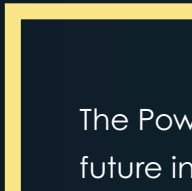



POWER OF SOCIALISATION





The Power of Socialisation Survey explores the attitudes of today's employees and the workforce of the future in collaboration with Mintel. 30,000 office workers and students in 21 countries were surveyed about socialising in the workplace and the effects that has on their sense of belonging, aligning to company goals and effect on their productivity. Within the UK 2,000 people were polled.



FOREWARD

KIRSTY ADAMS

PEOPLE DIRECTOR FOR TALENT, LEADERSHIP, LEARNING AND INCLUSION



Social connection isn't just a nice to have, but a necessary requirement of a happy and healthy life. Given that employees spend up to a third of their lives working, through our Power of Socialisation research, we have a more in-depth understanding of its impact on both employees and employers. Our research found that when a business has a sociable culture, employees are happier, stay with their employer longer, better understand their company's vision and their overall wellbeing improved.

Now more than ever, creating environments that nurture and support positive social environments is crucial – helping overall health, wellbeing and happiness, which in turn enhances peoples' loyalty and productivity. 'The Power of Socialisation' report highlights that enabling powerful moments of social connection at work is a necessity - something that is key within Compass for our colleagues, but also increasingly for our clients and customers across arrange of sectors."

WHY DOES WELLBEING MATTER?

Overall wellbeing of your employees

Friendships at work create a sense of belonging. Loneliness leads to employees taking twice as many sick days* and can have as much of a mortality risk as smoking, alcohol consumption and physical inactivity. 'The Power of Socialisation' report found:

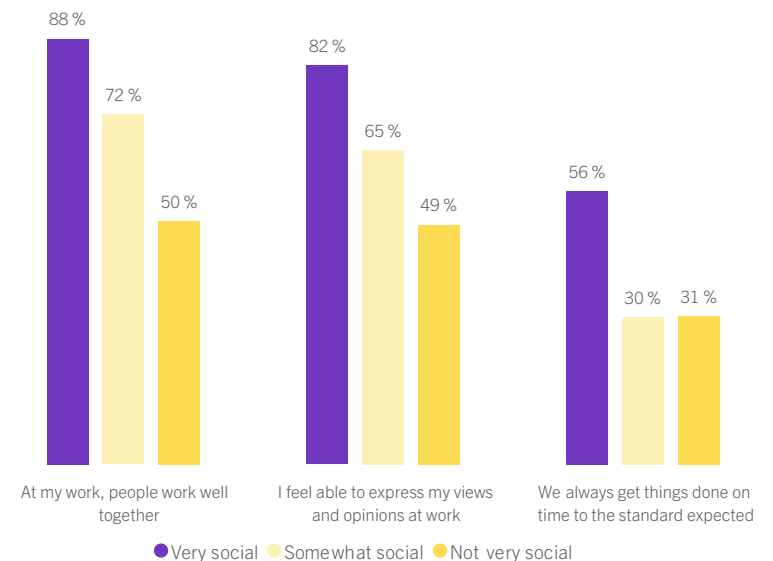
- Friends at work are just as important as friends outside work, according to **62%** of employees
- **77%** of workers who socialise in the office feel they belong at work, falling to **45%** among those who don't

The war for new talent

- **38%** of employees feel less loyal towards their employer now than they did before the pandemic, rising to **51%** of Gen Z and **45%** of Millennials. Source: Global Eating at Work Survey (GEAW23)
- Reduced loyalty results in higher employee turnover, increased costs and disruption for employers and potential erosion of company culture and cohesion

- **48%** of employees who describe their company as very social promote their organisation in an Employee Net Promoter Score vs **15%** who describe it as not very social
- Employees find that social workplaces are also inclusive – **83%** of employees who describe their organisation as very social agree that their organisation is actively promoting a diverse and inclusive environment for employees vs **45%** who describe it as not very social
- Employees who are aligned with the company goals:
 - Make decisions that are in the best interest of the company
 - Can focus their efforts on activities that directly contribute to the execution of the company's strategies
 - Feel a sense of purpose
 - Socialisation helps to ensure that employees are engaged with the business vision

% of employees who agree, by social culture



* BMC Public Health



75% of employees who socialise with their colleagues say that 'I understand the strategy and goals of my organisation', increasing to 85% if people socialise across different levels

75 %

46% of employees who don't socialise can say the same

46 %

The return of hybrid workers to the physical workplace

Effective strategies to encourage the return to the workplace can include team-building activities, collaborative projects, and spaces designed for interaction. Following on from our GEAW survey last year, almost a third of global employees are hybrid. In the survey last year **56%** of employees ranked flexible working hours as an important employee benefit, with **63%** of hybrid workers reporting that they look forward to going to work to see their colleagues. **44%** of hybrid workers agree they **would come into their place of work more often** if there were more opportunities to socialise with their colleagues

- The return to work is about incentivising, not imposing. We need to make the in-office experience enjoyable and beneficial to create a willingness among employees



Growth Director at Restaurant Associates, Peter Champain shares how, as a business, they're adapting to the evolving needs of today's employees and what the expectations are for the workforce of the future.

"We know that food and drink are key elements to creating that positive and inclusive workplace environment and we recognise that our offerings need to align with the unique needs of our clients. That's why we work hard to deliver premium hospitality experiences, ranging from deli bars to fine dining, and even delivered hospitality services, in partnership with Rocket and new partner, **Grazing**. It means that employees can enjoy delicious, nourishing food with their colleagues without needing to leave the workplace. We're proud that we can provide this level of flexibility and

that it's tailored to support the hybrid workplace model. Eating and drinking areas are central to employees' social experience and each space should promote convenience, community, and enjoyment".

With this new expectation of **added value** when employees go into the office, and the report showing that **61% of employees** who lunch together participate in team building, workplace celebrations, and social events—compared to just **14%** of those who don't—it is evident that **food and drink** are playing a powerful role in shaping the **workplace**.



1. MOMENTS OF SOCIALISATION

An intentional social strategy can ignite meaningful commercial success, but only if it's built on a foundation of proactive social culture.


Socialisation connects people to people and benefits employee wellbeing.

These moments of socialisation can be split into two: **Organised v Organic**

Organised socialisation connects people to the employer and drives collaboration, productivity and loyalty

Organic socialisation connects people to people and employees want more of it

There are two main ways employees socialise, so which should you prioritise?

 **Successful workplace**
The benefits of the social workplace

Where employees naturally come together to socialise

 **Effective Organic Socialisation**

 **Effective Organised Socialisation**

Where social events/activities are planned in advance by employer or employees

Providing the right space and food and drink for organic socialisation

The right Environment


The right Food & Drink


The right Environment


The right Food & Drink


Providing the right food and drink, and environments at organised social events

 **Culture of Socialisation**

35min

In 2023, the average length of the main break at work is 35 minutes, down from 38.6 in 2020

Source: GEAW23

3.9

The average number of times per week employees stop working and take a main break, down from 4.2 in 2020

Source: GEAW23

75%

Of employees believe that having lunch with their colleagues can help them build stronger relationships

Source: GEAW23

“When do you prefer to have casual conversations with your colleagues?”



20%

Before work



32%

During working hours



57%

During short breaks



46%

During long breaks (ie lunch)



15%

After work

Breaks are not detrimental to productivity but support it. Companies must increase the frequency and quality of employee break occasions to protect energy levels and support employee connectivity.

64 %

of Generation Z and Younger Millennial employees would like to socialise with their colleagues more often

68 %

of employees who engage in organic socialisation feel they belong at work, compared to just 28% of those who don't socialise organically

Organised socialisation connects people to their employer. Employees who take part in organised socialisation are more likely to...

Workplace events have a benefit to the employer, including a more productive workforce

77%

...understand the strategy and goals of the organisation vs 61% who don't engage in organised socialisation

57%

...feel connected with senior leadership* vs 21% who don't engage in organised socialisation

55%

...see clear opportunities for career advancement within their organisation vs 24% who don't engage in organised socialisation

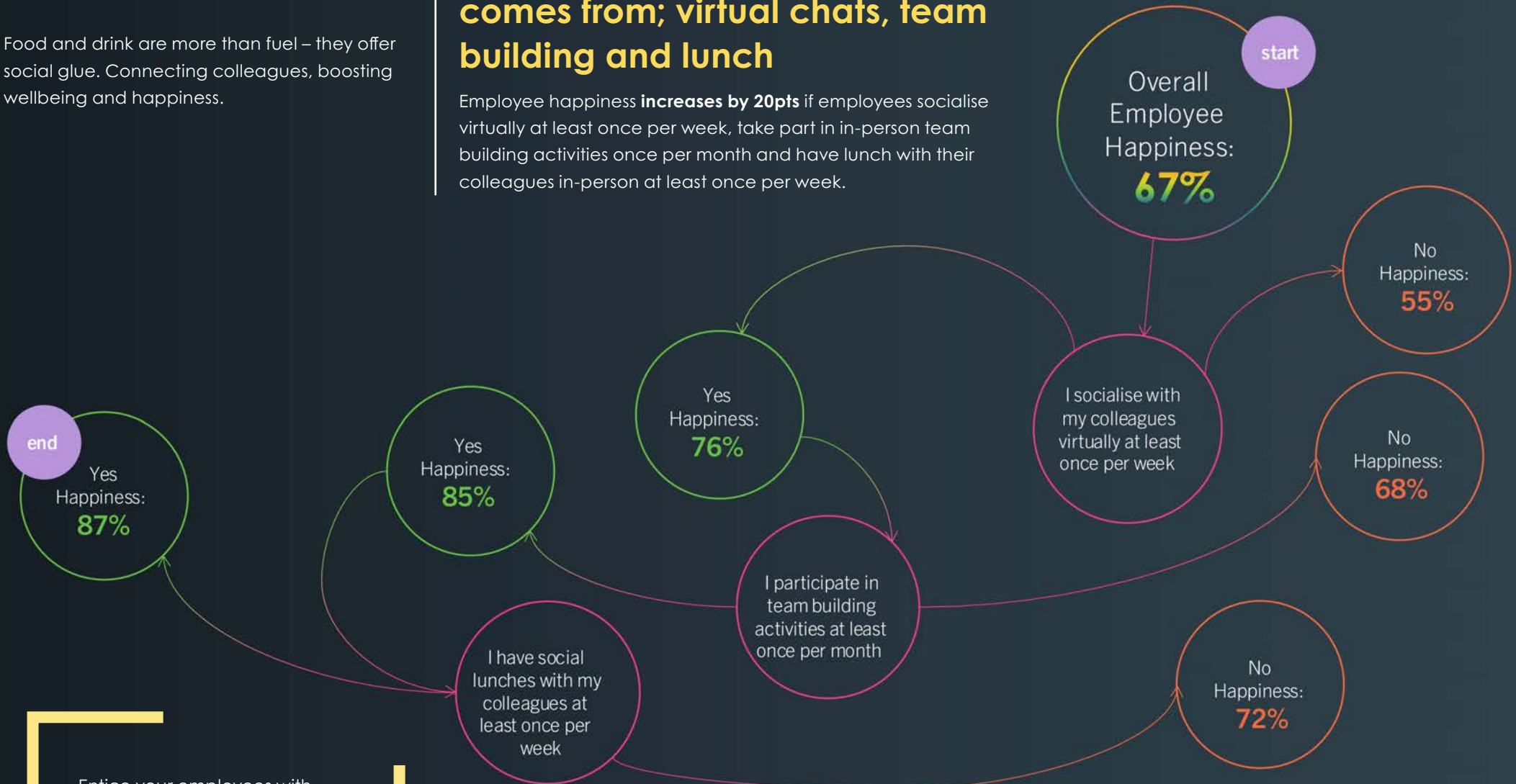
* agree with the statement "Senior leaders at my organisation socialise with employees at all levels"

2. RIGHT FOOD

Food and drink are more than fuel – they offer social glue. Connecting colleagues, boosting wellbeing and happiness.

The biggest boost to happiness comes from; virtual chats, team building and lunch

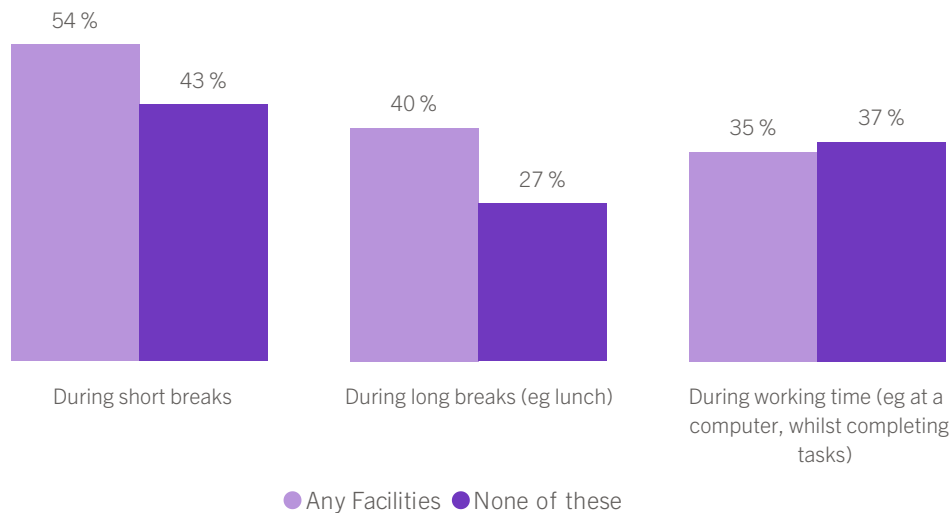
Employee happiness **increases by 20pts** if employees socialise virtually at least once per week, take part in in-person team building activities once per month and have lunch with their colleagues in-person at least once per week.



Entice your employees with better breakfast [Evolution of the workplace breakfast | Euresit](#)

Having F&B facilities makes it easier for employees to socialise at lunch... rather than during working time

When employees socialise, by F & B facilities



63%

of employees who have food and drink facilities at work have lunches with their colleagues at least once per week compared to **38%** with no food and drink facilities



Food and drink facilities should be at the heart of workplace spaces. This will encourage social interaction and signal to employees that taking a break, nourishing themselves and connecting with their colleagues is a priority.

ESS Enhances the Lived Experience for the UK's Service Personnel

ESS Defence supports over 250 military establishments across the UK. Our Defence clients provide a 'home from home' living environment for service personnel and, like many employers, are experiencing increasing pressures around attracting and retaining the best talent in a highly competitive market. To position themselves as employers of choice and support ongoing welfare, our clients are continually focused on enhancing the lived experience for members of the Armed Forces. The following case studies describe how ESS has collaborated on projects in support of this objective.

ESS Delivers Brand New Dining Concept for the British Army

ESS collaborated with the Army, site clients and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to transform the 'Trax Diner' at Allenby Barracks and the 'Heroes Kitchen' at Kendrew Barracks as part of the Army EATS project. The facilities enhance the lived experience of service personnel by:

- Providing a range of innovative dining options over and above the traditional three meals a day
- Delivering contemporary restaurant environments that encourage people to get together and socialise over food
- Opening for an additional 50+ hours weekly to provide the flexibility needed by today's soldier

The team used extensive knowledge and consumer insight from its Defence contracts and the wider Compass business, coupled with current high street trends, to develop a diverse food offer that incorporates:

- Nutritionally balanced meals providing great value for money
- Creative and exciting global food concepts
- Cook to order options prepared theatre style
- Hot and cold deli items to eat in or grab and go
- Lighter, healthier choices
- A selection of desserts

The chefs use fresh ingredients to prepare dishes that are colourful, appetising and full of flavour.

Digital technology is further increasing customer choice through the introduction of a number of 'on trend' food concepts, for click and collect via the ESS App.

The food court layouts have been designed to support customer flow. Individual serving stations reduce queueing times and extensive digital screen media makes it easy to identify the options available. The seating areas incorporate standard, high level and soft seating, providing light, bright social spaces that encourage service personnel to meet and relax with their colleagues.

ESS Enhances the Lived Experience at MOD Lyneham

ESS worked with MOD Lyneham and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to redesign and develop the Junior Ranks Bar on site, providing a social hub where people can meet and socialise with friends and colleagues.

The team worked with its longstanding design partner, an expert in developing modern foodservice and leisure facilities, to create a contemporary social venue with different zones to meet a variety of requirements, combining a main bar with a separate café and games room.

The main bar includes booth seating, sofas, high level seating and tables and chairs, providing a versatile space that can be used throughout the day and into the evening. Screens enable customers to watch music or sporting events. A specially selected drinks range is served, including a wide variety of non-alcoholic options to cater for different tastes.

'The Snug' provides a welcoming café environment with comfortable seating. There is an extensive drinks range, including cold drinks, smoothies and coffee. The food offer incorporates freshly made sandwiches, paninis, toasties and pizzas, as well as sweet treats.

The games room provides further opportunities for service personnel to relax and enjoy themselves.

Modern décor, furniture and artwork are incorporated to provide an attractive hybrid facility where service personnel will want to spend their leisure time.

The venue is open from late morning to evening, meaning it can be used in different ways, from socialising with friends and colleagues to working alone or holding informal meetings.



Food to support organic socialisation

Lunch is a catalyst for ongoing, organic socialisation but casual conversations play a part.



Casual conversations are centred around food; a choice of snacks serves as social glue in the workplace

34%

of employees who do not have any snack options available at their workplace have casual social conversations with their colleagues in-person multiple times a day...

47%

... this rises to **47%** among employees who have all four of sweet, savoury, healthy snack and baked goods options available

Could you be offering a great range of options on your menus that “spark conversation” or inspire casual chats?



There has to be a balance of good and bad food (for the days when you just need something naughty)

- Charlene, SE, Office Worker

no snacks



22%

sweet and healthy snacks

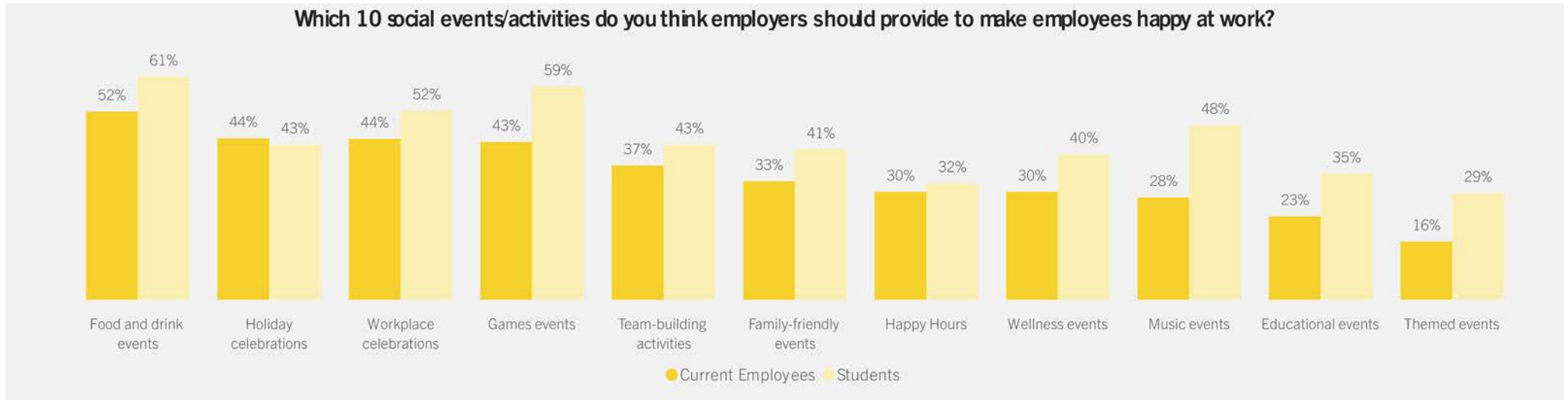


30%

of employees who consider their workplace to be very social, by snack provisions

Top tip - Investing in a variety of day part offerings is crucial to foster a culture of socialisation

Food & drink events are an employee favourite. In the future, immersive, experience-led events will gain traction.



While happy hours and classic events have been suitable for the workforce of the early 2000s, the next generation of employees want work events to be purposeful and provide experiences that reflect the hobbies and interests of their personal lives

Alcohol is no longer a focal point at employee events; a sentiment shared across generations

24%

of employees say alcohol is something they would want to see at workplace social events

55%

of students say that having non-alcoholic beverages is a great way to be inclusive at workplace social events

3. RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

HARWELL

The partnership between Eurest and Harwell has brought transformative changes to the campus's food and beverage offerings as part of Harwell's ambitious expansion and amenities plans.

Harwell, the UK's leading science and innovation campus, is on track to grow its 'Science City' in Oxfordshire, making room for thousands more people to join its innovation community. There are currently 7,000 scientists, engineers and innovators working across 200 organisations on the site. This is scheduled to significantly increase by 2028 – and Eurest will play a key role supporting this burgeoning community.

At the heart of the proposal lies a commitment to supporting local businesses and sourcing products from local areas to bolster the regional economy while advancing Eurest's Climate Net Zero targets.

Simon Ruck, Director, Asset Management, Harwell Campus, added: "We are committed to improving the facilities available to our community, and this new partnership will ensure they are as world-class as the organisations who are based here."

The Lightbox Cafe and hospitably offer a grazing restaurant, frictionless technology for seamless purchases and special events.

This eight-year contract represents a significant milestone for Eurest, a subsidiary of the Compass Group UK & Ireland, and aligns perfectly with Harwell's broader strategy of establishing a vibrant 21st Century science and innovation community.

Morag Freathy, Managing Director Eurest, said: "The campus is extremely impressive. Working with a likeminded client base that is open to new ideas and understands the crucial role food has to play, in terms of productivity and sustainability, is a wonderful opportunity for our teams."

The right environment is an enabler of socialisation. If you want people to work effectively together, you have to give them the spaces to be able to work together. Huddle rooms and collaborative work zones boost teamwork.

Workplaces must provide multifunctional environments that cater to diverse needs, enabling escapism, experiences and lasting connections to enhance wellbeing.



PETERBOROUGH CITY HOSPITAL

Medirest opens well-being focused restaurant at Peterborough City Hospital

Marking its 17 year the long-standing partnership with Progress Health and Peterborough City Hospital (PCH), Medirest has opened "The Wellspring Restaurant". Following a significant refurbishment of the original restaurant the new design aims to enhance the dining experience for staff, patients and visitors, providing a welcoming and well-being-focused environment.

Innovation has been put at the heart of the refurbishment, with key features including :

- a full front-of-house redesign with the addition of new facilities such as three new hot counters and a multi-deck for grab-and-go hot snacks
- a revamped centre island featuring a salad bar, cake counter, and hot drinks
- digital menu boards for easy navigation
- three meeting pods introduced for staff use, complemented by comfortable seating throughout offers extra meeting space for small gatherings and informal catch-ups
- a dedicated staff well-being room - providing a relaxing space away from the hospital hustle and bustle
- a staff-only dining area, and an upgraded patio with parasols for shades. Introduction of booth seating for informal catch-ups, creating a more flexible and user-friendly dining area
- The Smart Market now provides 24/7 hot food options for overnight staff, ensuring round-the-clock service

These enhancements aim to streamline service processes and ensure the continuous availability of hot, affordable, and nutritious food for employees, 24/7.

The overall environment now features a calm, inviting atmosphere with a mix of seating options, from comfy low-level armchairs to large high tables and stools.

Sustainability has also been a key consideration in the refurbishment. New LED lighting has been installed to reduce energy consumption, and the new fridges are more energy-efficient, contributing to the hospital's eco-friendly initiatives.

Health and wellness have been promoted through the introduction of nutritious meal options and wellness programs, ensuring that the restaurant supports the well-being of all its users.

The long-term vision for the partnership is to provide a facility of excellence that offers high-quality food at affordable prices, supporting the cost of living and promoting the well-being of staff, patients, and visitors to Peterborough City Hospital.

Neil Mitchell, Business Director, Medirest said:

"We are delighted to have opened The Wellspring Restaurant. Working in collaboration with PCH, we wanted to create a space that would meet the needs of the hospital's staff, patients and visitors. By putting wellbeing at the heart of the offer, the innovative design now provides a calm, relaxing, environment for all to enjoy. Additionally, NHS staff will have access to nutritious food 24/7, supporting them when working night shifts. We are looking forward to hearing the feedback from our customers in the coming weeks and months."

Joel Harrison, Chief Finance Officer for North West Anglia Trust, who runs Peterborough City Hospital, added:

"It's great to have a new restaurant that not only offers a wide range of cuisines to suit everyone's tastes they are also offering our staff reduced prices. The restaurant is open for staff, visitors and patients and has out of hours facilities so that people can get drinks and food at any time of day or night. The facilities look great and provide a relaxed environment for people to take time out and improve their wellbeing."

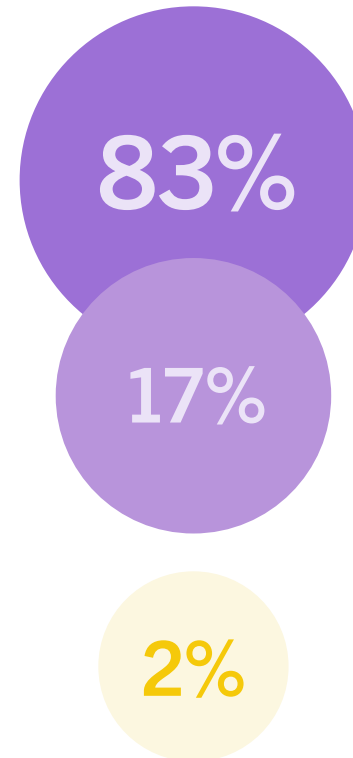


Why is the right environment so important?

Workplaces must provide multifunctional environments that cater to diverse needs, enabling escapism, experiences and lasting connections to enhance wellbeing. Employees spend a third of their lives working hard so their social spaces must work just as hard to provide essential escapism.

67% of employees say that it is important that social spaces look and feel like somewhere they want to spend time.

When workspaces are enjoyable to be in, happiness increases, which boosts reputation



of employees who say their workplace is an enjoyable space to be in are happy at work...

... but happiness falls to 17% if the environment is not enjoyable

of employees promote their employer if their workspace is not enjoyable to be in

Creating enjoyable work environments can boost job satisfaction and, in turn, create a more competitive employer

A bad environment poses a major barrier for employees looking to rest and reset on their breaks and can, in turn, significantly undermine socialisation in the workplace.

- In the top 3 of dream spaces, **54%** of employees wanted a calming scape to recharge and rest

Regardless of industry, break spaces must cater to employees' needs for both relaxing and revitalising – uplifting and energising environments with elements like natural light and modern design features to invigorate employees.

Features of a great break space

- Comfortable seating and dining spaces are top priority for employees – **51%** want a comfy place to sit whilst **45%** want to include tables and chairs as important so people can sit together in their shortlist of five features that make break areas more enjoyable to be in
- **34%** of employees include outdoor space so that people can be outside and get fresh air in their shortlist of five things they think would make employee break areas enjoyable to be in.
- **26%** want a connection to nature

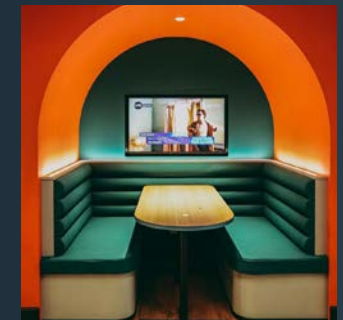
CHARTWELLS UNIVERSITIES

Building beautiful spaces is just as important as creating beautiful dishes.

Transforming our spaces into social destinations everyone wants to visit, providing students with places where they can come together to relax, work, eat and have fun really is key to creating that 'sticky campus'.

That's why we have partnered with Benchmark Designs Ltd to transform Eat Central at the University of Sussex into a truly outstanding, beautiful space filled with colour and fun but most importantly, built with the student in mind and how they may wish to use the space.

Eat Central is now home to a host of delicious food offers such as our pocket friendly Saver Menu, Bamboo – our Pan-Asian concept, Tortilla & our street food partner brand, Hot Chicken, all available to enjoy in a welcoming, comfortable space flexible to the needs of the consumer.



4. CULTURE OF SOCIALISATION

To create a culture of socialisation you need to align to your company goals. Employees derive quite different benefits from organic and organised socialisation yet both are important.

Socialisation generates teams that care, work hard and produce high quality work together and they strategically curate opportunities for interaction.

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF SOCIALISATION IN YOUR WORKPLACE



Perhaps the most compelling story about socialisation at work is the overwhelming desire for inclusive social interactions.

The world has moved on from just wanting to socialise with those we see as most like ourselves to a place where employees prioritise ensuring that all colleagues feel willing and able to participate in social activities. This alone shows how just important socialisation has become, not just in the workforce but in society at large.

A social workforce will only emerge if employees feel empowered and encouraged by leaders

18%

of employees say that limited time available for social activities (eg heavy workload, tight deadlines) prevents them from socialising at work

75%

of employees say it's important that employees feel able to socialise

SO, WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW?





If you would like to discuss this further please contact:
saleslead@compass-group.co.uk