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The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2005 Main Report

A report prepared by the Skills Unit, Research and Evaluation Branch,
Department for Employment and Learning

November 2007



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Based on the results of a survey carried out by Central Survey Unit, NISRA,
between June to November 2005

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Once again, the support of the administrative team within Research and Evaluation Branch has proved most helpful.

Skills Unit
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary and Conclusions

The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2005 was designed to provide a comprehensive snapshot of current skills needs of Northern Ireland employers in non-agricultural sectors. The primary purpose of this survey was to update the findings of the survey conducted in 2002 and therefore we now have some useful comparisons over time. The survey provides an overview of issues connected with skill shortages, skill gaps and training from an employer's perspective. Of particular interest are those areas where recruitment difficulties are related to external skill shortages and therefore subject to a 'skills' solution.

The last fifteen years have seen a marked improvement in the NI economy from a previous position of high unemployment and slow GDP and employment growth. In making comparisons with the survey conducted in 2002 there has been a decrease in the proportion of employers reporting vacancies, difficult to fill vacancies, skill shortage vacancies and skills gaps. These measures vary by occupational group and by industrial sector. Clearly some sectors are experiencing recruitment difficulties to a greater extent than others.

Employers displayed their commitment to on-the-job training, although the proportion of employers providing off-the-job training has declined since 2002. Again these measures vary by occupational group and by industrial sector. The majority of employers who did not provide training stated that their reason for doing so was 'staff have sufficient skills to do their job.' Employers tend to be aware of skill gaps within their workforce and appear to have been pro-active in taking appropriate action in provision of training.

Finally employers across sectors are consistent in reporting difficulty in filling vacancies due to non-skills related issues. These results would indicate that some employers may be failing to attract staff because of either reasons related to the job (e.g. long and unsocial hours) or reasons related to the potential workforce (e.g. a lack of work-readiness skills including poor attitudes and motivation).

BULLET POINT FINDINGS

Employee turnover

- Employee turnover for all businesses interviewed was 13%. This is lower than the average NI employee turnover calculated from the 2002 survey (16%).
- Turnover was slightly higher for small employers with between 5-10 employees (16%).
- Across all industrial sectors, employee turnover was highest in the Hotels and Restaurants sector (21%).

Current vacancies

- Overall, 11% of employers reported that they had at least one vacancy for which they were trying to recruit people from the external labour market. This is a decrease on the 2002 figure of 16%.
- Larger employers with 50 or more staff were more likely to report a current vacancy (42%). Across all industrial sectors, Health and Social Care had the highest incidence of current vacancies (16%).
- The occupational group that accounted for the largest number of vacancies (24%) was Personal Service Occupations which included care assistants, classroom assistants and hairdressers.

Difficult to fill vacancies

- Overall 6% of employers reported at least one vacancy that was proving difficult to fill. The corresponding 2002 figure was 10%.
- Larger employers with 50 or more staff were more likely to report a current difficult to fill vacancy (19%).
- Across all industrial sectors, Financial Services had the highest incidence of difficult to fill vacancies with 9% of these businesses reporting recruitment difficulties.
- The occupational groups that were most frequently perceived to be difficult to fill were Personal Service as well as Elementary Occupations (both reporting 20%).
- The most frequently mentioned reasons for difficulty in filling these vacancies were that there were poor attitudes, motivation and personality (38%), not enough people interested (35%) and a lack of skills (31%).
- The **main** reasons given for difficulties in filling vacancies were a lack of skills (20%), not enough people interested in that type of work (20%) and poor attitudes, motivation and personality (12%).
- Difficulties in recruitment clearly had an impact on business. For 42% of difficult to fill vacancies, employers reported that not filling the vacancies caused a major impact on the business. Over half of difficult to fill vacancies (56%) caused difficulties in meeting customer service objectives and in a third of difficult to fill vacancies the company lost business or orders to other competitors (34%) or had difficulty meeting quality standards (33%).
- For more than half of the difficult to fill vacancies (54%), employers had not taken any additional measures to overcome their recruitment difficulties. Of the 46% of difficult to fill vacancies where measures were taken, the most frequently reported measures taken to overcome recruitment difficulties were to use a more extensive range of recruitment channels than normal (17%).

External skill shortages

- Overall, 34% of all difficult to fill vacancies were due to external skill shortages. External skill shortages were defined as those vacancies difficult to fill due to a lack of skills, a lack of qualifications required or a lack of the work experience that the employer required.
- For industrial sectors for which reliable estimates were possible, external skill shortages were more prevalent within Transport and Communication (63% of difficult to fill vacancies in that sector), Construction (53%), Business Services (51%) and Financial Services (46%).
- External skill shortages were most prevalent in Sales staff (72% of difficult to fill vacancies) as well as Managers and Senior Officials (67%).
- The most common skills reported by employers as lacking from applicants were other technical and practical skills (35% of external skill shortages), communication skills (30%) and customer handling skills (22% of skill shortage vacancies).
- Between 2002 and 2005, there has been a decrease in the rate of
 - current vacancies (from 2.5% in 2002 to 1.7% in 2005);
 - difficult to fill vacancies (from 1.5% to 0.9%) and
 - external skill shortages (from 0.5% to 0.3%).

Recruitment difficulties in the last year

- Of those employers who did not report a current vacancy at the time of the survey, 29% reported that they had had at least one vacancy for which they were trying to recruit people from the external labour market in the previous 12 months.
- Overall, 7% of these employers reported at least one vacancy that was proving difficult to fill in the previous 12 months. A higher proportion of larger employers with 50 or more staff reported difficult to fill vacancies in the previous year (21%). Across all industrial sectors, Hotels and Restaurants had the highest incidence of difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months with 10% of these businesses reporting recruitment difficulties.
- The most frequently mentioned reasons for difficulty in filling these vacancies were a lack of skills (39%), not enough people interested (32%) and poor attitudes, motivation and personality (28%).
- The **main** reasons given for difficulties in filling vacancies were lack of skills (16%), a low number of applicants generally (15%) and not enough people interested in this type of work (12%).
- Almost two out of every five vacancies in the previous 12 months (39%) were considered to be difficult to fill due to a lack of skills. For these vacancies, 60% of employers reported applicants lacked other technical and practical skills, followed by customer handling skills (36%) and management skills (31%).

Staff retention

- Overall, 7% of employers reported difficulties in retaining staff. Larger employers with 50 or more staff were much more likely to report difficulties in retaining staff (25%) as were those businesses in the Hotels and Restaurants sector (12%).
- The most frequently mentioned **main reasons** for retention difficulties were that there were not enough people interested (17%), that staff don't want long-term commitment (16%) as well as the impact of the benefits trap and long, unsocial hours (both 13%).
- For all employers, the overwhelming impact of the retention difficulties was that it placed more strain on the management of existing staff in covering the staff shortage (64%).
- 45% of employers with retention difficulties had not taken any measures to overcome their retention difficulties.

Skill gaps

- Skill gaps exist where there is a gap between an employee's current skill level and what is needed to meet work objectives. In 2005, 9% of employers considered there was a skill gap in their existing workforce. This is lower than the figure of 13% which was reported in the 2002 survey.
- Larger employers with 50 or more staff were more likely to report a skill gap (21%).
- The existence of skill gaps was most prevalent within Financial Services, Health and Social Care and Other Services (14% in each sector).
- Almost half of these employers considered the skill gap to have had a very significant (13%) or a significant effect (32%) on their ability to meet business objectives. One in ten (9%) employers reported the skill gap had no impact on the business.
- Those skills that were mentioned most often as requiring improvement in the workforce were customer-handling skills (40%), other technical and practical skills (40%) and communication skills (37%).
- For the majority of skill gaps (84%), employers took measures to overcome proficiency problems. The most frequently reported measure was to provide further training or development (59%).
- Skill gaps created difficulties in meeting customer service objectives (36% of employers) and difficulties in meeting required quality standards (29%).

Training

- One third of employers (34%) had organised some off-the-job training for their staff in the previous year. However, in 2002 42% of employers organised this type of training for staff.
- Almost two thirds of employers (63%) in both the Education sector as well as the Health and Social Care sector provided off-the-job training compared to only 17% of employers in the Hotels and Restaurants sector.
- The most frequently reported reason why employers had not provided off-the-job training was that their staff had sufficient skills to do their job (73%).
- The provision of off-the-job training was most prevalent among those staff working in Professional Occupations (76%), Personal Service Occupations (75%) and Associate Professional Occupations (74%).
- The largest proportion of off-the-job training was job specific (76%).
- The most frequently used source of off-the-job training was private sector training companies (46%) and FE Colleges (21%).
- Overall, 60% of employers said that they had provided on-the-job training to their staff in the previous year. In 2002, the same proportion of employers also provided this type of training (61%).
- On-the-job training was most prevalent in Education (78%), Health and Social Care (71%) and Financial Services (68%).
- The most frequently reported reason why employers had not provided on-the-job training was that their staff had sufficient skills to do their job (92%).
- Experienced staff (57%) delivered the largest proportion of on-the-job training followed by line managers or supervisors (45%).
- One third of employers provided on-the-job training only (34%) while 8% provided off-the-job training only. A quarter (26%) of employers provided both on-the-job and off-the-job training.
- One third of all employers (32%) did not provide any on-the-job or off-the-job training to their staff in the previous year.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 A Brief Summary of the NI Economy and Labour Market

Taking 1990 as the base year, the NI economy has been the fastest improving of any regional economy in the UK¹. This can be seen from the usual measures of economic performance:

Growth in gross value added (GVA)². GVA reflects the numbers of people employed and their productivity and is important because it broadly measures changes in the standard of living. Northern Ireland GVA grew some 1 percentage point per annum faster than the UK over the period 1990 - 2003. Over the 13 year period GVA grew by 50% in real terms in NI which exceeds the UK figure of 35%.

Growth in employment. In the period March 1990 to March 2005 employee jobs grew by 30% in NI compared to 9% for the UK as a whole. Between March 1996 and March 2005 employee growth was 20%, the strongest employment growth of any region including London. As a consequence the NI employment rate has risen since 1992 by 5 percentage points, from 63% to 68%; the UK rose by 4pp, from 71% to 75%.

Change in the numbers and percentage of the unemployed. In the period Spring 1992 to Spring 2005, numbers unemployed in NI fell by 58%, greater than the UK fall (-50%) and much better than Wales (-47%) and Scotland (-38%).

The characteristics of the NI Labour Market at the time of the survey may be summarized as opposite:

¹ For full report see DEL Labour Market Bulletin #19, Chapter 4 (www.delni.gov.uk)

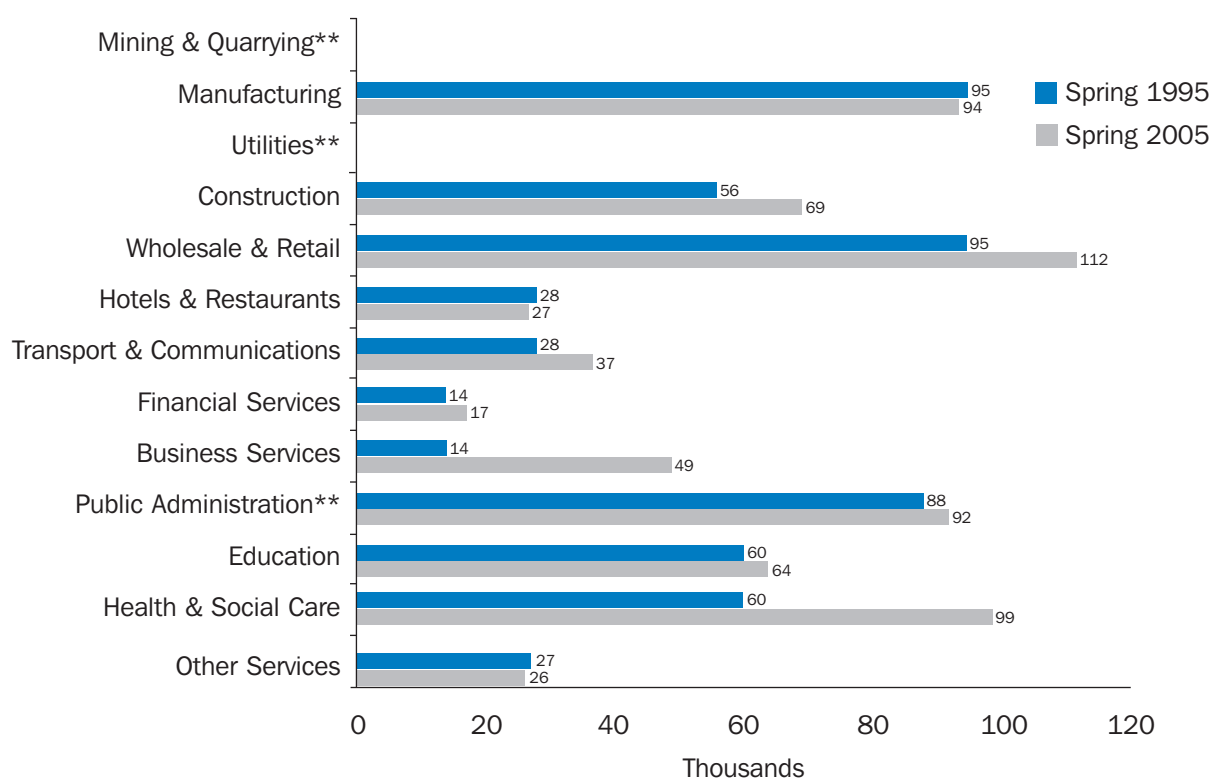
² The term gross value added (GVA) is used to denote estimates previously known as gross domestic product (GDP)

Figure 1. Selected key strengths and weaknesses in relation to the NI labour market

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Economy	Rapid recent economic growth underpinning labour market successes of recent years	But most recent forecast for UK and NI show perhaps a slowdown in growth over coming years
Labour Supply	<p>Increase in labour supply - NI has expanding workforce and this means that it will not experience a demographic downturn in medium term</p> <p>NI has a stream of relatively well educated young people entering the workforce with high participation in education and training</p> <p>Immigration to fill labour shortages</p>	<p>Increase in labour supply is also a potential weakness as number of jobs has to grow rapidly simply for NI to “stand still”</p> <p>Although NI young people do well there remains a group who have no or poor qualifications</p> <p>Some evidence of poor skills levels in existing workforce</p> <p>Outmigration of young people for HE</p> <p>Some evidence of skill shortages recruitment difficulties in some occupational areas</p> <p>Low levels of training in NI workplaces</p> <p>Relative lack of childcare restricting access to labour market</p>
Labour Demand	<p>Strongly rising employment - job growth has more than absorbed population growth recently</p> <p>Low labour costs - making people easier to employ</p> <p>Increasing productivity</p>	<p>Although rising labour demand throughout most of NI there are areas with proportionately fewer job opportunities</p> <p>Low pay - can depress the attractiveness of jobs to potential employees</p> <p>High dependence on public sector (around 30% of NI jobs cf 19% in GB)</p> <p>NI productivity still lags behind UK average</p>
Non-employment	Falling unemployment	<p>Pockets of high unemployment and non-employment especially in certain areas</p> <p>Persistently high levels of economic inactivity</p> <p>Some groups (e.g. disabled people, older workers) disproportionately excluded from the labour market</p>
Wider factors	<p>Relative normalisation of political situation</p> <p>Global economy and shocks (e.g. oil prices)</p>	<p>Lack of devolved administration/political uncertainty</p> <p>Global economy and shocks (e.g. oil prices)</p>

Over the period Spring 1995 to Spring 2005 it is estimated that the numbers in employment in all industries grew by 19%. The only reductions were in Manufacturing which fell by 1%, Hotels and Restaurants and Other Services which both fell by 4%. The greatest industrial change was in Business Services which grew by 250%. There was also growth in employment of 32% in Transport and Communications; 23% in Construction; and 21% in Financial Services.

Figure 2. Industrial change of the employed Spring 1995 to Spring 2005



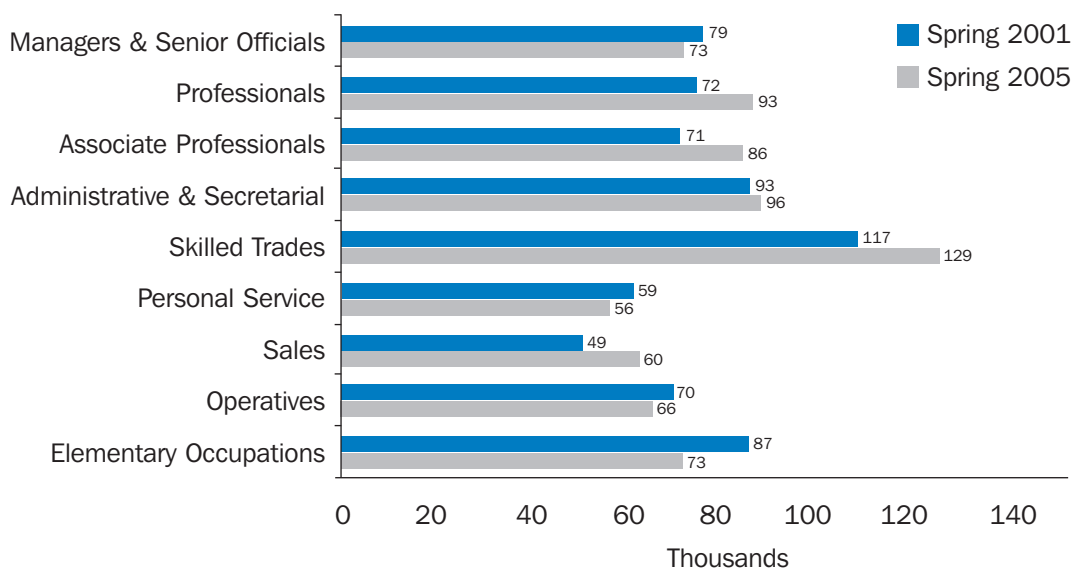
Source: Labour Force Survey, DETI

** Caution small numbers

Over the period Spring 2001³ to Spring 2005 it is estimated that the numbers in employment in all occupations grew by 5%. The greatest occupational change was in Professional Occupations (those occupations whose main tasks require a high level of knowledge and experience in natural sciences, engineering, life sciences, social sciences, humanities and related fields) which grew by 29%. There was also growth in employment of 22% in Sales and Customer Service Occupations; 21% in Associate Professional and Technical Occupations; and 10% in Skilled Trades.

³ Starting in Spring 2001 the new occupational classification system, SOC2000, was introduced. This makes comparisons with previous years - which were classified under SOC90 less reliable.

Figure 3. Occupational change of the employed Spring 2001 to Spring 2005



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETI

In summary, the last fifteen years have seen a marked improvement in the NI economy from a previous position of high unemployment and slow GDP and employment growth. These economic changes are reflected in a changed labour market where employers are finding increasing competition for labour but are also able to draw on an increasingly well educated workforce. However, despite educational improvements there have been frequent reports of 'skill shortages' although the slowdown in the world and national economies has meant a slight easing in NI.

1.2 Background to the Study

The NI Skills Monitoring Survey 2005 is the third in a series of surveys and is designed to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the current skill needs of NI employers in the non-agricultural sectors. The first survey in 2000 focused on private sector employers⁴ and the 2002 survey was extended to include the public sector⁵.

Employers responded to the surveys on a range of skills-related measures including:

- The nature and extent of current vacancies;
- The nature and extent of current vacancies proving difficult to fill;
- Projection of recruitment difficulties in the next 12 months;
- Staff retention difficulties;
- Skill gaps within the existing workforce; and
- Training.

⁴ For main report see <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-stats/skills-reports/northern-ireland-skills-monitoring-survey-2000.htm>.

⁵ For main report see <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-stats/skills-reports/northern-ireland-skills-monitoring-survey-2002.htm>.

In 2003, DEL commissioned Economic Research and Evaluation (ERE) to undertake a comparative analysis of the findings from a selection of the Skills Surveys undertaken in each of the five 'home' countries (England, Scotland, Wales, ROI and NI). Following on from this research, ERE recommended a set of harmonised questions to be included in each of the regional surveys⁶.

The primary purpose of the NI Skills Monitoring Survey 2005 is to update the findings of the survey conducted in 2002 and therefore we now have some useful comparisons over time. The same survey methodology was followed as before with the inclusion of a section on recruitment difficulties in the previous 12 months. Some of Economic and Research Evaluations recommendations (from the harmonisation project) were also included in the questionnaire.

In particular the key objectives of the survey were to:

- Provide robust estimates of the current level of vacancies and difficult to fill vacancies as an indication of demand for skills from all NI employers;
- To provide comparisons with the 2002 Survey;
- To highlight areas of skill shortages and skill gaps which might be amenable to a 'skills' solution; and
- To highlight areas of concern that might merit more detailed investigation.

In addition, it is possible to compare the findings of the NI Skills Monitoring Survey 2005 with other countries. Similar monitoring surveys have been conducted in England (2005), Wales (2005) and Scotland (2004). Where relevant data is available, figures are quoted in this report by way of comparison.

Central Survey Unit (CSU) of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) was commissioned to conduct the survey.

The questionnaire was developed as a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) questionnaire. CSU contacted a random sample of 6,871 businesses selected from the British Telecom Business Database throughout NI. A panel of 70 interviewers was involved in the survey, with all interviews conducted by telephone.

Interviewing began on 13th June 2005 and finished on 11th November 2005. In total, productive interviews were obtained at 4,126 businesses with a response rate of 70%.

⁶ *Towards a Harmonised Skills Monitoring Survey. Feedback Report. Economic Research and Evaluation. February 2005. (www.delni.gov.uk/harmonisedfeedbackreport).*

To provide comprehensive coverage of businesses both by sector and company size, the sample for the survey was a disproportionately stratified sample. It was necessary to construct weights to adjust the data to reflect the composition of the Business Database population as a whole. Unless stated otherwise, all base numbers are un-weighted and all percentage estimates are weighted.

As the NI Skills Monitoring Survey is an employer survey, it does not include the self-employed (sole trader) workforce. This has a differential effect upon different sectors, for example, Construction and Agriculture. For this reason, as well as the risk of survey fatigue due to similar surveys being carried out by DARD, Agriculture was excluded from the current survey.

This report details the main findings of the survey. The terms 'employer' and 'business' are used interchangeably throughout this report. As the survey was establishment based, information was collated on an individual basis irrespective of whether the site formed part of a larger organisation.

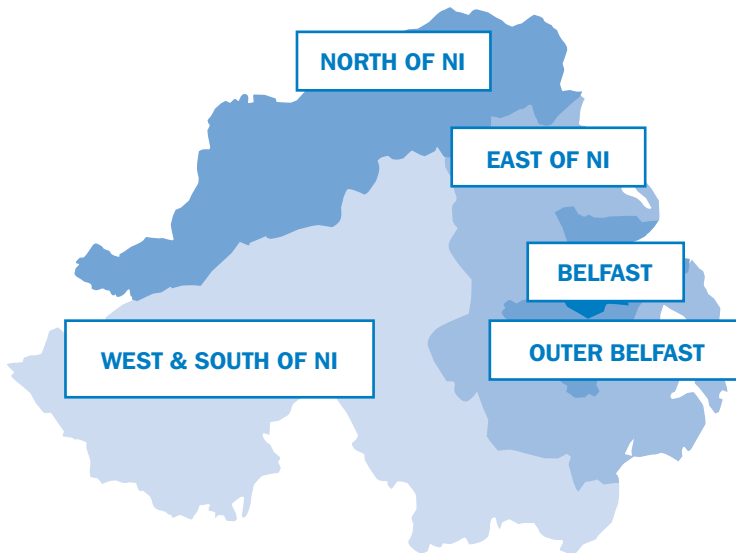
Tables are included detailing similarities and differences between businesses of different sizes and different industrial sectors. Given that there is likely to be considerable interest in detailed results for individual industrial sectors and occupational groups, tables are presented in full. However even with a large initial sample it is inevitable that certain measures will be based on a small number of responses. These are clearly marked and the reader is asked to exercise caution in interpreting these findings and treat them as indicative only. For this reason, throughout the text, discussion excludes those sectors with small sample bases.

Analysis is also provided for areas within Northern Ireland. To allow for reliable estimates to be made at a sub-Northern Ireland level, District Councils have been aggregated into NUTS III (Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics) which is a European Commission classification of sub-national areas.

The following map outlines Northern Ireland NUTS III areas which are comprised as shown below:

NUTS III Region	Constituent District
Belfast	Belfast
Outer Belfast	Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn Newtownabbey, North Down
East of NI	Antrim, Ards, Ballymena, Banbridge, Craigavon, Down, Larne
North of NI	Ballymoney, Coleraine, Londonderry, Limavady, Moyle, Strabane
West & South of NI	Armagh, Cookstown, Dungannon, Fermanagh, Magherafelt, Newry & Mourne, Omagh

Figure 4. Northern Ireland NUTS III regions



Notes on tables

- 1 Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
- 2 A percentage estimate of less than 0.5 is recorded as 0%.
- 3 Where no cases have been recorded for a cell a '-' is inserted.
- 4 Unless stated otherwise, all base numbers are un-weighted and all percentage estimates weighted.
- 5 Where the base cell is less than 100, the reader is asked to treat the results with caution.
- 6 Percentages will sum to more than 100 for multiple response questions.
- 7 Base numbers may vary slightly as responses of 'don't know' and 'refusal' have been excluded from analysis.

Some Useful Definitions

Recruitment Difficulties - where an employer is unable to fill current vacancies from the external labour market. Most recruitment difficulties are not true skill shortages.

Skill Deficiencies

One of two kinds:

Skill Shortage - those difficult to fill vacancies that are attributed by employers to one of the following causes; lack of skills, lack of qualifications, lack of work experience.

Skill Gap - where there is a gap between an employee's current skill level and what is needed to meet work objectives.

2.0 BUSINESSES INTERVIEWED, TURNOVER OF STAFF AND VACANCIES REPORTED

2.1 Introduction

In order to facilitate detailed analysis of questions included in the NI Skills Monitoring Survey, it was necessary to collect background information relating to each employer and their business. Sufficient information was collected to assist calculation of staff turnover.

This chapter also examines the current vacancies reported by employers. Respondents were asked a number of questions regarding vacancies that they had at the time of interview.

2.2 Details of employers interviewed

Some information about the businesses selected for the survey was obtained from the BT Business Database (refer to **Chapter 9** for technical details of the survey). This included the industrial sector of the business and the number of employees (banded) as well as address details.

The interviewer's first task on contacting a business was to confirm the name and address details with the respondent to ensure that they were at the right site. The interviewer then asked to speak to the person responsible for managing the staff resources at that site. As a first step in the interview, details relating to the nature and makeup of the business were collected before discussing the issues of vacancies and staff recruitment, retention and perceived skill gaps among the existing workforce.

In total, interviews were obtained with 4,126 employers. **Table 1** shows a breakdown of these business units by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and number of employees (see **Appendix 2** for a detailed description of the industrial sectors included in the survey).

Table 1. Industrial sector of businesses interviewed by size of employer

Industrial Sector	All Employers	1-4 Employees	5-10 Employees	11-49 Employees	50+ Employees	No of businesses interviewed in each industrial sector
	%	%	%	%	%	Units per sector
Mining & Quarrying	0	0	1	1	0	17
Manufacturing	17	17	16	18	16	700
Utilities	0	1	0	0	1	18
Construction	6	5	6	6	5	229
Wholesale & Retail	19	17	17	21	19	784
Hotels & Restaurants	4	3	5	4	7	181
Transport & Communications	8	10	11	6	5	324
Financial Services	3	4	4	3	1	135
Business Services	11	14	10	11	8	456
Public Administration	2	1	2	3	1	74
Education	8	4	5	7	19	339
Health & Social Care	11	9	13	10	14	456
Other Services	10	15	11	10	3	413
Base = 100%	4126	1044	735	1506	841	

2.3 Who were interviewed?

On contacting the employer, the interviewer asked to speak to the person who was responsible for staff at that site. In one third (32%) of interviews, the owner of the business responded to the survey. One quarter (24%) of the interviews were conducted with the Personnel or Human Resources Manager. **Table 2** shows the distribution of the positions held by respondents within their respective businesses.

Table 2. Position of respondent within each business

Position within company	All Employers %
Owner/Chairman/MD/Partner/Head of Agency or Branch/Headmaster/Principal	32
Director/Manager of Personnel/Human Resources/Recruitment/Staff Officer	24
General/Site/Factory/Works Director or Manager/EOI	10
Administration/Office Director or Manager/EOII	17
Finance Director/Manager/Accountant/Company Secretary	4
Training Director/Manager	1
Other Departmental Director/Manager	3
Senior secretary	3
Other	6
Base = 100%	4125

2.4 Employee Turnover

Employee turnover is an important indicator when considering wider issues such as recruitment difficulties and skill shortages. A high level of employee turnover may be related to factors such as low wages or unattractive working conditions; or to a high concentration of casual or seasonal workers. Conversely high turnover may be related to a high level of demand for skills where workers are induced to change employers in a wages 'merry-go-round'. Whatever the reason, a high level of turnover can affect employee's productivity through increased recruitment costs and the loss of experienced personnel.

To enable an assessment of employee turnover, employers were asked for -

- The number of new recruits they had taken on over the last 12 months
- The number of employees that had left in the last 12 months
- The number of employees 12 months previously
- The number of current employees

It is possible from these responses to calculate the level of employee turnover in the past 12 months, using the formula -

$$\% \text{ employee turnover} = \frac{100 \times (\text{number of new recruits} + \text{number of leavers})}{2 \times \text{number of employees 12 months ago}}$$

The average employee annual turnover between 2004 and 2005 was 13%. This is lower than the rate of 16% calculated from the findings of the NI Skills Monitoring Survey conducted in 2002.

Employee turnover in businesses varied according to the number of employees, industrial sector and geographical area. **Table 3** illustrates the relative employee turnover in very small, small, medium and large businesses⁷. Employee turnover was found to be highest among small businesses employing between five and ten people (16%) and lowest among very small businesses employing between one and four people (11%).

Table 3. Employee turnover by size of employer

	All Employers %	1-4 Employees %	5-10 Employees %	11-49 Employees %	50+ Employees %
	13	11	16	13	12
Base* = 100%	4072	1041	728	1491	812

* Bases exclude those who did not have employees one year ago

Employee turnover in businesses also varied according to industrial sector (see **Table 4**). Of those industries in which the base sample was at least 100 businesses, employers in the Hotels and Restaurants sector experienced the highest employee turnover (21%) while those in the Education sector experienced the lowest (7%).

Table 4. Employee turnover by industry

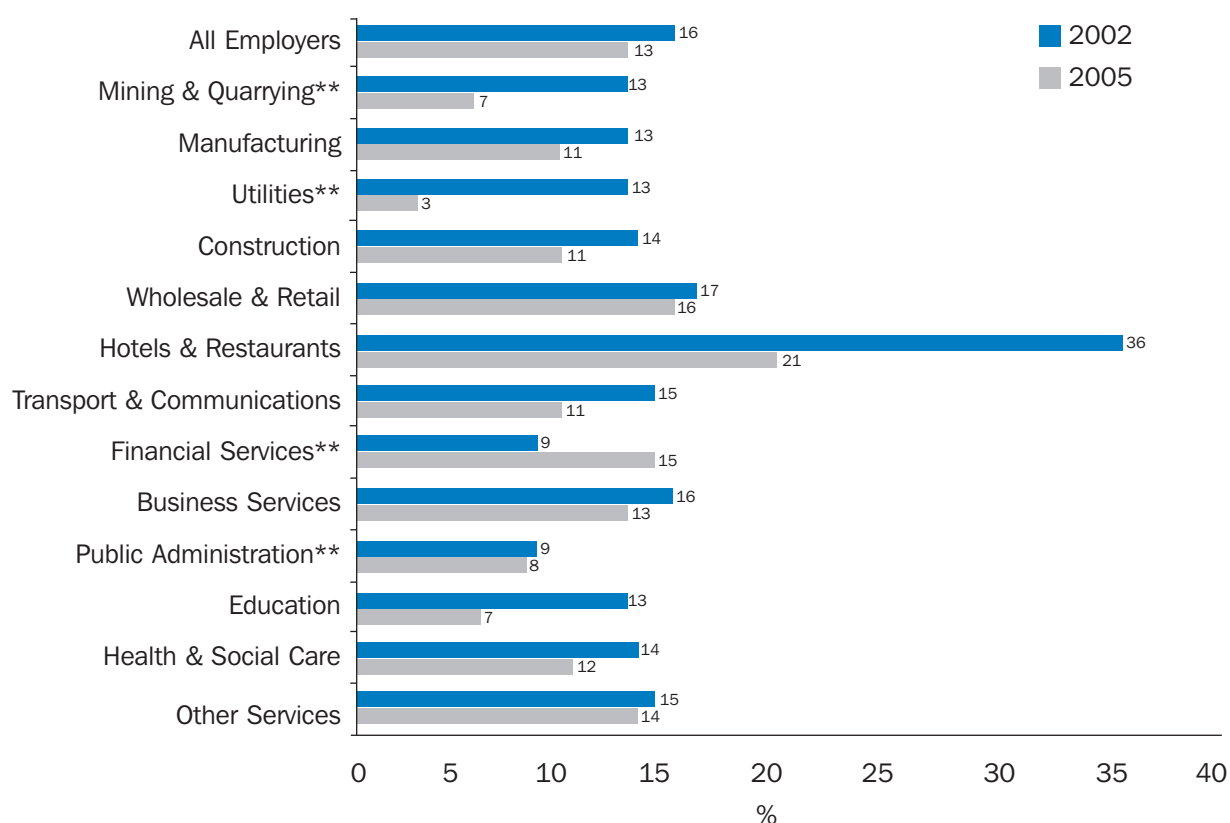
Industrial Sector	%	Base* = 100%
All Employers	13	4072
Mining & Quarrying**	7	17
Manufacturing	11	689
Utilities**	3	18
Construction	11	226
Wholesale & Retail	16	769
Hotels & Restaurants	21	175
Transport & Communications	11	320
Financial Services	15	135
Business Services	13	452
Public Administration**	8	74
Education	7	336
Health & Social Care	12	452
Other Services	14	409

* Bases exclude those who did not have employees one year ago ** Caution small numbers

⁷ For analysis by size of employer, businesses are allocated to the following size bands: 1-4 employees = very small business, 5-10 employees = small business, 11-49 employees = medium business, 50+ employees = large business.

As noted previously, it is possible to make comparisons between the results from the 2002 Skills Monitoring Survey and the current survey. **Figure 5** illustrates changes in the annual employee turnover between the two surveys. Between 2002 and 2005, the overall employee turnover rate decreased from 16% to 13%. It is interesting that for each industrial sector, the 2005 employee turnover rate is lower than the figure calculated for 2002. Of those sectors for which robust estimates could be derived, the largest decrease in employee turnover is seen in Hotels and Restaurants (36% in 2002, 21% in 2005). However as noted previously, this sector continues to have the highest employee turnover rate.

Figure 5. Employee turnover* by industry, 2002 and 2005 comparison



* Bases exclude those who did not have employees one year ago.

** Caution small numbers

There was little variation in employee turnover based on geographical location of the business unit (**Table 5**).

Table 5. Employee turnover by NUTS III areas of Northern Ireland

	All Employers	Belfast	Outer Belfast	East NI	North NI	West and South NI
	%	%	%	%	%	%
	13	13	14	13	12	13
Base* = 100%	4070	938	572	1070	584	906

* Bases exclude those who did not have employees one year ago

2.5 Current vacancies

All employers were asked if they had any vacancies at the time of interview (current vacancies). These were defined as vacancies for which action was being taken to recruit people from the external labour market. Overall, 11% of businesses reported that they had current vacancies. Therefore at the time of the survey, nine out of ten employers did **not** have any current vacancies.

In comparison, the proportion of NI employers reporting at least one vacancy (11%) is lower than employers in England⁸ (17%), Scotland⁹ (20%) and Wales¹⁰ (21%).

Almost half of the large employers questioned (42%), reported that they had current vacancies. Only one in twenty of the very small employers (5%) reported that they had current vacancies. **Table 6** shows the proportion of very small, small, medium and large businesses that reported having at least one current vacancy.

Table 6. Incidence of current vacancies by size of employer

	All Employers %	1-4 Employees %	5-10 Employees %	11-49 Employees %	50+ Employees %
Current Vacancies	11	5	15	24	42
No Current Vacancies	89	95	85	76	58
Base = 100%	4126	1044	735	1506	841

Table 7 illustrates the proportion of employers reporting current vacancies between different industrial sectors. Of these sectors for which robust estimates¹¹ could be derived, the lowest proportion of employers reporting current vacancies were in Construction (8%), Other Services (8%), Wholesale & Retail (9%) and Business Services (9%). The highest proportion of employers reporting current vacancies were in Health and Social Care (16%), Financial Services (15%), Education (15%) and Hotels and Restaurants (14%).

⁸ Comparisons with England are taken from the publication, *National Employers Skills Survey 2005: Key Findings*. Learning and Skills Council. June 2006. (www.lsc.gov.uk)

⁹ Scottish data are quoted from the publication, *Skills in Scotland 2004. Futureskills Scotland*. January 2005. (www.futureskillsscotland.org.uk)

¹⁰ Comparisons with Wales are taken from *Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey. Main Report*. March 2006. (www.futureskillswales.com)

¹¹ Robust estimates are calculated where the base cell contains a minimum of 100 cases. Where the base cell is less than 100, the reader is asked to treat the results with caution.

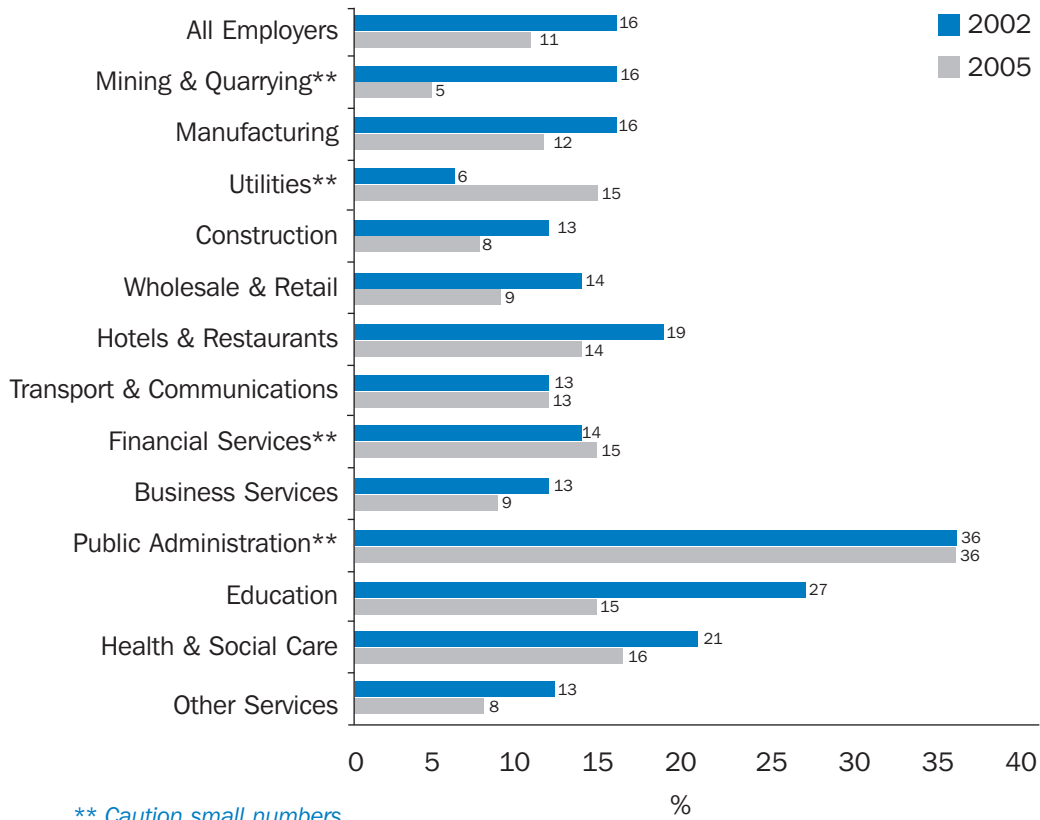
Table 7. Incidence of current vacancies by industry

Industrial Sector	Current Vacancies %	No Current vacancies %	Base = 100%
All Employers	11	89	4126
Mining & Quarrying**	5	95	17
Manufacturing	12	88	700
Utilities**	15	85	18
Construction	8	92	229
Wholesale & Retail	9	91	784
Hotels & Restaurants	14	86	181
Transport & Communications	13	87	324
Financial Services	15	85	135
Business Services	9	91	456
Public Administration**	36	64	74
Education	15	85	339
Health & Social Care	16	84	456
Other Services	8	92	413

** *Caution small numbers*

The overall decline in the incidence of current vacancies between the 2002 Survey (16%) and the current Survey (11%) is shown in **Figure 6**. This decrease is seen in a number of industries, most notably Education (from 27% in 2002 to 15% in 2005).

Figure 6. Incidence of current vacancies by industry, 2002 and 2005 comparison



The incidence of current vacancies varied only slightly across the five geographic areas of Northern Ireland (**Table 8**). Businesses in Belfast and East of NI were more likely to have reported current vacancies (12%) compared with those in Outer Belfast (8%).

Table 8. Incidence of current vacancies within NUTS III areas of Northern Ireland

	All Employers	Belfast	Outer Belfast	East NI	North NI	West and South NI
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Current Vacancies	11	12	8	12	11	10
No Current Vacancies	89	88	92	88	89	90
Base = 100%	4124	952	584	1077	596	915

2.6 Number of individual vacancies

Section 2.5 indicated the proportion of employers who reported having at least one current vacancy (11% of employers). When an employer reported that they had at least one current vacancy, they were asked to group all individual vacancies of the same type together and were then asked about each vacancy type rather than each individual vacancy (refer to questionnaire in **Appendix 1**). The respondent was asked to indicate the specific number of vacancies that they had for each job type.

Most (71%) of the job vacancies were for one person only and 24% were for 2-4 persons only (**Table 9**).

Table 9. Number of people required in each vacancy type

Number of people required in each job type vacancy	%
1	71
2 - 4	24
5 - 9	3
10 - 14	1
15 - 19	0
20 - 24	0
30+	0
Base = 100% (vacancy types)	1186

Using this information, it is possible to estimate the 'gross' number of vacancies that exist across all businesses. When applied to the Business Database population, the survey estimate equates to around 11,629 vacancies throughout Northern Ireland, (excluding the Agriculture and Fishing sectors)¹². As all survey estimates are subject to both sampling and non-sampling error, this estimate of the total number of Northern Ireland-wide individual vacancies should not be regarded as a finite measure of total individual vacancies, rather as an indicator.

¹² As the NI Skills Monitoring Survey is an employer survey, it does not include the self-employed (sole-traders). This has a differential effect upon different sectors, for example, Construction and Agriculture. For this reason, as well as the risk of survey fatigue due to similar surveys being carried out by DARD, Agriculture was excluded from the current survey.

2.7 Types of Vacancies

Employers were asked for specific descriptions of the jobs that they currently had vacancies for. The vacancies were then classified using SOC2000 (**Appendix 3** provides a fuller description of the job types contained within each occupational group).

Occupational coding of all vacancies not only allowed for the identification of differences between industrial sectors and between employers of different sizes but also provided an occupational base from which to look specifically at vacancies that were considered by the employer as “difficult to fill”.

Table 10 indicates that, overall, almost a quarter of all vacancies (24%) were classified as Personal Service occupations, such as care assistants, classroom assistants, sales assistants and hairdressers. Demand for vacancies was lowest among Managers and Senior Officials, where only a small proportion of vacancies existed (4%).

Table 10. Occupational group of vacancy by size of employer

Occupational group	All Employers %	1-4 Employees %	5-10 Employees %	11-49 Employees %	50+ Employees %
Managers & Senior Officials	4	9	3	4	4
Professionals	8	8	5	8	9
Associate Professionals	9	9	15	7	8
Administrative & Secretarial	14	17	17	11	12
Skilled Trades	10	11	10	11	9
Personal Service	24	14	30	29	22
Sales	7	4	6	6	10
Operatives	7	9	7	5	7
Elementary Occupations	17	19	8	21	19
Base = 100%	2727	110	160	726	1731

Figure 7. Occupational group of vacancy, 2002 and 2005 comparison

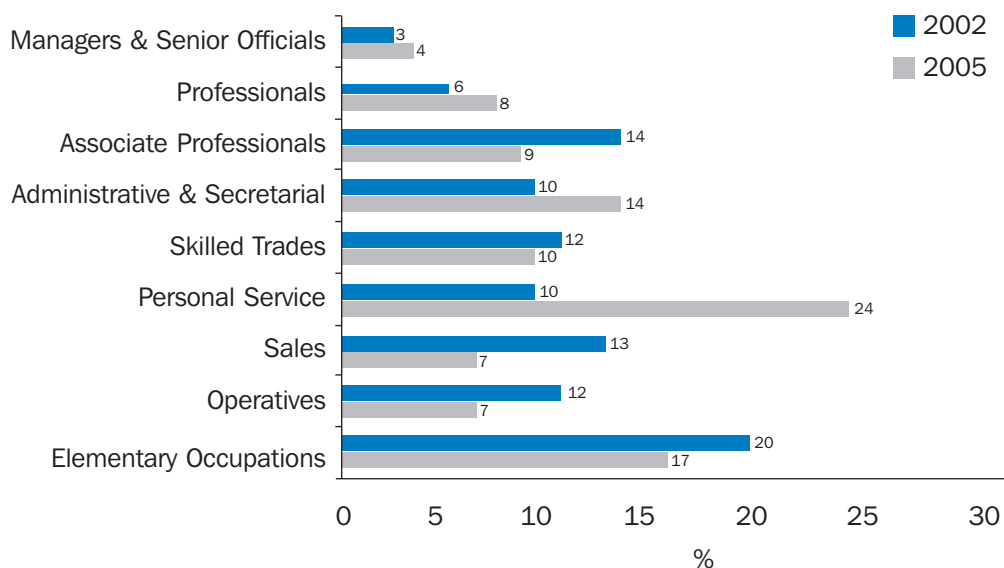


Figure 7 compares occupational groups of vacancies reported in 2002 and 2005. The most notable difference is evident for Personal Service occupations (up from 10% in 2002 to 24% in 2005). However, there is a reduction in the proportion of vacancies for Sales occupations (from 13% to 7%), Associate Professional occupations (from 14% to 9%) and Operatives (down from 12% to 7%) between the two surveys.

2.8 Methods of recruitment

Those employers with a current vacancy were asked what methods of recruitment they were using to fill their vacancies.

As shown in **Table 11** the most common form of recruitment was advertising in local/national newspapers (73%) followed by Government JobCentres (40%). 'Other' methods of recruitment included advertisements in shop windows as well as schools, colleges and universities.

Table 11. Method of recruitment

	All Employers %
Adverts in local/national newspapers	73
Government JobCentres	40
Private recruitment agencies	18
Word of mouth	17
Adverts in trade/specialist journals	11
Advertising on the Internet	11
Internal recruitment service	7
Waiting for transfer of staff	1
Other	10
None of the above/not actively seeking recruits	1
Base*** = 100%	1200

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

A small proportion of employers (1%) said they were not actively seeking recruits for their current vacancies. In the majority of these cases, the employers were waiting for approval, before starting recruitment.

3.0 CURRENT RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter we saw that 11% of employers reported that they had at least one current vacancy. Many vacancies that arise are either routine replacement of staff losses, the creation of new posts requiring staff with skills new to the business or the expansion of the workforce to meet increased demand. Within these vacancies as a whole, it is inevitable that some vacancies will prove easier for a business to fill than others.

This chapter focuses on current recruitment difficulties experienced by the employers. A number of vacancies are categorised as external skill shortage vacancies i.e. those difficult to fill vacancies that are attributed by employers to one of the following causes; lack of skills, lack of qualifications or lack of work experience. The impact of and measures taken to overcome skill shortage vacancies are discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Difficult to fill vacancies

The survey was specifically interested in finding out more about vacancies that employers reported as proving difficult to fill. There was no formal definition of a 'difficult to fill' vacancy - the employer was asked to define this in terms of their business area and their current situation.

In comparing these findings to earlier studies in Northern Ireland and to similar studies in Great Britain, it is again worth noting that the definition of a difficult to fill vacancy is a subjective one. There will be many factors influencing an employer's assessment of a 'difficult to fill' vacancy and this will be driven largely by the specific economic and business circumstances the employer is experiencing at the time of interview.

To attempt to discern if there are specific factors involved in those vacancies which are proving 'difficult to fill', a series of questions were asked on -

- The reason(s) employers thought that the vacancy was proving difficult to fill
- Measures taken by the employer to overcome the difficulties
- The effect(s) these difficult to fill vacancies were having on their business.

Just over one in twenty employers (6%) reported that at least one of their vacancies was proving difficult to fill (**Table 12**). Therefore the majority of employers (94%) did **not** report difficult to fill vacancies. When this estimate is applied to the entire Business Database population, the survey estimate equates to 6,024 difficult to fill vacancies throughout Northern Ireland.

In comparison, 10% of establishments in Wales and 7% of establishments in England reported difficult to fill vacancies.¹³

Table 12 also illustrates the incidence of difficult to fill vacancies among employers of different sizes. The incidence of difficult to fill vacancies was lowest for very small employers with 1 to 4 employees (3%) and highest for large employers with 50 or more employees (19%).

Table 12. Existence of at least one difficult to fill vacancy by size of employer

	All Employers %	1-4 Employees %	5-10 Employees %	11-49 Employees %	50+ Employees %
Has a difficult to fill vacancy	6	3	8	10	19
No difficult to fill vacancy	94	97	92	90	81
Base = 100%	4114	1043	734	1501	836

Some differences in the incidence of at least one difficult to fill vacancy were apparent when the industrial sectors were examined separately (**Table 13**). Excluding those sectors with small numbers in the survey, the proportion of employers reporting difficult to fill vacancies ranged from 3% in Other Services to 9% in Financial Services.

Table 13. Existence of at least one difficult to fill vacancy by industry

Industrial Sector	Vacancy difficult to fill %	Vacancy not difficult to fill %	Base = 100%
All Employers	6	94	4114
Mining & Quarrying**	2	98	17
Manufacturing	7	93	699
Utilities**	15	85	18
Construction	7	93	229
Wholesale & Retail	5	95	782
Hotels & Restaurants	7	93	181
Transport & Communications	5	95	323
Financial Services	9	91	135
Business Services	6	94	455
Public Administration**	13	87	73
Education	5	95	337
Health & Social Care	8	92	454
Other Services	3	97	411

** Caution small numbers

¹³ Reports for England, Scotland and Wales refer to hard-to-fill vacancies. Information on the number of employers reporting difficult to fill vacancies is not available for Scotland.

The Skills Monitoring Survey conducted in 2002 showed 10% of NI employers reporting difficult to fill vacancies. In the most recent survey, the corresponding figure (6%) is much lower. When analysed by industrial sector (**Figure 8**), a decrease in the proportion of employers reporting difficult to fill vacancies is evident in all sectors (where reliable estimates are available). This reduction is most notable in Education (from 12% in 2002 to 5% in 2005), Hotels and Restaurants (from 13% to 7%) and Other Services (from 8% to 3%).

Figure 8. Existence of at least one difficult to fill vacancy by industry, 2002 and 2005 comparison

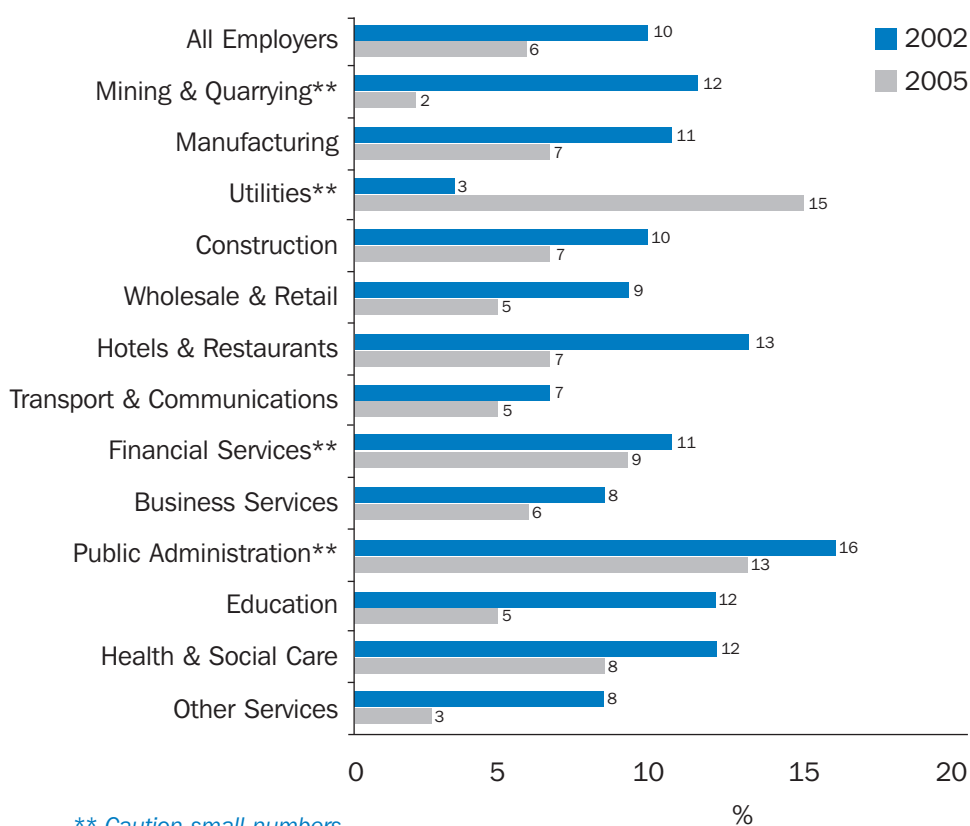


Table 14 illustrates the distribution of difficult to fill vacancies by area. The lowest proportion of employers reporting difficult to fill vacancies were located in Outer Belfast.

Table 14. Existence of at least one difficult to fill vacancy by NUTS III areas of Northern Ireland

	All Employers	Belfast	Outer Belfast	East NI	North NI	West and South NI
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Has a difficult to fill vacancy	6	7	4	7	6	6
No difficult to fill vacancies	94	94	96	93	94	94
Base = 100%	4112	950	582	1076	594	910

3.3 Occupational group of difficult to fill vacancies

Table 15 illustrates the occupational group of difficult to fill vacancies among employers of different sizes. Overall, the most common difficult to fill vacancies were for Personal Service (20%) and Elementary Occupations (20%) (**Table 15**). The least proportion of difficult to fill vacancies were for Managers and Senior Officials, Professionals as well as Sales staff (6% for each occupation).

Consistent with the overall findings, one third (32%) of difficult to fill vacancies in medium-sized businesses were for Personal Service occupations and one in five (22%) of difficult to fill vacancies in large businesses were for Elementary Occupations. By comparing the two largest categories of employers, it is noted that only 2% of difficult to fill vacancies in medium-sized businesses were for Sales occupations, whereas 18% of difficult to fill vacancies in large businesses were for these occupations.

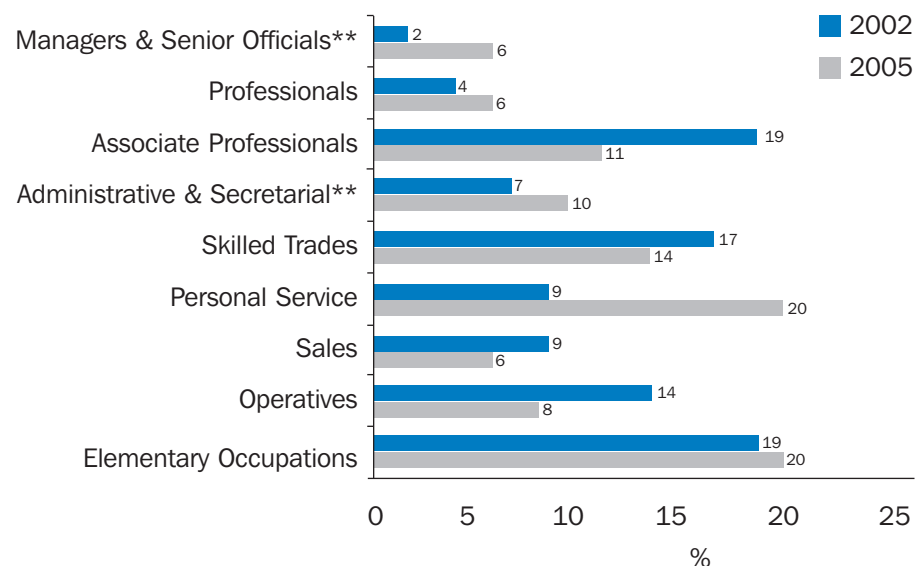
Table 15. Occupational group of difficult to fill vacancies by size of employer

Occupational group	All Employers %	1-4 Employees** %	5-10 Employees** %	11-49 Employees %	50+ Employees %
Managers & Senior Officials**	6	14	2	4	3
Professionals	6	-	4	8	10
Associate Professionals	11	11	22	4	8
Administrative & Secretarial**	10	16	18	6	3
Skilled Trades	14	16	13	14	12
Personal Service	20	4	24	32	18
Sales	6	2	1	2	18
Operatives	8	12	7	6	7
Elementary Occupations	20	25	8	24	22
Base = 100%	1302	57	84	352	809

** Caution small numbers

Figure 9 compares the occupational group of difficult to fill vacancies between the 2002 and 2005 surveys. On both occasions, the largest proportion of difficult to fill vacancies are reported in Elementary Occupations (19% in 2002 and 20% in 2005). Personal Service occupations also show a high level of difficult to fill vacancies in 2005 (20%) which is more than double the figure reported in 2002 (9%). In contrast the difficult to fill vacancies for Associate Professionals decreased from 19% to 11% in 2005.

Figure 9. Occupational group of difficult to fill vacancies, 2002 and 2005 comparison



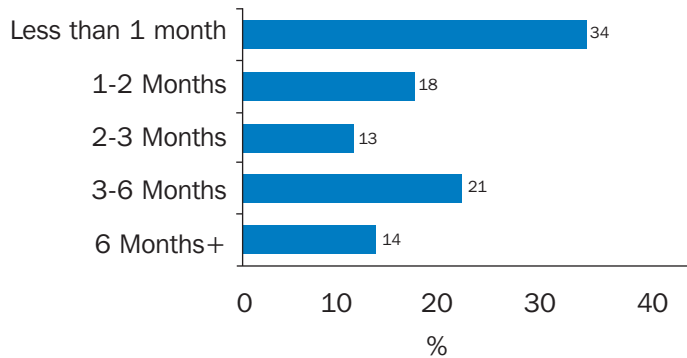
** Caution small numbers

3.4 Duration of vacancies

Figure 10 shows the length of time that difficult to fill vacancies have been reported as being open. As the survey asks about current vacancies, the information presented here relates to the length of time that the vacancy has been open at the time of the survey. This is not the same as the length of time taken to fill the vacancy.

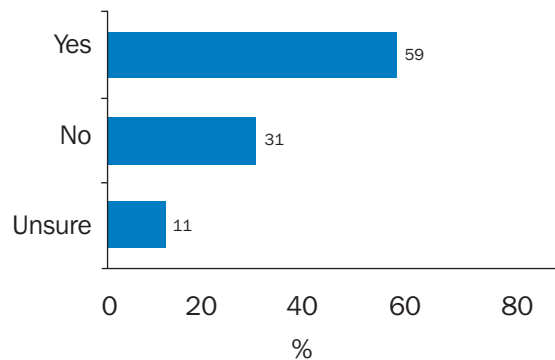
Approximately one third of employers with difficult to fill vacancies (34%), stated that these vacancies had been open for less than one month. However 14% of employers with difficult to fill vacancies, reported that they had been open for more than six months.

Figure 10. Duration of difficult to fill vacancies



Approximately three out of five employers (59%) with a difficult to fill vacancy felt it was taking longer to fill their vacancy than they expected (**Figure 11**).

Figure 11. Is the vacancy taking longer to fill than expected?



3.5 Reasons for difficult to fill vacancies

Employers were invited to specify any reasons, in their view, why the vacancies were difficult to fill.

Overall, a low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation and personality (38% of vacancies), not enough people interested in the type of work (35% of vacancies) and a lack of skills (31% of vacancies) were reasons given for difficulties faced in filling vacancies (**Table 16**).

Table 16. Reasons for difficulty in filling vacancies

	Difficult to fill Vacancies %
Poor attitudes, motivation and personality	38
Not enough people interested in this type of work	35
Lack of skills the company demands	31
Lack of work experience the company demands	21
Lack of qualifications the company demands	19
Low number of applicants generally	16
Impact of the benefits trap	13
Long/unsocial hours	8
Lack of basic ability to build upon	7
Wages offered are lower than other firms	6
Geographic location of the firm	5
Too much competition from other employers	5
Unattractive terms and conditions	4
Lack of career progression	3
Other	8
No particular reason	1
Base*** = 100%	1301

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

Table 17 gives a breakdown of the difficult to fill vacancies by occupational group and sets out reasons why the vacancies are difficult to fill. The reasons given vary considerably across the occupational groups. A lack of interest in the type of work relates to a large proportion of difficult to fill vacancies in the Skilled Trades (53%), Personal Service Occupations (46%) and Elementary Occupations (47%). A lack of skills the company requires related to difficulty filling vacancies in Sales (76%), Skilled Trades (46%) and Associate Professional and Technical Occupations (45%).

Table 17. Reasons for difficulty in filling vacancies by occupational group

	All Occupations	Managers & Senior Officials**	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative & Secretarial**	Skilled Trades	Personal Service	Sales	Operatives	Elementary Occupations
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Lack of skills the company demands	31	9	24	45	43	46	20	76	33	12
Lack of qualifications the company demands	19	7	18	18	50	29	6	1	17	22
Lack of work experience the company demands	21	63	24	14	34	35	12	2	21	13
Poor attitudes, motivation and personality	38	24	23	40	5	42	42	19	34	61
Not enough people interested in this type of work	35	8	17	11	39	53	46	12	27	47
Low number of applicants generally	16	8	39	18	9	17	20	8	21	13
Wages offered are lower than other firms	6	6	4	6	1	1	12	9	-	7
Impact of the benefits trap	13	-	-	1	9	9	21	8	27	18
Geographic location of the firm	5	2	15	10	1	5	5	12	3	2
Unattractive terms and conditions	4	6	5	5	5	1	2	-	1	11
Lack of career progression	3	3	-	1	4	-	9	7	-	2
Long/unsocial hours	8	5	3	1	2	2	15	4	7	18
Too much competition from other employers	5	6	18	10	0	11	5	1	2	-
Lack of basic ability to build upon	7	2	1	23	2	7	7	1	10	6
Other	8	1	14	22	13	4	10	-	2	3
No particular reason	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-
Base*** = 100%	1301	49	126	125	71	172	263	150	107	238

** Caution small numbers

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

Employers were asked to specify the **single most important** reason for the difficulty they experienced in filling their vacancies.

Table 18 illustrates the main reason for difficulty in filling vacancies. The most frequently mentioned single reason was the lack of skills the company demands (20%) as well as not enough people interested in doing that type of work (20%). One in ten employers cited poor attitudes, motivation and personality (12%) as well as a lack of work experience the company demands (9%) as the main reason for difficulty in filling the vacancies. Only 4% of vacancies were difficult to fill as a result of lack of qualifications required for the job.

Examination of the verbatim comments within the 'other' category, show a number of vacancies are difficult to fill due to funding issues, voluntary work and the length of the recruitment process.

The shaded portion of **Table 18** indicates those reasons which can be interpreted as representing an 'external skill shortage' as defined and discussed in **Section 3.8**.

Table 18. Main reason for difficulty in filling vacancies

	Difficult to fill Vacancies %
Lack of skills the company demands	20
Not enough people interested in this type of work	20
Poor attitudes, motivation and personality	12
Lack of work experience the company demands	9
Impact of the benefits trap	7
Low number of applicants generally	6
Lack of qualifications the company demands	4
Wages offered are lower than other firms	4
Long/unsocial hours	3
Too much competition from other employers	3
Geographic location of the firm	2
Unattractive terms and conditions	2
Lack of basic ability to build upon	1
Lack of career progression	0
Other	6
Base = 100%	1294

Table 19. Main reason for difficulty in filling vacancies by occupational group

	All Occupations	Managers & Senior Officials**	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative & Secretarial**	Skilled Trades	Personal Service	Sales	Operatives	Elementary Occupations
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Lack of skills the company demands	20	5	19	34	11	36	5	70	17	14
Lack of qualifications the company demands	4	2	7	4	17	4	2	-	5	-
Lack of work experience the company demands	9	61	17	4	16	3	2	3	7	6
Poor attitudes, motivation and personality	12	17	8	5	4	15	19	6	20	11
Not enough people interested in this type of work	20	2	6	4	27	19	24	11	19	33
Low number of applicants generally	6	3	3	20	1	7	3	5	7	5
Wages offered are lower than other firms	4	1	4	6	1	1	11	-	-	2
Impact of the benefits trap	7	-	-	-	1	6	11	3	16	13
Geographic location of the firm	2	2	4	4	1	1	5	-	2	1
Unattractive terms and conditions	2	3	2	1	4	1	2	-	0	5
Lack of career progression	0	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	0
Long/unsocial hours	3	2	3	-	1	1	2	4	5	9
Too much competition from other employers	3	1	15	4	-	3	5	-	1	-
Lack of basic ability to build upon	1	-	1	-	0	-	2	-	-	0
Other	6	2	12	14	13	4	7	-	2	1
Base = 100%	1294	50	126	125	71	172	261	144	107	238

** Caution small numbers

Table 19 illustrates the main reason for difficulty in filling vacancies by occupation. Lack of skills the company demands was the most frequently reported main reason for difficulty in filling vacancies for Professionals (19%), Associate Professionals (34%), Skilled Trades (36%) and Sales occupations (70%). One quarter (24%) of Personal Service occupations and one third (33%) of Elementary Occupations were difficult to fill due to not enough people being interested in this type of work. For Operative jobs, the most frequently cited main reason for difficulty in filling vacancies was poor attitudes, motivation and personality (20%).

3.6 Impact of difficult to fill vacancies on employers

Employers were also asked how much of an impact the difficult to fill vacancies were having on their business.

Table 20. Impact of difficult to fill vacancies by industry

Industrial Sector	Major Impact %	Minor Impact %	No Impact	Base = 100%
All difficult to fill vacancies	42	46	12	1299
Mining & Quarrying**	-	100	-	6
Manufacturing	46	42	13	175
Utilities**	-	100	-	7
Construction**	39	60	1	44
Wholesale & Retail	29	62	9	244
Hotels & Restaurants	33	30	37	109
Transport & Communications	70	28	2	144
Financial Services**	41	38	21	21
Business Services	37	57	6	151
Public Administration**	67	23	10	18
Education	22	75	4	106
Health & Social Care	60	33	7	225
Other Services**	64	33	3	49

** *Caution small numbers*

As shown in **Table 20**, just over one in ten difficult to fill vacancies (12%) did not have any impact on the business. A minor impact was reported for 46% of difficult to fill vacancies and a major effect for 42% of these vacancies. The majority of difficult to fill vacancies within Transport and Communications (70%) and Health & Social Care (60%) were having a major impact upon the business. In contrast, the majority of difficult to fill vacancies in Education (75%), Wholesale & Retail (62%) and Business Services (57%) had a minor impact upon the company. Just over one third (37%) of difficult to fill vacancies in Hotels and Restaurants did not have any impact upon the establishment.

Employers were also asked to specify the impact of the difficult to fill vacancies on their business.

Consistent with the finding in **Table 20**, approximately one in ten (12%) of the difficult to fill vacancies had not caused employers any particular problems. However, not being able to fill vacancies clearly had an impact on the business activities as shown in **Table 21**. In over half of the difficult to fill vacancies (56%), not being able to fill the posts has resulted in difficulties in meeting customer service objectives. Loss of business or orders to competitors (34%) and difficulties meeting required quality standards (33%) were also evident as a result of these unfilled vacancies.

One in ten (11%) of the difficult to fill vacancies reported 'other' impacts upon the business including additional work on other staff, difficulty in expansion and difficulty in meeting shift patterns.

Table 21. Effect of difficult to fill vacancies

	Difficult to fill Vacancies %
Difficulties meeting customer service objectives	56
Loss of business or orders to competitors	34
Difficulties meeting required quality standards	33
Increased operating/running costs	23
Delays developing new products	9
To withdraw from offering certain products or services altogether	7
Difficulties introducing technological change	4
Difficulties introducing new working practices	4
Other	11
No particular problems	12
Base*** = 100%	1204

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

3.7 Measures taken to recruit people into difficult to fill vacancies

It was considered important to know what measures, if any, employers had taken to overcome the difficult to fill vacancies. Again, employers could cite more than one action. The employers were asked specifically about measures, over and above what they would normally do in seeking to fill this type of vacancy.

For more than half of the difficult to fill vacancies (54%), employers had not taken any additional measures to overcome these recruitment difficulties. This can be contrasted with the reported effect that these difficulties have on their business in which only 12% of employers stated no particular problems with the difficult to fill

vacancies (**Table 21**). When asked why they have not taken any special measures to overcome these recruitment difficulties, the majority of employers (56%) said that nothing could be done.

Table 22 shows that for 17% of the difficult to fill vacancies, employers had used a more extensive range of recruitment channels than normal. Employers had also offered higher pay or more incentives than normal (9% of difficult to fill vacancies), spent more on recruitment or used more expensive methods (8%) and recruited staff from overseas (8% of difficult to fill vacancies).

Within the 'other' category, a number of employers had reduced the job criteria in order to fill their vacancies.

Table 22. Measures taken to recruit people into the difficult to fill vacancies

	Difficult to fill Vacancies %
Used more extensive range of recruitment channels than normal	17
Offered higher pay or more incentives than normal	9
Spent more on recruitment or used more expensive methods	8
Recruited staff from overseas	8
Considered a wider range of applicants	7
Built links with schools/colleges/universities	7
Been prepared to provide more training to less qualified recruits	7
Hired part-time staff	4
Offered enhanced terms and conditions	3
Changed the job specification by giving tasks to other staff	1
Hired contract staff	1
Changed the job specification by automating some tasks	0
Retrain existing staff	0
Contracted work out	0
Other	5
Base*** = 100%	1295

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

3.8 External Skill Shortages

Of particular interest is the prevalence of difficult to fill vacancies whereby external skill shortages are a contributing factor. If the respondent referred to any of the following reasons: a lack of skills the company demands; a lack of qualifications the company demands or a lack of work experience the company demands; then the vacancy was defined as difficult to fill due to an external skill shortage (as shown in the shaded area of **Table 18**). Overall, in 34% of difficult to fill vacancies, external skill shortages were a contributing factor.

Table 23 indicates the proportion of vacancies that were reported as being difficult to fill within each industry. Over half (52%) of all vacancies were considered by employers to be difficult to fill. This is also reflected in the industry analysis as most of the industrial sectors (with the exception of Education and Other Services) considered more than 50% of vacancies to be difficult to fill. Within the Construction sector, 81% of vacancies were difficult to fill. In contrast, 27% of vacancies in Other Services were difficult to fill.

Table 23. Proportion of difficult to fill vacancies due to external skill shortages by industry

Industrial Sector	Percentage of employers with difficult to fill vacancies	Percentage of vacancies that are difficult to fill	Percentage of difficult to fill vacancies due to external skill shortages
	%	%	%
All employers	6	52	34
Mining & Quarrying**	2	79	-
Manufacturing	7	57	35
Utilities**	15	68	24
Construction	7	81	53
Wholesale & Retail	5	52	24
Hotels & Restaurants	7	53	19
Transport & Communications	5	57	63
Financial Services	9	59	46
Business Services	6	58	51
Public Administration**	13	46	75
Education	5	35	13
Health & Social Care	8	51	19
Other Services	3	27	42

** Caution small numbers

Table 23 also shows the proportion of difficult to fill vacancies that are due to external skill shortages within each industrial sector. Overall for all employers, one third (34%) of difficult to fill vacancies were due to external skill shortages. When this estimate is applied to the entire Business Database population, the survey estimate equates to around 2,013 difficult to fill vacancies throughout NI that are due to external skill shortages. The 2002 survey also reported some 32% of difficult to fill vacancies as being due to external skill shortages. However as there was a higher percentage of difficult to fill vacancies reported in 2002, the total number of external skill shortage vacancies at that time was 3,128.

The proportion of vacancies that are reported as difficult to fill is highest for NI employers (52%) when compared with Scotland (46%), England (36%) and Wales (35%). However the proportion of difficult to fill vacancies that are due to external skill shortages is lowest in NI (34%) in comparison to England¹⁴ (70%), Scotland (55%) and Wales (41%).

External skill shortages affected some industries more so than others. For example, in more than half of the difficult to fill vacancies in Transport and Communications (63%), Construction (53%) and Business Services (51%), external skill shortages were a contributing factor. The proportion of difficult to fill vacancies due to external skill shortages for Financial Services (46%), Other Services (42%) and Manufacturing (35%) exceed the average for all industries (34%).

Table 24 illustrates the proportions of difficult to fill vacancies, due to external skill shortages, by the occupational group of the vacancy. Overall, most of the occupational groups had a large proportion of difficult to fill vacancies due to external skill shortages. Almost three quarters of Sales (72%) difficult to fill vacancies were due to external skill shortages. Personal Service occupations had the least difficulty with external skill shortages (10% of difficult to fill vacancies).

¹⁴ Figures for England relate to unprompted and prompted skill shortage vacancies.

Table 24. Proportion of difficult to fill vacancies due to external skill shortages by occupational group of vacancy

Occupational group	Percentage of difficult to fill vacancies due to external skill shortages
Managers & Senior Officials**	67
Professionals	42
Associate Professionals	42
Administrative & Secretarial**	45
Skilled Trades	42
Personal Service	10
Sales	72
Operatives	29
Elementary Occupations	20
Base*** = 100%	1302

***Caution small numbers*

3.9 Skills difficult to obtain from applicants for external skill shortage vacancies

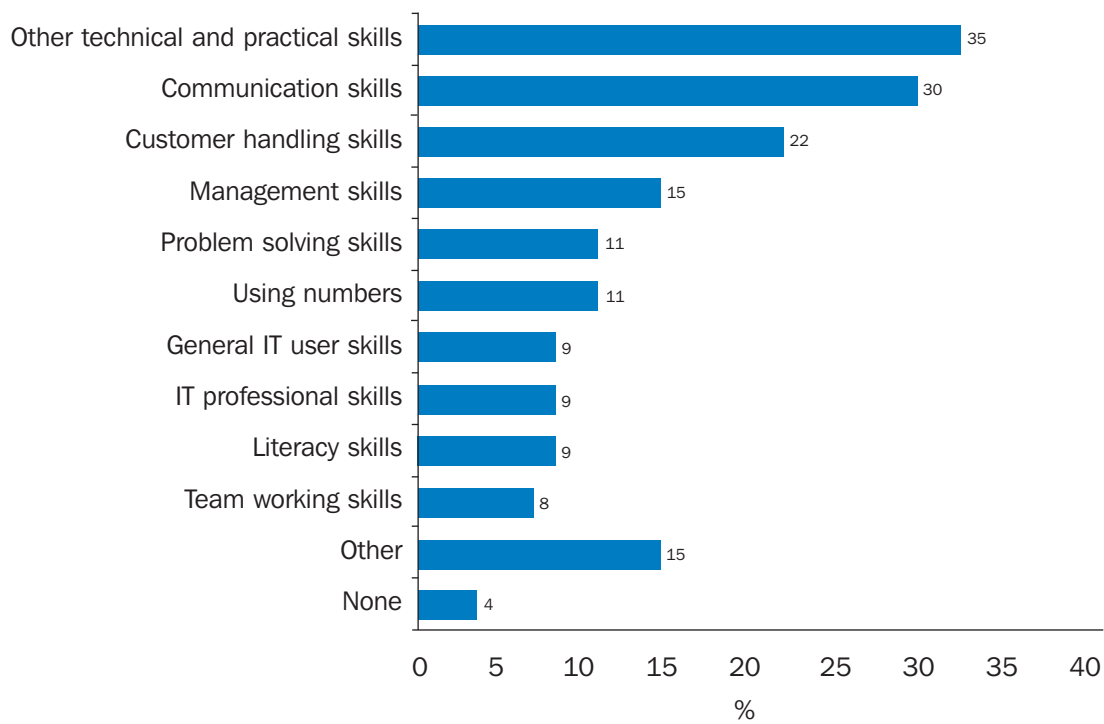
For each difficult to fill vacancy that was due to an external skill shortage, employers were asked what skills, if any, were found difficult to obtain from applicants.

As shown in **Figure 12**, the most common responses by employers were other technical and practical skills (35% of external skill shortages), communication skills (30%) and customer handling skills (22% of skill shortage vacancies).

For approximately 1 in 10 external skill shortage vacancies, employers had difficulty in obtaining the following skills from applicants - problem solving (11%), using numbers (11%), general IT user skills (9%), IT professional skills (9%), literacy skills (9%) and team working skills (8%).

For 15% of the external skill shortage vacancies, 'other' skills were lacking from applicants. Further examination of this category shows that the majority of these vacancies are difficult to fill due to a lack of language skills. When these responses were recoded and reanalysed, a total of 7% of employers reported language skills as the main reason for the difficulty in filling their vacancies.

Figure 12. Skills lacking in skill shortage vacancies



3.10 Vacancies in the context of employee numbers

The above analysis of vacancies, difficult to fill vacancies and external skill shortages has concentrated on the proportions of employers reporting them in each industrial sector and in terms of occupations.

It is also possible to report these findings in the context of employment within the sectors covered by the survey.

Table 25 expresses current vacancies, difficult to fill vacancies and external skill shortage vacancies as rates for each industrial sector. The rate is calculated as vacancies as a proportion of all employees. This not only standardises the number of vacancies in terms of employment but also allows for easy comparison between sectors. Attention is again drawn to those sectors where the number of respondents and therefore the number of vacancies reported are low and should be treated with caution.

Table 25. Current vacancies, difficult to fill vacancies and external skill shortage vacancies as a proportion of employees by industry

Industrial sector	Employee Jobs****	Current Vacancies		Difficult to fill Vacancies		External Skill Shortages	
	June 2005	No.	Rate***	No.	Rate***	No.	Rate***
All Employers	676,810	11,629	1.7	6,024	0.9	2,013	0.3
Mining & Quarrying**	2,010	14	0.7	11	0.5	0	0.0
Manufacturing	86,560	1,305	1.5	744	0.9	259	0.3
Utilities**	2,720	22	0.8	15	0.6	4	0.1
Construction	37,560	440	1.2	355	0.9	188	0.5
Wholesale & Retail	117,910	2,422	2.1	1,233	1.0	290	0.2
Hotels & Restaurants	41,450	1,661	4.0	883	2.1	170	0.4
Transport & Communications	28,950	879	3.0	499	1.7	314	1.1
Financial Services	17,820	227	1.3	133	0.7	61	0.3
Business Services	64,710	1,471	2.3	845	1.3	434	0.7
Public Administration**	64,290	86	0.1	39	0.1	29	0.0
Education	71,420	839	1.2	292	0.4	37	0.1
Health & Social Care	110,930	1,556	1.4	786	0.7	147	0.1
Other Services	30,480	706	2.3	189	0.6	79	0.3

** Caution small number

*** Rate is expressed as a percentage of total employment.

**** Total employee jobs for those sectors within the survey only.

In June 2005 there were 691,460 employee jobs in total for all sectors of the NI economy.

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and may not sum due to rounding.

Source: Quarterly Employment Survey, DETI. Figures are unadjusted.

As can be seen from **Table 25** the vacancy rate across all sectors was 1.7% of employee jobs. For those sectors where reliable estimates are possible current vacancy rates are above the average for Hotels and Restaurants (4.0%), Transport and Communications (3.0%), Business Services (2.3%), Other Services (2.3%) and Wholesale and Retail (2.1%).

Likewise for difficult to fill vacancies the average rate was 0.9% with Hotels and Restaurants (2.1%), Transport and Communications (1.7%), Business Services (1.3%) as well as Wholesale and Retail (1.0%) above the average.

Finally the average rate for external skill shortages was 0.3% with Transport and Communications (1.1%), Business Services (0.7%), Construction (0.5%) and Hotels and Restaurants (0.4%) above the average.

These findings suggest that, in terms of difficult to fill vacancies and external skill shortages, the effects are felt most acutely in the Hotels and Restaurants, Transport and Communications, Business Services and Construction sectors.

Table 26 compares the vacancy rates between the current survey and the survey conducted in 2002. Between 2002 and 2005, there has been a decrease in the rate of current vacancies (from 2.5% in 2002 to 1.7% in 2005), difficult to fill vacancies (from 1.5% to 0.9%) and external skill shortages (from 0.5% to 0.3%). In both surveys, Hotels and Restaurants as well as Transport and Communications reported vacancies, difficult to fill vacancies and external skill shortages above the corresponding average rates.

Table 26. Comparison of vacancy rates, 2002 and 2005

Industrial sector	Current Vacancy Rate***		Difficult to fill Vacancy Rate***		External Skill Shortages Rate***	
	2002	2005	2002	2005	2002	2005
All Employers	2.5	1.7	1.5	0.9	0.5	0.3
Mining & Quarrying**	1.2	0.7	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.0
Manufacturing	2.0	1.5	1.2	0.9	0.7	0.3
Utilities**	0.1	0.8	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.1
Construction	1.9	1.2	1.5	0.9	0.7	0.5
Wholesale & Retail	2.9	2.1	1.7	1.0	0.5	0.2
Hotels & Restaurants	4.1	4.0	2.3	2.1	0.7	0.4
Transport & Communications	3.0	3.0	1.9	1.7	0.8	1.1
Financial Services	2.5	1.3	2.0	0.7	0.4	0.3
Business Services**	2.6	2.3	1.3	1.3	0.8	0.7
Public Administration **	0.8	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0
Education	1.6	1.2	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.1
Health & Social Care	3.4	1.4	2.6	0.7	0.1	0.1
Other Services	3.6	2.3	1.8	0.6	0.4	0.3

** Caution small number

*** Rate is expressed as a percentage of total employment.

4.0 RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES IN THE LAST YEAR

4.1 Introduction

In **Chapter 2** we saw that 11% of employers reported that they had at least one vacancy. Following on from this, **Chapter 3** indicated that 6% of employers had a current vacancy that was proving difficult to fill. This chapter focuses on the employers who reported no current vacancy at the time of the interview but had recruitment difficulties in the previous 12 months.

4.2 Vacancies within the previous 12 months

As seen in **Section 2.5**, the majority of employers (89%) did **not** have a current vacancy at the time of interview. These employers were asked a series of questions relating to vacancies in the 12 months prior to the interview (**Table 27**). Almost one third of employers (29%) who did not have a current vacancy at the time of the survey had a vacancy in the previous 12 months. The proportion of employers reporting vacancies in the previous 12 months increases with increasing size of business (**Table 27**). This pattern is consistent with that shown for the proportion of employers reporting current vacancies (**Table 6**). For very small businesses, 17% of employers reported vacancies in the previous 12 months. For large businesses, 65% of employers reported vacancies in the previous 12 months.

Table 27. Incidence of vacancies in the previous 12 months by size of employer

	All Employers	1-4 Employees	5-10 Employees	11-49 Employees	50+ Employees
	%	%	%	%	%
Vacancies in the previous 12 months	29	17	46	59	65
No vacancies in the previous 12 months	71	83	54	41	35
Base = 100%	3219	974	621	1145	479

Within the industry sectors the highest level of vacancies in the previous 12 months were reported in Education (51%), followed by Wholesale and Retail (35%), Financial Services (30%) and Health & Social Care (30%) (**Table 28**). Only 17% of Construction employers reported a vacancy in the previous 12 months.

Table 28. Incidence of vacancies in the previous 12 months by industry

Industrial Sector	Vacancies in the previous 12 months %	No vacancies in the previous 12 months %	Base=100%
All employers	29	71	3219
Mining & Quarrying**	38	62	14
Manufacturing	21	79	553
Utilities**	33	67	15
Construction	17	84	195
Wholesale & Retail	35	65	625
Hotels & Restaurants	27	73	119
Transport & Communications	25	75	262
Financial Services	30	70	107
Business Services	29	71	368
Public Administration**	26	74	48
Education	51	49	238
Health & Social Care	30	70	336
Other Services	24	76	339

** Caution small numbers

Employers in Belfast had a higher incidence of vacancies (36%) in the previous 12 months than any of the other areas in Northern Ireland (**Table 29**).

Table 29. Incidence of vacancies in the previous 12 months by NUTS III areas of Northern Ireland

	All Employers %	Belfast %	Outer Belfast %	East NI %	North NI %	West and South NI %
Vacancies in the previous 12 months	29	36	29	25	28	27
No vacancies in the previous 12 months	71	64	71	75	72	73
Base = 100%	3217	704	462	862	471	718

4.3 Difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months

Once again there is no formal definition of a difficult to fill vacancy - the employer was asked to define this in terms of their business and their situation over the previous 12 months. Overall, 7% of vacancies in the past 12 months were reported as being difficult to fill (**Table 30**).

Table 30 shows the proportion of very small, small, medium and large businesses that reported difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months. As for vacancies in the previous 12 months, the proportion of employers reporting difficult to fill vacancies in the previous year increases with size of employer (from 5% for very small businesses to 21% for larger businesses).

Table 30. Existence of difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months by size of employer

	All Employers %	1-4 Employees %	5-10 Employees %	11-49 Employees %	50+ Employees %
Difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months	7	5	7	16	21
No difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months	93	95	93	84	79
Base = 100%	3237	978	627	1150	482

The proportion of difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months ranged from 4% in Transport and Communications, Financial Services and Other Services to 10% in Hotels and Restaurants (**Table 31**).

Table 31. Existence of difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months by industry

Industrial Sector	Difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months %	No difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months %	Base = 100%
All Employers	7	93	3237
Mining & Quarrying**	9	91	15
Manufacturing	6	94	556
Utilities**	7	93	14
Construction	5	95	195
Wholesale & Retail	8	92	626
Hotels & Restaurants	10	90	122
Transport & Communications	4	96	265
Financial Services	4	96	108
Business Services	7	93	368
Public Administration**	9	91	48
Education	7	93	238
Health & Social Care	9	91	342
Other Services	4	96	340

** Caution small numbers

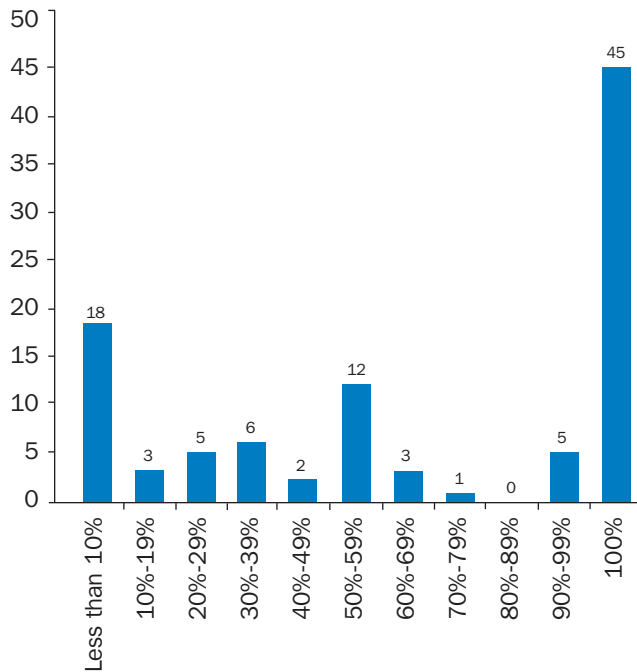
Employers in Belfast had a higher incidence of difficult to fill vacancies (11%) in the previous 12 months than any of the other areas in Northern Ireland (**Table 32**).

Table 32. Existence of difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months by NUTS III areas of Northern Ireland

	All Employers %	Belfast %	Outer Belfast %	East NI %	North NI %	West and South NI %
Difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months	7	11	5	7	4	6
No difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months	93	89	95	93	96	94
Base = 100%	3235	711	465	868	471	720

Employers were asked to approximate the proportion of vacancies which had proved difficult to fill (**Figure 13**). Almost half of all vacancies in the previous year were considered by employers to be difficult to fill (45%).

Figure 13. Proportion of vacancies in previous 12 months which are difficult to fill



4.4 Reasons for difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months

Employers were invited to specify any reasons, in their view, why the vacancies they had in the previous 12 months were difficult to fill (**Table 33**). Overall, a lack of skills the company demands was the most commonly reported reason (39% of difficult to fill vacancies) followed by not enough people interested in this type of work (32%). Other reasons given were a low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation & personality (28%), a lack of work experience (26%) and a low number of applicants (24%).

It is interesting to note that the top four reasons given for vacancies from the previous year being difficult to fill are the same top four reasons given for current vacancies being difficult to fill (**Table 16**).

Table 33. Reasons for difficulty in filling vacancies in the previous 12 months

	Difficult to fill Vacancies %
Lack of skills the company demands	39
Not enough people interested in this type of work	32
Poor attitudes, motivation and personality	28
Lack of work experience the company demands	26
Low number of applicants generally	24
Impact of the benefits trap	16
Lack of qualifications the company demands	14
Wages offered are lower than other firms	13
Unattractive terms and conditions	12
Long/unsocial hours	11
Geographic location of the firm	3
Too much competition from other employers	2
Lack of basic ability to build upon	2
Lack of career progression	1
Other	8
No particular reason	1
Base*** = 100%	352

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

Employers were asked to specify the main reason their vacancies in the previous 12 months were difficult to fill. Overall a lack of required skills was the most commonly reported reason (16%), followed by a low number of applicants (15%), a lack of interest in the type of work (12%) and a lack of qualifications (11%) (**Table 34**).

Table 34. Main Reason for difficulty in filling vacancies in the previous 12 months

	Difficult to fill Vacancies %
Lack of skills the company demands	16
Low number of applicants generally	15
Not enough people interested in this type of work	12
Lack of qualifications the company demands	11
Lack of work experience the company demands	10
Unattractive terms and conditions	9
Impact of the benefits trap	7
Long/unsocial hours	7
Poor attitudes, motivation and personality	6
Geographic location of the firm	3
Wages offered are lower than other firms	1
Too much competition from other employers	1
Lack of basic ability to build upon	0
Lack of career progression	-
Other	2
Base = 100%	352

Almost 2 out of every 5 vacancies (39%) were considered to be difficult to fill due to a lack of skills. These employers were asked to specify what skills they felt had been lacking from applicants for their difficult to fill vacancies (**Table 35**). Overall, 60% reported applicants lacked other technical and practical skills, followed by customer handling skills (36%) and management skills (31%). One quarter of employers (25%) referred to communication skills as lacking from applicants.

Table 35. What skills were candidates lacking

	All Employers %
Other technical and practical skills	60
Customer handling skills	36
Management skills	31
Communication skills	25
General IT user skills	5
IT professional skills	5
Team working skills	5
Literacy skills	4
Using numbers	3
Problem solving skills	2
Any other difficulties	3
None	3
Base*** = 100%	113

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

4.5 Impact of difficult to fill vacancies on employers

Employers were asked to specify the impact of the difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months on their business.

Not being able to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months had an impact on the majority (72%) of businesses as shown in **Table 36**. One third of employers (32%) reported difficulties in meeting customer service objectives. Employers also reported difficulties with quality (17%), increased running costs (10%) and loss of business or orders to competitors (10%).

Table 36. Effect of difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months

	Employers %
Difficulties meeting customer service objectives	32
Difficulties meeting required quality standards	17
Increased operating/running costs	10
Loss of business or orders to competitors	10
Restriction to business development activities	3
To withdraw from offering certain products or services altogether	2
Difficulties introducing new working practices	2
Difficulties introducing technological change	2
Other	24
No particular problems	28
Base*** = 100%	349

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

4.6 Measures taken to overcome recruitment difficulties

Overall 41% of employers with difficult to fill vacancies during the past twelve months reported taking special measures to overcome recruitment difficulties. 83% of employers who did not take any measures to overcome recruitment difficulties reported that there was nothing they could do to overcome these difficulties.

Table 37 illustrates that the most popular measure taken to overcome recruitment difficulties was to use a more extensive range of recruitment as mentioned by 14% of employers, followed by considering a wider range of people (12%) and hire part-time or contract staff (7%).

Table 37. Measures taken to overcome recruitment difficulties in the previous 12 months

	Employers %
Used more extensive range of recruitment channels than normal	14
Considered a wider range of applicants	12
Hired part-time or contract staff	7
Spent more on recruitment or used more expensive methods	6
Been prepared to provide more training to less qualified recruits	4
Offered higher pay or more incentives than normal	3
Retrain existing staff	3
Built links with schools/colleges/universities	2
Changed the job specification by giving tasks to other staff	2
Changed the job specification by automating some tasks	0
Other	4
None	59
Base*** = 100%	352

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

4.7 Most difficult to fill vacancy types

When an employer reported that they had at least one difficult to fill vacancy in the previous 12 months, they were asked which type of vacancy was the **most** difficult to fill. As shown in **Table 38**, the highest proportion of most difficult to fill vacancies was for Sales occupations (23%).

Table 38. Occupational group of most difficult to fill vacancy in previous 12 months

Occupational group	Most Difficult to fill Vacancies %
Managers & Senior Officials**	13
Professionals**	10
Associate Professionals**	3
Administrative & Secretarial**	9
Skilled Trades**	15
Personal Service**	14
Sales**	23
Operatives**	7
Elementary Occupations**	5
Base = 100%	340

***Caution small numbers*

When asked which qualifications were needed for the most difficult to fill vacancies, 35% of employers reported “none”. Over a quarter of employers (28%) reported job specific experience as necessary to fill these vacancies.

Almost all employers were able to provide reasons as to why this type of vacancy was the most difficult to fill. As shown in **Table 39**, one third of employers (33%) considered these vacancies to be difficult to fill due to a lack of skills and one quarter of employers (25%) reported a lack of work experience.

Table 39. Reasons for most difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months

	All Employers %
Lack of skills the company demands	33
Lack of work experience the company demands	25
Low number of applicants generally	23
Not enough people interested in this type of work	21
Poor attitudes, motivation and personality	14
Long/unsocial hours	13
Lack of qualifications the company demands	10
Impact of the benefits trap	9
Wages offered are lower than other firms	7
Geographic location of the firm	3
Too much competition from other employers	3
Lack of basic ability to build upon	3
Unattractive terms and conditions	1
Lack of career progression	1
Other	6
Base ***= 100%	350

***Percentage estimates sum to more than 100% as the question is multiple response

Table 40 shows the single main reason for the difficult to fill vacancy in the previous year. The most frequently reported main reasons were poor attitudes, motivation and personality (19%) as well as lack of skills (17%).

Table 40. Single main reason for most difficult to fill vacancies in the previous 12 months

	All Employers %
Poor attitudes, motivation and personality	19
Lack of skills the company demands	17
Not enough people interested in this type of work	15
Lack of work experience the company demands	13
Impact of the benefits trap	8
Long/unsocial hours	7
Low number of applicants generally	4
Lack of qualifications the company demands	4
Geographic location of the firm	2
Wages offered are lower than other firms	1
Too much competition from other employers	1
Lack of basic ability to build upon	1
Unattractive terms and conditions	1
Lack of career progression	0
Other	7
Base = 100%	348

5.0 EMPLOYEE RETENTION DIFFICULTIES

5.1 Introduction

One important aspect that may impact on vacancies and difficulties in recruitment are difficulties experienced in the retention of existing staff. Staff may leave for a variety of reasons. However, the loss of skills and experience can prove difficult to replace in the short term. A series of questions were asked on the issue of staff retention difficulties to ascertain the nature and extent of this potential problem.

5.2 Staff retention difficulties

Table 41 indicates that overall, 7% of employers experienced some difficulties in retaining staff. There is however considerable difference in terms of retention difficulties between employers of different sizes. One quarter of large employers (25%) reported difficulty in retaining staff compared to 3% of very small employers, although it should be noted from **Section 2.4 (Table 3)** that very small employers also had a lower staff turnover (11%) compared to large employers (12%).

Table 41. Staff retention difficulties by size of employer

	All Employers %	1-4 Employees %	5-10 Employees %	11-49 Employees %	50+ Employees %
Difficulties in retaining staff	7	3	8	14	25
No difficulties in retaining staff	93	97	92	86	75
Base = 100%	4119	1044	732	1504	839

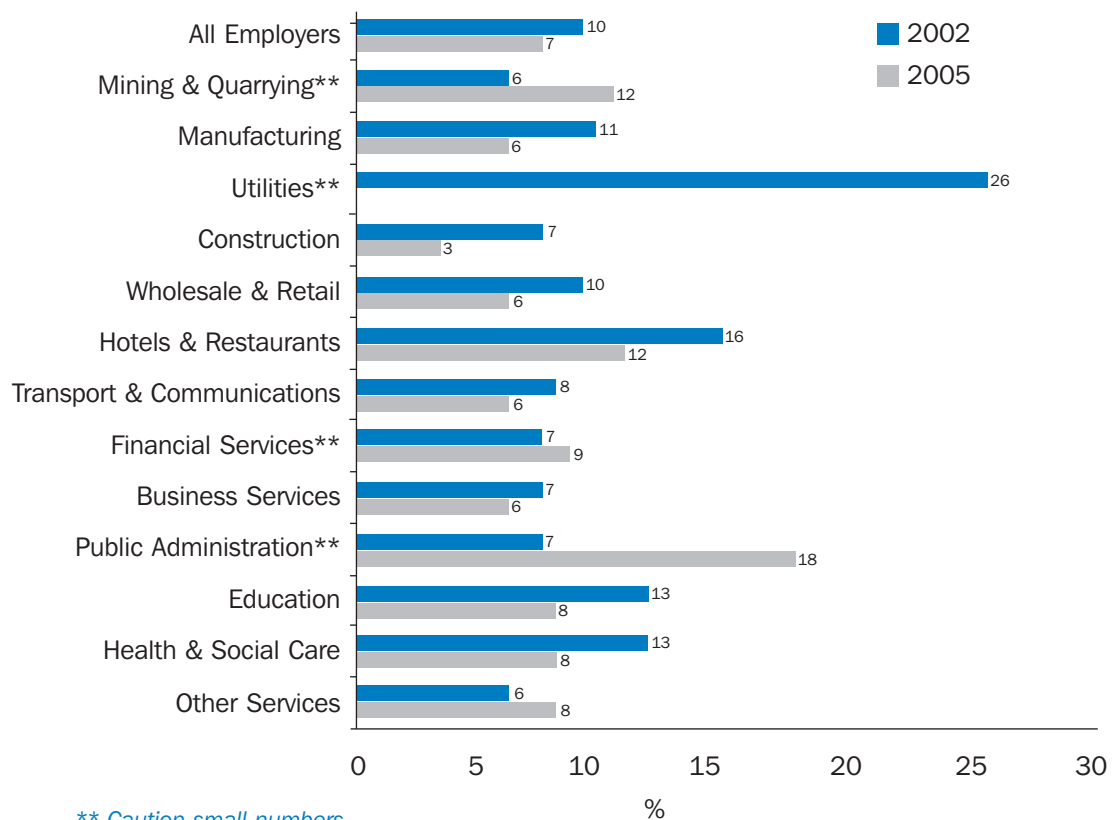
Major differences were also apparent between the various industrial sectors as shown in **Table 42**. Overall, 7% of employers reported some difficulties in retaining staff. Hotels and Restaurants suffered the largest proportion of staff retention difficulties (12%). Approximately one in ten employers in Financial Services (9%) reported retention difficulties.

Table 42. Staff retention difficulties by industry

Industrial Sector	Difficulties in retaining staff %	No difficulties in retaining staff %	Base = 100%
All Employers	7	93	4119
Mining & Quarrying**	12	88	17
Manufacturing	6	94	697
Utilities**	-	100	18
Construction	3	97	229
Wholesale & Retail	6	94	783
Hotels & Restaurants	12	88	181
Transport & Communications	6	94	324
Financial Services	9	91	133
Business Services	6	94	455
Public Administration**	18	82	74
Education	8	92	339
Health & Social Care	8	92	456
Other Services	8	92	413

** Caution small numbers

Figure 14. Staff retention difficulties by industry, 2002 and 2005 comparison



** Caution small numbers

Figure 14 compares the proportion of employers reporting retention difficulties between 2002 and 2005. Overall, a slight decrease (from 10% to 7%) is noted for all employers. The largest decreases have occurred in Manufacturing (11% in 2002 to 6% in 2005), Education (13% to 8%) as well as Health and Social Care (13% to 8%). Once again, Hotels and Restaurants reported the largest proportion of retention difficulties, however a slight decrease was noted in the current survey (from 16% in 2002 to 12% in 2005).

When NUTS III areas within NI were examined, employers across the five regions experienced broadly similar proportions of retention difficulties. Employers in Belfast experienced the highest retention difficulties (8%) and those in the North of NI reported the lowest (5%) (**Table 43**).

Table 43. Staff retention difficulties by NUTS III areas of Northern Ireland

	All Employers	Belfast	Outer Belfast	East NI	North NI	West and South NI
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Difficulties in retaining staff	7	8	7	6	5	7
No difficulties in retaining staff	93	92	93	94	95	93
Base = 100%	4117	948	583	1076	596	914

Table 44 indicates that the three occupational groups that employers experienced most difficulty in retaining staff in were those in Sales Occupations (20%), Elementary Occupations (20%) and Personal Service Occupations (16%).

Table 44. Occupational group of difficult to retain staff

Occupational group	Retention Difficulties %
Managers & Senior Officials**	1
Professionals**	3
Associate Professionals**	6
Administrative & Secretarial**	12
Skilled Trades**	12
Personal Service**	16
Sales**	20
Operatives**	9
Elementary Occupations	20
Base = 100%	545

** Caution small numbers

On average most of these jobs would require the jobholder working between 31-40 hours a week i.e. full time (**Table 45**).

Table 45. Hours worked per week for difficult to retain staff

Hours	Retention Difficulties %
1 to 10	2
11 to 20	13
21 to 30	10
31 to 40	70
At least 41 hours	5
Base = 100%	534

5.3 Types of qualifications required

Employers were asked what qualifications, if any, were required to carry out the jobs that they were finding it difficult to retain staff in (**Table 46**). A large proportion of these jobs did not require any formal qualification (38%). NVQs (16%) and GCSEs (13%) were the main qualifications required in posts in which it was difficult to retain staff. For those posts which require NVQs, over half were at Level 2 (53%) and one third were at Level 3 (33%). Other qualifications, which included HGV licenses, apprenticeships and food and safety certificates, were required in 16% of jobs.

Table 46. Qualifications required for retention difficulties

Qualification	Retention Difficulties %
Degree	5
Diploma	0
HNC/HND	4
ONC/OND	1
BTEC/BEC/TEC	1
Teaching qualification	1
Nursing/other medical qualification	1
Other Higher qualifications	1
A-Level	3
SCE Higher	0
NVQ	16
GNVQ	3
AS-Level	0
GCSE	13
RSA	4
City and Guilds	2
YT Certificate	1
Any other professional/vocational qualifications	3
Other	16
None	38
Base*** = 100%	542

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

5.4 Reasons for retention difficulties

Employers were then asked to specify the **main reason** to explain why they were experiencing their retention difficulties. The most common reasons provided by employers were that there were not enough people interested in doing this type of work (17%) as well as staff don't want long term commitment (16%) (**Table 47**).

Those employers who responded “not enough people interested in doing this type of work” were asked to elaborate further on this statement. A number of employers reported that “people don't want to do this type of work” as well as “work is boring/not attractive” or “it requires physical work.”

Table 47. Main reason for retention difficulties

	Retention Difficulties %
Not enough people interested in this type of work	17
Staff don't want long term commitment	16
Impact of the benefits trap	13
Long/unsocial hours	13
Too much competition from other employers	10
Lack of career progression	7
Wages offered are lower than other firms	7
Geographic location of the firm	6
Unattractive terms and conditions	6
Other	5
Base = 100%	544

5.5 Impact of the retention difficulties on the business

Employers were then asked how the retention difficulties they experienced had affected their business. The main impact of the retention difficulties was that it placed more strain on the management of the existing staff who had to cope with the staffing shortfall (**Table 48**). This was experienced in 64% of jobs with retention difficulties. Approximately in one in ten cases, employers experienced increased running costs (19%) and difficulties meeting customer service objectives (18%). However, in 14% of posts, the retention difficulty did not affect the business at all.

Table 48. Effect of retention difficulties

	Retention Difficulties %
More strain on management of existing staff	64
Increased running costs	19
Difficulties meeting customer service objectives	18
Increased recruitment costs	15
Difficulties with quality	14
Loss of business or orders to competitors	13
Loss of efficiency or increased wastage	10
Restriction to business development activities	9
Difficulties introducing new working practices	3
Difficulties accommodating technological change	1
Other	5
No affect	14
Base*** = 100%	545

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

5.6 Measures taken to overcome retention difficulties

It was important to know what measures, if any, employers had taken to overcome these retention difficulties. **Table 49** shows that for 45% of the jobs in which it was difficult to retain staff, no action was being taken to overcome the retention difficulties. The most common actions that were taken, were to introduce further training and development opportunities (17%), offer higher pay or more incentives than normal (15%) and introduce flexible working hours (14%). Other reasons include employment of foreign workers as well as discussion with staff to determine their reason for leaving.

Table 49. Measures taken to overcome retention difficulties

	Retention Difficulties %
Introduced further training/development	17
Offered higher pay or more incentives than usual	15
Introduced flexible working hours	14
Introduced job enrichment	7
Changed the job specification by giving tasks to other staff	6
Improved career progression	5
Provided assistance with travel	3
Changed the job specification by automating some tasks	2
Provided assistance with childcare	0
Other	8
None	45
Base*** = 100%	545

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

6.0 SKILL GAPS AMONG THE EXISTING WORKFORCE

6.1 Introduction

The survey concentrated not only on the issues of vacancies, difficult to fill vacancies and staff retention problems, but also on employers' perceptions of skill gaps within the existing workforce. Skill gaps exist where there is a gap between an employee's current skill level and what is needed to meet work objectives. A skill gap is different from a skill shortage vacancy which is a specific type of difficult to fill vacancy that occurs when applicants lack the required skills, qualifications or experience for the job. Whereas skill shortages refer to applicants for a job, skill gaps refer to those already in employment. While many employers recognise the necessity of providing training to new recruits, the issue of further training for the existing workforce to meet difficulties in recruitment or to meet new demands in the workplace can often be problematic.

6.2 Are there existing skill gaps?

At the start of the survey employers were requested to identify the occupational makeup of their workforce. Those employers, who said that there was a gap in the skills level of their staff, were asked follow up questions about the proficiency levels of each occupational group of staff that they employed in an attempt to discern which groups of employees were under-skilled.

The vast majority of employers (91%) said that their staff already possessed the skills needed to help the business meet its objectives. The remaining 9% of employers indicated that there was some gap between the types of skills that their current employees had, and those that the organisation needed to meet their business objectives, at the time of the interview. The majority of employers in other UK countries also considered their staff to be fully proficient. However the proportion reporting skill gaps (Scotland 21%, Wales 18%, England 16%) is much higher than in NI (9%).

There were differences in the perception of a skills gap between employers of different sizes. Only 6% of smaller employers reported a skill gap compared to just over a fifth (21%) of larger employers (**Table 50**). This may simply reflect the fact that larger workplaces have more employees and therefore commensurately more people “at risk” of not having the skills for the job.

Table 50. Reported skill gaps among the workforce by size of employer

	All Employers %	1-4 Employees %	5-10 Employees %	11-49 Employees %	50+ Employees %
Existing skills gap	9	6	12	15	21
No skills gap	91	94	88	85	79
Base = 100%	4115	1042	732	1502	839

The existence of skill gaps was most prevalent within the Financial Services, Health and Social Care and Other Services (14% in each sector) (**Table 51**).

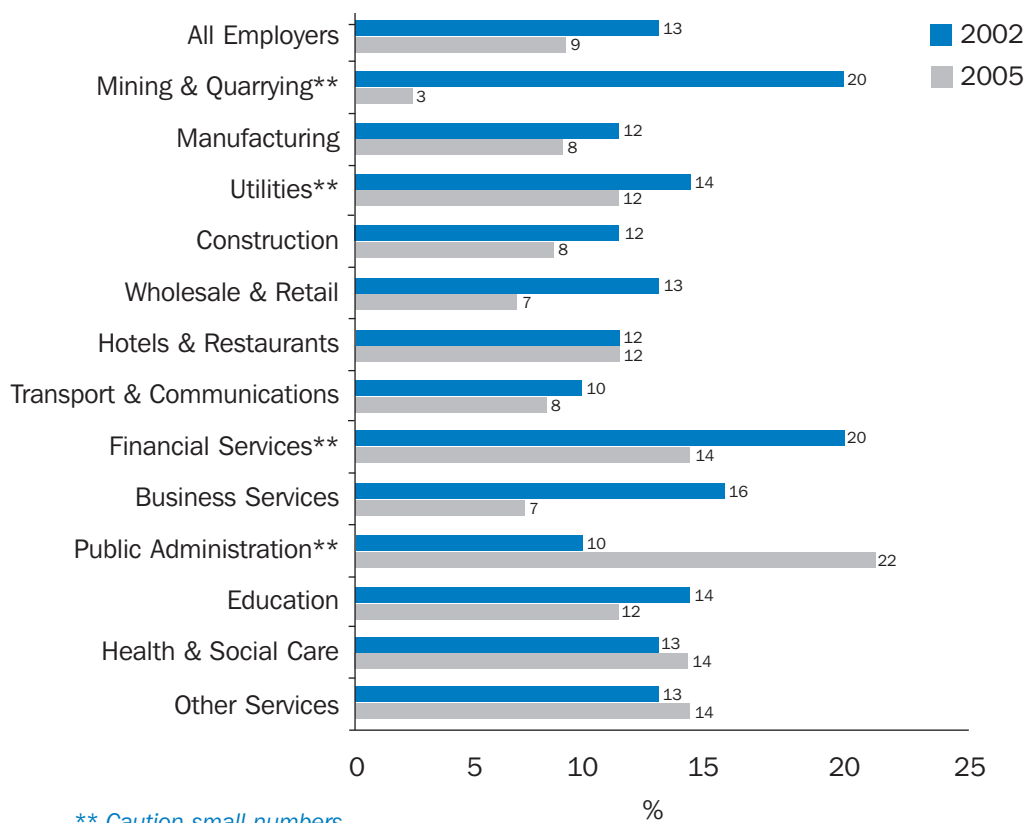
Table 51. Reported skill gaps among the workforce by industry

Industrial Sector	Existing skills gap %	No skills gap %	Base = 100%
All Employers	9	91	4115
Mining & Quarrying**	3	97	17
Manufacturing	8	92	695
Utilities**	12	88	18
Construction	8	92	229
Wholesale & Retail	7	93	782
Hotels & Restaurants	12	88	181
Transport & Communications	8	92	324
Financial Services	14	86	134
Business Services	7	93	454
Public Administration**	22	78	74
Education	12	88	339
Health & Social Care	14	86	455
Other Services	14	86	413

** *Caution small numbers*

Figure 15 compares reported skill gaps between the survey conducted in 2002 and the current survey. Overall there has been a reduction (from 13% to 9%) in the proportion of employers reporting skill gaps. The most notable decrease in reported skill gaps occurred in Business Services (from 16% in 2002 to 7% in 2005) and Wholesale and Retail (from 13% to 7%).

Figure 15. Reported skill gaps among the workforce by industry, 2002 and 2005 comparison



Some differences were also apparent when the five NUTS III regions of NI were examined separately (**Table 52**). Skill gaps were reported more frequently in Belfast where 11% of employers reported a skill gap among the existing workforce. In comparison, only 6% in Outer Belfast reported skill gaps.

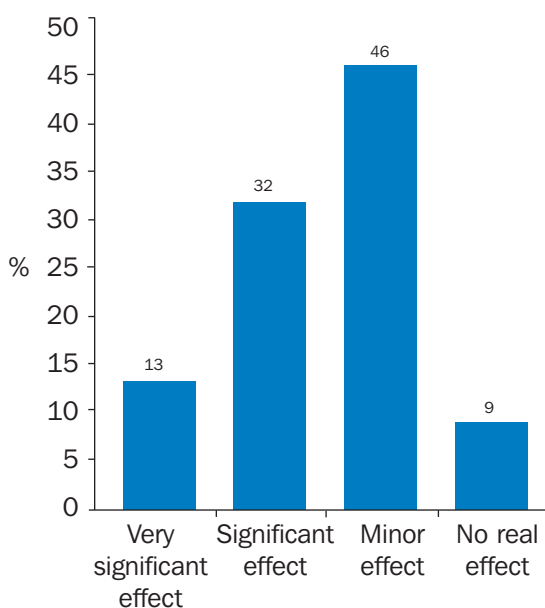
Table 52. Reported skill gaps among the workforce by NUTS III areas of Northern Ireland

	All Employers	Belfast	Outer Belfast	East NI	North NI	West and South NI
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Existing skills gap	9	11	6	9	10	10
No skills gap	91	89	94	91	90	90
Base = 100%	4113	948	580	1075	596	914

6.3 The extent of the skill gaps

Those employers who indicated there was a gap between the type of skills their current employees had and those the organisation needed were asked how significant they felt the gap was in terms of an ability to meet business objectives. Almost half said the gap had a very significant (major) effect (13%) or a significant effect (32%) as shown in **Figure 16**.

Figure 16. Significance of skill gaps



6.4 Reasons for skill gaps

The employers were then asked to specify the reasons for the lack of full proficiency among their groups of staff. Overall, lack of experience was cited as the most common reason for skill gaps among the workforce (67%). In a number of cases, training programmes only partially completed (35%) and failure to train and develop staff (15%) were reported as the reasons why staff were not fully proficient in their jobs (**Table 53**).

Overall a higher proportion of employers reported other reasons as to why staff were not fully proficient (28%). A number of common themes occurred across all occupations including a lack of motivation, attitude and a lack of soft skills. Problems with language were identified for Associate Professionals, Sales, Operatives and Elementary Occupations.

Employers were then asked to specify the main reason from those given for a lack of full proficiency amongst their staff. **Table 54** suggests that the majority of employers consider the main reason for a skill gap is lack of experience due to staff being recently recruited (36%). Around one quarter (26%) of employers reported the main reason for the skill gap is that staff have not completed training programmes. These 'transitory' skill gaps are likely to close as the employees gain more experience or complete their training.

Table 53. Reasons for skill gaps by those staff with a lack of full proficiency

	% All Occupations	Managers & Senior Officials**	Professionals**	Associate Professionals**	Administrative & Secretarial	Skilled Trades**	Personal Service**	Sales**	Operatives**	Elementary Occupations**
Failure to train and develop staff	15	15	17	4	17	3	19	5	7	6
Recruitment problems	13	2	23	1	3	2	3	6	12	4
High staff turnover	14	1	2	1	3	4	9	11	18	20
Inability of workforce to keep up with change	14	3	23	4	7	6	3	2	15	4
Lack of experience or staff being recently recruited	67	23	36	66	43	73	46	51	58	41
Training programmes only partially completed	35	57	34	2	40	40	44	32	18	52
Other	28	17	37	59	15	16	38	28	24	12
No particular reason	6	1	2	1	1	7	4	1	1	4
Base*** = 100%	392	76	48	47	109	64	55	89	69	66

** Caution small numbers

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

Table 54. Main reason for skill gaps by those staff with a lack of full proficiency

	% All Occupations	Managers & Senior Officials**	Professionals**	Associate Professionals**	Administrative & Secretarial	Skilled Trades**	Personal Service**	Sales**	Operatives**	Elementary Occupations**
Failure to train and develop staff	7	12	8	2	8	2	17	3	3	6
Recruitment problems	3	-	23	1	1	-	-	3	9	3
High staff turnover	4	1	2	-	1	1	5	4	9	18
Inability of workforce to keep up with change	2	1	18	3	3	3	1	0	4	-
Lack of experience or staff being recently recruited	36	18	11	37	40	57	33	45	45	25
Training programmes only partially completed	26	51	12	1	30	25	22	24	10	35
Other	20	16	26	57	15	5	20	20	19	11
No particular reason	2	1	2	1	1	7	3	1	1	4
Base = 100%	392	76	48	47	109	64	54	89	69	66

** Caution small numbers

Table 55. Skill gap due to changing skill needs

	All Occupations	Managers & Senior Officials**	Professionals**	Associate Professionals**	Administrative & Secretarial	Skilled Trades**	Personal Service**	Sales**	Operatives**	Elementary Occupations**
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Development of new products and services	12	6	28	11	10	8	3	10	12	4
Introduction of new working practices	13	15	33	11	12	12	7	8	9	12
Introduction of new technology	23	51	26	61	36	13	8	4	16	1
None of these	75	39	26	29	56	78	84	85	71	84
Base*** = 100%	392	76	48	47	109	64	55	89	69	66

** Caution small numbers

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

Employees were also asked whether skill gaps among their workforce were caused by changing skill needs due to development of new products and services, the introduction of new working practices and the introduction of new technology (Table 55). The majority of employers (75%) did not consider their skill gaps to have arisen because of what would appear to be positive developments in the organisation that could lead to higher productivity and/or higher output. These skill gaps appear to have arisen due to “business as usual”.

6.5 Skills needing improvement

Table 56 shows the most frequently reported skills that employers stated that their staff needed to improve. Employers could report more than one skill as lacking and for that reason the percentages appear to sum to more than one hundred. A large proportion of skill gaps arise mainly because of weaknesses in the softer core skills -

- Customer handling skills (40% of employers cited these skills as needing improvement among staff with an identified skill gap);
- Communication skills (37%) and
- Team working skills (24%).

Skill gaps of the current workforce also exist for other technical and practical skills (40%). These types of skills tend to be job-specific skills within certain sectors.

Of the 7% who reported 'other' skills as lacking from their employees, half of the employers referred to various personal characteristics including behaviour, commitment, motivation and use of initiative.

Table 56. Skills that need improved by those staff with a lack of full proficiency by occupational group

	All Occupations	Managers & Senior Officials**	Professionals**	Associate Professionals**	Administrative & Secretarial	Skilled Trades**	Personal Service**	Sales**	Operatives**	Elementary Occupations**
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
General IT user skills	20	55	7	6	56	4	8	27	13	-
IT professional skills	8	9	8	36	9	1	-	0	-	-
Communication skills	37	21	27	34	40	6	19	44	18	33
Customer handling skills	40	21	27	12	29	3	37	62	20	38
Team working skills	24	23	9	24	20	13	22	24	22	25
Problem solving skills	18	19	31	14	24	9	9	10	23	12
Management skills	15	40	33	35	7	2	-	2	1	7
Using numbers	10	5	1	4	6	1	-	20	11	10
Literacy skills	10	5	7	6	16	2	3	9	13	7
Other technical and practical skills	40	15	29	29	16	79	65	13	54	60
Any other difficulties	7	1	7	3	8	2	13	2	14	7
None	5	5	10	2	4	10	1	1	6	2
Base*** = 100%	392	76	48	47	109	64	55	89	69	66

** Caution small numbers

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

6.6 Measures taken to overcome skill gaps

As for current recruitment difficulties and retention difficulties, employers were asked what measures, if any, they had taken to overcome the skill gaps among their staff. The majority of employers had taken some action in response to the skill gap - only 16% had not taken any particular measure of action.

Table 57 shows the main measure taken by employers to overcome their skill gaps was to provide further training and development (59%), followed by an increase/expansion trainee programme (26%). However in 16% of cases no measures were taken to improve the skills of staff.

Table 57. Measures taken to overcome skill gaps

	All Employers %
Provide further training/development	59
Increase/expand trainee programmes	26
Change working practices	13
Reallocate work within the company	9
Increase recruitment	7
Expand recruitment channels	4
Other	4
None	16
Base*** = 100%	391

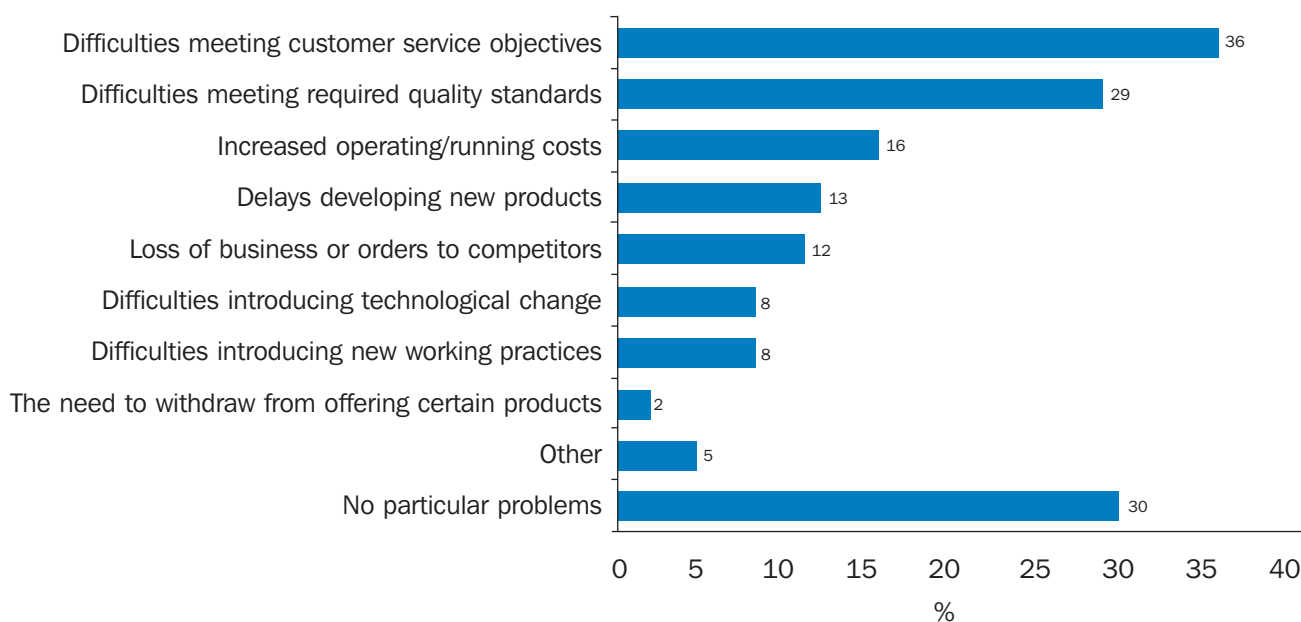
*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

6.7 Impact of skill gaps

The employers were asked how the lack of full proficiency among the occupational groups had impacted on their business.

Considering the definition of a skill gap i.e. a gap between the skills of current employees and those needed by the establishment to meet its business objectives, it is surprising that in 30% of cases a lack of full proficiency had no impact on the business (**Figure 17**). However for other employers, the skill gaps created difficulties in meeting customer service objectives (36% of employers) and difficulties in meeting required quality standards (29% of cases).

Figure 17. Effect of skill gaps



*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

6.8 Potential barriers facing employers

Employers who stated they had staff who were not fully proficient at their job were asked what barriers may exist to them **developing** a more proficient team of staff in the future.

Overall 33% of employers with skill gaps said a lack of time for training may hinder the development of a more proficient team of staff in the future (**Table 58**). Other potential barriers to developing a more proficient team of staff in the future were a lack of funding for training (30%) and a lack of cover for training (29%).

Table 58. Potential barriers to developing a fully proficient team of staff

	All Employers %
Lack of time for training	33
A lack of funding for training	30
Lack of cover for training	29
Lack of suitable courses in the area	22
High staff turnover	14
Lack of suitable courses generally	13
Unwillingness of staff to undertake training	9
Any other	8
Don't know	0
None	27
Base*** = 100%	390

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

Employers who did not report a skill gap amongst their workforce were asked what barriers might exist to stop them **maintaining** a proficient team of staff in the office. Overall 65% of employers felt that no real barriers exist to them maintaining a proficient workforce (**Table 59**).

Table 59. Potential barriers to maintaining a fully proficient team of staff

	All Employers %
Lack of time for training	10
Lack of cover for training	9
A lack of funding for training	8
Lack of suitable courses in the area	4
Lack of suitable courses generally	3
Unwillingness of staff to undertake training	2
High staff turnover	2
Any other	4
Don't know	9
None	65
Base*** = 100%	2919

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

7.0 TRAINING

7.1 Introduction

The 2005 Survey included a section which measured the extent to which public and private sector businesses have adapted to the growing policy of workforce development. An important aspect, when considering recruitment and retention issues, is to look at the level of training that is afforded to employees. This chapter mainly considers the provision of off-the-job and on-the-job training, as well as the delivery of training provided.

7.2 Provision of off-the-job training

The respondents were asked if they had provided any off-the-job training to their staff over the last 12 months. Off-the-job training was defined as 'training that was delivered away from the immediate work position, whether at the business premises or elsewhere'.

This type of training included all sorts of courses, e.g. full or part time; correspondence or distance learning; Health and Safety training etc, as long as it was funded or arranged by the employer for employees working at the business.

Table 60 indicates that overall, 34% of employers had organised some off-the-job training for their employees in the previous 12 months. A higher proportion of employers had provided this type of training in other UK countries (Wales 58%, England 46%, Scotland 17% provided off-the-job training only plus 34% provided a mixture of both on-the-job and off-the-job training).

There was considerable variation by size of employer. Most large employers (75%) had organised some form of off-the-job training for their staff compared to only 23% of very small employers.

Table 60. Off-the-job training by employer size

	All Employers %	1-4 Employees %	5-10 Employees %	11-49 Employees %	50+ Employees %
Off-the-job training	34	23	43	61	75
No off-the-job training	66	77	57	39	25
Base = 100%	4071	1028	725	1493	825

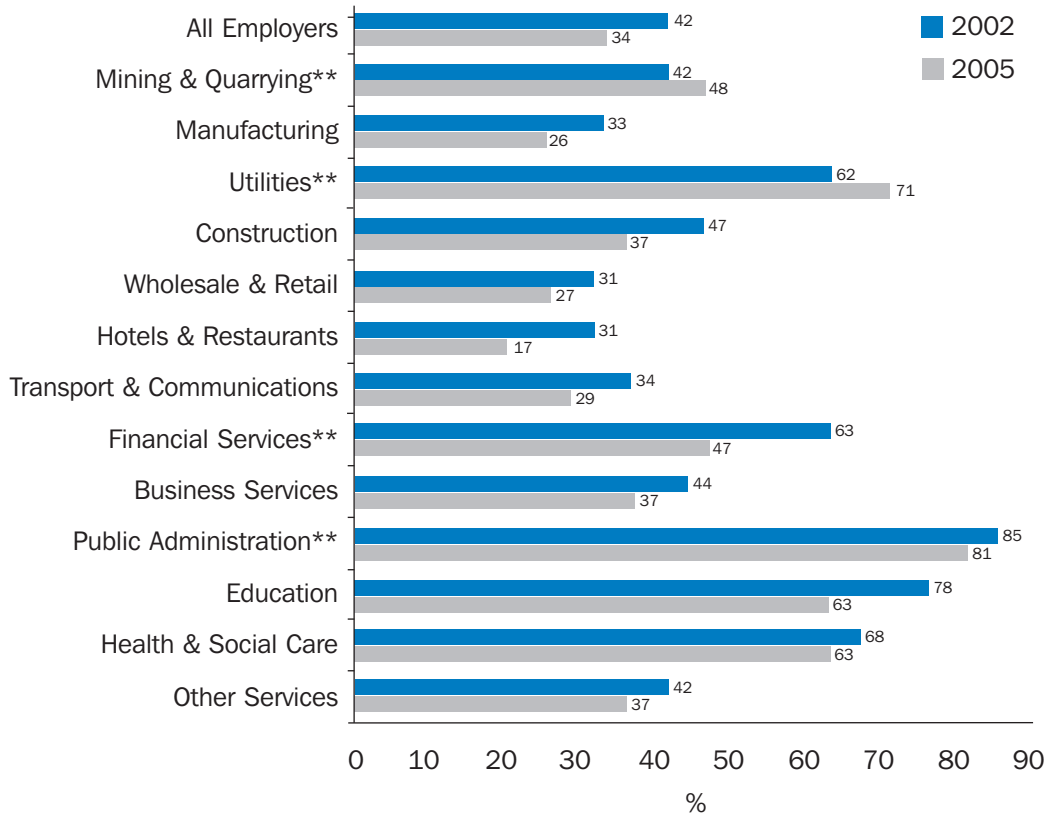
Across all employers, the provision of off-the-job training again varied considerably between the industrial sectors. Almost two thirds of employers (63%) in both the Education sector as well as the Health and Social Care sector provided off-the-job training compared to 17% of employers in the Hotels and Restaurants sector (**Table 61**).

Table 61. Off-the-job training by industry

Industrial Sector	Off-the-job training %	No off-the-job training %	Base = 100%
All Employers	34	66	4071
Mining & Quarrying**	48	52	17
Manufacturing	26	74	691
Utilities**	71	29	18
Construction	37	63	228
Wholesale & Retail	27	73	774
Hotels & Restaurants	17	83	181
Transport & Communications	29	71	321
Financial Services	47	53	131
Business Services	37	63	450
Public Administration**	81	19	72
Education	63	37	331
Health & Social Care	63	37	450
Other Services	37	63	407

** *Caution small numbers*

Figure 18. Off-the-job training by industry, 2002 and 2005 comparison



** Caution small numbers

The Skills Monitoring Survey conducted in 2002 showed 42% of employers provided off-the-job training for staff. However, in 2005 there was a reduction in the proportion of employers providing off-the-job training to 34% (**Figure 18**). Correspondingly, a decline is noted in each industrial sector for which robust estimates were calculated (i.e. base sample is greater than 100 businesses). The most notable decrease in the proportion of employers providing off-the-job training is for the Education sector (from 78% in 2002 to 63% in 2005) and Hotels and Restaurants sector (from 31% to 17%).

There was only a little variation in off-the-job training across areas in Northern Ireland. Employers in Belfast (37%) reported the highest off-the-job training and those in the North of NI the lowest (31%) (**Table 62**).

Table 62. Off-the-job training by NUTS III areas of Northern Ireland

	All Employers	Belfast	Outer Belfast	East NI	North NI	West and South NI
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Off-the-job training	34	37	36	33	31	34
No off-the-job training	66	63	64	67	69	66
Base = 100%	4069	938	578	1060	591	902

7.3 Reasons for not providing off-the-job training

Those employers who had not provided off-the-job training to any of their staff were asked to specify the reasons for this.

Almost three quarters of these employers (73%) said that their staff already had sufficient skills to do their job. This high level of skills is consistent with the views of employers reporting skill gaps - over 90% of employers did not consider there to be a gap between the skills in their current workforce and those needed to meet the establishment's business objectives (**Table 50**).

Over one quarter of these employers (27%) also stated that they preferred other training methods such as on-the-job training. Only 1% of employers said that they had not provided off-the-job training because there was a lack of information on training available or they were afraid their trained staff would be poached by other employers (**Table 63**).

Table 63. Reasons for no off-the-job training

	Employers
	%
Staff have sufficient skills to do their job	73
Other training method preferred (e.g. on-the-job training)	27
Cost of off-the-job training	5
Time constraints	4
No money available for training	2
There is no suitable training available	2
Lack of information on training available	1
Trained staff will be poached by other employers	1
Other	2
Base*** = 100%	1957

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

7.4 Who received the off-the-job training?

Those employers who had organised some off-the-job training for their staff were then asked to indicate which of their staff's occupational groups had actually received this training.

For most of the occupational categories, the majority of employers had provided some off-the-job training. The two exceptions to this were Elementary Occupations (which recorded the lowest proportion of employers (43%) providing off-the-job training) and Administrative and Secretarial Occupations (in which half (50%) of the employers had provided this type of training). The provision of off-the-job training was most prevalent for staff working in Professional Occupations (76%), Personal Service Occupations (75%) and Associate Professional Occupations (74%) (**Table 64**).

Table 64. Provision of off-the-job training by occupational group

Occupational Group	Off-the-job training %	No off-the-job training %	Base = 100%
Managers & Senior Officials	62	38	1903
Professionals	76	24	841
Associate Professionals	74	26	666
Administrative & Secretarial	50	50	1662
Skilled Trades	71	29	728
Personal Service	75	25	361
Sales	61	39	657
Operatives	67	33	599
Elementary Occupations	43	57	894

Table 65. Proportion of staff receiving off-the-job training

	Off-the-job training %
1% to 24%	17
25% to 49%	21
50% to 74%	20
75% to 99%	11
100%	31
Base = 100%	2051

Approximately one third of employers (31%) provided off-the-job training to **ALL** of their staff (**Table 65**).

7.5 Delivery of off-the-job training provided

The employers were then asked to identify the delivery of off-the-job training that they had funded or arranged for their staff in the last 12 months.

Across all employers most of the off-the-job training that had been provided was job specific training (76%) followed by health and safety or first aid training (53%) and training in new technology (30%) (**Table 66**).

Table 66. Delivery of off-the-job training by industry

	All Employers	Mining & Quarrying**	Manufacturing	Utilities**	Construction	Wholesale & Retail	Hotels & Restaurants**	Transport & Communications	Financial Services**	Business Services	Public Administration**	Education	Health & Social Care	Other Services
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Induction training	22	29	18	47	11	31	28	20	32	10	44	23	25	23
Health & Safety or First Aid training	53	86	58	82	76	58	55	43	32	50	65	52	48	42
Job specific training	76	50	65	82	60	73	61	79	93	70	80	84	85	92
Supervisory training	15	11	9	26	3	19	22	9	16	10	36	21	14	20
Management training	24	11	20	21	5	38	28	16	36	13	47	29	24	27
Training in new technology	30	29	38	30	12	37	19	40	41	23	50	35	29	21
Training in foreign languages	1	18	1	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	-	1	1	-
Soft/generic skills	6	7	5	25	0	2	11	8	9	3	15	11	8	9
Other	5	-	3	18	-	4	4	18	11	2	6	6	6	11
Base***=100%	2102	10	281	13	151	346	75	114	70	239	58	258	305	182

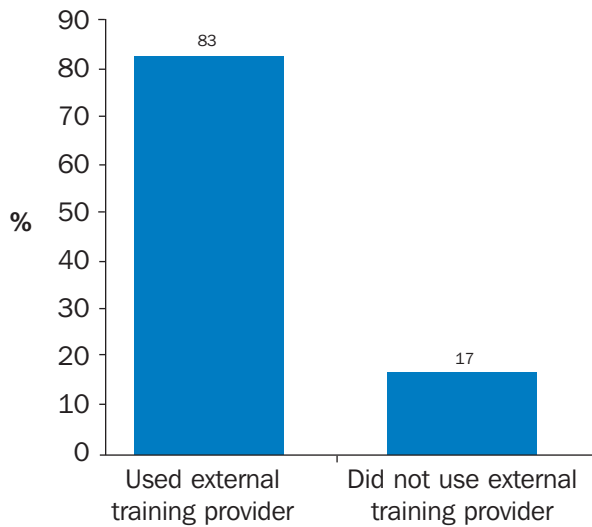
** Caution small numbers

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

7.6 Use of External Training Providers

Employers were asked if they had used any external training providers to deliver their off-the-job training and the delivery of external training providers used. The vast majority of employers (83%) had used external training providers to deliver off-the-job training to their staff (**Figure 19**).

Figure 19. Use of external training providers



The main external training providers used were private sector training companies (46%) or FE Colleges (21%) (**Table 67**).

Table 67. Provider of off-the-job training by industry

	All Employers	Mining & Quarrying**	Manufacturing	Utilities**	Construction	Wholesale & Retail	Hotels & Restaurants**	Transport & Communications**	Financial Services**	Business Services	Public Administration**	Education	Health & Social Care	Other Services
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Staff at this site	5	-	8	13	2	3	9	5	11	2	8	8	8	4
Further Education Colleges	21	17	20	14	19	19	20	14	9	20	20	25	25	30
University	10	-	11	13	5	3	3	5	4	8	18	35	19	4
Sector Training Council	9	11	6	-	46	1	3	7	-	12	4	3	4	4
Private sector training companies or consultants	46	100	56	85	41	40	37	61	43	53	56	33	45	52
Equipment suppliers e.g. computer companies	16	6	33	7	12	22	17	10	12	11	6	10	7	20
Professional associations	12	-	6	7	8	6	11	18	31	20	10	9	24	4
Employers representative bodies	2	-	2	7	2	2	2	1	1	5	4	2	2	0
Other establishments within own organisation	14	6	4	12	0	21	16	32	25	5	31	15	14	24
Other employers	3	-	4	13	-	5	3	3	1	1	2	3	4	4
Department for Employment and Learning	4	-	1	-	0	7	6	-	1	0	4	6	5	5
Other	11	-	6	22	1	10	12	5	15	11	9	20	11	20
Base***=100%	1764	7	237	9	143	269	55	82	50	207	51	230	261	163

** Caution small numbers

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

The majority of employers did not experience any difficulty over the last year in finding an appropriate training provider (95%) (**Table 68**).

Table 68. Difficulty over the last year in finding an appropriate training provider

	Difficulty finding an appropriate training provider %
Yes	5
No, have not experienced any difficulty	95
Base = 100%	2080

However, finding relevant courses was the most common training need that was difficult to satisfy through providers outside the organisation and was reported by 56% of these employers (**Table 69**). The other main difficulties reported were the lack of local providers (28%) and obtaining job specific training (27%).

Table 69. Types of training needs found difficult to satisfy through providers outside the organisation

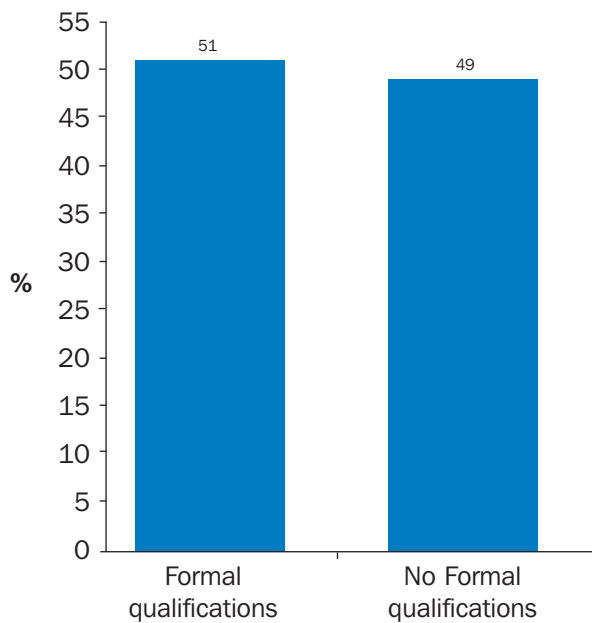
	Types of training needs difficult to satisfy through outside providers %
Finding relevant courses	56
Provider not available locally	28
Job specific	27
First aid/health and safety	6
IT	6
NVQ training	4
Other	18
Base*** = 100%	152

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

7.7 Did the off-the-job training lead to formal qualifications?

Employers were asked if any of the off-the-job training that they had funded or arranged for their staff had led to any formal qualifications and what these qualifications were. Half of the off-the-job training provided by sector employers (51%) led to formal qualifications (**Figure 19**).

Figure 20. Formal qualifications resulting from off-the-job training



Across all employers, the most common qualifications that the off-the-job training resulted in were industry recognised qualifications (40%) followed by NVQs (29%), (**Table 70**).

Table 70. Formal qualifications resulting from off-the-job training by industry

	All Employers	Mining & Quarrying**	Manufacturing	Utilities**	Construction**	Wholesale & Retail	Hotels & Restaurants**	Transport & Communications**	Financial Services**	Business Services	Public Administration**	Education	Health & Social Care	Other Services**
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NVQs/NCVAs	29	9	23	-	35	25	33	41	17	11	61	40	34	35
Other nationally recognised qualifications eg RSA, BTEC	11	9	14	-	8	6	9	7	7	7	13	14	14	23
Qualifications specific to your company	23	22	17	53	23	22	14	26	19	13	19	14	26	52
Industry recognised qualifications	40	61	45	32	57	32	30	64	43	54	21	26	27	41
Higher qualifications such as degrees	11	18	8	11	3	13	4	5	7	9	28	19	23	3
Other	18	-	17	57	7	21	33	25	34	29	9	15	15	5
Base***=100%	1188	7	153	6	97	194	46	42	37	127	38	154	189	98

** Caution small numbers

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

Over half of the employers (55%) reported no increase or decrease in the amount spent on off-the-job training in the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months. Over one third of employers (39%) reported an increase in the amount spent (**Table 71**).

Table 71. Comparison of amount spent on off-the-job training in the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months

	Comparison of amount spent %
A major increase	11
A minor increase	28
No increase or decrease	55
A minor decrease	5
A major decrease	1
Base = 100%	1797

The most commonly reported benefit which employers hoped to achieve from off-the-job training funded in the last 12 months was an increase/upgrade in workforce skill levels. This was reported in 67% of cases. This was followed by an improved ability to meet customer service objectives (50%) and an improved ability to meet required quality standards (46%) (**Table 72**).

Table 72. Benefits employers hope to achieve from off-the-job training funded in the last 12 months

	Benefits %
Increase/upgrade workforce skill levels	67
Improved ability to meet customer service objectives	50
Improved ability to meet required quality standards	46
Improved management capabilities	29
Improved employee motivation	29
Introducing technological change	24
Better ability to introduce new products	22
Increased workforce productivity	21
Introducing new working practices	20
Faster development of new products	10
Reduced operating/running costs	10
None of the above	15
Base*** = 100%	2097

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

Employers were also asked about the impact of the off-the-job training on a range of work areas. Over half of employers (51%) reported that off-the-job training had a major impact on both improved employee motivation and increased workforce productivity (**Table 73**). Off-the-job training also had a high impact on the faster development of new products with a major effect reported in 48% of employers. Off-the-job training was most frequently reported as having no effect to date on better ability to introduce new products (14%).

Table 73. Impact of off-the-job training

	Major Effect %	Minor Effect %	No effect to date %	Base = 100%
Impact on workforce skill levels	39	56	5	1546
Impact on management capabilities	39	53	8	718
Impact on faster development of new products	48	47	5	208
Impact on better ability to introduce new products	41	45	14	454
Impact on improved ability to meet customer service objectives	42	52	6	1072
Impact on improved ability to meet required quality standards	46	52	2	1057
Impact on reduced operating/running costs	41	51	7	265
Impact on introduction of technological change	43	49	8	512
Impact on introduction of new working practices	42	56	3	481
Impact on improved employee motivation	51	47	2	733
Impact on increased workforce productivity	51	44	6	536

7.8 Provision of on-the-job training

Respondents were asked if they had provided any on-the-job training to their staff over the last 12 months. On-the-job training was defined as 'training given at the desk or place where the staff usually work'. Six in ten employers said that they had provided on-the-job training to their staff (60%). This was more commonplace within larger employers (96%) but less so in very small businesses (43%) (**Table 74**).

UK information relating to on-the-job training is only available for Scotland where 12% of employers provided on-the-job training only and 34% provided a mixture of both on-the-job and off-the-job training.

Table 74. On-the-job training by employer size

	All Employers %	1-4 Employees %	5-10 Employees %	11-49 Employees %	50+ Employees %
On-the-job training	60	43	82	90	96
No on-the-job training	40	57	18	10	4
Base = 100%	4062	1027	723	1489	823

For each of the industrial sectors, the majority of employers (i.e. more than half of the employers) provided on-the-job training. Within the sectors, on-the-job training was most prevalent in Education (78%) and Health and Social Care (71%) (**Table 75**). Other sectors in which a large proportion of employers provided on-the-job training to their staff included Financial Services (68%), Hotels and Restaurants (64%) and Wholesale and Retail (63%).

Table 75. On-the-job training by industry

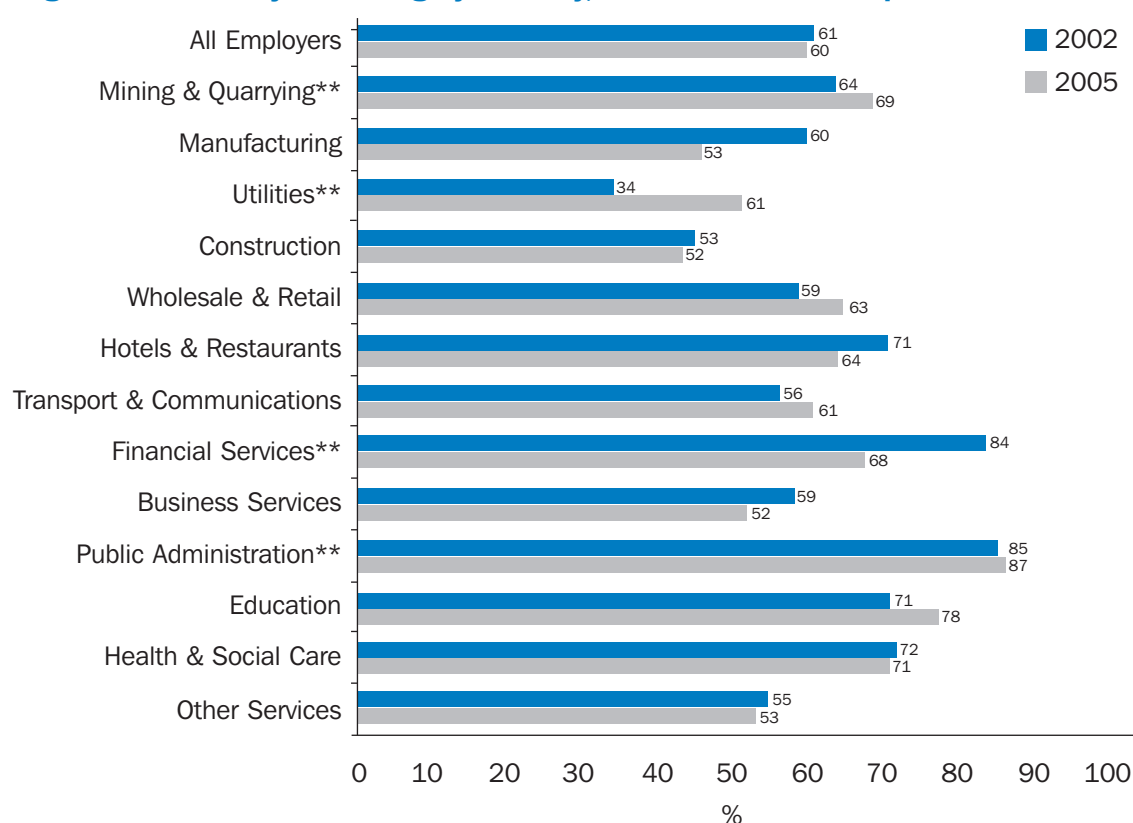
Industrial Sector	On-the-job training %	No on-the-job training %	Base = 100%
All employers	60	40	4062
Mining & Quarrying**	69	31	17
Manufacturing	53	47	688
Utilities**	61	39	18
Construction	52	48	227
Wholesale & Retail	63	37	775
Hotels & Restaurants	64	36	181
Transport & Communications	61	39	322
Financial Services	68	32	131
Business Services	52	48	448
Public Administration**	87	13	73
Education	78	22	329
Health & Social Care	71	29	449
Other Services	53	47	404

** *Caution small numbers*

Figure 21 compares the proportion of employers providing on-the-job training between 2002 and 2005. Overall, the same proportion of employers are providing on-the-job training in 2005 (60%) as in 2002 (61%).

There was some variation in the proportion of employers providing on-the-job training between the two surveys for a number of industrial sectors. The most notable decline in the proportion of employers funding or arranging on-the-job training was for Manufacturing (from 60% in 2002 to 53% in 2005), Hotels and Restaurants (71% to 64%) and Business Services (from 59% to 52%). However, figures for the Education sector indicate an increase in the proportion of employers providing on-the-job training (from 71% in 2002 to 78% in 2005).

Figure 21. On-the-job training by industry, 2002 and 2005 comparison



**Caution small numbers

On-the-job training varied slightly across areas in Northern Ireland. Employers in Belfast (67%) were most likely to have provided on-the-job training to their staff and those in Outer Belfast (56%) were least likely (**Table 76**).

Table 76. On-the-job training by NUTS III areas of Northern Ireland

	All Employers	Belfast	Outer Belfast	East NI	North NI	West and South NI
	%	%	%	%	%	%
On-the-job training	60	67	56	58	61	57
No on-the-job training	40	33	44	42	39	43
Base = 100%	4060	937	576	1057	588	902

7.9 Reasons why on-the-job training was not provided to staff

As noted above, 40% of employers said that they did not provide any on-the-job training to their staff in the previous 12 months. Almost all (92%) of these employers said that their reason for not doing so was because their staff already had sufficient skills to do their job (**Table 77**). This is consistent with the findings in **Chapter 6**, where 9% of employers reported skill gaps among their workforce (**Table 50**).

Table 77. Reasons for no on-the-job training

	Employers %
Staff have sufficient skills to do their job	92
Other training method preferred (e.g. off-the-job training)	6
Costs associated with on-the-job training	3
Time constraints	2
Trained staff will be poached by other employers	0
Other	3
Base*** = 100%	972

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

7.10 Delivery of on-the-job training provided

Employers were then asked to identify the delivery of on-the-job training that they had arranged for their workforce.

Across all employers, the more common providers of on-the-job training were training by other experienced staff in the company (57%) and training by line manager or supervisors (45%). Least common delivery involved the use of computer based packages which accounted for 4% (**Table 78**).

Table 78. Provider of on-the-job training by industry

	All Employers	Mining & Quarrying**	Manufacturing	Utilities**	Construction	Wholesale & Retail	Hotels & Restaurants	Transport & Communications	Financial Services	Business Services	Public Administration**	Education	Health & Social Care	Other Services
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Training by your company training officer or specialist	13	25	14	34	4	8	8	18	32	15	25	20	21	15
Training by a line manager or supervisor	45	38	38	80	37	52	43	46	63	37	58	50	44	48
Training by other experienced staff at your company	57	25	62	34	60	54	63	51	62	61	69	58	59	49
Training by staff in the company	16	5	17	10	8	11	32	17	20	10	13	23	21	17
Training provided by equipment suppliers	11	12	12	24	14	11	5	12	3	11	2	8	14	13
Private sector training companies or consultancies	5	17	4	5	3	5	1	3	3	5	9	11	10	3
Computer based training packages	4	3	1	9	7	2	1	4	18	11	3	6	3	2
Other	3	-	1	-	1	3	-	4	6	3	1	4	3	2
Base***=100%	3089	13	501	12	158	620	156	217	104	319	64	273	378	274

** Caution small numbers

*** Percentage estimates sum to more than 100%, as the question is multiple response

7.11 Provision of off-the-job and on-the-job training

When combining the findings for both off-the-job and on-the-job training, just over two thirds (68%) of employers provided or arranged training for their staff. **Table 79** shows approximately one third (34%) of employers provided on-the-job training only while 8% provided off-the-job training only. A quarter (26%) of employers provided both on-the-job and off-the-job training.

Table 79. Provision of off-the-job and on-the-job training

	Employers %
Off-the-job training only	8
On-the-job training only	34
Both on-the-job and off-the-job training	26
No Training	32
Base = 100%	4074

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Background

The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2005 was designed to provide a comprehensive snapshot of current skills needs of Northern Ireland employers in non-agricultural sectors. The primary purpose of this survey was to update the findings of the Survey conducted in 2002 and therefore we now have some useful comparisons over time. The survey provides an overview of issues connected with skill shortages, skill gaps and training from an employer's perspective. Of particular interest are those areas where recruitment difficulties are related to external skill shortages and therefore subject to a 'skills' solution.

8.2 Vacancies and Difficult to Fill Vacancies

The last fifteen years have seen a marked improvement in the NI economy from a previous position of high unemployment and slow GDP and employment growth. However the recent slow down in the world and national economies has also meant a slight easing in NI. In the current survey, employee turnover was estimated at 13% which is slightly lower to the level found in 2002 (16%). Employee turnover varied by industry and sector with the highest level in the Hotels and Restaurants sector. However some 11% of all employers reported one or more current vacancies and 6% reported difficult to fill vacancies. The figures are lower than those reported sector employers in the 2002 Survey, 16% and 10% respectively. In summary, the results suggest that the economic slowdown, which started in 2001, demonstrates a 'less tight' labour market with a lower proportion of employers reporting recruitment difficulties.

It should also be noted that 89% of NI employers reported no vacancies and 94% reported no difficult to fill vacancies. Although those employers who reported recruitment difficulties are in the minority, they are experiencing problems which they believe to have a detrimental effect on their business.

The survey investigated the reasons for vacancies proving difficult to fill. The most frequently reported main reason for difficulty in filling vacancies was a lack of skills that the company demands. The next two main reasons given were non skills-related i.e. not enough people interested in this type of work and poor attitudes, motivation and personality. These results would indicate that some employers may be failing to attract staff because of either reasons related to the job (e.g. long and unsocial hours) or reasons related to the potential workforce (e.g. lack 'work-readiness' skills including poor attitudes and motivation).

As many of the reported reasons for difficult to fill vacancies were not skills-related, these findings may suggest that skill shortages in the labour market may be causing significantly fewer problems than skill gaps in the existing workforce.

8.3 External Skill Shortages

Of particular interest, is the prevalence of difficult to fill vacancies whereby skill shortages are a contributing factor. The definition of external skill shortages as “those difficult to fill vacancies where the reasons given for difficulties included either lack of skills, qualifications or experience” gave a useful method of identifying 'true' skill shortages. Overall some 34% of difficult to fill vacancies were considered by employers to be external skill shortages. Between 2002 and 2005, there has been a decrease in the rate of external skill shortages (from 0.5% to 0.3%).

This apparent decline in skill shortages could be due to a number of reasons, including greater flexibility on the part of employers in their recruitment practices or greater flexibility on the part of applicants in deciding what job to accept. However, as discussed in the report, there is an imbalance regarding skill shortage vacancies. Some industries and occupations are more adversely affected than others.

More than half of difficult to fill vacancies considered to be external skill shortages were found in Transport and Communications (63%), Construction (53%) and Business Services (51%). A high proportion of these vacancies were also reported in Financial Services (46%) and Other Services (42%).

The largest proportion of external skill shortages were for Sales vacancies (72%) followed by Professionals, Associate Professionals and Skilled Trades vacancies (all with 42%).

8.4 Retention Difficulties and Skill Gaps

Overall 7% of employers reported difficulties in retaining staff, slightly lower than the level reported in 2002 (10%). This proportion varied greatly between industrial sectors with 12% of Hotels and Restaurants and 3% of Construction reporting difficulties. The occupational group in which it was most difficult to retain staff was Elementary Occupations (20% of employers reported difficulty in retaining staff).

Approximately one in ten employers (9%) indicated that there is some gap between the types of skills that their current employees had and those that the organisation needed to meet their business objectives. This shows a decline compared with 13% of employers who reported skill gaps in the 2002 Survey. Skill gaps may be considered to be part of business life, as a certain percentage of employees will not have been in the job long enough and/or because they have not yet completed their training. These 'transitory' skill gaps are likely to close as the employees gain more experience or complete training.

The most frequently mentioned skill gaps were: customer handling skills (40%), other technical and practical skills (40%), communication skills (37%) and team working skills (24%).

8.5 Training

The overall picture regarding training appears negative as one third of all employers (32%) did not provide either off-the-job or on-the-job training to their staff in the previous year. Fewer NI employers reporting provision of off-the-job training (from 42% in 2002 to 34% in 2005). The level of on-the-job training has remained constant between the two surveys (61% in 2002 and 60% in 2005).

The supply of off-the-job training varied between the industrial sectors with 63% of employers in both Education and Health and Social Care providing off-the-job training compared to only 17% of employers in the Hotels and Restaurants sector.

It is interesting to note that 14% of employers in Financial Services, Health and Social Care and Other Services reported skill gaps. For these three sectors there was variation in the proportion of employers providing off-the-job (47%, 63% and 37%) and on-the-job (68%, 71% and 53%) training.

Examining off-the-job training by occupational group shows that in most cases, more than half of the employees in any particular category (highest being Professionals, 76%) are provided with training - the exception to this is Elementary Occupations (43%). This is a widely observed phenomenon - the more highly skilled the more training given, the less skilled the less training provided. The majority of off-the-job training was job specific.

Private sector training companies (46%) delivered the largest proportion of off-the-job training, followed by Further Education Colleges (21%). The largest proportion of on-the-job training was provided by other experienced staff at the company (57%) and a line manager or supervisor (45%).

8.6 Conclusion

Since 2002, there has been a reduction in the proportion of employers reporting vacancies, difficult to fill vacancies, external skill shortages and skill gaps. Each of these measures appears to be a positive indicator regarding the match between skills supply and skills demand.

The evidence presented in this report would indicate that skill gaps in the existing workforce are causing more problems than skill shortages in the labour market. It is possible that most of the skills that are needed by staff with a lack of full proficiency can be improved by on-the-job training - to which the majority of employers are committed. However the decline in off-the-job training may have a long-term impact upon the business.

9.0 TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE SURVEY

9.1 The questionnaire

The main aim of the present study was to update the findings of the 2002 survey. Most of the questionnaire had been developed previously by DEL and Central Survey Unit for the 2000 survey, which drew on previously conducted research for question items and the development of new items for the issues under investigation. The questionnaire was updated to include a new section on recruitment difficulties in the previous 12 months.

The survey once again utilised a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) questionnaire approach. CATI has many advantages over traditional paper and pencil techniques in that range checks, internal validity and consistency checks in addition to complicated routing can all be handled with ease. In essence, the use of CATI means that the interview data is largely validated at the most appropriate point in the research process, namely the interview.

Following conversion of the questionnaire into CATI format, the questionnaire was tested by asking an experienced CSU survey interviewer to run through the questionnaire and provide feedback.

The use of CATI was particularly relevant as the survey was to be run as a telephone survey of businesses rather than a postal survey or a face-to-face survey.

Since the 2005 survey was largely a repeat of the 2002 survey and broadly the same questionnaire, a pilot exercise was not required.

9.2 The sample

9.2.1 Which sampling frame?

For the 2000 survey, much consideration went into identifying the most appropriate sampling frame to use to conduct a business survey. The Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) and the BT Business Database were both considered. It was accepted that both registers had benefits and drawbacks. However, the decision was taken to use the BT Business Database, as it was felt that it met the needs of the survey most closely. Since we were adopting a Telephone Survey approach, the availability of an up-to-date contact telephone number was a critical factor.

The BT Business Database was used again in 2005 to select the sample of business units, mainly for the same reasons as before. Some businesses in the Public Administration sector, however, were not available on this database due to confidentiality issues and these were selected using the IDBR.

9.2.2 Business selection

The first step in deciding on the sample to be drawn was to obtain a breakdown of Northern Ireland businesses by Sector Skills Councils (SSC) and employee size (**Table 80**). This is a modification to the previous surveys, which were stratified by Standard Industrial Classification. The change in stratification is to also enable analysis by Sector Skills Councils. This yielded in total, 50,418 business units.

Table 80. Details of the NI Business sampling frame

	1-4 Employees	5-10 Employees	11-49 Employees	50+ Employees	Total
Asset Skills	961	256	138	33	1388
Automotive	1492	410	212	34	2148
Care	732	383	424	54	1593
Central Government	19	9	38	10	76
Cogent	304	205	152	39	700
Construction	2675	922	524	102	4223
Culture	358	69	32	6	465
E-Skills	488	194	76	34	792
Energy and Utility	103	54	32	16	205
Financial	554	306	161	24	1045
Goskills	700	200	171	40	1111
Health	907	350	317	162	1736
Improve	387	179	148	79	793
Justice	7	8	21	13	49
Lantra	196	74	35	4	309
Lifelong Learning	374	182	137	30	723
Logistics	830	220	189	51	1290
People 1st	2614	1275	817	138	4844
Proskills	560	198	169	40	967
Semta	1153	466	261	75	1955
Skillfast	666	137	71	46	920
Skillsactive	706	195	153	27	1081
Skillset	337	41	34	7	419
Skillsmart	5270	2065	994	177	8506
SSDA Sector 1	1100	334	177	39	1650
SSDA Sector 2	971	384	236	47	1638
SSDA Sector 3	5288	1850	1192	285	8615
Summitskills	866	183	108	20	1177
Total	30618	11149	7019	1632	50418

To provide comprehensive coverage of businesses by SSC and company size, and to enable sufficient numbers for analysis, a disproportionate random sample of businesses was drawn by SSC and employee size band.

The sample was designed so that the overall distribution of businesses selected by employee size band was similar to that used in the previous surveys, and similar numbers of businesses were selected in each SSC, where possible, to enable some analysis in each SSC.

In order to reduce the survey burden on SSCs with the smallest size, the selected sample size for each SSC also took into consideration the total number of NI businesses in each SSC. Therefore those SSCs with the smallest NI population size had a slightly smaller sample of around 160 to 250 businesses, while those with a larger NI population size had a slightly larger sample size of around 250 to 350. This was achieved using the finite population correction as a general framework for selecting a suitable sample size in each SSC. Further adjustments to the number selected were then made on an adhoc basis for each SSC depending on its particular needs, such as its breakdown by company size. The overall sample size by employee size band is as follows:

Total Businesses Sampled	6,871
--------------------------	-------

9.3 The Fieldwork

Fieldwork for the survey began on 13th June 2005 and lasted until 11th November 2005. A panel of 70 experienced interviewers were used on the survey.

All businesses sampled for the survey were sent an advance letter prior to the interviewer attempting contact. The letter briefly introduced Central Survey Unit, outlined the nature of the survey, and clearly identified the commissioning client. Contact names and telephone numbers were included in the letter for businesses to contact in the event of queries.

9.4 Response rate details

In total 6,871 businesses were allocated to interviewers. **Table 81** provides a breakdown of the response rate for the survey.

Table 81. Overall response rate

	Number	Percentage %
Allocated	6871	100
Ineligible	937	14
Effective Sample	5934	100
Interviewed	4126	70
Unable to contact appropriate person	939	16
Refusal	869	15

Ineligible businesses were those businesses that no longer existed, had moved or were unobtainable from the phone number issued or had no employees at time of interview.

9.5 Weighting

As the sample for the survey was a disproportionately stratified sample, it was necessary to construct weights to adjust the data to reflect the composition of the Business Database population as a whole. A series of discrete steps were followed in order to derive the weights.

1. Where interviews had been obtained with multiples (such as supermarkets, car dealers etc), the data was back-checked to ensure that interviews were not included with both the headquarters of a multiple organisation and sites interviewed independently. Had this not been completed, it was possible that vacancies could have been included twice.
2. All businesses with 50 or more employees were checked (as far as possible) for membership of a multiple organisation or franchise.
3. Following the previous steps, weights were constructed to adjust the distribution of the businesses in terms of employee numbers and SSC to the distribution in the Business Database population as a whole.

Table 82 details the weights applied to businesses with 1-4 employees for each industrial sector.

Table 82. Details of weights for businesses with 1-4 employees

SSC Name	Interviewed	In Population	Weight
Asset Skills	53	961	18.13208
Automotive	48	1492	31.08333
Care	52	732	14.07692
Central Government	9	19	2.11111
Cogent	25	304	12.16000
Construction	30	2675	89.16667
Culture	58	358	6.17241
E-Skills	30	488	16.26667
Energy and Utility	38	103	2.71053
Financial	41	554	13.51220
Goskills	57	700	12.28070
Health	26	907	34.88462
Improve	18	387	21.50000
Justice	4	7	1.75000
Lantra	45	196	4.35556
Lifelong Learning	34	374	11.00000
Logistics	47	830	17.65957
People 1st	29	2614	90.13793
Proskills	39	560	14.35897
Semta	42	1153	27.45238
Skillfast	45	666	14.80000
Skillsactive	36	706	19.61111
Skillset	52	337	6.48077
Skillsmart	29	5270	181.72414
SSDA Sector 1	36	1100	30.55556
SSDA Sector 2	35	971	27.74286
SSDA Sector 3	46	5288	114.95652
Summitskills	40	866	21.65000
Total	1044	30618	

Table 83 details the weights applied to businesses with 5-10 employees for each industrial sector.

Table 83. Details of weights for businesses with 5-10 employees

SSC Name	Interviewed	In Population	Weight
Asset Skills	26	256	9.84615
Automotive	23	410	17.82609
Care	32	383	11.96875
Central Government	9	9	1.00000
Cogent	25	205	8.20000
Construction	38	922	24.26316
Culture	11	69	6.27273
E-Skills	32	194	6.06250
Energy and Utility	24	54	2.25000
Financial	33	306	9.27273
Goskills	30	200	6.66667
Health	37	350	9.45946
Improve	21	179	8.52381
Justice	4	8	2.00000
Lantra	34	74	2.17647
Lifelong Learning	35	182	5.20000
Logistics	27	220	8.14815
People 1st	44	1275	28.97727
Proskills	26	198	7.61538
Semta	26	466	17.92308
Skillfast	17	137	8.05882
Skillsactive	28	195	6.96429
Skillset	9	41	4.55556
Skillsmart	23	2065	89.78261
SSDA Sector 1	32	334	10.43750
SSDA Sector 2	28	384	13.71429
SSDA Sector 3	40	1850	46.25000
Summitskills	21	183	8.71429
Total	735	11149	

Table 84 details the weights applied to businesses with 11-49 employees for each industrial sector.

Table 84. Details of weights for businesses with 11-49 employees

SSC Name	Interviewed	In Population	Weight
Asset Skills	73	138	1.89041
Automotive	87	212	2.43678
Care	87	424	4.87356
Central Government	23	38	1.65217
Cogent	77	152	1.97403
Construction	67	524	7.82090
Culture	20	32	1.60000
E-Skills	37	76	2.05405
Energy and Utility	26	32	1.23077
Financial	51	161	3.15686
Goskills	24	171	7.12500
Health	50	317	6.34000
Improve	62	148	2.38710
Justice	15	21	1.40000
Lantra	19	35	1.84211
Lifelong Learning	61	137	2.24590
Logistics	60	189	3.15000
People 1st	68	817	12.01471
Proskills	54	169	3.12963
Semta	70	261	3.72857
Skillfast	31	71	2.29032
Skillsactive	85	153	1.80000
Skillset	21	34	1.61905
Skillsmart	68	994	14.61765
SSDA Sector 1	58	177	3.05172
SSDA Sector 2	73	236	3.23288
SSDA Sector 3	83	1192	14.36145
Summitskills	56	108	1.92857
Total	1506	7019	

Table 85 details the weights applied to businesses with 50+ employees for each industrial sector.

Table 85. Details of weights for businesses with 50+ employees

SSC Name	Interviewed	In Population	Weight
Asset Skills	16	33	2.06250
Automotive	20	34	1.70000
Care	28	54	1.92857
Central Government	3	10	3.33333
Cogent	22	39	1.77273
Construction	50	102	2.04000
Culture	5	6	1.20000
E-Skills	15	34	2.26667
Energy and Utility	7	16	2.28571
Financial	10	24	2.40000
Goskills	16	40	2.50000
Health	92	162	1.76087
Improve	44	79	1.79545
Justice	7	13	1.85714
Lantra	3	4	1.33333
Lifelong Learning	28	30	1.07143
Logistics	26	51	1.96154
People 1st	55	138	2.50909
Proskills	20	40	2.00000
Semta	34	75	2.20588
Skillfast	20	46	2.30000
Skillsactive	13	27	2.07692
Skillset	3	7	2.33333
Skillsmart	88	177	2.01136
SSDA Sector 1	19	39	2.05263
SSDA Sector 2	28	47	1.67857
SSDA Sector 3	158	285	1.80380
Summitskills	11	20	1.81818
Total	841	1632	

9.6 Sampling errors and confidence limits

Any sample is unlikely to reflect precisely the characteristic of the population from which it is drawn because of both sampling and non-sampling errors. An estimate of the amount of error due to the sampling process can be calculated. For a simple random sample design, in which every member of the sampled population has an equal and independent chance of inclusion in the sample, the sampling error (s.e.) of any percentage, p , can be calculated by the formula:

$$\text{s.e.}(p) = \sqrt{p(100-p)/n}$$

where n is the number of respondents on which the percentage is based.

A confidence interval for the population percentage can be calculated by the formula **95% confidence interval = $p \pm (1.96 * \text{s.e.}(p))$**

Table 86 provides example sampling errors and confidence limits for a range of questions in the survey. In general, the sampling errors and confidence limits for questions asked of all businesses are lower than those for questions asked of a sub-sample. **Table 86** can be used to indicate the nature of the sampling errors and confidence limits for the survey.

Table 86. Example sampling errors and confidence limits

	% (p)	Standard Error (p)%	95% Confidence Interval +/-
N = 4126 Percentage of employers with current vacancies	11	0.49	0.95
N = 4114 Percentage of employers with a difficult to fill vacancy	6	0.37	0.73
N = 4119 Percentage of employers having difficulty retaining staff	7	0.40	0.78
N = 1302 Percentage of difficult to fill vacancies which are for Managers/Senior Officials	6	0.66	1.29

The effect of a complex sample design on the precision of survey estimates is usually quantified by means of the design factor. Given the complexity in calculation of the design factor and the limited effect it would have on the current calculation of the standard error, the design factor has not been taken into consideration in the calculations within **Table 86**. Using this formula, will provide broad (but not absolutely precise) indications of whether differences are significant or not.

APPENDIX 1

THE 2005 NORTHERN IRELAND SKILLS MONITORING SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Background information

We have been commissioned by the Department of Employment and Learning (formerly The Training and Employment Agency) to conduct a survey on skill shortages in Northern Ireland. Your business has been randomly selected for the survey from the business database and is one of around 7000 companies who we will be talking to. We are interested in finding out whether your business has experienced difficulties in filling vacant positions or retaining staff, any methods of recruitment that you have used, any perceived skill gaps among your staff and the types of training methods that you use.

POSIT

Can I just check, what position do you hold in this business?

- 1 Owner/Chairman/MD/partner/head of agency or branch/headmaster/principal
- 2 Director/manager of personnel/human resources/recruitment/ employee relations/staff officer
- 3 General/site/factory/works director/manager/EOI
- 4 Administration/office director/manager/EOII
- 5 Finance director/manager/accountant/company secretary
- 6 Training director/manager
- 7 Other departmental director/manager
- 8 Senior secretary
- 9 Other

OTHPOSIT (if other mentioned in posit)

Please describe the position you hold in this business: _____

INDD2

What does this business make or do? _____

INTERVIEWER - DESCRIBE FULLY - PROBE MANUFACTURING or PROCESSING or DISTRIBUTION etc. AND MAIN GOODS PRODUCED, MATERIALS USED, WHOLESALE, RETAIL etc. or IF PUBLIC SECTOR RESEARCH, POLICY, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, TRAINING, EDUCATION.

INDT

Enter a title for the industry: _____

COMTYPE

Is this business a NI owned public limited company?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

COMTYPE2 (if no in comtype)

What type of organisation is this business?

INTERVIEWER CODE

- 1 A NI owned private company
- 2 A subsidiary of a GB company
- 3 A subsidiary of a non-UK company
- 4 A nationalised industry/state corporation?
- 5 Central government, civil service or armed forces?
- 6 Local government or council (including police fire services and local authority controlled schools/colleges)
- 7 A university, or other grant funded education establishment (include opted-out schools)
- 8 A health authority or NHS trust
- 9 A charity, voluntary organisation or trust
- 10 Some other kind of organisation

COMTYPE3 (if other in comtype2)

Other type of company - please specify: _____

INTRO4

We are interested in the turnover of staff in this business over the last 12 months as well as the different types of people who work there.

NUMEMP

Can you tell me how many employees both full-time and part-time you currently have in total based in this business. By that I mean any full or part-time employees on your payroll but excluding any casual or seasonal employees.

NUMYRAGO

How many employees did you have in total 12 months ago?

NEWREC

How many new employees have you taken on at this business in the last 12 months? Please include any employees who joined and have since left.

TOTLEFT

How many employees in total have left this business in the last 12 months?

SOCIN

In addition to knowing the number of staff that you have we are also interested in understanding the different types of staff that you employ. For example, the number of managers, professional staff, clerical staff, skilled operative staff etc.

SOCG1

Do any managers (ADD IF NOT PRIVATE SECTOR: and senior officials) work at this business? For example, branch manager, general manager, managing director, production manager, store manager, director, local government officer, publican, shopkeeper, transport manager etc.

INTERVIEWER - IF YES ENTER THE NUMBER OF STAFF

SOCG2

Do any professionals work at this business? For example, accountant, civil/design/production engineer, R & D scientist, business consultant, librarian, social worker, solicitor, teacher etc.

INTERVIEWER - IF YES ENTER THE NUMBER OF STAFF

SOCG3

Do any associate professional and technical occupations staff work at this business? For example, building inspectors, draughtsperson, laboratory technician, graphic designer, nurse etc.

INTERVIEWER - IF YES ENTER THE NUMBER OF STAFF

SOCG4

Do any administrative and secretarial staff work at this business? For example, credit controllers, counter clerks, typists, receptionists and legal secretaries etc.

INTERVIEWER - IF YES ENTER THE NUMBER OF STAFF

SOCG5

Do any skilled trades occupations staff work at this business? For example, Auto electricians, computer engineers, painters and decorators etc.

INTERVIEWER - IF YES ENTER THE NUMBER OF STAFF

SOCG6

Do any personal service staff work at this business? For example, Air travel assistants, hairdressers, bar staff etc.

INTERVIEWER - IF YES ENTER THE NUMBER OF STAFF

SOCG7

Do any sales and customer service staff work at this business?
For example, sales assistant etc.

INTERVIEWER - IF YES ENTER THE NUMBER OF STAFF

SOCG8

Do any Process, plant and machine operative staff work at this business?
For example, assembly worker, line worker, machine operator, baker operative,
bus driver, HGA/taxi driver etc.

INTERVIEWER - IF YES ENTER THE NUMBER OF STAFF

SOCG9

Do any elementary occupations staff work at this business? For example,
labourer, mate, cleaner, domestic helper, mail sorter, shelf filler etc.

INTERVIEWER - IF YES ENTER THE NUMBER OF STAFF

CHCKEMP

INTERVIEWER - CHECK TOTAL OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF STAFF EMPLOYED

CURRENT VACANCIES AND RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES

CURVAC

I would now like to ask you about current vacancies at this business. By current vacancies I mean positions for which you are already actively seeking recruits from outside the business/ organisation.

Do you currently have any vacancies for either full or part-time staff?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES SECTION (new for 2005): (if CURVAC is no)

ANYVAC (if no in curvac)

Did you have any vacancies for either full or part-time staff at this establishment within the past 12 months? By a vacancy I mean a position for which you actively sought recruits from outside the business/organisation.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Can't say

DIFFIL (if yes in anyvac)

Still looking over the last 12 months, were any of your vacancies particularly difficult to fill?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Can't say

FROM WHPROP TO OTHEST (if yes in diffil)

WHPROP

Approximately, what proportion of your vacancies proved difficult to fill? Was it....

- 1 Less than 10%
- 2 10% to 19%
- 3 20% to 29%
- 4 30% to 39%
- 5 40% to 49%
- 6 50% to 59%
- 7 60% to 69%
- 8 70% to 79%
- 9 80% to 89%
- 10 Over 90% but less than 100%
- 11 All
- 12 Cannot say

MAINREAS

What were the main reasons that some of your vacancies were particularly difficult to fill?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 A lack of skills the company demands
- 2 Lack of qualifications the company demands
- 3 Lack of work experience the company demands
- 4 Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality
- 5 Not enough people interested in this type of work
- 6 Low number of applicants generally
- 7 Wages lower than other firms
- 8 Benefits trap/ problem with benefits
- 9 Location of the firm/ poor public transport
- 10 Unattractive/ poor terms and conditions of employment
- 11 Lack of/ poor career progression
- 12 Job entails shift work / long/ unsocial/ irregular hours
- 13 Too much competition from other employers

- 14 Applicants lack basic ability to build upon
- 15 Other
- 16 No particular reason
- 17 Don't know

OTHR (if other in mainreas)

Please specify: _____

SMR (if multiple response in mainreas)

Which of these was the single main reason?

- 1 A lack of skills the company demands
- 2 Lack of qualifications the company demands
- 3 Lack of work experience the company demands
- 4 Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality
- 5 Not enough people interested in this type of work
- 6 Low number of applicants generally
- 7 Wages lower than other firms
- 8 Benefits trap/ problem with benefits
- 9 Location of the firm/ poor public transport
- 10 Unattractive/ poor terms and conditions of employment
- 11 Lack of/ poor career progression
- 12 Job entails shift work / long/ unsocial/ irregular hours
- 13 Too much competition from other employers
- 14 Applicants lack basic ability to build upon
- 15 Other
- 16 No particular reason
- 17 Don't know

LACSKIL

Which of the following skills, if any, did you find applicants for your difficult-to-fill vacancies to be lacking?

INTERVIEWER READ OUT AND CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 General IT user skills
- 2 IT professional skills
- 3 Communication skills
- 4 Customer handling skills
- 5 Team working skills
- 6 Problem solving skills

- 7 Management skills
- 8 Using numbers
- 9 Literacy skills
- 10 Other technical and practical skills
- 11 None
- 12 Any other difficulties
- 13 (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

OTHSKIL (if other in lacsil)

Please specify these other difficulties: _____

AFFEST

And how did your difficult-to-fill vacancies affect your establishment?

INTERVIEWER READ OUT AND CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 Loss of business or orders to competitors
- 2 Delays developing new products
- 3 To withdraw from offering certain products or services altogether
- 4 Difficulties meeting customer service objectives
- 5 Difficulties meeting required quality standards
- 6 Increased operating/ running costs
- 7 Difficulties introducing technological change
- 8 Difficulties introducing new working practices
- 9 No particular problems
- 10 Other

OTHAFF (if other in affest)

Please specify in what other ways your establishment was affected:

TAKEMEAS

Did you take any special measures to overcome the recruitment difficulties that you experienced in the past 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

WHMEAS (if yes in takemeas)

What measures did you take?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 Offered higher pay or more incentives than normal
- 2 Considered a wider range of people
- 3 Been prepared to provide more training to less qualified recruits
- 4 Retrain existing staff
- 5 Hired part-time or contract staff
- 6 Built links with schools/ colleges
- 7 Changed the job specification by giving some of the tasks to other staff
- 8 Changed the job specification by automating some of the tasks
- 9 Used more extensive range of recruitment channels than normal
- 10 Spent more on recruitment or used more expensive methods
- 11 Other

OTHMEA (if other in whmeas)

Please specify these other methods you took: _____

NOSPEN (if no in takemeas)

Why did you not take any special measures?

- 1 Nothing that could be done
- 2 Other

OTHNOT (if other in nospem)

Please specify: _____

TYPEVAC

What type of vacancy was the most difficult to fill?

INTERVIEWER: RECORD THE JOB TITLE HERE: _____

QUALNED

What type of education/qualifications were needed? _____

EXPNEED

And what type of experience was needed? _____

MREAS

What were the main reasons that this type of vacancy was the most difficult to fill?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT, CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 Lack of skills the company demands
- 2 Lack of qualifications the company demands
- 3 Lack of work experience the company demands
- 4 Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality
- 5 Not enough people interested in this type of work
- 6 Low number of applicants generally
- 7 Wages lower than other firms
- 8 Benefits trap/ problem with benefits
- 9 Location of the firm/ poor public transport
- 10 Unattractive/ poor terms and conditions of employment
- 11 Lack of/ poor career progression
- 12 Job entails shift work/ long/ unsocial/ irregular hours
- 13 Too much competition from other employers
- 14 Applicants lack basic ability to build upon
- 15 Other
- 16 No particular reason
- 17 Don't know

SPECOTH (if other in mreas)

Please specify this other reason: _____

SMAINR (if multiple response in mreas)

Which of these was the single main reason?

- 1 Lack of skills the company demands
- 2 Lack of qualifications the company demands
- 3 Lack of work experience the company demands
- 4 Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality
- 5 Not enough people interested in this type of work
- 6 Low number of applicants generally
- 7 Wages lower than other firms
- 8 Benefits trap/ problem with benefits
- 9 Location of the firm/ poor public transport
- 10 Unattractive/ poor terms and conditions of employment
- 11 Lack of/ poor career progression
- 12 Job entails shift work/ long/ unsocial/ irregular hours
- 13 Too much competition from other employers
- 14 Applicants lack basic ability to build upon
- 15 Other
- 16 No particular reason
- 17 Don't know

BUSOBJ

Considered in terms of MEETING YOUR BUSINESS OBJECTIVES over the past 12 months, what type of difficult to fill vacancy posed the biggest problem for your firm?

INTERVIEWER: RECORD THE JOB TITLE HERE: _____

BUSOBQ

What type of education/qualifications were needed? _____

BUSEXP

And what type of experience was needed? _____

BUSAFF

How did this vacancy affect your establishment?

INTERVIEWER READ OUT AND CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 Loss of business or orders to competitors
- 2 Delays developing new products
- 3 To withdraw from offering certain products or services altogether
- 4 Difficulties meeting customer service objectives
- 5 Difficulties meeting required quality standards
- 6 Increased operating/ running costs
- 7 Difficulties introducing technological change
- 8 Difficulties introducing new working practices
- 9 No particular problems
- 10 Other

OTHEST (if 10 in busaff)

Please specify this other affect: _____

CURRENT VACANCIES SECTION: (if CURVAC is yes and it is asked for each type of job you currently have vacancies for)

FROM VACTOT TO SOTH (if yes in curvac)

VACTOT

Could you tell me what types of job do you currently have vacancies for?

INTERVIEWER - RECORD THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT JOB TYPES THAT THERE ARE.

METHVAC1

What method(s) of recruitment are you already using to fill your vacancies?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Adverts in local/national newspapers
- 2 Adverts in trade/specialist journals
- 3 Government Jobcentres
- 4 Private recruitment agencies
- 5 Word of mouth
- 6 Advertising on the Internet
- 7 Internal recruitment service
- 8 Waiting for transfer of staff
- 9 Other
- 10 None of the above/ not actively seeking recruits

OTHMETH (if other in methvac1)

Please describe the other methods to fill vacancies:

NONWH1 (if none in methvac1)

Why are you not actively seeking recruits for your current vacancies?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Waiting for approval
- 2 The positions are currently occupied/ not available yet
- 3 Just haven't got around to it yet
- 4 Have already recruited/ waiting for someone to start
- 5 Have stopped/given up looking (because cannot find suitable recruits)

6 Other

OTHNRC (if other in nonwh1)

Please specify the other reason why you are not actively seeking recruits for your current vacancies:

Keep Features:

SICC

The industry is _____. Please enter SIC code

SOC

The respondents occupation :

Their job title is _____

The description is _____

The industry is _____

Please enter SOC code _____

[PRESS THE SPACE BAR TO CODE](#)

SC

Please enter SOCIAL CLASS code

SKINTRO

I would now like to ask you specifically about the job types that you currently have vacancies for.

OCCT

[INTERVIEWER - RECORD THE JOB TITLE HERE](#)

[INTERVIEWER: PROMPT FOR FULL DETAILS](#)

(IF 'manager' - PROBE: what type of manager?)

OCCD

What are the main duties of the ***** vacancy? _____

HOWMANY

How many vacancies in total do you currently have for the *****?

DIFFILL

Is the ***** vacancy difficult to fill?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

HMANY (if yes in diffill)

How many of the ***** vacancies are proving difficult to fill?

HLONG (if yes in diffill)

How long have you had this vacancy/these vacancies?

INTERVIEWER: PROMPT AS NECESSARY

- 1 Less than 2 weeks
- 2 2 weeks to 1 month
- 3 1-2 months
- 4 2-3 months
- 5 3-6 months
- 6 More than 6 months

ISLONG (if yes in diffill)

Is this vacancy/are these vacancies taking longer to fill than you had expected

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Unsure

REASON (if yes in diffill)

What are the main reasons the ***** vacancy is difficult to fill?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT - CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Lack of skills the company demands
- 2 Lack of qualifications the company demands
- 3 Lack of work experience the company demands
- 4 Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality
- 5 Not enough people interested in this type of work
- 6 Low number of applicants generally
- 7 Wages offered are lower than those offered by other firms
- 8 Benefits trap/ problem with benefits
- 9 Location of the firm/ poor public transport
- 10 Unattractive/ poor terms and conditions of employment
- 11 Lack of/ poor career progression
- 12 Job entails shift work/long/unsocial/irregular hours
- 13 Too much competition from other employers
- 14 Applicants lack basic ability to build upon
- 15 Other
- 16 No particular reason

OTHERDIF (if other in reason)

Please describe the other difficulties in filling the ***** vacancy.

MAINREAS (if multiple response in reason)

Of the reasons you have given, which is the main reason for the difficulty in filling the ***** vacancy?

- 1 Lack of skills the company demands
- 2 Lack of qualifications the company demands
- 3 Lack of work experience the company demands
- 4 Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality
- 5 Not enough people interested in this type of work
- 6 Low number of applicants generally
- 7 Wages offered are lower than those offered by other firms
- 8 Benefits trap/ problem with benefits
- 9 Location of the firm/ poor public transport
- 10 Unattractive/ poor terms and conditions of employment
- 11 Lack of/ poor career progression
- 12 Job entails shift work/long/unsocial/irregular hours
- 13 Too much competition from other employers
- 14 Applicants lack basic ability to build upon
- 15 Other

OTHMDIF (if other in mainreas)

Please describe the other main difficulty in filling the ***** vacancy.

CJCK (if not 1, 2 and 3 in reason)

Can I just check, are you finding the ***** vacancy hard to fill because?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT

- 1 Applicants have not been of sufficient quality
- 2 There have been few or no applicants
- 3 Or for both of these reasons
- 4 **DO NOT READ OUT** - Neither of these reasons

LQUALL (if 1 or 3 in cjck)

You said that you had problems with the quality of the candidates for *****.
Would you say that they had been lacking?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT. CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 The skills you look for
- 2 The qualifications you look for

- 3 The work experience that you require
- 4 Or do applicants tend to have poor attitudes, motivation and/or personality

WHSKL (if 1, 2 or 3 in reason or 1 or 3 in cjck)

Which of the following skills, if any, have you found difficult to obtain from applicants for *****?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT AND CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 General IT user skills
- 2 IT professional skills
- 3 Communication skills
- 4 Customer handling skills
- 5 Team working skills
- 6 Problem solving skills
- 7 Management skills
- 8 Using numbers
- 9 Literacy skills
- 10 Other technical and practical skills
- 11 None
- 12 Any other difficulties

OTHDIFF (if other in whskl)

What other skills have you found difficult to obtain from applicants?

HAVTAK (if yes in diffill)

Have you taken, or do you plan to take, any measures in response to the difficulties in filling the ***** vacancy, over and above what you would normally do in seeking to fill a vacancy of this type?

- 1 Yes, (Have taken or plan to take additional steps)
- 2 No, (Not doing, or going to do anything additional)

OVERCOME (if yes in havtak)

What measures have you taken?

INTERVIEWER - DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ALL MENTIONED.

- 1 Offered higher pay or more incentives than normal
- 2 Offered enhanced terms and conditions
- 3 Considered a wider range of applicants
- 4 Changed the job specification by giving some of the tasks to other staff
- 5 Changed the job specification by automating some of the tasks
- 6 Hired part-time staff

- 7 Hired contract staff
- 8 Built links with schools/colleges/universities
- 9 Used more extensive range of recruitment channels than normal
- 10 Spent more on recruitment or used more expensive methods
- 11 Recruited staff from overseas
- 12 Been prepared to provide more training to less qualified recruits
- 13 Retrain existing staff
- 14 Contracted work out
- 15 Other

OTHEROV (if 15 in overcome)

Please describe the other measures you have taken to overcome these recruitment difficulties.

WHYNME (if no in havtak)

Why have you not taken, or do not plan on taking any special measures

- 1 Nothing that can be done
- 2 Too early in the process
- 3 Other

SPECOTH (if 3 in whyhme)

Please specify: _____

GSPEAK (if hmany \geq 1)

Generally speaking, how much of an impact is this difficult-to-fill vacancy having on this establishment?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT AND CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 A major impact
- 2 A minor impact
- 3 No impact
- 4 **(DO NOT READ OUT)** Don't know

AFFECT (if 1, 2 or 4 in gspeak)

Is the _____ difficult-to-fill vacancy causing this business any of the following problems?

INTERVIEWER - CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Loss of business or orders to competitors
- 2 Delays developing new products
- 3 To withdraw from offering certain products or services altogether
- 4 Difficulties meeting customer service objectives
- 5 Difficulties meeting required quality standards
- 6 Increased operating/running costs
- 7 Difficulties introducing technological change
- 8 Difficulties introducing new working practices
- 9 No particular problems
- 10 Other

SOTH (if 10 in affect)

Please specify: _____

TOTAVAC

This gives a total of ***** current vacancies at this establishment. Does that sound right to you?

INTERVIEWER IF THE RESPONDENT SAYS NO, ASK FOR THE CORRECT TOTAL AND CHECK IF MISSING AN OCCUPATION OR INCORRECT NUMBER OF VACANCIES ENTERED FOR ANY OCCUPATION.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

DIFFICULTIES IN RETAINING STAFF

CURRSTAF

I would like to ask you a few questions about your existing staff.

RETSTAF

Are there specific jobs in which it is currently difficult to retain staff?

INTERVIEWER - RETENTION DIFFICULTIES ARE WHEN A HIGH NUMBER OF STAFF LEAVE (BUT NOT AS A DIRECT RESULT OF DOWNSIZING OR REDUNDANCY).

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

NUMSTAF (if yes in retstaf)

What types of job do you find it difficult to retain staff in?

INTERVIEWER - RECORD THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT JOB TYPES THAT THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES IN RETAINING STAFF.

FROM RETINTRO TO OTHAFCT (if yes in retstaf and numstaf > 0)

RETINTRO

I would like to ask you specifically about the types of jobs that you have said are difficult to retain. For each type of job, I would like you to give a description of the job together with the qualifications needed.

ROCCT

INTERVIEWER - RECORD THE JOB TITLE HERE: _____

ROCCD

What are the main duties of the *****? _____

RQUALS

What qualifications do you require for the *****?

INTERVIEWER - CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

- 1 Degree level qualification including graduate membership of a professional institute or PGCE, or higher
- 2 Diploma in Higher Education
- 3 HNC HND
- 4 ONC OND
- 5 BTEC, BEC or TEC
- 6 SCOTVEC, SCOTEC or SCOTBEC
- 7 Teaching qualification (excluding PGCE)
- 8 Nursing or other medical qualification not yet mentioned
- 9 Other Higher Education qualifications below degree level
- 10 A-Level or equivalent
- 11 SCE Higher
- 12 NVQ/SVQ
- 13 GNVQ/GSVQ
- 14 AS-level
- 15 Certificate of 6th Year Studies (CSYS) or equivalent
- 16 SCE Standard Grade
- 17 GCSE

- 18 RSA
- 19 City and Guilds
- 20 YT Certificate
- 21 Any other professional/ vocational qualifications/ foreign qualifications
- 22 Other
- 23 None
- 24 Don't know

ROTHSPEC (if other in rquals)

Please describe the other qualifications required for the *****?

RGNVQ (if GNVQ/GSVQ in rquals)

What level of GNVQ do you require for the *****?

- 1 Advanced level
- 2 Intermediate level
- 3 Foundation level
- 4 Don't know

RNVQ (if NVQ/SVQ in rquals)

What level of NVQ do you require for the *****?

- 1 Level 1
- 2 Level 2
- 3 Level 3
- 4 Level 4
- 5 Level 5
- 6 Don't know

RGROSPAY

What rate of pay is offered for the *****?

INTERVIEWER - RECORD THE NUMERIC VALUE HERE AND THE PERIOD THAT COVERS IN THE NEXT QUESTION. CHECK - IF THE RESPONDENT HAS DIFFICULTY ANSWERING, ASK FOR A BEST GUESS ESTIMATE. IF THE RESPONDENT PROVIDES A SALARY RANGE, RECORD THE AVERAGE.

RRATE

How long a period does this cover?

INTERVIEWER - RUNNING PROMPT

- 1 Hour
- 2 Day
- 3 Week

- 4 Fortnight
- 5 Four weeks
- 6 Calendar month
- 7 Year
- 8 Other

RRATOTH (if other in rrate)

Please specify how long a period this covers: _____

RHOURS

On average, how many hours a week would the ***** be expected to work?

MAINRET

Which of the following would you say is the main reason why it is difficult to retain staff in the ***** position?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT.

- 1 Wages offered are lower than those offered by other firms
- 2 Impact of the benefits trap
- 3 Geographic location of the firm
- 4 Unattractive conditions of employment
- 5 Lack of career progression
- 6 Long/unsocial hours
- 7 Too much competition from other employers
- 8 Not enough people interested in doing this type of work
- 9 Staff don't want long term commitment
- 10 Other

OTHERRET (if other in mainret)

Please describe the other main difficulty in retaining staff in the ***** position.

INTER2 (if not enough people interested in mainret)

You mentioned that not enough people are interested in doing this type of job.

Could you please elaborate further on this statement:

MEASURE

What measures, if any, have you taken to overcome the retention difficulties for the ***** position?

INTERVIEWER - CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Offered higher pay or more incentives than normal
- 2 Introduced job enrichment
- 3 Introduced further training/development opportunities
- 4 Introduced measures to improve career progression
- 5 Provided assistance with travel
- 6 Provided assistance with childcare
- 7 Introduced flexible working hours
- 8 Changed the job specification by giving some of the tasks to other staff
- 9 Changed the job specification by automating some of the tasks
- 10 Other
- 11 Not taken any measures to overcome retention difficulties

OTHMETH (if other in measure)

Please describe the other measures you have taken to overcome these retention difficulties:

AFFECT

How have the retention difficulties in the ***** position affected your business?

INTERVIEWER - CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Loss of business to competitors
- 2 Restriction to business development activities
- 3 Increased running costs (example use of excess overtime subcontracting or use of temporary staff etc)
- 4 More strain on management of existing staff in covering the shortage
- 5 An increase in recruitment costs due to more advertising or use of a recruitment agency
- 6 Difficulties with quality
- 7 Difficulties with customer service
- 8 Loss of efficiency or increased wastage
- 9 Difficulties with accommodating technological change
- 10 Difficulties with introducing new working practices
- 11 Other
- 12 Retention difficulties have not affected the business

OTHAFCT (if 11 in affect)

Please describe the affects a lack of skills in your current workforce has had on your business:

SKILL GAP SECTION

SOCINTRO

I would now like to turn to the skills within your existing workforce. Please do not think about any external recruitment problems that you may face.

GAP

Overall, and thinking about your current employees, would you say that there is a gap between the types of skills that your current employees have now, and those that ***** needs to meet its business objectives?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

SIGAP (if yes in gap)

How significant is this skills gap, in terms of the effect on your establishment's ability to meet its business objectives? Would you say that the skills gap is having a.....

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY.

- 1 Very significant/ major effect
- 2 Significant effect
- 3 Minor effect
- 4 No real effect

GAPINT

Earlier on you broke down the number of staff at this site into broad categories. In each category I would like to know what proportion you think are fully proficient at their job. By 'A proficient employee' I mean someone who is able to do the job to the required level.

If yes in gap, SOCPROF to PLSPE is repeated for each category of staff mentioned earlier i.e. managers and senior officials, professional, technical, administrative, skilled, personal service, sales, process plant and elementary.

SOCPROF (if number of socg > 0)

How many of your existing managers (ADD IF NOT PRIVATE SECTOR: and senior officials) would you regard as being fully proficient at their current job?

PROFC (if number of socg - number of socprof > 0)

What are the main causes of some of your managers (ADD IF NOT PRIVATE SECTOR: and senior officials) not being fully proficient in their job?

- 1 Failure to train and develop staff
- 2 Recruitment problems
- 3 High staff turnover
- 4 Inability of workforce to keep up with change
- 5 Lack of experience or staff being recently recruited
- 6 Training programmes only partially completed
- 7 Other
- 8 No particular reason

OTHSPEC (if other in profc)

Please specify: _____

MAINREA1 (if multiple response in profc)

Of the reasons you have given which is the single main reason for some of your managers (ADD IF NOT PRIVATE SECTOR: and senior officials) not being fully proficient?

- 1 Failure to train and develop staff
- 2 Recruitment problems
- 3 High staff turnover
- 4 Inability of workforce to keep up with change
- 5 Lack of experience of staff being recently recruited
- 6 Training programmes only partially completed
- 7 Other
- 8 No particular reason

OTHSPCA1 (if other in mainrea)

Please specify: _____

FREA1 (if number of socg - number of socprof > 0)

Is the fact that some of your managers (ADD IF NOT PRIVATE SECTOR: and senior officials) are lacking in proficiency the result of changing skill needs for any of the following reasons?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 The development of new products and services
- 2 The introduction of new working practices
- 3 The introduction of new technology
- 4 None of these

SKILIMP1 (if number of socg - number of socprof > 0)

And still thinking about your managers (ADD IF NOT PRIVATE SECTOR: and senior officials) who are not fully proficient which, if any of the following skills do you feel need improving?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 General IT user skills
- 2 IT professional skills
- 3 Communication skills
- 4 Customer handling skills
- 5 Team working skills
- 6 Problem solving skills
- 7 Management skills
- 8 Using numbers
- 9 Literacy skills
- 10 Other technical and practical skills
- 11 None
- 12 Any other difficulties

PLSPE (if other in skilimp)

Please specify: _____

FROM MGENER TO AOTH (if number of socg1 - number of socprof1 > 0 or socg2 - number of socprof2 > 0 or repeating through to socg9)

MGENER

Thinking more generally now about staff at all levels of the establishment, which of the following measures, if any, have you taken at this establishment to overcome lack of full proficiency amongst some of your staff.

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL MENTIONED

- 1 Increased recruitment
- 2 Providing further training/ development
- 3 Changing working practices
- 4 Reallocating work within the company
- 5 Expand recruitment channels
- 6 Increase/ expand trainee programmes
- 7 Other
- 8 **DO NOT READ OUT** No particular measures taken

OTHGEN (if other in mgener)

Please specify: _____

SOCAFF

Is the fact that some of your staff are not fully proficient causing ***** any of the following problems?

- 1 Loss of business or orders to competitors
- 2 Delays developing new products
- 3 To withdraw from offering certain products or services altogether
- 4 Difficulties meeting customer service objectives
- 5 Difficulties meeting required quality standards
- 6 Increased operating/ running costs
- 7 Difficulties introducing technological change
- 8 Difficulties introducing new working practices
- 9 No particular problems
- 10 Other

OTHAFF (if other in socaff)

Please specify: _____

BARRA

Which of the following barriers would you say may exist to your developing a more proficient team of staff in the future?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 A lack of funding for training
- 2 Lack of suitable courses in my area
- 3 Lack of suitable courses generally
- 4 Unwillingness of staff to undertake training
- 5 High staff turnover
- 6 Lack of time for training
- 7 Lack of cover for training
- 8 Any other
- 9 (DO NOT READ OUT) No particular measures taken
- 10 (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

AOTH (if other in barra)

Please specify the other barriers: _____

BARRB (if number of socg1 - number of socprof1 = 0 or socg2 - number of socprof2 = 0 or repeating through to sogc9)

Which of the following barriers would you say may exist to your maintaining a proficient team of staff in the future?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 A lack of funding for training
- 2 Lack of suitable courses in my area
- 3 Lack of suitable courses generally
- 4 Unwillingness of staff to undertake training
- 5 High staff turnover
- 6 Lack of time for training
- 7 Lack of cover for training
- 8 Any other
- 9 (DO NOT READ OUT) No particular measures taken
- 10 (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

BOTH (if other in barrb)

Please specify the other barriers: _____

TRAINING SECTION

TINTRO

I now have some questions about the training you provide at *****. This training may be off-the-job training, on-the-job training or training that is provided by an external provider.

ANSWER

Are you the best person to answer questions about training at *****?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

OTHER (if no in answer)

Could you identify another person that would be best equipped to answer the training questions?

INTERVIEWER - TYPE IN NAME: _____

TITLE (if no in answer)

And what is his/her job title

INTERVIEWER - RUNNING PROMPT

- 1 Owner/Chairman/MD/partner
- 2 Director/manager of personnel/human resources/recruitment/
employee relations
- 3 General/site/factory/works director/manager
- 4 Administration/office director/manager
- 5 Finance director/manager/accountant/company secretary
- 6 Training director/manager
- 7 Other departmental director/manager
- 8 Senior secretary
- 9 Other

OTITLE (if other in title)

Please describe the position they hold in *****: _____

INTRO

INTERVIEWER: DO YOU WANT TO PROCEED WITH THE TRAINING QUESTIONS AT THIS POINT. IF NO PLEASE COMPLETE THE TRAINING SECTION THROUGH THE 'SUB FORMS' BUTTON ABOVE WHEN YOU ARE SPEAKING WITH THE APPROPRIATE PERSON:

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

TINTRO1 (if yes in intro)

I am now going to ask you some questions about off-the-job training. By off-the-job training, we want you to include all training that was delivered away from the immediate work position. It can be given at your premises or elsewhere. It includes all sorts of courses - full or part time; correspondence or distance learning; Health and Safety training and so on - as long as it is funded or arranged by ***** for employees working at this location.

OFFJOB

Has ***** funded or arranged any off-the-job training for any of your employees in the past 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

NOFFJOB (if no in offjob)

Why have you not arranged or funded any off-the-job training for your employees over the last 12 months - Is it because...

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Staff have sufficient skills to do their job
- 2 Cost of off-the-job training
- 3 Time constraints
- 4 No money available for training
- 5 There is no suitable training available
- 6 Lack of information on training available
- 7 Other training method preferred (eg on the job training)
- 8 Trained staff will be poached by other employers?
- 9 Other

OTHNOT (if other in noffjob)

Please describe the other reasons for not arranging or funding off-the-job training:

FROM OFFEMP TO IPROD (if yes in offjob)

OFFEMP

For how many of your employees at ***** have you funded or arranged off-the-job training over the last 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - _____ HAS _____ EMPLOYEES

IF THE RESPONDENT HAS DIFFICULTY ANSWERING, ASK FOR A PROPORTION AND CALCULATE NUMBER

LASTYR

Over the past 12 months, about how many days off-the-job training have you funded or arranged for each person receiving such training?

INTERVIEWER - PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE

TOTFUN

Over the past 12 months, about how many days off-the-job training have you funded or arranged in total?

TRAINTRO

It was mentioned earlier by your colleague that you have ***** employees at this location. These employees were then broken down into specific groups of staff such as managers, administrative staff, sales staff and skilled manual staff. I am now going to ask you about off-the-job training for these categories.

SOCG1F1 (if socg1 > 0)

Have your managers (ADD IF NOT PRIVATE SECTOR: and senior officials) received any off-the-job training in the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

SOCG1F2 (if socg2 > 0)

Have your professional occupations received any off-the-job training in the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

SOCG1F3 (if socg3 > 0)

Have your associate professional and technical staff received any off-the-job training in the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

SOCG1F4 (if socg4 > 0)

Have your administrative and secretarial staff received any off-the-job training in the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

SOCG1F5 (if socg5 > 0)

Have your skilled trades staff received any off-the-job training in the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

SOCG1F6 (if socg6 > 0)

Have your personal service staff received any off-the-job training in the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

SOCG1F7 (if socg7 > 0)

Have your sales and customer service staff received any off-the-job training in the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

SOCG1F8 (if socg8 > 0)

Have your process, plant and machine operatives staff received any off-the-job training in the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

SOCG1F9 (if socg9 > 0)

Have your elementary occupations staff received any off-the-job training in the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

SOCGYR1 (if yes in socg1f1)

For how many of your managers (ADD IF NOT PRIVATE SECTOR: and senior officials) has this establishment funded or arranged training away from the immediate work position over the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - _____ HAS _____ managers

SOCGYR2 (if yes in socg1f2)

For how many of your Professional occupations has this establishment funded or arranged training away from the immediate work position over the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - _____ HAS _____ professionals

SOCGYR3 (if yes in socg1f3)

For how many of your Associate professional and technical staff has this establishment funded or arranged training away from the immediate work position over the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - _____ HAS _____ associate professional and technical staff

SOCGYR4 (if yes in socg1f4)

For how many of your Administrative and secretarial staff has this establishment funded or arranged training away from the immediate work position over the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - _____ HAS _____ administrative and secretarial staff

SOCGYR5 (if yes in socg1f5)

For how many of your skilled trades staff has this establishment funded or arranged training away from the immediate work position over the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - _____ HAS _____ skilled trades staff

SOCGYR6 (if yes in socg1f6)

For how many of your personal service staff has this establishment funded or arranged training away from the immediate work position over the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - _____ HAS _____ personal service staff

SOCGYR7 (if yes in socg1f7)

For how many of your sales and customer service staff has this establishment funded or arranged training away from the immediate work position over the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - _____ HAS _____ sales and customer service staff

SOCGYR8 (if yes in socg1f8)

For how many of your Process, plant and machine operatives staff has this establishment funded or arranged training away from the immediate work position over the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - _____ HAS _____ process, plant and machine operatives

SOCGYR9 (if yes in socg1f9)

For how many of your Elementary occupations staff has this establishment funded or arranged training away from the immediate work position over the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - _____ HAS _____ elementary occupations staff

OFFTYPE

Which of the following types of training has your organisation funded or arranged for employees at ***** over the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Induction training
- 2 Health & Safety or First Aid training
- 3 Job specific training
- 4 Supervisory training
- 5 Management training
- 6 Training in new technology
- 7 Training in foreign languages
- 8 Soft/generic skills?
- 9 Other

OTHTYP (if 9 in offtype)

Please describe the other type of off-the-job training: _____

PROVID

Was any of the off-the-job training you have funded or arranged over the last year provided by a provider from outside *****?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

PROVTYPE (if yes in provid)

Which of the following have you used to provide off-the job training you have funded or arranged from this location in the past 12 months? Has it been provided by....?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Staff at this site
- 2 FE college
- 3 Universities or other higher education establishments
- 4 Your Sector Training Council of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
- 5 Private sector training companies or consultants
- 6 Equipment suppliers, e.g. computer companies, suppliers of specialist machinery
- 7 Professional associations, e.g. the institute of electrical engineers
- 8 Employers' representative bodies, such as Chamber of Commerce or the CBI
- 9 Other establishments within your organisation
- 10 Other employers
- 11 Department for Employment and Learning
- 12 Other

PROVOTH (if 12 in provtype)

Please describe the other type of training provider: _____

DIFFIND

Have you found any difficulty over the last year in finding an appropriate training provider for the training you need to do - by appropriate I mean capable of providing the right type of training or the quality you require?

INTERVIEWER - CODE ONLY ONE

- 1 Yes
- 2 No, have not experienced any difficulty
- 3 Don't know

TYPTRA (if yes in diffind)

What types of training needs have you found difficult to satisfy through providers outside your organisation?

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Finding relevant courses
- 2 First aid/ health and safety
- 3 Provider not available locally
- 4 IT
- 5 Job specific
- 6 NVQ training
- 7 Other

SPOT (if 7 in typra)

Please specify these other training needs you have found difficult to satisfy:

OFQUAL

Did any of the training that you funded or arranged for employees over the past 12 months at this location lead towards a recognised qualification?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know

OFQTYPE (if yes in ofqual)

Which of the following qualifications were these?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 NVQs/ SVQs/ NCVAs (as applicable)
- 2 Other nationally recognised qualifications e.g. RSA, BTEC, City & Guilds
- 3 Qualifications specific to your company
- 4 Industry recognised qualifications (e.g. Microsoft accredited)
- 5 Higher qualifications such as degrees?
- 6 Other

OTHQTYPE (if other in ofqtype)

Please describe the other formal qualifications: _____

SPENT

Over the past 12 months, how much has this establishment spent in total on off-the-job training of staff? Please include only out-of-pocket expenses, not staff time.

INTERVIEWER - PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE - RECORD THE NUMBER OF DAYS

CSPEND

How does the amount that you spent in the last 12 months compare with the previous 12 months? Has there been....

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ONLY ONE

- 1 A major increase
- 2 A minor increase
- 3 No increase or decrease
- 4 A minor decrease
- 5 A major decrease
- 6 **(DO NOT READ OUT)** Don't know/ Cannot say

WMI (if major increase in cspend)

Could you say why there has been a major increase? _____

WMD (if major decrease in wmd)

Could you say why there has been a major decrease? _____

EXPECT

Could you say which of the following benefits you were hoping to achieve from the off-the-job training that you have funded in the past 12 months?

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Increase/ upgrade workforce skill levels
- 2 Improved management capabilities
- 3 Faster development of new products
- 4 Better able to introduce new products or services/ expand existing range
- 5 Improved ability to meet customer service objectives
- 6 Improved ability to meet required quality standards
- 7 Reduced operating/ running costs
- 8 Introducing technological change
- 9 Introducing new working practices
- 10 Improved employee motivation
- 11 Increased workforce productivity
- 12 None of the above - training was to meet regulatory/ other requirements

SKILL (if 1 in expect)

You hoped to achieve an increase/ upgrade in workforce skill levels from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

MANCAP (if 2 in expect)

You hoped to achieve improved management capabilities from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

DEVEL (if 3 in expect)

You hoped to achieve faster development of new products from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

NEWPRO (if 4 in expect)

You hoped to achieve a better ability to introduce new products or services/ expand existing range from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

CSO (if 5 in expect)

You hoped to achieve an improved ability to meet customer service objectives from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

QUALST (if 6 in expect)

You hoped to achieve an improved ability to meet required quality standards from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

REDCOS (if 7 in expect)

You hoped to achieve reduced operating/ running costs from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

TECTH (if 8 in expect)

You hoped to achieve an introduction of technological change from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

NPRAC (if 9 in expect)

You hoped to achieve an introduction of new working practices from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

IMPM (if 10 in expect)

You hoped to achieve an improved employee motivation from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

IPROD (if 11 in expect)

You hoped to achieve an increased workforce productivity from the off-the-job training you funded in the past 12 months. What impact has the off-the-job training had on your firm in this area? Has there been a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect to date?

- 1 A major effect
- 2 A minor effect
- 3 No effect to date

ONJOBINT

I am now going to ask you some questions specifically about on-the-job training. By on-the-job training, I mean training given at the desk or place where the person usually works. I'm not including off-the-job training which is given away from the usual work position.

ONJOB

Have you carried out any on-the-job training at ***** over the last 12 months?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

NONJOB (if no in onjob)

Why have you not provided any on-the-job training to your employees here in the last 12 months? Is it because...

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Staff have sufficient skills to do their job
- 2 Costs associated with on-the-job training
- 3 Time constraints
- 4 Other training method preferred (eg off-the-job training)
- 5 Trained staff will be poached by other employers?
- 6 Other

NONJOTH (if 6 in nonjob)

Please describe the other reason for not carrying out any on-the-job training over the last 12 months:

YONJOB (if yes in onjob)

What types of on-the-job training has _____ provided to your employees in the last 12 months

INTERVIEWER - ONLY READ OUT CODE 4 IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT MENTION EITHER CODE 2 OR CODE 3

- 1 Training by your company training officer or specialist training staff
- 2 Training by a line manager or supervisor
- 3 Training by other experienced staff at your company
- 4 Training by staff in the company
- 5 Training provided by equipment suppliers
- 6 Private sector training companies or consultancies
- 7 Computer based training packages?
- 8 Other

YONOTH (if other in yonjob)

Please describe the other method you have used over the last year to provide on-the-job training to employees at *****.

TRAIN1

Do you help your employees to learn new skills not connected to their current job for....

INTERVIEWER - READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- 1 Career development inside the organisation
- 2 Career development outside the organisation
- 3 Learning, training or education which has nothing to do with employment
- 4 None of the above?

YOU HAVE NOW REACHED THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 2

STANDARD INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION

Employers responding to the Skills Monitoring Survey have been classified into industrial sectors using the 2003 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). While the standard industrial sectors have been used, the titles of some of the sectors have been amended to aid readability. This is in line with the approach taken by the National Skills Task Force in “Skills For all: Research Report from the National Skills Task Force” and “Skills For All: Proposals for a National Skills Agenda - Final Report of the National Skills Task Force”.

Appendix 2 lists the sectors included in the study, the correct SIC 03 title of the industry and a more detailed breakdown is given for those industrial sectors where the further clarification may be required.

Title used in this Report	SIC03	Subsections/Included
Mining and Quarrying	C - Mining and quarrying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining & quarrying of energy producing materials; • Mining & quarrying except energy producing materials.
Manufacturing	D - Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food products, beverages and tobacco; • Textile and textile products; • Leather and leather products; • Wood and wood products; • Pulp paper and paper products, publishing and printing; • Coke, refined petroleum products; • Chemicals, chemical products and man-made fibres; • Rubber and plastic products; • Other non-metallic mineral products; • Basic metals and fabricated metal products; • Machinery and equipment not elsewhere classified; • Electrical and optical equipment; • Transport equipment; • Manufacturing not elsewhere classified.
Utilities	E - Electricity, gas and water supply	
Construction	F - Construction	
Wholesale and Retail	G - Wholesale & retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	
Hotels and Restaurants	H - Hotels & restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotels; • Camping sites & other short-stay accommodation; • Restaurants; • Bars; • Canteens and catering.

Title used in this Report	SIC03	Subsections/Included
Transport and Communications	I - Transport, storage and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land transport, transport via pipelines; • Water transport; • Air transport; • Supporting and auxiliary activities, travel agencies; • Post and telecommunications.
Financial Services	J - Financial intermediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial intermediation inc banks, building societies, leasing, credit etc; • Insurance and pensions funding; • Other auxiliary activities.
Business Services	K - Real estate, renting and business activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real estate activities; • Renting of machinery, equipment and personal and household goods; • Computer and related activities; • Research and development; • Other business activities.
Public Administration	L - Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public administration and defence; compulsory social security.
Education	M - Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education.
Health and Social Care	N - Health and social work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and social work.
Other Services	O - Other community, social and personal service activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewage and refuse disposal, sanitation and similar activities; • Activities of membership organisations not elsewhere classified; • Recreational, cultural and sporting activities; • Other service activities (washing, dry cleaning, hairdressing and beauty treatment, funeral and related, health activities, other services).

Sections excluded from the Survey are:

A - Agriculture, hunting and forestry

B - Fishing

P - Private households with employed persons

Q - Extra-territorial organisations and bodies

APPENDIX 3

STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION

SOC 90 (as used in the 2000 Skills Monitoring Survey) was the official Government system for classifying skills in the UK until replaced by SOC 2000. It is broadly similar to international systems. It is based on the similarity of qualifications, training skills, and experience commonly associated with the competent performance of constituent tasks.

SOC 2000 has a hierarchical structure; there are four skill levels and

- (i) 9 major groups
- (ii) 25 sub-major groups
- (iii) 81 major groups
- (iv) 353 unit groups

Each unit group is identified by a four digit number which also reflects its position in the Minor Group and Major Group (as shown in **Appendix 2**).

Box 1 summarises the major revisions in SOC 2000 from SOC 90 indicating changes in the location of occupations in terms of skill levels.

Box 1 Skill levels and the Sub-Major group structure of SOC 2000 and SOC 90

Skill Level	Sub-Major Groups of SOC 2000	SOC 90
Level 4	11 Corporate managers 21 Science and technology professionals 22 Health professionals 23 Teaching and research professionals 24 Business and public service professionals	1a Corporate managers 2a Science and engineering professionals 2b Health professionals 2c Teaching professionals 2d Other professional occupations
Level 3	12 Managers and proprietors in agriculture and Services 31 Science and technology associate Professionals 32 Health and social welfare associate professionals 33 Protective service occupations 34 Culture, media and sports occupations 35 Business and public service associate Professionals 51 Skilled agricultural trades 52 Skilled metal and electrical trades 53 Skilled construction and building trades 54 Textiles, printing and other skilled trades	1b Managers/proprietors in agriculture and services 3a Science and engineering associate professionals 3b Health associate professionals 6a Protective service occupations 3c Other associate professional occupations 7a Buyers, brokers and sales representatives 9a Other occupations in agriculture, forestry and fishing 5b Skilled engineering trades 5a Skilled construction trades 5c Other skilled trades
Level 2	41 Administrative occupations 42 Secretarial and related occupations 61 Caring personal service occupations 62 Leisure and other personal service 71 Sales occupations 72 Customer service occupations 82 Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives	4a Clerical occupations 4b Secretarial occupations 6b Personal service occupations 7b Other sales occupations 8a Industrial plant/machinery operatives, assemblers 8b Drivers and mobile machine operatives
Level 1	91 Elementary trades, plant and storage related occupations 92 Elementary administrative and service occupations	9b Other elementary occupations

Note: Sub-major groups of SOC 90 have been listed in the order which best approximates their equivalent position in SOC 2000. It must be stressed however that there is no exact correspondence at this level.

Source: SOC 2000 Volume 1 Table 1

Further details on the major changes from SOC 90 to SOC 2000 are outlined in Labour Market Bulletin No 14, Chapter 9.

1	SOC2K1000	Managers and Senior Officials
1.1	SOC2K1100	Corporate Managers
1.1.1	SOC2K1110	Corporate Managers and Senior Officials
1.1.1.1	SOC2K1111	Senior officials in national government
1.1.1.2	SOC2K1112	Directors and chief executives of major organisations
1.1.1.3	SOC2K1113	Senior officials in local government
1.1.1.4	SOC2K1114	Senior officials of special interest organisations
1.1.2	SOC2K1120	Production Managers
1.1.2.1	SOC2K1121	Production works and maintenance managers
1.1.2.2	SOC2K1122	Managers in construction
1.1.2.3	SOC2K1123	Managers in mining and energy
1.1.3	SOC2K1130	Functional Managers
1.1.3.1	SOC2K1131	Financial managers and chartered secretaries
1.1.3.2	SOC2K1132	Marketing and sales managers
1.1.3.3	SOC2K1133	Purchasing managers
1.1.3.4	SOC2K1134	Advertising and public relations managers
1.1.3.5	SOC2K1135	Personnel training and industrial relations managers
1.1.3.6	SOC2K1136	Information and communication technology managers
1.1.3.7	SOC2K1137	Research and development managers
1.1.4	SOC2K1140	Quality and Customer Care Managers
1.1.4.1	SOC2K1141	Quality assurance managers
1.1.4.2	SOC2K1142	Customer care managers
1.1.5	SOC2K1150	Financial Institution and Office Managers
1.1.5.1	SOC2K1151	Financial institution managers
1.1.5.2	SOC2K1152	Office managers
1.1.6	SOC2K1160	Managers in Distribution Storage and Retailing
1.1.6.1	SOC2K1161	Transport and distribution managers
1.1.6.2	SOC2K1162	Storage and warehouse managers
1.1.6.3	SOC2K1163	Retail and wholesale managers
1.1.7	SOC2K1170	Protective Service Officers
1.1.7.1	SOC2K1171	Officers in armed forces
1.1.7.2	SOC2K1172	Police officers inspectors and above
1.1.7.3	SOC2K1173	Senior officers in fire, ambulance, prison and related services
1.1.7.4	SOC2K1174	Security managers
1.1.8	SOC2K1180	Health and Social Services Managers
1.1.8.1	SOC2K1181	Hospital and health service managers
1.1.8.2	SOC2K1182	Pharmacy managers
1.1.8.3	SOC2K1183	Healthcare practice managers
1.1.8.4	SOC2K1184	Social services managers
1.1.8.5	SOC2K1185	Residential and day care managers
1.2	SOC2K1200	Managers and Proprietors in Agriculture and Services
1.2.1	SOC2K1210	Managers in Farming Horticulture Forestry and Fishing
1.2.1.1	SOC2K1211	Farm managers
1.2.1.2	SOC2K1212	Natural environment and conservation managers
1.2.1.9	SOC2K1219	Managers in animal husbandry forestry & fishing n.e.c.

- 1.2.2 SOC2K1220 Managers and Proprietors In Hospitality And Leisure Services
 - 1.2.2.1 SOC2K1221 Hotel and accommodation managers
 - 1.2.2.2 SOC2K1222 Conference and exhibition managers
 - 1.2.2.3 SOC2K1223 Restaurant and catering managers
 - 1.2.2.4 SOC2K1224 Publicans and managers of licensed premises
 - 1.2.2.5 SOC2K1225 Leisure and sports managers
 - 1.2.2.6 SOC2K1226 Travel agency managers
- 1.2.3 SOC2K1230 Managers and Proprietors In Other Service Industries
 - 1.2.3.1 SOC2K1231 Property housing and land managers
 - 1.2.3.2 SOC2K1232 Garage managers and proprietors
 - 1.2.3.3 SOC2K1233 Hairdressing and beauty salon managers and proprietors
 - 1.2.3.4 SOC2K1234 Shopkeepers and wholesale/retail dealers
 - 1.2.3.5 SOC2K1235 Recycling and refuse disposal managers
 - 1.2.3.9 SOC2K1239 Managers and proprietors in other services n.e.c.

2 SOC2K2000 Professional Occupations

- 2.1 SOC2K2100 Science and Technology Professionals
 - 2.1.1 SOC2K2110 Science Professionals
 - 2.1.1.1 SOC2K2111 Chemists
 - 2.1.1.2 SOC2K2112 Biological scientists and biochemists
 - 2.1.1.3 SOC2K2113 Physicists geologists and meteorologists
 - 2.1.2 SOC2K2120 Engineering Professionals
 - 2.1.2.1 SOC2K2121 Civil engineers
 - 2.1.2.2 SOC2K2122 Mechanical engineers
 - 2.1.2.3 SOC2K2123 Electrical engineers
 - 2.1.2.4 SOC2K2124 Electronics engineers
 - 2.1.2.5 SOC2K2125 Chemical engineers
 - 2.1.2.6 SOC2K2126 Design and development engineers
 - 2.1.2.7 SOC2K2127 Production and process engineers
 - 2.1.2.8 SOC2K2128 Planning and quality control engineers
 - 2.1.2.9 SOC2K2129 Engineering Professionals n.e.c.
 - 2.1.3 SOC2K2130 Information and Communication Technology Professionals
 - 2.1.3.1 SOC2K2131 IT strategy and Planning Professionals
 - 2.1.3.2 SOC2K2132 Software Professionals
- 2.2 SOC2K2200 Health Professionals
 - 2.2.1 SOC2K2210 Health Professionals
 - 2.2.1.1 SOC2K2211 Medical practitioners
 - 2.2.1.2 SOC2K2212 Psychologists
 - 2.2.1.3 SOC2K2213 Pharmacists/pharmacologists
 - 2.2.1.4 SOC2K2214 Ophthalmic opticians
 - 2.2.1.5 SOC2K2215 Dental practitioners
 - 2.2.1.6 SOC2K2216 Veterinarians
- 2.3 SOC2K2300 Teaching and Research Professionals

2.3.1	SOC2K2310	Teaching Professionals
2.3.1.1	SOC2K2311	Higher education teaching professionals
2.3.1.2	SOC2K2312	Further education teaching professionals
2.3.1.3	SOC2K2313	Education officers school inspectors
2.3.1.4	SOC2K2314	Secondary education teaching professionals
2.3.1.5	SOC2K2315	Primary and nursery education teaching professionals
2.3.1.6	SOC2K2316	Special needs education teaching professionals
2.3.1.7	SOC2K2317	Registrars and senior administrators of educational establishments
2.3.1.9	SOC2K2319	Teaching Professionals n.e.c.
2.3.2	SOC2K2320	Research Professionals
2.3.2.1	SOC2K2321	Scientific researchers
2.3.2.2	SOC2K2322	Social science researchers
2.3.2.9	SOC2K2329	Researchers n.e.c.
2.4	SOC2K2400	Business and Public Service Professionals
2.4.1	SOC2K2410	Legal Professionals
2.4.1.1	SOC2K2411	Solicitors and lawyers judges and coroners
2.4.1.9	SOC2K2419	Legal Professionals n.e.c.
2.4.2	SOC2K2420	Business and Statistical Professionals
2.4.2.1	SOC2K2421	Chartered and certified accountants
2.4.2.2	SOC2K2422	Management accountants
2.4.2.3	SOC2K2423	Management consultants, actuaries, economists and statisticians
2.4.3	SOC2K2430	Architects Town Planners Surveyors
2.4.3.1	SOC2K2431	Architects
2.4.3.2	SOC2K2432	Town planners
2.4.3.3	SOC2K2433	Quantity surveyors
2.4.3.4	SOC2K2434	Chartered surveyors (not quantity surveyors)
2.4.4	SOC2K2440	Public Service Professionals
2.4.4.1	SOC2K2441	Public service administrative professionals
2.4.4.2	SOC2K2442	Social workers
2.4.4.3	SOC2K2443	Probation officers
2.4.4.4	SOC2K2444	Clergy
2.4.5	SOC2K2450	Librarians and Related Professionals
2.4.5.1	SOC2K2451	Librarians
2.4.5.2	SOC2K2452	Archivists and curators

3 SOC2K3000 Associate Professional and Technical Occupations

3.1	SOC2K3100	Science and Technology Associate Professionals
3.1.1	SOC2K3110	Science and Engineering Technicians
3.1.1.1	SOC2K3111	Laboratory Technicians
3.1.1.2	SOC2K3112	Electrical/Electronics technicians
3.1.1.3	SOC2K3113	Engineering Technicians
3.1.1.4	SOC2K3114	Building and Civil Engineering Technicians
3.1.1.5	SOC2K3115	Quality Assurance Technicians
3.1.1.9	SOC2K3119	Science and Engineering Technicians n.e.c.

3.1.2	SOC2K3120	Draughtspersons and Building Inspectors
3.1.2.1	SOC2K3121	Architectural Technologists and Town planning Technicians
3.1.2.2	SOC2K3122	Draughtspersons
3.1.2.3	SOC2K3123	Building inspectors
3.1.3	SOC2K3130	IT Service Delivery Occupations
3.1.3.1	SOC2K3131	IT Operations Technicians
3.1.3.2	SOC2K3132	IT User Support Technicians
3.2	SOC2K3200	Health and Social Welfare Associate Professionals
3.2.1	SOC2K3210	Health Associate Professionals
3.2.1.1	SOC2K3211	Nurses
3.2.1.2	SOC2K3212	Midwives
3.2.1.3	SOC2K3213	Paramedics
3.2.1.4	SOC2K3214	Medical Radiographers
3.2.1.5	SOC2K3215	Chiropodists
3.2.1.6	SOC2K3216	Dispensing Opticians
3.2.1.7	SOC2K3217	Pharmaceutical Dispensers
3.2.1.8	SOC2K3218	Medical and Dental Technicians
3.2.2	SOC2K3220	Therapists
3.2.2.1	SOC2K3221	Physiotherapists
3.2.2.2	SOC2K3222	Occupational Therapists
3.2.2.3	SOC2K3223	Speech and Language Therapists
3.2.2.9	SOC2K3229	Therapists n.e.c.
3.2.3	SOC2K3230	Social Welfare Associate Professionals
3.2.3.1	SOC2K3231	Youth and Community Workers
3.2.3.2	SOC2K3232	Housing and Welfare Officers
3.3	SOC2K3300	Protective Service Occupations
3.3.1	SOC2K3310	Protective Service Occupations
3.3.1.1	SOC2K3311	NCOs and other ranks
3.3.1.2	SOC2K3312	Police Officers (sergeant and below)
3.3.1.3	SOC2K3313	Fire Service Officers (leading fire officer and below)
3.3.1.4	SOC2K3314	Prison Service Officers (below principal officer)
3.3.1.9	SOC2K3319	Protective Service Associate Professionals n.e.c.
3.4	SOC2K3400	Culture Media and Sports Occupations
3.4.1	SOC2K3410	Artistic and Literary Occupations
3.4.1.1	SOC2K3411	Artists
3.4.1.2	SOC2K3412	Authors writers
3.4.1.3	SOC2K3413	Actors entertainers
3.4.1.4	SOC2K3414	Dancers and choreographers
3.4.1.5	SOC2K3415	Musicians
3.4.1.6	SOC2K3416	Arts officers, producers and directors
3.4.2	SOC2K3420	Design Associate Professionals
3.4.2.1	SOC2K3421	Graphic designers
3.4.2.2	SOC2K3422	Product, clothing and related designers
3.4.3	SOC2K3430	Media Associate Professionals
3.4.3.1	SOC2K3431	Journalists, newspaper and periodical editors

3.4.3.2	SOC2K3432	Broadcasting associate professionals
3.4.3.3	SOC2K3433	Public relations officers
3.4.3.4	SOC2K3434	Photographers and audio-visual equipment operators
3.4.4	SOC2K3440	Sports and Fitness Occupations
3.4.4.1	SOC2K3441	Sports players
3.4.4.2	SOC2K3442	Sports coaches instructors and officials
3.4.4.3	SOC2K3443	Fitness instructors
3.4.4.9	SOC2K3449	Sports and fitness occupations n.e.c.
3.5	SOC2K3500	Business and Public Service Associate Professionals
3.5.1	SOC2K3510	Transport Associate Professionals
3.5.1.1	SOC2K3511	Air traffic controllers
3.5.1.2	SOC2K3512	Aircraft pilots and flight engineers
3.5.1.3	SOC2K3513	Ship and hovercraft officers
3.5.1.4	SOC2K3514	Train drivers
3.5.2	SOC2K3520	Legal Associate Professionals
3.5.2.0	SOC2K3520	Legal associate professionals
3.5.3	SOC2K3530	Business and Finance Associate Professionals
3.5.3.1	SOC2K3531	Estimators, valuers and assessors
3.5.3.2	SOC2K3532	Brokers
3.5.3.3	SOC2K3533	Insurance underwriters
3.5.3.4	SOC2K3534	Finance and investment analysts/advisers
3.5.3.5	SOC2K3535	Taxation experts
3.5.3.6	SOC2K3536	Importers, exporters
3.5.3.7	SOC2K3537	Financial and accounting technicians
3.5.3.9	SOC2K3539	Business and related associate professionals n.e.c.
3.5.4	SOC2K3540	Sales and Related Associate Professionals
3.5.4.1	SOC2K3541	Buyers and purchasing officers
3.5.4.2	SOC2K3542	Sales representatives
3.5.4.3	OC2K3543	Marketing associate professionals
3.5.4.4	SOC2K3544	Estate agents auctioneers
3.5.5	SOC2K3550	Conservation Associate Professionals
3.5.5.1	SOC2K3551	Conservation and environmental protection officers
3.5.5.2	SOC2K3552	Countryside and park rangers
3.5.6	SOC2K3560	Public Service and Other Associate Professionals
3.5.6.1	SOC2K3561	Public service associate professionals
3.5.6.2	SOC2K3562	Personnel and industrial relations officers
3.5.6.3	SOC2K3563	Vocational and industrial trainers and instructors
3.5.6.4	SOC2K3564	Careers advisers and vocational guidance specialists
3.5.6.5	SOC2K3565	Inspectors of factories, utilities and trading standards
3.5.6.6	SOC2K3566	Statutory examiners
3.5.6.7	SOC2K3567	Occupational hygienists and safety officers (health and safety)
3.5.6.8	SOC2K3568	Environmental health officers

4	SOC2K4000	Administrative and Secretarial Occupations
4.1	SOC2K4100	Administrative Occupations
4.1.1	SOC2K4110	Administrative Occupations: Government and Related Organisations
4.1.1.1	SOC2K4111	Civil Service executive officers
4.1.1.2	SOC2K4112	Civil Service administrative officers and assistants
4.1.1.3	SOC2K4113	Local government clerical officers and assistants
4.1.1.4	SOC2K4114	Officers of non-governmental organisations
4.1.2	SOC2K4120	Administrative Occupations: Finance
4.1.2.1	SOC2K4121	Credit controllers
4.1.2.2	SOC2K4122	Accounts and wages clerks book-keepers other financial clerks
4.1.2.3	SOC2K4123	Counter clerks
4.1.3	SOC2K4130	Administrative Occupations: Records
4.1.3.1	SOC2K4131	Filing and other records assistants/clerks
4.1.3.2	SOC2K4132	Pensions and insurance clerks
4.1.3.3	SOC2K4133	Stock control clerks
4.1.3.4	SOC2K4134	Transport and distribution clerks
4.1.3.5	SOC2K4135	Library assistants/clerks
4.1.3.6	SOC2K4136	Database assistants/clerks
4.1.3.7	SOC2K4137	Market research interviewers
4.1.4	SOC2K4140	Administrative Occupations: Communications
4.1.4.1	SOC2K4141	Telephonists
4.1.4.2	SOC2K4142	Communication operators
4.1.5	SOC2K4150	Administrative Occupations: General
4.1.5.0	SOC2K4150	General office assistants/clerks
4.2	SOC2K4200	Secretarial and Related Occupations
4.2.1	SOC2K4210	Secretarial and Related Occupations
4.2.1.1	SOC2K4211	Medical secretaries
4.2.1.2	SOC2K4212	Legal secretaries
4.2.1.3	SOC2K4213	School secretaries
4.2.1.4	SOC2K4214	Company secretaries
4.2.1.5	SOC2K4215	Personal assistants and other secretaries
4.2.1.6	SOC2K4216	Receptionists
4.2.1.7	SOC2K4217	Typists
5	SOC2K5000	Skilled Trades Occupations
5.1	SOC2K5100	Skilled Agricultural Trades
5.1.1	SOC2K5110	Agricultural Trades
5.1.1.1	SOC2K5111	Farmers
5.1.1.2	SOC2K5112	Horticultural trades
5.1.1.3	SOC2K5113	Gardeners and groundsman/groundswomen
5.1.1.9	SOC2K5119	Agricultural and fishing trades n.e.c.
5.2	SOC2K5200	Skilled Metal and Electrical Trades
5.2.1	SOC2K5210	Metal Forming, Welding and Related Trades
5.2.1.1	SOC2K5211	Smiths and forge workers

5.2.1.2	SOC2K5212	Moulders, core makers, die casters
5.2.1.3	SOC2K5213	Sheet metal workers
5.2.1.4	SOC2K5214	Metal plate workers, shipwrights, riveters
5.2.1.5	SOC2K5215	Welding trades
5.2.1.6	SOC2K5216	Pipe fitters
5.2.2	SOC2K5220	Metal Machining, Fitting and Instrument Making Trades
5.2.2.1	SOC2K5221	Metal machining setters and setter-operators
5.2.2.2	SOC2K5222	Tool makers, tool fitters and markers-out
5.2.2.3	SOC2K5223	Metal working production and maintenance fitters
5.2.2.4	SOC2K5224	Precision instrument makers and repairers
5.2.3	SOC2K5230	Vehicle Trades
5.2.3.1	SOC2K5231	Motor mechanics, auto engineers
5.2.3.2	SOC2K5232	Vehicle body builders and repairers
5.2.3.3	SOC2K5233	Auto electricians
5.2.3.4	SOC2K5234	Vehicle spray painters
5.2.4	SOC2K5240	Electrical Trades
5.2.4.1	SOC2K5241	Electricians, electrical fitters
5.2.4.2	SOC2K5242	Telecommunications engineers
5.2.4.3	SOC2K5243	Lines repairers and cable jointers
5.2.4.4	SOC2K5244	TV, video and audio engineers
5.2.4.5	SOC2K5245	Computer engineers, installation and maintenance
5.2.4.9	SOC2K5249	Electrical/electronics engineers n.e.c.
5.3	SOC2K5300	Skilled Construction and Building Trades
5.3.1	SOC2K5310	Construction Trades
5.3.1.1	SOC2K5311	Steel erectors
5.3.1.2	SOC2K5312	Bricklayers, masons
5.3.1.3	SOC2K5313	Roofers, roof tilers and slaters
5.3.1.4	SOC2K5314	Plumbers, heating and ventilating engineers
5.3.1.5	SOC2K5315	Carpenters and joiners
5.3.1.6	SOC2K5316	Glaziers, window fabricators and fitters
5.3.1.9	SOC2K5319	Construction trades n.e.c.
5.3.2	SOC2K5320	Building Trades
5.3.2.1	SOC2K5321	Plasterers
5.3.2.2	SOC2K5322	Floorers and wall tilers
5.3.2.3	SOC2K5323	Painters and decorators
5.4	SOC2K5400	Textiles, Printing and other Skilled Trades
5.4.1	SOC2K5410	Textiles and Garments Trades
5.4.1.1	SOC2K5411	Weavers and knitters
5.4.1.2	SOC2K5412	Upholsterers
5.4.1.3	SOC2K5413	Leather and related trades
5.4.1.4	SOC2K5414	Tailors and dressmakers
5.4.1.9	SOC2K5419	Textiles, garments and related trades n.e.c.
5.4.2	SOC2K5420	Printing Trades
5.4.2.1	SOC2K5421	Originators compositors and print preparers
5.4.2.2	SOC2K5422	Printers
5.4.2.3	SOC2K5423	Bookbinders and print finishers

5.4.2.4	SOC2K5424	Screen printers
5.4.3	SOC2K5430	Food Preparation Trades
5.4.3.1	SOC2K5431	Butchers, meat cutters
5.4.3.2	SOC2K5432	Bakers, flour confectioners
5.4.3.3	SOC2K5433	Fishmongers, poultry dressers
5.4.3.4	SOC2K5434	Chefs and cooks
5.4.9	SOC2K5490	Skilled Trades n. e. c.
5.4.9.1	SOC2K5491	Glass and ceramics makers, decorators and finishers
5.4.9.2	SOC2K5492	Furniture makers, other craft woodworkers
5.4.9.3	SOC2K5493	Pattern makers (moulds)
5.4.9.4	SOC2K5494	Musical instrument makers and tuners
5.4.9.5	SOC2K5495	Goldsmiths, silversmiths, precious stone workers
5.4.9.6	SOC2K5496	Floral arrangers, florists
5.4.9.9	SOC2K5499	Hand craft occupations n.e.c.

6 SOC2K6000 Personal Service Occupations

6.1	SOC2K6100	Caring Personal Service Occupations
6.1.1	SOC2K6110	Healthcare and Related Personal Services
6.1.1.1	SOC2K6111	Nursing auxiliaries and assistants
6.1.1.2	SOC2K6112	Ambulance staff (excluding paramedics)
6.1.1.3	SOC2K6113	Dental nurses
6.1.1.4	SOC2K6114	Houseparents and residential wardens
6.1.1.5	SOC2K6115	Care assistants and home carers
6.1.2	SOC2K6120	Childcare and Related Personal Services
6.1.2.1	SOC2K6121	Nursery nurses
6.1.2.2	SOC2K6122	Childminders and related occupations
6.1.2.3	SOC2K6123	Playgroup leaders/assistants
6.1.2.4	SOC2K6124	Educational assistants
6.1.3	SOC2K6130	Animal Care Services
6.1.3.1	SOC2K6131	Veterinary nurses and assistants
6.1.3.9	SOC2K6139	Animal care occupations n.e.c.
6.2	SOC2K6200	Leisure and other Personal Service Occupations
6.2.1	SOC2K6210	Leisure and Travel Service Occupations
6.2.1.1	SOC2K6211	Sports and leisure assistants
6.2.1.2	SOC2K6212	Travel agents
6.2.1.3	SOC2K6213	Travel and tour guides
6.2.1.4	SOC2K6214	Air travel assistants
6.2.1.5	SOC2K6215	Rail travel assistants
6.2.1.9	SOC2K6219	Leisure and travel service occupations n.e.c.
6.2.2	SOC2K6220	Hairdressers and Related Occupations
6.2.2.1	SOC2K6221	Hairdressers and barbers
6.2.2.2	SOC2K6222	Beauticians and related occupations
6.2.3	SOC2K6230	Housekeeping Occupations
6.2.3.1	SOC2K6231	Housekeepers and related occupations
6.2.3.2	SOC2K6232	Caretakers
6.2.9	SOC2K6290	Personal Services Occupations n. e. c.
6.2.9.1	SOC2K6291	Undertakers and mortuary assistants
6.2.9.2	SOC2K6292	Pest control officers

7 SOC2K7000 Sales and Customer Service Occupations

- 7.1 SOC2K7100 Sales Occupations
 - 7.1.1 SOC2K7110 Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers
 - 7.1.1.1 SOC2K7111 Sales and retail assistants
 - 7.1.1.2 SOC2K7112 Retail cashiers and check-out operators
 - 7.1.1.3 SOC2K7113 Telephone salespersons
 - 7.1.2 SOC2K7120 Sales Related Occupations
 - 7.1.2.1 SOC2K7121 Collector salespersons and credit agents
 - 7.1.2.2 SOC2K7122 Debt, rent and other cash collectors
 - 7.1.2.3 SOC2K7123 Roundsmen/women and van salespersons
 - 7.1.2.4 SOC2K7124 Market and street traders and assistants
 - 7.1.2.5 SOC2K7125 Merchandisers and window dressers
 - 7.1.2.9 SOC2K7129 Sales related occupations n.e.c.
- 7.2 SOC2K7200 Customer Service Occupations
 - 7.2.1 SOC2K7210 Customer Service Occupations
 - 7.2.1.1 SOC2K7211 Call centre agents/operators
 - 7.2.1.2 SOC2K7212 Customer care occupations

8 SOC2K8000 Process, Plant and Machine Operatives

- 8.1 SOC2K8100 Process, Plant and Machine Operatives
 - 8.1.1 SOC2K8110 Process Operatives
 - 8.1.1.1 SOC2K8111 Food, drink and tobacco process operatives
 - 8.1.1.2 SOC2K8112 Glass and ceramics process operatives
 - 8.1.1.3 SOC2K8113 Textile process operatives
 - 8.1.1.4 SOC2K8114 Chemical and related process operatives
 - 8.1.1.5 SOC2K8115 Rubber process operatives
 - 8.1.1.6 SOC2K8116 Plastics process operatives
 - 8.1.1.7 SOC2K8117 Metal making and treating process operatives
 - 8.1.1.8 SOC2K8118 Electroplaters
 - 8.1.1.9 SOC2K8119 Process Operatives n.e.c.
 - 8.1.2 SOC2K8120 Plant and Machine Operatives
 - 8.1.2.1 SOC2K8121 Paper and wood machine operatives
 - 8.1.2.2 SOC2K8122 Coal mine operatives
 - 8.1.2.3 SOC2K8123 Quarry workers and related operatives
 - 8.1.2.4 SOC2K8124 Energy plant operatives
 - 8.1.2.5 SOC2K8125 Metal working machine operatives
 - 8.1.2.6 SOC2K8126 Water and sewerage plant operatives
 - 8.1.2.9 SOC2K8129 Plant and machine operatives n.e.c.
 - 8.1.3 SOC2K8130 Assemblers and Routine Operatives
 - 8.1.3.1 SOC2K8131 Assemblers (electrical products)
 - 8.1.3.2 SOC2K8132 Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods)
 - 8.1.3.3 SOC2K8133 Routine inspectors and testers
 - 8.1.3.4 SOC2K8134 Weighers, graders, sorters
 - 8.1.3.5 SOC2K8135 Tyre, exhaust and windscreen fitters
 - 8.1.3.6 SOC2K8136 Clothing cutters
 - 8.1.3.7 SOC2K8137 Sewing machinists
 - 8.1.3.8 SOC2K8138 Routine laboratory testers
 - 8.1.3.9 SOC2K8139 Assemblers and routine operatives n.e.c.

8.1.4	SOC2K8140	Construction Operatives
8.1.4.1	SOC2K8141	Scaffolders, staggers and riggers
8.1.4.2	SOC2K8142	Road construction operatives
8.1.4.3	SOC2K8143	Rail construction and maintenance operatives
8.1.4.9	SOC2K8149	Construction Operatives n.e.c.
8.2	SOC2K8200	Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives
8.2.1	SOC2K8210	Transport Drivers and Operatives
8.2.1.1	SOC2K8211	Heavy goods vehicle drivers
8.2.1.2	SOC2K8212	Van drivers
8.2.1.3	SOC2K8213	Bus and coach drivers
8.2.1.4	SOC2K8214	Taxi, cab drivers and chauffeurs
8.2.1.5	SOC2K8215	Driving instructors
8.2.1.6	SOC2K8216	Rail transport operatives
8.2.1.7	SOC2K8217	Seafarers (merchant navy); barge, lighter and boat operatives
8.2.1.8	SOC2K8218	Air transport operatives
8.2.1.9	SOC2K8219	Transport Operatives n.e.c.
8.2.2	SOC2K8220	Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives
8.2.2.1	SOC2K8221	Crane drivers
8.2.2.2	SOC2K8222	Fork-lift truck drivers
8.2.2.3	SOC2K8223	Agricultural machinery drivers
8.2.2.9	SOC2K8229	Mobile machine drivers and operatives n.e.c.

9 SOC2K9000 Elementary Occupations

9.1	SOC2K9100	Elementary Trades, Plant and Storage related Occupations
9.1.1	SOC2K9110	Elementary Agricultural Occupations
9.1.1.1	SOC2K9111	Farm workers
9.1.1.2	SOC2K9112	Forestry workers
9.1.1.9	SOC2K9119	Fishing and agriculture related occupations n.e.c.
9.1.2	SOC2K9120	Elementary Construction Occupations
9.1.2.1	SOC2K9121	Labourers in building and woodworking trades
9.1.2.9	SOC2K9129	Labourers in other construction trades n.e.c.
9.1.3	SOC2K9130	Elementary Process Plant Occupations
9.1.3.1	SOC2K9131	Labourers in foundries
9.1.3.2	SOC2K9132	Industrial cleaning process occupations
9.1.3.3	SOC2K9133	Printing machine minders and assistants
9.1.3.4	SOC2K9134	Packers, bottlers, canners, fillers
9.1.3.9	SOC2K9139	Labourers in process and plant operations n.e.c.
9.1.4	SOC2K9140	Elementary Goods Storage Occupations
9.1.4.1	SOC2K9141	Stevedores, dockers and slingers
9.1.4.9	SOC2K9149	Other goods handling and storage occupations n.e.c.
9.2	SOC2K9200	Elementary Administration and Service Occupations
9.2.1	SOC2K9210	Elementary Administration Occupations
9.2.1.1	SOC2K9211	Postal workers, mail sorters, messengers, couriers
9.2.1.9	SOC2K9219	Elementary office occupations n.e.c.

9.2.2	SOC2K9220	Elementary Personal Services Occupations
9.2.2.1	SOC2K9221	Hospital porters
9.2.2.2	SOC2K9222	Hotel porters
9.2.2.3	SOC2K9223	Kitchen and catering assistants
9.2.2.4	SOC2K9224	Waiters, waitresses
9.2.2.5	SOC2K9225	Bar staff
9.2.2.6	SOC2K9226	Leisure and theme park attendants
9.2.2.9	SOC2K9229	Elementary Personal Services occupations n.e.c.
9.2.3	SOC2K9230	Elementary Cleaning Occupations
9.2.3.1	SOC2K9231	Window cleaners
9.2.3.2	SOC2K9232	Road sweepers
9.2.3.3	SOC2K9233	Cleaners, domestics
9.2.3.4	SOC2K9234	Launderers, dry cleaners, pressers
9.2.3.5	SOC2K9235	Refuse and salvage occupations
9.2.3.9	SOC2K9239	Elementary cleaning occupations n.e.c.
9.2.4	SOC2K9240	Elementary Security Occupations
9.2.4.1	SOC2K9241	Security guards and related occupations
9.2.4.2	SOC2K9242	Traffic wardens
9.2.4.3	SOC2K9243	School crossing patrol attendants
9.2.4.4	SOC2K9244	School mid-day assistants
9.2.4.5	SOC2K9245	Car park attendants
9.2.4.9	SOC2K9249	Elementary security occupations n.e.c.
9.2.5	SOC2K9250	Elementary Sales Occupations
9.2.5.1	SOC2K9251	Shelf fillers
9.2.5.9	SOC2K9259	Elementary sales occupations n.e.c.

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