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Training Practices and Skills Needs in Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strengthening the skills base is a priority for national and local policy makers in the UK. Employers have a vitally important contribution to make in this regard through their training and development activities, their participation in relevant consultations and policy initiatives, and by signalling their changing skill requirements.

Drawing on survey evidence gathered from 521 organisations located in Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East, this report provides new evidence relating to employers' skills needs, recruitment challenges, training activities, involvement in apprenticeship training, and engagement with local employment and training service providers.

Key findings from the survey include:

Skills needs

- The skills that organisations regarded as most important were 'foundational skills' such as literacy and numeracy. Skills related to customer service and planning and organisation were also highly valued.
- Green skills were rarely regarded as important.
- Most survey participants were confident about their organisation's ability to identify its future skill needs.
- More than two-fifths of organisations had introduced at least one advanced digital technology in the past three years. Adoption was most common among organisations that faced relatively high levels of competition.
- Organisations that had introduced advanced digital technologies were more likely than those that had not to have reduced the size of their workforce.
- AI is most often being used to support relatively low-level tasks such as data recording, summarising information and proofreading.

Recruitment

- Recruitment for higher level roles often extends beyond the local labour market. However, a quarter of organisations focus their efforts on the region when recruiting for higher level roles.
- Approximately two-thirds of organisations experience recruitment difficulties when recruiting new employees.
- Recruitment for higher skilled occupations tends to be more challenging than for lower skilled roles.
- However, more than one-in-ten survey respondents said that their organisation faced difficulties in finding applicants with adequate literacy or numeracy skills.

Training activity

- Organisations' main motivations for providing training were to increase productivity and retain employees.
- While more than 90% of organisations provided at least one form of training, this was often informal on-the-job training.
- One-fifth of organisations had not provided any employees with time off for training in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- Employees with non-standard contracts were less likely to receive training than employees with standard contracts.
- Although a majority of organisations had designated a team or person to take responsibility for workforce development, almost two-fifths had not and almost half of those organisations that provided training did not take a strategic approach.

Apprenticeships

- Around 41% of organisations employed at least one apprentice. The most common reason for doing so was to train individuals to meet organisational needs.
- The Apprenticeship Levy was cited as an incentive by only one-fifth of organisations.
- An inability to dedicate sufficient resources to supporting apprentices was the most common reason for organisations not employing an apprentice.
- Fewer than one-in ten organisations that did not employ an apprentice said that it was because of concerns related to apprentices' attitudes or work commitment.

Engagement with external service providers

- Awareness and use of public skills and employment services were relatively low. Stronger and more widespread engagement might be needed if more robust and inclusive pathways into work are to be developed and sustained.
- Around one-third of organisations that used external training providers had little or no influence over the training they provided.

INTRODUCTION

Investment in education and training is fundamentally important to productivity, innovation and the ability of individuals to progress in the labour market.

Research by Skills England[1] has forecast that employment demand in priority occupations across 10 key sectors will increase from 5.9 million in 2025 to 6.7 million in 2030, and that two-thirds of the additional employment will require workers with a qualification at level 4 or above. Occupations in digital, adult social care, construction and engineering are expected to experience the greatest increase in demand. Whether these and other skill demands can be met is a matter of concern for policy makers, employers and other stakeholders. There are clear weaknesses in the current ability of the UK education and training system to produce a sufficient supply of skills, as illustrated by the UK's 2024 Employer Skills Survey, which found that more than one-quarter (27%) of all vacancies in 2024 were skill-shortage vacancies.

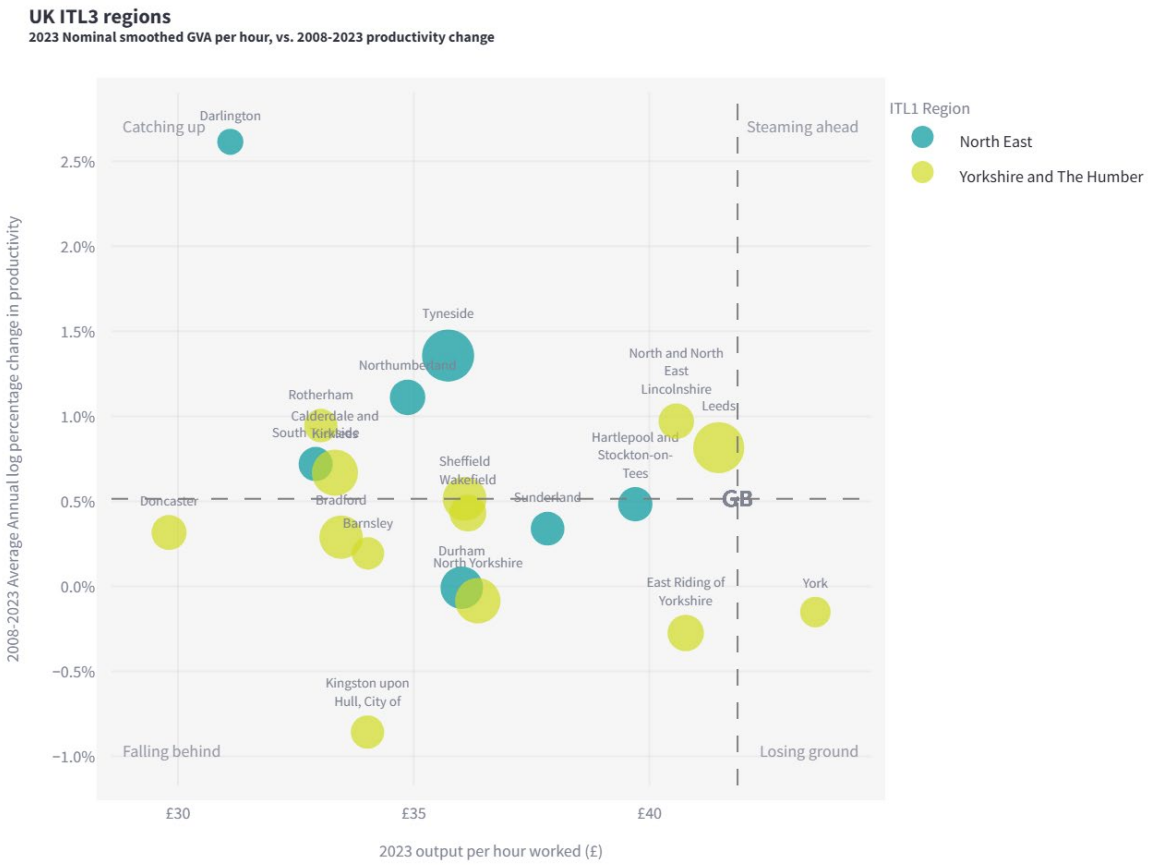
The UK government's Post-16 Education and Skills white paper, published in October 2025, set out plans for reforms covering apprenticeships, short courses, vocational pathways and work placements. A key component of the reform programme is the Growth and Skills Levy, which is intended to deliver 50,000 more apprenticeships[2] for young people and contribute to the government's goal of ensuring that two-thirds of young people enter higher-level learning or apprenticeships. Within regions, Mayoral Combined Authorities have been tasked with developing Local Growth Plans to provide a 10-year strategic framework for growth. These plans should align with other strategies relevant to skills and training, particularly Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and local Get Britain Working Plans, aimed at building more secure pathways into work. Updated government guidance issued in November 2025 requires all areas in England to develop three-year LSIPs covering the period 2026 to 2029[3]. The development of the LSIPs should be informed by the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy[4] and relate national priorities to local contexts.

This report represents a contribution to the evidence base relating to skills and employers' training practices within Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East. The report presents findings based on a survey of 521 organisations located in these regions. The survey's objectives and content were developed by the Yorkshire, Humber and North East (YHNE) Productivity Forum, which is part of The Productivity Institute (TPI) funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The remit of the Forum, which includes representatives

[1] Assessment of priority skills to 2030. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessment-of-priority-skills-to-2030/assessment-of-priority-skills-to-2030#executive-summary
[2] Department for Work and Pension - 50,000 more young people to benefit from apprenticeships as Government unveils new skills reforms to get Britain working - GOV.UK
[3] Skills England - Guidance for developing a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) - GOV.UK
[4] Department for Business and Trade - Industrial Strategy - GOV.UK

of businesses, employer bodies, regional policy bodies, further and higher education and other key stakeholders, is to identify specific productivity challenges and develop actionable insights that might help to address the challenges. Productivity levels in most parts of Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East are below the UK average and although some areas have exhibited above average growth in productivity over the past two decades, others have continued to fall behind[5].

Figure 1: Labour productivity performance by ITL3 regions in Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East, levels (value added per hour in 2023, in £) and change (growth, in % real terms, 2008 -2023)[6]



The YHNE Productivity Forum has identified training and skills weaknesses as a major obstacle to improving productivity in the two regions. One significant problem is the relatively low levels of attainment in relation to higher-level qualifications when compared to the UK average. According to the TPI's regional productivity scorecards (see Appendix 1), 8.8% of the

[5] Research by the Yorkshire, the Humber and North East Productivity Forum published in 2024 provides a more in-depth discussion of productivity in the two regions: Productivity, Training and Skills in Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East

[6] TPI - UK Regional Productivity Growth

UK's working age population are low skilled[7], while 45.9% are high skilled[8]. By comparison, 10.1% of the working age population in Yorkshire and the Humber are low skilled and 40% high skilled. The corresponding figures in the North East are 11.2% and 38.2% respectively.

In response to the existing evidence relating to skills and training-related obstacles to improving productivity in Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East, the YHNE Productivity Forum has developed a programme of research to provide more information about employers' training activity and skills needs in the regions. This report presents initial findings from this research. The findings are derived from a survey conducted by YouGov on behalf of the Forum. The survey questionnaire, which was directed at Human Resource (HR) managers and other managers with responsibilities relating to recruitment and training, asked about organisations' skills needs, recruitment and training practices, experiences of adopting AI technologies and engagement with external skills and employment services. The survey received 521 usable responses.

This report presents key findings from the survey, drawing attention to differences and similarities across the two regions and between organisations according to size and industry. The report comprises six sections. Section 1 examines organisations' skills needs and how they are identified. Section 2 explores recruitment practices. Section 3 focuses on organisations' training activity. Section 4 extends the analysis of training activity by focusing on apprenticeship training. Section 5 provides information about organisations' involvement with external training providers and employment services. Section 6 summarises the key findings and reflects on their implications.

[7] Percentage of the working age population with NVQ1/RQF1 or 'no qualifications'
[8] Percentage of the working age population with qualification at NVQ4+/RQF4+

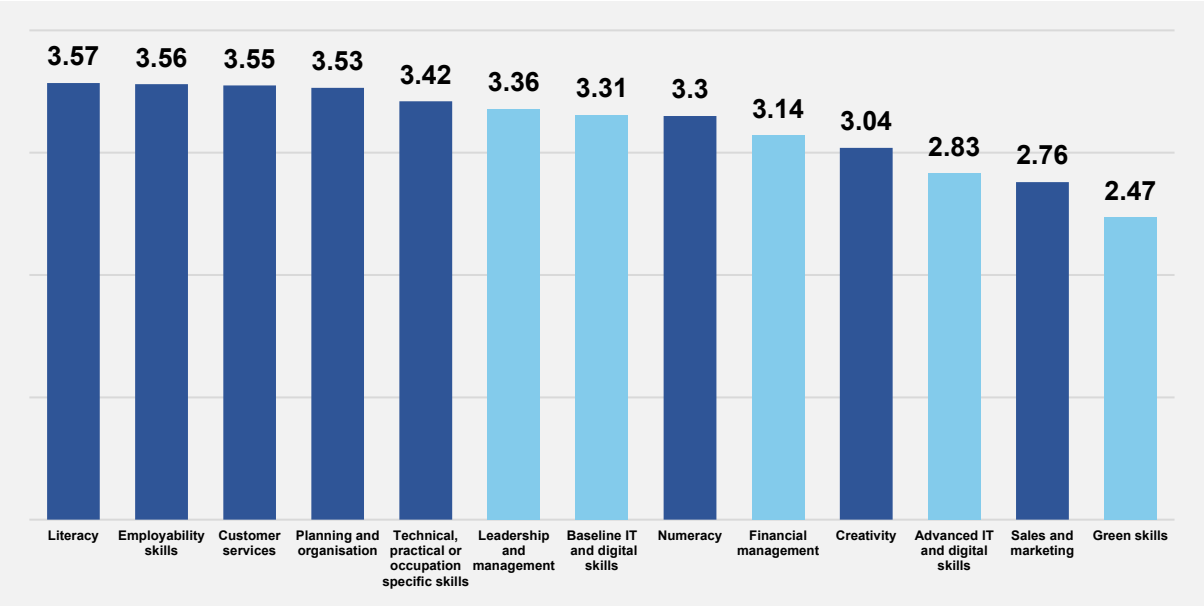
1. ORGANISATIONS' SKILLS NEEDS

Section 1 explores survey participants' views regarding their organisation's skill requirements. This section also examines organisations' use of advanced digital technologies and the implications for skills.

1.1. Which skills are most important?

As can be seen from Figure 2, the skills that were identified as being most important on average were 'foundational skills' related to employability and literacy. Skills related to customer service and planning and organisation were also consistently highly rated. A strong emphasis was also placed on leadership and management, as well as technical and occupational skills. By contrast, green skills, received the lowest average score, suggesting that they are typically regarded as less important than other types of skill.

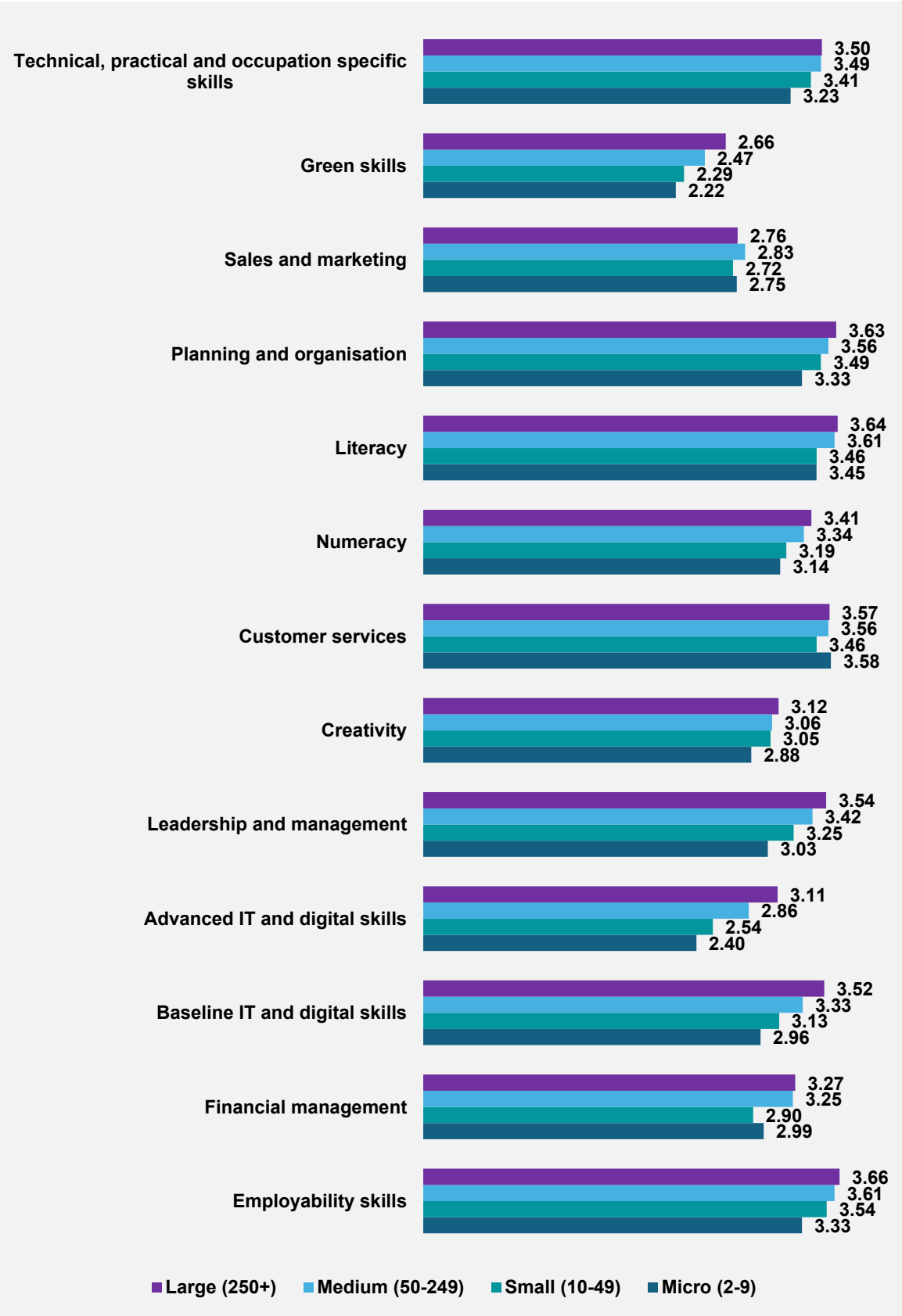
Figure 2: The relative importance of different skills[9]



As shown in Figure 3, the perceived importance of skill types varies by organisational size. Overall, larger organisations are more likely to perceive a wide range of skills as very important, particularly digital skills (both baseline and advanced), leadership and management skills, technical skills and green skills. By contrast, micro and smaller employers tend to prioritise core skills related to day-to-day operations, such as employability skills, literacy and planning and organisation.

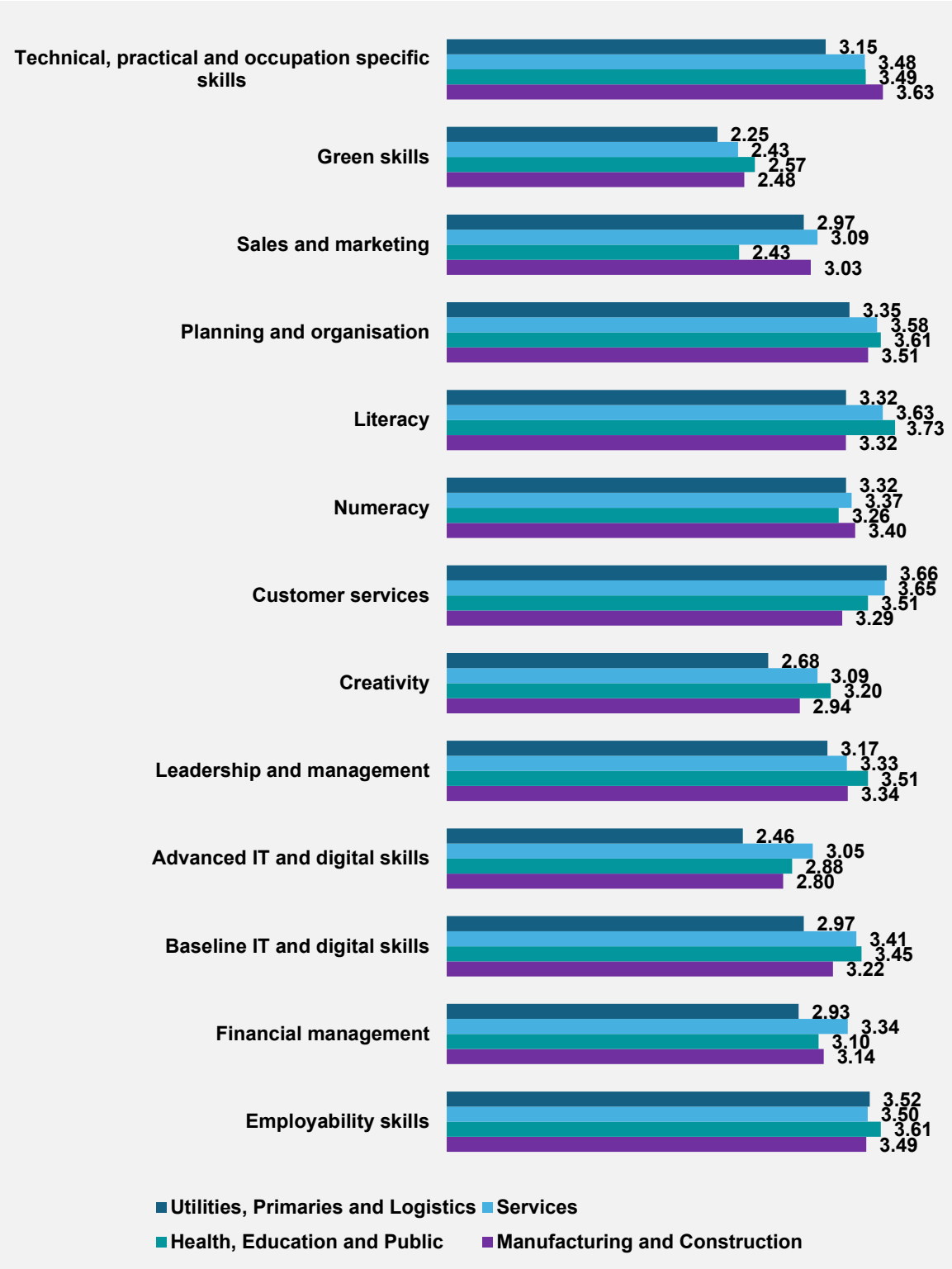
[9] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "How important, if at all, are the following types of skills for the workforce in your organisation?" Respondents ranked different choices on a scale from 1 = Not important at all to 4 = Very important

Figure 3: Importance of skills by organisational size



Core skills such as employability, literacy, numeracy and planning and organisation were consistently rated as important across all industries. The importance attached to other skills varied between industries. For instance, employers in manufacturing and construction were particularly likely to regard technical and occupational skills as very important while respondents in health, education, public services and the private service sector tended to emphasise baseline IT and digital skills, literacy and customer service-related skills.

Figure 4: Importance of skills by industry



Survey participants were also invited to provide information about skills that they deemed important beyond those covered by the questionnaire's response options. A total of 162 valid responses were received. Of the skills not covered by the questionnaire, 'empathy' was the

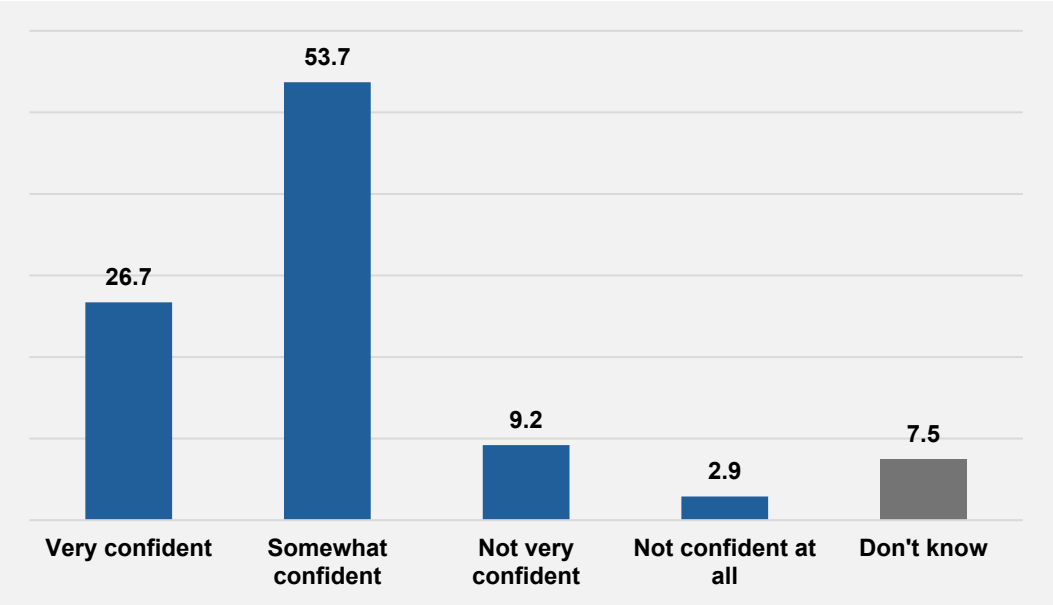
most frequently mentioned ‘skill’, alongside patience and resilience. These responses indicate that respondents took an expansive approach when interpreting what constitutes a ‘skill’.

Figure 5: Word cloud of additional skills identified by respondents

1.2. Identifying future skill needs

A large majority of respondents reported that they were confident about their organisation’s ability to identify its future skill needs, with 80.4% describing themselves as either very or somewhat confident. High levels of confidence were evident across industries, regions and organisations of different sizes.

Figure 6: Confidence in identifying future skills needs (%)[10]



Participants were also asked in the format of an open-ended question about how their organisation identifies its future skill needs. A total of 213 valid responses were received. The responses indicated that organisations use a number of methods to identify their needs, including internal discussions, formal assessments, benchmarking against competitors, client feedback, and ensuring adherence to regulatory requirements. The most frequently mentioned approach was internal discussions (25.3%), including staff feedback, internal conversations, and input from line managers and department heads. Performance evaluation (18.8%) was the second most common approach used to identify skill needs, including performance reviews and skills audits.

Respondents also pointed out that benchmarking against competitors, client feedback and monitoring industry trends (15%) were crucial for understanding their changing skills requirements. This suggests an externally-driven perspective, where skills planning is shaped by industry and market developments and customer expectations.

Regulatory and professional requirements (9%) accounted for a smaller share of responses, relating mainly to organisations in industries such as accountancy, health and law.

[10] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: “How confident, if at all, is your organisation in identifying its future skill needs?” Respondents ranked different choices on a Likert scale from 1 = Very confident to 4 = Not confident at all.

1.3. Digital technology and skills

43.4% of respondents reported that their organisation had introduced at least one advanced digital technology[11] in the past three years. The survey findings suggest a relationship between the adoption of such technologies and product market competition. Over half of those organisations that reported high levels of competition had introduced at least one advanced digital technology in the past three years, compared to less than half of those operating in moderately competitive environments. Adoption was lower among organisations operating in markets with low or no competition (only 38% reported that advanced digital technology had been introduced).

More than half the organisations that had reduced the size of their workforce in the last three years (53.7%) had introduced advanced digital technologies, compared to 45.4% of organisations that had increased the size of their workforce. This points to an association between technology adoption and changes in employment levels, although the survey cannot establish a direct causal effect between the two.

Table 1: Organisations' adoption of advanced digital technologies by level of competition and workforce size change (%)

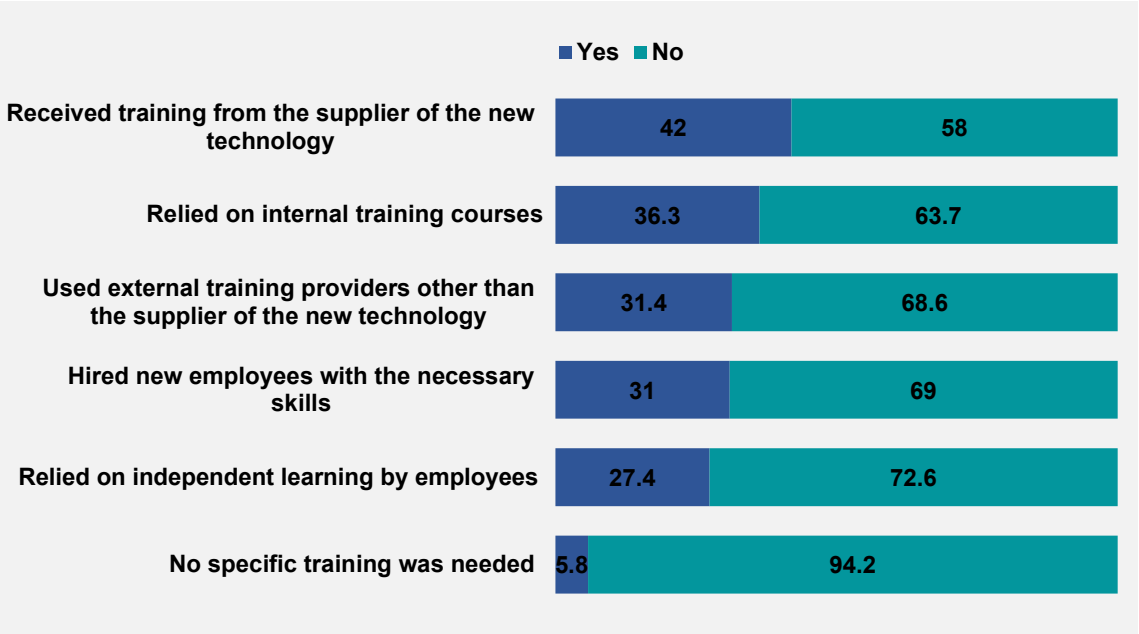
Level of competition	No significant competition	Low competition	Moderate competition	High competition
Adoption of Advanced digital technologies	43.2	32.9	42.5	51.5

Workforce change	Increased	Remained the same	Decreased
Adoption of Advanced technologies	45.4	36.5	53.7

Larger organisations were far more likely than smaller organisations to have introduced advanced digital technologies. Around 63.6% of large organisations had adopted at least one advanced digital technology in the past three years, compared to 36.6% of medium sized organisations and 25.3% of small organisations. Adoption was least frequent among micro businesses (18.2%). Adoption also varied by industry. Organisations in health, education and public services were the most likely (50.6%) to have introduced at least one advanced digital technology, followed by private service organisations (48.8%).

[11] Cloud computing, Artificial Intelligence, Big data, Internet of things, Robotics, 3D printing.

Figure 7: Measures taken to address skills needs for advanced digital technologies (%)[12]



Organisations had taken a number of approaches to address the skill requirements associated with the introduction of advanced digital technologies. The most commonly cited approach (42%) was receiving training from the supplier of the new technology, followed by the use of internal training courses (36.3%) and training provided by external training providers other than the technology supplier (31.4%). Thirty-one per cent reported recruiting new employees with the necessary skills while 27.4% relied on independent learning. Only a small minority (5.8%) indicated that no specific training was required, indicating that the introduction of advanced digital technologies requires accompanying investment in skills development.

An open-ended question asked respondents which skills had become less necessary following the introduction of AI technologies. Ninety-two responses were received. They indicated a reduced need for skills associated with routine and process-driven tasks. Administrative and clerical tasks were the most frequently cited, with 35% of respondents reporting that tasks requiring data entry, documentation and coordination had been automated. Employers noted that activities such as ‘data entry’ and ’minute taking and summarising meetings’, had previously been carried out manually but were now supported by AI tools. The second most frequently mentioned category was written communication skills (23%) related to tasks such as drafting, editing, proofreading and formatting. Respondents gave examples including ‘written content and redrafting emails’ and ’summarising information and proofreading’.

[12] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: “How did your organisation respond to the skill requirements needed to support the introduction of advanced digital technologies?” Respondents selected “Yes” and “No” for each option.

Research and analytical tasks were mentioned by 15% of respondents, mainly relating to activities associated with desk-based research, document review and data summarisation. Respondents highlighted tasks such as ‘researching competitors and new ideas’, ‘digesting and summarising complex data sets’ and ’data review and visualisation’, suggesting that AI tools are enabling employers to process large volumes of information more efficiently. A smaller share of respondents (12%) highlighted planning tasks, including basic scheduling and workflow organisation. Examples such as ‘less time needed for planning’, ’used more for scheduling’ and ’scheduling skills’ indicate that AI use is reducing the administrative burden associated with organising tasks. Finally, sector specific technical tasks related to industry specific activities, such as accounting, graphic design or medical applications, were the least frequently mentioned area (8%). Examples provided include ’genome sequencing’, ’AI detection in radiology’ and ’graphic design and photo editing’.

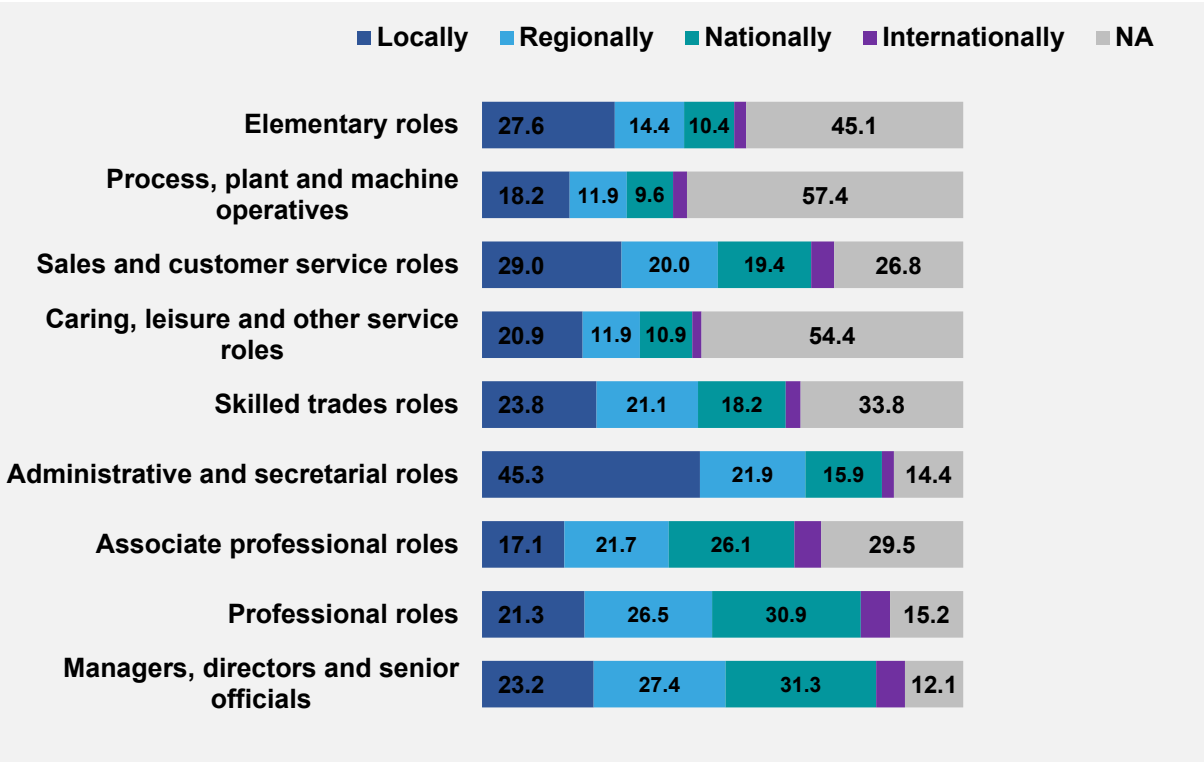
2. RECRUITMENT

This section explores the geographical areas from which organisations recruit employees in different occupational groups[13]. It examines whether the geographical scope of recruitment varies based on occupations, organisational characteristics and industry. This section also explores recruitment challenges that organisations experience.

2.1. Where do organisations recruit from?

As can be seen from Figure 8, while hiring is largely confined to local and regional areas for some occupations, recruitment for others expands beyond city and/or county boundaries.

Figure 8: Organisations' recruitment geography (%)[14]



For positions requiring higher level skills, such as managers, directors and senior officials, associate professional and professional roles, organisations are more likely to expand their recruitment activity beyond the region. Around three-in-ten organisations recruit nationally for

[13] The different occupational groups were classified according to the nine major groups of the UK Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2020 (SOC 2020 Volume 1: structure and descriptions of unit groups - Office for National Statistics)

[14] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "What is the most common geographical area from which your organisation recruits new employees for each of the following roles?" Respondents selected one of the following options for each role: Locally (i.e. town/city you are based in), Regionally (i.e. county you are based in), Nationally (i.e. across the UK), Internationally, NA (we do not have this role)

managers and professional roles while around one-quarter recruit from within the region. A local recruitment focus is relatively uncommon for these occupations.

In contrast, administrative and secretarial roles are far more likely to be filled from the local labour market. Almost half of the organisations in the sample recruited locally for these positions.

Skilled trades occupations show a mixed pattern. Local and regional recruitment were the most common approaches, but a notable share of organisations recruited nationally.

Overall, the results indicate a clear variation in recruitment geography, with a national focus for higher skilled roles and a local or regional focus for lower skilled and support roles. These patterns are consistent across Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East. The one exception is for elementary roles, where organisations in Yorkshire and the Humber tend to use the local labour market while those in the North East are more likely to recruit regionally. Beyond this, regional differences are limited.

On the other hand, organisational size plays an important role in shaping recruitment geography. Larger organisations consistently recruit from wider labour markets, especially for higher skilled occupations such as managers, directors, senior professionals and associate professional roles. For these positions, larger organisations tend to recruit nationally, while micro and small employers tend to heavily rely on local and regional recruitment. This is evident across all occupational groups.

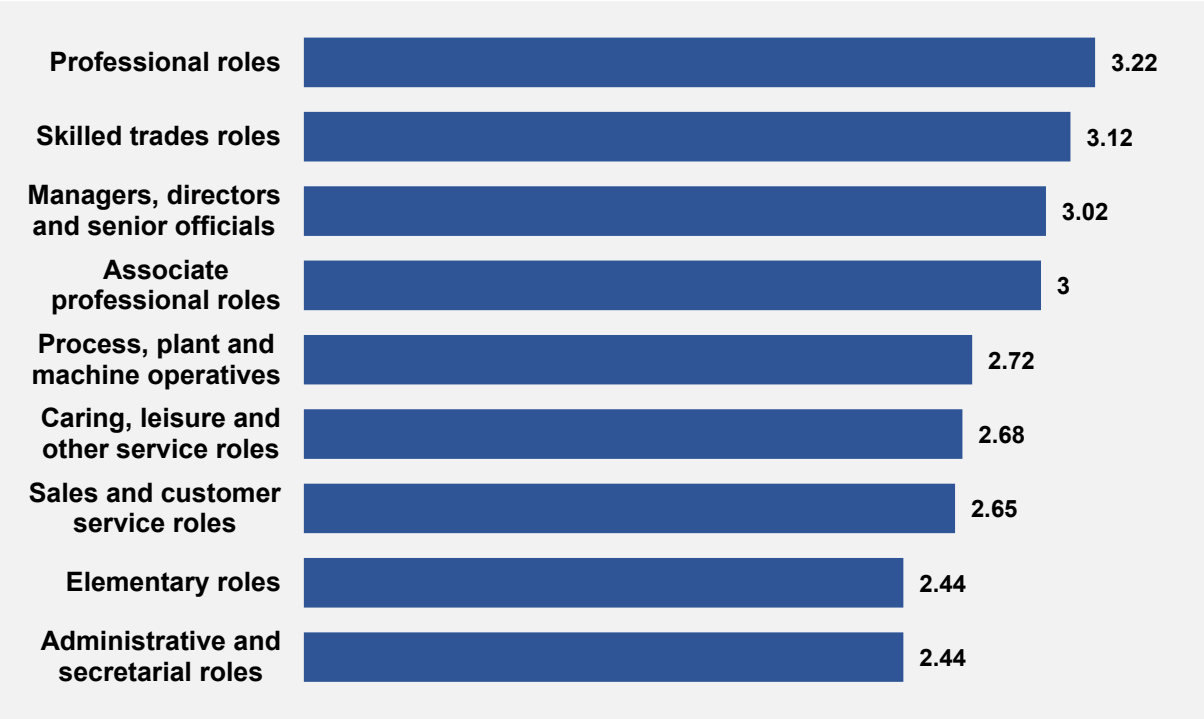
2.2. Recruitment difficulties

Respondents were asked whether their organisation experienced difficulties when recruiting new employees and whether these difficulties were associated with particular occupations.

Overall, 67% of organisations in the sample reported experiencing recruitment difficulties when recruiting new employees. These challenges were most pronounced for organisations in manufacturing and construction, 77% of which reported difficulties in recruitment, followed closely by those in health, education and public services (75%).

Recruitment difficulties are associated with organisational size, with clear differences between micro and large organisations. Small organisations were more likely to report recruitment difficulties (76%) followed closely by larger organisations (75%), while micro-organisations were much less likely to report difficulties (45%), possibly because they recruit less frequently.

Figure 9: Organisations' recruitment difficulties[15]



Survey participants reported that recruitment for roles requiring at least Level 3 qualifications tends to be more challenging than for roles requiring lower-level qualifications. At a more detailed occupational level, recruitment challenges in relation to professional roles appear to be particularly common: 42.9% of all organisations recruiting for professional roles reported that they experienced difficulties. Skilled trades positions were the second most challenging to recruit for: 40.3% of organisations that employed skilled trades workers had faced recruitment difficulties. At the other end of the spectrum are occupations such as administrative and secretarial roles, elementary roles and sales and customer service roles, where fewer organisations reported recruitment difficulties.

The differences between the two regions are small and relate mainly to which roles are easiest to recruit for. In Yorkshire and the Humber, respondents reported that elementary roles were the easiest roles to fill, while in the North East administrative and secretarial roles were reported to be the easiest.

While 20.2% of organisations reported difficulties in finding a sufficient number of applicants, the most common difficulties they faced related to the suitability of applicants rather than their number. The two most frequently reported difficulties were finding applicants with the right employment skills (38.8%) and finding applicants with the right technical skills (34.9%). A much

[15] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "To what extent is it easy or difficult to recruit employees in each of the following roles in your organisation?" Respondents ranked different choices on a Likert scale from 1 = Very easy to 5 = Very difficult.

smaller percentage (12.3%) of organisations mentioned difficulties finding applicants with adequate levels of literacy. An even smaller percentage (11.1%) reported difficulties in finding applicants with adequate numeracy skills. However, although difficulties associated with recruiting applicants with sufficient levels of literacy and numeracy were less frequently reported than other challenges, the findings nevertheless imply a significant problem relating to basic skills[16]. Put another way, around one-in-eight organisations had experienced difficulties in finding job applicants with a sufficient level of literacy and one-in-nine had experienced difficulties in finding applicants with a sufficient level of numeracy. These difficulties were most likely to be mentioned by larger organisations and those in health, education and public services.

The findings also indicate that almost one-in-five organisations experienced difficulties in finding applicants from their local area. In addition, some organisations struggled to accommodate applicants' preferences in relation to their location and / or pattern of work: 12.3% mentioned issues related to accommodating hybrid working and 16.1% reported challenges related to accommodating flexible working.

[16] The 2023 Survey of Adult Skills placed Yorkshire and the Humber seventh out of the nine regions of England for literacy and numeracy attainment. The North East ranked eighth. Survey of Adult Skills 2023: national reports for England - GOV.UK

Figure 10: Organisations reporting recruitment difficulties (%)[17]

[17] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "Has your organisation experienced any of the following difficulties when recruiting new employees?". Participants responded "Yes" or "No" for each option.

3. TRAINING ACTIVITY

This section examines the types of training that organisations provide, their motivations for providing training, employee participation in training, the extent to which training is strategically planned and how its value is assessed.

3.1. Reasons for providing training

Overall, 90.8% of respondents (473 organisations) reported providing at least one form of training. The most common type of training provided was on-the-job training (78.1%), followed by online training (70.2%) and apprenticeship training[18] (37.6%). On average, organisations provided four different training types.

Figure 11: Organisations' motivations for training their employees[19]

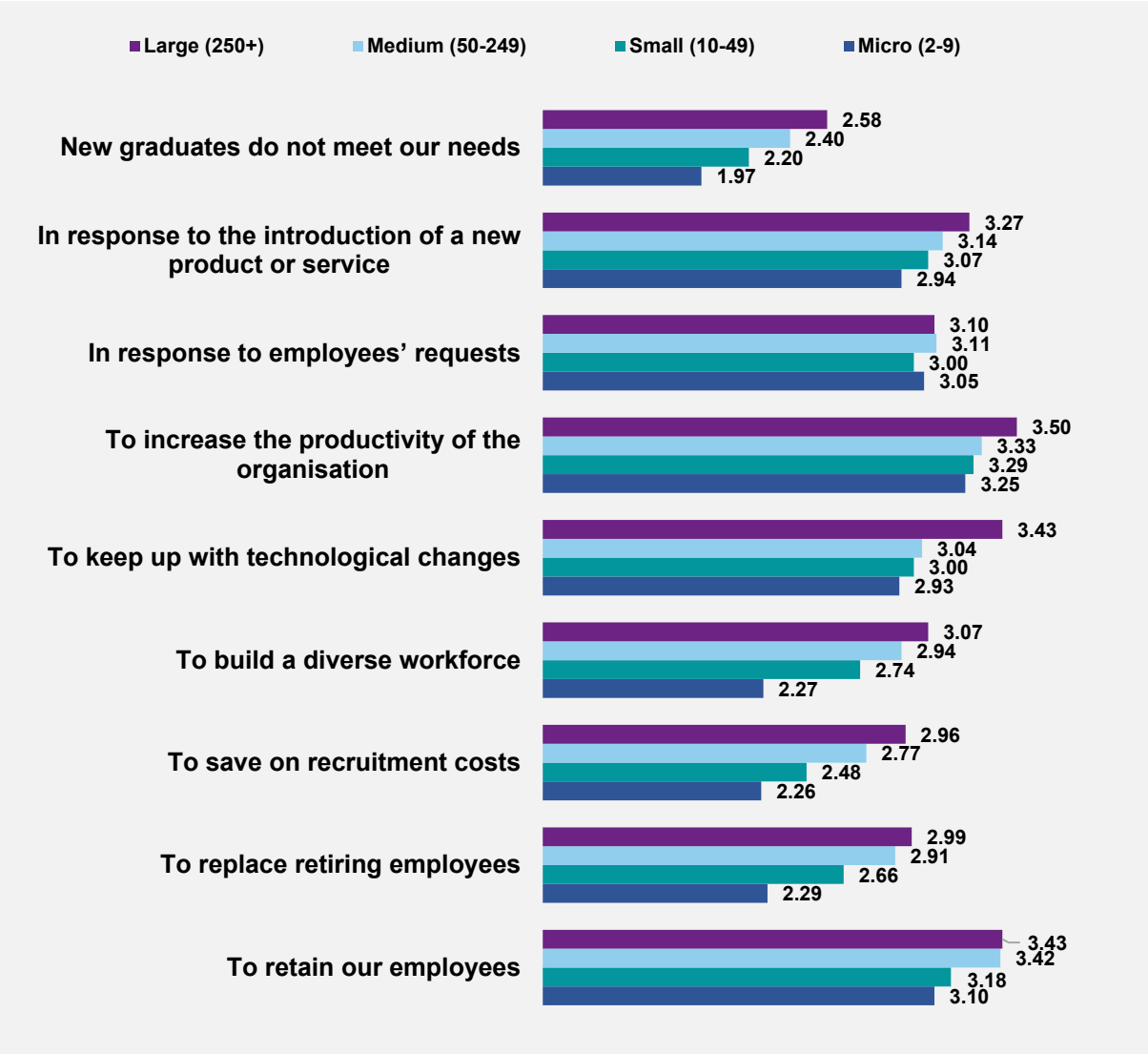
[18] Apprenticeships are jobs requiring the employers to commit and invest time and resources (paying the apprentice's wage alongside structured training and supervision). Apprenticeships strike a balance between employer's business needs and the apprentice's need for both training and income. (Become an apprentice: How apprenticeships work - GOV.UK)

[19] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "Thinking about the reasons why your organisation offers training, how important, if at all, are each of the following?" Respondents selected one option in each row on a Likert scale from 1 = Not important at all to 4 = Very important.

By far the most important reasons participants gave for providing training were to increase the productivity of their organisation and to retain employees. This points to the strategic role of training in supporting business performance and limiting employee turnover. Additionally, organisations placed a high importance on training to keep up with technological change or respond to the introduction of a new product or service. Employee requests for training were regarded as a 'somewhat important' reason for providing training. Reasons relating to recruitment, selection and workforce planning, particularly building a diverse workforce and replacing retiring employees, tended to be regarded as less important.

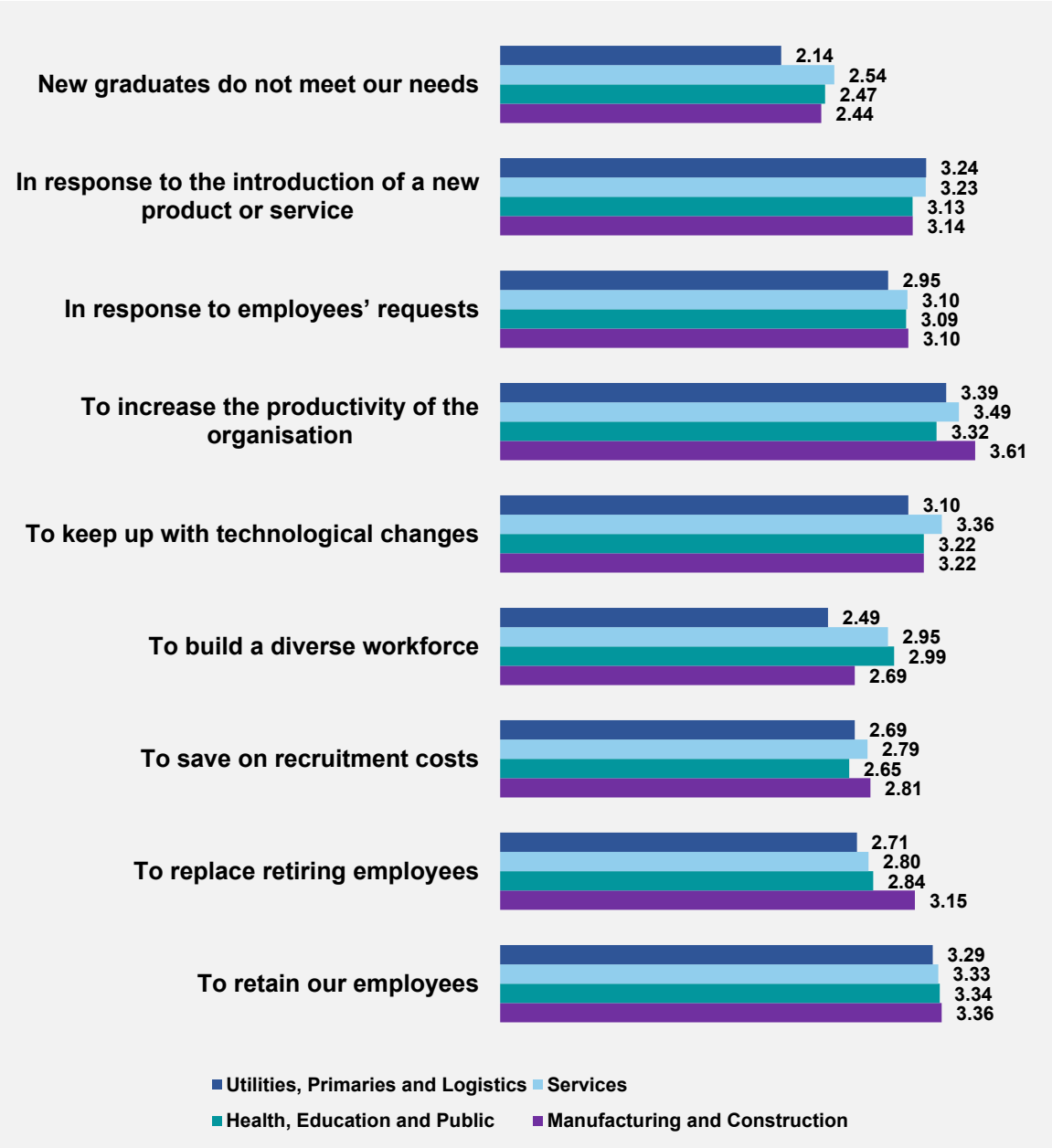
While the strongest motivation for training was to increase productivity, the importance of this consideration increased with the size of the organisation. Keeping up with technological change and supporting the introduction of a new product or service were also more important drivers of training among larger organisations than smaller organisations. Micro employers were less likely to emphasise strategic reasons for training. For these organisations, operational needs tended to be the main motivation for providing training. Across all organisations, the perception that new graduates do not meet organisational needs was the least important motivation for training, although its importance increases slightly with size.

Figure 12: Organisations' motivations for training employees according by organisational size



When looking at specific industries, it appears that employers in manufacturing and construction place a strong emphasis on productivity increases and keeping pace with technological change, while health, education and public services employers place greater importance on employee retention and responding to employees' requests. Private service sector employers also prioritise productivity and technological change, while placing less emphasis on replacing retiring employees. By contrast, utilities, primaries and logistics organisations place greater importance on workforce replacement alongside productivity increases.

Figure 13: Organisation's motivations for training employees by industry



3.2. Time off for training

The questionnaire asked about the extent to which employees had been given time off from their normal duties to undertake training in the 12 months prior to the survey. Among the 321 participants who responded, 35.5% reported that between 75% and 100% of employees had been given time off for training in the past 12 months. By contrast, 19% reported that no employees had received time off for training, implying that these organisations either do not provide training or rely on informal types of training, such as on-the-job training or mentoring. As can be seen in Table 2 and Table 3, clear differences are evident according to

organisational size and industry. Micro organisations were the most likely to report that no employees had been given time off for training, whereas medium and larger organisations were much more likely to report that most of their workforce had received time off for training. Organisations in utilities, primaries and logistics and in manufacturing and construction were the most likely to report that no time off had been provided for training, while health, education and public service organisations were the most likely to report that time off was provided.

Table 2: Organisations that provided their employees time off for training by organisational size

Percentage of employees that were given time off for training	**Micro (2-9)**		**Small (10-49)**		**Medium (50-249)**		**Large (250+)**	
	%	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**
0%	50%	42	19.6%	11	8.3%	5	2.5%	3
1 – 49%	21.4%	18	37.5%	21	43.3%	26	43%	52
50 – 74%	4.8%	4	16.1%	9	6.7%	4	9.9%	12
75 – 100%	23.8%	20	26.8%	15	41.7%	25	44.6%	54

Table 3: Organisations that provided their employees time off for training by industry

Percentage of employees that were given time off for training	**Manufacturing and construction**		**Health, education and public services**		**Private services**		**Utilities, primaries and logistics**	
	%	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**
0%	31.7%	13	7.5%	7	15.1%	13	36.5%	19
1 – 49%	46.3%	19	30.1%	28	43%	37	28.8%	15
50 – 74%	4.9%	2	11.8%	11	11.6%	10	3.8%	2
75 – 100%	17.1%	7	50.5%	47	30.2%	26	30.8%	16

3.3. Training and non-standard employment

As shown in Figure 14, most survey respondents reported that all employees had the same access to training. However, some organisations provided employees in standard employment (full-time with a 'permanent' / open-ended contract) with more opportunities than those in non-standard (e.g. fixed-term or part-time) forms of employment. It appears that fixed-term employees face the greatest disadvantage, with almost one-in-ten organisations providing them with less access to training than permanent staff. Gaps are also observed for part-time employees, as well as those employees with hybrid or fully remote working arrangements.

The reduced access to training for individuals in non-standard employment can lead to accumulated disadvantage over time, limiting their opportunities for career progression and skills development and increasing the likelihood of longer-term exclusion from the labour market.

Figure 14: Non-standard employees' access to training (% of organisations)[20]

3.4. Support for training

Having a designated team or person responsible for training and workforce development can help to ensure that training is targeted and aligns with an organisation's short- and long-term needs. Among organisations that provided training, 61.8% (322 organisations) reported having a designated team or person responsible for training. But having such a role does not automatically translate into strategic planning. Only around half (54.3%) of organisations that offered training indicated that they undertook strategic planning in relation to training and workforce development. As can be seen from Table 4, larger organisations were the most likely

[20] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "Do ….. employees have different access to training than their counterparts?" Respondents selected one of the following options: "Yes, they have more access", "Yes, they have less access", "No, they have the same amount of access", "Not sure", and "Not applicable – our organisation does not have that type of employees".

to have a designated person or team responsible for training and workforce development and engage in strategic planning.

Planning in relation to training and the presence of a team or individual with responsibility for training were most common among health, education and public service organisations (see Table 5). They were least common among organisations in the manufacturing and construction industries.

Table 4: Organisations' training responsibility and planning by size of organisation (%)

	Micro (2-9)	Small (10-49)	Medium (50-249)	Large (250+)
Organisations that have a designated team / individual responsible for training	40.3	48.1	62.2	84.3
Organisations that undertake planning in relation to training	32.5	48.1	62.2	70.2

Table 5: Organisations' training responsibility and planning by industry (%)

	Manufacturing and construction	Health, education and public services	Private services	Utilities, primaries and logistics
Organisations that have a designated team / individual responsible for training	59.3	73.2	66.1	67.3
Organisations that undertake planning in relation to training	45.8	69.5	61.7	52.5

It is potentially beneficial for organisations to be able to demonstrate that training delivers business value. Around 92% of organisations that provided training reported that they assessed its benefits. The most common used method for assessing the benefits of training was staff feedback (see Figure 15), followed by employees' obtaining formal qualifications or meeting standards, productivity increases and HR or line managers' assessments.

Figure 15: Organisations' processes for assessing the benefits of employee training (%)[21]

Organisations that assessed the benefits of training typically used three or four different measures. Larger organisations tended to use a broader range of assessment measures when compared with smaller organisations.

4. APPRENTICESHIPS

This section examines the extent to which organisations were involved with apprenticeship programmes, their reasons for being involved or not being involved and their experiences with the Apprenticeship Levy.

Apprenticeships remain a central feature of UK skills and employment policy, although the mechanisms through which they are funded have changed over time. The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2017, in addition to reforms of funding rules, standards and employer and training provider responsibilities, have created a number of incentives and challenges for organisations, with uneven effects across industries.

[21] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "How does your organisation assess the value of employee training?" Participants responded "Yes", "No" or "Don't know" for each measure or "Not applicable – we don't assess the value of employee training".

4.1. Reasons for recruiting apprentices

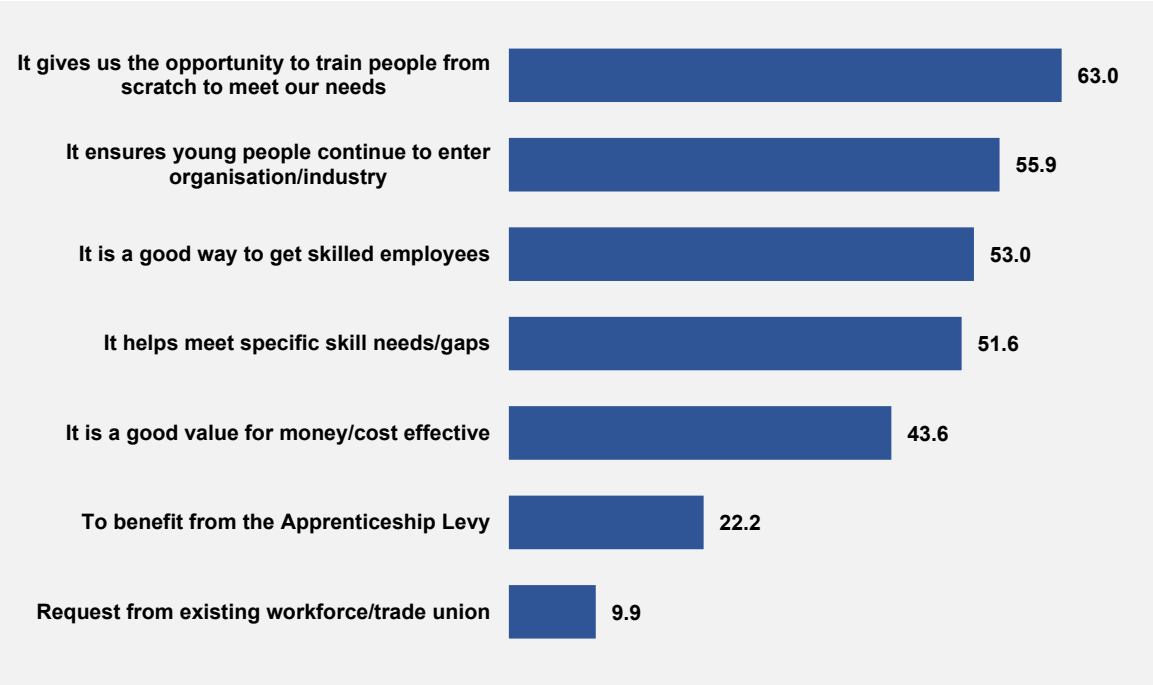
Almost 41% of respondents stated that their organisation currently employed at least one apprentice. Large organisations were the most likely to employ an apprentice. By contrast, only four micro-enterprises in the sample employed an apprentice.

The most common reason for employing apprentices was the opportunity to train individuals from scratch to meet organisational needs, followed by a wish to ensure that young people continue to enter the organisation or the industry. Survey respondents also highlighted that apprenticeships can be a good way of developing skilled employees and addressing specific organisational skill needs or gaps. Financial incentives appear to be secondary, as only 22.2% of participants said that the Apprenticeship Levy was a motivation for employing apprentices. The percentage of organisations reporting that the apprenticeship levy motivated them to employ an apprentice was positively associated with their size[22] (14.3% of small organisations, 21.2% of medium organisations and 23.5% of large organisations).

When examined by industry, the percentage of organisations that reported the levy as a motivation was 8% in utilities, primaries and logistics, 27.3% in private services, 25.3% in health, education and the public sector, and 13.8% in manufacturing and construction.

[22] We exclude micro-enterprises here on the grounds that only four organisations employed an apprentice. Of these, only one identified the levy as an incentive.

Figure 16: Organisations' reasons for recruiting apprentices (% of relevant organisations)[23]



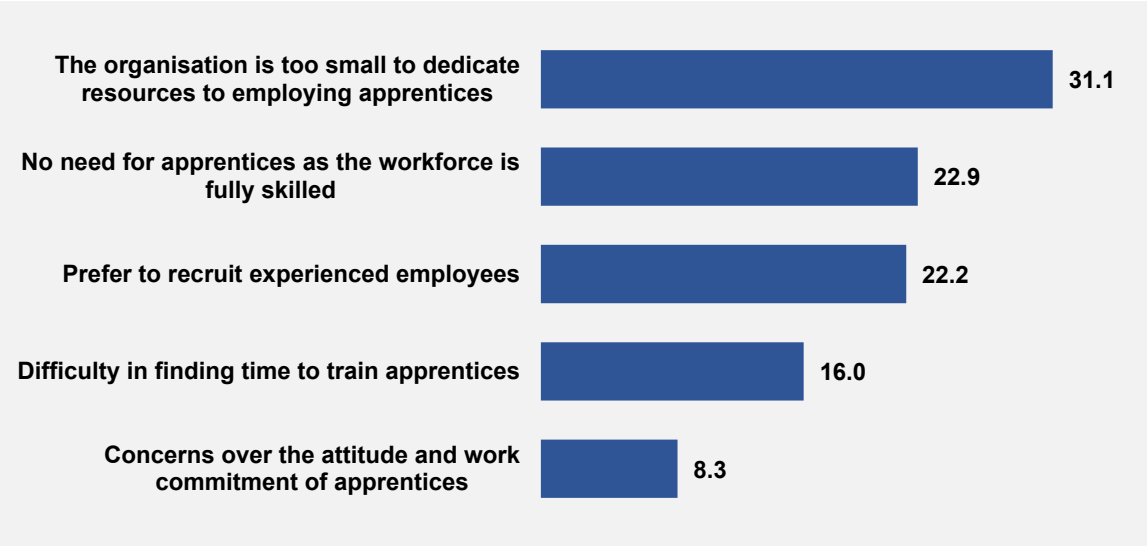
Apprenticeships were far more common among large organisations, which are more likely than smaller organisations to have the resources and capacity to absorb training costs, manage administrative requirements and provide apprentices with training and supervision. With regard to industry, our survey findings suggest that apprenticeships were most common in health, education and public services and in manufacturing and construction (Table 6).

Table 6: Share of organisations employing an apprentice – organisation size and industry (%)

Micro (2-9)	Small (10-49)	Medium (50-249)	Large (250+)
3.6	26.6	37.5	68.9
Manufacturing and	**Health, education and**	**Private services**	**Utilities, primaries and**
45.3	51.6	36.4	36.2

[23] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "What are the main reasons your organisation employs apprentices?" Participants responded by "Yes", "No", and "Don't know" for each reason.

Figure 17: Organisations' reasons for not employing an apprentice (% of relevant organisations)



More than half (55.3%) of the participating organisations indicated that they did not currently employ an apprentice. Among this group, 31.3% reported that their organisation was too small to dedicate resources to employing apprentices (this was the dominant consideration among micro and small businesses). 22.9% said that their organisation's workforce was already fully skilled while 22.2% reported a preference for recruiting more experienced employees instead of apprentices. Concerns regarding apprentices' attitudes or their work commitment were mentioned by only 8.3% of respondents

Table 7: Organisations' reasons for not recruiting an apprentice by size of organisation (%)

	Micro (2-9)	Small (10-49)	Medium (50-249)	Large (250+)
Concerns over the attitude and work commitment of apprentices	7.5	13.8	9.1	4.3
Prefer to recruit experienced employees	10.4	31	25.5	30.4
Difficulty in finding time to train apprentices	9.4	24.1	16.4	18.8
The organisation is too small to dedicate resources to employing apprentices	50	46.6	21.8	13
No need for apprentices as the workforce is fully skilled	26.4	22.4	20	20.3

In the private service industries and utilities, primaries and logistics, non-involvement in the apprenticeships was linked to limited organisational resources, while organisations in manufacturing and construction were more likely to prefer to recruit experienced employees. Within the health, education and public services, reasons for not employing an apprentice were more evenly spread, with no dominant consideration.

Table 8: Organisations' reasons for not employing an apprentice by industry (%)

	Manufacturing and construction	Health, education and public	Private services	Utilities, primaries and logistics
Concerns over the attitude and work commitment of apprentices	14.3	5.1	7.8	6.8
Prefer to recruit experienced employees	31.4	20.5	24.7	15.9
Difficulty in finding time to train apprentices	20	15.4	15.6	15.9
The organisation is too small to dedicate resources to employing apprentices	25.7	26.9	40.3	40.9
No need for apprentices as the workforce is fully skilled	20	23.1	26	25

4.2. Experiences of the Apprenticeship Levy

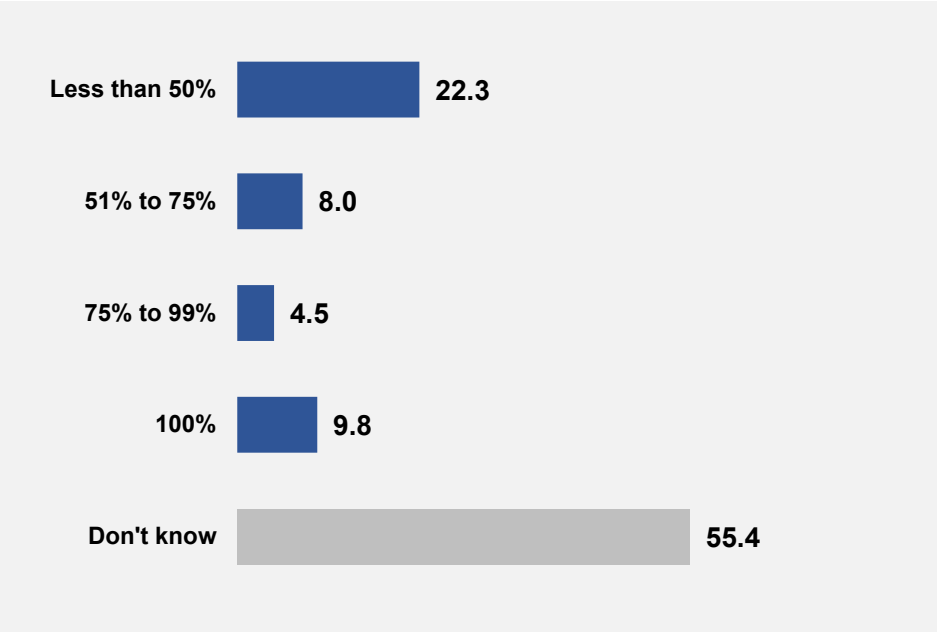
The Apprenticeship Levy is due to be replaced with a Growth and Skills Levy in 2026. The new levy is intended to enable employers to use their funds for a wider range of training aligned with their needs. Within the sample, 21.5% of respondents reported that their organisation was required to pay the apprenticeship levy. However, it should be mentioned that 34.5% of respondents replied that they did not know if their organisation was required to pay the levy.

One-in-ten of the levy-paying organisations (9.8%) used all of their levy funds, while 22.3% used less than half and 12.5% used between half and almost all of their funds. But 55.4% of the respondents indicated that they did not know the proportion of funds used.

For organisations that did not spend all of their levy funds (101 organisations), a lack of demand for additional apprenticeship places (20.8%) was the most commonly mentioned reason, followed by difficulties related to finding suitable apprentices and appropriate apprenticeship programmes (19.8%) and the rigidity of the levy system (18.9%).

17.8% of levy-paying organisations had transferring some of their unspent funds to other organisations in the past three years. In the cases where funds were transferred, they were mostly directed towards SMEs, both within and outside the organisation's supply chain, along with other organisations from the third sector.

Figure 18: Proportion of the apprenticeship levy funds used (% of levy-paying organisations)[24]



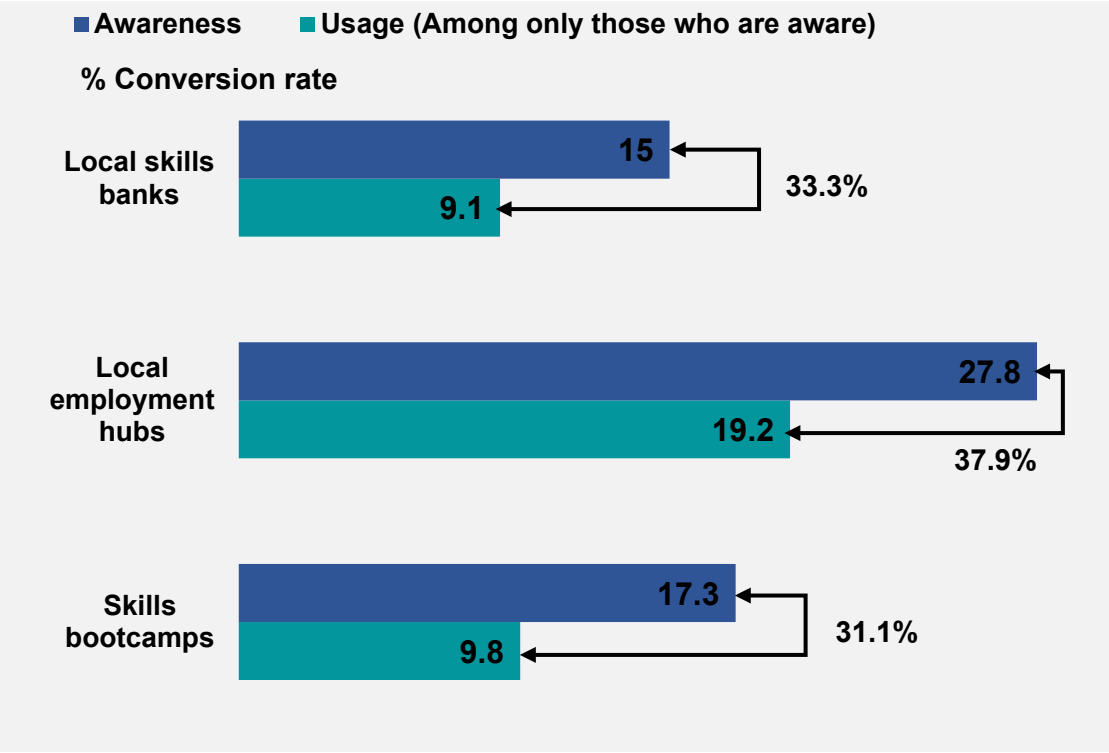
[24] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "What proportion of the Apprenticeship Levy funds do you typically use?" Participants selected from: "Less than 25%", "25% to 50%", "51% to 75%", "76% to 99%", "100%" and "Not sure".

5. ENGAGEMENT WITH EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

This section of the report examines the extent to which organisations engage with government employment and skills services and programmes and external training providers.

Awareness and use of government skills services were relatively low among participants. Local employment hubs were the best-known service, followed by Skills Bootcamps and Local Skills Banks. The pattern in relation to engagement with these services was similar, with local employment hubs being the most frequently used. The difference between awareness and use raises questions about the perceived relevance of these services, administrative complexity and level of employers' understanding.

Figure 19: Organisations' awareness and use of employment and skills services (%)[25]

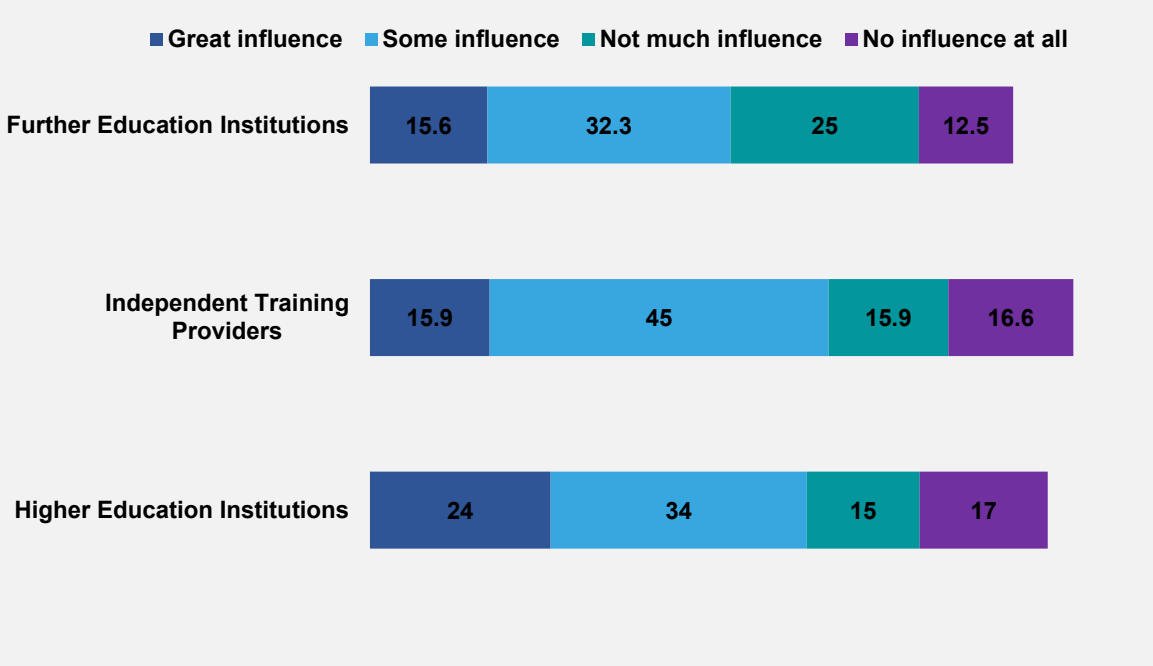


Engagement with external trainers was widespread across the sample, with independent training providers being the most commonly used (29% of organisations), followed by higher education institutions and further education colleges. This pattern is in line with national trends, where independent training providers account for the largest share of employer training

[25] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "Which of the following employment and skills services are you aware of?" and "Which of the following employment and skills services has your organisation used in the past last 3 years?" Respondents selected "Yes" and "No" for each option.

provision, specifically apprenticeships[26]. Across all providers, the majority of employers that sent their employees for training stated that they had at least some influence over the format of training that was provided, although the extent of influence varied.

Figure 20: Organisations' influence over the content of training provision (%)[27]



For each of the three types of provider, around one-third of survey respondents said that their organisation had little or no influence over the training provided.

[26] S. Chowen (FE Week) - ITP market share hits new heights and more from 23/24

[27] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "How much influence, if any, did your organisation have over the content or format of training provided?" Respondents selected "Great influence", "Some influence", "Not much influence" and "No influence at all" for each option.

Conclusions

Employers have a vital role to play in helping to enhance the skills base in Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East. This report has shed new light on some of the actions they are taking in relation to training and development and some of the challenges they face, particularly in relation to identifying their skill needs, staff recruitment, and apprenticeship training.

Strengthening the skills base is a priority for national and local policy makers in the UK. The national government has introduced a set of reforms relating to apprenticeship funding and the UK's qualifications framework intended to improve vocational pathways for young people and increase incentives for employers to invest in skill development. Mayoral Combined Authorities have also developed policies relating to skills as part of their strategic approach to supporting economic growth. MCAs have set out plans to link skills development and training with local social and economic priorities. In addition, 'employer representative bodies' (ERBs - mainly local Chambers of Commerce) have led on the development and review of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) aimed at identifying changes needed to make 'technical education and training more responsive to employer and local labour market needs'[28]. While the plans that have been developed in Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East address specific local needs, there are common themes such as a need for: increased involvement from employers in shaping education/training provision, an increase in technical and digital skills acquisition, a better understanding of the barriers to involvement in apprenticeships, and measures to enable employers to be more responsive and resilient to changes and support them in assessing their longer-term skills needs.

Most of the organisations surveyed for this report were confident about their ability to identify their future skills needs. Organisations emphasised the importance of 'foundation skills', such as literacy and numeracy, while skills related to customer service and planning and organisation were also highly valued. By contrast, green skills were rarely regarded as important, which might have implications for the achievement of MCAs' ambitions in relation to Net Zero.

More than two-fifths of organisations had introduced at least one advanced digital technology in the past three years. Adoption was most common among organisations that faced relatively high levels of competition and organisations that had introduced advanced digital technologies were more likely than those that had not to have reduced the size of their workforce. AI had

[28] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-employer-representative-bodies/notice-of-designated-employer-representative-bodies

often been used to support relatively low-level tasks such as data recording, summarising information and proofreading.

Approximately two-thirds of organisations had experienced recruitment difficulties. These difficulties were most in evidence in the manufacturing and construction industries (which are identified as priority industries by some MCAs), followed closely by health, education and public services. Recruitment for roles requiring qualifications at Level 3 and above tended to be more challenging than for roles requiring lower-level qualifications. Nevertheless, more than one-in-ten respondents said that their organisation faced difficulties in finding applicants with adequate literacy or numeracy skills. This suggests that problems remain in relation to the supply of basic skills in Yorkshire, Humber and the North East.

Although a majority of organisations had designated a team or person to take responsibility for workforce development, almost two-fifths had not and almost half of those organisations that provided training did not undertake strategic planning in relation to training. Organisations' main motivations for providing training were to increase productivity and retain employees, which aligns with the ambitions of regional policies makers. For example, the 'North East's New Deal for North East Workers' links skills investment to workforce progression and productivity. More than 90% of organisations covered by the survey provided at least one form of training, although this was often informal on-the-job training and one-fifth of organisations had given no employees time off for training in the 12 months prior to the survey. Micro organisations and organisations in manufacturing and construction were the most likely to report that no employees had been given time off for training. This is significant given that the manufacturing and construction industries have been identified as priority industries by MCAs in the two regions. Furthermore, employees with non-standard contracts were less likely to receive training than employees with standard contracts.

Around 41% of organisations employed at least one apprentice at the time of the survey, mainly in order to meet organisational needs. An inability to dedicate sufficient resources to supporting apprentices was the most common reason for organisations not having an apprentice, a constraint that was most common among smaller organisations. While evidence from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)[29] indicates that many employers believe that young people are often poorly prepared for the world of work and lack motivation, our survey found that concerns related to the attitudes or work commitment of young people were rarely important in explaining why organisations did not employ an apprentice.

[29] CIPD (2024) The changing face of the youth labour market.

Finally, the survey found that awareness and use of government employment and skills services were not widespread. Stronger and more widespread engagement is likely to be required if providers are to respond to the changing needs of employers. Engagement is also likely to be vitally important to the task of building and sustaining more robust and inclusive pathways into work.

APPENDIX 1: REGIONAL PRODUCTIVITY SCORECARDS

2025 TPI Regional Productivity Scorecards: United Kingdom

United Kingdom ITL3 Scorecard 2025

Category	Driver of Productivity	UKX United Kingdom	TLI London	TLJ South East	TLM Scotland	TLH East	TLD North West	TLK South West	TLN Northern Ireland	TLE Yorkshire and The Humber	TLG West Midlands	TLC North East	TLF East Midlands	TLL Wales
Productivity	Taxonomy relative to the UK		Losing ground	Steaming ahead	Catching up	Falling behind	Catching up	Falling behind	Catching up	Falling behind	Falling behind	Catching up	Falling behind	Catching up
	GVA per hour worked	£41.87	£53.96	£45.22	£41.28	£39.69	£39.31	£38.75	£36.88	£36.82	£36.02	£35.82	£35.61	£35.15
Business Performance	Export Intensity	32.2%	41.2%	26.1%	32.9%	28.4%	25.3%	23.3%	30.1%	21.7%	29.5%	28.5%	27.0%	34.1%
	New Businesses	11.0%	12.6%	9.9%	10.6%	10.6%	11.6%	9.8%	8.3%	11.0%	11.3%	11.6%	10.8%	10.3%
Skills & Training	Low Skilled*	8.8%	6.3%	7.5%	8.6%	8.0%	9.5%	8.0%	13.6%	10.1%	10.1%	11.2%	10.6%	10.9%
	High Skilled	45.9%	59.9%	48.2%	53.0%	42.0%	43.3%	42.7%	39.1%	40.0%	41.2%	38.2%	39.0%	41.8%
Health & Well-being	Active	78.7%	78.6%	81.7%	77.5%	80.6%	76.7%	80.9%	75.3%	76.8%	78.8%	75.8%	78.4%	77.0%
	Inactive due to Illness*	27.5%	19.6%	24.3%	31.6%	25.9%	30.0%	26.2%	37.8%	29.3%	29.3%	33.0%	26.8%	33.4%
	Working Age	61.1%	69.0%	59.4%	62.9%	59.0%	59.4%	57.8%	61.1%	60.7%	59.9%	60.3%	59.4%	60.6%
Investment, Infrastructure & Connectivity	5G connectivity	50.6%	99.2%	65.4%	25.4%	70.6%	62.3%	56.9%	63.4%	66.2%	72.5%	48.3%	75.1%	43.9%
	Gigabit connectivity	84.4%	89.6%	81.5%	77.8%	82.3%	88.1%	77.0%	94.2%	89.5%	88.2%	86.2%	85.8%	76.4%
	GFCF per job	£10,935	£14,091	£11,983	£10,472	£12,097	£9,335	£10,095	£10,581	£9,801	£9,114	£8,726	£10,095	£7,969
	ICT per job	£430	£590	£458	£475	£368	£397	£411	£271	£339	£380	£361	£365	£397
	Intangibles per job	£2,670	£3,400	£3,653	£1,979	£4,004	£1,872	£2,323	£2,185	£1,645	£2,399	£1,694	£2,411	£1,532

Key

- Better: higher than 105% of UK
- Equal: within 95% - 105% of UK
- Worse: lower than 95% of UK
- No data available

Cite as McKeogh, N; Menukhin, O; Ortega-Argiles, R; Sarsfield, W; Silva Ruiz, A; Watson, R (2025). TPI UK ITL3 Scorecards, TPI Productivity Lab, The Productivity Institute, University of Manchester.

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Annex: Methods and Sources

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Version: November 2025

2025 TPI Regional Productivity Scorecards: Yorkshire and The Humber

Yorkshire and The Humber ITL3 Scorecard 2025

Category	Driver of Productivity	TLE Yorkshire and The Humber	TLE21 York	TLE42 Leeds	TLE12 East Riding of Yorkshire	TLE13 North and North East Lincolnshire	TLE22 North Yorkshire	TLE45 Wakefield	TLE32 Sheffield	TLE33 Barnsley	TLE11 Kingston upon Hull, City of	TLE41 Bradford	TLE44 Calderdale and Kirklees	TLE34 Rotherham	TLE35 Doncaster
Productivity	Taxonomy relative to the UK	Falling behind	Losing ground	Catching up	Falling behind	Catching up	Falling behind	Falling behind	Catching up	Falling behind	Falling behind	Falling behind	Catching up	Catching up	Falling behind
	Taxonomy relative to ITL1		Losing ground	Steaming ahead	Losing ground	Steaming ahead	Falling behind	Catching up	Catching up	Falling behind	Falling behind	Falling behind	Catching up	Catching up	Falling behind
	GVA per hour worked	£36.82	£43.52	£41.47	£40.77	£40.57	£36.36	£36.15	£36.08	£34.03	£34.02	£33.46	£33.33	£33.03	£29.81
Business Performance	Export Intensity	21.7%	18.1%	21.0%		43.9%	18.2%	13.0%	27.1%		27.0%	26.3%	23.7%	17.7%	13.4%
	New Businesses	11.0%	9.4%	11.7%	9.3%	10.4%	9.1%	11.5%	10.9%	11.7%	12.3%	12.5%	11.1%	10.6%	13.9%
Skills & Training	Low Skilled*	10.1%	6.2%	8.2%	5.5%	10.5%	5.2%	11.1%	9.2%	12.4%	10.9%	14.7%	7.2%	15.6%	22.5%
	High Skilled	40.0%	53.0%	52.1%	40.4%	30.0%	42.2%	27.3%	44.7%	32.8%	31.6%	36.9%	41.2%	34.3%	29.1%
Health & Well-being	Active	76.8%	81.4%	76.9%	79.3%	77.2%	80.5%	77.6%	75.3%	72.9%	74.7%	75.1%	77.6%	71.3%	76.9%
	Inactive due to Illness*	29.3%	23.3%	18.6%	35.4%	34.4%	30.7%	20.4%	33.9%	40.2%	33.9%	24.5%	30.7%	35.2%	34.3%
	Working Age	60.7%	65.9%	61.9%	54.9%	60.5%	55.7%	58.0%	67.5%	62.8%	61.9%	58.9%	62.6%	58.6%	58.8%
Investment, Infrastructure & Connectivity	5G connectivity	66.2%	94.9%	92.3%	78.0%	81.4%	51.0%	94.8%	77.1%	84.4%	100.0%	94.2%	72.9%	92.9%	85.4%
	Gigabit connectivity	89.5%	87.2%	95.1%	89.7%	92.1%	74.2%	94.1%	93.0%	83.7%	99.5%	91.4%	85.9%	94.5%	91.6%
	GFCF per job	£9,801	£27,322	£8,446	£10,369	£15,457	£12,105	£8,340	£9,163		£6,878	£6,566	£5,859		
	ICT per job	£339	£282	£318	£233	£545	£435	£333	£371		£406	£381	£227		
	Intangibles per job	£1,645	£1,708	£1,945	£989	£1,151	£2,136	£1,581	£1,963		£1,304	£2,041	£1,287		

Key

- Better: higher than 105% of ITL1 parent region
- Equal: within 95% - 105% of ITL1 parent region
- Worse: lower than 95% of ITL1 parent region
- Data release surpressed
- Data unavailable due to change of ITL3 codes

Cite as McKeogh, N; Menukhin, O; Ortega-Argiles, R; Sarsfield, W; Silva Ruiz, A; Watson, R (2025). TPI UK ITL3 Scorecards, TPI Productivity Lab, The Productivity Institute, University of Manchester.

https://doi.org/10.48420/30030220

Annex: Methods and Sources

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2025 TPI Regional Productivity Scorecards: North East

North East ITL3 Scorecard 2025

Category	Driver of Productivity	TLC	TLC31	TLC44	TLC41	TLC43	TLC42	TLC32	TLC33
		North East	Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees	Sunderland	Durham	Tyneside	Northumberland	South Teesside	Darlington
Productivity	Taxonomy relative to the UK	Catching up	Falling behind	Falling behind	Falling behind	Catching up	Catching up	Catching up	Catching up
	Taxonomy relative to ITL1		Losing ground	Losing ground	Losing ground	Catching up	Catching up	Falling behind	Catching up
	GVA per hour worked	£35.82	£39.70	£37.84	£36.02	£35.73	£34.87	£32.92	£31.11
Business Performance	Export Intensity	28.5%	30.5%	71.2%	26.0%	20.8%			
	New Businesses	11.6%	12.1%	11.8%	11.0%	11.9%	9.7%	13.7%	12.5%
Skills & Training	Low Skilled*	11.2%	13.3%	15.0%	10.9%	10.8%	9.3%	10.3%	7.4%
	High Skilled	38.2%	35.4%	26.1%	34.1%	44.3%	41.9%	36.0%	41.4%
Health & Well-being	Active	75.8%	75.3%	75.1%	76.2%	76.2%	73.9%	73.7%	84.0%
	Inactive due to Illness*	33.0%	32.9%	34.7%	33.3%	34.8%	25.0%	35.2%	27.5%
	Working Age	60.3%	60.0%	61.1%	61.2%	62.8%	55.2%	57.3%	57.5%
Investment, Infrastructure & Connectivity	5G connectivity	48.3%	90.3%	98.5%	51.0%	97.5%	36.0%	82.1%	82.8%
	Gigabit connectivity	86.2%	93.9%	90.9%	76.4%	90.3%	72.7%	93.4%	91.9%
	GFCF per job	£8,726	£9,103	£8,858	£9,605	£7,241	£11,801	£8,614	£9,405
	ICT per job	£361	£579	£492	£210	£248	£328	£511	£741
	Intangibles per job	£1,694	£1,536	£3,307	£1,313	£1,125	£2,227	£1,657	£2,961

Key

- Better: higher than 105% of ITL1 parent region
- Equal: within 95% - 105% of ITL1 parent region
- Worse: lower than 95% of ITL1 parent region
- Data release surpressed
- Data unavailable due to change of ITL3 codes

Cite as McKeogh, N; Menukhin, O; Ortega-Argiles, R; Sarsfield, W; Silva Ruiz, A; Watson, R (2025). TPI UK ITL3 Scorecards, TPI Productivity Lab, The Productivity Institute, University of Manchester.

https://doi.org/10.48420/30030220

Annex: Methods and Sources

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APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH METHODS

The survey questionnaire was distributed to organisations in Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East by YouGov, a professional market research and data analytics organisation. The survey targeted organisations' Human Resource (HR) managers or, in organisations without an HR role, middle or senior managers with responsibility for training and/or recruitment and selection. The questionnaire included questions related to organisations' recruitment challenges, skills needs, training activity and workforce development. The questionnaire also explored the implementation of advanced digital technologies and organisations' engagement with training providers and public support services.

To ensure that the questions were clear and relevant, the survey was tested in multiple stages before launch. The initial draft was reviewed by nine stakeholders from the Yorkshire, Humber and North East regions, including individuals with policy and industry backgrounds. A pilot study was then conducted with 50 randomly selected organisations to test how the questions performed in practice. The results from the pilot study were reviewed and used to revise the questionnaire. The final survey used an active sampling approach to target participants who matched the study's selection criteria. The data collection took place between July and August 2025. A total of 521 useable responses were received.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The achieved survey sample included organisations that varied in terms of size, sector and industry.

In the North East, responses were received from organisations across all local authority areas (representation was strongest in major cities). In the case of Yorkshire and the Humber, no responses were received from the East Riding of Yorkshire or North East Lincolnshire (see Table 9). In addition, 59 organisations reported operating in the two regions but did not specify the local authority areas in which they had operations.

Table 9: Respondent characteristics – location

YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER	
Local Authority	**No. of respondents**
Leeds	59
North Yorkshire	46
Sheffield	45
Kirklees	29
Bradford	25

York	21
Calderdale	14
Hull	12
Wakefield	12
Barnsley	12
Rotherham	10
Doncaster	10
North Lincolnshire	9
East Riding of Yorkshire	-
North East Lincolnshire	-
NORTH EAST	
Local Authority	**No. of respondents**
Northumberland	23
Durham	23
North Tyneside	21
Newcastle upon Tyne	21
Sunderland	18
Stockton	12
Gateshead	12
Darlington	10
South Tyneside	7
Redcar and Cleveland	5
Middlesbrough	3
Hartlepool	3

Table 10: Respondent characteristics – size

Yorkshire and the Humber		
Organisation size	**Count**	**%**
Micro (2-9)	72	23.6%
Small (10-49)	41	13.4%
Medium (50 to 249)	55	18%
Large (250+)	136	45%
North East		
Organisation size	**Count**	**%**
Micro (2-9)	25	15.8%
Small (10-49)	30	19%
Medium (50 to 249)	23	14.5%
Large (250+)	80	50.7%

With regard to the number of people employed by the organisations, large organisations accounted for the largest share of respondents (45.8%), followed by micro-organisations (21.1%), medium organisations (17.9%), and small organisations (15.2%). The composition of the sample in terms of size was similar in both regions.

To put into context the composition of the sample, the official business population statistics for the two regions are presented in Table 11. Micro-enterprises account for by far the largest share of all organisations while large organisations constitute less than 1% of the total business population in both regions. However, large organisations account for a substantial share of total regional employment, highlighting the important role they play in shaping the labour market across the two regions.

Table 11: Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East business count by organisational size[30] and employment percentage[31]

Yorkshire and the Humber		
Organisational size	**Business population percentage**	**Employment percentage**
Micro (2-9)	82.6%	13.8%
Small (10-49)	14%	16%
Medium (50-249)	3%	13.6%
Large (250+)	0.5%	39.7%
North East		
Organisational size	**Business population percentage**	**Employment percentage**
Micro (2-9)	80.5%	14.4%
Small (10-49)	15.6%	16.9%
Medium (50-249)	3.3%	14.4%
Large (250+)	0.4%	35.3%

Larger organisations are overrepresented in the survey relative to their share in the population while micro businesses are underrepresented. While this means that the sample is not

[30] The two regions' business population (private, public and third sector) from NOMIS – Official census and labour market statistics (Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics)
[31] The employment percentage data is for private sector only from the Department for Business and Trade (https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/business-population-estimates-2025). The employment percentages do not sum to 100% because businesses with one employee and no employees were excluded.

representative of the wider population of businesses in the two regions, it is important to bear in mind that capturing information from micro businesses is a common challenge in employer surveys[32]. In any case, the purpose of the survey was to shed light on employer practices and how they vary across organisational types rather than to build a representative picture per se.

In terms of the sectoral composition of the sample, 57.9% of organisations were from the private sector, 22.2% from the public sector and 19.1% from the nonprofit sector.

Table 12: Respondent characteristics – Sector

Sector	Number of respondents
Private	302
Public	116
Third/Voluntary	100

Survey respondents were asked to identify the industry in which their organisation was based, selecting from a list derived from the UK Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes[33]. The industries were subsequently grouped into five broader industry categories: (1) manufacturing and construction, (2) health education and public services, (3) private service industries, (4) utilities, primaries and logistics, and (5) others.

Across the sample, the largest shares of respondents were concentrated in health, education and public (32.2%) and private service industries (24.4%), followed by utilities, primaries and logistics (13.6%), manufacturing and construction (12.5%) and 16.7% in the 'other' category.

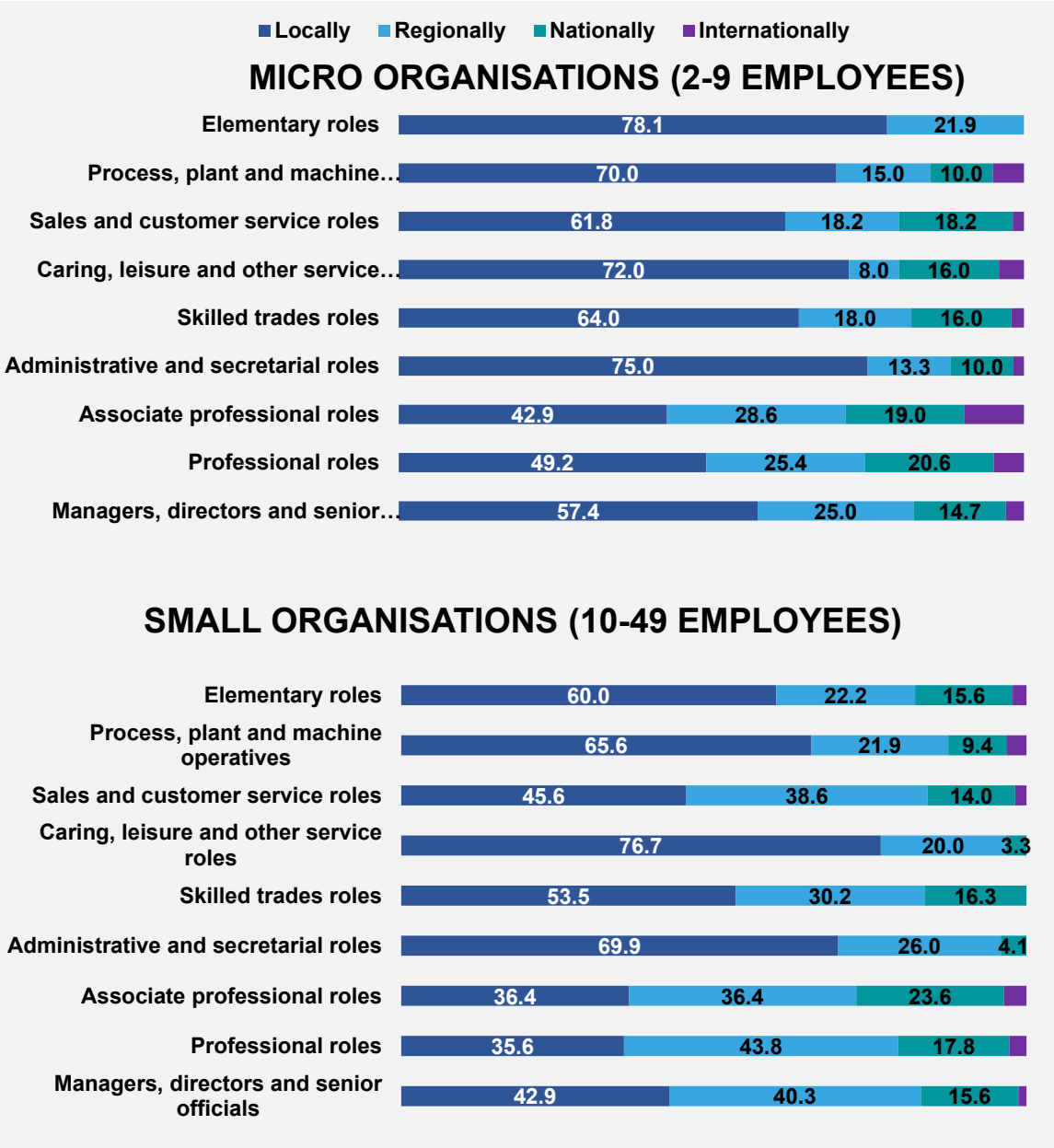
[32] ONS – Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) Quality and Methodology Information (Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) QMI - Office for National Statistics). European Central Bank Survey, Statistics Paper Series: Measuring non-response bias in cross country enterprise survey (Measuring non-response bias in a cross-country enterprise survey)

[33] The UK SIC was introduced to classify business establishments and other statistical units by the type of economic activity in which they operate in (UK SIC 2007 - Office for National Statistics).

Table 13: Respondent characteristics – Industry

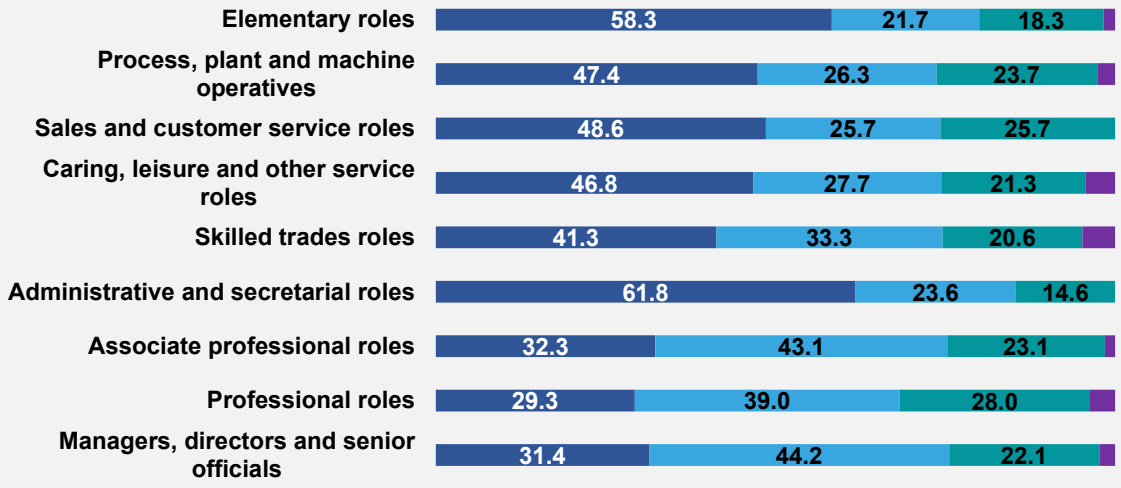
Industry category	Industries	Number of respondents
Manufacturing and Construction	Manufacturing	42
	Construction	23
Health, Education and Public	Human health and social work	63
	Education	79
	Public administration and defence.	26
Private services	Professional, scientific or technical	27
	Finance and insurance	31
	Accommodation or food services	12
	Administrative services	14
	Arts, entertainment and recreation	17
	Real estate	9
	Information and communication.	17
Utilities, primaries and logistics	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	8
	Mining and quarrying	-
	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	4
	Water supply	1
	Wholesale and retail	44
	Repair of motor vehicles/motorcycles	1
	Transportation and storage	13
Other	Other service activities	4
	Other household employment	-
	Other	83

APPENDIX 3: RESPONDING ORGANISATIONS' RECRUITMENT GEOGRAPHIES – ORGANISATIONAL SIZE (%)[34]

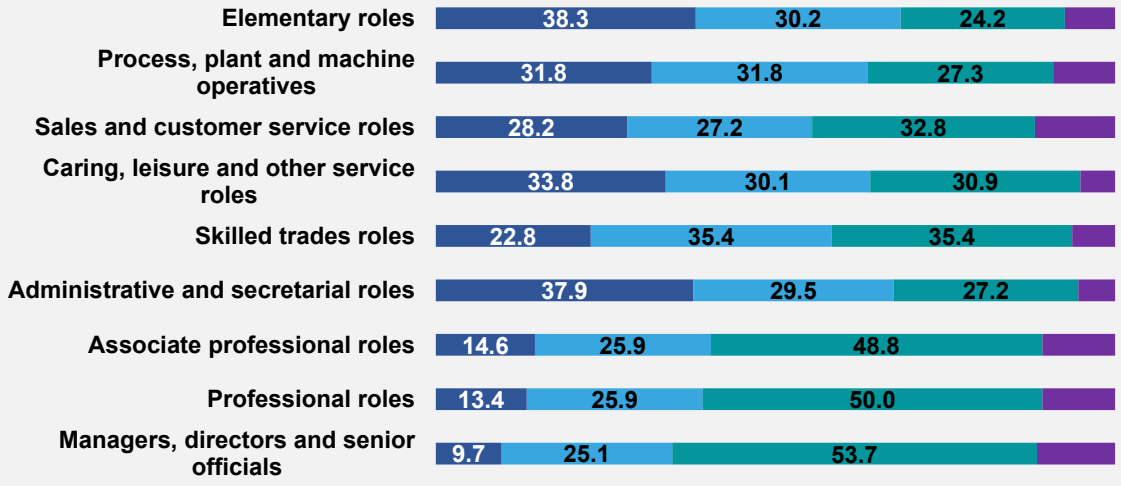


[34] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "What is the most common geographical area from which your organisation recruits new employees for each of the following roles?" Respondents selected one of the following options for each role: Locally (i.e. town/city you are based in), Regionally (i.e. county you are based in), Nationally (i.e. across the UK), Internationally.

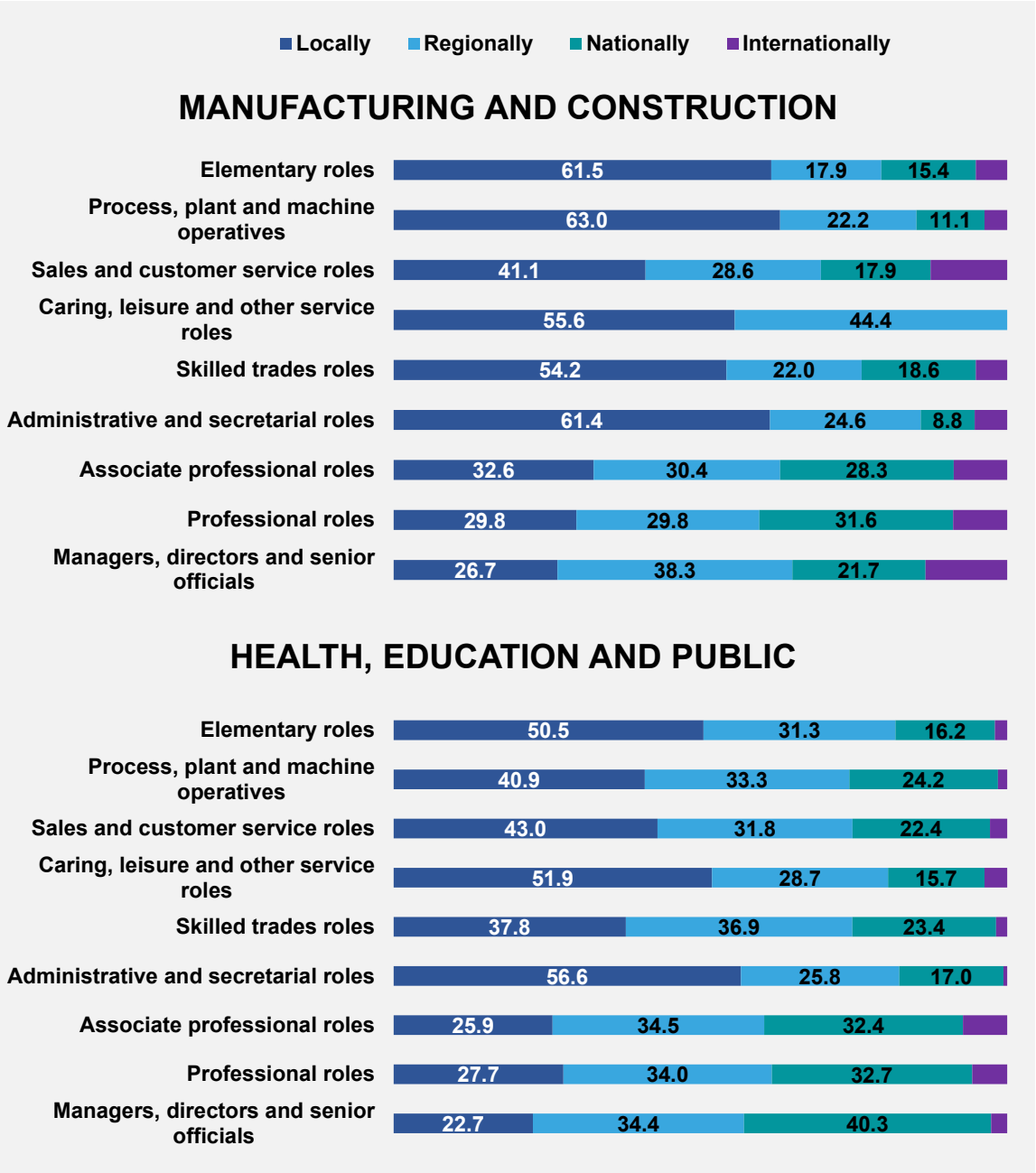
MEDIUM ORGANISATIONS (50-249 EMPLOYEES)



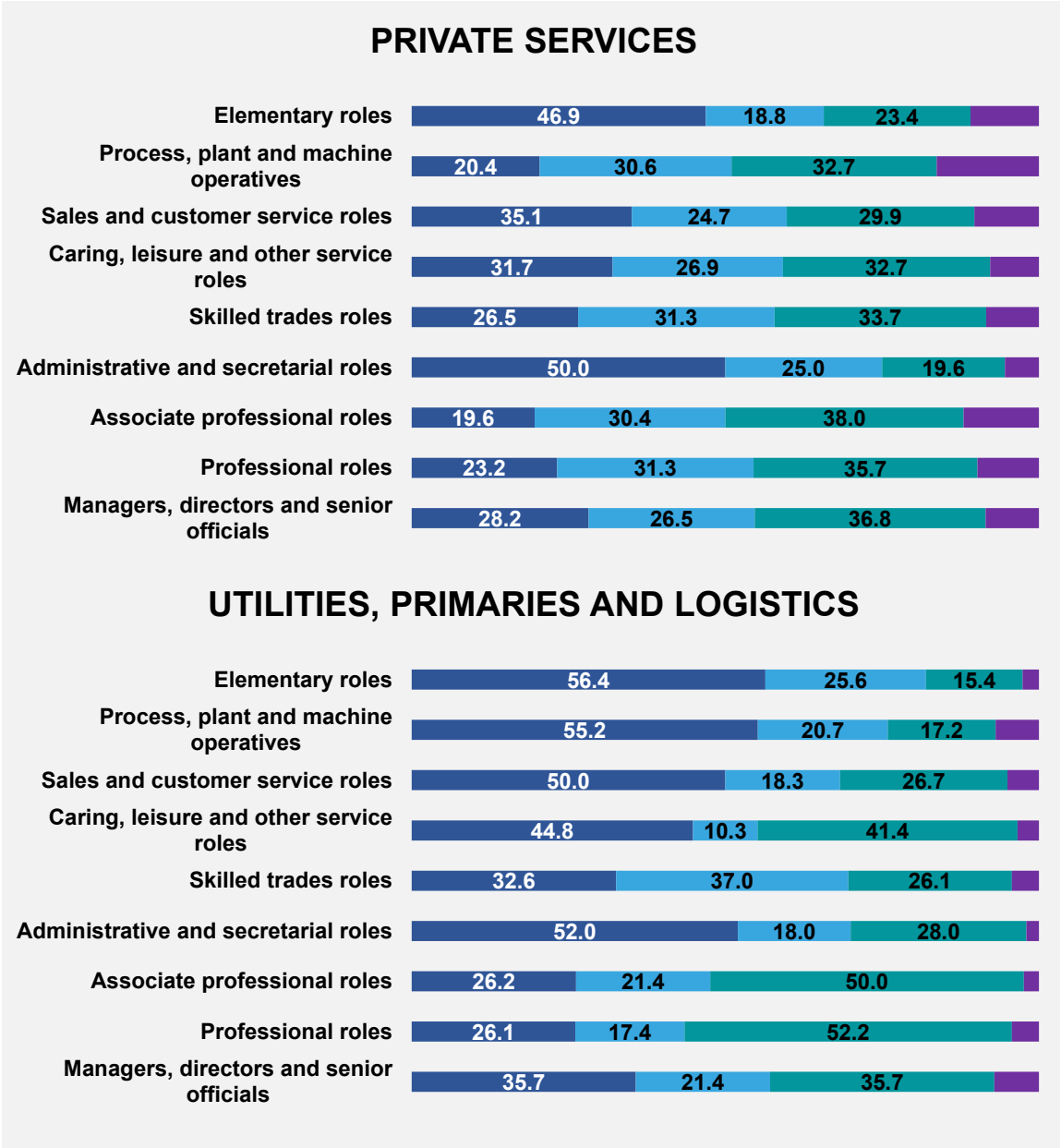
LARGE ORGANISATIONS (250+ EMPLOYEES)



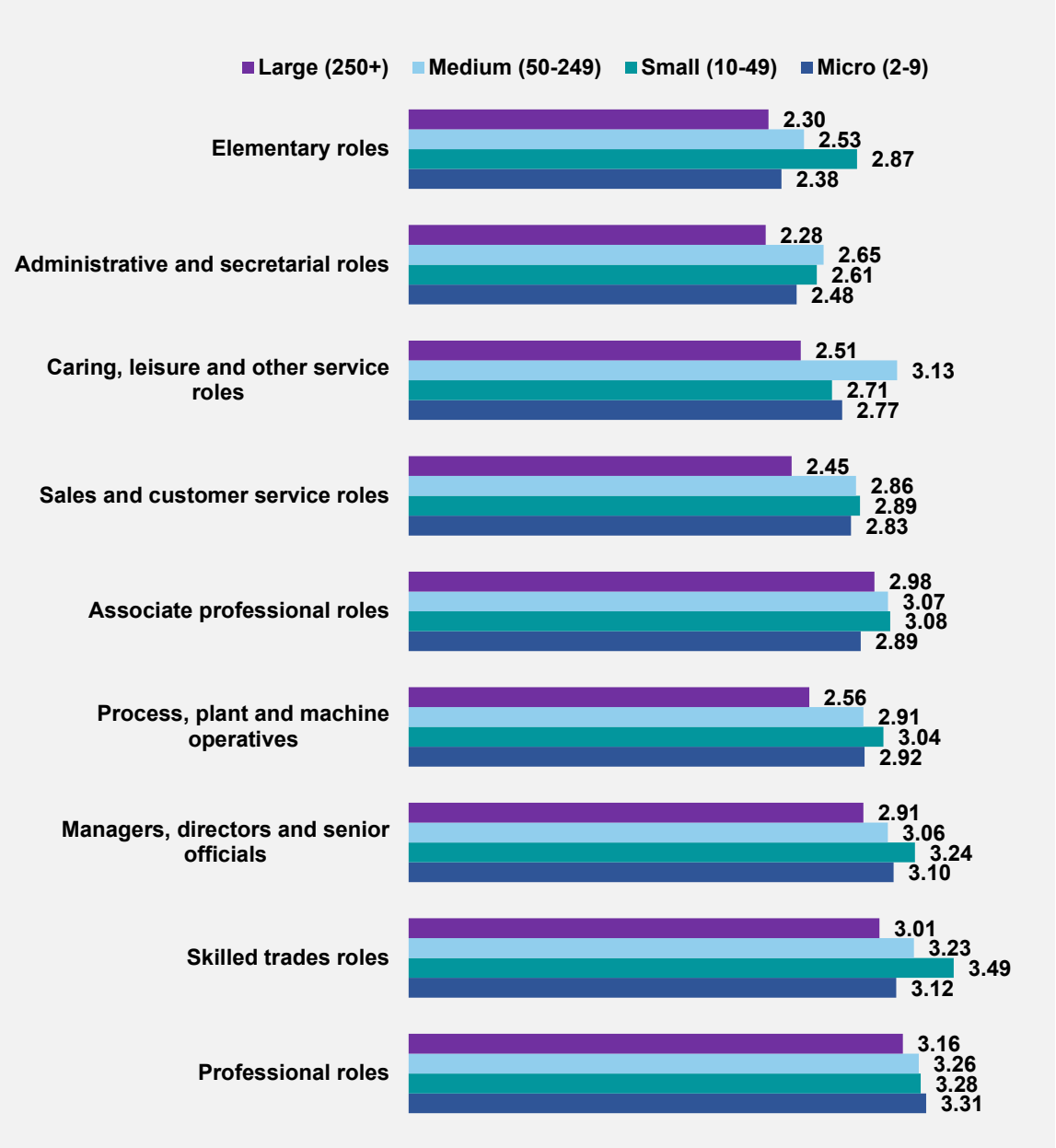
APPENDIX 4: RESPONDING ORGANISATIONS' RECRUITMENT GEOGRAPHY – INDUSTRY (%)[35]



[35] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "What is the most common geographical area from which your organisation recruits new employees for each of the following roles?" Respondents selected one of the following options for each role: Locally (i.e. town/city you are based in), Regionally (i.e. county you are based in), Nationally (i.e. across the UK), Internationally.

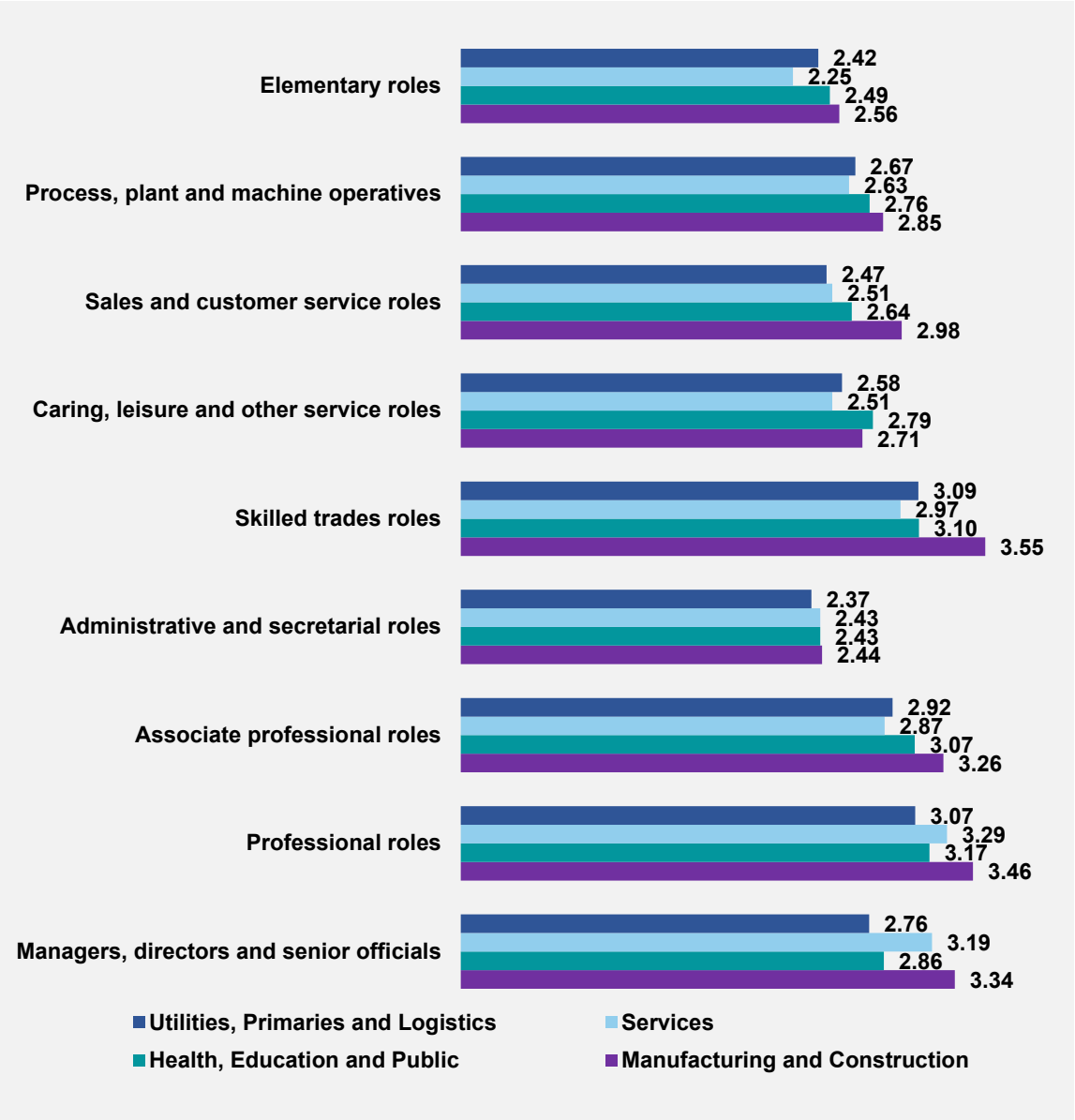

PRIVATE SERVICES
Elementary roles
46.9
18.8
23.4
Process, plant and machine operatives
20.4
30.6
32.7
Sales and customer service roles
35.1
24.7
29.9
Caring, leisure and other service roles
31.7
26.9
32.7
Skilled trades roles
26.5
31.3
33.7
Administrative and secretarial roles
50.0
25.0
19.6
Associate professional roles
19.6
30.4
38.0
Professional roles
23.2
31.3
35.7
Managers, directors and senior officials
28.2
26.5
36.8
UTILITIES, PRIMARIES AND LOGISTICS
Elementary roles
56.4
25.6
15.4
Process, plant and machine operatives
55.2
20.7
17.2
Sales and customer service roles
50.0
18.3
26.7
Caring, leisure and other service roles
44.8
10.3
41.4
Skilled trades roles
32.6
37.0
26.1
Administrative and secretarial roles
52.0
18.0
28.0
Associate professional roles
26.2
21.4
50.0
Professional roles
26.1
17.4
52.2
Managers, directors and senior officials
35.7
21.4
35.7

APPENDIX 5: RESPONDING ORGANISATIONS' RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES – ORGANISATIONAL SIZE [36]



[36] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "To what extent is it easy or difficult to recruit employees in each of the following roles in your organisation?" Respondents ranked different choices on a Likert scale from 1 = Very easy to 5 = Very difficult.

APPENDIX 6: RESPONDING ORGANISATIONS' RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES – INDUSTRY [37]



[37] The figure relates to a survey question that asked: "To what extent is it easy or difficult to recruit employees in each of the following roles in your organisation?" Respondents ranked different choices on a Likert scale from 1 = Very easy to 5 = Very difficult.