



The multigenerational game

Creating a workplace that works for everybody

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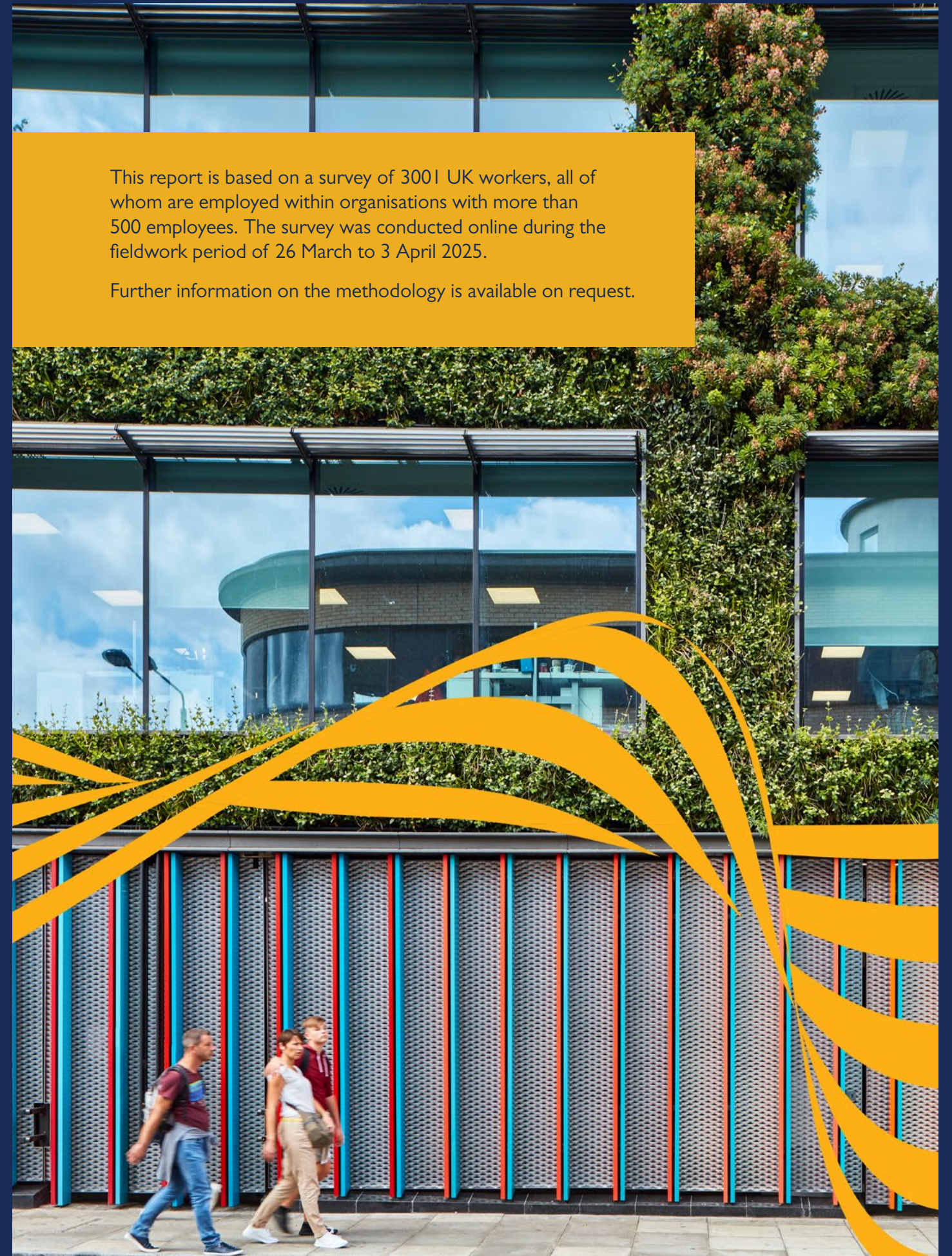
The risk of standing still

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About Mitie

This report is based on a survey of 3001 UK workers, all of whom are employed within organisations with more than 500 employees. The survey was conducted online during the fieldwork period of 26 March to 3 April 2025.

Further information on the methodology is available on request.





Today's multigenerational workplace: managing five generations under one roof

“75% of all workers in the UK say that a comfortable and well-designed physical workspace plays an important role in their job satisfaction.”

For the first time in history, UK workplaces are home to five distinct generations working side by side. From those looking towards retirement to Gen Z starting out in their careers, this unprecedented age span of over 50 years is creating both opportunities and tensions that demand strategic attention.

One thing is clear - across all generations, workplaces continue to play a vital role. Younger employees in particular place great importance on the physical workplace for their own productivity, career progression, professional development and social interaction.

The challenge for employers is how they use the workplace as a strategic asset. The aim should be to both attract and retain younger talent.

Their needs and wants don't always align with those of the older workforce. Therefore provision must also be made to make sure older colleagues have the tools and environment they need to thrive in their established careers.

Within this short report, we outline four key themes for organisations to consider when balancing the needs of their diverse workforce:

- 1. Nurturing younger talent through the workplace**
- 2. The generational technology paradox**
- 3. The neurodiversity inclusion gap**
- 4. Hybrid working is not just an age story**

1 PART ONE

Nurturing younger talent through the workplace

In today's evolving world of work, one truth stands out: development and progression are paramount for younger employees. For those entering the workforce or building early-career momentum, the workplace is more than just a location, it's a launchpad for growth. But, as our research shows, coming into the workplace is about more than just career progression.

As we would expect, it is the youngest members of the UK workforce - those aged 18-34 - who are more likely to see career progression and learning new skills as important motivators beyond factors such as salary.

However, just 33% of 18-24s and 40% of 25-34s are very satisfied with the opportunities for career progression and skills development provided by their employer. And, interestingly, the physical workplace itself plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of development and progression. Employees who spend more time on-site generally report higher satisfaction with their employer's support for career growth. This suggests that proximity fosters opportunity, whether through informal learning, spontaneous collaboration or access to leadership. In-person environments naturally facilitate mentorship and visibility, which are harder to replicate remotely.

Given this, the question becomes: how can employers encourage more regular on-site attendance without resorting to mandates? The answer lies in rethinking the workplace experience, not through compulsion, but through attraction. The "carrot" approach is not only more sustainable but also more aligned with the values of today's workforce.

Figure 1: % saying they are motivated by opportunities for growth and skills development

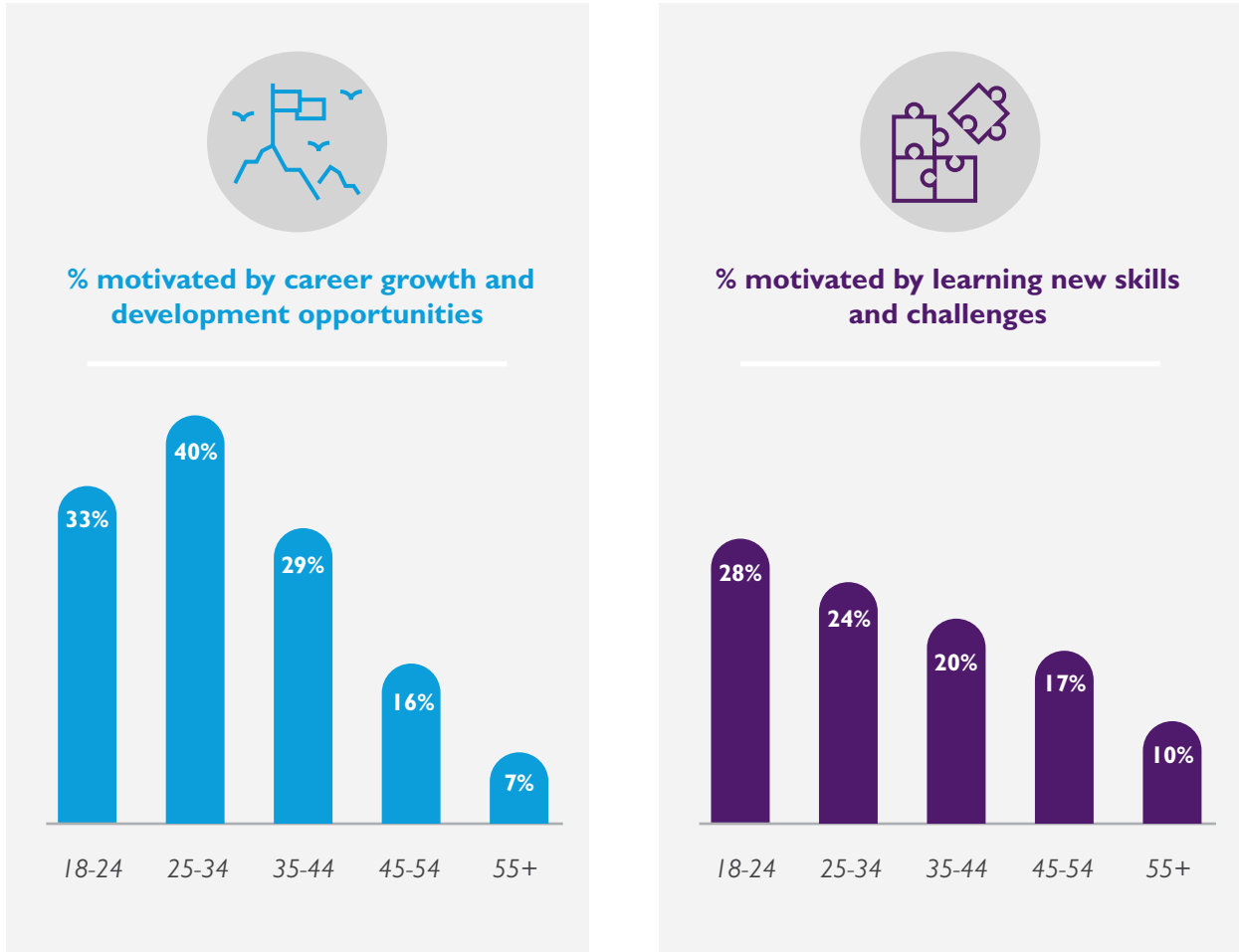
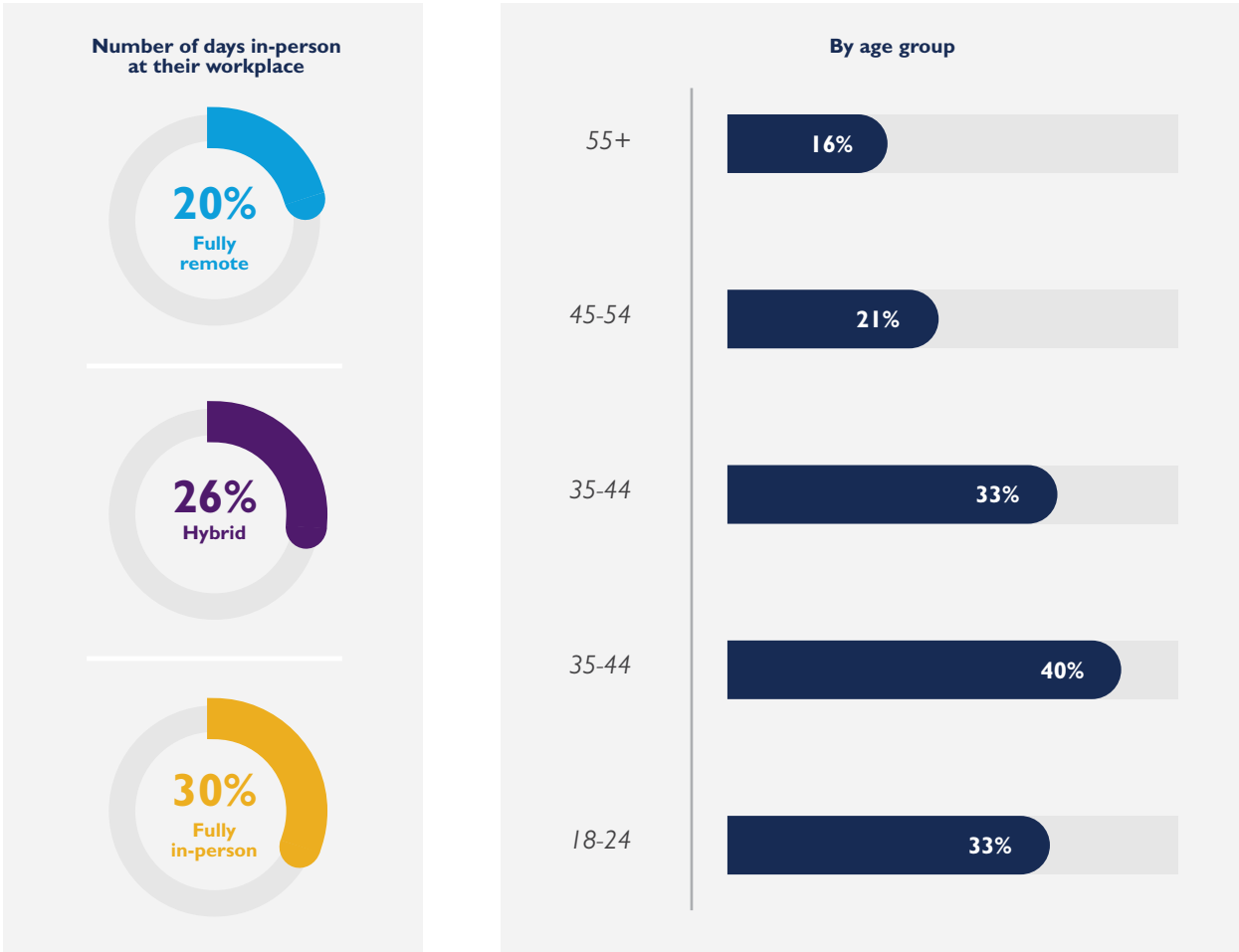


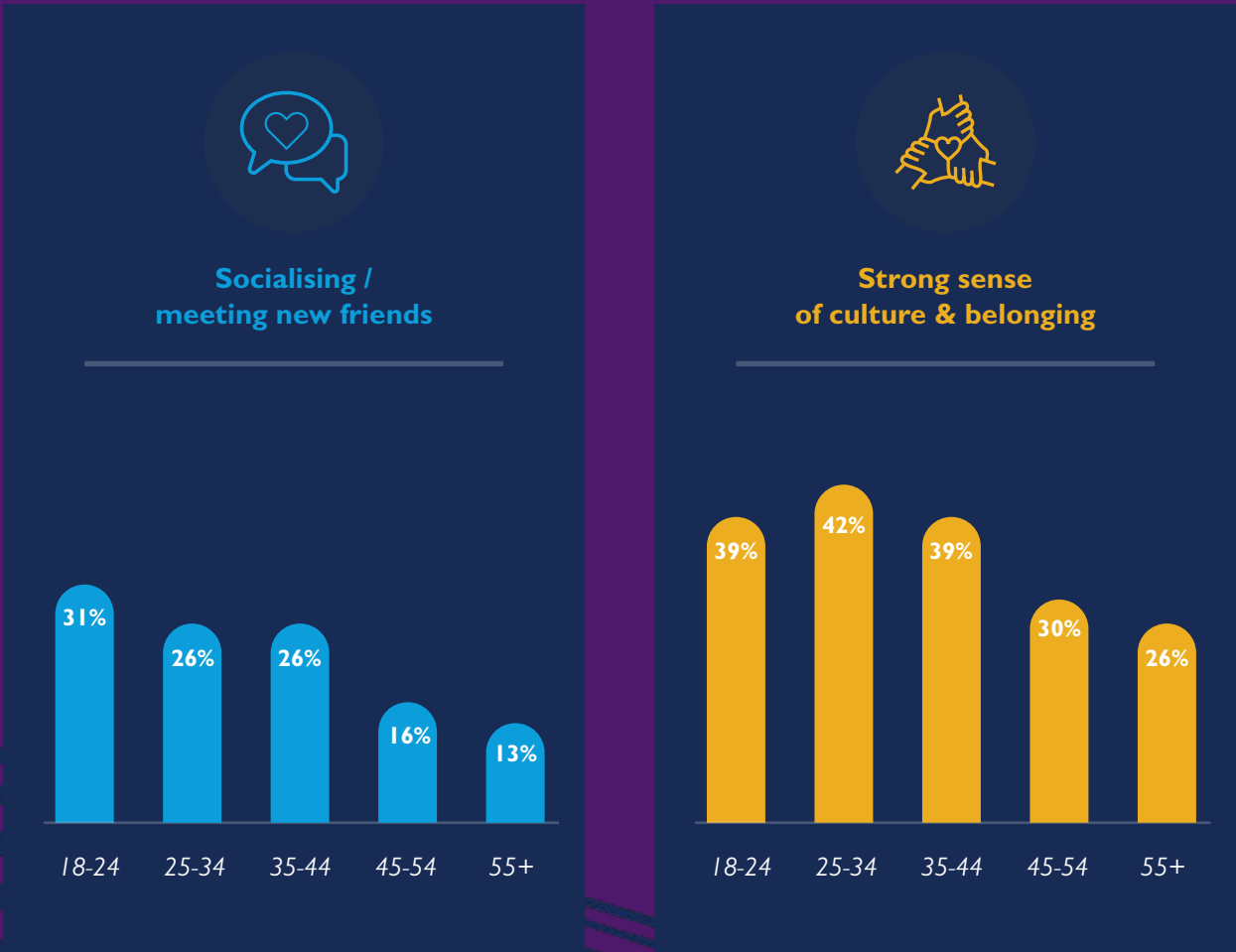
Figure 2: % very satisfied with opportunities for career progression and skills development by:



Belonging, culture and connection: The social drivers of in-person work

Our research shows that Gen Z and Millennial workers place particularly strong value in the social and cultural factors of the workplace. For this demographic, the workplace is more than just a place for work; it's a hub for connection, identity and belonging. This includes opportunities to build relationships and feel part of a shared purpose or community.

Figure 3: % stating that socialising / meeting friends and having a strong sense of culture and belonging are **very important** to their job satisfaction



These circumstances are difficult to replicate remotely and often flourish in physical environments where spontaneous interaction and cultural immersion are possible.

For early-career professionals, being on-site offers visibility, mentorship and a sense of inclusion that can be critical to their development. It's where they learn the unwritten rules, observe leadership behaviours and begin to understand the organisational culture. Feeling connected to colleagues and the company's purpose directly influences their engagement and retention, making it not just a "nice to have", but a key driver of job satisfaction.

CONSIDER THIS

Employers should actively cultivate workplace culture through intentional design and opportunities for social interaction. By recognising the importance of belonging and connection, organisations can make in-person work more meaningful, and more attractive, to the next generation of talent.¹

¹ Understanding millennials and generation Z in the workplace, Parihar and Singh, International Journal of Research in Human Resource Management, 2025

The universal importance of workplace design

Underpinning everything, workplace design and amenities are emerging as key levers. Employees of all ages who are dissatisfied with their workplace often cite uninspiring environments, a lack of social spaces and poor facilities as contributing factors. In contrast, well-designed, welcoming and functional spaces can act as magnets, drawing people in not just for work, but for connection, creativity and community.

Figure 4: Top-5 workplace factors that contribute to workplace dissatisfaction



● The five most significant contributors to workplace dissatisfaction by %

CONSIDER THIS

Employers should consider prioritising investment in workplace design and amenities. This doesn't necessarily mean extravagant spending, but rather thoughtful enhancements that reflect employee needs and preferences. Quiet zones for focus, collaborative areas for teamwork, wellness spaces and high-quality food and beverage options can all contribute to a more compelling workplace experience.

By aligning workplace strategy with employee expectations, particularly around development and environment, organisations can achieve a dual benefit: increased on-site attendance and improved employee satisfaction. This, in turn, supports retention, productivity and culture.



The generational technology paradox

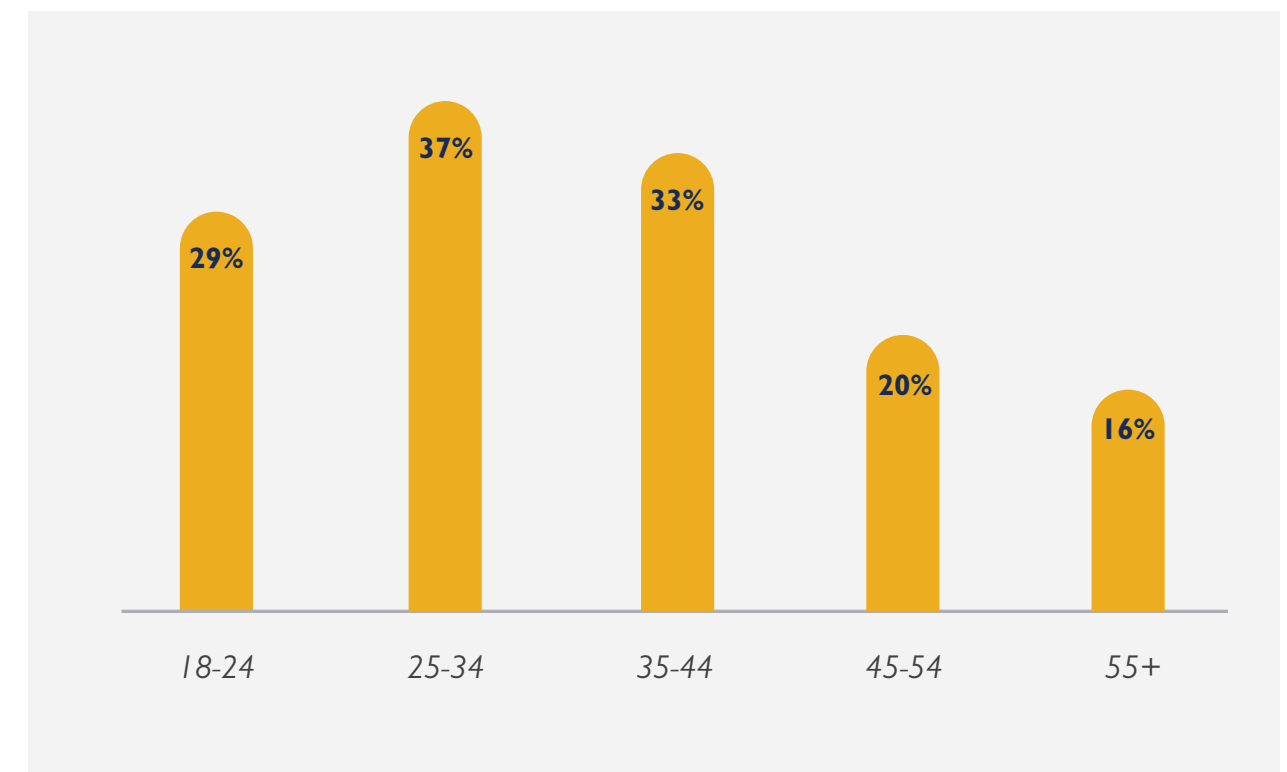
Technology is a cornerstone of modern work, but its impact is not felt equally across generations. As employers seek to streamline digital tools and platforms, they must navigate a nuanced landscape: one where age-related differences in expectations and priorities shape how technology is perceived and used.



Workers are embracing technology in unique ways – so a tailored approach can help them thrive

Contrary to common stereotypes, it's not just the younger generations most interested in embracing technology. But our research makes it clear that older generations are less likely to feel workplace technology is very effective in driving productivity.

Figure 5: % saying workplace technology is used very effectively to drive productivity

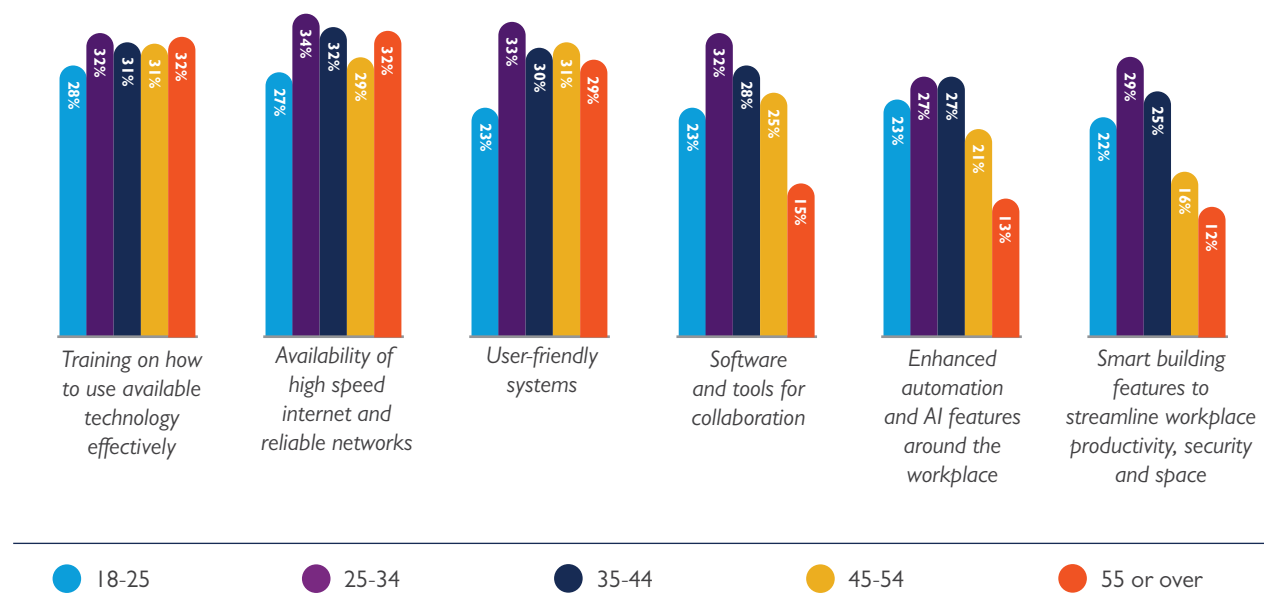


Nearly a third of over-55s (32%) want more dependable networks and 29% seek more user-friendly systems. This shows that technology that is fully functional should be the priority. Technology in the workplace should be intuitive and dependable, not overwhelming or overly complex. Employers must recognise that tech upgrades should not always mean more features, but rather better execution of the basics.

That said, our findings show that while younger workers still prioritise the basics, they are more likely to seek improvements in:

- Software and tools for collaboration
- Enhanced automation and AI features around the workplace
- Smart features to streamline workplace productivity, security and space.

Figure 6: Aspects of workplace-related technology that could be improved



CONSIDER THIS

Employers should prioritise reliability, accessibility and simplicity in their tech upgrades to make sure they meet the needs of all workers, rather than focusing solely on cutting-edge platforms.



Balancing tech-enabled dynamism with quiet focus

As employers rethink their physical spaces to accommodate evolving tech needs, they must also consider how workspace design intersects with generational preferences. Younger workers often favour dynamic, flexible environments that support collaboration and tech integration. This is likely driven by the importance they place on seeing colleagues in person. However, there is a clear desire across all groups to retain quieter spaces for focused work.

The challenge is not choosing one over the other, but designing for both. Smart tech can help bridge this gap, enabling adaptable environments that cater to different working styles and needs.

Figure 7: Importance of different types of workspace by age (% important / very important)

	More flexible and dynamic work environments with spaces designed for collaboration rather than individual work	Integration of high-tech work spaces, equipped with advanced tools for remote collaboration and virtual meetings	Quieter spaces to allow employees to concentrate on individual work
18-24	74%	69%	72%
25-34	77%	77%	77%
35-44	74%	77%	77%
45-54	65%	65%	77%
55-64	53%	54%	64%
65+	49%	50%	74%

Lower % saying very important Higher % saying very important



CONSIDER THIS

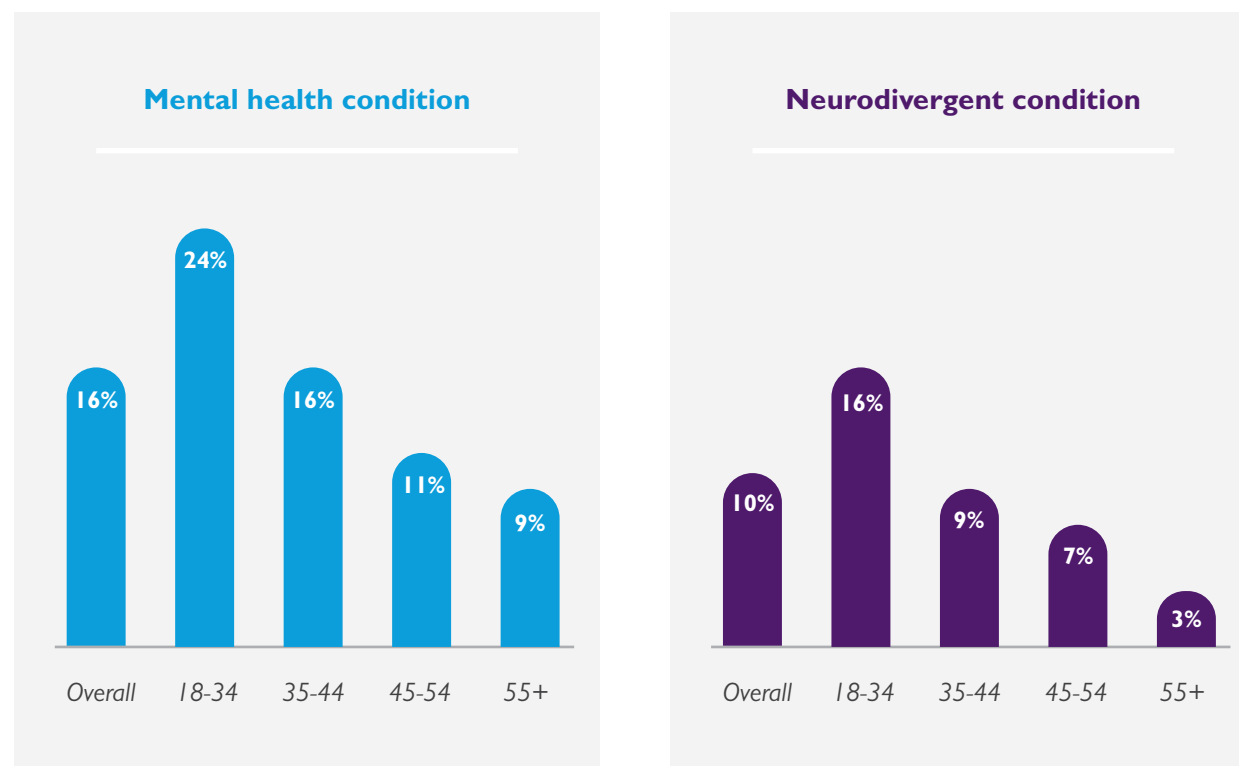
Organisations should ask employees about the most useful way to apply smart tech and AI tools. These solutions can overcome any workplace pain points that are hampering productivity and focus. When creating workspaces that answer the need for dynamism, tech and collaboration, don't forget the importance of quieter spaces for focused, individual work.

The neurodiversity inclusion gap

Creating inclusive workplaces is no longer a peripheral concern, it's a strategic imperative.

As organisations strive to build environments that support all employees, neurodiversity is emerging as a critical, yet often overlooked, area of inclusion. This is especially relevant given the changing demographics of the workforce. Younger employees are significantly more likely to identify as neurodivergent, with 16% of 18–34-year-olds reporting a neurodivergent condition, compared to just 10% across the overall workforce.

Figure 8: % of workers with mental health or a neurodivergent condition



This generational shift is bringing neurodiversity into sharper focus. But how inclusive do workplaces feel to those who live with these conditions?

The answer: neurodivergent employees are twice as likely as the general workforce to express dissatisfaction with the accessibility and inclusivity of their workplace environment (40% vs. 19%).

This signals a substantial gap between intention and impact, where inclusion policies may exist, but the lived experience of neurodivergent employees tells a different story.

The consequences of this gap aren't just cultural - they're operational.

CONSIDER THIS

Employers should not wait for requests to make adjustments. Instead, they should proactively offer neuro-inclusive design features that support a range of cognitive needs. This includes offering a choice of work environments, such as quiet zones, collaborative spaces, and sensory rooms, alongside adjustable furniture like standing desks and swivel chairs. Clear and consistent layouts also help reduce cognitive load and make navigation easier for everyone.



Neurodiverse employees lose more time to unproductive tasks and distractions, averaging 85 minutes per week, compared to 68 minutes among all workers.



They are also **more likely to attribute this lost time to workplace-related factors** (63% vs. 54%), suggesting that the environment itself is contributing to inefficiency.



Among neurodivergent 18–24s, the issue is even more pronounced: they are **twice as likely to say their workplace is not designed for productivity** (12% vs. 6% of their non-neurodivergent peers). Interestingly, this gap narrows with age, indicating that younger neurodivergent workers may face additional barriers, whether due to lack of confidence, experience or support.

Importantly, these adjustments should be **embedded into workplace design from the outset**, rather than bolted on reactively. This is particularly vital for younger neurodivergent employees, who may not feel empowered to ask for what they need or may be unaware of the support available. Employers must also consider how to foster a positive culture of openness, where employees feel comfortable disclosing neurodivergent conditions without fear of stigma or disadvantage.

CONSIDER THIS

Firms should explore ways to **encourage safe and voluntary disclosure**, making sure that neurodivergent employees are not under-represented in data or overlooked in policy. This could include anonymous feedback channels, visible support networks and clear communication around available adjustments.

Inclusion is not just about compliance, it's about creating environments where everyone can thrive. By addressing the neurodiversity gap, employers can unlock greater productivity, engagement and wellbeing across their workforce.



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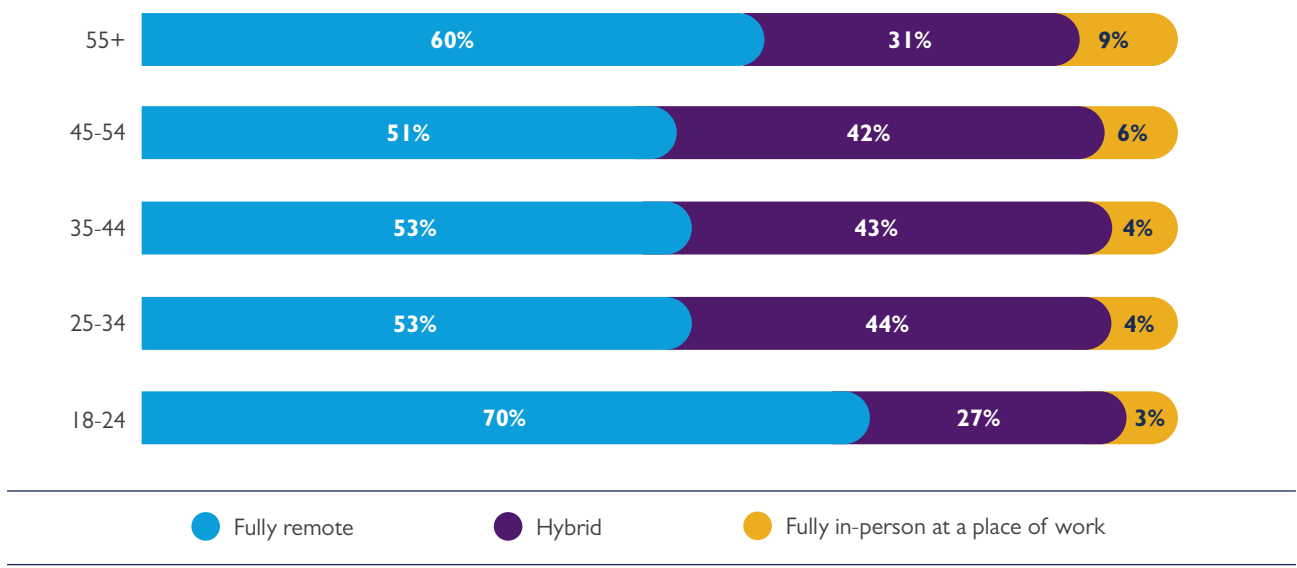
PART FOUR

Hybrid working is not just an age story

Hybrid working has become a defining feature of the modern workplace. But while it's often framed as a trend driven by younger generations, the reality is more complex. **Hybrid working is not just a youth-led movement, it's increasingly a mid-career norm**, shaped by a variety of factors including job role, commuting patterns and life stage.

Looking at the data, the picture becomes clearer. Those aged 18–24 are the most likely to be fully in-person (70%), while the 25–44 age group is most likely to be hybrid (43%), and over-55s are the most likely to be fully remote (9%). This distribution challenges the assumption that younger workers are leading the charge towards flexible working. In fact, many younger employees may not have had the opportunity to work remotely at all since starting their career, which limits their exposure to hybrid models and reduces their discretion over where they work.

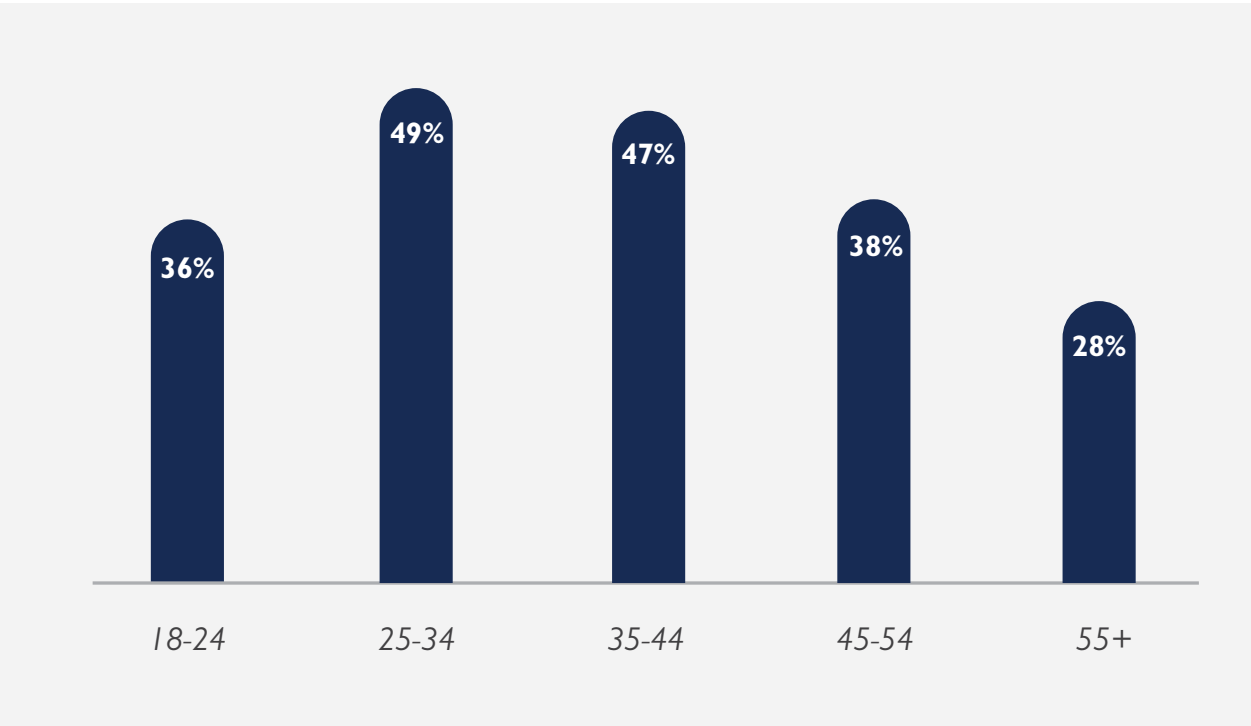
Figure 9: Working arrangement by age group



Despite this, the benefits of being physically present in the workplace, particularly around **career progression, mentorship and skills development**, are especially relevant to younger workers. These formative experiences are often best delivered in-person, where informal learning and spontaneous collaboration can flourish.

Interestingly, flexibility in where and when they work is **less important to 18–24s** than it is to older age groups, suggesting that younger employees may be more focused on growth and visibility than autonomy.

Figure 10: % saying flexibility in where and when they work is very important for workplace satisfaction



However, the story shifts when we look at those in their mid-career. **Employees aged 25–34 place a higher value on flexibility**, which is likely influenced by practical challenges such as commuting. **44% of this group report dissatisfaction with a difficult or costly commute**, compared to the average, making hybrid arrangements more appealing and necessary. For them, flexibility is not just a perk, but a solution to logistical and lifestyle pressures.

While the benefits of being at work in person are evident, employers that overlook flexibility will struggle to keep their people happy. Given the varied attitudes towards flexibility in working arrangements across age, employers should ensure their policies can be adapted to fit the needs and lifestyles of all employees.

It's also essential to track employee satisfaction over time, and monitor how different approaches to hybrid working impact engagement, productivity and retention. Flexibility should not be a one-size-fits-all solution. It should be tailored, intentional and grounded in the lived experiences of employees across age groups.

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CONSIDER THIS

Employers should design hybrid working policies that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all demographics. This means offering **flexibility to all workers where possible**, even if they don't explicitly demand it, and **clearly communicating the benefits of being on-site**, from career development and networking to mentorship and culture-building.

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT



Simi Gandhi-Whitaker
MD Smart Workplaces, Mitie



By investing deliberately in our workplaces – through thoughtful design, smart technology, and flexible policies – we can unlock capability, drive retention and position the workplace as a catalyst for organisational success.

As we navigate the evolving landscape of the modern workplace, it's clear that the workplace itself must be recognised as a strategic growth engine. Our research shows that 78% of 18–34-year-olds view well-designed workspaces as essential to job satisfaction, yet only 42% are currently satisfied. This highlights a significant opportunity to rethink how we design and deliver our environments.

We must create spaces that inspire, support diverse working styles and reflect the different life and career stages of our people. This includes balancing dynamic, tech-enabled collaboration zones with quieter areas for deep focus. Both are vital to innovation and productivity.

Through providing comfortable and well-designed spaces, fostering a sense of community and offering opportunities for face-to-face collaboration, employers can create an environment that employees of all generations want to be part of.



The risk of standing still

Employers that adopt a one-size-fits-all workplace strategy run the risk of pleasing no one. Key considerations include:

1. Rethink workplace strategy as a multigenerational asset

The physical workplace should be viewed not just as a cost centre, but as a **strategic enabler of talent attraction, retention and performance**. This means designing spaces that cater to the full spectrum of employee needs, from early-career professionals seeking collaboration and visibility, to older workers prioritising flexibility and focus.

Key actions:

Invest in **inclusive design principles** that accommodate different working styles and sensory needs.

- Create a **variety of work zones** - quiet areas for deep focus, collaborative hubs for teamwork and informal breakout spaces for social connection.
- Make sure **smart amenities** (e.g. ergonomic furniture, high-speed connectivity, wellness facilities) are accessible and relevant to all age groups.
- Recognise that **younger workers may not always voice dissatisfaction**, so proactive engagement and feedback loops are essential.

2. Segment your approach to tech and training

Technology is not universally experienced. Different generations interact with digital tools in distinct ways, and a blanket approach to tech rollouts or training can alienate key segments of the workforce.

Key actions:

- Before introducing advanced tech into the workplace, make sure you're nailing the basics with dependable networks and user-friendly systems.
- For younger employees, embed advanced digital tools - such as AI-driven productivity features, smart collaboration platforms and automation systems - into daily workflows.
- Provide ongoing support and upskilling tailored to career stage, not just job role, so that all employees feel empowered to use technology effectively.



3. Avoid hybrid work policies that alienate certain employee groups

Hybrid working is not a generational preference, it's a career-stage reality. While mid-career professionals often demand flexibility, younger workers may benefit more from in-person experiences that support development and networking. Yet, they are also the most likely to be dissatisfied with their current flexible arrangements.

Key actions:

- Design hybrid policies that reflect different needs, offering flexibility without compromising access to mentorship and growth opportunities.
- Communicate the benefits of being on-site clearly and positively, highlighting opportunities for learning, collaboration and visibility.
- Use employee satisfaction tracking tools to monitor how different working models impact engagement and adjust policies accordingly.

4. Make inclusion proactive, not reactive

Neurodiversity and accessibility must be built into the workplace by default, not added as an afterthought. Many neurodivergent employees, especially younger ones, may lack the confidence to request adjustments, leading to under-reporting and needs not being met.

Key actions:

- Offer a range of workspace options - including quiet zones, sensory-friendly rooms and collaborative areas - to support different cognitive styles.
- Provide adjustable furniture and clear, consistent layouts to reduce cognitive load and improve navigation.
- Create safe channels for disclosure, such as anonymous feedback tools or dedicated support networks, to encourage openness without fear of stigma.
- Ensure that neuro-inclusive design is embedded into workplace planning, not just HR policy.

About Mitie

Founded in 1987, we are the UK's leading facilities management and professional services company.

At Mitie, we blend hospitality-inspired services, smart technology and award-winning, inclusive design to create high-performing workplaces.

By collaborating closely with our customers, we transform spaces into vibrant experience hubs - where people, culture and productivity flourish.

Every element is seamlessly integrated, precisely managed and continuously optimised to make a measurable difference for every employee, customer and guest.

Delivering the future of high-performing places

Mitie makes places perform brilliantly. We bring together smart thinking, practical experience and the right technology to create environments where people thrive and perform at their best. We focus on what matters most to your organisation — today and for the future.



76,000
employees



30+
years experience in FM



149
different nationalities



2,500,000
assets looked after for our customers



Want to know more?

Get in touch to learn how you can better support your multigenerational workforce.

Together we'll transform your workplace into a hub of productivity, performance and long-term success, where every generation thrives.

To speak to our specialist workplace team, who can arrange a visit to our showcase in The Shard, email: workplaces@mitie.com.



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