Tourism Careers Research 2024 Update: Summary Report

Fáilte Ireland

The latest research tells us…

- **Recruitment and retention** has become less difficult for the third year in a row, as measures taken by employers seem to be having an overall positive effect. Nevertheless, it is still not easy in a tight labour market.

- Most workers either in or looking to work in the sector see it as a **long-term career** - this is helped by an ongoing **passion for their jobs**.

- Further strides in recruitment and retention have been helped by **improved perceptions of regular pay** in the sector, with 60% of employees saying that compensation has improved.

- However, workers feel that the **regularity of additional pay for unsocial hours has stagnated** after improving in earlier years, as have the perceptions of non-pay conditions.

- This is **negatively impacting** their **sentiment** towards the industry.
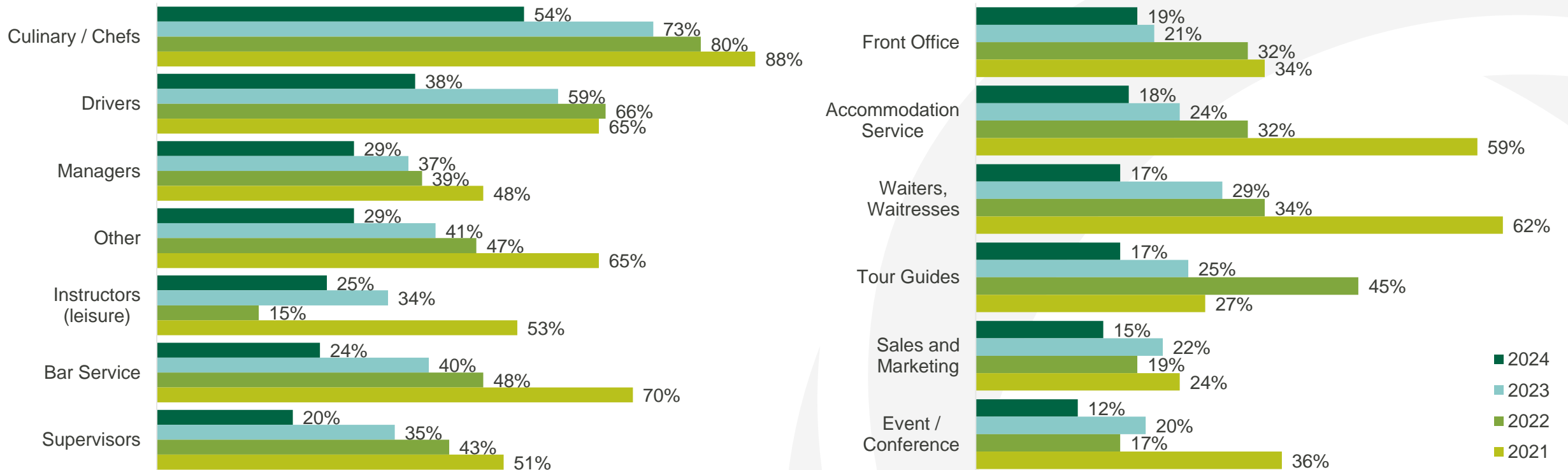
The latest research tells us…

- There remains a **significant divide** between what employers say they are doing and what workers perceive to be the case.

- Despite the impact of rising costs, in a tight labour market there is no scope for 'easing-up' on the progress made to date. Employers need to continue:

  - **Narrowing the gap between pay in tourism and competitor sectors**;

  - **Dealing with non-pay issues** (e.g. flexible working, upskilling, opportunities for career progression etc.);

  - **Effectively communicating positive changes**.

- Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Careers team will continue working with partners to elevate careers in the sector as appealing and rewarding.

- This research was conducted in partnership with Jobs.ie

Difficult positions to recruit

- All positions are less difficult to recruit compared to 2023, and most have greatly improved compared to earlier years.

- Chefs and Drivers continue to be the hardest positions to recruit for.

Change in Reporting 'Considerable Difficulty' Recruiting Staff by Position

Left chart:

Position	2024	2023	2022	2021
Culinary / Chefs	54%	73%	80%	88%
Drivers	38%	59%	66%	65%
Managers	29%	37%	39%	48%
Other	29%	41%	47%	65%
Instructors (leisure)	25%	34%	15%	53%
Bar Service	24%	40%	48%	70%
Supervisors	20%	35%	43%	51%

Right chart:

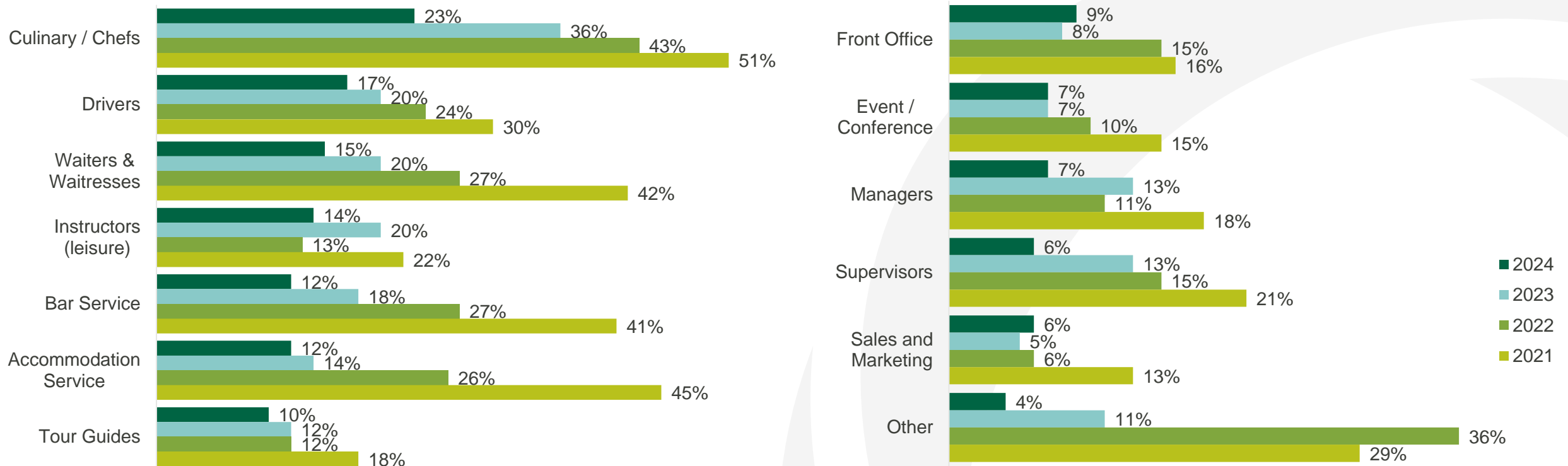| Position	2024	2023	2022	2021
Front Office	19%	21%	32%	34%
Accommodation Service	18%	24%	32%	59%
Waiters, Waitresses	17%	29%	34%	62%
Tour Guides	17%	25%	45%	27%
Sales and Marketing	15%	22%	19%	24%
Event / Conference	12%	20%	17%	36%

Retention Difficulties

- The ability to retain employees continues to improve and the proportion of businesses having difficulty is a fraction of what it was in previous years.

- Holding onto Chefs continues to be difficult for almost a quarter of relevant businesses.

Change in Reporting 'Considerable Difficulty' Retaining Staff by Position

Position	2024	2023	2022	2021
Culinary / Chefs	23%	36%	43%	51%
Drivers	17%	20%	24%	30%
Waiters & Waitresses	15%	20%	27%	42%
Instructors (leisure)	14%	20%	13%	22%
Bar Service	12%	18%	27%	41%
Accommodation Service	12%	14%	26%	45%
Tour Guides	10%	12%	12%	18%

Position	2024	2023	2022	2021
Front Office	9%	8%	15%	16%
Event / Conference	7%	7%	10%	15%
Managers	7%	13%	11%	18%
Supervisors	6%	13%	15%	21%
Sales and Marketing	6%	5%	6%	13%
Other	4%	11%	36%	29%

Impact of Difficulties

Impact remains similar to 2023

- The impact of understaffing on businesses is quite similar to 2023, though the proportions affected are slightly reduced.

- The 'negative impact on customer experience' (60%) continues to be an issue, especially among accommodation operators (69%).

- Understaffing is now less of a risk to business viability (14% now claiming that it may force closure vs. 30% in 2021).

- Of course, this does not mean that businesses aren't under pressure from other sources, i.e., rising operational costs.

Q19 "What impact would it have on your business if you're unable to find the right staff?"

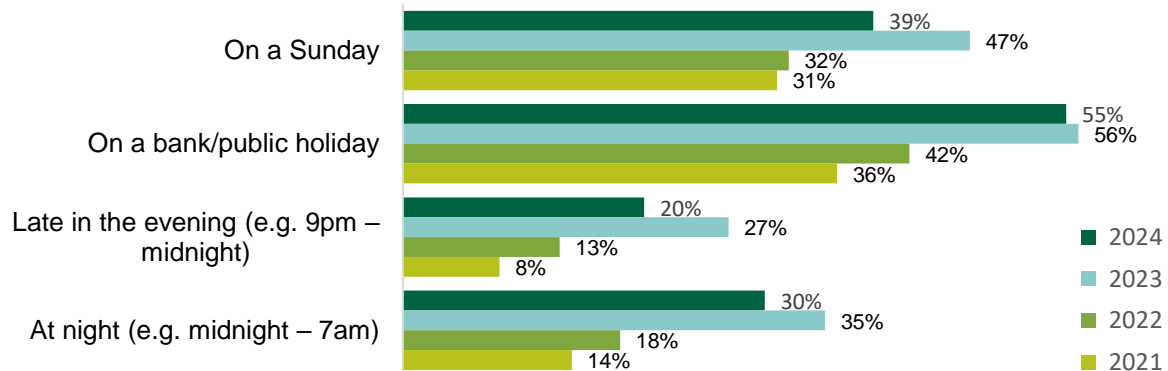| Category	Percentage
Added stress	65%
Negative impact on customer experience	60%
Extra hours for existing staff	57%
Have to train new staff with limited experience	53%
Have to reduce capacity, service or trading hours	50%
Negative impact on staff retention	37%
Closure	14%
Have to employ agency staff	10%
Don't know	4%
Other	1%

Base: 438

Slowdown in Improvements Cited by Workers

- Despite notable gains since 2021, workers feel employment conditions overall haven't improved further in 2024.

- As a consequence, opinion of the industry by current and former workers has softened slightly.

% workers receiving extra pay for unsocial hours

On a Sunday
- 2024: 39%
- 2023: 47%
- 2022: 32%
- 2021: 31%

On a bank/public holiday
- 2024: 55%
- 2023: 56%
- 2022: 42%
- 2021: 36%

Late in the evening (e.g. 9pm – midnight)
- 2024: 20%
- 2023: 27%
- 2022: 13%
- 2021: 8%

At night (e.g. midnight – 7am)
- 2024: 30%
- 2023: 35%
- 2022: 18%
- 2021: 14%

Legend: ■ 2024 ■ 2023 ■ 2022 ■ 2021

Do you see opportunities for career progression?

- 2024: 36%
- 2023: 38%
- 2022: 31%
- 2021: 30%

Do / could you see yourself having a long-term career in tourism & hospitality?

- 2024: 76%
- 2023: 88%
- 2022: 71%
- 2021: 71%

Legend: ■ 2021 ■ 2022 ■ 2023 ■ 2024

On a scale of 1 to 10 ... how likely are you to look for a job in tourism and hospitality in the near future? *(avg. score out of 10)**

- 2024: 5.0
- 2023: 5.2
- 2022: 3.2
- 2021: 3.5

*Respondents not looking for a job in tourism

Differing Viewpoints Between Employees and Employees

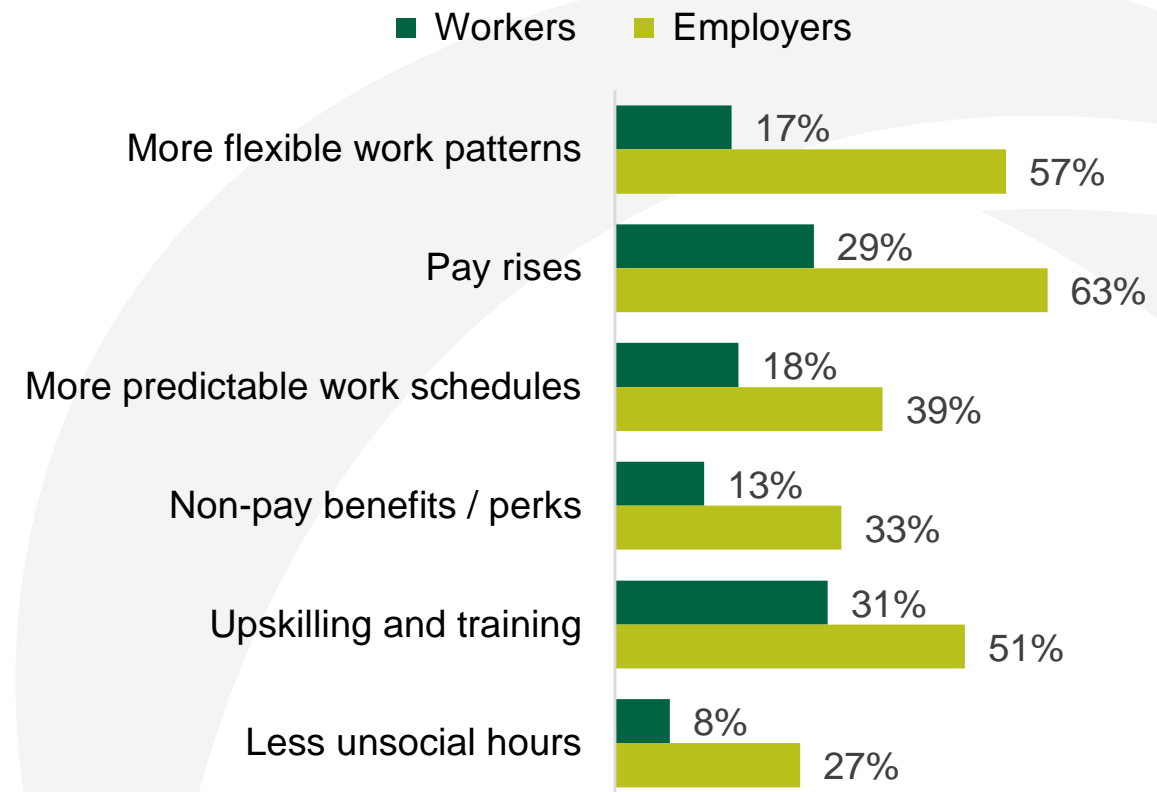**Jobs.ie**

Fáilte Ireland

Some very large differences in answers

- While employers are always likely to answer this question more favourably, differences in perceptions remain significant, especially regarding pay and flexible working patterns.

- Workers may not always be aware of measures undertaken, or they may not feel a measure is effective, which could lead to them not giving credit to the employer for at least trying.

- For their part employers may be failing to adequately inform their employees of changes.

Efforts to retain employees: answers by employers vs answers by workers
(Top 6 differences shown)

■ Workers ■ Employers

	Workers	Employers
More flexible work patterns	17%	57%
Pay rises	29%	63%
More predictable work schedules	18%	39%
Non-pay benefits / perks	13%	33%
Upskilling and training	31%	51%
Less unsocial hours	8%	27%

Base: 271 (workers) / 287 (employers)

Thank you

Economic & Industry Analysis

November 2024