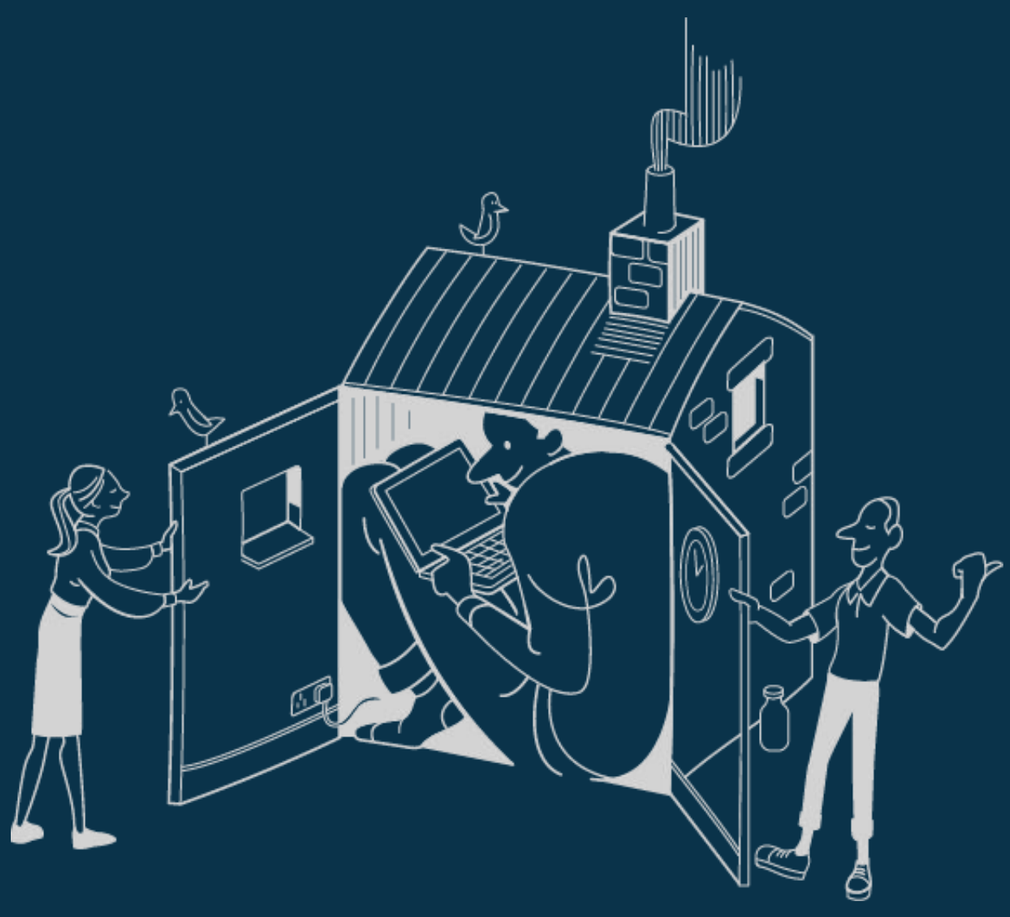
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# The Scaleup Culture Report 2023



A national report diving into the current state of workplace culture across the UK's technology sector

In partnership with:

YouGov®

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# Preface

Please note, this report focuses on the UK technology sector only, and is not representative of the UK workforce as a whole. The data in this report comes from ~1000 respondents across the UK working in tech jobs, and therefore the data illustrated throughout the report should be interpreted as such.

# Member spotlights include...

PLEO

silverfin

Florence

Sole

MR YUM

For more ways of working interviews with Techspace members, visit **techspace.co/blog**

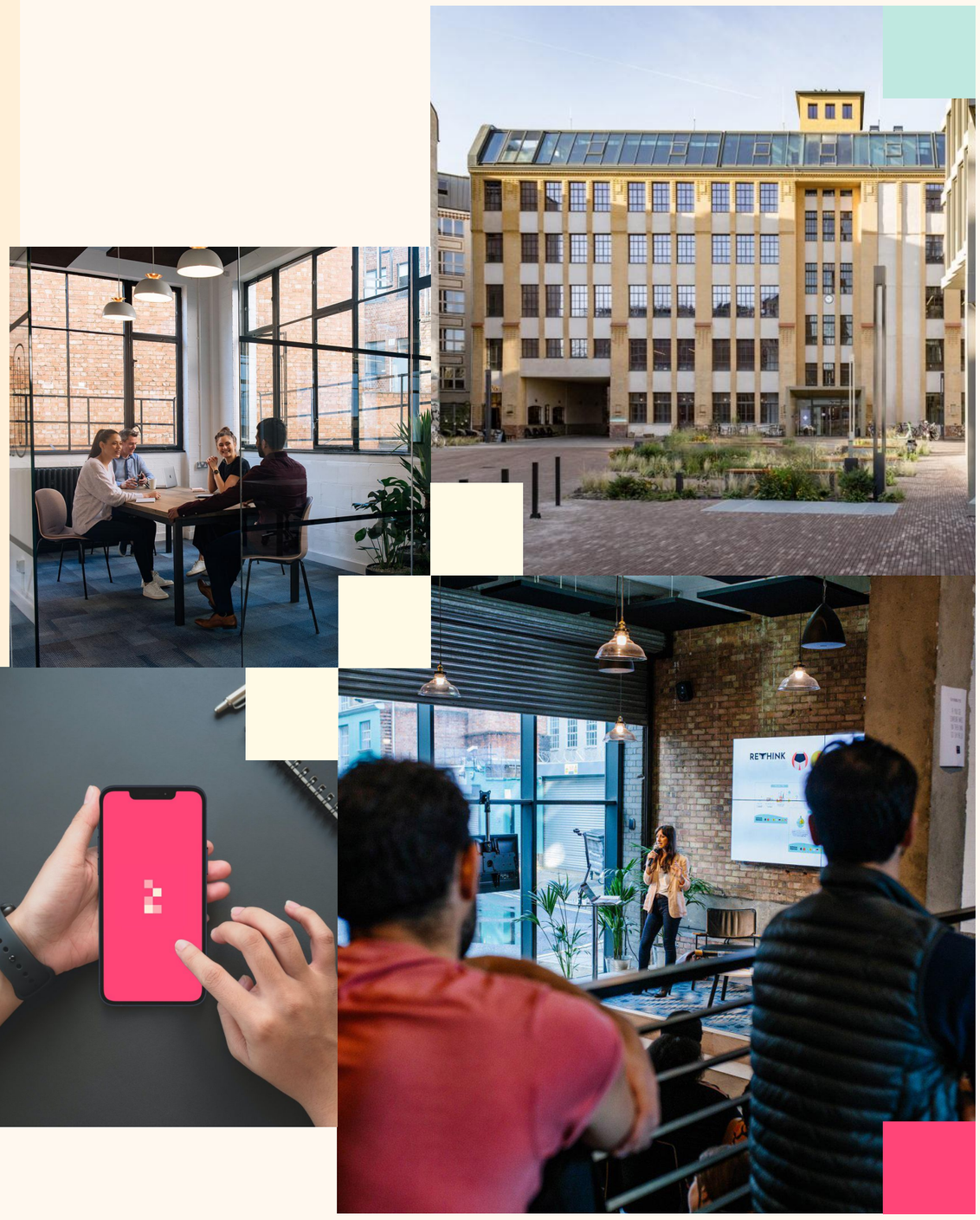
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# About us

**Techspace is a place for change-makers with tech at the heart of what they do.**

With space, expertise and community to amplify and inspire impact.

With over 10 years serving the tech sector we know what ambitious businesses are looking for. From space that flexes with you, to learning & development programmes designed to develop and inspire your team, you'll find we have the perfect place to attract top talent and drive your business forward.




## Where innovative and ambitious tech companies thrive

With locations in the heart of London and Berlin, two of Europe's key tech hubs and populated with like-minded businesses and enterprises, these are spaces built to create inspirational communities.

Our buildings are designed to adapt with the needs of its future facing members. Our development programs are created to nurture and support them and their teams. And our event spaces are jam packed with informative and thought-provoking programmes to enrich and inspire all.

So, whether your business is a scale-up or a grown-up, looking for a new space or more space, needing to innovate or simply be inspired, you'll find we have the perfect place to meet your needs and drive your business forward.

**Techspace**

Where change-makers are made.

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# Foreword

Over the past three years, the world of work has undergone a remarkable transformation. Driven by the pandemic and the shift to remote work, global working practices have entered a new era. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, it is evident that the workplace has transitioned from a slow-moving and mundane topic to one that is widely discussed in every company. Whether large, medium or small, every company needs to reevaluate the way they do their work.

Recognising the significance of these changes and their impact on collaboration and innovation is crucial.

Inevitably, high-profile and opinionated figures, such as Elon Musk and Boris Johnson, have expressed their views on the ideal work setup. We take a different approach and have sought out individual opinions of those actually doing the work.  "The Scaleup Culture Report" aims to present a comprehensive, real-world perspective on the inner workings of the UK's tech sector.



## About this report

- 1,000 respondents
- Technology workers
- UK-wide
- Including interviews with Techspace member community
- Commissioned by Techspace
- Executed by YouGov




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# Setting the scene

To set the scene, it's worth a quick recap of what's actually happened in the last three years. The way we work and our approach to work has undoubtedly changed. And it's thanks to a number of tectonic shifts during that three year period that's helped us get to where we are today.

When the pandemic broke out in March 2020, with so much uncertainty around the spread of the virus, many businesses who could exit their offices did so. This was true for Techspace's members and the lion's share of workplace providers across the UK. It goes without saying the majority of businesses didn't commit to new contracts until they had enough certainty that the pandemic wouldn't see a resurgence.

After a year most of us will never forget, for all manner of reasons, finally in the Summer of 2021, the world opened up again. Meanwhile the office sector started to experience a gradual recovery as businesses looked at bringing their teams back together. The financial strain most businesses had to endure was evident, and although nomadic hot-desking and flexible roaming memberships grew in popularity, when it came to businesses purchasing permanent workspace, predictably, it was larger and more financially stable businesses that were the first to make commitments on space. And with an abundance of space available in the market, those early movers had first pick of the best office locations. Picking the spots with the best transport links, best amenities and best office stock. Across the board, we saw businesses in our sector sensibly opt to take less space on more flexible terms. Signing spaces that helped them to reduce their monthly costs and keep control of their future costs.



Businesses favoured higher quality spaces in an attempt to attract their employees back to work. Using some of the savings they made on office space costs and pumping this back into the quality of the workspace itself.

Twelve months on, the dust has somewhat settled, we've all had about a year to acclimatise, businesses have likely decided on their working policies, and it feels like the world of work has some routine again.

In the following pages, we jump into the data from our YouGov national survey to see what those working routines look like today, and what the new normal is for the UK technology sector. We spot what's changed and we dive into the data to understand how UK tech workers really want to work. Drawing out the opportunities this presents for UK businesses to develop strong working cultures that allow them to build better and more successful businesses in this new era of work.

# How the UK works today

## The new normal

### Hybrid is the future

Fast forward to today, across the UK, our survey found that 75% of tech workers surveyed confirm their working week is some form of hybrid. Either Hybrid fixed or Hybrid flex*. With London's adoption of hybrid working topping the charts in comparison to other regions in the UK. The remaining 25% is evenly distributed between full-time in the office or fully remote.

* See Glossary on page 27 for Definitions for 'Hybrid fixed' and 'Hybrid flex'.

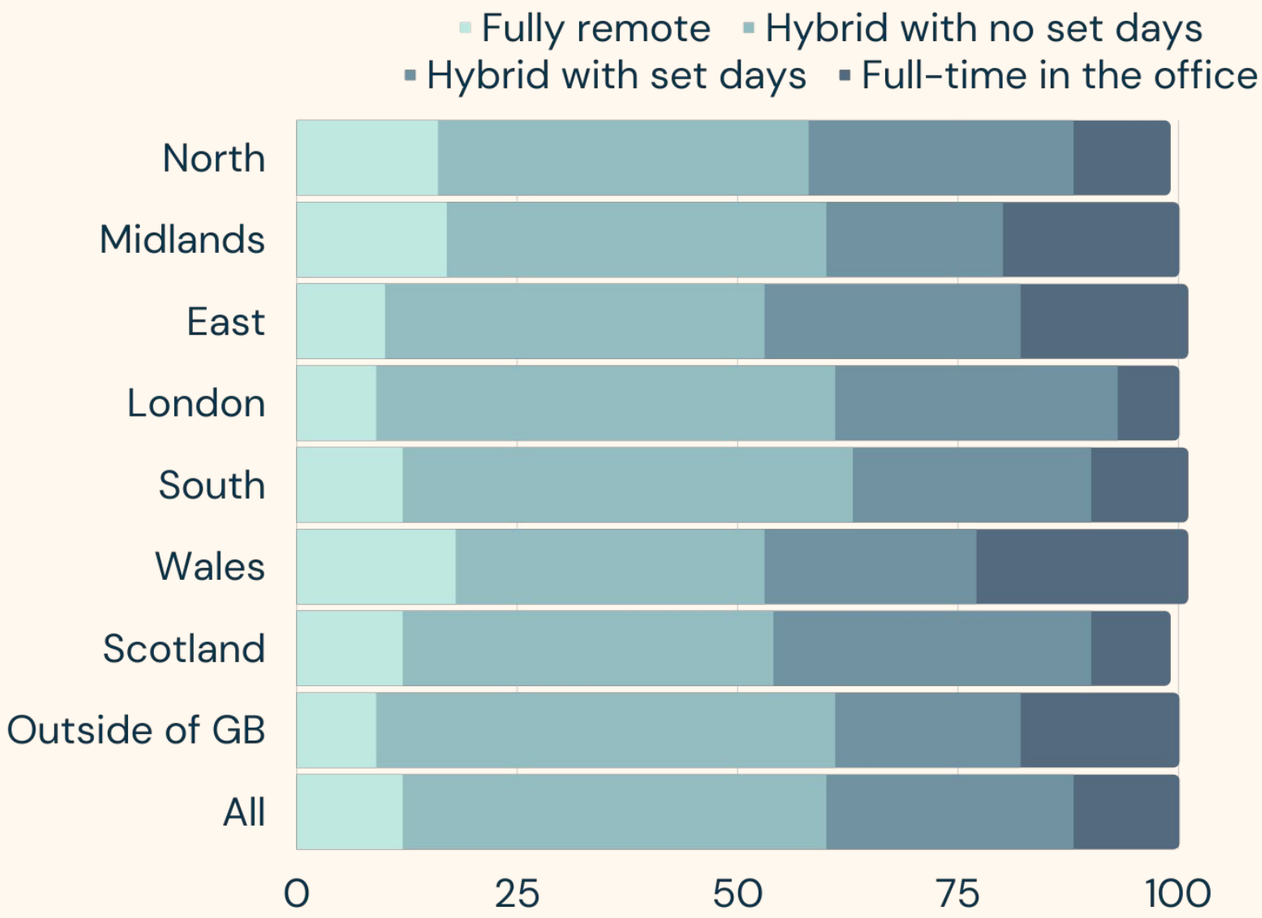



**Figure 1** - Current tech employee work arrangements amongst those with an office or workspace, split by regions in the UK (%) where the x axis illustrates the percentage of respondents who work Fully remote, Hybrid with no set days, Hybrid with set days and Full-time in the office).

### A quarter of workers don't have access to an office

When cross-referencing this data with another section of the survey, we also see that a proportion of hybrid working employees don't have an office at all. In total, we see that 24% of tech workers say they don't have an office or workspace, which is made up equally between those who are fully remote and those who hot-desk or roam.

### How does London compare to the rest?

- **Hybrid is the most common in London**

  As illustrated by the bar chart in **Figure 1**, those that work in London are most likely to work for a company with a hybrid work arrangement, as opposed to fully remote or full-time in the office.

- **Londoners have the longest average commute**

  As very few people actually live in central London, on average, tech workers that work in London spend approximately ~32% more time commuting than those in the other regions of the UK.

You might say this data isn't surprising for London. One hypothesis could be that London's more competitive employment market paired with longer average commute times mean employers are more likely to offer flexible working as a way to attract and retain their team.

*"We are constantly looking at ways of making The Sole Supplier the best place to work and retain staff,"*

**George Sullivan**, CEO and founder at The Sole Supplier

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## More than a quarter work in flexible office spaces

Over a quarter of respondents (28%) across the UK say they use a coworking space or flexible workspace as opposed to a conventional office. When comparing this percentage to a report by Colliers[1] which focused on London space occupied by flex workspace in 2018, this number was 5.1% (although it should be noted that this number would likely be larger for the technology sector).

Nonetheless, this indicates a sharp increase from pre-pandemic levels. We think this is driven by a growing demand for more flexible and collaborative work environments. It might also suggest that businesses and individuals are increasingly looking for alternatives to traditional office spaces that can be more cost-effective, offer more flexibility, and encourage greater collaboration and networking opportunities.

# Member spotlight

Tips for making hybrid work for your team

## Mr Yum shares its playbook for adopting hybrid working




**Beth Waker –** Marketing and Operations Coordinator at Mr Yum

At Mr Yum, the mobile food ordering and payments app, creating a sense of team is a high priority. Beth Waker, Marketing and Operations Coordinator at Mr Yum, is based at the startup's London office – she shares their playbook on how the business is bringing people together:

**Host a regular town hall**
Every second Wednesday of the month, Mr Yum has a UK town hall meeting that the whole UK team attends in person.

*"The town hall is all about team bonding,"* says Waker.

*"We really need to stick together, be totally aware and have the context of what's going on in the business. The best way to do that is to be together and talk about it"*

**Chance cafe**
Staff can opt in and be linked up with somebody else in the company every two weeks. If physically based in the same place, they go out for coffee or 'meet' remotely if they're in different countries.

*"The Chance Cafe is working really well in its early days and is a great example of an effective cultural initiative."*

**Inclusive socials**
The UK Mr Yum team arranges breakfast and evening socials every fortnight in order to be as inclusive as possible.

**Commute in on the same days**
While having complete flexibility on what days of the week you can come into the office has its perks, it can mean you are like passing ships with your colleagues. While there are no mandated days, many teams arrange to come in on the same day per week so they can work together.

*"We've managed to keep a good sense of camaraderie when we are all together because of these initiatives and because we're all striving for the same goal"* adds Waker.

Full interview via techspace.co/blog

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# Days are no longer considered equal

With such a high proportion of businesses choosing hybrid, the new normal also translates into a very different working week.

When it comes to going into the office, collectively, we've truncated the working week. The data is clear, Mondays and Fridays are not as popular as Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

## The results are in and most of us are TWiTs!

- As shown in **Figure 2**, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are the most popular days by far, with Monday the 4th most popular, and Friday the day tech workers are most likely to WFH.
- There are some discernible differences with younger employees more likely to frequent the office on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays but the most notable trend is that we all like to work remotely on Friday.

### Split by age

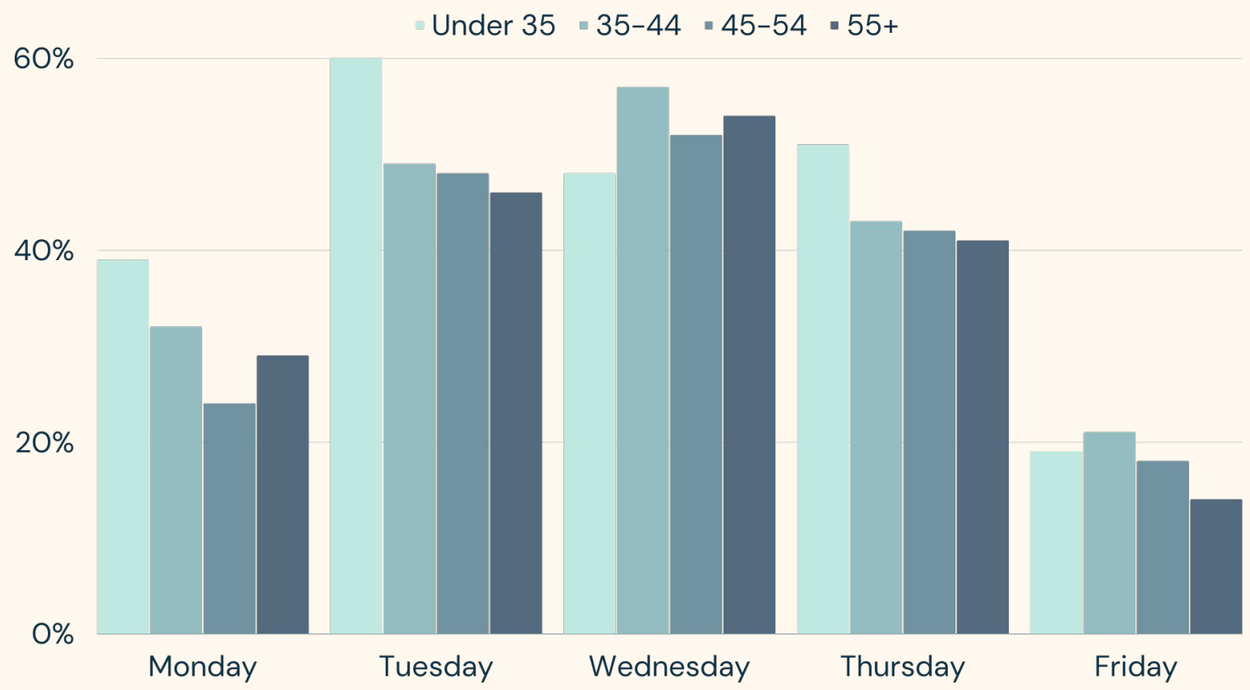



**Figure 2** - Current days in the office from respondents who work hybrid, segmented by age range of respondents (in the graph above the y axis illustrates the percentage of respondents who work the day in question, where respondents could select one or more options).

## The death of Friday in the office

In an article written by the BBC[2] in August 2022, the BBC suggests there has been a significant increase in the number of people who choose to work from home on Fridays, as compared to pre-pandemic levels.

A report published by TFL[3] corroborates this trend, stating that Fridays, which used to be the busiest weekday in terms of travel, have become one of the quietest. The report also notes that Mondays, which used to be the quietest weekday, have become slightly busier than before the pandemic.

## Under 35's spend the most time in the office

Our survey illustrates that each age category shown in **Figure 2** spends a similar amount of days at the office (between 1.85 and 2.18 days a week). However it also clearly shows that under 35's spend the most time in the office (2.18 days), and the older you get, the less time you spend working from the office (exemplified by the 55+ age category who spend 1.85 days).

One hypothesis for this trend could be that under 35's have a greater ambition to learn, climb the proverbial career ladder and place a greater value on socialising with colleagues. In addition, older workers are more likely to have dependents or raise a family, which is another factor that might reduce their time working in the office.



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## By company size...

Overall, the trend of working from home on Fridays is likely to continue, though there are some slight differences depending on the size of your business.

- **Figure 3** illustrates smaller businesses come into the office more often throughout the working week, indexed slightly more towards the start of the week relative to larger businesses.
- The larger tech companies we surveyed tend to come into the office less often (most notably on Fridays).

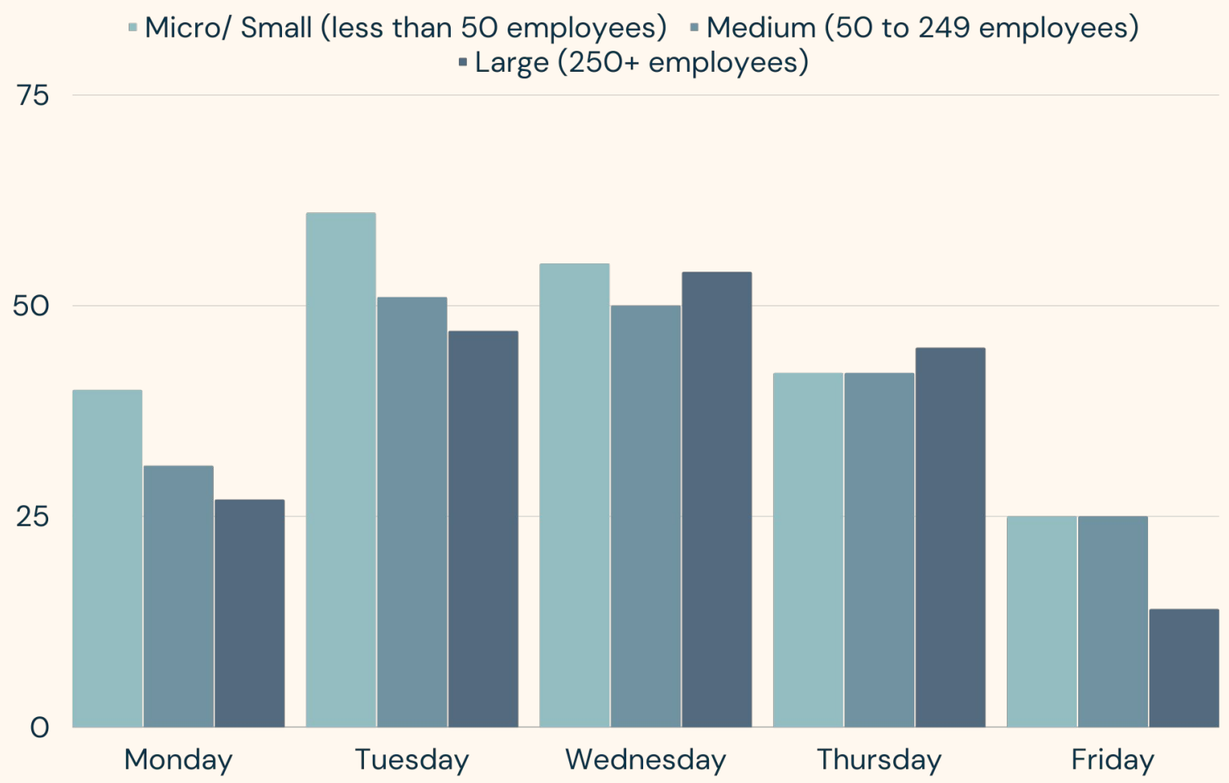



**Figure 3** - Current days in the office from respondents who work hybrid, segmented by organisational size (the y axis illustrates the percentage of respondents who work the day in question, where respondents could select one or more options).

# Member spotlight

## Should the size of your team influence your hybrid working policies?

### How unicorn, Pleo, embraces a more sustainable remote-first culture

When Denmark-based spending solution Pleo had just ten team members, the startup made its first move towards a hybrid team by hiring engineers in Canada. Today, with 820 employees spread across 30 countries, Pleo understands the importance of face-to-face connection, even with its remote workers.

*"Wherever possible, we like to put flexibility into our employees' hands..."* says Jessie.

*"For some roles, however, we believe that being co-located helps to foster a learning environment, especially for our entry-level sales roles."*

Pleo chose to create a hybrid working structure to help the startup attract the very best talent.

The company made the deliberate choice to rework the way it operates to ensure that its remote workers felt included, regardless of different time zones.



**Jessie Danyi** - Belonging and Impact Lead at Pleo.

*"In the early days, this was in the form of company-wide team camps, where we would go to a location and sit together for a couple of days to talk strategy, pitch new concepts, and get to know one another.*

*"As we've scaled, this has become an annual company-wide team camp where we all come together,"* adds Danyi.

*"As we progress and become more mindful of our footprint and of the environment, we have encouraged employees to come together more often as teams instead of frequent company-wide events so that they can foster belonging and ensure that they build relationships with those who they know and work alongside, but rarely see in a face-to-face setup."*

Full interview via techspace.co/blog

# What's the impact?

## So what?

With so many businesses shifting their approach to ways of working, is company culture better or worse? We asked UK tech workers their views on what the impact has been from the last three years. Across a number of categories, the overwhelming majority said they believed the impact has been a positive one.

But could it be that managers and employees view 'company culture' differently?

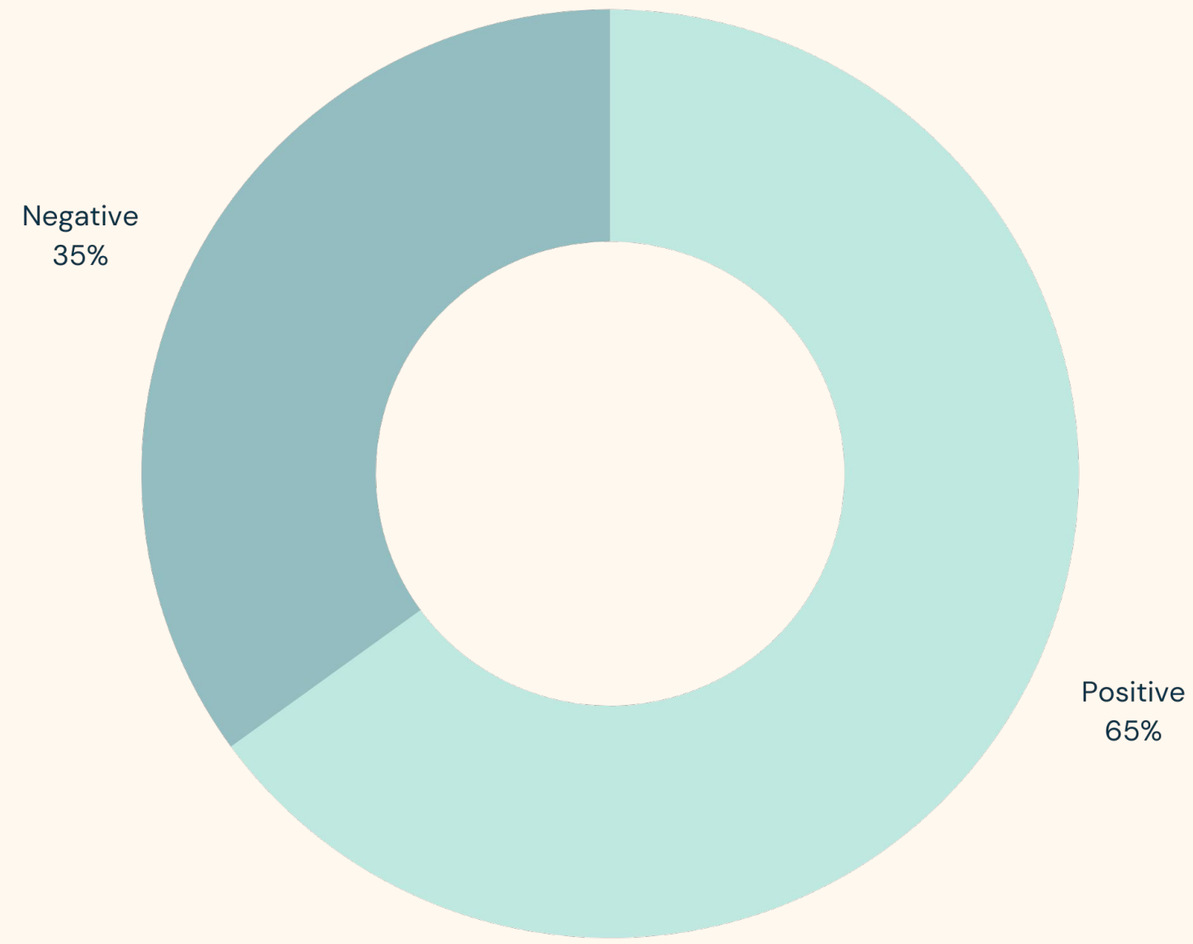



**Figure 4** - Impact of changes in working patterns to company culture.

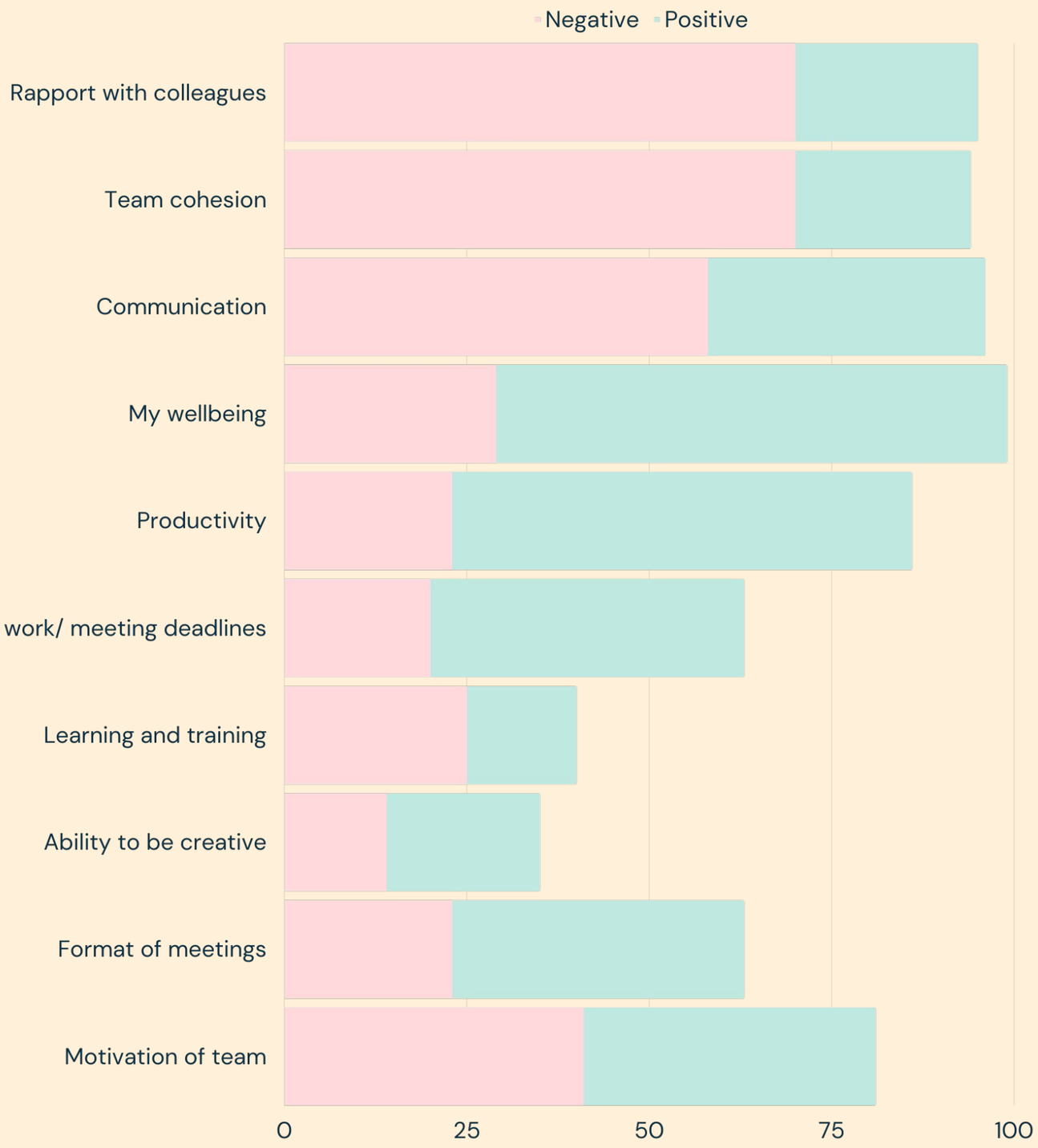



**Figure 5** - Features of company culture impacted by changes in working patterns over last three years (in the graph above respondents were asked if the last three years had a positive or negative affect on company culture, as a follow up to this question respondents were asked to choose the main attributes that contributed to this, and the y axis therefore shows the answers chosen by respondents as a percentage of respondents who answered that question).

## What are the main positives from the last three years?

### Positives

- Improved employee wellbeing
- Improved employee productivity
- Higher quality of work/ meeting deadlines
- Meetings held over video calls had a better format

When asked how company culture has been impacted by changes in working patterns over the last three years, 70% of respondents said their wellbeing was positively impacted. The majority of employees felt they were more productive, were better at meeting deadlines and overall produced a better standard of work.

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## What are the main negatives from the last three years?

**Negatives**

- Negative impact on communication
- Negative impact on team rapport
- Negative impact on team cohesion
- Negative impact on learning and training

Being away from the office has negatively impacted communication, team rapport and cohesion. 74% of respondents said they believe the changes in work patterns over the last three years had a 'large negative impact' on 'rapport with colleagues' and 'team cohesion' when it came to team culture.

*Will the reduction in the quality of communication, cohesion and team rapport create cultural problems in the future?*



# Good for "me" isn't always best for "we"

As you can see from **Figures 4** and **5**, the last three years offer a lot of positive benefits to the employee, but you could argue that the bi-product of these benefits to the individual ("me"), comes at the expense of the employer ("we").

Below we summarise our findings to demonstrate the disconnect between what employees want and what managers need:

- Employees think they are more productive when WFH, producing better quality of work and meeting deadlines
- Yet managers think they are less productive
- There's a widespread recognition that increased WFH negatively impacts communication and team cohesion
- At the same time, managers want more face-to-face time with employees but struggle to attract them in

Could it be that businesses are prioritising policy to attract talent over what they believe is best for overall company success? Given the negative impacts outlined above around communication, and team cohesion, are we likely to see more businesses mandate less flexible working practices as the job market normalises or goes into recession?



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# Member spotlight

## The business case for set days in the office.

### Why HealthTech scaleup, Florence, optimises for company success, not individual performance

While hybrid working has become the norm for a majority of startups, there's no one size fits all approach. Florence is a platform that connects independent nurses and carers directly with care providers to fill temporary shifts. The startup has three offices across the UK in London, Birmingham and Glasgow, each with different hybrid structures.

Glasgow, for example, is home to its operations, sales and customer service teams who all work in the office five days a week from 9am-5.30pm. In the London office, on the other hand, you will find Florence's engineers, marketing, product and finance teams, where everyone is in the office Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and work from home Monday and Friday.

*"In many roles, productivity is best achieved by being around other people in fields like sales, for example, where you vibe off the energy of other people,"* says Charles Armitage, co-founder and CEO at Florence. *"In other roles like engineering, you're probably most productive when you're not distracted, which might be best achieved at home – but productivity isn't the only goal when you're a team member."*

Armitage believes that it's important to have strong creativity, collaboration and company culture, and says these elements aren't achieved by working from home, but instead by in-person face-to-face interactions.

After working from home full-time in the height of the pandemic, the Florence team did a gradual return to the office where people came in a day or two a week, before fixed days were introduced to help meet key company goals.

*"When we were saying to come into the office one or two days a week whenever you want, we were finding that we weren't able to optimally achieve our goals of collaboration, communication, creativity and culture, so we had to tighten it up so people were all in on the same days,"* explains Armitage.

When devising a hybrid working strategy, Armitage recommends that fellow founders make a decision as to what is best for the company and then stick to it. He believes that while you can take the team's input on board and co-design the mission, trying to meet lots of different expectations creates confusion.

*"I'm optimising not for individual preference, but for company success,"* says Armitage. *"That might be a slightly different approach to other people – some people might think that by advertising for individual preference, you can create a strong company culture. I firmly disagree with that.*

*"For me, an essential part of the company is the people they work with. I think that if you don't have individual interactions in-person, you can't achieve that to the same extent."*




**Charles Armitage** - co-founder and CEO at Florence.

Full interview via techspace.co/blog

# The way we use space has changed

When we look at the impact from the last three years, with the majority of businesses choosing to adopt hybrid working and days of the week no longer being considered equal, we also find the way we use the workplace has changed dramatically.

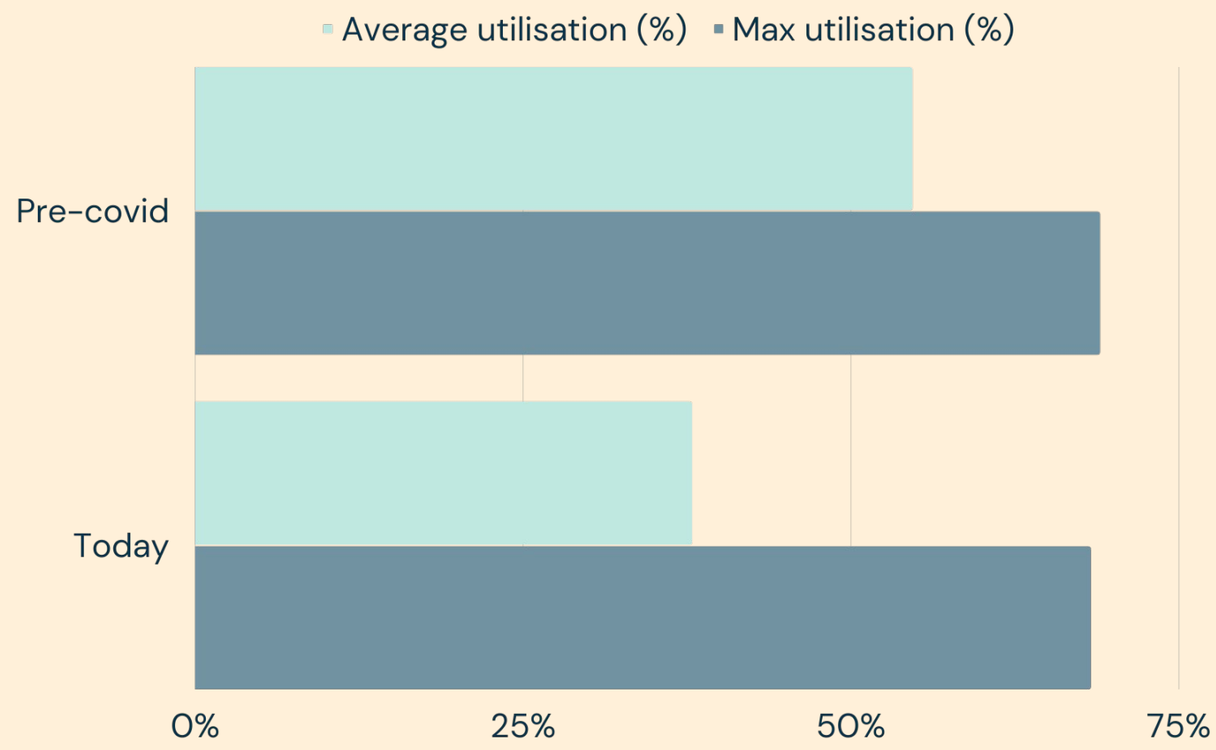



**Figure 6** - Techspace London utilisation (as a percentage of building occupancy) comparing pre-covid and today.



## How hybrid working affects the workplace

Overall we are seeing a gentle increase in coming back to the office, but on a granular level we've surfaced some interesting data points on how the space is being used.

The data from **Figure 6** is taken from our own anonymised building data across our London portfolio. Illustrating how frequently members use their workspaces week to week.

**Here are the takeaways:**

- Our busiest days are just as busy now as they ever were, at just below 70% utilisation.
- Average utilisation levels have dropped approximately ~30% since pre-covid.

Despite the fact that businesses have reduced their offices since pre-covid, member companies at Techspace are using their workspace 30% on average less than they were.

Member companies at Techspace use their offices on average 37.9% of the time, when comparing this to a recent study by Costar[4] which looked at the rest of the UK's average utilisation (from January 2023), this number was comparable to our own, at 34.3%.

# Tool-box

A playbook on the modern workplace search.

## How to kill two birds; An interview with Techspace

Rob Stevenson, COO at Techspace, encourages founders to begin thinking about the purpose of their office before designing the space itself.

It's integral to have a clear understanding of the problems you're trying to solve with an office space from the very start. Who's in your team? What is the cross-functional work that teams need to do to drive your business forward?

Next think about company culture. How do you want your company culture to be manifested in the way that you work together? It's not about putting a logo on a wall – it's about thinking about the specific ways you want to try and encourage people to behave and any behaviours you want to reinforce.

*"I'm a big believer that physical environments can help people to behave or change the way they behave,"* says Stevenson.

When it comes to budgeting, there is lots to consider. It's very easy to forget about particular costs or underestimate what those costs might be.

*"What I always encourage people to do is think about those costs on a per head basis,"* says Stevenson.

*"If you just think about it in terms of it being, for example, a space designed for 18 people and you take your cost and divide it by 18, you get a huge number.*

*"However, if you think broader and consider it's a space that's notionally for 18 people, but 50 people could use it, it's a smart way to drive the productivity of the whole team rather than just those who are working in your physical space that day."*

## Employers can leverage office design more to bring employees into the office

Our survey found that employees believe their offices are 'designed with hybrid working in mind', yet the majority of tech workers don't believe their employer is doing enough with the office design to encourage them into the office.

Ask yourself, if we're growing quickly, should we really just think about the size of the office?

*"You also need to think about a physical spaces' inherent flexibility, such as furniture, choice of layouts and the amenities that are plugged into it,"* adds Stevenson.

*"Every decision must come back to the question – how can this serve my team?"*



**Rob Stevenson** – COO at Techspace.

Full interview via techspace.co/blog

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# How employees want to work

## We asked, you answered...

It's all very well getting to understand how the UK currently works, but how does that compare to how the UK tech sector really wants to work?

We asked 1,000 respondents how they really want to work. What are UK employees looking for? What's the perfect balance of in-office and WFH? What attractions should UK businesses think about to encourage their workforce into work?

### 40% want 1 or 2 days in the office...

- When asked about their personal preference, the the majority of respondents prefer 1-2 days in the office.
- ~60% of respondents see the value of working from an office every week, with the majority (40%) of employees opting for either 1 or 2 days in the office.
- 38% of the respondents said they prefer not to spend any days working from an office.
- Engineering/Tech/IT want to WFH more than those in non-engineering roles.

### Full-time office workers value the office more

It turns out current circumstances influence preferences. In **Figure 7**, you can see tech workers who work hybrid fixed say they prefer to work from the office a little more often than those working hybrid flex.

However, 'full time in office' respondents say they prefer to work from the office most often. With 32% of those in office full time choosing to work from office 5 days per week, and 71% choosing between 3-5 days in the office.

This may also illustrate that those who work in the office see more value in working from the office...

| | Hybrid flex (your choice) | Hybrid fixed (set days/ min. # of days in office) | Full-time in the office |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No days** | 32% | 18% | 7% |
| **1-2 days per week** | 49% | 60% | 20% |
| **3-5 days per week** | 15% | 22% | 71% |
| **Other / don't know** | 4% | 0% | 1% |

**Figure 7** - How respondents choose to work (the table above shows the preferences from respondents who currently work Hybrid flex, Hybrid fixed and Full-time in the office).



## Senior leadership roles choose in-person

8 of 11 respondents who work in leadership roles, excluding those who don't have an office, choose to be in the office 2-4 days per week.

Although the sample size is small you could deduce that senior leaders often have a greater need for face-to-face interaction with other team members, to collaborate on projects, provide feedback, or build relationships with stakeholders. This could also be, in part, due to their role and the lens through which they view the company, choosing to maximising the success of the company as whole as opposed to their own individual productivity.

In addition, those in leadership positions may feel that their physical presence in the office is necessary to provide guidance and support to their team. This is especially important in industries such as finance, law, and healthcare, where there are strict regulations and protocols that need to be followed.

While remote work may be suitable for certain tasks and projects, there are many instances where being physically present in the office is necessary to effectively lead a team and meet business objectives.



## Tech workers find it valuable to be surrounded by like-minded peers

73% of employees surveyed who work within the tech sector find it valuable to engage with peers and other leaders from like-minded tech companies.

This is a big win for sector-focused communities like Techspace, and suggests that finding ways to support your team to network and engage with industry peers would be perceived as valuable by them.

Data like this confirms anecdotal evidence that workers in the tech industry have a strong sense of camaraderie and community with one another. This might be down to their growth mindset or the nature of the work, which often involves solving complex problems and requires a high degree of technical expertise. As a result, tech workers often find it valuable to be surrounded by like-minded peers who share their passion for technology and who can relate to their work experiences.

At Techspace we believe surrounding yourself with like-minded peers can have several benefits. We believe it can help to create a supportive work environment where people feel comfortable sharing their ideas and collaborating on projects. Leading to increased creativity and innovation, as well as a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect among colleagues.

We also believe being surrounded by like-minded peers can provide opportunities for learning and professional growth. For example, tech workers may be more likely to attend industry events or conferences if they know that their colleagues will be there. This might help them stay up-to-date on the latest trends and technologies in their field, and might also provide networking opportunities that could lead to new job opportunities or collaborations.

Overall, our survey conveys that a sense of community that comes from being surrounded by like-minded peers is a valuable asset for tech workers.

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# What encourages employees into the office?

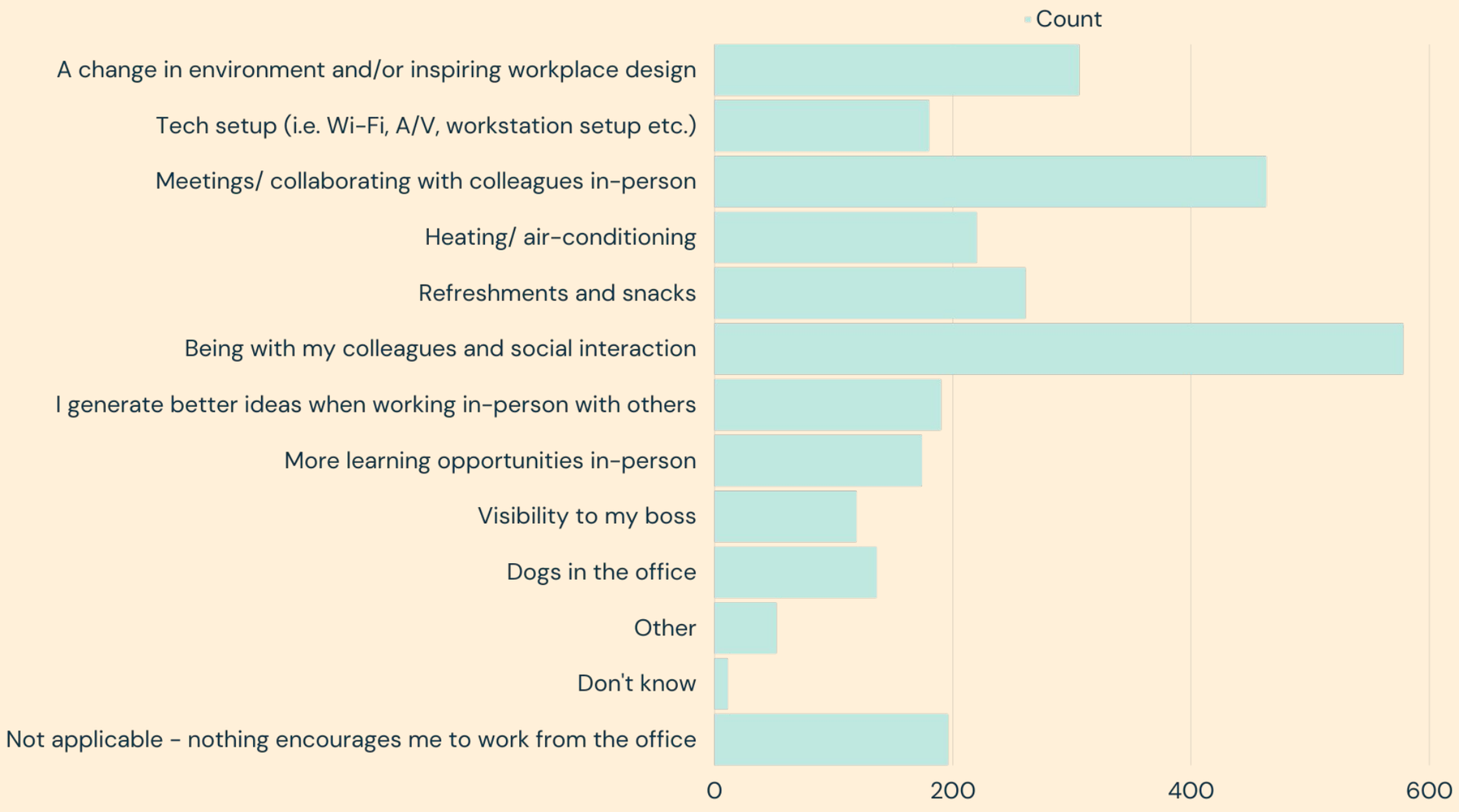



**Figure 8 -** Factors that would encourage working from the office (in the graph above the x axis illustrates the count of respondents who chose each option, where respondents could select one or more options).

## Top 5 office attractions for tech workers

1. 58% place importance on being with colleagues and social interaction
2. 46% place importance on meetings/ collaborating with colleagues in-person
3. 30% place importance on a change in environment and/or inspiring workplace design
4. 26% place importance on refreshments and snacks
5. 22% place importance on heating/ air-conditioning



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# Age plays a factor when influencing your team

## What encourages the younger workforce?

No surprises that social interaction is the most popular category. Followed by meetings and collaboration in person. But what follows is where it gets interesting...

It turns out, under 35 year olds' are greatly influenced by their office environment and the quality of their tech/ workstation setup, they also care more about heating and air conditioning and a lot more about dog-friendly offices!

Under 35's also care a fair bit about refreshments and snacks on offer in the office. And in the same vein, in lieu of the current economic environment, it makes sense that they are also keen to avoid paying for their own heating and air-conditioning.

Finally, under 35's are also more likely to come in to benefit from in-person learning opportunities than any other age group.

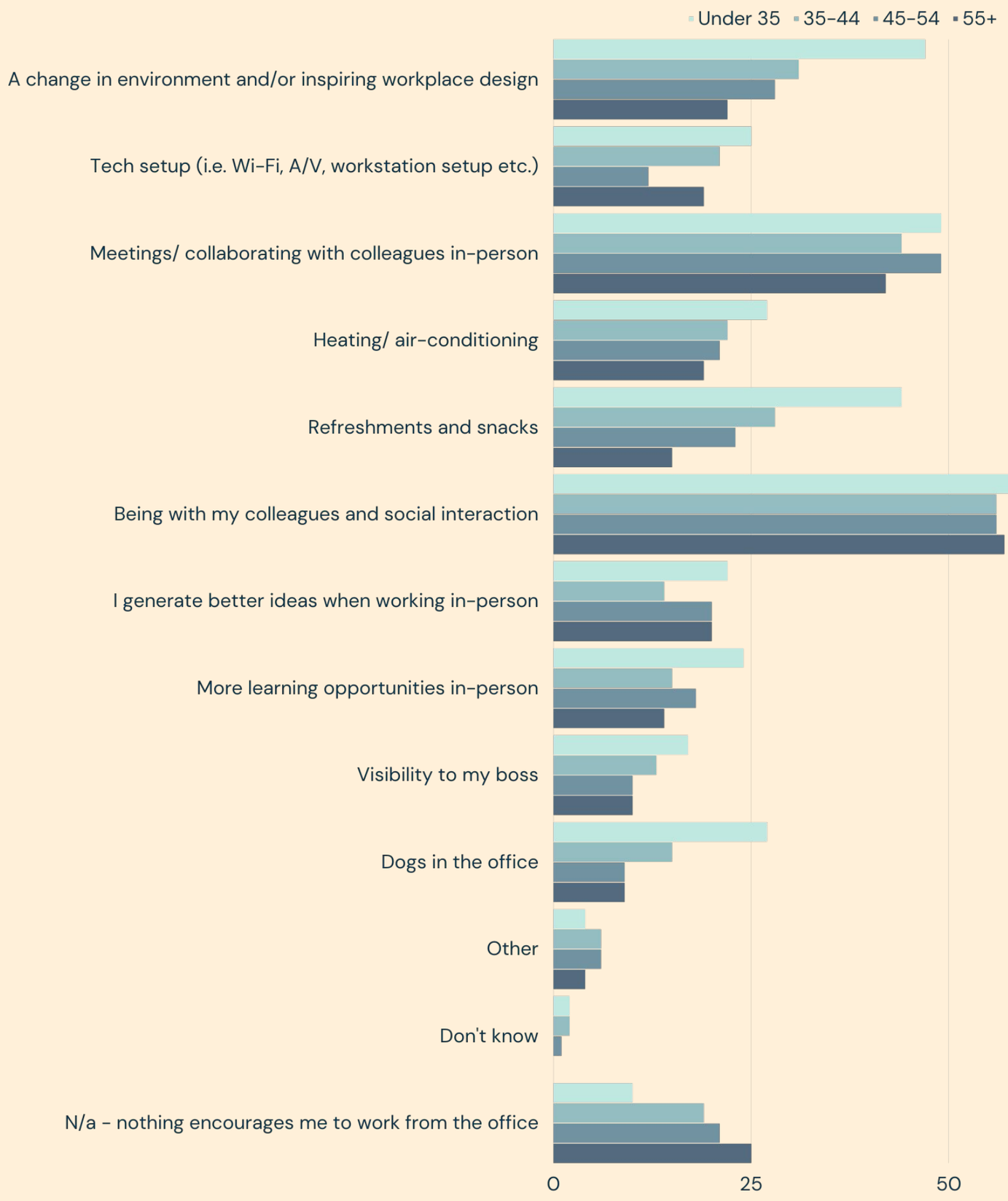



**Figure 9** - Factors that would encourage working from the office, split by age (in the graph above the x axis illustrates the percentage of respondents who chose each option, where respondents could select one or more options).



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# Member spotlight

## The Sole Suppliers' 9-point plan for engaging a young workforce

### The Sole Supplier's approach to building the optimal employee experience

After the height of the pandemic, George Sullivan, Founder and CEO at The Sole Supplier, decided to introduce cultural changes into the business that created flexibility and freedom for his team. Here, he shares the checklist of initiatives he implemented that tick those boxes:

1. Increasing our annual leave offer to 36 days including bank holidays, giving people more home time and more opportunities to take a break from work.

2. The introduction of two duvet days per year for days for when staff can't get out of bed. They don't need to give a reason – they just message on the day.

3. Bringing in TOIL (time off in lieu) for overtime has meant that staff can log their overtime and take the time back as annual leave. This has increased work-life balance as well as addressing stress levels and burnout.

4. Flexible start times – not everyone is a morning person, but if you are you can start early/leave early and vice versa.

5. Our remote working policy enables staff to work overseas or away from their usual base for up to four weeks in each calendar year.

6. Providing breakfast supplies and snacks in the office means that we are saving the staff a little bit of money when they do make that extra effort to come into the office.

7. On our new joiners' first day, we take the whole team for lunch. This encourages people to come into the office that day so that new staff get the chance to meet as many of the team as possible face-to-face.

8. We have a very active social calendar with regular team activities both during work hours and after work. This means that people who have commitments outside of work are able to join us. As the team has grown, we have tried to focus our effort on more wholesome activities without such a heavy focus on booze, such as the Crystal Maze Experience, Otherworld VR, and sound baths.

9. We have increased our family leave entitlement to support our staff through all stages of their life.

*"We don't want to dictate to our staff when they should come into the office, so we let everyone choose which two office days they want to come in for,"* he says.

*"The same as other companies, this does mean that desks and meeting rooms are often at capacity on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but we have recently addressed this by encouraging people into the office with more events on Wednesdays."*




**George Sullivan** – Founder and CEO at The Sole Supplier.

Full interview via techspace.co/blog

# Departmental differences




**Figure 10** - Factors that would encourage working from the office split by department (in the graph above the y axis illustrates the percentage of respondents who chose each option, where respondents could select one or more options).



## How do results differ between roles/ departments?

- More than most, Customer Service teams value learning opportunities in person.
- Operational teams value social interaction less than most departments.
- Product and HR teams value meetings in person more than other teams. *
- Finance and admin love dogs a little bit more than everyone else!

* Note, the sample size for Product and HR teams is small (below 50 respondents) and therefore reduces credibility of this conclusion

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# What can we all learn from this?

**If you're not going to come together in-office, you need to find another way to bring people together...**







## People want to see people

Everyone's business is different. And what's clear from our findings and our interviews, is that no one size fits all. But if there's one takeaway, it's that humans have an innate need for in-person interaction. Regardless of what role they're in.

When asked what factors encourage them to work from the office, the biggest attraction from the UK tech sector was 'being with my colleagues and social interaction'.

### Socials

If you're a business embracing hybrid or remote work, you should lean into the power of social occasions, whether this is lunch, Mr Yum's 'Chance Cafe' or after work socials. Part of building a winning team culture is facilitating time for your team to interact with one another (at or outside of work).

### Company-wide team days

All hands, Pleo's 'Company-wide team camp', team days, all-in days; whatever you choose to call them within your business, off-sites have become a staple for the modern workforce. And if you're a fully remote business, if you're not already, you should carve regular days in the calendar year for company-wide socials.

*"The only way that you can really connect ... is when you become a bit vulnerable so you see different sides of colleagues that perhaps they wouldn't typically display..."* – Beth Walker, Mr Yum

### In-person meetings

Of course, you don't have to have your own office to book meeting spaces. And although some of our findings suggested that the format of meetings was better remote, when asked what attracts employees into the office, the second-most popular answer was respondents' need for 'meetings/collaborating with colleagues in-person'.

Whether this is Zoom fatigue, tech issues or ideation, we'd encourage having a good balance of in-person meetings where the team can bond and practise healthy collaboration. Just make sure if you are going to run a hybrid meeting, that your tech, A/V and meeting style is inclusive to all participants. There's nothing worse than feeling like a fly on the wall in a meeting you should be contributing to.

It's also worth considering how some teams have different demands from other departments. As mentioned earlier in 'How employees want to work' Product and HR teams valued meetings in person a lot more than other teams did. So be mindful of the fact that some departments may have greater meeting room needs than others, and try to allocate resources accordingly. Maybe your meeting room budget should actually be split up unfairly!

# If you’re going to set days you need to communicate the behaviour you’re trying to encourage

For businesses who have opted for either full-time in office or leaned into hybrid fixed (i.e. have stipulated set days, or a minimum number of days in the office), alarmingly, almost one third (30%) of the employees we questioned (who work under this policy) think their managers want them in the office to check they are working.

That suggests almost one third of employees across the UK think their employers don’t trust them to do their jobs unsupervised. There’s a whirlpool of trust issues to unpack there.

The saving grace is that 40% of employees said they felt their company was attempting to achieve better alignment across the team.

There’s a fine line here between encouraging and mandating. Neither is wrong, necessarily. But businesses mandating in-office days need to be careful it’s not seen to be eroding trust between employer and employee.

Whatever your rationale, make sure it’s clearly communicated to all employees. Then set about building both the expectation, and the experience, that’s likely to encourage the type of behaviour you’re expecting to see on those days.

*“When we were saying to come into the office one or two days a week whenever you want, we were finding that we weren't able to optimally achieve our goals of collaboration, communication, creativity and culture, so we had to tighten it up so people were all in on the same days,”* – Charles Armitage, of Florence.



# No funny business... Do the right thing for your business and your employees

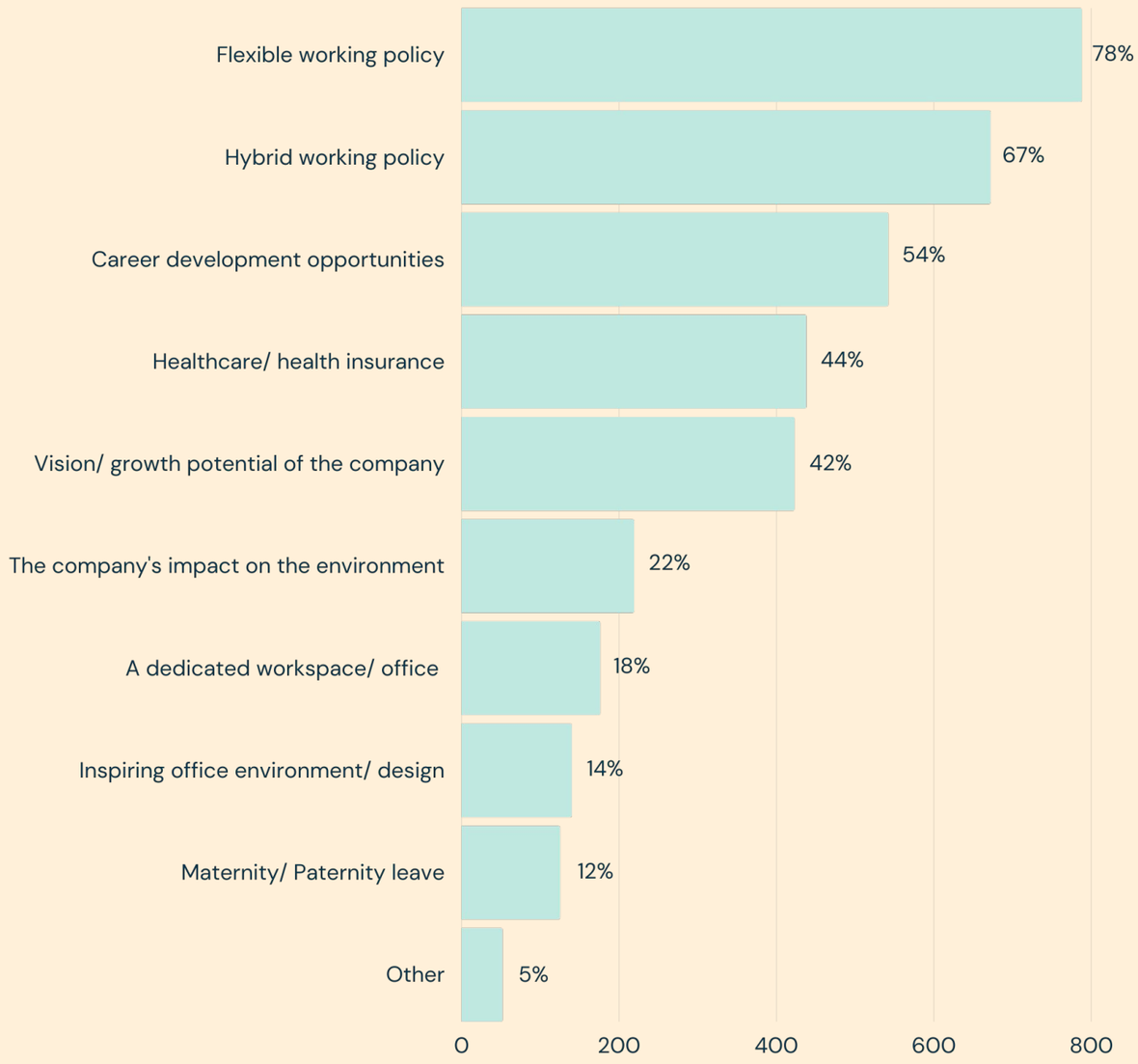



**Figure 11 –** A graph illustrating what factors are most important when applying for a new job (excluding pay, role and the location). In the graph above the y axis illustrates the count of respondents who chose each option, where respondents could select one or more options).

As illustrated by **Figure 11**, excluding pay, role and the location, the most important factors to UK tech employees when considering a new job are the company's flexible working policy, hybrid working policy, and career development opportunities (in that order).



## A word to the wise... No one size fits all

Of course, every business wants to stand out from the crowd. And as figure 10 above shows, embracing more flexible working policies might be one way to win that next hire. Just make sure you're doing it for the right reasons; don't make the mistake of copying another company's policies and expecting them to work for you.

As this report illustrates through both data and interviews, there are lots of experimenting currently underway but flexibility is now the norm. Very few businesses tackle these issues in the same way. And although hybrid without set days, or minimum days in the office is the most popular option across the UK, that doesn't mean you should make the switch. Stick with what makes sense for you and your business. Even if that means you miss out on that next hire. It's more important to avoid hiring the wrong people, than it is to set the wrong policies for your business long term.

Remember, it's relatively easy to offer your company more flexibility and freedom, but it's incredibly hard to backtrack again. So don't start offering benefits that aren't sustainable for the long term. The short term benefits will not outweigh the long term pain.

## Learning and development; a 'win-win'

However, there are a multitude of benefits listed above that you can and should leverage. Which means, if you're an ambitious scaleup looking for top talent, you need to think seriously about your investment in L&D, and how this might positively impact your business both internally and externally.

# Member spotlight

## Attract and retain top talent with L&D

### Why Silverfin double down on in-house L&D

The world of work has changed and so too has the need for a shift in what employee development plans look like and how they are deployed.

Stefaan Arryn, VP of People at cloud accounting platform Silverfin, believes the ability to let employees work from home is no longer a unique selling point, but is instead a commodity.

*"The world has become smaller and companies have enlarged their talent pools because they have learned that much can be done perfectly from a distance,"* says Arryn. *"This means there are many more remote-functions and the competition to attract the right candidate for these functions has become greater."*

Here, Arryn shares three key parts of Silverfin's employee development plan:

- We organise initiatives on a company level for certain groups of our employees like amongst other new joiners, managers and sales.
- Managers arrange other initiatives for employees in their team. These are at individual or collective level and are deemed necessary to help them do their job even better.
- An individual training budget of €1,000 is available so employees can sign up to training to strengthen their labour market position in our type of business. The training topics can be very broad and therefore beyond the requirements needed to fulfil their current role.




**Stefaan Arryn** – VP of people at Silverfin.

Full interview via techspace.co/blog

### Whether you like it or not, you need to find time for learning experiences in-person

There's been a multitude of studies that have compared the outcomes of in-person learning versus online learning. And if you do some digging, you'll find that both can vary in effectiveness depending on what's being taught, the level of difficulty, and to whom. Several other factors include the level of interactivity, the quality of the coaching, and the level of support.

The takeaway however, is that all learning, training and development can be benefited by some face-to-face interaction. At Techspace, for example, we believe the best behavioural results for all our management and leadership courses come from in-person programmes. To avoid distractions, encourage peer-to-peer learning...

...and contract more engagement with the facilitator, all our workshops are in person. That said, participants can also access an online learning hub between sessions to recap on material, add to their notes and prepare for the next session.

Earlier we saw that Customer Service roles found it more valuable to learn from others in-person. No doubt it's easier to learn great customer service from others in the flesh. The key is to tailor your learning experience by working backwards from your desired learning outcome. Work out what it is you want your learners to learn, what challenges they have and what they need to implement to overcome those challenges.

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# Finally, your office is an asset to your company, so turn it into an experience that enhances your culture

Across the UK, our report shows that coworking and flexible workspaces are less than half as popular as traditional office spaces, yet data from our report also suggests that those who work from a coworking space prefer working longer weeks in the office.

The office as an experience and space as a service has arrived with a bang. Our view is that flex providers have an awful lot to learn from the experience of hotels over the last 40+ years. Expectations are rising and it's never been more important to know your customer and tailor your products and services to their specific needs and wants.

The majority of our respondents, given the choice, said they would opt to work 1-2 days in the office. For many businesses that used to employ a 5 day week pre-pandemic, that's up to 80% less time in the office. As WFH setup and home Wi-Fi has improved, the in-office experience is less needed. In many ways it's more of a novelty. So no wonder employees are looking for more of a 'stand out' experience when they come to work.

And what makes an in-office experience stand out? Well, anything they can't replicate from home.

Whether that's barista-made coffee, market stall halloumi wraps for lunch, or a wrap-around 4K monitor at their desk, employees are demanding more from their workspace, and as businesses lean into more flexible working policies, to attract employees in, they need to respond.

## 5 steps to get you started

1. **Downsize your space needs**
   The average UK business is only using ~35%[4] of the space they rent on any given day. Which means the likelihood is, you're taking too much space. Cut your space in half. Your office space will have a better vibe, and you'll save money you can reinvest elsewhere.

2. **Use a flexible workspace to surge**
   Flexible workspaces have a unique advantage over traditional spaces because they offer shared amenities (workspace, meeting rooms, event spaces and common areas). For businesses with a low average usage across the week, and one high usage day (surge day) these flexible workspaces allow businesses to adapt as needed without paying for unused space.

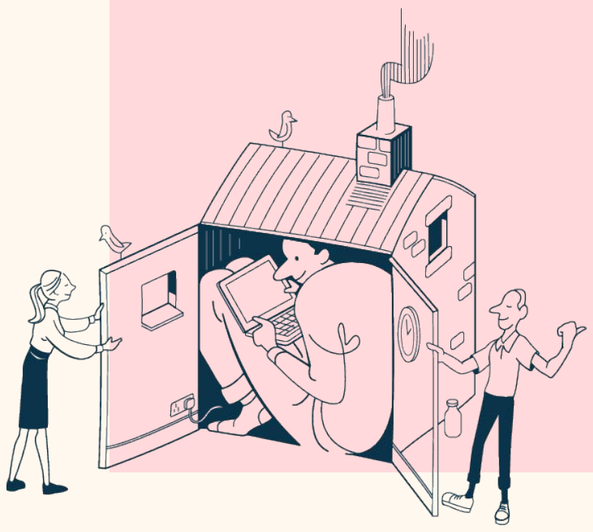
3. **Actively monitor your space usage**
   Nowadays, workplace analytics are fairly common practice. At Techspace we offer this as a service to our members, in turn helping them to right-size their office space needs on an ongoing basis. You'll also get data on which parts of the business use the office. So you can make better decisions.

4. **Re-design the space itself**
   Look at what your business does best when WFH. That might be focus work, calls, admin or whatever. For the remaining activities, design the office into something that's perfect for those activities. There's too many offices out there that are set up for yester-years work. Our survey suggests that 52% of employees said their employer has failed to make adjustments to the design of the office to encourage them into the office. There's a real opportunity there!

5. **Make every in-office day an experience**
   You don't have to dream up new ideas here. This report confirms that employees are encouraged to come into the office by snacks and refreshments, company lunch, and after work socials. Make it someone's job to organise these small things every day. And every now and again, when it makes sense, raise the bar and do something special. Maybe even memorable.

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# Want to work with us?



## Spaces that adapt to your needs

### Flexible spaces built for ambitious teams

**Fast-moving businesses need a flexible offering that adapts to their needs, not the other way around. Choose a workspace that frees you to grow your business, your way.**

- Memberships designed to adapt to your future needs
- Clever workplace insights and design services to help you get the most from your space
- Bookable spaces for away days and investor meets or bookable hotdesks for when you're on the move

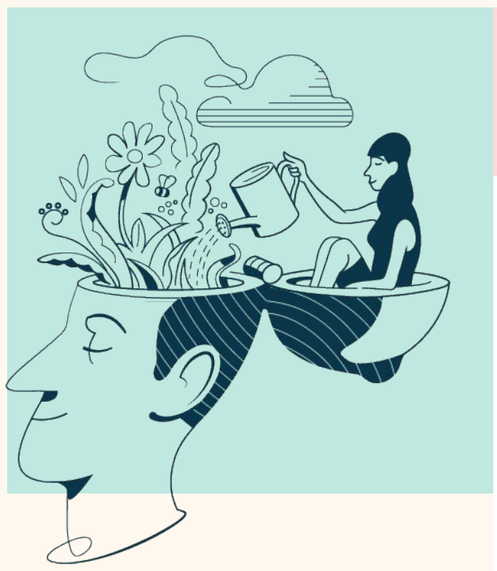


## No unwanted distractions

### Everything you need and nothing you don't

**Working hard needn't be hard work. So while you focus on the things that matter most to you, we'll take care of the distractions.**

- Ultra fast Wi-Fi, meeting room AV, configurable A/C. We've got all the basics taken care of
- Generous desks and shared areas that give you room to think and space to breathe
- Get your kicks without leaving the building with unlimited fresh, barista coffee



## A community of like-minded peers

### A community where the status quo don't go

**Since 2012, we've made it our business to know tech-driven businesses. And it's our tech-only membership that separates us from the rest.**

- Build valuable connections with members across Europe who've been where you are now, and walked in your shoes
- Leadership courses and programmes to inspire your rising stars and spark passion in your teams
- Rub shoulders with fellow change-makers at our events, breakfasts, socials and dinners

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# Glossary

## Definitions

**Coworking/ flexible office** – a place where other organisations also rent office space on a flexible basis, with shared use of communal amenities, such as meeting rooms and kitchens.

**Full-time in the office** – you are required to be in the office during office hours.

**Fully remote** – you have no (permanent) physical office space.

**Hybrid** – a company using one of either of the following working policies:

- Hybrid with no set days or minimum number of days in the office (i.e. your choice). Also known as “Hybrid flex”.
- Hybrid with set days in the office (you must be in the office X number of days OR on specified days). Also known as “Hybrid fixed”.

**Remote-first** – a company that chooses to make working remotely the primary option for most or all employees (and although the company may have offices, employs policies that are inclusive for those not working in-office).

**Respondents** – the participants who answered this survey.

**Utilisation** – refers to the degree to which something is being used or put to use for its intended purpose. It is a measure of efficiency that quantifies how much of a resource, asset, or capacity is being utilised relative to its maximum potential or ideal capacity.

## Abbreviations

**WFH** – Working from home.
**L&D** – Learning and Development

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## Interviewees

- **Stefaan Arryn**, VP of People at Silverfin
- **Karl Wilhelm Klevan**, HR & Talent Manager at Papirfly
- **Beth Waker**, Marketing and Operations Coordinator at Mr Yum
- **Timothée Clément**, Country Opener in UK and Ireland at Agicap
- **Jessie Danyi**, Belonging & Impact Lead at Pleo
- **Margaret Anne Coyle**, Co-founder and CEO at Hotbed
- **George Sullivan**, CEO and Founder at The Sole Supplier
- **Charles Armitage**, Co-founder and CEO at Florence

## Contributors

- **Rob Stevenson**, COO at Techspace
- **Kirstie Pickering**, Freelance Journalist
- **Lucy Patience**, Research Executive at YouGov

Although not everyone's interviews feature in this report, the complete catalogue of interviews with Techspace members can be found on our blog www.techspace.co/blog

## Author

- **Phil Ellis**, Co-founder & Marketing Director at Techspace




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