



The
Workplace
Employment
Relations
Study

The 2011 WERS First Findings

Manchester Industrial Relations Society
21 March 2013

Outline

The logo for WERS (Work, Employment, and Retirement Study) is located in the top right corner. It consists of a dark purple square with the word "WERS" in white, sans-serif capital letters. The square has a small white triangle at the bottom left corner, giving it the appearance of a speech bubble or a document icon.

WERS

- What is WERS?
- About the 2011 WERS
- Findings:
 1. In the shadow of recession
 2. The employment relationship
 3. Working lives
- Further information

What is WERS?

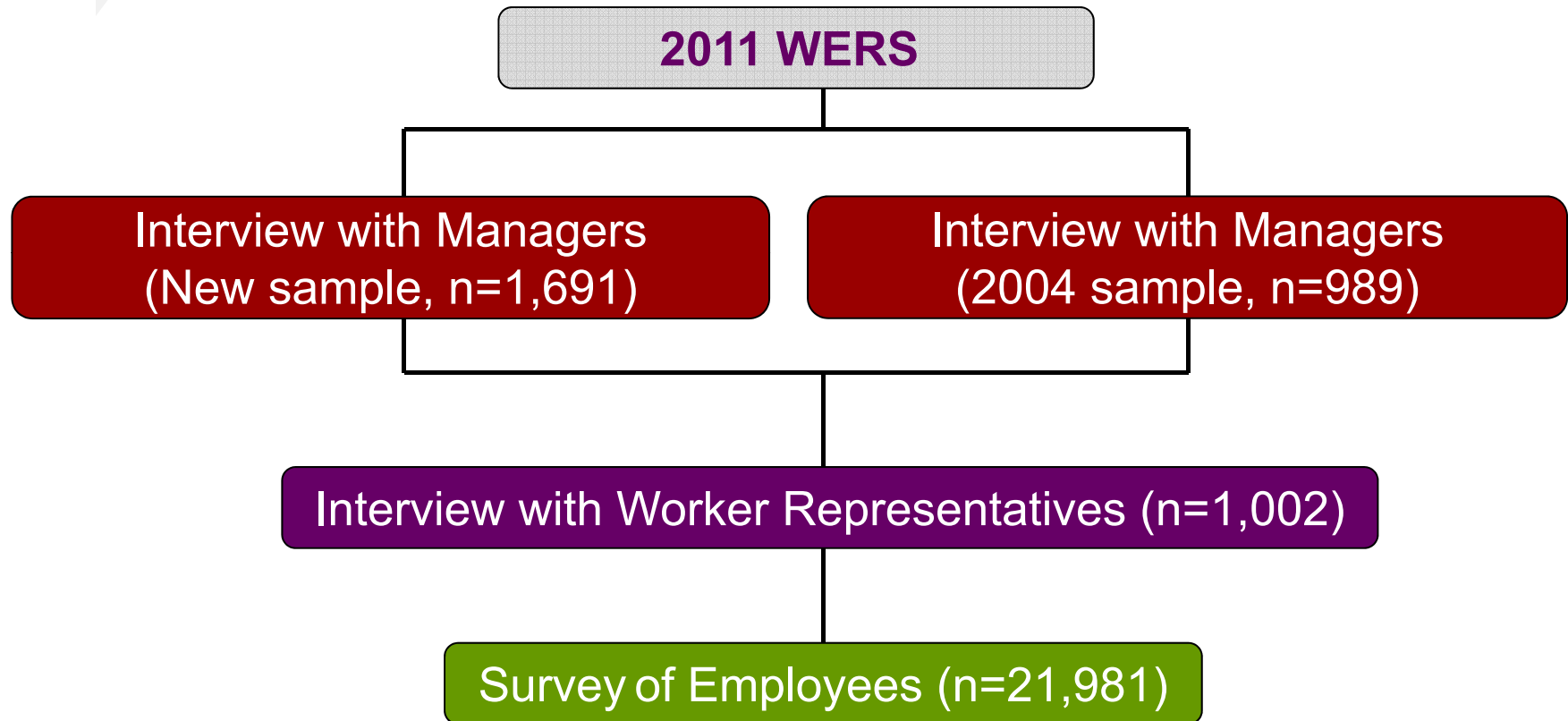
The logo for WERS (Workplace Employment Relations Survey) is a dark purple speech bubble with the word "WERS" in white capital letters inside it.

WERS


- **National** survey mapping employment relations in workplaces across Britain.
- **Unique and comprehensive** - data collected from managers, worker representatives and employees.
- **Well-established**: 1980, 1984, 1990, 1998, 2004, **2011**
- **Rigorous** – in 2011 almost 2,700 workplaces.
- **Independent** – multiple funding sources.
- **Endorsed** by a range of employer, union and independent organisations.

Research Design

WERS



 Face-to-face

 Face-to-face/phone

 Self-completion

About the 2011 First Findings

The logo for the Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS), featuring the word "WERS" in white capital letters inside a dark purple speech bubble shape.

- Fieldwork ran from March 2011 to June 2012.
- Data from:
 - 2,680 managers (response rate of 46 per cent)
 - 1,002 employee representatives
 - 21,981 employees
- Comparisons with last survey in 2004.
- Representative of British workplaces with 5+ employees.

In the Shadow of Recession

Workers and workplaces in the shadow of recession

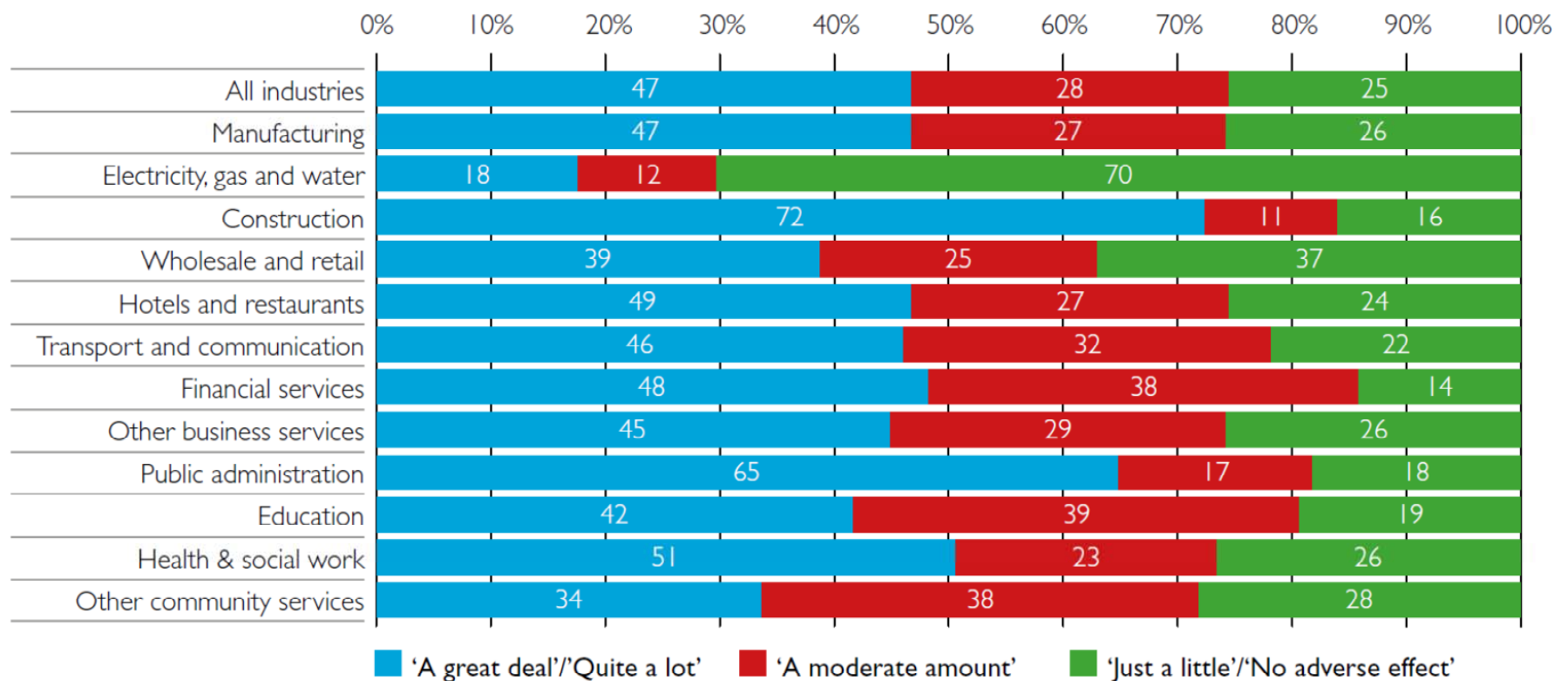
WERS

- Workplaces in the shadow of recession
 - To what extent were workplaces affected by recession?
 - What actions did workplaces take in response?
- More work, less pay? Employees in recession
 - What changes did employees experience as a result of recession?
 - Who was most affected?

To what extent were workplaces adversely affected by the recent recession?

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Percentage of employees in workplaces giving the specified response



Base: All workplaces (weighted by employment)

Actions taken by managers in response to the recent recession (%)

WERS

	Private	Public	All
Freeze/cut in wages	39	63	42
Freeze on filling vacant posts	26	44	28
Change in the organisation of work	22	35	24
Postpone workforce expansion	21	22	21
Reduce paid overtime	17	23	18
Reduce training expenditure	14	32	16
Reduce use of agency staff	13	31	16
Reduce basic hours	16	6	15
Compulsory redundancies	14	9	14
Voluntary redundancies	5	23	7
Reduce non-wage benefits	7	7	7
Enforced unpaid leave	3	2	3
Increase use of agency staff	2	4	3
Other response	3	5	3
No action taken	26	11	24

Base: All workplaces

More work, less pay?

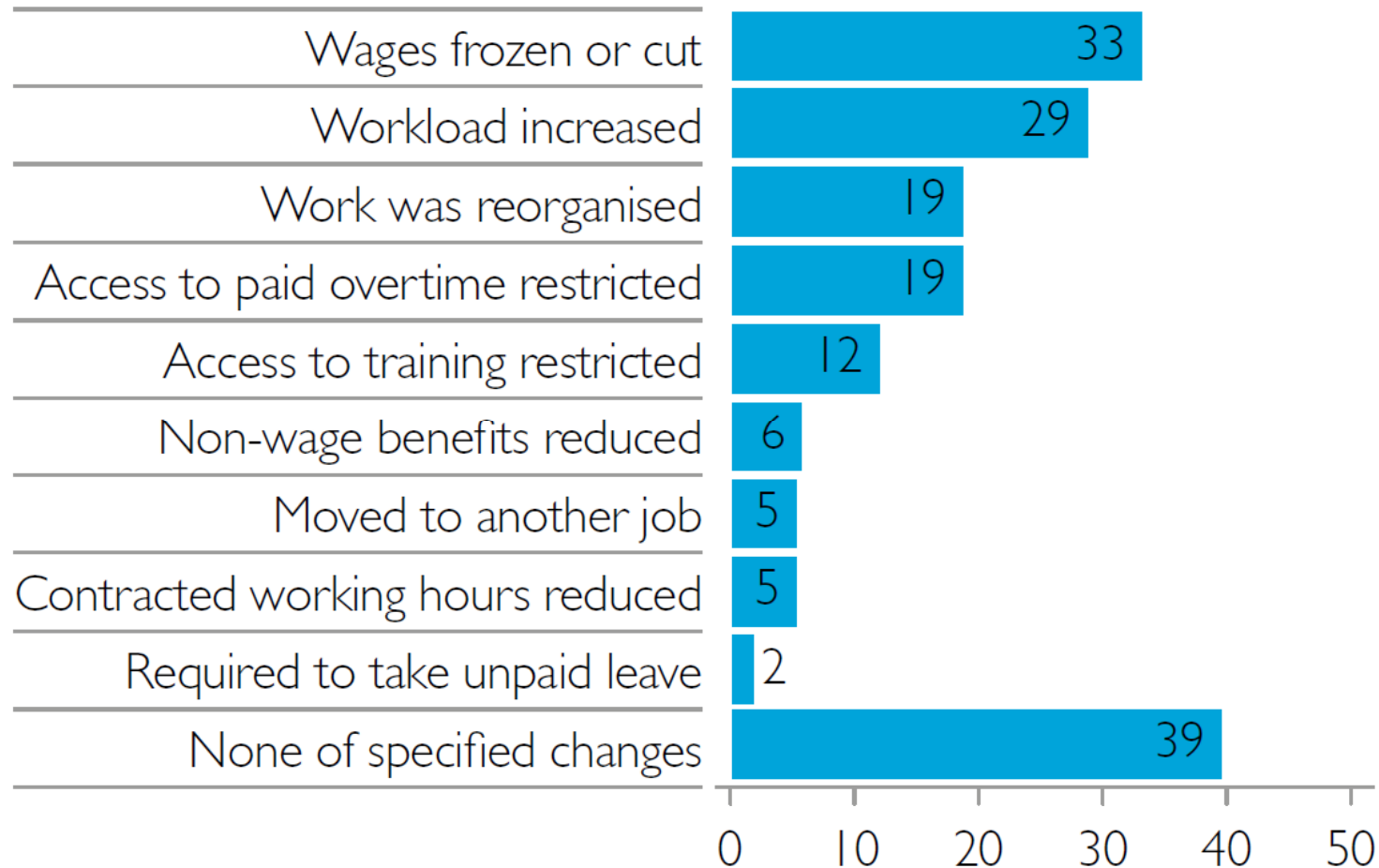
Employees in recession

The logo for WERS (Workforce Employment Research Survey) is located in the top right corner. It consists of a dark purple square with the word "WERS" in white, sans-serif capital letters.

- The most common changes reported by employees were wage cuts/freezes and increases in workload.
- Men were more likely to have seen some change in their working conditions than women.
- Managers were more likely to have seen some change than those in non-managerial occupations.

Changes experienced by employees as a result of recession (%)

WERS



Base: Employees at workplace during recession

Changes experienced by employees as a result of recession (%)

WERS

	Wages frozen or cut	Work-load increased	Any change
Sex			
Male	35	29	64
Female	31	28	58
Age			
Less than 20	1	8	26
20-29	23	24	55
30-59	36	31	64
60 plus	31	23	52
Working hours			
Full-time	35	32	64
Part-time	24	19	50
Occupation			
Managerial	38	39	67
Non-managerial	32	27	60

Base: Employees at workplace during recession

The Employment Relationship

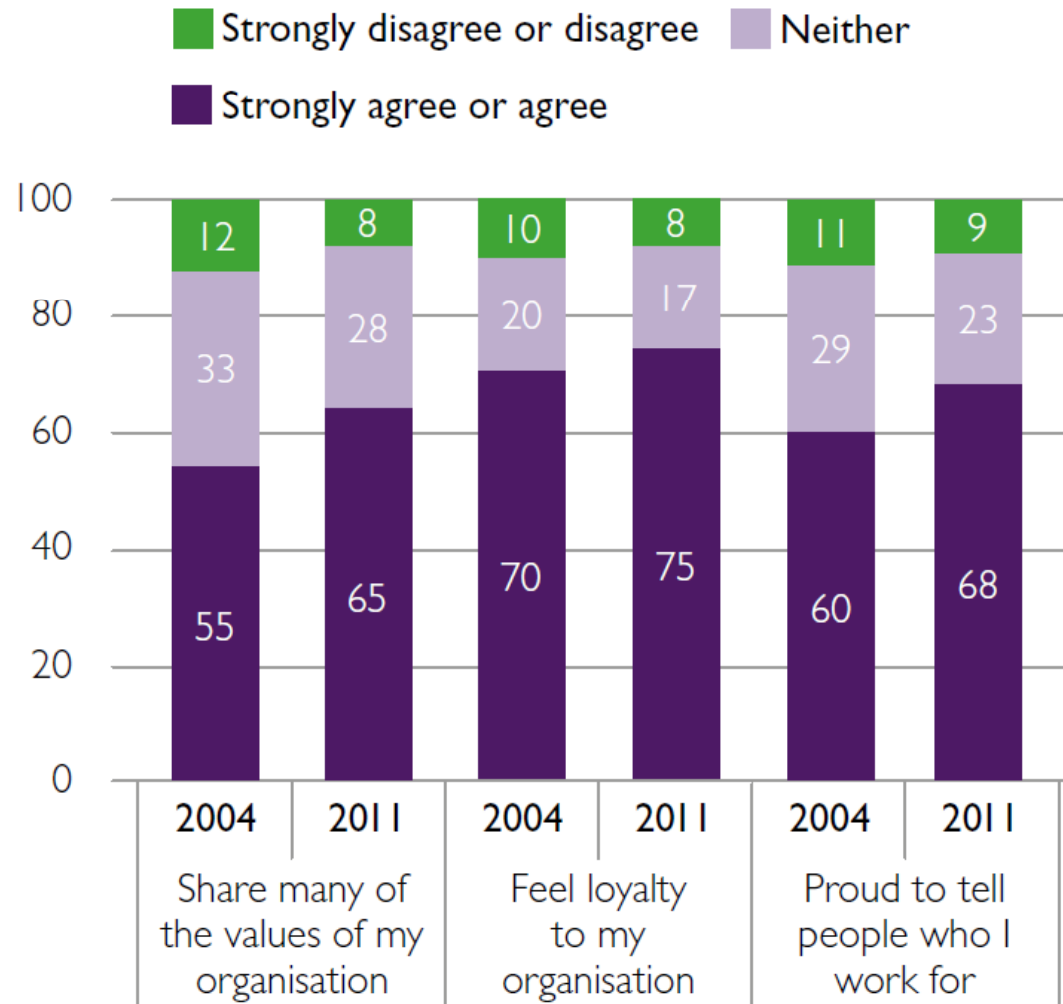
The Employment Relations Climate

The logo for WERS (Workplace Employment Relations Survey) is located in the top right corner. It consists of a dark purple square with the word "WERS" in white, sans-serif capital letters.

- 96% of managers report good relations with employees.
- 64% of employees report good relations with managers.
 - Improvement in relations in manufacturing.
 - No change in the public sector.
- Employees' organisational commitment has increased.

Employees' organisational commitment

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Base: All employees

Managing Employment Relations

WERS

- **Managers**

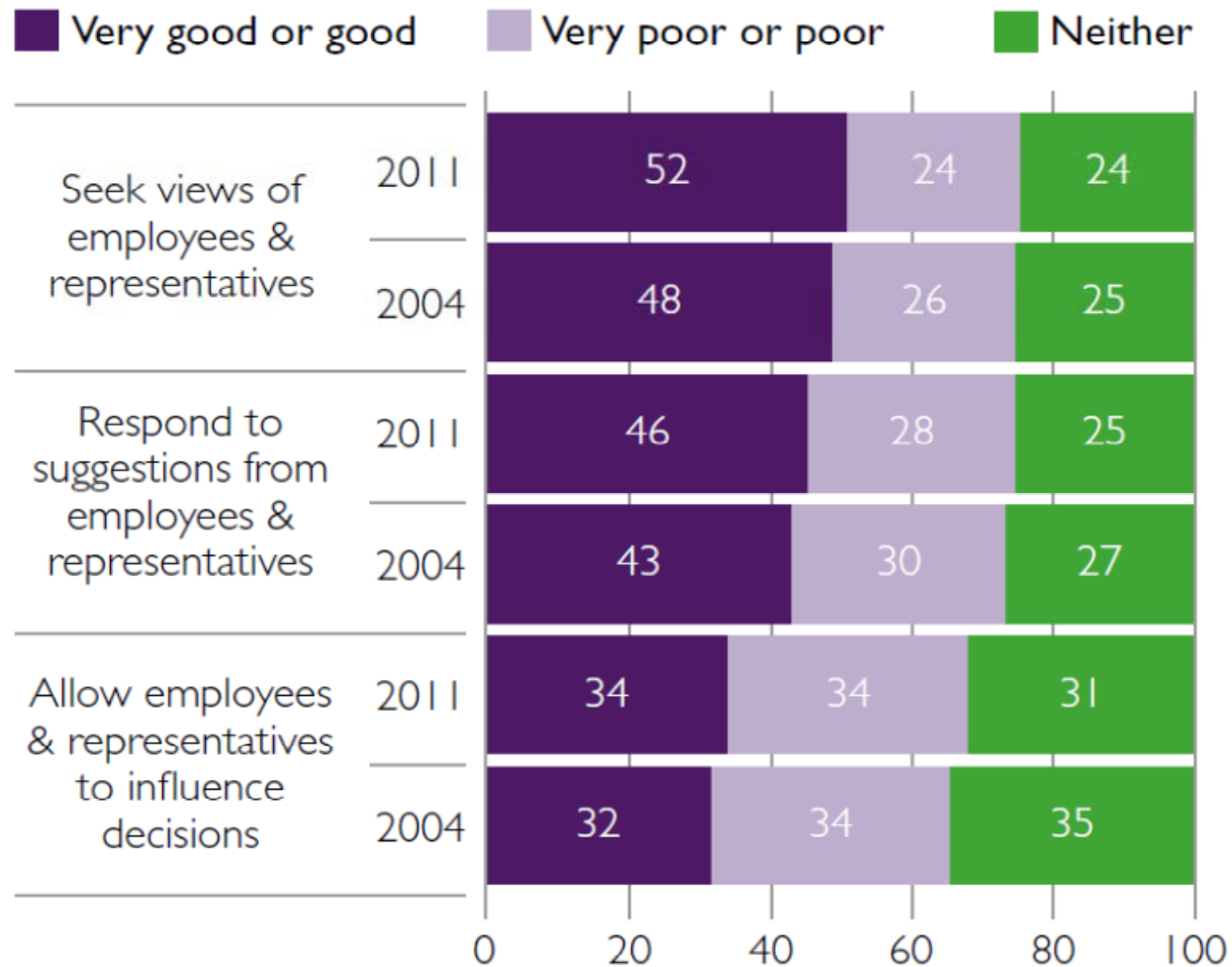
- Continued feminisation of the HR function
- Rise in formal HR qualifications
- Increasing autonomy of branch-level managers over HR processes

- **Engaging Employees**

- Increase in workplace meetings, team briefings and provision of financial information
- Less than half of employees feel that managers are good at responding to suggestions and allowing employees to influence decisions.

Employees' rating of management's active consultation

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Base: All employees

Workplaces with a union presence

WERS



Trade Unions

WERS

- Overall stability in the presence of unions, but continued decline in small private sector workplaces.
- 27% of unionised workplaces had at least one on-site lay union representative.
- Collective bargaining remains low in private sector, declined in the public sector.

Collective bargaining coverage

WERS

	Public	Private	All
Workplaces with any collective bargaining:			
2004	70	8	16
2011	58	6	13
Employees covered by collective bargaining:			
2004	69	17	29
2011	44	16	23

Base: All workplaces

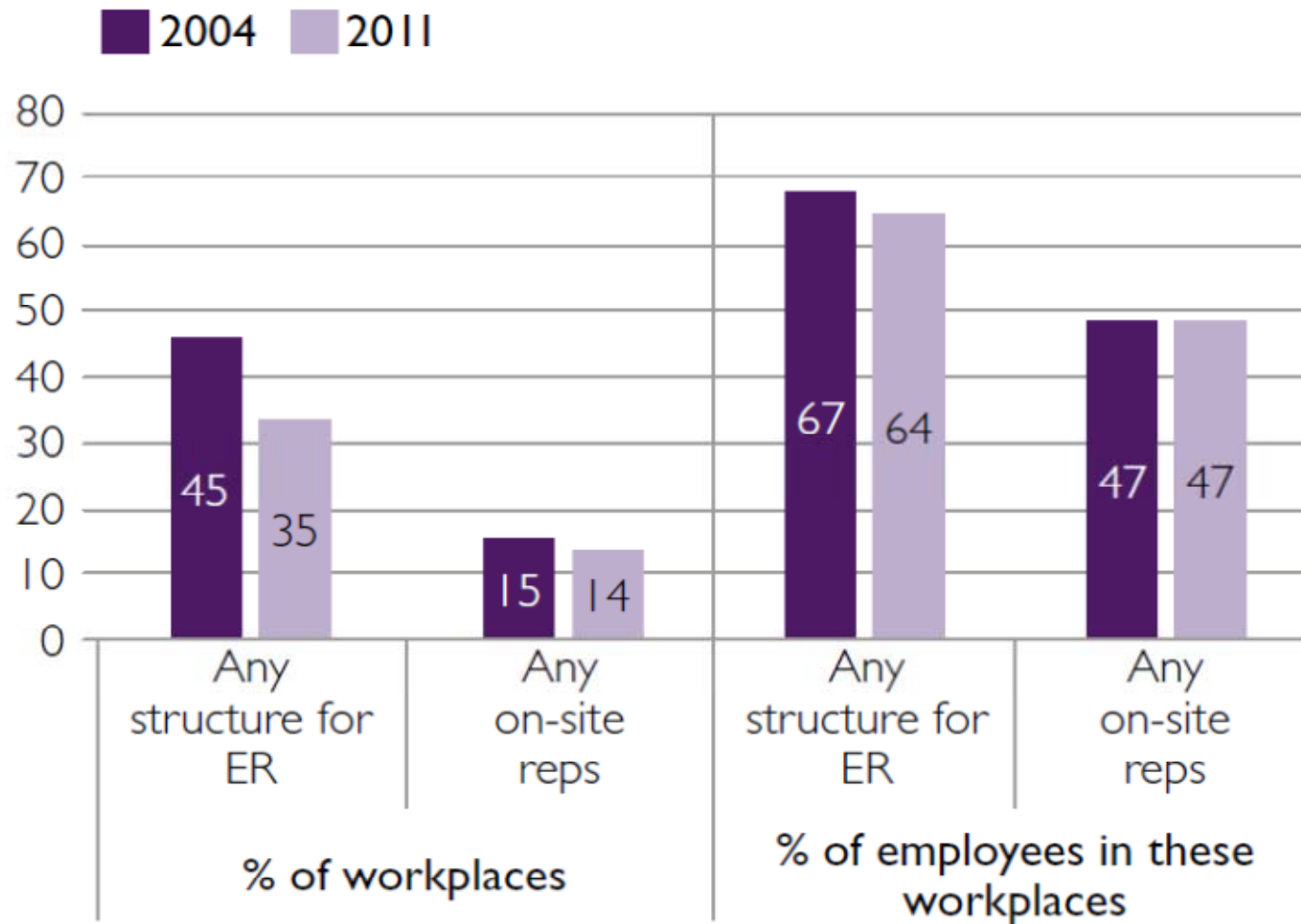
Non-union Employee Representation

WERS

- Joint consultative Committees (JCCs)
 - Presence of workplace JCCs remain stable –in 7% of workplaces.
 - 28% have a union representative.
 - Decline in JCCs at a higher level in the organisation.
 - Increase in reps saying that managers focussed on a preferred option in consultations.
- ‘Stand alone’ employee representatives
 - Present in 7% of workplaces.

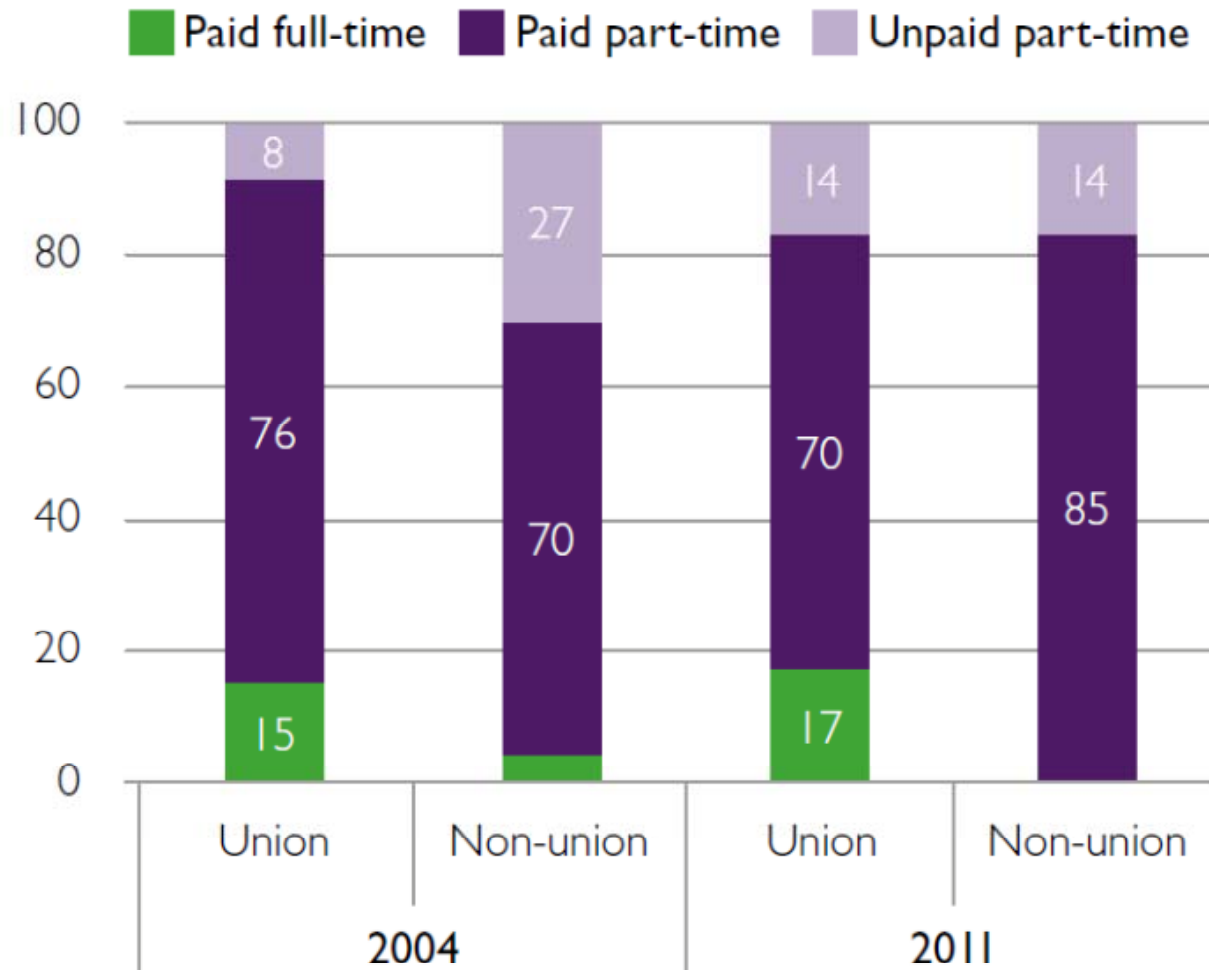
Employee representation at the workplace

WERS



Employee Representatives

WERS



Base: All workplaces

Managing Discontent

WERS

- Collective disputes
 - Rise in public sector workplaces that experienced strikes
 - No change in other forms of industrial action
- Individual disputes
 - Decline in % of workplaces that have had an employee raise a formal grievance
- Procedures for handling disputes
 - Majority of employees covered by procedures for handling grievances, as well as discipline and dismissals.

Employees: Who would best represent you in dealing with managers?

WERS



Base: All employees

Working Lives

Employees 'Very satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with their job (%)



Base: All employees

Job Demands and Control

WERS

- Demands

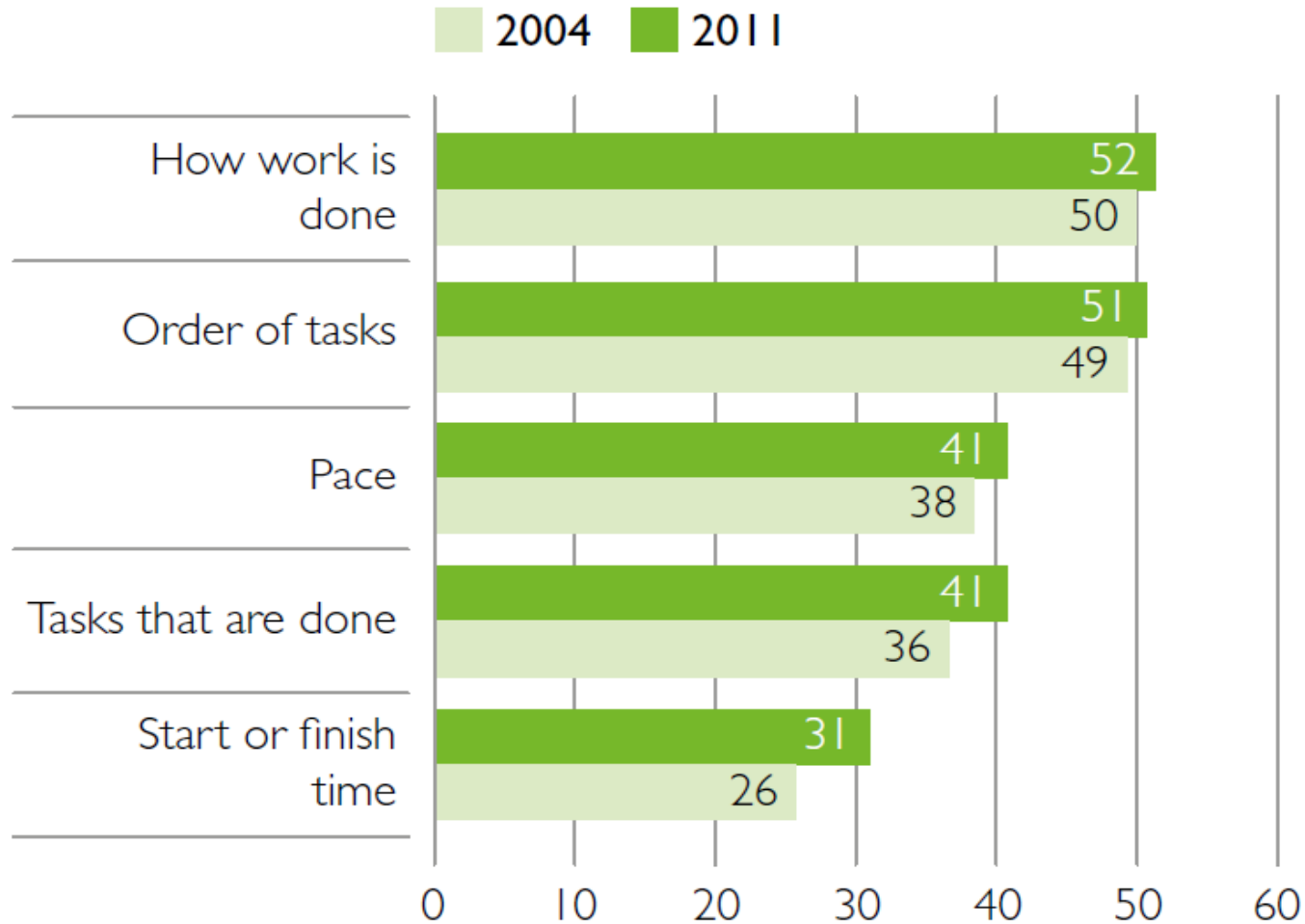
- More employees reported that their job requires them to work very hard: 34% strongly agreed with this sentiment, up from 27% in 2004.

- Control

- % of employees reporting high levels of autonomy increased on all dimensions...

Employees reporting 'A lot' of influence over their job

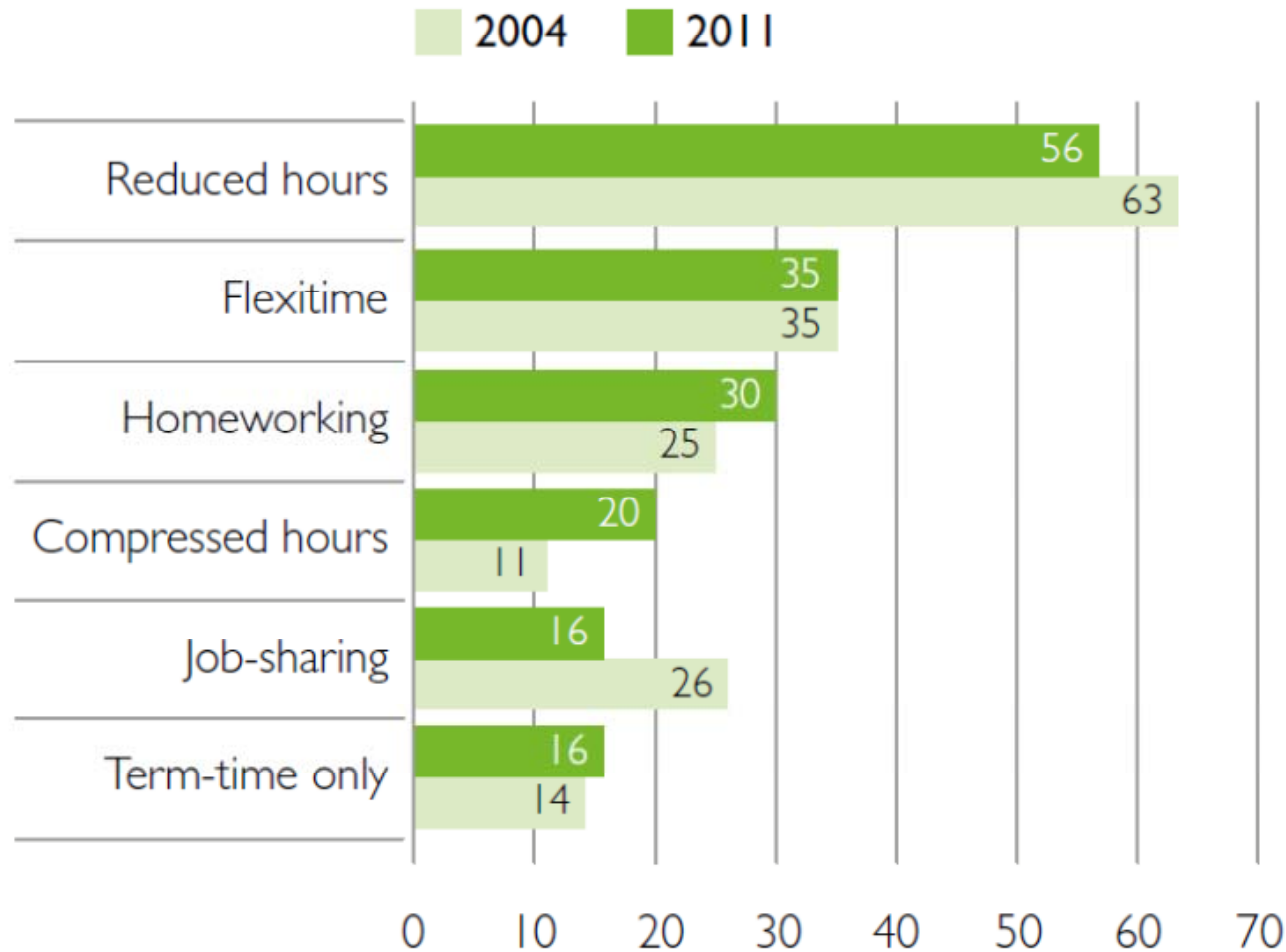
WERS



Base: All employees

Flexible working arrangements available to at least some employees (%)

WERS



Base: All workplaces

Work–Life Balance

WERS

- Flexible working arrangements
 - No general pattern of change in the adoption of work-life balance policies across workplaces.
 - Home working and compressed hours has increased.
 - Reduced hours and job-sharing have decreased.
- Work-life balance
 - Job sharing and working reduced hours associated with less interference; and home working associated with more.
 - Increase in managers agreeing that ‘it’s up to individual employees to balance work and family responsibilities’.

Equality and Diversity

WERS

- Policies

- Workplaces with formal policies have increased from two-thirds (67%) to three-quarters (76%).
- Policies are much more likely to refer now to age and sexual orientation than in 2004.

- Practice

- Low levels of monitoring and reviewing of recruitment, promotion and relative pay rates.
- Few workplaces have special procedures to attract disadvantaged applicants.

Working Lives in Recession

WERS

- In workplaces that cut back on training in response to the recession, lower proportions of employees were satisfied with training and development opportunities
- In workplaces most affected by the recession, their employees are:
 - Less likely to be satisfied with pay and job security;
 - More likely to have job-related anxiety; and
 - More likely to report time pressures in their job.

Further Information

WERS

- First Findings (2nd edition), and transparency data, can be downloaded from:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-2011-workplace-employment-relations-study-wers>
- WERS data available from UK Data Service.
- 2011 WERS book available from Palgrave Macmillan in November.

