



AVILIO

# Burnout, productivity and parent-guilt.

Examining  
work-life balance  
among managers

SURVEY REPORT - October 2024

Sample of 2,000 UK adults in work  
Of the 2,000 adults, 739 were in managerial  
positions, 392 of whom were parents.

Surveyed by leading independent market  
agency Opinium on behalf of Avilio Group.



## Context

In many ways, it's never felt harder to achieve a strong work-life balance. For many, hybrid working has transformed how we perform our roles, but it has also blurred the lines between work and home and, in some cases, led to a pressure to be 'always on'.

This challenge to achieve work-life balance only compounds as we approach a certain stage in our lives, typically the period when people start to grow their families while simultaneously taking on more responsibility at work, and demands for our time grow exponentially.

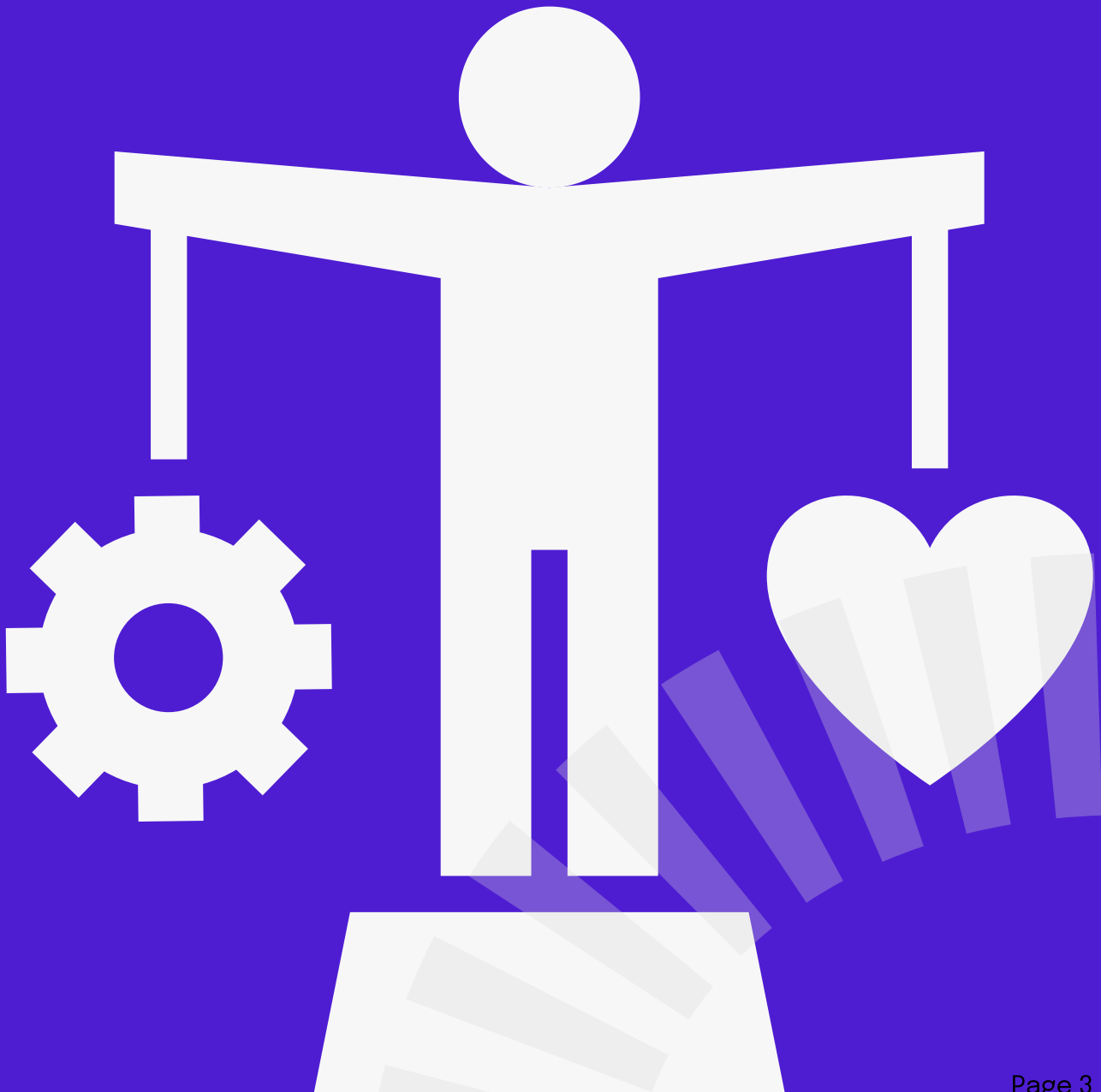
Without the right systems in place, juggling personal and professional obligations can quickly become overwhelming, leading to stress, burnout, and even a sense of failure in both areas.

This can have daunting implications for individuals and businesses alike, as employees may struggle with reduced productivity, poor mental health, and disengagement both at home and at work.

Over time, it is likely that this imbalance will also result in increased staff turnover rates for businesses, as workers seek roles offering better support, or, in some cases, even leave the workforce entirely to prioritise their personal lives.

To gain deeper insight into this challenge, the productivity and performance coaching provider, Avilio, commissioned a survey of 2,000 UK adults in work, focusing on over 700 managers, nearly 400 of which were parents. The findings of the survey as detailed in this report provide unique data and analysis into the challenges faced by today's workforce in achieving a healthy work-life balance, shedding light on the specific stressors these groups encounter, as well as their general approach to productivity.

In sharing this data, Avilio aims to help businesses, HR professionals, and individuals better understand the obstacles to and complexities behind achieving work-life balance. Indeed, recognising these pressures is a critical first step toward addressing them and creating solutions that enable people to lead more balanced, productive lives in both their professional and personal spheres.



## Key findings at a glance

In October 2024, a nationally representative sample of 2,000 UK adults in work were surveyed by leading independent market agency Opinium on behalf of Avilio. Of the 2,000 adults, 739 were in managerial positions, 392 of whom were parents.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE KEY FINDINGS:

### Stress, burnout and wellbeing in the working world

34%

Burnout

have experienced burnout in the past year

38%

Stress

of managers are stressed on a day-to-day basis in their professional lives

24%

Time off work

have taken time off work in the past 12 months due to stress

49%

Impact on family

feel their relationship with their family has suffered because of working

44%

Resentment

resent their job because it takes them away from time with their family

66%

Work-life balance

of managers are satisfied with their work/life balance, but just 25% feel this strongly

## Experiences of 'parent-guilt'

Half of manager parents  
(48%) experience  
'parent guilt'  
at least sometimes

48%



54%

54% of those that experience 'parent-guilt' feel they are failing both as a parent and a professional

62%

62% of those that experience 'parent-guilt' say it impacts their overall wellbeing

77%



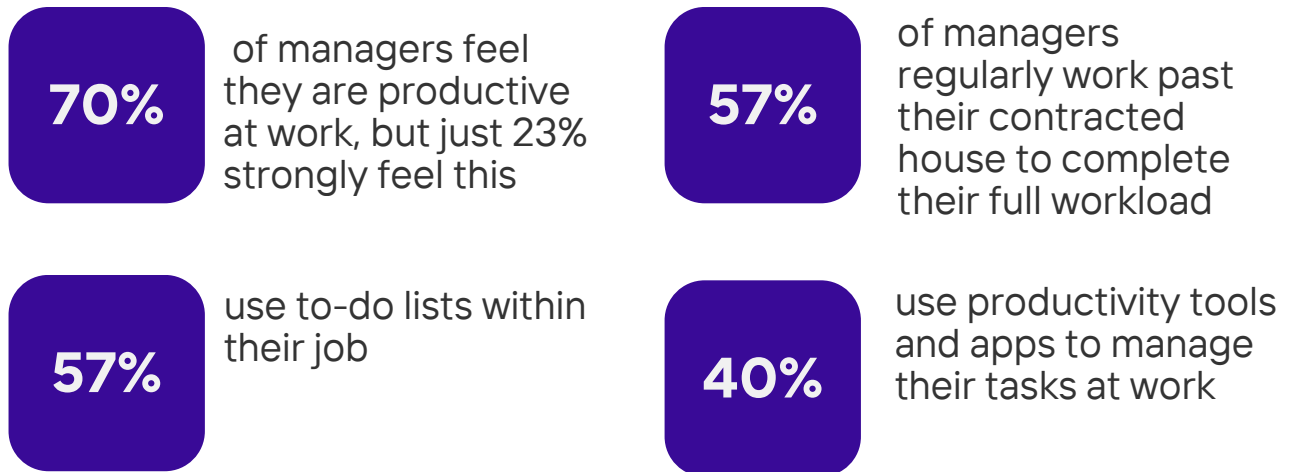
68%

Parenthood has significantly changed the working habits of 77% of female managers, dropping to 68% of male managers

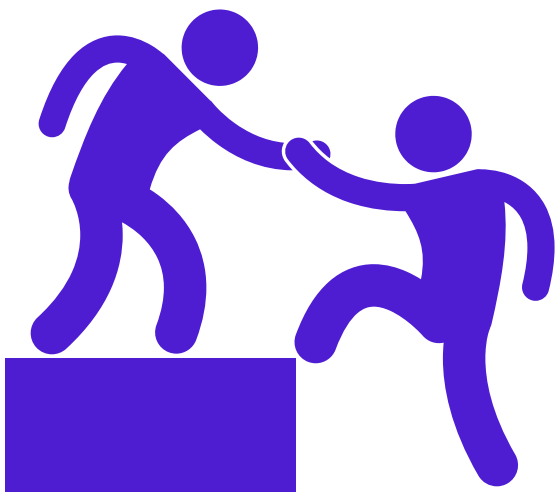
50%

have questioned whether they can continue working because of 'parent-guilt'

## Approaches to productivity



## Managers' feelings about their employer's wellbeing support



**61%**

of managers think their organisation cares about their stress and emotional wellbeing

**58%**

of managers' employers have initiatives in place to monitor and improve employee wellbeing

**58%**

of parent managers think their organisation has good policies and processes in place to help parents balance their childcare and professional duties

## Burnout and the work-life balance illusion

Burnout – a state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion - and stress are widespread issues in the professional lives of managers, our findings show. **Over a third (34%) of managers experienced burnout in the past year**, highlighting how pervasive this problem has become. Concerningly, the data also reveals that 38% of managers report feeling stressed daily, pointing to the consistently high levels of pressure faced in managerial roles.

**The impact on personal lives is also evident, with 49% feeling that their relationship with their family has suffered due to work pressures.**

It is therefore understandable that a similar number (44%) admit to resenting their job because it pulls them away from family time. This signals that for many managers, their professional responsibilities are overstepping into their personal lives.

Despite this data, two-thirds (66%) of managers claim to feel satisfied with their work-life balance, though just a quarter (25%) feel strongly satisfied. So, while many managers evidently perceive their work-life balance as manageable, a relatively small proportion feel definitively positive about it.

It could also be that managers may have become so accustomed to high levels of stress and pressure that their perception of what a healthy work-life balance should look like has been impacted by what they find possible. In short, they've become used to a degree of struggle and managing this has become the norm.



## The 'parent-guilt' epidemic

One of the most striking findings in the report is the overwhelming prevalence of 'parent-guilt' among managerial parents. For context, **parent-guilt** can be defined as a feeling that arises when the parent feels the pressures of their work is negatively interfering with their performance in the family domain.

Half (48%) of managers who are parents claim to experience this guilt at least sometimes, a testament to the emotional challenges of balancing professional and parental responsibilities. As mentioned previously, many feel that their work pressures have caused tensions or issues within their home life and family relationships, which could be a key driver of this guilt.

It is no surprise, therefore, that **three-in-five (62%) of working parents affected by parent guilt report that it has an adverse impact on their overall wellbeing**, with over half (54%) feeling like they are failing both as parents and as professionals.

Perhaps most concerning to businesses is that **half (50%) of managers experiencing parent guilt have even questioned whether they can continue working**. If left unaddressed, parent-guilt could therefore drive highly skilled, talented professionals out of the workforce, leading to both personal and organisational losses.

This risk could be particularly high among female managers, with the data suggesting that social and workplace dynamics still place a heavier burden on women when it comes to balancing work and family; **77% report having needed to significantly change their working habits after becoming parents**, dropping to 68% of male managers.



## Productivity: a mismatch in perception and reality

Most (70%) of managers feel they are productive at work, although just a quarter (23%) feel this strongly. Despite this self-analysis, the data also reveals that **57% of managers regularly work beyond their contracted hours.**

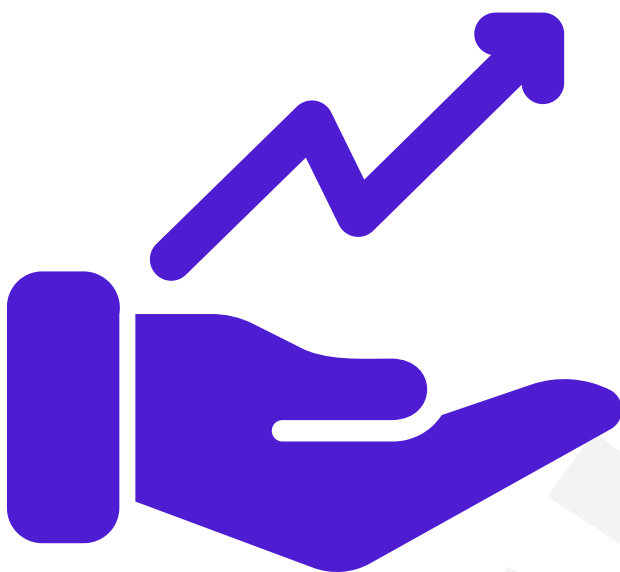
This reliance on working extra hours indicates that many managers are struggling to stay on top of their workload within their standard working day, which could contribute to the high levels of stress and burnout that our data has shed light upon.

This could stem from either an unworkable imbalance between workload and time available to complete tasks, or alternatively, an issue with sub-optimal productivity.

While a majority (57%) of managers use to-do lists to organise their work and 40% use other productivity tools, these methods alone may not be sufficient in managing the demands of a managerial role.

It is clear therefore that **managers need greater support from their employers** to operate effectively within the parameters of their working hours.

For businesses, this could look like enlisting the support of a productivity and performance coaching provider like Avilio to help them optimise their time management and productivity strategies, ultimately helping the organisation to support and retain its talent.



# Employer wellbeing support lags behind employee needs

Exploring the role of employers in establishing employees' work-life balances further, the survey also reveals interesting insights into managers' experience of wellbeing support at work.

Positively, **61% of managers feel that their organisation cares about their emotional wellbeing.** However, only 58% report that their organisation has initiatives in place to actively monitor and improve employee wellbeing.

This suggests that, although there is an encouraging recognition of wellbeing as an issue, more structured support may be needed. Among parents in managerial roles, the same proportion (58%) feel that their organisation has good policies in place to help them balance childcare and professional duties.

So, while companies may have some policies that address work-life balance, they may not be robust or accessible enough to make a significant difference for those who need them most. **Again, this suggests a gap between policy and practice that businesses must take action to bridge.**



## Finding solutions to poor work-life balance within time management and productivity

"Many professionals, especially managers, reach a point in their careers where the demands on their time from both work and home become overwhelming. Our survey clearly shows that this is worryingly being accepted as the norm – even being repressed by the individuals themselves, who are continuing to push forward without fully appreciating the toll it's taking on their wellbeing and performance.

"But **people deserve the opportunity to be the best version of themselves – both at work and at home.** Indeed, individuals should be able to thrive both professionally and personally, without having to sacrifice high performance in one part of their life for the other. For businesses and the individuals in their managerial teams, therefore, it's time to dispel the traditional notion that burnout is a natural or necessary consequence of ascending the ranks.

"At Avilio, we understand that balancing these responsibilities isn't only about managing time, which is of course highly important, but also about rethinking and optimising productivity. That way, we empower managers by giving them the tools they need to **perform effectively across their personal and professional lives.** Productivity is often the missing link between stress and success, and when approached strategically, it becomes a powerful tool for achieving a sustainable work-life balance.

"Investing in insight-driven solutions, training programmes, and personalised coaching like those offered by Avilio enables businesses to help their managers unlock new levels of effectiveness, improving individual performance but also driving success across the organisation. If managers feel supported, engaged, and empowered, they are more motivated to make a meaningful impact on the business.

"Ultimately, creating an environment where employees can thrive in all aspects of their lives is just smart business practice. After all, it's the businesses that recognise and choose to invest in this approach that will experience a more balanced, more motivated, and more productive workforce."

**Philippe Masson**  
CEO of Avilio





UK - US - FRANCE - SWITZERLAND

**Phone** +44 (0)20 3582 0532

**Email** [info@aviliogroup.com](mailto:info@aviliogroup.com)

**[www.aviliogroup.com](http://www.aviliogroup.com)**

