

# Legacy of COVID-19: post-crisis remote work in Finland

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Meeting of Experts on Measurement of Quality of Employment  
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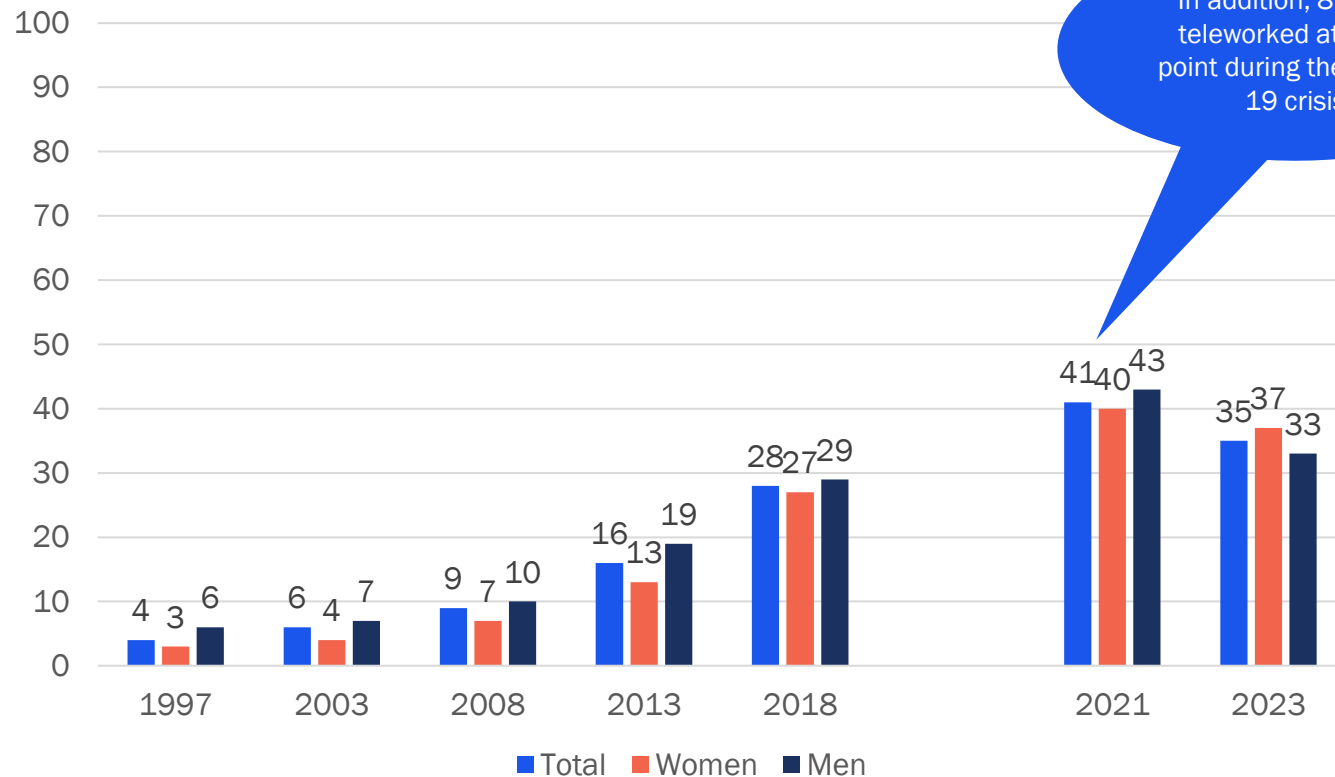
# Finnish Quality of Work Life Surveys

- 1977, 1984, 1990, 1997, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018, (2021), 2023 by Statistics Finland
- 3 000–5 800 employee respondents per data
- Response rate 68-91 %
- Face-to-face until 2018, web survey 2021 & 2023 (break in time series)
- Core questionnaire remains the same
- New themes added, old stuff removed/rotated; special themes
  - 2018 digitalization of the working life
  - 2021 Impact of COVID-19 on working conditions
  - 2023 Ecological sustainability in work life
- Provides information for
  - [policymaking](#)
  - [public debate](#)
  - data for [research](#) (possibility to link survey data to register data)



# One in three employee worked remotely in 2023

Share of employees working remotely in Finland, %  
Finnish Quality of Work Life Surveys 1997, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018 & 2023,  
The Impact of COVID-19 crisis on work life 2021 (Break in time series 2020)

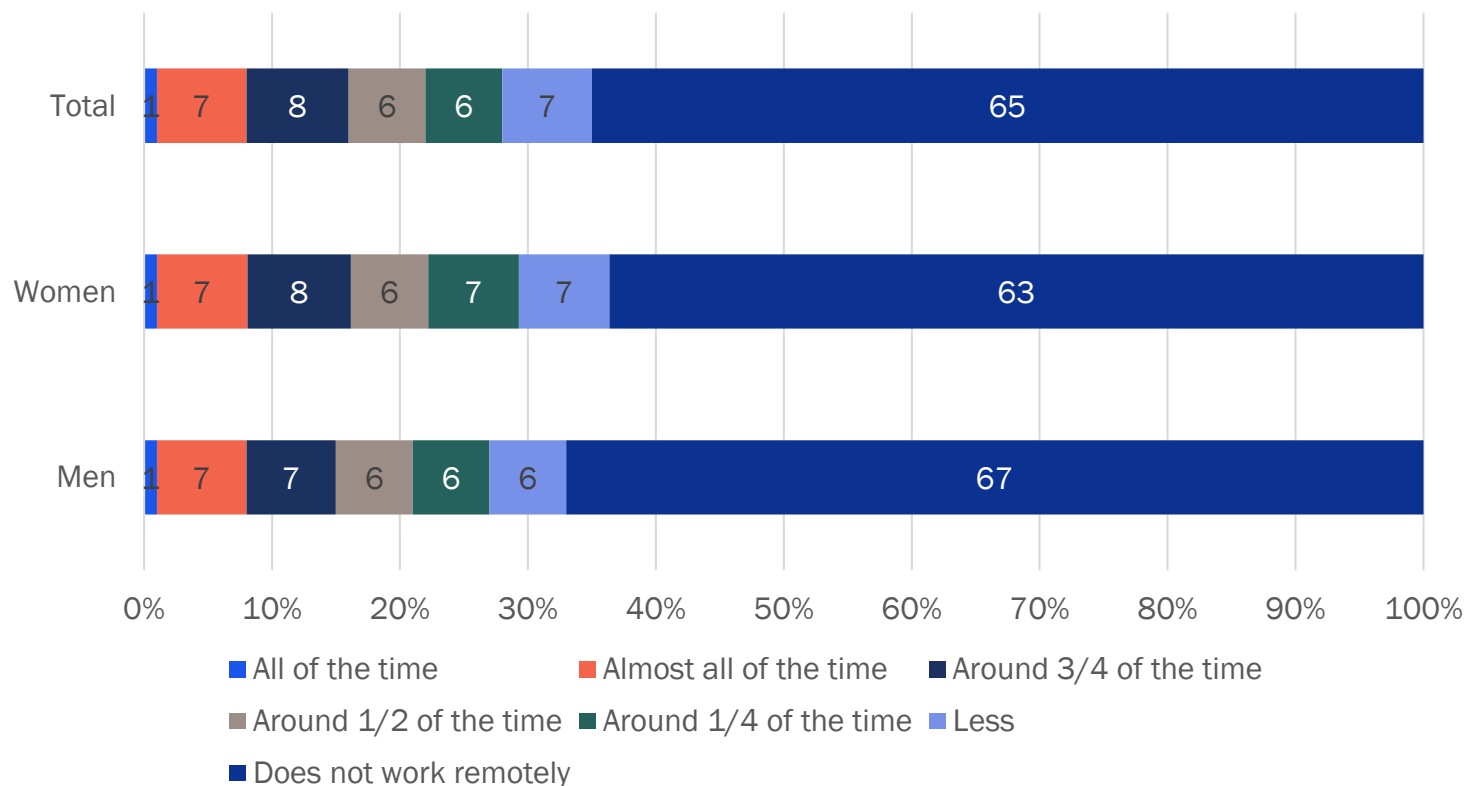


In addition, 8 % had teleworked at some point during the COVID-19 crisis

- Remote work grew in strides in the 2010s, peaked during the COVID-19 crisis, but has fallen somewhat after that
- More common for upper-level salaried than low-level salaried; among manual workers only a few do remote work
- In 2023 more common for women than men, for the first time
- Most common in the central government sector, the least common in the county government sector (social services and health care)

# More than one in five employee works remotely at least half of their working hours

Share of remote work in working hours, %, employees, FQWLS 2023

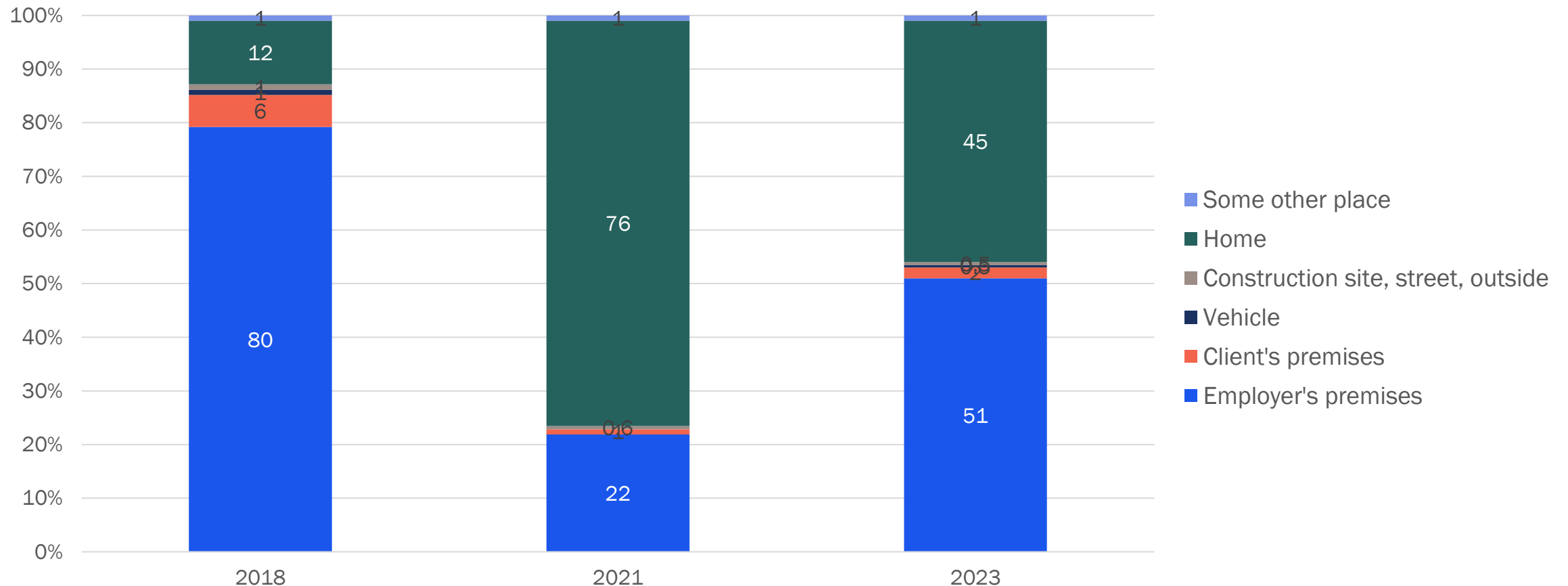


- 22 % of employees worked remotely at least half of the working hours in the autumn 2023...
- ...equalling to 63 % of all remote workers
- Down from 35 % or c. 80 % in spring 2021, respectively
- In 2021 intensive teleworking was more common for men; in 2023 there were barely any gender differences
- Highest intensity in the central government sector, the lowest in the county government sector



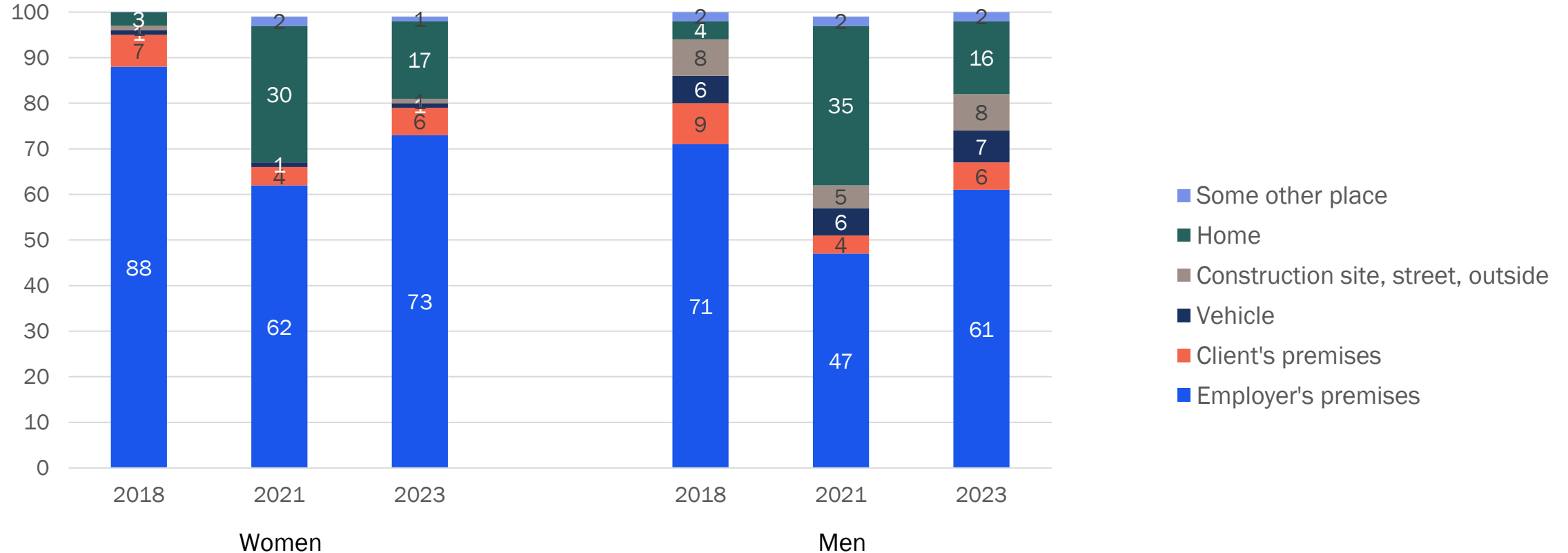
# Home has become the main place of work for almost half of the teleworkers...

The main place of work, employees in remote work, %, FQWLS 2018 & 2023, The Impact of COVID-19 crisis on work life 2021



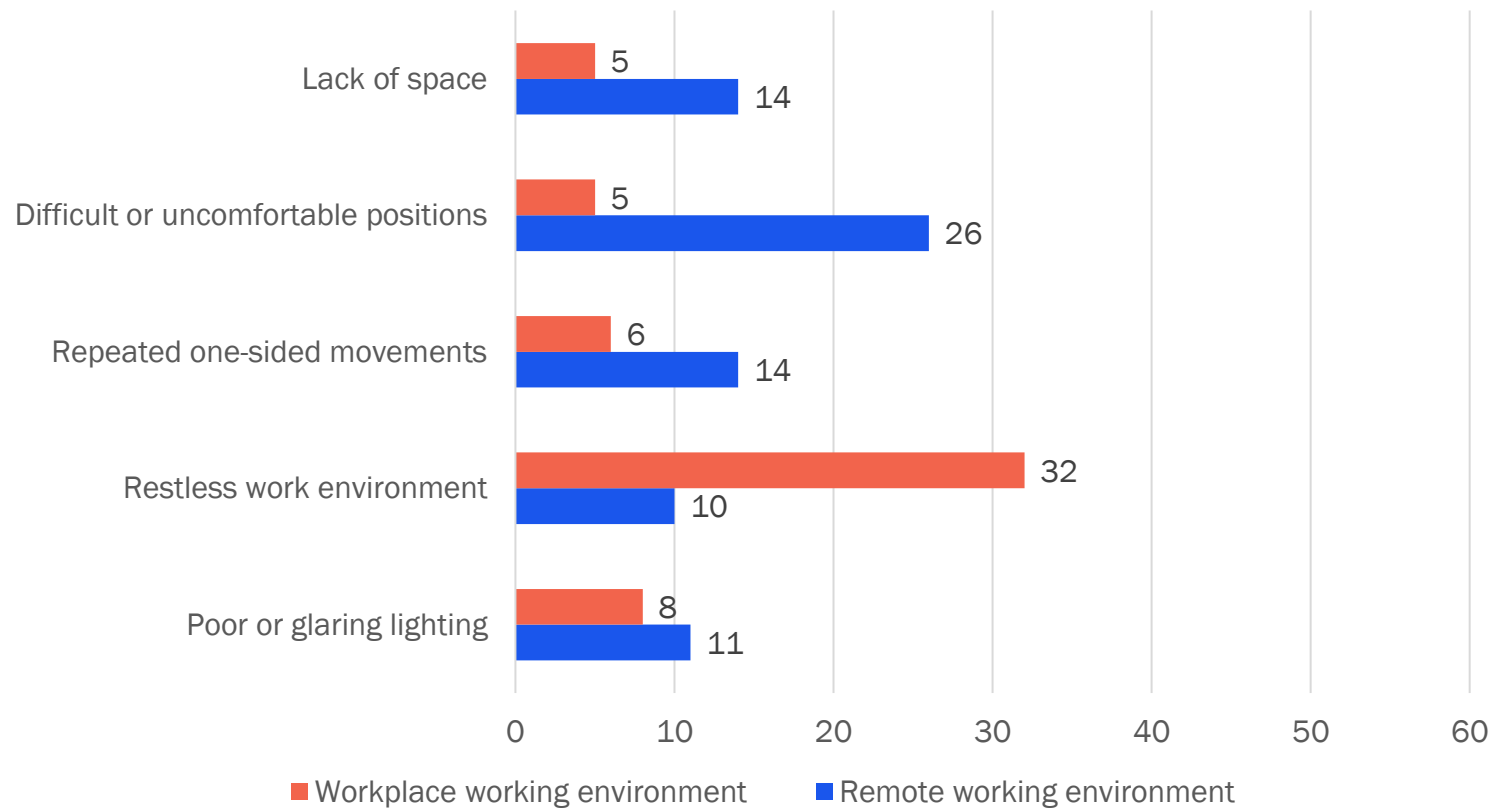
# ...and for one in six of all employees

The main place of work, all employees, %, FQWLS 2018 & 2023, The Impact of COVID-19 crisis on work life 2021



# Less ergonomics, but more peace in remote work

Experienced adverse factors by work environment, employees working remotely, %, FQWLS 2023

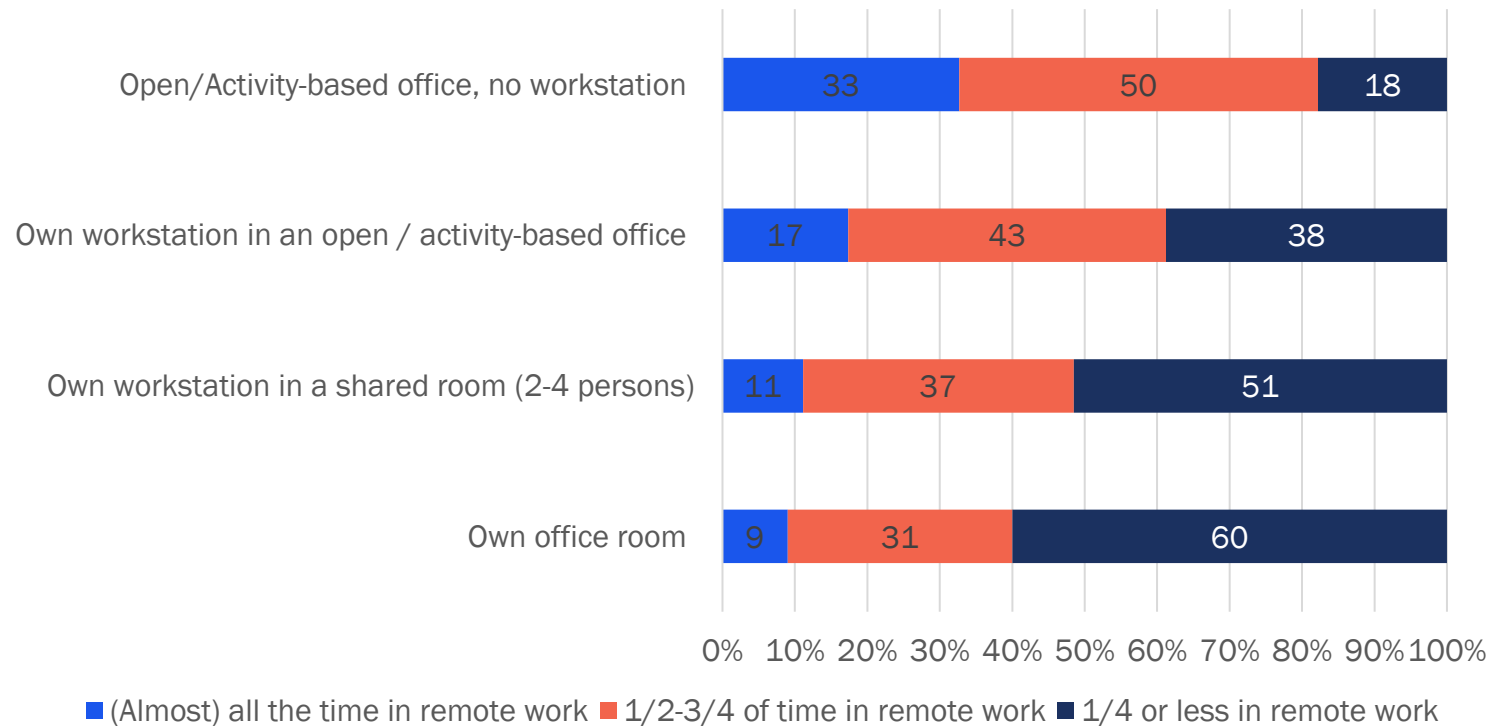


- Lack of ergonomics more common for women than men in remote work
- Eg. difficult or uncomfortable positions: women 34 %, men 16 %
- In 2021 men in remote work more often had their home office or dedicated working place than women; women more often at the kitchen table etc.
- 20 % of those in remote work has assessed the working conditions and environment of remote work together with their employer in 2023



# Highest share of remote work among those having no workstation at the employer's premises

Share of remote work in working hours by the type of office at employer's premises, %, employees working both remotely and at employer's premises, FQWLS 2023



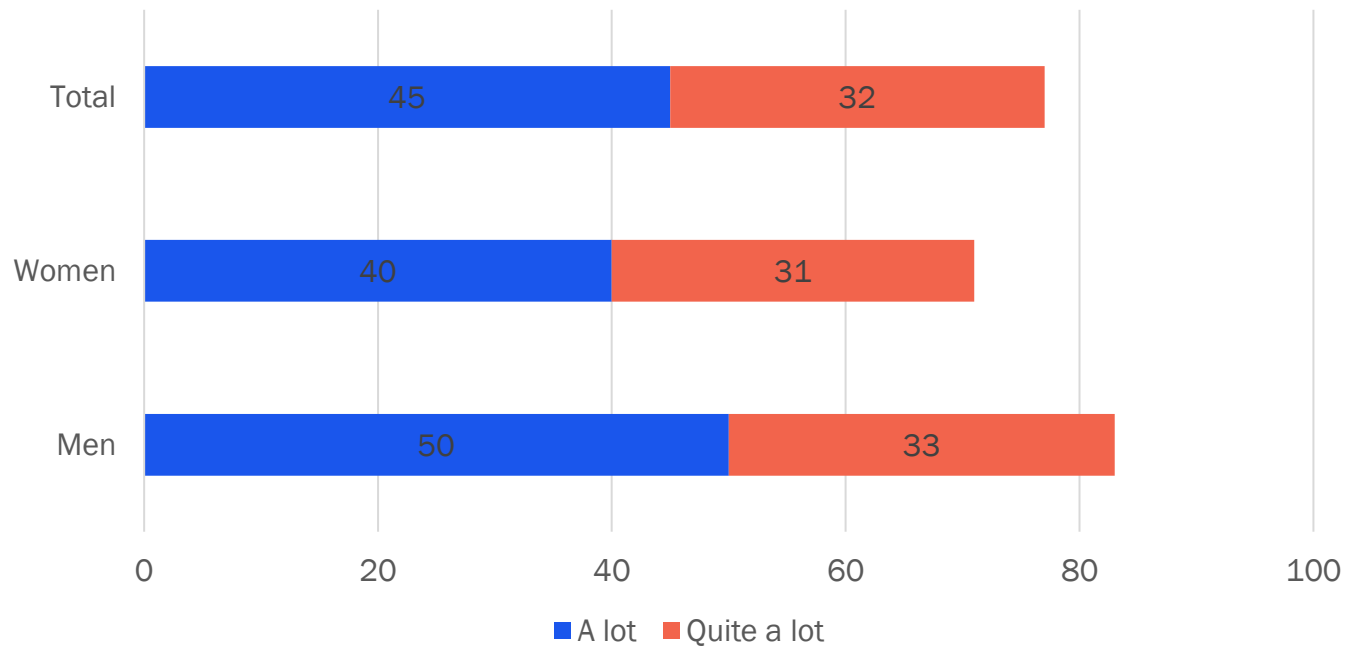
- Increased share of remote work and increasing share of open offices create a circle:
- The more employees work remotely, the less office space is needed and the more open offices grow in popularity...
- But the more restlessness in the office, the more employees might be tempted to stay at home in order to be able to concentrate...
- ...and the less office space will be needed etc.





# Men have more commonly possibilities to influence when and how much in remote work than women

Possibilities to influence when and how much in remote work, employees doing remote work by gender, %, FQWLS 2023

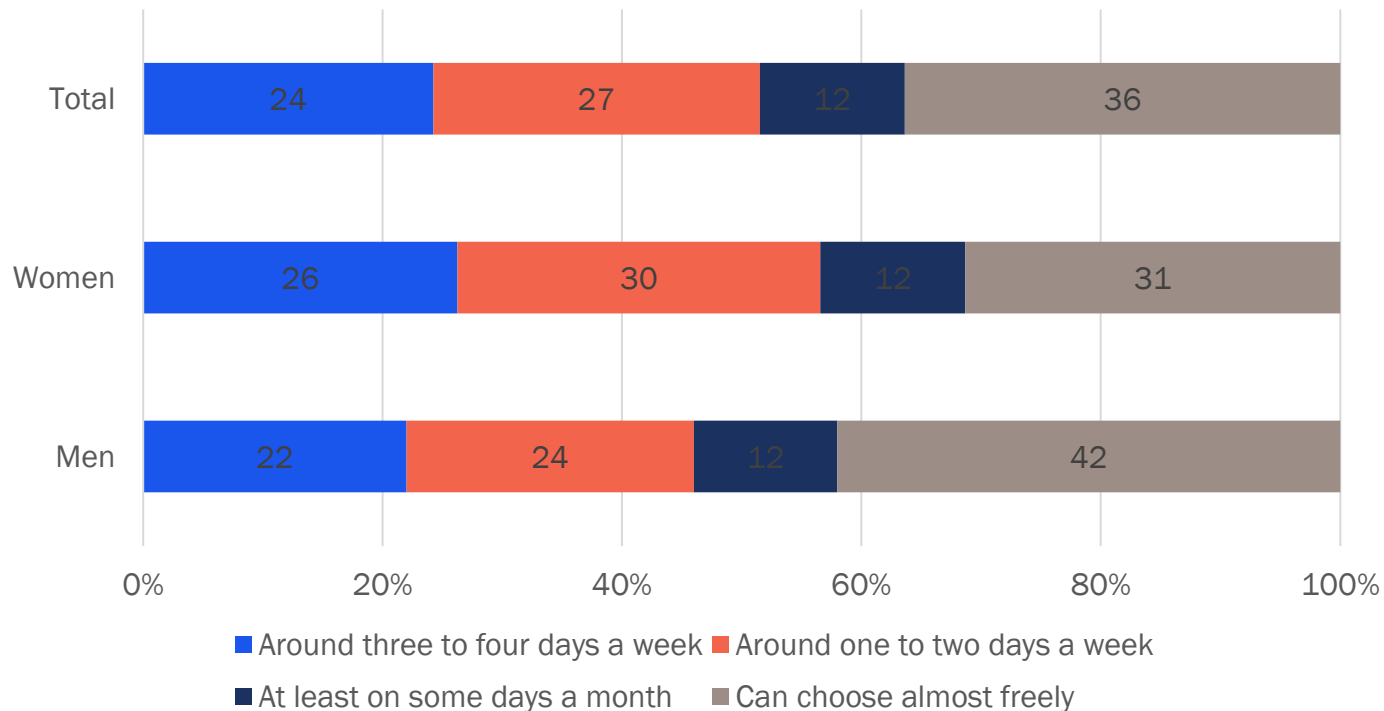


- Upper-level salaried have more possibilities than lower-level salaried
- Least possibilities in the county government sector, the most in the universities



# Every third can choose the amount of remote work almost freely

Amount of working at the workplace required by the employer, employees in remote work, %, FQWLS 2023

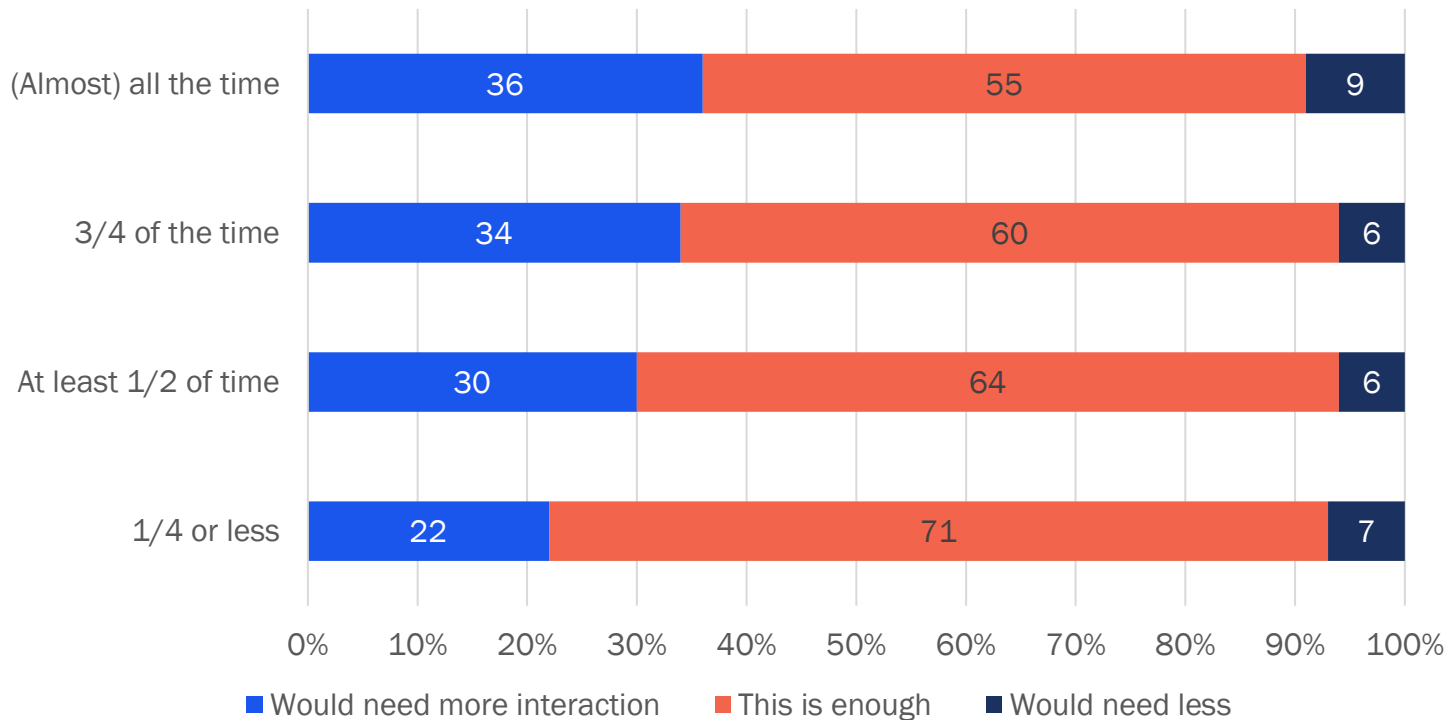


- Weekly presence required more commonly in women's than men's work
- Gender difference stemming (again) from the gender segregation: female-dominated county and local government sectors require the most presence, offer the least free choice
- Upper-level salaried having more choice than lower-levels
- Among those, who can choose the amount of remote work almost freely, 43 % work remotely (almost) all the working hours, altogether 76 % at least half of the hours



# Wish to work more remotely does not always exclude a wish to have more F2F contacts

Opinions of the sufficiency of face-to-face interaction with co-workers by the share of remote work, %, FQWLS 2023

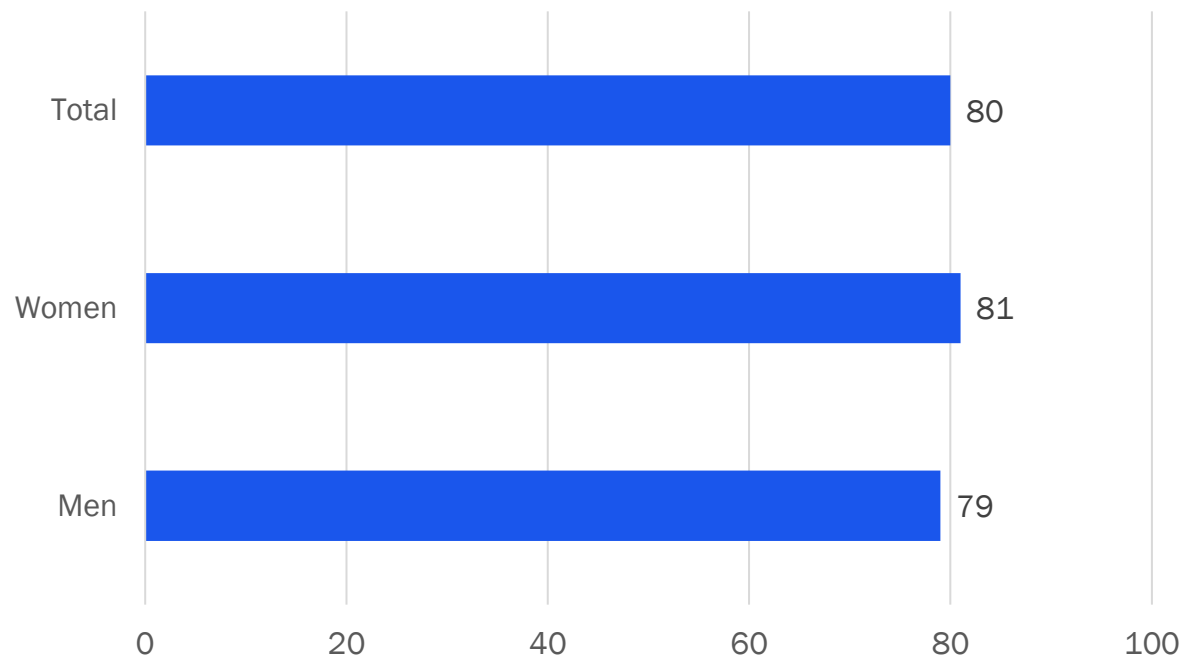


- Men in remote work more often than women say they would need more F2F interaction
- On the other hand, a good 10 % of men doing only remote work would cope well with even less F2F interaction
- Those who had the best possibilities to influence how much to work remotely, most often work remotely a large share of their working hours – and they also long for F2F interaction more often than the others 😊



# Every fifth does not record all the working hours done in remote work

Share of those recording all working hours in remote work, employees doing remote work with obligation to record working hours by gender, %

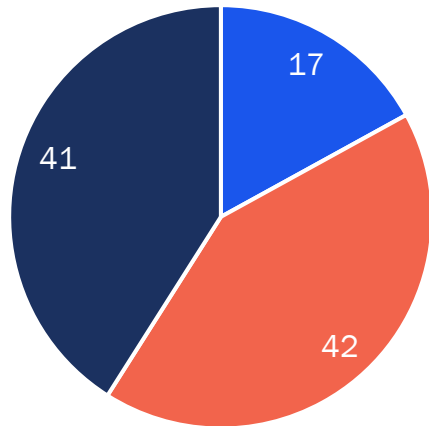


- Upper-level salaried employees, those in supervisory positions and those working at the universities more commonly not recording all the hours in remote work, even if requested to do so
- The older the remote workers, the more often a part of the working hours is not recorded
- About 20 % of men and 10 % of women do not have an obligation to record hours (= managers outside working time legislation or professional working total hours)



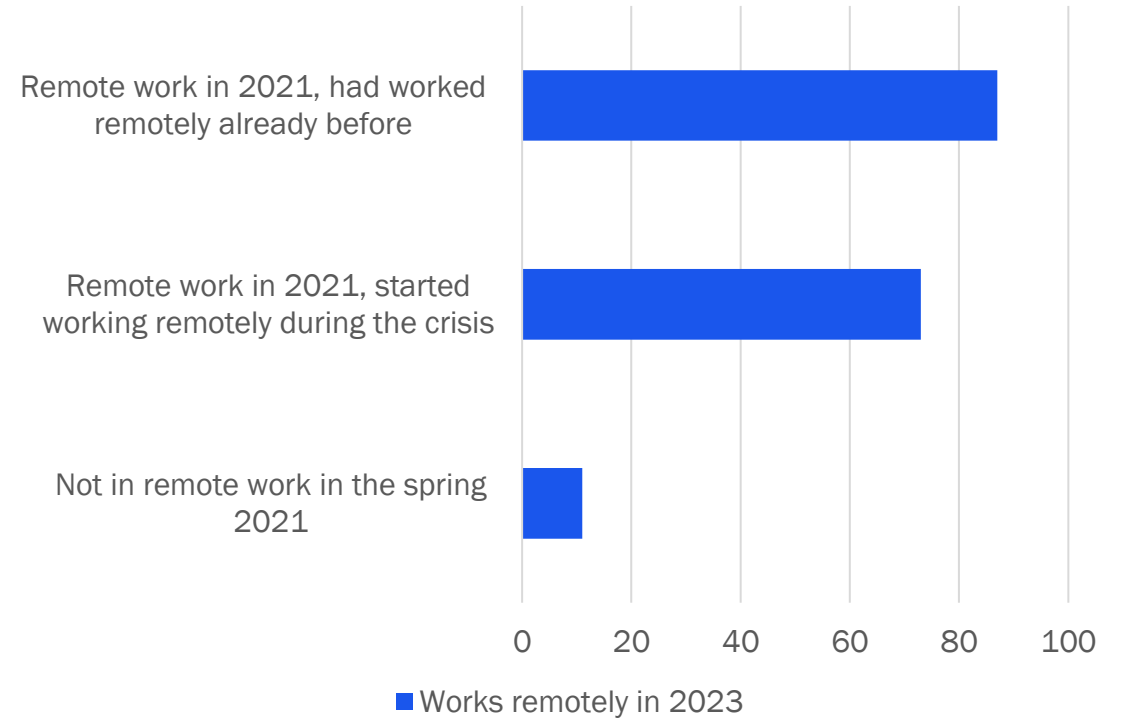
# COVID-19 crisis was a kick off to remote work for many

Employees in remote work in 2023 and their status in the spring 2021, %, FQWLS panel data (those employed as employees both 2021 & 2023)



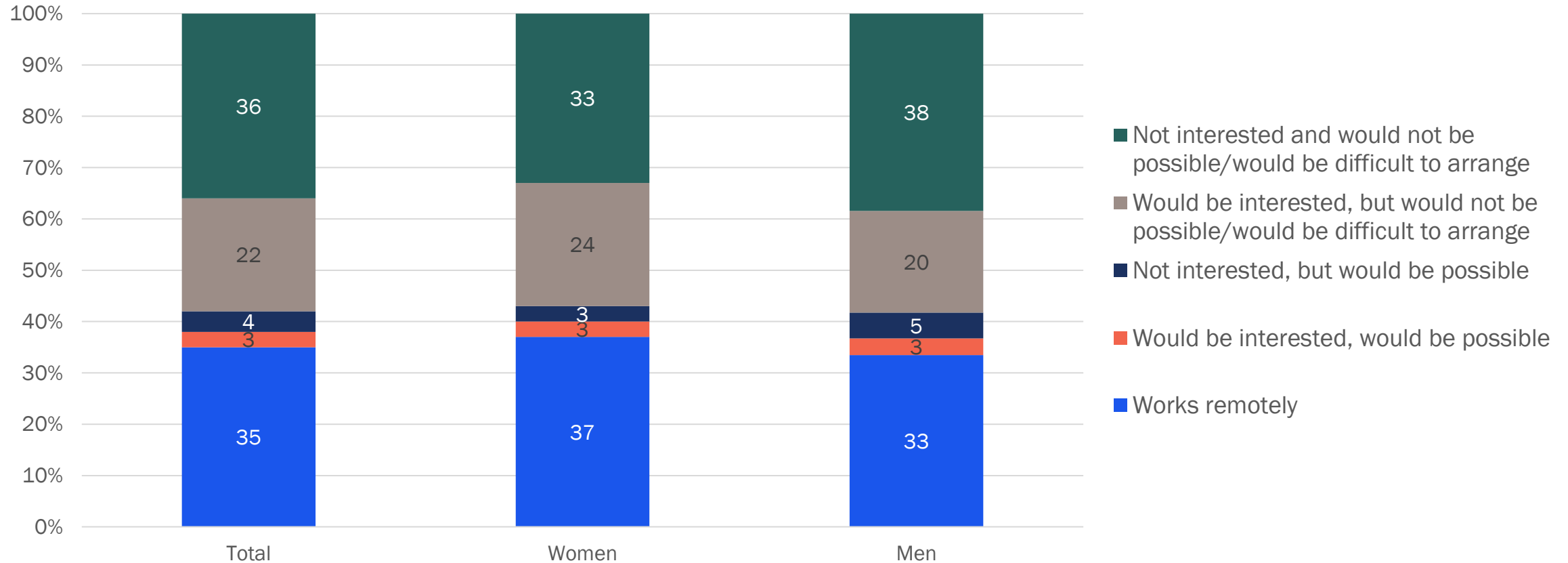
- Not in remote work in the spring 2021
- Remote work in 2021, started working remotely during the crisis
- Remote work in 2021, had worked remotely already before

Share of those working remotely in 2023 by their status in the spring 2021, %, Quality of Work Life Survey panel data



# Two out of five wage and salary earners are not interested in remote work

Remote work, interest in it and possibility to work remotely in one's job, employees, %, FQWLS 2023



# To sum up: a profound change in the work life

- The exceptional circumstances during COVID19 crisis boosted remote work: even those not interested in, and some of those for whom it was in principle not possible, worked remotely (c. 49 % at the most)
- Afterwards, the situation has "normalised" at the level of 35 %: almost all interested and almost all whose job allows work remotely
- Not only the prevalence but also the intensity of remote work has increased compared to pre-COVID19 situation
- Home has become the main place of work for almost half of the remote workers, fewer and fewer even have a workstation at the employer's premises any more
- Gender differences in remote work stem, for the most, from the gender segregation and structural changes in the labour market
- Shortcomings in ergonomics, too few F2F contacts, unrecorded working hours... but flexibility, peaceful work environment and better possibilities to reconcile work and private life
- Challenging situations especially as comes to the young newcomers of the labour market; what is happening to the sense of community and belonging?





## For more information

- [The share of remote working has fallen in 2023 from the coronavirus period but was higher than in pre-pandemic years - Statistics Finland](#)
- [Good one-fifth of wage and salary earners in remote work in 2023 – home is the main place of work for more and more people - Statistics Finland](#)

**Thank you for your attention!**