



Voices of Night Workers: Evidence from Lived Experience

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This report is part of the *Data After Dark* transdisciplinary research collaboration. The summary report, *Data After Dark: New Evidence on Night Work in London*, and additional research can be accessed [here](#).

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COVER PHOTO: [Winston Tjia](#)

“I think night workers have huge challenges, and we often undermine [ourselves] because we have our circumstances, like to fulfil our family needs, our financial circumstances, or maybe some other kind of situations we are in, and we compromise our health. We compromise our well-being. We compromise the sense of security and all these things. And I think it needs to come out, it needs to be debated, discussed, so that there should be some policy decisions which are based on evidence.”

[Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years.]

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	5
Executive Summary: Voices of Night Workers	6
1. Introduction	10
2. Aims and questions	11
3. Methodology and recruitment.....	11
4. Locational data and commute patterns.....	24
5. Voices of Night Workers	29
5.1 From staying afloat to the love of night work: motivations and circumstances	32
5.2 Negative experiences: no duty of care at all	33
5.3 I'd rather have a meal: food provision	34
5.4 Back-to-back shifts and work-life balance	35
5.5 Pay and the cost-of-living-crisis	35
5.6 Positive experiences and benefits	36
5.7 Health	37
5.8 Identity-related issues: between racialised exploitation and positive representation.....	41
5.9 Racism, harassment, safety and danger.....	42
5.10 Value of night work	44
5.11 What night workers want: improvements and imagined futures	46
Research team biographies	53
References.....	54
Appendix 1 – Analysis of the demographic characteristics of the surveyed participants	55
Appendix 2 – Long Table Etiquette.....	70
Appendix 3 – Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form	71

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Executive Summary: Voices of Night Workers

Night work is an essential but often undervalued component of the economy. This report explores the motivations, challenges, and aspirations of night workers in London, defined as individuals working between 6pm and 6am. It highlights the financial, social, and health implications of working outside daytime hours. Based on extensive engagement with night workers, drawing from their insights and experiences it underscores an urgent need for policy interventions, better working conditions, and a public recognition of night workers' contributions.

Led by Professor Ben Campkin and Dr Alessio Kolioulis – researchers of The Bartlett, UCL's Faculty of the Built Environment, who are based in its departments, UCL Urban Laboratory, The Bartlett School of Architecture and the Development Planning Unit – *Voices of Night Workers* forms one part of a transdisciplinary research collaboration, Data After Dark, in partnership with UCL Social Data Institute and Didobi Ltd. Data After Dark sets out to deliver a better data and evidence base for night workers in London, utilising a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods.

By prioritising evidence from lived experience, the *Voices of Night Workers* component of the collaboration aimed to better understand the challenges faced by London's nocturnal workforce. The research engaged night workers through a survey (98 respondents), followed by detailed participatory discussions using the format of long tables (Weaver, undated). The latter comprised a diverse sample of 20 individuals who work in a range of roles and in a variety of inner and outer London boroughs. Following a systematic coding and analysis of the evidence, the findings provide a basis from which night workers' insights can productively inform urban policy, governance and organisational policy.

The participants brought a rich composition of individual perspectives to the long tables, reflecting a wide range of personal and professional backgrounds. To contextualise their contributions, the report presents qualitative evidence alongside demographic and employment information. Maps of the participants' home-to-work trajectories are also included, accompanied by statements in their own words that describe their experiences and the nature of the challenges they face – from the effects of night-time commuting to safety concerns and the availability of public transport. In line with the university's ethical protocols, we have used pseudonyms to protect participants' anonymity.

Highlights of the research findings

Motivations for Night Work

Workers are drawn to night-time employment for a variety of reasons. These may include financial necessity, the higher wages (or perceived higher wages) offered compared with equivalent daytime work, or personal circumstances that require flexibility. Some choose night work to balance caregiving responsibilities or studies, while others work nights due to sectoral requirements, particularly in healthcare, retail, and security. Despite these benefits, night work is frequently perceived as a necessity rather than a choice due to the limited availability of alternative employment options. Night workers with especially precarious employment arrangements have struggled to stay afloat during recent economic challenges such as the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis.

Challenges Faced by Night Workers

Workplace Harassment and Safety

Night workers often experience a controlling work culture in their interactions with management, and harassment through negative experiences with customers, particularly in the nightlife sector and emergency services. Limited support structures exacerbate these challenges and hamper the workers' ability to perform their duties effectively.

Lack of Food Provision

Inadequate and unhealthy food options are a persistent issue, with workers relying on vending machines, takeaways, or home-prepared meals due to a lack of late-night food outlets. For some participants, the absence of nutritious meals has had a deleterious effect on their health and well-being and has exacerbated the other negative health consequences of working at night. When refreshments are provided, for employees in clubs and bars, these can often be unhealthy options, such as tokens for discounted or free alcoholic drinks. Night workers question the unavailability of nutritious food, especially given the physical demands of working at night.

Exhaustion and Work-Life Balance

Many night workers face back-to-back shifts, and long shifts, with insufficient rest periods, leading to exhaustion, social isolation, and long-term health problems. The dominance of the daytime economy restricts their access to leisure and social

activities and to essential services. The unconventional hours of night work mean that night workers can struggle to find a suitable work-life balance.

Financial Precarity

Despite the demanding nature of their jobs, night workers report stagnant wages, financial rewards that are out of proportion with the arduous commitments required, a lack of the collective bargaining power that might be needed to improve their working conditions, and a general financial strain exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. Many work under precarious employment conditions, including freelance arrangements with limited legal protections.

Health Risks

Night work disrupts sleep patterns and contributes to chronic health conditions such as insomnia, migraines, and diabetes. Exhaustion suffered because of late-night commuting, stress, social isolation, and the difficulty of accessing healthcare further compound these issues. Switching between shift patterns can take its toll on physical and emotional health. Night workers are disproportionately exposed to the risk-taking behaviours of others (such as drug and alcohol misuse) and/or situations which encourage them to take risks themselves: e.g. tiredness may lead to driving faster, long shifts might lead to eating unhealthily). Night workers report not being made aware of the correlations between night work and illness, only realizing these connections after experiencing health issues which require life adjustments.

Inequalities and Discrimination

Night workers are disproportionately from the Global Majority (Campbell-Stephens, 2020).¹ They also often have recent migration backgrounds and/or were not born in the UK (ONS, 2023). The types of work are often lower-paid positions, have limited career progression opportunities, or are otherwise precarious, exacerbating gendered and racialised inequalities. In this study, participants reported numerous incidences of harassment and discrimination based on ethnicity, sex or gender, both at work and while commuting.

¹ We are using this term as an alternative to “ethnic minority” or “BAME”, in line with Rosemary Campbell-Stephens’ definition: “Global Majority is a collective term that first and foremost speaks to and encourages those so-called to think of themselves as belonging to the global majority. It refers to people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or have been racialised as ‘ethnic minorities’. Globally, these groups currently represent approximately eighty per cent (80%) of the world’s population”. Rosemary Campbell-Stephens, ‘Global Majority; Decolonising the language and Reframing the Conversation about Race’, 2020, <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/schools/school-of-education/final-leeds-beckett-1102-global-majority.pdf> (accessed 8 April 2025).

Positive Aspects of Night Work

Despite these challenges, night work does in some contexts foster strong community bonds, particularly among creative and marginalised groups. Some employers offer a supportive workplace, for example by providing transport and prioritising employee welfare. Workers also value the flexibility, the higher pay compared with day wages in some roles, and the unique social possibilities of night-time employment environments.

Policy Recommendations and Future Improvements

Night workers have identified key areas for urgent intervention. For example:

- Employers must improve safety measures, provide adequate rest periods, and ensure that duty-of-care responsibilities and policies are implemented effectively.
- Access to nutritious meals and appropriate workplace facilities should be prioritised to support workers' health.
- Night workers' wages should be proportionate to risks; policies should support collective bargaining opportunities and enhanced employment protections.
- Improved public transport services, including later operating hours and dedicated night routes, would reduce the risk of harm for night workers.
- A dedicated policy framework for night workers should be developed, including a formal recognition of their contributions and increased representation in decision-making processes.
- Night workers should have access to flexible training opportunities, positive role models, workplace rights education, including educational resources on the risks of working at night, and career development opportunities.
- A specific charter for night workers should encode good employer practices, including the above, and caution against bad employer practices.

Night work is essential for London and the wider economy but remains undervalued and under-supported. Addressing the challenges faced by night workers requires a holistic approach that incorporates policy interventions, employer responsibility, and public engagement. A commitment to improving working conditions, fair pay, and social recognition will work towards a more sustainable and equitable night-time economy for all.

1. Introduction

Voices of Night Workers: Evidence on Lived Experiences aimed to document the personal narratives of individuals working in London during the hours between 6 pm and 6 am. The project aspired to positively influence inclusive policy decisions and support structures by reporting and analysing insights and experiences from night workers.

The goal was to improve the understanding of London's nocturnal workforce, ensuring that its needs and challenges are recognised and addressed within the broader context of urban governance. The researchers engaged a variety of night workers employed in diverse roles, circumstances, and locations.

This project was conceived as part of Data After Dark, a wider set of research collaborations. Led by the UCL Social Data Institute (directed by Professor James Cheshire), Data After Dark was a partnership between the UCL Urban Laboratory, The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL Innovation and Enterprise and Didobi Ltd, an external research consultancy, in collaboration with the Greater London Authority's 24-hour team. This initiative built on prior collaborations between these parties with the aim of forming a coordinated effort that enhances understanding of the lives and activities of London's night workers—an often-overlooked group in urban studies and policymaking. A key aim of the project was to integrate quantitative data analysis with qualitative research to develop a multifaceted understanding of the working conditions of night workers.

This report, *Voices of Night Workers: Evidence on Lived Experiences*, presents findings from survey and participatory research led by Professor Ben Campkin and Dr Alessio Kolioulis. It should be read alongside findings from other teams within the Data After Dark collaboration.

2. Aims and questions

The *Voices of Night Workers* research sought to report and analyse the experiences of London's nocturnal workforce. The research aimed to identify the challenges these workers face and to ensure that their contributions are recognised in –and productively inform– urban policy and governance. In particular, the objectives were to:

- Collect and analyse personal narratives of individuals working between 6 pm and 6 am and obtain insights into the challenges and needs of London's nocturnal workforce.
- Deepen understanding of the working conditions, health and safety issues, and perceived value of night workers' contributions.
- Address the often-overlooked role of night workers and engage them directly in discussions to ensure that research themes, findings and subsequent policy interventions are shaped by their perspectives.

3. Methodology and recruitment

For this research, the team employed a mixed-methods methodology, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to investigate the experiences of night workers in London. The following sections explain the process followed by the researchers, including: ethical considerations, the protocols followed through the university research governance procedures for a project that was considered 'high-risk', the approaches taken for the recruitment of participants, and details regarding the main methods: a survey followed by participatory documented discussion events known as long tables.

3.1 Ethics

While night work encompasses a diverse range of professions, including, for example, highly specialised roles in the NHS, literature on night work in the United Kingdom and Ireland reveals that it is often characterised by precarious employment and working conditions (Acuto et al. 2023, Campkin and Marshall, 2017, Kolioulis et al. 2021, MacQuarie 2023). For this reason, the team anticipated a discussion of sensitive topics at the long table events, particularly with regard to such matters as employment conditions, pay, citizenship status, socioeconomic precarity and descriptions of difficult experiences (such as racialised or gender-based discrimination). According to university protocols for evaluating ethical risks, night workers were classified as a 'vulnerable' population necessitating the highest level of ethical consideration, in line with medical research. High-risk applications at UCL are mandatory for research involving vulnerable populations, sensitive topics, or

interventions that could pose risks to participants. Therefore, in accordance with UCL's ethical standards and the guidelines of its Research Ethics Committee (REC), the research team developed and submitted an extensive high-risk ethics application, which was approved in May 2024 (reference 2814.003).

The process followed by the research team comprised several key steps, including:

- Identifying potential risks associated with the study, for example in collecting sensitive demographic information and in discussing personal topics such as violence, exploitation, pay and safety.
- Submitting the application via UCL's ethics@ucl system, detailing the research design, objectives and strategies to address ethical challenges, including a risk assessment, measures to protect participants' well-being, and a data impact assessment.
- Writing up participant-facing materials, including information sheets and consent forms, in order to clearly communicate the study's aims, data usage and the participants' rights, including details about consent, withdrawal of consent, and signposts to sources of support should the participants require this during or following the research.
- Integrating the REC's detailed feedback on the application, with clarifications regarding data use.
- Resubmitting the application to the REC.

Approval was obtained from UCL's Research Ethics Committee (REC).

The ethical approval process included a review of approaches to participant recruitment (see below).

The survey was prefaced by 15 questions on consent. In addition, an information sheet was provided, first as part of the survey and again to the long table participants (see Appendix 3).

From the pool of survey respondents, a selected sample was invited to participate in documented long table discussions. During the invitation process, the scope and aims of the project and the consent and withdrawal processes were reiterated. Prior to the long table discussions, participants were briefed once more on the ethical considerations and codes of conduct guiding the study. They were also reminded of their right to withdraw from the research at any time without consequence. The long table format was selected for its suitability to the ethics of the project, especially with regard to the potential vulnerability of the participants and the sensitivity of the topics they were likely to raise. These events were introduced by the researchers, and an etiquette sheet was distributed to participants at the beginning of each one (see Appendix 3).

Participants were also informed that they were under no obligation to elaborate on any topics they found difficult. If sensitive topics arose during the long tables and appeared to cause distress, the researchers proceeded with care. Participants were reminded of their rights to skip questions, pause, step back from the discussion, take a break, switch to a different topic, or terminate their participation altogether.

Survey and long table participants were also provided with contact information for support services such as The Samaritans and Citizens' Advice Bureau.

3.2 Data

The study implemented strict data management protocols in compliance with UCL's Data Protection Policy and GDPR requirements (see Appendix 3). Personal data were collected with the participants' consent, and were protected by security measures that included access restrictions, encryption for data transfers, pseudonymisation and anonymisation. Moreover:

- Data will be retained for different durations depending on their type. Anonymised data is stored for ten years to facilitate future research and knowledge-sharing across projects focused on night work.
- Personal data is retained only for the duration of the research project and for up to two years following its completion, after which it will be deleted unless an earlier request for deletion is made by a participant.
- Anonymised or pseudonymised research data is stored for up to five years following project completion and archived at UCL for potential future use by authorised researchers.
- Data sharing is strictly controlled among research partners. Anonymised data could be made available to research partners within the Data After Dark initiative, including the Greater London Authority and Didobi Ltd, under safeguards such as password protection and encryption.
- Personal data are not shared beyond the research team unless explicit consent has been given.
- Participants could request the removal of their data at any time, but if analysis or publication has already taken place, complete removal is not guaranteed. Complaints regarding data processing or breaches of confidentiality can be directed to the Principal Investigator Professor Ben Campkin, UCL's Data Protection Officer Alexandra Potts, or the UCL Research Ethics Committee.
- The Participation Information Sheet, which includes the full data management plan and contact details, can be found in Appendix 3 at the end of this document.

3.3 Recruitment

Potential participants were identified via online outreach, in-person leafleting and posterage in public and semi-public spaces, and through the existing networks of the researchers and The Bartlett, UCL's Faculty of the Built Environment, and UCL Urban Laboratory. The latter included web and social media posts, posting to relevant mailing lists, and to the Data After Dark collaboration's network. The main institutional social media accounts (Instagram, X) used were @UCLUrbanlab, @TheBartlettUCL, and @BartlettArchUCL.



Figure 1. Four images showcasing the leaflet with a QR code to access the survey (left), alongside billboards displaying the leaflet in public and semi-public spaces: a supermarket noticeboard, a café leaflet rack, a community notice board.

Participants were approached using a flyer that featured a QR code. This linked to a project webpage, which introduced the project and the content of the information sheet. There was also a link to a project-specific email address, managed by the Co-Investigator.

Participants were also recruited via calls for participation disseminated by the team for example through Reddit chat rooms, and via individuals and organisations representing night workers.

Initially, all participants took part in the survey and indicated whether they were interested in participating in the long-table discussions. The researchers then followed up personally to confirm their availability and to answer any queries.

English was used for communication across all recruitment activities.

After initiating the project, the researchers decided to introduce a survey question asking how participants had heard about the research project. Forty-seven responses were recorded. Various channels were identified, including word-of-mouth from friends or colleagues, advertisements and social media platforms. A word cloud generated using Microsoft Forms highlights popular terms (see Figure 2, below), with

'work' and 'friend' being the top sources. Six respondents, or 13%, specifically mentioned 'work' as the source. This could mean a referral or seeing a poster/flyer in the workplace.

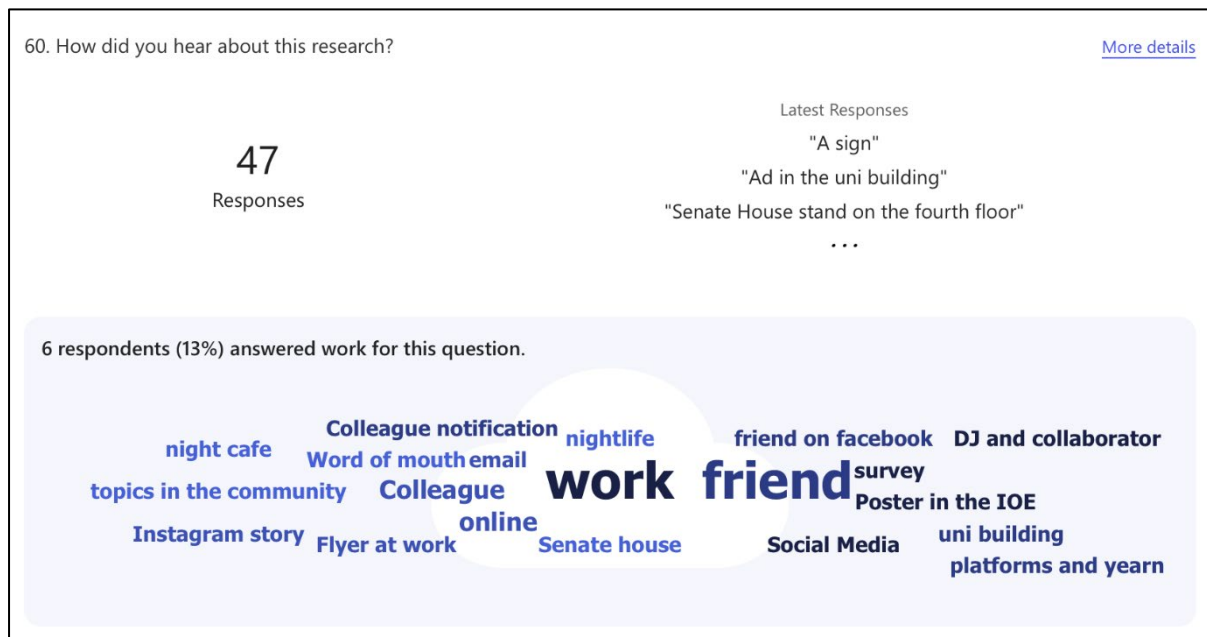


Figure 2. Responses illustrating how participants discovered the research, with key channels highlighted in a word cloud.

3.4 Survey

Participants were initially engaged through an anonymous online survey accessed via QR codes on the leaflet. This survey was designed to collect a non-random sample, meaning that participants were not selected randomly, but rather self-selected by choosing to participate. The survey, which took an average of 23:22 minutes to complete (including the time taken to read the information sheet and respond to consent questions) aimed to gather data on employment patterns, sectors, and working conditions, while also serving as a tool to recruit participants for further in-depth, documented discussions (the long tables).

The researchers used Microsoft Forms for the survey –part of the Microsoft 365 suite available to UCL staff. This software automatically linked responses to Microsoft Excel, ensuring the secure storage of data on UCL servers (OneDrive) and restricting the downloading of data from Excel to authorised staff only.

This survey data can be read in parallel with the larger-scale survey designed by Didobi Ltd in collaboration with the Data After Dark partners.

3.4.1 Sample composition

- Survey: 98
- Long Tables: 20

The survey collected 98 responses in total and, as explained above, served as a tool to identify participants for the long tables. During the survey, census categories were used for demographic data, including ethnicity. With access to the demographic characteristics of the surveyed non-random sample, and having in mind the assertion that Global Majority populations are disproportionately represented in many forms of night work (ONS, 2023), the team prioritised recruiting a demographically diverse long table sample.

3.4.2 Age Range (total sample)

- Upper Age Limit: No upper limit
- Lower Age Limit: 18

The age range was kept as open as possible to enable engagement with individuals at various life stages, and to allow for the possibility of comparative reflections based on different generational experiences. The team did not seek to work with people under the age of 18 because it was deemed that working with night workers already required a significant sensitivity to ethics, and there was no additional capacity within the research funding and timescale.

3.4.3 Long Tables

The survey was complemented by two participatory group discussions, which adapted the format of long tables (Weaver, 2014). The intention was to facilitate a communal exchange of experiences on workplace issues, including on sensitive topics such as safety, health and pay. The team organised two in-person long table discussions in August and September 2024 at Senate House, University of London, each lasting approximately three hours and held in the afternoon.

Twenty respondents were selected from the survey. The aim was to create a diverse sample by considering factors such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, educational background, sexuality, reported disabilities and age. The discussions included participants from various sectors, including hospitality, gig economy food delivery, retail, logistics, health and care. The team deliberately sought to include precariously employed night workers in order to address data gaps and complement the parallel research initiatives in the Data After Dark collaboration. The discussions drew on direct experiences from night workers across multiple boroughs, including inner and outer London.

The long table methodology was chosen over traditional focus groups for its capacity to foster open, conversational dialogue in a relaxed and collaborative setting, where participants are encouraged to shape the structure and content. Developed by the feminist artist collective Split Britches, this approach is modelled on the atmosphere of a dinner table. It encourages an equal participation in the sharing of experiences and allows for the discussion of challenging topics in an environment of collective support (Weaver, 2014). In this context, the long table format was particularly suited to exploring the sensitive and complex realities of night work. Participants were welcomed to the long table discussions and encouraged to contribute freely, guided by a 'menu' etiquette to ensure a safe and respectful space (see Appendix 2). However, in contrast to the typical uses of long tables, those conducted in this research were not held in public. This cautionary approach was taken to safeguard the participants' identities and to ensure appropriate data protection.

The host (lead researcher) introduced the etiquette, and the two principal researchers occasionally intervened to help maintain the flow of conversation with occasional prompts. These interjections were kept to a minimum. Participants were also encouraged to draw or write directly on the tablecloth if they so desired. This helped to create a collective record of their stories, connected across both long tables, and allowed for non-verbal expression.



Figure 3. The long table setup, featuring a collaborative tablecloth where participants wrote and drew their contributions during the discussions.

The discussions followed a loosely structured narrative progression, with prompts given first to focus on the participants' routes into night work (past), followed by their current roles and challenges (present), and finally their aspirations and ideas for potential improvements (future). This structure allowed participants to reflect on their initial steps into night work, share personal challenges and valued aspects of their work, and envision, in conversation, ways their experiences and conditions might evolve.

The long tables were co-facilitated by Principal Investigator (PI) Prof. Ben Campkin, who has extensive experience of using this format in research with migrant night workers and LGBTQ+ communities, and Co-Investigator (Co-I) Dr. Alessio Kolioulis. Both researchers have significant expertise in qualitative methods that engage marginalised communities while safeguarding their interests and contributions (e.g.,

Campkin, 2023; Campkin and Marshall, 2017; Kolioulis et al., 2021). The Co-I, supported by research assistants (Lily Flashman and Allie Lester), was responsible for the audio recording and editing of the outputs, while a research assistant (Roisin Fellowes) transcribed the audio recordings.

3.5 Analytical Framework

This section outlines the coding structure and framework developed for the analysis of qualitative evidence collected through the survey and long tables. The coding framework was designed according to themes that emerged from the survey data. It was then implemented to organise the survey and long table transcripts for analysis. This coding was implemented using NVivo 15, a qualitative data analysis software package available to UCL research staff, to facilitate thematic coding. The researchers opted for manual rather than automated coding.

The long tables were transcribed and the transcriptions were then organised to create individual 'cases' for each participant. Survey responses associated with these individuals were assigned to these cases. The cases were then imported into NVivo, where the coding framework was applied.

3.5.1 Coding Framework

The coding process was guided by the set of structured prompts used to stimulate responses from participants. These prompts were divided into two categories – survey and long tables.

At the survey level, participants had been asked to reflect on their experiences of night work through questions about safety, health, and their perceptions of how night workers were valued. They were also asked for their suggestions for how the understanding and appreciation of night work might be improved, and what might be done to enable better conditions for this work.

The long tables were structured into three temporal sections: past, present and future. Participants were encouraged to address topics such as pathways into night work, memorable experiences, current challenges and benefits and the future of night work.

The coding framework derived from the combination of these prompts was designed to structure data into i) broader codes and ii) specific sub-codes. In NVivo this is called 'parent-child' relationship.

3.5.2 Survey: Parent Codes

1. *Safety Issues*: frequency of safety incidents at work and the strategies participants used to manage them.

2. *Health Issues*: subdivided into physical and mental health issues.
3. *Valuation of Night Work*: positively, negatively or neutrally valued.
4. *Improvements*: suggestions for change, categorised into workplace improvements, public and societal changes, and policy recommendations.

3.5.3 Long Table Parent Codes

PARENT CODE	CHILD CODE
CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS	Benefits
	Challenges
EXPERIENCES	Neutral
	Negative
	Positive
HEALTH ISSUES	Mental Health
	Physical Health
IDENTITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY	Class
	Ethnicity
	Gender
IMAGINED FUTURES	Neutral
	Negative
	Positive
IMPROVEMENTS	Policy
	Public and Society
	Workplace
PATHWAYS TO NIGHT WORK	Circumstances
	Motivations
SAFETY ISSUES	Frequency of Issues
	Strategies to Manage
VALUATION OF NIGHT WORK	Neutral
	Negative
	Positive

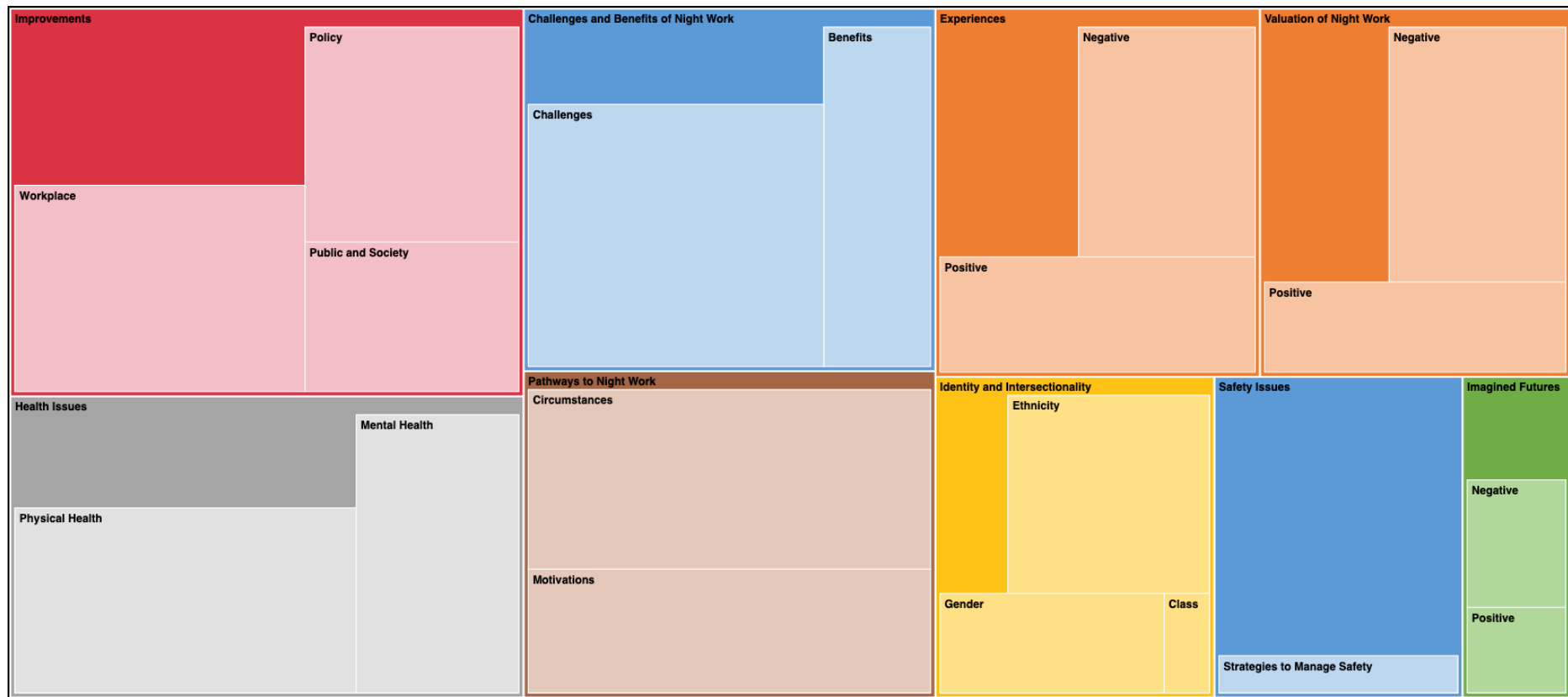


Figure 4. Treemap showing hierarchy of items coded using NVivo 15

Codes	Number of coding references	Aggregate number of coding references	Number of items coded	Aggregate number of items coded
Nodes\Challenges and Benefits of Night Work	5	109	5	18
Nodes\Challenges and Benefits of Night Work\Benefits	16	16	8	8
Nodes\Challenges and Benefits of Night Work\Challenges	88	88	17	17
Nodes\Experiences	10	47	7	14
Nodes\Experiences\Negative	25	25	9	9
Nodes\Experiences\Positive	12	12	8	8
Nodes\Health Issues	9	81	7	16
Nodes\Health Issues\Mental Health	20	20	10	10
Nodes\Health Issues\Physical Health	52	52	14	14
Nodes\Identity and Intersectionality	5	31	3	10
Nodes\Identity and Intersectionality\Class	1	1	1	1
Nodes\Identity and Intersectionality\Ethnicity	14	14	9	9
Nodes\Identity and Intersectionality\Gender	11	11	5	5
Nodes\Imagined Futures	2	9	2	6
Nodes\Imagined Futures\Negative	5	5	3	3
Nodes\Imagined Futures\Positive	2	2	2	2
Nodes\Improvements	19	82	10	19
Nodes\Improvements\Policy	19	19	10	10
Nodes\Improvements\Public and Society	12	12	7	7
Nodes\Improvements\Workplace	32	32	13	13
Nodes\Pathways to Night Work	0	40	0	19
Nodes\Pathways to Night Work\Circumstances	26	26	16	16
Nodes\Pathways to Night Work\Motivations	14	14	11	11
Nodes\Safety Issues	35	39	14	15
Nodes\Safety Issues\Frequency of Issues	0	0	0	0
Nodes\Safety Issues\Strategies to Manage Safety	4	4	2	2
Nodes\Valuation of Night Work	14	45	7	14
Nodes\Valuation of Night Work\Negative	24	24	10	10
Nodes\Valuation of Night Work\Positive	7	7	6	6

Figure 5. Aggregate count of items by coding categories

- **Past:** coding in this category focused on participants' pathways into night work, including motivations and circumstances such as migration. Experiences were further divided into positive aspects (e.g., freedom) and negative aspects (e.g., isolation), while another set of codes explored the intersection and influence of identity characteristics on experiences, including ethnicity, gender, and class.
- **Present:** This prompt looked at the challenges and benefits of current/recent night work, with specific attention to issues such as health, safety, pay, and access to services. Memorable experiences, both positive and negative, were also coded here, alongside reflections on participants' perceptions of how their contributions as night workers were valued.
- **Future:** Coding in this category reflected participants' imagined futures and desired changes. Sub-themes included improvements, such as better working conditions, family support or mental health resources, or improved manager/organisational appreciation of night workers' needs, among other aspects discussed.

4. Locational data and commute patterns

Our survey gathered geographical data from respondents, including home and work postcodes. This enabled us to map and comment on the distribution of the sample across London, and to gain a sense of peoples' commutes.²

The table below presents the top 10 work locations mentioned in response to question 47 of the survey: 'In which location(s) (e.g. neighbourhood or borough) do you most often work at night? Islington leads with 9 mentions, followed by a general designation for London with 8, Westminster and Newham with 7, Camden with 6 and Tower Hamlets registers 5 mentions. Victoria, Soho, and Hackney each receive 4 mentions, while Shoreditch registers 3 mentions.

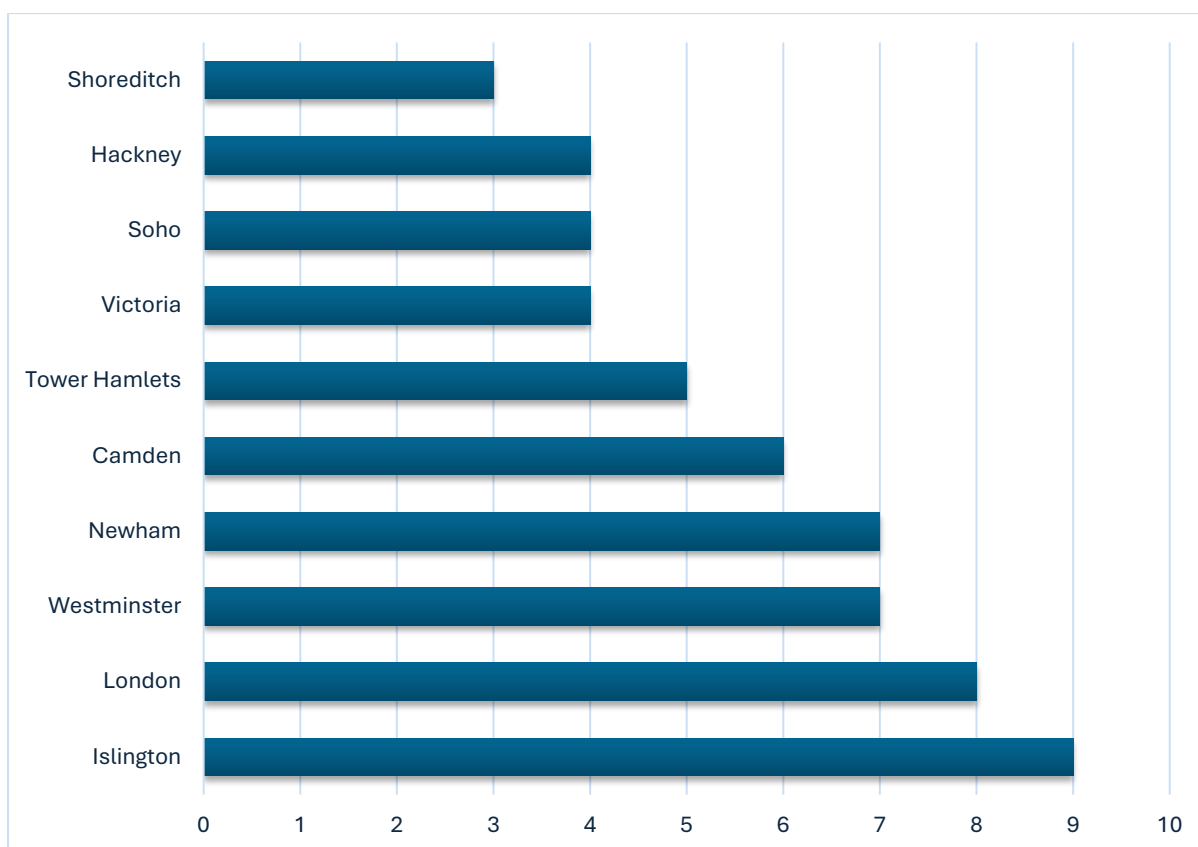


Table 1: Work locations of survey sample.

² The maps featured in this section were produced in collaboration with UCL Social Data Institute researchers Mikaella Mavrogeni and Michal Iliev.

Commuting trajectories

Our survey recorded commuting trajectories based on participants' home and workplace postcodes. The map below illustrates all recorded trajectories from survey participants who provided complete postcode data, offering a view of home-to-work commutes across different areas and distances. The data shows a central clustering of shorter commutes, while longer journeys extend to the periphery of London and beyond.

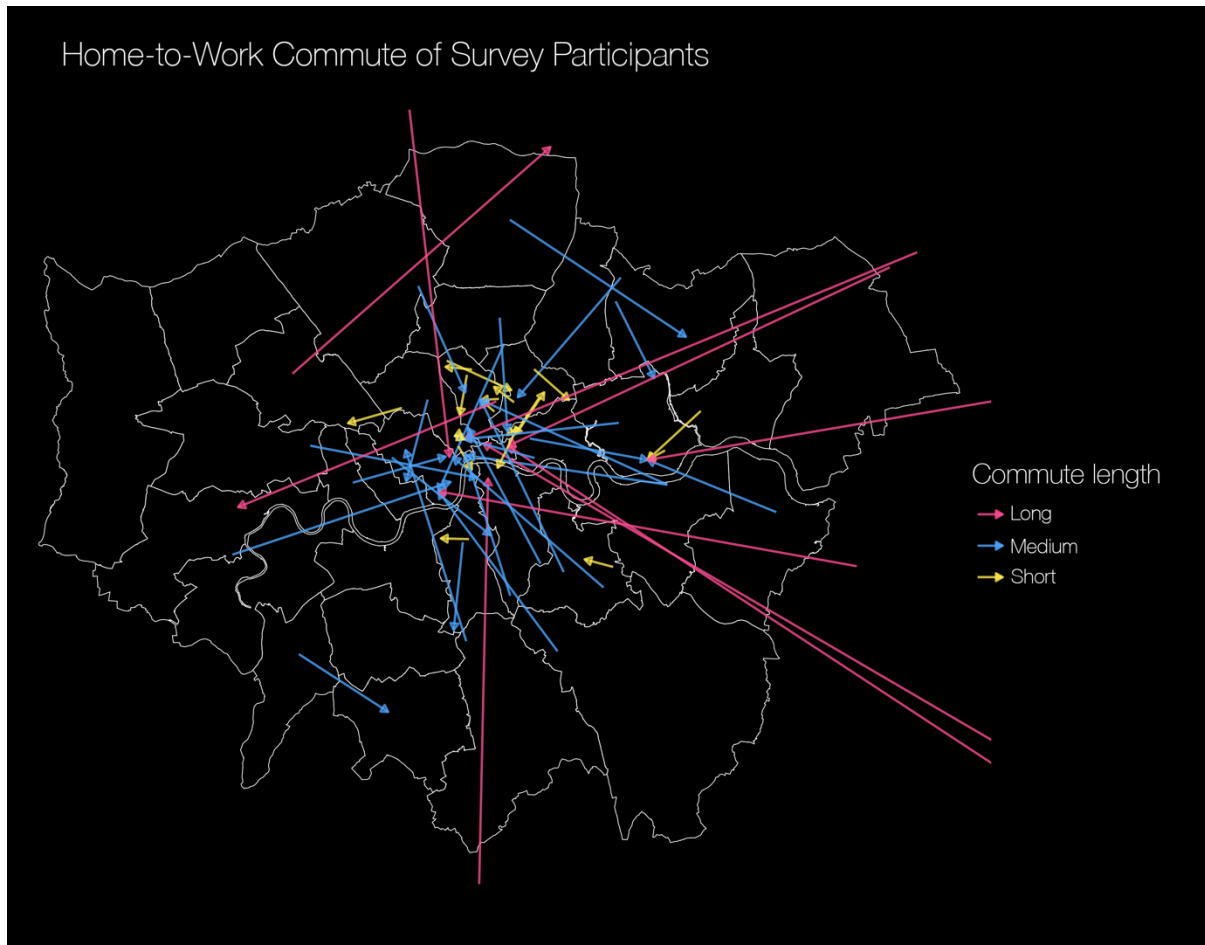


Figure 6. Home-to-work commute patterns of survey participants in London, categorised by commute length. Short commutes (yellow) are concentrated centrally, while medium (blue) and long (pink) commutes extend outward.

The following two maps display dots representing each recorded home and work postcode location provided by the survey participants. Despite the constraints of the sample size and the project timeframe, the maps are nevertheless revealing in their coverage of home and work locations. In addition, they illustrate the project's success in including night workers from inner and outer boroughs.

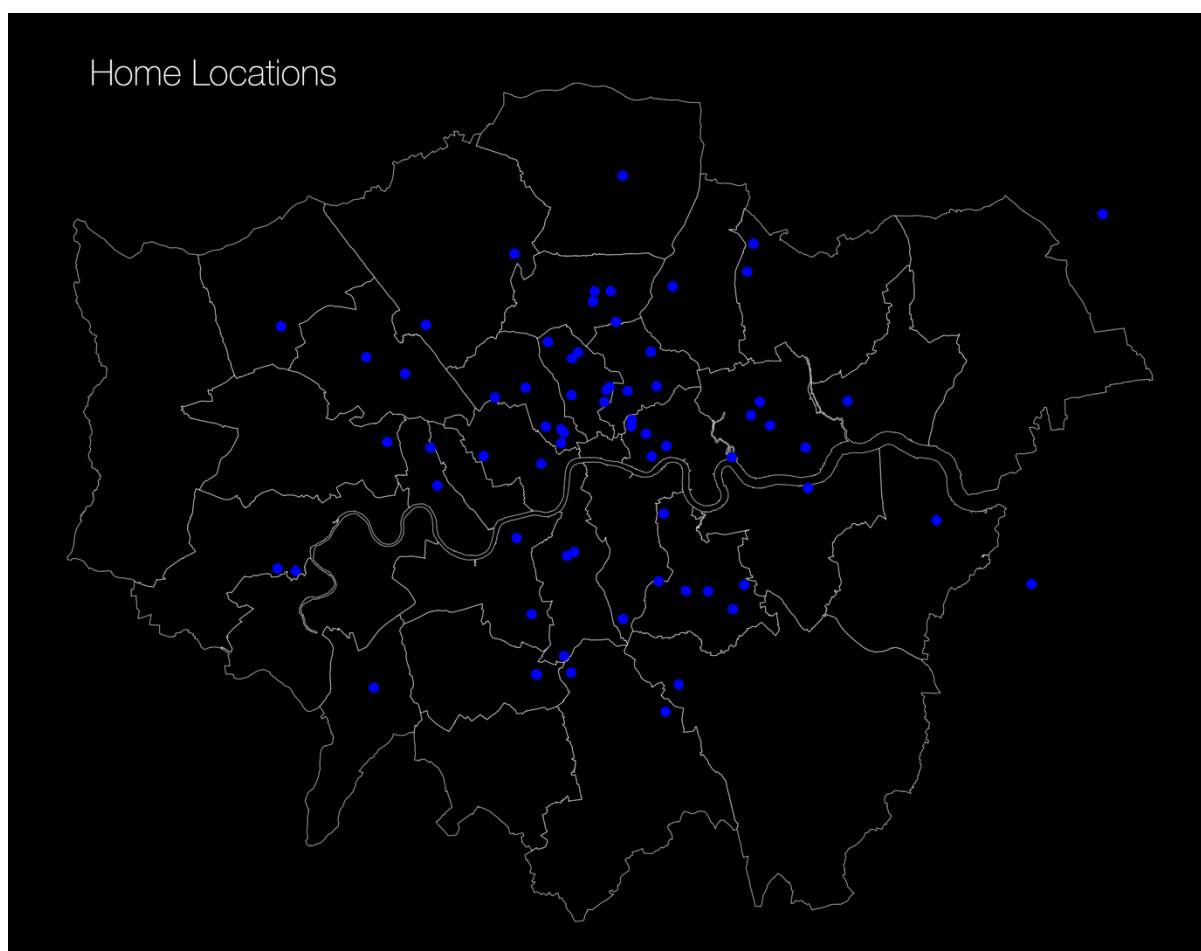


Figure 7. Distribution of recorded home postcodes provided by survey participants

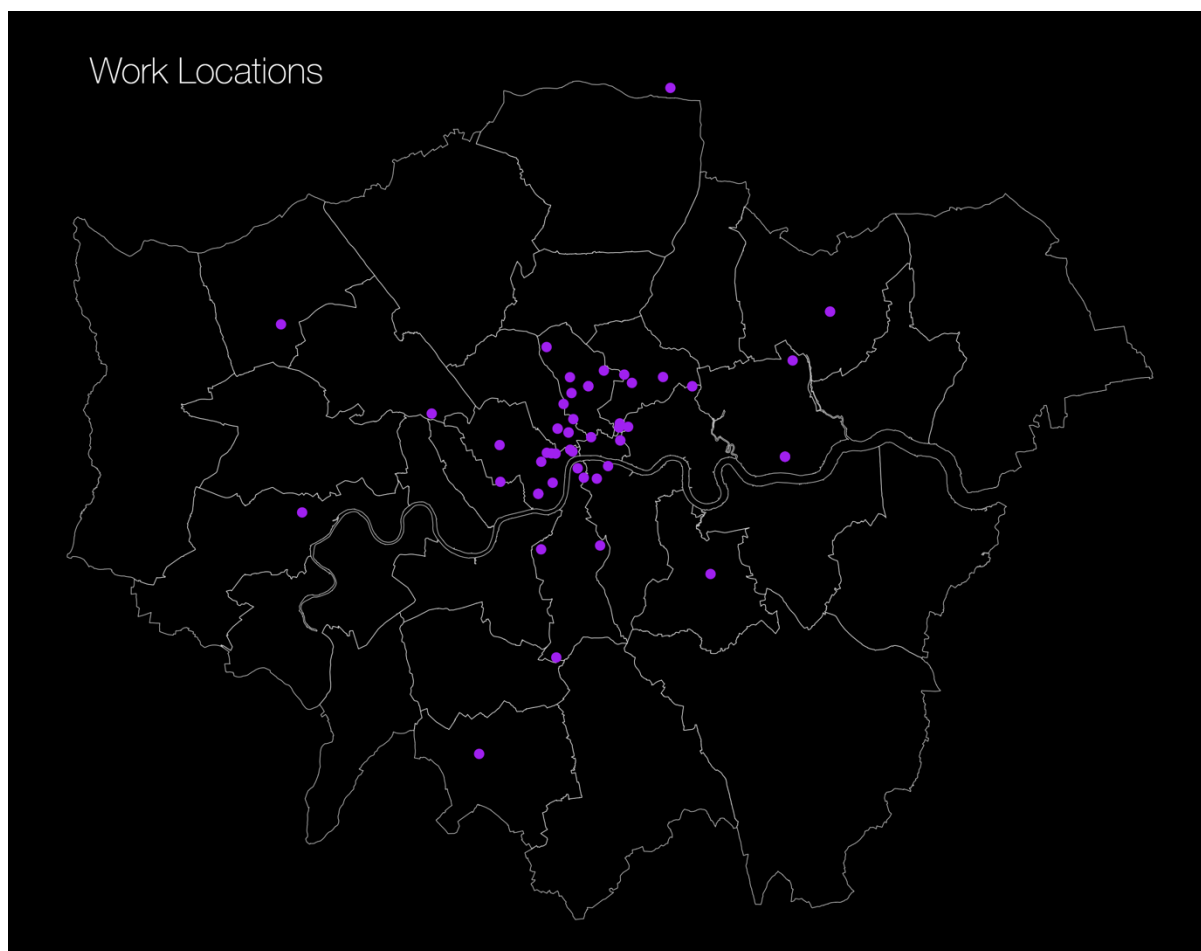


Figure 8. Recorded work postcodes of survey participants

Additionally, the map below visualises the data available for the home-to-work commute patterns of the long table participants. Participants who work from home or at an unspecified location within the same borough are represented by yellow dots.

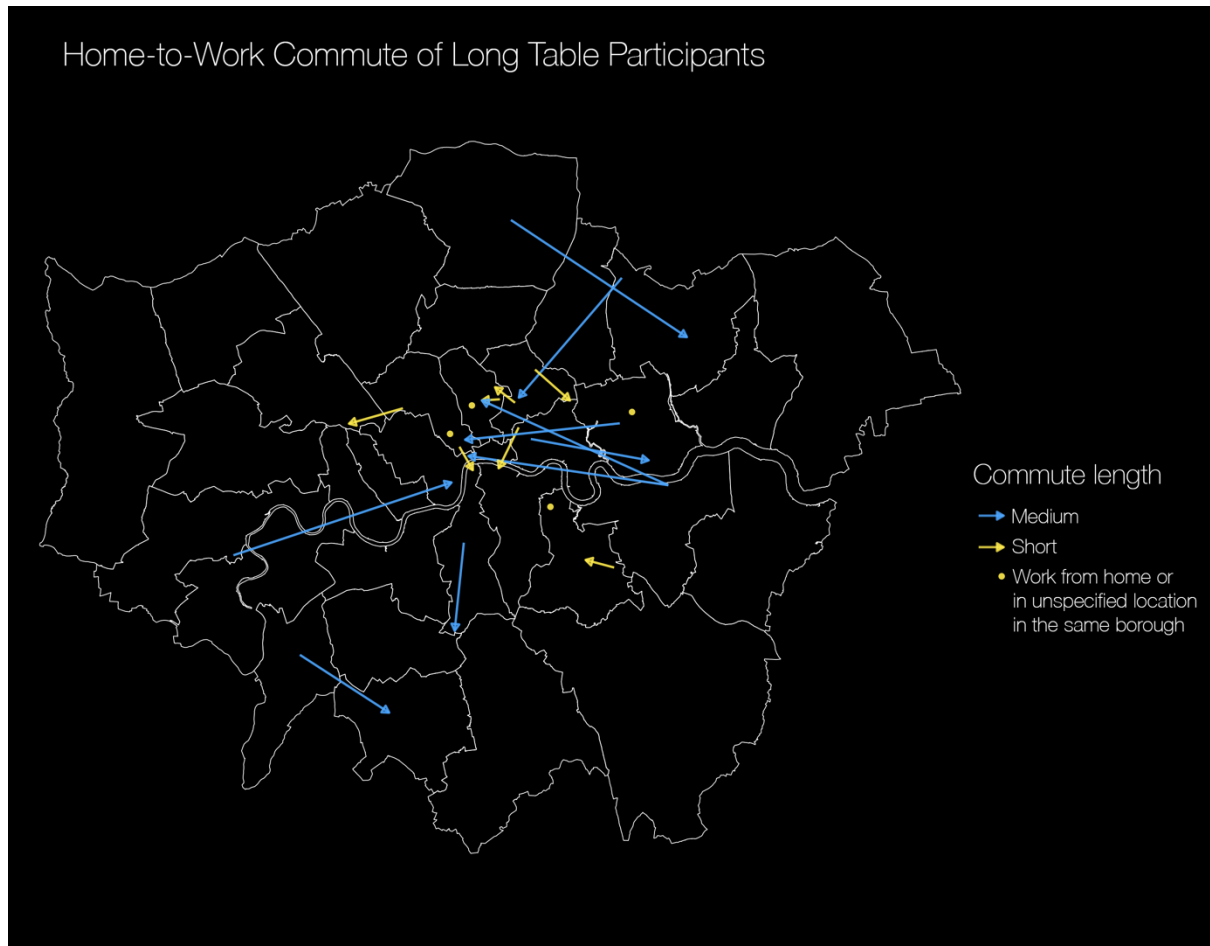


Figure 9. Home-to-work commute patterns of long table participants

5. Voices of Night Workers

The participants brought a rich composition of lived experiences and perspectives to the long tables, reflecting a wide range of personal and professional backgrounds.

- The sample included non-binary, trans non-binary, female and male individuals aged from ages 25-34 to 65+.
- The ethnic backgrounds of participants included Asian, Black African, Black Caribbean, Mixed, Multiple and Other ethnic groups, as well as White British.
- The majority were British nationals, with other nationalities represented including Trinidad and Tobago, India and Romania.
- Sexual orientation among the participants included pansexual, straight or heterosexual, and bisexual.
- Some participants have dependents, while others do not.
- A few participants reported having health conditions.
- Educational qualifications among the participants range from vocational qualifications to master's degrees.
- Participants work in sectors such as security, freelance, hospitality, health, food delivery and retail, with job titles including carer, check-out, customer service, DJ and estate operative.
- Employment status varies from casual to part- or full-time, to freelance and self-employed, with work experience ranging from 6 months-1 year to more than 10 years.
- Work locations are spread across various areas, including Tower Hamlets, Dalston, Camden, Waterloo, Southwark, Central London, Newham and Wordsworth.

In the following section, participants' statements are accompanied by demographic information in square brackets, thus: [age range, gender, ethnicity, job role, years in night work].

Table 1: Profile of Long Table Participants

ID	19	11	18	12	7	17	13	9	14	5
Age Range	25-34	25-34	25-34	25-34	25-34	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44
Gender	Non-binary	Trans non-binary	Female	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male
Health Conditions		Yes	No	No	No					No
Sexual Orientation		Pansexual	Straight or heterosexual	Bisexual	Straight or heterosexual					Straight or heterosexual
Ethnicity	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	White: Other White	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian
Education	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Vocational qualification	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Vocational qualification	Bachelor's degree
Sector	Security	Freelance or Self Employed	Hospitality	Hospitality	Hospitality	Hospitality	Freelance or Self Employed	Health	Food delivery	Retail
Job Title		DJ	Customer service	Runner	Estate Operative					Check out colleague
Employment Status	Full-time	Self-employed (freelance)	Casual	Part-time	Casual	Part-time	Self-employed (freelance)	Full-time	Full-time	Part-time
Experience	3-5 years	3-5 years	6 months-1 year	6 months-1 year	3-5 years	More than 10 years	3-5 years	More than 10 years	1-2 years	3-5 years
Language	English	English	English	English	English	English	English	English	English	Bengali
Nationality	British	Trinidad & Tobago	Indian	Romanian	British	British	British	British	British	Indian
Dependents	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Work Location	Tower Hamlets	Dalston	Camden, Waterloo	Southwark	Central London	Southwark	Newham and Tower Hamlets	Camden	Camden	Wordsworth

ID	16	15	4	3	20	6	2	10	1	8
Age Range	45-54	45-54	45-54	45-54	55-64	55-64	55-64	55-64	65+	65+
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Non-binary	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male
Health Conditions			Yes	Yes		No	No	No		No
Sexual Orientation			Straight or heterosexual	Gay or lesbian		Straight or heterosexual	Straight or heterosexual	Straight or heterosexual		Straight or heterosexual
Ethnicity	White: Other White	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	Somali	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African
Education	Vocational qualification	Master's degree	Secondary education	Secondary education	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Vocational qualification	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree
Sector	Hospitality	Professionals services	Security	Local government	Emergency services	Anti-social behaviour officer	Health	Health	Hostels for the homeless	Health
Job Title			Security officer	Out of Hours Response and Patrol Officer		Anti-social behaviour officer	Carer	Care Support worker		Support worker
Employment Status	Part-time	Self-employed (business owner/sole trader)	Self-employed (freelance)	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time
Experience	More than 10 years	More than 10 years	1-2 years	More than 10 years	1-2 years	More than 10 years	More than 10 years	More than 10 years	More than 10 years	6-10 years
Language	English & Spanish	English	English	English	English	English	English	English	Somali	Ibo
Nationality	Spanish	British	British	British	British	British	British	British	British	British
Dependents	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Work Location	Kensal Rise	Islington	Westminster	Islington	Control Room, Newham	Islington	Ilford	Lewisham	Islington and Waltham Forest	Lambeth

5.1 From *staying afloat* to the *love of night work*: motivations and circumstances

Participants reported a diversity of motivations for night work, and this connected to the nature of their work and other variables. For some this was financial necessity. For instance, Imran commented: “I’ve been working as a delivery driver catering takeaway out of necessity. On the back of the pandemic, and with the cost of living, it’s been staying afloat. So, it’s just to survive.” [Imran, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Food delivery, 1-2 years]. Financial motivations included being able “to get a bit more money,” as Hassan put it. [Hassan, age 65+, Male, Somali, Hostel for the Homeless, more than 10 years]. For some, working at night was linked to a sense of higher pay than for day work. Jamal, for example, commented that: “My experience has been [...] the financial side of it is very good, that’s the incentive. I think of me and not speak for anybody else [...] And I also get the time to also study or do my own thing, things that I like to do.” [Jamal, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Anti-social Behaviour Officer, more than 10 years].

Where there was an active choice to work at night, this ranged from passionately following a creative practice, “a love of mine” [Anika, age 25-34, Trans non-binary, Other Black, DJ, 3-5 years], to being drawn to the excitement and variety of night work as compared to day work, with its potential for different social possibilities and novel experiences.

Often, the motivation to work at night was explained by reference to day-time family life and other personal commitments. It “was easier for me as her mother”, said Isabel, who had returned to work when her daughter was three and had chosen to work in the evenings. “I could stay with her and then leave her at home with my ex-partner and then go to work and then come home around 11/11:30.” [Isabel, age 45-54, Female, Other White, Hospitality, more than 10 years.] Priya reported that she “started working as a night worker, mainly because it was easier to manage with my studies in the day.” [Priya, age, Female, Asian Indian, Customer Service, 6 months-1 year.]

In other circumstances, night work was the only option available. In some professions, there is a requirement to work a certain number of night shifts. For instance, Sophie pointed out that: “most jobs in nursing you work are rotation of days and nights and weekends because most areas are open 24/7.” [Sophie, age 35-44, Female, White British, Health, more than 10 years.] Ravi, working in retail, felt that he had had no choice in switching from day work to night shifts: “I was made redundant from my job, I think, five years back, and that was a day job, and because they closed down the checkout [...] Then they said, if you want to continue working in the supermarket [...] I decided to work at night, and I was a part-timer.” [Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years.]

5.2 Negative experiences: no duty of care at all

Participants reported a range of negative experiences associated with night work – from poor working conditions to difficult interactions with members of the public, and situations where they had to involve the emergency services. Negative experiences often stemmed from the workplace itself, including harassment at work and controlling work cultures. As Dwayne put it: “The experience of work culture at night is that on the side of the managers they see you interfering with that culture [...] I’ve come across some managers who in the middle of the night they will come for inspection to see whether you are sleeping.” [Dwayne, age 65+, Male, Black African, Care Support Worker, 6-10 years.]

Night workers also commented on negative interactions with their clients and customers, especially due to intoxication. For example, Morgan, an emergency service operator, perceived that young people sometimes called ambulances improperly when they were very intoxicated. They noted that this “affects my work because you know, they’ve got so pissed that, you know, they need to call an ambulance. They’ve got themselves into a terrible state. Meanwhile, granny’s having a heart attack, and she can’t get an ambulance. So, everything that we talk about in terms of how our communities are affected is [linked to] how our work is affected.” [Morgan, age 55-64, Non-binary, Other Ethnic Group, Emergency services, 1-2 years.]

Another out-of-hours keyworker, Emily, gave an example where they had suffered an injury, and rather than offering help, passers-by assumed that they were drunk and ignored them. “I managed to get this cab to drop me home”, they commented, “because I was so near my home I thought, let me go home first. I’ve gone home. I’ve crawled up the stairs. I’ve had to wake my wife up. Hello, look, I’ve done something really bad to my ankle. We phoned 999. They weren’t sending out ambulances, they were sending out cabs, so I’ve had to struggle into another cab, but there was no communication. So, this cab just dropped me at UCH [University College Hospital] actually, but no help, no, to get out. I literally fell out of the cab in between the cab and the curb and because people thought I was drunk, I ended up shouting for security, saying, look, I’m not drunk I need a wheelchair.” [Emily, age 45-54, Female, White British, Out-of-Hours Response and Patrol Officer, more than 10 years.] This incident is illustrative of the strongly negative perceptions of night-time behaviour on night workers’ own experiences, even when they work in roles that focus on making things safer at night.

Night workers also repeatedly reported very traumatic experiences. Leila, a DJ, reported that her drink had been spiked while at work: “I got spiked at ***** in the ***** room. So, basically, like, there was CCTV, like, the people that worked there

saw it. They thought I was having a heroin overdose and gave me Narcan and put me in an ambulance and basically all it was, I just been spiked by someone. And there was no duty of care. They just assumed that I'd gotten myself into that state. There was no follow up, no, nothing like that. I was quite obviously quite disappointed because that's a really big nightclub. And I was a performer, so I would technically, I was essentially like a member of staff, because I was there working. No duty of care at all." [Leila, age 35-44, Female, White and Asian, Hospitality, more than 10 years.]

5.3 I'd rather have a meal: food provision

Inadequate food provision was a recurring theme among participants. They were concerned that, while daytime workers in some sectors receive meals or discounted food, those working at night must either bring their own food or rely on limited options, such as vending machines or takeaway meals.

The absence of late-night food options goes beyond workplace provision. With a general lack of healthy food outlets open at night, participants feel the need to rely on whatever is available post-shift, or to prepare meals at home after long working hours. Dwayne questioned this, remarking that: "One of the issues that I've come across in my line of night work was that we need a canteen service or food during the night [due to the absence of other options]. When you work during the day a meal is provided [...] How do you balance that discrepancy?" [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.] Some night-time workplaces offer food and/or drink, but it is often insufficient, or deemed unhealthy, leading workers to question why nutritious, sustaining meals were not more readily available. DJs and hospitality workers, for example, observed that while free drinks are common in clubs, food provision is rare, despite the physical demands of their work. Anika argued that: "Anybody who works at night should get food, period. But in nightlife, the only thing promoters will give you is free drinks. I'd rather have a meal before playing than multiple drinks, because it's affecting my body. It's not sustainable. If meals are provided for daytime workers, they should be provided at night too." [Anika, age 25-34, Trans non-binary, Other Black, DJ, 3-5 years.]

It can also be difficult for night workers to bring their own food to work, particularly in environments where staff may not have access to microwaves, back-of-house storage, or permission to bring or carry food, even if they work in supermarkets. For example, working in retail, Ravi reported: "Another problem that we face in supermarkets is that the canteen closed out few years back. So even people who are working during the daytime buy sandwich, which is not proper food, and at night-time there is no provision [of food]. So, people eat very unhealthy snack. Every few

hours they pick up items from the shop floor and they buy it. So, I don't think that's a very useful way of looking at food and dietary habits." [Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years.] The impact of poor food provision is intensified where workers have to undertake long shifts; and because of the bodily impact of working at night. For example, Jamal noted that working a 13-hour shift as a council noise assistance officer, at first, he "would eat through the night," and that he has seen health benefits after changing his habits to avoid eating after a certain time. [Jamal, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Anti-social Behaviour Officer, more than 10 years.]

5.4 Back-to-back shifts and work-life balance

Many night workers experience scheduling conflicts that affect both their health and their ability to maintain a balanced life. Participants highlighted the difficulties of back-to-back shifts with inadequate rest periods, sometimes needing to assert their rights to prevent exhaustion. Dwayne, for instance, recounted having to confront his manager about the lack of sufficient breaks between shifts, framing it as a health and safety issue. "I told my manager I couldn't do back-to-back shifts [6 pm to midnight and 6 am to 2 pm], with only a few hours of rest. I had to explain that if something happened at work, I'd hold them accountable. I was proud to stand up for my health and safety." [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.]

Another dilemma night workers face is the limited availability of social and leisure options after work. Some participants expressed frustration with how cities remain structured around a daytime economy, making it difficult for those working unconventional hours to achieve the same work-life balance. Highlighting the sense of a work-life balance that is out-of-sync with dominant patterns, Elena, shared the following: "I always end up getting conflicted because it's 1 am and I'm done with work and I want to go for a pint. But then, do I want to make someone else work even later than me?" [Elena, age 25-34, Female, Other White, Hospitality, 6 months-1 year.]. Additionally, Elena also highlighted the lack of current options for those who work at night: "it would be nice to have options to have a bite or go for a drink given that half of the world works at night".

5.5 Pay and the cost-of-living-crisis

Many night workers struggle to secure fair pay. There is a lack of standardised rates, and newcomers often accept lower fees, making it harder for established workers to demand better wages. This lack of collective bargaining leaves many feeling isolated when trying to assert their rights.

Talking about the challenges of night work, Morgan reported: “I didn’t choose to do night work, I just need to stay afloat and pay my bills and have some mobility. With the amount of effort I’m giving, I just feel that it’s not enough. [...] It’s difficult, it’s hard and under-appreciated.” [Morgan, age 55-64, Non-binary, Other Ethnic Group, Emergency services, 1-2 years.]

While night workers may find their jobs personally fulfilling, they often describe them as financially unrewarding. Working in the hospitality sector, Leila, for example, commented: “Our work is rewarding, but not financially. We put ourselves through so much physically, emotionally and mentally, and the pay just doesn’t match up. I love making someone’s night, but I also need to pay my bills.” [Leila, age 35-44, Female, White and Asian, Hospitality, more than 10 years.] Additionally, many working in nightlife venues operate permanently under precarious employment structures, often invoicing as freelancers despite working regular hours, a situation sometimes referred to as ‘perma-lancing.’

The financial pressures of the cost-of-living crisis have also contributed to the precarity of working in nightlife venues. Rising rents and the increasing costs of alcohol mean that venues pass expenses onto customers, who, in turn, drink less, and go out less often.

5.6 Positive experiences and benefits

A significant number of participants highlighted the positive ways in which nightlife fosters strong communities, and how working at night served as a gateway to meeting other local artists and creatives. This can be particularly evident for specific groups, such as the queer community in Dalston. Despite her misgivings about pay and conditions, Leila, for example, reported that “certain spaces can be like a community hub, which is really important to the structure of nightlife and night workers.” [Leila, age 35-44, Female, White and Asian, Hospitality, more than 10 years.]

Positive experiences were also shared regarding workplace welfare and employee safety. For example, Anya described how the venue they work in as a security guard ensures safe transport for both staff and customers: “At the venue where I work, we have a policy that ensures anyone leaving, whether staff or customers, who cannot find their way home is provided with a cab, and we absorb that extra cost. All our staff have a standard £10 Uber expense they can claim back. If a customer is unable to get home, we simply book them a cab. Unlike many clubs that just send people out, we take that responsibility.” [Anya, age 25-34, Non-binary, White and Asian, Security, 3-5 years.]

Sophie, a nurse, reflected on how her experience of working at night was specific to the nature of her job, shift pattern and employment situation: “My experience is quite

different because I travel to work during rush hour, taking the tube, which means my working hours are still relatively sociable. I work in a hospital, which is a controlled and safe environment, so working nights doesn't affect how safe I feel at all." [Sophie, age 35-44, Female, White British, Health, more than 10 years.]

In the hospitality sector, Kofi described how working at prestigious events across London shaped his positive impressions of night work: "Since it was my first time doing night shifts, it was a new experience, being on my feet constantly, carrying trays, attending to guests, coordinating with chefs. There's a lot of physical effort and energy involved. But despite that, I still love the nightlife and the way things work." [Kofi, age 25-34, Male, Black African, Estate Operative, 3-5 years.]

For many participants, night work was seen to offer benefits, and these were cited by participants when they explained their pathways into night work. One key perceived advantage is higher pay, described by Kwami as "an incentive to overcome all the hurdles that you face at night." [Kwami, age 55-64, Male, Black African, Carer, more than 10 years]. Emily understood pay "as the main thing that is keeping me in night work, especially as I get older." [Emily, age 45-54, Female, White British, Out of Hours Response and Patrol Officer, more than 10 years.] Another perceived benefit is flexibility of time or the correspondence between night work and participants' sense of their own rhythm. "I do my best work at night", remarked Mei, due to being able to "work very, very quietly, peacefully." [Mei, age 45-54, Male, Other Asian, Professional Services, more than 10 years]. For Kwami [55-64, Male, Black African, Health, more than 10 years], "sleep is not a problem." Some workers, such as Jamal, chose night shifts to "study or do my own thing" during the day, or to spend more time with their family, especially if they did not feel that sleeping during the day was an issue for them. [Jamal, age 55-64, Male, Straight, Black Caribbean, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, more than 10 years.]. Others, including Sophie, reported loving the city's atmosphere at night and enjoying the experience of going back home, "when everyone else is going to work. It's a beautiful feeling." [Sophie, age 35-44, Female, White British, Health, more than 10 years.]

5.7 Health

5.7.1 *'It is affecting my body now': health, sleep and well-being*

Our survey asked night workers whether they had experienced health issues due to their work. While sleep disturbances were the most common concern, 16% of respondents (out of 51 individuals who responded to this question) reported experiencing stress. Other issues mentioned included chronic back pain, breathing difficulties, insomnia, chest pains, diabetes and migraines.

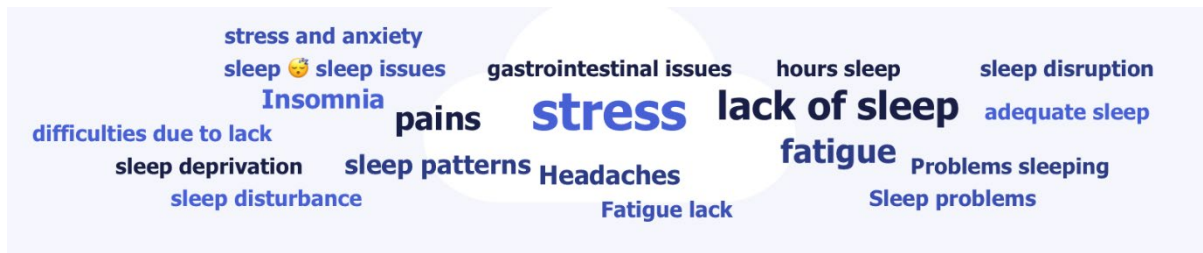


Figure 10. 'Have you experienced health issues as a result of night work? If so, please specify.'

5.7.2 Sleep and insomnia

It is well-known that working night shifts can disrupt circadian rhythms, leading to chronic sleep deprivation, which in turn affects mood, cognitive function and overall well-being.³ The evidence from our survey and long tables emphasises that working night shifts has significant negative impacts on both physical and mental health, and highlights the variety of health challenges faced by London's night workers.

Many workers reported struggling to get consistent sleep, and often sleep in short, fragmented cycles. "The biological clock and the demands of the work do not synchronise," Hassam surmised. [Hassan, age 65+, Male, Somali, Hostel for the Homeless, more than 10 years.] Even on days off, some participants felt that their bodies remained wired to a night schedule, negatively affecting relationships and family life. Contrasting a vision of 24-hour cities with his embodied reality of night work, Hassan went on to assert: "I suffered because of the 24/7 idea."

For some, the safety risks of commuting after a night shift added another layer of health-impacting stress. Dwayne expressed concern about this on multiple levels: "After a 12-hour night shift, your cardiac rhythms and mental state are affected. Would you be expected to drive? To take public transport and risk falling asleep? For women, travelling alone at 6 am after a shift is even more concerning." [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.]

In other circumstances, Kwami decided to take a nap in his car after work, reporting: "I was getting really exhausted and I had to stay back, do extra work, and I was so exhausted. So, on the M25, I knew I was going to veer off the road. So, I [took a nap and then] heard a knock at the window and there was a police officer. Obviously, he gave me a ticket because I was parked on the [hard] shoulder." [Kwami, age 55-64, Male, Black African, Carer, more than 10 years.]

³ See for example: Boivin, D. B., Boudreau, P., & Kosmadopoulos, A. (2022). Disturbance of the circadian system in shift work and its health impact. *Journal of Biological Rhythms*, 37(1), 3-28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07487304211064218>. James, S. M., Honn, K. A., Gaddameedhi, S., & Van Dongen, H. P. A. (2017). Shift work: Disrupted circadian rhythms and sleep. Implications for health and well-being. *Current Sleep Medicine Reports*, 3(2), 104-112. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40675-017-0071-6>. Josephine, A. (2010). Shift work: Coping with the biological clock. *Occupational Medicine*, 60(1), 10-20. <https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqp162>.

Access to healthcare was another challenge reported by participants. For night workers, scheduling or attending daytime medical appointments after finishing a shift can be taxing on multiple levels. As Dwayne recalled: “I finished a night shift and had a doctor’s appointment. By the time I got there, I was exhausted and in a bad mood. I felt like the doctor wasn’t listening, but maybe I was just too tired to explain properly.” [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.] The mismatch between usual healthcare service hours and night workers’ schedules can leave them struggling to prioritise their health, even while they recognise and worry about the health risks of working at night and the harms associated with some night-time workplaces, cultures or roles.

5.7.3 Exhaustion

The mental strain of night work also manifests in exhaustion at work and outside of work. For some, there was an accumulative exhaustion from switching between day and night shifts, or from long runs of shifts. Anya was relieved to avoid the expectation of drinking while on shift: “I’m quite happy that I switched from bar to doing security because I have to be sober.” [Anya, age 25-34, Non-binary, White and Asian, Security, 3-5 years.] Drinking alcohol had previously left them feeling drained and unable to maintain a positive attitude in night-time customer service roles.

Anika reflected that negative impacts on their body would not be sustainable in the long run and contrasted the provision of food or discounted food in some daytime workplaces with the provision of free drinks as a “benefit” for hospitality workers. [Anika, age 25-34, Trans non-binary, Other Black, DJ, 3-5 years.] They commented: “I feel like anybody who works at night should get food, period. But when you’re working in nightlife and in the clubs, the only thing that promoters will give you are drinks, just free drinks. And I’ve recently been thinking about, ‘why are we not just getting a food voucher [or] money so that we can get food, because I think that would be more helpful [...] There is so much drinking, and I feel like I would rather have a meal before I play, rather than just multiple drinks. ‘Cause it just is affecting my body now, as I’m doing this more and more, I’m already feeling, I’m feeling it, I’m feeling it, and it doesn’t, it just doesn’t feel like it’s something that is going to be sustainable in the long run. And I think it would be nice if people who work in the clubs get food.” On a more general level, this points to many night workers’ sense of a lack of responsibility taken by their employers towards their health and safety, which was understood to be neglected, or to be an optional consideration.

5.7.4 Mental health and emotional wellbeing

As well as physical health, mental and emotional wellbeing were strong themes in both the survey respondents’ and the long table participants’ accounts of the

negative impacts of night work.

These themes ranged from reports of the stress involved in certain kinds of work and the effects of sleep deprivation on mood to a sense of long-term detriment to wellbeing and anxiety caused by actual, perceived or future physical or emotional harm as a result of work patterns or environments. To illustrate the latter, Ravi, working in retail, focused on memory loss and lack of sleep as a cause of dementia: “One of the reasons that doctors say why you get into that state [of memory loss] is because you cannot, don’t sleep enough. The minimum adults should sleep [is] between 6 to 8 hours. [...] This morning, I woke up at around 6 o’clock. So, I slept five and a half hours. So, every day I’m sleeping like five hours, five and a half hours [...] But that is not very helpful. So, the cases of, you know, dementia is going up and up in this country.” [Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years.]

Imran, working as a food delivery rider, observed the interdependent relationship between sleep, health, emotional wellbeing and relationships: “During night-time work, I’m still [...] catching up on my sleep, and that [is] affecting my family and my loved ones [...] There’s that pattern [which] starts to occur and becomes a vicious cycle. Then it affects you and the family, and then the mental health aspect of it, that comes with night-time working. I mean, I didn’t choose to do night work. I just needed to stay afloat the cost-of-living doing my utmost to try and pay my bills and have some mobility. And in the amount of effort I’m giving, I just feel that it’s not enough. And on top of [that], [...] how they treat you, how they view you. You know that that compounds the problem for you. You ask the question: why am I doing it? But it’s difficult. It’s hard and under-appreciated.” [Imran, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Food delivery, 1-2 years.]

Social isolation was also prominent in reported experiences. This included, for Anya, working in nightlife hospitality, feeling “like you don’t have anyone to talk to a lot of the time” at work. [Anya, age 25-34, Non-binary, White and Asian, Security, 3-5 years.] They were concerned about an absence of support structures and opportunities to be supported with personal issues and pressures.

Some participants similarly commented on isolation outside of work when working a disruptive night shift pattern. Emily, for example, recalled: “I’m going through my phone, like, which mates are awake?” [Emily, age 45-54, Female, White British, Out-of-Hours Response and Patrol Officer, more than 10 years.] Another observed how social media use outside of work exacerbated the disruptions to their living pattern created by night work.

Many participants highlighted their disproportionate proximity to risk. This included exposure to alcohol and drug misuse in the hospitality sector, whether partaking themselves or being around others who are; or, taking risks due to tiredness, such as driving too fast, or eating unhealthily. Kwami’s memories of speeding illustrate this

well, in an account which also reported suicidal thoughts linked to work pressures: “So, obviously at night time the road is open, so we are driving, and I found out that when you are tired you tend to want to drive faster, and sometimes I find myself doing 100 miles per hour. I’m not realizing that I’m doing 100 miles per hour but I’m just trying to get to work in time. You know, and that was one of the downsides. But I had to leave that job as I felt I was going to kill myself.” [Kwami, age 55-64, Male, Black African, Carer, more than 10 years.]

Participants also emphasised ways in which they had learned from negative experiences, as when Leila, a DJ and club booker who had experienced many challenges, subsequently become an advocate for mental health and nightlife safety. [Leila, age 35-44, Female, White and Asian, Hospitality, more than 10 years.]

5.7.5 Diabetes and its links to night work

Three participants reflected on their personal experiences of developing prediabetes, managing diabetes, or worrying about diabetes, each linking it to the impact of night shift work on their health. [Amina, age 45-54, Female, Black African, Security, 1-2 years; Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 year; Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.] Dwayne reported: “I had a blood test. I kept feeling really tired and lethargic. Then I was told I had prediabetes. I had to change my lifestyle, even though I was already health conscious.” He had been unaware of the correlation between “doing night work and diabetes,” stating that when deciding to do night work he had “never, ever considered [this] was an issue”. He noted that he has since had to make adjustments to cope with undertaking night work with his condition.

Emily compared the shift patterns of night staff to day staff, highlighting a disparity in break times, and the impact this has on their ability to maintain healthy habits: “We work a seven-and-a-half-hour shift, including a break, whereas day staff work an eight-hour shift, but they get an hour for lunch. At night, we’re only getting half an hour.” [Emily, age 45-54, Female, White British, Out-of-Hours Response and Patrol Officer, more than 10 years.]

5.8 Identity-related issues: between racialised exploitation and positive representation

In one of the long table discussions, Dwayne shared his understanding that a disproportionate amount of night work is undertaken by “ethnic minorities.” For him, this was connected to socioeconomic pressures and specific social and cultural backgrounds: “I am of the belief – I could be proven wrong – but I am of the belief that a lot of the night works are done by ethnic minorities. And that plays a crucial

role, because I know within some Black communities that we have this thing called 'Black tax', which is a thing that if you come from the West Indies, or you come from Africa, [you] pay money back home to support your family or your community, or stuff like that. So, there's a lot of pressure. The only way to earn the highest income is to do night work. So, I would be surprised, so it would be nice to see or understand, you know, the correlation between the two." [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.] This reinforces the point made earlier, that while some night workers emphasised the poor pay and precarity of night work, others saw higher pay relative to day work as a benefit and draw. Here, Dwayne's comments emphasise the need to consider these circumstances in relation to specific social, historical and cultural contexts and patterns of migration.

For Ravi, it is important to understand relationships between migration, racial discrimination and employment: "I think the question of race is very important here [with] migrant workers coming to this country from across the globe [...]. It's also true about manual work [versus non manual]. The top management [is] controlled by certain ethnic groups in this country, which is true about other parts of the Global North. There has to be a reflection on how to make workplace[s] more inclusive, diverse. So, the EDI principles that we talk everywhere, they're not necessarily transposed on the ground." [Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years.]

In the specific context of nightlife hospitality, Anika also highlighted white privilege, which they saw reflected in levels of cultural capital and in employment opportunities: "We have a lot of DJs in London, and a lot of us are not getting the shine that we deserve, because it's just the same white dudes at the top playing in the top clubs getting the most money, and it would be nice to for that to change 'coz there's great DJs that are not just white men." [Anika, age 25-34, Trans non-binary, Other Black, DJ, 3-5 years.]

Additionally, positive role models and representations were reported as crucial for people of colour and women working in specific nightlife settings: "When I first started doing security work, as someone that is queer and someone that's also a person of colour, there wasn't much representation but specifically for the communities [at] the events I was hosting [it] was quite important for the people there, and to build that relationship with them as well." [Anya, age 25-34, Non-binary, White and Asian, Security, 3-5 years.]

5.9 Racism, harassment, safety and danger

Safety remains a pressing concern, and one where, for multiple night workers, their vulnerability to harassment or discrimination was understood to be exacerbated by their ethnicity and/or gender. Imran, for instance, remarked: "As a person of colour,

I'm already looking out for my safety when I go out. I've personally experienced racist attacks, so that's something I always have to think about [...] In terms of transport, sometimes going to a public transport, it can be, there's been situations where it wasn't safe." [Imran, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Food delivery, 1-2 years.] Several participants shared personal experiences of racist attacks, describing the heightened risks they face working in evening and night-time workplaces, commuting at night, or simply moving through public spaces.

On the question of the dangers of commuting to and from evening and night work, Anika stated: "There's a lot of stuff that we deal with [to get] home safely. I'm queer, I'm Black, I'm a woman [...] And there's been a lot of cases of Black women dying at night. [...] I guess there's no 'budget' to make sure that each person working in clubs or bars gets home safely. But I think there definitely needs to be that." [Anika, age 25-34, Trans non-binary, Other Black, DJ, 3-5 years.]

Reports of harassment featured in Leila's recollections: "I've also had a stalker. I've been harassed while I've been at work, being a woman and being a woman of colour." [Leila, age 35-44, Female, White and Asian, Hospitality, more than 10 years.] However, she emphasised, this had not deterred them: "These things have happened to me on the job and I still love it and like I must be [...] I must have something wrong with me, because I still love it. You know that I love the variety of it, and I keep going back, even though terrible things keep happening to me. But I take these terrible things, and I think: 'how can I make it better for everyone else?'" [Leila, age 35-44, Female, White and Asian, Hospitality, more than 10 years.]

Two workers also recalled experiences of being stopped by the police, which they perceived as a form of harassment. Dwayne reported such an incident during the pandemic: "When I was going to work on a night shift on a bike and I always used to get stopped by the police. [They] always used to ask: 'Where you going?', 'What time you going?' And I said I'm going to work. I had to show them my ID badge and give them the phone number of my workplace. It was just hassle." [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.]

Changing socio-political contexts also had an impact on participants' feelings of safety in night work, with some calling for a public discussion on the matter. In Imran's words: "With everything happening now, the riots [of summer 2024], the tensions, safety for night workers, especially for people of colour, needs to be talked about more." [Imran, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Food delivery, 1-2 years.]

5.10 Value of night work

Night workers' understandings of and feelings about their roles are of course very varied, and this was evident from the range of respondents we worked with.

From our sample, it is clear that many night workers feel undervalued and underappreciated. This is reflected in comments such as Amina's: "We are needed, but we are invisible at the same time." [Amina, 45-54, Female, Black African, Security, 1-2 years]. Similarly, in Ravi's words: "there is no value for contribution to work." [Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years.] Or, for Rafi: "I am seen as a burden, unfortunately." [Rafi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Self-employed Freelancer, 3-5 years.]

Hassan concluded that: "All night workers are undervalued." [Hassan, age 65+, Male, Somali, Hostel for the Homeless, more than 10 years.] Dwayne echoed this sentiment, adding: "I feel that you are not given the same respect as someone working during the day." [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.] The lack of recognition and respect for night workers was compounded for some by a sense that they and their work are negatively perceived. For example, for Imran: "It's hard and under-appreciated and then seeing how [people] view you. [...] It's been negative for me when it comes to night work." [Imran, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Food delivery, 1-2 years.]

Many night workers wish for more recognition. Rafi, for instance, said: "I just wish that there was more recognition or at least I was made to feel valued." [Rafi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Self-employed Freelancer, 3-5 years.]. A perceived disconnect with management tended to exacerbate this feeling. Rafi continued: "Because of the night-time working, you just see that management doesn't really value the input you're making. I just wish they actually made me feel a bit more valued in terms of the contribution I was making." Imran also expressed the need for a better connection with senior management: "As a night-time worker, it's not as visible from my experience. You're just a tick box or a number on the spreadsheet. No one appreciates the hard work or struggle I do to keep myself afloat during the cost-of-living crises." [Imran, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Food delivery, 1-2 years.] Emily also commented on the lack of thought given by managers into what night workers actually do: "Managers just don't seem to care." [Emily, age 45-54, Female, White British, Out-of-Hours Response and Patrol Officer, more than 10 years.]

An understanding of how night workers are valued, neglected or perceived as disposable, was often framed by comparison with the treatment of the day-time work force. Thus, for Amina: "Those who work in the daytime seem to have preferential treatment, almost as if they have different contract laws and

employment laws compared to those who work in traditional night sectors.” [Amina, age 45-54, Female, Black African, Security, 1-2 years.]

Interestingly, two night workers linked the undervaluation of night work to the contribution of the night-time economy as a whole. Leila highlighted how: “The night-time economy is so undervalued in this country, despite it bringing in a huge amount to the economy. We don't put the infrastructure, safety or investment in. It could add so much to the tourism industry.” [Leila, age 35-44, Female, White and Asian, Hospitality, more than 10 years.] Anya noted a mismatch between the amount of work and the nightlife: “Nightlife culture in general is taken advantage of [considering] how much work we put in, and [the] little reward [we get]. Full-time [night] workers give a lot to nightlife, but how people respond back to us, customers, employers, pay, does not reflect this.” [Anya, age 25-34, Non-binary, White and Asian, Security, 3-5 years.]

Night workers become visible and appreciated when their absence is felt, Amina explained: “It's only when you make them become visible in the community that you really appreciate and value them. If they just, all of a sudden, go on strike, that's it, we're paralyzed. The whole of London will really realize how important night workers actually are. Who's going to protect you? Who's going to do the CCTV? [...] So, we're really valuable. And even those who work at the Electricity Board make sure that we have a constant supply of electricity. We're all really important [...]” [Amina, age 45-54, Female, Black African, Security, 1-2 years.]

Some participants were cognisant of a temporary heightened recognition during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a recent moment of crisis. Discussing how night workers are essential across various sectors, one person remembered how, during the pandemic, key workers, including night workers, received recognition and practical support. Imran recalled: “I remember during the pandemic, for the key workers, including some night workers, a lot of big organizations were giving discounts or cashbacks for everyday shopping.” [Imran, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Food delivery, 1-2 years.] However, he continued: “once the pandemic finished and all the clapping hands ended, the recognition faded.”

Night work can be exhausting, and workers often feel under-rewarded. However, as Anya put it: “But then there's an opposite positive side where you make someone's night, or someone feels very safe in the space that you've created for them.” [Anya, age 25-34, Non-binary, White and Asian, Security, 3-5 years.]

Some night workers do feel valued. As Ade puts it: “I am valued by my employers”. [Ade, age 65+, Male, Black African, Care Support Worker, 6-10 years]. Others, like Sophie, recognise that their work is “somewhat valued by society and the general public.” [Sophie, age 35-44, Female, White British, Health, more than 10 years.]

In the long table discussions, participants exhibited a strong sense of affinity across different forms of night work. Hassan, a highly experienced, long-term night worker, for example, remarked that: “Especially in London, night workers really do a good job.” [Hassan, age 65+, Male, Somali, Hostel for the Homeless, more than 10 years.] Amina, although less experienced, similarly noted that: “Night workers are really valuable. Traditionally, you think security, you think healthcare workers, but just by having the discussion, we've got drivers, people who do logistics, truckers, they're also night workers. Even those who do deliveries on their bikes are really valuable because you need them to deliver at 3 am what you've ordered.” [Amina, age 45-54, Female, Black African, Security, 1-2 years.]

5.11 What night workers want: improvements and imagined futures

We conclude *Voices of Night Workers* by reporting on the ideas for improvements raised by the participants of the long table discussions. In our analysis, under the code ‘improvements,’ we had three subcodes:

- improvements in the workplace;
- improvements of policy; and
- improvements in relation to the public and society.

From this, we have identified a variety of prominent themes, from transport-related improvements to health and safety and additional training in the workplace.

This section of the report especially addresses one of the objectives of this research, which was to document the voices from night workers with a view to addressing and improving their working conditions. Understanding the participants’ preoccupations and suggestions should positively inform policy interventions at different scales.

5.11.1 Workplace health and safety

Health and safety at work was a major concern for our participants (see section 5). To address this, participants had a range of suggestions for improvements directed at their employment organisations and managers. Dwayne, for example, noted the need for reciprocity in the application of a duty of care (often a requirement for night workers, but not one that is perceived to be returned by their employers). His emphasis was on a need for employers to fulfil this duty “transparently.” [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years]. Priya’s view resonated with Dwayne’s: “I think the security of the night workers right now is kind of like optional to the people, to the managers of the company, but it should be kind of made as a rule, or a compulsion like you have to take this certain amount of money out of your everyday expenses, and this is certain monies assigned to the safety of the people. All the workers who are coming. Some kind of very strict link. I think it’s very nice.” [Priya, age 25-34, Female, Asian Indian, Customer Service, 6 months-1 year.]

Additionally, there was a call for regular wellbeing checks overseen by managers. Dwayne, again, felt strongly that “they [night workers] should have regular well-being

checks and stuff, even if it's like checking your blood pressure.” [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.] Priya argued that: “there should be health managers responsible for the mental health for people who work during the day and especially during the night.” This would result, she reflected, in “people working at night [feeling] much more included in the whole system rather than just coming, doing their work, going back home.” [Priya, age 25-34, Female, Asian Indian, Customer Service, 6 months-1 year.] For Kofi, an extended understanding of organisational and management responsibilities for health and safety was also important. He felt that this should go beyond the workplace and working hours: “It’s very important that businesses make sure that their employees are safely coming in and out work.” [Kofi, age 25-34, Male, Black African, Estate Operative, 3-5 years.]

Suggestions for practical improvements that arose during the long tables also included night workers’ emphatic requests for more rest time during their shifts, linking this to the challenges of their work. For instance, Jamal commented: “I resolve complaints dealing with noise at night, including premise alarms, loud parties, etc.”. He noted a need for “longer breaks, salary increase” for work that is “not for the faint hearted.” [Jamal, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Anti-social Behaviour Officer, more than 10 years.] Hassan, also argued for more breaks: “We need more rest time during the night. [When] you work night shifts you should be able to close your eyes for 90 minutes, between 2 am and 5 am.” [Hassan, age 65+, Male, Somali, Hostel for the Homeless, more than 10 years.] During these hours, some workers reported feeling at their most fatigued, and therefore demanded more breaks to maintain their wellbeing and efficacy to fulfil their duties. Vocalising the need to “understand how sleep is impacted” because of night work, Emily suggested that both transparency and the provision of information on this issue are vital for employers to provide. [Emily, age 45-54, Female, White British, Out-of- Hours Response and Patrol Officer, more than 10 years.]

One of the key themes that emerged in the long tables was the provision of food for night workers, including healthy options, because the current widespread lack of provision is having an obvious negative impact on their health and well-being. Ravi commented: “Food is a very important aspect. Yesterday I was listening to the BBC, the NHS is spending 64 million treating people with obesity. [...] If we can have something in place which allows people to have hot food, canteens with fresh food, I think that would really help night workers.” [Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years.] While Anika asked: “Why are we not just getting like a food voucher like money so that we can get food? Because I think that would be more helpful [than alcohol tokens].” [Anika, age 25-34, Trans non-binary, Other Black, DJ, 3-5 years.]

Many of the improvements suggested by night workers were by nature very practical and made in relation to their specific jobs, albeit with transferability to others. Priya, for example, a worker employed in a supermarket said: “The company [could] provide us with appropriate shoes or soles for standing, [which] is not like such a big hassle. It won’t be a big expense for them, but it might go a long way for the workers at night.” [Priya, age 25-34, Female, Asian Indian, Customer Service, 6 months-1 year.] In another instance, working in hospitality, Anika noted: “a lot of spaces are terribly ventilated, even after COVID. I feel daytime spaces are better ventilated.

Working in very tight clubs with no ventilation is really dangerous and can basically increase [the transmission of] COVID.” [Anika, age 25-34, Trans non-binary, Other Black, DJ, 3-5 years.]

Lastly, issues related to lighting and safety at work were also raised. For example, Anya observed: “Where I work, it’s a privately owned yard space. I’ve told the landlord multiple times (and so many other businesses) [that they] need to put up more lights in specific areas because I’ve watched multiple people get knifed or nearly knifed.” [Anya, age 25-34, Non-binary, White and Asian, Security, 3-5 years.] Drawing a link between lighting and the nature of so-called meanwhile spaces, in the context of night spaces in London, Leila pointed out: “In terms of lighting, that’s a really interesting point, because right now what you’re having is lots of nightlife spaces opening in meanwhile spaces. These are temporary, maybe they’ll be there for two years, three years, before that gets redeveloped into something else. These aren’t necessarily going to be places that have really good lighting or really good access. If councils are trying to encourage entrepreneurs and business owners and nightlife spaces to move into these small spaces, but they’re not providing the infrastructure, then we’re not actually giving customers safety in any way.” [Leila, age 35-44, Female, White and Asian, Hospitality, more than 10 years.]

5.11.2 Training

The majority of night workers who participated in the long table discussions raised the need for more, and more appropriate, training, scheduled at times suitable for those working evening and night shifts. They frequently reported that training does not cater for them, either because of a lack of relevant training opportunities, or because of the timing. For example, as Ade, a care worker, reported: “They put me on training at 9:45 am while I finish work 8 am. From where I am to [the place of the training], you can’t reach it with traffic, but [we are told] there’s nothing we can do. After I’ve arrived late [I’ve asked] to please change the time? At least 11, 11:45 am? [They said] no, it can’t be because of me. [But] I said others have the same problem, [It’s not] that they don’t know about working at night, they know but they don’t want to care.” [Ade, age 65+, Male, Black African, Care Support Worker, 6-10 years.] Alternatively, Kwami, another care worker, suggested, “[Employers] should find a way of giving us some days off, or give us some compensation for the fact that we are going to train, you know, either night or day time.” [Kwami, age 55-64, Male, Black African, Carer, more than 10 years.]

The theme of training also included discussion of the need for more training for nighttime-oriented organisations and businesses, including venues, on issues such as safety, and on how to better support individuals working nights. [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.]

5.11.3 Public awareness, education and campaigns are important to night workers

Additionally, night workers noted how public awareness, education and campaigns are crucial for improving their conditions. Amina was one of the participants who

expressed a need for more public discussion about safety for night workers. She emphasized the importance of campaigns to bring awareness to people and the community: “You might not know this, but campaigns talk about menopause, breast cancer, things like that. Equally, the government can put money into campaigns where it becomes so normalized to talk about night workers.” [Amina, 45-54, Female, Black African, Security, 1-2 years.] Going further, She emphasised the need for night workers and their knowledge and experience to be central in these discussions: “We're all really important, but it's just to make sure that we're now visible in society and in our communities when actually being invited to talk about our roles, our positions and what we do to make them become visible, as opposed to the traditional ‘a doctor's going to give a talk’. You never think of inviting night workers.” [Amina, age 45-54, Female, Black African, Security, 1-2 years.]

As the evidence we have gathered strongly demonstrates, night workers face significant challenges, which often compromise their health, well-being and sense of security, while at the same time they are attempting to fulfil the demands of family responsibilities and cope with financial pressures. Ravi again highlighted the need for these issues to be debated and discussed in public and in organisations and institutions with a view to informing evidence-based policy decisions: “We can improve it with real interventions from civil society, the state, or other conscious people within the community. There has to be debates, discussions, round tables, and citizens' assemblies where people get together to find solutions.” [Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years.] Morgan also called for societal education to reduce the exploitation of healthcare services: “We need to standardize education and work closer together,” they said, referring to the need for responsible night clubs to employ paramedics at night, and for better first aid training for venue staff. [Morgan, age 55-64, Non-binary, Other Ethnic Group, Emergency services, 1-2 years.]

On a more specific note, safety concerns were also raised in relation to public education, with one worker, Anika, sharing their experience of feeling unsafe while travelling home at night. They called for better education for men to promote understanding that certain behaviours are unacceptable. [Anika, age 25-34, Trans non-binary, Other Black, DJ, 3-5 years.] Rafi also stressed a specific point, namely, a need for local authorities to be more aware of night workers' vulnerabilities. [Rafi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Self Employed Freelancer, 3-5 years.]

5.11.4 Transport-related improvements

Travel at night is a critical issue for night workers. Kofi emphasised the importance of providing travel assistance, stating: “I think it's also important that travel is provided to night workers, especially those that live far or don't have access to like a vehicle of their own”. [Kofi, age 25-34, Male, Black African, Estate Operative, 3-5 years.] Additionally, the current transport system in London does not cater well for night workers, as they can be, as Sophie, a health worker, pointed out, in effect financially penalised for making outward and return journeys over two days. [Sophie, age 35-44, Female, White British, Health, more than 10 years.]

The need for better infrastructure and more reliable public transport also arose. “I just feel as though whoever is responsible needs to take more ownership [of

systems] like the bus. I don't mind if the bus comes every half an hour, but the bus sometimes doesn't come at all. I'm putting my life at risk, especially with what's happening in the world now. For me, [the bus is] very important because the trains don't work at night.” [Rafi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Self-employed Freelancer, 3-5 years.] Suggestions for improvements included late public transport, more frequent night buses, and lower fares at night. Although he perceived that night bus services had improved during his time in London (since the 1990s), comparing London to other cities that are more vibrant at night, Mei remarked: “I don't understand why we can't have that kind of metabolism that goes on that keeps a city kind of buzzing, so people don't feel like they're walking in darkness.” [Mei, age 45-54, Male, Other Asian, Professional Services, more than 10 years].

Businesses also have a role to play in supporting their night workers by providing transport. Anya, working in security, suggested that it would be good “to have a communal bus that night workers take to go back to a certain location. I think businesses should be doing more if they have people that work at night and they don't have a car to go home.” [Anya, age 25-34, Non-binary, White and Asian, Security, 3-5 years.] Innovative solutions, such as sensors at bus stops that can detect when someone is waiting alone and which could connect them to a call for support, would also enhance safety and perceived safety: “I found it was such a creative idea to make people not feel alone at 3 am in the middle of the night”, commented Priya, a retail worker, adding: “It is such a simple solution.” [Priya, age 25-34, Female, Asian Indian, Customer Service, 6 months-1 year.]

5.11.5 Pay remains critical

Beyond health and safety and training- and transport-related improvements, night workers discussed pay as a significant concern, often feeling their hard work is “undervalued”, as reported by Imran. [Imran, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Food delivery, 1-2 years.] Ravi's comments encapsulated the challenges: “Employers should be more aware about the conditions of working at night, and there should be awareness about the hard work at night, better wages, better conditions of work, more breaks, more holiday allowance by employers, and more flexible working hours, with the night rate starting from 9 pm, not midnight.” [Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years.] He further highlighted how, in supermarkets, changes to night pay were also deemed unfair: “The idea is to give extra money for working from 9 pm 'till 6 am. Now they have changed that rule to midnight 'till 6 am, so colleagues are losing three hours of night pay, which is completely wrong.”

Finally, there was a call for a specific charter for night workers, articulated by Dwayne: “They should have a charter for night workers, specific rules that outline what is good practice and what is bad practice. Maybe there should be a provision of food or vouchers. Similar to the minimum wage, which started off as a charter and then became a policy over the years.” [Dwayne, 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.] However, Ravi was cautious: “There needs to be bespoke solutions to this problem, not necessarily universal declarations. People from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds need to come together to discuss and address these issues.” [Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years.]

5.11.6 Stronger together: from educating oneself to being more vocal collectively

In reflecting on negative experiences as night workers, participants often expressed a desire to look out for their own rights and needs in future; and for positive change to improve conditions for others. In Rafi's words: "What I'm getting out of this is, is hopefully I'm going to learn to be more vocal back to my workplace." [Rafi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Self-employed Freelancer, 3-5 years.]

In one of the long table discussions, Leila, working in the nightlife sector, described her growing personal awareness of the impact of workplaces: "For me personally one of the things I've been trying to do is educate myself. So, I've been studying mental health advocacy in the workplace so that when I start hiring people again [...]." [Leila, age 35-44, Female, White and Asian, Hospitality, more than 10 years.] She reflected that, in the nightlife sector, "Things have changed hugely since I started but there's a long way to go to prioritise the safety of women, people of colour, disabled folk and LGBT people." These comments can be read in relation to Anika's statement of the constraints on venues in improving pay and conditions: "I think ways to improve, specifically, work in nightlife in terms of clubs and bars, like those spaces actually need better funding. Especially the small, queer parties." [Anika, age 25-34, Trans non-binary, Other Black, DJ, 3-5 years.]

Participants also discussed the power of collective action when demanding improvements at work. "There has to be some kind of intervention," said Ravi, "which will bring about these issues more clearly, like the unions, [which] can bring them very forcibly. There has to be a kind of national kind of monitoring into [night work] more carefully." [Ravi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Indian, Retail, 3-5 years]. Some of the ideas floated included the setup of a union-like collective for DJs to negotiate better pay and working conditions. Anika argued: "[We should] just start a collective, because I'm sure DJs will appreciate guidelines for [negotiating] salary. I would look at getting a group as DJs together and saying, 'This is what we want!'" [Anika, age 25-34, Trans non-binary, Other Black, DJ, 3-5 years.] Rafi concluded that: "What I feel I will take from this [long table] is [...] I will advocate more for my own mental health and I will try to maybe join a union or a body where I can have my views more effectively represented that way. I feel that's the only way in which I feel leadership or management will be able to know about our, my concerns, along with my colleagues and that's the only way to have a voice, I feel, in my capacity, in my role. So those are things I will take on board." [Rafi, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Self-employed Freelancer, 3-5 years.]

5.11.7 Improvements related to the policy environment

The role of London's Night Czar was acknowledged by multiple participants. They were aware of this role and had various views about it. Commenting on the debates about nightlife in London, Dwayne stated: "The Night Czar shows that London or the UK is moving to a 24-hour society. It's about putting structures in place to support night workers. With a 24-hour economy, you've got the London night tube at the weekends, so you've got all those workers working into the night. We need to look at the policy that Transport for London has put in place to support those people, and

whether that same policy can be transferred over to other sectors like hospitality, healthcare and retail.” [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.]

A concern was raised about certain councils that were perceived as being biased against nightlife businesses and which would hinder the improvement of conditions for night workers. Leila shared her worries: “I’m just wondering if certain councils are more predisposed to not wanting more nightlife. For example, in Hackney, they’ve got the special policy area. I don’t know if they still have it, but I know that they tried to limit new businesses moving in, because Dalston has grown rapidly in the last 15/20 years. They might be more predisposed to not encouraging nightlife, so they’re not going to put these things in place that we all desperately want and need to improve our safety.” [Leila, age 35-44, Female, White and Asian, Hospitality, more than 10 years.]

Calling for lobbying and policy-making to support night workers across various sectors, Dwayne commented: “You need to write to these people, lobby them, and say, ‘What about our sectors? What about the shop workers?’. Let’s have a policy, a table talk session like we’re having now [in the long table]. We need to listen and put strategies in place. Health, well-being, mental health, pain management and childcare all need to be in place to support the individual. Otherwise, you just end up being a statistic. Good policy and round tables like this could be transferred to the government, showing our report and recommendations regarding night work and the night-time vision.” [Dwayne, age 55-64, Male, Black Caribbean, Care Support Worker, more than 10 years.]

5.11.8 And finally . . . action

Some participants who had experience of participating in discussions about night work expressed frustration about a lack of concrete action. Imran expressed this clearly, saying: “I’ve been in so many forums, we’ve talked, research has been published. But I’ve reached that stage where now, in terms of action, [I ask:] ‘How are you going to implement this? Are you going to improve my life as a night-time worker?’ Because there’s been so much research and dialogue, so many forums on that, and I’m all for that. But then there comes a time when you say, ‘you know what, let’s see how that would be implemented. How will that affect my family?’ And I think a lot of people that I know are asking the same questions.” [Imran, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Food delivery, 1-2 years.] He makes a clear call for actionable plans rather than mere discussion: “Present us with an action plan on how you would implement your opinion rather than do cheap talk!” [Imran, age 35-44, Male, Asian Bangladeshi, Food delivery, 1-2 years.]

Research team biographies

Ben Campkin (he/him) is Professor of Urbanism and Urban History at The Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London, and Vice-Dean Public and City Engagement for The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment. Ben is the author of *Queer Premises: LGBTQ+ Venues in London Since the 1980s* (Bloomsbury, 2023) and *Remaking London: Decline and Regeneration in Urban Culture* (I.B. Tauris, 2013); and co-author with Lo Marshall of *LGBTQ+ Cultural Infrastructure in London: Night Venues, 2006-present* (UCL Urban Laboratory, 2016). He was Co-Director of UCL Urban Laboratory 2008–2011 and 2018–2023 and Director from 2011–2018. Ben was UK principal investigator on the EU-funded collaborative project, *Night-spaces: Migration, Culture and Integration in Europe* (NITE, 2019–23).

Dr. Alessio Kolioulis (he/him) is a Lecturer in Urban Economic Development and Director of Training and Advisory Services at The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London. He is a Co-Investigator on the *Facing inequalities and democratic challenges through co-production in cities* (FairVille) Horizon Europe Project (2023–27) and previously Postdoctoral Research Fellow on the project NITE with Professor Ben Campkin. His publications include "Integrating night studies into climate science" in *Nature Climate Change* (2024) and the forthcoming *Routledge Handbook of the Night-time Economy* (2026).

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Appendix 1 – Analysis of the demographic characteristics of the surveyed participants

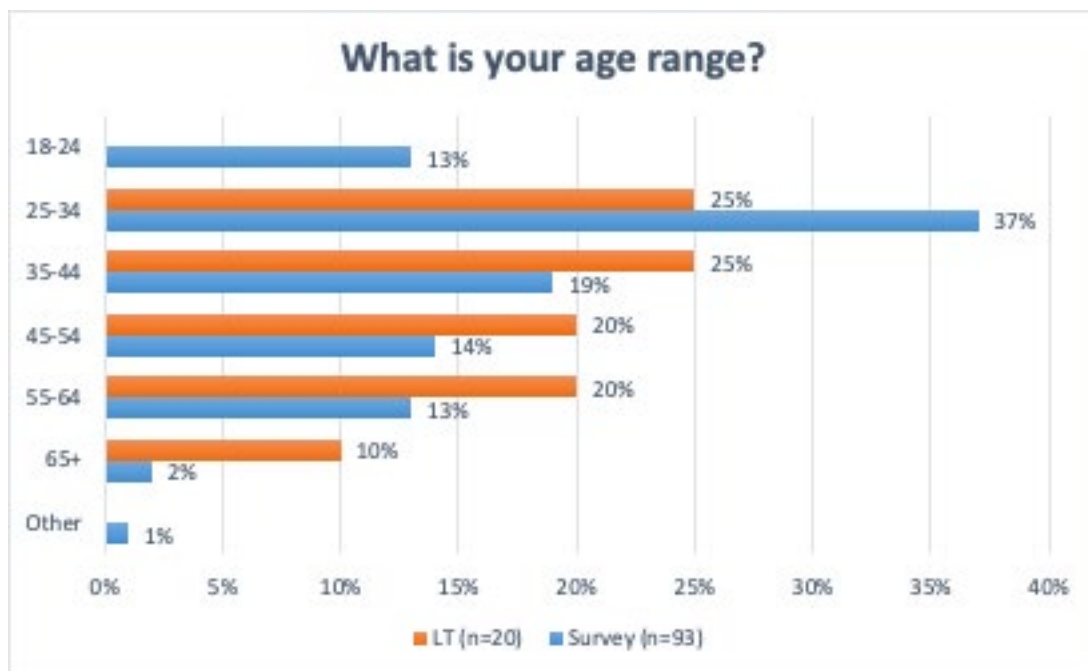
Our research captures insights into the lived experiences of night workers through a structured survey (number of responses = 98) and two long table (LT) discussions involving 20 participants. The survey sample represents the outcome of outreach efforts rather than a representative reflection of London's night workforce.

In the following analysis, we describe the key characteristics of the survey and long table sample.⁴

⁴ Please note that most classifications used in the survey (such as age ranges or lists of genders) are drawn from the Census 2021 to ensure consistency with national demographic data. Additionally, the industry categories in our survey (see the section *Which sector do you work in?*) do not correspond to the Greater London Authority (GLA) 24-hour team night work groupings.

Age Range

The survey sample's age profile is skewed towards younger participants, with 37% aged 25-34 and 19% aged 35-44. Note, however, that the LT sample intentionally included older workers in order to capture their perspectives as long-term night workers. Participants aged 55-64 and 65+ each make up 20% and 10% of the LT sample respectively. These introduce viewpoints from long-tenured night workers who have experienced different roles and differential levels of support over time.

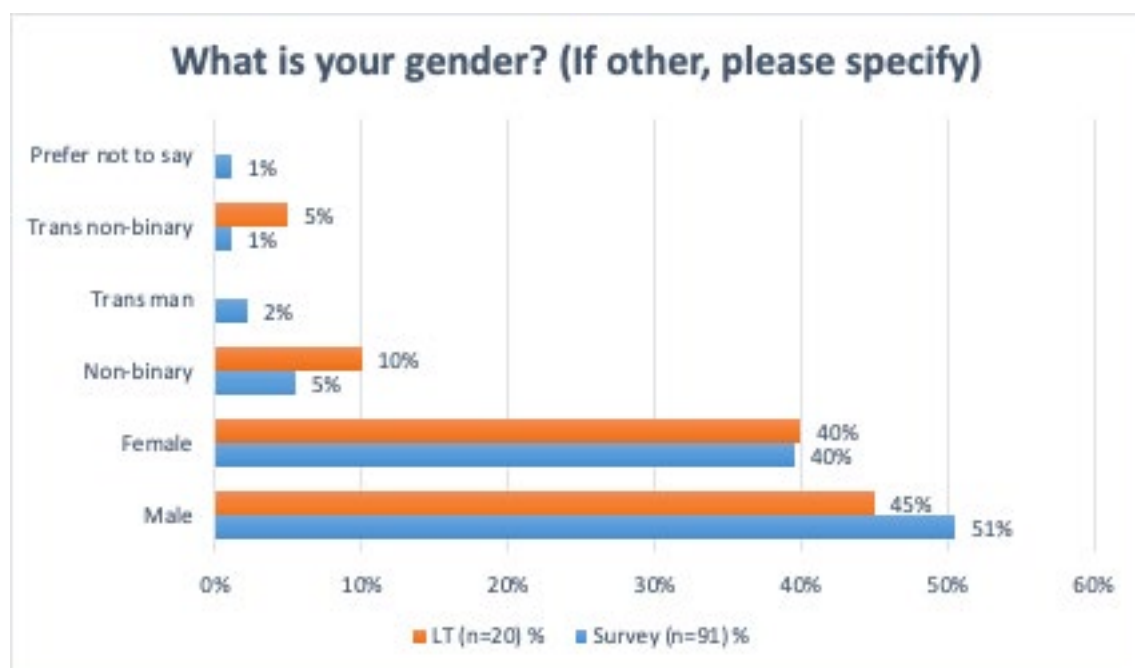


Gender Identity

How night work is experienced differently according to gender is another dimension that the researchers were keen to consider.

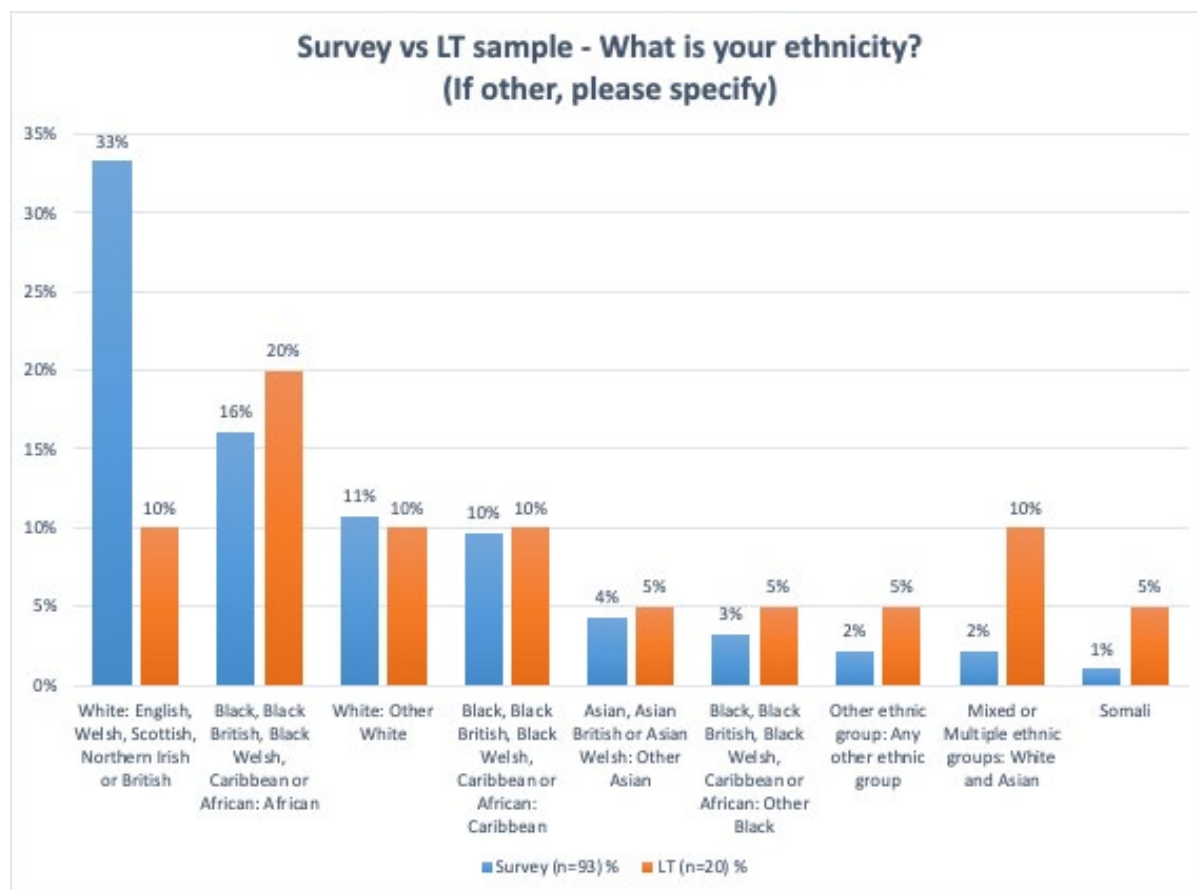
The survey sample is predominantly male (51%) and female (40%), with 10% identifying as non-binary and 5% as trans non-binary. The LT sample reflects this diversity, capturing the experiences of non-binary and trans non-binary individuals alongside male and female participants. While gender diversity was a key consideration in structuring the LT sample, its composition was also influenced by factors such as participant availability and representation across night-time sectors.

This reflects a move to incorporate perspectives that are frequently marginalised in workforce studies, particularly in relation to precarious employment. By including these voices, the LT discussions capture the lived experiences of gender-diverse workers, adding to our understanding of gender in the context of night-time precarity.



Ethnicity

The survey sample included a range of ethnic backgrounds, with White British (33%), Black African (16%), and Other White (11%) forming the largest groups. Black African participants constitute 20% of the LT sample.

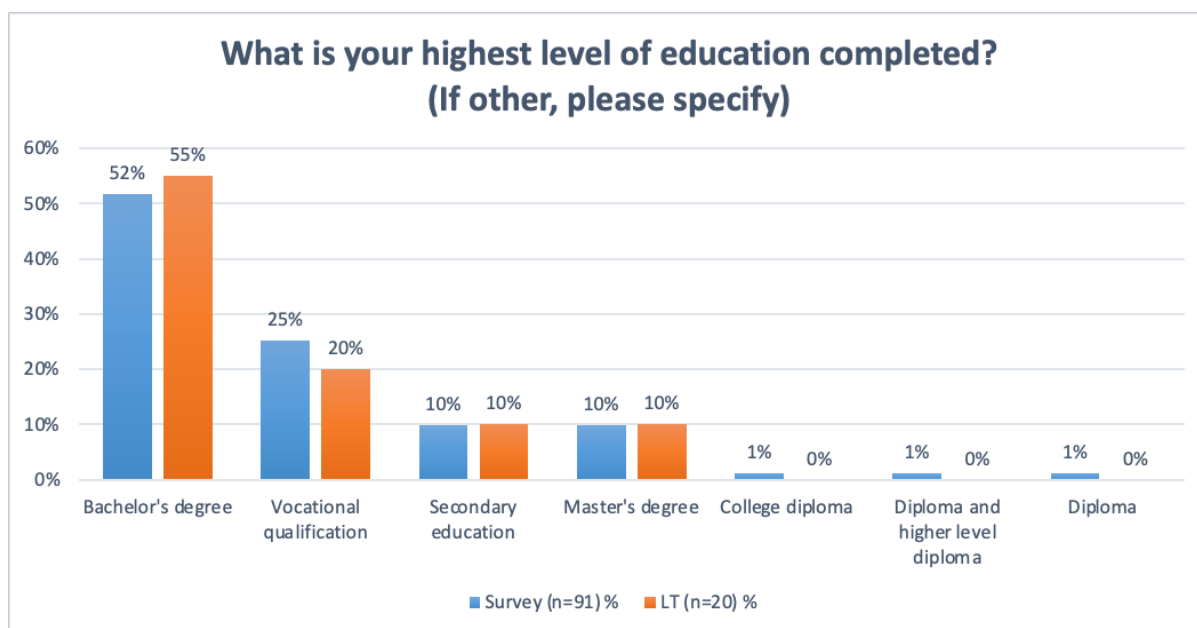


What is your ethnicity? (If other, please specify)	Survey (n=93)	%
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	31	33%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	15	16%
White: Other White	10	11%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	9	10%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	5	5%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	4	4%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	4	4%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	3	3%
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	2	2%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	2	2%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	2	2%
White: Irish	2	2%
Latin American	1	1%

Somali	1	1%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	1	1%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1	1%

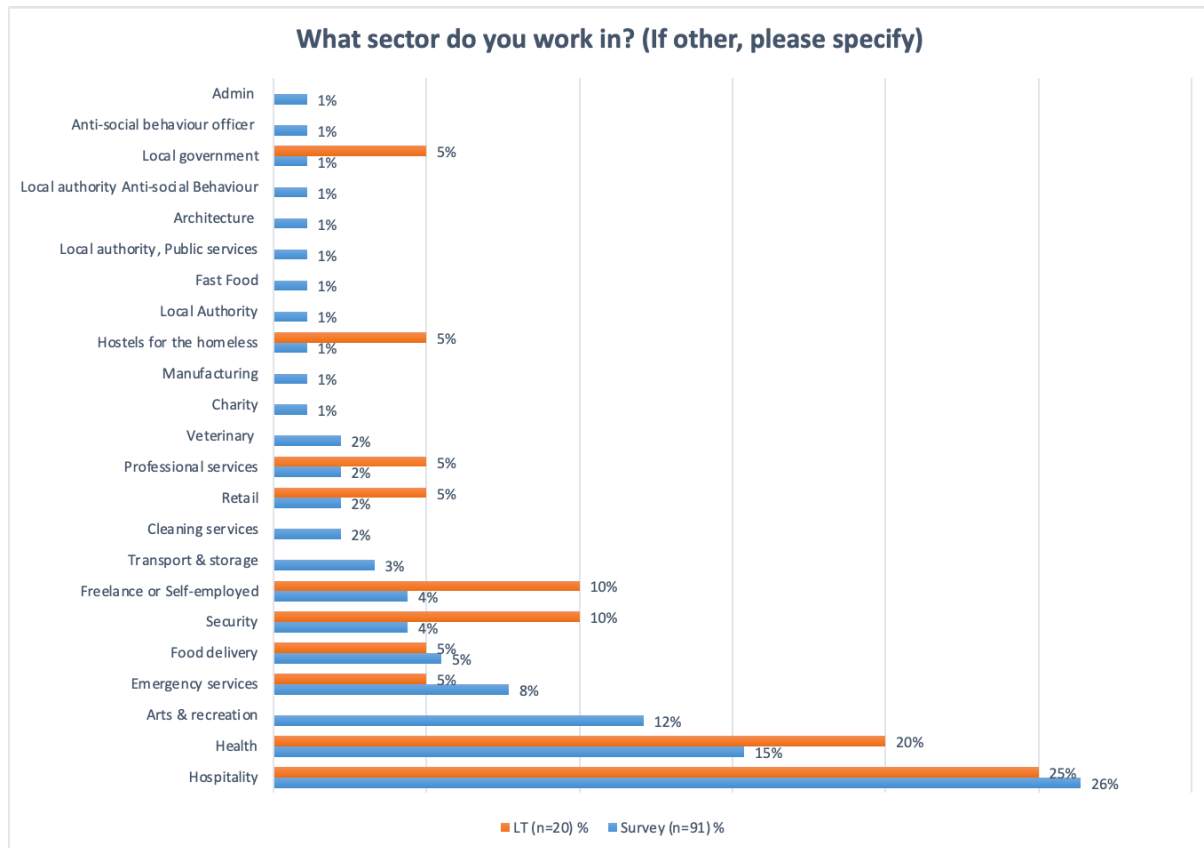
Education

Educational levels within the survey reflect a mix of qualifications, with the majority holding a bachelor's degree (52%) or vocational training (25%). In the LT sample, similar patterns are observed, though secondary education and master's qualifications each account for 10% of the sample. This selection supports discussions from varied educational backgrounds, offering a spectrum of experiences. The inclusion of diverse educational levels enhances the LT discussions by connecting educational background with night work's impact on economic and social stability.



Industry

The Hospitality and Health sectors come top across both the survey and LTs, representing 26% and 15% of the survey sample and 25% and 20% of the LT sample, respectively. These sectors are known for their high prevalence of night work, where roles, especially in Hospitality or Caring (Health) often lack job security.

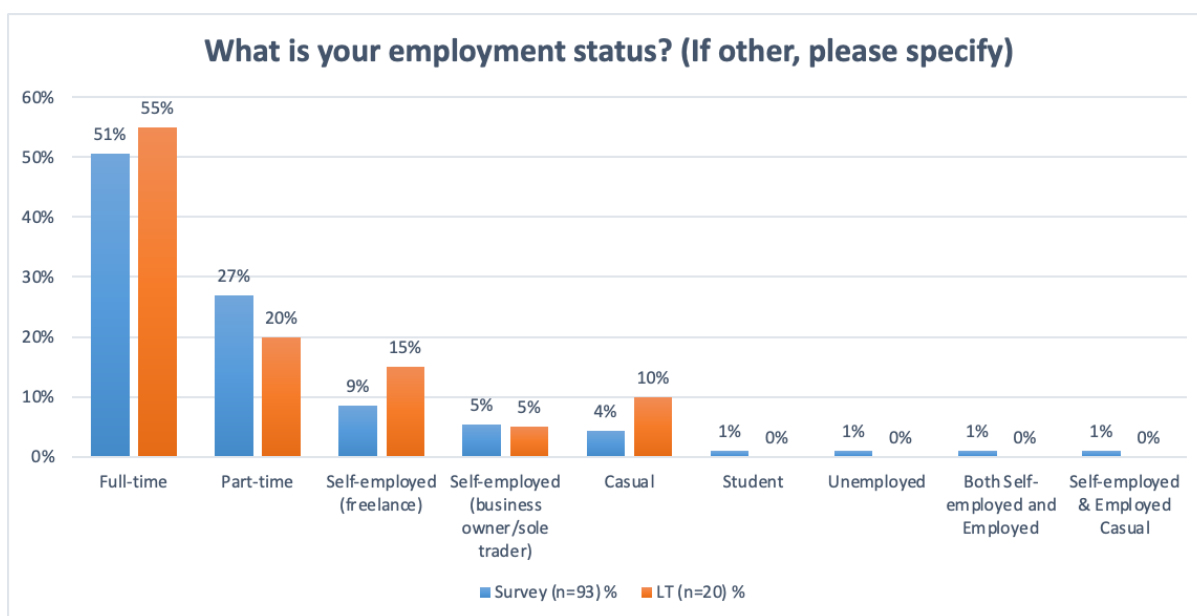


The LTs included participants from Security and Freelance or Self-employed work, each constituting 10% of participants. The variety of workers in the LTs also included representation from Emergency Services and Food Delivery workers as well as from Hostels for the Homeless and Local Government.

Employment Status

Employment status emerged as a crucial factor in addressing the wider range of issues and challenges facing night workers. The survey sample shows a strong representation of full-time employment (51%) alongside part-time (27%) and freelance work (9%). The LTs included a high proportion of casual workers (10%) and freelance/self-employed individuals (15%).

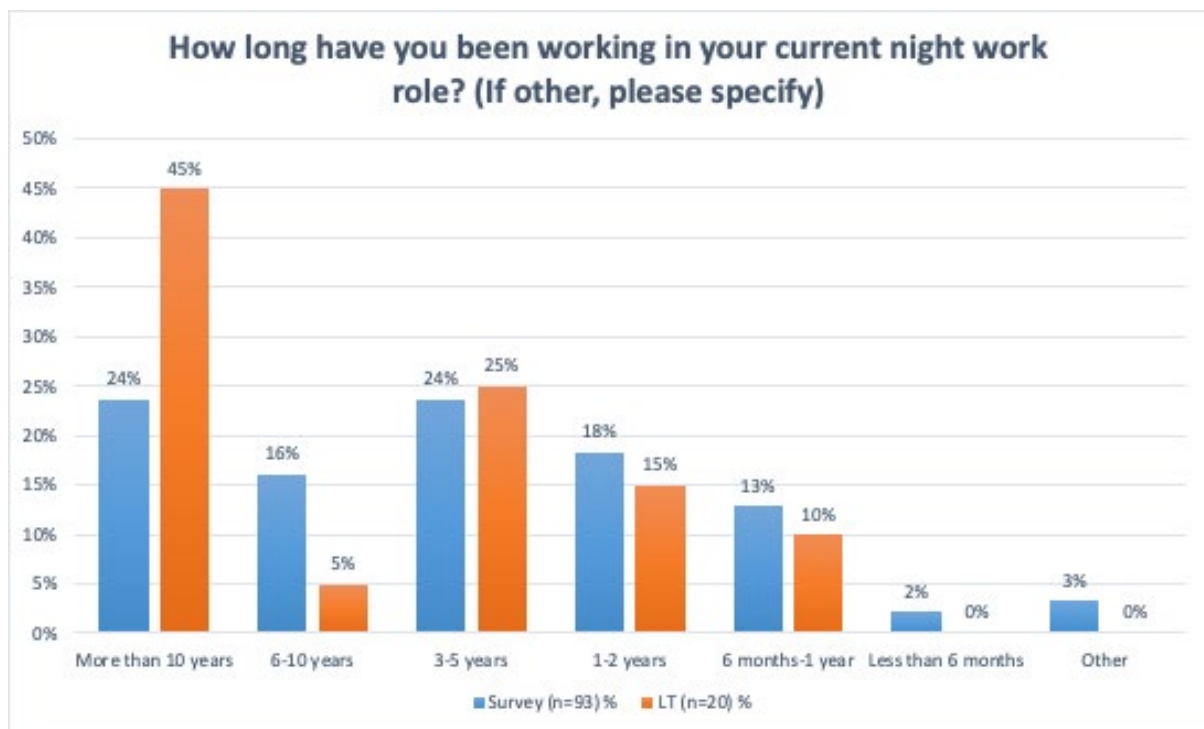
This provides insights into the precarity often associated with night work. At the same time, a strong presence of full-time workers (and people who have been in night work for more than ten years, ensures a deeper understanding of the long-term challenges of night work.



Length of Tenure in Night Work

The survey revealed a split between those with significant experience in night work and those newer to it. While 24% have been in their role for more than 10 years, another 24% have 3-5 years' experience.

The long table participants included 45% of night workers who had worked in their role for over 10 years. This offers a more longitudinal view of night work's effects and highlights the impacts on, for example, health and financial stability over time.



A comparison between the long tables sample and ONS data on night workers in London (2023)

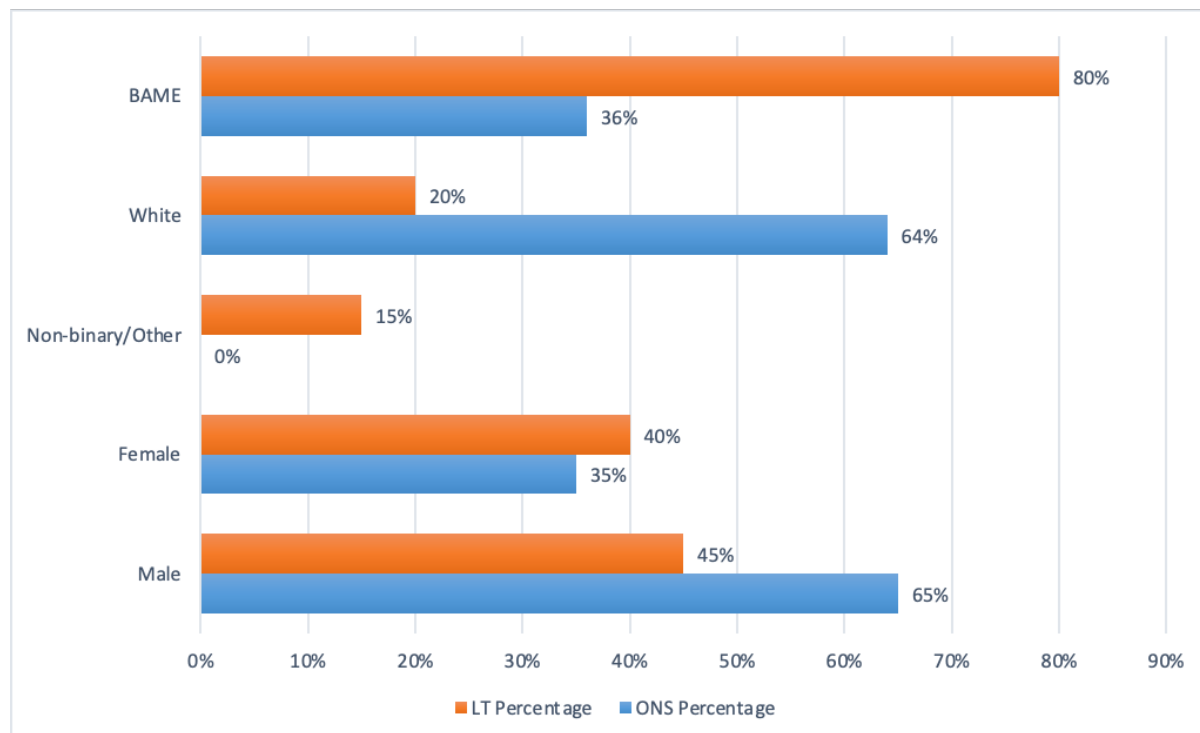
The comparison between the LT sample and data on night workers in London (ONS 2023), published under *London at night: An updated evidence base for a 24-hour city*, reveals both similarities and differences across age, gender, ethnicity, and employment type.

In comparing this data, the LT sample emerges as a more diverse representation of London's night-time economy workforce. Its higher proportion of mature workers, inclusion of gender diversity beyond binary categories, greater granularity and variety in the classification of ethnic backgrounds, and a higher prevalence of casual employment roles indicate a workforce composition more diverse than the average for night workers reported in the ONS/GLA 24-hour data for London (2023).

Age

Comparing age profiles is challenging due to differences in age bands between the two datasets. However, the LT sample features a more mature workforce than the London average. The ONS data further highlights a slightly younger night-time workforce in London compared to the LT sample.

Gender and Ethnicity



The gender distribution across the LT sample and data for London highlights significant differences, with the LT sample showing a more balanced gender representation and broader inclusivity.

According to the ONS data, males constitute the majority of night workers (evening and late night) in London, making up 65% of the night-time workforce. However, the LT sample comprises only 45% males. Females represent 40%. Moreover, the LT sample includes 15% of respondents identifying as non-binary, trans non-binary or other gender identities. This inclusion points to a diversity in gender representation absent from the ONS data, which only considers binary gender categories.

The ethnic composition of the LT sample reveals a much broader and more fine-grained spectrum of diversity compared to the ONS data, which generally categorises night workers as either White or BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic). According to the ONS data, White individuals make up 64% of the night workforce, while BAME groups represent 36%.

The LT sample has a different distribution, with only 20% identifying as White (10% English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, or British; 10% Other White), and 80% who identify as what would be designated 'BAME' if using the ONS categories. This broader ethnic representation suggests that specific ethnic groups are likely to be underrepresented in dominant night workforce statistics.

Additionally, the LT sample provides more granular details within the BAME category, with individuals identifying as Black African (20%), Black Caribbean (10%), Other Black (10%), and Mixed White and Asian (10%)

Employment

Employment Type	ONS Percentage	LT Percentage
Employee	79	70* (includes full time and part time)
Self-employed	20.7	20
Casual/Other	0.3	10

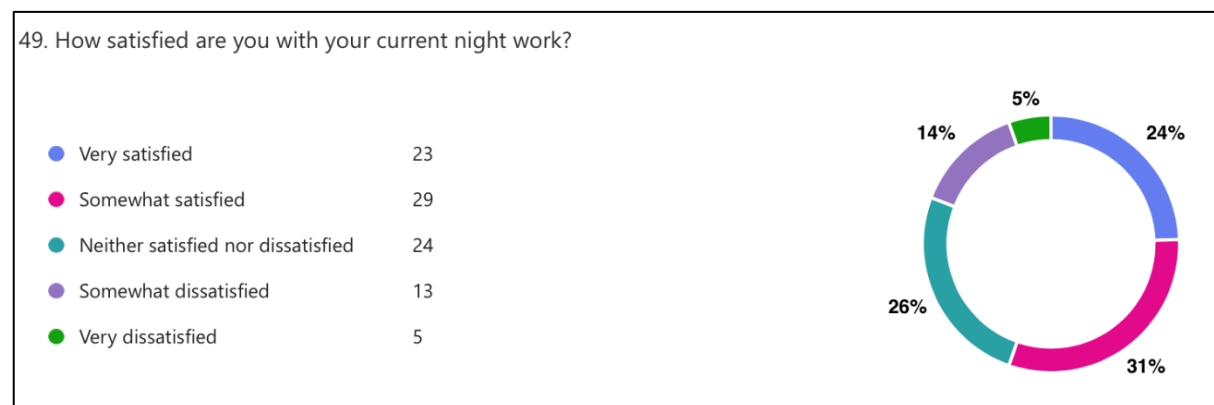
While both data samples show that traditional employment types dominate the night-time workforce, with employees making up the majority in both (78% in the ONS data and 70% in the LT sample) and self-employed night workers making up approximately 20% in both set of data, an important difference concerns workers in casual or other employment roles. The ONS data reports only 0.3% of night workers

in casual or other types of roles, whereas the LT sample includes a significantly higher 10% in casual employment.

Satisfaction, Well-being, Support and Safety Concerns

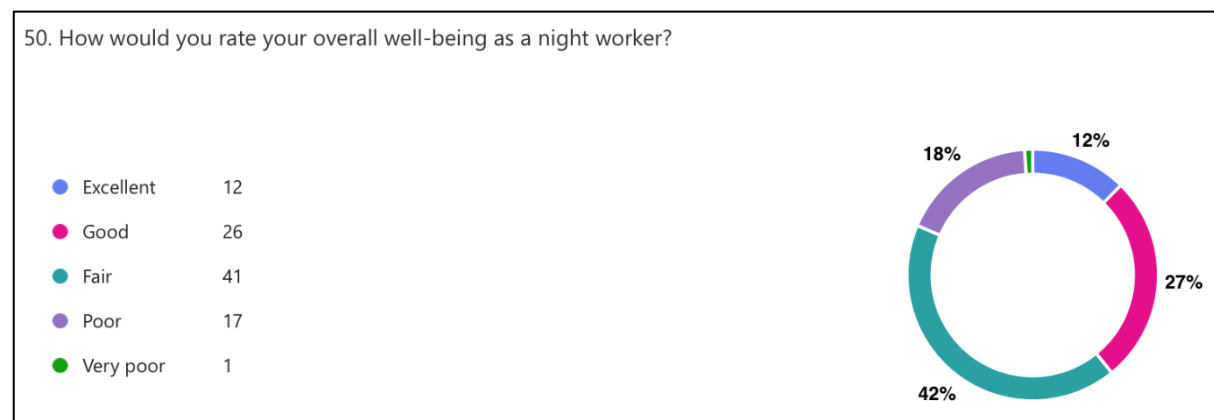
We complete the descriptive quantitative analysis by looking at night workers' experiences across the *Voices of Night Workers* sample as a whole, covering aspects of job satisfaction, well-being, employer support, and safety.

Job Satisfaction



While 24% of respondents are 'very satisfied' with their night work, the largest segment (31%) report being 'somewhat satisfied.' 14% are 'somewhat dissatisfied' and 5% are 'very dissatisfied,' indicating mixed feelings about night work.

Well-being

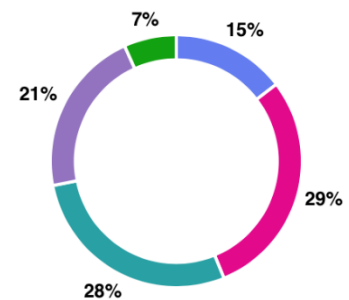


Ratings of overall well-being skew towards the lower end, with 44% indicating 'fair' well-being, 17% poor, and only 13% feeling it is 'excellent.'

Employer Support

51. If you are employed, rate the level of support you receive from your employer for night work

Excellent	13
Good	26
Fair	25
Poor	19
Very poor	6

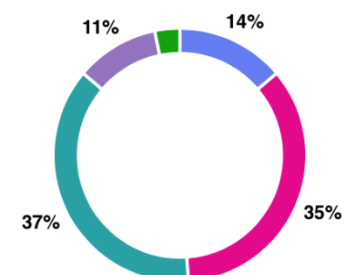


Support from employers was considered moderate, with a balanced distribution across satisfaction levels. However, a significant proportion (21%) rate it as 'poor' and 7% as 'very poor,' implying areas for improvement.

Safety in Commuting

52. Do you feel safe while commuting to and from work?

Always	13
Very often	33
Sometimes	35
Rarely	10
Never	3

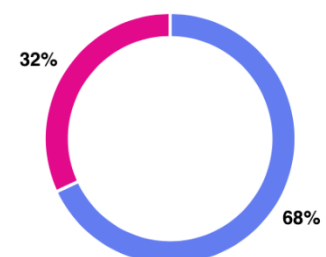


Safety concerns were apparent, with 37% only 'sometimes' feeling safe while commuting, and 11% 'rarely' or 'never' feeling safe. This highlights a potential need for safer commuting options or strategies and is an area that participants explored in more detail in the long table discussions.

Safety and Health Issues

53. Have you experienced any safety issues as a result of night work?

Yes	64
No	30



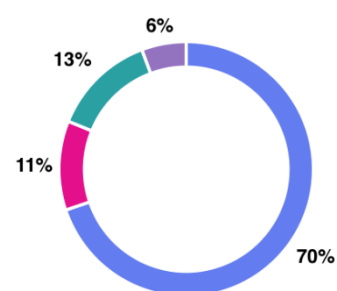
A majority of respondents have experienced safety issues (68%) and health (57%) issues due to night work, pointing to significant risks associated with night working that could require mitigating interventions.

Other characteristics surveyed

Sexual Orientation

35. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

● Straight or heterosexual	37
● Gay or lesbian	6
● Bisexual	7
● Other	3



Nationality

58 respondents (60%) answered British for this question.



Primary Language

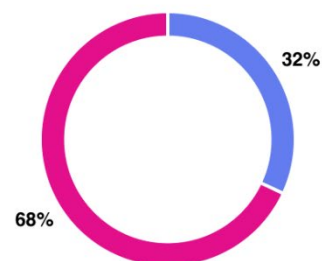
86 respondents (89%) answered English for this question.



Dependents

44. Do you have any dependents?

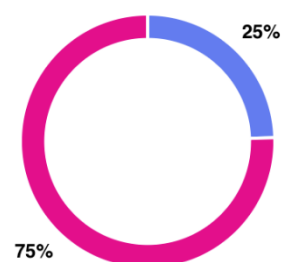
● Yes 31
● No 66



Physical or Mental Health Conditions or Illnesses

34. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

● Yes 13
● No 40



Other Survey Questions

The following questions and responses have been coded as part of our qualitative analysis and are reported in the main body of the report:

- What is your job title/role?
- What are the primary reasons you work at night?
- Have you experienced any safety issues as a result of night work? If so, please specify.
- Have you experienced any health issues as a result of night work? If so, please specify.
- Do you feel that your contribution as a night worker is valued? If yes, why? If not, why not?
- What improvements would you like to see in how night work is understood and/or valued?

Appendix 2 – Long Table Etiquette



Night Workers' **LONG TABLE**

ETIQUETTE

UCL, Senate House, 7th August 2024, 2pm

This is a conversation about night work, around a long table, like a dinner table

Anyone seated at the table is a welcome guest and participant

Talk is the only course. When you first speak, please introduce yourself and your job

No one will moderate the conversation, but a host will begin and end it, and may assist you

The long table is a democracy

To participate, simply take an empty seat at the table

If the table is full, you can request a seat

If you leave the table, you can come back to it again and again

Feel free to write, draw or scribble on the tablecloth

There can be silence

There might be awkwardness

There could always be laughter

There is an end, but no conclusion.





Appendix 3 – Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form

London's Global University



CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: Voices of Nightworkers: Evidence On Lived Experiences

Department: The Bartlett School of Architecture

Name and Contact Details of the Researcher(s): Dr Alessio Koliulis a.koliulis@ucl.ac.uk

Name and Contact Details of the Principal Researcher: Professor Ben Campkin b.campkin@ucl.ac.uk

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee:

Project ID number: (2814/003)

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

		Tick Box
1	*I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study. I have had an opportunity to consider the information and what will be expected of me. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction <i>and would like to take part in (please tick one or more of the following)</i> • a group discussion (known as a 'long-table' in this project) • an individual interview • a survey	
2	*I consent to participate in the study. I understand that my personal information (e.g. gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, disability and other characteristics that I wish to highlight) will be used for the purposes explained to me. Survey responses will be anonymous. Long-table discussions will not be anonymous but participants' names will be pseudonymised. I understand that according to data protection legislation, 'public task' will be the lawful basis for processing. I understand that according to data protection legislation, 'research purposes' will be the lawful basis for processing special category data. Public task: 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the [data] controller'.	

	Research purposes: 'Processing which is necessary for research purposes in the public interest'.	
3	Use of the information for this project only *I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure I cannot be identified <i>unless I state below that I am happy to be identified.</i> Anonymity is optional for this research. Please select from the following two options: 1. I request that my comments are presented anonymously – or with a pseudonym – but give permission to connect my role/affiliation with my comments (but not the title of my position). 2. I request that my comments are presented anonymously – or with a pseudonym – with no mention of my role/affiliation. To protect data, according to the type of data, the researchers will use the following security measures: Access restrictions; Pseudonymisation; Anonymisation.	
4	*I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the University for monitoring and audit purposes.	
5	I understand the potential risks of participating and the support that will be available to me should I become distressed during the course of the research.	
6	I understand that the data will be made available with research partners as part of a research collaboration called Data After Dark. This will include the Greater London Authority and Didobi Limited. All such data will be anonymised or pseudonymised, password protected and encrypted prior to transfer.	
7	I understand that – apart from the one-off honorarium for those participating in a documented discussion (long-table) – I will not benefit financially from this study or from any possible outcome it may result in in the future.	
8	I agree that my anonymised/pseudonymised research data may be used by others for future research. No one will be able to identify me when this data is shared.	
9	I understand that the information I have submitted will be published and I wish / do not wish to receive a report of the findings.	Delete as appropriate
10	I consent to my interview being audio/video recorded and understand that personal data will be deleted in a reasonable timeframe and that anonymised/pseudonymised data will be destroyed within 5 years <i>after the data has been collected.</i>	
11	I hereby confirm that I understand the inclusion criteria as detailed in the Information Sheet and explained to me by the researcher.	
12	I am aware of who I should contact if I wish to lodge a complaint.	
13	Use of information for this project and beyond. The data stored will be kept for 5 years after the end of the project, where appropriate. The researchers will follow GDPR requirements. I would be happy for the data I provide to be archived at UCL. I understand that other researchers who are part of the Data After Dark collaboration will have access to my anonymised/pseudonymised data.	
14	Transfer of Data I understand that my anonymised/pseudonymised personal data may be transferred to partner institutions working on the same project and if so the following safeguards will be put in place: encryption, password.	

If you would like your contact details to be retained so that you can be contacted in the future by UCL researchers who would like to invite you to participate in follow up studies to this project, or in future studies of a similar nature, please tick the appropriate box below.

	Yes, I would be happy to be contacted in this way	
	No, I would not like to be contacted	

Name of participant Date Signature

Researcher Date Signature



Participant Information Sheet For Adults

UCL Research Ethics Committee Approval ID Number:

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study: Voices of Night-workers: Evidence on Lived Experiences

UCL Ethics Project ID Number: 2814/003

Department: The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL

Name and Contact Details of the Researcher(s):

Dr Alessio Koliulis
The Bartlett School of Architecture, 22 Gordon Street, London, WC1H 0QB
a.koliulis@ucl.ac.uk

Name and Contact Details of the Principal Researcher:

Professor Ben Campkin
The Bartlett School of Architecture, 22 Gordon Street, London, WC1H 0QB
b.campkin@ucl.ac.uk

1. Invitation Paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

2. What is the project's purpose?

Voices of Night-workers: Evidence on Lived Experiences

This project sets out to understand the experiences of those who work at night, between 6pm and 6am. It aspires to inform better support structures and more inclusive policy decisions. The goal is to improve our understanding of London's nocturnal workforce, ensuring their needs and challenges are recognised and addressed within the broader context of urban development and policy.

This research aims to explore the experiences of night-workers in the urban environment, including their journeys, services, and working conditions. It seeks to identify ethical and effective approaches for documenting their voices and lived experiences. Additionally, the study investigates the accessibility of essential services and support for the well-being of night workers. Through qualitative evidence, it intends to inform policy decisions and develop a deeper understanding of lived experiences.

The research aims to align qualitative data with quantitative evidence to support policy-making in this context. Bartlett School of Architecture, Didobi Ltd and the Greater London Authority. This initiative builds on previous projects of all parties and seeks to further collaborate to enhance understanding of the lives of London's night workers, a group often overlooked in urban studies and policy-making. The aim is to

combine quantitative data analysis with qualitative research to develop a multifaceted understanding of the working conditions of night workers.

3. **Why have I been chosen?**

In our research we seek to engage a broad spectrum of people (adults, of 18+ years) who identify as night workers, whether in hospitality, food delivery/gig economy, logistics, health, and care sectors, or other sectors active after dark. Our research aim is to explore and document the lived experiences of night workers in London, focusing on aspects like transportation, working conditions, and access to services. The study seeks to gather qualitative evidence to inform policy-makers at the Greater London Authority 24-hour team and improve conditions for night workers.

You will have been identified as someone with relevant knowledge to contribute or because you have responded to a call out for informants via our public outreach channels (e.g. website, social media).

4. **Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form – if applicable). You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw you will be asked what you wish to happen to the data you have provided up to that point. Depending on the point of withdrawal, the data may already have been analysed and/or published, but the researchers will take every reasonable step to remove your data from further analysis and/or publications. If you participate in a documented group discussion (known as a 'long-table' in the research) but decide to withdraw, for practical reasons you will need to do so within two weeks, i.e. before the researchers have begun to analyse the data.

5. **What will happen to me if I take part?**

Your input will comprise [complete as necessary according to the activity].

- a group discussion (termed a 'long-table' in the research)
- a survey

which will take [insert time]. For long-table participants, travel expenses will be reimbursed if requested.

Long-tables are documented participatory group discussions which, in this project, are intended to elicit discussion of experiences and to generate data on the realities of working at night. These long-table discussions, will take place in-person at UCL and will last approximately 3 hours, including a break. There will be approximately 10 participants. During the long-tables, participants will be asked to share their personal stories, challenges, and insights, offering a deeper understanding of night work. For the purposes of communication and comprehension across all our activities, we will be using English. These events will be audio/video recorded digitally and transcribed using transcription software, with the transcription being proof-read/corrected by the researchers. The long-table will facilitate the gathering of **pseudonymised** biographies and maps of home/work trajectories.

Participants who complete only the survey will not receive a fee. Participants who participate in a long-table – i.e. the most time intensive contribution – will receive a participation fee of up to £100 per participant (£75 honorarium plus up to £25 travel expenses – receipted). The honorarium of £75 is based on a three-hour long-table discussion at the London Living Wage, plus an allowance for commuting to and from UCL East. This fee compensates participants for their time and travel expenses.

6. **Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?**

The

- a group discussion (long-table)

will be recorded as follows.

These events will be video/audio recorded digitally and transcribed using transcription software, with the transcription being proof-read/corrected by the researcher.

The video/audio recordings of your activities made during this research will be used for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures and on the research website and publications. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

The research project runs until November 2024. The data from the project will be kept for 5 years unless the researchers consider there is a reason for specific data to be deleted prior to this; or unless the participant requests earlier deletion.

7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There is a risk of raw data that participants have requested be anonymised or pseudonymised being leaked. However, the researchers will take all necessary measures to prevent this as described below.

In the event that participating in the research brings up challenging or sensitive topics for you, you can choose to pause or terminate your contribution. In case you require professional support to talk through challenges that are raised, you could contact The Samaritans helpline (call 116 123) or Citizens' Advice Bureau (0800 144 8848).

There is a risk of raw data that participants have requested be anonymised or pseudonymised being leaked. However, the researchers will take all necessary measures to prevent this, as described below.

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This project sets out to capture the personal narratives of those who work at night and between 6pm and 6am. It aspires to inform better support structures and more inclusive policy decisions. The goal is to improve our understanding of London's nocturnal workforce, ensuring their needs and challenges are recognised and addressed within the broader context of urban development and policy.

Participants who complete only the survey will not receive a fee. Participants who participate in a long-table – i.e. the most time intensive contribution – will receive a participation fee of up to £100 per participant (£75 honorarium plus up to £25 travel expenses – receipted). The honorarium of £75 is based on a three-hour long-table discussion at the London Living Wage, plus an allowance for commuting to and from UCL East. This fee compensates participants for their time and travel expenses.

9. What if something goes wrong?

If something goes wrong in the research or you wish to complain about any aspect of the research as it has involved you can write to the Principal Investigator, Ben Campkin (b.campkin@ucl.ac.uk).

Should you feel that your complaint has not been handled satisfactorily you can contact the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee – ethics@ucl.ac.uk.

10. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Unless you have given specific permission to be named, you will not be able to be identified in any ensuing reports or publications.

The researchers will work with individuals who identify as night workers. They will proactively seek to represent the diversity within this group of workers. To achieve this, it will be necessary to request information on various identity characteristics – e.g., employment status, sector of work, demographic factors such as ethnicity, age, and any other characteristics that participants wish to highlight. The researchers have experience in the methodologies they will be using, having previously conducted research on urban night workers, including the collection of personal and employment-related data. This research is aimed at exploring the experiences of these marginalised workers in the urban environment, focusing on their journeys, services, and working conditions, and aims to inform policy decisions through a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence.

To protect data gathered during our research we will use the following security measures: Access restrictions; Encryptions if/when sharing is needed between institutions; Pseudonymisation; Anonymisation; Regular back-up; Master copy stored on a university network storage.

11. Limits to confidentiality

Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines.

12. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The research that this project forms part of will lead to a range of academic publications such as journal articles, authored and edited books contributions and reports. Anonymised data will be stored for 10 years and may be shared with partners in order to develop shared findings across different projects focused on nightwork.

13. Data Protection Privacy Notice

Notice:

The data controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Office provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk **include Data Protection Officer's name/contact details: Alexandra Potts.**

To gather evidence on a diversity of nightworkers' experiences, the researchers will collect data which includes gender identities, ethnicities, nationalities, class backgrounds, sexualities, faiths, disabilities and ages). The survey will be anonymous but will ask for information such as home address, age, country of birth. The long-tables will not be anonymous but contributions by participants will be stored under pseudonyms.

Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice. The legal basis that would be used to process your personal data will be the provision of your consent. You can provide your consent for the use of your personal data in this project by completing the consent form that has been provided to you.

Your personal data will be processed during the life of the research project and in the following two years as work is published. The researchers have completed a Data Impact Assessment. They will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

UK data protection law is regulated by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed you may wish to submit a complaint to them. Contact details, and details of data subject rights are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>

14. Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA). It is a distinct project, led by researchers in The Bartlett School of Architecture and the cross-UCL Urban Lab. It has been designed within a collaborative set of initiatives, Data After Dark, led by UCL Social Data Institute.

15. Contact for further information

Professor Ben Campkin
The Bartlett School of Architecture, 22 Gordon Street, London, WC1H 0QB
b.campkin@ucl.ac.uk

You will be given a copy of the information sheet and, if appropriate, a signed consent form to keep.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering to take part in this research study.



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dataafterdark.org
urbanlab.comms@ucl.ac.uk