



Leading learning and skills

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National Employer Skills Survey (NESS)  
England

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# National Employer Skills Survey England



Department of Education

- **Purpose**
  - To provide insight into the extent, causes and implications of recruitment problems, skills gaps and training behaviour faced by employers in England.
- **Sample size**
  - Circa. 79,000 telephone interviews with establishments with 2+ employees
    - Training cost survey circa 7,000
- **Analysis:**
  - By sector
  - Employer size
  - National, regional and local

# Skills Needs Core questions



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# Proficiency/Skills gap



University of W.B.

Q. How many of your existing ... (occupation type) would you regard as not fully proficient at their job? (prompted)

- Identifies skills gap number of skills gaps by establishment
- Identifies skills gaps by occupation type
- Types of skills that are lacking
  - i.e. management

# Proficiency/Skills gap



Labour Market

**Table 4.1: Skills gaps, 1999–2007**

|  | ESS<br>1999 | ESS<br>2001 | NESS03 | NESS04 | NESS05 | NESS07 |
|--|-------------|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>All establishments:</b>                           |             |             |        |        |        |        |
| Percentage of establishment with a skills gap        | n/a         | 23          | 22     | 20     | 16     | 15     |
| Percentage of staff described as having a skills gap | n/a         | 9           | 11     | 7      | 6      | 6      |
| <b>Establishments with 5+ employees:</b>             |             |             |        |        |        |        |
| Percentage of establishment with a skills gap        | 56          | 50          | 39     | 31     | 26     | 23     |
| Percentage of staff described as having a skills gap | 11          | 10          | 11     | 7      | 6      | 6      |

*Source: ESS1999 and ESS2001 (DfES); NESS03, NESS04, NESS05 and NESS07 (LSC).*

*Base: First and third row all establishments; second and fourth rows all employment.*

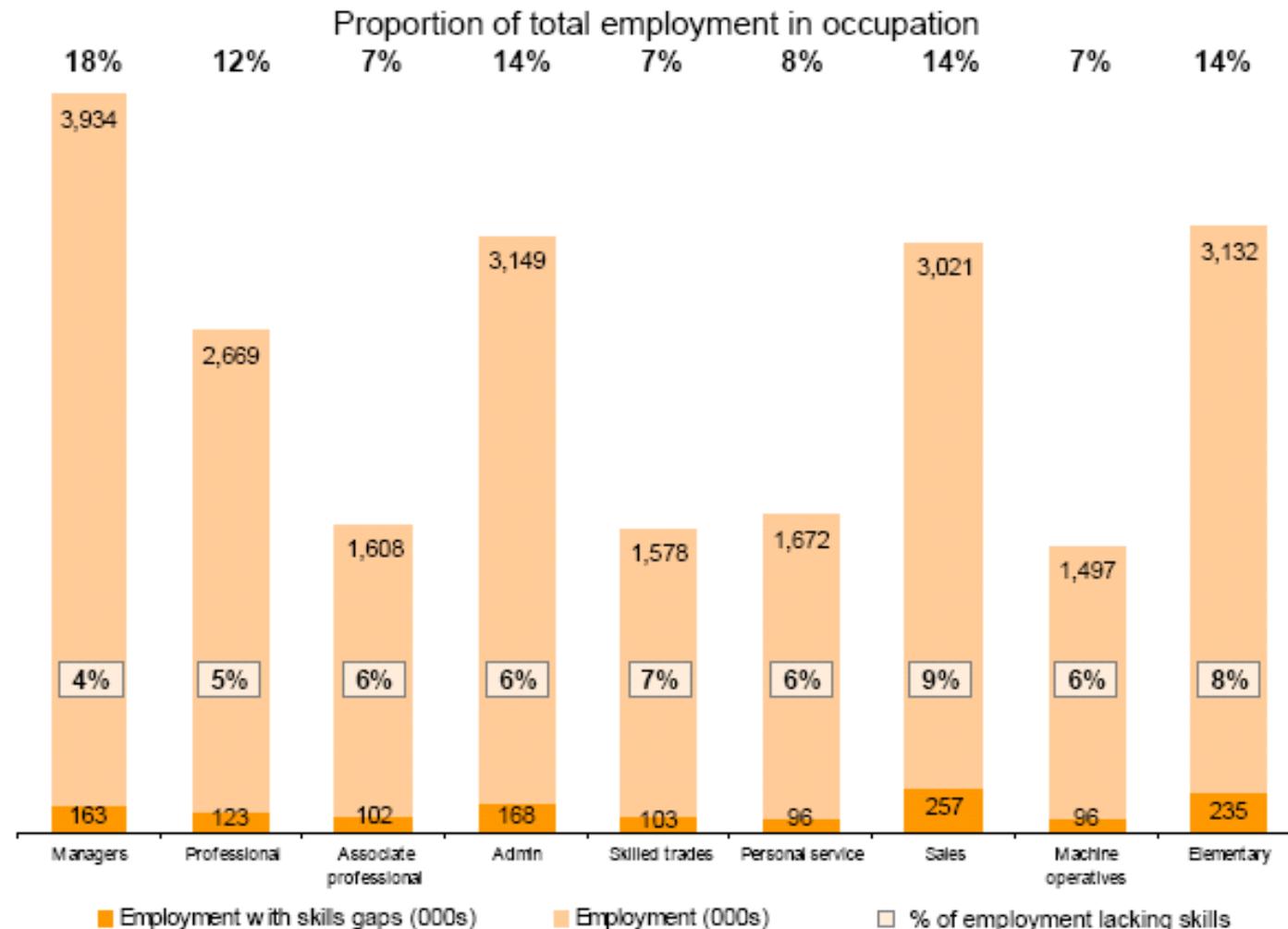
*Note: ESS1999 and ESS2001 figures for the percentage of staff lacking proficiency are best regarded as estimates (as discussed in footnote 3).*

# Proficiency/Skills gap



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Figure 4.1: Distribution of skills gaps by occupation



Base: All employment.

# Main causes of Skills gaps/ proficiency



Learning Skills Council

Q. I want to ask about two of the categories where you say not all staff are proficient. What are the main causes of some of your ..... (Occupation type) not being fully proficient in their job? (prompted)

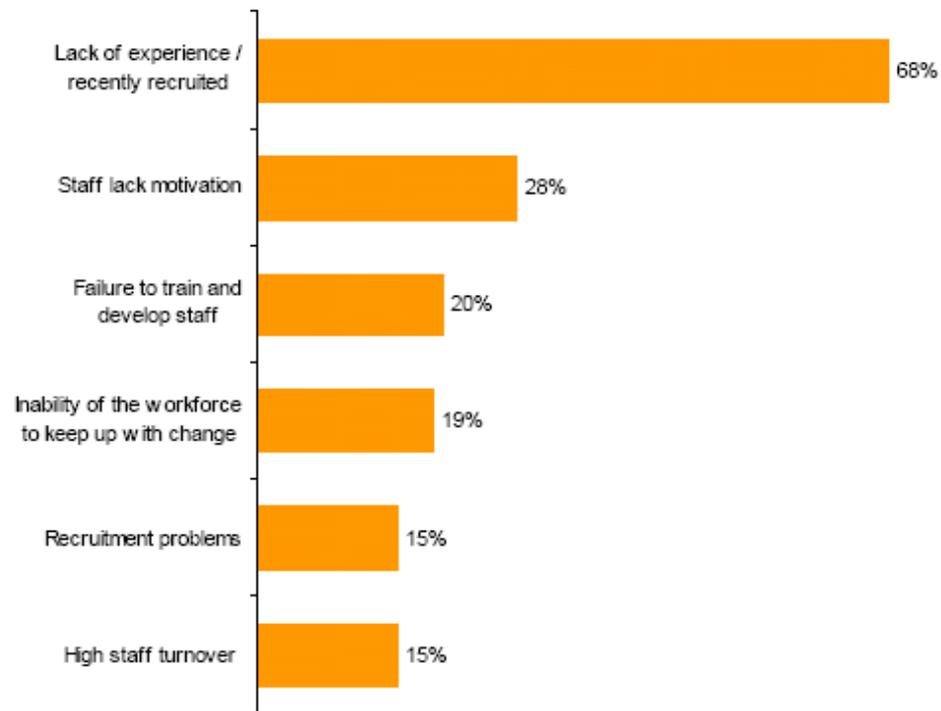
- Identifies the main causes for employees not being fully proficient at their job (with skills gaps)

# Main causes of Skills gaps/ proficiency



Learning Skills Council

Figure 4.2: Main causes of skills gaps



Base: All skills gaps followed up (unweighted=120,592; weighted=1,121,271).

# Skills Improvement/ Negative impact



Learning Skills Council

Q. Thinking about your ... (Occupations) who are not fully proficient which, if any, of the following skills do you feel need improving?

- Identifies the type of skills for improvement

Q. And which of these skills that are lacking for ... (occupation) is having the greatest negative impact on the establishment?

- Identifies the type of skills having the most negative impact on the establishment

NB: Additional questions asked will allow the LSC to look at the impact of skills gaps and what employers are doing to resolve these

**Table 4.4: Skill lacking overall and by occupation**

|                                | All 2003 | All 2004 | All 2005 | All 2007 | Managers | Professionals | Associate profs. | Administrative | Skilled trades | Personal services | Sales  | Operatives | Elementary |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|--------|------------|------------|
| <i>Unweighted base</i>         | 112,780  | 85,175   | 100,310  | 120,502  | 12,308   | 15,046        | 6,637            | 13,523         | 9,046          | 6,018             | 24,307 | 10,244     | 21,033     |
| <i>Weighted base (000s)</i>    | 1,170    | 1,241    | 1,050    | 1,121    | 124      | 108           | 672              | 141            | 886            | 746               | 236    | 812        | 201        |
|                                | %        | %        | %        | %        | %        | %             | %                | %              | %              | %                 | %      | %          | %          |
| <i>Skills lacking</i>          |          |          |          |          |          |               |                  |                |                |                   |        |            |            |
| Technical and practical skills | 43       | 45       | 44       | 51       | 33       | 54            | 52               | 48             | 69             | 59                | 46     | 57         | 53         |
| Customer-handling skills       | 55       | 47       | 46       | 41       | 30       | 26            | 27               | 37             | 21             | 49                | 64     | 25         | 47         |
| Oral communication             | n/a      | n/a      | 42       | 41       | 44       | 34            | 35               | 36             | 26             | 51                | 45     | 33         | 47         |
| Team working                   | 52       | 47       | 48       | 40       | 51       | 33            | 26               | 34             | 30             | 54                | 43     | 30         | 48         |
| Problem-solving skills         | 47       | 40       | 40       | 35       | 41       | 41            | 28               | 36             | 30             | 39                | 33     | 30         | 35         |
| Written communication          | n/a      | n/a      | 29       | 27       | 30       | 29            | 22               | 37             | 22             | 49                | 21     | 16         | 26         |
| Management skills              | 32       | 25       | 26       | 26       | 73       | 46            | 27               | 20             | 16             | 18                | 16     | 7          | 15         |
| General IT user skills         | 29       | 26       | 23       | 22       | 31       | 32            | 18               | 42             | 16             | 29                | 18     | 8          | 11         |
| Literacy skills                | 24       | 19       | 22       | 19       | 12       | 15            | 11               | 22             | 15             | 38                | 15     | 23         | 25         |
| Office admin skills            | n/a      | 20       | 20       | 18       | 25       | 17            | 13               | 51             | 12             | 17                | 13     | 3          | 7          |
| Numeracy skills                | 21       | 16       | 21       | 15       | 9        | 14            | 6                | 13             | 17             | 27                | 14     | 18         | 21         |
| IT professional skills         | 13       | 12       | 12       | 12       | 17       | 24            | 16               | 19             | 11             | 10                | 10     | 4          | 4          |
| Foreign languages              | 7        | 9        | 9        | 9        | 7        | 9             | 6                | 6              | 7              | 12                | 10     | 11         | 13         |

Source: NESS07, NESS05 and NESS04.

Base: All skills gaps followed up.

Note: Column percentages exceed 100 per cent because of multiple responses.

# Hard to Fill Vacancies



Center for Workforce Development

Q. How many of your vacancies for ... (occupation type) are proving hard to fill?

- Identifies the number and type of vacancies that employers are having difficult in filling

Q. What are the main causes of having a hard to fill vacancy (htfv) for ... (type of htv) - unprompted

- Identifies the type of htfv and reason for difficult in filling

Q. Can I just check, are you finding ... this vacancy for ... hard to fill because ...? (prompted)

- Confirms reasons for htfv due to skills/qualifications/experience

# Hard to fill vacancies



Center for Labor Policy Studies

**Table 3.1: Trends in incidence of vacancies and recruitment difficulties 2004–2007.**

|  | 2004   | 2005   | 2007   |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| <i>Unweighted base (employers)</i>     | 27,172 | 74,835 | 79,018 |
| % of establishments with any vacancies | 18     | 17     | 18     |
| % of establishments with any HtFVs     | 8      | 7      | 7      |
| % of establishments with any SSVs      | 6      | 5      | 5      |

Source: NESS07, NESS05, NESS04

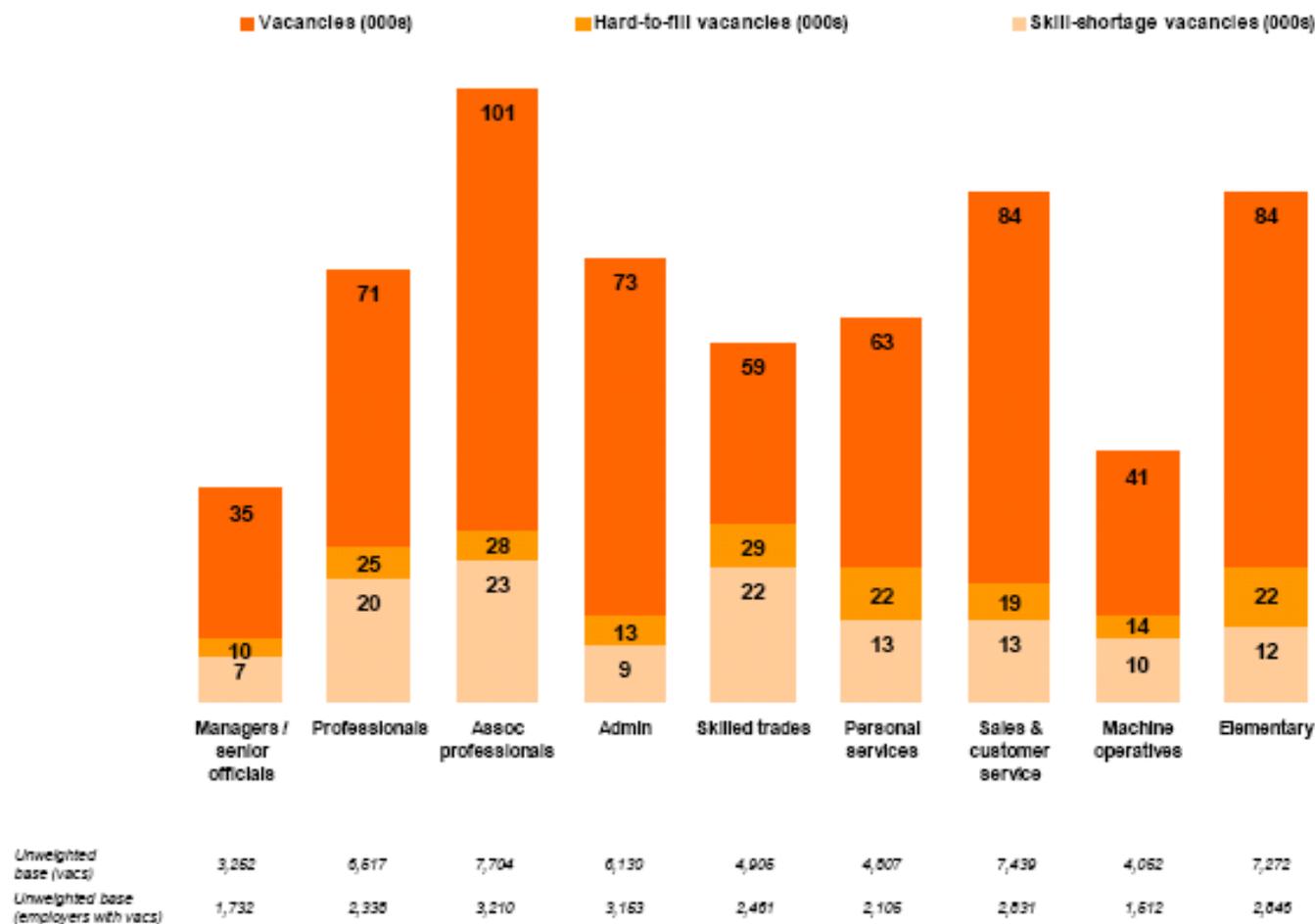
Base: All employers.

# Hard to fill vacancies



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Figure 3.3: Overall numbers of vacancies HtFVs and SSVs



Base: All vacancies.