



Sales
Labour Market Report
2012

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Appendix 1: Sector Skills Councils Names, SSC Descriptions and SIC Definition

Foreword

This report examines Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) relating to Sales and the demand from employers for relevant staff skills.

The report primarily draws on:

- existing data from Government reports such as the National Employer Skills Surveys in England (2009), Northern Ireland (2008), Scotland (2010) and Wales (2005)
- information included in Government datasets such as the Labour Force Survey
- national statistics websites, datasets and reports
- the previous Labour Market Information for Sales, commissioned by the MSSSB and produced by TBR in 2008.

This report presents a picture of Sales across the UK. It looks at:

- the current profile of Sales employment across the UK including workforce characteristics, training and qualification levels
- the skills challenges and skills related issues facing employers
- the types of skill shortages and gaps which Sales workers face
- what lies ahead

The principle purpose of this report is to provide a robust analysis of the current Sales occupation, skills and skills needs across the UK and within each of the four nations: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Executive Summary

Key findings

- Sales and Customer Service occupations account for eight per cent of all employment in the UK, or 2.383 million workers¹
- Sales and Customer Service workers are least likely of all the groups to work full time, and is the only group with the majority of employees (53 per cent) in part time positions, compared to 27 per cent of overall employment²
- Over two thirds (70 per cent) of employees working as Sales assistants and retail cashiers do so part-time, while less than one third (30 per cent) of employees in Sales related occupations are part-time workers. Sales supervisors are even less likely, with only 1 in 5 (20 per cent) working part-time³
- Sales assistants and retail cashiers are predominantly (two thirds) female, sales-related occupations have the same gender profile as the overall workforce (54 per cent male), and Sales Supervisors have an equal gender split (50 per cent each)⁴.
- 37 per cent of all male Sales staff are in managerial or associate professional roles⁵
- All of the four UK Nations have between 8 and 9 per cent of their employment in Sales and Customer Service occupations⁶
- In Wales, *Sales and retail assistants* is the single biggest occupation, with 57,000 workers, ahead of *care assistants and home carers* (44,000) and *cleaners, domestics* (35,000)⁷
- Between 2000 and 2009, employment in Wales grew by 90,000 (7 per cent). However, over the same period, employment in Sales and Customer service occupations fell by 7,000.⁸ Sales assistants and retail cashiers were the 10th fastest declining occupation between 2004 and 2009, falling 12 per cent (10,300 jobs) from 83,600 in 2004.⁹
- In England there were 46,325 vacancies for Sales and Customer Service occupations, of which 5,475 (12 per cent) were Skill Shortage Vacancies¹⁰
- In England the largest share of skills gaps is for Sales and Customer Service occupations, representing almost 1 in 5 instances of all skills gaps (18 per cent)¹¹.

¹ Source: ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

² Ibid

³ ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

⁴ ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011

⁵ ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

⁶ ONS (2011) (from NOMIS), Annual Population Survey- July 2010 – June 2011 (SOC2010).

⁷ Ibid

⁸ UKCES 2011, *Skills for Jobs: The National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales 2011 – Volume 2: Evidence Report*, p31

⁹ UKCES 2011, *Skills for Jobs: The National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales 2011 – Volume 2: Evidence Report*, p34

¹⁰ UKCES 2010, National Employer Skills Survey 2009: main report, p74

¹¹ UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 99

Executive Summary

- In Northern Ireland, Sales and Customer Service occupations comprise 1 in 5 (20 per cent) of all vacancies, but a slightly lower share of all DtfVs (16 per cent) and only 6 per cent of all SSVs.¹²
- Sales and Customer Service occupations have the second highest share of skills gaps (19 per cent) in Northern Ireland¹³
- In Scotland Sales and Customer Service occupations have the highest rate of skills gaps (9 per cent of employees) of any occupational group¹⁴
- In Wales, Sales & Customer Service occupations accounted for 14 per cent of total employment¹⁵.

¹² Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI) 2008, *The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008*

¹³ DELNI 2008, *The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008*, p50

¹⁴ The Scottish Government (2011), *Skills in Scotland 2010 (Scottish Employer Skills Survey)*, page 28

¹⁵ GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), *Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey*, p40

1. Introduction

1.1 Defining Sales

Sales occupations are defined in the SOC (discussed below) and as a group of functions in the National Occupational Standards.

In 2006, MSSSB defined the purpose of Sales as *'To create, build and sustain mutually beneficial and profitable relationships through personal and organisational contact'*.¹⁶

This emphasises networking and relationships, so-called 'soft skills', and relationship building with customers over one-off transactions, both of which will be discussed further in this report.

As with other pan-sector areas, Sales occupations are defined and classified in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), but Sales skills are also used in other occupations. The SOC will therefore not capture all the people undertaking Sales activities.

1.1.1 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Codes¹⁷

Much of the data in this report is defined by the Office of National Statistics' (ONS) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). The SOC is a hierarchical coding of occupations in the UK, created by the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

In 2010, the SOC 2000 was revised. Some of the newer data uses the updated SOC and some uses the older SOC 2000, so it is important to note the difference between the SOC 2000 and SOC 2010 when comparing data which uses these different groupings.

The key change in SOC 2010 for group 7 (Sales and Customer Service Occupations) is the creation of new minor groups for Sales Supervisors and Customer Service Managers and Supervisors. Sales supervisors are those who "oversee operations and directly supervise and coordinate the activities of Sales and related workers in retail and wholesale establishments."¹⁸

Note that while there was little change between the 2000 and 2010 SOC for Sales and customer service, there were significant changes in some other areas (like Managers, directors and senior officials).

Conceptually, it would be preferable if all the data was in a consistent grouping. But in order to benefit from the most information, and as the change has not been dramatic, both the SOC 2000 and the SOC 2010 are used in this report. Therefore, where SOC data is used, it will always be made clear whether this is SOC 2000 or SOC 2010.

Many reports on employment and skills use the largest occupational grouping (known as 1-digit) which splits occupations into 9 groups.

The 9 SOC groups are listed in Table 1.

¹⁶ TBR (for MSSSB) 2008, *Skills Needs and Training Supply for Sales – A Gap Analysis*

¹⁷ Office of National Statistics 2010, *Standard Occupational Classification 2010, Vol.1, Palgrave Macmillan*

¹⁸ Office of National Statistics 2010, *Standard Occupational Classification 2010, Vol.1, Palgrave Macmillan p208*

1. Introduction

Table 1: Major SOC (2000 and 2010) groups

SOC 2000	SOC 2010
1 Managers and Senior Officials	Managers, Directors and Senior Officials
2 Professional occupations	Professional Occupations
3 Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	Associate Professional and Technical Occupations
4 Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	Administrative and Secretarial Occupations
5 Skilled Trades Occupations	Skilled Trades Occupations
6 Personal Service Occupations	Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations
7 Sales and Customer Service Occupations	Sales and Customer Service Occupations
8 Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	Process, Plant and Machine Operatives
9 Elementary Occupations	Elementary Occupations

Source: ONS (2000 and 2010) SOC 2000 & 2010 vols 1.

Sales and Customer Service (Sales and Customer Service) occupations are combined in major group 7, with the following definition in both SOC 2000 and SOC 2010:

"This major group covers occupations whose tasks require the knowledge and experience necessary to sell goods and services, accept payment in respect of sales, replenish stocks of goods in stores, provide information to potential clients and additional services to customers after the point of sale. The main tasks involve a knowledge of Sales techniques, a degree of knowledge regarding the product or service being sold, familiarity with cash and credit handling procedures and a certain amount of record keeping associated with those tasks. Most occupations in this major group require a general education and skills in interpersonal communication. Some occupations will require a degree of specific knowledge regarding the product or service being sold, but are included in this major group because the primary task involves selling."¹⁹

The group is divided into Sales and Customer Service jobs as follows:

Table 2: Standard Occupational Classification (2000) Codes related to Sales

SOC Code	Major Group		Sub-Major Group		Minor Group
7	Sales and Customer Service occupations	71	Sales occupations	711	Sales assistants and retail cashiers
				712	Sales related occupations
		72	Customer service occupations	721	Customer service occupations

Source: ONS (2000) Standard Occupational Classification 2000.²⁰

¹⁹ Office of National Statistics 2010, Standard Occupational Classification 2010, Vol.1, Palgrave Macmillan p201

²⁰ Office of National Statistics 2000, Standard Occupational Classification 2000, Volume 1 structure and description of unit groups, 2000. London Stationery Office

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Table 3: Standard Occupational Classification (2010) Codes related to Sales

SOC Code	Major Group		Sub-Major Group		Minor Group
7	Sales and Customer Service occupations	71	Sales occupations	711	Sales assistants and retail cashiers
				712	Sales related occupations
				713	Sales supervisors
		72	Customer service occupations	721	Customer service occupations
				722	Customer service managers and supervisors

Source: ONS (2010) Standard Occupational Classification 2010.²¹

Sub-major group 71 "Sales occupations" is defined as:

*" Workers in this sub-major group sell goods and services in retail and wholesale establishments, accept payment in respect of sales, obtain orders and collect payments for goods and services from private households, replenish stocks of goods in stores, create displays of merchandise and perform other Sales related occupations.. "*²²

This sub-major group of "Sales occupations" is further broken down into the three components as follows:

Minor group 711 "Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers" is defined as:

*"Sales assistants and retail cashiers sell goods and services in retail or wholesale establishments, accept payments, give change and arrange finance as appropriate in respect of sales; obtain, receive and record telephone orders for goods and services."*²³

Minor group 712 "Sales related occupations" is defined as:

*"Job holders in this minor group visit private households to obtain orders and collect payments, deliver and sell food, drink and other goods in streets and open spaces from portable containers, stalls and vans, collect and deliver laundered and similarly serviced articles, replenish and display stocks of merchandise, and undertake a variety of Sales occupations not elsewhere classified."*²⁴

Minor group 713 "Sales supervisors" is defined as:

*"Sales supervisors oversee operations and directly supervise and coordinate the activities of Sales and related workers in retail and wholesale establishments."*²⁵

This is quite limited, as it excludes Sales supervisors in sectors other than retail and wholesale (i.e. someone who might have a supervisory role in Sales in another industry).

²¹ Office of National Statistics 2000, Standard Occupational Classification 2000, Volume 1 structure and description of unit groups, 2000. London Stationery Office

²² Office of National Statistics 2010, Standard Occupational Classification 2010, Vol. 1, Palgrave Macmillan p202

²³ Office of National Statistics 2010, Standard Occupational Classification 2010, Vol. 1, Palgrave Macmillan p202

²⁴ Office of National Statistics 2010, Standard Occupational Classification 2010, Vol. 1, Palgrave Macmillan p205

²⁵ Office of National Statistics 2010, Standard Occupational Classification 2010, Vol. 1, Palgrave Macmillan p208

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It is important to note that this Sales and Customer Service occupational group does not include some key Sales professions as they are primarily defined by another job characteristic (e.g. professional, elementary). The following Sales occupations have therefore been classified outside the Sales group in the SOC, as their defining characteristic is something other than sales:

- 1132 Marketing and Sales Directors
- 3541 Buyers and procurement officers
- 3542 Business Sales executives
- 3544 Estate agents and auctioneers
- 3545 Sales accounts and business development managers
- 925 Elementary Sales Occupations

These categories include both the very low-level Sales occupations, but also most of the higher Sales occupations, such as directors and managers.

Therefore, the 'Sales occupations' category within the 'Customer Service and Sales' category is just capturing those middle-level occupations.

This could be extremely misleading if we consider the 'Sales occupations' category to represent all sales-related jobs, as it actually removes the higher (and some elementary) occupations from consideration. However, many of the statistics in this report are only available for the major SOC groups, and therefore they need to be interpreted with the above in mind.

1.2 Scope of research

1.2.1 Secondary data

The aim of this report is to provide an up-to-date analysis of the Sales workforce in the UK. It draws on a compilation of national, regional and sectoral secondary data sources to ensure that an accurate picture of the workforce is reported on. The key sources this report makes reference to includes (but is not limited to):

- Government reports:
 - ✓ National Employers Skills Survey in England (NESS) 2009
 - ✓ Scottish Employer Skills Survey (SESS) 2010
 - ✓ Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey (NISMS) 2008
 - ✓ Future Skills Wales Sector Skills Survey (FSW) 2005
- The Office of National Statistics
- The Data Service statistics
- NOMIS
- UKCES
- Skills Development Scotland

In addition to these key sources, more sector specific and occupational specific data was used. For the full list of sources, please see the bibliography.

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1.2.2 Methodological issues and information validity

There are a number of methodological issues of concern which are set out below:

1.2.3 Consistency in terminology

This report presents the labour market information for the four nations: England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Attempts were made to identify research data across the four nations which used the same measurement parameters. For this reason the majority of this report uses data from the UK Commission for Employment and Skill (UKCES) and their corresponding national skills surveys. The National Employers Skills Survey in England (NESS), the Scottish Employer Skills Survey (SESS), the Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey (NISMS) and the Future Skills Wales Sector Skills Survey (FSW). However where additional reports were used, attempts were made to ensure that the definition used was consistent with the UKCES definitions, or to be explicit within the report about any variation.

There are two issues related to the classification of data in the SOC. One is that, due to the way data is presented by most sources used, this report combines the Sales and Customer Service occupational groups. Sales occupations account for the vast majority (77 per cent) of the Sales and Customer Service Occupations group, meaning that data will be more representative of sales.

The other issue (as discussed above) is that the Sales occupations group within Sales & Customer Service excludes some key categories, mostly managerial and associate professional, as discussed above. This will be dealt with in the workforce section (2), but must be kept in mind for subsequent chapters, where data is only available in the largest SOC groups.

1.2.4 Time limits on data

When identifying suitable research data the most up to date reports and statistics were identified. However it should be noted that comparisons across the UK Employer Skills Surveys will be limited as the date of each survey is different. The statistics for Wales (FSW, 2005) presents specific methodological concerns as it was undertaken before the recession in 2008. There are also concerns for the NIMS (2008) report where field work was undertaken during the beginning of the economic downturn and thus the full impact of the recession may not have been realised. However the use of other up-to-date data sources will be used to ensure the validity of data sources in reflect the current economic climate.

Each reference includes the year of collection to ensure transparency and clarity with data sources.

1.2.5 Sector

There are many different ways of understanding and describing the range of activities in which employers engage. In this report, business sectors are described in two ways: by classification into 14 Standard Industrial Classifications and on the basis of Sector Skills Council (see Appendix 1). It is important to note that the extent to which there is an exact fit between SIC 2003 codes and SSC footprint varies between SSCs. In some cases defining SSCs by SIC codes excludes certain elements of a SSCs footprint, so both methods are referred to in this report.

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Moreover, when looking at the data on the Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) it should be noted that this data was produced before the changes to some SSCs status were introduced. Therefore, some SSC which no longer exist are presented here to reflect the sector which they covered at that time. This applies to the following SSCs:

- Lifelong Learning UK which was closed down on 31st March 2011
- Government Skills which ceased to exist on the 1st April 2011
- Skillsfast which closed as an SSCs in 2011 and was merged with Skillset
- People 1st and Go Skills which merged on 4 July 2011

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

This section presents an overview of the Sales workforce across the UK.

2.1 Size and status of the workforce

Table 4 shows the number of employed and employment status by major SOC group.

This indicates that Sales and Customer Service occupations account for eight per cent of all employment in the UK, or 2.383 million workers.

Sales and Customer Service workers are least likely of all the groups to work full time, and is the only group with the majority of employees (53 per cent) in part time positions, compared to 27 per cent of overall employment.

Table 4: Employment by occupation and status, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011, UK

SOC (2010) Group	All employment ('000s)		Employees ('000s)						Self-employed ('000s)	
	Total	% of total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)	Total (%)	Total	as % of total employment
1 MANAGERS, DIRECTORS AND SENIOR OFFICIALS	2,889	10%	2,078	201	2,279	91%	9%	100%	584	20%
2 PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS	5,650	19%	4,108	880	4,989	82%	18%	100%	652	12%
3 ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL	3,926	14%	2,808	511	3,319	85%	15%	100%	590	15%
4 ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECRETARIAL	3,253	11%	2,031	1,078	3,109	65%	35%	100%	121	4%
5 SKILLED TRADES	3,207	11%	1,892	173	2,066	92%	8%	100%	1,125	35%
6 CARING, LEISURE AND OTHER SERVICES	2,664	9%	1,359	1,039	2,398	57%	43%	100%	257	10%
7 Sales and Customer Service	2,383	8%	1,070	1,214	2,283	47%	53%	100%	85	4%
8 PROCESS, PLANT AND MACHINE OPERATIVES	1,858	6%	1,389	150	1,539	90%	10%	100%	316	17%
9 ELEMENTARY OCCUPATIONS	3,239	11%	1,565	1,434	2,999	52%	48%	100%	221	7%
Total employment	29,069	100%	18,301	6,680	24,980	73%	27%	100%	3,951	14%

Note: Totals include unpaid family workers, persons on government-supported training and employment programmes and those who did not state whether they worked full or part time. Combined totals of employees and self-employed are slightly less than 'all employment', due to cases where employment status was 'not stated'.

Source: ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

Table 5 provides further detail at a finer level. This shows that Sales occupations (comprising 'Sales assistants and retail cashiers', 'sales-related occupations' and 'Sales supervisors') account for the vast majority (77 per cent) of the Sales and Customer Service Occupations group. This means that data categorised in the major group (Sales and Customer Service Occupations) will be more indicative of the Sales component.

This table also reveals very different patterns in part-time work for employees of the different sub-groups. Over two thirds (70 per cent) of employees working as Sales assistants and retail cashiers do so part-time, while less than one third (30 per cent) of

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

employees in Sales related occupations are part-time workers. Sales supervisors are even less likely, with only 1 in 5 (20 per cent) working part-time.

Table 5: Sales and Customer service employment by status and group, Quarter 2 (Apr-Jun) 2011, UK

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010):	All employment ('000s)	Share of total Sales and Customer Service employment	Full-time employees ('000s)	Part-time employees ('000s)	All employees ('000s)	Part-time employees (%)
711 Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers	1,459	61%	431	992	1,422	70%
712 Sales Related Occupations	188	8%	95	40	135	30%
713 Sales Supervisors	196	8%	156	39	194	20%
721 Customer Service Occupations	418	18%	283	129	412	31%
722 Customer Service Managers and Supervisors	123	5%	106	15	120	12%
7 Sales and Customer Service Occupations (Total)	2,383	100%	1,070	1,214	2,283	53%

Note: Totals include unpaid family workers, persons on government-supported training and employment programmes and those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.
Source: ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

As discussed earlier, group 71 'Sales occupations' does not include other Sales occupations which have been placed in another group like managers or professionals. Table 6 therefore adds these to the Sales occupation group, in order to get a more accurate workforce estimate.

However, two of the groups combine Sales with marketing occupations (*marketing and Sales directors, Sales accounts and business development managers*). Following the approach adopted by the 2008 labour market information report²⁶, two-thirds of these categories (67 per cent) have been attributed to sales. This estimate reflects the fact that some occupations will have both Sales and marketing responsibilities. Therefore there is some overlap with the marketing workforce, for which we also attributed 67 per cent of the categories for its estimate (see the 2012 Marketing LMI). Note that tables which follow on work status and gender will also reflect these proportions.

The new Sales workforce estimate therefore makes up a larger percentage of total UK employment than the Sales occupations group. The estimate adds 780,000 workers for a total of 2.622 million, which represents 9 per cent of UK employment. The SOC group 'Sales occupations' (1.842 million) represents 6 per cent. Of the new estimate, 30 per cent are these occupations from elsewhere in the SOC. Please note that this estimate excludes Customer Service employment.

Beyond providing a more accurate measure of the workforce, the inclusion of these extra groups is critical to our understanding of Sales as an occupation, because they have different characteristics than roles within the Sales occupation group, in terms of skills required and the typical job functions. Consequently other factors also differ, such as the status of employment and gender proportions.

²⁶ TBR (for MSSSB) 2008, *Skills Needs and Training Supply for Sales – A Gap Analysis*

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Table 6: Refined Sales workforce estimate, Quarter 2 (Apr-Jun) 2011, UK

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010)	Total in employment ('000s)	Share of total Sales workforce	percentage used for Sales estimate	original category total
71 Sales group	1,842	70%		
7111 Sales and retail assistants	1,062	41%		
7112 Retail cashiers and check-out operators	240	9%		
7113 Telephone salespersons	51	2%		
7114 Pharmacy and other dispensing assistants	72	3%		
7115 Vehicle and parts salespersons and advisers	34	1%		
7121 Collector salespersons and credit agents	15	1%		
7122 Debt, rent and other cash collectors	42	2%		
7123 Roundspersons and van salespersons	19	1%		
7124 Market and street traders and assistants	17	1%		
7125 Merchandisers and window dressers	32	1%		
7129 Sales related occupations n.e.c. ⁴	63	2%		
7130 Sales supervisors	196	7%		
Sales occupations elsewhere in the SOC	780	30%		
1132 Marketing and Sales directors	124	5%	67%	185
3541 Buyers and procurement officers	68	3%		
3542 Business Sales executives	143	5%		
3544 Estate agents and auctioneers	41	2%		
3545 Sales accounts and business development managers	275	10%	67%	410
925 Elementary Sales Occupations	129	5%		
New Sales occupations estimate	2,622	100%		

Notes: * Sample size too small for reliable estimate. Totals include unpaid family workers, persons on government-supported training and employment programmes and those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.

Source: ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

2.2 Gender of the workforce

Table 7 shows the gender split within the Sales and Customer Service occupational group. For UK employment overall, there were slightly more male (54 per cent) than female (46) workers.

In the 'Sales and Customer Service' group, there are more female workers (63 per cent) than male, as there are in the Sales category (64 per cent).

The three Sales occupations subcategories have distinctively different gender profiles. Sales assistants and retail cashiers are predominantly (two thirds) female, sales-related occupations have the same gender profile as the overall workforce (54 per cent male), and Sales Supervisors have an equal gender split (50 per cent each).

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

Table 7: Sales & Customer Service employment by sex, Quarter 2 (Apr-Jun) 2011, UK

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010)	All employment ('000s)			% of total employment in category		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
711 Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers	1,459	461	998	100%	32%	68%
712 Sales Related Occupations	188	101	87	100%	54%	46%
713 Sales Supervisors	196	97	98	100%	50%	50%
71 Sales	1,842	659	1,183	100%	36%	64%
721 Customer Service Occupations	418	167	252	100%	40%	60%
722 Customer Service Managers and Supervisors	123	52	71	100%	42%	58%
72 Customer Service	541	219	323	100%	40%	60%
7 Sales and Customer Service Occupations	2,383	878	1,506	100%	37%	63%
Total UK employment	29,069	15,587	13,482	100%	54%	46%

Note: Totals include unpaid family workers, persons on government-supported training and employment programmes and those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.

Source: ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

Another facet of this is the share of each gender's Sales and Customer Service staff in each category. Table 8 shows how the male and female employment within the Sales and Customer Service group is distributed. This shows that two thirds of female Sales and Customer Service staff (66 per cent) are Sales assistants and retail cashiers, compared with just over half of male Sales and Customer Service staff (52 per cent).

Only 7 per cent of female Sales and Customer Service staff are Sales supervisors, compared with 11 per cent of male Sales and Customer Service staff. Even though there is an even split of males and females in this category, this figure results from a greater number of women who are individually less likely to be supervisors.

Table 8: Sales & Customer Service employment share by sex, Quarter 2 (Apr-Jun) 2011, UK

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010)	All employment ('000s)			Share of Sales and Customer Service employment		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
711 Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers	1,459	461	998	61%	52%	66%
712 Sales Related Occupations	188	101	87	8%	12%	6%
713 Sales Supervisors	196	97	98	8%	11%	7%
71 Sales	1,842	659	1,183	77%	75%	79%
721 Customer Service Occupations	418	167	252	18%	19%	17%
722 Customer Service Managers and Supervisors	123	52	71	5%	6%	5%
72 Customer Service	541	219	323	23%	25%	21%
7 Sales and Customer Service Occupations	2,383	878	1,506	100%	100%	100%

Note: Totals include unpaid family workers, persons on government-supported training and employment programmes and those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.

Source: ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

Table 9 shows the gender division for the revised workforce estimate, which includes the categories elsewhere in the SOC. This has a more even gender split (44 per cent male).

This shows that the Sales occupations elsewhere in the SOC are dominated by men (65 per cent), while the SOC Sales occupations group is dominated by women (64 per cent).

This is not encouraging from a gender equality point of view, as these male-dominated occupations are mostly in the managerial and professional categories, which are higher-paid and require more skills and expertise.

Table 9: Sales workforce estimate by sex, Quarter 2 (Apr-Jun) 2011, UK

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010)	Total in employment (‘000s)			% of total employment in category	
	All	Male	Female	Male	Female
71 Sales group	1,842	659	1,183	36%	64%
711 Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers	1,459	461	998	32%	68%
7111 Sales and retail assistants	1,062	340	722	32%	68%
7112 Retail cashiers and check-out operators	240	63	177	26%	74%
7113 Telephone salespersons	51	23	28	45%	55%
7114 Pharmacy and other dispensing assistants	72	*	66	*	*
7115 Vehicle and parts salespersons and advisers	34	29	*	*	*
712 Sales Related Occupations	188	101	87	54%	46%
7121 Collector salespersons and credit agents	15	*	*	*	*
7122 Debt, rent and other cash collectors	42	26	16	62%	38%
7123 Roundspersons and van salespersons	19	15	*	*	*
7124 Market and street traders and assistants	17	12	*	*	*
7125 Merchandisers and window dressers	32	*	24	*	*
7129 Sales related occupations n.e.c. ⁴	63	32	31	51%	49%
713 Sales Supervisors	196	97	98	50%	50%
Sales occupations elsewhere in the SOC	780	507	273	65%	35%
1132 Marketing and Sales directors	124	97	28	78%	22%
3541 Buyers and procurement officers	68	27	41	40%	60%
3542 Business Sales executives	143	101	42	70%	30%
3544 Estate agents and auctioneers	41	21	20	50%	50%
3545 Sales accounts and business development managers	275	187	88	68%	32%
925 Elementary Sales Occupations	129	75	54	58%	42%
New Sales occupations estimate	2,622	1,166	1,456	44%	56%
All UK employment	29,069	15,587	13,482	54%	46%

Notes: * Sample size too small for reliable estimate. Totals include unpaid family workers, persons on government-supported training and employment programmes and those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.

Source: ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

The last three columns in Table 10 shows the distribution of female, male and overall Sales workers by occupation, based on the bigger Sales workforce estimate. This shows that 37 per cent of all male Sales staff are in managerial or associate professional roles (defined as those occupations starting with a ‘1’ or a ‘3’, and hence in the management or associate professionals groups in the SOC). However, only 15 per cent of female Sales staff falls into these groups.

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

Table 10: Shares of Sales workforce estimate by sex, Quarter 2 (Apr-Jun) 2011, UK

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010)	Total in employment (‘000s)			Share of Sales employment		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
71 Sales group	1,842	659	1,183	70%	57%	81%
711 Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers	1,459	461	998	56%	40%	69%
7111 Sales and retail assistants	1,062	340	722	41%	29%	50%
7112 Retail cashiers and check-out operators	240	63	177	9%	5%	12%
7113 Telephone salespersons	51	23	28	2%	2%	2%
7114 Pharmacy and other dispensing assistants	72	*	66	3%	*	5%
7115 Vehicle and parts salespersons and advisers	34	29	*	1%	2%	*
712 Sales Related Occupations	188	101	87	7%	9%	6%
7121 Collector salespersons and credit agents	15	*	*	1%	*	*
7122 Debt, rent and other cash collectors	42	26	16	2%	2%	1%
7123 Roundspersons and van salespersons	19	15	*	1%	1%	*
7124 Market and street traders and assistants	17	12	*	1%	1%	*
7125 Merchandisers and window dressers	32	*	24	1%	*	2%
7129 Sales related occupations n.e.c. ⁴	63	32	31	2%	3%	2%
713 Sales Supervisors	196	97	98	7%	8%	7%
Sales occupations elsewhere in the SOC	780	507	273	30%	43%	19%
1132 Marketing and Sales directors	124	97	28	5%	8%	2%
3541 Buyers and procurement officers	68	27	41	3%	2%	3%
3542 Business Sales executives	143	101	42	5%	9%	3%
3544 Estate agents and auctioneers	41	21	20	2%	2%	1%
3545 Sales accounts and business development managers	275	187	88	10%	16%	6%
925 Elementary Sales Occupations	129	75	54	5%	6%	4%
New Sales occupations estimate	2,622	1,166	1,456	100%	100%	100%

Notes: * Sample size too small for reliable estimate. Totals include unpaid family workers, persons on government-supported training and employment programmes and those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.

Source: ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

The largest 4-digit occupational unit groups for male Sales staff are:

- 7111 Sales and retail assistants (29 per cent of male Sales staff)
- 3545 Sales accounts and business development managers (16 per cent)
- 3542 Business Sales executives (9 per cent)
- 1132 Marketing and Sales directors (8 per cent)
- 7130 Sales supervisors (8 per cent)²⁷

The largest 4-digit occupational unit groups for female Sales staff are:

²⁷ 'Sales supervisors' is both a 4-digit (7130) and a 3-digit (713) SOC category.

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

- 7111 Sales and retail assistants (50 per cent)
- 7112 Retail cashiers and check-out operators (12 per cent)
- 7130 Sales supervisors (7 per cent)
- 3545 Sales accounts and business development managers (6 per cent)

Table 11 shows the full time/part time status for employees by sex. This shows that women are more likely to be employed in part-time positions in UK employment overall (42 per cent of female employees compared with 12 per cent of male employees).

As discussed above, Sales positions were more likely to be part-time, and within all of the subcategories for which data was available, women were more likely than men to hold part time positions. So, for instance, almost three quarters (71 per cent) of female Sales assistants and retail cashiers hold part-time positions, compared with only 42 per cent of male Sales assistants and retail cashiers.

The categories with the lowest proportion of part-time employees were Sales accounts and business development managers (7 per cent) and Business Sales executives (10 per cent). These were also groups with higher proportions of males (see Table 9 above).

Table 11: Shares of part time Sales employees by sex, Quarter 2 (Apr-Jun) 2011, UK

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010)	Part time employees as % of category		
	All	Male	Female
71 Sales group	61%	42%	71%
711 Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers	70%	55%	76%
<i>7111 Sales and retail assistants</i>	72%	60%	78%
<i>7112 Retail cashiers and check-out operators</i>	81%	73%	84%
<i>7113 Telephone salespersons</i>	26%	*	*
<i>7114 Pharmacy and other dispensing assistants</i>	54%	*	58%
<i>7115 Vehicle and parts salespersons and advisers</i>	*	*	*
712 Sales Related Occupations	30%	18%	44%
<i>7121 Collector salespersons and credit agents</i>	*	*	*
<i>7122 Debt, rent and other cash collectors</i>	*	*	*
<i>7123 Roundspersons and van salespersons</i>	*	*	*
<i>7124 Market and street traders and assistants</i>	*	*	*
<i>7125 Merchandisers and window dressers</i>	48%	*	60%
<i>7129 Sales related occupations n.e.c.⁴</i>	30%	*	*
713 Sales Supervisors	20%	*	32%
Sales occupations elsewhere in the SOC			
1132 Marketing and Sales directors	*	*	*
3541 Buyers and procurement officers	*	*	*
3542 Business Sales executives	10%	*	*
3544 Estate agents and auctioneers	*	*	*
3545 Sales accounts and business development managers	7%	*	16%
925 Elementary Sales Occupations	58%	52%	68%
New Sales occupations estimate			
All UK employment	27%	12%	42%

Note: Totals include unpaid family workers, persons on government-supported training and employment programmes and those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.
Source: ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

Table 12 similarly shows the part-time status of Sales and Customer Service employees by sex, which shows considerable variation between groups. Part-time status ranged from 12 per cent of employees (Customer Service managers and supervisors) to 70 per cent (Sales assistants and retail cashiers).

Table 12: Proportions of part time Sales & Customer Service employees by sex, Quarter 2 (Apr-Jun) 2011, UK

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010)	Part time employees as % of category		
	All	Male	Female
711 Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers	70%	55%	76%
712 Sales Related Occupations	30%	18%	44%
713 Sales Supervisors	20%	*	32%
721 Customer Service Occupations	31%	19%	39%
722 Customer Service Managers and Supervisors	12%	*	20%
7 Sales and Customer Service Occupations	53%	36%	63%
Total UK employment	27%	12%	42%

Note: Totals include unpaid family workers, persons on government-supported training and employment programmes and those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.

Source: ONS (2011) Labour Force Survey: EMP16: all in employment by status, occupation and sex, Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2011.

2.3 Sales occupations and industry

Sales is a pan-sector area, required in all sectors. Table 13 shows how workers in the Sales and Customer Service SOC group are distributed across industries, by sex.

The table shows that Sales and Customer Service workers are predominantly employed in the *Distribution, hotels & restaurants* industry (71 per cent). Of the remainder, there are:

- 12 per cent in banking, finance and insurance
- 5 per cent in public administration, education and health
- per cent in transport and communications
- per cent in manufacturing

The remaining categories each account for less than 2 per cent of Sales and Customer Service workers.

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

Table 13: Workers in Sales and Customer Service Occupations (SOC 2010) by industry (SIC 2007) and sex, UK, July 2010-June 2011

	Workers in Sales and Customer Service occupations			Industry group as share of occupation (%)			Proportion of M/F Sales and Customer Service workers in each industry	
	ALL	Male	Female	ALL	Male	Female	Male	Female
A Agriculture & fishing	3,000	1,600	1,400	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	53%	47%
B,D,E Energy & water	32,200	16,800	15,300	1.4%	1.9%	1.0%	52%	48%
C Manufacturing	75,900	36,900	39,100	3.2%	4.3%	2.6%	49%	52%
F Construction	19,300	8,900	10,400	0.8%	1.0%	0.7%	46%	54%
G,I Distribution, hotels & restaurants	1,676,900	584,000	1,092,800	71.3%	67.5%	73.5%	35%	65%
H,J Transport & Communication	104,200	50,700	53,600	4.4%	5.9%	3.6%	49%	51%
K-N Banking finance & insurance etc.	272,400	112,600	159,800	11.6%	13.0%	10.8%	41%	59%
O-Q Public admin education & health	124,500	37,000	87,500	5.3%	4.3%	5.9%	30%	70%
R-U Other services	43,600	17,100	26,500	1.9%	2.0%	1.8%	39%	61%
Total	2,352,000	865,600	1,486,400	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	37%	63%

Source: ONS (2011) (from NOMIS), Annual Population Survey- July 2010 – June 2011 (SOC2010).

Women account for 63 per cent of Sales and Customer Service workers, and in no industry do male Sales and Customer Service workers really dominate. There are two industries with a slightly higher proportion of male Sales and Customer Service workers: *agriculture & fishing* (53 per cent males) and *energy & water* (52 per cent). These are also the industries with very low proportions of Sales and Customer Service staff.

On the other hand, there are many more female Sales and Customer Service staff than male in *public administration, education & health* (70 per cent female) and *distribution, hotels and restaurants* (65 per cent female). These are also the industries with a high proportion of total Sales and Customer Service staff.

Even in traditionally male-dominated industries like *manufacturing, construction* and *transport and communication*, there are just slightly more female Sales and Customer Service staff than male.

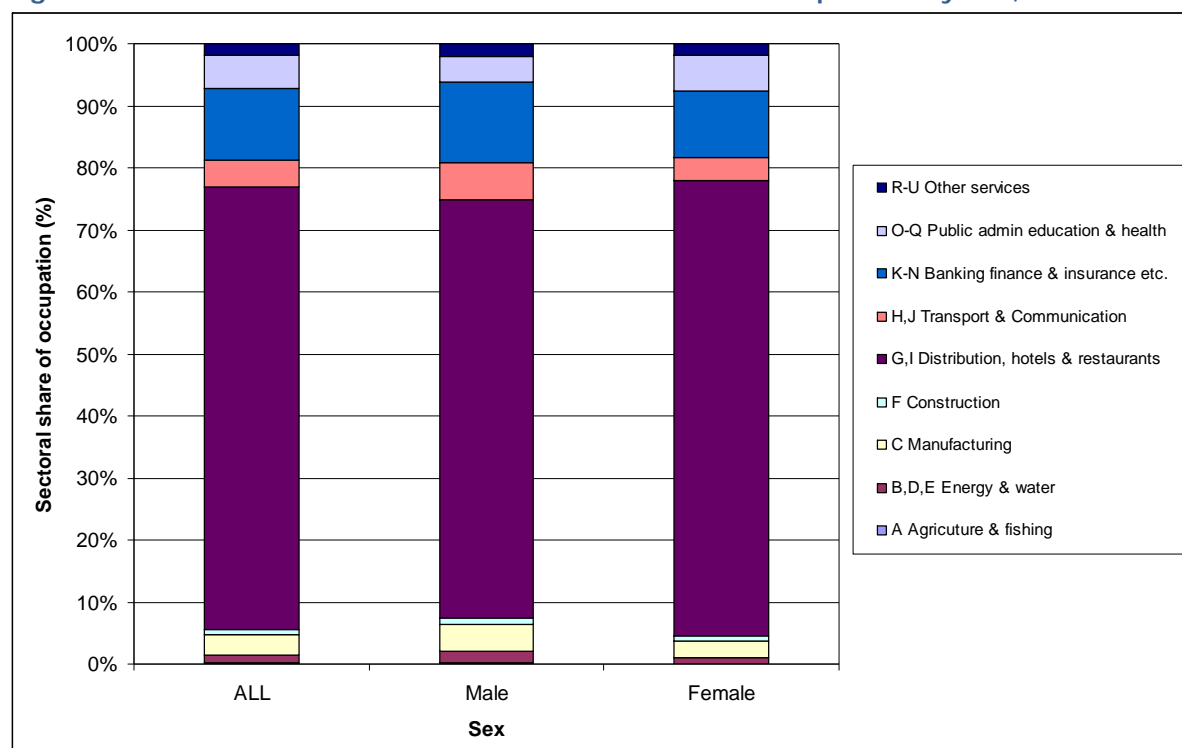
The Sales and Customer Service worker distribution *across* industries, however, is relatively similar for the sexes (see Figure 1 below).

A few differences are apparent. Primarily, male Sales and Customer Service staff are more likely than females to work in the traditionally male industries. For instance, male Sales and Customer Service workers are more likely to work in the *transport and communication* industry (5.9 per cent of male Sales and Customer Service staff, compared with 3.6 per cent of female Sales and Customer Service staff).

The fact that there are slightly more female Sales and Customer Service staff in this industry is because there is a greater *number* of female Sales and Customer Service staff overall. Similarly, male Sales and Customer Service staff are twice as likely as females to work in the *Energy & Water* industry, as 1.9 per cent of male Sales and Customer Service staff work in this industry compared with 1.0 per cent of female Sales and Customer Service staff.

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

Figure 1: Sectoral share of Sales and Customer Service occupations by sex, 2010-11



Source: ONS (2011) (from NOMIS), Annual Population Survey- July 2010 – June 2011 (SOC2010).

2.4 Geographical distribution of the workforce

Table 14 shows the share of employment by occupation for each nation. This reveals that all the nations in the UK have between 8 and 9 per cent of their employment in Sales and Customer Service occupations.

Table 14: Occupational shares in employment by nation, UK, 2011

Occupation	UK	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	10%	10%	8%	9%	9%
Professional Occupations	19%	20%	19%	18%	18%
Associate Prof & Tech Occupations	14%	14%	9%	13%	12%
Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	11%	11%	13%	11%	11%
Skilled Trades Occupations	11%	11%	15%	12%	12%
Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	7%	6%	7%	7%	7%
Elementary occupations	11%	11%	11%	11%	12%
All occupations	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: ONS (2011) (from NOMIS), Annual Population Survey- July 2010 – June 2011 (SOC2010).

Table 15 lists employment by nations within the UK. This reveals that the Sales and Customer Service workforce is slightly overrepresented in Scotland and Wales compared to the average across all occupations.

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

Table 15: Employment by occupation and nation, UK, 2011

Occupation	UK		England		Northern Ireland		Scotland		Wales	
	Number	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	2,855,900	2,465,700	86%	63,100	2%	211,900	7%	115,300	4%	
Professional	5,567,900	4,737,800	85%	146,900	3%	453,500	8%	229,700	4%	
Associate Prof & Tech	3,962,300	3,408,000	86%	73,600	2%	320,400	8%	160,200	4%	
Admin and Secretarial	3,231,700	2,719,900	84%	99,200	3%	268,300	8%	144,400	4%	
Skilled Trades	3,144,600	2,581,600	82%	121,000	4%	286,400	9%	155,500	5%	
Caring, Leisure and Other Service	2,620,100	2,171,800	83%	74,200	3%	242,300	9%	131,900	5%	
Sales and Customer Service	2,369,700	1,965,400	83%	63,000	3%	230,000	10%	111,300	5%	
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	1,874,500	1,554,900	83%	58,500	3%	168,100	9%	93,000	5%	
Elementary	3,177,900	2,665,600	84%	82,300	3%	281,500	9%	148,500	5%	
All occupations	28,804,600	24,270,700	84%	781,800	3%	2,462,400	9%	1,289,800	4%	

Source: ONS (2011) (from NOMIS), Annual Population Survey- July 2010 – June 2011 (SOC2010).

In Wales, *Sales and retail assistants* is the single biggest occupation, with 57,000 workers, ahead of *care assistants and home carers* (44,000) and *cleaners, domestics* (35,000). Women dominate all these occupations, with between 72 to 80 per cent of employment in each group. 'Marketing and Sales managers' is the 16th largest occupational category, with 15,000 workers.²⁸

Higher proportions of the workforce were in Sales and Customer Service occupations in South East Wales (8.5 per cent) and South West Wales (8.4 per cent) compared with North Wales (6.7 per cent and Mid Wales (6.4 per cent).²⁹

2.5 Changes over time

Figure 2 compares employment in the nine occupational groups over the past decade.

This shows that the Sales and Customer Service category (in red) is one of the smaller occupational groups in terms of employment size, and that employment in this group has remained pretty steady in terms of absolute numbers over the decade.

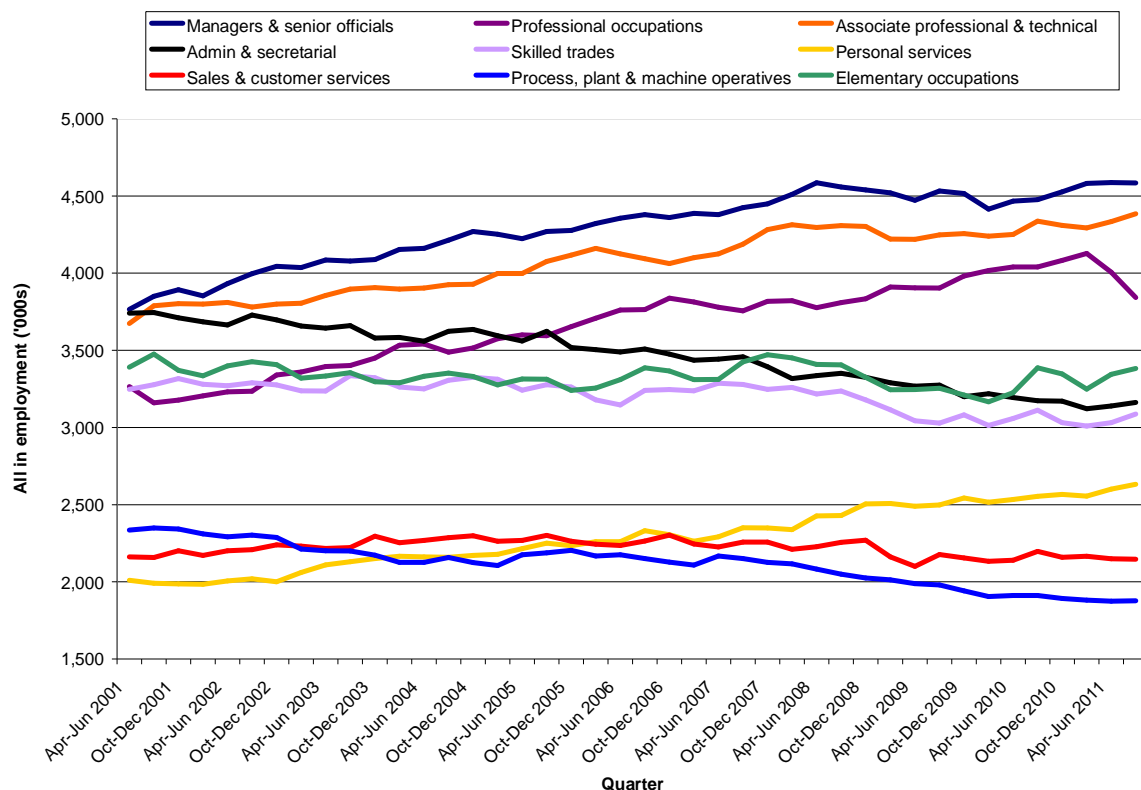
In April-June 2001, there were 2.16 million people in employment in this group, and in April-June 2011, there were 2.15 million. There was a slight rise in the figures in the middle of the decade (2005 and 2006, where it reached 2.3 million), but since then, there's been a slight decline.

²⁸ UKCES 2011, *Skills for Jobs: The National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales 2011 – Volume 2: Evidence Report*, p30

²⁹ UKCES 2011, *Skills for Jobs: The National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales 2011 – Volume 2: Evidence Report*, p36

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

Figure 2: Employment by occupation, 2001 to 2011, UK



Note: The data for the estimates from Jan-Mar 2011 onwards have been coded on the new SOC 2010 basis and then mapped to an equivalent SOC 2000 basis, which may cause inconsistencies with estimates prior to Jan-Mar 2011.

Source: ONS (2011), Labour Force Survey (table EMP08), (SOC 2000).

Wales

Between 2000 and 2009, employment in Wales grew by 90,000 (7 per cent). However, over the same period, employment in Sales and Customer service occupations fell by 7,000.³⁰ Sales assistants and retail cashiers were the 10th fastest declining occupation between 2004 and 2009, falling 12 per cent (10,300 jobs) from 83,600 in 2004.³¹

This occupation was also the 6th most negatively affected occupation in the recession in Wales in terms of job losses (4,100 lost between 2008 and 2009, or 5 per cent). Occupations which experienced greater declines tended to be operational or elementary.³²

Interestingly, though, elementary Sales occupations category (such as shelf-fillers) was the 10th greatest growth occupation between 2008 and 2009, growing 19 per cent (1,900) jobs between 2008 and 2009.³³

³⁰ UKCES 2011, Skills for Jobs: The National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales 2011 – Volume 2: Evidence Report, p31

³¹ UKCES 2011, Skills for Jobs: The National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales 2011 – Volume 2: Evidence Report, p34

³² UKCES 2011, Skills for Jobs: The National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales 2011 – Volume 2: Evidence Report, p39

³³ UKCES 2011, Skills for Jobs: The National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales 2011 – Volume 2: Evidence Report, p40

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

2.6 Ethnicity of the Workforce

Table 16 shows the proportion of employment that Sales & Customer Service occupations represent in each ethnic group.

This reveals that the 'Pakistani/Bangladeshis' group had a larger proportion of its employment in Sales & Customer Service jobs than other ethnic categories (14.1 per cent). The groups with the smallest proportion of their total employment in S&CS jobs were 'white' (7.8 per cent) and 'Black or Black British' (8.3 per cent).

Table 16: Employment in S&CS jobs by ethnic group, UK

Sales and Customer Service as share of 16+ employment in ethnic group (SOC 2010)	Percent
% 16+ mixed ethnic group in employment employed in S&CS	13.1
% 16+ Pakistani/Bangladeshis in employment employed in S&CS	14.1
% 16+ Black or Black British in employment employed in S&CS	8.3
% 16+ Indians in employment employed in S&CS	10.6
% 16+ other ethnic group in employment employed in S&CS	9.3
% 16+ whites in employment employed in S&CS	7.8

Source: ONS (2011) (from NOMIS), Annual Population Survey- Jan 2009 – December 2009 (SOC2010).

2.7 Disability of the Workforce

The UKCES' recent report on disability and skills examined disabled people's employment by occupation (see Table 17 below). The table outlines the occupational profiles of three disabled categories, compared to those who are not disabled. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) category in the table includes those people who have "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse affect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities", while the work-limiting disabled is based on the person's own assessment "of whether their impairment limits the amount or kind of work they can do".³⁴

This reveals that overall, there is a slightly higher proportion of the disabled workforce in Sales and Customer Service positions (8.0 per cent) than those in the workforce who are not disabled (7.4 per cent).

Those who are DDA-disabled only are about as likely (7.2 per cent) as those who are not disabled (7.4 per cent) to be in Sales and Customer Service occupations. Those who are work-limiting disabled only are slightly less likely (6.6 per cent), while those who are

³⁴ UKCES 2011, *Disability and skills in a changing economy*, p2

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

both DDA- and work-limiting disabled are more likely to be in Sales and Customer Service occupations (9.7 per cent) than non-disabled workers.

Table 17: Occupation by disability status, 2010, UK

Occupation (SOC 2000)	All disabled (%)	DDA- & work-limiting disabled (%)	DDA-disabled only (%)	work-limiting disabled only (%)	not disabled (%)
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	13.8	11.8	16.2	12.4	15.8
2. Professional occupations	11.9	9.5	14.4	11.4	14.4
3. Associate professional and technical	13.9	13.3	13.8	15.1	15.1
4. Administrative and secretarial	11.3	11.9	11.8	9.1	10.5
5. Skilled trades occupations	10.8	11.9	9.0	12.3	10.8
6. Personal services	10.1	10.5	10.1	9.6	8.5
7. Sales and Customer Service	8.0	9.7	7.2	6.6	7.4
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	7.7	8.2	7.3	7.7	6.6
9. Elementary occupations	12.5	13.3	10.2	15.7	10.9
Total (= 100%)	3,830,234	1,466,153	1,602,815	761,266	23,538,942

Source: UKCES (2011), *Disability and skills in a changing economy* p13, based on Labour Force Survey data (April-June 2010), UK

However, a Scottish report using Annual Population Survey data from a year earlier found that in Scotland, 7.6 of per cent disabled workers are in Sales and Customer Service occupations, compared with 8.1 per cent of workers who are not disabled. In other words, disabled workers in Scotland are slightly less likely than not-disabled workers to be employed in this group.³⁵

Table 18 shows a comparison of the types of jobs for disabled people across a range of countries. This uses a different occupational grouping than Table 17, but it does show that just over one in five jobs (20.6) for disabled people in the UK are in the *service workers and shop and market Sales* category.

³⁵ The Scottish Government 2010, *Scottish Government Disability Equality Scheme 2008-11: Annual Report 2010*, Table 1.4, based on ONS Annual Population Survey 2009 (Jan-Dec) data. Data refers to ages 16+.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/12/24082632/9>

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

Table 18: Type of jobs for disabled people (percentage)

(%)	Legislators, senior officials and managers	Professionals	Technical and associate Professionals	Clerk	Service workers and shop and market sales	Plant and machine operators and assembler	Elementary
Austria	8.9	7.6	9.7	8.8	7.1	10.5	11.3
Belgium	10.3	9.7	10.6	12.1	11.2	16.8	16.7
Cyprus	8.3	3.5	6.1	6.7	8.4	8.8	10.3
Czech Republic	10.6	12.4	12.7	13.8	14.4	15.9	25.6
Denmark	11.0	12.0	11.4	13.2	13.7	17.7	19.9
Estonia	16.9	16.9	17.6		14.2	19.8	28.4
Finland	24.4	24.7	26.3	29.7	27.2	26.6	28.9
France	18.1	16.9	19.9	20.2	20.5	25.0	27.8
Germany	6.5	5.7	7.0	7.1	6.2	8.9	11.4
Greece	6.6	4.9	4.4	3.8	5.4	6.5	7.1
Hungary	1.5	1.2	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.7	5.0
Ireland	7.1	5.6	6.5	6.1	6.9	6.5	9.9
Italy	3.9	2.7	3.4	4.5	4.1	4.8	6.2
Lithuania					3.2		5.0
Luxembourg	6.2	5.7	6.8	8.4	5.4	12.8	11.0
Malta							
Netherlands	19.0	17.4	18.4	22.2	17.7	25.3	21.0
Norway	6.6	8.2	7.4	10.2	12.0	11.9	16.3
Portugal	14.8	9.3	10.6	10.9	12.4	14.9	20.3
Romania	2.3	1.5	1.8	3.6	1.9	1.5	1.2
Slovakia		1.7	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.6	5.1
Slovenia	10.7	8.7	9.6	13.0	12.1	16.8	24.7
Spain	3.8	2.5	2.8	3.3	3.7	4.4	6.6
Sweden	12.1	16.1	16.8	20.0	23.3	20.2	25.0
United Kingdom	18.7	17.6	19.1	21.0	20.6	22.7	23.7

Source: Academic Network of European Disability experts (2009) ³⁶

2.8 Salary levels of the Workforce

Table 19 presents the average gross hourly earnings (£) of all employees, by occupation. The last three columns show how these numbers relate to the gross hourly earnings for all employees.

Men receive higher hourly earnings in every occupational category. This may be because, within these groups, men are overrepresented in higher paying jobs.

Sales and Customer Service jobs pay an average of £7.49 an hour, which represents 59 per cent of the average wage for all employees. This makes Sales and Customer Service the second-lowest paid group, above elementary occupations (£7.23) and slightly below personal services (£7.97).

³⁶ Academic Network of European Disability Experts 2009, *The labour market situation of disabled people in European countries and implementation of employment policies: a summary of evidence from country reports and research studies*, page 42-43

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

For all employees, women receive on average 82 per cent of men's earnings. However, this gap is lowest in the Sales and Customer Service and Personal services groups, where on average, women earn 91 per cent of what men earn.

This gap between the earnings of male and female Sales workers would almost certainly be greater if the Sales occupations found elsewhere in the SOC, such as Sales managers, were included (see the workforce section for an estimate of this larger group). As observed earlier, within the larger Sales workforce, males are more likely than female Sales staff to be employed in these higher paid groups (such as Sales directors).

Table 19: Average gross hourly earnings of all employees, by occupation (SOC 2000), UK, July-September 2011

SOC 2000	Average gross hourly earnings (£) (employees)			Women's earnings as % of men's	proportion of average hourly earnings (all employees)		
	Persons	Men	Women		Persons	Men	Women
Managers & senior officials	19.07	20.47	16.73	82%	1.5	1.5	1.5
Professional occupations	19.8	20.86	18.52	89%	1.6	1.5	1.6
Associate professional & technical	14.74	15.6	13.96	89%	1.2	1.1	1.2
Admin & secretarial	10.32	11.49	9.98	87%	0.8	0.8	0.9
Skilled trades	10.09	10.44	7.14	68%	0.8	0.8	0.6
Personal services	7.97	8.63	7.82	91%	0.6	0.6	0.7
Sales & customer service	7.49	7.97	7.23	91%	0.6	0.6	0.6
Process, plant & machine operatives	9.41	9.62	7.67	80%	0.7	0.7	0.7
Elementary occupations	7.23	7.63	6.71	88%	0.6	0.5	0.6
All employees	12.67	13.92	11.38	82%	1.0	1.0	1.0

Notes: not seasonally adjusted. Gross hourly earnings data is known to be underestimated in the LFS, mainly due to proxy responses. Respondents with hourly pay of £100 or more are excluded.

Source: ONS (2011), Labour Force Survey table EARN06, part 2

In Scotland in 2010, Sales and Customer Service was the occupational group with the lowest median full time earnings (£15,409), compared with an average across all occupations of £25,221.³⁷

In Wales (April 2010), Sales and Customer Service occupations were likewise the lowest paid of the nine occupational groups (£190 median gross weekly pay, compared to £365 for all employees).³⁸

³⁷ The Scottish Government 2011, High level summary of statistics, labour market, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0124069.pdf>, based on ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

³⁸ UKCES 2011, Skills for Jobs: The National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales 2011 – Volume 2: Evidence Report, p54

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

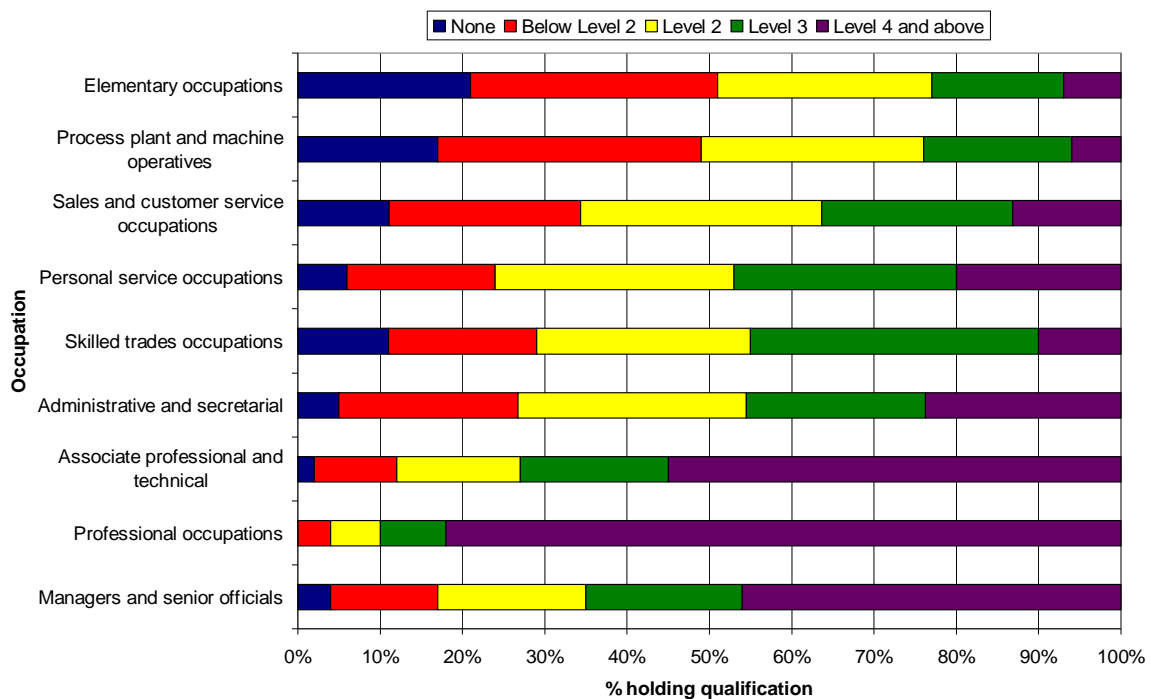
2.9 Qualification levels of the workforce

Figure 3 shows the highest qualification level held, by occupational group. This reveals that about a third (34 per cent) of those in Sales and Customer Service occupations have no qualifications or a qualification below level 2, and about half of the Sales and Customer Service workforce (52 per cent) have level 2 or 3 qualifications. The remaining 13 per cent (about 1 in 8 staff) have a level 4 qualification or above.

This means about two thirds of Sales and Customer Service staff has achieved at least a level 2 qualification. This is a smaller proportion than any other groups except for process plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations, where about half of the workforce has at least a level 2 qualification. Other groups range from 71 to 96 per cent.

'Sales and Customer Service occupations' is one of the groups with a smaller proportion of workers qualified at NVQ level 4 or above, but with about 1 in 5 workers in this category, it is still larger than for Elementary occupations, machine operatives or personal services.

Figure 3: Highest qualification level held by occupational group, 2008, UK

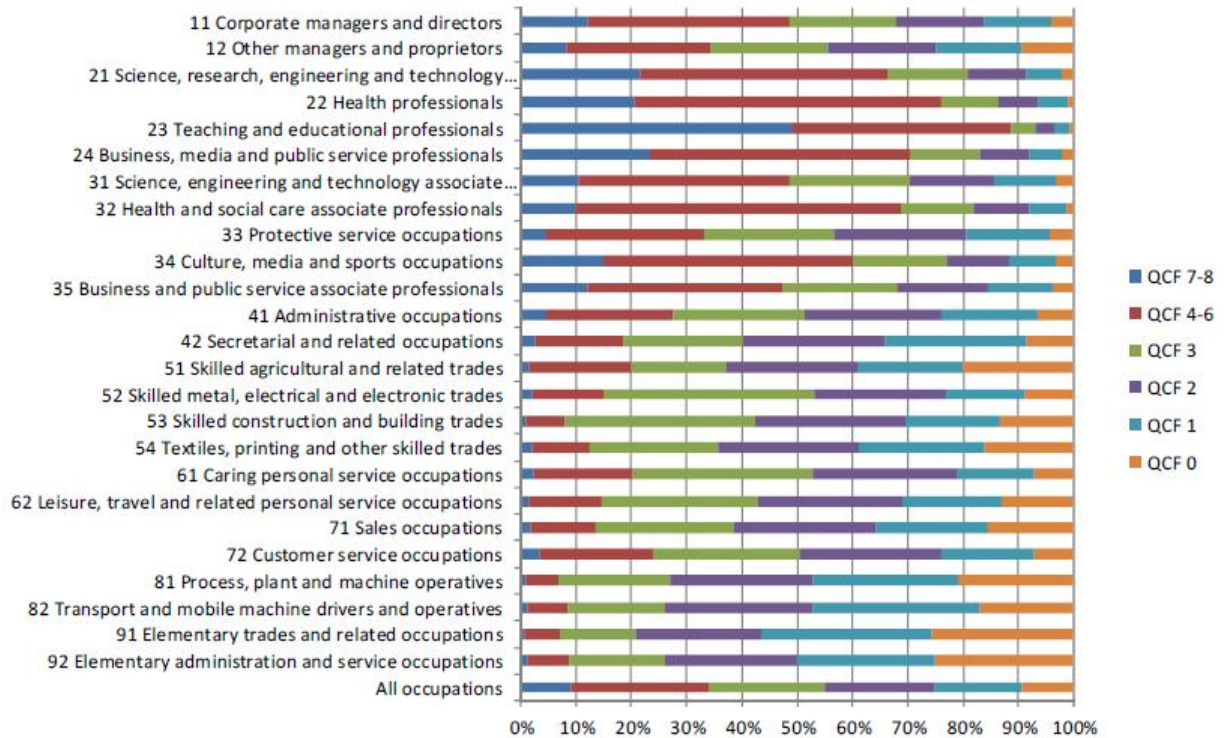


Source: UKCES (2009), *Ambition 2020*, p.53, (using ONS Labour Force Survey data from 2008).

2. Profile of the UK Sales Workforce

Figure 4 below uses more recent data, and splits Sales and Customer Service occupations so that the different qualification level share can be viewed for each. This reveals that Customer Service is a slightly higher qualified workforce than the Sales workforce.

Figure 4: Highest qualification level held by occupational group, 2010, UK



Source: UKCES (2011), Working Futures 2010-2020, p123

3. Drivers of skills demands

The following sub-sections set out the key drivers of skills demand for Sales occupations across the UK. Consideration is given to the main drivers associated with sales, and does not provide an extensive list of drivers. Some of the key drivers of change for Sales occupations include economic performance, consultative selling and technology.³⁹

3.1 Economic conditions

Globalisation has increased competition and given the buyer more choice and power. This affects different sectors and occupations to varying degrees, but the Sales sector is particularly affected by this increase in competition and focus on the customer. Consequently, excellent Customer Service and Sales techniques/ skills are becoming vital.⁴⁰

3.2 Consultative selling

Consultative selling – personalised service leading to repeat Sales – is of increasing importance in the Sales arena, and this has led to a greater focus on relationship management. With this has come an emphasis on targeted Sales techniques and repeat business, and consequently a greater need for skills in customer service.⁴¹

3.3 Technology

Sales personnel are becoming more and more likely to use technology in their jobs. Technology is also required to support the consultative selling discussed above.⁴²

Sales is one of the key business areas influenced by consumer use of the internet. In its study of ICT activity of 7,700 UK businesses with ten or more people in employment, the ONS (2011) found that e-commerce Sales accounted for 16.9 per cent of all Sales in 2010, with an estimated value of £385.4 billion.⁴³

The report also found that 15.3 per cent of businesses used their website for selling. Website Sales accounted for 4.2 per cent of total Sales (£95.9 billion). A large proportion of these were from the wholesale sector (£37.5 billion) and the retail sector (£12.8 billion).

A smaller proportion of businesses (7 per cent) used non-website ICTs for sales, but this represented a larger value of total Sales (£289.5 billion).

This growing focus on IT in Sales means that there is a greater need for staff with IT skills. TBR (2008) noted that the reduced administration resulting technological advances has resulted in increasing demand for direct selling skills⁴⁴.

³⁹ TBR (for MSSSB) 2008, *Skills Needs and Training Supply for Sales – A Gap Analysis* p10

⁴⁰ TBR (for MSSSB) 2008, *Skills Needs and Training Supply for Sales – A Gap Analysis* p12

⁴¹ TBR (for MSSSB) 2008, *Skills Needs and Training Supply for Sales – A Gap Analysis* p11

⁴² TBR (for MSSSB) 2008, *Skills Needs and Training Supply for Sales – A Gap Analysis* p11

⁴³ ONS 2011, *E-commerce and ICT activity, 2010 Edition*

⁴⁴ TBR (for MSSSB) 2008, *Skills Needs and Training Supply for Sales – A Gap Analysis* p11

4. Training, qualifications and apprenticeships

4.1 Training

4.1.1 Current training activities

Table 20 shows the average training fees by occupation, and the proportions of who bears the cost of the training.

This reveals training fees for Sales are much lower than any other occupational group except elementary occupations, and that the employee pays for a larger proportion of the training fees than does any other group.

Table 20: Training fees and associated costs, UK, 2006

	Training Fees	Who bears the cost (%)		
		Employers	Government	Self
All	22.0	68.5	4.4	3.37
Male	20.7	74.9	2.7	25.7
Female	23.3	62.6	5.9	41.0
Managers	28.2	86.9	3.2	17.2
Professionals	34.7	64.6	5.7	34.5
Associate professionals	25.7	70.1	2.2	31.9
Administrative and secretarial	17.9	64.5	11.2	39.9
Skilled trades	19.7	65.9	4.4	38.5
Personal services	22.0	47.2	3.4	56.2
Sales and customer service	6.6	32.0	2.6	66.8
Plant and machinery operatives	8.3	48.6	0.3	49.5
Elementary occupations	5.4	82.1	0.0	17.9

Source: UKCES (2009) *The 2009 Report: Ambitions 2020*, page 63

4.1.2 Training in England

Table 21 shows how many trainees each occupational group has had in the 12 months prior to the National Employer Skills Survey (2009), and what proportion of current employment that this represents.

Sales and Customer Service trainees in the previous 12 months represent 55 per cent of employment, which is fourth highest within the nine occupational groups, which range from 71 per cent (personal services) to 47 per cent (machine operatives and elementary occupations).

4. Training, qualifications and apprenticeships

Table 21: Distribution of training by occupation, England, 2009

	Employment (000s)	Trainees in the previous 12 months (000s)	Trainees as a proportion of current employment
Managers	4,219	2,052	49%
Professionals	2,575	1,659	64%
Associate professionals	1,721	1,061	62%
Admin	3,207	1,536	48%
Skilled Trades	1,612	860	53%
Personal services	1,797	1,268	71%
Sales and customer service	3,041	1,678	55%
Machine operatives	1,571	745	47%
Elementary	3,233	1,520	47%

Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 169

4.1.3 Training in Northern Ireland

Table 22 shows the proportion of staff (by occupation) which received off-the-job training from their employer in the 12 months prior to the Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey (2008). This reveals that Sales and Customer Service staff are the second-least likely (after elementary staff) to receive training, with only 1 in 5 Sales and Customer Service staff (21 per cent) trained in this way.

Most of this training is skills-based, with 78 per cent of employers who provide off-the-job training indicating that it is job-specific, while other types of training that are frequently offered include induction (44 per cent), training in new technology (46 per cent) and health and safety or first aid (66 per cent). However, only 16 per cent of employers who funded off-the-job training were offering training in soft or generic skills. This is despite the fact that these skills are considered to be needed for upskilling.

Table 22: Workforce receiving employer-funded off-the-job training by occupation, Northern Ireland, 2008

	Numbers trained	Number employed	% of workforce trained
Managers	45,535	102,295	44
Professionals	28,151	50,758	55
Associate professionals	30,996	60,367	51
Admin	31,680	104,948	30
Skilled Trades	18,418	49,917	37
Personal services	28,591	67,862	42
Sales and customer services	19,250	90,396	21
Machine operatives	16,547	58,753	28
Elementary	27,472	137,502	20

Source: Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI) 2008, The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008, page 81

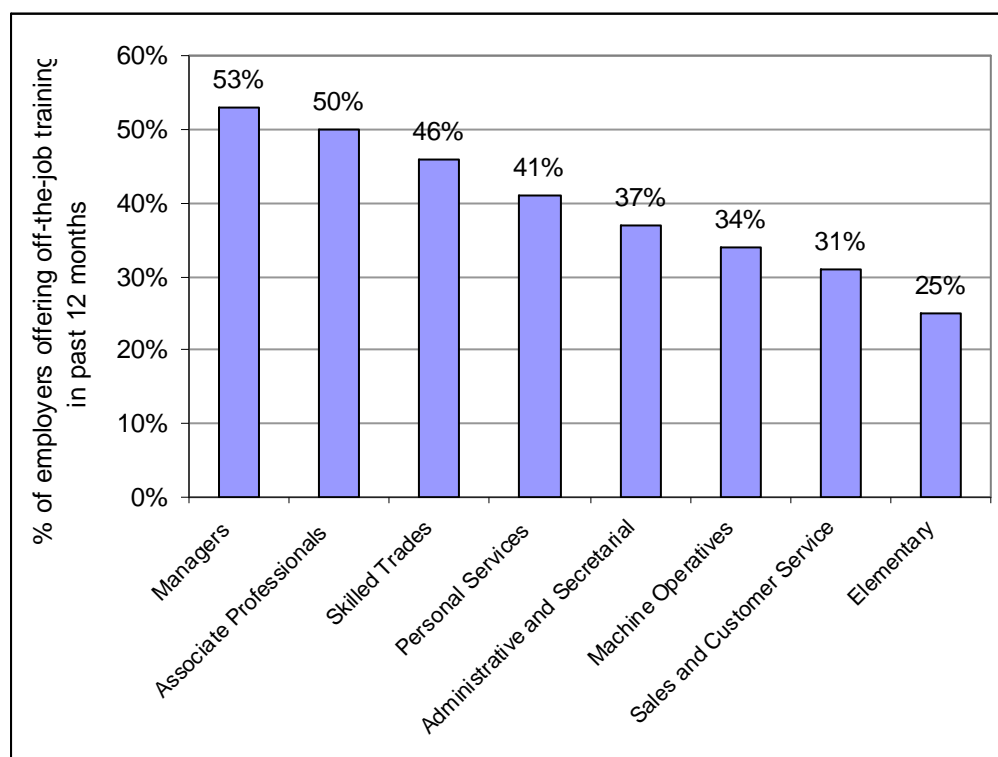
4. Training, qualifications and apprenticeships

4.1.4 Training in Scotland

In the 12 months leading up to the Scottish Employer Skills Survey (2010), just under half (45 per cent) of employers gave their employees off-the-job training.⁴⁵

Figure 5 shows the proportion of employees who received off-the-job-training in each occupational group. This reveals that less than a third (31 per cent) of Sales and Customer Service staff received employer-funded or arranged off-the-job training, which was the lowest rate apart from elementary occupations (25 per cent).

Figure 5: Proportion of employees receiving off-the-job training by occupation, Scotland, 2010



Note: the Professional occupations group has been excluded due to statistical unreliability.

Source: The Scottish Government, Skills in Scotland (2010) (Scottish Employer Skills Survey 2010), p39

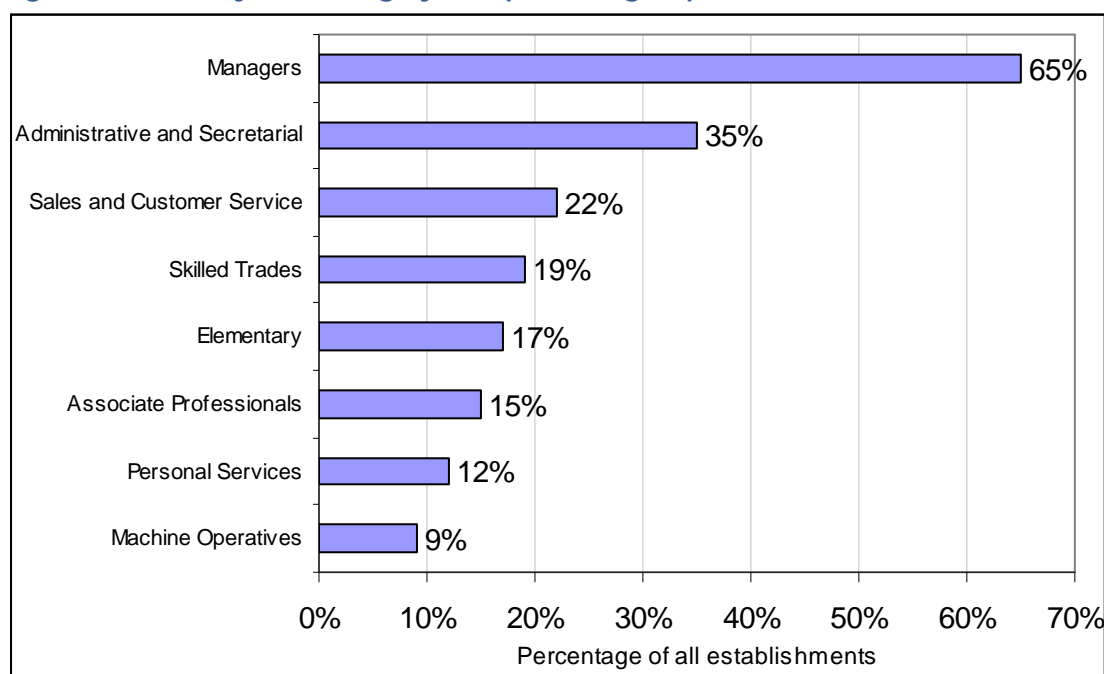
4.1.5 Training in Wales

The Future Skills Wales (2005) survey looked at employer funded and arranged training. Figure 6 illustrates the percentage of establishments that arranged off-the-job training for its staff, by occupational group. This shows that only 22 per cent of establishments provided training for staff in Sales and Customer Service occupations.

⁴⁵ *Source: The Scottish Government, Skills in Scotland 2010, (Scottish Employer Skills Survey 2010), p.33*

4. Training, qualifications and apprenticeships

Figure 6: Off-the-job training by occupational groups, Wales, 2005



Source: GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), *Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey*, page 79

4.1.6 Training programmes (UK)

An internet search for 'Sales training' revealed a number of organisations in the UK which exist exclusively to offer Sales training courses. These offer both open Sales courses as well as in-house training. Some of the recurring course content included selling skills, telephone sales, Customer Service and customer relationships, account management, negotiation, handling objections, Sales management, key account management and consultative Sales (discussed in the drivers of skills section).

There are also training courses on using social media sites, which illustrates one way in which Sales occupations are changing in the face of new developments in information and communications technology.

4.2 Qualifications

4.2.1 QCF qualifications (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

As of January 2012, 96 Sales QCF qualifications were listed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications⁴⁶.

Table 23 shows the Sales qualifications by level. This reveals that almost two thirds (63 per cent) of these qualifications are at levels 2 or 3, with the other qualification levels each accounting for between 6 and 10 per cent of the total.

⁴⁶ The Register of Regulated Qualifications is a public, online database run by Ofqual which lists all accredited qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

4. Training, qualifications and apprenticeships

Table 23: Sales qualifications on the QCF, January 2012

Level	Number	Percentage of total
Level 1	6	6%
Level 2	29	30%
Level 3	32	33%
Level 4	9	9%
Level 5	10	10%
Level 6	10	10%
Total	96	100%

Source: Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications, Jan 2012.

If an identical qualification is offered by (for instance) two Awarding Organisations, then these are counted as two separate qualifications as they will both be accredited. Taking this into account, there are 62 unique qualifications, but 96 in practice, as 6 of them are offered by multiple (6 to 8) Awarding Organisations. It should also be noted that many of the Awards listed are single-unit qualification.

Table 24 lists the qualifications on the QCF with information about how many Awarding Organisations offer each one, and also the (earliest) operational start date. This shows that all but two of the qualifications were first in operation in 2011.

Four of the six qualifications with multiple Awarding Organisations are in the level 2 and 3 apprenticeship frameworks, which will be discussed below.

Table 24: QCF Qualifications in Sales, January 2012

Title	number of AOs offering	credit value	First operational start date
Level 2 Certificate In Principles of Sales (QCF)	6	18	01-Apr-2011
Level 2 NVQ Certificate in Sales (QCF)	7	22	01-Apr-2011
Level 2 NVQ Diploma in Sales (QCF)	6	37	01-Apr-2011
Level 3 Certificate in Principles of Sales (QCF)	8	16	01-Apr-2011
Level 3 NVQ Certificate in Sales (QCF)	6	25	01-Apr-2011
Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Sales (QCF)	7	37	01-Apr-2011
Level 1 Award In Communication skills in Sales (QCF)	1	1	01-Jan-2011
Level 1 Award In Selling lawfully and ethically (QCF)	1	1	01-Jan-2011
Level 1 Award In Understanding consumer buyer behaviour (QCF)	1	1	01-Apr-2011
Level 1 Award In Understanding the Sales cycle (QCF)	1	3	01-Jan-2011
Level 1 Award In Sales and marketing (QCF)	1	7	01-Jan-2011
Level 1 Certificate In Sales and marketing (QCF)	1	13	01-Apr-2011
Level 2 Award In Sales targets (QCF)	1	2	01-Jan-2011
Level 2 Award In Understanding buyer behaviour (QCF)	1	3	01-Jan-2011
Level 2 Award In Understanding laws and ethics of selling (QCF)	1	3	01-Jan-2011
Level 2 Award In Selling to customers (QCF)	1	5	01-Jan-2011
Level 2 Award In TeleSales (QCF)	1	5	01-Jan-2011
Level 2 Award In Understanding selling to customers (QCF)	1	5	01-Jan-2011
Level 2 Certificate in Sales (QCF)	1	13	01-Jul-2010
Level 2 Certificate in TeleSales (QCF)	1	13	01-Jul-2010
Level 2 Certificate In Sales and Marketing (QCF)	1	17	01-Jan-2011
Level 2 Certificate In Principles of Selling (QCF)	1	18	01-Jun-2011
Level 3 Award In Understanding influences on buyer behaviour (QCF)	1	3	01-Jan-2011

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Level 3 Award In Prospecting for new business (QCF)	1	4	01-Jan-2011
Level 3 Award In Understanding customer segmentation and profiling (QCF)	1	4	01-Jan-2011
Level 3 Award In Understanding Sales and marketing in organisations (QCF)	1	4	01-Jan-2011
Level 3 Award In Preparing and delivering a Sales presentation (QCF)	1	5	01-Jan-2011
Level 3 Award In Using market information for Sales (QCF)	1	5	01-Jan-2011
Level 3 Award In Handling objections, negotiating and closing Sales (QCF)	1	6	01-Jan-2011
Level 3 Award In Sales pipeline management (QCF)	1	6	01-Jan-2011
Level 3 Award In Time and territory management for Sales people (QCF)	1	6	01-Jan-2011
Level 3 Certificate In Sales and marketing (QCF)	1	17	01-Jan-2011
Level 3 Diploma In Sales and marketing (QCF)	1	37	01-Jan-2011
Level 4 Award In Managing responsible selling (QCF)	1	4	01-Apr-2011
Level 4 Award In Writing and delivering a Sales proposal (QCF)	1	4	01-Apr-2011
Level 4 Award In Operational Sales planning (QCF)	1	5	01-Apr-2011
Level 4 Award In Sales negotiations (QCF)	1	5	01-Apr-2011
Level 4 Award In Understanding segmentation, targeting and positioning (QCF)	1	5	01-Apr-2011
Level 4 Award In Managing a Sales team (QCF)	1	6	01-Apr-2011
Level 4 Award In Finance for Sales managers (QCF)	1	7	01-Apr-2011
Level 4 Certificate In Sales and Marketing Management (QCF)	1	18	01-Apr-2011
Level 4 Diploma In Sales and Marketing Management (QCF)	1	41	01-Apr-2011
Level 5 Award In Analysing the financial potential and performance of customer accounts (QCF)	1	6	01-Apr-2011
Level 5 Award In Bid and tender management for account managers (QCF)	1	6	01-Apr-2011
Level 5 Award In Designing, planning and managing Sales territories (QCF)	1	6	01-Apr-2011
Level 5 Award In Motivation and compensation for Sales teams (QCF)	1	6	01-Apr-2011
Level 5 Award In Relationship management for account managers (QCF)	1	6	01-Apr-2011
Level 5 Award In Sales forecasts and target setting (QCF)	1	6	01-Apr-2011
Level 5 Award In Understanding and developing customer accounts (QCF)	1	8	01-Apr-2011
Level 5 Award In Understanding the integrated functions of Sales and marketing (QCF)	1	8	01-Apr-2011
Level 5 Certificate In Sales and Account management (QCF)	1	26	01-Apr-2011
Level 5 Diploma In Sales and Account management (QCF)	1	44	01-Apr-2011
Level 6 Award In Developing and using customer insight (QCF)	1	7	01-May-2011
Level 6 Award In Developing strategic relationships with major customers (QCF)	1	7	01-May-2011
Level 6 Award In Leadership and management in Sales (QCF)	1	7	01-May-2011
Level 6 Award In Leading a culture for responsible selling (QCF)	1	7	01-May-2011
Level 6 Award In Managing sales-related change (QCF)	1	7	01-May-2011
Level 6 Award In Planning and implementing Sales and marketing strategy (QCF)	1	7	01-May-2011
Level 6 Award In Sales force organisation (QCF)	1	7	01-May-2011
Level 6 Award In Sales forecasting and budgeting (QCF)	1	7	01-May-2011
Level 6 Certificate In Strategic Sales management (QCF)	1	28	01-May-2011
Level 6 Diploma In Strategic Sales management (QCF)	1	56	01-May-2011

Source: Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications, Jan 2012.

4.2.2 Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships for Sales and Telesales exist in England, Wales and Northern Ireland but not in Scotland.

These apprenticeships are certificated by the CFA. They are a group of components (including qualifications awarded by Awarding Organisations) that the learner must complete.

In 2011, CFA developed new level 2 and 3 apprenticeships in Sales and Telesales for England and Wales, with new QCF Sales qualifications. These were required to comply with the *Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England* and draft *Specification of*

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Apprenticeship Standards for Wales. Prior to this, there were older Sales and Telesales apprenticeships using NQF qualifications. The new apprenticeships were implemented on 31 May 2011.

The apprenticeships contain the following qualifications:

Level 2:

- Level 2 NVQ Certificate in Sales (QCF)
- Level 2 Certificate In Principles of Sales/ Selling (QCF)

Level 3:

- Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Sales (QCF)
- Level 3 Certificate in Principles of Sales (QCF)

In England, the apprenticeships also contained Transferable Skills for English and Maths, Personal Learning and Thinking Skills, and a minimum number of guided learning hours.

In Wales, the apprenticeship also contains Essential Skills Wales in communication and application of numbers and minimum on and off the job training hours.

The previous Sales and Telesales required the learner to complete a competence-based qualification, a knowledge-based qualification, and some key or functional skills in English and Maths.

Table 25 shows the apprenticeship achievements for Sales & Telesales in 2008/09 and 2009/10. While achievements fell between the two years, the number of learners achieving a level 3 (advanced) framework increased.

Table 25: Apprenticeship achievement in Sales & Telesales, England, 2008/09 and 2009/10

Level	Sex	S&TS apprenticeship Achievements	
		2008/09	2009/10
Level 2	All	1,700	1,140
Level 2	Female	660	460
Level 2	Male	1,040	680
Level 3	All	80	240
Level 3	Female	30	110
Level 3	Male	40	130
All Apprenticeships	All	1,770	1,380
All Apprenticeships	Female	700	580
All Apprenticeships	Male	1,080	800

Source: www.thedataservice.org.uk

5. England – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

The following sections provide an overview of the current skills needs in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales for Customer Service and Sales workers.

Terminology used in this section is described as follows:

Recruitment difficulties refer to vacancies that employers describe as hard-to-fill, difficulty-to-fill or skill-shortage related.

Hard-to-fill vacancies (HtfVs) are vacancies classified by employers as hard to fill.

Difficult-to-fill vacancies (DtfVs) are vacancies classified by employers in Northern Ireland as difficult to fill.

Skill shortage vacancies (SSVs) are a subset of hard-to-fill (or difficult-to-fill) vacancies where the reason given for the difficulty filling the position is a low number of applicants with the required skills, work experience or qualification.

Skill shortages occur when organisations cannot recruit sufficient people who are appropriately qualified, skilled or experienced to fill the vacancies they have. Alternatively, hard-to-fill vacancies (HtfVs) or difficult-to-fill vacancies (DtfVs) occur because of other issues such as poor pay, conditions or remoteness.

Skill gaps exist when members of the existing workforce in an organisation are seen to have lower skills than are necessary to meet current business needs.

Unweighted base this refers to the number of respondents on which a survey is based.

Weighted base weighting ensures that the survey results are representative of the entire population of employers.

5.1 Vacancies, recruitment difficulties and Skill Shortage Vacancies - England

This section draws on the UKCES (2010) *National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009* (NESS).

5.1.1 Recruitment difficulties by occupations (England)

Skills-related issues (qualifications, experience, skills) account for 74 per cent of hard-to-fill vacancies (HtfVs) in England. These vacancies are therefore known as skill shortage vacancies (SSVs).⁴⁷

Figure 7 shows the overall distribution of vacancies and recruitment difficulties in England, by occupational group.

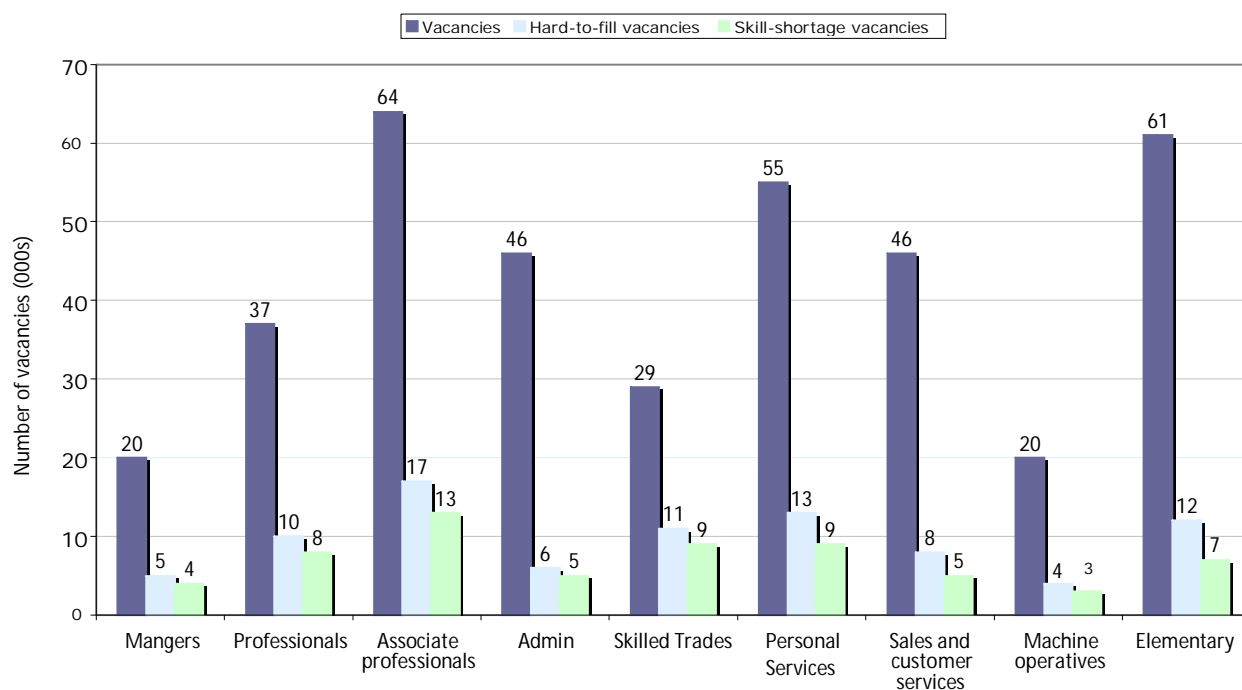
There were 46,325 vacancies for Sales and Customer Service occupations, of which 5,475 (12 per cent) were SSVs. This is lower than the overall proportion of 16 per cent of vacancies that are SSVs across all groups. Therefore when recruiting Sales and Customer Service staff, employers are less likely to face skill shortages problems than when recruiting for many of the other groups.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ UKCES 2010, *National Employer Skills Survey 2009: main report*, p52

⁴⁸ UKCES 2010, *National Employer Skills Survey 2009: main report*, p74

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Figure 7: Overall distribution of vacancies and recruitment difficulties by occupation, England, 2009



Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 7349

Table 26 lists the vacancies and SSVs reported by the NESS. Only two other groups have lower rates of SSVs as a proportion of vacancies: elementary occupations (11 per cent) and administrative and secretarial occupations (10 per cent).

Between 2007 and 2009, the proportion of vacancies that are SSVs dropped for every group. For Sales and customer service, it fell from 15 per cent to 12 per cent, while the overall rate fell from 21 per cent to 16 per cent.

Interestingly, the picture is somewhat different for some groups when we look at SSVs per 1000 employees. In this case, the Sales and Customer Service group is still the third lowest, but now the groups with lower SSVs are administrative and secretarial (1.4 SSVs per 1000 employees) and managers (0.9 SSVs per 1000 employees, due to a low number of vacancies⁵⁰).

⁴⁹ UKCES 2010, National Employer Skills Survey 2009: main report

⁵⁰ UKCES 2010, National Employer Skills Survey 2009: main report, p74

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Table 26: vacancies, SSVs and SSV density by occupation, England, 2007 and 2009

	Vacancies	SSVs	SSVs per 1,000 employees	% of vacs that are SSVs	
				2007	2009
<i>Un-weighted base</i>	<i>35,310</i>	<i>5,118</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
Overall	385,675	63,100	2.7	21	16
Managers	19,750	3,725	0.9	21	19
Professionals	36,825	8,300	3.2	28	23
Associate professionals	64,125	12,700	7.4	22	20
Administrative and secretarial	45,525	4,575	1.4	12	10
Skilled trades	28,975	8,900	5.5	37	31
Personal services	54,700	9,125	5.1	21	17
Sales and customer service	46,325	5,475	1.8	15	12
Machine operatives	20,125	2,900	1.9	24	14
Elementary	61,300	6,925	2.1	15	11

Source: Table recreated from UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 75

5.1.2 Skill Shortage Vacancies by sector skills council and occupation (England)

Table 27 illustrates the profile of skill shortage vacancies by Sector Skills Council (SSC).

This reveals that the some SSCs have large proportions of SSVs in the Sales and Customer Service category:

- Skillsmart Retail (48 per cent)
- Skillset (46 per cent)
- Cogent (33 per cent)
- Skills for Logistics (22 per cent)

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Table 27: Profile of skill shortage vacancies by occupation within SSC, England, 2009

(%)	Un-weighted	Weighted	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled Trades	Personal Services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine Operatives	Elementary
Overall	133	2,345	6	13	20	7	14	14	9	5	11
Asset Skills	76	1,710	3	1	10	14	2	11	18	8	31
Cogent	38	460	11	12	21	6	2	0	33	14	1
Construction Skills	67	674	14	21	16	4	31	0	1	10	2
Creative and Cultural Skills	151	1,194	4	23	51	9	1	-	8	-	2
Energy and Utility Skills	239	3,117	7	14	31	4	15	0	-	19	10
e-skills UK	186	2,232	8	25	35	8	12	-	10	1	1
Financial Skills Partnership	153	2,201	6	1	46	26	-	1	16	-	-
GoSkills	116	1,723	2	1	4	17	2	-	2	69	-
Government Skills	101	1,839	2	2	1	13	73	-	2	2	5
SEMTA	36	366	3	32	11	4	30	0	6	11	2
IMI	223	3,961	3	-	7	6	56	0	16	9	3
Improve Ltd	57	563	7	1	6	6	29	0	13	16	9
Lantra	51	335	1	13	6	3	34	8	-	14	21
Lifelong Learning UK	311	2,273	1	45	35	8	2	6	2	1	-
People 1 st	178	902	7	-	2	3	27	3	5	1	53
Proskills UK	65	349	0	1	24	2	54	0	9	4	6
Skills Active	76	452	4	-	31	9	10	25	4	-	15
Skillfast-UK	295	2,369	19	-	13	11	17	0	13	16	9
Skillset	64	511	2	6	37	4	-	2	46	-	3
Skillsmart Retail	451	6,869	14	2	12	10	9	-	48	-	5
Skills for Care & Development	351	3,854	5	6	17	5	2	56	2	-	1
Skills for Health	797	7,002	1	24	45	3	-	24	-	-	2
Skills for Logistics	116	1,723	6	-	35	16	8	-	22	5	7
Summit Skills	127	1,529	11	5	5	4	67	0	-	7	1

Notes: Skills for Justice has a base size less than 25 and is therefore not shown

Those blank represent a figure less than 0.5

Percentages sum across to 100 per cent for each SSC, subject to rounding.

Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 78

5.1.3 Skill shortage vacancies by sector (England)

Table 28 shows for each industry how their SSVs are distributed across occupations. On average, Sales and Customer Service represents 9 per cent of SSVs across sectors. The industries with the highest proportion of Sales and Customer Service SSVs are:

- Retail and wholesale (30 per cent)
- Financial intermediation (16 per cent)
- Manufacturing (11 per cent)
- Transport, storage and communications (11 per cent)

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Table 28: Profile of skill shortage vacancies by occupation within sectors, England, 2009

(%)	Un-weighted	Weighted	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled Trades	Personal Services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine Operatives	Elementary
Overall	5,118	63,089	6	13	20	7	14	14	9	5	11
Agriculture	59	1,374	3	2	1	0	48	4	0	10	31
Manufacturing	532	4,409	6	20	13	4	28	0	11	13	5
Construction	159	2,739	12	11	7	5	49	0	3	9	3
Retail and wholesale	484	7,672	8	1	14	7	26	*	30	9	4
Hotels and catering	441	6,347	7	0	2	3	29	2	3	1	55
Transport, storage and communications	247	2,758	3	1	13	16	4	2	11	48	3
Financial intermediation	153	2,201	6	1	46	26	0	1	16	0	0
Business services	851	13,170	8	20	25	11	7	2	9	6	11
Public administration and defence	145	1,287	7	9	22	11	39	0	2	4	6
Education	481	3,961	1	42	24	5	1	21	1	4	1
Health and social work	1,185	10,442	3	21	30	4	1	37	1	*	2
Other services	351	4,605	3	11	32	6	3	35	2	1	8

*Note: Percentages sum to 100 across each row. * denotes a figure less than 0.5 per cent. Mining and quarrying and electricity, gas and water sectors have a base size of less than 25 and are therefore not shown.*

Source: Table recreated from UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 76

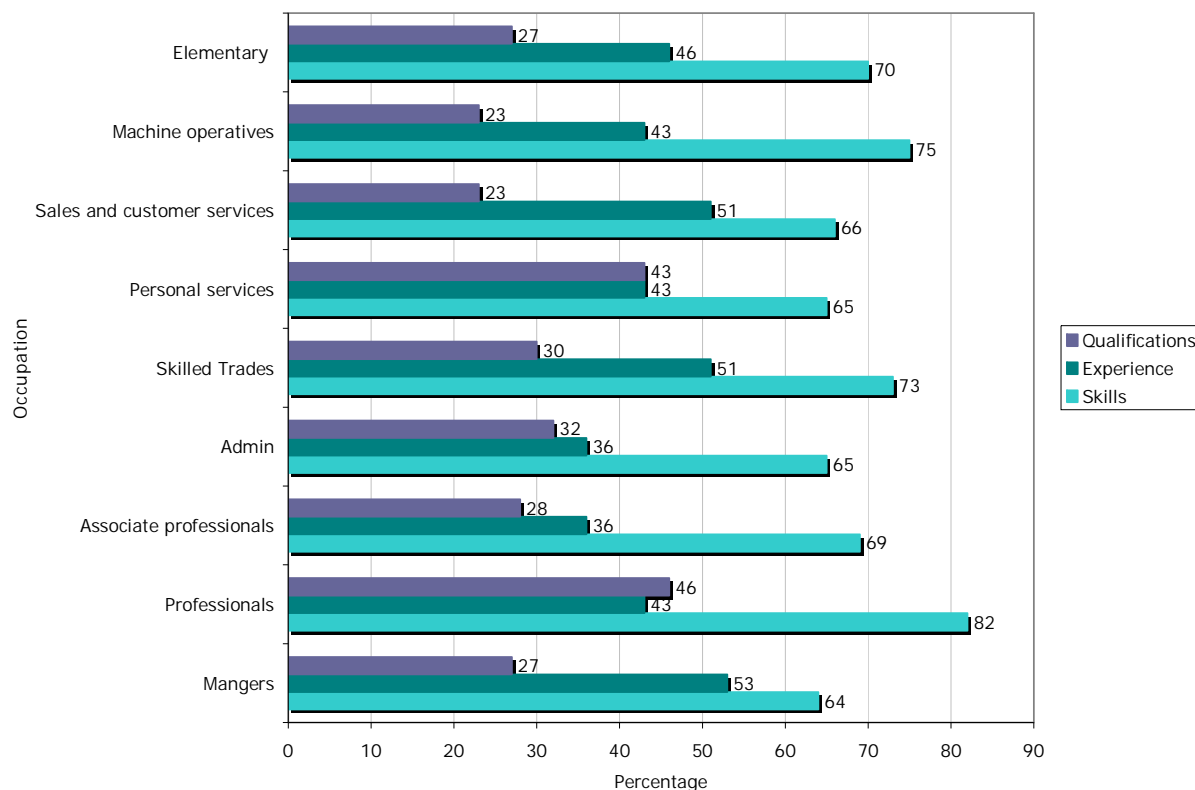
5.1.4 Reasons for skill shortage vacancies (England)

Figure 8 shows the employer-reported reasons for SSVs by occupational group. There are three possible contributors to SSVs: skills, qualifications and experience. In nearly all cases, skills were most likely to be reported as a reason for SSVs (between 64 and 82 per cent for each occupational group), followed by experience (36 to 53 per cent) and qualifications (23 to 46 per cent).

Sales and Customer Service occupations were among the least likely (along with machine operatives) to experience recruitment difficulties relating to lack of qualifications (23 per cent). SSVs for Sales and Customer Service occupations were much more likely to stem from a lack of skills (66 per cent) or experience (51 per cent) than qualifications, consistent with the other groups.

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Figure 8: Reasons for Skill shortage vacancies, England, 2009



Note: Percentages do not add to 100 as employers could provide multiple reasons.
Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 81

Interestingly, a lack of experience is more likely to be reported as a cause of SSVs for Sales and Customer Service occupations (51 per cent, equal to skilled trades) than any other group except for managers, which have a similar figure (53 per cent). The other groups range from 36 to 46. Overall, the Managers occupational group has a very similar profile to Sales and Customer Service in terms of reported causes of SSVs, which is interesting given the very different natures of these groups.

5.1.5 Types of skills lacking in SSVs by occupation (England)

Table 29 shows where employers cited particular skills as lacking in connection with SSVs, by occupational group. Unsurprisingly, the skill most often mentioned in relation to Sales and Customer Service SSVs was customer handling (cited in 56 per cent of Sales and Customer Service SSVs). Technical and practical skills were also cited in about half of Sales and Customer Service SSVs, which is actually the lowest of any occupational group (along with Administrative and Secretarial), as these skills are key across all occupations.

Communication skills were also frequently cited for Sales and Customer Service occupations, both written (45 per cent) and oral (49 per cent).

Perhaps most interesting for Sales and Customer Service is that the skill groups that employers cited least for Sales and Customer Service SSVs (foreign languages at 19 per cent and IT Professional at 20 per cent) were each still an issue for around 1 in 5 SSVs. This is still quite significant, and the fact that all the other skill groups were mentioned even more frequently indicates that all the skills listed in the table below need to be addressed to lower the rates of SSVs in Sales and Customer Service. Most of the other occupational groups have one or more skill groups infrequently mentioned (particularly

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machine operatives, where the bottom four skills are barely cited for any SSVs), but Sales and Customer Service have skills cited across the board.

Table 29: Skills lacking by occupational group within skill shortage vacancies, England, 2009

(%)	Overall	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled Trades	Personal Services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine Operatives	Elementary
<i>Un-weighted base (SSVs)</i>	5,118	300	1,035	1,098	328	614	585	356	331	440
<i>Weighted base (SSVs)</i>	63,089	3,735	8,303	12,693	4,573	8,908	9,123	5,480	2,908	6,932
Technical and practical skills	62	60	76	55	51	73	60	51	73	59
Customer-handling	41	40	37	36	49	28	45	56	24	60
Problem solving	38	39	45	28	39	42	38	41	21	45
Team working	37	25	31	31	33	41	42	41	26	54
Oral communication	35	27	17	26	46	38	46	49	27	44
Written communication	34	29	19	29	47	39	40	45	22	36
Management	32	63	29	33	30	37	24	34	11	32
Literacy	30	30	14	26	39	35	35	41	20	28
Numeracy	26	23	11	21	40	34	27	31	18	29
Office Admin	18	19	11	24	40	11	17	22	7	12
Foreign languages	18	11	28	13	17	13	19	19	8	30
General IT	16	18	9	16	31	13	15	22	9	11
IT Professional	15	13	13	15	28	10	12	20	6	19

*Note: Percentages for each occupation sum to more than 100 per cent due to multiple responses.
Source: Table recreated from UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 84*

The other key point is that customer-handling skills – often associated with Sales as well as Customer Service – are the second-most frequently cited skill overall (in connection with 41 per cent of SSVs), and right across occupational groups. The occupation was cited in relation to least was machine operatives (for 1 in every 4 SSVs), and surprisingly, it was cited in conjunction with more elementary occupation SSVs (60 per cent) than Sales and Customer Service SSVs (56 per cent).

5.2 Skills Gaps (England)

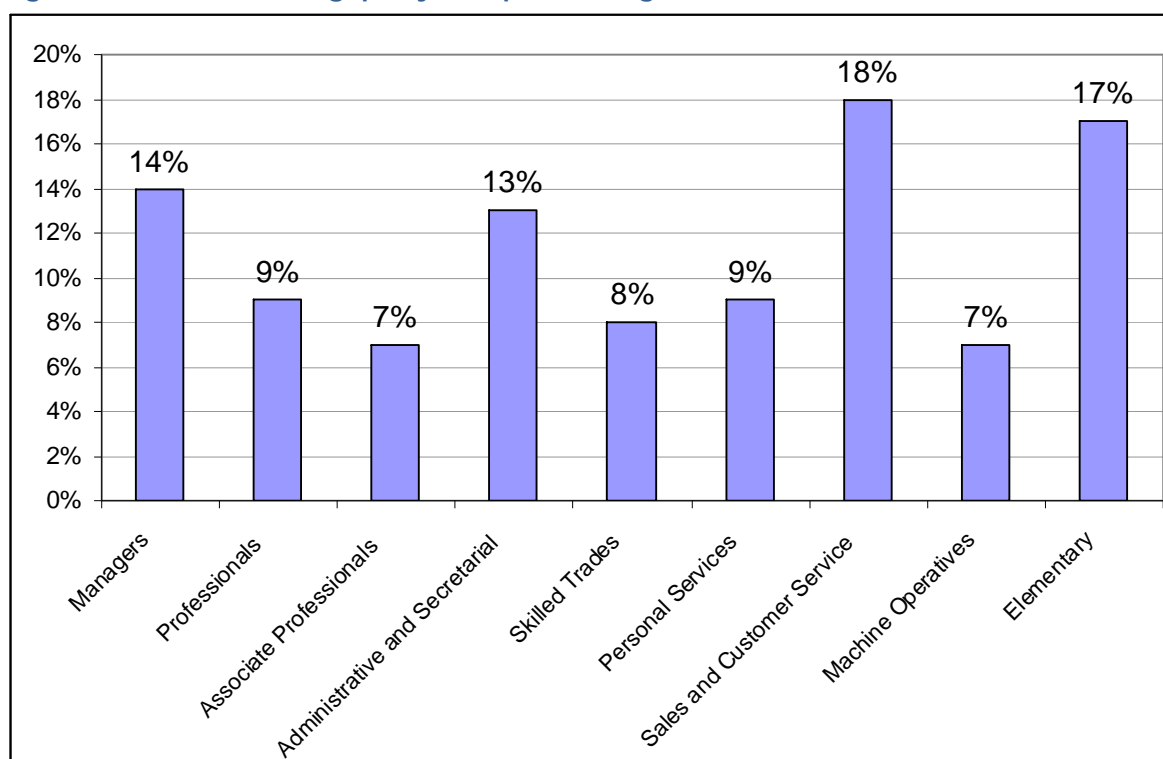
5.2.1 Skills gaps by occupation (England)

This section looks at the extent to which employers are experiencing skills deficiencies or gaps among their existing workforce.

Figure 9 illustrates how all reported skills gaps are distributed across occupations. The largest share of skills gaps is for Sales and Customer Service occupations, representing almost 1 in 5 instances of all skills gaps (18 per cent). This is closely followed by Elementary staff (17 per cent). In the three previous surveys (2003, 2005 and 2007), Sales and Customer Service skills gaps represented 19 per cent of skills gaps.

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Figure 9: Share of skills gaps by occupation, England, 2009



Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 99

Table 30 expands on this to show the percentage of staff in each occupational group reported as having a skills gap. Sales and Customer Service staff have the highest rate (10 per cent) of all the groups, 3 percentage points higher than the figure for all occupations (7 per cent). The NESS found that skills gaps (defined as existing where the current workforce lacks required skills) are more likely to be found in lower level occupations.

As the share of employment for Sales and Customer Service is 13 per cent but the share of skills gaps is 18 per cent, this means that skills gaps are overrepresented in this group.

Table 30: Skills gaps by occupation, England, 2009

	Total employment (000s)	Number of skills gaps (000s)	% of staff reported as having a skills gap	Share of employment	Share of all skills gaps
All occupations	22,977	1,702	7%	100%	100%
Managers and senior officials	4,219	233	6%	18%	14%
Professionals	2,575	147	6%	11%	9%
Associate professionals	1,721	117	7%	7%	7%
Administrative staff	3,207	219	7%	14%	13%
Skilled trade people	1,612	135	8%	7%	8%
Personal service	1,797	148	8%	8%	9%
Sales and Customer Servicestaff	3,041	311	10%	13%	18%
Machine operatives	1,571	111	7%	7%	7%
Elementary staff	3,233	282	9%	14%	17%

Source: Table recreated from UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 99

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As shown in Table 31, overwhelmingly, the skill lacking most among Sales and Customer Service staff is Customer handling (70 per cent of staff with reported skills gaps). It was the group second-least likely (behind managers) to lack technical and practical skills, and yet this was still second-highest reported for Sales and Customer Service staff (59 per cent). Team working, oral communication and problem solving were all lacking in just under half of cases, and written communication in almost a third (29 per cent). One in four cases had general IT user skills reported as an issue.

Table 31: Skills lacking by occupational group, England, 2009

(%)	ALL	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled trades	Personal services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine operatives	Elementary
Technical and practical	64	48	78	77	62	75	63	59	71	64
Customer-handling	51	43	41	48	51	33	52	70	29	57
Team working	50	57	44	49	45	37	55	45	58	57
Oral communication	46	45	42	42	45	33	48	48	45	52
Problem solving	46	48	49	49	49	42	46	42	54	42
Written communication	37	39	41	44	45	30	47	29	41	30
Management	36	77	53	44	29	23	28	20	28	21
General IT user	28	33	33	32	48	20	27	25	28	16
Literacy	24	14	17	23	25	20	39	18	36	29
Office Admin	22	28	23	25	52	12	17	16	17	12
Numeracy	21	11	16	19	21	19	27	17	35	28
IT Professional	17	23	22	28	28	10	16	13	12	9
Foreign languages	13	10	15	11	11	6	13	12	21	16

Source: Table recreated from UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 119

5.2.2 Skills gaps by sector skills council (England)

Table 32 below shows how the skills gaps are distributed by occupation within SSCs. The SSCs for which a large proportion of skills gap were in Sales and Customer Service occupations include:

- Skillsmart Retail (63 per cent)
- Financial Skills Partnership (38 per cent)
- Creative and Cultural Skills (31 per cent)
- Skillset (28 per cent)

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Table 32: Distribution of skills gaps by occupation and SSC, England, 2009

(%)	Number of skills gap (000s)	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled Trades	Personal Services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine Operatives	Elementary
Overall	1,702	14	9	7	13	8	9	18	7	17
Asset Skills	73	17	7	12	23	6	2	9	1	23
Cogent	22	14	6	4	12	11	-	22	21	11
Construction Skills	73	20	9	13	12	25	-	3	8	9
Creative and Cultural Skills	11	21	6	11	13	5	1	31	2	10
Energy and Utility Skills	17	15	5	3	28	23	-	9	9	9
e-skills UK	51	16	29	11	12	5	1	22	1	3
Financial Skills Partnership	82	14	10	12	25	-	-	38	-	1
GoSkills	20	13	4	5	11	4	-	17	22	22
Government Skills	22	27	9	20	34	2	-	3	2	2
SEMTA	119	13	9	11	8	23	-	9	9	9
IMI	31	12	1	2	12	37	-	24	6	6
Improve Ltd	32	10	1	2	6	4	-	22	21	21
Lantra	26	13	4	4	9	23	8	9	9	21
Lifelong Learning UK	75	12	44	9	15	2	7	4	-	7
People 1 st	180	10	1	1	3	5	1	18	1	60
Proskills UK	30	13	2	4	9	17	-	9	26	20
Skills Active	20	11	3	6	11	10	17	14	1	28
Skillfast –UK	12	13	2	6	12	4	-	22	21	21
Skillset	16	13	18	16	11	5	3	28	1	4
Skillsmart Retail	189	10	1	2	4	2	-	63	1	16
Skills for Care & Development	70	11	5	5	9	4	57	3	-	6
Skills for Health	131	15	10	7	23	1	36	1	2	5
Skills for Justice	11	13	6	38	22	1	14	2	-	3
Skills for Logistics	95	15	3	3	14	4	-	17	22	22
Summit Skills	21	12	2	3	10	61	-	3	2	6

Notes: Rows sum up to 100 per cent for each SSC (subject to rounding)

- denotes figures greater than 0% but less than 0.5%

Source: Table recreated from UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 108.

5. England – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

5.2.3 Skills gap by sector (England)

Table 33 shows the skills gaps by sector. This reveals that the sectors with the largest proportion of skills gaps in Sales and Customer Service are:

- Retail and wholesale (50 per cent)
- Financial intermediation (38 per cent)
- Transport, storage and communications (22 per cent)

These are three of the four sectors with the highest proportion of Sales and Customer Service SSVs (see Table 28).

In Retail and wholesale and Financial intermediation, the Sales and Customer Service occupations represent by far the highest key skills gap occupations for those sectors. In retail and wholesale, the next highest occupational group with skills gaps is Elementary occupations (16 per cent), and for financial intermediation, the next highest occupational group with skills gaps is Administrative & Secretarial (25 per cent).

Table 33: Profile of skills gaps by occupation within sector, England, 2009

(%)	<i>Number of skills gaps (000s)</i>	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled Trades	Personal Services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine Operatives	Elementary
Overall	1,702	14	9	7	13	9	9	18	7	17
Agriculture	18	15	2	2	7	29	*	2	13	30
Mining and quarrying	2	13	39	4	7	16	0	1	18	2
Manufacturing	204	13	7	8	8	15	*	8	24	14
Electricity, gas and water	9	26	4	6	20	22	0	11	9	1
Construction	77	16	4	5	11	44	-	3	5	12
Retail and wholesale	293	11	1	2	7	8	*	50	5	16
Hotels and catering	165	9	1	*	3	5	1	17	1	63
Transport, storage and communications	89	13	5	4	11	3	1	22	27	13
Financial intermediation	82	14	10	12	25	*	*	38	*	1
Business services	298	20	15	13	17	7	1	14	4	10
Public administration and defence	59	22	9	21	30	3	4	7	1	2
Education	110	11	36	9	12	2	19	2	*	9
Health and social work	212	12	9	7	18	2	24	2	2	5
Other services	92	14	5	6	20	8	11	15	2	19

- denotes a figure less than 0.5 per cent
- percentages for each sector sum to 100 across the row.

Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 103

5. England – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

Table 34 presents the nature of skills gaps by sector. The squares in blue illustrate where more than 50 per cent of employers have listed the type of skill as an issue in skills gaps.

Employers in three of the sectors discussed above with high skills gaps in Sales and Customer Service occupations (retail and wholesale, finance and transport) were also likely to report customer handling as a specific type of skills gap. Interestingly though, they were just as, or even more likely, to report technical and practical skills as a particular issue.

Technical and practical skills were mentioned by 64 per cent of employers, and more than 50 per cent in every single sector. Customer handling and team working were mentioned by about half of all employers. Customer handling was mentioned by more than 50 per cent of employers in eight of the 14 sectors. The sector with the smallest proportion of employers who mentioned customer handling was the electricity, gas and water sector, where it was still mentioned by 1 in four respondents.

Similarly, while hotels and catering reported their main skills gaps occupational group as Elementary (63 per cent of all occupations in this sector having skills gaps), at the same time, the main *type* of skills gap in the sector was customer handling. This illustrates that customer handling is something used across not just sectors but occupations.

Table 34: Nature of skills gaps by sector, England, 2009

(%)	Technical and practical	Customer handling	Team working	Oral communication	Problem - solving	Written communication	Management	General IT user skills	Literacy	Office admin	Numeracy	IT professionals	Foreign languages
Overall	64	51	50	46	46	37	34	28	24	22	21	17	13
Agriculture	73	34	40	38	40	24	27	22	19	15	19	13	9
Mining and quarrying	77	53	16	17	13	16	17	13	5	53	3	1	-
Manufacturing	73	29	52	45	53	39	37	35	29	23	30	17	14
Electricity, gas and water	53	25	53	32	32	43	32	36	9	21	1	1	3
Construction	68	35	41	34	40	32	31	28	18	19	21	14	6
Retail and wholesale	57	57	51	45	43	27	26	23	19	18	18	11	10
Hotels and catering	60	69	58	52	47	25	33	17	22	13	24	12	17
Transport, storage and communication	55	58	67	55	62	53	36	37	37	32	30	18	19
Financial Intermediation	81	65	43	43	39	38	34	35	15	22	14	29	22
Business Services	61	47	41	45	42	42	41	29	19	24	14	22	13
Public administration and defence	57	58	54	52	46	49	48	36	24	40	15	19	4
Education	72	38	48	37	40	34	36	40	30	25	23	27	10
Health and social work	66	52	51	43	49	44	37	33	32	26	22	21	13
Other services	67	56	55	51	48	40	39	32	28	18	25	24	9

Note: Figures refer to % of employers who raised these skills as an issue for employees with skills gaps.

Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 122

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5.2.4 Skills gaps by region (England)

As mentioned earlier, Sales and Customer Service represents a higher share of skills gap (18 per cent) than its share of employment (13 per cent). This is true for every region in England.

As seen in Table 35, this discrepancy is greatest in the Eastern region, where Sales and Customer Service staff are 8 per cent of employment but 18 per cent of skills gaps, and the North West, where Sales and Customer Service staff represent 12 per cent of employment but 19 per cent of all skills gaps.

Table 35: Number of skills gaps across regions, England, 2009

(%)	Number of skills gap (000s)	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled Trades	Personal Services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine Operatives	Elementary
Skills gap (profile of employment)	1,702	14 (18)	9 (11)	7 (7)	13 (14)	8 (7)	9 (8)	18 (13)	7 (7)	17 (14)
Eastern	161	14 (18)	6 (10)	8 (8)	14 (14)	8 (7)	9 (8)	18 (8)	5 (7)	20 (16)
East Midlands	137	12 (17)	9 (10)	5 (6)	14 (14)	7 (8)	8 (8)	16 (11)	12 (9)	18 (16)
London	291	15 (21)	13 (16)	10 (10)	14 (15)	3 (4)	5 (5)	20 (14)	4 (3)	16 (12)
North East	61	14 (16)	5 (6)	9 (9)	11 (14)	9 (7)	8 (8)	14 (11)	8 (9)	20 (14)
North West	209	13 (17)	6 (10)	8 (8)	13 (14)	11 (7)	8 (9)	19 (12)	6 (7)	17 (16)
South East	303	14 (19)	8 (10)	6 (7)	13 (13)	8 (8)	11 (9)	21 (15)	5 (6)	14 (13)
South West	203	12 (18)	9 (11)	5 (6)	9 (13)	10 (9)	9 (8)	18 (14)	7 (7)	20 (14)
West Midlands	196	14 (18)	9 (11)	6 (6)	12 (13)	9 (8)	9 (8)	16 (13)	10 (9)	15 (13)
Yorkshire and the Humber	142	14 (17)	8 (9)	5 (7)	15 (14)	9 (8)	10 (9)	16 (13)	8 (9)	16 (15)

Base: all skills gaps (in brackets all employment)
 Numbers add to 100 per cent across rows, subject to rounding.

Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 114

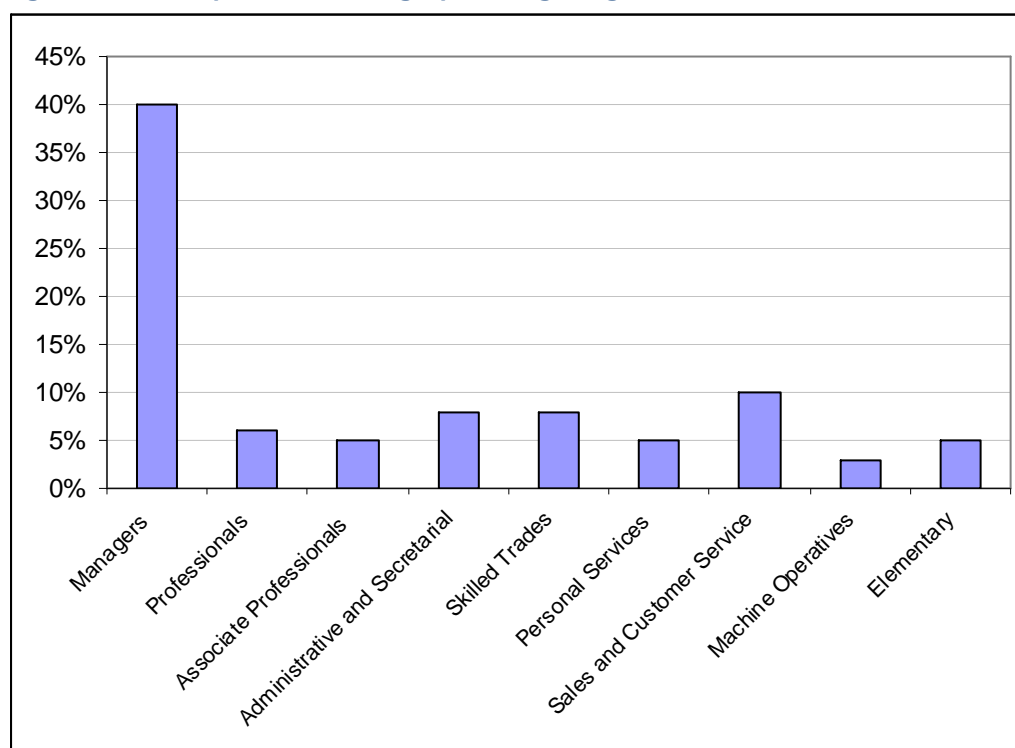
5. England – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

5.3 Future skill needs (England)

The NESS (2009) also reported on employer views of future skill needs. Where employers considered that there was a need to upskill staff (i.e. gain new skills or knowledge), they were asked which occupation would be most affected.

As seen in Figure 10, one in ten employers with a need to upskill staff thought that the most affected occupation would be Sales and Customer Service. It is interesting that most employers saw managers as being by far the occupation most affected (40 per cent), because as Figure 9 revealed, managers had a smaller share of total skills gaps (14 per cent) than Sales and Customer Service staff (18 per cent).

Figure 10: Occupation needing upskilling, England, 2009



Note: percentages do not add to 100 as 9 per cent of respondents were unsure which occupation would be most affected, or thought that more than one would be equally affected. These have been excluded from the figure.

Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 145

Table 36 lists the occupations that employers thought were most in need of upskilling, by SSC. Again, there is an interesting variation from Table 32 (distribution of skills gaps by SSC). For instance, 63 per cent of reported skills gaps within the Skillsmart Retail footprint are within Sales and Customer Service occupations, and only 10 per cent in Managerial occupations. Yet in the table below, employers who fall within the Skillsmart Retail footprint were more likely to think that managerial occupations most needed upskilling (46 per cent) before Sales and Customer Service (31 per cent).

While this seems like a discrepancy, it may just be due to the relative importance of the two groups in the minds of employers. While Sales and Customer Service have a greater share of skills gaps, it may be that the critical functions that managers play lead this occupation to be seen as a higher priority in upskilling. This variation may also be due to the way this data is reported in the different tables (proportion of employers versus percentage of employees with skills gaps).

5. England – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

Table 36: Occupation most needing upskilling by Sector Skills Councils, England, 2009

SSC	Most mentioned	2 nd most mentioned	3 rd most mentioned
Lantra	Managers (44%)	Skilled trade (16%)	Elementary (8%)
Cogent	Managers (35%)	Sales and Customer Service(22%)	Machine operatives (13%)
Proskills	Managers (35%)	Skilled trade (15%)	Machine operatives (14%)
Improve	Managers (33%)	Machine operatives (18%)	Elementary (12%)
Skillsfast-UK	Managers (41%)	Sales and Customer Service(14%)	Machine operatives (9%)
SEMTA	Managers (33%)	Skilled trade (22%)	Machine operatives (10%)
Energy and Utility Skills	Managers (30%)	Machine operatives (18%)	Skilled trade (10%)
Constructions Skills	Managers (44%)	Skilled trade (16%)	Professionals (10%)
Summit Skills	Skilled trade (44%)	Mangers (36%)	Associate professionals (4%)
IMI	Skilled trade (44%)	Managers (26%)	Sales and Customer Service(8%)
Skillsmart Retail	Managers (46%)	Sales and Customer Service(31%)	Admin/secretarial (4%)
People 1 st	Managers (46%)	Elementary (27%)	Sales and Customer Service(10%)
GoSkills	Managers (33%)	Machine operatives (25%)	Admin/secretarial (12%)
Skills for Logistics	Managers (40%)	Sales and Customer Service(18%)	Machine operatives and Admin/secretarial (10%)
Financial Services Skills Council	Managers (35%)	Sales and Customer Service(23%)	Admin/secretarial (16%)
Asset Skills	Managers (49%)	Admin/secretarial (16%)	Sales and Customer Service(12%)
E-skills UK	Managers (40%)	Associate professionals (15%)	Professionals (13%)
Government Skills	Admin/secretarial (26%)	Managers (13%)	Professionals (12%)
Skills for Justice	Associate professional (22%)	Admin/secretarial (21%)	Professionals (12%)
Lifelong Learning UK	Managers (35%)	Professionals (26%)	Admin/secretarial (13%)
Skills for Health	Managers (29%)	Personal services (19%)	Professionals (13%)
Skills for Care and Development	Managers (38%)	Personal services (31%)	Admin/secretarial (7%)
Skillset	Managers (47%)	Associate professionals (15%)	Admin/secretarial (6%)
Creative and Cultural	Managers (49%)	Associate professionals (11%)	Admin/secretarial (11%)
SkillsActive	Managers (45%)	Personal services (9%)	Admin/secretarial (9%)
Non-SSC employers	Managers (38%)	Personal services (12%)	Professionals (11%)

Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 147-8

Employers who considered upskilling to be required in the next 12 months (and could state the occupation in most need of upskilling) were also asked in the NESS about the types of skills which needed improving or updating in that occupation. Table 37 shows the results of this.

The table reveals that the most cited skills in Sales and Customer Service staff who need upskilling are customer-handling skills (63 per cent) and technical and practical skills (60 per cent). While customer-handling skills received proportionally fewer responses overall (37 per cent across all occupations), technical and practical skills were less mentioned for Sales and Customer Service staff than overall (63 per cent).

5. England – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

Table 37: Skills needing up skilling by occupation, England, 2009

(%)	Overall	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled trades	Personal services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine operatives	Elementary
<i>Un-weighted base</i>	52,119	19,480	4,362	3,348	4,503	5,561	3,051	6,246	2,444	3,124
<i>Weighted base (00s)</i>	937,597	414,256	62,479	50,718	81,603	87,090	51,189	106,057	28,365	55,841
Technical and practical skills	63	56	74	80	57	80	71	60	74	64
Management	38	45	41	36	32	26	34	39	20	30
General IT user	37	41	39	37	57	26	29	35	21	23
Customer-handling	37	30	28	35	37	31	48	63	29	57
Problem solving	35	33	33	37	34	36	42	42	33	41
Team working	35	30	31	31	30	31	54	45	37	54
Communication	32	27	27	33	34	26	48	45	30	47
Oral communication	27	22	22	25	27	22	42	40	25	43
IT Professional	24	27	35	33	35	16	13	17	9	11
Office Admin	23	24	17	17	39	14	18	26	12	15
Written communication	21	18	19	23	23	17	32	24	18	24
Numeracy	14	12	12	11	14	11	17	17	14	24
Literacy	13	10	12	12	14	12	22	15	13	21
Foreign languages	11	12	13	8	10	6	11	10	5	12

Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 151

Note: base is all employers needing to upskill over the next 12 months and able to identify the single occupation most likely to be affected. 'Communication skills' combines mention of either oral or written communication skills.

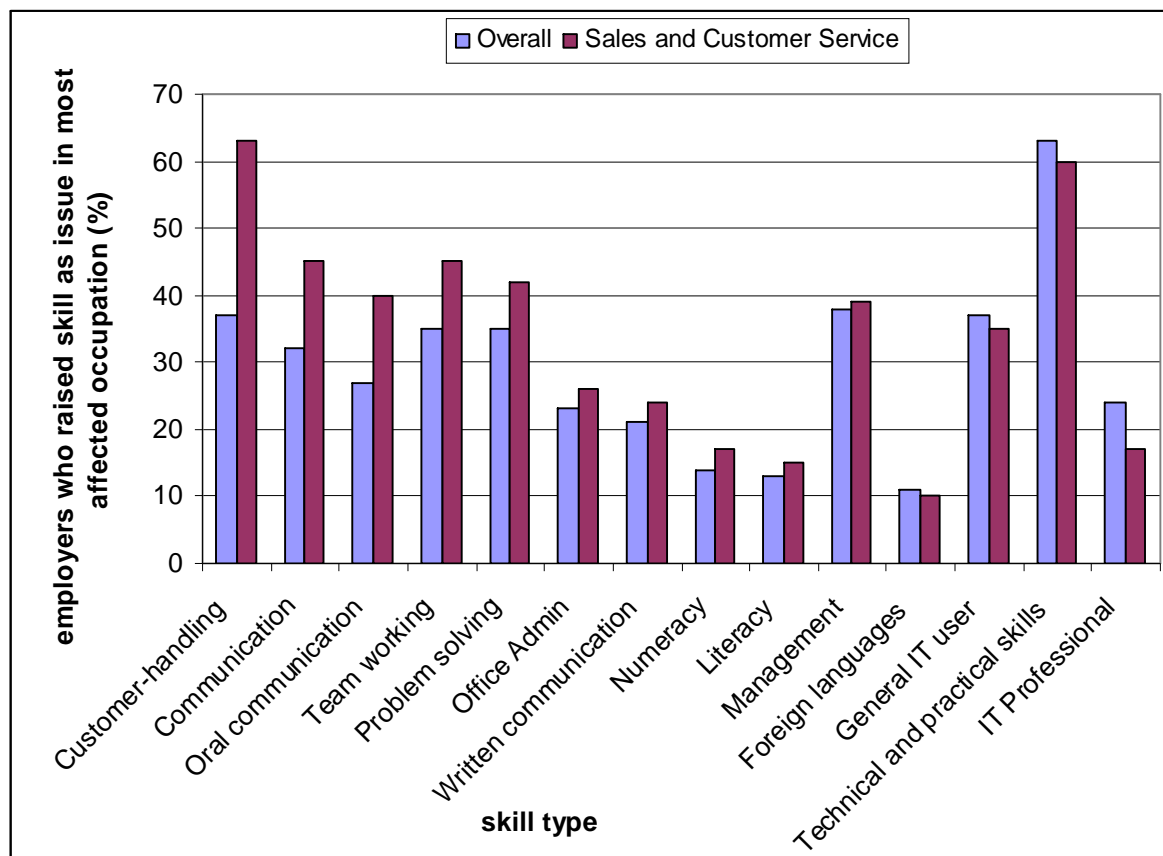
Figure 11 below uses the data in Table 37 above to compare the required skills for Sales and Customer Service with the required skills across all sectors. This is sorted by the absolute difference between Sales and Customer Service skill needs and overall skill needs. The skills on the left of the figure are more likely to be required in Sales and Customer Service occupations requiring upskilling than in all occupations requiring upskilling, and the skills on the right side of the graph are less likely than overall to be needed by Sales and Customer Service. The height of each bar indicates the proportion of employers who considered the skill as relevant to upskilling within the occupations.

The figure reveals that Sales and Customer Service occupations were more likely than average to need customer handling, communication, team working and problem solving skills, and less likely than average to require IT professional skills, technical and practical skills and general IT user skills.

It should be remembered that this information does not refer to skills needs for the occupational group in absolute terms, but just key skills perceived to need addressing in upskilling. This means that skills which are not mentioned by many employers may either not be needed much in that profession, or it may be that they are used, but those within the profession are competent in their use.

5. England – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

Figure 11: Skills required in Sales and Customer Service where this is the most affected occupation for upskilling, England, 2009



Source: Data from UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 151

6. Northern Ireland – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

This section provides an overview of the Business & Administration workforce in Northern Ireland. It draws on the Department for Employment and Learning's (DELNI) Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008.

6.1 Vacancies, recruitment difficulties and Skill Shortage Vacancies (Northern Ireland)

6.1.1 Recruitment difficulties by occupations (Northern Ireland)

Table 38 shows the vacancies, difficult to fill vacancies (DtfVs) and skill shortage vacancies (SSVs). This shows that Sales and Customer Service occupations comprise 1 in 5 (20 per cent) of all vacancies, but a slightly lower share of all DtfVs (16 per cent) and only 6 per cent of all SSVs. There are just under 3500 vacancies in Sales and Customer Service occupations.⁵¹

This also shows that about 1 in 4 (24 per cent) of vacancies in Sales and Customer Service occupations are classed as DtfVs, but SSVs only account for 1 in 20 vacancies (5 per cent) in Sales and Customer Service occupations. This is much lower than the overall figure (18 per cent), or any other occupational group, which range from 12 per cent (elementary occupations and administrative occupations) to 51 per cent (skilled trades).

Table 38: Distribution of vacancies and density of difficulties by occupation, Northern Ireland, 2008

	Share of all vacancies	Share of all DtfVs	Share of all SSVs	DtfVs as % of all vacancies	SSVs as % of all vacancies
Northern Ireland	100	100	100	29	18
Managers	4	6	6	38	25
Professionals	7	7	10	29	23
Associate professionals	13	15	17	33	24
Administrative	14	10	10	20	12
Skilled trades	5	9	14	55	51
Personal service	16	22	24	40	26
Sales and Customer Service	20	16	6	24	5
Machine operatives	4	4	3	23	14
Elementary	15	11	10	20	12

Source: Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI) 2008, *The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008*

Table 39 shows the length of time that DtfVs have been open by occupation. The most distinctive feature of this table is that 14 per cent of DtfVs within Sales and Customer Service occupations were only open for less than two weeks. By way of comparison, DtfVs reported in the other occupational groups which were open two weeks or less ranged from 0 per cent to 8 per cent of total DtfVs for each occupation.

Another 43 per cent of Sales and Customer Service DtfVs were open between 2 weeks and one month. This means that over half (57 per cent) of all Sales and Customer Service vacancies that employers class as difficult to fill have only been open for a month or less.

⁵¹ DELNI 2008, *The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008*, p26

6. Northern Ireland – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

This may be due to employer expectations that these jobs are usually filled quickly. However, DtfVs in Sales and Customer Service occupations were also least likely to be considered as taking longer than expected to fill (60 per cent, the third lowest after skilled trades occupations and managers).

Table 39: Length of time that DtfVs have been open by occupation, Northern Ireland, 2008

	Less than 2 weeks	2 weeks to 1 month	1 to 2 months	2 to 3 months	3 to 6 months	More than 6 months
Northern Ireland	6%	31%	18%	14%	16%	26%
Managers	7%	37%	23%	13%	9%	19%
Professionals	8%	11%	1%	27%	13%	40%
Associate Professionals	2%	30%	12%	15%	25%	23%
Administrative	5%	15%	30%	6%	21%	31%
Skilled Trades	2%	43%	8%	7%	22%	22%
Personal Services	0%	36%	3%	12%	9%	40%
Sales & Customer Service	14%	43%	21%	7%	0%	16%
Machine Operatives	0%	21%	15%	21%	36%	7%
Elementary	8%	14%	32%	13%	25%	9%

Note: some rows sum to more than 100 per cent, as employers could report on two types of DtfVs within each occupation.

Source: Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI) 2008, The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008, p28

6.2 Skills Gaps (Northern Ireland)

6.2.1 Skills gaps by occupation (Northern Ireland)

Table 40 shows the number of skills gaps for each occupation relative to employment. Skills gaps are counted as the number (or percentage) of workers who have gaps between their current skills and those required to meet business objectives. Over half (52 per cent) of employers who identified skills gaps indicated that skills gaps had a significant or very significant effect on the business' ability to meet business objectives, and another 41 per cent said it had a minor effect. This means that only seven per cent of employers found that skills gaps had no real effect on business objectives.⁵² The reduction of skills gaps is therefore key to ensuring that businesses are operating at their maximum potential.

Table 40 reveals that Sales and Customer Service occupations are overrepresented in skills gaps (19 per cent), relative to their share of employment (13 per cent). This is very similar to the pattern seen in England, where Sales and Customer Service occupations also represented 13 per cent of employment but 18 per cent of skill gaps.

Sales and Customer Service occupations have the second highest share of skills gaps (19 per cent) after elementary staff (24 per cent), with the other occupational groups ranging from 4 to 14 per cent. However, in terms of skills gaps as a percentage of total employment within the occupational group, Sales and Customer Service has the highest rate, at 12 per cent. This represents a total of 10,900 Sales and Customer Service staff having skills gaps.

⁵² Source: DELNI 2008, The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008, p50

6. Northern Ireland – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

Table 40: Skills gaps by occupation, Northern Ireland, 2008

(%)	Number of skills gaps	% share of skills gap	% share of employment	Skills gaps as % of total employment
All occupations	58,700	100	100	8
Managers and senior officials	8,000	14	14	8
Professionals	2,100	4	7	4
Associate professionals	4,300	7	8	7
Administrative staff	7,100	12	15	7
Skilled trade people	4,800	8	7	10
Personal service	3,500	6	9	5
Sales and Customer Service	10,900	19	13	12
Machine operatives	3,900	7	8	7
Elementary staff	14,000	24	19	10

Base: All establishments, unweighted = 4,000.

Note: Weighted skill gaps rounded to the nearest 100.

Source: DELNI 2008, The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008, page 54

Table 41 shows the percentage of employers reporting different skill types as lacking within each occupation. The skills most frequently reported in conjunction with Sales and Customer service occupations were:

- Customer-handling (69 per cent)
- Problem solving (58 per cent)
- Oral communication (54 per cent)
- Team working (48 per cent)

These are all traditionally considered 'soft skills', while the skills least likely to be raised for Sales and Customer Service occupations were IT professional (10 per cent), literacy (11 per cent) and numeracy (12 per cent).

Table 41: Skills lacking by occupational group, Northern Ireland, 2008

(%)	All (2008)	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled trades	Personal services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine operatives	Elementary
Technical and practical	50	37	54	59	40	66	54	30	57	40
Customer-handling	57	43	39	60	59	32	56	69	25	60
Team working	47	55	30	39	41	36	44	48	47	55
Oral communication	50	51	42	56	45	27	59	54	44	50
Problem solving	60	58	52	52	56	59	55	58	49	51
Written communication	34	31	29	39	41	17	39	28	37	26
Management	36	75	49	38	38	21	18	28	8	14
General IT user	27	35	38	23	48	14	19	18	22	10
IT professional	21	29	27	31	34	9	12	10	11	6
Literacy	21	10	14	11	29	18	17	11	34	21
Numeracy	17	12	6	5	19	13	9	12	34	21
Un-weighted numbers	1,186	298	71	120	328	176	107	299	115	292

Note: Percentages refer to employers who report having employees with skills gaps.

Source: DELNI 2008, The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008, page 56

6. Northern Ireland – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

The most apparent difference from the findings of the equivalent survey in England (NESS 2009) was a much lower emphasis on technical and practical skills, which for Sales and Customer Service occupations were mentioned by 30 per cent of respondents, compared with 50 per cent for all occupations. In the English survey, these skills were mentioned by 60 per cent of employers, and considered second most important for Sales and Customer Service after customer-handling skills.

6.2.2 Reasons for skills gaps (Northern Ireland)

Table 42 shows the reasons for skills gaps in each occupational group. Predominantly, Sales and Customer Service skills gaps are due to lack of experience or staff being recently recruited (cited by 73 per cent of respondents), or training programmes only partially completed (44 per cent). Perhaps surprisingly, high staff turnover was only raised as an issue by 9 per cent of respondents, which was not much higher than most of the other occupations (ranging from 5 to 8 per cent), save for elementary occupations at 18 per cent.

Table 42: Reasons for skills gaps by occupational group occupational group, Northern Ireland, 2008

(%)	All (2008)	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled trades	Personal services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine operatives	Elementary
Lack of experience or staff being recently recruited	70	58	60	73	67	61	59	73	61	64
Insufficient training and development for staff	46	51	32	46	48	34	49	39	51	44
Training programmes only partially completed	45	40	36	41	42	44	54	44	39	39
Inability of workforce to keep p with change	33	40	35	19	31	20	21	35	38	34
Recruitment problems	17	17	14	13	12	10	19	18	14	23
High staff turnover	10	8	5	8	7	5	8	9	8	18
<i>Un-weighted numbers</i>	1,186	298	71	120	328	176	107	299	115	292

Source: DELNI 2008, *The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2008*, page 58

7. Scotland– Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

This section provides an overview of the Sales workforce in Scotland. It draws on Skills in Scotland 2010, the report of the Scottish Employer Skills Survey 2010 (SESS 2010).

7.1 Vacancies, recruitment difficulties and Skill Shortage Vacancies (Scotland)

7.1.1 Recruitment difficulties by occupations (Scotland)

Table 43 shows the number and share of employees in each occupational group, and how this compares with the number and share of vacancies in each group.

The table reveals that Sales and Customer Service occupations represent 14 per cent of employment in Scotland, which is very similar to the shares in England and Wales (each 13 per cent). This is the second largest group after Professional occupations (19 per cent of employment), and about the same size as the administrative (13 per cent) and elementary (13 per cent) groups.

Sales and Customer service represents 16 per cent of vacancies, which is two percentage points larger than its share of employment.

Table 43: Employment and vacancies by occupation, Scotland, 2010

	No. of employees	No. of vacancies	share of employment	share of vacancies
<i>All occupations</i>	2,317,200	43,900	100%	100%
Managers and senior officials	247,000	1,300	11%	3%
Professionals	435,900	3,800	19%	9%
Associate professionals	189,400	4,700	8%	11%
Administrative staff	290,800	4,200	13%	10%
Skilled tradespeople	176,200	4,400	8%	10%
Personal service staff	199,100	5,800	9%	13%
Sales and customer service	317,400	7,000	14%	16%
Machine operatives	167,700	3,300	7%	8%
Elementary staff	293,800	7,100	13%	16%

Source: The Scottish Government (2011), *Skills in Scotland 2010 (Scottish Employer Skills Survey)*, p21

Table 44 shows the number of vacancies, hard to fill vacancies (HtFVs) and skill shortage vacancies (SSVs) in Scotland.

This indicates that Sales and Customer Service occupations have the lowest rate of HtFVs as a proportion of total vacancies (16 per cent). However, they also have the second highest rate of SSVs as a proportion of HtFVs – this means that the vacancies are hard to fill because of a skill shortage issue, and not for any other reason like unappealing conditions or remoteness.

7. Scotland– Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

Table 44: Overall distribution of vacancies and recruitment difficulties by occupation, Scotland, 2010

	No of vacancies	No. of HtfVs	No. of SSV	HtfVs as a % of vacancies	SSVs as a % of vacancies	SSVs as a % of HtfVs vacancies
All occupations	43,900	15,400	8,000	35%	18%	52%
Managers and senior officials	1,300	600	-	46%	28%	60%
Professionals	3,800	1,100	-	26%	9%	34%
Associate professionals	4,700	1,500	900	31%	19%	60%
Administrative	4,200	-	300	27%	8%	28%
Skilled trade people	4,400	-	-	61%	43%	71%
Personal service	5,800	2,500	-	43%	21%	48%
Sales and Customer Service	7,000	1,100	-	16%	10%	68%
Machine operatives	3,300	2,000	-	61%	39%	63%
Elementary	7,100	2,400	800	22%	11%	34%

- suppressed as statistically unreliable.

Source: The Scottish Government (2011), *Skills in Scotland 2010 (Scottish Employer Skills Survey)*, page 21

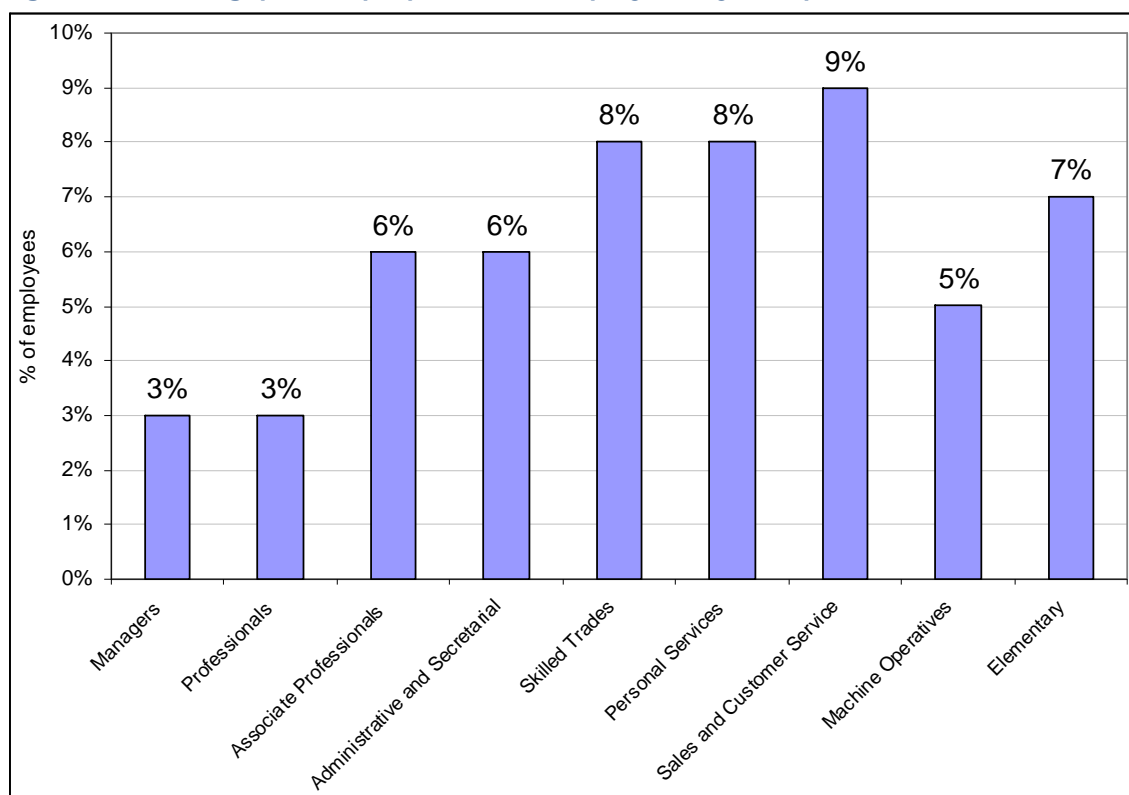
7. Scotland– Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

7.2 Skills gaps (Scotland)

7.2.1 Skill gaps by occupation (Scotland)

Figure 12 shows the proportion of employees that Scottish employers report as having skills gaps. This reveals that Sales and Customer Service occupations have the highest rate of skills gaps (9 per cent) of any occupational group. Interestingly, some of the high-skill occupations, such as managers and professionals, have the lowest skills gap rate (both 3 per cent), while low-skill occupations have higher percentages of skills gaps (elementary at 7 per cent, for example).

Figure 12: Skills gaps as a proportion of employees by occupation, Scotland, 2010



Source: *The Scottish Government (2011), Skills in Scotland 2010 (Scottish Employer Skills Survey), page 28*

8. Wales – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

This section provides an overview of the Sales workforce in Wales. It draws on the Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey. This unfortunately means that any changes that occurred as a result of the recession will not be captured. However, the results are broadly similar with the more recent survey in Scotland (2010), which suggests that the results are still acceptably applicable today. However, due to the different timeframes of the reports, any comparisons across nations should be treated with caution.

8.1 Vacancies, recruitment difficulties and Skill Shortage Vacancies (Wales)

8.1.1 Recruitment difficulties by occupation (Wales)

In 2005, HtfVs in Wales represented about one third (35 per cent) of all vacancies.⁵³

As Table 45 illustrates, Sales & Customer Service occupations accounted for 14 per cent of total employment in Wales, with a slightly smaller share of HtfVs (12 per cent), and an even lower share of SSVs (8 per cent).

Table 45: Recruitment difficulties by occupation, Wales, 2005

	% share of total employment	% share of hard-to-fill vacancies	Total hard-to-fill vacancies as % of employment	% share of skill shortage vacancies	Total skill shortage vacancies as % of employment
All occupations	99	99	-	99	-
Managers and senior officials	13	3	*	5	*
Professionals	14	6	1	8	*
Associate professionals	7	15	3	23	2
Administrative staff	11	5	1	4	*
Skilled trade people	8	18	3	26	2
Personal service	8	13	2	9	1
Sales and Customer Service staff	14	12	1	8	*
Machine operatives	12	9	1	10	*
Elementary staff	12	18	2	6	*

Note: some columns do not add up to 100 due to rounding. * less than 0.5%

Source: GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey, p40

8.1.2 Reasons for recruitment difficulties (Wales)

Table 46 shows the reasons for HtfVs by occupational group. The first three reasons (skills, qualifications and work experience) are considered the 'skill shortage' reasons. In other words, if one of these is the cause of an HtfV, then it is an SSV.

About a third of Sales and Customer Service HtfVs were due (in part or wholly) to "low number of applicants with required attitude, etc", which was higher than any other occupation (the next being skilled trades at 24 per cent), and the overall figure of 19 per cent across all occupations. Two skills-related categories (qualifications and work experience) were also much less frequently cited compared with the overall figure.

The other most-cited reasons for HtfVs in Sales and Customer Service occupations were:

⁵³GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership 2006, Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey, p41

8. Wales – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

- Lack of skills the organisation demands (19 per cent, compared with the overall figure of 28 per cent)
- Long hours/shift work (14 per cent, compared with 13 per cent overall)
- Low number of applicants generally (13 per cent, compared with 15 per cent overall)

Relative to the overall percentage, Sales and Customer service HtfVs were much less likely to be caused by wages lower than other firms (1 per cent compared with 9 per cent overall), location of firm/poor transport (3 per cent compared with 11 per cent overall) and not enough people interested in job type (11 per cent compared with 27 per cent overall).

Table 46: Reasons for HtfVs by occupation, Wales, 2005

	Total	Managers and senior officials	Professionals	Associate professionals	Administrative	Skilled trade	Personal service	Sales and customer service	Machine operatives	Elementary staff
<i>Unweighted</i>	1,543	**54	103	224	**90	258	176	195	230	208
<i>Weighted</i>	12,743	374	752	1,973	686	2,343	1,606	1,601	1,133	2,236
Lack of skills the organisation demands	28%	44%	42%	39%	13%	45%	15%	19%	36%	13%
Lack of qualifications	14%	11%	21%	27%	12%	23%	12%	1%	9%	5%
Lack of work experience	14%	21%	12%	17%	13%	26%	11%	9%	13%	7%
Low number of applicants with required attitude, etc	19%	9%	12%	11%	23%	24%	19%	32%	8%	19%
Not enough people interested in job type	27%	10%	25%	29%	22%	26%	28%	11%	29%	38%
Low number of applicants generally	15%	20%	11%	15%	8%	27%	10%	13%	6%	15%
Wages lower than other firms	9%	13%	15%	6%	8%	6%	12%	1%	18%	12%
Benefits trap/problem with benefits	3%	-	1%	-	2%	1%	3%	2%	1%	8%
Location of firm/poor transport	11%	13%	18%	12%	6%	12%	14%	3%	3%	17%
Unattractive/poor terms and conditions	4%	-	3%	2%	7%	2%	4%	7%	3%	5%
Poor career progression	1%	-	-	*	6%	*	4%	2%	1%	1%
Long hours/ shift work	13%	10%	*	5%	7%	7%	14%	14%	21%	25%
Competition from other employers	4%	6%	1%	5%	-	5%	3%	6%	4%	5%
Other	2%	16%	2%	1%	1%	*	5%	2%	2%	*
No particular reason	1%	-	-	-	5%	2%	-	-	1%	-
Don't know/not stated	5%	2%	-	2%	7%	6%	8%	6%	5%	5%

Small base (less than 100)

* less than 0.5% - denotes zero

**small base. *less than 0.5%. Multiple responses allowed.

Source: GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey

8. Wales – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

8.2 Skill shortages (Wales)

8.2.1 Skill shortages by occupations (Wales)

Table 47 lists the skills required by occupation where skill shortages exist. The most frequently mentioned skills relating to SSVs in Sales and Customer Service occupations are customer handling skills (67 per cent) and communication skills (66 per cent). These are much higher percentages than the figures across all occupations of 47 per cent and 43 per cent respectively.

Other skills mentioned the most in conjunction with Sales and Customer Service occupations are as follows, with the overall figure across all occupations also listed:

- Using numbers (36 per cent) (overall: 27 per cent)
- Problem solving skills (35 per cent) (overall: 38 per cent)
- Other technical and practical skills (21 per cent) (overall: 50 per cent)

Management skills, Welsh language skills, general IT user skills and IT professional skills were all raised for between 5 to 8 per cent of Sales and Customer Service SSV cases, but all were more frequently cited in the overall figure, so that Sales and Customer Service occupations are on average less likely to require those skills in SSVs.

Table 47: Skills required for skill shortage vacancies by occupation, Wales, 2005

Base: All occupations with SSVs followed up	Total	Professional	Associate professional	Skilled trades	Sales and customer service	Transport and machine operatives
Unweighted	671	**61	134	149	**67	103
Weighted	5,405	446	1,254	1,392	436	562
	%	%	%	%	%	%
General IT user skills	14	16	13	15	8	14
IT professional skills	13	20	17	10	7	4
Other technical and practical skills	50	31	52	70	21	74
Communication skills	43	13	49	39	66	39
Customer handling skills	47	12	58	41	67	40
Team working skills	36	6	42	37	20	44
Problem solving skills	38	19	48	45	35	44
Management skills	27	54	35	21	5	15
Using numbers	27	14	21	27	36	37
Literacy skills	31	11	30	34	19	43
Welsh language skills	11	3	9	18	7	5
Work experience (unspec)	4	6	6	3	1	-
Lack of qualifications	5	5	14	3	1	1
Others	3	5	5	-	15	-
Don't know/not stated/no answer	15	18	9	9	27	10

Notes: * less than 0.5%. ** small base (under 100). – denotes zero. Multiple responses allowed. Mentions of 3% or more. Managers & senior officials, Administrative & Secretarial, Personal Service and Elementary occupations not shown due to unweighted base sizes <50.

Source: GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey, question C8.

8. Wales – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

8.3 Skills gaps (Wales)

8.3.1 Skill gaps by occupation (Wales)

In Wales, skills gaps are defined as existing where employees are not fully proficient at their job.⁵⁴

Table 48 shows how skills gaps are distributed across occupational groups. Sales and Customer Service occupations have the highest proportion of employees with skills gaps (10 per cent), followed by machine operatives (8 per cent) and skilled trades occupations (7 per cent).

Sales and Customer Service occupations represent the largest share of employees (14 per cent, or about 1 in 7 employees) in Wales, similar to Professional occupations. However, about 1 in 4 (24 per cent) of employees with skills gaps are in Sales and Customer Service occupations, meaning that Sales and Customer Service occupations are overrepresented in the number of skills gaps.

Table 48: Skills gaps by occupation, Wales, 2005

	Total employees (000s)	Number of skills gaps (000s)	Occupation's share of employees	Occupation's share of skills gaps	Number of employees with skills gaps as a proportion of total employees
Managers and senior officials	139,653	4,798	13%	8%	3
Professionals	147,330	4,290	14%	7%	3
Associate professionals	75,004	3,141	7%	5%	4
Administrative staff	117,897	5,873	11%	9%	5
Skilled trade people	91,044	6,109	8%	10%	7
Personal service	90,916	5,591	8%	9%	6
Sales and customer service	155,427	15,431	14%	24%	10
Machine operatives	132,414	11,146	12%	17%	8
Elementary staff	134,109	7,426	12%	12%	6
Un-weighted base: 10,157					
Weighted 63:803					

Source: GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), *Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey*, p62

Future Skills Wales also reported on which skills were most lacking among employees with skills gaps. Given the rates of skills gaps for Sales and Customer Service as discussed above, it is surprising that only 3 per cent of establishments (prompted) mentioned Sales or marketing skills. Employers were much more likely to mention skills that were also frequently mentioned in relation to SSVs, such as problem solving skills (58 per cent), customer handling skills (57 per cent), other technical and practical skills (52 per cent), team working skills (49 per cent) and communication skills (49 per cent).⁵⁵ Likewise, when employers were asked about the 'technical and practical skills'

⁵⁴ GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), *Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey*, p54

⁵⁵ GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), *Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey*, p64

8. Wales – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

sought in connection with SSVs, only 1 per cent of establishments mentioned sales/retail skills.⁵⁶

This again emphasises the importance of soft skills as fundamental to occupational competence. If only specific Sales skills were required or valued in the Sales occupations, then the incidence of reported skills gaps for Sales and Customer Service occupations would be much lower.

Table 49 sheds more light on this. 52 per cent of employers raised 'other technical and practical skills' as an issue in skills gaps when asked to provide more details. The results are shown below. By occupational group, 15 per cent of Sales and Customer Service employees with other technical and practical skills gaps have them in sales/marketing, and another 14 per cent have gaps in customer service/handling. A further 13 per cent have gaps in product knowledge, which is a key requirement for Sales people.

The only other occupational group with reported sales/marketing skills gaps (as a subset of other technical and practical skills) was managers (7 per cent).

⁵⁶ GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), *Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey*, p53

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Table 49: Other technical and practical skills lacking by occupational group, Wales, 2005

(%)	Managers	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Administrative	Skilled trades	Personal services	Sales and Customer Service	Machine operatives	Elementary
Un-weighted base	293	261	230	204	602	326	825	821	478
Weighted base	1,627	1,571	1,497	1,354	3,320	2,640	5,107	4,852	2,906
Product knowledge	7	-	-	2	6	-	13	18	4
IT/computer skills	5	3	14	18	1	17	4	-	6
Technical procedures	1	7	3	2	1	15	4	-	1
Trade skills/ building/ electrical/ construction	-	1	-	-	26	1	-	-	1
Equipment handling/ training	2	9	11	-	3	3	4	63	11
Finance /account/ book keeping	13	6	11	16	-	-	1	-	-
Communication/ interpersonal	28	-	1	11	-	-	5	1	4
Further qualifications	-	1	6	2	3	18	-	-	-
Sales / marketing	7	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-
Customer service / handling	2	1	3	-	3	3	14	1	4
Job specific	3	8	4	2	1	-	6	1	3
Food/bar/hospitality	2	-	-	-	3	5	4	1	12
Training	-	8	11	-	1	2	7	3	1
Software / programming / databases	3	21	1	10	3	1	-	1	2
Care mechanic / repair skills	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	19	-
other	16	6	9	3	5	3	9	4	13
Don't know / no answer	13	4	22	11	17	13	9	12	18

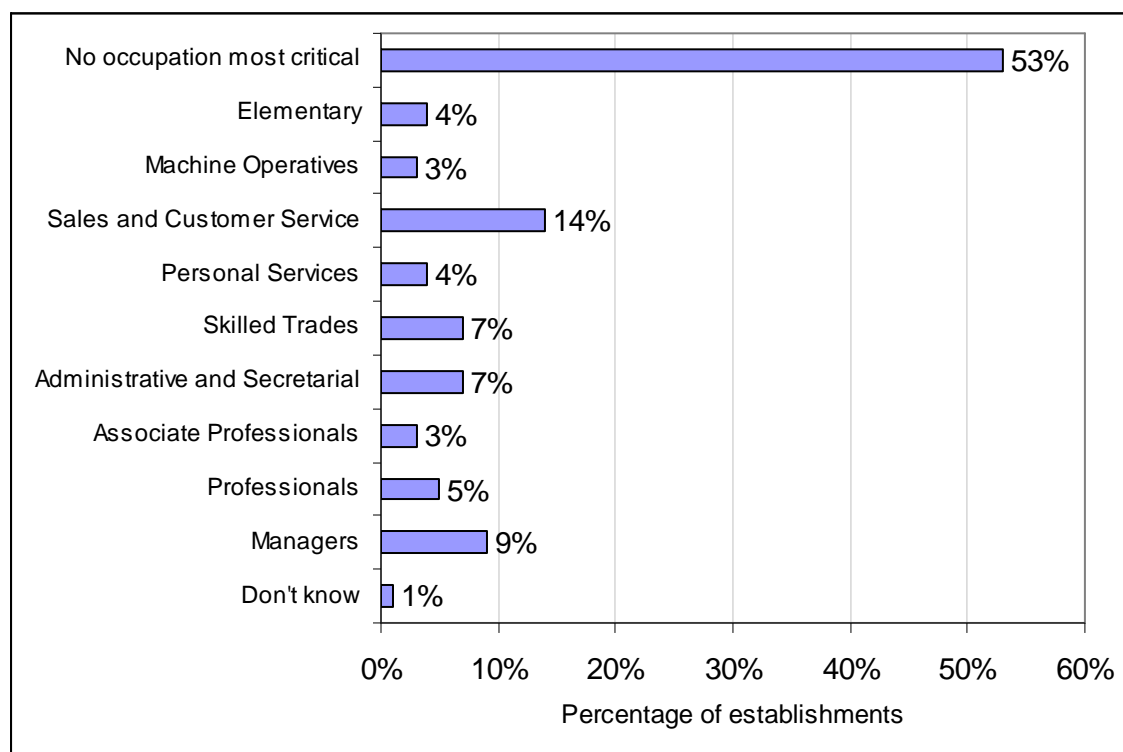
Base: all employees with other technical and practical skill gaps.

Source: GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey, page 70

8. Wales – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

Figure 13 illustrates which occupations with skills gaps employers thought the most critical in holding back business objectives. While over half of employers said that no occupation was more critical than others, 14 per cent thought that Sales and Customer Service occupations were the most critical. This rated the highest out of all the occupational groups, even above managers at 9 per cent.

Figure 13: Occupation with skills gap most critical in holding back business objectives, Wales, 2005



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ce: GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey, page 63

8. Wales – Vacancies, skill shortages and skills gaps

Only three per cent of employers with skills gaps amongst their employees raised actual Sales and marketing skills, as distinct from the occupations, after prompting. Table 50 shows in which industries different skills gaps are most common. This shows that sales/marketing skills were most common in the transport and communication sector.

Table 50: Most common types of skills gaps by sector, Wales, 2005

Type of skills gap	Most common in
Communication skills	Transport/communication, Production, Wholesale/Retail
Customer handling skills	Hotels/Catering, Wholesale/Retail
Team working	Hotels/Catering, Other Service, Production
Problem solving skills	Construction, Hotels/Catering
Technical and practical skills	Production, Other Services, Construction
General IT user skills	Public Admin/Education/Health, Banking/Insurance/Other Financial Services
Management skills	Production, Banking/Insurance/Other Financial, Hotel/Catering
Literacy	Public Admin/Education/Health, Construction
Using numbers	Hotels/Catering, Other Services
IT professional skills	Public Admin/Education/Health, Banking/Insurance/Other Financial Services
Welsh language skills	Public Admin/Education/Health, Hotels/Catering
Work experience	Public Admin/Education/Health, Banking/Insurance/Other Financial Services
Sales/marketing skills	Transport/Communication
Time management/keeping	Hotels/Catering
Motivation/behaviour	Hotels/Catering

Source: GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Future Skills Wales Partnership (2006), *Future Skills Wales 2005 Sector Skills Survey*, page 65

9. Sales and the UK economy

9.1 Occupational change and employment projections

9.1.1 Employment levels and projections, UK

UKCES' (2011) Working Futures 2010-2020 report provides detailed employment projections by industry and occupation⁵⁷. The following section draws on this report.

Table 51 lists past employment levels as well as projections to 2020 by occupation. This shows that employment in Sales and Customer Service occupations has risen between 1990 and 2010, but is expected to grow only slightly between 2010 and 2020.

Table 51: Employment levels and projections by occupation, UK, 1990 to 2020

Occupation (SOC2010)	Employment Levels (000s)				
	1990	2000	2010	2015	2020
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	2,284	2,540	3,016	3,279	3,560
2. Professional occupations	4,181	4,820	5,843	6,189	6,712
3. Associate professional and technical	3,050	3,561	3,926	4,138	4,476
4. Administrative and secretarial	4,437	4,078	3,698	3,466	3,312
5. Skilled trades occupations	4,736	3,767	3,526	3,389	3,295
6. Caring, leisure and other service	1,446	2,142	2,719	2,801	3,032
7. Sales and Customer Service	2,309	2,479	2,608	2,555	2,610
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	2,819	2,349	1,950	1,829	1,737
9. Elementary occupations	3,504	3,454	3,173	3,209	3,274
Total	28,768	29,192	30,458	30,855	32,008

Source: UKCES (2011), Working Futures 2010-2020, p81

Table 52 shows the past and projected employment share for each occupational group. This reveals that Sales and Customer Service employment as a share of total employment is very steady. It represented 8 per cent of total employment in 1990 and 2000, 9 per cent in 2010, and is expected to stay at 8 per cent between 2015 and 2020.

The report also indicated that part-time jobs in these occupations were expected to grow, while full time jobs would decline by about the same amount, so that there would be a larger share of part-time Sales and Customer Service jobs in the future.⁵⁸

Table 52: Employment share and projections by occupation, UK, 1990 to 2020

Occupation (SOC2010)	Employment Share (%)				
	1990	2000	2010	2015	2020
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	8%	9%	10%	11%	11%
2. Professional occupations	15%	17%	19%	20%	21%
3. Associate professional and technical	11%	12%	13%	13%	14%
4. Administrative and secretarial	15%	14%	12%	11%	10%
5. Skilled trades occupations	16%	13%	12%	11%	10%
6. Caring, leisure and other service	5%	7%	9%	9%	9%
7. Sales and Customer Service	8%	8%	9%	8%	8%
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	10%	8%	6%	6%	5%
9. Elementary occupations	12%	12%	10%	10%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: UKCES (2011), Working Futures 2010-2020, p81

⁵⁷ This report uses the SOC 2010, and so includes Sales Supervisors in its discussion of Sales occupations, but not Sales managers, directors or elementary sales occupations nor sales and related associate professionals, as these exist elsewhere in the SOC. For more information, see the workforce profile.

⁵⁸ UKCES 2011, Working Futures 2010-2020, p86

9. Sales and the UK economy

The working futures report also provides information at the sub-major group level, which enables Sales and Customer Service occupational employment to be examined separately.

Table 53 shows employment projections from 2010 to 2020 for Sales occupations and Customer Service occupations separately. This shows that these two sub-major groups have very distinct projections.

This reveals that employment in Sales occupations is projected to decrease by 113,000 jobs, while employment in Customer Service occupations is expected to increase by 115,000 jobs. This creates the net gain of 2,000 jobs as shown in Table 51, but this number masks this vast difference in the fortunes of the two groups.

Table 53: Employment projections, Sales and Customer Service occupations, 2010-2020, UK

SOC 2010 sub-major groups	Base year (000s)	2010 (% share)	Target year ('000s)	2020 (% share)	change (000s)	2010-2020 (%)	Components of change			
							scale effect		Occupation effect	
							000s	%	000s	%
71 Sales occupations	1991	6.5	1878	5.9	-113	-5.7	101	5.1	-207	-10.4
72 Customer service occupations	617	2.0	732	2.3	115	18.6	31	5.1	75	12.2
All occupations	30,458	100	32,008	100	1550	5.1				

Source: UKCES (2011), *Working Futures 2010-2020*, p104

The report indicates that Sales and Customer Service employment is dominated by the types of occupations like Sales assistants and retail checkout operators for which demand is likely to fall, because of greater concentration of businesses, competition from the internet and technology (e.g. automated checkout), pressures to reduce costs⁵⁹ and restructuring of retail and distribution sectors⁶⁰. However, the demand for more specialist Sales occupations is expected to increase⁶¹.

Additionally, retail Sales are expected to experience weak growth by "historical standards".⁶² While employment in Sales occupations is not expected to increase, growth in private sector services has meant that there are new jobs in Sales occupations within distribution.⁶³

⁵⁹ UKCES 2011, *Working Futures 2010-2020*, p96

⁶⁰ UKCES 2011, *Working Futures 2010-2020*, p xvii

⁶¹ UKCES 2011, *Working Futures 2010-2020*, p96

⁶² UKCES 2011, *Working Futures 2010-2020*, p50

⁶³ UKCES 2011, *Working Futures 2010-2020*, p77

10. The way forward

This report discussed the workforce profile, skills drivers and skills shortages and gaps for Sales occupations.

Between 2010 and 2020, Sales occupations are expected to decline by almost 6 per cent (113,000 jobs).

For future Sales jobs, a focus on web-based Sales and customer interaction will lead to increasing demand for IT skills and an emphasis on building relationships. This will mean an increased focus on customer service. Customer Service and Sales occupations represent a disproportionate amount of employees with skills gaps. The challenge will be for employers to address existing gaps in soft skills, including customer handling, while addressing current and future skills needs such as IT.

This will mostly concern the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector, where the majority of Sales occupations fall. However, Sales is a function of all business, and so all organisations, including those without dedicated Sales people, will have to address these skill challenges.

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12. Appendix

Appendix 1: Sector Skills Council names, SSC descriptions and SIC definition

SSC name	SSC description	SIC definition
Asset Skills	Property, housing, cleaning services, parking and facilities management	70, 74.7
Cogent	Bioscience, Chemical, nuclear, oil and gas, petroleum and polymer industries Sector Coverage: Bioscience, Chemical, nuclear, oil and gas, petroleum and polymer industries	11, 23-25 (exc. 24.3, 24.64, 24.7, 25.11, 25.12) 50.5
Construction Skills	Construction	45.1, 45.2, 45.32, 45.34, 45.4, 45.5, 74.2
Creative and Cultural Skills	Craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, visual and performing arts.	22.1, 22.31, 36.22, 36.3, 74.4, 92.31, 92.32, 92, 34, 92.52
Energy and Utility Skills	Electricity, gas, waste management and water industries	37, 40.1, 40.2, 41, 60.3, 90.01-90.02
E-skills UK	Information technology and telecommunications	22.33, 64.2, 72
Financial Skills Partnership	Financial services, finance and accounting sectors	65-67
GoSkills⁶⁴	Passenger transport	60.1, 60.21, 60.22, 60.23, 61.1, 61.2, 63.21, 63.22, 63.23, 80.41
Government Skills	Central government	75.1 75.21 75.22, 75.3
SEMTA	Science, engineering and manufacturing technologies (including Composites)	25.11, 25.12, 27-35, 51.52, 51.57, 73.10
IMI	The retail motor industry	50.1-50.4, 71.1
Improve Ltd	Food and drink manufacturing and processing	15 (exc 15.92 & 15.11/3), 51.38
Lantra	Environmental and land-based industries	1, 2, 5.02, 201, 51.88, 85.2, 92.53
Lifelong Learning UK⁶⁵	Community learning and development, further education, higher education, libraries, archives and information services, and work based learning	80.21, 80.22, 80.3, 80.42, 92.51
People 1st	Hospitality, leisure, passenger transport, travel and tourism	55.1, 55.21, 55.23, 55.3-55.5, 63.3, 92.71, 92.33
Proskills UK	Process and manufacturing sector	10,12-14, 20.4, 20.51, 21.1, 21.2, 22.2, 24.3, 26 (exc. 26.82/2), 36.1
Skills Active	Active Leisure, Learning and Well-Being	55.22, 92.6
Skillsfast –UK⁶⁶	Clothing, footwear and textiles industry	15.11/3, 17-19, 24.7, 51.16, 51.24, 51.41, 51.42, 52.71, 93.01
Skillset	Broadcast, film, video, interactive media, photo imaging, publishing and advertising. Fashion and Textiles (from 1 April 2010).	22.11-22.13, 22.15, 22.32, 24.64, 74.81, 92.1, 92.2, 92.4
Skillsmart Retail	Retail	52.1-52.6
Skills for Care & Development	Early years, children and young people's services, and social work and social care for adults and children	85.3
Skills for Health	The health sector across the UK	85.1
Skills for Justice	Community safety; courts, tribunals and prosecution; custodial care; fire and rescue; forensic science; law enforcement; offender management and support; policing; victim, survivor and witness support; youth justice and the children's workforce. Legal services joined the footprint in 2010/11.	75.23, 75.24
Skills for Logistics	Freight logistics industry and Wholesale	51 (exc. 51.16, 51.24, 51.38, 51.41, 51.42, 51.52, 51.57, 51.88), 60.24, 62.1, 62.2, 63.1, 63.4, 64.1
Summit Skills	Building services, engineering	45.31, 45.33, 52.72
Non-SSC employers	All sectors not covered by an SSC at this point in time and are spread across manufacturing and service sectors.	All other SICs

Source: UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009, page 330-334

⁶⁴ Formally merged with People 1st on 4 July 2011

⁶⁵ Lifelong Learning UK ceased to operate as a Sector Skills Council on 31 March 2011.

Responsibility for the majority of the LLUK footprint transferred to LSIS on the 1 April 2011.

⁶⁶ Was merged with Skillset on 1 April 2011