Training practices and skills needs in Yorkshire, the Humber and North East: At a Glance

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67%

of organisations experienced difficulties when recruiting new employees.

1 in 5

organisations had not provided any employees with time off for training.

More than

1 in 10

organisations faced difficulties finding applicants with adequate literacy or numeracy skills.

41%

of organisations employed at least one apprentice.

More than

90%

of organisations provided at least one form of training.

43%

of organisations had introduced at least one advanced digital technology.



Employers have a vital role to play enhancing the skills base in Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East.

Through their training and development activities, their participation in relevant consultation and policy initiatives, and by signalling their changing skill requirements.

This '**at a glance**' report presents key findings from a survey of 521 organisations across the two regions. The survey examined employers' skills needs, adoption of digital technologies, recruitment difficulties, training activities, involvement in apprenticeships and engagement with employment and training services.

UKRI Economic and Social Research Council

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A more detailed discussion of the survey findings is available in the full report. You can scan the QR code to access Training Practices and Skills Needs in Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East.

THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS VALUE THE MOST

The skills that were identified as being most important on average were 'foundational skills' related to employability and literacy.

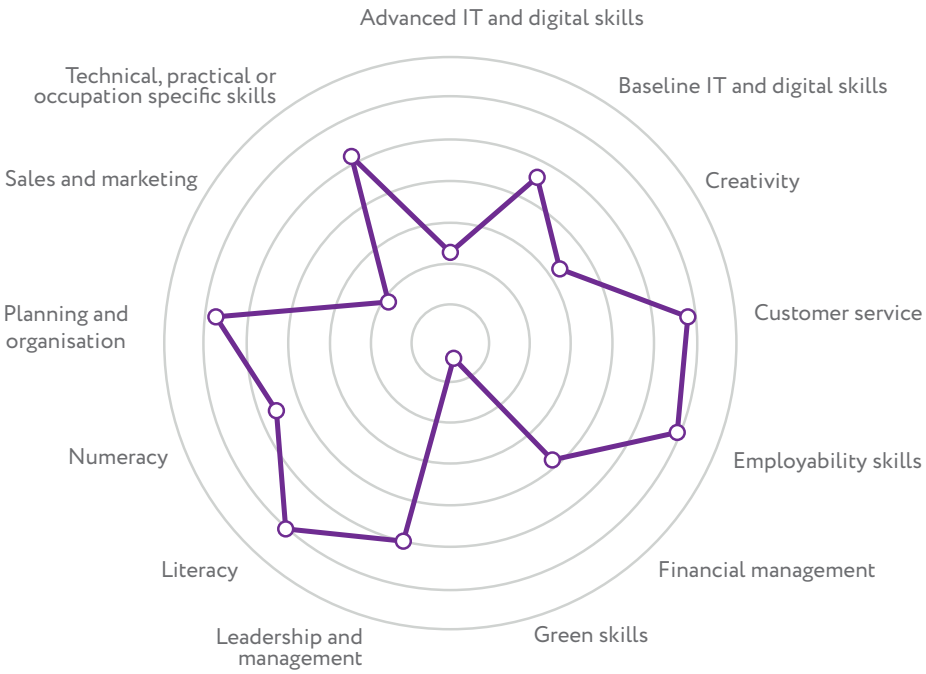
Skills related to customer service and planning and organisation were also consistently highly rated. By contrast, green skills received the lowest average score, suggesting that they are typically regarded as less important than other types of skills.

The perceived importance of skills varied by organisational size. Larger organisations tended to put greater importance on digital, leadership and management and technical skills, while micro and smaller employers prioritised core skills related to day-to-day operations.

Digital technology has an impact on skills needs

43.4% of organisations had introduced at least one advanced digital technology in the last three years. Adoption was more common among larger organisations and those operating in highly competitive markets.

Figure 1: The relative importance of different skills



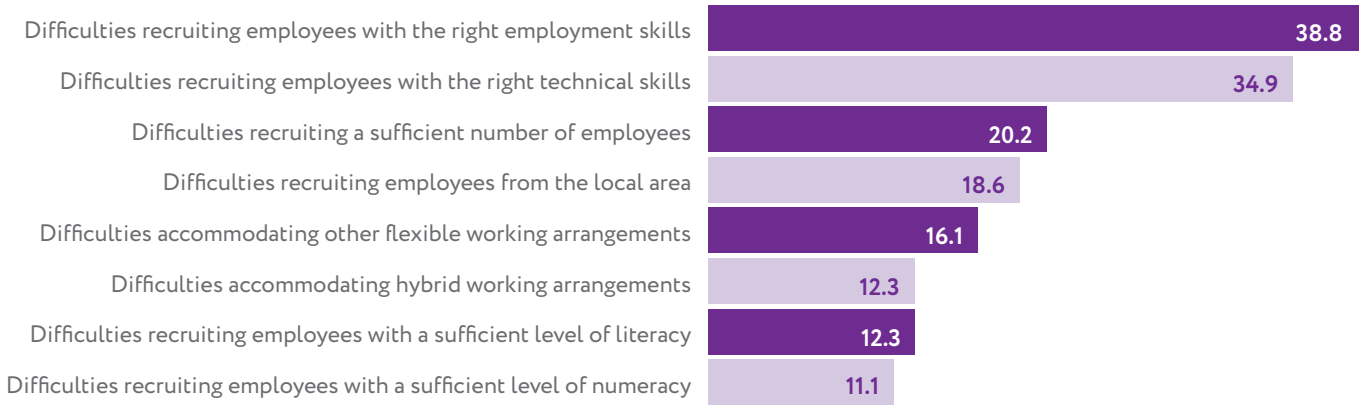
Organisations in health, education and public services were the most likely to have introduced at least one advanced digital technology, followed by private service organisations.

Organisations have adopted several approaches to address the skills requirements associated with the introduction of advanced digital technology. The most cited approaches were training provided by the technology supplier, reliance on internal training courses, training from external providers and recruiting new employees with the necessary skills.

Foundational skills are regarded as the **most important**, especially literacy and employability

RECRUITMENT IS CHALLENGING

Figure 2: Organisations reporting recruitment difficulties (%)



67% of organisations reported experiencing recruitment difficulties when recruiting new employees.

These challenges were particularly common among manufacturing and construction organisations, as well as in health, education and public services. Recruitment for roles requiring at least Level 3 qualifications was seen as more challenging than for roles requiring lower-level qualifications.

Professional roles and skilled trades were among the most challenging positions to recruit for.

Difficulties in finding applicants with the right employment and technical skills were substantially more common than difficulties in attracting sufficient numbers of candidates. Although fewer organisations reported challenges finding applicants with sufficient literacy and numeracy skills, the fact that more than one-in-ten encountered these difficulties indicates that weaknesses in basic skills remain a significant challenge across the two regions.

Organisations in the two regions are facing **significant problems** finding applicants with **basic skills**

TRAINING IS WIDESPREAD ACROSS ORGANISATIONS

90.8% of organisations reported providing at least one form of training.

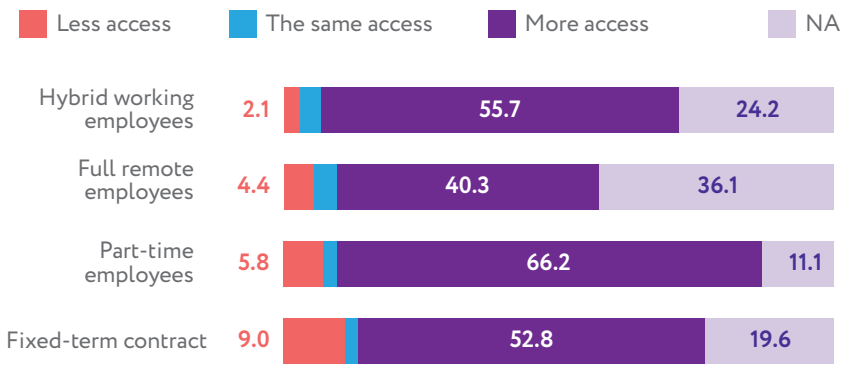
The most common type of training provided was on-the-job training, followed by online training and apprenticeships. Organisations provided, on average, four different types of training.

By far the most important reasons participants gave for providing training were to increase productivity and retain employees. Keeping pace with technological change and supporting the introduction of new products or services were also important motivations. Micro employers were more likely to emphasise operational needs than strategic reasons for training. Larger organisations regarded the introduction of new products or services and the need to keep up with technological change as important drivers of training.

One-in-five organisations reported that no employees had received time off for training, suggesting that these organisations either do not provide training or rely on informal forms, such as on-the-job training or mentoring.

Most organisations reported that all employees had the same access to training. Still, some organisations provided employees in standard employment (i.e. full-time with an open-ended contract) with more opportunities than those in non-standard employment, with fixed-term employees facing the greatest disadvantage.

Figure 3: Non-standard employees' access to training compared to employees with standard contracts (% of organisations)



Among organisations that provided training, 62% reported that there was a designated team or person responsible for training. But having such a role does not automatically translate into strategic planning. Around 74% of these organisations reported undertaking strategic planning for training and workforce development.

Apprenticeships are an important form of training

Almost 41% of organisations reported that they currently employed at least one apprentice.

The most common reason for employing apprentices was the opportunity to train individuals from scratch to meet organisational needs. The Apprenticeship Levy was cited as a motivation by around 22% of organisations that employed apprentices.

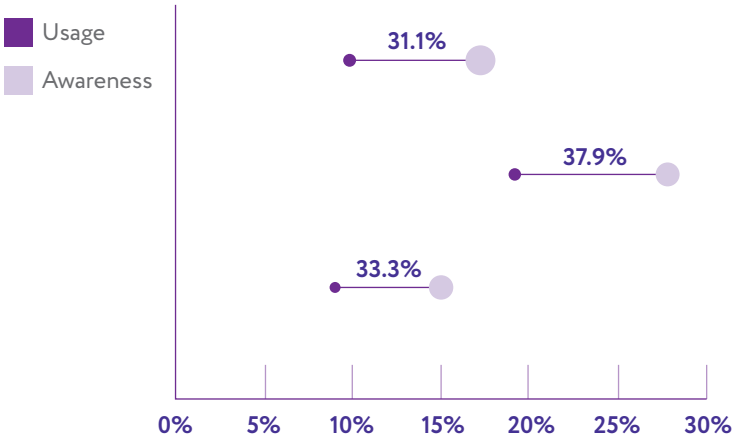
Apprenticeships were far more common among large organisations. With regard to industry, they were most common in health, education and public services, followed by in manufacturing and construction.

Around 55% of the participating organisations reported that they did not currently employ an apprentice. The most common barrier was a lack of resources, which was the dominant challenge among micro and small businesses. Organisations also stated that they didn't need apprentices, either because their workforce was already fully skilled or they preferred to recruit more experienced employees instead.

Employees with **non-standard contracts** were **less likely to receive training** than those in standard employment counterparts

ENGAGEMENT WITH EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDERS IS NOT WIDESPREAD

Figure 4: Organisations' awareness and use of employment and skills services



Awareness and use of public employment and skills services were relatively low among participating organisations.

Local employment hubs were the best known and most frequently used service, followed by Skills Bootcamps and Local Skills Banks.

However, awareness did not always translate into use, raising questions about the perceived relevance of these services, their administrative complexity, and employers' level of understanding.

Engagement with external trainers was widespread, with independent providers being the most commonly used, followed by higher education institutions and further education colleges.

The majority of organisations that sent an employee to train at an external training provider had at least some influence over the content or format of the provided training. However, the extent of influence varied.

Around one in three organisations using external providers had little to no influence over the training delivered.

Awareness and **use** of government skills services were **not widespread**

The survey's objectives and content were developed by the Yorkshire, Humber and North East Productivity Forum, which is part of The Productivity Institute.

The Productivity Institute is an organisation that works across academia, business and policy to better understand, measure and enable productivity across the UK. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (grant number ES/V002740/1).

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