



Engagement Insight

*A benchmarked staff engagement
assessment for Not for Profit
and Statutory Services*

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Developed by:



1 Introduction

1.1 About the report

The Engagement Insight tool is a 34-item tool designed to measure specific values and behaviours related to staff engagement. It has been developed specifically for use by non-profit and charitable organisations in Ireland. This report contains your results and compares these with a benchmark score from all community and voluntary organisations who have completed the Engagement Insight tool.

The report is separated into three sections. The first section explores literature related to employee engagement, why it matters, and what drives it. The second section explains the process used to develop and validate the Engagement Insight tool. The third and final section contains results for your organisation. This section also shows whether your organisation's score was higher or lower compared to other organisations and contains a breakdown of responses within your organisation.

1.2 How to read the results?

The Engagement Insight tool is comprised of a set of 34 items categorised under four domains; each measure a different aspects of staff engagement.

Four domains of engagement

The Engagement Insight tool has four domains across two distinct categories of items: (1) employee engagement and (2) drivers of engagement, which measures different aspects of the workplace or work culture that affect how engaged people feel in their jobs.

The four domains of the Engagement Insight tool are:

- 1) Employee engagement (9-items)
- 2) Drivers of engagement (28-items)
 - a. Relationship with my manager(s) (5-items)
 - b. Team relationships (10-items)
 - c. My personal experiences (10-items)

Rating scale for indicators

Each of the four domains contains a number of items that refer to values or behaviours experienced by staff in the organisation or staff team. Each of the items are rated on a scale used to assess how frequently the behaviour occur:

- 1) Rarely or never (about 0% - 20% of the time)
- 2) Occasionally (20% - 40% of the time)
- 3) Sometimes (40% - 60% of the time)
- 4) Frequently (60% - 80%)
- 5) Usually or always (80 - 100%)

Comparison to benchmark data

For each items, there are three pieces of information available: your organisation's score, the benchmarking score and the difference between these two scores, see below:

Item	Your organisation's score	Benchmark score	Your score compared to benchmark
Your organisation's engagement score	17.65	16.80	+0.85
My Employee Engagement	4.45	4.24	+0.22
I enjoy working here	4.81	4.33	+0.49
I feel enthusiastic about my work	4.38	4.32	+0.05

How much your organisation's score was higher or lower compared to benchmark score

The score is calculated as an average score between 1 to 5

2 Understanding Employee Engagement

2.1 Overview

This section of the report explores academic and practitioner literature on employee engagement, with a focus on why it matters and what drives it within an organisation or team. This literature highlights a number of key concepts and components that led to the development of the Engagement Insight tool and are featured within the tool itself.

2.2 What is employee engagement?

Employee engagement was first introduced by Kahn in 1990 in his seminal research on the "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work" (1). Significant research on employee engagement has taken place since then. Both academic and practitioner literature has consistently pointed at the key role that engagement plays in understanding organisational success.

The benefits of having an engaged workforce offers multiple reasons why organisations should want to measure and improve it. Gallup (2014) states that increasing employee engagement may be "the greatest untapped opportunity (...) to improve (...) performance and profitability" (2). This is particularly relevant to organisations located in Western Europe where it is reported to be one of the regions with the lowest employee engagement levels worldwide (3,4).

Employee engagement is closely linked with a positive and fulfilling psychological state where an employee feels fully immersed, absorbed or focused in their work as well as feels strongly connected and committed to both the role and the organisation itself (5-7). Employee engagement places particular emphasis on the extent to which employees are able to be their whole selves at work (1), bringing their identity, thoughts and feelings to their job as well as giving room for self-expression, personal voice and authenticity in the workplace. Strengthening employees engagement involves understanding the employee-organisation relationship in order to better support staff with reaching their potential and integrating their unique talents, goals and experiences into the workplace (2).

2.3 Why does employee engagement matter?

The effect of employee engagement is twofold. Disengaged employees can undermine organisational performance by engaging in behaviours that reflect their unhappiness and translate into costs for the organisation (2,8,9). On the other hand, engaged employees can significantly enhance an organisation, not only leading to higher levels of job performance/productivity (5,10,11) but also through the display of numerous behaviours, which in the long term, can translate into improved organisational outcomes. Some of key behaviours associated with high levels of staff engagement include:

- **Going the extra mile** - Staff who consistently undertake discretionary efforts, and work actively towards making things better (7,12).
- **Considering the bigger picture** - Engaged employees view their work in a way that matches organisational objectives and goals, and are also attentive to opportunities for organisational development (12,13).
- **Displaying organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB)** - Engaged employees are likely to display organisational citizenship behaviours, which significantly contribute to the effective functioning of the organisation (i.e. going out of one's way to help or include others, protecting the organisation from problems, sharing information etc.)(7,14,15).
- **Helping with promotion of the organisation's brand** - Engaged employees are likely to be advocates of their organisation (i.e. talking positively about it) both internally (i.e. with co-workers) and externally (i.e. service users)(16). This can act as a protective factor against risk (17), and also attract and retain talented workforce (7).

- **Drive innovation** - Engaged employees are more likely to be creative and respond positively to the ideas of others (7,18)

At the organisational level, common outcomes of engaged employees are:

- **Increased productivity and decreased absenteeism** - Engaged workforce are less prone to presenteeism (i.e., being at work even when not fit to do so) and to absenteeism (6,12).
- **Lower levels of employee turn-over and higher employee retention** - Research by Gallup (2000) found organisations with highly engaged staff teams have lower turnover when compared to the organisations with disengaged staff teams (10).
- **Higher levels of client/service user satisfaction** – Studies on the effect engagement has on service user satisfaction and loyalty between the most and the least engaged employees show differences of 2% to 4% (19) and up to 10% (10).

2.4 What drives employee engagement in an organisation?

Both academic and practitioner literature have found that there are a number of drivers or factors that can influence employee engagement. These drivers of engagement include:

- **Supportive relationships with managers** - Gallup (2017) states that "about 70% of the variance in engagement among workgroups can be attributed to their manager" (p.47) (3). Supportive and positive relationships with management often include leaders being open to failure and allowing employees to try new things (1), leaders showing empathy, compassion and concern for employees' needs and feelings (21,22), and leaders providing support with career progression (16,22).
- **Supportive co-worker relationships and positive teamwork** - Positive peer relationships at the workplace can foster psychological safety (23) and provide meaning at work (1). It is important interactions are developed both at the professional level and the personal level (i.e. being willing to know others beyond simply their role in the workplace) (1,24). Having structured work teams that work interdependently and that review their effectiveness can also play a key role in engagement (6).
- **Positive and frequent feedback** - Providing positive feedback allows employees to feel both valued (e.g., feeling of being appreciated and recognised within the organisation) and useful (e.g., understanding the impact of their work, feeling it is making a difference, having a sense of accomplishment) (1,25). Effective feedback should be both well-structured (6) and delivered at regular intervals (25).
- **Feelings of control and choice over work** - Feelings of control and choice over work are related to being able to have a voice over what's being done in a person's work and how it is done (26) as well as not having to constantly look for direction from others (1). Managers play a decisive role in the level of control that employees experience.
- **Involvement in decision making processes** - This driver is mainly related to employees' having their voice heard on aspects that are relevant to their work, however, it can also be related to employees' feeling well-informed about what is happening in the organisation, a critical factor for employee engagement itself (17). Involving employees in decision making processes requires more than sitting them at the table, it implies ensuring they feel able to participate, to be open with their communication (13), have the opportunity to be responded to by managers with honesty, as well as being able to see the tangible results of the organisation hearing, valuing and integrating their voice (i.e. establishing feedback loops)(16,27).
- **Sense of connection with the organisation and its purpose** - Having a sense of connection with the organisation values' is associated with employees understanding their self-image or, desired self-image and with their role (28). Factors that promote a sense of connection among staff are; communicating the organisational mission, vision, purpose and values clearly and ensuring these are reflected in employees experience, helping employees understand how their contribution fits the overall mission and providing spaces for employees to connect through their stories of work related achievements (27).

- **Perceiving the organisation as fair and supportive** – The relationship between employee and the organisation is one of exchange, where if the organisation has a caring approach towards the employee and provides them with supports and resources, they will, in return, respond with higher levels of organisational engagement (14).
- **Availability of resources** - Available resources relates to having access to adequate infrastructure needed to do one's job (e.g., equipment, tools, technology and processes)(4). Where possible, organisations need to support employees to assist in defining the resources they need, by asking as opposed to making assumptions (27).
- **Opportunities to grown and learn** - Professional opportunities are not limited to offering training or new job positions, they also include encouraging employees to find better ways of doing their job, taking on challenging projects, triggering reflection on what they are learning (27), or involving them in the continuous improvement of the organisation service delivery and/or processes. Equally important is to have alternative career paths that allow employees to progress professionally and play meaningful roles outside of managerial positions (16).
- **Clear expectations and goals** - Communicating expectations and goals clearly, helping employees to understand what this means and how this looks for the organisation as well as ensuring staff are held accountable is crucial for employee engagement (16).
- **Task and skill variety** - Task and skills variety can help avoid employees getting overloaded (23), and can also allow them to feel both competent and challenged when keeping a balance between routine and new skills (1).

These drivers of employee engagement will vary in relevance to an organisation and other contextual factors influencing the motivations of staff (28,29). The identified drivers of engagement played a key role in the development of the tool, and were combined with staff and manager consultation as to these can be described in a way that is relevant to the Irish not for Profit context. The development of the tool is described further in the next section.

A full report on the literature can be requested by contacting Philip Isard at Quality Matters (philip@qualitymatters.ie).

3 Development of the Engagement Insight Tool

3.1 Overview

This section outlines how the Engagement Insight tool was developed and validated. The primary purpose was to develop a tool to help managers and staff to understand the levels of engagement within their organisation as well as to identify strengths and areas of improvement. The tool is intended to help organisations to better understand priorities in order to improve staff engagement, and upon subsequent use, to help measure changes in levels of staff engagement over time.

3.2 Literature Review / Item Generation

A literature review¹ was undertaken to establish the initial parameters that would guide the identification of the items for the tool. The aim of the literature review was to:

- Identify the **main components of the employee engagement concept**, with reference to previous measurements and definitions
- identify the **drivers, predictors and/or antecedents** of employee engagement
- identify the **outcomes of employee engagement** for organisational performance
- identify specific components of employee engagement, drivers and **outcomes for the broad not for profit and social services sector**

Once the initial parameters for the tool were established through a literature review, a review of validated instruments or tools was undertaken to identify relevant items for measuring concepts or components of engagement. The aim was to understand if there were any discernible patterns in how engagement was measured through a variety of tools. This analysis of validated tools led to the creation a long list of relevant items for the Engagement Insight tool, which was separated into two categories of items, 1) items related to employee engagement, and 2) items related to drivers of engagement.

3.3 Consultation with Non-Profit Organisations

A consultation was held with 27 non-profit organisations and social services in Ireland. The aim of the consultation was to reduce the long list of items to a short-list of relevant items for measuring engagement. The process involved representation from social, housing/homelessness and health services as well as a range of other community/voluntary organisations². The outcome of this consultation was:

- Removal of one-third of the items based on respondent feedback. Any item where 30% or more of participants stated it was not relevant to their work or organisation was removed, with some very minimal exceptions based on key considerations from the literature review;
- Improvement of wording. Input from respondents helped improve the wording of items to avoid confusion and better represent their experience; and
- Agreement on a draft engagement tool that could be used in the pilot.

3.4 Pilot and Testing of the Engagement Insight Tool

From December 2020 to January 2021, a pilot was undertaken by inviting 15 community and voluntary organisations with 10 organisations agreeing to participate. Each organisation was purposively selected to ensure the pilot included a range of different sized organisations and who are working with different target groups and/or areas within the non-profit sector. Each participating organisation was offered a discounted fee for the report, and it was understood that there was a risk the Engagement Insight tool would not be validated. For the 10 participating organisations, their interest was motivated by a need to support the development and validation of the tool, which was considered an important resources developed by the sector and for the sector.

¹ This review included secondary-source literature on employee engagement from both academics and practitioners.

² A full list of the participating organisations in the consultation is available upon request.

3.5 Validation of the Engagement Insight Tool

Validation of the Engagement Insight tool involved undertaking a number of statistical tests using data collected from 10 community voluntary organisations. The validation involvement an assessment of both the construct validity and internal consistency (or reliability) of the tool. These tests were undertaken in two stages of validation, each with different organisations and numbers of responses.

The first validation process was undertaken in September 2020 based on data from 228 respondents from a single, large non-profit organisation in Ireland. Following this, a second validation process was undertaken in January 2021 using 644 responses from ten additional non-profit organisations in Ireland.

The same statistical tests were undertaken in both the first and second stages of validation. These tests were carried out both on the nine-items relating to engagement (e.g., My Employee Engagement) and the entire 34-item tool. Overall, statistical tests from both stages confirmed that the tool was valid and reliable³. Key findings were:

- The tool has good **construct validity**, which was measured using a principal components analysis across the nine items of Employee Engagement and the entire 34 item-tool including the drivers of engagement subscales. The test confirmed that the tool measures four distinct constructs, employee engagement, and three drivers of engagement. All nine employee engagement items loaded onto the 'my employee engagement' component above the 0.4 cut-off for acceptability⁴. All of the remaining items loaded onto one of the three drivers above the 0.4 cut-off for acceptability in both the pilot and the secondary validation analysis.
- A Cronbach's Alpha test was used as the statistical measure to assess the reliability, or **internal consistency** of the engagement tool. The test produces a coefficient on a scale between 0 to 10, with scores of 0.7 or higher relating to an acceptable level of reliability. The results of the test found the nine-items used for 'My Employee Engagement' had a coefficient of 0.92 and the 34-items of the engagement tool overall had a coefficient 0.96, which demonstrated the tool has an excellent internal consistency.

To receive a full report on the methodology, please contact Philip Isard at Quality Matters (philip@qualitymatters.ie).

3.6 Acknowledgement

Quality Matters wants to acknowledge the 10 organisations involved in the pilot and testing of the Engagement Insight tool. These organisations, and their staff, played an important role in the development of a tool that is for the sector, developed by the sector. These organisations were:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| - The Wheel | - Depaul Ireland |
| - LGBT Ireland | - XXX |
| - Enclude | - XXX |
| - Ballyfermot Star | - XXX |
| - Bridge Project | - XXX |

3.7 Summary

The Engagement Insight tool was designed to measure specific values and behaviours related to staff engagement, particularly for use in non-profit organisations and social services. The tools development and validation aimed to ensure that the tool measures what is important to staff and management in the sector in a way that is easy-to-use and which provides results which are considered academically valid and reliable. The pilot found that the tool was valid and reliable as a measure for staff engagement.

⁴ Stevens JP (1992) Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences (2nd edition). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum

4 Results from the Engagement Insight Tool

4.1 Organisation score comparison to benchmark score

This report contains results from 16 respondents who completed the Engagement Insight tool for **Ballyfermot Star**. Your organisation's results were benchmarked against the results from ten Irish community and voluntary organisations, which contains over 600+ responses. The figure below compares your organisation's score with the benchmark score for each of the four domains of the Engagement Insight tool.

Figure 1: Engagement score compared to benchmark score across four domains

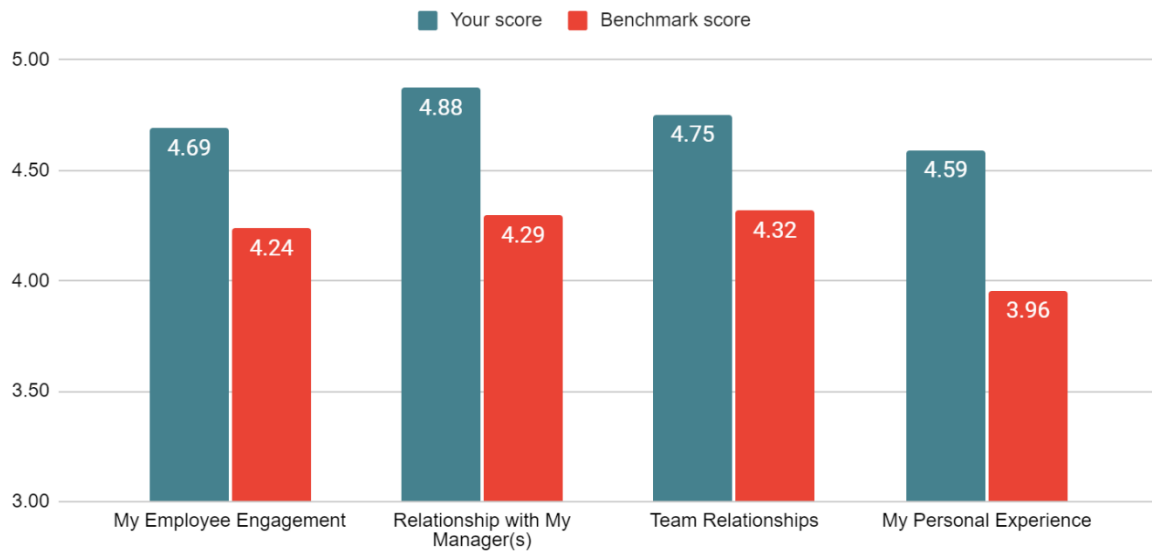


Table 1 Organisation score compared to the benchmark score for all items



The table below shows if your organisation's score was **higher** or **lower** compared to the benchmark score for all items of the Engagement Insight tool.

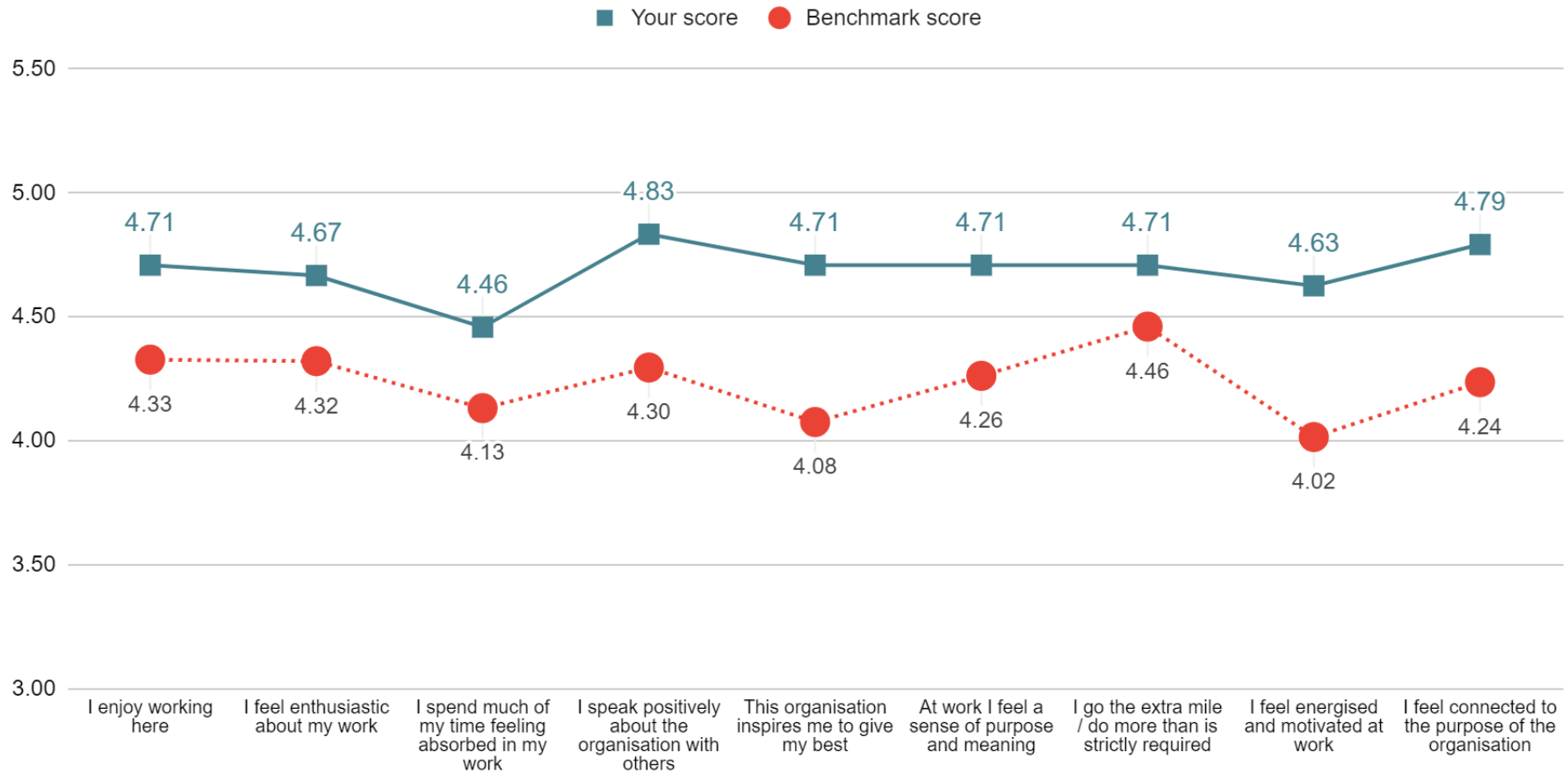
Table 2 Organisation score compared to benchmark score

Item	Your score	Benchmark score	Your score compared to benchmark
Your organisation's engagement score	18.91	16.80	+2.11
My Employee Engagement	4.69	4.24	+0.45
I enjoy working here	4.71	4.33	+0.38
I feel enthusiastic about my work	4.67	4.32	+0.35
I spend much of my time feeling absorbed in my work	4.46	4.13	+0.33
I speak positively about the organisation with others	4.83	4.30	+0.54
This organisation inspires me to give my best	4.71	4.08	+0.63
At work I feel a sense of purpose and meaning	4.71	4.26	+0.45
I go the extra mile / do more than is strictly required	4.71	4.46	+0.25
I feel energised and motivated at work	4.63	4.02	+0.61
I feel connected to the purpose of the organisation	4.79	4.24	+0.56
Relationship with My Manager(s)	4.88	4.29	+0.58
There are high levels of trust between my manager and I	4.88	4.30	+0.58
If I have a problem at work, my manager supports me	4.96	4.38	+0.58
My manager provides me with sufficient guidance or advice to do my job well	4.92	4.28	+0.64
My manager acts on staff feedback	4.79	4.19	+0.60
I feel confident speaking up to my line manager regarding problems or issues	4.83	4.33	+0.51
Team Relationships	4.75	4.32	+0.44
I have a good working relationship with my colleagues	4.88	4.58	+0.30
My colleagues are professional and do a good job	4.75	4.46	+0.29
My team treats each other with empathy and compassion	4.83	4.42	+0.41
My team solves problems together	4.75	4.28	+0.47
We have a good team morale	4.67	4.17	+0.50
In our team communication is open and honest	4.71	4.16	+0.55
Our team resolves disagreements effectively	4.63	4.08	+0.55
We share information effectively between teams	4.63	3.93	+0.69
My team approaches clients in a non-judgemental and open way	4.83	4.54	+0.30
My team is committed to high quality service delivery	4.88	4.56	+0.31
My Personal Experience	4.59	3.96	+0.63
I am recognised when I do a particularly good job or go the extra-mile	4.71	4.02	+0.69
I get useful and constructive feedback on my work	4.75	3.98	+0.77
I feel my views are valued	4.54	3.96	+0.58
I am encouraged to understand and ask questions in relation to changes and/or decisions in the organisation	4.54	3.91	+0.63
I feel involved in planning on topics relevant to my work	4.42	3.86	+0.56
I am clear on my role and on what is expected from me	4.75	4.40	+0.35
I am encouraged and supported to develop my skill base and/or take new challenges	4.75	4.08	+0.67
I am supported to take time to reflect on my work	4.46	3.67	+0.79
I am encouraged to take risks and implement new ideas	4.46	3.64	+0.81
I feel I have sufficient control over how I do my job	4.54	4.06	+0.48

4.2 My Employee Engagement

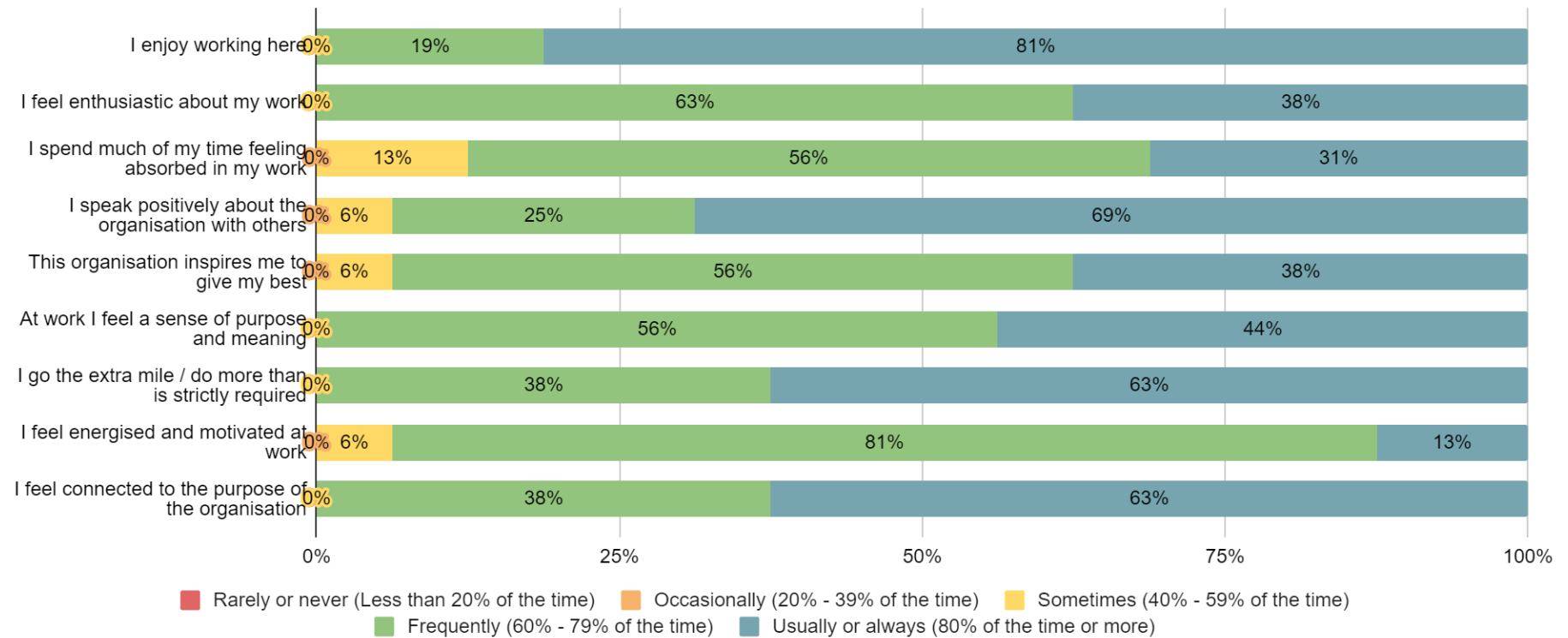
Organisation score compared to benchmark score

There are nine items for this domain. When analysed, the organisation score was higher for 9 items compared to benchmark score.



Response frequency for domain

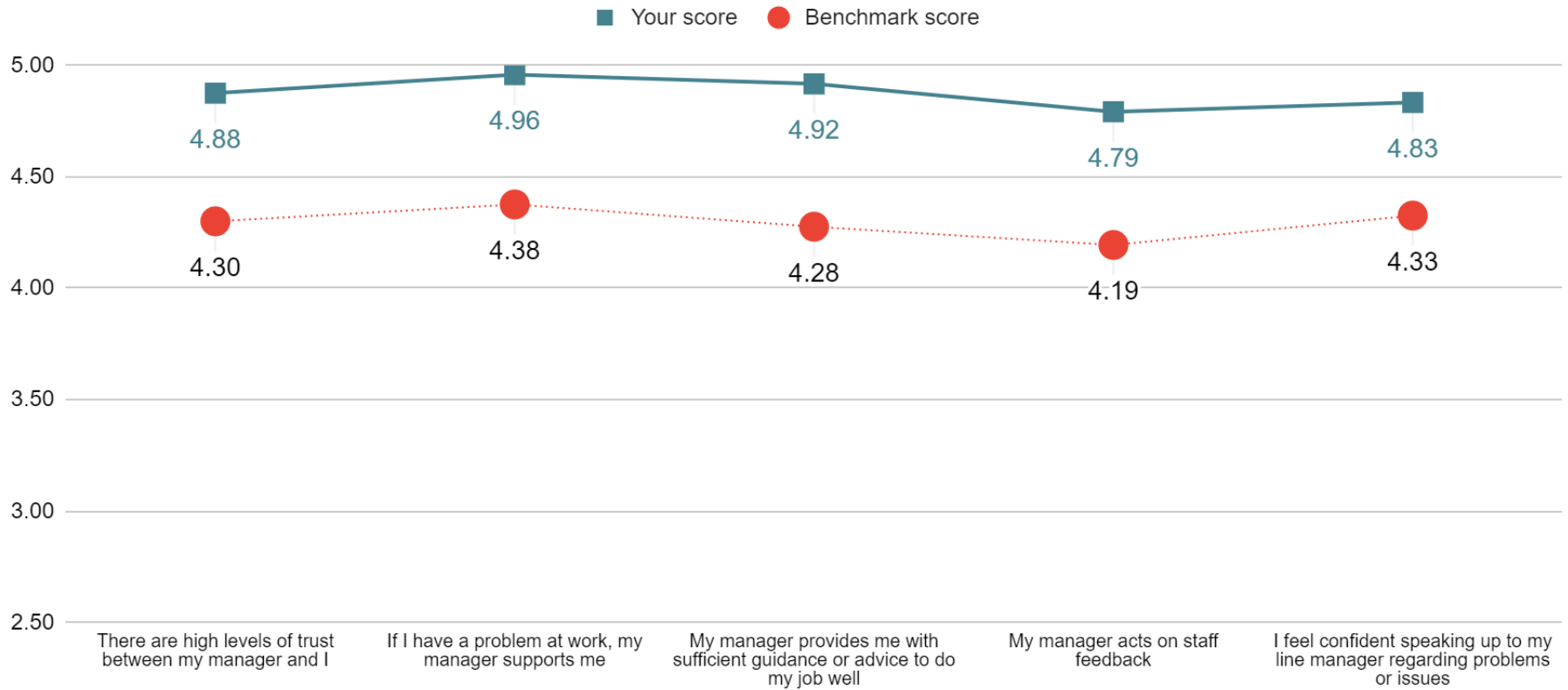
The figure below shows a breakdown of all responses for this domain.



4.3 Relationship with my Manager(s)

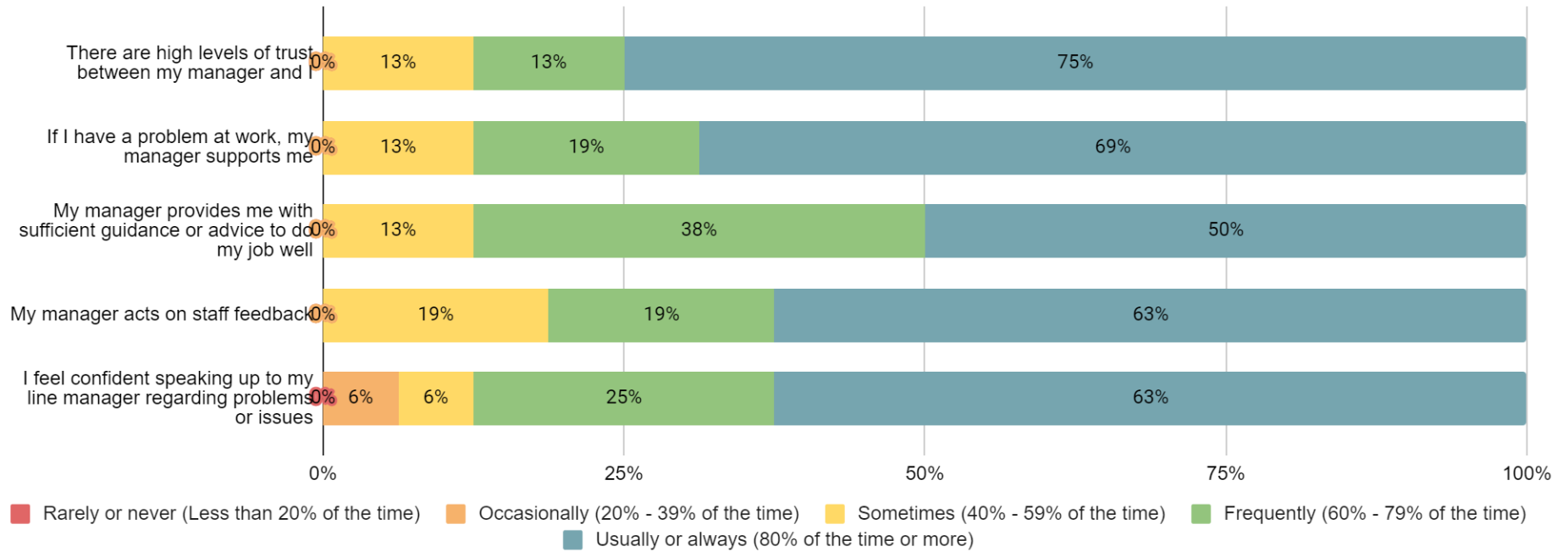
Organisation score compared to benchmark score

There are five items for this domain. When analysed, the organisation score was **higher for 5 items** compared to benchmark score.



Response frequency for domain

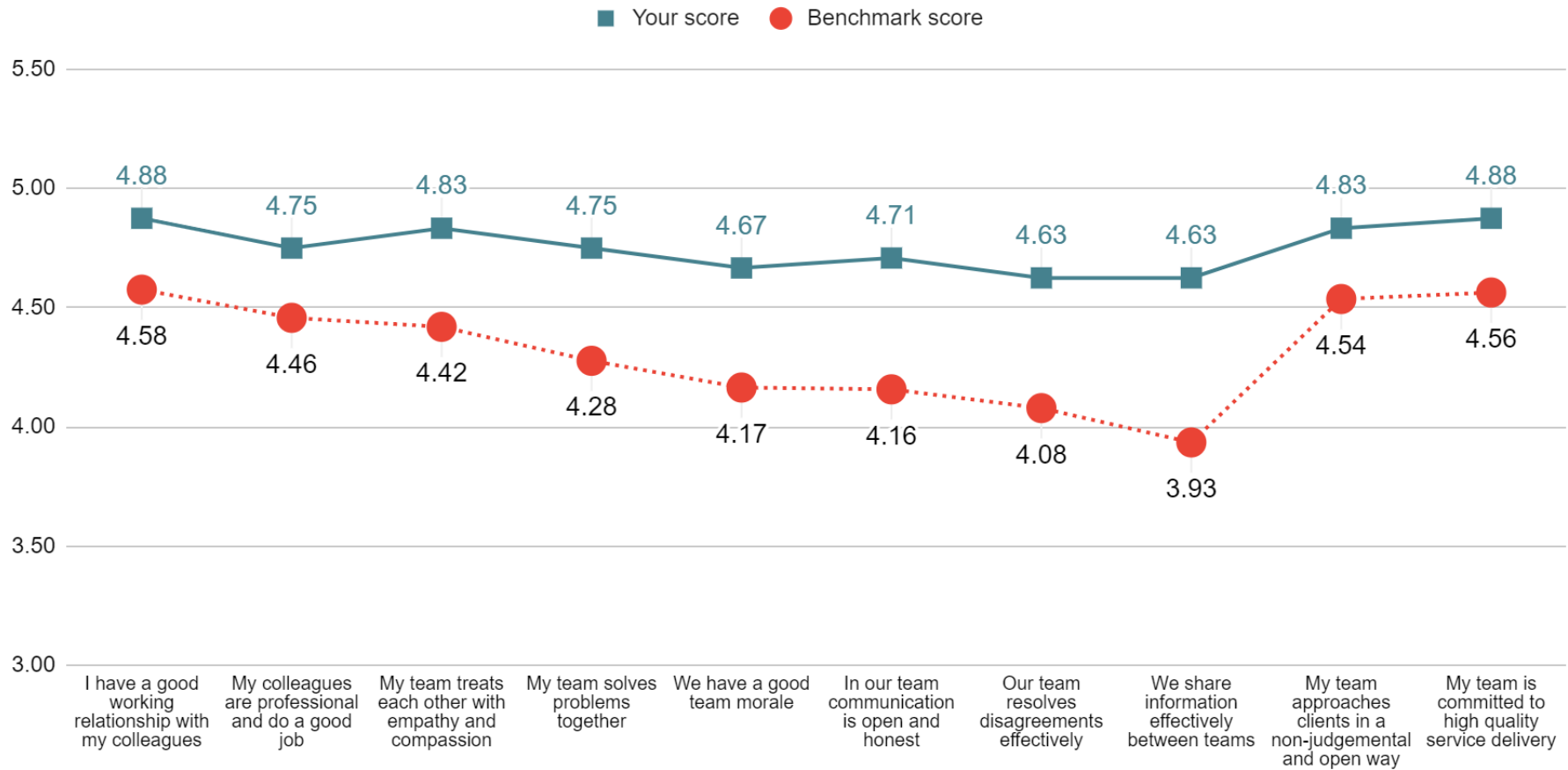
The figure below shows a breakdown of all responses for this domain.



4.4 Team Relationships

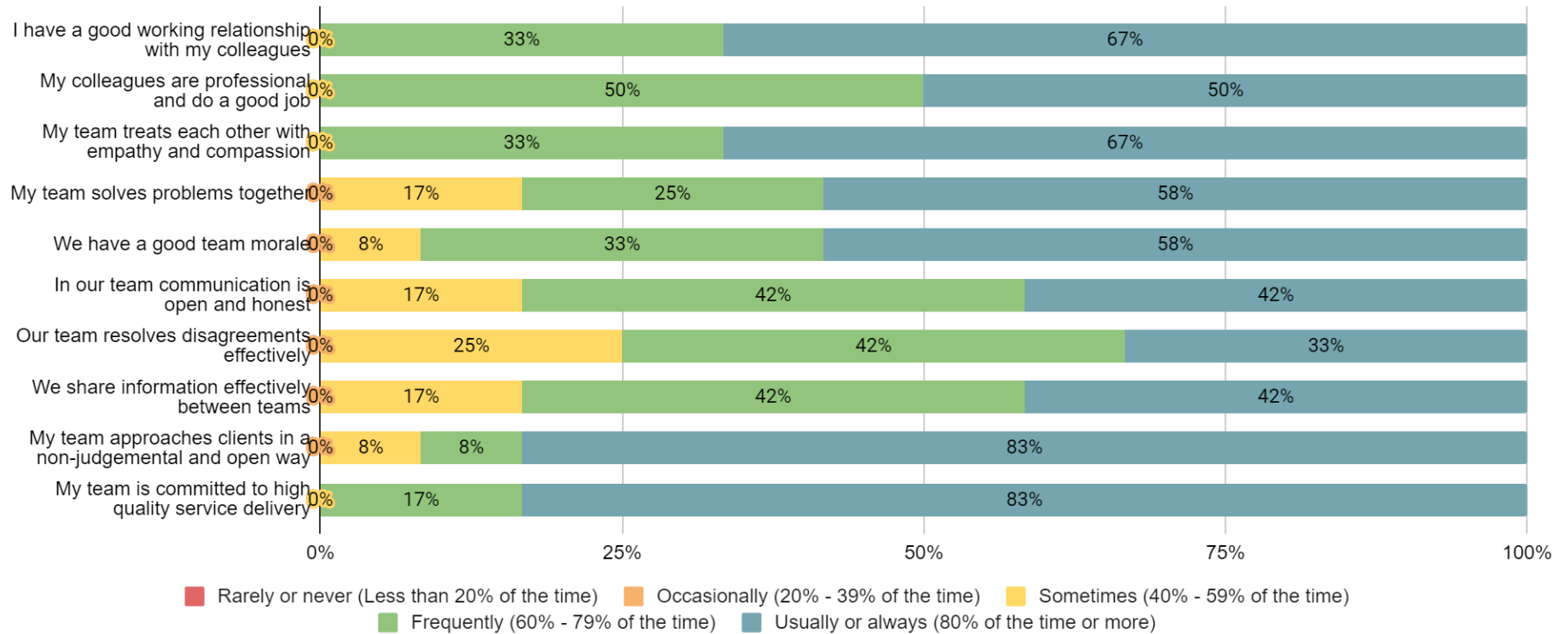
Organisation score compared to benchmark score

There are 10 items for this domain. When analysed, the organisation score was higher for 10 items compared to benchmark score.



Response frequency for domain

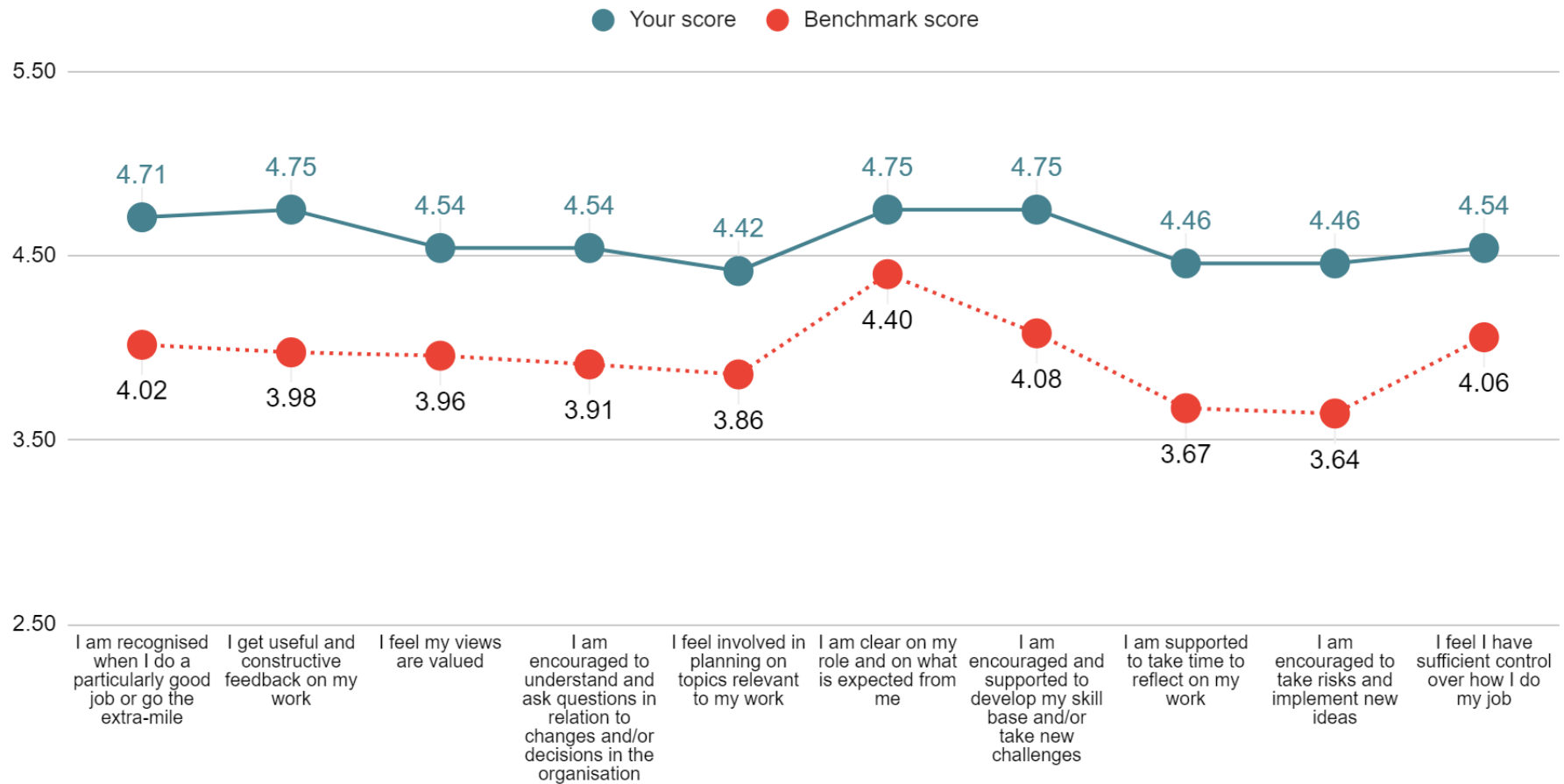
The figure below shows a breakdown of all responses for this domain.



4.5 My Personal Experience

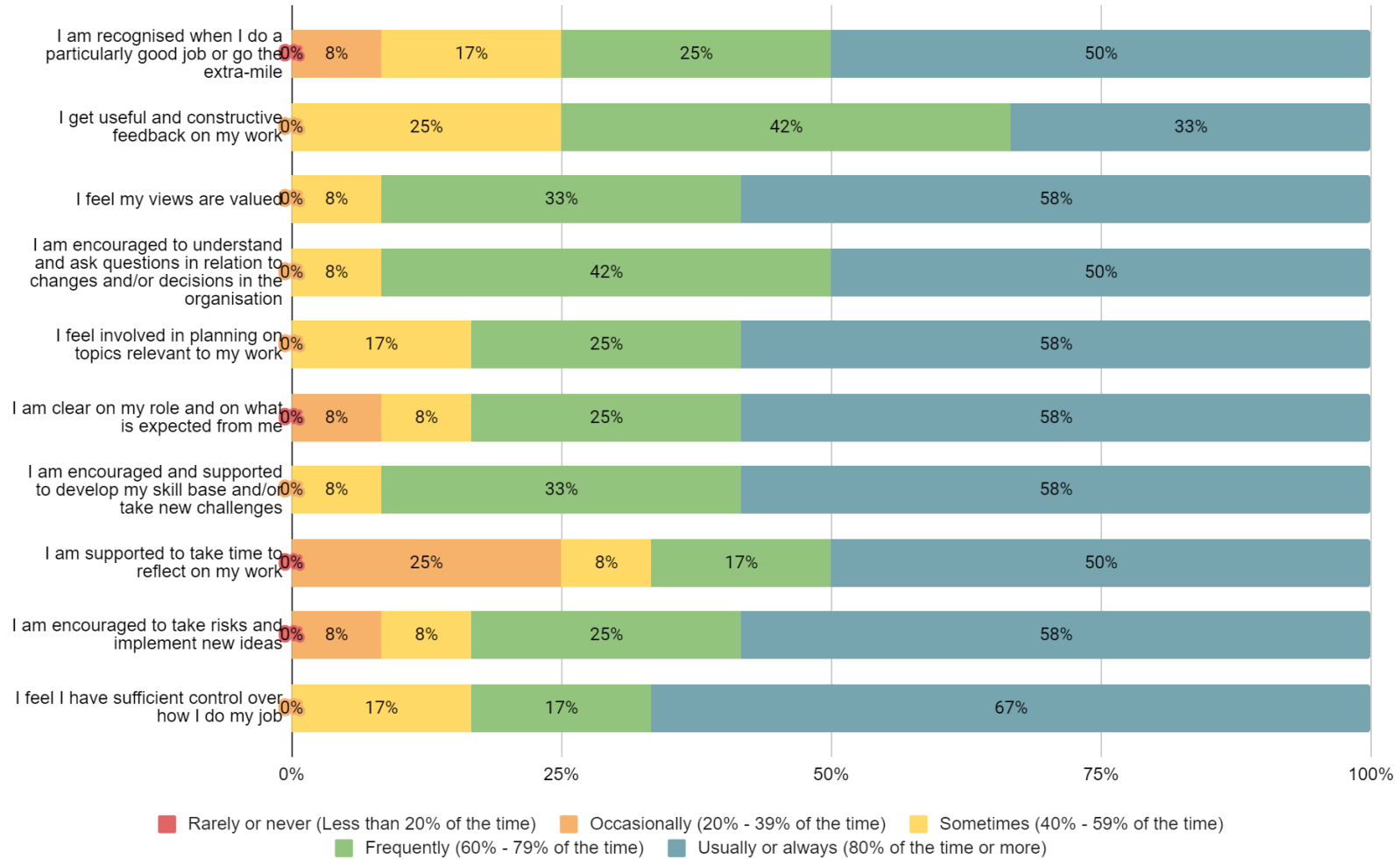
Organisation score compared to benchmark score

There are 10 items for this domain. When analysed, the organisation score was **higher for 10 items** compared to benchmark score.



Response frequency for domain

The figure below shows a breakdown of all responses for this domain.



5 How to Use the Results

The results in this report provide data that can help your organisation to build upon and improve staff engagement levels and experience the many benefits detailed in the literature section of the report. Based on Quality Matters' research and work supporting non-profit and statutory agencies, we provide the following guidance as a starting point, encouraging you to explore what would work best for your team or organisation:

- 1. Share the results with staff** - The engagement improvement process is likely to be more impactful if it is transparent and inclusive. This means, in relation to sharing the results, all staff should get to see the report.
- 2. Engage staff in a discussion about the findings** - Engaging staff, not just in knowing the results, but with interpreting results is likely to result in better engagement improvement. If you work in a large organisation it may be best to have these conversations in smaller teams. Having a good discussion can be more challenging if the group is larger than 10 – 12 people. The initial discussion may centre on: initial reactions, reflections on what the organisation is doing well in and areas that could benefit from improvement.
- 3. Prioritise areas to work on** - Pick a small number of meaningful actions your organisation can work on over the next year. Focus on what matters - anything more than two or three actions or areas of improvement may become unachievable and a barrier to progress. Depending on size or structure of your organisation you may invite teams to select a priority area at an organisation level and a priority area at a team level, which allows for different teams to select different priorities. It is important to consider priorities based on what is important to your team and what staff care about, not just focussing on area with a low score.
- 4. Generate solutions or actions** - Involve staff in generating ideas for practical steps to progress your priority areas, and ultimately, to improve your engagement score. Using an agreed process for choosing a course of action (e.g. basic conditions such as an identified lead person, available resources, etc.) develop goals, actions and clear timelines for implementing this change. Ensure you agree what success means, how it will be monitored and reported on to the team. Also, reviewing your organisation's values as a filter for interpreting and planning ensure this change or course of action is meaningful to your team.
- 5. Agree a time to repeat the tool** – This should be long enough away to allow real change to be made, but not so long that the structured approach to staff engagement becomes de-prioritised. Building the Engagement Insight tool into an annual review process or undertaken every two years is a clear way to ensure that staff engagement and experience in the workplace remains high on the organisation's agenda.

6 Future Development of Tool

It is intended that the benchmark for the Engagement Insight tool will be updated at least every 6 months. Once there is sufficient data, this can be broken down by sector and organisation size. If there is sufficient interest in the tool from the sector, Quality Matters hopes to develop an interactive website to support organisations with analysing data in a more tailored and nuanced way.

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