



# Learner survey



2022

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# Foreword

2021 proved another tricky year for business; where many expected that 2020's lockdowns and tumultuous workplace guidance was simply a blip on the landscape of history, COVID has lingered far beyond what anybody hoped for, or expected. Despite a handful of business leaders rushing their people back to the office, for the majority, the workplace has fundamentally changed forever, with hybrid working now taking centre stage in the narrative. Whilst we can see the beginning of the future workplace bedding in, with part-home-part-office working appealing to the masses, it's time to reflect on what 2021 looked like for the UK's workforce.

Last year's Learner Survey revealed that L&D took a hit in many areas, as businesses scrambled to stay afloat in the wake of a pandemic. But we also saw huge discrepancies across generations, seniority, and gender. This year, we went even bigger, and asked 5,000 UK workers about their learning journey in the past 12 months. How was their development impacted? Are they feeling more comfortable about career stability? Do they have progression opportunities? Are people still looking to leave their jobs at the same rate?

## **Where did we see the biggest wins – and losses – for L&D in 2021 versus 2020?**

Things are clearly changing in the post-COVID landscape. People's perceptions and expectations are changing and they are craving more self-development, more innovative ways of learning, and more flexibility on what – and how – they learn it.

In a candidate driven market, where employees are demanding ever more of their employers (and able to find it in forward-thinking companies), it's clear that businesses need to focus in on what their people want from learning and development in the coming years.



**Philip Pyle**

Chief Revenue Officer, Kallidus

# Survey methodology and respondent profile

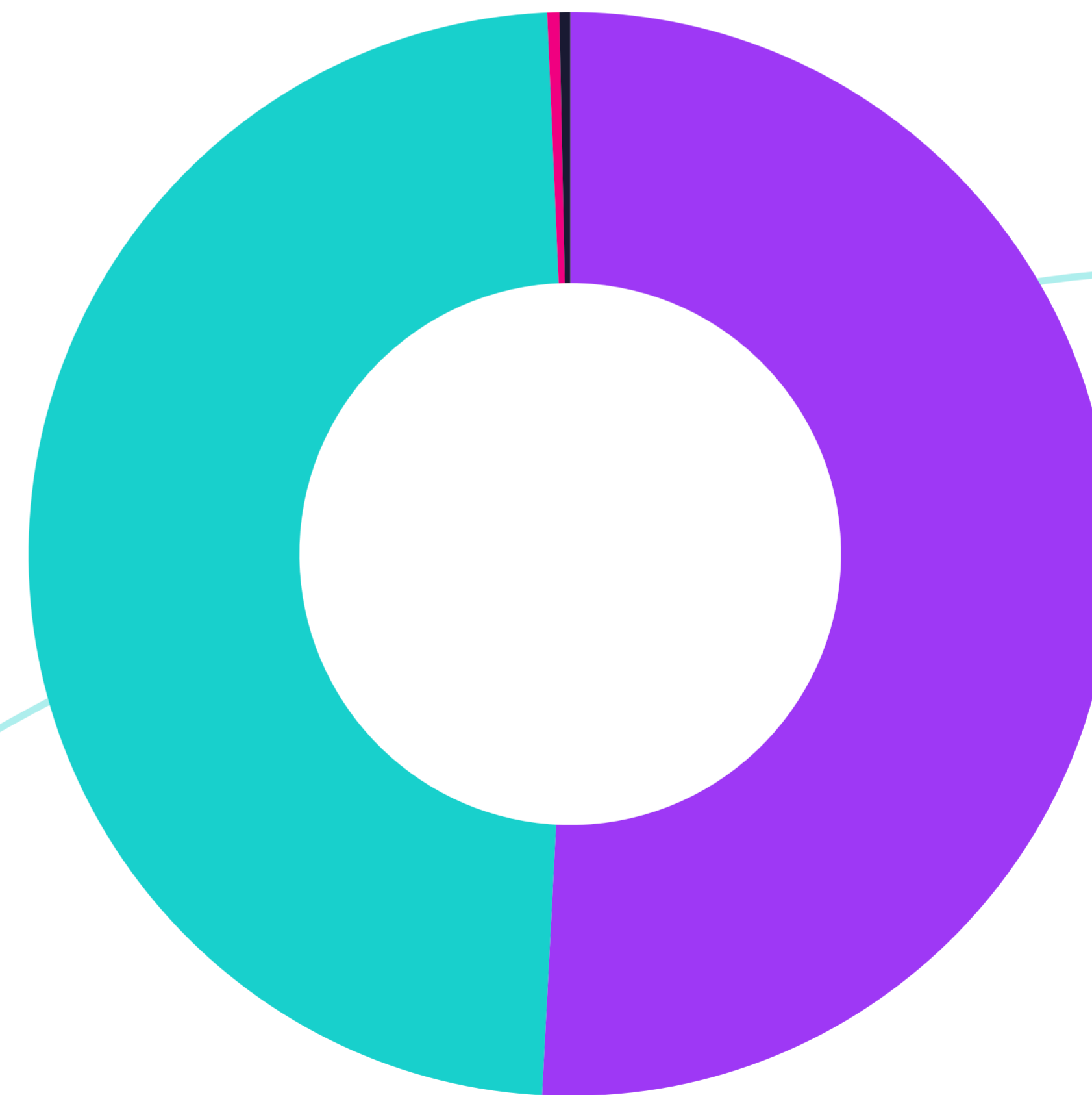
To truly understand the L&D needs of the UK's workers, Kallidus commissioned an independent online survey in December 2021.

We surveyed 5,005 employees across various industries and sectors, both public and private. In-depth questions were asked across the whole L&D spectrum, aiming to provide insight into individual motivations and learning preferences.

If you want to understand what people want, you should ask them. We've done the heavy lifting for you, and our insights, data, and key takeaways empower businesses to make better strategic decisions for their L&D strategy based on what actually works for learners.

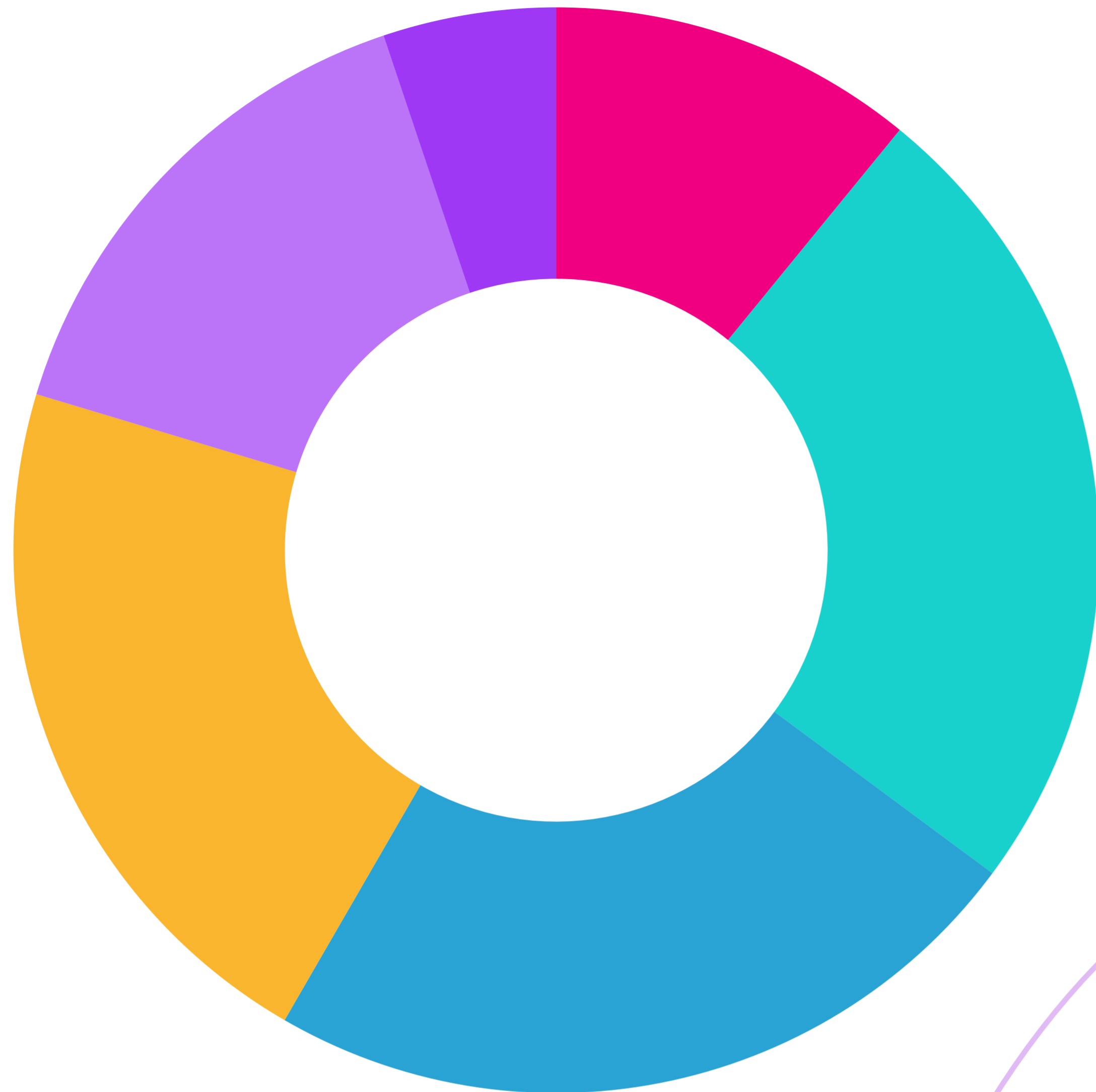
## GENDER

- Female
- Male
- I identify in another way
- Prefer not to say



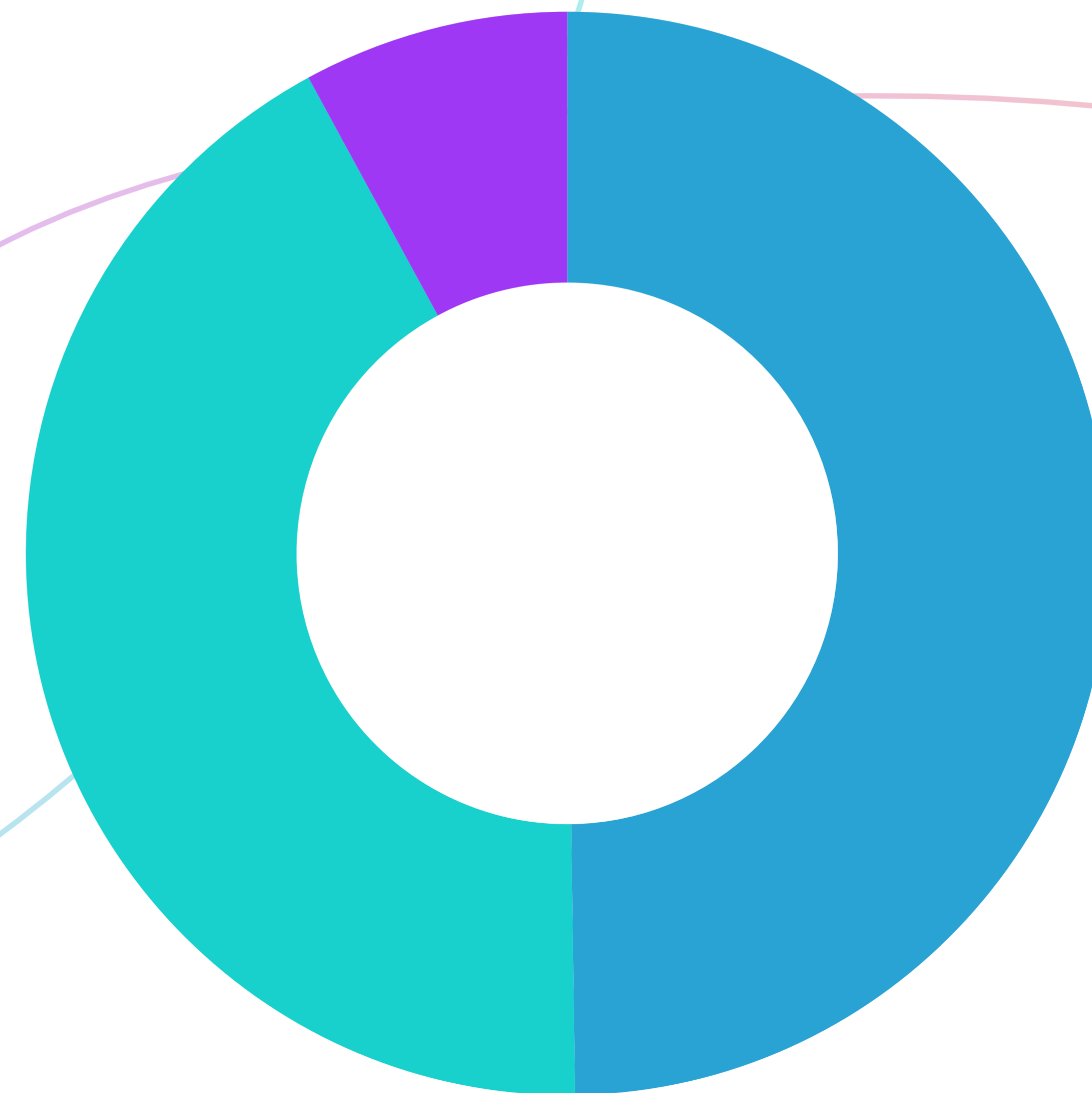
**AGE**

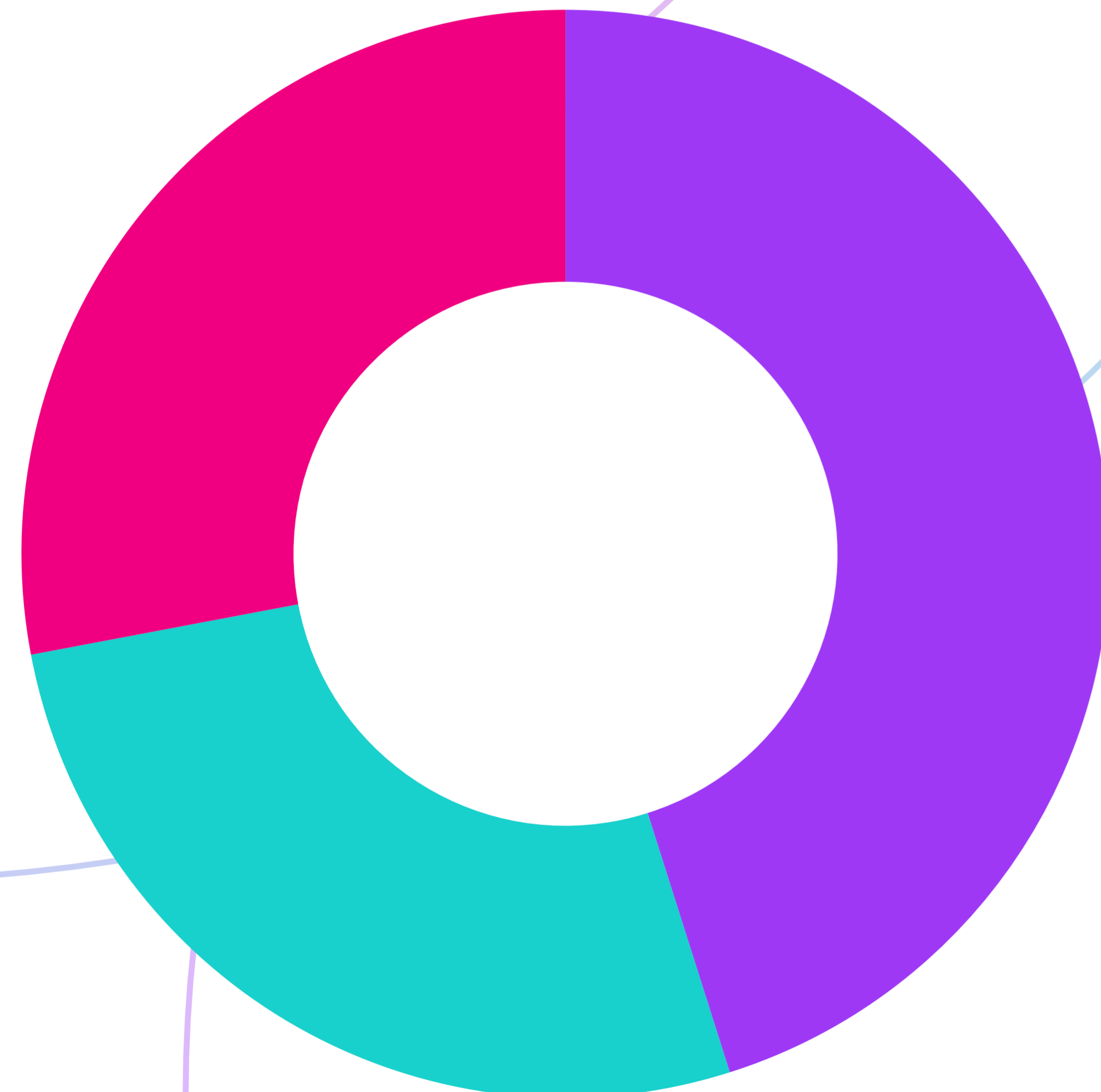
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+



**JOB ROLE**

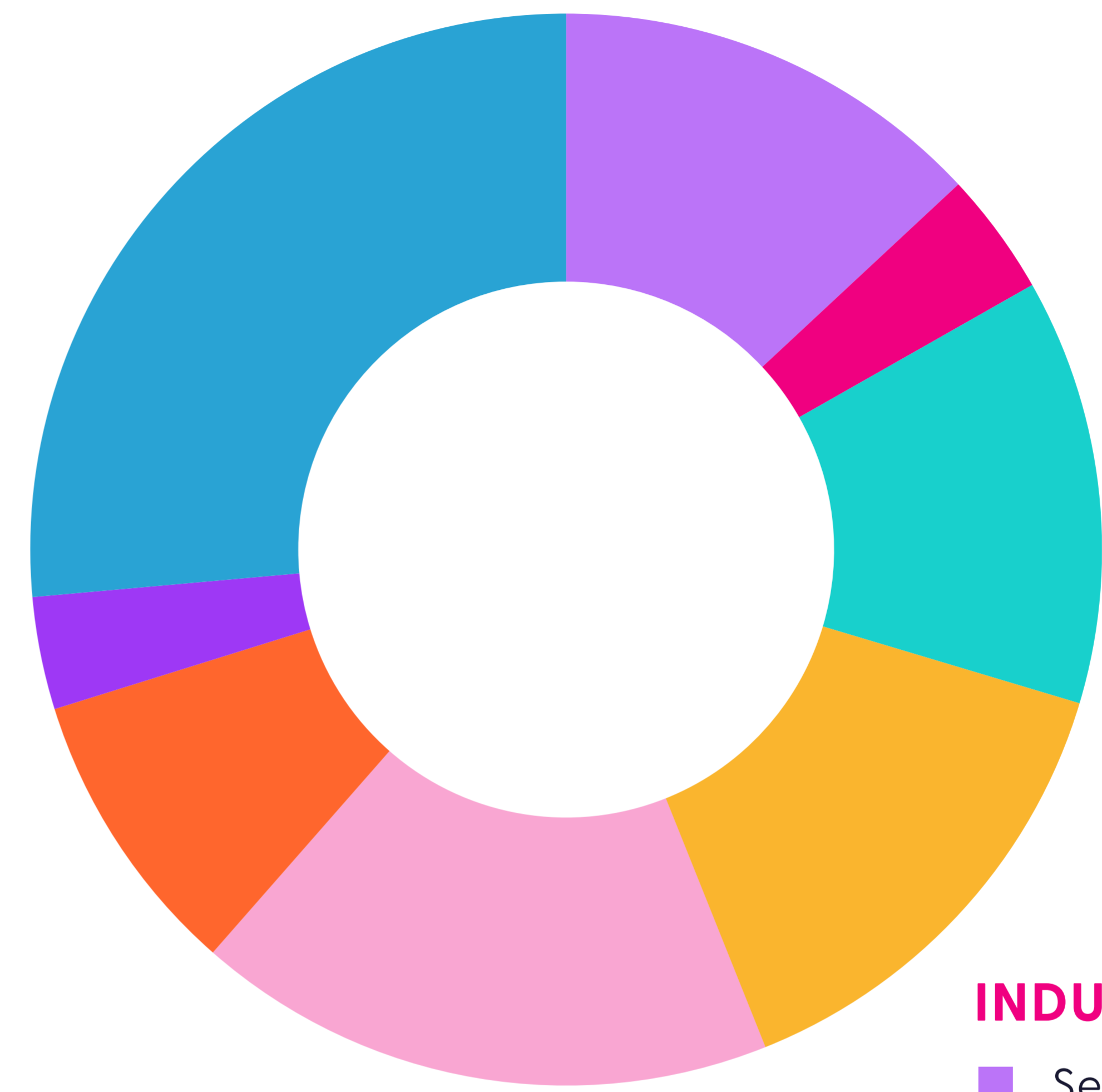
- Non-managerial position
- Supervisor/Manager
- Business leader





**SIZE OF ORG**

- Under 250 people
- 250 - 999 people
- 1,000+ people



**INDUSTRY**

- Services
- Utilities
- IT
- Healthcare
- Public sector
- Finance
- Commerce
- Other (please specify)



# Survey snapshot

## CAREER PROGRESSION IS STILL TAKING A HIT

Highlights of key trends and perceptions:

**43%**  
of people want  
more learning  
(vs 44% last  
year)

**33%**  
of people are not  
getting the training  
they need to progress  
their career  
(vs 35% last year)

**27%**  
of people had  
no access to  
learning  
(vs 25%  
last year)

**23%**  
are getting less  
support from their  
manager  
(vs 24% last year)

**43%**  
feel performance  
reviews are less  
frequent and  
effective than they  
used to be  
(vs 47% last year)



## People are still leaving

40% plan to look for a job in the next 12 months, seeking:

- ▶ Better pay and benefits
- ▶ Reskill and upskill
- ▶ Career progression



## People want more L&D

- ▶ 60% of people practice self-led learning
- ▶ 32% of people say staying relevant in their current job is the main motivator to learn



## Remote and hybrid working are impacting L&D

- ▶ 84% of people want team working / collaboration skills to understand how to navigate this new way of working
- ▶ But only 31% of people had access to this learning in 2021



# People are still leaving

Interestingly, where last year saw a heavy weighting to women looking to leave (43% of women compared to 34% of men), this year's survey is a dead heat across the board, with male and female respondents at 40% each, and those who identify in another way at 39%.

Where 17% were looking for a bigger salary last year, a whopping 48% are now looking to move for better pay and benefits. Reskilling, upskilling, and L&D opportunities remain important with 19% of respondents citing this as their reason for looking elsewhere.

One year on, people are still looking to leave their jobs at an alarming rate. 2 in 5 people will look for a new job in the next 12 months, and these are the top reasons why:

To seek better pay and benefits (48%)

To reskill / upskill (19%)

To move industries (19%)

# DEEP DIVE

## Why are people really leaving?

If the headlines are to be believed, it's a 'candidates' market', with job seekers driving the narrative and demanding more from salaries, benefits, and the workplace. But how did we get here?

Quite simply, the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything. People had the time to reflect during multiple lockdowns, and many are looking for work that gives them more purpose, seeking out meaningful roles in companies aligned with their values. And a shift to remote and hybrid working has broken down geographical boundaries, meaning the best talent can work for pretty much any business. Which makes acquiring the best talent hyper competitive.

People want to be paid what they're worth, have opportunities for career development, and appropriate benefits. **It's clear that this is the time to invest in your people strategy.**

# The gender gap is narrowing

In last year's report, we discussed the "Shecession" and the gender-politics of the pandemic on female caregivers in particular. We also noted that more women than men were unclear on the learning they needed to do to advance their careers, or were actively seeking more learning.

## So how did women fare in 2021?

Of those that cited the barrier to learning as being unable to find time due to home related priorities, the split between males and females was relatively even (23% and 25% respectively).

The impact of remote working on career progression – specifically that performance reviews do not seem to be as frequent or as effective as they used to be – seems to have had a similar impact on both men and women (45% and 42% respectively state performance reviews as less frequent or effective).

**In 2021's report:**

**48% of women wanted more learning versus 39% of men**

**72% of women wanted more clarity on the learning they needed to do versus 62% of men**

**Happily, those gender-weighted statistics appear to be levelling out:**

**42% of women versus 44% of men wanted more learning**

**31% of women are not getting the learning they need to progress their career versus 35% of men**



# DEEP DIVE

2021's report threw up some truly troubling figures that indicated women were struggling to progress, so the results for 2022 are heartening. Perhaps reflective of minimal school shut-downs in the previous 12 months, it is notable that many of the indications around women getting left behind for career development are beginning to level out.

# Self-led learning is on the rise

Last year, we told you that 61% of UK workers were practicing self-led learning, with many assuming the additional ‘down time’ caused by restrictions was the root cause.

Excitingly, this trend has continued, with 60% of workers still driving their own development, in spite of a return to near ‘normal’. Perhaps less commuting time is being replaced with career planning and progression? Either way, it’s increasingly obvious that those who wish to develop themselves will seek out employers who champion L&D, provide learning, access to learning platforms, and individual training budgets. And those motivated people? They’re the ones you want.

## Cater for everyone

Reflective of this ownership on self-development, 67% of workers are confident they know their preferred learning style.

Unfortunately, only 41% of employers provide a platform for employees to communicate their learning style, and only 16% consistently provide different learning options to accommodate those preferences.

It’s not all bad news though, as there is a clear awareness of the need to facilitate various learning styles: 76% of respondents have options of how to learn ‘occasionally’, ‘frequently’ or ‘always’.

In numbers, of 2,052 respondents whose employers enquire as to their learning style, only 800 ‘always’ cater for it.

# Top learning styles



**39%**

**VISUAL**



**20%**

**SOCIAL**



**11%**

**VERBAL**

## TOP TIP

Don't just ask your people how they like to learn, you also need to listen to them. Offering different learning options is not only the right thing to do, but also caters for accessibility issues, neurodiversity, and differing lifestyles.

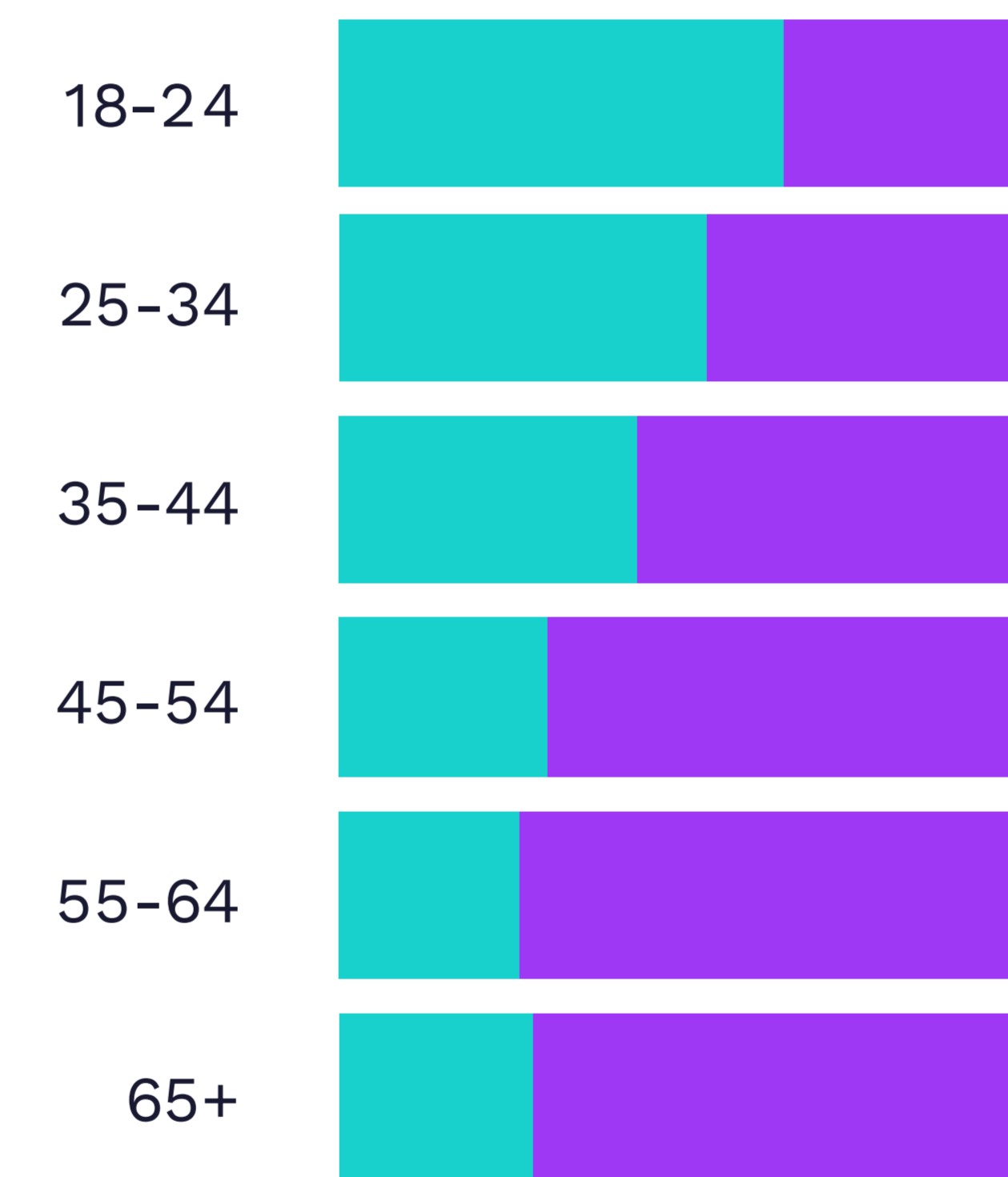


# Who gets to choose how to learn?

As usual, it's nice at the top: 53% of managers and 50% of business leaders are asked what their preferred learning style is, versus just 29% of non-managerial workers.

This is also something being prioritised for younger workers: 63% of 18-24 year olds have been asked, versus just 27% of 65+. Perhaps demonstrating an understanding that Gen Z are far more likely to take ownership of their development journeys than their older counterparts.

- I have been asked how I learn
- I haven't been asked how I learn



Age

# The future of L&D: Next-gen learning

'Next-gen' learning is a hot topic in L&D, but which modern techniques really get people excited?\*

- ▶ 52% of people want scenario based training (think problem solving in interactive courses)
- ▶ 47% still love quizzes and interactive features (like those found in eLearning)
- ▶ 45% want user generated content and the ability to share their own learning content (there's that self-led learning again!)

Leaderboards and earning badges are less important to learners, it seems, than the method of learning itself. Although competition still works for some: leader boards in particular are heavily weighted towards younger learners (52% of 18-24 year olds versus just 24% of 65+ find these engaging)



\*Based on 'motivated' or 'very motivated' responses.

# Digital learning is king

Most businesses pivoted quickly to home-working in the pandemic, and have spent the past two years investing in remote and hybrid working. For many, that has included their L&D strategies, with an increasing number of workers now learning online. But how does a move from the classroom stack up?

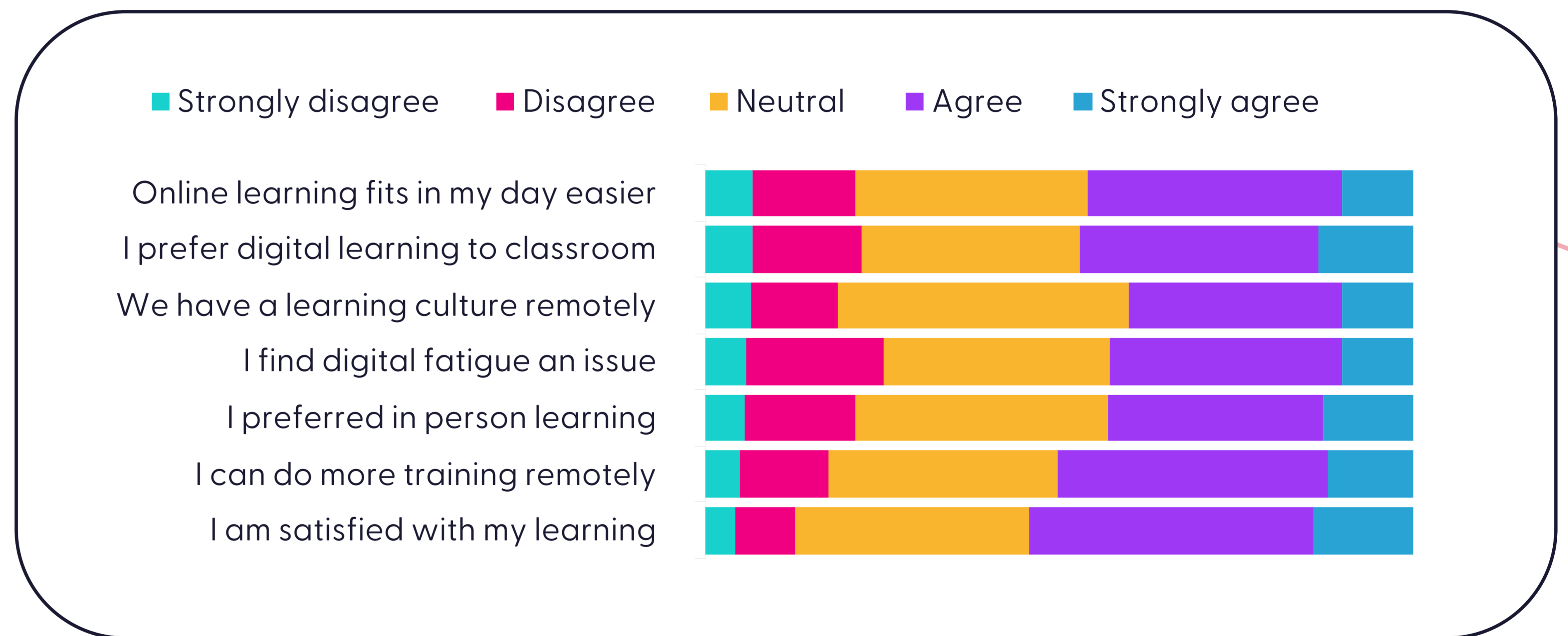
Pretty well, actually!

Every single demographic across age, gender, location, industry, role, and company size:

- ▶ Find it easier to fit online learning into their working day
- ▶ Are able to undertake more training working remotely
- ▶ Prefer digital learning to classroom learning

However, digital learning fatigue is still an issue. 43% of learners cite this as a concern, down a little for 48% last year, but it's clear there's some work to do for employers getting the balance right.

No wonder 60% of people find blended learning so successful.





# What types of learning are people loving?

Understanding the kinds of content your people actually want to engage with is key to getting them to engage! If you're struggling to get your teams on board, and L&D compliance rates are suffering, you might want to evaluate your delivery, and the types of learning you're providing your teams. If it's text heavy, boring, or involves them leaving their homes, you may struggle with engagement based on these results.



Interestingly, the gender split on all of the above is fairly even. However, we see vast differences generationally. So who likes\* what?

\*'likes' denoted by 50% or more quite/very successful

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Virtual classroom <b>Video</b> <b>eLearning</b> Microlearning Mobile learning Blended learning Gamified content & badges Simulations VR content AR content	Virtual classroom <b>Video</b> <b>eLearning</b> Microlearning Mobile learning Blended learning Gamified content & badges Simulations VR content AR content	Virtual classroom <b>Video</b> <b>eLearning</b> Microlearning Mobile learning Blended learning VR content External learning platforms	Virtual classroom <b>Video</b> <b>eLearning</b> Microlearning Mobile learning Blended learning	<b>Video</b> <b>eLearning</b>	<b>Video</b> <b>eLearning</b>

Across the board, every age group finds video and eLearning successful. Interestingly workers 18-34 found almost every learning style successful, perhaps demonstrating their adaptability to technology, and a hunger to learn at the earlier stages of their career.

If you're looking for a sure-fire way to build an inclusive learning strategy, investing in eLearning and video is a safe bet.



## What did people learn in 2021?

73% of people had at least 1 day of learning in 2021, with 10% having over 10 days!

But what were they learning?

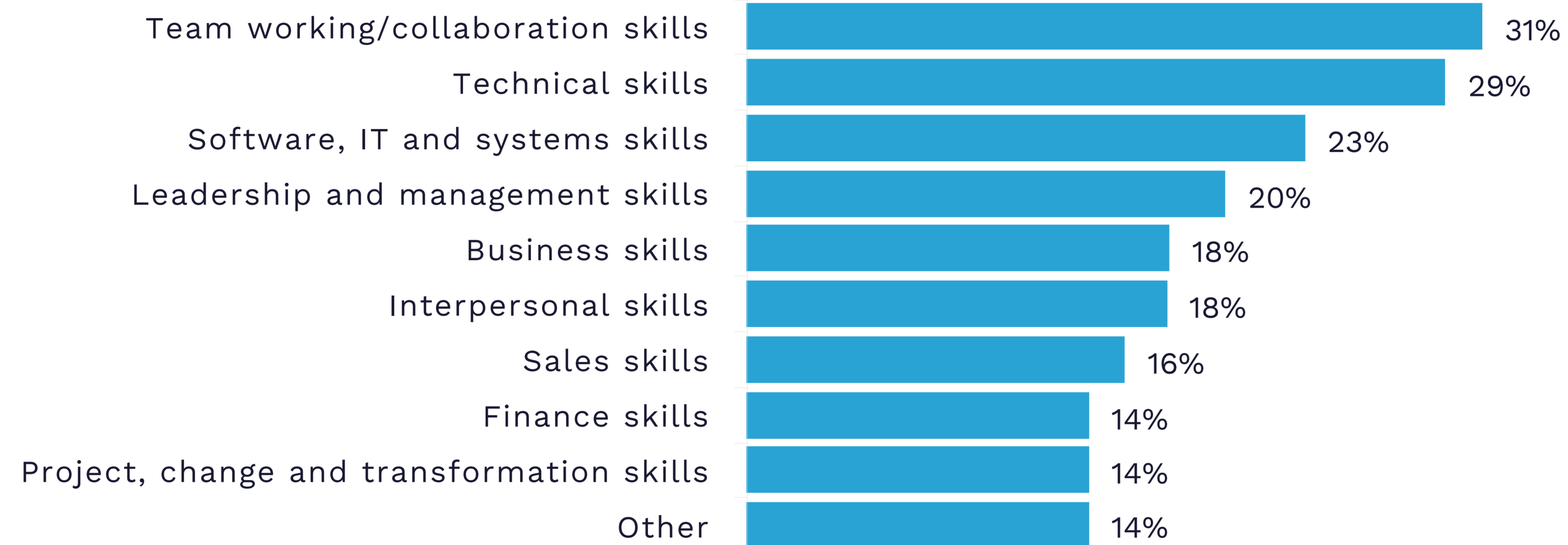
Once again, team working and collaboration featured top of the list, with a huge 31% of people learning how to better work together (vs 34% last year)

Technical skills were also high in both 2020 and 2021 (29% this year and 37% last year – thanks Zoom / Teams / Skype training!) This is unsurprising given the nature of a sudden shift to hybrid/remote working. To bolster this, 23% of people learnt software, IT, and systems skills in 2021.





# What did people learn in 2021?



# DEEP DIVE

## Technical skills

Half of the workforce will need to reskill or upskill by 2025, so it's no surprise that 29% of those surveyed spent time learning technical skills in 2022. From coding skills to machine learning and robotics, the workforce is fundamentally changing and people need to learn new skills at a rapid rate to keep up. Many people are adopting roles that didn't exist 5 years ago, let alone 10, and it's clear this trend will continue.

## What sorts of roles are emerging?

There are, quite literally, thousands every year. Some are the evolution of existing jobs, others brand new (climate change scientist, anyone?) Some rapidly growing roles include:

- UX / UI specialist – User Experience / User Interface designers focus on making users the centre of design. If you're using software with a really, really good user journey that feels hyper-intuitive, that's probably had the input of a UX designer.

- **RevOps** – Revenue Operations take care of optimising sales tech stacks, understanding trends and improving performance for fast-moving sales teams.
- **Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO)** – CROs are focused on increasing website conversion rates (that's how many visitors want to work with you!) They run tests on pretty much everything, from tone of voice, to colours and fonts, and even the size and shape of buttons.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Engineers** – Artificial Intelligence, or machine learning, is becoming a huge part of technology in all shapes and sizes. Unlike those creepy robots in the Spielberg film, AI is all about technology learning and adapting, like algorithms on social media pushing relevant content in front of you based on what you've engaged with.
- **DevSecOps Engineer** – Development Operations (DevOps) was all about factoring continuous testing into development cycles. Security used to come at the end. DevSecOps mirrors a broader understanding of the importance of security generally, baking security into the development process from day one.



# And what do they want to learn?

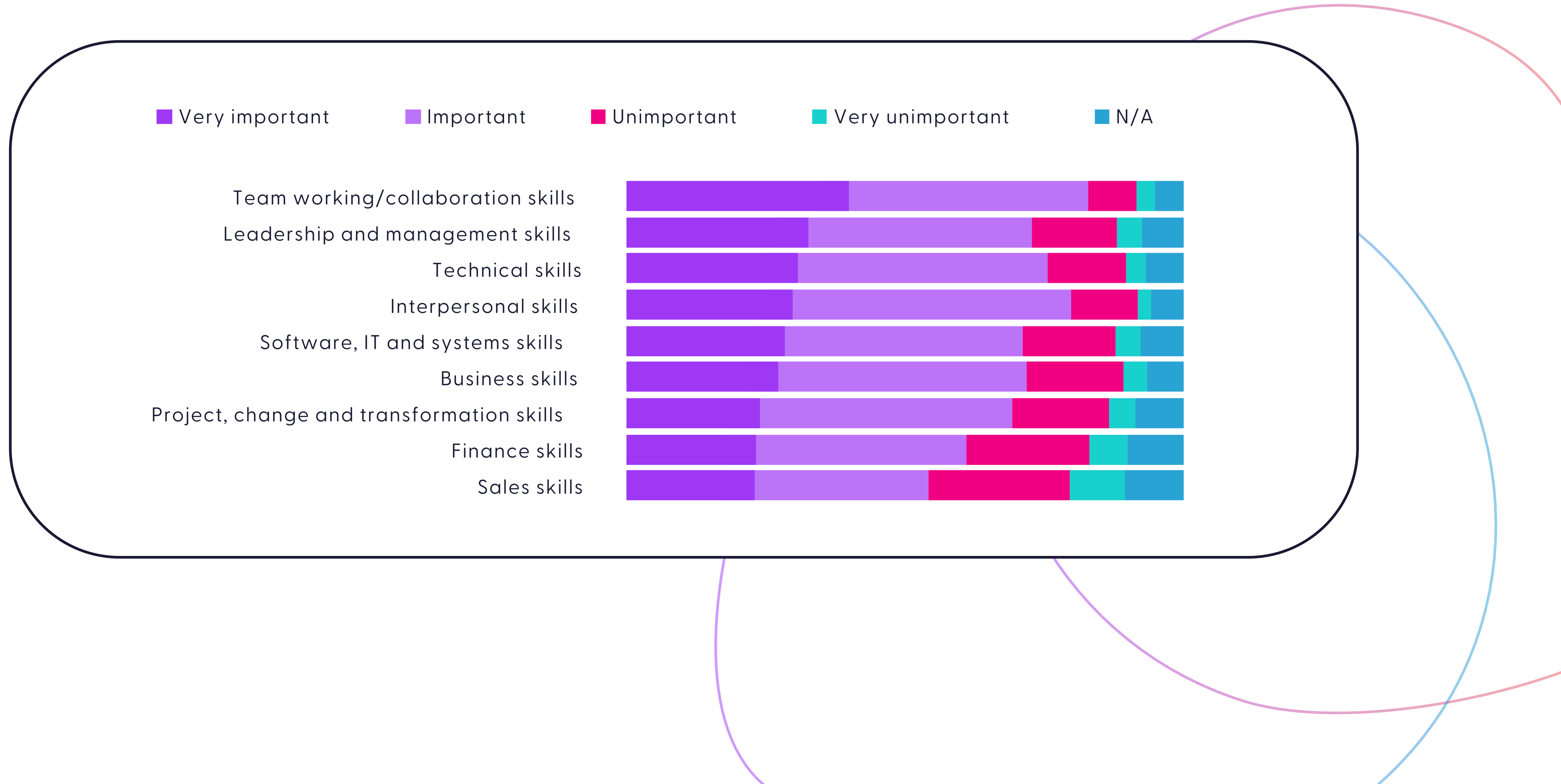
Luckily, people want to learn team work and collaboration skills, with a whopping 84% of people citing it as important or very important for their future development. The seismic shift in how we work and communicate since before 2020 cannot be underestimated. Work from home and ‘work from anywhere’ policies were far from the norm two years ago, so of course teams need investment in how best to work in this new world.

**It makes sense, and your people are asking for it; if you’re not already, it’s time to prioritise teaching them how to work as a remote team.**

Unsurprisingly, 74% of people see leadership and management skills as integral to their future development and career progression, and 81% also want to work on their interpersonal skills. Soft skills, generally, are more important than ever in a remote world, with the nuance of face-to-face interaction often lost in a Slack message or email.



Those technical skills are also super high, with 77% of respondents wanting more general technical skills, and 73% seeking Software, IT and systems skills.

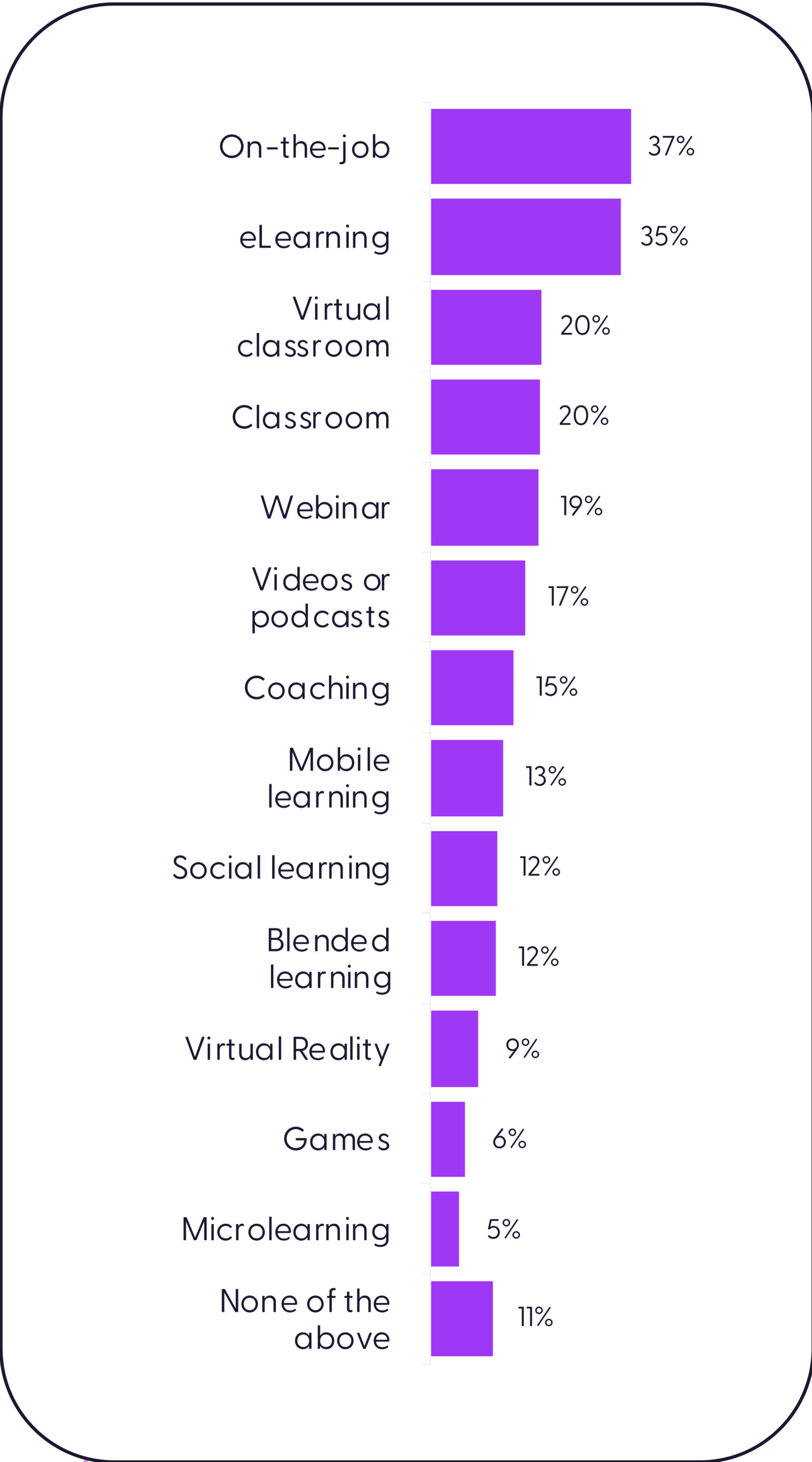


# How did people learn in 2021?

The most common learning styles were on-the-job (37%) and eLearning (35%), stable from last year (38% and 36% respectively).

20% of people had classroom sessions in person, unsurprisingly slightly up from 17% last year as lock-downs and restrictions have eased, making it easier to learn together in person. On this trend, we've also seen a reduction in mobile-learning (16% last year to 13% this year), indicative of more people's return to the office.

Those with access to next-gen learning tools remains disappointingly low, with again only 9% of people using VR.





# And how effective did they find those?

Microlearning was considered very effective, with 56% of people viewing it as effective or very effective, yet just 5% have accessed it. The bite-sized nature of microlearning means it fits easily and comfortably into the flow of work, mirroring that desire for non-intrusive learning interventions. 'At point of need' solutions (those that enhance people's working lives rather than disrupt them, often solving real-time challenges) are becoming increasingly popular as the workforce becomes more technically savvy.

Mobile learning is growing in popularity, with 62% rating it effective or very effective, slightly up from 59% last year. Games and gamification are also gradually becoming more popular, with 57% rating it highly this year, versus 53% last year. Both of these stats represent investment from businesses into their remote and flexible learning strategies, allowing teams to learn on their terms and schedules.

# How do people want to learn

It's not just about the methods people have been exposed to, it's also important to understand what methods they enjoy, and what they want to see more of moving forwards.

Last year, we told you people were looking for:

**50%**  
on-the-job  
learning

**41%**  
coaching

**38%**  
blended  
learning

This year looks very different, although the top spot remains unchanged:

**49%**  
learners want  
to see more  
on-the-job  
learning

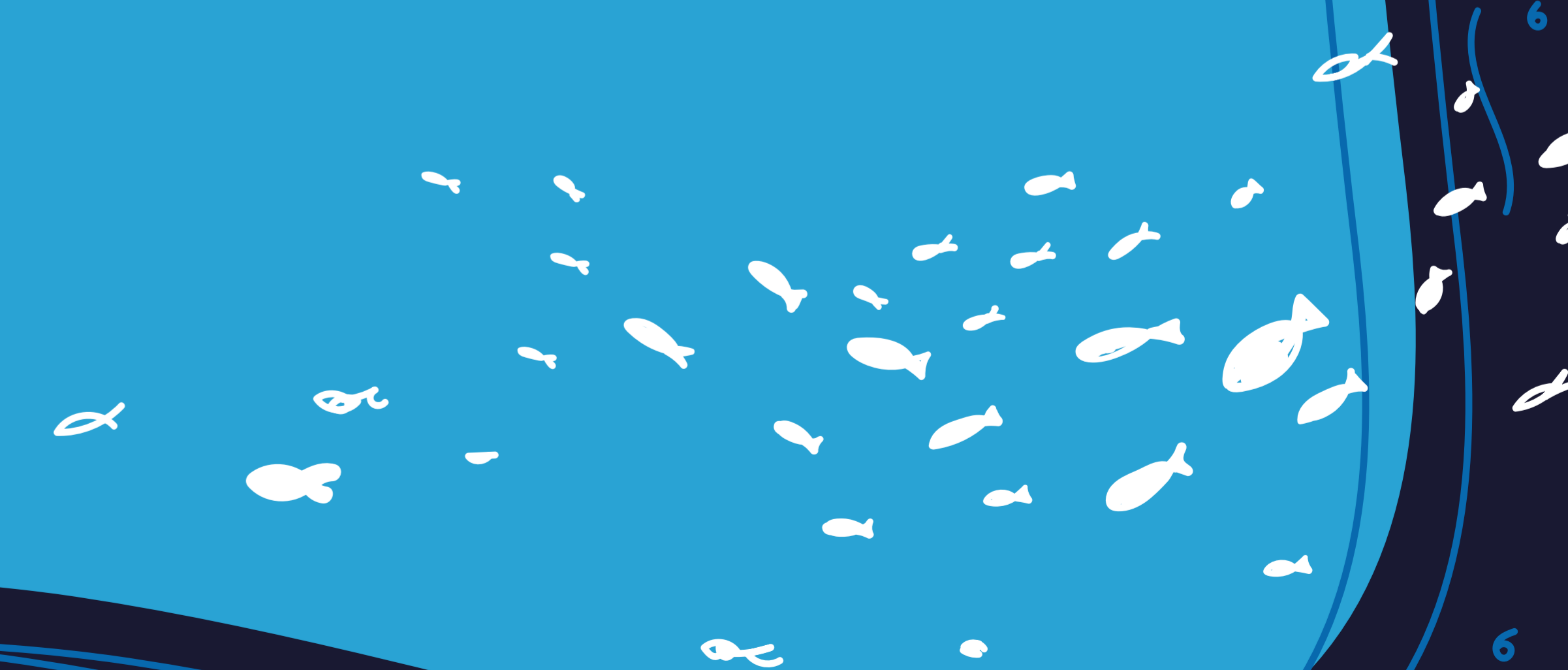
**32%**  
The next top  
requested  
training methods  
were blended  
learning and  
eLearning at  
32% each.

# DEEP DIVE

## Why the move to digital?

Coaching has been replaced by eLearning in this year's survey as the second most desired learning method. This could well be due to another year of remote working and a normalisation of digital learning. However, it is likely also reflective of the more downcast statistics surrounding a lack of face-time with managers and a reduction in quality of performance management.

While the rise of eLearning is exciting for the new remote-led world, it's important businesses re-centre development and coaching.





But it is no longer just about the method of learning. As learning in the workplace evolves, more personalised learning experiences are what learners are looking for. Only 10% of people don't want personalised learning to either increase or continue, so clearly one to focus on for 2022/3!

**41%**  
want more social  
/collaborative  
learning



**41%**  
want more  
informal  
learning

**31%**  
want less gaming  
in the workplace



## **Building a remote world:** The good, the bad, and the inexplicable

27% of workers did no learning in the last 12 months. Shockingly, this has increased from 2020 (25%). What we hoped was a pandemic induced blip, is seemingly a reflection on a large number of businesses still struggling to get robust remote/hybrid L&D strategies in place.

# DEEP DIVE

## What is on-the-job learning?

On-the-job learning refers to any learning interventions which are reactive and timely, helping people develop in an organic and natural way. This can include coaching and mentoring, bitesize eLearning, or targeted podcasts, videos or webinars.

Many were concerned that this real-time intervention approach to learning would be damaged by remote working – how will leaders clock opportunities for development via Teams or Slack? In reality, as long as businesses adopt that continuous approach to performance management employees are craving, on-the-job learning has never been easier.

A continuous conversation around development opportunities and skills gaps allows managers to easily assign bite-sized learning, or schedule a coaching conversation, while also empowering employees to seek out those solutions for themselves.



And who was impacted the most? You guessed it:  
non-managerial staff.

36% of non-managers versus just 16% of managers had no  
training at all in the past 12 months.

38% of managers and business leaders had over 5 days, versus  
just 19% of non-managers.

**28% cite a lack of learning provision from their organisations.**

This is echoed by 43% of workers wanting more training, with a  
huge 49% of 25 – 34 year olds seeking out more. As we see  
throughout this study, younger generations seem hungry for  
learning they don't feel they are getting.

**Who had less than 5  
days of training?**

**81%**

**Non-managerial  
staff**



**55%**

**Business leaders**



**63%**

**Supervisors  
/managers**



It's safe to assume that these numbers reflect CPD  
commitments for managers and business leaders.

# Learning for a new world

## Remote teams

The biggest impact that remote working has had on career progression seems to be performance reviews. 43% felt that performance reviews are not as frequent or as effective as they used to be, marginally lower than last year, but still a shocking figure.

Learners undertook the most training on team working/collaboration (31%), and looking ahead, team working/collaboration skills were seen as the most important for personal career development, with 84% of respondents citing 'important' or 'very important'.



The investment in these skills by employers is due to a recognition that teams must collaborate just as successfully remotely. The latter implies a preference among workers for continued remote working for the long haul, and a desire to maintain strong teams, and knowledge sharing while working from home.

Since remote/hybrid working has become the norm, 54% of learners state they are happy with the training their organisations provide overall, with people being able to undertake more training when working remotely, and finding it easier to fit online learning into their working day.

eLearning has been the most successful tool in supporting learning while working remotely, and this tool is favoured more highly with women (70%) than men (62%).





# DEEP DIVE

## Remote learning

With COVID restrictions now easing, people are either returning to the office or getting used to a hybrid approach, the thing learners need from their organisations is the ability to learn across a number of devices, anywhere, at any time.

66% of learners said improvement was needed in this area.

67% want more ownership of what and when they learn, and 70% want more budget.

# Conclusions

## One size doesn't fit all

As the workforce grows, we are seeing an increasing number of people over 55 in the workforce, alongside a spike in 18-24 year olds. We've seen throughout this report that they learn and consume media in vastly different ways, reacting differently to almost every methodology. It is crucial that businesses continue to deliver content that suits everybody.

### So, how do you cater for everybody?

- ▶ Ask people what and how they want to learn (and action that feedback!)
- ▶ Make different learning methods available for different topics and get creative:
  - Soft skills can be learned via coaching, eLearning, on the job and classroom sessions
  - Fire safety can be in-person or online
  - Developmental learning might look like a text book, a course, or a webinar podcast
- ▶ Keep adapting and developing your learning offering – your teams and requirements are ever changing; make sure your L&D strategy is too



# Learning doesn't belong in a vacuum

Learning in the flow of work and on-the-job learning are commonly popular methods throughout this study. Learning should be something that happens organically, every day; great organisations are putting structures in place to support continuous development.

Listen to your people and coach your managers to understand what their teams need. Learning belongs on the agenda every day, not just to tick a compliance box in HR.

People want clarity on their futures. With almost 40% of people planning to leave their jobs, and a huge motivating factor for two years being to develop and progress, it's clear that businesses must invest in their people. If you want the best people,

it's time to invest in:

- ▶ Clear progression plans
- ▶ Engaging learning content
- ▶ Self-development platforms

# Redefine learning

A podcast is learning. A webinar is learning. A book is learning. A conference is learning. We could go on...

Basically, anything that adds value to your people's development is learning. Allow your teams to lead their own development and track anything and everything that's relevant to them. More often than not, the things they seek out themselves will be more relevant and useful than something auto-assigned or recommended based on job title.

Does that replace the need for standardised learning modules like compliance training? No, absolutely not. But everything has its place. The key is to do both. Or, more accurately, to do it all.



## Keep structures that support women

For two years we've reported that women prefer digital environments and eLearning, and that they find it easier to fit learning into the day when working remotely.

The gap between male and female learning progress may have narrowed, but that is because of the change wrought by hybrid working.

Don't be tempted to undo the work of the past two years and move L&D back to a classroom. Focus on investing in learning that suits everybody, and where possible have provisions that suit everybody's preferences.

## Be prepared for change

Change is coming in the world of work, with technology constantly moving the goalposts and creating new jobs. Whether you're a tech company or a more analogue business, investing in technical skills now is the best way to get ahead, stay relevant, and continue to attract the best talent in years to come.



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