

Skills shortages in the UK economy

November 2022

Key Highlights from the Bulletin

This edition of the bulletin provides perspectives on the skills shortage from employers, parents, and young people:

- Employers are concerned that the significant gap between the skills employers require and skills available in the labour market threatens their success. The *Open University's 2022 Business Barometer* reports that 78% of UK organisations suffered a decline in output, profitability, or growth as a consequence of a lack of available skills, and the *Federation of Small Businesses* finds 80% of small firms faced difficulties recruiting applicants with suitable skills. The *Recruitment & Employment Confederation* estimates that if labour shortages are not addressed the cost to the UK economy will be £39 billion a year from 2024. Businesses and the government must see skills as an investment, not a cost, and also recognise the 'ever-increasing importance of inclusive workplaces contributing to their growth, productivity and revenue'. The *Department for Education* has established the Unit for Future Skills (UFS) to capture data on employers' current and future skills needs and develop 'products that enable users to make informed training and investment decisions'.
- The deficit of emerging technical skills required in sectors such as nursing and social care compounds existing labour shortages caused by issues such as poor working conditions, poor work-life balance, low pay, limited progression, and new restrictions on immigration policies. Required digital skills include not just sector-specific digital skills, but also include more general digital skills including record-keeping and communication skills. In film and TV, a similar situation is compounded by a lack of adequate information about screen industries reaching young people through their education. The *London Screen Academy's* diploma programme highlights one approach helping to tackle this shortage. It provides screen industry skills alongside developing professional behaviours through applied learning and assessed project work. In nursing and social care, the NHS fears that abolishing BTECs in 2024 and 2025 will damage the NHS in England's efforts to recruit enough nurses.
- Young people and their carers struggle with a lack of information and understanding of the skills employers require and those skills that will be important in the future and require stronger careers advice. Young people between 11- and 30-years old feel especially vulnerable, the *Youth Voice Census 2022* highlights. The consequences of lost opportunities due to the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and global political tensions, lead young people to report low self-belief, and a disconnect from careers education and career opportunities. Carers, care leavers, Black and transgender respondents were the least confident there were quality jobs available to them. While young people are attracted the new opportunities arising in green industries and for green growth, they exhibit a limited understanding of the necessary skills to participate in the green economy, and like employers they lack faith in the capacity of existing education provision to provide them with such skills. Parents remain important sources of career advice but are often similarly unfamiliar with new, often flexible, career route options. The *Gatsby Foundation* presents their new free suite of resources, 'Talking Futures', to help parents with these conversations.

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The Unit for Future Skills

Department for Education

Set up earlier this year, the Unit for Future Skills aims to provide information on the current and future skills needed by employers, so there is the right training available for people to get the skills they need to progress to get good jobs to boost productivity across the country.

The UK economy suffers from skills mismatch, with too many people without the right skills to meet employer need and enable productive sectors to grow. The Department for Education (DfE) post-16 reforms aim to make it easier to access high-quality training that will meet economic needs. However, there is no consistent source of information on the skills in demand and what training provides those skills, leaving colleges, employers, universities and students uncertain which courses best provide the skills needed in the economy.

Building on the work of the Skills and Productivity Board, the Unit for Future Skills (UFS) is developing a programme of innovative data techniques to bring together skills and job data held across government and beyond and enable its use. Supported by its Chair, Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, the UFS is working across departments, driving collaboration to share and link the considerable data on jobs and skills collected by public and private bodies. Currently the use and value of this data is limited as it is fragmented, there are key gaps, and it is not available or understandable for decision makers. The work of the UFS will focus on:

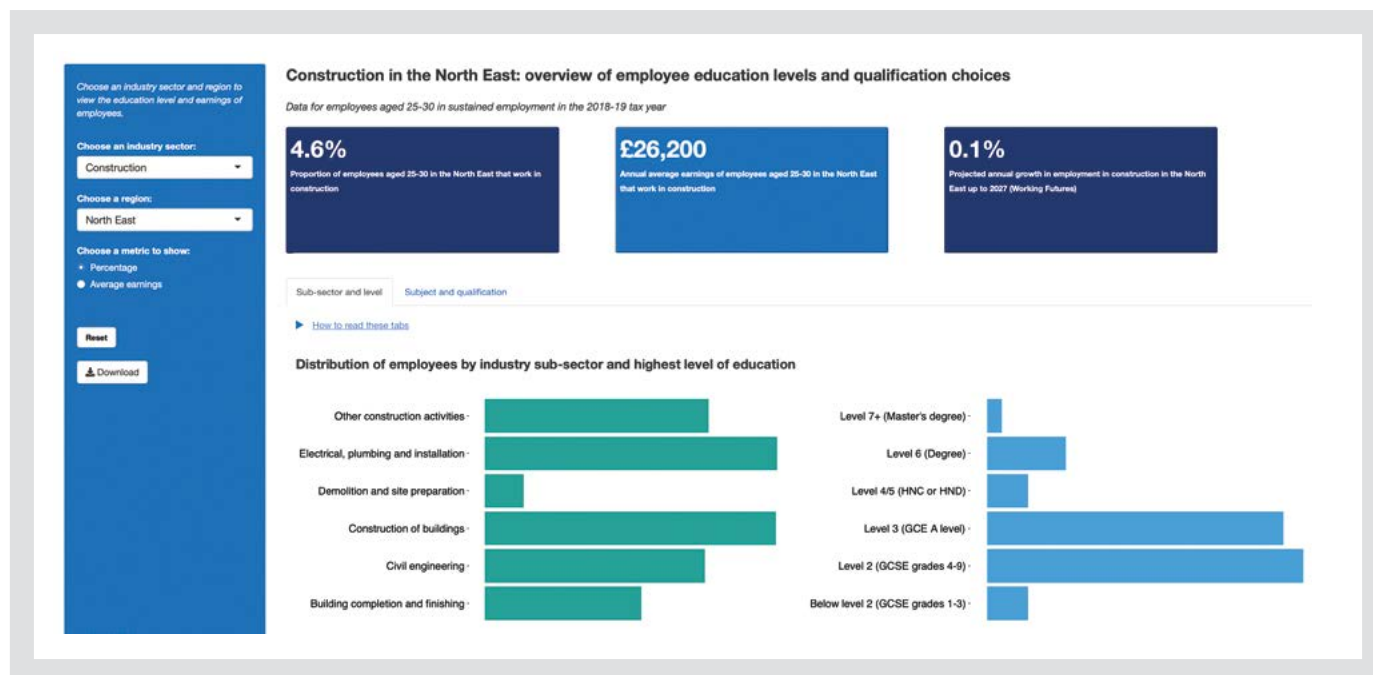
- bringing together and improving jobs and skills data - Coordinating action amongst data holders to provide a comprehensive resource capturing employers' current and future skills needs;
- structuring the data - Leading on developing new ways of making it accessible, coherent and usable, and mapping the link between education, skills and jobs at local levels; and
- producing insights - Working with analysts inside and outside Whitehall to make products that enable users to make informed training and investment decisions.

Combined, this data and analysis should transform our understanding of the jobs and skills market. It will enable the comparison of skills supply and demand at national, local or sector level; allowing policymakers, employers and institutions to identify trends and respond to skills shortages.

To achieve these goals, the Unit is working closely with analysts and data experts in the DfE and across departments including DWP, HMRC, ONS and BEIS, as well as engaging extensively with the research, education and business community.

The labour market and its data are complex, and a complete overview will not be available in the short-term. Some of the research that is being commissioned by the Unit will take time. However, since launching in May, the UFS has released five prototype dashboards, which have been used to gain user feedback to inform long-term projects. This includes a careers pathways dashboard showing routes young people take through education and employment in different industry sectors across regions of England.

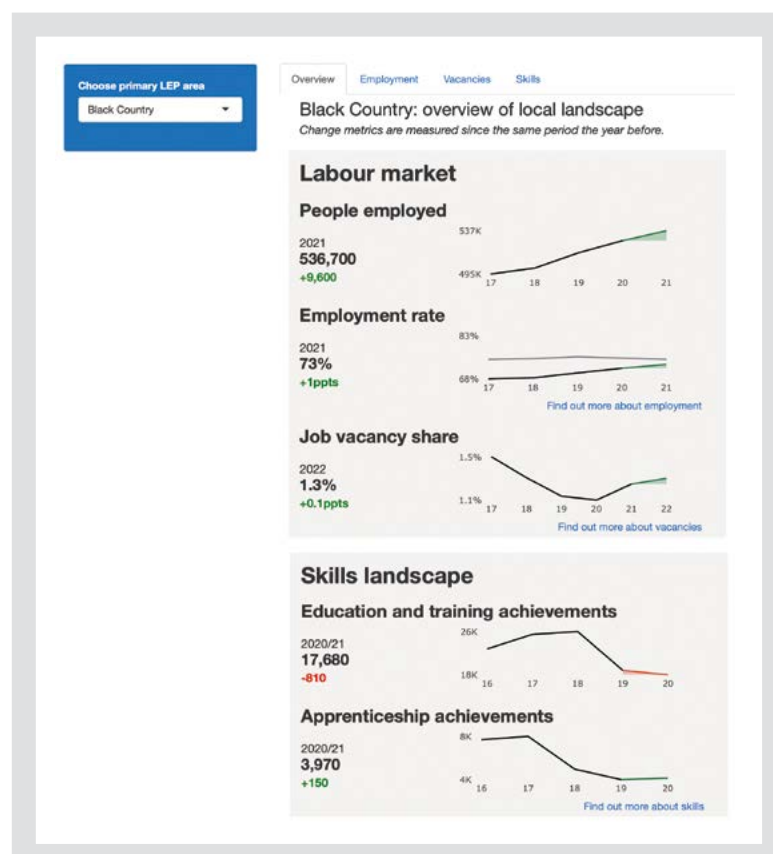
Figure 1: Careers pathway dashboard



While the Unit for Future Skills is still growing, the interest and need for its work has been clear. Organisations have been keen to contact the UFS and the Unit is working collaboratively to understand how to address data gaps and focus its products most effectively. This is a challenging but exciting time in skills data development. By developing data products, insights, and services for audiences across and outside of government the UFS will support a better understanding of what skills are needed throughout the country, and how our skills system is responding. This will ensure our skills reforms are responsive to employer needs and contribute to key Government priorities including improved productivity, net zero and levelling up.

More information about the Unit for Future Skills can be found at Unit for Future Skills - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) or the Unit can be contacted by email at UFS.CONTACT@education.gov.uk

Figure 2: Local skills dashboard. The latest release is the local skills dashboard which is being designed in collaboration with LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) and ERBs (Employer Representative Bodies) working on LSIPs (Local Skills Improvement Plans).





There is a vast amount of information and data in relation to skills, but this is not joined up and there are gaps that need to be filled by targeted research. The launch of the Unit for Future Skills earlier this year is an exciting development to help to address these issues. We are already working across government, and we are building external relationships and partnerships to shape our work going forward. As we work towards being a centre of expertise, we aim to produce products to support stakeholders needing robust skills data to make key decisions in this space.

Frank Bowley
Head of Unit for Future Skills

Not addressing labour shortages could cost UK economy up to £39bn a year

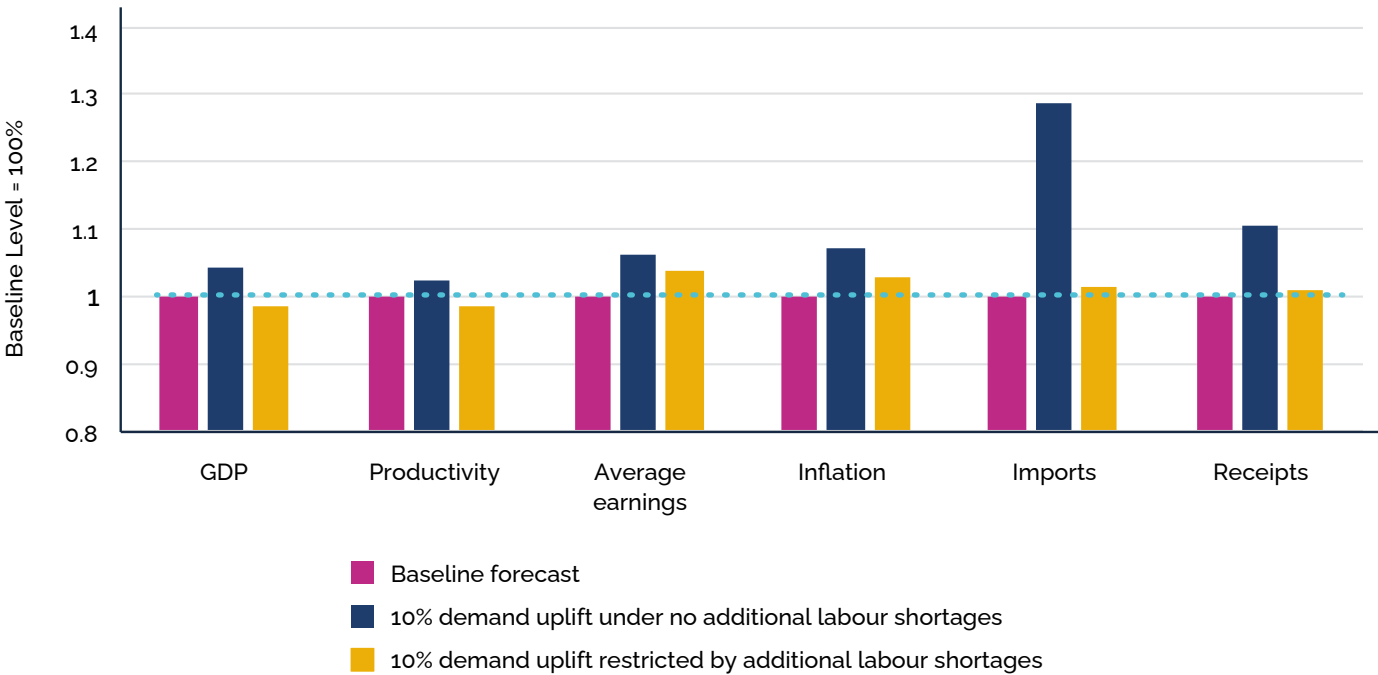
Recruitment and Employment Confederation

In July 2022, the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) published a new report, [Overcoming Shortages – How to create a sustainable labour market](#).

The extent of labour and skills shortages are well known, but the REC wanted to understand just how much damage these shortages could have on our economy, if left unaddressed. The report demonstrates the need for governments and business to act and suggests the policies to drive change and create a sustainable labour market.

Our report found that the UK economy could lose £39bn each year from 2024, if we don't address these shortages. We also found that prolonged shortages have a detrimental impact on growth, investment, and productivity. To prevent this, policy makers need to look at a range of issues from devolving skills policies to creating an immigration system that can flex to employer needs.

Figure 3: Damage of labour shortages to the UK economy





Future Workforce Strategy

The REC's central ask for governments is to create a cohesive, long-term workforce strategy for the UK that puts people planning at the heart of its growth strategy. This strategy should have a home in the Cabinet Office or with an independent commission. It must be delivered in collaboration with businesses and monitored for progress. Along with industry voices, the strategy must have cross-department input.

Skills policies that catalyse investment

We need to get the skills system right and ensure that funds follow market demand on skills. More so, we need skills funding approaches that ensure public money catalyses private sector investment into training and create an atmosphere in sectors and local areas where investment in training is incentivised and expected. The current system in England has made some progress – but the failed apprenticeship levy crowds out additional private sector money now. To change that, we must firstly redesign the apprenticeship levy in a way that

encourages high-quality early-career apprenticeships, good retraining options and modular courses that help move careers on quickly. Training must be accessible to all – not just those with the ability to do a year-long course with 20% of their time in off-the-job training. It is all about making sure the levy funds the right things and addresses shortages.

Skills supply and market-making also need to be further devolved to mayors and other authorities who can work with local businesses, local recruiters and skills and education providers. This can be supported by expanding Local Skills Improvement Plans across England. This model should offer more practical training schemes and ensure participating colleges have access to current employer data on what they are looking for. Lastly, a tax credit scheme for employers who invest in training for green jobs and skills would unlock more opportunities for upskilling, learning and development while ensuring we collectively work towards reducing our carbon footprint for future generations and meet our COP commitments. Through this scheme, we can really catalyse and incentivise investment in skills, people and jobs.

Making local labour markets work

Local labour markets must work and be sustainable in order for the wider economy to be able to truly bounce back and grow. It's also a vital cog in the levelling up machine. To make local labour markets work, we need further investment into local infrastructure – in simple terms, buses and better childcare facilities in rural areas. Along with the physical structure, statutory leave for grandparents and mandatory ethnic and disability pay gap reports could go a long way in reaching the communities and workers who are further away from the labour market. More importantly, local organisations should be at the heart of this discussion. Local businesses, local authorities and local people are the experts when it comes to their areas and have the knowledge and passion to level up the communities they belong to. Also, local recruiters, working with local businesses and education providers are well positioned to help maximise growth by providing good careers advice and identifying the skills gaps and job opportunities in particular areas. With the right powers and incentives, central government can unlock the vast potential of these areas and help the devolved nations, regions and local areas across the UK to level up.

What businesses can do

To overcome shortages, the actions needed from businesses are as important as those required by governments. Businesses must play their part on the skills agenda by putting the “people stuff” first and seeing skills as an investment rather than a cost. Equality, diversity and inclusion is another area that we need to get right, for example more action to close ethnicity and disability pay gaps. The report includes interviews with a range of businesses who recognise the ever-increasing importance of inclusive workplaces contributing to their growth, productivity, and revenue. Providing good working conditions is also vital. That's not simply about increasing salaries, but introducing flexibility where possible, and reviewing wider benefits. We know having a good place to work is what matters to employees, now more than ever. Good employee relations and staff engagement help people feel invested in a workplace and increase retention and output.



The severity of labour and skills shortages isn't new to the education sector but we have seen these problems spread across all sectors in recent times. That means both governments and businesses have to act to get the 'people stuff' right and get serious about long-term workforce planning. Neither government nor business can do this alone.

Companies should prioritise creating long-term workforce strategies at board level, investing in staff and the skills pipeline. And governments need to create the right funding structures for educators to do right by their staff and students but also to enable businesses to invest and thrive.

Neil Carberry
CEO, REC



Recruitment
& Employment
Confederation

Find out more about the Recruitment & Employment Confederation at www.rec.uk.com.

The Open University's 2022 Business Barometer

The Open University

The Open University partnered with the British Chambers of Commerce for the first time for its 2022 Business Barometer report. Based on a survey of 1,300 employers, conducted by the British Chambers of Commerce, the report is an annual temperature check on the UK's business landscape across a multitude of different UK nations, regions and sectors.

According to the latest Business Barometer report, UK organisations are experiencing the knock-on effect of ongoing skills shortages and recruitment challenges, as more than three quarters (78%) report seeing reduced output, profitability or growth.

The report also highlighted the effect the skills shortage is having on staff morale and wellbeing, as almost three-quarters (72%) of organisations say the impact increases workload on other staff. This statistic has crept up dramatically year on year, when only 56% of respondents from 2021's report claimed their staff were experiencing additional pressure. The skills shortage is an ongoing challenge that organisations across the UK face but the recent years have shown the wider business impact it can have.

To address the problem, more than half (52%) of large organisations will increase investment in staff training over the next year, compared to 47% of SMEs. Interestingly, the report revealed that 86% of large organisations are currently facing skills shortages while more than two-thirds (68%) of SMEs report the same. The sharp rise is in stark comparison to last year's report where almost a quarter (24 per cent) believed that finding staff with the right skillset was the single biggest challenge facing businesses.

But while 9 in 10 of large organisations are looking at a long-term strategic approach to skills gaps and have a written plan to address this, only 43%

of micro organisations (with fewer than 10 employees) said they have some form of plan to address workforce issues. Similarly, more than half (53%) of large organisations will increase investment in staff training over the next year, compared to 39% of micros, showing that large organisations are currently better equipped to tackle recruitment challenges, despite reporting larger skills gaps.

While investing in staff training and planning may not be an immediate priority for smaller businesses, this can alleviate existing pressures and ultimately boost the bottom line. This is seen in the report which reports on the knock-on effect of these shortages as 28% of businesses say they have had to turn down work or are not able to bid for work due to their staff shortage, ultimately impacting business growth.

Organisations reported they were feeling the full impact of complex socio-economic issues such as Covid-19, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and rising business costs – all feeding into the skills shortage.

To bridge the skills gap, organisations should engage with local chambers of commerce and explore different flexible training and upskilling opportunities with providers such as The Open University. The key is to find sustainable solutions and take a 'the grow your own talent' approach to foster loyalty and plug the skills gaps.

DIGITAL SKILLS

The Open University surveyed IT decision makers based in England to probe their attitudes towards the digital skills gaps their organisations might be facing and how they plan on closing the skills gap in their organisations in the near future.

The survey results revealed that the majority (77%) of employers say they currently have a digital skills gap in their organisation and are struggling to recruit new staff with adequate digital skills and to upskill their current staff.

Employers in England also acknowledged that improving digital skills would add value to their organisation with 48% of respondents say they think it would drive 'business' profitability' and almost half (48%) of respondents think that upskilling their current employees would help them avoid expensive new hires.

Respondents revealed their commitment to finding solutions to these challenges by revealing their plans to upskill their current staff to meet the skills gap in their company in the next two years (56%) with many planning to reskill their existing staff into new roles (46%).

When asked about the possibility of higher education courses providing solutions to these problems, 84% of employers think that the options of both [HTQs \(Higher Technical Qualifications\)](#) and apprenticeships are a good way to meet the digital skills gap in their business, and 72% think digital bootcamps could also offer a solution to their skills shortage needs.



The Business Barometer report highlights the need for employers to take a long-term strategic approach to addressing the skills gaps and that it's more important than ever to take a proactive view on employees' skills.

"The report also shows that recruitment is tougher than ever and that places a focus on growing talent from within and opening up opportunities for hidden talent both inside and outside the organisation. Critically, staff seem to be under more pressure than ever, looking at last year's report, an increased amount of employers admit that the skills shortage is increasing their teams' workload and wellbeing.

"Through The Open University's work with employers, we've seen how education can make a huge difference to workforce impact and diversity. Education is a huge enabler and has a vital role to easing and solving the skills shortage. If we can harness the ambitions of our people who deliver products and services, then it's a win-win for all.

Viren Patel

Director of the Business Development Unit at The Open University

Scaling Up Skills

Federation of Small Businesses

FSB's report published in September, *Scaling Up Skills*³, outlined the severe recruitment challenges facing small businesses.

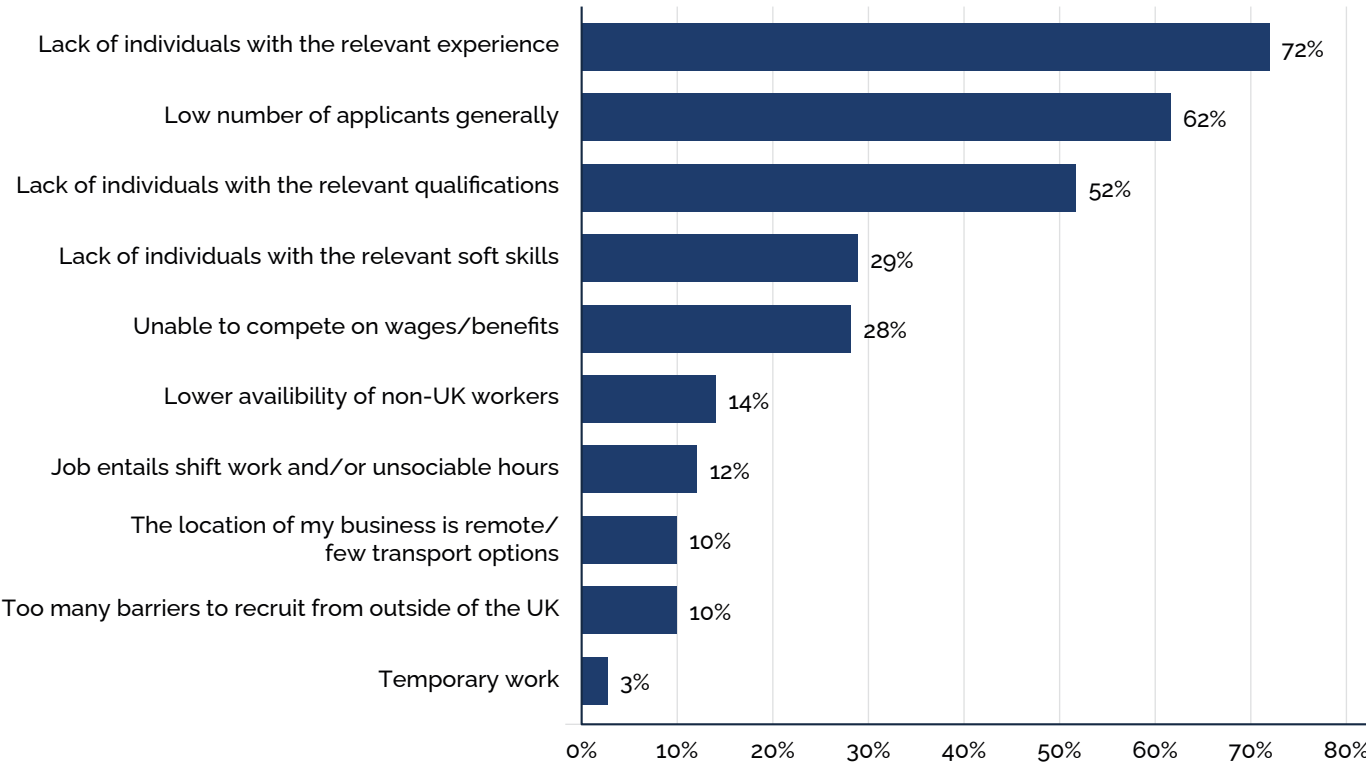
Roughly 80% of small firms who tried to recruit in the past 12 months had difficulties doing so. When we asked FSB members why they were having recruitment difficulties, it's due to low numbers of applicants generally as well as low numbers with suitable experience, qualifications, and skills (see table below).

These recruitment difficulties are not isolated to certain sectors, regions or skill levels. Although there is variation, FSB's survey finds that skill shortages are experienced by small businesses at all skill levels including medium and low skilled jobs (RQF definition).

Figure 5: Proportion of small businesses that have faced difficulties in filling roles by skill level in the last 12 months



Figure 4: Small business employers' explanation for recruitment difficulties





While Covid and Brexit partially explain why there are labour shortages (fewer people returning and entering the labour market), skills shortages are a systemic issue that don't have many quick-fixes.

While an increasing proportion of the population are very well qualified, the skills system is not geared towards those who left school without good qualifications. Recent reports from the [Institute for Fiscal Studies](#) and the [National Audit Office](#) are critical of an education and skills system that has in recent years entrenched education inequalities. More young people are leaving compulsory education without basic skills, fewer adults are participating in adult education courses and those adults who do training tend to already have high levels of qualifications.

To build a highly skilled economy, it is essential that opportunities to learn, develop and retrain are not

limited to those who are already highly skilled – this is key if the UK Government seeks to achieve its levelling up ambitions, but also to drive productivity improvements and economic growth.

Scaling Up Skills suggests ways to rebalance this. The report argues that no one should leave school without basic qualifications and highlights the need to encourage small businesses to conduct even more training than they are currently carrying out. One of the problems with training tax credits is that they are often used to benefit workers who have already achieved higher levels of qualification. Therefore, the report suggests that tax relief should be more generous for when an employer trains someone with a low or medium level of qualifications.

The self-employed, a large proportion of the workforce, are less likely to take training courses.

To change that, the report calls for the training tax relief for self-employed to be expanded out to training courses that would enable them to expand their business. This would mean that they could claim training tax relief not just on their narrow job remit but also on courses related to marketing and growing their business. The report also calls for the [EnterprisingYou programme](#), a project in Greater Manchester that supports the self-employed to learn new skills, to be continued and expanded to other regions of the country.

The recent emphasis from the Government on vocational training is welcome. However, for T Levels and apprenticeships to be strong alternatives to academic qualifications, the Government needs to engage with small businesses throughout the country. The report makes several suggestions on how to do so. This includes financial incentives. The report firstly recommends reintroducing the £1,000 financial incentive for hosting a T Level placement. Secondly, it recommends extending the current financial incentive to hire an apprentice under 19-year-olds to all under 25-year-olds, increasing the financial incentive to £3,000, but making this incentive exclusively available at to SMEs.

The report also calls for stronger careers advice to better reflect the different career opportunities available. This would particularly include an emphasis on how students can go on to start their own business, something that is currently badly neglected. Therefore, FSB calls for the Careers and Enterprise Company to develop a long-term strategy to promote enterprise to school children and ensure they have the knowledge, understanding and skills to start a business.

We often think of policy related to education, skills and the labour market separately. This needs to change. FSB's report recommends making the future skills unit independent of the Department for Education and empowered to make policy recommendations across Whitehall. It also calls for the development of a long-term education and skills strategy, looking at all aspects and thinking of future economic need. Even if a future recession prevents firms from hiring and subsequently the labour market becomes less tight, the education and skills system needs to be radically changed to meet socio-economic need and provide opportunities for all.



Tina McKenzie
FSB Policy Chair

Our members tell us their growth potential is being held back by a lack of appropriately-skilled staff, with vital roles going unfilled, ultimately harming the economy.

This skills and training deficit is a perennial issue, but far from an insoluble one. Our report sets out a roadmap for change on every level, from schools to apprenticeships to workplaces.

If the Government is serious about levelling up every region of England, and rebuilding the economy, our recommendations definitely need to be on the new Education Secretary's slate.

The Importance of Parental Engagement in Careers Education

Lesley Thain, Gatsby Foundation

As children progress through education, every decision they make has the potential to impact their future career path.

With a new system of technical education being rolled out in England, young people have better routes to pursue post-16 than ever before, so it's important that they are supported to make informed choices about which route to follow.

Alongside educators, parents, carers and guardians have significant influence on their child's career decisions. Children often turn to their parents for guidance and support, but it's not always easy for parents to navigate the often-stressful topic of career options.

Research commissioned by the Gatsby Foundation earlier this year reported that 71% of parents feel overwhelmed by the number of options available to their child. A-level, T-level or apprenticeship? All offer excellent progression routes post-16, but, for parents, knowing which one might be best for their child is difficult.

The research also showed that 62% of parents admit to relying predominantly on their own experiences when offering recommendations on potential future opportunities. With T-levels being relatively new to most parents but a great option for many young people looking to combine academic rigour with experience of industry, it's important to equip parents with the information and tools they need to help their child made the right choice.

To make things more complicated, 66% of parents say their child has expressed an interest in exploring a future career they know nothing about, a further 75% feel that the fast-changing job market increases the difficulty of offering apt advice and 83% are worried that they don't consider all the options that exist when discussing career choices with their children.

With jobs today such as: wearables developers, who engineer devices such as glasses and watches with special technology to make our lives easier and more efficient; acoustics consultants, who work alongside architects and engineers to minimise noise and vibrations; and iceberg movers, who track and navigate around icebergs safely, it's not surprising parents are confused.

Added to this, Gen Z have grown up in the gig economy. They want to feel fulfilled in their roles and aren't afraid to job-hop so they can expose themselves to new opportunities and experiences. This means that, either through choice or necessity, young people are pursuing a portfolio career. Set against this landscape, it's understandable that some parents feel ill-equipped with the advice they can offer their child.

But, as Shavanda Levers explains, parent of 17-year-old college student, Omari, that shouldn't stop parents from having career conversations: "I first started having conversations with my son about what his future career options could be when he turned 11 years old and, as a parent, it did initially feel daunting. From a very young age, Omari has always dreamt of becoming a professional basketball player. I thought I needed to have all the answers as to how he could look to make this dream a reality but, with time, I realised that you don't need to have it all worked out. The simple act of being open to having regular conversations and making your child's aspirations feel valued is the most helpful thing you can do as a parent."

And it's for this reason that the Gatsby Foundation – the organisation that created the Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance – has created a suite of free and interactive resource for parents and educators as art of

their Talking Futures campaign to encourage parents to have regular and more meaningful conversations with their child about their career and education options.

In February 2022, Gatsby launched its Talking Futures campaign to parents, unveiling a new [Talking Futures website](#) and a [suite of inspirational films](#) that demonstrate the value of parental support when it comes to career conversations. More recently, they launched a new [interactive tool](#) to help parents get more out of the career conversations they have with their child. The online resource provides questions and prompts to help get a conversation started, and helps young people explore with their parents some of the decisions they need to make when working out what career might be right for them.

Parents should also be able to look to their child's school or college for support. From autumn 2021, Gatsby has partnered with The Careers & Enterprise Company

(CEC) to support educators across England to connect parents into careers programmes through their [educator resources](#). Resources for schools and colleges to use include: tailored family learning sessions; practical tips and guidance on how to deliver activities aimed at parents and students; and a range of preparation activities to help educators and parents get the most out of parental engagement sessions.

When it comes to career options, young people have better choices available to them today, compared to when educators and parents were leaving school or college. Working together, Gatsby and CEC would like to see parental engagement embedded in every school and college throughout England, with accessible information made available to parents at key decision points so they can help their child make informed decisions about their best next step.



We know that young people frequently turn to their parents as a source of career guidance. Providing parents with accurate and independent information about the full range of education and career options available to their children is critical to enabling all young people to make informed decisions about their future.

The rapidly changing landscape of the world of work can be complex and confusing. Talking Futures cuts through that complexity. It breaks information down into manageable chunks and gives parents the information and signposting they need to guide their child through the decision-making process and discover the careers that might interest them.

It also supports teachers in having informed conversations with parents about how best to guide their children in making the decisions that will help shape their future careers.

Lesley Thain

Head of Career Programmes at the Gatsby Foundation

Youth Voice Census 2022

Youth Employment UK

The Youth Voice Census is now in its fifth year and has this time widened its reach from 14-24-year-olds to 11-30-year-olds.

This is to reflect the additional services Youth Employment UK offers but also to acknowledge the challenges young people are facing from 11 and up to 30. This year 4,083 young people completed the Youth Voice Census, the largest number of responses to date. The Census was open to responses from 31st March to 31st May 2022, gaining a unique understanding of the experiences young people are having in the systems around them, how they are doing right now and how they are feeling about their future. This year the quantitative Census responses were supplemented with a series of in-person qualitative interviews taking place with young people in Birmingham, Corby, Darlington, Liverpool, London, and Newcastle.

There is no doubt that the past three years have been traumatic for young people: the impact of a global health pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the uncertainty of political tensions (here and abroad). Another year on, Youth Employment UK's Youth Census have kept their commitment to spotlighting what it means to be a young person in the 21st century. The 2022 census provides us with a clear and stark warning that it is not enough for us to just be 'more ambitious' for our young people, but that we must be ready to act immediately.

Covid 19 and its long-lasting scarring has acted both as a catalyst and as a suppressant for some of the biggest issues facing young people: accelerating social, emotional and mental health challenges and contributing to the growing fears and feelings of isolation from age 11 all the way to age 30.

On-going impacts of Covid-19: Mental health emergency

Young people are in crisis – and the well-documented mental health crisis is escalating in its severity. Young people are worried, anxious, depressed and feeling that their lives are beyond their own control right now,

with compounded fears for their future. **28.5% of young people told us that they had 'social, emotional and mental health' challenges**, in addition throughout the free text commentary boxes, young people continued to link back to their feelings of anxiety and mental health challenges more than we have seen before.

Figure 6: Youth Employment UK (2022) Youth Voice Census. Youth Employment UK. p. 22.

My school pressured everyone to go to university. I now have no idea what I enjoy because I was given no help or guidance at school in helping me figure that out. COVID-19 has meant that I have not been able to access the support that was available to me while I was at university, and after I left.

I have a great deal of social anxiety as a result and struggle to acclimatise to the office/hybrid working nature of most jobs, which are open to graduates/young professionals with little experience.

I already had severe mental health issues and was unable to work/attend college prior to the pandemic. It didn't make a huge difference to me really, however, it obviously didn't help matters either.

I had a baby during lockdown and the support network has been poor.

Having been a carer during my A levels and missing out on experiences. I feel at a huge disadvantage.

Stuck inside with no outlet like sport.

Mental health issues are also becoming a barrier to work. 51% of young people **looking for work** thought their anxiety was the biggest barrier to accessing work. For those looking for work COVID-19 had the biggest impact on their mental health with over half (52.6%) stating that their mental health had been impacted 'a lot' or 'a great deal' and 42.1% saying that their motivation to apply for opportunities has been impacted 'a lot' or 'a great deal'. Young people **currently in work** told us their biggest barrier to accessing work had been anxiety (52%).

'Difference' is the disadvantage

Overall young people with protected characteristics, carers and care leavers were more greatly impacted by change and uncertainty. At every stage of their journey, and when we explore the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 these young people were always more likely to feel that they have been (or will be) impacted most negatively. Self-belief, confidence and staying positive scores were more likely to be at least 10% lower too.

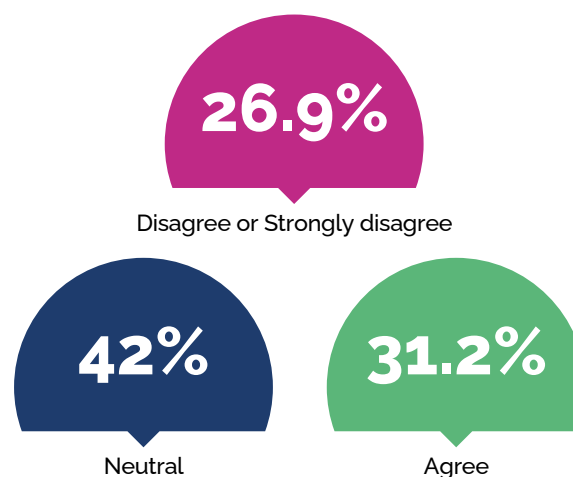
Young people with protected characteristics, carers and care leavers were less likely to be confident that there are quality jobs available to them. With an average difference of 15%. We see the largest differences for transgender respondents (by 25%) and for Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African respondents who were at least 10% more likely than any other race or ethnicity to not be confident in accessing quality work.

Unprepared for the future

Young people called for more support with gaining work experience. Many young people missed relevant opportunities due to COVID-19 restrictions and did not feel they had been given an adequate alternative. Young people mentioned they wanted more support and advice on dealing with stress and anxiety, particularly around dealing with exam pressures and academic expectations. A consistent number of respondents wanted to see schools better promote creative skills and talents, rather than focussing on academic achievement and academic subjects.

Figure 7: Youth Employment UK (2022). p. 49.

To what extent do you agree with this statement: "My school supported me sufficiently to develop the skills I need for the future"



Careers education in secondary school

All careers education activities are down in schools this year. The census further evidenced links between gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, additional needs and eligibility for free school meals as factors in access to careers education activities.

- 29.7% of young people rated the career advice they had received in secondary school so far as 'good' or 'excellent'.
- Parent/guardians, relatives, teachers and careers and employability websites are the most useful sources of careers advice.
- Young people do not think that youth workers (64%), National Careers Service (61.1%), mentor (57.5%) and apps (50.3%) are applicable to them.

Skills

- 34.4% of young people thought they understood the skills employers are looking for.
- Overall young people were most confident in their listening, creativity and literacy skills and least confident in self belief, staying positive and in their confidence.
- Young people with protected characteristics were most likely to have significantly lower self belief scores than their peers.

- The network around young people are helping them develop employability skills, with parents (78.3%), teachers (76.8%), and careers advisors (4.8%) being the most popular.
- Young people want to start developing their employability skills between the ages of 12 and 14.
- 31.2% of young people 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that their school supported them sufficiently to develop the skills they need for the future.

Figure 8: Youth Employment UK (2022). p. 50.

When thinking about employers, what, if anything, could they do to help young people develop their skills?

Give more opportunities to speak to employers. Make it clear what skills young people need to develop.

More career education workshops about interviews and what we can do to ensure we feel confident in our interview skills.

Be more willing to allow young people into their workplace, it is hard to get work experience now. Especially as no one wants to have a look after us and use things like COVID as an excuse.

Go into schools and explain what most employers would look for in an employee and skills that would be crucial for the job.

Provide classes on skills, give opportunities for discussion into the area to build awareness and help guide young people to resources that can develop their skills.

Employers need to learn how to actually listen and adapt to the needs of young people. They need to lay down the requirements for getting the job as clearly and thoroughly as possible. They need to be able to sit and help specific people or assign people to do that.

Choices

- 83.2% of young people had apprenticeships discussed with them once or more in secondary school.
- Traineeships, T Levels and accessing Jobcentre Plus provision was never discussed with 66%, 72.1% and 87% of young people.
- 5.6% of young people were 'likely' or 'very likely' to apply to a T Level.
- 29.3% of young people were 'likely' or 'very likely' to apply for an apprenticeship.

Exams and assessment

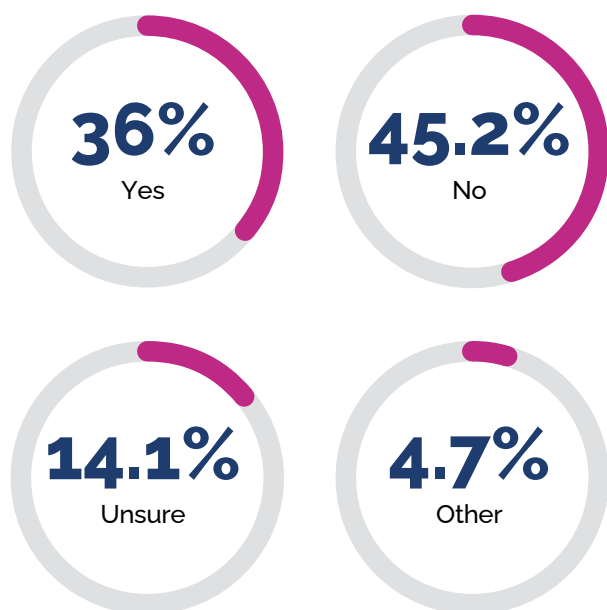
- 49.1% of young people stated that exams and assessments impact their mental health negatively.



Work experience in secondary school

Figure 9: Youth Employment UK (2022). p. 56.

Did you have an option of work experience during your time in secondary education (Years 9-13)?



- 36% of young people had access to work experience in secondary school.
- Work experience was 9% more likely to be in person this year.
- Young people see the value in work experience with 69.3% of those that undertook work experience rated it as 'good' or 'excellent'. Young people with additional needs and those eligible for free school meals were among the most likely to score favourably.
- Black, Black British, Caribbean or African respondents were most likely to agree that work experience helped you build useful skills and understand what it is like to be in work.
- Young people want work experience to start at 14 and 15 years of age and want more variety of opportunities and more instances of work experience.

Looking ahead: what do young people think about the coming year?

Figure 10: Youth Employment UK (2022). p. 34.

Is there anything you are worried about or not looking forward to in the next 12 months?

GCSEs, I'm worried that I might not achieve as high grades as I want.

The lack of social and emotional support I have heard of for students taking GCSE exams, especially with the disruption that has been caused by COVID.

No longer being able to access CAMHS as I am worried with my mental health after my 18th birthday.

The pricing increases for electricity and food, etc. and what this impact will have within my household and for friends and family.

I'm always worried about money the cost of living is a huge concern. Plus work is extremely stressful at the moment and if it continues like this I'm going to have to leave – not relishing that prospect.

The fact that my rights as a bisexual transgender person are constantly under attack are definitely worrying me. The fact that nothing is being done to support people like me worries me. The fact that I very much could be identified and assaulted also worries me.



For those still in education: Concerns about exams and workload at school were prominent. Many responses also expressed worries about the impact of missed learning time on their eventual grades. Respondents also expressed concerns around their employment prospects and transitioning from education to the labour market.

For those in work and looking for work: Many responses identified the rising cost of living as a worry for the next 12 months. Their answers identified rising rents, house prices and energy bills as particular concerns.

All young people: Across every age and stage young people expressed worries about mental health and the degree of support that would be available to them over the next 12 months. A significant number of responses identified concerns around women's rights, sexism, transphobia and homophobia.

Insights from the in-person discussion

Across June and July 2022, Youth Employment UK met with forty-four young people aged 16 - 30 in six locations (Birmingham, Corby, Darlington, London, Liverpool and Newcastle) to discuss their local area, their experience of education and their feelings about finding good employment locally.

Across all locations young people told us that they feel:

- Disconnected from opportunities.
- Let down by the careers education they had received at school.
- They had not had the opportunity to gain valuable work experience.

Even in those areas where young people recognise that local development to infrastructure is happening and opportunities are being offered, they do not feel that these opportunities are for them and could not see how they will benefit.

Young people have high aspirations for themselves but do not always feel empowered to work towards them or have the confidence that they will achieve them. Young people spoke about the difficulty they face when trying to access good quality work due to poor transport links or inflexible working hours.

The rising cost of living was also prevalent in our conversations with young people expressing growing concerns about the impact that rising prices is having on their lives and their ability to find good quality opportunities and employment.

To read the full findings, see: <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-report-2022.pdf>



The huge data set we have gathered this year is a clear and stark warning that we have to be more ambitious for our young people and we have to act now. Our collective vision should be a fairer, equal and quality journey for all young people, whatever their starting point.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, this must also mean a village can fail a child. Well fellow readers we are the village and it's time to choose our roles.

Laura-Jane Rawlings
Founder & CEO of Youth Employment

Harnessing Young People's Enthusiasm for a Green Future

Learning and Work Institute & WorldSkills UK

The UK's transition to a net-zero economy will bring a major shift in the labour market – with changes to existing jobs, the creation of new ones, and the growth of jobs already considered to be 'green'.

Further education and apprenticeships have a crucial role in equipping young people with the green skills employers require. Positively, this challenge has been recognised, for example, with a commitment in the UK Government's [Net Zero Strategy](#) to "reform the skills system so that training providers, employers and learners are incentivised and equipped to play their part in delivering the transition to net zero".

Recognising the importance of this mission, Learning and Work Institute conducted [research](#) on behalf of World Skills UK to better understand how young people can be supported to acquire the skills needed to support the UK's transition to net-zero emissions.

Here are five key messages from our research:

1. **Most employers surveyed require green skills or expect to in future** – and these skills are needed in a range of business areas and at all career levels. Just over two thirds (67%) of employers with green skills needs said they have had difficulty hiring suitable candidates, resulting in skills gaps that are having a negative impact on employers' ability to meet their net zero targets and their ability to manage rising energy costs.

Across all sectors, large organisations were more likely than small organisations to say that they require green skills. This indicates that smaller employers may benefit from support to identify their green skills needs, and larger employers could have a positive role in helping smaller firms in their supply chain to understand what transition to net zero looks like.
2. **Most young people surveyed feel inspired to pursue a career that can help the UK to reach net-zero** and are strongly motivated by a desire to combat climate change and a passion for sustainability. Highlighting the importance of technical skills to decarbonisation could therefore help to attract young people to apprenticeships and build prestige in technical education.
3. **Young people and employers agree that the skills for net-zero will be important for future careers, but both lack confidence that the education system is equipping young people with green skills.** Employers were split on whether young people are coming through the education system with the skills to support the UK's net-zero target. Less than one in five (16%) young people surveyed said that they wanted to pursue a green career having learnt about green skills at school or college, and even fewer (13%) said they have been inspired by their teachers. It's therefore really important that marketing campaigns, such as [Get the Jump](#), capitalise on the enthusiasm of young people to pursue green skills by helping schools, colleges and universities to signpost to education and training pathways available.
4. Despite their strong commitment to sustainability, **young people have low awareness and understanding of green skills and green jobs.** Their awareness of the jobs and careers available, the skills employers require, and the relevant education and training pathways is relatively low. Just over three out of five (63%) of young people said they have never heard of green skills and don't know what they are and 55% indicated they don't

know what green skills employers require in the current labour market. This re-emphasises that the education system must do more to promote green skills, to demonstrate their value, what they mean and the types of jobs they can lead to.

5. **Young women are more likely than young men to be enthusiastic about developing green skills and pursuing a green career, but they are also more likely to say they lack information to do this.**

Just over two fifths (42%) of young women surveyed said they find the prospect of a green career interesting compared to just under two thirds (32%) of young men. But young women were also more likely to say they did not understand what green jobs were available or how to acquire green skills. This suggests that green skills could be a great opportunity to encourage more women into STEM subjects and sectors and address perceived or real barriers to pursuing careers in STEM.

Our research highlights some of the challenges and the opportunities as we transition to a net-zero economy. To grasp the opportunities, employers and educators need to be clear about green skills and green jobs, and build that understanding into curriculum development and careers advice. We also need to ensure that this intelligence is built into our skills system, so that qualifications and provision reflect what we need now, build on what the future may hold, and can adapt rapidly to change. And employers need to attract young people by demonstrating the difference they are making to addressing the climate emergency.



With record high temperatures this summer, the climate emergency is at the forefront of our minds and should be high on our agendas. While efforts are being made to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, our research indicates that employers and young people lack confidence that the education system is equipping young people with the green skills they need. The opportunities are there to take, with young people expressing enthusiasm to pursue green careers. Grasping the opportunities will require educators and employers to be clear about green skills and jobs, and build that into curriculum development and careers advice.

Emily Jones

Deputy Director, Learning and Work Institute

Staffing, digital skills and recruitment in Health and Social Care

The past few years and in particular following the pandemic have exerted an immense amount of strain on the health and social care sector. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of financial support and staff shortages across the sector.

NHS staffing crisis

The pandemic has once again highlighted the importance of NHS staff in delivering healthcare for the nation. However, there are concerns around the recruitment and retention of NHS nurses, GPs and doctors. Throughout the NHS a growing number of vacancies remain unfilled. In July 2022 an MPs report found England is now short of 12,000 hospital doctors and more than 50,000 nurses and midwives, leading to one of the worst workforce crises in the history of the NHS. This had led to unintended consequences affecting staff and NHS services that can be offered. The King's Fund, an independent charitable organisation working to improve health care in England, stated "workforce shortages across all staffing groups in the health and care system are putting NHS hospitals,

mental health services, community providers and general practice under significant strain" (The King's Fund, 2022).

The pandemic has exacerbated these issues, and although there has been some government funding to health and social care, the workforce crisis has yet to be effectively tackled. NHS staff have identified and voiced a number of issues contributing to high turnover rates and difficulty in recruitment. The British Medical Journal's 2021 NHS Staff Survey surveyed 638,475 staff at NHS trusts between October and November 2021. Figure 11 shows some of the findings from the survey, highlighting some of the key issues that should be taken into consideration when tackling the staffing crisis, particularly around workload, feeling valued, experiencing burnout and levels of pay.



Figure 11: Summary of Findings from 2021 NHS Staff Survey. Waters, A. (2022).

Care standards

- 59% would recommend their organisation as a place to work, down from 67% last year
- 68% are happy with the standard of care provided by their organisation down from 74% in 2020
- 68% would be happy with the standard of care provided by their organisation for a friend or relative, down from 74% in 2020

Workload

- 27% said that their organisation had enough staff for them to do their job properly, down from 38% last year

Enthusiasm for work

- 67% feel enthusiastic about their job, down from 73% in 2020
- 53% look forward to going to work, down from 59% last year

Feeling valued

- 42% are satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work, down from 48% last year – the lowest rate in five years

Burnout

- 38% find their work emotionally exhausting
- 34% feel burnt out because of their work (including 41% of nurses and 33% of doctors)

Pay

- 33% of staff are satisfied with their level of pay, a drop of four percentage points on last year. Pay satisfaction among doctors – the staff group most satisfied with their pay – has dropped from 60% in 2020 to 50% in 2021

With the NHS struggling to fill vacancies and retain current staff, it is important that the education system can be a driving force to train new recruits. However, there are worries that the Government's plan to scrap BTECs by 2025 could deepen the staffing crisis even further. The Guardian reported "NHS Employers are particularly worried that abolishing BTECs in 2024 and 2025, as part of a move to new T-level qualifications in a shake-up of post-16 education, will damage the NHS in England's efforts to recruit enough nurses to help fill the almost 40,000 vacancies it has for them" (July, 2022). They are a particularly important pipeline into the sector for those from low-income backgrounds and mature students, who may have otherwise not had the opportunity to follow the pathway into these jobs. It is important now more than ever that there are enough opportunities and education pathways to support young people and adults to enter the health and social care sector.

Emerging technical skills needed in the health sector

An emerging issue within the health sector is the growing need for technical skills. Digital literacy and digital skills are essential in almost all jobs today. Within health these skills can be very specific: "such as those related to the ability to adapt clinical skills to developments in health and care, knowledge of the technical or scientific basis of work and understanding of relevant standards and legislation" (Hoffman et al., 2022, p.3). But they also include broader digital skills including digital record-keeping, digital communication with patients and conducting assessments of or consultations with patients remotely. A main benefit of an increase in digital literacy within the health sector would be freeing up more time for health professionals (Hoffman et al., 2022).

Similarly, within social care there is a need to improve digital skills of the existing and new workforce. A recent Nuffield Trust report exploring the development of digital skills for the social care workforce states, "providing opportunities for care workers to develop new skills and use new technologies can improve job satisfaction and help staff progress towards their career goals or inspire new career pathways. Digital skills have positive consequences on broader skills development and creating a fertile context for greater health and social care integration" (Oung et al., 2021,

p.1). Technology can be an enabler in job satisfaction and ultimately retention. Benefits to increased technology use among the social care workforce could include joined-up care and more efficient care delivery and planning (Nicholas and Miller, 2019).

Low pay and recruitment difficulties in social care

A challenge to improve the digital skills of the social care workforce is the funding provided to the sector. One main issue tainting the social care sector is low pay and minimal pay progression which in turn results in many members of staff leaving the sector. Ultimately, adequate funding of the social care sector will help resolve these issues. "One cannot seriously address the workforce issues in social care unless pay is improved; this is essential to boosting recruitment and improving retention" (Migration Advisory Committee, 2022, p.9). In Scotland and Wales, a mandatory hourly wage for care workers above the statutory minimum has been implemented but such a programme has not been implemented in England.

A report by the Migration Advisory Committee recommends "the Government introduces a fully funded minimum rate of pay for care workers in England that is above the National Living Wage (NLW), where care is being provided through public funds" (Migration Advisory Committee, 2022, p.9). Furthermore, the same report by the Migration Advisory Committee suggests revisiting the use of immigration as one solution to recruiting social care workers. However, the process is not straightforward for employers and should not be relied upon as the only solution to recruitment difficulties.

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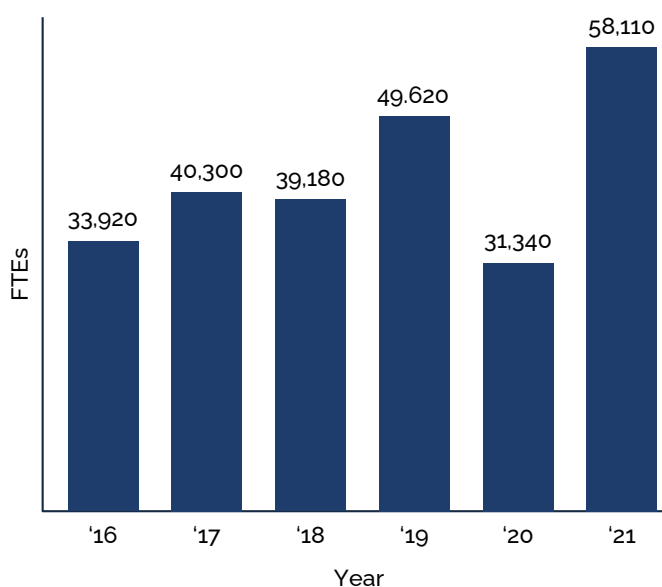
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Film and TV production – UK's rich cultural sectors face growing skills shortages

UK film and TV production has been growing significantly over several years, driven by increases in inward investment and the increased demand for on-demand streaming.

In particular, film and high-end TV (HETV) production in the UK had grown from £1.59bn in 2013 to £4.37bn in 2019 – an annual average growth rate of 18.4% (BFI, 2019 and 2022). Although there was a halt in production during parts of 2020 due to Covid, activity rebounded quickly, and production has been continuing to rise in 2021 and beyond. The growth in production has of course signalled a growth in the workforce as can be seen in Figure 12, which shows that between 2016 and 2021 the number of Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) in the HETV and film industry has grown by 71%.

Figure 12: Direct employment generated by HETV and film production in the UK (FTE). ScreenSkills (2022).



Source: Nordicity / Saffery Champness estimates based on data from Olsberg-SPI (2021)

However, although the size of the workforce has grown significantly, the rising demands of production has not been sufficiently met with the supply of qualified and skilled workers. An inadequate supply of a skilled workforce has also been exacerbated by Covid, with people leaving the workforce, but also Brexit, which has reduced the pool of EU talent available to work in the UK, which previously helped to meet the UK workforce shortfall. Crew shortages negatively impact productions, including crew being promoted too early and without the necessary support, leading to increasing levels of stress on set.

A number of factors further exacerbate the skills shortages in the industry, with working conditions and hours, recruitment practices, and poor work-life balance having an impact on crew retention and the diversity of the workforce. A 2021 survey from the Film and TV Charity highlighted these widespread problems. One in six people reported working over 60 hour weeks (compared with the UK average of one in 50). Over three quarters (78%) of people said that work intensity is having a negative impact on their mental health. Worryingly, over half of respondents (57%) had been the target of unacceptable behaviours in the past year.

Furthermore, new technologies have been introduced to the industry in recent years, for instance virtual production, creating new ways of film making and the need for the workforce to be equipped with a new range of digital skills. These new requirements require an upskilling of the existing workforce as well as preparing the new workers in the industry.

Diversity of the workforce

Barriers to working in production can be significant for people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. These include practical needs such as being able to access to a car to travel to set and afford equipment, to social barriers and the lack of certainty around long-term income because of the freelance nature of certain roles. Furthermore production jobs are rarely widely advertised and recruitment can be reliant upon word-of-mouth. This can present a barrier to people entering the industry, negatively impacting the diversity of the workforce and hindering progression for those already in it.

If the UK is to remain the competitive player it is in the global film and TV industry, and continue to bring great financial and cultural benefits, then action must be taken to help plug the skills shortages faced by the industry.

What are the jobs and scale of the skill shortages faced by the sector?

ScreenSkills's 2021 survey of the UK screen industries found that 87% of employers saw recruitment difficulties as a problem. Nearly half of employers (46%) rated recruitment difficulties as a moderate problem that sometimes limits their activities, with an additional third (36%) seeing it as a serious or very serious issue. Almost two-thirds felt that the pandemic exacerbated recruitment difficulties.



Skills shortages were reported as widespread across a variety of roles, though production management roles, (e.g. production managers, line producers, first assistant directors, accountants, locations assistants), were commonly cited as areas of concern. Other film and TV roles that were highlighted as particularly difficult to recruit include COVID-19 safety roles, hair and make-up artists, and editors. A skills audit conducted by the Work Foundation (2017) on behalf of the BFI identified several below-the-line crew roles that were experiencing skills shortages. Most of these shortage roles were concentrated in the production, art and construction departments.

ScreenSkills (2020) identified 10 specific roles that were likely experiencing permanent (as opposed to transitory or short-term) shortages:

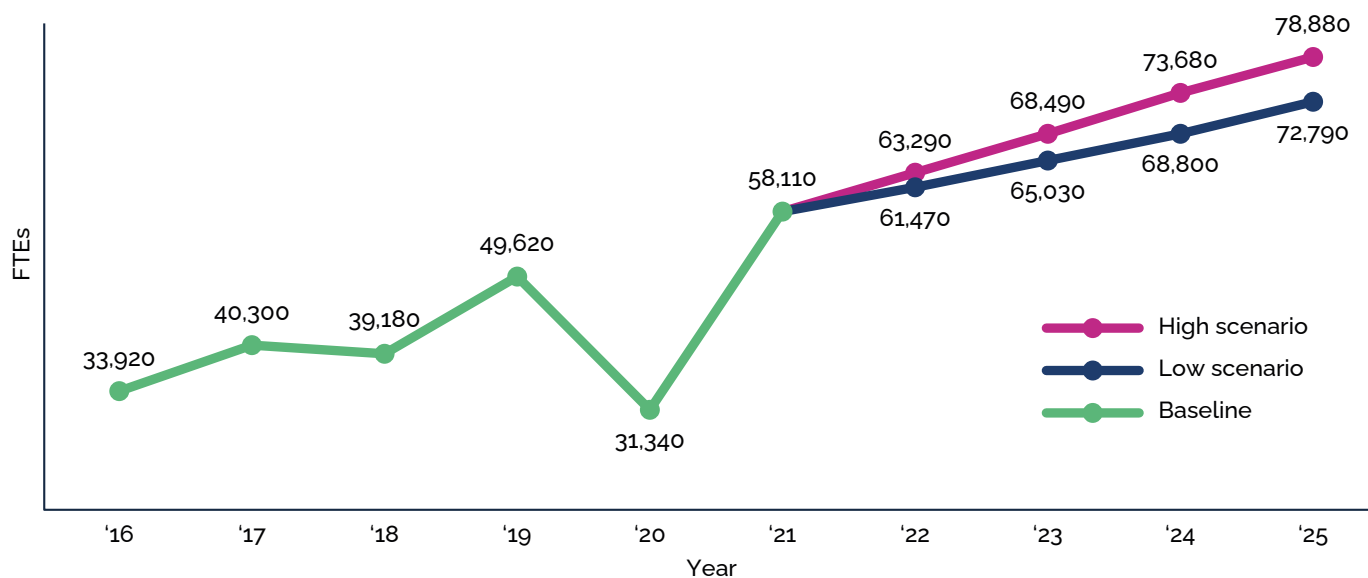
- Production accountant
- Location manager
- Production coordinator
- Line producer
- 1st assistant director
- Grip
- Editor
- Producer
- Assistant production accountant
- Production manager.

This research also identified a further five roles as subject to emerging skill shortages: art director, 2nd assistant director, 3rd assistant director, location assistant and unit manager.

Forecasts

ScreenSkills' 2022 research sought to estimate the growth in spending in the combined film and HETV production sub-sector, in order to forecast the demand for additional crew personnel required to deliver the additional production that is to be expected. Their research indicated that the UK could attract an additional £1.43bn to £2.02bn in annual film and HETV production spending by 2025, on top of the record-breaking £5.64bn recorded in 2021. This would mean that the sub-sector would require between 15,130 and 20,770 FTEs of additional crew personnel by 2025, over the existing crew workforce size estimated to be 52,300 FTEs in 2021. Figure 13 shows this forecasted growth based on both high and low growth scenarios.

Figure 13: Forecast of direct employment, film and HETV production (FTEs): crew and cast. ScreenSkills (2022). p. 18.



The above gross skills shortage forecasts do not take into account the additional personnel that would have to be attracted to the film and HETV production sub-sector in order to offset the effects of outflows due to retirement, family care responsibilities and general voluntary workforce attrition. Therefore indicating an even greater workforce gap that must be filled in the coming years. BFI's research indicates that the gross skills shortage should be increased by at least 2.93% in order to account for retirements (0.83% annual adjustment) and outflows for family-care responsibilities (2.1% annual adjustment).

What needs to be done?

Quality of work and retention of staff

In the short term, adoption of flexible ways of working, such as job sharing, could help improve inclusivity, increase the talent pool, and retain skilled crew. The sector must also consider the impact that late commissioning, long hours, and working practices have on workforce development and retention.

Investment in training

There needs to be a significant increase in training for both new recruits into the sector, as well as for upskilling the existing workforce, in order to keep up to date with industry developments, particularly technological

ones. Training also needs to be spread across the UK to expand the current focus of crew bases from South East of England to other regions of England and the other three nations of the UK.

Screen Skills (2022) estimates that an investment of between £95.1m and £104.3m annually in training will be needed by 2025 to enable the continued growth of the UK's film and HETV production sub-sector. Approximately 76% of this required investment will be needed to train the existing workforce, with the other 24% devoted to new entrants brought into the production workforce to meet the forecast growth in production spend.

Historically, film and TV productions have raised issues with being able to access the Apprenticeship Levy in England. In 2019, ScreenSkills estimated that the screen industry is paying £20 million a year into the Apprenticeship Levy, but only 25% of this funding is used by screen companies. One key barrier has been the requirement for an apprenticeship to last a minimum of 12 months and give sufficient time and support to the apprentice to help them achieve occupational competence. As the production of a film generally occurs over a period of only several months, there are logistical challenges to recruiting an apprentice to work on a single production. Productions can also face challenges with accommodating time for training within the production schedule.



Demystifying the industry and its roles

Young people see the Screen Industries as an attractive potential career option, but they consider these industries as 'unachievable' (BFI & ERIC, 2022). One of the issues is the lack of knowledge and understanding surrounding the industry and its roles. The 2017 Skills Audit of the UK Film and Screen Industries found that young people lack a true understanding of the screen industries, the breadth of roles available, and the career paths that exist. This is particularly the case for less 'visible' roles in film and TV, outside of actors, directors and writers, such as production managers and accountants, or more technical roles such as grips and editors (Carey et al., 2017). Careers teams feel they are not being equipped or supported enough by the Screen Industries to be able to highlight careers opportunities to young people; they feel their understanding and knowledge of these industries is relatively out of date and there is very little new information that reaches them (BFI & ERIC, 2022). For more information around careers, information, advice and guidance in the industry, see: [What's stopping young people from pursuing a career in the screen industries?](#)

Initial education and skills

For those thinking about their first steps into the industry, the number of Creative Industries-related subjects chosen in schools and colleges is decreasing. In 2018/19 22,300 students were entered for GCE A Level media/film/TV studies and moving image arts, down 13% from 2017/18 (BFI, 2019).

In research conducted by BFI (2022), multiple employers interviewed felt unease about the qualifications of new entrants from theory-based, as opposed to vocational courses. Within schools and further education, these courses can be taught by teachers who do not have industry experience or training.

Finally, much of the industry's workforce work on a freelance basis. There is an additional dimension of preparing entrants for life as a freelancer which was noted as lacking by interviewees from the industry (BFI, 2022), despite being an essential reality for the majority of roles in physical production. Examples included financial management and business skills, as well as understanding the tax and wider implications of freelance working.

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Creating a new generation of diverse young talent

The London Screen Academy (LSA) based in Islington, London has an overarching mission “To create stories that change the world”. LSA is acutely aware of the skills shortages and diversity challenges facing the screen industries. They took on their first cohort of students in 2019 with the aims of redefining creative education and tackling access issues the industry traditionally faces, by bringing in a new generation of diverse young talent.

LSA is a sixth-form academy offering year 12 and 13 students the opportunity to gain an UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Creative Practice: Art, Design and Communication, which is equivalent to three A levels. Unlike some qualifications, the nature of the Diploma isn't prescriptive, which allows freedom within the curriculum to provide LSA students with a hands-on experience; students learn the skills of the screen industry through applied learning and assessed project

work, such as client briefs. The curriculum closely integrates industry perspectives – with staff working closely with employers to make sure the curriculum is relevant and up to date.

Most students are looking to pursue a specialist career in the creative industries, and they nurture this by specialising from the beginning of their LSA journey – either in craft (e.g. Art Direction, Costume, Hair and Makeup), post production (e.g. editing, VFX, animation skills) or technical (e.g. cameras, lighting, sound and also editing skills). Students can also opt to take additional A levels in Maths and English, as well as an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). These A levels and EPQ often make real-world links to the vocational programme. For instance, maths students recently worked with an industry manager doing a budgeting project for a new film.

Running alongside the core qualifications, students are also given a personal development (PD) programme and a whole array of enrichment activities. The gap in terms of professional behaviours of those going into the industry had been noted by employers and so LSA's PD programme supports their students to be even more ready for employment above and beyond the technical knowledge and behaviours they are developing. Specific modules include working professionally, online identity, realities of the industry and developing job applications/CV editing.

The Industry Outreach team allows the academy to provide a package of exciting enrichment activities. This includes masterclasses from people in all areas of the industry, technical drop-ins from experts, and special





screenings. The team help maintain these rich and meaningful experiences with industry experts as well as set up and support a mentoring scheme for Year 13 students and a work experience programme which aims to get 100% of Y13 into work placements. The team is also beginning to nurture their growing alumni network who they hope will also come back to support their current students. Establishing strong relationships with industry partners educates the students about available roles and provides potential employers with a source of skilled new talent.

LSA have now gone on to offer a third year of study at Level 4 in either Film Production or Creative Enterprise. These offer a high-quality free alternative to university for students to hone their knowledge and skills and be ready to enter the industry.

A key aim of the Academy is to tackle the diversity of the industry in every sense. Their target is to have 50%

of their student population from underrepresented ethnic groups, which currently sits at an impressive 45%. They also intend to have 20% of the students who are eligible for Free School Meals in order to encourage more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into the industry. Once into the school, LSA have a very comprehensive equality, diversity and inclusion programme to support all learners and teachers to feel valued and supported. This includes a number of working groups made up of both teachers and student representatives on areas such as ethnicity, gender and LGBTQ+. These help understand specific aspirations and experiences of particular groups, especially those that for so long have been excluded by the industry.

LSA are likewise mindful of the makeup of their teachers, which they believe should also be diverse. With staff being a mix of those coming directly from industry and those who are trained teachers, they are not necessarily representative of their diverse student



population. One of the ways they have tried to tackle this is through running experience days. These are opportunities for people working in industry to visit the LSA and understand their practices, and to discover more about teaching possibilities. They have also recently set up their Film and TV educator's network to encourage educators to connect and share best practice.

LSA's offer of a high-quality and exciting hands-on learning experience, along with industry input and professional opportunities, has been a major step in opening careers in the film industry, in particular to those from underrepresented groups. As their graduate cohort grows, we will hopefully see a more diverse and highly skilled screen industry.





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