

# SURVEY 2010 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PERCEPTIONS

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OFFICE SUPPORT  
LEGAL/OIL & GAS

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# INTRODUCTION

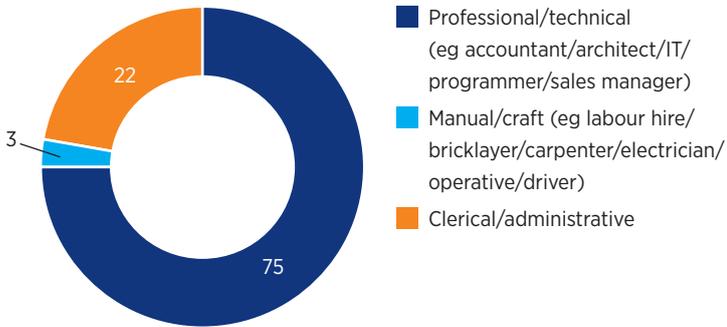
In April 2010, we carried out a survey to investigate employment and workplace issues concerning pay and benefits in the public and private sectors. We wanted to establish people's views on whether they would be better off in the other sector.

In addition, we wanted to gain an appreciation of people's feelings in relation to public sector industrial action. Over 4,300 people completed our survey and the views of both sectors are represented in the findings. Employees all over Ireland took part, discussing their opinions and workplace experiences over the last two years, along with their expectations for the next 24 months.

# SAMPLE ANALYSIS

## Which of the following broad descriptions best describes your current/most recent role?

Figures are represented as a percentage

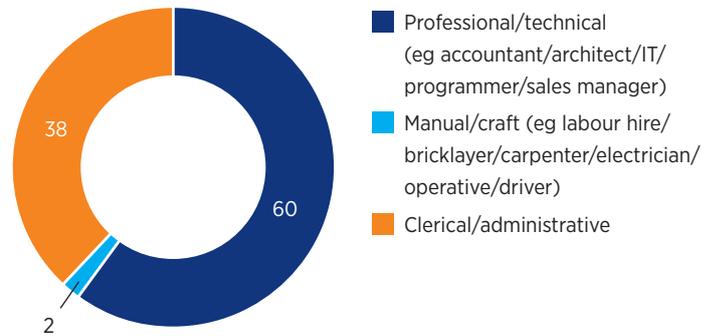


### PRIVATE SECTOR

Total number of private sector respondents – 3,567

### Unemployed respondents

Please note, in cases where respondents are not currently in employment (17 per cent of private sector employees and 13 per cent of public sector workers) answers are based on their most recent employment.



### PUBLIC SECTOR

Total number of public sector respondents – 773

# SURVEY OVERVIEW

The survey was a multiple choice, online questionnaire which established facts around what benefits employees receive in their workplace, what type of pension they obtain and if they had taken any cuts to their salary and benefits.

In addition, we wanted to gauge the respondents' perceptions of whether the salaries, benefits and job security are better in the other sector i.e. would the public sector provide better options than the private sector and vice versa.

Finally, we were curious to see whether an employee working in the private sector would be interested in working in the public sector and vice versa. We also wanted to know whether they anticipate more cuts in their workplace and if the public sector was right to pursue rolling industrial action.

# KEY RESULTS

The following highlights some of the key points that came out of the survey. It is followed by a detailed breakdown.

## Rolling industrial action

Three in five (59 per cent) of the public sector workers surveyed who expressed an opinion oppose with the pursuit of rolling industrial action (see p.15). Almost half of the public sector and 77 per cent of the private sector respondents oppose this action.

## Cuts in pay and workforce

79 per cent of public sector respondents have taken a cut in basic pay in the past two years and 64 per cent have taken a reduction in their benefits. This compares to 57 per cent and 61 per cent respectively in the private sector (see p.10).

Two in three (67 per cent) public sector workers anticipate further cuts to their pay in the next two years and 55 per cent believe their benefits will reduce further. This compares to less than half (44 per cent) of private workers who foresee pay cuts and 48 per cent who expect a reduction in their entitlement to benefits (see p.11).

65 per cent in the private sector foresee more redundancies in the next two years whilst 47 per cent of public sector employees expect job cuts to be made in their place of work (see p.13).

## Is the grass greener?

Almost three quarters (71 per cent) of the private sector would switch to the public sector to do a similar job for the pay, benefits and conditions that are offered in the public sector. 44 per cent of public sector workers said they would switch from their current job in the private sector if given the choice (see p.14).

Four out of five (81 per cent) private sector workers feel they would be more secure in the public sector. Only 14 per cent of public sector respondents feel they would be more secure in the private sector (see p.12).

Three in four (77 per cent) of private sector and 71 per cent of public sector respondents surveyed believe that employers offer a better work-life balance in the public sector (see p.7). The public sector scored higher in five of the seven 'benefits' categories surveyed (see p.8).

85 per cent of the private sector respondents and 75 per cent of the public sector believe their pension would be (or is) better in the public sector (see p.9). Interestingly, only half of the public sector respondents receive defined benefit pension schemes (see p.9).

54 per cent of private sector workers believe they would earn more doing the same job in the public sector, whilst 61 per cent of public sector workers believe they would earn more doing the same job in the private sector (see p.10).

# CONCLUSION

Despite the recommendations and reforms to date, it seems the public sector is still the most desirable place to be for both public and private sector workers.

## **Responses to our survey indicate that**

- Both sectors agree there is a better work-life balance in the public sector
- There's a consensus that five out of seven benefits discussed are better in the public sector
- 50 per cent of the public sector are on defined benefit pensions in comparison to 24 per cent of the private sector
- Almost equal percentage in the private (81 per cent) and the public sector (86 per cent) agree that job security is better in the public sector
- The majority of public and private sector respondents would want to do their job in the public sector

Pay cuts in the public sector have been widely announced and debated. They are the subject of fervent debate and a current, hot political issue. There has been less clarity over private sector pay. This survey is conclusive – over half of private sector workers (57 per cent) have seen cuts to their basic pay.

Whilst private and public sector workers have undoubtedly both suffered the economic consequences of the recession, it would be difficult to support the much aired argument that the public sector has been singled out or targeted to bear the brunt of the burden.

This is borne out by the key finding that the majority of both public and private sector workers would rather be on the state payroll.

What can't be doubted is the insecurity of the public sector respondents when it comes to anticipated job losses and pay cuts. 69 per cent foresee further pay decreases, 55 per cent predict their benefits will decrease and 47 per cent feel there will be redundancies in the next two years.

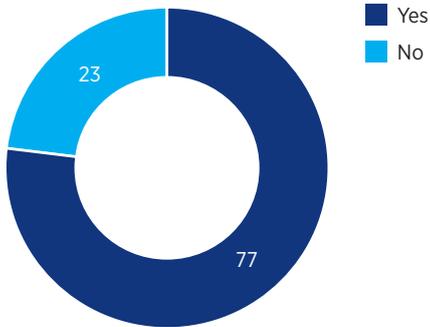
With the Croke Park deal on the table, this must reflect either a fear for the consequences of not accepting the agreement, or the Government's inability to deliver on it. Either way, both employers and employee bodies appear to have work to do to restore the faith and confidence of their workers.

# COMPLETE SURVEY RESULTS

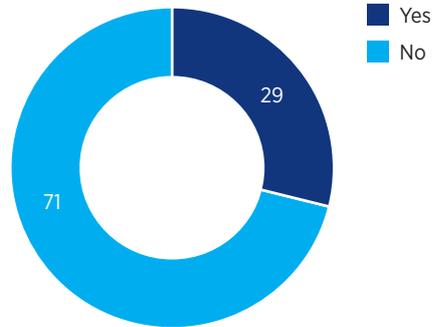
## Work-Life Balance

**In your opinion do employers offer a better work-life balance in the other sector?**

Figures are represented as a percentage



PRIVATE SECTOR

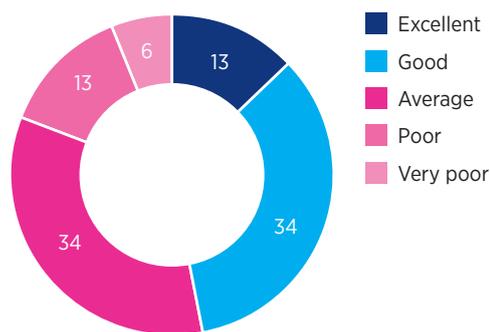


PUBLIC SECTOR

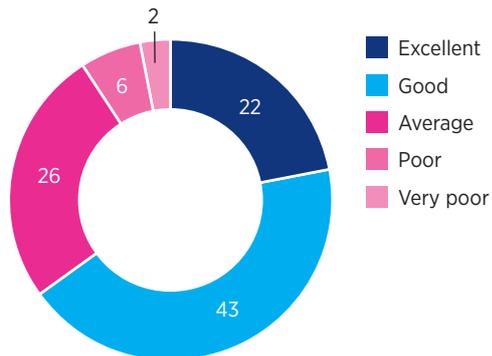
We asked public and private sector workers if, in their opinion, employers offered a better work-life balance in the other sector. Both sectors agree that there is better work-life balance in the public sector, as shown in the pie charts above.

**How would you rate your current/last employer's attitude to promoting a positive work-life balance?**

Figures are represented as a percentage



PRIVATE SECTOR



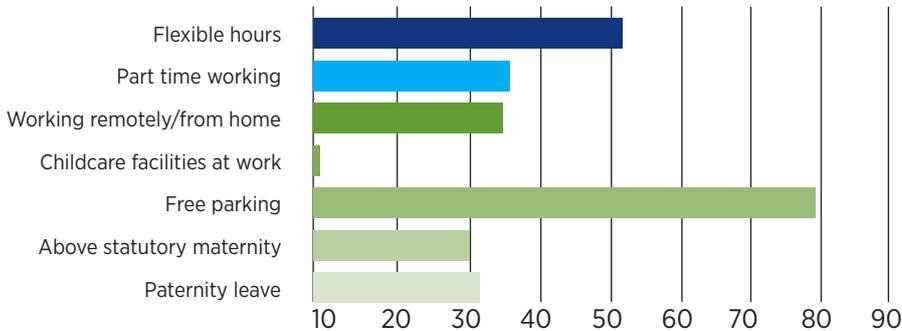
PUBLIC SECTOR

Furthermore, respondents' perception of their own sector's work-life balance support the statistics shown so far. 65 per cent of public sector workers surveyed agreed their employer had a 'good' or 'excellent' attitude toward promoting work-life balance. Less than half of private sector employees surveyed said the same, with 19 per cent feeling the work-life balance was poor or very poor.

# Benefits

## Does/did your employer offer any of the following?

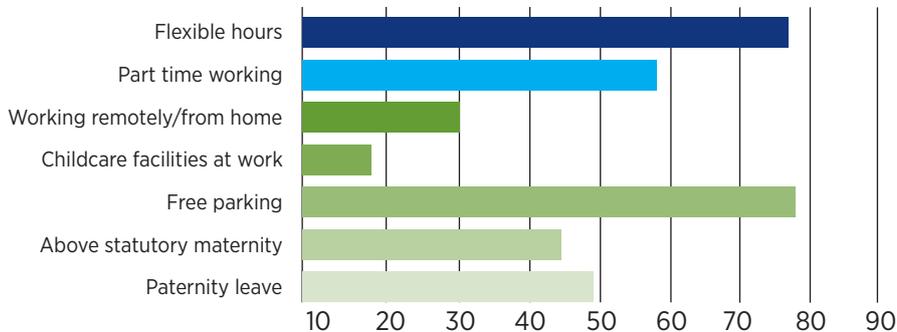
Figures are represented as a percentage



## PRIVATE SECTOR

## Does/did your employer offer any of the following?

Figures are represented as a percentage



## PUBLIC SECTOR

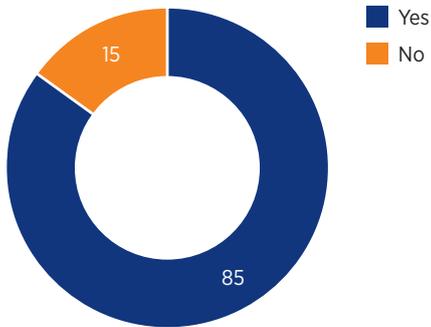
68 per cent of public sector survey respondents reported their employer provides flexible working hours to its staff. Only 44 per cent of respondents working in the private sector reported the same. While the provision of the option to work from home appears to be as prevalent in both sectors (just over 20 per cent), the opportunity to work part-time was far more widely reported from the public sector respondents (50 per cent) than private sector workers (28 per cent).

The proportion of respondents claiming to have the ability to avail of free parking was virtually identical in both sectors, however there was significant contrast relating to the provision of paternity and maternity leave by respondents' employers. 24 per cent of survey respondents in the private sector have the option to avail of paternity leave compared to 41 per cent of public sector survey respondents. Similarly, only 22 per cent of respondents working in the private sector had above statutory maternity leave in comparison to 37 per cent of their public sector counterparts.

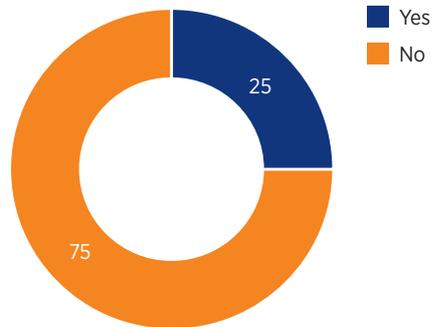
# Pensions

## Do you think your pension would be better in the other sector?

Figures are represented as a percentage



PRIVATE SECTOR



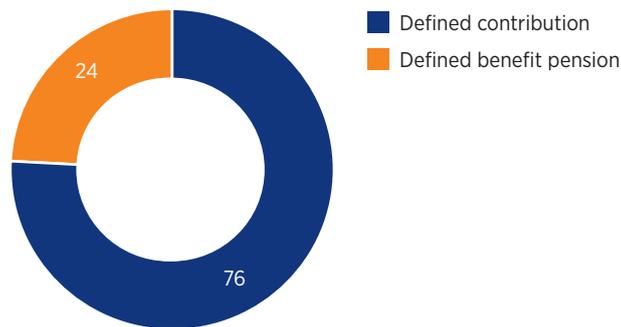
PUBLIC SECTOR

Work-life balance wasn't the only area where public and private sector workers' perceptions were congruent. Respondents to this survey are also in agreement that pensions are better in the public sector.

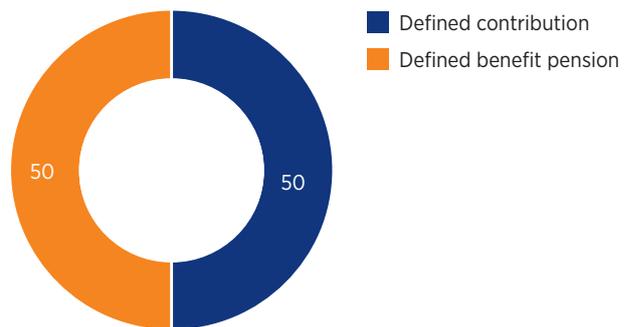
A defined benefit pension is widely held to be better than a defined contribution scheme. Our survey results show 50 per cent of the public sector enjoy a defined benefit scheme, which is twice the ratio of people receiving them in the private sector.

## Is/was your pension a defined contribution or a defined benefit pension

Figures are represented as a percentage



PRIVATE SECTOR

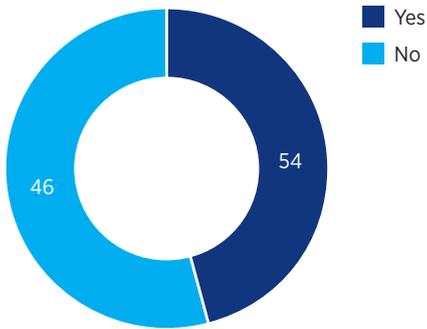


PUBLIC SECTOR

# Salaries

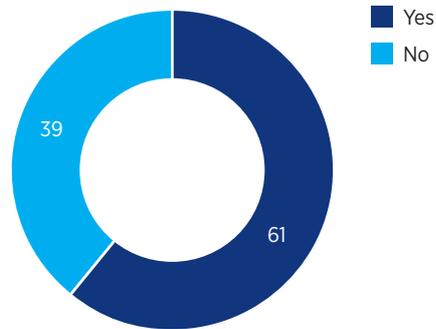
## In your opinion, would you earn more money in the other sector?

Figures are represented as a percentage



**PRIVATE SECTOR**

Although a direct comparison of salaries is often hard to make, it's interesting to observe how incongruent our survey respondents' perceptions of salaries in the other sector are.

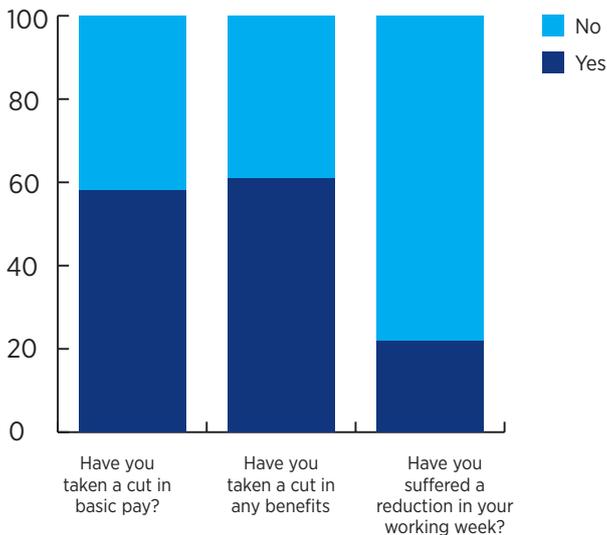


**PUBLIC SECTOR**

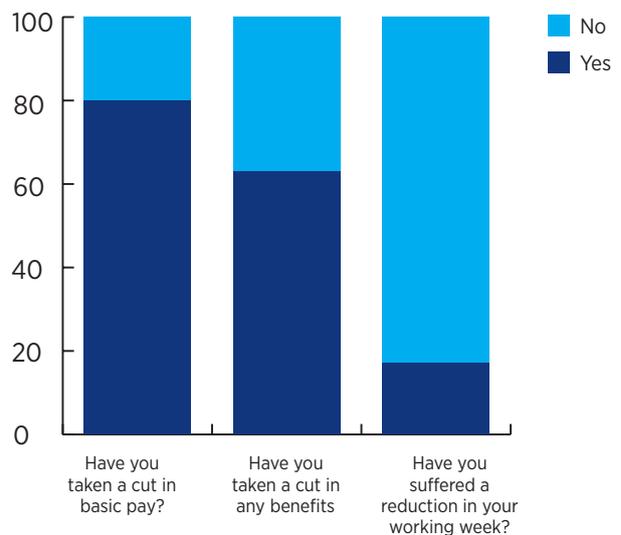
54 per cent of private sector workers believe they would earn more doing the same job in the public sector, whilst 61 per cent of public sector workers believe they would earn more doing the same job in the private sector.

## In the past two years

Figures are represented as a percentage



**PRIVATE SECTOR**



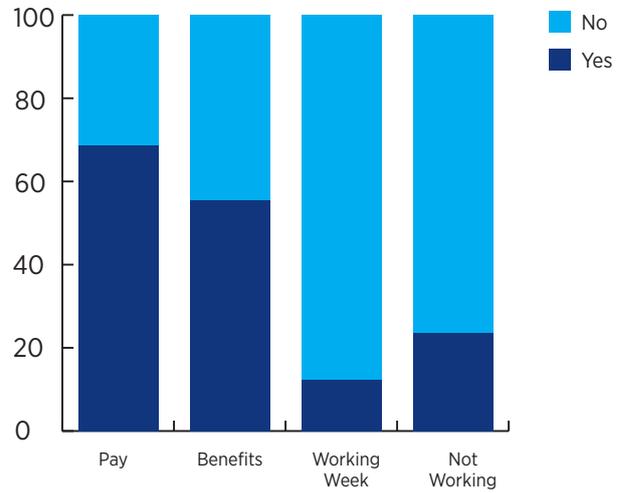
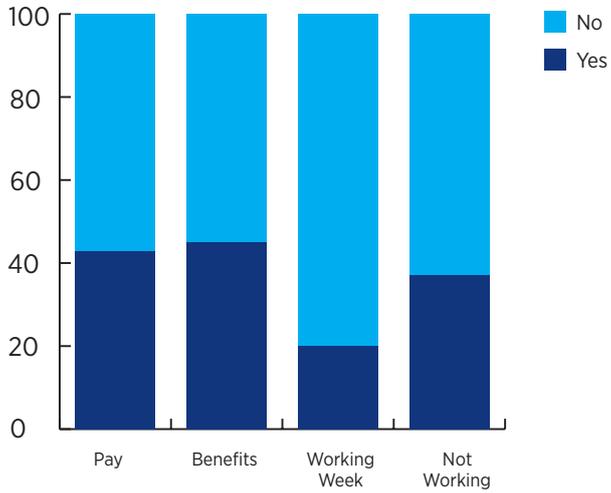
**PUBLIC SECTOR**

79 per cent of public sector workers surveyed have taken a pay cut in the past two years and 64 per cent have taken a reduction in their benefits. By comparison, 57 per cent and 61 per cent respectively in the private sector have suffered cuts. However, 23 per cent of private sector respondents have seen a reduction in their working week compared to 13 per cent working in the public sector.

# Salaries

## From your current position, do you anticipate a cut in...

Figures are represented as a percentage



### PRIVATE SECTOR

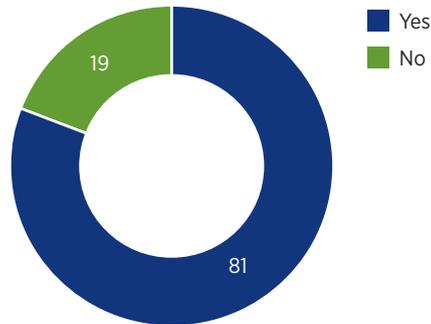
### PUBLIC SECTOR

Equally as interesting is the observation that 67 per cent of public workers anticipate further cuts to their pay in the next two years and 55 per cent believe their benefits will reduce further. This can be compared to 44 per cent of private workers who foresee pay cuts and 48 per cent who expect to receive less benefits.

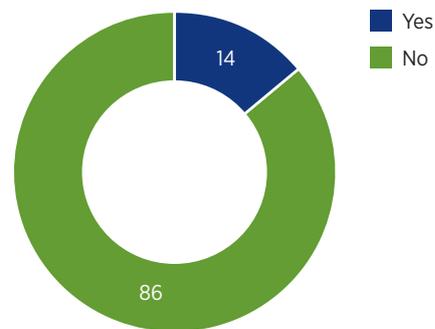
## Job security

### Do you think you would be more secure in the other sector?

Figures are represented as a percentage



PRIVATE SECTOR



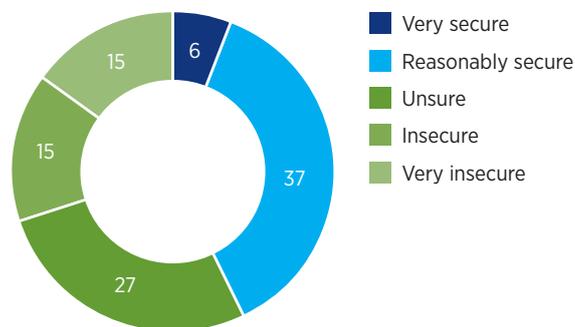
PUBLIC SECTOR

One of the hottest topics in the public versus private sector debate is job security. Many private sector employees cite this as the biggest difference between the sectors. The survey results show private and public sector respondents are in agreement that they have a better chance of keeping their job if they work in the public sector. 81 per cent of private sector workers feel they would be more secure in the public sector whilst only 14 per cent of the public sector feel they would be more secure in the private sector.

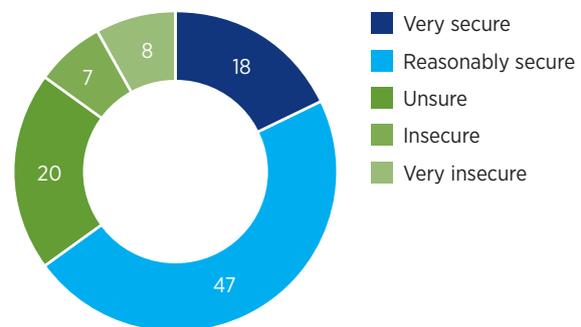
## Security of current role

### How secure do/did you feel about your current/most recent job?

Figures are represented as a percentage



PRIVATE SECTOR



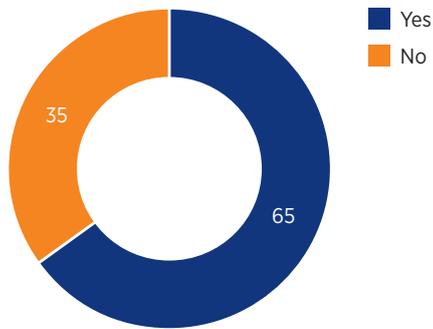
PUBLIC SECTOR

Conversely, 65% of the public sector respondents feel secure in their job, as do 43 per cent in the private sector. However, 30 per cent of the private sector are insecure or very insecure of their jobs' security, twice the rate of the public sector.

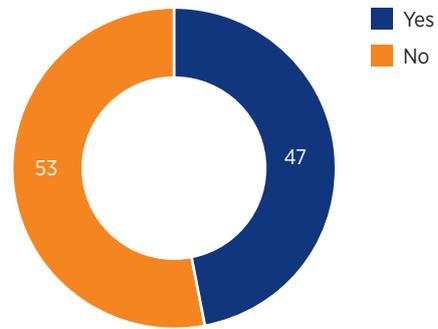
## Redundancies

**Do you anticipate any compulsory lay-offs within your company/office or department in the next two years?**

Figures are represented as a percentage



**PRIVATE SECTOR**



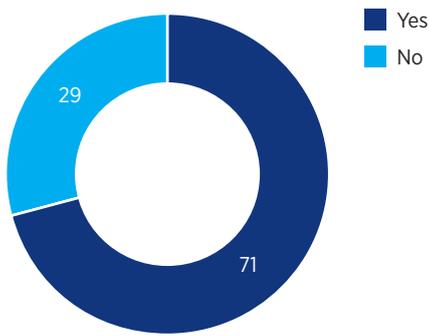
**PUBLIC SECTOR**

65 per cent of respondents from the private sector foresee more lay-offs in the next two years and 47 per cent of public sector employees anticipate compulsory redundancies.

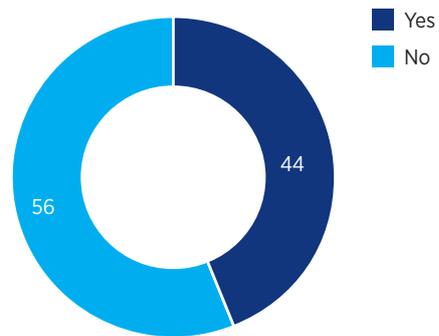
## Would you switch?

**Given the opportunity to do the same job in the other sector, swapping your current pay, benefits and conditions for those on offer in the other sector, would you accept?**

Figures are represented as a percentage



**PRIVATE SECTOR**



**PUBLIC SECTOR**

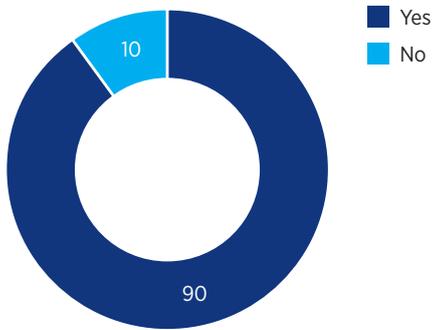
Considering the previous results, it's no surprise that 71 per cent of the private sector respondents claim they would swap their job for similar pay, benefits and conditions offered in the public sector.

Surprisingly, 44 per cent of public sector workers would swap their job situation for something similar in the private sector.

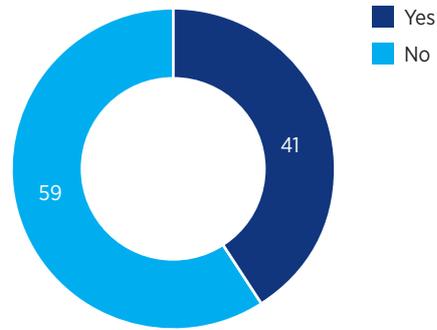
## Rolling Industrial Action

### In your opinion, is the public sector justified in pursuing rolling industrial action? (Yes/No)

Figures are represented as a percentage



PRIVATE SECTOR

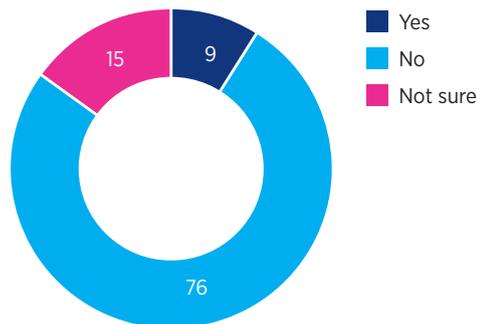


PUBLIC SECTOR

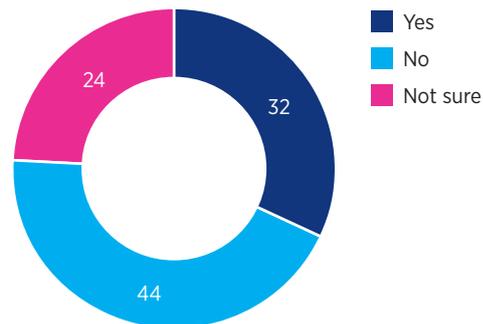
While we await the outcome of the Croke Park deal, we asked whether the public sector was right to be pursuing rolling action. Considering only those who expressed an opinion, the majority of public-sector workers are opposed to the action. Some 59 per cent of those said they were opposed to rolling industrial action, while only 41 per cent support the measures.

### In your opinion is the public sector justified in pursuing rolling industrial action?

Figures are represented as a percentage



PRIVATE SECTOR



PUBLIC SECTOR

When we include also the responses of those who claimed to be unsure of their opinion, there was still an overwhelming number of the private sector respondents disagreeing (77 per cent) with the pursuit of the action. Only one third of public sector workers surveyed think such action is justified. Nearly half opposed the action, whilst a quarter remain to be convinced either way.