

# Primary Research Report

Prepared for Federation of Small Businesses  
by PFA Research Ltd

## Research Support for the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

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A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of a grid of blue and green triangles of various shades, arranged in a pattern that suggests a staircase or a series of steps.

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# 1 Executive Summary

## 1.1 Introduction

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is a critical new project being led by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to set out the key changes needed to make technical skills training more responsive to employers' skills needs within a local area – in this case, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (CloS).

The initiative is funded by the Department for Education which selected FSB to lead the initiative in CloS. LSIPs are being conducted across the country and they are a central element of the new Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022. If successful, the LSIP will lead to shifts in the type and level of skills available to local employers and delivery of post-16 technical skills and training in several ways that will be more employer led. It will ensure CloS develops the fit-for-purpose skills specifically needed for this area.

FSB commissioned PFA Research to provide market research services to support the development of the LSIP. This research would set out to deliver new (up to date) insights into employers' challenges and frustrations on skills, and to hear what changes they would like to see relating to how skills and training are delivered in CloS.

In conjunction with FSB, PFA Research composed a programme of primary market research support comprising quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups and round table discussions to encapsulate the views of employers of all sizes, sectors and locations across CloS. However, the activities should pay particular attention to the two key sector clusters:

1. Manufacturing, Engineering & Marine (MEM)
2. Construction & Retrofit (CR)

The research activities comprised a survey of businesses located in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, conducted by telephone interviews and online self-completion, and a number of round table discussions, conducted in-person at venues across Cornwall and online events.

## 1.2 Quantitative Survey Key Findings

The targets for the survey were employers. 275 responses were received, from a telephone survey which conducted 250 interviews and 25 completions from a self-directed online questionnaire. The key findings of the research are as follows.

### Sample Profile

- Two thirds of respondents (68%) have the structure of being limited companies. 30% of respondents are from one of the two key sector clusters which were of particular interest – MEM and CR businesses are more likely to be limited companies in this survey.
- 89% of all VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises (Source: Office for National Statistics) employ fewer than 10 people. For the LSIP survey it was important that the sample captured larger employers. In the survey sample, 42% employ 10 or more people. 88% of respondents were able to provide an estimate of their annual turnover; over a quarter (27%) of respondents have annual revenues over £1m. The average turnover is estimated at £1.77m, with MEM businesses an average £2.33m and CR an average £1.62m.
- Businesses were asked to position their business in terms of growth objectives. A half (50%) say they have a plan for growth over the next three years, 4% wanting rapid growth. 42% will

concentrate on maintaining their current position or focussing on productivity and profitability. A slightly higher proportion of MEM businesses (55%) are looking for growth.

### **Recruitment**

- Three quarters (73%) of businesses surveyed have recruited or tried to recruit within the previous 12 months. These roles were often for new permanent positions, indicating a lack of essential skills to support business growth (62%), as well as backfilling permanent roles left vacant (57%).
- Nearly two thirds of these businesses recruiting (63%), said they experienced difficulties filling the roles, primarily because of a lack of candidates coming through (52%) as well as candidates missing the essential skills needs for the role (49%). Whilst the workforce issue of shortage of candidates is widespread, the absence of necessary skills among candidates is higher than average within the key sectors cluster (69%; or 75% within MEM and 60% within CR).
- For the vast majority (97%) of those trying to recruit and experiencing difficulties doing so, there are real impacts on the business; most commonly the impact of an increased workload on other staff which may not be sustainable (88%). For nearly two thirds, it causes difficulties for improving productivity (65%) or for those actively trying to expand the business (64%).

### **Vacancies**

- Four in ten businesses participating currently have vacancies that they are trying to fill. 30% of businesses with current vacancies and able to quantify have 3 or more vacancies, and 6% have 10 or more. The types of roles businesses say they are mostly trying to fill right now are 'skilled manual/technical positions' where 52% of those recruiting have one or more vacancies, and 'professional/managerial positions' where 30% have one or more vacancies. On average amongst the survey sample, there are 1.7 vacancies for every business participating. 44% of all vacancies require zero or less than one year's experience whilst 19% of vacancies are looking for four or more years' experience.
- For those trying to recruit skilled manual/technical positions, a third (34%) have been trying to fill the vacancies for more than six months. This compares to those with vacancies for professional/managerial positions where 'just' 23% have been trying to fill the roles for more than six months, and 18% for semi-skilled positions.
- The impact of businesses not filling these current vacancies means other staff are working extra (or overtime) to cover the work (52%), which can have an impact on long-term growth plans, increased stress within the workforce and is potentially an unsustainable scenario. Further, a third (32%) say they have had to turn business opportunities away as a result of a lack of capacity, and a quarter (24%) are adjusting the expected outputs and workflow to meet reduced staffing levels.

### **Skills Development and Sourcing**

- 80% of businesses participating in the survey identified one or more areas of skills that need improving in their current workforce, most commonly 'technical and practical skills for the job' cited by almost half of all businesses (48%) and six in ten (59%) of the MEM sector cluster. Over a third each identify 'management and leadership skills' (37%), 'team working skills' (37%) and 'sales & marketing skills' (36%).
- The main barriers for staff to improve skills most commonly relates to them not being able to find the time for training and development (38%). Lack of suitable local courses is an issue for

13% and lack of budget is in third place, for just 12%. Just 17% were unable to express any barriers.

- Just under one in five of the businesses participating (18%) say they have one or more people studying an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are more common amongst the key sectors, with 27% of the MEM businesses and 34% of the CR businesses. 30% say they are considering taking on an apprentice (additional, or their first apprentice) – most likely to be amongst the MEM sector businesses.
- Almost a quarter of businesses (23%) say they have training or skills development requirements that their business has been unable to source locally (and that they would have expected to be able to find in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly). Among the MEM businesses, the proportion is more than a third (35%). About half (48%) of those businesses unable to find the training they needed locally have sourced training outside of Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, which in most cases they have paid for. 16% have sourced training elsewhere but did not book the training.
- Training that is delivered 'on the job' in a live, practical scenario is favoured by the vast majority (84%) of participating businesses. All modes have a role to play, though online training that is pre-recorded or pre-fabricated is the least favoured with just 38% favouring.

### **Future Skills Needs**

- Businesses were asked whether there are any significant or major developments specific to their industry or type of business, that they are going to have to prepare for, or train staff for. 27% of participants answered, with responses which can be broadly summarised as:
  - Green skills and decarbonisation in construction and engineering
  - Changes in regulations and compliance requirements
  - Training staff for new technology and software
  - Electric vehicles and related training requirements
  - Increasing costs and sustaining payments
  - Brexit and its impact
  - Aging workforce and need for young people with engineering and manufacturing skills
  - Digitalisation and development of new products
  - Automation
  - Up-skilling and retraining staff to adapt to new roles and industry changes
  - Legislative changes in hospitality and tourism
- Nearly half (47%) of businesses anticipate that the type or level of skills they will need from their employees within the next three years will increase, though a full half (50%) expect the requirements to be the same. The types of occupations or skills that are likely to be affected (for skills needs changing) can be summarised as follows:
  - Technical skills, such as electronic, hydraulic, mechanical and engineering
  - Sales and customer communications, including customer service/relations
  - Management, financial and marketing skills
  - IT and technical skills, and web development skills
  - Administration, purchasing
  - Chef, hairdressing and beauty
  - Health and safety training and machine operators
  - Electric vehicles knowledge and skills.
  - Finance roles, accountancy and meeting obligations to HMRC
  - Animal care/ veterinary skills

- Social media and internet skills
  - Regulatory skills, such as infection control and allergen awareness
  - Project management and account handling.
  - Food and hygiene skills
  - Quality control
  - Communication skills and networking
- Participants were asked to what are likely to be their business' top three skills needs over the next 12 months. Responses were coded under key themes - the top three themes emerging were 'customer service skills' (24%), 'marketing and sales' (24%) and 'computer/IT/digital skills' (16%).
  - More than half (55%) consider 'leadership & management' to be a priority development area for their business over the next three years, for which they would likely seek training. Second most, 43% consider 'sustainability and Net Zero' to be a priority, closely followed by the need to meet environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles and 'equality and diversity in the workplace' (38%). A quarter (26%) do not believe there are priority development areas for their business. The construction and retrofit businesses appear less likely than others to cite any of the areas for priority development (38%).

### **Training Plans**

- More than half of businesses participating (56%) say they have a formal training plan that tracks the skills needs and training given for each employee, though for 17% it is only for some parts of the workforce. Businesses that are part of the MEM sectors cluster are most likely to have training plans in place, with one third (33%) saying they don't have any.
- Nearly every business with a formal training plan (99%) claimed to carry out training for their business, which also includes statutory/legislative compliance training.
- Of those with a plan for training, the vast majority (86%) have training planned for within the next 12 months and another 9% for within the next three years. For a majority 85%, this training will be accredited (approved by a regulated institution) though 78% are likely to undertake informal/non-accredited training.
- The most likely source for future training, for 28% of those with training plans, will be a local independent training provider. This is followed by the use of in-house training (16%), and an industry, professional organisation or trade body (e.g. the FSB, Chamber of Commerce, CITB, NFU, etc.) with 9%. Also 9% would source from a local college. Many would use multiple sources or specific industry sources of expertise.

### **Post-16 Technical Education Providers**

- 15% of all businesses participating perceive the level of understanding that providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly have of the skills needs and challenges faced by their organisation to be good or excellent, compared to a half (49%) who say their understanding is minimal or limited at best. Those who have used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly are more likely to feel positively towards providers understanding the skills needs and challenges faced by their organisation.
- Of those businesses which have used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, two thirds (67%) are fairly or extremely satisfied with the training received to meet the needs and challenges faced by their organisation.

- Of the small proportion of businesses (n=26) that have not used any external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, the most commonly cited reason was because the provider could not supply what was needed (46%) followed by there not being sector specialists (23%).
- Participants were asked to think about anything that has worked well or particularly benefited their business when working with providers of post-16 technical education. About 21% of participants provided a valid response of experiences, which include (in summary):
  - Positive experiences with apprenticeships, particularly those provided by Cornwall College and independent training agencies.
  - Positive feedback for specific training courses, such as asbestos and first aid training, and lifeguard training.
  - Good experiences with specific trainers and tutors who were professional and experienced.
  - Flexibility and convenience of training programs that allowed staff to train together or on specific days, and the ability to fast-track training.
  - Communication and support from training providers was seen as helpful, particularly in problem solving.

### **Training Budgets**

- About a third (31%) of businesses participating have a training budget which for most is proportionate or greater than previous budget periods. Over half (55%) say they do not have a budget for training but they will be likely to invest in training and skills. Just 12% will not spend on training.

### **Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)**

- Many businesses are keen to support young people to gain experience of the workplace, and education establishments need businesses to provide industry experience touch-points for their students. Four in ten of the businesses participating (39%) have taken students from school, college and/or university on work experience in the last 12 months. Whilst many businesses do not have the ability or interest to do this (17%), a fifth (21%) say they have not received such requests, leading to the assumption that these businesses would consider taking on a work experience student if suitably approached.
- Eight in ten businesses (80%) have undertaken activities and/or have policies in place that address awareness or actively support Environmental, Social and Governance (or ESG) principles. Over half (57%) say that their business actively tries to recruit a diverse and inclusive workforce. However, many of these employers do not have written and published policies relating to equality and diversity (49% without), and environmental sustainability such as for waste reduction and carbon reduction (57% without). A quarter (25%) have invested in training related to equality and diversity and similarly almost a quarter (23%) have invested in environmental sustainability training.

### **Leadership and Management**

- For the employer business to function well, be competitive, progressive and remain compliant in the market, as well as being responsible and meet the increasing needs of its people, it must have good leadership and management capabilities to cope and fulfil its responsibilities successfully. Businesses were asked whether they have the leadership and management skills to support a number of its cornerstone responsibilities and contemporary areas. Almost all



participating businesses feel they have leadership and management skills necessary for managing finance (97%) and the vast majority say they have the skills to support the health and wellbeing of employees (93%). The areas that are less fulfilled (though this is not necessarily a deficit) are with project development and management using Agile (21%) and for making the most of digital and artificial intelligence (40%).

## The LSIP

- Participants were asked about their suggestions for how the Local Skills Improvement Plan could help the delivery of skills and/or skills progression for their business. The most commonly cited theme related to the availability of local or more accessible training (20%), followed by the promotion and support for all sectors as viable careers (18%) and the improvement of links between the education system and industry (18%); the latter felt particularly strongly by MEM businesses.

## 1.3 Qualitative Research Key Findings

The following represent a series of highlight summaries, under the themes of the discussion guide. Whilst key findings are organised under thematic headings, many of the topics interrelate and have cross-cutting relevance.

### 1.3.1 Skills Needs

This section explored businesses' overarching needs for skills, considering the impact of what happens if those skills aren't being developed, whether people are coming through with the right foundation skills, organisations' approach to skills development, employees' expectations for training, and consideration of what industry developments may be heading their way that they will need to be prepared for.

#### ***Types of skills most difficult to develop or source***

- Participants paint a backdrop of a challenge recruiting professional engineers in Cornwall due to a lack of graduates from traditional engineering degree programs. The absence of graduates from Cornwall makes it difficult for industries, such as heavy processing industries, to establish a footprint in the region, especially with the cost of living, housing, and infrastructure in Cornwall being an issue. Businesses therefore have to pay high salaries and relocation costs to attract professionals to the region, which is not sustainable in the long term. The outlook is a situation that is set to worsen as lithium mining and offshore wind industries look to employ large numbers of people.
- One company explained their struggle to find skilled workers with multi-skilled mechanical and electrical expertise, and they are now recruiting part-qualified or car mechanics to address the shortfall. Upskilling and training this population of workers is the company's challenge for the next 18-24 months.
- Whilst companies may be willing to hire people who are the right fit for the business, even if they do not have the required skills, and to train them up, this approach comes with risks such as quality problems and safety. One company explained the sector experiencing a relatively high turnover rate, with people leaving at a later age in life due to the nature of the work. Also noted is a significant shortage of skilled people in the age range of 28-45, and issues around languages, with many larger companies growing significantly over the last 2-3 years, absorbing the pool of trained, skilled people, and leaving a shortfall generally.

- Construction has similar issues and a difficulty in attracting young people to certain sectors, such as groundworks, due to the perception of the work being physically demanding and not appealing enough. Provision of training on plant is particularly difficult because of the need for expensive equipment (e.g. dump trucks, JCBs) and the specialised training to operate them.
- The marine sector similarly is experiencing challenges with training and developing people with business and strategic skills, especially within the marine leisure sector which needs a high level of professionalism and customer facing skills. Thoughts that connecting training and education more closely to the industry's practical applications could inspire and excite more people to enter the sector but it needs to be able to compete with others, particularly emerging fields such as space and offshore wind, in order to retain talent and attract investment.
- Many participants were unable to explicitly specify the 'gaps' in their businesses in this way. Instead, they typified workforce issues (lack of people coming through, or lack of the right people) and the lack of work ethic, fundamental behaviours and attitudes of (usually) young people, absence of basic skills and their suitability for manual work.
- The issues are commonly negatively associated with social media and mobile phones, despite that this inferred younger generation are likely to be more able to engage with technology developments in the MEM and CR trades, such as online training.

#### ***Approach to skills development and future skills***

- One company described their training arm that provides qualifications to employees based on their roles, competencies, and behaviours. It uses an appraisal and performance management system, which includes monthly appraisals and yearly reviews. Staff competency is assessed every month, and they get paid for each band they move up. However, participants also acknowledge the problem of job progression when there are limited opportunities for ambitious employees.
- Thinking about barriers to training, participants acknowledge the challenges of training and apprenticeships within high-risk industries. It can be a problem with managing apprentices who may be under 18 due to safety reasons and the restrictions some companies have for allowing minors on their premises. Participants discussed the stringent health and safety regulations that affects their business, including the need for undertaking risk assessments, even for supposedly simple scenarios – all of which impacts upon their time and challenge to train people, that there are many hoops to climb through before someone is safe to be put into on-the-job training. Some believe that the ability to assess risk is a basic skill that can be taught or encouraged through schools, which would allow easy transition into the workplace.
- Also of some concern is the seemingly continual need to training, perhaps for things that don't change, potentially devaluing the purpose of training being all about compliance and not upskilling. Business owners who are, say, engineers by trade, have described not enjoying the pressure and responsibilities that come with running the business such as a continuous need for training which can be mentally draining, as well as having to be an H.R. manager and a quality manager. That said, they recognise the importance of training in the industry and the need for effective tutoring.
- Employers that have built successful businesses and have been building those businesses over many years understand the effort and hard work that has gone into achieving success. Progression, therefore, can be more about developing skills, experience and mastery over a long period of time and not simply about moving up a pay scale. There is a sense that many young people have unrealistic expectations about investing in their own futures but also an

exaggerated view of their own worth. Sector representatives and larger organisations can help promote aspirations and ethics, such as involving parents when recruiting and developing apprentices.

- For those looking to progress within the same organisation requires not just vacancies opening up but the ability to be released from existing duties, and that requires a field of new, suitably qualified candidates. This is a real concern for many, that there will be a significant shortfall in key skills in the medium- to long-term future. There needs to be a strategy for knowledge transfer and ensuring skills from those wanting to retire from manual jobs can be harnessed in other ways – perhaps to become trainers themselves (thus the need for ‘train the trainer’ schemes). Participants suggested that retaining older workers who have valuable skills and knowledge can be a solution to skills shortage (rather than relying solely on bringing through a young, inexperienced workforce), and that there should be more incentives and better pay for those who choose to become trainers or teachers in these key industries.
- There is criticism of the vocational education sector for shortage of good quality teachers and lecturers, and that colleges are struggling to attract people from the trades to work as college lecturers. To address this, there are cases of colleges having brought in retirees to teach and work with younger apprentices, which has been very successful - meaningful contact with employers is critical for young people to be successful in their apprenticeships, but there is a need for more join-up between different agencies and organisations to work on this issue. Schools are working to meet the Gatsby benchmarks for meaningful interactions with employers but there remains a lot of bureaucracy and red tape that can deter employers from getting involved.
- There is some concern over how the education system is preparing young people for future careers in engineering and tech, that combining sciences into one subject, such as STEM, is a way of "dumbing down" what were actually separate and valuable disciplines. Further, the workplace has changed significantly, but schools and career advice have not kept up with the changes and it is important to link the curriculum to the world of work so children can understand why what they are learning is relevant.
- Digital construction is an emerging area that requires basic digital skills to use software like spreadsheets and accounting tools, but also more advanced skills for things like building information modelling and augmented reality. However, some would say the construction industry has been slow to adopt new technologies and strategies, so it is important to develop a culture of change and provide simple solutions to encourage uptake.
- Technologies will have a wide role to play in the MEM and CR sectors. For example, virtual reality (VR) can be useful in training employees on health and safety by creating a virtual environment where hazards can be put in place without the physicality of the actual workplace, where it is acknowledged that traditional training can be expensive and time-consuming. However, if colleges want to prepare people with some of the advanced digital skills required by industries, tutors must stay up to date themselves.

### 1.3.2 Environmental, Social, Governance – ESG

This section wanted to examine whether businesses are able to recruit and develop skills among diverse and/or non-stereotypical people into their workforce; for example, people from diverse backgrounds, or hard-to-reach, or often excluded groups. Also, the extent to which businesses are considering ESG in all its issues, such as preparing for Net Zero and the green economy.

### ***Developing skills among diverse/non-stereotypical people into the workforce***

- Participants described the value of working with teams that are successful because of teamwork and blending the best of individuals. Whilst most are accepting of being inclusive and diverse generally, some are nervous about “saying the wrong thing” and fear policies being forced upon them – that their businesses are their concern and it is their own toil and investment that has made them successful. Diversity is seen as not just about race but also about a person's appearance, which could affect their company's impression on customers. Some are further irritated by conversations about lack of representation of ethnic minorities (in a geographic area that is predominantly White British) or the representation of women in traditionally male-dominated settings – because of opposition to fear of being forced to promote people who they feel may be less qualified for a role over their ‘choice’ candidates. However, many harbour old-school opinions and appear unaware or reluctant to be able to address those issues through training for resilience or progressive policies.
- Participants reflect on how efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, such as highlighting women in construction in videos and promoting trades in public services, and ensuring marketing for apprentices is properly inclusive and doesn't only represent white boys, are being made. However, the lack of diversity in Cornwall's population itself also poses a challenge for diversity in the industry. There are no physical barriers to joining the industry, but the industry needs to work on changing perceptions. One of the larger construction sector employers is alert to the situation of gender stereotypes and keen to champion inclusivity and diversity in their workforce, even if the odds are seemingly stacked against them.
- There is a recognised need for more diversity in the marine industry, particularly with regard to the underrepresentation of women though also people with disabilities; it needs to be more welcoming and promote itself better to young girls and women. Though progress is being made, such as the launch of a women in boat building website, but there is more work to do.
- Participants considered the role of specialist support groups, such as Black Voices Matter and Disability Inclusion Cornwall, but there was either little knowledge of them or little interaction. That said, some participants have described a typical Cornish culture of societal acceptance to differences, but in businesses the need to want to understand those differences better.

### ***Environmental & Net Zero***

- Thinking about future skills, and in construction and retrofit in particular and meeting the needs of green economy, research conducted has identified the need for 350,000 new full-time workers in construction by 2030 for retrofitting and achieving net zero. However, there is currently no national retrofit strategy, and the pathways for achieving net zero are unclear. The lack of clarity makes it challenging to determine which skills will be needed and when. Business leaders stress the importance of being proactive in training and education to avoid skills shortages, even though it may not be financially viable for colleges to run training programs until there is demand.
- Aligned with this, some businesses are concerned about the balance of knowledge and skills transitioning from gas to alternative technologies. Some of the courses, particularly around plumbing, need to be up to date, but currently have an excessive focus on gas work, which is becoming less relevant. However, whilst gas systems may be phased out, skills will still be needed to cope with their decommissioning. There it is suggested, however, that multi-skilled operatives, who are crucial for day-to-day repairs or general system work, have limited options for training and upskilling.

### 1.3.3 Skills Providers

This section considers relationships with training providers, where businesses source skills training from and the extent that the skills provision they need is available in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly. Also, whether the way skills are developed works for businesses and the importance of accredited training.

#### ***Sourcing training, and local provision***

- Funding to support training will always be helpful, and particularly in the context of the CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) funding and the apprenticeship levy. One participant mentioned that the value of the funding isn't as good as it used to be, and there is a question mark over the value that the CITB is giving back.
- In terms of other needs, participants across several sessions expressed interest in modular- or bite-sized learning, allowing employees to enter work with basic skills and regulatorily compliant (e.g. from college and ideally with their CSCS card), to be able to put to work on site or on the shop floor quickly, then to build up a portfolio of capabilities and certifications (and therefore experience) over time. There is a risk that if students are channelled to niche trades too early, they will leave the industry altogether.
- Participants considered the training requirements necessary for delivering contracts to the public sector, particularly in places like schools, hospitals, and police stations. They mentioned that many are qualifications and training courses that need to be demonstrated in order to work in those environments, which can be challenging for small employers to invest in.
- Finding every training need that every different business in Cornwall needs is unlikely, and businesses described how they brought specialist training to their location in Cornwall rather than sending employees out of county for training. This saved them a significant amount of money, and they believe that collaborating with other businesses could lead to even greater cost savings. Some proposed the idea of (say) builders' merchants providing training courses, which could help take pressure off of colleges that can't specialise in every single type of training and whether it was possible for a fund to support this kind of training.
- Colleges will have a significant part of play in the delivery of technical skills and they need to be able to respond to local employers' needs through collaboration to develop up-to-date training content. This would be a benefit to all, ensuring students acquire the skills most in demand. However, tutors themselves must maintain have up-to-date skills to teach the courses and that needs employers as industry professionals as part of the delivery. Colleges will need to have adaptable spaces that can cater for delivering different skills, or collaborative arrangements with industry to provide specialist teaching spaces.
- Participants discussed whether money needs to be made available to businesses for providing their own training departments, and potentially sharing the training department perhaps with small nearby businesses. This could help to keep training relevant and up-to-date, reflecting that some centrally delivered college courses, particularly around plumbing (say), are outdated, with an excessive focus on gas work, which is becoming less relevant. Indeed, participants have suggested that in the future the skill of working with gas will no longer be as relevant and people should be able to reach higher levels of certification without having to learn gas.

#### ***Delivery of skills in a way that works***

- Experiences and opinions of local skills providers is varied, and occasionally out of date. Some are sceptical of the real value of certificated qualifications and how new candidates present

themselves, that they lack substance and real understanding of industry. Some described how they implement their own assessments for core skills (around creativity, aptitude and attitude), that so long as there is a fundamental capability and good fit, then the specifics can be trained. Employers described how they have struggled to recruit into well-paid engineer posts finding people with directly relatable experience so are commonly accepting applications from people from other industries where there are parallel underlying skills and approaches.

- In consideration of the fundamental skills required for MEM and CR industries, participants have suggested that there should be a basic minimum bar of health and safety training that should be mandatory across all fields, including manufacturing and engineering. They posit that employers shouldn't be responsible for training employees in this basic knowledge, but rather for employing them to do the work.
- There is a sense that those commissioning and setting up courses, tutors and course planners, need to better understand the construction/retrofit industry a lot better; that very prescribed, traditional number of classroom/learning hours clocked is not prohibitive to getting people skilled and work ready. Some have struggled to find multi-skilled apprentices and that the rigidity of academic schedules can make it challenging to make things work from the business point of view, where businesses have limited capacity to support but colleges need volume to make courses financially viable.
- Navigating around the network of skills provision can be difficult for many. However, participants have described how they are not 'linked in' to colleges and that colleges don't know what they need. There is a sense that there is a lot of silo delivery without consideration of what businesses really need. Suggestions were made for an online portal where skills providers for businesses could post courses and training schedules, but also for private sector trainers and even other businesses that had knowledge to share.
- T-levels, which are vocational qualifications designed to provide practical skills and experience for students. One participant interested in taking on T-level students from Truro & Penwith and Cornwall Colleges, particularly those studying surveying and accounting software, described difficulties with engaging with the young people.
- Participants have described how colleges skills offers are changing, that they are disposing real estate due to the high cost of maintaining the buildings and a lack of students to fill them. One described the challenge of working with their local college, noting their underfunding but also an experience of poor customer service. Turnover and lack of staff can impact funding applications and apprenticeship programs, and participants highlighted the importance of investment in staff and skills in the colleges to build quality and deliver the required service. There is a degree of feeling a disconnect – that businesses release apprentices to go to college but there is lack of feedback on the value and there isn't a commercial approach or direct connection to businesses to demonstrate value delivered.
- Apprenticeship standards set by larger businesses can be difficult for smaller employers to meet and businesses ask for the involvement of smaller businesses in designing the standards.

### ***Importance of accredited training***

- Whilst accredited qualifications matter, certainly for demonstrating compliance or suitability for organisations to meet the requirements of some public sector contracts – as well as to employees who may wish to later take their skills elsewhere, employers need a demonstrably experienced and competent workforce with a wide (flexible) skillset. It can be a disincentive for small businesses (in particular) to invest in training, recognising the challenges of retaining young

apprentices (say) who may leave for better-paying jobs or change career paths altogether. Participants discussed the importance of paying employees enough to retain them and then the need for employers to create a positive workplace culture that encourages employee loyalty. There is a risk to investing in training employees who may leave and the potential vulnerabilities of specific skills.

- Some hold the view that that degrees and qualifications don't hold as much weight as they used to and that aptitude is more important.

#### 1.3.4 Getting the LSIP Right

Participants were given the opportunity to think about the LSIP specifically, and what difference it might make to them if it's done well. Many of the issues summarised above were re-iterated and arguably if all those issues are addressed then the LSIP may be deemed to be working.

Participants commonly reflected on the calibre and ready-for-work experience of young people, and they consider this needs to start with better connections between schools and industry, how to provide more meaningful work experience for students, as well as about improving professional development for post-16 students. Participants recognised that these are complicated issues, and conversations touched upon on issues such as mobility and transportation, and the need for better preparation of students for the dynamics of the workforce and adapting to new environments. Also, how practical skills taught in school may not necessarily align with the needs of modern industries. Whilst work experience at year 10 in schools is widely considered important, there is some confusion over whether it is sufficient and delivering enough value to young people as well as employers. Employers want young people with a mature outlook and 'professionally' ready for the workplace. This 'professional development' or basic life skills, needs to be taught through schools to give young people the best chance of success in life and employment.

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Background

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is a critical new project being led by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to set out the key changes needed to make technical skills training more responsive to employers' skills needs within a local area – in this case, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (CloS).

The initiative is funded by the Department for Education which selected FSB to lead the initiative in CloS. LSIPs are being conducted across the country and they are a central element of the new Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022. If successful, the LSIP will lead to shifts in the type and level of skills available to local employers and delivery of post-16 technical skills and training in several ways that will be more employer led. It will ensure CloS develops the fit-for-purpose skills specifically needed for this area.

FSB commissioned PFA Research to provide market research services to support the development of the LSIP. This research would set out to deliver new (up to date) insights into employers' challenges and frustrations on skills, and to hear what changes they would like to see relating to how skills and training are delivered in CloS.

### 2.2 Method

In conjunction with FSB, PFA Research composed a programme of primary market research support comprising quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups and round table discussions to encapsulate the views of employers of all sizes, sectors and locations across CloS. However, the activities should pay particular attention to the two key sector clusters:

- Manufacturing, Engineering & Marine (MEM)
- Construction & Retrofit (CR)

The research activities comprised a survey of businesses located in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, conducted by telephone interviews and online self-completion, and a number of round table discussions, conducted in-person at venues across Cornwall and online events.

#### *Quantitative Research (Surveys)*

The business survey comprised 250 one-to-one telephone interviews plus 25 online survey completions (total sample n=275). This allows the survey to be quoted with a margin of error of +/- 5.9% at the 95% level of confidence.

The sample for the telephone survey was sourced from Experian, an independent provider of business contact data. Sample data was selected based on sector description, to ensure that there was a significant 'key sector' representation in the file (i.e. businesses from the manufacturing, engineering, marine, construction and retrofit activities), as well as cross-sector representation. Records were selected from Experian based on businesses having more than one employee.

Telephone interviews were conducted by trained and experience telephone researchers. All calls were recorded (for training and quality assurance purposes), with each participant's permission. All interviews (telephone and online self-completions) were conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

#### *Qualitative Research (Discussion Groups)*

A series of formal focus groups, round table discussion events and one-to-one interviews recruited and promoted via the FSB events pages, were held with business owners and representatives



between Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January and Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February. A total of 48 participants attended the launch event online workshop or one of the focus group round table events.

The events were conducted via a combination of in-person and online virtual meetings held over Zoom. All events were recorded and auto-transcribed to assist notetaking and later analysis, with consent from participants. Discussions were guided by a pre-designed discussion guide, however allowing for the varying experiences of participants and different contexts, a more conversational format was permitted which provided the opportunity to more deeply explore specific topics or participant expertise where necessary.

#### *Analysis and write-up*

Quantitative data was captured using PFA Research's CATI (computer assisted telephone interviewing) platform. Data was transferred to the QPS-MR system for coding and producing tabulations.

Recordings captured from discussion groups were auto-transcribed for the sole purpose of aiding analysis, and a summary report produced.

### 2.3 Using this report

*While every care has been taken during the course of the research, PFA Research Ltd regrets that it can take no responsibility for any incorrect information supplied to us. The survey work is based on interviews or self-directed online completions and therefore data may be subject to fluctuation and interpretation.*

*Otherwise, the contents of this report represents our interpretation and analysis of information provided voluntarily by the representatives of responding companies. Whilst all care is taken to represent the information accurately and without bias, we cannot make absolute guarantees as to accuracy or completeness.*

### 3 Quantitative Research Results

This chapter provides the results to the primary quantitative research survey, presented as visualisations through charts and tabulated data with commentary as appropriate.

Analyses are organised under question themes; generally speaking, following the order of that questions were delivered through the interview and presented on the survey questionnaire (see Appendices for the questionnaire).

#### 3.1 Sample Profile

The intended targets for the survey were employers. Sample data was selected based on sector description, to ensure that there was a significant ‘key sector’ representation in the file (i.e. businesses from the manufacturing, engineering, marine, construction and retrofit activities), as well as cross-sector representation. Records were selected from Experian based on businesses having more than one employee.

Two thirds of respondents (68%) have the structure of being limited companies (Figure 3.1). The survey did not seek to achieve a sector representative sample; 30% of respondents are from one of the two key sector clusters which were of particular interest – higher than would naturally occur at random (Figure 3.2). MEM and CR businesses are more likely to be limited companies (Table 3.1).

Figure 3.1

**Q. What is the structure of your business?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

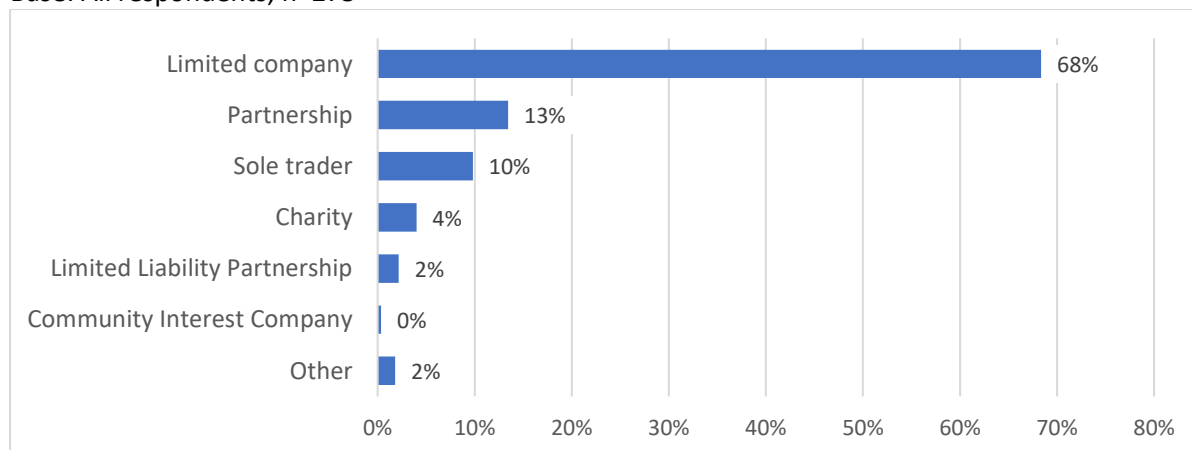


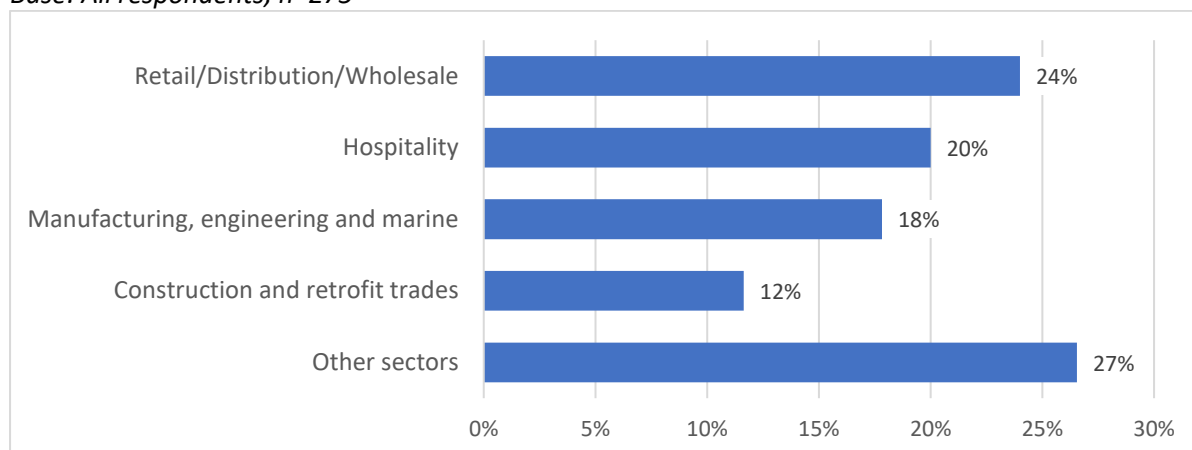
Table 3.1

	All sectors	MEM	CR	Others
Base	n=275	n=49	n=32	n=194
Sole trader	10%	10%	3%	11%
Partnership	13%	4%	13%	16%
Limited Liability Partnership	2%	4%	3%	2%
Limited company	68%	78%	78%	64%
Community Interest Company	0%	0%	0%	1%
Charity	4%	2%	3%	5%
Other	2%	2%	0%	2%

Figure 3.2

**Q. And which of these options best categorise the sector(s) you work in? CODED**

Base: All respondents; n=275



89% of all VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises (Source: Office for National Statistics) employ fewer than 10 people. For the LSIP survey it was important that the sample captured larger employers. In the survey sample, 42% employ 10 or more people (Figure 3.3). 88% of respondents were able to provide an estimate of their annual turnover; over a quarter (27%) of respondents have annual revenues over £1m (Figure 3.4). The average turnover is estimated at £1.77m, with MEM businesses an average £2.33m and CR an average £1.62m (Table 3.3).

Figure 3.3

**Q. How many people does your business currently employ in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

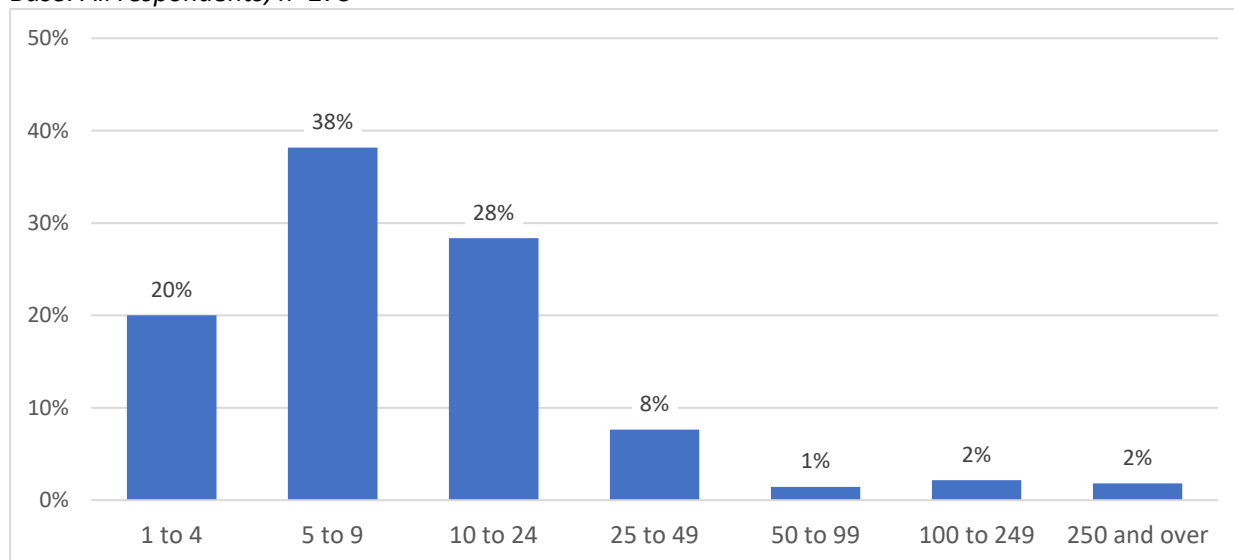


Table 3.2

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Self-employed / Sole trader only	2%	1%	0%	3%	3%
2 to 4	18%	25%	18%	34%	15%

5 to 9	38%	31%	29%	34%	41%
10 to 24	28%	26%	31%	19%	29%
25 to 49	8%	11%	14%	6%	6%
50 to 99	1%	1%	2%	0%	2%
100 to 249	2%	1%	2%	0%	3%
250 and over	2%	4%	4%	3%	1%
<i>Average (mean)</i>	<i>22.6</i>	<i>28.4</i>	<i>33.4</i>	<i>20.7</i>	<i>20.2</i>

Figure 3.4

**Q. Approximately, what is the annual turnover of the business?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

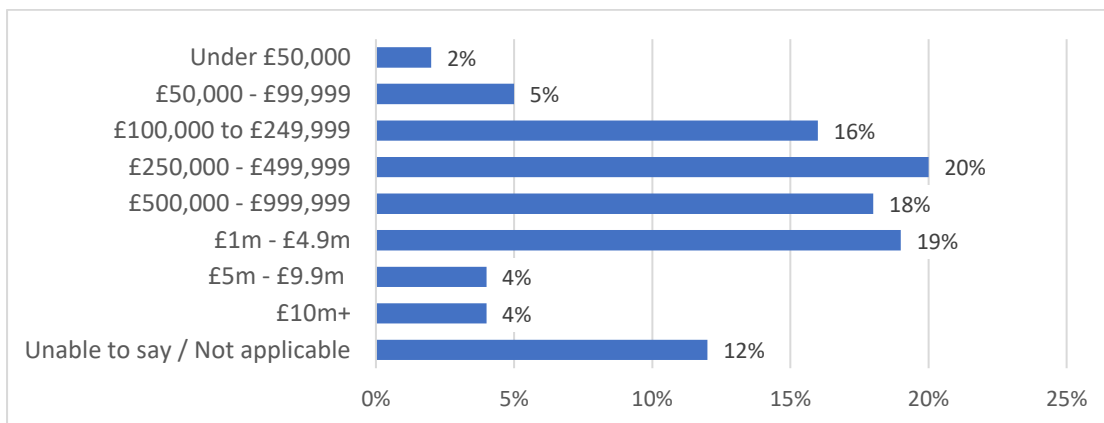


Table 3.3

	All sectors	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Others
Base (those answering)	n=242	n=75	n=44	n=31	n=167
Average turnover	£1.77m	£2.04m	£2.33m	£1.62m	£1.65m

Businesses were asked to position their business in terms of growth objectives. A half (50%) say they have a plan for growth over the next three years, 4% wanting rapid growth (Figure 3.5). 42% will concentrate on maintaining their current position or focussing on productivity and profitability. A slightly higher proportion of MEM businesses (55%) are looking for growth (Table 3.4).

Figure 3.5

**Q. Which of the following best describes your objective for the business within the next three years?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

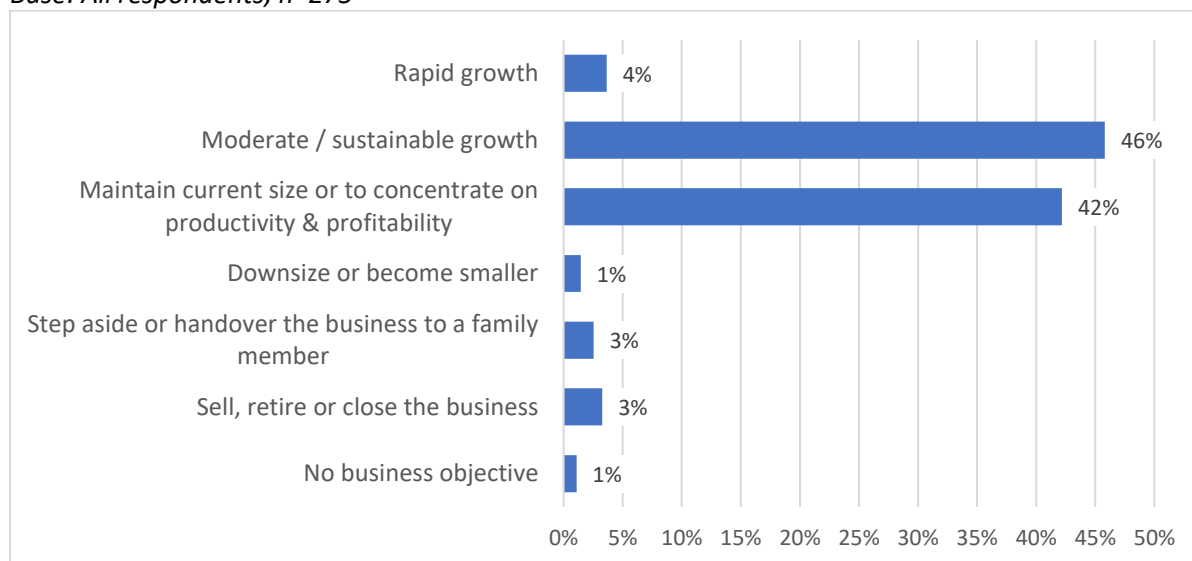


Table 3.4

	All sectors	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Others
Base (those answering)	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Growth (rapid + moderate/sustainable)	50%	53%	55%	50%	48%
Maintain	42%	40%	39%	41%	43%
Other	8%	7%	6%	9%	9%

### 3.2 Recruitment

The needs for skills in a business and recruitment issues are inextricably entwined. Three quarters (73%) of businesses surveyed have recruited or tried to recruit within the previous 12 months (Figure 3.6). These roles were often for new permanent positions, indicating a lack of essential skills to support business growth (62%), as well as backfilling permanent roles left vacant (57%) (Figure 3.7).

Nearly two thirds of these businesses recruiting (63%), said they experienced difficulties filling the roles (Figure 3.8), primarily because of a lack of candidates coming through (52%) as well as candidates missing the essential skills needs for the role (49%) (Figure 3.9). Whilst the workforce issue of shortage of candidates is widespread, the absence of necessary skills among candidates is higher than average within the key sectors cluster (69%; or 75% within MEM and 60% within CR) (Table 3.8).

Figure 3.6

**Q. Have you recruited or tried to recruit new staff over the last 12 months?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

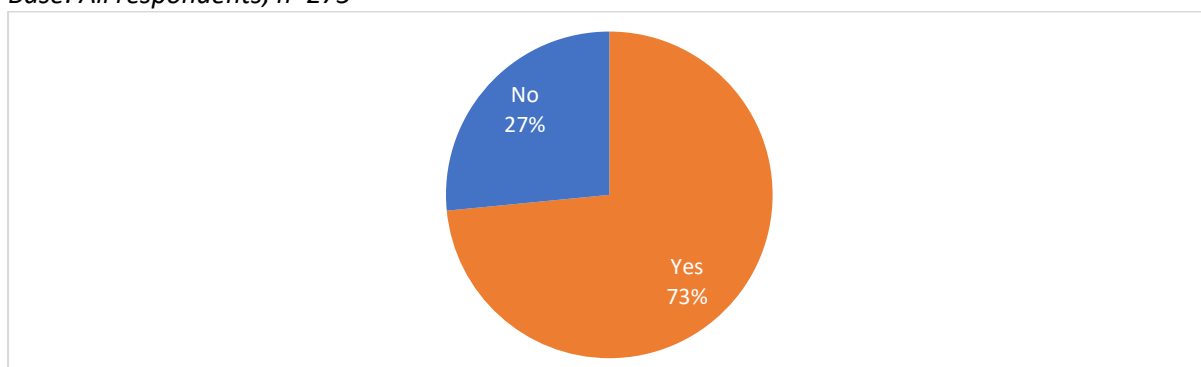


Table 3.5

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Yes	73%	72%	73%	69%	74%
No	27%	28%	27%	31%	26%

Figure 3.7

**Q. Were you recruiting/trying to recruit into:**

Base: All those who have recruited or tried to recruit in the last 12 months; n=202

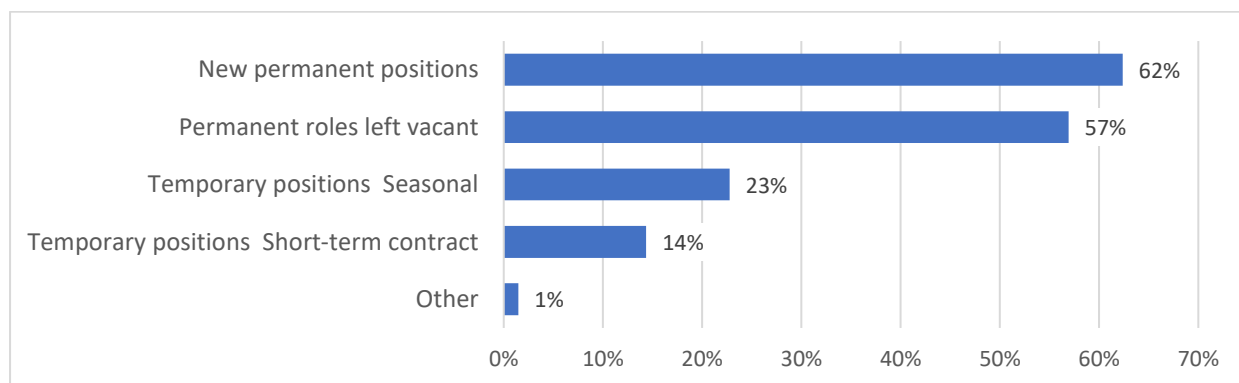


Table 3.6

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=202	n=58	n=36	n=22	n=144
Permanent roles left vacant	57%	59%	67%	45%	56%
New permanent positions	62%	72%	72%	73%	58%
Temporary positions seasonal	23%	5%	8%	0%	30%
Temporary positions/ Short-term contracts	14%	16%	14%	18%	14%
Other	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%

Figure 3.8

**Q. Did you have difficulties recruiting?**

Base: All those who recruited or tried to recruit in the last 12 months; n=202

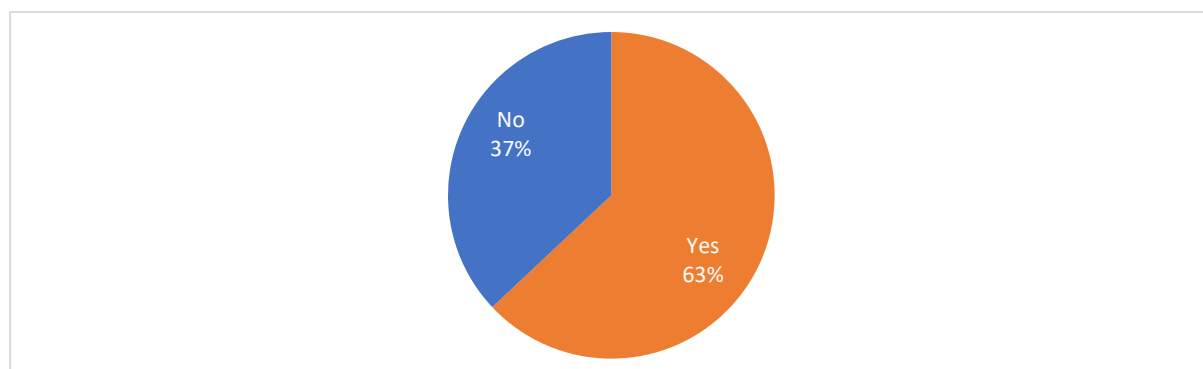


Table 3.7

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=202	n=58	n=36	n=22	n=144
Yes	63%	67%	67%	68%	62%
No	37%	33%	33%	32%	38%

Figure 3.9

**Q. For what reasons did you find recruitment difficult?**

Base: All those who had difficulties recruiting; n=128

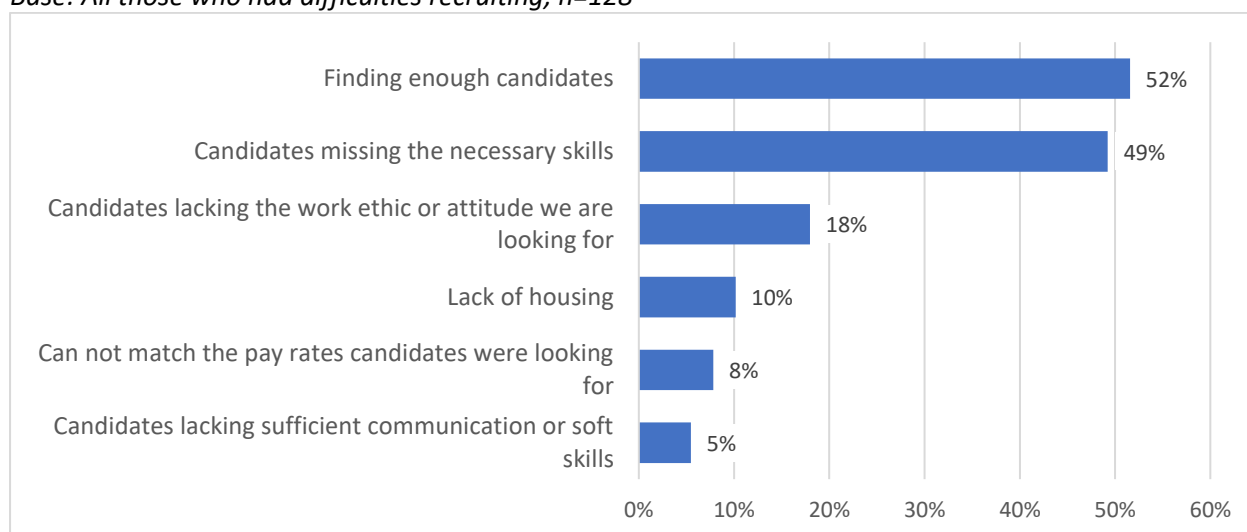


Table 3.8

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=128	n=39	n=24	n=15	n=89
Finding enough candidates	52%	59%	58%	60%	48%
Candidates missing the necessary skills	49%	69%	75%	60%	40%
Can not match the pay rates candidates were looking for	8%	13%	13%	13%	6%
Candidates lacking the work ethic or attitude we are looking for	18%	18%	25%	7%	18%
Candidates lacking sufficient communication or soft skills	5%	13%	17%	7%	2%
Lack of housing	10%	13%	21%	0%	9%

Some of the comments received included:

- “We need to provide accommodation for staff due to our remote location.”
- “Too many non-relevant applicants. Poor reaction to the advert.”
- “People not turning up for trial shifts.”
- “Not enough bus links, takes 1.5 hour to get work.”
- “People applying just to show they are looking for jobs.”
- “Brexit and pandemic, caused foreign workers to go back home to be with their families.”
- “Candidate found another job.”



For the vast majority (97%) of those trying to recruit and experiencing difficulties doing so, there are real impacts on the business; most commonly the impact of an increased workload on other staff which may not be sustainable (88%). For nearly two thirds, it causes difficulties for improving productivity (65%) or for those actively trying to expand the business (64%) – see Figure 3.10.

Figure 3.10

**Q. Have your recruitment difficulties impacted on any of the following areas of your businesses?**

Base: All those who had difficulties recruiting; n=128

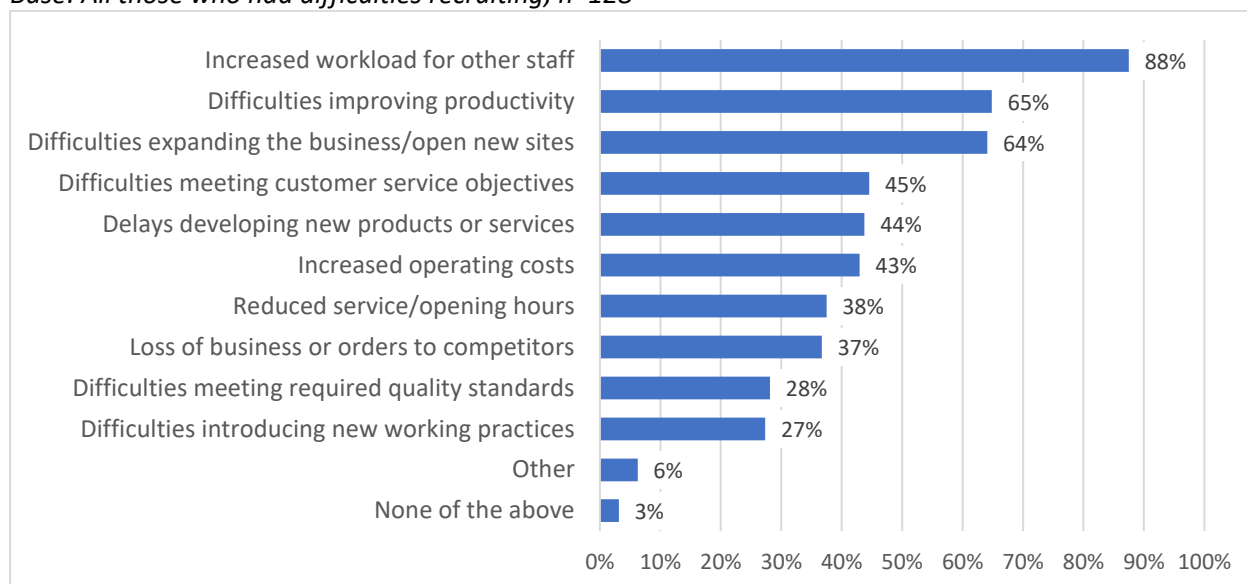


Table 3.9

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=128	n=39	n=24	n=15	n=89
Increased workload for other staff	88%	95%	96%	93%	84%
Difficulties improving productivity	65%	67%	71%	60%	64%
Difficulties in being able to expand the business/open new sites	64%	69%	67%	73%	62%
Difficulties meeting customer service objectives	45%	51%	54%	47%	42%
Delays developing new products or services	44%	46%	46%	47%	43%
Increased operating costs	43%	44%	38%	53%	43%
Reduced service/opening hours	38%	23%	29%	13%	44%
Loss of business or orders to competitors	37%	33%	29%	40%	38%
Difficulties meeting required quality standards	28%	26%	25%	27%	29%
Difficulties introducing new working practices	27%	31%	29%	33%	26%
Other	6%	3%	4%	0%	8%
None of the above	3%	3%	4%	0%	3%

### 3.3 Vacancies

Four in ten businesses participating in the survey currently have vacancies that they are trying to fill (Figure 3.11), and this is equally true of the MEM and CR key sectors. 30% of businesses with current vacancies and able to quantify have 3 or more vacancies, and 6% have 10 or more (Figure 3.12).

The types of roles businesses say they are mostly trying to fill right now are:

- **Skilled Manual/Technical positions** - 52% with one or vacancies (78% in key sectors)
- **Professional/Managerial positions** - 30% with one or vacancies (31% in key sectors)
- **Clerical positions** - 14% with one or vacancies (16% in key sectors)
- **'Semi-skilled' roles** - 29% with one or vacancies (30% in key sectors)
- **'Unskilled' roles** - 24% with one or vacancies (16% in key sectors)
- **Apprentices** - 8% with one or vacancies (16% in key sectors)
- **Other vacancies** - 5% with one or vacancies (0% in key sectors)

Of the 462 vacancies declared through the survey (an average 1.7 vacancies for every business participating), 44% require zero or less than one year's experience (Figure 3.13). 19% of vacancies are looking for four or more years' experience. Vacancies for businesses which are part of the key sectors are on average likely to require more experience.

For those trying to recruit skilled manual/technical positions, a third (34%) have been trying to fill the vacancies for more than six months (Table 3.14). This compares to those with vacancies for professional/managerial positions where 'just' 23% have been trying to fill the roles for more than six months, and 18% for semi-skilled positions.

Figure 3.11

**Q. Do you currently have vacancies that you are actively trying to recruit into?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

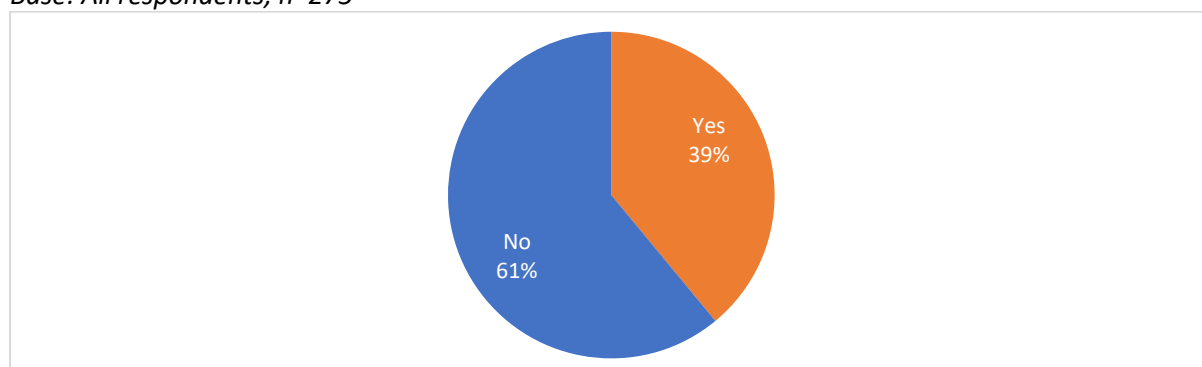


Table 3.10

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Yes	39%	42%	43%	41%	38%
No	61%	58%	57%	59%	62%

Figure 3.12

**Net Vacancies (Q. How many of these vacancies are for...?)**

Base: All those who have vacancies; n=107

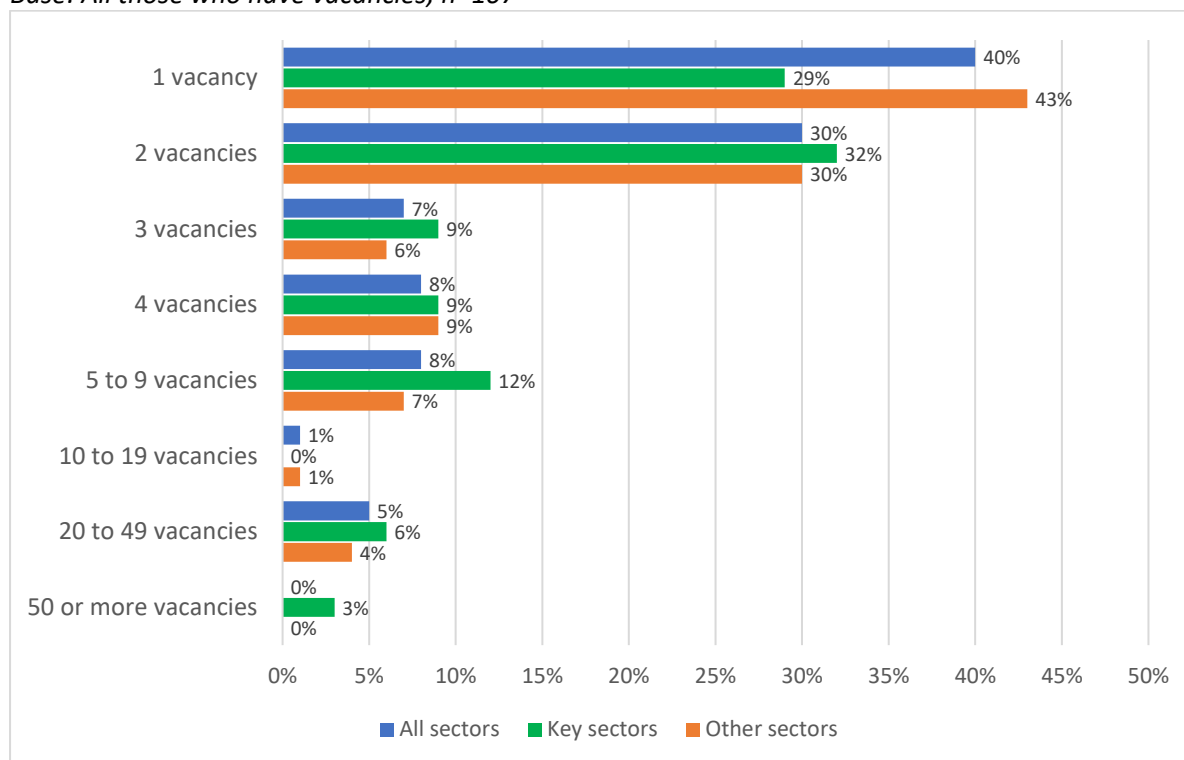


Table 3.11

**Q. How many of these vacancies are for...**

	All sectors	Key sectors	Other Sectors
<b>Skilled Manual/Technical positions</b>			
Base	n=101	n=32	n=69
None	48%	22%	59%
1	24%	34%	19%
2	12%	16%	10%
3	6%	9%	4%
4	4%	9%	1%
5 to 9	3%	0%	4%
10 to 19	2%	3%	1%
20 to 49	2%	6%	0%
<b>Professional/Managerial positions</b>			
Base	n=99	n=29	n=70
None	70%	69%	70%
1	18%	7%	23%
2	8%	17%	4%
3	3%	3%	3%
20 to 49	1%	3%	0%
<b>Clerical positions</b>			
Base	n=91	n=25	n=66
None	86%	84%	86%
1	11%	8%	12%
2	2%	8%	0%

3	1%	0%	2%
<b>Semi-skilled</b>			
Base	n=95	n=27	n=68
None	71%	70%	71%
1	16%	11%	18%
2	3%	0%	4%
3	4%	7%	3%
4	1%	0%	1%
5 to 9	3%	7%	1%
10 to 19	2%	4%	1%
<b>Unskilled positions</b>			
Base	n=93	n=25	n=68
None	76%	84%	74%
1	13%	12%	13%
2	4%	4%	4%
3	2%	0%	3%
4	1%	0%	1%
5 to 9	1%	0%	1%
20 to 49	2%	0%	3%
<b>Apprentices</b>			
Base	n=90	n=25	n=65
None	92%	84%	95%
1	7%	16%	3%
5 to 9	1%	0%	2%
<b>Other Vacancies</b>			
Base	n=91	n=23	n=68
None	95%	100%	93%
1	3%	0%	4%
2	2%	0%	3%

Figure 3.13

**Q. How many of these vacancies require [X years] experience?**

Base: All vacancies

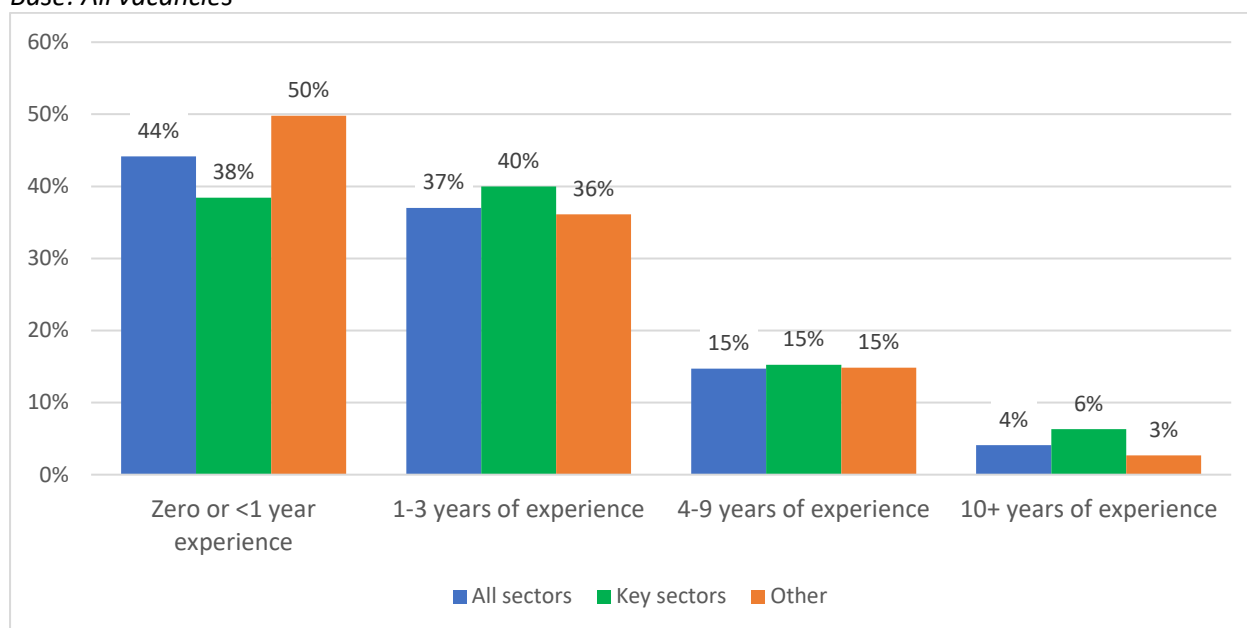


Table 3.12

**Q. How many of these vacancies require [X years] experience?**

Base: All those who have vacancies

	All sectors	Key sectors	Other Sectors
<b>Zero or &lt;1 year experience</b>			
Base	n=100	n=30	n=70
None	49%	53%	47%
1	24%	13%	29%
2	9%	10%	9%
3	4%	3%	4%
4	3%	0%	4%
5 to 9	7%	13%	4%
10 to 19	1%	3%	0%
20 to 49	3%	3%	3%
<b>1-3 years of experience</b>			
Base	n=102	n=31	n=71
None	46%	35%	51%
1	26%	29%	25%
2	12%	13%	11%
3	6%	6%	6%
4	4%	6%	3%
5 to 9	2%	3%	1%
10 to 19	1%	0%	1%
20 to 49	3%	6%	1%
<b>4-9 years of experience</b>			
Base	n=97	n=27	n=70
None	69%	63%	71%
1	15%	15%	16%
2	8%	11%	7%

3	2%	4%	1%
4	1%	0%	1%
5 to 9	3%	4%	3%
10 to 19	1%	4%	0%
<b>10+ years of experience</b>			
Base	n=93	n=26	n=67
None	94%	88%	96%
1	4%	8%	3%
5 to 9	1%	0%	1%
10 to 19	1%	4%	0%

Table 3.13

**Q. For how long have you tried to fill the vacancy(ies)?**

Base: All those who have vacancies and answered how long they have tried to fill the vacancies for each level of experience.

	Skilled Manual/Technical positions	Professional/Managerial positions	Clerical positions	Semi-skilled positions	Unskilled positions	Apprentices	Other
Base	n=53	n=30	n=13	n=28	n=22	n=8	n=5
Less than a month	19%	27%	54%	36%	50%	0%	20%
Up to 3 months	26%	23%	15%	29%	18%	38%	0%
Up to six months	19%	17%	8%	14%	5%	38%	20%
More than six months	34%	23%	15%	18%	18%	13%	60%
Don't know	2%	10%	8%	4%	9%	13%	0%

Table 3.14

**Q. For how long have you tried to fill the vacancy(ies)? by Industry Sector Cohorts**

Base: All those who have vacancies and answered how long they have tried to fill the vacancies for each level of experience.

	All sectors	Key sectors	Other Sectors
<b>Skilled Manual/Technical positions</b>			
Base	n=53	n=25	n=28
Less than a month	19%	12%	25%
Up to three months	26%	28%	25%
Up to six months	19%	32%	7%
More than six months	34%	28%	39%
Don't know	2%	-	4%
<b>Professional/Managerial positions</b>			
Base	n=30	n=9	n=21
Less than a month	27%	33%	24%
Up to three months	23%	33%	19%
Up to six months	17%	22%	14%

More than six months	23%	11%	29%
Don't know	10%	-	14%
<b>Clerical positions</b>			
Base	n=13	n=4	n=9
Less than a month	54%	75%	44%
Up to three months	15%	25%	11%
Up to six months	8%	-	11%
More than six months	15%	-	22%
Don't know	8%	0%	11%
<b>Semi-skilled</b>			
Base	n=28	n=8	n=20
Less than a month	36%	13%	45%
Up to three months	29%	50%	20%
Up to six months	14%	13%	15%
More than six months	18%	25%	15%
Don't know	4%	-	5%
<b>Unskilled positions</b>			
Base	n=22	n=4	n=18
Less than a month	50%	75%	44%
Up to three months	18%	25%	17%
Up to six months	5%	-	6%
More than six months	18%	-	22%
Don't know	9%	-	11%
<b>Apprentices</b>			
Base	n=8	n=5	n=3
Up to three months	38%	40%	33%
Up to six months	38%	60%	-
More than six months	13%	-	33%
Don't know	13%	-	33%
<b>Other</b>			
Base	n=5	n=0	n=5
Less than a month	20%	-	20%
Up to six months	20%	-	20%
More than six months	60%	-	60%

The impact of businesses not filling these current vacancies means other staff are working extra (or overtime) to cover the work (52%), which can have an impact on long-term growth plans, increased stress within the workforce and is potentially an unsustainable scenario. Further, a third (32%) say they have had to turn business opportunities away as a result of a lack of capacity, and a quarter (24%) are adjusting the expected outputs and workflow to meet reduced staffing levels (Figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14

**Q. What is the impact on your business as a result of the empty position(s)?**

Base: All those who currently have vacancies they are trying to recruit into; n=107

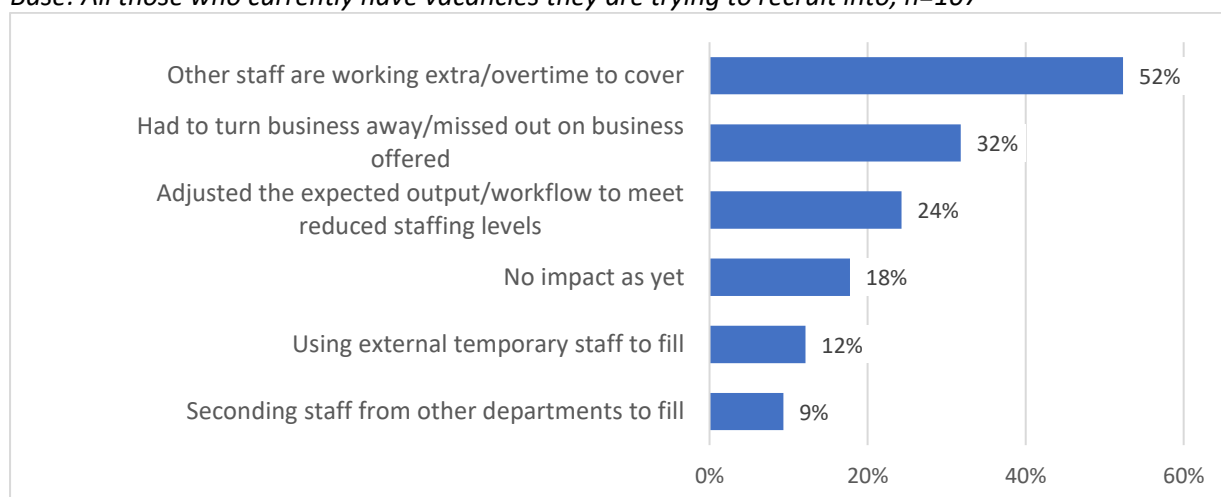


Table 3.15

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=107	n=34	n=21	n=13	n=73
Other staff are working extra/overtime to cover	52%	53%	57%	46%	52%
Had to turn business away/missed out on business offered	32%	29%	33%	23%	33%
Adjusted the expected output/workflow to meet reduced staffing levels	24%	38%	38%	38%	18%
No impact as yet	18%	6%	5%	8%	23%
Using external temporary staff to fill	12%	21%	29%	8%	8%
Seconding staff from other departments to fill	9%	0%	0%	0%	14%

Some of the supporting comments received included:

- “We couldn't proactively seek new business.”
- “Unable to expand business.”
- “Reduced productivity and unable to grow.”
- “Quality of the service and food is affected, reputation of the company.”
- “Poor service delivered to the customer.”
- “Plans on hold.”
- “Limits our ability to expand.”
- “Increased costs as using agency type staff.”
- “Booking lead time has become excessive.”



### 3.4 Skills Development and Sourcing

80% of businesses participating in the survey identified one or more areas of skills that need improving in their current workforce, most commonly 'technical and practical skills for the job' cited by almost half of all businesses (48%) (Figure 3.15) and six in ten (59%) of the MEM sector cluster (Table 3.16). Over a third each identify 'management and leadership skills' (37%), 'team working skills' (37%) and 'sales & marketing skills' (36%).

Figure 3.15

**Q. Within your workforce, which of the following skills do you feel need improving?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

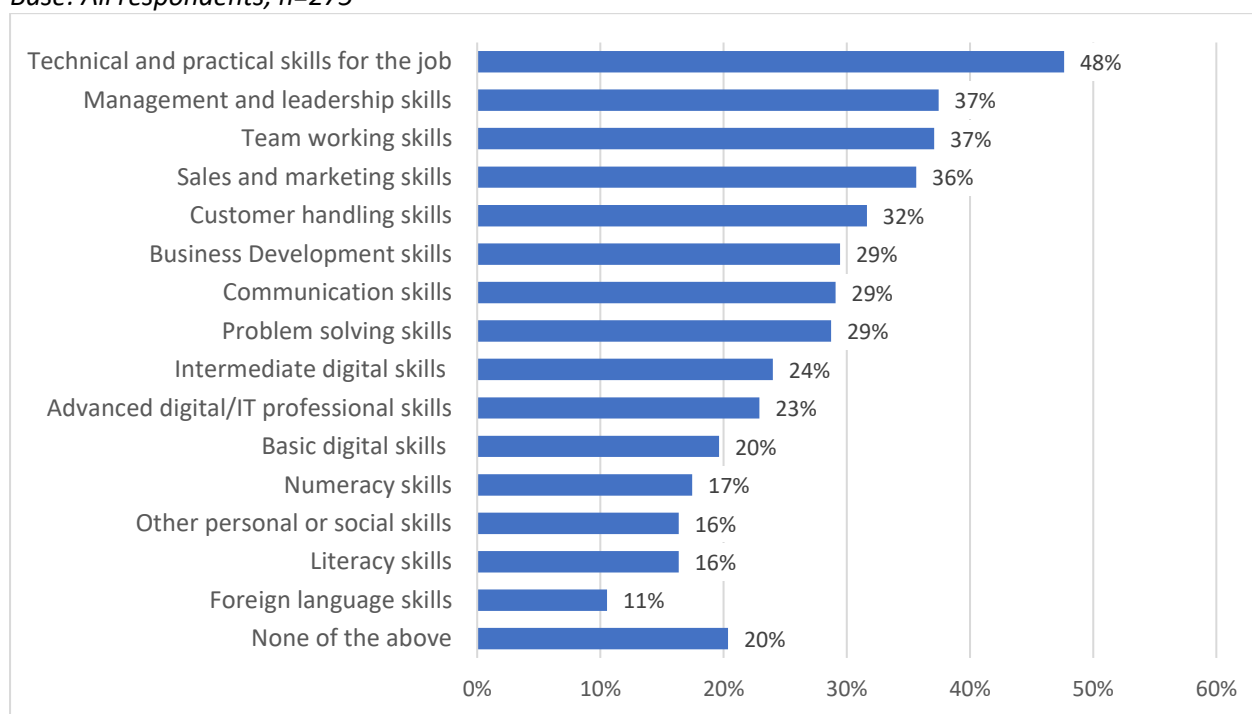


Table 3.16

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Technical and practical skills for the job	48%	56%	59%	50%	44%
Management and leadership skills	37%	35%	41%	25%	39%
Team working skills	37%	27%	27%	28%	41%
Sales and marketing skills	36%	25%	29%	19%	40%
Customer handling skills	32%	22%	24%	19%	36%
Business Development skills	29%	31%	37%	22%	29%
Communication skills	29%	22%	29%	13%	32%
Problem solving skills	29%	27%	33%	19%	29%
Intermediate digital skills; e.g. selling online/using standard software	24%	20%	27%	9%	26%
Advanced digital/IT professional skills	23%	21%	24%	16%	24%
Basic digital skills; e.g. being able to use the internet/find information online	20%	20%	27%	9%	20%

Numeracy skills	17%	12%	14%	9%	20%
Literacy skills	16%	7%	8%	6%	20%
Other personal or social skills	16%	10%	10%	9%	19%
Foreign language skills	11%	4%	6%	0%	13%
None of the above	20%	20%	16%	25%	21%

About 18% of participants responded to the question: “**Are there any other particular types of skills you feel need improving within your workforce that were not on that list?**” A full list of the verbatim responses are provided in appendices, Table 7.2, page 103 with some of the most common themes summarised as follows.

- **Technical skills** - including specific technical skills, electrical diagnostics, machine operating skills, glass making experience, and professional engineering/CAD.
- **Health and safety** - including safety skills, health and safety, first aid, and fire safety.
- **Work ethic and soft skills** - including resilience and adaptability, good timekeeping, common sense, delegation skills, project management, sales skills, leadership and management, and employability skills.
- **Specialised skills** - including baking skills, wine and spirits knowledge, animal care skills, and journalism within the agricultural machinery sector.
- **Green economy** - including skills needed for solar panel fitting, heat pumps, electricians, plumbers, gas fitters, and vehicle chargers.
- **Social media and marketing** - including social media skills and SEO training

The main barriers for staff to improve skills most commonly relates to them not being able to find the time for training and development (38%). Lack of suitable local courses is an issue for 13% and lack of budget is in third place, for just 12%. Just 17% were unable to express any barriers (Figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16

**Q. What are the main barriers to some of your staff needing improved skills in their job?**

Base: All respondents who have skills that need improving in their workforce; n=221



Table 3.17

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=221	n=65	n=41	n=24	n=156
Lack of time for staff training & development	38%	40%	46%	29%	37%
Lack of suitable local courses	13%	17%	22%	8%	12%
Lack of budget for staff training and development	12%	18%	22%	13%	9%
Recruitment problems	7%	11%	15%	4%	6%
Lack of experience due to recent recruitment	6%	11%	15%	4%	4%
Cost associated with sending staff away	5%	9%	10%	8%	3%
Lack of cover for training	5%	9%	12%	4%	3%
Unwillingness of staff to undertake training	5%	9%	10%	8%	3%
High staff turnover	3%	6%	7%	4%	2%
Inability of workforce to keep up with change	3%	5%	0%	13%	2%
Lack of motivation	3%	5%	7%	0%	2%
Lack of ambition	2%	5%	7%	0%	1%
Other	24%	23%	24%	21%	24%
Don't know/Not applicable	17%	11%	7%	17%	20%

Just under one in five of the businesses participating (18%) say they have one or more people studying an apprenticeship (Figure 3.17). Apprenticeships are more common amongst the key sectors, with 27% of the MEM businesses and 34% of the CR businesses (Table 3.18).

30% of participating businesses say they are considering taking on an apprentice (additional, or their first apprentice) – most likely to be amongst the MEM sector businesses (Table 3.19).

Figure 3.17

**Q. Do you currently have staff on apprenticeships?**

Base: All responding; n=275

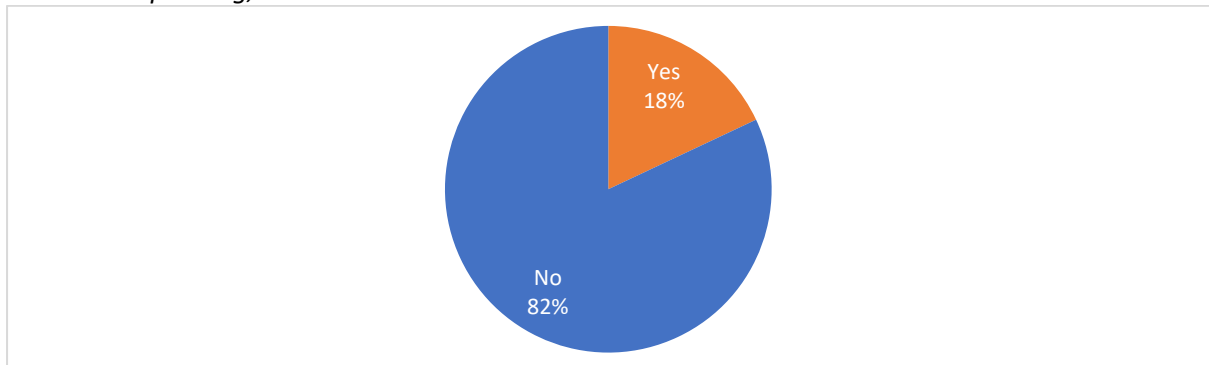


Table 3.18

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Yes	18%	30%	27%	34%	12%
No	82%	69%	71%	66%	88%
Don't know	-	1%	2%	-	-

Figure 3.18

**Q. Are you considering taking on (more) apprentices?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

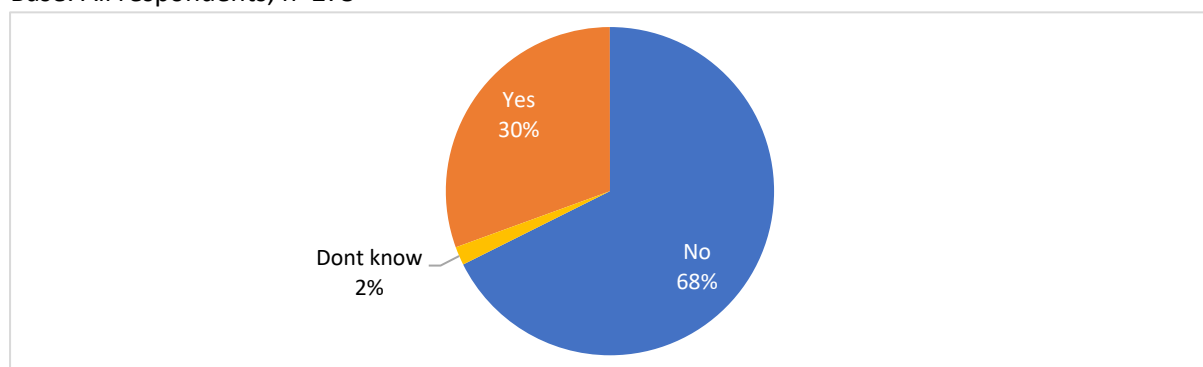


Table 3.19

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Yes	31%	37%	43%	28%	28%
No	68%	59%	53%	69%	71%
Don't know	2%	4%	4%	3%	1%

Almost a quarter of businesses participating (23%) say they have training or skills development requirements that their business has been unable to source locally (and that they would have expected to be able to find in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly) (Figure 3.19). Among the MEM businesses, the proportion is more than a third (35%) (Table 3.20).

About half (48%) of those businesses unable to find the training they needed locally have sourced training outside of Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, which in most cases they have paid for. 16% have sourced training elsewhere but did not book the training (Figure 3.20).

Figure 3.19

**Q. Thinking about the skills your business needs generally, are there any training or skills development requirements that your business has been unable to source locally (that it would expect to be able to find in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly)?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

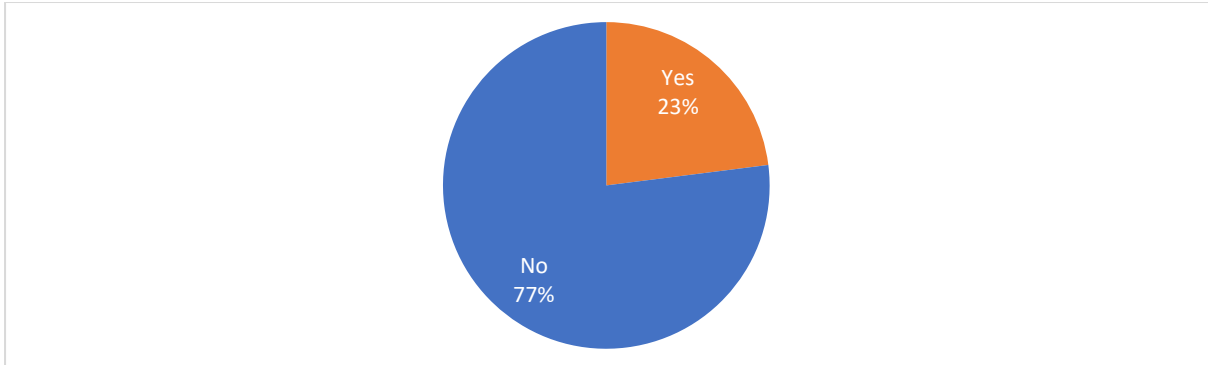


Table 3.20

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Yes	23%	28%	35%	19%	21%
No	77%	72%	65%	81%	79%

Figure 3.20

**Q. Have you sourced training for those skills outside Cornwall & Isles of Scilly?**

Base: All respondents who have been unable to source training or skills requirements locally; n=63

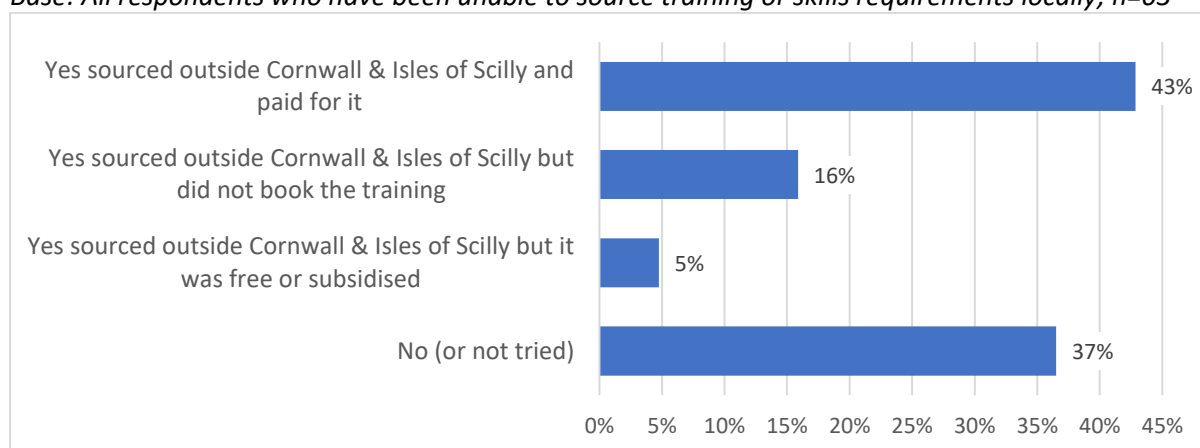


Table 3.21

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=63	n=23	n=17	n=6	n=40
Net - sourced outside CloS & booked	48%	48%	53%	33%	48%

Training that is delivered 'on the job' in a live, practical scenario is favoured by the vast majority (84%) of participating businesses (Figure 3.21). All modes have a role to play, though online training that is pre-recorded or pre-fabricated is the least favoured with just 38% favouring.

Figure 3.21

**Q. How do you favour training to be delivered?**

Base: All respondents who have skills that need improving in their workforce; n=221

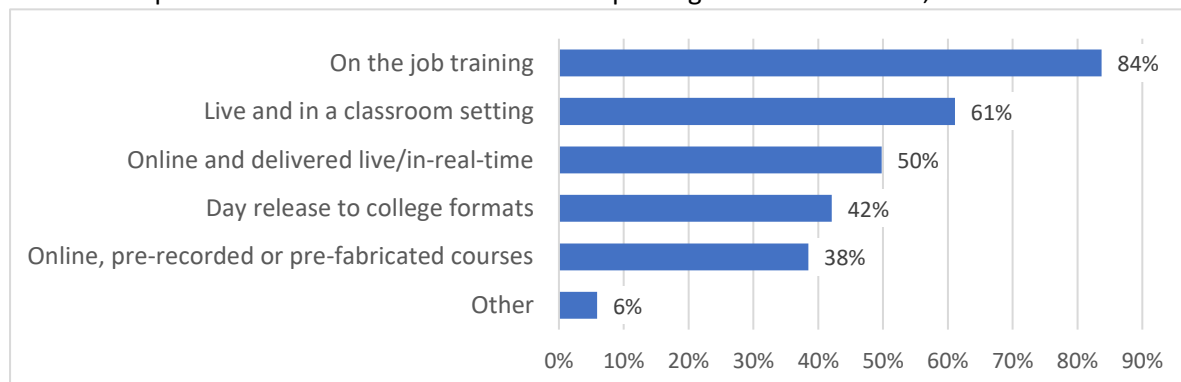


Table 3.22

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=221	n=65	n=41	n=24	n=156
Live and in a classroom setting	61%	65%	61%	71%	60%
Online and delivered live/in-real-time	50%	46%	41%	54%	51%
Online, pre-recorded or pre-fabricated courses	38%	28%	24%	33%	43%
On the job training	84%	86%	88%	83%	83%
Day release to college formats	42%	48%	44%	54%	40%
Other	6%	8%	12%	0%	5%



### 3.5 Future Skills Needs

**Q. Are there any significant or major developments specific to your industry or type of business, that you are going to have to prepare for, or train staff for?**

Businesses were asked whether there are any significant or major developments specific to their industry or type of business, that they are going to have to prepare for, or train staff for. 27% of participants answered, with responses which can be broadly summarised as:

- Green skills and decarbonisation in construction and engineering
- Changes in regulations and compliance requirements
- Training staff for new technology and software
- Electric vehicles and related training requirements
- Increasing costs and sustaining payments
- Brexit and its impact
- Aging workforce and need for young people with engineering and manufacturing skills
- Digitalisation and development of new products
- Automation
- Up-skilling and retraining staff to adapt to new roles and industry changes
- Legislative changes in hospitality and tourism

A full list of the verbatim responses is presented in appendices, Table 7.1, page 101.

Nearly half (47%) of businesses anticipate that the type or level of skills they will need from their employees within the next three years will increase, though a full half (50%) expect the requirements to be the same (Figure 3.22).

Figure 3.22

**Q. At any time within the next three years, do you consider that the type or level of skills you will need from your employees will...**

Base: All respondents; n=275

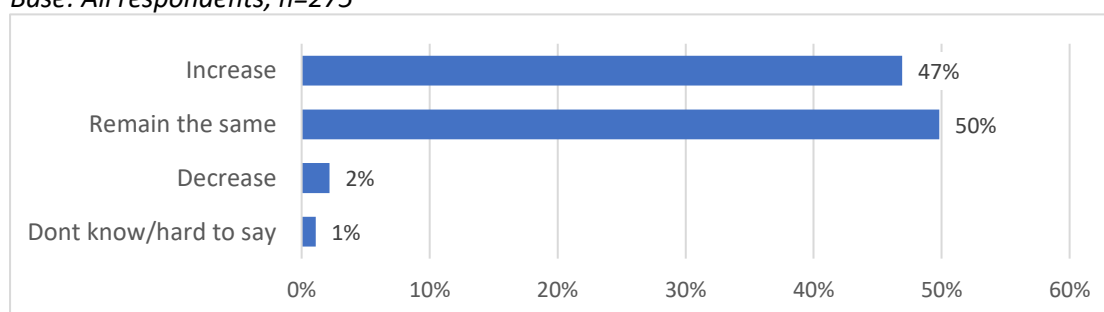


Table 3.23

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Increase	47%	53%	55%	50%	44%
Remain the same	50%	43%	41%	47%	53%
Decrease	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Don't know/hard to say	1%	1%	2%	-	1%

The types of occupations or skills that are likely to be affected (for skills needs changing) can be summarised as follows:

- Technical skills, such as electronic, hydraulic, mechanical and engineering
- Sales and customer communications, including customer service/relations
- Management, financial and marketing skills
- IT and technical skills, and web development skills
- Administration, purchasing
- Chef, hairdressing and beauty
- Health and safety training and machine operators
- Electric vehicles knowledge and skills.
- Finance roles, accountancy and meeting obligations to HMRC
- Animal care/ veterinary skills
- Social media and internet skills
- Regulatory skills, such as infection control and allergen awareness
- Project management and account handling.
- Food and hygiene skills
- Quality control
- Communication skills and networking

A full list of the verbatim responses can be found in appendices, Table 7.3, page 104.

Participants were asked to what are likely to be their business' top three skills needs over the next 12 months. A full list of the open text responses are provided verbatim in appendices. Responses were coded under key themes (Table 3.24). The top three themes emerging were 'customer service skills' (24%), 'marketing and sales' (24%) and 'computer/IT/digital skills' (16%).

Table 3.24

**Q. In the next 12 months, what are going to be your business top three skills needs?**

Base: All those respondents naming a skill needs

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=241	n=73	n=46	n=27	n=168
Customer service skills	24%	8%	11%	4%	30%
Marketing and sales	24%	21%	28%	7%	25%
Computer/IT/Digital skills	16%	12%	15%	7%	18%
Interpersonal/Communication Skills	15%	7%	9%	4%	18%
Management / Leadership	14%	14%	20%	4%	14%
Restaurant/Food sector	12%	1%	2%	0%	16%
Work ethic (incl. time management)	10%	3%	4%	0%	13%
Manual skills / tool handling	10%	12%	9%	19%	8%
Technical	7%	14%	13%	15%	4%
Administration/Office skills	6%	3%	2%	4%	8%
Engineering skills	6%	14%	20%	4%	2%
Health and safety/ Regulatory	5%	5%	2%	11%	5%
Social media	5%	1%	2%	0%	7%

Teamwork	5%	4%	7%	0%	5%
Finance	4%	7%	7%	7%	3%
Driving / HGV / Forklift	4%	0%	0%	0%	6%
Production	4%	5%	7%	4%	3%
Vehicle skills (electric or otherwise)	3%	11%	9%	15%	0%
Electronics	3%	7%	4%	11%	1%
Machine operation	2%	4%	4%	4%	1%
Sustainable technology	2%	5%	0%	15%	1%
Business development	2%	1%	0%	4%	2%
Problem solving	2%	1%	0%	4%	2%
Data management	2%	3%	2%	4%	1%
STEM skills	2%	3%	4%	0%	1%
Project management	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Beauty treatment	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%

Other themes (registered by less than 2% of all respondents), include: ‘human resources’, ‘design/CAD’, ‘retail’, ‘groundwork’, ‘website development’, ‘stock handling’, and ‘flexibility’.

More than half (55%) consider ‘leadership & management’ to be a priority development area for their business over the next three years, for which they would likely seek training (Figure 3.23). Second most, 43% consider ‘sustainability and Net Zero’ to be a priority, closely followed by the need to meet environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles and ‘equality and diversity in the workplace’ (38%). A quarter (26%) do not believe there are priority development areas for their business. The construction and retrofit businesses appear less likely than others to cite any of the areas for priority development (38%) (Table 3.25).

Figure 3.23

**Q. And which of the following would you regard as priority development areas for your business, over the next three years, for which you would likely seek training?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

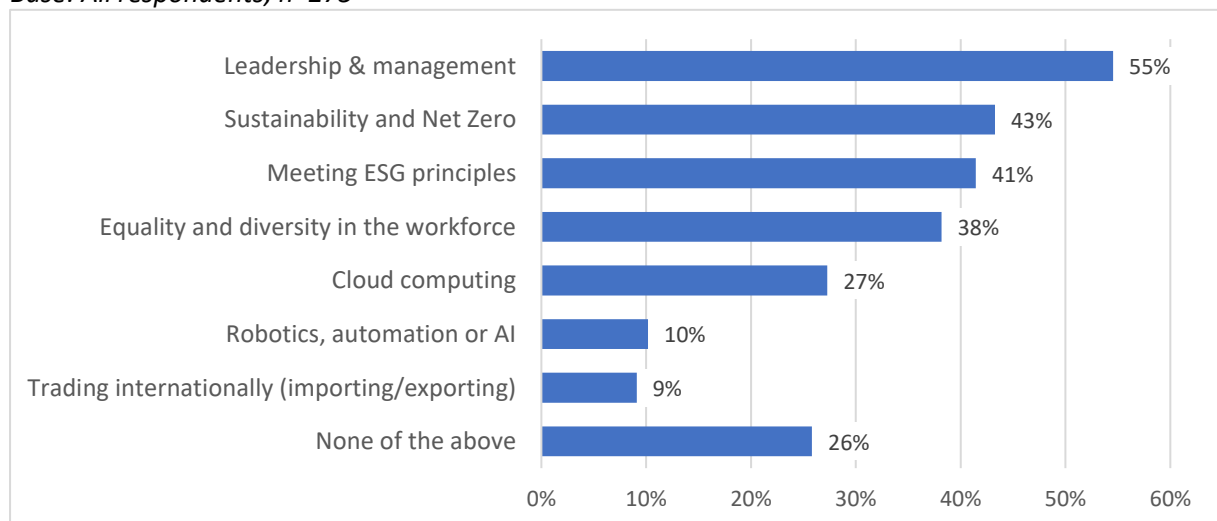


Table 3.25

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Leadership & management	55%	44%	49%	38%	59%
Sustainability and Net Zero	43%	40%	45%	31%	45%
Meeting ESG principles	41%	35%	37%	31%	44%
Equality and diversity in the workforce	38%	27%	27%	28%	43%
Cloud computing	27%	23%	31%	13%	29%
Robotics, automation or AI	10%	17%	22%	9%	7%
Trading internationally	9%	14%	22%	0%	7%
None of the above	26%	30%	24%	38%	24%

Survey participants were invited to make any further comments on where skills need developing or the reasons behind the skills gaps. A full list of verbatim responses are provided in appendices, Table 7.4, page 108, which can summarise into key themes including:

- Difficulty in finding suitable candidates for available jobs
- Education system is not meeting requirements for the job market
- Niche industries face a lack of trained professionals
- Importance of in-workplace skills development
- Limited availability of training and lack of investment
- Challenges recruiting young people; need for more work placements and apprenticeships
- Attitude of people towards work
- Ageing population contributes to skills gap
- Importance of communication skills

### 3.6 Training Plans

More than half of businesses participating (56%) say they have a formal training plan that tracks the skills needs and training given for each employee, though for 17% it is only for some parts of the workforce (Figure 3.24). Businesses that are part of the MEM sectors cluster are most likely to have training plans in place, with one third (33%) saying they don't have any (Table 3.26).

Nearly every business with a formal training plan (99%) claimed to carry out training for their business, which also includes statutory/legislative compliance training (Figure 3.25).

Of those with a plan for training, the vast majority (86%) have training planned for within the next 12 months and another 9% for within the next three years (Figure 3.26). For a majority 85%, this training will be accredited (approved by a regulated institution) though 78% are likely to undertake informal/non-accredited training (Figure 3.27).

The most likely source for future training, for 28% of those with training plans, will be a local independent training provider (Figure 3.28). This is followed by the use of in-house training (16%), and an industry, professional organisation or trade body (e.g. the FSB, Chamber of Commerce, CITB, NFU, etc.) with 9%. Also 9% would source from a local college. Many would use multiple sources or specific industry sources of expertise.

Figure 3.24

**Q. Does your company have a formal training plan that tracks the skills needs and training given for each employee?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

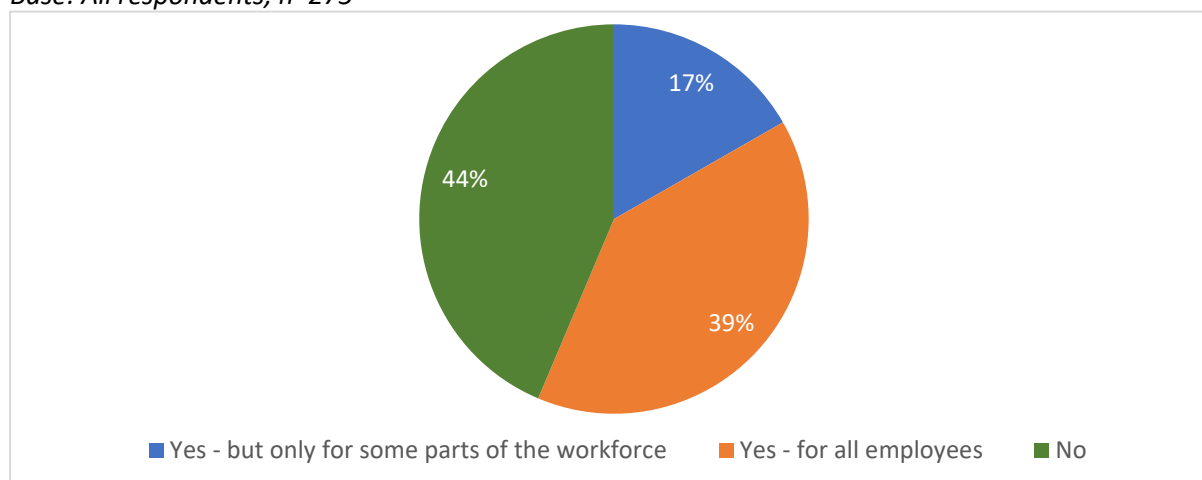


Table 3.26

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Yes - for all employees	40%	42%	45%	38%	39%
Yes - only for some parts of the workforce	17%	22%	22%	22%	14%
No	44%	36%	33%	41%	47%

Figure 3.25

**Q. Do you carry out training for your business for...**

Base: All respondents who have a formal training plan for all employees, or for some parts of the workforce; n=155

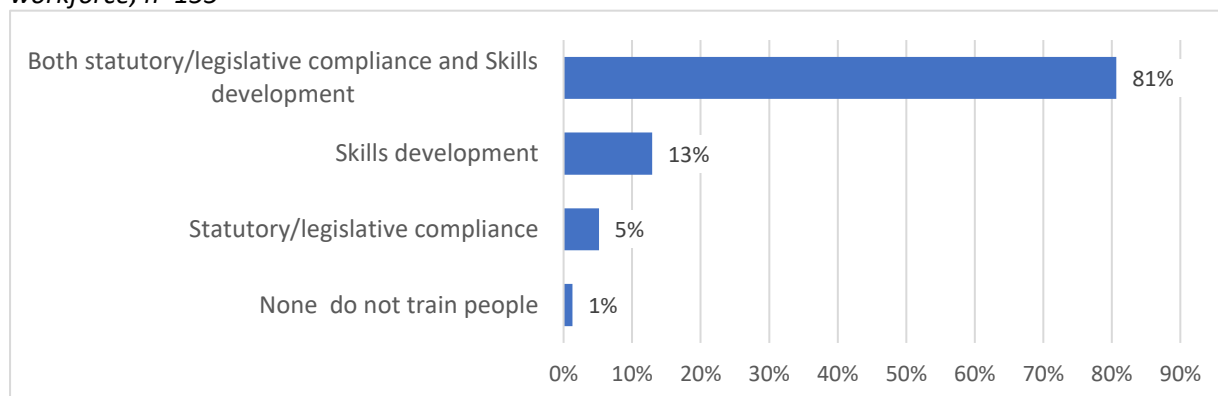


Table 3.27

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=155	n=52	n=33	n=19	n=103
Statutory/legislative compliance	5%	6%	9%	-	5%
Skills development	13%	8%	6%	11%	16%
Both Statutory/legislative compliance and Skills development	81%	83%	82%	84%	80%
None, do not train people	1%	4%	3%	5%	-

Figure 3.26

**Q. Is your company planning any employee training in the future?**

Base: All respondents who have a formal training plan for all employees, or for some parts of the workforce; n=155

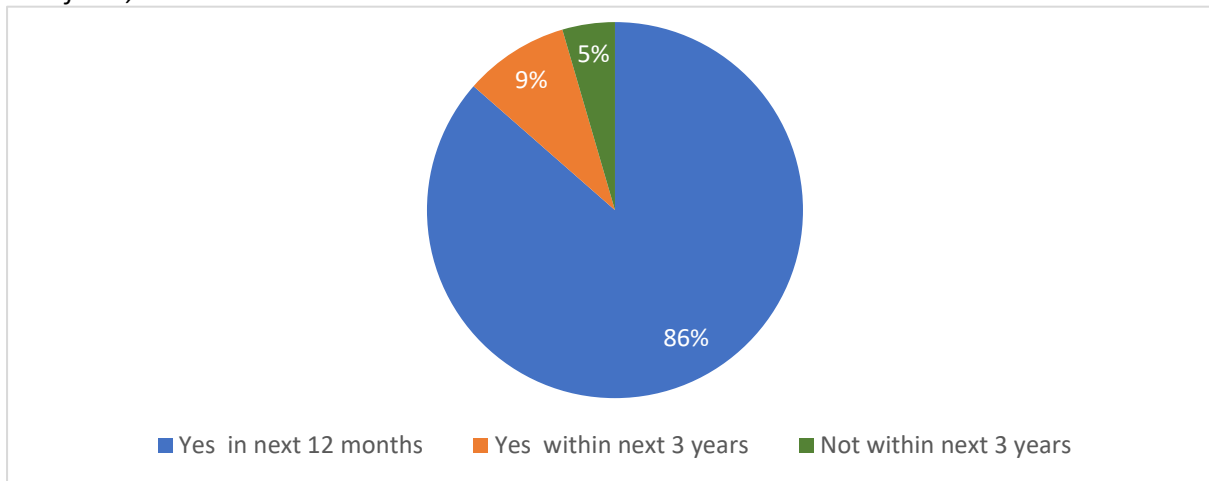


Table 3.28

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=155	n=52	n=33	n=19	n=103
Yes, in next 12 months	86%	92%	94%	89%	83%
Yes, within next 3 years	9%	4%	3%	5%	12%
Not within next 3 years	5%	4%	3%	5%	5%

Figure 3.27

**Q. Will the training you undertake in the future be?**

Base: All respondents who have training planned within 3 years; n=148

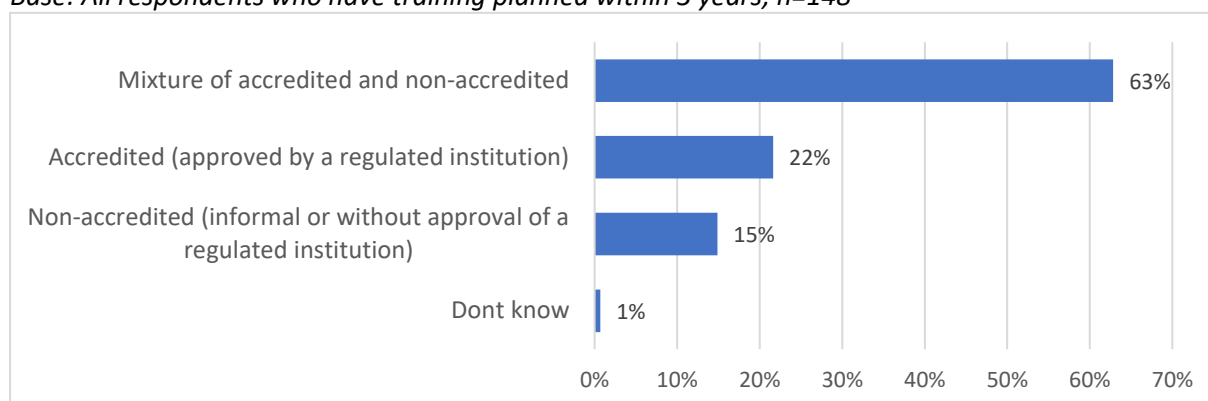


Table 3.29

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=148	n=50	n=32	n=18	n=98
Mixture of accredited and non-accredited	63%	70%	69%	72%	59%
Accredited (approved by a regulated institution)	22%	22%	22%	22%	21%
Non-accredited (informal or without approval of a regulated institution)	15%	8%	9%	6%	18%
Don't know	1%	-	-	-	1%



Figure 3.28

**Q. Where do you intend to source your future training from?**

Base: All respondents who have training planned within 3 years; n=148

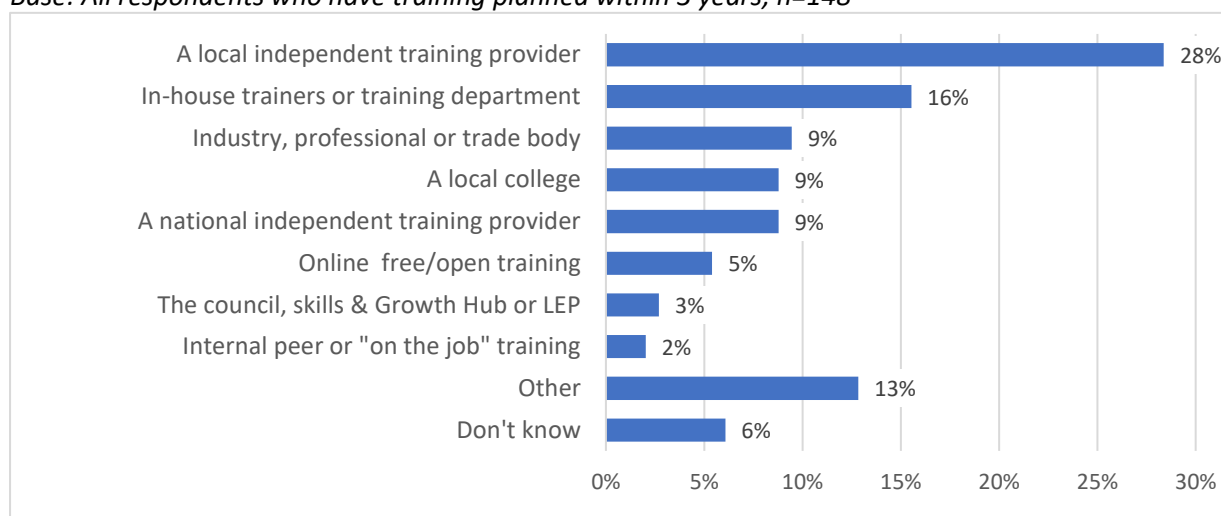


Table 3.30

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=148	n=50	n=32	n=18	n=98
A local independent training provider	28%	28%	25%	33%	29%
In-house trainers or training department	16%	12%	13%	11%	17%
Industry, professional or trade body	9%	12%	13%	11%	8%
A national independent training provider	9%	10%	9%	11%	8%
A local college	9%	10%	6%	17%	8%
Online free/open training	5%	2%	3%	0%	7%
The council, skills & Growth Hub or LEP	3%	2%	3%	0%	3%
Internal peer or 'on the job' training	2%	2%	3%	0%	2%
Other	13%	12%	16%	6%	13%
Don't know	6%	10%	9%	11%	4%

### 3.7 Post-16 Technical Education Providers

15% of all businesses participating perceive the level of understanding that providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly have of the skills needs and challenges faced by their organisation to be good or excellent, compared to a half (49%) who say their understanding is minimal or limited at best (Figure 3.29).

Figure 3.29

**Q. How would you rate the level of understanding that providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly have of the skills needs and challenges faced by your organisation?**

And

**Q. Have you spoken with and/or used any external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly to help with the skills needs and challenges faced by your organisation?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

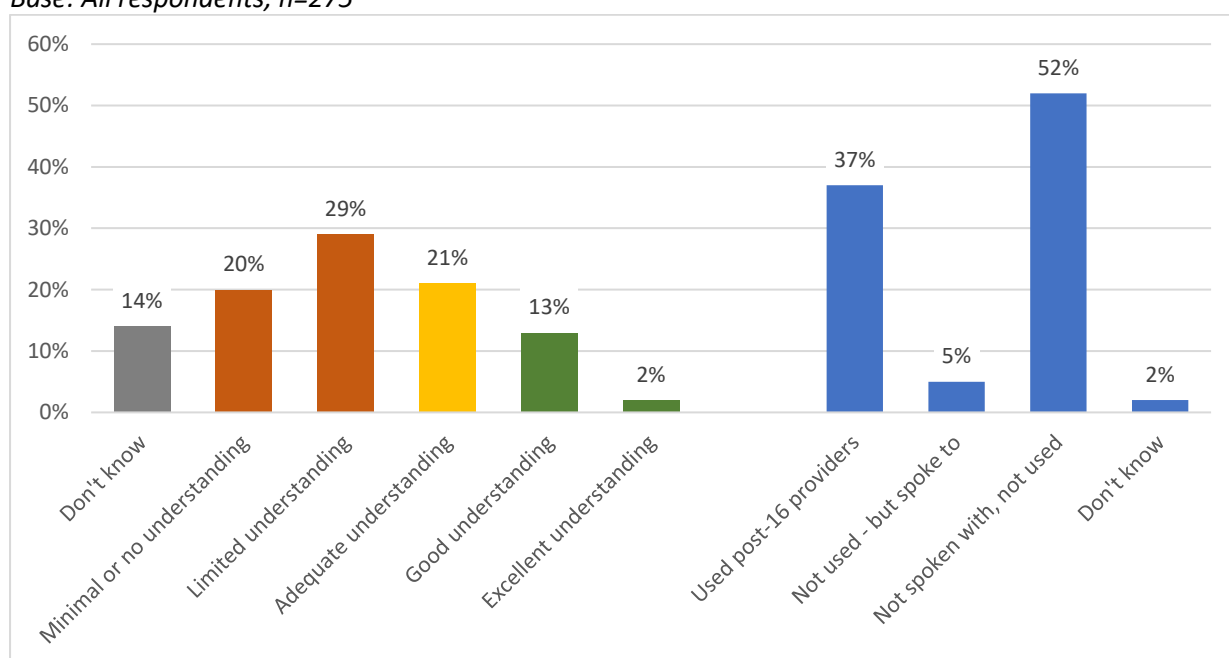


Table 3.31

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Excellent Understanding	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Good Understanding	13%	9%	8%	9%	15%
Adequate Understanding	21%	17%	10%	28%	22%
Limited Understanding	29%	41%	43%	38%	25%
Minimal or no understanding	20%	21%	27%	13%	20%
Don't know	14%	10%	10%	9%	16%
Yes - used	37%	54%	57%	50%	30%
No, but spoken with	9%	10%	10%	9%	9%
No, not spoken with & not used	52%	33%	31%	38%	59%
Don't know	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%

Those who have used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly are more likely to feel positively towards providers understanding the skills needs and challenges faced by their organisation (Table 3.32).

Table 3.32

**Q. How would you rate the level of understanding that providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly have of the skills needs and challenges faced by your organisation?**

By

**Q. Have you spoken with and/or used any external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly to help with the skills needs and challenges faced by your organisation?**

Base: Those confirming used or not used; n=270

	Yes – used	Not used
Base	n=102	n=168
Excellent Understanding	4%	1%
Good Understanding	16%	12%
Adequate Understanding	25%	18%
Limited Understanding	41%	23%
Minimal or no understanding	10%	27%
Don't know	5%	20%

Of those businesses which have used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, two thirds (67%) are fairly or extremely satisfied with the training received to meet the needs and challenges faced by their organisation (Figure 3.30).

Of the small proportion of businesses (n=26) that have not used any external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, the most commonly cited reason was because the provider could not supply what was needed (46%) followed by there not being sector specialists (23%) (Figure 3.31).

Figure 3.30

**Q. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= not at all satisfied and 5=extremely satisfied; how satisfied are you with the training received to meet the needs and challenges faced by your organisation?**

Base: All respondents who have used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly; n=102

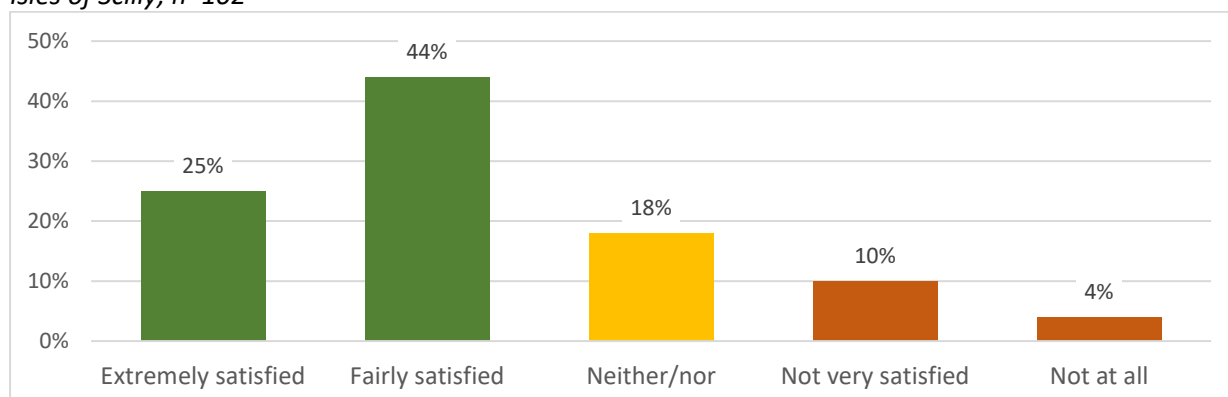


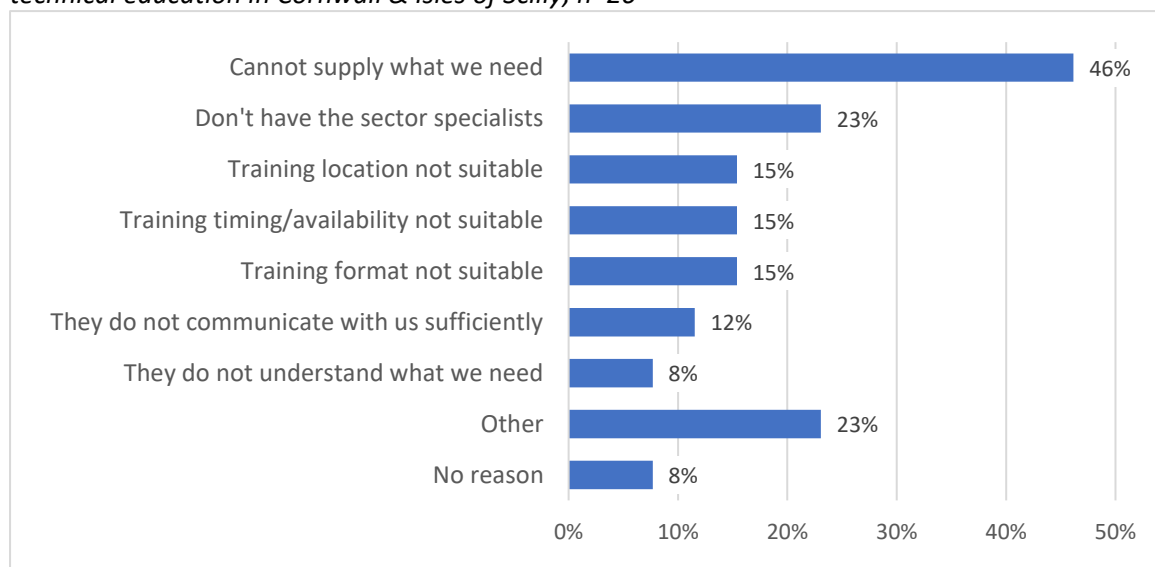
Table 3.33

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=102	n=44	n=28	n=16	n=58
Extremely satisfied	25%	27%	25%	31%	22%
Fairly satisfied	44%	41%	39%	44%	47%
Neither/nor	18%	11%	14%	6%	22%
Not very satisfied	10%	14%	14%	13%	7%
Not at all	4%	7%	7%	6%	2%

Figure 3.31

**Q. Is there a reason you don't use providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly?**

Base: All respondents who have spoken with but not selected/used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly; n=26



Participants were asked to think about anything that has worked well or particularly benefited their business when working with providers of post-16 technical education.

**Q. Thinking about previous experiences of working with providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, can you share any good experiences you have had?**

About 21% of participants provided a valid response, which are listed verbatim in appendices, Table 7.5, page 111. Good experiences shared include (in summary):

- Positive experiences with apprenticeships, particularly those provided by Cornwall College and independent training agencies.
- Positive feedback for specific training courses, such as asbestos and first aid training, and lifeguard training.
- Good experiences with specific trainers and tutors who were professional and experienced.

- Flexibility and convenience of training programs that allowed staff to train together or on specific days, and the ability to fast-track training.
- Communication and support from training providers was seen as helpful, particularly in problem solving.

### 3.8 Training Budgets

About a third (31%) of businesses participating have a training budget which for most is proportionate or greater than previous budget periods (Figure 3.33). Over half (55%) say they do not have a budget for training but they will be likely to invest in training and skills. Just 12% will not spend on training.

Figure 3.32

**Q. Which of the following best describes your investment in training and skills over the next three years?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

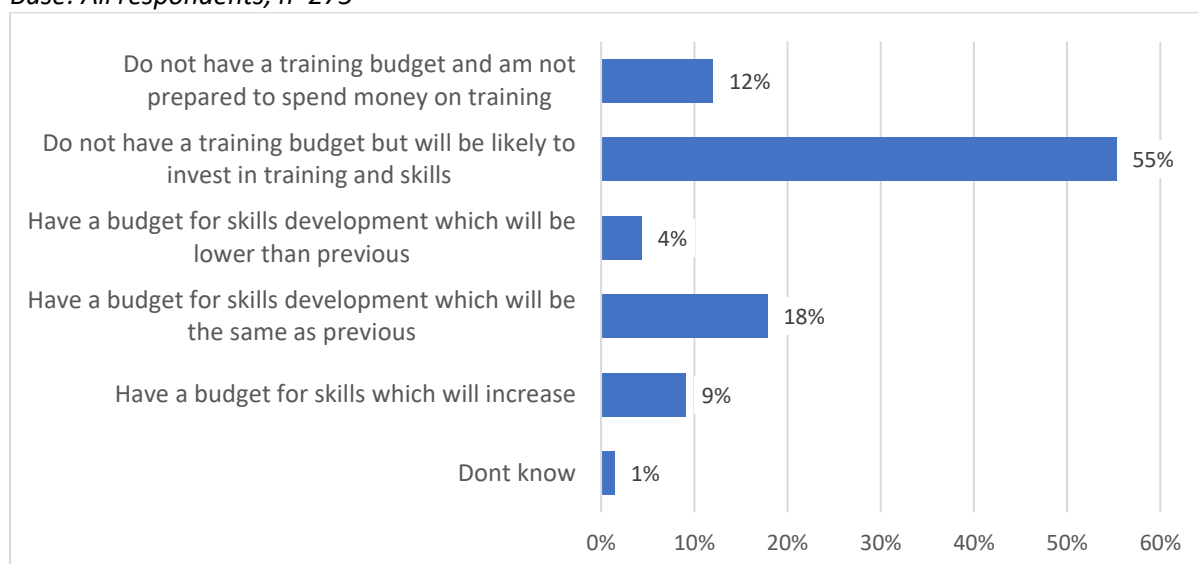


Table 3.34

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Have budget for training and skills (net)	31%	32%	34%	28%	31%
No budget - will invest in training and skills	55%	60%	59%	63%	53%
Will not spend / Don't know	13%	7%	6%	9%	16%

### 3.9 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)

Many businesses are keen to support young people to gain experience of the workplace, and education establishments need businesses to provide industry experience touch-points for their students. Four in ten of the businesses participating (39%) have taken students from school, college and/or university on work experience in the last 12 months (Figure 3.33). Whilst many businesses do not have the ability or interest to do this (17%), a fifth (21%) say they have not received such requests, leading to the assumption that these businesses would consider taking on a work experience student if suitably approached.

Figure 3.33

**Q. Have you taken any of these on work experience in the last 12 months?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

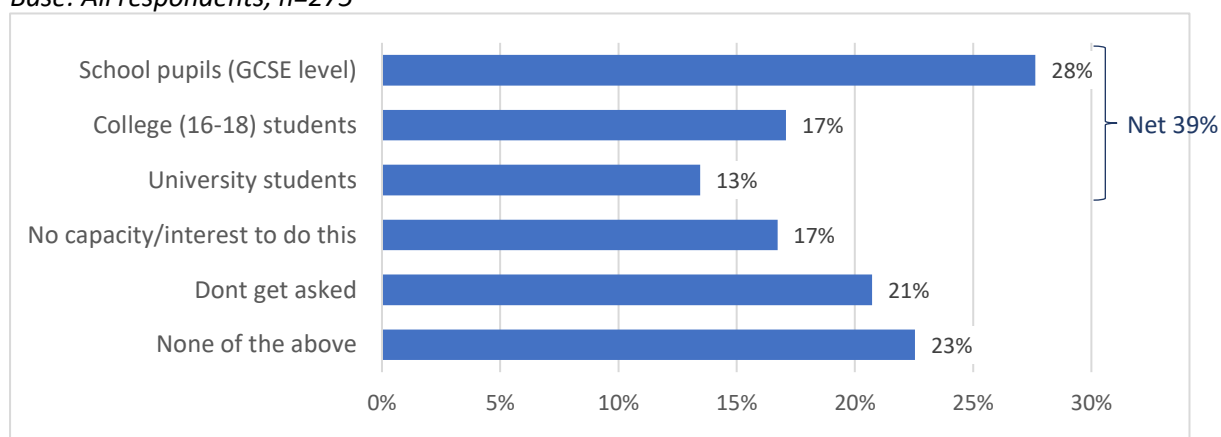


Table 3.35

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
School pupils (GCSE level)	28%	22%	20%	25%	30%
College (16-18) students	17%	17%	18%	16%	17%
University students	13%	10%	12%	6%	15%
No capacity/interest to do this	17%	15%	14%	16%	18%
Don't get asked	21%	22%	22%	22%	20%
None of the above	23%	25%	27%	22%	22%

Eight in ten businesses (80%) have undertaken activities and/or have policies in place that address awareness or actively support Environmental, Social and Governance (or ESG) principles. Over half (57%) say that their business actively tries to recruit a diverse and inclusive workforce (Figure 3.34). However, many of these employers do not have written and published policies relating to equality and diversity (49% without), and environmental sustainability such as for waste reduction and carbon reduction (57% without). A quarter (25%) have invested in training related to equality and diversity and similarly almost a quarter (23%) have invested in environmental sustainability training.

Figure 3.34

**Q. In which of the following ways does your company address awareness or support for Environmental, Social and Governance (or ESG) principles?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

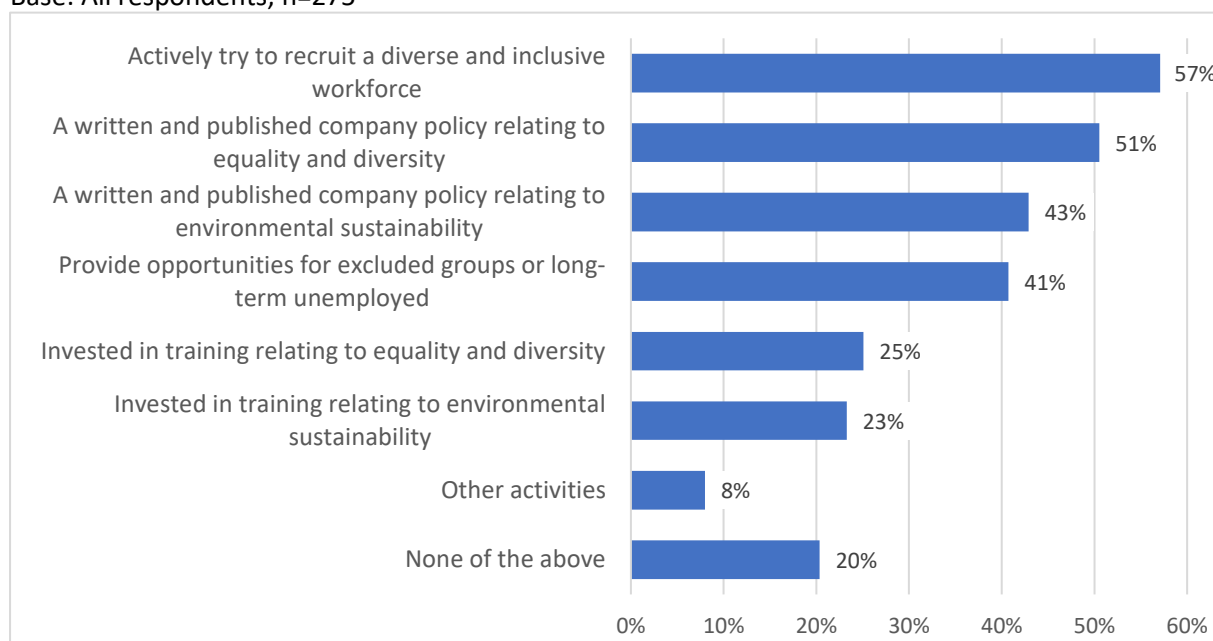


Table 3.36

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Actively try to recruit a diverse and inclusive workforce	57%	47%	51%	41%	61%
A written and published company policy relating to equality and diversity	51%	58%	63%	50%	47%
A written and published company policy relating to environmental sustainability	43%	56%	57%	53%	38%
Provide opportunities for excluded groups or long-term unemployed	41%	26%	31%	19%	47%
Invested in training relating to equality and diversity	25%	22%	27%	16%	26%
Invested in training relating to environmental sustainability	23%	31%	37%	22%	20%
Other activities	8%	2%	4%	-	10%
None of the above	20%	22%	20%	25%	20%



### 3.10 Leadership and Management

For the employer business to function well, be competitive, progressive and remain compliant in the market, as well as being responsible and meet the increasing needs of its people, it must have good leadership and management capabilities to cope and fulfil its responsibilities successfully. Businesses were asked whether they have the leadership and management skills to support a number of its cornerstone responsibilities and contemporary areas (Figure 3.35). Almost all participating businesses feel they have leadership and management skills necessary for managing finance (97%) and the vast majority say they have the skills to support the health and wellbeing of employees (93%). The areas that are less fulfilled (though this is not necessarily a deficit) are with project development and management using Agile (21%) and for making the most of digital and artificial intelligence (40%).

Figure 3.35

**Q. Does your business have the leadership and management skills to support the following?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

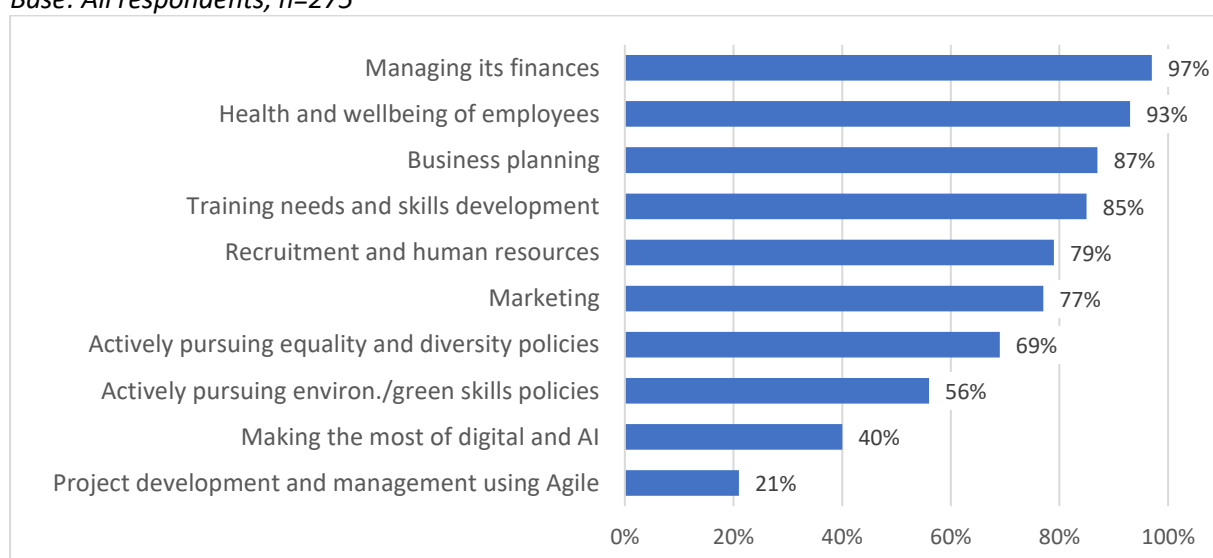


Table 3.37

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=275	n=81	n=49	n=32	n=194
Health and wellbeing of employees	93%	90%	88%	94%	95%
Managing its finances	97%	99%	98%	100%	96%
Business planning	87%	89%	88%	91%	86%
Marketing	77%	80%	82%	78%	76%
Recruitment and human resources	79%	81%	80%	84%	77%
Training needs and skills development	85%	84%	82%	88%	85%
Actively pursuing equality and diversity policies	69%	62%	65%	56%	72%
Actively pursuing environmental and green skills policies	56%	58%	61%	53%	55%
Project development and management using Agile	21%	21%	22%	19%	22%
Making the most of digital and AI (Artificial Intelligence)	40%	35%	35%	34%	42%

### 3.11 The LSIP

Participants were asked about their suggestions for how the Local Skills Improvement Plan could help the delivery of skills and/or skills progression for their business. The most commonly cited theme related to the availability of local or more accessible training (20%), followed by the promotion and support for all sectors as viable careers (18%) and the improvement of links between the education system and industry (18%)(Figure 3.36); the latter felt particularly strongly by MEM businesses (Table 3.38). A full list of the verbatim responses is provided in appendices, Table 7.6, page 113.

Figure 3.36

**Q. Overall and finally, what suggestions would you make for the Local Skills Improvement Plan to help the delivery of skills and/or skills progression for your business? (CODED)**

Base: All those making suggestion(s); n=139

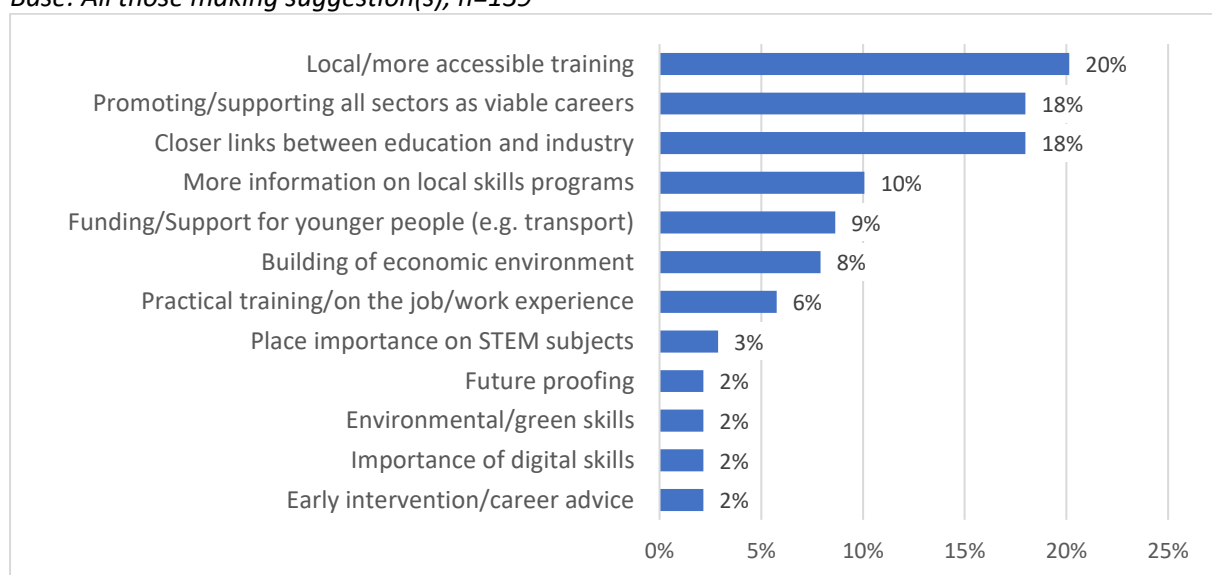


Table 3.38

	Total	Key Sectors Total	MEM	CR	Other Sectors
Base	n=139	n=47	n=28	n=19	n=92
Local/more accessible training	20%	23%	18%	32%	18%
Closer links between education and industry	18%	19%	29%	5%	17%
Promoting/supporting all sectors as viable careers	18%	23%	25%	21%	15%
More information on local skills programs	10%	13%	4%	26%	9%
Funding/Support for younger people (e.g. transport, driver insurances, etc.)	9%	6%	7%	5%	10%
Building of economic environment	8%	2%	4%	0%	11%
Practical training/ on the job/work experience	6%	4%	4%	5%	7%
Place importance on STEM subjects	3%	4%	7%	0%	2%
Early intervention/career advice	2%	2%	4%	0%	2%
Importance of digital skills	2%	2%	0%	5%	2%
Environmental/green skills	2%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Future proofing	2%	0%	0%	0%	3%

### 3.12 Final comments

**Q. Are there any further comments you would like to make in respect of skills and training specific to your business or sector, that we haven't discussed through the survey?**

Respondents were asked if they had any final comments to make. A full list of verbatim responses is provided in appendices, Table 7.7, page 119.

## 4 Qualitative Research

A series of formal focus groups, round table discussion events and one-to-one interviews recruited and promoted via the FSB events pages, were held with business owners and representatives between Tuesday 24th January and Tuesday 28th February. A total of 37 participants attended.

The events were conducted via a combination of in-person and online virtual meetings held over Zoom, each lasting up to two hours. Participants were not incentivised to participate.

All events were recorded and auto-transcribed to assist notetaking and later analysis, with consent from participants, and the assurance that their participation would be anonymous. Discussions were informed by a pre-designed discussion guide, however allowing for the varying experiences of participants and different contexts, a more conversational format was permitted which provided the opportunity to more deeply explore specific topics or participant expertise where necessary.

### 4.1 Key findings

#### 4.1.1 Skills Needs

- **What type of skills (for what roles) do you most need and do you find it most difficult to develop or source?**
  - What happens when you cannot develop skills? What examples do you have?
  - Do people come to you with the right foundation skills? In terms of skills, what 'work' do you have to do with them before they become useful?
  - Anything that over time seems to be getting better or worse?

The groups and round table interviews were asked to discuss what type of skills (or for what roles) they most need and find most difficult to develop or source. This point of discussion sought to extract specific technical roles relating to the business sectors present.

Participants paint a backdrop of a challenge recruiting professional engineers in Cornwall due to a lack of graduates from traditional engineering degree programs. The absence of graduates from Cornwall makes it difficult for industries, such as heavy processing industries, to establish a footprint in the region, especially with the cost of living, housing, and infrastructure in Cornwall being an issue. Businesses therefore have to pay high salaries and relocation costs to attract professionals to the region, which is not sustainable in the long term. The outlook is a situation that is set to worsen as lithium mining and offshore wind industries look to employ large numbers of people.

*"The professional engineers, yes, we want them to be in Cornwall. We want them to be, you know, closer to an office. We've now got 6 or 7 offices around the UK due to various reasons. And these people are now being recruited in other locations in the UK simply because of that, that there is there's not anybody in Cornwall. It's been the continuum of just struggling to recruit all the way through all the different companies I've worked for over the years. Obviously, this is not the first skills thing that's ever been done in Cornwall. I'll go on now about the professional engineering. How can we find professional engineers when there's no professional engineering graduates coming out of Cornwall? I will say, you know Camborne School of Mines is unique and the fact that it is dying is a real big problem for skills. Three of my employees to date have been because of Camborne School of Mine's graduates that stuck around in Cornwall; not having Camborne School of Minds will severely affect heavy process industries being able to have any sort of footprint in Cornwall that just won't be the people who want to run businesses be that independent businesses, or you know, similar to what I've always been in, which is, you know, a small part of a global company. These offices won't exist in Cornwall if we don't have anybody*

*who actually graduates from here and hangs around. The only other thing Exeter have done is actually put in a little renewable energy engineering course, which is providing some graduates locally, but without the traditional engineering degrees of mechanical, electrical, civil, structural... there's not the people graduating from Cornwall. Therefore, how'd you attract them here?"*

*"When you get into the point about all the social stuff of cost of living, housing, infrastructure... you know... how do we make packages attractive to get people down? You end up paying astronomical relocation and salaries, and all of the rest of it, to get people into the county. And that's not sustainable from a business point of view. Long term, because we end up pricing ourselves into a place where the money ends up being ridiculous."*

*"Thinking ahead as well, if you've got the lithium mining people looking to take on 800 people. You've got offshore winds that's set to take 2,000 people on. I'll tell you where they're going to get it from. You know they just don't exist, and you know they're just gonna pull them out of the local other companies."*

*"I think there's a people shortage, and I don't want to conflate people shortage and skill shortage. It's not that there's lots and lots of people that haven't got the right skills in some bits, and that's it, so there's still a training need to be satisfied."*

*"There's good jobs that are well paid in these [construction] industries. And so moving people into those courses and having them want to do so, that is part of the challenge as well."*

One company explained their struggle to find skilled workers with multi-skilled mechanical and electrical expertise, and they are now recruiting part-qualified or car mechanics to address the shortfall. Upskilling and training this population of workers is the company's challenge for the next 18-24 months.

*"A lot of [engineering companies] have now started to re-do apprenticeships, so they are starting to take apprentices on, so they might have people in the first, second, third year of their apprenticeships, and they are pushing on that back button. But there's just this huge gap of skilled people in their sort of late 20s to mid 40s, I would say, where apprenticeships just died out for that period of time, and now they don't exist."*

*"Everybody who we've ended up recruiting, I would suggest, is coming from a later age demographic so, and obviously that's the age demographic that's growing within the county. So how do we now get to and get people excited about doing that level of role and engaging at a much younger age in a career pathway that hopefully would give us that pipeline of talent as opposed to the struggle that we've had over the last 6-9 months?"*

*"We've also taken some sort of car mechanics and tried to get those guys across and upskilling them. So we've now got quite a big challenge of how do we upskill a population of people to be multi skilled across mechanical and electrical."*

Whilst companies may be willing to hire people who are the right fit for the business, even if they do not have the required skills, and to train them up, this approach comes with risks such as quality problems and safety. One company explained the sector experiencing a relatively high turnover rate, with people leaving at a later age in life due to the nature of the work. Also noted is a significant shortage of skilled people in the age range of 28-45, and issues around languages, with many larger companies growing significantly over the last 2-3 years, absorbing the pool of trained, skilled people, and leaving a shortfall generally.

Construction has similar issues and a difficulty in attracting young people to certain sectors, such as groundworks, due to the perception of the work being physically demanding and not appealing enough. Provision of training on plant is particularly difficult because of the need for expensive equipment (e.g. dump trucks, JCBs) and the specialised training to operate them.

*“Some sectors are not the most appealing to young people. I know one of the areas ... though it's not so much an issue in Cornwall is the feedback I've got, it's things like groundworks when they tend to be outdoor work, because you're out in all weathers, because it's very, very hard work that's not always seen as a most appealing sector.”*

*“Then, there's two things around the provision. Sometimes they want the skills, but there's not the local provision. So some of the things in Cornwall is the craft masonry, scaffolding, and also plant as well. And then sometimes the other bit with the provision, is that there is the provision there but there's so many people interested that the colleges are full, and they haven't got the resources, either in terms of the space in terms of the tutors, to be able to deliver that. So it's not been so much an issue in Cornwall this year, but I know all the Cornwall colleges were full last year with carpentry and joinery. It was so sort of popular with young people that they were turning young people away from the apprenticeships because they were full.”*

The marine sector similarly is experiencing challenges with training and developing people with business and strategic skills, especially within the marine leisure sector which needs a high level of professionalism and customer facing skills. Thoughts that connecting training and education more closely to the industry's practical applications could inspire and excite more people to enter the sector but it needs to be able to compete with others, particularly emerging fields such as space and offshore wind, in order to retain talent and attract investment.

*“[We need to make sure] those that want to come in [on the harbour operational side] can get quick access to readapting themselves in terms of the business skills... the training required is quite a challenge, and that training is becoming increasingly expensive and problematic to keep people operational and train them ... it's quite hard for people coming from [ex-mariner roles], ... having wider business management skills, strategic skills, what we now require in the business is quite critical.”*

*“The other thing I'll pick up is a marine leisure, you know, but half my team are marine leisure people broadly. They're increasingly difficult to get and retain. We do provide a lot of training, and with the fluid nature that as the pool people, losing people after you have spent a lot of money on training them is quite a big hit on our organisation. I think we need to work together better, I think there's a lot of providers that do their own thing.”*

*“I'm particularly into technologies, because that's been mentioned, and I think illustrating the excitement around the future of marine industry is quite hard to grasp at the moment. So again, what can we do about connecting things better? I was at the open day, the Marine School only last weekend, and although they do some great courses and have a great facility, you don't feel very well connected to the action when you're there and I think that's a bit of a challenge. It's not meant to be critical, and they recognise there's a slight problem with getting these real connections, but I think as an industry we probably need to look at how to get that inspiration piece working really really well.”*

Many participants were unable to explicitly specify the 'gaps' in their businesses in this way. Instead, they typified workforce issues (lack of people coming through, or lack of the right people) and the lack of work ethic, fundamental behaviours and attitudes of (usually) young people, absence of basic skills and their suitability for manual work.

The issues are commonly negatively associated with social media and mobile phones, despite that this inferred younger generation are likely to be more able to engage with technology developments in the MEM and CR trades, such as online training.

*“Work ethic! Massive, horrendously shocking in the age group between 18 and 25/26. The Instagram generation. They just don't, I mean, and I'm generalizing here because there are some really good guys out there. But when we go to interview through Indeed, for instance ... we probably get maybe between 40 and 50 people, you know, looking for a job. And we ended up – and it's probably not the right thing to say - we ended up looking for people that have a mortgage, so they had a need to go to work. In their 40s and 50s, which again is probably, you know, judgmental, whatever, because they had really good work ethic and also they had clean driving licences and they had a half decent run of previous jobs.”*

*“We now live in a world where there's instant gratification. So this is the biggest curse of our nation and without a doubt. So young people think that they have all these people on YouTube who have become multimillionaires just by posting videos every day, and they think that you can become rich just by doing very little ... the biggest issue we've got is young people need to understand you have to earn a living. No one's going to give you one.”*

*“...just to do with those soft skills, that sort of work ethic, ability to turn up in time. So that's part of it.”*

- **How does your business approach skills development?**
  - Do you undertake skills audits?
  - Does your company have a formal training plan (perhaps that tracks the skills needs and training given for each employee)?
  - Do you have time to train and upskill? Or is it a case of making time when it becomes a necessity?
- **Do your employees/workforce expect or ask for skills development?**
  - Is there scope for career or in-work progression in your business?
  - What are the barriers to training?
- **Thinking ahead to the ways that your businesses or industry sectors are changing, what's coming down the track that you are going to have to deal with or train people for?**

One company described their training arm that provides qualifications to employees based on their roles, competencies, and behaviours. It uses an appraisal and performance management system, which includes monthly appraisals and yearly reviews. Staff competency is assessed every month, and they get paid for each band they move up. However, participants also acknowledge the problem of job progression when there are limited opportunities for ambitious employees.

*“We have very stringent performance reviews which run on three months, six months, nine months For any new members, whether they're training or not, standard led thing. And then they're offered training online, stuff like all of the standard manual handling, dealing with hazardous substances or stuff they can do online. And then they're offered time back from experienced employees, so they'll get eight hours a week with a certain person, which is an investment into them because you have to pay for that person.”*

Thinking about barriers to training, participants acknowledge the challenges of training and apprenticeships within high-risk industries. It can be a problem with managing apprentices who may

be under 18 due to safety reasons and the restrictions some companies have for allowing minors on their premises. Participants discussed the stringent health and safety regulations that affects their business, including the need for undertaking risk assessments, even for supposedly simple scenarios – all of which impacts upon their time and challenge to train people, that there are many hoops to climb through before someone is safe to be put into on-the-job training. Some believe that the ability to assess risk is a basic skill that can be taught or encouraged through schools, which would allow easy transition into the workplace.

*“And another thing as well, is health and safety. So we have the health and safety audit team that work on our behalf and they come around and they work around the two sites. My wife received a 26 page report on all of the stuff that we've got to mandate for. I mean, it is mind blowing stuff. We now have to do a risk assessment for using a stepladder. It's a step, with one step that takes you off the floor about a foot and a half. It's the risk assessment for working at heights. This is drowning; business is drowning and that is pulling off an EU directive because this is where a lot of it's come from ... And now it's going to devolve to U.K. the way we're running the same rules.”*

*“Health and safety, risk assessments, that needs to be taught at school. Interestingly, every school does risk assessments every day – can the children do this, can the children do that. That is something we do, and every single person does risk assessments every day. Every child, when they get on their pushbike, whether they're going to jump six steps whether they're going to go twenty-six steps, they do a risk assessments. They don't realize that's what it is, and just about every job we do now, we're bombarded with risk assessments with some of those methods statements, but health and safety needs to be part of the curriculum. It shouldn't be optional. And, you know, most children know that's not safe to do. That is safe to do. But if that was formalised, it would make the transition into the workplace, where is an incredibly formal part of the workplace, irrespective of where you work nowadays, at least they would have that underlying basis ... [risk assessments] are part of the job... if children were brought up with that understanding in the education system, that health and safety risk as such is all part of any job you do. And there isn't any job I can think of that there isn't that aspect to the job.”*

Also of some concern is the seemingly continual need to training, perhaps for things that don't change, potentially devaluing the purpose of training being all about compliance and not upskilling. Business owners who are, say, engineers by trade, have described not enjoying the pressure and responsibilities that come with running the business such as a continuous need for training which can be mentally draining, as well as having to be an H.R. manager and a quality manager. That said, they recognise the importance of training in the industry and the need for effective tutoring.

*“There is a danger that we just train people because we're told that we've got to keep training them. so for example, if I teach you to wood turn to make a wooden bowl and all you do for a living is make a wooden bowl, come in every year and say you need to retrain to make the wooden bowl . That's what you already doing. And to say that we've got to go on a refresher course just to make sure that you know how to make a bowl properly. It's all money for old rope, and there's all these organizations are making massive amounts of money, continually getting people to do the same course. The mental health first aid course, which I did the refresher of was exactly the same as the first course I did. Nothing's changed since I did the course two years ago, but I had to pay another £400 to do the course again.”*

Employers that have built successful businesses and have been building those businesses over many years understand the effort and hard work that has gone into achieving success. Progression, therefore, can be more about developing skills, experience and mastery over a long period of time and not simply about moving up a pay scale. There is a sense that many young people have unrealistic expectations about investing in their own futures but also an exaggerated view of their



own worth. Sector representatives and larger organisations can help promote aspirations and ethics, such as involving parents when recruiting and developing apprentices.

*"I have one of our apprentices he started in started in December 2021. He's now been here just over a year, and he's come in and demanded a pay rise. Because he can now [work] at a certain level. I said yes you can, but you are taking twice the amount of time that an experienced guy takes. So yes, you can do the job, but your speed is not there. He says I can go to DPD or wherever and get a courier job at twenty seven grand. I said but if you go and do that that there is no step up and if you go into that job then how's your progression as a delivery driver, does it get you into logistics? I don't know, but they just don't quite get it. They just want to make a fast buck."*

*"This kid has been in the job for a year and has been demanding [a pay rise]. He's on 24, or 25 [thousand pounds], which is an obscene amount of money for someone that we are investing in as a company, probably between 15 and 20 grand a year on it, free combined tuition from his mentors in the business. So a lead engineer and his lead engineer. Then the amount of tools that we have to get for him, a vehicle, buy a phone. They just don't have a dicky bird of what's involved in putting this package together."*

*"There is a perception that businesses ... exploit youngsters because of the cost based model that's in situ for them, for like a 2 year scheme and then that's it, off they go ... but the wider aspect is that manufacturing for us is not appealing ... but the biggest fact that we've always found is actually it's not the children or the young person, is actually the parents. It's changing the perception of the parent's attitude towards earning and working and giving people skill sets. That's the thing that we found, being the biggest driver, and we've done open days here for our employees to bring their own parents in. When we've done interviews with young people, we've had their parents come in at the same time, to ask the management about what is it we're doing, what we're trying to achieve, show them around the facility, what we're going to invest with the youngster. So we try and do that when we go for apprentices where we're not able to find a particular skill set, and we decide to do that in-house element."*

For those looking to progress within the same organisation requires not just vacancies opening up but the ability to be released from existing duties, and that requires a field of new, suitably qualified candidates. This is a real concern for many, that there will be a significant shortfall in key skills in the medium- to long-term future. There needs to be a strategy for knowledge transfer and ensuring skills from those wanting to retire from manual jobs can be harnessed in other ways – perhaps to become trainers themselves (thus the need for 'train the trainer' schemes). Participants suggested that retaining older workers who have valuable skills and knowledge can be a solution to skills shortage (rather than relying solely on bringing through a young, inexperienced workforce), and that there should be more incentives and better pay for those who choose to become trainers or teachers in these key industries.

*"We train our lads from the bottom up and they become competent in whatever trade they've embarked on. What we would find ourselves in a position is, those men, they're probably come to a point that they could be managers of whatever nucleus part of the business we're doing. Then you've got to replace him with somebody else from the bottom again and come up through well prepared to do that as a business, but there's just not the people coming through."*

*"In construction, I can see in the next 10 to 15, 20 years, there's going to be a massive skills shortage even worse than it is now because the guys that work with us have been with us for several years. But once that generations lost, I don't know where the next generation is coming from. I know it all depends on people wanting to come into construction, but there's 30 people in each college perhaps on a carpentry or mason course. That's only 30 people. And how many people are retiring every year?"*

*"A lot of people have retired to Cornwall or semi-retired because they're fed up with what they were doing ... but if we gave them something interesting to do and their skills with it, perhaps it's a good way to get those people, maybe people who've retired early, back into work to train the trainer ... the knowledge would be invaluable."*

*"I would say the college environments are crying out for skilled people. They've been underfunded now for over a decade. And you know, how can you, when you're paying twenty four grand, expect to get a qualified electrical engineer to come and do training of electrical apprentices when the salaries just don't compare. It's the same scenario we can see the tech in IT industry where salaries in the market out-compete. But if you want to be a teacher, you just can't earn a market rate, so it's not attractive. And I think there's something that we really need to look at as a nation in terms of how do we get practitioners and people, maybe retired practitioners, to be the trainers and actually reward them well with what they deserve."*

There is criticism of the vocational education sector for shortage of good quality teachers and lecturers, and that colleges are struggling to attract people from the trades to work as college lecturers. To address this, there are cases of colleges having brought in retirees to teach and work with younger apprentices, which has been very successful - meaningful contact with employers is critical for young people to be successful in their apprenticeships, but there is a need for more join-up between different agencies and organisations to work on this issue. Schools are working to meet the Gatsby benchmarks for meaningful interactions with employers but there remains a lot of bureaucracy and red tape that can deter employers from getting involved.

*"We've got a couple of retirees that have come back and absolutely love it working with our younger apprentices. And I think sometimes you got to do things a little bit different. You know, the skill sets these guys have got, but also they're looking at new things as well. So what I'm finding is my second years now are much more knowledgeable because they've had time with these guys to learn some of the skills. It's so refreshing it's brilliant to see it."*

*"There is a big push to get people from the trades working as college lectures and things, and it's something we've worked with both Truro, though mostly Cornwall [Colleges]... but they struggle to get staff, and a lot of these people are people that have retrained, been on the tools or whatever, and depending on how much you can earn on the tools will determine whether you want to be a lecturer or not!"*

*"When I was in [Further Education], it actually pay quite well; over the last 4 or 5 to 10 years, it hasn't really kept pace, so they really struggle to get good quality people in there that can teach and lecture our young people when they go."*

There is some concern over how the education system is preparing young people for future careers in engineering and tech, that combining sciences into one subject, such as STEM, is a way of "dumbing down" what were actually separate and valuable disciplines. Further, the workplace has changed significantly, but schools and career advice have not kept up with the changes and it is important to link the curriculum to the world of work so children can understand why what they are learning is relevant.

*"I was lucky enough for my last job, which lasted 9 years, to actually go into schools and go into universities, you know, even primary schools, just to talk about engineering and just to say what engineering is. Give them options, you know. Go to a few secondary school career fairs, get them while they're in, you know, first, second year of secondary school, because that's when you've got to start to change their mind that engineering's actually a lot of fun. It's very easy for me, because we've got loads of like 3D visualization 3D scanning, all this sort of site survey type stuff. It all visually looks really good and quite frankly to them it just looks like a first*

*person shooter. That's why I tell them, you know that you can do this, but in real life we don't shoot anybody... But it's engaging kids in those sort of tools, and a lot of them, just come back half an hour later, having visited lots of other stands, telling them they could be wonderful trainee accountants if they really want it to be... We're offering something different and fun, exciting, and real world solutions... it is applied science in the real world."*

*"The workplace has changed quite significantly, and schools and careers advice haven't kept up with it, and that's a real problem. We've even gone into junior schools and things, you know, but they just don't know... you've got to get in there and show them its changed, and actually try and link the curriculum to the world of work, you know; if they're doing science, if they're doing that, why is it relevant if you want to be an engineer? Or whatever it is, what's relevant about it, and get them to understand that."*

*"Get them at that young age, because as soon as they start to choose what GCSE they want to do, you know ... it's well documented. How girls are put off doing physics, or other sciences, even if even it's not only a combined science. That's another problem we have... particularly with, you know, the engineering thing. Combined sciences are just a way of trying to dumb down what was actually really good separate sciences."*

*"I speak to a lot of people that want to be engineers. I think you've got a group of young people that aren't getting the right information. Information, advice, and guidance, I hate to tell you this, but it's still not good enough."*

Digital construction is an emerging area that requires basic digital skills to use software like spreadsheets and accounting tools, but also more advanced skills for things like building information modelling and augmented reality. However, some would say the construction industry has been slow to adopt new technologies and strategies, so it is important to develop a culture of change and provide simple solutions to encourage uptake.

*"Digital construction is very much dependent on the sort of the size of the employer. So some of the large companies it will be things like drones and augmented reality, and that sort of thing whereas to a local micro employer it's just going to be using a spreadsheet just to put the accounts in rather than writing things down. So the whole digital aspect is very hard to sort of nail down, because, on one hand, you've just got use of word and a spreadsheet, and on the on the other hand, you've got building information modelling and really complicated software systems."*

*"A lot of employers are quite reluctant to sort of adopt new strategies. So it's almost about developing that culture of change, I suppose, and providing those sort of simple solutions and so it's new moving in small steps. If you just put that gave somebody up sort of information modelling system. They're going to go, no and move away. But if you start to get them to embed things at a low level and sort of slowly, so they can start to adopt it and start to realise what the benefits are."*

Technologies will have a wide role to play in the MEM and CR sectors. For example, virtual reality (VR) can be useful in training employees on health and safety by creating a virtual environment where hazards can be put in place without the physicality of the actual workplace, where it is acknowledged that traditional training can be expensive and time-consuming. However, if colleges want to prepare people with some of the advanced digital skills required by industries, tutors must stay up to date themselves.

*"VR has it's set in terms of giving people exposure to experience because you're building that muscle memory. So that's a good practical health and safety good one to do in a VR environment, for risk assessments and things like that where people can, you know, you can*

*digitalise your factory workforce or the environment, and then you can put hazards in place without the physicality. To me, some of the basic health and safety for us is, for any business, is one of the most important things that we have to deal with, because it's so paramount, because there's so much risk associated and liability. So there's so much focus from our perspective on health and safety. So for me, IOSH, I would love to have every single employee trained to level 3, level 4, for IOSH was at least because then I know that i'm operating with a good safety conscious workforce. But it costs a lot of money. It's 4 days, 5 days out for those individuals, and then I'm having to throw time and resource behind it."*

*"We're quite fortunate in that some of our apprentices that we've picked have naturally picked up some CAD software and things like that, really, really well, but they've ended up having to teach the tutors how to use the software, for when they go for that higher qualification. So the tutors themselves, aren't being continually brought up to date with the current technology."*

#### 4.1.2 Environmental, Social, Governance - ESG

- **Are you able to recruit and develop skills among diverse and/or non-stereotypical people into your workforce?**
  - For example, people from diverse backgrounds, or hard-to-reach, or often excluded groups?
  - Have you brought in or have you any experience working with programmes such as Black Voices Matter Cornwall, Disability Cornwall or Inclusion Cornwall? (Have you heard of these?)
  - Is it important or have you given much thought to training for inclusivity and diversity?

Participants described the value of working with teams that are successful because of teamwork and blending the best of individuals. Whilst most are accepting of being inclusive and diverse generally, some are nervous about "saying the wrong thing" and fear policies being forced upon them – that their businesses are their concern and it is their own toil and investment that has made them successful. Diversity is seen as not just about race but also about a person's appearance, which could affect their company's impression on customers. Some are further irritated by conversations about lack of representation of ethnic minorities (in a geographic area that is predominantly White British) or the representation of women in traditionally been male-dominated settings – because of opposition to fear of being forced to promote people who they feel may be less qualified for a role over their 'choice' candidates. However, many harbour old-school opinions and appear unaware or reluctant to be able to address those issues through training for resilience or progressive policies.

*"I'm old school, right? I went to school, we all wore a tie. Now I've got lots of friends who've got piercings and tattoos on their faces ... I wouldn't employ them. It's not that they're not capable of doing the work, it's the fact that when they go into a site where I've got a customer, for example, that's making pharmaceuticals and someone goes in looking like that, they're going to be judged and because they're going to be judged, and my business is also going to be judged."*

*"Diversity is more about race - that's what we're talking about here. That shouldn't come into anybody's contract."*

*"There's all these attributes about how women operate, which are just very, very good and useful. But if we had a guy that's doing the same job, it probably wouldn't have been as good as if [she] was to do it ... and whether that's discriminatory or no, we put that person in place."*

*"I work for 1,100 companies. I know four female engineers. I know one of them who works at [company] is a brilliant engineer, but she's just going on maternity leave. It's caused absolute chaos to that company because she was a key person. She was senior management and they have lost one of the most skilled members. I've got seven engineers. If I had a female engineer that went on maternity leave for a year, that would break my company."*

Participants reflect on how efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, such as highlighting women in construction in videos and promoting trades in public services, and ensuring marketing for apprentices is properly inclusive and doesn't only represent white boys, are being made. However, the lack of diversity in Cornwall's population itself also poses a challenge for diversity in the industry. There are no physical barriers to joining the industry, but the industry needs to work on changing perceptions. One of the larger construction sector employers is alert to the situation of gender stereotypes and keen to champion inclusivity and diversity in their workforce, even if the odds are seemingly stacked against them.

*"I have not had any applicants that have been female ... actually, I did have one and she dropped out... in my last round of apprenticeship recruitment and diversity is a massive challenge for the construction sector. I looked into this recently, and I think something like 80, 90, the number of people who are male is ninety percent. I've got some figures somewhere about how many men are in the industry and then how many women are in the industry. And of those, I think it's about 87 percent of the women were all in office jobs rather than out in the field. And so there is there is a lot of stereotypical thinking and there are groups that are there to help women and LGBTQ+ people into construction and then breaking down some of the barriers that are perceived to be there."*

*"There are no physical barriers to people coming and joining the construction industry. But I think there are perceptions and stereotypical, you know, upbringings is part of this society, the material of the society that we're all living in. And I think it does influence people at a very self-conscious level about what you do and what you don't do."*

*"The door is open, but we don't get the inquiries."*

*"I just I don't know if we have that diversity in Cornwall."*

*"10 years ago I was given what I thought was a real poisoned chalice in the dockyard. I was made champion for diversity and inclusion and raised the women's network, because we only had about six percent of that in the technical workforce, which is woeful. But we had no women champions, we had no women to aspire to ... you can't see it, you can't be it . It was worse than that. You looked at all of our marketing. All of our marketing was white young boys. So guess who applied to compete and why? Young boys. And so we invited some really spectacular women engineers to come and talk to us, to inspire us and to inspire the few women that we had, and then we used that to build up a slightly larger cohort. And actually, on the back of that, we then used the women's network to build an LGBT network not only for us, but for our major supply chain, which was remarkably successful."*

There is a recognised need for more diversity in the marine industry, particularly with regard to the underrepresentation of women though also people with disabilities; it needs to be more welcoming and promote itself better to young girls and women. Though progress is being made, such as the launch of a women in boat building website, but there is more work to do.

*"Where do we start?! I'd say, there's a huge huge mountain to climb. I think a lot of good work has been done. But the first place we've got to start is our imagery; a lot of it, particularly on the water imagery, is male dominated, and therefore all you've got is this imagery of men, and I think we've got to be really careful about how we promote our industry, how we talk about our*

*industry throughout all we do, to make sure it's welcoming it doesn't seem to be a male bastion, and that's i'm particularly talking about on the water issues, I mean hopefully as an organisation we're changing and I think many others are. But you know, to break that, to make sure that young people, young girls and others, feel that it's a career path they want to take. It's got a huge, huge lot of time to go."*

Participants considered the role of specialist support groups, such as Black Voices Matter and Disability Inclusion Cornwall, but there was either little knowledge of them or little interaction. That said, some participants have described a typical Cornish culture of societal acceptance to differences, but in businesses the need to want to understand those differences better.

*"I can't say any of those businesses are actively reaching out."*

*"It's actually creating the culture that people are sort of saying, yeah, I want to know more. I'm interested. I want to understand."*

*"I do think that it's very much in the Cornish culture of acceptance, and to the point of like, you know, right, you're gay. I don't I don't need to care about that – just crack on."*

- **Similarly, what about training around environmental, Net Zero or waste reduction?**
  - What works well for you?
  - Can you find the training you need around these? Is this important to you?

Thinking about future skills, and in construction and retrofit in particular and meeting the needs of green economy, research conducted has identified the need for 350,000 new full-time workers in construction by 2030 for retrofitting and achieving net zero. However, there is currently no national retrofit strategy, and the pathways for achieving net zero are unclear. The lack of clarity makes it challenging to determine which skills will be needed and when. Business leaders stress the importance of being proactive in training and education to avoid skills shortages, even though it may not be financially viable for colleges to run training programs until there is demand.

*"We did a bit of research couple of years back, and we know it's a bit between now and 2,030. We're going to need 350,000 new full-time workers in construction just purely around Net Zero and retrofit. So some of that will be around modern efforts of construction, but the bulk of it will be around Net Zero... there's literally millions of houses that need to be retrofitted over the next 10 years. The problem at the moment is that the Government hasn't decided on its sort of national retrofit strategy. So there's a number of different carbon pathways, and until it's decided which pathway is taken, or where it's a combination of pathways, or which pathway starts first, it's whether it's going to be going down the use of hydrogen, or with the decarbonisation of the electrical grid... And because of that, because when those pathways happen and when they start, and how long they're going to go on for, it's difficult to determine their skills. So the construction industry in the areas and training for us to be there, trying to be quite proactive ... if we leave it until we get this strategy published, it's going to be too late."*

*"And obviously the issue with colleges is that they won't run a cohort until it becomes financially viable. So it's okay, saying, we're going to need 350,000. And you know, the principal is saying, well, I need to know ... I need 25 this year, 25 next year 25 and so on and that's where it's very hard. There's a few groups that that are working towards that as a South West Green Construction advisory panel which have got a lot of different train providers and social housing organisations and employers involved. So there are pockets of best practice there but I think it's difficult to know exactly what their skills needs are going to be; heat pumps, installation, you*

*know... I think the one the ones we do know for sure is what is what's called the retrofit coordinators, which is just another word for project manager, really, but project managing specifically around green. So it will be overseeing the whole process of going into a house, assessing what its energy efficiency is now, working out what is needed to retrofit the house, overseeing the retrofit, and then coming back after the retrofit is completed and monitoring it to make sure that it is now decreasing the carbon footprint in the way it was imagined at the start."*

Aligned with this, some businesses are concerned about the balance of knowledge and skills transitioning from gas to alternative technologies. Some of the courses, particularly around plumbing, need to be up to date, but currently have an excessive focus on gas work, which is becoming less relevant. However, whilst gas systems may be phased out, skills will still be needed to cope with their decommissioning. There it is suggested, however, that multi-skilled operatives, who are crucial for day-to-day repairs or general system work, have limited options for training and upskilling.

*"It is just about the environmental side of things, because a lot of the skills cut across, whether we're dealing with the environmental improvement works, whether we're doing the retrofit or new build, whether we're doing environmental improvement or more normal contracting related. I think there's an element of some of the courses, and how they are delivered, so like apprenticeships for around plumbing, for example, if you go beyond the level 2, I think you are required to do an element of gas work, and increasingly that gas work is less relevant as we go away from using gas setups, and there hasn't been necessarily been the training around for how to set up some of the systems that that can produce or others. You know, whether it be a heat source, ground source, that type of setup. Now I would say 6, 7, 8 years ago, it was a real problem to get plumbers to commission and install that alternative setup, whereas now ... it isn't perfect... but it is definitely improving, and a lot of newer plumbers do understand how to do it. The businesses have been through that process, so I think a lot of the skills, if you break them down right down to the sort of the site type level, then the skills are no different whether you're doing retrofit, whether you're doing new build, whether you're doing environmentally focused or not, But it's probably then how that lot is all coordinated into something that is relevant for today's operation."*

*"We have a lot of operatives who are what we refer to as multi skilled, and that that's more about repairs, day to day repairs in our existing properties, rather than the retrofit point or the or the new build point, but who have who have a range of skills, but to try and actually get a decent course for them to do as a general rule is tricky."*

*"What I do think is that a lot of those people, their skills are translatable ... in terms of actually installing heating system that goes with the heat pump, actually, it's the same skills that are used in putting in a wet central heating because they usually install wet systems in exactly the same way. They have some technical differences. They're set up slightly different. They're different sized, whatever it might be, but it's broadly the same knowledge. A gas specialist might have an issue. But most of those are general plumbers, who will carry on doing that, and so therefore there will be some retraining needed to get them to be able to specialise in, say, the heat pump setup, or anything else. We might see a move from, to more electricians, for example, being involved because as we move to things like, maybe PV as part of that, and I think some of the setup on the heat pumps, it's more electrically orientated, or people who are trained in that can translate to that as well."*

### 4.1.3 Skills Providers

- **Where do you source training from?**
  - Are these preferred sources? Why?
  - Where do you look?
- **Can you find all you need here in Cornwall?**
  - If no, what's missing and what do you do about it? (E.g. Basic needs vs specialist needs?)
  - Is this a problem? Does distance/location impact your ability to bring up skills?

Funding to support training will always be helpful, and particularly in the context of the CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) funding and the apprenticeship levy. One participant mentioned that the value of the funding isn't as good as it used to be, and there is a question mark over the value that the CITB is giving back.

In terms of other needs, participants across several sessions expressed interest in modular- or bite-sized learning, allowing employees to enter work with basic skills and regulatorily compliant (e.g. from college and ideally with their CSCS card), to be able to put to work on site or on the shop floor quickly, then to build up a portfolio of capabilities and certifications (and therefore experience) over time. There is a risk that if students are channelled to niche trades too early, they will leave the industry altogether.

*"A massive thing in the last couple of years, that's been huge to us, is being able to access the CITB grant funding for training. That's been massive. Beforehand it wasn't available to us because we attribute it to the CITB each year with a levy, we're now able to get grant funding for certain parts of training back. Without that, we would struggle to be fair as a business because the courses are quite expensive, and it's just sweetened the blow a little bit."*

*"[Workers] would like to learn small parts of other things and just as a, I'm just going to throw it in the mix now... I don't see many night skills of training for certain little small aspects. I've got some guys that want to learn how to solder lead, and you could probably learn that at a night school. And if that was available, they would jump on it tomorrow."*

*"[The CITC funding is] definitely a sweetener, although between these four walls I know that the whole levy scenario and what you get back doesn't always feel balanced. If we were able to just choose to put that money into training, it would be cheaper than paying the levy. So there's a question mark over the value that the CITC is giving back. And I think historically that's been a lot greater and broader than it is now. So I think that they cut back quite a lot on what they were offering businesses and as such, the offer isn't as good as it used to be from that point of view. So I think definitely the funding is good, you still have to pay for the training, it's not free, but some of it, it can be."*

*"One of the things I've found in local colleges here, is when they treat the construction industries, because they teach people bricklaying. Why don't they teach people for the first month of the course general building, all trades, so they then can say, oh, I want to be an electrician, I want to be a bricklayer. They don't know, when the kids go into construction, that they want to do brick laying. It's such a niche market. Normally, when bricklayers used to do plastering and rendering, do lots of other things to go with it, but they just do bricklaying and just focus on that one thing. And they hate it, and they get bored with it and they leave the industry."*

Participants considered the training requirements necessary for delivering contracts to the public sector, particularly in places like schools, hospitals, and police stations. They mentioned that many



are qualifications and training courses that need to be demonstrated in order to work in those environments, which can be challenging for small employers to invest in.

*“DBS checks, if you want to go work in schools your staff need to have done DBS checks and safe guarding. And sometimes, I don't think we've gone as far, they haven't insisted on Prevent, but that's certainly something that's been floated around. So before you even start, you have to have done quite a bit of work and I think it would be really good if that could kind of get packaged up in some way because I think the public sector have got a lot of power in the construction market in terms of what they want contractors to have when they go on site. They have massive asks, and I think there's a bit of, in that contracting process, they've got huge power in terms of how they choose to award contracts.”*

Finding every training need that every different business in Cornwall needs is unlikely, and businesses described how they brought specialist training to their location in Cornwall rather than sending employees out of county for training. This saved them a significant amount of money, and they believe that collaborating with other businesses could lead to even greater cost savings. Some proposed the idea of (say) builders' merchants providing training courses, which could help take pressure off of colleges that can't specialise in every single type of training and whether it was possible for a fund to support this kind of training.

*“We have courses in the [builders] merchants in the morning, which is quite useful ... you get your certification at the end of it. And there's another [qualification] under that guys' belts.”*

Colleges will have a significant part of play in the delivery of technical skills and they need to be able to respond to local employers' needs through collaboration to develop up-to-date training content. This would be a benefit to all, ensuring students acquire the skills most in demand. However, tutors themselves must maintain have up-to-date skills to teach the courses and that needs employers as industry professionals as part of the delivery. Colleges will need to have adaptable spaces that can cater for delivering different skills, or collaborative arrangements with industry to provide specialist teaching spaces.

*“If we can get to we can get to a point where there is true collaboration between a training provider and the employer, so they both benefit – a sort of a module like course where a [college] tutor, who might not have been on the tools for a long time and might not have the necessary skills to teach them ... but if they're able to go to the employer and upskill, then you're also able to use the employees from that employer to come in and do some of the teaching as well, so that they get those current [teaching] skills. And to me that solves so many problems because you haven't got that lack of tutors any more, because you're relying on industry to come in. And you haven't got tutors delivering things which aren't relevant at all to industry, because they're also being upskilled.”*

*“The other thing I wanted to say about this training area is with the specialist skill sets, that you have to travel out of county for, was one of the things that we were talking about; let's bring it in to Cornwall because we were struggling with getting flooring done and typically safety outside flooring in particular. And so we had jobs that we couldn't finish because we couldn't get flossers to commit ... And so we said, right, let's bring it down to us. We can train a group of people in our training area, and I think we have five people that trained and it cost us less than 600 pounds. If we had sent those people up country, staying in a hotel overnight, paid them for two days, standing on them for two days. And you're talking about a lot more. And so I've done some figures and I reckon if we can get a more collaborative group of individuals together ... there might be other things we could do as a collaborative group of businesses where we bring in specialist training, we train our own teams up. It costs less than half price to do it.”*

*“The only other thing I'd say is, I think collaboration is going to be key ... if you're a small business and you're two or three staff, all of this is a massive chunk of time and energy to organise. And I think collaborating and maybe revisiting the services that CITB do offer for members would be attractive. It would feel a nice to make use of the levy if they could help actually take some of the pain. And because they're quite bureaucratic and, you know, you have to fill in these forms to get the funding so the idea of collaboration and support from them centrally [would be good].”*

*“There are lots of different courses, there are lots of organisations, there's been lots of talk about having some sort of construction academy or working to, and you know various main contractors that we work with have had various things, you know, initiatives. We have our own, other housing associations have theirs, other employers have theirs, and that's one thing that's quite good I think about the Cornwall Manufacturing Group is that they seem to have come together to actually provide something [collectively]. And so we end up being a bit disparate. So therefore if we were a bit more collective in bringing things forward, then I think we'd have a bit more buying power, I suppose. I don't necessarily mean just in pure financial terms, but in being able to actually make sure that courses are put together for how we want them to be and to be a bit more coordinated in trying to bring people into the industry.”*

Participants discussed whether money needs to be made available to businesses for providing their own training departments, and potentially sharing the training department perhaps with small nearby businesses. This could help to keep training relevant and up-to-date, reflecting that some centrally delivered college courses, particularly around plumbing (say), are outdated, with an excessive focus on gas work, which is becoming less relevant. Indeed, participants have suggested that in the future the skill of working with gas will no longer be as relevant and people should be able to reach higher levels of certification without having to learn gas.

*“I think the risk is, and we've seen it with offshore, and in oil and gas. It's reactive. It's very reactive. They need so many people... shoot, recruit them... from Poland, the Philippines... get them trained up and get them out there.”*

- **Are skills providers delivering courses and training in the way that works for you? (For example, delivery format, timing, locations)**
  - What do you need, and why?
  - Do they understand your needs?
  - What ideas do you have for how they could better work with your sector or you as a business?
- **What training/skills providers do you particularly rate as good, and for what reasons?**
  - What makes a good provider of skills? What do you expect from them?
  - Any good experiences/examples?

Experiences and opinions of local skills providers is varied, and occasionally out of date. Some are sceptical of the real value of certificated qualifications and how new candidates present themselves, that they lack substance and real understanding of industry. Some described how they implement their own assessments for core skills (around creativity, aptitude and attitude), that so long as there is a fundamental capability and good fit, then the specifics can be trained. Employers described how they have struggled to recruit into well-paid engineer posts finding people with directly relatable experience so are commonly accepting applications from people from other industries where there are parallel underlying skills and approaches.

*"CVs don't mean anything, qualifications don't mean anything anymore, either, because you can buy qualifications."*

*"I've moved over to a skills based interview process, which requires someone to do a practical test. So to make something so we can see how that might work. You know, before you speak to them ... 90% of them failed."*

*"I've brought someone in who was a tank engineer, that passed the skills tests and went on to be a really good cover manufacturer because he was customer facing. He was able to create ... build something ... it had nothing to do with his previous job."*

In consideration of the fundamental skills required for MEM and CR industries, participants have suggested that there should be a basic minimum bar of health and safety training that should be mandatory across all fields, including manufacturing and engineering. They posit that employers shouldn't be responsible for training employees in this basic knowledge, but rather for employing them to do the work.

*"I think we have taken a strategy of growing our own within the business because it's hard to recruit. So I think we've got four apprentices at the moment. I think something that the colleges can do, which will really help us on the ground floor, is if they can get all of their apprentices CSCS card trained so that they come out ready to go - that would be massive. So what happens with apprentices is, even though they've done their apprenticeship course, gone and done with their college course, the CSCS card scheme is something that we need to have to go and work on the kind of clients that we're working with, and it just means you've got to put somebody through a whole lot of other training that isn't provided as part of the course."*

*"A guy comes out of an apprenticeship in his first year or first three months or, even he's completed his first 12 months, he hasn't got a basic health and safety certificate. I've always felt, I think it's important that the college, I'm not going to say should provide that... we pay for the course, it's not a problem, but I do feel as a basic starting point for any apprentice situation that they should have a basic minimum bar of the minimum health and safety course."*

There is a sense that those commissioning and setting up courses, tutors and course planners, need to better understand the construction/retrofit industry a lot better; that very prescribed, traditional number of classroom/learning hours clocked is not prohibitive to getting people skilled and work ready. Some have struggled to find multi-skilled apprentices and that the rigidity of academic schedules can make it challenging to make things work from the business point of view, where businesses have limited capacity to support but colleges need volume to make courses financially viable.

*"There was a skills boot camp program last summer. I made an application to it. It was a complete pain, because there was a requirement to achieve a certain number of hours. I think I needed to have 20 h worth of learning and I couldn't... no, it was much longer than that! .... Anyway, I struggled to come up with enough courses to fill the time, because actually to convert from doing a gas boiler to a heat pump engineer didn't take that long. There are a few key things you need to have understood, and the way that we are doing it on an individual basis of retrofits is we'll tend to hold your hand along the way. We'll give you a hard day, go ask these questions, and then off you go and do it, and we'll take you through that process, and you learn on the job, which for a lot of trades people is a good way to do it, because they're not off the tools - they're actually learning by doing - and that all works quite well. But that doesn't tend to lend itself to a structured NVQ."*

*"We've been talking about offering multi-skilled apprentices because we want to take on 2 or 3 to go, and probably half a dozen over a year, so our preference would be to take a couple of*

*people, and then another quarter take a couple of people more, another quarter take a couple of people, and so on... actually, we've basically struggled with that, because without necessarily, I mean it's not an issue per se, I think that they wanted to set a number of people to be able to make it worth their while running the course. I understand that, and we couldn't necessarily [guarantee]. Cornwall College already had that course going and they have been a bit more flexible."*

Navigating around the network of skills provision can be difficult for many. However, participants have described how they are not 'linked in' to colleges and that colleges don't know what they need. There is a sense that there is a lot of silo delivery without consideration of what businesses really need. Suggestions were made for an online portal where skills providers for businesses could post courses and training schedules, but also for private sector trainers and even other businesses that had knowledge to share.

*"So there's this sort of quite a lot in silos already goes on in the county, and I'm sure if we could somehow find a way of joining forces or even just having that communication, letting everyone know."*

*"It would be good, there's lots of different training providers doing lots of different things that are the same, aren't they? And actually, it would be really good if there was a central website where you could say, I want to do this, where can I do it, how much is it going to cost me, when are the courses going? That would be really helpful."*

T-levels, which are vocational qualifications designed to provide practical skills and experience for students. One participant interested in taking on T-level students from Truro & Penwith and Cornwall Colleges, particularly those studying surveying and accounting software, described difficulties with engaging with the young people.

*"What we were really interested in was a T-level that Truro College and Camborne College were running, which is a surveyor, and ... what is it called ... a surveyor and something T-level. I engaged both Truro & Penwith and Cornwall College all around those T levels, and we would have loved to have taken on some of those T-level people, you know. One day a week in the office. And actually, what it actually boils down to is they do a year of general surveying type stuff. So that's more construction related, or on site. But the second half of it is actually running a CAD software, which is what we use everyday to 3D model. Despite all the engagement and a couple of emails saying, Hello, apprentice, please contact me to sort out a a..., you know, the on the job training, the one day a week in the within the business... I had a couple of those emails and never got the young person actually contacting me to take those up. So whether that's because they went somewhere else, or don't know."*

Participants have described how colleges skills offers are changing, that they are disposing real estate due to the high cost of maintaining the buildings and a lack of students to fill them. One described the challenge of working with their local college, noting their underfunding but also an experience of poor customer service. Turnover and lack of staff can impact funding applications and apprenticeship programs, and participants highlighted the importance of investment in staff and skills in the colleges to build quality and deliver the required service. There is a degree of feeling a disconnect – that businesses release apprentices to go to college but there is lack of feedback on the value and there isn't a commercial approach or direct connection to businesses to demonstrate value delivered.

*"There was another scenario just before Christmas ... but about a week before the college was due to break up, I think someone banged the table and said, you must get your apprentices up to date with your visits, with their portfolio pieces. So, in the background, I know it's hugely*

*understaffed compared to what it used to be. A portfolio of apprentices now for an apprenticeship adviser is absolutely enormous compared to 10 years ago. For someone to go you have to get this done now a week before... I was saying, I really wish we'd had a bit of notice because we're trying to help support [our apprentices]. Not every employee will be so supportive or understanding of that. They need investment in these skills and in the staff that are running these things to build the quality, to deliver the service that's required to make that whole job role a career that people want to be involved with."*

*"I don't really know enough about what the apprentices actually do at college other than, I guess... I hear bits and pieces about that they haven't done very much in a training session. ... sometimes they'll go in and they'll do an hour's worth of activity as they see it." – "Sometimes that's been down to staff and tutors."*

*"If you are paying, to want to go on a training course for eight hours, and I only got an hour of it, you'd say something wouldn't you?! And that's what we're doing, because you have to go to college. They have to have that training in college once a week. I'm not sure that time is spent efficiently and productively, like it's not spent in a commercial way. But I'm saying that as a second or third hand pair of ears – that's coming from the apprentice rather than my actually seeing it."*

Apprenticeship standards set by larger businesses can be difficult for smaller employers to meet and businesses ask for the involvement of smaller businesses in designing the standards.

*"The standards in the apprenticeships can sometimes be quite difficult to achieve, and they're quite specific. They've been written by groups of larger employers who, you know, they may well be able to offer a range of opportunities to the apprentices on the courses. But when they actually come out and ... you need to get the standard met, it's not always easy for smaller employers who maybe have less flex."*

- **Is it important for training you undertake to be accredited?**
  - If no, what types are not accredited? Any good examples?
  - If yes, why?
- **What level or type of qualifications matter most?**
  - Does this vary by type of job?

Whilst accredited qualifications matter, certainly for demonstrating compliance or suitability for organisations to meet the requirements of some public sector contracts – as well as to employees who may wish to later take their skills elsewhere, employers need a demonstrably experienced and competent workforce with a wide (flexible) skillset. It can be a disincentive for small businesses (in particular) to invest in training, recognising the challenges of retaining young apprentices (say) who may leave for better-paying jobs or change career paths altogether. Participants discussed the importance of paying employees enough to retain them and then the need for employers to create a positive workplace culture that encourages employee loyalty. There is a risk to investing in training employees who may leave and the potential vulnerabilities of specific skills.

*"In year one, you pay the apprenticeship wage regardless, or you can do, but we've found that that doesn't compete to attract people. In year one I think ay about £5.50 an hour. Year two and as soon as they hit the age of 19, either one of those thresholds, it then goes up to minimum wage, which is now going to be £10.41 or something. I can't remember exactly what it is but from April it'll be over £10 pounds an hour. So that's a big investment every week, week in, week*

*out, in that you have to pay somebody when they're not productive. But it's a really great way to learn. So there is an attraction there to hire somebody who is under the age of 18 who's cheaper because if you hire someone over the age of 18, you then have to contribute towards their training fees. And it's not a massive amount, but it's still something and apprentices are I think that we've seen them as a long term investment but you have to hope they stay."*

*"In our team, we have people who can plaster rather than a specific plasterer. And actually the people who in our team, who are able to do a few different things are massively valuable because they're the most flexible people, multi-skilled, we can put them in different environments. One day they might be doing a bit of this, tomorrow they might be fitting fire doors. They're also the people that have got a really good understanding of how it projects slot together, so they're naturally people that might move into more site management type roles."*

Some hold the view that that degrees and qualifications don't hold as much weight as they used to and that aptitude is more important.

*"I look for aptitude. I look for personal skills because my job is to face customers every day and they work for customers on site and they need to better communicate. They need to be able to ignore their mobile phones and they need to be job focused and all of those things I've found by watching people around who I think might be useful for my company."*

#### 4.1.4 Getting the LSIP Right

- **What do you hope will be the benefit to your business (or sector) if we get the LSIP right?**
  - What do you hope will be available to you from the colleges or other skills providers?
  - What about shift in culture or attitudes towards skills provision? Or is this already OK?
- **Generally speaking, what needs to change around skills provision in Cornwall?**
  - What would be the single-most important improvement?
  - What messages would you like to send back to the Government/DoE for improving skills?

Participants commonly reflected on the calibre and ready-for-work experience of young people, and they consider this needs to start with better connections between schools and industry, how to provide more meaningful work experience for students, as well as about improving professional development for post-16 students. Participants recognised that these are complicated issues, and conversations touched upon on issues such as mobility and transportation, and the need for better preparation of students for the dynamics of the workforce and adapting to new environments. Also, how practical skills taught in school may not necessarily align with the needs of modern industries. Whilst work experience at year 10 in schools is widely considered important, there is some confusion over whether it is sufficient and delivering enough value to young people as well as employers. Employers want young people with a mature outlook and 'professionally' ready for the workplace. This 'professional development' or basic life skills, needs to be taught through schools to give young people the best chance of success in life and employment.

*"What we need is to keep teaching young people in a general education, not focused education. But this is the route you're going to go because most young people I speak to haven't got a clue where they want to go when they're at school, and yet they're being forced into channels that they don't necessarily like because that's what the education system wants to do."*

*"If we're only giving them one shot at one thing in year 10, they've only ever really tried that one thing. So actually, right, you know you don't want to be a chef, but you don't know what you want to be because you haven't been given the opportunity to do any other work."*

*"When I was at Falmouth Marine School, we did a class called professional development, and that was an absolute joke when you're only 16 or 17 and you think, well, how does this help me? But actually, 'professional development' is exactly what we're talking about, which is how do you give a professional persona to said employer? And it's those kind of classes. How do you apply for a mortgage? When should you have kids? By the age of 21 before you're financially stable? Or actually, you know, there's so many things that aren't the basics to kids."*

*"They're not taught at base level grassroots level, i.e. at school secondary school how to operate with an employer. They're not told, right, when you turn up to work this is how you should conduct yourself. This is what is expected ... when you walk in and you need to be customer facing or you need to deal with problem solving, which is most of what the kids have to do. They have to work it out for themselves."*

*"It's coming down to the reality of business ... the reality of running a business. One of my big hobby horses is that basic finance should be taught - and I'm talking how capitalism works, how global economies work, the real straight interest rate, what is financial management that you with the reality of actually growing up and having to run your own finances. If I were to be taught that in school, I think I would just go completely in a different direction. But because people don't understand things... they don't think it actually it matters to them"*

#### 4.1.5 Cases: Innovations and inspiring young people

The following are two extended quotations offered by participants at the events, providing examples of initiatives of some companies in Cornwall that are working with or supporting further education providers to deliver skills in a different way.

##### **Bespoke Training Centre**

*"So when you when you're coming up to your apprenticeship end point assessment, you need to practice skills and it's going to be examined in detail tests and so on. It's not always easy to practice those skills on client sites where if they bodge something up, it's a commercial bodge and it's got to be paid for, but you can go and practice doing things in an area that's safe.*

*So we've got these different bays set up for different skill sets. For instance, somewhere they can go to practice. Secondly, because it's a commercial opportunity for us to hire those bays out and make some money out of the space that we've got in the longer term. And thirdly, for a philanthropic benefit because we can and the CITB have actually supported us to run a little project.*

*We're going to have 16 schoolchildren in next week doing a rotation of different construction activities They're going to do carpentry, masonry, plastering and they're going to do tiling and just have a go for 45 minutes, rotate around and they will get a chance to have a go. And the idea being that when, if they are thinking that they want to get into construction, they'll be thinking of us when they come to think about who they want to apply for their apprenticeships in the longer term.*

*And, because we need as an industry to do more, this is more important really to inspire people to get into this. Because when you look at how many people are actually in trades in Cornwall, we're*

*a lot higher than the national average for people who are in skilled trades. And you could argue we're at saturation point, that as many people who want to do this in our population are actually doing it, so what do we do now? We have to push harder to inspire more people to want to join. I believe having an experience of it is that you can only do what you know ... And I think a lot of people are only able to understand careers based on what they see other people doing in their families and their friendship groups or things that they've been exposed to.*

*So, hopefully we'll give those students an opportunity to practice and actually when we work experience students in, some of them come out saying I thought I wanted to be this but I've really enjoyed this this week, so that's now what I want to do, and they've changed their mind about where they want to head."*

### **Manufacturing Academy**

*"There's been a lot of fed up people years not being able to get people involved, not being able to engage with schools, not being able to get young people into manufacturing or engineering, whatever it might be. So 18 months ago we went to Cornwall College, and we talked about the problem, and we said we would like to start engaging it as early as possible with manufacturing as soon as possible. We came up with this this academy that we had running now for about 6 months.*

*So what it's saying that is, 14 year olds who are taking their GCSEs. We've created a level 2 certificate in manufacturing and engineering, which is same equivalent level as the GCSE. And the curriculum for that was dictated by our members. So we talked to the college about what we wanted to learn about what we didn't want them to learn about. And they went away, and they pulled together various different modules in order to hit those things. So when we started talking to schools about it, we got some of the companies because we go talk to the careers advisors the teachers and we managed to get 2 schools involved. And we thought, okay, how are we going to launch this, how do we get kids interested? And we need to talk to the parents because they're the ones who can actually make the decision on what these kids are going to do. So we invited the parents in and we presented to them about manufacturing Cornwall and all the really interesting things actually do happily call people don't know about.*

*We can get 15 kids here into the first group for the first year. Start off small and see how we go. We've ended up with 3 groups. We've got 45 kids, a 14 doing our manufacturing and engineering level 2 qualification. And that is just one beauty group. So it's 2 year course, so they'll be moving into their second year in September, and then we are hoping to do Group 2 in Cornwall College in Camborne, and also group 3 in Bodmin, Callywith so we working with both colleges, both delivering the same thing for us. But we're gonna start spreading the geography right across the county. So next year we should have close to 200 14 year olds, doing manufacturing and engineering at the age of 14, and then the plan is to start a pathway for those kids to go on to do friendships if they wish to go on to do further education if they wish, A' levels in maths, STEM, you know, and things like that.*

*And you know the thought processes is, great, if we get 200 kids involved in it early doors fantastic. If 100 of those end up going on to do an engineering qualification, fantastic. If 50 of them go into a career in manufacturing and engineering Cornwall. Great. So you know the attrition will be there, but we just felt if we didn't do something about it that we're still going to be moaning about in 5 years time.*

*So you know it would be great for other people to get involved in this with us, but you know we want to look after manufacturing in the first instance, because we're trying to address our own*



*gaps. But if we can make it bigger and bigger, and we can have, you know, several couple of thousand kids doing this each year in manufacturing and engineering that might help out Celtic Sea Power and the mining, etc., etc., and the boat building.*

*So it's early days, but it's been very successful. The kids are just past their first set of exams and they're just about to do a different factory visit each month. So we've got the whole group of kids coming to our place in June. I think they're going to go to different factories throughout the year as well. And then they're also going to be doing a project for the second year where the Manufacturing Company is going to help from with that project depending on what it is. So that different expertise coming in from the different industries. So it's something new, we think that nobody's really done before. In fact, I just I was in London I was in London on Thursday last week for the Make UK awards, which is the national manufacturing body, and we came second for developing future talent."*

## 5 Six focus areas of the CloS LSIP

This section provides a conclusive view of the headline issues for the six areas of focus for the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly LSIP.

### 5.1 Manufacturing, Engineering and Marine (MEM)

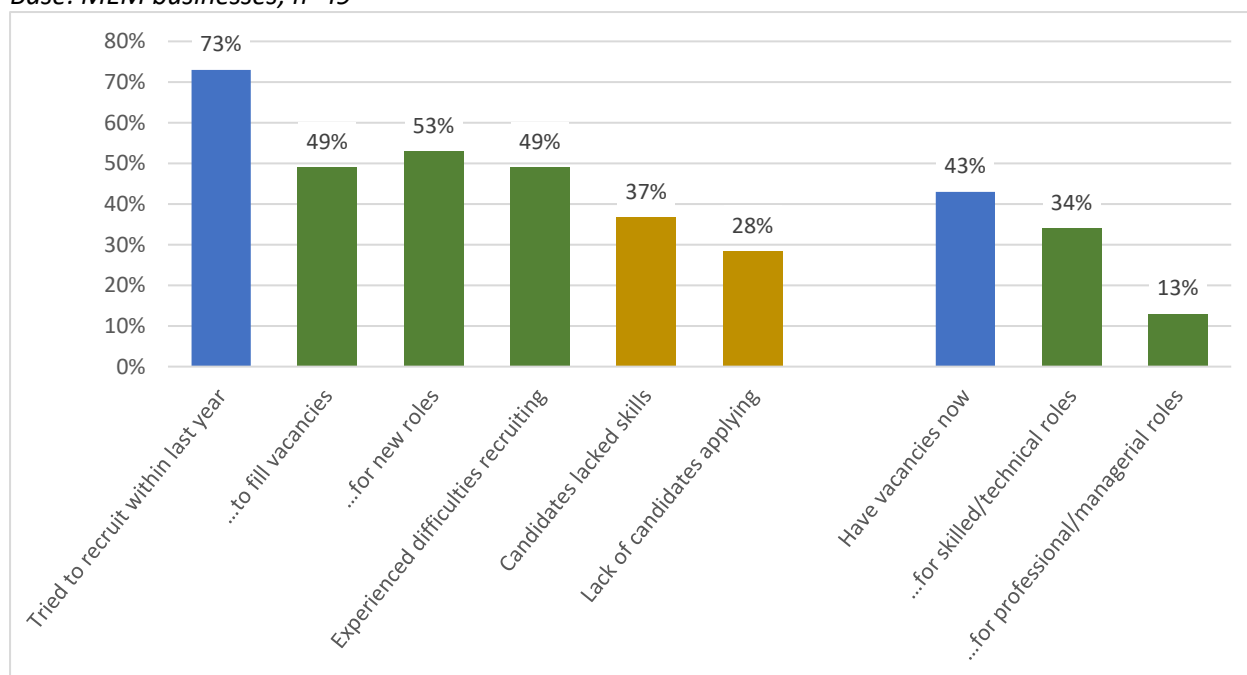
**Profile:** The survey included 49 MEM businesses (18% of all respondents), 78% of which were limited companies and 18% sole traders or partnerships. They have 33 employees on average (mean) and turnover £2.33m on average. More than half (55%) have a business objective for rapid or moderate/sustainable growth within the next three years.

**Recruitment & skills issues:** Three quarters (73%) of MEM businesses surveyed have recruited or tried to recruit within the previous 12 months, two thirds to fill permanent roles left vacant but 72% for new permanent positions. Two thirds (67%) have struggled to recruit, primarily because candidates lack necessary skills (75%) but also a lack of supply of candidates (58%). A quarter (25%) report that candidates lack a work ethic or attitude required for the MEM workplace. Unfulfilled roles create an increased workload for other staff (96%) and hold back MEM businesses to improve productivity (71%) or expand the business (67%).

Figure 5.1

#### Summary of recruitment challenges

Base: MEM businesses; n=49



**Levels of qualifications:** 43% of MEM businesses currently have vacancies, and 34% of all MEM businesses have vacancies for “skilled manual/technical” positions (7.3 vacancies on average). These vacancies are hard to find: 27% have been trying to fill for more than six months (60% more than three months), compared to unskilled and clerical roles which are mostly filled in under three months. A third of those trying to recruit are turning business away as a result of insufficient capacity.

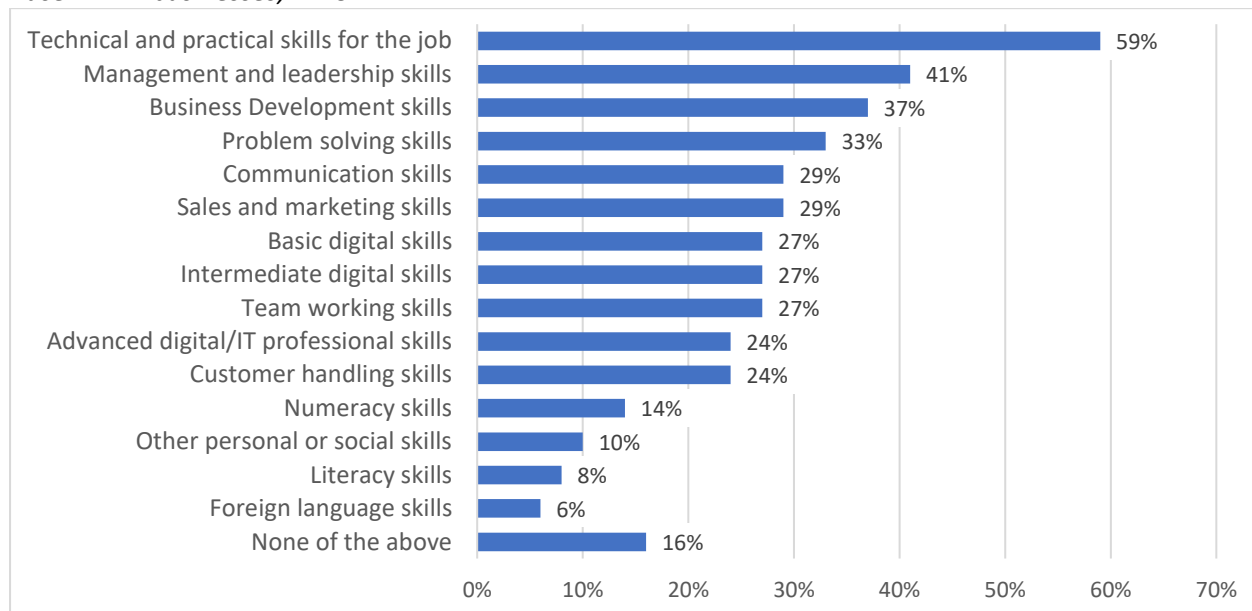
**Training – vocational & leadership/management:** Six in ten MEM businesses feel that ‘technical and practical skills for the job’ need improving within parts of their workforce. Specific technical skills include ‘professional engineering’, CAD, machine operating skills, electronics, glass making, and

electrical diagnostics. Other forms of **vocational training** features strongly: 33% have a need for ‘problem solving’, 29% for communication skills and 27% want better team workers. Two thirds of MEM businesses (67%) say they have a formal training plan for some or all parts of their workforce.

Figure 5.2

**Q. Within your workforce, which of the following skills do you feel need improving?**

Base: MEM businesses; n=49



Whilst the vast majority of MEM businesses feel they have leadership and management skills necessary for managing finance (98%) and the vast majority say they have the skills to support the health and wellbeing of employees (88%) at the ‘corporate’ level, 41% state have a need to improve **management and leadership skills** at least within some parts of their workforce. (N.B. Of the 43% of MEM businesses with current vacancies, 41% of are trying to fill “professional/managerial” positions.) A half (49%) of MEM businesses consider ‘leadership & management’ to be a priority development area for their business over the next three years, for which they say they would likely seek training.

**Training delivery:** 35% of MEM businesses participating say they have training or skills development requirements that their business has been unable to source locally (and that they would have expected to be able to find in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly), compared to the average 23%. This required training includes ‘textile training’, ‘mechanical, electrical and hydraulic engineering’, ‘leadership and coaching’, ‘food safety level 3’, ‘green skills’, ‘change management’, ‘forklift courses’, ‘engineering degrees’, and ‘electronics training and fault finding’. A half of these (53%) have then sourced and booked the training they need elsewhere. Training that is delivered ‘on the job’ in a live, practical scenario is favoured by the vast majority of MEMs (88%) play, though online training that is pre-recorded or pre-fabricated is the least favoured with just 38% favouring

Training that is delivered ‘on the job’ in a live, practical scenario is favoured by the vast majority (88%) of participating businesses. All modes have a role to play, though all modes have a role to play; online training delivered live/in-real-time would be used by 41%.

**Providers:** 10% of the MEM businesses participating perceive the level of understanding that providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly have of the skills needs and challenges faced by their organisation to be good or excellent. 57% have used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly to help with the skills needs and challenges

faced by your organisation, with another 10% who have spoken with but not used. Of those that have used, about two thirds (64%) are fairly or extremely satisfied with the training received.

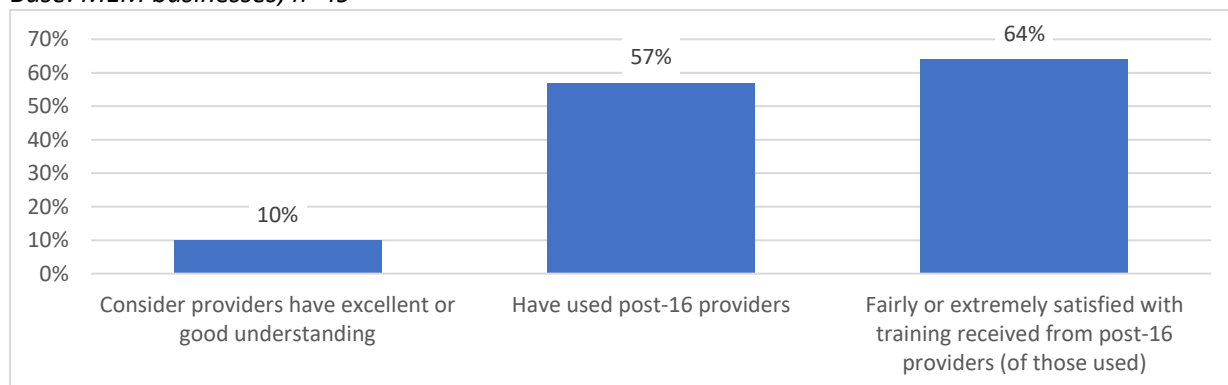
Figure 5.3

**Q. How would you rate the understanding providers of post-16 technical education have...? And**

**Q. Have you spoken with and/or used any...? And**

**Q. How satisfied are you with the training received to meet the needs and challenges faced by your organisation?**

Base: MEM businesses; n=49



### Cross-cutting themes:

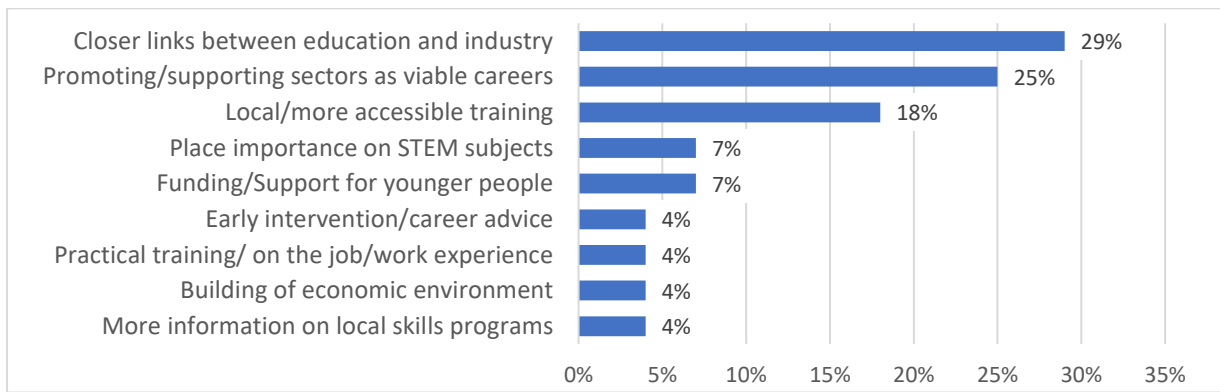
- Eight in ten MEM businesses (80%) have undertaken activities and/or have policies in place that address awareness or actively support Environmental, Social and Governance (or ESG) principles. A half (51%) say that their business actively tries to recruit a diverse and inclusive workforce (slightly lower than the average of 57%), 63% have a written and published policy relating to equality and diversity, and 57% have a policy relating to environmental sustainability – both higher than average.
- 27% say there is a need for skills improvement in their workforce for ‘intermediate digital skills (e.g. selling online/using standard software)’ and 24% for ‘advanced digital/IT professional skills’. 15% of MEMs put ‘computer/IT/digital skills’ in among their top 3 skills needs for the next 12 months.

**Asks of the LSIP:** When MEM participants were asked about their suggestions for how the Local Skills Improvement Plan could help the delivery of skills and/or skills progression for their business, the most commonly cited response was ‘closer links between education and industry’ (29%) followed by ‘promoting/supporting all sectors as viable careers’ (25%) and ‘local/more accessible training’ (18%). This aligns with several comments from discussion groups which expressed concern about misapprehensions of what jobs in engineering or manual professions are like – therefore introduction to these types of jobs through education and school experiences would be an investment for the long term.

Figure 5.4

**Q. Overall and finally, what suggestions would you make for the Local Skills Improvement Plan to help the delivery of skills and/or skills progression for your business? (CODED)**

Base: All MEM businesses making suggestion(s); n=28



## 5.2 Construction and retrofit (CR)

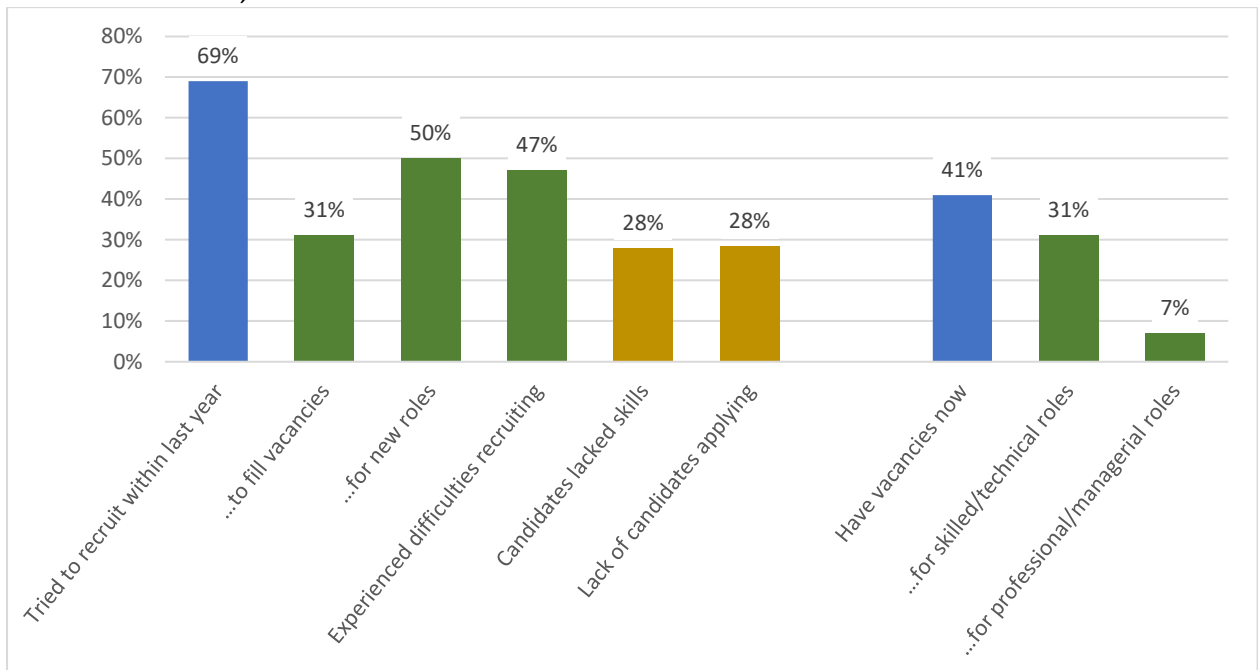
**Profile:** The survey included 32 CR businesses (12% of all respondents), 78% of which were limited companies and 16% sole traders or partnerships. They have 21 employees on average (mean) and turnover £1.62m on average. A half (50%) have a business objective for rapid or moderate/sustainable growth within the next three years.

**Recruitment & skills issues:** Seven in ten (69%) CR businesses surveyed have recruited or tried to recruit within the previous 12 months, 73% to fill new permanent positions and 45% to fill roles left vacant. Two thirds (68%) have struggled to recruit, primarily because candidates lack necessary skills (60%) and a lack of supply of candidates (60%). Unfulfilled roles create an increased workload for other staff (93%) and make it difficult to expand the business (73%) or improve productivity (60%).

Figure 5.5

### Summary of recruitment challenges

Base: CR businesses; n=32



**Levels of qualifications:** 41% of CR businesses currently have vacancies, and 31% of all CR businesses have vacancies for “skilled manual/technical” positions (1.6 vacancies on average). These vacancies are hard to find: 30% have been trying to fill for more than six months (60% more than three

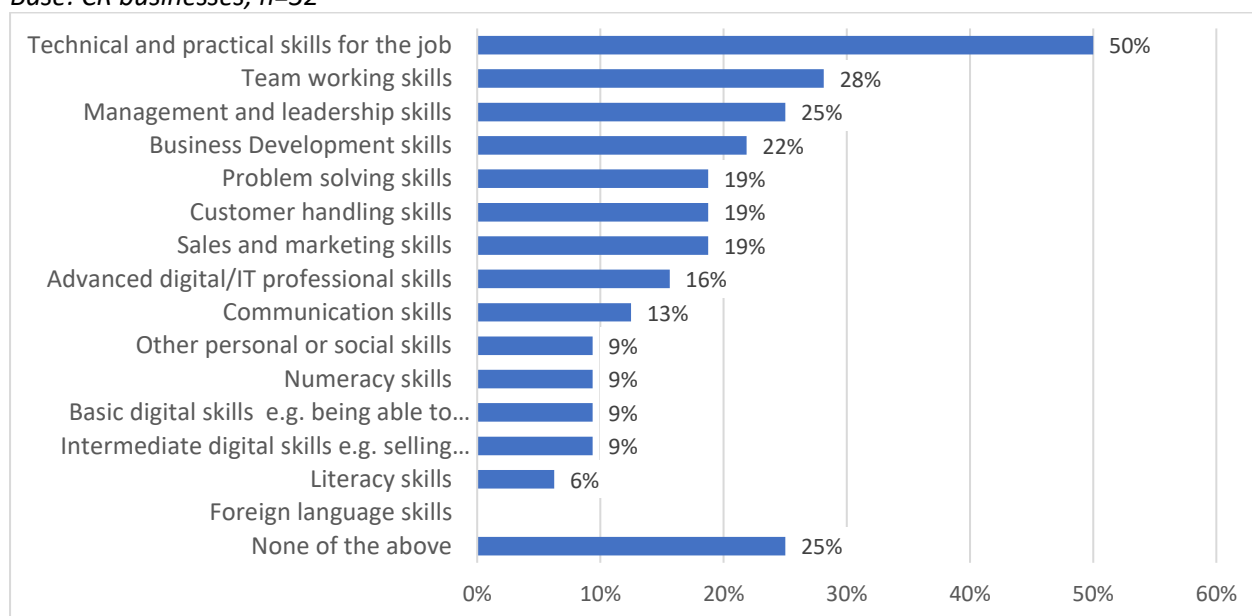
months. A quarter of those trying to recruit are turning business away as a result of insufficient capacity.

**Training – vocational & leadership/management:** A half of the CR businesses feel that ‘technical and practical skills for the job’ need improving within parts of their workforce. Specific technical skills include groundwork skills, CAD drawing, and SEO training (for online marketing) . Other forms of **vocational training** features strongly: 28% want better team workers, 22% to support business development, 19% each have a need for ‘problem solving’, ‘customer handling’ and ‘sales & marketing’. 59% of CR businesses say they have a formal training plan for some or all parts of their workforce.

Figure 5.6

**Q. Within your workforce, which of the following skills do you feel need improving?**

Base: CR businesses; n=32



Whilst all the CR businesses participating feel they have leadership and management skills necessary for managing finance (100%) and the vast majority say they have the skills to support the health and wellbeing of employees (94%) at the ‘corporate’ level, 25% state have a need to improve **management and leadership skills** at least within some parts of their workforce. (N.B. Of the 41% of CR businesses with current vacancies, only 17% of are trying to fill “professional/managerial” positions.) 38% of CR businesses consider ‘leadership & management’ to be a priority development area for their business over the next three years, for which they say they would likely seek training.

**Training delivery:** 19% of CR businesses participating say they have training or skills development requirements that their business has been unable to source locally (and that they would have expected to be able to find in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly), compared to the average 23%. This required training includes ‘for working on rooftops’, specialised technical training, ‘stone masonry’, ‘advanced geophysical skills’, ‘stair building’, ‘building windows/doors’, and an ‘NVQ in cladding’. A third of these (33%) have then sourced and booked the training they need elsewhere. Training that is delivered ‘on the job’ in a live, practical scenario is favoured by the vast majority of CRs (83%), though online training that is pre-recorded or pre-fabricated is the least favoured with just 33% favouring

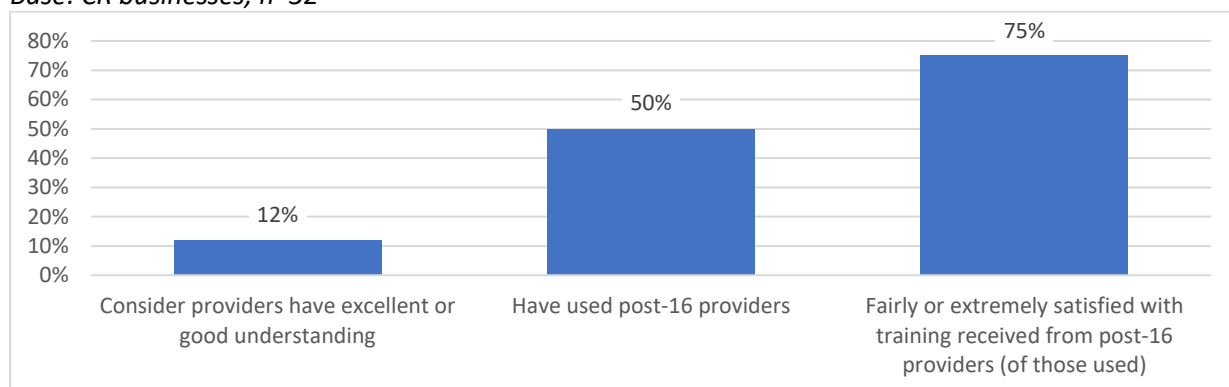
Training that is delivered ‘on the job’ in a live, practical scenario is favoured by the vast majority (83%) of participating businesses. All modes have a role to play, though all modes have a role to play; online training delivered live/in-real-time would be used by 54%.

**Providers:** 12% of the CR businesses participating perceive the level of understanding that providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly have of the skills needs and challenges faced by their organisation to be good or excellent. 50% have used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly to help with the skills needs and challenges faced by their organisation, with another 9% who have spoken with but not used. Of those that have used, three quarters (75%) are fairly or extremely satisfied with the training received.

Figure 5.7

**Q. How would you rate the understanding providers of post-16 technical education have...? And**  
**Q. Have you spoken with and/or used any...? And**  
**Q. How satisfied are you with the training received to meet the needs and challenges faced by your organisation?**

Base: CR businesses; n=32



**Cross-cutting themes:**

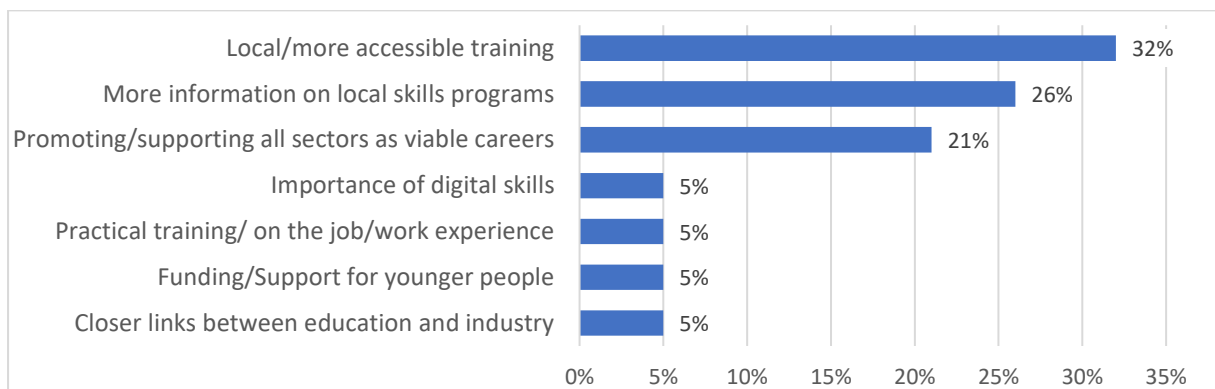
- Three quarters of CR businesses (75%) have undertaken activities and/or have policies in place that address awareness or actively support Environmental, Social and Governance (or ESG) principles. Less than half (41%) say that their business actively tries to recruit a diverse and inclusive workforce (somewhat lower than the average of 57%), 50% have a written and published policy relating to equality and diversity, and 53% have a policy relating to environmental sustainability (higher than average).
- Just 9% say there is a need for skills improvement in their workforce for ‘intermediate digital skills (e.g. selling online/using standard software)’ and 16% for ‘advanced digital/IT professional skills’. Just 7% of CRs put ‘computer/IT/digital skills’ in among their top 3 skills needs for the next 12 months.

**Asks of the LSIP:** When CR participants were asked about their suggestions for how the Local Skills Improvement Plan could help the delivery of skills and/or skills progression for their business, the most commonly cited response was ‘local/more accessible training’ (32%) followed by ‘more information needed on local skills programs’ (26%) and ‘promoting/supporting all sectors as viable careers’ (21%).

Figure 5.8

**Q. Overall and finally, what suggestions would you make for the Local Skills Improvement Plan to help the delivery of skills and/or skills progression for your business? (CODED)**

Base: All CR businesses making suggestion(s); n=19



### 5.3 Digital

The development of skills for a digital economy is a cross-cutting theme for the LSIP. It spans the need for functional skills, such as for workers who may be in non-digital, manual occupations to be able to engage with digital administrative processes (e.g. electronic timesheets, online training, booking systems, digital apparatus) through to advanced applications that are innovating industries like engineering, manufacturing and construction.

Key findings from the research pertaining to digital include the following.

- Businesses were asked to consider any **significant or major developments** specific to their industry or type of business that they are going to have to prepare or train staff for. Around 10% specifically mentioned changes around digital or related technology; including agri-robotics, electric vehicle servicing, virtual reality for visualising design of spaces, software relating to new housing legislation, digitising business operations through software such as Salesforce and the Microsoft environment, systems to improve communications and reports to clients, PLC programming, meeting obligations for Making Tax Digital, developing technology such as the 3G switch off and opportunities to apply improved software processing, coping with increased automation within engineering.
- 20% of all businesses responding (27% within MEM, though only 9% within CR) feel **basic digital skills** (e.g. being able to use the internet/find information online) need improving within their workforce. 24% say that **intermediate digital skills** (e.g. selling online/using standard software) needs improving (27% within MEM, though only 9% within CR) and 23% need **advanced digital/IT professional skills** to be improved (24% for MEM, 16% for CR). Other skills specifically mentioned include CAD drawing, social media, SEO training and skills using MS Excel spreadsheeting.
- Most businesses are able to find the training that they need from **locally based providers** (77%). Of those that can't, the types of skills they're looking for are generally not digital skills related, though a few make mention of difficulties finding training for social media, advanced IT skills, and digital advertising.
- Large amounts of skills training are delivered online. 50% of all businesses participating favour training that is **online and delivered live/in-real-time** and 38% like training that is **online by pre-recorded or pre-fabricated courses**.
- Overall, 47% businesses anticipate that within the next 3 years the type or level of skills they will need from their employees will increase. In terms of the **type of occupations or roles** affected, about 30% specifically mentioned digital or technology related advancements.



These include ability to digitise business administration (e.g. stock control, Making Tax Digital, finance), digital marketing, general confidence and capability around technology and computerisation, digital marketing, agri-robotics, design, AI and generally 'all across the board'.

- Businesses asked what are going to be in their **top three skills needs** in the next 12 months, 14% overall (third place to marketing/sales and customer service skills, both 21%) were responses relating to computer/IT/digital themes.
- **Cloud computing** is a priority development area for over a quarter (27%) of all businesses over the next three years and 31% of MEM businesses. **Robotics, automation or AI** is a priority area for one in ten overall (10%) and 22% of MEM businesses.
- 40% of businesses believe they have the leadership and management skills to support the **making the most of digital and AI (Artificial Intelligence)**, 57% say they do not.

## 5.4 Green

The development of skills for Net Zero and the green economy is a cross-cutting theme for the LSIP. It spans the need for businesses to adjust to new legislation, leadership issues relating to principles around ESG and responsible business, decarbonisation and changes to technology as a result of the green economy (e.g. electrification of vehicles).

Key findings from the research pertaining to green economy include the following.

- Businesses were asked to consider any **significant or major developments** specific to their industry or type of business that they are going to have to prepare or train staff for. Around 5% specifically mentioned changes around green technology and environmental changes; including being able to maintain and repair electric vehicles and dealing with battery technology, skills for wind power, regulatory changes such as around plastics use, water conservation, heat and power generation from anaerobic digestion systems, carbon-neutral housing and upskilling for greener construction, and solar power technology.
- Most businesses are able to find the training that they need from **locally based providers** (77%). Of those that can't, the types of skills they're looking for are generally not oriented to Net Zero and addressing green economy.
- Overall, 47% businesses anticipate that within the next 3 years the type or level of skills they will need from their employees will increase. In terms of the **type of occupations or roles** affected, about 7% specifically mentioned developments relating to green economy, most commonly related to electrification of vehicles and renewable technologies. Unless the issue has a direct relation to core business, most businesses are not considering a wider scope to green economy.
- Under half of businesses (43%) claim to have a written and published company policy relating to **environmental sustainability**, such as waste reduction, carbon reduction etc. and just 23% overall have invested in training related to the topic. Both higher than the average: 57% of MEM businesses and 53% of CR businesses have policies. 37% of the MEMs have invested in training and 22% of CR businesses.
- **Sustainability and Net Zero** is a priority development area for 43% of all businesses over the next three years, and 45% of MEM businesses but just 31% of CR businesses. **Meeting ESG**

**principles** is a priority development area for 41% overall, though just 37% of MEM businesses and 31% of CR businesses.

- 56% of all businesses believe they have the leadership and management skills to **actively pursue environmental and green skills policies**, 43% say they do not.

## 5.5 Work readiness

One common grievance from employers, and often seemingly directed at young people, are candidates' lack of functional and communication skills, lack of a work ethic and their general readiness to fulfil their role in the workplace.

Key findings from the research pertaining to work readiness include the following.

- Three quarters (73%) of businesses surveyed have recruited or tried to recruit within the previous 12 months, of which nearly two thirds (63%) had difficulty recruiting. The reasons behind those difficulties include finding enough candidates (52%), candidates missing the necessary skills (49%) and then '**candidates lacking the work ethic or attitude we are looking for**', expressed by about one in five (18%).
- Four in ten businesses participating in the survey currently have vacancies that they are trying to fill, and this is equally true of the MEM and CR key sectors. On average, there are 1.7 vacancies for every business participating in the research. 44% of all the vacancies require **zero or less than a year's experience** – jobs which evidently have a relatively low bar to access, suitable for candidates who can present fundamental aptitude and attitude for which employers will provide the necessary training.
- Considering their existing workforce, 80% of employers identify one or more skills they feel need improving. 29% have identified a need for better **communication skills**, 29% for problem solving skills, 17% for better **numeracy**, 16% for 'other **personal or social skills**' and 16% for better **literacy** skills. 43% said they had a need for one or more of these skills to be improved within their workforce. Some 'deficits' in work readiness specifically mentioned include time keeping and time management, resilience, adaptability, presentability, 'common sense' and basic work ethic and employability skills.
- Addressing work readiness and improving those skills amongst a workforce, requires a workforce that is **prepared to learn and improve**. Businesses were asked what the main barriers were to some staff needing improved skills in their job. Whilst logistics and opportunity dominate reasons, some employers identified an 'unwillingness of staff to undertake training' (5%), 'lack of motivation' (3%), an 'inability of workforce to keep up with change' (3%) and 'lack of ambition' (2%). In total, 7% of businesses said one or more of these barriers applied.
- When asked what are going to be among their top three skills needs in the next 12 months, 10% of businesses cited issues relating to **work ethic** (including time management) and 15% cited **interpersonal/communication skills**.
- Many businesses responded positively to the request for "**asks**" of the LSIP, which included suggestions pertaining to preparing the future workforce to be ready for work. This includes '**closer links between education and industry**', cited by 18% of those responding, and relates to businesses wanting younger people to be provided with many early experiences of what a place of work looks like and how they would be expected to behave in it. There is

also an ask for ‘funding/support for younger people’ (such as around access to transport or meeting costs), to ensure they are able to get to their workplaces easily and on time. Other suggestions around providing work experience or on-the-job training experiences and early interventions with careers advice.

## 5.6 Skills system

An effective system for bringing through a skilled workforce, whether introducing new entrants to the workforce, upskilling to support business growth, or re-skilling for people looking for second or third new careers, is essential to a functioning economy.

The research explored employers’ experiences of post-16 skills providers; some highlights as follows.

- The background to demand is one where a half of all businesses are wanting to achieve growth within the next three years (and almost all others will concentrate of being productive and profitable), the majority have been through or are currently actively engaged in recruiting into their workforce, with a high demand for technical skills.
- 80% of businesses identified one or more areas of skills that need improving in their current workforce. However, **accessing provision of training** is a challenge for many; 38% say that there is a ‘lack of time for staff training and development’ as a main barrier to being able to improve skills within the existing workforce, and 13% struggle to find suitable courses locally. Allocating budget is an issue for 12%.
- About one in five overall (18%) currently have one or more staff on **apprenticeships**, most commonly within the in-focus MEM and CR sectors (27% and 34% respectively) which can represent an investment in future productive workforce. 30% are considering taking on their first or additional apprenticeships – again, most prominently amongst MEM (43%) and CR (28%).
- Almost a quarter of businesses participating (23%) say they have training or skills development requirements that their business has been **unable to source locally** (and that they would have expected to be able to find in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly). About half (48%) of those have sourced the training outside of Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, which in most cases they have been prepared to pay for.
- Training that is delivered ‘on the job’ in a live, practical scenario is favoured by the vast majority (84%) of participating businesses, though all modes have a role to play including ‘live and in a classroom setting’ (e.g. college provision) (61%), and ‘online and delivered live/in real-time’/virtual training (50%). Online training that is ‘pre-recorded or pre-fabricated’ is the least favoured (38%).
- A culture of learning, including encouragement for continuous personal development and performance management, is embedded for many businesses but not all. More than half of businesses participating (56%) say they have a formal training plan that tracks the skills needs and training given for each employee, though for 17% it is only for some parts of the workforce.
- The most likely source for future training, for 28% of those with training plans, will be a local independent training provider. Other sources of training include industry, professional organisations and trade bodies (9%), the **local colleges** (9%) and in-house provision (16%). Many will use multiple sources.

- The relationship with local skills providers and colleges in particular is varied. Some business leaders' views may be based on out-of-date experiences or long-held opinions without opportunity to be updated. Whether it is fair or not, just 15% of all businesses participating at least *perceive* the level of understanding that providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly have of the skills needs and challenges faced by their organisation to be good or excellent, compared to a half (49%) who say their understanding is minimal or limited at best.
- Many have not used a provider of post-16 technical education for skills training at all (let alone recently) – 37% say they have used and just 5% have spoken to a provider (and not used), which may suggest that those engaged with post-16 providers are more likely than not to be using them. Indeed, those who say they have used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly are more likely to feel positively towards them for understanding the skills needs and challenges faced by their organisation.

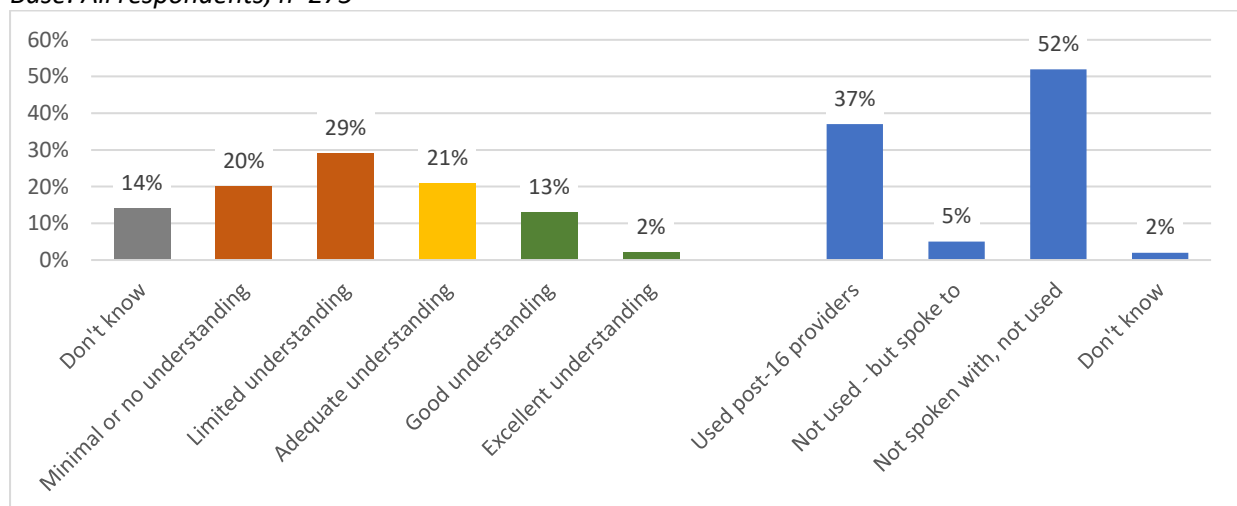
Figure 5.9

**Q. How would you rate the level of understanding that providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly have of the skills needs and challenges faced by your organisation?**

And

**Q. Have you spoken with and/or used any external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly to help with the skills needs and challenges faced by your organisation?**

Base: All respondents; n=275

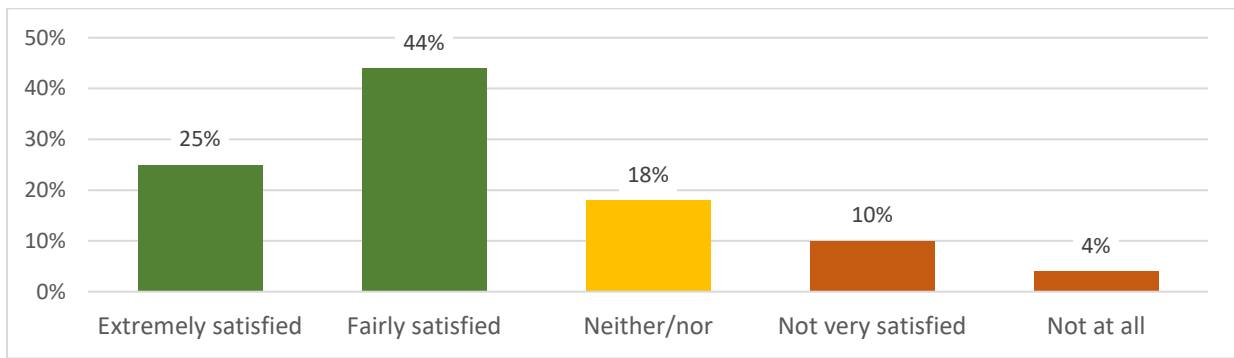


- Of those businesses which have used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, two thirds (67%) are fairly or extremely satisfied with the training received to meet the needs and challenges faced by their organisation.

Figure 5.10

**Q. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= not at all satisfied and 5=extremely satisfied; how satisfied are you with the training received to meet the needs and challenges faced by your organisation?**

Base: All respondents who have used external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly; n=102



- Many businesses responded positively to the request for **“asks” of the LSIP**, which included suggestions pertaining to the skills system. Among them include making ‘training more accessible and local’ (20%), creating ‘closer links between education and industry’ (18%) – which could include collaborations between post-16 training and specialist industry facilities/expertise, and a way to deliver ‘more information on local skills programs’ (10%).

## 7 Appendices

### 7.1 Survey Questionnaire (Overview)

Ref	Question / theme
1.	What is the structure of your business? 01. Sole trader 02. Partnership 03. Limited Liability Partnership 04. Limited company 05. Community Interest Company 06. Charity 07. Other – please describe
2.	Briefly and in your own words, how would you describe the activities of your business:  [[Q2.1]] RESEARCHER ALSO CODE TO: 01. Manufacturing, engineering and marine 02. Construction and retrofit trades 03. Other
3.	How many people does your business currently employ in <u>Cornwall</u> & Isles of Scilly? 01. Self-employed/Sole trader only 02. 2 to 4 03. 5 to 9 04. 10 to 24 05. 25 to 49 06. 50 to 99 07. 100 to 249 08. 250 and over
4.	Which of the following best describes your objective for the business within the next three years? 01. Rapid growth 02. Moderate / sustainable growth 03. Maintain current size or to concentrate on productivity & profitability 04. Downsize or become smaller 05. Step aside or handover the business to a family member 06. Sell, retire or close the business 07. No business objective
5.	Are there any significant or major developments specific to your industry or type of business, that you are going to have to prepare for, or train staff for?
<b>VACANCIES, RETENTION &amp; RECRUITMENT</b>	
6.	Have you recruited or tried to recruit new staff over the last 12 months? 01. Yes 02. No
7.	Were you recruiting/trying to recruit into... 01. Permanent roles left vacant 02. New permanent positions 03. Temporary positions – Seasonal 04. Temporary positions – Short-term contract 05. Other – please describe [[Q7X]] 06. Don't know [SRIP]
8.	Did you have difficulties recruiting?

Ref	Question / theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Yes</li> <li>02. No</li> </ul>
9.	<p>For what reasons did you find recruitment difficult?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Finding enough candidates</li> <li>02. Candidates missing the necessary skills</li> <li>03. Can't match the pay rates candidates were looking for</li> <li>04. Candidates lacking the work ethic or attitude we're looking for</li> <li>05. Candidates lacking sufficient communication or 'soft' skills</li> <li>06. Lack of housing</li> <li>07. Other... please describe [[Q9X]]</li> </ul>
10.	<p>Have your recruitment difficulties impacted on any of the following areas of your businesses?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Loss of business or orders to competitors</li> <li>02. Delays developing new products or services</li> <li>03. Difficulties meeting customer service objectives</li> <li>04. Difficulties meeting required quality standards</li> <li>05. Increased operating costs</li> <li>06. Difficulties introducing new working practices</li> <li>07. Increased workload for other staff</li> <li>08. Difficulties in being able to expand the business/open new sites</li> <li>09. Difficulties improving productivity</li> <li>10. Reduced service/opening hours</li> <li>11. Any other difficulties (please specify) [[Q10X]]</li> <li>12. None of the above [SRIP]</li> </ul>
11.	<p>Do you <u>currently</u> have vacancies that you are actively trying to recruit into?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Yes – how many? [[Q11.1]]</li> <li>02. No</li> </ul>
12.	<p>How many of these vacancies are for...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Skilled Manual/Technical positions</li> <li>02. Professional/Managerial positions</li> <li>03. Clerical positions</li> <li>04. Semi-skilled</li> <li>05. Unskilled positions</li> <li>06. Apprentices</li> <li>07. Other types... please state [[Q12X]]</li> </ul>
13.	<p>How many of these vacancies require...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Zero or &lt;1 year experience</li> <li>02. 1-3 years of experience</li> <li>03. 4-9 years of experience</li> <li>04. 10+ years of experience</li> </ul>
14.	<p>For how long have you tried to fill the vacancy(ies): {Q12}?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Less than a month</li> <li>02. Up to three months</li> <li>03. Up to six months</li> <li>04. More than six months</li> <li>05. Don't know</li> </ul>
15.	<p>What is the impact on your business as a result of the empty position(s)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Other staff are working extra/overtime to cover</li> <li>02. Using external temporary staff to fill</li> <li>03. Seconding staff from other departments to fill</li> <li>04. Adjusted the expected output/workflow to meet reduced staffing levels</li> </ul>

Ref	Question / theme
	05. No impact as yet 06. Had to turn business away/missed out on business offered 07. Other... please describe [[Q15X]]
<b>SKILLS DEVELOPMENT &amp; SOURCING</b>	
16.	Within your workforce, which of the following skills do you feel need improving? 01. Basic digital skills – e.g. being able to use the internet/find information online 02. Intermediate digital skills e.g. selling online/using standard software 03. Advanced digital/IT professional skills 04. Communication skills 05. Sales and marketing skills 06. Customer handling skills 07. Team working skills 08. Foreign language skills 09. Problem solving skills 10. Management and leadership skills 11. Business Development skills 12. Numeracy skills 13. Literacy skills 14. Other personal or social skills 15. Technical and practical skills for the job 16. None of the above [SRIP]
17.	Are there any other particular types of skills you feel need improving within your workforce that were not on that list?
18.	Identifies training/skills needs 01. Yes 02. No
19.	What would you say are the main barriers to some of your staff needing improved skills in their job? 01. Lack of time for staff training and development 02. Lack of budget for staff training and development 03. Lack of suitable local courses 04. Don't know how to assess training needs 05. Lack of cover for training 06. Recruitment problems 07. High staff turnover 08. Unwillingness of staff to undertake training 09. Inability of workforce to keep up with change 10. Lack of experience due to recent recruitment 11. Lack of motivation 12. Lack of ambition 13. Cost associated with sending staff away 14. Other – please specify [[Q19X]] 15. Don't know/Not applicable [SRIP]
20.	Do you currently have staff on apprenticeships? 01. Yes 02. No 03. Don't know
21.	Are you considering taking on apprentices? 01. Yes 02. No 03. Don't know



Ref	Question / theme
22.	Thinking about the skills your business needs generally, are there any training or skills development requirements that your business has been unable to source locally (that it would expect to be able to find in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly)? 01. Yes – please describe [[Q22.1]] 02. No
23.	Have you sourced training for those skills outside Cornwall & Isles of Scilly? 01. Yes – sourced outside CloS and paid for it 02. Yes – sourced outside CloS but it was free or subsidised 03. Yes – sourced outside CloS but did not book the training 04. No (or not tried)  [[Q23.1]] Comments [DO NOT PROMPT]
24.	How do you favour training to be delivered? 01. Live and in a classroom setting 02. Online and delivered live/in-real-time 03. Online, pre-recorded or pre-fabricated courses 04. On the job training 05. Day release to college formats 06. Other – please describe [[Q24X]]
25.	At any time within the next 3 years, do you consider that the type or level of skills you will need from your employees will... 01. Increase 02. Remain the same 03. Decrease 04. Don't know/hard to say
26.	What types of occupations or skills are affected?
27.	What types of occupations or skills are affected?
28.	In the next 12 months, what are going to be your business' top three skills needs?
29.	And which of the following would you regard as priority development areas for your business, over the next three years, for which you would likely seek training? 01. Sustainability and net zero 02. Robotics, automation or AI 03. Trading internationally (importing/exporting) 04. Cloud computing 05. Equality and diversity in the workforce 06. Leadership & management 07. Meeting ESG principles (Environmental, Social, Governance)
30.	Do you have any further comments on where skills need developing or the reasons behind the skills gaps?
<b>TRAINING PLANS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT</b>	
31.	Does your company have a formal training plan that tracks the skills needs and training given for each employee? 01. Yes - for all employees 02. Yes - but only for some parts of the workforce 03. No
32.	Do you carry out training for your business for... 01. Statutory/legislative compliance 02. Skills development 03. Both 04. None – don't train people

Ref	Question / theme
33.	<p>Is your company planning any employee training in the future?</p> <p>01. Yes – in next 12 months  02. Yes – within next 3 years  03. Not within next 3 years</p>
34.	<p>Will the training you undertake in the future be...?</p> <p>01. Accredited (approved by a regulated institution)  02. Non-accredited (informal or without approval of a regulated institution)  03. Mixture of accredited and non-accredited  04. Don't know</p> <p>[[Q34.1]] Comments [DO NOT PROMPT]</p>
35.	<p>Where do you intend to source your future training from?</p> <p>01. A local independent training provider  02. A national independent training provider  03. A local college  04. A local university  05. The council, Skills &amp; Growth Hub or LEP  06. An industry, professional organisation or trade body (e.g. FSB, Chamber of Commerce, CITB, NFU, etc)  07. In-house trainers or training department  08. Internal peer or “on the job” training  09. Online – free/open training  10. Other – please state [[Q35X]]  11. Don't know</p>
36.	<p>How would you rate the level of understanding that providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall &amp; Isles of Scilly have of the skills needs and challenges faced by your organisation?</p> <p>01. Minimal or no understanding  02. Limited Understanding  03. Adequate Understanding  04. Good Understanding  05. Excellent Understanding  06. Don't know</p>
37.	<p>Have you spoken with and/or used any external providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall &amp; Isles of Scilly to help with the skills needs and challenges faced by your organisation?</p> <p>01. Yes - used  02. No – but spoken with  03. No – not spoken with &amp; not used  04. Don't know</p>
38.	<p>On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= not at all satisfied and 5=extremely satisfied; how satisfied are you with the training received to meet the needs and challenges faced by your organisation?</p> <p>01. Not at all (1)  02. Not very satisfied (2)  03. Neither/nor... (3)  04. Fairly satisfied (4)  05. Extremely satisfied (5)  06. Don't know</p>
39.	<p>Is there a reason you don't use providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall &amp; Isles of Scilly?</p> <p>01. Don't have the sector specialists</p>

Ref	Question / theme
	02. Cannot supply what we need 03. Don't understand what we need 04. Too expensive 05. Training format not suitable 06. Training timing/availability not suitable 07. Training location not suitable 08. They don't communicate with us sufficiently 09. Other – please describe [[Q39X]] 10. No reason
40.	Thinking about previous experiences of working with providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, can you share any good experiences you have had?  [Probe as necessary] - Anything that has worked well or particularly benefited your business?
41.	Which of the following best describes your investment in training and skills over the next three years? 01. Do not have a training budget and am not prepared to spend money on training 02. Do not have a training budget but will be likely to invest in training and skills 03. Have a budget for skills development which will be lower than previous 04. Have a budget for skills development which will be the same as previous 05. Have a budget for skills which will increase 06. Don't know
<b>WORK EXPERIENCE &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	
42.	Have you taken any of these on work experience in the last 12 months? <i>(Tick all that apply)</i> 01. University students 02. College (16-18) students 03. School pupils (GCSE level) 04. No capacity/interest to do this [SRIP] 05. Don't get asked [SRIP] 06. None of the above [SRIP]
43.	In which of the following ways does your company address awareness or support for Environmental, Social and Governance (or ESG) principles? 01. A written and published company policy relating to environmental sustainability, such as waste reduction, carbon reduction etc. 02. Invested in training relating to environmental sustainability, such as waste reduction, carbon reduction etc. 03. A written and published company policy relating to equality and diversity 04. Invested in training relating to equality and diversity 05. Actively try to recruit a diverse and inclusive workforce 06. Provide opportunities for excluded groups or long-term unemployed 07. Other activities – please describe [[Q43X]] 08. None of the above [SRIP]  [[Q43.1]] Comments [DO NOT PROMPT]
44.	Does your business have the leadership and management skills to support the following: a) Health and wellbeing of employees b) Managing its finances c) Business planning d) Marketing

Ref	Question / theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e) Recruitment and human resources</li> <li>f) Training needs and skills development</li> <li>g) Actively pursuing equality and diversity policies</li> <li>h) Actively pursuing environmental and green skills policies</li> <li>i) Project development and management using Agile</li> <li>j) Making the most of digital and AI (Artificial Intelligence)</li> </ul> <p>01. Yes 02. No 03. Don't know</p>
<b>WRAP UP</b>	
45.	Overall and finally, what suggestions would you make for the Local Skills Improvement Plan to help the delivery of skills and/or skills progression for your business?
46.	Thank you for your help with this survey. My final couple of questions will help us with overall analysis and to ensure we have reached a wide diversity of businesses.
47.	Where is your prime business location in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly?
48.	<p>Approximately, what is the annual turnover of the business?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Under £50,000</li> <li>02. £50,000 to £99,999</li> <li>03. £100,000 to £249,999</li> <li>04. £250,000 to £499,999</li> <li>05. £500,000 to £999,999</li> <li>06. £1m to £4.9m</li> <li>07. £5m to £9.9m</li> <li>08. £10m +</li> <li>09. Unable to say / Not applicable</li> </ul>
49.	Are there any further comments you would like to make in respect of skills and training specific to your business or sector, that we haven't discussed through the survey?

## 7.2 Verbatim Responses & Coding

Table 7.1

**Q. Are there any significant or major developments specific to your industry or type of business, that you are going to have to prepare for, or train staff for?**

Ref	Response
1027	Changes in technology.
1238	Training for chainsaws.
1260	Eyelash extensions training.
2087	prepare for the slow down in the high street
4007	Keeping up with current model changes
4008	Renewable wind, involving the maintenance and repair of the equipment.
4014	We have a large number of EU funded projects which will be ending , after we will transition staff to new areas of work
5004	Increase in prices, increase in wages, sustaining paying for people.
5047	Only if we need to relocate the business, we would need IT training.
5082	We are already doing this for electrical vehicles.
5120	New allergens legislations
5164	change in letting legislations which is ongoing
5166	With rising costs we're going to have to educate our staff on why prices are going up and get them ready to deal with customer complaints due to the economic climate currently.
5169	We are subject to regulations that we have to keep up to date with.
5190	More compliance
5196	Yes electric vehicles which are becoming more common
5230	Yes, try and get the TikTok generation off their phones and come to work
5282	Explaining utility pricing issues for students
5311	There is legislation being put forward that all estate agents need to be trained, but there is no date for it yet. It maybe in 2024.
5314	Brexit
5327	Brexit is the main thing for our business.
5514	Training is on-going, turning lights off as there is a electricity and gas crisis, and the Government is not helping local businesses.
5696	Moving towards doing weddings, front of house staff training
5721	Plastic legislation
5735	Electric cars
5922	We have already bought machines in the last two years.
5962	Electric vehicles
5997	We are currently training staff to sell worming and flea treatment.
7084	Decarbonisation
8041	Changes to building regulations
8096	Loss of accommodation options. Inns and hotels are closing down and we needs those available for people to take part in the walks. We need to do things a different way.
8117	Electric vehicles
8214	Being a lot more cost aware, such as for gas and electric and for general running costs.

8397	Electrical car training
8450	Training regarding making reporting of tax digital.
8493	Following regulations constantly.
8749	Virtual reality. Being able to see in 3d the spaces we design
8851	Water quality
8869	Staff are trained differently weekly because we make bespoke items
8937	Yes electrical and fire and security qualifications.
8989	Changeover from current government funding to new funding schemes
9015	Making tax digital.
9048	Preparing a special application for our staff to report/communicate quicker with clients etc. and training to higher standards.
9083	Digitalization and development of new products.
9090	The cost of living , subsidise additional cost of power supply and evaluate how we can subsidised that without effecting the support we give
9137	Training of staff for new lodges
9151	Yes changes in the tax system.
9179	I suppose the battery technology.
9260	Training staff for bed and breakfast services.
9522	We are going to be piloting a scheme with the NHS that we need to train for.
9634	Electrification of motor vehicles.
9697	There is some New software, for training on new legislation on housing.
9731	Big increase in solar power technology
9744	We are always training staff for filleting.
9756	Electric vehicles
9790	Ongoing changes in legislation.
10098	Other than normal technological advances nothing in particular
142324171	Green skills are needed for the construction sector, in terms of upskilling exiting contractors and sub-contractors as well as skilling the next generation of workers in this area. The building regulations and net zero requirements are changing so rapidly that it is currently really hard to find enough contractors with the right skills in renewables, air source heat pumps and monitoring, for both the installation and maintenance phases. This is a KEY growth area for Cornwall as we have a huge opportunity to provide renewables for all new developments, as well as retrofit kit into existing properties. Other factors include for sustainability and ecology advice into planning applications, as well as survey works and decarbonisation strategies.
356611333	Lack of trained staff
581804636	Regulatory requirements of our clients leading to more projects Reuse of water within client sites Use of Anaerobic digestion to create heat and power
965326704	Green engines will require different servicing and maintenance when they arrive.
1099065349	We support young people in understanding local employers skills needs, especially to develop the core '21st century' skills such as initiative, can-do attitude and team work. Biggest challenges are accessing young people due to academic pressures and volunteers having time to support.
1124016419	The growth of the digital sector in Cornwall and the south west will be dramatic in the next few years. Just with the launching of the satellites into space there are already companies moving to Cornwall with software requirements. Unless we see more students being taught computer science and advanced digital skills these jobs will go to incomers to Cornwall. There is also a lot of jobs available to anyone living

	in Cornwall that are fully remote. Enabling highly skilled work at high pay rates to bring money into the Cornish economy.
1192799058	Mechanical engineering; PLC programming; Project Management; Machine purchasing
1400865020	Changing/Developing technology such as the 3G switch off and opportunities to apply improved software processing.
1486767490	New procurement regulations
1541789669	Always major industry developments to keep up with
1555894197	Automation will become a key driver for the business due to lack of labour. This will require more skilled technicians and engineers which need training in the county. Decarbonising our business, looking to vastly increase the renewable energy percentage over the next 12-18 months. We will need to either recruit or training that knowledge.
1557314228	Yes, within the Agri-robotics sector
1576771262	We will be recruiting many tutors within business support services, leadership and management and health and social care. There is increasing need to support these subjects for staff and employers nationally
1699730496	Aging demographic so young people with manufacturing and engineering skills
1965232832	Up-skilling our team so that every employee has the chance to develop new skills so they can have a more interesting variety of work and are developing transferable skills that can adapt to new roles as the hospitality industry changes.
2056595277	Move towards Carbon neutral housing in both new and existing properties.
2074053982	There are a variety of industry accredited training programmes created by the likes of Microsoft, Sales Force, and many more.

Table 7.2

**Q. Are there any other particular types of skills you feel need improving within your workforce that were not on that list? (Within your workforce, which of the following skills do you feel need improving?)**

Ref	Response
1027	Skills in CAD drawing.
1273	Groundwork skills
2087	Hand skills for bespoke made items
4008	Specific technical skills.
4014	Basic employability skills
5053	Bakers and baking skills
5067	Need a pool of skilled people. Level of people who have the skills for the job role not people just coming for the summer holidays for a six week period.
5163	Resilience and adaptability, so not flaking out after a few weeks working.
5192	Safety skills, health and safety
5214	Health and safety trainings ,electronics
5230	Turning up for work on time
5278	Certain spa treatments
5314	Knowledge of wines, spirits etc.
5364	Good time keeping skill
5487	Front of house staff for the cafe
5610	Work ethic of the people

5627	Only like H.R related ones for example, all aspects of health and safety and grievance.
5701	Local knowledge and being able to recommend local activities to clients.
5730	Presentability for the roles.
5735	Electrical diagnostics
5809	General cooking skills.
5922	More machine operating skills.
5975	Accountancy and book keeping
7084	Glass making experience
7224	Just specialist engineering skills.
8096	Wellness at work- helping people to develop skills so that they can deal with workloads for e.g. being able to take breaks. Be aware of stress and have the strategy to deal with it.
8100	Common sense.
8279	Time management and commercial awareness
8319	Excel skills for spreadsheets
8334	Project Management skills.
8389	Help with social media.
8459	Driving skills need improving. They come back with scratches on their vehicles and I wonder how that happened.
8734	Animal care skills
8929	Delegation skills
9083	Project management, sales skills only.
9179	Social media skills.
9509	SEO training
9651	Tractor Driving
9832	Human Resource skills
10002	First Aid Fire safety
10004	Health and safety
10078	Social media
581804636	Professional Engineering, CAD
1124016419	Not within the workforce of our company at the moment. But it is our role to try and entice others to see that there is a requirement for advanced digital skills and the jobs to match them available.
1486767490	Skills needed for the green economy. Solar panel fitters, Heat pumps, Vehicle chargers, battery storage Electricians, Plumbers, Gas fitters
1557314228	Journalism within the agricultural machinery sector. And into the future, employees with an understanding of Agri-robotics
1576771262	All staff are continually learning and developing, but increased need for leadership, management and sales
1965232832	Skills to create a work environment that allows innovation to flourish through creating a learning culture that allows new things to be tried and accepts that not everything that is tried will work.
2074053982	Industry accredited training

Table 7.3



**Q. What types of occupations or skills are affected?**

Ref	Response
1027	Training with new machinery.
1047	Joiners and machinists
1128	It is just more staff needed.
1154	Electronic skills.
1248	Electrical with developments such as car charging.
1260	Hairdressing and beauty.
1263	Health and safety training and machine operators
1268	Groundworkers
2040	Sales and customer communication
2045	Parts people and sales people
2087	Catering and assembly workers
4007	Engineering
4008	Hydraulic, mechanical, electrical engineers
4036	Keeping up with changing technology
4038	Management will be affected, by the need for increased financial and marketing skills.
5004	Customer service due to people being responsive or "woke" generation.
5082	I think it is mainly to do with vehicle developments and electrics.
5120	A shortage in all roles, cooking skills mainly though.
5163	Increase in management skills as I'm getting older and would like to be on the shop floor less
5164	Letting agents and estate agents
5166	Managerial, product development and sales Customer Service
5190	IT and technical skills, Administration, purchasing and finance roles
5196	Tyre fitters, electric vehicles people need to be trained adequately
5317	Holiday park Personnel.
5327	Improving the skills that already exist.
5330	All employees regarding health safety training
5339	Technical IT Staff
5349	Ongoing training, with engine training, engineering side is changing all the time ,
5369	Marketing and hospitality
5485	All job roles- team building
5502	Workshop skills
5514	Stylists, Customer demand or customer expectations. Instagram is not our friend.
5547	Work done is very limited, as Insurance requires different criteria we have to go with it.
5624	Mainly chefs, front of house, as different products are coming in.
5730	Whole industry will be affected, general skills needs improving, numeracy, dealing with customers, education needs improving.
5732	Social media and the Internet, it will affect social media co-ordinator and IT personnel.
5735	Whole thing, repairing cars, electric vehicles knowledge.
5740	Stone Masonry.
5773	Administrative, in the context of IT because it's evolving all the time.

5809	Courses about infection control.
5837	Web developers
5922	Technology as it is always changing.
5936	Engineers, need engineering skills.
5962	The fixing of motor cars, needing up to date information on them.
5975	Sales and marketing
5997	Forklift driving.
7068	Skills and up to date training when going onto the construction site.
7069	The graduate and post graduate skills in engineering.
7205	Engineering, instrumentation skills.
7224	All engineering skills.
8007	I would say management will be affected as the business is going to be focusing more on profit and loss accounting.
8096	Management and Leadership skills. Mental and Wellbeing skills. IT skills.
8100	All new regulations being in a kitchen etc. allergens etc.
8117	The garage as a whole, but mainly the technicians.
8148	Accounting obligations to HMRC key cutting equipment and new products coming in will have to be learnt about
8167	Chefing
8172	Keeping up with advancements in general.
8223	Meta
8224	More electronics, it will affect mechanics mainly.
8227	Landscapers
8245	Technology skills needs will increase.
8295	General staff
8312	Rope skills on safety nets.
8334	Project managers, account handlers and web development skills.
8382	Technical
8389	Our driver could learn more computer skills.
8397	Mechanics, electrical vehicles and welding
8450	Changes in accountancy regarding making tax reporting digital.
8490	Crossed training
8493	Specific industry training
8617	Technology and social media
8661	Everybody will be affected as the industry moves forward in general
8716	Care in particular and we also provide meals, so also food safety standards skills.
8734	Animal care assistants and veterinary nurses
8749	Interactive technology usage
8800	To Improve skills within the sector, I always support people with their degrees, that applies to any of the staff.
8817	Computer work
8869	Learning new skills every week because we make bespoke items
8907	Technical - Confidence with using our systems, internet and till etc.
8969	Depends on new laws and health and safety, drivers, will be mainly affected.
8976	Manual skills, use of equipment

8983	Engineering side, technical knowledge
9015	Accountants
9047	General farming skills to cope with the environmental regulations
9048	Team leading Sales Marketing
9083	Growth of the company and new job roles.
9137	Chefs and bar staff, customer service skills
9179	Technology skills.
9201	IT skills.
9355	Things might change, there will be some business development when I hand over the business to my daughter in law, she will need some management type skills. Daughter-in-law to become proprietor.
9357	Basic serving to management , financial skills and budgets
9377	Food and hygiene, quality control, it will affect retail assistants mainly.
9399	Administration Skills.
9450	Bar staff, waiting staff, chef
9514	Communication skills.
9522	We are going to be upskilled.
9634	Electrification of vehicles, the skill set will have to change quite a lot, it will affect the majority of the staff, probably 10 out of the 14 staff at least which is a concern for me.
9697	Legislation changes, that applies to a lot of us.
9723	communication skills
9731	Across the board in all job roles, IT skills
9744	Factory based work.
9756	Electric vehicles, affecting the majority of staff, really all roles.
9790	Just general day to day work.
9797	I am upskilling staff, chef training for them but it depends on funding.
9913	Customer relations skills.
9937	Chef and cooking
10002	Butchery Customer Service Food and Hospitality
10004	General farm workers and herdsmen , stockmanship skills
10008	More digital skills, it will affect the admin and marketing side of the business.
10040	Technical computer skills.
10078	Stock control system going from manual to electronic
10082	All the occupations, will be affected, AI and technology types of skills.
10098	Networking Cyber security
142324171	Time management Productivity
581804636	Professional Engineers
834464922	CAD Designers Welder fabricators Project managers
1124016419	All office type skills will be affected. There needs to be a greater understanding among the population that basic digital skills will not be enough to ensure a well paid job in the future. Those with a higher level of computer knowledge and control will be able to obtain better paid and more secure jobs in the future.
1192799058	Technical skills and capability
1273106519	Food hygiene Marketing
1400865020	Surveying / data processing

1486767490	To fit in with new technologies related to the green economy
1490967185	All really but especially anything requiring specific expertise e.g. butchers, fishmongers, chefs, experienced managers
1541789669	Trades
1555894197	Engineering, production floor, customer services, warehouse
1557314228	Editorial and publishing, technical journalism, health and safety and risks assessments within the agri-robotics sector
1576771262	Increased skills needed as business expands
1965232832	All, so our team are ready to meet an evolving market.
2056595277	Technical skills Plumbing/heating skills for renewable technologies

Table 7.4

**Q. Do you have any further comments on where skills need developing or the reasons behind the skills gaps?**

Ref	Response
1027	There are no skills gaps it is just difficult trying to find people to do the jobs.
1047	Education system not fit for purpose, parents don't want kids to do hard graft that they did. They don't teach their kids the moral of working.
1172	There is no one being trained to do our job in the future.
1248	We need to keep up to date with everything.
1260	More in-workplace skills I think are needed.
1268	Health and safety might need developing in the future
2018	We are a family business so we do a lot of in house training from father to son
2022	Such a niche industry that nobody thinks of it.
2045	Geographical Location gives us a limited pool, staff aren't willing to do what we do and knowledge isn't there ,
4008	There is a massive skill gap in mechanical, electrical engineers, we need to develop more courses to train people more locally.
4014	Access to very bespoke training. Support for training outside of Cornwall which isn't formally accredited training
4036	Lack of availability of training in west Cornwall
4038	We are a very old fashioned business.
5039	We need people who can talk to people that's the number 1 requirement, now we can't get people who want to work, I think that's down to covid, people got used to not working.
5045	Not enough youngsters coming into the trade
5053	Not much inspiration /incentive for training in the industry , more work placements and apprenticeships would be helpful and need promoting stronger. Younger people tend to be encouraged to get skills outside Cornwall rather than stay here in Cornwall.
5067	The Problem is the Government is putting money into equality and diversity, but the money should go into training them to have the skills to do the job, not if you upset somebody or not.
5163	Just reiterating, adaptability and resilience and the ability to apply for the job. People lacking CV writing skills
5171	The colleges in Cornwall on the whole are unable to provide full hairdressing courses to NVQ level 3.

5190	Graphically where our business sits we have a small pool of job situations.
5196	A lot of it down to covid and people don't want to return to work, lots of Tyre companies are in the same situation
5214	The ageing population is behind the skills gap, majority of younger people move out of Cornwall because earning potential in Cornwall is stunted
5230	I think the reason is that the government are squeezing small businesses tightly with regards to energy costs, national insurance, pensions, etc. The government needs a better understanding of how the internet has changed the workforce. Many people are turning to things like Only Fans and making way more than they would making £10,000 a year at a small business
5317	People don't pay enough for people wages down here, fifty year old people want to be paid a decent wage.
5327	We need to keep up to date with all the regulations.
5342	Just that in our area courses are very few and far between, which means we have to travel outside of Cornwall.
5349	We do training on a regular basis so we try to keep ahead of the game
5377	Lack of education with schooling, not given fair chances due to social and economic issues, like coming from broken homes or drugged up families.
5399	Lack of investment for years,
5485	A lot of the sustainability side we will need help with going forward
5514	Lack of skills and funding for training, I have no spare cash at present.
5547	It is People's attitude towards the work that is missing, you can train anybody if they wish to learn.
5624	Waitress team, employ young staff needing experience and for behind the bar really.
5649	It is reflected in the business, because staff have historically not been trained.
5730	Manners, respect for customers, themselves and other team members.
5740	Purely practical skills for stone masonry.
5922	I think we should concentrate on teaching people the right approach to work, having the right mind set to work. We need staff to do physical work.
5936	Our industry has struggled to recruit as it is not desirable, people think they will be unpaid, on the engineering side is where we struggle to recruit.
5975	Just accountancy and book keeping, with changes to HMRC and digital tax, it would be more cost effective if we did accounts in house.
5995	Actually trades people there is a shortage of skilled electricians, plumbers, carpenters. My husband does a lot of these things. Hard to get skilled people to do tiling, plumbing.
7069	Most of our staff are long term members of staff so it is just updating the skills they already have.
7224	It is hard to get youngsters into engineering, they are keener on digital work.
8148	We can't afford to send people away to do courses due to people needing to be present in the shop. Brexit has had a detrimental effect. We're a UPS collection point but people need invoices for things leaving the country even if they're going to Ireland.
8312	I think it is about accessibility of more training locally.
8327	The new generations communication skills are different to ours.
8716	I think with the covid pandemic now a lot of training is online, and the staff much prefer face to face training.
8734	Animal care skills, holistic and homeopathic skills.

8869	People don't want to work or get their hands dirty, they prefer it jobs
9047	People need a much more positive attitude to their work
9090	Only individual capabilities , mostly due to age
9147	We need more HGV drivers and ADR training so dangerous goods can be carried.
9152	Main skill we need is drivers and they're being siphoned off from our industry. Cornwall college are poaching our drivers to drive empty busses. Our industry is being bled dry.
9179	My comment would be get back to basics with more training for manual skills jobs.
9377	We do in house training, Epos training on website, so everything is pretty covered by us.
9382	Don't think there's a skill gap just would like to maintain and keep up with changing things.
9514	I don't think we need anything in particular, we have a good skills base.
9573	New employees need gas training otherwise any training is all in house
9634	It's all to do with electrification of vehicles, and how the trade has been for generations a low skill career, at your school level you were told if you fail your exams you can be a car mechanic but things are changing and it's dangerous now because you've got the equivalent of 3-phase 400 volts running through the car, the whole nature of our job needs to change, licensing and more control.
9797	Labour shortage, no one applies for the jobs with the skills needed, like chefs.
9832	As we're a chemical warehouse we'll need training for that constantly Brexit has affected trade due to the nature of exporting chemicals.
69560014	Seasonal roles for someone not already living in Cornwall is out of reach due to the cost of living and renting during the peak season.
356611333	Not enough youngsters training
461935366	Hospitality and tourism is the second biggest employer in Cornwall however the quality of candidates being admitted to college is very low with very low motivation. The industry is not treated as a valid industry and the skills shortage the industry is not going to improve until it is treated as such.
1099065349	We seem to be concentrating too much on Technology as a solution, whereas Technology is simply a tool and the Tech Industry actually only employs around 2,000 people in Cornwall. We are not teaching either Businesses or Candidates for employment people skills: how to deal with employees and how to engage them. How to move from a micro start up business to one that has a larger workforce. We are assuming that's something natural (which it isn't) and instead just concentrate on the more heavily funded and promoted areas which will not improve Cornwall's economic outlook.
1124016419	Skills need developing that encourage the general population to realise that there are highly paid jobs available to them locally or available to them remotely. The skills they currently have are also valuable to companies in other industries and with some new training they can have a better career and life style.
1192799058	On site technical training A textile specific academic facility
1273106519	Confidence and networking skills
1400865020	As well as running a specialist surveying contractor I also deliver lectures in this area at a university. I see far more industrial demand for qualified surveyors than there are graduates in the subject, especially at MSc level. The pattern is similar in other areas such as most branches of engineering. Despite the upsurge in the potential for mining in the UK (tin, lithium etc.) there are currently no active undergraduate programs for mining engineering in this country. There appears to be a massive

	disconnect between what industry needs and what the HE/FE system provides. In part this is down to government policy which does not incentivise HE/FE to produce graduates in the subjects that are needed by industry. However, there is also an information deficit in secondary schools which appear ill-equipped to offer well informed careers guidance, steering pupils into areas with high demand and consequently better earnings prospects. It would seem sensible to vary university fees according to economic need, with lower fees for subjects where there is a shortage of graduates (perhaps up to a quota per university?) and higher fees for subjects of less value to the UK economy, using the high fees to cross-subsidise the reduced fees.
1490967185	Most people applying for our jobs, both skilled and unskilled, have very little idea how to write a CV or submit a decent job application. We spend a disproportionate amount of recruitment time on time-wasters who apply for jobs for which they are not qualified, or who don't respond to comms or arrange interviews then don't turn up, or even accept jobs then don't turn up. Because we do things properly with a lot of care, this is a massive drain on our management time.
1555894197	Skills gap because of lack of providers here in the County. Training for all on flexible working
1557314228	Agri-robotics is a new and emerging market for which there are very few if any skills training to better equip existing agricultural workers to help them transition or for new, younger employees who might suit this sector.
1965232832	A lot of the training available in Cornwall delivered by outside trainers and educational establishments is old fashioned and not suitable for the real business world. The exception are the gardening training apprenticeships at Cornwall college & some health and safety related training.
2074053982	There are so many industry accredited training courses that no one knows about. They aren't being delivered by local colleges but this represents a huge opportunity for people to upskill and find new opportunities.

Table 7.5

**Q. Thinking about previous experiences of working with providers of post-16 technical education in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, can you share any good experiences you have had?**

Ref	Response
1027	When we have had apprentices in the past the college experience has not been relevant to the reality of doing the job.
1047	Ex tradesmen doing the teaching are very good
1121	They all gained their qualifications so it was successful.
1128	We have done asbestos training and first aid training and it has always been very useful.
1138	The only thing that was good was the provider was very friendly and did their best for me, but they didn't provide what I needed.
1193	communication was very helpful along with the advice given and level of support. Overall helped to improve communication within the team.
1248	The exams were passed at the end which is good.
1260	I have had good feedback from the college and they have been extremely helpful and given all the help needed to one of my girls.
1268	the ability to fast track their training to fit their needs when starting the course
1273	Only recently signed up currently

2087	I have been pleased with all the people we have had (apprentices) and any problems were solved
4008	Cornwall network marine, Cornwall college, Cornwall network Marine is a training body more conducive to developing courses and has worked with us to develop them.
4009	It trained our son for the business.
4014	account learning , always very smooth process using them, good price and very efficient
4038	I have Used them for apprentices, and it has given them a lot of confidence, one went on a trip abroad and presented his findings to the whole team, trained with Cornwall Marine network.
5120	I had Two apprentices who were mature students, both came out with distinctions in their line of field.
5127	My colleague went on the course and it was perfect for him as he became a good mechanic. He learnt everything he needed to know.
5164	always given us the information we have needed to learn, kept us up to date with legislation changes and various aspects of estate agency
5192	Lifeguard training has been really good, RLSS we have used them, and they have been good.
5251	I have done first aid training it was well presented with one day online and one day in the classroom.
5327	Increased productivity afterwards.
5449	I took someone on through the Kick Start program, where young people are encouraged into work, he is good and has now been taken on full time.
5478	Unlocking Potential - we had good targeted business programs/support programs
5529	Have some good ones in the past with office staff and mechanics. I liked the independent training agencies compared to the college though. The Independent agencies were more flexible. I was able to fast track someone last time which you can't do with colleges
5579	Never had a problem really. 9/10 delivered on what they said
5649	I have no other experience other than a member of staff who has recently started with the business, so it is too early for me to comment on.
5696	the guys on the maintenance team did a course that was very well delivered and enabled them to use scaffold towers, which was done at Cornwall college
5718	All particularly good, we did a food hygiene course at Truro college and it was good.
5730	They all come back with one years training and think they are a chef, they know only the basics, and sauces they would buy them from suppliers rather than making them.
5962	Local college being close and easily accessible.
8041	I like it when we go through case studies in person.
8075	Have a good relationship with a local training company. Mutual understanding with everyone involved about what the job requires
8167	Whole experience was good Quick, easy, communitive
8214	I would say not applicable.
8223	we have had an apprentice from Truro college and they have been brilliant and have now become a full time employee
8227	the apprenticeship works well, nothing more to add



8295	Very good trainer who came into the office. Very professional and experienced. Just in the end the overall program didn't fit the needs of the business
8302	the staff have been easy to deal with and accommodating
8312	The supervisory course was good.
8397	mot training is very good and held locally the fact its in the same town is really beneficial as we don't need to travel outside the area
8716	Recently we have been going through Cornwall college, and they are very flexible which means all the staff can train on the same day. This means we can close for the day and all the staff can train together which is very helpful.
8907	My boss and I gained certificates and enjoyed the course
9013	The academy I work with are good
9083	Recruited a marketing apprentice through Truro and Penrith college just completing there 18 months training who has been good.
9090	we work with St Austell and Penryn colleges and have had successful volunteers and work placements , no bad comments
9116	Local college has been very good to us
9399	We had an apprentice through Cornwall College and there was very good communication with the College.
9522	The tutor comes in to work with students and we work with the tutor so it is very collaborative.
9586	The training was good and done to a good high standard.
9697	In my personal experience we have had a good low cost training, it was subsidised a lot for us with us being a charity.
10017	We did an apprenticeship through the college which was beneficial to the business.
1124016419	Providers are willing to talk to companies and develop new courses that relevant to the local industry. These new training and learning provisions will help to provide some of the new staff in the future. But training needs to be available to the entire workforce not just students. And they need to know that it is available to them.
1400865020	We have had access to students for temporary employment on specific projects giving them experience and training in the process.
1486767490	Used an independent as they specialised in Electrical and because they were small were flexible.
1555894197	Truro and Penwith College, Engineering department have been excellent. Not used other local providers at this stage.
1576771262	we run all our training and it is excellent
1965232832	Garden apprenticeships very good. Health and beauty therapy not suitable to our business - too low skill levels. Catering courses : mixed.

Table 7.6

**Q. Overall and finally, what suggestions would you make for the Local Skills Improvement Plan to help the delivery of skills and/or skills progression for your business?**

Ref	Response
1027	If they just spoke to us.
1047	I'm not sure what you can do in this area, financial incentives for businesses to take on work experience kids on a regular basis.
1138	I believe our education system is geared up for education, but not for people doing manual work.

1172	We just need to get people into the work environment, the government wants people to go into jobs such as IT, and not into hands on technical work.
1193	Stay in contact with businesses and speak with colleges to find out the needs of people coming into the trade.
1248	I think providing skill centres locally as the nearest skill centre to us is about 50 miles away.
1260	I would like to make it a lot greener and I'd like a lot more help in recycling of business waste.
1263	more awareness of what's available and what's out there
1268	make courses more accessible and more affordable
1273	Making it available and aware that it's there. Small businesses don't know about it if it isn't broadcasted to people
2022	Somehow needs to be trained in universities. We find people want to get involved in the website design etc. but not manufacturing the surfboards.
2045	Spend some time in local businesses and see what is happening
2087	more hands skills available , old original crafts need to come back , need more arts and crafts courses.
4007	Need to deliver a more diverse course that covers marine engineering on a broader spectrum
4008	More access to specific technical skills for Mechanical, Electrical and Hydraulic engineering.
4012	I think the challenge in this area isn't to do with training and skills, it is the lack of housing which is causing people to move out of Cornwall.
4014	the ability to be flexible in training , not just help with government accredited courses, some businesses need more specific short non accredited courses for their business
4036	provide training venues and trainers
4038	To be More pro-active and come and sit down with us. Talk about what they can offer us.
5004	Need to go back to Old school, people being able to deal with difficult customers, as they feel like they are owed something because of Covid, because they were locked up for 18 months, They can be Abusive till they get it.
5045	We need more youngsters that want to get their hands rather than work with computers
5053	Local training with anything related to hospitality, and training on site. Basically localised training.
5067	They need to look at the price and other cost impacts to the business.
5082	Obviously support with cost of having another person as whilst they are training they are not earning us any money.
5120	More training opportunities available that are government funded. Mainly for school leavers, people of all ages need opportunities as well. I used True Blue solutions previously for training. They are a local independent provider.
5127	We tend to employ Unskilled young people that we train, and they grow as people and gain new skills and leave knowing more than when they started.
5163	Getting applicants to the point they can apply well to the job, and as mentioned previously resilience and adaptability.
5164	More training for people in the property sector locally in Cornwall
5166	Customer communication. A lot of the generation is into technology etc. rather than talking to people so an emphasis on improving that in training would be good. Educate people on handling food and cleaning correctly.
5192	More practical training, learning on the job.

5214	electronics courses for us , high frequency welding and injection moulding courses but I don't see these courses appearing in Cornwall as there aren't many companies needing these skills. Also repair and maintenance of plant and machinery fault finding courses
5311	No comment really we just need to look at green policies we could introduce for the business.
5317	I am in Lands end in Cornwall, and it needs a complete change of thinking from the Cornwall Council, they do not invest in new colleges or developing Universities for training. Penzance is one of the most deprived area's in Europe's top ten. The Council needs to develop more scientific, and technological solutions with courses, I could run the Council and generate Billions in revenue.
5339	we are quite niche so it's difficult for us, but we don't feel there's any education locally to provide the skills needed for our job.
5399	On the job experience you can't beat it
5444	Weather it's viable for them to look at the industry itself, training done in house
5449	I think for us it is more practical, tool based skills.
5485	More training out of classroom setting, a more interactive type of training off site and not in classroom
5487	easily accessible courses and free at the point of delivery
5502	getting the right young people into college to do the job and not just taking anyone
5514	More availability for courses locally, it costs so much more when travel costs are added to the cost of training.
5529	I would love to take someone on, but not through the college system. Had to provide so much for the last person from college we took on. Was far too rigid. and cost us too much. We'd need more flexibility in future.
5573	Just having more classroom training available.
5579	Make it more accessible Some businesses can't afford to send their staff on it Would like a form of grant or subsidy to help
5588	More local daily courses, would be good but there is a college close by that offers quite a lot to be fair.
5696	Would be nice to be linked in with more of the colleges and courses done locally that will provide the future workforce.
5703	More accessible training
5718	They need to Cater more for this industry, do more evening courses, rather than daytime courses. As some of my staff have two jobs, and they work during the day. So evening courses would be better for them. Customer service skills need to be different as staff have to deal with drunk and angry people, that needs to be tailored to this industry.
5735	Need a college that can provide the training needed within a reasonable distance. Plymouth college not communicating well. Cornwall college was good however too far away. Need better courses available
5740	For there to be more emphasis on practical skills.
5746	I get a lot of CVs that are not written out right.
5770	We need an Actual training person in Cornwall for hairdressing for apprenticeships, as the person we have is from Plymouth which is too far away would be good to have somebody more local.
5778	Bringing in younger drivers and make it easier for young drivers to get into the industry the insurance is too expensive,
5794	Make it more easier and user friendly.
5809	Generally more investment with rail links for Cornwall would help the business overall.

5922	Basically if they could search job offers and find what skills that are needed so the vacancy can be filled.
5936	Need to encourage more hands on training, train hands on skills, not just computer skills.
5962	Improving the amount of training facilities locally.
5971	More work experience for people.
5995	Issue is not enough people in the area. Managerial people, skilled people, we are managers, not enough staff to do the role. No housing, no connections from one village to another village. Lack of International people in the area.
7068	I think they need to bring back basic training in schools such as basic maths in schools instead of subjects like algebra. Basic maths skills would be much more helpful in manual jobs.
7224	Just for youngsters to work in more hands on industries.
8096	I think direct contact with employers to discuss the training needs and what can be matched to them . Supporting employers face to face individually to help with training.
8148	I'd like to see more focus on small businesses like ourselves. When you have a small business you have to be a jack of all trades so everything gets divided up into a lot of things
8167	More on site training
8214	I would like to see more engagement from local education providers who train chefs. For us to be able to have apprentices, and for greater engagement with professional catering institutions.
8224	Just Finding more people towards manual labour jobs rather than IT jobs.
8227	providing training to areas specific to our trade.
8238	More grants or incentives for the youngsters to work
8245	I think that especially in areas where there are a lot of small businesses it would be good to make best use of the skills and it would be good to get help with online marketing. I would like to see a hub, as not everyone wants to go online. It could be in a place such as the village hall, and be about such things as how to set up a business, how to do social media marketing and help to sort out energy suppliers for the business.
8302	I would need more knowledge about the local skills plan.
8312	More availability of health and safety construction skills training.
8319	Basic reading, writing, and using excel to a decent level is what we need to focus on.
8327	More advertising about courses available.
8382	Funding and a link with post 16 college
8389	It would help if apprenticeships were available in floristry for our business.
8397	Its very helpful to have local groups facilitating training, that's the most important thing for us. We need to have accessible local training as it means reduced costs as we don't need to travel for training.
8490	funding
8493	Discuss with businesses that are here what skills they need. At a younger age help with specialist skills so they have a clear plan
8606	more younger trained seamstresses ,no sewing courses available for school leavers , all our employees are from the older age group
8651	Access to local quality provisions Timings Training providers have done a lot remotely as well as face to face which is good and needed. Making sure the provider that provides the training is knowledgeable themselves
8661	Providers need to be realistic about the level of understanding education needed. Need to make the courses more realistic to do alongside on the job training/working

8716	I do think there could be more availability regarding IT training. It would be good if maybe there was an open day to show which IT systems are available and helpful for our sector.
8734	They Need to do the courses that we need like animal care, holistic and homeopathic courses.
8749	Focus on new technologies. Starting with school/college level.
8817	one clear voice, one point of contact that gives us a umbrella of services , making it as simple as possible
8869	understanding how our business works
8893	Mainly more apprenticeships.
8907	Affordable courses
8937	I suppose having more providers available for training rather than limited training available for electrical training.
8969	The Biggest problem is the ADR training we are limited to where we can go, how often the courses are, they are only over certain months of the year, and it restricts and affects the business, as it means somebody has to be with a new starter until they are trained fully.
8976	provide accommodation and housing
9013	Making the business aware of the courses they provide that could help me. I get no contact myself, I have to actively find one myself.
9015	Keep adjusting to the new needs and requirements so that training is up to date by rolling out webinars and questionnaires.
9048	More accessible for small businesses, sponsored and funded. More live sessions because people are missing interaction between them. A live training session would be best with hands on approach
9083	Funding, mainly. Flexibility of delivery for whole team training. Opportunities to feed in our requirements .Different methods of collecting information for our needs, as needs evolve and change, suggestion box so we can fill in as and when we need to, and training on Governance for charities.
9090	making small businesses and charities more aware of what's available
9116	Active communication with us and pooling from other organisations of the same type
9137	make training readily available and cheap
9147	We need more ADR training and HGV training.
9154	We need chefs trained for hospitality.
9179	I just think people in schools and colleges could come and visit the smaller businesses and make themselves known to us.
9201	The skills are there but Cornwall can't retain people, there is no market to keep them once they have been trained.
9236	One of the most important things for us is getting young people to think for themselves a bit more. We need people to be more self aware and working autonomously
9260	To be honest we don't have any problems with skills, we just have problems recruiting staff due to the remote location of the business.
9377	An Annual email to let me know what is available on courses, and training.
9509	We need more local providers of training courses.
9514	I would say that realistically to not exclude manual labour sometimes people feel you should only do manual labour if you can't do anything else, when you can get good pay for it.
9744	To have a better understanding of the business.

9790	We are trying to put a CRM (Customer Relations Management) package together at the moment, so it would be helpful for small businesses to get help with computer systems available.
9797	Match the courses to the skills that are needed. Matching skills to the area. To do Forward planning that way.
9913	I would say reach out to a lot more companies, include a lot more businesses and provide funding.
9936	Making things available, telling people what money is available etc. More communication and having the right person come around and say training is available here etc. Been with the FSB before a few times, and while it as okay it wasn't as good as Business Link was
10004	target younger ages, focus on more manual courses for secondary school pupils
10008	Making local businesses more aware of courses, I have not received any marketing materials for courses locally.
10017	I think basic digital skills and software training.
10033	make it easier to try find out about the Local Skills Improvement Plan, more awareness about the organisation is needed
10078	not sure if there are retail courses locally as haven't looked but a btech course with day release for a retail management course could be good idea
10105	Just more contact with them.
69560014	Post 16 are not aware of the possibilities of working in the marine activity sector, or working for a charity.
142324171	To actively reach out to small businesses more with offering
461935366	Talk about hospitality/catering/tourism as a valid career at GCSE level
581804636	Need graduate Professional Engineers
834464922	Improve business? FE cooperation
965326704	We need an access fund for people on the Isles of Scilly so they can access training on the mainland. Also for off islanders to get to St Mary's as this can be expensive particularly in winter months
1099065349	Introduce real meaningful training opportunities run by qualified and experienced business people.
1102699984	Free ESOL lessons Manufacturing apprenticeships
1124016419	Understand that by providing higher paid and better skilled individuals within the local economy the overall economy of Cornwall will be improved. These individuals will spend their money locally and have better life futures in terms of mental and physical health. Improved training for higher level skills will provide them with more secure job opportunities away from the foibles of seasonal, weather restricted, outdoor work.
1192799058	A cohesive plan Less disparate organisations/agencies etc More schools "ready for work" influence Focus resource and implement pilots and actual impact
1400865020	We need young people coming out of FE/HE with relevant skills sets. perhaps closer links between education and industry would help.
1486767490	Plan the skills for a Net Zero Cornwall, it will be the biggest growth in the coming years.
1490967185	We are a really good employer and employ a happy and committed team but it's a very stressful and costly process to achieve that. We estimate that recruitment has taken about a third of a senior manager's time over most of the past year and for every successful productive employee we find, we sometimes reject over 50. Retaining employees is also difficult with many of the younger generation not wanting to commit to any job for any length of time, and many older recruits finding the workplace much harder than they had imagined, often wanting their job to fit around the rest of their lives to an unworkable degree. We also lose people who

	have health conditions or chaotic lives which eventually lead to them not being able to hold down their jobs. All these factors have a big impact on our productivity. Any investment in improving skills must therefore recognise that issues like health and well-being and attitudes to work and employment need investment alongside if we are ever to move on significantly.
1521592910	For me short bite size courses over the summer are useful with longer training courses in the winter when the business is closed. It's always good to have access to basic skill courses such as Emergency First Aid at Work. Courses that bring the basic skill level of seasonal staff up to requirements.
1541789669	Remove some of the responsibility/funding from schools, let youngsters know what skills are needed & how well some of the trades are paid
1557314228	Plan ahead for new and emerging technologies rather than play catch up
1576771262	Support with funding to assist in short sharp training interventions rather than relying on apprenticeships
1965232832	Offer skills training on nature and the environmental challenges we are facing and how businesses can adapt.
2056595277	Better access to renewable technologies. More flexibility in course arrangements.
2074053982	Traditional education and training has failed to deliver the skills required in the software related industries. As a result there are industry created training programmes including many with their own accreditation systems. If such courses could be made available to people who are looking to upskill and career switch then this would be transformative. Think about India and how they transformed their economy creating a wide range of roles ranging from highly technical to digital administrative. There are examples in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe where their economies have been transformed and have over taken Cornwall. Policy makers in Cornwall need to learn from other areas who are outperforming us.

Table 7.7

**Q. Are there any further comments you would like to make in respect of skills and training specific to your business or sector, that we haven't discussed through the survey?**

Ref	Response
1027	I would like to add the system needs to reform from the grassroots, the education system does not help people with practical skills.
1047	The government have put some decent sized grants now but the lack of loyalty from my 3 previous apprentices make it not worth it for me anymore
1238	The training needs to be on the job for our business rather than in a classroom.
1248	I think it is important businesses have night schools and classrooms within 20 miles of them, so there is somewhere you can go to.
4012	I think some of the questions are more relevant to corporate businesses based in London where I have worked in the past. We don't have the same diversity in Cornwall.
4014	training skills are hugely important to the economy, we need more businesses to invest in training themselves
5004	Hospitality is more stressful than it was 6 years ago.
5169	Just that I have had to go to a company outside of Cornwall for training.
5447	customs related/Brexit was our biggest training need
5610	The Problem with youngsters is they only want to do what they want to do ,I am fed up with training people up, and then they go off after a couple of weeks when they decide they don't want to do it anymore.
5730	Government should get rid of the dole, in Spain after 12 months they lose their dole. Here if they don't like a job they can re-apply for it after a few months.

5740	All of our skills are developed in house.
5778	Encourage young people into the profession, it should be made easier for them to start and not so expensive
8100	Just needs to be made more appealing that this type of work can be a career and not a stepping stone
8245	I would add that I think the FSB could do some sort of swap shop for skills for small businesses. There are probably some businesses that need skills, and some businesses have the skills, so there could be a sharing of skills.
8651	More local access for quality provisions
9048	We should relax Brexit rules so we can recruit more from abroad. Cornwall is struggling with workers for my sector. Local government should look at this problem and address this maybe with schemes etc. to attract people.
9083	Training opportunities for the older workforce to re-train mid career.
9179	We need help finding the right people for the jobs in our business, schools and colleges could help us with this.
9377	Industry training, alcohol licenses to be covered.
9514	It is just a case of people should come and look at what we are doing before they sell the training.
581804636	Need to understand the contribution that Camborne School of Mines has made to the local Engineering sector and that the majority of Engineering employment in Cornwall is because of CSM graduates staying in Cornwall.
1099065349	There is no training available in our business sector/specialism that we cannot create and deliver better internally. We, quite literally, wrote the book on it.
1541789669	We are developing a local training facility to cover trade & management aspects for our industry please get in touch if would like to know more
1555894197	There often is support available but sometimes it is hard to navigate who to talk to. When ESF funding is involved the admin and paperwork involved is extremely off putting, time consuming and costly.
1965232832	I have seen a lot of money invested in subsidised training and work support initiatives and sadly, many of them seem ineffective or difficult for businesses to use. Some of the government schemes have been very poor. The time it takes to arrange apprentice interviews and get apprentices started has been very poor. It has taken weeks for tutors to get back to us at times. I think a new system of external training by colleges that did not require a full day release would be popular and useful for businesses - especially if it could be done in a modular way.
2074053982	Can we do things differently?



### 7.3 Qualitative Interview Discussion Guide (Overview)

#### SKILLS NEEDS

- **What type of skills (for what roles) do you most need and do you find it most difficult to develop or source?**
  - What happens when you cannot develop skills? What examples do you have?
  - Do people come to you with the right foundation skills? In terms of skills, what 'work' do you have to do with them before they become useful?
  - Anything that over time seems to be getting better or worse?
- **How does your business approach skills development?**
  - Do you undertake skills audits?
  - Does your company have a formal training plan (perhaps that tracks the skills needs and training given for each employee)?
  - Do you have time to train and upskill? Or is it a case of making time when it becomes a necessity?
- **Do your employees/workforce expect or ask for skills development?**
  - Is there scope for career or in-work progression in your business?
  - What are the barriers to training?
- **Thinking ahead to the ways that your businesses or industry sectors are changing, what's coming down the track that you are going to have to deal with or train people for?**

#### ESG

- **Are you able to recruit and develop skills among diverse and/or non-stereotypical people into your workforce?**
  - For example, people from diverse backgrounds, or hard-to-reach, or often excluded groups?
  - Have you brought in or have you any experience working with programmes such as Black Voices Matter Cornwall, Disability Cornwall or Inclusion Cornwall? (Have you heard of these?)
  - Is it important or have you given much thought to training for inclusivity and diversity?
- **Similarly, what about training around environmental, Net Zero or waste reduction?**
  - What works well for you?
  - Can you find the training you need around these? Is this important to you?

#### SKILLS PROVIDERS

- **Where do you source training from?**
  - Are these preferred sources? Why?
  - Where do you look?
- **Can you find all you need here in Cornwall?**
  - If no, what's missing and what do you do about it? (E.g. Basic needs vs specialist needs?)
  - Is this a problem? Does distance/location impact your ability to bring up skills?

- **Are skills providers delivering courses and training in the way that works for you? (For example, delivery format, timing, locations)**
  - What do you need, and why?
  - Do they understand your needs?
  - What ideas do you have for how they could better work with your sector or you as a business?
- **What training/skills providers do you particularly rate as good, and for what reasons?**
  - What makes a good provider of skills? What do you expect from them?
  - Any good experiences/examples?
- **Is it important for training you undertake to be accredited?**
  - If no, what types are not accredited? Any good examples?
  - If yes, why?
- **What level or type of qualifications matter most?**
  - Does this vary by type of job?

## GETTING THE LSIP RIGHT

Brief intro from Ann on what the LSIP will actually look like.

- **What do you hope will be the benefit to your business (or sector) if we get the LSIP right?**
  - What do you hope will be available to you from the colleges or other skills providers?
  - What about shift in culture or attitudes towards skills provision? Or is this already OK?
- **Generally speaking, what needs to change around skills provision in Cornwall?**
  - What would be the single-most important improvement?
  - What messages would you like to send back to the Government/DoE for improving skills?
- **Anything else?**