



Deloitte Global 2023
LGBT+ Inclusion @ Work

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A letter from Elizabeth Faber and Emma Codd

2023 LGBT+ Inclusion @ Work 

The Deloitte Global 2023 LGBT+ Inclusion @ Work report explores the experiences of LGBT+* people in work around the world through the lens of both sexual orientation and gender identity. Building on the Deloitte Global [2022 LGBT+ Inclusion @ Work](#) pulse survey of 600 LGBT+ respondents, this report provides deep insights on the experiences of LGBT+ people in the workplace, including the steps their employers are taking to further LGBT+ inclusion and the impact this has on them, their levels of comfort in being out at work about their LGBT+ identity, and their experiences of non-inclusive behaviors in the workplace.

The result is an in-depth global view of some of the realities of being LGBT+ at work in 2023. The report, which surveyed 5,474 non-Deloitte LGBT+ people who work in various sectors across 13 countries, shows that LGBT+ employees generally feel the positive impact of their employers demonstrating a commitment to LGBT+ inclusion, yet a little more than four in 10 said that their employers fail to do so either internally or externally.

And while a majority of respondents highly value being out at work, less than half feel comfortable being out* about their sexual orientation or gender identity with everyone at work. Just over an additional one-third report that they are comfortable being out, but only with certain colleagues. A fear of being treated differently because of their LGBT+ identity was the top reason for respondents not being out.

The research reveals that more needs to be done to provide an environment in which LGBT+ employees feel able to be themselves at work—particularly given that four in 10 of all respondents report having experienced non-inclusive behaviors.

What's more, those who are out about their sexual orientation indicated they were more likely to have experienced such behaviors than those who are not. Meanwhile, the survey found that respondents who are out about their gender identity were more likely to report having had worse experiences with other aspects of work, including believing that they had been looked over for a promotion or assignment in a former role.

The result is that one in three of all respondents are actively looking to change employers to find an organization that is more LGBT+ inclusive. When it comes to considering a potential new employer, LGBT+ employees want to see diversity and to get involved in furthering it—with a diverse workforce and the opportunity to get involved in inclusion initiatives ranking highest in order of importance. This is especially the case among Gen Zs and millennials when compared to their Gen X* counterparts.

In fact, the survey has found that attitudes and experiences vary across generational groups and seniority and for ethnic minority respondents. Gen Z and millennial as well as ethnic minority respondents attached the highest value to workplace diversity and the highest importance to being able to freely express their LGBT+ identity—and these respondents also ranked highest in terms of intention to leave their employer to find an organization that is more LGBT+ inclusive.

We hope this report provides organizations with detailed data and insights into the experiences of LGBT+ employees and helps enable them to take the necessary steps to turn positive messaging on LGBT+ inclusion into concrete actions.

* LGBT+ was defined for survey respondents as the following: The LGBT+ acronym (which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and more) is used throughout this survey for consistency and includes anyone who does not identify as heterosexual and cisgender. Deloitte professionals were not polled as part of this survey.

* We recognize that coming out is often an ongoing process rather than a single moment. For the purposes of the report, the phrase 'out at work' is intended to mean that people would be comfortable disclosing their gender identity or sexual orientation to colleagues should the opportunity present itself.

* Gen Z defined as born between 1995 – 2005, millennials as born between 1983 – 1994, and Gen X as born between 1967 – 1982



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Executive summary

The responses from 5,474 LGBT+ people in workplaces from 13 countries across the world show that many organizations have considerable scope to raise their ambitions when it comes to demonstrating their commitment to LGBT+ inclusion to their employees. The findings also reveal that many LGBT+ employees feel uncomfortable being out in the workplace and face non-inclusive behaviors such as microaggressions and harassment. And when LGBT+ employees feel that their employers aren't doing enough to support LGBT+ inclusion, many are prepared to look elsewhere for organizations that do.

The report also explores the positive impact of employers demonstrating their commitment to LGBT+ inclusion and opportunities for organizations to improve the experiences of their LGBT+ workers.

Key findings:

One-third of respondents are looking to move to a more LGBT+ inclusive employer, a figure that is even higher for those in an ethnic minority

One-third of all respondents are actively looking to change employer to one that is more LGBT+ inclusive. This is even higher for ethnic minority respondents, with over half currently looking for a new role.

When it comes to choosing their new employer, what matters most to respondents is seeing a diverse workforce—with this being a deciding factor for nearly seven in 10. The opportunity to personally get involved sits a close second, with nearly two thirds of respondents citing the opportunity to be involved in diversity and inclusion initiatives as a top consideration. Other factors—such as having leaders who are out at work and an internal and external commitment to LGBT+ inclusion—are also important for around half of respondents.

Diversity and LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace are particularly important for younger generations

Gen Z and millennial respondents are far more likely than their Gen X counterparts to place an emphasis on diversity and inclusion when seeking a new employer. This generational difference can also be seen when it comes to the importance of being out at work, with just less than half of Gen X respondents citing this as important versus roughly two thirds of Gen Zs and millennials.

Being out at work is important for many, yet less than half are out with all colleagues

The majority (six in 10) of respondents believe it is important to be able to be out at work about their sexual orientation, with this rising to three quarters of respondents for gender identity. But less than half feel comfortable being out with all of their colleagues, and another one-third of respondents say that they are only comfortable being out at work with select colleagues. Some respondents aren't comfortable being out with anyone at work at all when it comes to their sexual orientation (14%) or gender identity (17%).

Concerns about being treated differently keep many from being out at work, while other factors, including concern for personal safety, play a role

For those who are not comfortable being out to all—or even some—colleagues, the most common reason is a concern about being treated differently. Beyond this, the reasons vary by sexual orientation and gender identity. From a sexual orientation perspective, a preference not to discuss their private life at work is the next most cited reason, followed by concerns about facing discrimination or harassment, and that they would not be treated with respect. Nearly two in 10 cite concerns for personal safety. From a gender identity perspective, concerns about discrimination or harassment are the second most cited reason, followed by a worry that they would not be treated with respect. Just over one quarter cite concerns for their personal safety.



Executive summary

Comfort to be out at work increases with seniority

Comfort in being out at work increases with seniority. This is most pronounced when it comes to sexual orientation—just over half (51%) of those in senior roles are comfortable being out at work, compared to just over a third (37%) of junior employees. This trend holds true for gender identity, but the difference is less significant—54% of those in senior roles are comfortable being out about their gender identity at work, compared to 46% of junior respondents.

Allyship and role models increase comfort in being out

Allyship plays a part when it comes to comfort in being out at work, with six in 10 (61%) who are out at work to at least some colleagues about their sexual orientation—and almost seven in 10 of those who are out about gender identity to at least some colleagues—saying that allyship helps them to be out.

When it comes to role models, comfort being out about sexual orientation to anyone at work rises to over half of those who have access to LGBT+ role models, from just under one-third where there are none. The picture is similar when looked at from a gender identity perspective.

Comfort being out decreases when it comes to being out with direct managers

When looking at those colleagues to whom respondents are out, a stark difference can be seen when comparing comfort to be out with closest colleagues versus those who are more senior. Indeed, while slightly fewer than 60% of those who are out about their sexual orientation, and 54% of those who are out about their gender identity are comfortable being out with their closest colleagues, only 37% are comfortable being out about either their sexual orientation or gender identity with their direct managers.

Non-inclusive behaviors are being experienced at work—and many say they are certain it is a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity

Four in 10 respondents (42%) have experienced non-inclusive behaviors in a work context and just less than half say they are certain they experienced them as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity, with a further 37% saying they strongly suspect this to be the reason.

When it comes to escalating this behavior to their employer so that action can be taken, 43% of these respondents did not report their experience to their employer. For these respondents, four in 10 didn't think their complaint would be taken seriously, closely followed by a concern that reporting would make the situation worse, and around one-third didn't have confidence that action would be taken. Just under one-third didn't report because they were concerned about adverse career impact.



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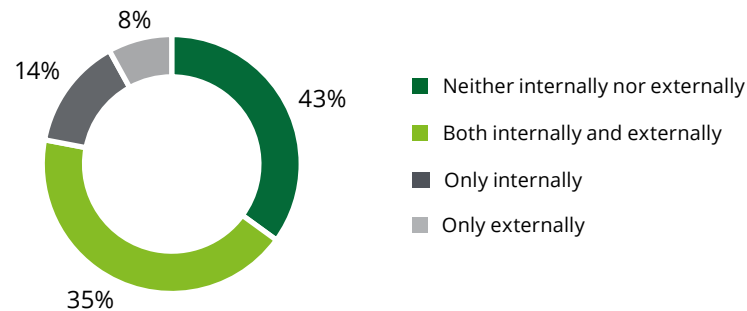
A minority of employers demonstrate commitment to LGBT+ inclusion both internally and externally

Only around one-third (35%) of respondents affirm that their employer demonstrates commitment to LGBT+ inclusion both internally (that is, through actions solely within their organization) as well as externally through actions outside the company. A little more than four in 10 (43%) say that their employer either does neither or they are unaware or unsure of their employer's commitment to LGBT+ inclusion. Smaller numbers of respondents cited their employers as demonstrating this commitment exclusively internally (14%) or solely externally (8%).

From an external commitment perspective, most commonly cited actions related to communications, with employers talking about the importance of LGBT+ inclusion externally being most cited (46%), followed by referencing LGBT+ inclusion in recruitment campaigns (40%). It should be noted that the least cited are those which require formal commitment and action by an employer—namely membership of external advocacy organizations (cited by just less than one-third of respondents) and signing up to [the UN standards of conduct for business tackling discrimination against LGBTI people](#) (the UN standards) (cited by only three in 10).

Nevertheless, when respondents noted that their organization did demonstrate a commitment to LGBT+ inclusion, whether internally or externally, the vast majority say that this has a positive impact on them and their lives in the workplace.

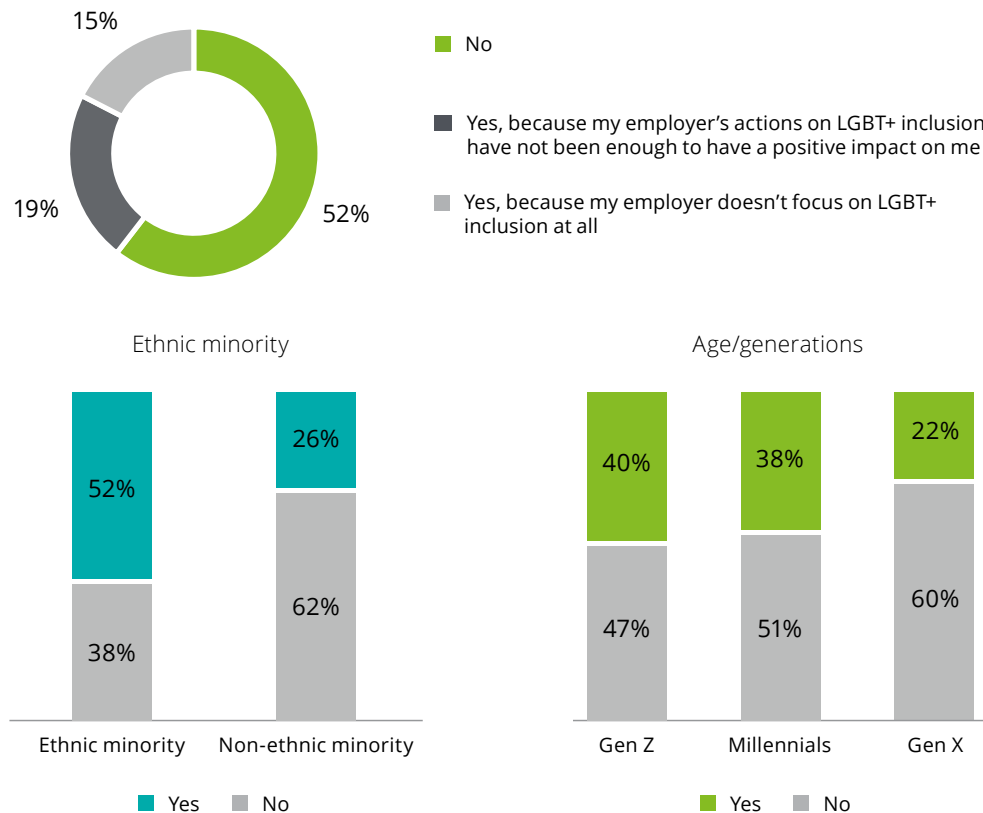
Employer demonstration of commitment to LGBT+ inclusion



Inclusion drives LGBT+ employee career decisions

One in three of all respondents are actively looking to change employers to find an organization that is more LGBT+ inclusive. And this retention challenge is even more pronounced among ethnic minority and Gen Z and millennial respondents, with just over half of ethnic minority respondents looking to change employers for an organization that is more LGBT+ inclusive and around 40% of both Gen Zs and millennials reporting the same. This aligns with findings from the Deloitte Global [2023 Gen Z and Millennial Survey](#) which found that a majority of respondents from these generations are more likely to leave their employer within the next two years when dissatisfied with their employers' progress in creating a diverse and inclusive environment.

People actively looking to change employers in order to find an organization which is more inclusive of LGBT+ employees*



* Excludes don't know/prefer not to answer/unsure responses

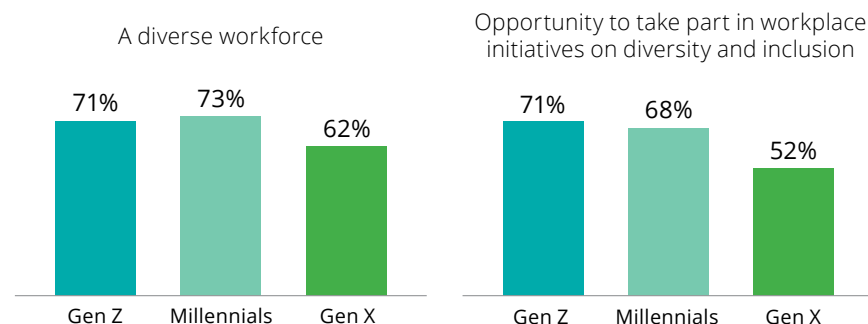
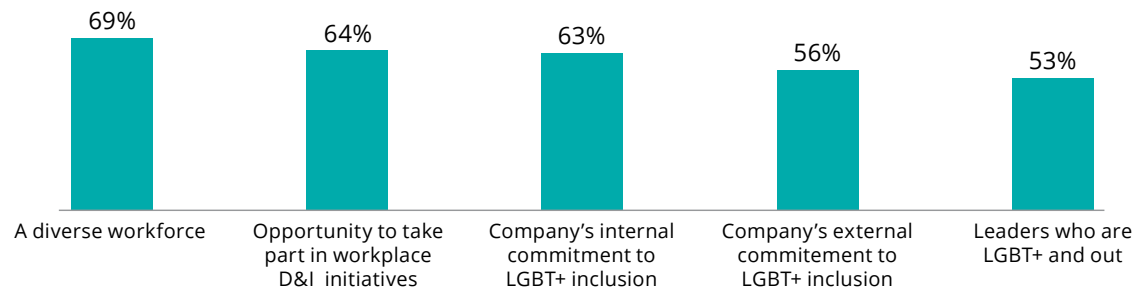


When considering a new employer, seeing a diverse workplace and the chance to get involved matters the most

When it comes to thinking about applying for a new role, six in 10 respondents actively sought out information about an organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion before applying. And what prospective employees see matters—nearly seven in 10 respondents (69%) cite workforce diversity as a deciding factor. This is followed by the ability to get involved in diversity and inclusion initiatives, cited by nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents. From a generational perspective, these factors are especially important for Gen Z and millennial respondents. Indeed, nearly two-thirds of millennials (64%) and three-quarters of Gen Zs (72%) researched an organization's commitment to inclusion compared to four in 10 Gen X respondents (43%). And a diverse workforce is cited as an important factor by 71% of Gen Z respondents and 73% of millennial respondents—10% higher than for Gen X (62%). A similar generational difference is seen when it comes to the opportunity to take part in workplace initiatives on diversity and inclusion, with this rated as important by 71% of Gen Zs and 68% of millennials compared with only 52% of Gen X respondents.

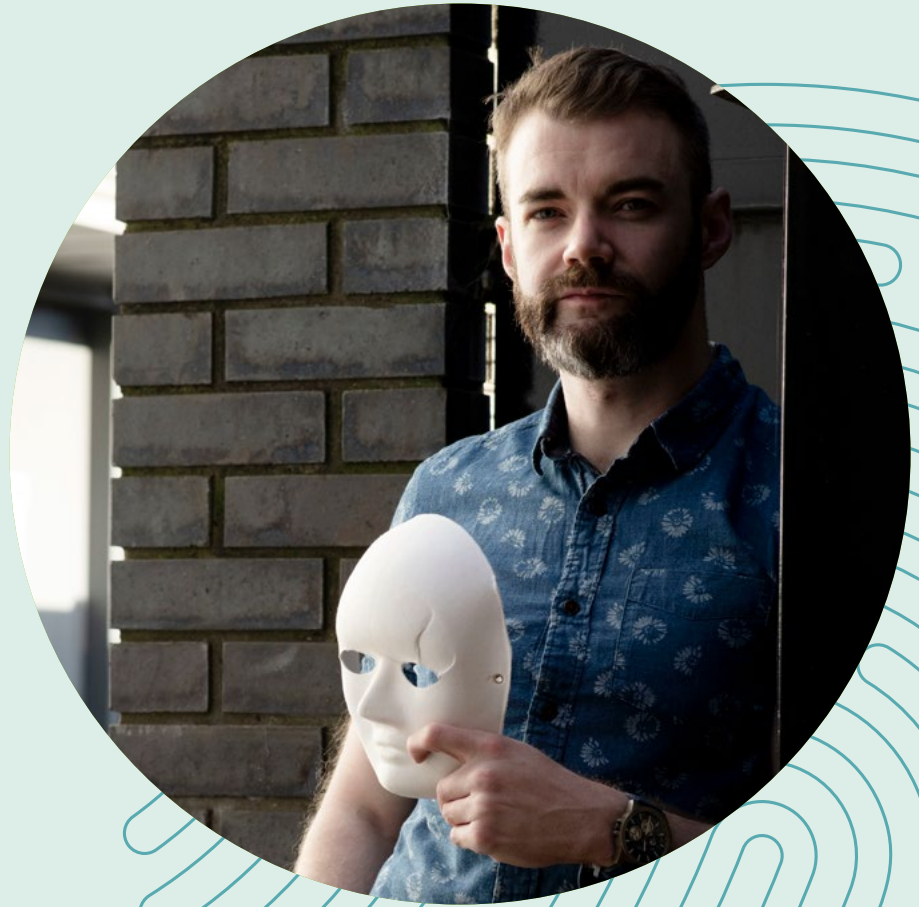
A prospective employer's internal commitment to LGBT+ inclusion is also a deciding factor—with 63% of respondents citing internal commitment as an important factor (versus 56% who cite external commitment). While half (53%) cite the existence of leaders who are out as a deciding factor, it is the lowest ranked of all such factors.

Level of importance placed on the following factors when deciding to apply for a new role



2

Most LGBT+ employees want to be out at work, but many don't feel comfortable being so

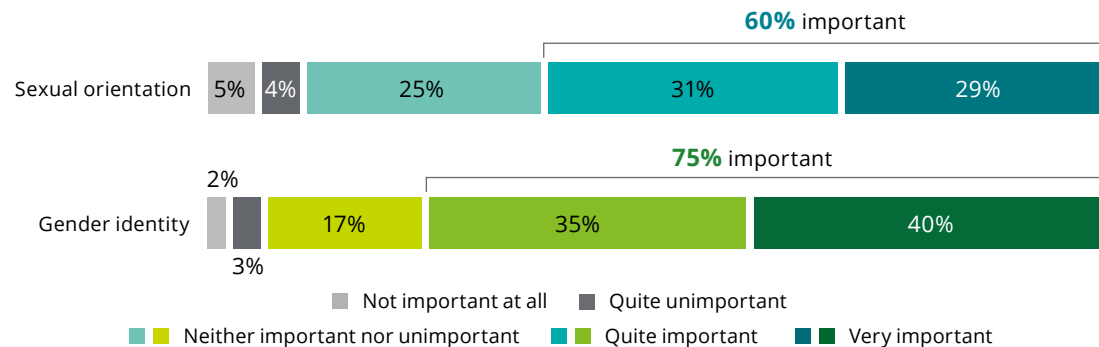


LGBT+ people attach a high level of importance to being out at work

A large majority of respondents attach a high level of importance to being able to freely express their LGBT+ identity at work. Indeed, 60% of all respondents believe it is important to be able to freely express their sexual orientation at work while 75% said the same for gender identity. Certain groups place an even higher premium on this freedom than the overall sample, with 74% of lesbian respondents and 77% of transgender respondents saying being able to express their sexual orientation is important.

From a generational perspective, younger generations are more likely to consider being out at work to be important—with 64% of LGBT+ Gen Zs and 66% of millennials believing this to be the case compared with nearly half (48%) of Gen X.

Importance of being able to freely express **sexual orientation** or **gender identity** at work*



* Excludes don't know/prefer not to answer/unsure responses

These people think it's important to be able to freely express their **sexual orientation** at work

74%
of lesbian women
vs 60% of gay men

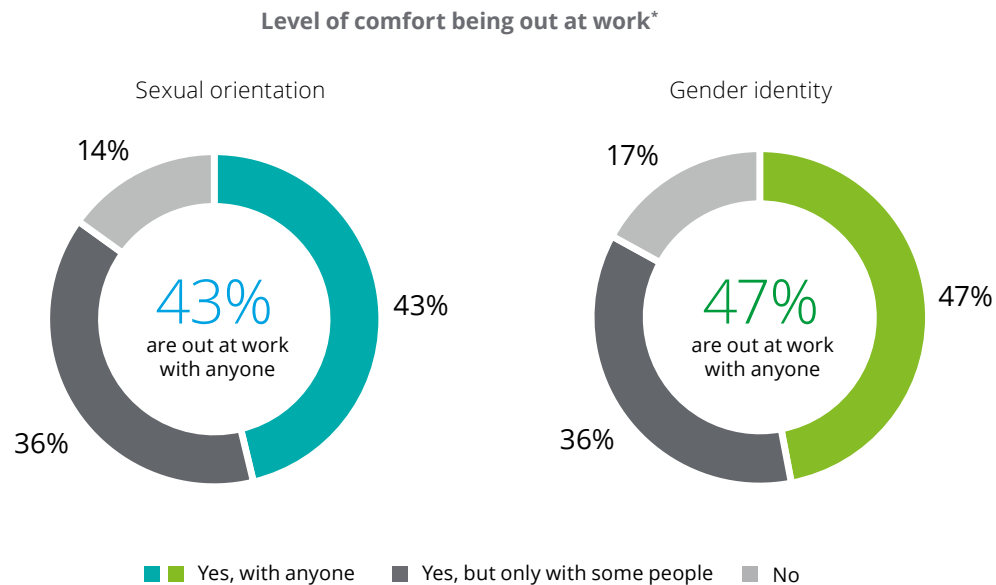
77%
of transgender people
vs 59% cisgender

64% / 66%
of LGBT+ Gen Zs/Millennials
vs 48% of Gen X



But more needs to be done to enable LGBT+ employees to feel comfortable in being out at work

While a large majority of respondents attach a high level of importance to being able to freely express their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace, less than half of respondents feel comfortable being out about their sexual orientation (43%) or gender identity (47%) with everyone at work. Another third say they are comfortable being out at work, but only with some people—and, of this group, around three in 10 respondents described themselves as feeling uncomfortable but trying to be more open. Finally, 14% of respondents aren't comfortable being out about their sexual orientation at all, a figure that was slightly higher for gender identity—at 17%.



* Excludes don't know/prefer not to answer/unsure responses



Comfort in being out at work increases with seniority, while positive experiences with allyship and the presence of senior LGBT+ role models also help

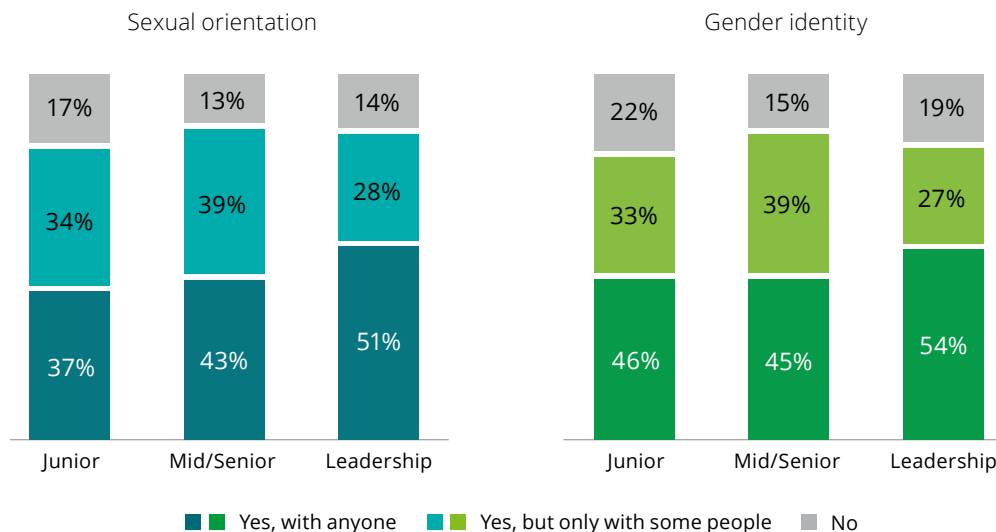
Respondents' comfort in being out grows with workplace seniority. Only 37% of junior employees are comfortable being out with anyone about their sexual orientation versus 43% of mid/senior employees and 51% of those in a leadership role. The picture when it comes to gender identity is broadly similar, albeit a greater percentage of junior people are comfortable with being out, with this jumping from 46% for these junior employees to 54% for those in leadership roles.

Allyship can also play an important role, with six in 10 (61%) of those out at work to at least some people about their sexual orientation saying that allyship helps them be out compared with 20% who don't think this is the case. A similar pattern is seen when it comes to gender identity, with almost seven in 10 (68%) citing allyship as helping them be out to at least some people compared with 16% who don't agree.

The same is true regarding the presence of senior LGBT+ role models in the workplace: comfort being out with anyone at work about sexual orientation rises to 54% where role models exist compared with 31% where there are none. The pattern is again similar regarding gender identity: comfort being out with anyone at work rises to 56% where there is a presence of roles models (from 32% where there are not).



Level of comfort in being out at work by seniority*



* Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%

Only just over one-third are comfortable being out at work with their direct managers

Although nearly 60% of those respondents who are only out about their sexual orientation with some people at work say they feel comfortable being out with their closest colleagues, this drops significantly to just more than one-third (37%) when it comes to comfort with being out to their direct managers. A drop is also seen when it comes to being out about gender identity, from 54% of respondents to 37%.

Level of comfort in being out at work regarding sexual orientation with different groups of people



Level of comfort in being out at work regarding gender identity with different groups of people



Fear of being treated differently and discrimination is preventing people from being out at work—and just over a quarter cite concern for their personal safety as a reason not to be out about their gender identity

The survey asked respondents who feel uncomfortable being out at work—either at all or with certain groups—what makes them feel this way. While the top reason—namely a worry of being treated differently because of their sexual orientation (39%) or gender identity (46%)—was consistent, the ranking of other reasons varies by sexual orientation and gender identity.

When it comes to sexual orientation, a preference to not discuss private life at work is the second most cited reason (37%). Fear of adverse treatment by others also features—with just less than one-third (32%) citing a concern that they would face discrimination and harassment and three in 10 worrying that they would not be treated with respect; just over one-quarter (26%) worry that being out at work will affect their career prospects and 12% say that their company doesn't encourage openness. Nearly two in 10 (19%) cite a concern for their personal safety as a reason.

From a gender identity perspective, fear of adverse treatment by others at work features highly, with concerns about facing discrimination and harassment being the second most cited reason (by 41%) and 38% saying they are concerned that they would not be treated with respect. Three in 10 are concerned that being out about their gender identity at work would affect their career prospects, with a similar number (29%) citing a preference not to discuss their private life at work. While 14% say that their company does not encourage openness, around one-quarter (26%) cite concerns for their personal safety as a reason.

Again, the responses show a generational difference, with Gen X respondents more likely to have a preference not to discuss their private life at work compared to their younger counterparts. Indeed, 43% of Gen X respondents note this to be the main reason they chose not to be out about their sexual orientation and 36% when it comes to their gender identity. This contrasts with around a third of Gen Zs (34%) and millennials (35%) citing the same reason for not being out about sexual orientation and 24% of Gen Zs and 30% of millennials when it comes to gender identity.



Barriers to being out at work

	I worry I would be treated differently	I prefer not to talk about any aspect of my private life at work	I worry I would face discrimination or harassment	I worry I will not be treated with respect	I worry it will affect my career opportunities	I worry about my personal safety	My company doesn't usually encourage openness
Sexual orientation	39%	37%	32%	30%	26%	19%	12%
Gender identity	46%	41%	38%	30%	29%	26%	14%
	I worry I would be treated differently	I worry I would face discrimination or harassment	I worry I will not be treated with respect	I worry it will affect my career opportunities	I prefer not to talk about any aspect of my private life at work	I worry about my personal safety	My company doesn't usually encourage openness

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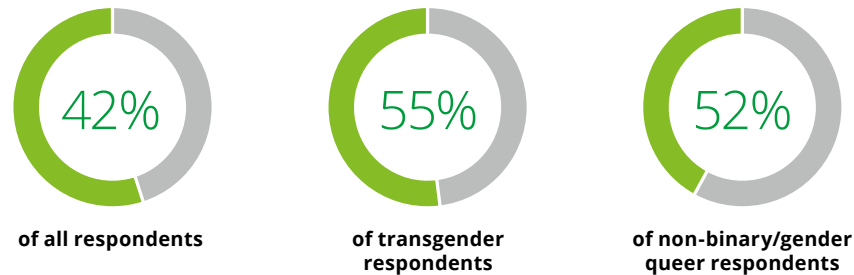
Workplace experiences
vary depending on
whether people
are out



Four in ten have experienced non-inclusive behaviors at work

Four in 10 respondents (42%) reported that they have experienced non-inclusive behavior in the workplace. This rises to over one-half for transgender (55%) and non-binary/gender queer (52%) respondents. When it comes to the type of non-inclusive behavior experienced, 65% of those respondents who experienced such behaviors experienced harassment while 89% experienced microaggressions, and 57% experienced both.

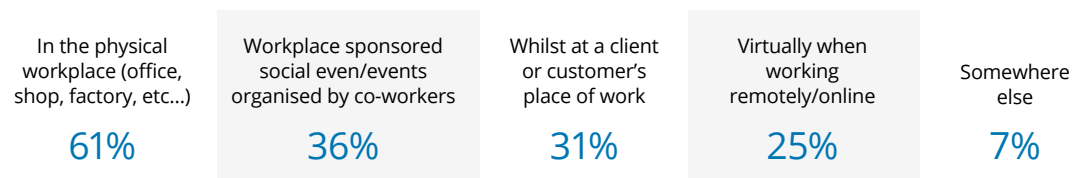
People who have experienced non-inclusive behaviors:



The majority of non-inclusive behaviors are experienced in the physical workplace

More respondents experienced non-inclusive behavior in the physical workplace than in the virtual workplace, with 61% of respondents saying they experienced these behaviors there versus 25% who experienced them virtually. Other physical locations also featured with just over one-third of respondents (36%) subjected to non-inclusive behavior at a workplace-sponsored social event, and—for just under a further third (31%)—the experience took place while at a client's place of work.

Personal experience of non-inclusive behaviour, and places where it happened



Unwanted jokes top the list of non-inclusive behaviors faced

When it comes to the non-inclusive behavior experienced, the most common was receiving unwanted comments or jokes of a sexual nature (39%) with this rising to 52% for non-binary/ gender queer respondents. This was followed by unwanted jokes at an individual's expense, which was experienced by about one-third of respondents. More than one-quarter (27%) experienced feeling patronized, undermined or underestimated because of their sexual orientation or gender identity (with more women than men citing this). The same number of respondents reported being on the receiving end of disparaging or belittling remarks due to their LGBT+ identity, with this most common among non-binary/gender queer respondents (35%). Being misgendered or 'dead named' (the act of deliberately or unintentionally calling a transgender and/or non-binary person by their birth name when they now use a different name) was faced by 34% of non-binary and genderqueer respondents.

Non-inclusive behaviors experienced - all respondents

Unwanted comments or jokes of a sexual nature	Unwanted jokes at my expense	Feeling patronized, undermined or underestimated	Disparaging comments about my gender identity or sexual orientation	Being excluded from informal interactions/ conversations
39%	31%	27%	27%	23%
Consistently being addressed in an unprofessional/ disrespectful way	Being interrupted and/or talked over in meetings	Repeated disparaging comments about the way I look	Disparaging/belittling comments about my relationship status	Not being invited to social events / work drinks
22%	22%	21%	21%	20%
Having someone else take the credit for my idea	Unwanted approaches or physical advances by colleagues	Being given fewer opportunities to speak up in meetings	Being misgendered or dead-named	Unwanted physical contact (in the workplace/ at work events)
20%	20%	19%	18%	18%
Unwanted inappropriate/ offensive/ suggestive communications	Repeated disparaging/ belittling comments about my race/ ethnicity	Physical aggression		
18%	15%	12%		



More needs to be done to help encourage the reporting of non-inclusive behavior

Just under half of respondents who have experienced non-inclusive behaviors say they are certain they experienced them as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity, with a further 37% saying they strongly suspect this to be due to their sexual orientation and 30% believing that their gender identity was the reason.

Just over one-half (55%) of these respondents reported the incident to someone in their organization and 43% did not. Of those who did report, more were likely to be out about their LGBTQ+ identity: 58% of those who reported were out about their sexual orientation with reporting dropping to 34% for those not out. Similarly, 64% of those who reported were out about their gender identity compared to the 41% of those not out.

Of those who did not report their experience to their employer, the most common reason was that they did not think their complaint would be taken seriously (40%), followed closely by a fear that reporting would make the situation worse (39%). Around a third didn't have confidence that their organization would take action, while just under a third were concerned about adverse career impact if they reported.

Of those who reported their experience to their employer, two-thirds were satisfied with the action taken—with this most frequently comprising support or counseling to the person who experienced the non-inclusive behavior. This was typically provided in combination with other actions, such as the person who displayed the non-inclusive behavior being provided with coaching/training or being disciplined but remaining in their role. 42% of respondents said that the person they reported was either openly dismissed or asked to leave the company (though the latter was communicated as a resignation).

Reasons for not reporting non-inclusive behavior

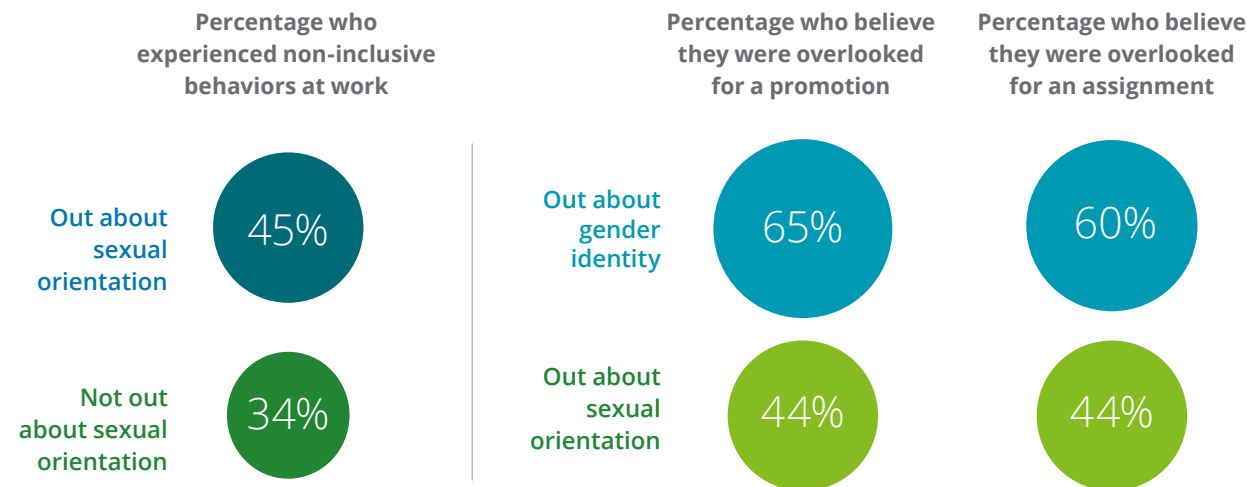
I didn't think my complaint would be taken seriously 40%	I feared doing so would make the situation worse 39%	I didn't have confidence that the organization would take action 33%
I was concerned that reporting the issue would adversely impact my career 30%	I didn't have faith in my employer's ability to stop the behavior 28%	The person/group who displayed the non-inclusive behavior held a position of authority/leadership 24%
I didn't feel the behavior was serious enough to report 23%	I didn't want other people at my company to know 22%	There was no clear way for me to raise the issue with my employer 18%



People who are out at work report different experiences with non-inclusive behaviors than those who are not

When it comes to sexual orientation, those respondents who are out about their sexual orientation with at least some colleagues at work are more likely to have experienced non-inclusive behavior (45%) than those who are not out (34%). The opposite is the case, however, when it comes to gender identity, with such behaviors being experienced by more respondents who are not out about their gender identity (62%) than those who are (52%).

When looking at other aspects of working life, and considering responses by gender identity and sexual orientation, those respondents who are out about their gender identity were more likely to report worse experiences than those who are out about sexual orientation. For example, those out about gender identity are more likely to believe that they were overlooked for promotion (65% for gender identity versus 44% for sexual orientation) or an assignment (60% for gender identity versus 44% for sexual orientation). This is even more pronounced among transgender respondents, with 73% believing they were overlooked for promotion due to their gender identity and 66% believing they were overlooked for an assignment due to this.



Respondents' reflections

This is a selection of views from LGBT+ respondents on inclusion in the workplace

In the first place I went to there was a community of people who were very homophobic, very transphobic and bullied me basically. And I had a manager that just said "you know what, just avoid them...don't go near them". Which very much felt like it placed the responsibility on me.

- Millennial, Non-binary, Lesbian, UK

The documented policies for trans employees make me very comfortable. That helps me a lot for my mental health, knowing and feeling I'm protected from discrimination and harassment.

- Gen X, Trans, Queer, US

I felt seen when I was interviewed by someone from the LGBTQ+ community. Like people from my community are finally included. I felt motivated.

- Millennial, Male, Gay, South Africa

I want to stay longer so that I can also create change and be a role model for those that come after me.

- Millennial, Male, Gay South Africa

It feels really important to have the kind of environment where you can feel accepted and like you don't have to withhold information. I think it's just really important to foster a positive, healthy mindset in the workplace, it also helps prevent burnout.

- Gen Z, Non-binary, Lesbian, US

I wish we had a support network at work, a place we can call our own and have the ability to talk to people that understand.

- Millennial, Non-Binary, Bisexual, South Africa

I am not very comfortable wearing my type of clothes, very bright colors and all because I see in people's eyes that weird gaze is there.

- Millennial, Transgender, India

There are two gay men in high positions, I like that about my company.

- Millennial, Female, Lesbian, Mexico

There was this LGBT+ role model directory. It was just like a list of people, what they do, their background, how they've got to that position. I was asked if I wanted to be in it, and I said yes. They do a mentoring thing as well, that is amazing too. When you are coming from a particular minority, being able to talk to someone about what it means to be out and visible in those positions is great.

- Millennial, Non-binary, Lesbian, UK

I think it's important to be your real self at work, without any fear of being judged.

- Millennial, Female, Lesbian, South Africa

I also was very intentional around asking each company that was interviewing me specifically what diversity, equity and inclusion looked like at their companies and what kinds of initiatives they had, and whether it was generally supported.

- Gen Z, Trans, Queer, US

If we have the support of allies who are sharing pronouns first, then that's an invitation for us as well to be comfortable. It's just really subtle ways that can make people recognize that this is a universal experience.

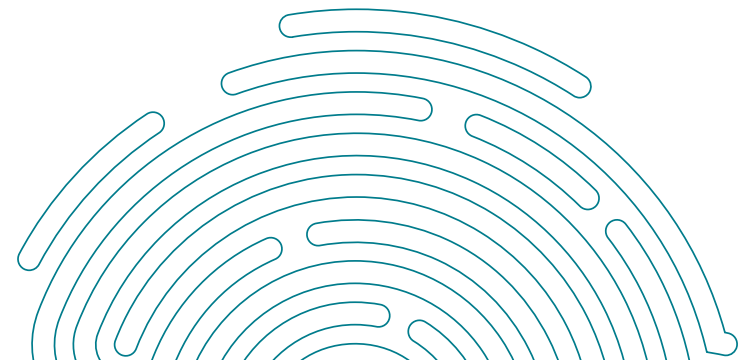
- Gen Z, Non-binary, Lesbian, US

If I do see someone there that is openly gay, then it does make me feel instantly more at home.

- Millennial, Female, Lesbian, UK

What if coming out would hinder my progression at work? You never know people's agendas.

- Millennial, Transgender, Pansexual, South Africa



Recommendations

The findings of the Deloitte Global LGBT+ Inclusion @ Work survey provides unique insights into the experiences of LGBT+ people in the workplace. It also shines a light on what LGBT+ employees look for in an employer—and the likely outcome if they don't experience this.

So, what could employers do so they don't fall short of these expectations? Here's a starting point:



Clearly demonstrate a commitment to LGBT+ inclusion

Demonstrating a commitment to LGBT+ inclusion means more than talking about it—it means taking actions that will likely have an impact. The result of this appears to be clear: respondents who see their employers demonstrating commitment to LGBT+ inclusion report a positive effect on themselves and their lives in the workplace. Yet with a little more than four in 10 respondents reporting that their employers fail to demonstrate this commitment either internally or externally, it is equally apparent that employers should do more.

When it comes to internal actions, employers should remember that employees value the opportunity to get involved and expect to see an impact. From an external commitment perspective, this should not be viewed in isolation to internal actions; indeed, signing up to the UN standards, for example, not only shows a formal and serious commitment to LGBT+ inclusion but also provides a framework through which companies can actively demonstrate a commitment to LGBT+ inclusion both within their organization and outside it.



Provide opportunities to get involved in inclusion and make a difference

The survey identified that LGBT+ employees value seeing diversity along with the ability to get involved, with nearly seven in 10 respondents citing workforce diversity as a deciding factor when looking for a new job and slightly less than two-thirds citing the ability to get involved in diversity and inclusion initiatives as key. These figures were even higher for Gen Z and millennial groups.

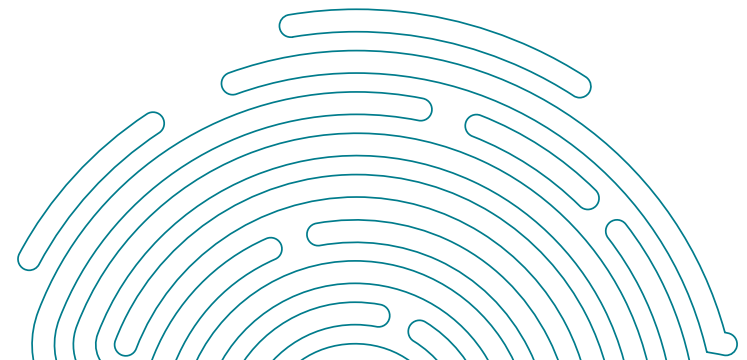
Employers should provide an environment where such opportunities exist—for example the ability to get involved in Employee Resource Groups, providing lived experience input into strategy or getting involved in reverse mentoring. And they should also understand that prospective employees want to see diversity when they look at the organization—both in relation to its staffing and other workplace aspects.



Harness the power of allyship and role models

A majority of those out with at least some colleagues about their sexual orientation or gender identity reported that allyship helps them be out, underscoring the importance of making LGBT+ inclusion part of everybody's day to day, beyond solely LGBT+ employees.

Organizations who wish to foster an LGBT+ inclusive environment should embed allyship into their strategy—this includes helping enable allies to join LGBT+ Employee Resource Groups and encouraging allies, including senior individuals, to be visible and vocal in their support for the LGBT+ community.



Recommendations



Enable people to feel more comfortable being out, including with direct managers, by addressing and removing barriers

The value of helping enable LGBT+ colleagues to be out at work is strong. However, it is also apparent that concerns exist when it comes to being out with more senior people; indeed, when compared with being out about sexual orientation or gender identity with close colleagues, comfort to be out at work drops significantly when it comes to being out with direct managers.

And, while some respondents prefer not to discuss their personal life at work, for many others it is a fear of unequal treatment and discrimination that is the principal driver of their decision to only be out to close colleagues, or indeed not to be out at work at all. And for some this is driven by concern for personal safety.

Organizations should work to address these concerns, helping enable LGBT+ colleagues to feel able to be out with all colleagues, including their direct managers and leaders, should they wish to be—and to be so without fear of unequal treatment or impact to personal safety. This means messaging from the top emphasizing the importance of LGBT+ inclusion to the organization. It means enabling managers and leaders to understand how to have a conversation about LGBT+ inclusion and to learn from lived experience through—for example—storytelling. Importantly, it also means requiring leaders to create and maintain a respectful and inclusive working environment in which barriers to being out are addressed and removed.



Consider the intersectional experiences of LGBT+ employees and address them

LGBT+ employees are not a monolithic group, and the findings highlight how the intersectionality of multi-faceted LGBT+ identities results in different workplace experiences. For example, expectations around workplace diversity and the opportunity to get involved in inclusion activities were highest among Gen Z and millennial cohorts compared to Gen X respondents. Similarly, these groups attach a higher level of importance to being able to freely express LGBT+ identity at work compared to their Gen X peers, feel less reticent about sharing their private life at work, and are more likely to look for an organization demonstrating a stronger commitment to LGBT+ inclusion—the latter also being especially true for ethnic minority respondents.

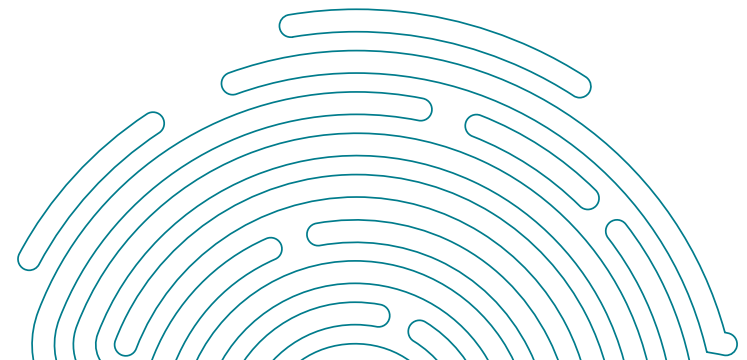
Employers should seek to better understand this divergence of expectations and experiences and, where required, to reflect it in their LGBT+ inclusion strategies. This means enabling people to self-identify and to feel able to freely express their views from a lived experience perspective. And it means leaders listening to these views and, where required, taking steps to address them.



Address non-inclusive behaviors

With four in 10 respondents having faced non-inclusive behaviors—with this climbing to more than one-half for transgender (55%) and non-binary/gender queer (52%) respondents—non-inclusive behaviors are adversely impacting LGBT+ employees' experience at work. In addition, most respondents were either sure or strongly suspected that the behavior they experienced was down to their LGBT+ identity.

Employers have work to do to help ensure that such behaviors do not happen and, when they do, to help enable all LGBT+ employees to feel able to report without concern. This means sending a clear and consistent message from the top of the organization, alongside educating on such behaviors and their adverse impact, and taking appropriate action when such behaviors are found to have taken place.



Methodology

The Deloitte Global LGBT+ Inclusion @ Work study is a global survey of 5,474 non-Deloitte LGBT+ people who work in various sectors that took place between January and February 2023 via online quantitative interviews and one-to-one in-depth qualitative discussions.



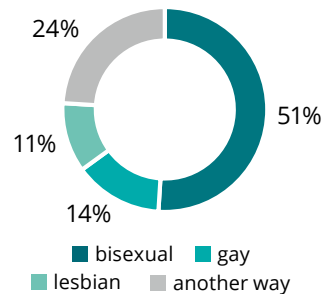
Countries surveyed

Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, India, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States.

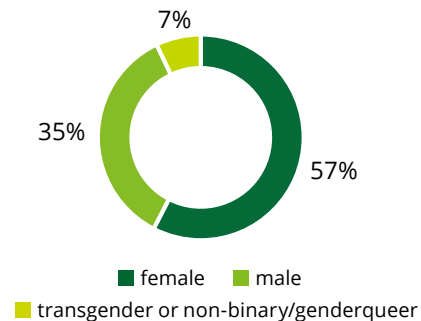


Demographics*

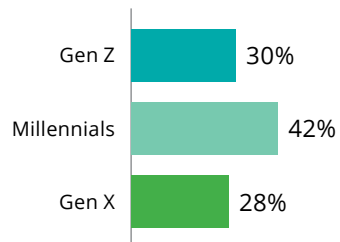
Identify as (sexual orientation)



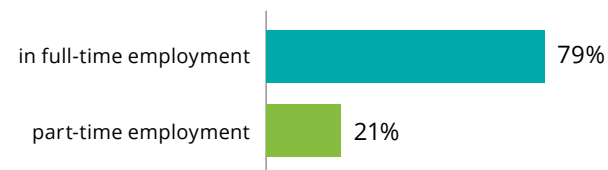
Identify as (gender)**



Age***



Employment status



* Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%.

** Respondents could select all applicable identifiers

*** Gen Z defined as born between 1995 – 2005, millennials as born between 1983 – 1994, and Gen X as born between 1967 – 1982





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