

# Cartridge People Workplace Hygiene Survey 2026

## Executive Summary

Workplace hygiene plays a critical role in protecting employee health and well-being, maintaining productivity, and creating environments where people feel safe. Following the global Covid-19 pandemic of 2020–2022, expectations around workplace cleanliness have fundamentally shifted, with hygiene now viewed as a core business responsibility rather than a background function. At the same time, flu levels have reached their highest point since 2001, placing renewed pressure on employers to ensure hygiene standards are not only met, but consistently maintained across all working environments.

This report presents the findings from Cartridge People's Workplace Hygiene Survey, which examined how UK offices manage cleaning responsibilities, the availability of hygiene supplies, and everyday hygiene behaviours among employees. By analysing both organisational practices and individual habits, the report highlights where workplaces are performing well and where targeted improvements could make the greatest impact.

## Key findings at a glance:

- 74% of offices say their workplace is cleaned daily or multiple times per day
- 54% rely at least partly on external cleaning providers
- 22% of employees want their employer to provide better cleaning supplies or equipment
- 28% of employees say they rarely or never clean their personal workspace
- 15% of employees have experienced hygiene concerns that were not addressed or reported
- 74% of employees say personal hygiene at work is very or extremely important

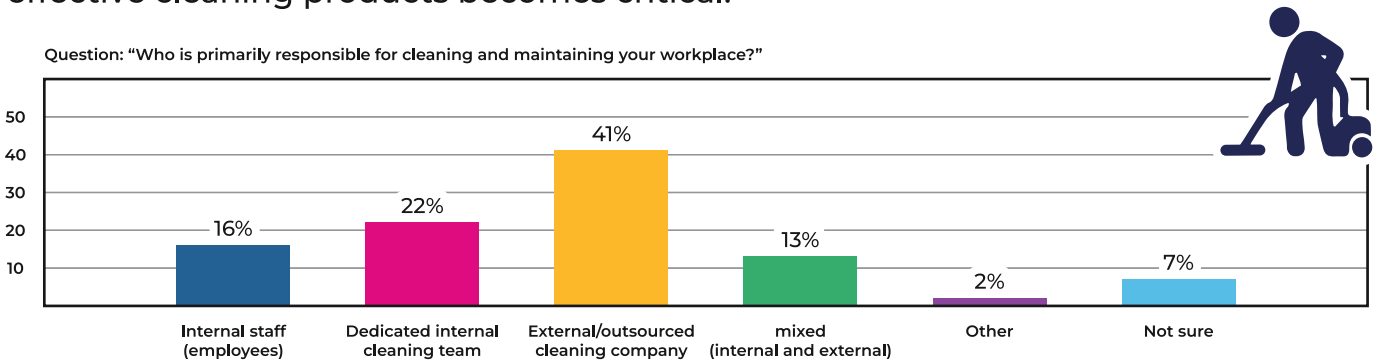
These findings suggest that while organisational cleaning is well established, day-to-day hygiene relies heavily on employee behaviour and access to the right supplies.

# Cleaning Responsibility: A Shift Toward Outsourcing

The data shows a clear preference for outsourced cleaning support, with 41% of workplaces relying on external cleaning companies and a further 13% using a mixed model of both internal and external cleaning.

However, 16% of respondents still report that general employees are responsible for cleaning. This can lead to inconsistent standards, particularly when hygiene tasks fall outside formal job roles or training. It can also be difficult to monitor whether employees are fairly sharing cleaning responsibilities, which can lead to some employees feeling resentful about always having to clean up after others.

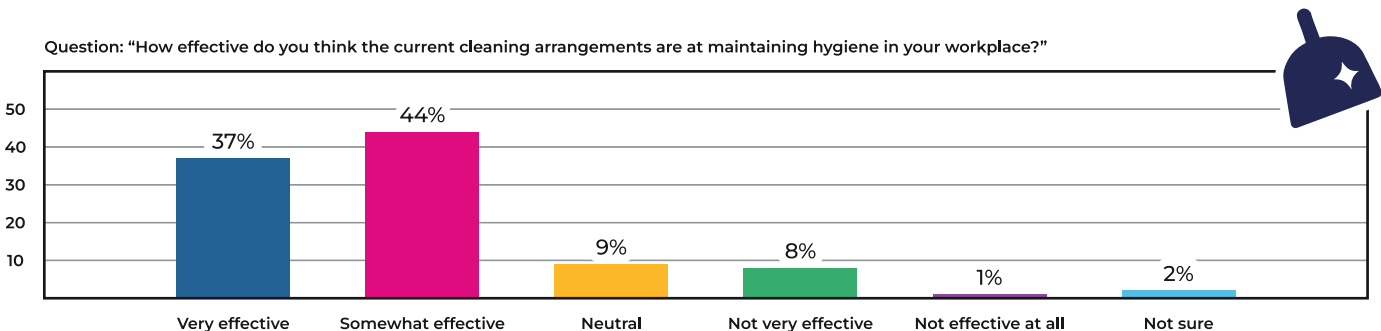
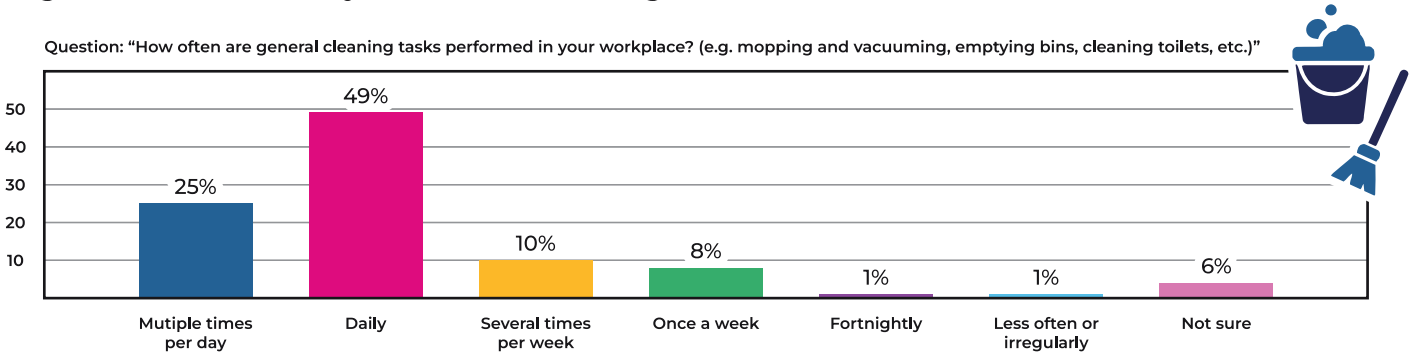
Where employees are expected to share responsibility, the availability of simple, effective cleaning products becomes critical.



# Cleaning Frequency vs. Perceived Cleanliness

While cleaning frequency is high, with nearly three-quarters of offices cleaning daily or more, this does not necessarily translate to confidence in hygiene standards.

Although 81% of office employees believe current arrangements are effective, the remaining respondents either feel neutral or dissatisfied. This gap suggests that visibility and timing of cleaning may matter as much as frequency. For example, employees may not see cleaning taking place during peak usage times, or high-touch areas may not receive enough attention.

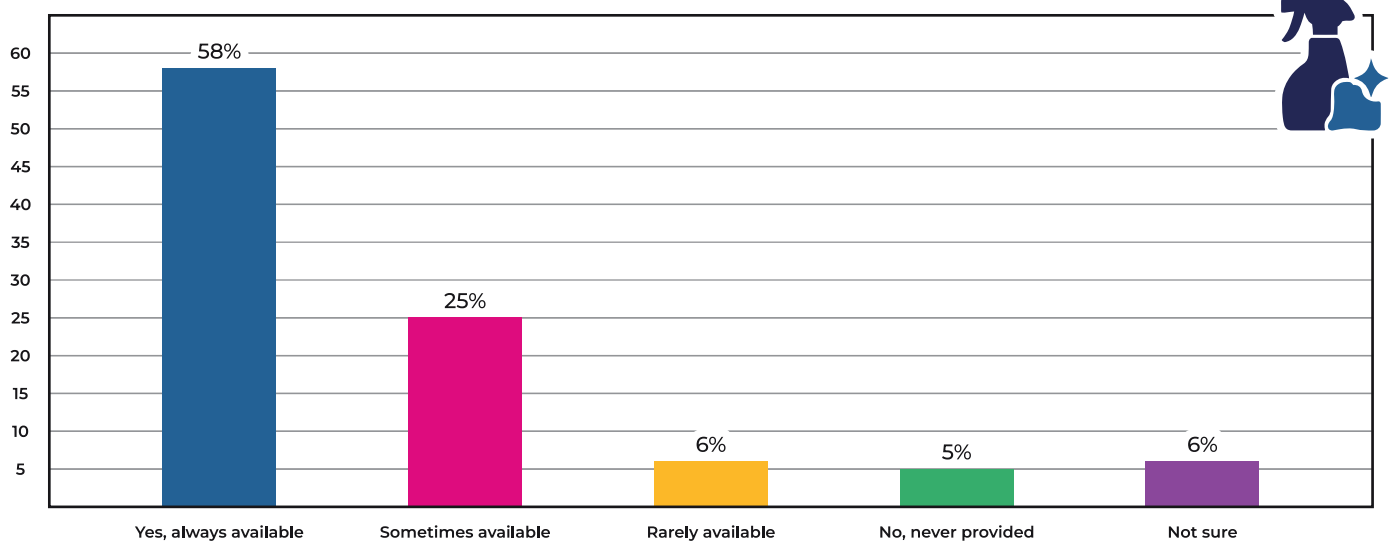


## Cleaning Supplies: Availability Drives Behaviour

While 58% of employees report that supplies are always available, 11% experience limited or inconsistent access.

When cleaning supplies are not readily accessible, employees are less likely to take immediate action, such as wiping down a shared desk, cleaning equipment, or washing up dirty mugs. Easy access to wipes, sprays, and sanitiser allows employees to uphold cleanliness every day, not just during scheduled cleaning.

Question: "Does your workplace provide cleaning supplies? (e.g. wipes, hand sanitiser, disinfectant spray, etc.)"

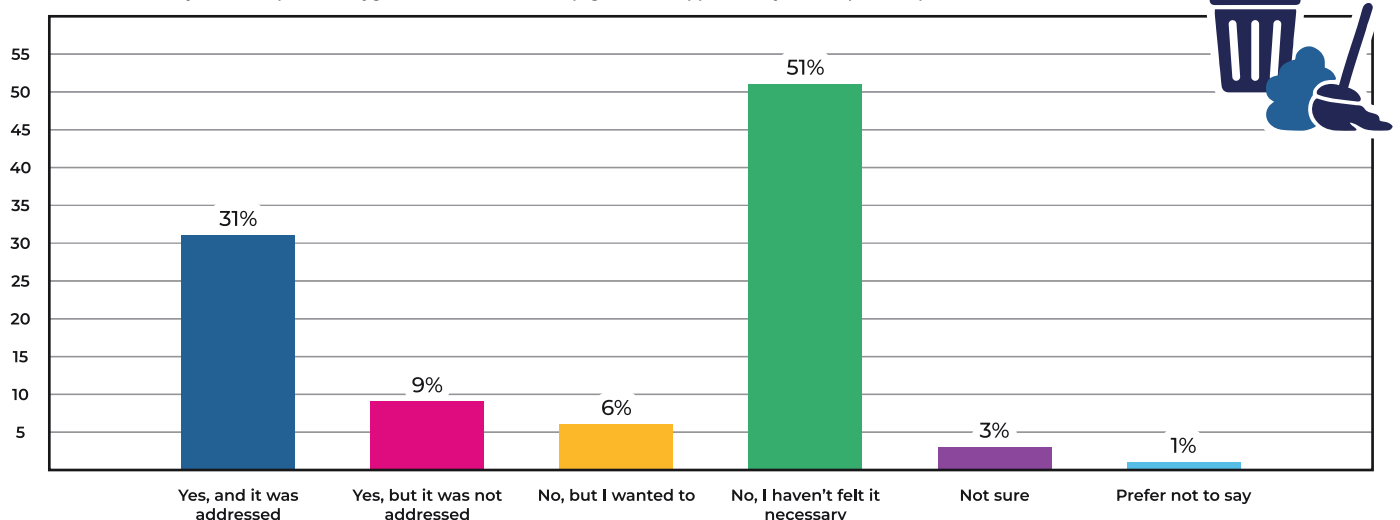


## Hygiene Concerns: The Cost of Inaction

15% of respondents have either reported hygiene issues in the office that were not addressed or wanted to report concerns but did not. Even small unresolved issues can create the perception that hygiene is not taken seriously.

Addressing hygiene concerns promptly reinforces a culture of care and accountability. Clear reporting processes, visible responses, and accessible supplies can help prevent minor hygiene concerns from becoming ongoing problems.

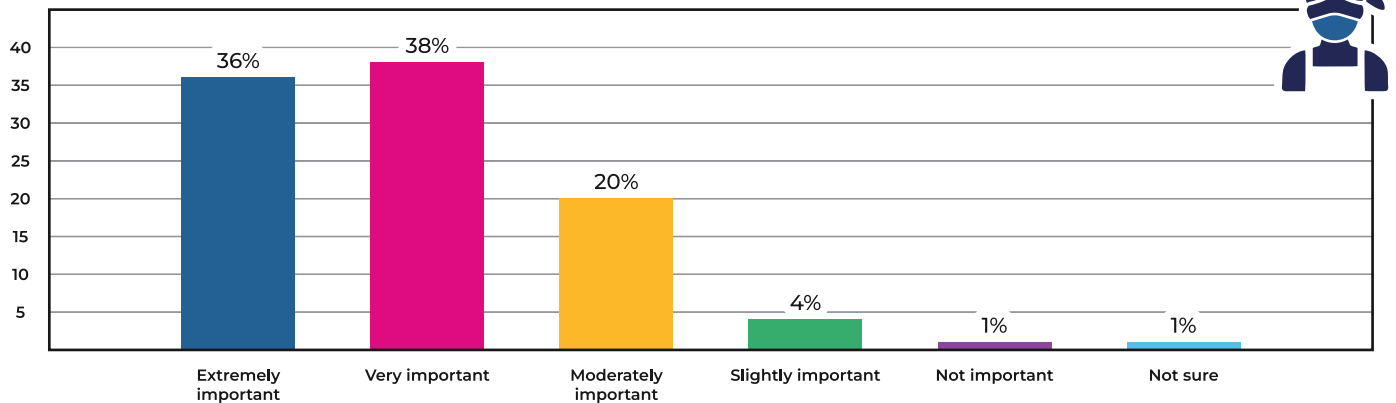
Question: "Have you ever reported a hygiene concern at work? (e.g. lack of supplies, dirty areas, spills, etc.)"



# Personal Hygiene: Strong Awareness, Uneven Application

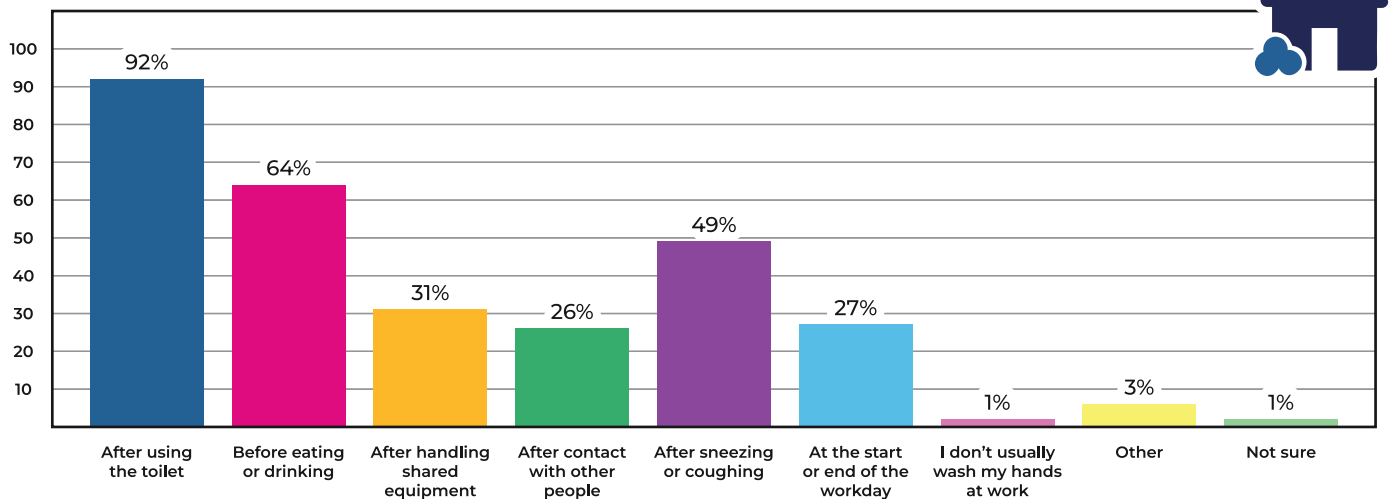
Personal hygiene is clearly valued, with 74% rating it very or extremely important. Handwashing rates are high, particularly after toilet use and before eating.

Question: "How important are both your own and others' personal hygiene (e.g. hand washing, desk cleanliness, etc.) to you while at work?"



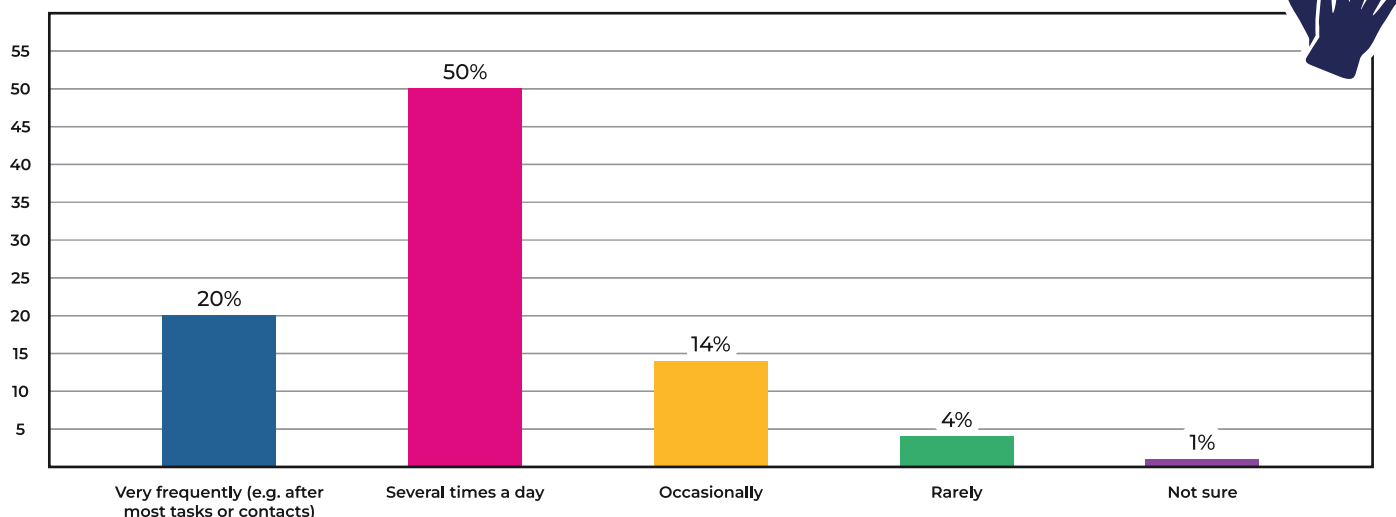
However, hygiene rates seem to be lower after using shared equipment or interacting with colleagues. One respondent even stated they do not wash their hands at all if they're working from home.

Question: "In which situations do you wash or sanitise your hands at work?" (Select all that apply)



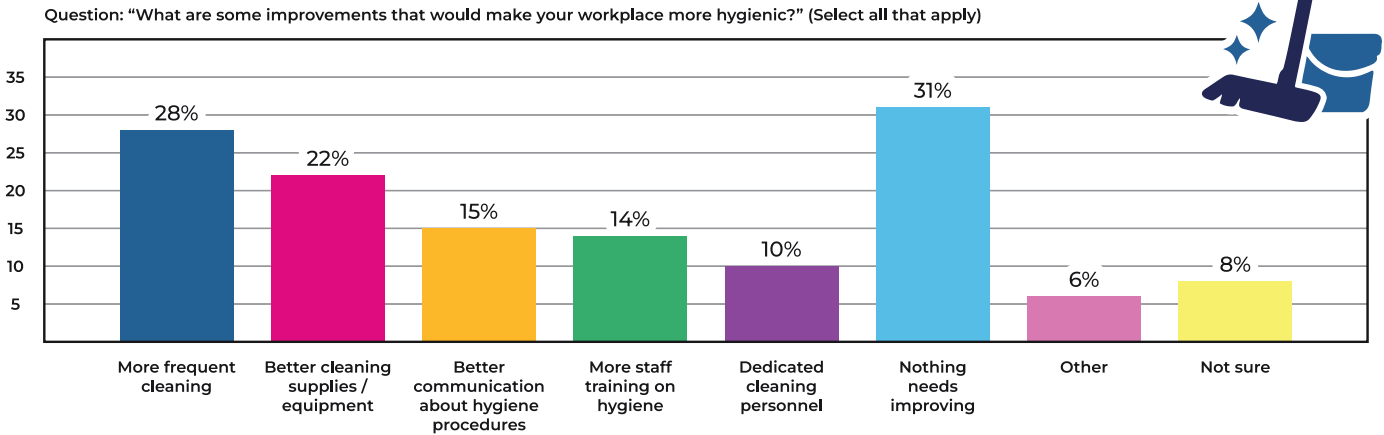
Everyone's idea of hygiene is different, but when working in shared spaces, there should be some key non-negotiables to avoid any discontent. This is especially relevant in shared offices, warehouses, workshops, and customer-facing environments.

Question: "How often do you wash or sanitise your hands during a typical workday?"



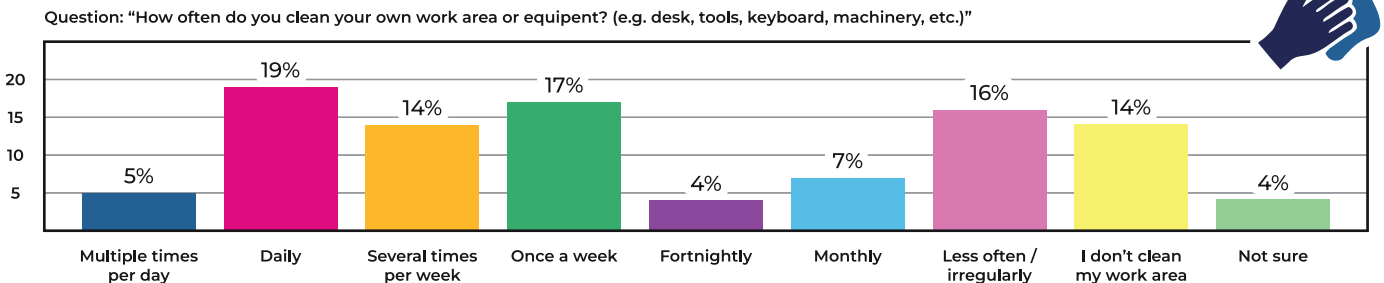
## Improvement Priorities Reflect Practical Needs

Respondents prioritised more frequent cleaning and better supplies over structural or staffing changes. Most offices would already have hygiene frameworks in place, but the survey shows there may be a lack of tools or consistency required to maintain standards throughout the day. Interestingly, nearly one-third felt no improvements were necessary.



## Personal Workspace Cleaning: A Clear Opportunity

Nearly 30% of respondents clean their workspace rarely or not at all. This offers a new question: what do employees view as 'unclean' or 'unhygienic'? Obvious mess and spills may invoke immediate action, but how often do people wipe down shared spaces even if there is no clear mess? Everyone's idea of hygiene will slightly differ from person to person, which can make enforcing cleanliness difficult in shared spaces, particularly in roles that are high-pressure.



## Conclusion: From Compliance to Culture

Overall, the results show that most offices are doing the right things but the biggest hygiene improvements lie in consistency, accessibility, and employee engagement. By supporting professional cleaning with quality supplies and encouraging staff to take day-to-day action, organisations can create a more hygienic workplace culture.

## Supporting Better Workplace Hygiene with Cartridge People

Cartridge People helps businesses maintain high hygiene standards with a wide range of reliable, professional cleaning supplies, including disinfectant wipes and hand sanitiser, among other cleaning essentials.

By ensuring cleaning products are always available where they're needed most, businesses can support both professional cleaners and employees in maintaining cleaner, safer workplaces.