

Skills shortages in the UK economy

July 2019

Skills shortages



As discussions around the impact of Brexit intensify and the fourth industrial revolution continues to have an impact on sectors across the economy, issues of skills shortages and the changing shape of the labour market are never far from the news.

In this bulletin, latest research from The Open University reinforces the extent of skills shortages with **68% of employers struggling to find the skills they need in the last year** at a total cost to UK business of £4.4 billion.

International research by LinkedIn picks up messages from earlier bulletins, with **92% of employers saying that so-called 'soft skills' are equally or more important than hard skills**. Meanwhile, the Learning and Work Institute emphasises the **fall in UK employer investment in training to half the EU average per worker** – £5.1 billion less in real terms than 10 years ago.

Looking to the future, latest research by ONS suggests that **1.5 million jobs in the UK are at high risk of automation**, with humans likely to be replaced by computer programs, algorithms or robots. Younger workers are more likely to be affected with **15.7% of 18-24 year olds employed in occupations at high risk**. Despite this, Youth Employment UK's Youth Voice Census suggests that young people are still not getting the wide range of advice they need, while research by OxPolicy suggests that to address the issue, we must help young people develop in areas where humans are able to keep a competitive edge, focusing on creative, caring and collaborative skills.

Centre for Cities emphasise the importance of looking at skills shortages and solutions through a locality lens, demonstrating that **when it comes to inclusive growth, different places face different challenges**. The RSA and Digitalme's Cities of Learning programme provides one possible solution, **connecting and amplifying formal and informal learning and training provision** that exist across a place and underpinning these with digital badges.

Finally, we take an in depth look at the health and social care sector with The Health Foundation, whose research shows that NHS hospitals, mental health and community providers are currently reporting a **shortage of more than 100,000 FTE staff, representing one in eleven posts**. Looking ahead, the current level of shortages looks set to worsen, with **shortages of nurses alone set to rise to 70,000 within five years and 100,000 within ten years** if action is not taken.

OLLY NEWTON, Director of Policy and Research, Edge Foundation

92% of employers say that so-called 'soft skills' are equally or more important than hard skills.





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4 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA
020 7960 1540 · www.edge.co.uk



The Open University Business Barometer 2019

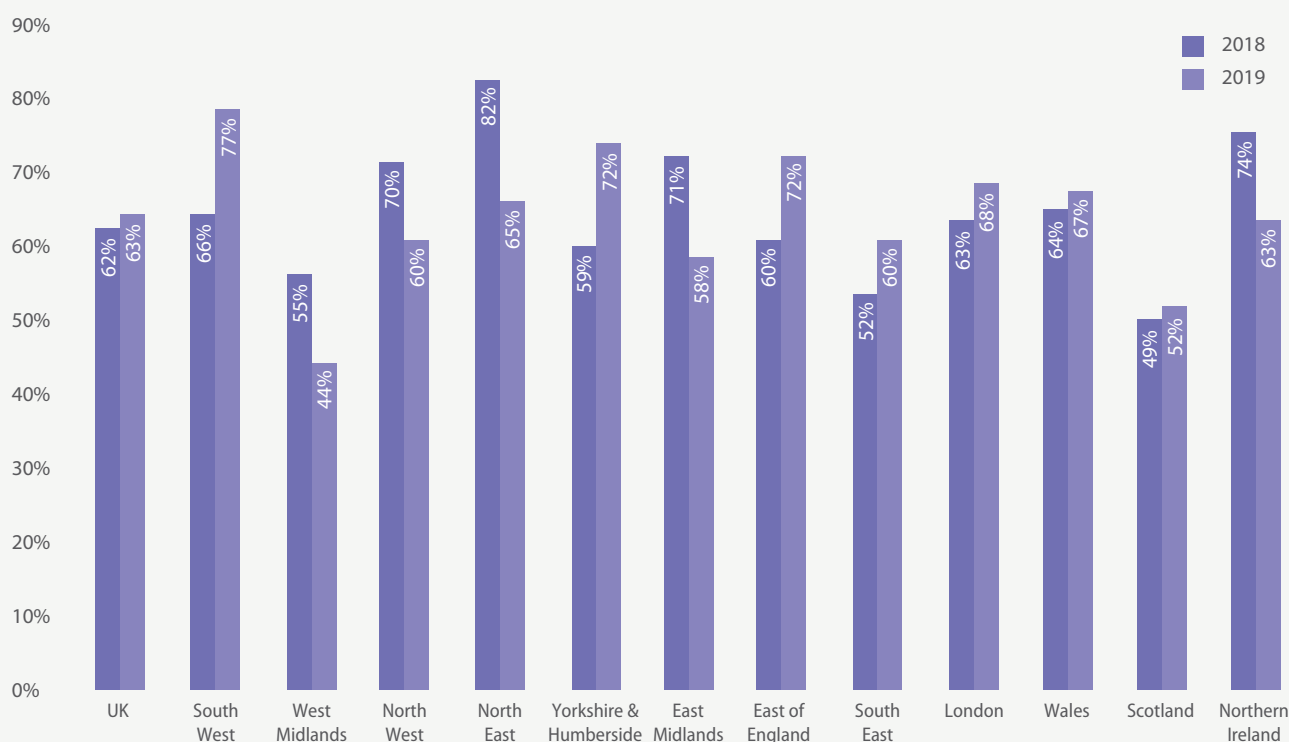
The Open University – published July 2019

The Open University Business Barometer investigates the skills landscape of the UK, highlighting current and future skills shortages, the factors affecting organisations' access to skills, and the impact on business. The third annual report, based on a sample of 950 senior business leaders, is available [here](http://www.open.ac.uk/business/Business-Barometer-2019).

This year's report reveals that **two-thirds (68%) of UK employers have struggled to find workers with the skills they need in the past year**, which is affecting agility, productivity and efficiency. While a quarter (25%) opted to leave a position vacant, others are spending more on recruitment fees, salaries, temporary staff or hiring at a lower level than intended and paying for additional training – at a total cost of £4.4 billion, down from £6.3 billion in 2018.

Organisations continue to report issues in sourcing talent with the right managerial (35%) and leadership (32%) skills, although this has decreased in the past year. In contrast, **finding digital and ICT skills has become more problematic (34% experienced an issue, up from 28% in 2018)**, which may reflect an increased focus on building skills to address the rapid pace of digital development.

How have skills shortages changed across the UK?





More than half (53%) of senior business leaders reported increasing their education budget in the past 12 months – by an average of 10

The research suggests that organisations may be changing their approach to solving skills shortages, as this 30% decrease in spending is accompanied by increased training and development budgets. **More than half (53%) of senior business leaders reported increasing their education budget in the past 12 months – by an average of 10%**– and more than three in five (61%) expect to do so in the coming year.

While many employers have relied on buying in talent in the past, nearly two in five (37%) expect this to become harder in the next year, with one in five (22%) agreeing that they will have to focus on developing talent from within if they want to guarantee access to the skills they need. The current uncertainty surrounding Brexit may be a driver of this change in gear, as **three in five (59%) senior business leaders agree that skills shortages will worsen after the UK officially leaves the European Union.**

Seven in ten (71%) employers think that developing the existing workforce is a more sustainable approach to securing skills, but it is important that any training offered helps rather than hinders. Providers like The Open University offer flexible, technology-enabled degrees and apprenticeships, which allow employees to fit learning around work and personal commitments – and which nearly three in five (58%) employers believe is less disruptive than other forms of training.

Despite this change of approach, more than three in five (62%) employers expect that they will struggle to find talent with the right skills in the next 12 months, and close to half (47%) believe that their organisation will start to struggle financially as a result of this.



David Willett, Corporate Director, The Open University

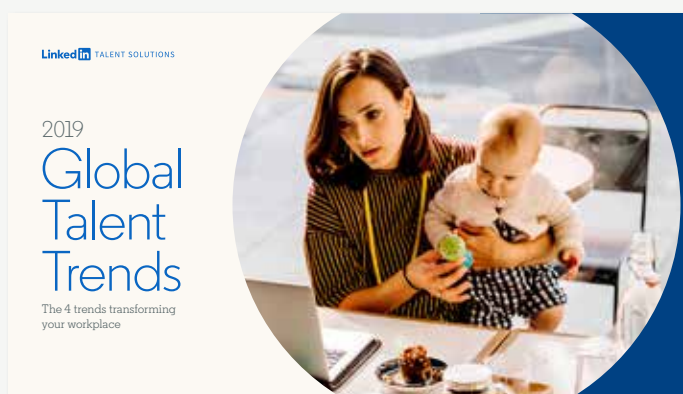
With many employers feeling uncertain about the future, it is crucial that they have access to the skills, knowledge and experience they need in order to seize opportunities and overcome challenges that arise. Many employers are now switching their focus to build the skills of the existing workforce, rather than buying

them in, but training must deliver the best results with minimal disruption. With technology-enabled work-based training, like that provided by The Open University, employees can learn how, when and where they like, which means that education can flex around existing work and personal commitments, and workers can apply their learnings to the workplace right from the start.

2019 Global Talent Trends

LinkedIn Talent Solutions

– published January 2019



LinkedIn surveyed 5,000 employers in 35 countries as well as analysing behavioural insights on how people use the LinkedIn platform to identify four global trends in HR and recruitment.

You can read the full report [here](https://news.linkedin.com/2019/January/linkedin-releases-2019-global-talent-trends-report). [https://news.linkedin.com/2019/January/linkedin-releases-2019-global-talent-trends-report]

The most striking finding was the **increasing importance of so-called 'soft skills'**. As the report makes clear, *the rise of automation and artificial intelligence means that hard skills alone are no longer enough to be successful. While the half-life of many hard skills is shrinking, soft skills stay relevant: a particular programming language may go out of fashion, but creativity, adaptability, and collaboration skills will always be valuable.*

Reinforcing our findings in *Skills Shortages Bulletin 3*¹, the data from LinkedIn suggests that **creativity is the most in-demand soft skill in short supply**. This trend will likely continue: a recent McKinsey study predicts that as automation transforms the skills companies need, demand for creativity will rise sharply by 2030².

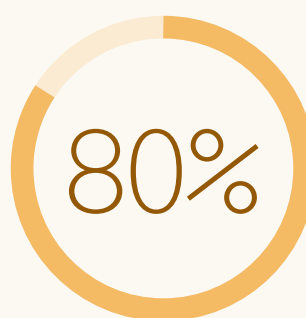
However, companies are also clear that they find it difficult to measure soft skills – only 41% of those surveyed said that they had a formal process in place to assess soft skills, while **57% said they struggle to assess them accurately**.

It's more important to hire for:

30%
Soft skills

62%
Soft and hard skills

8%
Hard skills



say soft skills are increasingly important to company success

While hard skills may get a candidate's foot in the door, it's soft skills that ultimately open it.



Lydia Liu
Head of HR, Home Credit
Consumer Finance Co. Ltd



Time for Action

Learning and skills for economic growth and social justice

Learning and Work Institute – published March 2019

Latest research by the Learning and Work Institute examines the UK's skills base against comparator countries, using modelling to look ahead to the skills position in 2030. You can read the full report [here](https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/skills-vision-2030). [www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/skills-vision-2030]

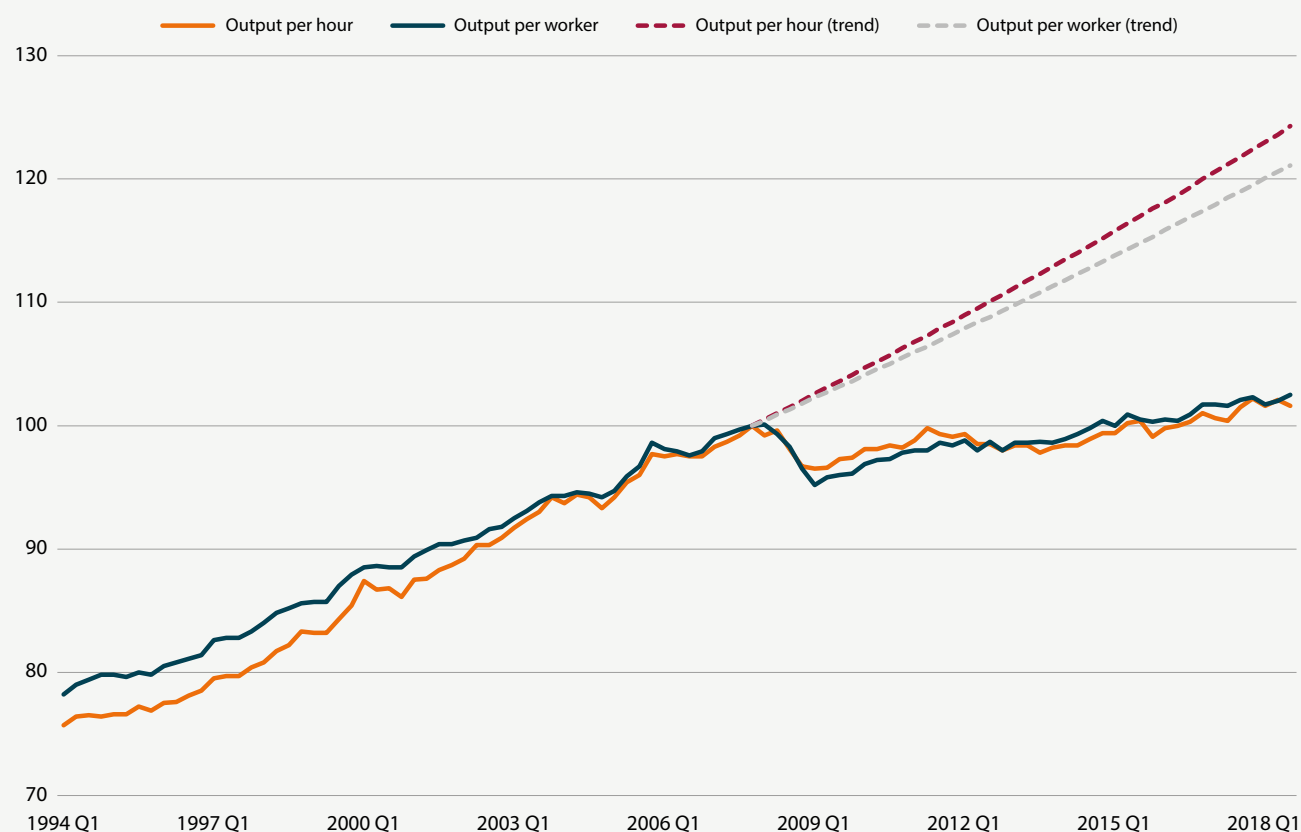
Cuts in public funding for adult skills and falling employer investment have led to the **UK's skills base lagging behind that of comparable countries** and could see the country slip into serious decline.

Among striking aspects of the decline in skills training identified in the study include a **fall in UK employer**

investment to half the EU average per worker and £5.1bn less in real terms than 10 years ago.

Coupled with **substantial cuts in funding for adult learning** (45% since 2009-10) and much lower participation rates (the lowest in 20 years) the decline in skill training represents a 'perfect storm' for the UK.

Productivity in the UK

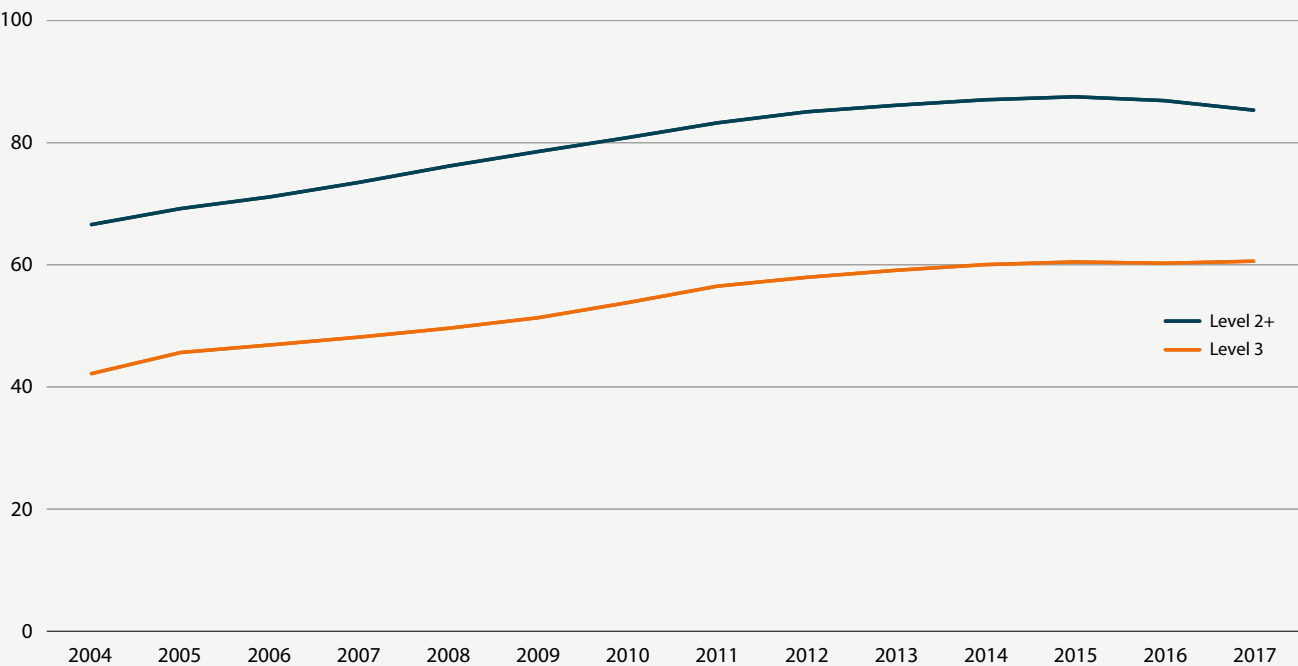


Source: Office of National Statistics



Growing proportions of qualified people in other countries mean that the UK, despite seeing some improvements, will fall from fourth to sixth of the G7 countries for low skills.

Highest qualifications by age 19



Growing proportions of qualified people in other countries mean that the UK, despite seeing some improvements, will **fall from fourth to sixth of the G7 countries for low skills.**

The relative fall in the UK's skills performance will stunt economic growth and social equity and could leave the UK going backwards as other nations progress. Such a trend would be deeply damaging to the country's prospects.

Time for Action – learning and skills for economic growth and social justice

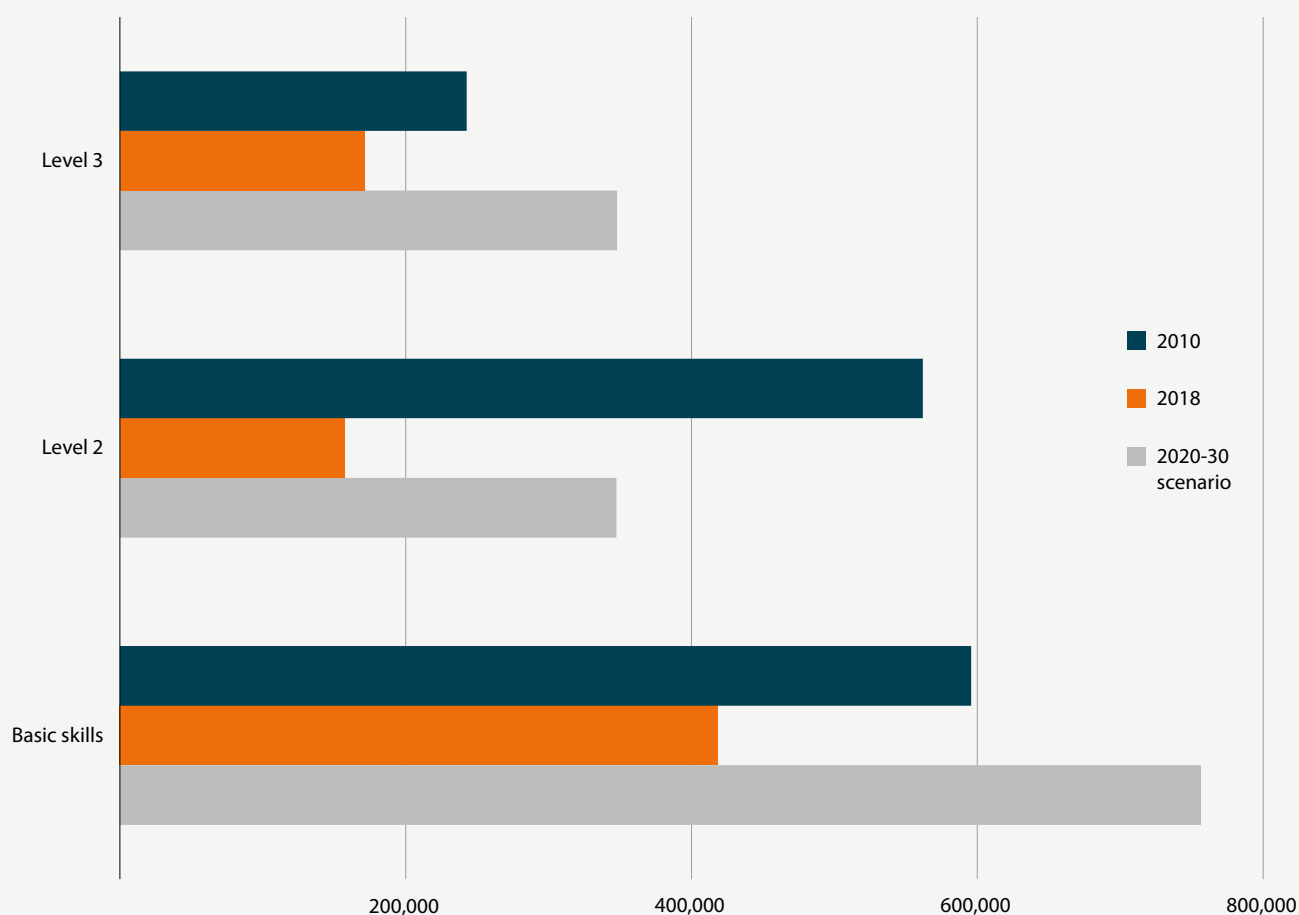
The Learning and Work Institute has suggested potential **ambitions for the UK to ensure more people have functional literacy and numeracy and intermediate qualifications**. They are:

- Three million more people to improve functional literacy and numeracy by 2030
- Nine million more people to achieve level 2 (GCSE equivalent) qualifications

- 1.8 million more to achieve level 3 (A Level equivalent) qualifications

This could boost the UK economy by £20bn a year and help an extra 200,000 people into work. It would reverse the falls in the number of adults improving their skills since 2010.

Rates of required skills and qualification improvement



Source: L&W calculations



Stephen Evans, Chief Executive of Learning and Work Institute:

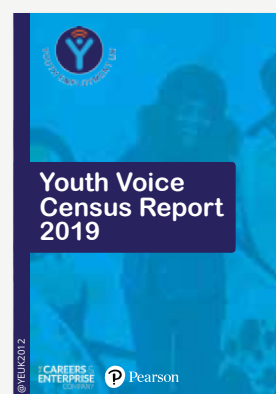
This is neither inevitable nor unavoidable. Seismic shifts in the global economy, driven by advances in technology, create huge opportunities. Making the most of them will require a world class skills base.

This skills problem is a social justice issue. Our most disadvantaged individuals pay the highest price for low skills but also have the most to gain from up-skilling their way out of deprivation.

(There is more information in [Stephen's blog on the report](https://www.tes.com/news/how-10-year-plan-could-fix-skills-system) (<https://www.tes.com/news/how-10-year-plan-could-fix-skills-system>))

Youth Voice Census Report 2019

Youth Employment UK – published May 2019



The Youth Voice Census Report is Youth Employment UK's annual survey benchmarking the experiences of young people as they transition between education and employment. This year 3,008 14-24 year olds shared their views on issues related to education, employment and skills.

Read the full report [here](https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-Youth-Employment-UK-Report_FINAL-1.pdf). [www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-Youth-Employment-UK-Report_FINAL-1.pdf]

Awareness of apprenticeships is on the rise but students are still twice as likely to be informed about the university route.

Apprenticeships are increasingly being presented to young people as an option. This year, 83% of students reported having had apprenticeships discussed with them, compared to 58% in 2018. However, 51% of students reported having had university discussed with them five times or more, whereas only 27% reported having had apprenticeships discussed with them five times or more.

Gender matters

Gender has an effect on a young person's level of engagement with school and employment. Gender also plays a part in determining which choices are offered to a young person who is considering their next steps while in education. At secondary school, girls are more likely to receive mentoring, visit universities and undertake CV workshops, while boys are more likely to visit employers and colleges and take part in enterprise activities.

Confidence and wellbeing

Only half of young people reported that they were 'quite confident' or 'very confident' that they will move into meaningful work and only 31% think employers are 'supportive' or 'very supportive' of hiring young people. This year there is a significant increase in the number of people saying in their own words that they do not think there will be enough jobs to go around. Gender is also

significant here with young women typically more engaged and positive about the services they are offered whilst in education, despite getting fewer interventions than young men. However, this positivity wanes as young women consider entering work - their confidence about being able to find a job is far lower than that of young men.

One to one support services

There is a recognition from young people that although they need information, they would also benefit from someone being on hand to support them to understand what the choices mean to someone with their particular skills and interests. For every age group, the ask from young people is for personal support to help steer them through their options.



This year, 83% of students reported having had apprenticeships discussed with them, compared to 58% in 2018.

Which occupations are at highest risk of being automated?



* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/whichoccupationsareathighriskofbeingautomated/2019-03-25>

Office for National Statistics – published March 2019

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) analysed the jobs of 20 million people in England in 2017. You can find out more, including looking at automation risks for specific occupations and local authority areas [here](#).*

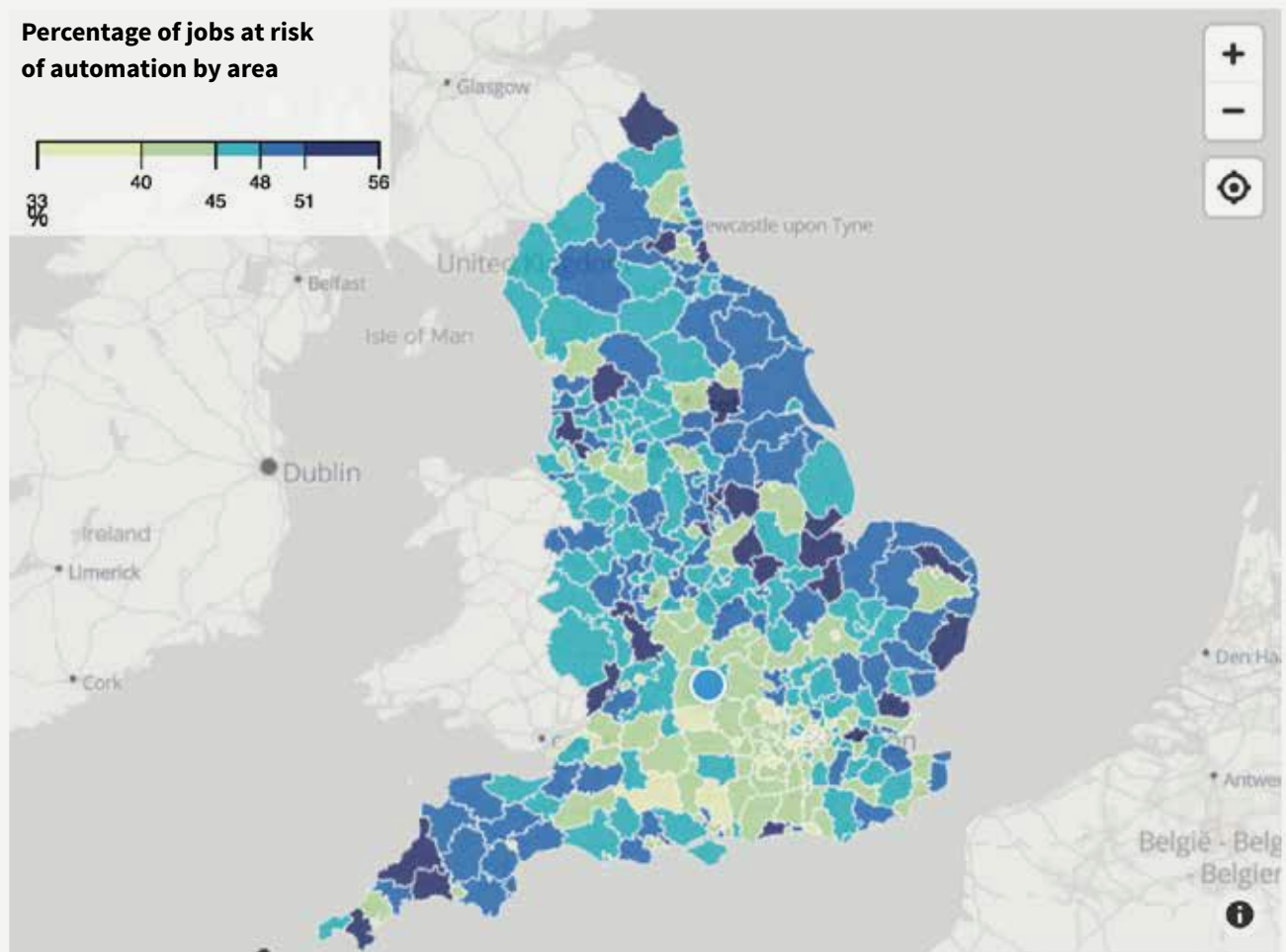
The research found that **7.4% of them – equivalent to 1.5 million jobs – are at high risk of automation**, with humans likely to be replaced by computer programs, algorithms or robots.

Looking at this from an equalities angle, 70.2% of the jobs at high risk of automation are currently held by women. Meanwhile, **younger workers are more likely to be affected**, with 15.7% of 18-24 year olds employed in occupations at high risk.

Occupations at risk of being automated, grouped by sector

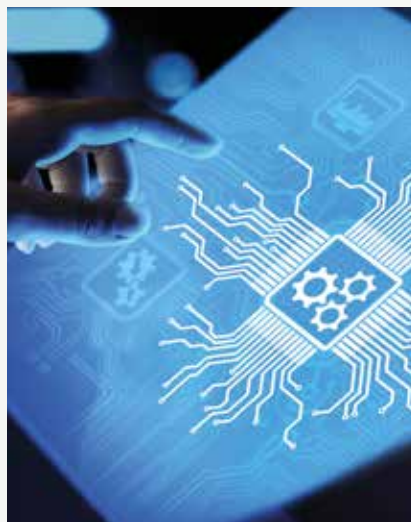


Skills shortages



The occupations with the **highest risk of automation were waiters and waitresses, shelf fillers and elementary sales occupations**, all of which are low skilled or routine. The occupations at the lowest risk of automation were medical practitioners and senior education professionals.

Looking at the spread of occupations around the country shows that the risk of job automation changes significantly by local area depending on the mix of jobs available. The overall pattern suggests that the **south of England and urban centres have lower rates of likely job automation than northern and more rural areas.**



Jobs for the Future

Protecting the labour market in the face of the AI revolution

OxPolicy – published February 2019



Research from OxPolicy critically examined literature on the potential impact of artificial intelligence (AI) and found that technological progress, particularly the development of AI, could drastically change our society and labour market, necessitating a swift and innovative policy response.

You can read the full report [here](https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/sites/default/files/OxPolicy%20-%20Jobs%20For%20The%20Future.pdf). [www.globalpolicyjournal.com/sites/default/files/OxPolicy%20-%20Jobs%20For%20The%20Future.pdf]

While AI could disrupt labour markets significantly, **workers in low-skilled, low-waged jobs are the ones that will be most affected in the medium term**. Yet new technologies also harbour opportunities for injecting greater flexibility and opportunity into labour markets. In order to harness this potential, however, **policymakers need to move from seeing AI as an investment opportunity to also addressing its potentially disruptive socioeconomic impact**.



A comprehensive response to the challenges posed by emerging technologies requires a coordinated response across government departments, including a review of social security policies that currently do not consider the increased burden placed on workers by more frequent job transitions. Crucially, a **long-term strategy must also ensure that workers are equipped with the necessary skills throughout their working lives** to stay successful in a labour market constantly revolutionised by technological change.

As emphasised in previous Skills Shortage Bulletins, while the UK government has focused on STEM skills as an educational priority, more **emphasis on the areas where humans will be able to keep a competitive edge is required, focusing on creative, caring and collaborative skills in particular**. Focusing educational reform on people early in their lives will also not suffice

– the true challenge will be ensuring that workers can update their skills throughout their working lives, by increasing investment in a range of measures aimed at lifelong learning and training.



Leonie Westhoff from Oxford University, who led on the report: *Artificial intelligence could dramatically change our labour market. This potential could be harnessed to create more flexible and inclusive labour markets – but only if the government adapts social security systems and invests intensively in skills development to address the disruptive impact of technology on the world of work.*



Opportunity knocks?

Employment outcomes for low-skilled people in urban Britain

Centre for Cities – published March 2019

Centre for Cities' latest report looked at the central role cities play in providing economic opportunities for people with few or no qualifications, providing important insight to national and local policy makers interested in inclusive growth. You can read the full report [here](https://www.centreforcities.org/publication/opportunity-knocks-economic-outcomes-for-low-skilled-people-in-cities/). [www.centreforcities.org/publication/opportunity-knocks-economic-outcomes-for-low-skilled-people-in-cities/]

In recent years, **inclusive growth has risen up the agenda**. People up and down the country are increasingly concerned not just about economic growth, but how everyone can benefit from it.

Cities, as places of opportunity, play a key role in this debate. They are home to some 55% of people in Britain that have few or no qualifications, but how successful are they at providing job opportunities for their low-skilled workers?



People with few or no qualifications account for almost a third of the working age population, while as many as four in every ten jobs are low-skilled.

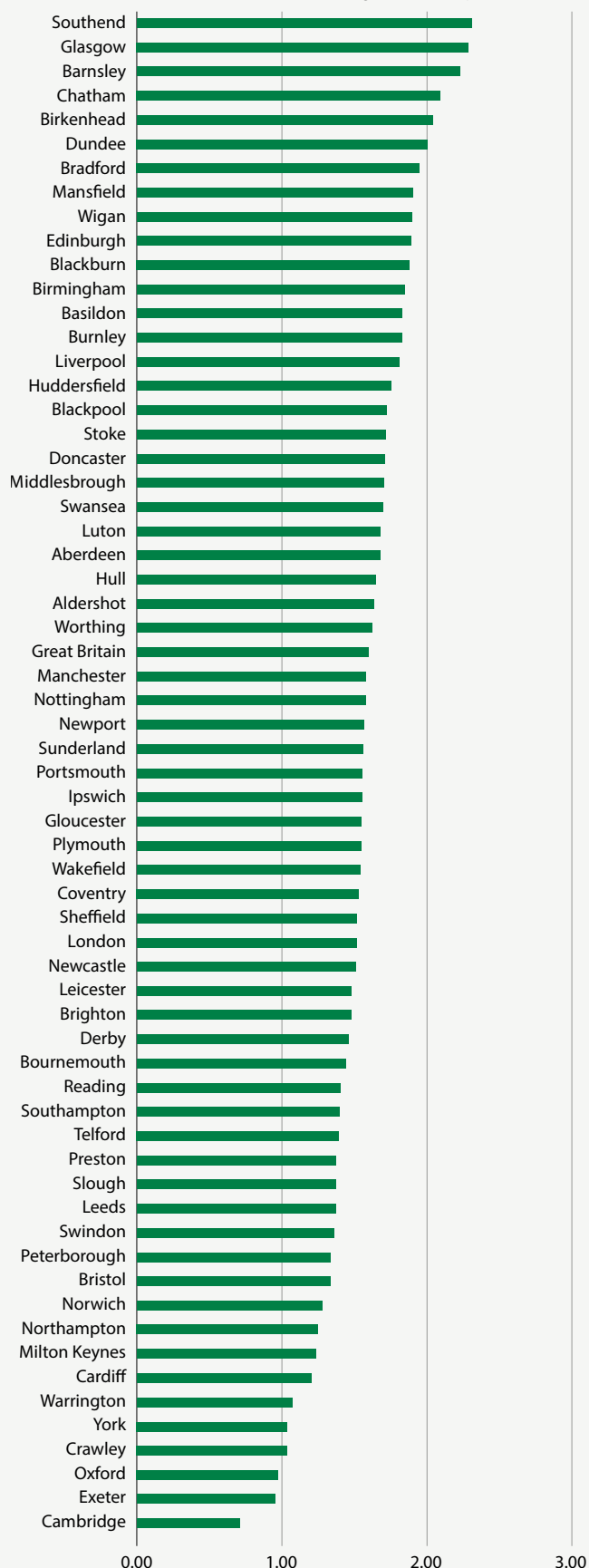
Splitting cities according to the strength of their economies shows two broad patterns. On the one hand, there are weaker city economies, where productivity is lower. In these cities – mostly located in the North of England and Midlands – both low-skilled jobs and low-skilled residents are more prevalent.

People with few or no qualifications account for almost a third of the working age population, while as many as four in every ten jobs are low-skilled.

Yet, this large number of low-skilled jobs does not translate into better economic opportunities for the low-skilled people living in those areas. When looking at the low-skilled people-to-job ratio of places like Southend and Barnsley, there is a clear mismatch, with over two people competing for one low-skilled job. As a result, **unemployment rates for low-skilled people tend to be higher than elsewhere in the country.**



Low-skilled people in low-skilled jobs ratio, 2011



Source: ONS, Census 2011

Skills shortages

In order to encourage inclusive growth, these cities need to get growth going. This will require both demand-side interventions aimed at creating more job opportunities and supply-side initiatives to improve skills.

On the other hand, **the picture looks very different in some of our strongest city economies.** In Oxford, Cambridge and Exeter – three cities not often associated with lower-skilled work – there are more low-skilled jobs than low-qualified workers, highlighting a skills shortage. This is clearly good news for the low-skilled workers living in these cities.

In addition to this, in strong city economies there is also another very clear mismatch: people with few or no qualifications are almost 50% more likely to be in higher-skilled occupations in Aldershot and Brighton than they are in Wakefield and Doncaster.

The two things together suggest that strong city economies do not just provide jobs for higher-skilled workers, but for those that have few or no qualifications too. In these cities, challenges related to making sure low-skilled people benefit from economic growth have less to do with creating job opportunities, and more to do with making it cheaper to live in these places.

In line with broader economic trends, **when it comes to inclusive growth, different places face different challenges.** For some it is about growing the size of the overall pie, creating more growth that can then be shared. For others it is more about managing the costs of economic growth, such as high house prices, congestion and air pollution. Clearly, these cannot be addressed with a one-size-fits-all approach. Rather, we need our cities to be able to choose the economic interventions that suit them most – be it on attracting businesses, improving infrastructure or affordable homes.



Elena Magrini

Analyst at Centre for Cities

Ensuring everyone can access the labour market, not just by being in work, but in 'good-work', requires investment in skills, particularly in adult education, up and down the country. However, the message of this report is clear: growing cities' overall economies is a prerequisite for inclusive growth and different places are at different stages. The government should give city leaders more powers to tailor economic interventions to their needs – be it on attracting businesses, improving infrastructure or affordable homes.



We need our cities to be able to choose the economic interventions that suit them most – be it on attracting businesses, improving infrastructure or affordable homes.

Cities of Learning – RSA

The RSA and Digitalme's Cities of Learning programme is a **new model for cities and places to design and deliver lifelong learning and skills** in a way that allows them to be guided by the needs of their local economies and people.

Taking forward recommendations from the RSA's 2015 report *A New Digital Learning Age* to pilot Cities of Learning in the UK – building on other global initiatives such as UNESCO Learning Cities – the RSA has developed the concept with partner cities and localities.

Cities of Learning connects and amplifies different forms of formal and informal learning and training provision that exist across a place, and creates valuable new progression pathways for learners into further learning, employment or civic opportunities via a system of digital open badges. The model addresses skills gaps, talent pipelines, and provides a framework for effective place-based initiatives to facilitate economic growth as well as strengthen civic pride and identity.

The Cities of Learning model is orientated around three **key design principles**: new local civic leadership with a collective vision for learning and skills; mobilising diverse networks of learning and skills providers, and connecting different learning opportunities via open badges and a digital online platform. The platform is underpinned by the concept of a 'learning spine' which provides a scaffold for structuring place based learning across different providers, and forms the foundation for new badge-based learning pathways. It also provides a new, common language for learning and skills progression.

Data-driven tools in the platform **capture and provide insights on the development of skills**, and the impact of learning and progression, allowing city leaders and employers to better address the needs of the local economy and particularly skills gaps, and promoting lifelong learning. Open badges can be issued by a range of stakeholders across a locality, and facilitate the recognition of learning and skills to respond to local priorities and labour market needs.



In 2017 the RSA and Digitalme collaborated with **Greater Manchester, Brighton and Plymouth** to test and prototype the Cities of Learning approach. Plymouth is building pathways around its strong and entrepreneurial civic, social enterprise, and STEM sectors. In Brighton Our Future City, which combines culture, arts, enterprise, education, community and public leadership, is leading on pathways design across the network.

Support from Further Education Trust for Leadership, Ufi Charitable Trust and City & Guilds is enabling the RSA to **continue its work with Plymouth and Brighton to roll out pilots and evaluate the approach over 2019/20**. These first pilots will be targeted at 14 to 25 years olds.

Last year Cities of Learning was named by global education non-profit HundrED as one of their **most inspiring global Education Innovations for 2019** – you can find out more [here](https://hundred.org/en/innovations/cities-of-learning-uk). [https://hundred.org/en/innovations/cities-of-learning-uk]



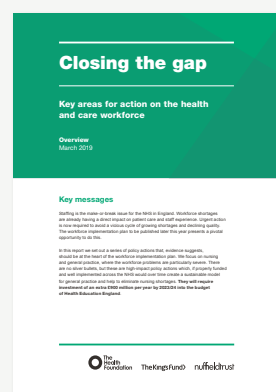
Rosie Clayton, Associate Director Cities of Learning, RSA

Cities of Learning aims to mobilise the potential of place based networks, new forms of civic leadership, and new technologies in creating places that value and promote lifelong learning as core to their culture and civic identity.

Spotlight on: Health and Social Care

The Health Foundation is a leading independent charity committed to improving health and health care across the UK. They worked with The King's Fund and Nuffield Trust to produce ***Closing the Gap***, which sets out key areas for action on the health and care workforce.

You can read the full report [here](https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/upload/publications/2019/Closing-the-gap-key-areas-for-action-overview.pdf). [www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/upload/publications/2019/Closing-the-gap-key-areas-for-action-overview.pdf]



Staffing is the make-or-break issue for the NHS in England. **Workforce and skills shortages are already having a direct impact on patient care and staff experience.**

Urgent action is required to avoid a vicious cycle of growing shortages and declining quality.

When the NHS was first established in 1948, it was supported by a workforce of around 144,000 staff. Now, more than 70 years later, it is the largest employer in

England, with around **1.1 million full-time equivalent (FTE) staff** in hospital and community services³ (NHS Digital 2018b).

Yet right now the NHS workforce is struggling to cope. NHS hospitals, mental health and community providers are currently reporting a **shortage of more than 100,000 FTE staff, representing one in eleven posts⁴**, severely affecting some key groups. One of the greatest challenges



Spotlight on: Health and Social Care

lies in nursing, with 41,000 nurse vacancies (one in eight posts)⁵, but there are also problems in medicine, particularly in some specialities – for instance, core psychiatry is not on the Migration Advisory Committee’s list of shortage occupations.

These pressures also extend beyond NHS trusts, with serious staffing issues in general practice. Meanwhile, the adult social care sector is also under pressure and facing many of the same issues. There are 1.1 million FTE jobs in adult social care⁶ and **vacancies are rising, currently totalling 110,000**, with around one in ten social workers and one in eleven care worker roles vacant⁷. There is also a registered nurse vacancy rate of 12% in adult social care, implying around 5,000 nursing vacancies in this sector.

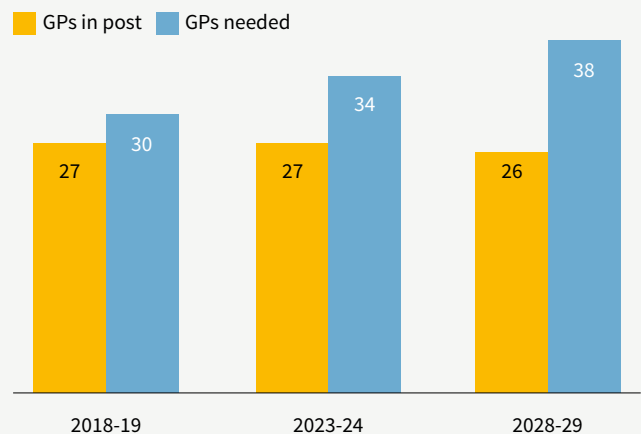
Concerns about Brexit appear to have created additional risks in both the short and the medium term. Already a **net inflow of nurses from the European Union (EU) into the NHS has turned into a net outflow**: between July 2017 and July 2018, 1,584 more EU nurses and health visitors left their role in the NHS than joined⁸ (NHS Digital

2018b). Meanwhile, the Government’s efforts to increase numbers in nurse training have so far been unsuccessful – the number of placed applicants for nurse undergraduate training was 4% lower in 2018 than in 2016⁹.

Overall, the current level of shortages looks set to worsen, with **shortages of nurses alone set to rise to 70,000 within five years and 100,000 within ten years** if action is not taken.

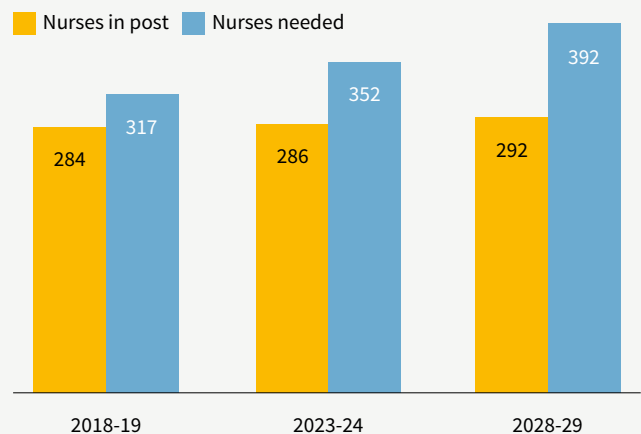
Will we have enough GPs?

GPs demand and supply full-time equivalent, in thousands



Will we have enough nurses?

Nurses demand and supply full-time equivalent, in thousands



Note: Future predictions based on current trend

Source: Nuffield Trust / King's Fund / Health Foundation

Workforce challenges are currently the biggest threat facing the health service, and are **already having significant consequences for both patients and staff**. As the Care Quality Commission stated in its recent report on the state of health and social care in England, *workforce problems have a direct impact on people’s care*¹⁰.



Skills shortages

The latest GP Patient Survey shows clearly that patients have problems accessing general practice, with more than a third of patients struggling to get an appointment when they need one¹¹ (NHS England and Ipsos MORI 2018). Meanwhile, for services provided by NHS trusts, **performance against key waiting-time standards has been in decline since 2012/13**, with patients experiencing longer waits for both accident and emergency and planned care. Within social care, recent research suggests that the lack of skilled personnel are contributing to the creation of ‘care deserts’ with 1.4 million older people already not getting the care they need¹².



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REPORT

- **Increase the number of nurses joining the NHS from training** by 5,000 a year by working to reduce the dropout rate during training by a third and encouraging more nurses to join the NHS on completion.
- **Change the system of financial support to student nurses** to provide a cost of living grant of £5,200 per year while training and cover the cost of tuition fees.
- **Increase the international recruitment of nurses** by 5,000 a year until 2023/24 to address the immediate challenges.
- **Update the model of general practice** to draw on the skills of expanded multidisciplinary teams in order to reduce pressure on GPs.
- **Create a universal and improved ‘offer’ for NHS staff** including increasing pay in real terms and a substantial CPD offer as practice changes.



Anita Charlesworth
Director of Research and Economics, Health Foundation

The workforce is the make-or-break issue for the health service. Unless staffing shortages are substantially reduced, the recent NHS Long

Term Plan can only be a wish list. The government could do something to radically transform the situation with nursing over that decade and we could have enough staff domestically to meet demand. That’s really important but it won’t happen without action and that action requires investment.



Dame Donna Kinnair
General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing

We will not stop until people are held to account for the desperate shortages each and every one of us has witnessed. Politicians must stop short-

changing the public. They must stop the rot and put an end to the workforce crisis in nursing. Rather than only looking at the cost of educating and employing nurses, the government must think about the true cost - financial and human - of not doing it...the goodwill of nursing staff is being abused and politicians must know it is running out.

Case study

The mental health workforce



The statistics for the mental health workforce are particularly challenging. Vacancies for mental health nursing, the largest staff group in the sector, **account for more than 20% of all unfilled nursing posts in England¹³**, while around 9% of UK consultant psychiatric posts remain unfilled.

In September 2018, evidence provided to MPs by Department of Health and Social Care Ministers¹⁴ suggested that **around two thousand mental health staff a month were leaving their posts in the NHS in England**. Between June 2017 and May 2018, a total of 23,700 mental health staff left the NHS, equivalent to one in eight of the sector's total workforce.

A 2017 recruitment campaign by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych) took a different approach, as Dr Kate Lovett, consultant psychiatrist and RCPsych dean explains – *We put the voice of the patient, rather than the doctor, at the centre of the campaign. It was very powerful; we used real doctors and had actors speaking the words of patients. We wanted to change the narrative, to show psychiatric medicine as it really is.*

Alongside the pay premium NHS Employers negotiated from 2016 in the overall junior doctor contract, this helped to **boost the number of junior doctors deciding to train in psychiatry by 30%** last year.



Between June 2017 and May 2018, a total of 23,700 mental health staff left the NHS, equivalent to one in eight of the sector's total workforce.

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The Edge Foundation
44 Whitfield Street
London, W1T 2RH

T +44 (0)20 7960 1540
E enquiry@edge.co.uk

www.edge.co.uk