Employer Perspectives Survey 2016

Northern Ireland Slide Pack
Introduction

This is the fourth survey in this biennial series. A number of changes were made to the questionnaire to reflect changing policy requirements. The study focused on the following areas:

- How to support the pipeline of talent into business
- Employers’ approaches to recruitment
- What employers look for in applicants and recruitment of education leavers
- Employer engagement with work experience
- Staff development and employers’ decisions on this
- Skills initiatives and vocational qualifications
- Employer engagement with and attitudes towards apprenticeships

Employer Perspectives Survey 2016

Northern Ireland: 2,007 interviews

Covers all business sectors of the economy

Fieldwork carried out between May and August 2016

With person responsible for training and HR issues

Sites with 2+ employees were eligible

22 minute telephone interviews

Questionnaire Coverage

- This is the fourth survey in this biennial series
- A number of changes were made to the questionnaire to reflect changing policy requirements.
- The study focused on the following areas:
Achieved interviews and confidence intervals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By region</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Number of interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>55,104</td>
<td>2,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>10,684</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>12,570</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>4,822</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>9,585</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Eastern</td>
<td>8,416</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>9,027</td>
<td>294</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By sector</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Number of interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sector &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>7,714</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3,057</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5,397</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail</td>
<td>11,806</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels &amp; Restaurants</td>
<td>4,070</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Comms</td>
<td>2,616</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>1,093</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>6,611</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Admin.</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3,096</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Social Work</td>
<td>4,474</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Other</td>
<td>4,372</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the figures presented in this slide pack are subject to a margin of error: 2 percentage points (p.p.) at the overall level; around 6 p.p. across most regions; and typically around 8 or 9 p.p. across most sectors.
Survey population: size

% of all establishments

- 54%: 100+
- 21%: 50 to 99
- 15%: 25 to 49
- 6%: 25 to 49
- 3%: 10 to 24
- 2%: 5 to 9
- 2%: 2 to 4

% of all employment

- 35%: 100+
- 16%: 50 to 99
- 14%: 25 to 49
- 13%: 10 to 24
- 10%: 5 to 9
- 11%: 2 to 4

Source: ONS Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), March 2015
Survey population: sector

Source: ONS Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), March 2015
Survey population: region

Source: ONS Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), March 2015
Employer attitudes

Staff happiness is as important as organisational performance

- Disagree strongly: 13%
- Disagree slightly: 31%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 25%
- Agree slightly: 23%
- Agree strongly: 53%

Staff ability to do job is more important than formal qualifications

- Disagree strongly: 12%
- Disagree slightly: 27%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 25%
- Agree slightly: 23%
- Agree strongly: 55%

Happy to pay towards training and development

- Disagree strongly: 7%
- Disagree slightly: 7%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 23%
- Agree slightly: 25%
- Agree strongly: 36%

Always looking for new opportunities

- Disagree strongly: 7%
- Disagree slightly: 10%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 25%
- Agree slightly: 24%
- Agree strongly: 32%

Investing in management skills is a top priority

- Disagree strongly: 7%
- Disagree slightly: 11%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 26%
- Agree slightly: 27%
- Agree strongly: 28%

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)

Produced by IFF Research
Entry to work
Employers with vacancies in the past 12 months

Northern Ireland: 44% of employers had vacancies in the last 12 months

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)

**Notes:**

* denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution.
Recruitment channels used

- **Word of mouth or personal recommendations:** 62%
- **Placed adverts on your own website using internal resources:** 47%
- **Placed adverts on social media using internal resources:** 39%
- **Government recruitment service or scheme:** 55%
- **Another form of paid-for recruitment service, including the press:** 46%
- **School, college or university job fairs or careers services:** 18%
- **Paid someone to place adverts on your website or social media:** 9%

**Internal resources**
- ANY*: 83%
- SOLE*: 19%

**External resources**
- ANY: 78%
- SOLE: 12%

Note: multiple responses were allowed

“Any recruitment channel” refers to employers who used an internal or external recruitment channel, in conjunction with others. “Sole recruitment channel” refers to those employers who used either internal or external resources as their only method of recruitment.

Base: All Northern Ireland recruiting employers (1,204)
What employers look for when recruiting

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevant work experience</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths &amp; English GCSE</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational qualifications</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic qualifications</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All Northern Ireland employers (2016: 2,007, 2014: 2,005)
What employers look for: relevant work experience

**Northern Ireland:** 73% of employers look for relevant work experience

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Eastern</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
What employers look for: maths and English

Northern Ireland: 63% of employers look for maths and English

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)

Belfast: 70%
South Eastern: 67%
North West: 63%
South West: 60%
Southern: 60%
Northern: 59%

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Belfast (440), South Eastern (299), North West (176), South West (294), Southern (312), Northern (486)

Financial Services: 91%
Public Admin.: 84%
Business Services: 83%
Education: 79%
Health & Social Work: 78%
Transport & Comms: 68%
Arts & Other Services: 65%
Manufacturing: 63%
Wholesale & Retail: 60%
Construction: 56%
Hotels & Restaurants: 45%
Primary Sector & Utilities: 40%

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Financial Services (46), Public Admin. (34), Business Services (246), Education (139), Health & Social Work (252), Transport & Comms (96), Arts & Other (127), Manufacturing (124), Wholesale & Retail (531), Construction (161), Hotels & Restaurants (131), Primary Sector & Utilities (120)

* denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
What employers look for: vocational qualifications

Northern Ireland: 57% of employers look for vocational qualifications

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)

Sectors:
- Education (139)
- Health & Social Work (252)
- Construction (161)
- Business Services (246)
- Public Admin. (34)
- Arts & Other Services (127)
- Manufacturing (124)
- Primary Sector & Utilities (120)
- Transport & Comms (96)
- Hotels & Restaurants (131)
- Wholesale & Retail (531)
- Financial Services (46)

* denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution

Produced by IFF Research
**What employers look for: academic qualifications**

**Northern Ireland: 53%** of employers look for academic qualifications

*Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)*

- Belfast: 62%
- South Eastern: 58%
- South West: 57%
- Southern: 50%
- Northern: 48%
- North West: 47%

*Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Belfast (440), South Eastern (299), South West (294), Southern (312), Northern (486), North West (176),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Admin.</td>
<td>83%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>81%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Social Work</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Comms</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Other Services</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels &amp; Restaurants</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sector &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Education (139), Public Admin. (34), Financial Services (46), Business Services (246), Hotels & Restaurants (131), Health & Social Work (252), Transport & Comms (96), Arts & Other (127), Manufacturing (124), Construction (161), Wholesale & Retail (531) Primary Sector & Utilities (120)

*'%' denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution.*
Recruitment of young people (aged under 25)

Northern Ireland: 63% of recruiting employers had taken on a young person in the last 12 months

Base: All Northern Ireland employers who had recruited (1,131)

- ** denotes a figure not shown due to a base size of fewer than 25 employers
- * denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who had recruited: Southern (162), Northern (269), Belfast (275), South West (173), South Eastern (165), North West (87)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who had recruited: Hotels & Restaurants (98), Wholesale & Retail (281), Manufacturing (85), Construction (70), Arts & Other Services (56), Business Services (137), Education (83), Transport & Comms (61), Health & Social Work (180), Primary Sector & Utilities (283)

Department of Education
Channels used to recruit young people

Internal resources

- **ANY**: 73%
- **SOLE**: 41%

External resources

- **ANY**: 52%
- **SOLE**: 22%

**Word of mouth or personal recommendations**: 53%

- Placed adverts on your own website using internal resources: 36%
- Placed adverts on social media using internal resources: 30%
- Another form of paid-for recruitment service, including the press: 25%
- Government recruitment service or scheme: 20%
- School, college or university job fairs or careers services: 13%
- Paid someone to place adverts on your website or social media: 8%

*Base: All Northern Ireland establishments that have taken on a young person in the last year (788)*

*Note: multiple responses were allowed*

“Any recruitment channel” refers to employers who used an internal or external recruitment channel, in conjunction with others. “Sole recruitment channel” refers to those employers who used either internal or external resources as their only method of recruitment.

Produced by IFF Research
Recruitment of education leavers

Northern Ireland: 29% had recruited an education leaver in the last 12 months

Base: All Northern Ireland employers (2,007)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Belfast (440), South West (294), Southern (312), North West (176), Northern (486), South Eastern (299)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Education (139), Hotels & Restaurants (131), Health & Social Work (252), Wholesale & Retail (531), Business Services (246), Transport & Comms (96), Arts & Other Services (127), Primary Sector & Utilities (120), Construction (161), Manufacturing (124), Public Admin. (34), Financial Services (46)

‘*’ denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
Preparedness of education leavers for work

**Base:** All Northern Ireland establishments that have recruited each type of education leaver in the previous 2-3 years: 16 year-old school leavers (235), 17-18 year old school leavers (337), 17-18 year old FE leavers (296), University/HE leavers (456)
Work experience offered in last 12 months

48% of employers in Northern Ireland offered work placements

**Education placements: 41%**
- Students at school: 31%
- Students at FE or 6th Form College: 20%
- Students at University: 15%

**Broad Adult Placements: 16%**
- Work trials: 7%
- Placements for unemployed: 9%
- Voluntary work (unprompted*): 1%
- Special needs/Disability programme: 1%

**Internships: 7%**
- Internships, either paid or unpaid: 7%
- Graduate programme (unprompted): <1%

**Work Inspiration**
- 13% of employers engaged with schools, colleges or universities to offer ‘work inspiration’ activities, such as mentoring, holding site visits and visiting educational institutions to talk with students about careers

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* Where respondents had offered other types of work experience which did not fit within the pre-coded answer options, they were able to provide detail for an “other” type of experience. These responses were then grouped (or coded) into similar categories, giving the resulting “Voluntary work” category.

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)
Note: multiple responses were allowed
Work placement offering, by sector

ANY PLACEMENT

48%  88%  70%  56%  60%  55%  52%  45%  39%  36%  40%  32%  32%

ANY EDUCATION PLACEMENT

88%

ANY BROAD ADULT PLACEMENT

65%

ANY INTERNSHIP

53%

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Education (139), Health & Social Work (252), Business Services (246), Public Admin. (34), Arts & Other (127), Transport & Comms (96), Manufacturing (124), Wholesale & Retail (531), Primary Sector & Utilities (120), Hotels & Restaurants (131), Construction (161), Financial Services (46)

* denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
Work placement offering, by region

**ANY PLACEMENT**

- **Belfast**: 52%
- **Northern**: 49%
- **North West**: 51%
- **Southern**: 47%
- **South Eastern**: 42%
- **South West**: 45%

*Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Belfast (440), Northern (486), North West (176), Southern (312), South Eastern (299), South West (294)*
Types of work placement offered

- Placements for students from school: 31% (10%)
- Placements for students from FE College or 6th form: 20% (15%)
- Placements for students from university: 15% (14%)
- Placements targeted at the unemployed: 9% (18%)
- Work trials for potential new recruits: 7% (54%)
- Internships, either paid or unpaid: 7% (20%)
- Voluntary work (unprompted): 1% (**)

Base: All Northern Ireland employers (2,007)
Base: Establishments who had placements in last 12 months for: students from school (769), students from FE college/6th form (541), students from university (432), the unemployed (211), potential new recruits (168), internships (217)

*** denotes a figure not shown due to a base size of fewer than 25 employers
Mean number of work placements offered in the last 12 months, by region

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who have had placements in the last 12 months: Northern (275), Belfast (255), Southern (178), South West (164), South Eastern (153), North West (106)
Mean number of work placements offered in the last 12 months, by sector

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who have had placements in the last 12 months: Wholesale & Retail (236), Business Services (154), Health & Social Work (193), Primary Sector & Utilities (49), Education (129), Arts & Other (74), Construction (66), Hotels & Restaurants (65), Manufacturing (75), Transport & Comms (55)

Note: Public Admin. and Financial Services are not shown due low base sizes of fewer than 25 employers
Employers offering work inspiration activities to students

Northern Ireland: 13% of employers offered work inspiration activities to students

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)

Work Inspiration activities include mentoring, holding site visits and visiting educational institutions to talk with students about careers

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Belfast (440), South West (294), North West (176), South Eastern (299), Northern (486), Southern (312)

"*" denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
Reasons for offering work experience opportunities

**PLACEMENTS**
- **Altruistic**: 71%
- **Direct benefit**: 35%
- **Circumstantial**: 15%

**INSPIRATION**
- **Giving them experience**: 28%
- **Doing our 'bit' / uphold relations with the local community**: 24%
- **Part of formal corporate social responsibility policy**: 7%
- **Existing links with educational institutions**: 2%
- **Helps with recruitment / as a trial**: 5%
- **Helps with the workload**: 1%
- ** Raises our profile in the recruitment market**: 6%
- **Beneficial to the company (e.g. fresh ideas/up to date skills etc.)**: 2%
- **Approached by student or educational institution**: 9%
- **Favour for family member or friend**: 4%

*Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who have had work placements / offered work inspiration in the last 12 months (1,131/371)*

*Note: multiple responses were allowed*
Reason for not offering work experience

- No suitable roles: 37%
- Do not have the time / resource to manage: 18%
- No one has approached us: 14%
- Recruitment freeze: 10%
- Not suitable due to the size of the establishment: 9%
- Does not offer us any business benefits: 8%
- Don't have the work to offer them: 6%
- Regulatory requirements: 5%
- Never thought about it: 5%
- Company policy / Head Office decision: 5%
- No need (unspec.): 4%
- Recruit experienced staff through other avenues: 3%
- Age restrictions: 2%

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments offering no work experience opportunities in the last 12 months (808)
Note: multiple responses were allowed
People development
Summary of approach to training

68% had provided training for staff

- 32% don’t provide or fund any training
- 56% provide internal training
- 34% provide both external & internal training
- 45% provide external training

- 42% provide external training through private providers
- 12% provide external training through both private and public providers
- 14% provide external training through public providers

Base: All Northern Ireland employers (2,007)
Northern Ireland: 14%
Of employers who train used FE colleges as a source of training
Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train (1,581)

FE Colleges as a source of training

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train: North West (136), South West (230), Belfast (370), Southern (235), South Eastern (233), Northern (377)

Northern Ireland: 14%
Of employers who train used FE colleges as a source of training
Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train (1,581)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train: North West (136), South West (230), Belfast (370), Southern (235), South Eastern (233), Northern (377)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train: Public admin (31), Education (134), Health & Social Work (235), Construction (126), Arts & Other (97), Hotels & Restaurants (101), Business Services (194), Manufacturing (100), Wholesale & Retail (374), Financial Services (41), Primary Sector & Utilities (72), Transport & Comm (76)

‘*’ denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
Higher Education Institutions as a source of training

Northern Ireland: 11%
Of employers who train used Higher Education Institutions as a source of training

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train (1,581)

- South Eastern: 15%
- Belfast: 14%
- Southern: 10%
- South West: 9%
- Northern: 8%
- North West: 8%

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train: South Eastern (233), Belfast (370), Southern (235), South West (230), Northern (377), North West (136)

- Public Admin.: 25%
- Education: 20%
- Financial Services: 20%
- Health & Social Work: 18%
- Primary Sector & Utilities: 14%
- Business Services: 13%
- Transport & Comms: 13%
- Arts & Other Services: 11%
- Manufacturing: 6%
- Wholesale & Retail: 4%
- Construction: 3%
- Hotels & Restaurants: 2%

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train: Public admin (31), Education (134), Financial Services (41), Health & Social Work (235), Primary Sector & Utilities (72), Business Services (194), Transport & Comms (76), Arts & Other (97), Manufacturing (100), Wholesale & Retail (374), Construction (126), Hotels & Restaurants (101)

*% denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
Commercial organisations as a source of training

Northern Ireland: 50%
Of employers who train used commercial organisations as a source of training

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train (1,581)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train: South Eastern (233), North West (136), Belfast (370), Northern (377), South West (230), Southern (235)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who train: Public admin (31), Health & Social Work (235), Construction (126), Education (134), Business Services (194), Financial Services (41), Manufacturing (100), Transport & Comms (76), Arts & Other Services (97), Hotels & Restaurants (101), Wholesale & Retail (374), Primary Sector & Utilities (72)

"*" denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
Reasons for choosing to invest resource in public training providers

Reasons for using

- Relevant courses: 64% (2016) vs. 65% (2014)
- Quality/standard of courses: 11% (2016) vs. 8% (2014)
- Regulated qualification*: 10% (2016)
- Tailor courses to meet our needs: 9% (2016) vs. 12% (2014)
- Local: 8% (2016) vs. 9% (2014)

Barriers to using

**FE Colleges**
- Courses not relevant: 45% (2016) vs. 49% (2014)
- Subject matter not relevant: 12% (2016) vs. 9% (2014)
- Do not know enough: 8% (2016) vs. 8% (2014)
- Too expensive: 5% (2016) vs. 3% (2014)
- Happy with current relationship: 5% (2016) vs. 2% (2014)

**HEIs**
- Courses not relevant: 45% (2016) vs. 45% (2014)
- Subject matter not relevant: 13% (2016) vs. 8% (2014)
- Training more advanced than needed: 6% (2016) vs. 4% (2014)
- Do not know enough: 6% (2016) vs. 8% (2014)
- Too expensive: 6% (2016) vs. 5% (2014)

*Added as a pre-code in 2016

Base (2016/2014): All Northern Ireland employers who use FE Colleges or HEIs to deliver training (368/358)
Note: multiple responses were allowed

Base (2016/2014): All Northern Ireland employers who have not used FE colleges for external training and were asked why (501/459)
Note: multiple responses were allowed

Base (2016/2014): All Northern Ireland employers who have not used HEIs for external training and were asked why (459/556)
Note: multiple responses were allowed
Take-up of vocational qualifications

Northern Ireland: 22%
Of employers had arranged or funded training designed to lead to a recognised vocational qualification in the last 12 months

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Belfast (440), North West (176), South Eastern (299), Northern (486), South West (294), Southern (312)

53%*
44%
41%*
37%
25%
25%
20%
20%
19%
18%
14%
11%

Public Admin., Health & Social Work, Financial Services, Education, Construction, Hotels & Restaurants, Arts & Other Services, Transport & Comms, Business Services, Manufacturing, Wholesale & Retail, Primary Sector & Utilities

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Public Admin. (34), Health & Social Work (252), Financial Services (46), Education (139), Construction (161), Hotels & Restaurants (131), Arts & Other (127), Transport & Comms (96), Business Services (246), Manufacturing (124), Wholesale & Retail (531), Primary Sector & Utilities (120)

* denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution

Department for Education

Produced by IFF Research
Business benefits and impacts of vocational qualifications

Business benefits of vocational qualifications

Can be adapted to business needs
- Agree slightly: 9%, 8%
- Agree strongly: 32%, 8%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 55%, 37%
- AGREE: 2016: 87%, 2014: 86%

Offers good value for money
- Agree slightly: 10%, 8%
- Agree strongly: 37%, 8%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 45%, 37%
- AGREE: 2016: 83%, 2014: 81%

Impact of vocational qualifications

Better business performance
- Agree slightly: 8%, 25%
- Agree strongly: 65%, 25%
- AGREE: 2016: 90%, 2014: 90%

Improved staff retention
- Agree slightly: 11%, 26%
- Agree strongly: 55%, 26%
- AGREE: 2016: 81%, 2014: 84%

Base: All Northern Ireland employers who had arranged/funded training towards vocational qualifications in the previous 12 months (2014/2016): 640/620

Figures will not add up to 100% as “don’t know” answers are not displayed

Produced by IFF Research
Barriers of training staff to vocational qualifications

- VQs take too long to deliver: 29%
- VQs are too complicated for our needs: 27%
- VQs are too much bureaucracy: 27%
- VQs are not as rigorous as other qualifications: 15%
- Relevant VQs are not available to us: 11%
- Staff don’t want VQs: 35%
- The training we already provide is sufficient: 13%
- The government does not provide grants/funding to cover the costs: 41%
- VQs are too expensive to deliver: 33%
- Cutbacks in our training budget: 28%
- Lack of information/knowledge about VQs: 39%

*Multiple responses allowed

Base: All Northern Ireland employers who have not arranged training in the last 12 months that has led to a Vocational Qualification (2014/2016): 895/961
Note: multiple responses were allowed

Produced by IFF Research
External help sought on skills and training

24% sought or received advice

9% experienced issues but did not seek advice

66% did not experience skills-related issues

16% Training Providers
- Commercial or not for profit training provider: 16%
- College: 9%
- University: 4%

15% Collectives & Representatives
- Professional body: 11%
- Other employers: 6%
- Chamber of Commerce: 2%
- Trade Union: 2%

13% Public Sector
- Local Authority: 7%
- Sector Skills Council: 6%
- Government: 1%

6% Other Private
- Consultancy: 5%
- Suppliers: 1%
Employer collaboration on skills and training practices

Northern Ireland: 14%
Of employers have worked with others to develop skills or expertise in the workforce

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)

* denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
Employer involvement in designing content of vocational qualifications

**Northern Ireland: 53%**

Of employers who have arranged or funded external training in the past 12 months that was designed to lead to a Vocational Qualification have had some involvement in the design of its content.

Base: All Northern Ireland employers who have trained staff using vocational qualifications in last 12 months (620)

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**Base: All Northern Ireland employers who have trained staff using vocational qualifications in last 12 months**: Southern (79), Northern (144), Belfast (156), South Eastern (85), North West (58), South West (98)

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* denotes a figure not shown due to a base size of fewer than 25 employers

** denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
Employer involvement in designing content of external training

Northern Ireland: 49%
Of employers who have arranged external training in the past 12 months have had some involvement in the design of its content

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments that provide external training (1,161)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments that provide external training: Belfast (278), South Eastern (176), North West (102), Southern (165), Northern (273), South West (167)

** denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
Awareness and use of the National Occupational Standards in Northern Ireland

- To develop training plans to meet the establishment’s training needs: 7% (2014: 8%)
- For staff appraisals or performance management: 6% (2014: 6%)
- To develop job descriptions or guide recruitment criteria: 7% (2014: 7%)
- For succession planning or competency frameworks: 6% (2014: 6%)

10% of all Northern Ireland employers used NOS… (2014: 11%)

Northern Ireland: 43% any awareness of NOS (2014: 42%)

- Good knowledge: 5%
- Aware with some knowledge: 16%
- Aware but don’t know what they are: 22%
- Not heard of NOS: 57%

‘Don’t know’ responses are not shown

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2016/2014): (2,007/2,005)
Apprenticeships
An overview of apprenticeships

Northern Ireland: 13% of establishments offered apprenticeships

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments (2,007)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: South West (294), Southern (312), South Eastern (299), North West (176), Northern (486), Belfast (440)

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments: Construction (161), Manufacturing (124), Arts & Other Services (127), Wholesale & Retail (531), Education (139), Business Services (246), Hotels & Restaurants (131), Financial Services (46), Health & Social Work (252), Public Admin. (34), Transport & Comms (96), Primary Sector & Utilities (120)

** denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution

Produced by IFF Research
Apprenticeships by region

2012 2014 2016 % of establishments that have/offer apprenticeships

Base for 2016: All Northern Ireland establishments: Total (2,007), Belfast (440) Northern (486), North West (176), Southern (312), South West (294)
Apprenticeships by sector

Base for 2016: All Northern Ireland establishments: Total (2,007), Education (139), Public Admin. (34), Health & Social Work (252), Arts & Other (127), Construction (161), Manufacturing (124), Wholesale & Retail (531), Hotels & Restaurants (131), Business Services (246), Financial Services (46), Primary Sector & Utilities (120), Transport & Comms (96)

*** denotes a figure not shown due to a base size of fewer than 25 employers
** denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution
Reasons for offering apprenticeships, amongst employers who have recently started to offer them

49% Acquiring talent

- Good way to get skilled staff: 39%
- Ensure young people continue to enter the company / industry: 10%
- Want to upskill current staff: 8%
- We could shape our own apprenticeship framework: 6%
- Improve staff morale / retention: 2%
- To train people from scratch / to our needs: 1%
- Demand among existing staff: 1%

17% Nurturing talent

- Good way to give young people a chance: 16%
- To help the community / corporate social responsibility: 3%
- To help people into work: 2%

19% Altruistic

- Availability of grants: 4%

5% Financial

- Anticipating the apprenticeship levy: 1%

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments that started offering apprenticeships in the last three years (83)

Note: multiple responses were allowed
Reasons for not offering apprenticeships

Perceived structural barriers
- Not looking to recruit new staff: 16%
- Apprenticeships are not suitable for our size: 15%
- Apprenticeships are not offered for our industry: 15%
- Cannot afford to: 6%
- Do not have the time to train them: 4%
- No need as all staff are fully skilled: 14%
- Does not suit our business model: 9%
- Prefer to recruit experienced staff: 5%
- Prefer other forms of training: 3%
- Past apprentices were of a poor standard: 1%

Actively choosing not to
- Never have before so not considered it: 5%
- No one has enquired about doing one: 2%
- Do not know enough about them: 2%

Lack of awareness

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments not offering apprenticeships (1,681)
Note: multiple responses allowed.
Types of external training providers used for apprenticeships

60\% of establishments offering apprenticeships had used an external provider to deliver at least some of the training for their apprentices

- A Further Education or 6th form college: 64\%
- A commercial training provider: 33\%
- A professional body: 29\%
- A university or higher education institution: 16\%
- A non-profile making organisation: 13\%
- Other: 5\%

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments who have or offer formal apprenticeships (326)

Base: All establishments whose apprentices receive external training (251)
Note: multiple responses were allowed
Awareness and knowledge of apprenticeships

Northern Ireland: 29% of employers not currently offering apprenticeships were aware of apprenticeships and had at least a (self described) good knowledge of what they involve.

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments not offering apprenticeships (1,681)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Awareness and Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Eastern</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments not offering apprenticeships (1,681) South West (224), Belfast (385), Southern (253), South Eastern (253), Northern (417), North West (149)

Awareness and knowledge of apprenticeships:

- Construction: 49%
- Manufacturing: 38%
- Transport & Comms: 34%
- Public Admin.: 34%
- Primary Sector & Utilities: 34%
- Business Services: 31%
- Arts & Other Services: 31%
- Financial Services: 26%
- Education: 25%
- Health & Social Work: 25%
- Wholesale & Retail: 22%
- Hotels & Restaurants: 21%

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments not offering apprenticeships: Construction (103), Manufacturing (77), Transport & Comms (86), Public Admin. (32), Primary Sector & Utilities (113), Business Services (210), Arts & Other (108), Financial Services (42), Education (122), Health & Social Work (225), Wholesale & Retail (453), Hotels & Restaurants (110)

**' denotes a base size of between 25-49 employers and should be treated with caution.
Awareness of specific government-recognised apprenticeship schemes

- **Apprenticeships for those aged 25 plus**
  - 2016: 25%
  - 2014: 21%
  - 2012: 20%

- **Higher Apprenticeships**
  - 2016: 24%
  - 2014: 22%
  - 2012: 18%

Base (2012/2014/2016): All Northern Ireland establishments (1,000 / 2,005 / 2,007)
Awareness and use of apprenticeship services

**Apprenticeship NI***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Aware but not used</th>
<th>Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base (2012/2014/2016): All Northern Ireland establishments (1,000 / 2,005 / 2,007)

*Use of Apprenticeship NI was not captured in 2012

**Group Training Associations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Aware but not used</th>
<th>Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2012/14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Aware but not used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/14</td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Use of Apprenticeship NI was not captured in 2012
Future demand for apprenticeships

All Northern Ireland establishments
Base: 2,007

Offers apprenticeships
13%

Does not offer apprenticeships
81%

Whether plan to offer in future?

- Yes, plan to offer in future: 15%
- No: 70%
- Don’t know: 15%

- Base: 326
- Base: 1,681

23% of all Northern Ireland establishments plan to offer apprenticeships in future
Reasons for planning to start offering apprenticeships

69% Acquiring talent
- Good way to get skilled staff: 37%
- To expand the business: 22%
- Ensure young people continue to enter the company/industry: 20%
- Good way to give young people a chance: 18%
- To help people into work: 3%

21% Altruistic
- Want to upskill current staff: 7%
- To train people from scratch/to our needs: 3%
- We can shape our own apprenticeship framework: 3%
- Improve skills/knowledge of new and existing staff: 1%
- Demand among existing staff: 2%

17% Nurturing talent
- Good value for money/cost effective: 2%
- Availability of grants: 1%
- Anticipating the apprenticeship levy: 3%

3% Financial

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments that plan to start offering apprenticeships in future (251).
Note: multiple responses were allowed.
Change in apprentice numbers (past and future)

**Change since first started offering apprenticeships**

- 76% Stay about the same
- 7% Increase
- 17% Decrease

**Expected change in next 2 years**

- 71% Stay about the same
- 24% Increase
- 4% Decrease

Base: All Northern Ireland establishments with current apprentices (292)

Note: breakdowns by region and sector are not shown due to low base sizes.
Conclusions
How establishments support the pipeline of talent into businesses and entry routes into employment

- Despite persistent issues relating to hard-to-fill and skill-shortage vacancies (as reported in ESS 2015), employers use a fairly limited number and range of recruitment channels to bring talent into their business.
  
  - The majority of employers who recruited someone (62%) used word of mouth / personal recommendations to access the potential labour market. (11% used this as their sole method of recruitment).
  
  - As well as limiting the range of potential applicants that employers have access to, this has the impact of restricting jobseekers’ routes to employment.

- Employers value work experience above qualifications (whether academic or vocational) as a means of gauging the quality and potential of new recruits.

- Developing forms of work experience and work inspiration that genuinely respond to employers’ needs to develop and access experienced new recruits offers potential to improve individuals’ entry to the labour market.
How to increase the provision of apprenticeships

- EPS 2016 presents a positive picture in terms of increases in the proportion of establishments offering apprenticeships and the number of apprentices taken on.

- Among employers that had started offering apprenticeships in the last three years, the most common reasons for having done so related to them being viewed as a means to acquire new talent. Among employers not offering apprenticeships, perceived structural barriers were common (e.g. perceiving apprenticeships to be unsuitable for their size or sector).

  - The findings on reasons why employers engage or not engage with apprenticeships may serve as useful tools to inform communications with employers to support increased engagement with apprenticeships.

- Approaching a quarter (23%) of Northern Ireland establishments were planning to offer apprenticeships in future.

- Potential to increase apprenticeship numbers also exists among establishments already offering them. Around a quarter (24%) of these employers expected to increase the number of apprentices they employ over the next two years.
Subgroup differences

- Construction employers placed most value on candidates having relevant work experience when recruiting (84%), yet very few employers in this sector offer work placements (32%). Instead, Construction employers lead the way in offering apprenticeships (26% were offering apprenticeships at the time of the survey).

- The proportion of employers offering apprenticeships was highest in the South West region (19%), compared with a range of between 11% and 13% across the other regions.

- Take up of vocational qualifications was similar across regions (ranging from 19% of employers in the Southern region to 25% in Belfast). However, by sector, take up of vocational qualifications was highest in the Public Administration, Health and Social Work, Financial Services and Education sectors.

- Employers across all sectors and region were more likely to have used commercial organisations as a source of training for their staff over the past 12 months, compared with using further education colleges or higher education institutions.