

Together, we roll

Painting a picture of the
decorating community's needs



 **DECORATOR CENTRE**

125 YEARS | CENTRED on you

AkzoNobel

The price of fuel, the cost of living, post pandemic work patterns... the world seems to be changing at breakneck speed right now. Keeping up can be a challenge.

So, we've been checking in on Britain's decorating community, chatting with more than 500 painters and decorators about the ups and downs of 21st Century life in the trade.

In this pulse check of the UK industry, you'll find unique insights into what's keeping tradespeople awake at night, as well as what makes them tick.

As a sign of the times, the cost-of-living crisis is the number one concern right now: 56% say they are "very concerned" by it. The year ahead is set to be a challenging and worrying time for the trade.

The skills shortage in the industry is also top of mind. More than half (55%) of painters and decorators are concerned about this and nearly two thirds (61%) report difficulties finding tradespeople with the skills required to get the job done.

Mental health also matters. Most (77%) tradespeople feel that maintaining their wellbeing is more of a challenge now than before the pandemic and 45% have suffered personally. However 22% of those experiencing mental distress did nothing about it, highlighting that we could all do more as a community to raise awareness.

Read on to find out what the painting and decorating community is thinking and feeling right now as we start a new year. At Dulux Decorator Centre, we have been centred on our customers' needs for more than 125 years and look forward to working with the industry to help support the trade in 2023 and beyond.

Guy Butterworth,
Managing Director,
Dulux Decorator Centre



In the spotlight: mental wellbeing

The pandemic has taken a heavy toll on Britain's emotional wellbeing, with doctors warning of a wave mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. How is this impacting the decorating community and what can be done to help?

Is mental wellbeing more of a challenge since covid?

38%
Much more



40%
Slightly more

22%
Less/not at all



The impact of Covid 19

Britain's decorators have been working harder since the start of the pandemic, with business picking up for **39%** of decorators and remaining the same for **48%**. They've also struggled more with their mental health: **45%** of decorators have suffered personally with their mental wellbeing in the past, **73%** of them since the pandemic began. In fact, worryingly, more than three quarters (**78%**) of painters and decorators feel that maintaining mental wellbeing is more of a challenge today than it was before the pandemic.

Have you been working more since the start of the pandemic?

39%
Yes, more



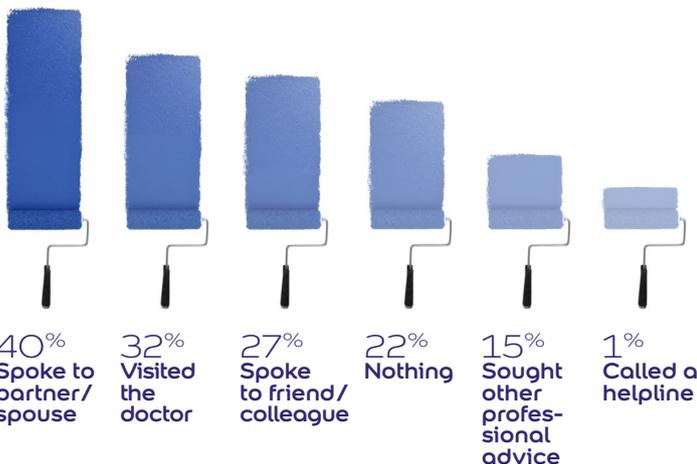
48%
About the same

13%
No, less

It's good to talk

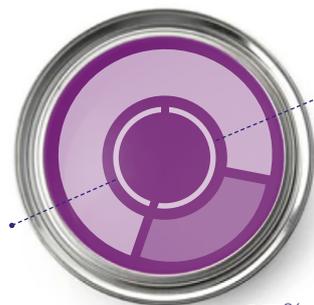
Talking therapy: two thirds of decorators who have experienced mental health problems have spoken about them. Of the 180 decorators we spoke to who have experienced mental wellbeing issues, more than two thirds (**67%**) sought help by speaking to people close to them. Forty per cent spoke to their partners or spouses and **27%** confided in friends or colleagues.

What have you done to improve your mental wellbeing at times of distress?



Have you suffered personally with your mental wellbeing? If so, when?

73%
Since the start of the pandemic



55%
No

45%
Yes

27%
Before the pandemic

The world around us and the community we work in

Dealing with change can sometimes be difficult. And there's been no shortage of change in recent months. So what issues are causing most concern for the decorating community and how can we all adapt?

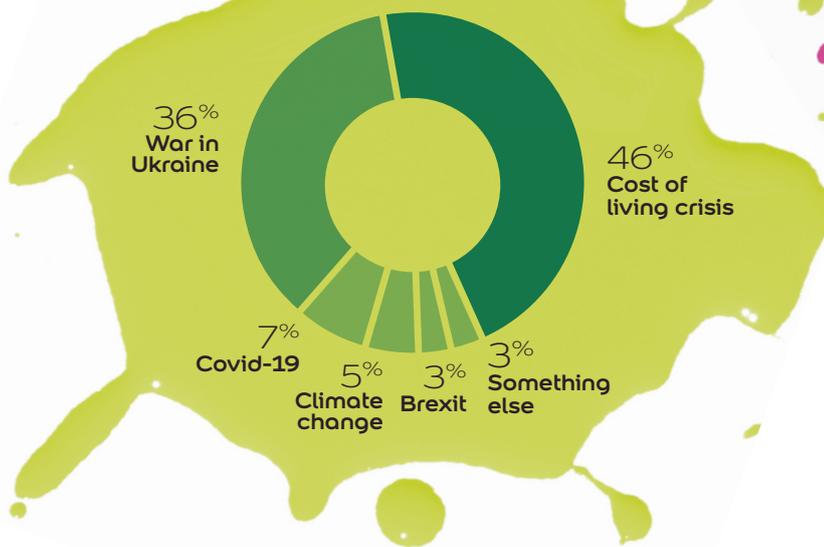
The way we work

We spoke to 549 painters and decorators for this study; 461 (85%) of them are male and 85 (15%) are female. A third of our sample group own their own businesses, 11% are employed by others. More than half (56%) of the decorators we spoke to are self-employed.

Who we spoke to...



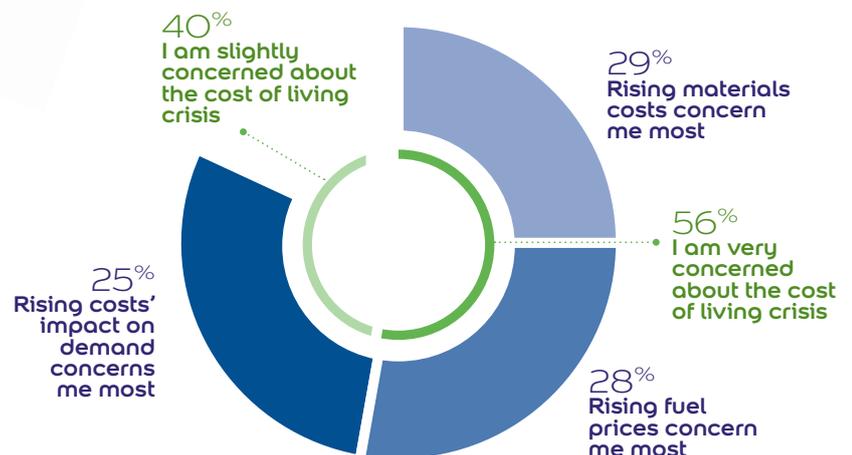
Which global issue concerns you most?



What are the business issues keeping decorators awake at night?

The cost of living crisis is the number one concern for decorators. The soaring cost of living is causing most sleepless nights for the decorating community right now. It's easy to see why: inflation hit a 40-year high of 10.7% in November 2022* and the increased energy and fuel bills are having a huge impact on small businesses. 57% of painters and decorators who completed the survey stated that the rising cost of fuel and materials were the other biggest concerns when it came to running their businesses.

What issues are giving decorators sleepless nights?



*Source: Office of National Statistics

Diversifying our workforce

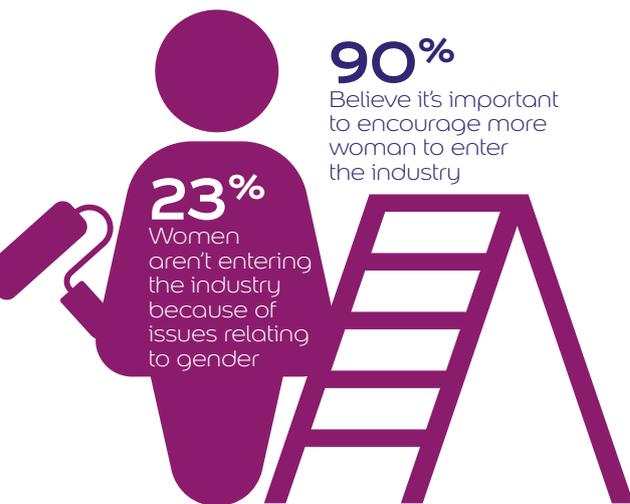


Diversifying and upskilling the industry's workforce, whilst breaking the bias against women and other minorities in the trade, is a focus for many organisations. So, what issues are the community facing and how can we overcome them?

Welcoming more women into the industry

Currently just one in five people joining the industry is female. Encouraging more women and other minorities to join the trade will benefit us all by bringing a wider range of skills and points of view into the industry and helping to end all kinds of discrimination.

Why aren't women entering the industry and does it matter?



Currently just one in five people joining the industry is female. Encouraging more women and other minorities to join the trade will benefit us all by bringing a wider range of skills and points of view into the industry and helping to end all kinds of discrimination.

Gender imbalance matters to the trade

The overwhelming majority (**90%**) of tradespeople agree that it's important to encourage more women to enter the industry; **23%** cite reasons relating to gender including sexism and male dominance as key reasons for the imbalance. We're trying to break the bias by publicly showcasing the successes and skills of women in the industry.

Do you think it is important to encourage women to join the decorating industry?

90% Yes



Why are there fewer women in the trade?

"I think it's down to old school ways – associated with chauvinistic cheeky chappies. Most of the decorators I know are absolute gentlemen and have daughters. More women in the industry would be warmly welcomed."

Anonymous response from State of the Nation research, 2022



"In recent years, we've had more female apprentices than ever"

"Our industry struggles to attract women into site-based roles. There's still a stigma that it's all 'lads, lads, lads.' We're working hard to change this. I sometimes felt like a token woman early in my career. I certainly don't feel like that now, but I want to ensure that no other women feel the same.

"We work closely with suppliers such as AkzoNobel to deliver workshops that enhance students' development. We also offer work experience through decorating academies in colleges, getting female students working on live sites to demonstrate that these are safe and exciting workplaces.

"In recent years, we've had more female apprentices than ever – 12% of last year's intake were female. If you're a woman looking to work in decorating but have no experience, that's okay. We can teach the skills to paint and decorate."

Anna Higham, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, Bell Group UK



"We operate in a welcoming, women-friendly environment in a diverse and exciting sector"

"Many women think the industry is just about painting and climbing ladders. There's so much more to it than that! We need to find better ways of engaging with them. Once women are in the industry, they can see the scope of jobs that are on offer, but we often struggle to get them over the threshold.

"Becoming the first female board director at Bagnalls was a personal career highlight. We now have two women on the board. We have highly skilled women decorators producing really intricate work, and they have different ways of dealing with customer care that are really beneficial.

"I'd advise women to reach out on social media or get on the phone to some of the great female workers we have in the trade. They'll soon discover that we operate in a welcoming, women-friendly environment in a diverse and exciting sector, where no two days are ever the same."

Joanne Gualda, Group Marketing Director, Bagnalls

Brushing up on skills

Painters and decorators are busier than ever before. Despite a challenging couple of years, tradespeople say they are working more than pre-pandemic with many saying they are experiencing the busiest time of their career.

However, this demand requires talent and with a labour shortage, many painters and decorators are feeling the pressure and struggling to source the right people with the right skills.

Additionally, the current population of decorators is declining steadily as they retire and alongside this the tradition of handing down businesses to the next generation is also fading away.

The skills shortage

Nearly two thirds (**61%**) of painters and decorators report difficulties finding tradespeople with the right skills to get the job done and more than half (**55%**) say they are concerned about a skills shortage in the industry.

But it's not just about labour and technical skills, painting and decorating is a 'people business'.

After technical skills what makes a good decorator?



**Skills shortage:
How concerned are you?...**

55%
I'm concerned
about the skills
shortage



61%
There doesn't
seem to
be enough
skilled people
out there

People skills are paramount

Our research reveals that tradespeople have the right attitude when it comes to work, with customer satisfaction and professional pride being key priorities in their own work and when recruiting.

We spoke to 348 members of the community about what they think makes a good decorator beyond practical skills like painting or wallpapering. The response was resounding: **62%** said interpersonal skills were most important. Being polite, friendly and showing manners came out top, mentioned by **13%** of decorators who said people skills were most important. Next up was being able to listen, understand and be understood well, with **12%** citing communication skills. Third was being reliable and trustworthy (**7%**).

We are partnering with the **Dulux Academy** to offer **Dulux Academy Training** at our Dulux Decorator Centre stores. Courses cover subjects ranging from business skills such as brand building, website building and sales techniques through to practical skills and techniques including design, paint skills, wallpapering and spraying.



What's the most important skill, outside of decorating techniques, you need to run a successful business?

"Really understanding the products I use so I can offer the best results for my clients."

Supporting the industry

Our research has given us a far deeper understanding of what keeps Britain's painters and decorators awake at night. In 2023, we will continue to support the trade through both our existing and some new initiatives.

What decorators want

Many painters and decorators will need additional personal and financial support this year, with many turning to their suppliers to seek out benefits.



68% would like to see loyalty rewards; programmes such as Nectar points which can be used in-store or online with Dulux Decorator Centre, can really help offer savings and be used to combat the cost-of-living challenges. The points can be used not only on fuel but also travel or days out to help support mental wellness in very challenging times.

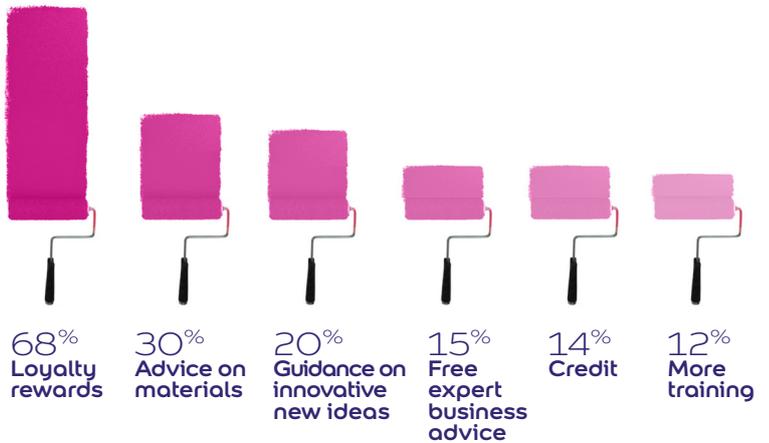
It's clear from our research that the community also wants advice, training and guidance on the hottest new trends.

Laughter at work

Getting the job done well means the world to Britain's decorators. But it's not all about hard graft. We are social animals. Working with and for other people provides valuable opportunities to interact and share laughs – 374 decorators told us about their funniest moments they've had at work.



What support would you like to see from suppliers?



Common mishaps involve stepping in roller trays and painting properties the wrong colour. While 10 of the funny moments involved dogs and on four occasions decorators reported dipping their brushes into their cuppas by mistake!





CENTRED
on you

Together, we roll

Dulux Decorator Centre has been **centred on you** for more than 125 years, rolling with the trade and partnering with tradespeople to ensure they have the **materials, know-how, support and skills** they need to maximise customer and personal satisfaction for every job.

As well as supplying all the best products from the leading brands, we offer **free delivery, colour matching and mixing to order, click & collect and expert advice** in our 238 stores nationwide and online. We also offer support through the **Dulux Decorator Centre Workfinder** that brings together our customers who have job opportunities with decorators looking for work. And for those decorators who are busier than ever, we can help ease the pressure with our **one-stop-shop range** in store or online at www.duluxdecoratorcentre.co.uk where you can also manage your account 24/7. We also offer **sustainable products** and free **can recycling** and we are the only decorating merchant to offer **Nectar points**.

We partner with the Dulux Academy to offer **Dulux Academy Training at our Dulux Decorator Centre stores** and online to provide painters and decorators with training that develops their skills and expertise at every stage of their careers. We also partner with local painting and decorating colleges to deliver training courses.

Get in touch:

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