

The Impact of Technology and Economic Shifts on UK Consumers

April 2025



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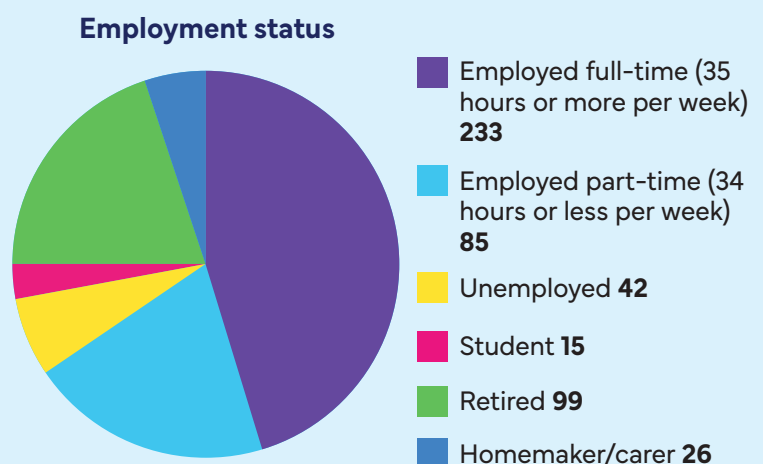
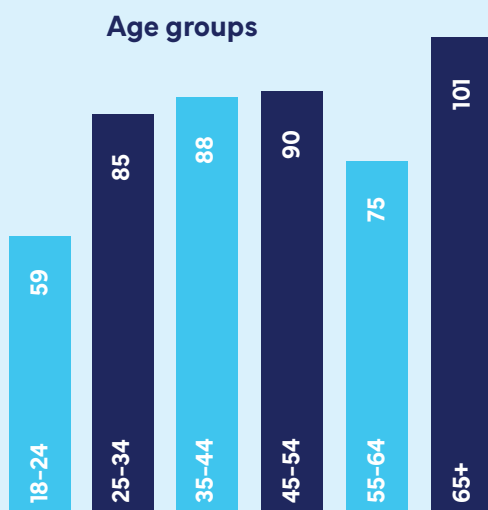
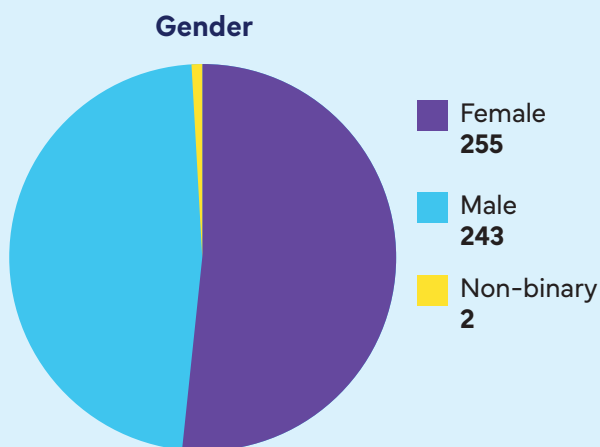
Technology in the Workplace – Blessing or Curse?

With AI taking technological advancements to another level, this latest research from the CCMA explores public perceptions of how technology is impacting the world of work, its benefits and potential risks, as well as consumer preferences for digital versus human channels for customer contact.

Research methodology

This research comprised a quantitative survey with n=500 online interviews conducted with UK adults aged 18+ from 6-12 February 2025. Quotas were set by age, gender and region to ensure a nationally representative sample. The composition of the sample was as follows:

In the second phase, we shared findings from the quantitative consumer research in discussion with contact centre leaders, who provided commentary and context some of which is included in this report.





All eyes right now are on the labour market, as the UK government tries to entice greater workforce participation and announcing plans to make the UK an 'AI superpower'.¹

Technology is fundamental to raising productivity and underpinning the UK's goal of greater growth. This latest research reveals that the public welcomes the use of technology in the workplace, but also that not everyone is equally ready for it.

Turning to customer contact, it is clear that despite the rapid and widespread rollout of self-serve, if given the choice there is still a preference for humans in the loop. With AI and automation top of everyone's minds, it's critical that we keep in mind what we might potentially be losing as well as what can be gained.

Leigh Hopwood, CEO, CCMA



Frank Sherlock,
VP of International,
CallMiner

Over the past year, UK consumers have continued to experience economic uncertainty and rising living costs. At the same time, workplaces have seen increased investment in technology. It's encouraging to see consumers recognising key benefits of these technologies, such as automation reducing repetitive tasks and improved access to information. However, for these advantages to be fully realised in the long term, greater focus on education and retraining is essential.

While digital adoption has accelerated, the demand for human interaction remains strong. Rather than replacing human engagement, technology should augment those interactions and efforts — enhancing efficiency and productivity, while preserving the personal touch consumers are still craving. Striking this balance will be crucial in shaping a successful and sustainable future.

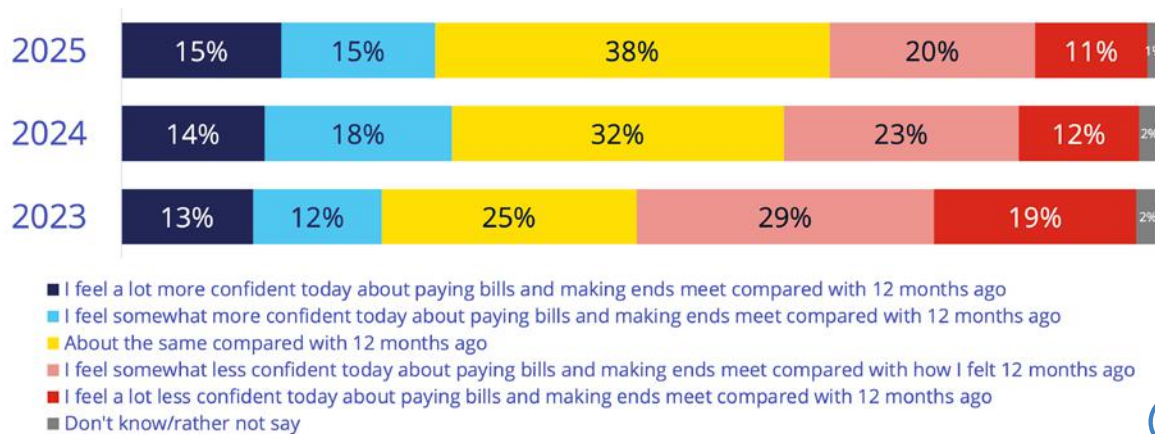
¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ai-opportunities-action-plan-government-response/ai-opportunities-action-plan-government-response>

Consumer Confidence has Stayed the Same After 2024's Rebound

The CCMA has been tracking consumer confidence annually since 2023. In 2024 a rebound in consumer confidence was observed compared with 2023, when the rising cost of living was headline news in the UK.

In 2025 consumer confidence has maintained at a roughly comparable level to 2024, as Figure 1 illustrates.

Figure 1: Compared with 12 months ago, would you say that today you feel more confident, less confident or about the same in terms of your ability to pay bills and make ends meet?

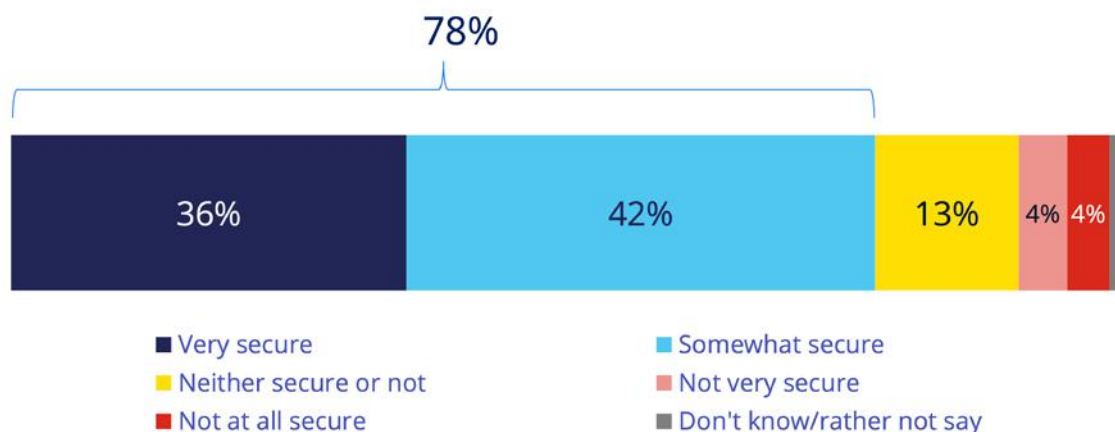


Base: n=500

The vast majority of people employed full and part-time (78%) feel 'very' or 'somewhat' secure in their jobs.

Figure 2 shows that 78% of colleagues say their jobs are 'somewhat' or 'very' secure, with only 8% feeling their jobs are 'not very' or 'not at all' secure.

Figure 2: Is your job(s) secure for at least the next 12 months?



Base: Employed full or part-time (n=318)

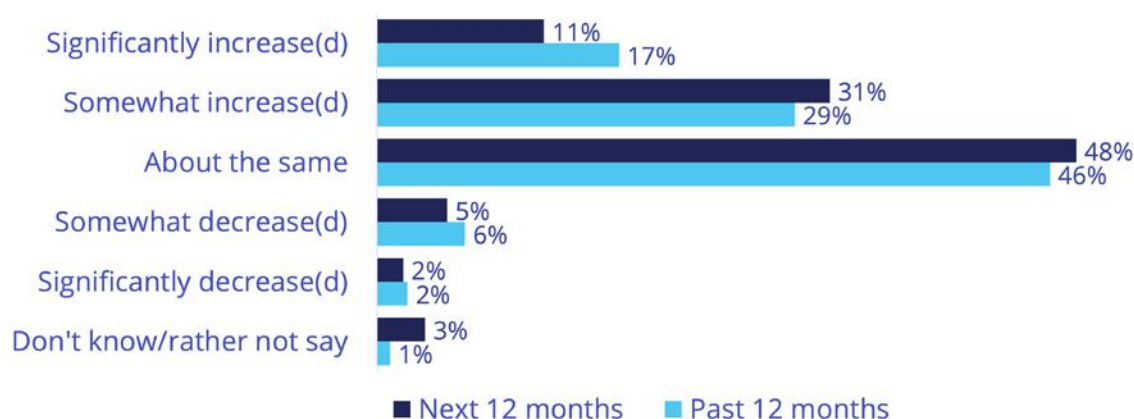
Job Security in Exchange for Increasing Demands

While most people feel secure in their jobs, many are facing heavier workloads. Figure 3 shows that 45% of the public who are employed or students report their workloads have

grown during the past year, compared with just 8% who say their workloads have reduced. A similar proportion (42%) expect workloads to grow in the coming 12 months.

Almost half (45%) of those who are employed or students report their workloads grew over the previous 12 months.

Figure 3: Has your workload increased, decreased or stayed the same over the previous 12 months? VS Do you expect your workload to increase, decrease or stay the same over the next 12 months?



Base: Employed full or part-time, students (n=333)

When asked to select from a list of reasons why their workload has increased or decreased, many different reasons are cited. Figure 4 shows 'change in responsibilities' is the most commonly-cited reason for workload change (32%),

followed by 'change in staff numbers/team composition' (28%). The multiplicity of causes point to a dynamic, fast-moving UK workplace.

Figure 4: The following are reasons why workload might change. Please select those which apply to you. (Multiple choice).



Base: Employed full or part-time, students, workload increased or decreased (n=214)

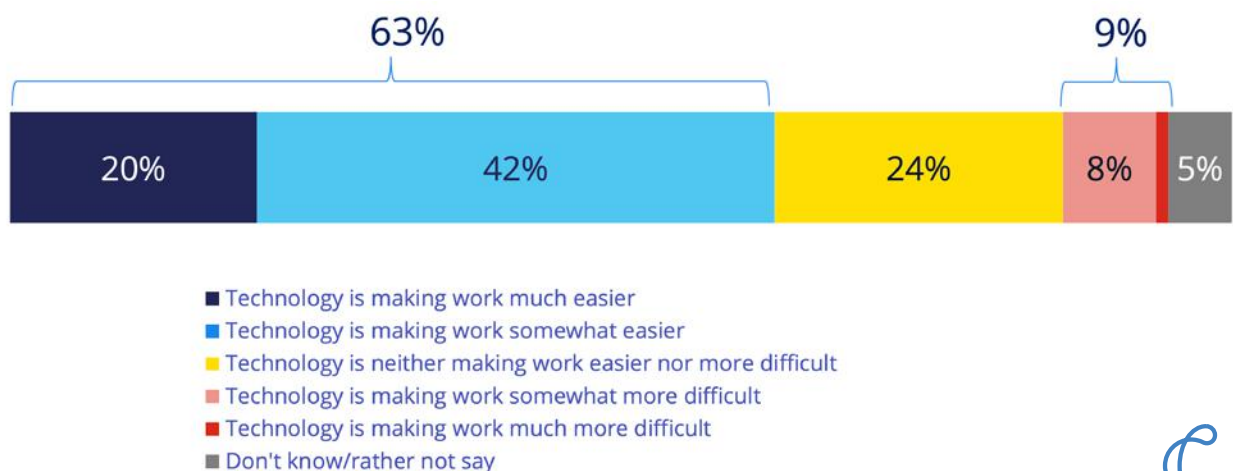
Can Technology Help People Cope with Growing Workloads?

Almost two in three (63%) members of the public believe technology is making work easier.

Could technology assist those who are facing increasing workloads, and in doing so raise productivity? Almost two in

three people (63%) believe technology is making work easier, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: In your opinion, is technology making work easier, more difficult, or neither?



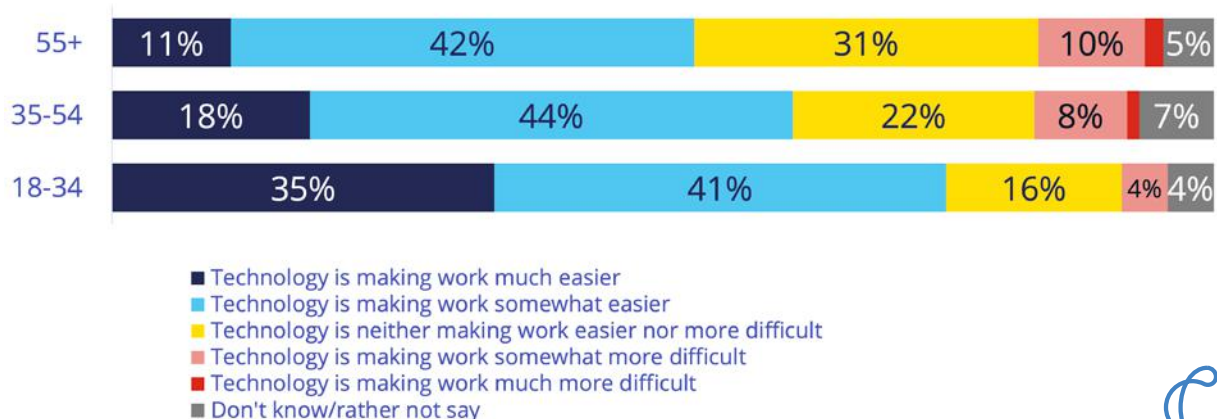
- Technology is making work much easier
- Technology is making work somewhat easier
- Technology is neither making work easier nor more difficult
- Technology is making work somewhat more difficult
- Technology is making work much more difficult
- Don't know/rather not say



Base: n=500

Younger people are especially optimistic about the power of technology to make work easier, as illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6: In your opinion, is technology making work easier, more difficult, or neither? (By age group).



- Technology is making work much easier
- Technology is making work somewhat easier
- Technology is neither making work easier nor more difficult
- Technology is making work somewhat more difficult
- Technology is making work much more difficult
- Don't know/rather not say



Base: 18-34 n=144, 35-54 n=178, 55+ n=176

What are some of the ways in which technology benefits the workplace? Figure 7 shows that the leading benefits cited by the general public are 'better access to information' (47%),

'automation of repetitive tasks' (46%) and 'more flexible working' (46%).

Figure 7: Which of the following would you agree are potential benefits of applying technology in the workplace?
Please select all that apply.



Base: n=500

"We have removed more tedious work from our lives" - a consumer

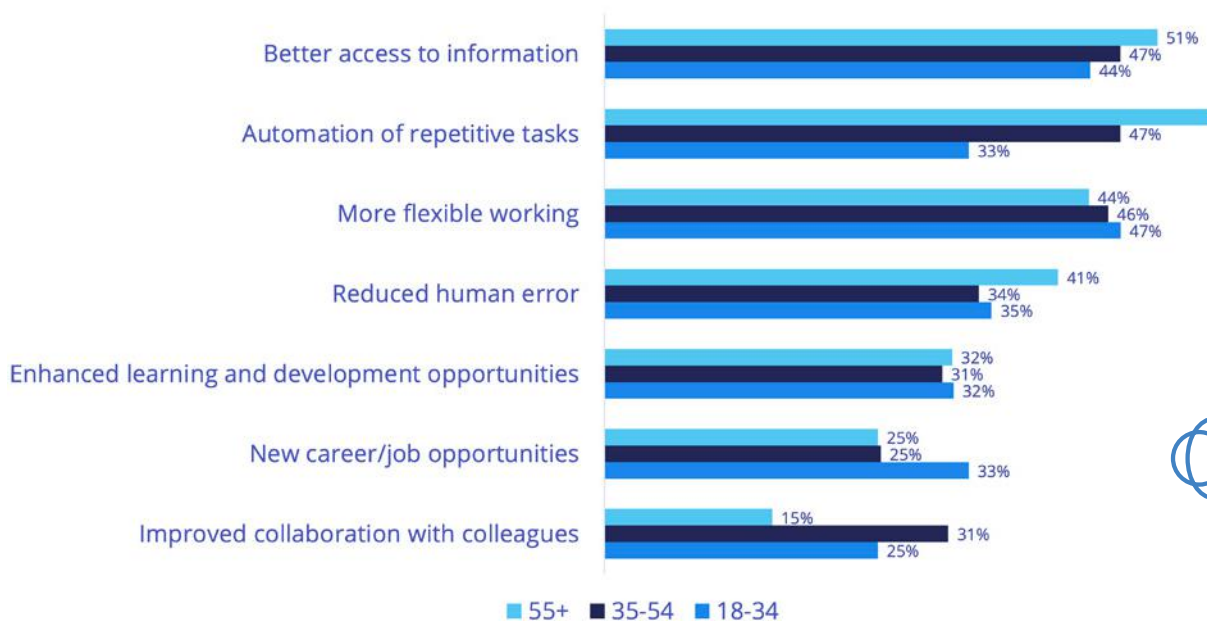
"Automating soulless tasks" - a consumer

"It's enabling people who previously couldn't connect or work due to disabilities to do those things" - a consumer

Some benefits of technology at work are particularly salient among older consumers than younger ones: in particular, 'better access to information' and 'automation of repetitive

tasks', as Figure 8 illustrates. Conversely, 'new career/job opportunities' is comparatively more salient among 18-34 year-olds.

Figure 8: Which of the following would you agree are potential benefits of applying technology in the workplace?
Please select all that apply. (By age group)



Base: 18-34 n=144, 35-54 n=178, 55+ n=176

The public is equally if not more aware of potential risks of applying technology to work as it is of potential benefits. In fact, the proportion who when prompted cited 'less human

contact' (57%) and 'it will eliminate people's jobs' (52%) is notably higher than those who cited the leading benefit (47%).

The most-cited risks of technology in the workplace – 'less human contact' and 'it will eliminate people's jobs' are more salient than the top-cited benefit 'better access to information'.

Figure 9: Which of the following would you agree are potential risks of applying technology in the workplace? Please select all that apply.



Base: n=500

"While some will benefit, many will find work automated, and so down-graded" – a consumer

"It is just so difficult to keep up" – a consumer

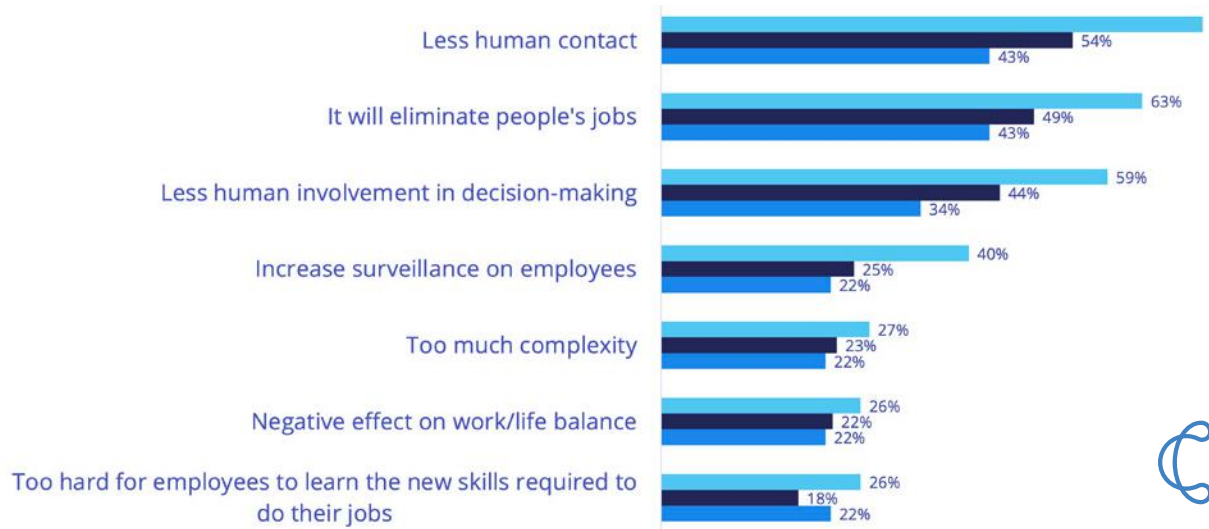
"We are losing the skills that can only be developed by hands on experience" – a consumer

"You are having to spend more time learning new technology than doing your job" – a consumer



Figure 10 shows that older people are especially wary of potential risks. Employers must work especially hard to reassure, educate and earn their trust.

Figure 10: Which of the following would you agree are potential risks of applying technology in the workplace? Please select all that apply. (By age group)



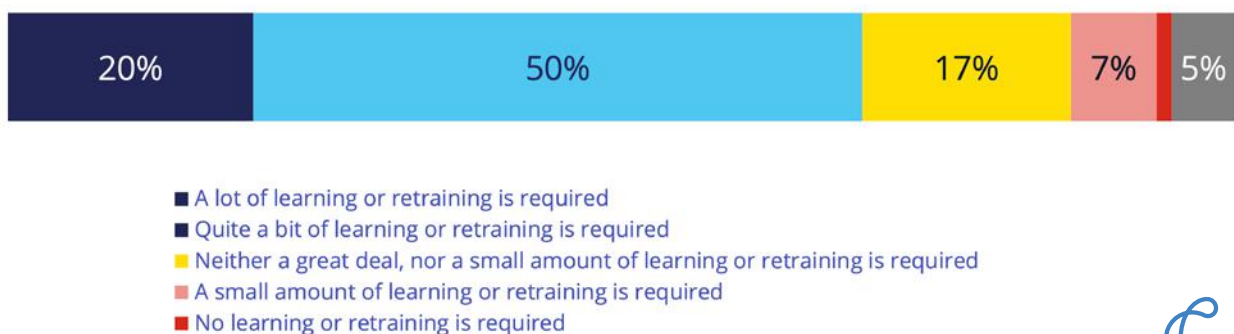
Base: 18-34 n=144, 35-54 n=178, 55+ n=176

Most people recognise the need for colleagues to acquire and hone their skills in order to get the best from technology at work. Figure 11 shows that 70% of the public believe that

'a lot' or 'quite a bit' of learning and retraining is required to effectively use new technology in the workplace, compared with just 9% who believe 'no' or 'a small amount' is required.

70% of the public believe that 'a lot' or 'quite a bit' of learning and retraining is required to effectively use new technology in the workplace.

Figure 11: In your experience, how much learning or retraining is required to be able to effectively use new technology in the workplace.

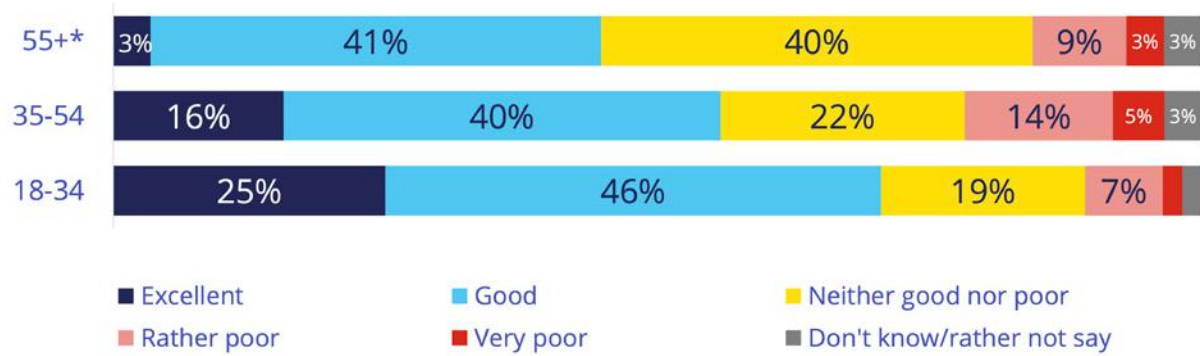


Base: n=500

When asked to rate their employer's learning and development, a majority (59%) of those in full-time and part-time employment offer positive ratings. However, there is a notable difference between age cohorts as illustrated

in Figure 12. Older colleagues are less likely to offer strongly positive ratings, underscoring how employers must ensure that colleagues of all generations are fully equipped for the modern workplace.

Figure 12: How would you rate the learning and development offered by your employer to help you succeed in your role?



Base: Employed full or part-time (18-34 n=112, 35-54 n=117, 55+ n=58 *small base)



Human Versus Digital Interaction for Customer Contact

In this section we shift our attention from the workplace to the world of customer contact. To what extent do consumers appreciate the benefits and risks of digital contact channels,

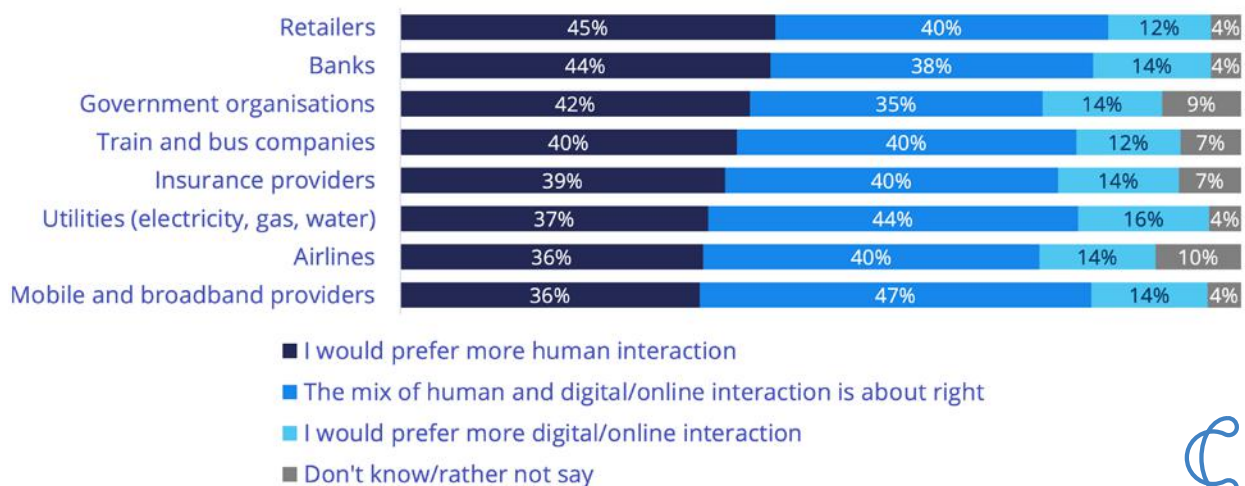
and would they welcome further digitisation or a reversion to human interaction?

Across all sectors, consumers are more likely to want more human contact than to want more digital interaction.

When asked if they would prefer more digital customer contact or more human interaction, consumers are more likely to want more human contact than to want more digital

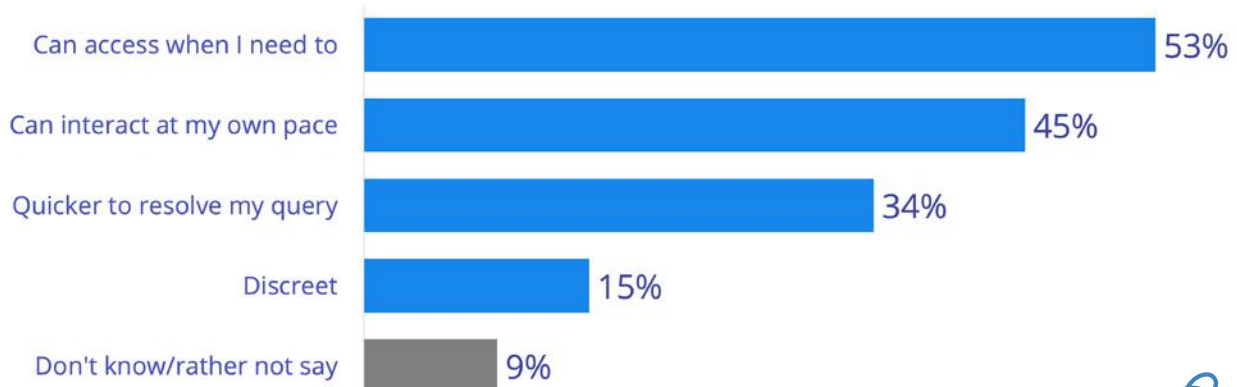
interaction. Figure 13 illustrates this is true across all industry sectors.

Figure 13: Thinking about (Sector) and the mix of digital/online versus human interaction you have with them for customer service, would you say the mix is about right, or would you prefer more digital/online interaction or more human interaction?



Base: n=500

Figure 14: The following are some reasons for preferring digital/online interactions for customer service. Please select all that apply to you.



Base: n=500

When asked to pick from a list of possible reasons to want more human interaction in customer contact, the most-cited

reason was 'better chance of satisfactory resolution'.

Figure 15: The following are some reasons for preferring **human** interactions for customer service. Please select all that apply to you.



Base: n=500

With many consumers now experienced in self-serve channels, 'computer says no' has emerged as major concern that is holding back further acceptance. The preference for human support especially when trying to achieve a

favourable outcome suggests that automation still has a long way to go to gain people's trust, especially for contact reasons that involve context, nuance and decision-making.

Five Learnings

on How Technology and Economic Shifts are Impacting UK Consumers

- 1** While 78% of people in full or part-time work feel 'very' or 'somewhat' secure in their jobs, almost half (45%) of those in work or study reported workloads increasing.
- 2** Technology is key to coping with growing workloads. 63% of consumers believe that technology makes work easier, compared with just 9% who think technology makes work more difficult.
- 3** As well as benefits, consumers are also aware of the potential risks of technology in the workplace, with losing human contact top of the list of perceived risks. Risks are especially salient for older colleagues.
- 4** 70% accept that retraining and learning is needed to effectively use technology at work. Employers' learning and development is meeting the needs of older colleagues less well.
- 5** The desire for humans in the loop also exists in customer contact, with consumers more likely to express a desire for more human contact than for less. A majority of consumers believe that there is a better chance of their query being resolved if there is a human advisor in the loop.

About the CCMA

For more than 30 years, the CCMA has been absolutely dedicated to supporting contact centre professionals. We're constantly pushing ourselves to do more for our thriving community, which happens to be the largest community of contact centre professionals in the UK. The CCMA was founded with the goal of sharing best practice and networking to improve skills and knowledge in order to progress contact centre operations – and we live by that to this day.

We give those that work in contact centres the chance to discuss ideas and share experiences through member-only Special Interest Groups and online and in-person events.

Members are invited to become Accredited through the Contact Centre Standards Framework and get independent guidance on where to focus for improvements. There is also the opportunity to benchmark the operation against 25+ KPIs.

The CCMA Academy gives everyone a structured learning opportunity to support both personal and professional development for the benefit of their operation.

And of course, we celebrate the progress our industry is making through the UK National Contact Centres Awards. Those that win go on to share their stories through channels such as the UK National Contact Centre Conference, Best Practice Visits and CareerTalk. They are invited to input into the Special Interest Groups and other events.

www.ccma.org.uk

About CallMiner

CallMiner is the global leader in conversation intelligence to drive business performance improvement. Powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning, CallMiner delivers the industry's most comprehensive platform to analyse omnichannel customer interactions at scale, allowing organisations to interpret sentiment and identify patterns to reveal deep understanding from every conversation. By connecting the dots between insights and action, CallMiner enables companies to identify areas of opportunity to drive business improvement, growth and transformational change more effectively than ever before. CallMiner is trusted by the world's leading organisations across retail, financial services, healthcare and insurance, travel and hospitality, and more. To learn more, visit CallMiner.com, read the CallMiner blog, or follow us on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.

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