

Questionnaire on Working Conditions in Call Centres v1.71

1. You

First of all, a few questions about you that do not reveal your identity yet. Only at the end of the interview, we ask you if you want to give us your address, etc., so that we can stay in touch. If not, the questionnaire remains anonymous.

1.1 Age

1.2 Gender?

1.3 Citizenship/Residence status e.g. FRG

1.4 How long have you worked in the call centre?

1.5 Have you worked in call centres before? In how many and how long?

2. The Company:

2.1 Company name, address, telephone number, etc.

2.2 Company size:

2.2.1 Is the call centre where you work a sole proprietorship or the subsidiary or subsidiary of a larger company? If the latter, of which company?

2.2.2 Was the company formerly part of a company and has it now been outsourced?

2.2.3 How large is the call centre area of your company?

2.2.4 How many phones or workstations are there?

2.2.5 How much revenue does the call centre make?

2.3 Is the call centre specialized?

2.3.1 Inbound or Outbound?

2.3.2 Are there any specific products or clients that are tailored to the services of the call centre?

2.3.3 Are partial services provided to other companies or done by other companies?

2.3.3.1 If yes, which one?

2.3.3.2 Do different companies work in 'your' office? What is the division of labour between companies? Are they forming a network?

2.4 What is your assessment of the situation of the call centre?

2.4.1 Is the call centre busy?

2.4.2 Are there seasonal fluctuations?

2.4.2.1 What effects do these have?

2.5 Staff of the company:

2.5.1 How many workers are there in the call centre?

2.5.2 What is the numerical ratio between men/women and Germans/migrants?

2.5.3 What are the employment relationships? How many permanent employees, students, temporary agency workers and other temporary workers are there?

2.5.4 Is there a collective agreement? Does it apply to you?

2.5.5 Are there any colleagues whose jobs or wages are financed by public funding?

2.5.6 Which basic qualifications/level of education is present/must exist amongst your colleagues?

2.6 Works council and unions:

2.6.1 Is there a works council (for the whole enterprise or the call centre)?

2.6.1.1 If yes: is the works council responsible for you?

2.6.1.2 If not, would you find it important to be involved? What role would you like to play?

2.6.2 What is the works council doing? Do you find your interests represented by him? Have your individual interests been represented by the works council? As?

2.6.3 Which unions are represented in the call centre (in the whole company)? What is the degree of organization?

2.6.4 Are there trade union representatives?

2.6.4.1 What are they doing?

2.6.4.2 What is your relationship to them?

2.6.5 Do you think your interests are represented by the union?

2.6.6 What is the relationship between works council and unions? What is the relationship between works council and management? How does this work in practice?

2.6.7 Are you a union or works council member or representative?

3. Your personal circumstances

3.1 What is your educational background? Are you currently a student?

3.2 How do you live? (Alone, with family, etc.)

3.3 Life and work

3.3.1 How did you get this job?

3.3.2 Why do you do this job (interest, training, livelihood, extras, pay debts)?

3.3.3 How many hours per week do you work in the call centre?

3.3.4 What is your monthly income from working in the call centre? Wages from other work? From other sources (parents, benefits, grants)? What is your total monthly income (gross/net)?

3.3.4.1 Is this sufficient to live on?

3.3.4.2 Do you need to help others (e.g. friends, partner, children)?

3.3.5 Do you have any further obligations (e.g. another job, studies etc.)?

3.3.5.1 If yes, what are these? Can they be managed together or are there problems? What are these? Do you feel that is a special concern?

3.3.6 Does the work fit your living conditions?

3.3.7 Do you frequently change your job? Why?

3.3.7.1 Have you had better or worse jobs previously? What were these and how were they better or worse?

3.3.8 Do you want to change jobs?

3.3.8.1 If yes, why?

3.4 Life Risks:

3.4.1 Are you covered by health insurance? (family insurance, compulsorily insured with employer's contribution, completely private)

3.4.2 Are you covered by pension insurance? Have you already made any claims?

3.4.3 Are you insured for unemployment? Have you already made any claims?

3.4.4 Are you protected against occupational disability, privately or via statutory social security?

3.4.5 Are the listed risks even a problem for you? Do you feel socially secure? Do you feel your life or work situation is "precarious"?

4. The work process

4.1 Please describe your work: What are you doing? We are still developing preliminary questions on this topic. If something important is missing in the following, please tell us.

4.1.1 What kind of "product" are you providing or selling?

- Pure information service
- You are producing something (membership, ordering, booking ...)
- You handle complaints
- Other (what?)

4.1.1.1 Can you identify with this, do you care about, or have a problem with it?

4.1.2 What kind of customers do you have to deal with?

4.1.2.1 Business customers or private individuals

4.1.2.2 Long-term customer relationship or one-time contacts

4.1.2.3 do the customers pay for the service?

- via the telephone bill (Ortstarif, 0180er, 0190er)
- for a product, regardless of the phone call

4.1.2.4 Do the customers offer compliments, make jokes, cause pressure, make life hectic ...

4.1.2.5 Are the customers predominantly: pleasant, indifferent, unpleasant? Do you want to help them, to get some peace, to throw a spanner in the works?

4.1.2.6 Do you often have to catch anger, anger, frustration of the customers. Are you offended, accused, shouted at by the customers? Do you always have to be friendly? Is "the customer always right"? Are there rules for cases of escalation? Do you meet customers in-between without a telephone line?

4.1.2.7 What do you think about "total customer orientation" in the service sector?

4.1.3 Is this the activity for which you were hired? If not, do you feel this is a positive or negative, and why? Is it more varied, more challenging, more stressful?

4.2 Is your work process divided into several component parts?

4.2.1 Try to describe the division of labour involved?

4.2.2 Do you think the division of labour makes sense? Why/why not?

4.3 What kinds of disturbances / interruptions / disorganization occur?
(Computer failure, lines busy, shift plan does not work ...)

4.3.1 How are these disruptions handled?

4.3.2 How do the colleagues react? Are the disturbances at your / your expense?

4.4 Do you contribute positively to the work process?

4.4.1 Is this rewarded (bosses / colleagues)?

4.5 Are there opportunities for promotion? Which?

4.6 Are you under pressure (and from where)?

4.6.1 How is your work performance monitored / monitored?

4.6.1.1 Does the monitoring take place exclusively over supervisors or through colleagues?

4.6.1.2 What technical means are used to monitor work?

Does anyone hear your phone calls (at times)? If so, do you know that this is punishable?

4.6.1.3 Are the results of the monitoring made transparent?

4.6.1.4 Are there ways to evade surveillance?

4.7 Do you work with information that is relevant to security or privacy?

4.7.1 Which rules / regulations for dealing with security or data protection relevant data exist?

4.8 How would you describe the leadership style/working atmosphere in your company (authoritarian, hierarchical, team, management by stress)?

5. Working conditions

5.1 Employment contract:

5.1.1 Do you have a written employment contract?

5.1.2 If yes, what contract do you have:

- limited unlimited?
- with/without job description?
- on 640, - DM basis? (Do you pay to claim?)
- Fee or work contract; (Seemingly) independent?
- Temporary employment agency (temporary employment)?

5.1.2.1 Are you satisfied with it?

5.1.2.2 Was the contract content known before the signature?

5.2 Qualifications:

5.2.1 What requirements did you have to bring along for the job (formal / informal)?

5.2.1.1 Do you consider the required conditions to be useful?

5.2.2 Is there training?

5.2.2.1 In what is training provided?

5.2.2.2 If yes, for how long?

5.2.2.3 Has the training been paid and if so, how?

5.2.3 Do you think that your qualification is sufficient?

5.3 Working Hours:

5.3.1 From when to when is the call centre working daily? On weekends and holidays?

5.3.2 When do you work (daily working hours)?

5.3.3 How are working hours determined (are there regular working hours, how long term is planned)?

5.3.3.1 Do you have any influence on it and if so how?

5.3.3.2 Is there on-call service?

5.3.3.3 Is homework involved?

5.3.3.4 How soon can you be forced to do extra work?

5.3.3.5 What is the practice here?

Are there ways to fight it?

5.3.3.6 How is overtime handled?

5.3.4 Can you temporarily withdraw informally during work hours? How and how long?

5.3.5 Are you satisfied with it?

5.4 Holiday and illness:

5.4.1 Is there a holiday regulation?

5.4.1.1 How much vacation do you have?

5.4.1.2 How is the holiday paid?

5.4.1.3 Are there any problems if you want to take a vacation? Can you determine the location of your holiday freely? Can you understand the conversion of your holiday entitlement to actual holidays?

5.4.2 How is illness handled?

5.4.2.1 Is there continuation of sick pay?

5.4.2.2 Do you work despite illness? Why?

5.4.2.3 Can you celebrate ill? In which extensive?

5.4.3 Are there motivational / reintegration interviews? How are these discussions going?

5.5 Conditions at the workplace

5.5.1 Do you have your own workspace?

5.5.2 Is the office open-plan?

5.5.3 Are you working on a PC? Is it connected? Connected to the telephone system? Do you use the phone over the computer (do you have to enter the number)? Which software do you work with? On Windows xx?

5.5.4 Is your workplace ergonomically designed? How are the workstations equipped? Monitor or LCD screen? Flicker? How big is the screen? Which distance to the screen can you take during work? Does it reflect? How is the lighting? Do you need to turn your head? Offset keyboard? Wrist rest? Can you adjust screen settings (font, window sizes, colors, mouse speed ...)?

How big is your workspace? Is the table height-adjustable? The chair?

Do you have during / after work: pain (back, arms), blurred vision, difficulty concentrating? Are you exhausted after work? Is there a company-organized eye test (regular / one-time)?

5.5.5 Are there regular paid break times (when/for how long)?

5.5.6 Do you know the guidelines for VDU workstations?

5.5.7 Are the guidelines for VDU workplaces met?

5.6 Is there a break room? Is there a smoking room?

5.7 Do you get free drinks? Is cheap food available (canteen, restaurant vouchers)?

6. The rewards

6.1 What do you get for a salary/commission/piece-rate?

- 6.2 What is your hourly wage (gross)?
- 6.3 Do you get salary?
- 6.4 Do you know how your pay is composed?
- 6.5 Are there additional rewards (e.g. holiday pay, Christmas bonus, overtime pay, night supplement, weekend or holiday surcharge)?
 - 6.5.1 If yes, how much for what?
- 6.6 Are you satisfied with the pay system, do you benefit from it?
 - 6.6.1 Does the wage correspond to what you expected at the beginning of work?
- 6.7 Is there equal pay for equal work?
- 6.8 Is the wage differentiation justified and comprehensible?
 - 6.8.1 Disadvantaged / Does the pay system favour certain groups of colleagues? Do certain groups of colleagues typically find themselves in certain pay groups or the like?
- 6.9 Can the wages improve unexpectedly (private calls, theft, incorrect writing down of working hours)?

7. The colleagues

- 7.1 Is there a large fluctuation in the workforce (if so, why)?
- 7.2 Are there colleagues who have been working in the company for some years?
 - 7.2.1 With what perspective?
 - 7.2.2 What role do these have?
- 7.3 Do you often work with the same people?
- 7.4 Are there any cliques within the workforce? Are they important? In what way?
- 7.5 Are there permanent divisions among the colleagues?
 - 7.5.1 What are these based on (conflicts of interest, "cultural" differences, etc.)?
- 7.6 How would you describe the relationship with your colleagues?
- 7.7 Are there any friendships that go beyond the operational framework, which is simply being a colleague? Are they important in terms of work?
- 7.8 Communication:
 - 7.8.1 What communication opportunities are there in the workplace (smoking room / canteen)?
 - 7.8.2 Can you talk to each other during work hours at the workplace?
 - 7.8.3 Are your working and remuneration conditions a topic of conversation?
- 7.9 Are there disputes / conflicts within the workforce?
 - 7.9.1 If yes, about what?
 - 7.9.2 To what extent are different employment relationships (core staff/temporary workers) or internal hierarchies responsible for this?
 - 7.9.3 How do these conflicts affect day to day work?

8. Arguments and Conflicts

- 8.1 Are there conflicts with supervisors or company management? If so, over what (money, working hours, termination)?
 - 8.1.1 Who is directly involved in these conflicts?

- 8.1.2 How do the colleagues behave (solidarity, lack of solidarity, ignorance)?
 - 8.1.2.1 Have you ever been involved in such conflicts? In what role?
- 8.1.3 Are there colleagues who intervene more frequently in conflicts / act as spokespersons for the workforce?
 - 8.1.3.1 Does this affect your position within your colleagues? (Which?)
 - 8.1.3.2 Are these people particularly at risk, subject to special repression by superiors?
 - 8.1.3.3 What kind of workplace do these people have?
- 8.1.4 How do works councils or trade unions react to the disputes?
 - 8.1.4.1 What is your opinion of this?

9. Your interest

- 9.1 How did you find this interview?
 - 9.1.1 What was missing but important to you?
- 9.2 Are you interested in political/practical action in call centres? Also, in 'your' call centre?
 - 9.2.1 What possibilities do you see in your area?
 - 9.2.2 Could/should the works council or the union play a role?
 - 9.2.3 Are you interested in our collection of material on working conditions in call centres?
 - 9.2.4 Are you interested in meeting call centre agents?
 - 9.2.5 Are you interested in attending an event on Call Centres, actively participating in it (reporting on experiences, presentation ...), or preparing one?
 - 9.2.6 Are you interested in our further work on call centres? Would you like to be informed? Would you like to participate?
 - 9.2.7 Are you giving us your identity so that we can keep in touch with you?
 - 9.2.7.1 Name?
 - 9.2.7.2 Address?
 - 9.2.7.3 Phone number?
 - 9.2.7.4 Email address?