

<b>'Characteristic'</b>	<b>Boomers</b> 1946-1964	<b>Gen X</b> 1965-1980	<b>Millennials</b> 1981-1996	<b>Gen Z</b> 1997-2012
<b>Risk Tolerance</b>	High	High	Medium	Low
<b>Work-Life Balance</b>	Low	Medium	High	Very High
<b>Digital Fluency</b>	Limited	Learning	Adapted	Native
<b>Mental Health openness</b>	Low	Medium	High	Very High
<b>Job Loyalty</b>	High	Medium	Low	Pragmatic
<b>Feedback Needs</b>	Annual	Occasional	Regular	Frequent
<b>Financial Caution</b>	Medium	Low	Medium	Very High
<b>Career Expectations</b>	Linear	Self-reliant	Optimistic	Squiggly
<b>Communication Style</b>	In-person	Email/phone	Digital-first	Digital/instant
<b>Approach to Authority</b>	Respectful	Sceptical	Challenging	Questioning

# Recruiting, Retaining & Understanding Gen Z

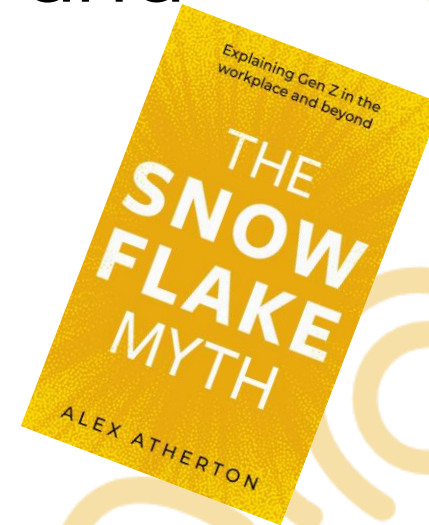
Essex Primary Heads' Association

**Alex**  
ATHERTON  
SPEAKING • COACHING • TEAMS



# About me

- Experienced educator
- Leadership coach (one to one and leadership teams)
- Author – The Snowflake Myth
- Speaker – multigenerational workplace with a Gen Z lens.



Years of Birth

Current age



Silent Generation	1925 – 1945	81 – 100
Baby Boomers	1946 – 1964	62 – 80
Generation X	1965 – 1980	46 – 61
Millennials	1981 – 1996	30 – 45
Generation Z	1997 – 2012	14 – 29
Generation Alpha	2013 – 2028	13 max



# TODAY

- Education context
- What is a generation?
- Characteristics of Gen Z
- Solutions for recruitment & retention
- Q&A

# What issues are you facing?

Recruitment?

Retention?

Workplace norms?

Motivating?

Anything else?





# Education context



# FORTUNE

## The 10 fastest-growing industries

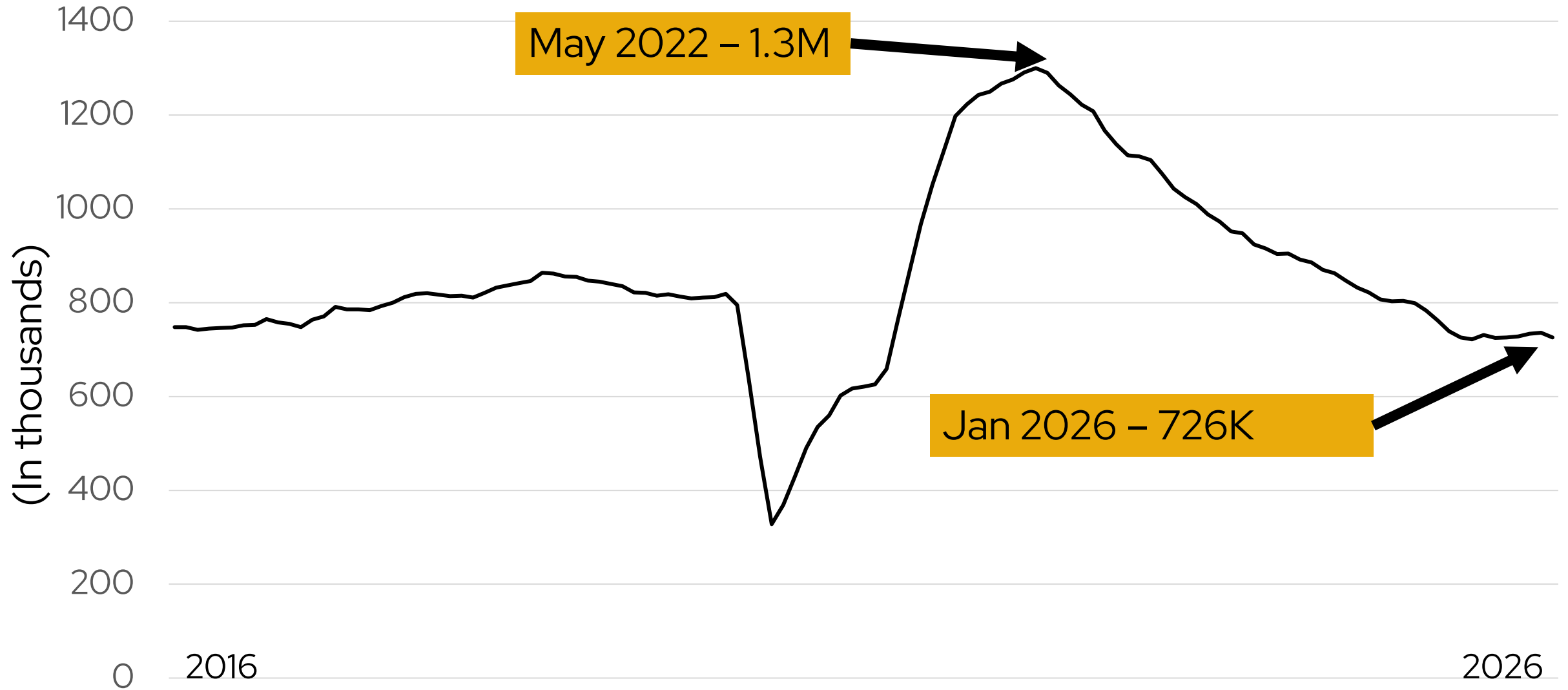
Gen Z grads don't want tech jobs anymore—instead low-paid careers with plenty of holiday in teaching are all the rage, LinkedIn says

1. Education
  2. Utilities
  3. Oil, gas, and mining
  4. Consumer services
  5. Construction
  6. Government administration
  7. Hospitals and health care
  8. Transportation, logistics, supply chain, and storage
  9. Wholesale
  10. Financial services
- 

That's because, according to a 2024 LinkedIn analysis of millions of member profiles and job postings, the fastest-growing industry in the U.K. is the education sector—with teachers, lecturers, and learning support assistants “being some of the most sought-after roles.” LinkedIn's career expert Charlotte Davies told *Fortune*.



# Number of job vacancies in the UK



May 2022 – 1.3M

Jan 2026 – 726K



Department  
for Education

# Headline facts and figures - 2024

FTE number of entrants

**41,736**

1,400 fewer than 2023

FTE number of leavers

**41,212**

1,300 fewer than 2023

Women in their 30s are over 20% of leavers

Missing Mothers report

# Latest figures

10% quit after just one year of teaching

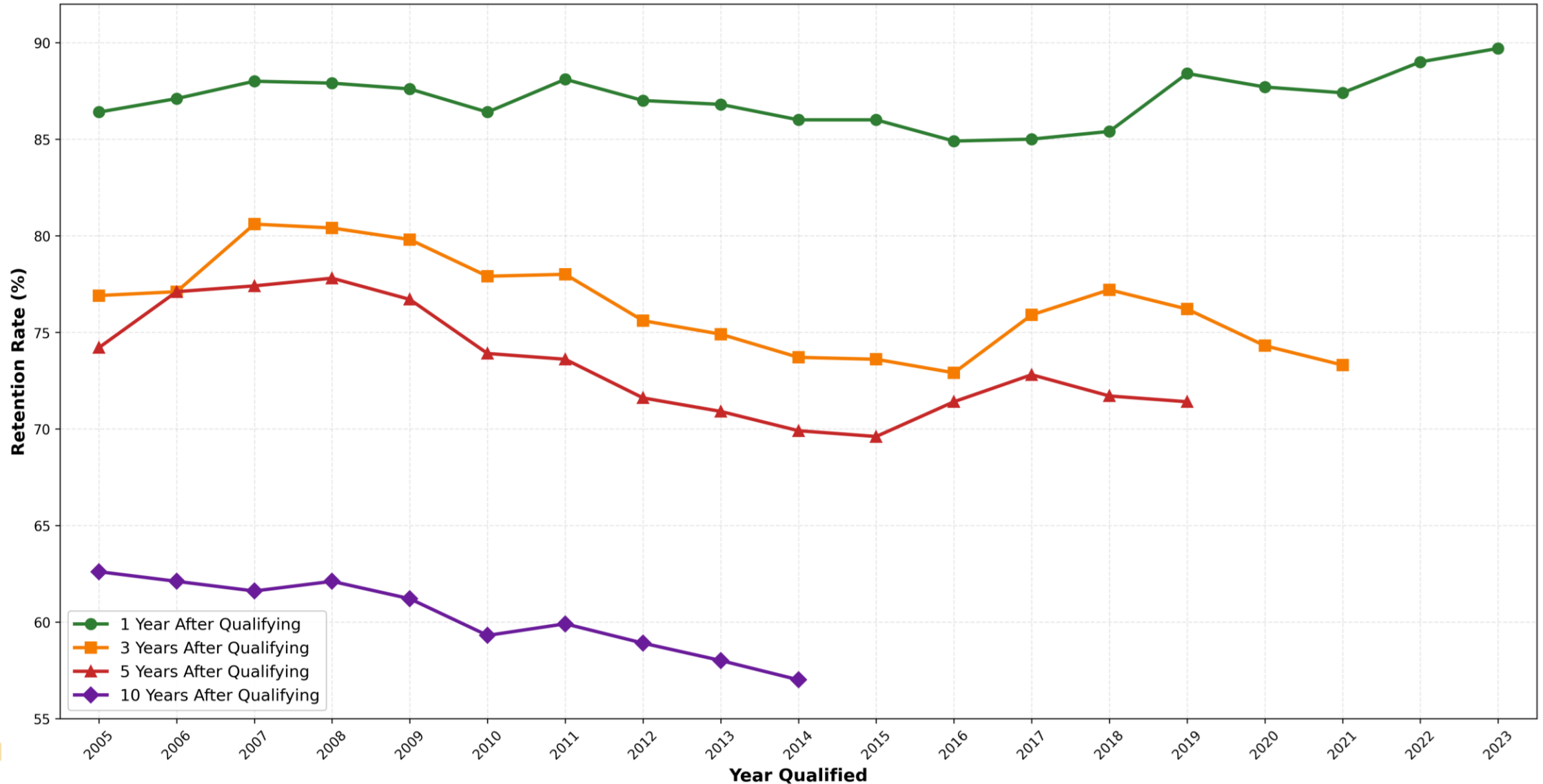
27% after three years

33% after five years

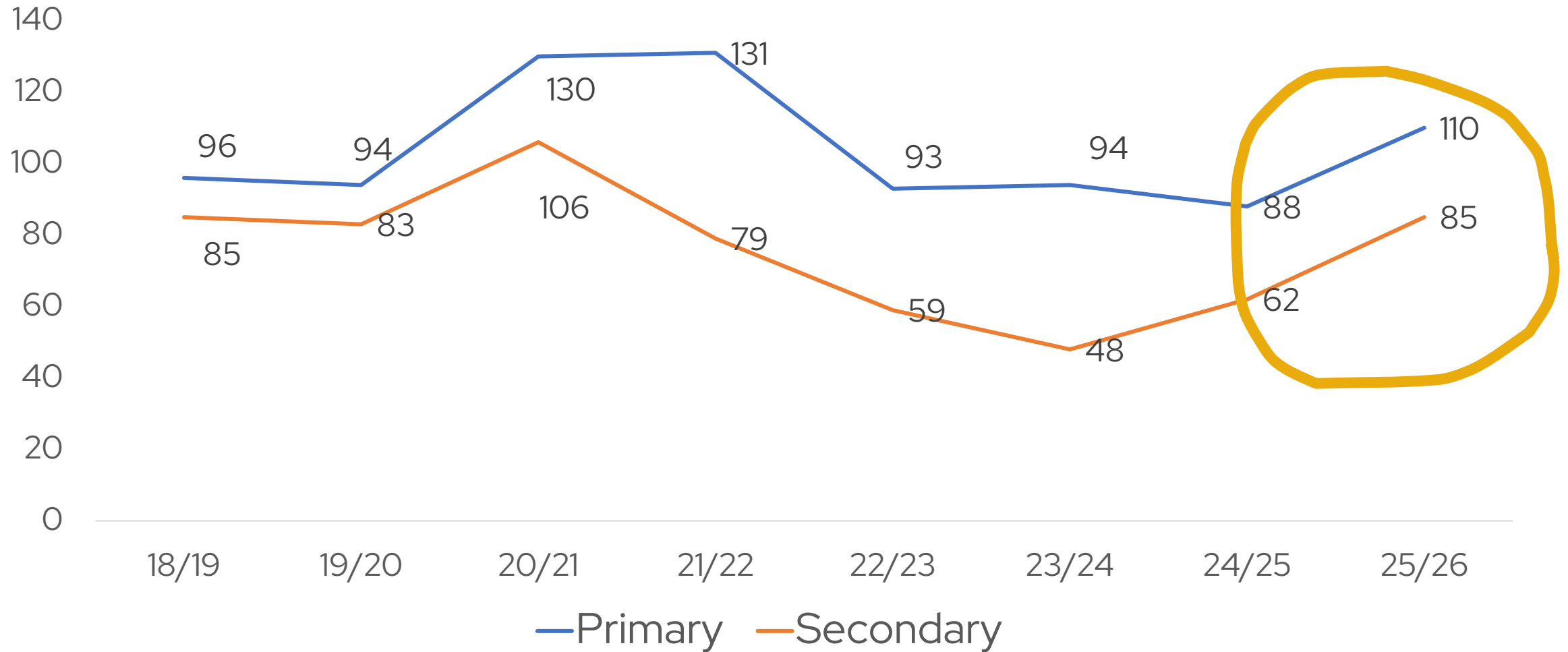
43% after ten years



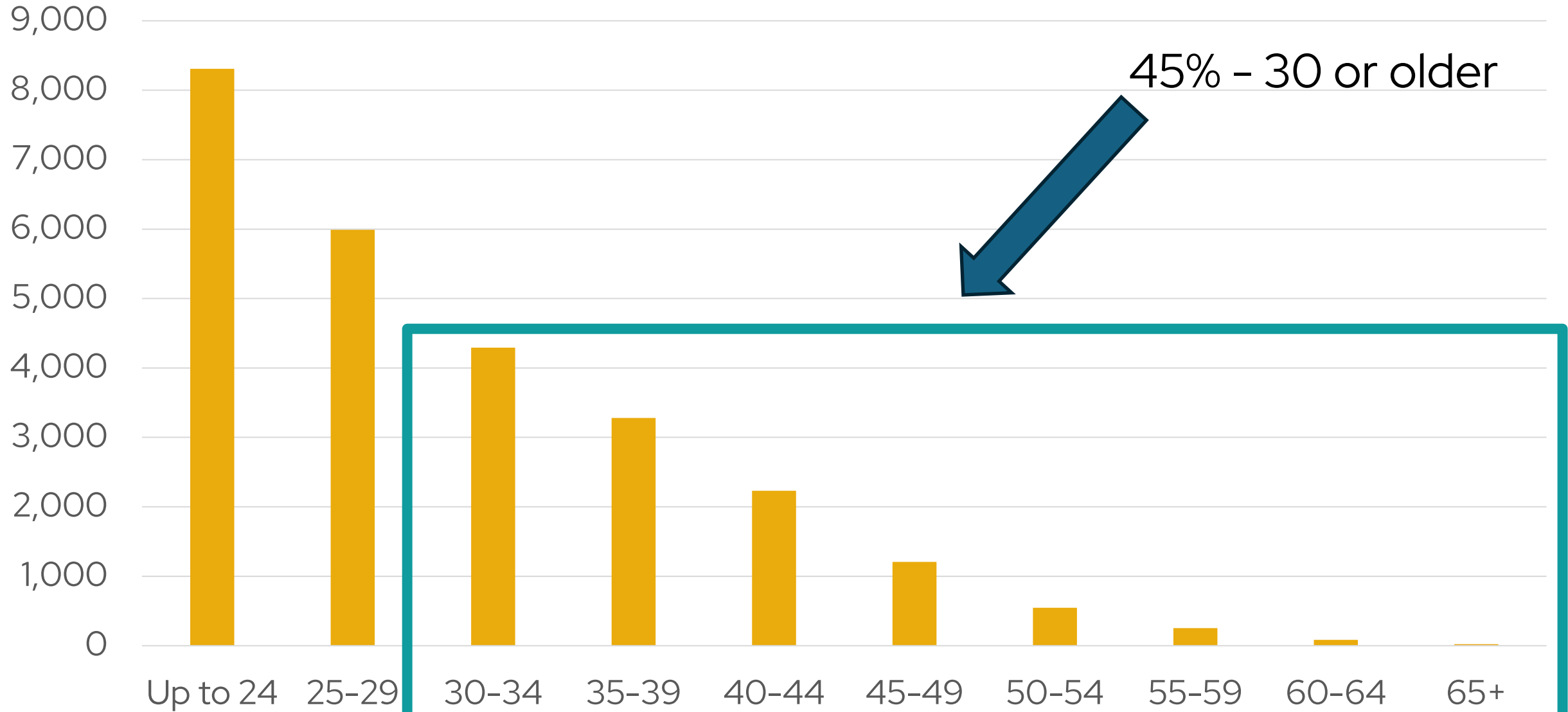
# Teacher retention rates in England by years after qualifying cohorts 2005 to 2023



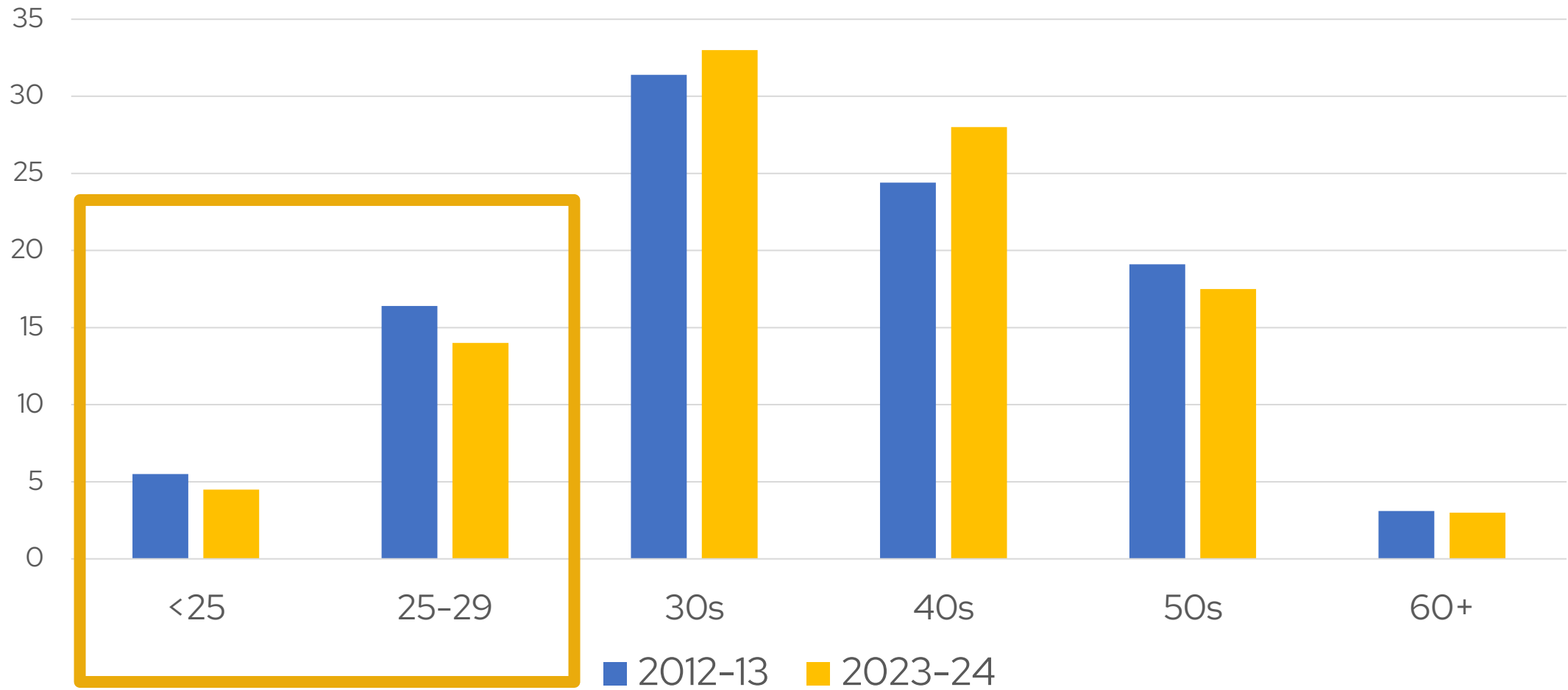
# % of target reached - Initial Teacher Training



# Teacher training candidates for 26/27 – as at Jan 2026



# England's teachers - age profile



**What is a generation?**



# Generations

- *Approximately* 15 to 20 years
- Social construct to analyse change over time
- Focus is 'cohorts' not 'time of life'
- Differences *within* generations much bigger than *between*
- 'Western' concept



**Who are the different generations?**

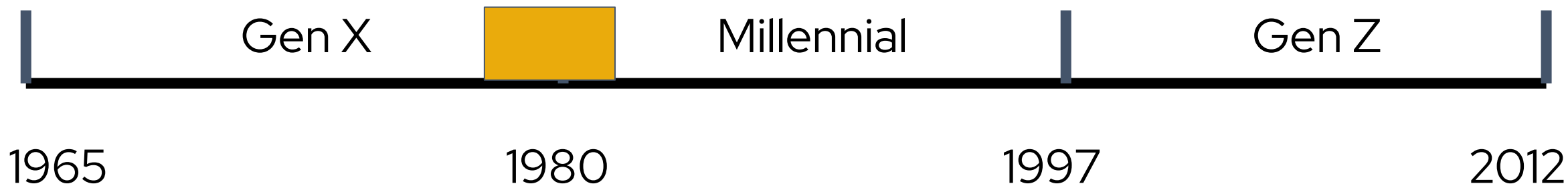


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Current age

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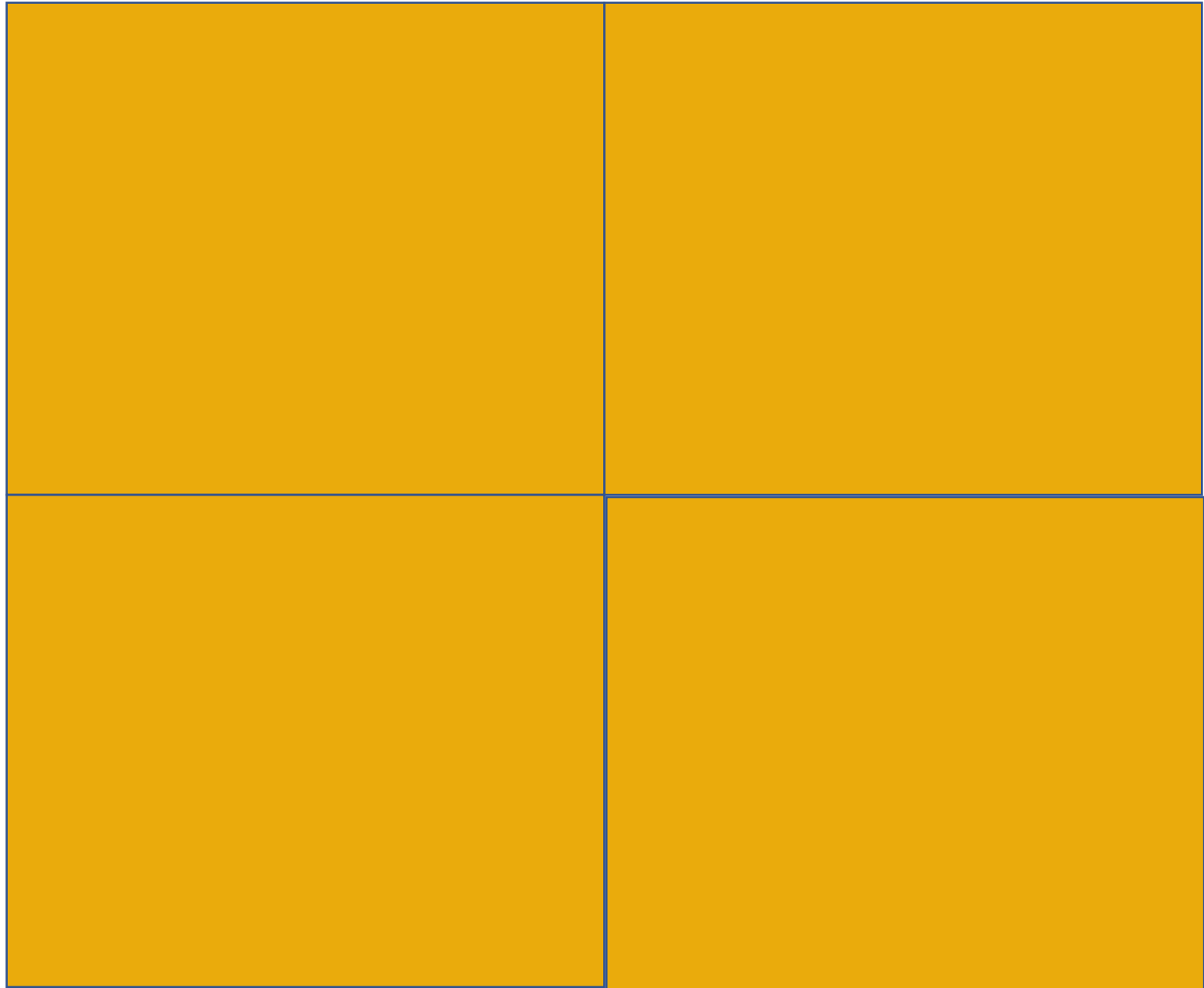




**Years of birth for generations**



Key  
markers



**Gen Z**



## 'Hiring Gen Z is a nightmare – they don't turn up to their first day of work'

Young people can barely get through an interview – let alone become valuable employees

Charlotte Gill

2 April 2024 · 10:00am

"A nightmare" is how James McNeil describes his experience working with members of Generation Z.

Many young workers are barely able to get through an interview, are unwilling to pick up the phone and have even ghosted their new companies completely on the first day of their jobs, according to exasperated employers.

McNeil, 38, had been in charge of a sales team of an organisation collecting music royalties from businesses and often he received job applications from 20-somethings to join the company.

"We'd book interviews [but] people wouldn't turn up, or they'd turn up late, or they'd turn up and were wildly unprepared," says McNeil, who now runs Ready2Lease, a car leasing firm. "They didn't know anything about what they were doing, what they were there for."



Gen Z are arriving to college  
unable to even read a sentence—  
professors warn it could lead to a  
generation of anxious and lonely  
graduates

**FORTUNE** January 9, 2026,

**M+** The astonishing statistic that shows  
why Gen Z workers are infuriating bosses

Gen Z are an employer's nightmare – my twenties  
put them to shame

*Patrick West*

Gen Z can't cope with the real  
world

📅 13 December 2025, 1:13pm

**THE  
SPECTATOR**

26 October 2025

**Daily Mail+**

**The Telegraph**

16 April 2024



The Gen Z job crisis is real: 1.2M recent grads in the U.K. competed for just 17,000 open roles

**FORTUNE**

October 28, 2025,

Gen Z grads in the U.K. are earning 30% less than millennials did—new data shows the degree payoff is collapsing

**yahoo!finance**

December 3, 2025

## 87% of Gen Z Workers Feel Unprepared to Succeed in the Workforce

By [Rhea Kelly](#) | 10/28/25

**CAMPUS  
TECHNOLOGY**

### The graduate 'jobpocalypse': Where have all the entry-level jobs gone?



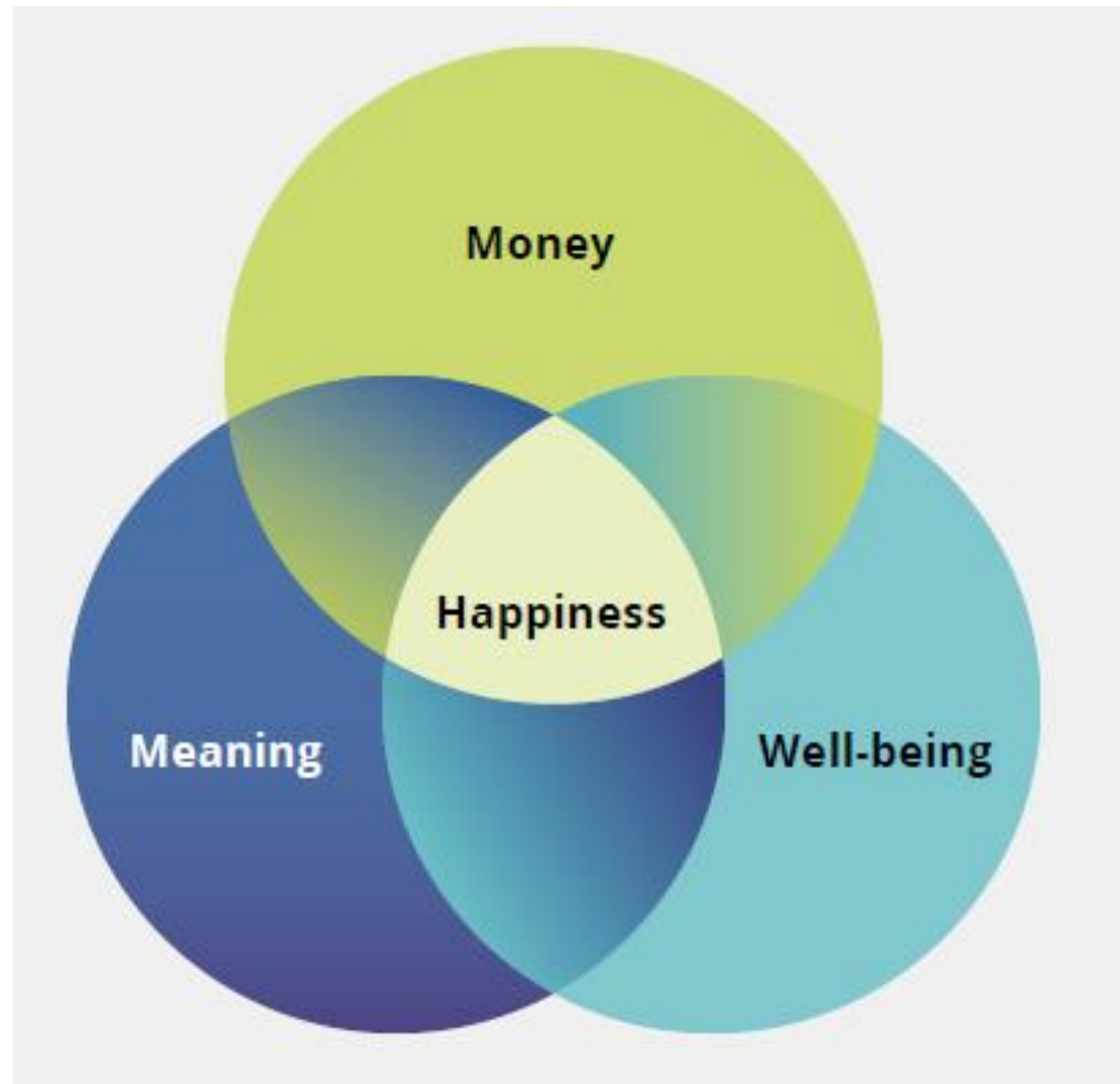
Financial Times ✓

1.39M subscribers

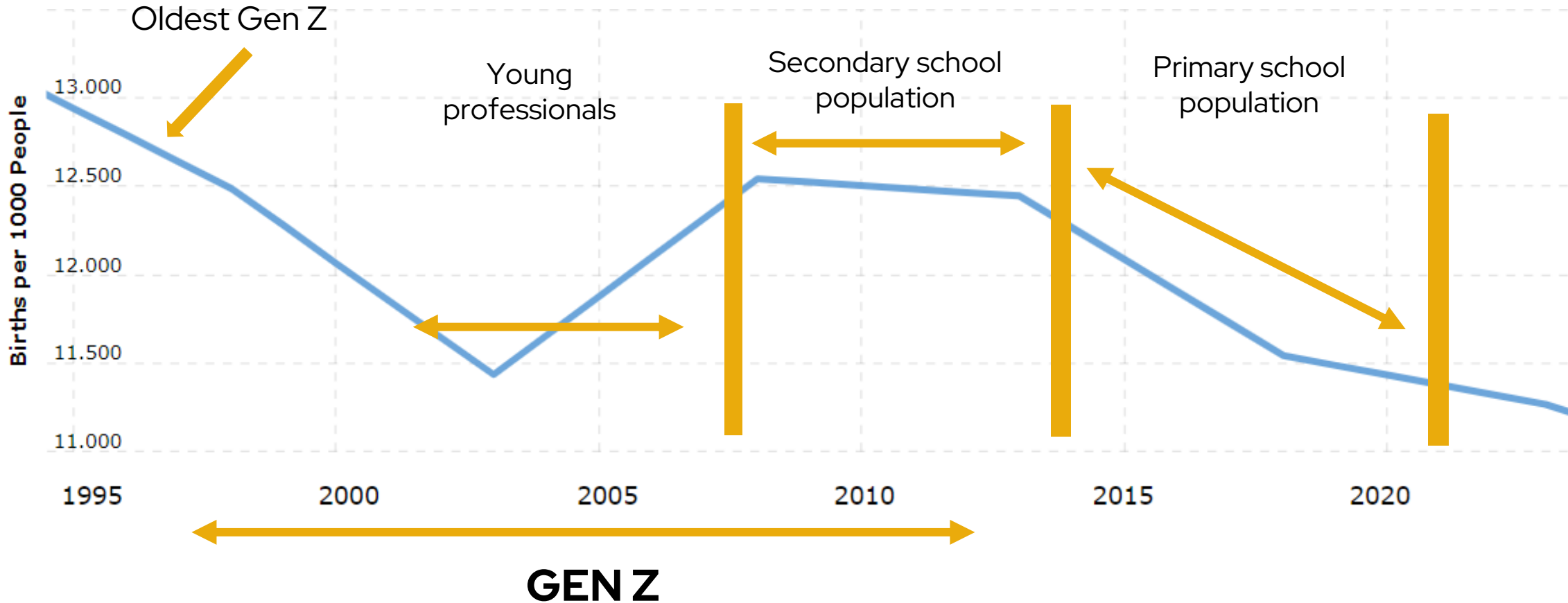
September 29 2025



What do  
young staff  
want from  
their work?



# UK Birth Rates 1995-2024



# Key characteristics



# 1. Pragmatic



# Generation Z pragmatism

- 75% of Generation Z want their own business
- Approximately 400K Gen Z are running their own business
- Concern about long-term prospects
- Multiple streams of income out of *necessity*



# LinkedIn job titles

## Actual titles used in 2012

Digital Overlord  
Creator of Happiness  
Retail Jedi  
Wizard of Light Bulb Moments  
Dream Alchemist  
Chief Chatter  
Change Magician  
Accounting Ninja  
Chief Biscuit Dunker  
Direct Mail Demi-God

## Generation X/Y

Agile Coach  
Enable teams to  
achieve remarkable  
results  
Inspiring leaders to  
discover their brilliance  
Strategic thinker  
I help...

## Generation Z

Chief Executive  
Officer  
Founder  
Chief Finance  
Officer  
Executive Director  
Group Director



## 2. Diligent



# Degree Classifications

	2009-10	2018-19	
<b>First</b>	14%	28%	
<b>Upper Second</b>	48%	48%	
<b>Other</b>	38%	23%	



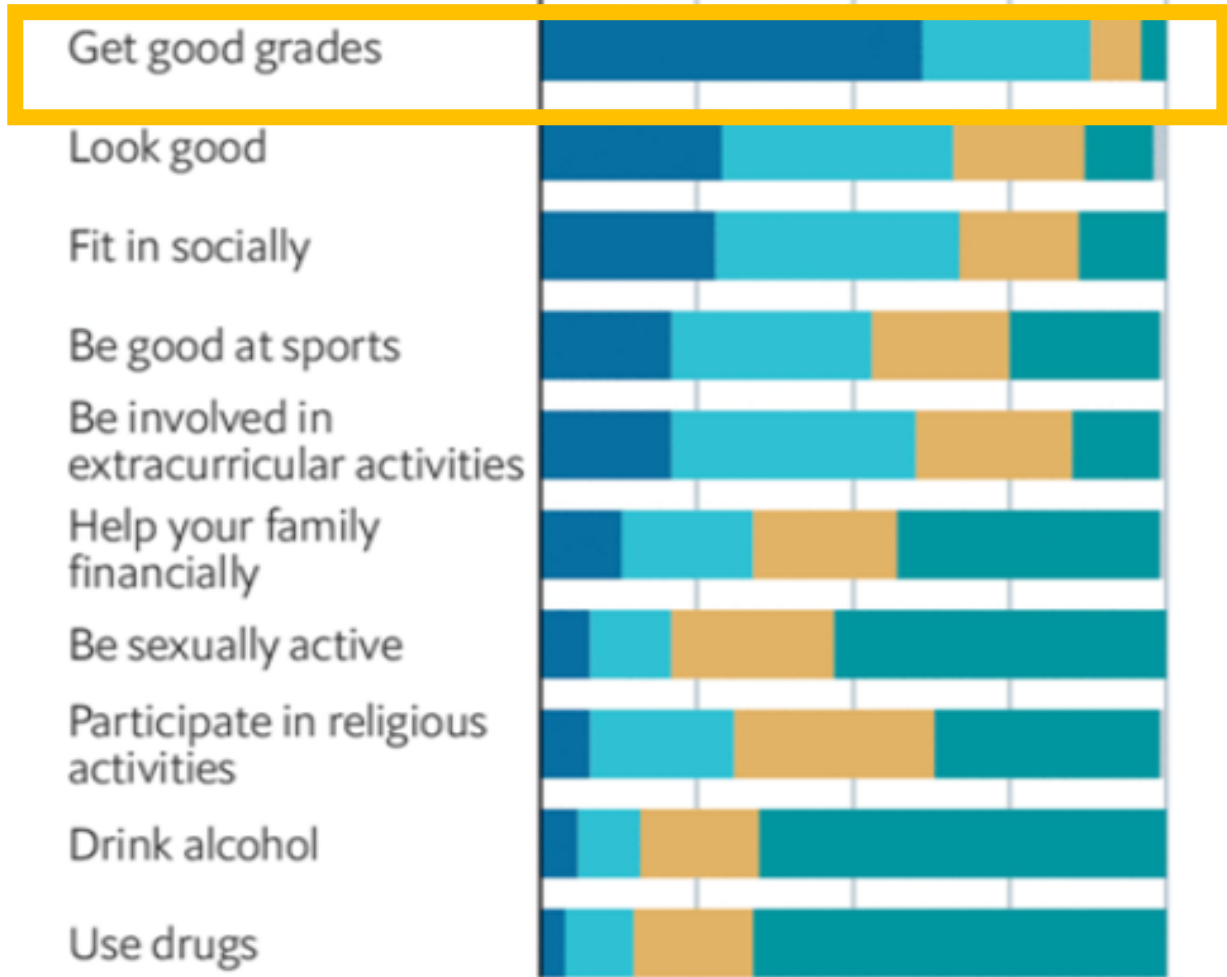
University	First class	Change since 2010-11
Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine	52.5%	69.9%
University College London	41%	67.3%
University of Durham	39.6%	115.2%
The University of Manchester	38.3%	109.3%
The University of Leeds	36.7%	108.5%
The University of Warwick	36.3%	32.5%
University of Oxford	34.1%	19.2%
University of Cambridge	33.3%	27.6%
Queen Mary University of London	31.9%	101.9%
The University of Sheffield	31.6%	69%
University of Bristol	31.3%	32.1%
University of Exeter	31.2%	56.8%
University of Southampton	30.7%	54.3%

23-24  
% degrees – 1sts  
Russell Group  
(England)



■ A lot   ■ Some   ■ Not too much   ■ None at all

0   25   50   75   100



**2018 survey in USA**

**13-17 year olds**

**The Economist**



# 3. Apprehensive



# GEN Z APPREHENSIONS

Reputation  
management  
from a young  
age

Less  
happy

Impact  
of social  
media

Rise of  
artificial  
intelligence

Risk  
averse

Digital,  
asynchronous  
communication

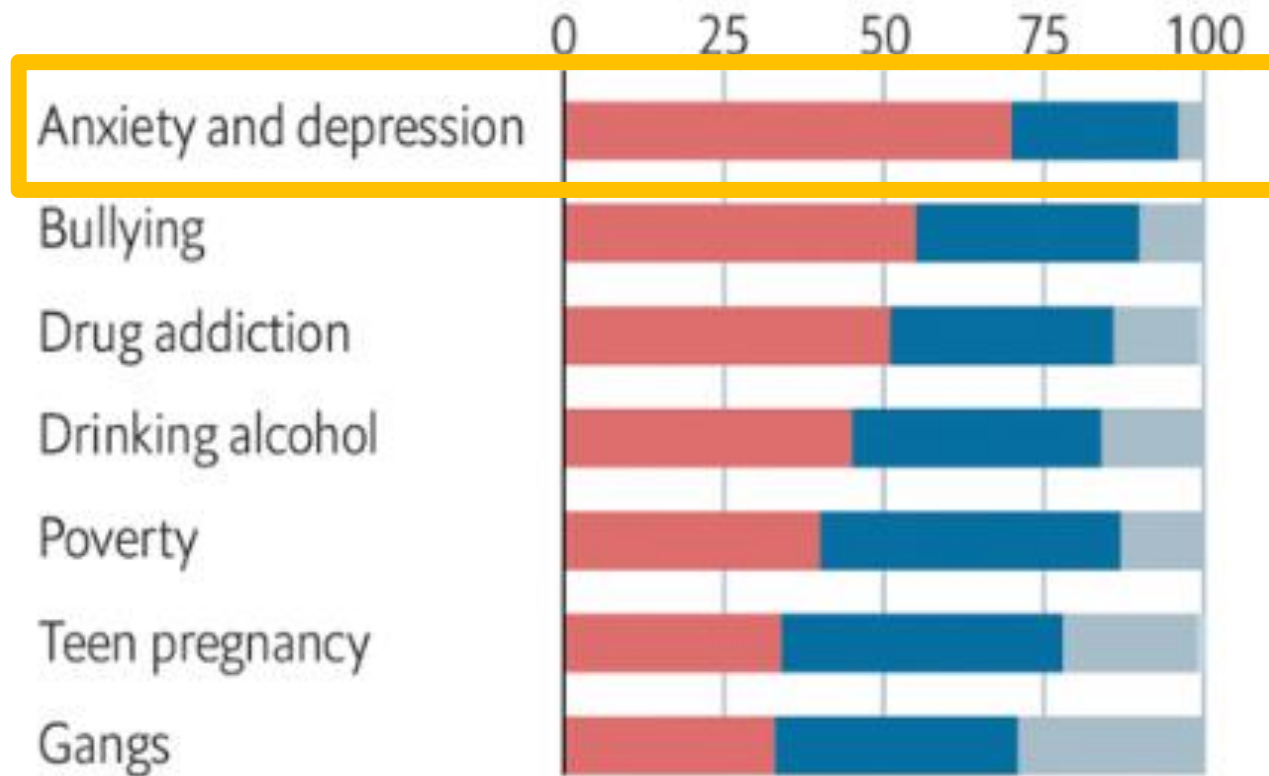
Fewer  
romantic  
relationships

Fewer  
physical  
workplaces

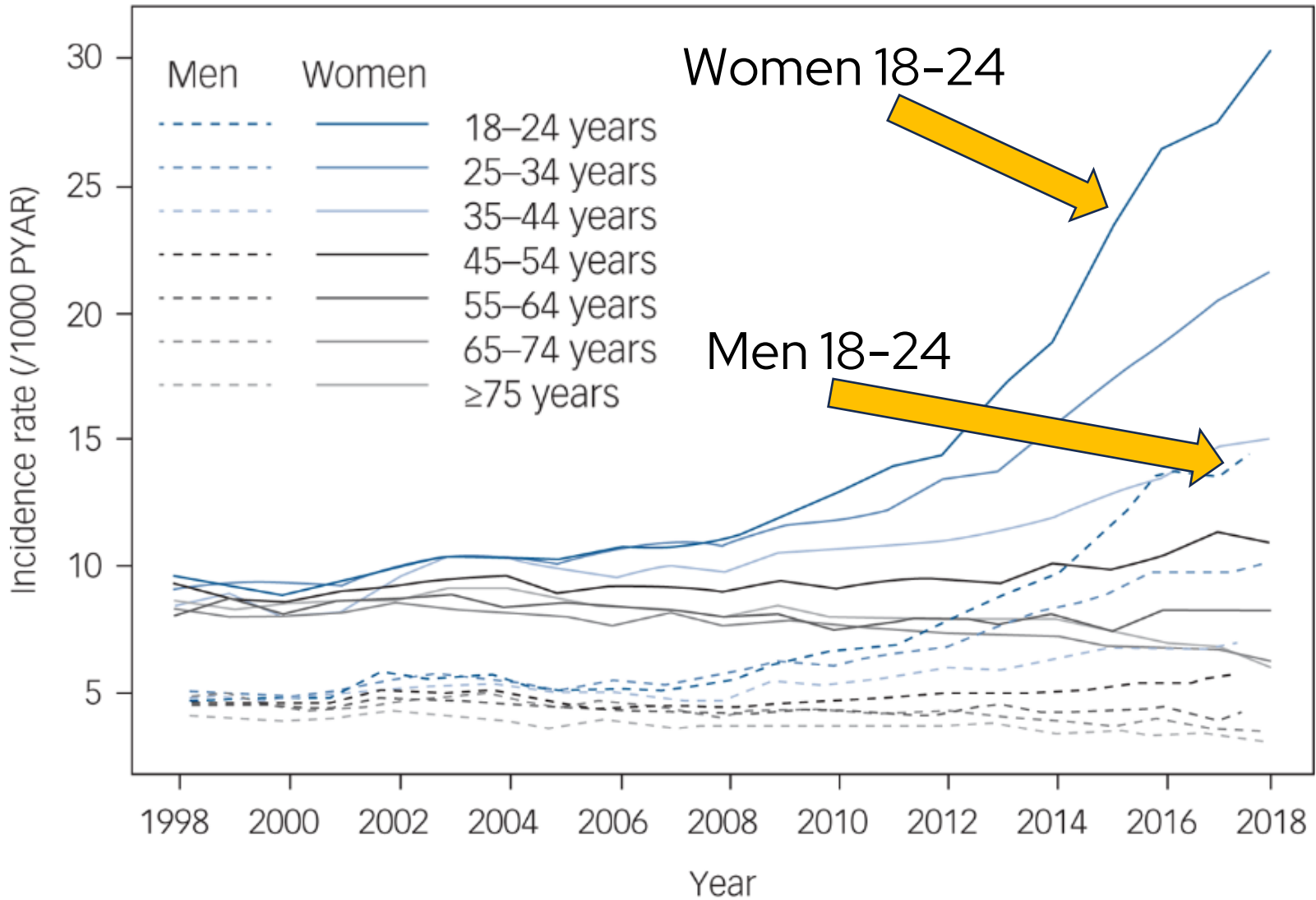


“How much, if at all, do you think each of the following is a problem among people your age in your community?”, % responding

■ Major ■ Minor ■ Not a problem



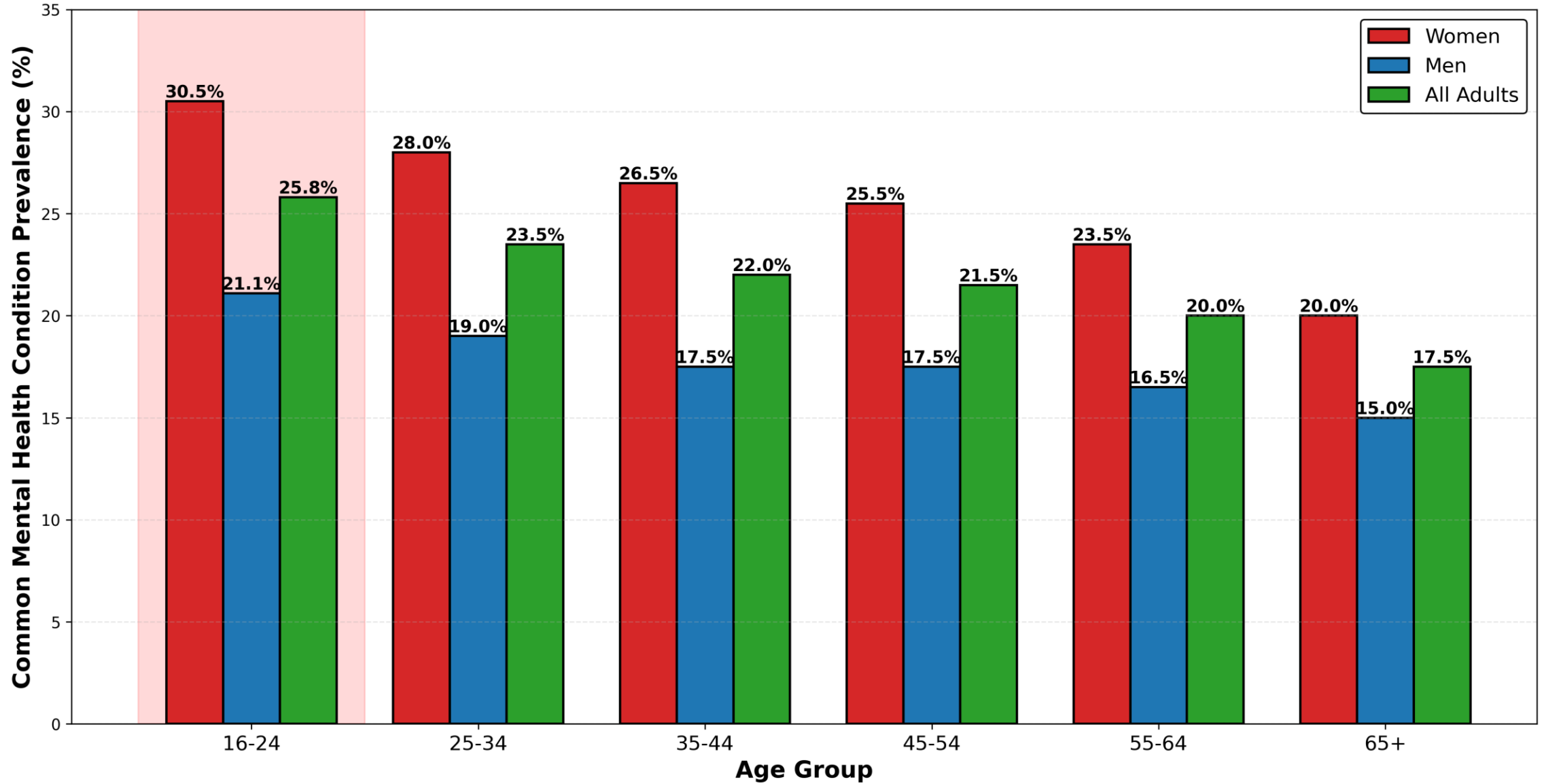
# Crude rates



Anxiety diagnoses by age group and gender, UK



# UK Anxiety & Mental Health by Age Group (2023/24) APMS



# Table discussion



# **Recruitment & Retention Solutions**





1. Make it *easy* to apply

# Better use of technology

With the proliferation of technology throughout modern life, people are accustomed to accessing almost everything instantaneously via their phones. Schools and colleges utilising technology effectively therefore achieve higher numbers of teacher applications, providing them with more choice and enabling higher-quality recruitment. We've seen first-hand that accessible applicant-friendly processes, such as fully mobile-optimised forms, increase completion rates by more than 50 per cent.

Despite reducing the drop-off rates of potential candidates who may get bored or frustrated with older systems, many application processes still fail to provide the ideal candidate experience. While it does differ between organisations, many other industries are making it easier to apply for roles than ever before, with application time in many sectors falling under five minutes. Benchmarking, guidance and implementation support for schools to improve the use of technology within applications would significantly boost recruitment efforts within the education sector.

**SCHOOLS**  
**WEEK**

*That data has now evolved and we are seeing in some cases, increased application numbers of up to 150%, depending on location and role requirement.*



**Rhys Howells**  
Managing director, Eteach





## 2. Be clear, be thorough

# Clarity & Detail

Job descriptions

Workplace culture

Person specifications

Values of organisation

Training opportunities

Degree of flexibility

Video testimonials

Hours of work

The purpose of the work is...

Future opportunities

Benefits

This is why we do x,y,z

How appraisal works





**wycombehightv** Wycombe High TV

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32 Following 458 Followers 8531 Likes

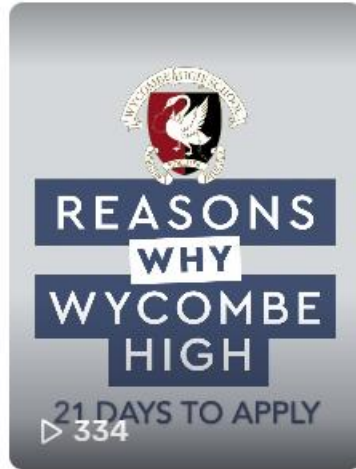
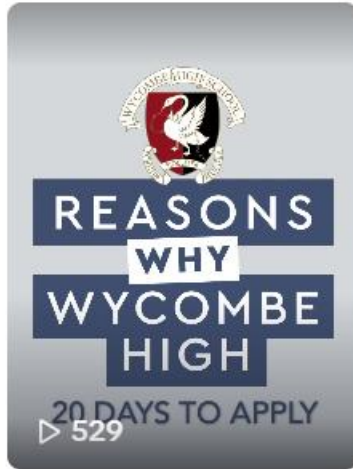
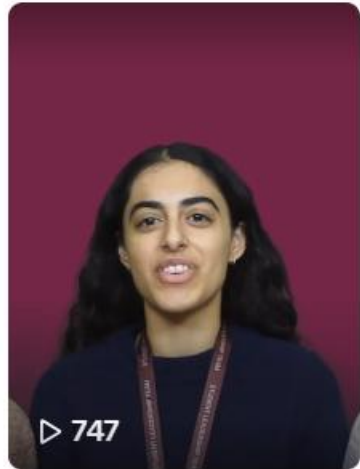
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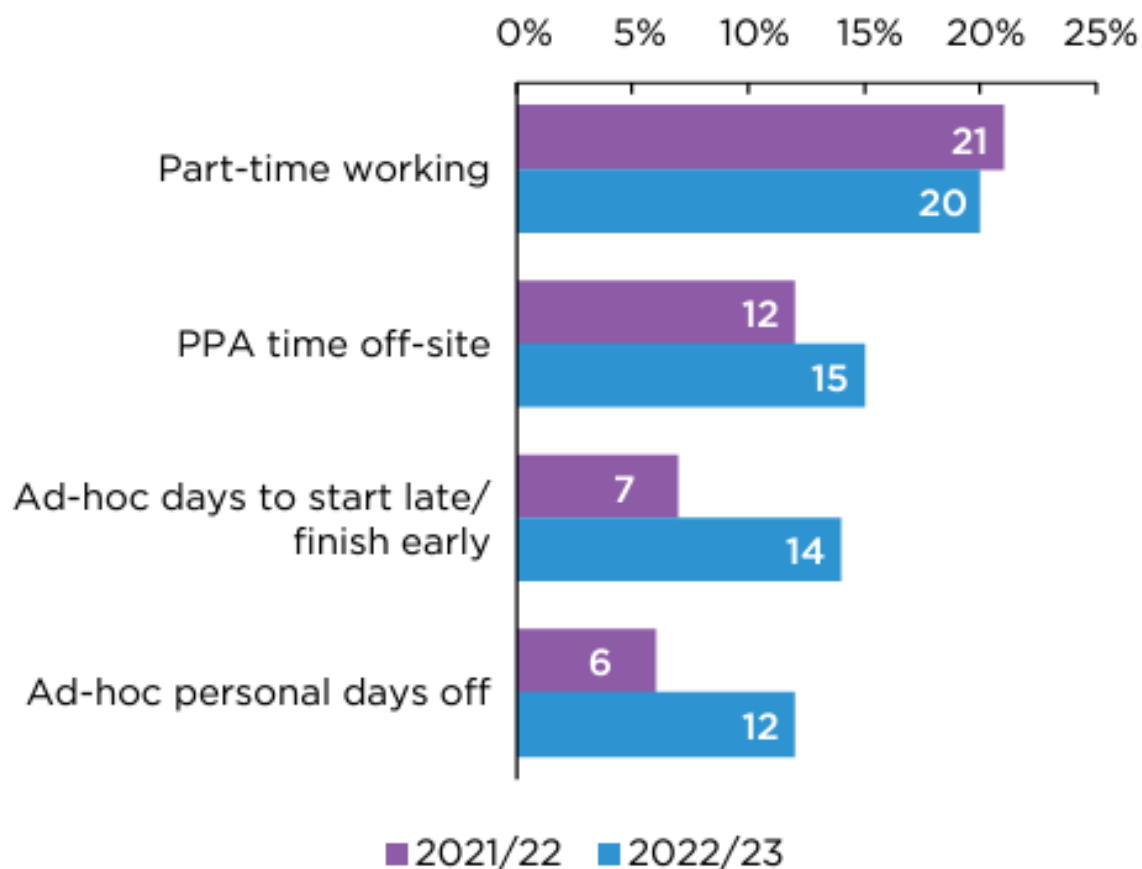
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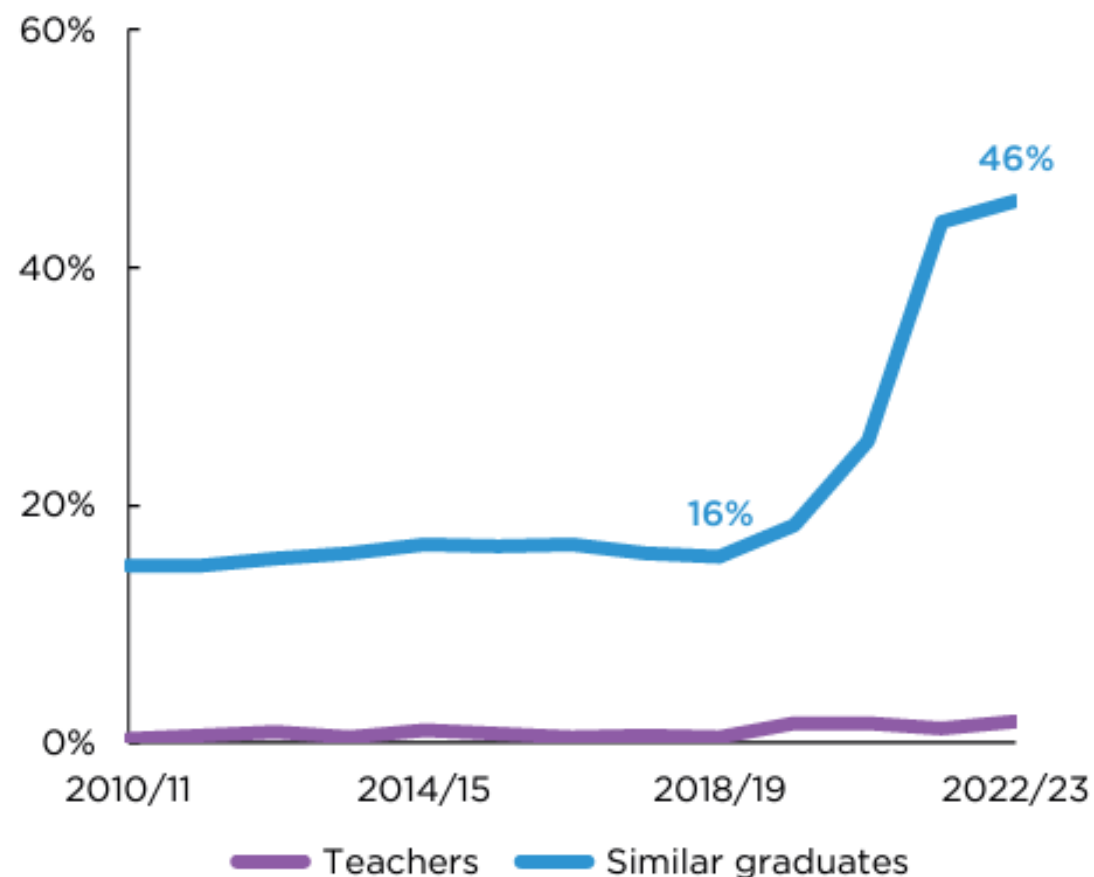
♡ Liked



### Proportion of teachers engaging in flexible working arrangements



### Proportion of teachers and similar graduates that primarily work from home



CAREERS

**I'm a Gen Z office worker and I love my 9-to-5 because it gives structure to my life. I've had a flexible job and it was frustrating and demoralizing.**

[Sawdah Bhaimiya](#) Dec 9, 2023, 10:04 AM GMT





3. Be who you say you are

# Do you anticipate leaving your current employer in the next 18 months?

Boomers	29%
Gen X	28%
Millennials	38%
Gen Z	50%



# Always. Be. Retaining.

Be ultra-clear – repeatedly – on who you are, your values and where you are going.

Don't just say it once when they join....

Keep saying it!



# Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3

Summary report

November 2024

## What would your teachers say?

Table 3.1 Distribution of working hours 2021 - full-time teachers and leaders

Hours worked	<20	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 or more	Don't know
Full-time teachers	1%	1%*	4%*	32%*	39%	17%	4%	1%	2%*
Full-time leaders	<1%	0%	1%	10%	42%*	34%*	10%*	2%*	1%





# 4. Personal & Professional Development



**29.2%**

**of young people in  
secondary school had  
access to work  
experience**

**#YOUTHVOICECENSUS** 



1 in 4 Gen Zers Brought

Interview

**77%**

of Gen Z job seekers have brought a parent to an interview— they're even getting them to negotiate pay rises and take their hiring tests

**FORTUNE**

August 14, 2025,

e 29%

# Personal (and professional) development

- Ultra-detailed onboarding
- Work etiquette
- Potential imbalance between qualifications and soft skills
- Give them the 'real world' skills you want them to have



# 30% of new hires leave within the first 90 days

For Gen Z, it's even higher. Here's how to change that.



## PRE-DAY 1

- ▶ Send personalized welcome video within 48 hours
- 📁 Create digital welcome pack
- 👤 Assign pre-start buddy



## DAYS 1-7

- Day 1: Connection before content
- Provide crystal-clear role clarity
- Address values directly
- Give them a real task by end of week
- Schedule early check-in



## DAYS 8-30

- Create visible learning roadmap
- Balance structure with autonomy
- Connect work to outcomes
- Share company progress regularly
- Facilitate cross-team connections



## MONTHS 2-3

- Weekly 15-minute check-ins
- 60-day conversation (explicit expectations check)
- 90-day career development discussion



## AFTER 90 DAYS

- Acknowledge milestone
- Maintain weekly check-ins
- Provide ongoing growth opportunities

# Conscious unbossing – 52% of Gen-Z professionals don't want to be middle managers



- **52%** of Gen-Z professionals don't want to be middle managers
- **72%** Gen-Z would choose an individual route over managing others
- **69%** of Gen-Z say middle management is too high stress, low reward
- **89%** of employers still think that middle managers play a crucial role





# 5. Enable contributions & collaboration

# THEY ARE TAKING ACTION TO DRIVE THE CHANGE THEY WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD

Is

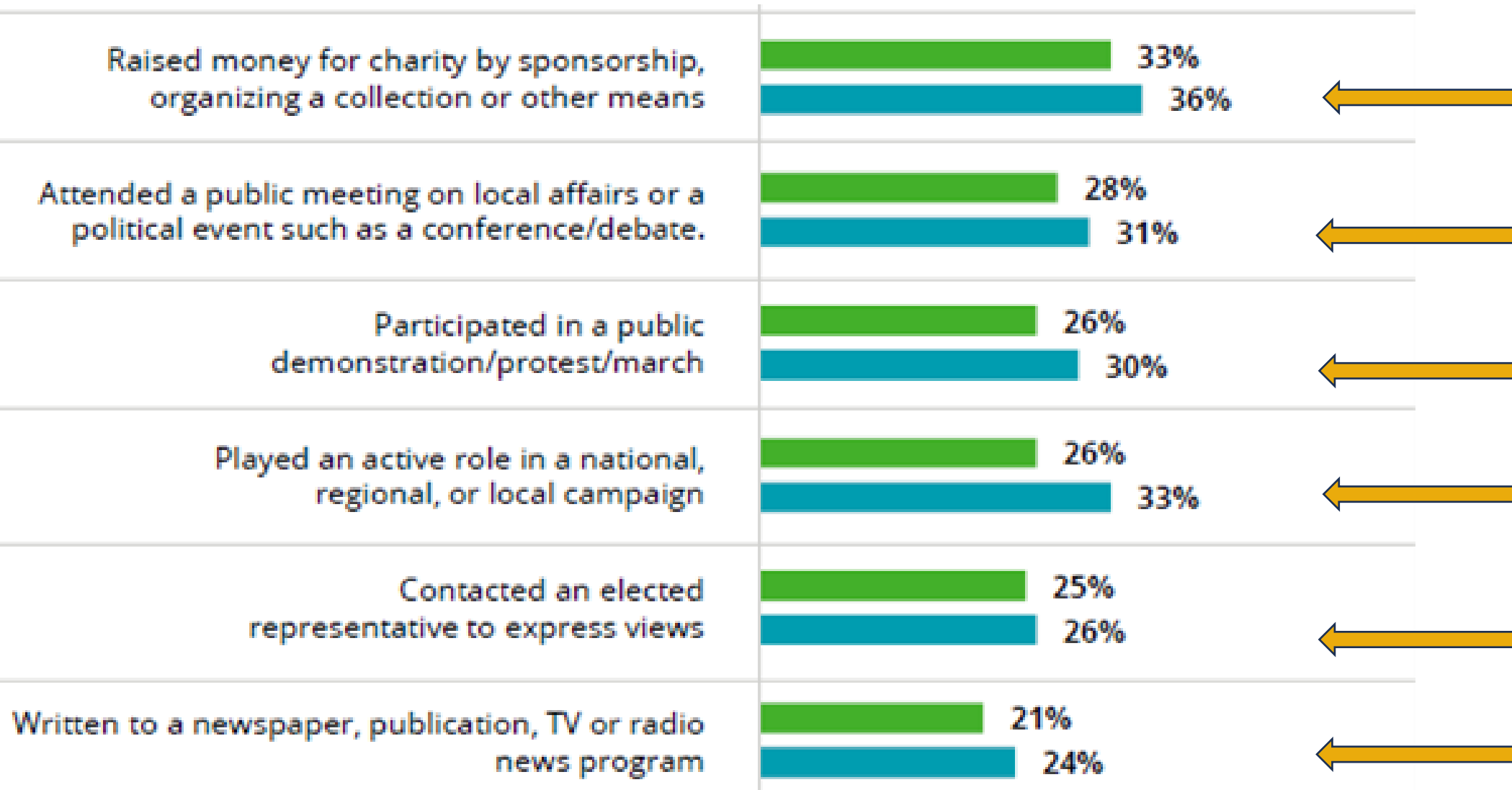
% that have done the following over the past two years



# THEY ARE TAKING ACTION TO DRIVE THE CHANGE THEY WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD

● Millennials  
● Gen Zs

% that have done the following over the past two years



# TODAY

- Education context
- What is a generation?
- Characteristics of Gen Z
- Solutions for recruitment & retention
- Q&A

Explaining Gen Z in the workplace and beyond

# THE SNOWFLAKE MYTH

ALEX ATHERTON

Access the slides 



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Alex  
ATHERTON

# Q&A

LinkedIn



Email me (tell  
me what you  
thought of this!)



Website

