

Skills shortages in the UK economy

April 2019

Skills shortages



I want to start this issue with some excellent news. The Department for Education, who are a key part of our Skills Shortage Analysis Group, have confirmed that **they will continue the Employer Skills Survey**, with the next round of research going into the field this summer. The new survey will also incorporate content that had previously been collected by the Employer Perspectives Survey, such as on apprenticeships. This is one of the richest and most important sources of data on skills shortages, so we are delighted that it will continue and will report on their findings in future Bulletins.

In this edition, we look at the current state of the labour market through research by CIPD. This suggests that, with so many graduates in non-graduate jobs and workers not making full use of their skills, **as many as half (49%) of UK workers could be in the wrong job, based on their skill level.**

Research from Edge, Education & Employers and the National Education Union sets out definitively the skills employers are looking for and where teachers are doing their best to instil them. This is in spite of current education policy with **nearly half (47%) of teachers believing there are fewer opportunities to develop employability skills in the reformed GCSEs and two thirds (66%) that there are fewer opportunities to develop creativity.**

Turning to the future of work, leading research from RSA and the World Economic Forum (WEF) shows how, from autonomous vehicles to cancer-detecting algorithms, every corner of the economy has begun to feel the heat of a new machine age. The RSA points to widespread anxiety about mass automation and notes that **less than 5% of respondents felt that schools, colleges and universities are very well prepared.** Meanwhile, the WEF points out that as well as the growth in high-tech skills there will also be a **premium on human skills like creativity, originality, persuasion and negotiation**, reinforcing the messages from earlier research. Both agree that we need to take an active role in shaping the future.

Finally, we take a detailed look at the hospitality sector, particularly topical in light of the current debates around Brexit. Overall, the industry is twice the size of financial services and yet research from UK Hospitality shows that **it is common for there to be more than 100,000 vacancies in the sector at any time**, with one of the highest proportions of hard to fill vacancies of any sector.

OLLY NEWTON, Director of Policy and Research, Edge Foundation





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Joint Dialogue How are schools developing real employability skills?

Education and Employers, Edge and the National Education Union

– published November 2018

This report from Education and Employers, The Edge Foundation and the National Education Union draws together existing literature to map and define the skills that employers say are lacking in school leavers. Then, using survey data from some 700 secondary school teaching staff, it asks: are students being afforded the opportunities to develop these skills while at school? The full report is available [here](https://www.educationandemployers.org/research/joint-dialogue). [www.educationandemployers.org/research/joint-dialogue]

There have been many recent surveys in the UK and abroad about the specific skills that employers are looking for and this can sometimes present a complex picture for young people and education professionals. We undertook a meta-analysis of a large number of these reports to **distil down the key skills and competencies**

common across these pieces of research. We then tested these with employers in a series of focus groups to sense check them and bring them down to a more specific level. The result is a **definitive picture of the skills and behaviours that employers are looking for** in their new employees.



Joint Dialogue – How are schools developing real employability skills?

From our survey of teachers, it is clear that they aim to support their students to develop these skills:

- Over **90% of teachers believe that the top five skills and two of the four competencies cited by employers are developed in school.** The vast majority state that students have a range of opportunities to acquire and practise these skills through classwork and extra-curricular activities.
- Teachers believe that teamwork, confidence, communication, creativity and problem solving are the top skills and competencies **developed through extra-curricular activities.**
- Teachers also aim to use **lessons outside of direct subject areas**, such as tutor time, to help students with information about the world of work and to boost their communication skills.

Despite the huge effort schools are investing in developing and instilling these skills and competencies in young people, the research highlights that **current policy in England, such as the narrower curriculum and increased content and exam-focus of GCSEs and A levels, are standing in the way** of young people developing the skills necessary for working life.

On average, 38% of teachers felt that since the introduction of the new Key Stage 3 curriculum there have been **fewer opportunities to develop the skills and competencies demanded by employers.** Meanwhile, 56% of respondents felt that changes to the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum are limiting students' chances to acquire creative thinking skills and 45% believed that young people have **limited opportunities to develop their career development skills.**

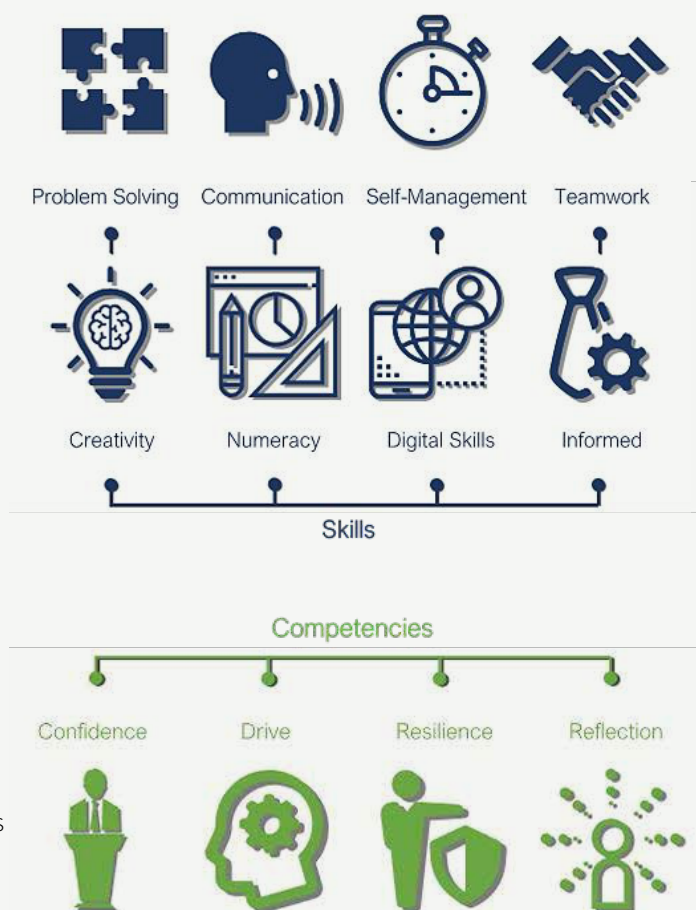
Nearly half (47%) of teachers believe that there are **fewer opportunities to develop employability skills and competencies since the introduction of the reformed GCSEs and A levels.** Of these a third stated that changes to the syllabus had, for example, necessitated a new focus on rote learning to the detriment of developing the skills and attitudes needed for work.



Dr Mary Bousted, Joint General Secretary, National Education Union

This ground-breaking research comes at a vital time. In our uncertain and complex world, so called 'soft' or 'transferable' skills are increasingly cited as the necessary tools to forge a successful career. A plethora of reports are published each year, detailing the missing skills in young people entering the workplace. It is refreshing therefore, to introduce research that brings employers' requirements together with the work that takes place in schools to equip students for the future.

66% of teachers felt that following the introduction of the new GCSEs and A levels there was less opportunity to develop creativity, with 61% stating there was less opportunity to develop teamwork.



Over-skilled and underused

Investigating the untapped potential of UK skills

CIPD – published October 2018



The CIPD's report *Over-skilled and underused: Investigating the untapped potential of UK skills*, based on a representative survey of over 3,700 UK employees and online focus groups, explores how well people's skills are used and developed in the workplace. You can read the full version [here](http://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/work/skills/untapped-potential-uk-skills). [www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/work/skills/untapped-potential-uk-skills]

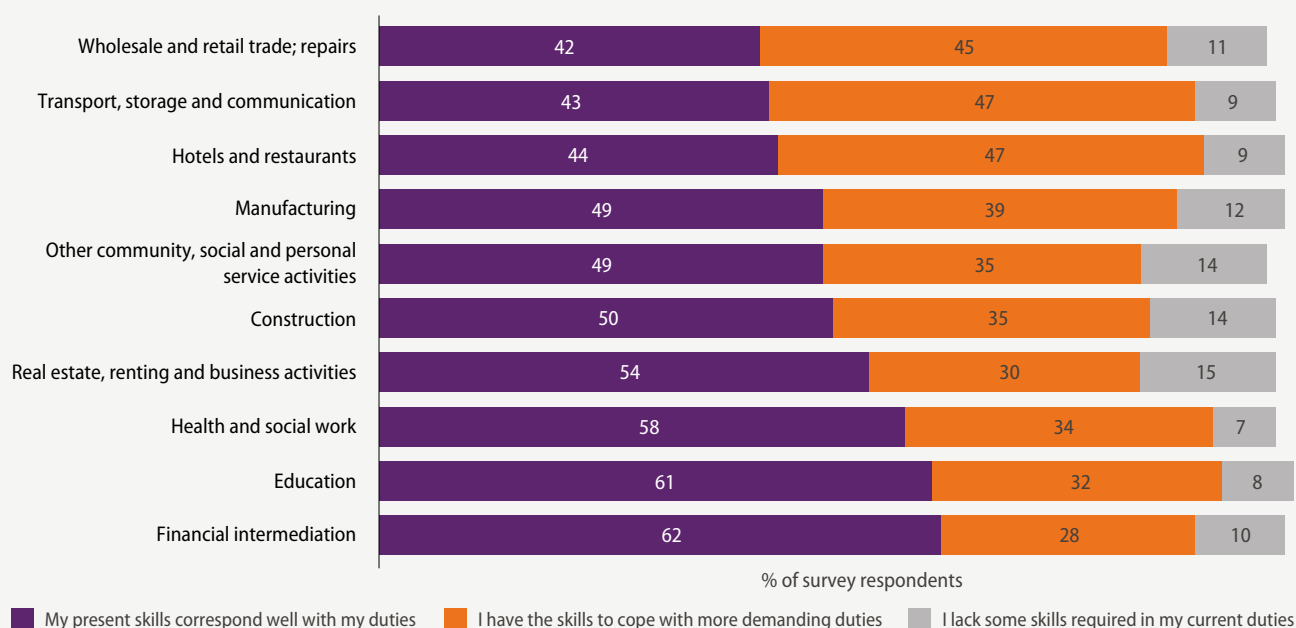
The survey found that more than a third (37%) of workers have the skills to cope with more demanding duties, and that one in ten (12%) lacked the skills needed to carry out their current job effectively. **This means that as many as half (49%) of UK workers could be in the wrong job, based on their skill level.**

The research also uncovered a high proportion of graduates in non-graduate jobs, a phenomenon highlighted in recent *Skills Shortage Bulletins*. Almost a third (30%) of respondents said that while a degree would be required in order to get their job, lower qualifications

are actually needed to do their job effectively. This suggests that many employers are still using degrees as a way of filtering applications.

The level of skills mismatch is considerably higher than average in sectors that have a high proportion of low-wage/low-skilled work. In wholesale and retail, transport and communications, and in hotel and restaurants, the proportion of workers who report that they have the skills to cope with more demanding duties is significantly higher than average (at 45%, 47% and 47% respectively).

Skills mismatch by industrial sector: proportion of workforce over-/under-skilled and matched





“A degree isn’t at all necessary for my job; many people who are senior to me didn’t go to university... [I feel bitter], bitter might be a bit of a strong word, but that is what it is! And regretful I suppose, I could’ve spent more time working on my career and saved some money too.” Focus group participant

Skills mismatch can have damaging consequences for individuals and businesses. Individuals who can’t fully use their skills at work suffer reduced job satisfaction, higher levels of workplace stress and are more likely to want to quit their jobs. For businesses, skills mismatch impacts negatively on productivity, not only from reduced efficiency within firms but also because it makes it harder for more efficient firms to expand. The survey findings confirm these negative impacts with just **53% of over-skilled workers stating that they are satisfied with their jobs** compared to

74% of people whose skills are well-suited to their role. The research also found that over-skilled workers are also likely to earn considerably less and are less likely to have achieved career progression.

When it comes to how well individuals are supported to develop their skills when at work, **the research reveals that a quarter of the workforce had undertaken no training in the last 12 months.** Older employees, low-wage workers, those on part-time contracts and the self-employed were particularly badly affected.



Peter Cheese, Chief Executive, CIPD

The focus of skills policy over the last three decades has been primarily on increasing the supply of skills. It was assumed that this would create a virtuous

circle - businesses supplied with a bigger pool of higher levels of skills would shift their business models to take advantage of these. But the evidence is that although the UK has one of the most qualified workforces in the world, there is still a high proportion of jobs that require low, or no, qualifications, and a significant skills mismatch in the overall jobs market. The UK has fallen

behind in investment in the workplace and in training the workforce, and these are key causes of lower labour productivity and of limited progression. Anticipating more rapidly changing jobs and roles and a post-Brexit world where access to migrant skills is likely to change, it is vital that businesses take a more strategic view of the roles, skills and capabilities they need and how to invest in them. Working together with educators and governments, both locally and centrally, now is the time to take a much broader look at all these issues to ensure better business outcomes, as well as outcomes and opportunities for individuals and our future workforces.

Good work in an age of radical technologies

RSA – published September 2018



The RSA founded its Future Work Centre to look at what it calls ‘radical technologies’ from artificial intelligence to robotics, and their impact on work and workers. Their first report, *Good Work in an Age of Radical Technologies* is available [here](http://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/work-in-an-age-of-radical-technologies). [www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/work-in-an-age-of-radical-technologies]

The **speed at which radical technologies are being adopted is certainly gathering pace**. DeepMind, a leading light in the field of deep learning algorithms, recently found that its software can diagnose 50 types of eye disease with 94% accuracy. Elsewhere, the Press Association has begun deploying algorithms to generate 30,000 local news stories each month. Meanwhile, a Shanghai fulfilment centre is now able to process 200,000 orders per day with just four employees.

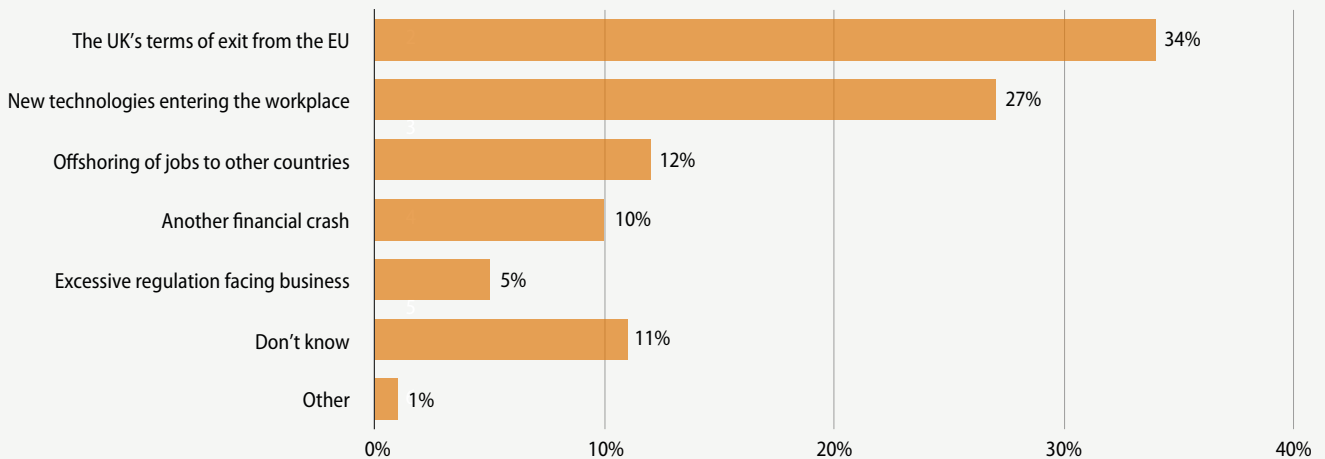
From autonomous vehicles to cancer-detecting algorithms, and from picking and packing machines to robo-advisory tools used in financial services, **every corner of the economy has begun to feel the heat of a new machine age**.

Should we be afraid? Or should we welcome the robots into our lives and workplaces? The RSA’s view is that we should not lurch to conclusions.



Good work in an age of radical technologies

Which of the following factors do you think will lead to the greatest loss of jobs over the next 10 – 15 years?



RSA/Populus survey of 1,114 UK workers (part time and full time). Field work undertaken 27-28 June 2018

For all the recent progress, technology is still limited in what it can do. But just because technology is not yet destroying swathes of jobs, it does not mean that it won't completely transform them. We will see the emergence of two types of jobs: 'hi-tech' ones that involve creating, maintaining and interpreting machines; and 'hi-touch' ones that are entirely resistant to automation, such as social care workers and hospitality staff.

Our unemployment rate may be at its lowest rate since the 1970s, but more people want to work fewer hours than want to work more and **what matters is the quality of that work – pay progression and purpose – where the UK already performs poorly.** The number of people on a zero hours contract reached 1.8 million in 2017 and as many people now work in the gig economy – via online platforms like Uber and Deliveroo – as are employed in the NHS. Previous RSA research found that only half of workers (51%) felt their job provides their life with meaning or purpose.

Anxiety about mass automation is widespread – 34% of workers surveyed believed that this change would result in large job losses and that few will be replaced with new and different roles. But there is also evidence that at this stage, automation is tending to substitute for individual tasks rather than whole roles, so it can be a complementing force, enabling workers to achieve more and better quality work. There is, however, certainly a distributional issue – most automation studies indicate that low-skilled workers will bear the brunt of any disruption.

The RSA's view is that we **should focus less on the automation of jobs than their evolution.** From carpenters to cleaners or architects, most jobs will continue to exist a decade from now but in a very different form. For most workers, Brexit is a greater cause of concern than new technologies because of the immediacy of its impact.

Some skills – creativity, communication and manual dexterity, for example – are stubbornly resistant to automation and will help individuals to adapt to these new roles. Interestingly, **less than 5% of respondents felt that schools, colleges and universities are very well prepared** to protect workers from the effects of new technologies.



Benedict Dellot, Head of the RSA Future Work Centre

Benedict reminds us of the importance of making active choices in this space: *The good news is that this is not a passive process – we have a choice in how we respond. Investors can choose which technologies to throw money behind. Tech companies can choose which projects to prioritise and which features to build into their products. Employers can choose which technologies to purchase and how to deploy them. Educators can choose which skills to equip young people with. Policymakers can choose the terms of our tax and welfare systems.*

The Future of Jobs Report 2018

World Economic Forum – published November 2018



The World Economic Forum was founded in 1971 as a not-for-profit organisation committed to sharing economic data and approaches between nations. Its annual meeting at Davos is one of the world's leading summits of business leaders, international leaders and economists and they bring together some of the most comprehensive worldwide data on the future of the world's economies. Their *Future of Jobs Report 2018* is available [here](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2018.pdf). [www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2018.pdf]

The World Economic Forum's report builds on the point made by RSA's research (pages 6-7) that in order to harness the transformative potential of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, business leaders across all industries and regions will **increasingly need to formulate a comprehensive workforce strategy** ready to meet the challenges of this new era of accelerating change and innovation. As transformation accelerates, the window of opportunity for proactive management is closing fast.

Globally, among the range of established roles that are set to experience increasing demand in the period up to 2022 are Data Analysts and Scientists, and Software and Applications Developers, roles that are significantly based on and enhanced by technology. Also expected to grow are **those roles that leverage distinctly 'human' skills** such as Customer Service Workers, Training and Development and Organisational Development Specialists. There is also accelerating demand for entirely new specialist roles relating to the latest emerging technologies, such as AI and Machine Learning Specialists and Blockchain Specialists.

Key emerging job roles in the UK include:

- Software and applications developers and analysts
- Managing directors and chief executives
- Sales and marketing professionals
- Data analysts and scientists
- General and operations managers
- Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing, technical and scientific products
- Assembly and factory workers
- Human resources specialists
- Financial and investment advisers
- Financial analysts



Comparing skills demand, 2018 vs. 2022, top ten

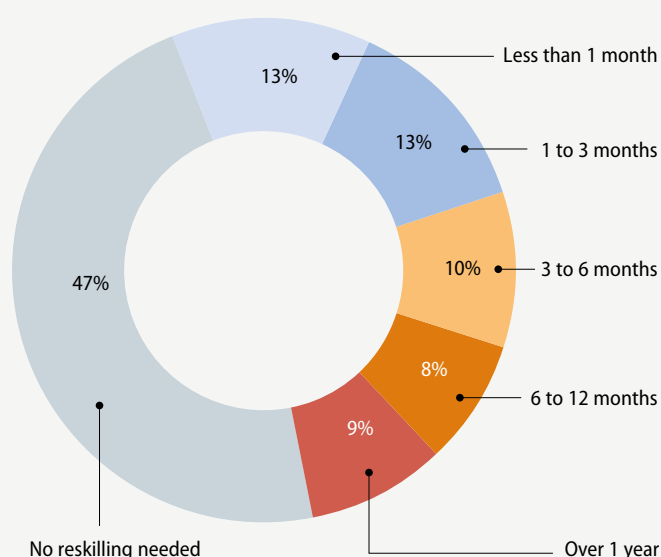
Today, 2018	Trending, 2022	Declining, 2022
Analytical thinking and innovation	Analytical thinking and innovation	Manual dexterity, endurance and precision
Complex problem-solving	Active learning and learning strategies	Memory, verbal, auditory and spatial abilities
Critical thinking and analysis	Creativity, originality and initiative	Management of financial, material resources
Active learning and learning strategies	Technology design and programming	Technology installation and maintenance
Creativity, originality and initiative	Critical thinking and analysis	Reading, writing, maths and active listening
Attention to detail, trustworthiness	Complex problem-solving	Management of personnel
Emotional intelligence	Leadership and social influence	Quality control and safety awareness
Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation	Emotional intelligence	Coordination and time management
Leadership and social influence	Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation	Visual, auditory and speech abilities
Coordination and time management	Systems analysis and evaluation	Technology use, monitoring and control

Given the wave of new technologies and trends disrupting business models and the changing division of labour between workers and machines transforming current job profiles, the vast majority of employers surveyed expect that, **by 2022, the skills required to perform most jobs will have shifted significantly**. Worldwide, there is an average shift of 42% in workforce skills over the 2018-22 period.

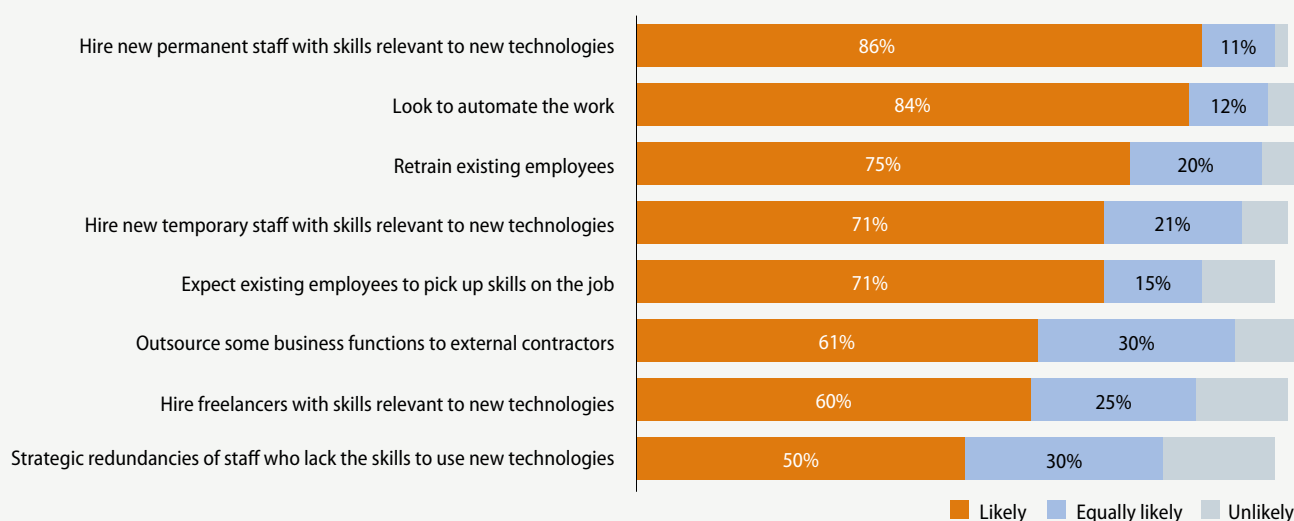
By 2022, no less than 54% of all employees will require significant re- and upskilling. Of these, within the UK about 36% are expected to require training of up to six months, while 9% will require additional skills training of more than a year. Proficiency in new technologies is only one part of the 2022 skills equation, however, as **‘human’ skills such as creativity, originality and initiative, critical thinking, persuasion and negotiation will retain or increase in value**.

Average reskilling needs

(share of workforce)



Responses to shifting skills needs (Average reskilling needs (share of workforce) share of companies surveyed)



Skills shortages

Companies highlight three future strategies to manage the skills shortages that are likely to be widened by the adoption of new technologies – seek to automate tasks completely, hire new staff who are skilled at working with the new technologies, and retrain existing employees. In the UK, **the most common strategy (at 97%) is to hire staff with new skills, putting further pressure on the education system to deliver individuals with those abilities.**

The overall findings of the report suggest the need for a **comprehensive ‘augmentation strategy’**, an approach where businesses look to utilise the automation of some job tasks to complement and enhance their human workforce’s comparative strengths and ultimately enable employees to extend to their full potential. However, to unlock this vision, workers will need to have the appropriate skills to enable them to thrive in the workplace of the future and the ability to continue to retrain throughout their lives.



Heather Carey, Deputy Director of the Work Foundation

Heather reflects on a recent OECD World Forum that drew similar conclusions: *Despite the promise that technology offers for radical improvements to productivity and living standards; we need*

much greater emphasis on the practical issue of how to effectively adopt and operationalise technology, alongside people, in a way that benefits both businesses and workers.

While this is vital to the future prosperity of the UK, these are global challenges; and were the subject of much

debate at the OECD World Forum, which I attended in South Korea in November; where researchers, policy-makers and business leaders from over 100 countries debated the future of wellbeing.

What became clear is the need for strong governance and partnership; a clear, long-term, strategic framework; and an active, inclusive, and integrated set of labour market, skills and welfare policies that will maximise the opportunities and mitigate the risks that technology presents. This is vital to enhance our resilience, adaptability and ability to actively manage change in a way that ensures no one is left behind.

Spotlight on: Hospitality

UK Hospitality is a leading trade association representing the broad hospitality sector. Their work covers everything from bars and coffee shops to contract catering, hotels, nightclubs, visitor attractions and other leisure venues.

The UK Hospitality sector has seen a significant growth in employment in the last 10 years. Overall, it **employs 2.9 million people and generates £130bn of economic activity**, while paying £38bn in taxation to fund important local and national services. Hospitality is the third largest private sector employer in the UK - double the size of financial services and bigger than automotive, pharmaceuticals and aerospace combined.

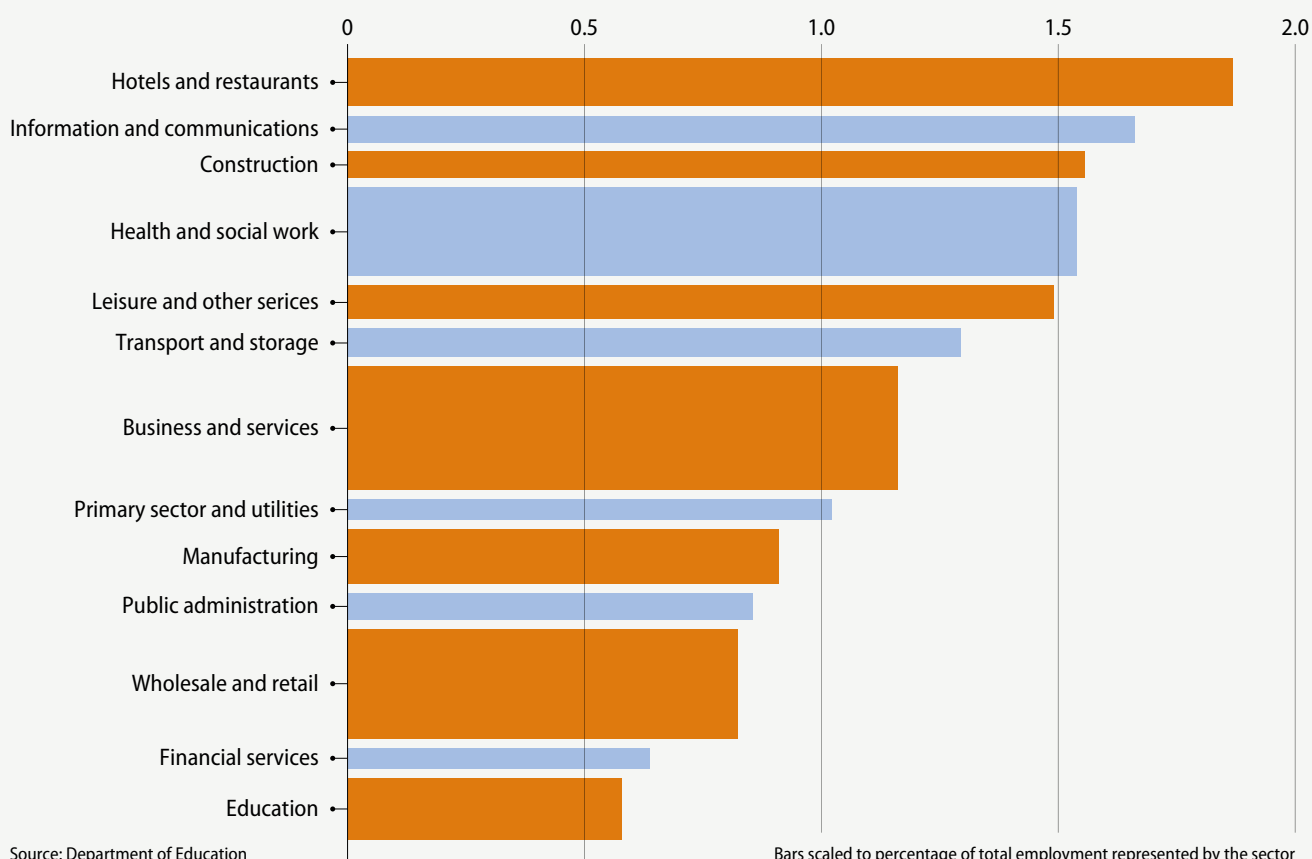
Yet over that same period, as the sector has grown, skills shortages have consistently been reported in a number of

key operational roles. **More than 100,000 vacancies in the sector is common at any one time** and hospitality was singled out in recent analysis by the Financial Times as the sector with the highest proportion of hard to fill vacancies.

The sector has been discussed frequently in the challenging debates about Brexit and its impact on staffing and skills. **Reductions in European migration are already impacting the sector** and the introduction – from January 2021 – of a new immigration framework risks reducing workforce supply still further.

The sectors facing the biggest labour shortages

Hard to fill vacancies as a % of employment



Skills shortages

Hospitality UK feels that there are three responses to this emerging challenge.

FIRST, at the **sector level** they are keen to influence three key pieces of policy. The legislative debate on immigration will be crucial for this sector, as will the right policies on vocational education and careers. Finally, they are keen to build support for the Sector Deal on Tourism.¹

SECOND, at the **level of the companies and organisations**, the most thorough and imaginative workforce plans have to be designed and then implemented with determination and consistency. This reflects very much the wider advice of the RSA and World Economic Forum earlier in this Bulletin. In hospitality as in other sectors of the economy, businesses that can steal a competitive advantage through better labour utilisation, engagement, retention and output will enjoy great rewards.

THIRD, when **hiring specific members of staff**, managers who recognise the need for recruitment to be done completely differently, taking into account wider aptitudes and skills rather than just paper qualifications, will be the ones who thrive and maintain excellent levels of service.

At the sector level, growth is still very much anticipated in the coming years. Domestic demand is challenging in

many locations but a steady increase is forecast in the number of international visitors to the UK in the coming years. **In 2011, we had 30 million visitors, in 2025 we are aiming for 49 million.** This is one of the reasons why the UK Government has approved in principle a Sector Deal for Tourism, one of the most important chapters of which deals with skills development.

A **National Tourism and Hospitality Skills Board** is being established with senior representation from major employers. It will report into the existing Tourism Industry Council, which is co-chaired by the Minister for Tourism and a senior executive from Hilton Worldwide. It will be a bridge between the sector and the Government, supporting mutual objectives to boost productivity and create high quality jobs.

The campaign to boost skills is centred on the need for continued reform and increased resources to vocational education. The sector has long been a place where people can progress exclusively on the basis of merit. **It remains one of the few areas where ‘shop-floor to boardroom’ remains true.** Apprenticeships are hugely important in our sector and the Sector Deal includes plans for 300,000 apprenticeships to be started by 2025. These apprenticeships are at all levels, including degree level and provide a very strong offer to existing and future employees



Spotlight on: Hospitality

who want to develop their career. With the introduction of the new T level qualification in a couple of years, there will potentially be two powerful entry routes into the sector.

Another key part of the focus on skills must be addressing the image of the industry and making sure it is portrayed as a dynamic and exciting opportunity. Employers are working with the Department for Work and Pensions' network of Jobcentre+ managers and teams and a wide variety of local organisations who work with some of the harder to reach groups who are seeking to enter or re-enter the labour market. The partnership with DWP is especially strong and UK Hospitality have recently concluded a month long joint campaign. The Hospitality Works campaign ended in early March with a huge event at Manchester United's ground where more than 50 employers were able to meet and chat with local jobseekers and college leavers.

This complements the work of the **Inspiring Hospitality Careers programme** run by the Edge Hotel School (see page 15), which we set out in the last Bulletin.²

Recruitment and retention are two sides of the same coin and there is a wide recognition in the sector that, if it is to make the most of the strong opportunities for growth in this sector, the great career opportunities that the industry offers must be clearly and boldly communicated.



Sir Garry Hawkes CBE
Founder and Trustee, Edge
Foundation, former Chair &
CEO of Gardner Merchant



Hospitality more than any other industry relies upon the skills, motivation and personalities of its workforce. It is vibrant, dynamic and employs millions of people directly and indirectly.

Yet hotel managers in the UK are usually graduates of the great hotel schools of Switzerland, Germany and Italy, while staff are often economic migrants hungry for work and reward. This situation is fuelled by snobbery around technical and service occupations and a school and higher education system that favours academic or pseudo-academic education.

My own time working in Holland and Germany showed me a different approach in societies that are eminently fairer than our own. Each had systems of secondary education that emphasised technical opportunities with the same vigour as academic studies.

The problems in hospitality are exacerbated by the highly fragmented industry, which makes it hard to exercise influence on government policy. Senior management ignore the opportunity to develop home-grown talent and exploit the easy option of importing skills.

We need a complete change of attitude in recognising that education must be relevant to the abilities of students and the needs of industry. It should not only reflect the aspirations of policy makers who have universally experienced higher education, but the needs of employers and talented young people who, with the right skills and aspirations, could have fulfilling and satisfying careers.

Case study

Skills shortages in London's kitchens



Nicolas Bosetti and Mario Washington-Ihime from the Centre for London have looked at London's kitchen skills. London's food scene is booming, but is facing chronic challenges in how it trains and cares for its chefs.

The number of chefs in London has tripled over the last decade, partly enabled by migration – 85% of London chefs were born abroad, compared to 50% in the rest of the country. This makes London's culinary scene particularly vulnerable at a time of falling immigration.

The research shows that at an early age, young people like the idea of becoming a chef, but as they grow up, negative associations and stereotypes of the profession tend to dominate.

In terms of training, there is a good provision of catering courses, but drop-out rates are high and the courses often do not provide softer skills, like creativity, team work and resilience, that are needed in a high pressure kitchen environment. Apprenticeships are not available in sufficient numbers to make a real impact – only a few hundred chefs completed an apprenticeship last year.

Overall the UK loses roughly 10% of its working chefs every year, but London has particular challenges because of the high cost of living.

The report argues that solutions include inspiring young people from an early age, improving education and training with a modular catering curriculum and prolonged work experience, supporting greater apprenticeship completions and improving working conditions in the industry.



Case study

Edge Hotel School

The skill shortage of managers in the UK hospitality industry is not a new phenomenon, however one higher education institution is taking a particularly innovative approach to addressing it.

The Edge Hotel School was the first higher educational institution in the UK to deliver a management degree based in a commercial 4-star hotel. Undergraduates not only read for a University of Essex degree but also gain experience and insight by working within the hotel in operative, supervisory and managerial positions over the duration of their course.

The intention is that, whilst they are in lectures, students have a traditional undergraduate experience (with all the social and academic activities that go with this) but when they are working in the hotel they become young hospitality professionals, adopting the corresponding behaviour and working style. Not only does this require the students to manage their time effectively and prioritise different deadlines but it also acclimatises the student to the expectations of their future industry.

Students can choose to undertake a traditional three year programme or, alternatively, undertake the qualification in just two years. In the latter instance, students experience the same number of hours of academic contact and the same academic rigour but work through the traditional academic holiday periods. Thus, the students may find themselves working in the hotel over Christmas and New Year as well as Easter and Summer. In return, they save a full year of University fees, they are able to get into the workplace sooner and they gain a genuine and realistic experience of the expectations of professional managers within the industry.



Andy Boer, Principal of the Edge Hotel School says: *alongside our philosophy of 'industry engaged education', which seeks to engage sector organisations and professionals to deliver the academic syllabus, we offer students a fully immersive experience, learning in a real workplace. As a result, our graduates emerge with industry experience in roles across the hotel and a real understanding and commitment to staying in their industry.*

Case study

The Yarrow (Broadstairs College)



Like the Edge Hotel School, Broadstairs College in Kent is addressing the skills shortage in hospitality by opening its own boutique hotel called The Yarrow. The hotel is housed in a Grade II Listed building that was formerly the main college campus. After falling into disrepair in the early 2000s, the college looked at innovative ways to redevelop the building and decided to create a training hotel. It launched in 2016 as the only college owned and operated hotel in England, with a clear vision to inspire the next generation of hospitality professionals.

Led by a team of industry professionals (the head chef has a background in a two Michelin starred restaurant), students get the opportunity to develop and hone their skills in a real commercial environment, building in the employability skills industry requires while sharpening technical skills too. It has been very successful so far, with the hotel attracting very positive reviews, as well as becoming Kent's number one hotel on TripAdvisor, while students have seen excellent progression, with great feedback from local employers.



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