**Employer Skills Survey 2022: Main Headlines**

**Background**

The Employer Skills Survey (ESS), commissioned by DfE, gathers labour market intelligence on employer skills needs and training activity among employers across the UK, and has been undertaken approximately every two years since 1999. The 2022 ESS was conducted between June 2022 and March 2023, with results being representative of employers across the UK. 534 Buckinghamshire employers were surveyed during this period.

This report summarises the key findings from the results available on pages 3 and 4.

**Summary**

Recruitment difficulties are the main challenge for Buckinghamshire businesses according to results from the 2022 ESS. Buckinghamshire businesses with hard to fill vacancies are more reliant on outsourcing work in comparison to other LEP areas. The training behaviour and vocational training knowledge of Buckinghamshire employers are strongly influenced by the higher proportion of micro and small businesses in the county than the national average.

**Recruitment difficulties & skills shortages**

The results suggest that recruitment difficulties have become more acute in Buckinghamshire than the national average. 18% of Buckinghamshire employers surveyed had at least one vacancy that was hard to fill, compared with 15% nationally. This was the joint third highest proportion out of the 38 LEP areas in England, and equated to 61% of all vacancies in Buckinghamshire.

This is comparatively worse than the 8% of Buckinghamshire employers that had a hard to fill vacancy in the 2019 ESS. Despite recruitment difficulties increasing across all LEP areas due to a tightened labour market, Buckinghamshire’s proportion was originally equal to the national average.

For Buckinghamshire businesses with hard to fill vacancies, the majority (81%) have had to increase workload for other staff. This was similar to the national average (83%), however the implication of having to outsource work was higher than the national average (36% and 30% respectively) and the second highest proportion of all LEP areas.

Alongside issues concerning a lack of applicants to vacancies, just over a third (35%) of vacancies in Buckinghamshire were skills shortage vacancies – a vacancy that is hard to fill due to a lack of skills, qualifications or experience among applicants.

A higher proportion of Buckinghamshire employers had a skills shortage vacancy than the national average (12% and 10% respectively), growing from 7% and 6% respectively in 2019. Compared to other LEP areas, Buckinghamshire had the joint highest proportion of employers with a skills shortage vacancy. Specialist skills or knowledge needed to perform the role were particularly lacking among applicants according to 75% of Buckinghamshire employers with a skills shortage vacancy, the highest of any LEP area.

**Skills gaps & training**

In contrast, Buckinghamshire performed relatively well in the incidence of skills gaps. 13% of Buckinghamshire employers had staff that were not fully proficient, lower than the national average (15%) and the joint second lowest by LEP area, behind only London.

Despite this, almost a third (30%) of Buckinghamshire employers with a skills gap said this was caused by staff not receiving appropriate training, the joint second highest by LEP area. Technical skills that needed improving included operational skills (57% of Bucks employers with a skills gap), followed by complex analytical skills (47%), basic skills (37%) and digital skills (36%).

The lack of training is further evidenced by the proportion of employers who funded or arranged training for staff over the past 12 months. In Buckinghamshire, this came to 58% of employers, lower than the national average of 60%. The proportion of employers providing on-the-job training was lower than the national average, while the proportion providing off-the-job training was higher.

Employers did not provide training for a range of reasons. However, two reasons stood out. 8% (joint second highest by LEP area) said it was due to no money being available for training. While 3% (joint lowest) said that no training was available in the relevant subject area.

**Apprenticeships, work experience & T Levels**

Just 13% of Buckinghamshire employers have or offer apprenticeships. This was significantly lower than the 20% average for England. Despite there being less ‘awareness and good knowledge of apprenticeships’ than the national average (48% and 53% respectively), employers did not identify this as a primary reason for not having or offering apprenticeships. Instead, it was the size of their business that made apprenticeships unsuitable.

The challenge of business size also reflected reasons for not offering work-related experiences to students. 31% said they don’t have the time or resource to manage it, and 17% said the size of their business made it unsuitable. Both reasons were the highest proportion of any LEP area.

In terms of T Levels, 71% of Buckinghamshire employers had not heard of them, higher than the 67% national average. Buckinghamshire employers were also less likely to be interested in providing work placements to T Level students than the national average (29% and 33% respectively), and a higher proportion thought providing them would be difficult (62% and 60% respectively).

**Sources**

[UK headline facts and figures](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/employer-skills-survey/2022)

[UK research report](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65855506fc07f3000d8d46bd/Employer_skills_survey_2022_research_report.pdf)

[Local summary data tables](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F657733d70467eb001355f511%2FEmployer_skills_survey_2022_LEP_summary_data_tables.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

[Local data tables](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F65730278049516000f49beb5%2FEmployer_skills_survey_2022_LEP_data_tables.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

[Questionnaire – Annex C](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/methodology/technical-documentation-2022)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | England | Buckinghamshire | LEP Rank (out of 38) |
| Vacancies |  |  |  |
| Have at least one vacancy that is hard to fill | 15% | **18%** | 3 |
| Have a skills shortage vacancy | 10% | **12%** | 2 |
| % of all vacancies which are SSVs | 36% | **35%** | 20 |
| Technical / practical skills found difficult to obtain from applicants (those with SSVs) |  |  |  |
| *Complex analytical skills* | 49% | **39%** | 31 |
| *Operational skills* | 52% | **48%** | 20 |
| *Digital skills* | 34% | **35%** | 10 |
| *Basic skills* | 36% | **34%** | 23 |
| Soft / people skills found difficult to obtain from applicants (employers with SSVs) |  |  |  |
| *Management & leadership skills* | 46% | **32%** | 37 |
| *Sales & customer skills* | 43% | **31%** | 35 |
| *Self-management skills* | 55% | **51%** | 22 |
| Skills gaps |  |  |  |
| % of establishments with any staff not fully proficient | 15% | **13%** | 36 |
| Number of skills gaps as a % of employment | 6% | **5%** | 19 |
| Technical / practical skills that need improving in occupations with skills gaps (employers with skills gaps) |  |  |  |
| *Complex analytical skills* | 50% | **47%** | 23 |
| *Operational skills* | 54% | **57%** | 9 |
| *Digital skills* | 36% | **36%** | 14 |
| *Basic skills* | 35% | **37%** | 9 |
| Soft / people skills that need improving in occupations with skills gaps (employers with skills gaps) |  |  |  |
| *Management & leadership skills* | 48% | **49%** | 10 |
| *Sales & customer skills* | 50% | **45%** | 26 |
| *Self-management skills* | 65% | **64%** | 17 |
| Training |  |  |  |
| % of establishments training staff over the last 12 months | 60% | **58%** | 25 |
| % of establishments providing off-the-job training in the last 12 months | 39% | **41%** | 12 |
| % of establishments providing on-the-job training in the last 12 months | 49% | **47%** | 28 |
| % of training establishments providing online training or e-learning in the last 12 months | 67% | **69%** | 7 |
| Number trained as % of total staff | 60% | **50%** | 36 |
| Training days per trainee | 5.9 | **6.1** | 16 |
| Training days per staff | 3.5 | **3.0** | 32 |
| Apprenticeships\* |  |  |  |
| Whether have any apprentices currently | 11% | **9%** | 32 |
| Whether currently offer apprenticeships at site | 8% | **4%** | 37 |
| Whether have or offer apprenticeships | 20% | **13%** | 37 |
| Whether are aware and have good knowledge of apprenticeships / have or offer apprenticeships | 53% | **48%** | 32 |
| Work experience |  |  |  |
| Main reasons for not offering placement/internship programmes or other work-related experiences to students over the last 12 months |  |  |  |
| We have no suitable roles | 29% | **25%** | 27 |
| Do not have the time / resource to manage it | 19% | **31%** | 1 |
| They are not suitable due to the size of the establishment | 10% | **17%** | 1 |
| No one has approached us | 10% | **9%** | 27 |
| T Levels |  |  |  |
| Not heard of T Levels | 67% | **71%** | 7 |
| Interested in providing work placements to T-levels students | 33% | **29%** | 27 |
| Difficult to provide work placements to T-levels students | 60% | **62%** | 13 |
| \*91 Buckinghamshire sample size |  |  |  |