

# LGBT+WFH

Effective inclusion strategies for remote working



**Out Now**  
GLOBAL  
Research report

December 2021

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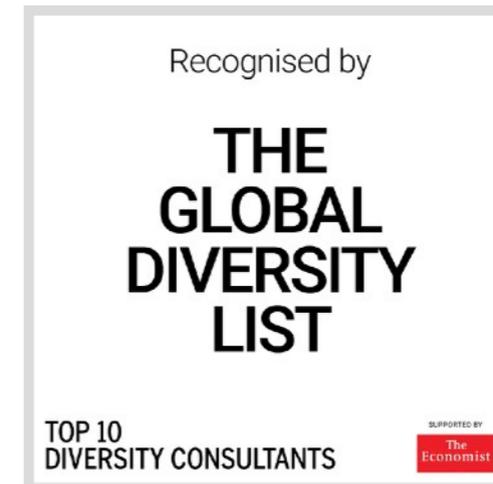
## Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to many colleagues, including: Christian Benson, Kelly Metcalf, Kirsty Jackson, Melanie Woolfendon, Maribel Labrado, Karen Thomson from Fujitsu; Urs Eberhard from Switzerland Tourism and Susann Jerry from Out Now, for their invaluable support of this project and for their ongoing efforts to advance inclusion and belonging for everyone.

## About Out Now

Established in Australia in 1992, Out Now is an LGBT+ specialist global research and workplace training consultancy. The firm is now based in Paris, France and its clients include community organisations, NGOs, government and many of the world's leading companies.

Out Now is named as being one of the world's Top 10 Diversity Consultants in the Global Diversity List, supported by *The Economist*.



## **About this report**

The 'LGBT+WFH' report is based on the analysis of more than 2,000 responses received from 38 countries.

Three countries - UK, USA and Australia - were focused on for the research.

Sampling took place from December 2020 until September 2021, a period when many countries experienced varying degrees of lockdowns and stay-at-home orders.

The working from home acronym 'WFH' has become one which is now understood by far more people than previously, with many who were able to do so being encouraged to work remotely from home due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Technology became a vital part of allowing people to continue to connect with colleagues as the world found its way forward, by deploying new ways of working.

We recognise that many people, especially those who received the new recognition during 2020 as "essential workers", work in roles where working-from-home is difficult or impossible.

Respondents were invited to complete every question in the survey, although, with the exception of the data privacy acknowledgement, respondents could decline to answer particular questions if they wished to.

## **A statement on World AIDS Day 2021**

This report is released on 1 December 2021, World AIDS Day.

While this study is not related to HIV, the virus responsible for AIDS, HIV remains an issue that impacts many millions around the world.

At a time when our thoughts are occupied by the impacts of a new global health situation, we wanted to include this statement in the front of our report to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of so many people working across the world to support those impacted by HIV and AIDS. Most importantly, we want to remember the many millions of lives lost during the past 40 years.

Sadly, we all now have become familiar once again with the disorienting impacts of a new and little-understood virus.

The vital work of so many - on combatting the impacts of HIV and now on Covid-19 - is work for which we express immense gratitude.

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# Executive summary 1/5



The global Covid-19 pandemic which commenced in March 2020 continues across the world.

In addition to the most devastating impacts of illness and death caused by the pandemic, societies have been faced with a need to suddenly transition from long-established ways of operating. Businesses had to re-invent their ways of working, almost overnight.

One of Out Now's responses to the situation has been that our education initiatives for clients on LGBT+ inclusion moved from in-person workshops to primarily being made available online.

We also had a need to understand what specific impacts upon LGBT+ people - and those who support them, who are commonly known as "allies" - happened due to the shift for so many people to working from home (WFH).

Until 2020, most LGBT+ inclusion initiatives we worked with our clients on were centred around in-person workplace interactions.

As workplaces transitioned to digital space, with remote working, we wanted to see whether this significant change in people's working environments created any impacts upon LGBT+ inclusion.

It has been clear in Out Now's work for some years that LGBT+ inclusion succeeds when initiatives are visible.

After years investing in strengthening LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace, the 'LGBT+WFH' research findings show that there currently exists a clear risk for business, presented by the new working environment. If remote working reduces LGBT+ visibility, the many personal and commercial advantages, delivered by effective employee inclusion, risks becoming substantially diminished as a result.

The challenge of the research study we embarked on from December 2020 to September 2021, which became the 'LGBT+WFH' report you are now reading, was to assess the inclusion experiences of LGBT+ people and allies when working from home.

We wanted to learn the impacts of remote working on LGBT+ inclusion as experienced by those most directly impacted. We needed to assess the current risks faced by business arising from the new work environment. Importantly, we also wanted to understand what initiatives might be deployed so that any potential negative impacts of remote working are not only understood but that they may be met with new, positive opportunities to advance the visibility and success of LGBT+ inclusion at work.

# Executive summary 2/5



Included as Appendix A in the report is the **Out Now 'LGBT+WFH' Toolkit** - which provides a highly actionable resource. This provides a set of key actions which LGBT+ allies, employees and managers can each implement - to ensure the ongoing visibility of LGBT+ inclusion at work when working remotely. Based upon the findings of this study and others, it currently seems strongly likely that an increased number of employees will experience a 'hybrid' mix of in-office and remote working into the future. The enclosed Toolkit delivers information to assist in meeting the requirements needed to ensure LGBT+ inclusion remains both visible and effective.

## Key findings

**Part 1** of the report shows various things which respondents like and dislike about working from home.

The top positive factors include flexibility in organising the working day, not having to commute to a workplace and being able to work from anywhere with a suitable internet connection.

At the top of the disliked factors, we find respondents miss spontaneous workplace interactions as well as relationship-building time with colleagues. These two are particularly important in regard to LGBT+ inclusion effectiveness.

Write-in comments from respondents illustrate the impacts of this loss of 'social' or spontaneous opportunities at work to strengthen working relationships. In particular, respondents linked this to a loss of their opportunities to be visible in terms of LGBT+ inclusion. As expressed by one respondent from Belgium: "It is more difficult to make new contacts and advocate for diversity. It (now) requires will versus daily influence."

In **Part 2**, we consider data on LGBT+ inclusion impacts caused by working from home.

Most LGBT+ respondents (58%) and allies (55%) think it is harder to be visibly supportive of LGBT+ topics with colleagues when working from home.

Few respondents believe it is less important to be visibly 'out' as an LGBT+ person or an ally at work when working from home. Only 6% of allies and 8% of LGBT+ people thought this.

A majority of allies (61%) and LGBT+ respondents (57%) believe being visibly 'out' at work is as important when working remotely as it is when working in-person. Further, at least one in three (33% allies; 35% LGBT+) respondents believe being visibly 'out' as an LGBT+ person or an ally at work has now become *more important* when people are working from home.

# Executive summary

3/5



A plurality of respondents (47% allies; 46% LGBT+) indicate that the topic of LGBT+ inclusion is discussed less often with colleagues when working from home.

As a result of these findings, we see that a strong majority of respondents believe the move to increased levels of remote working means “we need new ways to discuss LGBT+ inclusion at work”. A strong majority of allies (73%) and LGBT+ respondents (70%) agree with this statement.

Part 3 shows there are several new opportunities for visibility presented by remote working which enjoy broad support among respondents.

As one UK respondent wrote: “There are fewer traditional ways to communicate and discuss these issues when working from home but we are finding new ways to supplement this”.

Another, US-based, respondent wrote: “We have been discussing at leadership level about how we can incorporate visibility for all our diversity groups - it is a challenge but we are determined to find new opportunities from this new WFH situation.”

The following table summarises levels of support for some initiatives which are able to be implemented when working from home.

ACTION	SUPPORT LEVEL ALLY RESPONDENTS (%)	SUPPORT LEVEL LGBT+ RESPONDENTS (%)
Mention LGBT+ support in external communications	86	79
Mention LGBT+ support in internal communications	85	80
Making LGBT+ supportive backdrops available to all for online meetings	67	59
Use of pronouns (she/her; they/them; he/him) in email signatures	64	63

# Executive summary 4/5



## Recommendations and conclusions

Respondents generally favour a hybrid model of working from home combined with some level of in-person working to enhance working relationships, innovation, group interactions.

A generally understood meaning of the term 'hybrid' working refers to a person enjoying the freedom to be able to work from a traditional in-office situation as well as from an offsite location, most often their home. Many employees from 2021 are being offered hybrid work options, such as 3 days outside the office and 2 days per week working from their corporate office.

With hybrid working seeming likely to become a long-term lasting impact from the Covid-19 pandemic, it is essential for workplaces to transition general LGBT+ visibility and specific inclusion initiatives to digital spaces, while still ensuring in-person physical workplace visibility and initiatives are maintained.

The data suggests that working from home need not remain a net negative for LGBT+ inclusion. Indeed, opportunities can be seen.

By deploying a range of digitally-focused resources and initiatives, over time initial barriers to LGBT+ visibility when working from home would seem able to be reduced. Pro-active initiatives centred on employee engagement will be key for organisations to manage this successfully.

It is important to note there are many roles in society which the pandemic taught us are actually performed by 'essential workers', whose work cannot be done from home.

Positive outcomes from the experience of working from home cited by respondents include:

### General

- Worker flexibility
- Positive for productivity
- No commute - saving time and money
- More likely you will be measured for what you do rather than who you are

Negative outcomes from the experience of working from home included:

### General

- Work relationships harder to maintain
- Spontaneous interactions missed
- Too much on-screen meeting time
- Harder to perceive others' 'tone'
- Loneliness

### LGBT+ inclusion impacts

- More challenging to be out as LGBT+
- More challenging to be visible as an ally
- Topic of LGBT+ inclusion is discussed less when working from home

# Executive summary 5/5



In addition to actions discussed above and in the LGBT+WFH Toolkit (see Appendix A), Out Now recommends the following initiatives are able to be implemented which can be expected to assist with the ongoing visibility of LGBT+ inclusion when remote working:

- senior leader visibility, to demonstrate clear support, in digital work spaces - can include messages of support in email signatures, use of email pronouns, social media or workplace blog articles making support for ongoing LGBT+ inclusion support clear
- online sensitivity training workshops - it has proved highly beneficial in Out Now's working with clients to provide their teams with specific actionable steps through workshops to support teams to achieve effective inclusion visibility when remote working
- building in 5 or 10 minutes of 'free time' at the start or end of online meetings, by not starting and ending on the half/hour - with a stated encouragement to use these opportunities for more informal chats between colleagues
- scheduling online social events for colleagues with LGBT+ inclusion as part of the focus - although these may require careful thought as to utility for participants, as many respondents (66%) reported having too many online work meetings scheduled.

The key element for ensuring that inclusion for LGBT+ people and allies remains effective when working remotely is visibility. Allies must be able to be visible as allies in order to be effective. LGBT+ people need to see and hear that the topic continues to be supported by allies to know whether they should feel safe to come out as an LGBT+ person to colleagues.

It is important, for both business and personal reasons and whether working in-person or working from home, that LGBT+ employees continue to feel reassured and certain that they will remain valued and respected as a member of their workplace team if they choose to come out at work.

The topic of strengthening LGBT+ visibility at work is not exclusively a 'management' topic.

Everybody at work has the potential to choose to take actions which enhance visible support for the topic of LGBT+ inclusion, so that they can help to ensure all colleagues are able to feel valued and respected for their work - and for being themselves.

**The need to make a conscious decision to be a visible ally for LGBT+ colleagues is vital, particularly now so many people are working from home - and the many significant benefits to be gained from this visibility remain as valuable and substantial as ever.**

# Welcome



## Message from Out Now

The years of 2020, 2021 and 2022 will be remembered for many reasons - including, no doubt, the global and continuing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As well as the immense human suffering the disease itself has caused, there are profound impacts on daily life - including on what we had long considered 'normal' ways of working. For those whose working life does not of necessity involve in-person interactions, one consequence has been the global ascent of working from home. 'WFH' became a three-letter acronym more widely understood than ever before.

Out Now has worked on LGBT+ inclusion for three decades. The rise of the pandemic in 2020 meant that long-accepted ways of advancing LGBT+ inclusion at work had to be re-imagined.

One thing that has clearly not changed is a vital element which creates workplaces where LGBT+ inclusion is able to thrive - *visibility*. The LGBT+WFH study findings show that the essential relevance of visibility has not changed, though what has obviously changed are the mechanisms available to achieve it. Until 2020, many LGBT+ inclusion actions were constructed around in-person, in-workplace interactions. With the rise of WFH since then, many people's workplace interactions with colleagues now took place from their homes, digitally, via on-screen remote working.

The data findings show that ensuring inclusion visibility is maintained is vital as a foundation for the supporters of LGBT+ people (referred to as "allies").

Having colleagues being seen to support LGBT+ inclusion at work is valuable to LGBT+ people and, as a result, can strengthen workplace outcomes in general - as Out Now's earlier work on business case data has shown.

The *LGBT+WFH* study exists due to the input of over 2,000 respondents across more than 30 countries. We thank them for sharing their views with us. As you will see, the essential importance of visibility has increased with the advance of new remote ways of working. Importantly, the application of more technology to facilitate many people's daily working lives has also given rise to new opportunities able to help ensure visibility is maintained.

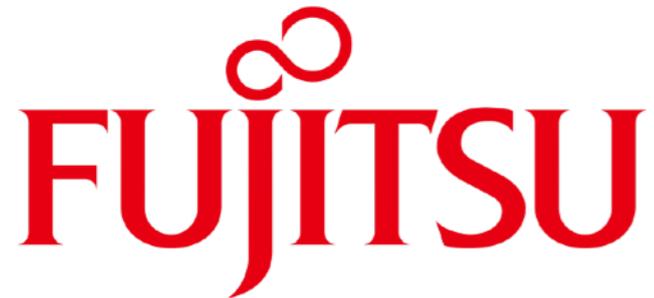
As the data shows, visibility is now considered more important than ever to successful LGBT+ inclusion and can be achieved in new ways, as a result of conscious inclusion strategies able to be actioned by us all.

I want to thank the report sponsors Fujitsu and Switzerland Tourism for their strong support of inclusion.

We are pleased to present this new research data and encourage you to consider the ways you personally can leverage new opportunities to become more visible as an ally to LGBT+ people. I know from personal experience that the support of allies can be something with the power to change people's lives for the better - and that potential is something no pandemic can take away.

**Ian Johnson, CEO, Out Now**

Paris, France — 1 December 2021



It is our people that make Fujitsu what it is. At Fujitsu we value fairness and equality as part of what is called 'The Fujitsu Way'. Intrinsic to this are our corporate values, which include the important sense of personal value we want each member of our team to experience - through aspiration, trust and empathy.

Fujitsu was the first Japanese company to have publicly expressed our support for the UN LGBT+ inclusion business standards and continue to view LGBT+ inclusion as a fundamental part of our values - and to create a culture of belonging and respect for all colleagues.

The Out Now 'LGBT+WFH' research is an important study that is helping us to develop meaningful actions that achieve better LGBT+ inclusion.

With hybrid working here to stay and with millions of people around the world likely to spend more of their time working remotely in the future, the findings of this research help with practical guidance on how to create an inclusive hybrid culture for LGBT+ colleagues and allies. Achieving this can benefit all members of our team.



This is especially important to Fujitsu because we can only achieve our purpose of building trust in society through innovation by embracing and encouraging diversity. Innovation is fostered through having a diverse workforce that is empowered to bring the best of themselves, different perspectives, backgrounds and experience to work.

Fujitsu Pride is our first 'global' network and our goal is to be the employer of choice in the technology sector for LGBT+ inclusion.

Fujitsu Pride creates safe spaces for LGBT+ people to collaborate and challenge the organisation to be visibly inclusive.

Network successes include: Virtual Global Pride events including social media campaign [#ShowYourPride](#), visibly demonstrating LGBT+ support by adding rainbow to your profile picture or [virtual lanyard](#) and a series of [LGBT+ Ally guides](#) to educate allies that have both been shared within and outside Fujitsu.

**Christian Benson**

Vice President, Client Managing Director, Fujitsu

Executive Sponsor of the Fujitsu Europe Pride LGBT+ network



"Whether you are currently working from home or at the office - Switzerland is ready and waiting to welcome you for your next holiday in our beautiful country.

At Switzerland Tourism we have long been proud of our visibility in welcoming our LGBT+ guests. We appreciate and respect all who choose to discover what makes so many people love telling others about their most recent visit to Switzerland.

We are keenly aware of the importance of putting workplace inclusion policies into practice and value greatly the diversity of our own workforce. Our LGBT+ colleagues are part of a team made strong by the many different backgrounds of all who work at Switzerland Tourism.

It is our pleasure to be able to support this new 'LGBT+WFH' research initiative by Out Now - to help us all better understand how to best meet the needs of LGBT+ people and support the many people and organisations who choose to be visible as LGBT+ allies.

Switzerland Tourism stands with you in this important work."

**Urs Eberhard**  
Head of Markets, Switzerland Tourism





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# Part 1

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## Working from home - general reactions

Respondents were asked to share their general impressions - positive and negative - about remote working.



## 1.1 Things people like about working from home

### Top 6 things

1. Flexibility in how I organise my day
2. Not commuting to work
3. Work from any location with internet
4. I save money
5. Wearing clothes I want to wear
6. Feel more productive

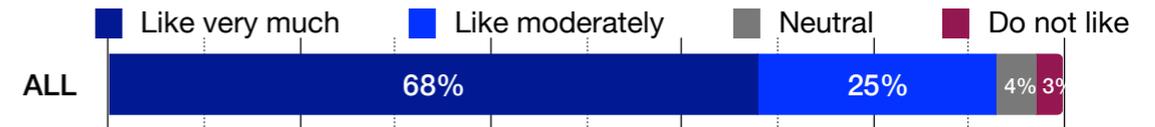
## 1.1 Things people like about working from home

In the graphs to the right we see the top six things respondents selected which they liked about working from home.

Some additional aspects which respondents like included: better space to work in (a total of 77% of respondents indicated they liked this aspect), fewer interruptions from colleagues (also 77%) while being able to spend more time with other people in their household was a factor liked by 74% of respondents.

A slight majority of all respondents (52%) indicated they think it is more likely they will be measured for what they do rather than who they are when working from home.

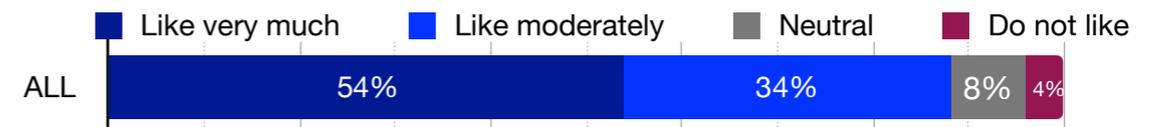
Flexibility in how I organise my day



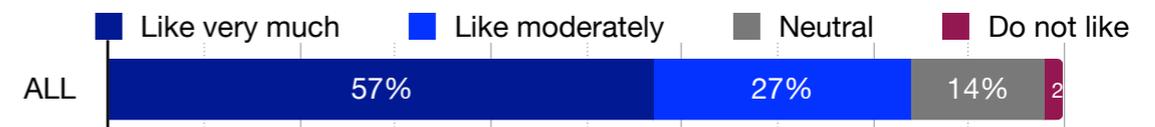
Not commuting to work



Work from any location with internet



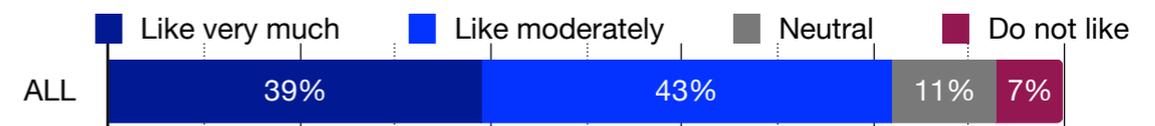
I save money



Wearing clothes I want to wear



Feel more productive





## 1.1 Things people like about working from home

Sample participant remark

The pandemic has caused so much upheaval. But I must say I really like working from home in a lot of respects. Sure, I miss the day-to-day interactions but I do not miss the commute to the office and I really like being able to sit where I want at home to work, when I want and wearing what I want to wear.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from Canada**

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## 1.2 Things people dislike about working from home

### Top 6 things

1. Miss spontaneous workplace interactions
2. Less relationship building time with colleagues
3. Harder to separate work from home life
4. Having too many onscreen meetings scheduled
5. Harder to perceive the 'tone' of other people
6. Feel more lonely working from home

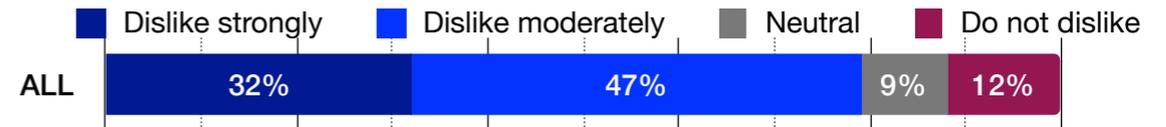


## 1.2 Things people dislike about working from home

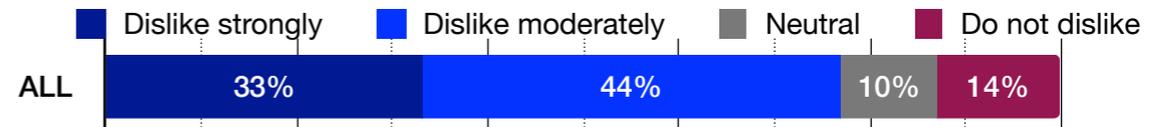
In the graphs to the right we see the top six things respondents selected which they disliked about working from home.

Some additional aspects which respondents disliked include: distractions / noise at home (disliked by 59% of respondents), feeling like they are always at work / never get to leave (a total of 57% of respondents indicated they dislike this aspect) while the sense of missing out on work opportunities was a factor disliked by 47% of respondents.

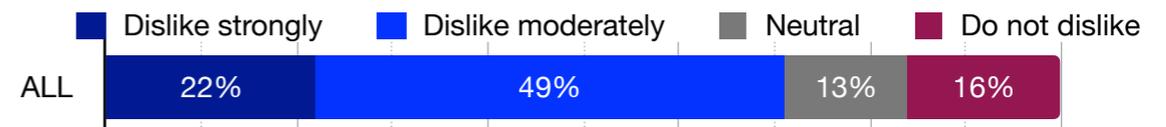
### Miss spontaneous workplace interactions



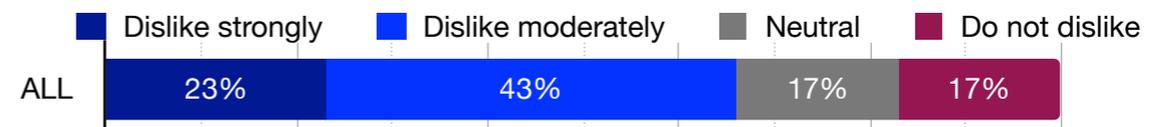
### Less relationship building time with colleagues



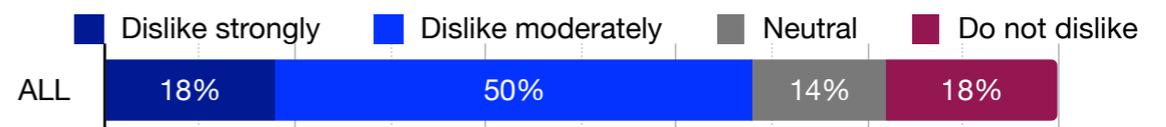
### Harder to separate work from home life



### Having too many onscreen meetings scheduled



### Harder to perceive the 'tone' of other people



### Feel more lonely working from home

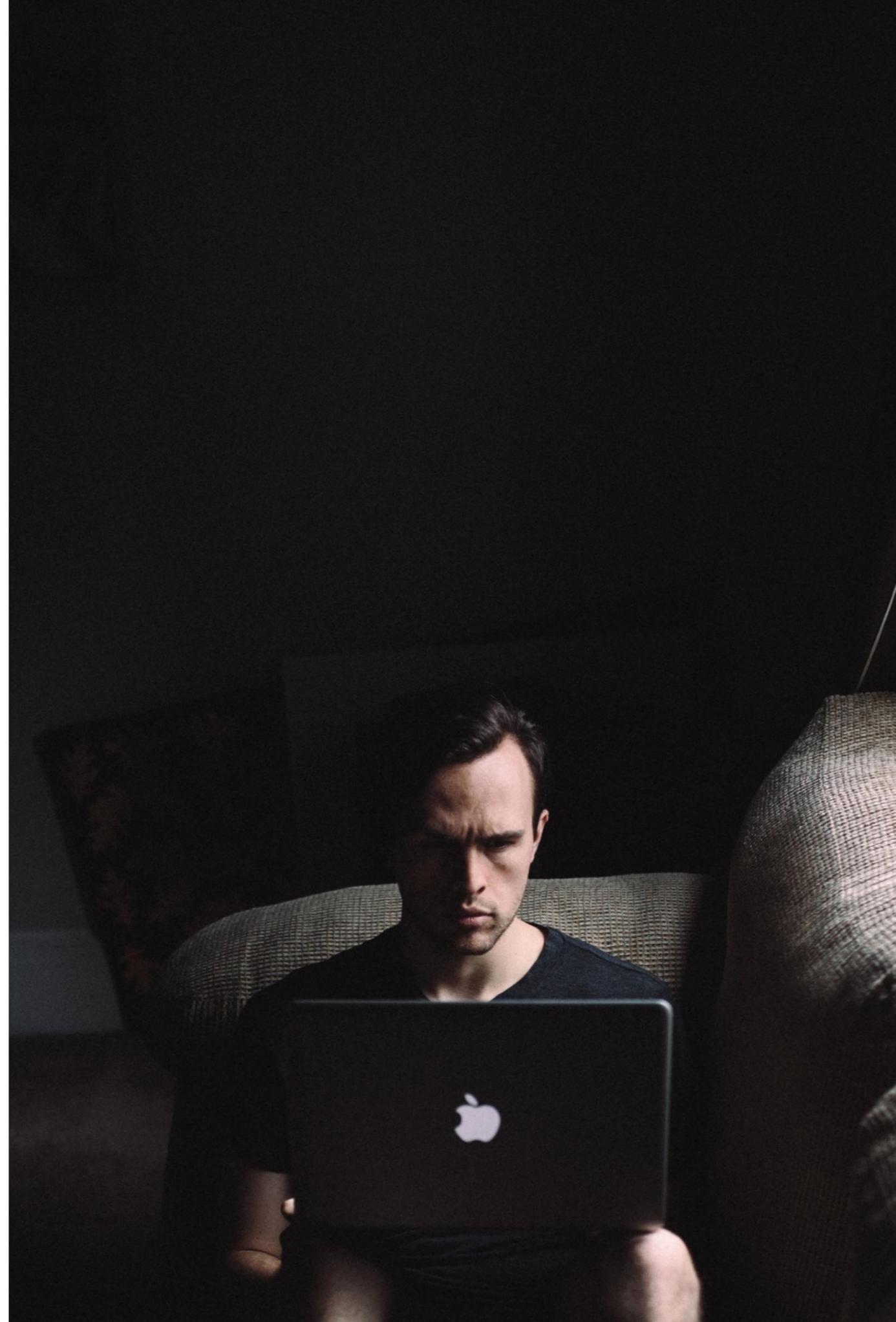


## 1.2 Things people dislike about working from home

### Sample participant remark

I have to confess to feeling like I am not coping that well with working out of the office. I have so many scheduled meetings on-screen and then when they're done, I still have all my usual work to do. I miss just chatting to colleagues - that never seems to happen much when we have on-screen meetings. I really miss not being able to just bump into someone for a chat like used to happen all the time in the office. And I really am starting to resent how it feels that I am expected to be available more hours than I ever used to work when we were all in the office. I hope this does not continue like this for too long. It is really stressing me.

LGBT+ respondent from USA



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# Part 2

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## Working from home - LGBT+ inclusion impacts

Respondents were asked to share their views on how remote working can impact LGBT+ inclusion at work.



## 2.1 Visibility is more difficult now

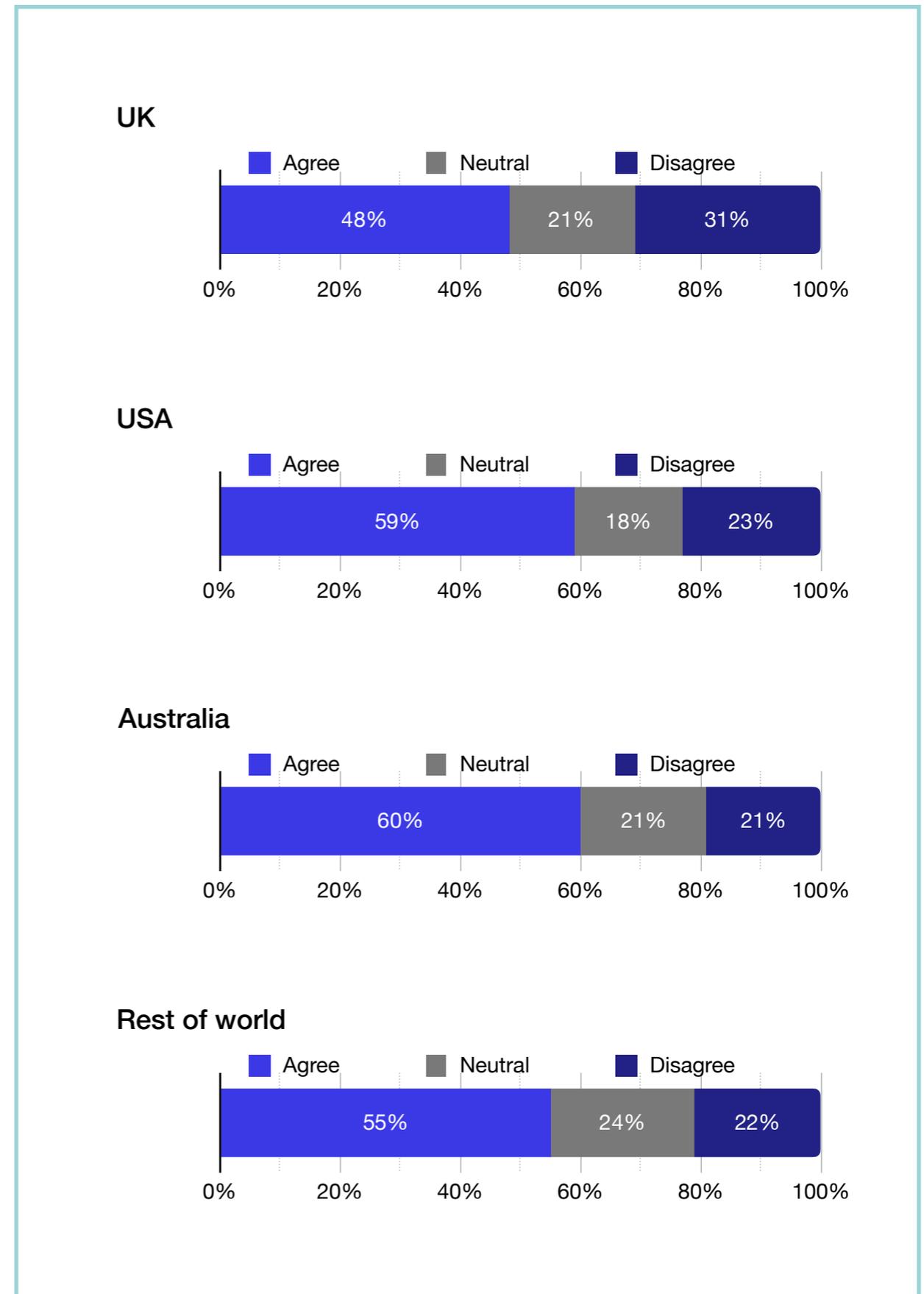
“I think it is harder to be visibly supportive of LGBT+ topics with colleagues when working from home”

Out Now knows from our three decades of LGBT+ research, that one of the most important aspects of successful inclusion strategies is visibility - both from a corporate perspective and in relation to individual allies at work.

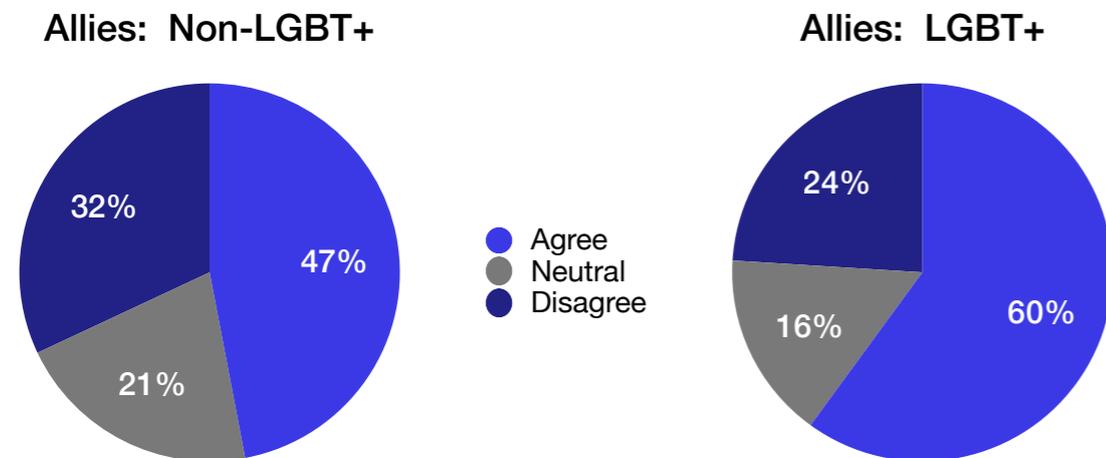
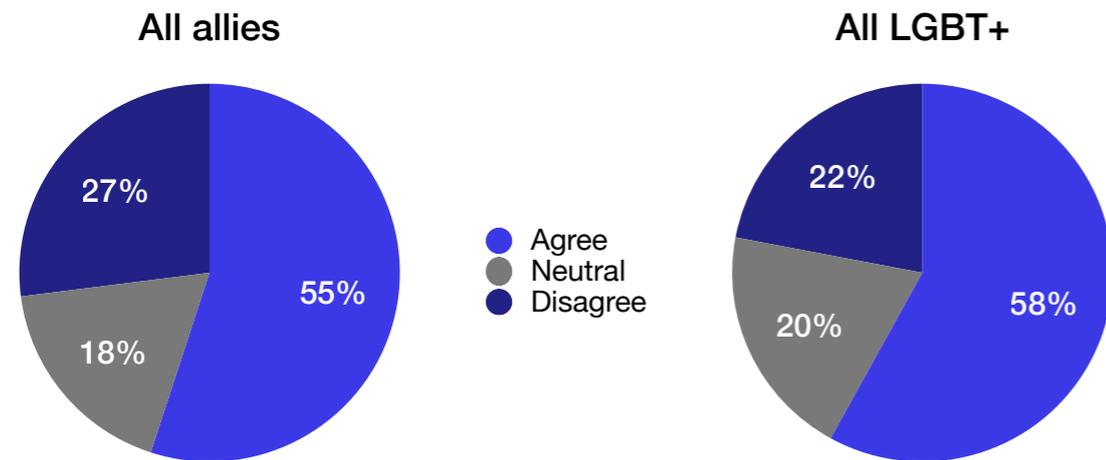
This is because LGBT+ people make a risk assessment on whether it is feasible or advisable to ‘come out’ as LGBT+ to their colleagues. Out Now research has shown clearly that visible support for LGBT+ inclusion is a key motivator in this regard.

It is clear from the answers to this question, that visibility is seen to be more challenging when respondents work from home. This can be illustrated by the participant remarks extracted below in section 2.1.1.

Nonetheless, we shall see later in this report (Part 3) that as well as presenting challenges for visibility, new remote ways of working have also opened new possibilities for showing visible support for LGBT+ inclusion at work.

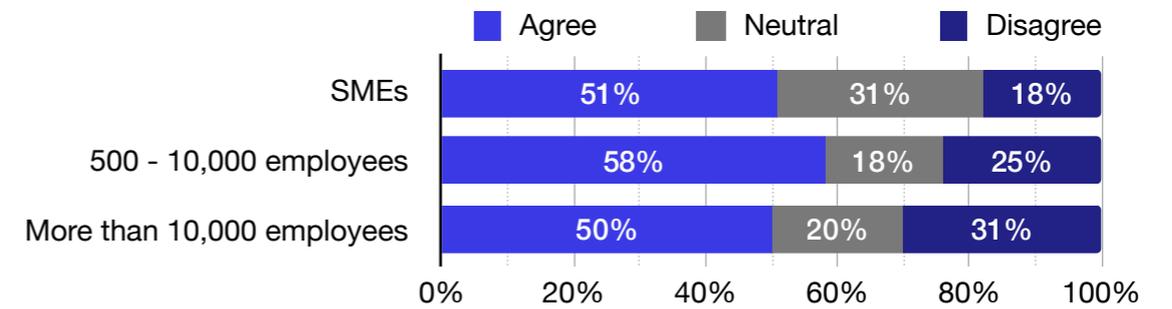


## 2.1 Visibility is more difficult now

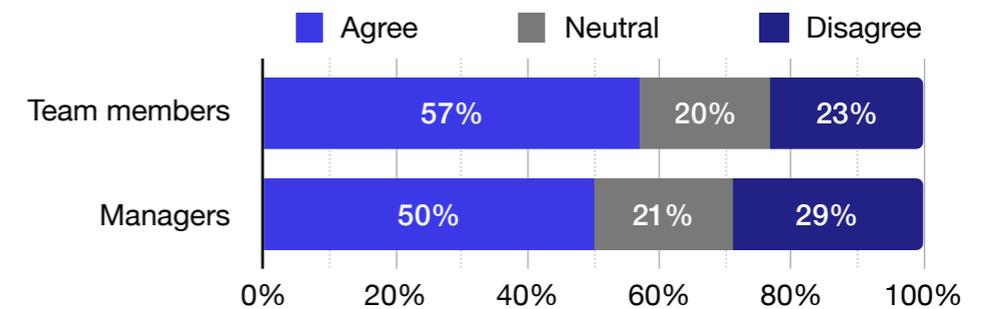


“I think it is harder to be visibly supportive of LGBT+ topics with colleagues when working from home”

### Company size



### Seniority at work



In these data tables we look at key findings analysed through the lens of various aspects of respondent characteristics.

## 2.1.1 Visibility is more difficult now

### Participant remarks

Not having social interactions in person makes everything that is social more difficult.

LGBT+ respondent from Portugal

It is more difficult to make new contacts and advocate for diversity. It requires will vs daily influence. Adding signature mentions showing support for inclusion is one way to compensate.

LGBT+ respondent from Belgium

We speak less, so this topic is rarely in the conversation. LGBT+ people cannot express themselves.

Heterosexual respondent, ally from Poland

We used to have regular social gatherings at the end of the day, now impossible. People don't want to have yet another online meeting at the end of the day.

LGBT+ respondent, ally from Netherlands

There is no opportunity to have inter-personal conversations.

LGBT+ respondent from Canada

It is more visible when you walk with your colleagues to a restaurant during lunch, chatting with them in cafeteria. You can talk spontaneously. While working from home, you miss all these opportunities.

Heterosexual respondent, ally from Japan

## 2.1.1 Visibility is more difficult now

### Participant remarks

We used to hold great in-person onsite events at the workplace. We have some virtual Pride events, but many people are tired of so many virtual/zoom meetings.

LGBT+ respondent from Australia

I want to be an ally just like I was in the office but I don't know how to. I have thought I could wear my rainbow lanyard for on-screen meetings since that was one way I made sure people knew I am an ally in the office but I worry it might look odd since they know I am working from home.

- Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK

I think it is harder to come across as LGBTQ+ friendly in a purely online workspace, harder to be visible to others, without the opportunity for more casual and relaxed socialising.

LGBT+ respondent, ally from UK

Meetings start and finish then the next one starts for most of the day. There is very little discussed outside the topics of the meetings. Social chats happen much less now because we work from home.

LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA

There are fewer traditional ways to communicate and discuss these issues when working from home but we are finding new ways to supplement this.

LGBT+ respondent from UK

Our Pride employee group used to have networking events through the year. That was one of the most important ways the company made sure inclusion was in front of people through those events. They are not online so the topic is just mentioned a lot less at work now.

- Heterosexual respondent, ally from USA

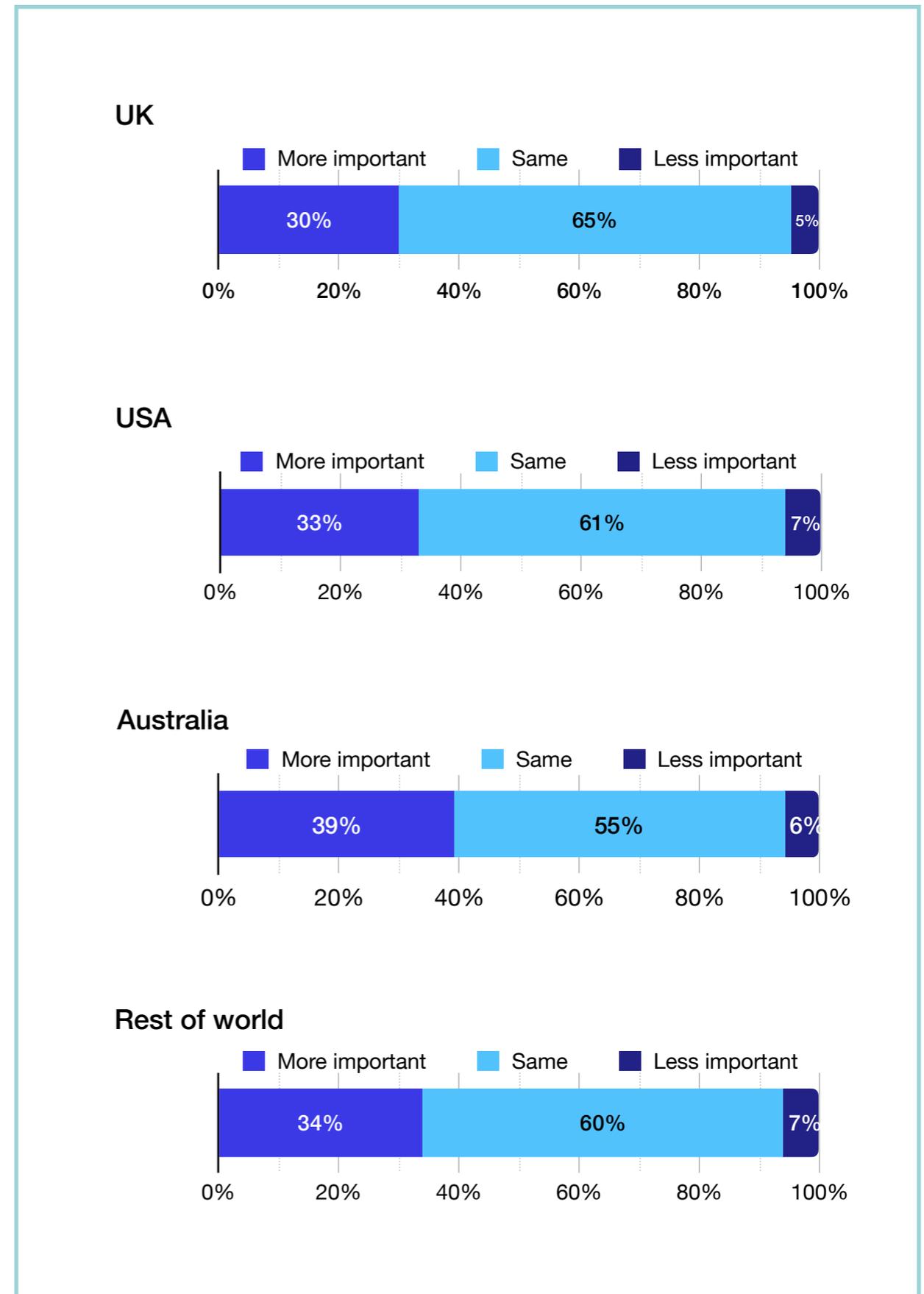
## 2.2 Visibility is more important now

“Do you think it is more or less important to be visibly 'out' as an LGBT+ person / an ally at work now when so many people are working from home?”

For a question such as this, we might expect the “same” option to be the default option to be selected by a majority of respondents, as is the case here for each geographical region considered in the graphs on the right. We interpret this to mean that inclusion visibility remains at least as important as it always has been.

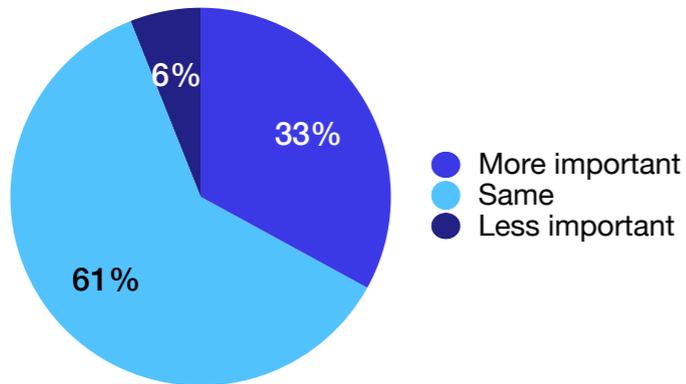
What is noteworthy here are the numbers of respondents who feel that visibility - for both allies and LGBT+ people - is now *more* important when working from home.

The participants' written remarks on this question (section 2.2.1) are typical of the kinds of concerns we saw expressed by many respondents about the continuing importance of LGBT+ inclusion visibility when working from home.

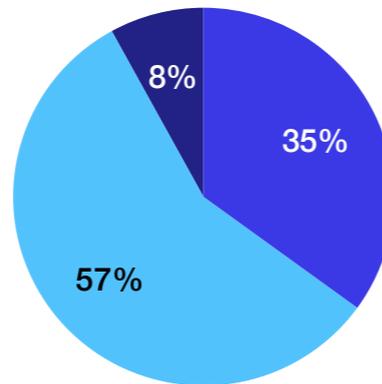


## 2.2 Visibility is more important now

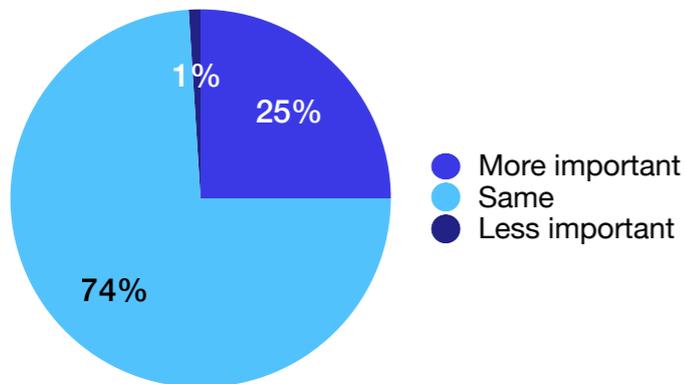
All allies



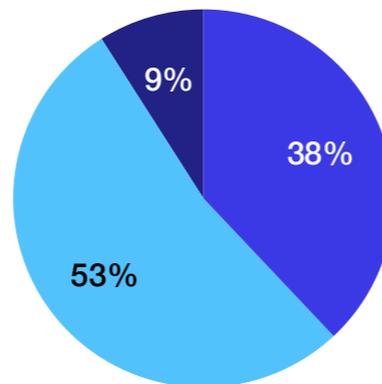
All LGBT+



Allies: Non-LGBT+

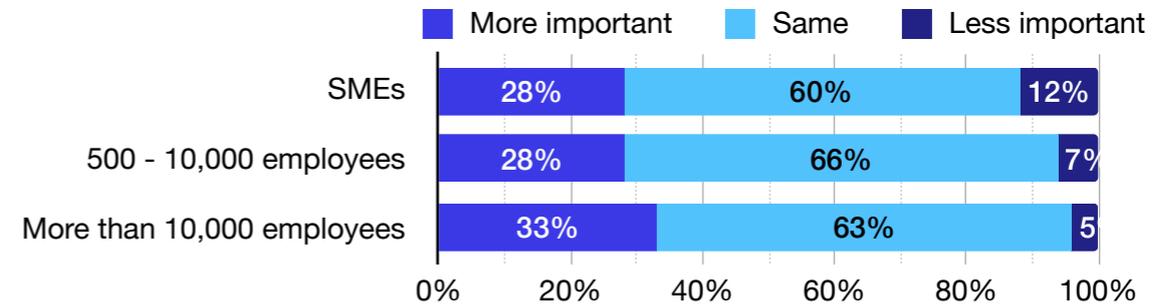


Allies: LGBT+

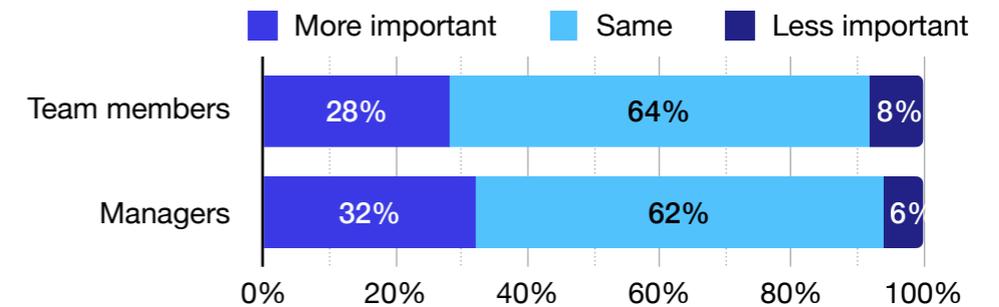


“Do you think it is more or less important to be visibly 'out' as an LGBT+ person / an ally at work now when so many people are working from home?”

Company size



Seniority at work



In these data tables we look at key findings analysed through the lens of various aspects of respondent characteristics.

## 2.2.1 Visibility is more important now

### Participant remarks

We need to create as many opportunities as possible to raise awareness.

Heterosexual respondent, ally from Japan

I feel less visible. You have to be more intentional about it and use other online signifiers.

LGBT+ respondent from Australia

There is a real risk the topic is mentioned less and we need to guard against that. LGBT+ people are no less relevant at work so we need to make sure they know they are still respected and included at work.

Heterosexual respondent, ally from Australia

The aim for me is for it to become totally normalised but until it is the more exposure people get to people that are LGBT+ the more they will realise that we are all just people and any fears or awkwardness or concerns will just fade to nothing. Until we get there, if people are not aware that they are working with people who are LGBT+ then it will continue to be 'other' in many peoples' minds and hence something to be feared or railed against.

Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK

I think that 'visibility' is still a personal choice, but being more visible as an ally is probably more important as it can show where help or friendship is available for anyone struggling with acceptance or workplace issues.

Heterosexual respondent from UK

## 2.2.1 Visibility is more important now

### Participant remarks

As an ally it is important that people know who we are as not as visible as when in the office.

Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK

I think working from home makes it more important for me to be seen as an ally - I want my LGBT+ colleagues to know I support them and continue to do so, even when we do not occupy the same workspace.

Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK

It is important that I am visible as ally so that my colleagues feel comfortable to be themselves and know that I am on their side.

Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK

I think it is really important to be visible otherwise I worry the topic will disappear from discussions at work.

Heterosexual respondent, ally from USA

We need to be overt about our support so that colleagues know they can be themselves. We have to find ways to do this in our brief interactions.

Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK

Since I started working from home I have found it harder to find easy ways to be out - as both a lesbian and as an ally. I am convinced though that it is essential to be visible in both capacities since I want my colleagues to fully understand who I am.

LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA

## 2.2.1 Visibility is more important now

### Participant remarks

Visibility whether in the office or remote working is still critical. And even more effort is needed to be 'visible' with remote work...i.e. my always utilizing my camera for meetings plus using gay, though subtle and in good taste, backdrops for these meetings. These backgrounds have prompted some new employees to reach out to talk about office etiquette about being 'out' at the office. Isolation or the sense of isolation and non-support should not be allowed to happen.

LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA

The principle hasn't changed at all. What may have changed is that when I was new on the job, I was looking out to see how out someone could be, and now you just don't interact as much with your coworkers.

LGBT+ respondent from USA

We have been discussing at leadership level about how we can incorporate visibility for all our diversity groups - it is a challenge but we are determined to find new opportunities from this new WFH situation.

LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA

It remains important to be visible to dispel stereotypes and beliefs that do not support diversity and inclusion. Folks need to experience working with others whose values and beliefs may be different to promote tolerance, acceptance and patience.

- LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA

I miss the opportunities to socialise with the network - all our functions before were in person so we are introducing a virtual meeting but I am not sure it is as effective yet.

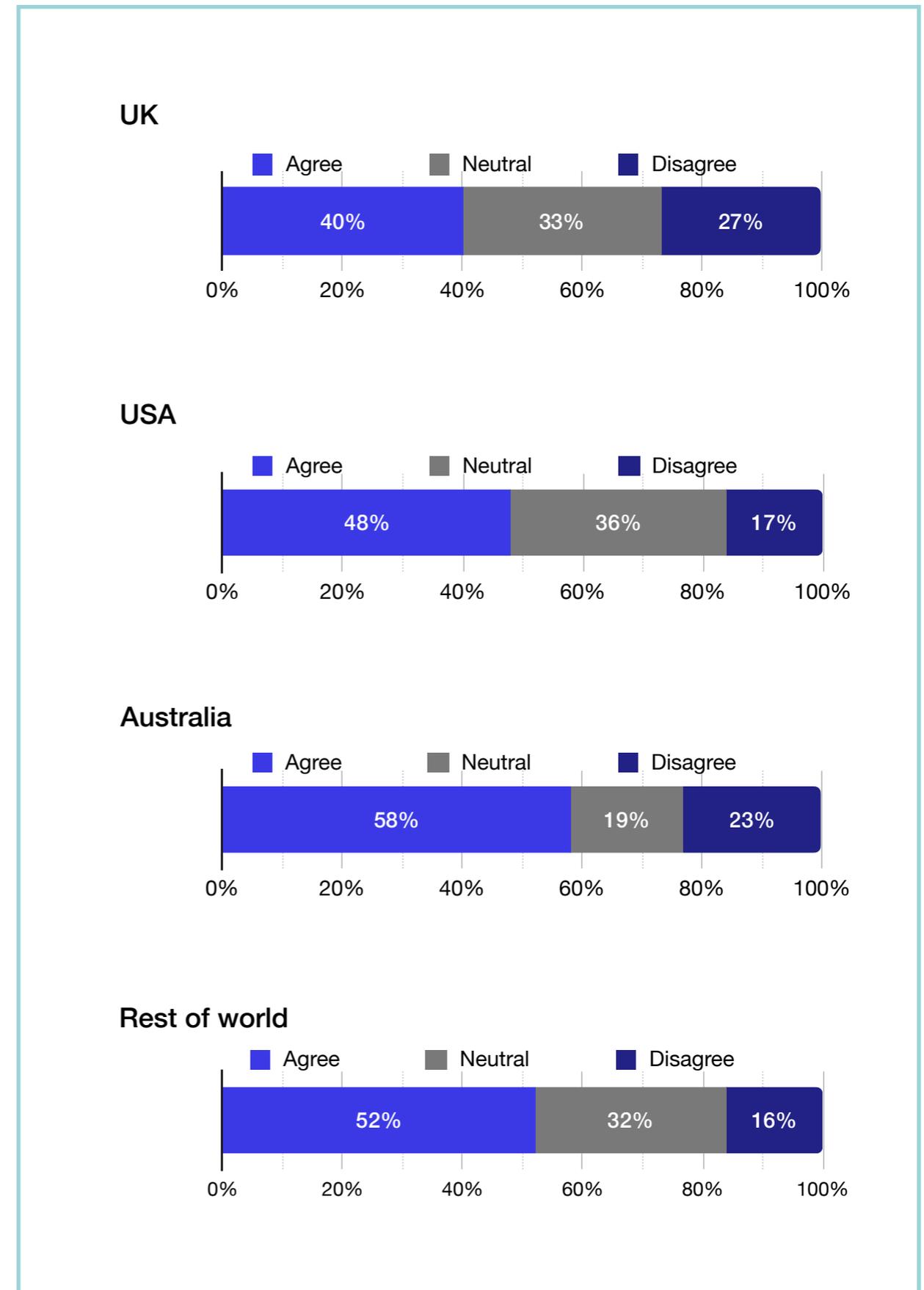
Heterosexual respondent, ally from USA

## 2.3 LGBT+ inclusion is discussed less at work

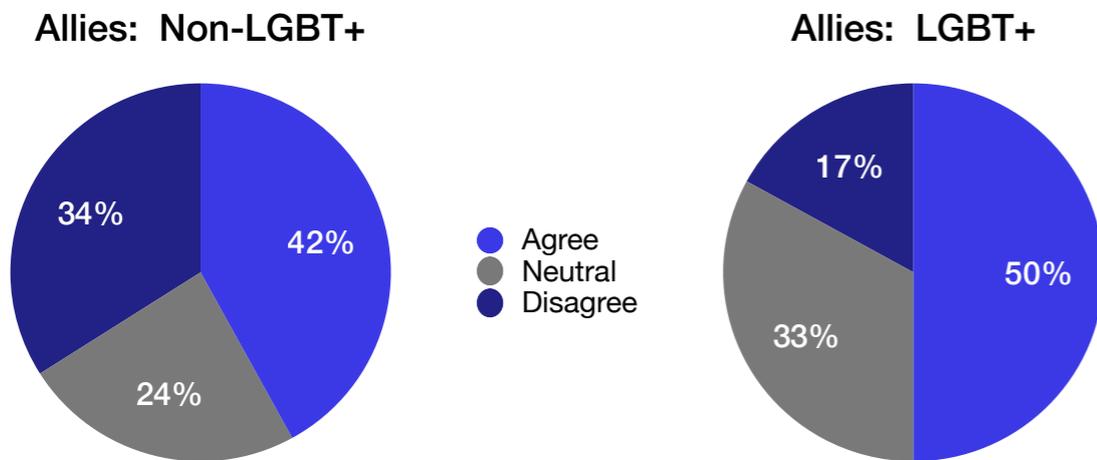
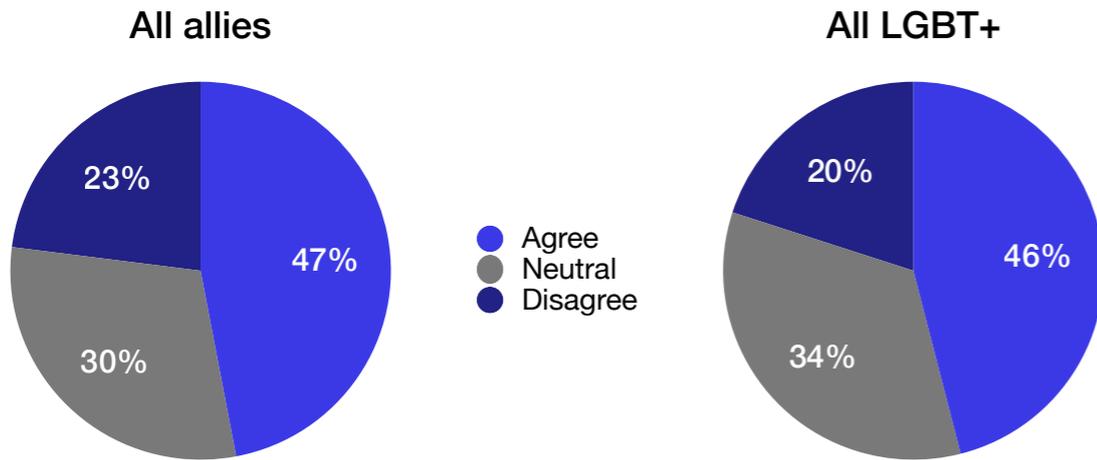
“The topic of LGBT+ inclusion is discussed less often with colleagues when working from home”

A plurality of respondents in the UK and US agree with this statement - and a majority do so in Australia and the rest of the world.

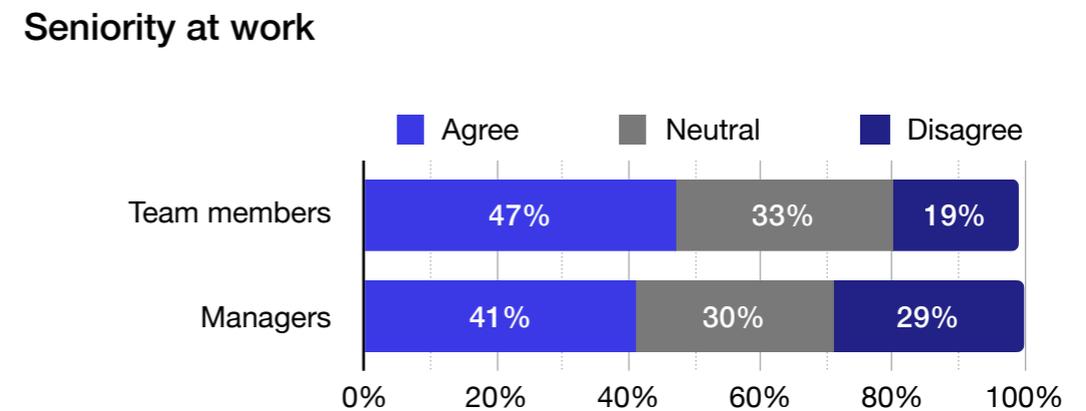
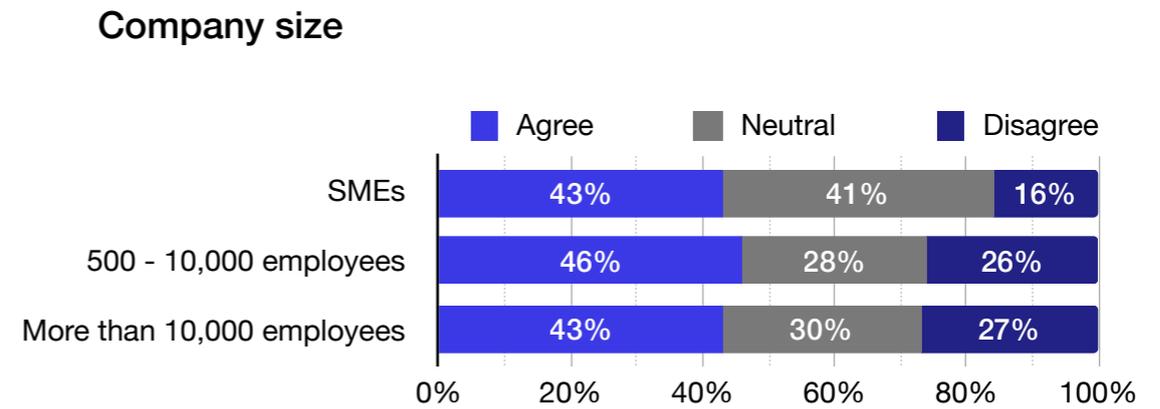
We can see that half of all LGBT+ people who also identified themselves as being allies to others think that LGBT+ inclusion tends to be discussed less often with colleagues when remote working.



## 2.3 LGBT+ inclusion is discussed less at work



“The topic of LGBT+ inclusion is discussed less often with colleagues when working from home”



In these data tables we look at key findings analysed through the lens of various aspects of respondent characteristics.

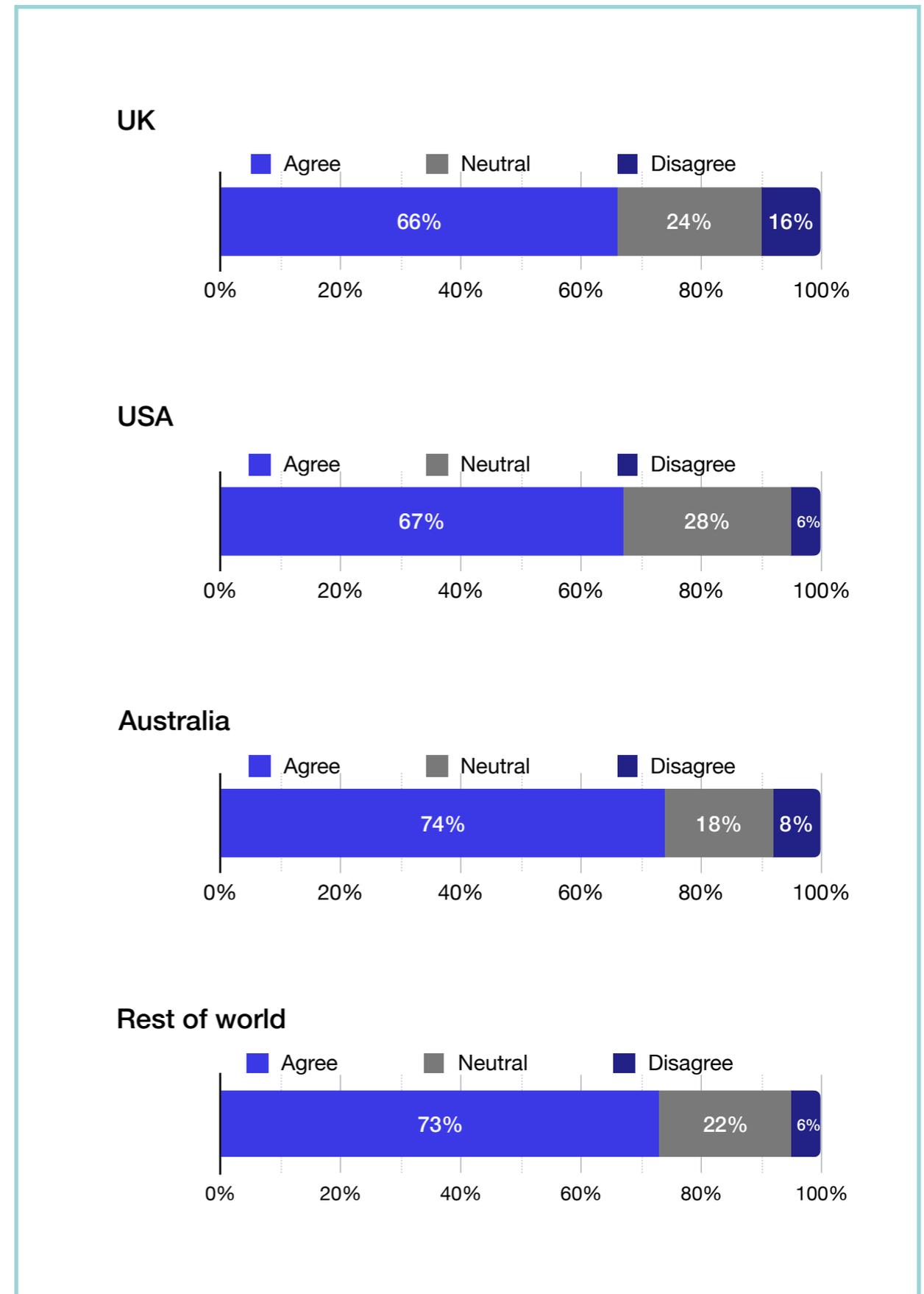
## 2.4 New ways to discuss LGBT+ inclusion needed

“We need new ways to discuss LGBT+ inclusion at work”

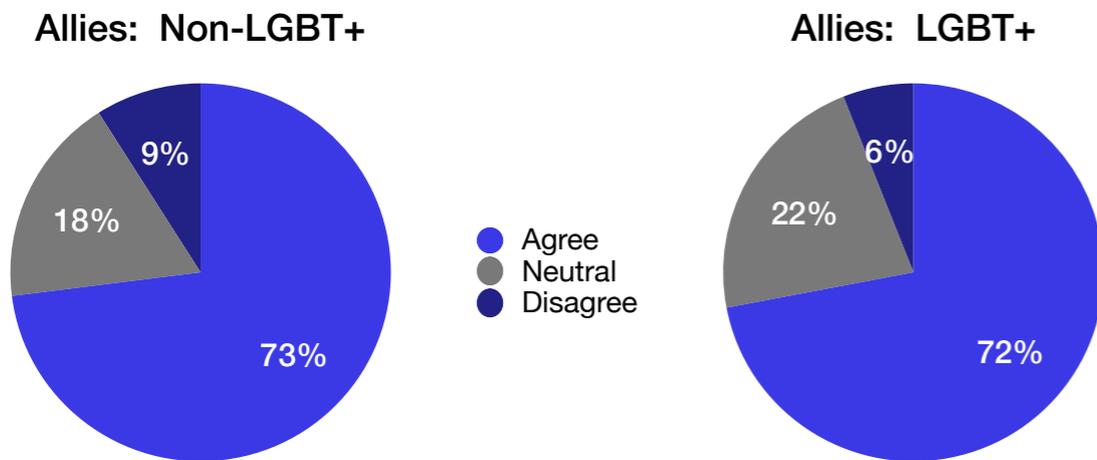
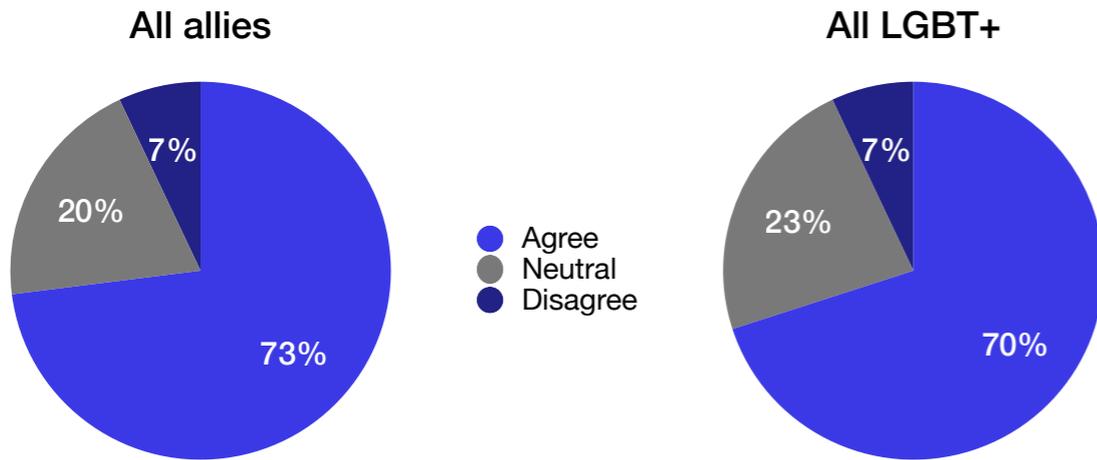
A convincing majority of all respondents analysed agreed with this statement.

In fact, among all allies globally, we see that three out of every four respondents (73%) agree.

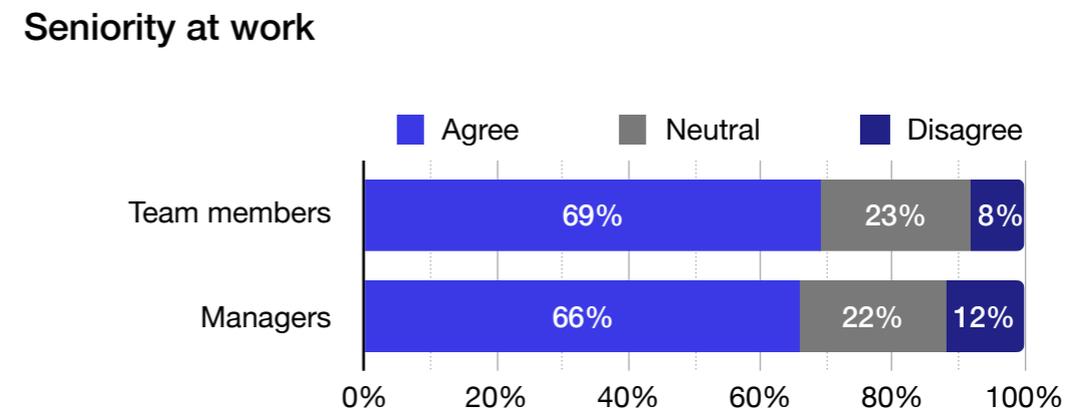
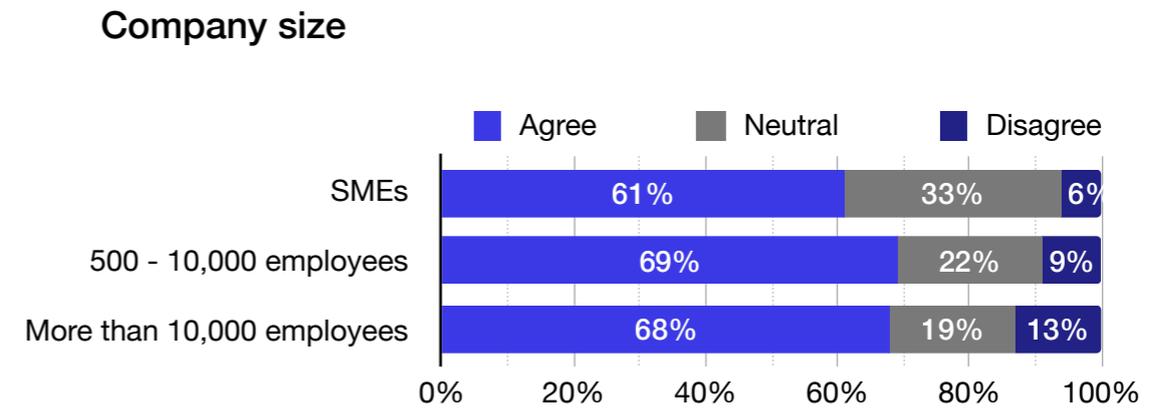
There would seem to be an important need for employers to find and implement new ways to ensure that the topic of LGBT+ inclusion is visible and discussed at work when employees find themselves working remotely.



## 2.4 New ways to discuss LGBT+ inclusion needed



“We need new ways to discuss LGBT+ inclusion at work”



In these data tables we look at key findings analysed through the lens of various aspects of respondent characteristics.



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## Part 3

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### Strategic implications for remote working

New ways of working can present challenges, as well as new opportunities to advance the visibility of LGBT+ inclusion at work.

## 3.1 Understanding the key challenge

### Visibility is key

Running consistently throughout responses received is the theme of the challenge presented to maintaining the visibility of LGBT+ inclusion topics at work.

Prior to 2020, for most organisations, such inclusion activities generally involved actions implemented in traditional working environments, in-person at work, able to be easily seen by others.

With the switch to remote working for many workers since 2020, it is maintaining the visibility of LGBT+ inclusion actions which presents the most significant challenge to continuing to provide effective levels of support for LGBT+ people and allies at work.

This section of the report includes a range of specific and participant-suggested actions able to support inclusion visibility when working remotely.

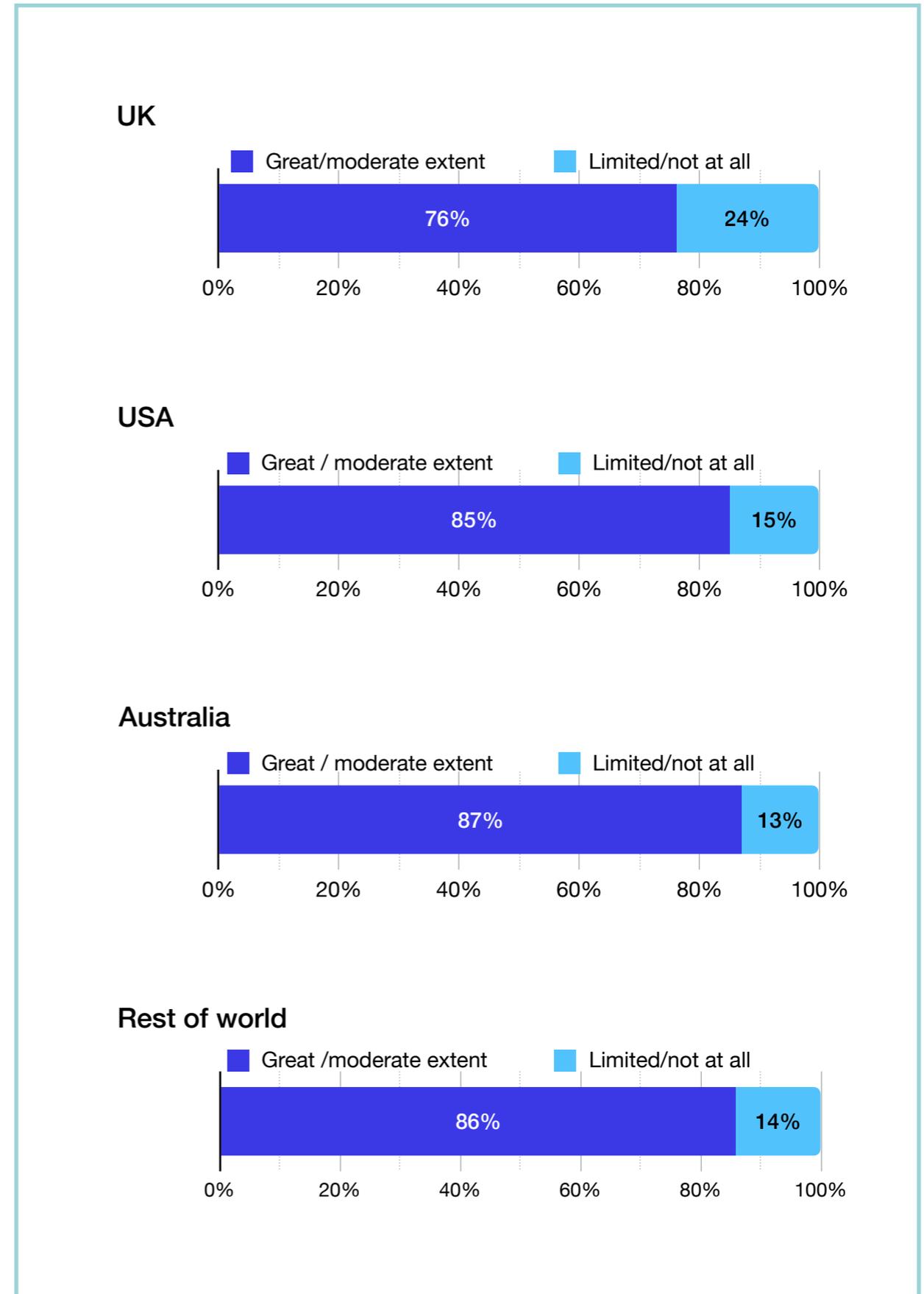


## 3.2 Actions

### Mention LGBT+ support in external communications

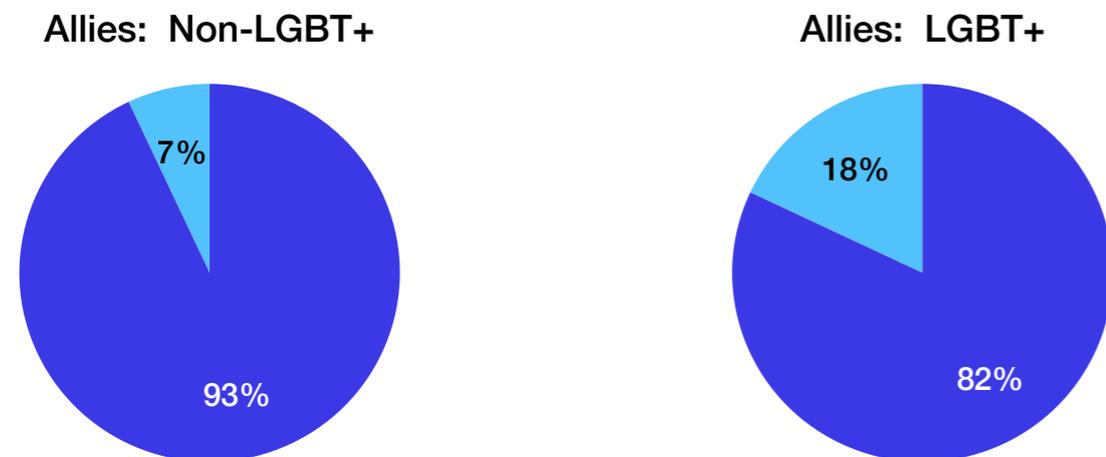
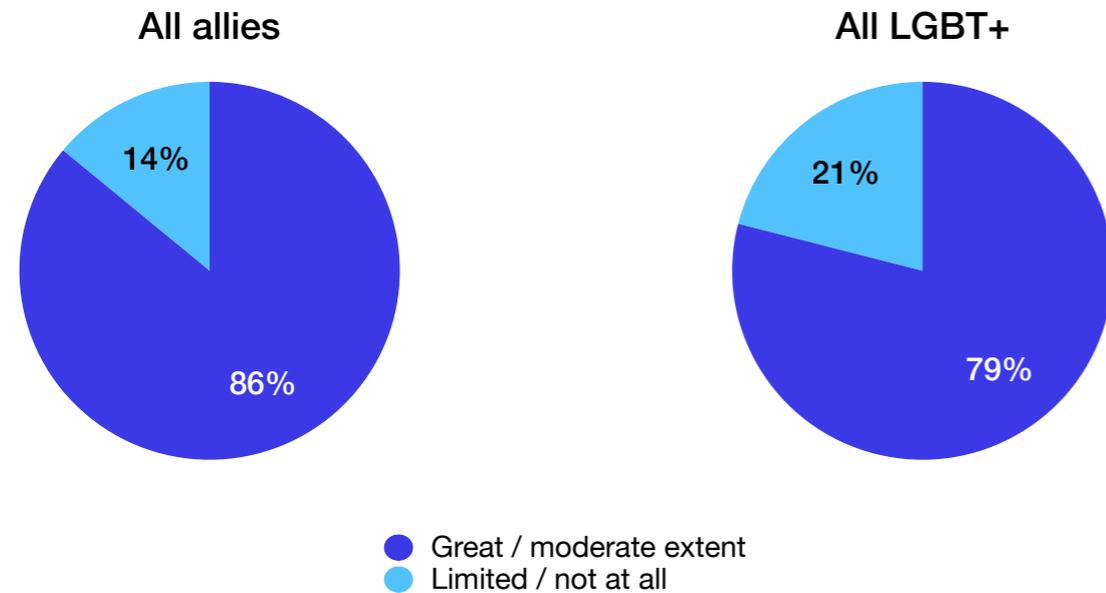
From a corporate standpoint, mentioning LGBT+ positively in external-facing communications represents an 'easy win' able to show continuing support for inclusion when many or all of the firm's employees are working remotely.

This is evidenced by the strong levels of support for this proposition among all analysed groupings. In fact among allies who are non-LGBT+ the support level exceeds 90%.



## 3.2 Actions

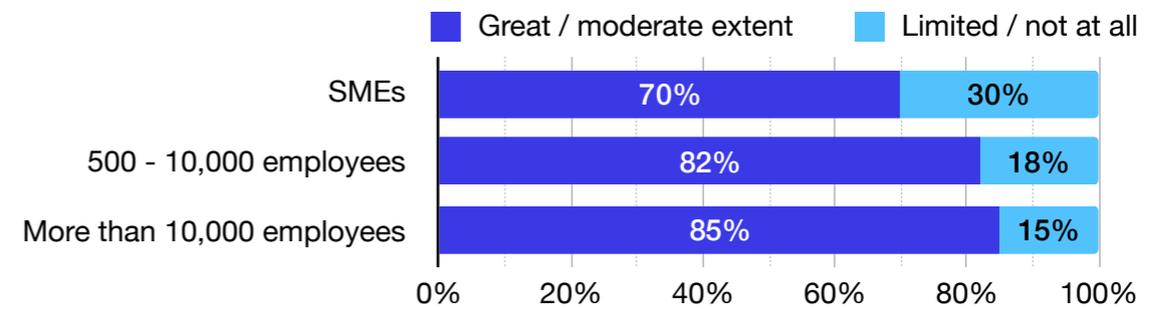
### Mention LGBT+ support in external communications



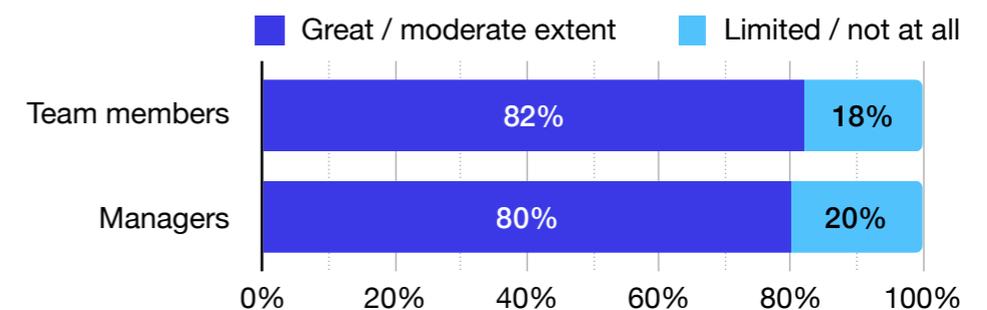
In these data tables we look at key findings analysed through the lens of various aspects of respondent characteristics.

“To what extent do you think this action could support LGBT+ inclusion when people are working from home?”

#### Company size



#### Seniority at work

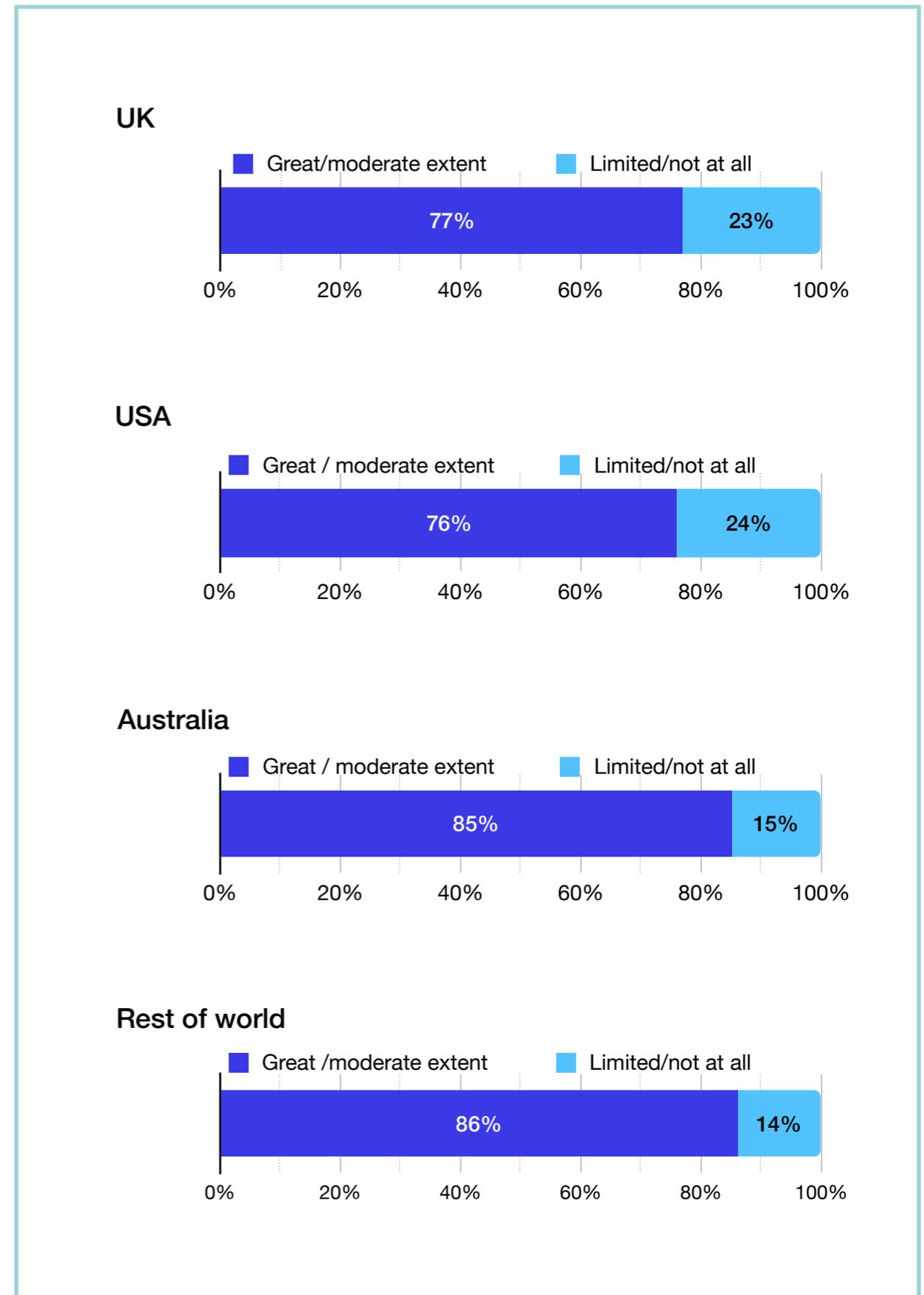


### 3.3 Actions

#### Mention LGBT+ support in internal communications

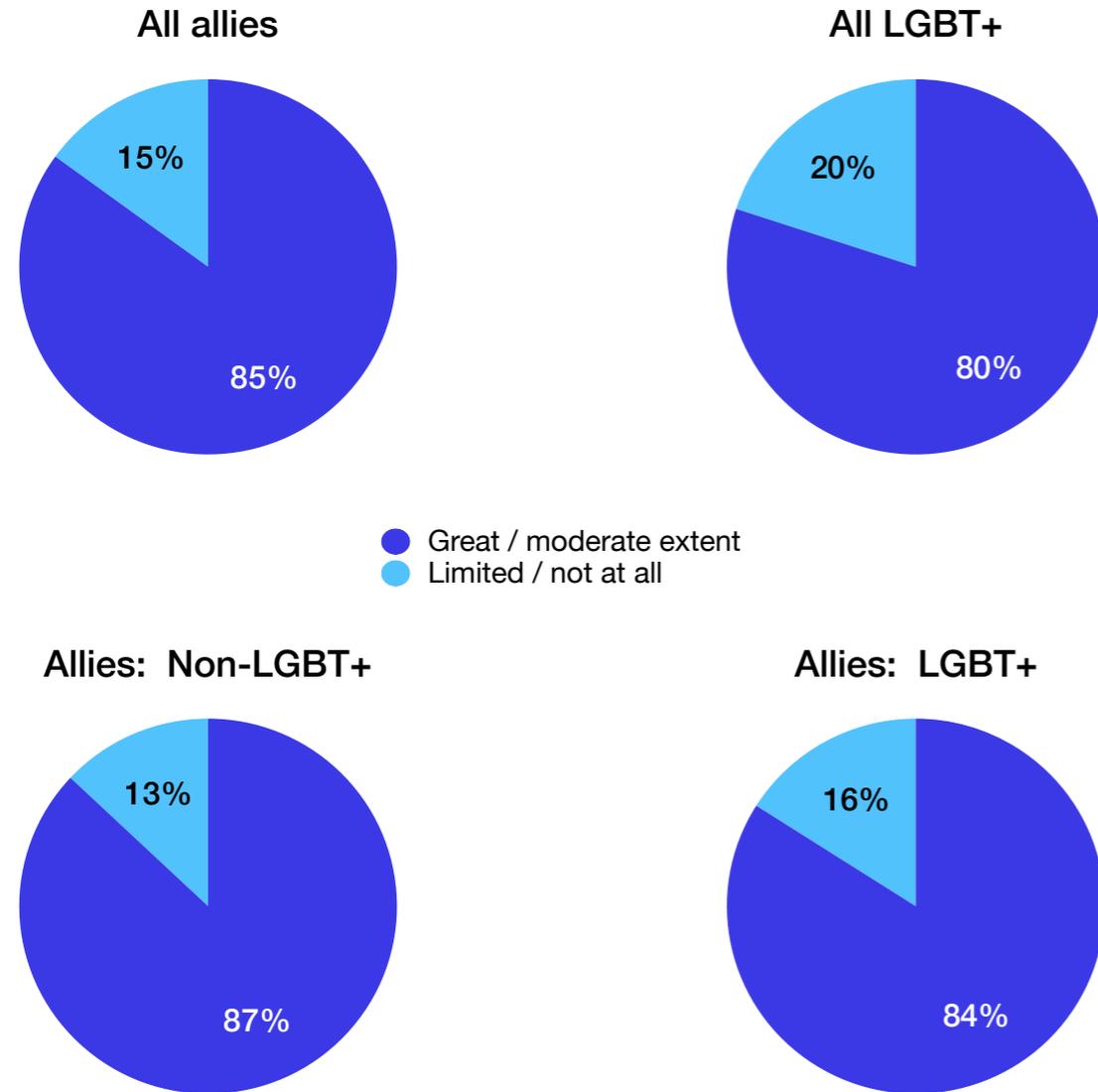
Again, corporate communications can play an effective and important role in maintaining visibility and support for LGBT+ inclusion when colleagues are remote working.

Ensuring the regular, visible use of internal communications to make clear the corporate position of support for LGBT+ inclusion can help to provide an effective foundation of support for all allies and LGBT+ colleagues when many may find themselves outside their usual workplace environment.



### 3.3 Actions

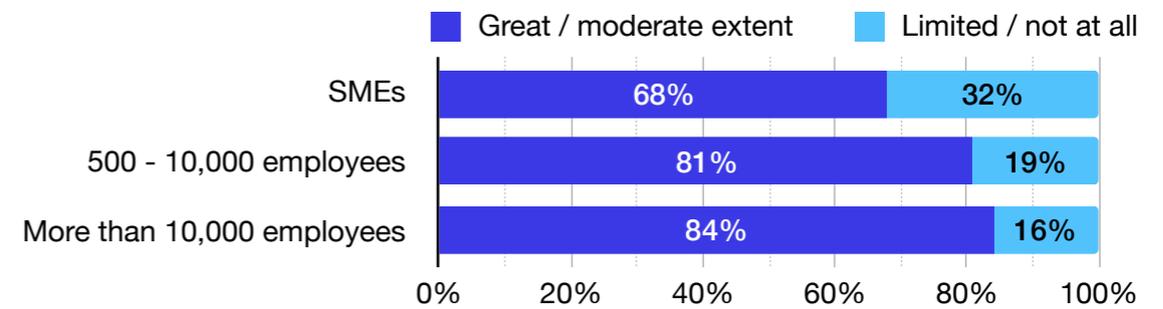
#### Mention LGBT+ support in internal communications



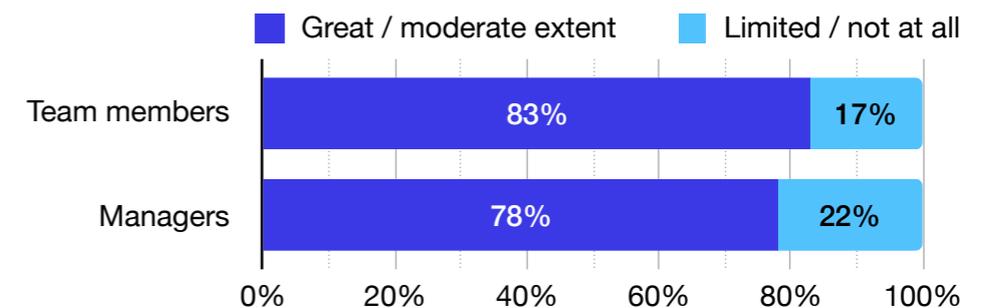
In these data tables we look at key findings analysed through the lens of various aspects of respondent characteristics.

“To what extent do you think this action could support LGBT+ inclusion when people are working from home?”

#### Company size



#### Seniority at work



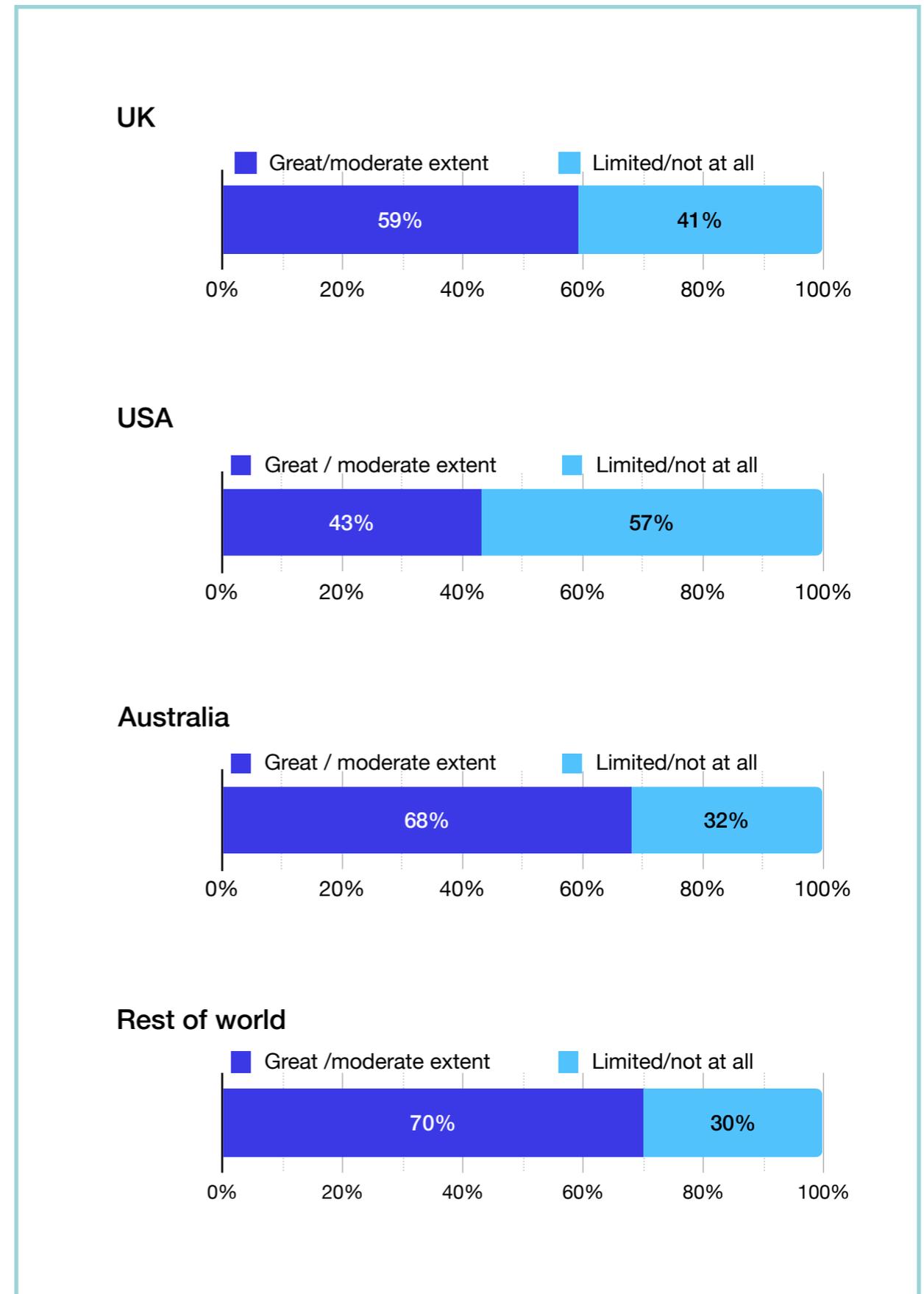
## 3.4 Actions

### Making LGBT+ supportive backdrops available to all staff for Zoom/Teams/Skype meetings (eg rainbow, 'Pride' support group logos etc)

This approach received generally strong levels of support. In most regions analysed a majority of respondents supported the use of supportive virtual backgrounds for Teams/Zoom/Skype etc calls. An exception was in the US - where 43% was the level of support.

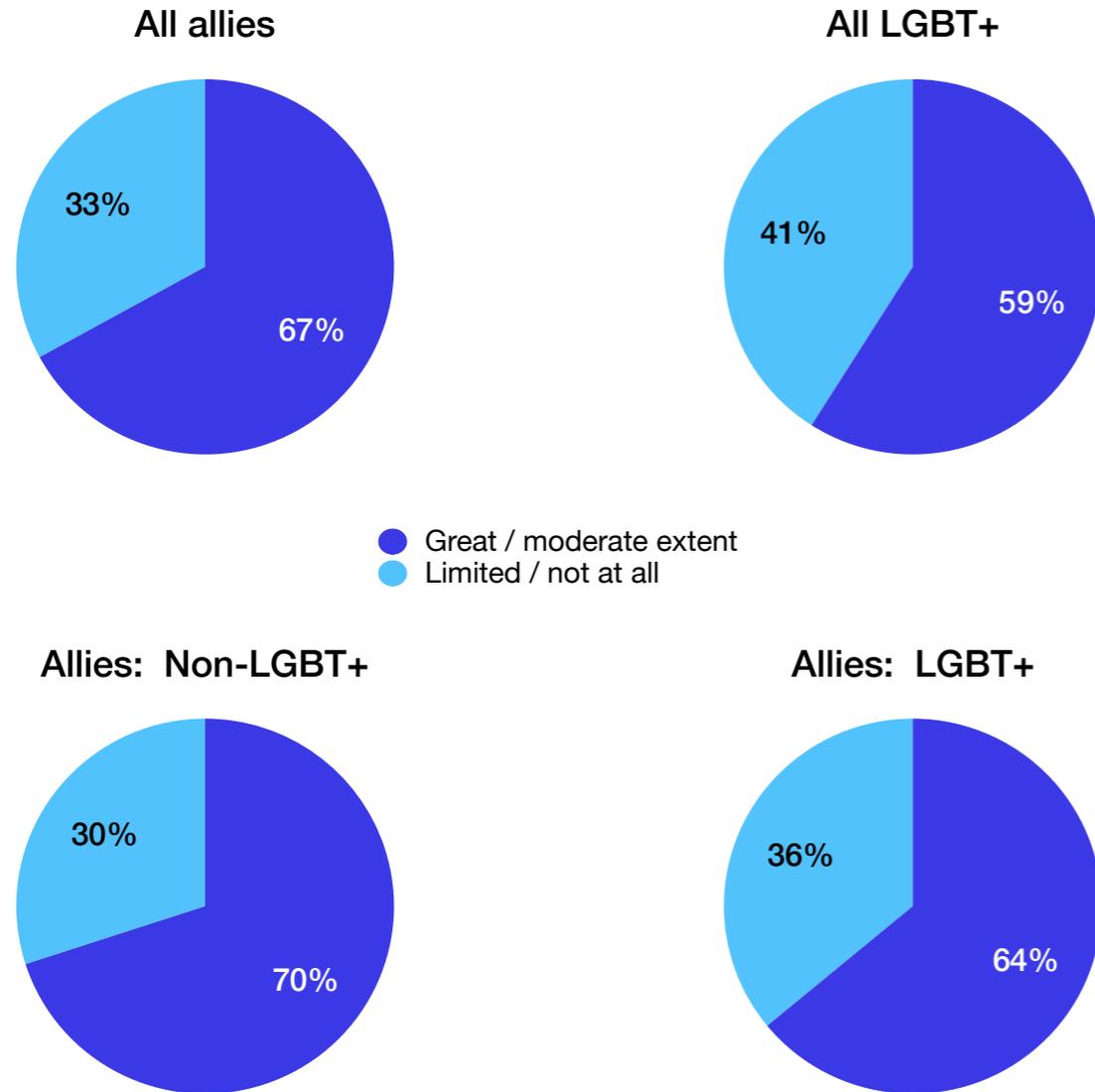
Among allies, the proposition was strongly supported by two thirds of respondents (67%).

Six out of ten LGBT+ respondents (59%) were in support of making supportive screen backgrounds available.



### 3.4 Actions

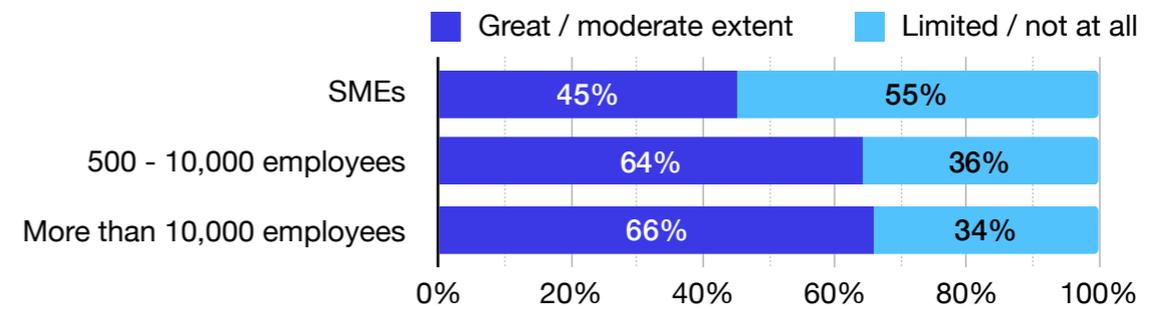
#### Making LGBT+ supportive backdrops available to all for online meetings



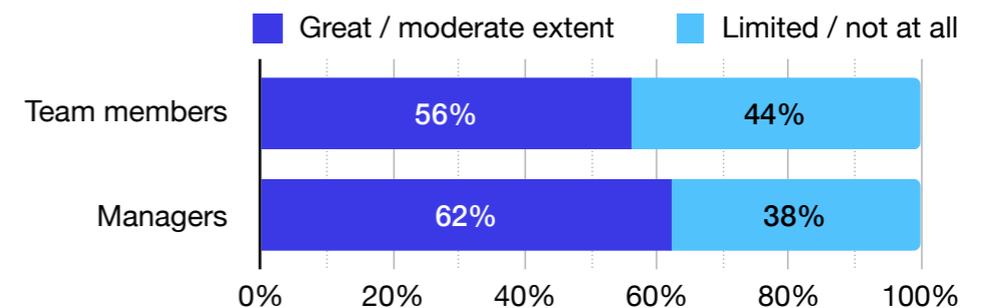
In these data tables we look at key findings analysed through the lens of various aspects of respondent characteristics.

“To what extent do you think this action could support LGBT+ inclusion when people are working from home?”

#### Company size



#### Seniority at work



## 3.5 Actions

### Use of email signature pronouns

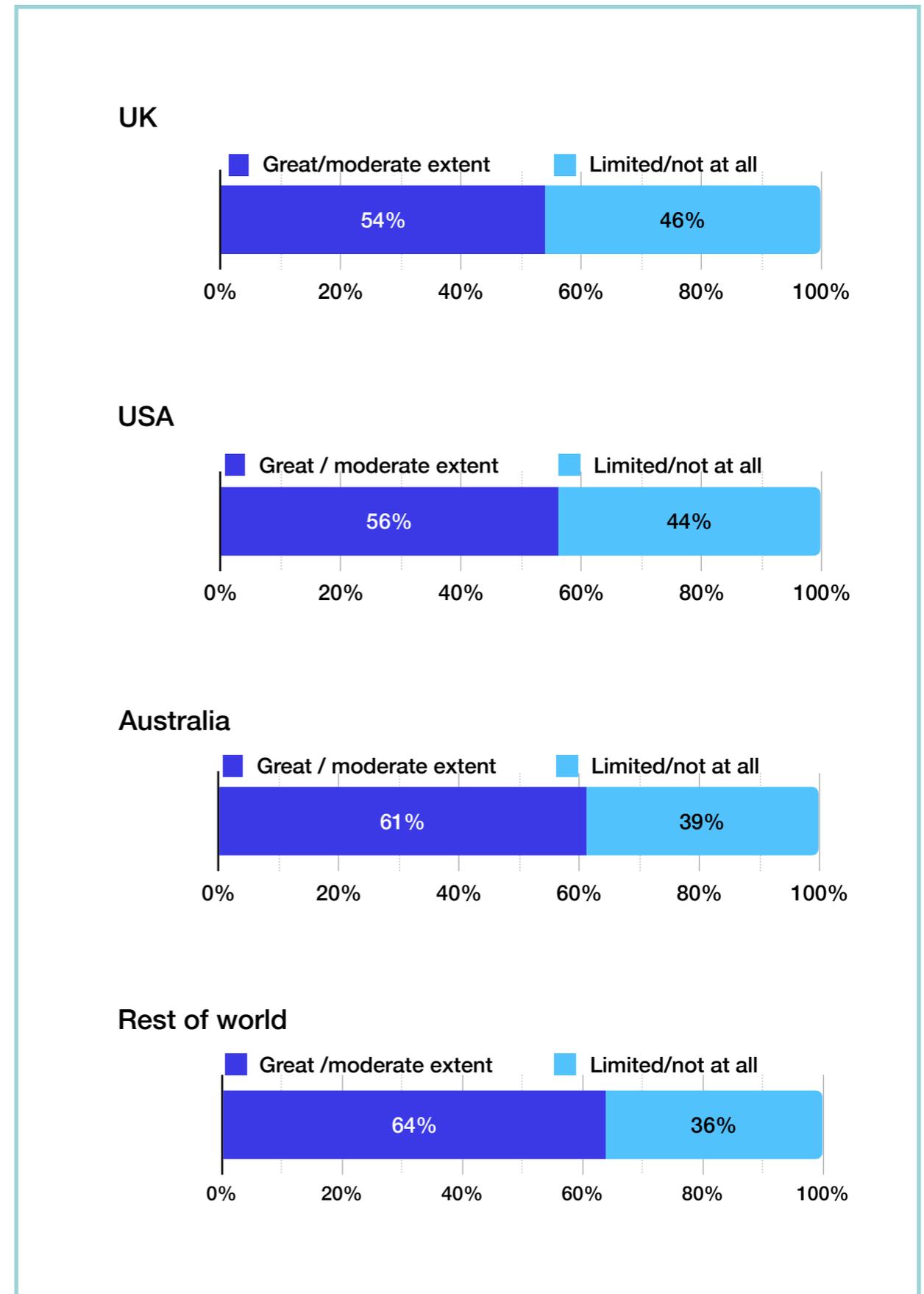
eg: She / Her / Hers

They / Them / Their

He / Him / His

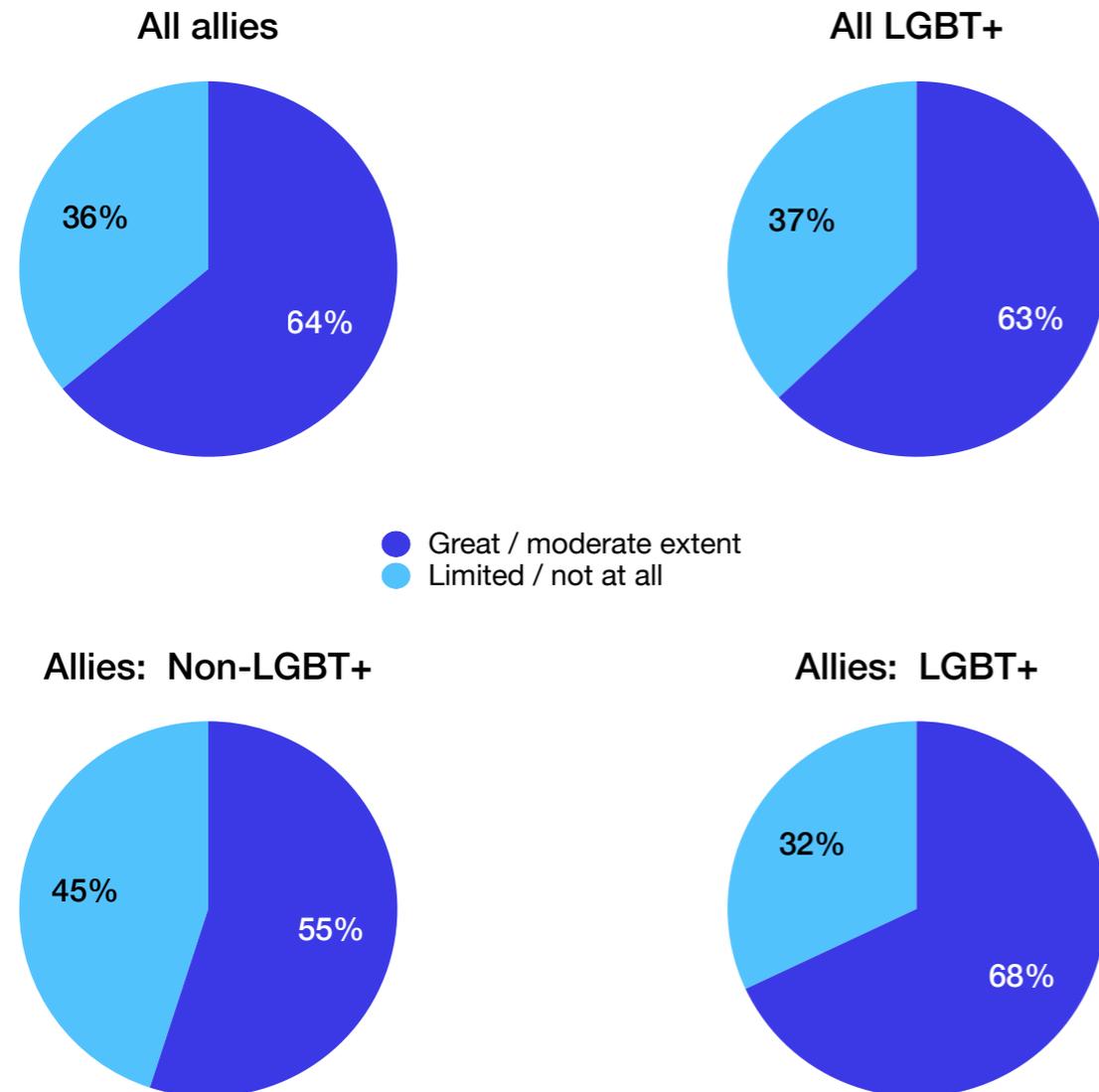
The use of such pronouns is seen by many to represent a form of support for diversity and inclusion.

Including email signature pronouns represents an easy and effective way to let email recipients know that the sender is someone who is likely to be supportive of people's individual situations.



## 3.5 Actions

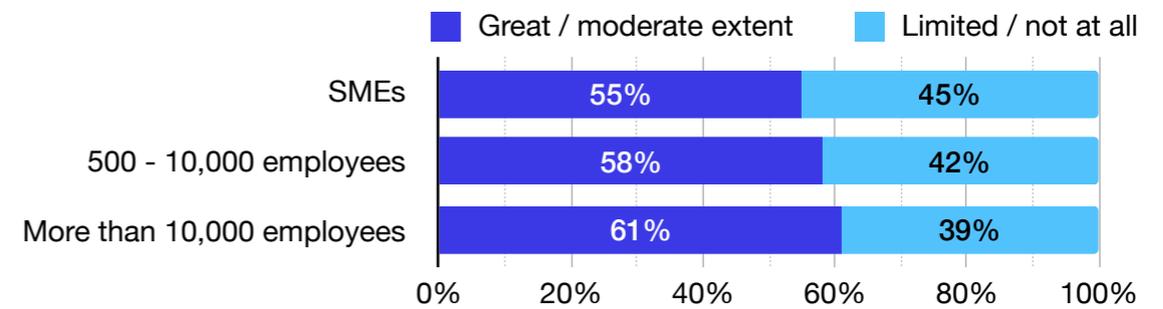
### Use of email signature pronouns



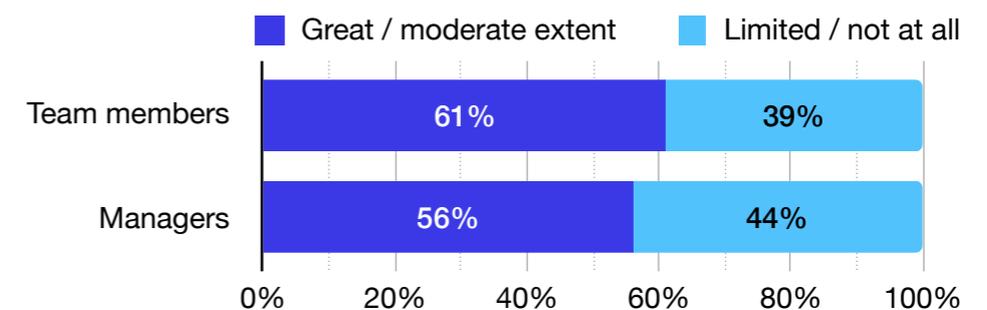
In these data tables we look at key findings analysed through the lens of various aspects of respondent characteristics.

“To what extent do you think this action could support LGBT+ inclusion when people are working from home?”

#### Company size



#### Seniority at work



## 3.6 Actions and other suggestions

### Participant remarks

I think educating people about the less political aspects of the LGBT+ community is essential and hasn't been done yet.

**LGBT+ respondent from Germany**

More virtual events, games, etc. out of local business hours that are not mandatory, but optional.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from Portugal**

More variety of senior leadership visible engagement, always seems to be the same faces.

**LGBT+ respondent, ally from UK**

It would be nice to host regular online meetings (virtual dinner party, etc.) to allow cross communications between non-ally and ally.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from Japan**

Dedicated HR resourcing for Pride network support. Other support for Pride committee members - time off during the work day for network activities (rather than doing after hours, in between business-as-usual tasks).

**LGBT+ respondent from Australia**

All managers need to be frequently talking to their teams about support for LGBTQ+ and other minority groups, even if they \*think\* none of their team members identify this way. There needs to be more training for line managers about how to shift traditional attitudes in their team and crack down on biased comments head-on. I think that 'allyship' should be the norm and that visuals/aesthetics throughout the office and virtually should be set as standard, not optional..

**LGBT+ respondent from UK**

I think it really is just as simple as not caring whether or not someone is LGBT+ but also expressing disapproval when others do.

**LGBT+ respondent, ally from Netherlands**

I work for a state health department that supports LGBTQI+ allies in the work place. They've created signature blocks and other resources to assist in supporting my community in the workplace.

**LGBT+ respondent from Australia**

## 3.6 Actions and other suggestions

### Participant remarks

I feel it is part of my duty as a leader in our business to represent the values and commitments of the company and as these align to my own values I am pleased to do so.

We have implemented virtual lanyards at our company which means there is a clear identifier that i am an ally whenever anyone emails/speaks to or looks for me. the physical lanyard would only have been seen when people actually saw me, less frequently.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK**

It starts with the public sector. This sector is in service to our communities. There is absolutely no excuse for poor representation of groups in senior positions.. when there is more visibility of LGBT at the top of the food chain, it supports those below!

**LGBT+ respondent from UK**

I really like when I see a message of support in someone's email signature.

**LGBT+ respondent from USA**

You can't underestimate the importance of work social interaction, both for leisure and in meetings to gauge people's reactions. Some wfh do not come on camera, or have a picture, so you do not know their face or who they are. This is fine, but is also a reason why in-person gathering is important.  
- Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK

The Pride group at my work is able to share comms with us in a platform we all see every day and I think their visibility stepped up since the pandemic made us all WFH. I have actually found that makes it easier for me to show others I am an ally.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from USA**

We have started an allies and LGBT+ network Friday end-of-day virtual drinks get-together. People enjoy it and chat about all kinds of things, just like we used to in 'real' life.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK**

Compulsory training for everyone in the company to educate about LGBT+ people at work and how to be an ally.

**- Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK**

Even though we work from home I think having some kind of training would help educate people why this topic is still important.

**Heterosexual respondent from USA**

## 3.6 Actions and other suggestions

### Participant remarks

More senior leaders should show their support publicly by speaking in support of LGBTQ+ inclusion and encouraging others at work to become allies like I am. I really think this would do a lot of good.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from USA**

It needs to be more visible all year. In my work there is a big fuss made each June for Pride month, then... nothing until the end of the next May. We should see support for LGBTQ+ issues visibly all year.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from USA**

We definitely would benefit from some sensitivity training workshops. I have colleagues that I think would be supportive but they never say or do anything supportive so how can I know if they're an ally or not?

**LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA**

Call out inappropriate language/jokes/hate speech...and depending on whether you think the person needs to be taken aside and educated for the inappropriate joke privately OR called very publicly at that exact moment (even derailing a meeting) as hate speech is against company inclusivity policy.

Use gay themed backgrounds on team calls and use your camera to be seen - always.

Be supportive to colleagues LGBTQ+, Allies, and others...continue to show all that in the end, we are just co-workers with the same home and work issues and not aliens.

Let others know you have two shoulders to help them with their burdens.

Share your success with your colleagues.

Share your families with your colleagues. My husband's father died and the outpouring of colleagues' sympathies to him, by name, has been huge as they all feel they know him as well as they know me.

Be yourself - trying to fake it at work is sensed by all as you not being fully engaged, not being transparent. I personally think (after 4+ decades of working) that non-transparency and non-authenticity is more detrimental to your career than being out.

**LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA**

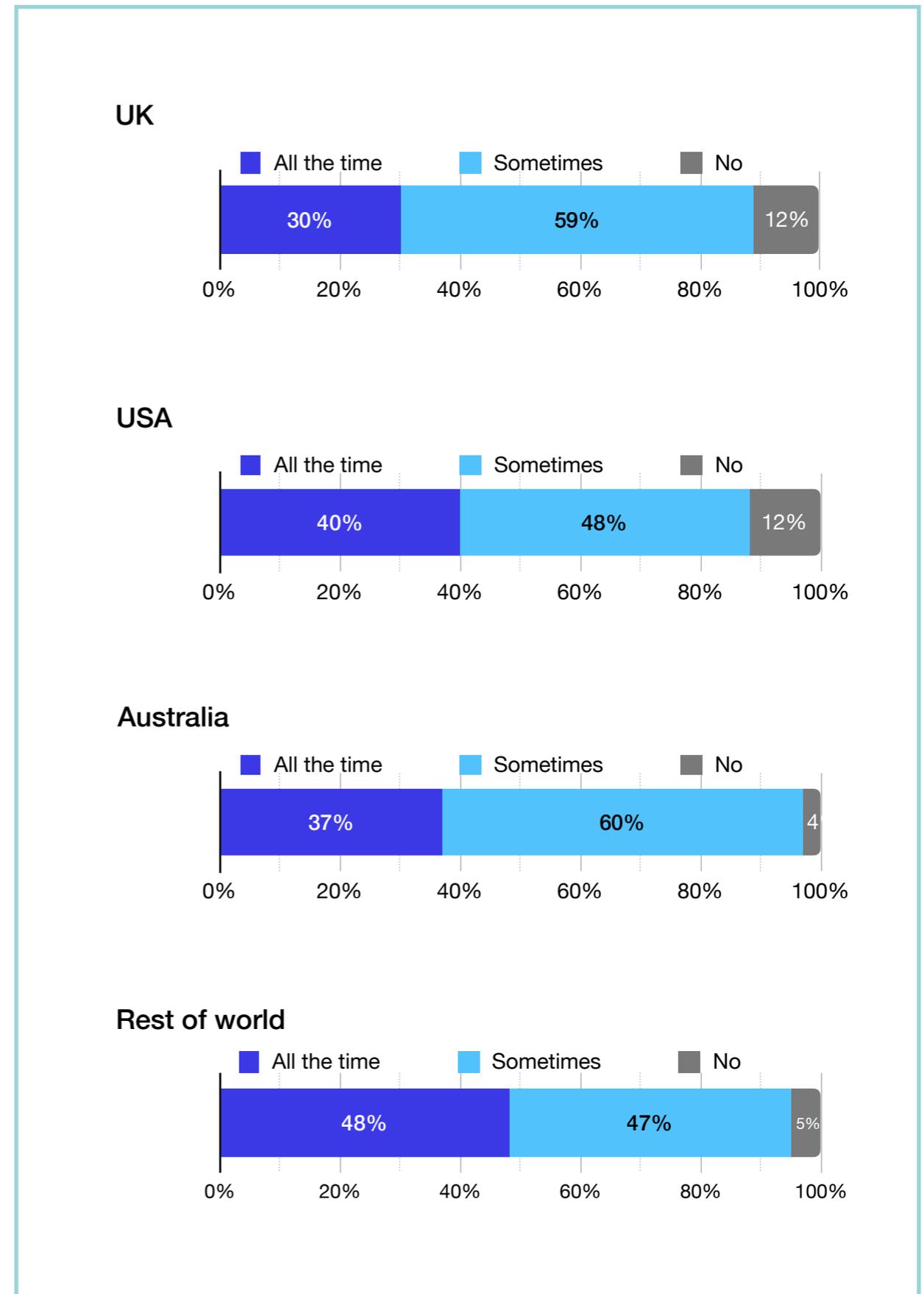
## 3.7 The hybrid working future

### Would you like to work from home in the future if you could?

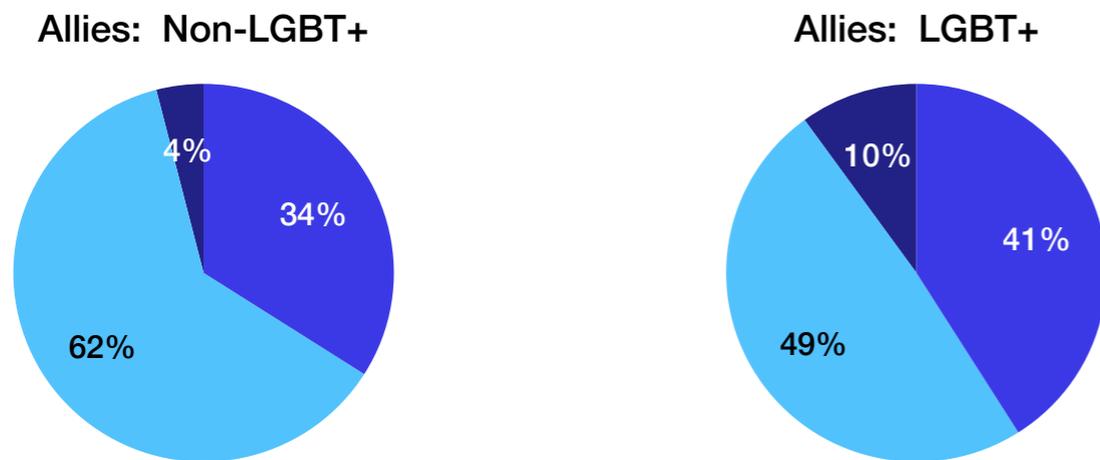
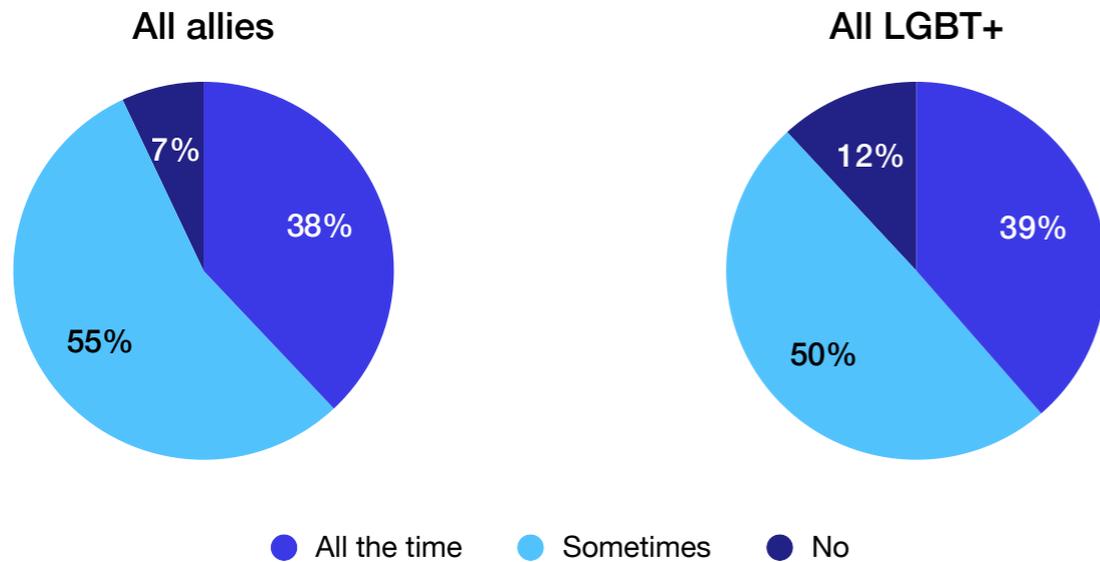
We have seen that there exist strong concerns about the risks working from home presents to maintaining LGBT+ inclusion visibility at work. Nonetheless, among respondents to the 'LGBT+WFH' study, working from home also provides some benefits - as we saw in Part 1 of the report.

There exists support for working on a 'hybrid' basis into the future - combining in-person workplace and remote working.

The findings of this report show that there is a clear need for organisations to meet the challenges to LGBT+ inclusion presented by the new working environment.



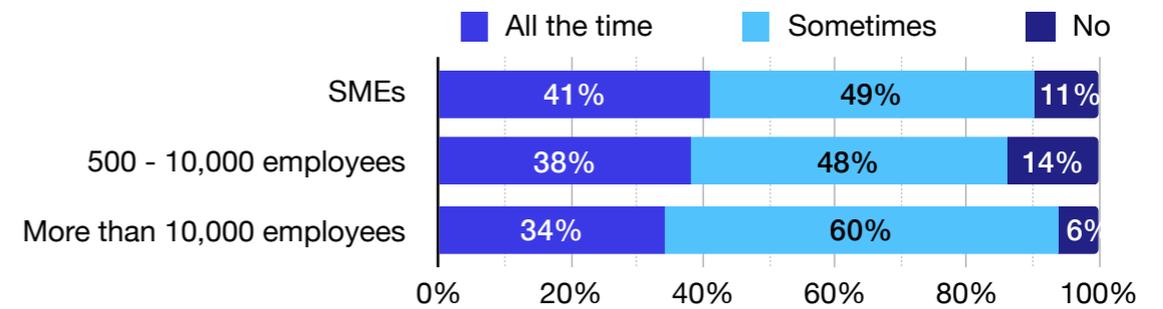
## 3.7 The hybrid working future



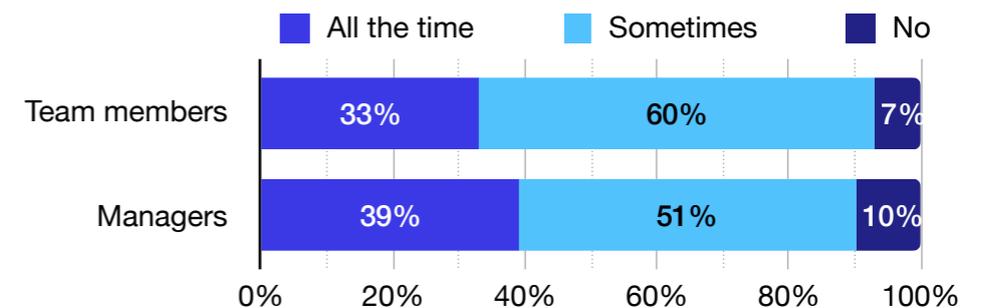
In these data tables we look at key findings analysed through the lens of various aspects of respondent characteristics.

“Would you like to work from home in the future if you could?”

### Company size



### Seniority at work



## 3.7.1 The hybrid working future

### Participant remarks

More productive. Colleagues are all around the world. Often in my office location there are not many people I directly work with. Everything digital. Easier to work from home, more flexible, cheaper.

**LGBT+ respondent, ally from Germany**

I find it more efficient, both time and money-wise. I also get to spend much more time with my husband who also works from home most of the time.

**LGBT+ respondent from New Zealand**

I struggle with self motivation when working from home for long periods. It's fine if I have specific tasks to complete, but the run of the mill stuff, less so. I miss the social interaction in the office before we get down to work, especially with colleagues I don't directly work with. It's also harder to have those difficult conversations with colleagues about performance or problems by phone or on screen, rather than face to face or 'over a coffee'.

**LGBT+ respondent, ally from UK**

50/50 working from home and working at the office.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from Netherlands**

I'd prefer to work in a social environment with an option to work at home if desirable.

**LGBT+ respondent from Australia**

I'd like a balance of the two - 50:50 or 70:30 - home:office.

**LGBT+ respondent, ally from Netherlands**

I much prefer hybrid working. We can be as productive and I also use email signatures and a virtual rainbow lanyard to show I am an ally.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from Australia**

I'd like to be in the workplace about once a fortnight and for other meetings when necessary, but no more than that. I also feel that we need to find / create / co-create more imaginative resources to support LGBTQ+ and other diverse groups in this newly evolving workplace.

**- LGBT+ respondent from UK**

## 3.7.1 The hybrid working future

### Participant remarks

A few days a week at home would help maintain a good work-life balance, however I need the sanity checks and community of the office the majority of the time to function happily. A ratio of 3:2 or 4:1 office:home would suit me best.

**LGBT+ respondent from UK**

I think a mix or mainly working from home is a better environmental choice but would like to option to go into an office or to face-to-face meeting on some occasions to get the benefits of both.

**Heterosexual respondent, ally from UK**

Would be happy with a mixture of home and office working, which is how I worked before the Pandemic.

**LGBT+ respondent from UK**

Widespread WFH is very helpful to disabled workers, though it also reveals the accommodations we could have had all along. It took it bothering 'regular folks' for it to get attention and prioritization and I hate that. Still, WFH has been great at mitigating the effects of fatigue, pain, chronic illness symptoms for me personally and these options need to stay after restrictions are lifted.

**LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA**

I prefer working from home in general but occasional office visits are nice to have.

**LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA**

Our company has realized how effective working from home is for many positions - including my own. I love the commute and the dress code (especially when not on video calls), and find I get so much more done without colleagues 'dropping by' my desk constantly

**- LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA**

My entire team is remote since the beginning of the pandemic, so I work from home also; however, I often go into the office for meetings. While I definitely enjoy working from home, I think that going into the office every once in a while also helps break up monotony.

**- LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA**

My work says they are going to adopt a hybrid model for the future and I am really pleased with that - best of both worlds in my view.

**LGBT+ respondent, ally from USA**

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# Appendix A

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## LGBT+WFH Toolkit

A resource able to assist with actions to enhance LGBT+ inclusion when working remotely.



Working from home can make it harder to show support for our LGBT+ colleagues. Here are some ideas for ways you can show that you support LGBT+ inclusion when working remotely.

## Use a virtual lanyard

A great way to remain visible as an LGBT+ ally when working from home is to use a virtual symbol such as the one below, which adds a rainbow border around employee profile pictures.

This is an effective signal to all who see it that this person chooses to be a visible supporter of LGBT+ inclusion at work.

This example below is one you can download and use for yourself, thanks to Fujitsu. It is available to download [at this link](#).



## Use a statement of support

Another way to make sure people know you choose to be an ally to your LGBT+ colleagues is with a short statement of support which you can place wherever makes sense in your situation, to remain visible when remote working.

This could appear in multiple places.

You could include a statement of support:

- in your email signature text
- in a LinkedIn profile
- on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook or other social media
- in your online corporate profile
- anywhere else suitable to make sure your support of LGBT+ inclusion is visible.

An example text:

**I am pleased to support LGBT+ inclusion at work**

## Use email signature pronouns

One way to show others you are comfortable with the topic of different identities is by using email signature pronouns.

They can act as an easy-to-send ‘signal’ able to show support for LGBT+ inclusion. People receiving the email can then anticipate the sender is a person who supports diversity.

Some commonly-used examples:

- she - her - hers
- he - him - his
- they - them - theirs

Here is an example used by Out Now’s CEO:

Looking forward to talking soon.

Onwards,

Ian.

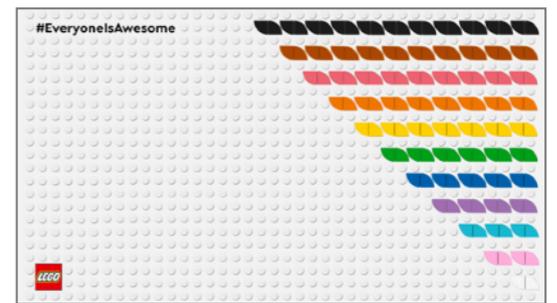
**IAN JOHNSON** (he - him - his)  
Chief Executive Officer  
Out Now

## Use a virtual background

Many people have experienced more online meetings than ever before as a result of the pandemic.

Using a virtual background to show support for LGBT+ inclusion is effective - and easy-to-do. Your employer may already have some to choose from or you can find many pictures you could use online.

Here are some examples:



## Place a rainbow item near you

The rainbow has for almost fifty years been associated with LGBT+ communities.

One effective way to show support when remote working is to put a rainbow-coloured item behind or next to you when you are on-screen for an online meeting.

That could be a simple rainbow sticker or symbol on the wall behind you or something like a small rainbow flag sitting beside you on your desk which people in the meeting can see.

You don't have to mention it during the meeting for it to be effective as a visible symbol which can show all in the meeting that you are an ally to LGBT+ people.



## Other ideas

There are many ways you can show visible support for LGBT+ inclusion when working from home. Here are some more ideas you can consider.

- Don't assume everyone will be in a heterosexual situation. Use "partner" or ask "are you in a relationship?" to avoid making assumptions.
- End meetings 5 or 10 minutes before the end of the half/hour. Make it known that this is 'chat time', to encourage more social interactions with colleagues working from home.
- Think of ways you can leverage internal or external corporate communications to show support for LGBT+ inclusion. Respondents to the 'LGBT+WFH' study thought both these can have strong impacts on strengthening visibility for LGBT+ inclusion.
- Have education workshops delivered to share more practical ideas among colleagues on how they can become visible allies.

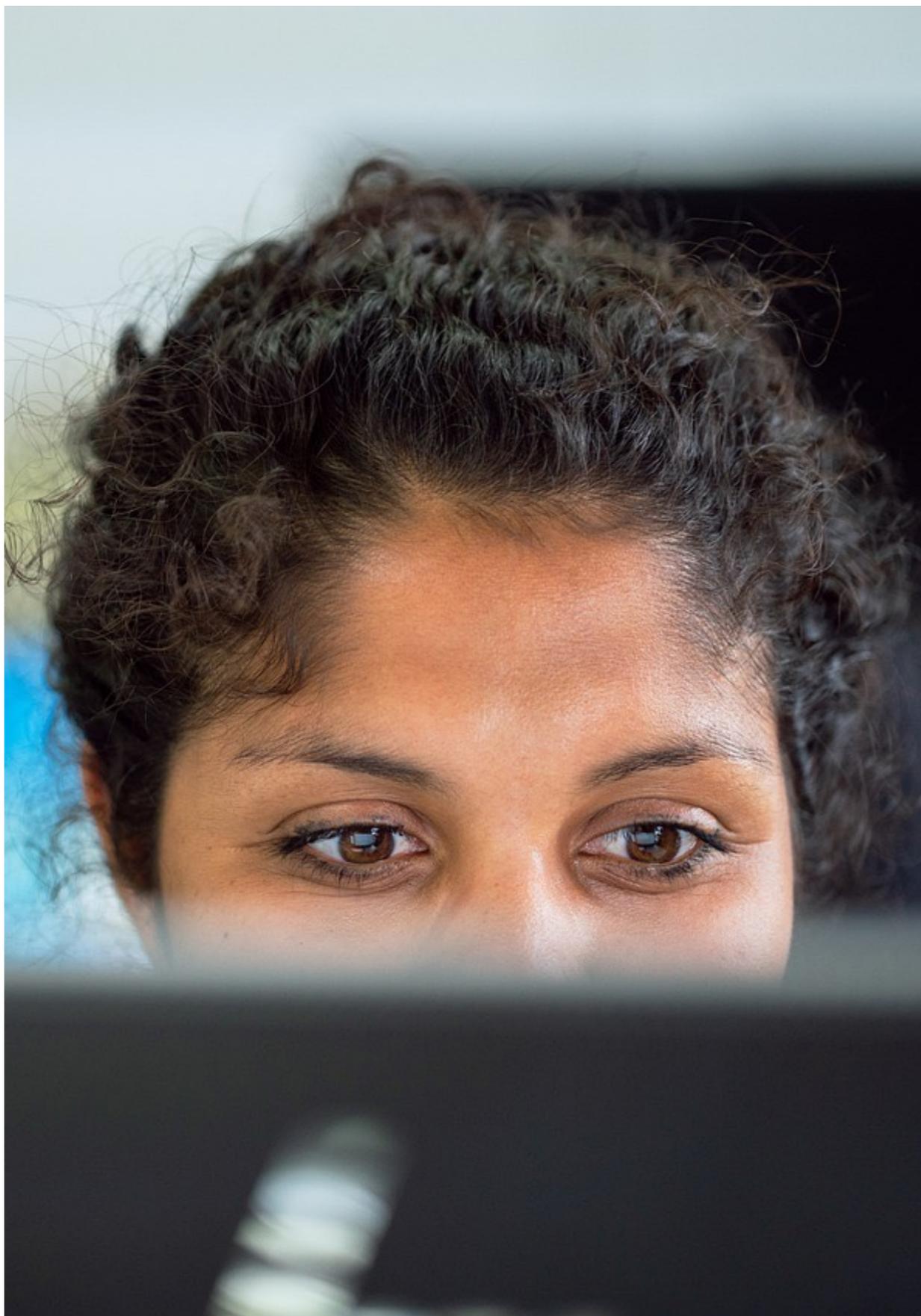
**[Contact Out Now](#)** for help with more information on this - as well as other effective strategies able to strengthen LGBT+ inclusion at work.

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# Appendix B

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## Respondent overview



# Appendix B.1

A total of 2031 respondents completed the survey.

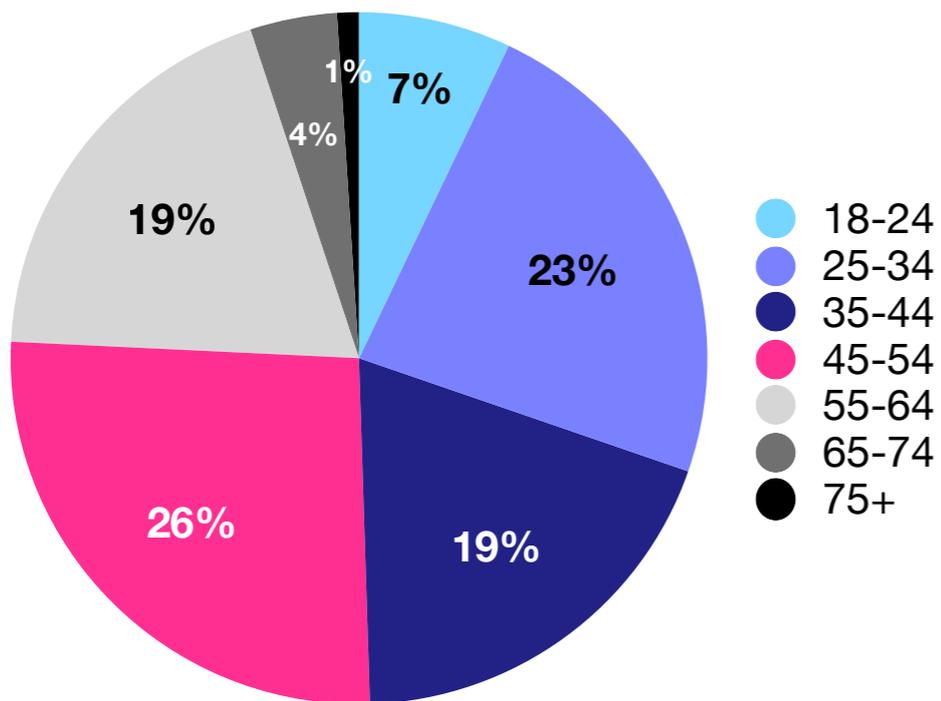
In addition to the three analysed countries - UK, USA and Australia - 576 respondents were drawn from a further 35 countries, with numbers of respondents from each country appearing in the table on this page.

110 respondents opted not to identify their country.

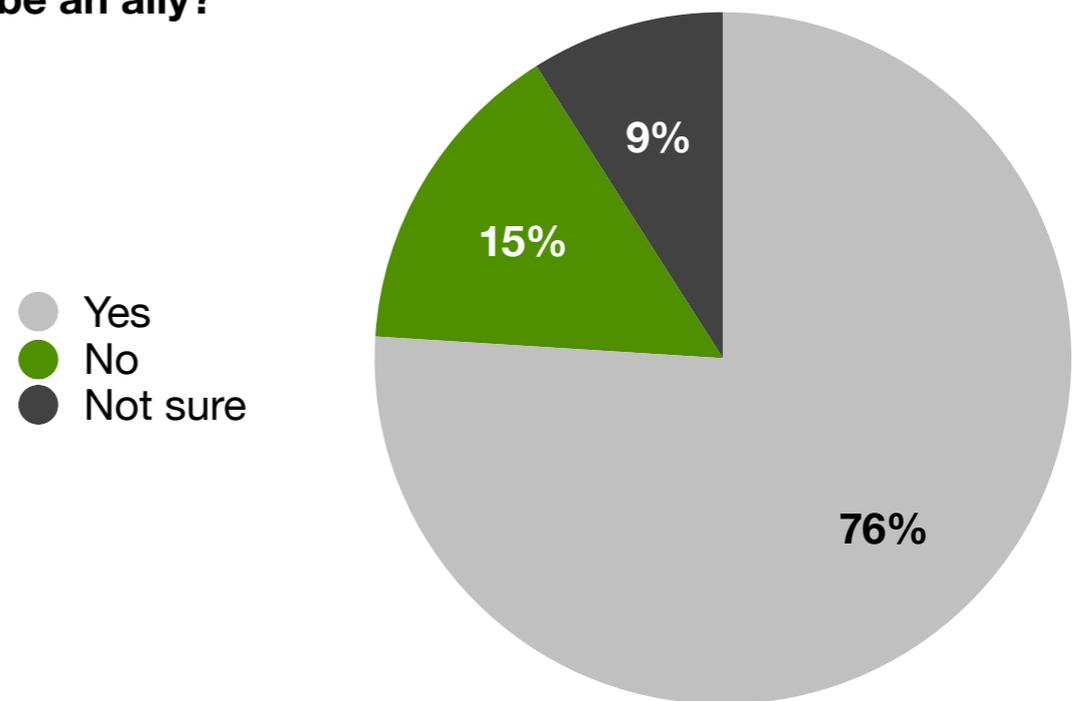
Country	Respondents	Country	Respondents
UK	1024		
USA	209		
Australia	112		
<u>Rest of the world</u>	576		
Andorra	1	Malaysia	1
Austria	3	Malta	8
Brazil	18	Mexico	33
Canada	47	Netherlands	29
China	2	New Zealand	7
Costa Rica	9	Norway	3
Czech Republic	12	Philippines	21
Denmark	6	Poland	47
Egypt	1	Portugal	52
Estonia	2	Russia	1
Finland	31	Singapore	3
France	17	Slovakia	11
Germany	44	South Africa	23
India	53	Spain	20
Ireland	27	Sweden	3
Italy	10	Switzerland	3
Japan	19	Taiwan	5
Luxembourg	4		
		Country not specified	110
		<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>2031</b>

# Appendix B.2

By age

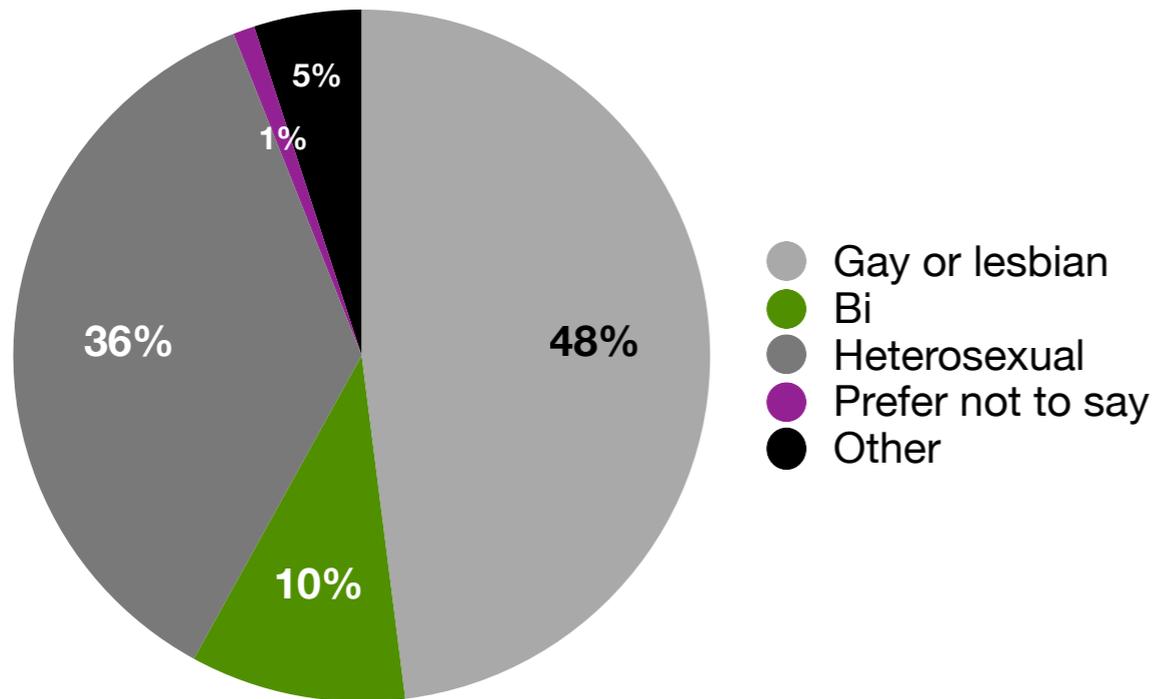


Do you consider yourself to be an ally?



# Appendix B.3

## By sexual orientation

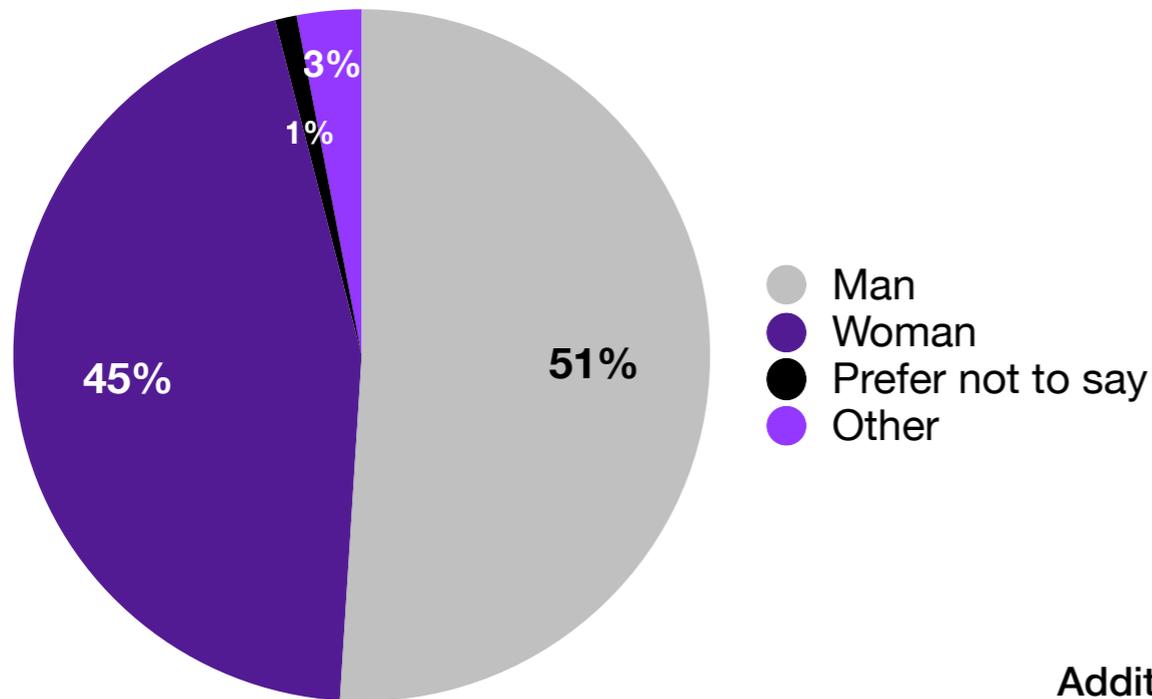


## Self-written descriptions for sexual orientation included:

Pansexual	31 respondents
Queer	27 respondents
Asexual	11 respondents
Other	3 respondents

# Appendix B.4

Respondents are:



**4.3%** of respondents are Trans

Additional respondent-provided information:

29 respondents (1.4%) indicated they are non-binary

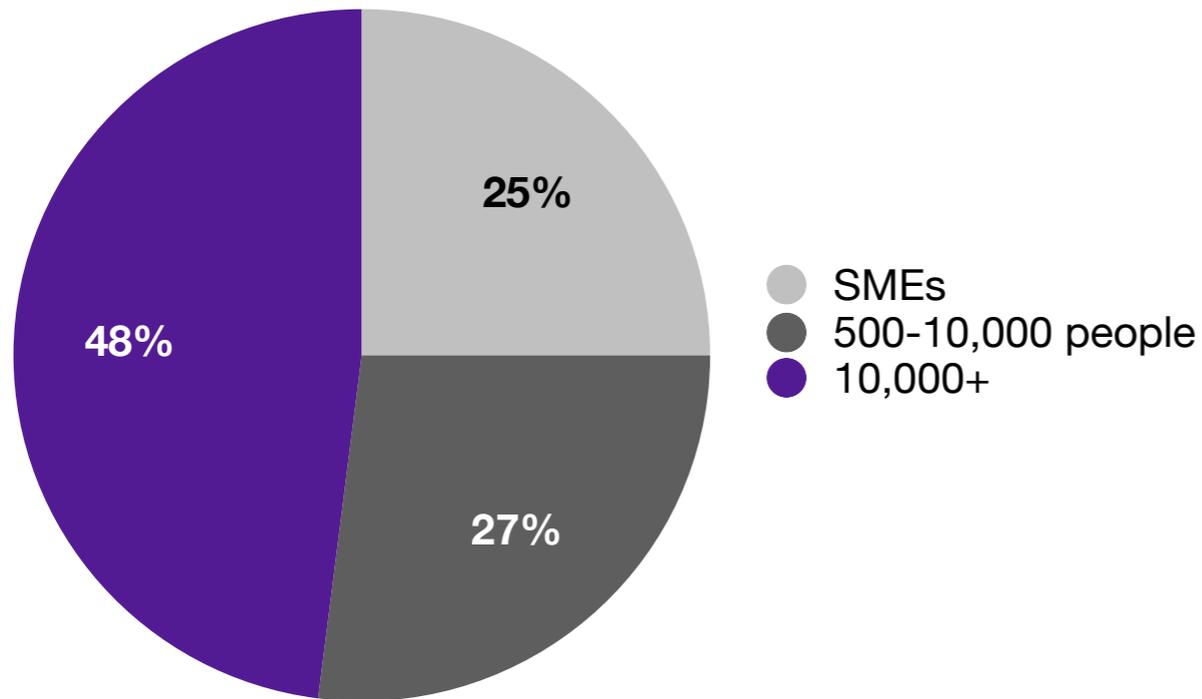
4 respondents indicated they are genderqueer

2 respondents indicated they are agender

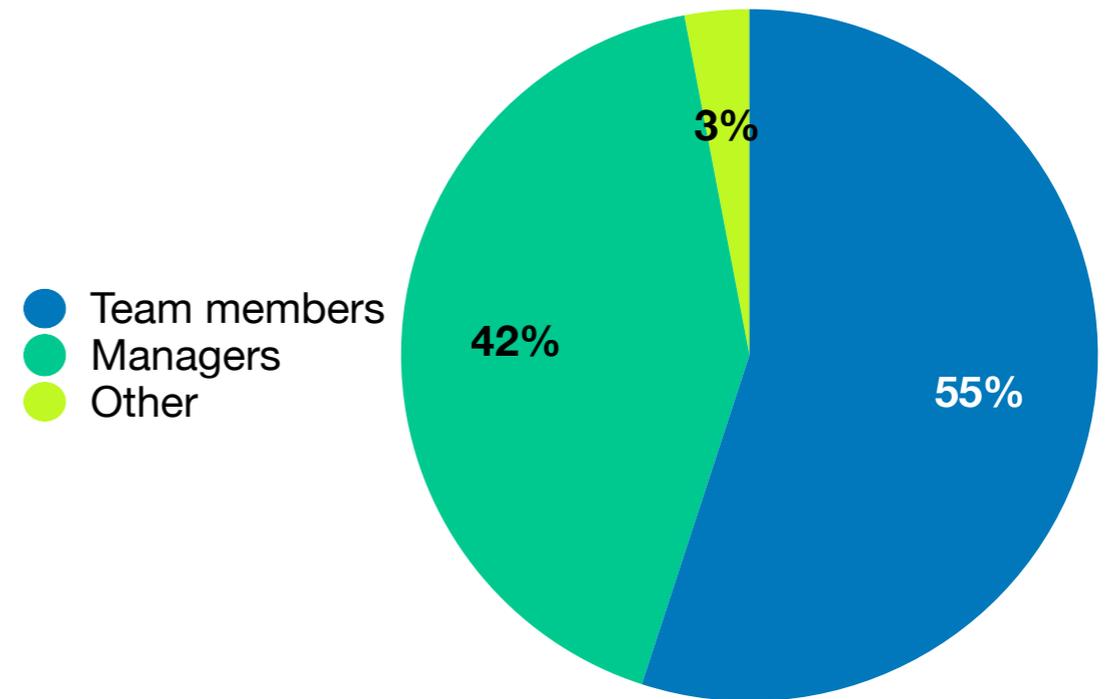
1 respondent indicated they are androgynous

# Appendix B.5

By scale of most recent employer



By workplace seniority



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