



Battle for talent:
The public sector view

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Gaining the edge in the battle for talent



Winning the battle for talent with tech

Expectations have changed. Today's top talent aren't just looking for a corner office and a big salary, they're looking for something more. They want to continue to deliver to their communities and citizens, whether that's saving lives, keeping people safe, or rebuilding a town- however they're now expecting to be able to deliver this as seamlessly as possible, being provided with the right tools and environment to ensure they can make a big difference.

Today, organisations find themselves locked in a battle for talent. Skilled employees are gravitating towards employers that are willing to invest in flexible working, technology, training, and creating additional social value. Public sector organisations are fighting this battle on two fronts - competing with both their contemporaries and private enterprises that historically offer better pay, benefits, working conditions, and technology.

Fortunately, the public sector's continued investment in digital infrastructure can help to tip the scales in its favour.

Our previous research with the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) found public sector organisations accelerated their capabilities and invested significantly in technology during the height of the pandemic by more than four years.

This rapid adoption was vital in order to keep the country running and keeping people safe, but it has also helped to level the playing

field as these organisations attempt to meet employees' changing expectations.

However, to create lasting change, public sector organisations must continue to embrace technology alongside the training and development that will help their employees to make the most of it.

To understand more on the opportunity to meet new expectations and the skills challenge, we partnered with Censuswide to survey 1,500 public and private sector employees and identify the role of technology in the employee experience. In this report, we'll be looking at the public sector findings and what these mean for those organisations seeking to win the battle for talent.

Now is the time for organisations to lean into their existing investments, using technology in their long-term strategy to provide improved working environments, which will empower their existing employees and attract the next generation of talent into the public sector.



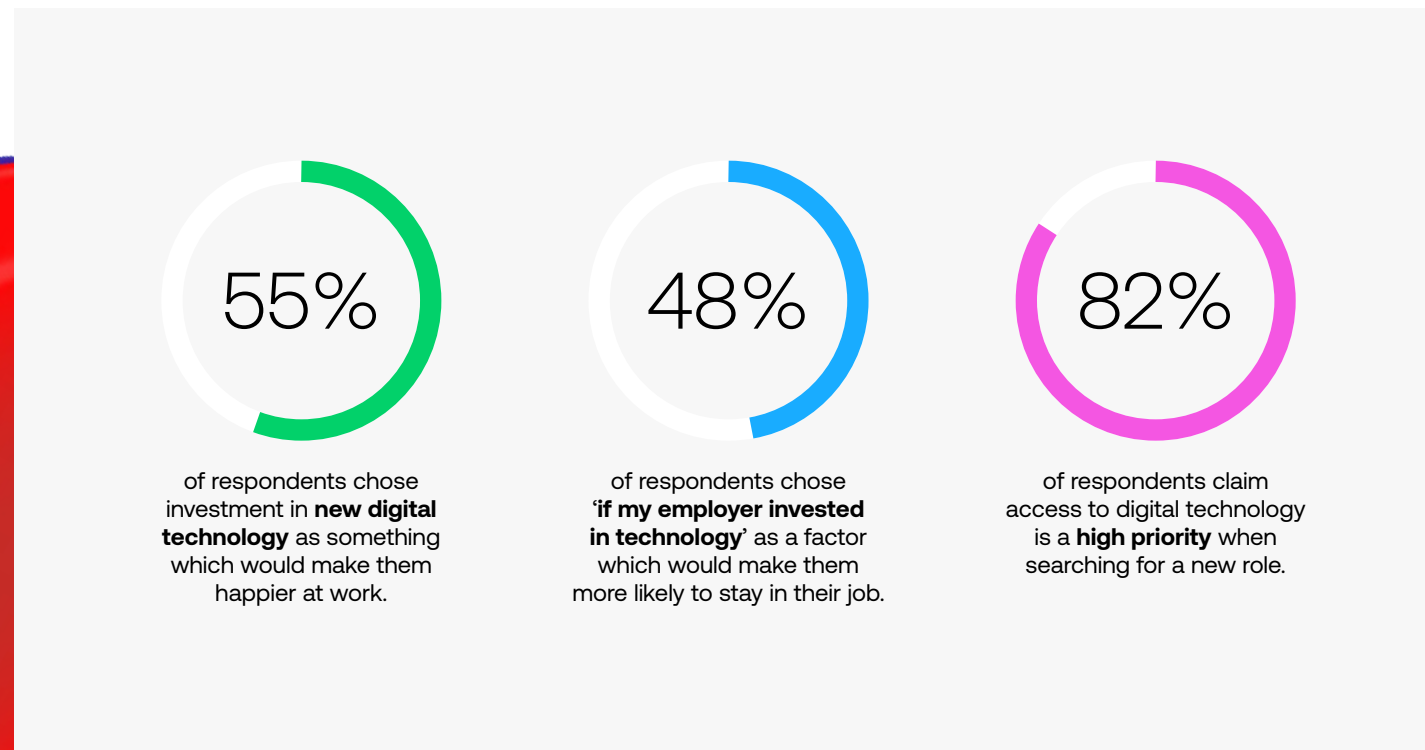
“One of the key issues I think we have as a public sector organisation, is retaining good people with the relevant technical skills to get on with this kind of work and actually innovate for us.”

Phil Davies, Chief Superintendent, Director of Information, Greater Manchester Police.

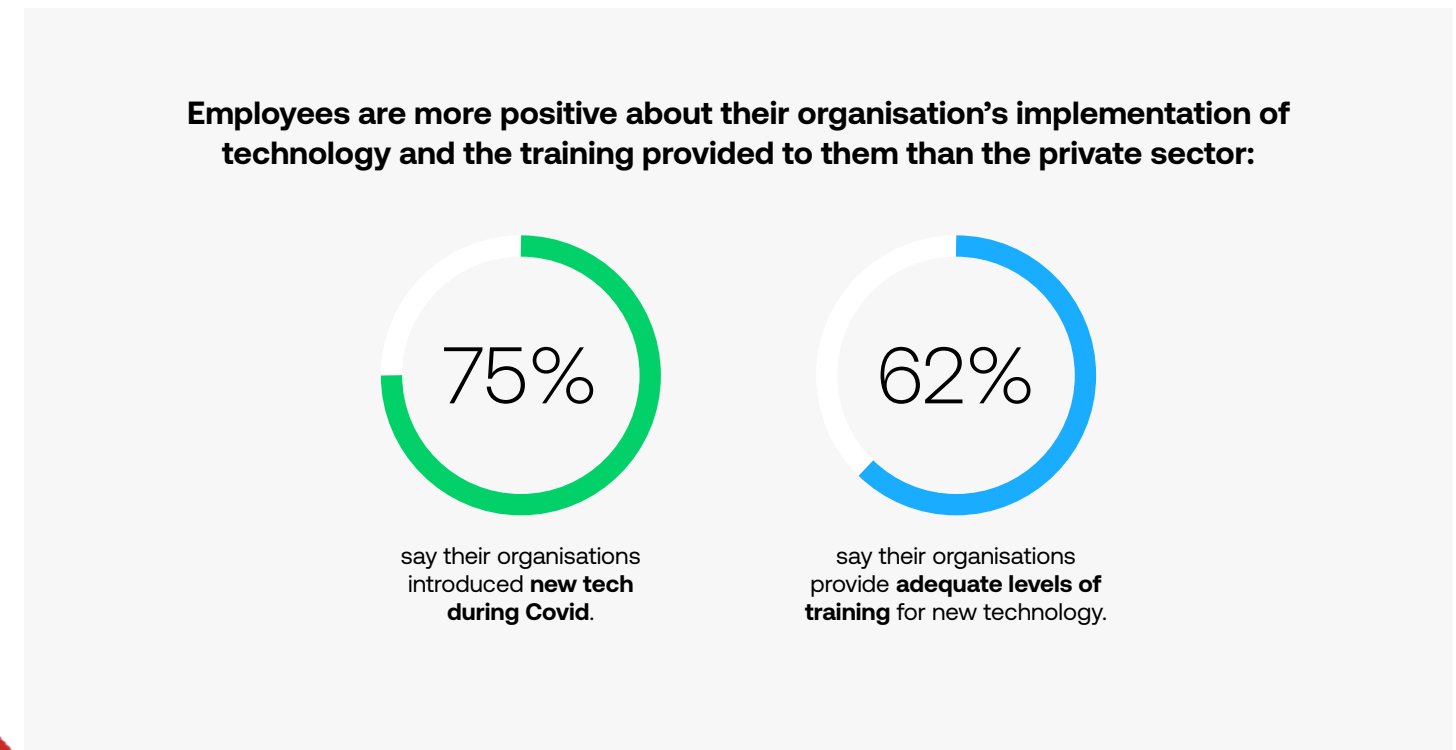


Key findings of the research

The vital role of tech in recruitment and retention:

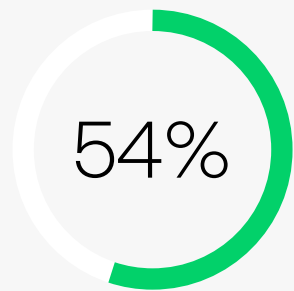


The public sector has embraced digital change:

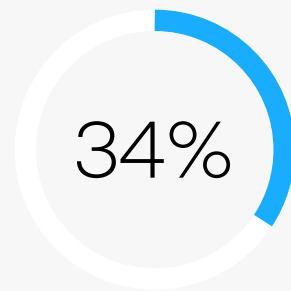


Continued investment is crucial to maintain momentum:

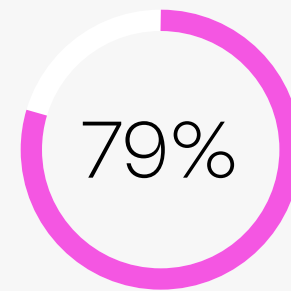
Better technology will mean happier, more engaged employees



of employees believe their organisation will **revert their technological** capabilities.



feel their performance at work is either **always or often negatively affected** by the tech provided by their employer.



of respondents say tech plays an **important role in helping them** stay engaged and happy in their jobs.



Tech is creating empowered, confident, and more loyal employees

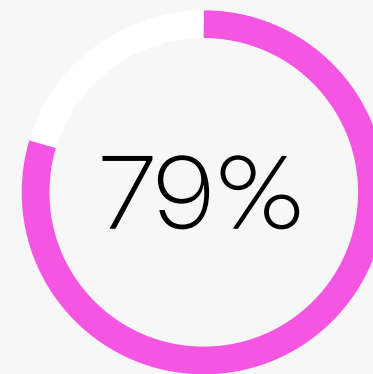
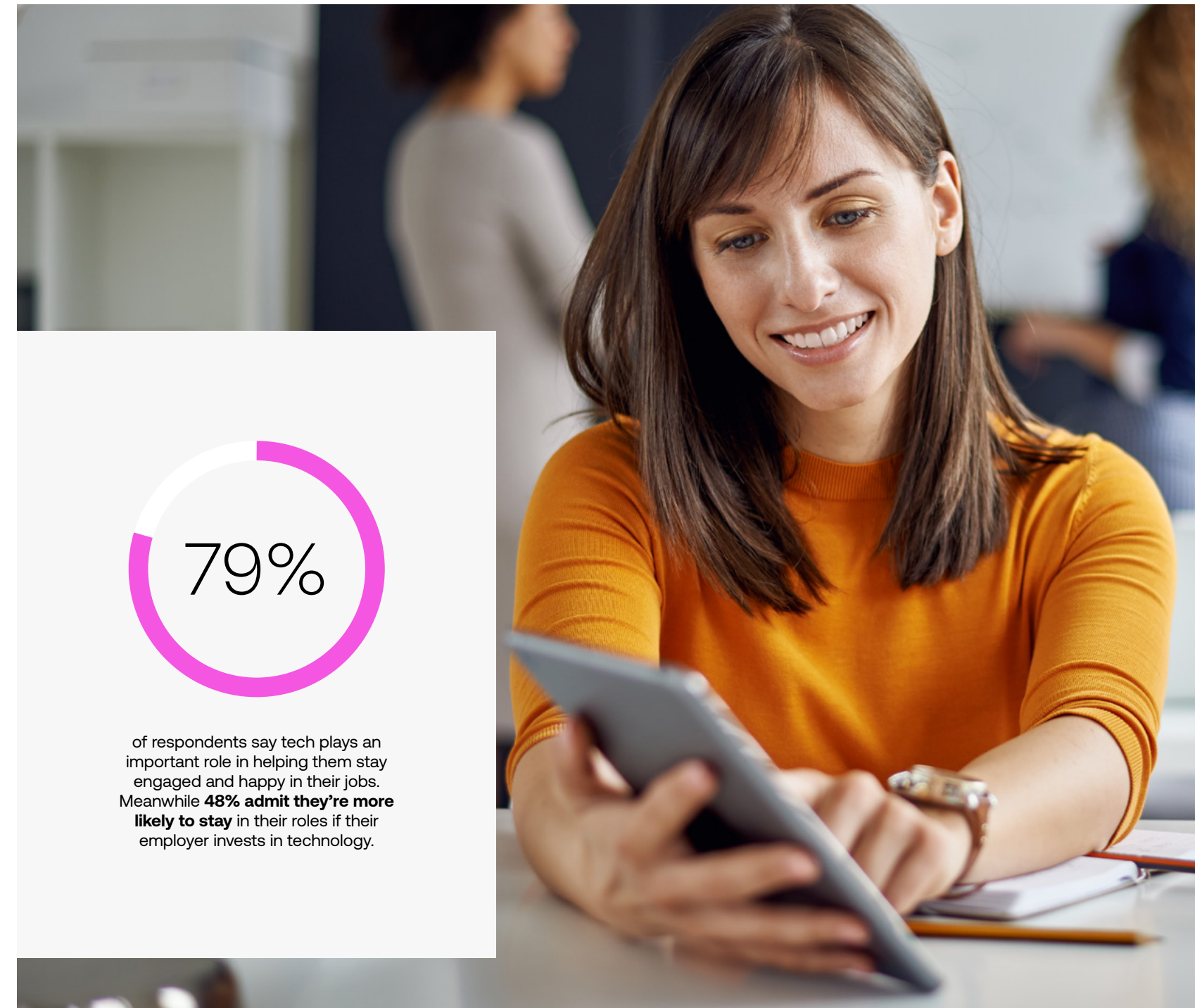
COVID-19 brought about seismic changes across public services. Almost overnight entire offices were forced to pivot to remote working. Investments in technologies such as collaboration tools, cloud services and enhanced cybersecurity meant that workers were able to continue their roles remotely without impacting their output.

Employees' eyes have been opened to an alternative way of working and an increasingly empowered talent pool now expects to be given access to the technology they need to work how, when and where they want to.

There's no doubt that the rapid acceleration of technological change has benefited organisations, but the public sector still faces ongoing challenges. The UK is fighting an economic dip, whilst still trying to tackle a social care crisis, and provide a health service that is fighting to make care accessible to all.

From Brexit to bureaucratic red tape, there are a number of factors that are placing a strain on employees and impacting their ability to make the kind of contribution that attracted them to work in the public sector in the first place.

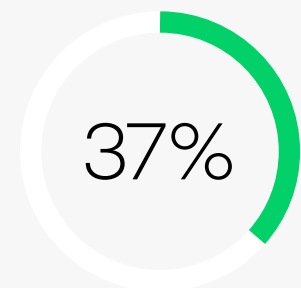
If we're going to create lasting change that will enable attracting and retaining the best talent, then it's vital that organisations address these issues. Investments in digital technology can help by empowering employees to overcome challenges and equipping them with the tools they need to not only make their work more effective, but ultimately more rewarding. Not to mention the wider benefits of positively impacting society.



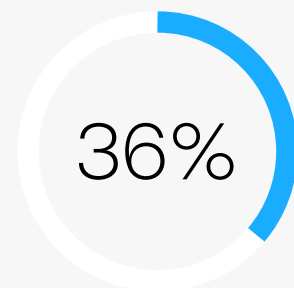
79% of respondents say tech plays an important role in helping them stay engaged and happy in their jobs. Meanwhile **48% admit they're more likely to stay** in their roles if their employer invests in technology.



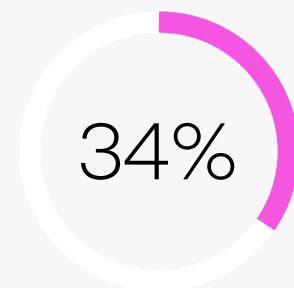
Top 3 technologies that have had the most positive impact on public sector productivity levels over the past two years:



Collaboration tools
(e.g. Microsoft Teams, Slack)



Document management technologies and tools (e.g. systems that enable the storage, securing and sharing of documents – most often in the cloud)

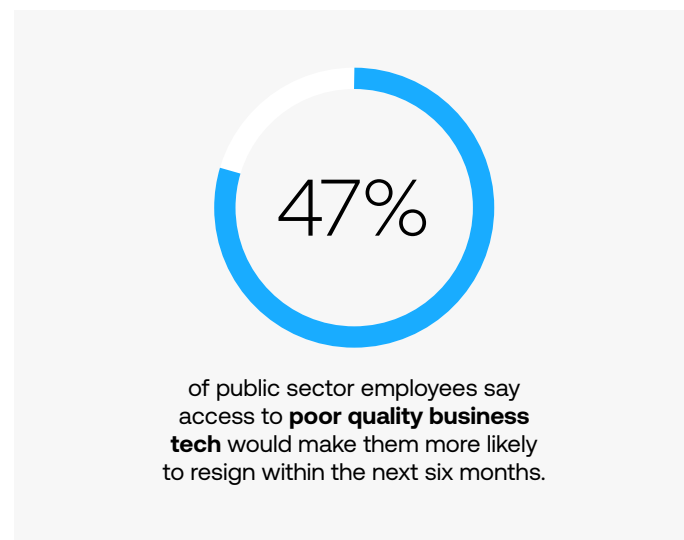


Connectivity applications, solutions, infrastructure
(e.g. faster broadband, reliable mobile data)

Digital adoption has already played a key role in the ability to rebound from the pandemic. At a time when productivity and satisfaction could be expected to fall, we've seen significant improvements as investments in connecting, protecting and empowering staff have paid dividends. This might be through investing in collaboration tools, document management tech, or connectivity infrastructure.

There should be no going back. Yet according to our research, some organisations are considering just that, as 54% of public sector employees believe their employers will revert their technological capabilities to pre-pandemic levels.

It's a concerning statistic. Now is not the time to slow progress, but to accelerate the adoption of new technology and continued investments in long-term solutions such as core infrastructure and secure connectivity is vital.



“We’ve talked about how when digital works, it works really well. But it also takes collaboration, an awful lot of commitment, and creativity as well.”

Cath Ritchie, Business Relationship Manager, Technology and Change – North Yorkshire County Council

It's time for a cultural transformation

Technology alone won't win the battle for today's top talent. While organisations should be applauded for the investment they're making in new technology, our research suggests that there's a growing digital skills gap developing and employees are taking notice.

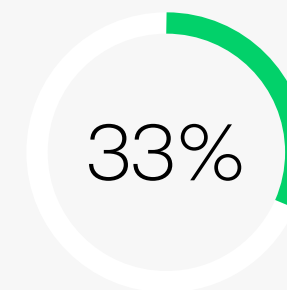
More than half (55%) of workers told us that their employers have a shortage of skills in relation to digital technology, while the vast majority (87%) revealed that they are concerned about the impact this skills shortage could have on their organisation.

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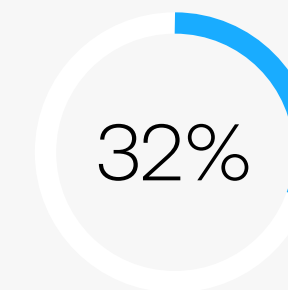
Investment in technology and skills is investment in people. Training plays a crucial role in retention, leading to greater employee engagement and satisfaction. With the scales weighing so heavily in the favour of workers, attentive employers will not only help to close the digital skills gap but stand out from the crowd when it comes to attracting and retaining today's top talent. And this investment will benefit our society beyond the workplace – handing people the skills they need for everyday use in what is becoming an increasingly digital world.



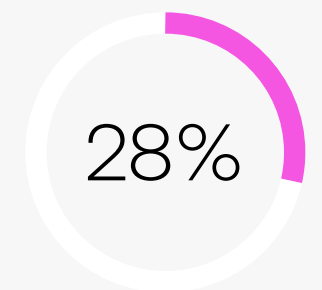
The top 3 reasons they think are behind the skills shortage:



A lack of training opportunities



People have left and no one else has the expertise to replace them



A difficulty in making open roles seem appealing to young people



“There is a big ticking time bomb across all of this, what we class as digital skills. I’m not sure calling it digital skills is so helpful. These are almost everyday skills you need for life now.”

Robert Ling, Assistant Director of Technology change and customer services, North Yorkshire County Council

Enhancing the employee experience

Employees are clear on what they want. And they've been voting with their feet in order to get it, moving to those organisations that invest in creating a positive workplace experience.

Flexible working and the technology that enables it are key. Today's talent want the ability to work where they want, when they want and on what platform/device they want to do it on.

When asked what would make them happier at work, 50% of respondents chose 'if their employer ensured that their technology supported remote and truly hybrid working preferences' – with 47% saying this factor would be more likely to make them stay in their current job.

We know that organisations have already invested in these digital technologies during the pandemic, now they must go one step further

by making connectivity the cornerstone of their long-term plans to create desirable workplaces that can compete against their private sector counterparts. The good news is that the power is in their hands to retain their top performers and attract a fresh generation of talent.

Having **clear hybrid working policies**, (42%) and being granted tech such as **business laptops and mobile devices** (40%) are the highest priority commitments amongst **public sector candidates** looking to move job.

“Issues in relation to new inductees learning by osmosis and understanding the culture of the organisation, it's taking much longer and if anything, it's not proven to be effective in the current way that we're doing it.”

Scott Crudgington, Deputy Chief Executive of Hertfordshire County Council

Gaining the edge in the battle for talent

The battle for talent has become a talking point across society. Employees understand their value more than ever before, and employers are facing this new reality every day.

Digital technology can help organisations to position themselves as desirable workplaces, but it can also help to highlight the intangibles that attract employees to the public sector. Whether it's improving patients' experience, keeping our streets safe or regenerating local areas.

However, there are other things to consider that also impact where and how we work...

The cost-of-living crisis, the impending threat of recession and the growing focus on sustainability are among the uncertainties that we all face.

In an age where employee experience, professional purpose and work-life balance are key, organisations must now expect more from suppliers to go above and beyond to create a true partnership.

One that should support you with:

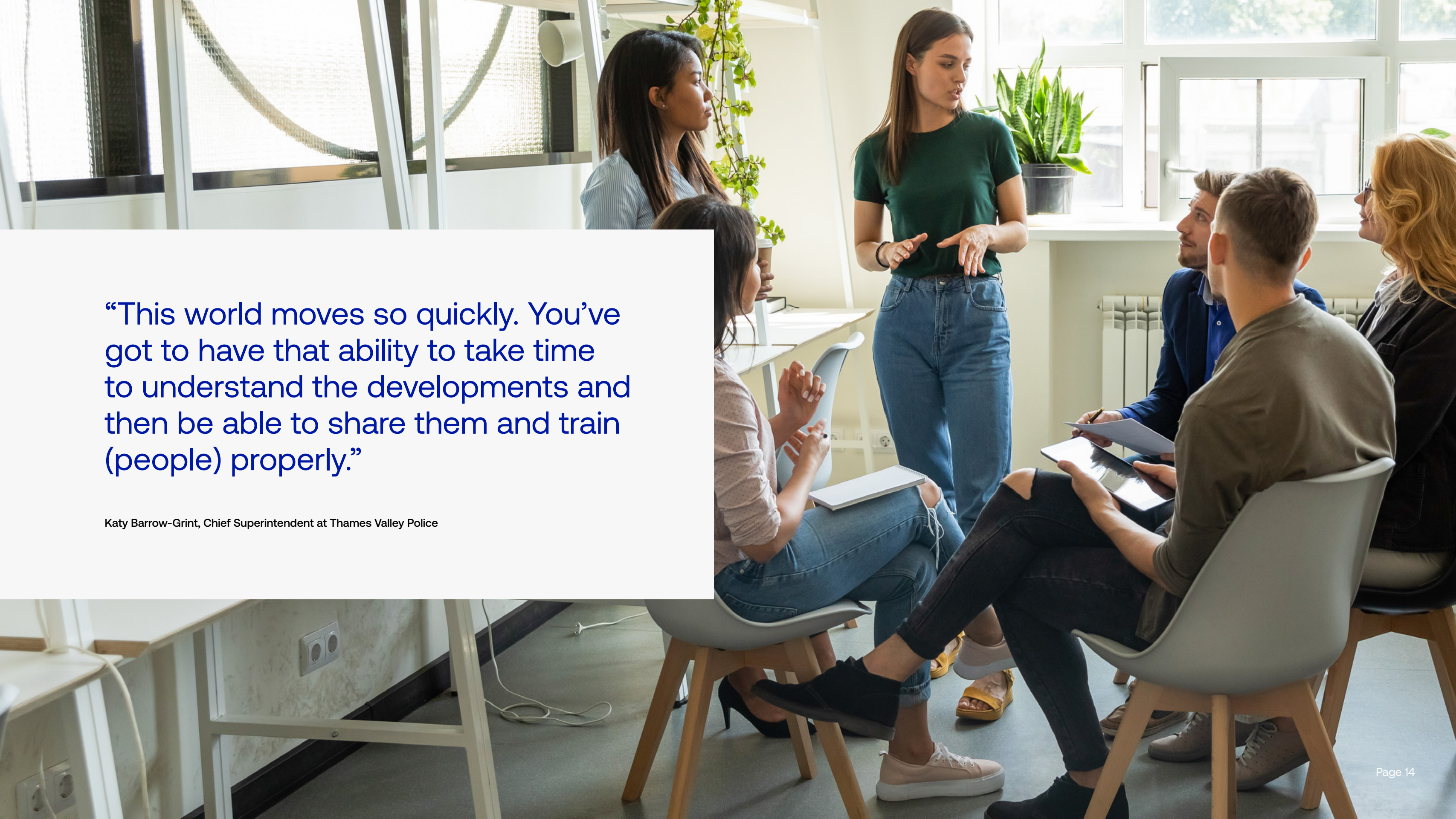
- Boosting employee productivity and their experience
- Enhancing citizen experience
- Digital delivery of services

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“This world moves so quickly. You’ve got to have that ability to take time to understand the developments and then be able to share them and train (people) properly.”

Katy Barrow-Grint, Chief Superintendent at Thames Valley Police



Business