

# 21st Century Evangelicals

A snapshot of the beliefs and habits of  
evangelical Christians in the UK - Autumn 2013

## Working faithfully?



Research by the Evangelical Alliance

# Introduction

What is a typical evangelical Christian? What contributions do they make to society? What do they believe? What is distinctive about their lifestyle? What opinions do they hold about the most pressing issues of the day?

These are just some of the questions that the Evangelical Alliance is exploring as part of an ongoing study into the beliefs, habits and practices of evangelical Christians in the UK. The answers will help Christian leaders and the Church at large to understand their social context, and to make more effective plans for mission and ministry in the world today.

In January 2011 our groundbreaking *21st Century Evangelicals* research reported on our survey of more than 17,000 people. Since then more than 3,000 have agreed to join our panel. In partnership with eight other Christian organisations, we ask this panel questions on different themes to produce regular reports, and usually have more than 1,500 responses each time.

These are our reports so far, containing fascinating information on evangelicals' beliefs, opinions and experiences:

- *Life in the church?* (May 2013)
- *Do we value education?* (February 2013)
- *Confidently sharing the gospel?* (November 2012)
- *Does money matter?* (September 2012)
- *The world on our doorstep?* (May 2012)
- *How's the family?* (February 2012)
- *Are we communicating?* (December 2011)
- *Does belief touch society?* (September 2011)
- *21st Century Evangelicals* (January 2011)

We hope that you will find the reports interesting and that they will spark conversations and ideas.

At [eauk.org/snapshot](http://eauk.org/snapshot) you can:

- download all the reports and order paper copies
- access free downloadable Powerpoint presentations and discussion questions to further explore the issues raised
- get involved by joining the research panel.

**“Evangelicals are facing fierce new challenges today; these surveys give valuable insights to the Christian leaders and organisations that serve them and must help them navigate the road ahead.”**

Ruth Marriott, Wycliffe Bible Translators

**“These are such fantastic little booklets, jam-packed with fascinating and thought-provoking information. We plan to encourage our cell groups to use them for prayer and discussion in the ‘witness’ section of their meetings, and to that end we are making a copy available for each church member, along with some discussion-starter questions and suggestions for prayer.”**

Louise Chick, Network Church St Albans

**“The *Confidently sharing the gospel?* research highlighted that many Christians are too scared to share the gospel, and that they often doubt that such sharing is even necessary. The report provided a useful stimulus to our church to continue to teach others about why we share the gospel, and how.”**

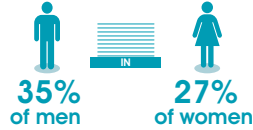
Ben Epps, pastor, Longmeadow and Immanuel Evangelical Churches, Stevenage



# Top 10 key statistics



feel valued for the work they do (compared to 59% in a similar government survey of civil servants).



percentage of those who say "I regularly bring work home with me".



said they worked more than 40 hours a week, and 7% more than 60 hours.



thought *Too much emphasis on performance management and the target culture* was a significant or very significant problem in the workplace.



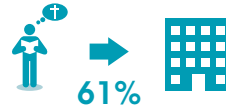
think the government should change the law to ensure everyone receives a living wage.



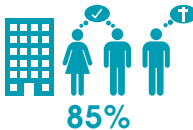
are in a church that runs a specific project for the unemployed.



of people who had been unemployed felt they had received no support from their church.



say a sense of calling is very important to them in a job, while only 22% say a good rate of pay.



say most people at their work know they are a Christian.

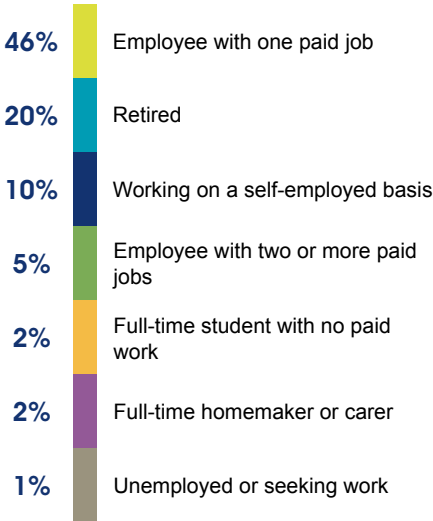


have encountered difficulties at work from management because they are known as a Christian or have spoken up for Christian values.

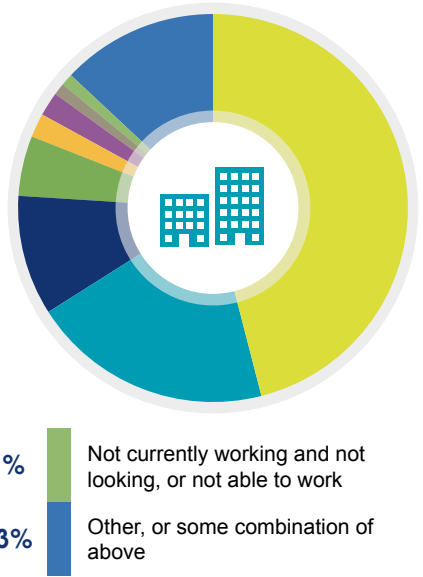
This online survey was carried out in May 2013 and 1,511 people took part. As this is an opportunity sample we cannot claim it is statistically representative of all UK evangelicals, but it does cover a broad range of denominations and geographic regions. More detailed information about the data is available from [g.smith@eauk.org](mailto:g.smith@eauk.org)

# What kind of work do we do?

99% of our panel had some experience of employment during their lives although only 73% were currently economically active (in paid work or seeking work).



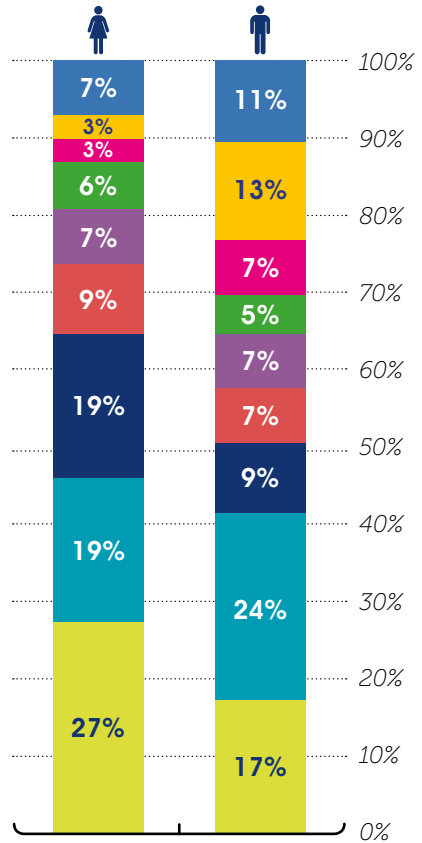
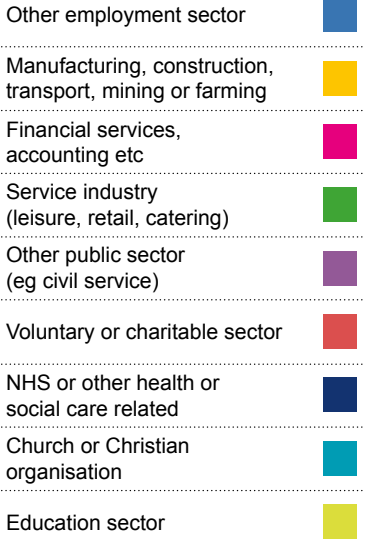
## Current employment status of our respondents



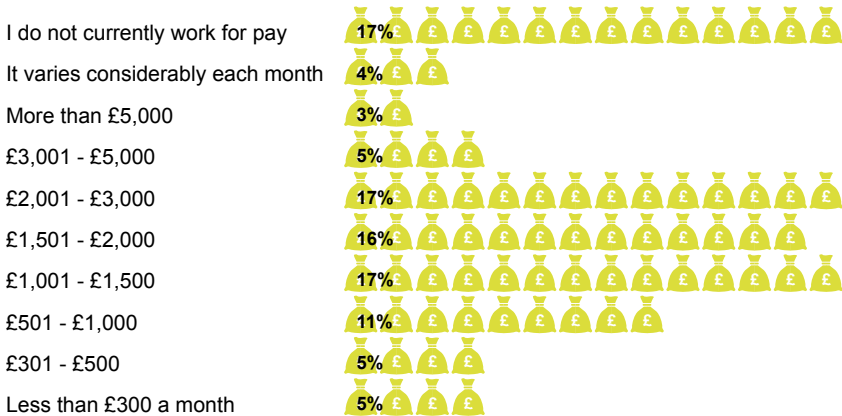
## The jobs that our panel have



## Employment sector by gender



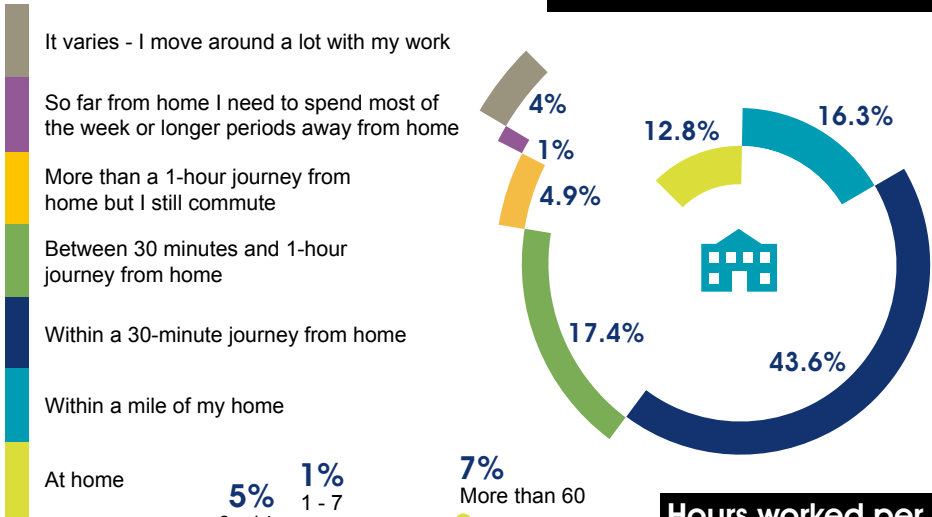
## Monthly pay after tax and other deductions



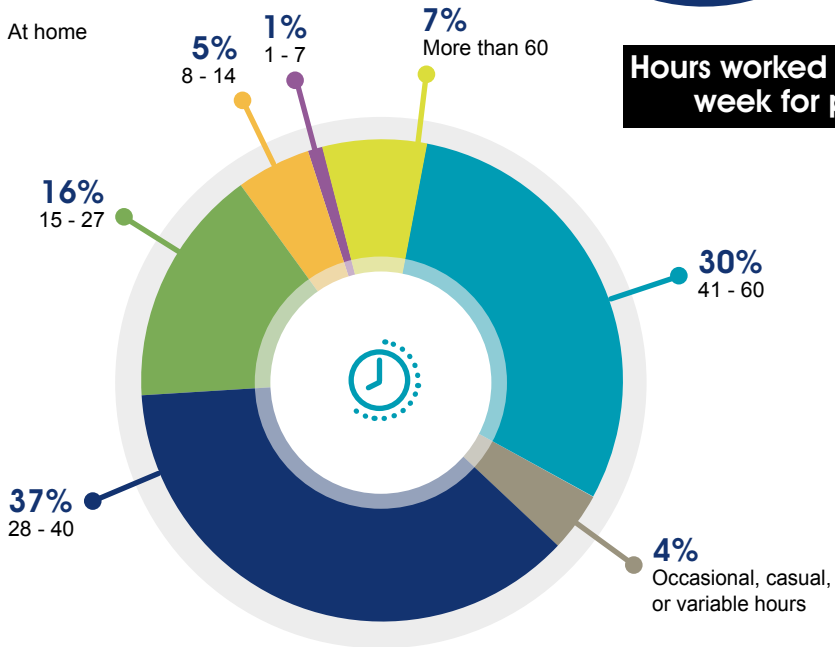
There is considerable variation in reported pay rates. Over a quarter of our panel of evangelical Christians currently take home over £2,000 a month from their work, which suggests a pre-tax salary level of at least £30,000. The median individual income in the UK for 2012-13 is put at £21,300. Many of the respondents with lower take-home pay may be part-time employees.

# Hours worked and distance travelled

**How far our respondents travel to work**



**Hours worked per week for pay**



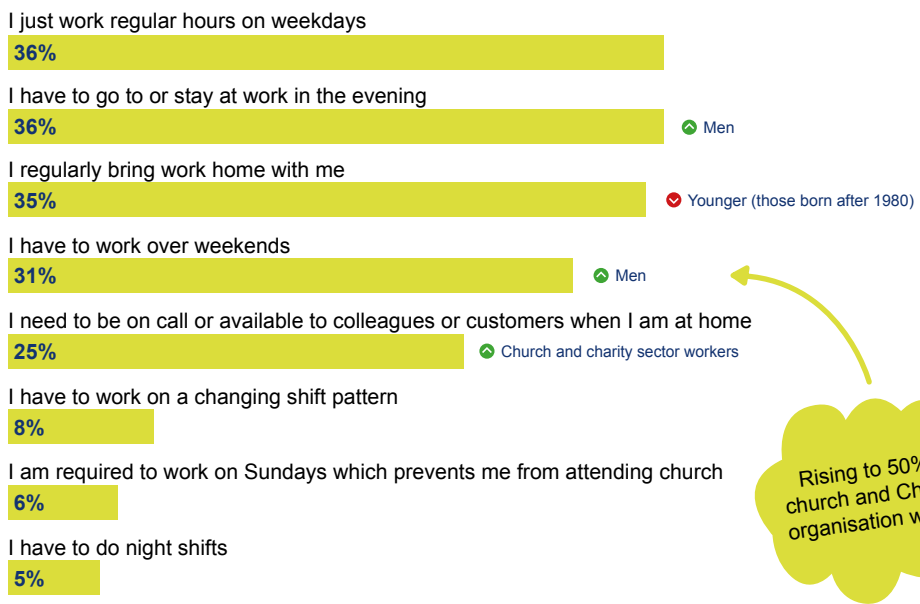
- Over half the men in our panel said they worked more than 40 hours, and 10% more than 60
- Working more than 40 hours was most common for those in the church and charity sector and relatively uncommon for the self-employed and those who held down two or more jobs
- Retired people were more likely to say they used to work long hours compared to those currently employed

Wednesday  
Housegroup - 7.30  
(Bring cake)

Working this weekend!

## Unsocial hours

▲ More than average    
 ▼ Less than average

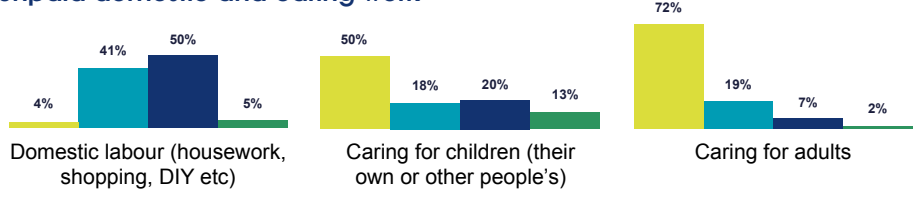


Rising to 50% for church and Christian organisation workers

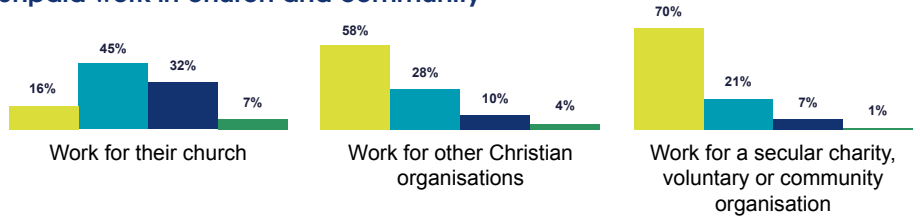
## Unpaid work

● None    
 ● 1 to 3 hours    
 ● 4 to 10 hours    
 ● More than 10 hours

### Unpaid domestic and caring work



### Unpaid work in church and community

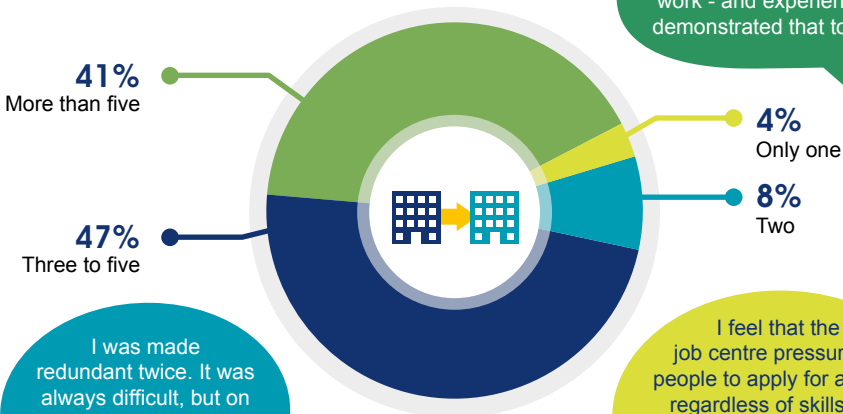


# Career patterns and unemployment

## How long have you been in your current job?



## How many different jobs have you held?



I was quite happy to take a voluntary redundancy. I felt that God had strongly indicated a different line of work - and experience has demonstrated that to be so.

I was made redundant twice. It was always difficult, but on both occasions I changed career direction and could see God's hand in it.

I feel that the job centre pressurises people to apply for any job regardless of skills and experience and treats you a like a naughty child. There is little support or encouragement.

26% of respondents had taken a career break of more than a couple of months to do a course of study, and 10% due to work-related stress. 36% of women had taken a career break to concentrate on raising children (compared to 2% of men).



## Experience of unemployment

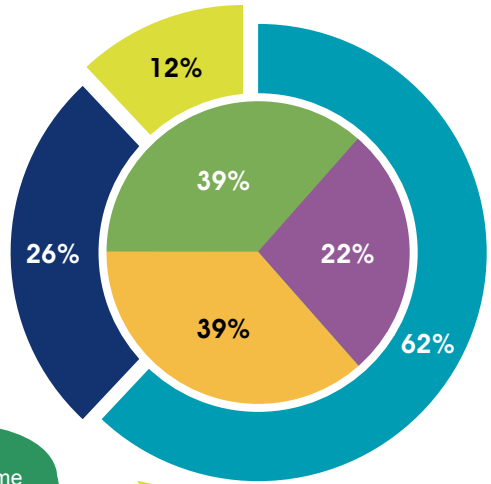
Have you ever been made redundant or lost your job?

- Never
- Once
- More than once

Have you ever claimed out of work benefits?

(Based on the 538 respondents who had been unemployed at least once)

- Never
- Once
- More than once



Throughout my unemployment, I had brilliant prayer support from my church, and knew that God was in charge.

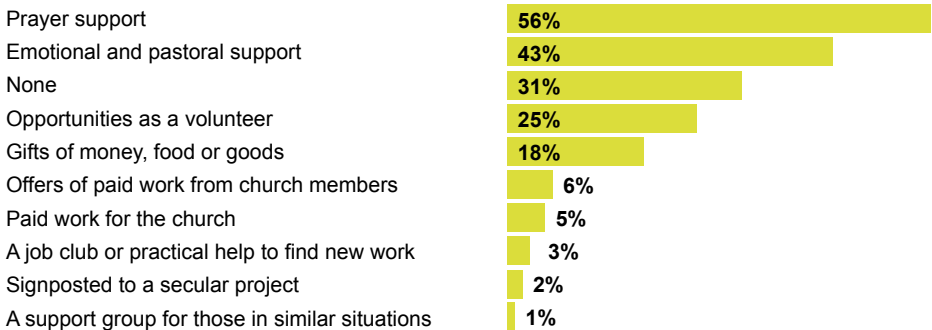
When I was made unemployed I felt shame and disgust and was treated like dirt by people including some who call themselves Christians.

It was absolutely horrendous when I lost my job. Not helped by church teaching: "God will bring a job along in His perfect timing." Too much Christian teaching on this issue is shaped by middle-class life experiences.

I was made redundant when I worked as a youth worker for a church - it hurt a lot as the church handled the situation badly and had not planned things properly. It put me off going to church for a while and did have a negative impact on my faith.

The government benefits system is heartless and cruel.

## How the Church helped when you were unemployed



Nearly a third of people who had been unemployed felt they had received no help from their church, and for the vast majority who received help this consisted of prayer and emotional or pastoral support.

# Add your voice to the biggest evangelical movement in the UK

We're looking for more voices.

We're looking for more people who want to **shape** the evangelical movement across the UK, people who want to help us **speak** to government and make sure that the Evangelical Alliance brings real, lasting **change** to people and communities.

Will you join us? You'll also get a free bi-monthly copy of *idea* (the biggest Christian magazine in the UK), access to members-only **resources** and much more.

Join us. We're better together.

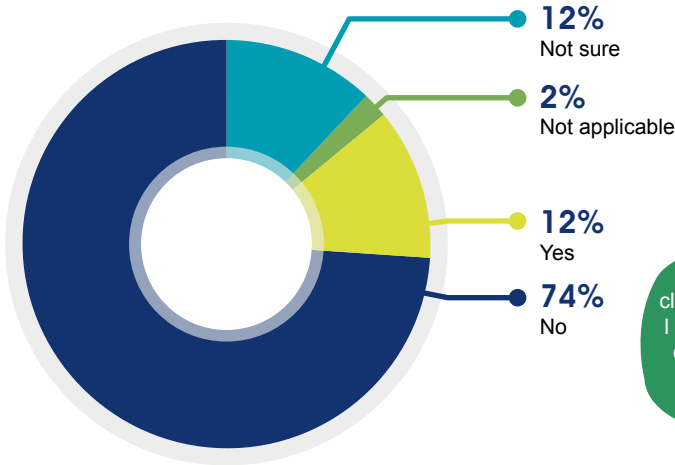
[eauk.org/join](http://eauk.org/join)

evangelical alliance  
better together



# Discrimination at work

## Have you personally ever been subject to discrimination at work?



As a single person they expect you to be more flexible.

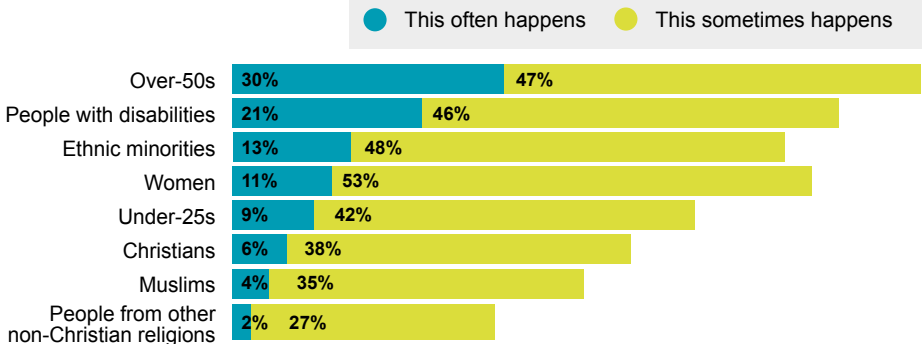
At an interview I was asked: "Why at the age of 53 are you applying for this job?"

Because I suffered from clinical depression - although I always completed my work on time and professionally - I was prevented from developing my career.

Of the 140 who gave some description of the issue they had faced, 35 appeared to be based on gender, 15 on age, 15 on disability and 7 on race or ethnicity. There were 16 cases involving a person who had clearly taken an ethical stand on an issue or practice in the workplace. In 27 cases, Christian faith appeared to be the basis for discrimination. Therefore less than 2% of the panel described personal experience of faith-related discrimination (although 14% had experienced some hostility or problems from colleagues and 9% from management - see page 18). However 53% think that *Christians getting into trouble at work if they say what they believe* is a significant problem (page 14). The perception of discrimination against Christians seems much higher than the reality.

## To what extent do you think there is discrimination in employment against each of the following groups of people?

Once I was nearly not offered a job because I was a Christian - but the person concerned was overruled.



Prayer is key to usefulness in the workplace - secular and spiritual - in my experience.

Work gives me a sense of achievement and positive self-esteem.

I believe that workers and employers have the responsibility to work and trade ethically, for the benefit of all in the community.

The work ethic is very important, ie you should work to provide for yourself and your family if you are able to do so.

Although my work isn't valued by the church in general (I work in the sewage industry!) not all of us are called to spread the gospel or help the disadvantaged and I value my work as it brings me into contact with non-Christians.

Work is a divine gift and all callings are equally valid before God.

My favourite memory of all my workplaces is the camaraderie.

Work can be hell. I am not surprised there are lots of people on benefits.

As I have realised how little we talk about work at church I am inspired to ensure we do think about ways of supporting one another.

Our church runs a weekly work club for local unemployed people.

I don't agree with the general witch hunt of the unemployed as there are a lot of genuine people unable to work or unable to get jobs.

Work is important, designed by God before sin came into the world.

I have found that working for a Christian organisation is very rewarding in many ways, such as having staff prayers, but it is frustrating too in that it gives very few opportunities for witnessing to non-Christians.

It upsets me that church remains somewhat elitist in its approach to work and employment.

I think churches should do a lot more teaching and preaching about issues relating to people's working lives because that is what the man and woman on the street are coping with most days of their lives.

It's lonely being a working woman and not something the Church seems to support.

Work is a blessing from God, and we can praise and worship God through our work. Following the examples of Jesus and Paul we can use work as a blessing and a witness.

Sadly, I have found more staff issues in Christian employers than secular employment.

Difficult to know how to fit in work, home, family and church.

The NHS is not a caring profession to work for anymore and is totally target-driven. I have often been asked how I manage to maintain a positive outlook on life/cope with workload and have been able to say it is my faith.

There seems to be political consensus to financially bully the unemployed and migrant workers.

Great career as a teacher until the national curriculum and a new bullying head gave me a breakdown.

Before I became a Christian... my work was done by and large in an immoral way... Christ gradually leached these poisons out of my system.

Bad management (toxic leaders) are too common and damage people's careers.

I am currently involved in what is called BAM [Business As Mission] this is showing good values in how I practise and run my business.

I enjoy working, but my husband is currently employed in a high pressure job with long hours and one of us needs to be home to run things and maintain the sanity of both of us!

Many in church leadership appear to have inadequate understanding of the theology of work and its application to today's society.

# Opinions and experiences of work

● Agree or strongly agree

The gap between top earners and those on a more basic wage is too great



Employers should be flexible to make work more family-friendly



People are being expected to work harder for less money these days



Most unemployed people would like to work, but the system doesn't make it easy/worthwhile

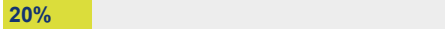


Women often encounter obstacles that prevent them progressing to the top level of their career structure

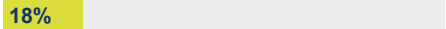


## Based on your own experience of the workplace and that of colleagues, family or friends:

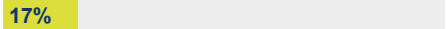
There are huge numbers of skivers and scroungers who prefer to live on benefits than try to find a job



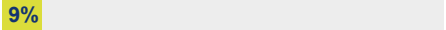
Offering bonus payments or incentives is the best way to get hard work out of staff



Most businesses work ethically



Most workers try to get away with doing as little hard work as possible



● Significant or very significant

## How significant are the following problems in the workplace?



85%

Too much emphasis on performance management and the target culture



60%

Bullying by Management



53%

Christians getting into trouble at work if they say what they believe



50%

Dishonesty, theft and fraud



44%

Taking unwarranted sick leave



39%

Sexual harassment



22%

A culture that condones racism

## The government should...

● Agree or strongly agree

Ensure that no one is prevented from, or penalised for, expressing their religious convictions in the workplace

91%

Do better to ensure there are enough decent jobs for everyone who wants to work

82%

Change the law to ensure everyone receives a living wage

75%

Increase taxes on the wealthy and reduce them on the lower-paid

71%

Do more to protect the rights and working conditions of employees

70%

Make sure no one works more than 48 hours a week

52%

Reduce migration in order to safeguard jobs for British workers

36%

Make it easier and cheaper for employers to hire and fire staff

29%

Cut back welfare benefits for the unemployed

17%

## Job satisfaction

● Our survey (economically active only)

● Civil Service People Survey 2011

I am interested in my work **93%** **89%**

I am treated with respect by the people I work with **91%** **84%**

I feel valued for the work I do **84%** **59%**

I am sufficiently challenged by my work **80%** **75%**

I feel involved in the decisions that affect my work **66%** **49%**

I achieve a good work life/private life balance **59%** **67%**

I feel my pay reflects my performance and responsibilities **54%** **32%**

I have an acceptable workload **53%** **61%**

I feel harassed or bullied by management **8%** **28%**

I value the contact with people that comes with the job **90%**

I enjoy good, friendly relationships with my colleagues **88%**

I believe my work is worthwhile because it brings benefit to society **81%**

I am often tired out at the end of a working day **70%**

I feel a strong sense of calling to the work I do **69%**

I am often stressed because of work **39%**

I do my job mainly because I need the money it provides **23%**

I often get bored and fed up with my work **11%**

I want to leave this job as soon as possible **10%**

# Why do we work?

It's important to me that I feel I'm making a difference for the better in the work that I do.

Job satisfaction is much more important than financial reward – the sense that what I do is worth something.

What is important is having purposeful activity, and that does not have to be a job.

This isn't what I believe God wants me to do but I have to work to earn money!

“We pray fervently at MAF that God will raise up men and women to fill our many overseas vacancies. This research encourages us to keep praying and trusting God to send out workers into his harvest field (Matthew 9:38). With over 60% saying that a true sense of vocation is very important, it is good to know that as God’s people we are listening for His voice and seeking to discern His call and direction for our lives.”

Ruth Whitaker, chief executive, MAF UK

## What is desirable in a job or work situation?

● Very important   ● Of some importance   ▲ More than average



Church and charity sector workers have a higher than average sense of vocation or calling and business sector workers lower than average.



Could this be  
**You?**



Pilots

Engineers

Managers

Support



**Consider joining MAF**

[www.maf-uk.org/jobs](http://www.maf-uk.org/jobs)

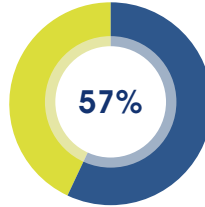
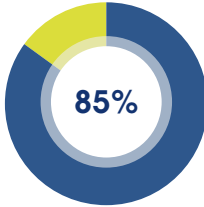
Registered charity in England and Wales (1064598) and in Scotland (SC039107)

# Christians at work

## As a Christian in the workplace:

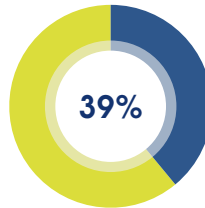
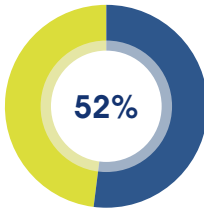
I view my work (window cleaner) as a 'frontline' for my witness.

Most people know they're a Christian



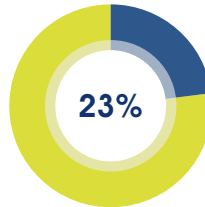
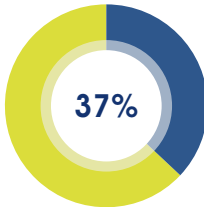
Have supportive Christian colleagues at work

Often have opportunities to talk about their faith to non-believers while at work



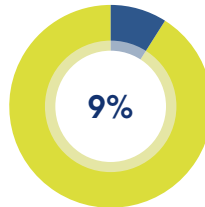
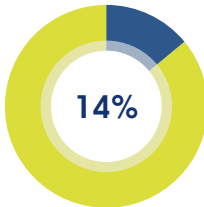
Say there is an organised group of Christians in their workplace who meet together for fellowship or prayer

Say the organisation they work for has a strong Christian ethos



Say there is a Christian chaplain serving in their workplace

Have sometimes met hostility, exclusion or mocking from colleagues because they know they're a Christian



Have encountered difficulties at work from management because they are known as a Christian or have spoken up for Christian values

People sometimes laugh about Christian values. They mention my choice not to swear and are keen for me to break this if I'm stressed.

All my colleagues are Christians so I am sad to not have opportunities to share my faith with colleagues or have more non-Christian friends.

Social work is known as a profession that is hostile to Christianity; however I have never encountered direct hostility. I find a high number of social workers are very open to talking about spiritual matters.

# Does the Church support working Christians?

“We believe the gathered Church is the best place to equip people for their scattered frontlines during the week. The workplace is a critical frontline for service, mission and discipleship.”

LICC, WorkForum

## My church:

77%	Understands that for some people the pressures of work limits their involvement in church life
75%	Supports members who are facing difficult issues at work
71%	Understands that people's involvement in the workplace is a calling to God's mission in the world, even though it may not offer scope for evangelism
69%	Prays for its members in respect of their working lives
57%	Encourages and prepares people to witness and evangelise at work
54%	Helps people apply biblical teaching in the context of their workplace
49%	Helps Christians to think through the issues they face in the workplace
39%	Provides regular teaching about the biblical understanding of work
22%	Values work carried out for the church more highly than secular occupations or work involvement
14%	Values members who work in professional occupations more highly than those who work in low paid, unskilled jobs
13%	Values members who work in the caring professions more highly than those who work in business and industry

## At my church:

My small group are very supportive of one another in our lives at work. Other than that, church has virtually nothing to say about work, and I find this very disappointing

My main church leader knows what I do at work	73%
Within home/cell groups at church we often pray for people in their work situations	73%
The members of my home/cell group know what I do at work	72%
Within home/cell groups at church we talk about the issues people face at work	71%
A large proportion of people at church know what I do at work	63%
My main church leader has visited me in my workplace	16%
I rarely talk about my work to anyone in my church	15%

we believe  
in your church

*partner with us*

CAP Money Course

Job Clubs

Debt Centre

We believe in the local church because it has the only message that will truly transform lives. We empower churches to give practical answers to the poverty and debt they see in their communities.

Find out more at  
[capuk.org/partnership](http://capuk.org/partnership)

Life-changing

Support

Mission

christians  
against  
poverty

**CAP**

**Lifting people out of debt and poverty**

# Does the Church support the unemployed?

We used to run a project for unemployed people, but couldn't continue due to lack of funding.

We are involved with other churches in providing foodbanks for those who struggle financially.

“We are really pleased that this report shows that churches care about the plight of the unemployed and want to get involved, as shown by 56% of respondents being offered prayer support when they were unemployed. But we would love to see more churches running specific projects to help the unemployed. This year Christians Against Poverty has launched its new CAP Job Clubs initiative, making it easier for churches to help people practically by giving them the skills and confidence to find employment.”  
John Kirkby, founder of Christians Against Poverty

## My church:

- Supports, with practical help, members who have lost their jobs or livelihoods **53%**
- Offers practical support to unemployed people in the community **40%**
- Has strong links to local businesses, employers or professional groups **19%**
- Runs (or is in partnership with) a specific project to help the unemployed (job club/training scheme etc) **13%**
- Offers voluntary work placements to unemployed people **13%**
- Has strong links with Christian fellowship groups based in local workplaces **12%**
- Has set up a social enterprise or business that offers opportunities for employment or work-related training **8%**

We run a church-based cafe, which is staffed largely by volunteers, many of whom are vulnerable and may be unemployed.

One member of our church is in the process of setting up a social enterprise to help long-term unemployed people.

Around 9% of our respondents' churches run an employment project, another 9% are interested in developing some activities serving local unemployed people and 31% are willing to think more about such initiatives. However, 31% said they personally received no support from the Church when they were unemployed.

# So what?

## Points for prayer and action



### The value of work

Clearly many evangelical Christians are fulfilled in their work – with 93% interested in their work and 84% feeling valued for the work they do. But frustrations do exist, including the emphasis on performance management and meeting targets. Many evangelicals say that a sense of vocation and an opportunity to serve others are much more important in a job than the pay, respect or status gained.

However, people's comments reveal that for many Christians their identity is strongly connected to their work. There are indications that younger, female and low-paid workers are less content than many of our panel who are at the 'top end' of the labour market. It is concerning that the Church in the UK often struggles to be relevant to manual and low-skilled workers, many of whom are in low-paid and insecure employment.

We can be thankful that many of us have the ability and opportunity to work. However we should be careful not to allow what we do to define who we are. Ask God to help you do your work (both paid and unpaid) excellently, as a service to Him. Pray for wisdom and patience to deal with the struggles of work, and also try to pray for – and practically support – others who are experiencing difficulties with work or unemployment.

### Work, rest and play

Our findings indicate that work today is demanding and many evangelicals seem to lack time for rest and relaxation. More than a third said they regularly brought work home with them and 10% had taken a career break due to work-related stress. Some 37% said they worked more than 40 hours per week – with 7% working more than 60 hours. These figures were especially high for people who worked for the Church or a Christian organisation. Many also spent a lot of time on unpaid work, such as caring for children and volunteering (especially for their church). It seems that, although the 'Protestant work ethic' remains strong, it may also be eating into time for families and friendships.

Do you intentionally set aside a Sabbath period, obeying God's command to rest? Is church a place where those with demanding workloads are supported? Pray for those you know who work unsocial hours, have high pressure jobs or many responsibilities, and think about how you can support them practically.

### Justice in employment

Evangelicals are concerned about the lack of decent jobs available, and 80% reject the idea that there are huge numbers of 'skivers and scroungers' happy to live on benefits. Three quarters think the government should change the law to ensure everyone receives a living wage. There is recognition that bullying and discrimination exist in the workplace, with good attitudes and practices of management seen as the most desirable factor when looking for employment.

Evangelicals have historically created work and fought for better pay and conditions. What can you and your church do to promote fairer working practices and policies? How can your church encourage and equip Christian managers, business owners and organisations to lead by example and work by best practice?

## Does the Church care about the unemployed?

The evangelical Church has a history of practically supporting the unemployed, and it is encouraging that 40% say their church offers practical support to unemployed people in the community. However, only 13% of our respondents were in a church which ran a specific project to help unemployed people, and only 13% were in churches offering voluntary work placements to the unemployed. Alarming, 31% of those who had become unemployed felt they received no support from their church.

In the context of continuing economic difficulties, the Church's lack of attention for unemployment needs addressing. Our challenge is to become prayerfully and practically involved in relevant activities and initiatives to help people into work. Importantly, the Church also has a responsibility to encourage entrepreneurial Christians to create much-needed jobs, and thereby regenerate our communities.

## Faith at work

Some 85% say most people at work know they are a Christian, and even more say they enjoy good working relationships with their colleagues. More than half say they often have opportunities to speak about their faith to non-Christians while at work. The comments also indicate that evangelicals' attitudes and behaviour at work and their sense of vocation are strongly influenced by their faith. Just over half thought that Christians getting into trouble at work if they say what they believe was a significant problem, but only 14% said they had met hostility from colleagues for their faith, and 9% from management. The perception of discrimination against Christians therefore seems to be worse than the reality.

Thank God we live in a country where freedom of belief and speech are protected. Pray that this protection will continue, and for Christians in countries where this is not the case. Pray for opportunities for yourself and others to confidently share your faith and God's love at work without fear. Also pray for more workplace fellowships so that Christians can gather to pray and encourage each other to witness at work.

## Does the Church see the workplace as a mission field?

It seems that much of the Church is overlooking the workplace as a vital daily frontline for mission. Less than half of our respondents felt their church helped Christians to think through the issues they faced in the workplace, and only 57% felt their church encouraged and prepared them to witness and evangelise at work. Less than a fifth had been visited at work by their main church leader.

Think about how you can show an interest in the working lives of your church family, supporting and praying for them. Pray your church will be a place that understands the issues people face in their day-to-day lives and provides applicable and relevant teaching. Pray that Christians everywhere will see the workplace as an opportunity to live out the good news of the gospel, and that the Church will actively equip Christians for this mission field.

To explore these findings and issues further you can access a free Powerpoint and discussion questions on [eauk.org/snapshot](http://eauk.org/snapshot)

We hope you have found this report interesting and thought-provoking. To find out more about joining us as a member of the Evangelical Alliance, visit [eauk.org/joinus](http://eauk.org/joinus)

Contact [g.smith@eauk.org](mailto:g.smith@eauk.org) if you would like to access a full data report, including inter-group breakdowns.



# Afterword

This is another fascinating report, providing a snapshot of evangelicals' experiences of working life. There is good news – many Christians are involved in a variety of working roles, with a strong sense of vocation and determination to work hard. We should be thankful that in so many workplaces there is freedom to be known as a Christian, to demonstrate Godly values and to speak openly about our faith.

But the survey also shows areas of concern, with many frustrated at the constant pressure to meet targets, and a small minority feeling marginalised for their faith. And there is evidence that some are overworking, with long hours and little time to relax.

The Church needs to think through its theology of work and make sure that biblical teaching is relevant and helping form effective disciples in working life. The Church has a strong tradition of striving for justice in employment and establishing practical programmes to help the workless. At a time of great economic crisis today many more churches need to get involved in these areas and encourage entrepreneurial Christians to create jobs.

As you reflect on this report, start thinking afresh about the attitudes to work that you and your church hold, and whether you are relevant to workers and the unemployed in your community.

**Steve Clifford**, general director,  
Evangelical Alliance

Discussion questions and a Powerpoint presentation of key findings can be downloaded free on our website.

You can also join our research panel at [eauk.org/snapshot](http://eauk.org/snapshot)



More detailed information about the research can be found at [eauk.org/snapshot](http://eauk.org/snapshot) and a fuller data report is also available on request from [g.smith@eauk.org](mailto:g.smith@eauk.org)

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