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Anywhere but Lost

Creating the Conditions for Young
Employees to Thrive in Hybrid Work



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 The
British
Academy

How can this report help your organisation?

This report, written based on rigorous academic research that has already influenced national debates about hybrid work, is designed as a practical tool for employers that are looking for actionable solutions that can help them maximise the opportunities and mitigate the challenges of the hybrid work model. This report sets out the BOND framework - a practical, evidence-based tool for building inclusive and productive hybrid workplaces for early-career staff. It is designed to support organisations review existing practices and identify key opportunities for improvement, as well as to help employers that are preparing a shift towards hybrid working. The report should not be viewed as a fixed template but rather as a direction- and inspiration-setting toolkit. Context-specific judgement is needed to determine the most suitable approach to its implementation.

This framework outlines four interconnected pillars for creating inclusive and productive hybrid workspaces. Specifically, it proposes a strategic approach to hybrid working based around a set of mutually supportive commitments: **B**elonging, **O**pportunities for connection, **N**ew routines and skills, **D**edicated support. Together, these pillars help turn hybrid work from a policy decision to an integrated strategic approach.

This report is written specifically for organisational leaders and HRM professionals. It can also be of interest to middle managers and early career staff but we wanted to draw their attention to additional resources we have designed around their specific needs.

What the report offers:

- A holistic evidence-based model for building inclusive and productive hybrid working environments.
- A set of practical actions mapped against the employee lifecycle.
- A unique specialist resource to help the integration, boost the development and retention of young hybrid workers.

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Why invest in hybrid working?

Hybrid working is now mainstream in the UK: around 39% of workers work from home at least some of the time, with 26% working in a more formal hybrid arrangement.¹ A recent survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development found that 74% of employers are offering hybrid as a working option² and these arrangements are considerably more common among degree-holders than other workers³. A 2025 House of Lords inquiry concluded that hybrid working can be the ‘best of both worlds’ compared with fully remote or fully in-person work, but only if it is managed well and that under-investment in management training is holding many organisations back from realising that potential⁴.

There are tangible benefits to hybrid working for both organisations and individuals: 41% of UK employers say hybrid working has increased productivity in their organisation (against 16% who say it has decreased it) and 80% of employees report a positive impact on their quality of life⁵. Set against the context of increasing employee sickness levels, costing employers in the UK around £85 billion annually,⁶ hybrid working can offer a sustainable proposition to supporting employee health and wellbeing. It can be crucial for forming positive views of the organisation which, in turn, decrease the intention to leave⁷, which is significant not least due to the high costs of recruiting talent (a median of £1,500 per employee⁸). Hybrid arrangements therefore offer considerable benefits for both employees and employers.

At a societal level, hybrid working offers potential to widen participation in employment as it can offer reasonable adjustments to workers with disabilities⁹. For young people in particular, the Milburn review has identified that 45% of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) have some form of disability. This is an escalating crisis that is a major economic risk, potentially costing the UK £125 billion per year.¹⁰ Hybrid working can help diversify and increase organisational talent pools.

41%
**of staff report
increase in
productivity**

80%
**of staff report
increased life
quality**

McCartney, 2025

¹ ONS, 2025

² McCartney, 2025

³ ONS, 2025

⁴ House of Lords, 2025

⁵ McCartney, 2025

⁶ ONS, 2025

⁷ CIPD, Good Work Index 2025

⁸ CIPD, Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey 2024

⁹ House of Lords, 2025

¹⁰ DWP, 2026

What is unique about young hybrid workers?

Hybrid work impacts different groups of staff in different ways¹¹. New, refined approaches to hybrid working call for more nuanced, evidence-based and comprehensive strategies which take a more holistic approach.¹²

A crucial cohort to consider are young employees¹³. Since young employees are only beginning to craft their professional careers, they are yet to develop healthy and sustainable work routines and practical hybrid working skills. They are also the ones who are most likely to grapple with resource disparity, information gaps, reduced visibility, uneven access to tacit knowledge that makes workplace integration more challenging. It is therefore crucial to build inclusive and productive hybrid work environments where young professionals can thrive.



¹¹ Ciuk and Galpin, 2025a,b

¹² Bonesso, Cortellazzo and Afeltra, 2026; Ciuk and Galpin, 2025b; Teng - Calleja, 2024; Van der Velden and Deprez, 2023

¹³ CIPD, 2025

Introducing BOND – an evidence-based framework for creating inclusive and productive hybrid environments

Our research shows that young graduates perform best in organisations that BOND; ones that approach hybrid working as an on-going strategic commitment and have developed dedicated processes and adaptive routines to comprehensively address the specific challenges and leverage the opportunities of hybrid-working. Starting a new graduate role often generates considerable anxiety that is compounded by uncertainties around building connections with others, belonging, learning and performing, which often takes place through internet-based platforms.

While challenges cannot be fully mitigated, organisations can go a long way to develop vibrant hybrid-working environments that attract, retain and support young talent. Success is boosted by reciprocal adjustments where managers, teams, and young workers adapt practices rather than expecting newcomers to conform to pre-existing norms. Underpinned by a comprehensive analysis of first-hand accounts of young graduates, our BOND framework proposes a four-pillar approach for inclusive and productive hybrid workspaces.



B – Belonging



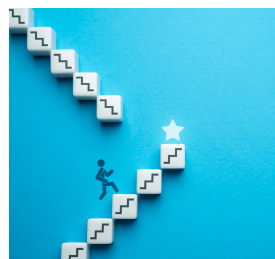
Forming a sense of belonging to the organisation and work group is an essential process for new entrants. For young people, this becomes even more important and can significantly affect how they see themselves in the work setting. It is therefore crucial to help young people connect to the wider purpose of the organisation so that they know how they are making a difference, feel acknowledged, respected and valued.

O – Opportunities for Connection



Social connection describes how people relate to and interact with each other. This might comprise: the number, types, and frequency of relationships and role contacts; the type and amount of support exchanged; and whether interactions are positive or negative¹⁴. In hybrid work, forging connections with others cannot be left to chance encounters alone. It also should not be framed as a sole responsibility of young people or their line managers but as reciprocal efforts of all staff. It is crucial for organisations to proactively design for these different types of connection to reduce feelings of separation and isolation exacerbated by different modes of work.

N – New Routines and Skills



Effective hybrid working requires specific skills, practices and routines that are developed over time by individuals, groups and the organisation as a whole. For young people, in particular, it is very easy to fall victim to digital presenteeism; feeling pressured to appear constantly online and available, which blurs the boundary between work and rest and makes it harder to switch off. Sustainable and supportive organisational and team practices are crucial for young graduates in establishing healthy work patterns.

D – Dedicated Support



While young people tend to have a strong preference for hybrid working, they often struggle without the right support. Instead of pre-designed packages that might be more suited for more experienced staff, for young entrants, dedicated and tailored support often works best. These arrangements need to take into account the graduates' living responsibilities and circumstances, including social or financial marginalisation and health or disability needs, moving beyond protected characteristics to engage with all aspects of the support that will enable the graduate to flourish in their new role.



“Explain how the hybrid structure in your organisation works in the interview process, right from the beginning, because it helps massively. It is important as an organisation to build that trust. Try and tailor the induction the best you can towards that person’s situation and their role.”

Asher - Fast Moving Consumer Goods

Induction & on-boarding



“We had some introductory sessions, however, they were online, so it felt less organic. ... it didn't feel like we could really connect with the teams or the people attending.”

Andrew - Finance

“In the first few weeks, just people being really interested in getting to know me ... played an important role”

Poorna - Higher Education

Hybrid working tends to be very attractive to young applicants who often perceive it as a perk and a sign of trust¹⁴. Yet, for most successful applicants joining a new organisation as a hybrid worker, the induction and onboarding period is a stressful and challenging process filled with a mix of emotions, such as pride, joy and anxiety.

Carefully designed and well-structured onboarding can significantly help graduates manage the transition from student to employee¹⁵. Clear ownership of the process and deliberate choices about what is delivered formally or informally, online or in person, and individually or in cohorts, need to be carefully considered.

¹⁴ Ciuk and Galpin, 2025a

¹⁵ Chillakuri, 2020

Induction and Onboarding

01

Make time to connect

Plan induction to include time for getting to know others and relationship-building.

02 Avoid virtual-only inductions

Avoid, if possible, online-only inductions.

03

Equip your line managers

Share induction best practice with line managers.

04

Set expectations early

Clearly explain expectations regarding hybrid working.

B – Belonging

- Start early. Consider how you can foster belonging prior to the young employees' first day at work. Well-timed small symbolic gestures of inclusion can make a big difference.
- Use physical and digital artefacts, such as company-branded welcome packs, to help make young employees feel welcome and appreciated.
- For large employers, consider creating a virtual tour.
- For smaller employers and SMEs, arrange a tour of company facilities.
- Pair the physical orientation with introductions to other staff.
- If you are an SME, consider membership of a trade or representative body to introduce young graduates to the sector and help build networks.
- For larger employers, use co-ordinated cohort-based starts that combine an information and connection focus, if possible, to help new graduates build peer support quickly.
- Consider space as part of your induction: where will holding the induction best help make informal connections?

O – Opportunities for Connection

- Once the offer of employment is made, focus on building early connection, e.g. reach out with an information pack, encourage line managers to make contact and set up digital chats.
- For larger intakes of newcomers, maximise connection opportunities within the cohort. Plan for connection fostering opportunities. Plan induction touchpoints that mix in-person and online connection and consider increasing office time early on with appropriate support.
- Review social activities for inclusivity and tailor them to employees' interests and requirements so everyone has accessible ways to build relationships.
- Create who-to-ask directories.
- During induction, discuss what a supportive, connected hybrid environment looks and feels like for graduates. Co-create this with new starters so it aligns with organisational values, e.g. consider communication styles on and offline; meetings and one-to-one protocols.
- Promote inclusive induction routines of short informal instructions with colleagues within and outside of the immediate team.

N – New Routines and Skills

- Make hybrid working (expectations, healthy routines, useful tips, common challenges) a topic of induction and discussion during check-ins and team meetings.
- Check expectations, start a dialogue with young people. Listen.
- Address the risks of digital presenteeism and digital overload, clarify expectations to prevent them.
- Encourage teams to co-ordinate shared office time so that young graduates get into the habit of face-to-face working with others.
- Be realistic with your expectations, if you want to build connection during shared office days, consider ways of facilitating it.
- Do not expect deep work when it is building connection that you want to foster during more limited office days.
- Make hybrid norms such as 'switching off' more explicit to reduce anxiety.



D – Dedicated Support

- Provide opportunities to ask questions about hybrid arrangements and plan for any access needs or adjustments (e.g. increased office attendance).
- Use a peer-group buddy system to provide additional online and in person support, such as how to hybrid work effectively.
- Ensure managers and colleagues have protected time to support discussions with new starters and shape hybrid practices and on-boarding collaboratively.
- Set a tone for a collaborative approach to hybrid working to promote openness and multi-directional feedback.
- Be prepared to embrace flexibility to accommodate, where feasible, the support young hybrid starters would benefit from the most.
- Arrange practical checks of home-based working equipment and, if possible, offer financial support to help with the required improvements.
- Help line managers provide the required support through sharing induction best practice.

Watch-outs

- Virtual-only inductions - these can be very isolating for young graduates who more often than other groups strive to make friendships at work and connect with others on a more personal level.
- Overreliance on e-learning - this can increase cognitive load and slow down learning.
- Process and information-heavy, crammed inductions with little space for building connections.
- Scheduling the first day during low office attendance days where key colleagues are less likely to be in.
- Long communication breaks from recruiters and line managers after the appointment and before the first day.
- Unprepared first day that could signal that the new starters are a low priority.
- Absent line managers - new starters will be heavily reliant on guidance and support in the initial stages especially when working remotely. This risk is often sharper in smaller organisations where wider support structures might not always be available.
- Relying on serendipity for connection building - proactive action is needed to ensure everyone is included.
- Assuming that young workers have already developed hybrid working skills and can hit the ground running.
- Over-relying on tried and tested solutions without the need to adapt to specific needs and circumstances of young starters.





“I just needed someone to tell me it’s okay to ask questions.”

Peyton - Healthcare



“Ask me what I prefer when I’m learning, it makes such a difference.”
Bianca - Aviation

“When someone takes the time to explain things properly... that stays with you.”
Layla - Professional Services

“Sometimes I just needed reassurance that I wasn’t doing everything wrong.”
Pramiti - Local Government

Hybrid working can enable the creation of a very supportive environment with rich opportunities for development. However, it can also pose challenges if learning is not systematically considered through a hybrid lens to ensure equal access to development opportunities for all staff ¹⁶. Evidence suggests that hybrid working staff may be reluctant to ask for help¹⁷. This tendency is even more pronounced among young, early career workers who may require most support but are held back by insecurity and the fear of being judged.

Collaborative, team-based learning routines (such as regular peer practice sessions or informal, low-stakes feedback check-ins) support the creation of safe and non-threatening environments. New starters need regular access to formal and informal development opportunities through peer groups, planned and ad-hoc feedback sessions and new challenges¹⁸. Most early career employees benefit from specific support to build core hybrid skills¹⁹, including boundary-setting and strong online and offline communication²⁰ and conflict-resolution²¹.

¹⁶ Boyraz and Gilbert, 2024

¹⁷ Knight, Olaru, Lee and Parker, 2022

¹⁸ Fayard, Weeks and Khan, 2021

¹⁹ Ciuk and Galpin, 2025 a,b

²⁰ Teng - Calleja et al., 2024

²¹ Hughes and Davis, 2024

Learning and Development

O1 Extend peer support

Use peer support beyond induction, consider two-way mentoring involving both more junior and senior employees.

O2 Make feedback predictable and regular

Promote timely and regular (such as weekly) two-way feedback.

O3 Train managers to coach

Invest in line manager training so that they can coach and mentor young staff and understand how to role model.

O4 Support tacit learning

Provide platforms for tacit learning and opportunities for work shadowing, peer knowledge exchange.

B – Belonging

- Belonging can be enhanced through collaboration opportunities with colleagues outside of the immediate team.
- Help new starters feel connected to the organisation, its purpose and values and to understand their role in it (e.g. through company-wide events) to enhance the feeling of belonging.
- When introducing peer support, ensure the buddy's role goes beyond tasks, e.g. checking in on how the graduate is settling in and introducing them socially, not just answering work questions.
- Supplement digital learning with tacit learning opportunities of appropriate behaviours and skills and in a face to face or interactive digital environment, e.g. work shadowing; observation; peer knowledge exchange.

O – Opportunities for Connection

- Design on-going opportunities for informal but also structured learning with, and through, others.
- Consider linking task-focused learning with opportunities to build connections with peers, line managers and staff outside of the work team.
- Encourage line managers to continue to facilitate young recruits' connections to colleagues and the organisation through introductions, advocacy and development opportunities.

N – New Routines and Skills

- Be clear about which (hybrid) skills are important for your organisation, what they look like and develop a strategy to systematically help graduates develop them.
- Encourage and enable line managers to help young graduates develop hybrid working skills and routines through coaching, mentoring and role modelling.
- Help line managers of young workers appreciate the practical implications of diverse communication and information-processing styles for everyday work.
- Provide and promote development opportunities.

D – Dedicated Support

- Have active conversations with new hybrid employees about the way they prefer to learn and offer learning across different modes where possible.
- Ensure equality between office and hybrid workers when it comes to access to development opportunities, feedback and discussions.
- Check that the support you provide is suitable for neurodivergent and international young employees.
- Be aware of tacit learning and consider how hybrid employees can access this in line with their working arrangements.
- If a buddy was assigned at induction, ensure peer support does not lapse after the first few weeks; development-stage check-ins matter as much as day-one ones.
- Encourage scheduling of predictable check-ins (e.g. weekly or fortnightly) and continue some mentoring beyond probation.
- If possible, provide access to learning platforms that graduates can use flexibly depending on their needs.

Watch-outs

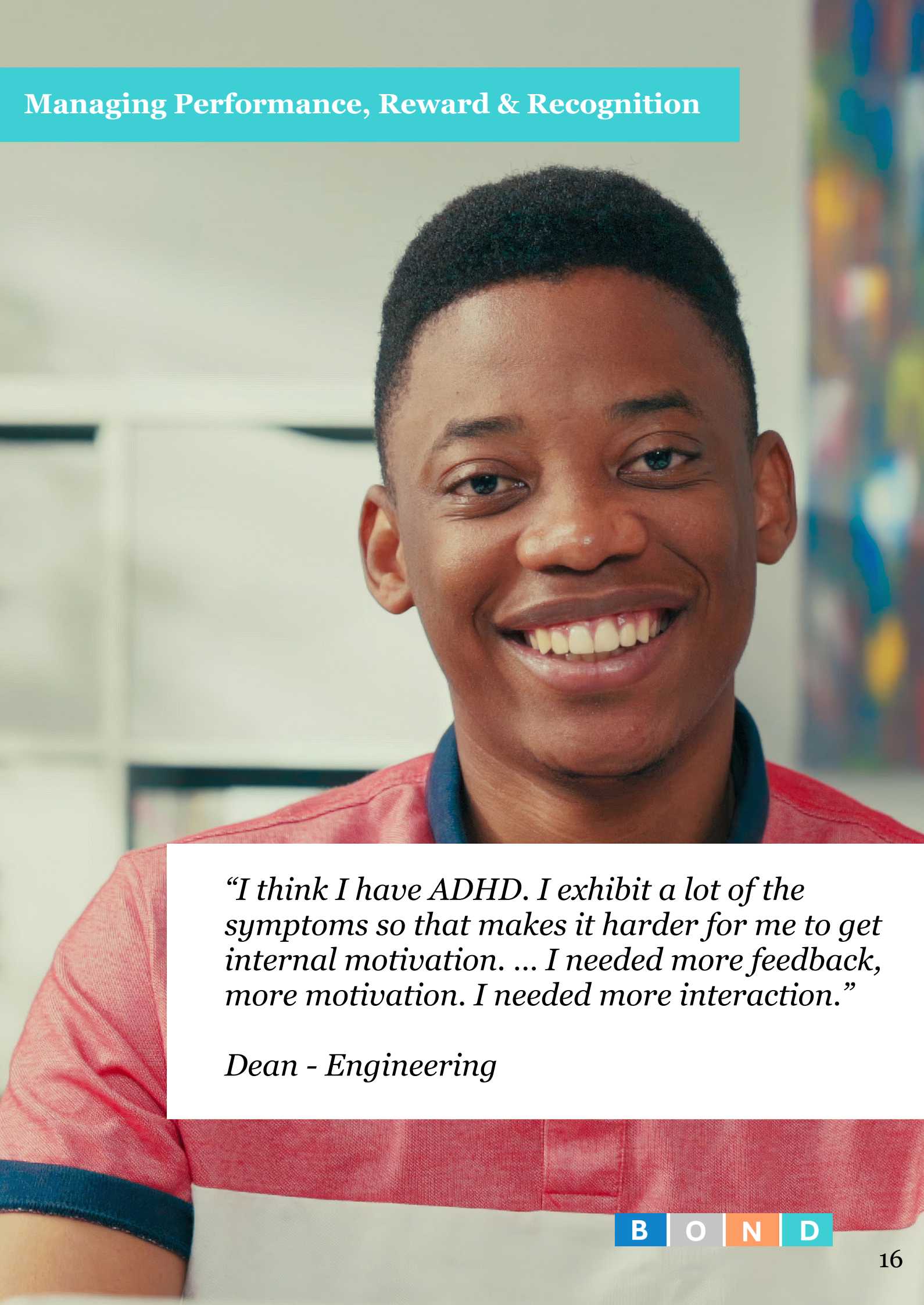
- Allocating young graduates to work with under-trained, unsupported line managers who are already over capacity as they are unlikely to be able to provide the required support.
- Not providing regular and consistent feedback for development.
- Overreliance on line managers as carrying the sole responsibility for their employee learning and development.
- Missing opportunities for reciprocal adjustment: where managers and teams also adapt their own habits (e.g. meeting format, feedback style) rather than expecting only new starters to adapt²² to accommodate varied learning and working styles.
- Dominance of deficit-thinking, with young workers expected to smoothly fit into existing dominant cultural norms.
- Interpreting difference (e.g. in terms of learning styles, non-standard accent) as deficiency.²³
- Development opportunities invisible to newcomers if these opportunities rely on organisational knowledge and embeddedness in established networks that newcomers lack.
- Dominance of sporadic rather than on-going learning opportunities.



²² Ciuk et al., 2023

²³ Ciuk et al., 2024

Managing Performance, Reward & Recognition



“I think I have ADHD. I exhibit a lot of the symptoms so that makes it harder for me to get internal motivation. ... I needed more feedback, more motivation. I needed more interaction.”

Dean - Engineering



“Ensure that you make time for [young graduates], have one to ones and really try and understand how much direction they need and how much leadership they need. New graduates starting probably need a bit more.”

Andrew - Finance

“Regular check-ins ... and developmental check-ins, ... really help me stay accountable”

Karl - Fintech

The forms and practical arrangements associated with hybrid working vary widely. Many new graduates are unfamiliar with what these might entail and how best to deal with some of the challenges hybrid working can pose. Organisations need to clearly define what hybrid work means for them and the reasons for mandatory or flexible practices. Unclear instructions or assumed practices can leave graduates feeling disempowered. Similarly, strict policies that do not take into account the realities of hybrid working can be counter-productive.

Managers, peers and the wider organisation all play a crucial role in creating a supportive hybrid environment. Managers in particular may need on-going guidance and consistent support to balance connection with oversight across the full employee lifecycle, from induction and probation to development and progression²⁴.

Both leaders and employees require the skills and resources to manage hybrid work effectively²⁵ and without overload. These support mechanisms are especially important for young graduates.

²⁴ Spitzmuller, Xiao and Woznowski, 2023

²⁵ Bonesso et al, 2026

Performance, Reward and Recognition

01

Balance oversight with trust

Check progress and wellbeing regularly but avoid using response times as a proxy for effort.

02

Tackle presenteeism

Define clear expectations around being present for both in-person and online work.

03

Recognise supportive managers

Recognise managers for building supportive hybrid environments.

04

Give graduates visibility

Provide opportunities for young hybrid workers to be visible across the organisation by progressively involving them in cross-departmental projects.

B – Belonging

- Could team incentives be used to foster belonging in teamwork?
- Progressively involve young workers in cross-departmental projects with a clear purpose where opportunities for development and being visible across the organisation can enhance the feeling of belonging.
- Train buddies to introduce graduates intentionally across the organisation, not just within the local team so that they can gain visibility and, with time, recognition beyond their team.

O – Opportunities for Connection

- Ensure performance management recognises not just task delivery but also encourages managers and employees to build supportive relationships in hybrid work.
- Set clear expectations for behaviour when work and social interactions overlap, including use of organisational IT for online socialising and office work or social time.
- Extend conflict-management and mediation policies to cover online interactions as well as face-to-face situations.



N – New Routines and Skills

- Consider how to provide reassurance for young workers. Insecurities and a strong desire to prove themselves can easily lead to overworking.
- Balance oversight with trust: check in on progress and wellbeing regularly, but avoid monitoring online activity or response times as a proxy for effort.
- Structure online delegation clearly to help young graduates build independence over time.
- Define clear expectations around presence in-person and online work to avoid presenteism.
- Encourage the creation of different ways of celebrating and rewarding achievements online and in person.



D – Dedicated Support

- Provide dedicated online and in-person time and space for graduates to ask questions and receive feedback from managers and peers.
- Offer safe opportunities for upwards feedback, both virtual and face-to-face.
- Ensure line managers understand their key role in recognising hybrid workers and maintaining fairness between office-based and hybrid staff.
- Support hybrid working with appropriate resources such as management time and equipment.
- Explain how performance is assessed in hybrid-working settings to reduce anxiety and help manage expectations.
- Consider tailored support for atypical work patterns so support is equitable.
- Recognise and reward the efforts of buddies and mentors.

Watch-outs

- Treating hybrid skills as taken for granted and assuming that young hybrid workers can hit the ground running without dedicated support.
- Reward systems and informal culture that promote perfectionism and inadvertently discourages young hybrid workers from asking questions and learning.
- A punitive approach to early 'failures' and mistakes, which can feel more significant in the online context (where there is a permanent record of them).
- Unequal distribution of development opportunities.
- Micro-management when working online, e.g. tracking response times as a proxy for effort; this undermines trust faster than it builds accountability.





“Because I was the only woman of colour in that team, it was really, really difficult to fit into the team. I did feel left out here and there, because they would go out drinking, or for pub meets where I couldn't really go, because I'm Muslim.”

Asiyah - Education

Inclusion & Wellbeing

“

It's very important, especially when you are an expat, to belong somewhere, ... especially that you left your country and family and friends.”

Dean - Engineering

“What [my line manager] really helped me with was to get to know the larger organisation. ... it had to do with the introductions [she arranged].”

Anika - Education

There is a strong need for sustaining inclusive cultural practices to reduce isolation and micro-practices of exclusion. Inclusive practices, beyond sporadic gestures, together with personalised support and participatory hybrid policies can go a long way towards strengthening belonging²⁶. It is particularly crucial for line managers to monitor whether hybrid workers, particularly those from minority or disadvantaged groups, have equal access to development and progression opportunities. However, creating inclusive environments and promoting young employees' wellbeing cannot be framed as a responsibility of individuals. It requires a comprehensive approach and consistent, mutually supporting practices. Otherwise, negative symbolism (such as preoccupation with the “green dot” as a marker of online availability) can easily undermine efforts to create supportive work environments.

²⁶ Ciuk and Galpin, 2025

Organisational demographics strongly shape how included young hybrid employees feel. Graduates from under-represented backgrounds are more likely to experience exclusion in hybrid settings, especially without active support from managers, mentors or buddies²⁸. Socioeconomic and class background is a less-discussed dimension of this: graduates in our study described feeling unable to relate to colleagues' casual references to family-funded housing deposits or unpaid internships, and described the discomfort of being expected to explain or represent their own culture or background to colleagues who had made assumptions about it. These are easy to miss because they rarely surface as formal complaints but they can be experienced as accumulated micro-aggressions and have a detrimental effect on wellbeing. Virtual communication can also obscure less visible diversity characteristics, increasing the risk of misunderstanding or overlooking individuals. Some graduates also face additional barriers such as inadequate home-working setups.

There is a strong need for participatory hybrid-working policies that can promote inclusion and wellbeing and strengthen belonging. Consistent, but also flexible, approaches to fostering wellbeing in hybrid environments together with the provision of dedicated support are a useful platform upon which to build coherent hybrid-working solutions. Hybrid-working can be an excellent enabler of staff wellbeing but its management cannot be left to chance. There is a risk of online burnout and work extensification.



Inclusion and wellbeing

01

Encourage some coordination of office attendance

Encourage staff to co-ordinate office attendance while retaining flexibility.

02

(Re)design space for connection

Use or redesign available physical space so that it supports connection and inclusion .

03

Train managers for inclusion

Train line managers in fostering inclusive behaviours and practices online and in person.

04

Link hybrid work to your wellbeing strategy

Rather than treating them as separate, make hybrid working part of your well-being strategy.

B – Belonging

- Consider creative ways of using co-working spaces so that when hybrid employees come into the office they are not alone.
- If you are planning social activities that blur the work and leisure boundary, ensure that they cover a range of activities and take place in different settings to ensure there are multiple and inclusive opportunities to bond.
- Think about belonging as linked respect, acceptance and appreciation of the evolving professional voice of young staff.

O – Opportunities for Connection

- Encourage staff to co-ordinate office attendance so that hybrid employees can make the best of their office time to create connections.
- For larger employers, consider creating employee-led networks so that there are opportunities to connect to peers working in the same mode as well as through shared values or interests. Ensure to support and acknowledge the work of these networks.
- Ensure that the available physical space is conducive to fostering connection rather than solely promoting individual work. Even small adjustments can make a big difference.
- Bonding over food is an excellent opportunity to foster connection both for large organisations and SMEs. Is there any scope to enhance it in your organisation?
- Design regular formal and informal opportunities for connection online and offline.

N – New Routines and Skills

- Managing hybrid-work so that it fosters wellbeing is likely to look differently for different staff. Where possible, use flexible support mechanisms that have the greatest chances of offering the best accommodation for staff from different backgrounds and with different needs.
- Raise awareness of different micro-routines that can help cope with feelings of isolation in hybrid work that can be particularly challenging for young workers.
- Encourage line managers to role-model healthy hybrid-working routines.
- Ensure that some of your training considers boundary-setting as this is what a lot of young employees grapple with.
- Raise awareness of potential exclusionary communication that relies on shared cultural knowledge that international employees might lack. Some UK and industry-specific cultural, political and linguistic cues (e.g. idioms) can be difficult to decipher for some new staff depending on their background.
- Consider how to promote collective awareness of neurodivergence that can translate into inclusive team routines.
- Train line managers in building online routines that encourage participation so that young staff can be involved in ways that don't require speaking up in large groups, e.g. contributing via chat, pre-submitted questions, or smaller breakout discussions.

D – Dedicated Support

- Young hybrid workers have different needs to more seasoned staff. They are likely to benefit from tailored support that boosts their development and performance.
- Remember that these needs are likely to change with time, approach them as dynamic.
- Line managers should be encouraged to check support needs regularly.
- Where feasible, take a co-creative approach towards forming inclusion and wellbeing policies and ensure that the needs of young hybrid workers are considered.
- Reflect how you can promote a more comprehensive approach to inclusion in in-person and online interactions beyond protected characteristics to foster belonging.

Watch-outs

- Approaching hybrid-working as a logistics issue or a one-off policy decision rather than core to wellbeing strategy.
- Treating early-career hybrid workers as a homogeneous group; with equal access to resources, shared preferences and comparable experiences. Be mindful of and ready to accommodate, where possible, a variety of circumstances.
- Don't make assumptions about employees' preferences or ways to be included. Incorporate a collaborative approach to determining what is needed and by whom.
- Don't inadvertently reward hybrid working practices that you are trying to avoid.
- Be mindful that inconsistent or poorly modelled working routines can send mixed messages and undermine wellbeing efforts.
- Don't focus only on legally protected characteristics for your inclusion practices.
- Don't assume silence from hybrid worker is a sign of wellbeing.
- Avoid wellbeing becoming largely manager-dependent.



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Appendix:

Methodology

This report is based on c. 80 hours of in-depth interviews and rich multimedia storyboards created and shared with us by 40 early career young hybrid workers. The participants from our study are both UK and international earlier career graduates working in a range of sectors and roles.

In light of the scarcity of evidence-based academic publications and rigorous industry reports on young hybrid workers, purposeful sampling was adopted to recruit a cross section of recent graduate hybrid workers from a wide range of sectors, such as publishing, healthcare, advertising, retail and engineering, company profiles (small and medium size employers as well as large multinationals and public sector organisations) and performing a variety of professional roles. The sample comprises diversified perspectives and includes voices from ethnic minorities, neurodivergent employees, those with long-term health conditions and caring responsibilities.

Narrative data were analysed thematically.

Research Team



Dr Sylwia Ciuk is an Associate Professor of Organisation Studies at Oxford Brookes University. She has done extensive research on organisational change in multinational organisations as well as in the public sector. Dr Ciuk specialises in organisational change, culture, hybrid work, leadership, inclusion and language diversity at work. She is the research lead of the ‘Navigating Hybrid Work’ study underpinning this project.



Dr Kay Galpin is an Associate Researcher at Oxford Brookes University. She has worked on a variety of complex projects, spanning many sectors and organisations. She is an expert in employee wellbeing, inclusive leadership and organisational change, with a background that combines academic research and senior HR practice. She has worked closely with Dr Ciuk on the ‘Navigating Hybrid Work’ project, in particular on translating the study’s rich insights into practical tools for change.

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