

Flexible working for all

Astrid Allen

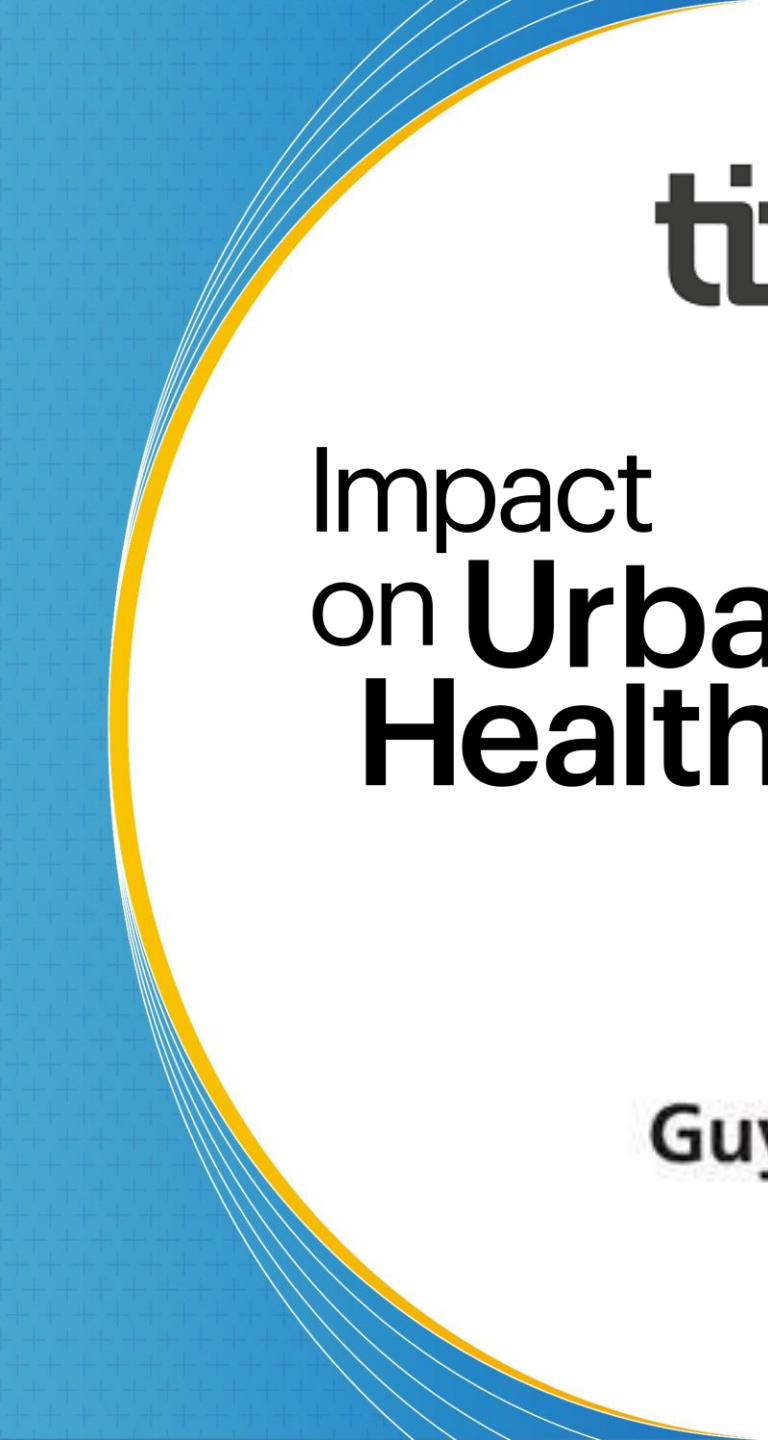
Senior Research Fellow

Institute for Employment Studies

*Key findings from research with
Timewise*

Context

- Rise in home and hybrid working
- However, over half of workers are site-based
- Workforce participation
- Health and wellbeing



timewise

Impact
on **Urban
Health**

**Sir Robert
McALPINE**

NHS

Guy's and St Thomas'
NHS Foundation Trust

ies institute for
employment
studies

Wickes

Evaluation approach

- Staff surveys
- HR data
- Interviews and focus groups

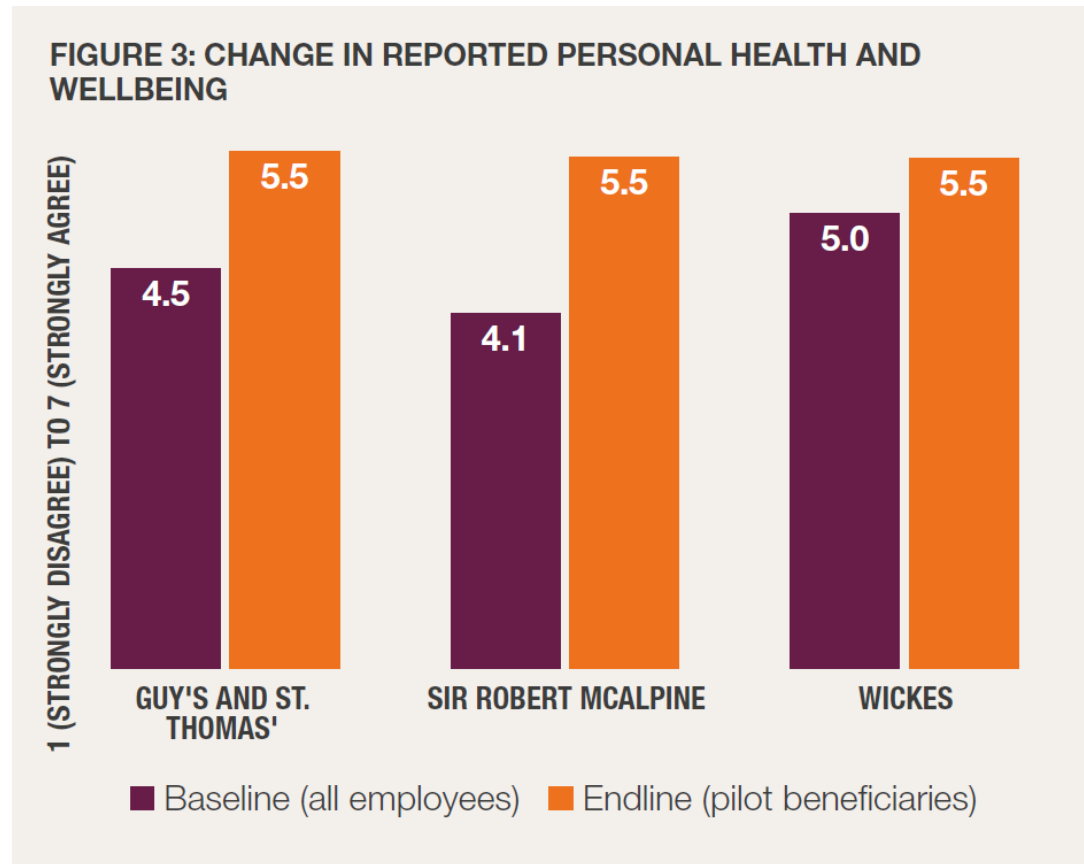
Flexible working pilots

- Guy's and St Thomas': 15 one-year qualified nurses received five additional roster requests
- Sir Robert McAlpine: 13 staff reported adopting a new agile working approach
- Wickes: Reduction in working hours and increased flexible working among the 66 pilot beneficiaries

What changed for individuals?

- Working practices
- Health and wellbeing
- Work life balance
- Job satisfaction

Health and wellbeing

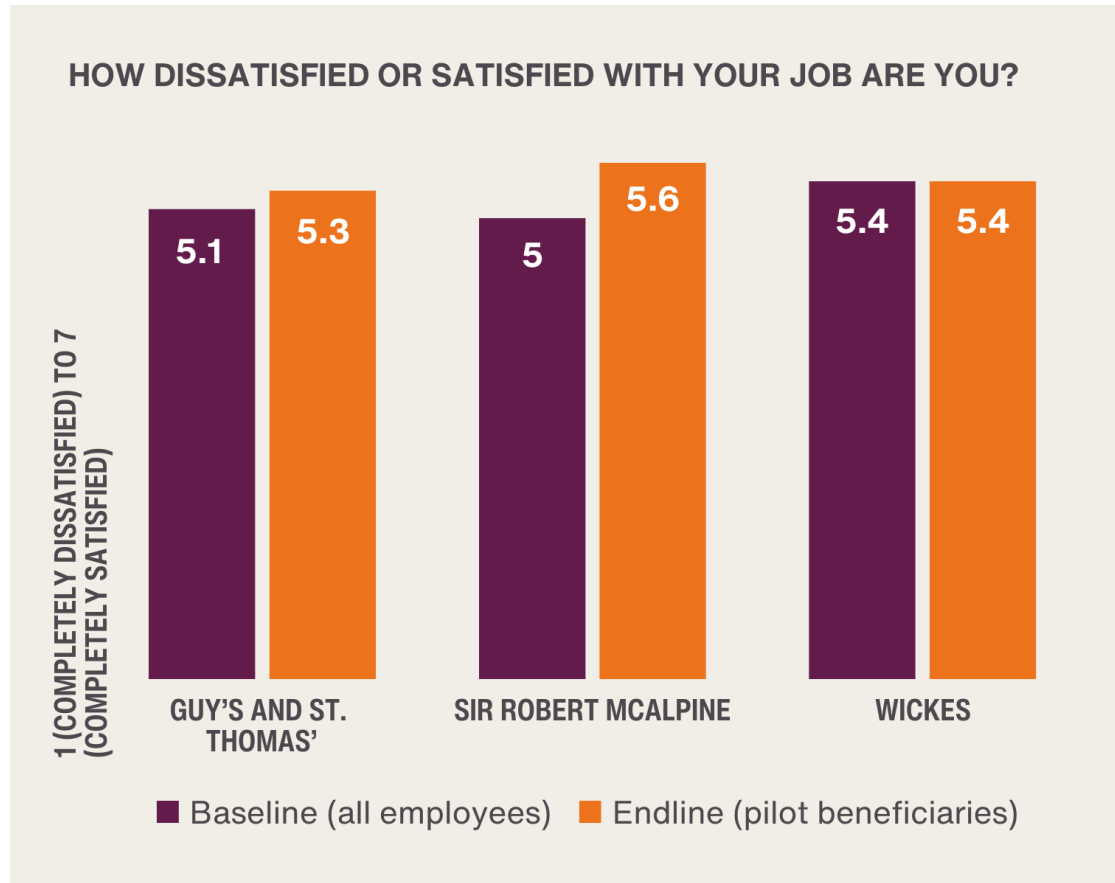


At baseline, 51% of all respondents said their current working arrangements allowed them to maintain a good level of personal health and wellbeing. At endline, 82% of beneficiaries agreed.

“I’d just won Store Manager of the Year at Wickes. But my home life wasn’t great. My daughter was three and a half and my other was newborn. My wife was really struggling. She needed to go into work one day a week. We had little time together. I took the opportunity at my performance review to say I needed to make a change. Then the trial was presented to me. To me it was a no-brainer.”

Store Manager, Wickes

Job satisfaction



83% of beneficiaries agreed that their new flexible working arrangement had increased their level of job satisfaction.

“The more control people have over their [working] pattern would generally make people happier. Everyone operates differently and people need different rest times.”

*Staff Nurse, Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS
Foundation Trust*

What changed for organisations?

- Staff retention
- Sickness absence
- Employee performance
- Culture change

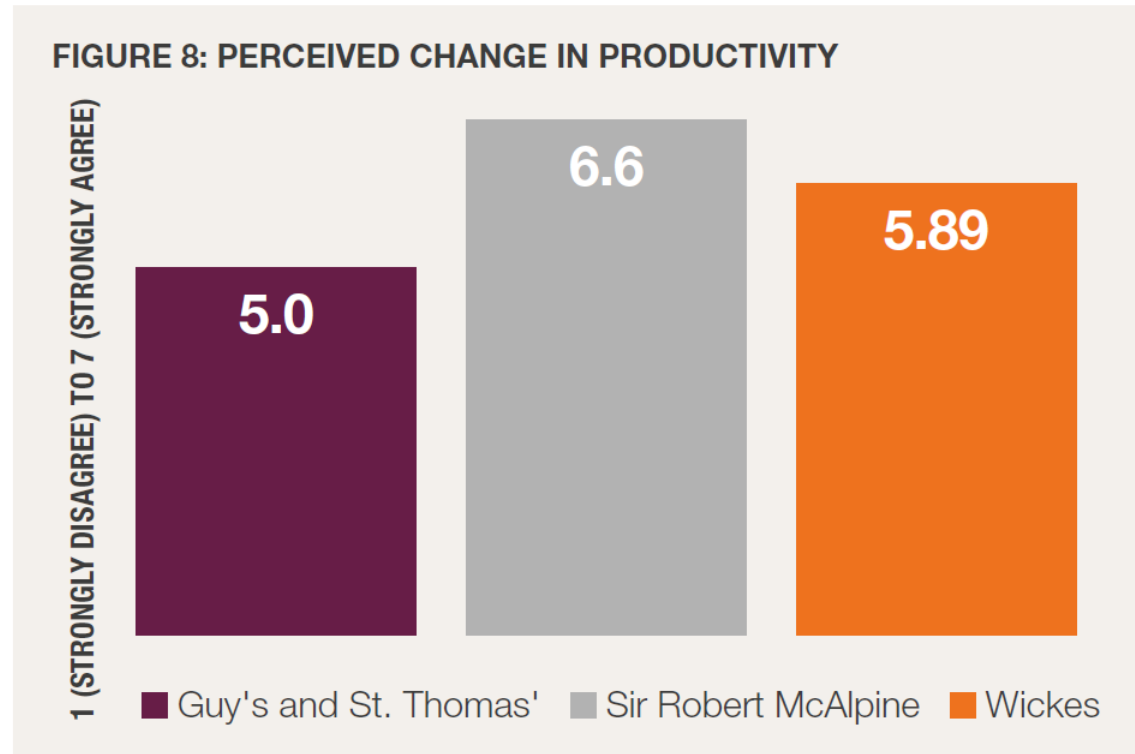
Retention

- Prior to the pilot, most said they would take a different job with better work life balance ‘even if it paid slightly less’
- Following the pilot, 76% of beneficiaries agreed that their new working arrangement made them want to stay
- Conversations with staff revealed that increased flexible working enabled some employees to work more hours

“The flexible working trial has made me appreciate my job more, and (if possible) has made me even more loyal to Wickes, as I have the best work-life balance I have ever had in all the years I have been at Wickes.”

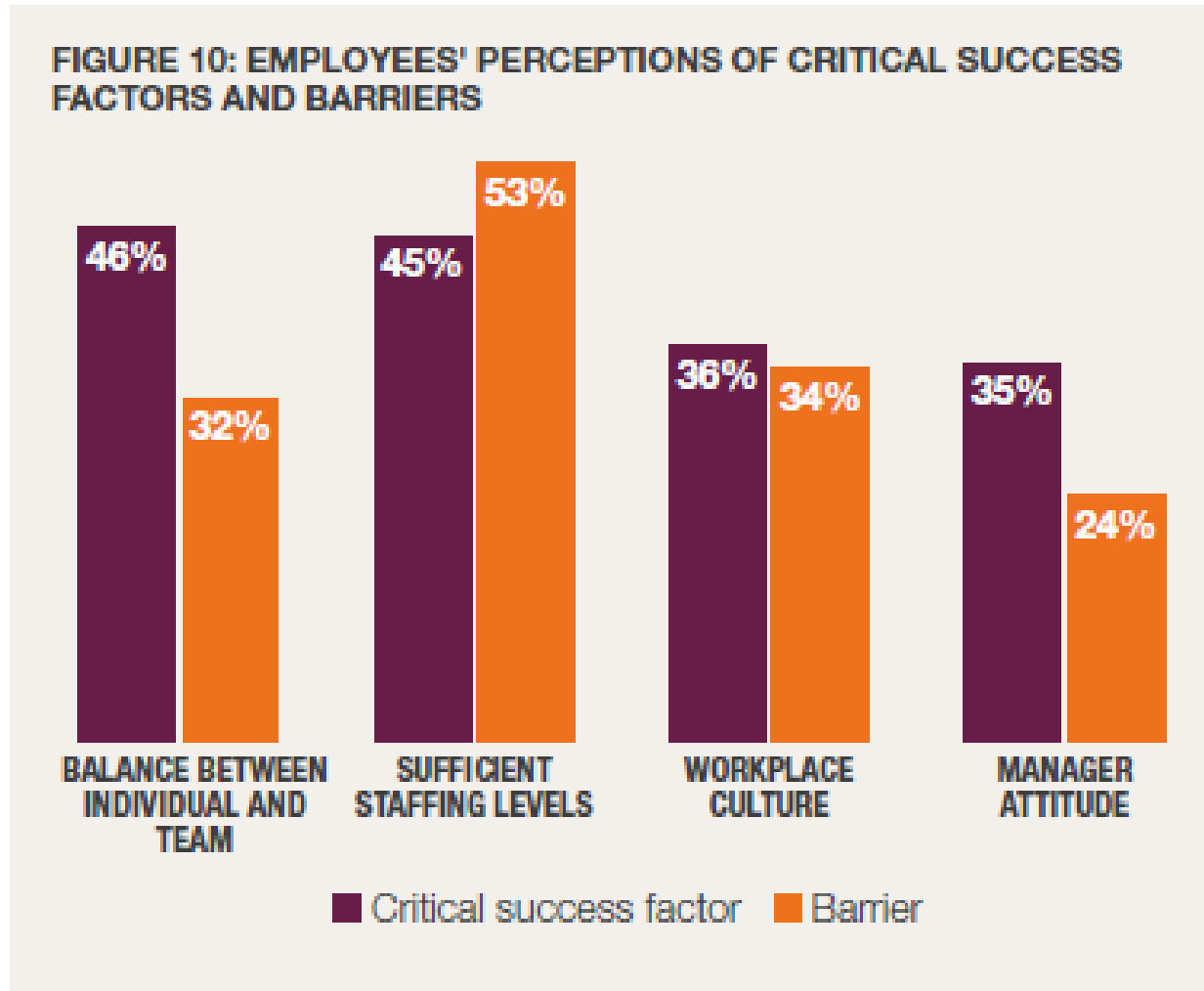
Store Manager, Wickes

Performance



83% of beneficiaries agreed that their new working arrangement helped them to work in a more productive way.

Critical success factors

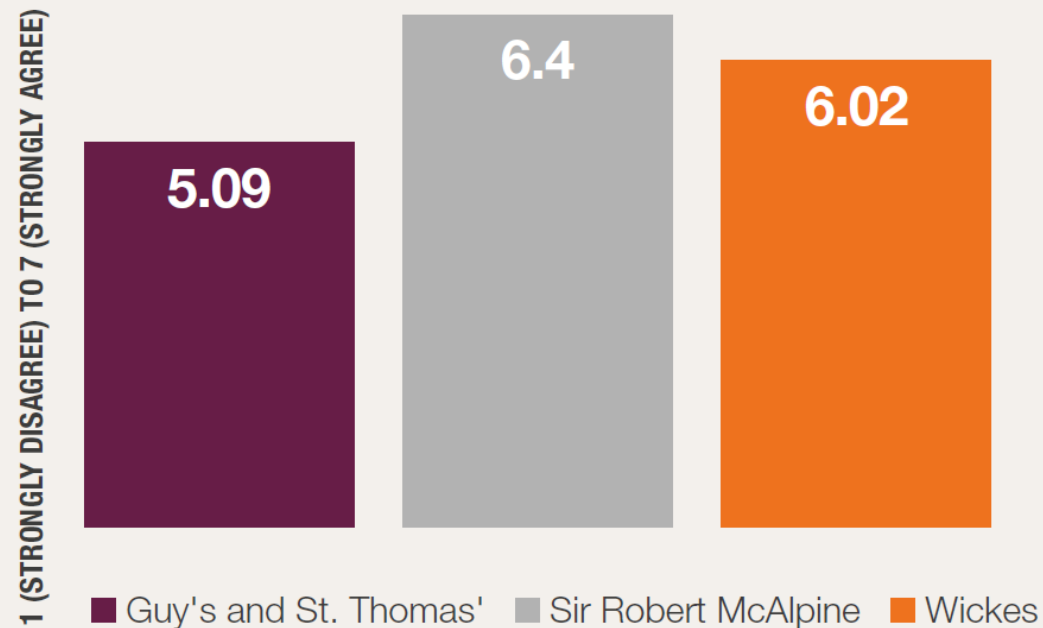


“If someone comes to me and says I want to be flexible and another person comes to me and says they want to be flexible in the same area, but they both provide cover for the same thing, I can’t accommodate both of those requests, so [we consider] how can we compromise together?”

Project Manager, Sir Robert McAlpine

No going back

FIGURE 9: BENEFICIARIES WHO SEE NEW WORKING APPROACH AS CENTRAL TO HOW THEY WANT TO WORK IN THE FUTURE



84% of beneficiaries agreed that their new working arrangement is central to how they want to work in the future (rating it five 'somewhat agree' or above).

Key recommendations

- Establish clear organisational principles and expectations on flexible working
- Share messaging on the value of flexible working for all individuals
- Employee voice and engagement are key to designing and organising work effectively at a local level
- Recognise the value of pilots and the evaluation of them

“It’s a different way to live and work.
A better one.”

Store Manager, Wickes

About IES:

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) is an independent, apolitical, international centre of research and consultancy in public employment policy and HR management. It works closely with employers in all sectors, government departments, agencies, professional bodies and associations. IES is a focus of knowledge and practical experience in employment and training policy, the operation of labour markets, and HR planning and development. IES is a not-for-profit organisation.

www.employment-studies.co.uk

Follow IES on Twitter  [@EmplmntStudies](https://twitter.com/EmplmntStudies)
and LinkedIn  [Institute for Employment Studies](https://www.linkedin.com/company/institute-for-employment-studies)