

# randstad UK

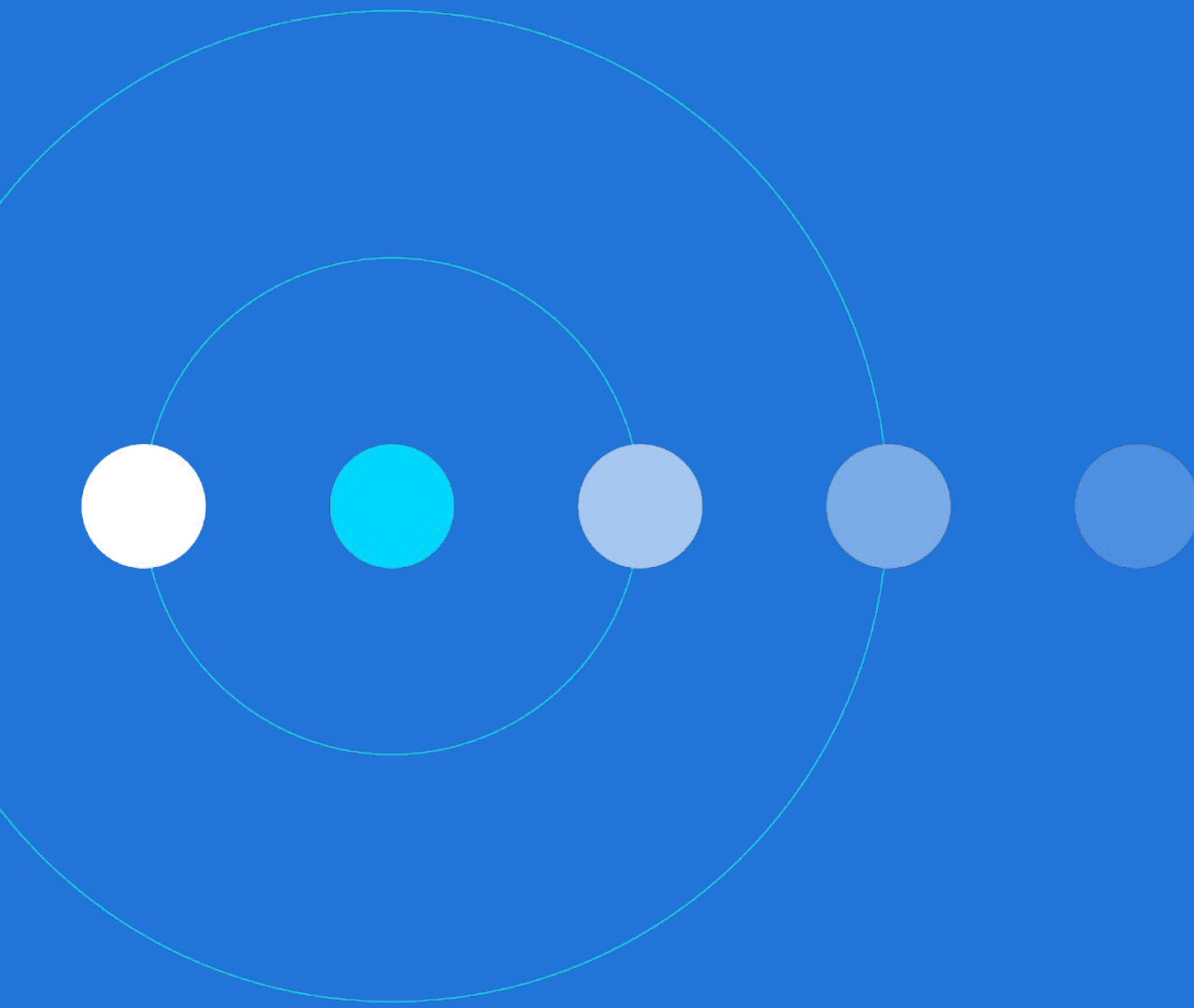
employer brand research 2025.



randstad



partner for talent.



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# executive summary.



# employee priorities in the UK remain stable.

## EVP drivers

The ideal employer profile in the UK has remained stable over the past three years, indicating that employees' core expectations have largely remained unchanged.

Work-life balance remains the top priority for the British workforce, followed closely by attractive salary. However, a significant gap exists between employee expectations and reality—only about half feel their salary and benefits needs are met, and while 65% are satisfied with work-life balance, there is still ample room for improvement.



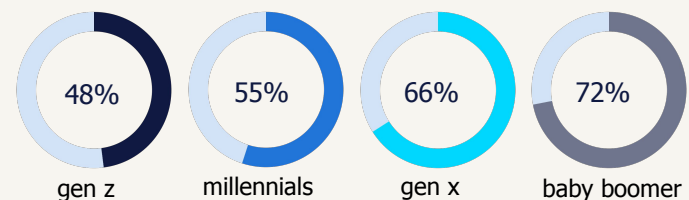
7 in 10 employees rate their employer positively in terms of equity.

## generations

Across generations in the UK, the top priorities in choosing an ideal employer are similar, especially when looking at the top three drivers. However, Gen Z stands out slightly by placing greater emphasis on good training and development, while job security, ranked in the top three by older generations, holds less importance for them. That said, good training is still valued across all age groups.

Unlike in other markets where generational differences are more pronounced, UK workers across generations largely seek the same qualities in an ideal employer.

Importance of attractive salary & benefits across generations.



## specialisations

The same trend holds true across specialisations, with employees consistently valuing the same top five drivers in an ideal employer. The main exception is that those in digital roles value career progression over job security.

When assessing their current employer, some specialisation differences emerge. Digital talent rate their employers highest on having a good reputation, offering work-life balance, and providing a pleasant work atmosphere. In contrast, operational and professional talent show more alignment with each other, placing greater importance on equity, convenient location, and long-term job security. So while expectations are similar, experiences vary, especially depending on the type of work employees do.

# both switching and intention to switch jobs has declined compared to last year.

## retention and reskilling

While job-switching intentions and actual job changes have seen a slight decline compared to last year (down 1% and 3% respectively), people are still moving jobs, albeit with a bit more hesitation. This shift signals a move towards greater job stability and suggests employees are slightly less inclined to change roles in the short term. This presents a unique opportunity for employers to focus on long-term retention strategies rather than purely reactive hiring.

Enhancing work-life balance remains the leading reason employees leave their jobs, surpassing all other motivators. The factors driving employees to leave closely align with the key motivators that attract and retain talent, underscoring the need for employers to strengthen their Employee Value Proposition (EVP).

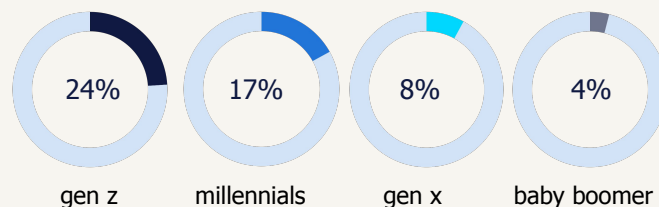
Additionally, reskilling is deemed important to 66% of the workforce, highlighting the critical role of continuous learning and development in employee satisfaction and retention.

## generations

Gen Z leads the way in job switching, with 24% making a move in the last 6 months of 2024, significantly outpacing other generations. This gap highlights differences in age-related priorities, risk tolerance, and approaches to career stability, emphasising the need for employers to continually refine their offerings to align with shifting employee expectations.

Across generations, the main reasons for leaving an employer are largely the same - to improve work-life balance or in response to an irresistible offer, with compensation also playing a key role. For Gen Z, a lack of career growth opportunities also stands out as a more significant reason to move on.

employees who switched jobs in the past 6 months



## specialisations

Operational talent shows the highest intention to switch jobs and also experiences the highest turnover rate across specialisations.

The reasons for changing employers remain consistent across all specialisations, suggesting that broader external factors are influencing employees' decisions to move, rather than role-specific dynamics.



# UK employers are improving across all equity statements.

## equity

Employers continue to perform well in equity, with a high general evaluation and scores remaining stable across key statements compared to last year, showing only minor shifts. Employer strengths are cited as recognising employees' unique attributes and providing equal pay for equal work, but a key area for improvement remains ensuring that opportunities go to the most deserving employees.

Currently, 34% of the British workforce identifies as a minority. These employees are significantly more likely to face identity-based obstacles (52%) compared to their non-minority counterparts (32%) underscoring the need for organisations to strengthen inclusivity efforts, promote fairness, and create equal opportunities for all employees. While 66% of UK employees believe that their employer's approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity is authentic, a third still see room for improvement.

## generations

Gen Z employees report higher rates of identifying themselves as part of a minority (35%). Among them, the most common reasons for identifying as a minority are ethnicity / nationality (23%) and religion (12%).

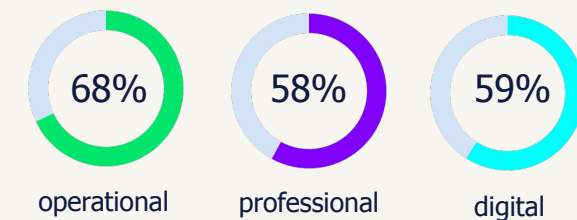
Alongside Millennials, Gen Z is also more likely to report facing career progression obstacles due to their identity, significantly more so than Gen X and Baby Boomers. This highlights the need for strong diversity and inclusion initiatives, particularly for Gen Z, who may encounter distinct workplace challenges related to their background.

## specialisations

While digital professionals consistently rate their employers highly across all equity metrics, nearly half (48%) report facing career progression obstacles due to their identity.

This indicates a potential need for employers to assess and address pay equity concerns, particularly for operational talent, to improve satisfaction and retention.

my organisation provides equal pay for equal work



# regular AI usage has remained the same in the UK compared to the previous year.

## AI

The use of AI in the workplace has stagnated, with the percentage of employees regularly incorporating AI into their work being 24%.

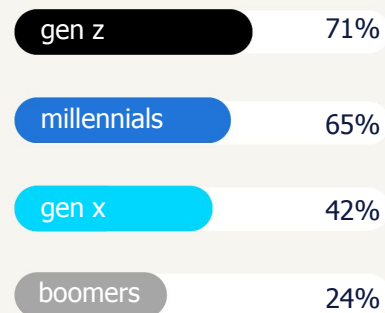
A slight majority of British workers (51%) believe AI will have little to no impact on their jobs, a sentiment that remains consistent with the previous year. Additionally, perceptions of AI's impact have become less positive, with only 42% viewing it favourably compared to 45% last year. This suggests there are no clear signs of growing acceptance in the workplace.

However, while enthusiasm for AI has declined, overall sentiment remains more positive than negative, with many employees maintaining a neutral stance. This presents a key opportunity for employers to proactively demonstrate the benefits of AI, leveraging its potential to enhance operational efficiency and improve the employee experience.

## generations

Gen Z and Millennials are leading the way in AI adoption, while Gen X is the only generation showing a decline in usage. This drop in engagement aligns with a significant decrease in their positive sentiment (-9%) compared to last year. In contrast, Baby Boomers show little to no change in either usage or sentiment. This trend points to growing enthusiasm and usage among younger generations, stagnation among Boomers, and a decline among Gen X.

general AI utilisation across different generations



## specialisations

AI usage is highest among digital talent and lowest among operational employees, who are also more likely to believe AI will have little to no impact on their jobs. This is likely due to the nature of their work but also suggests that while digital employees actively engage with AI, operational and other sectors may require more targeted efforts to showcase its benefits.

Digital employees also hold a more positive outlook on AI's impact; however, 88% still feel an impact of AI on their current job, more than any other specialisations. While they acknowledge potential risks, AI is largely seen as a tool for enhancement rather than a direct threat, highlighting an opportunity for employers to reinforce its role in the workplace.

# motivation and engagement is high amongst UK workforce.

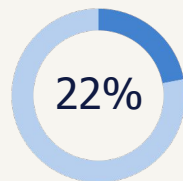
## motivation & engagement

The majority of the British workforce is engaged, with 64% reporting they feel motivated in their current role and 49% stating they are more engaged than the previous year. This is positive for employers, as higher engagement typically correlates with lower turnover.

Employees who feel more motivated largely attribute it to a strong work-life balance, which remains the top driver of an ideal employer in the UK. Conversely, those who feel less engaged primarily cite a lack of recognition and appreciation for their contributions.

Remote working continues to enhance work-life balance, with 22% of respondents indicating that physical workplace presence is optional. However, over a third (37%) are still expected to be in the office five days per week.

Office attendance is optional for nearly a quarter.



## generations

The younger generations, Gen Z and Millennials, report higher engagement levels than Gen X and Baby Boomers, with avr. 69% feeling more engaged compared to 53 % of older generations.

Motivation drivers differ across generations. While all generations agree that a strong work-life balance is the most important factor for motivation, feeling valued and supported by management is crucial for everyone except Gen Z, where growth opportunities take priority. This aligns with the drivers of disengagement—while all generations cite feeling undervalued by management as their top reason for disengagement, for Gen Z, an attractive salary and benefits is the main factor.

This highlights how management practices and employee value propositions might need to be tailored to different generations to ensure motivation and reduce disengagement. Gen Z in particular may need stronger career development opportunities and competitive compensation packages.

## specialisations

Engagement levels vary across specialisations, with digital talent reporting the highest motivation and engagement in their current role of 87%, compared to an average of 70% for other specialisations. Additionally, digital talent are the most likely to report increased motivation compared to the previous year of 70%, compared to an average of 53% for professionals and operational roles.

Motivation drivers also differ by specialisation. For digital talent, growth opportunities are the most important motivator, while for operational and professional roles, work-life balance takes precedence.

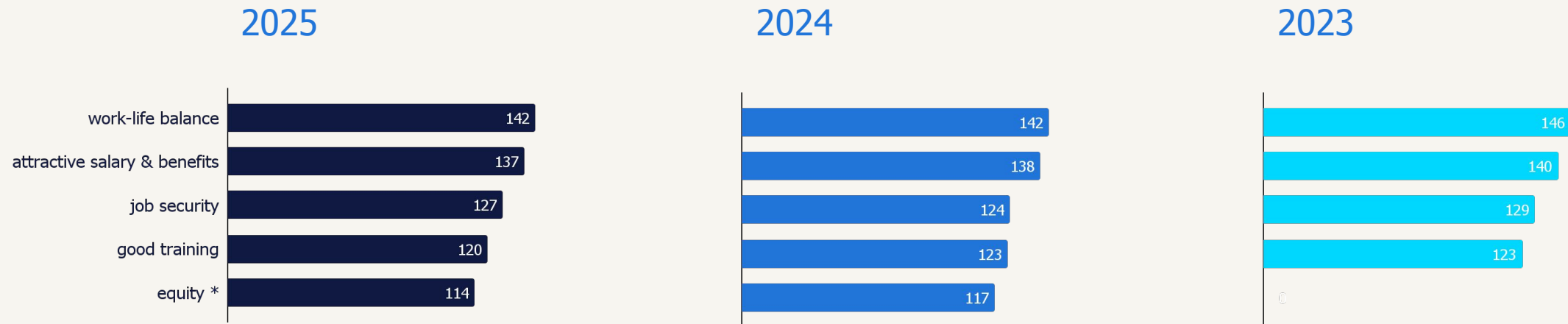


key drivers.



# the ideal employer profile in the UK has remained consistent over the past three years.

With key drivers remaining largely unchanged, employee needs and priorities appear stable. Work-life balance, attractive salary and job security remain the top three factors, combining both functional and emotional aspects.



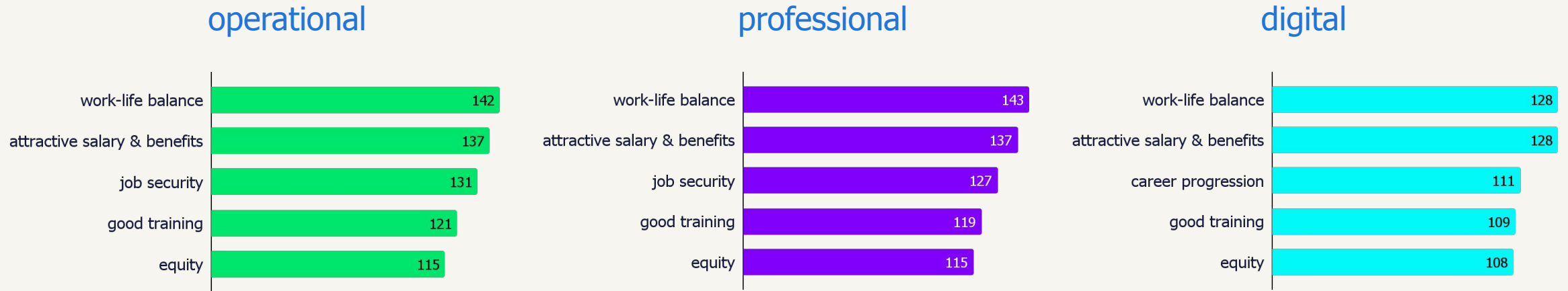
\* new in 2024: 'offers employees equal opportunities regardless of age, gender, ethnicity etc.'

how to read the above indexed scores:  
150: driver is chosen 50% more often than the average driver to be important  
75: driver is chosen 25% less often than the average driver to be important



across specialisations, the top priorities are largely consistent, with work-life balance emerging as the most important.

The only notable difference is among Digital talent, who place less importance on job security and instead prioritise career progression.



seven in ten employees rate their employers positively on equity, suggesting progress in fostering fair and inclusive work environments.

### evaluation of current employer

1. is conveniently located
2. equity
3. job security
4. very good reputation
5. work-life balance
6. pleasant work atmosphere
7. financially healthy
8. interesting job content
9. career progression
10. attractive salary & benefits
11. gives back to society

### profile of ideal employer

1. work-life balance
2. attractive salary & benefits
3. job security
4. good training
5. equity
6. pleasant work atmosphere
7. career progression
8. strong management
9. very good reputation
10. financially healthy
11. is conveniently located

While equity can be a strength in employer branding and retention efforts, there is still more work to be done to help those who identify as a minority.

Job security aligns well with both current employer ratings and ideal employer rankings, showcasing its importance and potential.

Conversely, there remains a large disparity in the importance and current perception of attractive salary and benefits, with just over half of British workers feeling that their employer meets their expectations.



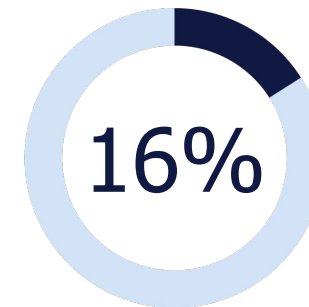
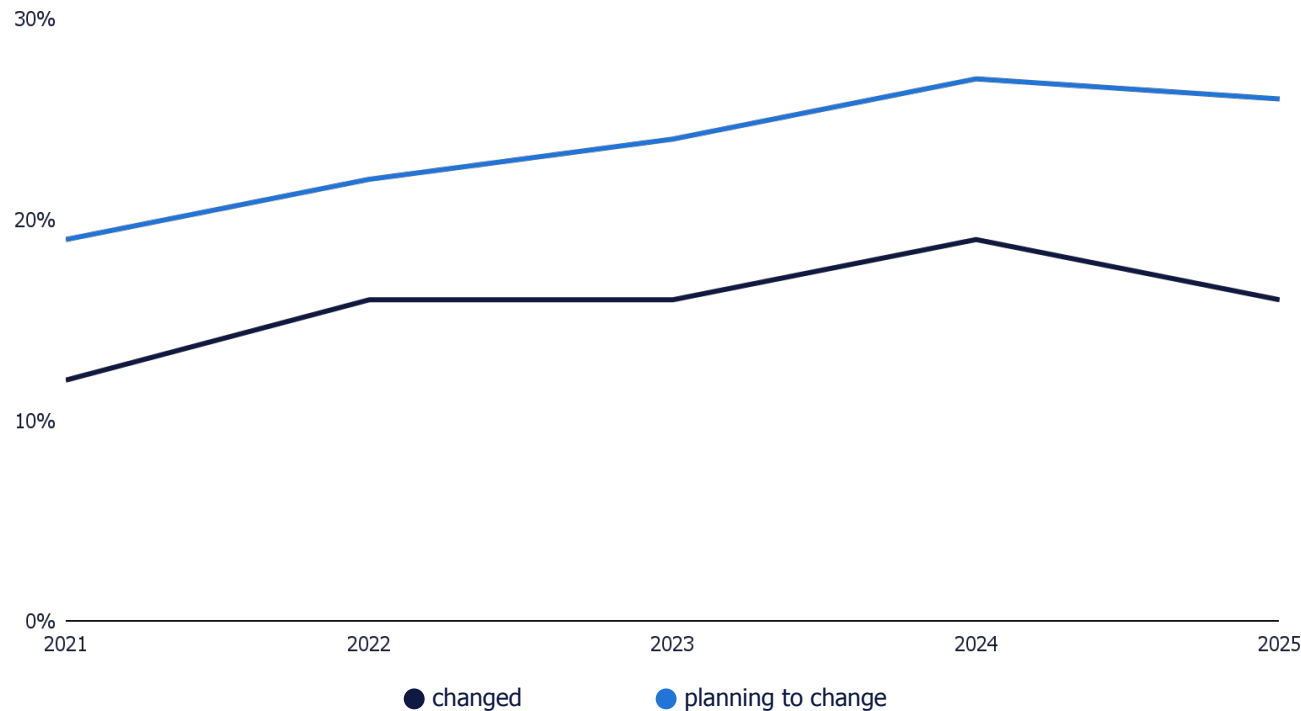
# job-switching behaviour in focus.



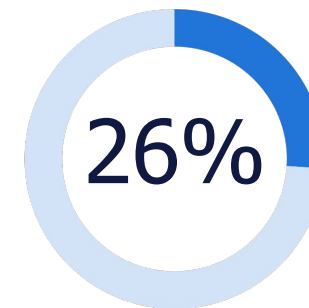
compared to last year, fewer employees have changed jobs (-3%) or plan to do so (-1%).

While employers may find some relief in this decline, job market volatility over the past five years suggests they should remain vigilant and strengthen their value proposition.

### have changed employer in the last 6 months of 2024



have changed employer in the last 6 months of 2024



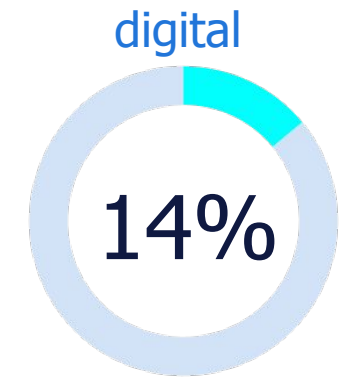
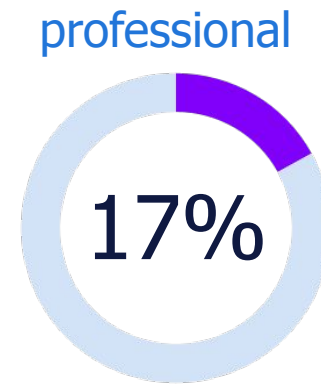
is planning to change jobs within the first 6 months of 2025



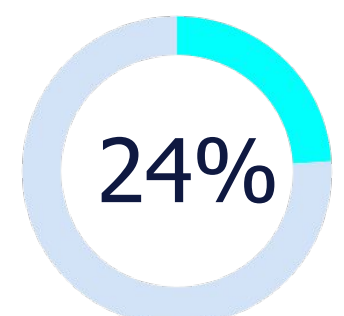
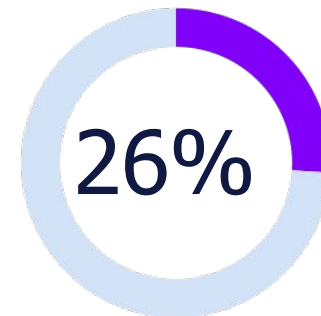
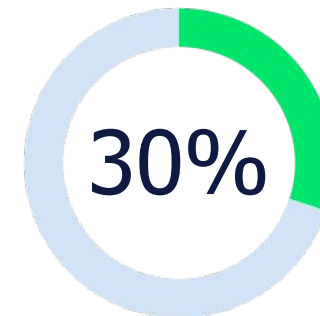
Q. Did you change jobs in the last 6 months?  
Q. Do you plan to change jobs within the next 6 months?

the operational specialisation sees most inclination to switch jobs (30%) and highest actual turnover (21%).

have changed employer in the last 6 months of 2024

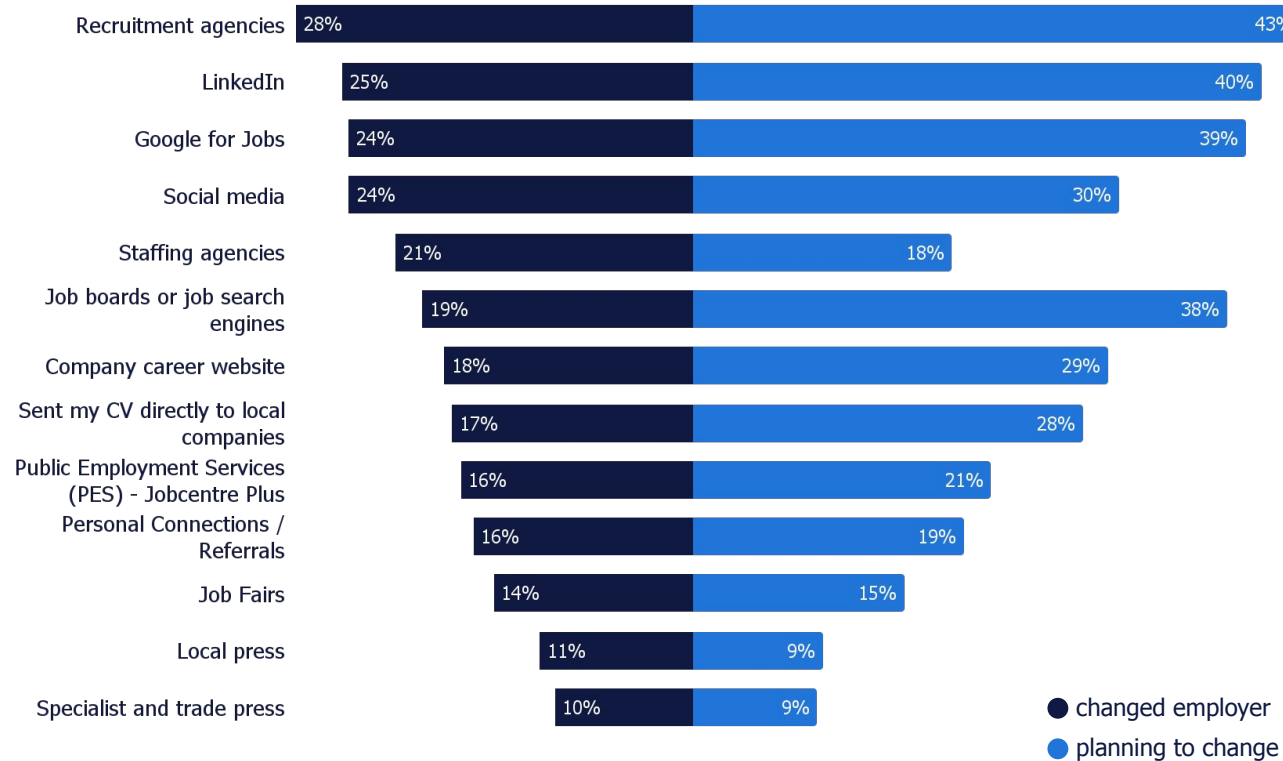


planned to change jobs within the first 6 months of 2025



recruitment agencies have the highest reach among job seekers, and prove most successful for finding a job for those who changed employer.

### sources for job opportunities



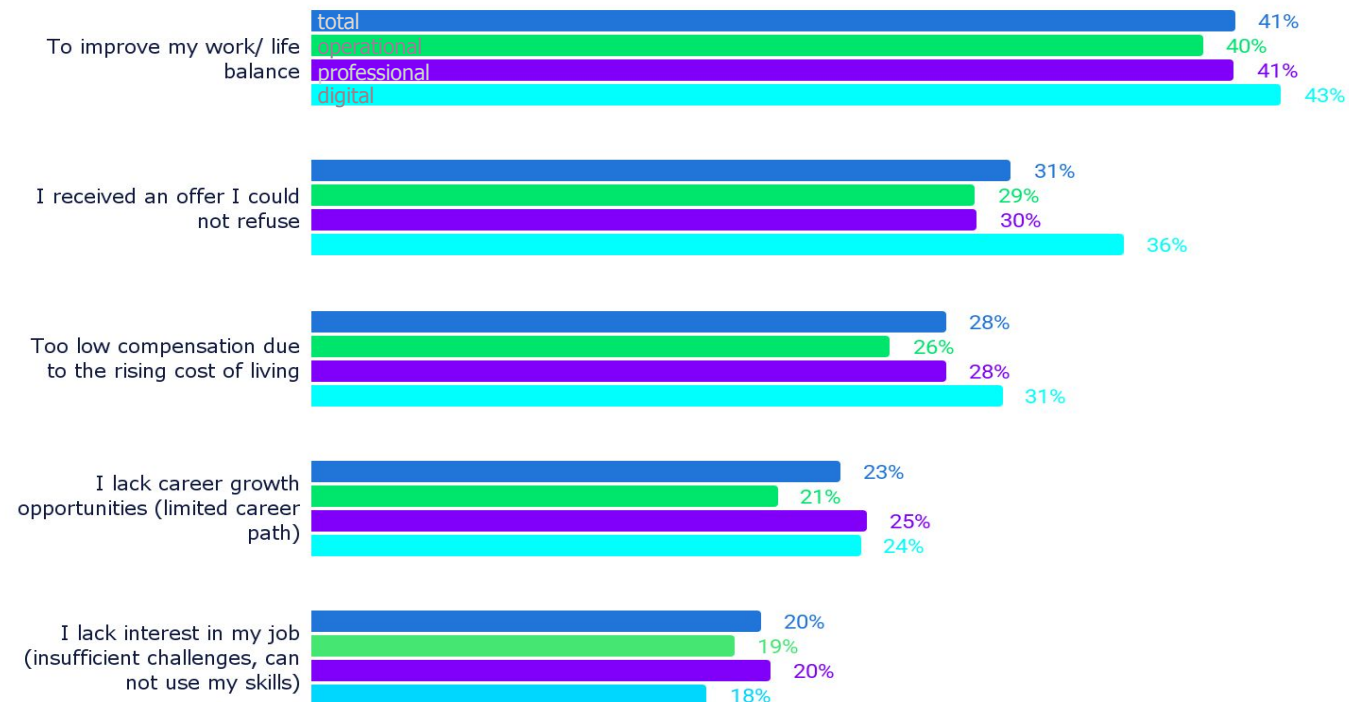
Recruitment agencies remain the most commonly used medium across all generations. However, younger generations also heavily rely on LinkedIn and social media in their job search, reflecting their more digital-first approach. Millennials, on the other hand, are more inclined to use Google to find job opportunities.

The differences between various job types are minimal, except that operational talent tend to rely less on LinkedIn.



# work-life balance continues to be the standout motivation for leaving current employment.

## reasons for leaving



This is followed by lack of monetary compensation and lack of growth opportunities and interest in the job.

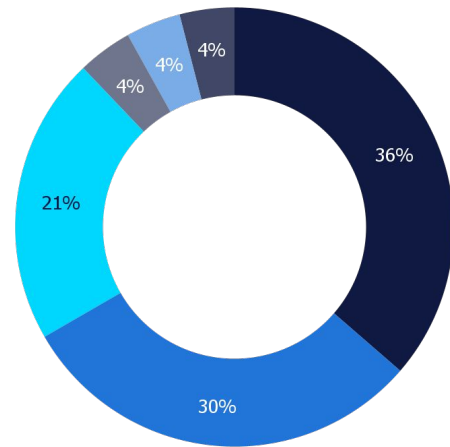
The top motivators for switching employers have remained relatively stable compared to last year. There are no notable differences across specialisations, workers share similar priorities when it comes to leaving a job.

While Gen Z less frequently cite poor leadership as a reason for leaving, Baby Boomers more often cite a poor relationship with their manager as a reason to leave.



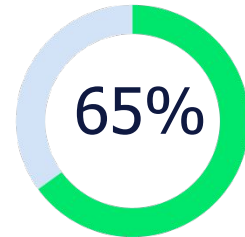
# reskilling is important to two-thirds of the workforce, especially for internal movers, younger workers, and the highly educated.

## importance of reskill

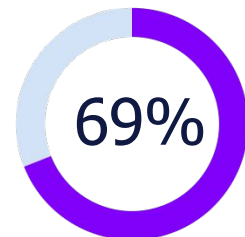


- 5 – very important to me
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 – not important at all
- don't know

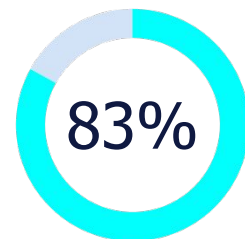
## operational



## professional



## digital



% top-2-box: important & very important

Those seeking job changes or internal job changes value reskilling opportunities more than employees who do not want to move. This suggests that employees seeking new opportunities — whether internally or externally — see reskilling as a key factor in career advancement. Employers looking to retain talent may need to invest more in reskilling programmes to match talent expectations.

Skills shortages are also affecting current workers, with over half (53%) stating that they have been impacted by increased workloads, stress and lack of progression.

Younger generations place greater importance on reskilling, emphasising the need for strong internal training programmes to support career growth and retain top talent.

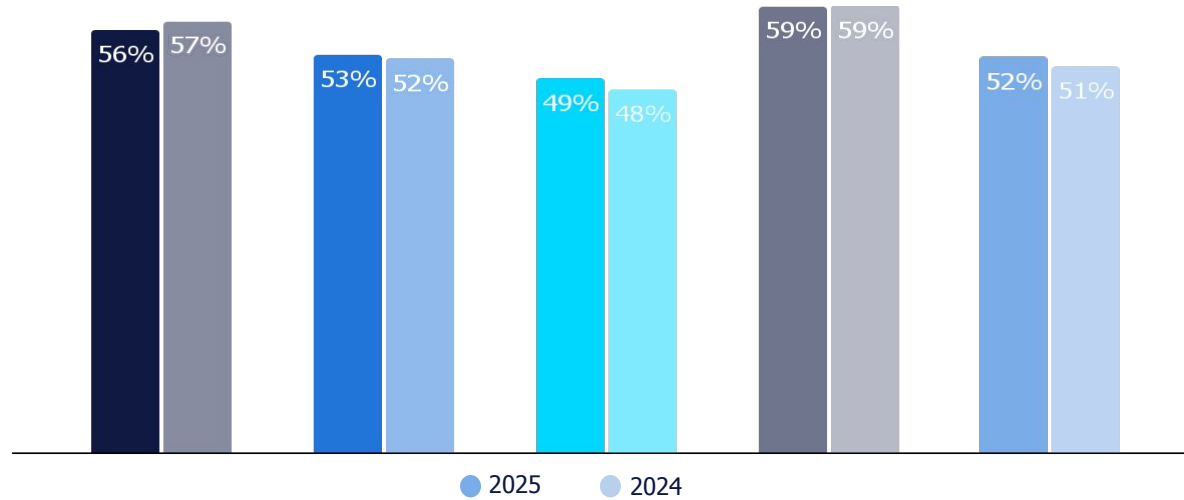


# annual topics: equity and AI.



employers have shown stability across the equity statements and only minor differences can be seen compared to 2024.

which of the following statements do you consider to be true for your current employer?



- my unique attributes, characteristics, skills, experience and background are valued in my organisation
- senior managers are fair when it comes to hiring or career advancements of those that report into them
- at my organisation, the best opportunities go to the most deserving employees
- my organisation provides equal pay for equal work
- senior managers are fair when it comes to reskilling and upskilling opportunities of those that report into them

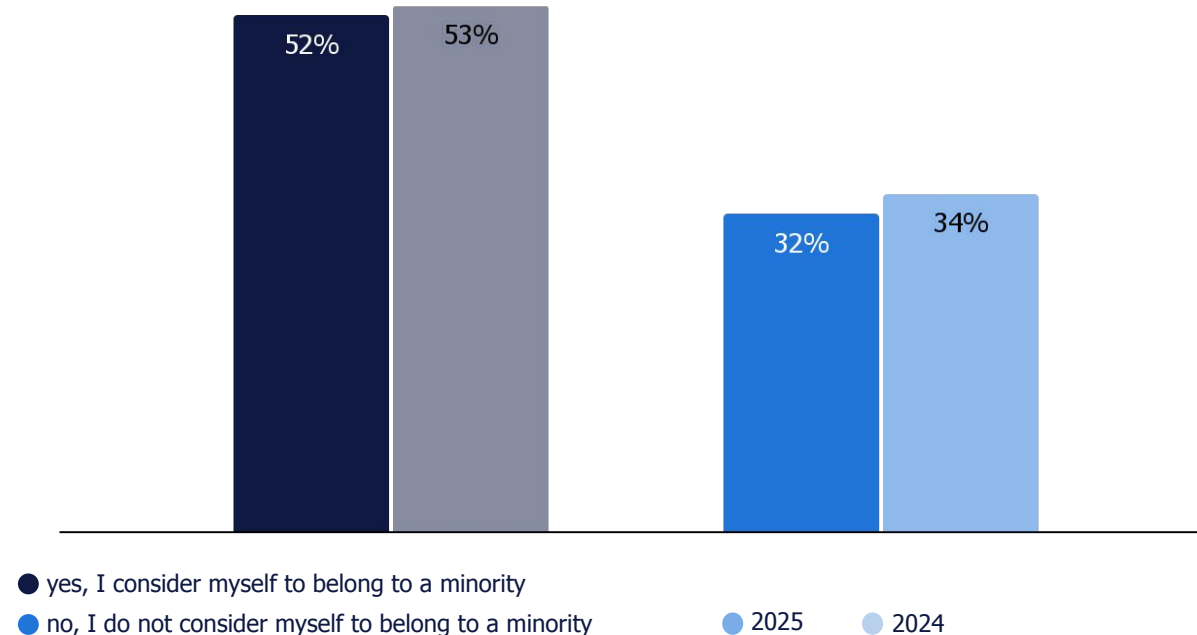
Employers perform best in providing equal pay for equal work. However, across statements relating to the fairness in career advancement opportunities there remains a challenge, with fewer than half of employees rating their employer favourably in this area.

This highlights a critical gap that employers must address to create a more equitable and merit-based workplace.



minority-identifying workers are significantly more likely to face obstacles tied to their identity compared to non-minority employees.

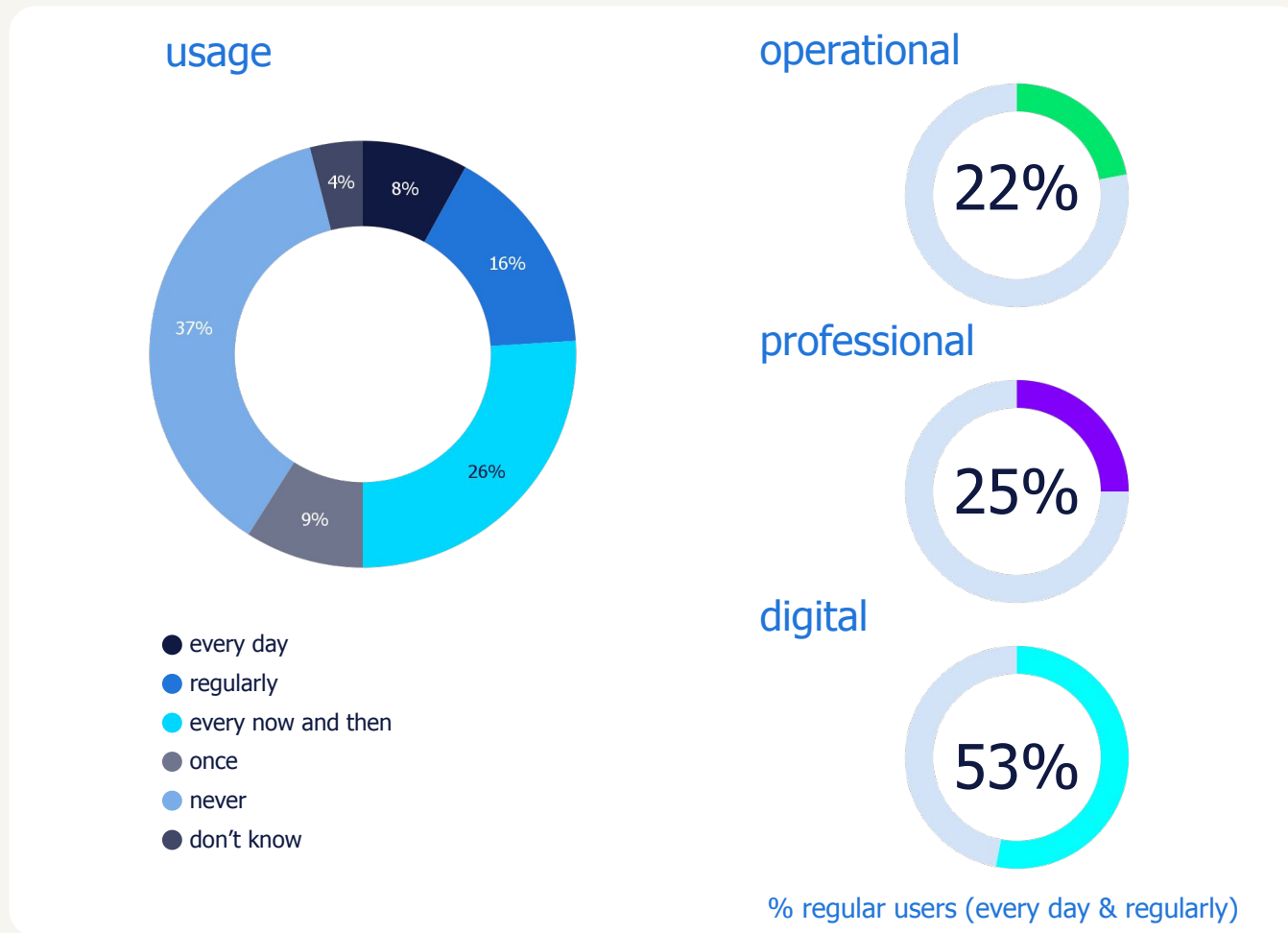
I have faced obstacles in my career progression in this organisation which I believe are due to who I am



Overall, 34% of the British workforce identifies as a minority, primarily driven by ethnicity/race (16%). Gen Z have the highest minority representation at 43%. Gen Z workers also claim more often to have faced such obstacles (in part because they also more often claim to belong to a minority).



# AI adoption stagnates, driven by digital specialists and younger generations.



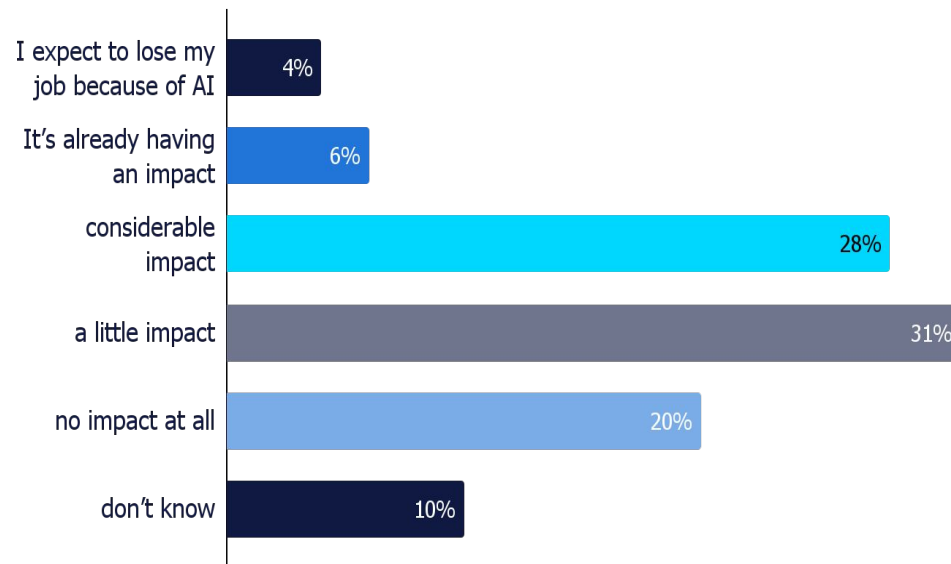
AI adoption has remained stable compared to the past year, with the highest usage among digital specialists and younger generations. When looking at regular usage, there's a sharp generational drop from 29% among younger generations to just 5% among Baby Boomers. However, the number of people who have never used AI in the workplace has dropped from 41% to 37%. Non-users are mainly older generations (65%) and operational talent (41%), who may have less need or fewer opportunities to apply AI in their daily tasks.



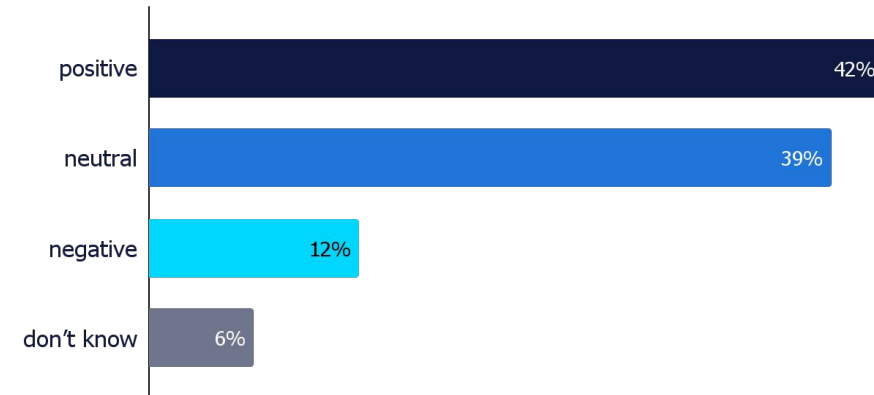
while AI usage in the workplace continues to evolve, less than half of British workers still expect it to impact their roles in the next five years.

Encouragingly for employers, attitudes toward AI remain positive, though positive opinions have declined by 3% while neutral opinions have increased by 2%.

### expected impact of AI on your job



### impact of AI on job satisfaction\*



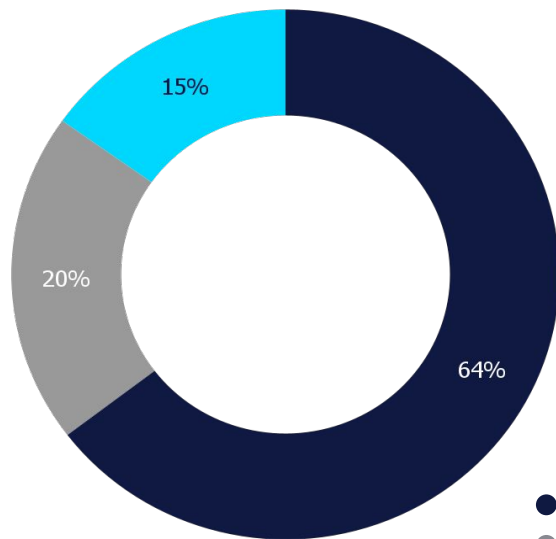
\* asked to those who see AI having a little to a considerable impact on their job.



# employee engagement and motivation is on the rise.

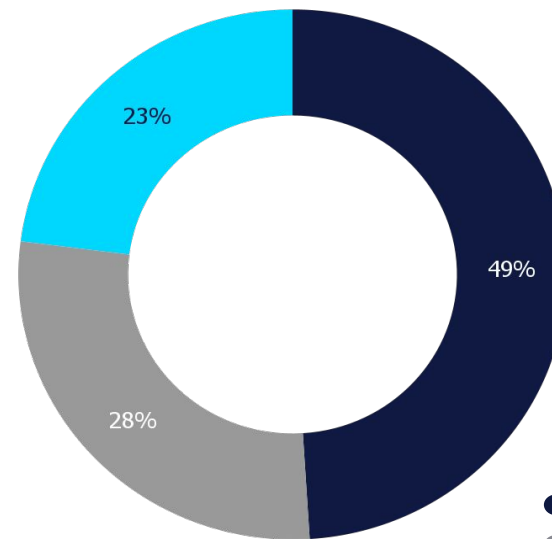
64% of the British workforce feel motivated in their current role and nearly half (49%) are more engaged than a year ago.

motivated & engaged



- motivated / engaged
- neutral
- not motivated / engaged

compared to a year ago



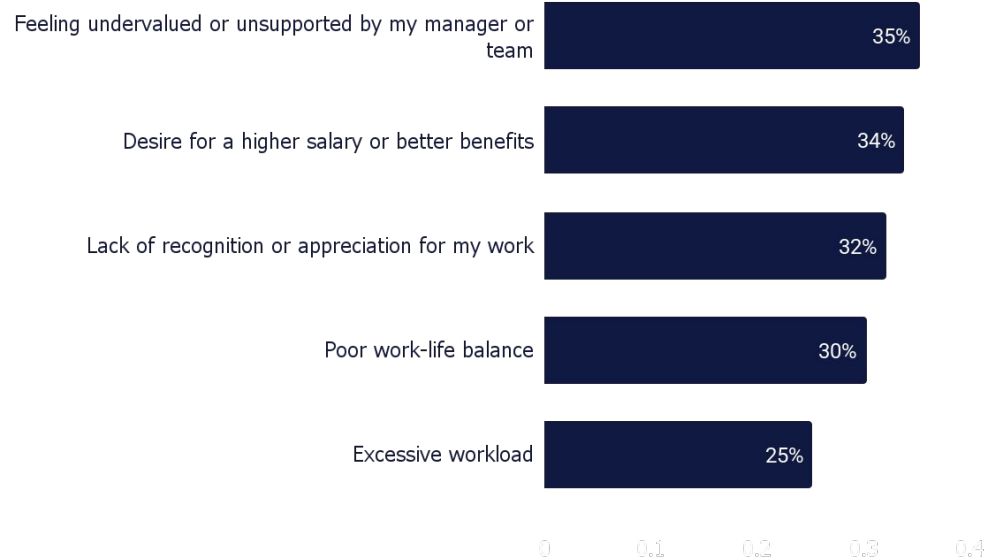
- more motivated / engaged than a year ago
- same as last year
- less motivated / engaged than a year ago



# a strong work-life balance and recognition drive motivation.

Both motivated and disengaged employees identify feeling valued/undervalued by their manager or team as the top reasons for their attitudes, underscoring its significant impact on motivation.

## less motivated & engaged



## more motivated & engaged



Q. You have stated that you are less motivated / engaged than a year ago. Has this been influenced by any of the following factors?  
Q. You have stated that you are more motivated / engaged than you were a year ago. Has this been influenced by any of the following factors?

# the top employers to work for in uk.

## 2025

1. Seagate Technology
2. BMW
3. Coca-Cola
4. Marks & Spencer
5. Mott MacDonald
6. Rolls-Royce
7. British Airways
8. Schneider Electric
9. John Lewis & Partners
10. Oracle

## 2024

1. Pearson
2. Thomson Reuters Corporation
3. John Lewis (Waitrose) & Partners
4. GKN (GKN Automotive, GKN Aerospace)
5. Marks & Spencer
6. Rolls-Royce Group
7. Seagate Technology
8. BMW
9. BBC
10. Mott MacDonald Group

## 2023

1. WTW
2. BBC
3. Apple
4. British Airways
5. BAE Systems
6. Marks & Spencer
7. John Wood Group
8. Rolls-Royce
9. BMW
10. KPMG



# appendix.

# 34 markets surveyed covering more than 75% of the global economy.



- |           |                |            |                 |                |
|-----------|----------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| argentina | chile          | hungary    | the netherlands | spain          |
| australia | china          | india      | new zealand     | sweden         |
| austria   | czech republic | italy      | norway          | switzerland    |
| belgium   | france         | japan      | poland          | united kingdom |
| brazil    | germany        | luxembourg | portugal        | united states  |
| canada    | greece         | malaysia   | romania         | uruguay        |
| denmark   | hong kong SAR  | mexico     | singapore       |                |

## sample

- aged 18 to retirement age representative on gender overrepresentation of age 25 – 44 comprised of students, employed and unemployed workforce

## fieldwork

- online interviews
- Q1 2025

## length of interview

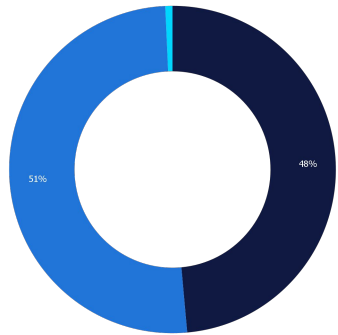
- 14 minutes

## UK respondents

- 10,753

# sample composition in uk, socio-demographics, education, region.

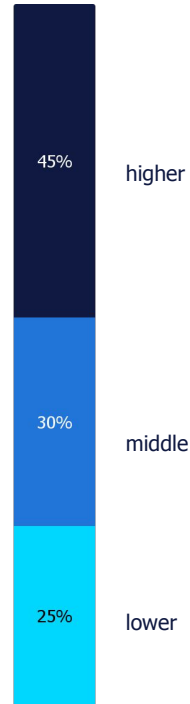
## gender



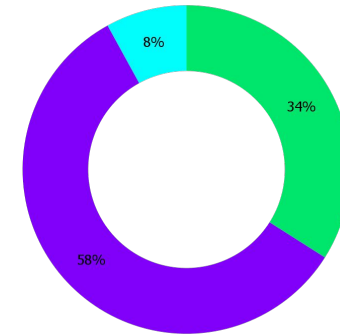
- male
- female
- other\*

\* other is comprised of all other gender identities and people who prefer not to answer the question

## education

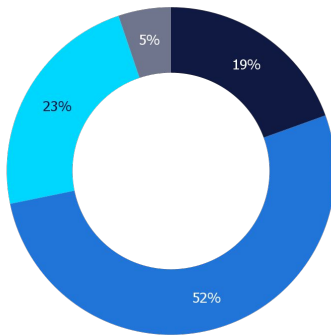


## specialisations



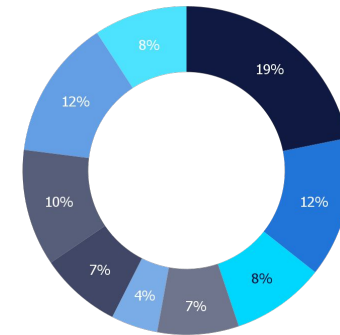
- operation
- professional
- digital

## age



- Gen Z (1997-2012)
- Millennials (1981-1996)
- Gen X (1965-1980)
- Baby boomers (1946-1964)

## region



- London
- South
- Midlands
- North
- Scotland
- Yorkshire and Humber
- East of England
- Wales
- Northern Ireland



# your thoughts.

let's start a conversation

Our research has many insightful, but complex insights so we'd love the opportunity to walk you through this document, share our thoughts and answer any questions you might have.

[request a call.](#)

thank  
you.



partner for talent.