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Cumberland Lodge

Gen Z and the City: Restoring balance between generations

Report

Gen Z and the City: Restoring balance between generations

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Foreword

A perennial issue in our society is the question of how different generations relate to each other. Incomprehension, misunderstanding, uncertainty, and sometimes even fear are far from unusual in relationships between people from different generations as culture changes over time. However, as our research for this report has highlighted, this is the first time the workplace holds up to four generations, making the possibility of tensions and conflict even greater. The gulf between Gen Z and other generations feels wider and more complex.

Many anecdotes about Gen Z and their attitude to work can be found across the media, so it is important to take time to look at the evidence and to reflect on what this will mean for the workplace in the future.

This report emerges out of a significant partnership formed between St Paul's Cathedral, located as it is in the very heart of the City of London, and Cumberland Lodge, an educational charity focused on working with young people to understand and address contemporary social conflicts through facilitating conversations across differences. It presents initial findings from research about Gen Z in the workplace, drawn both from a literature review and from in person interviews.

We look forward to continuing the conversation, bringing together different generations to think through how the work place is changing, and to explore actions we can take to ensure productive inter-generational workplaces, in the city and beyond.

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Contents

Appendices

Figures

Tables

Gen Z and the City: Restoring balance between generations

Executive summary

While generational conflict in the workplace is not new, the current historical context presents unique challenges. The youngest generation in the workforce today, Gen Z, are beginning their careers amid increasing precarity and inequality, alongside complex social, economic, and political issues such as climate change and rapid technological shifts. Gen Z will inherit and work within these complex challenges that require equally complex solutions (Kreienkamp & Pegram, 2021). While misunderstandings between generations can divert attention and energy away from addressing these critical issues, fostering intergenerational collaboration is essential for tackling them.

Continuing St Paul's' focus on understanding how values and ethical frameworks play out in the City of London (St Paul's Institute, 2011), this report aims to explore and understand generational differences in today's workplace, with a focus on bridging gaps and overcoming misunderstandings. It is part of a wider collaborative project between St Paul's Cathedral and Cumberland Lodge, to examine shifting values between generations and the impact this is having, and will continue to have, on workplaces in the City of London and beyond. The goal is to develop recommendations and tools to help firms and institutions manage generational diversity effectively.

Through a review of research on Gen Z and the City of London, combined with interviews with key informants in business, finance, and the NGO sectors, this report identifies crucial points of contention and conflict in the workplace. It also provides context for, and challenges stereotypes about, Gen

Z, such as perceptions of being 'lazy', 'entitled', 'fragile', and 'lacking resilience'. Finally, it will suggest recommendations for improving intergenerational dialogue and workplace effectiveness.

Key findings

The report argues for a more balanced understanding of generational differences that considers the economic, political, and social changes that have affected various age groups. It highlights the importance of creating more opportunities for dialogue between generations to restore balance and foster a more inclusive work environment. Our key findings include:

- Gen Z began their careers in a landscape dramatically altered by the COVID-19 pandemic, including a shift to remote work and economic instability. These changes have influenced their expectations and approaches to work.

- While there are advantages to remote and flexible working, it poses a challenge to the development of intergenerational interactions. The office can provide a space for generations to encounter each other in order to create a better understanding of different values and workplace practices.

- Precarity and inequality, that has widened since the 1960s, impacts the relationship between generations, raising questions of inter-generational justice and informing Gen Z attitudes, politics, and values.[1]

- The use of online platforms for work contributes to the perception of Gen Z as entrepreneurial, navigating traditional career paths while exploring other opportunities or 'side hustles' (Christian, 2023; Parker, 2022; Walsh & Black, 2021).

- Gen Z are embedding mobility into their lives and wants to continue learning through different life and work experiences, but this may be perceived by older generations as a lack of loyalty or commitment.

- Gen Z's focus on work-life balance may not be evidence of this generation being 'selfish or self-centered' but rather of

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1   The Gini coefficient—a measure of income or wealth inequality within a population on a scale of 0-100, where 100 represents perfect inequality and 0 perfect equality—shows that Britain has become more unequal since the 1960s (Manley, 2021). In 1968, the Gini Coefficient was 26.8, but it was 32.4 in 2021 (down from a high of 38.8 in 2000) (World Bank, 2024).

"a generation that has grown up in an out-of-control world" trying to regain a sense of control (Onesto, 2022, p. 51).

- The importance of work-life balance for Gen Z is partly a response to the instability and unpredictability they have witnessed, such as economic recessions, global crises, a climate emergency, and rapid technological change. The desire for balance is a way of maintaining mental health and personal wellbeing, but may be perceived by older generations as laziness or entitlement.

- The impact of AI and digital technologies on the workplace could provide an opportunity for inter-generational dialogue and reverse mentoring: younger generations bring their digital skills, while older generations bring their interpersonal and management experience.

- Gen Z are more accustomed to bringing their 'whole self' to work, including their values, and they want their employers to align with these values. In contrast, some older generations in the workplace may perceive these issues as outside the remit of the institutions they work for.

- Gen Z are more likely to voice their discomfort or displeasure around practices and language viewed as discriminatory. This applies to gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. This outspokenness may lead to tensions with older generations. However, rather than thinking of Gen Z as an homogenous cohort, there is evidence of divergences in values particularly related to gender: young women appear more likely to hold 'progressive' or 'liberal' values while young men can be more likely to hold more 'conservative' values.

- While the gender pay gap is relatively small for younger workers, it widens with age and experience, particularly among Boomers. This disparity highlights the ongoing issue of gender inequality in the workplace and the need for continued efforts toward pay equity.

Introduction

Economic challenges, technological innovation, shifting social boundaries, and existential threats such as climate change are generating an atmosphere of insecurity, impacting young people's expectations for their futures. There is increasing debate around generational inequalities and injustices, particularly in relation to debt, housing and political participation (Bristow, 2021). Yet, the personal and social values that enable young people to navigate the 21st century's uncertainties are also affecting the workplace and workplace practices, including the City of London's financial services sector.

In addition to wider social and environmental concerns, this is a significant moment in labour history as for the first time, four generations are active in the workforce: Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z (Atay & Williams, 2024; Moore, 2023, pp. 14–15, see Table 1).[2]

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2   Appendix A provides more detail on generations and generational research.

Table 1: Generations in the workplace today

Generation name	Years born	Age	Share of population (England and Wales) (%, 2021)
Baby Boomer	1945-1965	59 to 79 years	23
Gen X	1966-1979	45 to 58 years	18
Millennial	1980-1995	29 to 44 years	22
Gen Z **'Postmillenials, Zoomers, or i-Gen-ers'** (Katz et al., 2021, p. 1) **'TikTok generation'** (Ipsos, 2023a, p.15)	1996 to the early 2010s	12 to 28 years	20

Sources: Duffy (2021, p. 11); Ipsos (2023a)

Each generation brings unique values, but differences can lead to tensions, including older generations feeling frustrated with the newest generation's approach to work (Burton, 2024; Edgecliffe-Johnson, 2023; Money-Coutts, 2024; Steafel, 2024). Concerns around changing values and practices in multigenerational workplaces have been voiced in media, corporate briefings, and other publications (Costa, 2023). New executive courses are now being offered to manage what the *Financial Times (FT)* has argued is "one of the thorniest challenges for executives to grasp" (Wylie, 2024). 'Gen Z whisperers', advisers from young employees to consulting firms, are helping companies recruit, manage, and capture new customers (Raval, 2024).

In these debates, Gen Z, also known as 'postmillennials, Zoomers, i-Gen-ers' (Katz et al., 2021, p. 1) or the 'TikTok generation' (Ipsos, 2023a, p. 15), are sometimes presented as bringing 'fresh ideas and skills' to the workplace, being "[t]ech-savvy, connected, entrepreneurial and socially conscious" employees (British Council, 2024). However, there is also a predominant perception of Gen Z as lacking a work ethic (Money-Coutts, 2024; Steafel, 2024).

There is always a risk of oversimplifying and misusing generational labels (Rudolph et al., 2021). Categorising one generation as 'lazy', 'narcissistic' or 'selfish' (Duffy, 2021, p. 7), or another as 'out of touch' and 'old fashioned', can lead to misunderstandings and fuel generational divisions. This is a common occurrence in media and news articles, which often sensationalise generational differences. Keeping in mind the need to avoid stereotyping and sweeping judgements, the following report aims to better understand generational changes, to provide a more nuanced understanding of Gen Z, and identify interventions that will improve intergenerational relationships in the workplace.
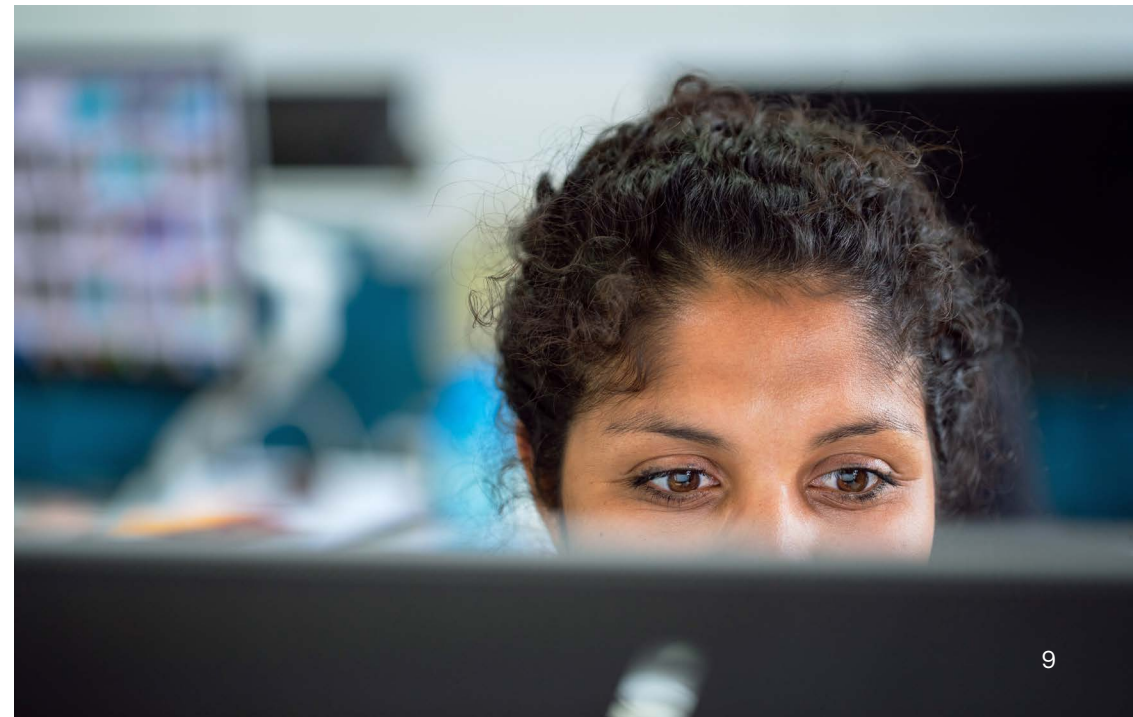
Aims and purpose

Generational research may be deployed for different purposes, including observing, understanding, and explaining social change, and/or to understand better those seeking to create change (White, 2013). It can help us identify how economic, political, and social changes impact and interact with the values of different generational cohorts, including in the workplace. A leading researcher in the field, Bobby Duffy (2021), argues that in examining lifecycle and cohort effects (Appendix A) at the individual and collective level, we can have "a much greater ability to predict what comes next regarding the biggest issues of our time" (Duffy, 2021, p. 9).

Taking the workplace and intergenerational justice as one of these 'big issues', this report, produced in partnership with Cumberland Lodge and St. Paul's Cathedral, consists of a literature review and key informant interviews. The review focused on sociocultural, economic, political, and institutional perspectives on workplace changes, using 'Gen Z' and 'generation' as key search terms. Material reviewed was English-language, and focused on the UK, particularly the City of London, but with some reference to other contexts, including the US and Europe. Sources drawn on for this report include reports from management consultancies, think tanks, charities, and government agencies, including McKinsey, Deloitte, Ipsos, and the Resolution Foundation, alongside academic literature, journal articles, and books from various disciplines, notably social sciences (sociology, geography), management, and human resources. The review of the literature informed the research design including the decision to interview key figures in senior positions within the City of London about their experiences of working with Gen Z and changes in the workplace. Six key informant interviews were conducted online, with consent obtained from each participant. All interviewees are anonymous for confidentiality, with pseudonyms used in

the report, unless permission has been given to be named. Appendix B provides a list of key informant interviews.[3]

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[3] The interviews were transcribed using Otter.ai software and reviewed by the author to ensure accuracy. The transcripts were then coded with NVivo qualitative analysis software, and key themes were identified through this process.

The City of London and Gen Z

The office is more than just a place of work; it is also a complex web of relationships, partnerships, collaborations, networking, and socialising (Harris, 2021; Orrell et al., 2024). This section explores some of the transformations that have occurred in the City of London in recent decades, connected to economic, political, and social change, to highlight the work environment that Gen Z is entering.

The history of the City of London, also known as 'the Square Mile' or the City, has generated a unique workplace. It is London's primary central business district, and since the 17th century, one of the world's largest financial services centres (Eagleton-Pierce, 2023). It has its own Lord Mayor, its own government and policing (City of London Corporation, 2024).

The City has a relatively young and highly skilled workforce. In 2024, there were 615,000 employees, dominated by Gen Z and Millennials (around 56% aged between 22 and 39 compared to the UK average of 44%). In terms of gender and race, only 38% of the workforce were women, and 37% were of Black, Asian, or minority ethnic origin (City of London, 2024).

Unsurprisingly, the Financial Services sector, including banking, fund management, and insurance, dominate employment (32%, see Figure 1), alongside Professional Services, including legal services and management consultancy, making up 28% of the workforce (City of London, 2024).

Figure 1: Employment by Sector in the City of London, 2024

■ Financial Services   ■ Professional Services   ■ Tech   ■ Business Services   ■ Others
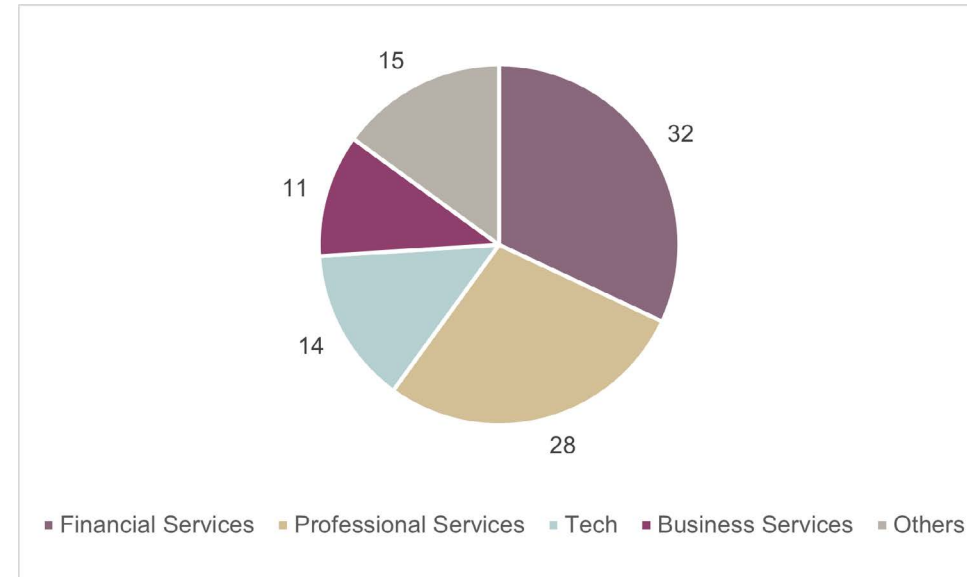
Source: City of London (2024)

Over the last 50 years, there has been a significant shift in where people work. Between 1978 and 2020, there was a 250% growth in office jobs in the UK, from 3.8 million in 1978 to 9.6 million in 2020 (Harris, 2021).[4] This increase in office-based jobs reflects the shift in the UK economy in the 1990s, from one based on manufacturing to a service-based economy (Harris, 2021, p. 6). The Boomer generation experienced these changes while in the workforce, and Gen X just as they were entering it.

The shift toward a service-based economy also coincided with a rapid increase in high-income earners in London and subsequent increasing inequality, impacting on the geography of the city (Dorling, 2023). Between 1993 and 2022, there was a 240% increase in employment in high-paid jobs in 'Inner London', including the City, compared to a 95% increase across

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4   Jobs categorised as 'office economy' include those in the following sectors: Information and Communications; Financial and Insurance; Professional, Scientific and Technical and Real Estate; Administrative and Support Services, and Public Administration (Harris, 2021, p. 6). This does exclude other sectors which may include office jobs, however, the sectors included cover the majority of office roles (Harris, 2021).

the UK. Low-paid jobs increased by 50% and middle-paid jobs by 7% (Xu, 2023b). High-paid jobs include those in sectors that dominate the City such as finance and insurance (ONS, 2023). The national mean earnings in finance were £7,500 per month before tax in 2023, significantly higher than mean earnings in the UK as a whole of just £2,700 per month (Xu, 2023a).

Those on higher incomes can afford the high rent and house prices in the City and its surrounding boroughs (see Figure 2, neighbouring boroughs include Westminster, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Islington, and Camden). In these boroughs, the average private monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment between April 2023 and March 2024 was over £1,500 (Greater London Authority, 2024). In the City, the average rent was £2,138 (Greater London Authority, 2024). Individuals with low incomes have tended to move from central areas of London to west and northeast boroughs (Hillingdon, Ealing, Barking and Dagenham, Newham and Waltham Forest), as well as into the commuter belt, impacting commuting patterns and diversity within the City (van Ham et al., 2020).

Figure 2: Map of London Boroughs

Source: Greater London Authority (GLA) (2018)

The deregulation of the property market and financial services in the 1980s led to a surge in new office buildings in the City, with demolition and redevelopment of swathes of land (Harris, 2021).[5] To accommodate financial services, new offices were expected to incorporate 'dealing floors the size of football pitches', capacity for the latest technology, and flexible, open trading floors that enabled a panoramic view of teams rather than separate offices (Eagleton-Pierce, 2023, p. 191). Simultaneously, investments in infrastructure in the City for the emerging digital economy included fibre-optic cables for increased bandwidth capacity (Eagleton-Pierce, 2023).

5   However, the financial crash that was felt in the early 1990s impacted the property development market so that "40 million sq ft (c3.7 million sq m) of space, equivalent to nearly 1,000 football pitches, was empty in central London alone, and there was a development pipeline of around 100 million sq ft (9.3 million sq m), representing a staggering 50% increase in total stock" (Harris, 2021, p. 186).

Large skyscraper buildings now characterise the City. The Gherkin (30 St Mary Axe), for example, was given building approval in 2000 and was a catalyst for other towers to be built in the area, including Heron Tower, finished in 2007, and 22 Bishopsgate, completed in 2020 (Eagleton-Pierce, 2023). The redevelopment of Liverpool Street, later known as Broadgate, was undertaken in the 1980s and opened in 1991, incorporating shops, cafes, bars and restaurants to provide leisure spaces for workers (Gillen, 2019). The latest skyscraper to join this skyline will be 1 Undershaft, sitting next to the Leadenhall building and as tall as the Shard on completion. It was recommended for approval by city planners in July 2024. **For Gen Z, the City's landscape is defined by these skyscrapers and large office buildings, while at the same time, there is a trend for hybrid and flexible working from home as the next section illustrates.**

Hybrid and flexible working

Despite the growing number of large office buildings in the City, technological innovations have reshaped how and where people work (Harris, 2021). With the advent of computers in the 1980s came the idea of the 'agile' or 'knowledge' worker, able to work from a variety of settings, in and out of the office, including at home, clients' premises, in coffee shops or transit lounges (Harris, 2021).[6]

In the 2000s and 2010s, the technological innovations that allowed people to work flexibly intensified. COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020 highlighted that the traditional office is often unnecessary. Access to phones, laptops, and other technology means work can be done flexibly and remotely outside the City and the country, and not confined to core business hours of 9 am – 5 pm (Harris, 2021; Katz et al., 2021). As Katz et al. (2021, p. 130) note, "work in the digital age requires new techniques for harnessing the combined power of workers sitting in front of their individual screens in scattered locations".

Gen Z is the first generation to finish their education and join the workforce during this period of intense reorientation of work, "in a post-pandemic state of flux" (Dunlop et al., 2023, p. 3). Deloitte's Annual Global Gen Z and Millennial Survey (2023) found that 65% of Gen Z respondents wanted a hybrid or remote work pattern (Deloitte, 2023). The most popular preference was to have full choice over where they work, followed by a combination of remote and on-site work but with requirements set by the employer as to when to be on-site, rather than fully remote or full-time in the office (Deloitte, 2023).

A key reason for this preference was to free up time to spend with friends and family, pursue hobbies, and take care of non-work-related responsibilities. It would also save money

6   According to Harris (2021, p. 291), "One of the earliest examples of agile working in the corporate sector was that introduced by IBM at Bedfont Lakes, near Heathrow in 1992. On moving in, IBM had 600 'SMART' workers who used the office as a base but had no fixed, personal space." BT was also "one of the strongest advocates of agile working" (Harris, 2021, p. 291) from the mid-1990s.

(commute, work clothes, and dry cleaning) (Deloitte, 2023). 54% of Gen Z respondents said that hybrid work is positive for mental health, and this percentage was higher for parents (59%), ethnic minority groups (58%), and people with visible disabilities (60%) (Deloitte, 2023).

Despite a continued preference for flexible work patterns, Deloitte's 2024 *Gen Z and Millennial Survey* found that 51% of Gen Z and 57% of Millennials now work fully on-site (Deloitte, 2024). Of those mandated to return to the office, 13% of Gen Z had started looking for a new job or were looking to leave their current role (Deloitte, 2024).

A crucial value impacting Gen Z choices is concern for environmental futures (Deloitte, 2024). As Jon (interviewed June 2024), a Senior Investment Director in the financial services sector, noted:

> " I cannot really go into a meeting with a 20-year-old and not end up having a conversation about ESG, environment, social, corporate governance, BP, Shell, oil companies. You know, environmental factors. I'll have a conversation about that in six out of 10, seven out of 10 meetings, whereas for the Baby Boomers, it will be one or two out of 10.

In this regard, more flexible work patterns can reduce the environmental impact of commuting. Onesto (2022) argues that companies with large office spaces, contributing significantly to city pollution, could lessen their impact by switching to smaller premises or getting rid of office space entirely. Mar (interviewed July 2024), a Senior Executive in the consultancy/professional services sector, noted that some companies are now designing offices to be more sustainable.

Many of the larger banks and financial technology (FinTech) companies have implemented flexible and hybrid work arrangements since COVID-19 lockdowns, as pointed out by interviewees such as Ana (May 2024), a Senior Executive in FinTech. Employees can work from home one or two days per week, and some companies even allow employees to work in

a different country for a set period (four to eight weeks) each year.

There are examples of large banks reducing their office space, and hot-desking is becoming more common. It was suggested by Jon that a key reason for this was linked to cost-cutting as on most days there tended to be less than 70% of people in the office:

> " They've just extrapolated and said, well, each area has 70% of desks in the new office and see how you get on with that.

This also suggests a degree of experimentation around these new work patterns. HSBC, for example, will move from Canary Wharf to the City by 2027 as part of its commitment to flexible working and plans to downsize its office space (Foster & PA News, 2023).

Office space is also being adapted to accommodate these changes, as described by Eli (interviewed June 2024), a Senior Marketing Executive in a global consumer goods company:

> " The need for conference rooms is so massive, because we all go into the office and at least a couple of people on every call are on Zoom, and so we tend to have to jump into a room. And so the need for separate private rooms has skyrocketed.

Senior leaders in the financial sector have voiced concerns about working from home, sometimes arguing that it is bad for collaboration and corporate culture (Patridge, 2023). Perhaps the most high-profile example of this is Goldman Sachs CEO David M. Solomon, who said in February 2021 that remote working was an 'aberration' and not the 'new normal' (*BBC News*, 2021). Some companies have implemented changes to encourage employees back to the office, including getting rid of parking charges or, in the case of Lloyds, offering free food

in some offices (Kollewe, 2023). Other financial institutions have been implementing tighter restrictions on hybrid and flexible work, and some have begun monitoring employees' office attendance by checking data on 'turnstile access' (Foy & O'Dwyer, 2024).

There has, however, been an inevitable backlash to this tightening of restrictions. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the significant shift towards greater flexibility in where people work, most Gen Z employees have *only* ever known hybrid and remote work patterns. Mar connected this flexibility to trust, as working from home signifies a high degree of trust from employers, something she felt Gen Z values:

> " I think this generation really values being trusted, and there's a feeling that when you're allowed to work from home, that you're being trusted.

As a result, Gen Z employees often expect more flexibility and autonomy in their work arrangements, leading to tensions and misunderstandings with older colleagues and managers accustomed to different work norms.

Media reports in June 2024 highlighted an increase in employment tribunal cases as companies clamped down on flexible and remote working (Croft, 2024). A notable example is a 2024 case of a senior manager suing the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) for denying her request to work from home full-time (Croft, 2024; Downes, 2024). The judge ultimately ruled in favour of the FCA, noting that "The need for staff to provide a physical presence at an office location is a debate that many companies are now engaged in, and the solutions arrived at will no doubt differ considerably from employer to employer" (Downes, 2024).

Despite the perceived flexibility of remote work, employers can still monitor workers, especially gig workers, through mechanisms such as a ratings or ranking systems (Lord 2020). This insight underscores the potential challenges and power

dynamics that can arise between generations as they grapple with the limits of remote working.

The social network

Office spaces are also important for the relational aspects of work, including meetings, mentoring, training, collaboration, and socialising (Harris, 2021). This sentiment was reiterated during interviews. Media reporting around the effects of the pandemic on Gen Z suggests that the shift to online and lack of face-to-face interaction during the lockdown years left this generation less well-equipped for workplace interactions (O'Dwyer, 2023; Peake, 2024). The *FT* reported that companies had to provide extra coaching to their youngest staff "after noticing that recruits whose education was disrupted by lockdowns have weaker teamwork and communication skills than previous cohorts" (O'Dwyer, 2023).

During an interview with Ben (June 2024), a Senior Executive in the finance sector, the importance of being physically present in the office to bridge generational differences was emphasised:

> " If you're not together physically then it's much harder. Those differences can harden. So, I think where you can be together, that's a good thing in terms of understanding differences.

Eli also highlighted that new work arrangements, with people coming into the office at different times, have reduced opportunities for networking across teams and departments, leading to more siloed work practices. For Gen Z, especially those beginning their careers, this may restrict opportunities to explore other teams and departments within an organisation. Mar noted that networking occurs not only in the office but in social activities such as over coffee and during after-work drinks. Since people are not coming into the office at the same time or as regularly, these opportunities have lessened:

> " It was totally normal to go out for drinks after work, maybe two or three times a week, and you would see people in the office every day and have coffee meetings with people. There was a lot more socialising and networking that just happened naturally. And I do wonder how much Gen Z are missing from not having that baked in so much. Not to say that socials don't happen, but it's far less natural. A big part of work is your network and your connections.

Socialising practices are changing. The Work Foundation (Lancaster University) found there is now much less emphasis on post-work drinks than in the past (Atay & Williams, 2024). Some reports indicate Gen Z consume less alcohol and have been labelled 'Britain's 'sober-curious' generation' (Ahmed, 2024). Market research by MINTEL (2024) found that around one-third of Gen Z aged 18-24 do not drink alcohol. Among those who do, it is often to help with relaxation or as a treat, rather than as something to be consumed regularly as older generations might have done (MINTEL, 2024). The research suggests that Gen Z is more conscious of the potential negative impact of alcohol on wellbeing and health, as well as impacted by higher prices for alcohol compared to low- and no-alcohol alternatives (MINTEL, 2024). Despite these trends, the Work Foundation found that only 19% of UK employers have guidance on inclusive social events, and just 21% have a workplace alcohol policy or responsible consumption guidelines (Atay & Williams, 2024, p. 17).

The decline of formal socialising events may be off-set by online networking. Interviewees recognised the importance of digital networks for Gen Z. Jon suggested that **while socialising and in-person learning opportunities are important, their significance may be overstated as Gen Z has adapted to technology and online living, finding new ways to network and learn.**

A job for life?

Learning is considered important for career progression, sometimes even more than financial remuneration. Opportunities for promotion, and allowing Gen Z to move across, not just up, are important for long-term commitment to an organisation (Onesto, 2022). A Deloitte survey found that Gen Z respondents who felt they were learning skills they needed for the future in their current role were 2.5 times more likely to agree that staying at their current organisation is the best way to advance their career (Dunlop et al., 2023). Wider surveys of working-age adults across 18 countries, including the UK, found that Gen Z workers, when considering leaving a job "prioritise career development and meaningful work more than compensation" (De Smet et al., 2023, p. 3). They were the only generation that did *not* cite 'inadequate compensation' as the top reason for leaving (De Smet et al., 2023, p. 3). The research found that Gen Z want a "holistic, sustainable work experience where they can start building their careers" alongside work flexibility (De Smet et al., 2023).

An example of how to retain and appeal to Gen Z could be through "20 Percent Time", which has been used at Google to allow employees to work on something that inspires them during less busy times (Onesto, 2022). This is a less hierarchical way of working because it allows employees to work on their projects that may or may not work out. However, in the long term, if, for example, something an employee works on proves to be successful, the company will 'own' it:

> " What 20 percent time does for your organization is allow for that wasted time to be reclaimed and made into something more useful for you and your employees wherein they are happier, which in turn leads to them being healthier and more productive (Onesto 2022, p. 54).

At the same time, Gen Z is more comfortable moving companies, and the idea of a job for life is more alien (Duarte

& Pereira, 2023). These ideas around company loyalty, or lack thereof, may be at odds with older generations, particularly Boomers, and can create problems for employers in retaining talent, incurring costs, weaker results, and high staff turnover as a result (Duarte & Pereira, 2023). However, if an employer focuses on supporting Gen Z in their role and finding other opportunities for them, they are more likely to return at a later stage with more skills and expertise (Onesto, 2022). This 'fluid movement' between employers reflects the general sense of ***Gen Z embedding mobility into their lives and wanting to continue learning through different life and work experiences.***

Has Gen Z "never had it so good"? A complicated picture

Although mobility, flexibility, and hybrid working may appear attractive to Gen Z, there are downsides to these work patterns. Jobs are increasingly precarious, and there has been a shift from the idea of a job for life (Lord, 2020). What has been called the 'Uberization' of work reflects the 'continuing individualisation of the labour force' and reliance on "freelancing, zero-hours contracts, portfolio careers and on-demand business models" (Lord, 2020, p. 409).

Greater flexibility around work patterns may lead to the assumption that Gen Z do not work as hard as older generations or are less ambitious or career-driven. Research contradicts this view; for example, a 2023 McKinsey report found that 83% of women and 85% of men with hybrid work patterns were interested in getting promoted compared to 79% of men and women working fully on-site (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

However, it is a hard stereotype to shake. During an interview, Ben observed that there was, "a sense that my generation worked probably harder than the one before" and that some colleagues feel that Gen Z "never had it so good":

> " The main tensions that I think I find are this idea that we work harder than them [...] Now that may or may not be the case. And I wonder whether or not the generation above me, the Boomers, think that they worked harder than me, but I think that is the general perception, speaking frankly, from my personal experience.

This perception stems, in part, from differences in work habits. A Deloitte survey found that 86% of employers regarded work as a significant part of their identity, but only 61% of Gen Z did (Dunlop et al., 2023). These results were linked to effort at work, i.e. "Gen Z is the least likely generation to say that they often

go above and beyond what's required of them at work" (Dunlop et al., 2023, p. 10). According to Ben, Gen Z employees are not working the long hours that older cohorts did at the same age:

> " Things that we did put up with, in terms of late nights, seven days a week, etc., that they just wouldn't and rightly wouldn't put up with.

A key factor in this shift is the increased emphasis on work-life balance. Practices such as 'protected weekends', where employees are not expected to work, reflect this change.

Schröder (2023) found that younger people in general tend to give less salience to careers, with the importance of work increasing with age up to around 40 years, and then gradually decreasing.[7] There are some gendered differences here as well. A US survey of workers found that as men age, work becomes a more important part of their identity; 65% of Boomer men regard it as important compared to just 26% of Gen Z men (Orrell et al., 2024, p. 11). Similarly, the same survey found that older workers (Gen X and Boomers) were more likely than Gen Z workers to feel both pride in their work and that their job aligned, at least partially, with their personal interests (Cox et al., 2024).

However, McKinsey's 2023 *Women in the Workplace* report found that young women (age 30 and under) were just as ambitious as older employees: 97% of women and 96% of men aged 30 years and under viewed their career as important, compared to the average of 96% for all employees. 93% of women and 94% of men aged 30 years and under were interested in getting promoted to the next level compared to 81% average for all employees (McKinsey & Company, 2023, p. 10).

Yet, ambition seems tempered by the importance of a good work-life balance for Gen Z, which emerged as a theme during interviews. Some of the reasons are linked to a general culture shift around workplace expectations, as noted above and in the following quote from Ben:

> " I think workplace conditions are better. So, you know, there is much more of a focus top down on things like work-life balance and mental health and bringing your full self to work today, than there was 25, 20 years ago, when I started. Now that's not to say that it wasn't there, but it wasn't an explicit focus of major firms whereas nowadays it is. I think being able to bring your full self to your employer and your employment, I think that's pretty major in terms of the quality of your work life. So, I think in some ways, they do have it better than we did.

From this perspective, the shift toward better working conditions has been a top-down process in some organisations. An older generation, that was expected to work long hours, all-nighters and weekends, is now in managerial positions and shifting expectations for all employees. Recognising the difficulty of undoing patterns once they are set, Eli acknowledged that Gen Z have established boundaries and prioritised life outside of work, not wanting to start their careers working long hours. It was suggested by both Eli and Jon that some Millennial managers, especially those with young children, may share these priorities and be more likely to support work-life boundaries.[8] However, not all managers may feel the same, and this can lead to some tension arising from the perception that Gen Z does not want to work, as Eli observed:

> " [Gen Z] have a pretty clear cut guardrail when it comes to work, I think. It is much higher than it is for Millennials, Gen X or Boomers (...) I think that my Gen Z co-workers are

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7   This study analyses the Integrated Values Survey of 584,217 individuals from 113 countries surveyed between 1981 and 2022, of which 3,210 were Gen Z. Birth cohorts are defined through five-year intervals (rather than 15-year intervals) to test the generational hypothesis using multilevel regressions (Schröder, 2023).

8   A US survey found that 85% of parents with children under 18 considered flexibility in how and where they work a very important factor when selecting a job, compared to 77% of workers without children (Cox et al., 2024, p. 23).

much clearer that the expectation is that this is essentially eight to six or nine to five, and that working nights or weekends is a one-off request or it's not an assumed work behaviour. Now I'm saying all of this without any judgement. I mean, as a parent of four children, I think that the emphasis on those guardrails is incredibly healthy, but it has been fascinating because I have other members of my team who are, say, Gen X, who find it hard to wrap their head around that idea. You know, I think there's an assumption that, well, you're kind of available as needed, and it's whatever the work requires, whereas I think my Gen Z coworkers have a little bit of a 'hey, I need to make sure that I'm carving out time for my hobbies, for my friends, for my community'.

Prioritising life outside the workplace was also linked to Gen Z asking for sabbaticals, something that Eli felt was a new phenomenon. The sabbatical process was causing some tension between colleagues, as some were approved and others were not, depending on the team and the manager. In addition, Gen Z requests for time off were considered at odds with some of the older generations in the workplace who would never have expected to take a break from their careers in their 20s, even for a couple of months.

One of the reasons for taking sabbaticals was to travel and to 'recharge', perhaps with an awareness that these opportunities would become less as they moved into their 30s, as Eli recognised:

> " I think you have a lot of Gen Z looking at the rest of their office and saying, 'Whoa, once I have children, this is going to become infinitely harder'.

The extent to which this is becoming a norm in other companies is unknown, and there is scope for further investigation into why Gen Z feel the need for sabbaticals early in their work life and what impact this will have on workplace practices.

These accounts suggest that Gen Z, whether through a top-down or bottom-up process, are not working in the same way as older generations did at the same age. Although some evidence suggests that people in the UK more generally work less hours on average than in previous decades (Duffy, 2021, pp. 78–79), it is difficult to measure these changes accurately. Calls for a shorter work week are apparent from the middle of the 20th century and getting louder in the 21st century. There have been legislative and policy changes on working hours, mainly driven by trade union activity, although these movements have weakened since the 1980s (Cunningham, 2014).

While there are limits on working hours, such as the 1998 European Commission (EC) Working Time Directive, limiting the number of hours a worker can be required to work to an average of 48 hours a week over a 17-week period, employees can opt out of this (Cunningham, 2014). The City is still renowned for long days and intrusive work patterns as the next section will highlight. ***The difference with Gen Z is that this generation is speaking up in order to reject this pattern.***

Prioritising work-life balance: Speaking up

Since the 1970s, the changing nature of the labour market has created challenges around accounting for working time, and it is not always clear if the number of hours employees work has in fact decreased in line with policy (Cunningham, 2014). This is particularly related to the decrease in manual jobs and shifts in gender composition of the workforce. Women are more likely to work part-time, and shift work and self-employment have become more common (Cunningham, 2014). With these caveats in mind, Cunningham (2014) shows that between 1979 and 1998, the average work week for full-time employees was around 38 hours, and then between 1998 and 2003, hours for men fell by less than one hour per week. The trend is harder to disentangle for women, but there was an increase in the

average work week by over three hours that may be connected to more women working full-time (Cunningham, 2014).

Different sectors of the economy still have workers putting in longer hours, classified as over 48 hours per week. 11% of the UK workforce in 2003, rising to 13.1% in 2007, worked above this number (Cunningham, 2014). Men with children were more likely than women to work extended hours alongside "[m]anagers, professionals and operative and assembly workers" (Cunningham, 2014, p. 187). The lowest earners, those in the bottom 10% income group, worked on average 13 hours less than the highest earners (those in the top 10% income group) (Cunningham, 2014, p. 187). More recently, analysis of the UK Labour Force Survey (2023 Q2) by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) shows that in 2023, 18.8% of employees in London worked unpaid overtime, significantly higher than the 13.2% at the national level (TUC, 2024). Among chief executives and senior officials, 38% worked unpaid overtime, just slightly less than teaching professionals, who had the highest proportion at 40% (TUC, 2024). This suggests that "high social status has come to be marked, not by leisure, but by being busy, by working long hours" (Jonathan Gershuny, cited in Cunningham, 2014, p. 188).[9]

These long hours and working weeks are still a feature of specific sectors of the City. An *FT* article from June 2024 states that "Message boards such as Wall Street Oasis and Reddit continue to be lit up with complaints from junior analysts at investment banks about long hours and the resulting impact on mental and physical health" (Indap, 2024). Another *FT* article reports that junior lawyers in London at 'elite firms' have been given significant pay rises amounting to as much as 50% over the last five years (up to £150,000 for newly qualified lawyers in top UK firms). This has raised concerns that "bumper pay could

result in higher expectations around the hours young lawyers should be working, affecting employee wellbeing" (Ring, 2024).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the pandemic and the shift to remote working did not reduce working hours (Cotterill, 2021). Although there is some evidence that the number of hours worked per week slightly decreased in the financial, technological, and professional services sectors linked to 'quiet quitting', (Hamilton et al., 2023), the longer-term or permanent nature of this reduction is less clear.[10]

Gen Z has pushed back against some of these trends, holding companies to account for their commitments to better work-life balance. In March 2021, it was reported that "a group of first-year investment banking analysts at Goldman Sachs presented management with a slide deck describing arduous working conditions" (Armstrong, 2021). The presentation showed the results of a survey of 13 first-year analysts at Goldman Sachs who "reported an average work week of 95 hours, with five hours of sleep a night starting at 3 am" (Armstrong, 2021; Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC, 2021). The analysts said their physical and mental health had gotten significantly worse after starting their roles and that their work hours had negatively impacted relationships with family and/or friends (Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC, 2021). One of the quotes from the presentation was: "My body physically hurts all the time and mentally I'm in a really dark place" (Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC, 2021, p. 10).

For some Gen Z employees, speaking out in this way is about reversing the gaze back onto employers and exposing bad company practices, such as "poor working conditions or bad treatment by bosses" (Gabert-Doyon & Thomas, 2024). Social media is being utilised as a tool in this campaign to change workplace practices and expectations. 'Quit-Tok' sees employees record themselves on video calls with their managers where they either resign or are laid off (Gabert-Doyon & Thomas, 2024; Raval, 2024). Anonymous forums on platforms like Glassdoor, Blind, and Fishbowl are allowing

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9   It is important to note that Millennials, in particular, entered the workforce just before or after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and the recession that followed, when there were much higher rates of underemployment and unemployment. In 2012, over three million workers said in a survey that they would like to work longer hours (Cunningham, 2014, p. 188). Some millennials were entering the workforce in a highly competitive environment and may have been more likely to agree to terms that were more detrimental to them. Although challenging for Gen Z, precarity has been present beyond this generation. The "fear of unemployment or underemployment" can drive people to accept harmful working conditions (Cunningham, 2014, p. 194).

10 'Quiet quitting' emerged as a phenomenon during the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily among Gen Z workers who shared their experiences of doing only the bare minimum at work or fulfilling only their contractual obligations (Richardson, 2023).

greater transparency on corporate practices, as employees, often of tech firms, 'discuss their company and pay' (Gabert-Doyon & Thomas, 2024). Mar noted that her Gen Z colleagues are very active on these platforms, likening them to the private conversations over coffee that older generations had when starting their careers. However, these anonymous public platforms provide managers and employers with some insight into how people are feeling. The open/public nature of these platforms means companies may be more likely to take seriously employee concerns for reputational risk or damage, as Mar noted:

" Now it's in the public realm, and maybe it does force more change from companies as well, because you quickly see these stories if people feel they've not been treated well by their company.

This shift amongst Gen Z employees toward holding employers to account was also highlighted by Eli:

" I feel like there is still a strong network of Gen Z in our office. I think they're in Snapchat groups and they're better connected than the Millennials or the Gen X or Boomers [...] I think Gen Z are much more open about sharing income and compensation numbers than people in my generation were. There's an information sharing that happens more freely. (…) there's more of a push back on the 20th century grind and more content coverage over people pushing back.

While Gen Z use technology to push for better work conditions, there is no one definition of work-life balance (Brough et al., 2020; Bulger, 2014). The origins of the term date to the 1970s feminist movement advocating for "policies and facilities that would make it easier for mothers to engage in paid work" (Cunningham, 2014, p. 189). It resurfaced as a term in the 1990s, again primarily as an issue for women but with a greater

emphasis on "self-improvement, the establishment of self-identity, assertiveness and so on" (Cunningham, 2014, p. 190). The EU also took it up as a policy issue connected to work and family life, with some pressure on employers to devise 'family-friendly' employment practices, such as flexible working hours. Some definitions emphasise achieving "equal engagement in and satisfaction with work and personal life roles", while others focus more on the achievement of goals in both home and work life (Bulger, 2014 p. 7321). Bulger also suggests that an absence of conflict between work and home life is a sign of achieving work-life balance.[11]

There is growing evidence that achieving a good work-life balance, such as reducing and exercising greater control over workloads, can support better mental health (Staton, 2024). Conversely, a loss of a sense of control over work may contribute to making Gen Z employees less happy and productive. ***Therefore, Gen Z speaking up for work-life balance may not be "evidence of this generation being selfish or self-centered" but rather of "a generation that has grown up in an out-of-control world" trying to regain a sense of control through controlling their workloads*** (Onesto, 2022, p. 51)**.**

A Deloitte survey found that mental health is a key area of concern for Gen Z but do not feel their bosses are supportive or understand: 40% of Gen Z surveyed said "they do not get the support they need to perform well at their job", and "28% of Gen Zers say they struggle with their mental health because of their boss" (Dunlop et al., 2023, p. 8). This was higher for respondents who identified as racially or ethnically diverse. A report by the Global Business Collaboration for Better Workplace Mental Health found that just under half of workers in the UK experienced stress at work, with this figure rising to 55% for Gen Z workers and 51% for Millennials (The Global Business Collaboration for Better Workplace Mental Health, 2024). Some of this stress was linked to relationships at work,

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11 Leisure, however, has arguably disappeared from the work-life balance discourse, being equated with family obligations (Cunningham, 2014). Women's leisure time decreased between the 1970s and 1990s, and "[l]ong hours at work were made worse by an increase in the intensity of work and a decline in control over work" (Cunningham, 2014, p. 193). More men reported their work as very or extremely stressful in the 1990s and early 2000s than in the 1970s (Cunningham, 2014).

with 36% of Gen Z mentioning difficult relationships, compared to the UK average of 28% (The Global Business Collaboration for Better Workplace Mental Health, 2024).

While 63% of employers in the UK provide mental health support, higher than the global average of 53%, only 33% of employees have access to specific mental health leave days (The Global Business Collaboration, 2023). The research also highlighted the importance of senior leaders discussing mental health at work. When senior leaders spoke about mental health, it positively impacted employees' feelings about their workplace, making them less likely to want to quit and more likely to discuss their own mental health issues (The Global Business Collaboration for Better Workplace Mental Health, 2024). However, just 47% of employees in the UK believed that supporting employee mental health was a priority for their leaders. Additionally, 52% of workers experiencing poor mental health had informed their managers about it, and 47% reported being discriminated against as a result (The Global Business Collaboration for Better Workplace Mental Health, 2024).

This research indicates that both line managers and senior leaders play a crucial role in supporting the wellbeing and mental health of employees. This is especially important for Gen Z women: a U.S. survey found that 55% of Gen Z women experienced feelings of imposter syndrome, believing they were not good at their job, compared to 46% of Gen Z men, 21% of Boomer men, and 27% of Boomer women (Orrell et al., 2024, p. 12).

Misunderstandings around mental health between generations in the workplace can be mitigated through the provision of training and by facilitating greater conversation and openness around mental health. Training on how to hold conversations with someone experiencing mental health issues is a key first step (The Global Business Collaboration for Better Workplace Mental Health, 2024)**.**

Research also highlights that Gen Zs are looking for specific qualities in their managers, which also has the potential for intergenerational conflict. While Gen Z highly value empathy, bosses do not always place as high a value on demonstrating

this (Dunlop et al., 2023). Gen Z "who feel cared for at work" were more than three times more likely to say they look forward to work and less likely to leave (Dunlop et al., 2023, p. 7).

The blurring of online and offline worlds

Wellbeing and workplace expectations are also being impacted by the blurring of on- and offline worlds. As 'digital natives', social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, BeReal, YouTube, and Snapchat are used to share personal lives and experiences, often overlapping with in-real-life (IRL) interactions and relationships (Henry & Shannon, 2023; Moore, 2023; Onesto, 2022; Parry & Battista, 2019).[12] The growth in these platforms has been capitalised on by brands who sponsor influencers and creators with large social media followings (Christin & Lu, 2023).

Social media has become a primary job and source of income for some Gen Z influencers, and sometimes an additional source of income and job satisfaction in parallel with other employment. Canon Dr Gillian Bowen, CEO of the YMCA London (City and North), an education, health, and wellbeing charity, noted that there has been a shift away from the idea that you "must go to university to advance your career". There is greater attention to 'enterprise' driven by social media and the idea that "you can create your own content and get paid for it". *The use of online platforms for additional work contributes to the perception of Gen Z as entrepreneurial, navigating traditional career paths while exploring other opportunities or what is known as "side hustles"* (Christian, 2023; Parker, 2022; Walsh & Black, 2021)**.**

The lack of distinction between online and offline worlds may mean that some Gen Z struggle to balance work and personal life because they are expected to be online all the time,

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12   Since the 2000s, there has been a growth in the number and size of social media platforms, but they are "dominated by Meta (Facebook and Instagram), Alphabet (YouTube), Twitter, and ByteDance (which controls TikTok)" (Christin & Lu, 2023, p. 4).

contributing to burnout (Deloitte, 2023). As a result, there are reports of Gen Z turning their backs on smartphones and choosing a 'dumbphone' or burner phone instead, with limited technological capabilities (Tapper & Ahmed, 2024). Having lived through digital ubiquity, Gen Z seem to be moving toward 'digital minimalism' and "are the only generation whose time on social media has fallen since 2021" (Tapper & Ahmed, 2024).

This shift in behaviour could be seen as a coping mechanism, a response to the stress and pressure of constantly being connected (Haidt, 2024). Although hybrid and flexible working patterns are viewed by Gen Z as positive for mental health, as noted in the previous section, these structures may also contribute to feelings of burnout, and Gen Z having worse mental health than older generations (Arora et al., 2022). Research by the Resolution Foundation found that young people in their early 20s are now generally more likely to be out of work because of ill health than people in their early 40s, whereas 25 years ago, the reverse was the case (McCurdy & Murphy, 2024, p. 7).[13]

This increase in mental ill health has also led to negative stereotyping of Gen Z, with offhand commentary describing this cohort as 'generational sicknote' (Rees, 2024). A *Telegraph* article, for example, reports that an employer of graduates in a London media company said "Every time we recruit someone, they come in with a file on their mental health ailments, and typically their allergies, too. We are then obliged to give them easier work, or take it easy on them" (Rees, 2024). Similarly, a *Daily Mail* article reports that "Everyday problems of 'being young' are now being rebranded mental health issues" (Ely, 2024). The conclusion is that Gen Z is overexposed to a mental health narrative and needs to learn to be more resilient and 'get on with it', as the article's author notes:

" Obviously in my generation (I am 44), we were never exposed to this. And in my early 20s, when I suffered depression and debilitating insomnia, I never felt I could

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13 While in 2013, 93,000 people aged 18-24 were out of work because of ill health, this had increased to 190,000 in 2023 (McCurdy & Murphy, 2024, p. 32).

talk about it at work, and duly went in each day. It never once crossed my mind to not go to the office. Surely this is the better way to approach things?

The tensions between an increasingly online world, the blurring of online and offline, and the inability to 'switch off' are likely to become even more heightened as new AI-enhanced technologies, such as automated chatbots and predictive analytics, are introduced into workplaces. The *FT* reports that the US bank JPMorgan Chase is implementing a policy of training all its new hires in artificial intelligence (Murphy, 2024).

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) report found that around 70% of employment in the UK is now in occupations with high exposure to AI (Cazzaniga et al., 2024, p. 8). The authors warn that advanced economies may experience more polarisation from the structural transformation this will bring about. On one hand, Gen Z face a greater risk of labour displacement and income precarity. On the other hand, advanced economies such as the UK are better positioned to take early advantage of AI growth due to larger employment in jobs which can be complemented, rather than replaced by, AI.

Unlike previous cycles of job automation, AI is expected to affect both high and low-income occupations. However, the gains from AI-enhanced technology are more likely to be experienced by educated workers in higher-income professions. According to Cazzaniga et al. (2024), Gen Z is the most educated generation in the UK to date, and college-educated workers are more likely to be able to adapt to the introduction of this technology. However, there may also be a reduction in demand for some jobs, such as clerical positions that once served as an entry into careers, making labour market entry more difficult for younger workers starting out.

Gen Z may be the generation in the workforce most comfortable with digital technologies; "using digital tools to craft a life that makes sense to them, on their terms" rather than following patterns laid down by previous generations (Henry & Shannon, 2023). However, they are also the

generation that will have to grapple with issues of burnout, regulation, data protection, surveillance, mis/dis-information and deep fakes. There may also be fewer opportunities for Gen Z workers without higher education to progress into jobs utilising AI. Similarly, older generations may struggle to adapt to new technologies and face additional barriers as their skills become rapidly obsolete (Cazzaniga et al., 2024). *This scenario could provide opportunities for inter-generational reverse mentoring (see the Conclusion & Recommendations section of this Report): younger generations bring their digital skills, while older generations bring their interpersonal and management experience into a conversation.*

Managing inequalities: The cost of living

The speed of change being generated by digital innovation adds to the sense of an 'out of control' world, noted earlier, exacerbated by growing levels of inequality in which the City is at the centre. *Precarity and inequality impacts the relationship between generations, raising questions of intergenerational justice informing Gen Z attitudes, politics, and values.*

While Gen Z employees in the City may have a higher average salary than other Londoners, they are also exposed to increasing costs of living and a housing crisis in the city. The Resolution Foundation found that it is harder for younger generations to own their own home than previous generations, and subsequently, they are less likely to have their own space to work in (Broome et al., 2023). This sets up a tension with the desire to work flexibly.

Homeownership for 19-29 year olds more than halved between 1989 and 2013, from 23% to just 8% (Broome et al., 2023, p. 10). While the average house price in the 1970s was £9,277, average earnings were £2,265, making the average home 4.1 times the average income (Kyriakou, 2023). In 2023, the average house price in the UK was £286,489, while average earnings were £32,432, meaning the average home cost was about 8.8 times

the average income (Kyriakou, 2023). This means that Gen Z is more likely to be in the private rented sector than any previous generation at the same age (Broome et al., 2023, p. 10).

The national average annual salary in 2023 was £34,963, and for London, £44,370 (Goodman, 2024). The average annual salary for Gen Z in London in 2024, broken into two age categories, was £22,693 for 18-21 year olds and £35,386 for 22-29 year olds (Goodman, 2024). The cost of living can far exceed these sums. The average private monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the City between April 2023 and March 2024 was £2,138; in neighbouring boroughs, the median was around £1,800 (Greater London Authority, 2024). For those commuting to work, an annual Adult Transport for London (TFL) travelcard in 2024 cost between £1,708 (for Zone 1 only) and £4,452 (Zones 1-9) (Mayor of London & Transport for London, 2024).

In addition to rent and transport, a large proportion of Gen Z are also paying back student loan debt. Gen Z (and Millennials) may be the most educated generation, but this is also contributing to them being the most indebted (Duffy, 2021). Annual tuition fees, introduced in 1998 at £1,000, are now the highest for Gen Z graduates at £9,250 in 2017 (Callender & Davis, 2024). To support the cost of university education, since 2006, student loans have been extended to cover tuition fees and living expenses for all English-domiciled students studying in the UK (Callender & Davis, 2024, p. 3). The average debt on graduation is now around £45,000 (Bolton, 2023; Jones, 2024).

This debt is impacting the career choices that Gen Z are making. For some, this has meant choosing careers unconnected to their degrees to pay off their debts, or they have found ways to pay less or not at all by not reaching the income threshold for repaying the loan (Callender & Davis, 2024). Student debt also affected graduates' housing options, with graduate debtors more likely to rent or live with their parents while struggling to save for a deposit (Callender & Davis, 2024). Mar acknowledged that the current economic situation makes it more difficult for Gen Z to change jobs:

" They may be less able to leave a job because they're also super concerned about their own financial security.

Mar connected this financial insecurity to mental health issues, identifying it as a significant contributor to Gen Z anxiety and stress.

The data starkly highlights the vastly different circumstances for Gen Z and Millennials today compared to older generations. Yet despite these realities, there has been some backlash against the idea that it is particularly challenging for Gen Z to get on the property ladder without financial support from family members, also known as the 'bank of mum and dad'. In 2023, the *Guardian* reported that 37% of first-time buyers received a gift to help with their deposit in 2022/23 (Savage, 2024). The chairman of NatWest, Sir Howard Davies, however, told *BBC Radio Four's Today* programme in January 2024 that he didn't think it was "that difficult at the moment" for young people to buy a house: "You have to save, and that's the way it always used to be" (Bow & Penna, 2024; Walters, 2024). This refrain is not unique to Gen Z but was also directed at Millennials, as articulated by Tim Gurner, an Australian millionaire and real estate mogul, who in 2017 complained that Millennials needed to stop buying avocado on toast if they wanted to buy a home (Levin, 2017). However, given the increase in house prices compared to wages, "even if someone swore off avocados and fancy coffee for 20 years, they'd still struggle to meet the required deposits, pay the necessary fees, and get anything near liveable" (Kyriakou, 2023).

Generational changes: Gender and other shifting values

Alongside economic precarity, and changes in work patterns, where people work, and how they work, Gen Z is entering the workplace at a time of rapid social change, particularly attitudes towards gender and sexuality. This has become a predominant marker of difference between generations. Gen Z often position themselves as more progressive and accepting in opposition to older cohorts (Allen et al., 2022, p. 653).

In the European context, Gen Z generally has higher levels of gender equitable and socially progressive views as well as being more open to fluidity in gender and sexuality. Research in England has found that children and young people have an "expanding vocabulary of gender identity and a commitment to gender equality, gender diversity and the rights of sexual minorities" (Renold et al., 2017, p. 5). Of young people in school, 83% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that "people my age are more accepting of different types of gender than older generations" and strongly agreed that people should be able to choose their pronouns (Renold et al., 2017, p. 5). Gender identity is positioned on a continuum rather than fixed or binary.

Transformations in gendered expectations, childcare, maternal health, and a reduction in birth rates, has led to more women in formal employment in the UK than previous generations, increasing from around 53% to 72% (ONS, 2024a; see also Duffy, 2021; Appendix C). This has been enabled by changing social attitudes. The 40th British Social Attitudes survey (2023) found that just 1 in 10, or 12% of people agreed that "a job is all right but what most women want is a home and children", compared to 1 in 3 (31%) in 1989 (Allen & Stevenson, 2023).

Trade unions have also played a pivotal role in pushing for legislation and policy changes toward greater equality in the

workforce.[14] While trade union membership has been declining, an Ipsos poll in January 2023, just prior to coordinated strike action across multiple public sector unions in the UK, showed that 64% of Gen Z and younger Millennials (18-34 years old) think that strikes are fairly/very effective in general as a mechanism to protect workers' interests. This compares to 55% of 35-54 year olds and just 45% of 55-75 year olds. However, younger people were more likely to say that strike action would be disruptive to them (Ipsos, 2023). As discussed in the section on the blurring of online and offline worlds, it may be that Gen Z is using different pathways and means to begin the process of change outside those of formal trade union structures, even if history shows that the largest gains to improvements in employment have come through collective action.

There is still work to be done on equality in the workplace. Despite the greater percentage of women in work, gendered inequalities remain, with men in more senior positions than women (Francis-Devine & Hutton, 2024). In 2024, 13% of men worked as managers, directors or senior officials, whereas 8% of women were in these roles (Francis-Devine & Hutton, 2024, p. 12). Additionally, the gender pay gap, measured as the difference between men's and women's median hourly pay, was 7.7% for full-time employees in 2023 but -3.3% for part-time employees, i.e., women were paid more than men for part-time work (Francis-Devine & Hutton, 2024, p. 23). The gender pay gap is greater for older workers. It is between 10 and 15% for full-time workers over 40 years but "is small or negative for employees in their 20s and 30s" (Francis-Devine & Hutton, 2024, p. 24). *In other words, at their current age, the gender*

14   For example, in 1970, women trade unionists organised a large Equal Pay demonstration in Trafalgar Square, leading to the Equal Pay Act of 1970, which required employers to treat men and women doing the same job equally in their pay and conditions (Global Health 50/50, 2023, p. 5). Since 2010, the Equality Act has replaced existing equality legislation, allowing for claims of direct gender pay discrimination even where there is no actual comparator, and making pay secrecy clauses unenforceable (Global Health 50/50, 2023, p. 6). Additionally, since 2017, the Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations have been in effect, requiring private and voluntary-sector organisations with 250 or more employees to publish data on their gender pay gaps (Gabert-Doyon & Thomas, 2024). UK government statistics on trade union membership, however, shows that membership in the UK reached a peak in 1979 (13.2 million) and then sharply declined during the 1980s and 1990s. By 1996 there were 7.9 million union members (Department for Business & Trade, 2024, p. 5). In 2021 there were 6.7 million union members, dropping to 6.4 million in 2023 (Department for Business & Trade, 2024).

pay gap is almost insignificant for Gen Z but greatest for Gen X and the Boomer generations.

However, the gender pay gap in the financial services sector is higher than in other sectors, and "bullying, harassment and sexist behaviours have been widely seen as commonplace" in some parts of the finance world (Thym et al., 2024, p. 237). The 2024 Treasury Committee report, *Sexism in the City*, reviewed progress on removing barriers to women entering and progressing in careers across the financial sector. It found that generally, diversity, equity and inclusion had become a 'tick-box' exercise (House of Commons Treasury Committee, 2024).

The most significant barriers facing women relate to maternity leave and childcare, with reports showing that when women take maternity leave and return to work, they are not supported, take up less senior roles, or shift to part-time work (House of Commons Treasury Committee, 2024). Despite some shifts in societal expectations around the role of women in society, women are still penalised in the labour market when they have children (Francis-Devine & Hutton, 2024).

Working from home may provide some greater flexibility for working parents, particularly mothers. However, a *Women in the Workplace* survey of US companies found men were more likely to benefit from working on-site. They were better positioned to "receive mentorship and sponsorship […] and have their accomplishments noticed and rewarded" (McKinsey & Company, 2023, pp. 26–27).

These are important issues that will likely become a concern for Gen Z as they enter their late 20s and early 30s and move into a different life stage, having children themselves. The oldest of Gen Z were in university during the '#MeToo' movement and are "the first generation to have their adult careers develop in a post-MeToo era" (Savage, 2023). As the *Sexism in the City* report has highlighted, companies may have policies in place on paper, but gender inequality remains embedded in many workplaces.

In addition, recent research is beginning to show divergences between young men and women within the Gen Z cohort, with some young men potentially holding more conservative

views (Burn-Murdoch, 2024; KCL Global Institute for Women's Leadership & Ipsos, 2024). In a zero-sum equation, a trend in conservative popular culture and media in the UK and elsewhere argues that men and boys are losing out to gains made by women. The narrative is one of men being "victimised by feminism and social justice movements and now suffering 'reverse discrimination' compared to women and racial and sexual minorities" (Equimundo, 2022, p. 6). Some reports also express this as the 'red pill' ideology and the manosphere (Botto & Gottzén, 2023). ***These are tensions that may find their way into workplaces, impacting not only on generational but also gendered work relations.***

'Values' are important to significant numbers of Gen Z and are not separated into personal and work spheres. Gen Z is seen to be more likely to leave workplaces or turn down job offers from companies that do not align with their values (Deloitte, 2024; Savage, 2023). Deloitte's 2023 annual global survey of Gen Z and Millennials found that 44% of Gen Z rejected assignments due to ethical concerns, and 39% had turned down employers that did not align with their values (Deloitte, 2023). Studies also find that Gen Z wants to "make a difference in the lives of others, whether in their immediate sphere or farther away" (Katz et al., 2021, p. 155). For some, the systems and structures they inherit are "broken or incapable of solving the enormous problems the world is facing without significant change" (Katz et al., 2021, p. 157).

During an interview for this research, Ana felt that Gen Z employees want to see companies follow through in implementing the policies they have put in place, including around gender and sexual discrimination:

" They are constantly looking for consistency in alignment with behaviours and company policies and procedures. So, if there's a policy around, you know, maintaining good codes of conduct and behaviours, they do not want senior leadership that are displaying bad behaviours. They want everything to align, because that is what makes sense for them [...] I think previous generations were just much

more accepting. And I feel like some of that acceptance came from, particularly for women, feeling very grateful that they had an opportunity in a typically male-dominated environment. Whereas young people now, I'm not saying they're ungrateful, but they have a lot more entitlement. And I mean this in the nicest possible way, not in a derogatory way [...] I think they are much more entitled and aware of what their rights are. They are not afraid to use their rights to get what they want.

This narrative highlights the difference between older and younger generations, particularly among women, and the change from feeling 'grateful' to have a job, to a cohort that know and ask for their rights. Mar also highlighted a shift in behaviours and norms related to both gender and race, particularly in the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter protests and the #MeToo movement:

" I think the one thing that has definitely changed is [...] the way that people behave and what is now seen as acceptable, versus what was seen as acceptable in the early noughties when I started working. They're vastly different [...] there is a huge focus on the right way to behave. And people are very, very conscious now of a much broader breadth of issues. Things like microaggressions, things as a result of George Floyd and the discussions that were had around that, and as a result of #MeToo. I think people are a lot more considered and careful about behaving in the right way. Some people would see that as a negative, but I think it's made people much more thoughtful about others' experiences, and how they can be more inclusive and create a more inclusive culture.

Although both Mar and Ana highlight the positive nature of these changes for more inclusive workplaces, these shifts have not gone without pushback and resistance. Mar, for

example, suggested that some older Gen X and Boomers view some of these changes more negatively, distinguishing between personal or individual values and institutional culture, encapsulated in the following quote:

> " What is this new thinking? We're here to create profit. Business is here to create profit, not here for any of this rubbish or whatever.

Gen Z is more accustomed to bringing their 'whole self' to work, including their values related to equality, the environment, and justice. In contrast, other generations in the workplace may perceive these issues as outside the remit of the institutions they work for and do not feel the need to take a stand on them. ***These differences may lead to tension in the workplace as younger colleagues voice their discomfort or displeasure around certain practices and language viewed as discriminatory, related not only to gender, but also to race, ethnicity, and sexuality.***

This tension may be part of the reason why a US survey of workers found that Gen Z men and women (49% and 54% respectively) were more likely to feel they need to change their appearance or presentation to fit in at work, compared to Gen X and Boomer men and women (32% and 39% respectively) (Orrell et al., 2024, p. 12). Canon Dr Gillian Bowen also noted that speaking up and being one's 'authentic self' may come at a cost, particularly for minority groups, including being passed over for promotions:

> " It's shameful, actually, that young people feel that there are elements within their authentic selves that they cannot share, or that if they do share, they're at risk of losing something, they're at risk of losing the opportunity to have that job. They're at risk of losing the opportunity of obtaining a promotion.

Egalitarian values are increasingly embedded in calls for non-hierarchical work environments, the desire to participate in decision-making, to have their ideas heard, and to work in a supportive environment (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Katz et al., 2021; Onesto, 2022; Rodriguez et al., 2021). Yet Deloitte's Gen Z and Millennial Survey (2023) found that while Gen Z want to be empowered to drive change within their organisations, 32% said decisions were made from the top down, and employee feedback not often acted upon. Katz et al. (2021, p. 130) highlight the challenges for Gen Z in pointing out "weaknesses in the more hierarchical social structures that are a legacy of the industrial age" while also "[f]inding social structures that support personal autonomy in the context of collaborative work".
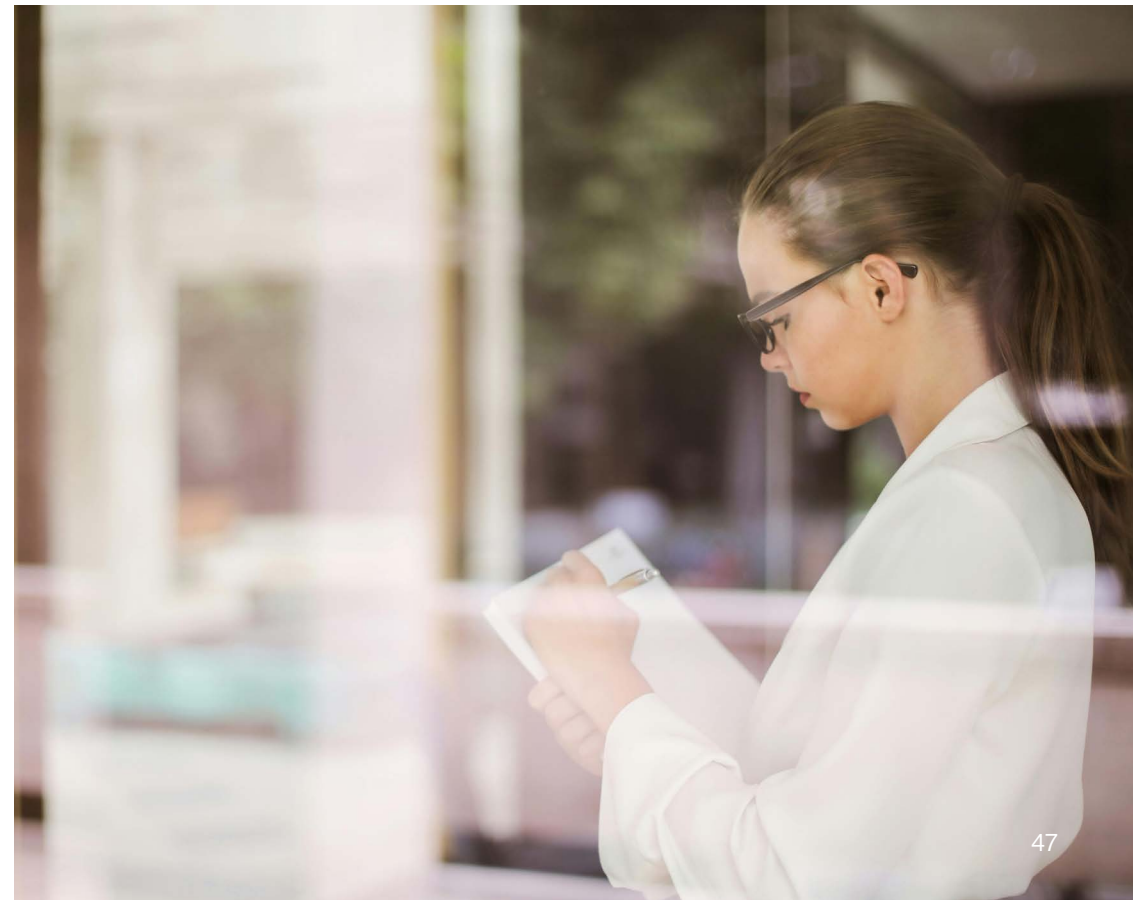
Conclusion and recommendations

Conflict and tension between generations in the workplace are not new, but the current historical context is unique. Gen Z is entering the workplace during a time of increasing precarity and inequality. The social, economic, and political challenges facing the world today, including issues related to climate change and technological advancement, are complex and require equally complex solutions (Kreienkamp & Pegram, 2021). Misunderstandings between generations can distract from addressing these critical issues. Conversely, dialogue is vital to prevent misunderstandings and stereotyping of different generations from becoming entrenched.

The key points of contestation and misunderstanding identified in this report include changes in work patterns, shifts in technology, and a heightened awareness of workplace inequalities related to race, gender, and sexuality. Gen Z are more likely than older generations to speak out when they feel that certain practices do not align with their values or the organisation's policies. Additionally, the report highlights the importance of taking seriously the mental health concerns of all workers, including Gen Z, noting that work can be a significant source of stress and anxiety. Training for managers, understanding Gen Z's experiences, and fostering open dialogue are crucial first steps.

Hybrid and remote work patterns, including hot desking, can limit in-person interactions and socialising. It is important to find ways to bring different generations together, whether online or in person, while recognising that working from home may be beneficial for some individuals due to factors such as disability, mental health, or parental responsibilities.

Various strategies are being used in the corporate sector to address the intergenerational tensions emerging in the workplace. On the basis of the research for this report, we would recommend the following, with the caveat that any strategy should be piloted and adapted to suit individual organisations and departments.

Reverse mentoring

Unlike the more hierarchical structure of traditional mentoring where those in senior positions support junior colleagues, reverse mentoring "acknowledges the expertise of newer and younger professionals in specific areas" (Satterly et al., 2018, p. 444). In this model, junior colleagues mentor senior colleagues, a practice introduced by the CEO of General Electric over 20 years ago (Chaudhuri et al., 2022; Satterly et al., 2018). Reverse mentoring facilitates knowledge transfer between generations and can be applied to various areas including DEI, technology, and social media (Chaudhuri et al., 2022). For example, PwC UK introduced reverse mentoring for DEI purposes by matching senior partners with junior staff members who were "different from them in terms of gender and ethnicity, to learn from and understand each other's experiences" (PwC, 2016, p. 30). As Ana noted during an interview:

> " It's a cross-generational scheme to help a more experienced person learn about somebody that's just starting out in the workplace, and somebody just starting out to help an older person learn about some of their challenges, concerns, etc […] It can be really, really amazing, but you've got to cultivate that yourself. When I'm involved in reverse mentoring, I make sure that the person who's reverse mentoring me feels really comfortable to be able to share things so that I can learn from them […] I want to have a relationship with that person as if they are somebody that is as experienced as me. Because even though they're younger and don't have as much experience, I can still learn from them.

Another similar approach is 'intergenerational mentoring' which emphasises cooperation and learning to foster "an

environment where everyone leads, and everyone learns." (Satterly et al., 2018, p. 448). In this model, the mentee can be either a senior or junior employee, depending on their needs and the relationship's purpose. For instance, a senior Boomer may benefit from Gen Z colleagues' guidance on technology rather than career advice. All generations can form mentoring relationships, with each providing different skills.

Shadow boards

Another example of a less hierarchical work structure is establishing a shadow board (Home et al., 2023; Jordan & Khan, 2022; Jordan & Sorell, 2019; Robins, 2020). These consist of "a group of non-executive employees who work with senior executives on strategic initiatives […] to leverage insights from younger generations and to diversify the perspectives that executives are exposed to" (Jordan & Khan, 2022). Similar to youth boards, shadow boards have been implemented by a range of companies, in the private, public, and creative sectors, to help connect with younger consumers. Gucci, for example, created a shadow board of Millennials in 2015, after which sales grew by 136% between 2014 and 2018 (Jordan & Sorell, 2019). Mar highlighted how this structure helps break down traditional hierarchies in the workplace:

" Just this idea that you've got a group of young people who are in a position of influence, and that they actually get to talk to the senior leaders of the organisation about real issues.

Similarly, Jordan & Khan (2022) found that organisations implementing shadow boards "more effectively bridged gaps between workers of different generations, which enhanced respect and understanding across the hierarchy". In this way, shadow boards can facilitate dialogue between generations and contribute to a more inclusive work environment.

Learning circles and listening sessions

Learning circles and listening sessions can facilitate conversations between generations, as well as provide a space for employees from more marginalised and underrepresented groups (race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality) to express their emotions and concerns (Asare, 2021). Listening sessions, for example, were introduced by some companies in response to the Black Lives Matter movement for employees to share their direct experiences of racism. Mar discusses the benefits of listening sessions, which function similarly to learning circles, for creating inclusive workplaces:

" It was incredibly moving to hear how so many of our young people were willing to speak out, and so many of them were willing to speak out about their personal experiences. So the other thing is to note that […] many organisations are much more White and male at the top, and you've got much more diversity at the bottom. So naturally through those conversations, you know, a lot of our Black colleagues, many of whom will be Gen Z, were sharing personal experiences. I think it was quite a learning curve, actually, for the people in positions of power to hear that type of experience that maybe they hadn't appreciated previously.

Although these sessions may open up a space for dialogue and learning between generations, including identifying racism, there are important limitations to this approach including the impact they have in dismantling more deeply engrained racist structures (Lawson, 2020).

Learning circles typically involve 10-25 employees and one or two facilitators, forming a circle where only one person speaks at a time. The theme of the circle depends on the issue at hand, but a key aspect is maintaining a non-judgmental environment to encourage openness. A study by Itzchakov & Kluger (2017)

found that employees who felt listened to during a listening or learning circle were less anxious and more relaxed, which, they argue, fosters deeper self-reflection and awareness, leading to "less extreme work-related attitudes".

Listening circles can also be a valuable tool for innovation and collaboration within organisations, facilitating learning from "real-life problems encountered in participants' everyday work" (Aakjaer & Wegener, 2023, p. 471). Aakjaer & Wegener (2023) argue that the complexity of today's social problems requires an approach that combines a broad range of expertise and knowledge, which can be found in listening and learning circles. The success of this approach requires experienced facilitation, but we would emphasise that having an intergenerational presence in a listening circle amplifies the possibilities for learning and for beneficial change for any organisation.

By implementing strategies such as reverse mentoring, shadow boards, learning circles and listening sessions, organisations can bridge generational divides and leverage the diverse strengths of their workforce. For these strategies to be effective, they must be thoughtfully tailored to the specific context of each organisation and supported by ongoing dialogue and feedback. Ultimately, creating a workplace that values and integrates the perspectives of all age groups will be in a better position to navigate the complex challenges of the multi-generational office, as well as the shifting social, economic, and political context in which it is situated.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Generations: Definitions and key terms

The concept of a generation stems from the work of Hungarian sociologist Karl Mannheim in the early 20th century. It is generally used to refer to "an age cohort within a society that experiences the same set of historical conditions over the life course" (Hantrais et al. 2020, p. 278). The argument is that the political, economic, social and cultural contexts in which we grow up and come of age, impact and shape our views and values (Ipsos, 2023a). Generational thinking helps make sense of the world, connecting socio-economic and political shifts over time with changes in thinking and individual values (Ipsos, 2023a; Tolgensbakk, 2022, p. 174).

Whatever generational category they fall into, young people are often viewed in popular media and culture as 'figures of struggle', hope, resistance, and/or nostalgia (Threadgold, 2018). Teenagers and young adults, the current age of Gen Z, are often held to stand for progress and modernity, and so reporting around this tends to position them as trailblazers (depending on the political orientation of the newspaper) or as undermining traditional values. As the opening to an article in *The Face* (a style magazine) puts it, in relation to Gen Z and the younger Gen Alpha (Pometsey, 2024):

> " Not too long ago, Gen Z were the new kids on the block, at the centre of every trend and moral panic, praised for their activism, analysed for their alleged aversion to alcohol and sex, and blamed for their, let's say, part-time approach to work. The zeitgeist revolved around their tastes and TikTok dances. They were the future. But recently, something's changed. Those kids are, slowly but surely, becoming adults. And they – that is, you and us, or some of us at least – are showing their years by engaging in an age-old old-person pastime: complaining about the next generation.

Threadgold (2020, p. 687) argues that "politicians or business advisors create versions of young people as rhetorical devices to obfuscate social and economic problems or to blame for the decline of western civilisation". Duffy (2021) similarly cautions against using broad and sweeping generalisations that seek to highlight differences between generations in terms of generational stereotyping. Instead, he argues for an analysis that accounts for period, lifecycle, and cohort effects (Duffy, 2021, p. 8) (Table 2). By disentangling these effects at the individual and collective level, we can see "how and why societies are changing, and a much greater ability to predict what comes next regarding the biggest issues of our times" (Duffy, 2021, p. 9).

Table 2 provides an overview of these effects, with period effects experienced by all age groups, cohort effects experienced by particular age cohorts, and lifecycle effects describing shifts that take place according to age and life events. Duffy (2021, pp. 11–12) suggests, "Every change in societal attitudes, beliefs and behaviours can be explained by one – or, more often, a combination – of these three effects." These distinctions highlight the difficulty in conducting rigorous generational analysis, mainly because there is often a dearth of data mapping changes to values over time. For example, the same questions may not have been asked of Boomers at the same age as Gen Z today to be able to say for certain that a specific value is unique to Gen Z (Duffy, 2021; Ipsos, 2023a).

Table 2: Key terms and concepts

| Key term	Description	Example
Period effects	"These attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of a society can change in a consistent way across all age groups. These period effects often occur in response to a major event that affects everyone, whether directly or indirectly, such as a pandemic, war or economic crisis." (Duffy, 2021, p. 9)	COVID-19 pandemic Global Financial Crisis
Cohort effect	"A generation can also have different attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours because they were socialised in different conditions from other generations, and thus will remain distinct from other cohorts even as they age." (Duffy, 2021, p. 11)	Technology adoption and usage
Lifecycle effect	"People also change as they age, or as a result of major life events, such as leaving home, having children, or retiring." (Duffy, 2021, p. 10)	Attitude to work, voting practices, and political preferences

Source: Duffy (2021)

Appendix B. Key Informant Interviews

Position	Pseudonym	Sector
Senior Executive	Ana	FinTech Company
Senior Executive	Ben	Global Financial Institution
Senior Marketing Executive	Eli	Global Consumer Goods Company
CEO	Canon Dr Gillian Bowen	YMCA London, City and North
Senior Investment Director	Jon	Financial Services Institution
Senior Executive	Mar	Consultancy/ Professional Services

Appendix C. Changes to the workforce over time

Figure 3 shows Office for National Statistics (ONS) employment rates for men and women in the UK between 1971 and 2024 (ONS, 2024a). In the UK, the employment rate for women aged 16 to 64 years increased from 52.8% in January to March 1971 to 71.6% in January to March 2024 (down from 72.4% in December 2019 to February 2020 and 72.2% August to October 2023) (ONS, 2024a). The employment rate for men aged 16 to 64 decreased from 92.1% in January to March 1971 to 77.4% in January to March 2024 (ONS, 2024a).

Figure 3: Employment rates for women and men aged 16-64, 1971 to 2024
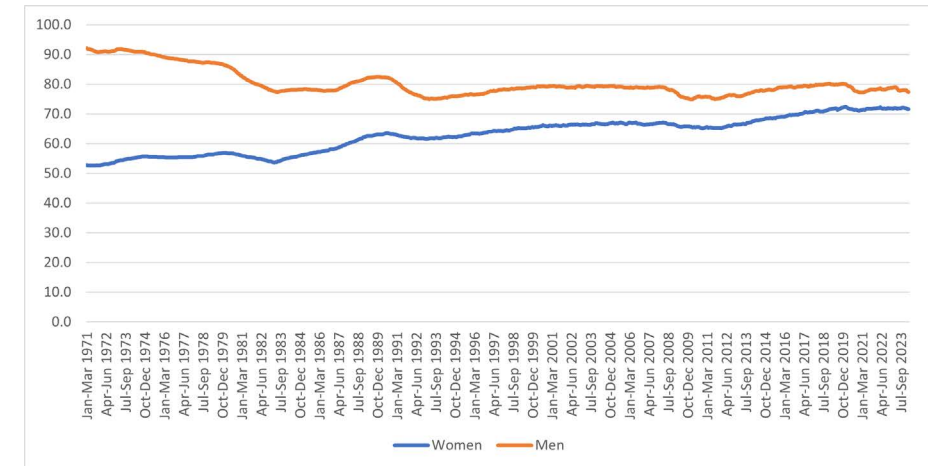
Sources: Francis-Devine & Hutton (2024); ONS (2024b)

Figure 4 shows the number of men and women in full-and-part-time employment between 1992 and 2023 (ONS, 2024b). It shows that the number of women working full-time increased from 6,481,000 in 1992 to 10,146,000 in 2024, and the number of women in part-time employment increased from 5,024,000 to 5,843,000 in 2024 (down from 6,421,000 in January to March 2020). As a percentage, the proportion of women in employment working part-time decreased from 44% in 1992 to 37% in 2024 (ONS, 2024b). Over the same period, the number of men in full-time employment increased from 13,151,000 to 14,704,000, and in part-time employment, it increased from 980,000 to 2,303,000 (ONS, 2024b). As a percentage, the proportion of men in employment working part-time increased from 7% in 1992 to around 14% in 2024 (ONS, 2024b).

Figure 4: Changes in full-time and part-time employment (thousands), men and women aged 16+, 1992-2024
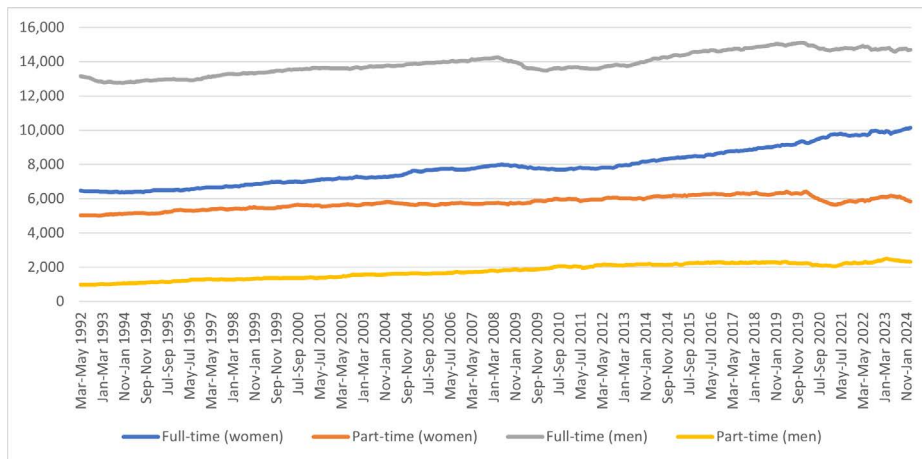
Note: Data before the dotted line from July to September 2022 has been weighted with different population data. Q4 is from October to December.

Source: ONS (2024b)

Cumberland Lodge

Cumberland Lodge is an educational charity and social enterprise that exists to empower young people to lead the conversation around social division. Providing them with the skills, perspective, and confidence to question, challenge, and understand, some of the most complex social issues of our time.

St Paul's Cathedral

St Paul's Cathedral is a vibrant working church, a national treasure, and a London icon.

Our building provides a space for reflection, discovery, learning and debate. St Paul's is uniquely placed to engage with deeper questions of how to live well in an increasingly complex world.