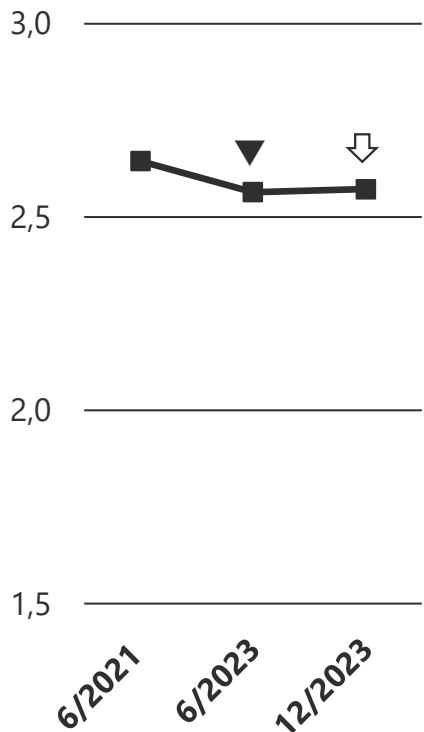
▲▼ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) compared to the previous survey  
 ↘↗ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) between the surveys carried out in summer 2021 and late 2023

# Hardly any changes in job burnout

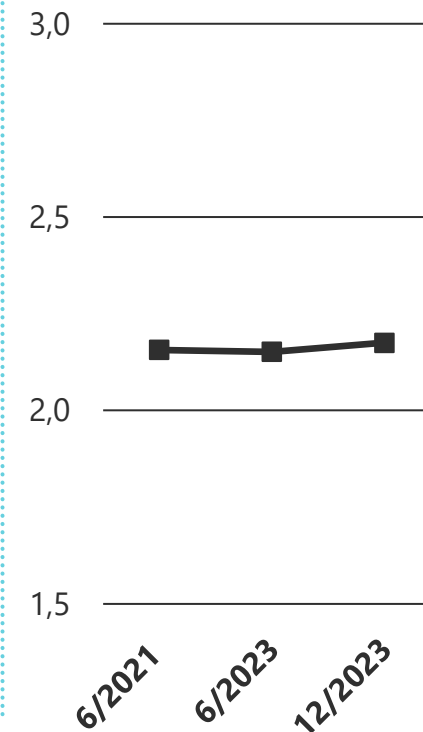
 **JOB BURNOUT**  
(scale 1–5)



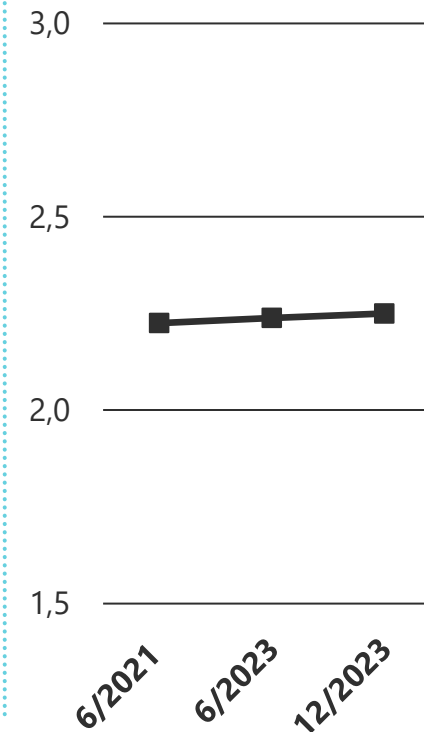
 **EXHAUSTION**  
(scale 1–5)



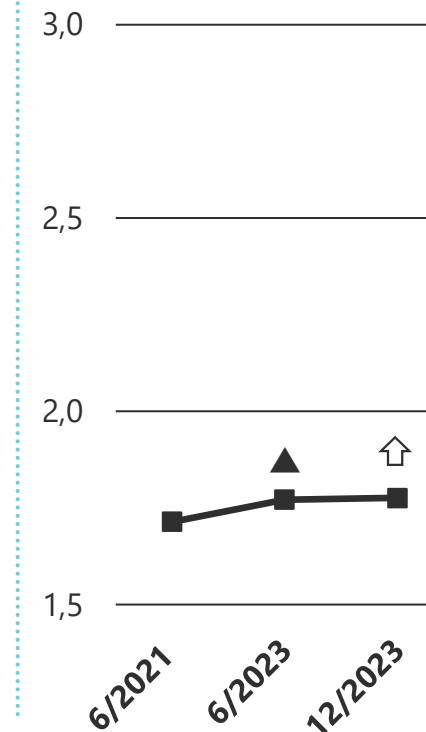
 **MENTAL DISTANCE**  
(scale 1–5)



 **COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT**  
(scale 1–5)

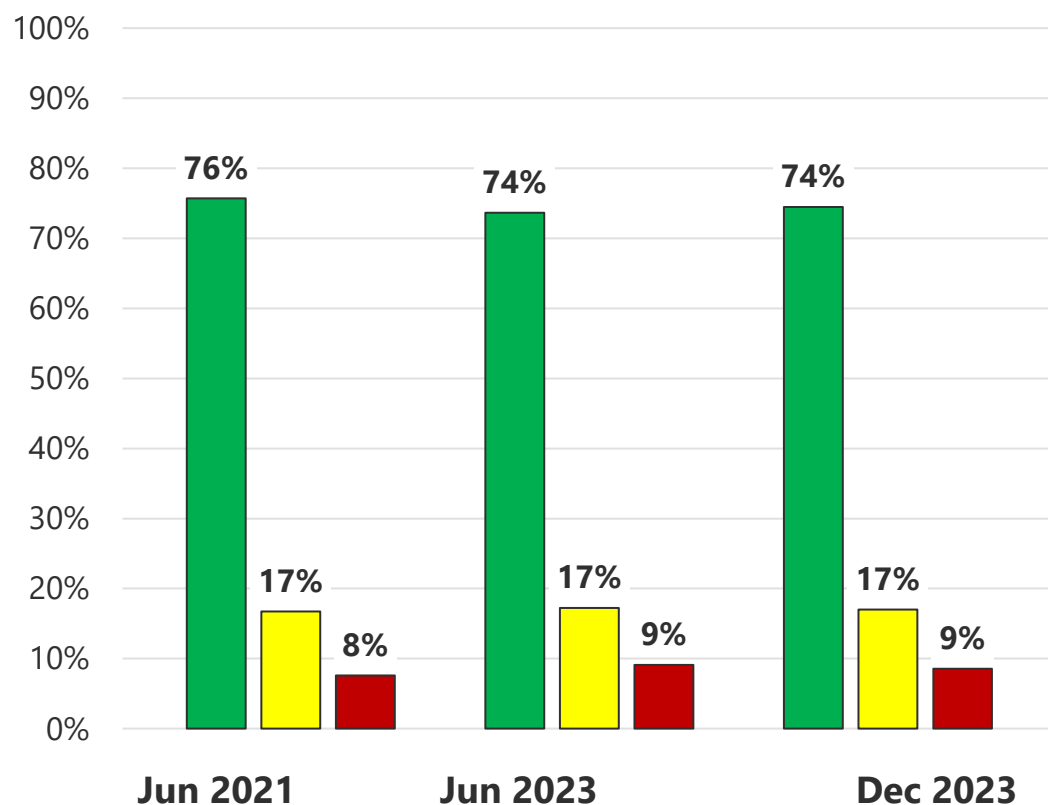


 **EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENT**  
(scale 1–5)



▲▼ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) compared to the previous survey  
 ⇩⇨ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) between the surveys carried out in summer 2021 and late 2023

# About one in four people still have an increased risk of job burnout or have severe job burnout

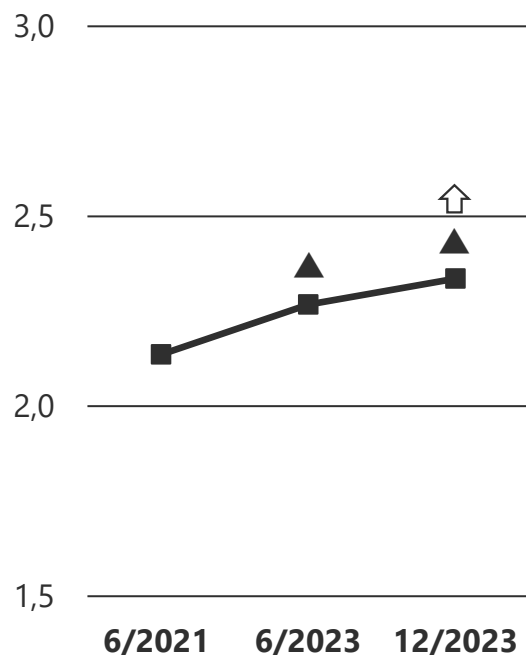


- **No job burnout** = the person does not experience job burnout and most likely feels well in this respect. Nevertheless, the person may feel tired, stressed or bored of their work or may not find their work to be engaging.
- **Increased risk of job burnout** = symptoms occur occasionally and/or to some degree. The person can persevere for a long time, but now it is time to recognise the problem and take action to recover their well-being.
- **Severe job burnout** = job burnout symptoms hinder coping in daily life and require immediate actions to correct the situation.

▲▼ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) compared to the previous survey  
 ⇅ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) between the surveys carried out in summer 2021 and late 2023

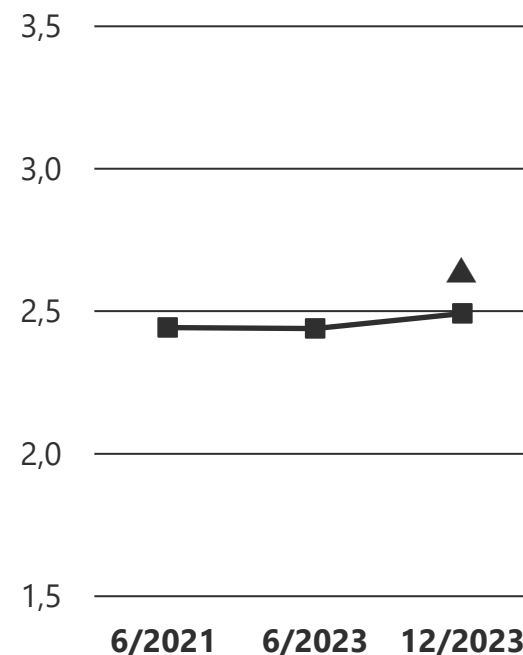
# Working while sick is more common, and resignation plans have increased

## WORKING WHILE SICK (scale 1–4)



In late 2023, 41% had worked at least twice in the last six months despite feeling that they should be on sick leave.

## PLANS TO RESIGN (scale 1–5)



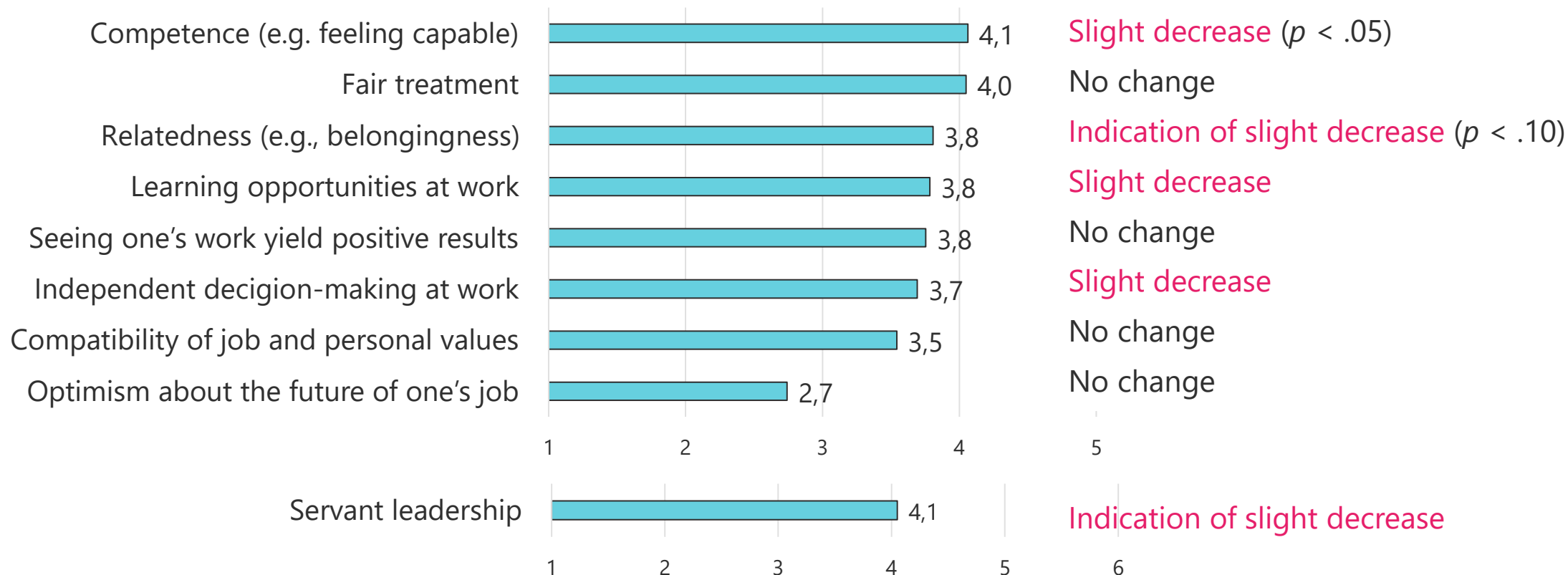
At the end of 2023, 26% had often considered resigning from their current job.

▲▼ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) compared to the previous survey  
 ⇩⇨ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) between the surveys carried out in summer 2021 and late 2023

# Well-being at work is boosted by various job resources, but more than one is on a slight decline.

Prevalence of job resources among the population  
(the longer the bar, the more resources)

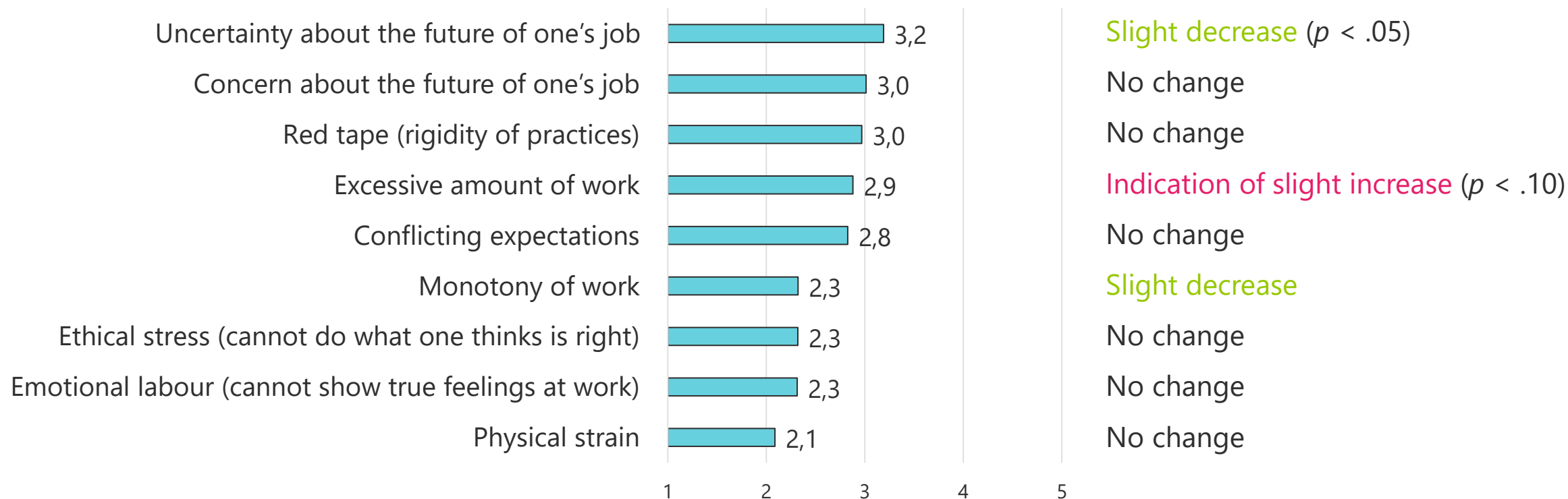
**Decrease in job resources  
between summer and late 2023**



# Among stressful job demands, uncertainty about the future of one's job was reported the most


Prevalence of job demands among the population  
(the longer the bar, the more job demands)

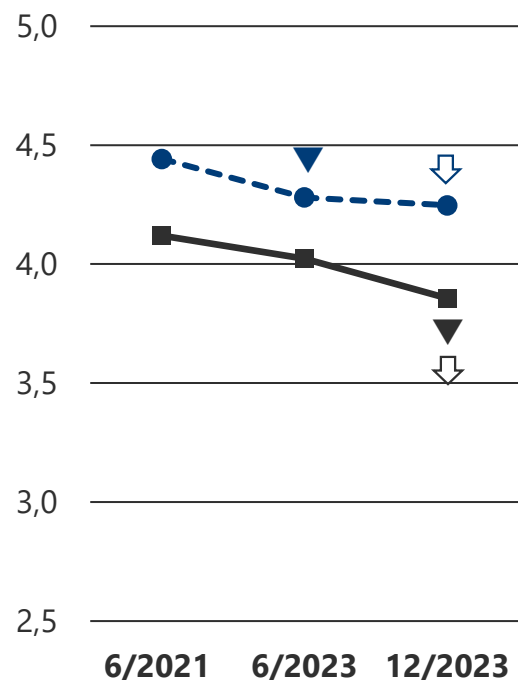
Development of job demands  
between summer and late 2023




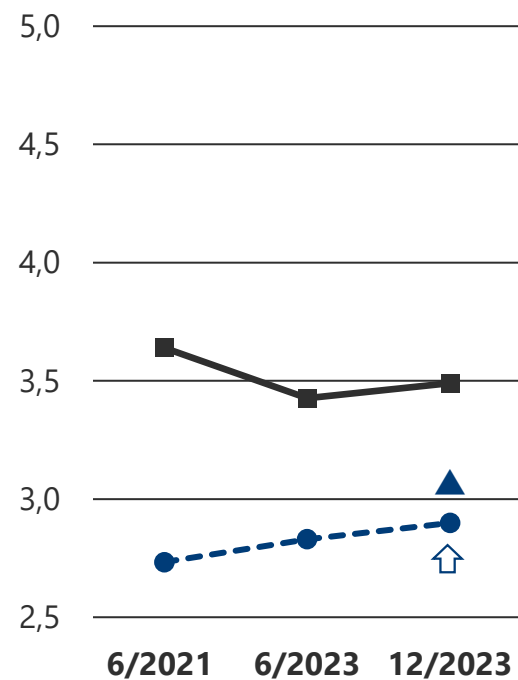
**Young adults' well-being at work remains poorer than that of other age groups, and it has decreased further. Factors that are stressful for young adults at work are less independence, insufficient challenges, and expressing feelings that do not correspond to the person's true feelings.**

# The well-being at work of young adults has decreased further and is poorer than among older people

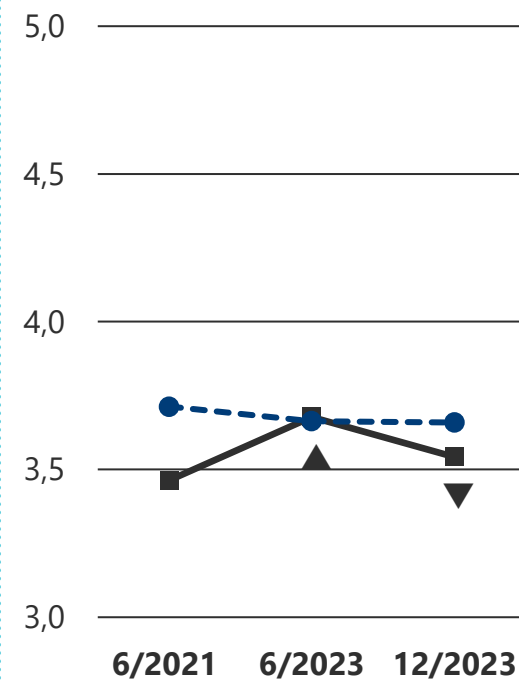
 **WORK ENGAGEMENT**  
(scale 0–6)




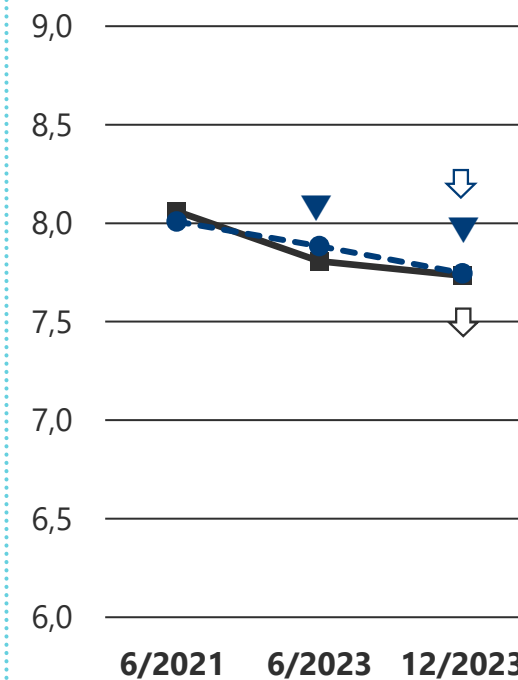
 **JOB BOREDOM**  
(scale 0–6)



 **JOB SATISFACTION**  
(scale 1–5)



 **WORKABILITY**  
(scale 0–10)

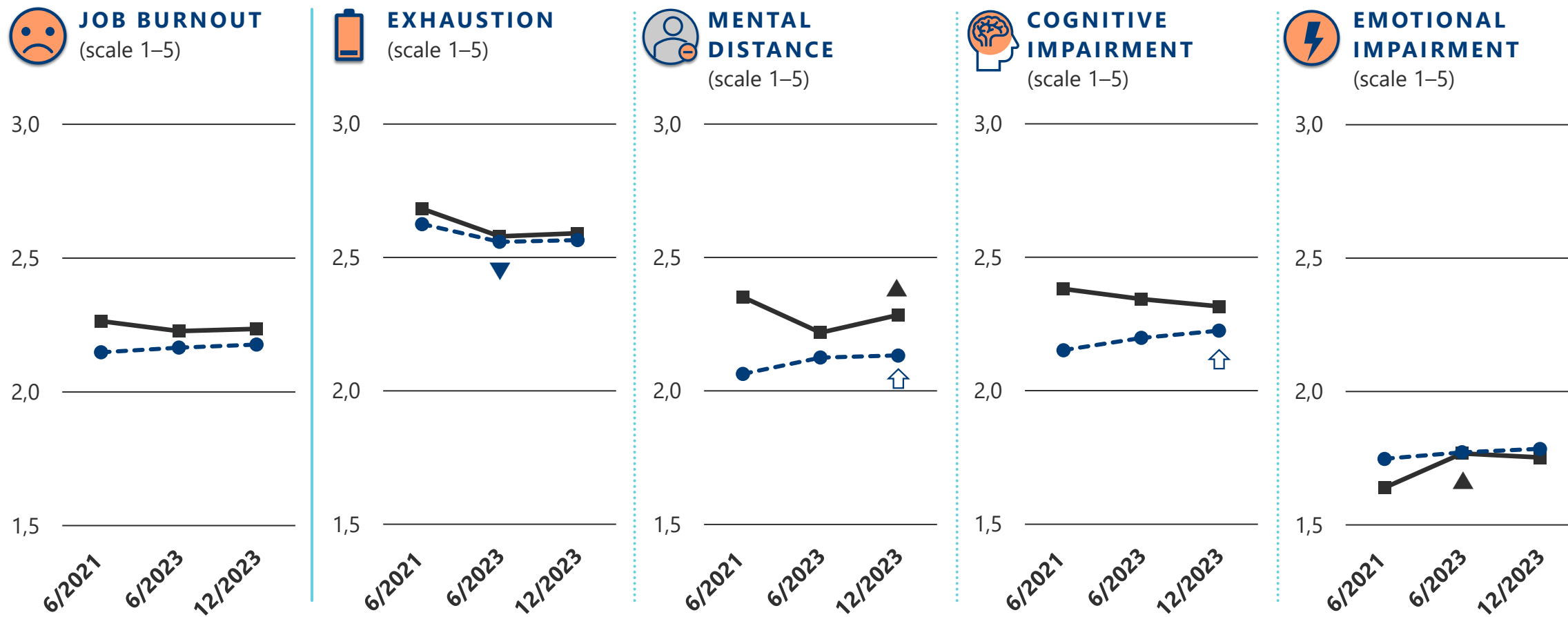


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 ↕↕ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) between the surveys carried out in summer 2021 and late 2023

—■— Under the age of 36  
 -●- 36 or older



# Mental distance from work is more prevalent among young adults and is also on the rise

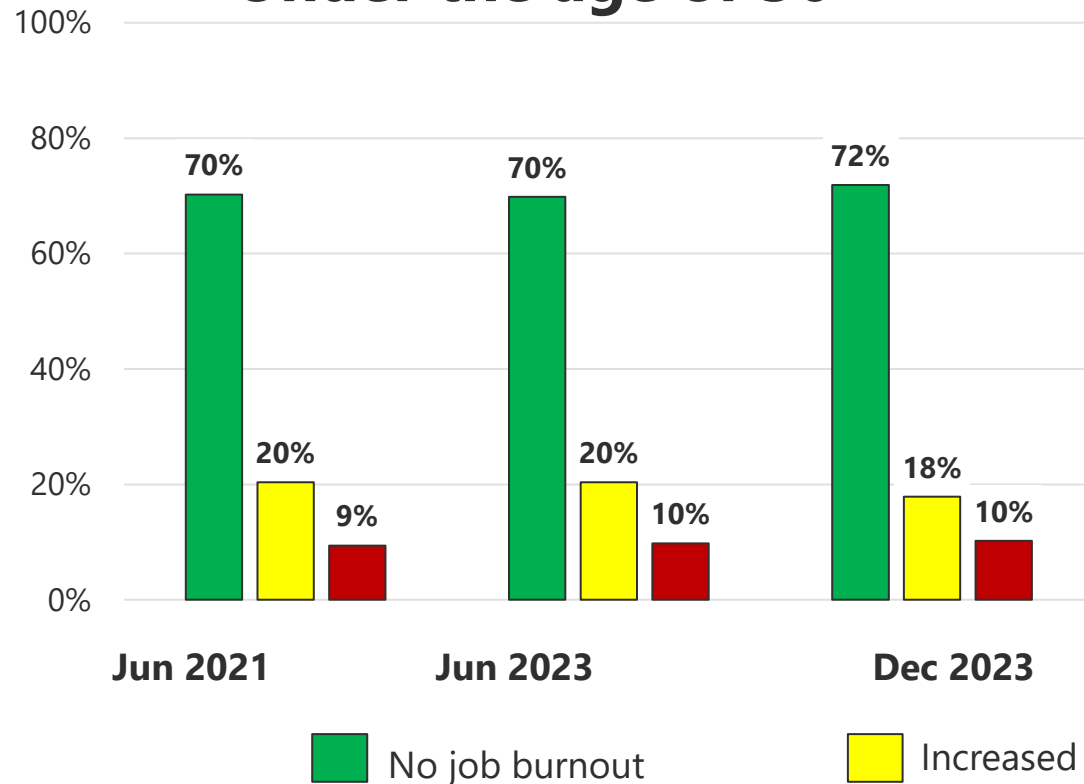


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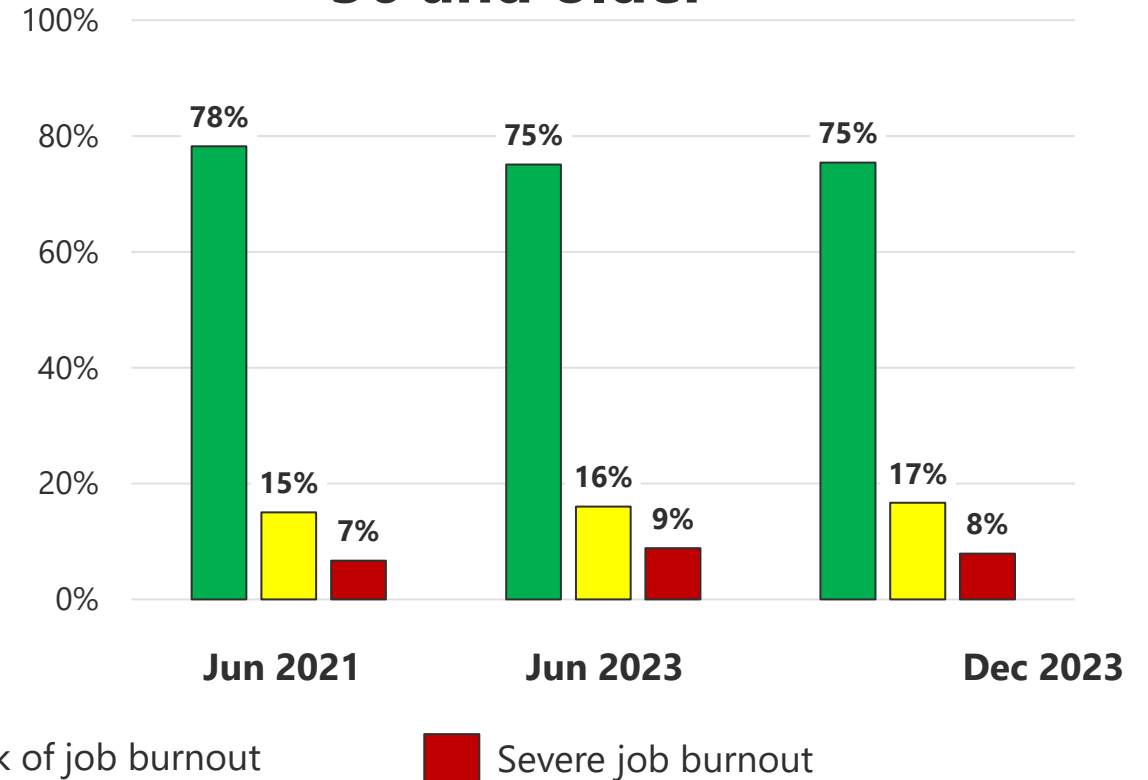
■ — Under the age of 36  
 ● - - 36 or older

# An increased risk of job burnout and severe job burnout concern both younger and older people

## Under the age of 36



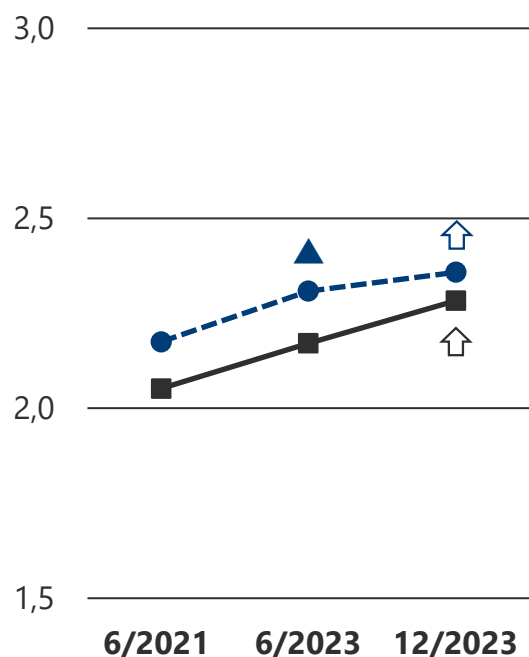
## 36 and older



▲▼ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) compared to the previous survey  
 ⇩⇧ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) between the surveys carried out in summer 2021 and late 2023

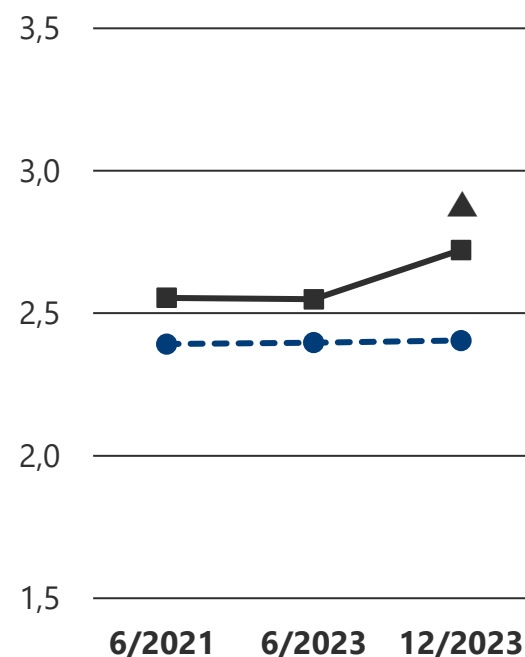
# Working while sick has become more common among both age groups. Plans to resign have become more common among young adults.

**WORKING WHILE SICK** (scale 1–4)



In late 2023, 38% of respondents under the age of 36 responded that they had worked while sick at least twice in the last six months. The corresponding percentage of those aged 36 or older was 42%.

**PLANS TO RESIGN** (scale 1–5)



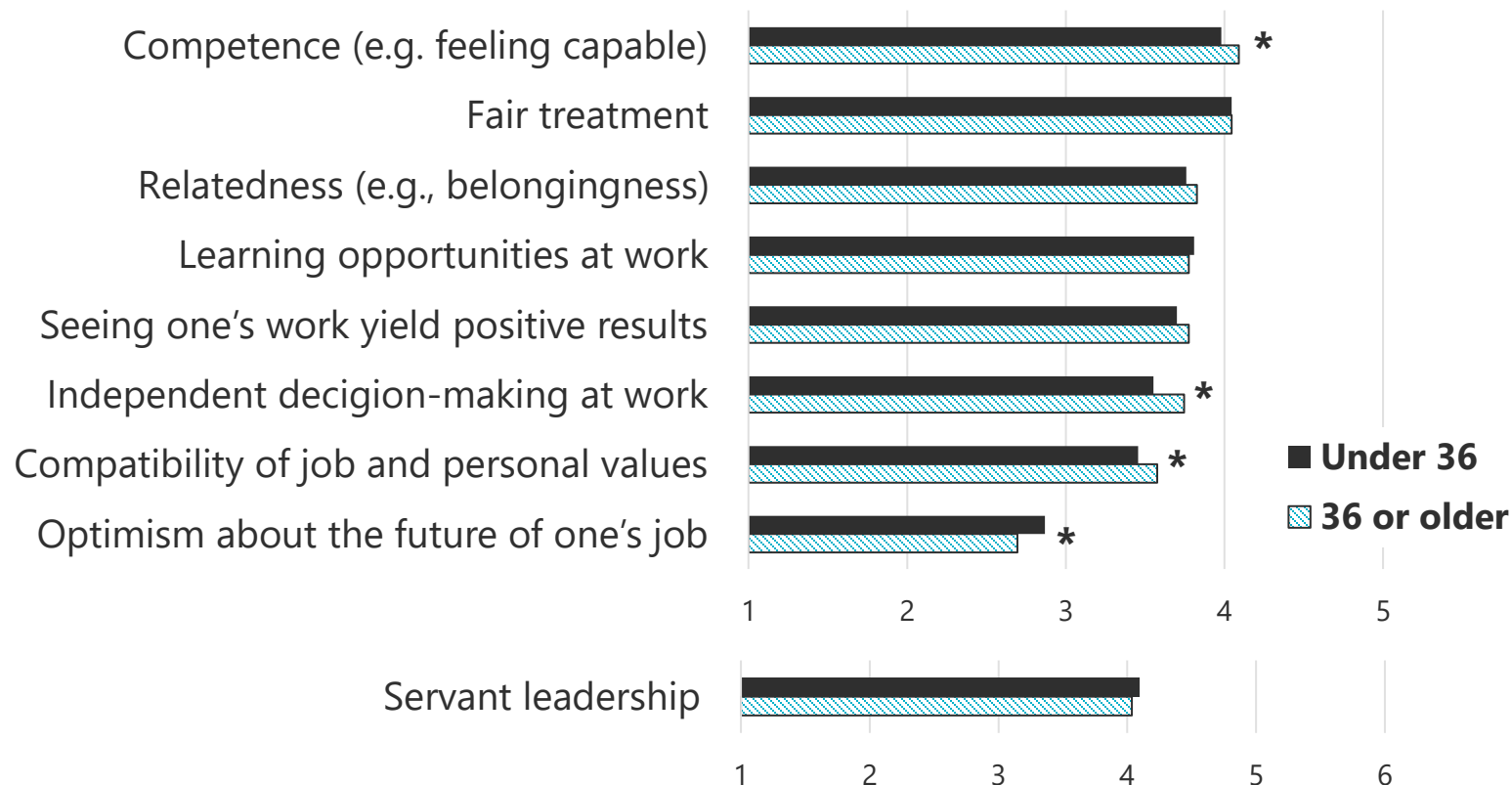
In late 2023, 32% of those aged under 36 responded that they had often considered resigning from their current job. The corresponding percentage of those aged 36 or older was 24%.

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 ↕↕ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) between the surveys carried out in summer 2021 and late 2023

■ — Under the age of 36  
 ● - - 36 or older

# Young adults experienced less autonomy, poorer compatibility of values, and less feelings of capability but more optimism

Prevalence of job resources in late 2023  
(the longer the bar, the more resources)



\* = statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between groups

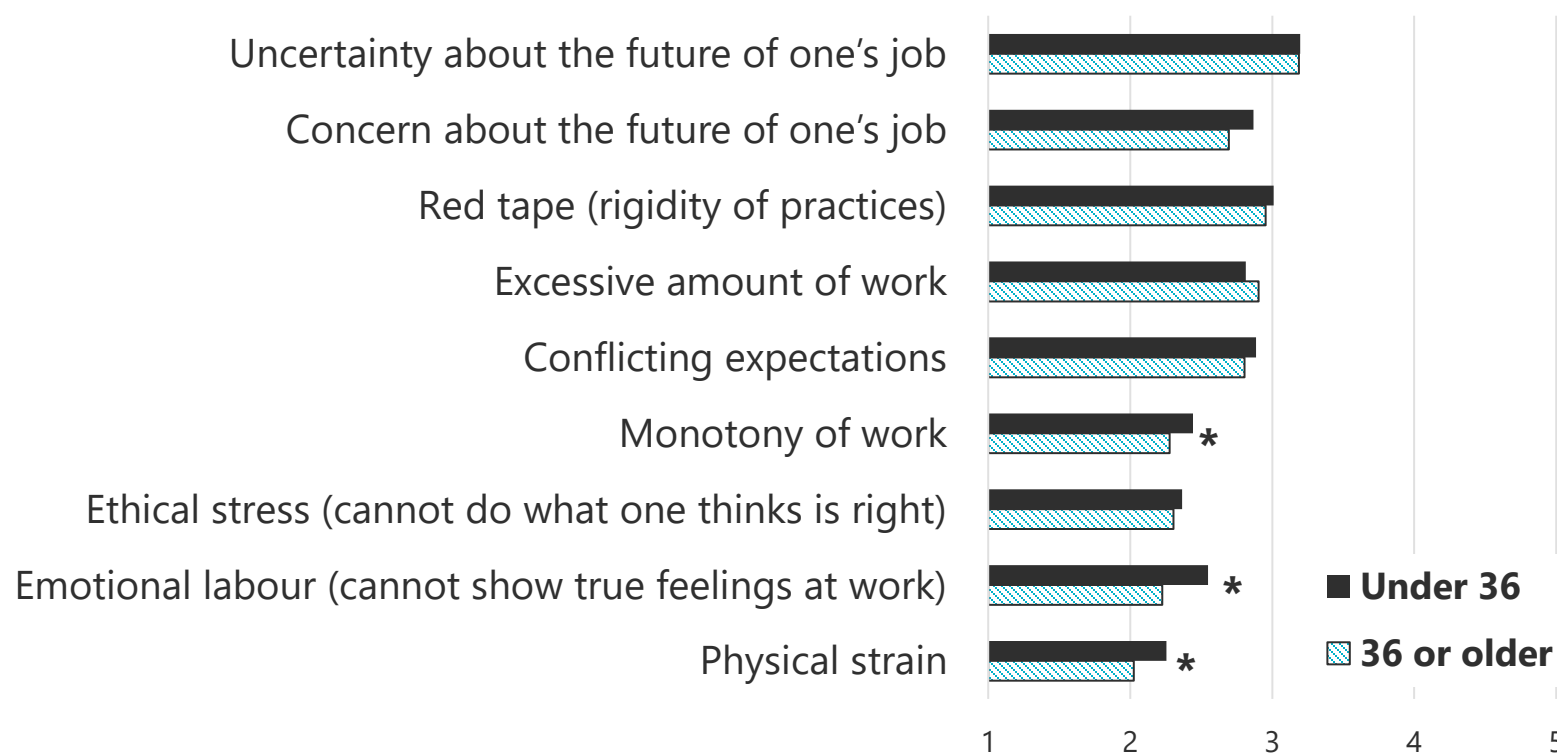
## Development of job resources for work between summer and late 2023

Young adults' experiences of relatedness, fair treatment, servant leadership and the possibility to learn while working decreased slightly. Moreover, the compatibility of job and personal values in particular decreased more among young adults than among older people.

Among older people, feelings of capability and independence at work decreased slightly.

# Young adults are stressed by increasing emotional labour and duties that are not challenging enough

Prevalence of job demands in late 2023  
(the longer the bar, the more job demands)



\* = statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between groups

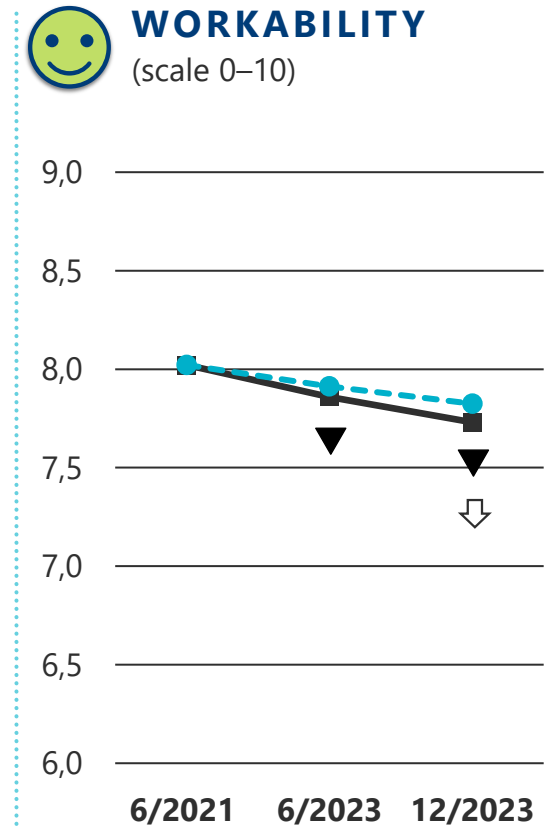
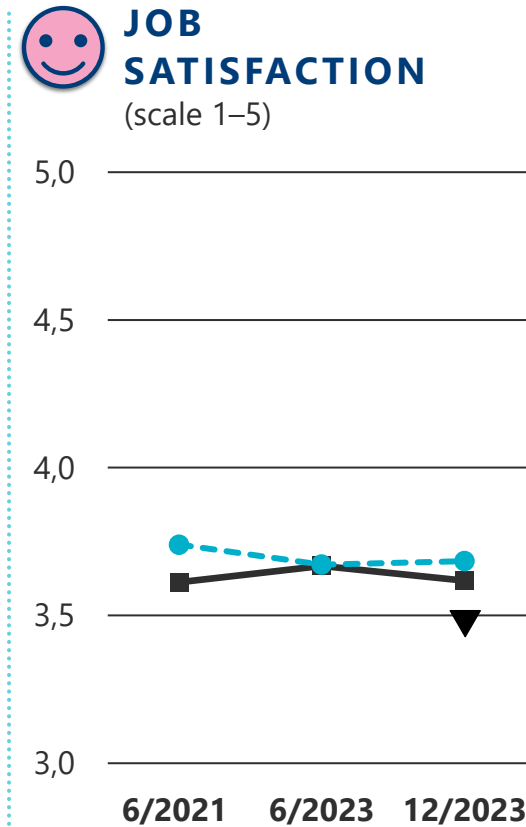
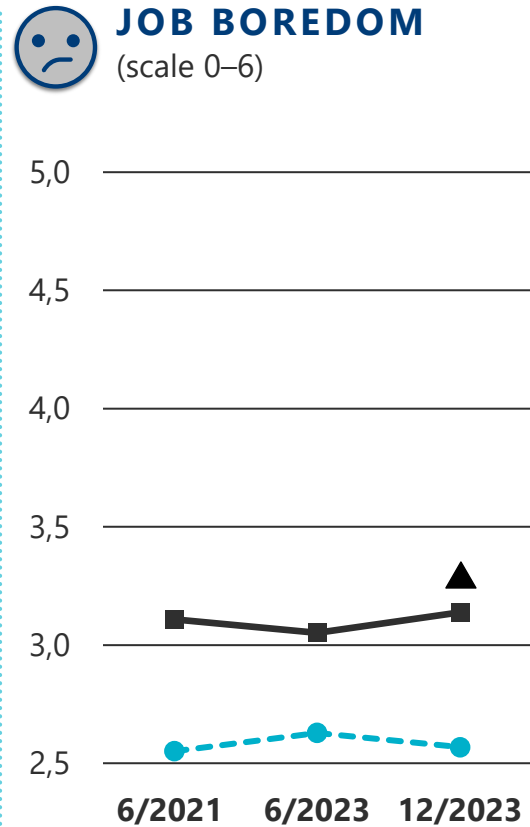
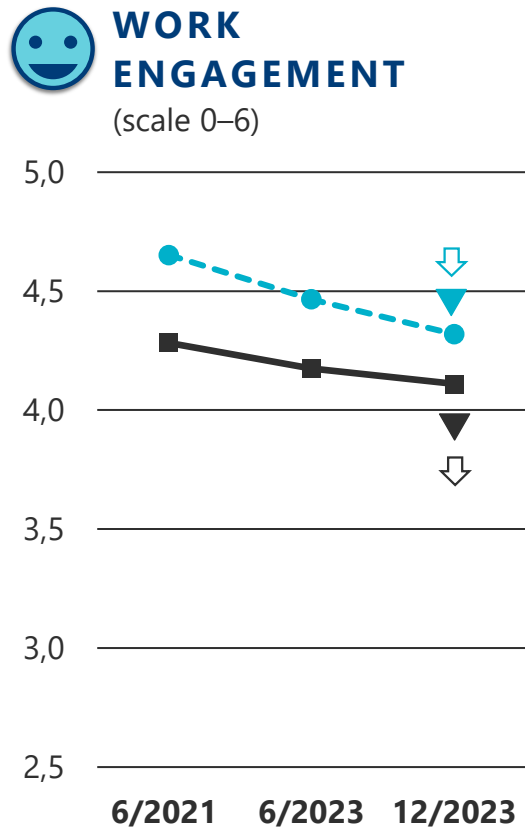
## Development of job demands between summer and late 2023

Emotional labour increased among young adults, whereas no change was found in this matter among older people. The increase in emotional labour was also greater among young adults than among older people based on a statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) difference in trends.

Among older people, there was a slight decrease in physical work strain. On the other hand, there was also a similar trend among young adults.

**The well-being at work of managers has decreased and their plans to resign have increased. Managers find the excessive amount of work in particular to be stressful.**

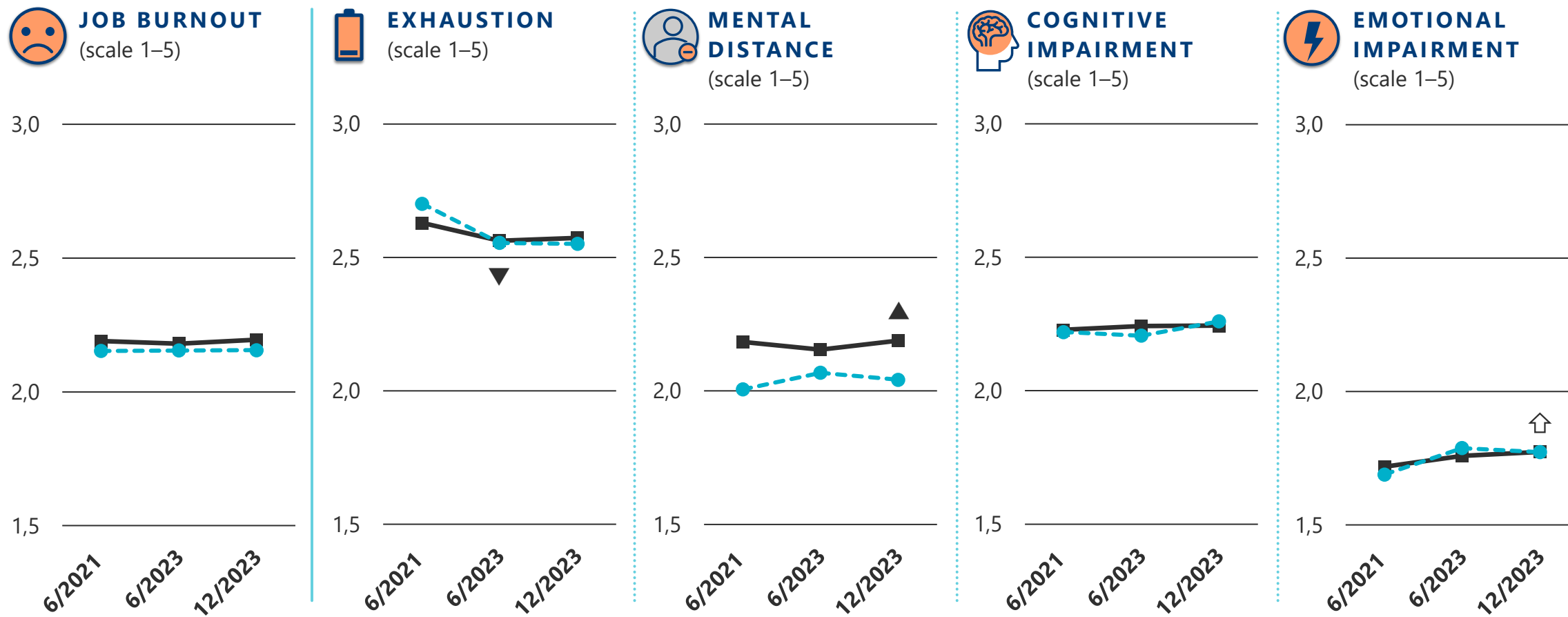
# Work engagement has decreased among managers



▲▼ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) compared to the previous survey  
 ↓↑ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) between the surveys carried out in summer 2021 and late 2023

■— Employee  
 ●- - Manager

# Job burnout at same level among managers and employees. Managers experience less mental distance.

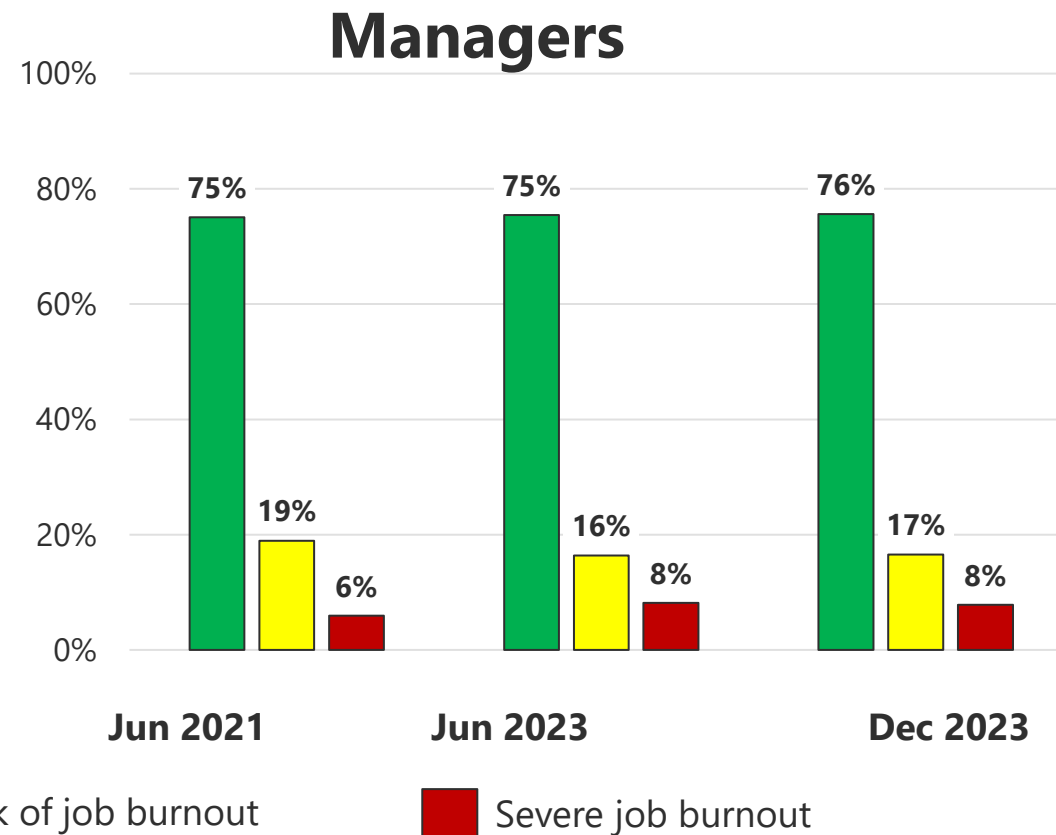
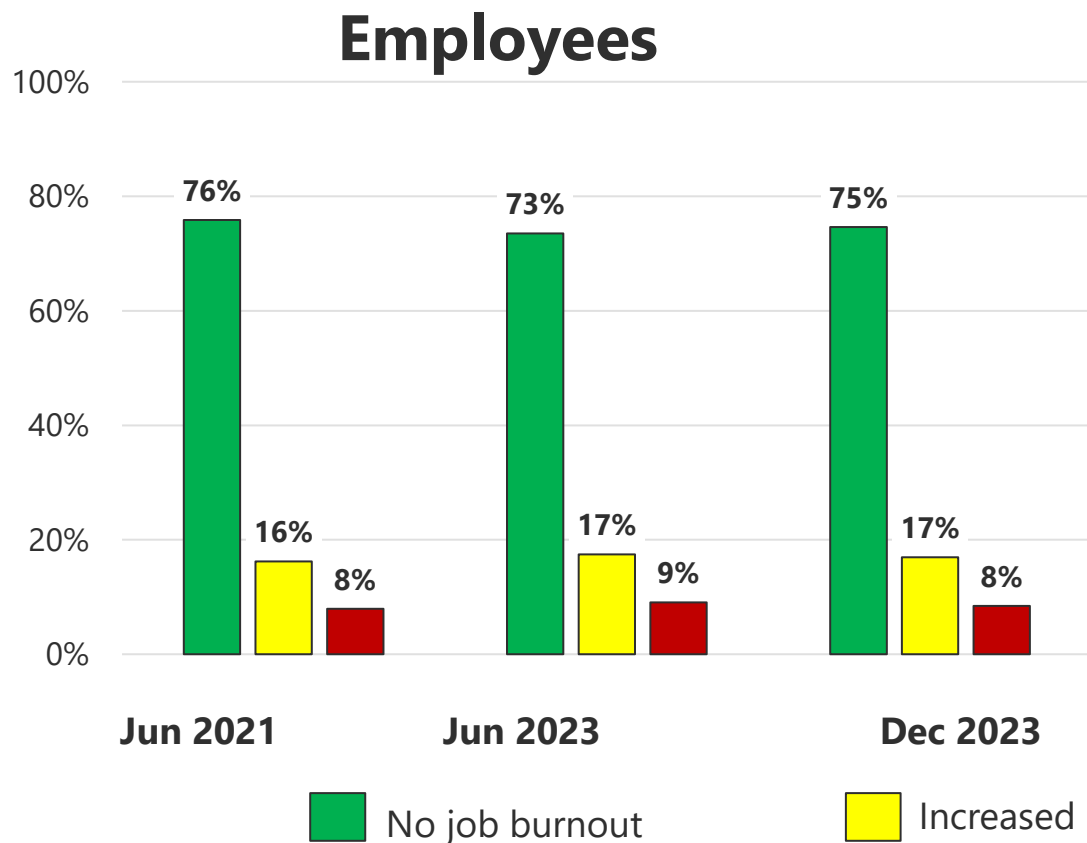


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■ Employee  
 ● Manager



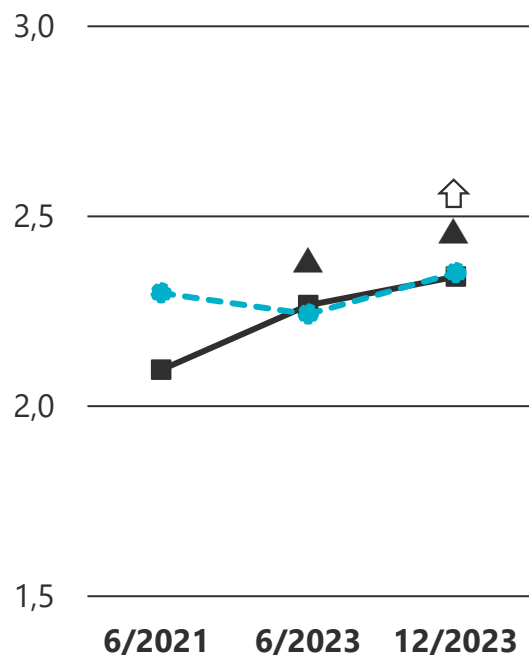
# One in four employees and managers are either at risk of job burnout or have severe job burnout



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 ⬇️⬆️ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) between the surveys carried out in summer 2021 and late 2023

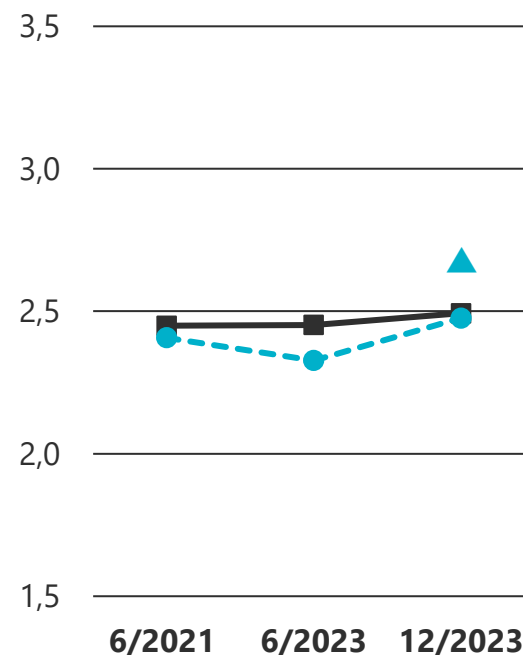
# More resignation plans among managers, and employees more often at work while sick

**WORKING WHILE SICK** (scale 1–4)



In late 2023, 40% of employees reported having worked while sick at least twice in the last six months. The corresponding percentage of managers was 45%.

**PLANS TO RESIGN** (scale 1–5)



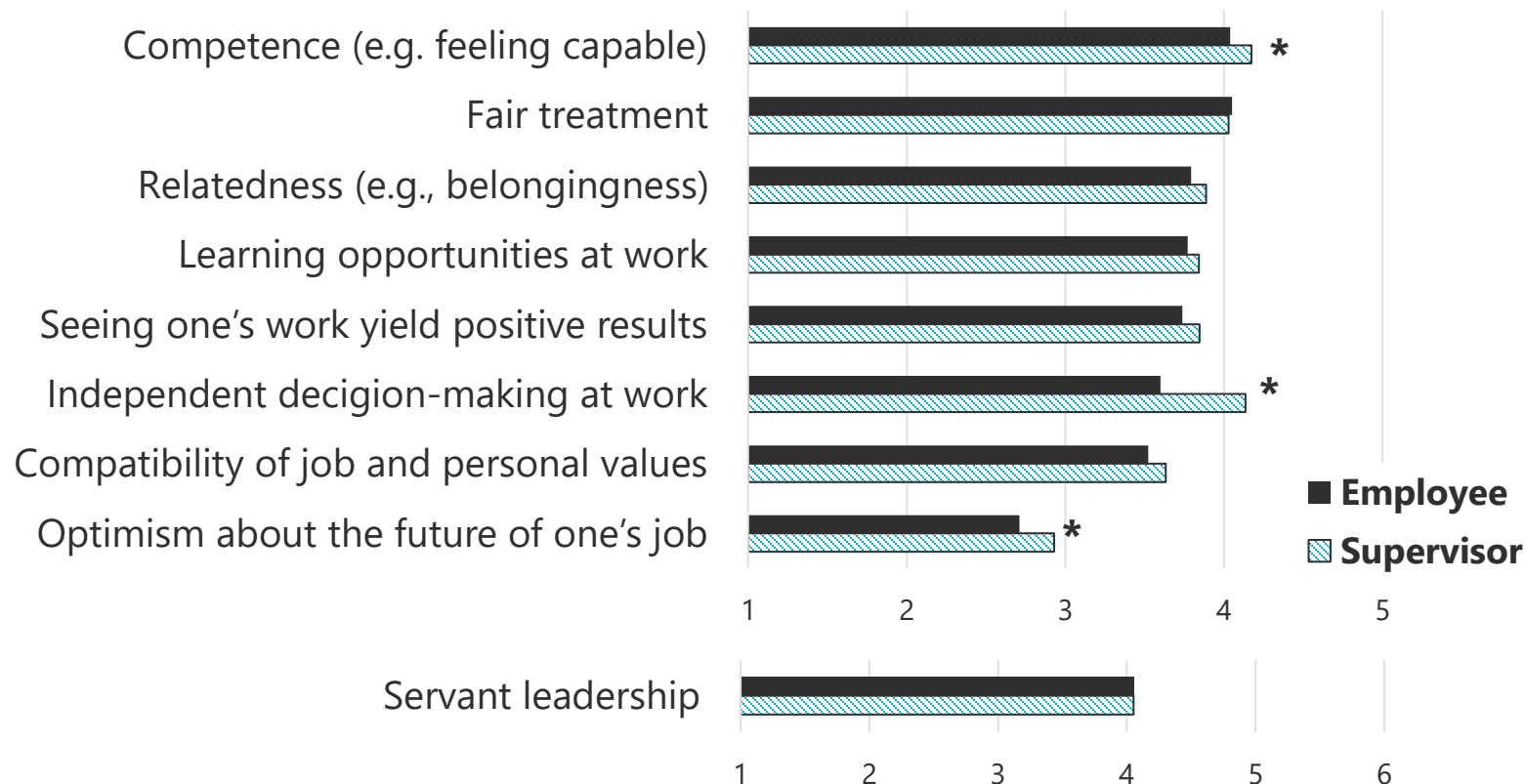
In late 2023, 26% of employees reported having often considered resigning from their current job. The corresponding percentage of managers was 22%.

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 ↓↑ = Statistically significant increase/decrease ( $p < .05$ ) between the surveys carried out in summer 2021 and late 2023

—■— Employee  
 - - ● - - Manager

# Decision authority is a key job resource for supervisors. Learning opportunities are on the decline.

Prevalence of job resources in late 2023  
(the longer the bar, the more resources)



\* = statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between groups

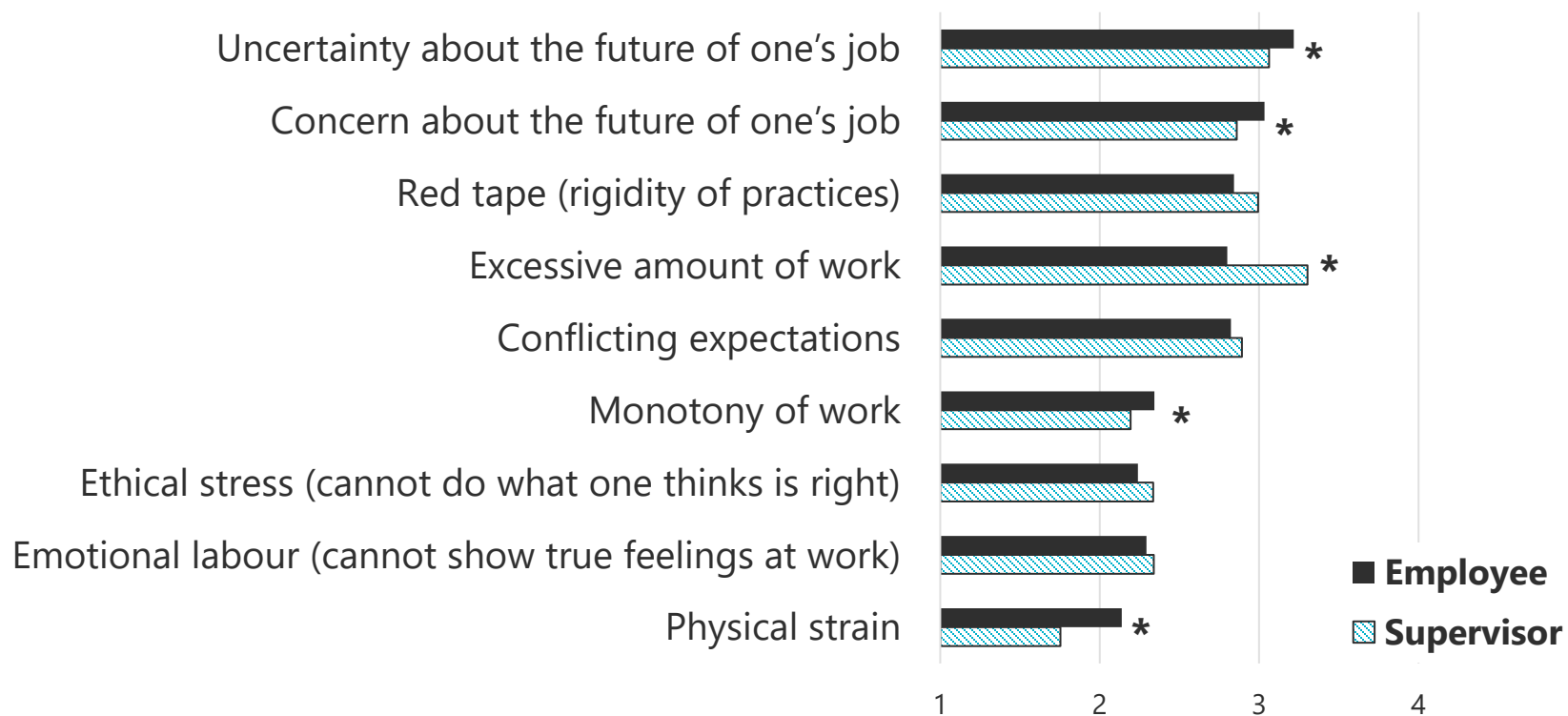
## Observations about the development of job resources for work between summer and late 2023

Supervisors' perceived level of relatedness, competence and servant leadership of their supervisor decreased. Moreover, in particular the compatibility of job and personal values, as well as learning opportunities, decreased more among supervisors than among employees.

The only change in job resources among employees was decreased independence, which also decreased among supervisors.

# Supervisors are stressed by excessive amounts of work, while physical work strain decreased

Prevalence of job demands in late 2023  
(the longer the bar, the more job demands)



\* = statistically significant difference (p < .05) between groups

## Development of job demands between summer and late 2023

Employees' perceived level of excessive amounts of work decreased, while their perceived level of conflicting roles increased. The trends regarding these matters were also similar among supervisors. The perceived level of physical work strain decreased in both groups, slightly more so among supervisors than among employees.

**Remote work is once again linked to greater job boredom and loneliness. Its possible benefits include a more balanced amount of work and less physical work strain.**

# According to the survey, remote work involves more challenges than positive aspects

The study examined the statistical associations from the amount of remote work reported in summer 2023 and late 2023 by those who responded to the survey and spent at least 25% of their working hours working remotely at the time of both surveys, and whose amount of remote working did not change between the two surveys (N=583).

## **Negative** phenomena associated with remote work

- Less compatibility between job and personal values.
- More job boredom.
- Less attachment to the job (job embeddedness)
- The job and other aspects of life enrich each other less.
- Greater loneliness.
- Less hope and reduced ability to cope.
- Less optimism.

## **Positive** phenomena associated with remote work

- Lower levels of excessive amounts of work.
- Lower levels of physical work strain.

# Summary and recommendations

# Well-being at work has decreased at the level of the working population based on many indicators

- Work engagement has decreased compared to both 2021 and summer 2023. People now experience work engagement only once a week on average, which is less than previously observed in Finnish benchmark data.
- Job boredom has also once again started to increase since summer 2023.
- Additionally, job satisfaction and workability have decreased since last summer; workability has also decreased compared to 2021.
- However, there were no changes in job burnout compared to last summer: 17% are at elevated risk of experiencing job burnout, while 9% have severe job burnout.



# The well-being at work of young adults is still persistently poorer than that of others and has decreased further

- Work engagement was lower and job boredom was more common among young adults (under the age of 36) than among older people. Young adults rate their workability at the same level as older people, even though, based on previous studies, workability usually declines with age and is better in youth.
- Symptoms of job burnout were equally prevalent among young adults and older people.
- Work engagement had decreased among young adults both since 2021 and since last summer. Of the symptoms of job burnout, mental distance had increased since last summer, whereas workability had remained at the same level as last summer, though it was lower than in 2021.
- Among older people, there was a decrease in work engagement and an increase in job boredom compared to 2021. Workability had decreased compared to both time points.

# Many indicators of employees' well-being at work show a decrease – work engagement has decreased among managers and supervisors

- Employees' work engagement, job satisfaction and workability have decreased, while job boredom and mental distance have increased since summer 2023.
- It was already noted during a previous follow-up of How is Finland Doing? (summer 2022) that work engagement had decreased among managers, and it still remains lower among this group than in 2021. There have been no changes in job boredom, job burnout and workability among managers.
- One in four people among both employees and managers either is at risk of job burnout or has severe job burnout.

# Reduced well-being at work is linked to working while sick and plans to change jobs

- Of the Finnish working population, 41% had worked while sick at least twice in the last six months, and 26% had plans to resign – both working while sick and resignation plans have increased from previous levels.
- Working while sick has increased among both young and older employees since summer 2021.
- Young adults' resignation plans have increased since last summer. Now, one in three young adults was considering changing jobs, whereas the same figure among those over the age of 35 was one in four.

# How have the working conditions affecting well-being developed? 1/2

- Many of the job resources support well-being at work in different jobs. However, there has hardly been any improvement in working conditions compared to previous levels. Instead, there was a slight decrease among the working population in job resources such as the independence of work and opportunities to learn new things.
- One positive observation was that, of the factors that cause stress, there had been a slight decrease in uncertainty about the future of one's job and the monotony of work (work not being challenging enough).
- Among young adults, there has been a decrease in many of the social resources for work, such as community spirit, servant leadership, fair treatment and the compatibility of job and personal values, among other things. Among older people, independence and feelings of competence decreased.

# How have the working conditions affecting well-being developed? 2/2

- The decrease in the positive job resources in the last six months pertained more to supervisors than to employees. Supervisors' perceived levels of community spirit, own capability and servant leadership in their supervisor decreased. Moreover, in particular the compatibility of job and personal values, as well as learning opportunities, decreased more among supervisors than among employees.
- Employees' perceived level of excessive amounts of work decreased, while their perceived level of conflicting roles increased. Similar changes also took place among supervisors, but excessive amounts of work remained the most common stress factor among them.
- Remote work was linked to lower physical work strain – the downside is its many harmful links to loneliness, job boredom and incompatibility of job and personal values, as well as reduced hope and optimism, among other things.

# Conclusions

- Well-being at work has a positive connection to workability, job commitment and the productivity of work. It appears that the downward trend in well-being at work that started from the pandemic has yet to reverse.
- Sustainable working life consists of thriving, healthy and productive individuals and communities. Actions are now needed at both national and workplace levels to develop the work and working conditions of managers, supervisors and employees alike.
- It is concerning that both young adults and managers felt that many elements of belongingness decreased. Moreover, managers had lowered perceptions of their own managers' leadership practices.
- Remote work has become an established form of work, but it also involves many threats related to work and well-being that still have to be tackled.

# How is Finland Doing? Key results about Finns' well-being, 1/2

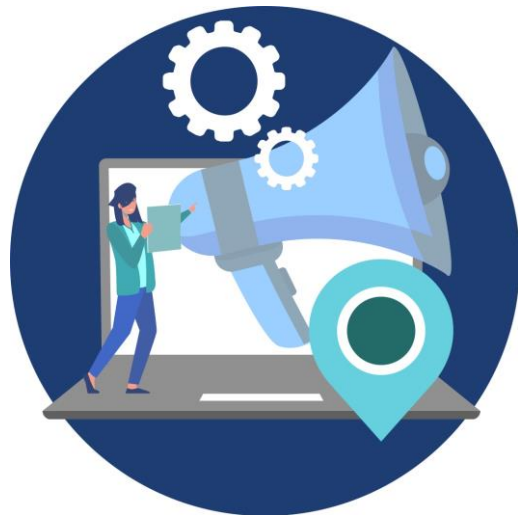


**Well-being at work has decreased in the last six months.** This is partly due to people's reduced resources at work. Working while sick has also become more common, and people are more inclined to consider resigning from work.



**Young adults' well-being at work remains poorer than that of other age groups.** Factors that are stressful for young adults at work include in particular having less independence, insufficient challenges, and expressing feelings that do not correspond to the person's true feelings.

# How is Finland Doing? Key results about Finns' well-being, 2/2



**The well-being at work of managers has decreased, while their plans to resign have increased.** Managers find the excessive amount of work in particular to be stressful.



**Remote work is once again linked to greater job boredom and loneliness.** The possible benefits of remote work include a more balanced amount of work and less physical work strain.



# Tips and tools for employees and workplaces



**The Mental Health Toolkit** contains tools and materials for promoting well-being at work that are available free of charge:

**[MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT \(TTL.FI/EN\)](https://www.ttl.fi/en)**



One of the tools is the '**How are you?**' **well-being at work test** (in Finnish only), which has already been used by more than 100,000 Finns to assess their well-being at work:

**[HOW ARE YOU? WELL-BEING AT WORK TEST \(TTL.FI\)](https://www.ttl.fi)**



Coming in spring 2024: **Job burnout assessment tool for workplaces** in order to identify the risk of job burnout at community and individual level. The manual and questionnaire for assessing burnout is available in [Finnish \(link\)](#) and [English \(link\)](#).

**More info and previous results:  
[ttl.fi/en/research/projects/how-is-finland-doing](https://ttl.fi/en/research/projects/how-is-finland-doing)**

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