

2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey

Multinational Governance and Policies Headquarters (HQ) Perspective

Survey fielded between
April 20, 2020 and May 1, 2020

May 7, 2020



Stacy

Matt

LIVE

About the survey

113

HQs responded between
April 20 and May 1, 2020
about benefits around the world

3.2M

employees at responding
organizations globally

61%

For profit,
publicly traded

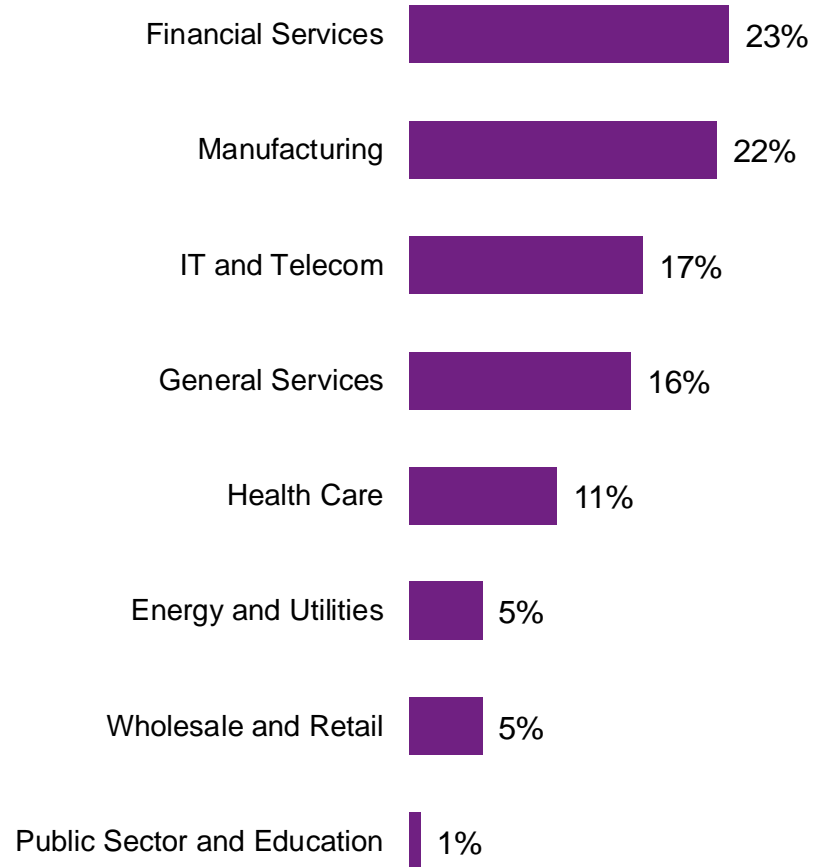
32%

For profit,
private

4%

Nonprofit/
Government

Industry



Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. 4% of respondents were from other industry segments.
Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Highlights

HQ perspective



Business impact

HQs anticipate negative outcomes for business results, productivity and wellbeing over the next 6 months. Yet, nearly half of employers are uncertain about what to expect in two years making it difficult to plan ahead.



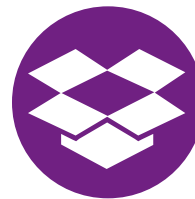
Multinational employers take action

Many HQs are protecting their businesses through hiring freezes (76%) and furloughs (43%) and protecting employees through mandatory work from home (86%) and alternative work teams (48%).



Restoring stability

Many multinational employers have developed a strategy and a communication plan for reopening the workplace. Most anticipate a phased or gradual reopening with an emphasis on critical employees.



Broader benefits priorities

HQs prioritize enhancements over benefit reductions. Top priorities of multinational employers include enhancing mental health services, promoting existing programs and supporting financial wellbeing.

Highlights

HQ perspective



Enhancing health care benefits

Many HQs take actions to provide additional coverage for employees with COVID-19 and promote the use of telemedicine. Stress and mental health issues are also a concern and HQs respond by promoting mental health services and EAP availability.



Addressing financial strain through retirement benefits

Multinational employers are taking various actions to tackle employee financial strain by facilitating withdrawals, enhancing financial wellbeing and communicating directly with employees nearing retirement. Few HQs have taken actions to suspend or close their retirement benefits.



Wellbeing takes center stage

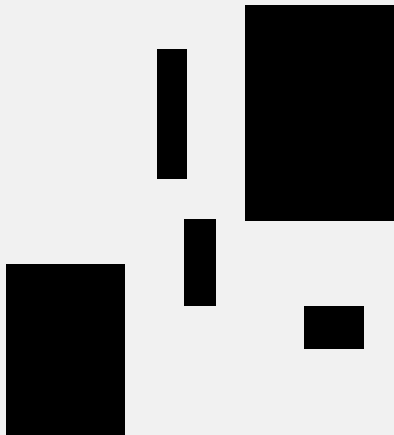
HQs add virtual solutions to support specific cohorts especially work from home employees through virtual workouts, nutrition counseling and social gatherings for non-work purposes. Measuring, identifying and training managers on how to respond is another key priority of HQs to support financial wellbeing.



Strengthening leave programs

Many HQs issued a common company policy or minimum standards for sickness leave, which extend to hourly paid. HQs are also looking to add flexibility to PTO/vacation programs to prevent lost days at year's end due to the build up of surplus hours during the pandemic.

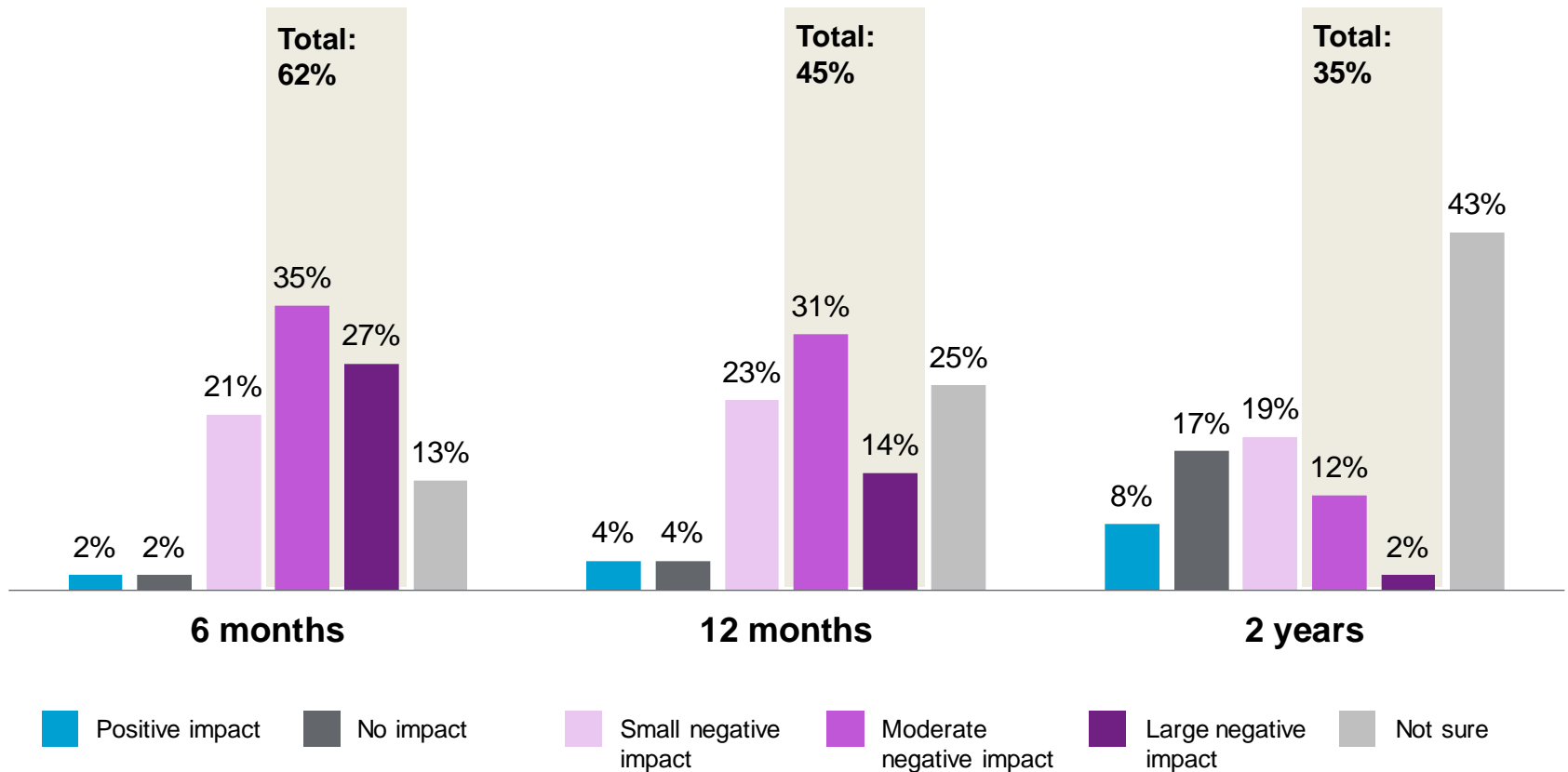
Section 01: Business Impact



Many HQs think COVID-19 will have a negative impact on their business in the next year

Nearly half of employers are uncertain about what to expect in two years

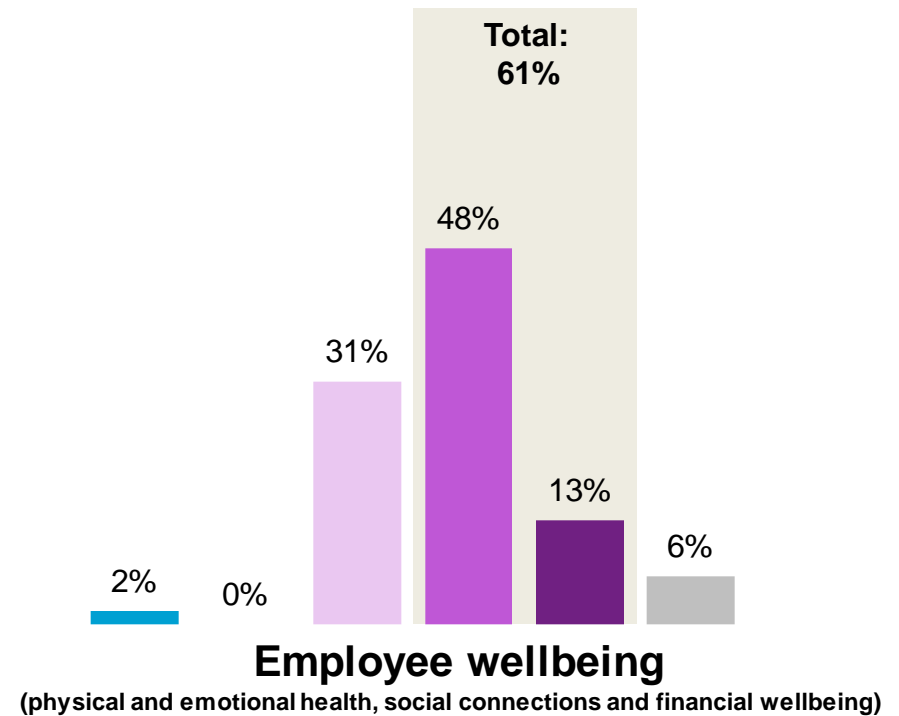
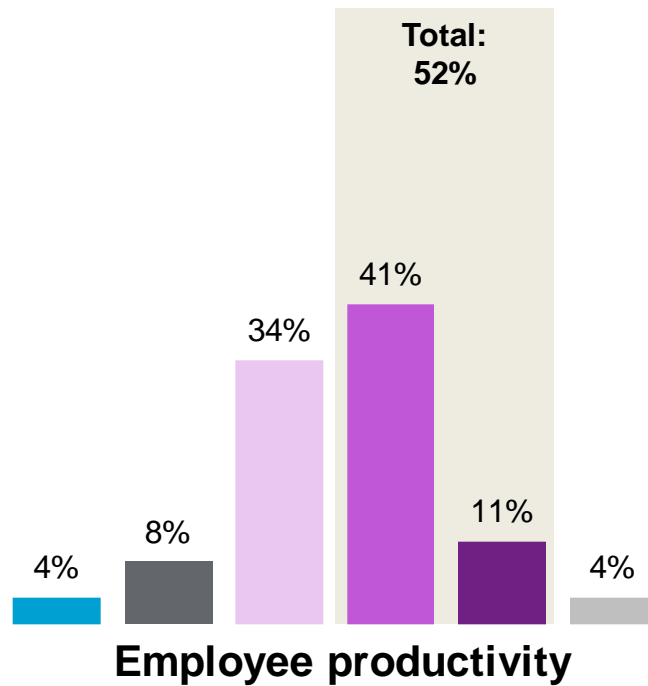
What impact will COVID-19 have on your business results over the next 6 months? 12 months? 2 years?



Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Half of HQs think COVID-19 will have a negative impact on their employee productivity – almost two-thirds think employee wellbeing will be impacted

What level of impact will COVID-19 have on the following aspects of your employees over the next 6 months?

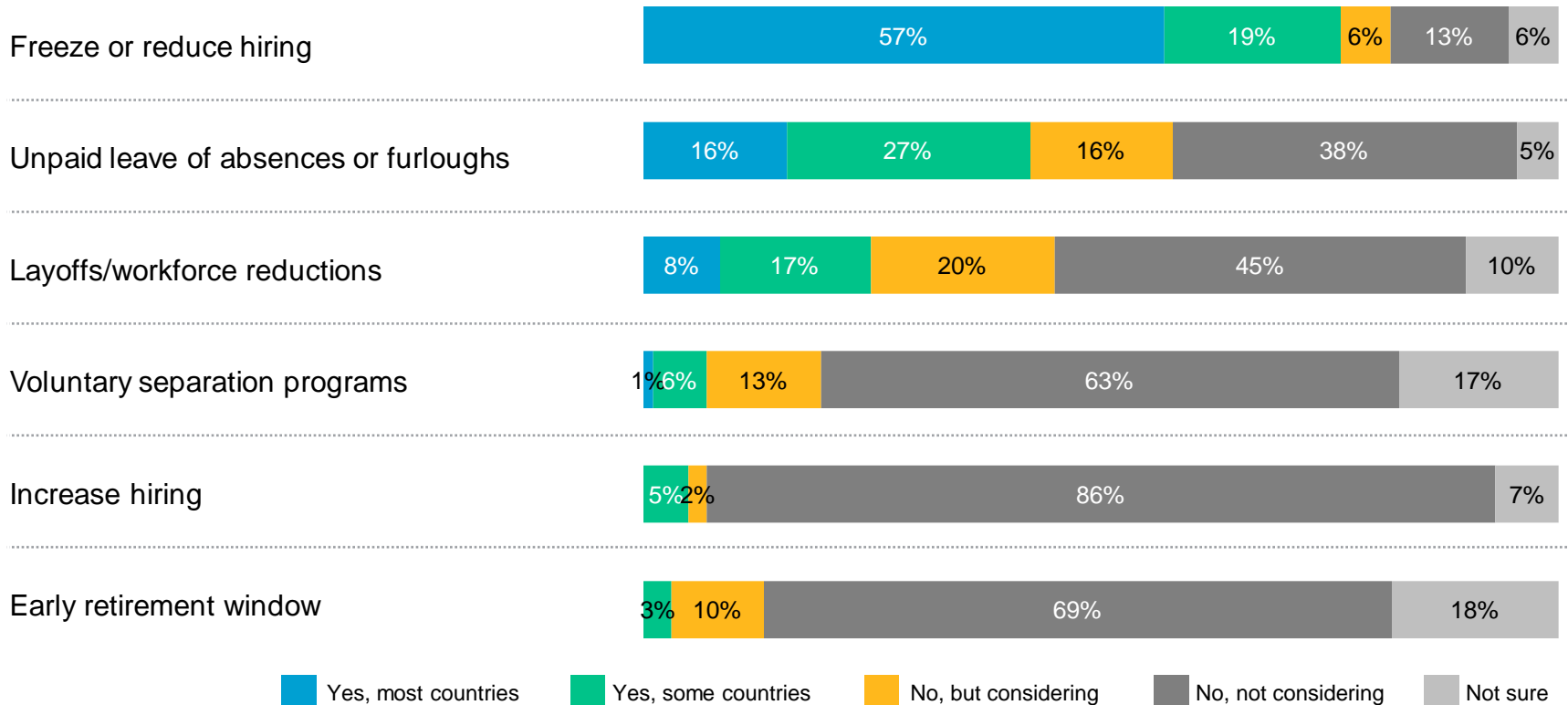


■ Positive impact
 ■ No impact
 ■ Small negative impact
 ■ Moderate negative impact
 ■ Large negative impact
 ■ Not sure

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Most multinational employers freeze or reduce hiring in most countries

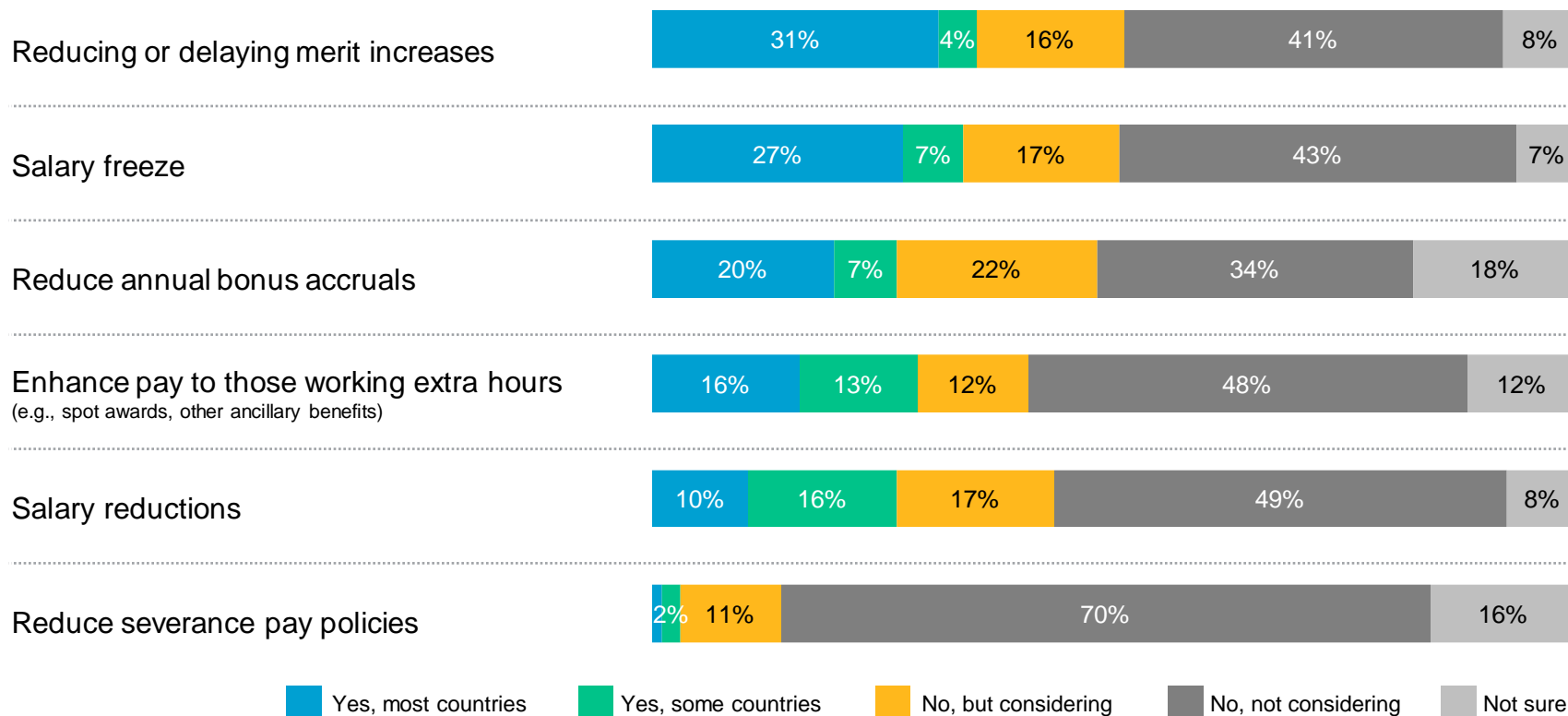
Has your organization taken or is planning to take any of the following actions in response to COVID-19 (where possible).



Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Multinational employers have taken actions to reduce costs through a variety of adjustments to pay

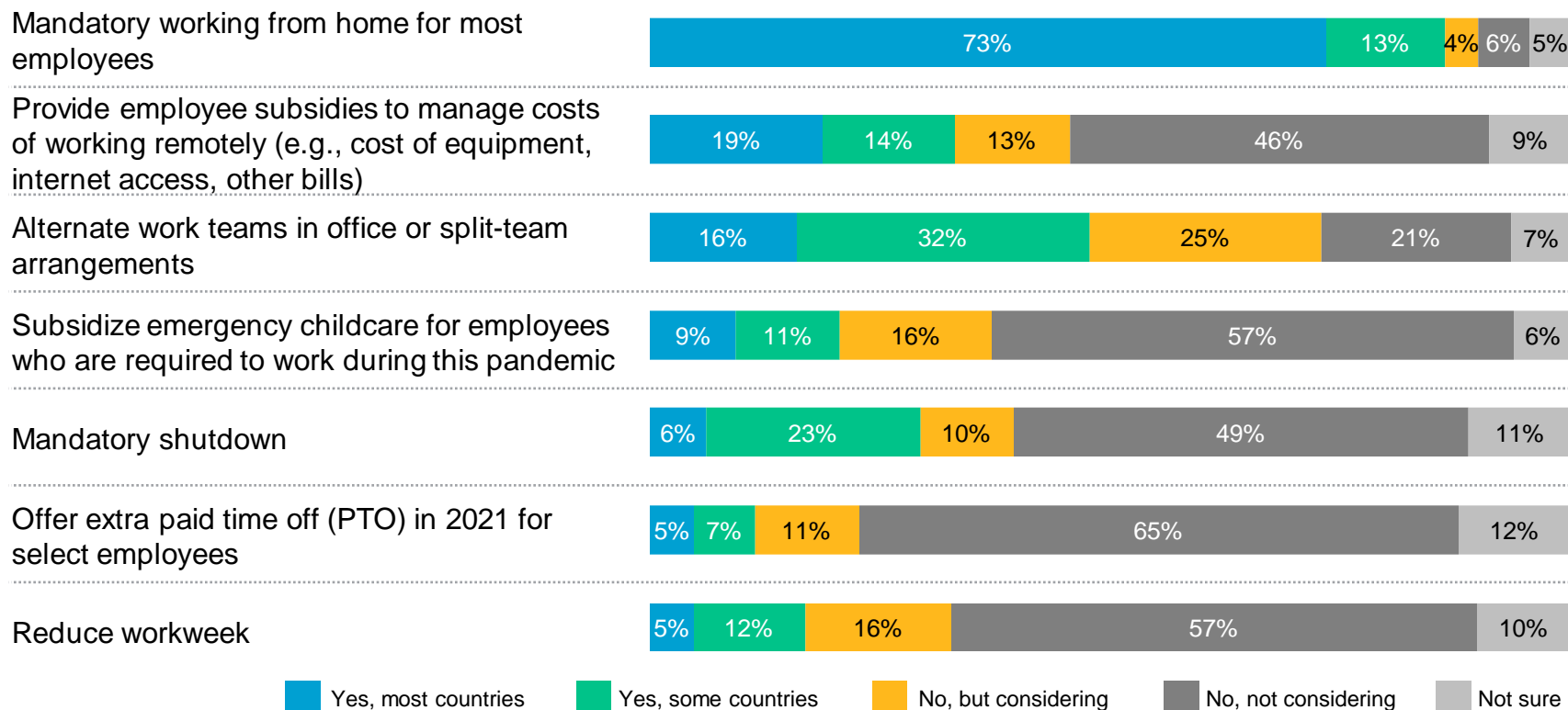
Has your organization taken or is planning to take any of the following actions in response to COVID-19 (where possible).



Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

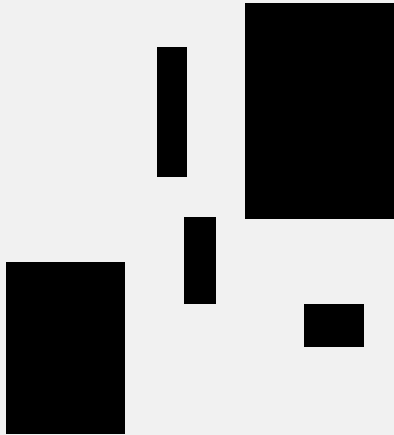
Most multinational employers adopted work from home requirements and about one-third provide subsidies to help manage the costs of remote work

Has your organization taken or is planning to take any of the following actions in response to COVID-19 (where possible).



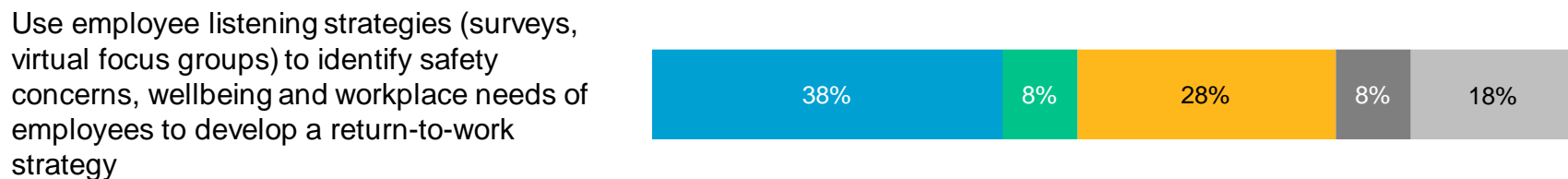
Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Section 02: Restoring Stability



Most multinational employers are developing strategies, protocols and a communication plan for reopening the workplace

Has your organization taken or is planning take any of the following actions in preparation for when the COVID-19 travel and social distancing restrictions are lifted?

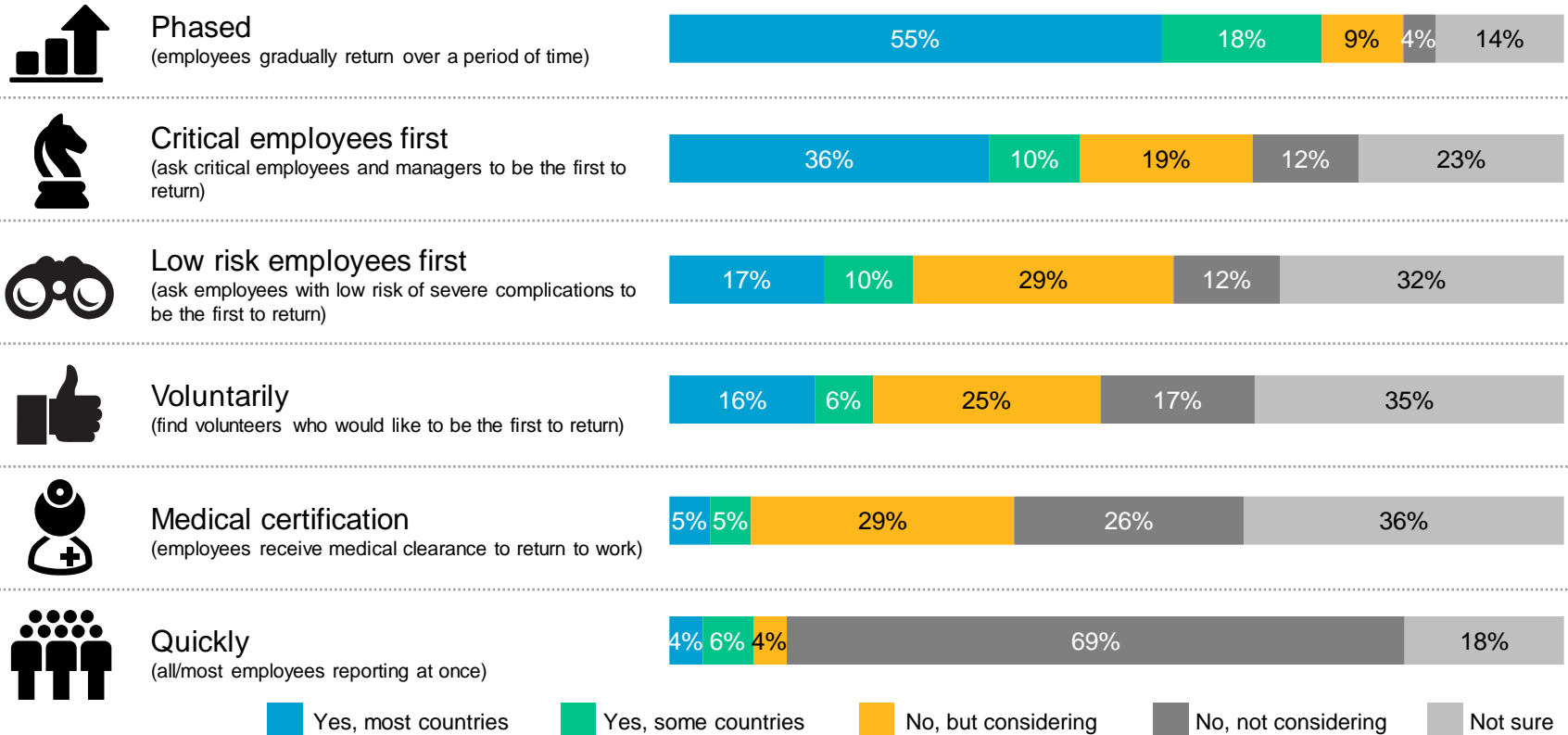


■ Yes, most countries
 ■ Yes, some countries
 ■ No, but considering
 ■ No, not considering
 ■ Not sure

Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

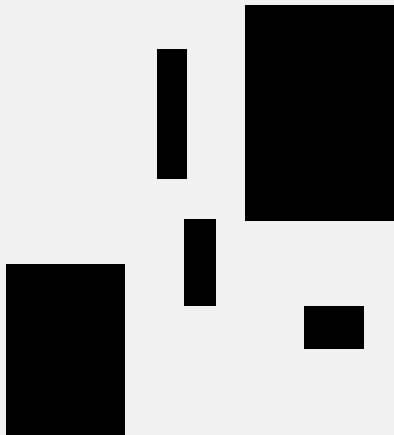
Most multinational employers will follow the phased approach when reopening the workplace after the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted

Is your organization likely to follow any of the following approaches when returning to work after the COVID-19 travel and social distancing restrictions are lifted?



Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Section 03: Broader Benefits Priorities

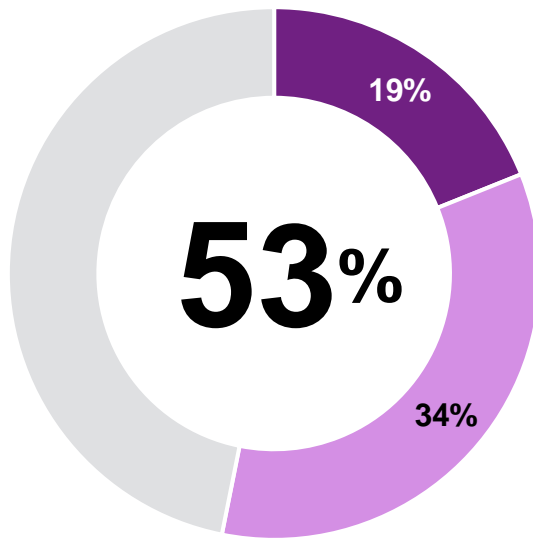


Over half have made some changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis

And over two fifths plan to make changes

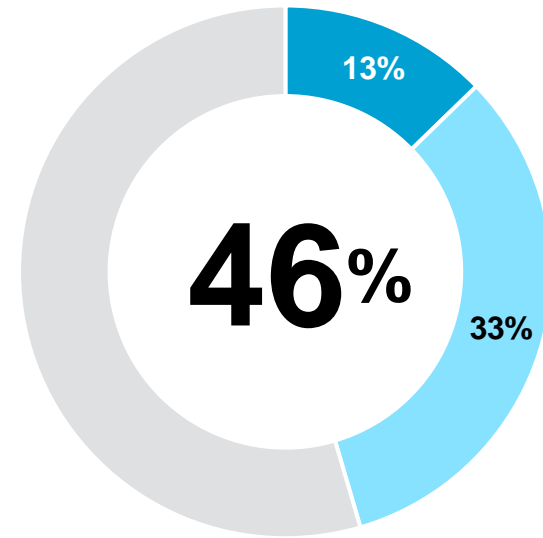
To what extent has your company already made benefits program changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis? To what extent are you planning to make changes over the next 6 months?

Already made changes



- 4/5-To a great extent
- 3-To a moderate extent

Planning to make changes

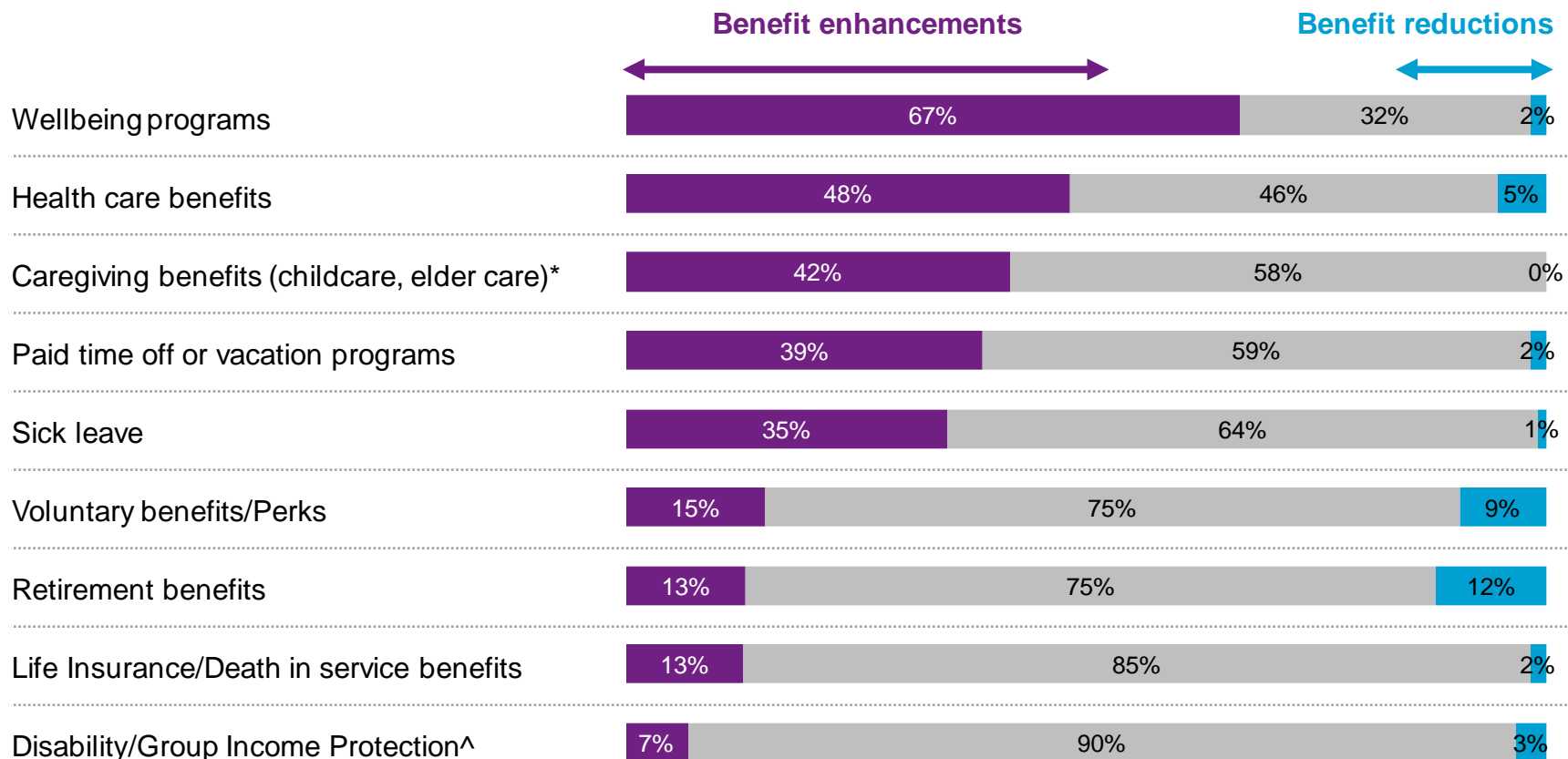


- 4/5-To a great extent
- 3-To a moderate extent

Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Half of HQs are looking to enhance health care benefits and wellbeing programs

Considering the changes your company has already made and is expected to make over 2020, is your company planning to make any benefit enhancements or reductions?



Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. * US HQs only. ^ UK HQs only.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Two thirds of HQs choose enhancing mental wellbeing and communicating on benefits as important benefits priorities



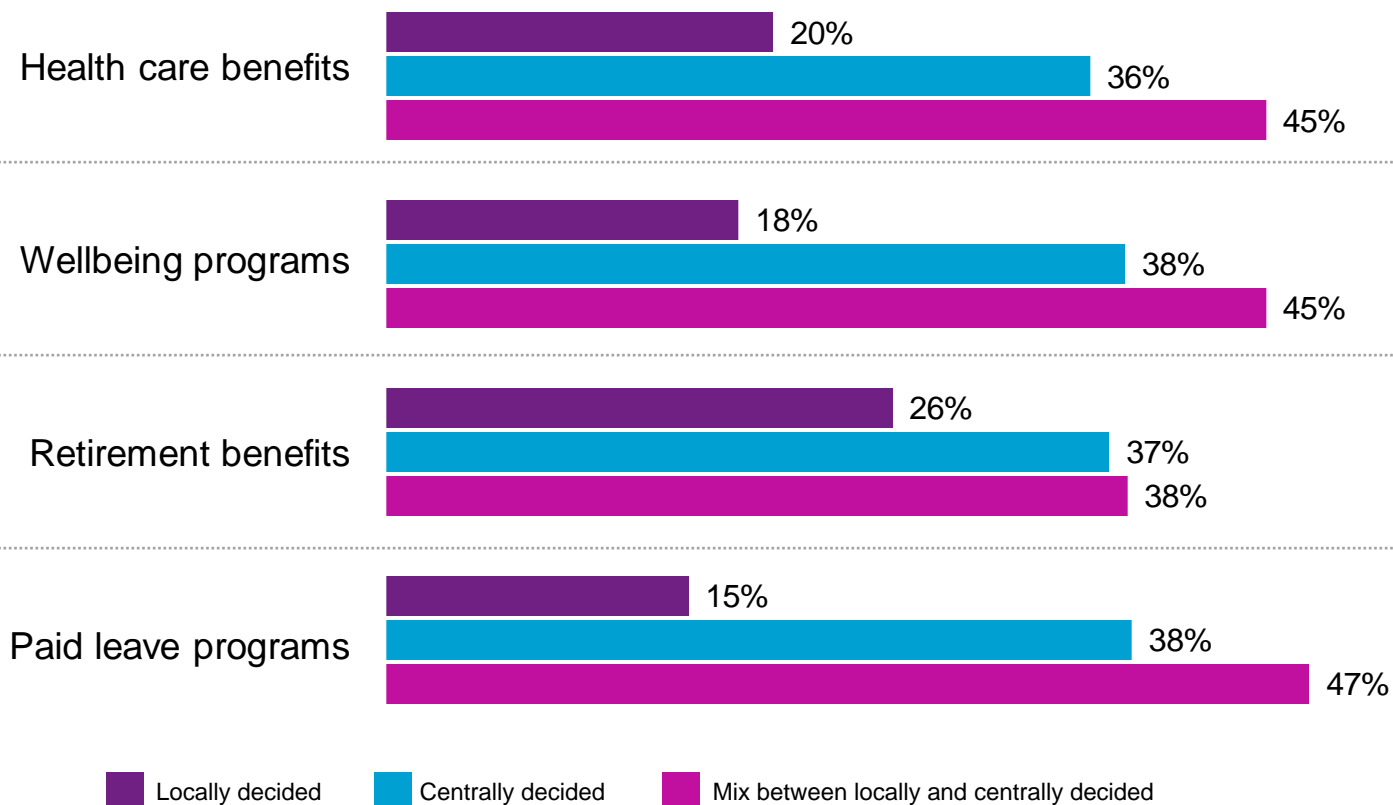
Which of the following do you expect to be your organization's most important benefits priorities over the next 6 months?

#1	Enhance mental health services and stress/resilience management	67%
#2	Communicate on benefits and wellbeing programs that might be important to employees at this time	65%
#3	Support the financial wellbeing of employees	26%
#3	Ensure business continuity of benefits programs (e.g., vendor management)	26%
	Address benefits for employees not at work (e.g., furloughs, involuntary leave, sick leave)	23%
	Reduce costs of benefits Programs	19%
	Enhance programs/actions around employee safety	19%
	Reframing benefits in a post-COVID environment	16%
	Improve the physical wellbeing of employees	13%
	Improve social connections (i.e., reduce loneliness)	12%
	Provide more flexibility to employees about benefit options/choices	9%

Note: Percentages indicate "being selected in top 3".
Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Most HQs decided the changes to the benefits programs centrally or mix between locally and centrally

How are changes to the following benefits programs governed during the period of the pandemic?



Note: "Not sure" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.

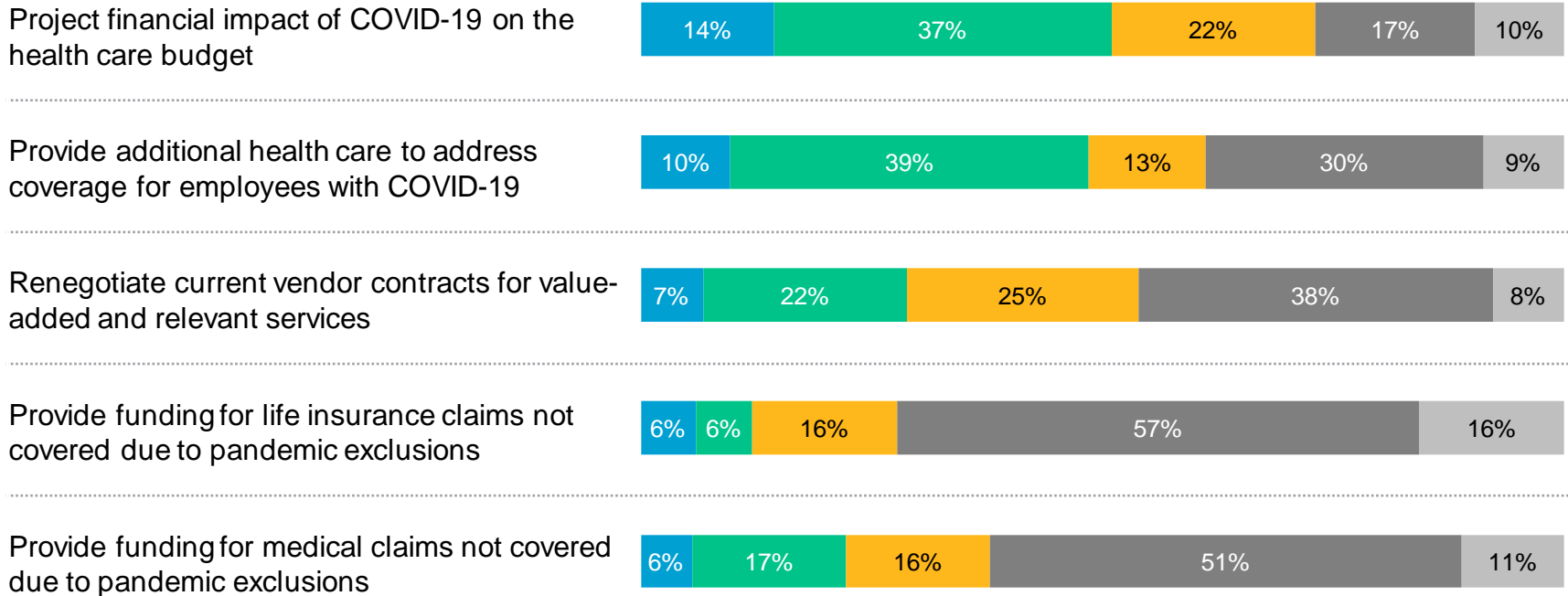
Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Section 04: Health Care Benefits



Most multinational employers are projecting financial impact of COVID-19 on the health care budget

What actions has your organization taken to manage the financial impact of COVID-19 on the company's health care benefits?



■ Yes, most countries
 ■ Yes, some countries
 ■ No, but considering
 ■ No, not considering
 ■ Not sure

Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

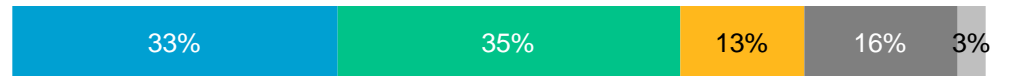
Nearly all multinational employers are promoting use of telemedicine, virtual visits for medical concerns

What actions has your organization taken to encourage access to health care during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Promote use of telemedicine, virtual visits for medical concerns



Increase access to mental health services



Eliminate employee share of cost of health care for employees on unpaid leave of absence or furloughed



Increase access to on-site or near-site clinics

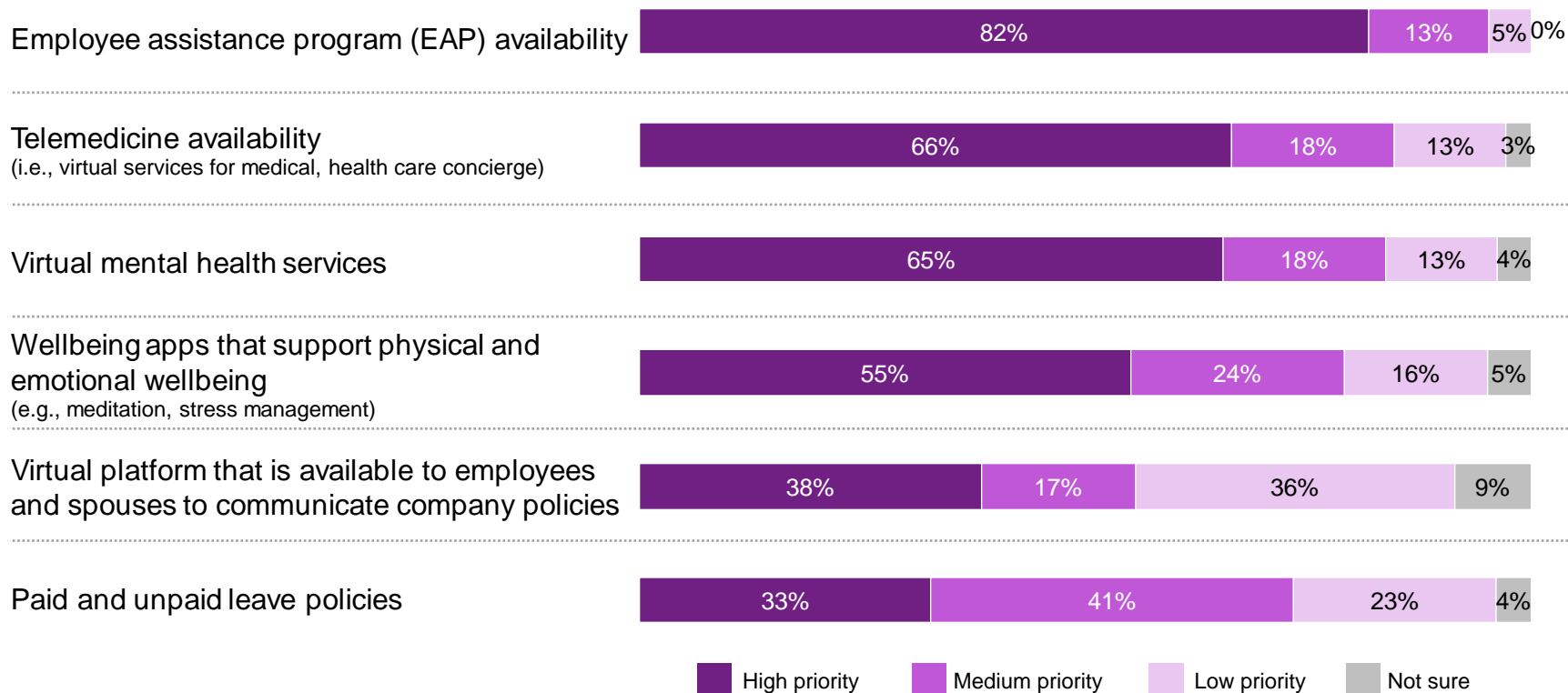


■ Yes, most countries
 ■ Yes, some countries
 ■ No, but considering
 ■ No, not considering
 ■ Not sure

Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Employee assistance program (EAP) and telemedicine availability are high priorities

Which of the following benefits has your organization made a priority to promote and communicate about as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?



Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Over half of multinational employers have already or are considering to revise their health care strategy for 2021

How broadly do the following apply to your company as a result of COVID-19?

Likely to revise our health care strategy for 2021



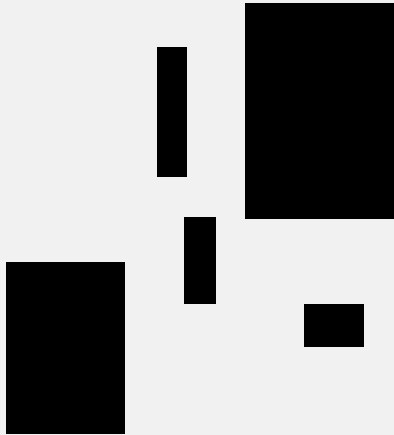
Delayed implementation of benefit changes or new health care and wellbeing programs for 2020



■ Yes, most countries ■ Yes, some countries ■ No, but considering ■ No, not considering ■ Not sure

Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Section 05: Retirement Benefits



Few multinational employers have taken actions to suspend or close their retirement benefits in response to COVID-19

Please indicate what actions your organization has taken or is planning to take, with respect to its retirement benefits in response to COVID-19.

Suspend/reduce employer contributions to defined contribution (DC) plans
(e.g., regular or matching contributions)



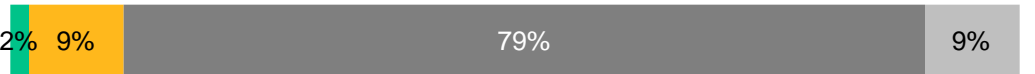
Suspend/reduce employer contributions to defined benefit (DB) plans



Close or freeze DB plan accrual



Use DB plans to influence workforce behavior
(e.g., phased retirement, voluntary exit)

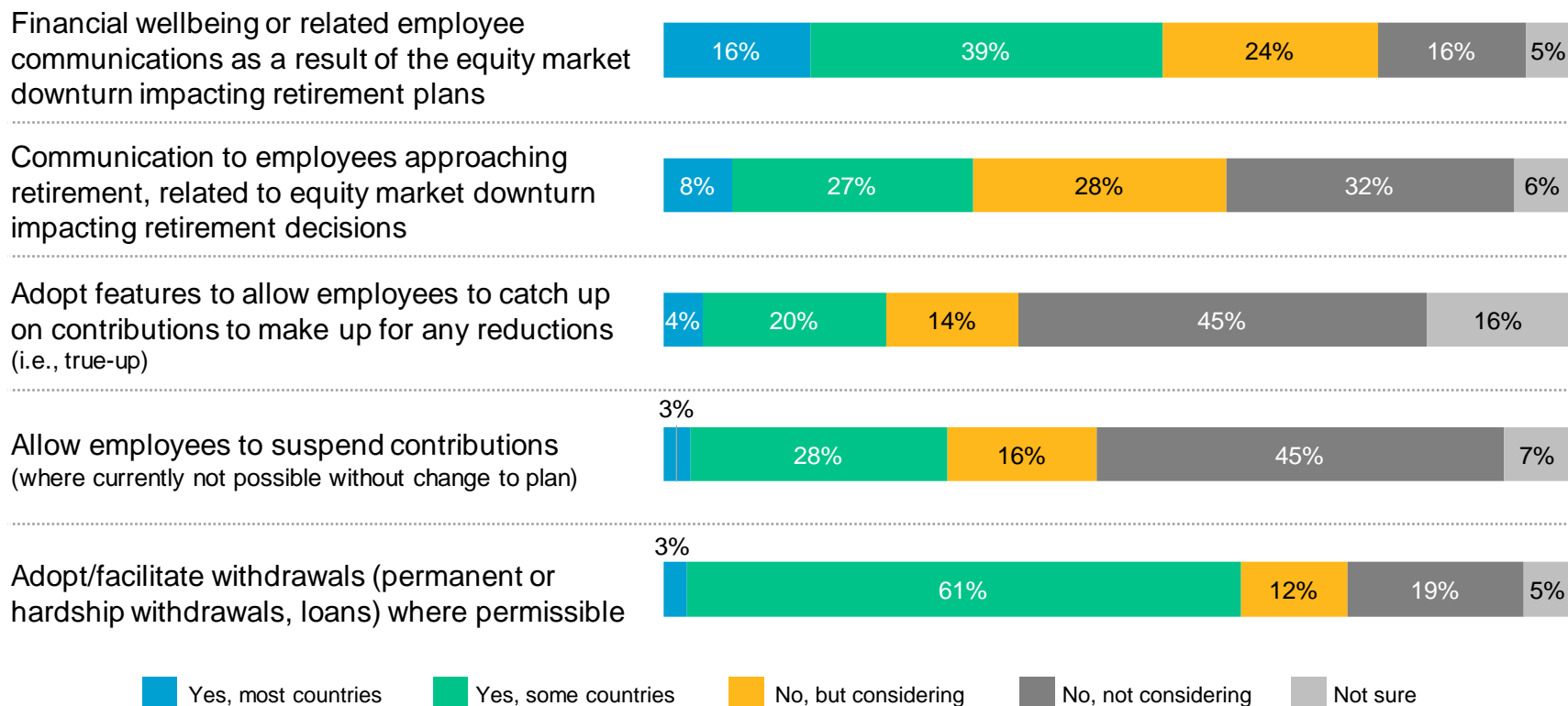


■ Yes, most countries
 ■ Yes, some countries
 ■ No, but considering
 ■ No, not considering
 ■ Not sure

Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Multinational employers are taking various actions to tackle employee financial strain relating to retirement benefits

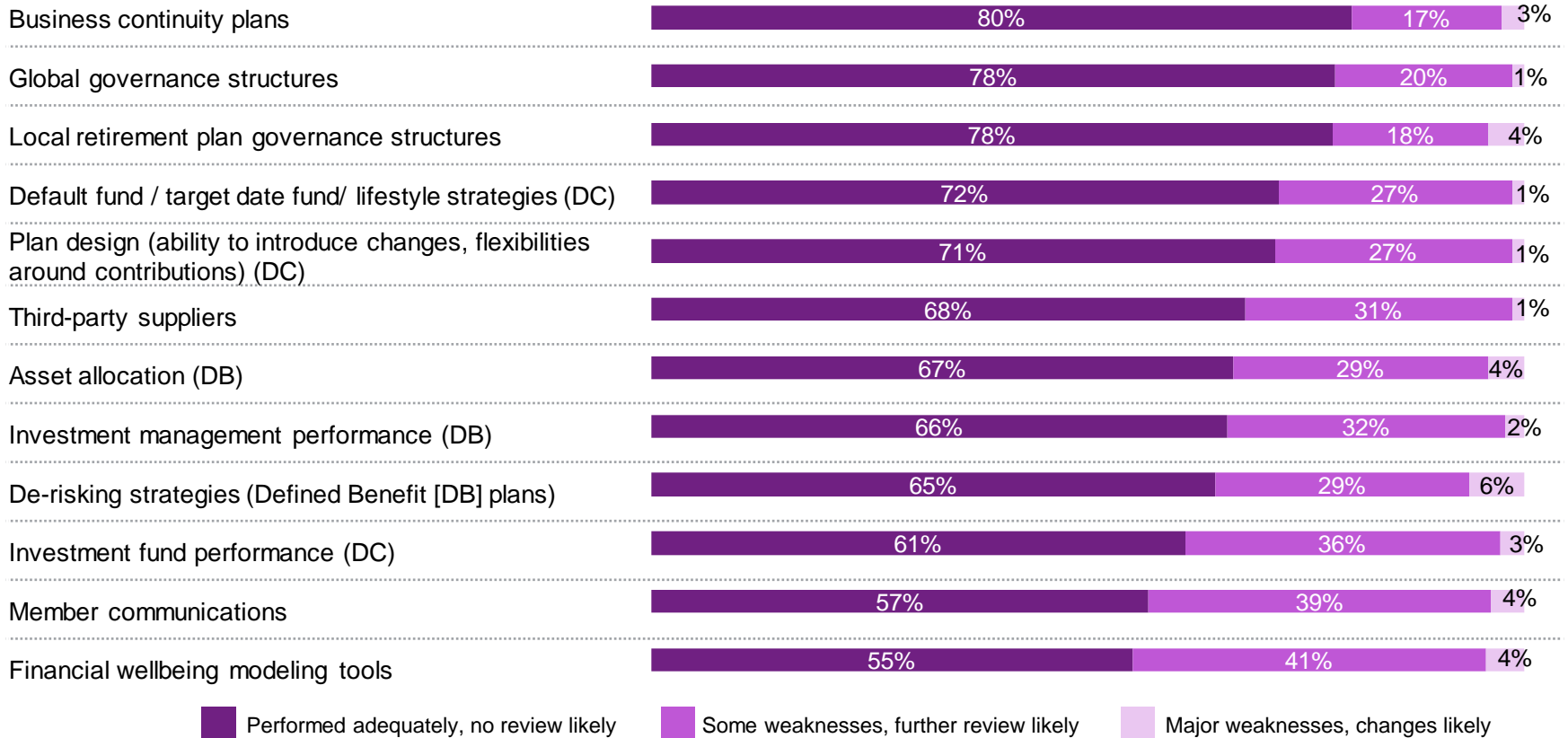
Please indicate what actions your organization has taken or is planning to take, with respect to tackling employee financial strain via your organization's retirement benefits in response to COVID-19.



Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Most HQs say their retirement plans performed adequately as a result of the pandemic

How has the management of your retirement plans performed, as a result of the pandemic and which areas might you consider requiring a review once the pandemic crisis is over?



Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.

Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Section 06: Wellbeing



Most multinational employers have taken actions to support employees' wellbeing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

What actions has your organization taken to support employee wellbeing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Offer new virtual solutions that are easy to implement to support work from home employees
(e.g., virtual workouts, virtual social gatherings)



Promote healthy weight / nutrition / physical activity for work from home employees



Assess immediate wellbeing needs for specific cohorts
(e.g., on-site employees, at-risk employees, furloughed)

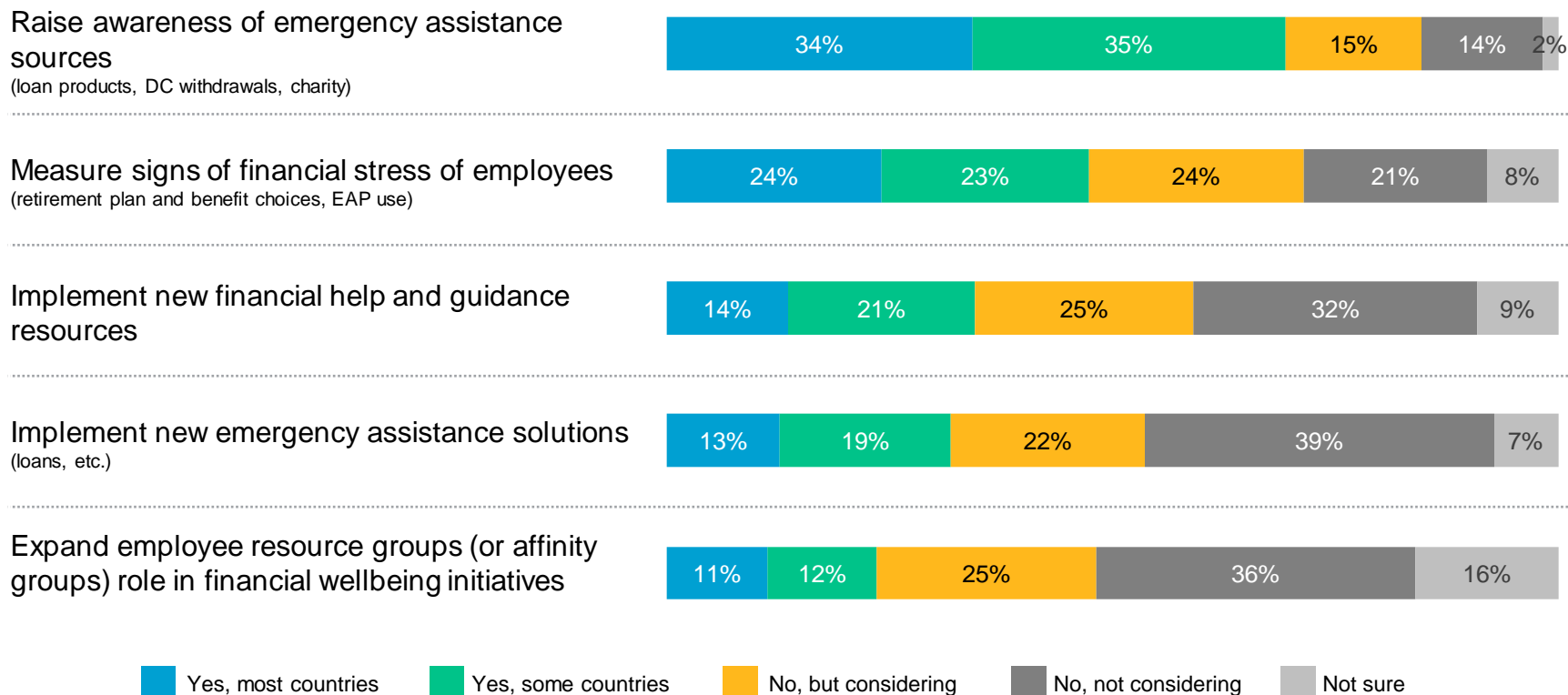


■ Yes, most countries
 ■ Yes, some countries
 ■ No, but considering
 ■ No, not considering
 ■ Not sure

Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Two thirds of multinational employers have raised awareness of emergency financial assistance sources

What actions has your organization taken to support employee wellbeing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?



Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Over 9 in 10 multinational employers are fostering opportunities for employees to connect for non-work purposes

What actions has your organization taken to support employee emotional wellbeing and mental health as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Foster opportunities for employees to connect for non-work purposes

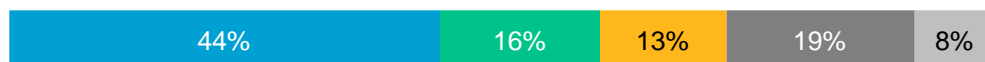
(e.g., virtual water cooler, virtual/video coffee breaks)



Train managers on managing and engaging a remote workforce



Promote affinity groups or employee resource groups to encourage employee discussions among those with common interests/situation



Train managers on recognizing signs of anxiety and/or depression and how to refer to resources

(Employee Assistance Program [EAP], etc.)



Measure employee anxiety during the current period

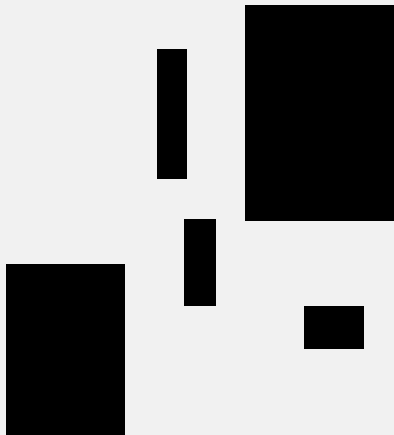
(e.g., potential illness, job loss)



■ Yes, most countries
 ■ Yes, some countries
 ■ No, but considering
 ■ No, not considering
 ■ Not sure

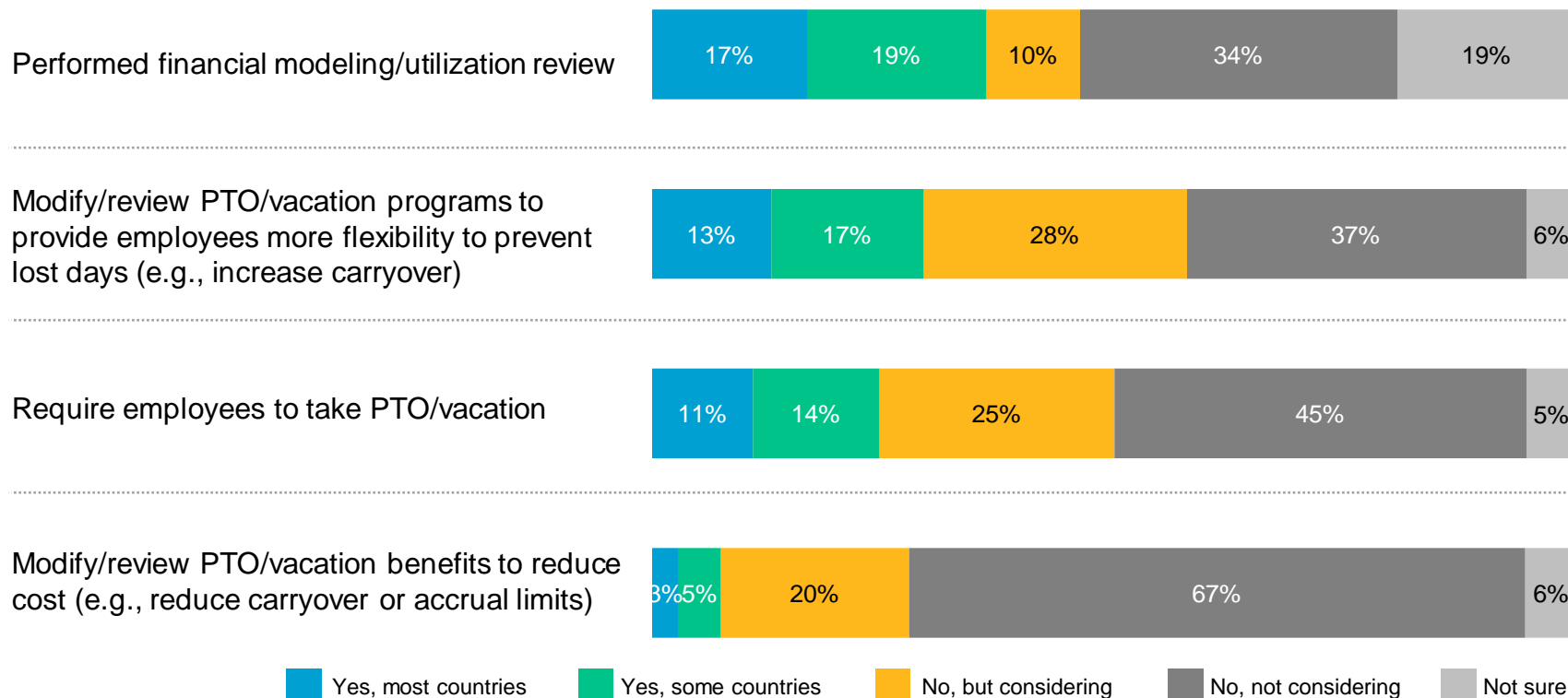
Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Section 07: Leave arrangements



Nearly one third of multinational employers are looking to add flexibility to PTO/vacation programs to prevent lost days due to the build up of surplus hours during the pandemic

Has your organization modified or plan to modify the paid time off (PTO) or vacation benefits it provides employees?



Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

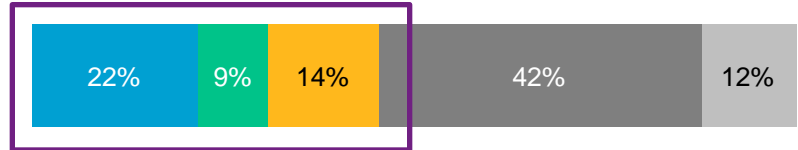
Many HQs issued common company policy or minimum standards for sickness leave; most also apply to hourly paid

Considering your salaried employees, has your organization issued any global guidance or minimum standards to your businesses regarding sickness leave policy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Common company policy across countries

Minimum standards across (local variation in levels above minimum)

■ Yes, most countries
 ■ Yes, some countries
 ■ No, but considering
 ■ No, not considering
 ■ Not sure



The company policies / guidelines also apply to...

Hourly paid employees

91% (N=32)

Contract workers

36% (N=33)

The company policies / guidelines also apply to...

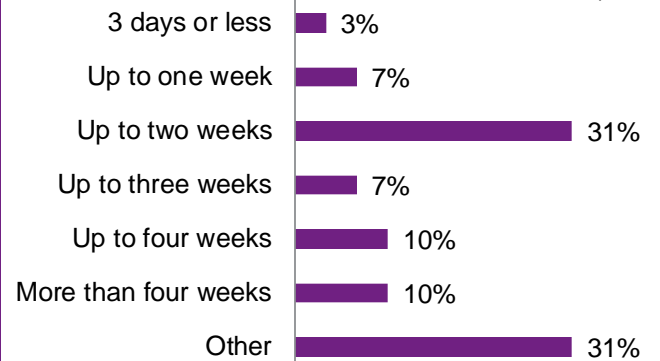
Hourly paid employees

89% (N=27)

Contract workers

25% (N=28)

What is this minimum guarantee or commitment? (N=29)



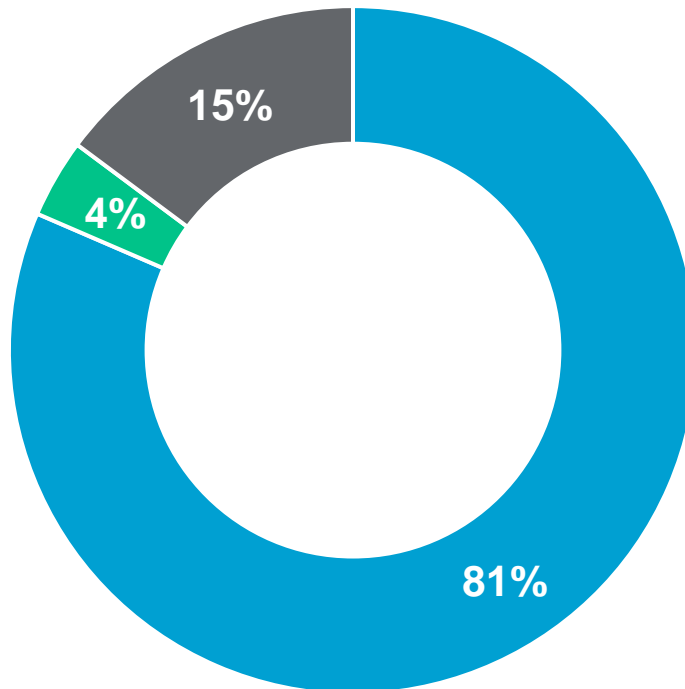
Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Section 08: Globally Mobile Employees



Majority of employers who offer emergency healthcare coverage to business travelers provide for treatment of COVID-19

If you offer your international business travelers' coverage for urgent/emergency health care through a Business Travel or Personal Accident plan, does your plan provide coverage for the testing and treatment of COVID-19?



- Yes – no exclusion for epidemic/pandemic illnesses (or exclusion waived)
- Yes – our organization purchased coverage for an additional premium
- No – our plan excludes all treatment for epidemic/pandemic illnesses

Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective.
Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Nearly all multinational employers offer international assignees health care coverage without pandemic exclusions

83%



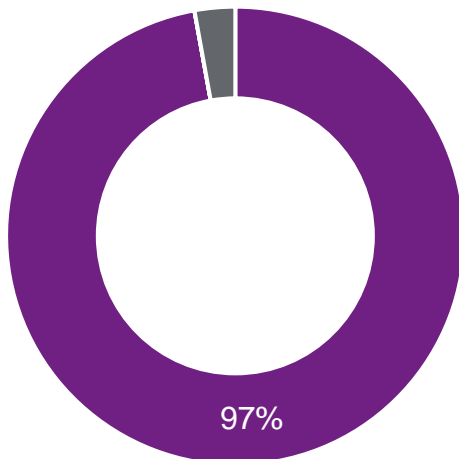
organizations have international assignees (expatriates either repatriated or not)

93%



organizations provide health care coverage for international assignees via a global health plan*

If you offer your international assignees health care coverage through a global health plan, does your plan provide coverage for the testing and treatment of COVID-19?^



- Yes – no exclusion for epidemic/pandemic illnesses (or exclusion waived)
- Yes – our organization purchased coverage for an additional premium
- No – our plan excludes all treatment for epidemic/pandemic illnesses

Note: “Not sure” and “Not applicable” options excluded.

Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective. * Respondents have international assignees.

^ Respondents have international assignees and provide health care coverage for international assignees via a global health plan.

Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Multinational employers confirm high-value services critical for their international assignees

To what extent are the following services important to your international assignees?

Support for preemptive or medically necessary evacuation through assistance vendor
(i.e. ISOS, Generali Assist, etc.)



Provision of personal protective equipment
(masks, hand sanitizer, disinfectants, etc.)



Telehealth
(web- or app-based consultation)



EAP (Employee Assistance Program) counseling

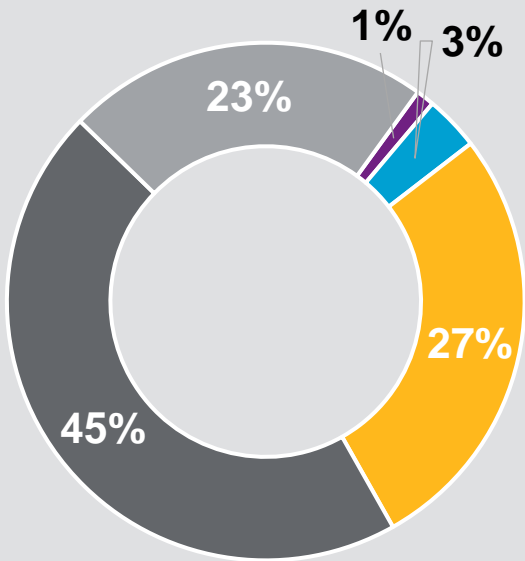


■ To a great extent (4 or 5) ■ To a moderate extent (3) ■ Not at all (1 or 2)

Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Percentages indicate "To a great extent" or "To a very great extent".
Sample: Respondents have international assignees. Respondents who provide health care coverage for international assignees via a global health plan.
Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

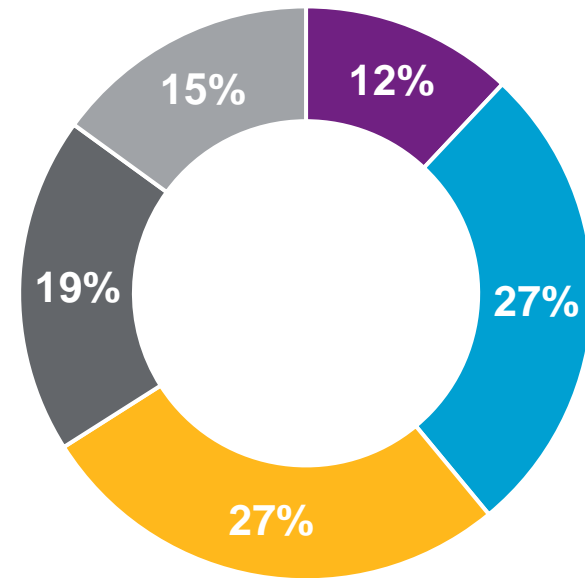
Only 4% of multinational employers have repatriated “all or most” of their international assignees as a result of COVID-19

How many expats have been fully repatriated (early end to assignment)?



How many repatriation cases were based on a company decision?

If any

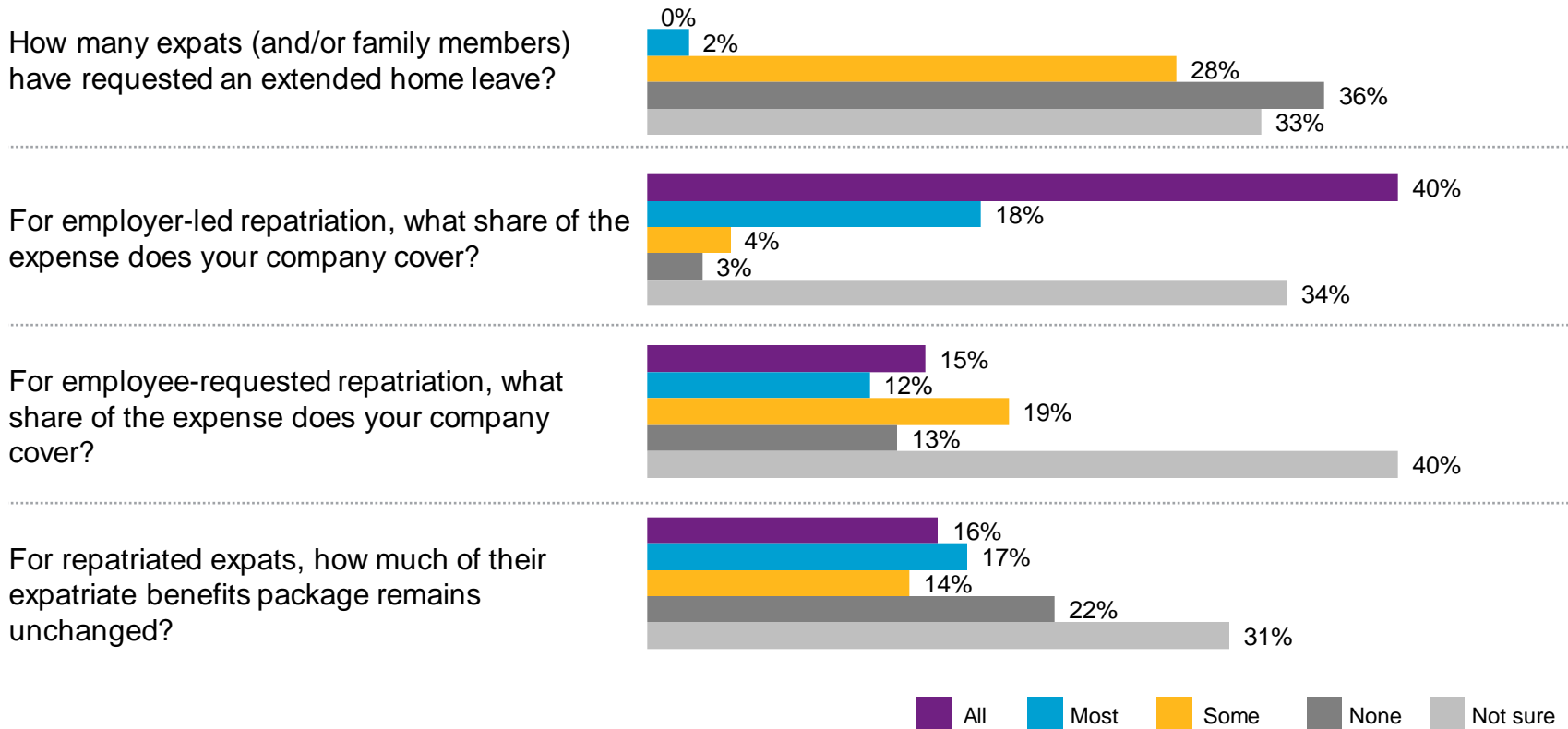


■ All ■ Most ■ Some ■ None ■ Not sure

Note: “Not applicable” option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. N=26
 Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective. Respondents have international assignees.
 Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Most of the expenses for international assignees who are repatriated due to the pandemic are covered by the company

Do the following apply to all, most or some of your international assignees?



Note: "Not applicable" option excluded. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Sample: Respondents completed the survey from the multinational governance and policies perspective. Respondents have international assignees.

Source: 2020 COVID-19 Benefits Survey, HQ perspective.

Additional resources

Visit our dedicated resources page for ongoing updates:

<https://www.willistowerswatson.com/en-us/insights/trending-topics/covid-19-coronavirus>

