PARIO PARTNERS

# Generational Intelligence: Futureproof Your Nursing Workforce

# Executive Summary

Millennials now represent a substantial share of the nursing workforce and are influencing expectations around development, flexibility, technology, and values-driven culture. This cohort is more likely to report burnout, seek career progression through mobility, and expect ethical leadership and digital capability as standard.

Pario Partners surveyed 233 UK-based nurses across the NHS, private, and not-for-profit sectors.

The data shows clear generational patterns, particularly among Millennials, that employers must respond to in order to attract, retain, and support their workforce effectively.

Strategies built around structured development, practical wellbeing, clear leadership, and digitally enabled systems are no longer optional. Aligning with Millennial priorities is now a critical factor in workforce sustainability and risk mitigation.

# About this Report

Generational shifts are reshaping the nursing workforce. As expectations evolve, healthcare employers are rethinking how they attract, retain, and develop staff.

This report explores the priorities of Millennial nurses — a generation known for valuing purpose, growth, digital fluency, mental health, and social responsibility — and what those priorities mean for workforce strategy.

It offers practical, high-level guidance to inform planning, retention, and organisational development in a changing employment landscape.

# Methodology

Pario Partners conducted an online survey in April 2025, gathering responses from 233 qualified nurses across NHS, private, and not-for-profit healthcare settings.

Participants answered demographic and attitudinal questions using a five-point scale across seven themes: training, career progression, work-life balance, workplace culture, technology, social responsibility, and sustainability.

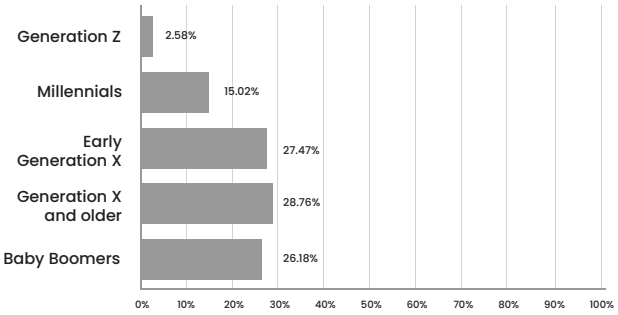
Respondents were grouped by age to reflect accepted generational categories: 20–29 (Gen Z), 30–39 (Millennials), 40–49 (Early Gen X), 50–59 (Gen X+), and 60+ (Baby Boomers).

Generational motivations have been extensively explored in credible research. This report should not be used to stereotype individuals or make assumptions based on age. Rather, it is intended to support inclusive workforce planning.

# Participant Profile

Respondents were grouped by age as a proxy for generation. Most respondents identified as female, accounting for seventy-nine percent, with twenty-one percent identifying as male. In terms of workplace setting, sixty-three percent work in the NHS, thirty-six percent in the private sector, and one percent in charitable or not-for-profit organisations.

**Respondents by Generation**



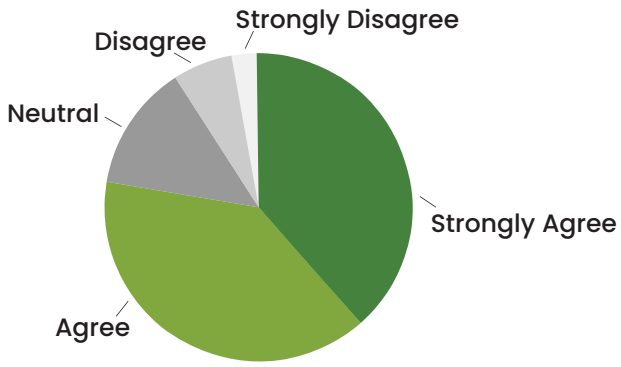

# Data Focus: Training & Development

*Offering development boosts millennial retention*

Millennials demonstrate a clear link between access to professional development and long-term retention. While sentiment toward learning is broadly positive across the workforce, Millennials are more likely to view career growth as a continuous journey, shaped by skills acquisition, purpose, and progression.

Sixty percent of respondents felt supported in their training and development. However, older cohorts were more likely to express neutrality or dissatisfaction, indicating a potential disconnect in how support is delivered or perceived. This highlights the importance of communication, visibility, and tailoring development offers to meet the expectations of different age groups.

**Specialist Training Improves Nursing Effectiveness**




Millennials were more likely to report that enhanced training opportunities would influence their decision to remain in a role. For this generation, visible investment in development is not only expected, it is seen as a marker of value and a driver of loyalty.

**Action for Employers**

- Make training support visible and tailored. Millennials equate learning opportunities with feeling valued.
- Strengthen communication to close generational perception gaps and ensure development feels accessible and equitable.

**Service Spotlight: Executive Search**

We specialise in recruiting transformational leaders, using an evidence-based assessment to ensure alignment between leadership style and organisational culture.

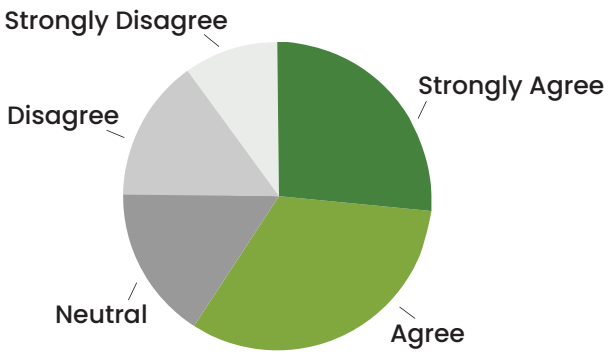
# Data Focus: Career Progression

*Twenty-four percent of nurses expect to move employers within two years*

Career mobility is a key consideration for Millennials. Eighty percent of Millennial respondents said they are open to changing healthcare settings, such as moving from hospital to community or hospice care, to advance their careers. This figure is more than double that of respondents aged fifty and over, underlining a clear generational difference in attitudes toward progression and flexibility.

Mentorship and structure play a critical role across all age groups. Seventy-one percent of nurses agreed that clear progression pathways and strong mentorship influence their decision to stay in a role. Among Millennials, this rose to eighty-three percent, reflecting their preference for ongoing feedback and clearly defined development routes. Traditional management roles appeal to some, but many in this cohort favour specialisation, lateral movement, or alternative leadership pathways.

**I see myself in my current role in two years' time**




While fifty-nine percent of respondents expect to remain in their current role over the next two years, twenty-four percent do not, with Millennials significantly more likely to express this uncertainty. This reflects a workforce more open to job mobility, where career growth is often pursued through change rather than tenure. To retain this generation, employers must offer visible, flexible development opportunities that align with evolving definitions of leadership.

**Action for Employers**

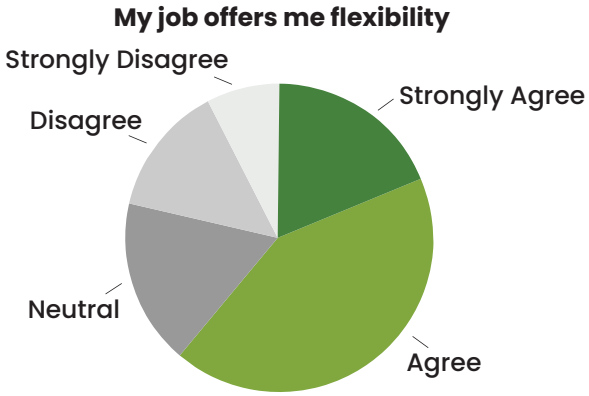
- Invest in mentorship and future leadership development through clinical, educational, and non-traditional career pathways.
- Engage Millennials through structured progression, continuous feedback, and roles that reflect their values and working styles.

# Data Focus: Work-Life Balance

*Burnout is widespread*

Work-life balance is a concern across all generations, but expectations and experiences vary by age. While Millennials are often viewed as facing the greatest strain, balancing career, childcare, and elder care, regression analysis found no significant differences in reported challenges between age groups. This suggests that pressures around work-life balance are shared more evenly than commonly assumed.

Nurses in older groups were less likely to express a desire to reduce hours, challenging the assumption that late-career professionals naturally seek to scale back. Financial factors may play a role, with older staff remaining in full-time roles longer due to rising living costs or delayed retirement. For Millennials, the desire for flexibility is often present but shaped by similar economic realities, resulting in complex and sometimes conflicting expectations around work.




Burnout was significantly prevalent among Millennials, with seventy-four percent reporting direct experience. Beyond clinical pressures, this may reflect broader societal challenges such as rising costs of living, delayed milestones, and high expectations for personal fulfilment. Addressing burnout among this group requires more than shift flexibility; it calls for proactive, culturally aware approaches to wellbeing and support.

**Action for Employers**

- Design flexible working options that reflect clinical realities while aligning with Millennial expectations for balance and autonomy.
- Equip line managers to recognise early signs of burnout and embed peer-led support through trained wellbeing champions.

**Service Spotlight: Workforce Compliance**

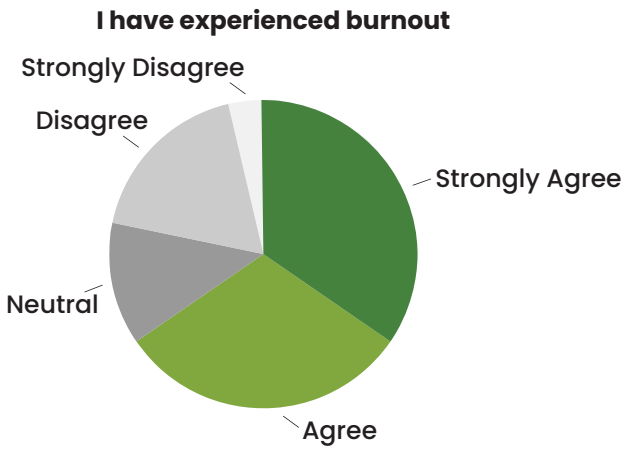
An integrated workforce compliance solution, aligned with NHS Employers and CQC standards. Complete end-to-end management from onboarding through to ongoing credential management.

# Data Focus: Workplace Culture

## *Mental health support is falling short*

Millennials tend to view workplace culture more positively than older peers. Sixty percent agreed that their organisation fosters a supportive environment, though only fourteen percent selected 'Strongly Agree'. This suggests a gap between overall sentiment and deeper confidence. This generation is more likely to expect that organisational values are not just stated but consistently demonstrated in day-to-day practice.

Openness to communication and feedback is also stronger among Millennials. Sixty-three percent reported that their workplace encourages this, compared to just thirty-five percent of those aged sixty and over. Despite this, only seventeen percent of Millennials strongly endorsed their culture, pointing to a cautious optimism rather than full confidence. Preferences for leadership that promotes independence and flexibility were consistent across generations, with eighty-eight percent of respondents in agreement, highlighting a broader shift toward trust-based, inclusive management styles.



Perceptions of mental health support were less positive. Among Millennials, sixty-four percent were neutral or disagreed that their employer provides adequate support. This sentiment was echoed across age groups, suggesting a widespread lack of confidence in current approaches. Strengthening trust in this area is increasingly important to staff wellbeing, even as operational and financial constraints persist.

**Action for Employers**

- Make culture tangible. Ensure consistent leadership behaviours and use organisational culture reviews to bridge the gap between stated values and lived experience.
- Build trust through honest, two-way communication, and empower staff to engage in feedback and improvement through regular, anonymous input channels.

**Service Spotlight: Strategic Workforce Advisory**

Professional consultancy supporting workforce planning and operational effectiveness. Outcomes-focused and data-driven to support informed decision-making.

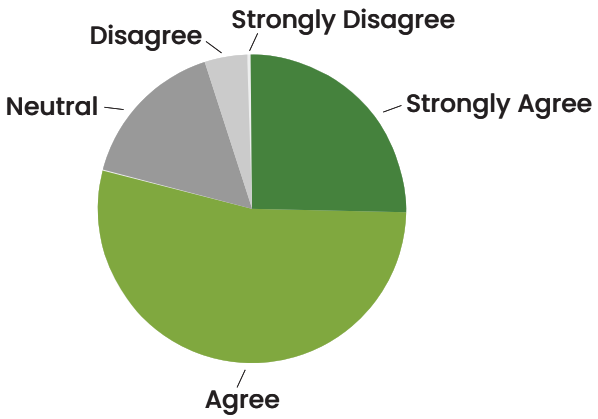
# Data Focus: Technology

## *Nurses report strong confidence in digital tools*

Confidence in digital health technology is high across all age groups, with eighty-five percent of respondents expressing agreement. Millennials reported the highest level of digital confidence, with thirty-five percent selecting 'Strongly Agree'. In contrast, only seventeen percent of those aged sixty and over did so, and one in four in that group felt neutral, highlighting a digital confidence gap between generations.

Seventy-three percent of Millennials agreed their workplace provides adequate support for adopting new technologies, the highest proportion across all age groups. Among older respondents, one-third selected 'Neutral', pointing to inconsistent perceptions of implementation support. These findings underline the importance of effective change management. Without structured communication and planning, even well-designed systems can generate resistance or underuse.

**I feel confident using digital technologies**




Millennials were also the most likely to strongly endorse the benefits of digital systems in improving team coordination, with thirty-eight percent selecting 'Strongly Agree', compared to just fourteen percent of those aged sixty and over. As digital-native professionals become more prominent in the workforce, their expectations are reshaping

norms around technology. This includes the rise of virtual meetings and remote collaboration, which now require not just technical fluency, but confident facilitation and team leadership in digital environments.

**Action for Employers**

- Leverage Millennial digital confidence through peer-led training and digital champion roles to accelerate adoption.
- Strengthen change management processes by pairing system rollouts with structured communication, hands-on support, and tailored engagement across age groups.

**Service Spotlight: Regulatory Inspection & Audit Support**

Expert inspection support for CQC, NHS commissioners and local authorities, and internal governance team audits.

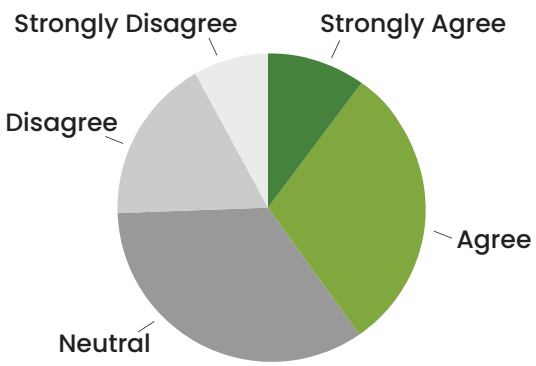
# Data Focus: Social Responsibility

*Millennials are positive on workplace ethics*

Millennials are significantly more likely than older colleagues to view their workplace as socially responsible. Eighty-five percent agreed or strongly agreed that their employer actively promotes ethical practices, the highest of any age group. This aligns with broader generational trends, where Millennials place greater value on organisational purpose and expect ethical commitments to be visible and authentic.

Perceptions around equity and inclusion reveal a generational divide. Half of the Millennial respondents believe sufficient action has been taken to address discrimination and bias in healthcare settings, compared to only thirty percent of those aged sixty and over. This may reflect either greater optimism among younger staff or a concern among older professionals that efforts have not fully addressed age-related bias. The high proportion of neutral and negative responses among older cohorts reinforces the need for a visible, inclusive, and multigenerational approach.

**Has enough been done on discrimination?**




Ethical dialogue is also more positively rated by Millennials. Seventy-one percent agreed their workplace encourages open discussion on ethical dilemmas in patient care, compared to forty-nine percent of respondents aged sixty and over. While overall sentiment is encouraging, the data suggest that Millennials feel more

empowered to engage in ethical conversations. This reinforces the importance of building cultures where values are consistently practiced, not just promoted.

**Action for Employers**

- Make organisational values visible and actionable, aligning with Millennial expectations for workplaces that actively promote ethics, social responsibility, and equity.
- Foster open, structured dialogue on ethical issues, ensuring all staff feel empowered to raise concerns and contribute to inclusive decision-making.

**Service Spotlight: Complaints and Incident Handling**

Complaints management, from low-risk incidents to complex clinical cases, ensuring safe services and protecting the organisation's reputation.

# Data Focus: Environmental Sustainability

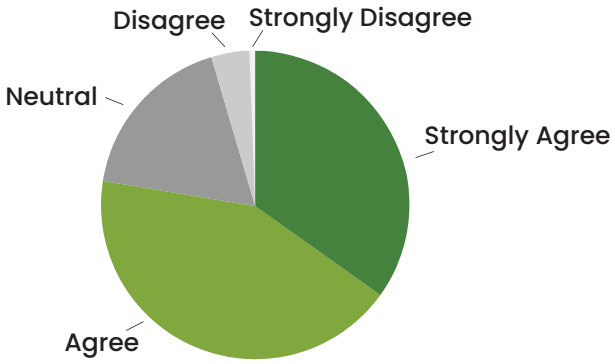
*Nurses want to act on sustainability and want training to do it better*

**Environmental Sustainability**

Support for stronger environmental action is consistent across all generations. More than seventy-five percent of respondents agreed that healthcare must take greater responsibility for its environmental impact, a clear signal of cross-generational consensus on the issue.

Nearly eighty percent of nurses reported taking environmentally conscious actions in their daily work, such as reducing waste or conserving energy. This was particularly evident among Millennials, where nearly half selected 'Agree'. While 'Strongly Agree' responses were slightly lower than in older age groups, the overall results suggest that Millennials are actively engaged with sustainability and form a key demographic for driving future organisational initiatives.

**Healthcare must do more on sustainability**




There is also a strong appetite for practical guidance. Over two-thirds of nurses, including more than seventy percent of Millennials, want further training on making their practice more environmentally sustainable. This presents a timely opportunity to turn individual commitment into structured, organisation-wide action.

**Action for Employers**

- Deliver practical, clinically relevant sustainability training focused on impact.
- Embed sustainability as part of professional standards, not as a separate priority, but as part of doing the job well.

# Strategic Implications: Futureproofing the Workforce

Millennials now make up a significant proportion of the nursing workforce and are setting the tone for what professionals expect from their employers. They are values-driven, digitally confident, and highly focused on development. Millennials are more likely to report burnout and consider moving roles within a short timeframe.

The data shows that traditional approaches to retention are not sufficient for this group. Employers need to provide structured development, credible leadership, visible flexibility, and a working environment where organisational values are consistently applied.

Future-ready workforce strategies must be aligned with the expectations of Millennials. This is not about generational preferences: it is a strategic requirement to improve retention and mitigate workforce risk over the medium and long term.

**Report Authors**

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Clare is a recognised industry expert in workforce compliance and regulation. With extensive experience in both human resources and as a registered nurse, she has held senior management roles within the NHS, private healthcare, and as a CQC-registered manager in social care.

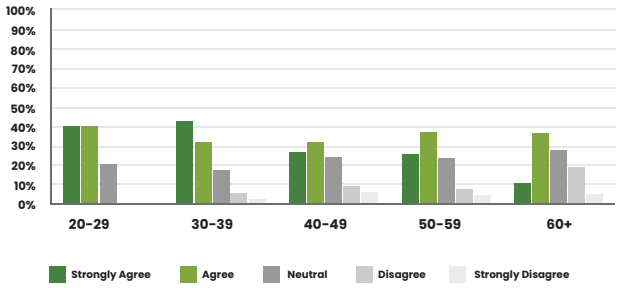
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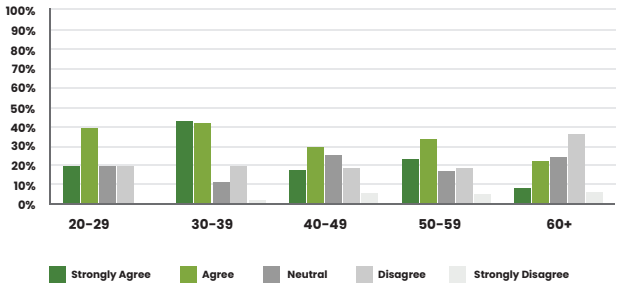
# Appendix: Survey Results

## Training and Development

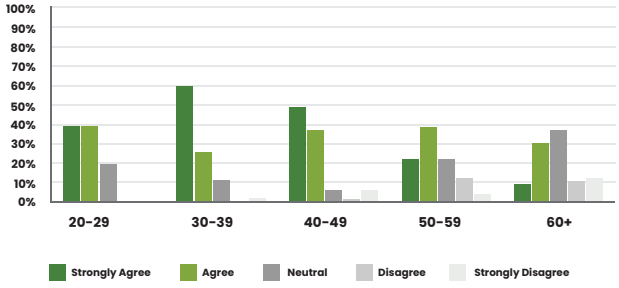
### I feel supported by my employer to pursue further training and education



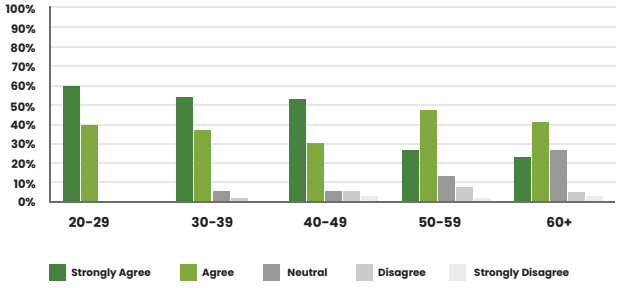

### Is remote learning as effective as in-person training for development nursing skills?



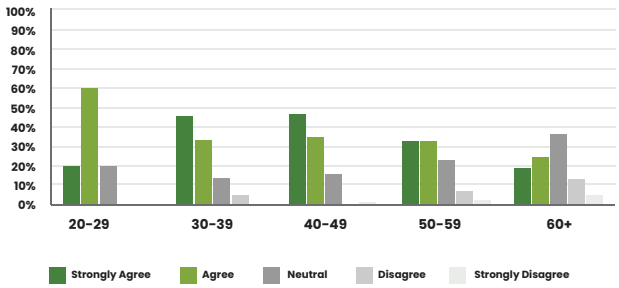

### Would you consider further education to specialise in a nursing field?




### Specialist training in a nursing field would improve my effectiveness as a nurse

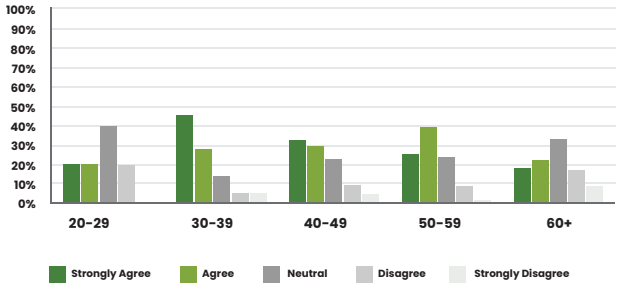



### Improved training opportunities would make me more likely to stay in my job

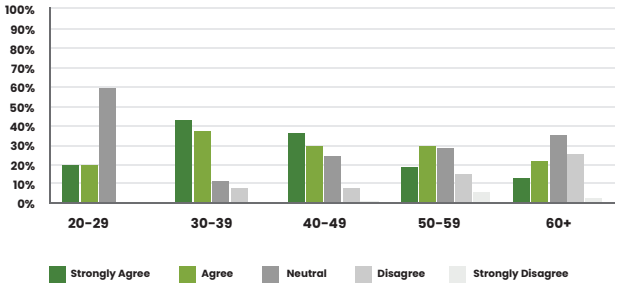



## Career Progression

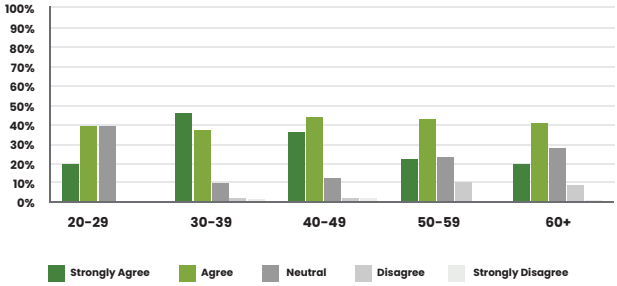
### I seek career advancement opportunities within my organisation



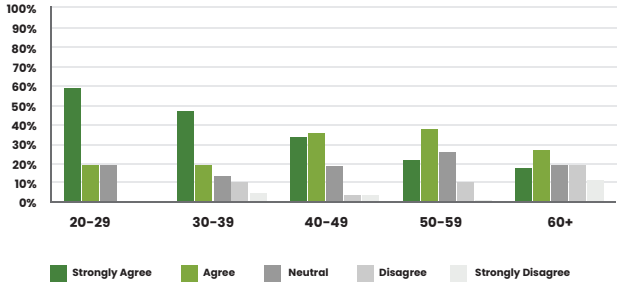

### I would consider moving to a different healthcare setting to advance my career



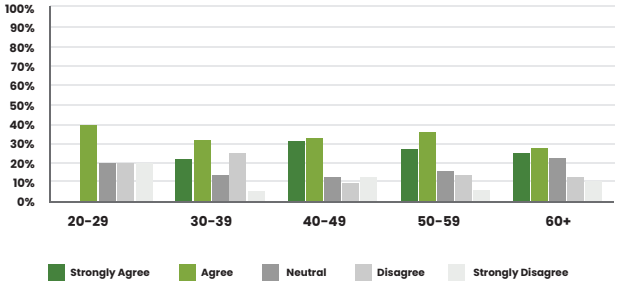
### Mentorship and career progression influence my decision to stay in a job




### Leadership roles interest me for my career growth

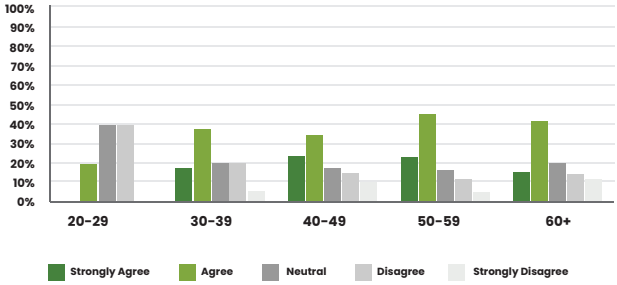



### I see myself in my current nursing job for the next two years

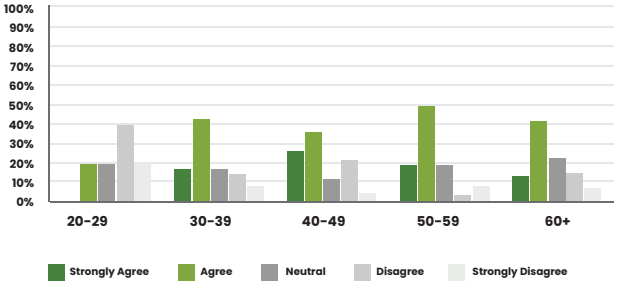



## Work-Life Balance

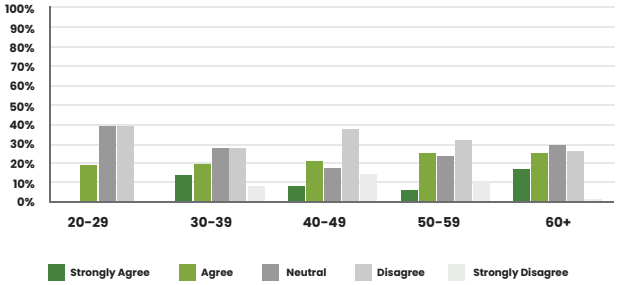
### I feel I have a good work-life balance in my current job



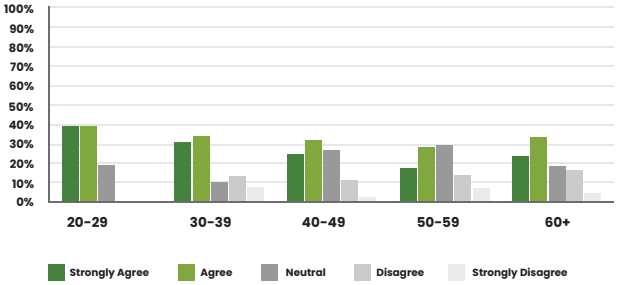

### My job provides enough flexibility to manage personal and family responsibilities



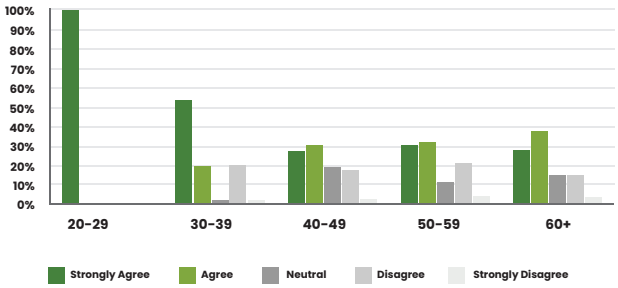

### I would prefer fewer hours, even with a lower salary




### My job has a significant impact on my mental health

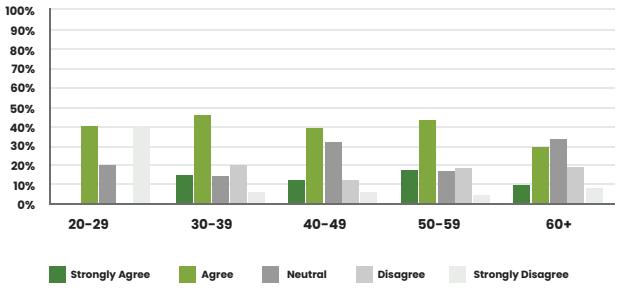


### I have experienced burnout due to my work

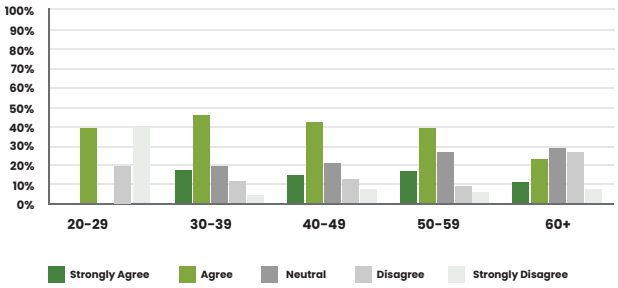



## Workplace Culture

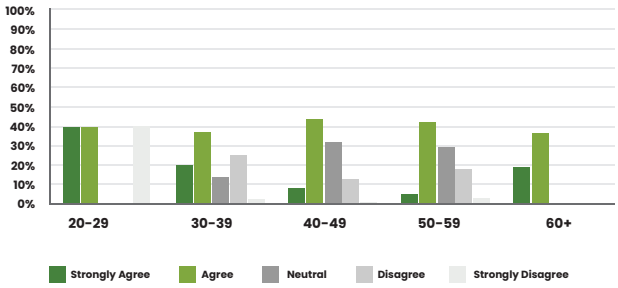
### My workplace fosters a positive and supportive environment



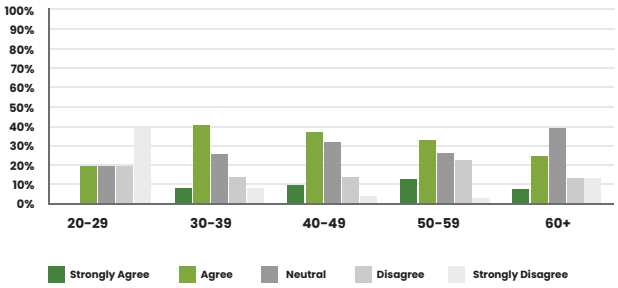

### My workplace culture encourages open communication and feedback



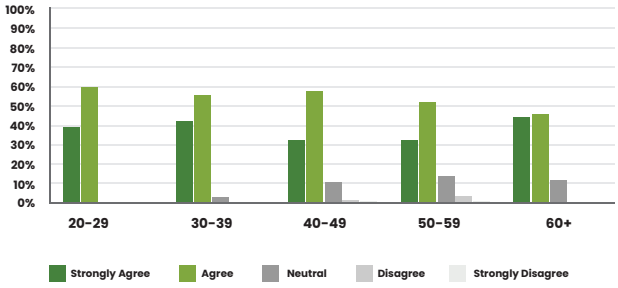

### Generational differences impact interactions in my workplace




### I feel my employer provides sufficient support for my mental health and well-being

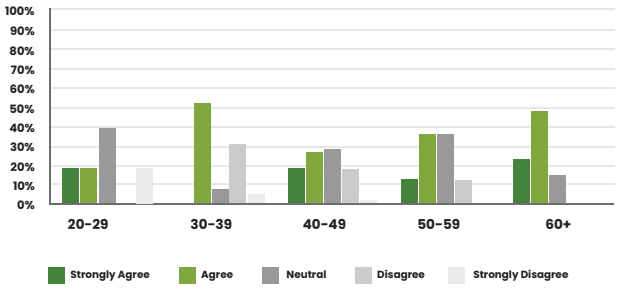



### I prefer a leadership style with more independence and flexibility

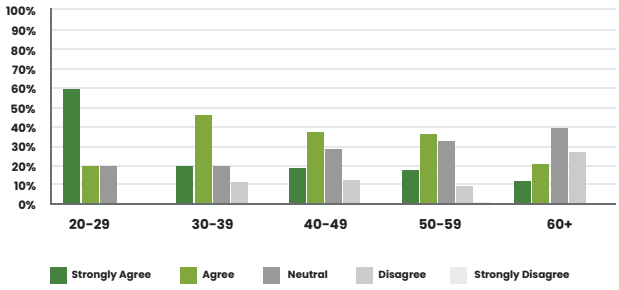


## Technology

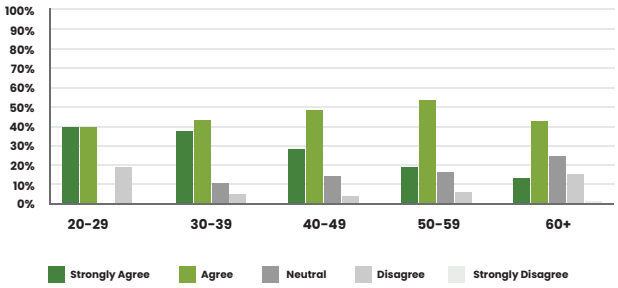
### Digital healthcare tools increase my workload and reduce patient care time



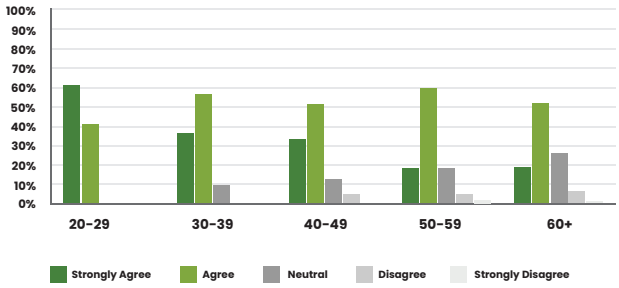

### Technology improves the efficiency of patient care



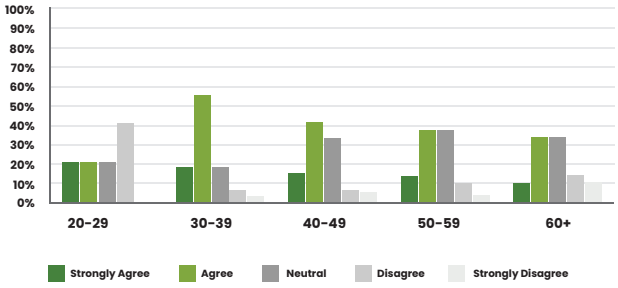

### Digital healthcare systems improve coordination between multidisciplinary teams




### I feel confident using digital health technologies in my daily practice

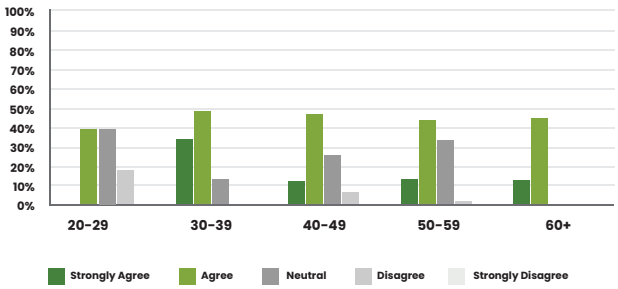



### My workplace provides adequate support for integrating new healthcare technologies

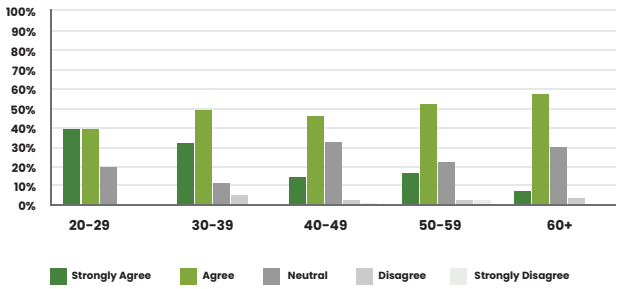



## Social Responsibility

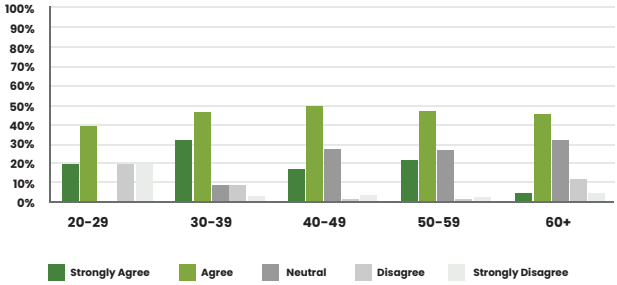
### My workplace actively promotes social responsibility and ethical practices



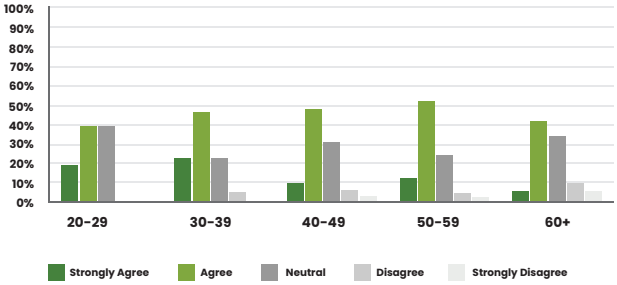

### I feel empowered to advocate for patients with social and economic inequalities



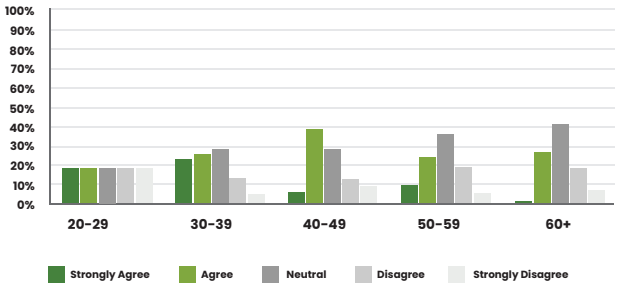
### My workplace promotes an inclusive and diverse environment for employees




### My workplace encourages discussions about ethical dilemmas in patient care

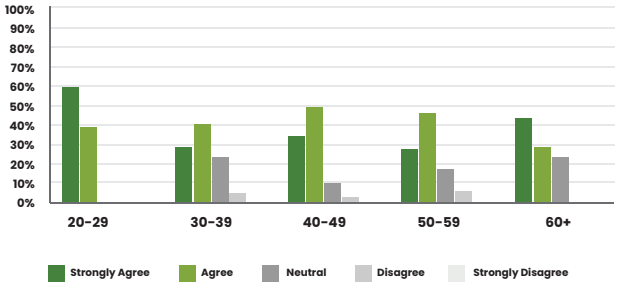



### Action has been taken to address discrimination and bias in healthcare settings

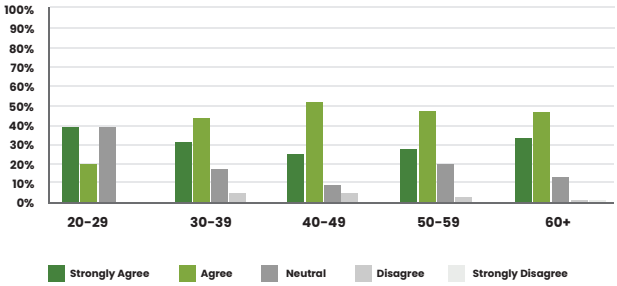



## Environmental Sustainability

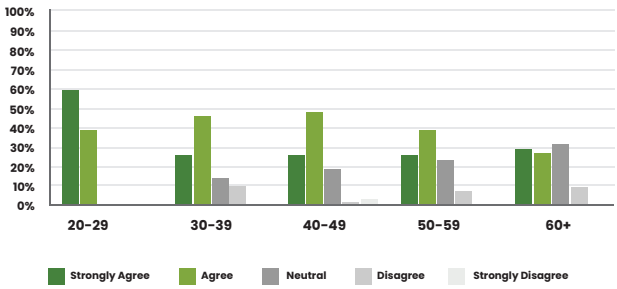
### Healthcare organisations should take stronger action to reduce their environmental impact



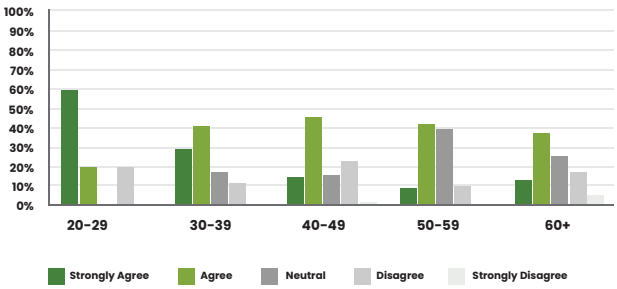

### I consider environmental sustainability in my nursing duties



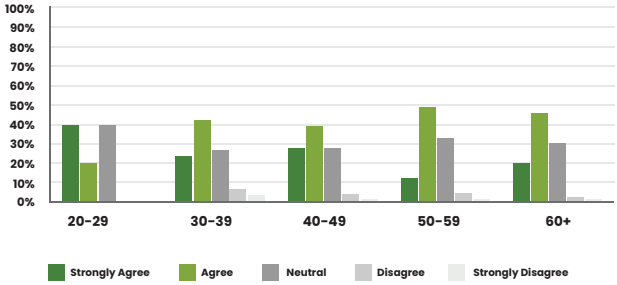

### I would like more training on making nursing sustainable




### I face challenges that prevent me from acting sustainably at work



## Initiatives to reduce environmental impact in healthcare often feel disconnected from frontline realities



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