



Greater Lincolnshire

Local Skills Improvement Plan

Annex D: LSIP Primary Research

LSIP 2026-29: Annex D 2026 to 2029

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0.0 Background, objectives and methodology

Background | The story so far...

- The first Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) cycle from 2023–2026 is now drawing to a close. A primary and secondary research evidence base needed to be gathered and a consultative engagement process with employer organisations implemented to inform the origination of the LSIP Report that will direct the second cycle running from 2026-2029.
- The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB 'The Client'), was re-appointed as the Employer Representative Body (ERB), to lead the development of the new Greater Lincolnshire Local Skills Improvement Plan ('The GLCAA LSIP') working in close collaboration with Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (as 'The Mayoral Strategic Authority').
- Habit5 - a research agency accredited as a Company Partner by the Market Research Society (MRS) – was appointed to conduct primary quantitative and qualitative research, as part of a wider programme of research.



The aims of the LSIP | What needs to be achieved

All areas of England expected to develop a new 3-year LSIP covering period the 2026-2029.

The four key aims for the LSIPs are set out as being:

1. Support economic growth by addressing skill needs within an area required to meet the skills priorities set out by SAs/MSAs and local priorities identified by employers drawing together a wide range of data, evidence and insights
2. Facilitate the engagement of employers in the skills system and investment in training (better understanding of the skills system, stronger employer voice)
3. Change the supply of skills provision at all levels up to and including level 8
4. Inform how devolved and non-devolved funding can be used to support skills priorities

FSB and all of the other Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) across England were briefed to work together with the relevant Strategic Authority on all stages of the LSIP, with the sector priorities of the Strategic Authority providing the framework for the development of the LSIP, alongside Local Growth Plans, the Industrial Strategy, Skills England's assessment of skills needs and employer input."

Draft LSIPs are to be submitted to DfE by end March, with the final version submitted by May, for planned publication in June 2026.

Who we needed to understand |

Businesses of any size based in Greater Lincolnshire or with significant operations in the area

ONS estimates for 2025 indicate that there are 38,665 VAT and/or PAYE registered enterprises located in Greater Lincolnshire.

The senior business decision makers in these enterprises with responsibility for employee recruitment, development and training, represent the population to be researched.

ONS Business Workbook 2025

Table 10 - Number of VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises in districts, counties and unitary authorities within region and country by employment sizebands

Greater Lincolnshire	Employment Size Band							Total
	0-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-249	250+	
E06000012 : North East Lincolnshire	3,425	580	305	190	55	30	20	4,605
E06000013 : North Lincolnshire	4,445	620	285	180	80	35	15	5,660
E10000019 : Lincolnshire	21,795	3,500	1,650	910	305	145	95	28,400

NB All figures are rounded to avoid disclosure. Values may be rounded down to zero and so all zeros are not necessarily true zeros.

NB We appreciate that there are likely to be at least as many entities that are NOT registered for VAT or PAYE but they will normally be micro businesses: sole traders, consultants and freelancers, who do not employ anyone. Therefore, skills gaps can only apply to them personally.

We recognise that a minority may have made unsuccessful attempts to recruit others and so have experienced skill shortage. VAT or PAYE registration were NOT qualifying criteria to participate in the research, presence of at least one employee based in Greater Lincolnshire was applied as a criteria.

Who we needed to understand | With the 10 Priority Sectors regarded as the primary population to engage

Based upon strategic economic considerations and an analysis of recruitment behaviours and volumes plus forecast employee replacement and future growth metrics, GLCCA identified the 10 Priority Sectors listed below. These 10 Priority Sectors have accordingly been treated as the primary population to engage within the research that has been conducted by Habit5 in Jan-Feb 2026..

Priority Industry Sectors | Greater Lincolnshire

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing
- Construction
- Defence
- Digital and Technologies
- Energy
- Health and Adult Social Care
- Ports and Logistics
- Professional and Business Services
- Visitor Economy

Methodology | A bespoke Online Survey was conducted with Employers across Greater Lincolnshire

Survey Structure
Introductory Page
Your role and your organisation
Your workforce
Recruitment experiences
Non-Priority Sector Skill Shortages
Specific Priority Sector Skill Shortages
Retaining existing employees
Skills gaps in your existing workforce
Providing training
Concluding questions

The image displays three screenshots of the survey interface. The top-left screenshot shows the introductory page with the FSB and LSIP Greater Lincolnshire logos, a title 'Understanding your priorities as an employer', and a 'Next' button. The top-right screenshot shows a mobile view of the survey with a title bar 'LSIP Greater Lincolnshire - Employers Survey 2026', a note about required questions, and a list of location options with radio buttons. The bottom-center screenshot shows a desktop view of a question: 'Over the last 3 years, has your organisation done any of the following...' with three columns for 'Yes', 'No', and 'Don't know' and a 'Next' button.

The Online Survey featured FSB and Greater Lincolnshire CCA branding on the opening page.

A responsive design was used to build the survey.

Survey Engagement | Responses from 416 employers participating in the survey, were taken into analysis.

A bespoke Online Survey with Employers was scripted, designed, built and hosted by Habit5. The survey fieldwork was conducted between 21st January – 8th February 2026.

360 fully completed surveys were achieved, as a further 56 were substantially complete, in total 416 unique responses from Employers were taken into analysis.

This size of total sample delivers a Confidence Interval of ± 4.78 at the 95% Confidence Level, which we regard as satisfactory, given the degree of difficulty involved in engaging this time poor population.

Margin of error: **4.78%**

This means, in this case, there is a 95% chance that the real value is within $\pm 4.78\%$ of the measured/surveyed value.

Confidence Level: ?	95%	▼
Sample Size: ?	416	
Population Proportion: ?	50	%
Population Size: ?	38665	Leave blank if unlimited population size.
Calculate ▶ Clear		

NB The number of fully completed surveys in Jan-Feb 2026 was 72% or 151 records higher than the volume achieved by a similar survey, with the same population, for Phase 2 of the 2023-26 LSIP cycle in Autumn 2024.

Focus Groups | Conducted with senior decision makers in the Priority Sectors plus two workshops with Providers

Nine x 2-hour Focus Groups were conducted with Employers in the Priority Sectors between 13th January and 10th February 2026.

Two x 2-hour Workshops with the representatives of Education and Training Providers were conducted between 18th and 23rd February 2026

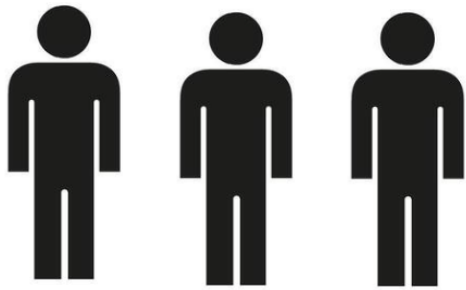
- 6 of the Focus Groups and the Provider workshop were conducted in-person
- 5 of the Focus Groups were conducted online using the Zoom platform

Participant recruitment to the Focus Groups was handled by the FSB in collaboration with GLCCA.

Date	Timeslot	Event Type	Sector	Moderator	Geography	Audience	Location
13 January 2026	10am-11:45	Online Focus Group	Advanced Manufacturing	David Jones	Greater Lincs	Employers	Online
14 January 2026	10am-11:45	Online Focus Group	Energy Industries	David Jones	Greater Lincs	Employers	Online
19 January 2026	10am-12pm	Online Focus Group	Visitor Economy	David Jones	Greater Lincs	Employers	Online
23 January 2026	10am-12pm	In-person Focus Group	Health & Adult Social Care	David Jones	Greater Lincs	Employers	Grantham
26 January 2026	10am-12pm	In-person Focus Group	Defence	David Jones	Greater Lincs	Employers	Lincoln
27 January 2026	10am-12pm	In-person Focus Group	Agri Tech & Food Manufacturing	David Jones	Greater Lincs	Employers	Grimsby
29 January 2026	10am-12pm	In-person Focus Group	Construction	Sophie Fox	Greater Lincs	Employers	Sleaford
02 February 2026	10am-12pm	In-person Focus Group	Professional & Business Services	Sophie Fox	Greater Lincs	Employers	Woodhall Spa
09 February 2026	10am-12pm	Online Focus Group	Digital & Technologies	Sophie Fox	Greater Lincs	Employers	Online
13 February 2026	10am - 2pm	Online Focus Group	Ports & Logistics	Sophie Fox	Greater Lincs	Employers	Online
18 February 2026	2pm-4pm	In-person Provider Workshop	Providers	David Jones	Greater Lincs	Providers	Lincoln
23 February 2026	10am-12pm	Online Provider Workshop	Providers	David Jones	Greater Lincs	Providers	Online

NB A Focus Group with employers in the Ports & Logistics sector was scheduled to take place but low engagement meant that this had to be cancelled. It was replaced with an additional workshop with Providers, based upon the level of demand to engage from this population.

Some general insights | The size of an Employer organisation can mean that skill shortage for a large organisation can present as a skills gap for a small or micro business.



Large or Medium Size Organisation

Several IT Managers.
IT 100% of what each
jobholder does.

An unfilled vacancy here is
Skills Shortage.



Small Business

1 x Operations Manager.
IT around 30% of their
responsibilities

Individual weakness in
IT is a Skills Gap.



Micro Business

1 x Owner or MD.
IT around 10% of their
responsibilities

Individual weakness in
IT is a Skills Gap.

Some general insights | Standard Occupational Classifications (SOCs) struggle to keep up with new and emerging job roles.

The ONS Standard Occupational Classifications (SOCs) last underwent a major update with the introduction of SOC 2020, which was released in February 2020, exactly six years ago.

Occupations and job roles have changed and evolved in quite fundamental ways since then, particularly in Digital & Tech, Renewable Energy, etc. There was very little, if any, talk of AI back in 2020 for instance.

Given the richness of published data available that relates to the SOCs we can understand the appeal of relying quite heavily on these data sets to identify the Potential Priority Occupations that were proposed by Greater Lincolnshire Council and used as stimulus with the Focus Group and incorporated in the Online Survey.

However, the speed of role evolution and new roles emerging, is likely to mean that the fastest moving sectors see a disconnect between the roles that are regarded as recruitment priorities for them and the Potential Priority Occupation stimulus used within the research.

Potential Priority Occupations | Digital & Technology

- IT Managers
- IT Operations Technicians
- IT Project Managers
- IT Quality and Testing Professionals
- IT User Support Technicians
- Other IT Professionals
- Newspaper, Periodical and Broadcast Editors
- Photographers, Audio-visual and Broadcasting Equipment Operators
- Programmers and Software Development Professionals
- Telecoms and Related Network Installers and Repairers
- Assemblers (electrical and Electronic Products)
- CAD, Drawing and Architectural Technicians
- Call and Contact Centre Occupations
- Computer System and Equipment Installers and Services
- Cyber Security Professionals
- Database Administrations and Web Content Technicians
- Graphic and Multimedia Designers
- IT Directors
- IT Business Analysts, Architects and System Designers

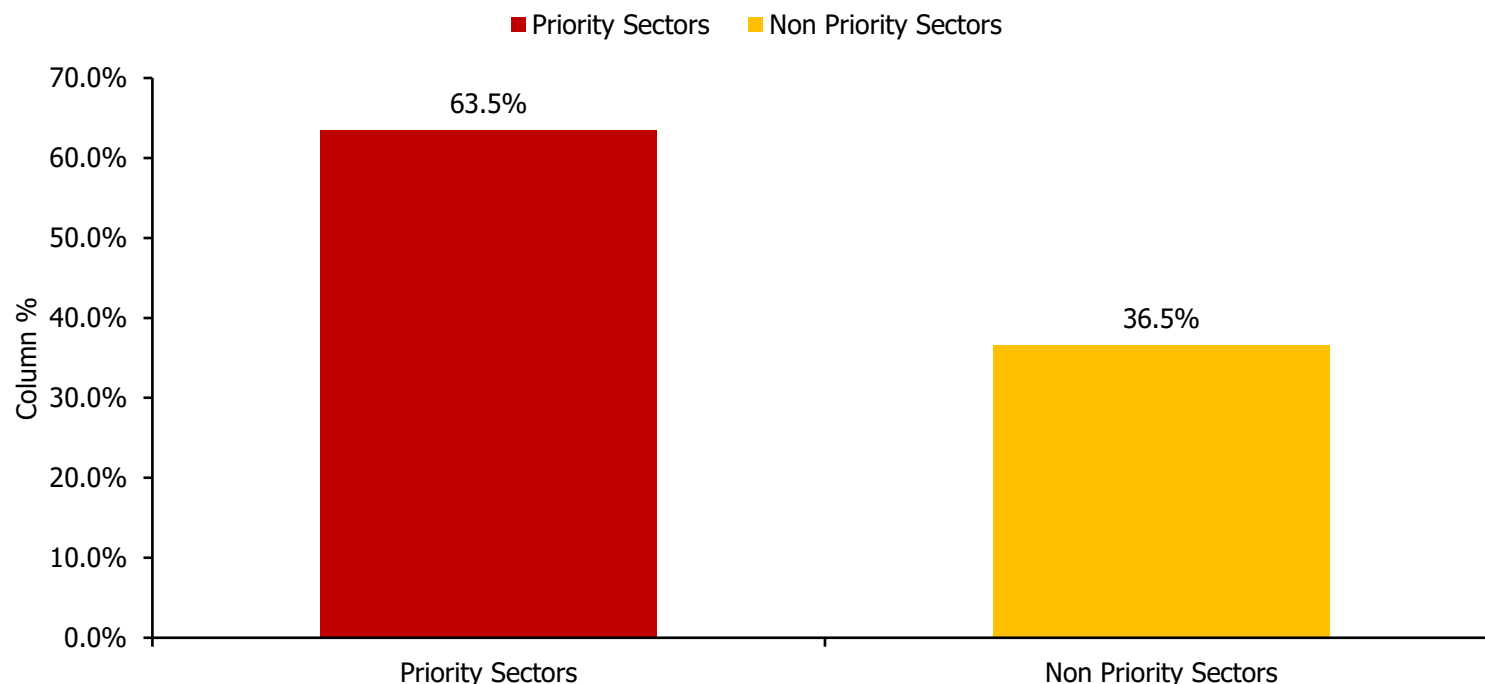
Example of Potential Priority Occupations stimulus slide used within the Focus Groups.

1.0 Participant sample profile

Sector | Overall, survey participants drawn from the Priority Sectors account for over 63% of the total sample or 264 participants.

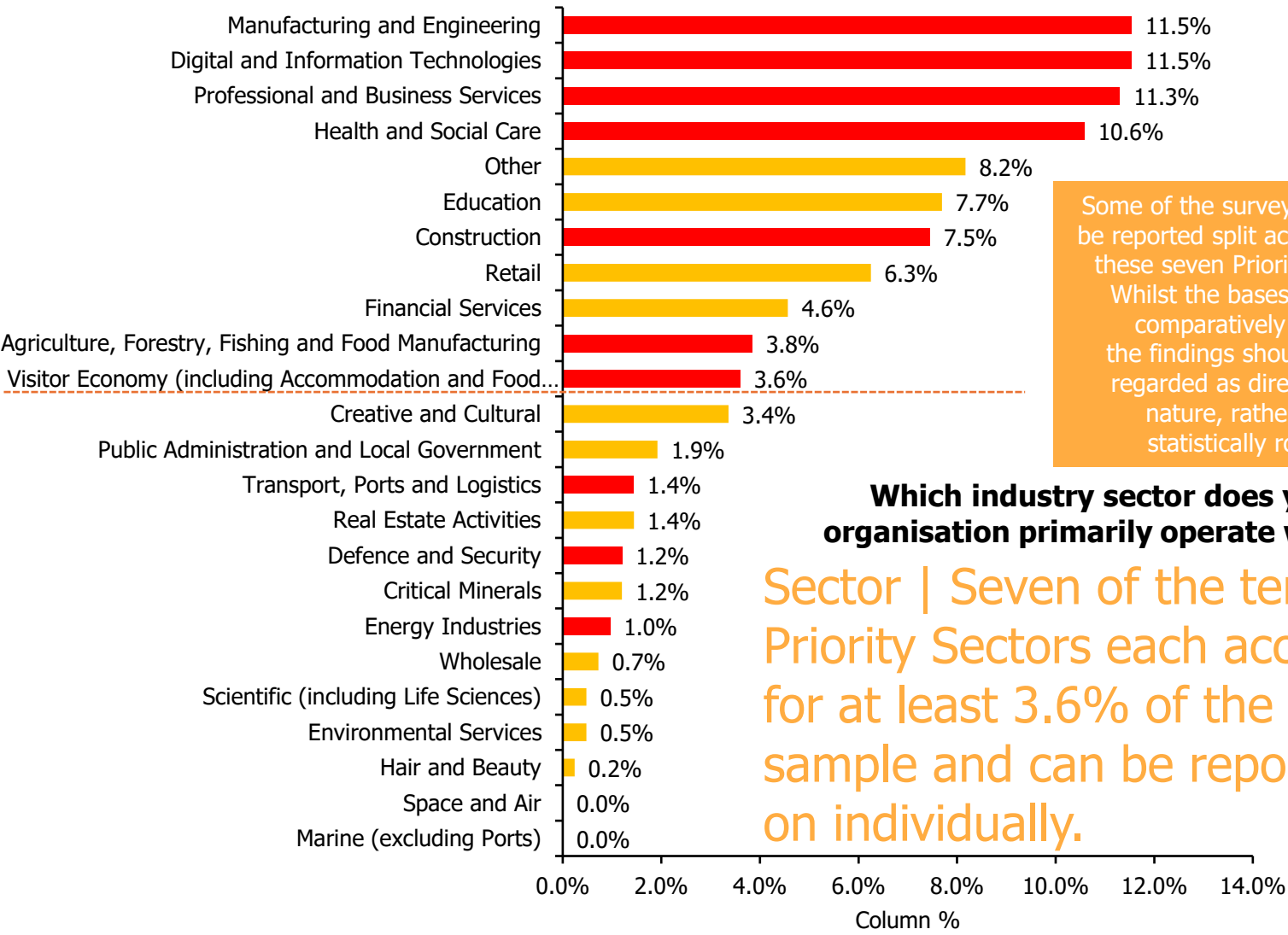
14

Which industry sector does your organisation primarily operate within?
| By Priority Sector status groups



NB Many of the results and findings from the survey will be reported using this consolidation of all Priority Sectors combined versus all of the Non-priority Sectors combined. The aim is identifying variations in these robust sample bases, that can then be investigated in greater detail at a more directional level.

Base: Priority Sectors (n=264), Non Priority Sectors (n=152), Sample Size = 416



Some of the survey results will be reported split across each of these seven Priority Sectors. Whilst the bases here are comparatively larger, the findings should still be regarded as directional in nature, rather than statistically robust.

Which industry sector does your organisation primarily operate within?

Sector | Seven of the ten Priority Sectors each account for at least 3.6% of the sample and can be reported on individually.

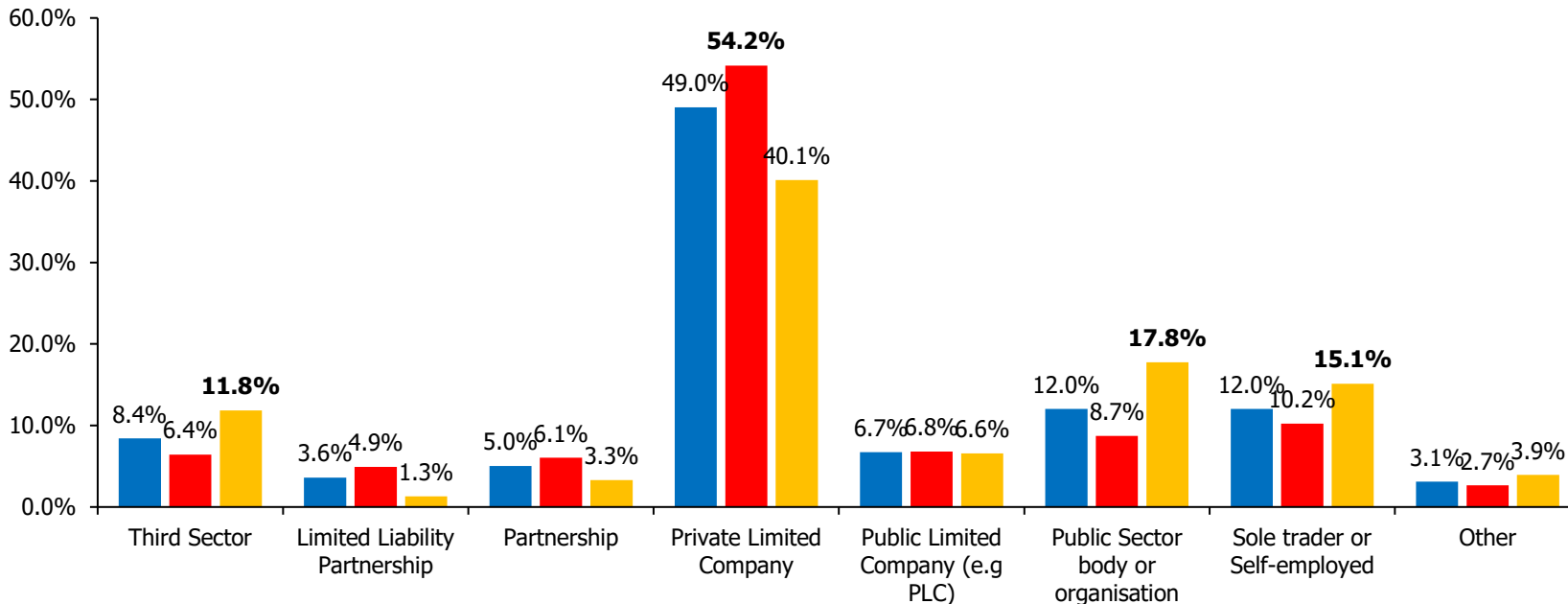
Base: Marine (excluding Ports) (n=0), Space and Air (n=0), Hair and Beauty (n=1), Environmental Services (n=2), Scientific (including Life Sciences) (n=2), Wholesale (n=3), Energy Industries (n=4), Critical Minerals (n=5), Defence and Security (n=5), Real Estate Activities (n=6), Transport, Ports and Logistics (n=6), Public Administration and Local Government (n=8), Creative and Cultural (n=14), Visitor Economy (including Accommodation and Food Service) (n=15), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Food Manufacturing (n=16), Financial Services (n=19), Retail (n=26), Construction (n=31), Education (n=32), Other (n=34), Health and Social Care (n=44), Professional and Business Services (n=47), Digital and Information Technologies (n=48), Manufacturing and Engineering (n=48), Sample Size = 416

Business structure | 54% of the participants working in the Priority Sectors were employed in Private Limited Companies, compared with just 40% in the Non-priority Sectors.

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What is the structure of your organisation?

■ Total ■ Priority Sectors ■ Non Priority Sectors



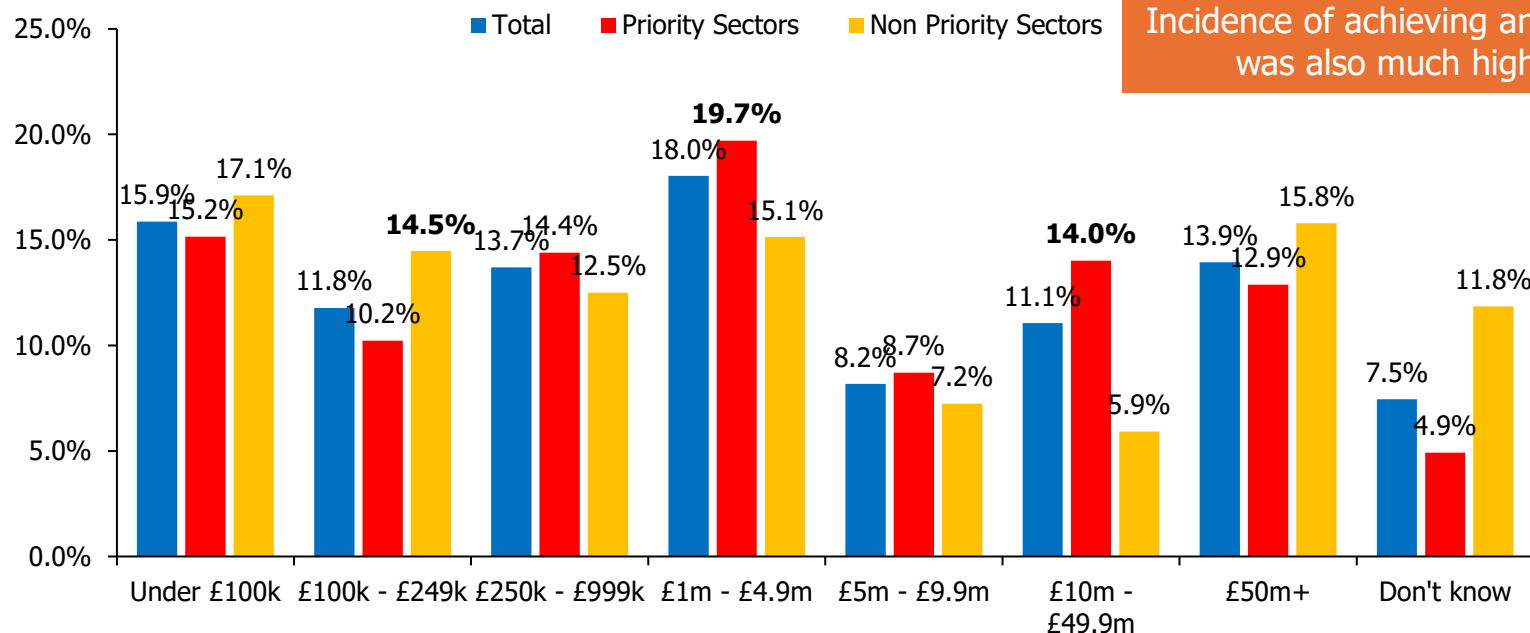
The participants from the Non-priority Sectors were markedly more likely to be in Public Sector organisations, (18% - NB Strong representation from Education will help to explain this), Third Sector organisations (12%) or be a Sole trader... (15%).

Base: Third Sector (n=35), Limited Liability Partnership (n=15), Partnership (n=21), Private Limited Company (n=204), Public Limited Company (e.g PLC) (n=28), Public Sector body or organisation (n=50), Sole trader or Self-employed (n=50), Other (n=13), Sample Size = 416

Size | At 21%*, the share of organisations in the Priority Sectors with known annual turnover in their last financial year of between £1m - £4.9m, was markedly higher than for the Non-priority Sectors (17%*).

17

Which of the annual turnover bands below would your organisation fall into, based upon performance in your last financial year?



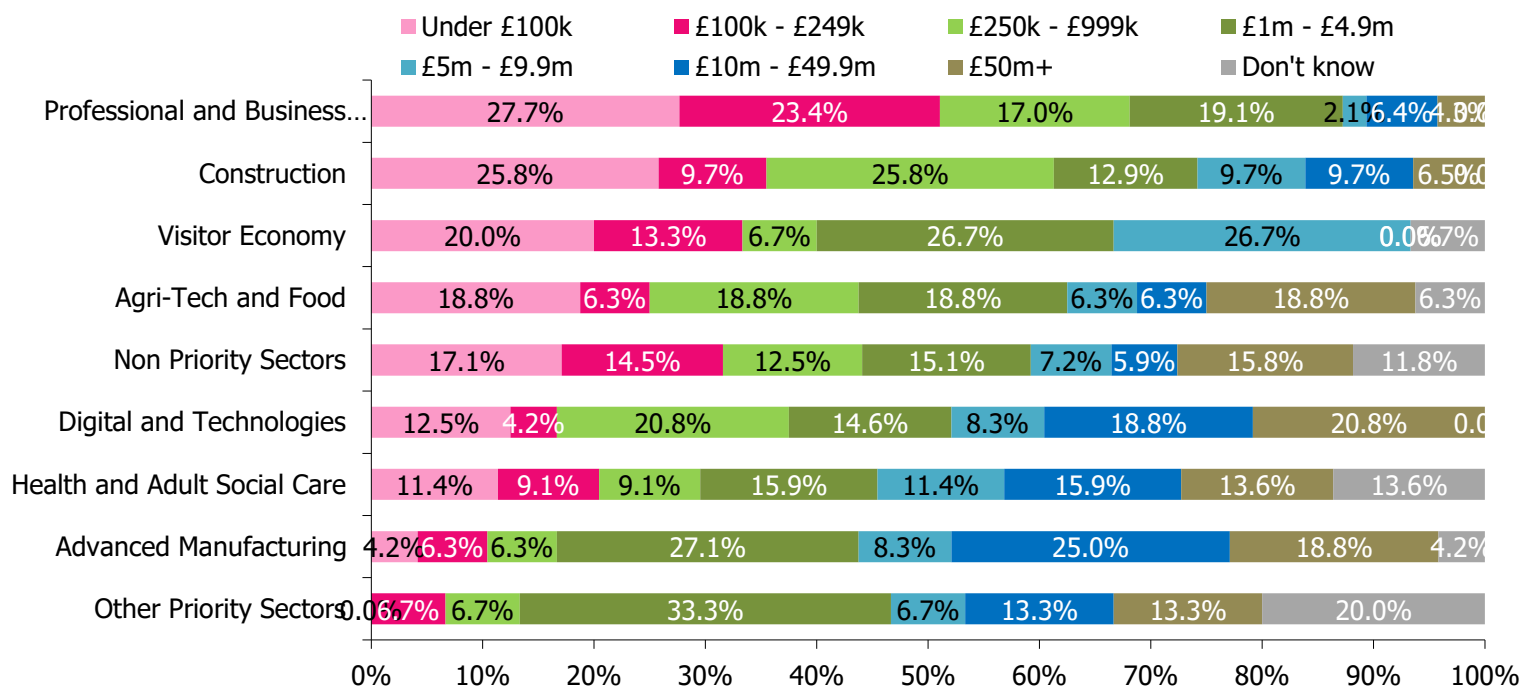
*NB Percentages here ignore participants answering 'Don't know' which can often be where T/O is not emphasised as a metric, e.g. Defence, NHS, Education, etc.

Base: Under £100k (n=66), £100k - £249k (n=49), £250k - £999k (n=57), £1m - £4.9m (n=75), £5m - £9.9m (n=34), £10m - £49.9m (n=46), £50m+ (n=58), Don't know (n=31), Sample Size = 416

Size | Over half (51%) of the Professional and Business Services organisation have annual turnover below £249k, whereas 44% in Advanced Manufacturing achieved £10m+.

18

Which of the annual turnover bands below would your organisation fall into, based upon performance in your last financial year? | By Priority Sector



The firmographic profile of the Priority Sectors is very different.

Published ONS data for VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses should be referenced to aid comparative understanding of the composition of each sector.

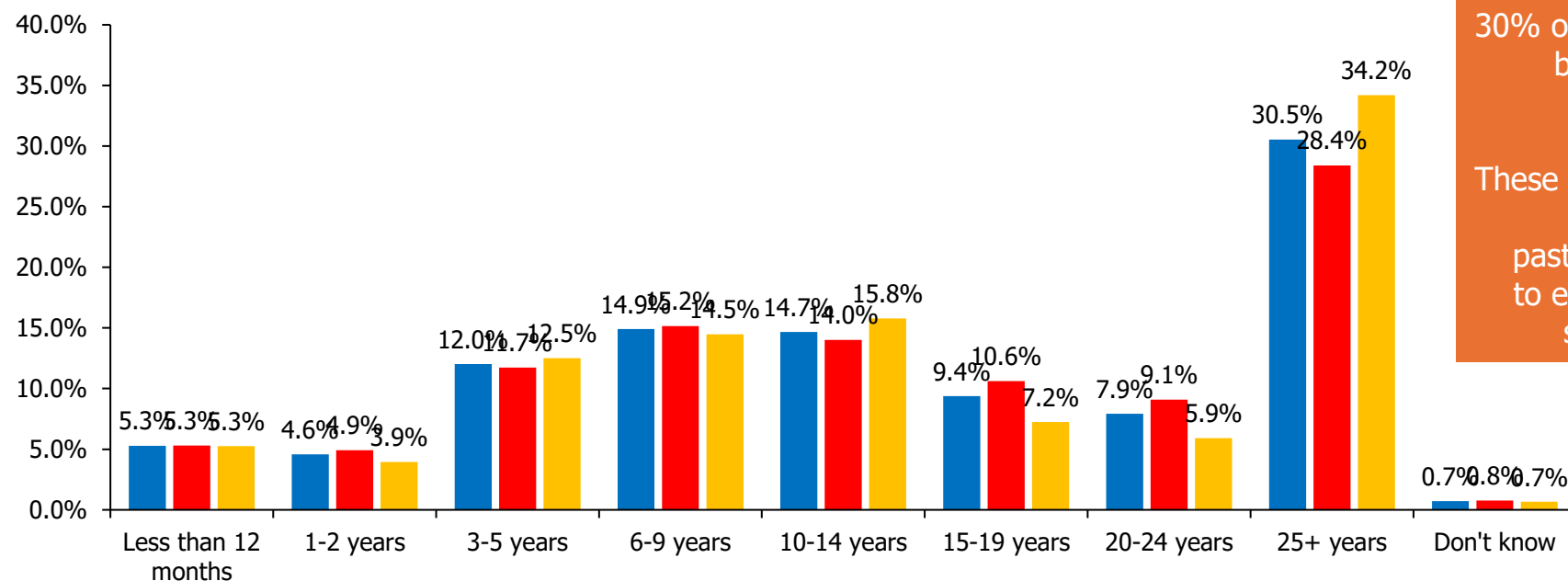
Base: Agri-Tech and Food (n=16), Professional and Business Services (n=47), Non Priority Sectors (n=152), Construction (n=31), Other Priority Sectors (n=15), Digital and Technologies (n=48), Advanced Manufacturing (n=48), Health and Adult Social Care (n=44), Visitor Economy (n=15), Sample Size = 416

Longevity | The median trading longevity for the employer organisations represented in the survey was 10-14 years, this compares with an average business age in the UK of 9 years⁽¹⁾.

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How long has your organisation been operating or trading for?

■ Total ■ Priority Sectors ■ Non Priority Sectors



30% of the total sample have been operating for 25+ years.

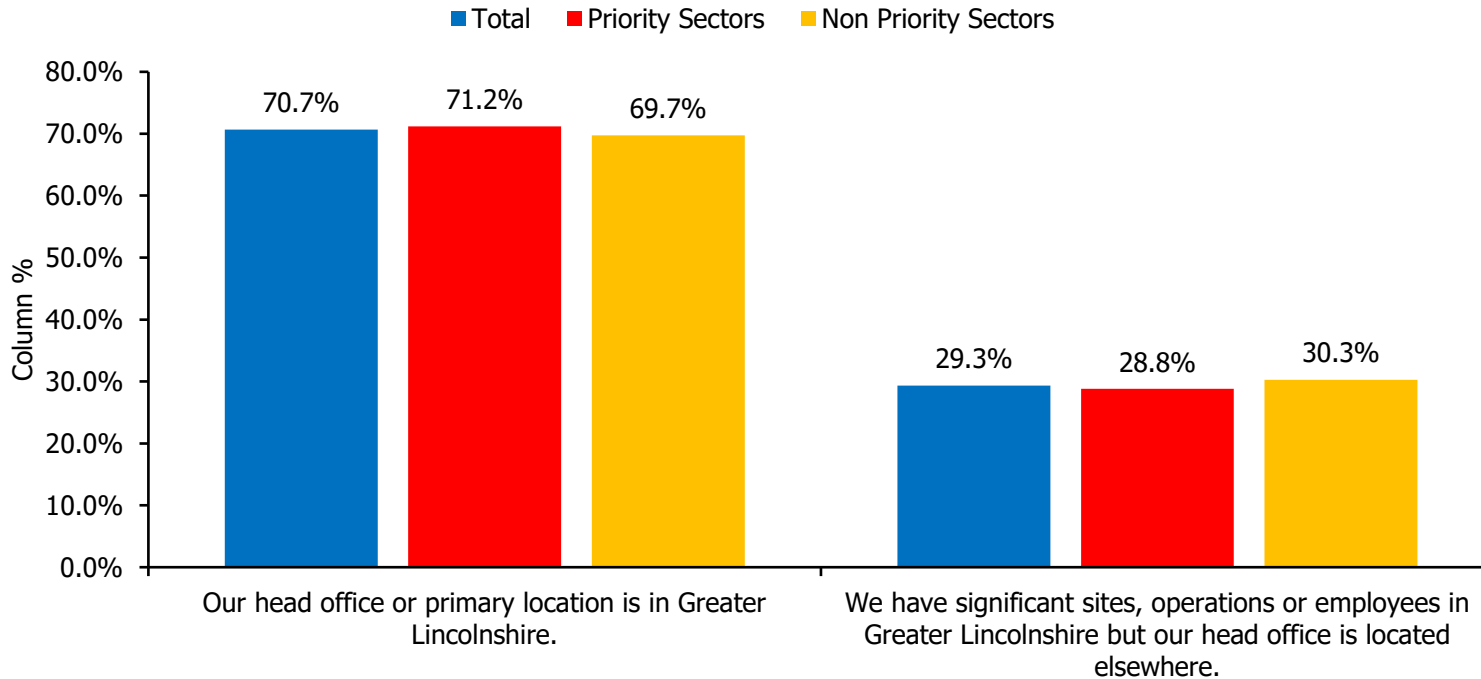
These organisations will often have extended past experience on skills to evaluate their current situation against.

⁽¹⁾Companies register activities April 2024 to March 2025.

Base: Less than 12 months (n=22), 1-2 years (n=19), 3-5 years (n=50), 6-9 years (n=62), 10-14 years (n=61), 15-19 years (n=39), 20-24 years (n=33), 25+ years (n=127), Don't know (n=3), Sample Size = 416

Location | 71% of the organisations in the Priority Sectors have their head office or primary location in Greater Lincs; they are therefore invested in the area's skills profile and capacity.

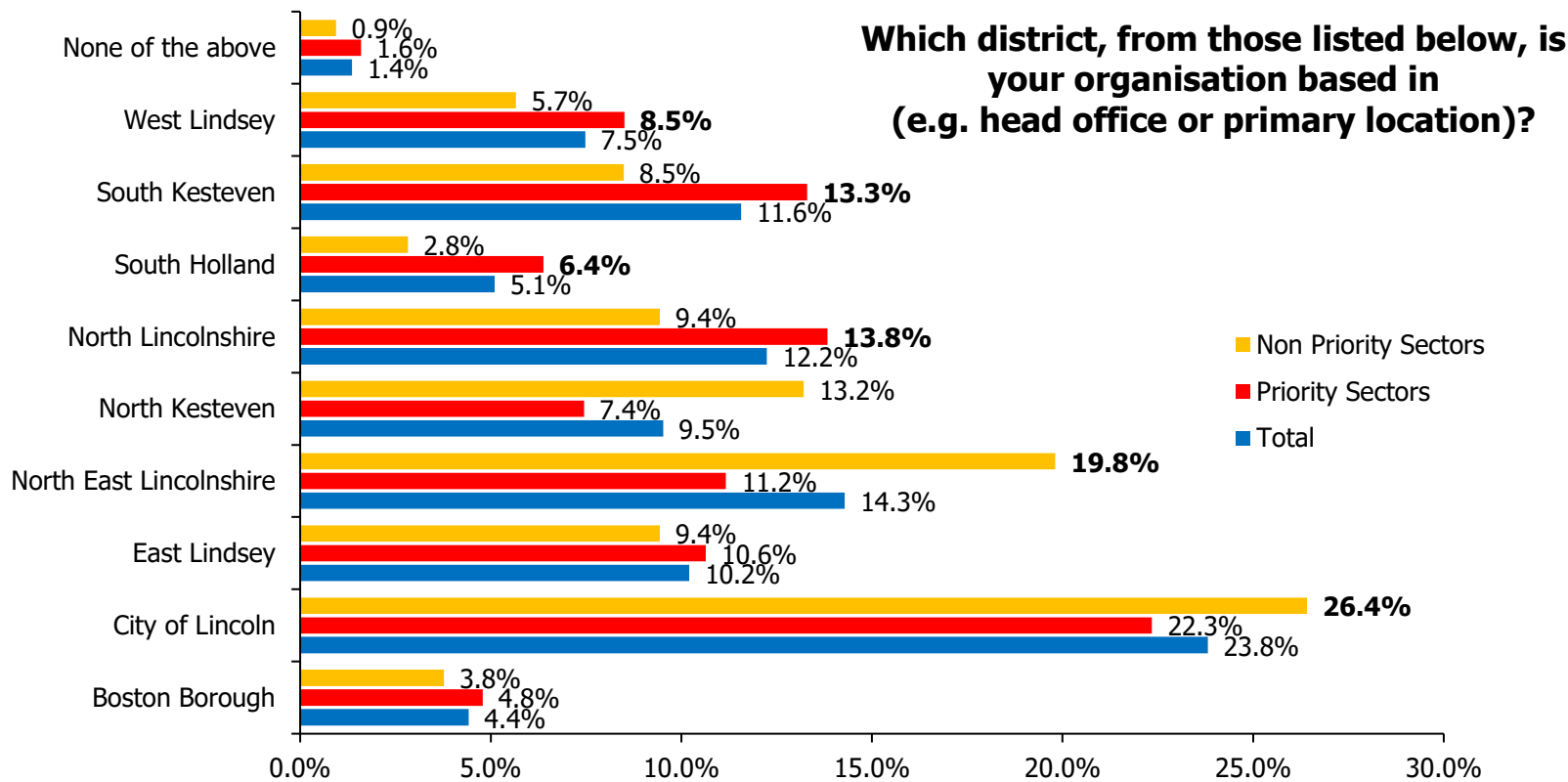
Please select the description below that best reflects the location of your organisation.



Base: Our head office or primary location is in Greater Lincolnshire. (n=294), We have significant sites, operations or employees in Greater Lincolnshire but our head office is located elsewhere. (n=122), Sample Size = 416

District | A comparatively larger proportion of the Priority Sector participants' organisations are based in: South Kesteven (+4.8% v Non), North Lincs (+4.4%) South Holland (+3.6%) or West Lindsey (+2.8%).

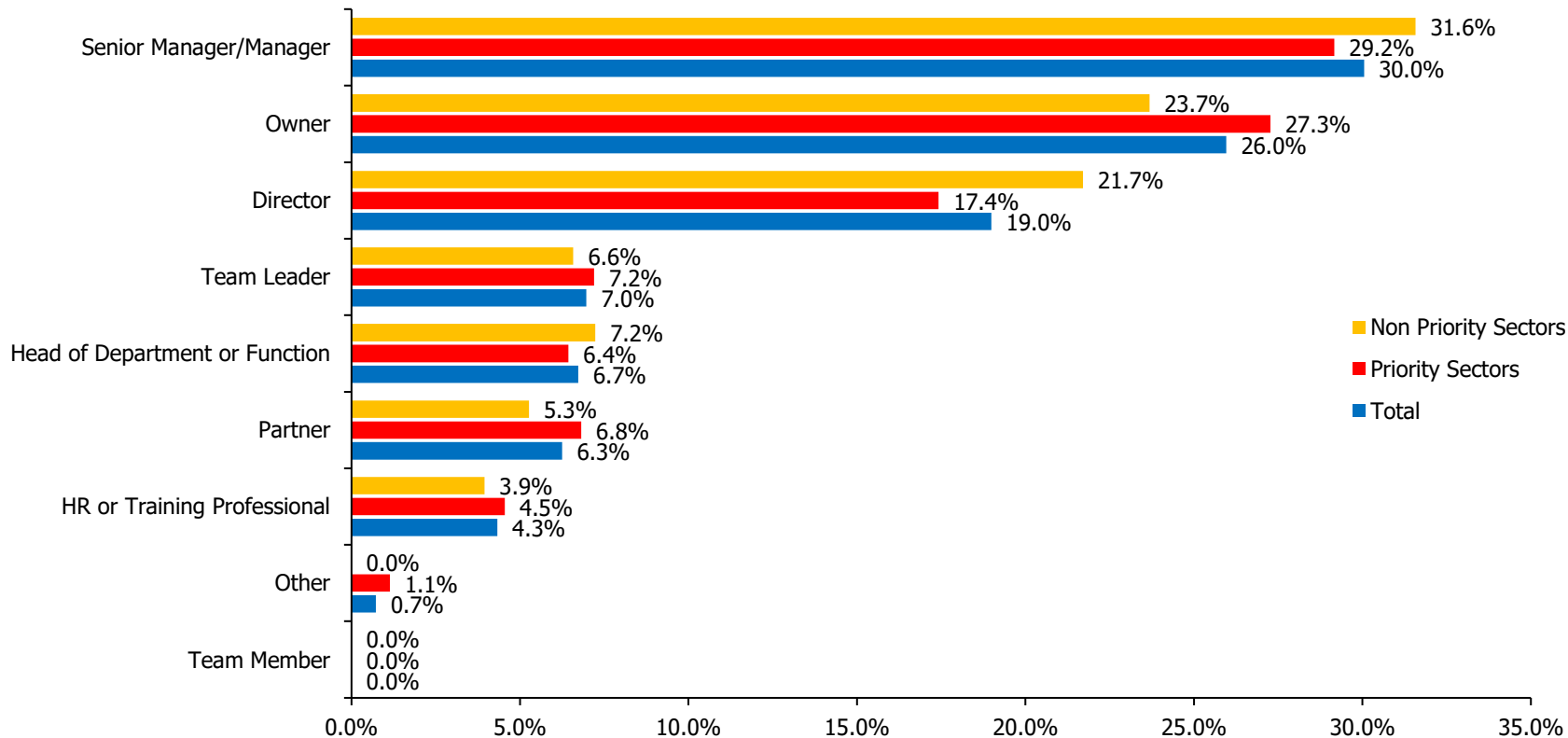
21



Base: Boston Borough (n=13), City of Lincoln (n=70), East Lindsey (n=30), North East Lincolnshire (n=42), North Kesteven (n=28), North Lincolnshire (n=36), South Holland (n=15), South Kesteven (n=34), West Lindsey (n=22), None of the above (n=4), Sample Size = 294

Role | 58% of the survey sample were Owners, Directors, Partners or Departmental Heads of their organisation, with a further 33% Senior Managers or Managers.

What is your role in the business or employer organisation you are representing, in responding to this survey?



NB Individuals in Team Member roles were disqualified from completing the survey, on the basis that they were not sufficiently senior to be a decision maker on recruitment and skills development.

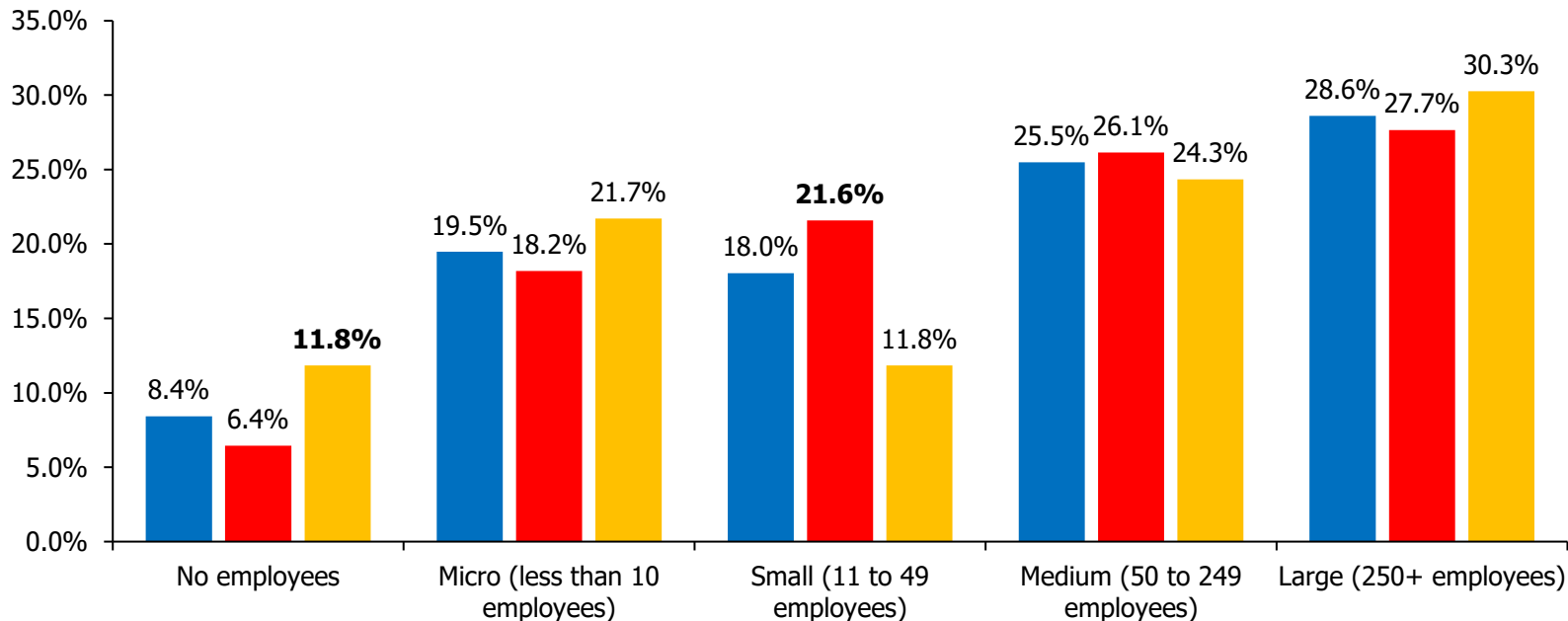
Base: Owner (n=108), Director (n=79), Partner (n=26), Senior Manager/Manager (n=125), Head of Department or Function (n=28), HR or Training Professional (n=18), Team Leader (n=29), Team Member (n=0), Other (n=3), Sample Size = 416

Employee base | Priority Sector employer organisations are more likely than Non-priority to be Small Businesses with 11-49 employees (22% .v. 12% Non), whereas the latter are more likely to have No employees (12% v 6% Priority)

23

What size is the total current workforce in your organisation?

■ Total ■ Priority Sectors ■ Non Priority Sectors

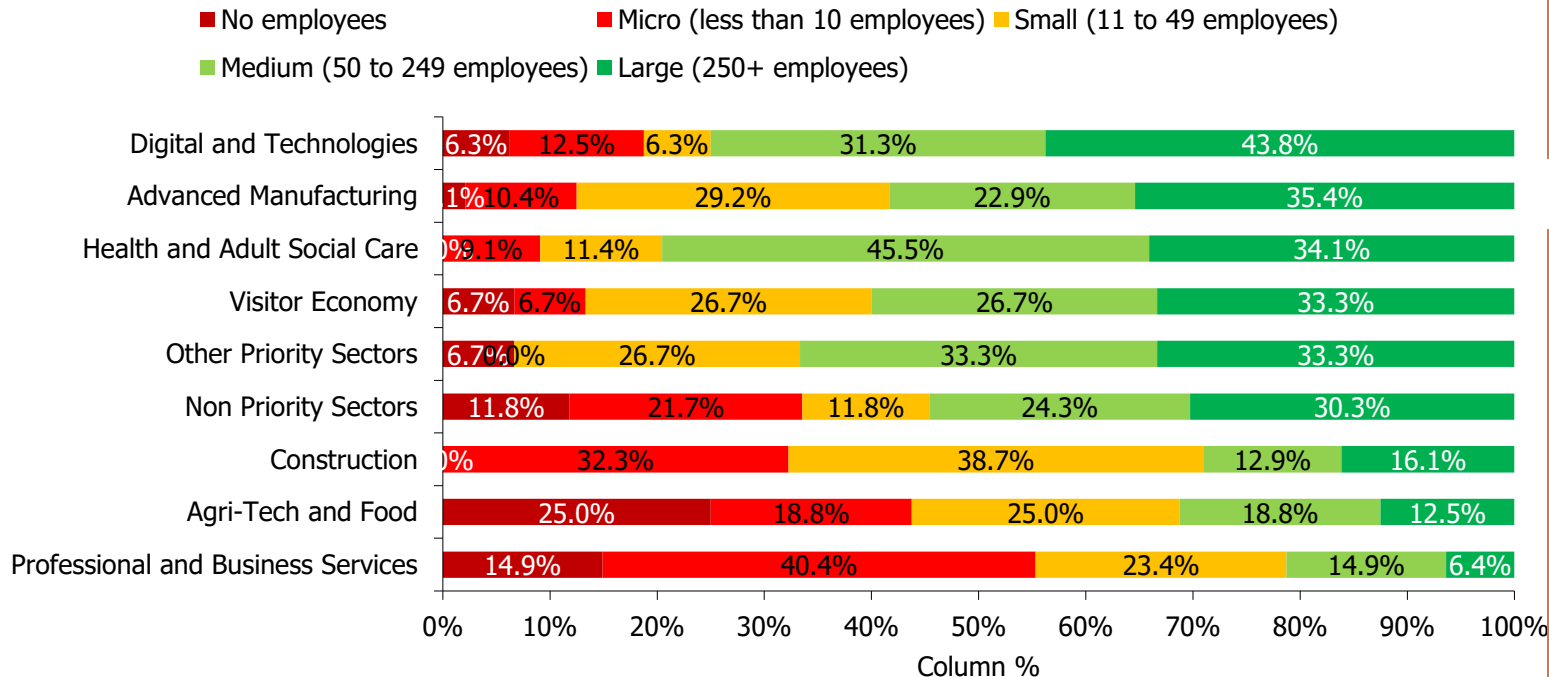


54% of participants in the Priority Sectors work in organisations with 50+ employees, equating to Medium or Large enterprises.

Base: No employees (n=35), Micro (less than 10 employees) (n=81), Small (11 to 49 employees) (n=75), Medium (50 to 249 employees) (n=106), Large (250+ employees) (n=119), Sample Size = 416

Employee base | 44% of the participants in Digital and Tech, 35% in Advanced Manufacturing and 34% in Health and Adult Social Care, are working in large organisations with 250+ staff.

Approximately, what percentage of your overall workforce is based in Greater Lincolnshire? | By Priority Sector



Base: Agri-Tech and Food (n=16), Professional and Business Services (n=47), Non Priority Sectors (n=152), Construction (n=31), Other Priority Sectors (n=15), Digital and Technologies (n=48), Advanced Manufacturing (n=48), Health and Adult Social Care (n=44), Visitor Economy (n=15), Sample Size 416

Conversely, 55% of the participants from the Professional and Business Services sector are working in organisations with fewer than 10 employees, if any.

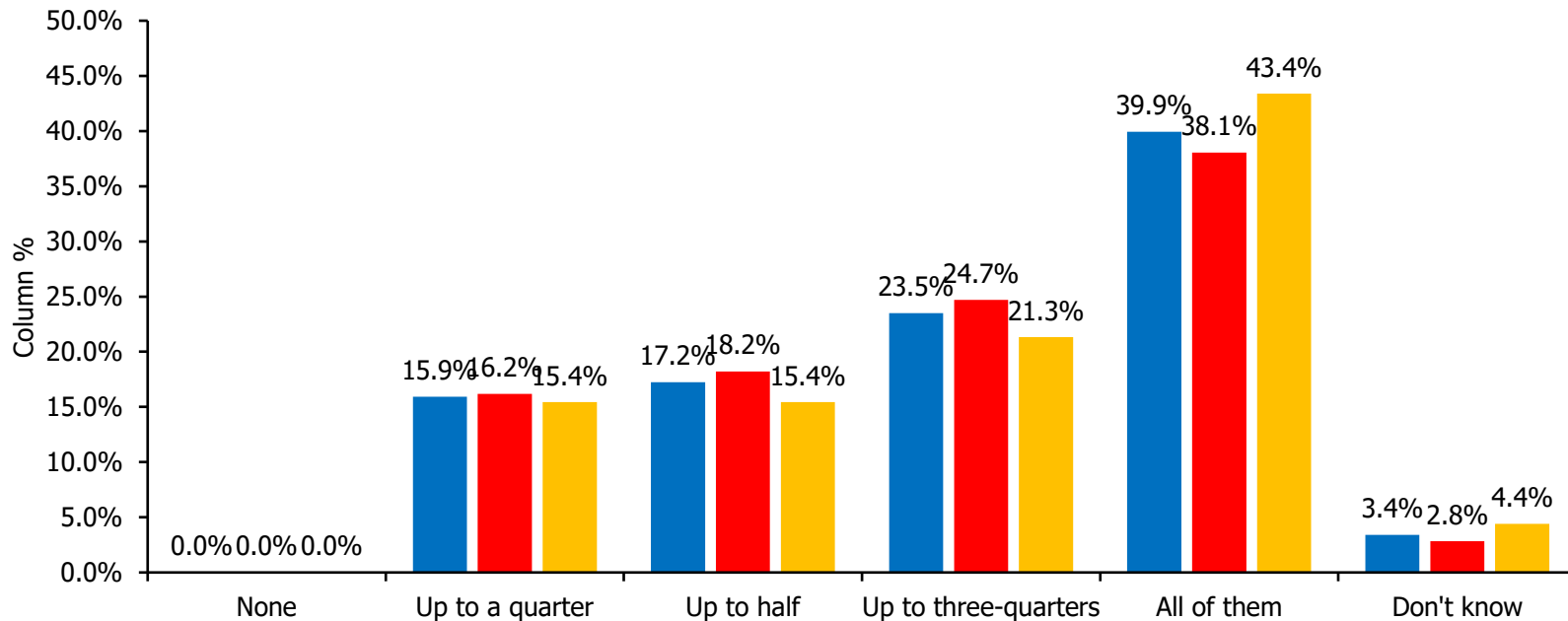
We assume that account will be taken in the LSIP of:

- Total employees by size band of organisation within each of the Priority Sectors and overall, for GLCCA.
- Both size and sector, independently and when combined, merit careful consideration.

Workforce location | 40% of the total sample of employers, have all of their staff based in Greater Lincolnshire, and in that way, are directly invested in the skills ecosystem in the area.

Approximately, what percentage of your overall workforce is based in Greater Lincolnshire?

■ Total ■ Priority Sectors ■ Non Priority Sectors



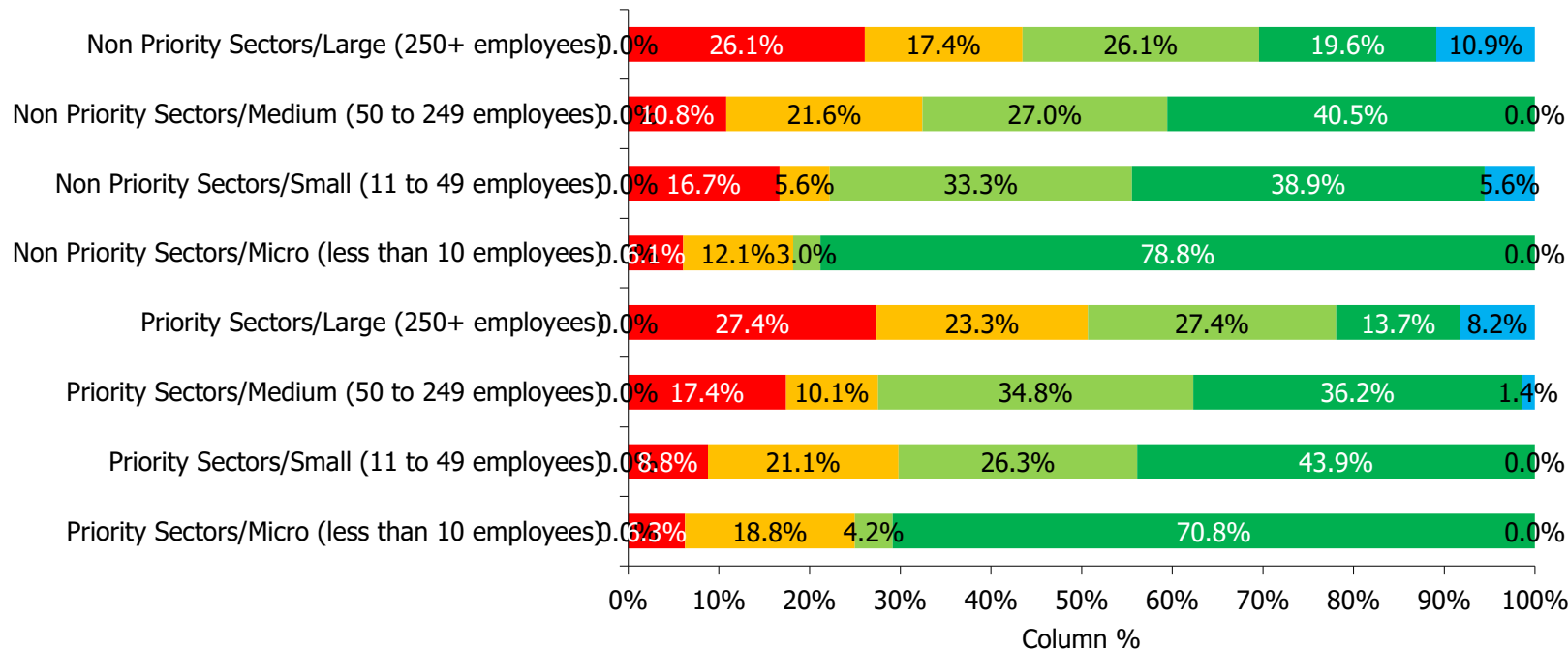
Base: None (n=0), Up to a quarter (n=61), Up to half (n=66), Up to three-quarters (n=90), All of them (n=153), Don't know (n=13), Sample Size = 383

Workforce location | Employers in the Non-priority Sectors, across each size of business, are more likely than those in the Priority Sectors, to have all of their employees based in the GLCCA area.

26

Approximately, what percentage of your overall workforce is based in Greater Lincolnshire? | By size of workforce and priority status

■ None ■ Up to a quarter ■ Up to half ■ Up to three-quarters ■ All of them ■ Don't know



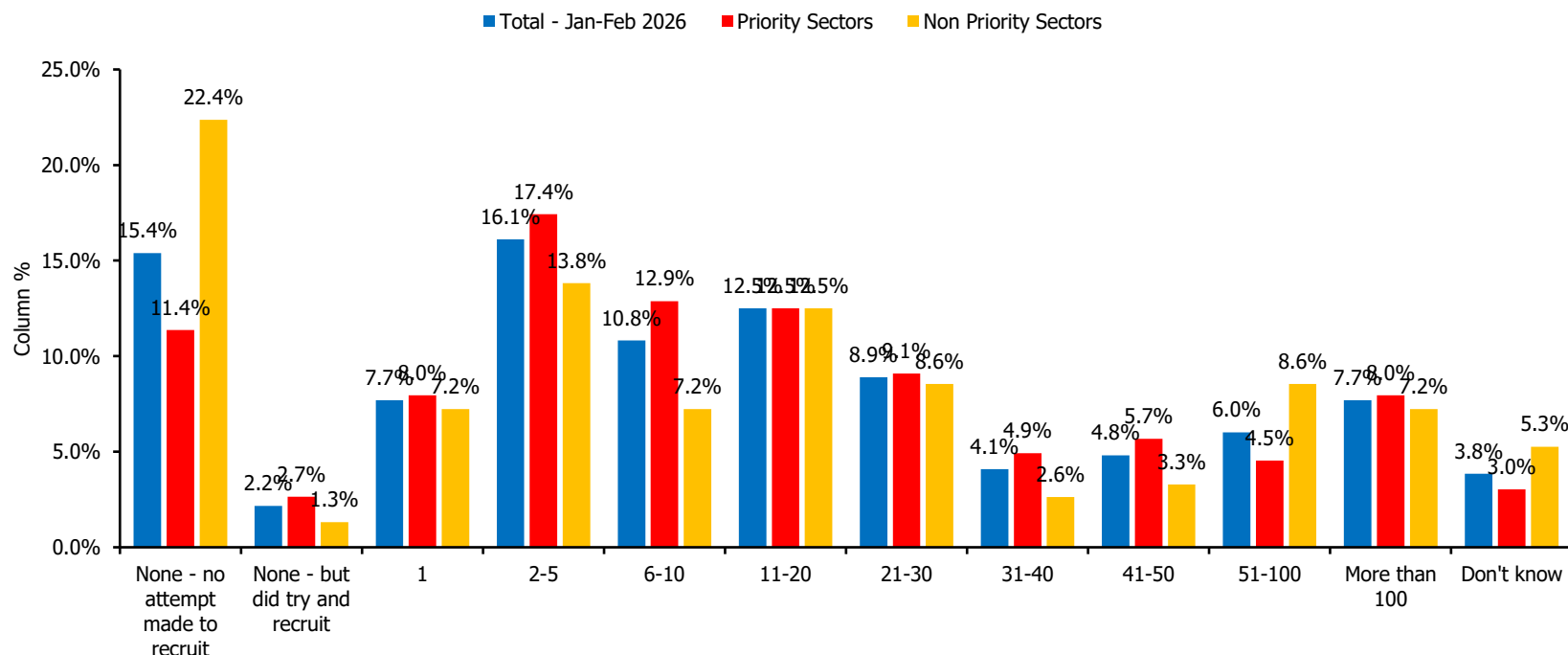
Base: Priority Sectors/Micro (less than 10 employees) (n=48), Priority Sectors/Small (11 to 49 employees) (n=57), Priority Sectors/Medium (50 to 249 employees) (n=69), Priority Sectors/Large (250+ employees) (n=73), Non Priority Sectors/Micro (less than 10 employees) (n=33), Non Priority Sectors/Small (11 to 49 employees) (n=18), Non Priority Sectors/Medium (50 to 249 employees) (n=37), Non Priority Sectors/Large (250+ employees) (n=46), Sample Size = 381

2.0 Recruitment and skill shortage

Recruitment | 84%* of all employers have either recruited new employers, or tried to do so, over the last 12 months, with incidence rising to 88%* for the Priority Sectors.

28

Approximately, how many Full-time Equivalent (FTE) employees have you recruited to your organisation over the last 12 months?



The mode number of new recruits in Priority Sector organisations in 2025 was 2-5 employees.

*NB Percentages exclude 'Don't know'.

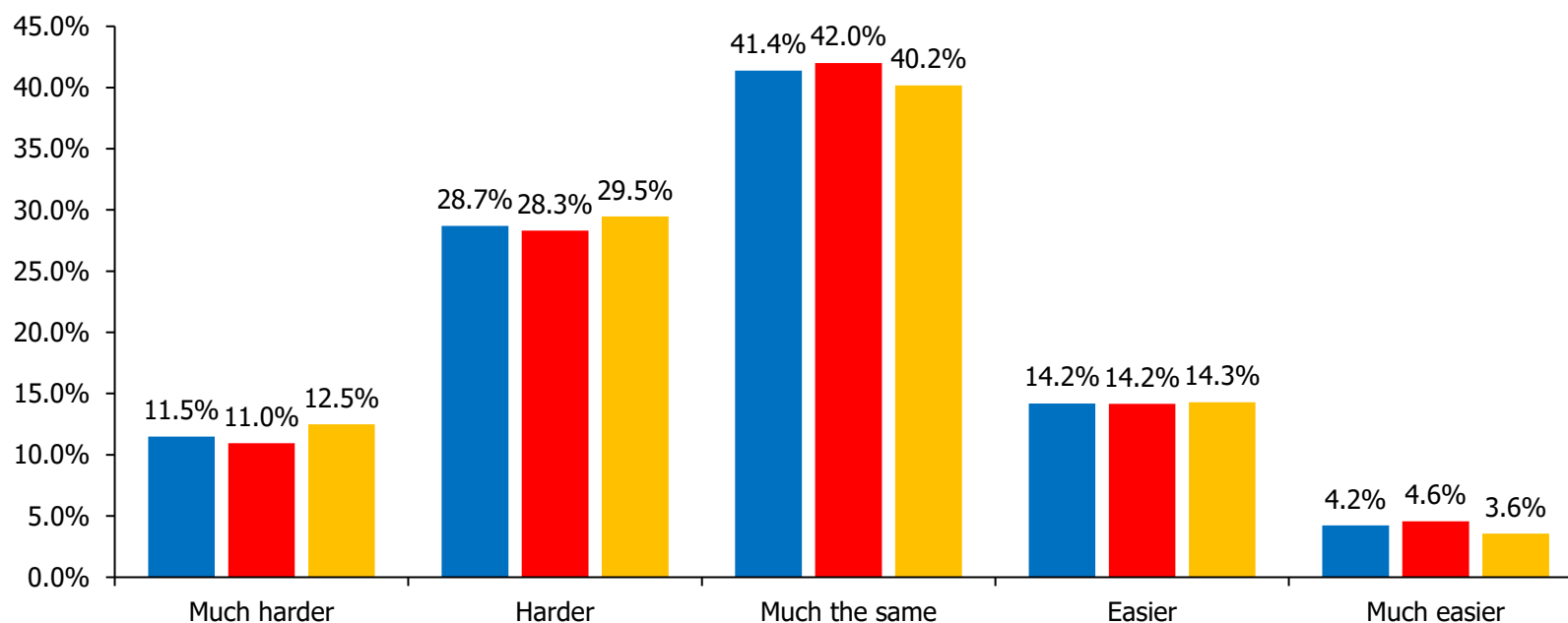
Base: None - no attempt made to recruit (n=64), None - but did try and recruit (n=9), 1 (n=32), 2-5 (n=67), 6-10 (n=45), 11-20 (n=52), 21-30 (n=37), 31-40 (n=17), 41-50 (n=20), 51-100 (n=25), More than 100 (n=32), Don't know (n=16), Sample Size = 416

Recruitment experience trend | 40% of employer organisations indicated that recruitment was 'Harder' or 'Much harder' in 2025 compared with 2024, with this perception equally widespread in Priority and in Non-priority Sectors.

29

Compared with 2024, would you say that recruiting new employees to your organisation in 2025 was...?

■ Total ■ Priority Sectors ■ Non Priority Sectors



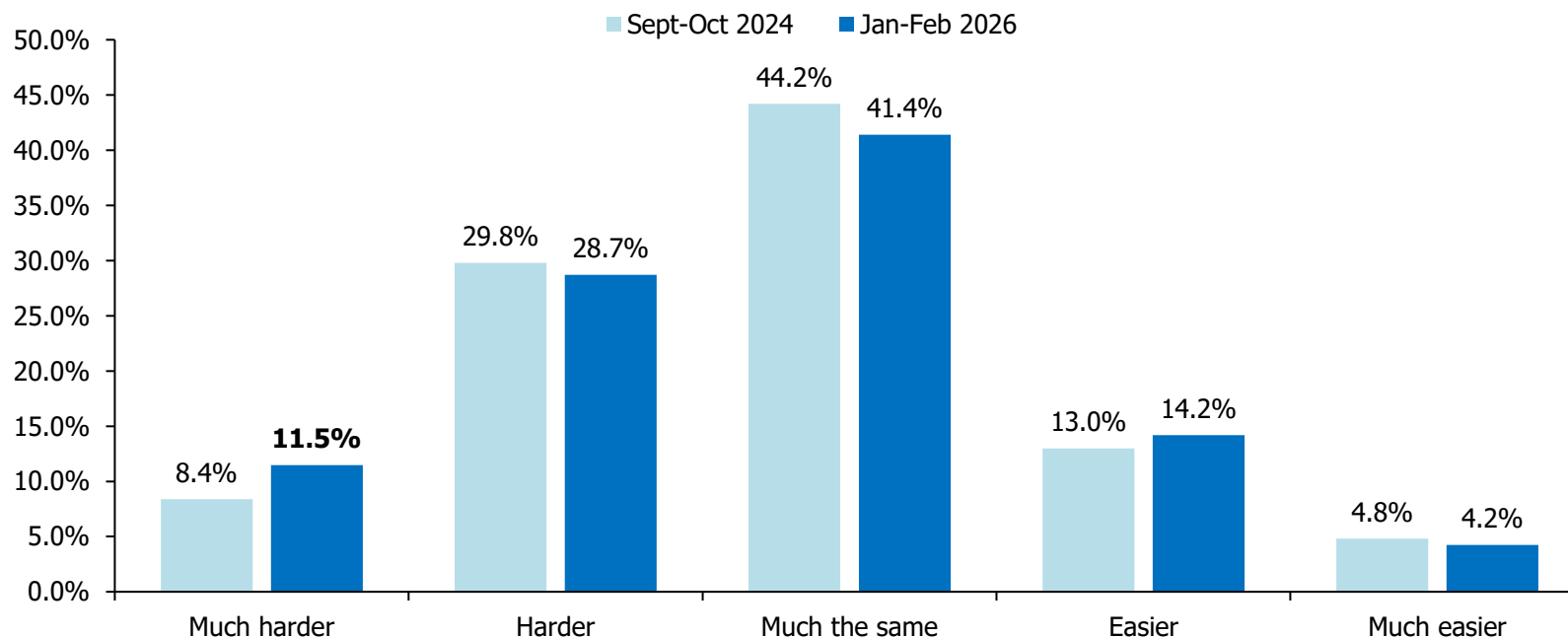
Base: Much harder (n=38), Harder (n=95), Much the same (n=137), Easier (n=47), Much easier (n=14), Sample Size = 331

Recruitment experience trend | The incidence of finding recruitment 'Much harder' has risen by +3.1% to 11.5%, compared with the equivalent LSIP Phase 2 survey in 2024.

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LSIP 2026-29 Survey Jan-Feb 2026 = **Compared with 2024, would you say that recruiting new employees to your organisation in 2025 was...?**

LSIP 2023-26 Phase 2 Survey Sept-Oct 2024 = **Over the last 12 months, would you say that recruiting new employees to your organisation has been...?**



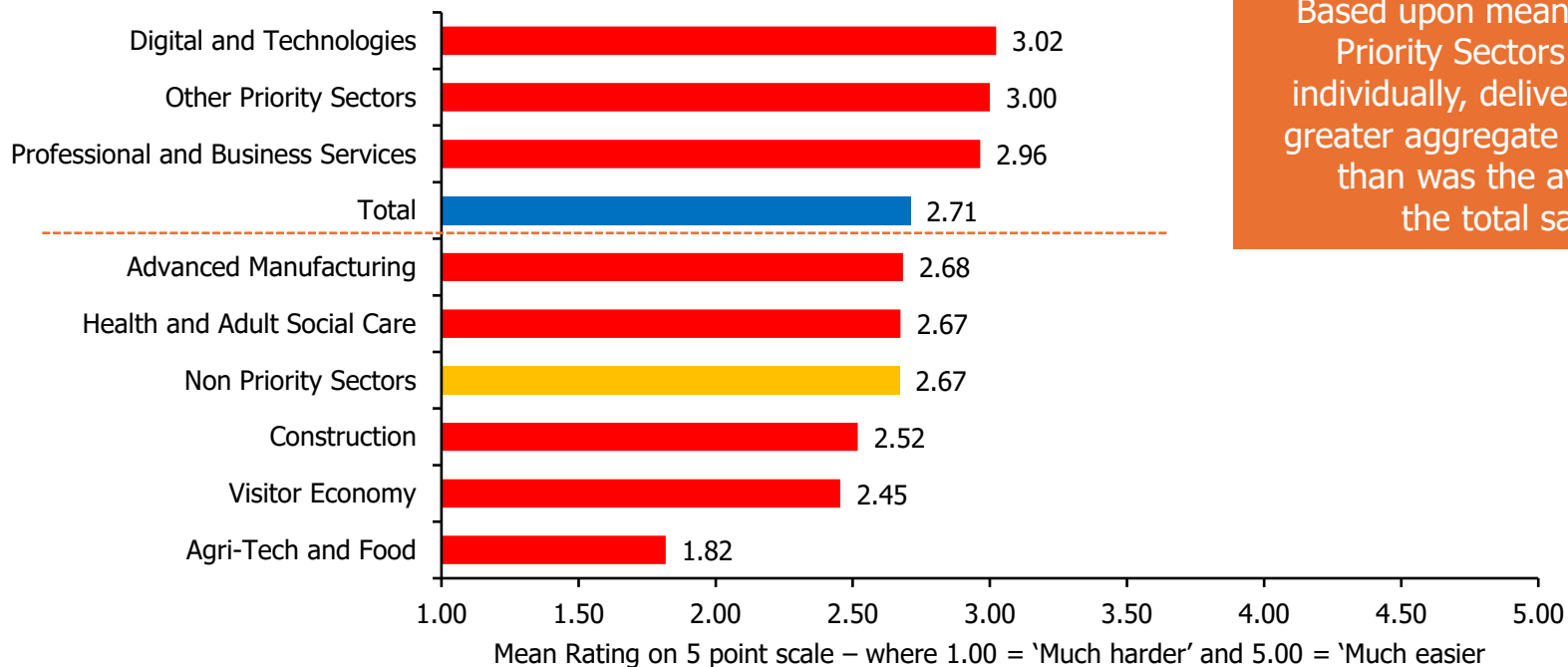
Jan-Feb 2026 Base: Much harder (n=38), Harder (n=95), Much the same (n=137), Easier (n=47), Much easier (n=14), Sample Size = 331

Sept-Oct 2024 Base: Much harder (n=17), Harder (n=62), Much the same (n=92), Easier (n=27), Much easier (n=10), Sample Size = 208

Recruitment experience trend | Agri-Tech and Food Manufacture (mean 1.81/5.00) appear to have found recruitment particularly difficult in 2025.

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Compared with 2024, would you say that recruiting new employees to your organisation in 2025 was...? | By Priority Sector

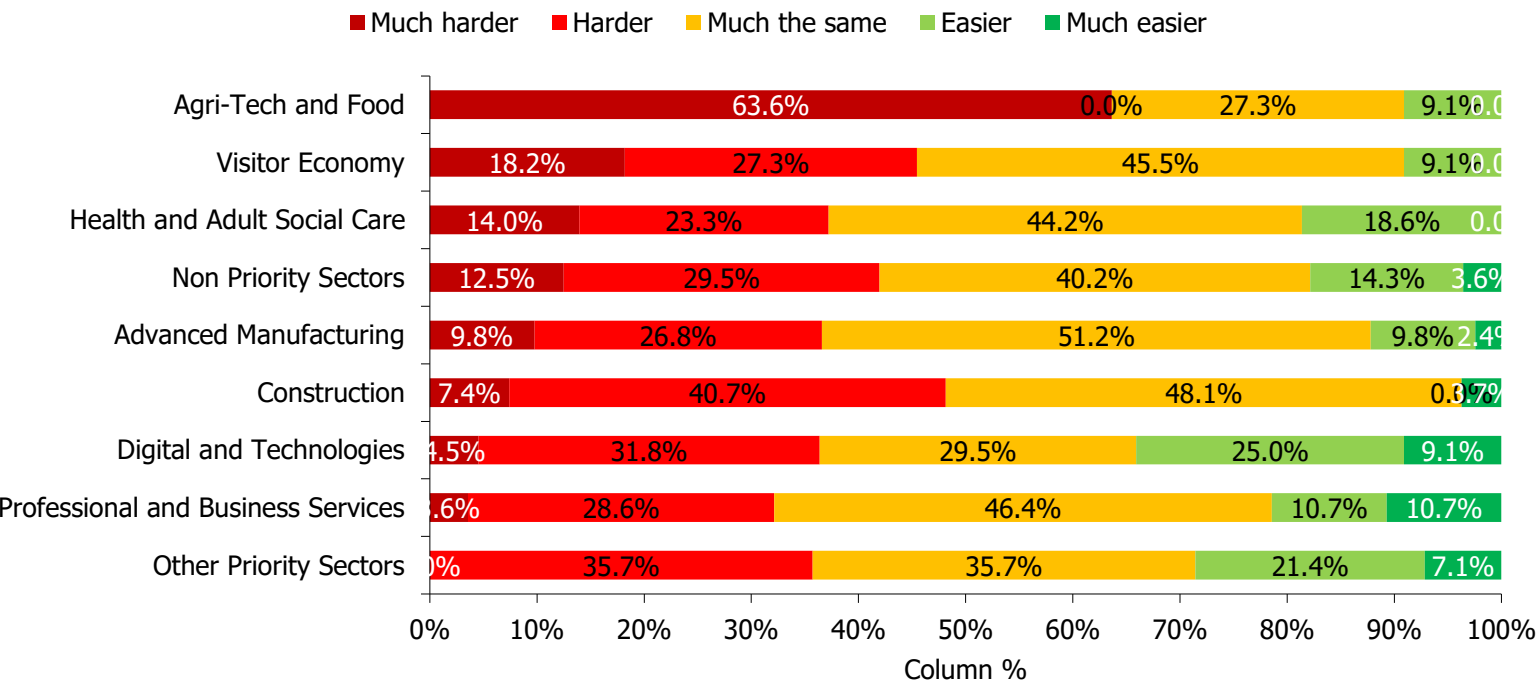


Based upon mean ratings, five of the eight Priority Sectors that we can report on individually, delivered ratings that indicated greater aggregate difficulty with recruitment than was the average or norm across the total sample (2.71/5.00).

Base: Digital and Technologies (n=44), Other Priority Sectors (n=14), Professional and Business Services (n=28), Total (n=331), Advanced Manufacturing (n=41), Health and Adult Social Care (n=43), Non Priority Sectors (n=112), Construction (n=27), Visitor Economy (n=11), Agri-Tech and Food (n=11). Sample Size = 331

Recruitment experience trend | Whilst small bases Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing, along with the Visitor Economy are the most likely Priority Sectors to have found recruitment 'Much harder' in 2025 than in 2024.

Compared with 2024, would you say that recruiting new employees to your organisation in 2025 was...? | By Priority Sector



48% of the employers in the Construction sector found recruitment 'Harder or Much harder' in 2025 compared with a year earlier, the second highest incidence among the Priority Sectors.

Base: Agri-Tech and Food (n=11), Professional and Business Services (n=28), Non Priority Sectors (n=112), Construction (n=27), Other Priority Sectors (n=14), Digital and Technologies (n=44), Advanced Manufacturing (n=41), Health and Adult Social Care (n=43), Visitor Economy (n=11), Sample Size = 331

Please briefly describe below, what you feel has made recruitment harder or much harder in 2025.

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Advanced Manufacturing	Because there are too many applicants for too few roles
Advanced Manufacturing	Higher costs, skills gaps and mismatches
Advanced Manufacturing	It's harder we were searching for people with some skill levels
Advanced Manufacturing	lack of candidates with relevant skills
Advanced Manufacturing	lack of candidates with required skills and experience
Advanced Manufacturing	Lack of required skills , finding people with right attitude and approach.
Advanced Manufacturing	Lack of skills . Even though apprenticeships are in place the level of competency they come out with is not good enough
Advanced Manufacturing	Lack of suitable applicants, particularly for minimum wage roles
Advanced Manufacturing	Less applications, no shows for interviews and low standard candidates
Advanced Manufacturing	minimal interest; our rural location makes it less appealing
Advanced Manufacturing	National living wage increases has made the bottom end of the market more competitive. Engineering / Technical skills are in short supply for some trades.
Advanced Manufacturing	The relevant skills are more difficult to find . Too many degree qualified people that don't have relevant skills for industry
Advanced Manufacturing	Trying to encourage younger people into manufacturing is tough.
Advanced Manufacturing	We are finding it hard recruiting because we have too many people for roles advertised
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Lack of good calibre candidates
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	more people using ai, not thinking for themselves, less common sense and skill
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	No one wants to change jobs
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	younger generation not wanting to work normal hours, lack of interest in sector as deemed as hard work
Construction	Increased costs to taking on new starters
Construction	It's harder to find normal people nowadays
Construction	It is difficult to attract talent.
Construction	Lack of construction skills and experience
Construction	Lack of new blood into the industry
Construction	People don't apply for the vacancy
Construction	People's are not educated
Construction	Quality of applicants
Construction	quality of applicants and minimum wage increases
Construction	Salary expectations, shortage of applicants, recruitment agencies, skills shortage of applicants, lack of loyalty
Construction	You have to be so careful to select the right candidate to protect yourself and your business more so now than ever before
Defence	Generating interest level in suitable candidates
Defence	No one is will to risk
Digital and Technologies	A couple of issues, the labour market has a shortage and there is also an issue of skill mismatch
Digital and Technologies	Because it is more harder to find the right people with the proper skillset
Digital and Technologies	Higher costs, more expensive youth employment.
Digital and Technologies	I don't get much qualified candidates as usual.
Digital and Technologies	Larger amount of applicant from overseas even when specifying we are not looking for overseas. Overabundance of contractors applying instead of FTE. Quality of candidates has seemed to have decreased, running into candidates who can't answer questions without an AI answering for them.
Digital and Technologies	My company only employs specialists within our industry so getting someone who lives near by or willing to relocate was extremely difficult.
Digital and Technologies	Not as many quality candidates that have the required skills we are looking for.
Digital and Technologies	People under qualified
Digital and Technologies	Recruitment has become harder in 2025 due to a combination of skills shortages , increased candidate expectations , and intensified competition for talent. Rapid advances in AI and technology have widened the gap between available skills and employer needs , while candidates now expect higher pay, flexibility, and purpose-driven work.
Digital and Technologies	Recruitment in 2025 has become increasingly difficult due to several interconnected factors, primarily centered around supply and demand issues, skills gaps , candidate expectations , and economic pressures.
Digital and Technologies	Skills shortages and specialization – Demand for niche, AI-adjacent, and hybrid skill sets continues to outpace supply. Candidate selectiveness – Candidates have higher expectations around pay , flexibility, purpose, and speed of process, and drop out quickly if these aren't met. Increased competition
Digital and Technologies	The skill sets we want are harder to find
Digital and Technologies	There were fewer suitably qualified candidates in 2025 , making hiring more difficult than in 2024. As technology is evolving, some candidates have refused to upskill
Digital and Technologies	Too many people applying
Digital and Technologies	We have had a lot of competition in 2025
Energy	Laziness
Energy	Nobody wants to work and the young people expect the moon on a stick

Key to highlights:

Yellow = Widest theme within a Priority Sector or full data set where a small volume of responses

Green = Secondary theme

Blue = Tertiary theme

Please briefly describe below, what you feel has made recruitment harder or much harder in 2025.

Health and Adult Social Care	AI writing resumes and giving interview techniques to candidates who are not appropriate. Applicants not qualified to correct level
Health and Adult Social Care	Because the state of the economy
Health and Adult Social Care	Changes in immigration, lack of interest in social care
Health and Adult Social Care	Financial funding
Health and Adult Social Care	Lack of good quality candidates who are qualified for the roles.
Health and Adult Social Care	Lack of people interest in care work
Health and Adult Social Care	Lack of suitable applicants
Health and Adult Social Care	People apply and then do not respond or simply apply without experience and don't want to start on a lower wage and received the full training. AI generated CV's that appear good on the surface but when interviewed the experience doesn't match the data placed on the CV. The market is also swamped with people looking for sponsorship.
Health and Adult Social Care	people don't want to work
Health and Adult Social Care	People will come in for interview, go through the process and will not carry on but expected to be paid for the training. Some will say that it is not for them as soon as they started. The others did not turn up for interview.
Health and Adult Social Care	Recruitment has become harder in 2025 due to persistently low wages in health and social care, which makes it difficult to attract and retain staff. Training requirements are increasingly demanding and can be hard to access, while the role itself is physically and emotionally demanding, leading many potential candidates to seek work in less challenging sectors.
Health and Adult Social Care	The immigration laws for international hires and the lack of local candidates for specific job requirements.
Health and Adult Social Care	The quality of recruits has worsened
Health and Adult Social Care	Think because we are rural and people are struggling to commit to healthcare jobs
Health and Adult Social Care	We use the NHS Jobs website for recruitment. That recently changed and it is a challenging website to navigate. Our organisation is quite wide ranging regarding job roles but I am aware that other positions have struggled to find suitable applicants for the role - this is usually at the interview stage where there appears to be a combination of low confidence and lack of competence.
Ports and Logistics	People are tending to stick with their current employer due to the economic climate.
Professional and Business Services	Difficulty finding qualified candidates
Professional and Business Services	Our primary operation is recruitment of temporary labour into the food, warehousing, and logistics sector. The appetite for employment in these sectors amongst the 'native', particularly younger generation has diminished significantly over time. Reliance on labour from overseas remains but since Brexit we have experienced significant challenges in recruiting people into more skilled roles. The 'quality' - in the broadest sense of the word - of migrant labour available since Brexit has declined and the gap between entry-level and more skills roles is often too large to bridge for these workers.
Professional and Business Services	Poor quality of applications, difficulty in people turning up for interview, expense of advertising vacancies - and I wouldn't mind that if it was at least successful in leading to a recruit
Professional and Business Services	Quality
Professional and Business Services	Quality of candidates not there. Candidate expectations too high.
Professional and Business Services	Requirements
Professional and Business Services	Trying to find people who will work is difficult
Professional and Business Services	Wages
Visitor Economy	Lack of skilled personal answering recruitment advertisement
Visitor Economy	Lack of trained personnel
Visitor Economy	People are reluctant to work and there are so many dual job roles they only want specific venues or roles
Visitor Economy	quality of applicants, lacking range of skills and far too many (about 40%) spurious applications on Indeed

Please briefly describe below, what you feel has made recruitment harder or much harder in 2025.

Non Priority Sectors	Applicants over use of AI makes recruitment much harder.
Non Priority Sectors	Budget cuts
Non Priority Sectors	Candidates are not suitable and fewer apply
Non Priority Sectors	Didn't seem to be many genuine motivated candidates.
Non Priority Sectors	Due to lack of support and candidate experience
Non Priority Sectors	fewer suitable candidates
Non Priority Sectors	Finding people with the right talent is hard but finding someone who actually wants to work is even harder. People have no incentive to work as they receive too much in benefits.
Non Priority Sectors	Finding the right skills set for the roles.
Non Priority Sectors	Finding the right talent
Non Priority Sectors	I think the sector is low paid but expecting higher qualified staff
Non Priority Sectors	It's just harder to find more trustworthy people who aren't going to drop out of the job a week later
Non Priority Sectors	Lack of people applying
Non Priority Sectors	Lack of people wanting to work in early years
Non Priority Sectors	Lack of skills in land management for resilient futures, ecology, biodiversity, project management
Non Priority Sectors	Less qualifications coming through, less applications, less genuine application's
Non Priority Sectors	Level of skills versus the aptitude and desire to want to teach
Non Priority Sectors	More to choose from but less suited to fill the roll
Non Priority Sectors	no-shows at interviews
Non Priority Sectors	Not enough suitable applicants
Non Priority Sectors	People are not as qualified
Non Priority Sectors	People aren't interested
Non Priority Sectors	People don't seem to want jobs
Non Priority Sectors	People just don't want to work. They have no loyalty, respect or even the decency to reply to a message. I am so fed up of trying to recruit I have kept my business small now because I haven't got the patience for the process
Non Priority Sectors	Production
Non Priority Sectors	Recruitment in 2025 was harder due shortage of skilled applicants in our sector.
Non Priority Sectors	Recruits do not want to work, do not turn up to interviews, generally have no work ethic.
Non Priority Sectors	Shortage of money for recruitment
Non Priority Sectors	Specification on operation
Non Priority Sectors	Talent for head office roles have been harder to recruit for.
Non Priority Sectors	The changes in law and regulations have been the greatest hindrance for recruiting. It is very difficult for a small company to navigate regulations and incur extra monetary obligations.
Non Priority Sectors	The contracts I have want qualified staff but the business model and content we provide doesn't warrant this. So its difficult to balance. So basically its our contracts expectations have shifted.
Non Priority Sectors	The economy is declining
Non Priority Sectors	The minimum wage increase made our jobs a lot less competitive
Non Priority Sectors	The quality of employees walking through the door has reduced.
Non Priority Sectors	The recruitment market pool, particularly for skilled jobs, seems to be less and less.
Non Priority Sectors	The volume of applications has increased and applications are submitted with similar cover letters and CVs which suspect are AI generated. These are the two main factors that contributed to a longer selection process is taking longer.
Non Priority Sectors	Too many cvs coming in
Non Priority Sectors	Unable to compete with public sector remuneration (despite delivering public sector contracts) Employee expectations not viable for our roles eg 100% home working Higher incidence of health / mental health challenges that make working in environments challenging/ unsafe Applicants drop out during recruitment process General standard of applicants is lower than 5 years ago
Non Priority Sectors	We primarily use Indeed for recruitment. We have an extremely low staff turnover, which does present some challenges when recruiting. Indeed doesn't really offer the tools that align precisely with how we would like to describe the position or the company as a whole. We have explored apprenticeship programmes for young people on more than one occasion, but the process does not fit with our company or ethos, so we have instead chosen to employ young people directly and train them ourselves.
Non Priority Sectors	We require someone who has access to a vehicle and a lot of applicants did not
Non Priority Sectors	Willingness to work in young people
Non Priority Sectors	Younger sense of entitlement

Please briefly describe below, what you feel has made recruitment much easier in 2025.

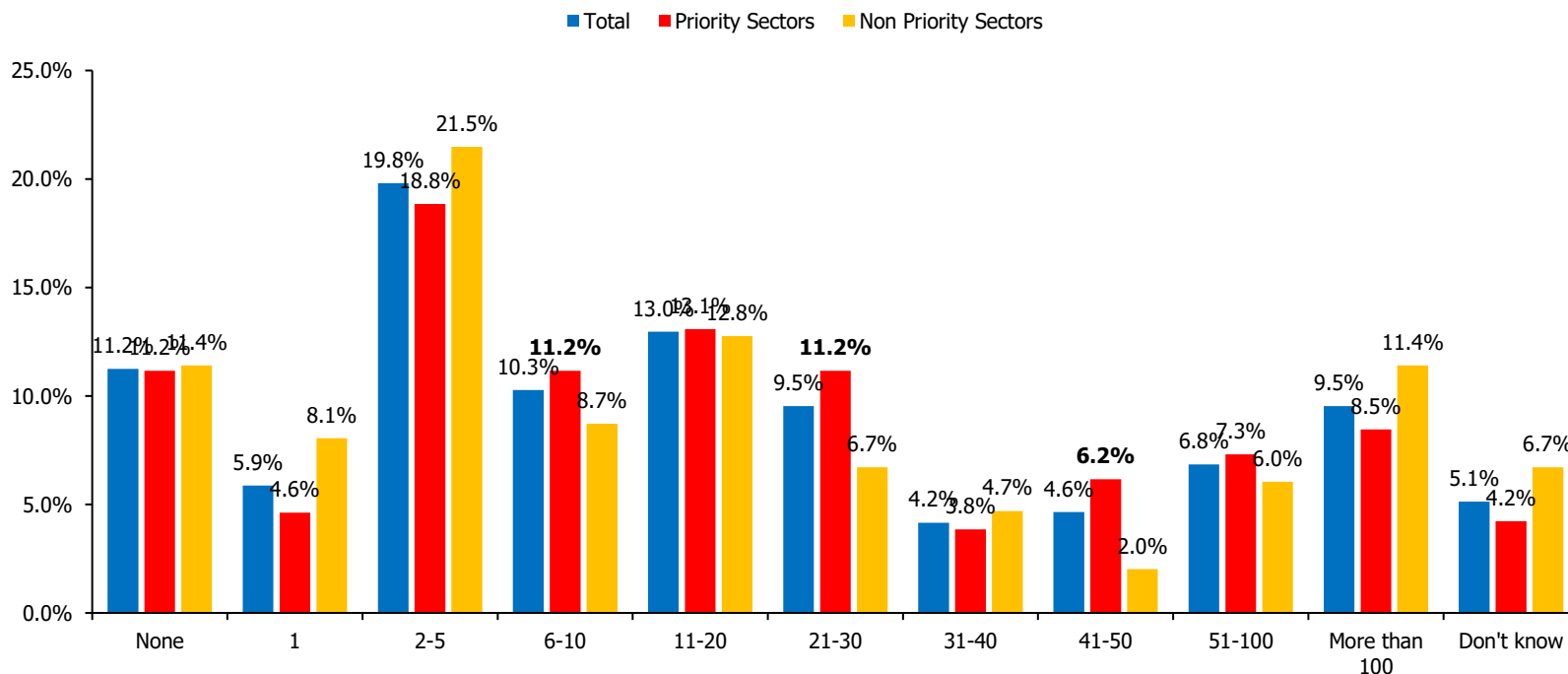
36

Advanced Manufacturing	Advanced AI tools that screen resumes faster and more accurately.
Construction	It feels like a lot of companies are letting staff go/that there are more people looking for new employment
Digital and Technologies	AI screening tools , remote interviews, better job platforms faster communication.
Digital and Technologies	Because it was easier getting people
Digital and Technologies	Because we got more interested people
Digital and Technologies	In 2025, my employment got easier thanks to better remote work tools clearer communication and more automation of repitative tasks. I also had flexible hours and stronger team support which helped me stay productive and less stressed compared to 2024
Ports and Logistics	Recruitment has become easier in 2025 due to better use of AI and digital tools, improved online job platforms, and more flexible working options that attract a wider pool of candidates.
Professional and Business Services	Many candidates are available, it is a question to find the one with the required experience/abilities.
Professional and Business Services	More people has AI skill
Professional and Business Services	mORE SKILL EMPLOYEE IS THERE
Non Priority Sectors	Better
Non Priority Sectors	I don't know it's just easier to talk to people now
Non Priority Sectors	Predictive analytics helping identify high-potential candidates early.

Intent to recruit | 85% of the organisations expressing an opinion, intend to recruit at least one employee over the next 3 years.

37

Approximately how many new employees do you intend or envisage seeking to recruit, over the next 3 years, incorporating both replacements and any growth?



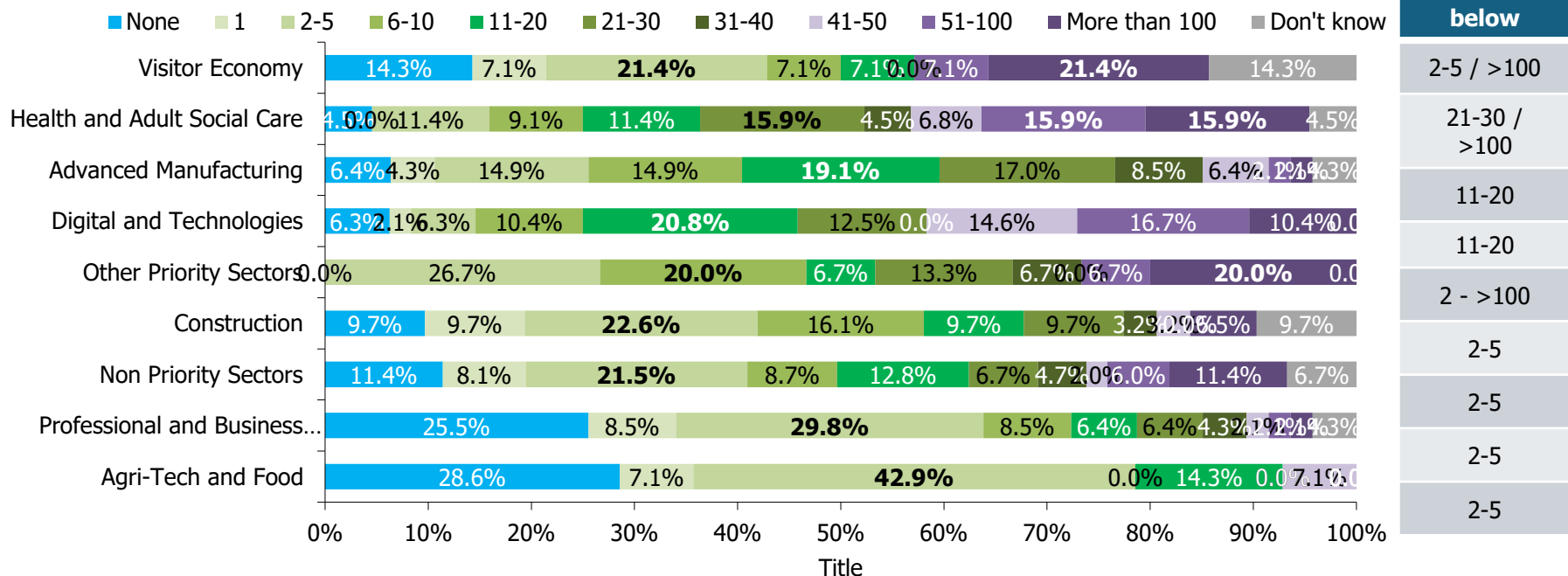
Whilst recruiting 2-5 new employees is the mode answer across both the Priority and Non-priority Sectors, the Priority Sectors have a markedly greater intent to recruit 6-10 new employees (+2.5% v Non), 21-30 (+4.5%) and 41-50 (+4.2%).

Base: None (n=46), 1 (n=24), 2-5 (n=81), 6-10 (n=42), 11-20 (n=53), 21-30 (n=39), 31-40 (n=17), 41-50 (n=19), 51-100 (n=28), More than 100 (n=39), Don't know (n=21), Sample Size = 409

Intent to recruit | The Visitor Economy has the most disparate future intent on recruitment with joint modes at both 2-5 new recruits and 100+.

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Approximately how many new employees do you intend or envisage seeking to recruit, over the next 3 years, incorporating both replacements and any growth? | By Priority Sectors



Base: Agri-Tech and Food (n=14), Professional and Business Services (n=47), Non Priority Sectors (n=149), Construction (n=31), Other Priority Sectors (n=15), Digital and Technologies (n=48), Advanced Manufacturing (n=47), Health and Adult Social Care (n=44), Visitor Economy (n=14), Sample Size = 409

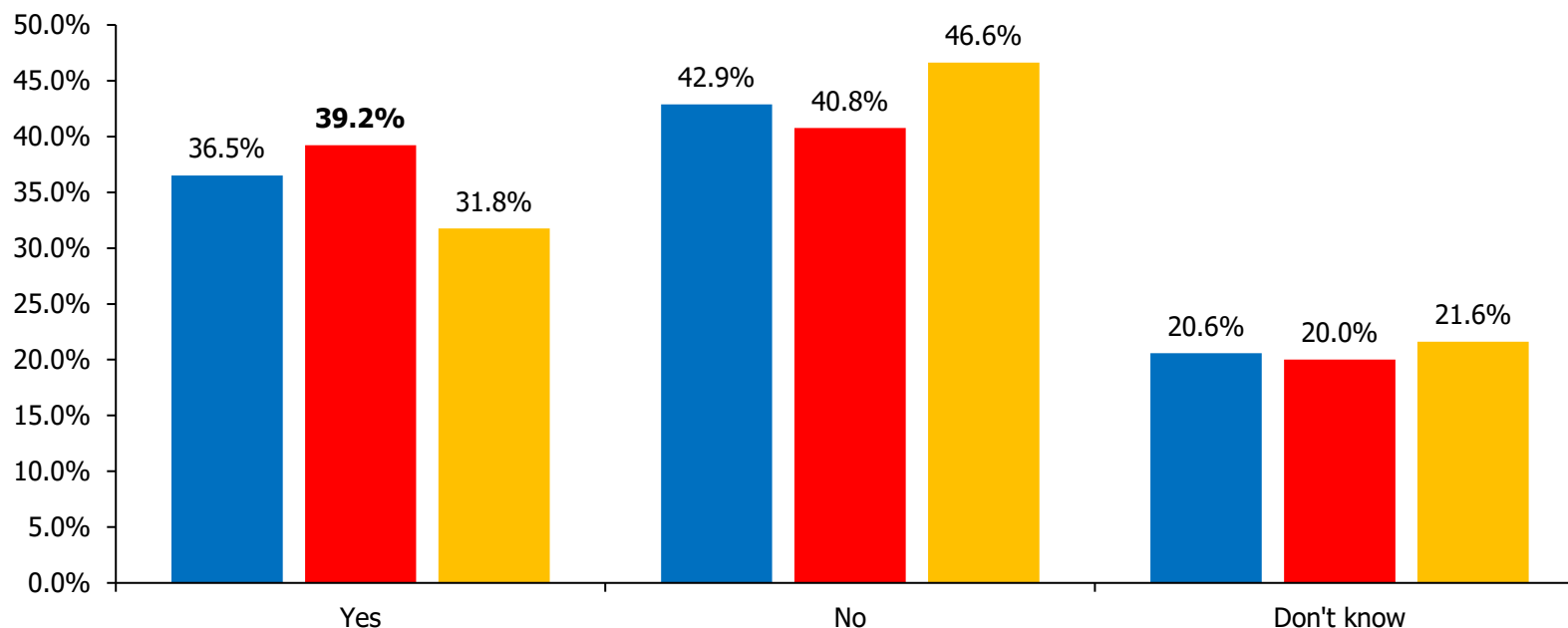
- **3.0 New roles and new skills**

New roles and new skills | 39% of employers in the Priority Sectors anticipate needing new roles or new skills in the next 3-5 years, a +7% higher incidence than for Non-priority.

40

Are there any new roles or new skills you anticipate needing in the next 3–5 years, that are not currently available in the local labour market?

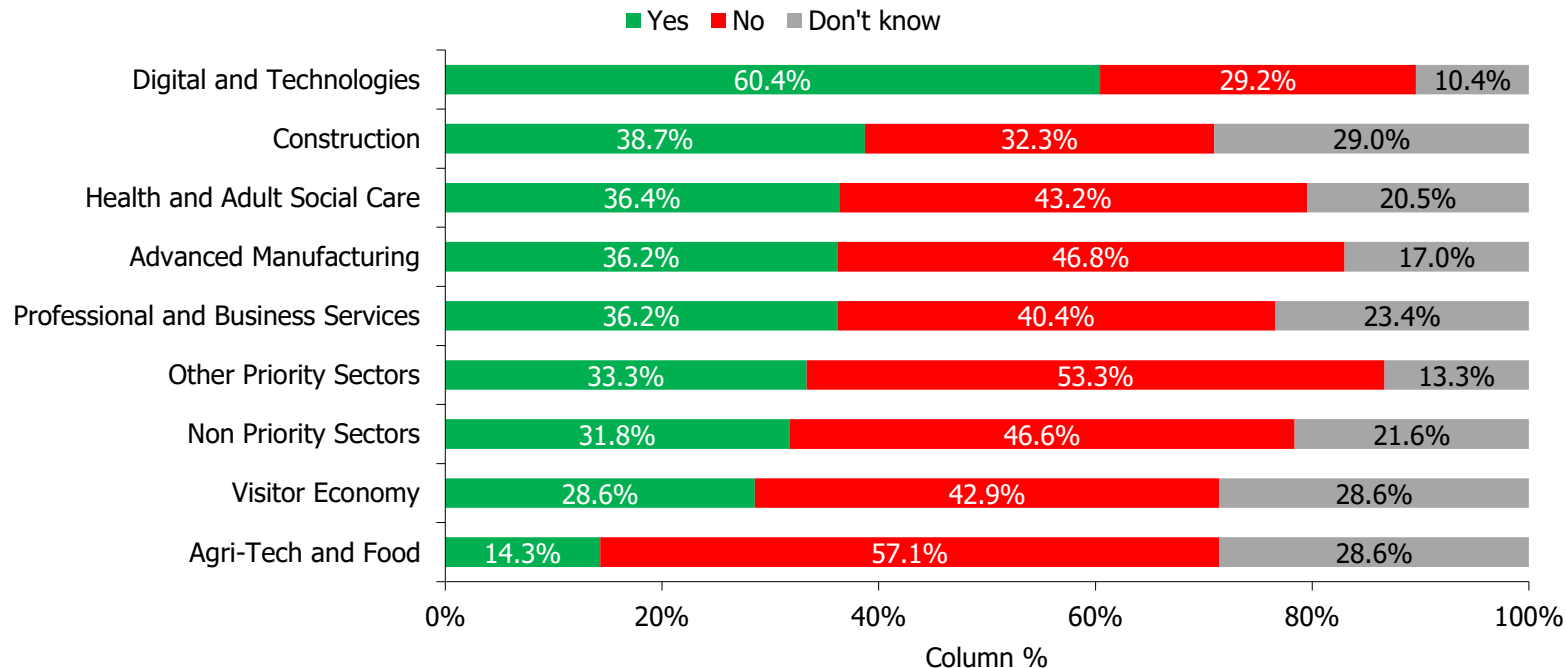
■ Total ■ Priority Sectors ■ Non Priority Sectors



Base: Yes (n=149), No (n=175), Don't know (n=84), Sample Size = 408

New roles and new skills | Over a third of the employers in five of the Priority Sectors, anticipate needing new roles or new skills over the next 3-5 years.

Are there any new roles or new skills you anticipate needing in the next 3–5 years, that are not currently available in the local labour market? | By Individual Priority Industry Sectors



Base: Agri-Tech and Food (n=14), Professional and Business Services (n=47), Non Priority Sectors (n=148), Construction (n=31), Other Priority Sectors (n=15), Digital and Technologies (n=48), Advanced Manufacturing (n=47), Health and Adult Social Care (n=44), Visitor Economy (n=14), Sample Size = 408

Please briefly describe below the new roles or new skills you anticipate needing in the next 3–5 years, that are not currently available in the local labour market.

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Industry Sector	Please briefly describe below the new roles or new skills you anticipate needing in the next 3–5 years, that are not currently available in the local labour market.
Advanced Manufacturing	AI skills, practical hands on skills.
Advanced Manufacturing	Cable Jointers
Advanced Manufacturing	Calibration engineers, technical manager
Advanced Manufacturing	Cnc programming, automation skills
Advanced Manufacturing	Cyber security
Advanced Manufacturing	Data analytics / IT roles to support the business digital strategy. We will need the workforce to have better IT skills both IT literacy and also system understanding.
Advanced Manufacturing	Data centre and UPS
Advanced Manufacturing	Digital - Data
Advanced Manufacturing	I would say more skills such as marketing skills will be beneficial as we require more people with these types of expertise in these fields.
Advanced Manufacturing	IT dept is needing suitable roles
Advanced Manufacturing	Leadership skills
Advanced Manufacturing	Operators. I believe new machine would be acquired moving forward we would need skilled individual who can operate such machines
Advanced Manufacturing	Specialist courses in Fire Protection/ Fire Alarm sector. Including Security. Engineers Office Experience Project Management Sales
Advanced Manufacturing	We have an in house compliance role and an in house IT analyst
Advanced Manufacturing	we require skilled roles throughout production and simply there are no candidates in the Lincolnshire area. Our sector, design and print, which is one of the biggest in the UK isnt mentioned in your list of sectors, because it falls under the wider manufacturing sector.
Advanced Manufacturing	welding of both aluminium and steel. fabricators, vehicle painters, purchasing manager
Construction	Ground worker
Construction	Advanced Ai tech team.
Construction	Cards for machines
Construction	Computer use and AI
Construction	Employees with more knowledge in AI and utilising it
Construction	Good communication, trust
Construction	Learning about ai.
Construction	Multi traders
Construction	Qualified electricians and welders
Construction	Quantity Surveying Site Management Design
Construction	Quantity Surveyor Site Manager
Construction	Shipping
Defence	Data Privacy & Compliance Specialist
Defence	DevSecOps and C++ predominantly, filling gaps for legacy systems as apposed to new emergent technologies. Support Technicians also.

Please briefly describe below the new roles or new skills you anticipate needing in the next 3–5 years, that are not currently available in the local labour market.

Digital and Technologies	Advanced AI governance specialists quantum-safe cybersecurity experts compliance expertise
Digital and Technologies	AI & Machine Learning Ethics Specialist — to guide responsible AI development and compliance. Generative AI Prompt Engineer / Human-AI Interaction Designer — to craft and optimize complex prompts and workflows. Cybersecurity for Quantum Computing — specialists focused on securing systems against future quantum threats.
Digital and Technologies	AI analysts
Digital and Technologies	AI Ethicists & Algorithmic Bias Auditors
Digital and Technologies	AI Ethics and Governance Specialist – to ensure responsible, fair, and compliant use of AI systems. Generative AI Trainer/Prompt Engineer – experts who can fine-tune, prompt and optimize large language and creative models for enterprise use. Sustainability Data Analyst
Digital and Technologies	AI specialist, data analysts, cybersecurity experts, automation engineers, advanced managers.
Digital and Technologies	AI tools
Digital and Technologies	Automation & Robotics Engineer
Digital and Technologies	Chief operations officer
Digital and Technologies	cloud architects
Digital and Technologies	Cyber security, information the and computer engineering.
Digital and Technologies	Database analyst
Digital and Technologies	I anticipate a growing need of advanced digital and data driven skills that are currently limited in the local Labour market
Digital and Technologies	Looking ahead to 2028, several new roles and skills are expected to become crucial in the workforce, many of which are not currently abundant in the local labor market. This shift is primarily driven by advancements in technology, evolving job demands, and changing societal needs
Digital and Technologies	Media campaign team, they should be in charge of putting the company names on every social media platforms and handle advertisement campaign
Digital and Technologies	More ai adept roles
Digital and Technologies	Over the next 3–5 years, we anticipate needing advanced skills in AI and automation engineering, cybersecurity risk and resilience, and data analytics for predictive decision-making, which are currently limited in the local labour market. In addition, roles combining IT, facilities management, and sustainability expertise such as smart infrastructure specialists and energy optimization analysts are expected to be in short supply.
Digital and Technologies	People who actually know what they're doing
Digital and Technologies	Quantum computing engineer and AI ethics is needed
Digital and Technologies	Roles like AI ethicists and data privacy specialists is going to be big key.
Digital and Technologies	Skilled engineers
Digital and Technologies	skills in AI, data analysis, automation, cybersecurity and digital platforms are emerging rapidly and are not yet sufficiently available in the local workforce.
Digital and Technologies	Social Media manager.
Digital and Technologies	Software testing, IT support
Digital and Technologies	The biggest challenge of the upcoming years will not be pure tech roles or traditional HE graduate that completed programmes that are only subject-focused. The shortage one can envisage will be people who can translate AI into safe, commercial, real-world application for different sectors. Locally, roles likely to emerge before they formally appear in job ads may include: AI adoption strategists, Responsible AI Implementation Leads, AI Risk & Governance Advisors. These roles sit between

Please briefly describe below the new roles or new skills you anticipate needing in the next 3–5 years, that are not currently available in the local labour market.

Health and Adult Social Care	AI
Health and Adult Social Care	AI's professional
Health and Adult Social Care	Apprentice and qualified social workers
Health and Adult Social Care	Blood work
Health and Adult Social Care	Branching out
Health and Adult Social Care	Cybersecurity Analysts to protect against new threats like AI-driven attacks and future risks from quantum computing.
Health and Adult Social Care	Delegated clinical tasks
Health and Adult Social Care	Emerging tech skills like AI, machine learning, data science, and cybersecurity, green skills in sustainability and renewable energy.
Health and Adult Social Care	Healthcare professionals with a digital skill set.
Health and Adult Social Care	in the field of artificial intelligence
Health and Adult Social Care	management roles
Health and Adult Social Care	New medical protocol and the constant update of procedure
Health and Adult Social Care	Over the next 3–5 years, we anticipate a need for care workers with enhanced clinical skills to support hospital-at-home services. This includes competencies such as monitoring vital signs, supporting long-term conditions, medication support, basic clinical observations, and working closely with community nursing and NHS teams. These more clinically focused care roles are not currently widely available within the local labour market.
Ports and Logistics	I anticipate a growing need for roles and skills related to AI and automation, advanced data analysis, and digital transformation. Skills combining technical expertise with adaptability, problem-solving, and cross-functional knowledge are likely to be in short supply in the local labour market.
Ports and Logistics	We need sales based people as opposed to the operational experience I and my colleagues have.
Professional and Business Services	A variety of social skills
Professional and Business Services	Admin
Professional and Business Services	Adopting technology as an enabler for business wide processes
Professional and Business Services	AI
Professional and Business Services	AI integration
Professional and Business Services	AI skillset is important
Professional and Business Services	Dealing with UHNW clients
Professional and Business Services	Digital and applied AI
Professional and Business Services	Qualified conveyancing solicitors
Professional and Business Services	Quality
Professional and Business Services	QuickBooks expertise
Professional and Business Services	Technology automation online platforms creating online course
Professional and Business Services	the skills i need are
Professional and Business Services	We will need people experienced in MTD
Visitor Economy	Apprenterships
Visitor Economy	HR and people skills are always an advantage
Visitor Economy	Manager
Visitor Economy	SIA licensed staffing

Please briefly describe below the new roles or new skills you anticipate needing in the next 3–5 years, that are not currently available in the local labour market.

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Non Priority Sectors	Advanced AI, and specialist academic and research knowledge
Non Priority Sectors	AI and computer skills
Non Priority Sectors	AI competency
Non Priority Sectors	AI experience
Non Priority Sectors	AI expertise
Non Priority Sectors	AI knowledge base.
Non Priority Sectors	Basic system training for older candidates who have the traits to do the work but not IT skills
Non Priority Sectors	Core team to support schools
Non Priority Sectors	Cybersecurity specialists with financial-sector compliance experience
Non Priority Sectors	Data / digital relevant to voluntary sector
Non Priority Sectors	digital marketing, cloud computing, renewable energy, green technologies, sustainable practices, care workers, mental health support, healthcare management, automation, robotics, advanced manufacturing techniques, supply chain management, logistics coordination and transport operations
Non Priority Sectors	E-commerce Data Analyst
Non Priority Sectors	Environmentally based roles with specific qualifications and skills not readily available in the local labour market. Also technical roles with essential criteria where qualifications are not readily available. Also impacted by national shortages of social workers, solicitors, surveyors will continue to become harder to recruit to.
Non Priority Sectors	Expertise in data privacy and regulatory compliance will be needed.
Non Priority Sectors	Girls activator role that specifically focuses on the increase of girls engagement
Non Priority Sectors	Global partners or marketers who understand their local markets
Non Priority Sectors	Manager for outdoor activities Manager for events
Non Priority Sectors	Marketing expert
Non Priority Sectors	More managing positions both local and regional.
Non Priority Sectors	More resources
Non Priority Sectors	People who actually work hard
Non Priority Sectors	People who are fluent in AI
Non Priority Sectors	Probably learning how to compute numbers into tables
Non Priority Sectors	project management of DEFRA funded Lincoln and Witham Landscape Recovery Project; ecologists and farm advisors with knowledge of nature based solutions for resilient, regenerative, cost-effective, (in terms of extreme weather, flooding and drought, rising input costs) ways of managing water, soil, food production and nature; knowledge and experience of delivering cost effective nature-based solutions to mental health;
Non Priority Sectors	Regional managers i can't cover the whole area so I need to get people to do this for me.
Non Priority Sectors	Retail managers and staff. Head of Retail operations, Senior Managers of Retail specifically focused on operations.
Non Priority Sectors	Skills like in-house production
Non Priority Sectors	Specific programming languages, wireless electronic engineering, (very few Trained Retail, Trained Warehouse)
Non Priority Sectors	Teaching skills in retrofit, green energy etc.
Non Priority Sectors	Vehicle engineers
Non Priority Sectors	we expect to need more people with advanced digital, data analysis and automation skills, which are currently hard to find in the local labour market
Non Priority Sectors	We have significant challenges recruiting lecturers, assessors and technicians in areas like Engineering, Construction trades, Digital. We also have issues recruiting to professional service area functions particularly coding, data and cyber security. This means we cannot provide local and regional employers the skilled workforce they need as we have our own capacity challenges.

4.0 Priority Sector specific

- **4.1 Advanced Manufacturing**

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Focus Group | Participant sample

Non Exec Director

- Multiple roles held
- NED of automation software company based in Greater Lincolnshire – which is a gold standard apprenticeship organization
 - 24 staff in the UK and 12 in South Africa
 - Partner organisations in India and Ghana as well
- NED of a manufacturing company also based in Spalding
 - Manufactures in China as well
 - Looking to expand into America
- Member of the trade association for the bulk handling industry.

Owner

- Small precision engineering business based in Grantham
- 4 employees.

Managing Director

- Robotics and automation solutions provider
- Full turnkey design and build
- The build of machines is completed in Grantham
- 30 employees, including 6 apprentices
- Trades internationally.

Project Manager

- School of Science and Technology
- HEI in the East Midlands
- Focuses upon Knowledge Exchange, research and innovation
- Institution is a strategic partner in the creation of the Automated Distribution & Manufacturing Centre (ADMC) in Ashfield - which is a 3,000 sqm flagship project designed to be a centre of excellence for automation, supporting SME growth

The participant sample demonstrates that small Advanced Manufacturing businesses, with fewer than 50 employees, can still incorporate significant international operations and customer bases.

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – an ageing workforce

- **Ageing workforce:** cohort retiring or getting close to doing so. Hard to attract replacements into the industry, as a whole. Longstanding problem for at least ten years. One firm had calculated the average age of their workforce at 55. Whilst the ageing profile of the workforce, particularly seniors, is a longstanding issue for the sector, it was felt that it could become '*exponential*' increasing very rapidly to shackle the whole sector.
- A 'huge gap' is coming when the current cohort of senior management and leadership retire, that could see the whole sector across the UK '*really struggle and go backwards*'.
- **Finding a recruit with all-round knowledge probably means that they are aged 50+ on entry to the business:** They are then only likely to stay working in the business for a short time.

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – low awareness, poor image and understanding problems

- **More fragmented and smaller entities reduces sector profile:** The historic demise of several larger engineering companies in some geographies can reduce sector visibility locally, even though many micro and small firms are continuing to prosper.
"Grantham has a rich history of engineering companies, very large engineering companies, that are no longer with us."
- **Lack of appreciation of the centrality and immediacy of what the sector does:**
"everything that we touch or use every day is, will have gone through some sort of material handling process."
- **Schools not equipped to introduce students to the sector:** They were felt not to have the teachers or the equipment to give students a sense of the 'physical' side.
- **The structural loss of polytechnics was felt to have very significantly reduced the teaching of practical engineering at an advanced level,** with universities taking a more theoretical approach, that often relied upon exposure to a 'sandwich' year in industry, to create a better balance in theoretical:practical knowledge: *"If you're not doing it, how can you actually claim to be that engineer or that practitioner?"*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – the mindset and attitudes of new entrants

- **A different mindset is felt to exist among new entrants and less experienced staff:**
“They don't really want to be an engineer. It's mostly... it's a job...you find the odd one that, like me, lives it, if you get what I mean. We go home at night being curious, and we'll go on YouTube, and we'll look at videos, and we have that natural curiosity that extends past the working day.”
- **The shortcomings in mindset, were felt to go all the way back to lost opportunities, probably in Years 4-6 of Primary Education:**
“When I've ever done any kind of, activities with, you know, primary school kids, stuff like that. You see them all, they're really good, they're really tactile, they're using their hands, they're really, you know, getting into stuff and then they get into that period of their education where it just gets battered out of them, basically, and it's all about exams and hitting milestones and things, and they do very little skill-based education, it's all academic.”
- **Going into engineering can be regarded as something of a last resort:** *“Typically, most of them (FE Students) had not really achieved very much at school, and it was kind of like, well, what can I do then? And they just ended up doing engineering. They've got no joy for it, you know.”*

The emphasis placed by Secondary Education on learners going on to HE courses was felt to have robbed engineering of many 'brilliant' engineers, leaving the pool of engineers as now 'very small and of poor quality'.

The HEI participant acknowledged that the chance had already been missed with many learners by the time they enter Uni.

Skill shortages | Implications for the sector – reduction in portable technical skills and unexpected gaps in training

- **There was an identified risk that the reliance felt to be placed upon employers rather than FE/HE to practically teach technical skills had the potential to create junior engineers with very job-specific, less generalist, less portable skills.** As an employer would only train on the particular skills needed to do a specific job: *“They’ll be controlled by the companies they’re in, rather than be generic, to be able to jump from company to company, or to take these technical skills somewhere else.”*
- **Structural risk for the UK economy, if Manufacturing decays due to skill shortages:**
“We keep ignoring the big elephant in the room. Which is basically all our manufacturing’s just going to go abroad if we don’t train people to actually make stuff. You know, they have loads of data engineers and people that do all analytics and stuff like that. Brilliant. We will need them, I completely accept that, but they won’t have a job, unless we’ve still got people in making things.”

Skill shortages | Existing responses to address issues

- **More far-sighted firms have already set out to develop their own future leaders** from Apprentices onwards but it is acknowledged to be *“very difficult to find the right type of person that wants to do engineering”* – this led to one firm working very closely with schools to offer students opportunities to come in an *‘try engineering’* – introducing the learners to basic marking out, drilling and tapping holes.
- **Some proactive offers of industry help to FE were not taken up:**
“I've said, ‘I will come in if you need me to, and I will help. I will sit in that classroom with your tutor, and I... I will fill in them gaps of knowledge that you don't have’...They say ‘That's a brilliant idea, we'll talk about that again sometime’, and then it doesn't happen...the offer gets extended again, and another six months go by, and then it's another year, and, you know, nothing really moves on.” (GL)

Skill shortages | Roles that are difficult to recruit

- **Senior Engineering Technicians and Professionals:** Losing one very experienced manager can mean having to find 2-3 people to replace them, as they have acquired multiple skills, encompassing 3 or 4 jobs, over a long career - *“He can work every machine, he can... you know, he can design, he can use CAD software, everything. But finding those people, they're a rare breed these days, you just can't find them anywhere.”*
“The country has a cultural issue that engineers are not valued and there is no longer a career pathway. Most senior managers are financial based.”
- **Their future successors as Business Owners and Leaders, particularly in Micros:** *“I've not had any luck, really, over the last, sort of, five years, finding anyone that can, sort of, step into my shoes and do what I do.”*
- **Instrumentation and Control (I&C) Engineers:** with the appropriate professional certificates and/or specialised diplomas (HNC/Level 3).
- **Electronic Engineers:** Who can repair and fix devices down to a component level. NB This role is distinct from more general electricians.

“The problem is finding the right sort of people who want to come in, those people who want to build the machines, those people who want to do the software element, and also finding the people that have some experience of the applications to actually translate the customer needs into what they want to buy.” (GL)

Skill shortages | Occupations likely to become hard to recruit over the next 3 years

- **Unsurprisingly, AI, Robotics and Automation were referenced here:**

“That is where everybody's seeming to go now, because they can't get the staff, they can't get the people, so they're looking for automation. There's no automation engineers and things like that.” It was acknowledged that employers are still working through their needs here and so the training requirement is often hard to specify. *“We know there will be a demand, we don't know what that demand will be, and we don't know, really, which areas are going to spike more than others.”* **NB The ONS Standard Occupation Classifications (SOCs) do not yet fully incorporate emerging roles in: AI, Robotics and Automation. Consequently, care needs to be taken to ensure that these are not missed.**

On AI, Robotics, and Automation, should Employers and relevant Providers of all types, be collaborating more extensively, on both the commercial opportunity that could be harnessed and the training needs that sit alongside achieving the desired outcomes?

Potential Priority Occupations

| Advanced Manufacturing

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods)
- Electricians and Electrical Fitters
- Elementary Process plant operatives
- Fork-Lift Truck Drivers
- Large Goods Vehicle Drivers
- Managers in Storage and Warehousing
- Mechanical Engineers
- Metal Machining Setters and Setter-operators

- Metal Working Machine Operatives
- Metal Working Production and Maintenance Fitters
- Production Managers and Directors in Manufacturing
- Production, Factory and Assembly Supervisors
- Routine Inspectors and Testers

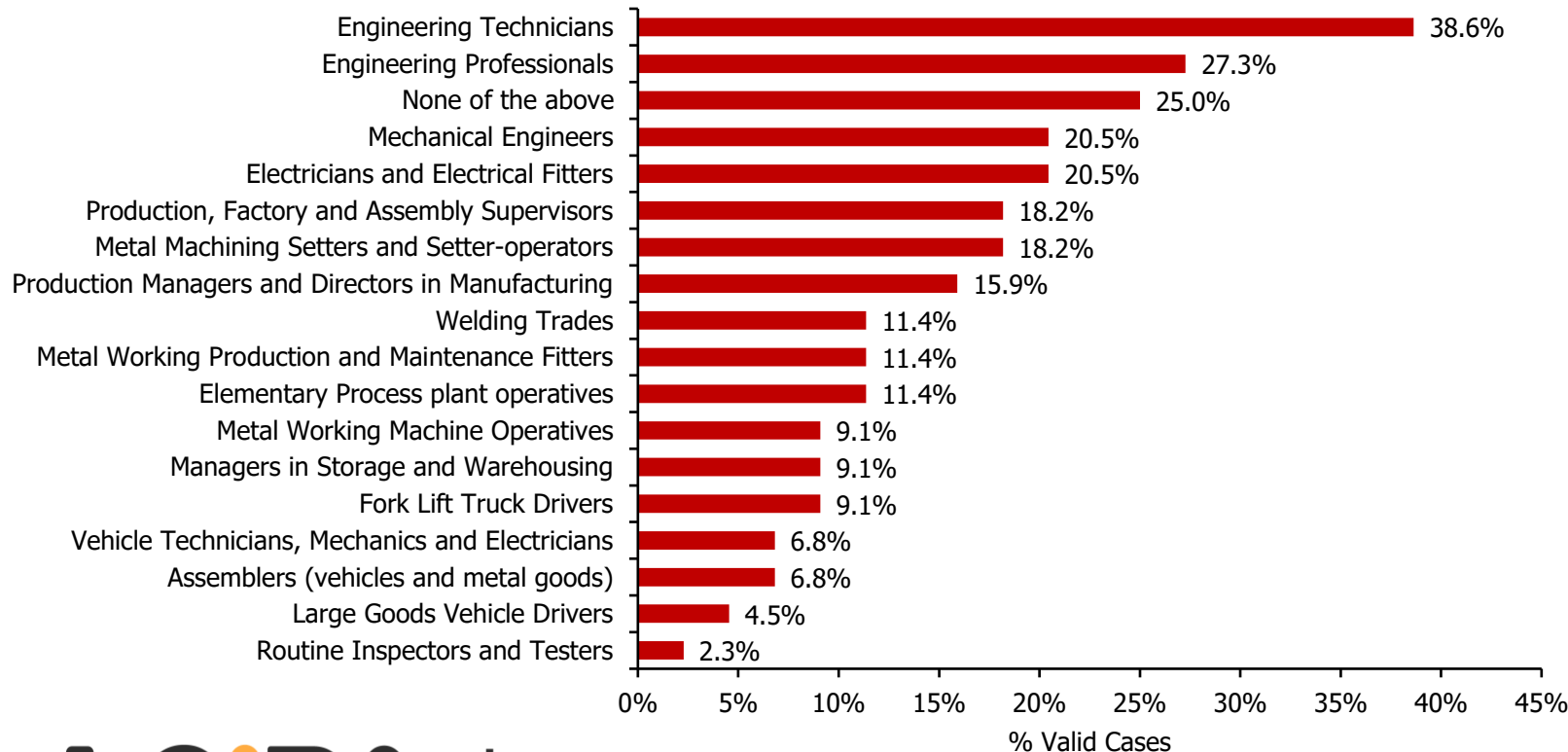
NB Stimulus like this for each sector was only presented after all spontaneous input on Skills Shortages had been gathered from participants.

Only Occupations explicitly referenced as being a priority or not regarded as a priority, are highlighted accordingly. Roles that are not highlighted, were not referenced.

Advanced Manufacturing | By a distance, Engineering Technicians (39%) have most widely been difficult to recruit over the last 12 months, followed by Engineering Professionals (27%).

57

Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, have you found it difficult or very difficult to recruit, over the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply) | Advanced Manufacturing

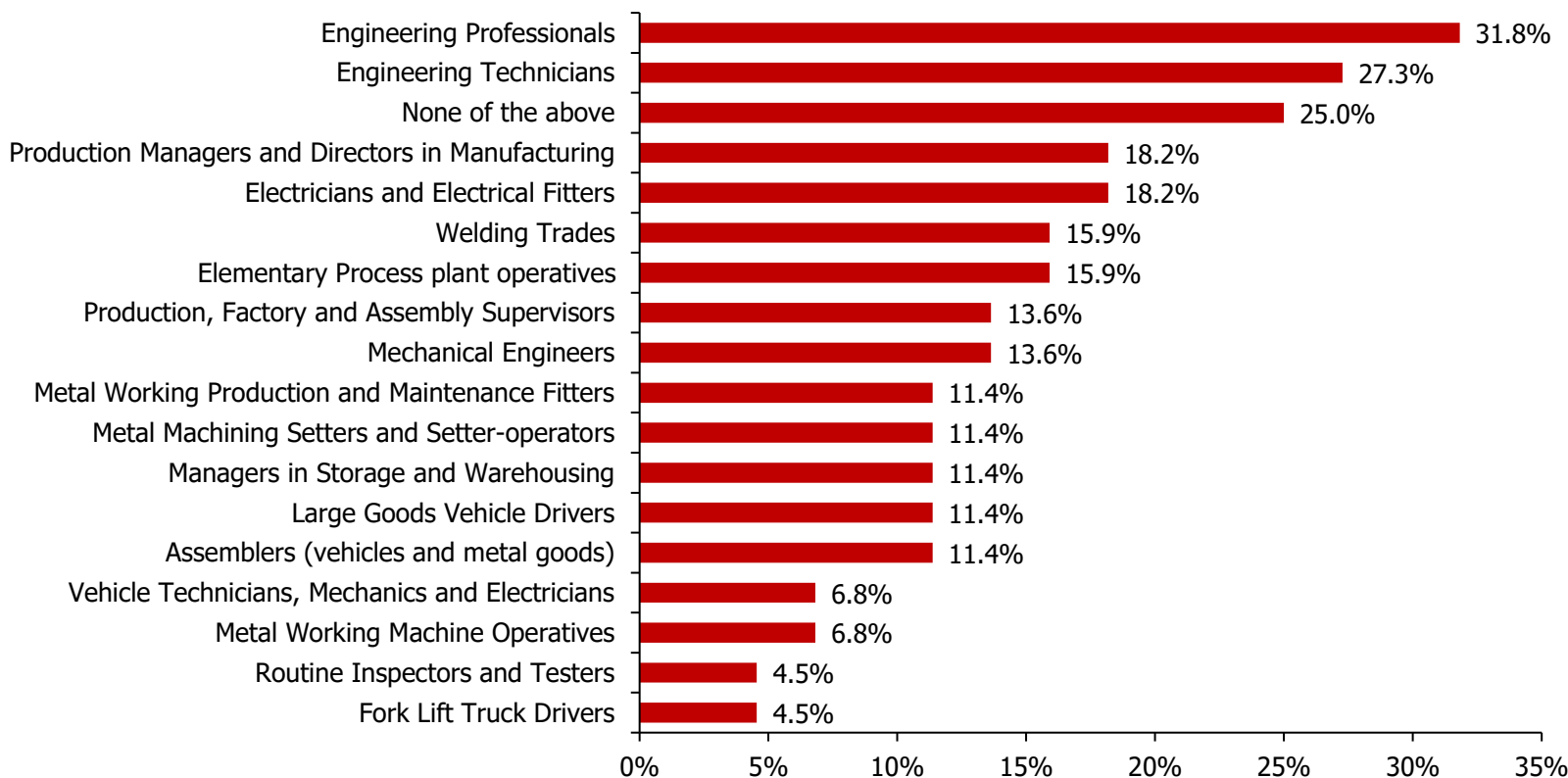


Base: Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods) (n=3), Electricians and Electrical Fitters (n=9), Elementary Process plant operatives (n=5), Engineering Professionals (n=12), Engineering Technicians (n=17), Fork Lift Truck Drivers (n=4), Large Goods Vehicle Drivers (n=2), Managers in Storage and Warehousing (n=4), Mechanical Engineers (n=9), Metal Machining Setters and Setter-operators (n=8), Metal Working Machine Operatives (n=4), Metal Working Production and Maintenance Fitters (n=5), Production Managers and Directors in Manufacturing (n=7), Production, Factory and Assembly Supervisors (n=8), Routine Inspectors and Testers (n=1), Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics and Electricians (n=3), Welding Trades (n=5), None of the above (n=11), Sample Size = 44

Advanced Manufacturing | Looking ahead over the next 3 years, Engineering Professionals (32%) are regarded most widely, as likely to be hard or very hard to recruit.

58

Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, do you believe will be hard or very hard to recruit, over the next 3 years? (Please tick all that apply) | Advanced Manufacturing



Base: Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods) (n=5), Electricians and Electrical Fitters (n=8), Elementary Process plant operatives (n=7), Engineering Professionals (n=14), Engineering Technicians (n=12), Fork Lift Truck Drivers (n=2), Large Goods Vehicle Drivers (n=5), Managers in Storage and Warehousing (n=5), Mechanical Engineers (n=6), Metal Machining Setters and Setter-operators (n=5), Metal Working Machine Operatives (n=3), Metal Working Production and Maintenance Fitters (n=5), Production Managers and Directors in Manufacturing (n=8), Production, Factory and Assembly Supervisors (n=6), Routine Inspectors and Testers (n=2), Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics and Electricians (n=3), Welding Trades (n=7), None of the above (n=11), Sample Size = 44

Please list below any other occupations or roles, not referenced in the previous two questions, that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

59

NB Each participant could provide up to five free text answers to this question. Each row provides an individual participant's response(s).

Advanced Manufacturing other1	Advanced Manufacturing other2	Advanced Manufacturing other3	Advanced Manufacturing other4	Advanced Manufacturing other5
Accountants				
Admin	Sales			
Apprentices				
Area Sales Manager				
Calibration engineer				
Compliance officer	IT analyst			
Cybersecurity specialists	Data analysts	Software developers		
Data				
Designers	Surveyors	Architect	Cleaner	Receptionist
Finance roles - all levels	Technical roles - Technologists and agronomy / NPD roles			
Fire & Security - Engineers	Fire & Security - Project Managers	Fire & Security - Sales	Fire & Security - Admin	
HR/ office staff				
IT	Compliance			
Janitors				
Metallurgist	Technical/Product Engineering Managers	Foundry Operatives	Furnace Operators	Maintenance Technicians
None				
None	NOne			
Printers	Print Finishers			
Process automation specialists				
Procurement & Strategic Sourcing Specialist				
Production Staff				
Project Engineers - office based	Site Engineers			
Purchasing Manager				
Quality engineers / Managers	Facilities Engineers / Managers	Plumbers	Welders	Electricians
Sales				
Service staff				
Supply	Distribution networks	Sales channels		
Technical Managers	Farm Managers	QC Managers		

Skills gaps | Key technical needs – the fundamentals

- **In some geographies at least, the technical fundamentals were felt to be missing at entry level:** *“The students come out today and they don't even know, like, why a bolt is a bolt and a screw is a screw. They don't know why you should use this type of file. They don't know why you should...centre drill a hole first. It's really basic stuff.”* There was a feeling that advanced Health & Safety content or Continuous Improvement principles like Kaizen were being focused on too much to the detriment of practical, fundamental skills that sit at the heart of entry level roles – *“That’s what pays their wages.”*

Skills gaps | Key technical needs – training to rollout the use of new technologies and new kit

- **Duplicating supplier training to contain cost and maximise autonomy and control:**
Once a technological kit supplier (e.g. FANUC robot) has delivered specialist training on the equipment, employers may then need to replicate this training in-house as the number of employees required to know how to use or maintain the kit grows. Employers end up identifying their own trainers and teaching resources on the kit –
“We have to look after ourselves, really, but more so.”



FANUC robots are industry-leading, 6-axis industrial robots known for their yellow colour, high reliability, and versatility across manufacturing, including welding, material handling, painting, and assembly. Ranging from compact arms (LR Mate) to heavy-duty palletizers (M-410), they operate using specialized controllers and teach pendants for precise, automated, or collaborative (green CR/CRX series) tasks.

Where the same models of kit are being widely installed and adopted across one or more industry sectors, could more be done to aid employers in rolling out training beyond the initial onboarding period that the kit supplier will cover?

Skills gaps | Key technical needs – systems integration

- **Systems integration skills for Software Engineers are hard to find, hard to build up and hard to keep updated:** *“People who know how to get the different bits of legacy equipment to talk to each other and also understand the process that the manufacturer's using... That whole system is producing something, and if it isn't joined up, and it isn't thought through, there's a problem.”*

Skills gaps | Key soft skills – communication, communication and communication

- **Communication and interpersonal skills of younger, less experienced staff and new entrants were highlighted:** *“The ability for a younger generation to actually be able to speak to customers, and actually work with the customers, and have that sort of confidence, to actually apply the knowledge and the experience that they're gaining.”* - Is enough emphasis placed upon FE and HE learners explaining to others the technical work that they are doing and why it is necessary?
- **by a relatively fast-growing Small Business.**

Potential Priority Skills Gaps

| Advanced Manufacturing

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

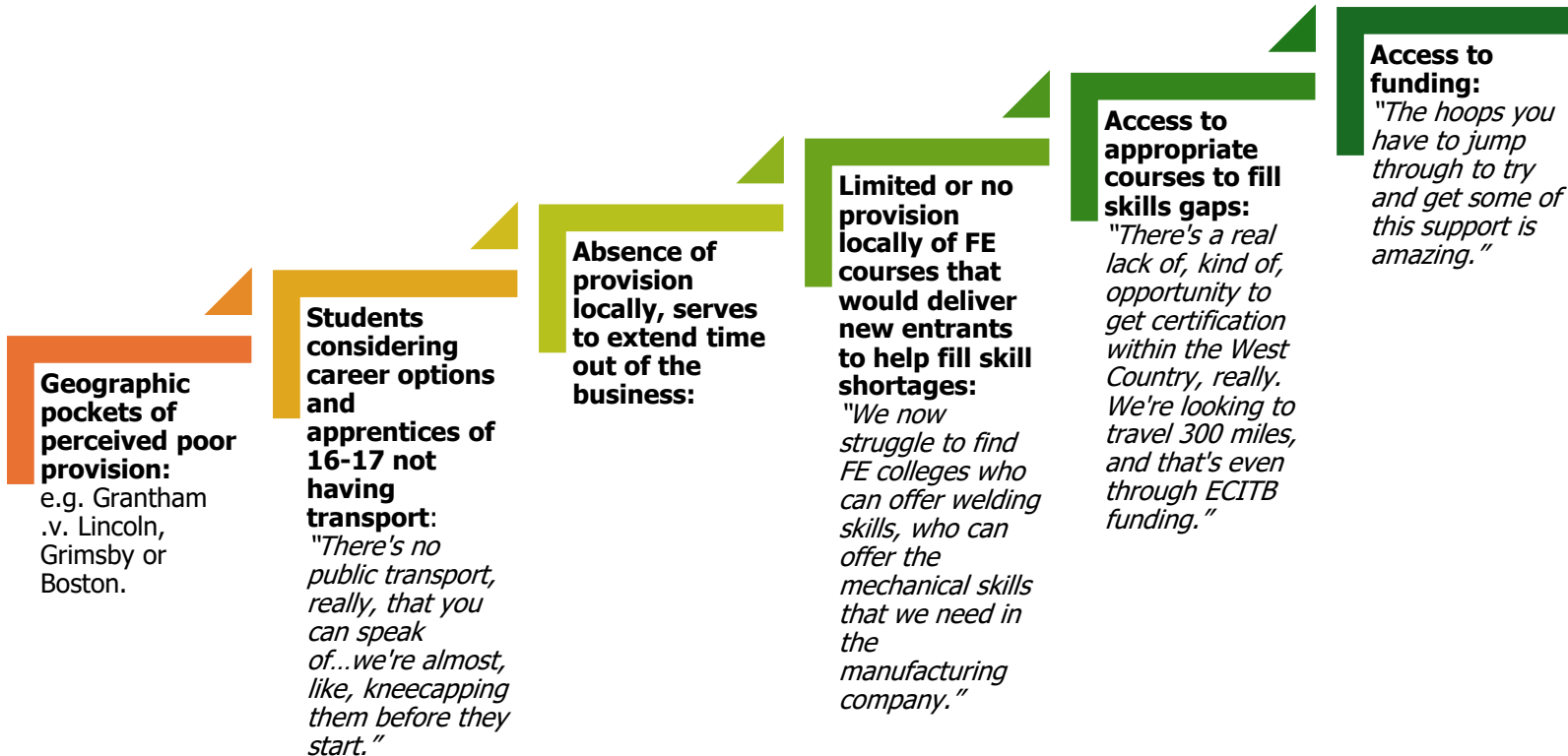
Not regarded as a priority

- Ability to use automation systems (PLC/HMI)
- Integrating digital tools into manufacturing processes
- Harnessing AI and Machine Learning
- Programming, maintaining and re-configuring industrial robotics
- Advanced data analytics
- R&D and prototyping
- Flexible problem-solving
- Systems Thinking
- Management & Leadership
- Teamworking & Collaboration
- Communication

Skills gaps | Organisational impacts

- High dropout rates among Apprentices and other junior employees
- Higher risk of a disconnect between what junior engineers are doing or not doing and end customer expectations
- Employers having to pick up responsibility for a lot more introductory practical training that FE did previously
- Reduced capacity to capitalise upon environmental monitoring opportunities
- Slower rollout in the use of new technologies and new equipment
- Weaknesses in manufacturing systems that were harder to identify and harder to rectify

Barriers encountered | Every aspect of access to provision – geographic, transport, funding et al



Top three priorities for improvement in provision | Collaboration was referenced repeatedly in different contexts

Find ways to support the industry in refreshing and updating FE tutor knowledge of Engineering and the skills now involved.

First Priority

*"None of the staff that work within the engineering department have ever worked as an engineer in anger. So, they're not teaching from a position of, kinda... lived experience... which grounds what they're teaching in a real-world example."
(GL – Grantham)*

Providers and Employers to have the forums and accountabilities to collaborate more widely and actively on how to better understand the provision demands arising from AI, Robotics and Automation in Advanced Manufacturing.

Second Priority

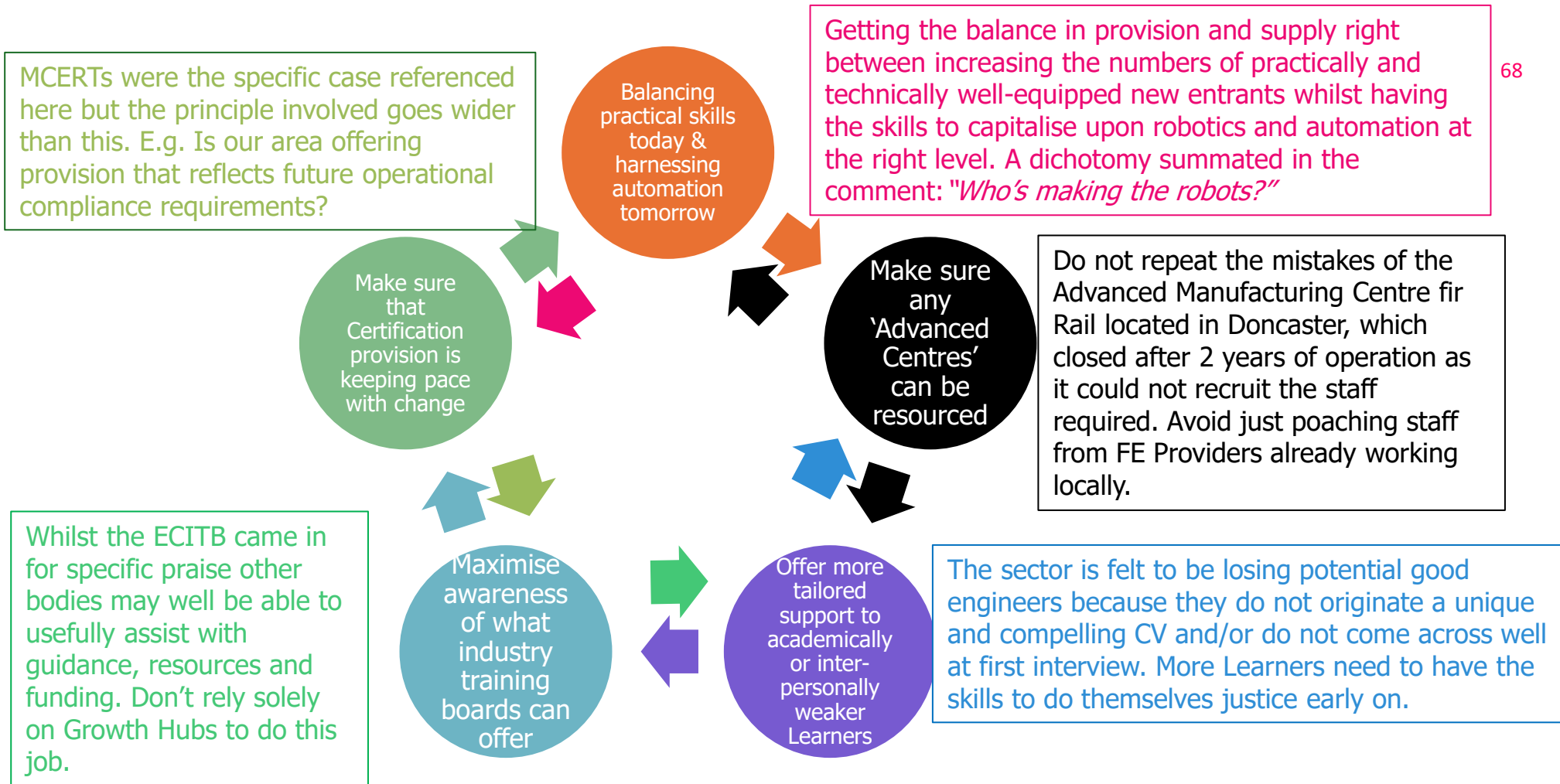
The industry 'ask' is not clear enough right now but needs articulating as quickly as possible, with Provider input and buy-in from the outset.

Build more relationships between industry and schools at both Primary and Secondary levels to help create and foster a love of practical 'hands-on' technical skills.

Third Priority

This is likely to require local initiatives, on say STEM ambassadors, and proactivity as changes to the National Curriculum in this area, will come through far too slowly.

General priorities for the LSIP | From pragmatic to strategic



4.2 Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing

Focus Group | Participant sample

Learning and Development Manager

- Seafood manufacturer
- 3 sites
- 400 people in Greater Lincolnshire

Consultant

- Representative body for UK seafood industry.

HR and Development Manager

- Farming and livestock multi-enterprise
- 65 employees – half in visitor, half in farming side

Director

- Agri-tech AI startup
- Camera-based livestock weight prediction and feed optimization

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – Talent pipeline shrinking and misconceptions about the sector

Declining education and training pipeline: Universities and colleges have reduced specialist provision (e.g., food science, technical placements, agriculture), shrinking the talent pipeline. Courses that once fed directly into the sector have disappeared or become too expensive.

- *“Food science as a discipline in universities has been declining for maybe 25, 20 years... there isn't a pipeline of talent coming through the main universities.”*
- *“Placement years have sort of disappeared from the university courses... people sort of getting that practical experience within manufacturing.”*

Low awareness and misconceptions of the sector: Young people have little understanding of agri-tech, food tech, or manufacturing careers. Many see these as low-skilled or unattractive, despite strong salary and progression potential.

- *“Nobody knows what it is... in terms of opportunities and young people saying that's a good career, have you heard of it?”*
- *“You don't get many kids leaving school thinking it's fun or attractive working in a factory... putting on your factory coat.”*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – roles becoming more technical and workforce ageing

Rising skill requirements but unchanged perceptions: Roles that were once seen as “basic” have become highly technical, requiring digital, mechanical, animal welfare, and analytical capability but the labour market still views them as low-skilled.

- *“A stock person... has traditionally been seen as quite a basic role and it’s not... it’s a very technical area these days.”*

Ageing workforce and loss of heritage skills: Large proportions of skilled workers are nearing retirement, and there is limited succession planning. Losing these individuals means losing decades of tacit knowledge.

- *“We have a manager... on his retirement pathway now... replacing that person... is going to be very difficult.”*
- *“Our director is going, if my key people leave I don’t have a succession plan... what are we doing about it?”*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – technical talent being picked-off by higher paying sectors, disconnects with providers

Competition from other higher-paying sectors: Engineering and technical talent is being attracted into energy, renewables, offshore work, defence, robotics and other advanced manufacturing sectors.

- *“Manufacturing now being the most attractive sector in the area for engineers... the renewable energy side is becoming more attractive.”*
- *“Other sectors have these gaps... and you read between the lines they’ll solve their problem by pinching from the other sectors.”*

Limited industry and education coordination: Disconnects between universities, colleges and employers mean curricula don’t reflect industry needs; research and innovation often fail to reach farms or factories.

- *“The trickle from Lincoln College to actual farm... it’s not happening.”*
- *“There isn’t a lot of cross-working... no specific forum between advanced manufacturing and food manufacturing.”*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – entry costs rising as work-readiness falls

Difficulty attracting and retaining young talent: Young employees often seek flexibility, faster career progression, and work that feels meaningful. Employers report motivational issues and weaker work readiness.

- *“The younger generation... flexibility is much more important, and they don’t think it’s attractive working in a factory.”*
- *“They lose interest too quickly... the force they came in with wasn’t the same after.”*

High costs of recruitment, training and wage pressures: Raising minimum wages and NI contributions increase the cost of hiring and training, especially for SMEs and start-ups.

- *“I can’t as a start-up afford extremely highly paid qualified people... minimum wages... it hurts small businesses.”*
- *“It’s been a huge on-cost facing into the national insurance increase... makes it more expensive to hire any young person.”*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – technological advance running ahead of capacity in new skills

Rapid pace of technological change: AI, automation, robotics and digitalisation require skills that many businesses (and workers) don't yet have. Employers know they need new skills but often can't articulate exactly what they are.

- *“There's a general recognition that things are moving at pace... but they're not always able to articulate it.”*
- *“We need loads of kids to understand how they can use both AI and automation... that's a huge upskill that needs to happen.”*

Skill gaps | Underlying issues

Transport and mobility: Lack of driving licences or access to transport prevents young people from accessing rural jobs.

Understanding of career pathways: Many young people see university or STEM pathways as “not economical,” deterring them from entering technical careers.

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Pig livestock roles: Stock persons are increasingly technical (medicines, antibiotics, welfare, feed systems, trials); calibre and expectations misaligned with traditional perceptions. It's a small workforce numbers but a high skill intensity; succession risk for senior technical managers with 30+ years' experience.

- *"...a stock person on a pig farm has traditionally been seen as quite a basic role and it's not... they're handling medicines, they're handling antibiotics, they're needing to basically do the basic levels of welfare, veterinary practice and livestock management... it's a lot more than that."*

General agricultural roles: Anything required understanding of mixed crop and livestock operations, technical livestock management and high-level welfare and veterinary-adjacent competence.

- *"We have a core team... looking after approximately two and a half thousand acres of mixed grass, potatoes, peas, sugar beet... Then we have breeding units... a manager, assistant manager and stock people... It's the calibre we struggle with."*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Engineering: Sector generally struggles due to ageing engineering workforce and competition from renewables/energy for talent. Specific roles include maintenance engineers, manufacturing/automation engineers and food processing engineers.

- *“Engineering... I think a lot of the other businesses tend to find they've got a slightly more aging workforce in engineering.”*

AI/software/tech roles for agritech: For smaller and early-stage agri-tech businesses AI engineers, software developers (front and back end), applied AI/data roles on-farm systems are difficult to find. There's a very limited local talent pool, candidates lack work readiness and start-ups cannot compete on salary.

- *“We are in AI, so finding specialized people in and around Louth is hard...”*
- *“Kids should be having... someone telling them what's happening [in AI]... there's no awareness... They need exposure.”*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Seafood technical functions: Quality assurance, technical managers and new product development (NPD) are hardest to recruit, these are critical roles with limited university pipeline due to a decline in food science and food technology courses plus low awareness among young people.

- *“The toughest area that we find to recruit into is the food technical side of things. So both quality... probably the biggest issues in the quality side...”*
- *“...equally the new product development. So both sitting under that food technical bracket. I think that's pretty consistent across all of the seafood businesses.”*

Operational roles: Lower-skilled roles are fillable and easy to recruit at entry level however supervisor/manager recruitment is harder. There's a lack of clear development pathways for internal progression.

- *“...we're quite good at recruiting into operations in the lower-skilled roles but actually maybe not into the supervisor and managerial positions and we struggle a little bit more there...”*
- *“...thinking about how we can create those pathways to upskill people into those areas.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for over next 3 years

AI, automation and digital roles: The sector is moving quickly towards AI-enabled production, automation of equipment and processes, digital twins and robotics in farming and manufacturing. However, it's not yet determinable exactly what these roles are or look like, only that they are on the horizon. It does mean new job categories will exist such as AI/Automation operatives, digital equipment technicians, machine optimization operatives and on-factory digital and data support roles. These are expected to be essential for keeping new automated equipment running and for interpreting AI-generated outputs.

- *“There’s something around AI and digital and automation... we know there's a problem... we know we're going to need certain skills... but actually the base in the factories at the moment... they're not always able to articulate it.”*
- *“You want to automate... but equally you don’t want to jump too quickly and lose skilled individuals.”*
- *“You can be sitting on the computer as a digital twin... you know how each machine is working. That’s a huge upskill that needs to happen.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for over next 3 years

Heritage skills: Roles such as fish filleting and hand-skill craft roles, whilst not new are expected to become even harder to recruit for. Fish filleting for example is a high skilled manual craft that younger generations are not entering, smaller companies rely on heavily and cannot be auto effectively unless within a very large business. It's a financially rewarding role but not well known or promoted.

- *“...fish filleters are highly skilled and they're not being trained in the same way and young people are not coming into that profession.”*
- *“It does tend to be on the job... it's a hand skill that is unlikely... ever to be automated. It can be automated, but only the big businesses would [do it].”*
- *“Some of the salaries are really good... it is a hand skill... almost like an artisan job, a heritage skill.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for over next 3 years

Robotics-enabled agricultural roles: As robotics adoption accelerates (e.g., autonomous machinery, precision systems), the future workforce will need skills in robot operation, sensor and machine learning interpretation and digital/remote farm management. Roles that are likely to be difficult to recruit to are robotics farm technicians, precision agriculture operatives and digital livestock system operators.

- *“Robots working in farm... they are not very far away... automation is at the peak.”*

Broader AI literacy and digital skills across the workforce: Even where new job titles don't yet exist, AI competence, basic programming logic and data interpretation skills will be required across multiple job families. The challenge is that schools and colleges currently do not provide sufficient exposure, and young people cannot see the career pathways. This will widen the gap further.

- *“Kids should be having... a teacher who's telling them what's happening [in AI]... they are not aware... they need that exposure.”*
- *“...the career pathways are very defined for existing trades... but with AI people can't see the pathways.”*
- *“We need loads of kids to understand how they can use both AI and automation.”*

Potential Priority Occupations

| Agri Tech and Food Manufacturing

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Agricultural and Fishing Trades
- Animal Care Services Occupations
- Butchers
- Farm Workers
- Farmers
- Fishing and other elementary Agriculture Operations
- Fishmongers and Poultry Dressers
- Food, Drink and Tobacco Process Operatives
- Horticultural Trades
- Managers and Proprietors in Agriculture and Horticulture
- Packers, Bottlers, Canners and Fillers
- Restaurant and Catering Establishment Managers and Proprietors
- Routine Inspectors and Testers
- Warehouse Operatives

New Occupation - Aquaculture: Anticipated skills demand for planned on-land salmon farming in Grimsby within two years. Local skills/providers currently lacking (expertise exists in Shetlands and similar regions) but this is an up-and-coming need.

Warehouse operatives – not an issue and not difficult to recruit to or retain people in.

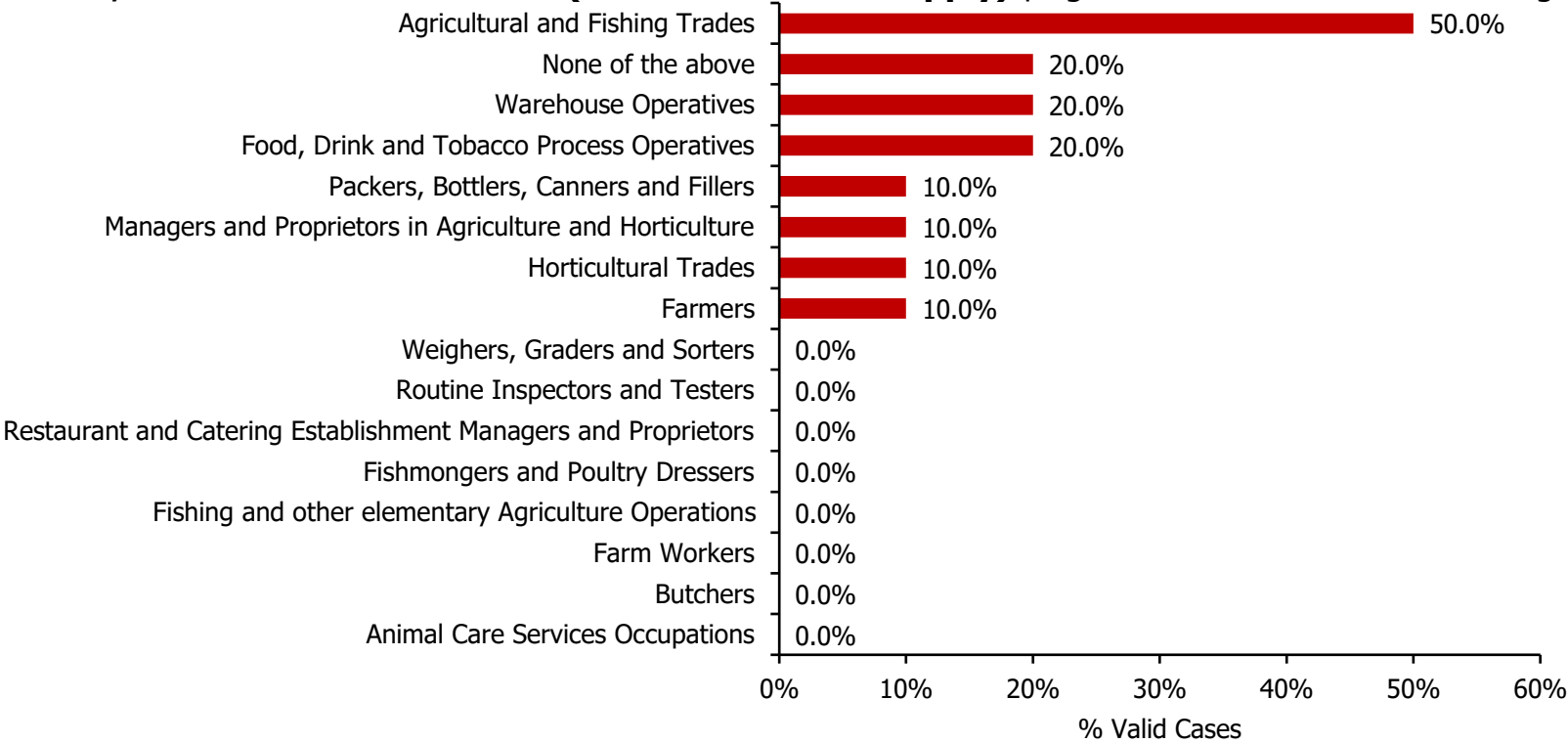
Commercial trader roles are a recruitment issue – require strong commercial acumen and global trading knowledge with a specific skill set like logistics, supply chains, negotiating and imports/exports.

Missing – AI, R&D and technology roles.

Difficult – skilled butchers is a shortage. No abattoir currently operating in Lincolnshire, increasing transport, animal welfare concerns, and sustainability issues.

Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing | From a very small base, the somewhat generic 'Agricultural and Fishing Trades' has been the role that has proved difficult to recruit over the last 12 months, for the widest number of employers.

Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, have you found it difficult or very difficult to recruit, over the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply) | Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing

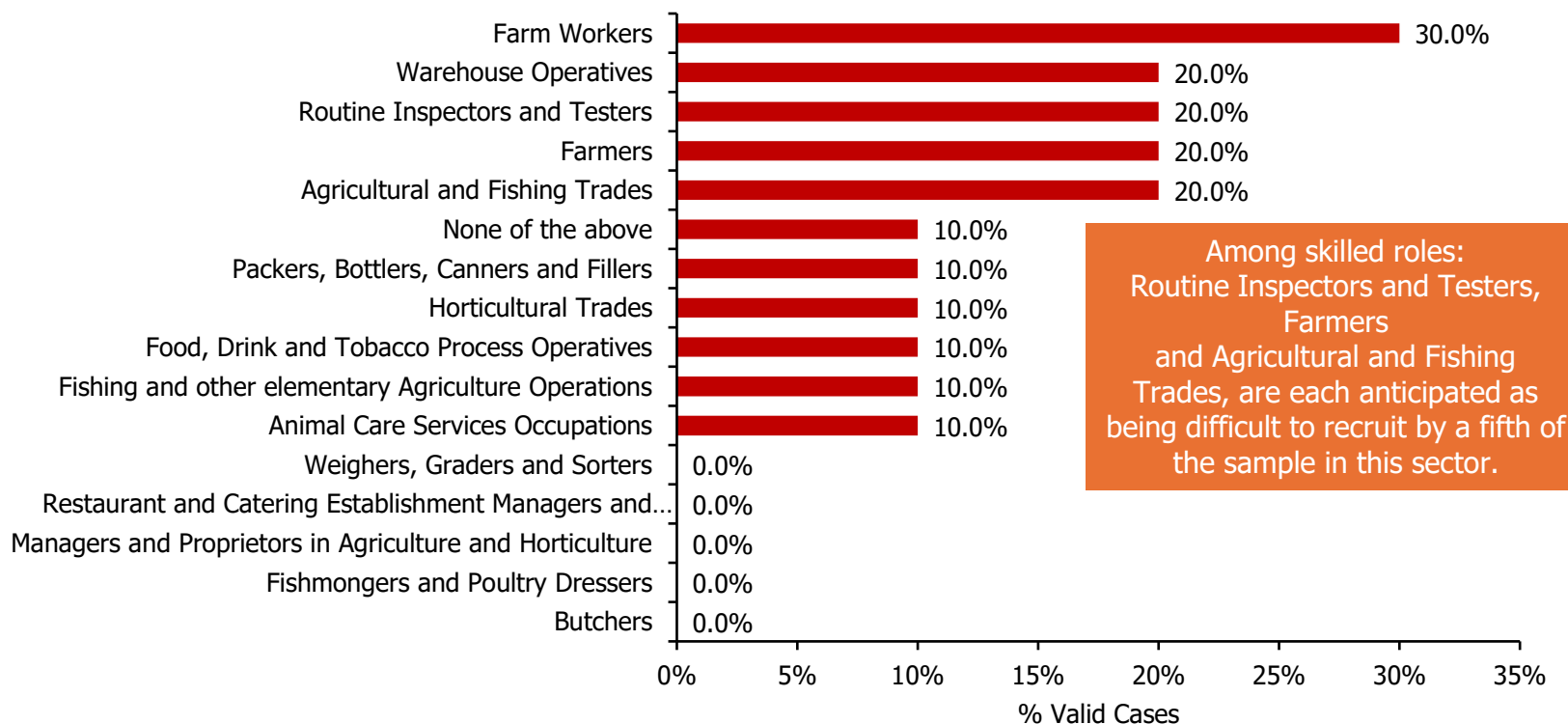


Base: Agricultural and Fishing Trades (n=5), Animal Care Services Occupations (n=0), Butchers (n=0), Farm Workers (n=0), Farmers (n=1), Fishing and other elementary Agriculture Operations (n=0), Fishmongers and Poultry Dressers (n=0), Food, Drink and Tobacco Process Operatives (n=2), Horticultural Trades (n=1), Managers and Proprietors in Agriculture and Horticulture (n=1), Packers, Bottlers, Canners and Fillers (n=1), Restaurant and Catering Establishment Managers and Proprietors (n=0), Routine Inspectors and Testers (n=0), Warehouse Operatives (n=2), Weighers, Graders and Sorters (n=0), None of the above (n=2), Sample Size = 10

Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing | Looking ahead over the next 3 years, employers most widely anticipate 'Farm Workers' being difficult to recruit.

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Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, do you believe will be hard or very hard to recruit, over the next 3 years? (Please tick all that apply) | Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing



Base: Agricultural and Fishing Trades (n=2), Animal Care Services Occupations (n=1), Butchers (n=0), Farm Workers (n=3), Farmers (n=2), Fishing and other elementary Agriculture Operations (n=1), Fishmongers and Poultry Dressers (n=0), Food, Drink and Tobacco Process Operatives (n=1), Horticultural Trades (n=1), Managers and Proprietors in Agriculture and Horticulture (n=0), Packers, Bottlers, Canners and Fillers (n=1), Restaurant and Catering Establishment Managers and Proprietors (n=0), Routine Inspectors and Testers (n=2), Warehouse Operatives (n=2), Weighers, Graders and Sorters (n=0), None of the above (n=1), Sample Size = 10

Please list below any other occupations or roles, not referenced in the previous two questions, that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

86

Agri - Food other1	Agri - Food other2	Agri - Food other3	Agri - Food other4	Agri - Food other5
Bar staff	Kitchen staff			
Data / technical analysts	Computer scientists			
estate maintenance person				
Financial Controller	Experienced Adminstrators			
none more				
tree surgeon	Vouanteer	ground worker	Landscaper	Farm worker

Skill gaps | Technical skills

Digital and data skills:

- **Data literacy and analytics:** Ability to interpret production data, use digital sensors, analyse productivity, and feed insights into decision-making (e.g., yield optimisation, livestock growth analysis).
 - *“We need... less reliance on the senior manager having those skills and more reliance on... people... trained so they can actually have that data analysis and feed into the farm as a whole.”*
- **Digital system integration:** Understanding how multiple technologies (GPS, nitrogen sensors, farm management systems) connect and communicate.
 - *“The technologies are all there... but they don’t talk to each other... I can see that having a real technical gap of having people with the full breadth of knowledge to understand all of the systems.”*
- **Use of automation and agri-tech:** Operating advanced machinery that increasingly does the work previously done manually (e.g., precision farming equipment).
- **Digital record keeping:** Replacing outdated paper-based systems (e.g., Red Tractor

Skill gaps | Technical skills

Engineering and technical operator skills

- **Engineering shortages:** Particularly multi-skilled engineers with both electrical and mechanical expertise.
 - *“Engineering, multi-skilling of engineers is probably one for us, having them both skilled in the electrical and mechanical space.”*
- **Technical operator skills:** Moving machine minders into more advanced technical operator roles that combine engineering knowledge, digital skills, and problem-solving.
 - *“We’re talking about a program... to meet this technical operator need, which... borders on engineering... and that digital analytical piece would be key.”*
- **Refrigeration and energy engineering:** Especially relevant in sectors with large cold-storage estates.

Skill gaps | Technical skills

Leadership and management: There is a need for stronger leadership capability across technical teams. This is particularly important for those progressing from operator roles into supervisory or technical management positions.

Agriculture and food production technical competencies

- **Loss of accredited training:** Mandatory competencies in pig farming (moving/handling, farrowing, servicing) no longer have formal accreditation, creating a training gap.
 - *“Within the pig industry, the majority of what we would call our mandatory competencies don’t have any accreditation anymore... we’re having to... turn it into an internal certificate.”*
- **Specialist production knowledge:** Need for senior stock-people with specialisms (farrowing, service, nursery) who can support managers.
- **Understanding breeding and productivity technologies:** Using data to make decisions on livestock health, growth, and breeding sources

Skill gaps | Technical skills

Food safety and compliance: There are gaps in food safety training including level 3 and 4, HACCP qualifications and understanding regulatory standard and digital traceability requirements.

- *“We’re always trying to increase kind of food safety knowledge... things like food safety level 3s, level 4s, HACCP... these things are expensive.”*

Higher-level technical knowledge:

- **Advanced scientific skills:** Food science, biological sciences, and product safety expertise; businesses struggle to recruit new entrants.
 - *“It requires scientific knowledge... it is a profession when you need that external qualification.”*
- **Lack of higher-level (Level 6–8) technical programmes:** Universities not sufficiently engaged in offering vocational, applied programmes needed in these sectors.
 - *“There’s so few coming in and looking for that career, the businesses are looking for operators out of the skills and moving to these roles.”*

Skill gaps | Soft skills

Problem-solving and critical thinking: There's a gap in the ability to troubleshoot digital systems, interpret data and make informed decisions. This is essential as technology becomes more integrated into everyday.

Adaptability and learning agility: The workforce needs to adapt to rapid digitalization, new regulatory requirements and changing production methods. Employees who are trained for older systems struggle to transition.

- *“Technology exists and technology is proven, but some people are running faster... the farmers who understand the data will always run a lot faster.”*

Self-management and professionalism: There are challenges related to time management, reliability of younger workers and overall workplace readiness. This increases the resource burden of supporting early-career apprentices.

- *“The time and resource needed for young people is a huge commitment... businesses are thinking about how are we going to manage productivity.”*

Communication and collaboration: These skills are necessary for cross-functional technical teams, apprenticeship providers, businesses and universities who are working together and translation of data insights into operational decisions.

Potential Priority Skills Gaps

| Agri Tech and Food Manufacturing

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Operating and maintaining digital systems, sensors, robotics and automation systems
- Advanced data analytics, including of soil and plants
- Interpreting and applying data insights for decision support
- Food safety
- Quality assurance
- Regulatory compliance
- Cybersecurity skills
- Specialist knowledge of precision agriculture
- Drone operation skills
- Change management (re-adopting and using)
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Commercial knowledge to scale up technology applications

Training provision | In-house and outsourced

Internal and in-house training: Level 2 Food Safety delivered internally (higher levels require external provision and there is a lack of funding available), general basic skills development especially for farm staff and technicians.

External specialist training:

- Engineering training delivered by strong local providers (HETA, CATCH), frequently used and positively reviewed.
 - *“Engineering is the one that we would specifically source locally... HETA are great.”*
- Higher-level food manufacturing and technical skills via the University of Lincoln’s National Centre for Food Manufacturing (NCFM).
 - *“We’re fortunate with the university being a specialist provider of higher level food manufacturing skills.”*
- Business admin, project management, and support roles trained through local colleges (e.g., Franklin College).
- **Leadership development:** Future Seafood Leaders programme (100+ people trained across 18 months). A sector-designed Seafood Leadership Bootcamp delivered in collaboration with Lincoln University.
 - *“We’ve worked as a cluster to design a sort of seafood leadership boot camp... addressed needs very well.”*
 - *Future Seafood Leaders program, we’ve had about a hundred and something through it.”*

Training | Barriers to training

Funding: Uncertain, short-term funding streams, unclear future cycles that hinder planning, and the absence of support for higher-level qualifications such as Level 4 Food Safety.

- *“It’s just a bit of a minefield... not knowing what’s coming.”*
- *“Increasingly short-term nature of funding... skills improvement fund absence etc.”*

Use of bootcamps has increased accessibility and affordability of specialist programmes.

- *“We’ve funded it through a boot camp to make it more accessible.”*

Training availability and gaps: AI, data, and analytics courses are limited and often not contextualised to food, farming, or seafood sectors. Lack of accredited basic animal welfare training after City & Guilds withdrew their offer. Some training simply not available in Greater Lincolnshire, requiring travel outside the region.

- *“City and Guilds have drawn theirs... there’s a gap between basic animal welfare and the Lantra courses that kick in after that.”*
- *You may have encountered a situation where you've wanted to source some training externally... not been able to source it in Greater Lincolnshire at all.”*

Training | Barriers to training

Workforce & sector barriers:

- Difficulty attracting digital specialists due to lower pay in farming/food vs tech sectors. Need for hybrid capabilities (data + field work), which is an unusual combination.
 - *“I would not find someone over here... they would expect automatic remote working... banking sector pays more.”*
 - *“It’s a tricky balance... somebody who’s happy to go into a field and check sensors but also has digital skills.”*
- Varied workforce readiness: Some older workers open to technology if it improves productivity. Some younger workers less engaged or distracted despite being “tech native.”
 - *“The 60-year-old... is up for the game... I think it’s the 18-year-old who’s got this mobile phone and more distraction.”*
- Sector culture and expectations sometimes lag behind technological change.

Provider-side constraints: FE and HE providers struggle to keep pace with rapid developments in AI. Colleges can teach fundamentals, but sector-specific application is missing.

- *“AI is moving faster than any provision can keep up with... next year, it might already feel out of date.”*

Training | Improvements or innovations in training

Local specialist provision: Engineering training quality is the only thing that would be sourced locally, particularly through HETA, CATCH (due for major expansion) and NCFM (University of Lincoln) is a nationally recognised specialist provider and highly valued.

- *“HETA and CATCH are really outstanding... CATCH is about to massively expand.”*
- *“The university being a specialist provider... well respected and well known.”*

Leadership development: The Future Seafood Leaders programme is regarded as a major success with national uptake. The Seafood Leadership Bootcamp has improved management and leadership pipeline development.

- *“We believe [Seafood Leadership Bootcamp] has addressed needs very well.”*
- *“We’ve had about a hundred and something through it... Scotland have picked it up.”*

Better provider-employer links: Franklin College has been responsive and is building deeper connections with local industries. Cluster-based design of programmes (e.g., seafood sector collaboration) is working well.

- *“They’re very responsive... a good provider... we have a good link with them.”*

Training | Top priorities for improvement in training provision

Flexibility & responsiveness: Training that can respond quickly to emerging needs such as short courses, sector-led, modular, not restricted by apprenticeship frameworks. Less bureaucracy and greater agility in funding models (especially for urgent or niche training needs).

- *“We would like real... ultimate flexibility for sectors to respond without too many constraints.”*
- *“We don’t want to be too constrained, but we’d like some funding.”*

AI, data, and digital upskilling for existing employees: Foundational data analysis training for current staff. Sector-specific AI/data application training (how to apply it on farms, in factories, with sensors, robotics, drones). Support for transitioning experienced workers into more digital roles.

- *“There is this big piece about upskilling existing employees into use of data, AI, data analytics.”*
- *“Even getting to confidence around data would be a good place.”*

Addressing key gaps in accreditation: Reintroducing or replacing basic accredited animal welfare training (lost when City & Guilds withdrew). Ensuring higher-level food safety qualifications (e.g., Level 4) are available and funded.

- *“City and Guilds have drawn theirs... we need to look at how we can get that for the future.”*

Training | Top priorities for improvement in training provision

Workforce pipeline development: Continuing and expanding leadership pipelines (e.g., seafood model). Encouraging pride and career identity in technical/operator roles, not just managerial pathways.

- *“Training has been put on the back burner... industry allowed to slide to its bottom level.”*
- *“There should be pride in being a technician or operator.”*

Employer-led collaboration: More industry clusters designing joint training (pig sector was specifically mentioned). Better sector-to-sector learning (e.g., farming learning from advanced dairy or international models).

- *“Collaboration within the industry... would help us define better what we need.”*

Improving alignment between providers and industry: Ensuring providers can contextualise delivery to real processes and equipment. Strengthening FE/HE capability in AI and digital which is currently behind pace.

4.3 Construction

Focus Group | Participant sample

Office Manager

- Company of 40 subcontractors
- Predominantly fit kitchens

Health and Safety and Business Development Lead

- Company of 40 subcontractors
- Predominantly fit kitchens

Planner

- Planning consultancy
- 6 employees

Director

- Membership based organization that represents micro and small construction firms across the region.

Office Manager

- Building contractor
- 40 employees

HR

- Leads apprenticeship and cross sector training across construction, civils and engineering.

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – irregular work, compliance creep, generational differences, pay expectations

Irregular work and lack of security: Unpredictable scheduling in construction makes many roles unattractive to potential recruits who want stability. Self employment makes income unpredictable.

- *“If we haven’t got work for two or three days they’re not getting paid... they’ll look elsewhere.”*
- *“We cannot guarantee them five days a week... that is what we struggle with.”*

Compliance burden and credential creep: Ever changing site induction requirements deter candidates and makes it difficult to ensure stable work.

- *“It’s another responsibility back to the lads... there’s a lot of things changing.”*

Generational differences and COVID impacts: Young workers entering the workforce post Covid often lack confidence, initiative and communication skills.

- *“They have been conditioned to just enough... keep my head down and get through this.”*

Unrealistic pay expectations: Some new entrants overestimate their value compared to their actual skills, creating tension and recruitment difficulties; it’s believed this is fuelled by comparing themselves to social media content.

- *“You’re not worth 250 pounds a day... you can’t read drawings and your brickwork’s not that good.”*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – academic routes promoted, accessibility and problem solving

Poor careers advice: Schools heavily promote academic routes and overlook vocational and construction pathways.

- *“Construction is for people who aren’t academic... totally wrong.”*
- *“Careers advice is not independent... planning never gets mentioned.”*

Rural access barriers: Limited access to nearby training centres and poor transport links mean many potential learners simply can’t reach the courses available.

- *“It’s really difficult in rural areas... there’s only a limited number of courses people can do locally.”*

Lack of problem solving among new entrants: College training often focuses on idealised scenarios, leaving young workers unprepared for real world complexities.

- *“They are trained to build new houses but when they go to repair something... they are not able to solve that problem.”*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Labourers and off loaders: Labourer roles are the hardest to fill due to irregular work patterns and low motivation; workdays vary unpredictably which undermines retention.

- *“It can be a horrible job... motivation is gone if you’ve been sat for a while waiting.”*
- *“We struggle with labourers because part of the business, we win contracts because we can get the delivery done.”*

Line managers: Smaller firms depend on promoting from within, but many site-based staff move into management without the training or skills needed. As a result, businesses often end up with capable tradespeople in roles that require stronger people and business management abilities.

- *“They expect to become managers and expect to have the management skills...that’s our strongest area of skills gap.”*
- *“Our skills shortages are at the management level and that is business skills because we are so niche that we organically grow.”*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Estimators and quantity surveyors: These roles demand a rare mix of technical depth, commercial judgement, and precision, making them hard to fill.

- *“They need to know where every screw, every bolt is...what they need to know is specific”*
- *“It is really important for us to have good estimators and surveyors... it is a very niche skill set.”*

Drivers: Because deliveries are nationwide and tightly scheduled, firms struggle to hire sufficient reliable drivers to keep up with demand.

- *“We might have ten off loaders but only two drivers so how can we get to three places.”*

Trainers, assessors and college lecturers: Colleges struggle to hire trade lecturers because experienced tradespeople can earn significantly more by staying on site. Lecturer salaries can't compete with industry wages, leaving providers unable to attract the skilled staff they need

- *“Bricklayers at entry level are earning more than the lecturers... providers just can't recruit.”*
- *“The providers, they just cannot recruit. Bricklayers at entry level are earning more than the lecturers.”*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Heritage and traditional trades: Skills needed for older buildings, traditional methods, and specialist materials are disappearing as experienced workers retire, creating a clear shortage in conservation expertise. Much of the local housing stock depends on these skills, making the gap increasingly critical.

- *“A lot of our housing stock is older and needs those special heritage skills.”*
- *“We have not mentioned heritage skills.”*
- *“Collyweston slate roofers and lead workers... there is a gap.”*

Town planners: A lack of visibility around the planning profession means too few young people choose it, leading to persistent shortages. Awareness among students is minimal, and planning is rarely included in school careers guidance, limiting the pipeline into the field. It is rarely included in the curriculum.

- *“Town planning is just not ever mentioned at careers fairs... it’s never on their agenda.”*
- *“Generally there is a shortage of young people wanting to pursue it as a career. Town planning is just not on the agenda.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for (Over next 3 years)

Groundworkers: Candidates expect rapid progression, avoiding manual work. Perception that “wet trades” are low status.

- *“Nobody wants to do the wet trade work... they all think they’re above it.”*

Multi trade operatives: Small firms increasingly need flexible workers who can handle a range of tasks rather than single specialisms. Increasing demand for flexible workers. Small firms need staff who can work across multiple trades.

- *“They are really crying out for multi trades like Level 2 NVQ.”*

Plant maintenance engineers: These hybrid roles fall between sectors and do not neatly align to apprenticeship funding, restricting the talent pipeline. Not classed clearly in funding structures. Current apprenticeship funding rules exclude hybrid roles.

- *“Plant maintenance engineers are not counted by construction and not counted by engineering either.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for (Over next 3 years)

Heritage trades: Demand for specialist heritage work remains high, while new entrants into these crafts are very limited.

- *“Traditional buildings still need those special heritage skills...stonemasonry, heritage windows etc.”*

Ventilation, electrical and digital hybrid roles: The rapid growth of digital tools, automation and sustainability expectations are creating new skills gaps.

- *“The pace of IT is exponential... managers are overwhelmed.”*

Trainers and assessors: Without improving pay and recruitment routes, the shortages already experienced in FE provision are likely to worsen. Expected to worsen as pay gaps widen.

- *“The providers just cannot recruit... lecturers are not paid enough.”*

Potential Priority Occupations

| Construction

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Bricklayers
- Carpenters and Joiners
- Civil Engineers
- Construction and Building Trades
- Construction and Building Trades Supervisors
- Construction Project Managers and Related Professionals
- Construction Operatives (*as Labourers*)
- Groundworkers
- Electricians and Electrical Fitters
- Elementary Construction Occupations
- Metal Working Production and Maintenance Fitters

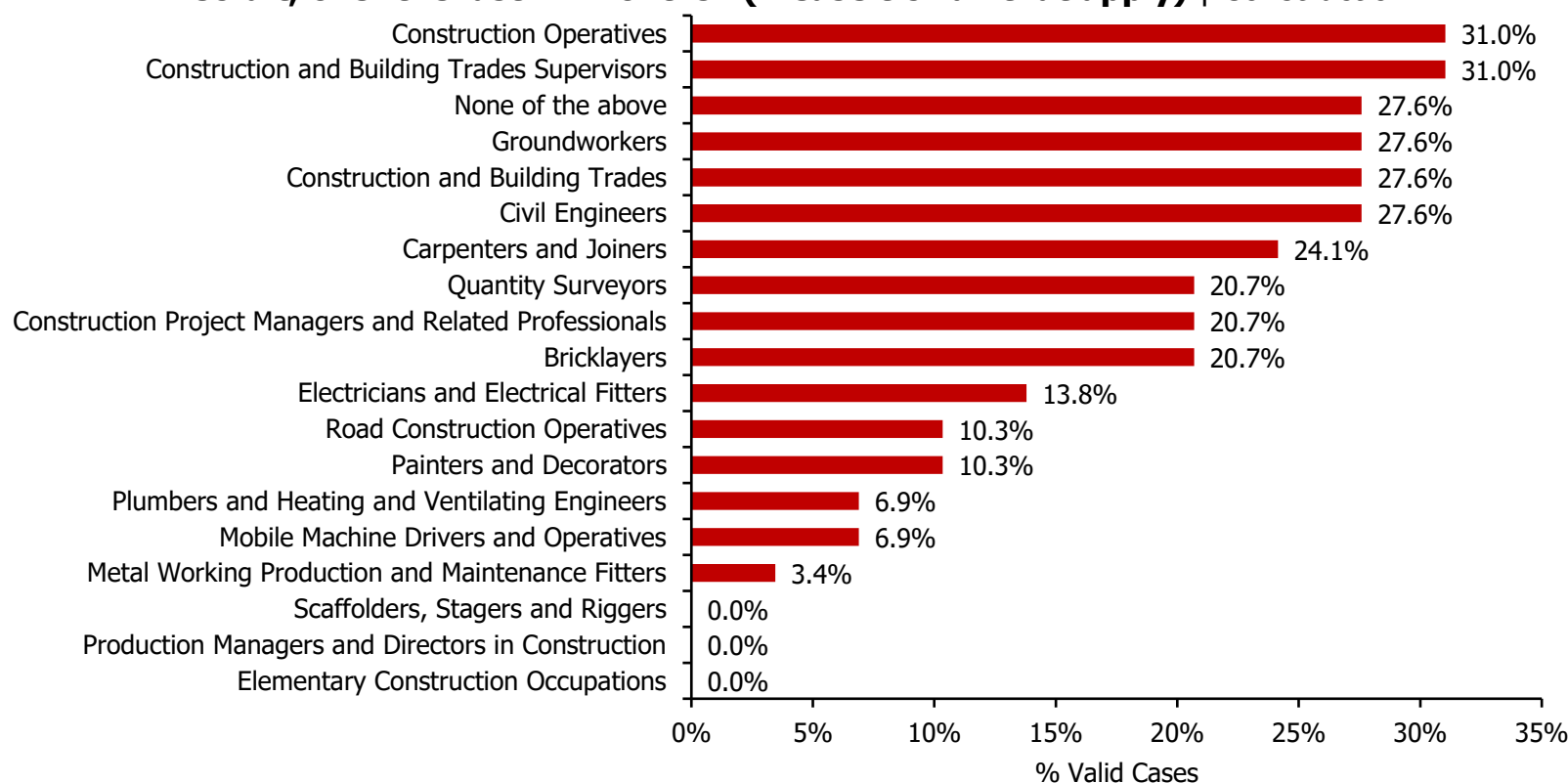
- Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives
- Painters and Decorators
- Plumbers and Heating and Ventilating Engineers
- Production Managers and Directors
- Quantity Surveyors
- Road Construction Operatives
- Scaffolders, Stagers and Riggers

Missing: Roofers, Trainers, heritage skills and planners.

Construction | 'Construction and Building Trades Supervisors' (31%) is the skilled role that was difficult to recruit for more employers than any other, over the last 12 months.

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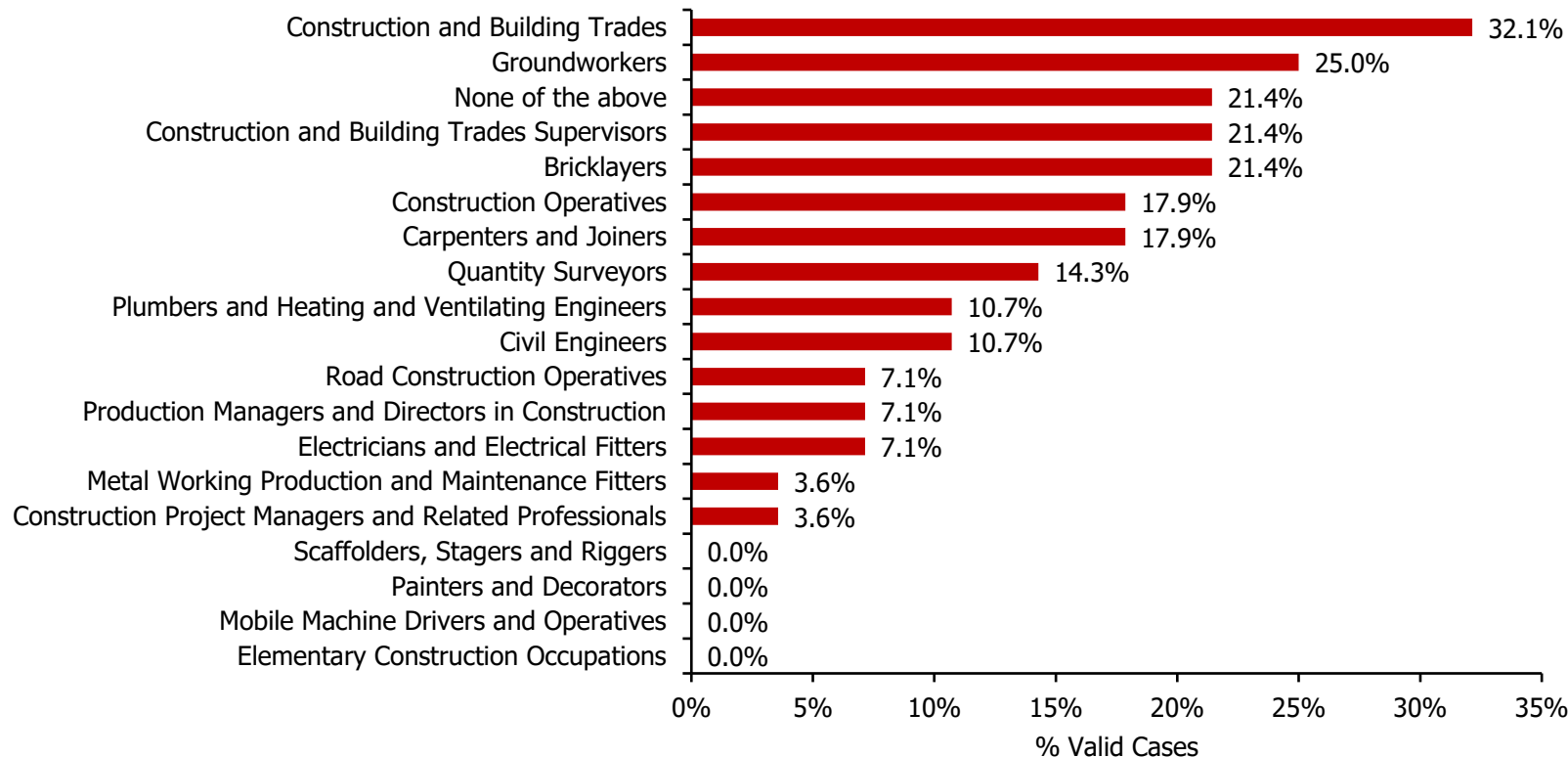
Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, have you found it difficult or very difficult to recruit, over the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply) | Construction



Base: Bricklayers (n=6), Carpenters and Joiners (n=7), Civil Engineers (n=8), Construction and Building Trades (n=8), Construction and Building Trades Supervisors (n=9), Construction Operatives (n=9), Construction Project Managers and Related Professionals (n=6), Electricians and Electrical Fitters (n=4), Elementary Construction Occupations (n=0), Groundworkers (n=8), Metal Working Production and Maintenance Fitters (n=1), Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives (n=2), Painters and Decorators (n=3), Plumbers and Heating and Ventilating Engineers (n=2), Production Managers and Directors in Construction (n=0), Quantity Surveyors (n=6), Road Construction Operatives (n=3), Scaffolders, Stagers and Riggers (n=0), None of the above (n=8), Sample Size = 29

Construction | The relatively generic 'Construction and Building Trades' (32%), alongside the more specific 'Bricklayers' (21%) and 'Carpenters and Joiners' (18%) are predicted to be in the top six most difficult to recruit roles.

Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, do you believe will be hard or very hard to recruit, over the next 3 years? (Please tick all that apply) | Construction



Base: Bricklayers (n=6), Carpenters and Joiners (n=5), Civil Engineers (n=3), Construction and Building Trades (n=9), Construction and Building Trades Supervisors (n=6), Construction Operatives (n=5), Construction Project Managers and Related Professionals (n=1), Electricians and Electrical Fitters (n=2), Elementary Construction Occupations (n=0), Groundworkers (n=7), Metal Working Production and Maintenance Fitters (n=1), Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives (n=0), Painters and Decorators (n=0), Plumbers and Heating and Ventilating Engineers (n=3), Production Managers and Directors in Construction (n=2), Quantity Surveyors (n=4), Road Construction Operatives (n=2), Scaffolders, Stagers and Riggers (n=0), None of the above (n=6), Sample Size = 28

Please list below any other occupations or roles, not referenced in the previous two questions, that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

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Construction other1	Construction other2	Construction other3	Construction other4	Construction other5
Civil Engineering Estimator	Commercial Manager	Setting out Engineers		
General labourer				
HR				
In house designers				
It and AI specialist				
Non skilled labour	Forklift driver			
Plasterer				
Shipping	Brick manufacture	Marketing	Eco	Manager
Temporary BMU riggers	Permanent BMU maintenance engineers	Fall protection System Designers		
Welders				

Skills Gaps | Technical Skills

Estimating and commercial awareness: Accurate estimating is crucial for cost control and profitability but remains a major gap across firms.

Digital systems skills: Workers at all levels increasingly need to navigate complex client platforms and digital tools.

- *“Digital skills... managers are overwhelmed with how much digital support they need.”*

AI and automation basics: Automation is creeping into admin, project management and pricing tasks, creating new upskilling needs.

- *“Anything that is automation... the pace of IT is exponential.”*

Plan reading and site layout: Learners often leave college without the ability to confidently interpret building drawings.

- *“Layout, reading, site planning... big skills gap.”*

Multi trade competence: Firms want versatile workers who can perform a broader range of tasks than traditional single trade roles.

Compliance administration: Administrative competence is becoming essential due to rising paperwork, documentation and accreditation requirements.

- *“The burden of paperwork and compliance is totally disproportionate.”*

Skills Gaps | Soft Skills

Poor communication, professionalism and workplace behaviour: A major soft skills deficit concerns communication, appropriate conduct, and the ability to interact confidently.

- *“It’s the personable skills and the softer skills like being able to answer a phone.”*
- *“They won’t look anybody in the eye... no confidence.”*
- *“There’s such a big age gap between someone who’s 50 and someone who’s 20 in that standard of workplace behaviour.”*
- *“People buy people... you have to have something about you – motivation and personality.”*

Low motivation, work ethic and unreal expectations: Younger workforce lack drive, are easily demotivated and have unrealistic expectations about progression and pay.

- *COVID era entrants have been “conditioned to just enough... keep my head down and don’t say anything, I’ll get through this.”*
- *“Some think they’re worth £250 a day... but can’t read drawings or set a job out.”*
- *“There’s no enthusiasm... even to buy a basic screwdriver.”*
- *Labourers lose motivation quickly: “Motivation’s gone if you’ve been sat for a while waiting.”*

Skills Gaps | Soft Skills

Lack of initiative, problem-solving and independent thinking: New entrants can only complete tasks when told exactly what to do, with very limited problem solving capability.

- *Young workers “want to be told what to do... there is nothing else there,” and they are “ticking a box but just not delivering.”*
- *“They don’t have the problem solving abilities... they’re trained to build new houses, but when they go in to repair something... they’re not able to solve that problem.”*
- *Apprentices are “not skills ready” – they may have technical basics, but cannot apply them independently.*
- *“Everything’s got to be broken down into task specific steps... no initiative.”*

Adaptability, resistance to change and resilience: Many workers, especially those new to the workforce, struggle to adapt to changing expectations, digital systems, and on site variability.

- *“They don’t like change, some of these guys aren’t young... but we need to keep them.”*
- *Younger entrants struggle with adaptability; they are “fine if you give them a task, but there is nothing beyond that.”*

Potential Priority Skills Gaps

| Construction

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Co-ordination of more complex builds
- Skills in Building Information Modelling (BIM)
- Digital modelling
- AI-enabled (planning)
- Net-zero materials knowledge
- Understanding complex building codes, standards and regulations
- Risk management and mitigation
- Communication
- Team leadership
- Creative thinking/problem solving
- Conflict resolution
- Commercial awareness

Training | Training undertaken

Management and leadership training: Several firms have already invested in structured management development for staff progressing from on site roles into supervisory or management positions.

- **Level 5 management and leadership programmes:** *“We are developing level fives at the minute and doing a lot of one to one coaching.”*
- **One-to-one coaching for new managers:** *“There’s a lot of coaching... workflow analysis, interaction with finance, HR, marketing.”*
- **Apprentices:** *“I currently have cross country about 30 apprentices across 11 providers.”*
- **Bricklaying and carpentry:** *“We generally always have a bricklayer and a carpenter apprenticeship.”*
- **Trainee planners and university work-placement students:** *“We have a trainee planner... and we’re doing some work experience with the uni as well.”*

External training partnerships: Some employers have engaged in external partnerships to support employability skills.

- **University-based employability sessions:** employers delivered mock interviews and competency workshops
- *“I used to go into Leeds University and do a seminar for their interview skills... that was really helpful.”*

Training | Training undertaken

Technical training: Mandatory training is delivered to meet on-site compliance requirements, this includes things such as health and safety, site readiness, manual handling, asbestos, confined space awareness, managerial awareness and other compliance modules.

Development of on-the-job training and portfolios: Some organisations have implemented internal training structures to evidence learning and improve the practical readiness of workers.

- **Portfolio based skills development for apprentices and new entrants:** *““One of the things I’ve introduced in the last two years is the portfolios... they have to evidence it.”*
- **Structured on site learning with experienced trades (‘grandfather rights’):** *“Our older guys love teaching the younger ones... passing their skills on.”*

Digital skills and systems training: Not always done through formal routes and courses, companies have been training staff in digital tools due to client requirements. There was an emphasis on ongoing internal support for digital literacy as workloads increase.

Training | Barriers to training

Lack of relevant or local provision: Some professional disciplines, such as planning, have no local training routes at all.

- *“...there are no planning courses in Lincolnshire”*

Funding misalignment: Employers shoulder most of the training burden while receiving a very small share of apprenticeship funding.

- *“We get 5 percent and colleges get 95% of the funding, although 80% of apprenticeship learning is done by us.”*
- *“We get £1,000 pounds but we have 80% of the burden.”*

Excessive cost and fragmentation of accreditation: Multiple accreditation schemes duplicate effort and cost, making compliance difficult to manage.

- *“I have to belong to CHAS and Constructionline and several others... they are the same thing but different.”*
- *“They all do the same thing ... it's just a farce.”*

Training | Barriers to training – experienced tutor shortages, overly academic courses, tick-box over building competence

Providers unable to hire qualified tradespeople as trainers: Low FE salaries mean providers cannot attract skilled tradespeople into teaching roles.

- *“Providers just cannot recruit because trade pay outstrips teaching pay.”*

Overly academic course content not aligned to real work: Theoretical courses often do not prepare learners for practical work in real construction environments.

- *“The course hasn’t moved on in 20 years... massively academic... not preparing them for work.”*

Excessive induction and compliance requirements: Training is often reduced to online box ticking rather than meaningful competency development.

- *We have something like 72 hours of online induction. It is just ticking boxes.”*

Training | Top priorities for training – More meaningful feedback from training providers

Improved and more meaningful feedback from training providers: There needs to be more detailed, contextualised feedback on apprentices' progress. Current feedback is limited to numeric measures (1 – 4) with no explanation. The needs is to understand what apprentices can do, evidence of their skills development and assessment of their performance in real-world contexts. The lack of practical knowledge among some college apprenticeship staff was highlighted as a barrier to meaningful assessment.

- *“Providers made to give us feedback reports... I’m used to literally every one of them produce a page of dialogue contextualising how well they’re doing and evidencing it. I get now 12 measures of a number one to four and that’s all I get.”*
- *“I’d rather somebody who’s been on a site tell me they can do this job rather than somebody who’s got no skills or relevance to the job but telling me how good my apprentice is.”*
- *“80% of an apprenticeship is delivered by us... 20% of them and they get 95% of the funding and we get five. There’s a massive... swing there somewhere.”*

Training | Top priorities for training – much greater focus on measured outcomes

Training provision needs to be measured and designed around job outcomes: There's frustration that some courses do not lead to real employment; courses that consistently do not lead to jobs should be 'dropped' – colleges and universities should be judged on job outcomes. Provision should be aligned to local labour market needs, rather than national "Tier 1" priorities that do not reflect Lincolnshire's realities.

- *"I would love to see the new CTECs, but also all the colleges and universities, any course measured on job outcomes, in the same way that Ofsted goes into school and gives them ratings."*
- *"Drop the courses that are not leading into jobs... If it's not leading to a job drop it and get some courses in that are specific for jobs in the local areas."*
- *"The focus... is to deliver local skills improvements, I mean the clue's in the title, but [you're] not going to improve local skills by looking at tier one."*

Training | Top priorities for training – greater inter-connectivity between experiences on-site and at college

Better integration between training providers and employers: Hands-on, real-world learning opportunities are highly valued. Employers want the ability to visit providers and see apprentices practising skills in safe environments (e.g., brickwork bays). “Grandfather rights” / experienced tradespeople could be used to demonstrate practical skills. Planning in particular, needs more on-the-job and placement opportunities, clearer pathways into the profession and more local training options.

- *“Something else that we all talked on that we really like is our grandfather rights, the old boys, and going into these providers... show you what you can do in a safe environment, because we can’t do that on client sites.”*
- *“It would be really... valuable for an employer to go in and see their apprentice practise this moment.”*
- *“Every trainee planner learns from being in the work environment and shadowing more experienced officers and less so in the educational environment... more meaningful connections with education providers at all levels.”*
- *“I’d love to see a planning course at Lincoln University — I’ll run it.”*

Focus Group | Participant sample

Organisation

Role

Commercial consultancy

Director/Owner

DEA Aviation

Director of Business Development

JD2E

HR and Recruitment Consultancy

Lone Star Analysis

Managing Director

Metrea

Engineering Manager

RAF Coningsby

Squadron Leader

RAF Cranwell

Station Commander

**RAF Cranwell / Air Forces
Leadership Academy**

Group Captain, Head of Leadership Academy

RAF Digby

Station Commander / CO operational unit

RAF Recruiting & Selection

Wing Commander

RAF Waddington

Commander CSW

SRC UK

Business Coordinator

University of Lincoln

Representative as observer

Skill shortages | Underlying issues

Ageing workforce and shrinking ex-military talent supply

- *'A lot of our workforce is much older, there is a bit of a car crash coming, it's (the supply chain) relied a long time on recruiting ex-serving people and that pool just isn't there.'* (RAF)
- Lack of young people entering key trades (e.g. catering, hospitality, logistics) *"When I look at [name of base]... I don't see young people coming through into those industries.'* (RAF)

Competition for the same limited talent pool

- *'You've now got 5 or 6 organisations based in Lincoln all fighting for the same people.'* (Consultant)

Wage inflation driven by this competition

- *'What that does in my experience is it makes the wages go dramatically high, in fact almost unreasonably so.'* (Consultant)

Contracted services pay too low to attract talent

- *'We don't pay very well in our contracted services... the burden it's going to put having to put cleaners through an SC (Security Clearance)... it's not worth it.'* (RAF)

Attracting people to Lincolnshire - the location and perception of it can prove to be a challenge

- *'I don't think it's seen as an attractive place to work... once you're in the job there is a perception that not a lot of other options.'* (Consultant)

Skill shortages | Underlying issues

Work-from-home expectations conflicting with operational needs but WFH has brought staff retention benefits

- *'How do we move from a work-from-home culture to a defend-the-air-base culture and how do we work contracted staff into that?' (RAF)*

Several participants agreed that many candidates are found wanting across several soft or transferable skills

- *"...what I think a lot of the people applying for roles are lacking is actually leadership skills, confidence, self worth communication in a physical reality, critical thinking to analyse the data and the information that's being given to them, a level of resilience and agility. A proactive stance and accountability without needing to be fed everything." (RAF)*
- *"Resilience is definitely an issue, we get some very interesting people but they have the breaking strain of a KitKat." (RAF)*

Security clearance barriers limiting recruitment, particularly to low paid support and contract roles

- *'Some people are just not prepared to go through it... it could take quite a long time.' (RAF)*

Skill shortages | Existing responses to address issues

Engaging Air Cadets and Air Graduates and youth organisations as future talent pipeline

- *'The training they receive can be better than basic training...We do monitor that conversion rate but we do not push it ,as it's a youth organisation...what we would love to do is if we can't get them into the military itself is to get them into defence industry.'* (RAF)

Use of internships and entry-level hiring to build local software engineering capability

- *'For us personally... the internships and the entry-level roles, we do quite well and tend to retain quite well.'* (Supply chain)

Utilising reservists and internal talent for specialist data and analytics roles

- *'One of ours (Data Analysts) is actually a reservist... they've basically carved themselves and made themselves indispensable.'* (RAF)

Developing gap-year and early-entry options to broaden recruitment routes

- *'We are looking at opening gap years within the military... it's a really early formation but it's just a thought for the future.'* (RAF)

Skill shortages | Roles that are difficult to recruit

Core and frontline roles

Pilots & Weapon Systems Operators

- *'Pilots are our issue...Brexit legislation changes have restricted operations in Europe.'* (Supply chain)
- *'We're going to still struggle to recruit the number of pilots we need.'* (RAF)

Licensed Engineers / Aircraft Engineers

- *'Specialist skills... licensed engineers... are our issue.'* (Supply chain)
- *'The BAE Systems tech is being paid double what the RAF technician is... they're leaving after six to eight years...a diluted engineering workforce.'* (RAF)

Not a shortage as such but a new requirement - GCHQ roles in Lincolnshire

- *"New GCHQ recruitment into [base name] for the first time. It's very exciting. Lots of national interest."* (RAF)

Skill shortages | Roles that are difficult to recruit

Key operational roles

Cybersecurity Engineers

- *'Cybersecurity engineers... that pool in Lincolnshire is slim pickings.'* (Supply chain)
- *'There's a national issue for us in cyber.'* (RAF)

IT/Software Engineers (Mid-Senior, esp. C programmers)

- *'We struggle with mid to senior engineers with specific C technical depth.'* (Supply chain)

Data Scientists / Data Analysts

- *'I have one single point of failure who is the data scientist... everyone is trying to tap into that individual.'* (RAF1)
- *'We're desperately short on the data analytics as well.'* (RAF2)

Logistics / Drivers / Fuel & Ops Support

- *'We need drivers... logisticians... fulfilment operators.'* (RAF)

Health & Safety Professionals

- *'Some of the hard gaps that we struggle with is around health and safety...not a shortage of professionals, it's more about what we are prepared to pay.'* (RAF)

Military Doctors and Medics

- *'We are crying out for doctors. They are much easier to recruit when we are at war. The work is felt to be too mundane at other times...We give them training that is second to none.'* (RAF)

Skill shortages | Roles that are difficult to recruit

Support and contracted roles

Governance / Compliance / Auditors

- *'Governance and compliance areas... internal auditors... we struggle.'* (Supply chain)

Infrastructure / Estates / Facilities Specialists

- *'We are a very old station, we have an awful lot of infrastructure challenges... it's having someone with the right expertise.'* (RAF)

Welfare Officers / HIVE Hub / Community Support Roles

- *'We have welfare officers...that again we struggle with.'* (RAF)

Chefs & Catering Staff

- *'They seem to really struggle with chefs for the area.'* (RAF)
- *'I think again nationally... we're short of chefs.'* (RAF)

Hospitality / Accommodation / Hotel Management

- *'I need six hotels worth of experts to run them to the standard we would like...not the standard that we have to accept.'* (RAF)

Cleaning / Real Life Support Roles

- *'They struggle with catering, cleaning...'* (RAF)
- *'Having to put cleaners through an SC... it's not worth it.'* (RAF)

Skill shortages | Roles that are difficult to recruit

General needs

Security-cleared personnel (across multiple roles) (RAF)

Some roles and employers are required to employ UK nationals only

STEM & Technical Graduates

- *'The pool is diminishing... the Air Force is getting smaller... fewer people coming out.'* (Consultant)

Skill shortages | New or emerging roles over the next 3 years

Space-related Engineering / Space Domain Roles – Emerging role over the next 3+ years

- *'I'd be really surprised if we weren't operating more in that domain.'* (RAF)

AI ethics and coaching roles

- *'Someone who understands governance and how to integrate it effectively.'* (RAF)

Potential Priority Occupations

Key:

| Defence

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Aerospace Engineers
- Business and Financial Management Professionals
- Civil Engineers
- Cyber Security Professionals (*“Physical Security too”*)
- Electrical Engineers
- Electronic Engineers
- Engineering Professionals
- Engineering Technicians
- Environment Professionals
- Health and Safety Managers and Officers

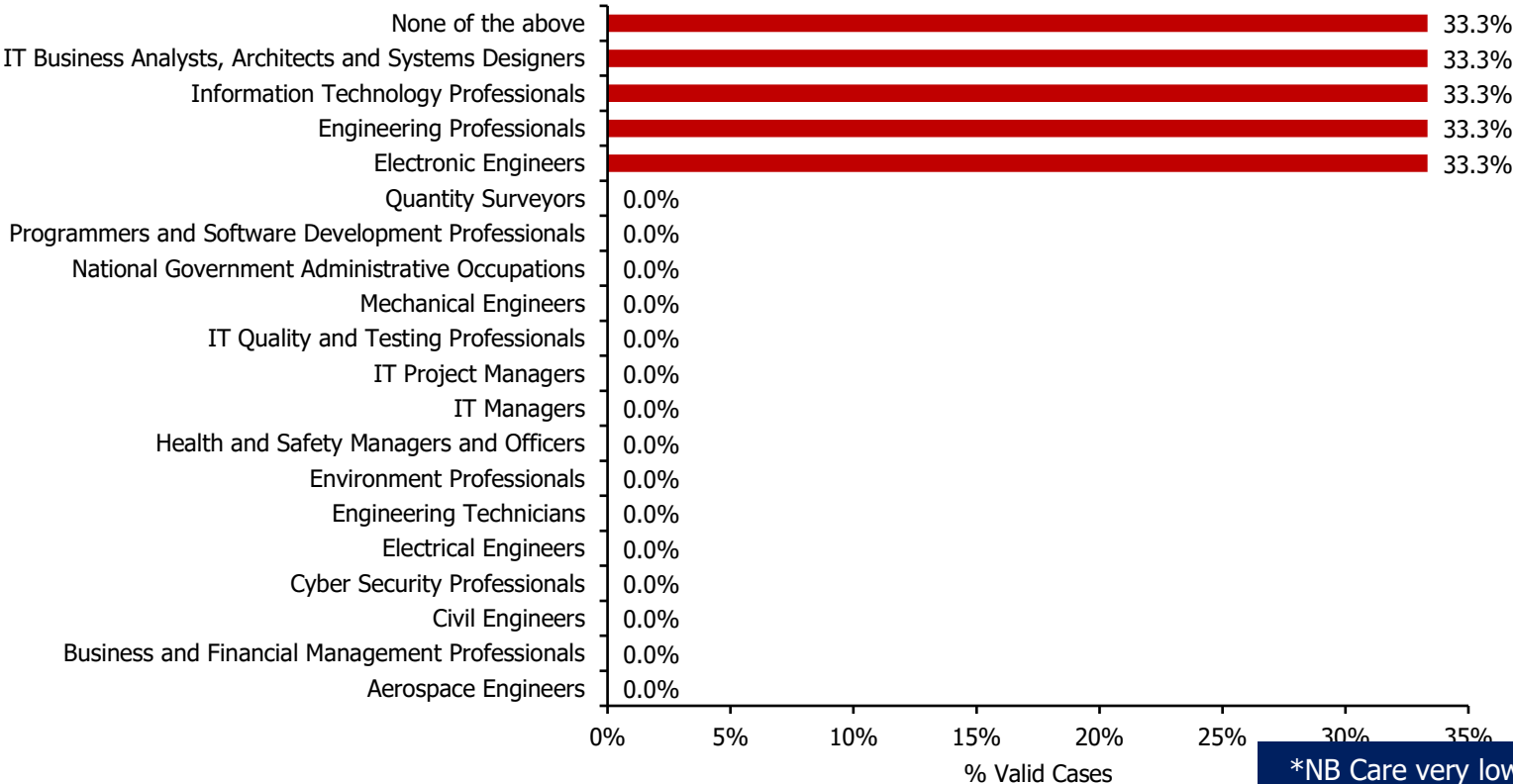
- IT Business Analysts, Architects and Systems Designers
- IT Managers
- IT Project Managers
- IT Quality and Testing Professionals
- Other IT Professionals
- Mechanical Engineers
- National Government Administrative Occupations
- Programmers and Software Development Professionals
- Quantity Surveyors

Service Personnel roles were felt to be missing along with leadership and management roles, with a perceived bias towards blue collar and more cerebral roles.

Inter-industry support roles were missing too.

Defence | Directionally at least, 'IT Business Analysts', 'IT Professionals', 'Engineering Professionals' and 'Electronic Engineers' have each proved difficult to recruit over the last year.

Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, have you found it difficult or very difficult to recruit, over the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply) | Defence



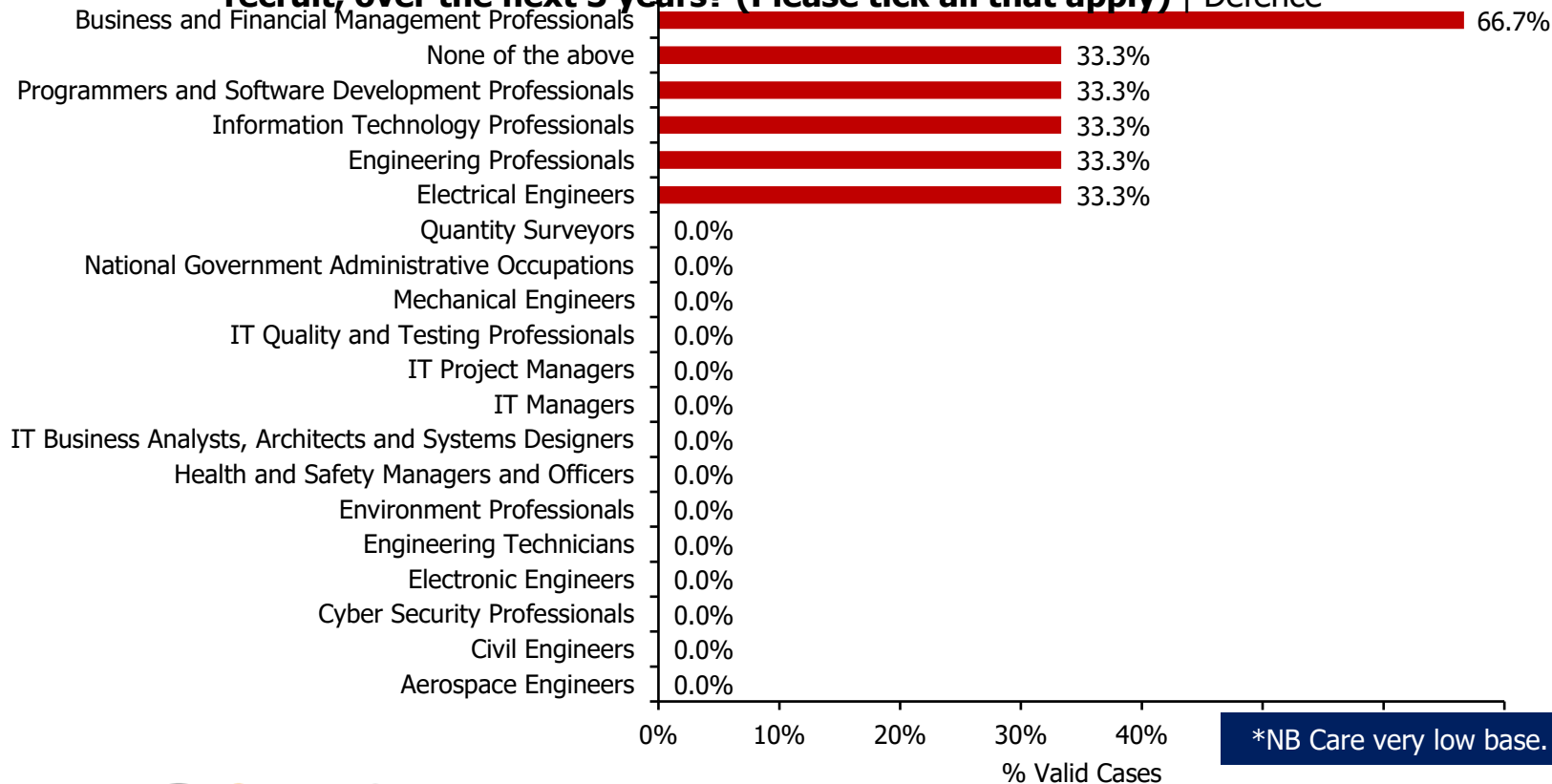
134
Base: Aerospace Engineers (n=0), Business and Financial Management Professionals (n=0), Civil Engineers (n=0), Cyber Security Professionals (n=0), Electrical Engineers (n=0), Electronic Engineers (n=1), Engineering Professionals (n=1), Engineering Technicians (n=0), Environment Professionals (n=0), Health and Safety Managers and Officers (n=0), Information Technology Professionals (n=1), IT Business Analysts, Architects and Systems Designers (n=1), IT Managers (n=0), IT Project Managers (n=0), IT Quality and Testing Professionals (n=0), Mechanical Engineers (n=0), National Government Administrative Occupations (n=0), Programmers and Software Development Professionals (n=0), Quantity Surveyors (n=0), None of the above (n=1), Sample Size = 3

*NB Care very low base.

Defence | Indicatively, 'Business & Fin Mgmt. Prof.' (67%), 'Programmers and Software Dev Prof.', 'IT Prof.', 'Engineering Prof.' and 'Electrical Engineers' (each 33%) may be difficult to recruit over the next 3 years.

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Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, do you believe will be hard or very hard to recruit, over the next 3 years? (Please tick all that apply) | Defence



Base: Aerospace Engineers (n=0), Business and Financial Management Professionals (n=2), Civil Engineers (n=0), Cyber Security Professionals (n=0), Electrical Engineers (n=1), Electronic Engineers (n=0), Engineering Professionals (n=1), Engineering Technicians (n=0), Environment Professionals (n=0), Health and Safety Managers and Officers (n=0), Information Technology Professionals (n=1), IT Business Analysts, Architects and Systems Designers (n=0), IT Managers (n=0), IT Project Managers (n=0), IT Quality and Testing Professionals (n=0), Mechanical Engineers (n=0), National Government Administrative Occupations (n=0), Programmers and Software Development Professionals (n=1), Quantity Surveyors (n=0), None of the above (n=1), Sample Size = 3

Please list below any other occupations or roles, not referenced in the previous two questions, that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

Defence other1	Defence other2
Automation Engineers	Engineering Managers

Skills gaps | Key technical training needs

Leadership and People Management

- “We’ve promoted them to failure, they’ve progressed into being a team leader without any leadership skills.” (Supply chain)

Wider expertise in data analysis to reduce reliance on a tiny number of over-worked specialists

- “It’s that ability to analyse data through modern means that...middle to senior level management will probably need.” (RAF) – NB Use of AI at some bases is restricted at the moment.

Decision-Making, Critical Thinking and Multi-Specialist Collaborative Problem-solving

- “How do we make better decisions and understand risk, that whole decision piece is growing.”
- “...the work that they do is getting even more complicated because of the geopolitical scenarios that we face. But at the same time, we’re going into problem-centric approaches. So, rather than just being a specialist who is amazing at what you do, we are forcing them together, to be able to think laterally about how am I going to solve this problem.” (RAF)

Security Awareness and Risk Management

- “Security is a massive gap and without robust security our networks are highly vulnerable.”

Environmental Awareness and Management

- “Environment...competition for resource and...actually truly understanding the environmental legislation, what you can, what you can’t do, how we move forward, you know, particularly something like the Air Force where we’re burning fuel.” (RAF)

Geo-political and economic awareness

- “Understanding how the world works... So, like world economics, you know, links into logistics, planning and supply chain risk management. If you don’t understand some of those international geopolitical challenges for the defence sector.” (RAF)

Rewarding self-starting skills development

A participant from the RAF explained that:
“The Army have just introduced something called Project McCreath, which effectively improve your skills and develop. As a professional, you will get financially rewarded. You’ll also get a rank promotion and you get to stay in the specialty.”

Skills gaps | Essential and soft skills needs

The importance of essential or soft skills was flagged immediately:

- *“...if you're going to be an aircraft engineer, we teach you how to do that bit. We need people to come with the right attitude and for me it's about that attitude piece...that confidence, communication, teamwork, being able to hold the conversation with another person.” (RAF)*

Communication skills in multiple settings

- *“That ability to stand up in a group setting and express your views or to brief a large audience, the written communication is really important as well.” (RAF)*
- *“You might be a genius, but if you can’t communicate the issues or work with others, that’s a challenge.”*
- *“The ability to discuss when you disagree, rather than take positions, that leads to conflict.” (RAF)*

Psychological work-readiness

- *“...it's almost that wider education about what the world of work looks like, rather than what you wish it was. Because I think that's quite difficult. Sometimes when you sort of get people and go, what did you expect?” (RAF)*

Potential Priority Skills Gaps

| Defence

- High-spec fabrication skills (“Low-spec too”)
- Digital & systems integration skills
- AI(-awareness) “*deeper than awareness*”
- Cyber
- Expertise in designing, testing and integrating large defence platforms
- Logistics planning
- (Supply-chain) risk management “*in a broader sense*”
- Expertise in geospatial and signals intelligence

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Green/Net-Zero awareness and understanding
- Energy resilience planning and management skills
- Emerging platform knowledge, e.g. regarding quantum, autonomy and electronic warfare support
- Project leadership (“*and managing people*”)
- Export market knowledge

A well-rounded senior employee was thought to need an appreciation of several of the skills here. A concentration on one of these becomes an occupation or specialist role.

Training provision | What is already happening

Building partnerships with local FE/HE institutions for skills alignment

- *'The training and education side— Lincoln University delivers our professional education.'* (RAF)

But some baffling provision procurement decisions appear to have been made too...

- *"Bizarrely, at [RAF Base name in Lincolnshire], Portsmouth Business School deliver our air power studies. Why on earth doesn't Lincoln?...Lincoln provides the Navy's down in Dartmouth quite near Portsmouth. Yeah, it's ridiculous....it does seem that, you know, when we look at the powerhouse that's RAF Lincolnshire, why isn't it Lincoln University that delivers our professional education?"* (RAF)

Expanding cross-sector defence partnerships via local clusters and providers

- *'Initiatives like this and the Defence Security Cluster allow us to have a closer relationship with industry in ways we haven't had before.'* (RAF)

Leveraging civilian training routes and government funding (DfE/Skills England)

- *'There are a number of pathways... military in certain geographical areas get priorities onto those courses, but I can guarantee the military don't know that.'* (HEI)

Encouraging collaboration with industry for placements and shared training

- *'We try to correct it with things like mentoring... getting that little bit of cross-thinking because if you've all learned the same thing it can be a bit narrow.'* (RAF)

Top two priorities for improvement in training and provision

Address the lack of diversity of thought in training provision – different perspectives, lateral placements, left-field mentors...

First Priority

"If you take our logisticians, they go through the same logisticians course you know with probably the same training objectives, mildly updated, that's been in place for many years, and so we don't then have that diversity of thought." (RAF)

Cross map where UK Government funding is at different levels to upskill, as the Military was thought not to tap into this where it could benefit from accessing these resources.

Second Priority

*"I know there are a number of pathways...that actually the military in certain geographical areas because of skills gaps, get prioritised onto those courses. I can guarantee that the military sat in those areas don't know that.
So, actually how do we bring that closer together? Skills England, DfE, industry and military, to be able to plug some of the skills gaps with money that already exists."
(RAF)*

Overview of considerations for the LSIP | Defence

Workforce pipeline constraints

Limited local talent pool, high competition among defence SMEs, and reduced inflow to the supply chain from shrinking Armed Forces workforce.

Engineering & Technical roles

- Shortages in aircraft engineers, licensed engineers, networking/IT programmers, C-language engineers, and those capable of repairing rather than only replacing components.

Cyber & Security roles

- High demand for cyber engineers, security-cleared personnel, and physical/technical security specialists; long SC vetting times worsen shortages.

Project & Programme Management

- Difficulty sourcing project managers with required security clearance who can be physically based in Greater Lincolnshire.

Data Analytics & AI

- Severe shortages of data analysts/data scientists supporting intelligence, analytics, and decision-making.

Leadership, Communication & Resilience

- Widespread gaps in communication skills, critical thinking, confidence, and the ability to work in diverse teams.

Infrastructure, Logistics & Real-Life Support

- Gaps in chefs, catering staff, cleaning, accommodation support, and facilities managers across RAF stations.

STEM & Future Technologies

- Need for skills in space, robotics/automation, environmental technologies, additive manufacturing, and AI-ethics/governance.

4.5 Digital and Technology

Focus Group | Participant sample

Chief Marketing Officer

- Digital and AI skills training provider

Director

- Technical design, consultancy and implementation for film, TV and music industry

Founder

- Newly established company focusing on SME digital education, generative AI, responsible AI, and ethical AI implementation.

Director

- Software company for private healthcare market
- 108 staff – 50% of the team is technical staff

CEO

- Digital and AI skills training provider
- 23 employees
- Also runs an incubator supporting ~14 tech startups with £5m+ raised through SEIS/EIS

Careers and Employability Lead

- NHS Lincolnshire Trust
- 15,000 employees
- Strong focus on developing digital technologies and roles within the health sector.

Director

- Mental health support
- 4 full time staff, as well as part-time

Skill shortages | Underlying issues

Education not keeping pace with industry needs: Universities and training providers are not adapting quickly enough to changes in technology, especially AI, resulting in graduates lacking real-world, applied and work-ready skills.

- *“We want the students to be able to demonstrate these kind of skills, but... the development of the content, the curriculum changes... we are far behind.”*
- *“People coming straight from university... weren’t being educated to a level where they could produce commercial code.”*

Lack of work readiness and soft skills: New entrants often lack essential behaviours such as communication, resilience, self-management and teamwork, making them unprepared for the expectations of modern workplaces.

- *“Their soft skill attainment is probably quite a bit lower... things like two-way conversation, understanding tasks, completing tasks... those gaps still remain true.”*
- *“One of the biggest problems... is... their ability to be able to fail and have the self-belief to... get back up after that.”*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues

Rapid technological change outpacing workforce capability: AI, automation, robotics, cybersecurity, data engineering and emerging fields like quantum and drone tech are evolving faster than organisations can build talent pipelines for them.

- *“AI has already changed our... business functioning... the job market also rapidly evolves.”*
- *“What you needed engineers 6 months ago for... you don’t need a board now.”*

Industry preference for experienced mid-level talent over juniors: Due to rising costs, employers are less willing to take on inexperienced staff; instead, they seek mid-level hires who can deliver immediately; exacerbating shortages at the middle tier.

- *“Employers much more prefer now to have work-ready talent... hiring mid-level people who... can land and complete the work straight away.”*
- *“Newly trained software developers aren’t being taken into those roles... employers want... people that are further along.”*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues

Organisational resistance to technological change: Several sectors, particularly the NHS, struggle with cultural resistance, low confidence in technology, and internal gridlock, preventing effective adoption of new tools and increasing demand for specialist support roles.

- *“One of the big issues... is people’s lack of faith in AI... we have a lot of organisational gridlock issues.”*
- *“Things have always been done a certain way... getting that sort of allowing themselves to make that change... is probably the biggest issue.”*

Insufficient exposure to real-world tools, data and commercial context: Even when technical skills exist, graduates and early-career staff often lack business-critical competencies such as working with data, interpreting analytics, and applying technologies in organisational contexts.

- *“There was... a gap when it came to reporting and analytics and financial information, and how to use that in a business context.”*
- *“How many AI tools... contextualised knowledge can be transferred into applying directly to the business context... there is a massive big question mark.”*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues

Limited local talent pipelines for specialised or emerging roles: Sectors such as robotics, cybersecurity, immersive media, and drone technologies report that talent either must be recruited internationally or is not being trained locally at all.

- *“A lot of the specialists... [in robotic surgery] come from abroad.”*
- *“Drone technology is really popular in China... I have not seen widespread educational provisions here.”*

Rising expectations for digital literacy across all roles: Digital skills are no longer confined to technical occupations; all roles increasingly require fluency with tools, AI-assisted workflows, analytics and hybrid work practices but many workers lack baseline capability.

- *“The divide is getting bigger and bigger... digital literacy and AI literacy.”*
- *“It is those base-level roles that we’re struggling to get people to come in to... because it’s not seen as an exciting place to have a digital career.”*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Mid-level Software Developers: There's a strong demand for mid-level developers, but a lack of candidates who can bridge the gap between newly trained juniors and experienced developers.

- *"The big one we're seeing... is the sort of middle ground in software development."*
- *"Newly trained software developers aren't... being taken into those roles... employers want to have software developers that are coming in that are further along."*

AI-literacy roles/code review capability: Adoption in AI-assisted coding means they need developers who can understand, interpret and quality-check AI generated code, which are skills that current graduates often lack.

- *"People are requesting mid-levels that are getting a lot of the AI to do the code, and then they're just simply doing code review."*
- *"We're going to have a gap between those that understand the AI-produced code, and then how to... how to review AI code."*

Digital literacy: There's a widening gap between what universities teach and what businesses need particularly around AI, contextualized digital skills and readiness for the workplace.

- *"The divide is getting bigger and bigger... universities are struggling... putting the AI skills into the real business context, we are far behind."*
- *"There was an indication of shortage... a 156% rise of skills shortage."*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

IT Project Managers: Technical project roles requiring understanding of data, reporting, and financial metrics are harder to fill. Newer entrants lack confidence using analytics and finance in business decision-making.

- *There was also a gap when it came to things like reporting and analytics and financial information, and how to use that in a business context.”*
- *“That element of financial side of things was something that we did focus on quite heavily...”*

Compliance/commercial administrators: Some organisations struggle more with specialist administrative roles than technical ones, particularly navigating government frameworks and commercial compliance processes.

- *“The area that we've found hardest to employ people into is more on the commercial, compliance side.”“*
- *“Getting someone to help out with... God knows how many forms that we need to fill in to be compliant with Crown Commercial Services.”*

Junior-level digital roles: The NHS struggles to attract entry-level digital candidates; roles are not perceived as exciting, leading to low-quality applicant pools despite a willingness to “grow your own”.

- *“It is those base-level roles that we're struggling to get people to come in...”*
- *“The quality of applicants that we get for those base-level roles are not great.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for over next 3 years

Advanced AI and automation specialists: Roles such as automation engineers, AI-assisted workflow designers, and agentic-AI specialists.

- *“Automation engineers... understanding what the human needs to do, but then also how to automate workflows going forward.”*
- *“Smart people doing smart stuff... letting the robotic processes... Agentic AI... augment processes.”*

Cybersecurity and secure-coding professionals: The accelerating use of AI-generated code increases risk, creating strong demand for cyber security, secure coding, and penetration testing expertise.

- *“One is cyber security... understanding things like pen testing... making sure... any applications... are secure.”*
- *“Cybersec is going to become more important as more crappy code's produced.”*

Data, data engineering and data visualization specialists: As automation increases, data roles -from entry-level data handlers to PhD-level data scientists - will become more critical. A major gap exists between education and industry expectations.

- *“Data can sit with... a data engineer... data input... or a PhD doing deep data research.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for over next 3 years

AI governance, compliance and implementation roles: Compliance with AI regulation (e.g., EU AI Act) will create shortages in governance and risk-based roles.

- *“Do we have enough talents to actually... adopt around compliance, around implementation...?”*
- *“This type of job roles and responsibilities, we need to really address.”*

Emerging tech roles (quantum, drones, immersive tech): New roles in quantum computing, drone operations, low-altitude economy, immersive media, and sensor-rich environments.

- *“One of the things the UK is leading at the moment is quantum... that just turns the whole world upside down... you stop needing mathematicians and start needing physicists.”*
- *“The low-altitude economy... drone technology... is really popular... I have not seen... widespread... educational provisions here.”*

Specialist healthcare technology roles (robotics, AI enabled clinical tech): Surgical robotics, high-end medical automation and digital health tech require specialised talent often recruited internationally.

- *“We’re doing a lot of work... with robots that perform surgery. A lot of the specialists... come from abroad.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for over next 3 years

AI adoption, change management and digital confidence roles: Especially in NHS/public sector: roles focused on staff confidence, AI literacy, process change, and cultural readiness.

- *“We’ll be wanting to recruit internal staff that are specifically focused on AI usage.”*
- *“One of the big issues is people’s lack of faith in AI.”*

Human centred skills: communication, soft skills & human–AI interface: Growing demand for roles requiring strong interpersonal skills, interpretation of AI outputs, human-in-the-loop decision making.

- *“How people can be more human... that interface with the humans is going to become more and more of a skill.”*
- *“Soft skills are going to become more and more important... as AI speeds up a lot of the technical elements.”*

Potential Priority Occupations

| Digital & Technology

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Assemblers (electrical and Electronic Products)
- CAD, Drawing and Architectural Technicians
- Call and Contact Centre Occupations
- Computer System and Equipment Installers and Services
- Cyber Security Professionals
- Database Administrations and Web Content Technicians
- Graphic and Multimedia Designers
- IT Directors
- IT Business Analysts, Architects and System Designers
- IT Managers
- IT Operations Technicians
- IT Project Managers
- IT Quality and Testing Professionals
- IT User Support Technicians

- Other IT Professionals
- Newspaper, Periodical and Broadcast Editors
- Photographers, Audio-visual and Broadcasting Equipment Operators
- Programmers and Software Development Professionals
- Telecoms and Related Network Installers and Repairers

"... the way technology's moving, a lot of these roles are either no longer there, or they've been changed, or helped, or morphed, however you want to describe it."

"I don't think anyone in our organization would recognise any of those roles...even down to the sense that, you know, the developers call themselves engineers now."

"if you went on Indeed or something, and looking for one, you wouldn't be able to find any of those today."

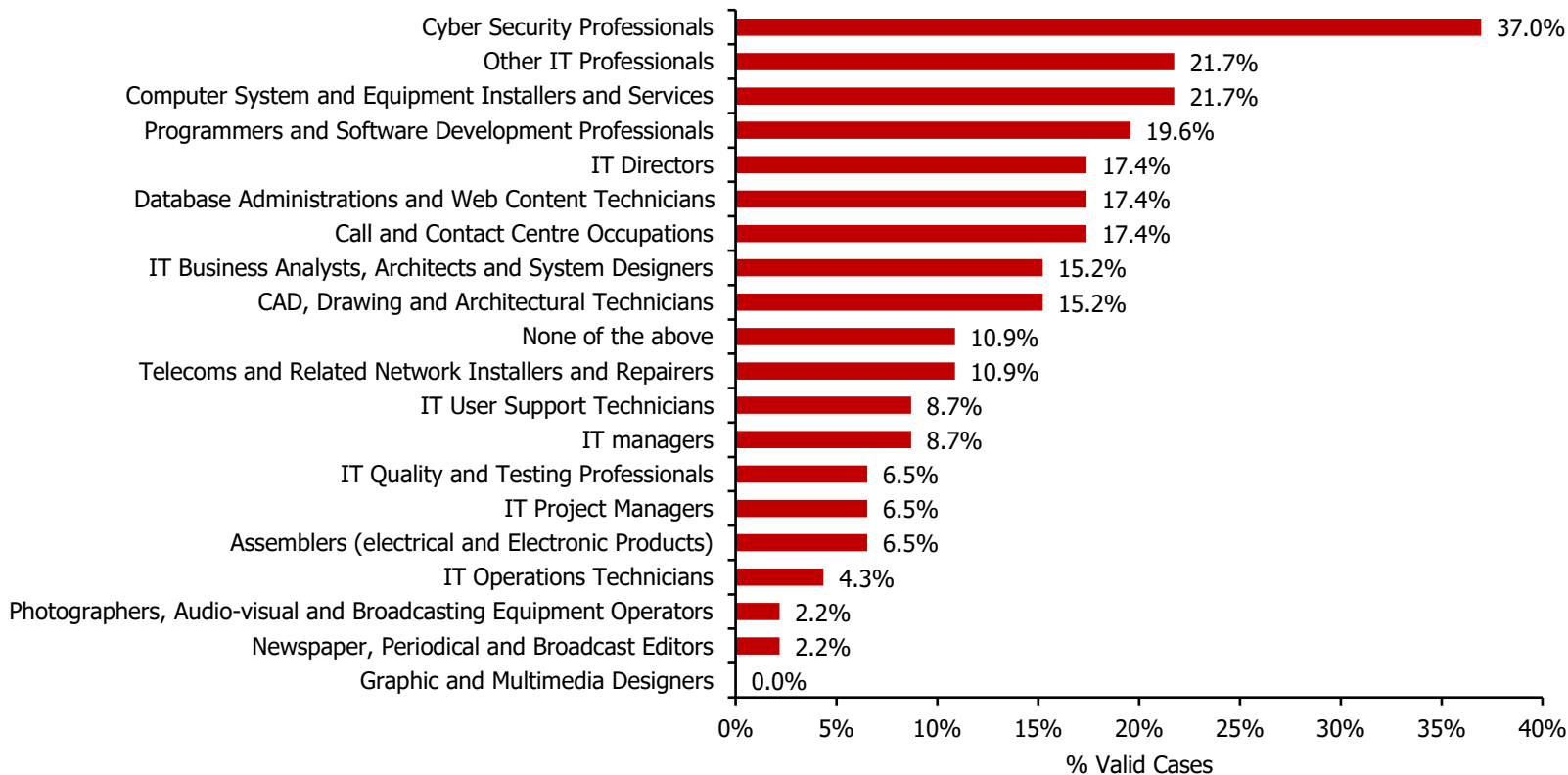
Not only have the roles evolved but the language used has changed.

Missing:

- Digital marketing – story teller, influencer, content creator
- Data scientists

Digital & Tech | 'Cyber Security Professionals' (37%) by a distance have most widely been hard to recruit over the last 12 months.

Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, have you found it difficult or very difficult to recruit, over the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply) | Digital & Tech



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Base: Assemblers (electrical and Electronic Products) (n=3), CAD, Drawing and Architectural Technicians (n=7), Call and Contact Centre Occupations (n=8), Computer System and Equipment Installers and Services (n=10), Cyber Security Professionals (n=17), Database Administrations and Web Content Technicians (n=8), Graphic and Multimedia Designers (n=0), IT Directors (n=8), IT Business Analysts, Architects and System Designers (n=7), IT managers (n=4), IT Operations Technicians (n=2), IT Project Managers (n=3), IT Quality and Testing Professionals (n=3), IT User Support Technicians (n=4), Other IT Professionals (n=10), Newspaper, Periodical and Broadcast Editors (n=1), Photographers, Audio-visual and Broadcasting Equipment Operators (n=1), Programmers and Software Development Professionals (n=9), Telecoms and Related Network Installers and Repairers (n=5), None of the above (n=5), Sample Size = 46

Digital & Tech | The research suggests that the skills shortage in 'Cyber Security Professionals' is likely to widen further over the next 3 years to 43% of employers, with 'Programmers & Software Dev. Prof.' (20%) and 'CAD...Technicians' (20%), tough too.

156

Base: Assemblers (electrical and Electronic Products) (n=8), CAD, Drawing and Architectural Technicians (n=9), Call and Contact Centre Occupations (n=4), Computer System and Equipment Installers and Services (n=8), Cyber Security Professionals (n=20), Database Administrations and Web Content Technicians (n=4), Graphic and Multimedia Designers (n=2), IT Directors (n=8), IT Business Analysts, Architects and System Designers (n=7), IT managers (n=4), IT Operations Technicians (n=3), IT Project Managers (n=3), IT Quality and Testing Professionals (n=5), IT User Support Technicians (n=3), Other IT Professionals (n=5), Newspaper, Periodical and Broadcast Editors (n=1), Photographers, Audio-visual and Broadcasting Equipment Operators (n=2), Programmers and Software Development Professionals (n=9), Telecoms and Related Network Installers and Repairers (n=6), None of the above (n=5), Sample Size = 46



Please list below any other occupations or roles, not referenced in the previous two questions, that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

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Digital & Tech other1	Digital & Tech other2	Digital & Tech other3	Digital & Tech other4	Digital & Tech other5
A new ceo (our old on died)				
Account manager				
AI and machine learning engineers				
AI based Engineering draftspeople				
AI developer	ML engineers	Desktop support engineers		
AI Integration Experts in Non-Tech Sectors	AI/ML Engineers, MLOps Engineers, AI Infrastructure Architects	Go-to-Market (GTM) Engineer	AI Governance & Assurance Roles	Livestream E-commerce Hosts and Strategists
AI tools				
AI/ML Engineers	Software Developers / Engineers (all levels)	IT infrastructure specialist	Data Scientists & Analysts	Cloud Architect
Cloud Infrastructure and Systems Integration Specialists – professionals with hands-on experience integrating legacy systems with modern cloud platforms, while ensuring security, compliance, and operational continuity, have been particularly difficult to recruit and are expected to remain scarce.				
Computer engineering				
Cybersecurity specialists	Data scientist/data engineers	Quantity surveyors	Supply chain planners	Cloud infrasturcture engineers
Data scientists/Data Analysts	UX/UI designers	Cloud Architects/Engineers	DevOps Engineers	Renewable energy specialist
Database administrators	Web content technicians			
Doctors	lawyers			
Finance and accounting professionals	Compliance and regulatory specialists	Operations and supply-chain coordinators	Skilled administrative and executive assistants	
Financial analyst	Auditors			
HR Analytics & Workforce Planning Specialist	Quality Control Specialist			
HR Analytics & Workforce Planning Specialist				
Information storer				
IT Project Managers and Delivery Managers	Business Analysts	Product Managers/Owners	Site Reliability Engineers (SREs)	Quality Assurance (QA) Automation Engineers
Metaverse research scientist	Climate impact analst	Digital reputation defender		
On-Desk engineers				
presentation				
Project manager	Account			
Project Managers (Digital / IT Projects)	Business Analysts	Software Developers (Full-Stack / Mobile)	DevOps Engineers	Digital Marketing Specialists
project managers with industry specific experience	healthcare professionals			
Reception staff	Customer support			
Skill trade	Technology specialist	Educational role	Scientific	
Skilled data analytics and data scientists	Technical project managers			
Skilled transdespeople, senior technicians, specialist engineers compliance leads, and experience supervisors.				
Social Media Manager				
Software engineer				
Software Engineers (particularly AI/ML, data, and cloud specialists)	Skilled trade and technical maintenance role	Digital product manager	Senior leaders with both commercial and people leadership capabilities	Data Analysts and Data Scientists
Software Engineers / Developers (all levels)	AI and machine learning engineers	Cloud Architect	Data scientist and analyst	Network and infrastructures engineer
tea\cger				
Telecom	Security	Amain tech		

Skill gaps | Technical Skills

Keeping pace with emerging technologies: New technologies and trends – AI, automation, cloud, coding etc. means staff require continuous upskilling.

- *“We have to be knowledgeable before anybody else’s, so that we can create the courses, build the courses, and then deliver on the courses.”*

Subject matter expertise in technology implementation: Shortage of people who can explain *why* technology matters – the impact, investment and gain. There’s people who can adopt the tech but not use it to its full potential in elevating its value, ROI and business impact.

- *“What we’re not good at... is subject matter experts. Why does it all matter? What is AI, automation, new technology bringing to the party?”*

Applied digital marketing and AI related skills: shift from SEO to Large Language Model (LLM) based marketing requires updated digital capability. Many businesses are behind the curve compared to educators who have been preparing for this shift

- *“A great example is the change... from SEO into LMM... and how that is changing how marketers need to work.”*

Skill gaps | Technical Skills

Understanding and applying advanced technologies (AI, automation, agentic systems): Lack awareness of what AI enabled processes already exist and how to adopt them effectively.

- *“Exactly what is it doing?... Is it bringing... augmenting... simplifying processes... allowing smaller businesses to scale up quicker?”*

Lifelong learning capability: Strong capability and mindset for continuous learning is needed, especially in fast-moving tech areas.

- *“We can't really stop from learning, and we really need to send this message quite strongly to influence... the younger talents.”*
- *“Learning doesn't stop when you finish the university degree. If anything, it actually should extend... above and beyond that particular stage of your life.”*

Skill gaps | Soft Skills

Commercial awareness and business acumen: Employees often lack appreciation of how their roles fits into organisation goals, financials and performance.

- *“You need to understand how your role fits into the bigger picture of the organisation, and what value you bring.”*
- *“They need to understand the business acumen, and I think that is missing.”*

Basic life and financial literacy skills: Younger employees often join the workforce without essential financial knowledge (budgeting, credit, mortgages), requiring organisations to provide training to support wellbeing and reduce future stress.

- *“We have to put on external training courses to teach people the basics around finance... how mortgages work... how a credit card works.”*
- *“They're just not getting taught any of this... and we do that from a perspective of looking after staff and mental health.”*

Skill gaps | Soft Skills

Cultural intelligence and cross organisation communication: Employees need stronger skills in understanding internal culture and navigating external, cross organisation, and cross sector cultures (e.g., B2B, digital/physical hybrid working).

- *““This cultural skills is not only internal... but also the external culture, organization to organization... beyond the local geographical area.”*

Storytelling and communicating impact: There is a gap in the ability to tell compelling, accurate stories about work, innovations, and processes. This now sits at the intersection of technical and soft skills

- *“Storytelling... should be seen nowadays as part of the technical skills.”*
- *“Good stories will not be known unless someone tells about it... the stories will become more compelling if the people who directly experience the process tell them.”*

Curiosity and independent learning: A lack of curiosity limits innovations – employees need to bring broader interested and perspectives into their work which can spark new thinking.

- *“Whilst we give people time for job-specific training... it's actually building up the curiosity.”*
- *“Why aren't the schools going out and talking to [businesses]... there are so many great businesses out there... if we could create an environment where they could come together and learn from one another.”*

Potential Priority Skills Gaps

Key:

| Digital & Technology

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- AI and Machine Learning expertise
- AI integration skills
- AI tool operationalisation skills
- Secure system design and cryptography skills
- Digital forensics skills
- Advanced data analytics and modelling skills
- Advanced statistics skills
- Analytical thinking skills
- Software development expertise in languages like Python, JavaScript, C++, and cloud-native development
- Cloud computing and infrastructure skills including competence in AWS, Azure, Google Cloud Platform and related DevOps practices
- Skills in automation technologies, orchestration tools and digital system controls
- Communication skills
- Leadership and Management

All relevant but there are some that need to be added or are missing. Needs to be broken down further rather than just the overarching "communication skills" for example.

To add:

- Instructional design thinking skills, or instructional designing skills – bring strategic thinking ahead of actioning

Missing:

- Data Science
- Quantum – has potential to be a lot more impactful than AI
- UX Design

Need to be able to see what the impact of the roles are on the strategic needs of the business and how it delivers growth or change.

Training | Existing provision – Mandatory and compliance

Mandatory and compliance training: Common to most organisations, particularly those working with vulnerable groups, healthcare or education.

- Safeguarding (for children, young people, and adults)
- Data protection and GDPR (often at a higher level due to regulatory requirements)
- Health & safety compliance
- Best practice in the workplace

These are typically delivered through:

- Internal systems and digital learning platforms
- External providers where specialist compliance expertise is needed

“we have a very robust mandatory training... some of which, though, is government-specified, in terms of safeguarding perspective, and compliance with people's data, more so than just GDPR.”

Training | Existing provision – Technical and specialist

Technical, professional and specialist training: Specialist upskilling depending on industry needs.

- Technical qualifications (e.g., security exams, Microsoft certifications)
- IT and digital skills development
- Clinical training for NHS-related staff
- Apprenticeships across varied disciplines, supported by external providers

Some organisations highlighted developing apprenticeship schemes with accredited outcomes (e.g., City & Guilds diplomas) to support both workforce development and career progression.

- *“If someone wants to go up and do security exams... with rotating through the Microsoft stuff, they might want to do that self-learning or they might want a course, and we’ll go out for that.”*
- *“We have a massive apprenticeship offer as well... and we use a range of external providers for that.”*
- *“I’ve also worked with and developed apprenticeship schemes... so that they’ve got accredited qualifications for themselves going forward.”*

Training | Existing provision – L&M

Leadership and management training: Recurring investment across employers

- Leadership development programmes for SLT (senior leadership teams)
- Executive-level coaching to support progression into C-suite roles
- HR-related training such as people management, documentation standards, and employee relations

Often these programmes:

- Are initially designed with external consultancy expertise
- Transition to internal delivery by in-house learning & development teams

“Leadership programs for senior executives... was run by an external consultancy company... geared at taking SLT into C-suite level training.”

“A lot of the stuff around leadership and management, we would work with an external provider to pull the course together, but then our L&D department would repeat that going forward.”

Training | Existing provision – Wellbeing and support

Inclusivity, mental health and pastoral training: This ensures staff can identify early signs of difficulty and provide appropriate support.

Training areas include:

- Mental health awareness and recognising behavioural changes
- Creating inclusive learning and working environments
- Skills for interpreting online learner behaviours (for remote teaching)
- Supporting diverse groups of participants

“A lot of mental health and supporting and recognising changes in colleague behaviour... trying to make it a very inclusive... our training is very much about inclusivity.”

“Our tutors are trained in reading mannerisms and behaviours on screen to identify if any of our learners are having difficulties.”

“Ensuring that everybody has a positive experience, and that everybody is an individual.”

Training | Barriers to training

Cost and funding constraints:

- *“Some of the compliance trainings... could actually cost a lot... if employers want to send their employee to attend courses over £1,000... that could potentially be a cost-related barrier.”*

Quality and consistency of local providers: The area’s local provision is perceived as insufficient, in specialism such as: finance, law, accountancy, patents and R&D, in these instances national providers are relied on.

- *“The providers that we've got inside Lincolnshire... haven't given us what we needed at the end.”*
- *“Unfortunately, Lincoln University... we weren’t happy with some of the candidates that came out previously.”*

Limited local training offer: Local “trailblazer” companies working in agri-tech, defence, satellite imaging, and exporting create demand for more advanced technical skills. Their presence fosters more innovative approaches to training and capability-building within the region, even though these success stories aren’t widely shared.

- *“Given that we don’t have a lot of higher education providers in Lincolnshire, it's not like we’ve got loads to choose from.”*

Training | Barriers to training

Geographic accessibility challenges:

- *“I can get to London quicker than I can get to Boston or Skegness... so my first reaction, if I can't get it in Lincoln, would be to get on the train and go down to London for it.”*
- *“I think there's a regional issue... very quickly, if it's not in your bubble, you are having to travel to somewhere like London.”*

Suitability and relevance of courses:

- *“We need to put some clinical staff through a piece of training... and we've gone outside of the county because the providers... haven't given us what we needed.”*

Training | Perceived improvements or innovation in training

Growth of high-quality local training providers: Lincolnshire has seen the emergence of strong independent providers (e.g., Newland Partners, Pitorum HR) offering effective and responsive training options for SMEs. These are viewed as reliable, high-quality sources for general and HR-related training needs.

- *“So, we have found some really, really good independent providers in Lincolnshire.”*

Strategic use of national programs and external specialists: There’s areas local provision is insufficient, such as finance, law, accountancy, patents and R&D, in these instances national providers are relied on.

- *“For things like finance and stuff like that, we go out of the county because there isn't enough of us in the county to make it worthwhile anyone's time to.”*

Innovation-led skills development driven by high-tech SMEs: Local “trailblazer” companies working in agri-tech, defence, satellite imaging, and exporting create demand for more advanced technical skills. Their presence fosters more innovative approaches to training and capability-building within the region, even though these success stories aren’t widely shared.

- *“Within Lincolnshire, we do have some SMEs that have actually... they are the trailblazers in terms of technology, as well as forward-thinking type of businesses in agriculture, in defence.”*

Training | Top priorities for improving training provision

Soft skills and workplace readiness: Building communication, teamwork, resilience, curiosity, and understanding of how workplaces function to prepare learners for fast-changing environments.

- *“All we need is those soft skills, and that resilience with them, and that curiosity.”*

Accessible and flexible training: Training should be easy to access, delivered in varied formats, and scheduled to suit working adults, parents, and young people, so it integrates smoothly into real life.

- *“The training need to be accessible”*
- *“How can we vary this up, so that it's integrated into your working week in an easy way.”*

Training | Top priorities for improving training provision

Cross-disciplinary and applied learning: Learners need more opportunities to work on real business challenges, collaborate across subject areas, and develop adaptable, multi-skilled “digital unicorn” capabilities.

- *“It's still pretty much... subject knowledge-based... but more importantly, that kind of cross-disciplinary, applied, flexibility, willingness, curiosity.”*
- *“You have to be willing to transform into that digital unicorn.”*

Future-focused digital capability (AI, marketing, mental health tech):

Skills development should include digital marketing, practical AI use, and emerging applications such as AI tools supporting mental health and out-of-hours support.

- *“Some kind of AI chat box to help people... something in the evening or weekend.”*
- *“Online platforms... to help people when the officers are not there.”*

4.6 Energy Industries

Focus Group | Participant sample

Senior Advisor Business Transformation

- Fuel refinery operation in Greater Lincolnshire with 1,000 employees in the UK
- Member of ECITB Board
- Governor of large multi-site FE provider.

Skills Project Manager

- Engaged in project to build a prototype fusion power plant in West Burton, Greater Lincolnshire
- Staff are slowly migrating to West Burton, with around 200 already located there
- Also has involvement in the STEP Fusion Skills Collaboration.

Communication Manager

- A contractor for a firm awaiting planning consent for an offshore wind farm, 33 miles from the Lincolnshire coast
- Intent is to cable the energy onshore at Anderby Creek to a substation near Spalding
- £5.5bn in funding
- 80 people in project team now, at construction stage 2,000 jobs are anticipated over a 3 year period, kicking off in 2027 if consent is secured
- Planned 400-500 operational and maintenance staff
- Has personally worked in the Energy sector for 18 years

Director of Strategic Communications

- Independent training provider
- Based near Grimsby
- Focus on running apprenticeships and adult skills courses relating to the processing of hazardous materials.
- Has around 70 employees

The **STEP Fusion Skills Collaboration** is a 20-year partnership between the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and the East Midlands Combined County Authority (GLCCA), launched in July 2025 to develop the workforce for the UK's first prototype fusion energy plant, STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production), at West Burton. It focuses on creating high-value jobs, regional training, and apprenticeships, with construction starting in the early 2030s.

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – Long lead times, immense scale, urgency of requirements

- **An ageing workforce in engineering** is thought to mean needing to recruit 2,000 new entrants a year just to replace exits.
- **Very long project lead times that are reliant upon planning consent being granted:** *“...the prototype power plant isn't expected to be operational until the 2040s...we're currently doing a lot of skills mapping exercises.”*
- **Rapid growth in offshore wind in the UK drives a very general need:** *“We're going from 35,000 in the industry now...to 100,000 by 2030. So, we need more of everyone.”*
- **Generating new energy sources from new processing operations does not have an existing resourcing model to follow:** This can put the focus on importing some transferable skills from near neighbour sectors like: oil, gas, nuclear, aviation or defence, this in turn generates a need for transition training. The desire to transition is likely to be very age dependent, with those in their 20s, 30s much more inclined than individuals in their 50s.
- **Urgent requirements for very high volumes in a particular trade, for a very short contracted period on huge projects:** *“Imagine trying to find 1,200 of those skill sets (trades) for an 8-week period - it's very demanding.”* Scale and urgency drives up day rate premiums paid, frequently to a 20% premium or higher.

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – major project inter-dependencies, diversity challenges, inter-sector competition

- **The scale of projects can produce waves of demand or suddenly boost supply** if one or two projects are either put on hold or declined.
- **Fluctuations in major projects can create short term scarcity in Senior Managers** with the relevant experience and competence. Concerns were also expressed regarding a gulf in quality and capability between Gen Y Millennials (born 1981-96) and Gen Z (born 1997-2012) leaders.
- **A view was expressed that the HyMarnham hydrogen production plant near the Trent had struggled with skill shortages:** *“...it's really difficult for the industry get some of these projects over the line, because they just... the skill set's just not there, the people are not there.”*
- **The sector continues to suffer from diversity challenges** both in relation to females and ethnic minorities.
- **The Energy Sector can sometimes be in direct competition with the Marine and Ports & Logistics Sectors for the same skills**, which can amplify scarcity.
- **Providers to the sector habitually struggle to recruit from the industry. due to pay differentials to tutoring.** Fears were voiced by employers that one of the bottlenecks to future training provision, will be the 'teacher-tutor element'.

Skill shortages | Existing responses to address issues – under-way but may be running late and not at sufficient scale?

- **Governor-level involvement in large FE organisation**
- **Offering industry placements**
- **Ex-forces transition programmes**
- **Industry-led STEM workshops in primary and secondary schools:**
“It's been incredibly popular because these schools (Skegness to Spalding) haven't seen that investment before....and they are really glad to have people coming in, and the teachers are glad to have us doing interactive, STEM activities.”
- **Growing regional training capacity in Greater Lincolnshire** - creating the UK's largest welding training centre, and along with the Humber Freeport, currently expanding this facility in a £5 million initiative, which will be opening in the next 8 to 10 weeks
- **The industrial training provider based in the Grimsby area was confident in their outreach and engagement with young people**, highlighting that they received 625 applicants last year for around 150 apprenticeship opportunities. Parents and relatives employed locally in the Energy sector serves to boost both understanding and interest among young people.

NB Because funding is consent-dependent, workforce training or transitioning cannot commence as early as might be desirable, particularly given that some specialist training can span 4-5 years or more.

Skill shortages | Roles that are difficult to recruit

- **Electrical Design Engineers**
- **Advanced Control Specialists**
- **Instrumentation Design Technicians**
- **Rigging Specialists**

Each quite specific roles, not high volume (c. 24 in a large organisation) but hard to fill and in high demand, particularly around the storage and delivery of clean energy.

From a volume of demand perspective, the following roles were referenced:

- **Welders** (particularly in relation to transport and storage)
- **Pipe fitters**
- **Mechanical fitters**
- **Platers**
- **Electricians**

For offshore wind the particular pinch points are thought to include:

- **High Voltage Electricians**
- **Senior Authorised Persons (SAP)**

Senior Authorised Person (SAP) electrical training in the UK prepares experienced engineers for high-voltage (HV) safety, switching operations, and issuing safety documents. Courses, often 4–5 days and City & Guilds accredited, combine theory with practical, realistic switchgear exercises. These programs cover HV safety rules, risk assessment, and legal responsibilities, essential for managing industrial/commercial networks.

Skill shortages | Roles that are difficult to recruit (contd.)

- **Business Development Managers (BDMs):** Who have both the relevant energy user contacts but also an extensive understanding of newer clean energy sources and processes
- **Data Analysis and Digital specialists**

Skill shortages | Occupations likely to become hard to recruit over the next 3 years

Many new roles and job types are emerging in clean energy

- Areas of desirable specialist knowledge that were highlighted, included:
 - **Plasma Physics**
 - **Fusion Engineering**
 - **Magnet Science**
 - **Superconducting Engineering**
 - **Clean Energy Plant Operations**
 - **Commissioning**
 - **Project Management** in technically complex settings, incorporating a knowledge of engineering, fusion, commercial and procurement.

Potential Priority Occupations

Key:

| Energy Industries

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

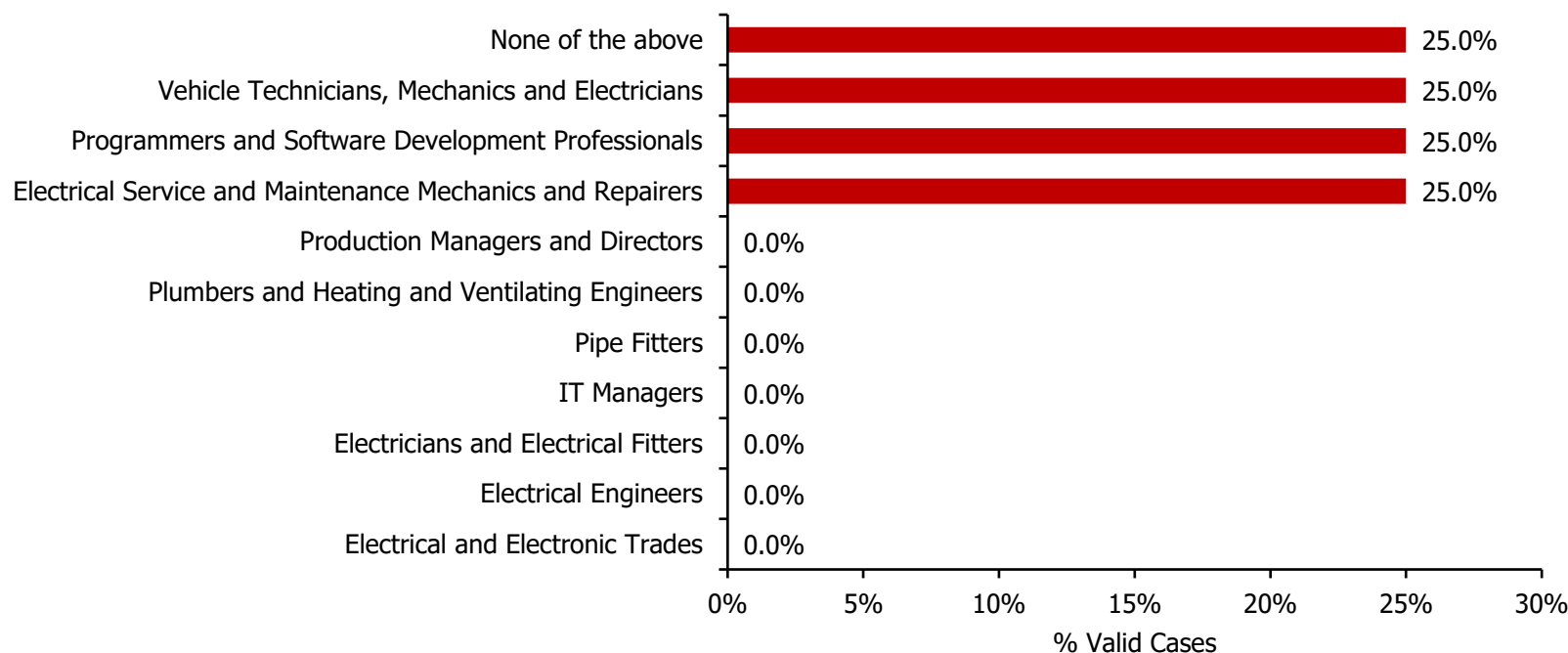
- Electrical and Electronic Trades
- Electrical Engineers
- Electrical Service and Maintenance Mechanics and Repairers
- Electricians and Electrical Fitters
- IT Managers
- Pipe Fitters
- Plumbers and Heating and Ventilating Engineers
- Production Managers and Directors
- Programmers and Software Development Professionals
- Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics and Electricians

NB A note of caution was raised that Pipe Fitters previously working in Oil & Gas and switching to hydrogen, needed some re-training as the specifications involved differ.

Energy | Directionally, the difficult roles to recruit have recently been: 'Vehicle Technicians...', 'Programmers & Software Dev. Prof.', 'Electrical Service & Maintenance Mechanics...'

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Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, have you found it difficult or very difficult to recruit, over the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply) | Energy



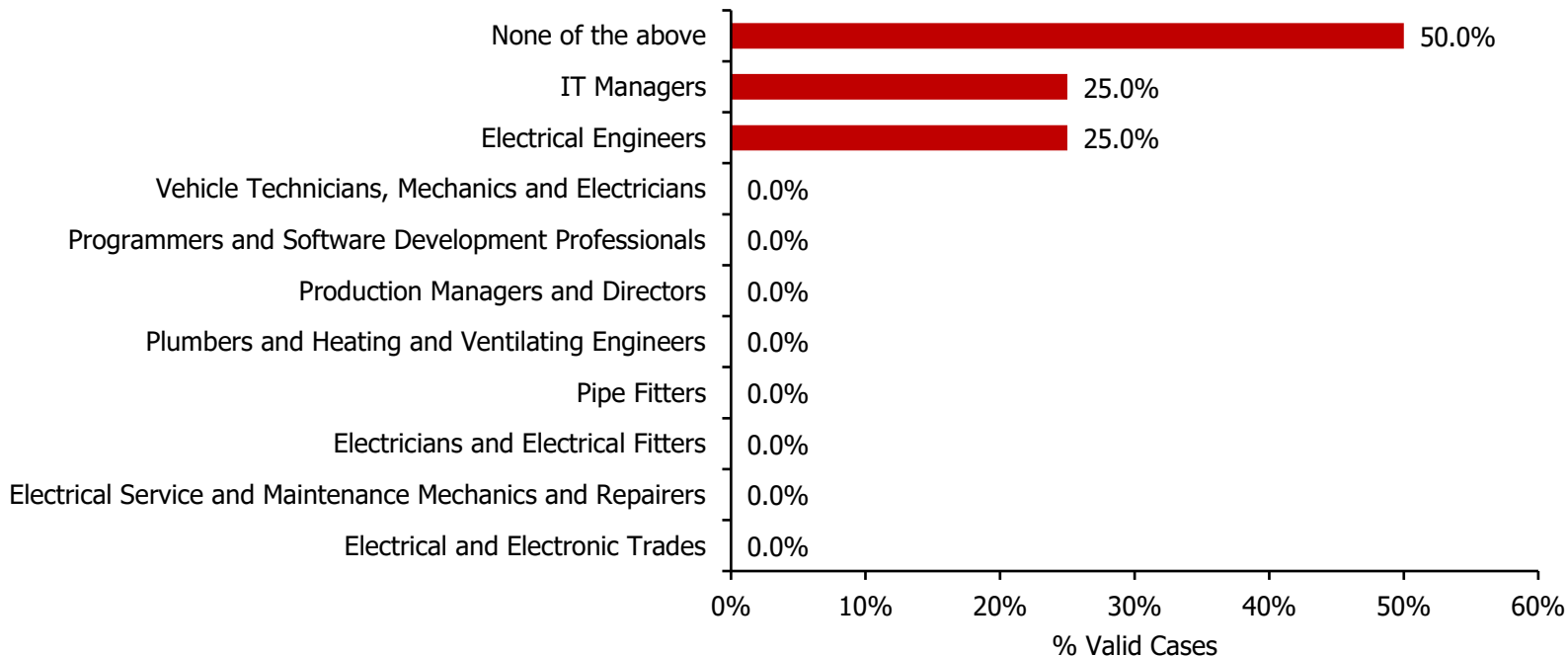
Base: Electrical and Electronic Trades (n=0), Electrical Engineers (n=0), Electrical Service and Maintenance Mechanics and Repairers (n=1), Electricians and Electrical Fitters (n=0), IT Managers (n=0), Pipe Fitters (n=0), Plumbers and Heating and Ventilating Engineers (n=0), Production Managers and Directors (n=0), Programmers and Software Development Professionals (n=1), Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics and Electricians (n=1), None of the above (n=1), Sample Size = 4

*NB Care very low base.

Energy | Again directionally at least, 'IT Managers' and 'Electrical Engineers' are set to be hard to recruit over the next 3 years.

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Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, do you believe will be hard or very hard to recruit, over the next 3 years? (Please tick all that apply) | Energy



Base: Electrical and Electronic Trades (n=0), Electrical Engineers (n=1), Electrical Service and Maintenance Mechanics and Repairers (n=0), Electricians and Electrical Fitters (n=0), IT Managers (n=1), Pipe Fitters (n=0), Plumbers and Heating and Ventilating Engineers (n=0), Production Managers and Directors (n=0), Programmers and Software Development Professionals (n=0), Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics and Electricians (n=0), None of the above (n=2), Sample Size = 4

*NB Care very low base.

Please list below any occupations or roles that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

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Energy other1	Energy other2	Energy other3
Mechanical Engineers	Programme Managers	PhDs

Skills gaps | Key technical needs – AI, technology use and timescales to productive work

- **AI integration:** “...*how to use it effectively.*”
- **Confidence and competence in using technology per se.**
- **Reducing the time period between arrival as a new graduate entrant to the business and truly productive working:** thought to average around two to three years at the moment – Are the training interventions that have the most significant positive effect on time-to-competence already well understood or not?
- **Leadership skills**

Skills gaps | Key soft skills

- **Communication skills** – across all uses face-to-face, verbal, written, presentation, etc.
- **Problem solving skills**

Potential Priority Skills Gaps

| Energy Industries

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Specialised skills in renewable technologies
 - Carbon Capture & Storage (CCS) systems knowledge
 - High-voltage specialism and power systems design
 - Hydrogen production expertise
 - Safety management expertise
 - Advanced data analytics
 - Digitisation
 - Digital transformation leadership
 - Programme delivery expertise and complex project management skills
 - Expertise in energy efficiency and building performance monitoring and management
 - Training and teaching expertise for in-house roles
 - Leadership and Management
- This list was regarded as pretty comprehensive but would benefit from greater specificity particularly regarding CCS and addressing the absence of some blue-collar skills.

Training provided | Funding-driven constraints in the supply chain have the potential to create skill bottlenecks

- **Safety upskilling and safety leadership:** invested in by a large corporate, with the training outsourced through a global entity.
- **Team training on technology upgrades:** outsourced as part of a digital transformation programme.
- **Concerns were voiced by large corporates that key smaller firms in their supply chain would only recruit and train against known commercial committed revenue streams**, which at best only have visibility 12-18 months out: *“So, when you've got the funds available as a project, you're two to three years late (on training), and you've got that gap to fill between FID (Final Investment Decision) and resource demand, and that's where the market tension comes.”* This perspective on the supply chain was endorsed by a participant working in it, their **business focused near exclusively on in-house training through shadowing but staff having the time to do this well was a major challenge**, as capacity is aligned to contracted revenues
- **There was felt to be a need for pump priming investment in training:** *“...ahead of FID to ensure the resource is in the right place at the right project at the right time.”* It was floated that initiatives under the Adult Skills Fund could help in plugging this gap.

Training provided | Reactive in Small Businesses, strategic in Large Corporate organisations

- The pre-construction fusion project had been **investing in training for personnel at its Oxford base via the Fusion Opportunities in Skills Training, Education and Research (FOSTER programme)**. Could some of the staff to be located in the GLCCA or Greater Lincolnshire areas receive training under the same initiative?
- Oxford benefits from being home to the [Oxford Advanced Skills Training Facility](#) which is analogous to CATCH in North East Lincolnshire.
- Encouragingly the Skills Project Manager in fusion energy commented:
“We’re looking to lift and shift a lot of that knowledge we’ve got in Cumbria and Oxfordshire into the region (centred on West Burton)”.
Is the scale, phasing and longevity of this process under the Step Fusion Skills Collaborative understood and factored into plans?

The Fusion Opportunities in Skills, Training, Education and Research (FOSTER) programme, delivered by the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), is a national initiative aiming to train over 2,000 people by 2030 to build a skilled workforce for the UK fusion industry. It supports apprentices, graduates, and researchers through Industry PhD schemes, 8-week paid summer internships (£4,500), and international fellowships.

Barriers encountered | All aspects of access: rurality, transport, capacity and awareness, plus work-readiness

Perceived absence of a central database online that brings together information on all of the relevant training courses on offer related to clean energy production.

Work readiness of Learners continues to be regarded as a real challenge:
"...whether it's timeliness, communication, resilience, those sorts of things...is something that is still a challenge to us today and will continue to be."

Insufficient capacity in industrial training of apprentices beyond the current heartland geographies:
"We need lots and lots more CATCHes!"

Transport challenges for apprentices: *"When you're dealing with apprentices, they can't necessarily afford to travel as far as, say, a kind of someone on a professional course, or masters."*

Insufficient access to training in rural communities:
"we need to find solutions of getting training into rural communities, to ensure that those people have got the opportunity."

Top priorities for improvement in provision | Collaboration, co-ordination, sharing best practice, and co-ordinating supply across and between providers of all types

Regional collaboration and co-ordination by providers of all types

both from a quality (best practice) and a capacity planning perspective.
Minimising competition between providers which was recognised as hard because a lot of the funding for training is competitively tendered for – Could inclusive BID consortiums be formed in more instances to overcome this?

First Priority

More engaging incentives for the currently economically inactive to take up training opportunities, e.g. free gym membership:
"making signing up to training more appealing and kind of financially appealing, because it comes with perks."

Second Priority

How much co-ordination of skill demand is done across and between major clean energy projects, rather than simply within an individual project?

4.7 Health & Adult Social Care

Focus Group | Participant sample

Organisation	Organisation type / description	Base / area	Employees in Greater Lincolnshire	Notes on participant
Joy Tender Loving Care (JOYTLCS)	Micro business Domiciliary care	Lincoln	~20 staff	
Lincolnshire Co-op	Consumer co-operative; pharmacies highlighted as focus	Greater Lincolnshire (multiple branches)	~2,900 total; 44 pharmacy branches (staff count not specified)	Participant oversees apprenticeships, work placements, early careers; Has FE background. Focus on L&D; Works with pharmacy business leads on skills gaps
Lincolnshire Co-op	Consumer co-operative with pharmacy operations	Greater Lincolnshire	As above	
Oaksfield Care Limited	CQC registered for home care	Branston		
Sygenta	Newly CQC-approved domiciliary/home care provider	Greater Lincolnshire (exact base not stated)	Hiring plan: 10 in first 18 months	Whilst an experienced HR professional the participant was new to the care sector; aims to learn recruitment best practice
Shine	Charity operating wellbeing hubs, community cafes; adult education; training incl. Mental Health, First Aid	Across Lincolnshire	~45 staff across county 13 peer support workers and community connectors;	Administer community fund
Walnut Care	Home care provider with LA contract on the East Coast;	Greater Lincolnshire; East Coast	~150 staff	Highly connected business participant with strong links to sector bodies
Lincoln College	Level 1-3 Health & Social Care provision & apprenticeships	Lincoln area		Here chiefly in an observer capacity

NB There were no participants in this Focus Group representing the NHS, Private Hospitals or General Practice.

If possible, more engagement and consultation with these very significant segments in the sector should be sought, prior to finalising the LSIP.

Skill shortages | Underlying issues identified in the group – transport, low pay, negative perceptions and blocked pathways

Widespread inability to drive, combined with a poor public transport infrastructure makes recruitment much harder in rural Greater Lincolnshire

- *“The most obvious one is driving. We could probably fill all of our home care jobs 10 times over if they could all drive. You can't rely on public transport in this county.” (Home Care provider)*

Low rates of pay and negative perceptions of the sector

- *“Let's be honest the pay is not fantastic.” (Home Care provider)*
- *“Care sector... it's not the most sexiest of roles.” (Home Care provider)*
- The UK Government's Adult Social Care Workforce Survey (2025) found the primary obstacle to both recruitment and retention is better pay in other sectors. Many care workers remain close to minimum wage; as of March 2025, median hourly pay was just 56p above the National Living Wage, with 1 in 5 residential care workers living in poverty. (The Health Foundation – July 2025)

16-17 year-olds not having any clear pathway, at that age, into starting their training for a career in Social Work

- The timing of work placements and a perceived prohibition on under 18s in this work setting, means that training for this Profession can only currently start at 18 years of age.

As driving substantive change in the public transport infrastructure is not in scope for the LSIP, should more investment be made in training more Driving Instructors to address the backlog in driving tests and so help more people acquire this key skill more quickly?

The average waiting times for a practical car test reached 22 weeks as of September 2025. An estimated 1.1 million tests were disrupted by the pandemic, with 360,000 currently unbooked, and the National Audit Office does not expect wait times to return to normal until November 2027.

Skill shortages | Underlying issues general across the UK – Visa falls, low morale, burnout, rising demand from an ageing population

Reduced access to international recruitment

- Visa data shows a dramatic fall in entry visas for care workers in early 2024 — 84% lower than the previous quarter and 87% lower than the same quarter in 2023. (*Source: Gov.uk 'Adult social care workforce survey: April 2025 report'*).
- Policy changes restricting immigration have led to fewer British workers entering the sector, worsening shortages

Low morale and high burnout

- Gov.uk surveys show low morale, particularly in domiciliary care (46% reporting morale issues).
- High workloads, emotional strain, unpaid travel time, and lack of progression are commonly cited pressures.

Rising demand from an ageing population

- The sector is one of the UK's priority areas because demand is growing rapidly with the ageing population.
- More complex needs (dementia, chronic conditions) require more skilled staff — but training pipelines have not kept up.

Skill shortages | Roles that are difficult to recruit

Senior Care Workers

- *"They can't get good senior care workers." (Home Care provider)*

Care Co-ordinators

- Can often be a highly stressful role with logistics and conflict management demands.
- *"It's the job that nobody wants to do... the stress level is important." (Home Care provider)*

Deputy Managers

- Hard to retain or find an experienced deputy manager, with a couple of years in a similar role.
- *"I've been trying to get a reasonable, skilled deputy manager... they move before they grow." (Home Care provider)*

Social Workers

- *Significant county-wide shortage; reliance on agency.*
- *"Social workers... they're like hen's teeth. There just aren't any. Lots of locums." (Home Care provider)*

Newly-qualified Pharmacists

- Perceived as hard to retain, which creates churn. May be daunted by lacking management skills.
- May not see a development trajectory, can move to Acute where research opportunities are greater and pay may be higher.
- *"We really struggle to retain newly qualified pharmacists... there's a shortage of pharmacists in general." (Pharmacies)*

Relief Pharmacists & Pharmacy Technicians

- Driving required for multi-site work and many do not drive; leads to a reliance on locums.
- *"Getting them around from place to place is difficult because a lot of them don't drive." (Pharmacies)*

Medicine Counter Assistants in pharmacy – have been devalued somewhat to Level 2.

- *"Nobody wants to be on the medicine counter... but it's a really important role." (Pharmacies)*

Skill shortages | New or emerging roles

AI specialist expertise – understanding how to apply it to best effect

- *“I think the issue of AI is a big one because we're already seeing some care providers offering this service, saying AI can support with care plans and all these compliance challenges that we currently face, is very time consuming, very, very time consuming. We're already trying to wrap our heads around the different digital systems and then add AI to that...It's very advanced from where we are at the moment.” (Home Care provider)*

Potential Priority Occupations

Key:

| Health and Adult Social Care

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

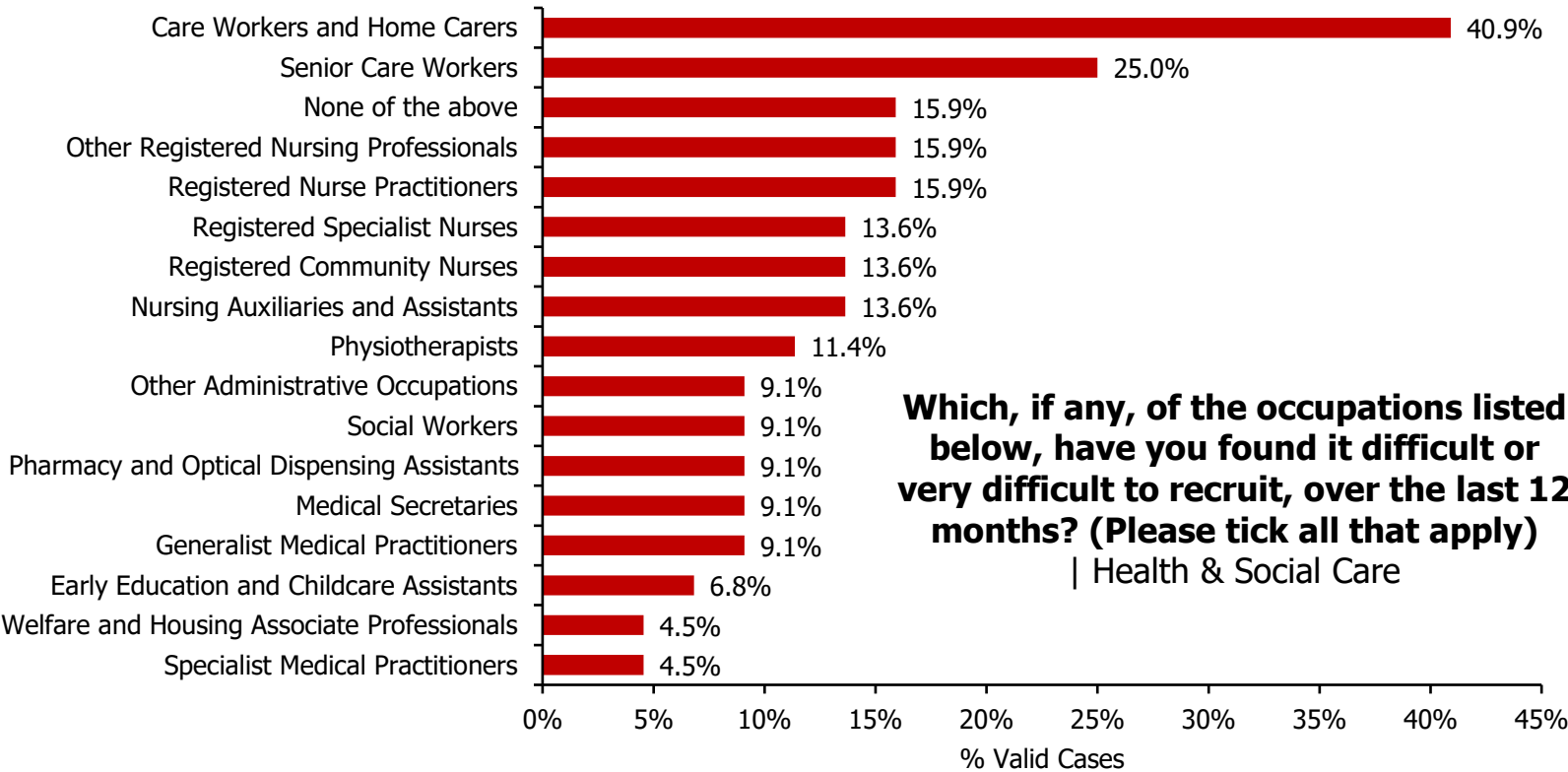
- Care Workers and Home Carers
- Early Education and Childcare Assistants
- Generalist Medical Practitioners
- Medical Secretaries
- Nursing Auxiliaries and Assistants
- Pharmacy and Optical

The feeling from this Adult Social Care dominated group was that the numbers of nurses in Greater Lincolnshire was fine but that there were weaknesses and shortcomings in their skill sets.

"It's a skill shortage but not a people shortage."

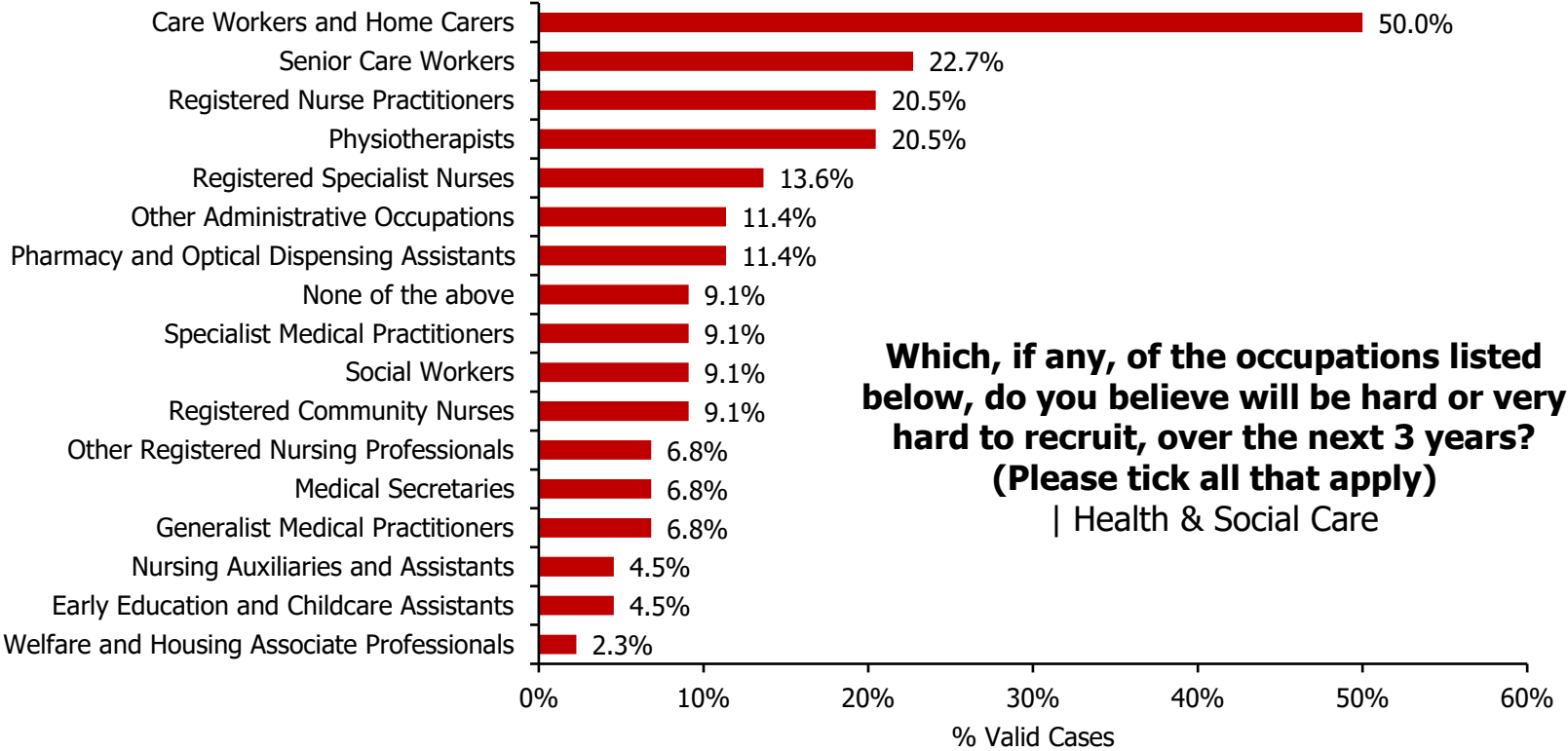
- Registered Community Nurses
- Registered Nurse Practitioners
- Registered Specialist Nurses
- Senior Care Workers
- Social Workers
- Specialist Medical Practitioners
- Welfare and Housing Associate Professionals
- Other Administrative Occupations
- Other Registered Nursing Professionals

Health & Social Care | 'Care Workers and Home Carers' (41%) and 'Senior Care Workers' (25%) have presented the widest difficulty from a recruitment perspective, over the last 12 months.



Base: Care Workers and Home Carers (n=18), Early Education and Childcare Assistants (n=3), Generalist Medical Practitioners (n=4), Medical Secretaries (n=4), Nursing Auxiliaries and Assistants (n=6), Pharmacy and Optical Dispensing Assistants (n=4), Physiotherapists (n=5), Registered Community Nurses (n=6), Registered Nurse Practitioners (n=7), Registered Specialist Nurses (n=6), Senior Care Workers (n=11), Social Workers (n=4), Specialist Medical Practitioners (n=2), Welfare and Housing Associate Professionals (n=2), Other Administrative Occupations (n=4), Other Registered Nursing Professionals (n=7), None of the above (n=7), Sample Size = 44

Health & Social Care | Looking ahead, the difficulty in recruiting 'Care Workers and Home Carers' looks set to widen, up to 50% of employers, with skill shortage for 'Registered Nurse Practitioners' and 'Physiotherapists' escalating to 20% too.



Base: Care Workers and Home Carers (n=22), Early Education and Childcare Assistants (n=2), Generalist Medical Practitioners (n=3), Medical Secretaries (n=3), Nursing Auxiliaries and Assistants (n=2), Pharmacy and Optical Dispensing Assistants (n=5), Physiotherapists (n=9), Registered Community Nurses (n=4), Registered Nurse Practitioners (n=9), Registered Specialist Nurses (n=6), Senior Care Workers (n=10), Social Workers (n=4), Specialist Medical Practitioners (n=4), Welfare and Housing Associate Professionals (n=1), Other Administrative Occupations (n=5), Other Registered Nursing Professionals (n=3), None of the above (n=4), Sample Size = 44

Please list below any other occupations or roles, not referenced in the previous two questions, that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

200

Health and Social Care other1	Health and Social Care other2	Health and Social Care other3	Health and Social Care other4	Health and Social Care other5
Administration staff				
Biomedical scientist	Senior biomedical scientists			
Care Coordinator for homecare				
Cleaners				
Consultant medical staff				
Data analyst	Specialist engineer			
General Nurses				
Health				
Medical and surgical Consultants				
New training staff	Paramedics			
Nurses	Doctors	Healthcare assistants		
Occupational Therapist	Speech Language Pathologist			
Occupational therapists	Sight impairment officers			
Radiographers	Occupational therapist			
Radiologists				
recovery mentor				
Registered care mgrs				
Registered Manager - OFSTED	Registered Managers - CQC	Special Education Teachers	Senior School Staff	Trauma informed Carers
senior engineer at a level of research worker				
Theatre assistant	Scrub nurse	Business development coordinator	Health and safety lead	

Skills gaps | Key technical needs – Ventilation monitoring, Clinical and Mental Health awareness, balanced competencies in Nursing

Ventilation care and monitoring for Home Care services

- *“...the number of people having that (Ventilation) and having carers trained with monitoring and being able to know when things are wrong with the monitor that the patient is using at home, is quite important.” (Home Care provider)*

Clinical awareness below Nursing-level, particularly around incontinence and skin health

- *“It’s (Clinical awareness) very hard to find and I think it’s becoming essential. You can’t assume that the district nurse is coming to everybody.” (Home Care provider)*

Greater depth and greater importance placed upon Mental Health Awareness

- *“...you can still see, and if someone’s bleeding out, well, that needs dealing with. Well, mental health is as dangerous as that. I mean, I live in Newark and I think there’s been 6, 7, 8 male suicides in December. So, it’s definitely that urgent, but it’s seen as, you know, ‘ask twice and it’s quite simple’ and it really isn’t as simple as that.” (Wellbeing Charity)*
- *“...a lot of our workforce are so frightened of mental health, that they just don’t even see it, when they see it.” (Home Care provider)*

More nurses with equal competence in co-morbidities in the elderly

Skills gaps | Key technical needs – Logistics, conflict resolution, local delivery, data analysis and technical writing for standards

Logistics (in Home Care)

- Managing staffing rotas where work patterns are sometimes quite complex and time allowances very fine

Conflict management and resolution

- Can often arise in Home Care from unscheduled staff absences
- In Pharmacies staff would sometimes ‘ban’ customers, in part because they did not have the skills to manage and defuse conflict or handle threatening behaviours

Level 2 Pharmacy Assistant training delivered locally

Data and digital skills - both basic and intermediate for analysis

- *“...the first thing I wrote was data, so making data-led decisions. So, knowing where to find the data, how to analyse the data, as well...Their digital skills are maybe not where they need to be... decisions based on opinion not fact.” (Pharmacies)*

Technical writing skills to resource the drafting and updating of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Skills gaps | Emerging skills needs – autonomous working in Nursing, holistic care, ability to drive in Nursing (not just Social Care)

Ability of nurses to work more autonomously

Holistic skills across caring for people with learning difficulties AND health conditions of middle and old age

More Nurses needing the ability to drive and access to a car as more care takes place away from hospitals

Potential Priority Skills Gaps

| Health and Adult Social Care

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Budget and cost management
- Care for people with complex needs (e.g. dementia)
- Communications skills across different care settings
- Conflict resolution
- Data literacy and analytics
- Digital skills
- Innovation
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership
- People management
- Problem solving
- Procurement (Based upon a deeper understanding of the 'care' setting)
- Safety and wellbeing competencies (e.g. safe handling) – NB Some perceived duplication or over-supply in delivering this, as preference was for in-house
- Strategic planning

'Commissioning' was felt to be missing from the list.

"So, 'procurement' would be about buying the right cup for the right price. 'Commissioning' would be looking at your clientele and saying, actually, that's not the right design of cup. I need a different design of cup. I need a different design of service."
(Home Care provider)

Training provision | Safe-handling in-house, management development for early-career Pharmacists and praise for Level 5 course provision

Safe-handling was now resourced in-house once an employee had attended a ‘train the trainer’ style course and this approach was preferred as the safe-handling context could then be well understood for that particular Home Care provider

The Pharmacies employer was providing hands-on branch support for training and supporting early-career Pharmacists with closer management development

- *"I'm going out to branches to support people... older colleagues trying to navigate the training."* (Pharmacies)
- *"They've (early-career Pharmacists) got all the pharmacist skills, but suddenly they're manager... they get eaten alive sometimes."* (Pharmacies)

One participant had completed a Level 5 course last year and praised the provider involved:

- *"I completed my level five last year, and it was tough. It was tough juggling that with work and all the other responsibilities, but the providers I was with, they were very, very supportive, very supportive. And without them, I don't think I would have completed. So' I know the importance of being paired up with the right provider."* (Home Care provider)

Barriers encountered | Transport, funding structures and their complexity, pathway blockers and low completion rates

Public transport infrastructure and inability to drive

Possibly unintended consequences of funding structures, e.g.

Qualified Nurses disincentivised to then go on to qualify to do Social Work by removal of bursaries and public funding for a second degree.

Blockers on transferable skills between Nursing and Social Care then inhibiting pursuing higher technical qualifications, e.g.

"I've got a learner on a T-level adult nursing course that's been turned down by every university for physiotherapy because they said she's not got a science background...even education providers not understanding. They do a biology, so the T-level nurses do a biology A-level in one year." (Education provider)

Low completion rates, in part down to unwillingness to release employees for training, e.g.

"We can't get level 2s because you can't make any money on them, can you? (To Education provider)

That's because people don't finish them...The level 2 provision, the money's not, doesn't work for colleges...And it's assumed if there's a lack of completion that it must be the education provider's fault, and therefore it affects your stats and your view. I mean, it's often not, it's the sector. We can't always release people to go when we should." (Home Care provider)
Apprenticeship modularisation may help here.

Funding complexity is severely impacting utilisation.

Any new or modified provision in Greater Lincs needs accrediting and aligning to funding, e.g.

"The government has put £12 million towards funding in adult social care for the second-year running, and I don't think we'll break £4 million in terms of using it, because it's just too complicated and doesn't meet the need. And I'm really worried that they'll have seen £9 million not used for two consecutive years, and they're going to say, you don't need it...The NHS spends £3,000 pounds a year on its' staff, in terms of workforce development. Social care gets £30. It doesn't work." (Home Care provider)

There was a feeling that the claims process to secure funding was burdensome for SMEs and favoured large entities.

Top three priorities for improvement | Health & Adult Social Care

Address the current lack of provision pathways between Nursing and Social Care, as resourcing strategies continue to converge

First Priority

"...this ability for transition across the two sort of areas of work,...in that you can still have that sort of nursing background if you were in a health and social care position, but the qualifications don't lend itself to that. The qualifications lend itself to you either go down a health and social route or you go down a nursing route...I mean we've got quals on there, some of the nursing assistants and nursing associate quals would be really beneficial to do in care facilities...but generally you have to do them within an NHS background."
(Education provider)

Introduce a new qualification that reduces the costs involved in updating and refreshing understanding of Compliance with the regulatory framework (particularly CQC)

Second Priority

"A lot of our managers have no idea how to ensure that we are complying with the regulations. So, we all spend a small fortune bringing in people to tell us how to do it. But if we can address that skills shortage and confidence and it's almost like, yeah, 'I've got a certificate from, I don't know, Lincoln College or from somebody that's recognised and it says, I do know how to do this.' I would say the average small care business is probably spending £10,000 pounds a year that they don't need to spend because of that skills gap."

(Home Care provider)

SMEs in the sector will not have in-house Compliance Managers or Legal Teams to tap into on this.

There was a feeling that Education Providers did not appreciate the significance of this issue to SMEs.

Increasing collaboration and multidisciplinary training

Third Priority

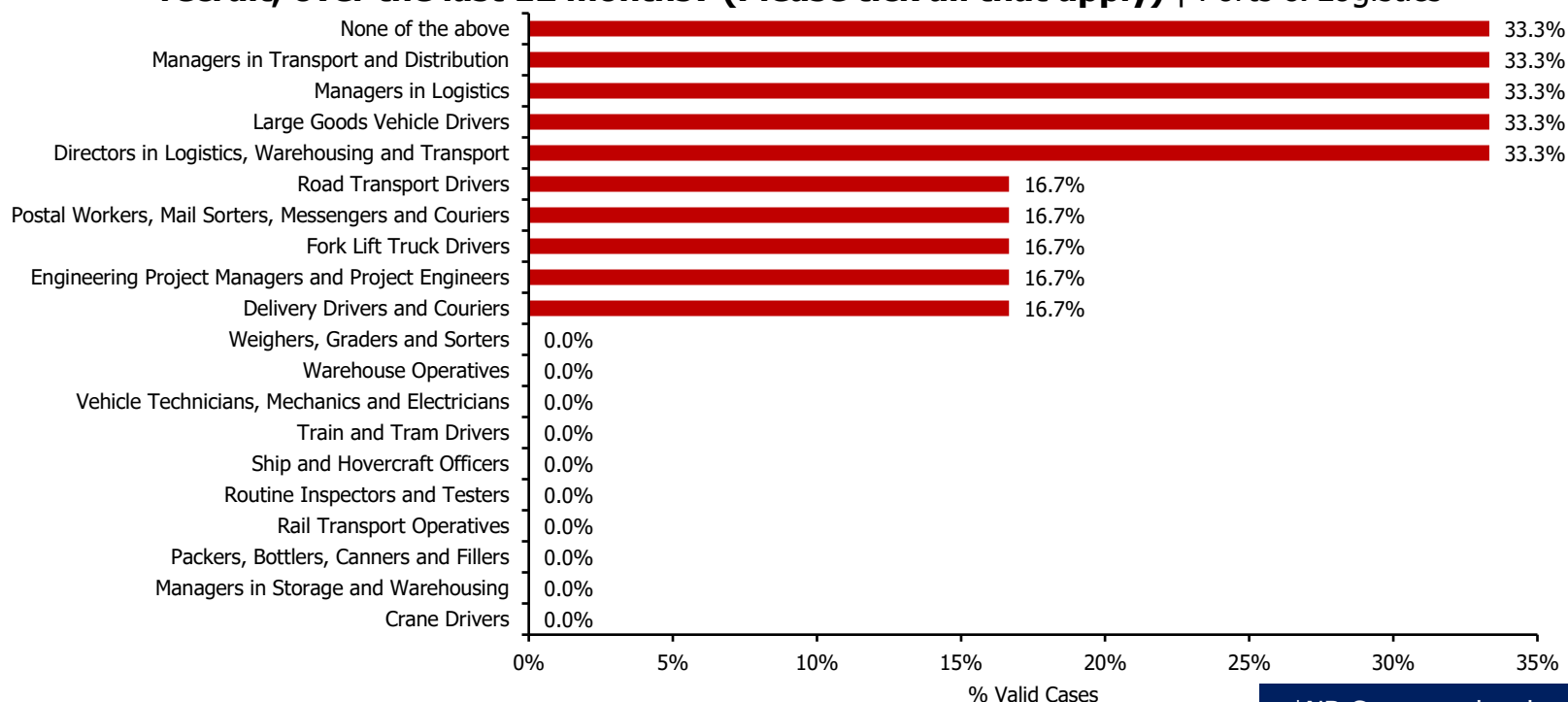
"There even needs to be an integrated joint working training... let's tear the walls down."
(Home Care provider)

4.8 Ports and Logistics

Ports & Logistics | A third of a very small sample, have experienced difficulty in recruiting: 'Managers in Transport, Distribution and/or Logistics', 'Large Goods Vehicle Drivers' and/or 'Directors...' in the sector.

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Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, have you found it difficult or very difficult to recruit, over the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply) | Ports & Logistics



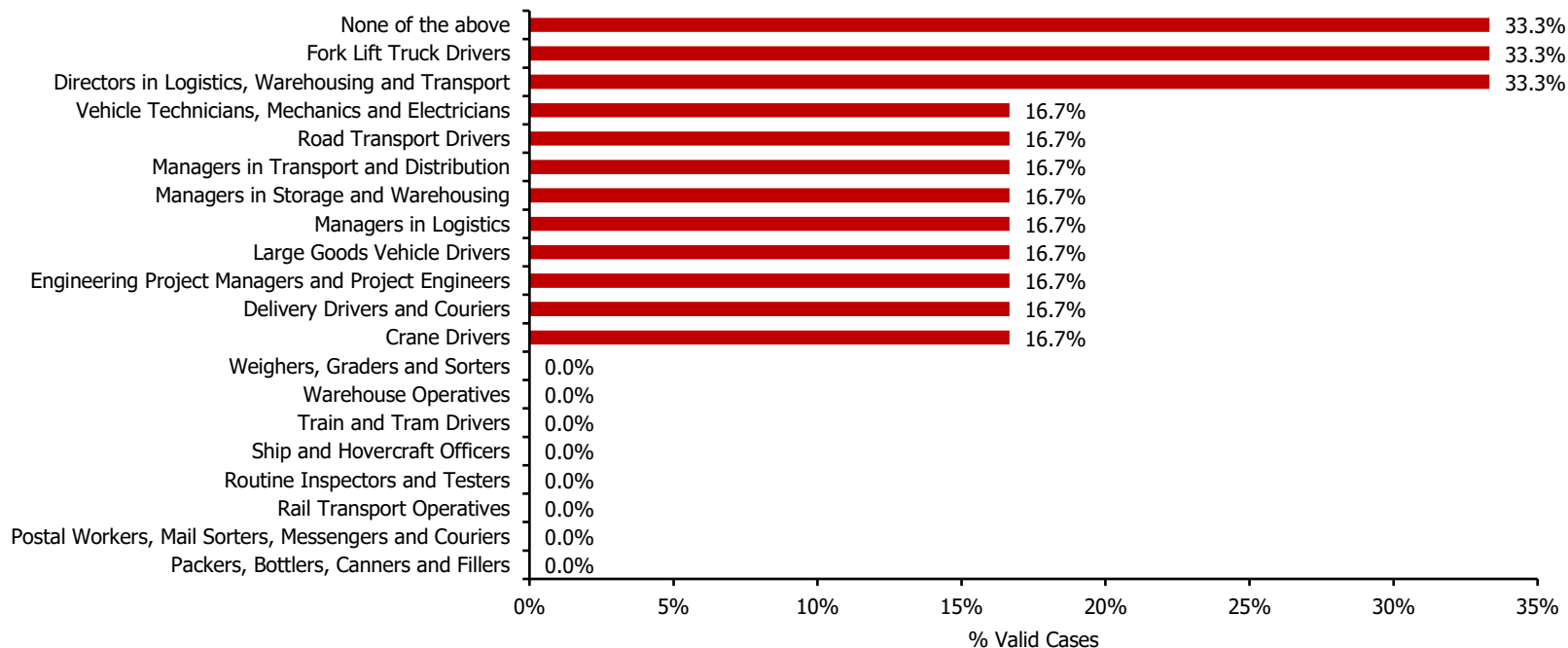
Base: Crane Drivers (n=0), Delivery Drivers and Couriers (n=1), Directors in Logistics, Warehousing and Transport (n=2), Engineering Project Managers and Project Engineers (n=1), Fork Lift Truck Drivers (n=1), Large Goods Vehicle Drivers (n=2), Managers in Logistics (n=2), Managers in Storage and Warehousing (n=0), Managers in Transport and Distribution (n=2), Packers, Bottlers, Canners and Fillers (n=0), Postal Workers, Mail Sorters, Messengers and Couriers (n=1), Rail Transport Operatives (n=0), Road Transport Drivers (n=1), Routine Inspectors and Testers (n=0), Ship and Hovercraft Officers (n=0), Train and Tram Drivers (n=0), Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics and Electricians (n=0), Warehouse Operatives (n=0), Weighers, Graders and Sorters (n=0), None of the above (n=2), Sample Size = 6

*NB Care very low base.

Ports & Logistics | Looking ahead, widespread skill shortage is anticipated in: 'Fork Lift Truck Drivers' (33%) and 'Directors...' (33%).

210

Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, do you believe will be hard or very hard to recruit, over the next 3 years? (Please tick all that apply) | Ports & logistics



Base: Crane Drivers (n=1), Delivery Drivers and Couriers (n=1), Directors in Logistics, Warehousing and Transport (n=2), Engineering Project Managers and Project Engineers (n=1), Fork Lift Truck Drivers (n=2), Large Goods Vehicle Drivers (n=1), Managers in Logistics (n=1), Managers in Storage and Warehousing (n=1), Managers in Transport and Distribution (n=1), Packers, Bottlers, Canners and Fillers (n=0), Postal Workers, Mail Sorters, Messengers and Couriers (n=0), Rail Transport Operatives (n=0), Road Transport Drivers (n=1), Routine Inspectors and Testers (n=0), Ship and Hovercraft Officers (n=0), Train and Tram Drivers (n=0), Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics and Electricians (n=1), Warehouse Operatives (n=0), Weighers, Graders and Sorters (n=0), None of the above (n=2), Sample Size = 6

*NB Care very low base.

Please list below any other occupations or roles, not referenced in the previous two questions, that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

211

Ports & Logistics other1	Ports & Logistics other2	Ports & Logistics other3
Cybersecurity specialists	Data analysts	
Cybersecurity specialists	Cloud infrastructure engineers	Experienced project managers
Office clerks		
Shift lead		

4.9 Professional and Business Services

Focus Group | Participant sample

Learning Business Partner

- Organisations has food stores, pharmacies, funeral homes and travel
- 2900 employees

Owner

- Sole trader
- HR consultancy and coach

Owner

- Credit controller
- 5 employees

Skill shortages | Underlying issues

Location and low pay competitiveness: Lincolnshire employers struggle to attract highly qualified professionals because the area is less appealing than major cities and salaries are often lower, reducing the available talent pool.

- *“Lincolnshire... isn’t necessarily a destination... local pay is probably not as competitive.”*
- *“As soon as the pay isn’t the same as... Sheffield or London... people are quite transient, so they will move for a job.”*

Lack of early work experience / workplace readiness: Younger entrants often lack basic workplace confidence and communication skills because they have had little exposure to real work environments during education.

- *“They’re emerging into the workforce... scared to death of picking up a phone.”*
- *“They’ve done a Master’s at 22... never done a day’s work... emerging into the workforce fully formed adults [and] frightened.”*

Cultural and generational gaps: There’s growing differences in expectations between generations, with some younger workers expecting rapid progression and reward without the same experience or tenure.

- *“There is a level of entitlement... they think they should be able to go into a job and every year get more pay.”*
- *“People... don’t want to graft; they just think, ‘I automatically get that.’”*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues

Lack of practical training in education: Many qualifications provide theoretical knowledge but give students little hands-on, real-world experience, leaving them underprepared for employment.

- *“You’re not getting any practical skills... no employment experience within your educational journey.”*
- *“I learned all about the theory... but you’re not getting any practical skills...no real-life employment experience.”*

Digital skills gap: Basic and intermediate digital competencies remain inconsistent across the workforce, made worse by outdated systems that limit staff confidence and capability.

- *“Digital skills are the gap... our infrastructure is awful and antiquated.”*
- *“We struggle to find anybody with basic Excel or Word skills... most can do a filter, but that’s the limit.”*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Pharmacists: Recruitment is particularly challenging because the national shortage of pharmacists is magnified in Lincolnshire, where attracting highly qualified professionals to a rural, less city-centric location is difficult.

- *“It’s the roles like pharmacists. There’s a shortage there.”*

Funeral sector roles: Roles in the funeral profession require a very specific temperament, emotional resilience and a high standard of interpersonal care. Employers said the field attracts fewer applicants, and those who do enter often arrive with entrenched ways of working that make cultural integration difficult.

- *“We do struggle with funerals as well to get good people in the funeral business.”*

Credit controllers: There’s a lack of awareness of credit control as a professional career path. Few young people pursue CICM qualifications, and many underestimate the skills required particularly phone confidence, emotional resilience and technical financial understanding. Demand is high nationwide, leading even London firms to outsource because they cannot recruit locally.

- *“We struggle to find people that are credit controllers... to get somebody that’s qualified credit control is quite hard.”*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Lawyers/solicitors: Legal roles are hard to fill because candidates often favour larger cities with higher salaries, bigger firms, and clearer career progression. Lincolnshire is perceived as a less desirable destination for qualified legal professionals, especially senior solicitors or those aiming for partner-track roles.

- *“I know lawyers... are quite a big problem area... Lincolnshire isn’t necessarily the place that they target to go to.”*

HR professionals with sector specific experience: HR expertise and sector familiarity are scarce, and transitions between sectors (e.g., public to private) can be difficult due to major differences in pace and culture.

- *“HR... can also be quite difficult, because a lot of businesses tend to want somebody who’s already done the industry.”*

Managers with strong people skills: Across sectors, there’s a shortage candidates with the interpersonal and leadership capability required to manage teams effectively. Many technically strong individuals struggle with people management, conflict resolution, and difficult conversations, making these roles increasingly hard to fill.

- *“It’s hard to find good managers... they just don’t have the skills to do that.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for over next 3 years

Customer service roles: Customer service roles may become less attractive as AI takes over routine tasks.

- *“People aren’t going to want to go into customer service roles, because they don’t believe that they’re going to exist in five years.”*

Call-centres and phone-based roles: Phone-based work already struggles to attract younger workers who prefer digital communication over direct calls. As organisations invest in chatbots, automated payment systems, and AI triage tools, candidates increasingly assume call centre roles are declining or will soon be fully automated.

- *“Call centres... will become a thing of the past.”*

General bookkeeping roles: There’s an expectancy for entry-level bookkeeping routes to shrink as cloud-based finance platforms automate tasks traditionally used to train early-career employees. Tools like Xero and QuickBooks can now complete receipts management, reconciliations, and basic reporting, reducing both the number of roles available and the long-term attractiveness of bookkeeping as a profession

- *“General bookkeepers... that will be [gone], you’ve got Xero and QuickBooks.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for over next 3 years

Management and leadership roles: Leadership pipelines are weakening as younger workers increasingly avoid people-management roles due to the stress, accountability, and emotional load, creating a growing reluctance to step into supervision and leaving organisations exposed to leadership gaps as experienced managers retire.

- *“People... don’t want to be managers... it’s not enough reward for the stress.”*

HR roles requiring human judgement: HR roles requiring nuanced judgement may become harder to recruit as fewer entrants develop strong interpersonal foundations. While AI can automate certain HR tasks such as basic FAQ queries, scheduling, and initial screening, many HR responsibilities still rely on human judgement. These include grievances, conflict resolution, safeguarding psychological safety, and managing sensitive employee relations.

- *“They need to be able to work with AI but retain human judgment... I can’t imagine that’s going to continue.”*

Potential Priority Occupations

| Professional & Business Services

Key:
Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Book-keepers, Payroll Managers and Wages Clerks
- Business and Financial Project Management Professionals
- Business Associate Professionals
- Business, Research and Administrative Professionals
- Chartered and Certified Accountants
- Finance and Investment Analysts and Advisers
- Financial Accounts Managers
- Finance Managers and Directors
- Human Resources Administrative Occupations
- Human Resources and Industrial Relations Officers
- Human Resources Managers and Directors
- Management Consultants and Business Analysts
- Marketing and Sales Directors
- Office Managers
- Personal Assistants and Other Secretaries
- Sales Accounts and Business Development Managers

Professional & Business Services | At 46%, **not** experiencing difficulty recruiting to any of the roles researched, is much higher than in other Priority Sectors.

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Base: Book-keepers, Payroll Managers and Wages Clerks (n=5), Business and Financial Project Management Professionals (n=5), Business Associate Professionals (n=3), Business, Research and Administrative Professionals (n=3), Chartered and Certified Accountants (n=4), Finance and Investment Analysts and Advisers (n=1), Financial Accounts Managers (n=3), Financial Managers and Directors (n=3), Human Resources Administrative Occupations (n=2), Human Resources and Industrial Relations Officers (n=3), Human Resources Managers and Directors (n=2), Management Consultants and Business Analysts (n=2), Marketing and Sales Directors (n=3), Office Managers (n=2), Personal Assistants and Other Secretaries (n=2), Sales Accounts and Business Development Managers (n=4), None of the above (n=18), Sample Size = 39

Professional & Business Services | 18% of employers anticipate future challenges in recruiting 'Book-keepers, Payroll Managers and Wages Clerks', higher than for any of the other roles researched.

222



Base: Book-keepers, Payroll Managers and Wages Clerks (n=7), Business and Financial Project Management Professionals (n=6), Business Associate Professionals (n=2), Business, Research and Administrative Professionals (n=5), Chartered and Certified Accountants (n=2), Finance and Investment Analysts and Advisers (n=3), Financial Accounts Managers (n=4), Financial Managers and Directors (n=2), Human Resources Administrative Occupations (n=2), Human Resources and Industrial Relations Officers (n=0), Human Resources Managers and Directors (n=0), Management Consultants and Business Analysts (n=2), Marketing and Sales Directors (n=4), Office Managers (n=3), Personal Assistants and Other Secretaries (n=3), Sales Accounts and Business Development Managers (n=5), None of the above (n=15), Sample Size = 39

Please list below any other occupations or roles, not referenced in the previous two questions, that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

223

Professional & Business other1	Professional & Business other2	Professional & Business other3	Professional & Business other4	Professional & Business other5
AI specialists	Web design	Artist		
Assistant	helper	Apprenticeship		
Business development managers	Digital marketing officers	Admin that don't expect £50k!		
Business Development Professionals				
Cleaners				
Drivers				
General Operatives	Hygiene Operatives	Skilled Operatives / Machine Operatives	Team Leaders	Engineers
Human Resources				
It	AI			
Manager				
Marketing roles				
Senior cybersecurity analyst	Cloud solutions architect	Business intelligence analyst	Automation engineer	Senior Network Engineer
Skilled marketing juniors	Skilled marketing managers			
software developer	AI professional			
tax specialists	VAT specialists			
Verbal assistance for online stuff	Tec people for automation Ai	People who can help teach online platforms how to get a leadmagnet live	Someone who understands CRM systems	

Skill gaps | Technical skills

Digital skills: There's a lack of essential digital competencies, with people struggling beyond very basic spreadsheet and document functions.

- *"We struggle to find anybody with any sort of basic Excel or Word skills."*
- *"Most of them can do a filter, but that's the limit... if you ask them to do a pivot table or a VLOOKUP, they just don't know."*

Online learning and digital literacy: Staff often lack confidence using online learning systems, meaning they avoid digital training and miss opportunities to upskill.

- *"They're not comfortable with doing their learning online... missing out on opportunities."*
- *"We're trying to develop more of a learning culture, but a lot of them... would still rather come to a face-to-face session, which we just can't always do."*

Data analysis and storytelling: Employees can produce data but struggle to interpret or communicate insights, leading to ineffective use of information.

- *"People are requesting data... but they don't know what they want it for... data storytelling is needed."*
- *"They're just literally giving the raw data—they're not able to tell the story of what it means."*

Skill gaps | Technical skills

Cyber security: Basic cyber-hygiene skills are inconsistent, with staff sometimes handling sensitive data unsafely in everyday tasks.

- *“Everybody needs to go [on] cyber security.”*
- *“I literally heard someone taking card details over the phone in a shop... I said you’re not allowed to do that.”*

Technical sector-specific qualifications: Key specialist areas, such as credit control, pharmacy and funeralcare, lack recognised training routes or awareness of existing qualifications.

- *“You don’t hear a lot about the CICM... credit control is overlooked.”*
- *“We’re creating a bespoke funeral apprenticeship... and a bespoke pharmacy tech one, because we just can’t get people with the right skills.”*

Skill gaps | Soft skills

Communication skills: Many employees avoid phone calls, struggle to compose professional emails, or default to emojis or informal language inappropriately.

- *“Composing an email... I have to sit with them.”*
- *“Young people don’t want to talk on the phone—they hide behind emails.”*

Resilience and confidence: Employees are easily overwhelmed, reluctant to ask for help, or lack the confidence to problem-solve independently.

- *“They do crumble quite quickly.”*

Customer service mindset: Basic customer awareness, professionalism, and empathy are inconsistent.

- *“They just don’t give a s*** anymore... there’s no community feel.”*

Work readiness and professionalism: Staff often lack basic workplace expectations such as punctuality, presentation, initiative, and understanding workplace etiquette.

- *“General ready-to-work skills are missing.”*

People-management & difficult-conversation skills (for future managers): Even potential managers lack the confidence and capability to handle conflict, performance issues or sensitive situations.

- *“Managers avoid difficult conversations because they don’t know how to do them.”*

Potential Priority Skills Gaps

| Professional & Business Services

Key:

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- AI/Machine learning and automation
- Advanced data analysis and modelling skills
- Data interpretation skills
- Cybersecurity and resilience skills
- Risk management skills
- Consultative selling skills
- Stakeholder management skills
- Client relationship management skills
- Leadership
- Self-management and independent working skills at early career stage (esp. where hybrid or WFH)
- Strategic planning and change management skills
- Business strategy and commercial acumen
- Balanced combination of technical specialism expertise and digital capability (for tech-enabled services)

People need better data interpretation skills as they request data without fully understanding what it is telling them or how to best use it.

Missing: Marketing – particularly important for small businesses

Training | Existing provision – lots delivered in-house

Internal training

Organisations utilise a wide range of in-house provision, often used to avoid external costs or because it suits their dispersed workforce.

- In-house L&D delivery, including one-to-one coaching, role-play, scenario-based training and compliance modules.
 - *“We do a lot of in-house training.”*
- In-house coaching provided by a highly qualified internal coach, accessed by all levels including front-line colleagues.
 - *“We’ve actually got a really qualified coach on the L&D team... anyone can access [her].”*
- Digital basics & online learning support (e.g., helping colleagues use the LMS, Excel essentials, online learning navigation).
- Compliance training such as GDPR, anti-money laundering and health & safety.
 - *“We do like internal training because we’re anti-money laundering... they’ll just do a little section of that online.”*

Training | Provision outsourced

External training

Businesses invest in specialist or accredited external providers where skills cannot be built internally

- Apprenticeships (pharmacy, funeralcare, pharmacy technician routes, business admin, etc.).“
 - *“Apprenticeships have become a lot more respected... the level of qualification you can get.”*
- External qualifications such as CICM for credit control, accountancy training, PRINCE2, Insights, and sector-specific technical courses.
 - *“There’s no apprenticeship for credit control... it’s all accounts.”*
- Executive coaching (high-cost programmes for senior leaders).
 - *“I got an invoice for £35,000 for executive coaching the board of directors.”*
- Externally delivered workshops & bootcamps (leadership, people management, digital skills).
 - *“I’ve been to a couple of workshops... all funded.”*

Training | Barriers to training

Complexity and misunderstanding of apprenticeships: The apprenticeship system remains difficult for many employers to navigate and the complexing discourages uptake. Levy, funding rules and the 20% off-the-job requirement deter both managers and learners.

- *“An apprenticeship scheme can be really complex to understand... you walk away because you don’t get it.”*
- *“20% off-the-job is the killer.”*

Local challenges: The local training market cannot always meet demand for specialised or niche areas and the geographical area creates logistical and access barriers across a large rural county.

- *“There’s no one in the local area... we can’t get someone to do the personal makeup.”*
- *“Lincolnshire is so massive... trying to put on training for anyone is hard.”*
- *“There’s no one in the local area offering that.”*

Cost challenges: Cost remains a major constraint, especially for small businesses as training is expensive, high-level coaching is seen as disproportionately costly.

- *“Some of the things people charge out at... it’s just [too much].”*
- *£35k coaching invoice example demonstrates disparity in investment.*

Training | Barriers to training

Engagement and learner confidence barriers: Staff reluctant to speak up in groups; fear of being wrong; unwillingness to attend away-days; low participation.

- *“They don’t want to speak up in front of others... in case they're wrong.”*

Smaller organisations often feel excluded from FE and training provision:

FE providers and colleges frequently prioritise larger organisations, leaving SMEs feeling overlooked and underserved within the local training ecosystem.

- *“Some colleges don’t want to engage with you because you are small.”*

Funding uncertainty: Concern over the future of bootcamps and funded training after March.

- *“Every workshop... is funded... but funding finishes in March.”*

Training | Improvements or innovations in training

Customised apprenticeship pathways: Tailored programmes co-designed with providers (funeralcare, pharmacy tech).

- *“We’re working with providers to create a bespoke funeral apprenticeship.”*

Growing culture of coaching and internal development: In-house coaching increasingly accessible to frontline staff, not just leaders.

- *“Anyone can access the in-house coach... she’s unbelievable.”*

Bootcamps offering flexible, low-cost training for SMEs: Particularly successful for digital and people-management topics.

- *“These bootcamps are good because you can send any team member on one.”*

Shift towards applied learning: Apprenticeships valued for embedding skills immediately into the workplace.

- *“With an apprenticeship you bring the learning straight into the team.”*

Training | Top priorities for improvement in training

Strengthen management and leadership capability: Developing leadership capability remains critical for organisational resilience and poor people management underpins many workforce issues.

- *“Everything comes back to people... if people can’t manage people, it’s going to be really difficult.”*

Improve employability, communication, and work readiness: Employability and interpersonal skills are essential to address future workforce challenges. Especially for younger entrants lacking phone confidence, resilience, or workplace etiquette.

- *“Communication... is the one.”*
- *“General employment skills for younger generations.”*
- *“Work readiness... managing expectations.”*

Enhanced digital, AI and future of work skills: Businesses also need support adapting to technological change and its workforce implications. Including Excel, online learning navigation, productivity tools, and AI literacy.

- *“You cannot not have AI in that top.”*
- *“Understanding of the future of work... especially for older workers too.”*

Training | Top priorities for improvement in training

Mentoring models for older workers: There's a need to utilize older workers more effectively; retaining and involving post-55 workers through mentoring is important. There needs to be a structured route for knowledge transfer.

- *“They’ve got so much to contribute... they can do mentoring.”*

Better school–employer links: Schools and colleges need stronger engagement with local employers; careers support and employer links require improvement.

- *“If schools or colleges worked with small businesses... it would help students know what they want to do.”*

Policy writing support and capability: Organisations would benefit from clearer support for policy development and organisational practice. Policy writing and updating is a widespread capability gap.

- *“There’s this need to update policies... but no one is in a position to do that.”*

4.10 Visitor Economy

Focus Group | Participant sample

Director

- Local arts centre and university-run cultural venues
- 15 – 20 core staff, 20 casual workers, 15 volunteers

Event and Tours Coordinator

- Privately owned estate

General Manager

- Local hotel that also has a restaurant and conference facility
- 30 staff and 10 – 15 casual workers

Marketing and Outreach Manager

- Local theatre
- 5 – 10 employees supported by 75 volunteers

HR and Development Manager

- Multi-enterprise farming group + including farm shop, they run events
- Around 25 staff (22 full-time, remainder casuals, many students)

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – declining talent pipeline, negative perceptions, applicants not work-ready

Declining talent pipelines and reduced training availability: Traditional sources of skilled workers, particularly chefs, operational managers and technical roles have weakened.

- *“I don't know whether the colleges are still doing chefs courses... I think the courses are a lot smaller.”*
- *“Trying to find level 4, 5 and 6 qualifications... there seems to be a withdrawal of funding at the higher levels.”*

Poor perception of industry conditions: Hospitality roles are perceived as unattractive due to long hours, demanding shifts, and past negative experiences

- *“People leaving the industry... not coming back into it because of hours and things like that... previous bad experiences.”*

Low candidate motivation or work readiness: Employers note behavioural barriers, especially at entry and lower skilled levels; even when vacancies attract applicants, many are not work-ready or motivated to commit.

- *“We can set up 5 or 6 interviews... and they're just not turning up.”*
- *“Their willingness to work is a little bit short.”*
- *“Some people join because they need a job... it's a stepping stone... this'll do for now.”*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – transport barriers, wider competition for professional roles

Rurality and transport barriers: Rural Lincolnshire's geography makes recruitment significantly harder as large segments of potential workers cannot reach workplaces reliably.

- *"We're in the heart of rural Lincolnshire... not having people able to come to you reliably... is quite a thought to get over."*
- *"Buses don't run at 6am... we ideally like people to be able to drive."*

Competition from remote, higher-paid roles: Strategic and professional roles (marketing, comms, brand, tech roles) are especially difficult to recruit because candidates can work elsewhere, often for London salaries, while living locally. Visitor economy and local employers are out-competed on salary and career pathways.

- *"We can't compete with people living locally but taking that London wage due to working from home."*

Lack of security, casual or fragmented roles in the creative and technical arts: Technical theatre and visual/performing arts roles have become harder to fill due to structural changes. Talented technicians leave the sector for more stable employment.

- *"A lot of that work is casual and insecure... not enough work to sustain them."*

Skill shortages | Underlying issues – high attrition, fear of closures

Attracting candidates isn't the issue, it's retaining and developing them: Recruitment is relatively strong in some areas, but the real pressure point is training and progression. Even when employers can attract new starters, retention is weak without clear development pathways. With limited structured progression, turnover stays high, which in turn keeps skills shortages ongoing. Retention also hinges on engagement and belonging

- *“Availability of candidates is good... the onward development and retention is the important part.”*
- *“Training doesn't stop once you've joined... there's got to be that availability to improve retention.”*
- *“They need to feel part of the organisation... You need to keep somebody's attention... once that starts to drift, somebody will automatically be looking elsewhere.”*

Fear of instability due to closures and economic uncertainty: Workers stay put instead of applying elsewhere due to closures. This reduced mobility means it is harder to recruit.

- *“Some people don't like to move in fear of redundancy... with hospitality and leisure establishments closing.”*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Chefs: This was consistently highlighted as the hardest role to fill, specifically Head Chefs who are multifaceted are the most difficult to recruit. Lower-level chefs are easier to recruit, but inconsistent skill levels mean menus must be adjusted to match the capacity of whoever is on shift.

- *“We’ve been looking for... a head chef... that head chef needs to be able to... cook with fresh food, prepare menus, and develop his kitchen team.”*
- *“We’ve had to tailor our menus to the skill set that’s in the kitchen... on certain days we’ve had to say dishes are not available.”*
- *“They’ll leave here because... they have a fallout... there’s chefs that have done every venue in the local area.”*
- *The only two positions... that’s been the struggle has been the chef and the receptionist.”*
- *“This chef issue has been a national issue... with people leaving the industry, not coming back into it because of hours and things like that.”*
- *“Chefs... I would say... all of those issues have the whole industry in a chokehold.”*

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

High-level skilled hospitality staff: Shortage of candidates with advanced qualifications in management, health & safety, HACCP, etc.

- “You can get somebody in at level 1 or 2, but trying to find level 4, 5, and 6 qualifications... they’re expensive courses.”
- “There seems to be a withdrawal of funding at the higher levels.”

Strategic-level marketing, comms and brand professionals: It’s hard for smaller local businesses to compete with remote and London-paying roles.

- “We’ve really struggled to develop high-quality marketing comms brand professionals at a strategic level.”
- “We can’t compete with people living locally but taking that London wage.”

Technical roles in visual and performing arts: Technician shortages due to freelance insecurity and reduced touring.

- “Technical skills, in particular visual arts... and performing arts... is another big challenge.”
- “A lot of that work is casual and insecure... that work is not there to sustain them.”

Sales manager for specialist products: Difficulty finding someone with the right commercial experience for a diversified estate (gin, vineyard, beef).

- “At the moment... one real vacancy, and that is for a sales manager... trying to find someone with the right experience.”

Skill shortages | Roles difficult to recruit for

Receptionists: Demand for candidates with hotel experience and shift flexibility.

- *“We’ve not had candidates of previous experience of the calibre that we would like... particularly the receptionist.”*

Front-of-house management: Shortage of skilled staff able to run shifts effectively.

- *“To find real, experienced management that can run shifts... I think there is definitely a gap.”*

Operations/venue operations staff: Difficulty finding people with broad operational and logistical experience.

- *“Anything operations... keeping the doors open and the lights on... there is still a gap for those people.”*

Skill shortages | Roles likely to become difficult to recruit for over next 3 years

Safeguarding, compliance & safety roles in Creative and Venue settings: Emerging shortage in roles connected to compliance safeguarding and meeting new safety regulations in venues – especially within the creative arts and theatre sector..

- *“It is things like safeguarding and compliance for venues... there seems to be a lot of new rulings coming in about how venues need to run.”*
- *“We’re scrambling to keep up... people are having to wear a variety of hats in order to keep all of that afloat.”*

Potential Priority Occupations

| Visitor Economy

Key

Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Bar and Catering Supervisors
- Bar Staff
- Catering and Bar Managers
- Chefs
- Cleaning and Housekeeping Managers and Supervisors
- Coffee Shop Workers
- Cooks
- Customer Service Occupations
- Hotel and Accommodation Managers and Proprietors
- Kitchen and Catering Assistants
- Leisure and Sports Managers and Proprietors

- Publicans and Managers of Licensed Premises
- Restaurant and Catering Establishment
- Sales and Retail Assistants
- Sports and Leisure Assistants
- Waiters and Waitresses

"If I look at these, these are all very much delivery roles...but what about trying to make sure that we're developing capacity, or creating more things to stimulate these things, rather than just delivering what we already have."

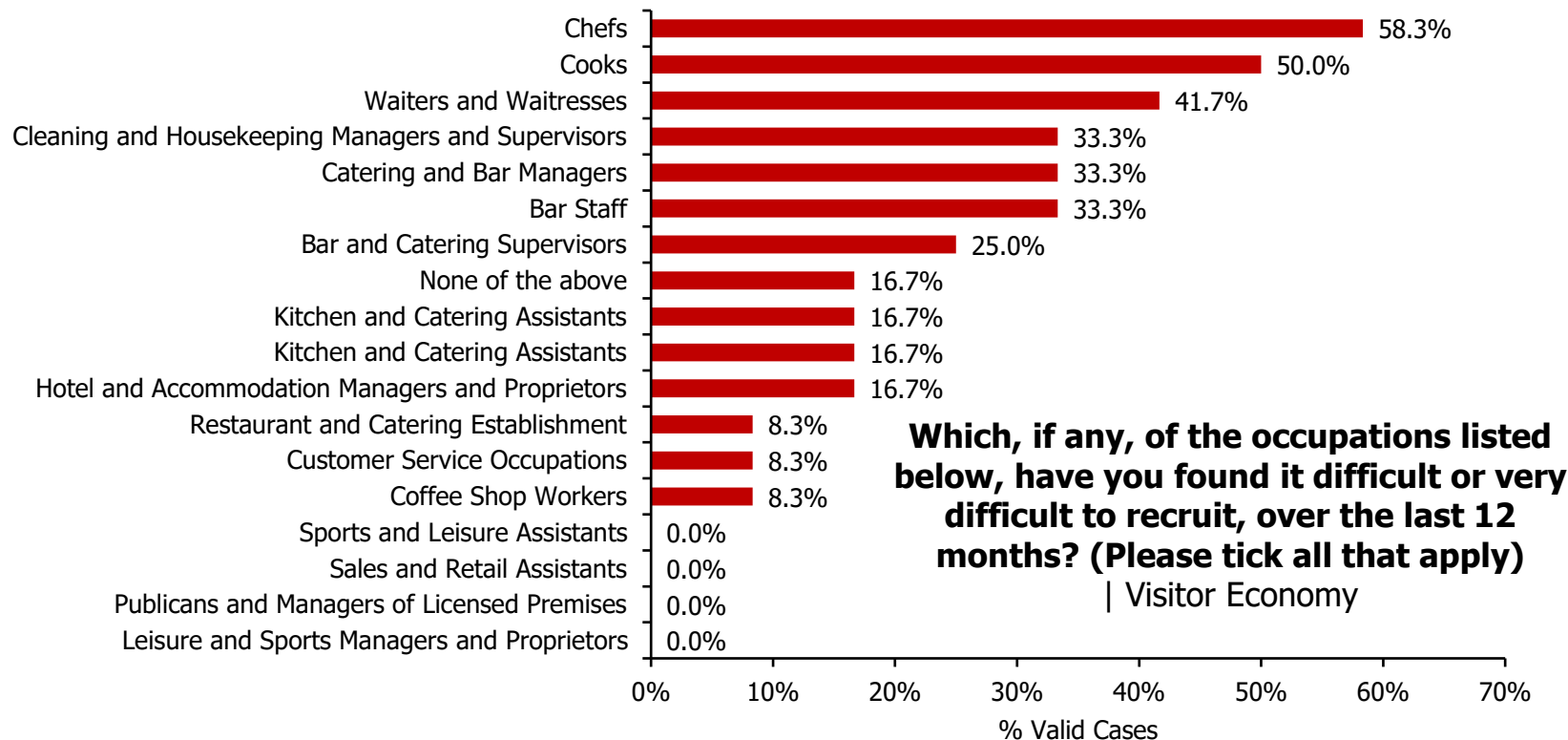
Missing to ensure growth within Lincolnshire:

- Advocacy & brand roles
- Marketing specialists
- Fundraising & development roles

All priorities but training and retention within these roles is the focus.

Visitor Economy | Unsurprisingly, 'Chefs' (58%) and 'Cooks' (50%) have presented the widest recruitment difficulty over the last 12 months but four more roles have been proved challenging to fill for at least a third of the sample.

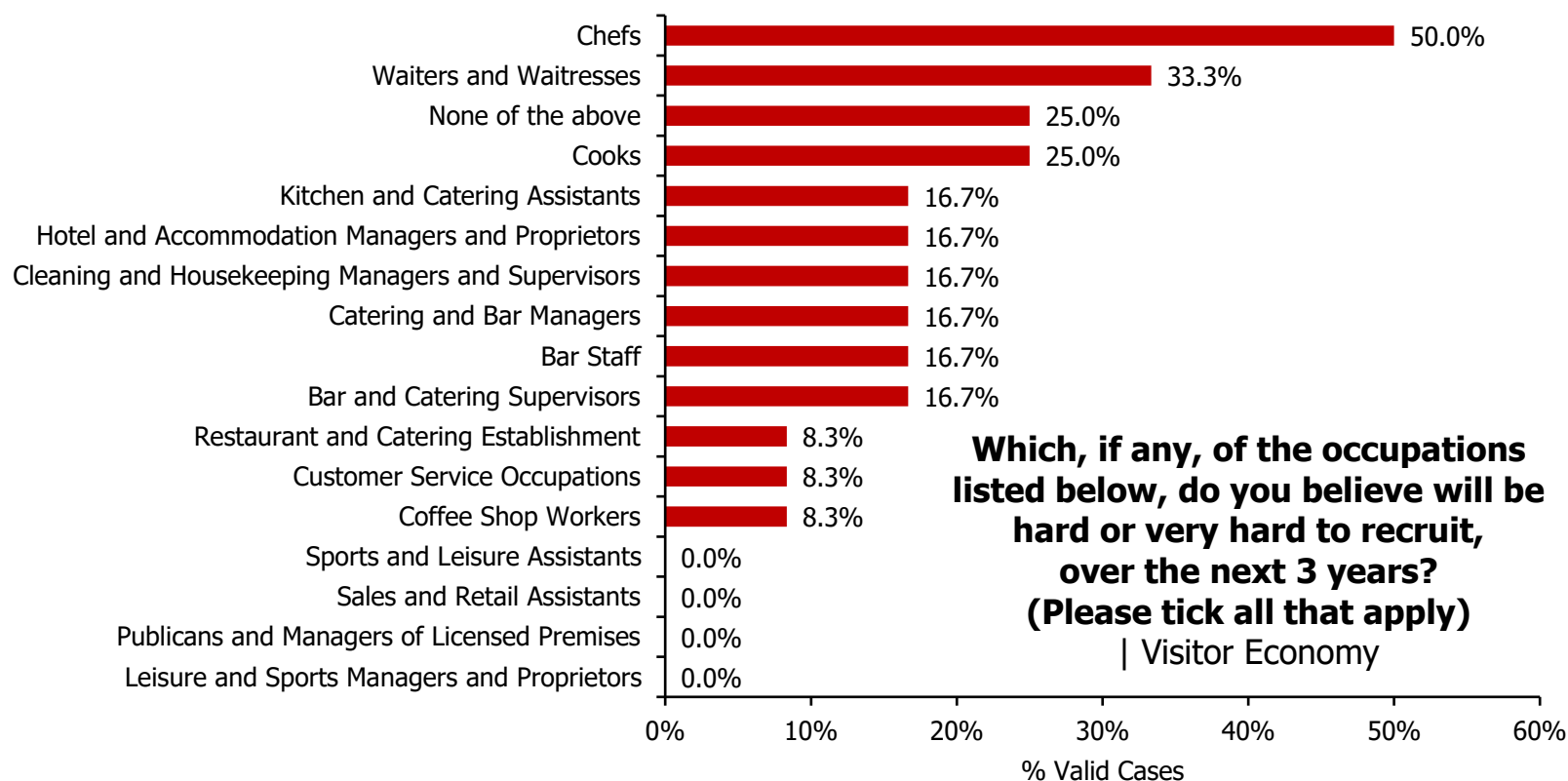
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Base: Bar and Catering Supervisors (n=3), Bar Staff (n=4), Catering and Bar Managers (n=4), Chefs (n=7), Cleaning and Housekeeping Managers and Supervisors (n=4), Coffee Shop Workers (n=1), Cooks (n=6), Customer Service Occupations (n=1), Hotel and Accommodation Managers and Proprietors (n=2), Kitchen and Catering Assistants (n=2), Kitchen and Catering Assistants (n=2), Leisure and Sports Managers and Proprietors (n=0), Publicans and Managers of Licensed Premises (n=0), Restaurant and Catering Establishment (n=1), Sales and Retail Assistants (n=0), Sports and Leisure Assistants (n=0), Waiters and Waitresses (n=5), None of the above (n=2), Sample Size = 12

Visitor Economy | Employers see little change ahead over the next 3 years in the skill shortages experienced with 'Chefs' (50%), pressure may ease somewhat with 'Cooks' (25%), whilst growing for 'Waiters and Waitresses' (33%).

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Base: Bar and Catering Supervisors (n=2), Bar Staff (n=2), Catering and Bar Managers (n=2), Chefs (n=6), Cleaning and Housekeeping Managers and Supervisors (n=2), Coffee Shop Workers (n=1), Cooks (n=3), Customer Service Occupations (n=1), Hotel and Accommodation Managers and Proprietors (n=2), Kitchen and Catering Assistants (n=2), Leisure and Sports Managers and Proprietors (n=0), Publicans and Managers of Licensed Premises (n=0), Restaurant and Catering Establishment (n=1), Sales and Retail Assistants (n=0), Sports and Leisure Assistants (n=0), Waiters and Waitresses (n=4), None of the above (n=3), Sample Size = 12

Please list below any other occupations or roles, not referenced in the previous two questions, that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

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Visitor Economy other1	Visitor Economy other2	Visitor Economy other3	Visitor Economy other4	Visitor Economy other5
Cleaners/Housekeeping team members	Fast food assistants	Delivery drivers		
Commercial manager	Marketing manager			
Porter				
Qualified and experienced managers	Maintenance team			
Senior Managers (Operations)	Facilities Team members	Head of Marketing	Coffee Machine Engineers	General Managers
SIA Operatives				
Visitor Experience staff				

Skill gaps | Technical Skills

AI skills and creative technology adoption: AI-related skills gaps are widening as digital transformation moves faster than workforce capability. Employers report emerging shortages in understanding and using AI tools, automation, and creative technologies, with many staff lacking the competence or training needed to adopt these systems effectively.

- *“A big skills gap that has been identified is in AI training... it’s the future.”*
- *“AI... there’s all sorts of things... we’ve got AI training scheduled for the whole team.”*
- *“A lot of places are capitalizing on creative technology... we’re missing out.”*

Digital and creative technology skills (including backstage tech): A growing skills gap is emerging, with too few staff confident in using digital tools, creative technologies, or core technical-theatre functions such as lighting, sound, AV, and basic stage management. As technology in the visitor economy evolves rapidly, venues feel increasing pressure to keep pace. Employers now need adaptable, multi-skilled.

- *“It’s probably... technology, and the scramble to keep up with all of that... for our backstage techs, the expectation of what our digital media will look like.”*
- *“We need... multi-skilled technicians... people that can confidently cover lighting, sound, AV, basic stage management.”*

Skill gaps | Technical Skills

Digital marketing, CRM, SEO and social media: Venues and tourism businesses face a widening gap in strategic-level digital marketing capability, particularly in areas such as CRM, SEO, analytics, content strategy, and social media management. Many staff can handle day-to-day posting, but the sector struggles with the more advanced skills needed for brand development, long-term digital planning, and effective campaign design. The pace of digital change is accelerating, making it even harder for organisations to keep up.

- *“CRM training, SEO management, social media... that is definitely something... our biggest gaps.”*
- *“Social media branding and marketing... taking it up to that next level... in a cost effective way.”*
- *“Technology side... social media marketing... is constantly changing and you need to be on top of what’s happening.”*

Cyber security awareness: Low staff awareness of online risks, phishing, mobile-device vulnerabilities, and basic cyber safety is creating avoidable exposure. As more work moves online, the risk surface grows, and visitor-facing teams often receive little training in safe digital behaviour.

- *“Cyber security... is a bit of a priority... everybody using mobile devices and Wi Fi is potentially leaving the organization open to attack.”*

Skill gaps | Technical Skills

Technical budgeting and data/evaluation skills: Weaknesses in budgeting for technical projects and inconsistent data collection and evaluation practices. Funding and impact measurement requirements are increasing, but many organisations lack people who understand budgeting for tech, or consistent evaluation frameworks.

- *“Technical budgeting literacy seems to be something that keeps coming up.”*
- *“Data documentation and evaluation practice... we’re in a bit of a flux... dispersed across a variety of different evaluation practices.”*

Compliance, safeguarding and legislative knowledge: Increasing training needs around Martyn’s Law, safeguarding, exploitation, and legal responsibilities for employers. Smaller organisations lack capacity to stay up to date; expectations on employers are rising.

- *“Safeguarding... sexual exploitation... people using your venue for illegal activities... that’s only going to escalate.”*
- *“So many changes... employment law... harassment, bullying, sexual harassment... responsibility placed on the employer.”*

Skill gaps | Soft Skills

Customer service quality and complaint handling: Need for stronger customer service, handling rising customer expectations, and managing complaints. Consumers are becoming more discerning and quicker to complain; frontline staff must be prepared.

- *“Intensifying the customer service experience... complaint handling... people are going to be a lot more savvy with where they spend their pound.”*

People skills and confidence: Shortfall in basic interpersonal confidence, including phone handling and dealing with anxious customers. Rising mental health challenges and anxiety among staff affect service delivery.

- *“Consistent and competent people skills... in a world where high anxiety and poor mental health is prevalent... people are afraid to pick up the phone.”*

Multitasking and prioritisation: Staff struggle juggling multiple responsibilities and keeping pace with fast moving priorities. Many roles require wearing “multiple hats,” especially marketing and operations roles in small venues.

- *“It is very difficult... you have to wear so many hats... knowing which skills you can farm out and which things you need to concentrate on next*

Potential Priority Skills Gaps

| Visitor Economy

key:
Mentioned spontaneously

Endorsed as a priority when prompted

Not regarded as a priority

- Full proficiency in customer service
- Menu design skills
- Kitchen and operations management skills
- Team leadership skills
- Digital marketing skills
- Social media management skills
- SEO and targeted advertising skills
- Sustainability and Green Tourism related skills
- Communication skills in multiple settings and contexts
- Conflict resolution skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Sales skills
- Revenue optimisation skills
- Multi-skilling to maximise flexible resourcing
- Experience design skills
- Language and cultural awareness skills

"Sustainability, green tourism, corporate social responsibility, that sort of thing. That's where we need to be able to improve ourselves, I think."

Missing : technical budget literacy and confidence in finance.

Training provision | **Mandatory and food/kitchen-related**

Mandatory and statutory training (external): Training required for legal compliance, health and safety, or public-facing operations.

- First aid
- Basic and intermediate food hygiene
- Personal licences
- Health & safety
- Manual handling
- Safeguarding
- Fire safety/safety training
- Data compliance/ online safety

Hospitality and food-related training (mostly external): Skills linked to kitchen work, food safety, and hospitality operations.

- Food hygiene (basic + intermediate)
- Food safety requirements (day-one essentials)
- Mentor / Train-the-Trainer courses for kitchen progression
- Apprenticeships in kitchen operations

Training provision | Customer Service and Digital Marketing

Customer service, people skills and inclusion training: Training aimed at improving service quality, visitor experience, and inclusive practice.

- Customer service enhancement
- Complaint handling
- Conflict management
- Diversity & equality
- Deaf awareness
- Unconscious bias training
- Anti-racist and anti-ableist training
- Empathy Lab: disability & access barriers

Digital, marketing and technology training: Training to support digital capability, marketing performance, and technical literacy.

- Digital marketing fundamentals
- Social media marketing
- SEO / CRM
- Basic online courses for branding and content
- Website management

Training provision | Compliance, L&M, Mental Health

Specialist and compliance training for venues and events (mostly external): Training aimed at improving service quality, visitor experience, and inclusive practice.

- Personal licence for events
- Safeguarding for academy teachers / volunteers
- Training linked to Martyn's Law
- Legislative changes (employment, harassment, sexual harassment)
- Event-specific or heritage-specific training

Leadership, progression and development training: Training to build internal pipelines, promote progression, and support long-term development.

- Train-the-trainer
- Mentor development
- Education and Training Level 3 Personal Development Plans (PDPs)
- University development programmes for promotion readiness
- Apprenticeships for career progression

Mental health and wellbeing training (external): A growing category linked to staff welfare and customer experience.

- Mental health first aid
- Wellbeing awareness

Training | Barriers to training

Training affordability: The end of EU-funded programmes has made training significantly more expensive. Employers described needing to “game the system” to access training, or being forced into bundled courses they don’t need, increasing cost and reducing relevance. Funding gaps limit how much small hospitality and visitor economy businesses can upskill their workforce.

- *“We’ve done a lot... when there was European funding available... pay for one course and get the next one free.”*
- *“Since that’s finished... we have to do an obscure course... packaged as two courses... which wasn’t relevant to what we were doing.”*

Difficulty in finding local, relevant, quality training providers: There’s a lack of visibility of what training exists locally, limited sector-specific provision and inconsistent communication from local providers like colleges. Utilising a search engine often leads to businesses hiring providers from outside the region. Businesses are left to “figure it out themselves,” leading to poor choices, reliance on external providers, and inefficient use of training budgets.

- *“Google doesn’t always allow you to see who’s actually local... like booking a plumber and they’re in Wales.”*
- *“We’ve never worked with Lincoln College... never seen any adverts for funding or courses.”*
- *“Suppliers are often outside Lincolnshire... we’re not good at crowding in investment.”*

Training | Barriers to training

Staff time and capacity constraints: Small teams cannot absorb downtime, making even affordable training inaccessible. With many organisations operating with minimal staff, any training that requires absence from the workplace becomes difficult.

- *“The numbers needed would close us down for those days.” “*
- *Since that’s finished... we have to do an obscure course... packaged as two courses... which wasn’t relevant to what we were doing.”*

Unclear training pathways and lack of guidance for individuals: Development is ad hoc, informal, dependent on employee initiative and not a coherent workforce strategy. Employees who want to develop must often find and choose training themselves, with little structure or advice from employers.

Training inflexibility: Training structures are built for large employers, making them inaccessible for 90% of the visitor economy, which is dominated by micro and small businesses. Skills Bootcamps and similar programmes often require too many participants per employer, making them unworkable for small businesses with small teams.

- *“Numbers that would need to be on the course would close us down for those days... need more flexibility.”*
- *“Instead of creating one for 8 or 10 people... one or two people could go along.”*

Training | Barriers to training

Lack of central coordination: The sector lacks a shared intelligence hub, leading to duplication, inefficiency, and missed opportunities for collaboration.

- *“A one stop shop for training... that’s what would be most useful.”*
- *“Better communication of the types of courses available... specific to the industry.”*

Mismatch between public-sector approach and commercial realities: Public funded training often misses employer priorities (e.g., revenue generation, productivity, retention) and lack commercial understanding. making it less relevant. This leads to unrealistic expectations around free events or uncompensated labour.

- *“They expect everybody to put on events for free... they don’t get it.” .”*
- *“There’s not a lot of commercial awareness.”*
- *“They didn’t have a lot of commercial nous... it didn’t feel like they understood the commercial side.”*

Reliance on external providers creates issues: Training and external services can become transactional and disconnected from business identity, reducing effectiveness. This happens in technical areas like websites, digital assets or ongoing marketing.

- *“They don’t embrace who we are... our voice gets lost.”*
- *“If you go externally, you don’t own your website... you run into all sorts of problems.”*

Training | Barriers to training

Training can be perceived as basic and not going beyond foundation level:

Employees plateau at an entry level of understanding, limiting progression, innovation, and competitiveness. Basic courses are easy to access but there is a lack of intermediate and advanced training.

- *“Courses cover the basics... we need skills that extend beyond the basics.”*
- *“Digital courses... were just a brief insight... we’re still learning.”*

Training | Issues to address

Need for better alignment and visibility: Local training efforts already exist but remain fragmented, with limited coordination or visibility across Lincolnshire. Organisations are developing similar initiatives in isolation, signalling the need for shared, aligned, and scalable employer-led training.

- *“We're trying to do the same thing... there's got to be support across Lincolnshire.”*

Apprenticeship levy is underused and represents a major missed opportunity: Levy is not maximised locally, particularly by organisations that receive it (local authorities, universities) but are not always agile enough to deploy it effectively. Lincolnshire is missing out on economic and investment opportunities because many apprenticeship providers are based outside the county.

- *“We rarely underutilize the apprenticeship levy.”*
- *“Local authorities and universities are not always the most nimble... and I think we could really utilise it.”*

Not using the levy is regarded as a big miss as Apprenticeships are seen as highly valuable in raising standards, building pipelines, and stabilising kitchen teams. Future head chefs come from lower-level chefs so investment at the base is critical. Apprenticeships also create accountability within kitchens.

- *“The lower chefs turn into the head chefs... it's a matter of making sure you get them on apprenticeships.”*
- *“When there's apprenticeships happening... everybody's standard is higher... even if you've got a head chef who isn't that bothered, it holds them to account.”*

Training | Top priorities for improvement

Local Lincolnshire training portal: Employers repeatedly said they don't know what training exists, who provides it, which courses are high quality, or what funding is available. The current system is fragmented, confusing, and inefficient. They want a single, curated portal to make it easier for businesses, especially those who are time-poor or smaller venues, to compare and book appropriate training.

- *“A hub of information in terms of training opportunities... a one-stop shop for training for Lincolnshire.”*
- *“Access to an online portal of trusted courses... especially someone Lincolnshire-based.”*
- *“Better communication of the types of courses available that are specific to the industry.”*

Training | Top priorities for improvement

More advanced, flexible and sector-relevant training: Employers said that most existing training covers only the basics, leaving staff without the advanced capabilities needed for modern visitor-facing organisations, particularly in marketing, digital skills, customer service, accessibility, and technical event delivery. It needs to be flexible allowing small businesses to access it by only sending one or two people without closing operations.

- *“A lot of online courses cover the basics... we need to extend people’s skills... extensions to the skill set we already have.”*
- *“We looked at progressive training... but bootcamps need more flexibility... the numbers required would close us down.”*

Improved access to funding, grants and clear development pathways: Employers want training that supports staff progression and retention, but the costs, the end of EU funding, and inconsistent guidance make it hard to invest. A clear system of grants, funded courses, and mapped progression routes would help the workforce grow and stay in the sector.

- *“Information on any grants for training... or free resources... available in one place.”*

4.11 Non-priority Sectors

Please list below any occupations or roles that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

Difficult Roles Non priority 1	Difficult Roles Non priority 2	Difficult Roles Non priority 3	Difficult Roles Non priority 4	Difficult Roles Non priority 5
accountant	guard	lawyer	baker	security
Actuarial scientist	Mechanical engineering	Civils		
Admin	Instructors			
Advanced Data Analyst	Cloud Engineer			
Analysts	Risk analysts			
Branch Manager	Personal banking manager	Customer representative	Senior branch manager	multi-skilled Telephony colleague
Catering kitchen staff				
Chefs	General Managers	Financial Advisors		
Cleaners	Housekeepers	Litter pickers		
Contract Manager	Risk Manager			
credit controllers	admin roles	accounts roles		
Customer Experience				
Data Analyst	Cryptocurrency Analyst	AI programmer		
Data analysts	Software developers	Cybersecurity specialists		
Data scientist	AI tech			
Digital / data	Part time family support workers (prison)	Volunteer development		
Digital and IT related role	Administrative and customer service provider			
Driver/sales	Part time Saturday staff			
Early engagement lead	Women and girls officer			
ecologist	project manager for complex land-management projects	farm advisers with knowledge of nature-based solutions for more resilient, profitable food production	farmers / land managers	market gardeners
Engineers	IT specialist			
Environmental Health Officers	Monitoring Officers	Planning Officers		
Experienced admin support for sector	Younger apperienties			
Financial analyst	Operational analyst			
Ground floor workers				
HR roles				
indeed	fox recruitment	glassdoor		
Lack of Funds				
Maintenance manager				
New work coach				
Office Staff (Trainee)	Workshop Staff (Qualified and Trainee)			
operations managers	customer service reps	Marketing specialists	data scientists	HR managers
Pickers	Warehouse Operatives	Retail Associates	Professional Roles	
Planning/Planners				
Police officers				
Practitioners				
Rewards	IT	Supply chain	Pharmacists	Funeral roles
Risk Analyst	Fraud Prevention			
Sales assistants				
Sales assistants				
Sales with industry knowledge	MD			
Shop Manager	Assistant Shop Manager	Nursing Staff	Head of Operations	Head of Retail
Skilled trade	Engineering & technical roles	Digital software	Health care	Finance & accounting specialist
Social media exec	Digital marketing	Marketing ops		
Software developers	Cybersecurity specialists			
software developers	data analysis	cybersecurity project managers	experienced project manager	skilled technicians
Software Engineer	Cybersecurity Specialist			
Software Engineers	Data Scientists	Cybersecurity Specialists		
Solicitor	Educational Psychologist	Social Worker	Surveyors	Senior Leadership roles
Sourcing properties	Funding properties	Finding tennants	AI	General computer skills
Support Planner	Support Worker	Team Leader		
Team leader	Supervisor	Team assistant		

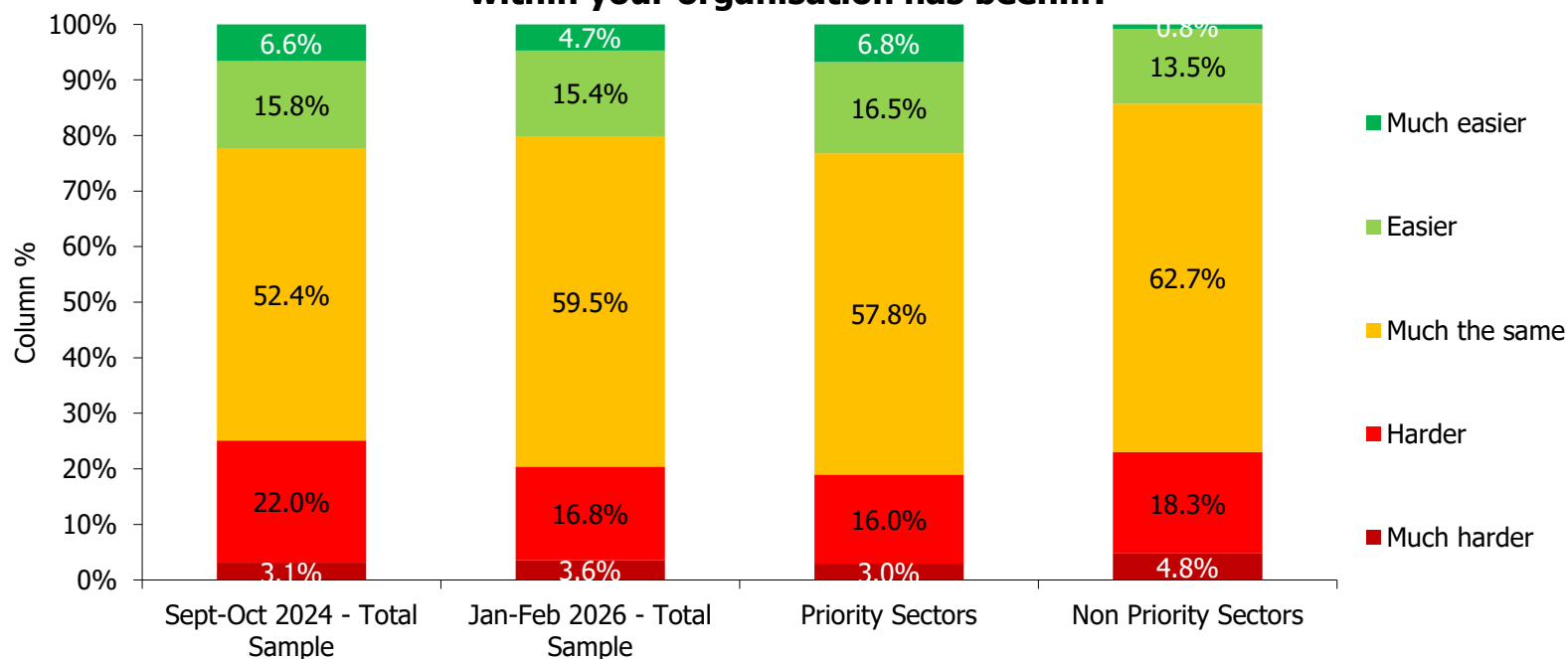
5.0 Staff retention

Staff retention | Incidence of employers finding staff retention 'Harder' or 'Much harder' YOY has fallen by 4.7% since Sept-Oct 2024 - the first LSIP may have contributed?

266

Jan-Feb 2026 = **Again, compared with 2024, would you say that retaining existing employees within your organisation during 2025 was...?**

Sept-Oct 2024 = **Over the last 12 months, would you say that retaining existing employees within your organisation has been...?**



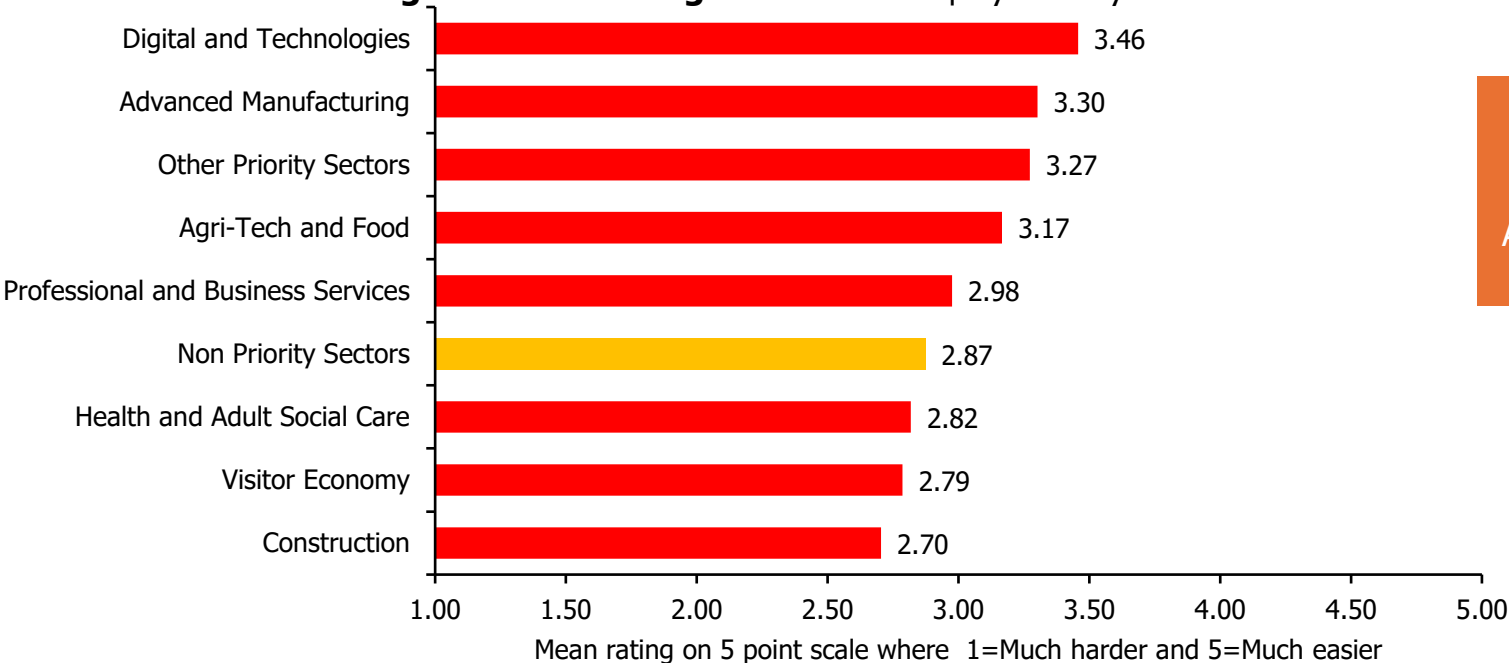
If anything, the Non-priority Sectors are experiencing greater challenges around staff retention than are the Priority Sectors, in aggregate at least.

Jan-Feb 2026 Base: Total (n=363), Priority Sectors (n=237), Non Priority Sectors (n=126), Sample Size = 363

Sept-Oct 2024 Base: Total (n=227) Much harder (n=7), Harder (n=50), Much the same (n=119), Easier (n=36), Much easier (n=15), Sample Size = 227

Staff retention | Construction (2.70/5.00), Visitor Economy (2.79) and Health & Social Care (2.82) would appear to have experienced the most widespread challenges in retaining staff.

Again, compared with 2024, would you say that retaining existing employees within your organisation during 2025 was...? | By Priority Sector



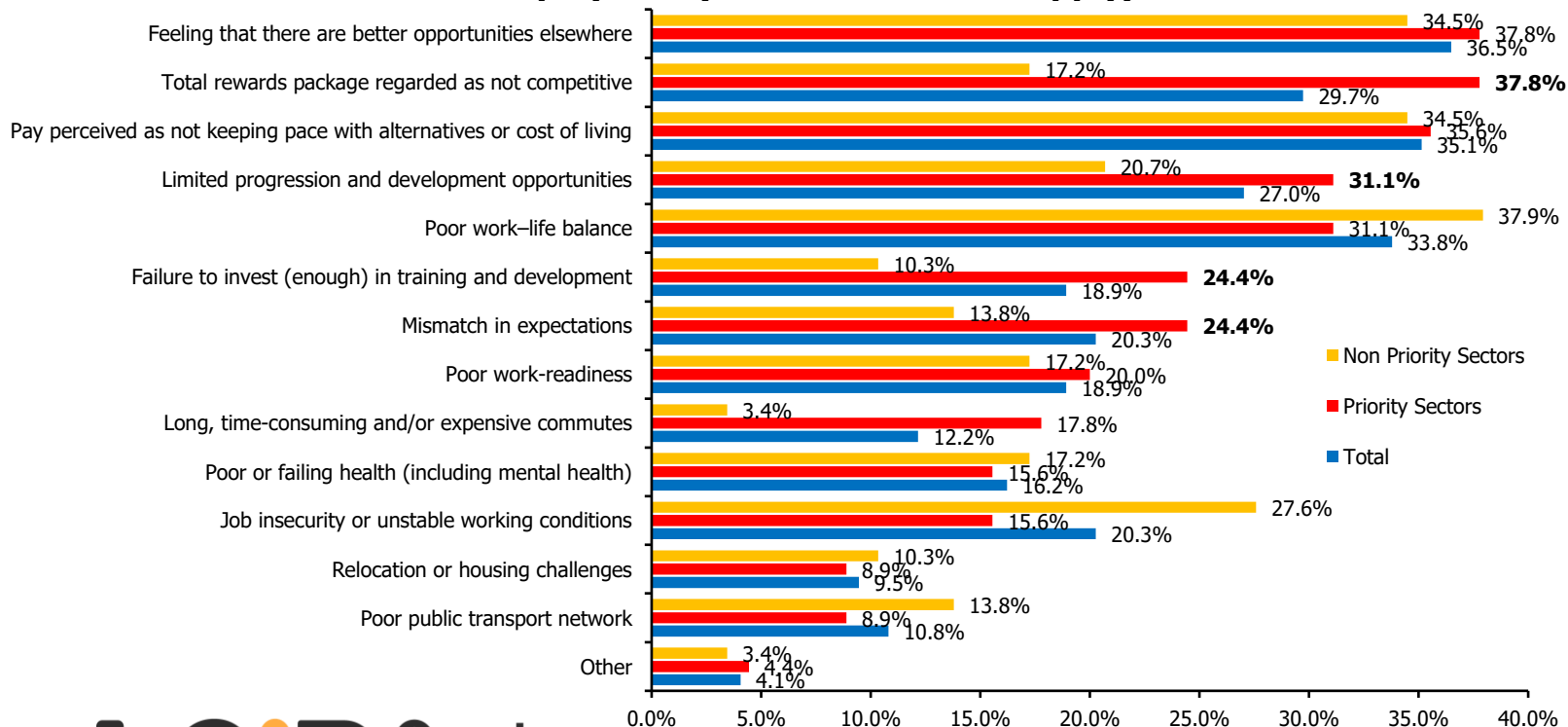
Staff retention is much less widely an issue in the Digital & Tech (3.46) and Advanced Manufacturing (3.30) sectors.

Base: Construction (n=27), Visitor Economy (n=14), Health and Adult Social Care (n=44), Non Priority Sectors (n=126), Professional and Business Services (n=40), Agri-Tech and Food (n=12), Other Priority Sectors (n=11), Advanced Manufacturing (n=43), Digital and Technologies (n=46), Sample Size = 363

Staff retention | Employers in Priority Sectors are much more likely to regard: 'Uncompetitive rewards package' (38%), 'Limited progression...' (31%), 'Failure to invest...in training...' (24%) and 'Mismatch in expectations' (24%), as factors making retention harder in their organisation.

268

Which factor(s) have made it harder or much harder for your organisation to retain employees? (Please tick all that apply)



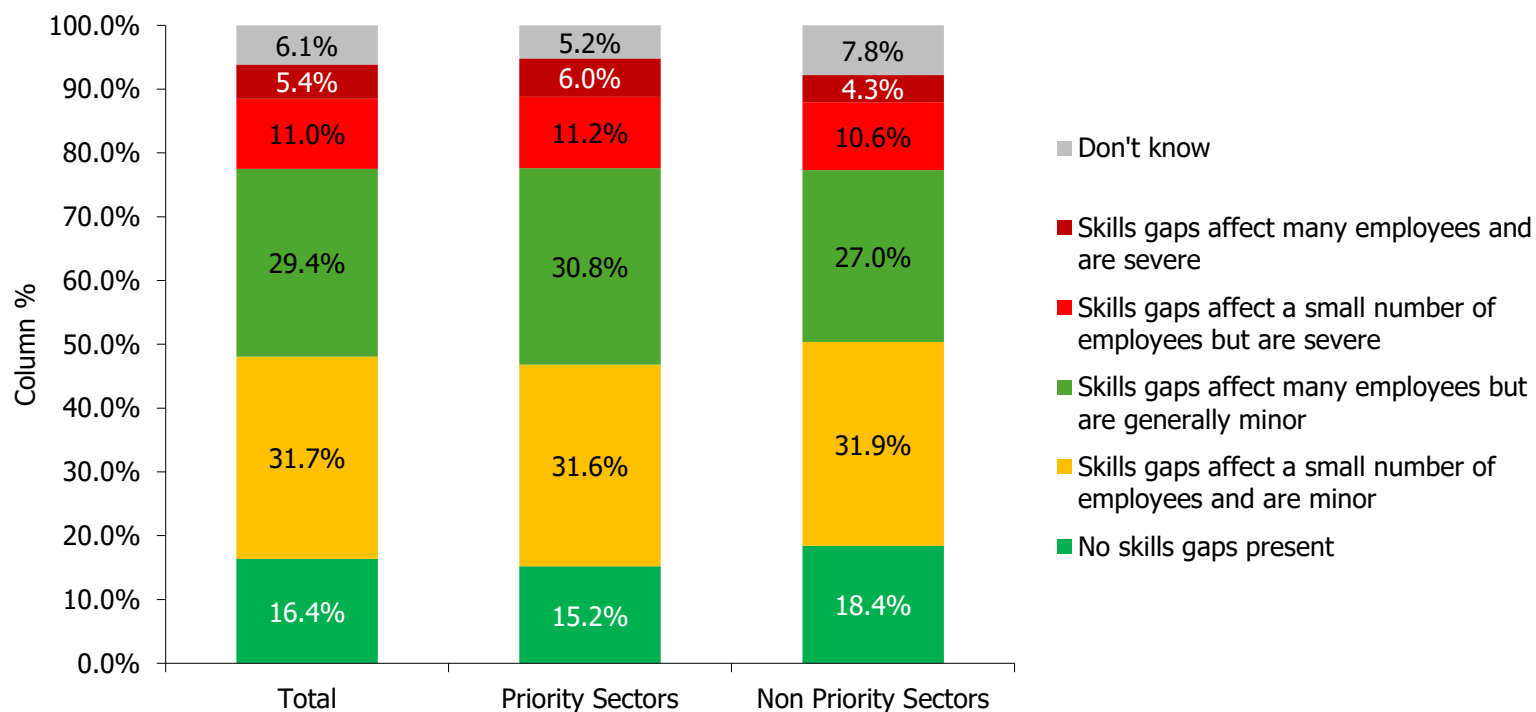
Base: Long, time-consuming and/or expensive commutes (n=9), Poor public transport network (n=8), Poor work-readiness (n=14), Mismatch in expectations (n=15), Pay perceived as not keeping pace with alternatives or cost of living (n=26), Total rewards package regarded as not competitive (n=22), Poor work-life balance (n=25), Limited progression and development opportunities (n=20), Job insecurity or unstable working conditions (n=15), Feeling that there are better opportunities elsewhere (n=27), Failure to invest (enough) in training and development (n=14), Relocation or housing challenges (n=7), Poor or failing health (including mental health) (n=12), Other (n=3), Sample Size = 74

6.0 Skills gaps and training provision

Skills gaps | Slightly more employers in the Priority Sectors acknowledge the presence of any skills gaps (+5.8%) and slightly more of them admit that they are severe (+2.3%).

270

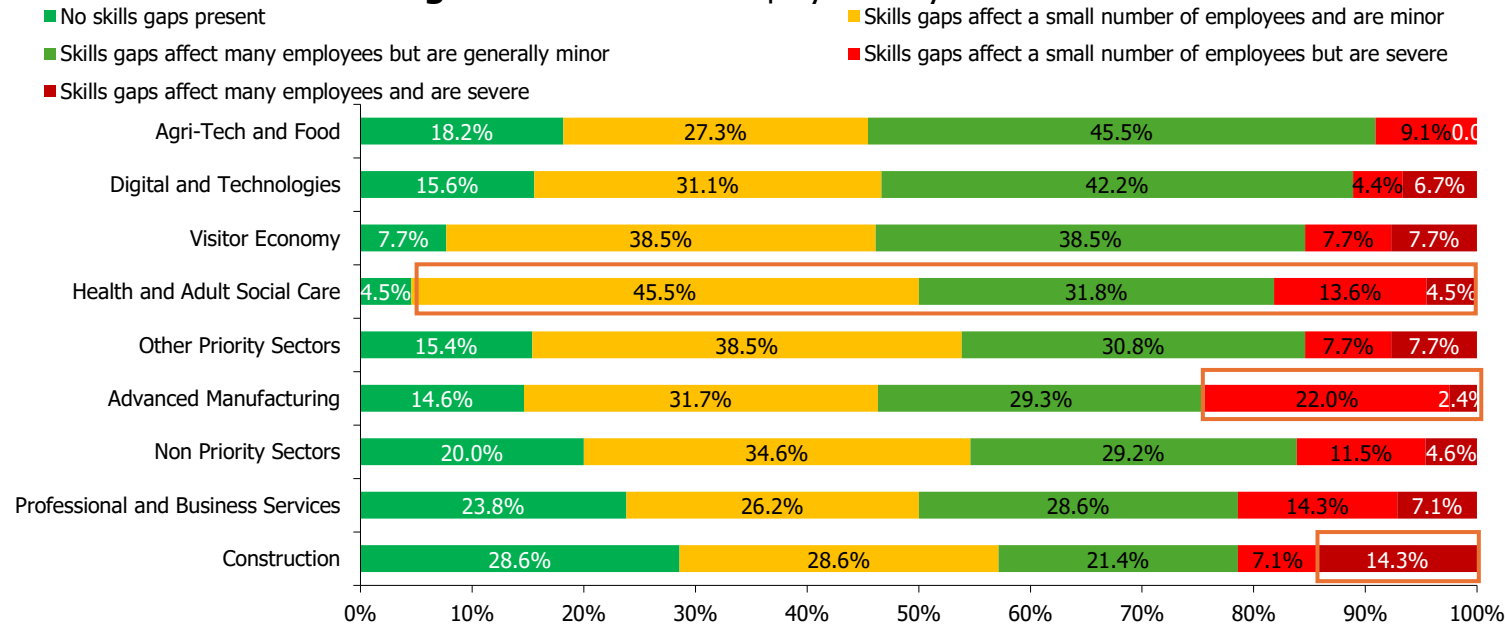
Which of the following best describes the skills gaps in your existing workforce, across the organisation overall?



Base: Total (n=391), Priority Sectors (n=250), Non Priority Sectors (n=141), Sample Size = 391

Skills gaps | Health and Social Care (95.5%) admits to the widest incidence of any skills gap, Advanced Manufacturing has the widest 'severe' skills gaps (24.4%) and Construction has the highest share of severe skills gaps affecting many employees (14.3%).

Which of the following best describes the skills gaps in your existing workforce, across the organisation overall? | By Priority Sector



Base: Agri-Tech and Food (n=11), Professional and Business Services (n=42), Non Priority Sectors (n=130), Construction (n=28), Other Priority Sectors (n=13), Digital and Technologies (n=45), Advanced Manufacturing (n=41), Health and Adult Social Care (n=44), Visitor Economy (n=13), Sample Size = 367

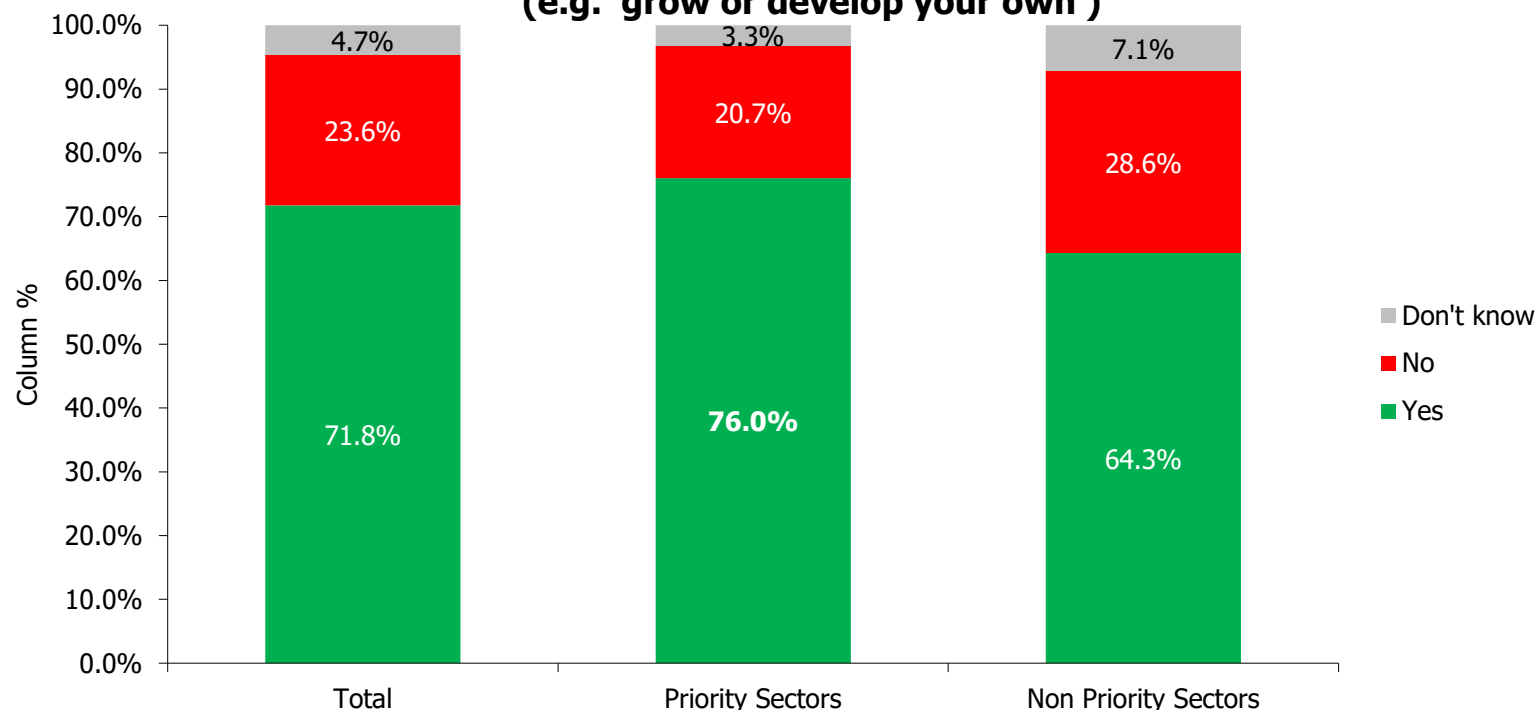
Industry Sector	Please briefly describe the skills gaps that you regard as being severe?
Advanced Manufacturing	AI
Advanced Manufacturing	Gaps in technical knowledge
Advanced Manufacturing	Lack of knowledge
Advanced Manufacturing	Leadership and Management Digital skills
Advanced Manufacturing	Much of our demand is for IT
Advanced Manufacturing	Production foundry operatives, critical to producing product customer requires.
Advanced Manufacturing	There is a disconnect between the skills qualifications predict and the reality of the persons actual skills.
Construction	Experience is the biggest problem, people seem to want to climb the ladder without the necessary skills or experience
Construction	Groundworkers lack of certified training are expected to be taught on the job (especially when younger) struggle to keep up with the experienced and cause them to loose interest in ground working as a career.
Construction	In order to afford our workforce being a small business we have had to recruit unskilled workers & are having to train them from scratch which is time consuming
Construction	Management skills, significant development courses and coaching is highly intensive. This is operationally challenging to transition as senior management are leaving post covid.
Construction	Some employees need more qualification
Digital and Technologies	Advanced AI, machine learning, and data engineering skills, especially in building, deploying, and governing production-ready models at scale
Digital and Technologies	Auditors
Digital and Technologies	Everything
Digital and Technologies	Skilled transpeople, senior technicians , specialist engineers, compliance leads, and experienced supervisors.
Digital and Technologies	The skill gaps include advanced data analysis and interpretation and professional who can integrate technical expertise
Health and Adult Social Care	Confident Numeracy and Literacy
Health and Adult Social Care	Green and sustainable technology
Health and Adult Social Care	Leadership, caring skills, wellbeing
Health and Adult Social Care	Managers not being able to amnage effectively. Amongst support workers a lack of exprience on supporting so heavily reliant on managers
Health and Adult Social Care	The most severe skills gaps are in clinically trained care workers who can safely support more complex needs, such as medication administration, and long-term condition management. There is also a shortage of staff with advanced training in safeguarding, dementia care, and digital record-keeping, which are essential for high-quality, safe care.
Health and Adult Social Care	Understanding accountability and taking responsibility. Understanding the job role and the expectations with it. Most people think that doing care is an easy job but it takes a lot to be one as the role involves about dealing with different people with conditions and certain quirks and preference.
Health and Adult Social Care	Very specialist medical skill sets
Ports and Logistics	Severe skills gaps include advanced digital and IT skills, particularly in cybersecurity, cloud computing, and data analysis, as well as a lack of experienced professionals with strong problem-solving, communication, and leadership skills.
Professional and Business Services	AI development
Professional and Business Services	As a two person limited company we often find that we need business support at grassroots level. The IT sector is changing, apps and automation seem to be everywhere... AI and its uses seems to be limitless... but we need to know what and how to use these things safely! Using Xero software for book keeping - would be great to have support there Having wellbeing support for business owners to prevent burnout and stress (I could deliver this)
Professional and Business Services	Health
Professional and Business Services	How to get a lead magnet live how to use online platforms to make online course live
Professional and Business Services	I have taken on a school leaver (grammar) and am having to teach him how to write in a logical and coherent manner. His attention to detail is limited and desire to put in anything more than minimum effort is sad
Professional and Business Services	Language ability. General levels of intelligence and capacity to learn and develop.
Professional and Business Services	Please see previous answer re client relationship and technology skills
Professional and Business Services	Recruitment
Visitor Economy	Basic chef skills and customer service skills work readiness
Visitor Economy	More complex computers

Industry Sector	Please briefly describe the skills gaps that you regard as being severe?
Non Priority Sectors	Automaton crm integration mailshot
Non Priority Sectors	Business Acumen. Leadership skills. Business Skills in terms of knowing the best way to grow the business. HR Skills in helping to recruit and retain employees.
Non Priority Sectors	Computer skills and AI
Non Priority Sectors	HR and people management
Non Priority Sectors	In our organization there are over 10,000 volunteers within 60-75 year old age group who do not have digital skills
Non Priority Sectors	IT operations
Non Priority Sectors	Long term knowledge.
Non Priority Sectors	project management of complex land-based projects involving multiple partners and requiring knowledge and experience of farming, ecology, hydrology, community sector, policy, fundraising, regenerative/nature friendly farming methods, building community and catalysing change amongst land managers
Non Priority Sectors	Reliability
Non Priority Sectors	Social media marketing. How to market and how to use social media for business and also helps with funding for businesses
Non Priority Sectors	statutory roles like social work, educational psychologist, solicitor and surveyors.
Non Priority Sectors	There are not enough applicants versed in AI. Degrees in Computer Science don't really matter when you can't analyse data or integrate databases with AI technology.
Non Priority Sectors	this reflects a typical casual social week without over or under stating social activity
Non Priority Sectors	Training, knowledge with people

Training provision | The incidence of providing training to address skills shortages by 'growing your own' is markedly higher in the Priority Sectors at 76% (+11.7% above Non-priority.)

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**Over the last 3 years, has your organisation done any of the following...
...provided training to combat occupational skills shortages
(e.g. 'grow or develop your own')**

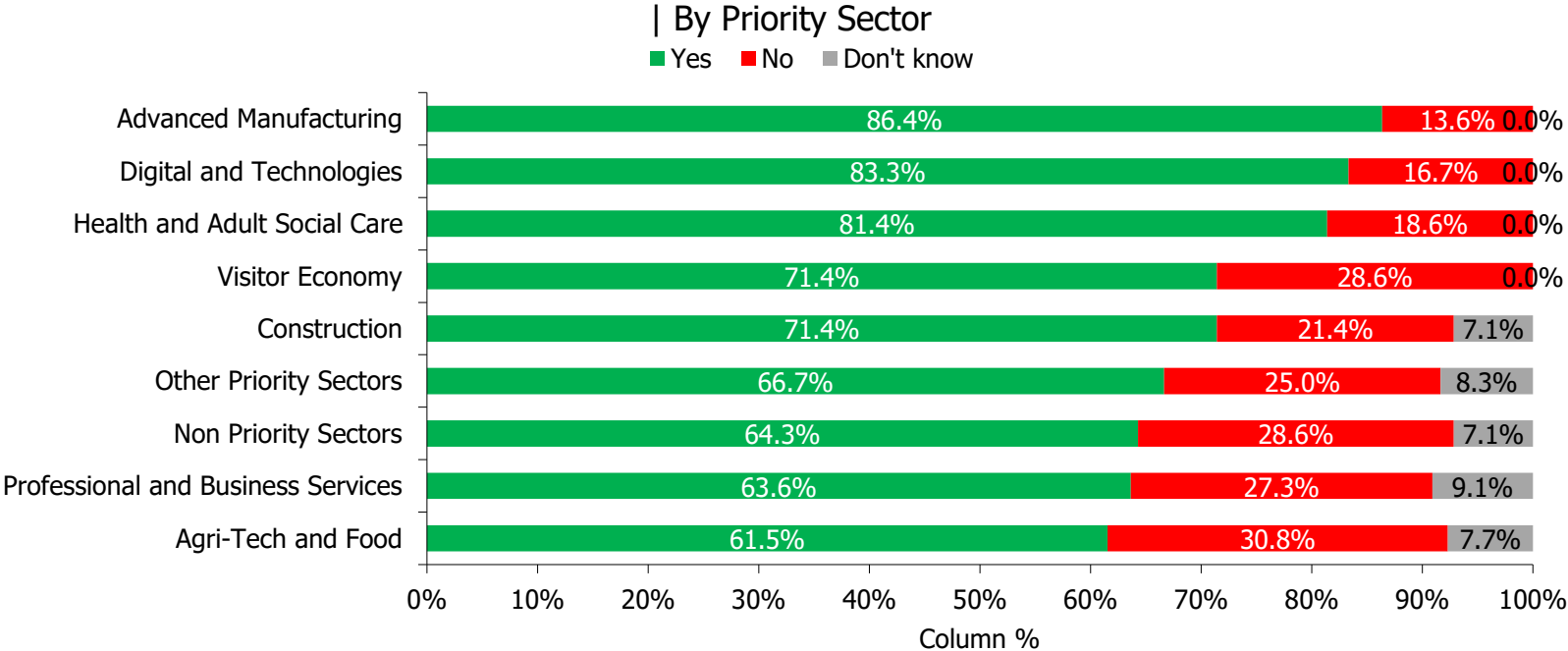


Base: Total (n=386), Priority Sectors (n=246), Non Priority Sectors (n=140), Sample Size = 386

Whilst their recruitment experiences over the last 12 months at least are quite similar, more Priority Sector employers are taking steps to address skills shortage through developing their existing workforce.

Training provision | Over 80% of the employers in three of the Priority Sectors are providing training designed to 'grow their own': Advanced Manufacturing (86%), Digital & Tech (83%) and Health and Social Care (81%).

Over the last 3 years, has your organisation done any of the following...
provided training to combat occupational skills shortages (e.g. 'grow or develop your own')

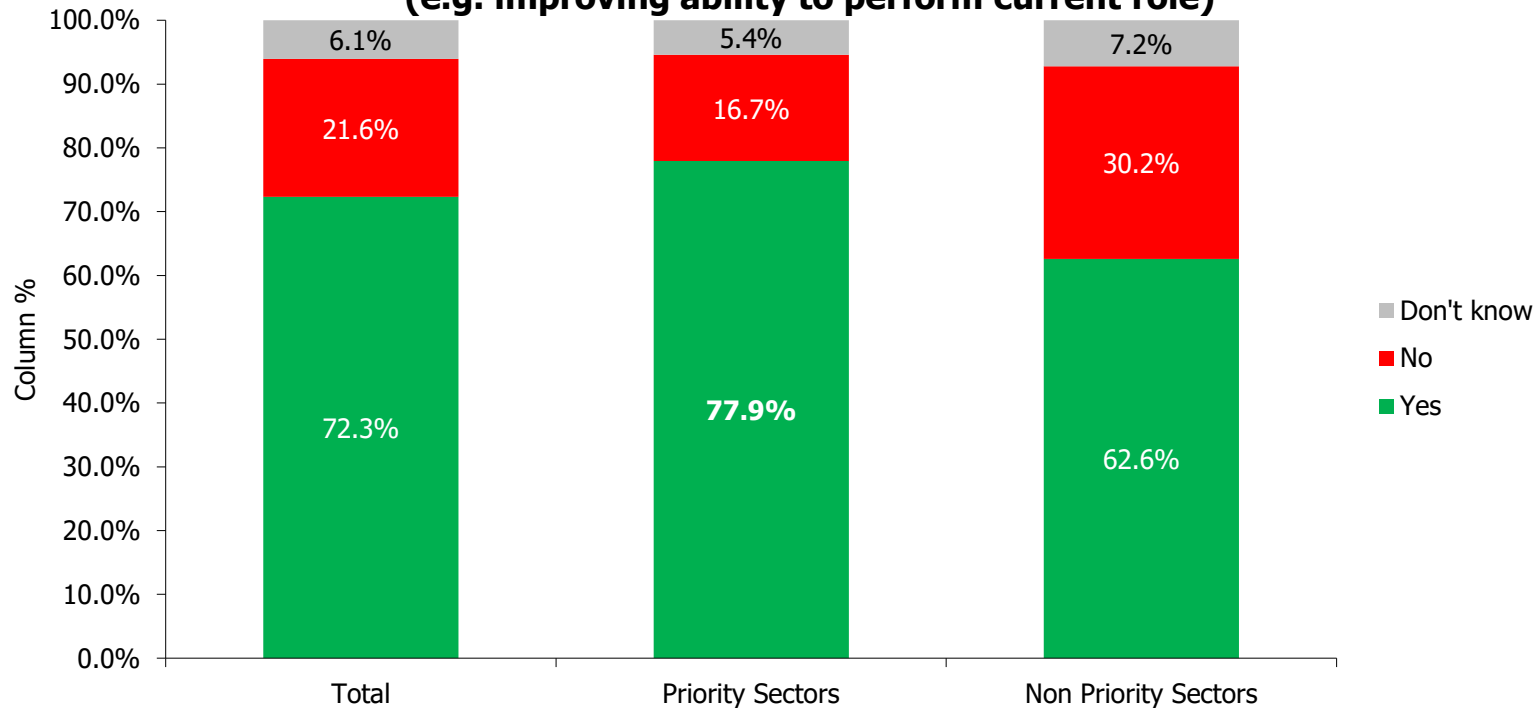


Base: Agri-Tech and Food (n=13), Professional and Business Services (n=44), Non Priority Sectors (n=140), Construction (n=28), Other Priority Sectors (n=12), Digital and Technologies (n=48), Advanced Manufacturing (n=44), Health and Adult Social Care (n=43), Visitor Economy (n=14), Sample Size = 386

Training provision | 78% of Priority Sector employers have provided training to address skills gaps over the last 3 years, compared with 63% for Non-priority Sector employers.

276

**Over the last 3 years, has your organisation done any of the following...
...provided training to address skills gaps in your existing workforce
(e.g. improving ability to perform current role)**

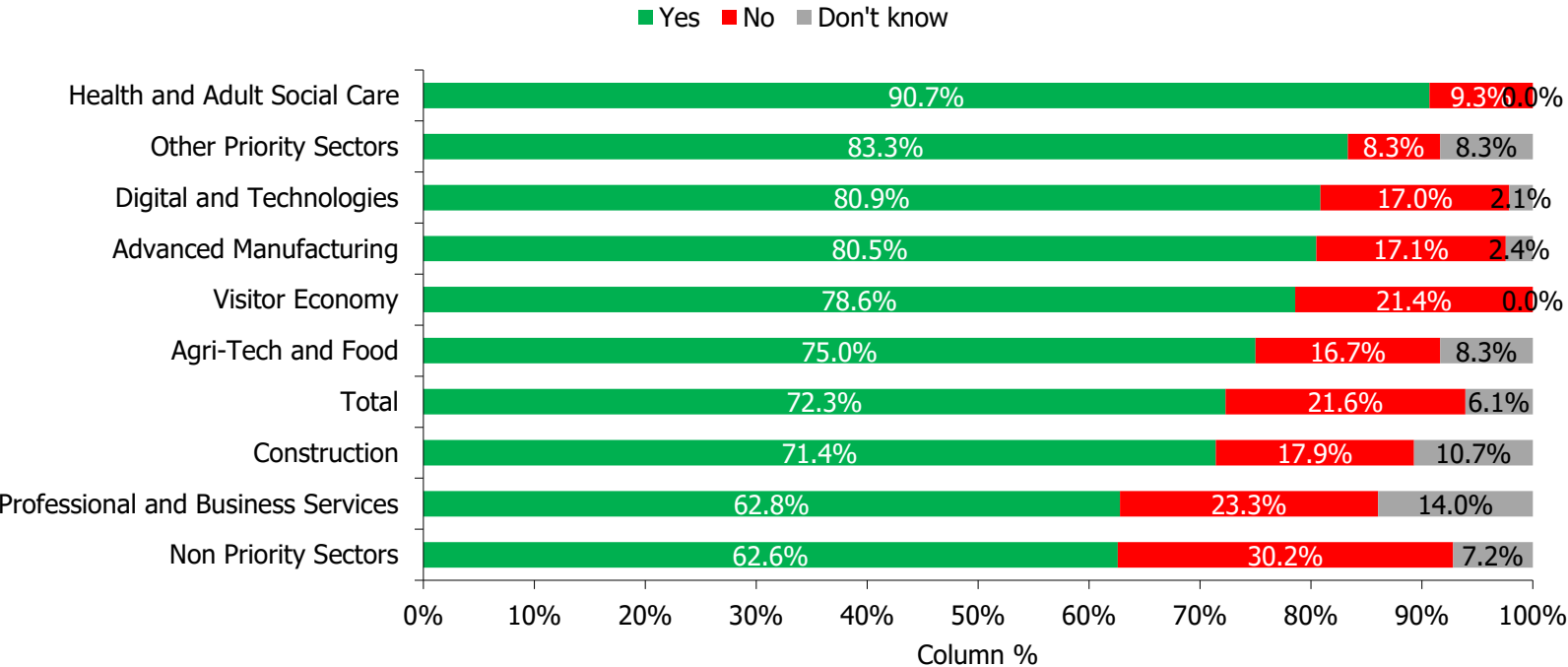


Base: Total (n=379), Priority Sectors (n=240), Non Priority Sectors (n=139), Sample Size = 379

Whilst the presence of any skills gaps is quite similar, more employers in the Priority Sectors appear to be taking more steps to address this.

Training provision | At 91%, Health and Adult Social Care is the Priority Sector where employers are most likely to provide training to address skills gaps in their existing workforce.

Over the last 3 years, has your organisation done any of the following...
provided training to address skills gaps in your existing workforce
(e.g. improving ability to perform current role) | By Priority Sector



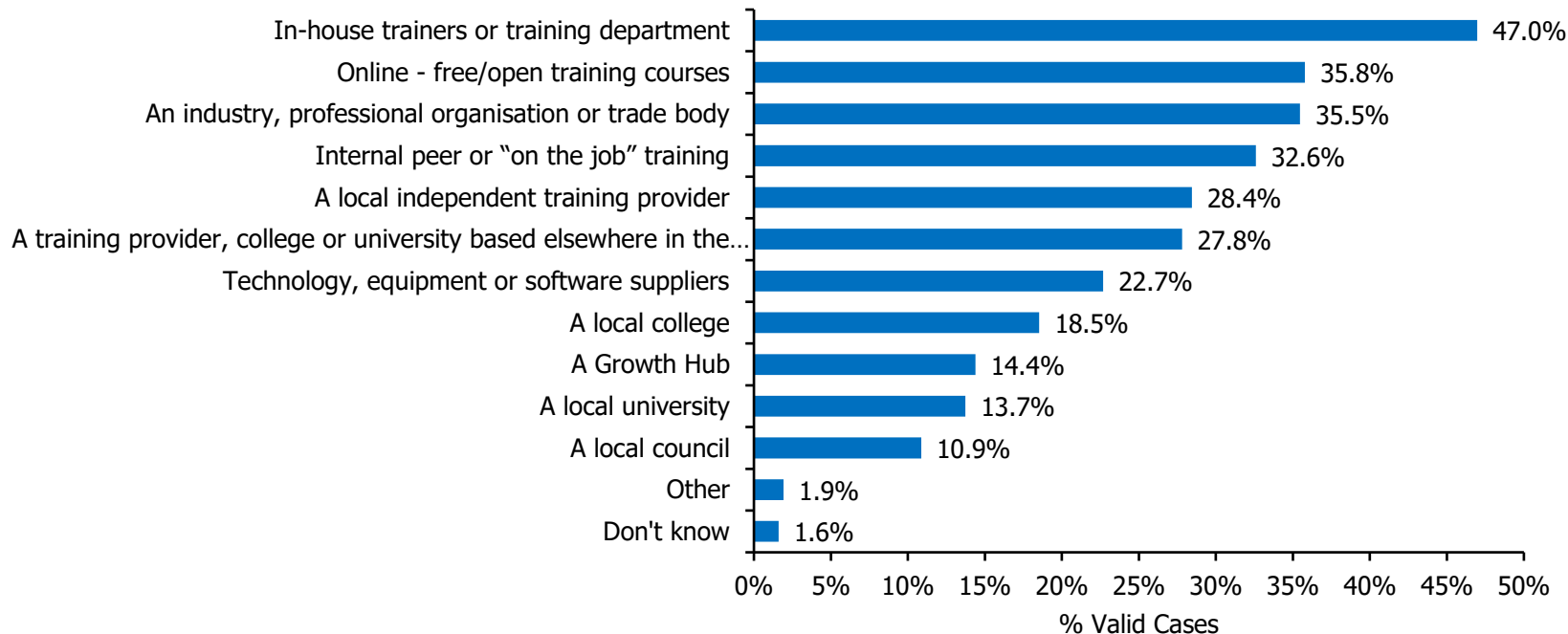
Employers in the Professional and Business Services sector are the least likely to provide training to plug skills gaps, albeit some of the explanation here will be in the comparatively small and micro size profile of entities in this sector.

Base: Total (n=379), Agri-Tech and Food (n=12), Professional and Business Services (n=43), Non Priority Sectors (n=139), Construction (n=28), Other Priority Sectors (n=12), Digital and Technologies (n=47), Advanced Manufacturing (n=41), Health and Adult Social Care (n=43), Visitor Economy (n=14), Sample Size = 379

7.0 Use and perceptions of training providers

Use of training providers | When outsourcing, over a third of the employers providing training have used 'Online – free/ open training courses' (36%) and/or 'An industry...body' (35%).

Where has your organisation sourced training from, over the last 3 years?
(Please select all that apply) | Where providing training at all

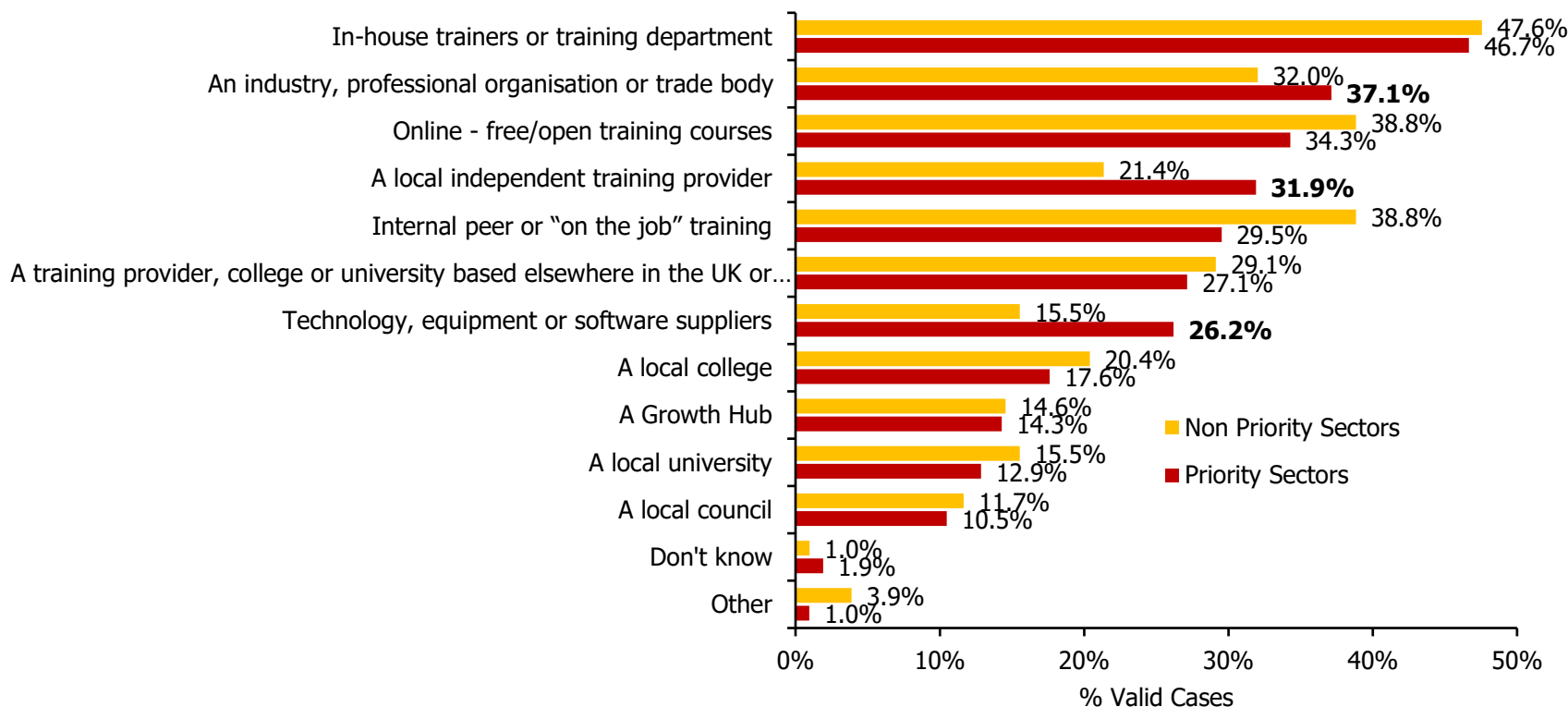


Base: Don't know (n=5), Other (n=6), A local council (n=34), A local university (n=43), A Growth Hub (n=45), A local college (n=58), Technology, equipment or software suppliers (n=71), A training provider, college or university based elsewhere in the UK or beyond (n=87), A local independent training provider (n=89), Internal peer or "on the job" training (n=102), An industry, professional organisation or trade body (n=111), Online - free/open training courses (n=112), In-house trainers or training department (n=147), Sample Size = 313

Use of training providers | Employers in the Priority Sectors more widely source training from: An industry...body (+5%), a local ITP (+10%), and/or a Technology...supplier (+11%), with only 18% using a local College and 13% a local University.

280

Where has your organisation sourced training from, over the last 3 years?
(Please select all that apply) | Where providing training at all

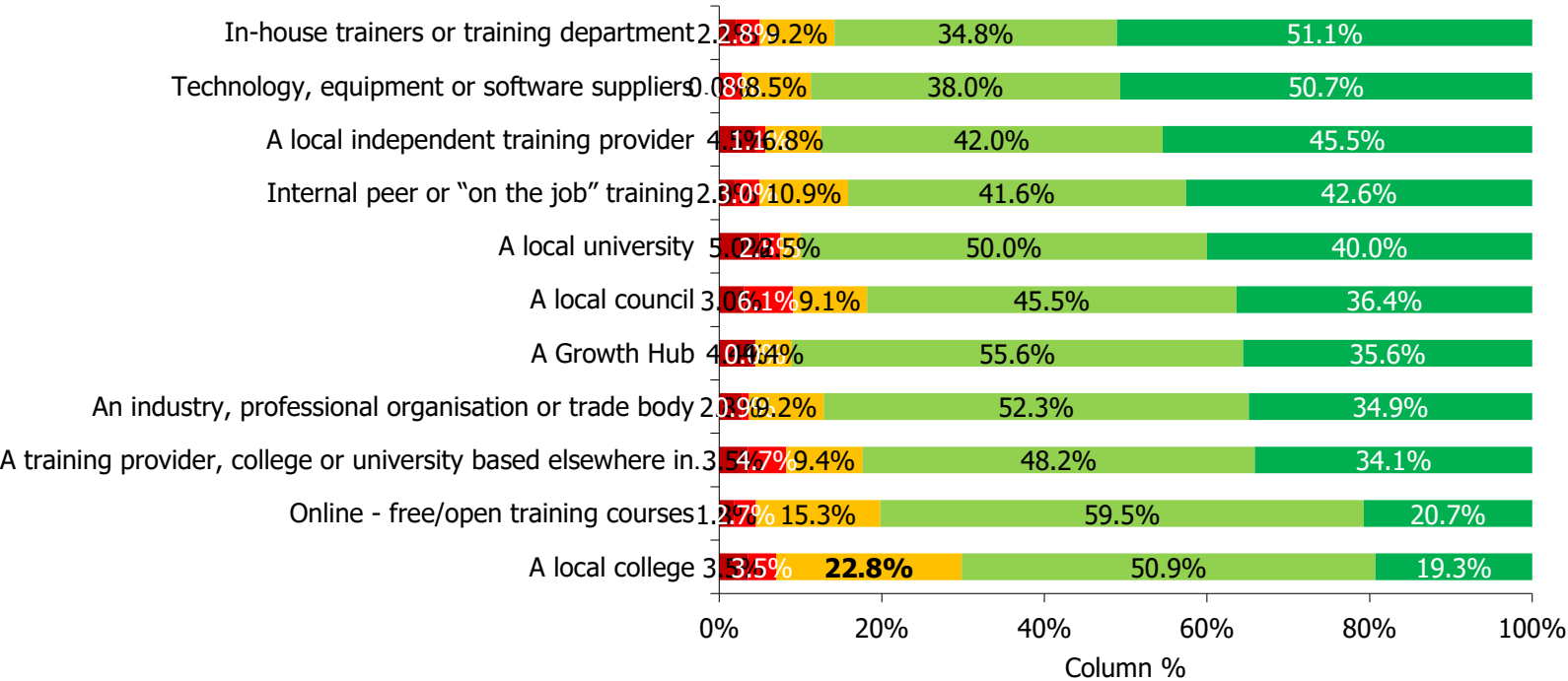


Base: Other (n=6), Don't know (n=5), A local council (n=34), A local university (n=43), A Growth Hub (n=45), A local college (n=58), Technology, equipment or software suppliers (n=71), A training provider, college or university based elsewhere in the UK or beyond (n=87), Internal peer or "on the job" training (n=102), A local independent training provider (n=89), Online - free/open training courses (n=112), An industry, professional organisation or trade body (n=111), In-house trainers or training department (n=147), Sample Size = 313

Satisfaction with providers | Suppliers (51%) and local ITP (46%) both outperform “on the job” training (43%) in securing the highest satisfaction rating. ‘Local college’ lags on this measure due to high ‘ambivalence’ which we have seen in other areas when conducting concurrent research.

Please indicate using the rating scale below your level of satisfaction with the training delivered by each of the providers listed. | Provider only rated where used

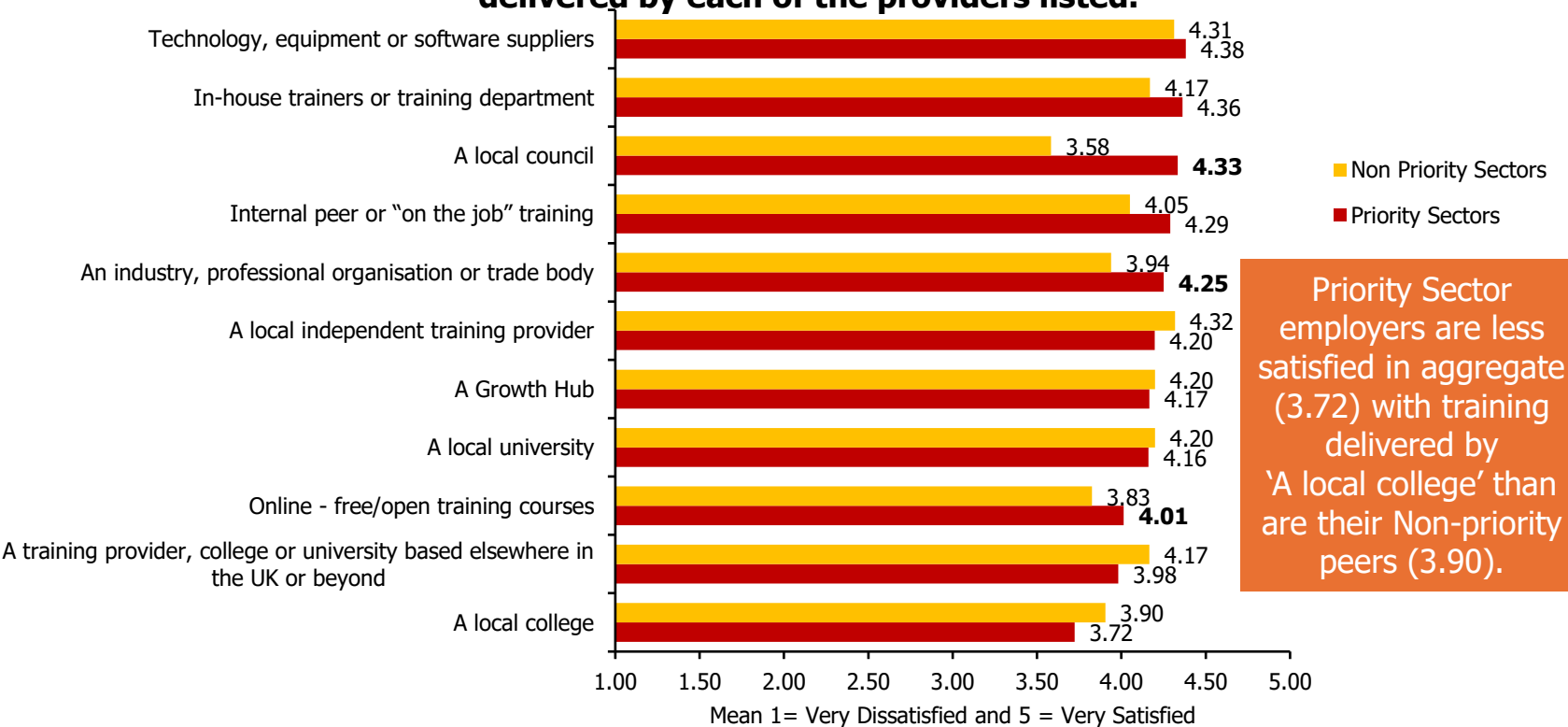
Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied Satisfied Very Satisfied



Base: A local independent training provider (n=88), A local college (n=57), A local university (n=40), A local council (n=33), A Growth Hub (n=45), A training provider, college or university based elsewhere in the UK or beyond (n=85), An industry, professional organisation or trade body (n=109), In-house trainers or training department (n=141), Technology, equipment or software suppliers (n=71), Online - free/open training courses (n=111), Internal peer or “on the job” training (n=101), \${Q24_OTHER} (n=6), Sample Size = Variable

Satisfaction with providers | In aggregate, employers in the Priority Sectors are more satisfied than their peers in Non-priority Sectors, with provision sourced from: 'A local council', 'An industry...body' or 'Online'.

Please indicate using the rating scale below your level of satisfaction with the training delivered by each of the providers listed.

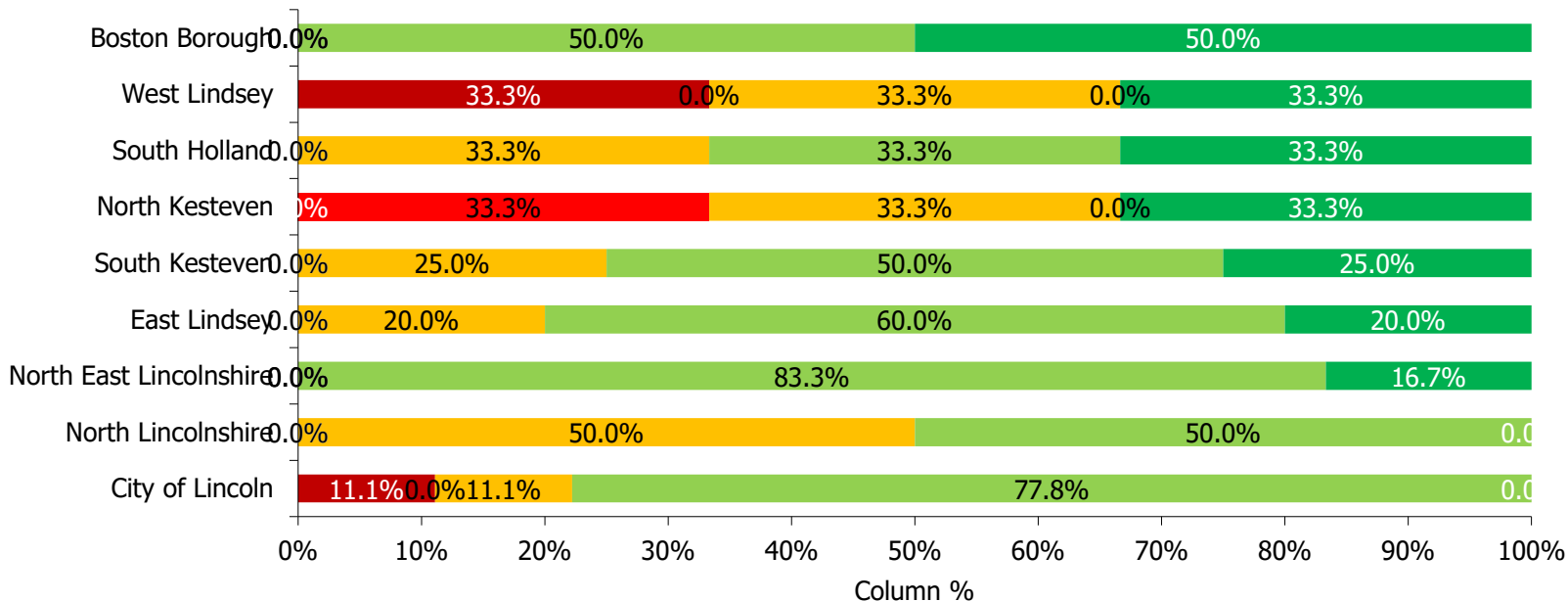


Base: A local independent training provider (n=88), A local college (n=57), A local university (n=40), A local council (n=33), A Growth Hub (n=45), A training provider, college or university based elsewhere in the UK or beyond (n=85), An industry, professional organisation or trade body (n=109), In-house trainers or training department (n=141), Technology, equipment or software suppliers (n=71), Online - free/open training courses (n=111), Internal peer or "on the job" training (n=101), \$Q24_OTHER\$ (n=6), Sample Size = Variable

Satisfaction with providers | Directionally at least, dissatisfaction or ambivalence regarding 'A local college' appears to be more prevalent in: West Lindsey, North Kesteven and North Lincolnshire.

Please indicate using the rating scale below your level of satisfaction with the training delivered by each of the providers listed. | By Head Office District for 'A local college'

■ Very Dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied

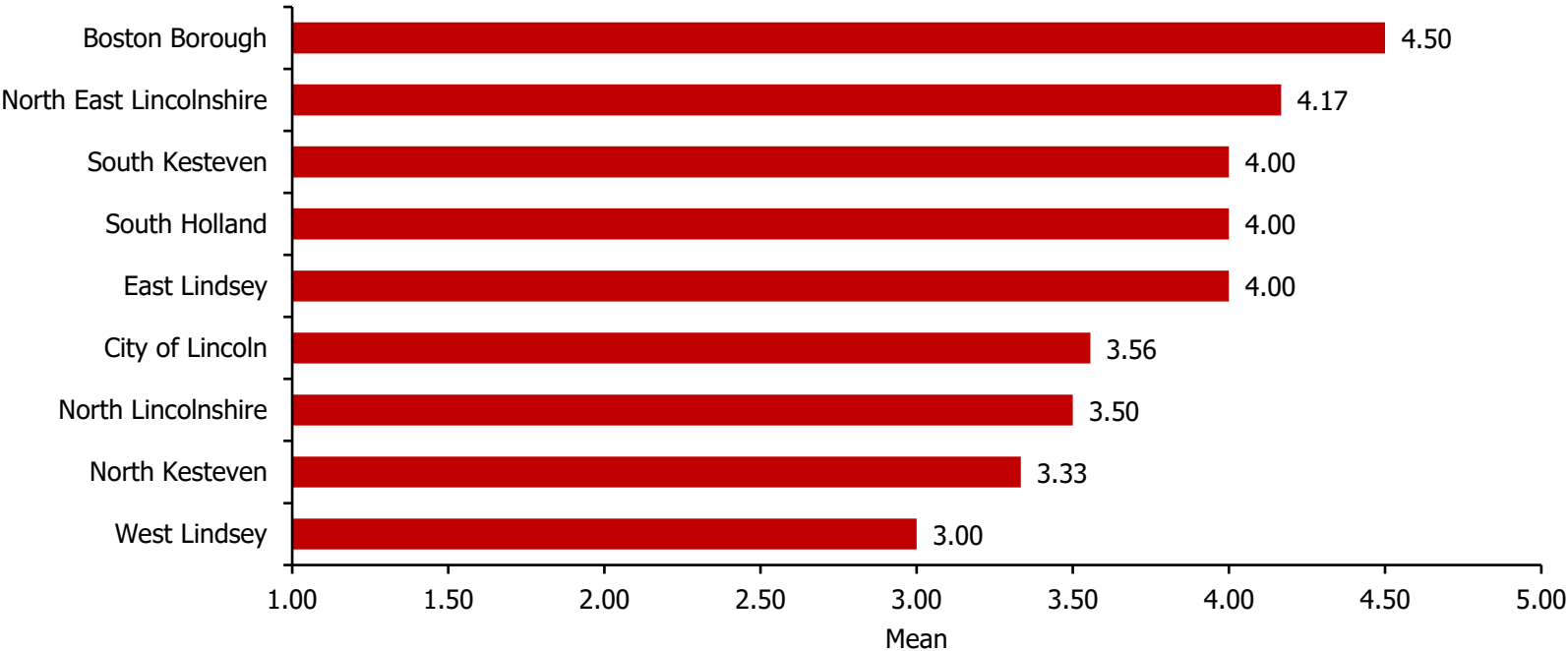


NB Care very low base.

Base: Boston Borough (n=2), City of Lincoln (n=9), East Lindsey (n=5), North East Lincolnshire (n=6), North Kesteven (n=3), North Lincolnshire (n=4), South Holland (n=3), South Kesteven (n=4), West Lindsey (n=3), Sample Size = 39

Satisfaction with providers | Directionally, 'A local college' secures a higher mean satisfaction rating from employers based in: Boston Borough (4.50/5.00) and North East Lincolnshire (4.17).

Please indicate using the rating scale below your level of satisfaction with the training delivered by each of the providers listed. | By Head Office District for 'A local college'



NB Care very low base.

Base: West Lindsey (n=3), North Kesteven (n=3), North Lincolnshire (n=4), City of Lincoln (n=9), East Lindsey (n=5), South Holland (n=3), South Kesteven (n=4), North East Lincolnshire (n=6), Boston Borough (n=2), Sample Size = 39

Please briefly describe why you were 'Very Satisfied' with your experience of the training delivered by one or more providers you have used within the last 3 years.

Advanced Manufacturing	Because it has done what we needed it to do
Advanced Manufacturing	Because our tutors cover everything needed in the chosen area
Advanced Manufacturing	Clear learning objectives helped me focus on key skills.
Advanced Manufacturing	effective and professional
Advanced Manufacturing	Extremely professional
Advanced Manufacturing	Informative, relevant, bite size
Advanced Manufacturing	just good quality training with the employees gaining new skills as proposed
Advanced Manufacturing	Our floor is quite unique. So nothing better than the experienced operators showing the new people the ropes. No external course can provide that.
Advanced Manufacturing	Our in house training team is good
Advanced Manufacturing	Our staff now meet our current training objectives
Advanced Manufacturing	Positive application of learning in the workplace, positive feedback from the employees
Advanced Manufacturing	Specialist in the products they sell
Advanced Manufacturing	Staff well informed after training
Advanced Manufacturing	The training was well structured, engaging, and clearly tailored to our organisation's needs. The providers demonstrated strong subject knowledge, delivered content in a practical and accessible way, and ensured sessions were interactive and relevant. Feedback from attendees was consistently positive, and the training had a clear impact on confidence, capability, and day-to-day performance.
Advanced Manufacturing	They were well knowledgeable and their methods were easy to grab
Advanced Manufacturing	Trainers were knowledgeable and experienced in the subject.
Advanced Manufacturing	Very knowledgeable about the matters we were trained in
Advanced Manufacturing	We have a fantastic in house Compliance Supervisor with experience within our Industry. This is hard to find though.
Advanced Manufacturing	We have developed our own in-house training programme with a local training provider and directly with awarding bodies.
Advanced Manufacturing	We talked to them in advance and clearly explained what we required and they were able to deliver.
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Improved staff
Construction	Bespoke, applicable and cost effective, ROE in terms of training brief
Construction	Great work for our needs.
Construction	In house training is tailored to our requirements & not generic
Construction	Local company we have dealt with for many years that offers the training we require.
Construction	The employee was happy and successfully gained new skills which they are using in their expanded role. They get paid more they are more flexible to the company.
Construction	Training that we've organised for the operatives and staff has been informative and enjoyable for members of our company who have a range of learning abilities.
Construction	Training was beneficial, well run and the presenter was knowledgeable
Construction	Training was relevant and well delivered
Defence	High quality, tailored and domain specific with usable / applicable examples that are tailored to our organizational context.

Please briefly describe why you were 'Very Satisfied' with your experience of the training delivered by one or more providers you have used within the last 3 years.

Digital and Technologies	Because the training was very impactful and educational
Digital and Technologies	Because we got everything we needed
Digital and Technologies	Because we recieved the best services
Digital and Technologies	Engaging, professional, got what we wanted
Digital and Technologies	helpful and educatging
Digital and Technologies	High quality of external training providers for specific areas of expertise. Engaging trainers and interactive sessions.
Digital and Technologies	High quality trainers , practical content, flexible delivery measurable outcomes , strong support.
Digital and Technologies	High-quality, practical content delivered by knowledge trainers, tailored to our needs and immediately applicable in the workplace
Digital and Technologies	I loved how they handled the large staffed to be trained, the quality of learning materials used and offered both exclusive mental and physical training
Digital and Technologies	I was very satisfied with the startup training delivered by Thrive Tribe, particularly because it balanced inclusive business community for micro-businesses with practical execution. The training was genuinely supportive for founders at different stages, tools and frameworks are provided with contexts and peer learning which is valuable, the space was used to test ideas and challenge assumptions and learning from others' journey in a psychologically safe setting.
Digital and Technologies	I was very satisfied with the training because it was practical, up to date and delivered by knowledgeable instructors who made complex topics easy to understand
Digital and Technologies	It has an impact in the day to day operations.
Digital and Technologies	It have been a successful training
Digital and Technologies	Sessions encouraged interaction and active participation.
Digital and Technologies	Skills gained could be applied immediately on the job.
Digital and Technologies	The employees that came back from the training were able to teach the others and improve overalle morale and production
Digital and Technologies	The trainer was knowledgeable and made complex topics easy to grasp.
Digital and Technologies	The training received was highly relevant to our needs and exceptionally well delivered
Digital and Technologies	The training was done by people that were experienced in the field already, it was relevant, well delivered and practical, which could be applied immediately in the workplace, resulting in noticeable improvements in staff skills and performance.
Digital and Technologies	The training was transformative and quite engaging with the required skills gap and it wasn't difficult to understand
Digital and Technologies	There was a great improvement after the training
Digital and Technologies	These factors combined to create a positive training experience, leaving participants highly satisfied and motivated to implement what they learned.
Digital and Technologies	ties with local university specialist training have help us to move into different and newer technologies.
Digital and Technologies	We have improved a lot in those 3 years
Digital and Technologies	We utilise as many resources as we can from internal knowledge from team members to external resources when additional help is needed. Developing the skills of our team is a very high priority for our business. We are 100% employee owned and the vision is that the business will be passed down through the team, a bit like a family business. Team members need to have the desire to develop their skills, this is then supported to ready them for their next role in the business. As a digital business, we have seen these roles evolve and change over time and we expect this to continue to do so as the digital world develops and the business grows. The real challenge is identifying the skills that need to be developed and finding the right training for those skills which is cost effective and productive for both the team member and the business.
Digital and Technologies	We were very satisfied because the training was well-structured, relevant to our operational needs, and tailored to our industry context. The trainers were highly knowledgeable and used practical, hands-on approaches that enabled staff to apply new skills immediately. In addition, the providers were flexible and responsive, offering ongoing support and adapting content based on our feedback.
Digital and Technologies	We were very satisfied with the training delivered because it was high-quality, practical, and closely aligned with our business needs.
Energy	They were coaching how to use their own product

Please briefly describe why you were 'Very Satisfied' with your experience of the training delivered by one or more providers you have used within the last 3 years.

Health and Adult Social Care	Because the after effect of the training was positive on the Job and task delegations.
Health and Adult Social Care	Because we got the training we need very cheap for staff
Health and Adult Social Care	Building our own team of trainers and assessors has transformed the flexibility and quality of the learning opportunities that we offer
Health and Adult Social Care	communication and planning
Health and Adult Social Care	Face to face knowledgeable trainers instead of tick box e-learning
Health and Adult Social Care	I love it
Health and Adult Social Care	It create room for proximity and easy level up the skills gaps while learning on the job.
Health and Adult Social Care	It was engaging and delivered by people who understood our needs
Health and Adult Social Care	It was quick , preside , extremely experienced and very easy to follow
Health and Adult Social Care	It was well structured and tailored to our needs
Health and Adult Social Care	met required need
Health and Adult Social Care	Met the needs required, informative, appropriate pace and different learning styles
Health and Adult Social Care	Our apprenticeship programme for Social Workers utilises Lincoln University. This has been invaluable at developing our 'grown our own' programme.
Health and Adult Social Care	Pitched at correct level. Delivered effectively to individuals
Health and Adult Social Care	Quality of staff after training
Health and Adult Social Care	The training that we had is aligned with the needs of our company.
Health and Adult Social Care	The trainings have been effective as we have seen a 70% growth in work efficiency.
Health and Adult Social Care	Their teaching skills were beyond expectations, they did really great and everyone that participated gained something.
Health and Adult Social Care	There has been some changes that included a new practice educator that helped get staff updated to a better standard
Health and Adult Social Care	They are conscientious and possess a certain degree of professional expertise.
Health and Adult Social Care	They have been detailed and engaging
Health and Adult Social Care	Trainers were hands on. Training materials were up to date.
Health and Adult Social Care	We developed a strategy of recruiting local people to train as Social Workers. We were able to work with the university to develop our own internal programme which to date has proved very successful. In fact this has allowed us to work outside our organisation and offer our training to the charity sector to enable them to train social workers as well. This fits in with our policy of 'giving back' as a CIC.
Health and Adult Social Care	We have written our own courses to ensure the content is correct and invested a lot of money in our staff force to develop them as individuals not only for the company but for personal interest.
Health and Adult Social Care	we used university of derby online mooc course and it was very in-depth and very helpful to the training course we used for our staff and new employees

Please briefly describe why you were 'Very Satisfied' with your experience of the training delivered by one or more providers you have used within the last 3 years.

Ports and Logistics	I was very satisfied because the training was well-structured, practical, and relevant to real work needs. The trainers were knowledgeable, the content was up to date, and it could be applied immediately in the workplace.
Ports and Logistics	Sessions were engaging and interactive.
Ports and Logistics	The quality was very good
Ports and Logistics	Training delivered professionally and to predicted timescale
Professional and Business Services	All have been excellent. No issues arising from any of the training we have used.
Professional and Business Services	Excellent value, format and accessibility
Professional and Business Services	High quality and tailored training. Understanding our needs.
Professional and Business Services	I was very satisfied with the training because the providers delivered high-quality, hands-on cybersecurity content using industry-leading tools and resources, delivered by knowledgeable instructors in a supportive way that directly boosted my skills and confidence on the job.
Professional and Business Services	I'm on a part funded Thrive Tribe Bootcamp cohort 5 It's been great so far
Professional and Business Services	It is targeted to the needs of the profession
Professional and Business Services	no issues with feedback
Professional and Business Services	People like to learn more.
Professional and Business Services	Quality and ambition to learn
Professional and Business Services	The in-person training provided by an external training company, but funded by the local council, has by far been the best as the engagement you get with face-to-face training is far better, giving much more opportunity to ask questions and gain understanding as you go along.
Professional and Business Services	The knowledge and experience from independent trainers reflects how much our employees learn. Good trainers get excellent results
Professional and Business Services	The training was satisfactory
Professional and Business Services	They are rally helpful for my organizations.
Professional and Business Services	they are very professional in there training
Professional and Business Services	Training from within
Professional and Business Services	Very thing was explained clearly very good support which has been on going after course had finished

Please briefly describe why you were 'Very Satisfied' with your experience of the training delivered by one or more providers you have used within the last 3 years.

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Visitor Economy	It was very in depth as to the way we were shown in different scenarios how to approach customer care skills
Visitor Economy	Our project is unique and training from within ensures that the essence is interwoven with the skills training
Visitor Economy	Responsive approach that allowed us to feed into the training to make it more bespoke to our needs

Please briefly describe why you were 'Very Satisfied' with your experience of the training delivered by one or more providers you have used within the last 3 years.

Non Priority Sectors	achieved well
Non Priority Sectors	Although simple tasks, achieved what was intended
Non Priority Sectors	As we believe, given the trains to the highest level
Non Priority Sectors	because by working in partnership with national specialists we have learnt 'on the job' and now have skills and experience in house
Non Priority Sectors	Because I did the training myself
Non Priority Sectors	Because it was very easy to understand and also ask questions for more information and clarification
Non Priority Sectors	Content was practical and easy to apply immediately.
Non Priority Sectors	Delivered at pace, with accuracy and professionalism by experts
Non Priority Sectors	Delivered excellent value and measurable results
Non Priority Sectors	Easier to learn on the job, very wide range of needs and skills for the job, can not be taught a lot of it via specific training
Non Priority Sectors	Easy to use and can work at on pace
Non Priority Sectors	Excellent area knowledge and delivery
Non Priority Sectors	Experienced trainers that gain knowledge with your organisations and their values to ensure the training is much more company focused rather than generic
Non Priority Sectors	I am very satisfied because the taining was practical, engaging and directly improved the skills my team needed
Non Priority Sectors	I have done the business acceleration course with the thrive tribe which has been invaluable
Non Priority Sectors	I thought it was easy to understand
Non Priority Sectors	I was satisfied with my training because I was trained by professional
Non Priority Sectors	I was very satisfied because the training was well-structured and practical
Non Priority Sectors	I've never had an issue with them
Non Priority Sectors	It was fun and easy to do
Non Priority Sectors	It was just at the right level and free
Non Priority Sectors	It was the best way to train people that really got them engaged in the process
Non Priority Sectors	It was training to make the employee competent with the software and hardware we use and code with. They did a good job in training the individuals.
Non Priority Sectors	It was very thorough and informative
Non Priority Sectors	It works well for us and is high quality
Non Priority Sectors	Its in house so easily monitored
Non Priority Sectors	Learning outcomes were clearly explained and achieved.
Non Priority Sectors	Materials provided were clear, useful, and comprehensive
Non Priority Sectors	Quality of the intervention was good and met our expectations
Non Priority Sectors	Really well co-designed to cover exactly what we were looking for. Delivers had strong subject-specific knowledge and were engaging/thought-provoking
Non Priority Sectors	Some of the speakers and external support have been competent and added good value

Please briefly describe why you were 'Dissatisfied' or 'Very Dissatisfied' with your experience of the training delivered by one or more providers you have used within the last 3 years.

Industry Sector	Response
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	they are thorough and can teach well, however some of the courses could be done in half the time so the staff get bored and see training as a chore
Construction	No reporting of progress just numbers, unqualified incompetent staff (no experience, but PHD s - no good for skills!!)
Construction	People are too stupid
Digital and Technologies	Because it wasn't up to the quality I paid for.
Digital and Technologies	We were dissatisfied with some training providers because the content was often too generic and not sufficiently aligned with our specific technical environment or business needs.
Health and Adult Social Care	Lack of professionalism
Health and Adult Social Care	The online trainings don't work as majority of our staff lack computer skills.
Health and Adult Social Care	The skills match up were not up to expectations
Non Priority Sectors	I've never really had a positive experience
Non Priority Sectors	It's been a really disappointing experience
Non Priority Sectors	Lack of communication
Non Priority Sectors	Not a lot of help given
Non Priority Sectors	Not regular enough and not as promised
Non Priority Sectors	Not the right skills set
Non Priority Sectors	Not trained on the systems we used
Non Priority Sectors	Online training doesn't seem to be very effective, especially when the training is prerecorded and staff can rush through.
Non Priority Sectors	Software provider training expensive and not incorporated into change management.
Non Priority Sectors	Why I was not satisfied was because it was in-house not much effort was dedicated
Professional and Business Services	Poor communication, high turnover of staff.
Professional and Business Services	Quality
Professional and Business Services	The relevance, depth and delivery method of the respective courses
Visitor Economy	It didn't offer sufficient relevant or detailed information to help improve role.
Visitor Economy	Prescriptive delivery that seemed to be more about completing the qualification than it was preparing our staff for the next stages

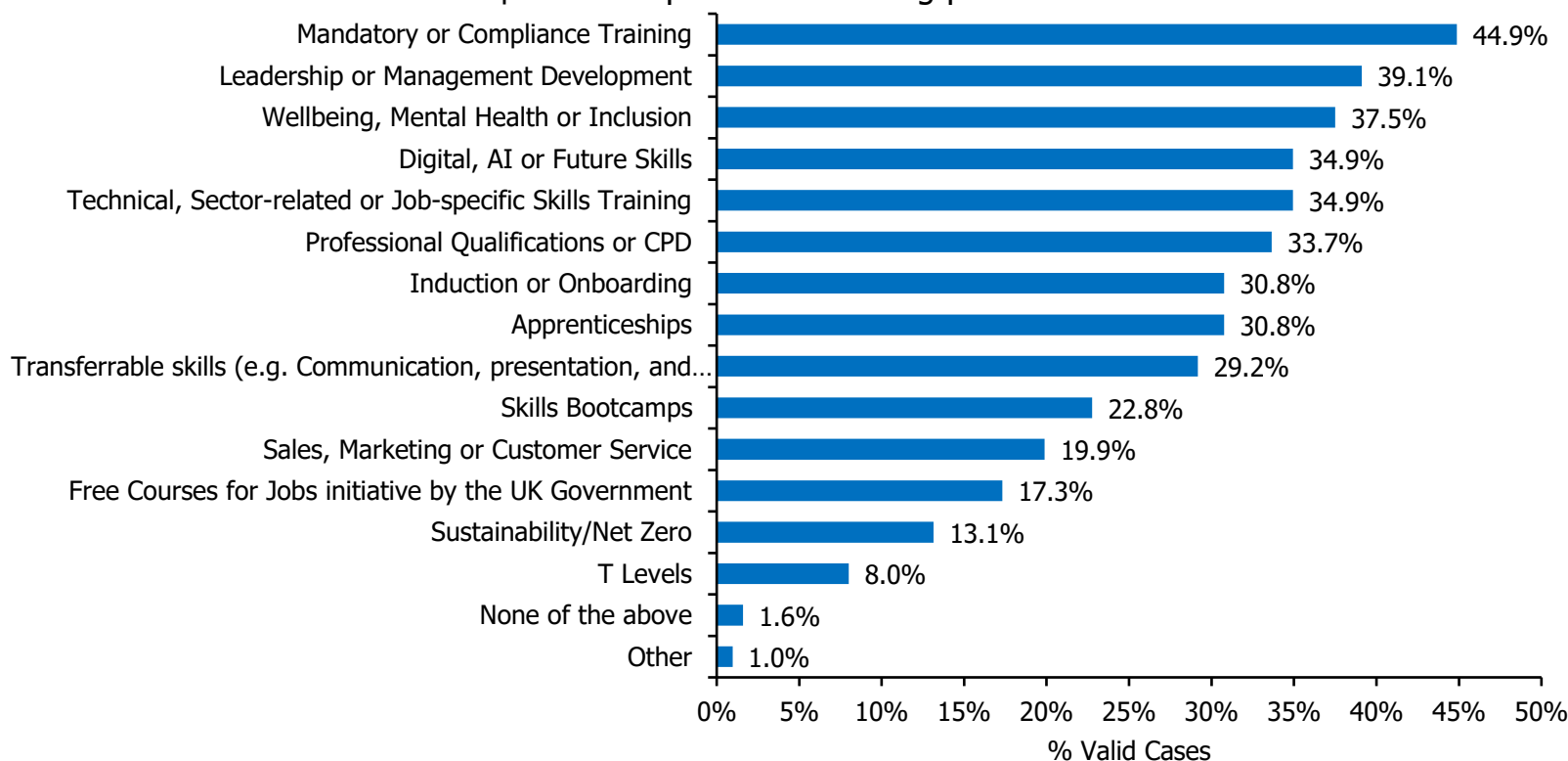
8.0 Types of training offered to employees and how this is sourced

Types of training | Mandatory (45%), Leadership or Management Development (39%) and Wellbeing... (37%) are the three types of training most widely invested in.

293

Please indicate below which types of training your organisation has invested in for your workforce, over the last 3 years. (Please select all that apply)

| Total sample where training provided

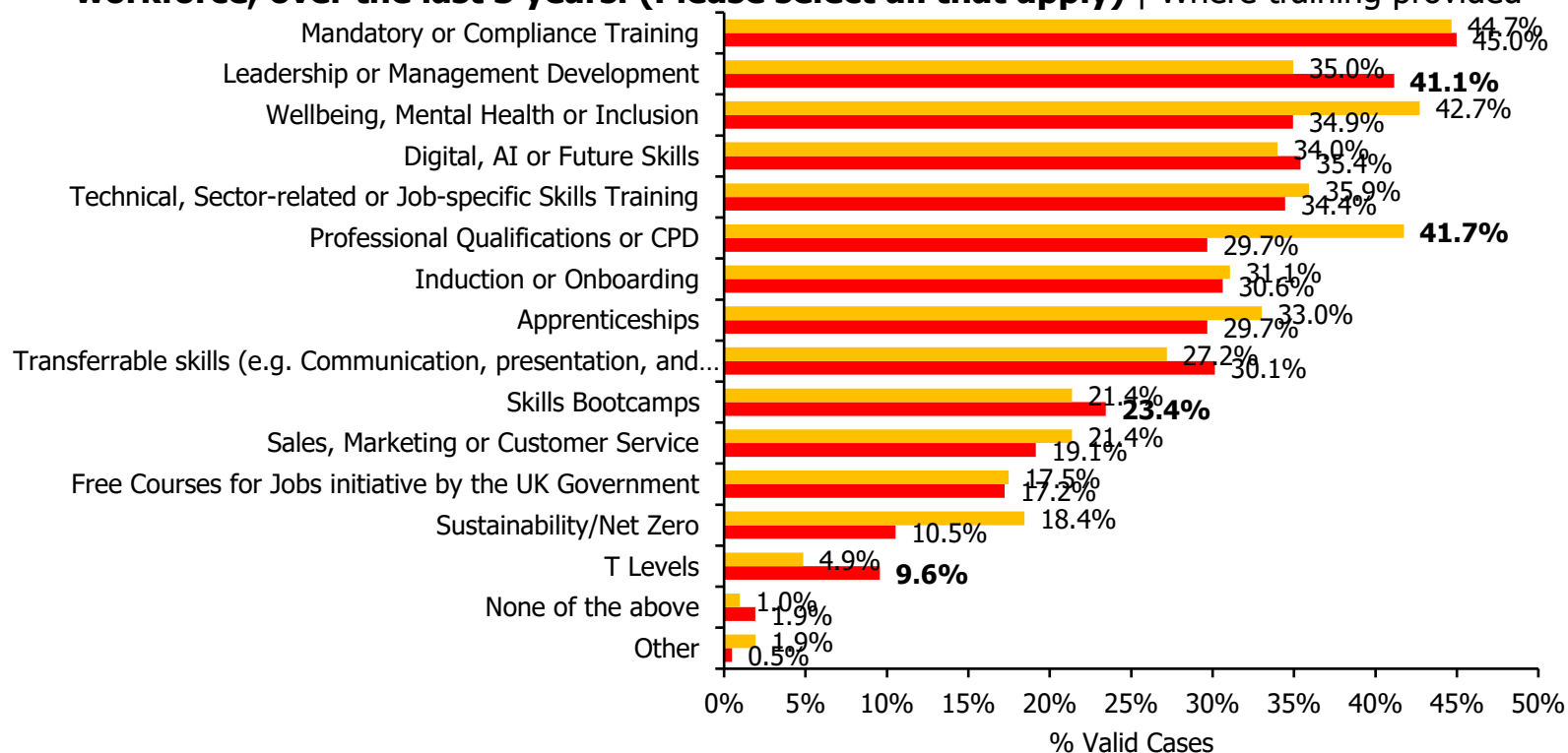


Base: Other (n=3), None of the above (n=5), T Levels (n=25), Sustainability/Net Zero (n=41), Free Courses for Jobs initiative by the UK Government (n=54), Sales, Marketing or Customer Service (n=62), Skills Bootcamps (n=71), Transferrable skills (e.g. Communication, presentation, and teamwork) (n=91), Apprenticeships (n=96), Induction or Onboarding (n=96), Professional Qualifications or CPD (n=105), Technical, Sector-related or Job-specific Skills Training (n=109), Digital, AI or Future Skills (n=109), Wellbeing, Mental Health or Inclusion (n=117), Leadership or Management Development (n=122), Mandatory or Compliance Training (n=140), Sample Size = 312

Types of training | Employers in the Priority Sectors are more likely to have invested in: Leadership and Management Development (+6%), T-Levels (+5%), Transferrable skills (+3%) and/or Skills Bootcamps (+2%).

294

Please indicate below which types of training your organisation has invested in for your workforce, over the last 3 years. (Please select all that apply) | Where training provided

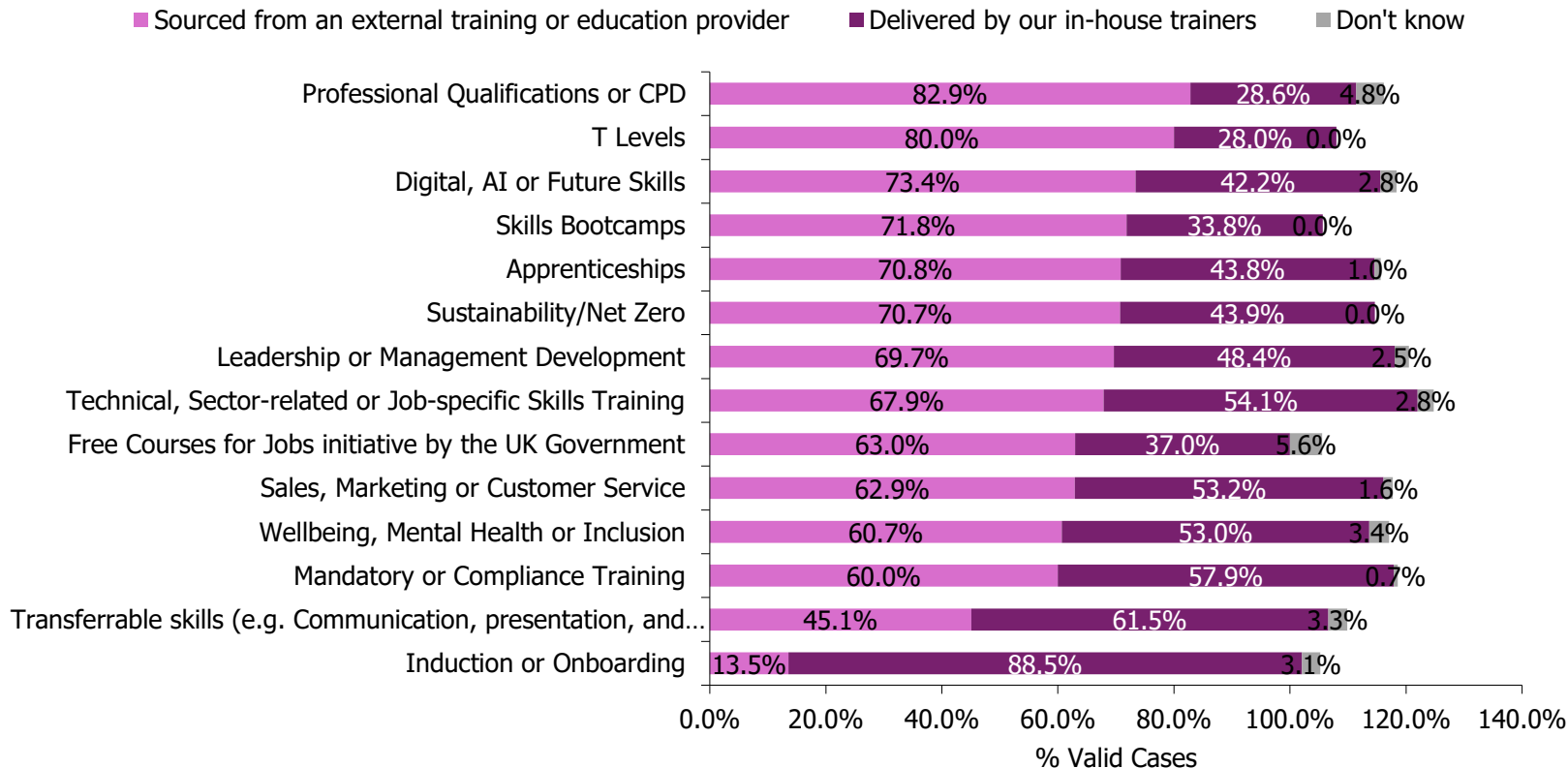


Base: Other (n=3), None of the above (n=5), T Levels (n=25), Sustainability/Net Zero (n=41), Free Courses for Jobs initiative by the UK Government (n=54), Sales, Marketing or Customer Service (n=62), Skills Bootcamps (n=71), Transferrable skills (e.g. Communication, presentation, and teamwork) (n=91), Apprenticeships (n=96), Induction or Onboarding (n=96), Professional Qualifications or CPD (n=105), Technical, Sector-related or Job-specific Skills Training (n=109), Digital, AI or Future Skills (n=109), Wellbeing, Mental Health or Inclusion (n=117), Leadership or Management Development (n=122), Mandatory or Compliance Training (n=140), Sample Size = 312

Source of provision by type | Prof Quals/CPD (83%), T Levels (80%), Digital, AI or Future Skills (73%) and Skills Bootcamps (73%) are most widely outsourced by employers.

295

Were the types of training listed below, sourced from an external provider, delivered by your in-house trainers or both?



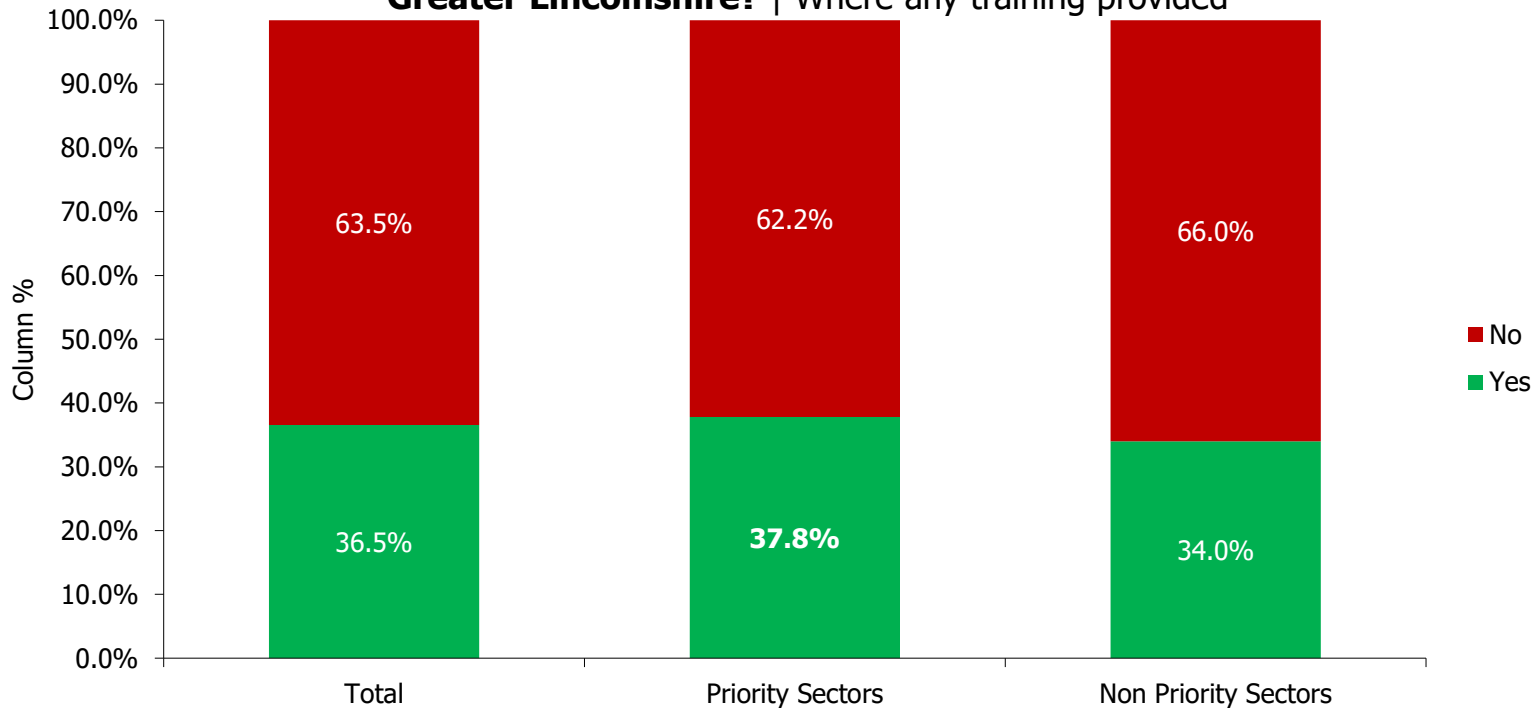
Base: Digital, AI or Future Skills (n=109), Sales, Marketing or Customer Service (n=62), Mandatory or Compliance Training (n=140), Technical, Sector-related or Job-specific Skills Training (n=109), Apprenticeships (n=96), Leadership or Management Development (n=122), Professional Qualifications or CPD (n=105), Transferrable skills (e.g. Communication, presentation, and teamwork) (n=91), Wellbeing, Mental Health or Inclusion (n=117), Induction or Onboarding (n=96), Skills Bootcamps (n=71), Sustainability/Net Zero (n=41), Free Courses for Jobs initiative by the UK Government (n=54), T Levels (n=25), Other (n=3), Sample Size = Variable

9.0 Gaps experienced in local provision

Absence of local provision | Employers in the Priority Sectors are slightly more likely (38% v 34% Non-priority) to be unable to source provision locally that they would expect to find.

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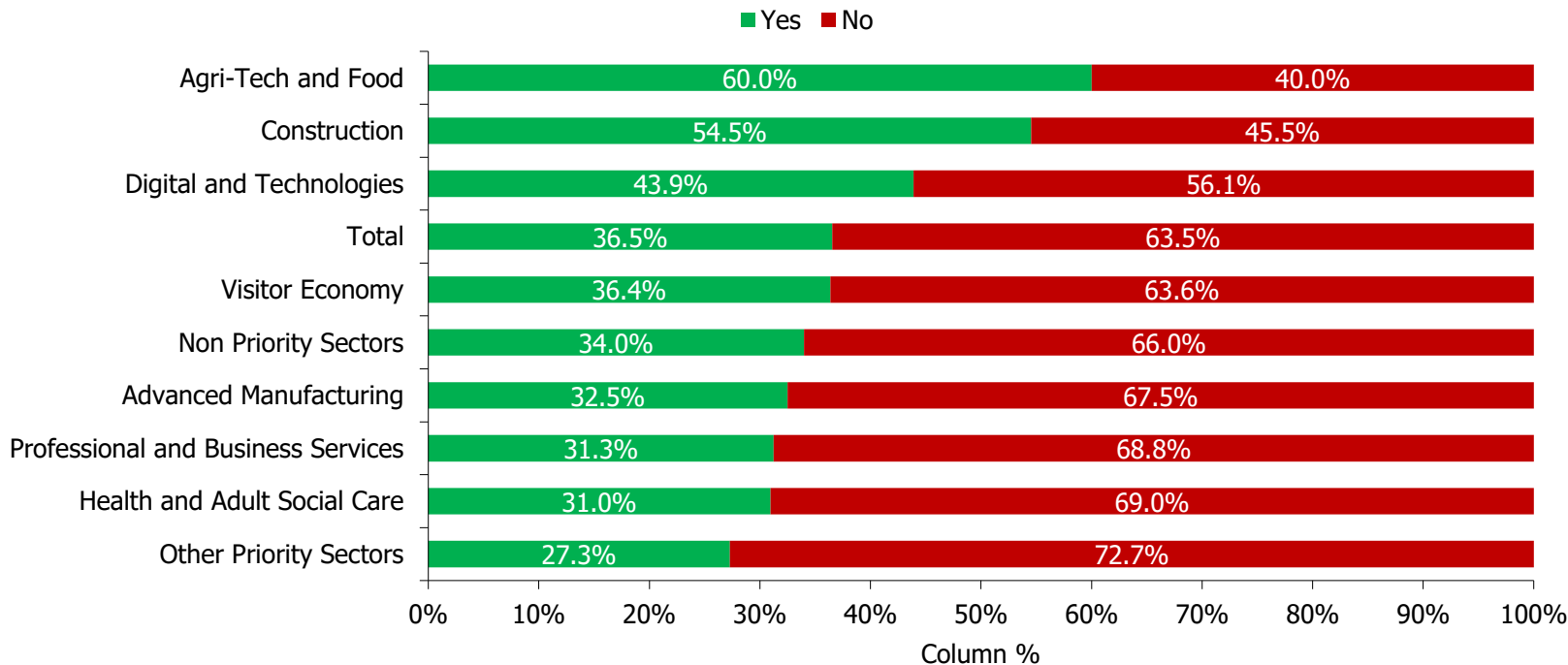
Were there any training or skills development requirements that your organisation has been unable to source locally over the last 3 years, that it would expect to be able to find in Greater Lincolnshire? | Where any training provided



Base: Total (n=312), Priority Sectors (n=209), Non Priority Sectors (n=103), Sample Size = 312

Absence of local provision | Agri-Tech and Food Man (60%), Construction (54%) and Digital and Tech (44%) are the sectors who encountered the most widespread challenges in sourcing training locally in Greater Lincolnshire.

Were there any training or skills development requirements that your organisation has been unable to source locally over the last 3 years, that it would expect to be able to find in Greater Lincolnshire? | By Priority Sector – Where any training provided



Base: Total (n=312), Agri-Tech and Food (n=10), Professional and Business Services (n=32), Non Priority Sectors (n=103), Construction (n=22), Other Priority Sectors (n=11), Digital and Technologies (n=41), Advanced Manufacturing (n=40), Health and Adult Social Care (n=42), Visitor Economy (n=11), Sample Size = 312

Please briefly describe the training or skills development provision you have been unable to source in Greater Lincolnshire.

Advanced Manufacturing	Calibration
Advanced Manufacturing	Engineers
Advanced Manufacturing	ESOL
Advanced Manufacturing	Fire & Security Courses
Advanced Manufacturing	Foundry skills; moulding, closing and melting.
Advanced Manufacturing	Greater range of degree level apprenticeships.
Advanced Manufacturing	In the last 3 years, there were gaps in Welding and Fabrication apprenticeships being offered.
Advanced Manufacturing	Not able to provide apprenticeship due to seasonal closures
Advanced Manufacturing	Pilot
Advanced Manufacturing	Printing and Printing Finishing.
Advanced Manufacturing	The appropriate level of apprenticeship
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Level of training required
	on site training
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	one day management courses
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Sales Development
Construction	C&G 2365 electrical training
Construction	Construction Apprenticeship - We have used CITB at Bircham Newton
Construction	Crurrier, Ai training
Construction	Forklift training
Construction	Multi trade trainers
Construction	NVQ L3 Accessing and Rigging Temporary and permanent pathways.
Construction	Shipping
Construction	Site manager courses & ground worker training
Construction	Test for machines
Construction	Training on the green economy e.g. installation of solar panels.
Digital and Technologies	Higher-Level Technical & Digital Skills Training in advanced digital and technical areas beyond basic Skills Bootcamps, such as specialised software development, advanced data analytics or AI skills, remains limited locally. Although Skills Bootcamps cover some digital topics, there's still a shortage of higher-level, industry-specific technical courses tailored to employer needs.
Digital and Technologies	Advanced AI, cybersecurity, specialist engineering, and leadership development training locally.
Digital and Technologies	Advanced AI/ML and Data Engineering training, especially courses that go beyond introductory theory to cover production-grade model deployment (MLOps) and big data pipeline design.
Digital and Technologies	Advanced data analytics and data science courses are hard to access in the area.
Digital and Technologies	Advanced digital and specialist technical training (e.g AI, cybersecurity, and higher-level data skills) not available locally
Digital and Technologies	AI robotics is something that we would like to move into ,but as yet we require further information and support before we invest.
Digital and Technologies	Cutting edge digital & STEM skills Cyber security, AI for business and software development
Digital and Technologies	higher level IT short courses, E.g. Microsoft Azure certifications.
Digital and Technologies	improvement officer
Digital and Technologies	In Greater Lincolnshire, some specific training or skills development provisions that organizations have struggled to source locally include: - Advanced Digital Skills: Specialized courses in areas like data science, AI, and machine learning for non-tech industries. - Precision Agriculture Tech*: Training in precision farming technologies, like drone operation and geospatial analysis, for the agrifood sector. - Cyber Security for SMEs: Tailored programs for small businesses to address cyber threats and data protection. - Advanced Manufacturing Techniques: Courses on Industry 4.0 technologies, like robotics and automation, for local manufacturers.
Digital and Technologies	Leadership
Digital and Technologies	Management training is really hard to find as it covers such a broad range of skills. The area I am struggling to find help with is around guidance for managers to be able to develop team members, how to have those difficult conversations, how to communicate with a team member who can be quite shy and withdrawn. How to bring out the very best in each team member. This is something I am personally learning by reading and listening to Podcasts then working with my managers to develop those skills.
Digital and Technologies	These training deficiencies highlight the need for dedicated development initiatives and partnerships to enhance the skills landscape in Greater Lincolnshire, ultimately supporting local economic growth.
Digital and Technologies	We have been unable to source specialised advanced data science and machine learning training tailored to business applications, as most local courses focus on basic Excel or introductory analytics rather than practical predictive modelling.
Digital and Technologies	While the region is actively developing in the AI literacy space, most available provision currently focuses are limited. As Greater Lincolnshire's digital ecosystem matures, more global perspectives are starting to form. At present, advanced provision tends to come from two directions: compliance-led training driven by regulatory and assurance needs, and high-technology company training focused on specific platforms or tools, rather than broader, implementation-focused capability building for SMEs and regional organisations. This creates an opportunity to strengthen locally delivered, sector-applied AI capability that bridges global innovation with local economic priorities.

We recommend reviewing the answers provided here against what you know is provided in Greater Lincolnshire, to understand what is genuinely a gap and what is lack of awareness/visibility of existing provision and/or possibly geographic access within our area.

Please briefly describe the training or skills development provision you have been unable to source in Greater Lincolnshire.

Health and Adult Social Care	AI specialism
Health and Adult Social Care	Clinical skills
Health and Adult Social Care	customer service, understanding more about Dementia and how to manage their differences in behaviour. Cooking skills as well if possible.
Health and Adult Social Care	Development for leadership and Management in health and social care focussing on Deputies and seniors.
Health and Adult Social Care	First aid
Health and Adult Social Care	Linca
Health and Adult Social Care	Master's level courses for development
Health and Adult Social Care	Oliver McGowan training - epilepsy and emergency medication and fire marshal (sourced but very expensive)
Health and Adult Social Care	Over the last three years, we have struggled to source locally trained staff with enhanced clinical skills, such as medication administration, vital signs monitoring, and care for complex long-term conditions. We would expect that, with investment and development, these skills could be more readily sourced within Greater Lincolnshire in the future to support hospital-at-home and more clinically focused care roles.
Health and Adult Social Care	The only way to know if the person
Ports and Logistics	I have been unable to source advanced and specialised training locally, particularly in areas such as AI, data analytics, cybersecurity, and higher-level digital skills, which often require providers outside Greater Lincolnshire or online alternatives.
Professional and Business Services	Accounting using Xero
Professional and Business Services	AI
Professional and Business Services	Basic health and social care training
Professional and Business Services	Client relationship
Professional and Business Services	First aid
Professional and Business Services	Not many qualified people
Professional and Business Services	Quality
Professional and Business Services	Some (not all) people skills training
Professional and Business Services	Technology undstwbw how to use son platforms on line to get an online course out and marketed online with CRM as well Been on course to write the course and the copy for the lead magnets but cannot find how I make it all live online to sell how do you make the leadmagnet live link the course and grow your CRM
Visitor Economy	City and guilds catering qualifications
Visitor Economy	SIA training
Visitor Economy	Skills

Please briefly describe the training or skills development provision you have been unable to source in Greater Lincolnshire.

Non Priority Sectors	Advanced Digital and Automation Training:
Non Priority Sectors	Advanced supply chain and logistics analytics.
Non Priority Sectors	AI, marketing, computer
Non Priority Sectors	Compliance
Non Priority Sectors	Dei training to suit everyone
Non Priority Sectors	Digital training skills
Non Priority Sectors	Education sector specific training and development, in particular T Level and Apprenticeship workforce development and education sector conferences.
Non Priority Sectors	Everything is geared up for AI - this will just reduce the jobs market. there should be more support in developing team members and giving them skill they can use to do a better job. Use of social media, personal brand, all helps to promote businesses and the teams that work there.
Non Priority Sectors	Flexible attendance/blended learning and also regular course dates provided. Difficult unless you require apprenticeships/funded provision that seems to be the default provision.
Non Priority Sectors	Funeral skills
Non Priority Sectors	Housing training EDI / cultural competency Unconscious bias
Non Priority Sectors	HR training that was flexible
Non Priority Sectors	Humans resource management,the company needed someone who is capable and more knowledgeable and with different experiences..
Non Priority Sectors	I don't think local colleges are much good
Non Priority Sectors	It has been hard to find adult teacher training courses. Such a Pttis further education qualification this used to be very easy to source.
Non Priority Sectors	Management
Non Priority Sectors	Masters qualifications
Non Priority Sectors	natural flood management, freshwater habitat creation, biodiversity net gain,
Non Priority Sectors	Social media marketing and marketing
Non Priority Sectors	Specific training such as for site staff or office staff in school
Non Priority Sectors	Staff
Non Priority Sectors	There appears to be no colleges offering our industry standard training
Non Priority Sectors	Videography and drone pilot courses
Non Priority Sectors	We give all work people and placements the heist training levels
Non Priority Sectors	we have been unable to source advanced digital, ai and speaciald data analysis training locally in greater lincolnshire
Non Priority Sectors	We have not been able to find those who can code both in blockchain or ethereum networks. Neither were we able to find individuals who could work with agentic models in AI.

10.0 Most pressing training needs

What would you say are the most pressing training need(s) in your organisation, from a technical skills perspective, over the next three years?

Industry Sector	Response
Advanced Manufacturing	Ability to talk with customers
Advanced Manufacturing	AI
Advanced Manufacturing	Allergy training
Advanced Manufacturing	Cable Jointers
Advanced Manufacturing	Calibration and uncertainty of measurement
Advanced Manufacturing	Computer skills
Advanced Manufacturing	Continuous improvement IT
Advanced Manufacturing	Digital Literacy
Advanced Manufacturing	Extended social media management and campaigning
Advanced Manufacturing	Fabrication, Technical Sales
Advanced Manufacturing	Fire & Security specific training
Advanced Manufacturing	Food safety, Engineering
Advanced Manufacturing	Generally everyone moving up a level so we can bring in new trainees
Advanced Manufacturing	Instructors for training employee
Advanced Manufacturing	It skills
Advanced Manufacturing	Knowing how to work
Advanced Manufacturing	Leadership
Advanced Manufacturing	Make sure the people we hire are skilled in that dept
Advanced Manufacturing	Multi skilling. Getting people trained up to be able to work in more than one role within the factory
Advanced Manufacturing	One of our biggest issues is being able to find the right amount of school students who want to do an apprenticeship rather than go to university. A common comment from industry is that many university degrees are not relevant to industry needs and may explain this weeks report about the large amount of graduates claiming benefits.
Advanced Manufacturing	ongoing compliance with changes to legislation
Advanced Manufacturing	Practical hands on skills, learning on the job.
Advanced Manufacturing	Process automation specialists
Advanced Manufacturing	Proving
Advanced Manufacturing	skilled machine operation
Advanced Manufacturing	Statistical analysis and data literacy across teams.
Advanced Manufacturing	Teaching, industry experience
Advanced Manufacturing	Time
Advanced Manufacturing	Training metal machine setters is a pressing need.
Advanced Manufacturing	UPS and Genset specifications
Advanced Manufacturing	Upskilling staff in advanced data perusal and interpretation.
Advanced Manufacturing	We dont have any pressing training needs
Advanced Manufacturing	We dont have any pressing training needs, we are already sorting them. But see previous answers re lack of skills in printing
Advanced Manufacturing	Welding, fitting, painting
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	AI
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	chainsaw tickets
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Cloud computing skills
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Fit
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Legislation and IT
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Managers
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Project management and technical / IT
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Teach people the mechanical skills
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Training and certificate required to do job, ie, forklift, Spray certificates, chainsaw
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Using AI

What would you say are the most pressing training need(s) in your organisation, from a technical skills perspective, over the next three years?

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Industry Sector	Response
Construction	AI and IT development. All the courses are too long, they will be obsolete by the time the come to completion in 12 months.
Construction	All trainings are required
Construction	Brick laying
Construction	Computer skills
Construction	Forklift training
Construction	General and specialist skills needed for being a competent QS & site engineer
Construction	Having the correct training
Construction	Health & Safety
Construction	Health & Safety and Procurement
Construction	It and AI professionals
Construction	Learning about ai
Construction	More training more better
Construction	Multi trade
Construction	Persuading management on the necessity for adequate training
Construction	Plant operatives and skilled trades.
Construction	Procurement, production efficiency,
Construction	Site management
Construction	Skill at hand. Eg working with hand tools
Construction	The training I give people
Construction	Use and utilisation of AI
Construction	we need to train 2 employees to be level 3 qualified electricians which will be time consuming & costly to our business
Construction	Young managers with site skills
Defence	It and ai skills
Defence	Quality Assurance and System and Software Architecture

What would you say are the most pressing training need(s) in your organisation, from a technical skills perspective, over the next three years?

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Digital and Technologies	A platform that users are willing to engage with and complete training on
Digital and Technologies	Advanced digital skills, cybersecurity training, data analytics automation, and technical upskilling.
Digital and Technologies	AI knowledge
Digital and Technologies	AI roles
Digital and Technologies	AI tools
Digital and Technologies	AI, data and automation skills – upskilling staff in data literacy, AI tools (including generative AI), and process automation to improve productivity and decision-making. Cybersecurity and data protection – strengthening skills in cyber risk awareness, secure system design, and compliance to address growing digital and regulatory threats. Cloud and modern IT platforms – training in cloud technologies, systems integration, and DevOps to support scalable and resilient operations.
Digital and Technologies	AI, data, and automation skills – Practical use of AI tools, data analytics, and process automation across roles.
Digital and Technologies	Azure
Digital and Technologies	By focusing on these pressing training needs, organizations can equip their workforce with the essential technical skills required to thrive in a rapidly changing environment. Investing in continuous learning will not only improve employee performance but also drive organizational success.
Digital and Technologies	Cloud computing and architecture training, particularly in multi-cloud environments, cloud security, and infrastructure as code
Digital and Technologies	Cloud platform fluency DevOps & automation
Digital and Technologies	Conference learning
Digital and Technologies	Cyber security
Digital and Technologies	Data analysis and visualization skills would greatly benefit our team.
Digital and Technologies	Data analyst
Digital and Technologies	Digital skills (data, AI, cybersecurity), cloud and systems modernisation, and advance technical upskilling for emerging technologies
Digital and Technologies	education
Digital and Technologies	Expanding technical skills in process automation and efficiency tools.
Digital and Technologies	First Aid. As were a small company its crucial all employees are first aid trained.
Digital and Technologies	General Educational conferencing covering all or most sectors
Digital and Technologies	I would say the technology aspect is the most pressing training
Digital and Technologies	Improve computer literacy and accuracy. In particular, skills relating to use of AI tools and validating the responses and content generated by AI.
Digital and Technologies	Key training priorities include data and digital literacy, systems and software training, cybersecurity, and the effective use of automation and AI tools.
Digital and Technologies	Most pressing should be in the IT department, more rigorous security training are mandatorily needed
Digital and Technologies	Operational efficiencies across the business, including in peoples day to day work.
Digital and Technologies	Over the next three years, our most pressing technical training needs will focus on data analysis and data literacy, cloud computing, and cybersecurity skills. We also need to upskill staff in automation tools, low-code/no-code platforms, and modern software and systems development. These capabilities are essential to support digital transformation, improve efficiency, and manage growing technological and security demands.
	Seminar proposal
Digital and Technologies	Software engineering, Mathematics, Statistics
Digital and Technologies	Software tester
Digital and Technologies	Strengthening software development and coding capabilities.
Digital and Technologies	Technological know-how
Digital and Technologies	Technology is evolving faster than traditional job structures, with AI, automation, and data now embedded across all business functions. However, training and roles remain too siloed. The key need is cross-disciplinary capability, specifically: Applying AI in real business and risk contexts; combining automation with process and organisational change; Turning data into clear leadership decisions; wmbdning AI governance into everyday operations and supply chains, etc.
Digital and Technologies	The most pressing technical training needs over the next three years are advanced cybersecurity skills (threat detection, incident response, and third-party risk management), cloud and systems integration capabilities, and data analytics and AI literacy to support automation and data-driven decision-making. In addition, upskilling in smart infrastructure technologies and energy management systems will be critical to support modern, technology-enabled operations.
Digital and Technologies	The most pressing technical training needs over the next three years are likely to include upskilling in advanced digital and data capabilities, particularly AI, data analytics, and automation tools, to improve productivity and decision-making.
Digital and Technologies	The most pressing technical training needs over the next three years include upskilling staffing data analysis and digital tool, and effective use of technology to support research
Digital and Technologies	The most pressing training needs in my organization, from a technical skills perspective, over the next three years is cybersecurity specialist
Digital and Technologies	Training employees not to use ai for everything and to use their actual brains
Digital and Technologies	Training in AI tech
Digital and Technologies	Training needs to be given
Digital and Technologies	Training on how most of our systems works
Digital and Technologies	Understanding new initiatives like AI.
Digital and Technologies	Unsure
Digital and Technologies	We are a web design and digital marketing agency, it's difficult to quantify the skills we will need as our industry is so fast changing. Having a team that are adaptable and hungry to learn new skills is vital. For a lot of the technical skills we need the education and do not have time to write the courses before the skills have evolved and changed. This is something we are aware of and when recruiting we target future employees who want to learn on the job.

What would you say are the most pressing training need(s) in your organisation, from a technical skills perspective, over the next three years?

Energy	AI knowledge
Energy	Information
Health and Adult Social Care	Adult carers.
Health and Adult Social Care	AI and technology
Health and Adult Social Care	Awareness and implementation of AI technology
Health and Adult Social Care	Basic computing, using word, excel, troubleshooting with computers.
Health and Adult Social Care	Changing of procedure within emergency care
Health and Adult Social Care	clinical skills dementia care
Health and Adult Social Care	Common sense
Health and Adult Social Care	Conflict Management
Health and Adult Social Care	Conflict management
Health and Adult Social Care	Cybersecurity and cloud integration
Health and Adult Social Care	Data protection and privacy and Cybersecurity skills.
Health and Adult Social Care	Dementia, behavioural and face to face training
Health and Adult Social Care	Digital enablement.
Health and Adult Social Care	Funding although using apprenticeships levy
Health and Adult Social Care	Getting funding for training courses
Health and Adult Social Care	Health
Health and Adult Social Care	Healthcare tasks to cover community services
Health and Adult Social Care	Healthcare technology & Clinical Informatics. With growing reliance on electronic patient records, staff need to be up to date training on system navigation and data entry accuracy, and device troubleshooting.
Health and Adult Social Care	I think it is the cost of training, not just having the person away from their job but the cost of certificated companies that you have to pay such high tuition fees
Health and Adult Social Care	I would say Data analytics, digital health records management, and IT systems integration.
Health and Adult Social Care	in the field of artificial intelligence
Health and Adult Social Care	Incident investigation, PSIRF, GDPR
Health and Adult Social Care	Just have compassion and good people skills
Health and Adult Social Care	Keeping pace with AI
Health and Adult Social Care	Leadership and management skill in a young workforce
Health and Adult Social Care	Leadership skills, management skills, resilience,
Health and Adult Social Care	Mandatory health and safety
Health and Adult Social Care	Medical equipments operation and Maintenance.
Health and Adult Social Care	Over the next three years, the most pressing training needs are in clinical and technical skills that enable care workers to safely support more complex care at home. This includes training in medication administration, vital signs monitoring, care for long-term conditions, infection control, and the use of digital care records. Upskilling in these areas is essential to meet the evolving needs of patients and to deliver hospital-at-home services safely.
Health and Adult Social Care	People centred care
Health and Adult Social Care	Production of music
Health and Adult Social Care	Retention skills
Health and Adult Social Care	Safeguarding
Health and Adult Social Care	Senior nursing staff
Health and Adult Social Care	Skills and experience and empathy and understanding and understanding
Health and Adult Social Care	Social worker training
Health and Adult Social Care	Strategic leadership and op mgt
Health and Adult Social Care	Technology
Health and Adult Social Care	The technical skills would be on Artificial intelligence
Health and Adult Social Care	We have developed our own training deviation to ensure staff have access to training from day one. All our courses are CPD accredited. This was done to ensure all staff were supported to achieve the best. However, the use of AI is a constant battle in report writing as it loses the validity of the human touch when depicting real events educating people not to cheat is currently the hardest battle.
Health and Adult Social Care	Welfare to Work / Housing Support skillset needed to meet the demand of reducing economic inactivity.
Health and Adult Social Care	Writing skills

What would you say are the most pressing training need(s) in your organisation, from a technical skills perspective, over the next three years?

Ports and Logistics	Health and Safety
Ports and Logistics	Need to upgrade according to new legislation coming in
	Network security and monitoring.
Ports and Logistics	Panel beaters
Ports and Logistics	The most pressing technical training needs over the next three years will be upskilling in digital technologies such as AI tools, data analysis, cybersecurity, cloud systems, and improving overall IT literacy to keep pace with new systems and processes.
Ports and Logistics	Unknown
Professional and Business Services	Accounting and taxation skills
Professional and Business Services	adapting to the new MTD system
Professional and Business Services	AI security
Professional and Business Services	AI skill and mental health training need more.
Professional and Business Services	AI skills
Professional and Business Services	Artificial intelligence
Professional and Business Services	Automation AI Apps Algorithms
Professional and Business Services	Automation of processes
Professional and Business Services	Business and financial management
Professional and Business Services	commercial awareness, business management, consultative selling
Professional and Business Services	computer skills
Professional and Business Services	Currently none required
Professional and Business Services	Digital and AI
Professional and Business Services	Digital marketing skills
Professional and Business Services	Experience
Professional and Business Services	Faster typing
Professional and Business Services	Financial and technical skills
Professional and Business Services	it and AI skills
Professional and Business Services	IT literacy
Professional and Business Services	Job recruitment
Professional and Business Services	know the basics
Professional and Business Services	Marketing training
Professional and Business Services	Mentoring and motivation coaching
Professional and Business Services	Microsoft
Professional and Business Services	People skills are the most lacking in any industry. I help several companies across Lincolnshire with their employees, recruiting and training. Sift skills are definitely needed.
Professional and Business Services	Qualities of candidates
Professional and Business Services	Sales people
Professional and Business Services	special painting techniques
Professional and Business Services	The biggest training priority for Air IT Lincolnshire over the next three years is really levelling up our team's advanced cybersecurity skills especially around threat intelligence, cloud security, and using AI to fight attacks so we can stay ahead of the growing threats, new regulations, and the serious shortage of talent out there.
Professional and Business Services	The most challenging aspect are the tacit skills which are difficult to train.
Professional and Business Services	to learn how to incorporate AI in our business safely
Professional and Business Services	Trademark paralegal training - this will be done mostly online via the Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys
Professional and Business Services	Understanding how to work online platforms to get online course live and selling knowing at least one platform and how it works for lead manger and CRM as a small business struggle to find people to help plus automation
Professional and Business Services	Use of accounting processes and use of AI
Professional and Business Services	Working with AI
Professional and Business Services	WORKING WITH AI
Professional and Business Services	You need to be very skilled in communication
Visitor Economy	Bond specifically
Visitor Economy	Chef or Senior Cook
Visitor Economy	Customer service and AI training
Visitor Economy	Customer services skills
Visitor Economy	Food preparation, security licensing (SIA), LPG Gas Engineers
Visitor Economy	Health and safety
Visitor Economy	Health and safety Kitchen training and readiness
Visitor Economy	IT skills
Visitor Economy	Keeping your coursework updated
Visitor Economy	More customer care skills
Visitor Economy	People Management
Visitor Economy	Training
Visitor Economy	Understanding changes in legislation

What would you say are the most pressing training need(s) in your organisation, from a technical skills perspective, over the next three years?

Non Priority Sectors	Accounting and AI
Non Priority Sectors	Accreditation refreshers to enable continuation of practice for compliance.
Non Priority Sectors	AI
Non Priority Sectors	AI
Non Priority Sectors	AI & Automation skills
Non Priority Sectors	AI capacity
Non Priority Sectors	AI development, access locally to qualifications that are necessary for certain roles (ie roadworker) currently doing training needs analysis with recent TUPE of services such as technical roles and ICB roles.
Non Priority Sectors	AI experience
Non Priority Sectors	AI experts needed to upskill staff.
Non Priority Sectors	AI knowledge and effective use of it
Non Priority Sectors	AI probably
Non Priority Sectors	AI training courses
Non Priority Sectors	AI training.
Non Priority Sectors	Basic numeracy
Non Priority Sectors	Basic training
Non Priority Sectors	Business Development
Non Priority Sectors	closing gaps created by rapid AI adoption, cloud migration, and escalating security threats.
Non Priority Sectors	Cloud computing & digital infrastructure
Non Priority Sectors	Communication
Non Priority Sectors	Communication
Non Priority Sectors	Compliance with legal duties and GDPR
Non Priority Sectors	Computer knowledge
Non Priority Sectors	Computer skills
Non Priority Sectors	Computer skills
Non Priority Sectors	Computer technology
Non Priority Sectors	Confidence with incoming technologies and the use of AI although this is likely to be supported centrally as we are a large organisation.
Non Priority Sectors	Consumer duty and analytical skills
Non Priority Sectors	Content creation
Non Priority Sectors	Continued growth of AI and the need to continue to grow, that and the use of Social Media. As a small business, learning the skills to continue in business might become fundamental
Non Priority Sectors	Currently we do the majority of training ourselves. But will be looking to find more out of house training organisations this is seeming to be harder than first thought. As there isn't the funding there once was.
Non Priority Sectors	Cybersecurity awareness and technical defenses.
Non Priority Sectors	Cybersecurity awareness and technical security skills across the organisation
Non Priority Sectors	Data analysis and demand forecasting skills.
Non Priority Sectors	Data Analysis and Interpretation, Cybersecurity, Cloud Computing, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning, Digital Literacy, Programming and Coding
Non Priority Sectors	Data Analytics and AI
Non Priority Sectors	Data management and governance training will be essential.
Non Priority Sectors	data processing and moving from visual basic to other software creating programs.
Non Priority Sectors	Dealing with change/resilience to change
Non Priority Sectors	Design
Non Priority Sectors	Digital / AI (as part of other jobs, not specific roles) leadership development Change management
Non Priority Sectors	Digital skills
Non Priority Sectors	Digital skills
Non Priority Sectors	Digital skills and use of AI
Non Priority Sectors	Digital skills in the context of engineering and manufacturing. Use of AI
Non Priority Sectors	Digital training, social media training

What would you say are the most pressing training need(s) in your organisation, from a technical skills perspective, over the next three years?

Non Priority Sectors	Environmental education regarding ongoing government regulations. (ECP).
Non Priority Sectors	Experienced individuals.
Non Priority Sectors	First aid
Non Priority Sectors	Functional skills
Non Priority Sectors	Getting DEI to the correct level where the company is happy
Non Priority Sectors	I need to recruit more teachers / lecturers to meet demand and student applications in the following subjects - Engineering, all construction trades, Digital, English and maths. I need more staff in my Management Information and Data teams with ability to code.
Non Priority Sectors	I'm unsure. Maybe more training in child development
Non Priority Sectors	In house training capabilities to cut out the middle man
Non Priority Sectors	Increasing use. Of AI and tech
Non Priority Sectors	Industry experienced trainers such as welders/pipefitters
Non Priority Sectors	It
Non Priority Sectors	It
Non Priority Sectors	IT and system software
Non Priority Sectors	IT skills are essential, and keeping up with changes is very challenging for employers and team members. Being able to use things like Microsoft Excel and utilise these tools would really help to grow efficiency.
Non Priority Sectors	Knowledge of managing social media and using software packages
Non Priority Sectors	Knowledgeable about AI
Non Priority Sectors	Lack of knowledge and use when it comes to packages such as word and excel
Non Priority Sectors	Lack of training
Non Priority Sectors	Making sure that everybody has an up to date canine first aid training certification
Non Priority Sectors	Management
Non Priority Sectors	Marketing
Non Priority Sectors	Marketing and social media marketing
Non Priority Sectors	Marketing skills, Business skills, AI and automation skills, Skills in HR.
Non Priority Sectors	More seminars
Non Priority Sectors	More skills needed in use of IT equipment, and more training needed in behaviour management.
Non Priority Sectors	New client acquisition
Non Priority Sectors	New products and new systems training
Non Priority Sectors	People management
Non Priority Sectors	people skills
Non Priority Sectors	Physical training, It/technology training
Non Priority Sectors	Probably the computing section
Non Priority Sectors	Problem solving quickly
Non Priority Sectors	Professional boundaries, mental health training
Non Priority Sectors	Professionalism on the work place.
Non Priority Sectors	Programming
Non Priority Sectors	Qualified staff
Non Priority Sectors	Retrofit. clean energy etc
Non Priority Sectors	Safeguarding and first aid training
Non Priority Sectors	Safeguarding and wellbeing training
Non Priority Sectors	Sales
Non Priority Sectors	Send training
Non Priority Sectors	Serviced Accommodation training
Non Priority Sectors	Skills with AI
Non Priority Sectors	So use crm and automating invoicing and sales emails
Non Priority Sectors	Suitably experienced and qualified trainers - pay parity with the industrial sector is non-existent so difficult to attract and retain experienced colleagues who will be attracted to jobs in industry that pays significantly more. Succession planning is an issue.

What would you say are the most pressing training need(s) in your organisation, from a technical skills perspective, over the next three years?

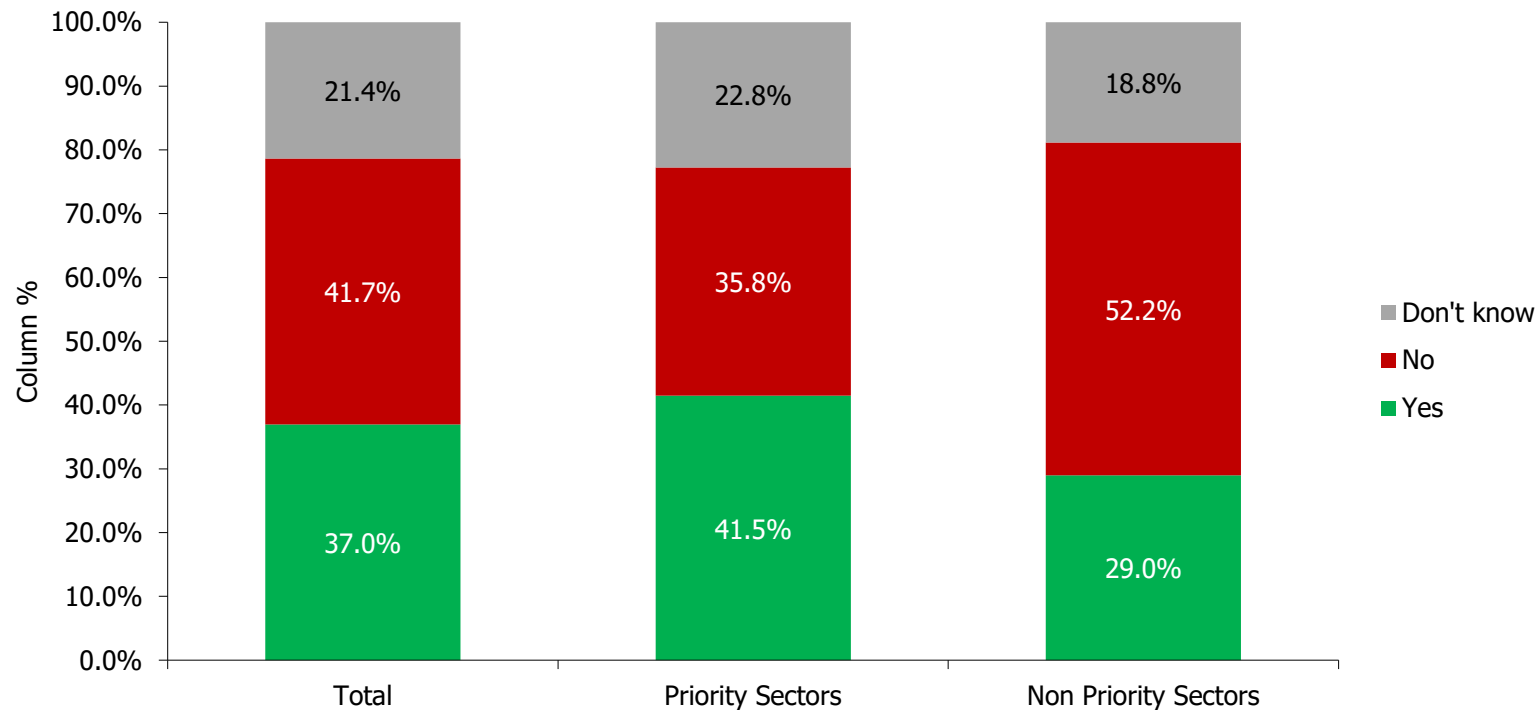
Non Priority Sectors	Supervisory/Managerial Experience
Non Priority Sectors	Sustainability – particularly linked to building services. AI. Professional qualifications. Inclusion.
Non Priority Sectors	System integration and API management skills to support digital transformation
Non Priority Sectors	Team work
Non Priority Sectors	the most pressing technical training needs in our organization over the next three years are in digital skills, data analysis, cybersecurity and automation technologies
Non Priority Sectors	The most pressing technical training needs over the next few years in my organization is improving IT related skills competency .
Non Priority Sectors	To be able to keep up with advances in technology. Social media, AI, CRMs
Non Priority Sectors	Train is getting a lot better than the workplace for all employees
Non Priority Sectors	Training for grounds person and the technical operations outdoors
Non Priority Sectors	Training in use of AI
Non Priority Sectors	Training staff to effectively use new digital platforms and software.
Non Priority Sectors	Training uptake we offer comprehensive training but often employees overlook this.
Non Priority Sectors	Up to date information
Non Priority Sectors	Upskilling in new technologies such as AI and adding to existing skill set to align with competitors, ie, videography, drone photography.
Non Priority Sectors	Use of AI
Non Priority Sectors	Using AI so we don't fall behind.
Non Priority Sectors	We definitely require more training in many different aspects
Non Priority Sectors	We have a training school on site , students i full time rolls on 3 year courses , when qualifying we try to accommodate them I permanent work
Non Priority Sectors	We need stronger cloud computing and modern financial systems skills
Non Priority Sectors	We need to be more clear with people about what our policies stand for

11.0 Perceived improvements in provision

Past improvements | 37% of all employers surveyed indicated that they had noticed significant improvements in provision in Greater Lincs, increasing to 41% in the Priority Sectors.

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Over the course of the last three years, have you noticed any significant improvements, innovations or major developments in the provision of training in Greater Lincolnshire?

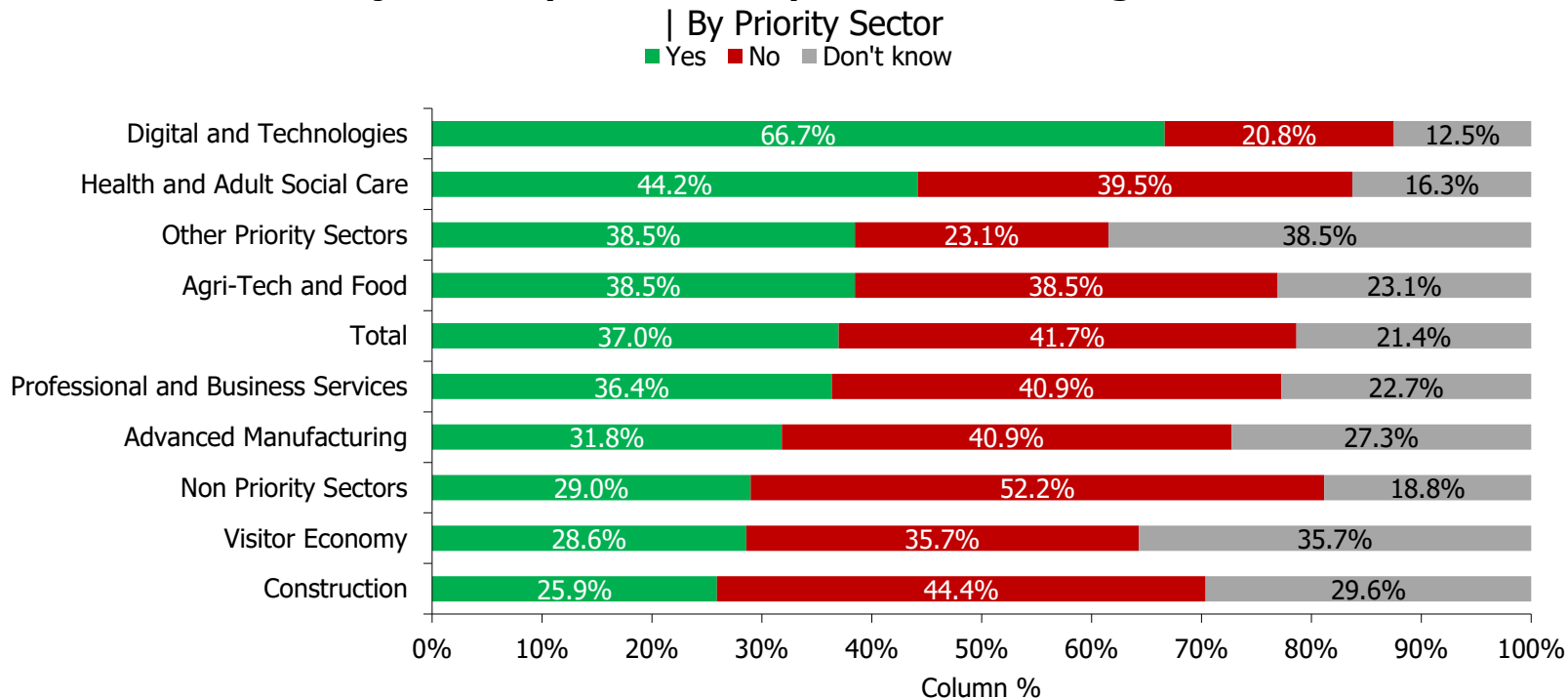


Base: Total (n=384), Priority Sectors (n=246), Non Priority Sectors (n=138), Sample Size = 384

The incidence of noticeable improvements in provision among Priority Sector employers, is higher than we have seen in two other geographies where concurrent research has been conducted (albeit with a slightly different mix of Priority Sectors).

Past improvements | Digital and Tech (67%) and Health and Adult Social Care (44%) most widely notice improvements in provision, with Construction (26%) least likely to do so.

Over the course of the last three years, have you noticed any significant improvements, innovations or major developments in the provision of training in Greater Lincolnshire?



Base: Total (n=384), Agri-Tech and Food (n=13), Professional and Business Services (n=44), Non Priority Sectors (n=138), Construction (n=27), Other Priority Sectors (n=13), Digital and Technologies (n=48), Advanced Manufacturing (n=44), Health and Adult Social Care (n=43), Visitor Economy (n=14), Sample Size = 384

Please briefly describe the most significant improvement, innovation or major development in the provision of training in Greater Lincolnshire that you have become aware of, over the last three years.

Advanced Manufacturing	AI innovation has significantly improved a lot in greater Lincolnshire.
Advanced Manufacturing	BSALM offering by Boston College. Apprenticeships offered by University of Lincoln Holbeach Campus
Advanced Manufacturing	Increase in Business Innovations Events
Advanced Manufacturing	Not sure , other than the fact some skills and precision. Training can allow offers to monitor feedback and work on an entrepreneurs mindset respectively, to improve the way they hand their work.
Advanced Manufacturing	Our own training programme
Advanced Manufacturing	Production
Advanced Manufacturing	Provision of Welding Fabrication Apprenticeships being offered at a local college.
Advanced Manufacturing	Skills bootcamps(delivered by us) LSIP, funding for adult skills
Advanced Manufacturing	The creation of professional websites and easy navigation to professional workshops and offices
Advanced Manufacturing	The government have put more money into providing better traning facilities
Advanced Manufacturing	The number of business relevant courses has increased
Advanced Manufacturing	University of Lincoln Help to Grow Scheme
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Better consistancy of training
	more employees
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	So much choice
Construction	Ability to get funding.
Construction	Mire people become traders
Construction	Not sure how to explain
Construction	Upgraded our suppliers to sustainable energy sources

We recommend reviewing the answers provided here against what you know was implemented during the LSIP 2023-26 cycle in Greater Lincolnshire, to understand what is getting noticed and referenced positively and what lacks awareness/visibility and potentially positive impact.

Please briefly describe the most significant improvement, innovation or major development in the provision of training in Greater Lincolnshire that you have become aware of, over the last three years.

Digital and Technologies	A successful educational conference training where everyone really benefited a lot
Digital and Technologies	Because it was satisfying
Digital and Technologies	Better equipment and anti virus software
Digital and Technologies	Better level apprenticeships locally, e.g. level 4 IT, although still not always in the right focus areas.
Digital and Technologies	Expanded online courses, employer partnerships, flexible apprenticeships, digital training infrastructure growth.
Digital and Technologies	Fast delivery and innovation of technology
Digital and Technologies	Information packaging is faster than it used to be in the past
Digital and Technologies	Intellectual training
Digital and Technologies	Introduction of flexible online and blended learning programmes, making advanced technical and training more accessible across Greater Lincolnshire
	Investment in cutting-edge training facilities has boosted skills development.
Digital and Technologies	Launch of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) to align post-16 education and training with employer needs across the region, engaging employers directly in shaping future skills provision.
Digital and Technologies	Local colleges have expanded digital and technology-focused courses.
Digital and Technologies	More easily affordable access
Digital and Technologies	Noticed the staffs productivity level greatly improved, jobs we outsourced to third party company were now being done internally
Digital and Technologies	Organisation and industry can now do things well unlike before that organisations were not having trained employees
Digital and Technologies	Over the last three years, a notable improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire has been the establishment of collaborative training hubs that focus on tailored skill development across various industries, particularly in advanced manufacturing and digital technologies.
Digital and Technologies	Over the last three years, the most significant improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire has been the stronger alignment of skills training with local employer needs. This has been driven by initiatives such as the Local Skills Improvement Plan, the expansion of flexible, employer-led Skills Bootcamps, and sector-focused partnerships in areas like digital skills, construction, energy, and agri-food making training more responsive, practical, and job-focused.
Digital and Technologies	Over the past three years a notable amount of improvement in training provision have emerged and align education more closely to employers needs
Digital and Technologies	People are not bent to change and pursuit of knowledge
Digital and Technologies	Some key developments include: - *Agri-food Hubs*: Boston College and Lincoln College are developing state-of-the-art facilities for training in hydroponic farming, sustainable food production, and innovative product development. - *Digital Skills Centres*: Stamford College and Lincoln College have established digital skills centres, focusing on areas like cyber security, mobile technologies, and green IT. - *Apprenticeships and Work
Digital and Technologies	The growth of flexible, employer-led digital and hybrid training programmes, including skills bootcamps and apprenticeships, has been the most significant improvement in the provision of training in the Greater Lincolnshire over the last three years.
Digital and Technologies	The improvement was that everyone has been improving
Digital and Technologies	The Lincolnshire Institute of Technology launched with £13 million pounds of investment creating state-of-the-art facilities and new co-design employment courses in agri-foods, engineering, digital and construction
Digital and Technologies	The most significant development in training provision across Greater Lincolnshire over the last three years has been the shift from traditional entry-level digital skills delivery towards applied, business-context digital and AI capability, particularly through employer-aligned, productivity/marketing skills-focused development.
Digital and Technologies	The most significant improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire over the last three years includes several key developments: Agri-food Hubs: Boston College and Lincoln College are developing state-of-the-art facilities for training in hydroponic farming, sustainable food production, and innovative product development, with £2.5m allocated from the devolution deal. - NHS Workforce Training: The University of Lincoln secured a £1.4m grant to transform hands-on clinical training for medics, enhancing student readiness for frontline NHS roles.
Digital and Technologies	The most significant improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire over the last three years is the establishment of various initiatives aimed at addressing skills gaps and promoting economic growth. Some notable developments include: - Agri-food Hubs: Boston College and Lincoln College are developing state-of-the-art facilities for training in hydroponic farming, sustainable food production, and innovative product development, with £2.5m allocated from the devolution deal. - Digital Skills Centres: Stamford College and Lincoln College have established digital skills centres, focusing on areas like cyber security, mobile technologies, and green IT. - NHS Workforce Training
Digital and Technologies	There has been notable infrastructure development and a rise in innovative programs
Digital and Technologies	There have been a significant innovative improvement in artificial intelligence and internet of things that makes it easier to get things done with ease
Digital and Technologies	There is a greater move into technology and what the future AI will look like.

Please briefly describe the most significant improvement, innovation or major development in the provision of training in Greater Lincolnshire that you have become aware of, over the last three years.

Health and Adult Social Care	a better connected offer across the patch
Health and Adult Social Care	Due to the universities expansion there is much more expansion
Health and Adult Social Care	Expansion of digital platforms
Health and Adult Social Care	More comprehensive skills training
Health and Adult Social Care	More effective collaboration between providers and employers. Skills Bootcamps
Health and Adult Social Care	More university courses
Health and Adult Social Care	My view is that in the health and care sector we have become aware of the value of developing people who live in our communities in terms of growing our own.
Health and Adult Social Care	PEople have become more efficient in their workplace and they do things faster.
Health and Adult Social Care	Skills Bootcamps and LSIP framework are the most significant and innovation-driven shift making training more accessible, employer aligned, and responsive to regional growth sectors.
Health and Adult Social Care	Skills bootcamps is a standout development in greater Lincolnshire with flexible and employer linked training in areas of higher demands
Health and Adult Social Care	Skills Bootcamps is a standout development in Greater Lincolnshire's training landscape over the past three years. Giving adults free employer-linked training in high demand areas.
Health and Adult Social Care	Stamford college gives more supporting skills
Health and Adult Social Care	The ability to meet with other businesses and speak about the problems regarding recruitment.
Health and Adult Social Care	The improvement I noticed is that, our organisation team members have been doing well without any problem.
Health and Adult Social Care	The training skills have improved staying up to date with regulations
Health and Adult Social Care	The University of Lincoln's £1.4 million investment in transforming NHS workforce training with state-of-the-art simulation environments.
Ports and Logistics	Due to the progression of ai there appears to be more online training and development companies than before.
Ports and Logistics	More opportunity within training centres
Ports and Logistics	The most significant improvement has been the expansion of digital and hybrid training programmes, with more online delivery, partnerships between local colleges and employers, and greater access to flexible, short courses focused on practical skills.
Ports and Logistics	The variety that is now offered
Professional and Business Services	AI
Professional and Business Services	AI integration
Professional and Business Services	I know there's been focus on building employability in colleges
Professional and Business Services	Lincoln be smarter
Professional and Business Services	people are more highly focused on AI skill
Professional and Business Services	Quality
Professional and Business Services	Skills bootcamp
Professional and Business Services	The availability of skills bootcamps seems to have increased significantly.
Professional and Business Services	The biggest change I've noticed in training here in Greater Lincolnshire over the last three years is the big rollout of those flexible Skills Bootcamps; they're short, practical courses shaped around what employers actually need in things like engineering, manufacturing, construction and care, so people can pick up useful skills fast and go straight into job interviews with local companies.
Professional and Business Services	the breadth, range and access to courses
Professional and Business Services	The opportunity to attend boot camps and Be Smarted workshops linked to Lincoln University
Professional and Business Services	there is more professional trainers in our area
Visitor Economy	More trainers to use in different
Visitor Economy	More training partnerships available
Visitor Economy	Seems to be a lack of funding available for the delivery of courses
Visitor Economy	The level of customer care has improved with taking theses courses

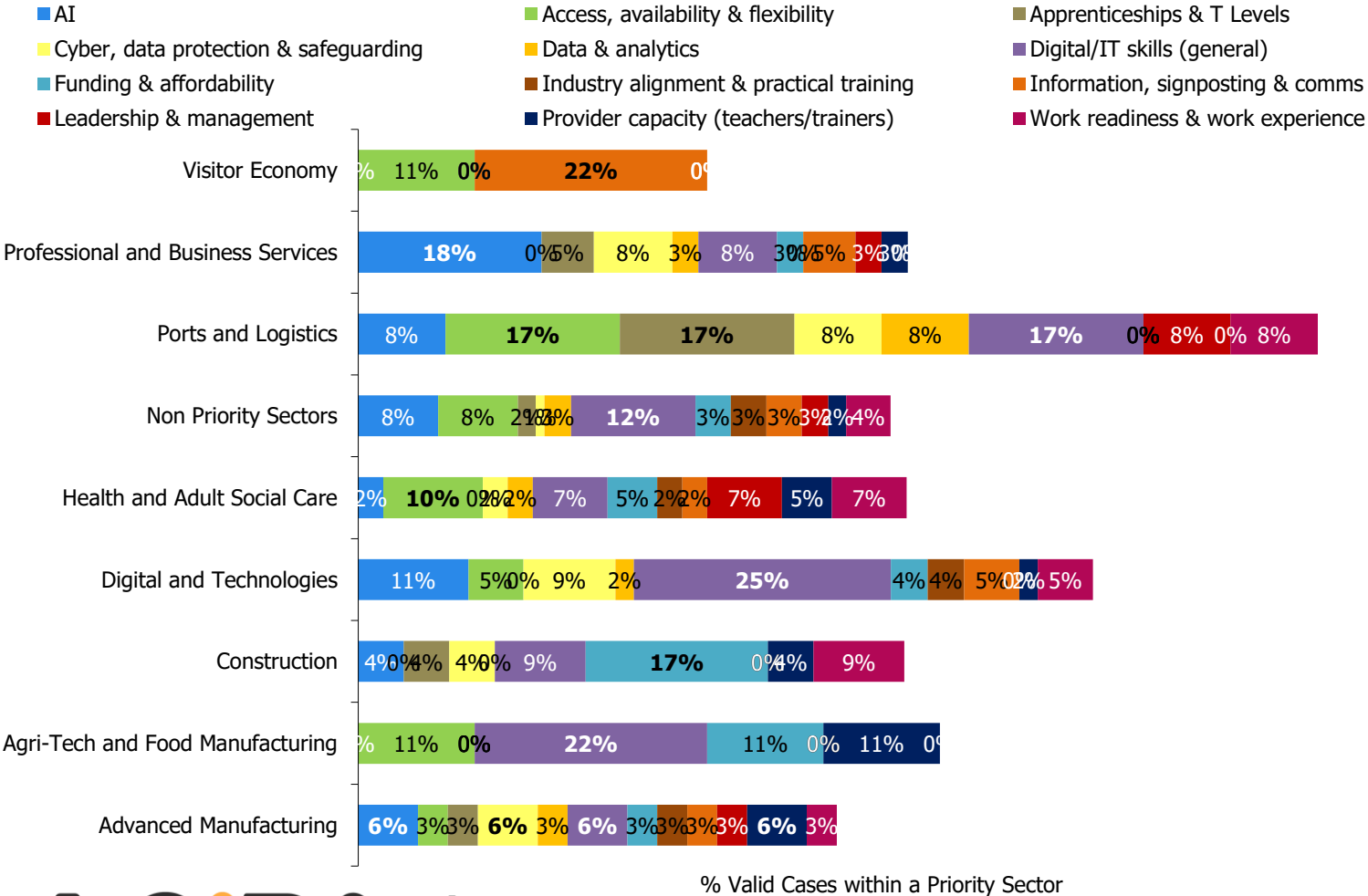
Please briefly describe the most significant improvement, innovation or major development in the provision of training in Greater Lincolnshire that you have become aware of, over the last three years.

Non Priority Sectors	a lot more businesses
Non Priority Sectors	A lot of training is very accessible to small businesses. My peers have told me how much the system has improved.
Non Priority Sectors	Access to skills bootcamp
Non Priority Sectors	Bootcamps and also funded training programs through NCS/CPO
Non Priority Sectors	Council run training which was not previously available
Non Priority Sectors	Easier to understand
Non Priority Sectors	Everyone is ready and willing to learn more skills to help themselves and their organization
Non Priority Sectors	Great opportunities available
Non Priority Sectors	Great service, good customers feed back
Non Priority Sectors	I learnt lots with the thrive tribe business boot camp on how to start and run my new business. Without it I would have given up by now.
Non Priority Sectors	increase in online and blended learning, bootcamp offer expanded, employer focussed programmes like HGV Driver scheme.
Non Priority Sectors	I've heard the new Digital Centre of Excellence at the University of Lincoln is making waves.It's really boosted digital skills training in areas like cybersecurity, data science, and software development, which is great for local businesses and graduates. Definitely seems like it's helping bridge the skills gap in the region's digital sector.
Non Priority Sectors	Medical school and bootcamps
Non Priority Sectors	More courses available.
Non Priority Sectors	More in-depth training
Non Priority Sectors	More opportunities and providers to access training from.
Non Priority Sectors	More training companies
Non Priority Sectors	More training opportunities which are more easily accessible
Non Priority Sectors	New courses available in the local area. And improvements at local colleges
Non Priority Sectors	One of the most significant developments in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire over the past three years has been the expansion and delivery of Skills Bootcamps, part of a major government-backed initiative locally that has rapidly scaled up flexible, employer-led training aligned with local labour market needs.
Non Priority Sectors	Online option
Non Priority Sectors	Probably the solar panels
Non Priority Sectors	Provision of digital training including Ai
Non Priority Sectors	Scams
Non Priority Sectors	Skills bootcamps have been welcome development
Non Priority Sectors	the most significant development has been the expansion of online and hybrid training programs , making specialist courses more accessible across greater lincolnshire
Non Priority Sectors	The Thrive Tribe is the organisation that have helped tremendously with helping me grow my business
Non Priority Sectors	The training offered by local authority has been increased in volume
Non Priority Sectors	The training provider I used taylorred the training to our specific needs.
Non Priority Sectors	There are so many more opportunities although we do our own in house training primarily. I am not much more open to out side training due to the amount of excellent training that is stating to appear.
Non Priority Sectors	There is much more support for sme now
Non Priority Sectors	There's great improvement on teamwork and same digital compentecy in our organization.

12.0 Priorities for improvement in training provision

Please briefly describe below, up to three priorities for improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire that you would like to see addressed within the LSIP 2026-29.

| First Priority mentioned by Priority Sector were categorised to one or more of the main themes



NB The percentages do NOT sum to 100% as a single response can reference several categories and uncategorised responses are not shown here.

The percentage here is on a valid cases basis, e.g. The percentage of participants in a given Priority Sector referencing a theme in their answer.

	Please briefly describe below, up to three priorities for improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire that you would like to see addressed within the LSIP 2026-29.		
Industry Sector	Improvement priority1	Improvement priority2	Improvement priority3
Advanced Manufacturing	AI		
Advanced Manufacturing	AI security	Compliance	Mental health
Advanced Manufacturing	awareness	effectiveness	availability
Advanced Manufacturing	Better staff at colleges	More staff at colleges	More employer engagement from colleges
Advanced Manufacturing	By far the biggest improvement we could recommend is for the educational sector to have a much better understanding of industry skills requirements and use that as the key driver for training rather than just the amount of students who gain degrees. A much more vocational approach is required in our opinion.		
Advanced Manufacturing	Clear progression routes from training to careers.	Develop more employer led, sector specific training that reflects real business needs.	Increase flexible and modular training options to support upskilling alongside work.
Advanced Manufacturing	Compliance	IT	
Advanced Manufacturing	Conduct a feasibility study to review expanding and meeting the needs of local, regional and national employers within our training programme	Source high quality apprentice applications over a range of roles.	Develop links with Greater Lincolnshire schools and colleges / training providers. Attend careers fairs, give guest speaker / subject specialist talks etc.
Advanced Manufacturing	Continuation of bite size relevant courses or skills bootcamps being delivered	Engagement with key people at organisations to promote training	
Advanced Manufacturing	Course times	Course venues	
Advanced Manufacturing	Digital Skills - Data Science & Data Governance		
Advanced Manufacturing	Ensuring that staff qualifications match their skills. Engineers without maths ability are pointless. Admin staff that can't write are pointless		
Advanced Manufacturing	Fire & Security courses	Fire & Security - Hands on Training	Fire & Security - Admin processes (Project Management/ Sales)
Advanced Manufacturing	Free	Government funded	Wider range
Advanced Manufacturing	Hiring	Training	Retention
Advanced Manufacturing	Implement training plan for all employees, particularly foundry operatives.	Deliver training per plan	Continuously educate / train workforce.
Advanced Manufacturing	Leadership and Management development	Digital skills and IT system	Continuous Improvement
Advanced Manufacturing	Metal machine setters needs a significant improvement.		
Advanced Manufacturing	More help for small businesses		
Advanced Manufacturing	More professionals being available	Creation of more training centers	Availability of more online classes
Advanced Manufacturing	One	Never	Yes
Advanced Manufacturing	Process automation skills	AI Training and support	
Advanced Manufacturing	Securing teachers and lecturers for the local college in Grantham so we can source local young talent and have them trained locally	Better outreach into schools making kids aware of the range of engineering opportunities and the value of these jobs	
Advanced Manufacturing	Skills		
Advanced Manufacturing	Specific Engineering training college	Food production and technical role training - getting people interested in food manufacturing	
Advanced Manufacturing	Technical training	Skilled work	Data analysis
Advanced Manufacturing	To have access to apprenticeship courses that can relate to our industry. I understand it isn't realistic to expect print specific courses, but a wider manufacturing course would be beneficial to enable us to access proper apprenticeships	I have no other priorities	
Advanced Manufacturing	Training younger people		
Advanced Manufacturing	We don't have any priorities for improvement, there's so many people looking for work we don't have any trouble finding suitable applicants		

Please briefly describe below, up to three priorities for improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire that you would like to see addressed within the LSIP 2026-29.

Industry Sector	Improvement priority1	Improvement priority2	Improvement priority3
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Amount of training	Cost	Travel
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Clarity of access to grant funding	More information about skills providers	not sure
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Enhancing digital skills	Developing specialised training programs	Improving access to apprenticeship
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	More staff	More training	better training
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	More technical - IT, computer programming courses	Increase in training providers	More opportunities for self growth training
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	More trainers	More specific training	More hands on training
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	training for new entrants and young employees to get certificate needed to do the job	CPD training for managers that will count towards skill level	Ability for young or new entrants to do management courses to build up to become managers
Construction	Cheaper	Accessibility	Location
Construction	Client focus	Environmental impact	Employees health
Construction	Cscs		
Construction	Digital training ready for tax changes	Apprentice positions made simpler	
Construction	Explanation	Reliability	
Construction	Extend grandfather rates for 50+ years. They are leaving industry due to burden of 'schooling' - even though competent for 30 years.	Experienced skilled training providers.	Embedding employer experts into colleges to verify employees have the skills - cannot use clients sites as unsafe.
Construction	funding for training	training available locally	
Construction	Good teachers and educators.	Location of training.	Easy to obtain funding.
Construction	Improve Shipping costs	Efficiency	Employees satisfaction
Construction	It and Ai training including cyber security	Green economy training including installation and maintenance of solar panels and heat pumps	Sales training closing the deal.
Construction	More courses	Better training	None
Construction	More Funding	More Choice in specific areas	Better coverage in schools for construction opportunities
Construction	More people	More traders	
Construction	More young people having a apprenticeships for the skilled jobs		
Construction	Quality	Level of training	
Construction	Technology education	Skilled workers apprenticeship	More affordable housing
Construction		Active recruitment and consistent apprenticeship programmes for all trades	Promoting good working practises both quality related and safety in the workplace
Construction	Training facilities county wide		
Construction	Training to provide qualified electricians.		
Construction	Work ready Students [so part of their course should include work experience]	Colleges to ditch Maths & English as part of apprenticeships as it excludes a lot of good kids [I myself never completed my maths/English exams]	More financial support to employers who take on SEND students along with more level one courses for these students
Defence	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know
Defence	Knowledge of all of the eduactional bodies holistically with feedback and provisions for what they offer. currently there is no 'marketplace' for what is available in Lincolnshire. We know what we know.		

Please briefly describe below, up to three priorities for improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire that you would like to see addressed within the LSIP 2026-29.

Industry Sector	Improvement priority1	Improvement priority2	Improvement priority3
Digital and Technologies	AI features	Data storing	Telecom handling
Digital and Technologies	AI understanding and progression	Automation and robotics	My own AI training and innovation understanding
Digital and Technologies	Awareness	Networking	Courses
Digital and Technologies	Awareness for employers to know where to go to find the courses, is there one central place? I answered I don't know because I am not sure what courses there used to be and what courses there are now.	The style of learning, it can be hard to make time for team members to step out of the business to do the training. What options can be offered to make this easier?	The style of training. I am very much about a collaborative workforce- 360 feedback, an environment where all team members are encouraged to develop their personal and technical skills. I don't want my team member to be going for training that doesn't align with my core beliefs and values.
Digital and Technologies	Better alignment with the employers needs	More flexible and accessible training options	Expansion of digital and technical skills training
Digital and Technologies	Better funding.	More opportunities across all industries.	Easily accessible.
Digital and Technologies	Charity		
Digital and Technologies	Develop cross-disciplinary applied AI and digital transformation training that combines technical skills with real business implementation, sector context, and responsible AI deployment. The focus should move beyond tool awareness towards productivity, workflow redesign, and commercial value creation for SMEs..	Strengthen mid-to-advanced level digital capability pathways, particularly in areas such as automation design, data-to-decision skills, and AI governance in operational environments.	Expand employer-led, place-based, flexible training models that align directly to regional economic priorities and SME engagement patterns.
Digital and Technologies	Digital skills development	Sector specific training	Work-based learning
Digital and Technologies	Enhance funding support for workforce upskilling and reskilling.	Develop more flexible, modular, and short duration training options.	Improve access to training in rural and hard to reach areas.
Digital and Technologies	Enhancing digital skills	Addressing skill gaps in keys sectors	Improving accessibility and Inclusion
Digital and Technologies	Enhancing Employer Engagement	Addressing Skills Gaps in Key Sectors	Improving Accessibility and Progression
Digital and Technologies	Expan advanced digital ,AI, and cybersecurity training locally.	Strengthen employer -led apprenticeships and industry-education partnerships.	Improve access to flexible . affordable training for upskilling existing workforce.
Digital and Technologies	Expand and enhance advanced digital and tech training, including AI/ML, data engineering, cloud architecture, cybersecurity, DevOps/SRE and software integration—ensuring courses are practical, industry-aligned and accessible locally.	Develop specialised employer-driven training pathways and apprenticeships that directly link local businesses with training providers, including co-designed curricula, real workplace experience, and strong progression routes into high-skill roles.	Increase access to high-quality training infrastructure and resources, such as modern labs, simulation environments, and up-to-date tools, along with funding support for SMEs to upskill existing staff without prohibitive cost barriers.
Digital and Technologies	Expansion of advanced digital and technical training	Stronger industry alignment and employer collaboration	Greater flexibility and accessibility of training
Digital and Technologies	Faster verification	More specialized employees	Faster work done rate
Digital and Technologies	Finance	Educaty	Political
Digital and Technologies	Goal	Innovation	Progress
Digital and Technologies	Improved progression pathways further and higher level of education	Expanded access to flexible work based training	Stronger alignment between training provision and employers needs
Digital and Technologies	Increased focus on new tech like AI	More focus on digital skills	More training on sustainable tech
Digital and Technologies	Inspiring and supporting young people	Supporting existing workforce	Creating work vacancies for the youths
Digital and Technologies	IT career guidance and progression	Cyber security workshops for small businesses	Spotting phishing and scams for small business owners
Digital and Technologies	IT training		
Digital and Technologies	Make training readily accessible to everyone who wants to take advantage of it so that the overall levels can improve.	Communicate what training is available and encourage uptake	Ensure there is a thriving support community following the training to help reinforce the knowledge and skills gained
Digital and Technologies	More cyber security	AI	Coding
Digital and Technologies	More financing	More diverse	More informing
Digital and Technologies	More local access to advanced digital and technical training.	increased industry-tailored and practical courses.	Flexible learning formats to suit workforce needs
Digital and Technologies	more security measures	more IT improvement	Good company equipments
Digital and Technologies	Patience	Willingness to learn	Finance
Digital and Technologies	Sourcing more in house training	Training as many employees as possible in as much as possible	
Digital and Technologies	Strengthen crossprovider progression pathways. Develop coordinated level 2 - level 8 routes across FE and HE with transparent credit transfer and upskilling modules	Expand work based learning routes, boost apprenticeshi, T level and industry placements numbers	Co-design flexible employer driven curricular
Digital and Technologies	Stronger alignment between training provision and employee need	Improved access and flexibility of training	Clear progression pathways and careers information
Digital and Technologies	Stronger provision of advanced digital and cybersecurity training, with clearer progression routes from entry-level courses to higher-level technical and professional qualifications aligned to employer demand.	Greater employer-provider collaboration, including more work-based learning, placements, and co-designed curricula to ensure training delivers job-ready skills and improves retention in the local workforce.	Improved access to flexible and modular training, especially for working adults, through blended and part-time delivery that supports upskilling in areas such as cloud technologies, data analytics, and smart infrastructure.
Digital and Technologies	Success	Unique	Creating a lot of things
Digital and Technologies	Support for recruiting university students	Alternatives to apprenticeships (we are too small but would love to)	
Digital and Technologies	The number of staff, would love the enrollment number to go up	More available curriculum courses to improve on	
Digital and Technologies	There needs to be a stronger emphasis on developing specialized training programs in advanced manufacturing technologies, including automation and robotics	Focusing on comprehensive digital marketing and IT training programs is crucial.	There should be an increased effort to develop training and education pathways for healthcare roles, particularly in mental health and specialized nursing
Digital and Technologies	To build the company	To grow	To manage well
Digital and Technologies	Training	Training	
Digital and Technologies	Upskill workforce is digital tools and software relevant to local industries	More apprenticeships with flexible schedules for existing employees	More local training hubs or online options for rural areas.
Digital and Technologies	Visit more companies	Tell me what you can do for me	AI skills
Digital and Technologies	Work readiness, you people do not seem to have the same approach to work that older generations.	Very focused industry specific qualifications	Effective marketing.

	Please briefly describe below, up to three priorities for improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire that you would like to see addressed within the LSIP 2026-29.		
Industry Sector	Improvement priority1	Improvement priority2	Improvement priority3
Energy	Make sure they can speak English		
Energy	More alignment to the developments and skills provision for major programmes like STEP Fusion and adjacent powerstations, and their supply chain.		
Health and Adult Social Care	1. Digital Skills Training: Increase provision for digital skills, including data analytics, cybersecurity, and emerging technologies.	2. Healthcare and Life Sciences Training: Enhance training programs for healthcare professionals, focusing on new technologies and innovative practices.	3. Green Skills and Sustainability: Develop training programs addressing green skills, sustainability, and environmental practices, supporting the region's net-zero ambitions.
Health and Adult Social Care	A far more connected and administered work experience programme for schools, colleges and graduates. Employers don't have the resource to coordinate this internally and speaking to the educations providers (especially schools) neither do they.	Increase the number of entry-level apprenticeships across all sites.	Build in digital training within a health care setting into the healthcare curriculum
Health and Adult Social Care	A more joined up approach. Many organisations are providing the same services, including councils, and I would like to see the best training delivered to all organisations.	A forward vision as to what is required for the next 5 years.	LEADERSHIP and MANAGEMENT training that is not organizationally bound.
Health and Adult Social Care	Alignment of curriculum with employers driven demand. This will help learners graduate with exact competencies businesses are hiring for.	Boosting of accessibility and flexibility of learning. This will help learning possible without disrupting work or family life.	Strengthening quality assurance and staff development across FE Providers.
Health and Adult Social Care	Cheaper	Local	Efficient
Health and Adult Social Care	communication	location - we need more local training	communication
Health and Adult Social Care	Council	Help is needed	Freedom
Health and Adult Social Care	delivery of courses	make sure we keep our values	
Health and Adult Social Care	Digital skills	Sustainable technology	Technical roles
Health and Adult Social Care	Driving skills	Leadership	Digital/AI
Health and Adult Social Care	Education near Sleaford ?	Transport issues accessing colleges or uni	
Health and Adult Social Care	Enhanced clinical training for care workers, including medication administration and support for long-term conditions.	Dementia and safeguarding training to ensure high-quality, safe care.	Digital skills development, including electronic care records and remote monitoring.
Health and Adult Social Care	Face to face training	Leadership	Operational mgt
Health and Adult Social Care	Health		
Health and Adult Social Care	Improve accessibility and flexibility of training for under-represented groups.	Strengthen employer engagement of training pathways.	Close the stem-skills gaps through targeted upskilling and higher level qualifications.
Health and Adult Social Care	In house training provided by the trust including stress management	In house trainings for junior staff	Knowledge and skill training for junior staff
Health and Adult Social Care	Management Training / Skills - more suited to the job and not just based on theory		
Health and Adult Social Care	Mental health understanding	Crisis management	Health
Health and Adult Social Care	More affordable and accessible trainers that travel and deliver at the workplace		
Health and Adult Social Care	More help for depression	More help for disabled	
Health and Adult Social Care	Patients	Training and learning new skills	
Health and Adult Social Care	Precision	Care in handling staff	Good effective results
Health and Adult Social Care	Promotion of trail days in services - bad press sometimes over rides the success stories and people are turned off by this	Establishing good links with the job centres who I have approached on several occasions but had no response in order to develop a training drive for the health and social care sector where people may be suffering from anxiety and need additional support to take the first steps back to employment.	Development of our in house offering to strengthen our staff teams
Health and Adult Social Care	Regulations	Rewarding compliance	More in face training
Health and Adult Social Care	Researcher	Artificial Intelligence	Management Direction
Health and Adult Social Care	SEN education	The children's care system	
Health and Adult Social Care	Staff retention		
Health and Adult Social Care	They should focus on how to make people more efficient at their work.	They should focus on ensuring more people get trained.	They should encourage people to do better everyday.
Health and Adult Social Care	Training around CV presentation and interview preparation	Customer service and persona centred care	Life skills
Health and Adult Social Care	Transferable Skills in communication, time management, punctuality. These are severely lacking in the regional youth workforce		
Health and Adult Social Care	Understanding the role of care and it's expectations (This is more than wiping someone's bottom) as there is always a stigma attached to it. It does sound very derogative when people think that if they cannot get any job that this is the last option!	Customer Service and how to deal with difficult situations.	Understanding consent, mental capacity and acting on best interest.
Health and Adult Social Care	Using AI	On line courses	More support for apprentices
Health and Adult Social Care	Venues	Skilled trainers	Funding
Health and Adult Social Care	Work readiness and essential skills	Digitalisation	Good careers advice and guidance
Health and Adult Social Care	Working in harmony	Professionalism in different fields.	Knowing more on Artificial intelligence

	Please briefly describe below, up to three priorities for improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire that you would like to see addressed within the LSIP 2026-29.		
Industry Sector	Improvement priority1	Improvement priority2	Improvement priority3
Ports and Logistics	Apprenticeship	Data	Supervision
Ports and Logistics	Improved access to specialist IT and digital skills training.	Faster response to emerging skills needs.	More modular and short-course training.
Ports and Logistics	Increase access to advanced digital and technical training, including AI, data analytics, cybersecurity, and cloud skills.		
Ports and Logistics	Increase in training for school levers	Apprenticeships for school levers	
Ports and Logistics	Management skills		
Ports and Logistics	More usage of T levels	Using modern work experience to help create a talent pipeline	
Professional and Business Services	AI	Income	Market growth
Professional and Business Services	AI	Leadership	
Professional and Business Services	ai	compliance	
Professional and Business Services	AI skills	Digital skills	Quality education
Professional and Business Services	Apprenticeship training opportunities - we might consider taking on an apprentice if the college offered suitable course - they may do but I've been unable to locate time!!		
Professional and Business Services	Better marketing of what's available by local councils, particularly for things like skills bootcamps.	A wider variety of course content available in skills bootcamps.	
Professional and Business Services	Better skills boot camps that actually teach valuable lessons for people starting in business. The current options are a joke.	More funding for training and workshops.	More networking events.
Professional and Business Services	Cheaper training	In depth training	
Professional and Business Services	Construction skills training - not my business	Engineering - not my business	
Professional and Business Services	Digital and AI skills for productivity		
Professional and Business Services	Digital marketing	Business development	.
Professional and Business Services	focus on skills	future opportunities	esg
Professional and Business Services	Higher level skills bootcamps	Removal of the financial contribution for one person limited companies	Single skill short courses
Professional and Business Services	honesty	learning	growth
Professional and Business Services	Less a training priority, but what must come first is better engagement of young unemployed workers		
Professional and Business Services	Locally sourced trainers	Specific to the company needs	Cost
Professional and Business Services	Management and sustainability	AI integration	Training
Professional and Business Services	Managing business relationships	Implementation of technologies	Personal resilience
Professional and Business Services	More advanced and specialised digital/tech training especially in areas like cybersecurity, cloud computing, AI, and data skills to tackle the big shortages we're seeing in IT and engineering roles.	Better access to flexible, higher-level apprenticeships and bootcamps particularly for mid-career upskilling and in rural areas so more people can progress without having to relocate or juggle full-time work.	Stronger collaboration between employers and providers to make sure training is even more tailored to real business needs, with faster updates to courses and clearer pathways from training straight into jobs.
Professional and Business Services	more cyber security	AI implemented	software integration
Professional and Business Services	More online Tec support	How to great an o mince course from start to Finnish	Show how AI can help with automation not just prompt but from start to finish linked to an online platform
Professional and Business			

	Please briefly describe below, up to three priorities for improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire that you would like to see addressed within the LSIP 2026-29.		
Industry Sector	Improvement priority1	Improvement priority2	Improvement priority3
Professional and Business Services	More training for skilled labour and trades	More training in catering/hospitality	More training in accounting
Professional and Business Services	Organisational skills	CRM procedures	Policies and processes
Professional and Business Services	Our teams mental health	Staffs happiness	my
Professional and Business Services	Professional apprenticeship	AI training	Sales training
Professional and Business Services	Quality	Quality	
Professional and Business Services	Quality funded training for micro businesses. Orgs with less than 5 FT people are often excluded.	Bitesized ongoing training sessions to avoid them members being out of the business for long periods of time.	Training to enable managers to people manage effectively. This would help avoid disputes in the workplace and costly procedures and claims.
Professional and Business Services	RAINING IN AI		
Professional and Business Services	Security		
Professional and Business Services	Small business support	Staying ahead of the AI change curve	Networking opportunities to promote businesses
Professional and Business Services	Unlicensed company	Wages	Gas/electric
Professional and Business Services	Work		
Professional and Business Services	Work		
Visitor Economy	Communication across the wider county	Collaborative learning	IT
Visitor Economy	Improved access outside of working hours	More online provision	
Visitor Economy	Kitchen hygiene	Kitchen safety, Bladed tools etc	Housekeeping, Laundry facilities best practice
Visitor Economy	More available opportunities for younger personnes to be able to train in LPG Engineering on the job, given the high level of LPG services used in Greater Lincolnshire.	Better funding/investment for those already in employment to upskill and technical training instead of the priority always focusing on those out of employment.	
Visitor Economy	More catering skills made available	HR link up and well being	More diversity and inclusion
Visitor Economy	More computer work	Money areas	Comsture
Visitor Economy	Single source of information as to what is available as opposed to hundreds of different emails	out of hours flexibility	
Visitor Economy	Soft skills		
Visitor Economy	Training	Personify	

	Please briefly describe below, up to three priorities for improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire that you would like to see addressed within the LSIP 2026-29.		
Industry Sector	Improvement priority1	Improvement priority2	Improvement priority3
Non Priority Sectors	A more welcoming way of encouraging employees with anxiety and mental health disorders to attend any form of workshop, as they often struggle with attending.	More focus on AI and how it can be used to make daily tasks easier in the business	Improving customer service skills
Non Priority Sectors	A training passport across the place for key mandatory topics ie GDPR, Safeguarding, cyber etc	More apprenticeship providers with face to face provision to small groups, especially technical skills and increase the amount of bespoke training provision when it is not available locally.	Raising awareness of careers mapping across partnerships to support understanding of transferrable skills.
Non Priority Sectors	Access to all	Varied options	Online leaning
Non Priority Sectors	Advertisement & Access	Soft skills - Customer service. I conduct alot of interviews for the under 25 age group and this is severely lacking.	Technical skills to help people understand the use of tech alongside everyday roles.
Non Priority Sectors	AI	Sales	None
Non Priority Sectors	AI	Sales and marketing	Sustainability
Non Priority Sectors	AI Skills	Better Communications Skills	Numeracy Skills
Non Priority Sectors	AI training	Marketing priorities	
Non Priority Sectors	Apprentice ships	More e learning courses	More zoom virtual training
Non Priority Sectors	Asking small businesses of the skills they are seeking.	Introduce courses at colleges where anyone can study for a skill certificate in the niche areas I have outlined.	To not place the burden of the expense of the above courses on the council tax payer but on the businesses themselves.
Non Priority Sectors	Availability		
Non Priority Sectors	Awareness of local provision	recommendations for local providers	
Non Priority Sectors	Basic business training	Technology	Business growth
Non Priority Sectors	Be able to use the tech stack we use	Be up to date on marketing trends	Money
Non Priority Sectors	Better alignment of training with local employers needs and growth	Increase progression routes and higher levels skills development	Enhanced collaboration and training accessibility
Non Priority Sectors	Better availability	Time to complete training	
Non Priority Sectors	Better diversification and reach out to wider audiences.	Egged compliance with ISO 14001	Reduce wasted time spent travelling
Non Priority Sectors	Better funding to enable growth	Industry understanding the importance of training and the cost effectiveness of it in the long run	
Non Priority Sectors	Better pay		
Non Priority Sectors	Bills		
Non Priority Sectors	Boost programming and coding opportunities	Offer blended online and in-person courses	Support joint skills initiatives
Non Priority Sectors	Bring it to a company		
Non Priority Sectors	Communication		
Non Priority Sectors	Computer	Customer service	Sales and marketing
Non Priority Sectors	Digital competency	Teamwork	Good communication skills
Non Priority Sectors	Digital skills	Numeracy	Management
Non Priority Sectors	Education sector training provision in area to be improved.		
Non Priority Sectors	Employability skills	Experience	Professionalism
Non Priority Sectors	Energy	Housing	Services
Non Priority Sectors	energy training	EPC regulations	GGP training
Non Priority Sectors	Expand access to advanced digital, ai and data analysis training locally	increase availability of flexible, hybrid and online learning options for working professionals	develop more sector specific apprenticeship and skills development programs to fill local skills gaps
Non Priority Sectors	Expand data analytics learning opportunities	Improve accessible workforce development	Align training with labour market
Non Priority Sectors	Funding availaibility	Additional support to businesses for recruitment and up skilling	Retention initiatives to encourage businesses and local people to be employed in Greater Lincolnshire
Non Priority Sectors	General computer skills	Using AI	Software packages, Google, Microsoft
Non Priority Sectors	Get people educated	I'm not sure	Make it a easier to get reainjng
Non Priority Sectors	Getting 16/30 im work and off benefits		
Non Priority Sectors	Graphic design using AI	Nearby location	Speed of course
Non Priority Sectors	Improvements on First Aid training availability	More free courses for self employed people and those on benefits	Not sure

Please briefly describe below, up to three priorities for improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire that you would like to see addressed within the LSIP 2026-29.

Industry Sector	Improvement priority1	Improvement priority2	Improvement priority3
Non Priority Sectors	Incentive for participating in training	Training more easily accessible for the local area and those that don't drive	More courses available for further development
Non Priority Sectors	It	Devlepping TA	Literacy
Non Priority Sectors	It skills	Computer programming skills	
Non Priority Sectors	IT Support for older delegates	Practical business growth	Leadership skills
Non Priority Sectors	It's up to the board and they don't do it.	HR department needs a review.	It's a high risk.
Non Priority Sectors	Leadership development	Change management	EDI / cultural competency Unconscious/ unconscious bias
Non Priority Sectors	Less regulation and longer term investment	Improved visibility, communication and relationships between independent training providers and funders - understand the local skills provision and how it meets specific industry needs	Government - faster decision making - provide market assurance / confidence
Non Priority Sectors	Mailing	Crm	Pitching
Non Priority Sectors	Management	Communication	Listening
Non Priority Sectors	Marketing systems	Social media	Protecting my business- trademarks/GDPR
Non Priority Sectors	More access to local training in Boston	Local property networking gtroup	More AI and basic computer training on marketing and media.
Non Priority Sectors	More advanced digital, data, and AI training locally.	Stronger links between employers and training providers.	Flexible training options for people in work.
Non Priority Sectors	More affordable	More dates	Closer to home
Non Priority Sectors	More choice of courses.	More accessible	Cost.
Non Priority Sectors	More competition and choices	Faster ways to communicate	More facilities
Non Priority Sectors	More courses	More variety	More in job support
Non Priority Sectors	More dei training		
Non Priority Sectors	More employers involved in co-design and co-delivery of curriculum to ensure providers meet their skills gaps - this would increase capacity for more courses in areas such as engineering, plumbing, brickwork, plastering, electrical - providers don't have sufficient workforce to meet demand and need employers to contribute where possible	improved capital investment in existing providers so residents are learning in industry standard facilities with up to date equipment and resources	improved careers advice pre-16 so school aged children and parents are aware of all available options and careers paths - that there are more options than A levels and University - whilst this is right the path for osme for others they would be better undertaking an apprenticeship - we need to better promote apprenticeships and other programmes across the region to ensure we meet employers skills needs and achieve economic growth and productivity for the region.
Non Priority Sectors	More external trainer	Free courses	Good pays to staff undergoing such training
Non Priority Sectors	More first aid spaces to account for the amount of education providers that require the spaces.	Cost of training being suitable.	More evening availability
Non Priority Sectors	More focus on practical, hands-on training in sectors like engineering, manufacturing, and construction to address skills gaps.	Increased support for SMEs to access training and upskilling opportunities, maybe through more flexible funding or resource options.	Enhanced digital skills training, especially in areas like data analysis, AI, and cybersecurity, to future-proof the local workforce.
Non Priority Sectors	More free training	Practical use of AI	
Non Priority Sectors	More frequent courses	More	
Non Priority Sectors	More funding	Better spaces for learning	Larger range of courses
Non Priority Sectors	More independent training organisations ive struggled to find any.	English as a second language provisions.	
Non Priority Sectors	More industry-relevant and practical training	flexible training options	Stronger links between training providers and employers
Non Priority Sectors	More localised specific trsing	Our governing body visiting us	More qualifications
Non Priority Sectors	More online training		
Non Priority Sectors	More readily available training that tailors specifically to different sectors		
Non Priority Sectors	More relevant opportunities for younger people	Return of Kings Trust	
Non Priority Sectors	More sector-specific technical training aligned to local jobs.	Increased availability of higher-level qualifications.	Better promotion of existing training provision.
Non Priority Sectors	More specific skills eg health and safety	More teaching assistant skills for SEND	Subject training for curriculum
Non Priority Sectors	more training	a lot of properties	,
Non Priority Sectors	More training for business owners	More training for HR	More AI and Automation training
Non Priority Sectors	More work readiness training	Communication training - soft skills	
Non Priority Sectors	New courses, each year seems to be the same courses.		
Non Priority Sectors	Nothing the usual political partners trading usual provision.	Bespoke provision, smaller businesses that have actual direct experiences and can offer vocational areas and transferable skills.	Staffing that is current up to date and qualified as well as competent.
Non Priority Sectors	Offer AI implementation training	Promote continuous learning culture	Ensure training matches business priorities
Non Priority Sectors	Paediatric first aid	Safeguarding	Fire safety
Non Priority Sectors	Quicker	Easier	More productive
Non Priority Sectors	Readiness for work in schools		

	Please briefly describe below, up to three priorities for improvement in training provision in Greater Lincolnshire that you would like to see addressed within the LSIP 2026-29.		
Industry Sector	Improvement priority1	Improvement priority2	Improvement priority3
Non Priority Sectors	Relevant courses, tailored to the business, not off the shelf, unrelated courses set up to feed training companies who have no interest or focus on tailoring to the business	Fully funded, it is a failure of the state that applicants are not skilled in Lincolnshire, however businesses are paying more tax to fund - more unemployment and more loss of skills. Training should be tailored and funded via grants - while also noting businesses are not a stop gap for the applicants moving onto another set of benefits if they 'tick' they have been trained.	Training needs to start much younger - young people are priced out of the job market by the rise in living wage for stepping stone jobs. Disincentivising businesses to take them on vs someone with more experience at the same rate. Leading to less natural opportunities for young people to gain skills (for free)
Non Priority Sectors	Sales	Computer	Customer service
Non Priority Sectors	Skills	Training	Production
Non Priority Sectors	skills for future-proofed, resilient, nature-friendly food production and land management	skills for assessment and management of biodiversity and habitats especially in farmed landscapes	skills around resilient production, procurement and supply of healthy food for consumption in Lincolnshire, diet, health, how to reduce costs of bad diet/obesity, improve activity levels, health and wellbeing saving resources of NHS, Social care, welfare payments etc
Non Priority Sectors	Skills programmes		
Non Priority Sectors	Social media marketing	Marketing	How to obtain Funding and bidding
Non Priority Sectors	Software skills - Microsoft training courses - not online as they do not work	Social Media - how to manage and use effectively	Sales - Lead Generation and follow up process - get the most out of Hubspot and similar CRM systems
Non Priority Sectors	swift	effective	up to date
Non Priority Sectors	Teacher Training	Digital and Ai	Employability Skills for job readiness with focus on resilience in young people
Non Priority Sectors	There continues to be a significant gap in higher-level qualifications (Level 4+) and technical skills across the region, with shortages particularly acute in advanced manufacturing, engineering, construction, digital and STEM related roles.	Many employers and workers still lack clear awareness of existing training offers and funding streams, and training is not always structured flexibly to suit working adults, micro-businesses or those in rural areas. Strengthening communication between providers and employers, improving guidance on Adult Education Budget and Skills Bootcamp access, and expanding flexible delivery (evening/online) will help align skills provision with real labour market needs.	There are persistent geographical and socioeconomic disparities in skills levels in parts of East Lindsey, Boston and South Holland, with higher proportions of residents with low or no qualifications and barriers to participation (e.g., transport, digital exclusion). Prioritising basic skills.English, maths and digital literacy, tailored support for under-represented groups, and targeted outreach in disadvantaged communities will improve both equity and local economic participation.
Non Priority Sectors	To ensure everyone gets equal and sufficient training		
Non Priority Sectors	To gain more public traction	To earn better money	To be more successful
Non Priority Sectors	To have more training available	More courses available	Better facilities
Non Priority Sectors	Training	Innovation	Expertise
Non Priority Sectors	Training centres that are comutable from Peterborough	Conduct a training needs assessment to identify gaps	Build a continuous improvement programme
Non Priority Sectors	training for older people	encouraging softer skills development	getting the youngsters to want to work and to respect experiences of others
Non Priority Sectors	Training made easier to access		
Non Priority Sectors	Training to meet future industrial projects in the area	Involve local training providers in all discussions	
Non Priority Sectors	Use of and growth of AI		
Non Priority Sectors	We need more people to actually engage	We need better trainer suited to people's needs	We need to make people involved
Non Priority Sectors	We would benefit from a less formal alternative to traditional apprenticeship schemes, particularly for less dynamic roles such as stores work, warehouse operations, and similar positions. A more flexible work experience route that allows us to bring in young people without the administrative burden and rigid structure of formal apprenticeships would better suit our needs. This would enable us to provide practical, hands-on training that aligns with our company culture and operational requirements, whilst still offering valuable opportunities for young people to gain skills and experience in the workplace.	We would greatly benefit from better local job listing platforms that are well-recognised and actively promoted within the community. Using multi-national platforms like Indeed doesn't always effectively reach the local talent pool we require. A dedicated local recruitment platform or job board, supported and advertised by the local authority, would help us connect with candidates who are already based in the area or looking to work locally. This would be particularly valuable for attracting people who may not regularly use large job sites, and would also support our preference for employing local residents, reducing commute times and strengthening community ties. Additionally, a local platform could better highlight opportunities for people at different career stages, including those seeking entry-level positions or career changes within their own community.	Streamlined support and guidance for small businesses employing and training young people outside of formal apprenticeship schemes. We would benefit from access to resources, best practice frameworks, and potentially financial incentives that acknowledge and support employers who are willing to invest in young people through direct employment and on-the-job training. This could include simplified paperwork, clearer guidance on employment rights and responsibilities when hiring younger workers, and recognition that not all businesses operate in a way that aligns with traditional apprenticeship structures. Such support would encourage more local employers like ourselves to take on young people and provide them with valuable work experience and skills development within our community
Non Priority Sectors	Wider skills gap that needs filling	Retaining staff	None
Non Priority Sectors	Work readiness and essential skills	Green Skills and Industrial Decarbonisation	

13.0 Significant barriers when sourcing provision

Barriers | Across all employers: Cost (30%), Access to funding (24%) and Impact on productivity (18%) / Course relevance (18%) are the most widespread perceived barriers when sourcing training.

330

Please select from the list of options below, what you regard as the three most significant barriers faced by your organisation when sourcing workforce training in Greater Lincolnshire (Please select up to three answer options OR one of the N/A options)

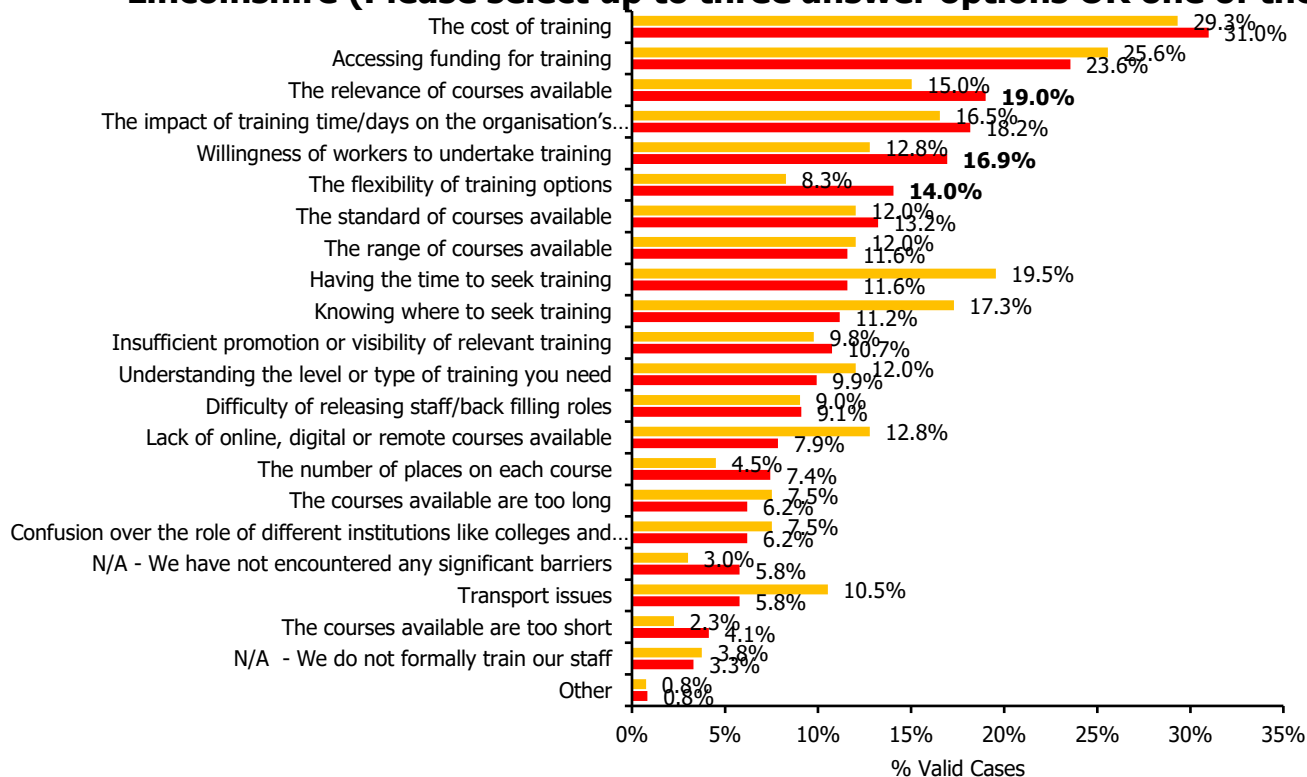


Base: Knowing where to seek training (n=50), Insufficient promotion or visibility of relevant training (n=39), Having the time to seek training (n=54), Understanding the level or type of training you need (n=40), Confusion over the role of different institutions like colleges and universities (n=25), The range of courses available (n=44), The relevance of courses available (n=66), The courses available are too long (n=25), The courses available are too short (n=13), The number of places on each course (n=24), The standard of courses available (n=48), The cost of training (n=114), Accessing funding for training (n=91), Lack of online, digital or remote courses available (n=36), Transport issues (n=28), The flexibility of training options (n=45), The impact of training time/days on the organisation's productivity (n=66), Willingness of workers to undertake training (n=58), Difficulty of releasing staff/back filling roles (n=34), N/A - We do not formally train our staff (n=13), N/A - We have not encountered any significant barriers (n=18), Other (n=3), Sample Size = 375

Barriers | Priority Sector employers more widely select as Top 3 barriers: Course relevance (+4%), Willingness of workers to undertake training (+4%) and Flexibility (+6%).

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Please select from the list of options below, what you regard as the three most significant barriers faced by your organisation when sourcing workforce training in Greater Lincolnshire (Please select up to three answer options OR one of the N/A options)



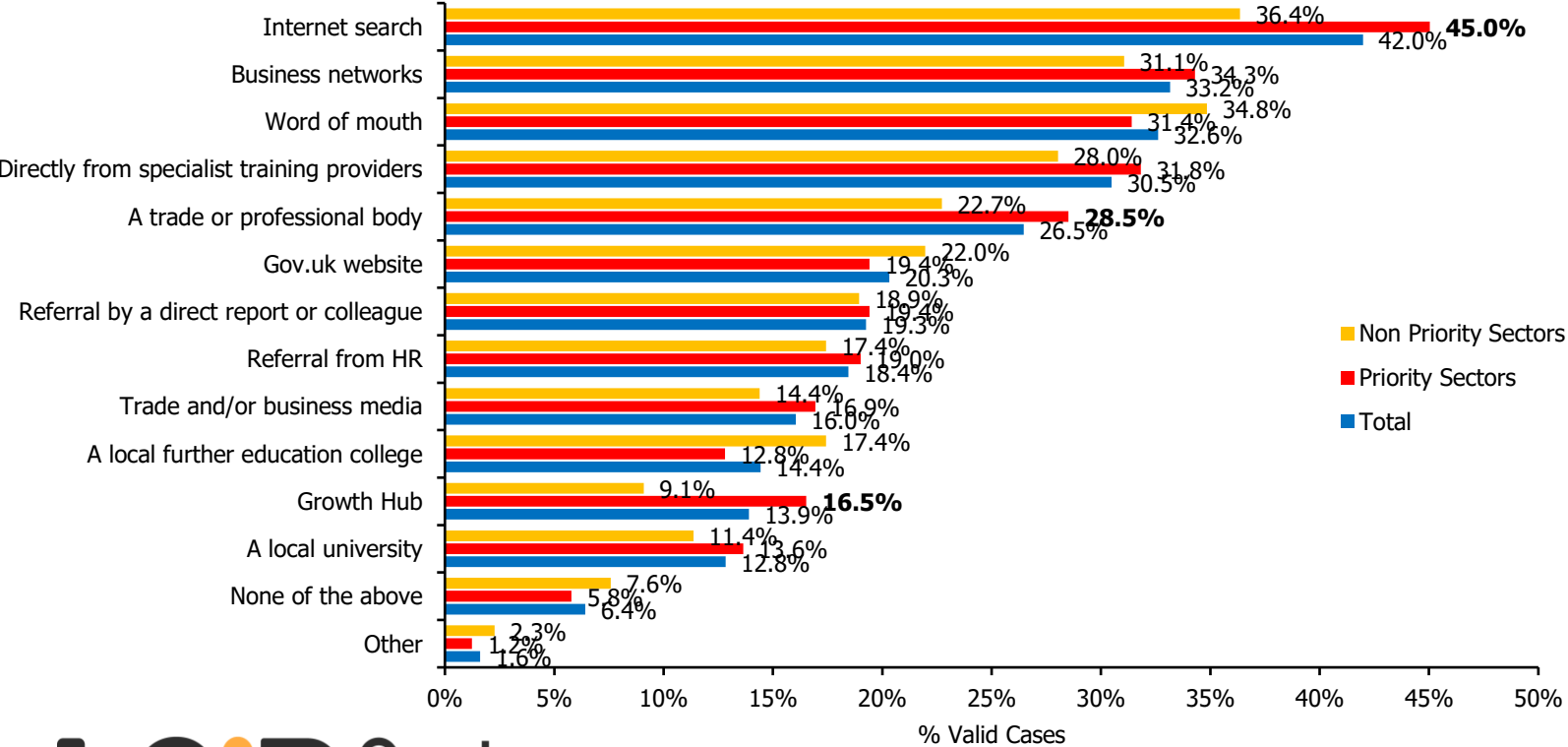
■ Non Priority Sector
■ Priority Sectors

Base: Knowing where to seek training (n=50), Insufficient promotion or visibility of relevant training (n=39), Having the time to seek training (n=54), Understanding the level or type of training you need (n=40), Confusion over the role of different institutions like colleges and universities (n=25), The range of courses available (n=44), The relevance of courses available (n=66), The courses available are too long (n=25), The courses available are too short (n=13), The number of places on each course (n=24), The standard of courses available (n=48), The cost of training (n=114), Accessing funding for training (n=91), Lack of online, digital or remote courses available (n=36), Transport issues (n=28), The flexibility of training options (n=45), The impact of training time/days on the organisation's productivity (n=66), Willingness of workers to undertake training (n=58), Difficulty of releasing staff/back filling roles (n=34), N/A - We do not formally train our staff (n=13), N/A - We have not encountered any significant barriers (n=18), Other (n=3), Sample Size = 375

14.0 Sources of awareness of provision

Sources of awareness | Employers in the Priority Sectors are more widely reliant upon: Internet search (45%), Trade bodies (28%) and Growth Hub (16%), as sources of awareness of training.

How do you typically find out about training and development opportunities?
(Please tick all that apply)

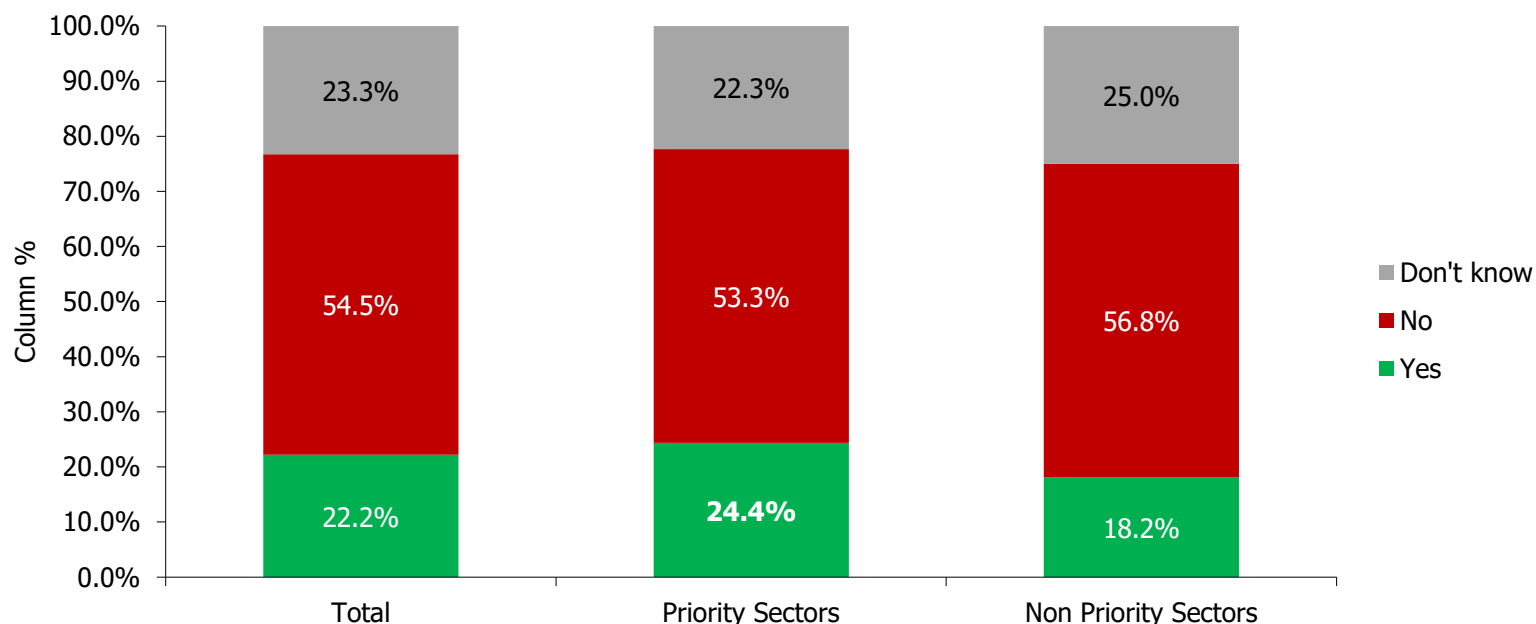


Base: Other (n=6), None of the above (n=24), A local university (n=48), Growth Hub (n=52), A local further education college (n=54), Trade and/or business media (n=60), Referral from HR (n=69), Referral by a direct report or colleague (n=72), Gov.uk website (n=76), A trade or professional body (n=99), Directly from specialist training providers (n=114), Word of mouth (n=122), Business networks (n=124), Internet search (n=157), Sample Size = 374

Communication preference | Just under a quarter of employers in the Priority Sectors would prefer to hear about training and development opportunities in other new ways, beyond their current experience.

334

Are there any other ways, beyond those typically experienced, in which you would prefer to hear about training and development opportunities?



Base: Total (n=374), Priority Sectors (n=242), Non Priority Sectors (n=132), Sample Size = 374

How would you prefer to hear about training and development opportunities in the future?

Advanced Manufacturing	Direct meetings
Advanced Manufacturing	Email
Advanced Manufacturing	Email Communication
Advanced Manufacturing	have a dedicated single representative who understands all of the providers, funding, placements etc
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	A newsletter via email
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	More Agricultural focused training group for Lincolnshire that openly advertises courses rather than little individual group that is only as good as the person running it.
	More of it
Construction	Email
Construction	Email
Construction	How to sell in the construction market
Construction	I would;d like to receive emails of free training available to our employees that may be suitable to their roles
Construction	opportunities through the new job centres/ careers/ local business suport platforms coming through DWP - one stop shop for help!
Digital and Technologies	Advertisement
Digital and Technologies	Email and promotional activities
Digital and Technologies	Email Newsletters Regular updates through email newsletters would be ideal, as they allow for detailed information about upcoming training sessions, workshops, and resources tailored to specific interests.
Digital and Technologies	Email updates , employer networks , local events, online platforms, and newsletters.
Digital and Technologies	Email updates , professional networks, and tragated online portals or platforms.
Digital and Technologies	I would prefer to hear about training and development opportunities through targeted email updates and a online platform that provides clear, up to date information
Digital and Technologies	I would prefer to hear about training and development opportunities through targeted email updates, supported by a central online portal or newsletter that highlights relevant, employer-focused programmes, funding options, and upcoming courses.
Digital and Technologies	I'd prefer to discuss specific training needs and requirements with an advisor so I can ask questions about the course and they can help me match the business needs with the training requirements
Digital and Technologies	New papers, podcast and news
Digital and Technologies	Official social media channels/websites/newsletters
Digital and Technologies	On social media
Digital and Technologies	On social media platform like Twitter
Digital and Technologies	Physical and scheduled
Digital and Technologies	Social media platform like Twitter
Digital and Technologies	Through media
Digital and Technologies	Through regular email updates or newsletters.
Digital and Technologies	Through social media
Health and Adult Social Care	A connected offer alongside a training network - this may exist already and may be that we dont access this in the right ways.
Health and Adult Social Care	Email Newsletter, Short text or app notifications.
Health and Adult Social Care	Learn more through additional means
Health and Adult Social Care	Liasing with someone/ a group of similar sector businesses directly to see how we can work in collaboration and support each other to strengthen our staff teams
Health and Adult Social Care	Newsletter email
Health and Adult Social Care	Newsletters
Health and Adult Social Care	Ongoing locally free
Health and Adult Social Care	Social media
Ports and Logistics	Direct from councils and government
Ports and Logistics	Direct liks
Ports and Logistics	I would prefer to hear about training and development opportunities through email updates, online platforms or websites, and professional networks such as LinkedIn.
	Phone calls from HR or training coordinators.
Professional and Business Services	Email? Newsletter ? Central resource? Again they may already be presents but in unfamiliar with them
Professional and Business Services	Find out about a mailing list or put is on social media
Professional and Business Services	Newsletters. To be able to sign up to alerts for specific types of training.
Professional and Business Services	Through email news letters
Visitor Economy	A central portal for all training opportunities in GL
Visitor Economy	Email
Visitor Economy	Monthly forums or discussion

How would you prefer to hear about training and development opportunities in the future?

Non Priority Sectors	A central hub to search for training - with reviews / recommendations. Place for businesses to connect / share training needs
Non Priority Sectors	A dedicated website structured for employers to find what they are looking for.
Non Priority Sectors	A third party.
Non Priority Sectors	Central training database
Non Priority Sectors	Details directly from training providers in the local area
Non Priority Sectors	Direct from the official provider - without bias from the training companies wanting to fill spaces to keep their numbers up.
Non Priority Sectors	Email
Non Priority Sectors	Email
Non Priority Sectors	Email, I'd be happy to be on a centralised list that provided information
Non Priority Sectors	Have a mailing list emailed to me that I can join that tells me about updates available in the area for opportunities
Non Priority Sectors	I would prefer to hear about training and development opportunities through email updates from trusted providers and professionals networks
Non Priority Sectors	More help
Non Priority Sectors	Personal communication via email would be preferable. Advertising would be the best alternative.
Non Priority Sectors	Put on a platform that sends you information regarding training
Non Priority Sectors	The City of Lincoln does a good job of sharing what is available - NE Lincs we get no visibility at all.
Non Priority Sectors	Training portal
Non Priority Sectors	Via email
Non Priority Sectors	Via emails
Non Priority Sectors	Via sources such as Business Lincolnshire
Non Priority Sectors	Weekly updates about training in our local area

15.0 Provider perspectives from the workshops

Provider perspectives | Workshop involving representatives of 9 different organisations

In order to understand the context regarding education and training provision from the providers perspective in the GLCCA area, we conducted an in-person 2-hour workshop involving 8 participants and an online 2-hour workshop involving a further 8 participants. The providers represented across both workshops, are as listed below.

In-Person Workshop 18/02/2026	
Think Tank, Lincoln	
Organisation	Key Details
Riseholme College FE	~60 staff; ~500 16-18s; 150 apprentices
CATCH ITP	~420 apprentices; ~75 staff
Step House Training ITP	Supports ~700 apprentices 800 bootcamps 65 staff plus 150 contractors
University of Lincoln HEI	1,300 apprentices 18,000 students (inc FE)
Lincoln College FE	600 employees; 3,500 16-18 year-olds 14,000 adults
Inspire Education Group FE/ITP	6,000 16-18 year-olds 10,000 adults; 1,000 apprentices
HETA ITP	83 staff 900 L3-5 1,000+ adults learners
Boston College FE	2,500 16-18 year-olds 3,000 adults 500 apprentices 480 staff

Online Workshop 21/02/2026	
Organisation	Key Details
Franklin Sixth Form College (Grimsby)	≈2,100 students aged 16–19 ≈200 staff
CATCH ITP	≈450 apprentices (c. 100 per year) Thousands on short courses 75 Staff
Lincoln Bishop University HEI	≈2,000 university students 220 Staff
TEC Partnership FE	≈5,400 16–18 learners ≈1,000 apprentices (≈3,700 in Greater Lincs) 1,265 staff (800 in Greater Lincs)
Skegness College (part of TEC Partnership) FE	≈260 learners 30 Staff
Skegness College (part of TEC Partnership) FE	
The Thrive Tribe ITP	≈200 learners per annum + work with ≈500 small businesses monthly 3 staff
DN Colleges Group FE (Doncaster & North Lindsey/Scunthorpe)	≈2,000 16–18; 600 apprentices; 2,000 adults; 400 HE learners

Provider perspectives | The positive changes in education and training provision, over the last 3 years

Change Identified	Remarks
Greater collaboration across FE Colleges and ITPs in particular, driven by the LSIF, was very widely endorsed The collaboration on training and re-skilling between FEs and ITPs in response to the redundancy situation at the Prax Lindsey Oil Refinery was highlighted as a good example: <i>"We used a hub and spoke model there...and it has brought us all closer together."</i> (FE)	<i>"There's been real positive collaboration between colleges...A few years ago we were encouraged to compete...I think that's had a great impact for student outcomes."</i> (FE) <i>"The LSIF allowed us to invest in new technology and it did bring us closer to other providers."</i> (ITP) <i>"We now openly and actively talk across FE Colleges."</i> (FE) <i>"ITPs and FE Colleges working together gives a richer partnership, because we've got things to learn from each other."</i> (ITP) <i>"The joined-up piece is a better way of working and going back with a united voice."</i> (FE) <i>"Universities were a bit arrogant before...we are now more collaborative."</i> (HEI) This closer collaboration extended as far as joint or consortium bids for funding: <i>"Tender issues often now expect a collaborative partnership, the expect a lead. If the collaboration did not exist, bidding would often be impossible...Leading these bids has become ever more demanding though."</i> (FE)

Provider perspectives | The negative or ambiguous changes in education and training provision, over the last 3 years

Change Identified	Remarks
Changes to apprenticeship legislation affecting affordability	<i>"In apprenticeships, there's been changes to legislation which have impacted on the affordability for organisations of recruiting apprentices." (FE)</i>
Uncertainty created by devolution	<i>"With devolution in GLCCA, that is causing a degree of uncertainty in the short to medium-term." (FE)</i>
Demographic growth in 16–18 population without matching funding	<i>"Demographic growth in the 16 to 18 age group has meant... we're having to effectively support a higher number of students with less income." (FE)</i>
Reduction in capital funding for FE Colleges	<i>"This is compounded by the impact of inflation." (FE)</i>
Loss of major employers reducing training demand	<i>On south bank of the Humber: "We've lost one of the refineries... we've lost chemical plants... that's definitely an impact." (ITP)</i>
A great deal of academic reform (T Levels, qualification changes)	<i>"The tremendous amount of academic reform... introduction of T Levels... changing language of apprenticeship units..." (FE)</i>
Removal of Level 7 apprenticeship funding	<i>"The removal of Level 7 funding for apprenticeships... affects us as an employer hugely." (HEI)</i>
Maths and English funding/requirement shock	<i>"Because that was an overnight decision... it just meant instant redundancies, as soon as it happened." (HEI)</i>
Very rapid de-listing of Apprenticeship standards	<i>"Switching off standards impacts us immediately and UK Government often only gives 3 months' notice of this....mismatch of what Employers want and what can be done with funding." (HEI)</i>

Provider perspectives | The negative or ambiguous changes in education and training provision, over the last 3 years

Change Identified	Remarks
Institute of Technology no longer prioritised	<i>"Institute of Technology was flavour of the month... now it's not... there's no benefit in doing it...do we need it anymore?" (HEI)</i>
Lack of strategic coherence on skills over the last five years	<i>"The disunity, the piecemealness of funding available for independent training providers and you can see that the market is now consolidating and the confusion is still there. The lack of clarity around what's going on with apprenticeships...Government not employer choice anymore." (ITP)</i>
More consolidation still to come among ITPs which could adversely impact learners, in the short term at least	<i>"...you are going to lose specialists and smaller providers in the area, and anybody that's under £1,000,000 turnover now, is really going to struggle to survive." (ITP)</i>
Increase in emotional/mental-health needs among learners	<i>"The number of students with emotional, social, mental health needs... is overwhelming in some respects...numbers of home educated learners, who may not be able to transition back into mainstream education." (FE)</i>

Provider perspectives | Perceived strengths in education and training provision in GLCCA

Perceived Strength	Remark
Collaboration across providers	<i>"There's been real positive collaboration between colleges..." (FE)</i> An example here was cited of the recent Defence Tech Centre of Excellence Bid.
Employer engagement improving and their appetite to get involved is high	<i>"We've got a renewed and stronger will to meet employers needs..." (FE)</i> <i>"Employer appetite and willingness to get involved. I think it's never really openly been higher." (FE)</i>
FE and ITPs can see themselves as agile and flexible but funding parameters do not assist here	<i>"...we are really responsive and agile as an Education sector to what employers want. The bureaucracy of the funding is a side point, but typically, if employers come to the door...we'll all operate within whatever business parameters, whether it's group size or profitability or whatever. But generally, think that we...will do anything to try and help the community we're in." (FE)</i>
Stable and strong senior expertise	<i>"We have a fairly stable ecosystem of expertise in the county..." (HEI)</i>
Human capital and a significant estate of public sector providers	<i>"I think without those individuals who work in the sector it would have been expected to have collapsed a long time ago. Often on a wing and a prayer. A lot of the time. I think a strength is that we have got a significant estate across Lincolnshire, albeit it is in some places ageing and very expensive to maintain." (FE)</i>
Breadth of provision – if awareness and understanding is fully established	<i>"I don't think the average teacher will know what an NVQ is and all the rest of it. So, I think how we articulate that and support schools to better inform their learners, that will make a difference...breadth of provision, brilliant opportunities for students, fantastic. If they know what to look for and where to look." (FE)</i>

Provider perspectives | Perceived weaknesses in education and training provision in GLCCA

Perceived Weakness or Area for Improvement	Remarks
Lack of capital funding	<i>"Lack of capital funding... can make it difficult to respond to demographic growth...fewer pots to go after." (FE)</i>
Inability to meet learner demand, is compounded by this lack of capital	<i>"So, if we take Construction as an in demand sector in Lincolnshire, we can probably do twice as much stuff. We just don't have the capacity in terms of physical space to do that, so with an inability to secure capital funding that can become a real challenge." (FE)</i>
Course end dates not assisting the job market – spikes in labour supply	<i>"We churn out graduates from the FE sector all at the same time, we flood the job market and this doesn't make it easy for learners to secure the job that they are seeking." (FE)</i>
Poor decision-making in devolution	<i>"The decisions are being made on education by non-educational specialists...no Skills Board, as was." (HEI)</i>
Funding decisions that comparatively penalised providers based in GLCCA	<i>"155 providers got given skills bootcamp funding, with a lot more out of area than other devolved counties chose to do. There is no reciprocity here...we can't bid to run bootcamps for say Nestle in York because we are out of the Yorkshire area....this does not support providers in Lincolnshire and has led to redundancies." (HEI)</i>
Transport and rurality barriers	<i>"Without public transport system we can't do it." (FE) "We spend a fortune getting students to our college." (FE) "Inflexible delivery models that require people to turn up at a given location 2 days per week...we don't even offer an evening." (FE)</i>

Provider perspectives | Perceived weaknesses in education and training provision in GLCCA

Perceived Weakness or Area for Improvement	Remarks
Felt to be much harder to work closely with DWP in Greater Lincolnshire than in other geographic areas	<i>"...it's much easier to work with job centres outside Lincolnshire than inside and we have good access elsewhere and good access for the referrals to programmes...we put resources elsewhere. Lincolnshire is not as open."</i>
Complexity of curriculum reform	<i>"The level 3 reform... the challenges with T Levels... is the biggest shift impacting us." (FE)</i>
Increasing confusion on the part of: employers, parents and learners about the role for schools compared with post-16 providers	<i>"There's a real confusion over what schools do and what post-16 does. Schools have very different levels of engagement with the post 16 sector and increasingly schools are moving into to and offering vocational provision." (FE)</i>
DfE stifling innovation in several different ways	<i>"only the DfE could look at something that's 'novel' and use that word in a derogatory fashion. It's mind boggling, isn't it? ...Difference or unusual or innovative? 'That's dangerous'...I think that has understandably stifled innovation." (FE)</i>
Increased learner mental-health needs	<i>"The number of students with emotional, social, mental health needs... is overwhelming." (FE)</i>

Provider perspectives | Perceived opportunities for education and training provision in GLCCA over the next 3 years

Opportunity	Remarks
Targeted support for NEETs, economically inactive adults and SEND	<i>"Targeted support for NEETs and inactive adults." (FE)</i> <i>"There may be more SEND funding coming along the way." (FE)</i>
Systematically understand the skills network and skill system for Greater Lincolnshire and respond to mobilise and address any weaknesses or gaps	<i>"...identify and mobilise the skills network that you've got and then fill in the gaps and it does mean using colleges, ITP's, the voluntary sector. to develop provision to make sure that everything is covered." (ITP)</i>
The inclusion of foundational sectors like Health & Social Care and Ports & Logistics in those prioritised within the LSIP	<i>"It's great that the direction of travel for the priority sector now includes, some support sectors or underpinning sectors, particularly like healthcare, health and social care and logistics...rather than just high return GVA. So, it's good that they're coming through, I think." (FE)</i>
Continued growth in numbers of 16-18 year-olds over the next 2 years at least	<i>"So, there is the potential to train those young people up for the vacancies that are there." (FE)</i>
Opportunity to reduce student debt by studying at HE-level much closer to home	<i>"It's maybe not as expensive as going away and maybe they can hold down a job at the same time, as studying for HE." (FE)</i> Is the opportunity for local HE provision within wider FE settings being fully leveraged, particularly in 'cold spots' geographically? Is awareness and understanding of this proposition, where it needs to be among learners and their parents?

Provider perspectives | Perceived opportunities for education and training provision in GLCCA over the next 3 years

Opportunity	Remarks
The Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) which is introduced in January 2027, offers the potential for take up of more modular provision by adult learners and young people alike	<i>"...its being broken down into much smaller chunks with the new Lifelong Learning Entitlement which individuals can access in a much more fragmented fashion...rather than whole degree...this opens up part time offers, more granular provision that then has funding." (HEI)</i>

Provider perspectives | Perceived threats facing education and training provision in GLCCA over the next 3 years

Threats	Remarks
Lack of funding for redundancy-support provision	<i>"There is no provision for redundancy support...it doesn't fall under ASF, that's your biggest opportunity to reskill... but at the moment, there is lack of provision" (ITP)</i>
Increasing complexity of qualification system	<i>"The further complexity of the whole bloody system... we're going to introduce V Levels... introduce stepping-stone qualifications for English and Maths..we've still got NVQs... it's an absolute knot...How is an average parent or student supposed to understand all of that!" (FE)</i>
Postcode lottery for employer funding of bootcamps	<i>"We can fund 3 of you but we can't fund the other 2 because of where you live." (FE)</i>
Financial fragility of providers	<i>"Financial stability... necessarily inhibits growth and innovation" (FE)</i>
Lack of coherence on what the UK Government wants and slow pace implementing manifesto commitments on skills	<i>"There is a lack of coherence of what the government wants ADOS (Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule) to provide...At the moment there's no clear direction on it and that's a real problem." (ITP) "Which again is another case of lag thinking, because...prior to the election they were talking about the Skills and Growth Levy and how there would be flexibility. Yet it's taken them this long to get to what there's going to be." (ITP)</i>
Limited flexibility for Employers in use of levy funds and an assumed utilisation rate of just 50%	<i>"When the levy was introduced, the rationale was that it was all about introducing employer choice. But effectively what the government decided is we don't like the choices you're making. So, we're going to roll back on it all. You're allowed to choose whatever you want, as long as it's what we want." (FE)</i>

Provider perspectives | Perceived threats facing education and training provision in GLCCA over the next 3 years

Threats	Remarks
Fear that provider eligibility criteria to provide the new Apprenticeship Units could drastically limit supply	<i>"You are gonna have to be graded 'Good' or above and have above average success rates to offer these...you will find yourself with maybe somebody (a provider) who geographically is in the ideal situation to be able to deliver this with a need there and they can't deliver it because they haven't met the criteria." (ITP)</i>
Compliance requirements and complexity is increasing	<i>"...the only thing that they do seem to be sort of clear about and it seems to be getting piled up higher and higher is the compliance that we have to follow as providers...they are always quick to say you've got to do this." (ITP)</i>
As consolidation happens and some provider close consequent gaps in provision may remain unfilled	<i>"...in the past you can guarantee that provision will be replaced, that's not the case in the current marketplace. That provision may not get replaced." (ITP)</i>
Too high a proportion of Learners go out of county for HE courses and either never come back or only do when they retire	<i>"The ecosystem of Lincolnshire is an issue...it is regarded as a nice place to retire. Too many students, from the grammar schools, in particular, leave for HE, and don't come back to the county." (HEI)</i>
Concerns were raised about the cohort of young people that providers are supporting	<i>"We have a generation of young people who are disengaged and not resilient...it is this that needs addressing." (ITP)</i>

Provider perspectives | Perceived threats facing education and training provision in GLCCA over the next 3 years

Threats	Remarks
Job vacancy volumes currently falling, apprenticeship opportunities have contracted too	<i>"We are seeing a drop there, particularly in entry-level vacancies." (FE)</i> <i>"The changes to the living wage, Employment Rights and national insurance have reduced the numbers of employers offering apprenticeships." (FE)</i>
For larger FE Groups funding complexity increasing, alongside cuts to the Adult Skills Fund, e.g. Variances across four different Mayoral Authorities	<i>"Some provision might have an equal split in young people and adult learners. The central decisioning on adult funding may mean that some provision has to be stopped altogether, as it stops being viable without the adult funding." (FE)</i>

Provider perspectives | On the skills shortages and skills gaps in the Priority Sectors

Priority Sector	Observations
Within the in-person workshop cross-cutting themes were flagged up first and thought to be top of mind with employers too	<i>"So, digital and AI effect seven out those nine (Priority Sectors)." (FE)</i> <i>"...every employer in the country are in the foothills of trying to decide how to use AI." (ITP)</i> <i>"Leadership and Management goes across all of them." (FE)</i> <i>"...all employers want to talk about are those cross-cutting themes...you talk to any employer about your average 16 to 18 student and their employability...basic stuff: Communication...team working...not using the phone. It's not getting one of them call in sick." (FE)</i> <i>"The focus on skills shortage occupations by priority sector misses the point that most Employers simply want work readiness." (ITP) "The focus on occupations is misguided." (FE)</i>
The widespread impact of AI across all of the Priority Sectors was raised as an over-arching theme	<i>"We'll need to understand how AI will drive redundancies and what that then means for re-skilling and career change." (FE)</i>

How will the best content and LMI modelled data on the impact of AI specifically to the Greater Lincolnshire economy be fed into the LSIP Report and LSIP process? Is any of this data being shared with SME employers too?

Is the best thinking from Jisc and other similar sources on the digital and AI transformation in provision, also being factored into the LSIP process?

There would be real benefit in supporting much greater collaboration and the development of jointly devised strategies on positively harnessing AI between Employers and Providers (and possibly Learners too). Both are independently trying to get to grips with this seismic change at the moment.

Provider perspectives | On the skills shortages and skills gaps in the Priority Sectors

Priority Sector	Observations
Health and Social Care	<i>"60% of workers in care are only qualified to Level 2...that impacts progression and eligibility for provision to support that." (FE)</i> <i>"The NHS is taking on far fewer apprentices than it did." (ITP)</i> <i>"Eligibility on Right to Remain will really hit this sector hard." (ITP)</i> <i>"Social prescribing is a growth area and that may lead to gaps." (FE)</i>
Construction and Energy	<i>"A huge project around the Humber...Energy and Construction both lean on Engineering skills...so that will put a bit of weight on all providers, because we have a finite landscape...only so many welding bays." (FE)</i> The existence of huge capital projects in other regions is and will draw skilled tradespeople away to higher paid roles.
Professional and Business Services	Skills shortage = Cybersecurity in Employer organisation and in Education Skills gap = How best for existing staff to harness AI to improve productivity There was a feeling that more Professional people were looking to go self-employed or start their own micro business, in part at least, to benefit from flexible and hybrid working – provision on 'starting your own business' would align with us.
Visitor Economy	There was a feeling that learner numbers on courses relating to this sector were "dropping all the time" and that this was starting to call into question the geographic scale of current provision relating to this sector. There was also a recognition that Employers are trying to make work in this sector "less seasonal".

Provider perspectives | Skills needs in the Education sector now and over the next 3 years

The absence of Education among the Priority Sectors was spontaneously remarked upon:

- “There's a key sector that employs 8% of the workers in Greater Lincolnshire, and it's not there as a priority...the Education sector is not there...we have our challenges, where can we get that recognised as a sector.” (FE)

Education Sector skills needs	Remarks
Teacher Training facility next to the Humber	<i>"I'd like to see one really good teaching teacher training school, that we can all buy into. We can all throw money into." (ITP) Particularly to aid new tutors joining from industry or the armed forces to make the transition.</i>
Rates of pay offered for skilled tradespeople in Construction and Engineering plus also Digital and IT specialists to become tutors, help drive widespread shortages despite some good initiatives in this area	<i>"...they are first and foremost electricians, who maintain their occupational competency and all the rest of it, and I think we as a sector, we need to recognise that sometimes you might have to pay them £40-50 plus grand a year, in order to get decent people and that if we don't crack that we're gonna be what is it 70,000 short of electricians." (FE1)</i> <i>"Electrical areas is a real problem for us, full stop." (FE2)</i> <i>"Construction... we have some difficulties as well." (FE2)</i> <i>"Those newer skills... things like retro-fit skills." (FE3)</i> <i>"We've had struggles around motor vehicle and recruitment around that particular post." (FE3)</i> <i>"We also have an initiative called Trade to Teach...where, if you're thinking about, kind of, ending your career in engineering, or on the tools, or any of the specialist areas...you can come into the college, kind of, no obligations, and ultimately try teaching, and we've seen a successful pull-through, actually, of staff around that. (FE4)</i>

Is there scope to extend the 'Trade to Teach' initiative, either geographically to incorporate more providers and/or to cover more trade types?

Provider perspectives | Skills needs in the Education sector now and over the next 3 years

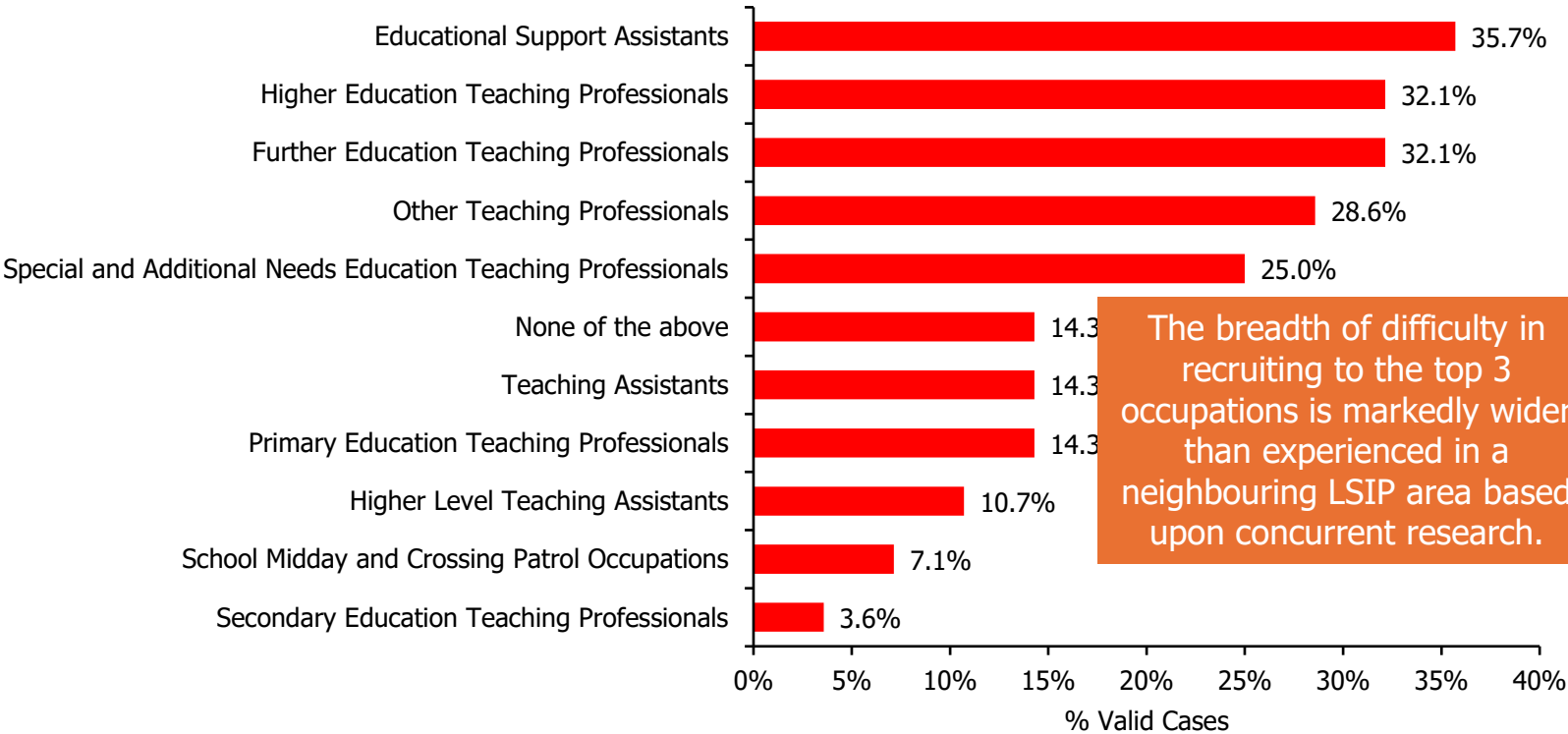
Education Sector skills needs	Remarks
Maths and STEM teachers and to a lesser extent English (NB Schools can pay more than FE)	"I don't know any provider who has a full and stable complement of English and Maths staff." (FE1) "One area where we do struggle is English and Maths." (FE2) "We tend to struggle to... recruit really good quality teachers within those areas. (STEM)" (Secondary) The increase in Level 2 students at entry in FE and Sixth Form Colleges is driving up the demand for Maths tuition.
Support Roles (incl. SEND and Progress Coaches)	High turnover due to low pay relative to responsibility. "They think 'I can get the same money for working at Tesco's, but the level of responsibility... is significantly more... We have had more problems with these types of roles than anything else.'" (FE)
Need to continue to step up Mentoring and Wellbeing support	"...we've increased our mentors by 10% year on year but that is an ongoing requirement." (FE) The suggestion was made on whether more of this resourcing could be centralised, as well as some admin roles, e.g. associated with bootcamps.
Transport is a big limitation	"I think transport is probably one of the biggest limiting factors. That's for students. That's for staff...we can't really do hybrid work in the same way as in other sectors, that means we're at the mercy of our wonderful transport system." (FE) Perceived lack of connectivity was felt to negatively impact perceptions of potential candidates from roles coming from outside the county.

Provider perspectives | Skills needs in the Education sector now and over the next 3 years

Education Sector skills needs	Remarks
High volumes of redundancies in HE means no significant shortages in academic roles in the sector but support staff is a different story	<i>"We get very strong fields because of HE staff being laid off." (HEI) "Support staff (back office not student facing) in data, digital and IT however are much more challenging, in the same way as they are in FE, because of pay rates, etc." (HEI)</i>

Education | Educational Support Assistants (36%), HE Teaching Professionals (32%) and FE Teaching Professionals (32%) are the three occupations that presented the most widespread recruitment difficulties over the last 12 months.

Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, have you found it difficult or very difficult to recruit, over the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply) | Education



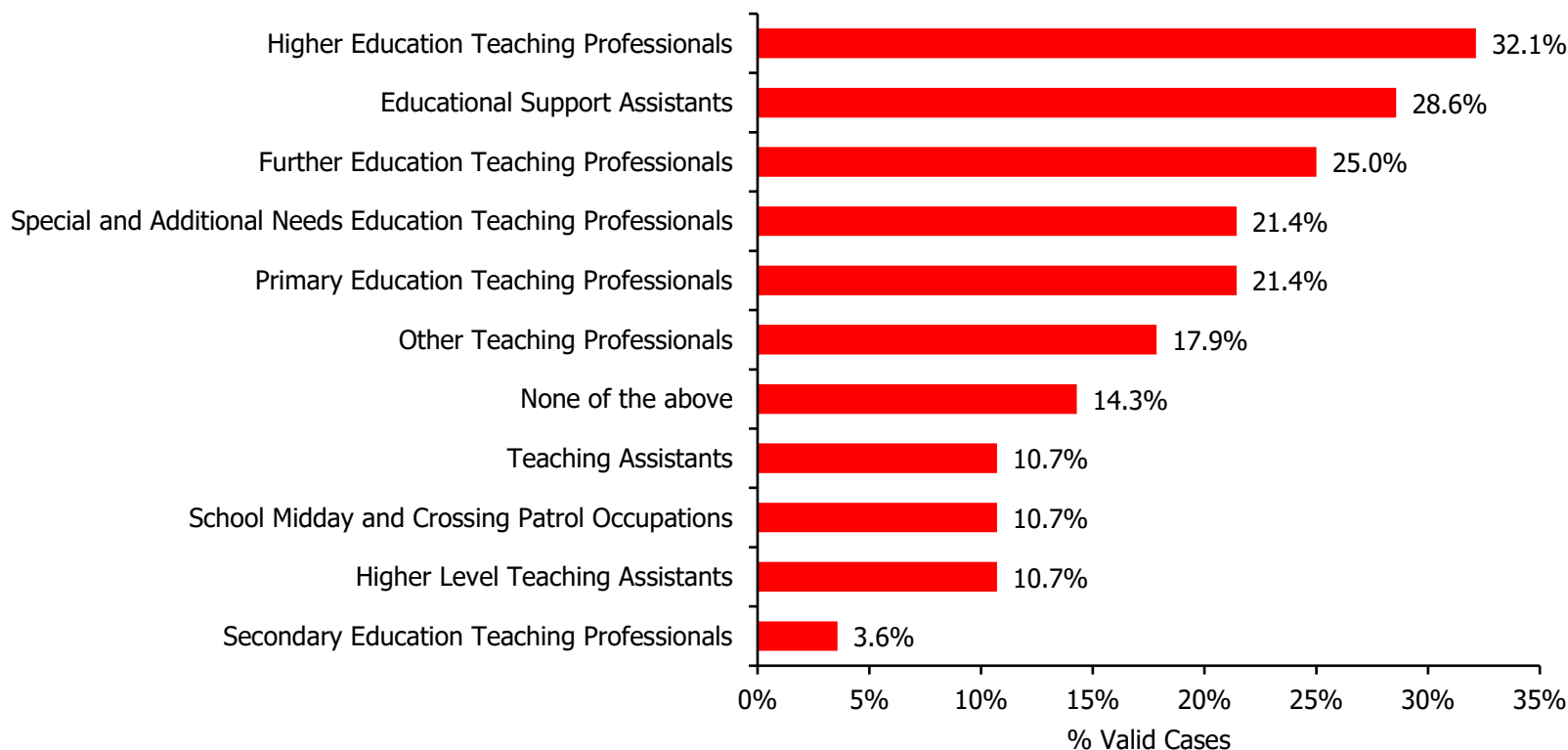
The breadth of difficulty in recruiting to the top 3 occupations is markedly wider than experienced in a neighbouring LSIP area based upon concurrent research.

Base: Educational Support Assistants (n=10), Further Education Teaching Professionals (n=9), Higher Education Teaching Professionals (n=9), Higher Level Teaching Assistants (n=3), Primary Education Teaching Professionals (n=4), School Midday and Crossing Patrol Occupations (n=2), Secondary Education Teaching Professionals (n=1), Special and Additional Needs Education Teaching Professionals (n=7), Other Teaching Professionals (n=8), Teaching Assistants (n=4), None of the above (n=4), Sample Size = 28

Education | Looking ahead over the next 3 years, the same three occupation types are most widely thought likely to be hard or very hard to recruit.

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Which, if any, of the occupations listed below, do you believe will be hard or very hard to recruit, over the next 3 years? (Please tick all that apply) | Education



Base: Educational Support Assistants (n=8), Further Education Teaching Professionals (n=7), Higher Education Teaching Professionals (n=9), Higher Level Teaching Assistants (n=3), Primary Education Teaching Professionals (n=6), School Midday and Crossing Patrol Occupations (n=3), Secondary Education Teaching Professionals (n=1), Special and Additional Needs Education Teaching Professionals (n=6), Other Teaching Professionals (n=5), Teaching Assistants (n=3), None of the above (n=4), Sample Size = 28

Please list below any other occupations or roles, not referenced in the previous two questions, that your organisation has either found it difficult to recruit over the last 12 months and/or anticipates being difficult to recruit in the future?

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Education other1	Education other2	Education other3
Accountants	health professionals	finance roles
Authenticity		
Domestic staff	Operation teams	Maintenance assistance
Early years staff		
Funding and Data specialists	Client facing roles	
One to one teaching assistants for SEND	School governors	
Safeguarding		
Senco		
Senco		
Site staff	Accountants	
Site staff	Finance staff	Kitchen staff
Training Manager		
Tutors in skilled vocation areas as they are paid more in industry		
Welding instructors		

Provider perspectives | The needs of learners

Participants highlighted the following priority learner-driven or learner-inspired needs that should be considered as part of the LSIP process in Greater Lincolnshire:

- **IT skills** – “...phone skills, using a touchscreen, are different from IT skills” (FE1) “Using PC and software is a different set of skills...Using Microsoft software, spreadsheets, even how to save work is a challenge, relative to scrolling.” (FE2) “Some older people may also lack digital skills” (ITP)
- **Interview preparation and CV writing**
- **Work-ready employability skills** – “Being professional in a workplace.” (Sixth Form) “Basic behaviours are needed and development is required, across really all curriculum areas.” (FE)
- **Communication skills** – “They all snapchat each other, they don’t communicate in other ways...They need those oracy skills, the ability to talk confidently to others and present.” (Sixth Form) “Young people can often not be able to express the skills that they do have.” (FE)
- **English and Maths at the required level** – “They come to us in September and we do an initial assessment of them. We’ve seen them below entry 3 in English and Maths, so the gap to the desired GCSE level is absolutely massive...we’ve got to do something significant on English and Maths, otherwise it is going to get a bigger and bigger problem.” (HE)
- **Learner reflection on skills they have developed, and skills they need to work at.**
- **Employability Passports were referenced as a way to document employability skills and a plea made for a Greater Lincs-wide Passport, with common standards and common currency** – “I think it would be really good if we all worked on the same Passport that was endorsed by employers., learners could show this at interview.” (Sixth Form) “I would completely agree the Skills Passport piece and we did that previously in the West Midlands.” (FE)

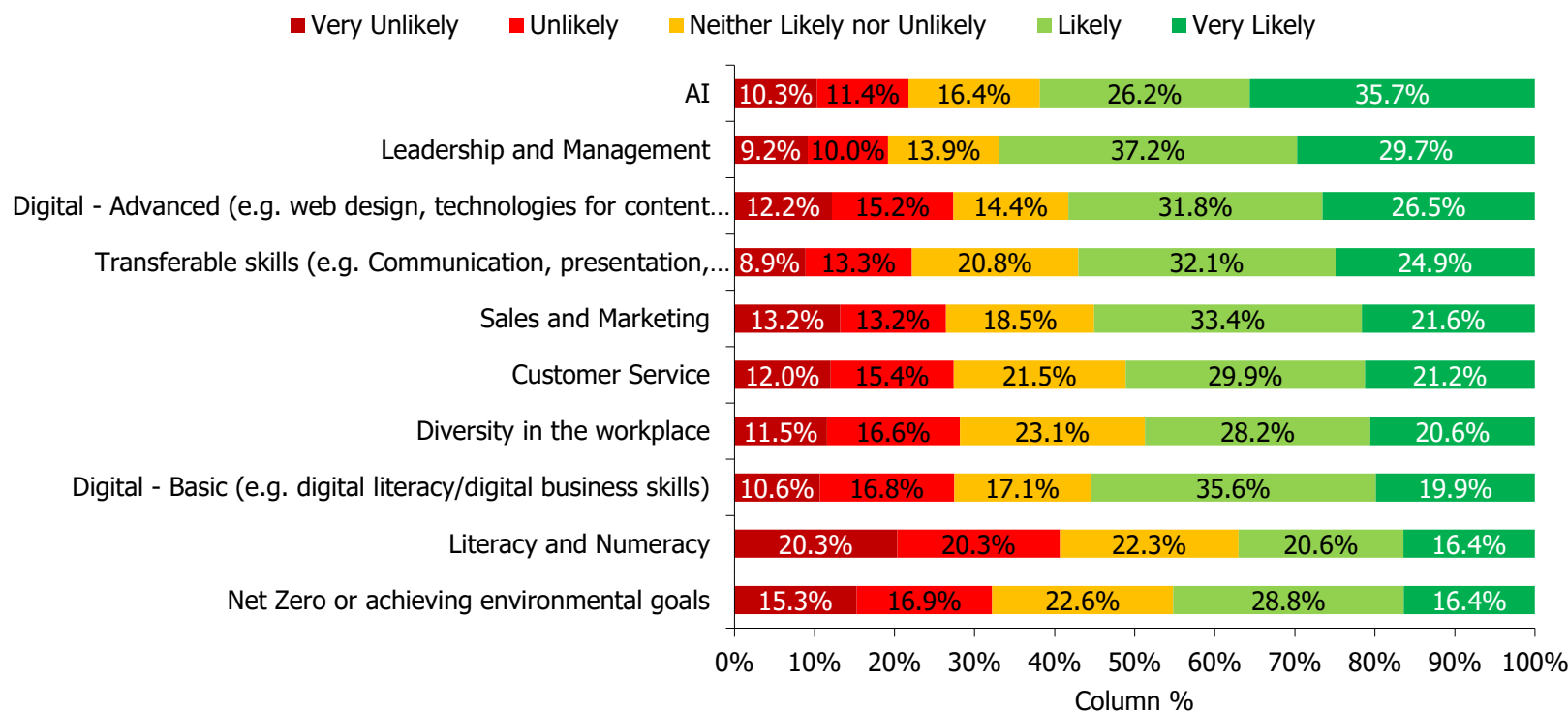
At HE level, there was also a feeling that the preparedness of First Year undergraduates to develop into **independent learners** during their time studying at university, had diminished over the years.

16.0 Future intent on cross-cutting skill areas

Future intent | Well over a third of Employers indicated that they were 'Very Likely' to source external training relating to AI (36%), with the next most widespread strong intent for L&M (30%) and then Digital – Advanced (26%).

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Please indicate how likely or unlikely it is that your organisation will seek to source external training in each of the cross cutting skill areas listed below, over the next 3 years.

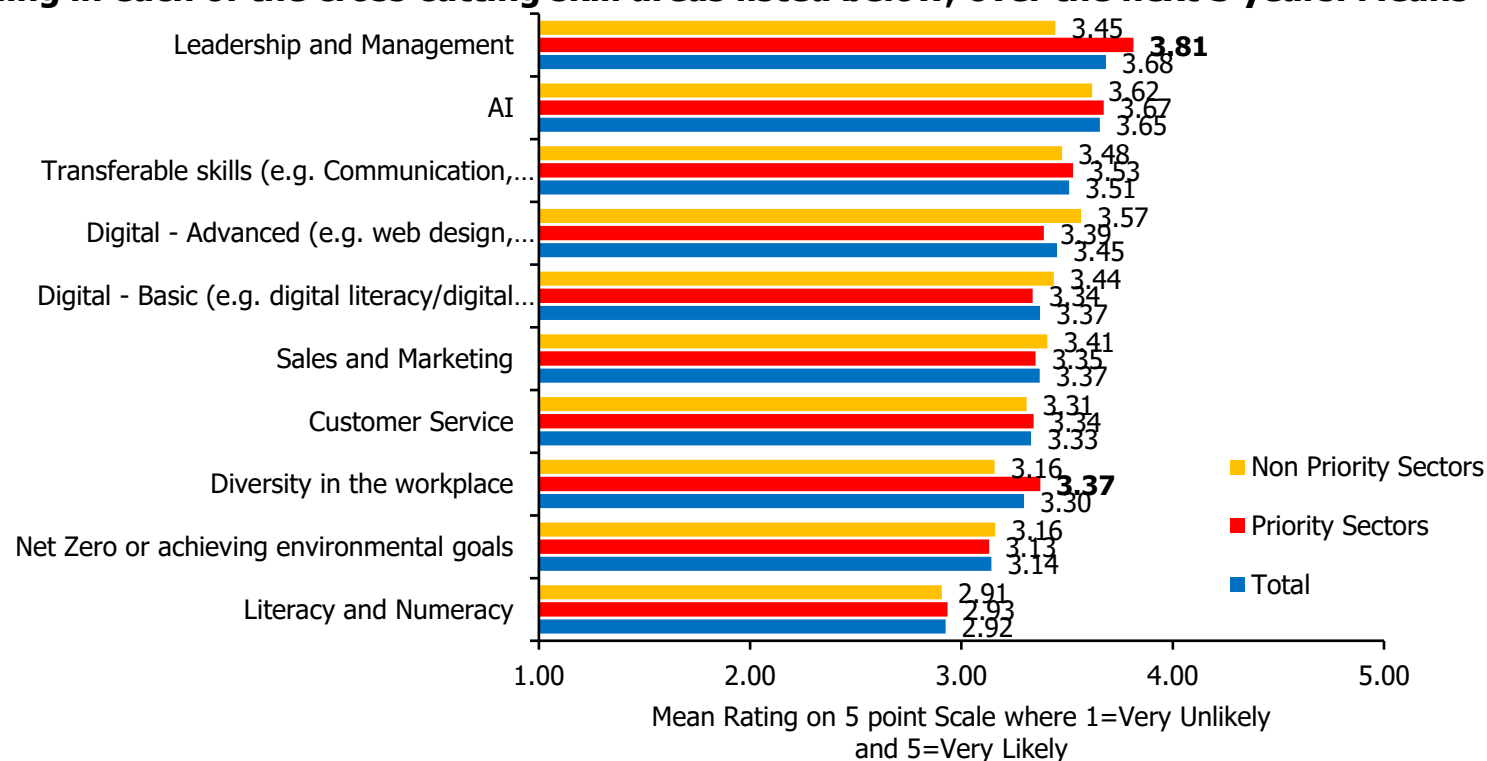


Base: Net Zero or achieving environmental goals (n=354), AI (n=359), Digital - Basic (e.g. digital literacy/digital business skills) (n=357), Digital - Advanced (e.g. web design, technologies for content creation) (n=362), Leadership and Management (n=360), Customer Service (n=358), Literacy and Numeracy (n=359), Sales and Marketing (n=356), Transferable skills (e.g. Communication, presentation, teamwork, etc) (n=361), Diversity in the workplace (n=355), Sample Size = Variable

Future intent | The ranked mean demand profiles among employers are quite similar between Priority and Non-Priority, the former has slightly more appetite for: L&M and Diversity in the workplace.

361

Please indicate how likely or unlikely it is that your organisation will seek to source external training in each of the cross cutting skill areas listed below, over the next 3 years. Means



Base: Literacy and Numeracy (n=359), Net Zero or achieving environmental goals (n=354), Diversity in the workplace (n=355), Customer Service (n=358), Sales and Marketing (n=356), Digital - Basic (e.g. digital literacy/digital business skills) (n=357), Digital - Advanced (e.g. web design, technologies for content creation) (n=362), Transferable skills (e.g. Communication, presentation, teamwork, etc) (n=361), AI (n=359), Leadership and Management (n=360), Sample Size = Variable

17.0 Closing feedback

Is there any other feedback or input that you would like to provide regarding the skills and/or training that your organisation needs?

Advanced Manufacturing	At times the amount of training providers can be overwhelming and hard to understand who is best to go with.
Advanced Manufacturing	Colleges are not listening to employers.
Advanced Manufacturing	Focused on Fire & Security
Advanced Manufacturing	Getting more information
Advanced Manufacturing	Help us to develop our own training programmes.
Advanced Manufacturing	It would be helpful to have available external course details for 2-3 years as this would help with budget and training needs analysis planning
Advanced Manufacturing	lack of local resources
Advanced Manufacturing	Training organisations must prepare students for the work environment. Providing qualifications to people with marginal skills undermines the whole qualification value.
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	Training Courses used to subsidized and a very wide number of courses, now it is only limited to a few courses. Used to do a training plan over 2 years planned with trainers and money allocated accordingly
Construction	CITB Grant system needs simplifying, places like Gainsborough need better local training providers & Colleges need to be more flexible with days apprentices need to attend college/make better use of their site experiences as part of their course
Construction	Construction has an ageing workforce and more help is needed for business like opurs to fill the gaps, this need to come from senior Government as well as local.
Construction	In the future will need to find out how AI can benefit our company.
Construction	The pace of change is stiffening; CITB stopped grants with 30 days' notice. Apprenticeship assessment review is taking too long, and apprenticeships are 80:20, but colleges get all the funding, and say we have to produce skills evidence, not them!
Construction	TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN CONSTRUCTION AND ITS SERVICES SHOULD BE MORE VISABLE THAN IT IS CURRENTLY. AS A LONG ESTBLISHED COMPANY WE UNDERSTAND OUR TRAINING REQUIREMENTS AND WHERE TO FIND OUR TRAINERS
Digital and Technologies	Better communication about available training opportunities would help.
Digital and Technologies	CG Vision Cconsultancy is a new start-up business (less than 12 months operational), however it is built on significant prior experience designing and delivering Higher Education provision in areas such as Big Data and AI in Digital Marketing, alongside initial AI capability training across Greater Lincolnshire through Lincoln Be Smarter and Help to Grow Alumni workshops. The challenge is not capability or delivery readiness, it is access to early-stage funding pathways that enable new, specialist providers to participate in regional skills delivery at pace. To be able to access pilot funding, innovation pots, or co-delivery partnership models would allow new specialist organisations such as CGVC to demonstrate impact quickly, support regional priority sectors sooner, and strengthen the diversity and responsiveness of the local training ecosystem.
Digital and Technologies	Continuous Learning Culture Promoting a culture of continuous learning is crucial
Digital and Technologies	Ensure training is closely aligned within emerging industry needs, practical for day-to-day roles, and accessible locally or online to reach all employees.
Digital and Technologies	Friendly staffs and organizers
Digital and Technologies	Having taylor made modules that would work for each employee.
Digital and Technologies	I don't have any further comments to make for now
Digital and Technologies	I will say we need to provide more skills
Digital and Technologies	I'm okay with the ones available now
Digital and Technologies	Increased employer involvement in course design would improve relevance.
Digital and Technologies	More funding , flexible delivery, closer employer collaboration; improved awareness.
Digital and Technologies	More management training opportunities.
Digital and Technologies	The challenge I am currently working on is how to help each team member get an understanding of their role and what they need to do to get to the next level. I know they are keen to earn more but it's hard to find the right structure to communicate with them the skills they need to develop to reach the next level
Digital and Technologies	Training providers should engage more with local employers to understand needs.
Digital and Technologies	We would really value a more flexible, employer-led training system that helps people build practical, job-ready digital and professional skills, with clear pathways for progression and stronger links between training providers and employers.
Digital and Technologies	We would welcome more employer-led, flexible training pathways that focus on practical, industry-relevant skills and allow for rapid upskilling as technologies evolve. Greater integration between technical training, certifications, and real workplace application, along with clearer information on funding and support for upskilling existing staff, would significantly help organisations plan and invest in workforce development more effectively.
Digital and Technologies	Yes. In addition to the points already raised, we would welcome greater flexibility and responsiveness in training provision to reflect the pace at which technology and skills requirements are evolving. We would also value more employer-led course design, shorter modular programmes, and clearer progression pathways from entry-level to advanced technical skills.
Energy	Engineering skills
Health and Adult Social Care	Computing skills for senior staff
Health and Adult Social Care	Feedback loops for continuous improvement.
Health and Adult Social Care	I don't think so
Health and Adult Social Care	Interesting survey
Health and Adult Social Care	The important things had been mentioned.
Health and Adult Social Care	there is no other input.
Health and Adult Social Care	To meet the evolving needs of patients and support hospital-at-home services, our organisation requires a workforce with stronger clinical skills, enhanced safeguarding and dementia training, and greater digital competency. We would also welcome more locally available training pathways and funding support to make these upskilling opportunities accessible and sustainable.
Health and Adult Social Care	university of derby were a very good source of information and provided excellent material we so grateful
Health and Adult Social Care	We hope for a more diverse range of training content.
Professional and Business Services	How a small business can learn how to put a course online from start to finish with all marketing attached
Professional and Business Services	its very well implemented
Professional and Business Services	The reason I've answered don't know is I might be interested if a suitable course were available!
Professional and Business Services	Use local providers with good courses can be agile to meet needs of small businesses
Visitor Economy	There are high expectations to be able to offer training and improve skills, but there is less loyalty and ability to retain staff, so investing in developing team members is a risk and can be difficult to convince on return on investment

Is there any other feedback or input that you would like to provide regarding the skills and/or training that your organisation needs?

Non Priority Sectors	Asking for 3 year projections is difficult because of constant changing landscape.
Non Priority Sectors	Courses taught at university and college are not relevant to the requirements of the area and the needs of the businesses; this is a vicious circle that leads to young people moving out of Lincoln because they don't feel the right jobs are here, but really the colleges and universities should be working backwards - but it does not make economical sense for the universities and colleges to do so if young people are fixated on an unachievable dream that is not only letting the county down; but the country down. The incentives everywhere need to be conjoined to add real value as a whole to the economy and look to becoming more circular, rather than scoring points in isolation.
Non Priority Sectors	Ejeh
Non Priority Sectors	Faster access to emerging skills training is needed.
Non Priority Sectors	I hope things get better for the skills shortage soon.
Non Priority Sectors	I think it's a serious issue.
Non Priority Sectors	I would like to see more localised grants to train people to become post-16 trainers/teachers/instructors
Non Priority Sectors	It would be beneficial to have more flexible training options that cater to shift workers and smaller businesses, as it's often challenging to release staff for training during standard hours. More emphasis on practical, on-the-job training would also be really valuable
Non Priority Sectors	It would be good if local training opportunities were easy to find out about online: like in a directory
Non Priority Sectors	Marketing and social media and how to become better with technology
Non Priority Sectors	More help
Non Priority Sectors	Requires online training platform upgrade to provide in house online training. Engagement and communication training is very much needed.
Non Priority Sectors	Skills gaps are definitely within people skills, subject specific knowledge is strong. Specifically dealing with difficult conversations and transitions from team roles to managerial roles
Non Priority Sectors	Soft skills training improves client communication
Non Priority Sectors	Staff need guidance on integrating new systems with existing processes
Non Priority Sectors	Stop in-house training
Non Priority Sectors	The should help to provide support to organisations to enable them fund cost of skills acquisition to employee's.
Non Priority Sectors	Too many youngsters going to university, youngsters lacking social skills
Non Priority Sectors	we would benefit from more locally available, industry specific training in emerging technologies and digital skills to keep our workforce competitive

18.0 Summary of findings by Priority Sector

Priority Sector	Situation and underlying issues	Mode recruitment intent over the next 3 years	Key Skills Shortages referenced in the Focus Groups – current and <i>future</i>	Top 3 Priority Occupations from the Survey over the next 3 years	Technical Skills and <i>Soft Skills</i> Gaps – spontaneously mentioned in the Group
Advanced Manufacturing	- Ageing workforce: cohort retiring or getting close to doing so. - More fragmented and smaller entities reduces sector profile - Lack of appreciation of the centrality and immediacy of what the sector does - Structural risk for the UK economy, if Manufacturing decays due to skill shortages	11-20	- Senior Engineering Technicians and Professionals <i>Future successors as Business Owners and Leaders particularly in Micros</i> - Instrumentation and Control (I&C) Engineers - Electronic Engineers <i>AI, Robotics and Automation</i>	1. Engineering Professionals 2. Engineering Technicians 3. Production Managers and Directors in Manufacturing 3. Electricians and Electrical Fitters	- Technical fundamentals were felt to be missing at entry level - Duplicating supplier training to contain cost and maximise autonomy and control - Systems integration skills - People Management <i>Communication and interpersonal skills</i>

Priority Sector	Situation and underlying issues	Mode recruitment intent over the next 3 years	Key Skills Shortages referenced in the Focus Groups – current and <i>future</i>	Top 3 Priority Occupations from the Survey over the next 3 years	Technical Skills and <i>Soft Skills</i> Gaps – spontaneously mentioned in the Group
Agri-Tech and Food Manufacturing	- Declining education and training pipeline - Low awareness and misconceptions of the sector – seen as less skilled than it now is - Ageing workforce and loss of heritage skills - Competition from other higher-paying sectors for more technical roles - Limited industry and education coordination - High costs of recruitment, training and entry wage pressures - Difficulty attracting and retaining young talent - Transport and mobility challenges	2-5	- General agricultural roles - Pig livestock roles - Maintenance Engineers - Seafood technical functions, e.g. Quality Assurance <i>Fish filleting and hand-skill heritage craft roles</i> <i>AI/software/tech roles for agritech</i> <i>Robotics-enabled Agri-Tech roles</i>	1. Farm Workers 2. Agricultural and Fishing Trades 2. Farmers 2. Routine Inspectors and Testers 2. Warehouse Operatives	- Data literacy and analytics - Digital system integration - Use of automation and agri-tech - Digital record-keeping - Engineering and technical operator skills - Refrigeration and energy engineering - Leadership and management - Food safety and compliance <i>Problem-solving and critical thinking</i> <i>Adaptability and learning agility</i> <i>Communication and collaboration</i>

Priority Sector	Situation and underlying issues	Mode recruitment intent over the next 3 years	Key Skills Shortages referenced in the Focus Groups – current and <i>future</i>	Top 3 Priority Occupations from the Survey over the next 3 years	Technical Skills and <i>Soft Skills</i> Gaps – spontaneously mentioned in the Group
Construction	- Irregular work and lack of security - Generational differences and COVID impacts - Unrealistic pay expectations of new entrants - Compliance burden and credential creep - Academic options promoted over trade skills in Secondary Education - Rural access barriers	2-5	- Line managers - Labourers and off loaders - Estimators and Quantity Surveyors - Drivers - Heritage and traditional trades - Town planners - Groundworkers - Multi trade operatives - Plant maintenance engineers <i>Ventilation, electrical and digital hybrid roles</i>	- Construction and Building Trades - Groundworkers - Construction and Building Trades Supervisors	- Estimating and commercial awareness - Digital systems skills - AI and automation basics - Plan reading and site layout for new starters - Multi trade competence in Micros - Compliance administration <i>Communication,</i> <i>Professionalism and workplace behaviour</i> <i>Initiative</i> <i>Problem-solving</i> <i>independent thinking</i> <i>Adaptability</i> <i>Resilience</i>

Priority Sector	Situation and underlying issues	Mode recruitment intent over the next 3 years	Key Skills Shortages referenced in the Focus Groups – current and <i>future</i>	Top 3 Priority Occupations from the Survey over the next 3 years	Technical Skills and <i>Soft Skills</i> Gaps – spontaneously mentioned in the Group
Defence	• Ageing workforce and shrinking ex-military talent pipeline into the supply chain • Competition for the same limited talent pool among supply chain companies in Lincoln area • Attracting more senior people to Lincolnshire - the location and perception of it can prove to be a challenge • Contracted services pay too low to attract talent • Work-from-home expectations conflicting with operational needs • Security clearance barriers limiting recruitment, particularly to low paid support and contract roles	Base too low	Core and frontline: • Pilots & Weapon Systems Operators • Licensed Engineers / Aircraft Engineers Key operational roles: • Cybersecurity Engineers • IT/Software Engineers (Mid-Senior, esp. C programmers) • Data Scientists / Data Analysts • Logistics / Drivers / Fuel & Ops Support • Health & Safety Professionals • Military Doctors and Medics • Language Specialists • Project Managers Support and contracted roles: • Governance / Compliance / Auditors • Infrastructure / Estates / Facilities Specialists • Welfare Officers / HIVE Hub / Community Support Roles • Chefs & Catering Staff • Hospitality / Accommodation / Hotel Management • Cleaning / Real Life Support Roles	Base too low	• Leadership and People Management • Wider expertise in data analysis • Security Awareness and Risk Management • Environmental Awareness and Management • Geo-political and economic awareness • Decision-Making • Critical Thinking • Multi-Specialist Collaborative Problem-solving • <i>Communication skills in multiple settings</i> • <i>Psychological work-readiness</i>

Priority Sector	Situation and underlying issues	Mode recruitment intent over the next 3 years	Key Skills Shortages referenced in the Focus Groups – current and <i>future</i>	Top 3 Priority Occupations from the Survey over the next 3 years	Technical Skills and <i>Soft Skills</i> Gaps – spontaneously mentioned in the Group
Digital and Tech	• Education not keeping pace with industry needs • Lack of work readiness and soft skills • Rapid technological change outpacing workforce capability • Industry preference for experienced mid-level talent over juniors • Insufficient exposure to real-world tools, data and commercial context for new entrants, even at graduate level • Limited local talent pipelines for specialised or emerging roles • Rising expectations for digital literacy across <u>all</u> roles	11-20	• Mid-level Software Developers • AI-literacy roles • Code review capability • IT Project Managers • Compliance/commercial administrators • Junior-level digital roles in Public Sector • <i>Advanced AI and automation specialists</i> • <i>Cybersecurity and secure-coding professionals</i> • <i>Data, data engineering and data visualisation specialists</i> • <i>AI governance, compliance and implementation roles</i> • <i>AI adoption, change management and digital confidence roles</i> • <i>Human centred skills: communication, soft skills & human-AI interface</i> • <i>Emerging tech roles (quantum, drones, immersive tech)</i> • <i>Specialist healthcare technology roles (robotics, AI enabled clinical tech)</i>	1. Cyber Security Professionals 2. Programmers and Software Development Professionals 3. CAD, Drawing and Architectural Technicians NB SOC derived occupation names are lagging rapid change in the sector	• Keeping pace with emerging technologies • Subject matter expertise in technology implementation • Applied digital marketing and AI related skills • Lifelong learning capability • Commercial awareness and business acumen • <i>Cultural intelligence and cross organisation communication</i> • <i>Storytelling and communicating impact</i> • <i>Independent learning</i> • <i>Basic life and financial literacy skills</i>

Priority Sector	Situation and underlying issues	Mode recruitment intent over the next 3 years	Key Skills Shortages referenced in the Focus Groups – current and <i>future</i>	Top 3 Priority Occupations from the Survey over the next 3 years	Technical Skills and <i>Soft Skills</i> Gaps – spontaneously mentioned in the Group
Energy	• An ageing workforce in engineering • Very long project lead times that are reliant upon planning consent being granted • Rapid growth in offshore wind in the UK drives a very general need • Generating new energy sources from new processing operations does not have an existing resourcing model to follow • Urgent requirements for very high volumes in a particular trade, for a very short contracted period on huge projects • Fluctuations in major projects can create short term scarcity in Senior Managers • The sector continues to suffer from diversity challenges • The Energy Sector can sometimes be in direct competition with the Marine and Ports & Logistics Sectors for the same skills	Base too low	Hard to find specialisms: • Electrical Design Engineers • Advanced Control Specialists • Instrumentation Design Technicians • Rigging Specialists • High Voltage Electricians • Senior Authorised Persons (SAP) • Business Development Managers (BDMs with industry knowledge and connections) • Data Analysis and Digital specialists High volume demand: • Welders (particularly in relation to transport and storage) • Pipe fitters • Mechanical fitters • Platers • Electricians <i>New and emerging roles:</i> • <i>Plasma Physics</i> • <i>Fusion Engineering</i> • <i>Magnet Science</i> • <i>Superconducting Engineering</i> • <i>Clean Energy Plant Operations</i> • <i>Commissioning</i> • <i>Technically complex Project Management</i>	Base too low	• AI integration • Leadership skills • Technology savvy • Acceleration to productive working for new entrants, even at graduate level • <i>Communication skills</i> • <i>Problem solving skills</i>

Priority Sector	Situation and underlying issues	Mode recruitment intent over the next 3 years	Key Skills Shortages referenced in the Focus Groups – current and <i>future</i>	Top 3 Priority Occupations from the Survey over the next 3 years	Technical Skills and <i>Soft Skills</i> Gaps – spontaneously mentioned in the Group
Health and Adult Social Care	• Rising demand from an ageing population • Low rates of pay and negative perceptions of the sector • Reduced access to international recruitment • Widespread inability to drive, combined with a poor public transport infrastructure makes recruitment much harder in rural Greater Lincolnshire • Low morale and high burnout • 16-17 year-olds not having any clear pathway, at that age, into starting their training for a career in Social Work	21-30 Probably Private Sector >100 Probably Public Sector	• Senior Care Workers • Care Co-ordinators • Deputy Managers • Social Workers • Newly-qualified Pharmacists with Management skills • Relief Pharmacists & Pharmacy Technicians • Medicine Counter Assistants in pharmacy • <i>AI specialist expertise – understanding how to apply it to best effect</i>	1. Care Workers and Home Carers 2. Senior Care Workers 3. Registered Nurse Practitioners	• Ventilation care and monitoring for Home Care services • Clinical awareness below Nursing-level, particularly around incontinence and skin health • More nurses with equal competence in co-morbidities in the elderly • Greater depth and greater importance placed upon Mental Health Awareness • Logistics (in Home Care) • Level 2 Pharmacy Assistant training delivered locally • Data and digital skills - both basic and intermediate for analysis • Technical writing skills • <i>Conflict management and resolution</i>

Priority Sector	Situation and underlying issues	Mode recruitment intent over the next 3 years	Key Skills Shortages referenced in the Focus Groups – current and <i>future</i>	Top 3 Priority Occupations from the Survey over the next 3 years	Technical Skills and <i>Soft Skills</i> Gaps – spontaneously mentioned in the Group
Professional and Business Services	• Location and low pay competitiveness • Lack of early work experience / workplace readiness • Cultural and generational gaps in expectations on progression and rewards • Lack of practical training in education	2-5	• Credit controllers • Lawyers/solicitors • HR professionals with sector specific experience • <i>Customer service roles</i> • <i>Call-centres and phone-based roles</i> • <i>Management and leadership roles</i>	1. Book-keepers, Payroll Managers and Wages Clerks 2. Business and Financial Project Management Professionals 3. Sales Accounts and Business Development Managers NB 38% of survey participants answered that 'None' of the roles would be hard or very hard to recruit over the next 3 years; the highest proportion across the Priority Sectors.	• Digital skills • Online learning literacy • Data analysis and storytelling • Cyber security • People management • Customer service mindset • <i>Work readiness and professionalism</i> • <i>Communication skills</i> • <i>Resilience and confidence</i>

Priority Sector	Situation and underlying issues	Mode recruitment intent over the next 3 years	Key Skills Shortages referenced in the Focus Groups – current and <i>future</i>	Top 3 Priority Occupations from the Survey over the next 3 years	Technical Skills and <i>Soft Skills</i> Gaps – spontaneously mentioned in the Group
Visitor Economy	- Poor perception of industry conditions - Declining talent pipelines and reduced training availability - Competition from remote, higher-paid professional roles - Fear of instability due to closures and economic uncertainty - Low candidate motivation or work readiness - Rurality and transport barriers - Lack of security, casual or fragmented roles in the creative and technical arts - Retention is weak without clear development pathways.	2-5 and >100 Divergent mix of entities by size.	- Chefs - High-level skilled hospitality staff - Strategic-level marketing, comms and brand professionals - Sales manager for specialist products - Technical roles in visual and performing arts - Receptionists with hotel experience and shift flexibility - Front-of-house management - Operations/venue operations staff - Safeguarding, compliance & safety roles in creative and venue settings	- Chefs - Waiters and Waitresses - Cooks	- AI skills and creative technology adoption - Digital and creative technology skills (including backstage tech) - Digital marketing, CRM, SEO and social media - Cyber security awareness - Technical budgeting and data/evaluation skills - Compliance, safeguarding and legislative knowledge - Customer service quality and complaint handling - People skills and interpersonal confidence - Multitasking and prioritisation



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