

Early exit from work in Ireland: An analysis of LFS Data

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Background

- Extending working lives: key policy goal in Europe and Ireland (DPER, 2016; European Foundation, 2012)
 - The EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014–2020 includes ‘taking account of the ageing of the EU’s workforce’ as a major health & safety challenge.
 - Workers leave employment for reasons other than illness/injury, including family obligations and voluntary retirement (King and Pickard, 2013; Warren and Kelloway, 2010)

Health & Work related illness and older workers

- Work-related musculoskeletal disorders are more common among older age groups (Russell et al., 2016; EU-OSHA, 2016a).
- Work-related stress, anxiety, depression is lowest among workers over 65, peaks at 45-54 yrs then drops (Russell et al. 2016).
- Age is not a determinant of performance or ability to work (reviews by EU OSHA 2016; Borsh-Supan 2013)
- *Biological ageing* varies across individuals and influenced by past and current working conditions; experience compensates for any deterioration in physical abilities; adjustments to tasks, hours can accommodate biological ageing
- Social construction of age – stereotypes/policies



Work related injury and older workers

- Younger workers and inexperienced workers are the most at risk of workplace injury (Crawford et al., 2010; Khanzode et al., 2012).
- Irish research finds injury declines with age, even when differences in sector & occupation taken into account (Russell et al., 2015)
- Older workers over-represented in fatal injuries (HSA reports)
- Injury rates are lower for older workers, but accidents involving older workers are likely to result in more serious injuries, permanent disabilities or death when compared to younger workers (EU OSHA, 2016a; Robertson and Tracy, 1998).

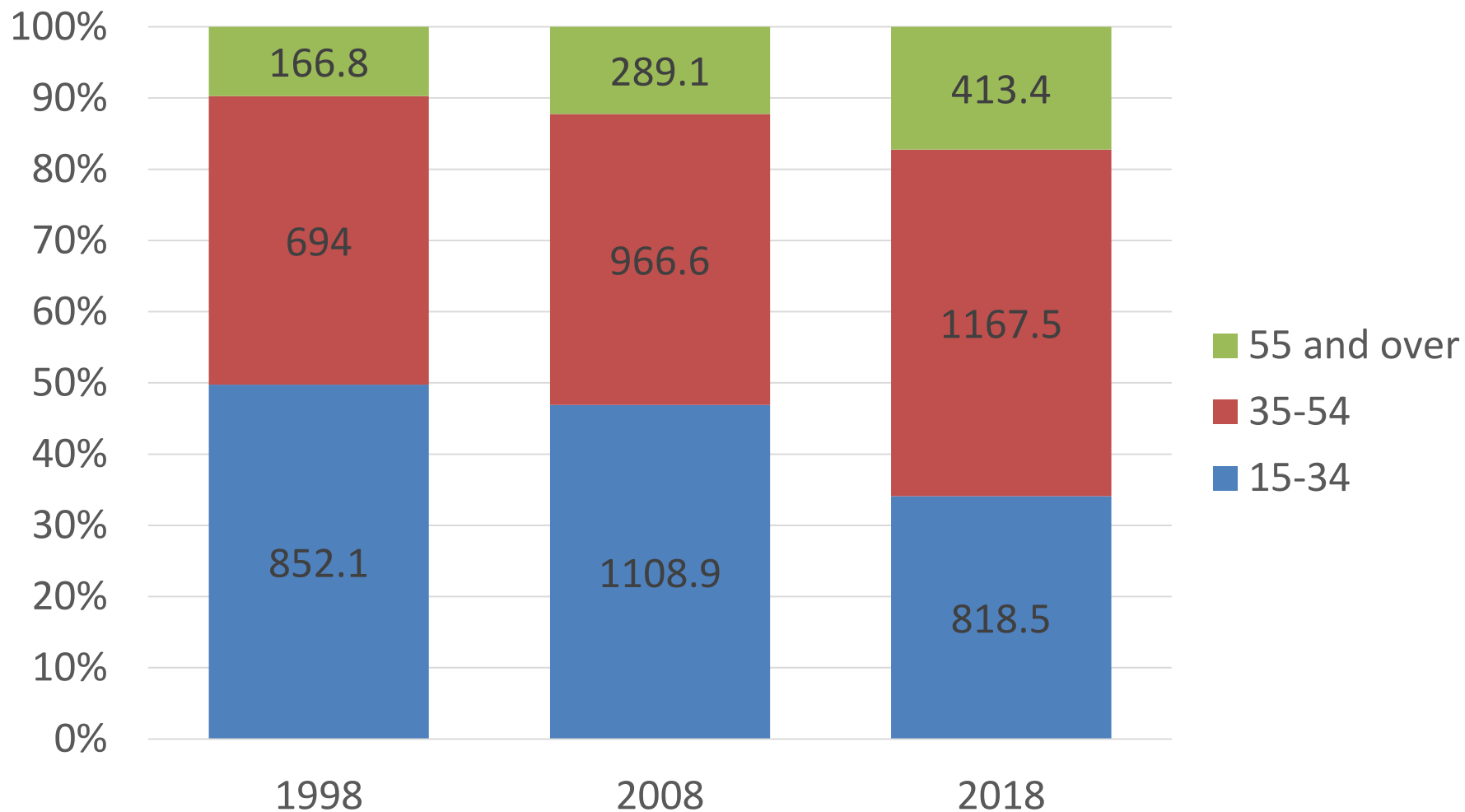
Research Questions

- *Which sectors and occupations are best at retaining older workers?*
- *What are the reasons workers give for early exit? Do these reasons differ by sector or occupation?*

Data and analysis

- Data
 - Labour Force Survey Q4 2017- Q3 **2018**
- Sample definition
 - **Older workers:** Respondents in employment 55 and over.
 - **Early leavers:** Respondents out of work for more than a year, who left employment in the last 8 years, and who were aged 55-59 when they left.

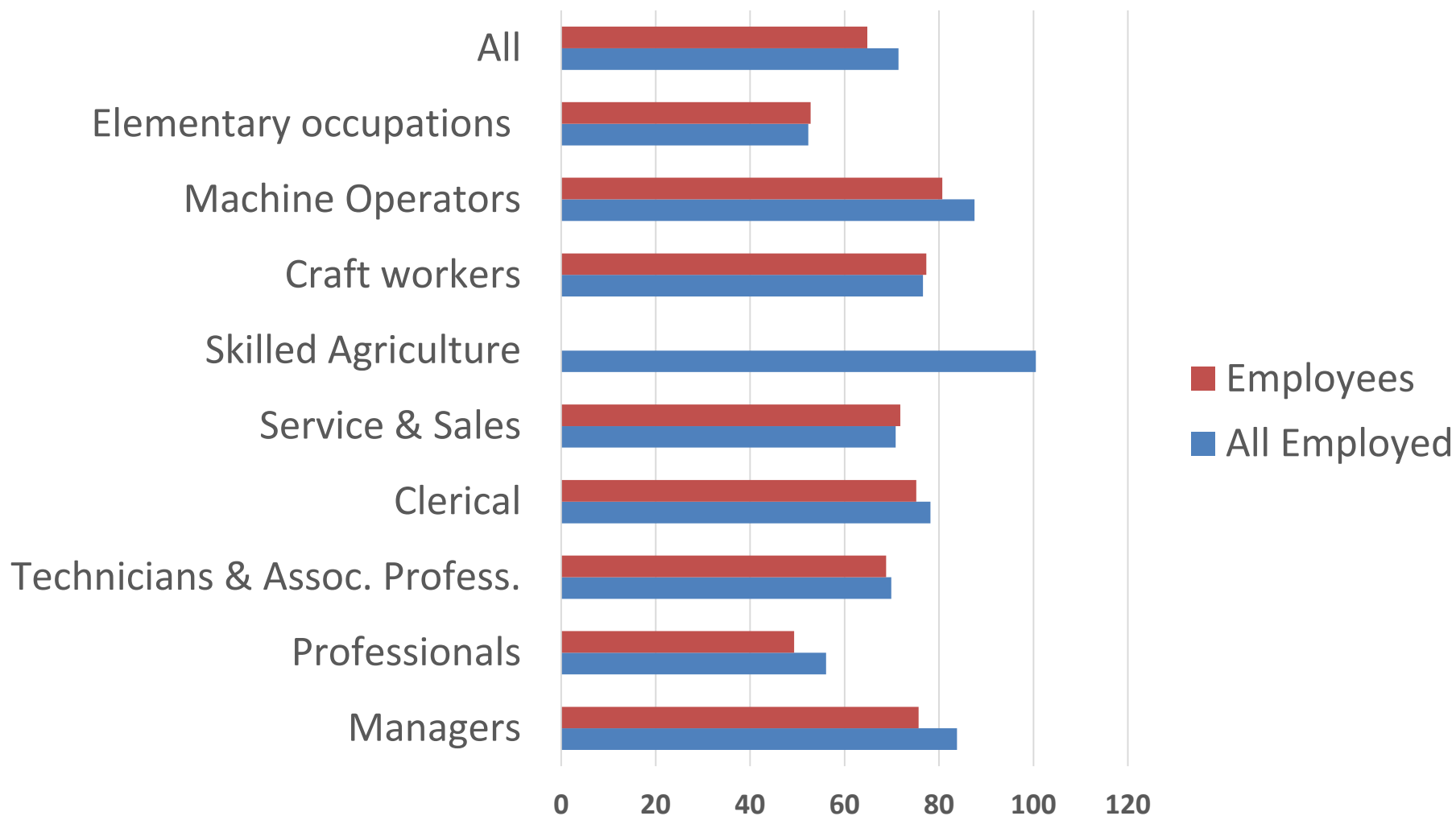
Age composition of Irish Labour Force (% & N), LFS



Retention Rates

- A retention rate calculates the proportion of employed aged 55 to 59 who are still in employment at age 60 to 65 years (OECD Older Workers Scorecard)
- Synthetic cohort. Compares numbers employed aged 60-65 years with 5 years or more job tenure in 2018 to the numbers of 55-59 years employed 5 years earlier (2013)

Retention rates by occupation 60-64 year olds, LFS 2018



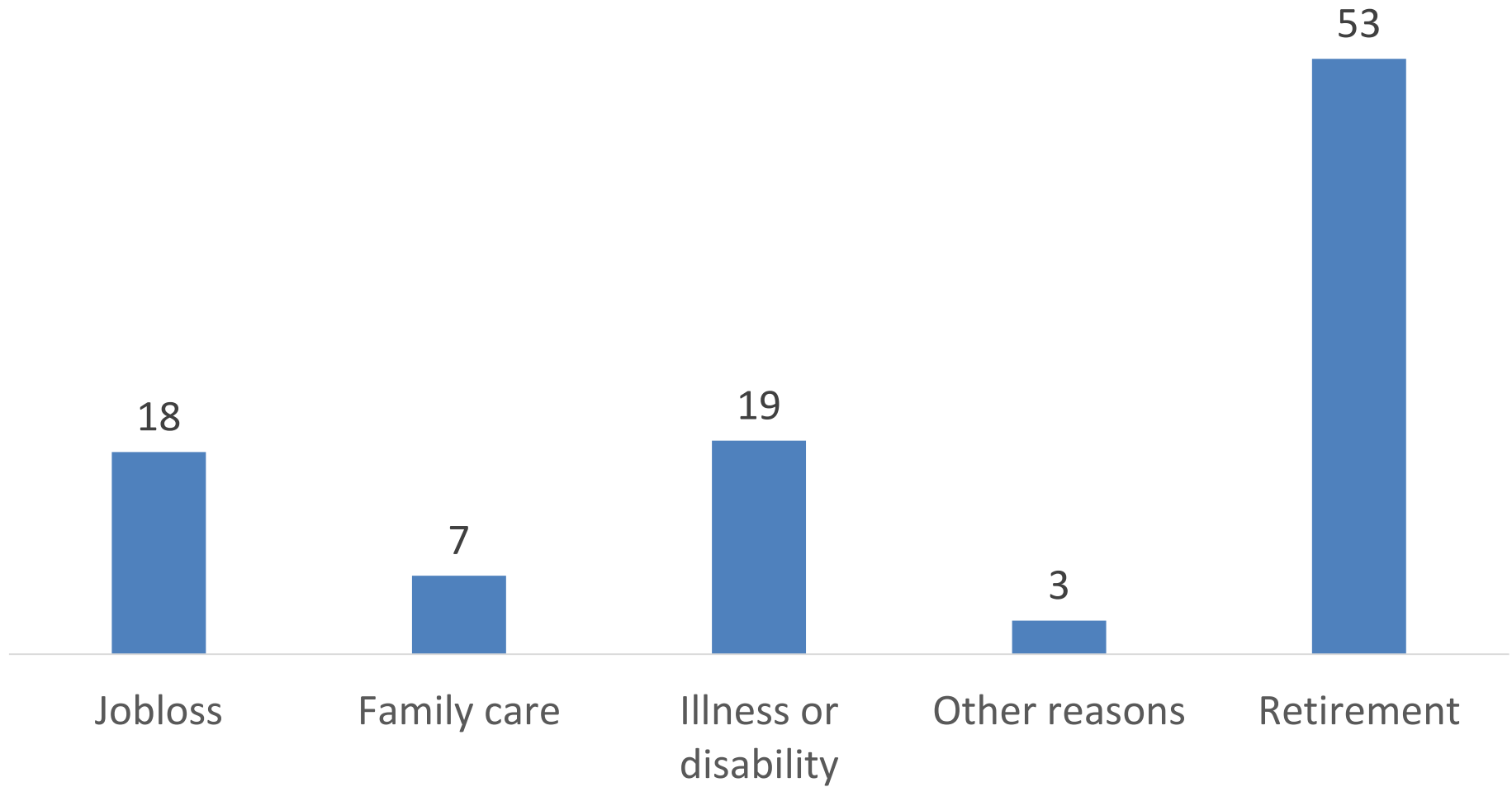


Early exit

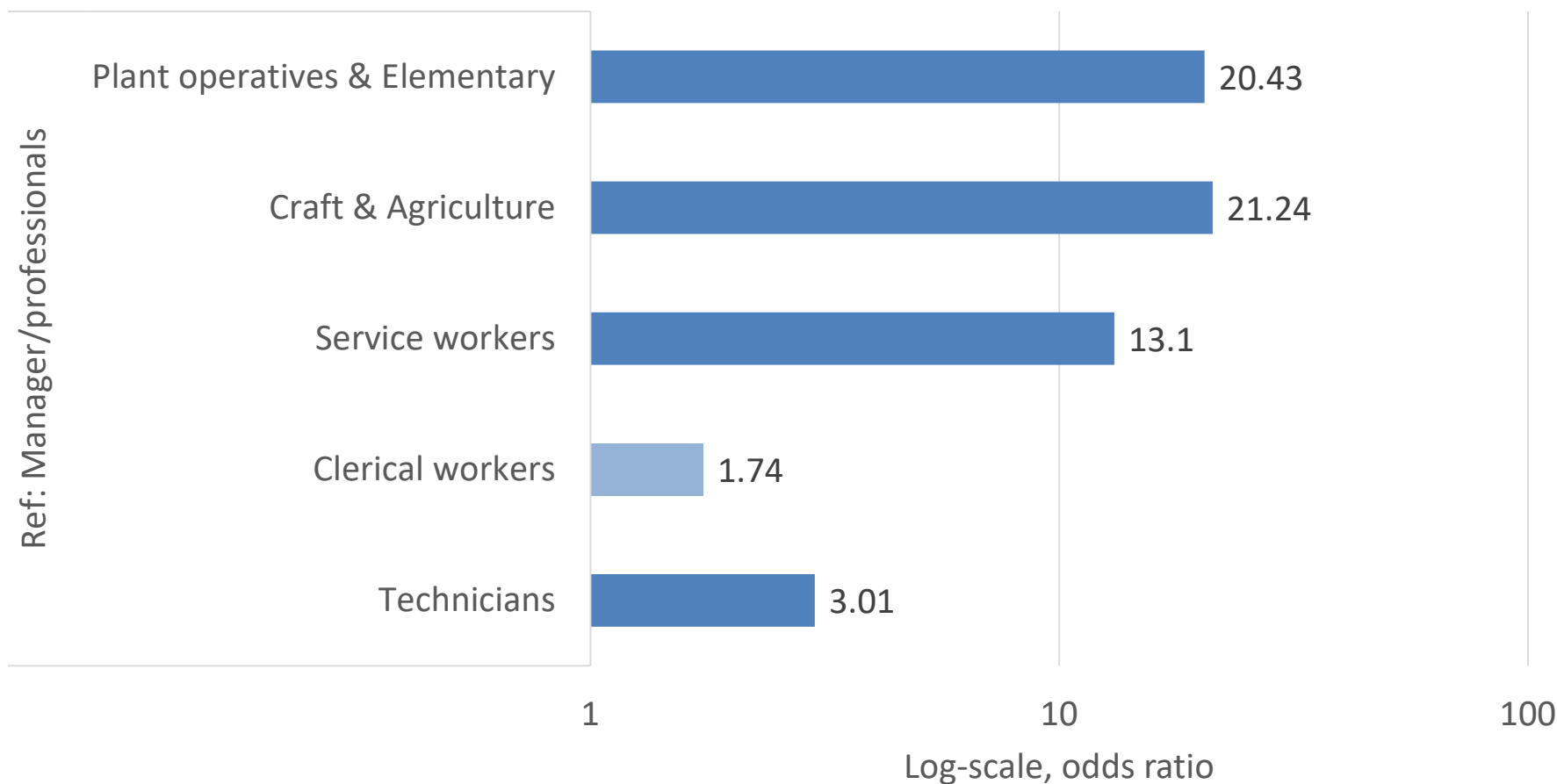
- Aged 55-59 years when they left work
- Select respondents out of work for at least a year to reduce chance that exit is not temporary
- Refer to the occupation and industry of their last job



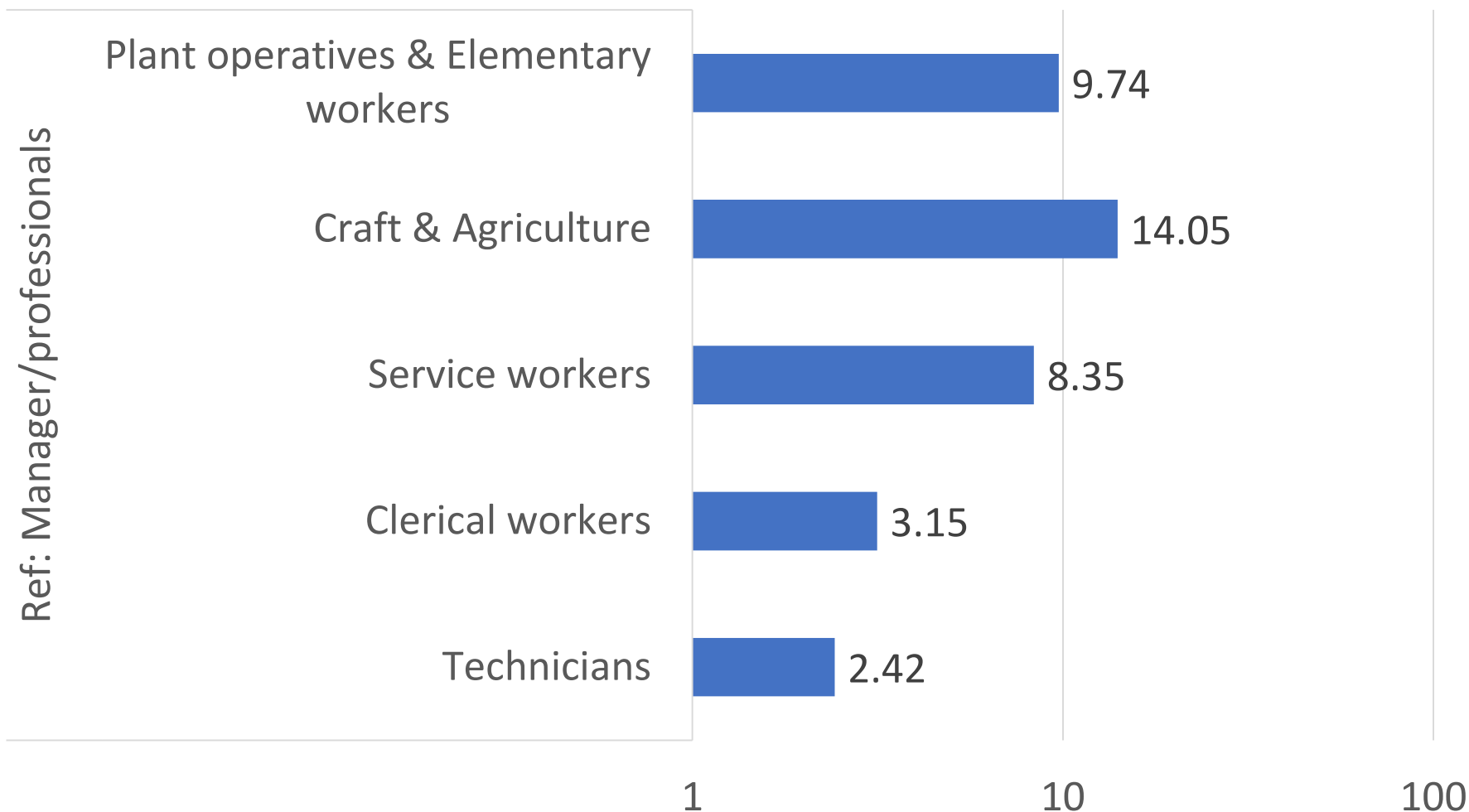
Reason for early exit (%), LFS 2018



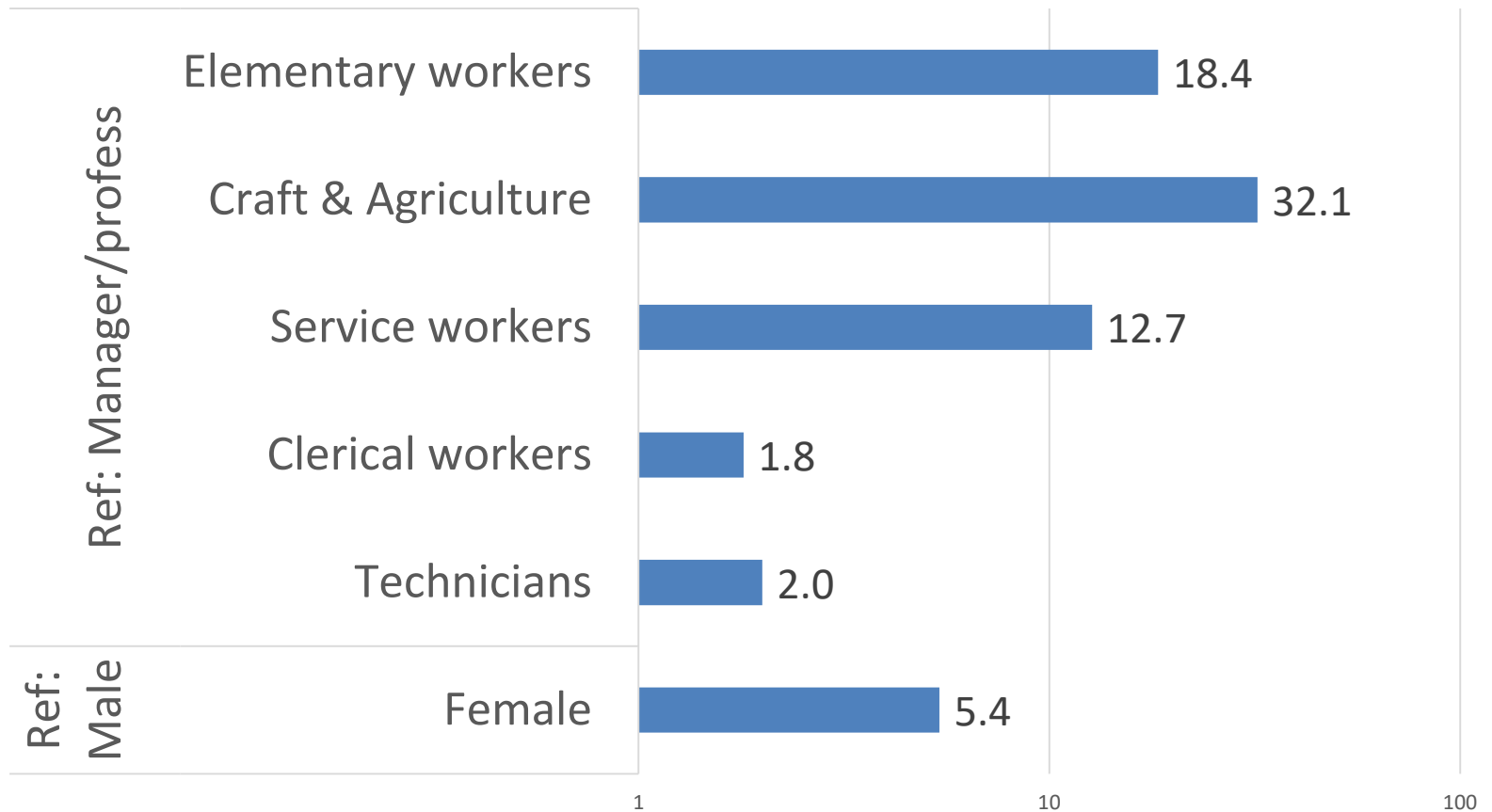
Odds of leaving due to “illness or disability” vs “early retirement”, LFS 2018



Odds of leaving due to “job loss” vs “early retirement”, LFS 2018



Odds of Leaving Early for Family Reasons vs Early retirement



Summary (1)

- Share of older workers of the total workforce increased.
- Selection effects likely: those with poorest working conditions and health already exited
- Retention of older workers has improved, but there are sectoral differences in retention
- Employee retention highest in admin services (white collar, secure)

Summary (2)

- Occupations: lowest retention at top and bottom of scale elementary and professional. Different reasons for early exit.
- Elementary (+ other manual) workers more likely to exit due to illness or job loss. Professional/managers due to early retirement
- 1 in 5 early exits due to illness/disability, another 1 in 5 to job loss, 1 in 17 due to family care.
- Suggests need for policies to support retention – flexibility, accommodation, caring support, and prevention of health/safety risks throughout working life.

Thank you!

Report available at www.esri.ie

Paper coming soon

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