



North East

**Data Hub**

# Employment and skills needs of the offshore wind, tourism, and health and social care sectors in the North East LEP area

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# Introduction

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In 2020, the North East LEP commissioned Ortus to explore the employment and skills needs within three key North East sectors: offshore wind, tourism and health and social care. For the latter, the focus was on digital skills.

This work will support the North East Skills Advisory Panel in its task of ensuring that skills provision in the region reflects and responds to employment needs. The work is part of a research programme to develop methodologies that identify future skills requirements in the North East.

The project included a range of complementary methodologies, including a literature review, secondary analysis of relevant datasets and an employer survey in each sector. There was also in-depth consultation with a small number of employers to explore key issues in more detail. It is important to note that the research was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the methodology was adapted in response.



# Offshore wind

## Business base

**570**

North East based businesses  
(1% of all businesses in the economy)  
within the narrow Energy definition

**2,095**

within the broad Energy definition (4%),  
where energy is one of several sectors within  
which goods or services can be categorised

The vast majority of these businesses employ

**fewer than 10 people**

**8,000  
employed**

in the narrowly defined Energy  
sector in the North East LEP area  
(3.6% of the GB total) in 2019.

**20,000  
employed**

in the broadly defined Energy sector

## Skills shortages and gaps

Lack of applicants with required skills, experience and qualifications most cited reasons for skills shortages.

Concerns around the future demand may give rise to future skills shortages across a wide range of roles

**For hard to fill vacancies, skills that were proving difficult to find:**



Complex problem solving



Basic numerical skills



Complex numerical or statistical skills or understanding



Manual dexterity

## Workforce development

Nearly all employers were committed to training staff, including off-the-job and on-the-job training

**Barriers to providing more training included:**



Cost of training or lack of funds



Difficulties finding the time to arrange



Staff motivation

**60%**

had arranged training towards a nationally recognised qualification

## Recruitment and retention

**Hard to fill vacancies included:**



physical scientists



electrical engineers



other engineering professionals



programmers and software development professionals



sheet metal workers



human resources administrators

**Recruitment difficulties included:**



a low number of applicants generally



too few people being interested in the type of work



competition from other employers



In very specialised areas of work, especially in research and development, recruiting within a very competitive global labour market

Employers generally didn't attribute recruitment challenges to skills shortages

## Future skills needs

**In the next three years, employers anticipate requiring the following skills:**



Advanced or specialist IT skills



Specialist design skills relating to offshore wind technology



Complex numerical or statistical skills or understanding



Complex problem solving

# Tourism

## Business base

**6,445**

enterprises operating in the Tourism sector in the North East LEP area in March 2020, based on the definition developed by the UN World Tourism Organisation

**71%**

were in the food and beverage serving subsector, mostly comprising restaurants, cafés, public houses, take-away food shops and mobile food stands

Enterprises in the North East Tourism sector are more likely to be employing 10 to 49 people than in all North East sectors combined (19% compared with 10%).

**93,000**

are employed in Tourism, accounting for 11% of total employment (2019).

A large proportion of the Tourism workforce is employed in roles where staff behaviours rather than high technical competence make the crucial difference to the customer experience. These roles include bar staff, waiters and waitresses, and kitchen porters.

Tourism is more reliant on part-time employment than the North East LEP economy as a whole:

**60%**

of Tourism employment is in part-time positions, compared with 34% for all sectors.




The Tourism workforce is younger than the average across other sectors.

**32%**

of Tourism workers are aged 16 to 24.






## Recruitment and retention

A range of occupations were identified, most commonly

-  chefs, kitchen and catering assistants
-  receptionists
-  bar staff

Competition from other employers, and staff not wanting to make a long-term commitment to a job were most commonly cited as the drivers of retention challenges.

**Recruitment difficulties were attributed to:**

-  the possible impacts of leaving the EU
-  a demographic downturn in the number of young, people particularly in rural areas
-  shift working or unsociable hours,
-  competition from other employers
-  poor terms and conditions

## Workforce development

**50%** of respondents had arranged off-the-job training





**71%** had arranged on-the-job training



Basic induction and health and safety or first aid training were most common type of training

## Future skills needs

**In the next three years, employers anticipate requiring the following skills:**

-  Computer literacy and basic IT skills
-  Finance and marketing skills (including use of social media and e-commerce)
-  Customer handling skills
-  Other personal and interpersonal skills


## Skills shortages and gaps

For hard-to-fill vacancies, applicants lacked the required skills or experience, specifically in occupations such as taxi drivers, restaurant supervisors and leisure and theme park attendants.

**A range of personal and interpersonal skills that were lacking among applicants for hard-to-fill vacancies, including:**

- weaknesses in customer handling skills
- managing and motivating other staff
- managing their own feelings, or the feelings of others
- half of tourism employers interviewed in the autumn said that COVID had impacted on skills needs

**Other identified skills gaps were present among a wide range of occupations including:**

-  Bar staff, chefs, kitchen and catering assistants and waiters and waitresses, receptionists, housekeepers and related occupations
-  sales and retail assistants
-  communication operators (specifically, taxi dispatchers)
-  fitness instructors
-  programmers and software development professionals

# Health and Social Care – Digital skills

## Business base

**1,165** enterprises operating in the Health sector in March 2020.

**1,035** enterprises operating in Social Care.

**125,000 employed** in the Health and Social Care sector in 2019. **75,000** people working in Health and **50,000** in Social Care.

**15%** of all employment in the North East LEP area

### The main occupations include:

**Caring Personal Services** **39,700 employees** (31% of the sector)

**Nursing and Midwifery Professionals** **21,500 employees** (17%)

**Health Professionals** **12,800 employees** (10%)

**39%** of Health and Social Care employees hold a degree or equivalent.

**32%** of Health and Social Care employment is in part-time positions, compared with 26% for all sectors.







78% with of Health and Social care workers are female, compared to 47% in all sectors of the North East economy

Technological advances and digitisation of services mean that jobs and tasks within Health and Social Care are changing and the skills of the current and future workforce will need to change in response.

## Digital skills shortages and gaps

Physiotherapists, care workers and home carers were cited as difficult role to fill because of a shortage of applicants with the required digital skills, experience or qualifications.

**Within the social care sector, a range of digital skills that were lacking amongst applicants for hard-to-fill vacancies included:**

-  Using care planning software
-  Using digital medication management software
-  Using remote monitoring systems
-  Using clinical software or systems
-  Using and maximising the functionality of the NHS Electronic Staff record
-  Providing IT support.

**1/3** of health sector respondents noted they had one or more members of staff who were not fully proficient in the digital skills they needed to do their jobs.

Health related occupations where digital skills gaps were identified include practice managers, optometrists, medical and dental technicians, receptionists, etc.

Social care occupations where digital skills gaps were identified include care workers, nurses, nursery nurses and assistants, social services managements.

Gaps were most attributed to staff not receiving appropriate training and the introduction of new technology.

Both sectors were taking steps to address these gaps through training and implementing mentoring schemes for example.

62% of health and social care employers interviewed in the autumn said that COVID had impacted on digital skills needs

## Recruitment and retention



A major challenge facing the sector is an ageing workforce; in the North East, over half of the workforce is aged over 45 and a quarter aged over 55. Two thirds (67%) of the new recruits required by the sector are needed to replace those leaving the workforce.



Vacancies were proving difficult to fill due to applicants lacking the digital skills, qualifications or experience required.

## Workforce development

**30%** of respondents had arranged or funded off-the-job training in the use of digital training

**50%** had arranged on-to-job training or informal training in use of digital technology.

### In Health, the focus of training has been on:

- Use of email programmes and other basic software systems
- Use of clinical software system

### In social care, the focus of training has been on:

- Basic software systems

## Future skills needs

In Health, the skills needed are likely to be related to the use of clinical software and systems, whilst in Social Care, the focus will be on basic software systems.

Technological developments, including the widespread use of digital tools and intelligent devices, have significant implications for the roles and functions of the Health and Social Care workforce.