Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Skills Advisory Panel: Skills for Growth Survey

Annex 1: Full Survey Results

September 2022

Metro —— Dynamics

Contents

Introduction

- Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP's Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) has commissioned this piece of business research to provide an up-to-date evidence base on the key skills needs of businesses in the area. From February to July 2022, Metro Dynamics and IBP Strategy and Research worked together to conduct a survey of the local business base and analyse the results.

- This Annex to the full report sets out and visualises the findings of the survey by question.

- The findings in the following slides are based on 780 survey responses.

- The table on slide 7 shows the breakdown of the 780 responses by local authority area and priority sector. Against targets set for priority sector responses, some sectors have exceeded targets, with more emphasis being placed now on reaching other priority sectors.

- We have also supplemented the survey with deep dive conversations with businesses and sector groups.

A note on sample size

- A total of 780 businesses were surveyed, respondents were not obliged to answer each question so for a number of questions the number of respondents was slightly below 780. The number of respondents for each question is included with each visualisation.

- For questions where respondents chose from a set of options there was no limit on the number that could be selected. As such the number of responses in these cases often sum to more than the total.

- We should be cautious in drawing strong conclusions about geographic differences as these may be driven by the sector make up the sample across the localities.

Respondent characteristics

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Survey Sample

Of the priority sectors, the largest in the survey sample is Engineering/Manufacturing, which accounts for 25% of the total responses. The businesses surveyed were mainly small and medium in size: 72% had 10 or fewer employees.

Q1.4: What is your main industry / sector?

- Other — 42% (326)
- Engineering / manufacturing — 25% (194)
- Construction — 13% (104)
- Health and social care — 9% (71)
- Logistics — 6% (46)
- Digital — 5% (39)

%
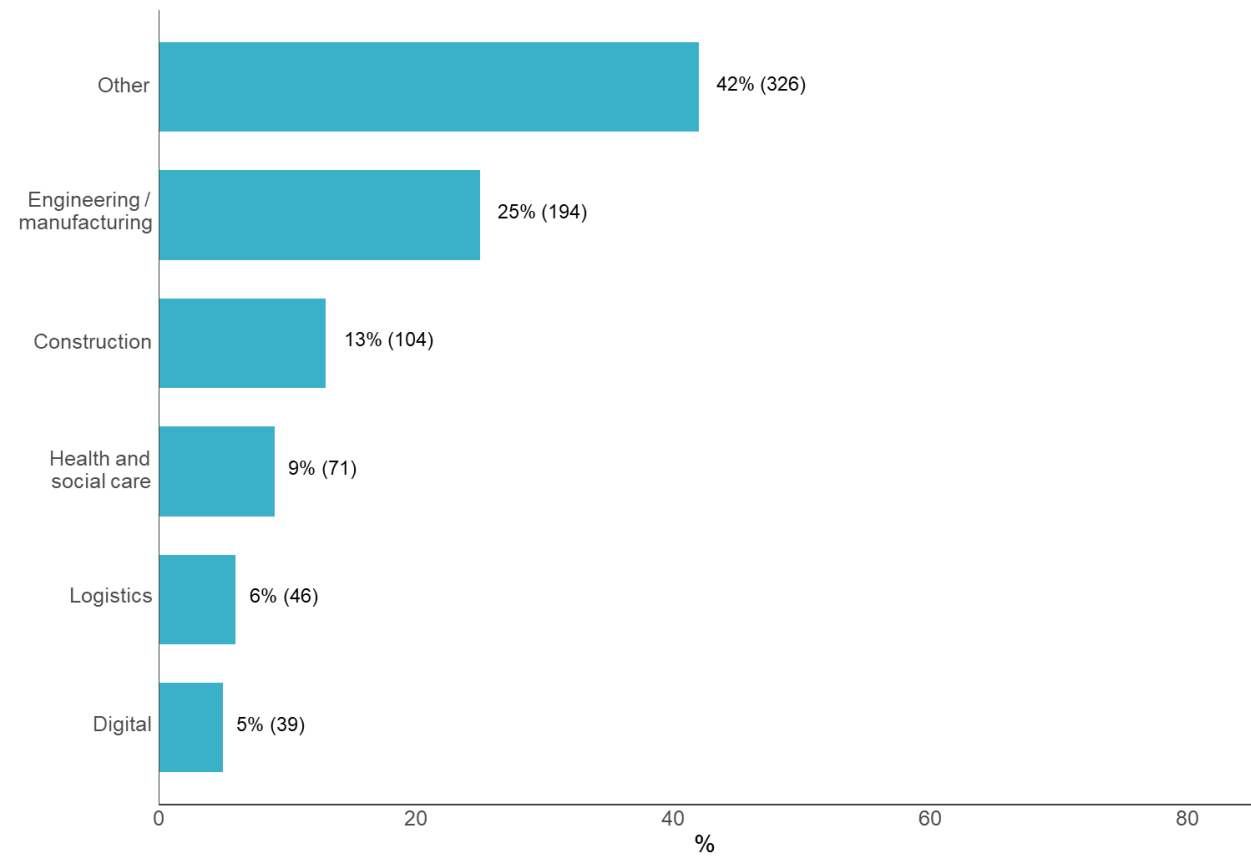
% of total, n = 780

Firm size by employees

Number of repondents

- 0-5 — 53% (416)
- 6-10 — 19% (150)
- 11-15 — 8% (64)
- 16-25 — 7% (53)
- 26-50 — 7% (56)
- 51-100 — 3% (25)
- 101-250 — 1% (9)
- 250+ — 1% (7)
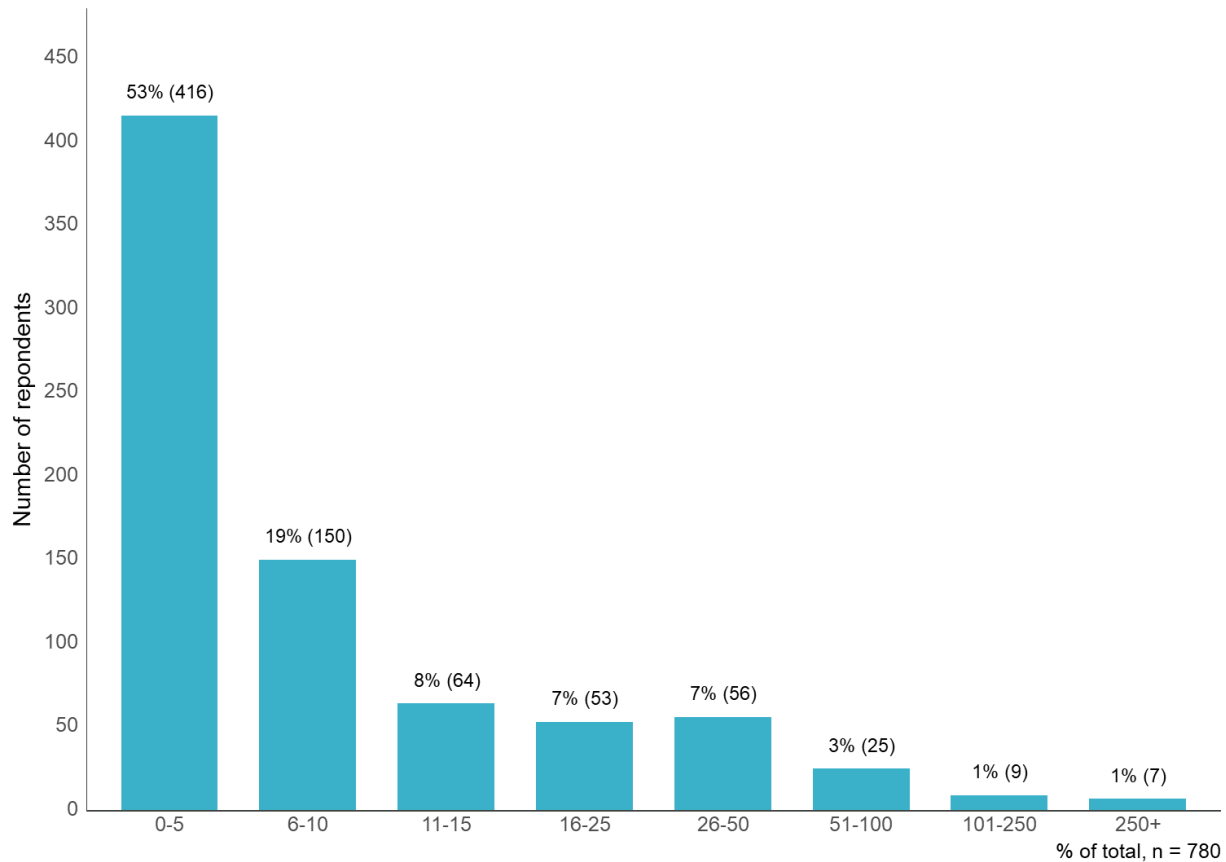
% of total, n = 780

Survey Sample

The below table summarises the geographic and sectoral split of the businesses sampled and provides the % of the total area business count for each locality as a point of reference.

	Construction	Digital	Engineering / manufacturing	Health and social care	Logistics	Other	Total	% of total business count	% of survey sample
Cannock Chase	12	3	26	8	5	19	73	9%	9%
East Staffordshire	13	4	27	5	6	31	86	12%	11%
Lichfield	3	2	9	7	0	30	51	12%	7%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	3	2	14	3	2	23	47	9%	6%
South Staffordshire	3	3	4	3	1	15	29	11%	4%
Stafford	13	5	26	10	7	49	110	14%	14%
Staffordshire Moorlands	6	2	8	5	0	23	44	11%	6%
Stoke-on-Trent	32	11	55	22	14	80	214	16%	27%
Tamworth	5	0	11	3	7	24	50	6%	6%
Somewhere else	11	6	11	5	4	29	66	-	8%
Not answered	3	1	3	0	0	3	10	-	1%
Total	104	39	194	71	46	326	**780**		100%

Survey Sample: Exporting

The majority of businesses surveyed (78%) operate only in the UK. The engineering and Manufacturing sector has the highest proportion of firms who export, with 34% doing so.

Q1.9: Does your business export?

78% (587)

22% (170)

Q1.9
No, we only operate in the UK
Yes

% of total, n = 757

Q1.9: Does your business export?

66% (127)
72% (33)
74% (29)
75% (52)
81% (255)
93% (91)

34% (65)
28% (13)
26% (10)
25% (17)
19% (58)
7% (7)

Engineering / manufacturing | Logistics | Digital | Health and social care | Other | Construction

Q1.9
No, we only operate in the UK
Yes

% of sector, n = 757
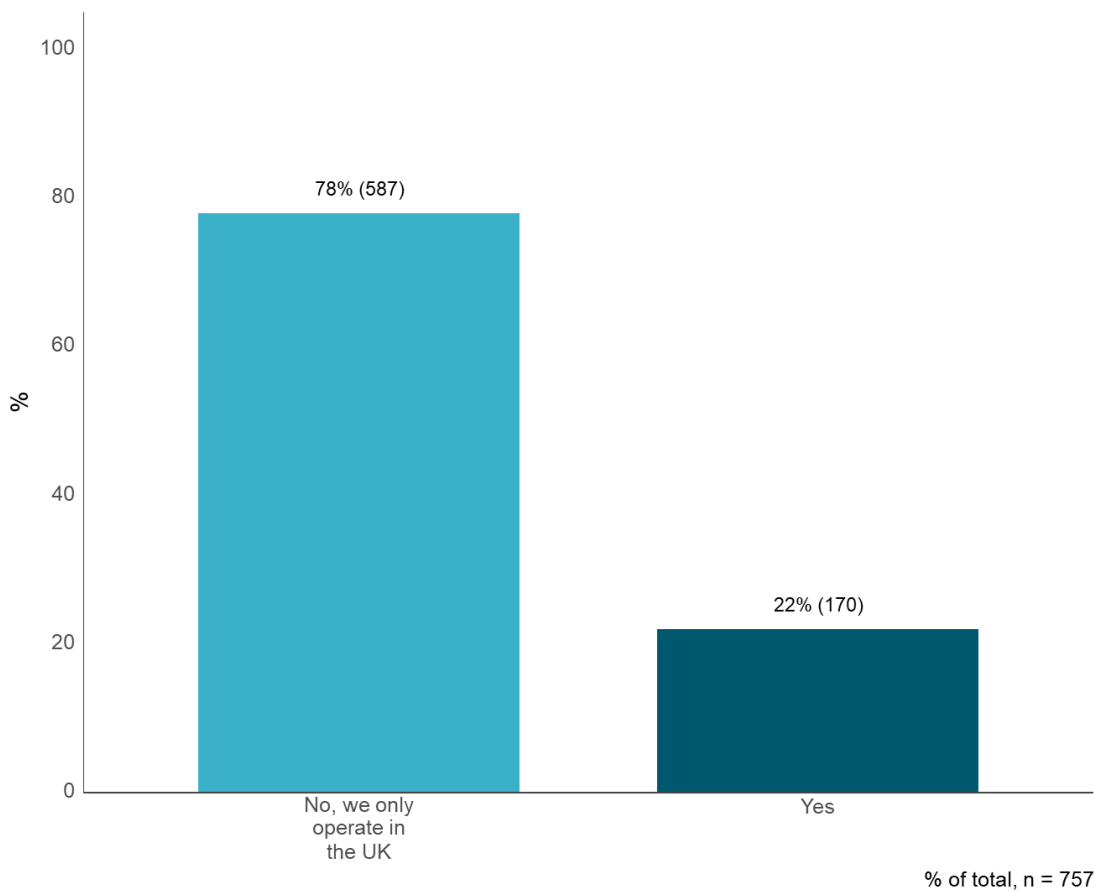
Survey Sample: Exporting

Q1.9: Does your business export?
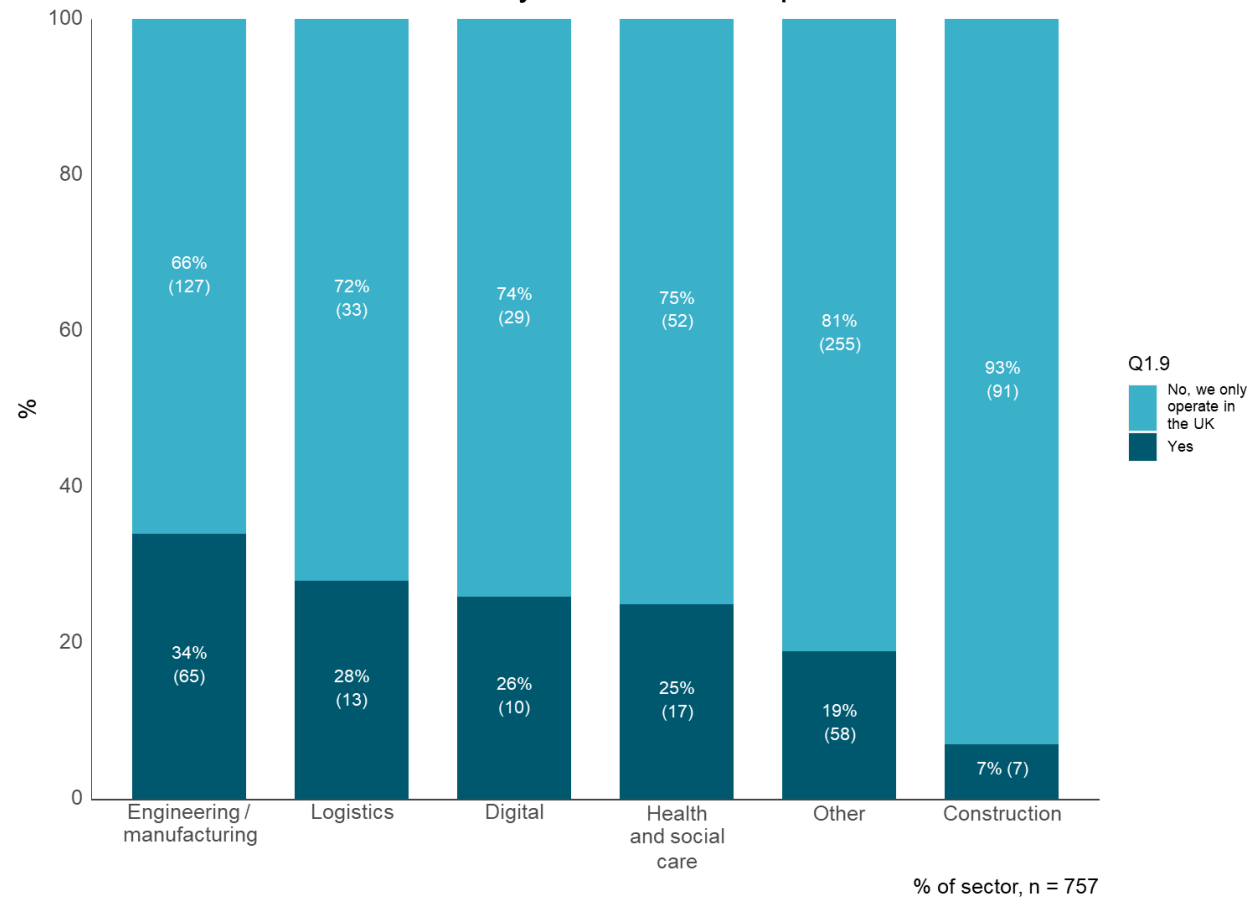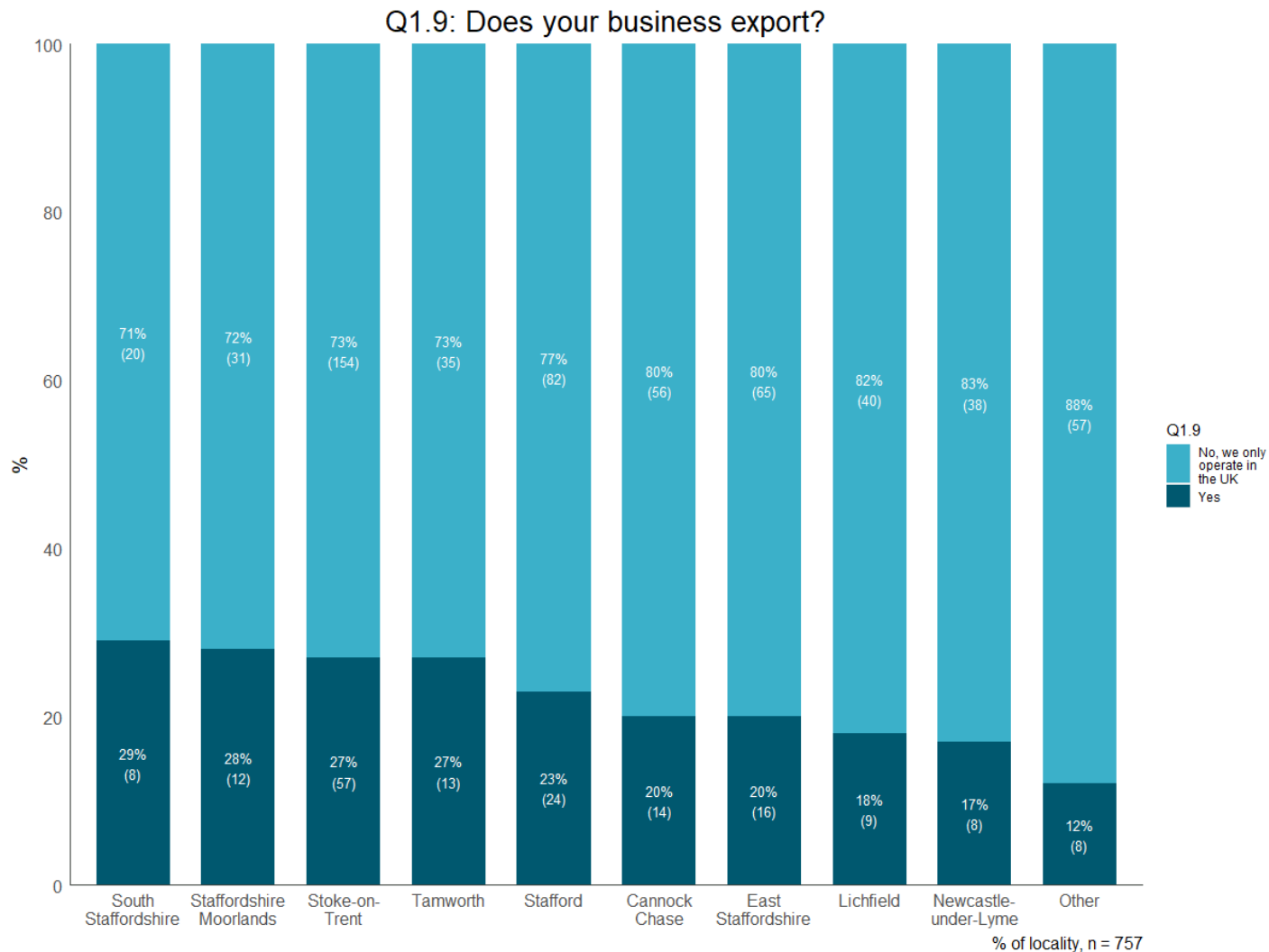
The highest proportion of exporting businesses is found in South Staffordshire, where 29% of businesses export, and the Staffordshire Moorlands (with 28%).

The largest number of exporters are found in Stoke-on-Trent, where there are 57 firms (27% of the total sample).

% of locality, n = 757

Survey Sample: Turnover

Q1.11 What was the approximate annual turnover for your Stoke-on-Trent and or Staffordshire locations most recent financial year?

% of total, n = 780, NA refers to businesses who declined to answer
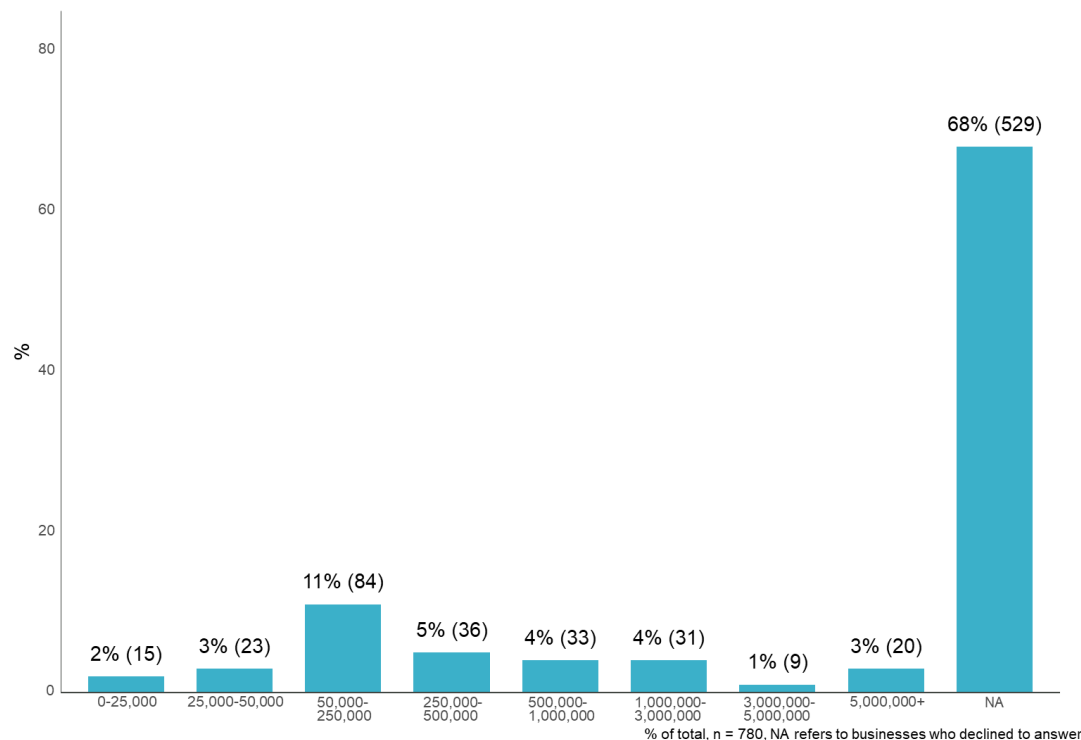
The majority of businesses did not disclose their approximate turnover for the last year.

Among those that did respond, the modal response of £50,000-£250,000 stands out and 63% of those who responded had a turnover below £500,000.

Survey Sample: Business Age and Aspirations

The survey respondents are well established businesses, 81% have been trading in the area for more than 10 years and just 2% have been trading there for less than 2 years.
Close to half of respondents are planning to maintain their current size, with 43% planning for some level of growth.

Q1.12 How long has your business been trading in Stoke-on-Trent / Staffordshire?

Response
- Between 2 and 5 years
- Between 5 and 10 years
- More than 10 years
- Up to 2 years
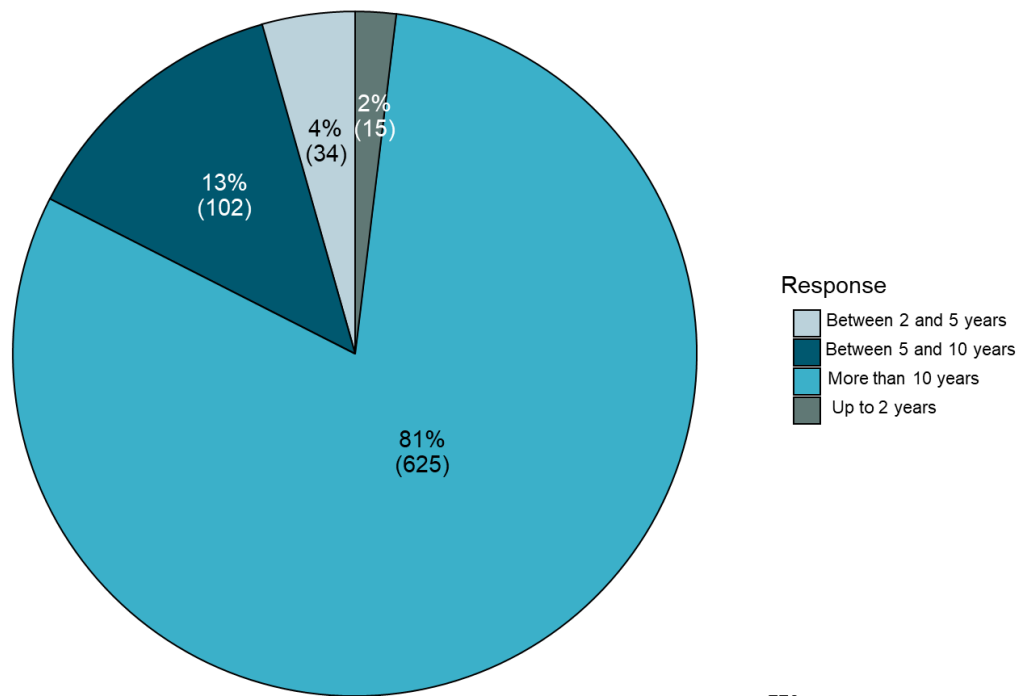
n = 776

Q1.13 What are the future growth aspirations for the business?
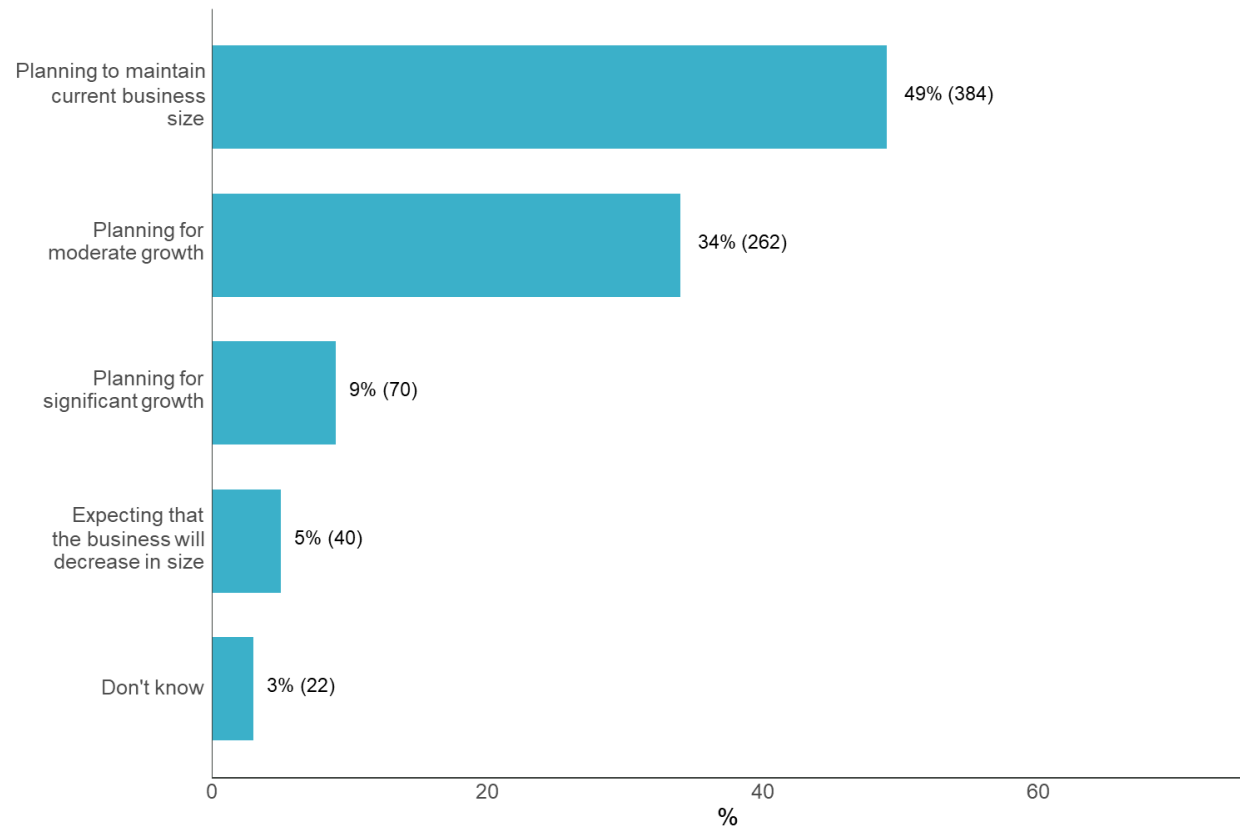
% of total, n = 778

Survey Sample: Business Priorities

Q1.14 Which of the following are priorities for your business?

Priority	% (count)
To increase revenue and profitability	80% (622)
To provide better customer service	48% (375)
To focus on upskilling your team	40% (309)
To invest in innovation	32% (248)
To make better use of technologies and turn more operations digital	22% (175)
To increase the social value of our work	21% (160)
To increase the percentage of sales made with new products / product features	21% (165)
To achieve carbon neutrality in business operations	18% (138)
Another priority	8% (61)
To expand into new international markets	5% (41)

%

% of total, n = 780

The main priority for the businesses is to increase revenue and profitability, with 80% selecting this option.

Businesses are also focused on improving customer service and upskilling their teams.

Carbon neutrality is a priority for 18% of the survey respondents.

Recruitment and skills shortages

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Recent Recruitment

Less than half of respondents had recruited in the last 12 months.
Of the priority sectors, the highest rate of recruitment was in the Health and Social Care sector (at 73%) and the lowest in the Construction sector, where 42% recruited.

Q2.1a: Have you recruited in the last 12 months?

% of total, n = 780

Q2.1a
- No
- Yes

Q2.1a: Have you recruited in the last 12 months?

% of sector, n = 780
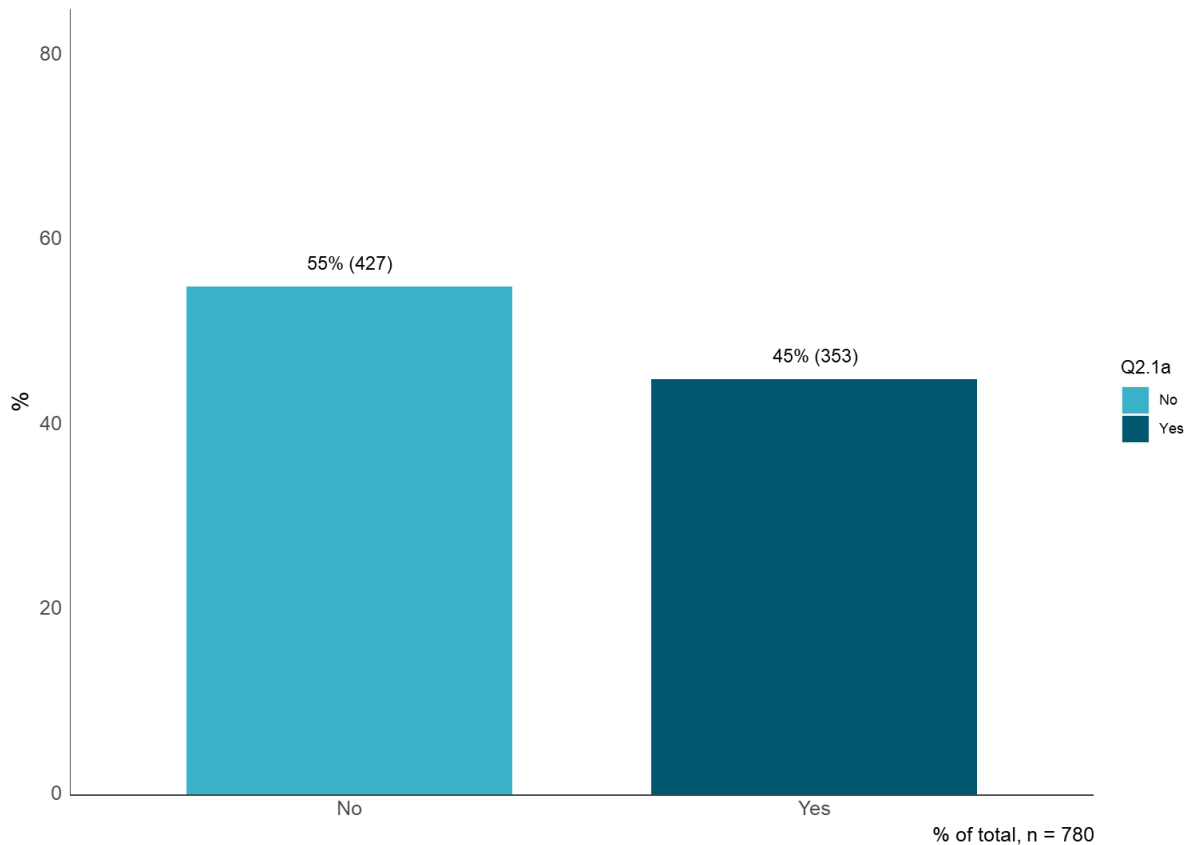
Q2.1a
- No
- Yes

Recent Recruitment

Q2.1a: Have you recruited in the last 12 months?
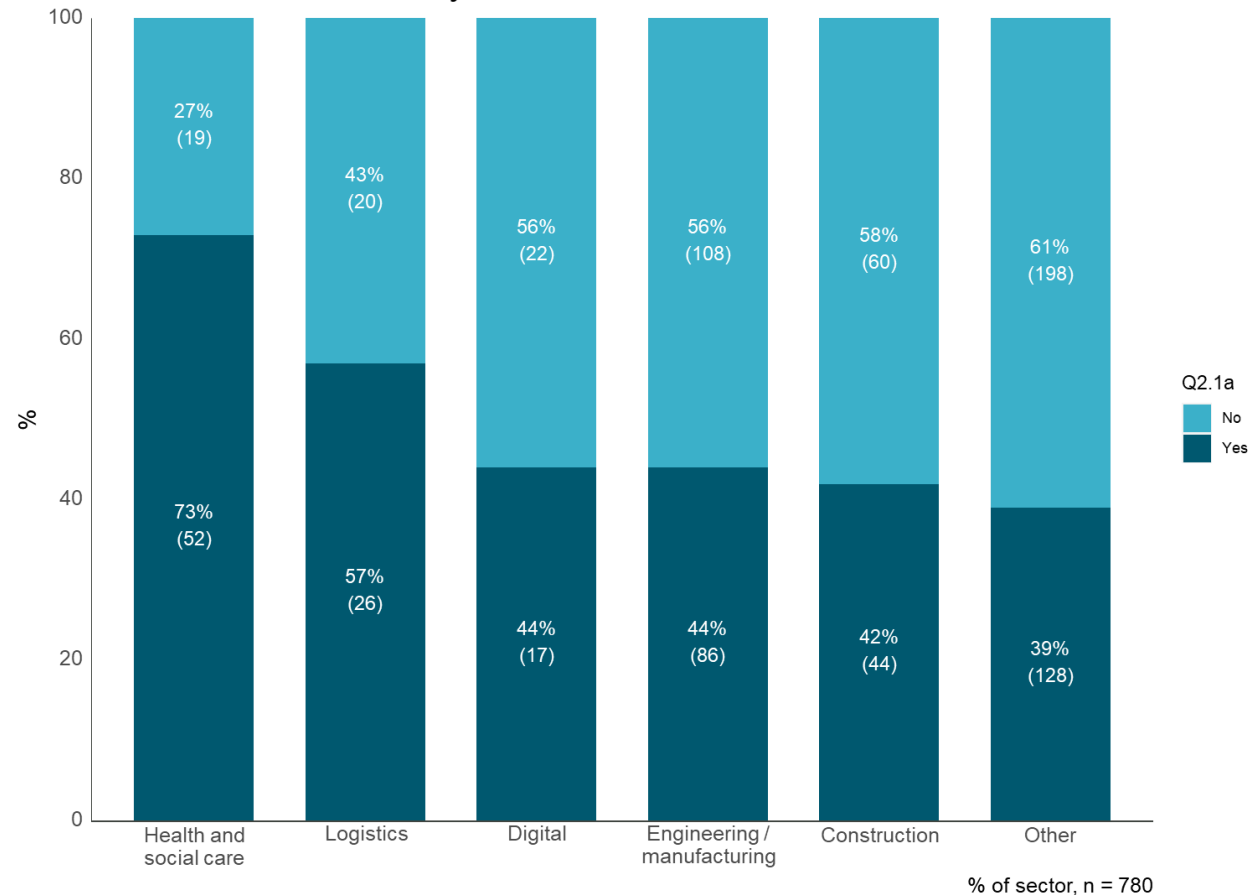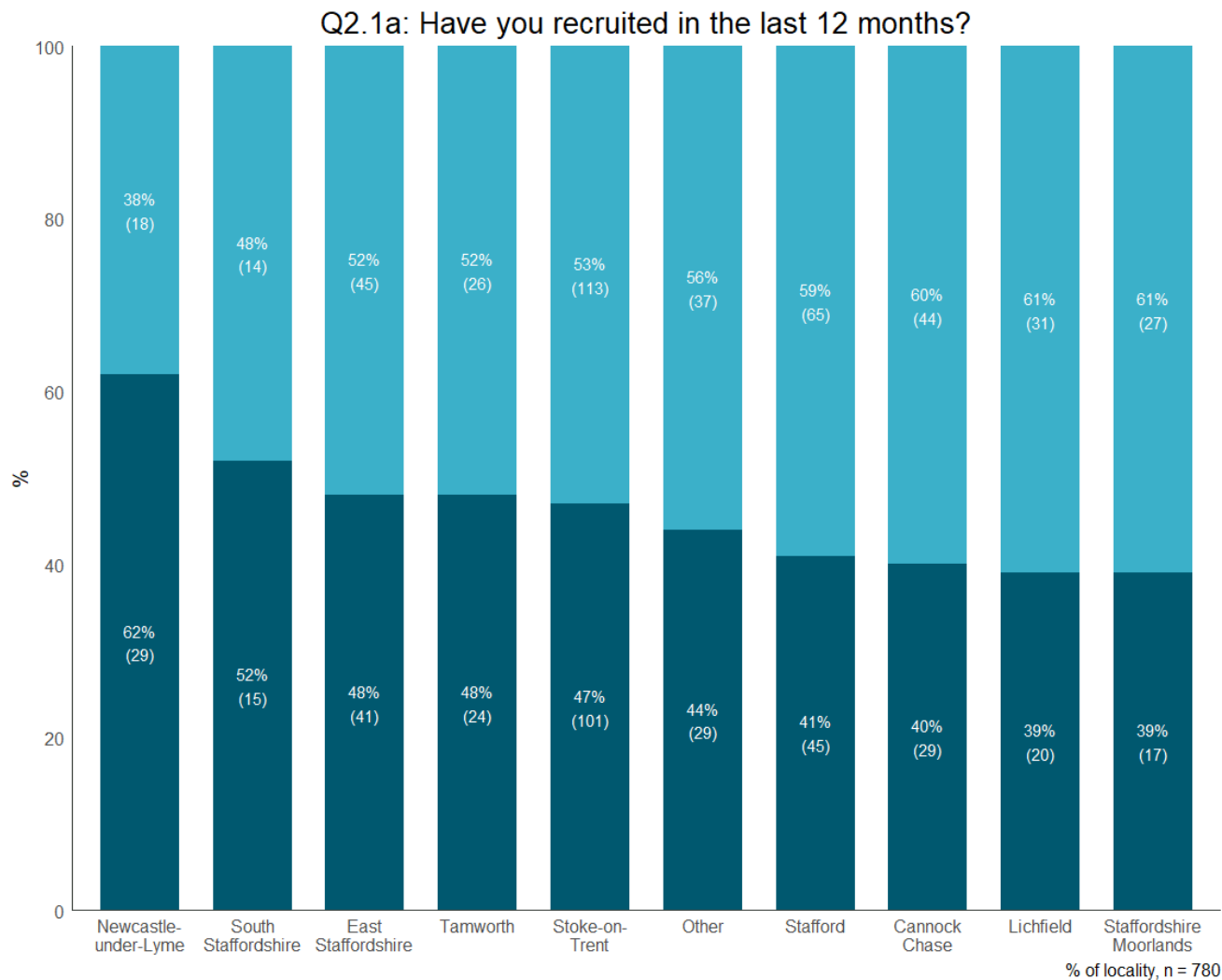
Looking at recruitment by area we see that Newcastle-under-Lyme has the highest percentage of firms who had recruited in the last year (62%).

Lichfield and Staffordshire Moorlands had the lowest percentage of firms who had recruited, each at 39%.

% of locality, n = 780

Future Recruitment Plans

Of the businesses who had not recruited, just 19% are looking to recruit in the next 12 months. The digital sector has the highest percentage of firms looking to recruit at 36% while logistics are the least likely to be planning to recruit.

Q2.1c: If no, are you looking to recruit in the next 12 months?

% of businesses who have not recruited, n = 427
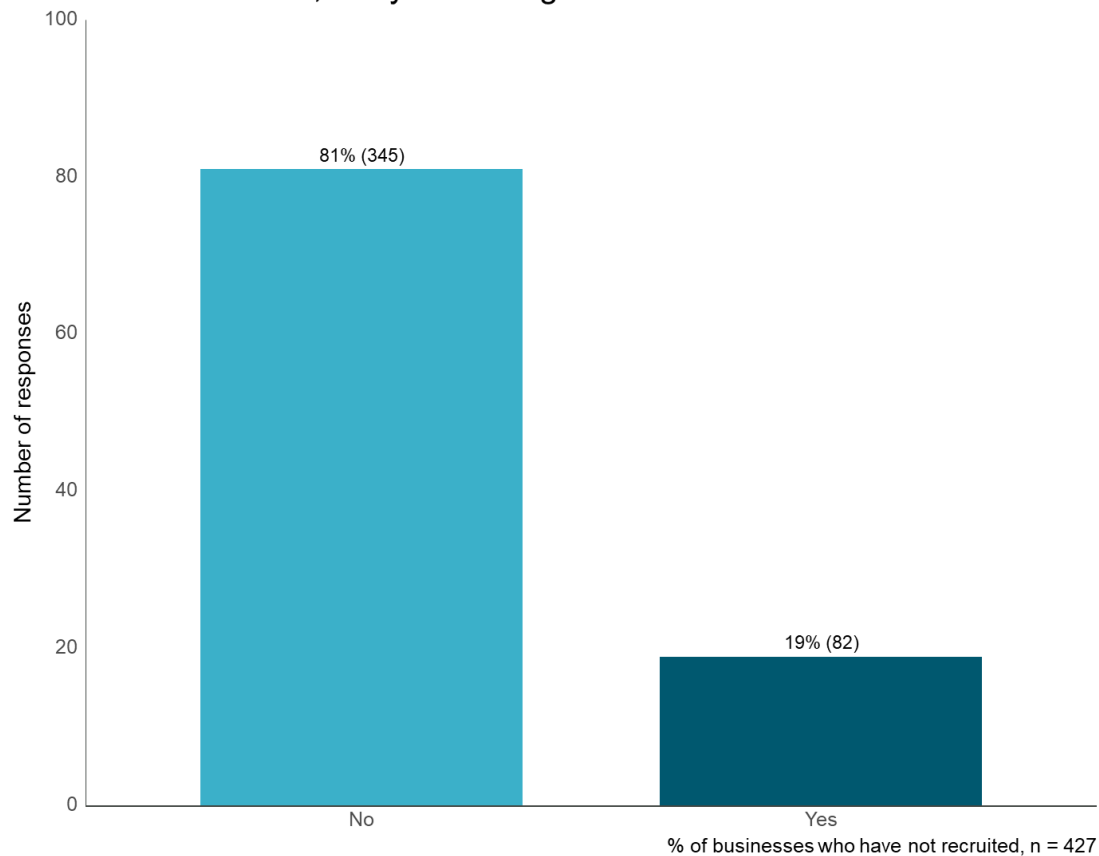
Q2.1c: If no, are you looking to recruit in the next 12 months?

% of sector, n = 427

16

Future Recruitment Plans
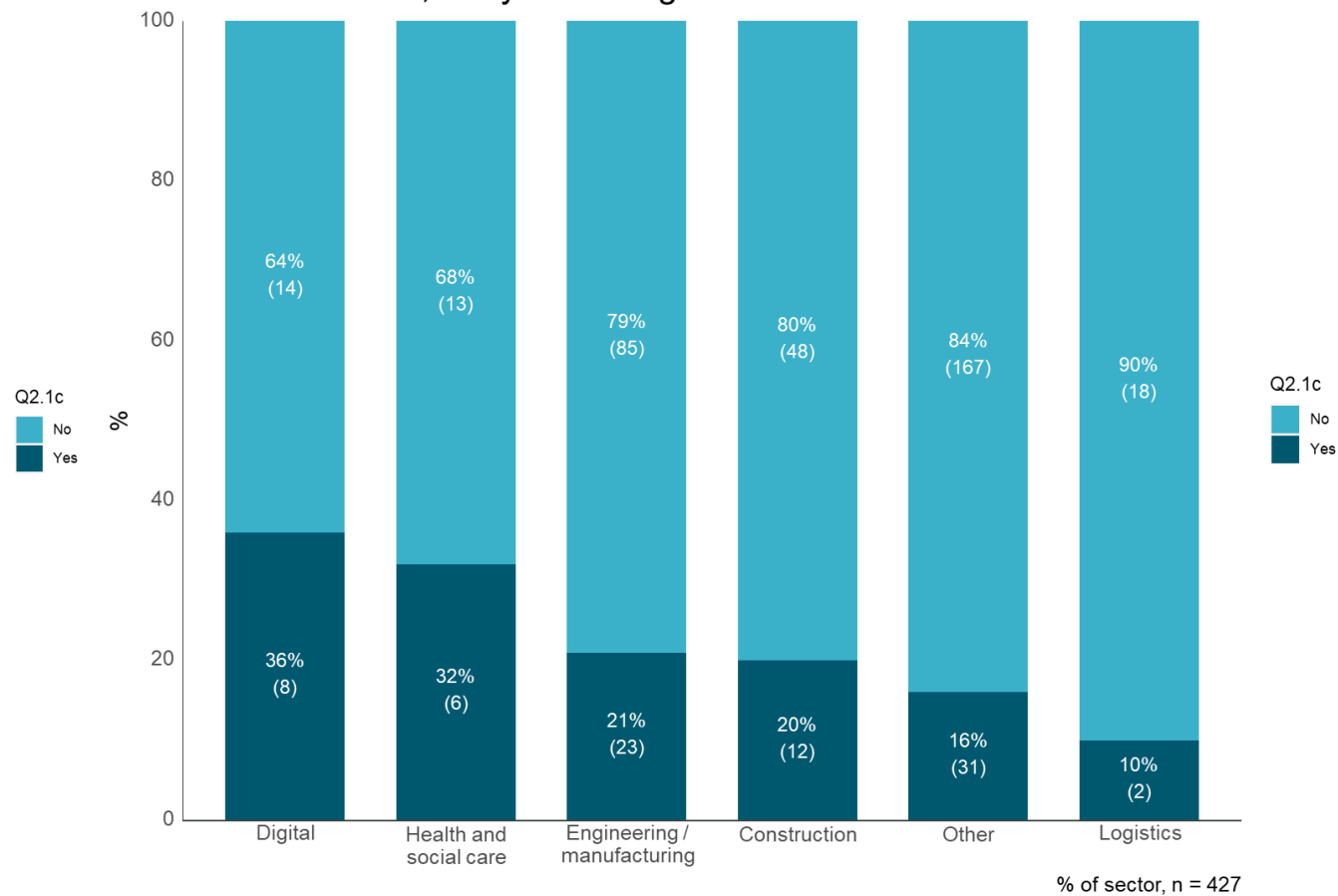
Q2.1c: If no, are you looking to recruit in the next 12 months?
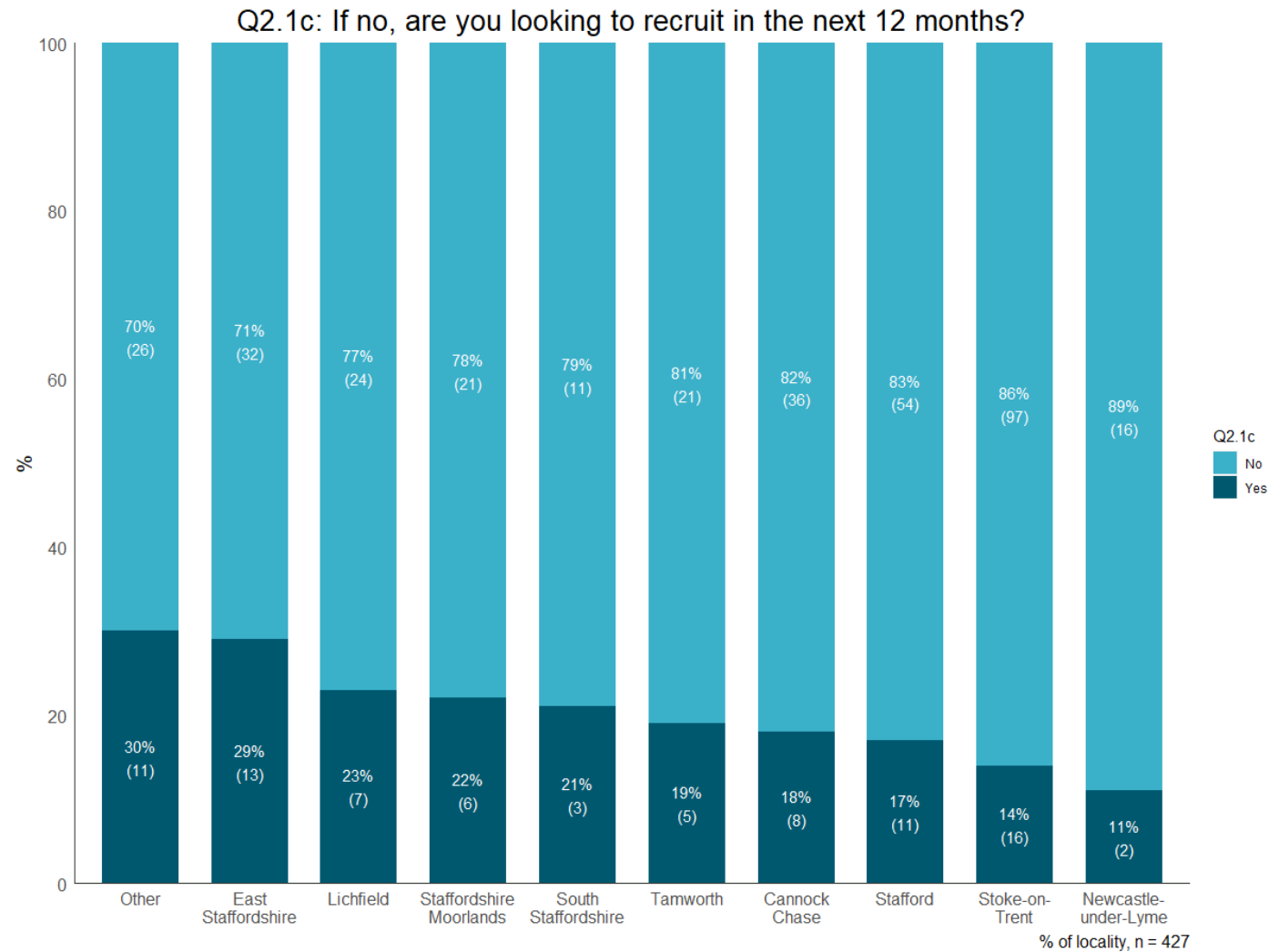
The locality with the highest percentage of firms looking to recruit is East Staffordshire while Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent have the lowest percentages who say they are looking to recruit.

Recruitment Challenges

Businesses face challenges when looking to recruit, with 57% of those who recruited reporting that they found it difficult. Recruitment challenges are particularly acute in the Health and Social Care and Digital sectors.

Q2.2a: If you have recruited in the last 12 months did you find it difficult?

Q2.2a: If you have recruited in the last 12 months did you find it difficult?

43% (151)

57% (201)

Q2.2a
No
Yes

% of businesses who have recruited, n = 352

29%(15) | 35%(6) | 41%(52) | 50%(22) | 50%(43) | 50%(13)

71%(36) | 65%(11) | 59%(76) | 50%(22) | 50%(43) | 50%(13)

Health and social care | Digital | Other | Construction | Engineering / manufacturing | Logistics

Q2.2a
No
Yes

% of business who recruited, n = 352
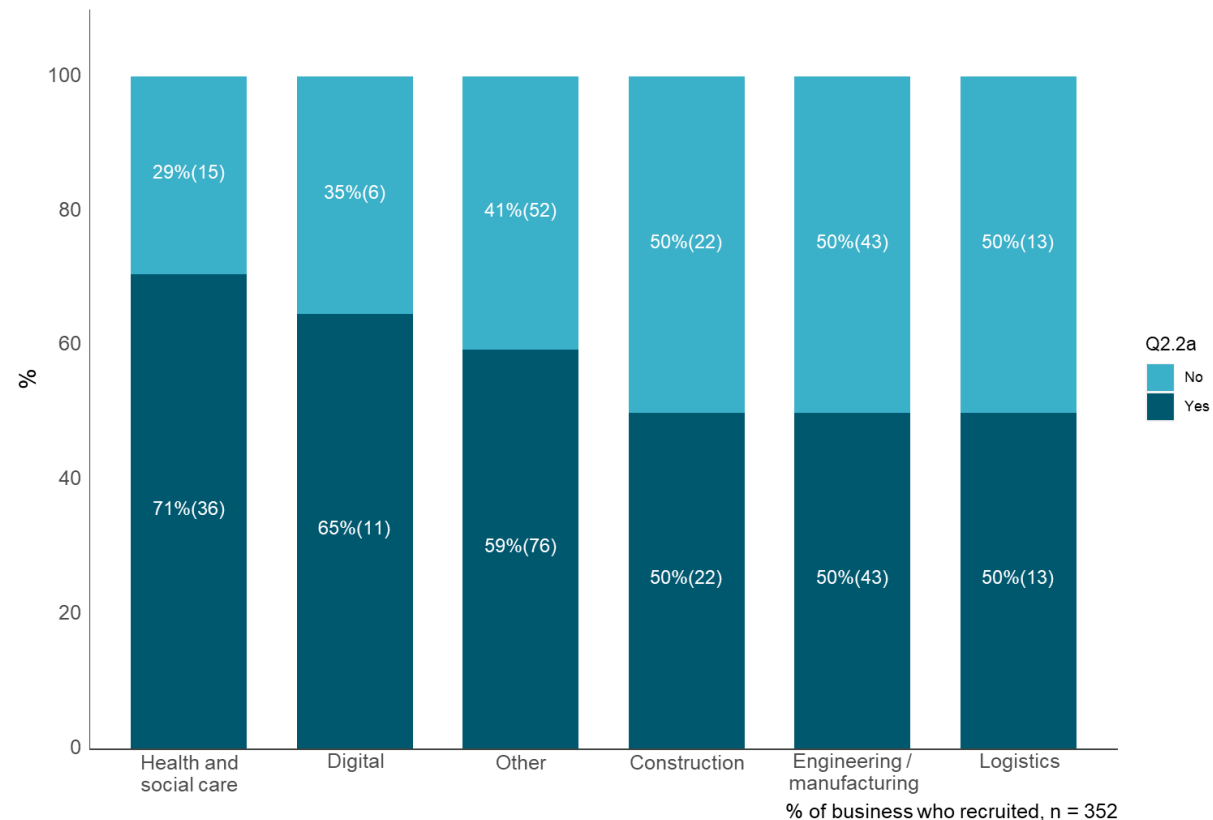
Recruitment Challenges

Q2.2a: If you have recruited in the last 12 months did you find it difficult?

% of business who recruited, n = 352
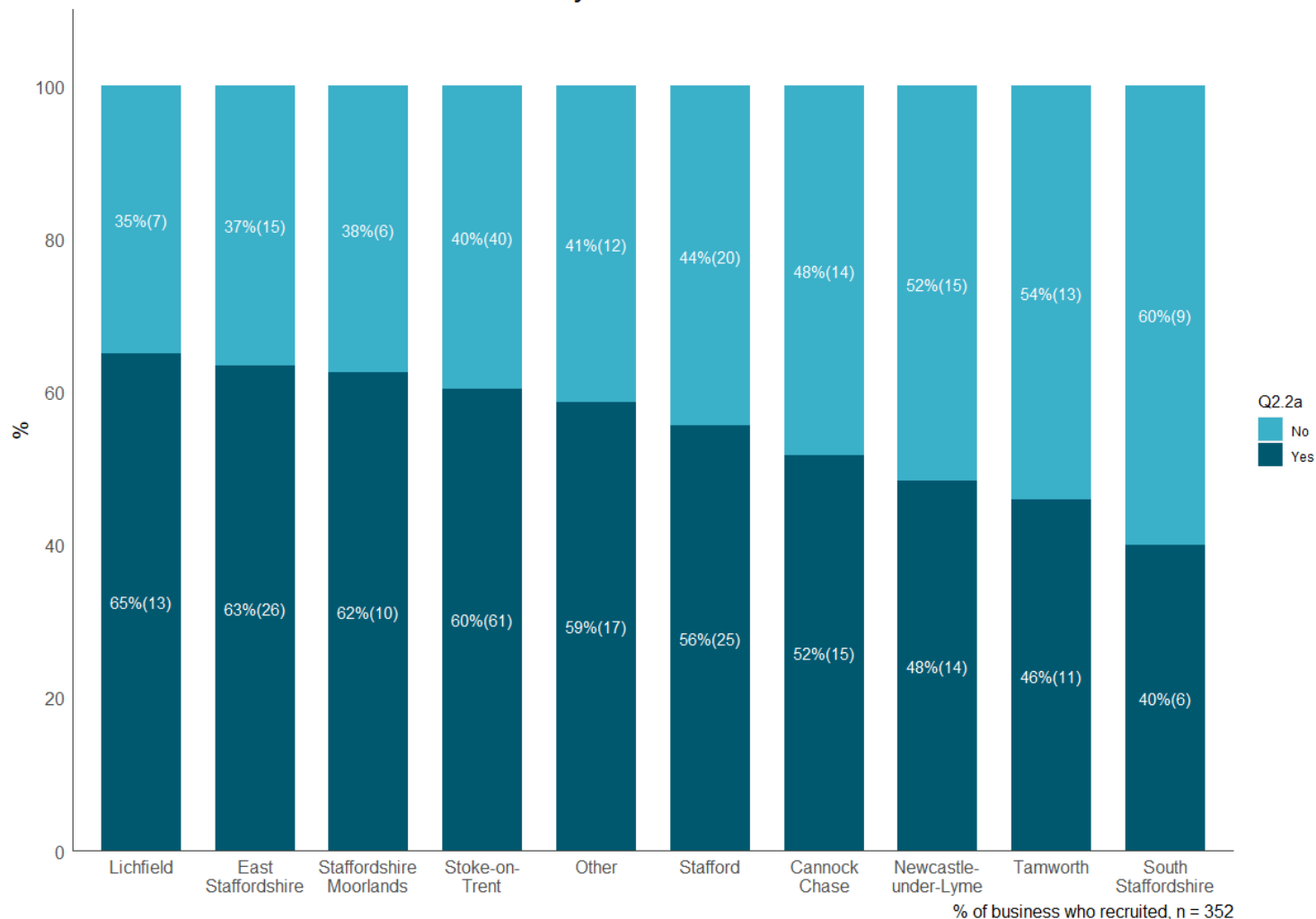
The number of firms finding it difficult to recruit varies by the area, with a higher proportion of businesses reporting they faced difficulties in places like Lichfield, East Staffordshire, the Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent.

South Staffordshire had the lowest percentage of businesses reporting they found it difficult to recruit.

Recruitment Challenges

Q2.2b: Why do you think that is?

Lack of suitable candidates due to lack of skill or experience	70% (140)
Lack of interest from candidates in the role	52% (105)
Candidate remuneration demands are too high	20% (41)
Another reason	20% (40)
Candidate demands for flexible working	6% (13)

%
% of respondents who recruited and found it difficult, n = 201
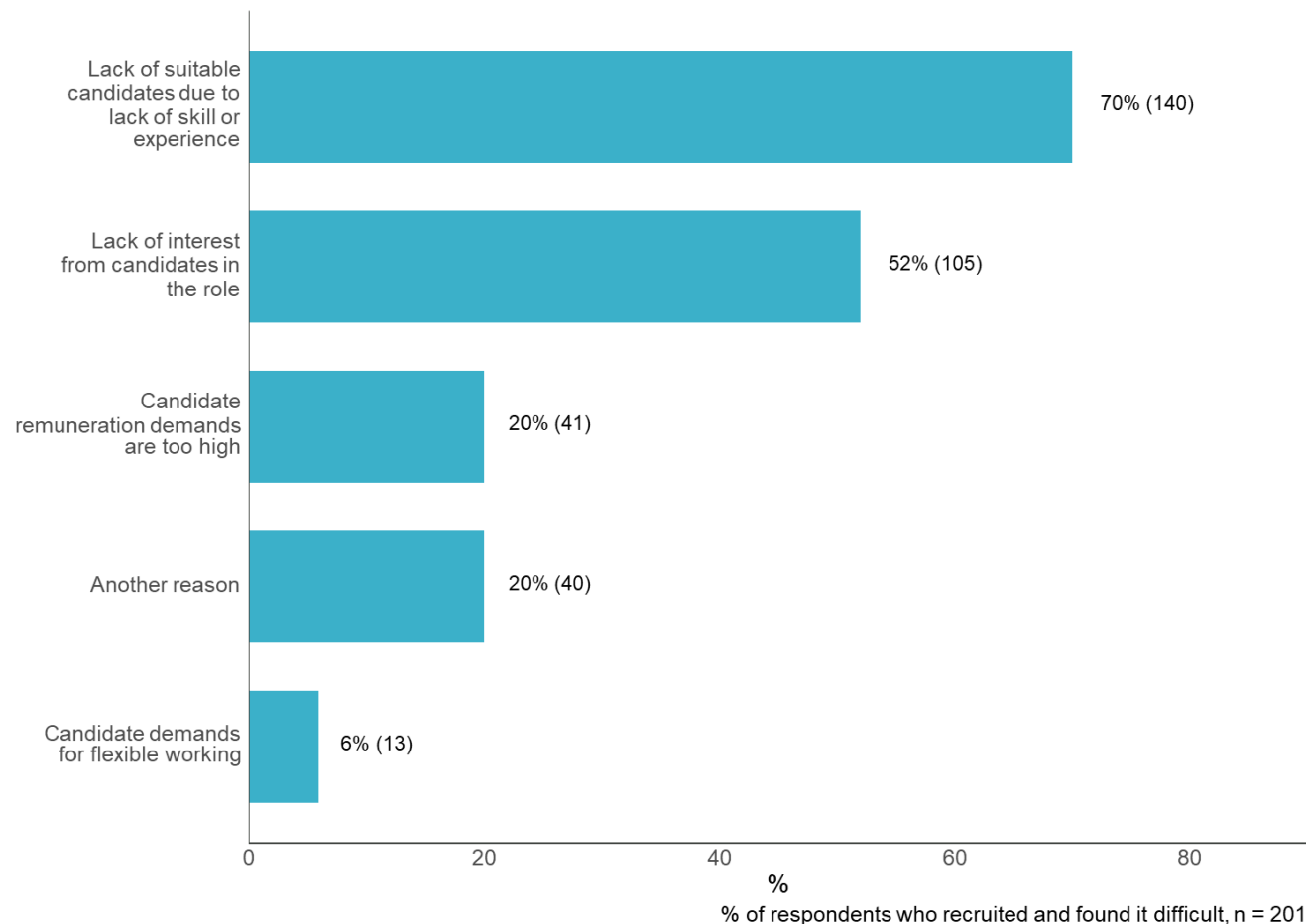
The most common reason for recruitment challenges was a lack of suitable candidates, with 70% of businesses who struggled to recruit citing this.

A lack of interest in the role was also cited by 52% of the businesses who struggled to recruit.

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Recruitment Challenges

Q2.2b: Why do you think that is?
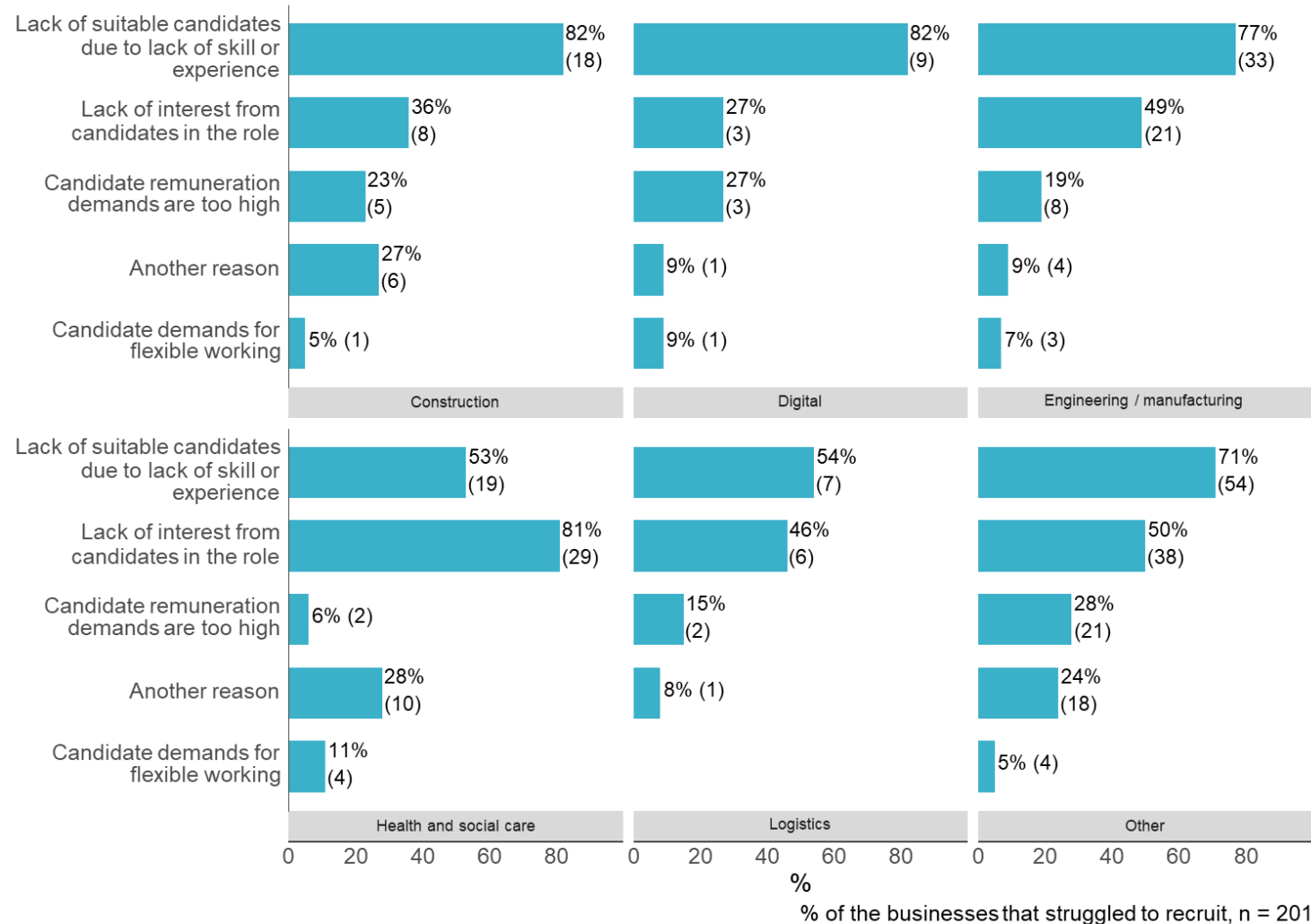
Looking at recruitment challenges by sector the Health and Social Care stands out, it is distinct from the other sectors as the most commonly cited reason is lack of interest, which is given by 81% of respondents.

Lack of candidate interest was the most common answer in each of the other sectors.

% of the businesses that struggled to recruit, n = 201

21

Recruitment Challenges

Q2.2b: Why do you think that is?
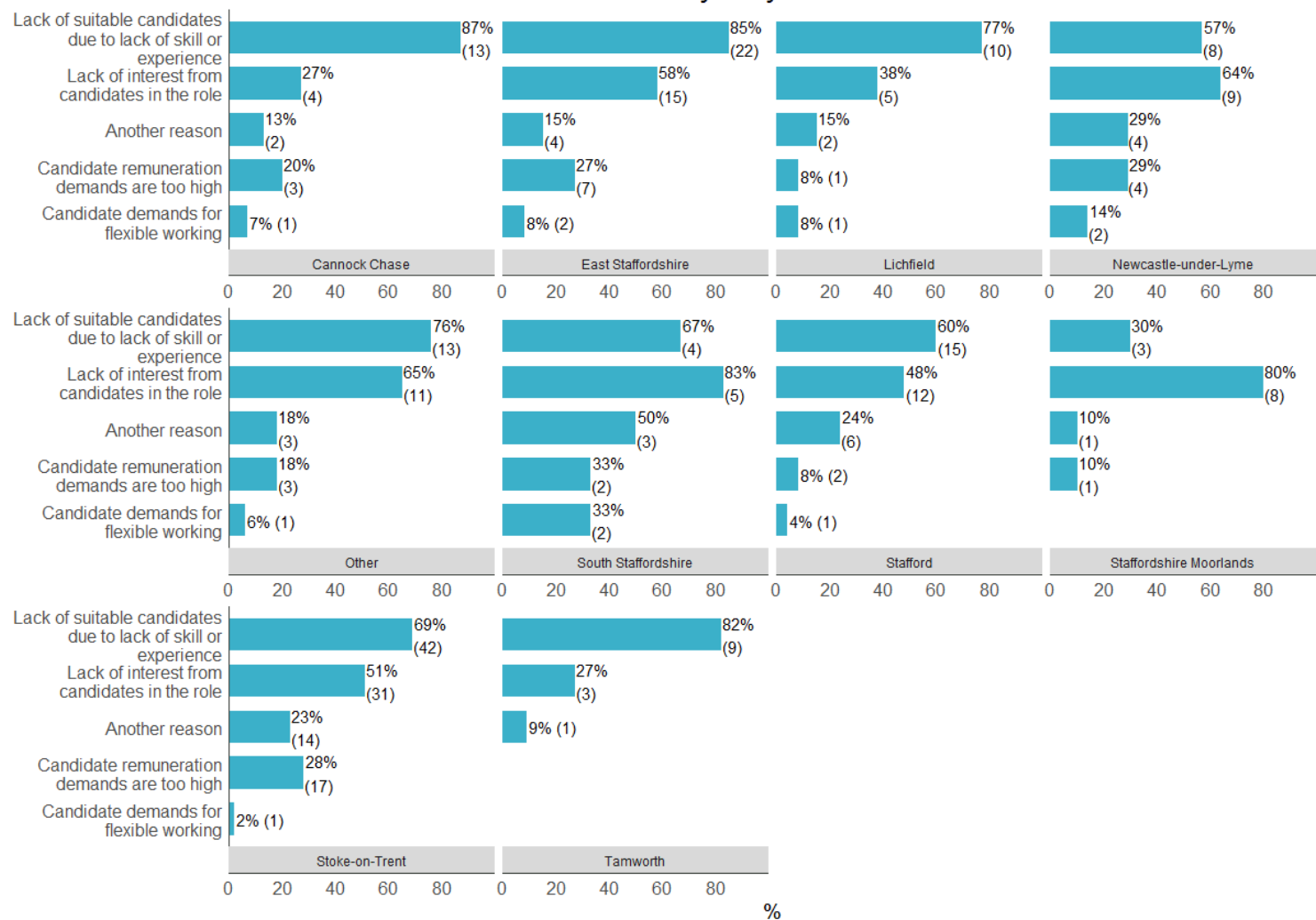
Different parts of the region experience different types of recruitment challenges.

For example; the main challenge in Newcastle-Under-Lyme is lack of candidate interest and 57% of businesses cite a lack of experience, while in Cannock Chase 87% cite a lack of skill/experience and only 27% cite lack of candidate interest.

% of the businesses that struggled to recruit, n = 201

Q2.2b cont. 'Another reason' responses

Responses included:

- Difficulty in candidates travelling to rural work locations with public transport issues

- Tougher competition for candidates since the pandemic with people leaving the workforce

- Challenges with Brexit and changes to immigration law

- The nature of work in some businesses doesn't seem to appeal to younger candidates

- A lack of candidates applying, or not showing up for interviews, not necessarily a skills issue

- Barrier in health and social care of vaccination requirements

Impact of Recruitment Challenges

Q2.2c What impact has this had on the business?

Reducing the amount of business you can deliver — 57% (114)
Increased operating costs — 25% (50)
Other — 23% (46)
Inability to develop new products or services — 8% (16)
Inability to develop new markets — 7% (14)
Reduced quality of products and services offered — 5% (11)

%
% of businesses who have recruited and struggled to do so, n = 201
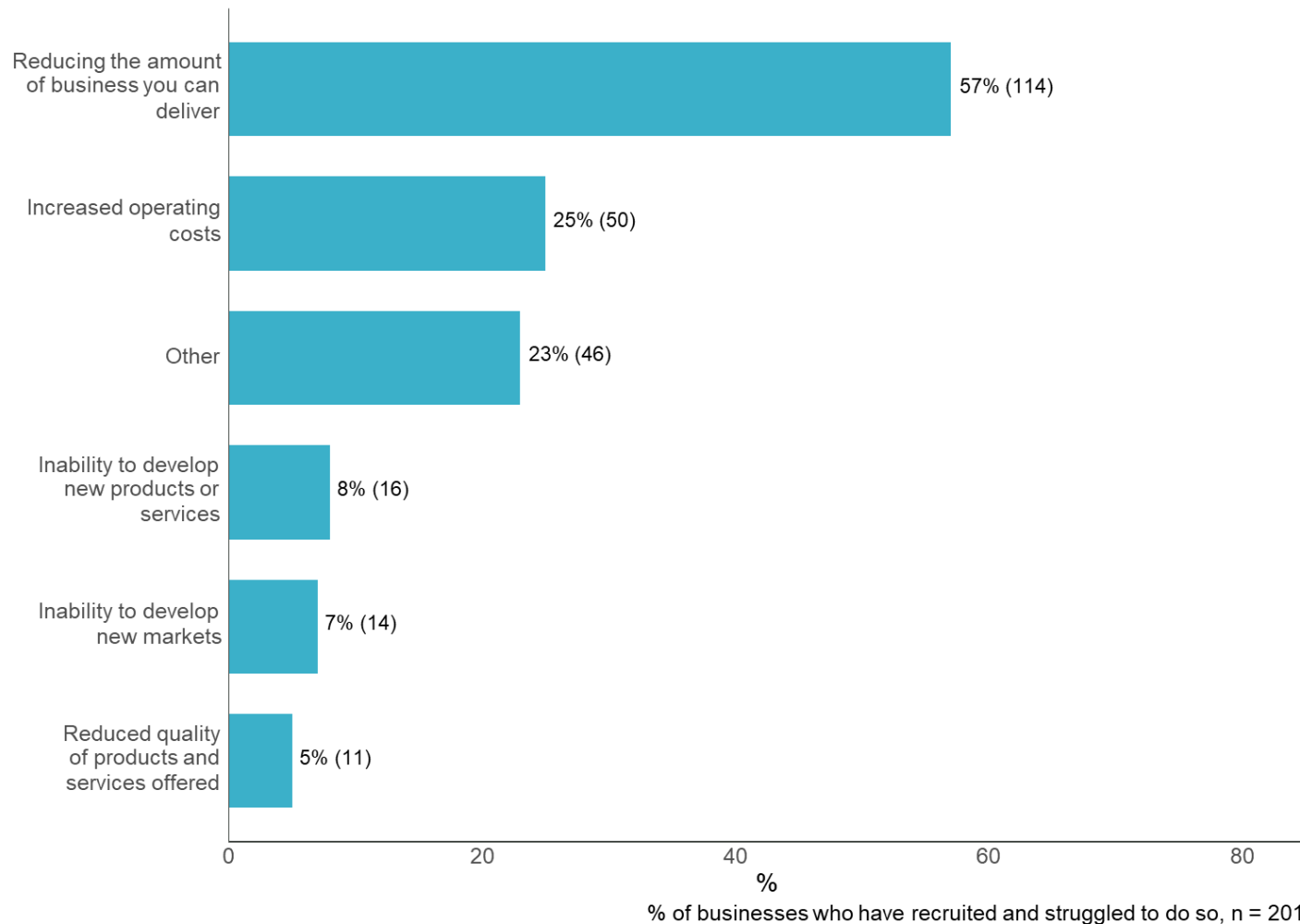
Recruitment challenges reduce the amount of business that can be delivered for over half of the firm who experienced them.

For smaller percentages of businesses it increased operating costs and affected the ability of the business to develop new products or markets.

Q2.2c cont. 'Other' responses

Common responses included:

- Business owners/managers picking up more work themselves

- Other members of staff working longer hours

- Businesses turning down work and cancelling jobs/projects

- Restricting businesses' growth plans

Hard to Fill Vacancies

22% of businesses surveyed have a hard to fill vacancy in their business. The sectors with higher proportion of respondents having hard to fill vacancies are Health and Social Care and Engineering/Manufacturing.

Q2.3a Do you have any vacancies in your business that are hard to fill due to a lack of skills, qualifications, or experience in applicants?

78% (606)

22% (172)

Q2.3a
No
Yes

% of respondents, n = 778

Q2.3a Do you have any vacancies in your business that are hard to fill due to a lack of skills, qualifications, or experience in applicants?

	Health and social care	Engineering / manufacturing	Logistics	Digital	Other	Construction
No	63% (45)	77% (149)	78% (36)	79% (31)	80% (261)	81% (84)
Yes	37% (26)	23% (44)	22% (10)	21% (8)	20% (64)	19% (20)

Q2.3a
No
Yes

% of sector, n = 778

26
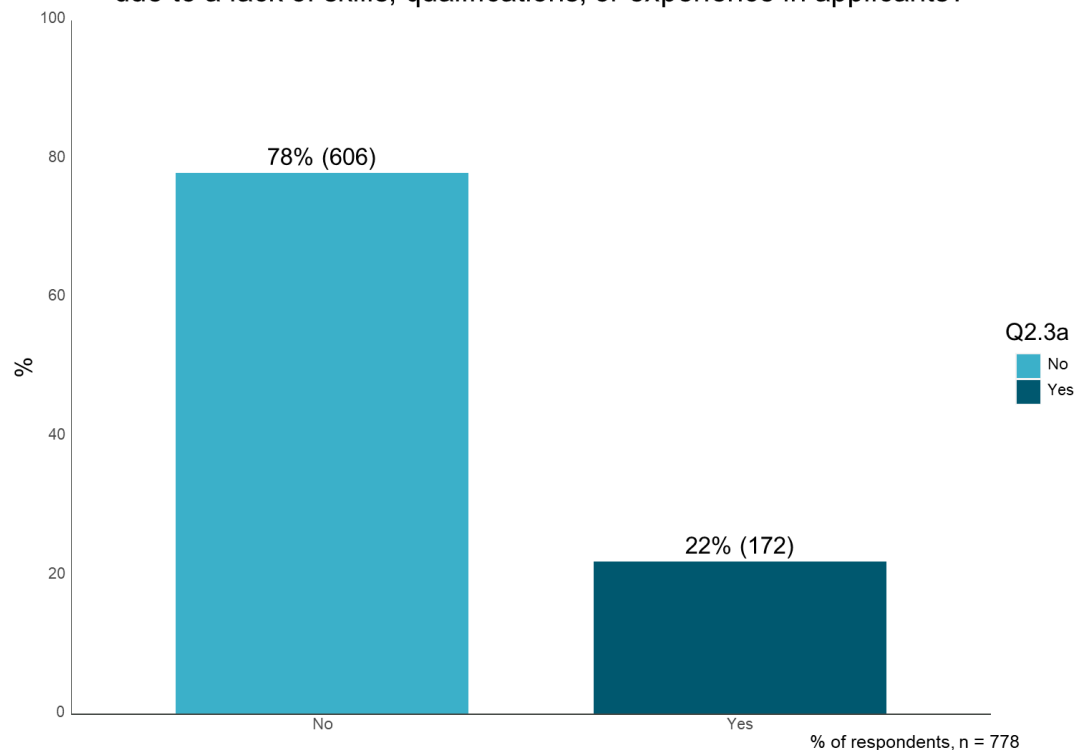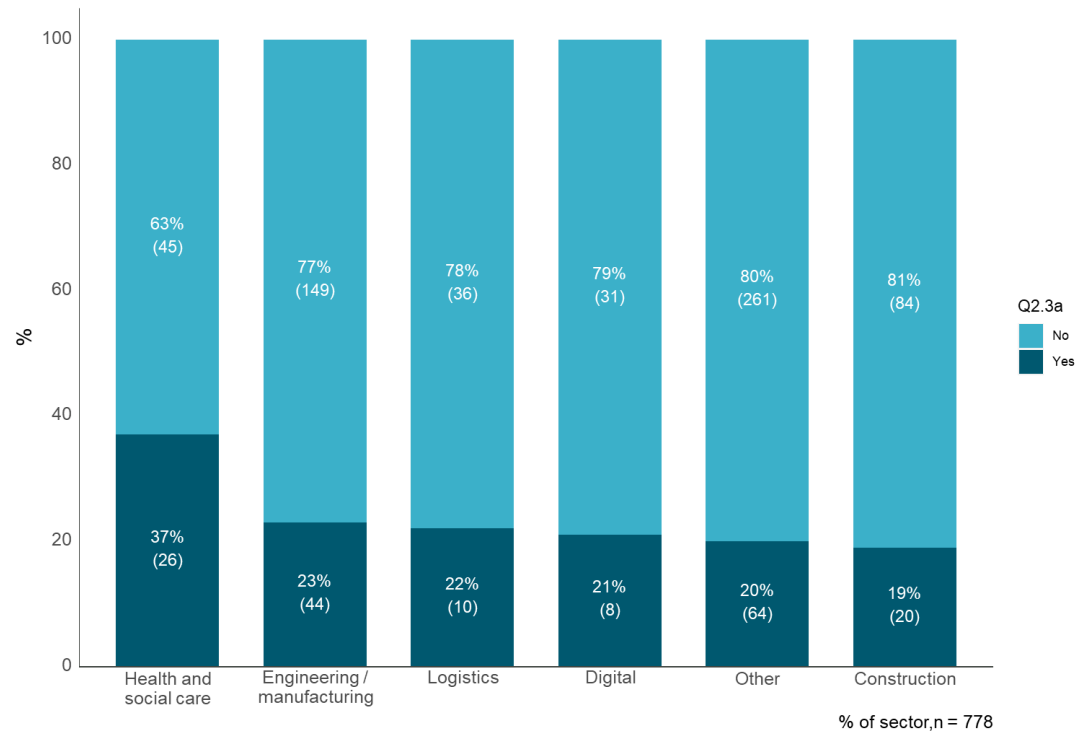
Hard to Fill Vacancies

Q2.3a Do you have any vacancies in your business that are hard to fill due to a lack of skills, qualifications, or experience in applicants?
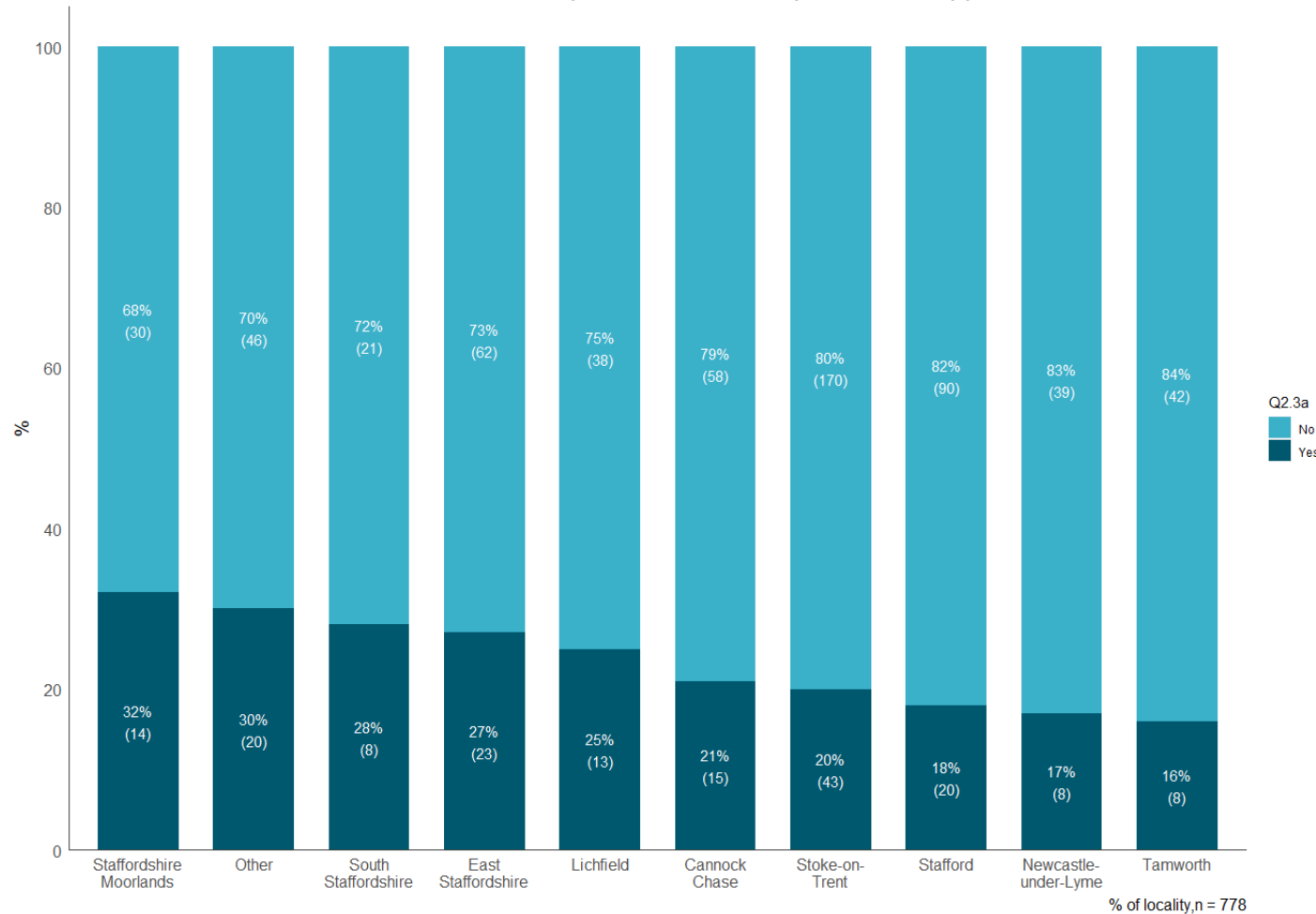
The proportion of businesses with hard to fill vacancies varies across the area; it is twice as high in Staffordshire Moorlands as it is in Tamworth.

% of locality, n = 778

Hard to Fill Vacancies: Occupations

Overall, most vacancies are for skilled operational staff and this is largely true for each of the sectors. In the Digital Sector the most common response is Senior Technical Staff, but the small sample size must be noted.

Q2.3c In what occupation are these vacancies?

Skilled operational staff — 49% (85)
Other operational staff — 23% (39)
Other staff — 16% (27)
Senior technical staff — 12% (21)
Middle management or supervisory staff — 6% (11)
Senior managers — 2% (3)

Number of responses

% of respondents with hard to fill vacancies, n = 172

Q2.3c In what occupation are these vacancies?

Construction / Digital / Engineering / manufacturing

Skilled operational staff — 60% (12) | 25% (2) | 55% (24)
Other staff — | | 9% (4)
Other operational staff — 25% (5) | 12% (1) | 16% (7)
Senior technical staff — 10% (2) | 38% (3) | 20% (9)
Middle management or supervisory staff — 5% (1) | 12% (1) | 2% (1)
Senior managers — 5% (1) | |

Health and social care / Logistics / Other

Skilled operational staff — 38% (10) | 60% (6) | 48% (31)
Other staff — 19% (5) | 60% (6) | 19% (12)
Other operational staff — 42% (11) | 10% (1) | 22% (14)
Senior technical staff — 8% (2) | 10% (1) | 6% (4)
Middle management or supervisory staff — 8% (2) | | 9% (6)
Senior managers — | | 3% (2)

%

% of sector with hard to fill vacancies, n = 172

Hard to Fill Vacancies: Occupations

Q2.3c In what occupation are these vacancies?

Cannock Chase
- Skilled operational staff: 47% (7)
- Other operational staff: 20% (3)
- Other staff: 20% (3)
- Senior technical staff: 7% (1)
- Middle management or supervisory staff:
- Senior managers:

East Staffordshire
- Skilled operational staff: 65% (15)
- Other operational staff: 22% (5)
- Other staff: 22% (5)
- Senior technical staff: 17% (4)
- Middle management or supervisory staff: 9% (2)

Lichfield
- Skilled operational staff: 54% (7)
- Other operational staff: 15% (2)
- Other staff: 8% (1)
- Senior technical staff: 15% (2)

Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Skilled operational staff: 50% (4)
- Other operational staff: 12% (1)
- Other staff: 38% (3)
- Senior technical staff: 12% (1)

Other
- Skilled operational staff: 40% (8)
- Other operational staff: 35% (7)
- Other staff: 15% (3)
- Senior technical staff: 5% (1)
- Middle management or supervisory staff: 15% (3)
- Senior managers: 5% (1)

South Staffordshire
- Skilled operational staff: 62% (5)
- Other operational staff: 12% (1)
- Other staff: 12% (1)
- Middle management or supervisory staff: 25% (2)

Stafford
- Skilled operational staff: 55% (11)
- Other operational staff: 15% (3)
- Other staff: 20% (4)
- Senior technical staff: 25% (5)
- Middle management or supervisory staff: 5% (1)
- Senior managers: 5% (1)

Staffordshire Moorlands
- Skilled operational staff: 43% (6)
- Other operational staff: 29% (4)
- Middle management or supervisory staff: 14% (2)

Stoke-on-Trent
- Skilled operational staff: 44% (19)
- Other operational staff: 28% (12)
- Other staff: 16% (7)
- Senior technical staff: 14% (6)
- Senior managers: 2% (1)

Tamworth
- Skilled operational staff: 38% (3)
- Other operational staff: 12% (1)
- Senior technical staff: 12% (1)
- Middle management or supervisory staff: 12% (1)

% of locality with hard to fill vacancies, n = 172

Skilled operational staff is the most common hard-to-fill vacancy across the region, with some variation in how common it is.

The percentage with hard to fill vacancies in more senior roles varies considerably but should be treated with caution due to low number of respondents.

Hard to Fill Vacancies: Occupations

For the priority sectors, detailed questions were asked about the nature of hard-to-fill vacancies.

Q2.3c In what occupation are these vacancies? [Engineering and Manufacturing]

Occupation	Value
Other	16% (31)
Engineering technicians	6% (12)
Machine operatives	5% (10)
Welding trades	4% (8)
Science, engineering and production technicians	1% (1)
Sales related occupations	1% (2)
Mechanical engineers	1% (2)
Buyers and procurement officers	1% (1)

% of sector, n = 194
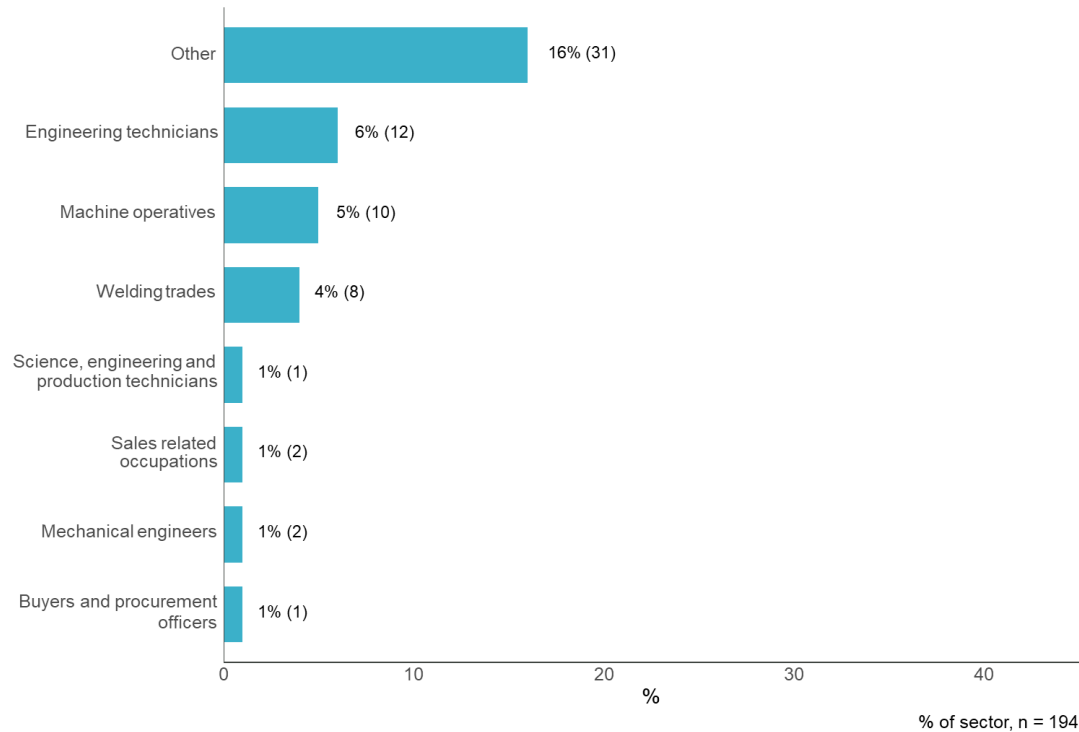
Q2.3c In what occupation are these vacancies? [Logistics]
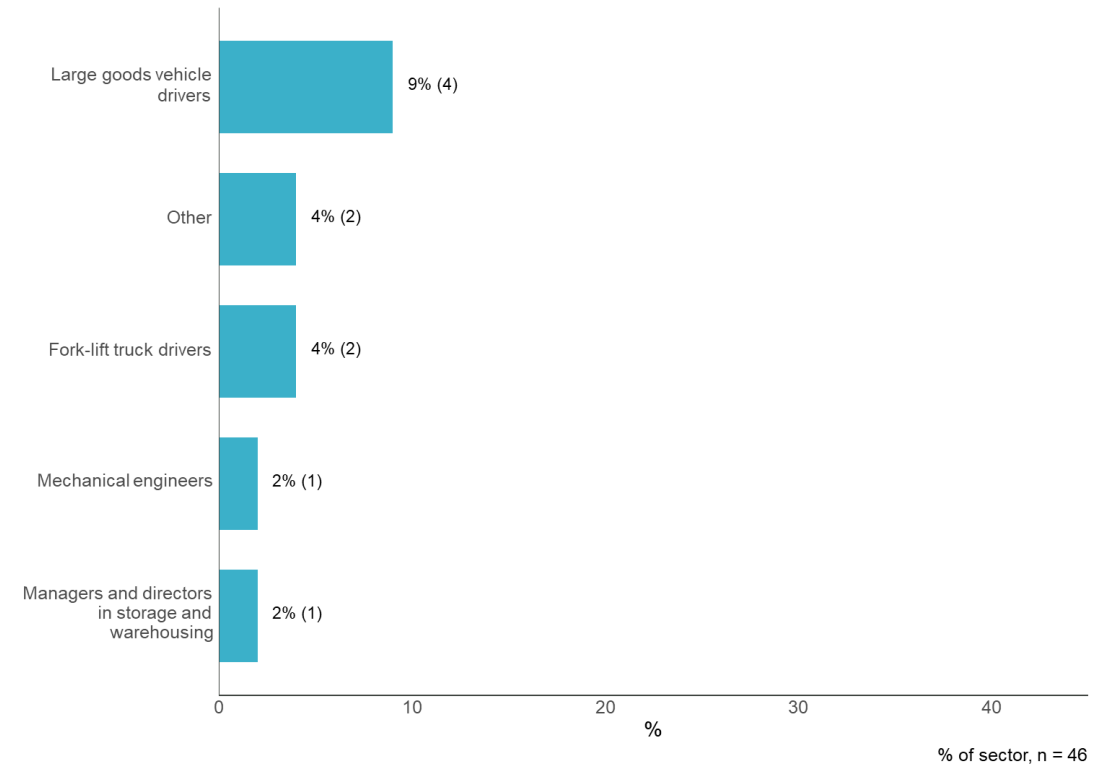
Occupation	Value
Large goods vehicle drivers	9% (4)
Other	4% (2)
Fork-lift truck drivers	4% (2)
Mechanical engineers	2% (1)
Managers and directors in storage and warehousing	2% (1)

% of sector, n = 46

Hard to Fill Vacancies: Occupations

Q2.3c In what occupation are these vacancies? [Construction]

Occupation	Value
Other	18% (19)
Carpenters	4% (4)
Modern methods of construction	3% (3)
Sales and customer service roles	2% (2)
Bricklayers	2% (2)
Architects	2% (2)
Mechanical engineers	1% (1)
Managers	1% (1)
BIM	1% (1)

% of sector, n = 104
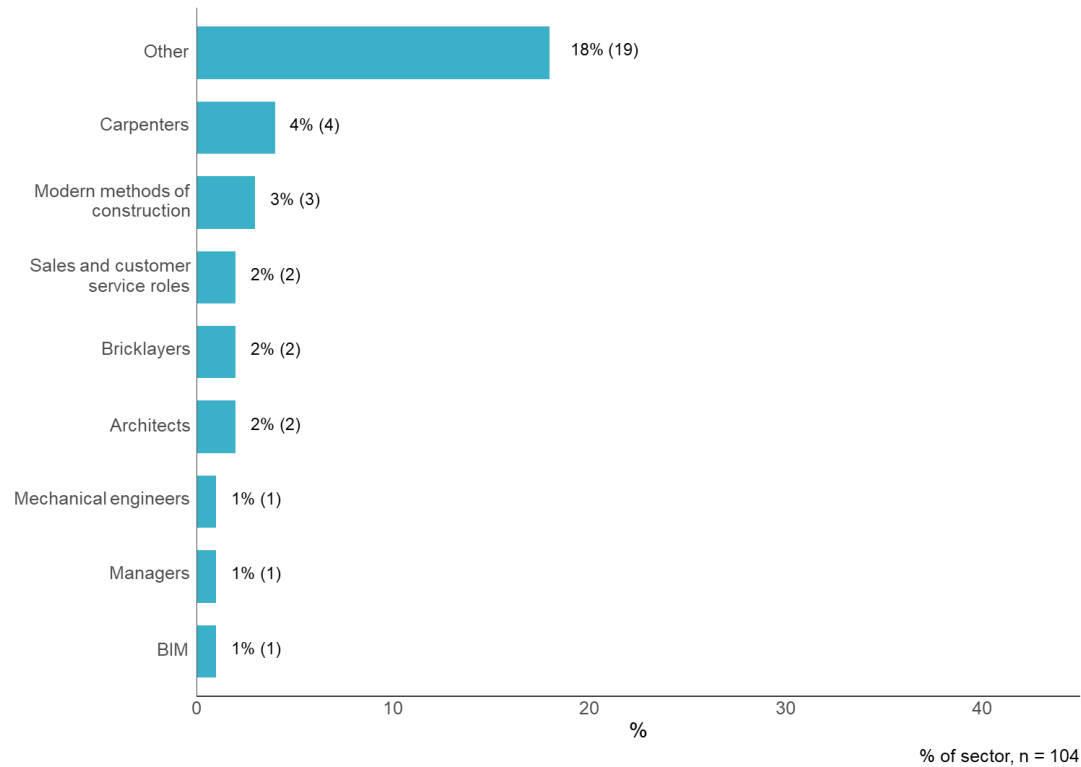
Q2.3c In what occupation are these vacancies? [Health and social care]

Occupation	Value
Care assistants	21% (15)
Care workers and home carers	15% (11)
Other	14% (10)
Nurses	7% (5)
Allied health professionals	4% (3)
Science, engineering and production technicians	1% (1)
Doctors	1% (1)
Dental nurses	1% (1)

% of sector, n = 71
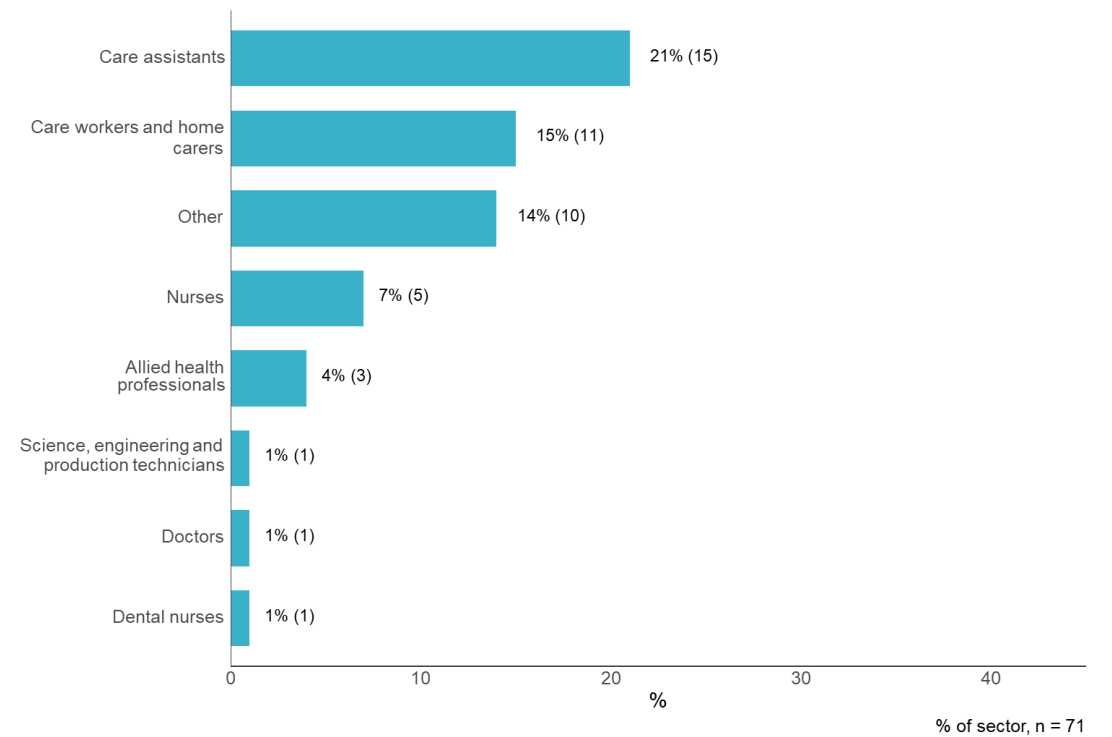
Digital Skills: Recruitment Challenges

Recruiting digital skills is not major challenge for the survey sample, with 5% reporting that they are struggling to recruit the skills that they need. This is highest in the digital sector, where 15% of respondents were struggling.

Q2.5a: Are you struggling to recruit staff with the digital skills that you need?
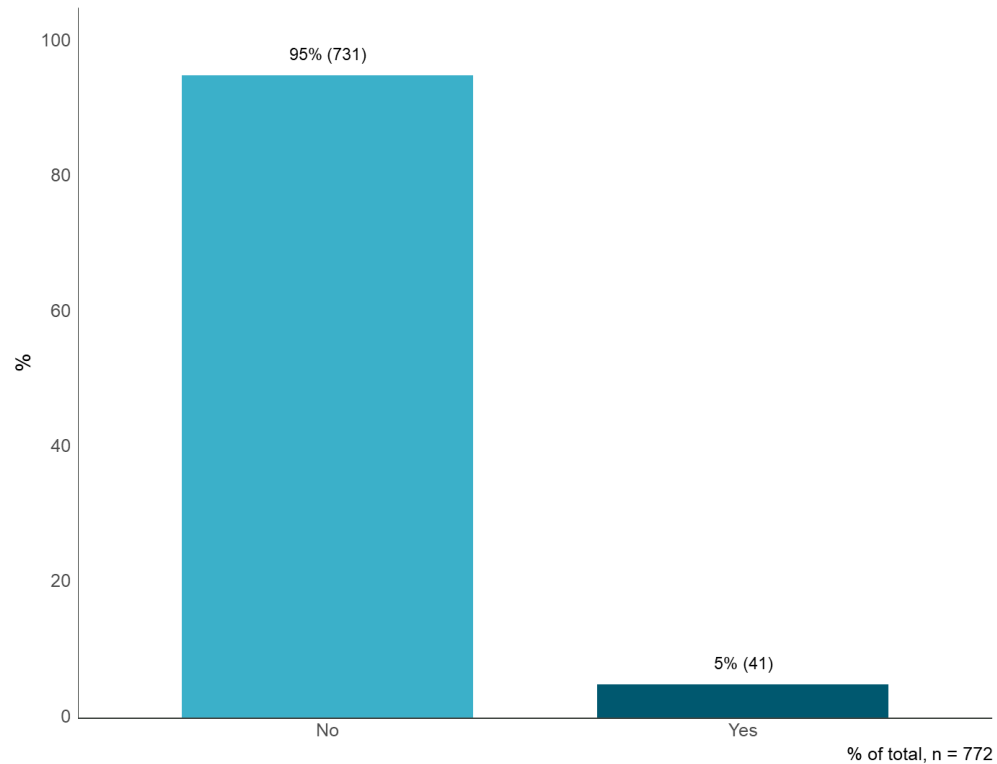
Q2.5a: Are you struggling to recruit staff with the digital skills that you need?

% of total, n = 772

% of sector, n = 772
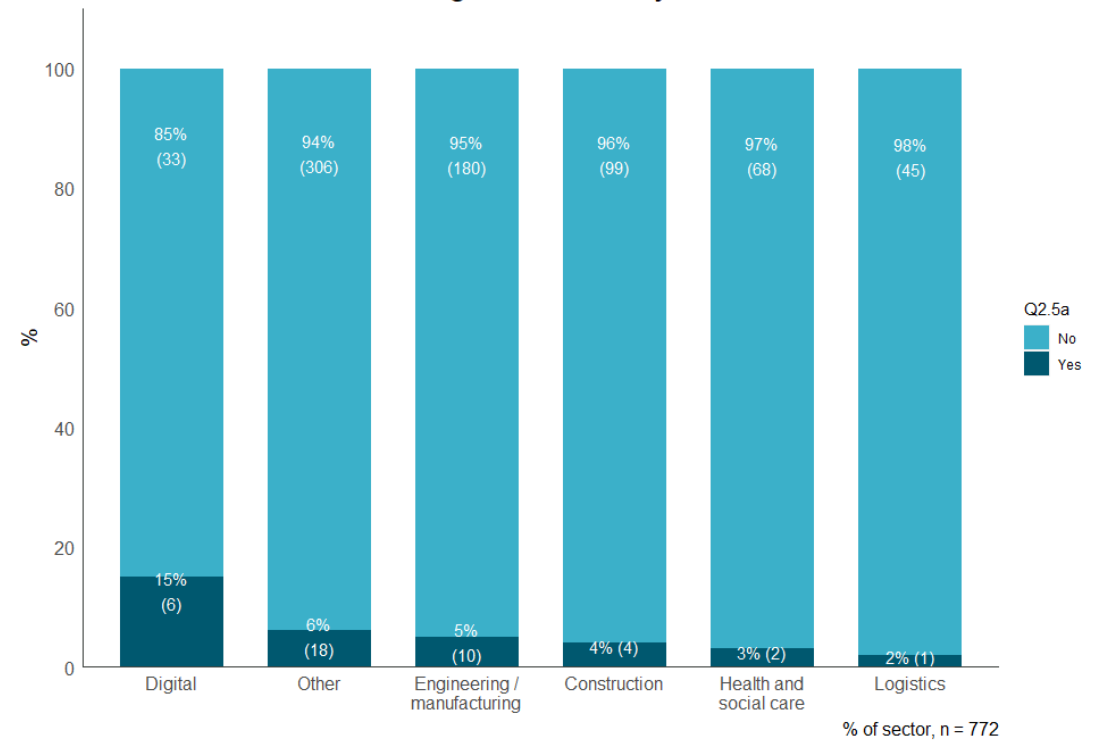
Digital Skills: Recruitment Challenges

Q2.5a: Are you struggling to recruit staff with the digital skills that you need?

% of locality, n = 762

There is no substantial geographic variation, with very small number of firms in each area struggling to recruit digital skills.
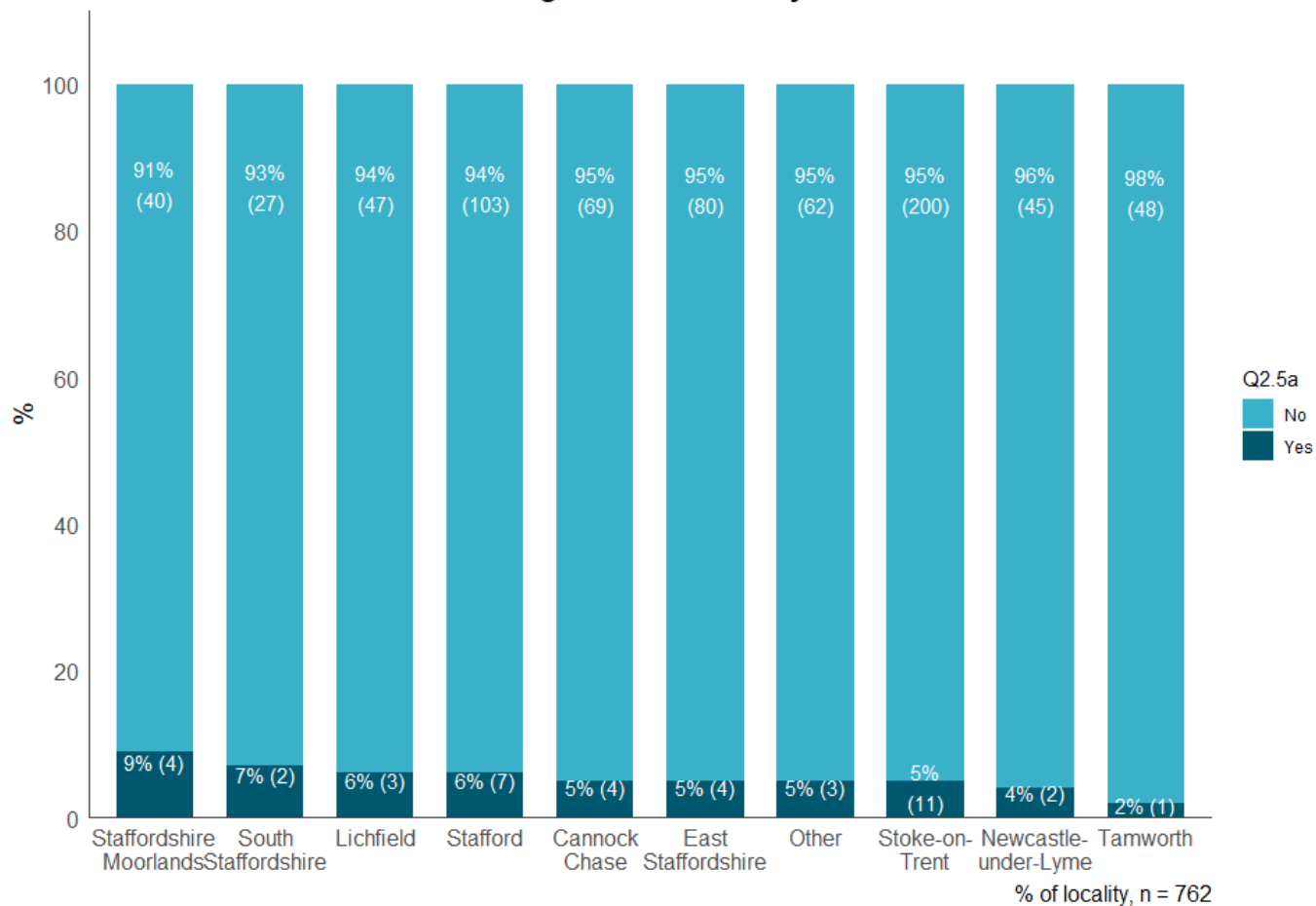
Hard to Find Skills: Digital

Q2.5c: What type of digital skills are you struggling to find in applications?

Skill	% (n)
Other	30% (12)
Computer literacy	28% (11)
Programming / software development	18% (7)
Microsoft Office and other productivity software	10% (4)
Online content creation and marketing	8% (3)
Digital product management	5% (2)
IT business analysts, architects and systems designers	2% (1)

% of respondents struggling to recruit, n = 41
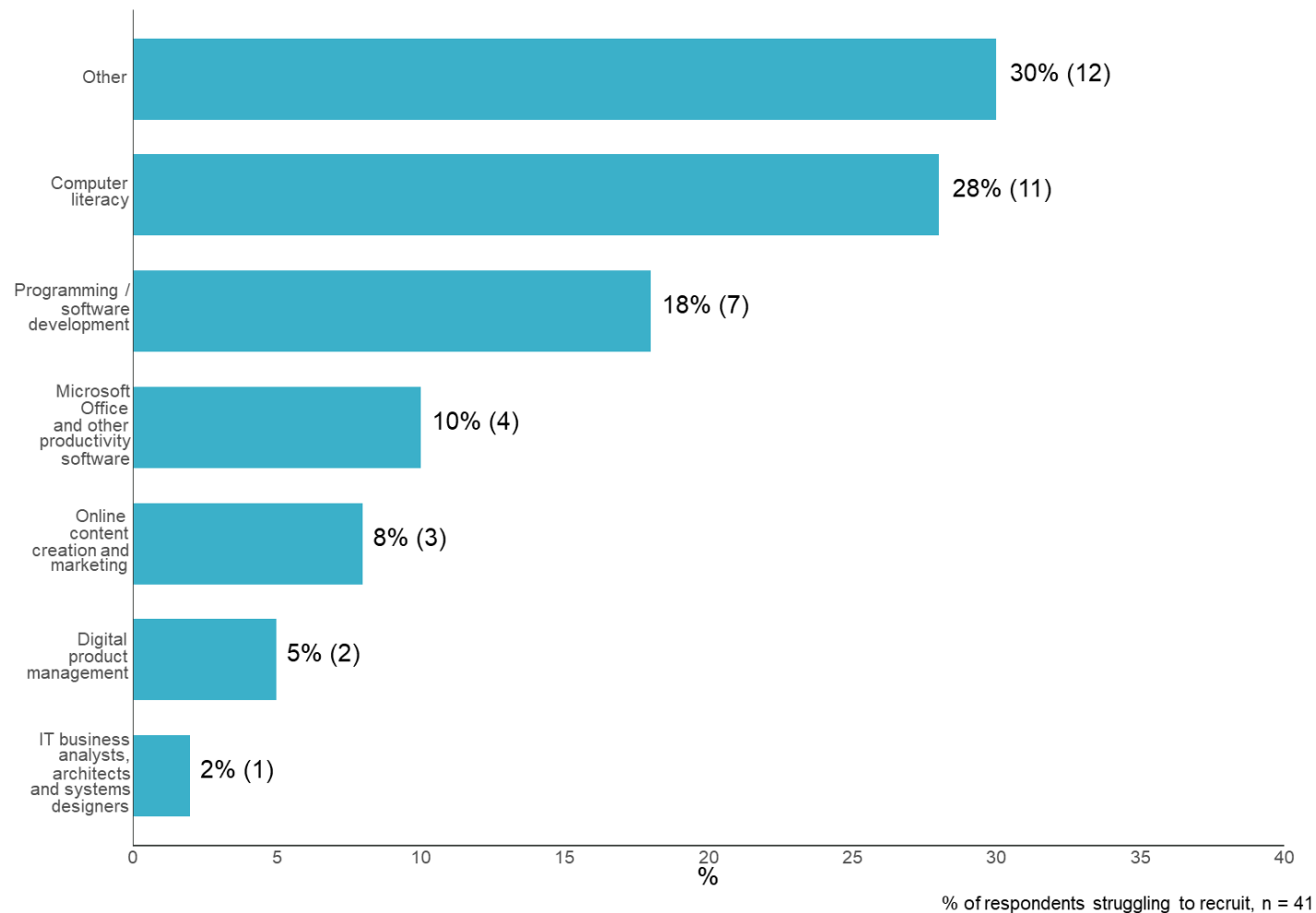
The most common hard-to-find skill is computer literacy, though again this number of respondents here are small as just 41 firms say they are struggling to recruit digital skills.

Q2.5c cont. 'Other' responses

Responses included:

- Technical and mechanical skills

- Engineers and robotics technicians

- Software development

- Diagnostics

- Character rigging

- Digital marketing

- 3D software knowledge

- Video production and editing

Recruitment Challenges: Green Skills

Q2.6a: Are you struggling to recruit staff with the green skills that you need?

1% of firms (11 in total) surveyed are struggling to recruit staff with green skills they need.
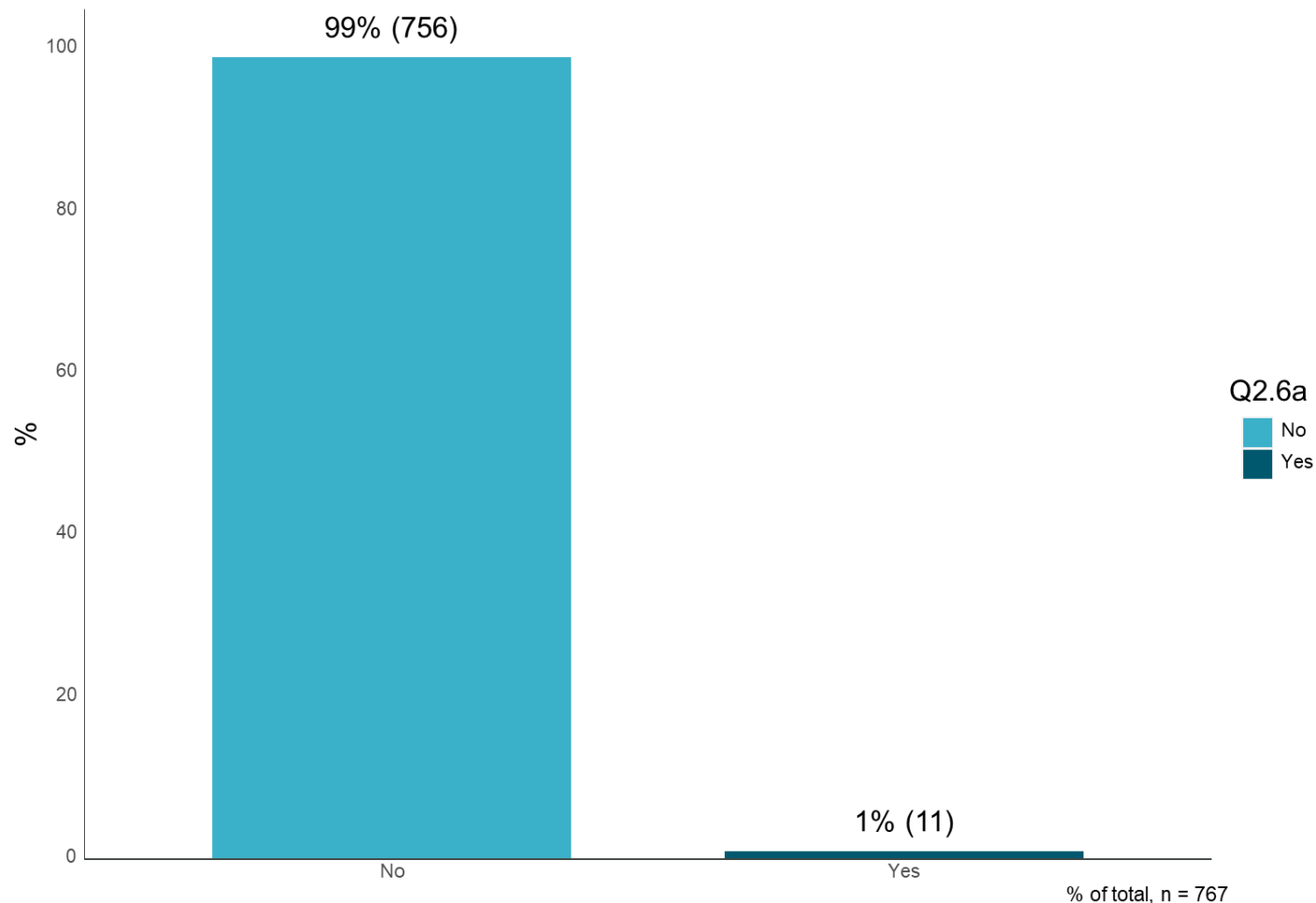
% of total, n = 767

Hard to Fill Vacancies: Reasons

Q2.7 Which of the following reasons do you associate with your hard to fill vacancies?

Reason	% (n)
Low number of applicants with required skills	63% (109)
Not enough people interested in doing this type of job	52% (89)
Lack of work experience the company requires	22% (37)
Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business	17% (29)
Other	15% (25)
Remote location / poor public transport	9% (16)
Lack of local provision of specific skills training	9% (16)

%

% of respondents with hard to fill vacancies, n = 172
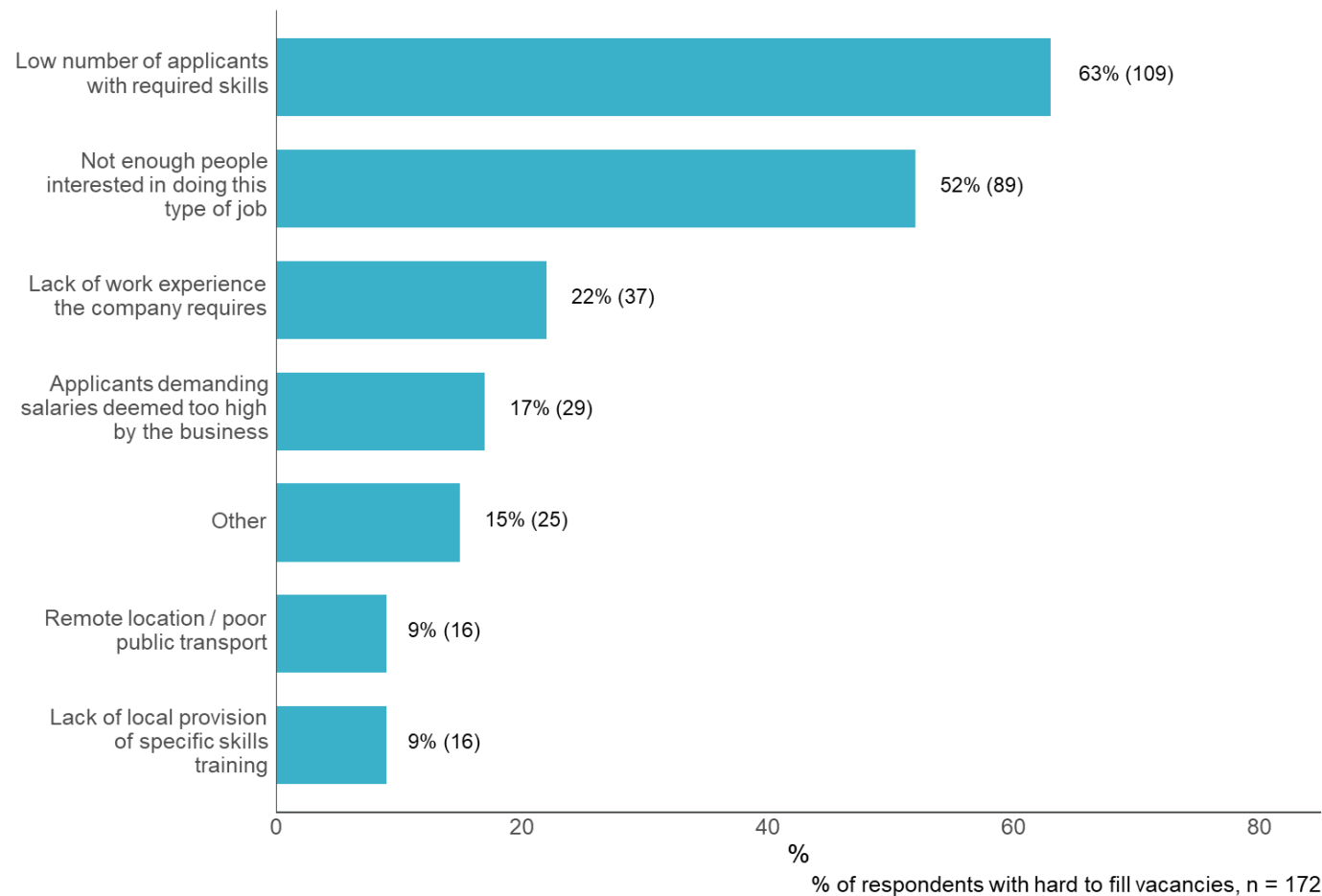
63% of firms attribute their hard-to-fill vacancies to a low number of applicant with the required skills.

A lack of interest in the job is also a frequent response, cited by over 50% of respondents with hard to fill vacancies.

Q2.7 cont. 'Other' responses

Responses included:

- Difficulty in affording to recruit new staff

- Lacking specific skills – e.g. technical and engineering, HGV drivers

- Young people going to university instead of on-the-job training roles

- Lack of technical education available locally

- Lack of interested applicants

- Difficulty replacing staff retiring during the pandemic

- Some candidates don't seem interested due to working hours or travelling away from home

Hard to Fill Vacancies: Reasons

Q2.7 Which of the following reasons do you associate with your hard to fill vacancies?

There is some variation by sector: a lack of candidate interest is a particularly acute challenge in Health and Social Care and Digital sectors.

% of the businesses in sector with HTF vacancies, n = 172

Hard to Fill Vacancies: Reasons

Q2.7 Which of the following reasons do you associate with your hard to fill vacancies?

Cannock Chase
- Low number of applicants with required skills: 80% (12)
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job: 47% (7)
- Lack of work experience the company requires: 33% (5)
- Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business: 7% (1)
- Other: 20% (3)
- Remote location / poor public transport:
- Lack of local provision of specific skills training: 7% (1)

East Staffordshire
- Low number of applicants with required skills: 70% (16)
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job: 52% (12)
- Lack of work experience the company requires: 26% (6)
- Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business: 26% (6)
- Other: 9% (2)
- Remote location / poor public transport: 4% (1)
- Lack of local provision of specific skills training: 9% (2)

Lichfield
- Low number of applicants with required skills: 77% (10)
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job: 62% (8)
- Lack of work experience the company requires: 38% (5)
- Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business: 31% (4)
- Other: 15% (2)
- Remote location / poor public transport: 15% (2)
- Lack of local provision of specific skills training: 15% (2)

Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Low number of applicants with required skills: 62% (5)
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job: 62% (5)
- Lack of work experience the company requires: 12% (1)
- Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business:
- Other: 12% (1)
- Remote location / poor public transport: 25% (2)
- Lack of local provision of specific skills training:

Other
- Low number of applicants with required skills: 55% (11)
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job: 45% (9)
- Lack of work experience the company requires: 25% (5)
- Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business: 10% (2)
- Other: 15% (3)
- Remote location / poor public transport: 15% (3)
- Lack of local provision of specific skills training:

South Staffordshire
- Low number of applicants with required skills: 75% (6)
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job: 50% (4)
- Lack of work experience the company requires: 25% (2)
- Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business: 38% (3)
- Other: 12% (1)
- Remote location / poor public transport:
- Lack of local provision of specific skills training: 12% (1)

Stafford
- Low number of applicants with required skills: 55% (11)
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job: 60% (12)
- Lack of work experience the company requires: 5% (1)
- Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business: 15% (3)
- Other: 35% (7)
- Remote location / poor public transport: 5% (1)
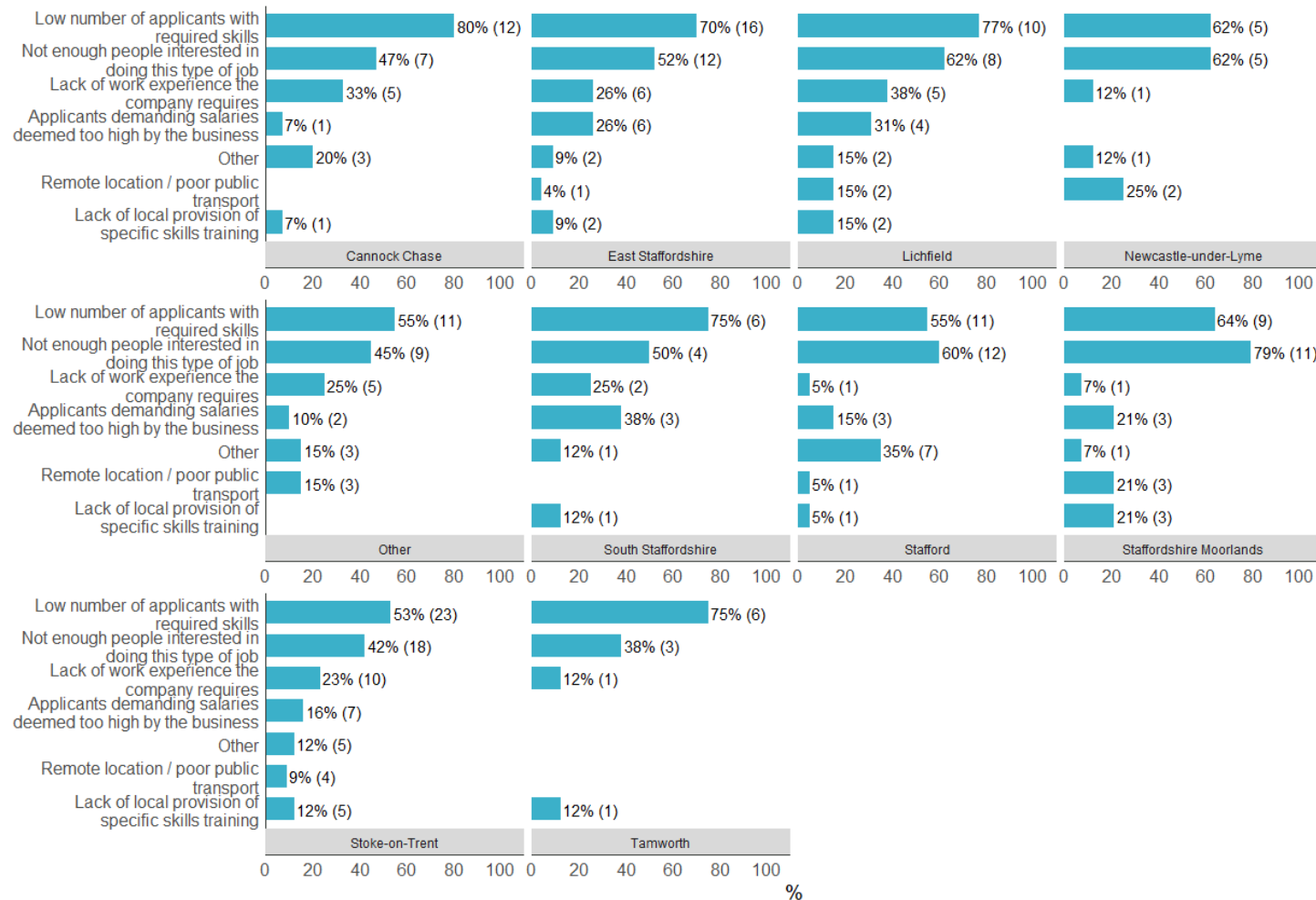- Lack of local provision of specific skills training: 5% (1)

Staffordshire Moorlands
- Low number of applicants with required skills: 64% (9)
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job: 79% (11)
- Lack of work experience the company requires: 7% (1)
- Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business: 21% (3)
- Other: 7% (1)
- Remote location / poor public transport: 21% (3)
- Lack of local provision of specific skills training: 21% (3)

Stoke-on-Trent
- Low number of applicants with required skills: 53% (23)
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job: 42% (18)
- Lack of work experience the company requires: 23% (10)
- Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business: 16% (7)
- Other: 12% (5)
- Remote location / poor public transport: 9% (4)
- Lack of local provision of specific skills training: 12% (5)

Tamworth
- Low number of applicants with required skills: 75% (6)
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job: 38% (3)
- Lack of work experience the company requires: 12% (1)
- Applicants demanding salaries deemed too high by the business:
- Other:
- Remote location / poor public transport:
- Lack of local provision of specific skills training: 12% (1)

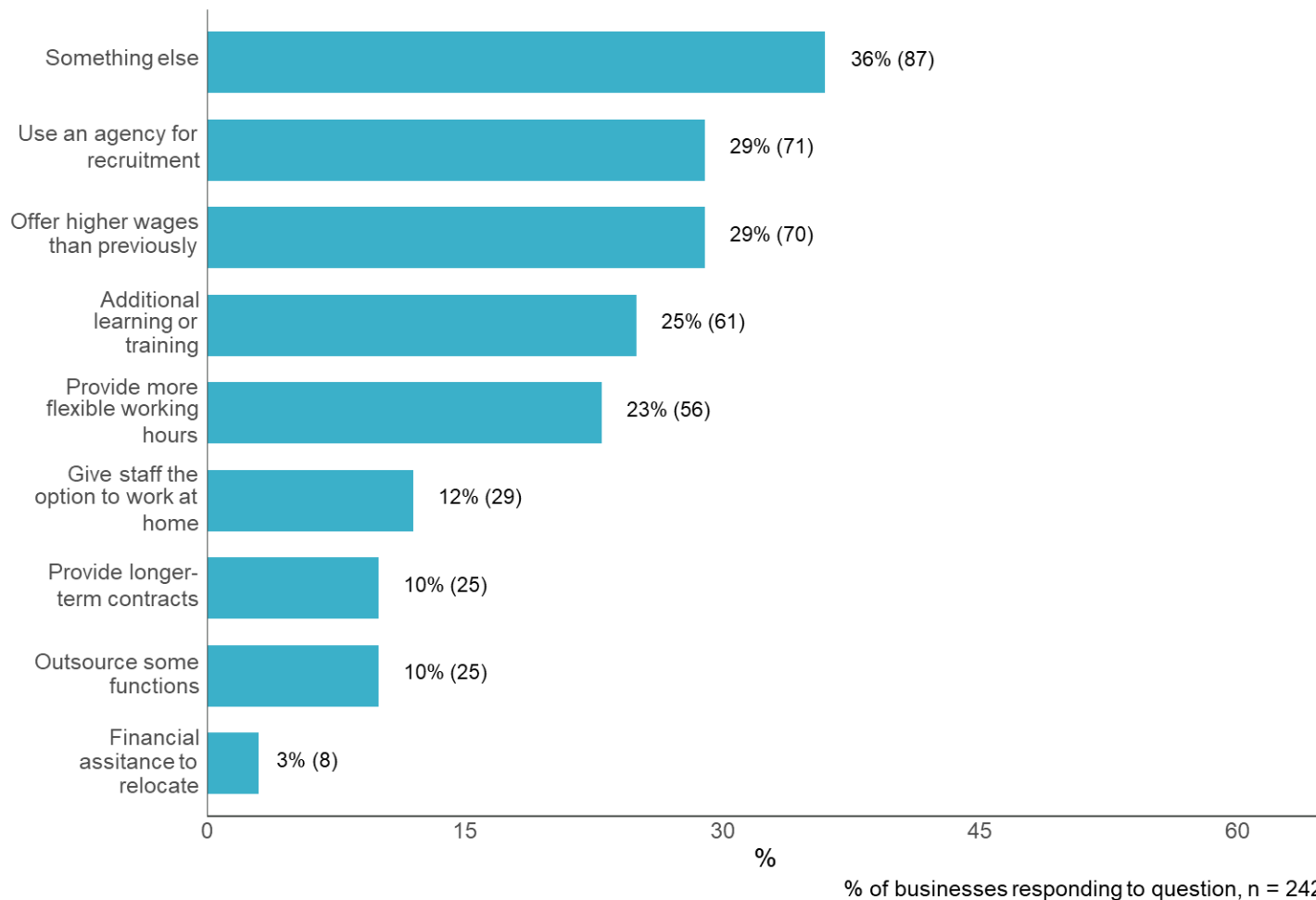% of the businesses in sector with HTF vacancies, n = 172

The proportion of firms citing a lack of interest in the role varies by place, from 38% in Tamworth to 79% in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

In every locality, the percentage of businesses with HTF vacancies who say there is a low number of applicants with the required skills is above 50%, and is as high as 80% in Cannock Chase.

Mitigating Recruitment Challenges

Q2.8 What actions have you taken to mitigate any recruitment issues that you have been having? Please select all that apply.

Category	% (n)
Something else	36% (87)
Use an agency for recruitment	29% (71)
Offer higher wages than previously	29% (70)
Additional learning or training	25% (61)
Provide more flexible working hours	23% (56)
Give staff the option to work at home	12% (29)
Provide longer-term contracts	10% (25)
Outsource some functions	10% (25)
Financial assitance to relocate	3% (8)

% of businesses responding to question, n = 242

Firms have taken a variety approaches to mitigate recruitment challenges including using an agency, offering higher wages, additional training and more flexible hours.
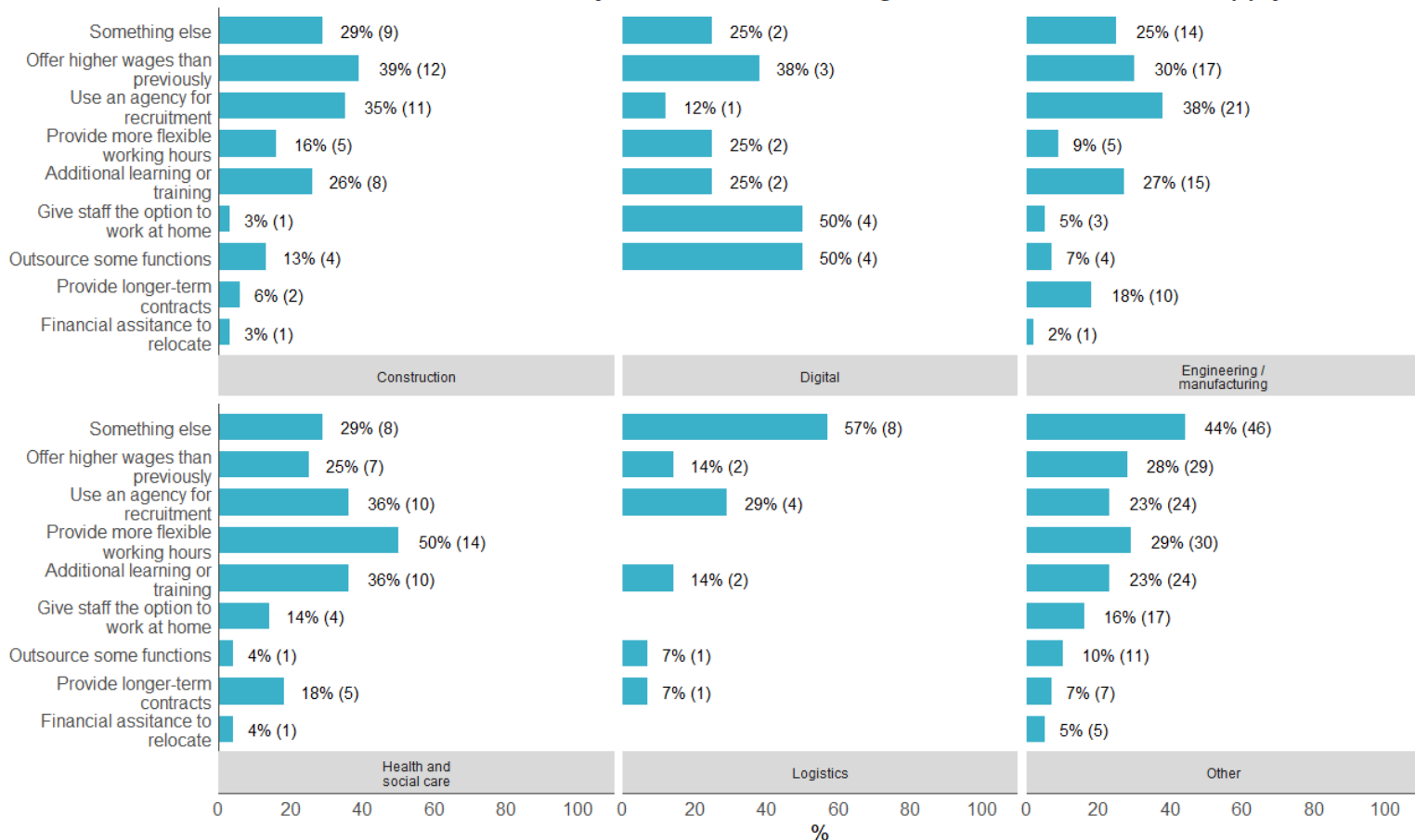
Q2.8 cont. 'Other' responses

Responses included:

- Advertising through university

- Speaking to colleges

- Advertising on social media

- Recruiting seasonal staff through local college

- Hiring apprentices

- Establishing a bespoke driver school with local grant support

- Implementing more training to support staff

- Increasing staff benefits

- Lowering entry requirements and having more training in place for new staff

- Some overseas outsourcing

Mitigating Recruitment Challenges

Q2.8 What actions have you taken to mitigate any recruitment issues that you have been having? Please select all that apply.

Construction

Action	%
Something else	29% (9)
Offer higher wages than previously	39% (12)
Use an agency for recruitment	35% (11)
Provide more flexible working hours	16% (5)
Additional learning or training	26% (8)
Give staff the option to work at home	3% (1)
Outsource some functions	13% (4)
Provide longer-term contracts	6% (2)
Financial assitance to relocate	3% (1)

Digital

Action	%
Something else	25% (2)
Offer higher wages than previously	38% (3)
Use an agency for recruitment	12% (1)
Provide more flexible working hours	25% (2)
Additional learning or training	25% (2)
Give staff the option to work at home	50% (4)
Outsource some functions	50% (4)

Engineering / manufacturing

Action	%
Something else	25% (14)
Offer higher wages than previously	30% (17)
Use an agency for recruitment	38% (21)
Provide more flexible working hours	9% (5)
Additional learning or training	27% (15)
Give staff the option to work at home	5% (3)
Outsource some functions	7% (4)
Provide longer-term contracts	18% (10)
Financial assitance to relocate	2% (1)

Health and social care

Action	%
Something else	29% (8)
Offer higher wages than previously	25% (7)
Use an agency for recruitment	36% (10)
Provide more flexible working hours	50% (14)
Additional learning or training	36% (10)
Give staff the option to work at home	14% (4)
Outsource some functions	4% (1)
Provide longer-term contracts	18% (5)
Financial assitance to relocate	4% (1)

Logistics

Action	%
Something else	57% (8)
Offer higher wages than previously	14% (2)
Use an agency for recruitment	29% (4)
Additional learning or training	14% (2)
Outsource some functions	7% (1)
Provide longer-term contracts	7% (1)

Other

| Action	%
Something else	44% (46)
Offer higher wages than previously	28% (29)
Use an agency for recruitment	23% (24)
Provide more flexible working hours	29% (30)
Additional learning or training	23% (24)
Give staff the option to work at home	16% (17)
Outsource some functions	10% (11)
Provide longer-term contracts	7% (7)
Financial assitance to relocate	5% (5)

% of businesses responding to question, n = 242

Approaches to mitigating recruitment challenges varies by sector, for example:

- Health and social care firms were more likely to provide flexible working hours;
- Engineering/manufacturing were more likely to use an agency and offer training options/longer-term contracts.
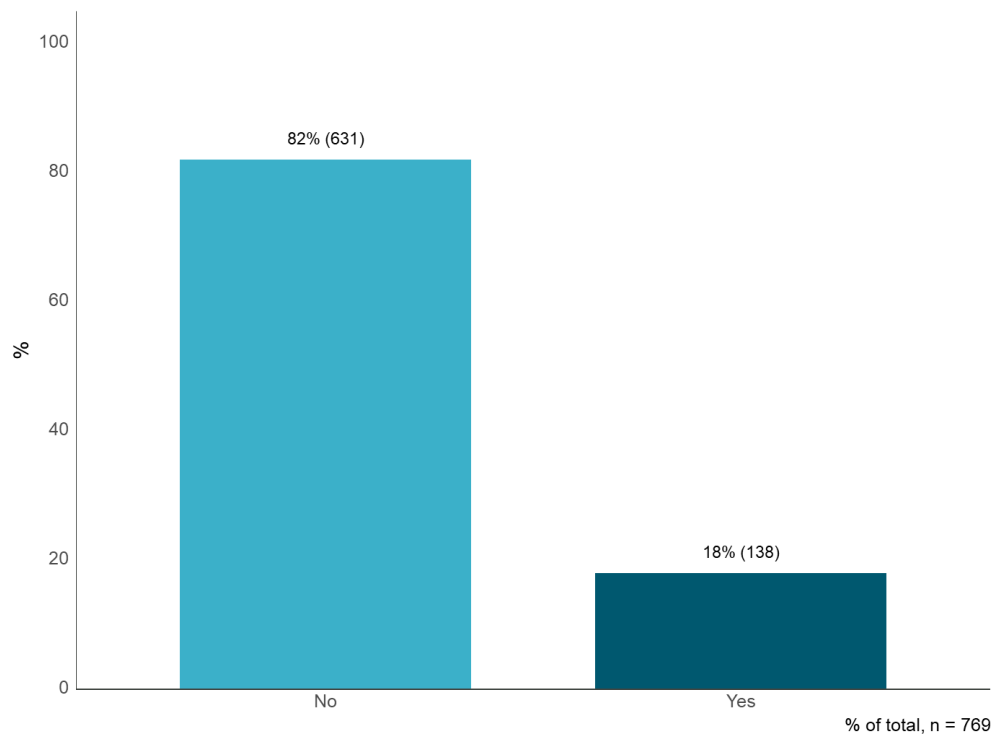
43

Mitigating Recruitment Challenges

Q2.8 What actions have you taken to mitigate any recruitment
issues that you have been having? Please select all that apply.

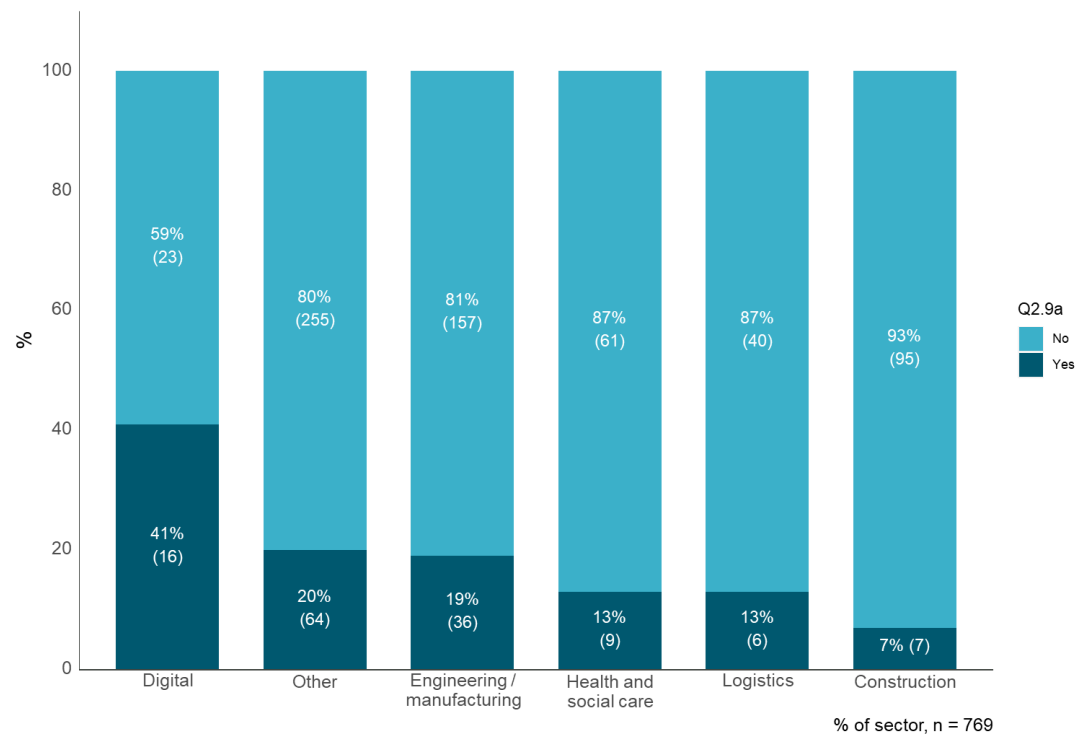% of businesses responding to question, n = 242
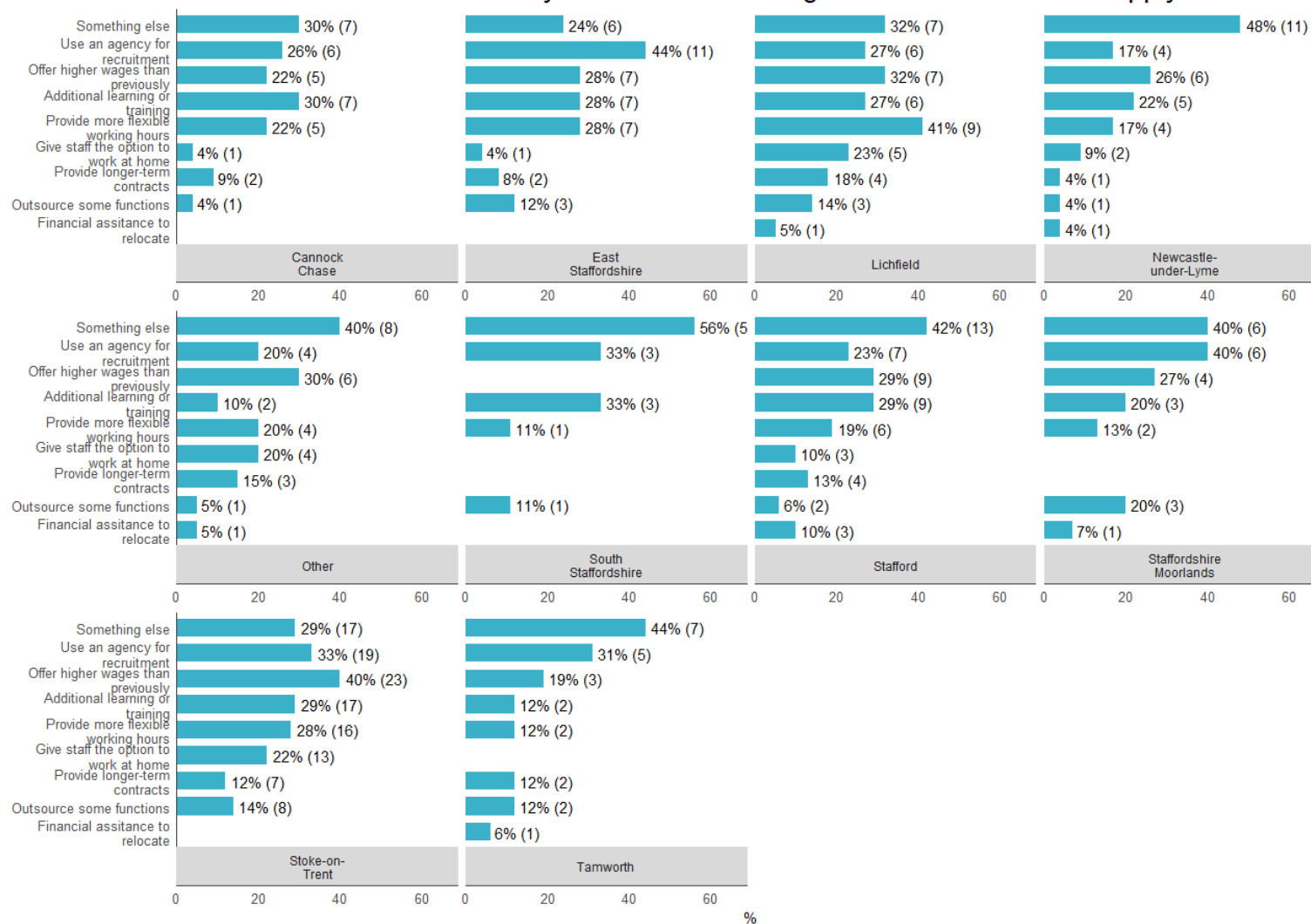
Changing Working Practises

Working practises have changed as a result of Covid-19 in 18% of businesses surveyed. This varied by sector with the highest percentage saying practises had changed in the digital sector and the lowest in construction.

Q2.9a: Have working practices your business in relation to home/ remote working changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

82% (631)

18% (138)

No   Yes

Q2.9a
No
Yes

% of total, n = 769

Q2.9a: Have working practices your business in relation to home/ remote working changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

	Digital	Other	Engineering / manufacturing	Health and social care	Logistics	Construction
No	59% (23)	80% (255)	81% (157)	87% (61)	87% (40)	93% (95)
Yes	41% (16)	20% (64)	19% (36)	13% (9)	13% (6)	7% (7)

Q2.9a
No
Yes

% of sector, n = 769

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Changing Working Practises

Q2.9a: Have working practices your business in relation to home/ remote working changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

% of locality, n = 759
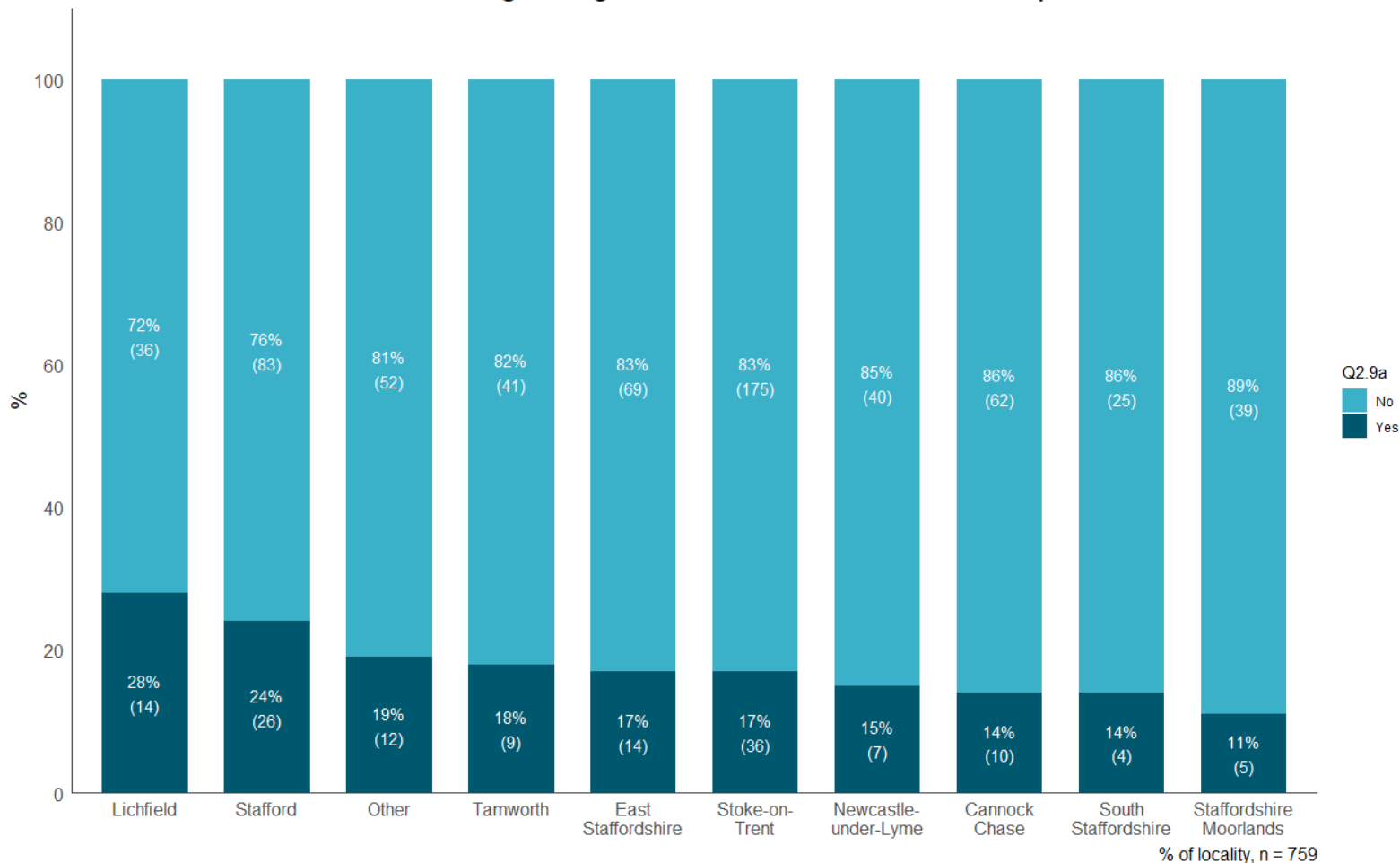
The number of businesses saying their working practises have changed also varies by location, with businesses in Lichfield most likely to say that their practises had changed.

Changing Working Practises

Q2.9b: Have working practices your business in relation to home/ remote working changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

% of businesses who have changed, n = 135
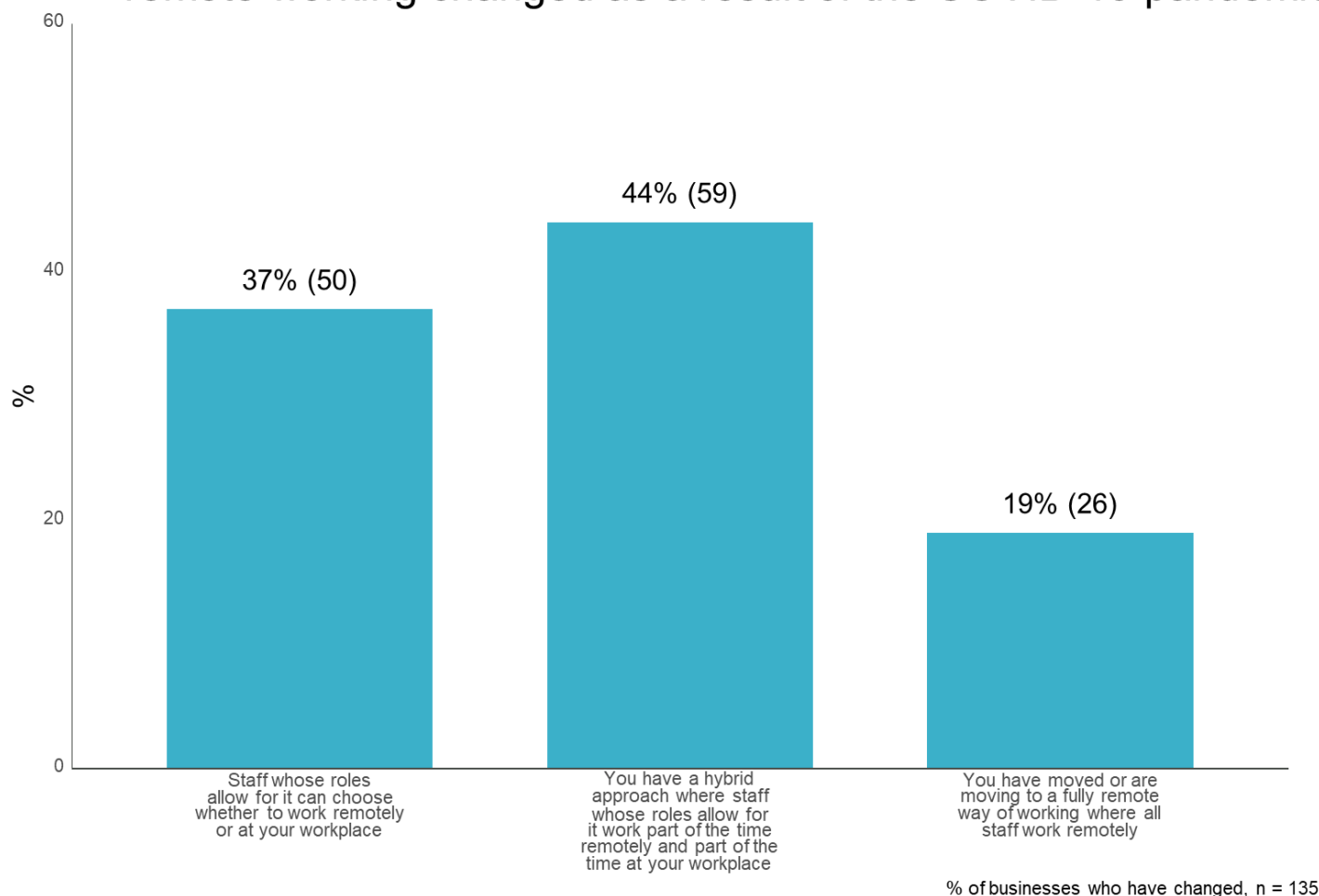
Among firms who have changed their working practises, 44% have moved to a hybrid approach.

37% have seen staff whose roles allow for it choose whether to work remotely or in the office.

The remaining 19% are moving/have moved to a fully remote way of working.

Changing Working Practises

Q2.9c: Have these changes made it easier or more difficult to recruit and retain staff?

% of businesses who have changed, n = 135

For most businesses, changing their working practises have not affected their ability to retain and recruit staff.

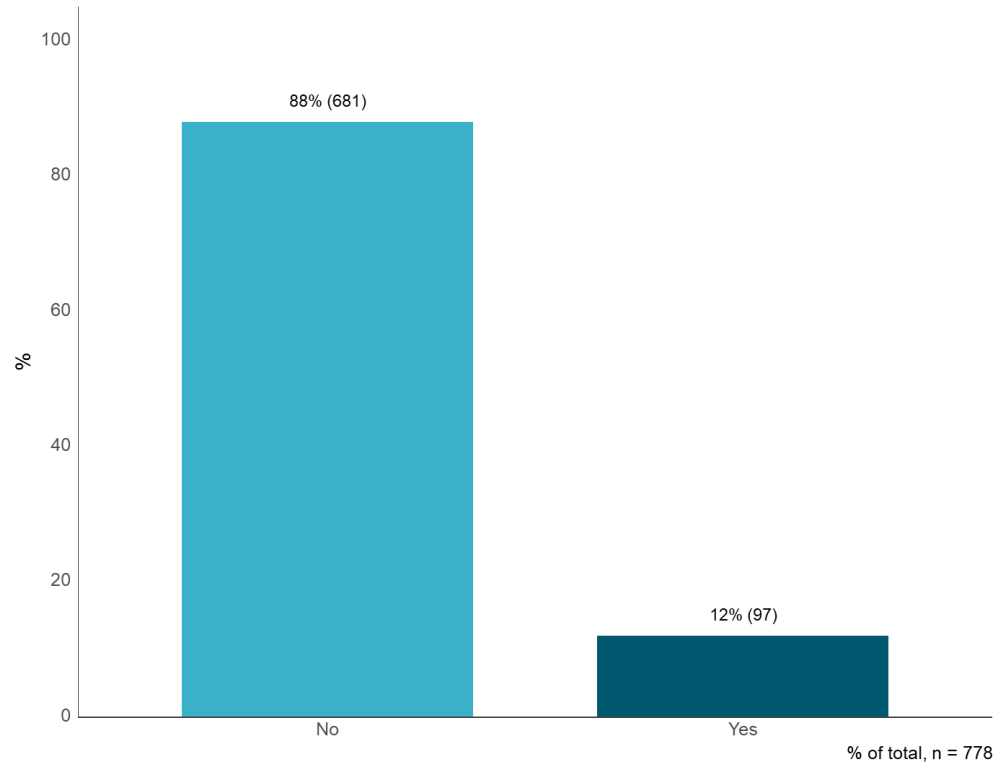For 25%, changes have made recruitment and retention easier.
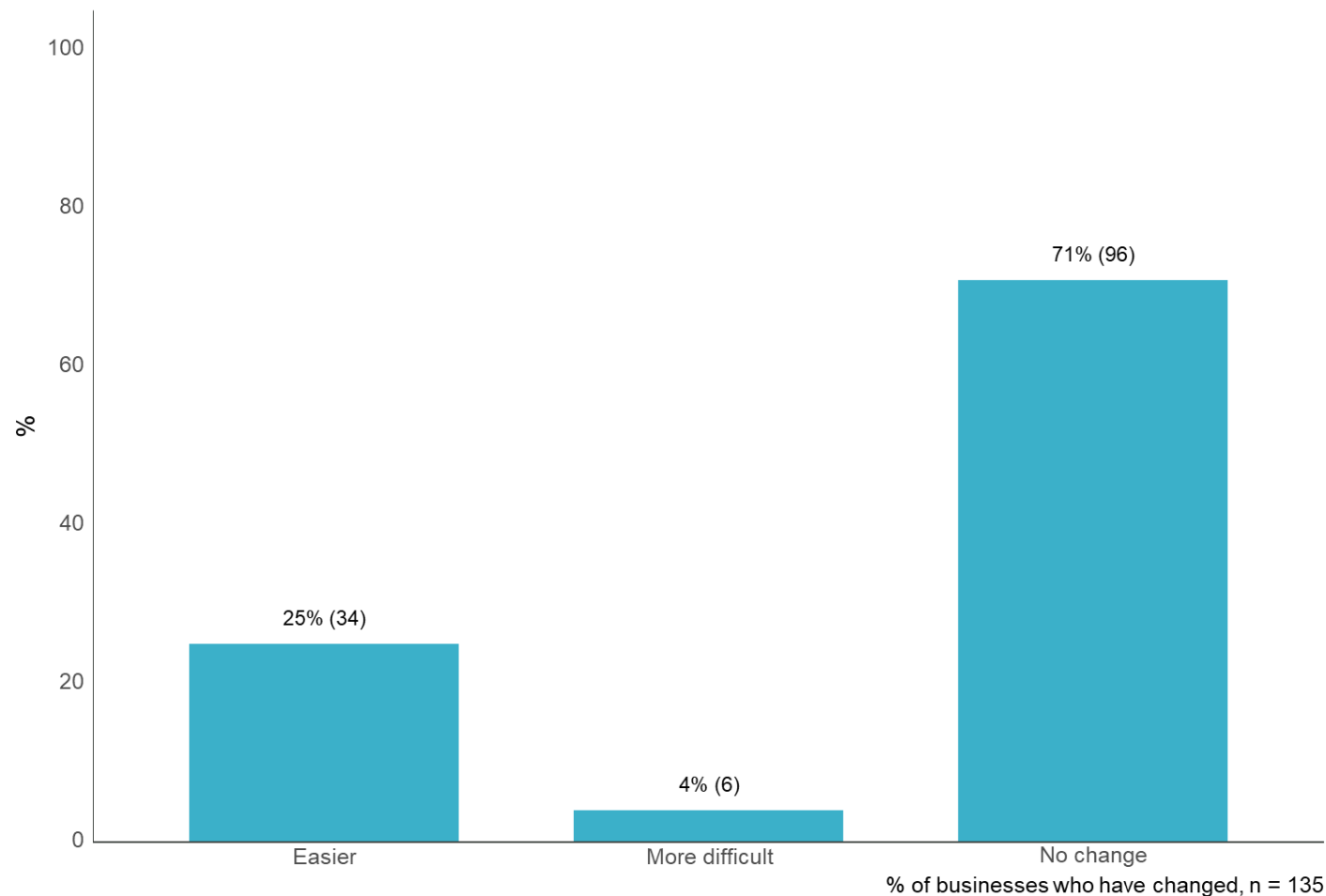
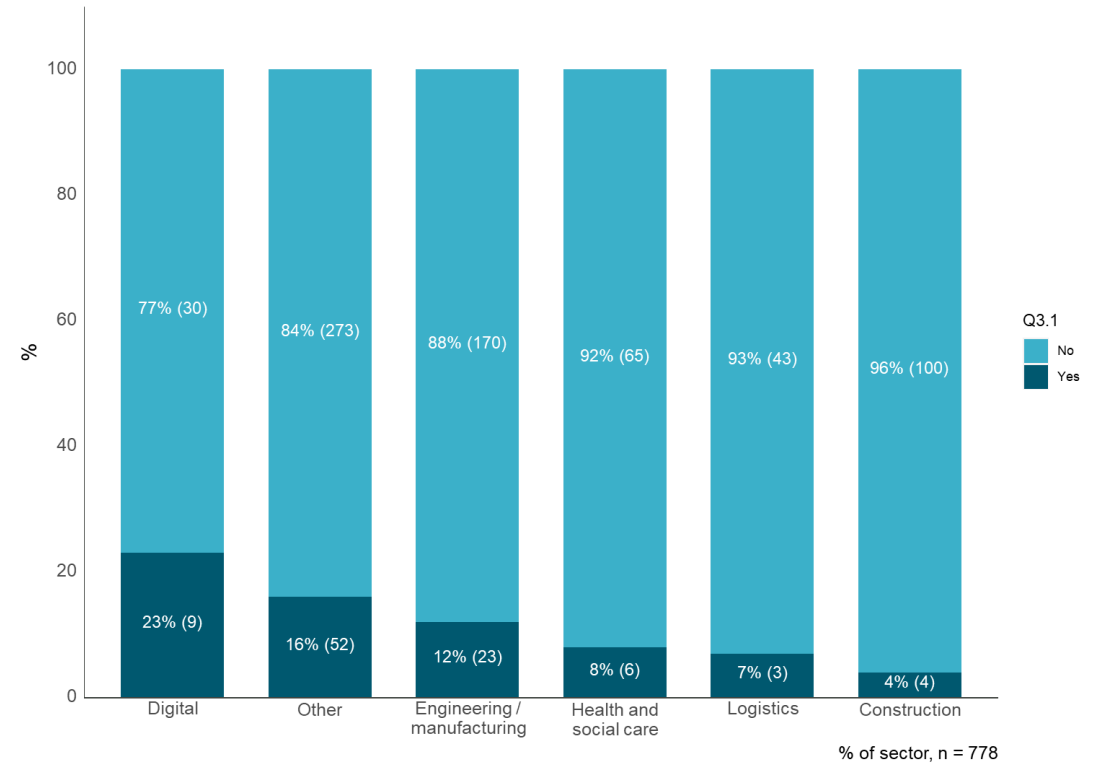# Workforce skills gaps

Metro —— Dynamics

Digital Skills Gaps

12% of respondents have digital skills gaps in their existing workforce, by sector this is highest in the digital sector and lowest in the construction sector, where just 4% of firms have digital skills gaps.

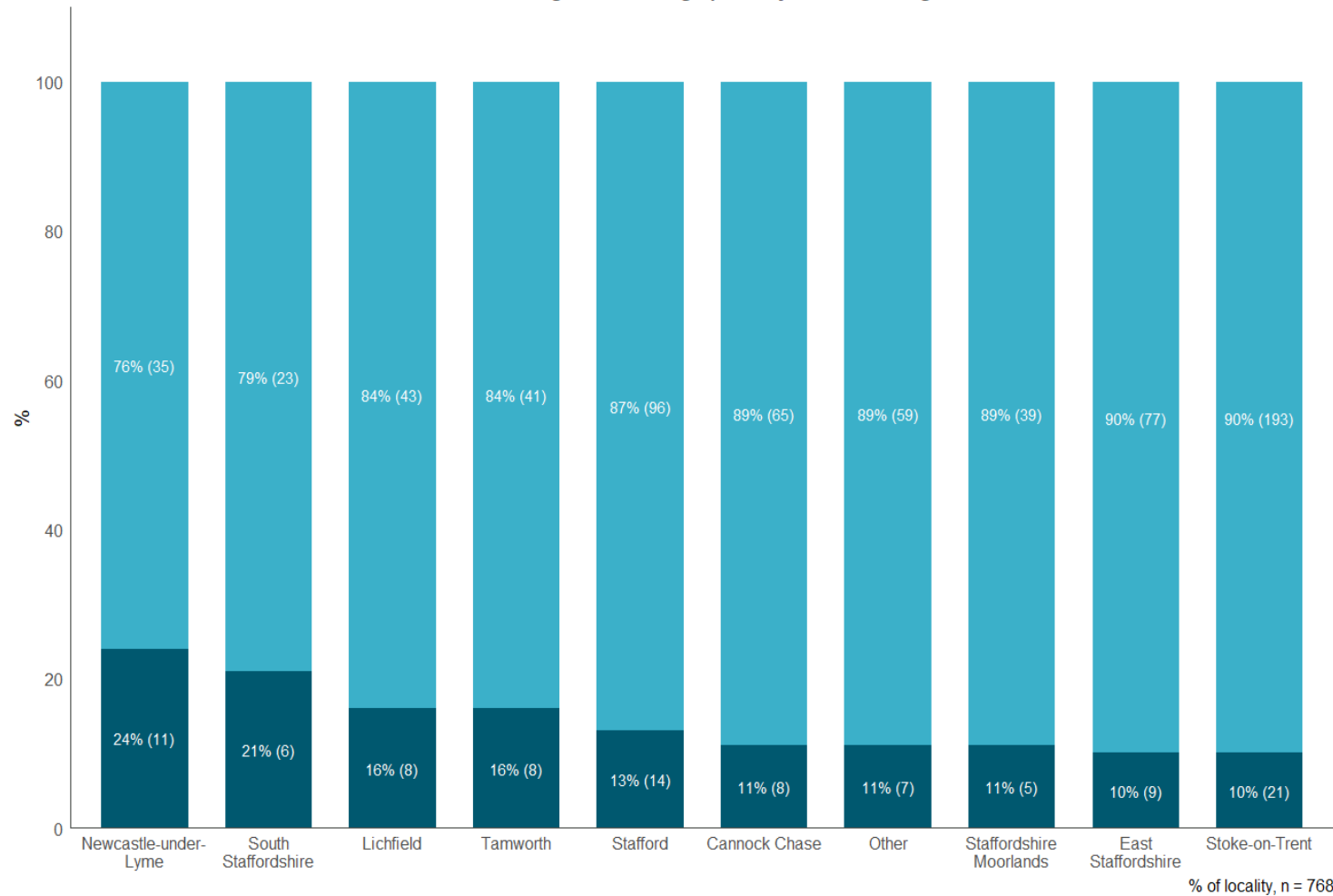Q3.1: Are there digital skills gaps in your existing workforce?

88% (681)

12% (97)

No   Yes

Q3.1
No
Yes

% of total, n = 778

Q3.1: Are there digital skills gaps in your existing workforce?

77% (30)   84% (273)   88% (170)   92% (65)   93% (43)   96% (100)

23% (9)   16% (52)   12% (23)   8% (6)   7% (3)   4% (4)

Digital   Other   Engineering / manufacturing   Health and social care   Logistics   Construction

Q3.1
No
Yes

% of sector, n = 778

Digital Skills Gaps

Q3.1: Are there digital skills gaps in your existing workforce?

Locality	No	Yes
Newcastle-under-Lyme	76% (35)	24% (11)
South Staffordshire	79% (23)	21% (6)
Lichfield	84% (43)	16% (8)
Tamworth	84% (41)	16% (8)
Stafford	87% (96)	13% (14)
Cannock Chase	89% (65)	11% (8)
Other	89% (59)	11% (7)
Staffordshire Moorlands	89% (39)	11% (5)
East Staffordshire	90% (77)	10% (9)
Stoke-on-Trent	90% (193)	10% (21)

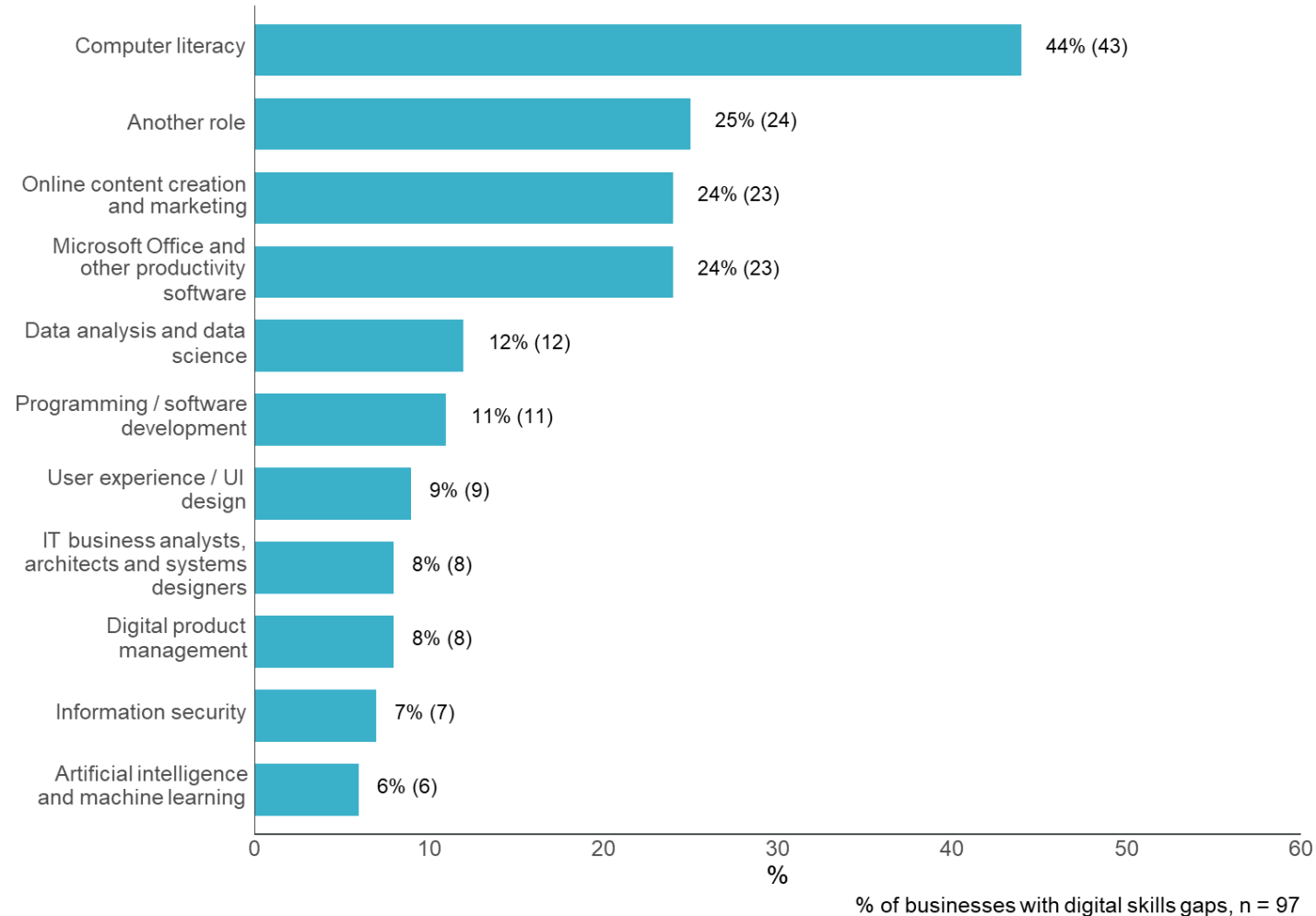Q3.1
No
Yes

% of locality, n = 768

Newcastle-under-Lyme has the highest percentage of respondents with digital skills gaps, closely followed by South Staffordshire.

The lowest proportion with digital skills gaps was in Stoke-on-Trent, where 10% of businesses have skills gaps.

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Digital Skills Gaps: Roles

Q3.1b: What type of digital roles are the gaps in?

Role	% (count)
Computer literacy	44% (43)
Another role	25% (24)
Online content creation and marketing	24% (23)
Microsoft Office and other productivity software	24% (23)
Data analysis and data science	12% (12)
Programming / software development	11% (11)
User experience / UI design	9% (9)
IT business analysts, architects and systems designers	8% (8)
Digital product management	8% (8)
Information security	7% (7)
Artificial intelligence and machine learning	6% (6)

%

% of businesses with digital skills gaps, n = 97

The most common skills gap is in computer literacy, which 44% of businesses with digital skills gaps listed.

More specialised skills like programming, UI design, security and AI were all cited by a small number of the respondents.
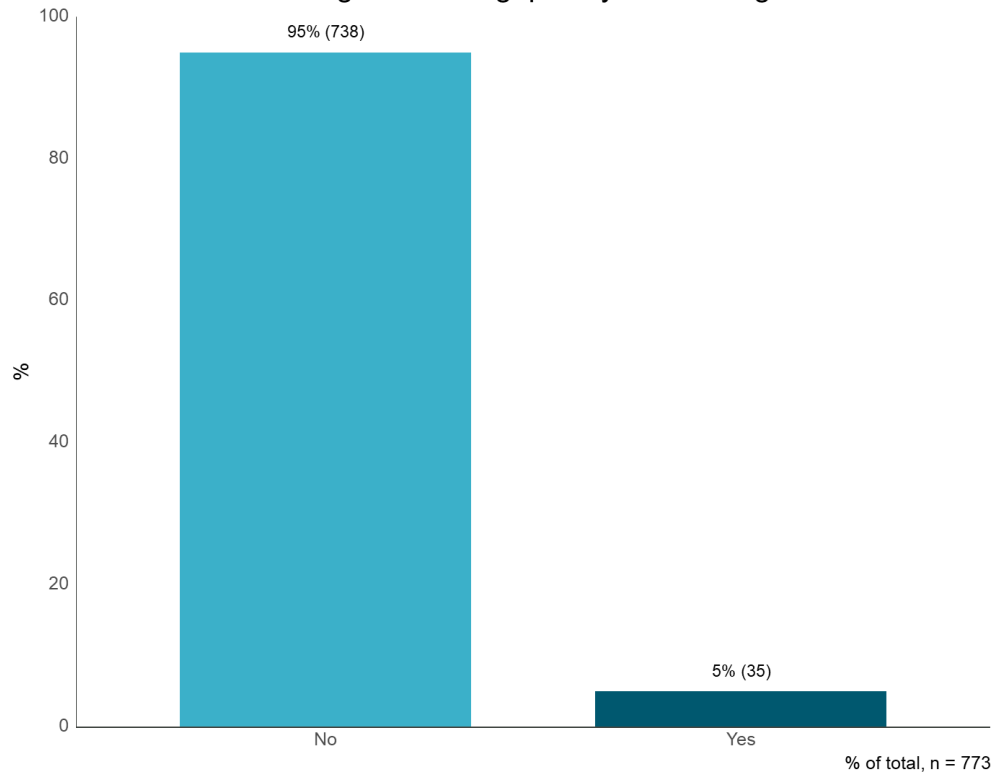
Q3.1b cont. 'Another role' responses

Responses included:

• Digital marketing

• Digital design and CAD skills

• Social media

• Familiarity with node based workflows

• Animation

• Software development

• CRM and website management
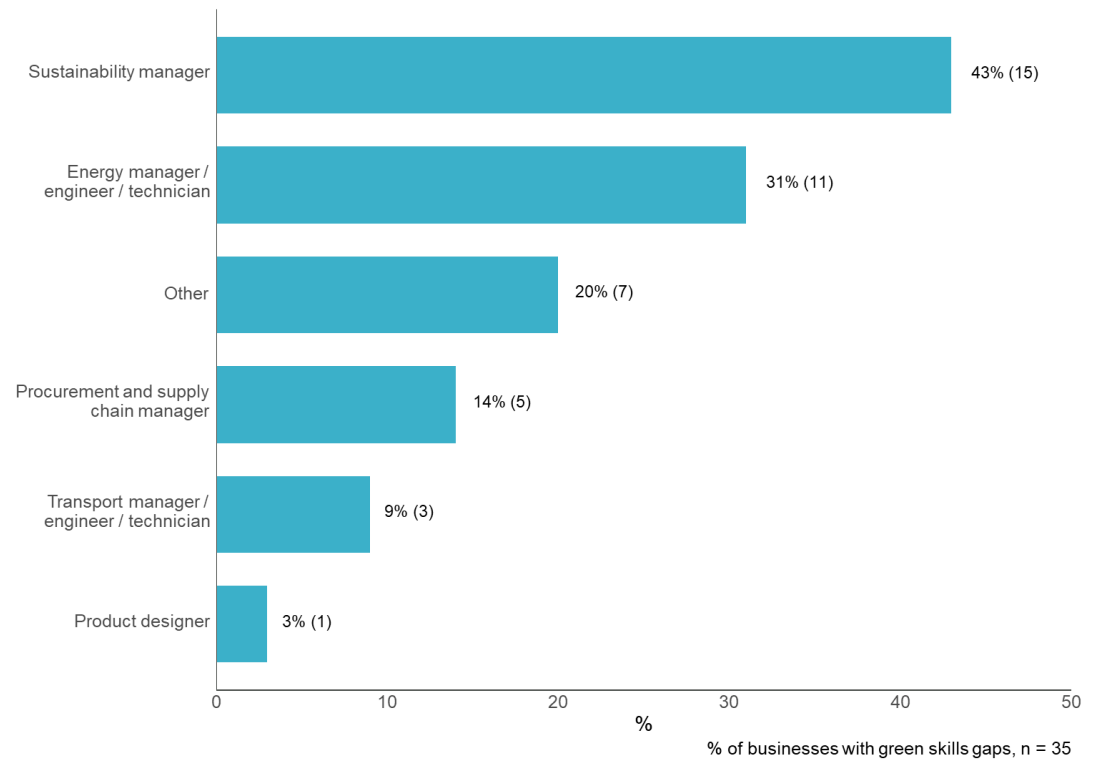
• Video production and editing

Green Skills Gaps

5% of respondents have green skills gaps in their workforce, with Sustainability Manager the most frequently cited role by firms with green skills gaps.

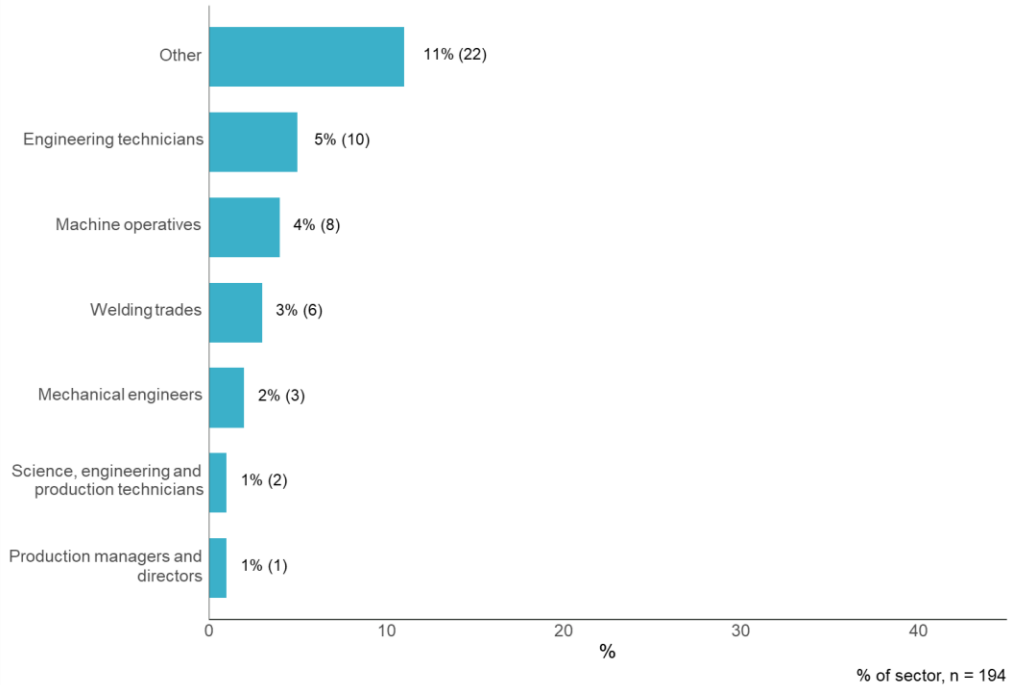Q3.2: Are there green skills gaps in your existing workforce??

95% (738)

5% (35)

No   Yes

Q3.2a
No
Yes

% of total, n = 773

Q3.2b: What type of green roles are the gaps in?

Sustainability manager — 43% (15)

Energy manager / engineer / technician — 31% (11)

Other — 20% (7)

Procurement and supply chain manager — 14% (5)

Transport manager / engineer / technician — 9% (3)

Product designer — 3% (1)

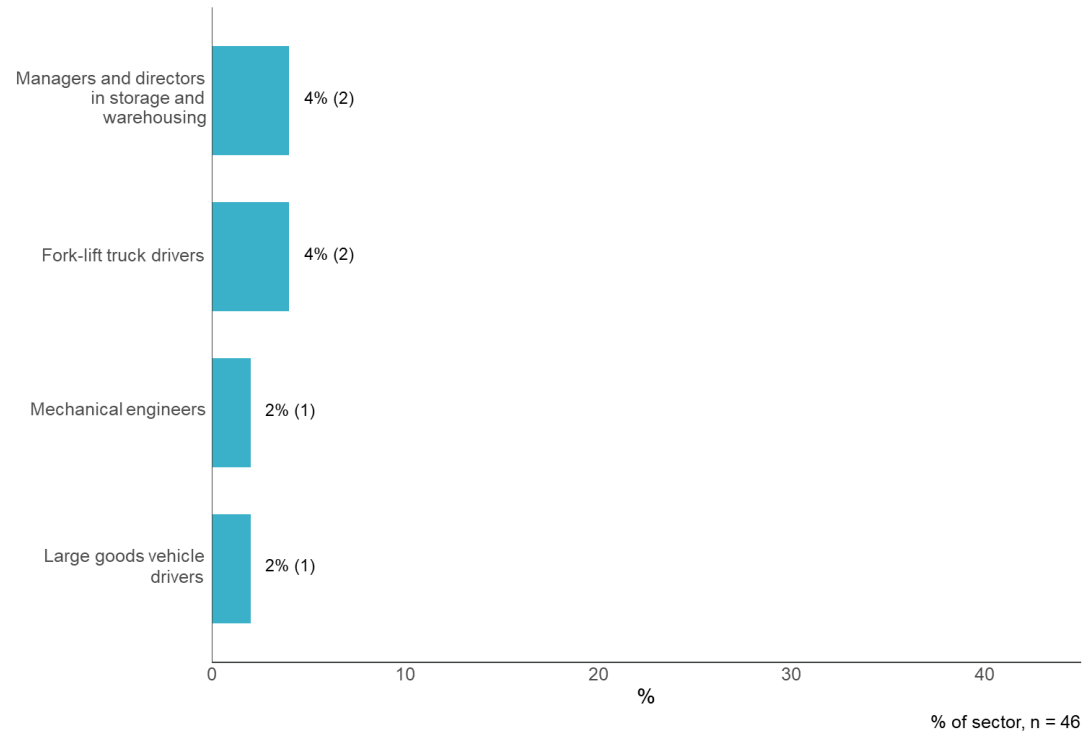% of businesses with green skills gaps, n = 35

Skills Gaps: Sector Focus

For the priority sectors, more detailed questions were asked about the nature of skills gaps.

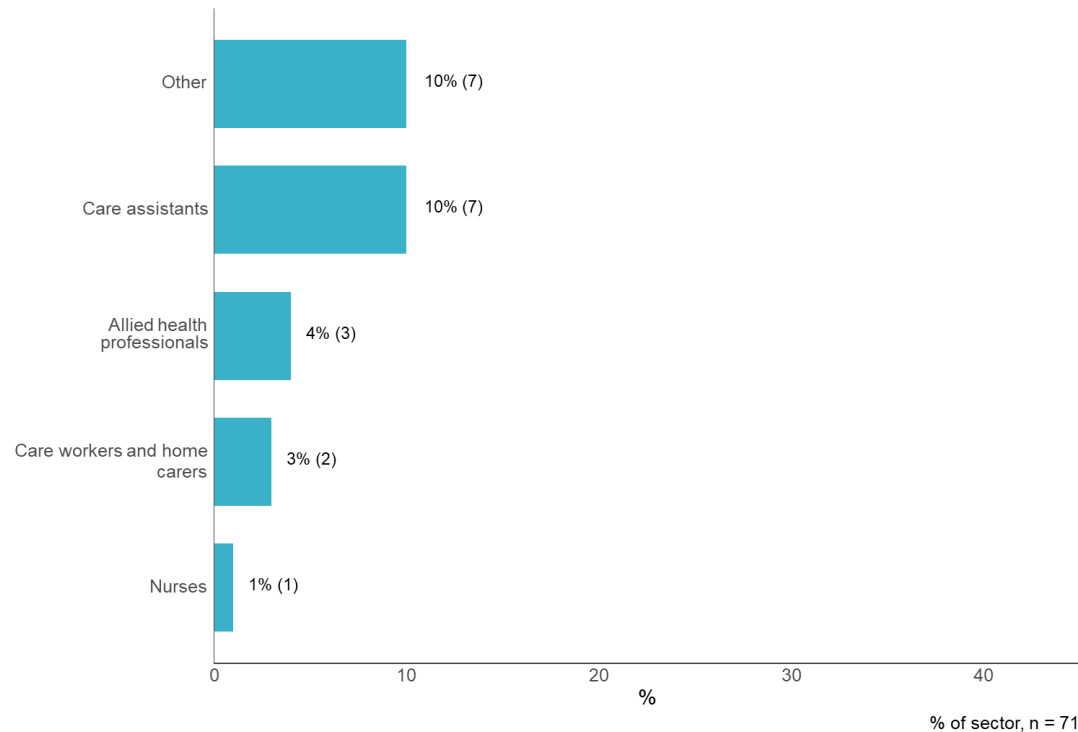Q3.3 In what roles do you have skills gaps in the workforce? [Engineering and Manufacturing]

- Other — 11% (22)
- Engineering technicians — 5% (10)
- Machine operatives — 4% (8)
- Welding trades — 3% (6)
- Mechanical engineers — 2% (3)
- Science, engineering and production technicians — 1% (2)
- Production managers and directors — 1% (1)

% of sector, n = 194

Q3.3 In what roles do you have skills gaps in the workforce? [Logistics]

- Managers and directors in storage and warehousing — 4% (2)
- Fork-lift truck drivers — 4% (2)
- Mechanical engineers — 2% (1)
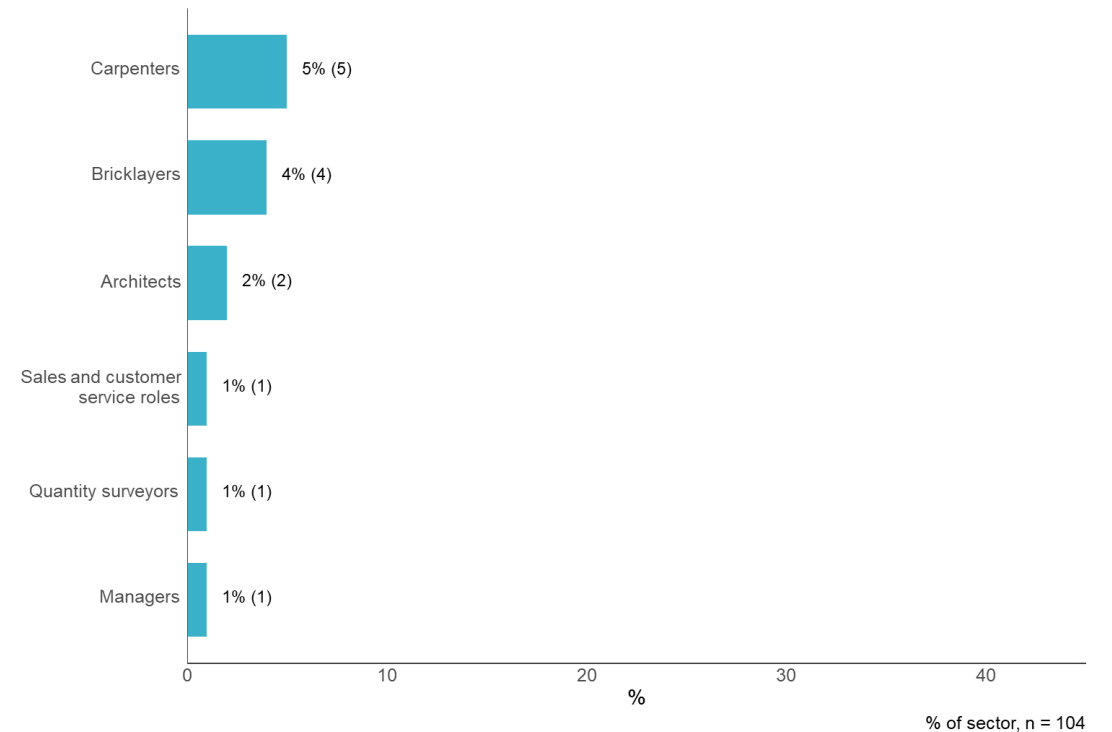- Large goods vehicle drivers — 2% (1)

% of sector, n = 46

Skills Gaps: Sector Focus

For the priority sectors, more detailed questions were asked about the nature of skills gaps.

Q3.3 In what roles do you have skills gaps in the workforce?
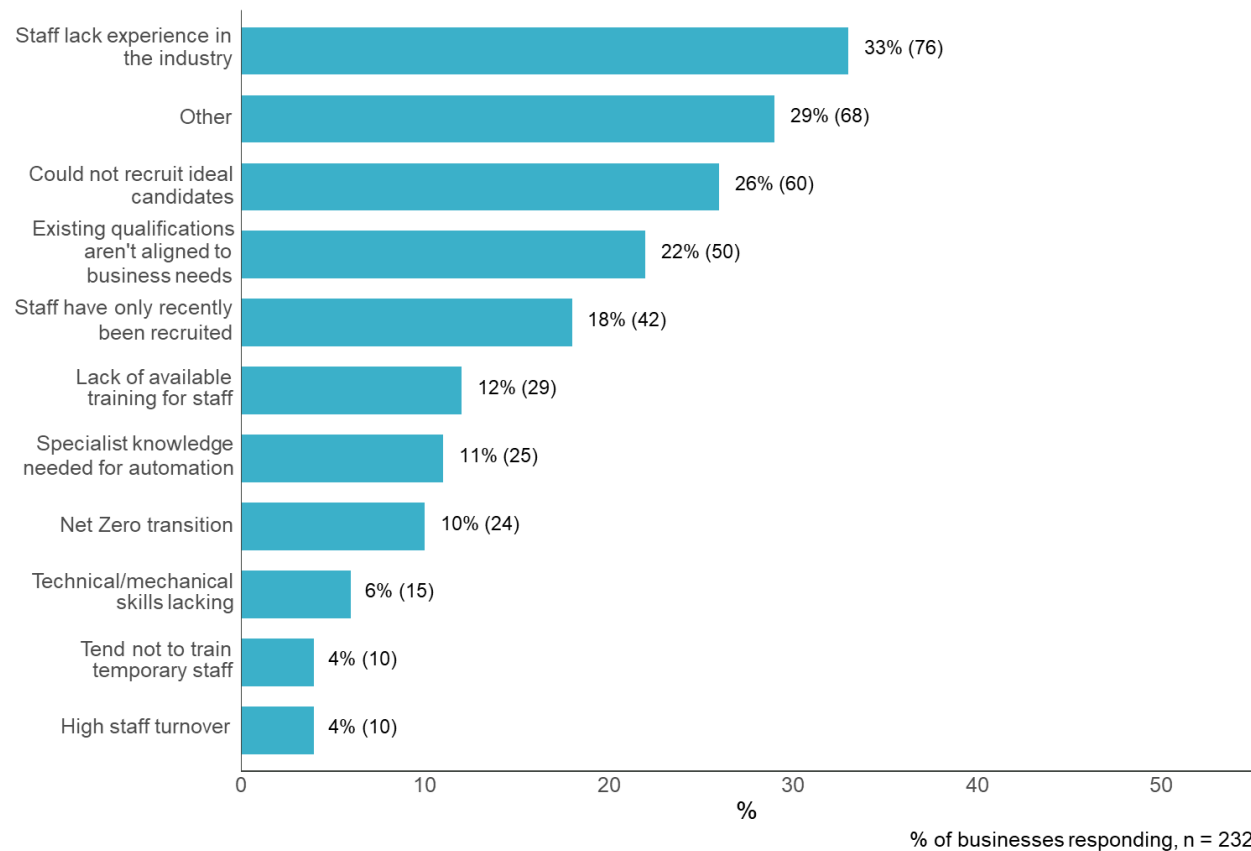[Health and social care]

- Other — 10% (7)
- Care assistants — 10% (7)
- Allied health professionals — 4% (3)
- Care workers and home carers — 3% (2)
- Nurses — 1% (1)

% of sector, n = 71

Q3.3 In what roles do you have skills gaps in the workforce?
[Construction]

- Carpenters — 5% (5)
- Bricklayers — 4% (4)
- Architects — 2% (2)
- Sales and customer service roles — 1% (1)
- Quantity surveyors — 1% (1)
- Managers — 1% (1)

% of sector, n = 104

Skills Gaps: Reasons

Q3.4 Which of the following reasons do you associate with your EXISTING workforce skills gaps?

Reason	% (count)
Staff lack experience in the industry	33% (76)
Other	29% (68)
Could not recruit ideal candidates	26% (60)
Existing qualifications aren't aligned to business needs	22% (50)
Staff have only recently been recruited	18% (42)
Lack of available training for staff	12% (29)
Specialist knowledge needed for automation	11% (25)
Net Zero transition	10% (24)
Technical/mechanical skills lacking	6% (15)
Tend not to train temporary staff	4% (10)
High staff turnover	4% (10)

%

% of businesses responding, n = 232

The most frequently cited reason for workforce skills gaps is a lack of experience in the industry among staff.

It is notable the 22% said qualifications are not aligned to business needs and 12% say there is a lack of available training.
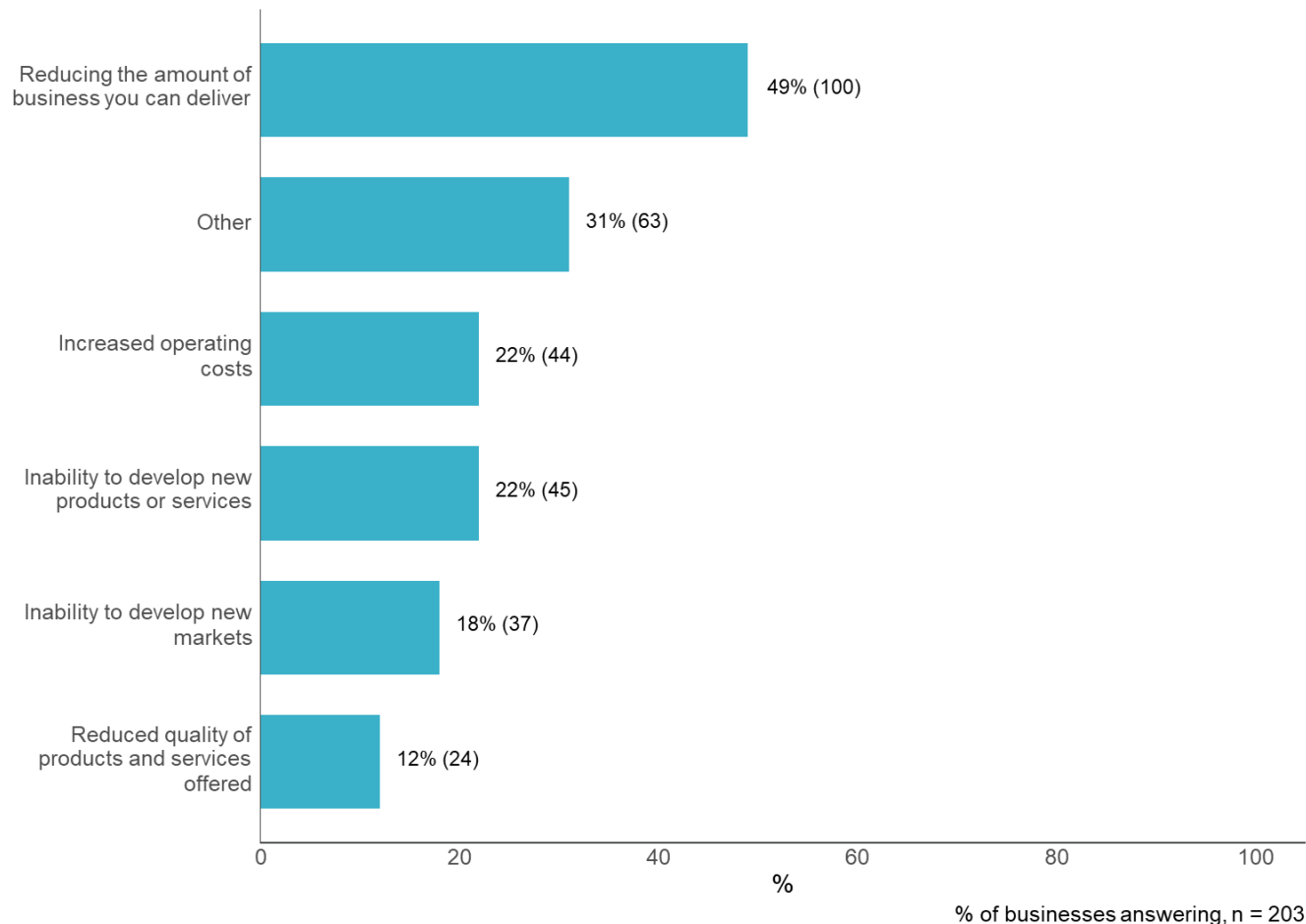
57

Q3.4 cont. 'Other' responses

Responses included:

- Limited IT skills in older staff

- Difficulty finding staff who have mix of manual skills and academic ability

- Limited margin to pay staff more

- Lack of time for training

- Lack of right courses offered at local colleges

- Lack of funding for training

Skills Gaps: Impact

Q3.5 What impact have skills gaps had on the business?

Reducing the amount of business you can deliver — 49% (100)
Other — 31% (63)
Increased operating costs — 22% (44)
Inability to develop new products or services — 22% (45)
Inability to develop new markets — 18% (37)
Reduced quality of products and services offered — 12% (24)

%

% of businesses answering, n = 203

Skills gaps have a similar impact to recruitment challenges, reducing the amount of business that can be delivered for 49% of the businesses experiencing them and increasing operating costs for 22%.

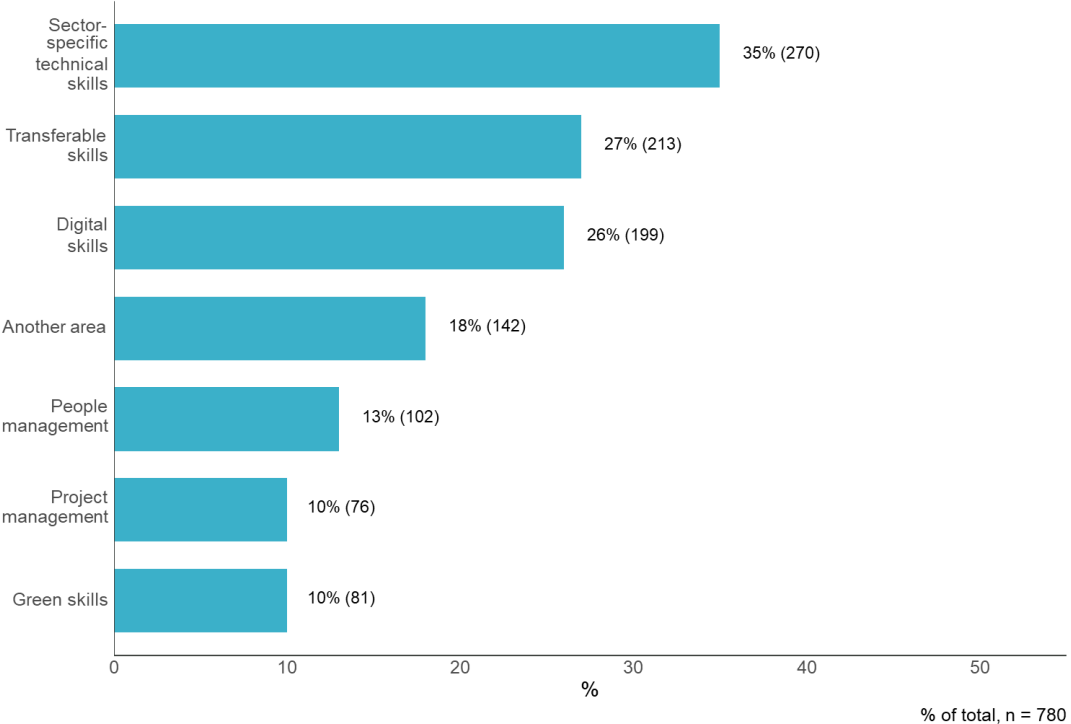It also prevents a number of businesses from developing new products/services and from developing new markets.
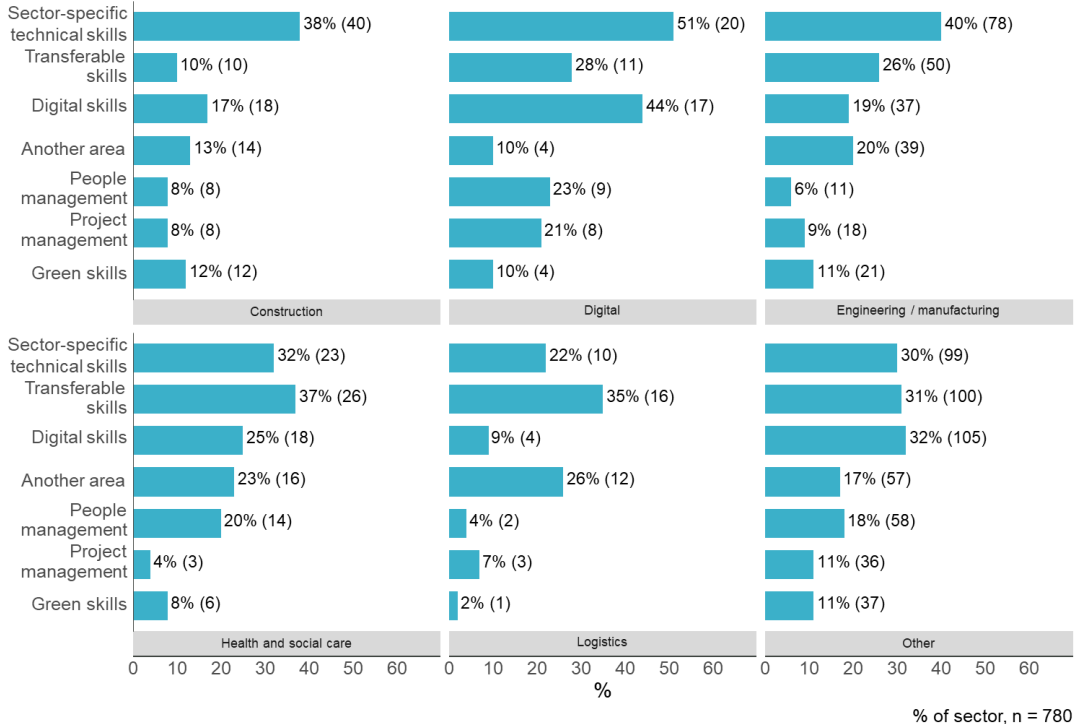
Future skills needs

Metro —— Dynamics

Key Future Skills Needs

For most businesses the key future skills requirements will be sector specific technical skills and transferable skills. 10% of businesses expect green skills to be key for them in the future.

Q4.1 What are the key future skills needs for your business in the long term?

Skill	% (n)
Sector-specific technical skills	35% (270)
Transferable skills	27% (213)
Digital skills	26% (199)
Another area	18% (142)
People management	13% (102)
Project management	10% (76)
Green skills	10% (81)

% of total, n = 780

Q4.1 What are the key future skills needs for your business in the long term?

Skill	Construction	Digital	Engineering / manufacturing
Sector-specific technical skills	38% (40)	51% (20)	40% (78)
Transferable skills	10% (10)	28% (11)	26% (50)
Digital skills	17% (18)	44% (17)	19% (37)
Another area	13% (14)	10% (4)	20% (39)
People management	8% (8)	23% (9)	6% (11)
Project management	8% (8)	21% (8)	9% (18)
Green skills	12% (12)	10% (4)	11% (21)

Skill	Health and social care	Logistics	Other
Sector-specific technical skills	32% (23)	22% (10)	30% (99)
Transferable skills	37% (26)	35% (16)	31% (100)
Digital skills	25% (18)	9% (4)	32% (105)
Another area	23% (16)	26% (12)	17% (57)
People management	20% (14)	4% (2)	18% (58)
Project management	4% (3)	7% (3)	11% (36)
Green skills	8% (6)	2% (1)	11% (37)

% of sector, n = 780

61

Key Future Skills Needs

Q4.1 What are the key future skills needs for your business in the long term?
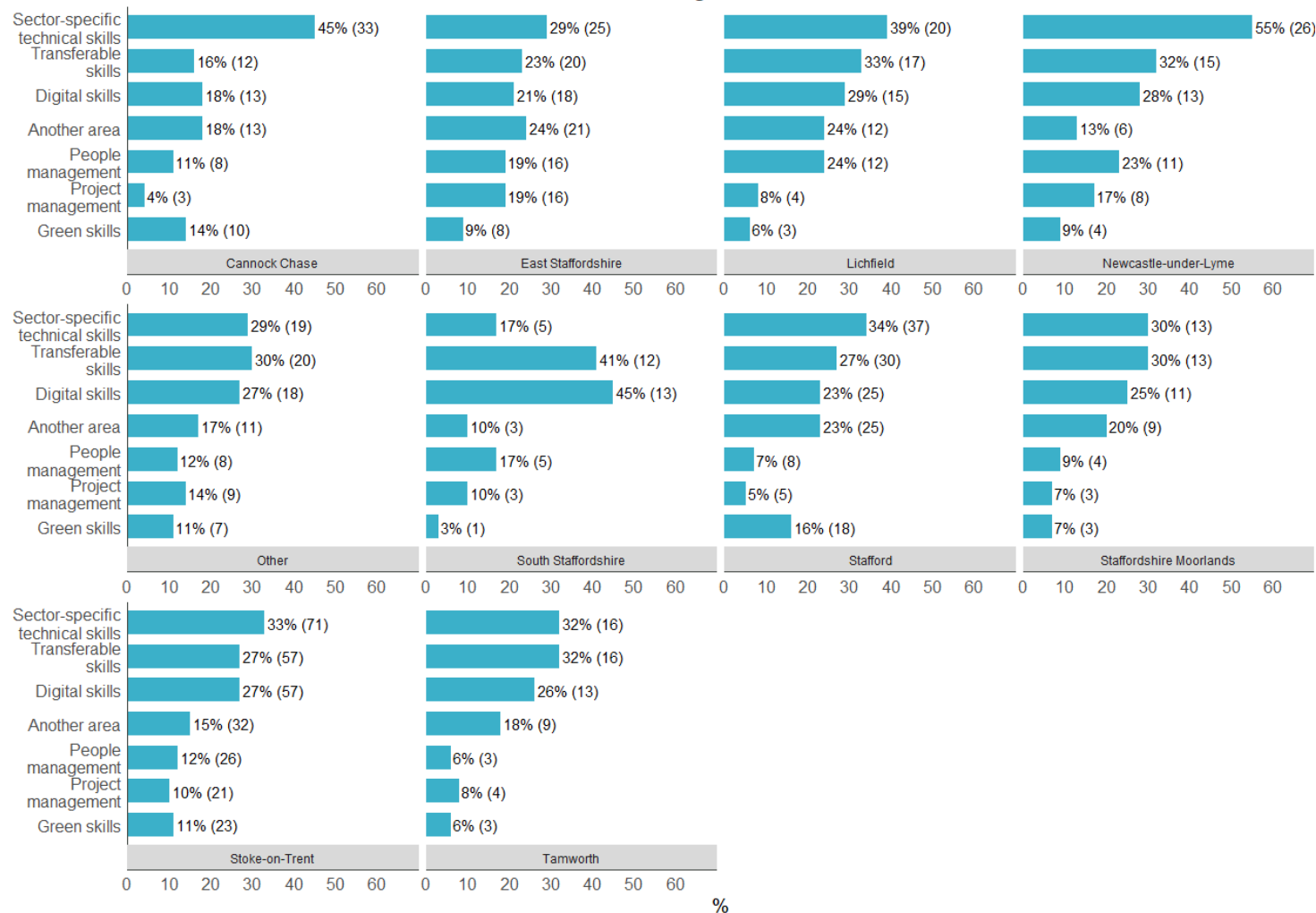
The proportion of businesses for whom digital skills will be key is high in South Staffordshire, at 45%.

% of locality, n = 770

62

Q4.1 cont. 'Another area' responses

Responses included:

- Web design

- Digital skills

- Marketing and sales

- Customer service

- Advancing technologies

- Net zero knowledge

- Engineering skills

- Mechanical and electronics

- Manufacturing and fabrication

- Drivers and forklift drivers

- Skilled welders

- Bricklaying and installing

- Social services and caring

- Health and safety

Q4.2 Tell us as much as you can about your business's future skills needs in relation to the areas identified by you in the previous question

Responses included:

- Progressing with technological and digital advances

- Things are progressing very quickly, and a younger team helps the business stay up-to-date with tools and skills

- Technical and digital skills needs expected to increase

- Keeping up with accreditation needs and site rules

- Specific needs depend on specific contracts

- Need for staff who have motivation to work and train

- Smaller businesses focusing on hiring for specific future skills needs

- Some business leaders planning to retire and shut businesses in coming years

Future Skills Needs: Digital

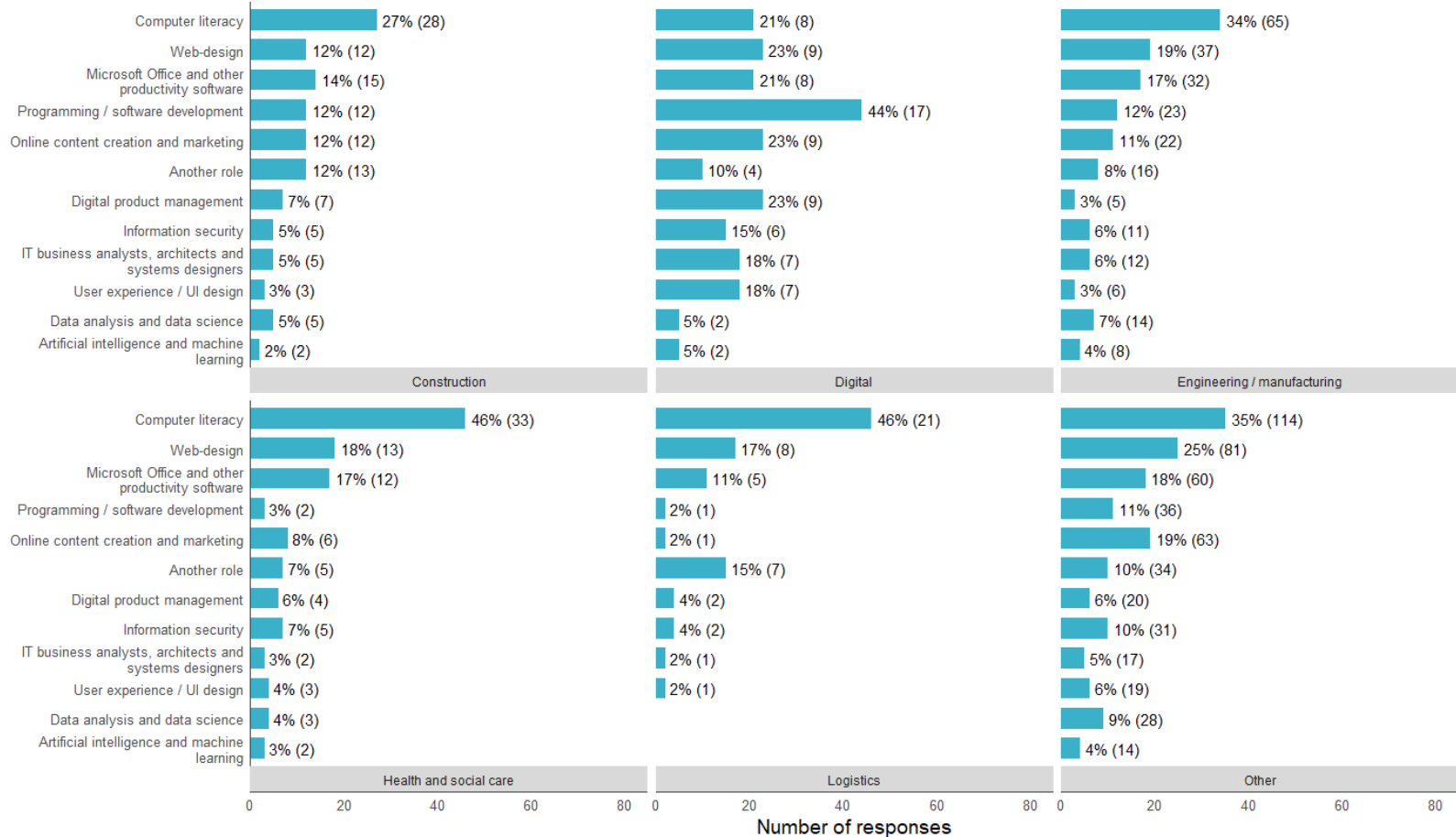## Q4.3 Which digital roles or skills needs do you expect your business to need in the future?

Skill	% (count)
Computer literacy	34% (269)
Web-design	21% (160)
Microsoft Office and other productivity software	17% (132)
Online content creation and marketing	14% (113)
Programming / software development	12% (91)
Another role	10% (79)
Information security	8% (60)
Data analysis and data science	7% (52)
IT business analysts architects and systems designers	6% (44)
Digital product management	6% (47)
User experience / UI design	5% (39)
Artificial intelligence and machine learning	4% (28)

%

% of total, n = 780
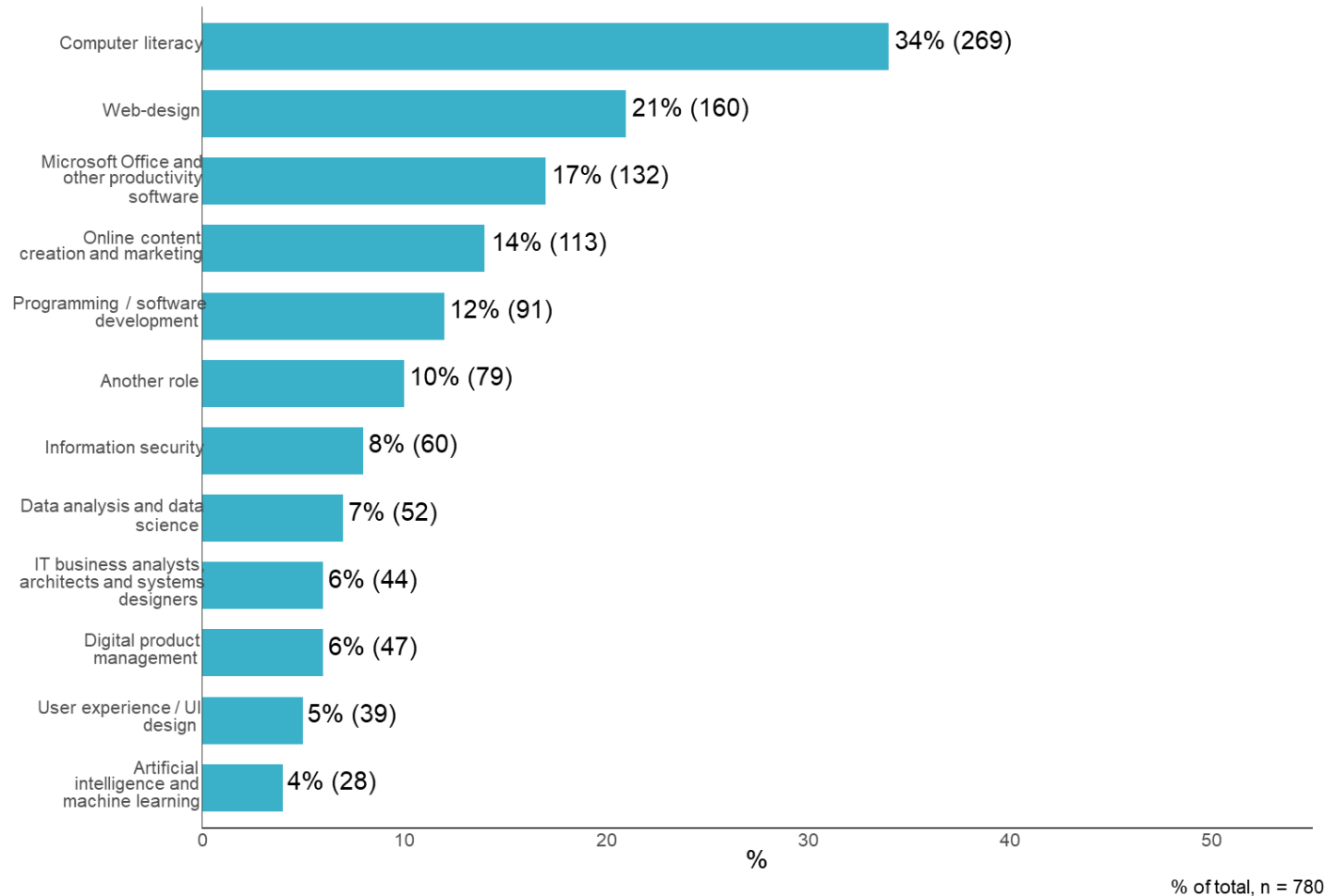
Businesses expects to need a wide range of digital skills in the future. The most common responses are skills like computer literacy, web-design, Microsoft Office and online content creation.

Fewer firms expect to need skills in areas like information security, data analysis and user experience.

Future Skills Needs: Digital

Q4.3 Which digital roles or skills needs do you expect your business to need in the future?
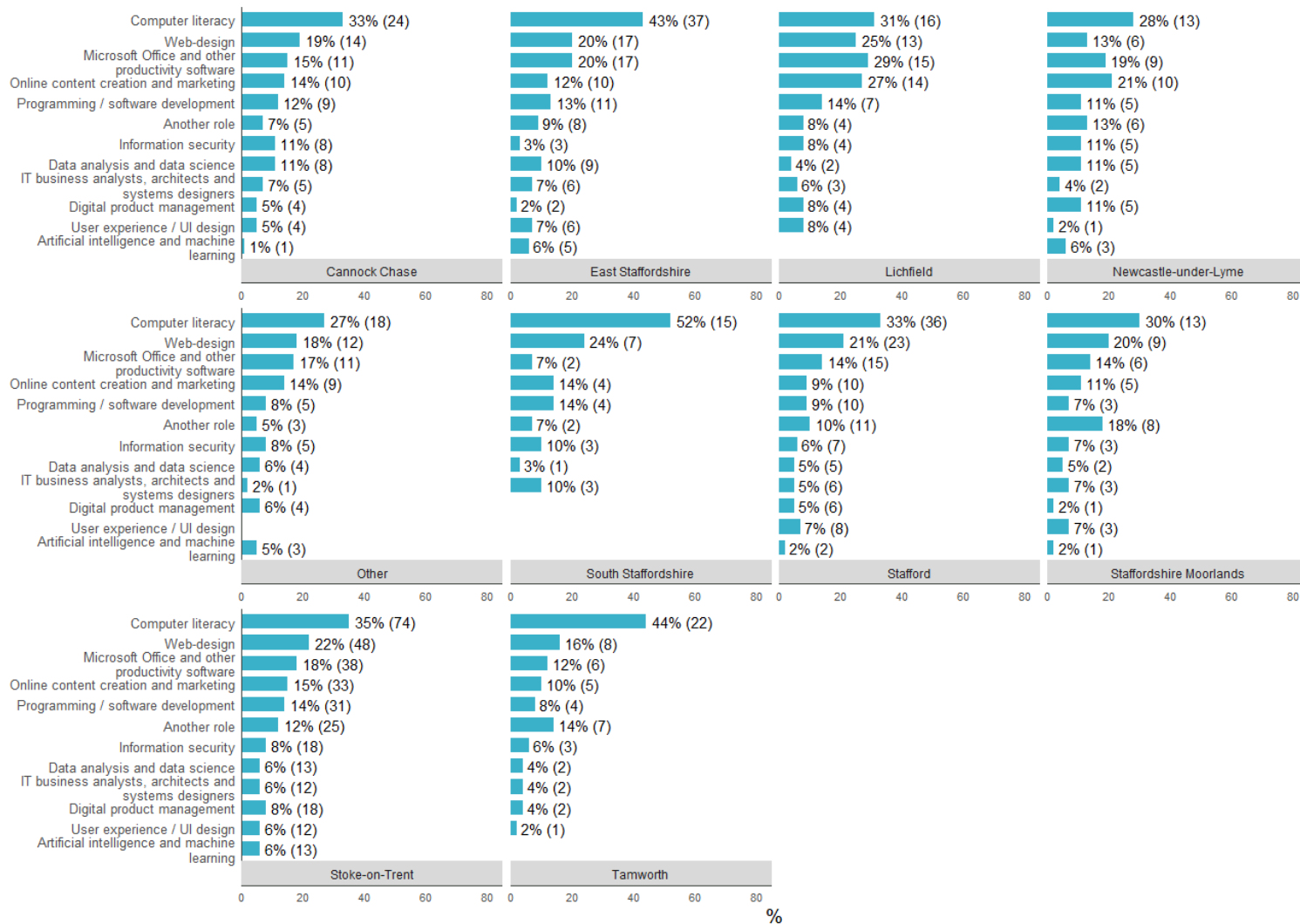
Expected future needs follow broadly similar patterns across sectors, with the exception of the digital sector, where future needs are quite different.

% of sector, n = 780

Future Skills Needs: Digital

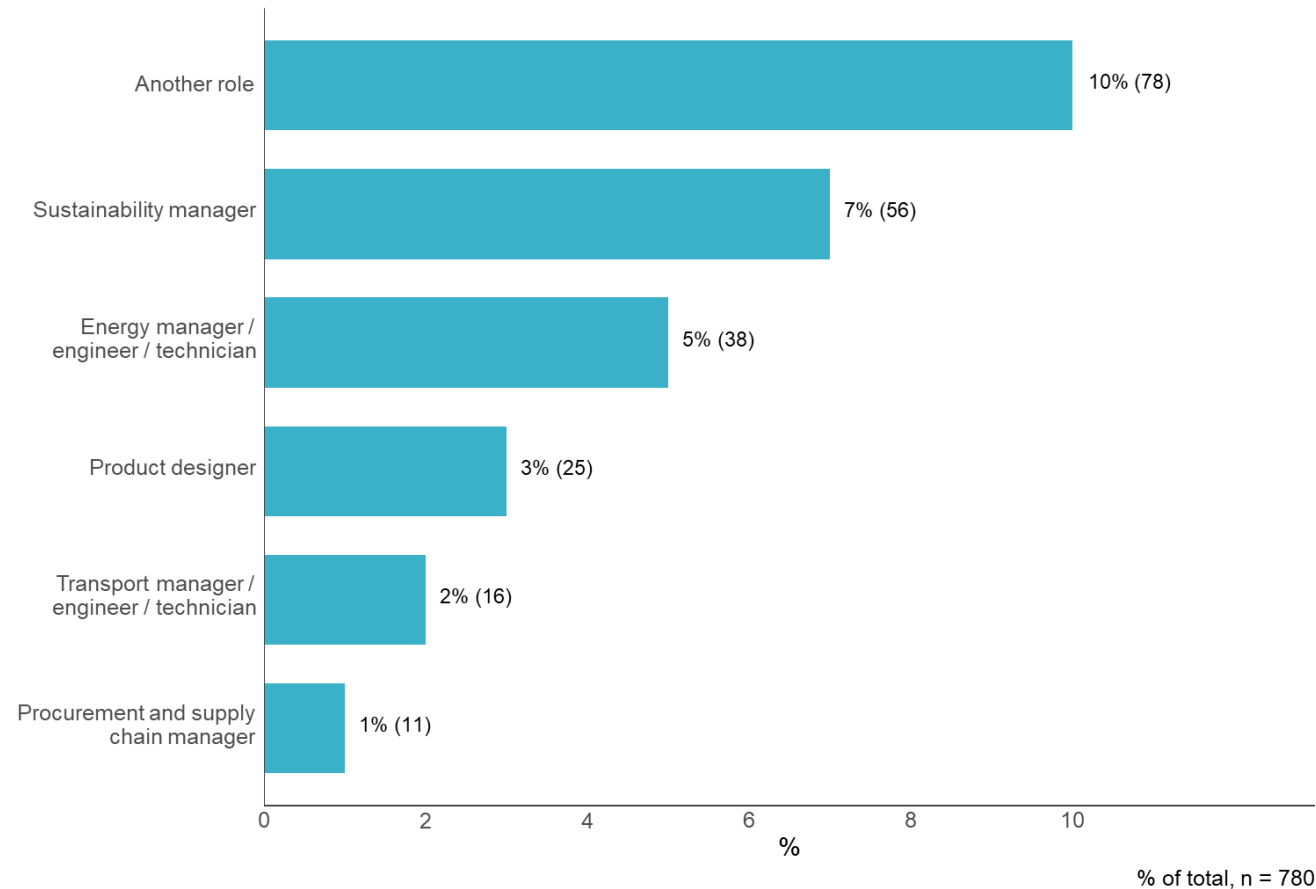**Q4.3 Which digital roles or skills needs do you expect your business to need in the future?**

Future digital skills needs are similar across the localities of the LEP area.

Computer literacy is the most frequent response in each area.

Cannock Chase
- Computer literacy — 33% (24)
- Web-design — 19% (14)
- Microsoft Office and other productivity software — 15% (11)
- Online content creation and marketing — 14% (10)
- Programming / software development — 12% (9)
- Another role — 7% (5)
- Information security — 11% (8)
- Data analysis and data science — 11% (8)
- IT business analysts, architects and systems designers — 7% (5)
- Digital product management — 5% (4)
- User experience / UI design — 5% (4)
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning — 1% (1)

East Staffordshire
- Computer literacy — 43% (37)
- Web-design — 20% (17)
- Microsoft Office and other productivity software — 20% (17)
- Online content creation and marketing — 12% (10)
- Programming / software development — 13% (11)
- Another role — 9% (8)
- Information security — 3% (3)
- Data analysis and data science — 10% (9)
- IT business analysts, architects and systems designers — 7% (6)
- Digital product management — 2% (2)
- User experience / UI design — 7% (6)
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning — 6% (5)

Lichfield
- Computer literacy — 31% (16)
- Web-design — 25% (13)
- Microsoft Office and other productivity software — 29% (15)
- Online content creation and marketing — 27% (14)
- Programming / software development — 14% (7)
- Another role — 8% (4)
- Information security — 8% (4)
- Data analysis and data science — 4% (2)
- IT business analysts, architects and systems designers — 6% (3)
- Digital product management — 8% (4)
- User experience / UI design — 8% (4)

Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Computer literacy — 28% (13)
- Web-design — 13% (6)
- Microsoft Office and other productivity software — 19% (9)
- Online content creation and marketing — 21% (10)
- Programming / software development — 11% (5)
- Another role — 13% (6)
- Information security — 11% (5)
- Data analysis and data science — 11% (5)
- IT business analysts, architects and systems designers — 4% (2)
- Digital product management — 11% (5)
- User experience / UI design — 2% (1)
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning — 6% (3)

Other
- Computer literacy — 27% (18)
- Web-design — 18% (12)
- Microsoft Office and other productivity software — 17% (11)
- Online content creation and marketing — 14% (9)
- Programming / software development — 8% (5)
- Another role — 5% (3)
- Information security — 8% (5)
- Data analysis and data science — 6% (4)
- IT business analysts, architects and systems designers — 2% (1)
- Digital product management — 6% (4)
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning — 5% (3)

South Staffordshire
- Computer literacy — 52% (15)
- Web-design — 24% (7)
- Microsoft Office and other productivity software — 7% (2)
- Online content creation and marketing — 14% (4)
- Programming / software development — 14% (4)
- Another role — 7% (2)
- Information security — 10% (3)
- Data analysis and data science — 3% (1)
- IT business analysts, architects and systems designers — 10% (3)

Stafford
- Computer literacy — 33% (36)
- Web-design — 21% (23)
- Microsoft Office and other productivity software — 14% (15)
- Online content creation and marketing — 9% (10)
- Programming / software development — 9% (10)
- Another role — 10% (11)
- Information security — 6% (7)
- Data analysis and data science — 5% (5)
- IT business analysts, architects and systems designers — 5% (6)
- Digital product management — 5% (6)
- User experience / UI design — 7% (8)
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning — 2% (2)

Staffordshire Moorlands
- Computer literacy — 30% (13)
- Web-design — 20% (9)
- Microsoft Office and other productivity software — 14% (6)
- Online content creation and marketing — 11% (5)
- Programming / software development — 7% (3)
- Another role — 18% (8)
- Information security — 7% (3)
- Data analysis and data science — 5% (2)
- IT business analysts, architects and systems designers — 7% (3)
- Digital product management — 2% (1)
- User experience / UI design — 7% (3)
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning — 2% (1)

Stoke-on-Trent
- Computer literacy — 35% (74)
- Web-design — 22% (48)
- Microsoft Office and other productivity software — 18% (38)
- Online content creation and marketing — 15% (33)
- Programming / software development — 14% (31)
- Another role — 12% (25)
- Information security — 8% (18)
- Data analysis and data science — 6% (13)
- IT business analysts, architects and systems designers — 6% (12)
- Digital product management — 8% (18)
- User experience / UI design — 6% (12)
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning — 6% (13)

Tamworth
- Computer literacy — 44% (22)
- Web-design — 16% (8)
- Microsoft Office and other productivity software — 12% (6)
- Online content creation and marketing — 10% (5)
- Programming / software development — 8% (4)
- Another role — 14% (7)
- Information security — 6% (3)
- Data analysis and data science — 4% (2)
- IT business analysts, architects and systems designers — 4% (2)
- Digital product management — 4% (2)
- User experience / UI design — 2% (1)

% of locality, n = 770

67

Future Skills Needs: Green

Q4.4 Which Green roles or skills needs do you expect your business to need in the future?


The small percentage of firms surveyed who expect they will need green roles/skills in the future is notable, particularly given the sectoral composition of the sample, with engineering/manufacturing and construction firms well represented.

% of total, n = 780

Future Skills Needs: Green

We can look at green skills needs by sector and locality but given the small number of firms responding to this question it is of limited usefulness.

Q4.4 Which Green roles or skills needs do you expect your business to need in the future?
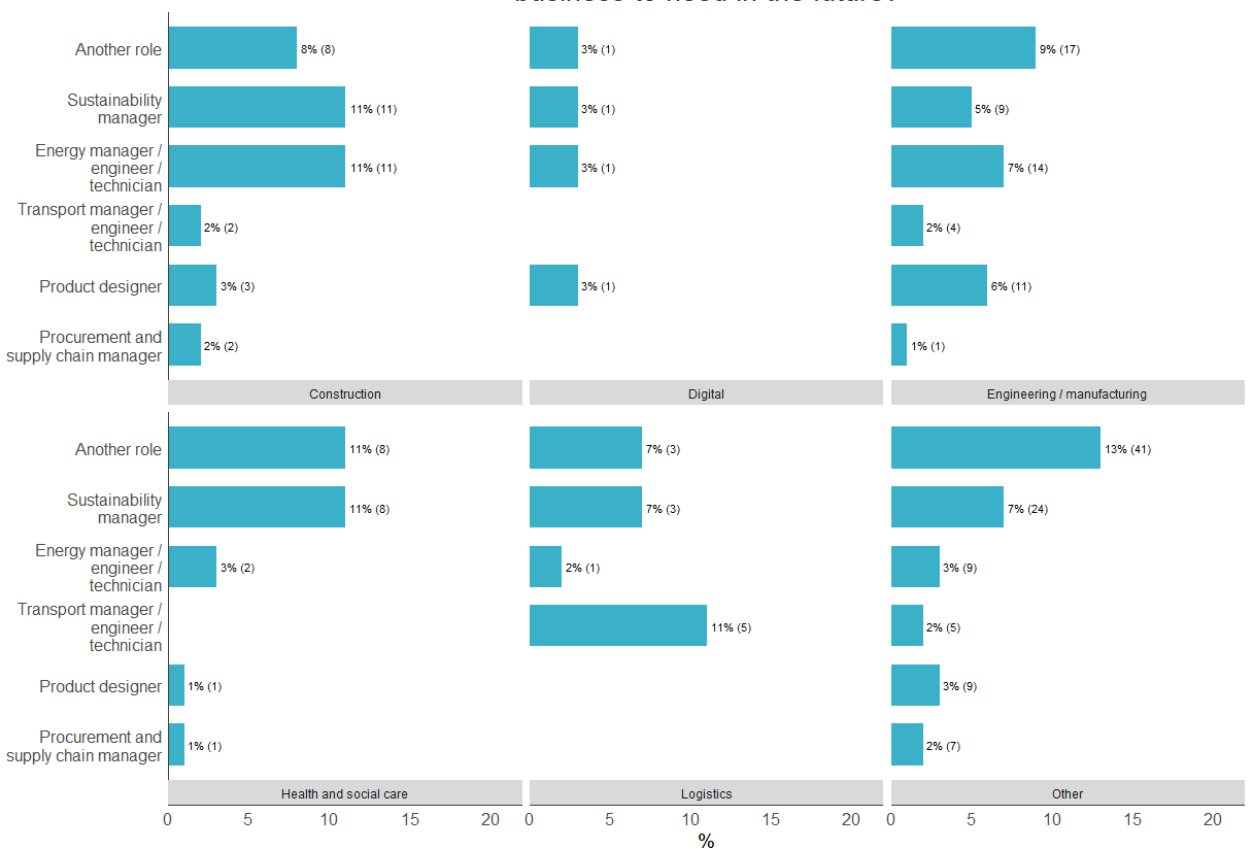
Q4.4 Which Green roles or skills needs do you expect your business to need in the future?

% of sector, n = 780
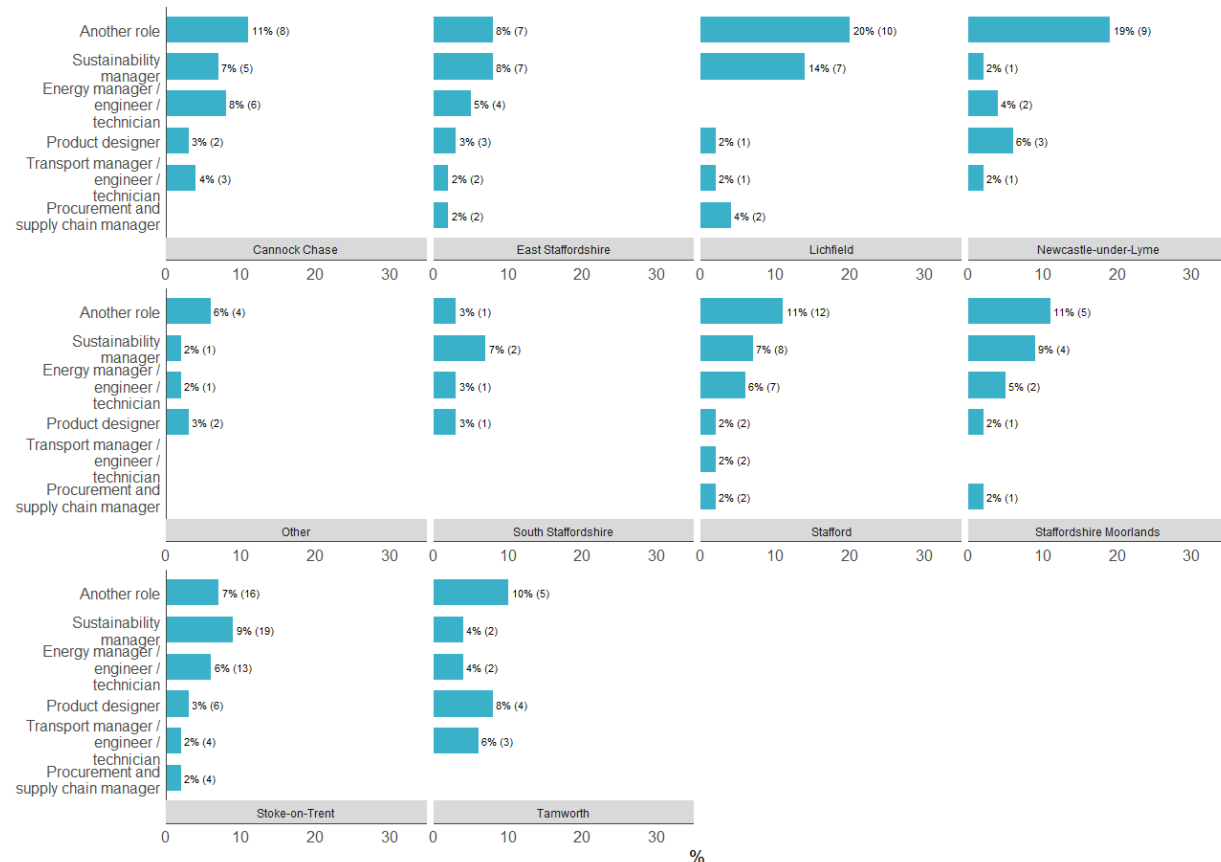
% of sector, n = 770

Obtaining Skills Needed

Q4.5 How do you anticipate your workforce will obtain these skills?

On-the-job training for existing staff — 50% (392)

Recruiting for new skills — 31% (242)

External training to existing staff — 28% (215)

Another approach — 11% (86)

Knowledge Transfer opportunities from Universities — 8% (60)

% of total, n = 780
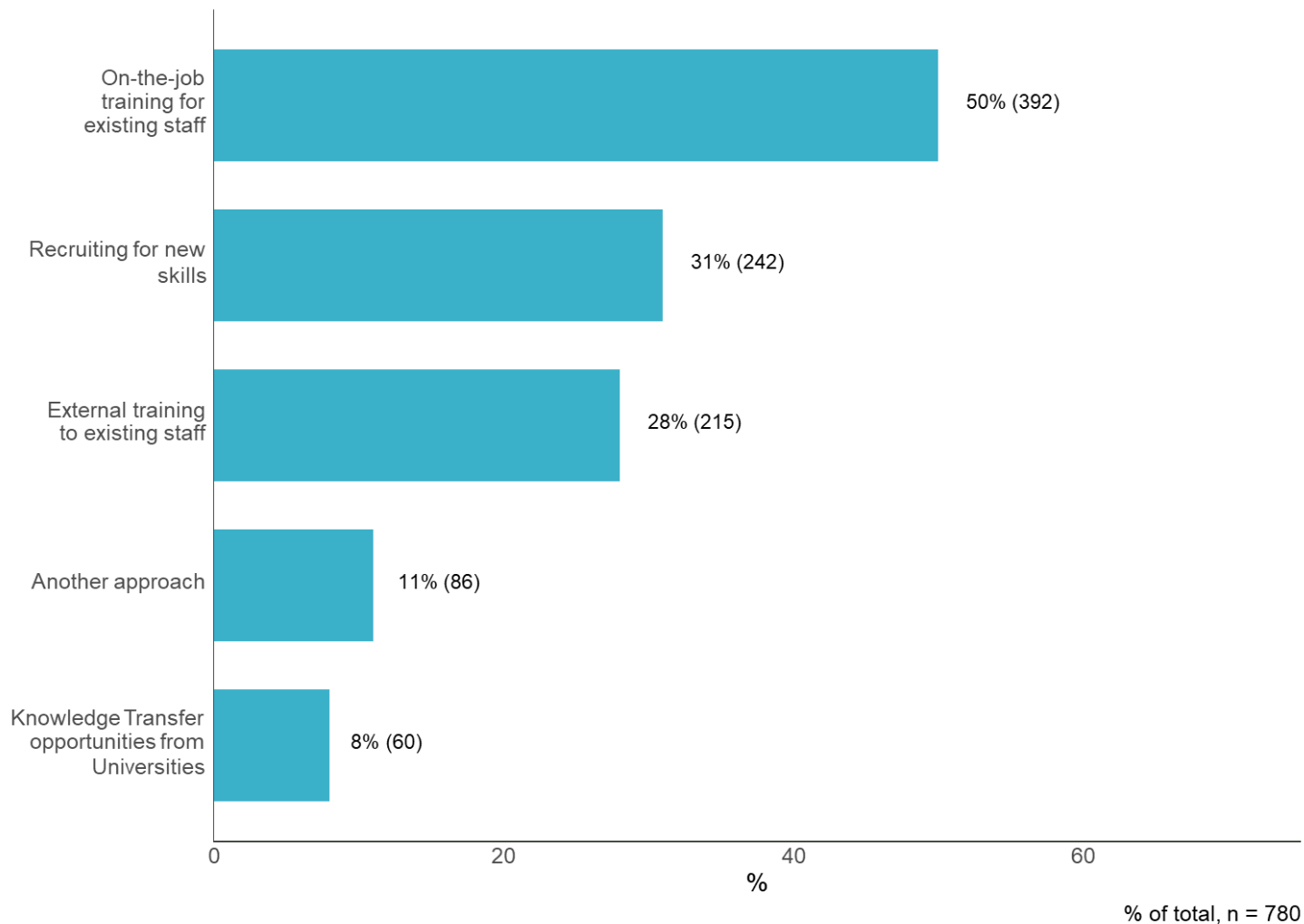
Training will be vital for businesses to obtain future skills needs. 50% of the businesses expect to obtain the future skills they will need through on-the-job training for existing staff. 28% will rely on external training to staff.

Recruitment will also play a role; 31% of businesses anticipate that they will recruit for new skills.

70

Q4.5 cont. 'Another approach' responses

Responses included:

- Online training
- Working with an external provider / agency
- On-the-job training, especially for new staff
- Working with other businesses
- Hiring apprentices

Obtaining Skills Needed

Q4.5 How do you anticipate your workforce will obtain these skills?

Construction
- On-the-job training for existing staff: 46% (48)
- Recruiting for new skills: 33% (34)
- External training to existing staff: 29% (30)
- Another approach: 7% (7)
- Knowledge Transfer opportunities from Universities: 4% (4)

Digital
- On-the-job training for existing staff: 54% (21)
- Recruiting for new skills: 36% (14)
- External training to existing staff: 28% (11)
- Another approach: 10% (4)
- Knowledge Transfer opportunities from Universities: 18% (7)

Engineering / manufacturing
- On-the-job training for existing staff: 52% (100)
- Recruiting for new skills: 34% (65)
- External training to existing staff: 23% (44)
- Another approach: 9% (17)
- Knowledge Transfer opportunities from Universities: 8% (15)

Health and social care
- On-the-job training for existing staff: 82% (58)
- Recruiting for new skills: 35% (25)
- External training to existing staff: 46% (33)
- Another approach: 10% (7)
- Knowledge Transfer opportunities from Universities: 11% (8)

Logistics
- On-the-job training for existing staff: 52% (24)
- Recruiting for new skills: 30% (14)
- External training to existing staff: 28% (13)
- Another approach: 7% (3)
- Knowledge Transfer opportunities from Universities: 7% (3)

Other
- On-the-job training for existing staff: 43% (141)
- Recruiting for new skills: 28% (90)
- External training to existing staff: 26% (84)
- Another approach: 15% (48)
- Knowledge Transfer opportunities from Universities: 7% (23)

% of sector, n=780

Responses by sector are similar, with the exception of the Health and Social Care Sector, where the proportion of businesses anticipating they will use on-the-job training and external training for existing staff considerably higher.

Obtaining Skills Needed

Q4.5 How do you anticipate your workforce will obtain these skills?
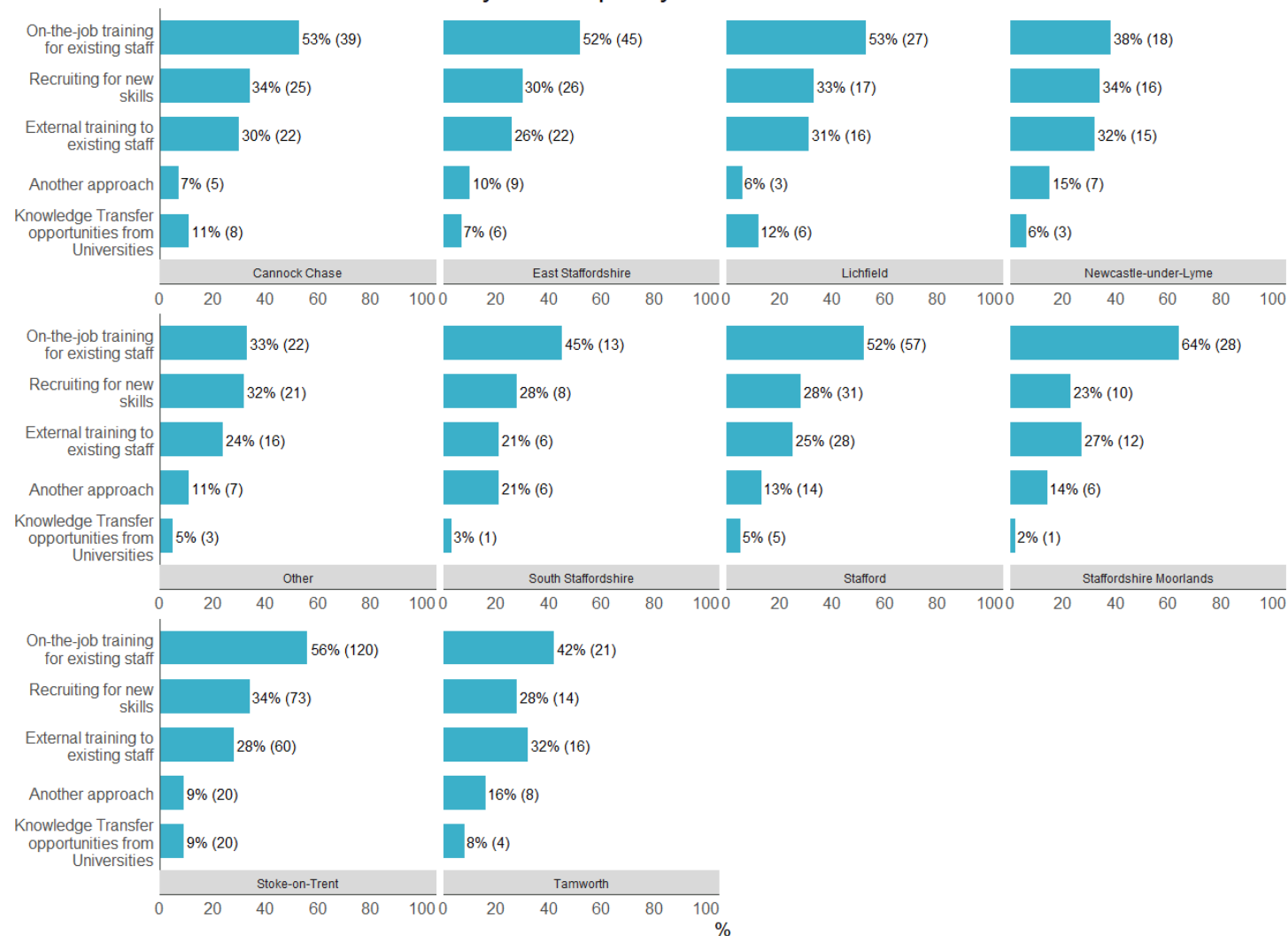
Patterns across localities are broadly similar with some exceptions where higher proportions anticipate using on-the-job training to obtain future skills, particularly in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

% of locality, n=770

Training

Types of Training

The most common type of training that has been arranged by firms surveyed is job-specific training and induction training for new staff. This is true for individual sectors too, with the exception of the digital sector, where 26% had organised digital/technology training.

Q5.1 Which of the following types of training have you arranged or funded for your employees within your business in the past 12 months?
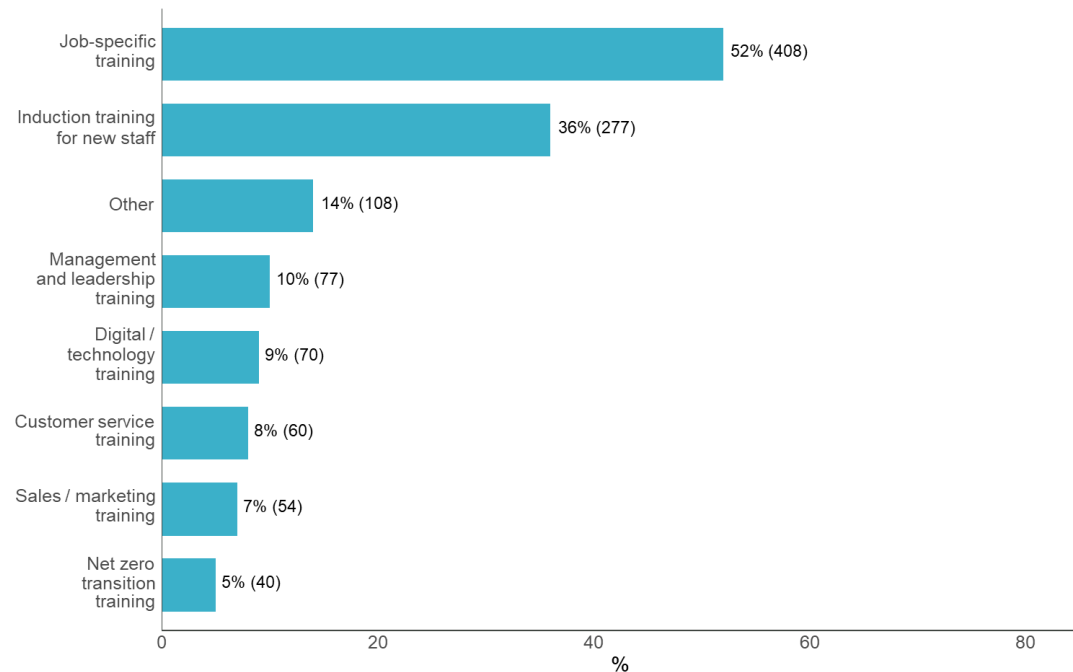
% of total, n = 780

Q5.1 Which of the following types of training have you arranged or funded for your employees within your business in the past 12 months?
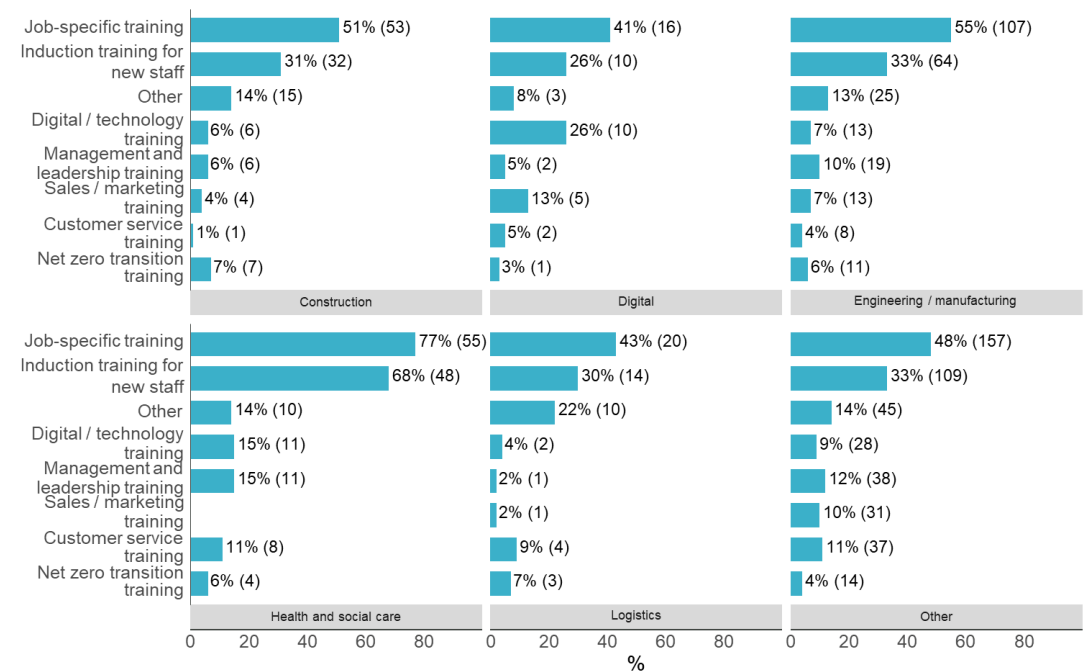
% of sector, n=780

Types of Training

Q5.1 Which of the following types of training have you arranged or funded for your employees within your business in the past 12 months?
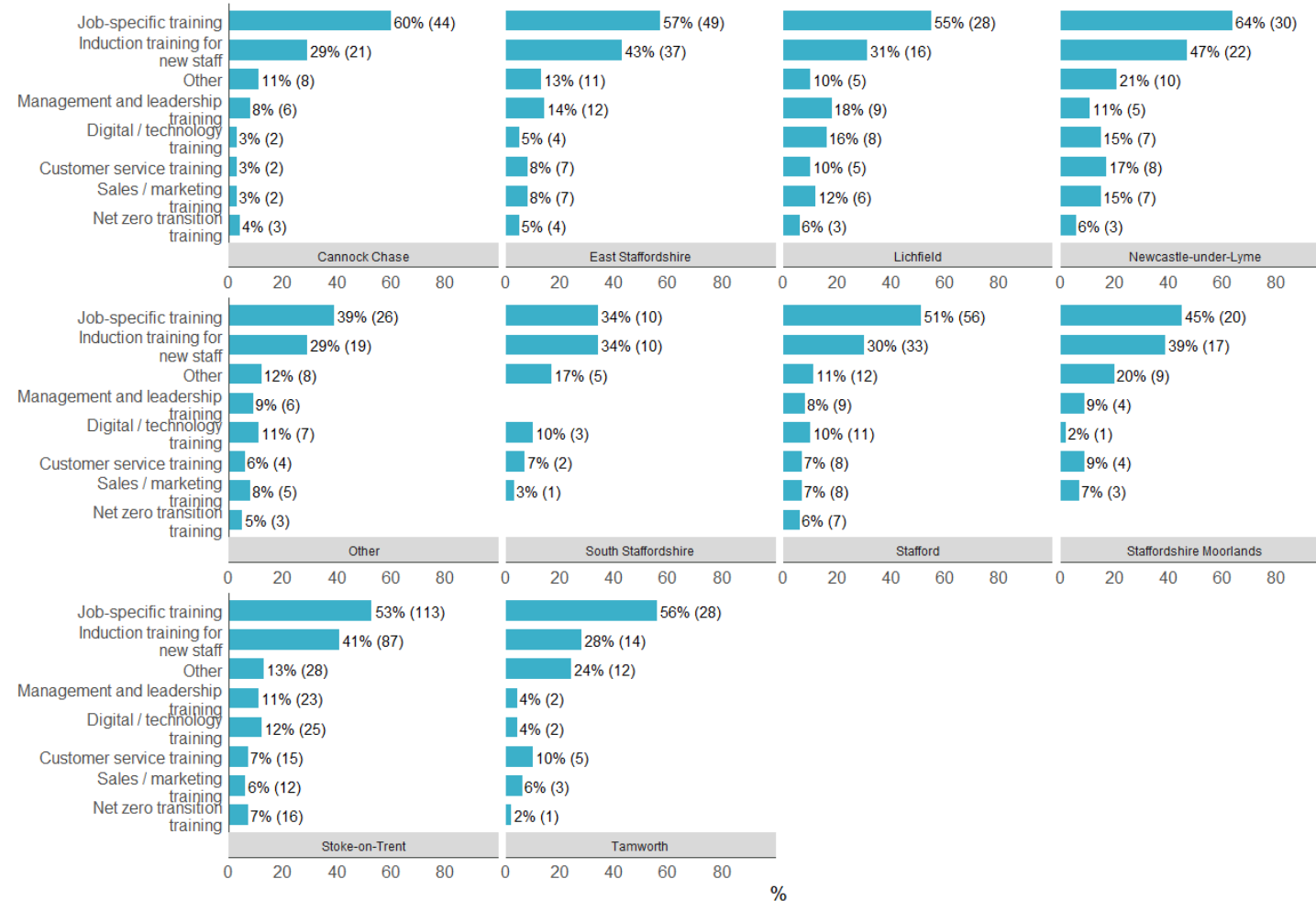
The types of training organised is broadly consistent across the different localities, job specific training is the most common form in each locality, flowed by induction training for new staff.

% of locality, n=770

76

Q5.1 cont. 'Other' responses

Responses included:

- Robotics training

- Manufacturing

- Health and safety

- Mental health

- Gas safety and engineering

- Online accounting / finance

- Forklift licence

- CVC driving

- Client facing project delivery

- Occupational CPD

- Food hygiene

- Manual handling

Training Plans/Budgets

42% of the businesses surveyed have training plans/budgets or workforce strategies in place. By sector, Health and Social Care firms were the most likely to have these in place by some distance.

Q5.2: Do you have any training plans / budgets or workforce strategies in place currently?
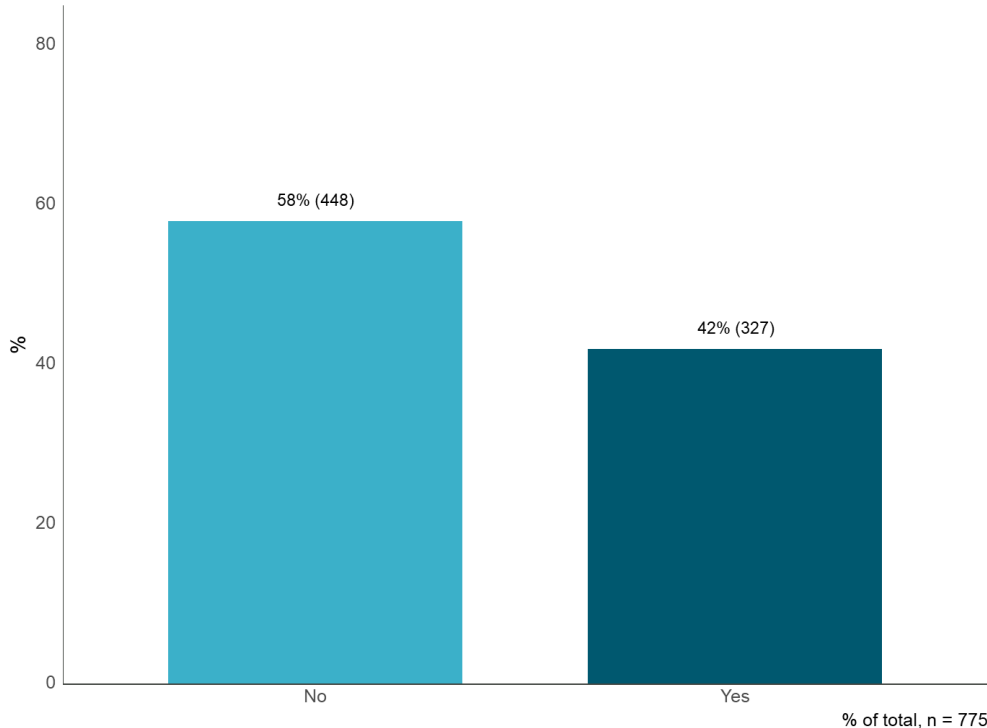
% of total, n = 775

Q5.2: Do you have any training plans / budgets or workforce strategies in place currently?

% of sector, n = 775

78
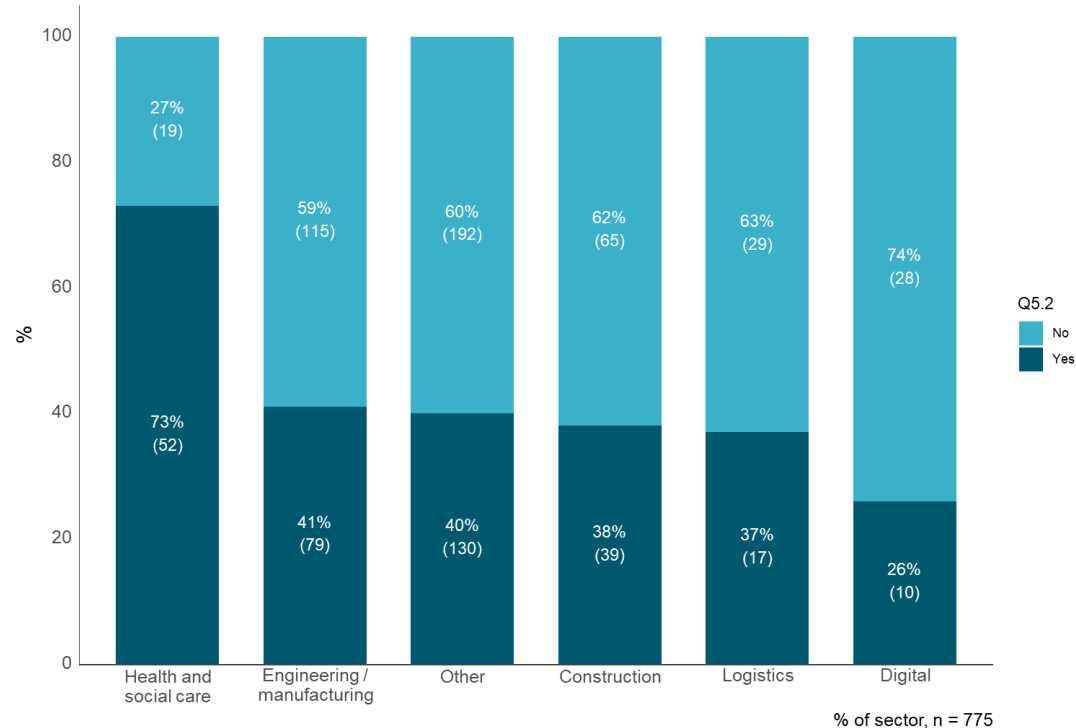
Training Plans/Budgets

Q5.2: Do you have any training plans / budgets or workforce strategies in place currently?

% of locality, n = 765
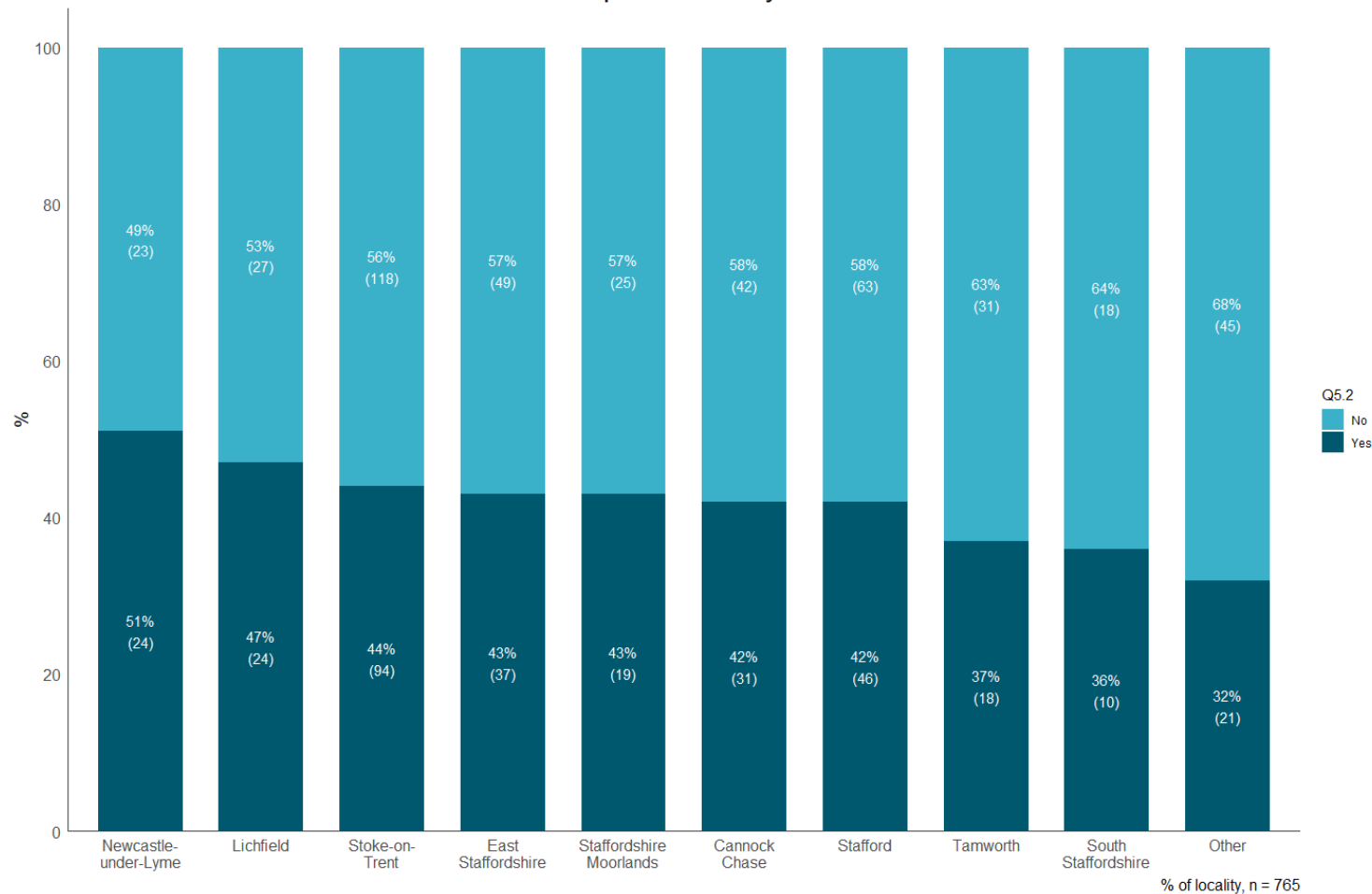
There is some variation by area in how many businesses reported having a training plan/workforce strategy in place.

Newcastle-under-Lyme has the highest proportion of businesses with a training plan/workforce strategy in place; 51% of businesses surveyed report having this.

Approach to Training

Businesses take a mixture of approaches to training, the most common approach overall (and in all sectors except Construction) is informal in-house training. Over half use external providers and 37% say they use formal-in-house training.

Q5.3 Which of the following overall approaches to training do you take within your business?

% of total, n = 780

Q5.3: Which of the following overall approaches to training do you take within your business?

% of sector, n = 780
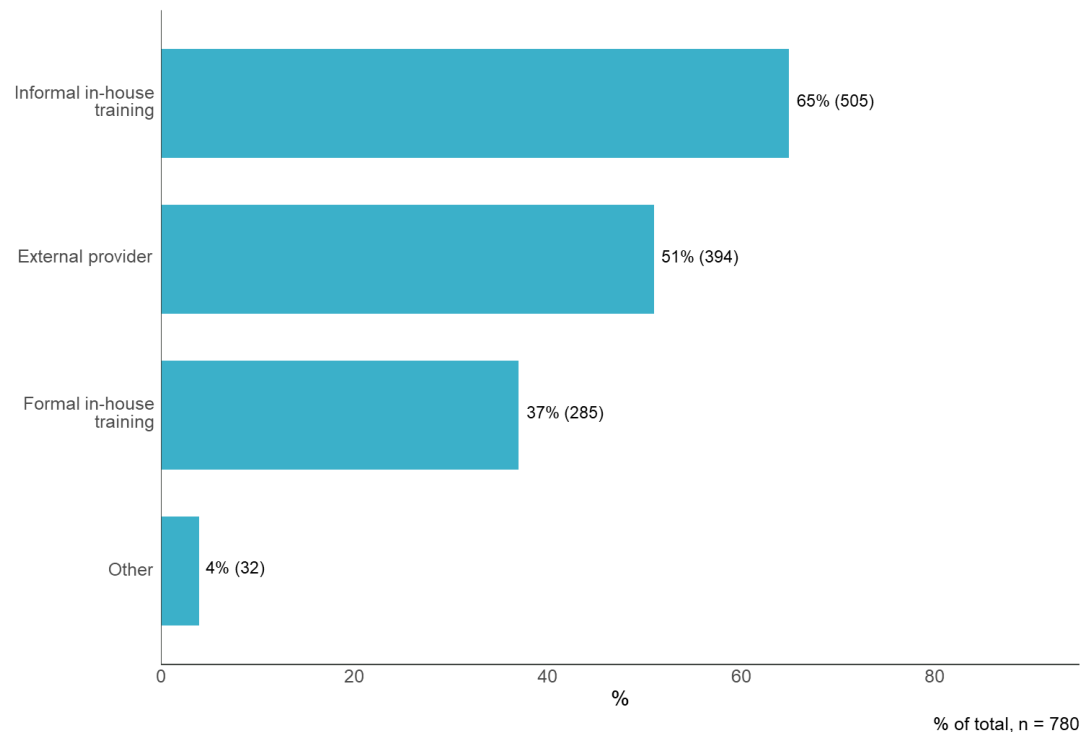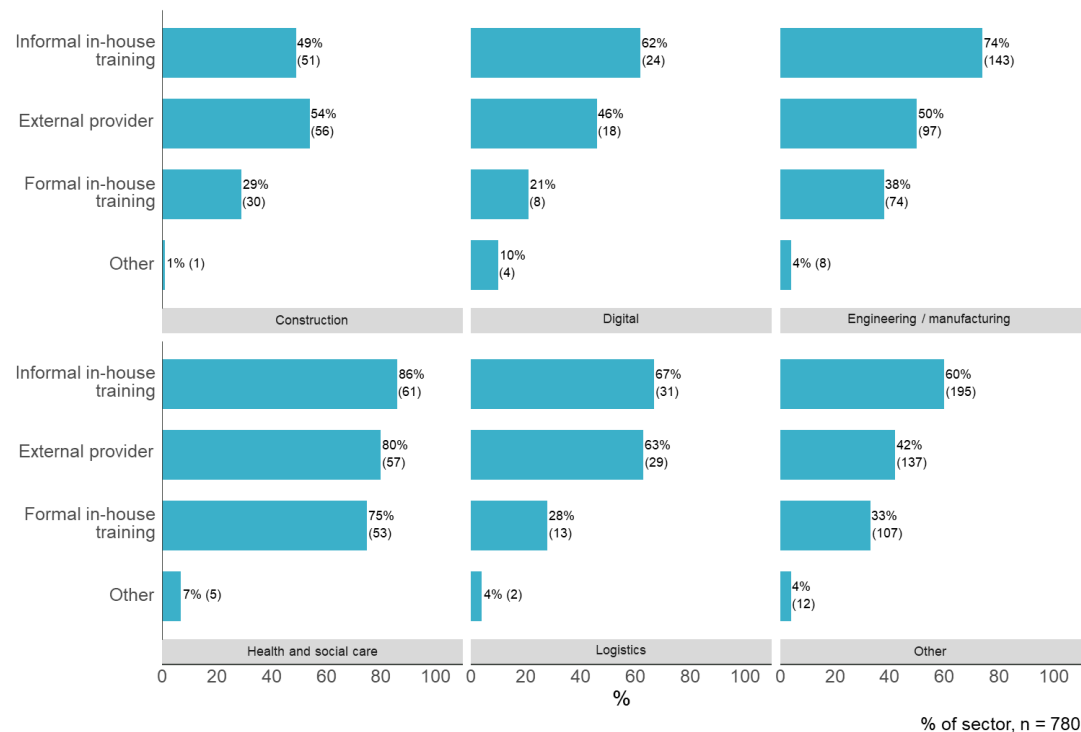
Approach to Training

Q5.3: Which of the following overall approaches to training do you take within your business?

Cannock Chase
- Informal in-house training: 67% (49)
- External provider: 40% (29)
- Formal in-house training: 38% (28)
- Other: 4% (3)

East Staffordshire
- Informal in-house training: 70% (60)
- External provider: 56% (48)
- Formal in-house training: 34% (29)
- Other: 6% (5)

Lichfield
- Informal in-house training: 61% (31)
- External provider: 51% (26)
- Formal in-house training: 39% (20)
- Other: 12% (6)

Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Informal in-house training: 72% (34)
- External provider: 51% (24)
- Formal in-house training: 49% (23)
- Other: 6% (3)

Other
- Informal in-house training: 58% (38)
- External provider: 38% (25)
- Formal in-house training: 24% (16)
- Other: 2% (1)

South Staffordshire
- Informal in-house training: 59% (17)
- External provider: 52% (15)
- Formal in-house training: 48% (14)
- Other: 3% (1)

Stafford
- Informal in-house training: 62% (68)
- External provider: 49% (54)
- Formal in-house training: 30% (33)
- Other: 5% (6)

Staffordshire Moorlands
- Informal in-house training: 68% (30)
- External provider: 45% (20)
- Formal in-house training: 34% (15)

Stoke-on-Trent
- Informal in-house training: 66% (142)
- External provider: 54% (116)
- Formal in-house training: 41% (88)
- Other: 2% (5)

Tamworth
- Informal in-house training: 64% (32)
- External provider: 64% (32)
- Formal in-house training: 32% (16)
- Other: 4% (2)

%

% of locality, n = 770

Businesses across the area are similar in their approach to training, relying heavily on informal in-house training with slightly lower proportions using external providers in most places.

81

Q5.3 cont. 'Other' responses

Responses included:

• Online learning

• Skills sharing with other businesses

• College training including through distance learning

• Self-directed learning

Vocational Qualifications

46% of businesses surveyed offer the opportunity for employees to gain vocational qualifications through training. This considerably differs by sector with 80% in Health and Social Care doing so and 37% of businesses in the Digital Sector.

Q5.4: Do you offer the opportunity for employees to gain vocational qualifications through training?

54% (411)
46% (354)

No   Yes

Q5.4
No
Yes

% of total, n = 765

Q5.4: Do you offer the opportunity for employees to gain vocational qualifications through training?

Sector	No	Yes
Health and social care	20% (14)	80% (57)
Construction	52% (53)	48% (48)
Engineering / manufacturing	52% (100)	48% (91)
Logistics	56% (25)	44% (20)
Other	61% (195)	39% (124)
Digital	63% (24)	37% (14)

Q5.4
No
Yes

% of sector, n = 765
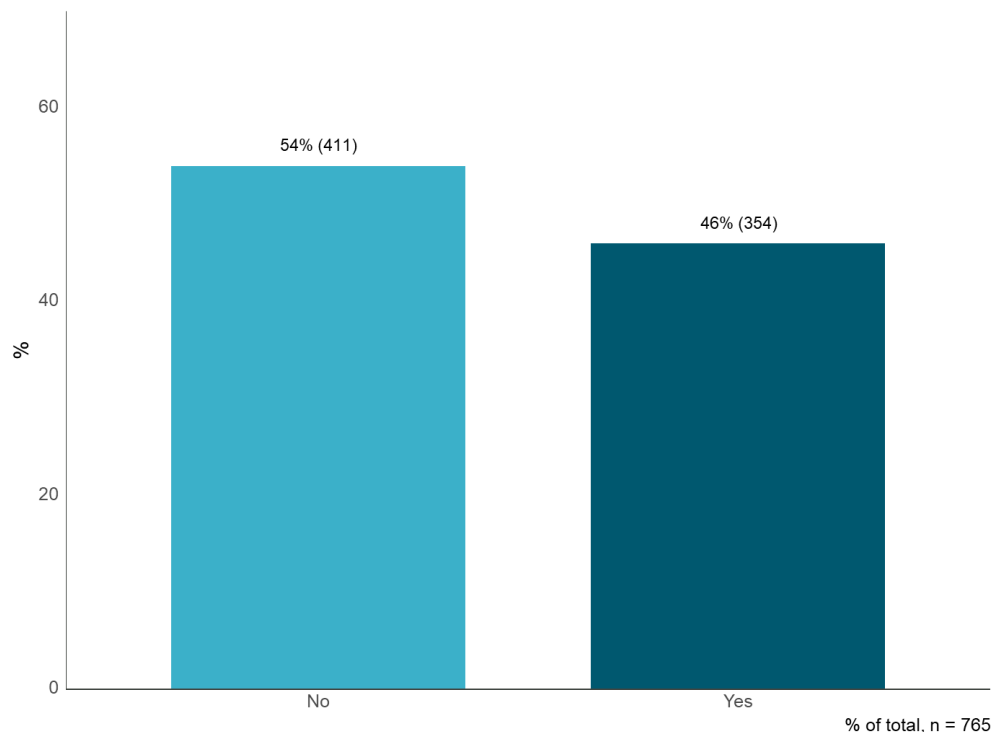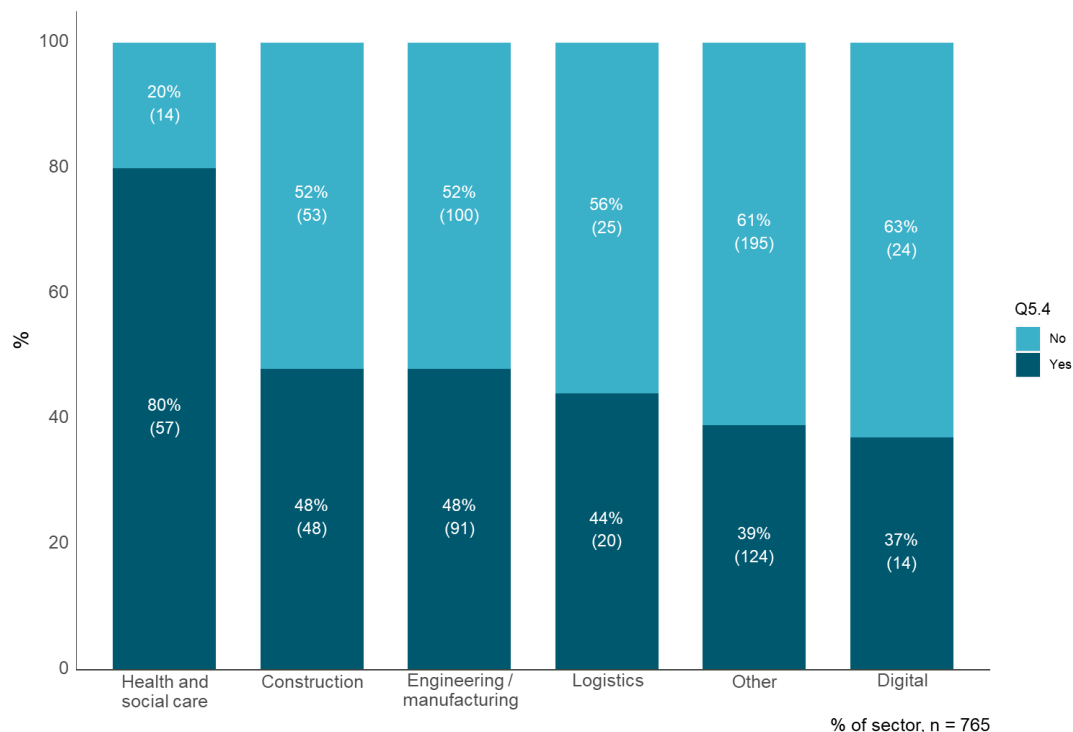
Vocational Qualifications

Q5.4: Do you offer the opportunity for employees
to gain vocational qualifications through training?
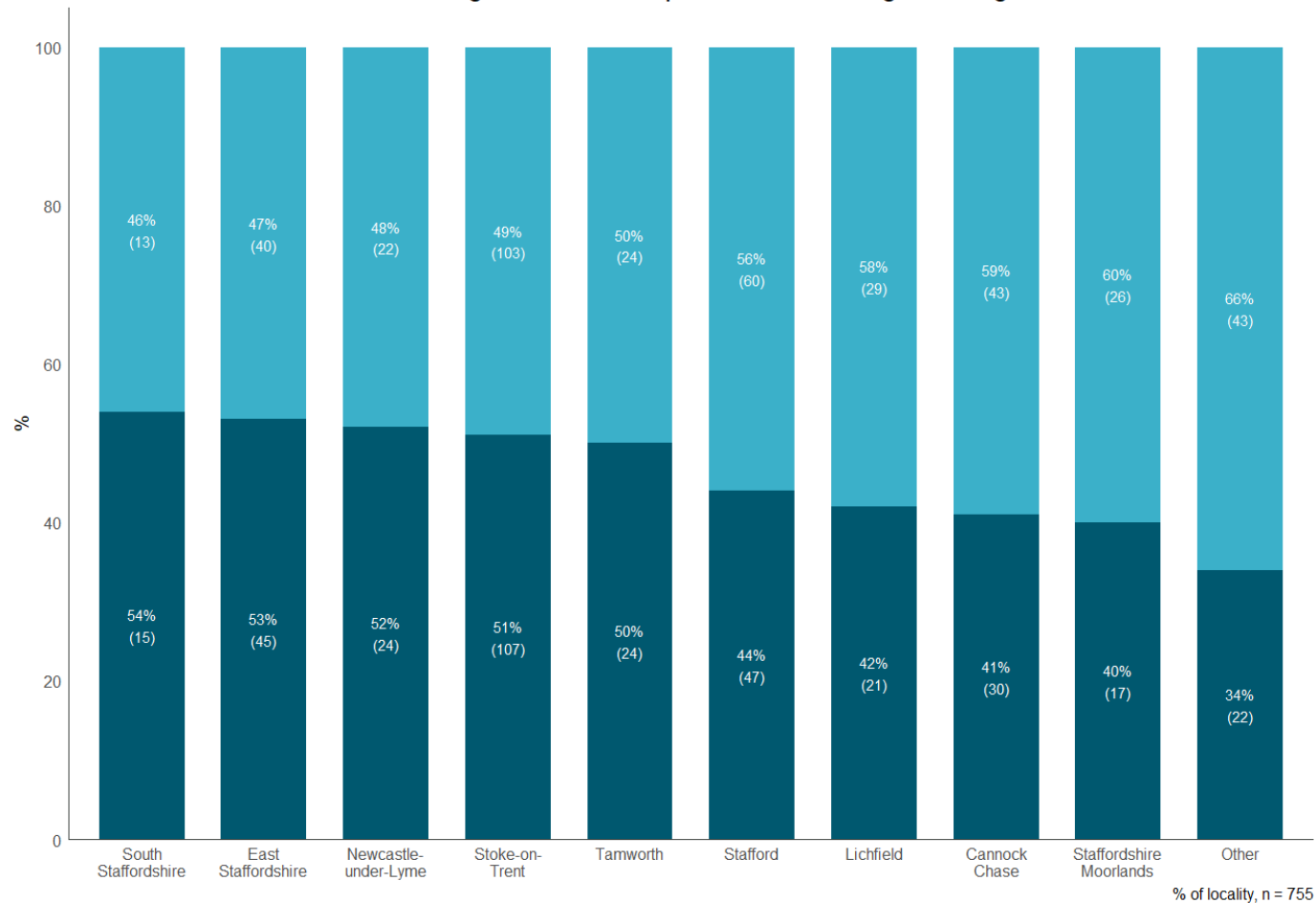
There are some differences by area in the proportion offering opportunities to gain vocational qualifications; in South Staffordshire, East Staffordshire, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent and Tamworth this is 50% and above. In the remaining localities this was between 40% and 44%.

% of locality, n = 755

Training: Proportion of Workforce

Q5.5: Approximately what proportion of your existing workforce do you offer training to / have benefited from training?

% of total, n = 780

The proportion of the workforce who had benefitted from training varied but the most common answer (given by 34% of firms) was between 91% and 100% of the workforce.
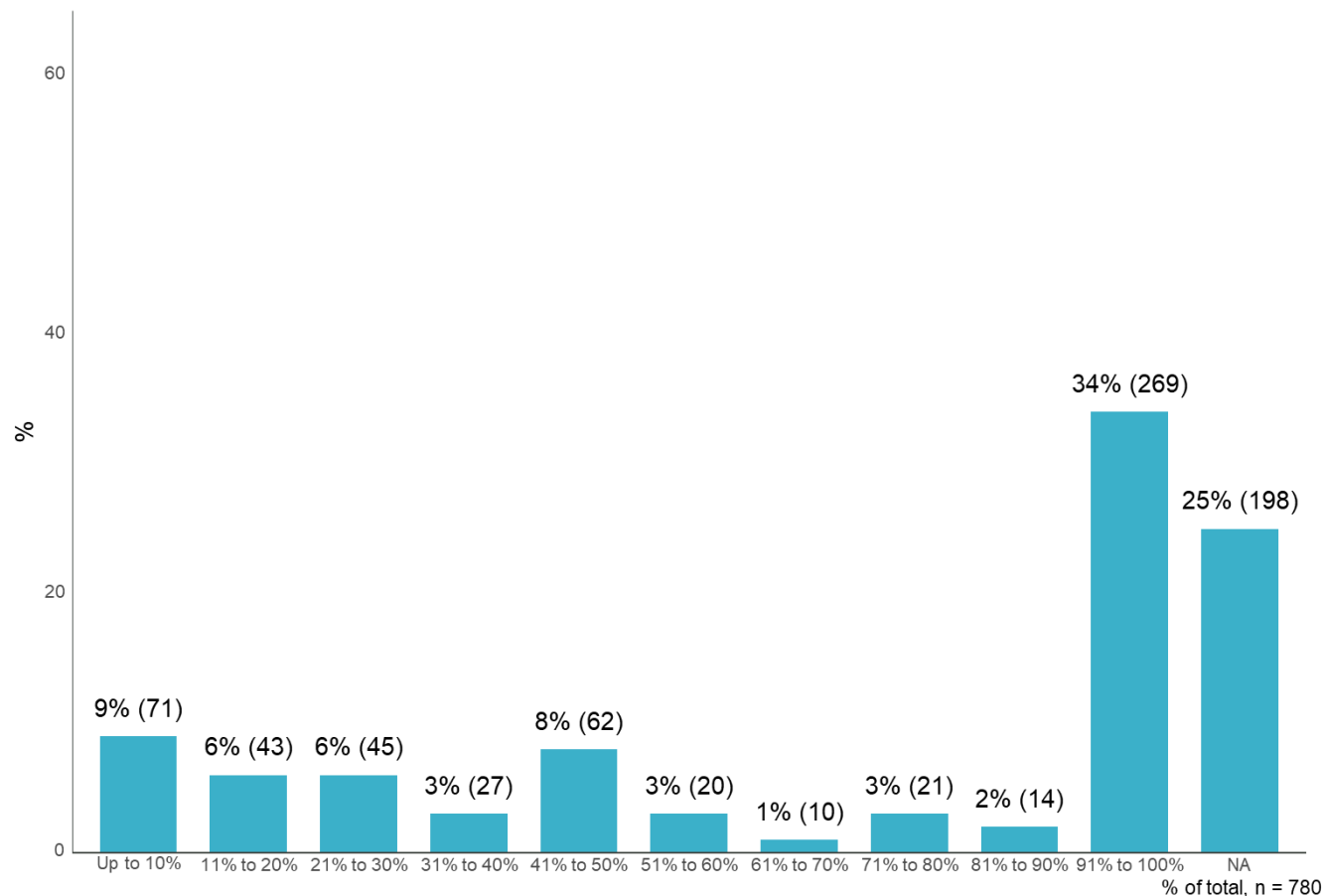
External Training: Proportion of Workforce

Q5.6 What proportion of your workforce receives training through an extenal provider in a typical year?

The proportion of the workforce who had benefitted from external training varied, the most common answer (given by 17% of firms) was between 91% and 100% of the workforce. 15% of respondents said 10% or less of their workforce had benefitted from external training.
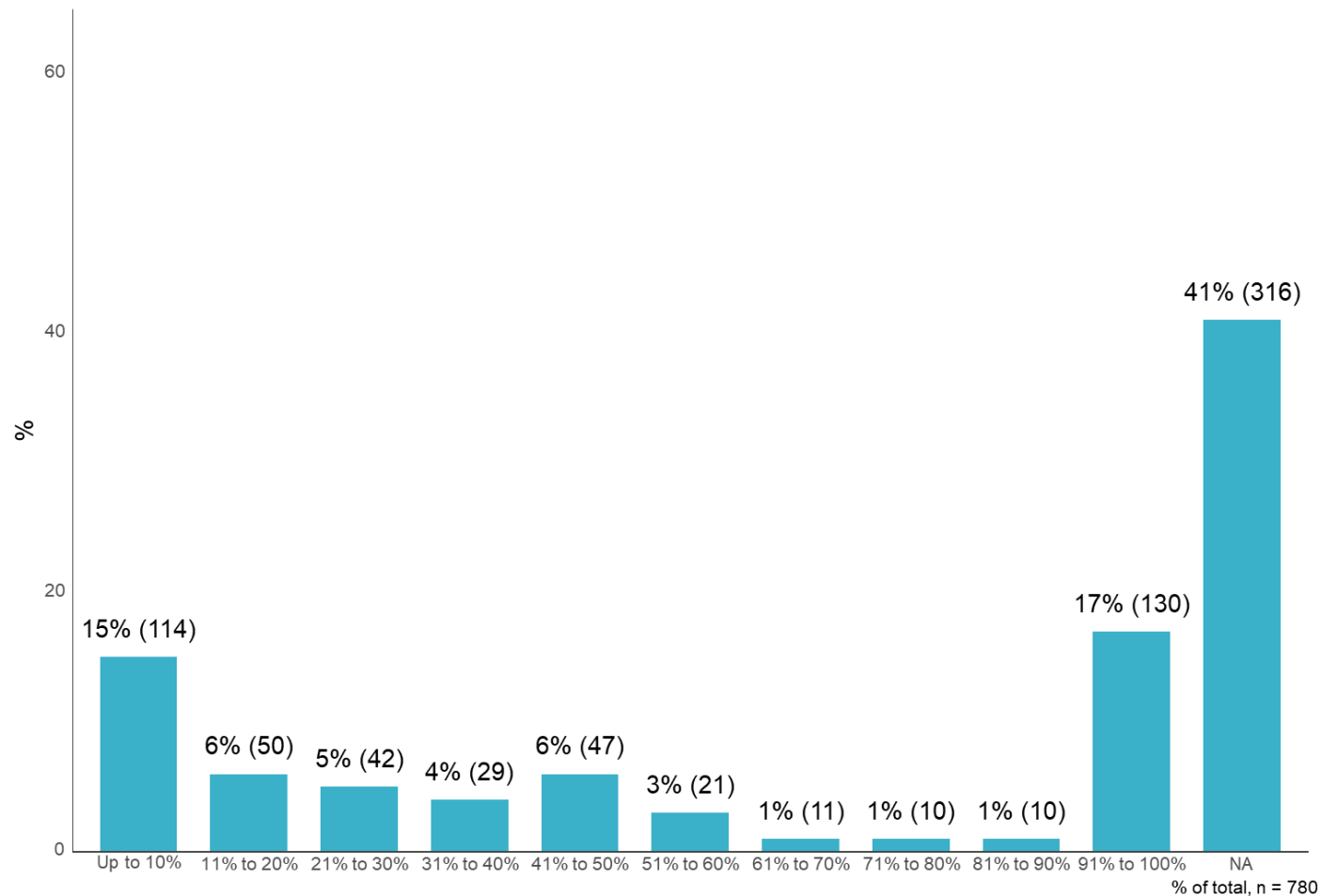
% of total, n = 780

86

Barriers to Providing Training

Q5.7: Which of the following are barriers to you providing training to your staff?

Barrier	% (count)
Can't spare staff time	36% (279)
The cost of training	26% (205)
No need for training	26% (200)
Lack of staff interest	11% (82)
Hard to organise	9% (73)
Lack of suitable training providers	6% (45)
Lack of appropriate training / qualifications	6% (46)
Other	5% (42)
Not aware of training opportunities available	4% (34)

% of total, n = 780

The main barrier to providing training was being unable to spare staff time (36%), followed by cost (26%) and a lack of staff interest.

26% of respondents felt they had no need for training.

87

Q5.7 cont. 'Other' responses

Responses included:

- Business is in a niche area, so there isn't suitable external training available

- Recruitment challenges preventing staff – even those requiring training – to be hired

- Lack of Government funding available for training

Barriers to Providing Training

Q5.7: Which of the following are barriers to you providing training to your staff?
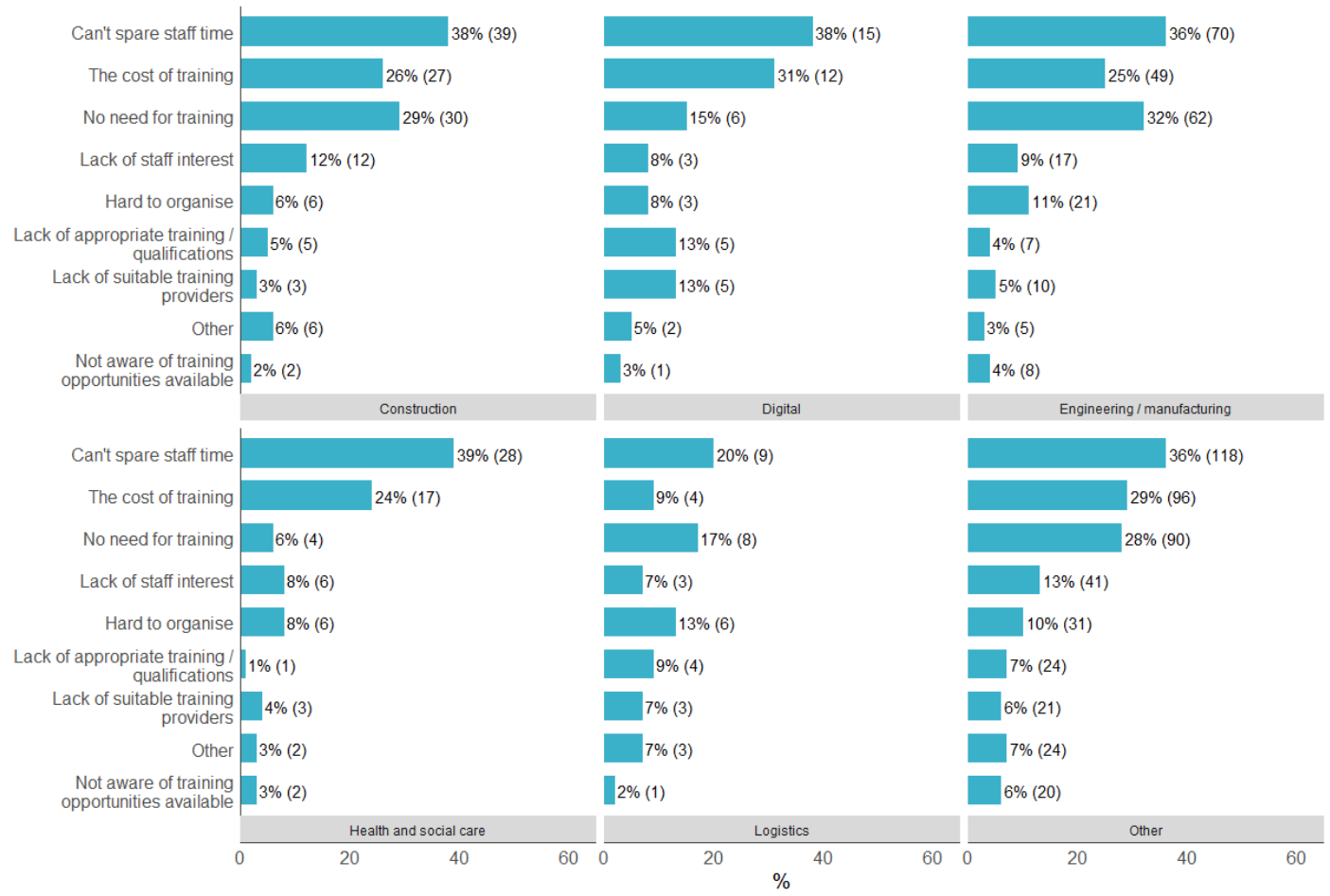
% of sector, n = 780

Staff time was the main constraint for each sector.

32% of firms in the Engineering/Manufacturing sector did not see the need for training.

A higher percentage of digital businesses cited a lack of appropriate qualifications and providers as a barrier.

Barriers to Providing Training

Q5.7: Which of the following are barriers to you providing training to your staff?
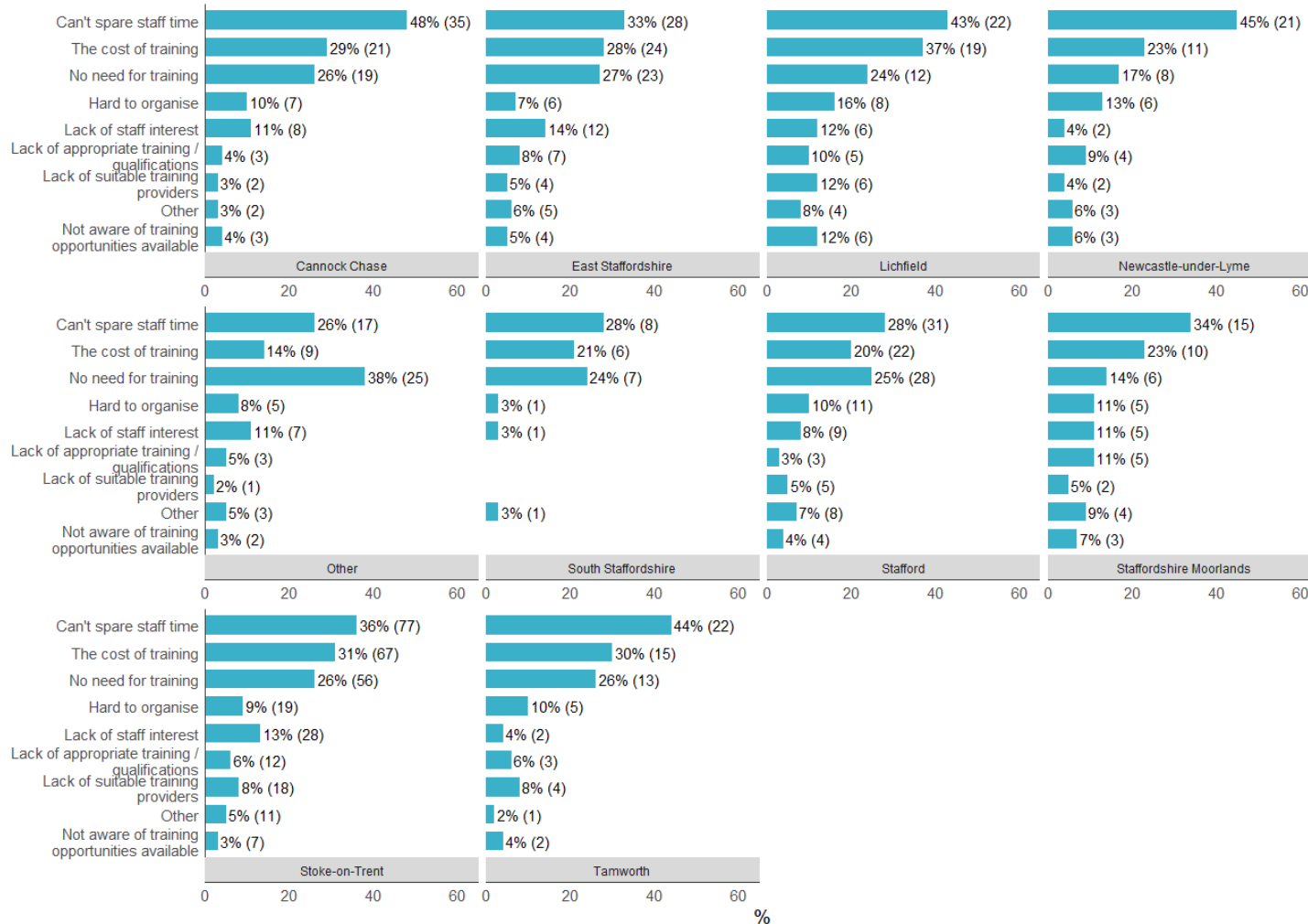
The responses follow a broadly similar pattern across the LEP area's localities.

% of locality, n = 770

Awareness of Local Providers

Q5.8: How would you describe your awareness of organisations and facilities in the local area that offer training to your workforce?

Only limited knowledge but would know where to go to find out more — 38% (295)

Good knowledge but have some gaps — 28% (217)

Only limited knowledge and would not really know how to find out — 20% (153)

Already have an excellent knowledge — 12% (97)

%

% of total, n = 762
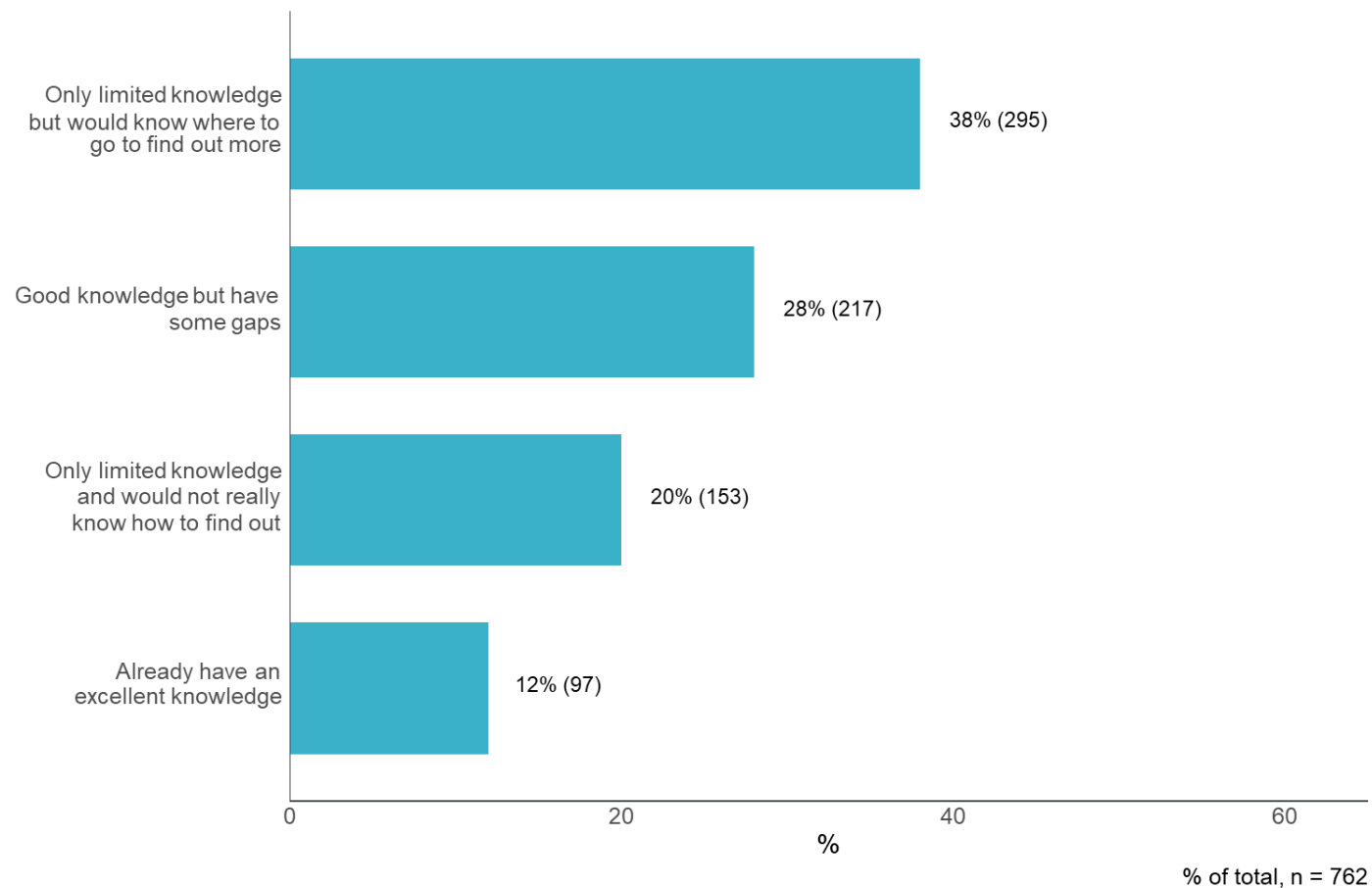
Firms have a limited knowledge of organisations and facilities providing training in the area; 40% say their knowledge is either good or excellent.

20% have limited knowledge and are not sure how to find out more.

Awareness of Local Providers

Q5.8: How would you describe your awareness of organisations and facilities in the local area that offer training to your workforce?

Construction
- Only limited knowledge but would know where to go to find out more: 37% (38)
- Good knowledge but have some gaps: 32% (33)
- Only limited knowledge and would not really know how to find out: 17% (18)
- Already have an excellent knowledge: 12% (12)

Digital
- Only limited knowledge but would know where to go to find out more: 44% (17)
- Good knowledge but have some gaps: 31% (12)
- Only limited knowledge and would not really know how to find out: 13% (5)
- Already have an excellent knowledge: 5% (2)

Engineering / manufacturing
- Only limited knowledge but would know where to go to find out more: 42% (81)
- Good knowledge but have some gaps: 28% (55)
- Only limited knowledge and would not really know how to find out: 18% (34)
- Already have an excellent knowledge: 12% (23)

Health and social care
- Only limited knowledge but would know where to go to find out more: 28% (20)
- Good knowledge but have some gaps: 37% (26)
- Only limited knowledge and would not really know how to find out: 11% (8)
- Already have an excellent knowledge: 24% (17)

Logistics
- Only limited knowledge but would know where to go to find out more: 37% (17)
- Good knowledge but have some gaps: 22% (10)
- Only limited knowledge and would not really know how to find out: 26% (12)
- Already have an excellent knowledge: 15% (7)

Other
- Only limited knowledge but would know where to go to find out more: 37% (122)
- Good knowledge but have some gaps: 25% (81)
- Only limited knowledge and would not really know how to find out: 23% (76)
- Already have an excellent knowledge: 11% (36)

% of sector, n = 762

Businesses in Health and Social care were most likely to have a good or excellent knowledge of the organisations and facilities in the area providing training.

Of the priority sectors Engineering/Manufacturing businesses were least likely to have a good or excellent knowledge.

Awareness of Local Providers

Q5.8:How would you describe your awareness of organisations and facilities in the local area that offer training to your workforce?
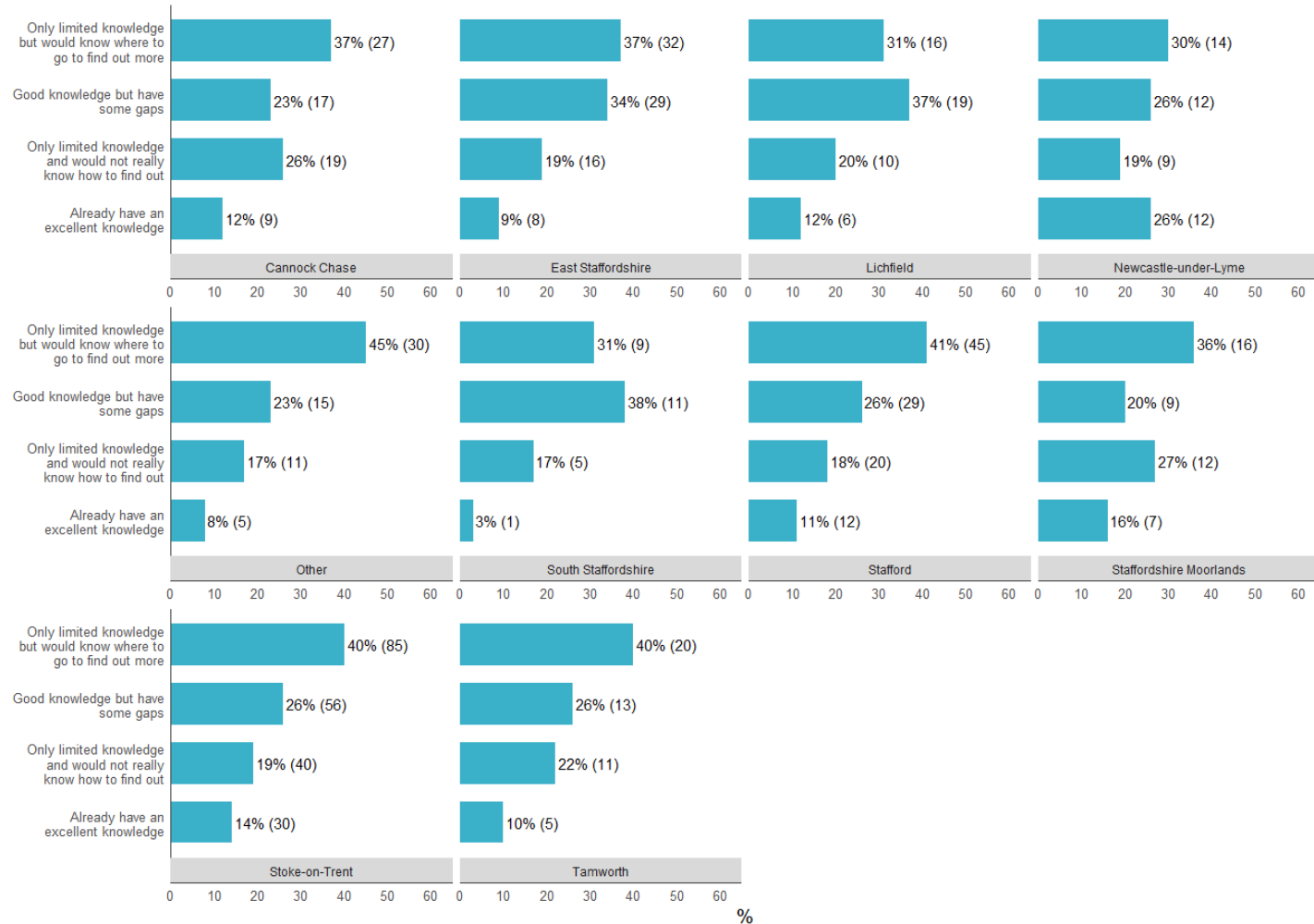
The levels of awareness of the training options in the are does differ by locality, with lower levels of awareness in Cannock Chase, Staffordshire Moorlands and Tamworth.

% of locality, n = 752

93

Apprenticeships

Metro —— Dynamics

Apprenticeships

28% of the businesses surveyed offer apprenticeships. There are more firms offering apprenticeships in engineering/manufacturing and health and social care sectors and fewer offering them in digital and logistics sectors.

Q6.1: Do you offer apprenticeships within your business?

% of total, n = 777

Q6.1: Do you offer apprenticeships within your business?

% of sector, n = 777
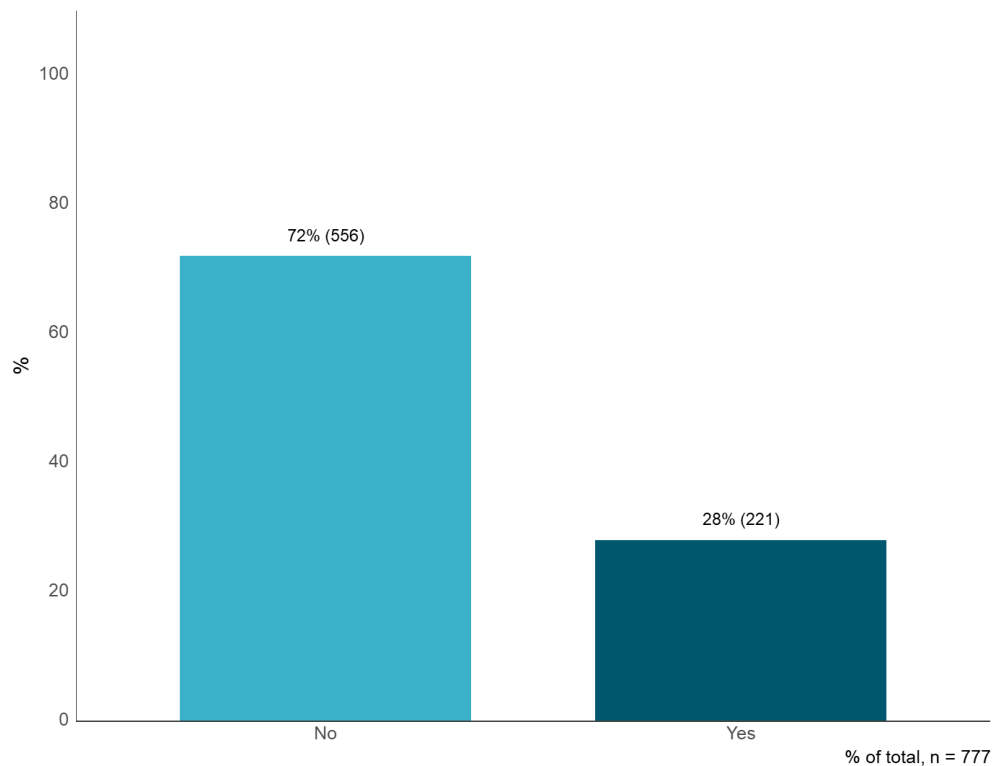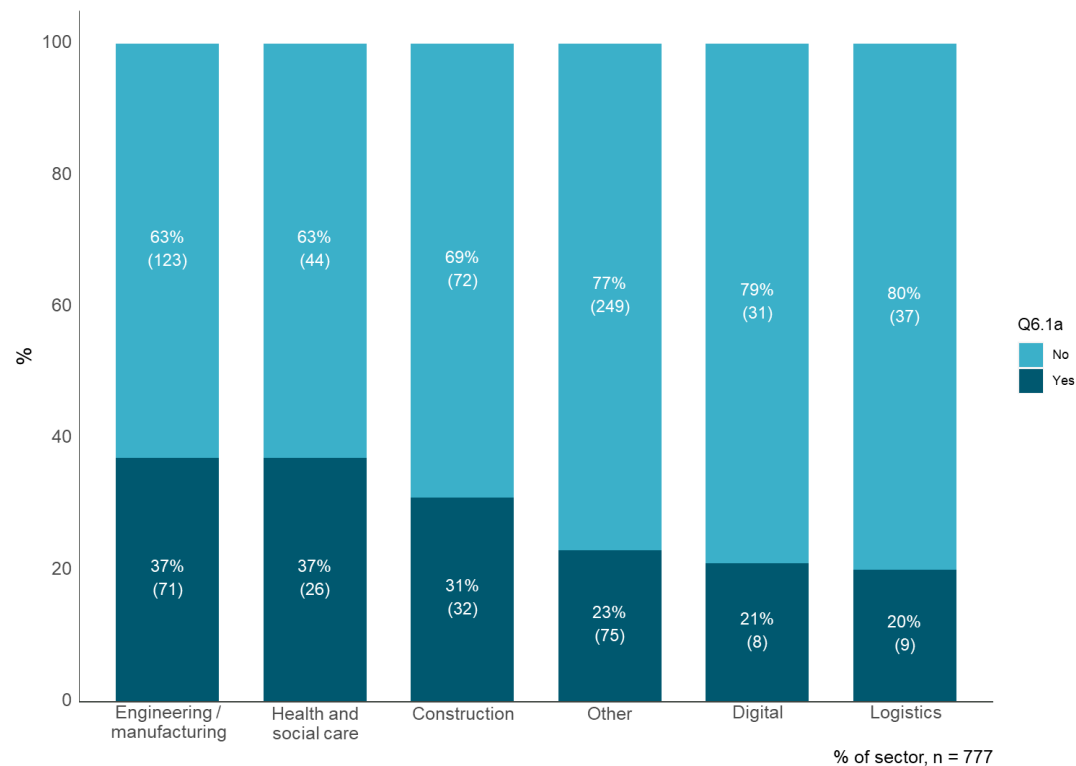
Apprenticeships

Q6.1: Do you offer apprenticeships within your business?

% of localities, n = 767
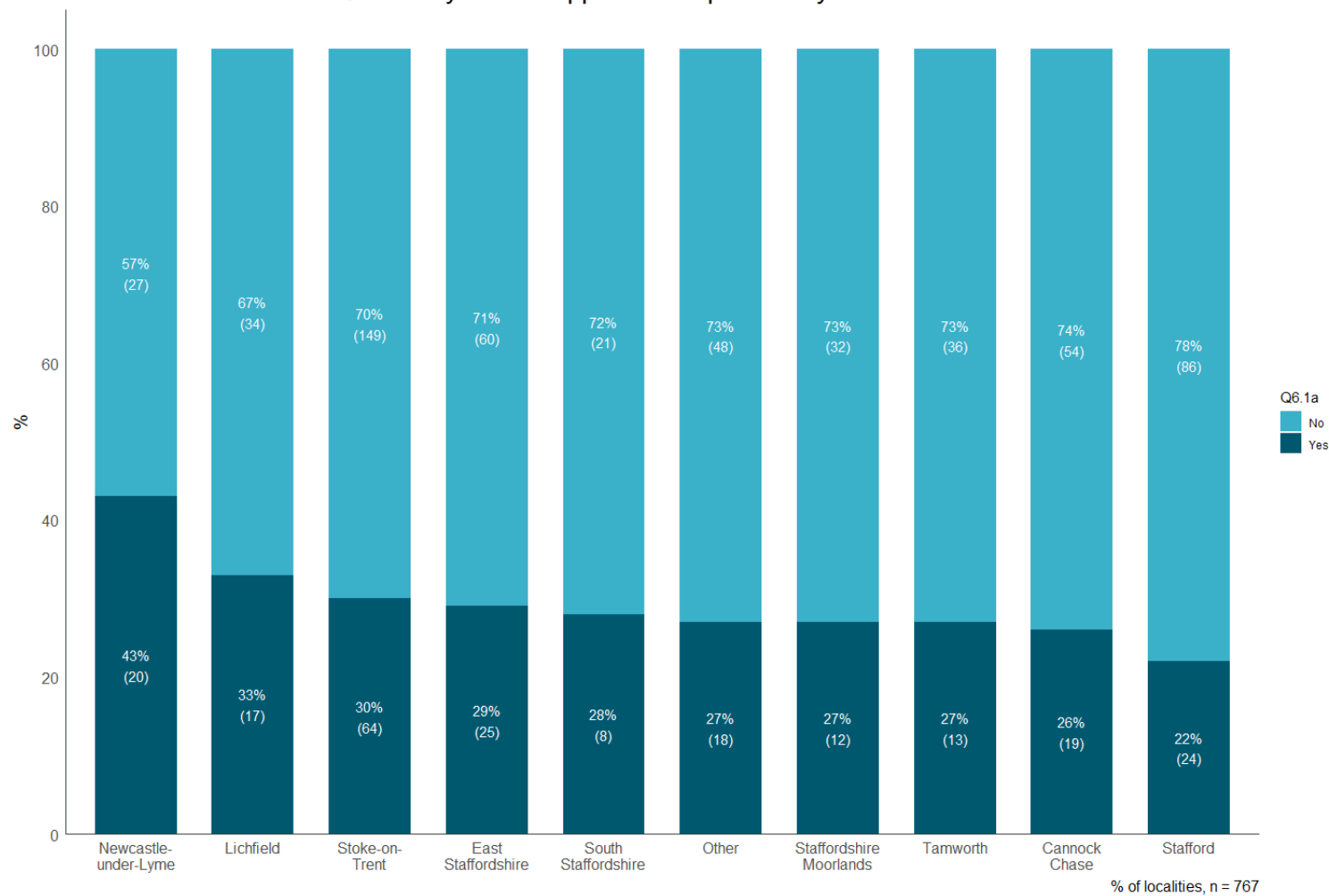
The proportion of businesses offering apprenticeships varies by locality, with the highest proportion in Newcastle-under-Lyme (43%) and the lowest proportion in Stafford (22%).

Attracting Interest in Apprenticeships

Q6.1b: How easy or difficult is it to attract interest in your apprenticeship programme?

Most firms find it easy to attract interest in their apprenticeships, with 17% says it is very easy and 53% saying it is fairly easy.
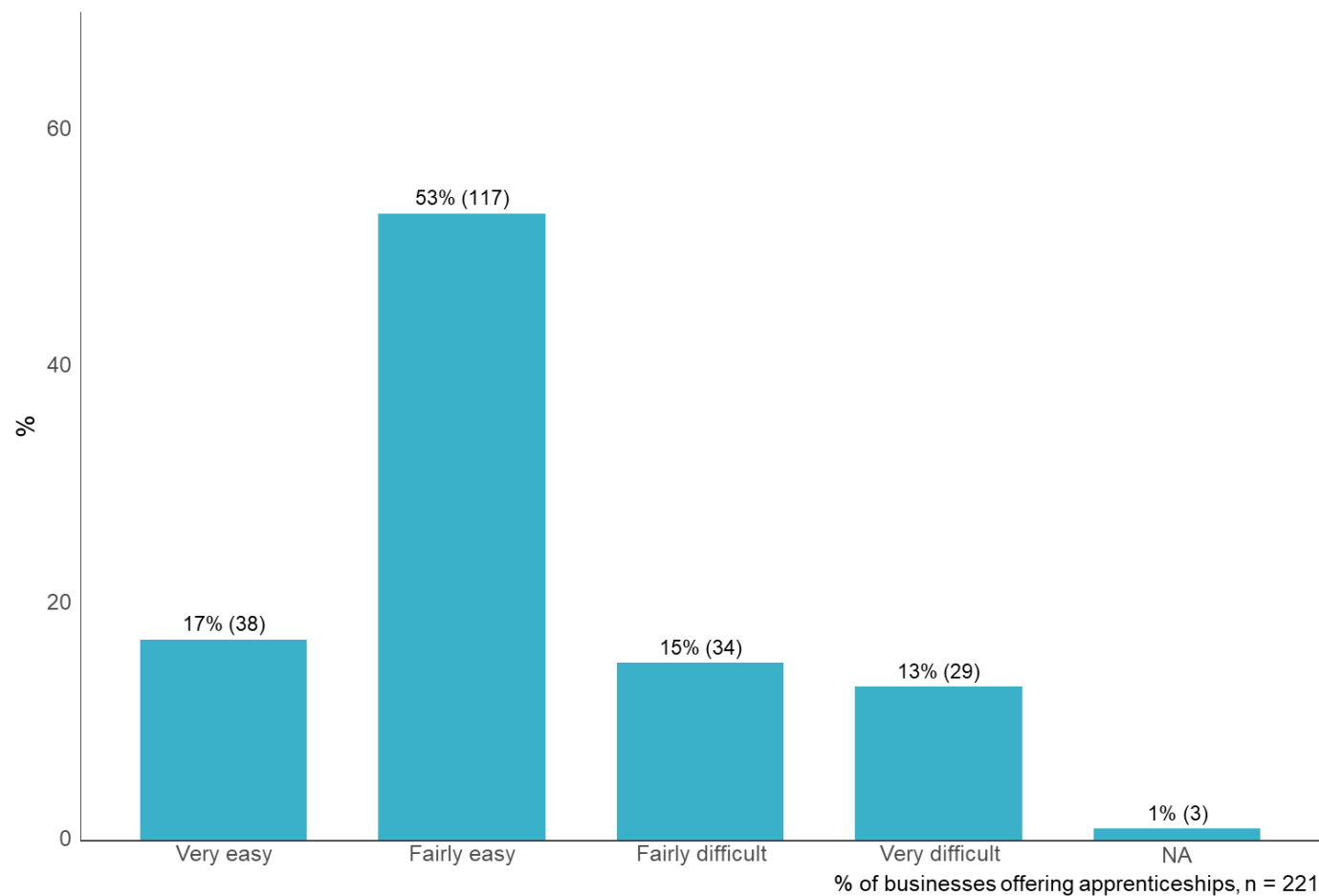
% of businesses offering apprenticeships, n = 221

Attracting Interest in Apprenticeships

Q6.1b: How easy or difficult is it to attract interest in your apprenticeship programme?

% of businesses offering apprenticeships, n = 221
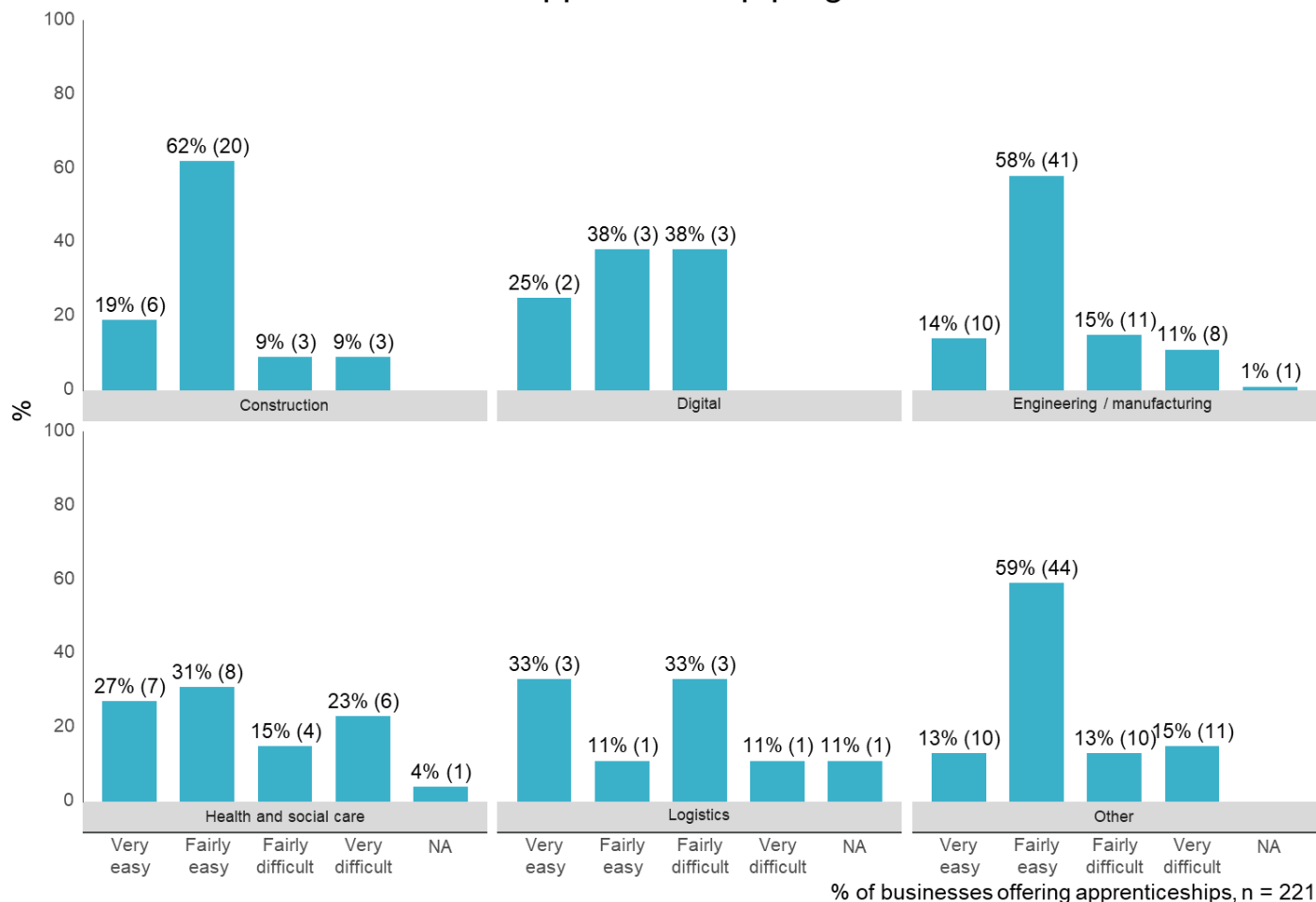
Looking at the sectoral breakdown, in each sector a majority found it fairly or very easy to attract interest.

The Logistics sector had the highest percentage finding it difficult but this is a sector where only 9 respondent were offering apprenticeships.

Of the other sectors, Engineering/Manufacturing had 26% of firms finding it difficult and Health and Social Care had 38%.

Attracting Interest in Apprenticeships

Q6.1b: How easy or difficult is it to attract interest in your apprenticeship programme?

In most places in the LEP area, a majority of firms who offer apprenticeship find it fairly or very easy to attract interest in their apprenticeships.

The exception to this is East Staffordshire, where 52% of the respondents found it either fairly or very difficult.

% of businesses offering apprenticeships, n = 221

Number of Apprentices

The majority of firms have a small number of apprenticeships; less than 5 and have either taken on no apprentices (53%) of 5 or fewer (44%) in the last 12 months.

Q6.1c How many apprentices do you have currently?

% of businesses with apprentices, n = 181
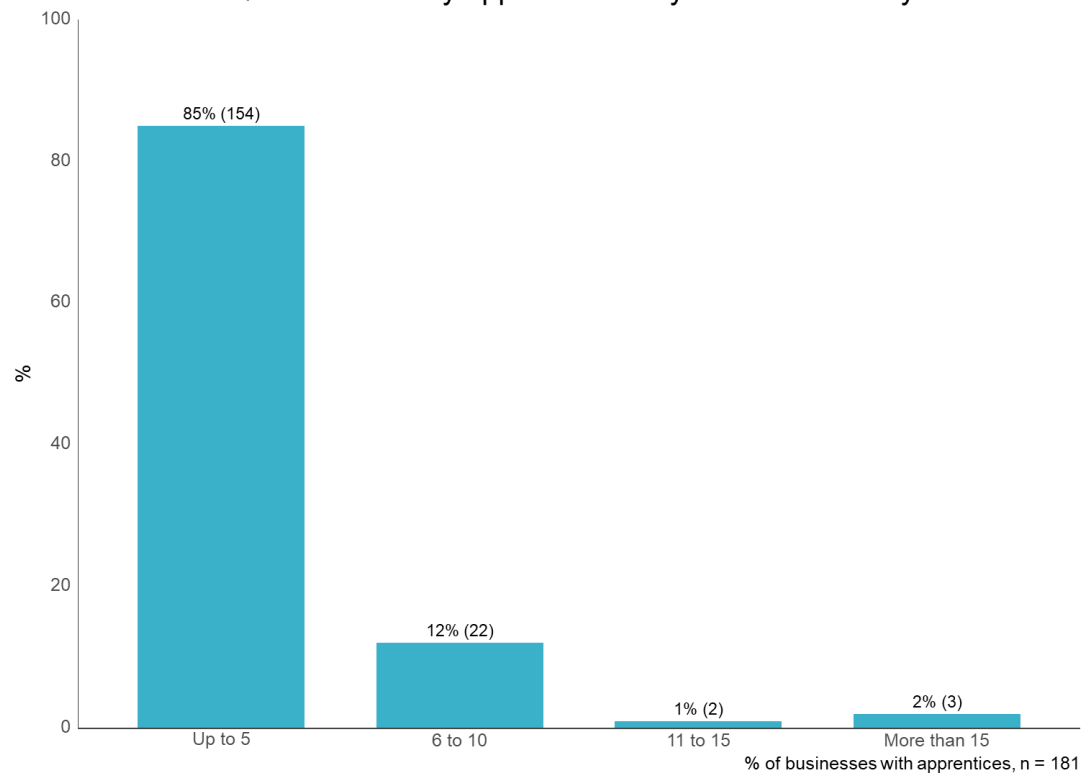
Q6.1d How many apprentices have you enrolled in the last 12 months

% of businesses who responded to question, n = 216
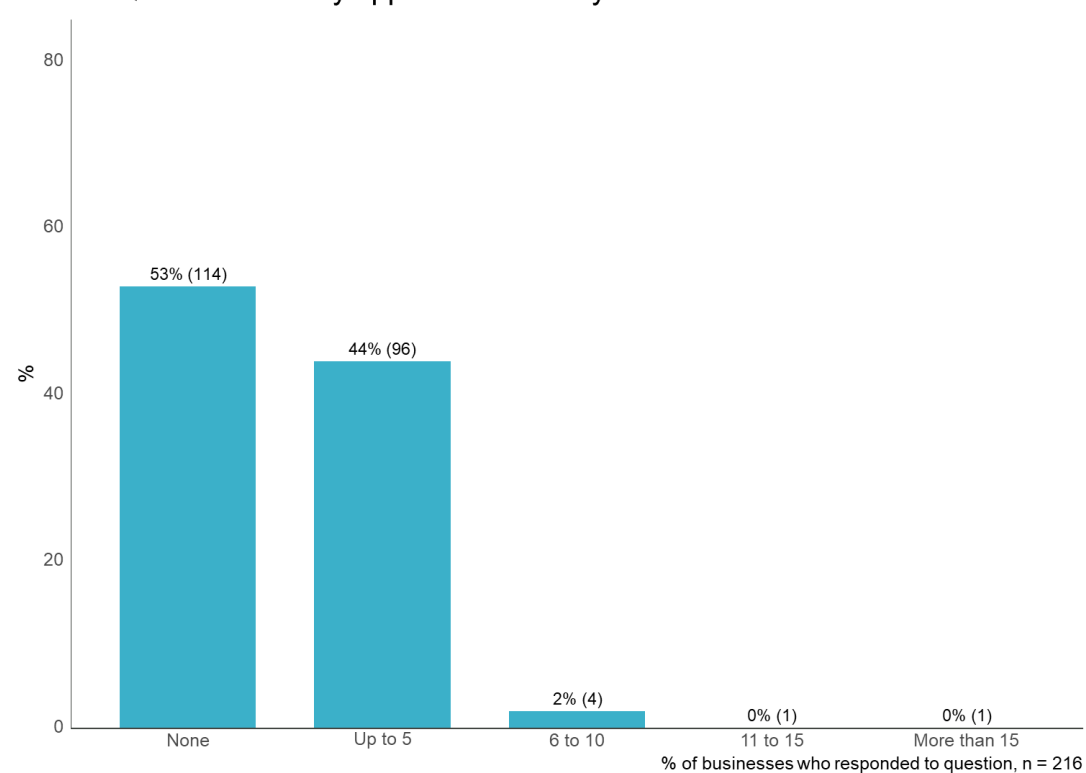
Offering Apprenticeships in the Future

25% of the businesses surveyed intend to offer apprenticeships in the future, with the highest proportions intending to do so in the Construction and Digital sectors.

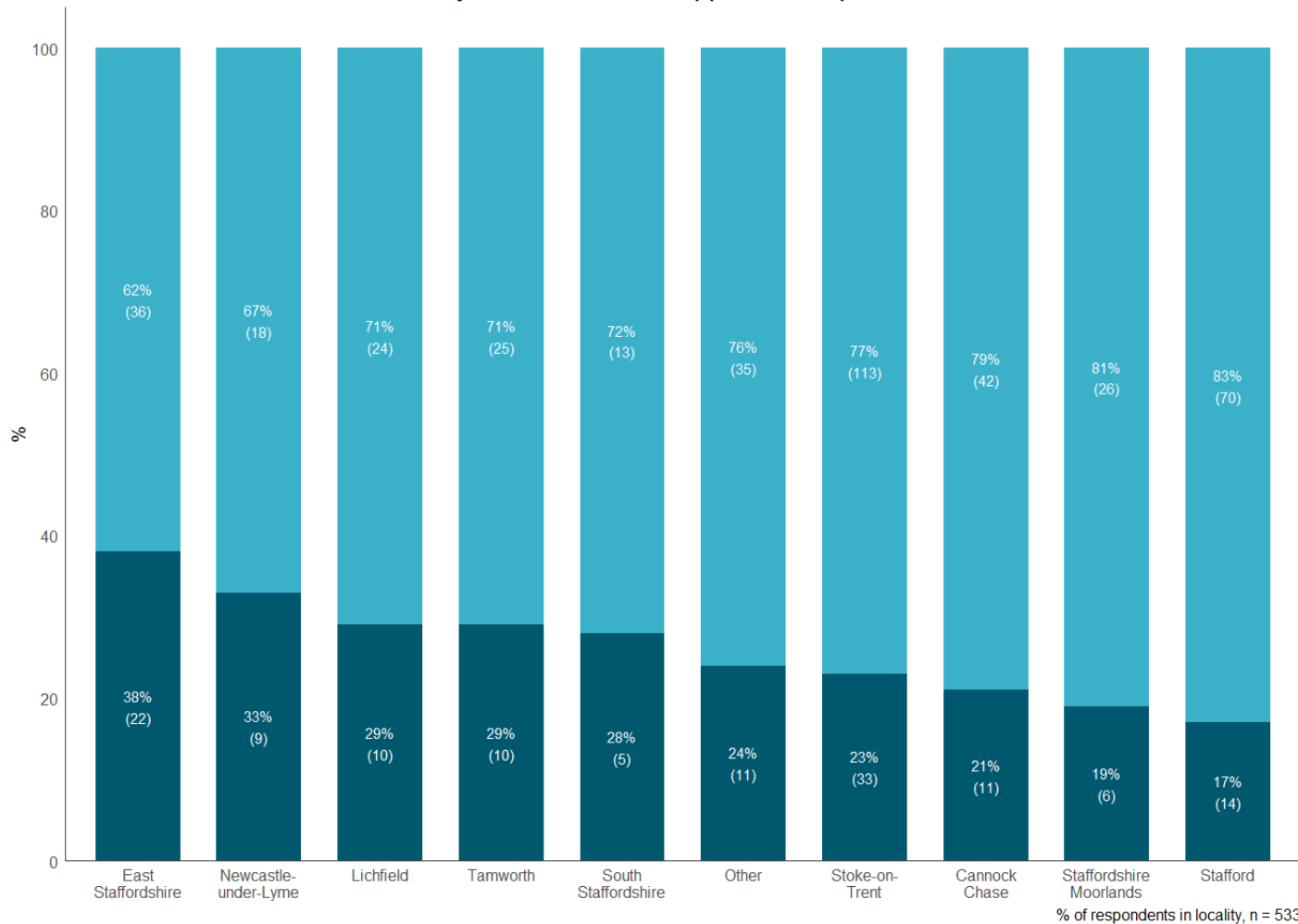Q6.1e Do you intend to offer apprenticeships in the future?
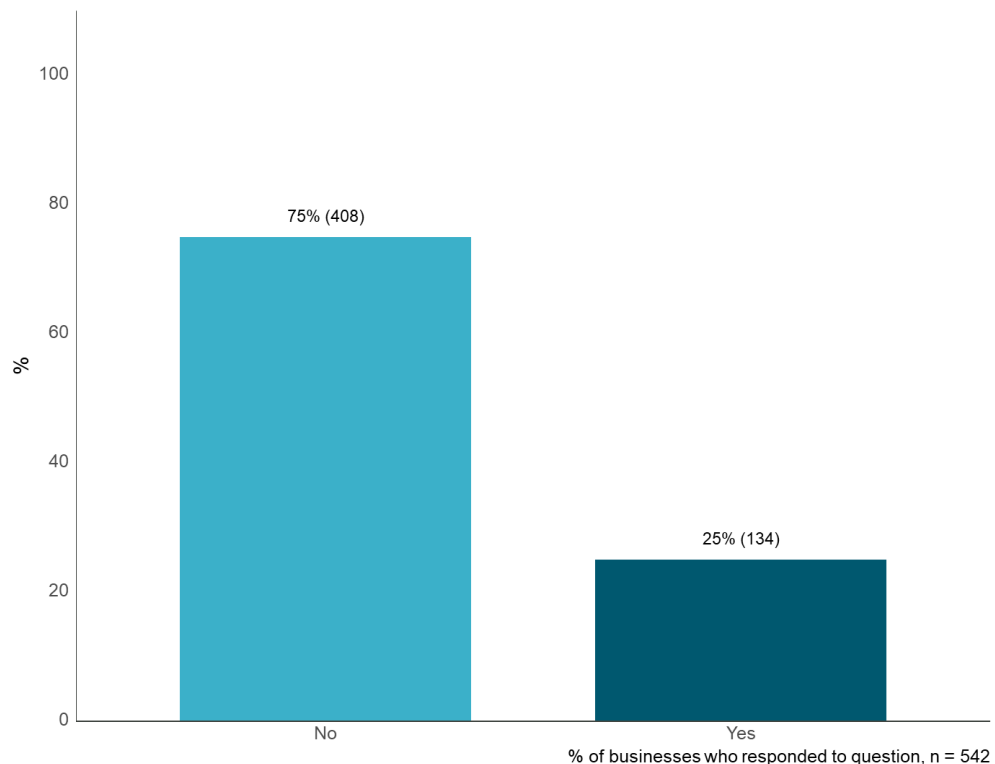
75% (408)

25% (134)

Q6.1e
No
Yes

No   Yes

% of businesses who responded to question, n = 542

Q6.1e Do you intend to offer apprenticeships in the future?

	Construction	Digital	Engineering / manufacturing	Other	Logistics	Health and social care
No	68% (48)	68% (19)	74% (90)	77% (189)	80% (28)	83% (34)
Yes	32% (23)	32% (9)	26% (31)	23% (57)	20% (7)	17% (7)

Q6.1e
No
Yes

% of respondents in sector, n = 542

101

Offering Apprenticeships in the Future

Q6.1e Do you intend to offer apprenticeships in the future?
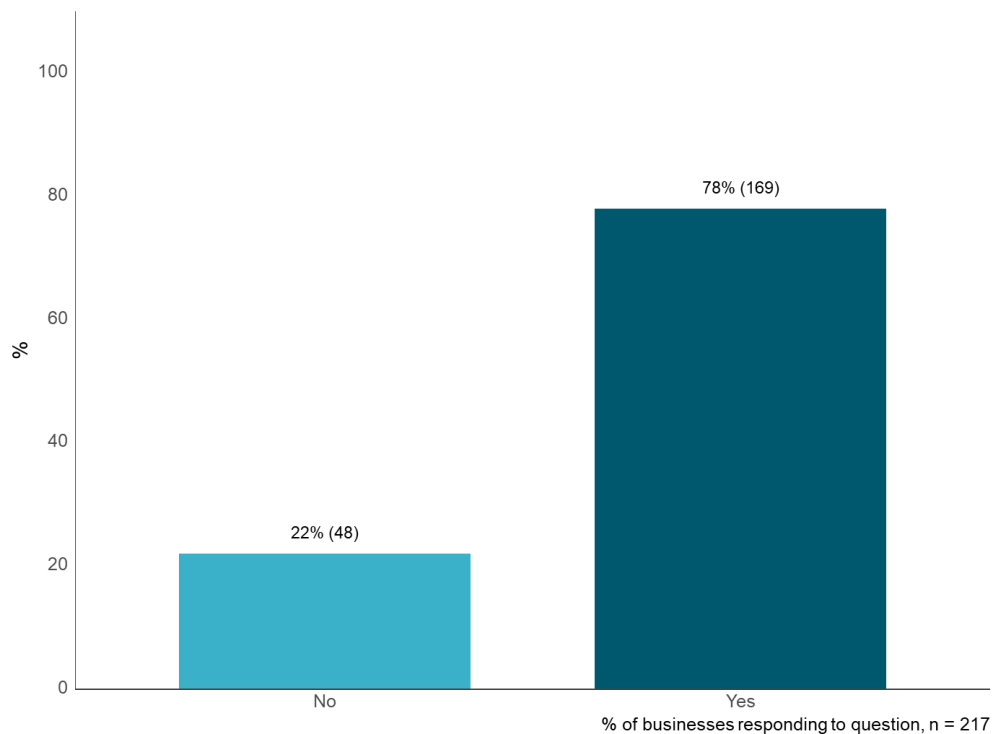
% of respondents in locality, n = 533

There are notable geographic differences in business intentions to offer apprenticeships; in East Staffordshire the proportion intending to do so is over double the proportion intending to do so in Stafford (38% versus 17%).
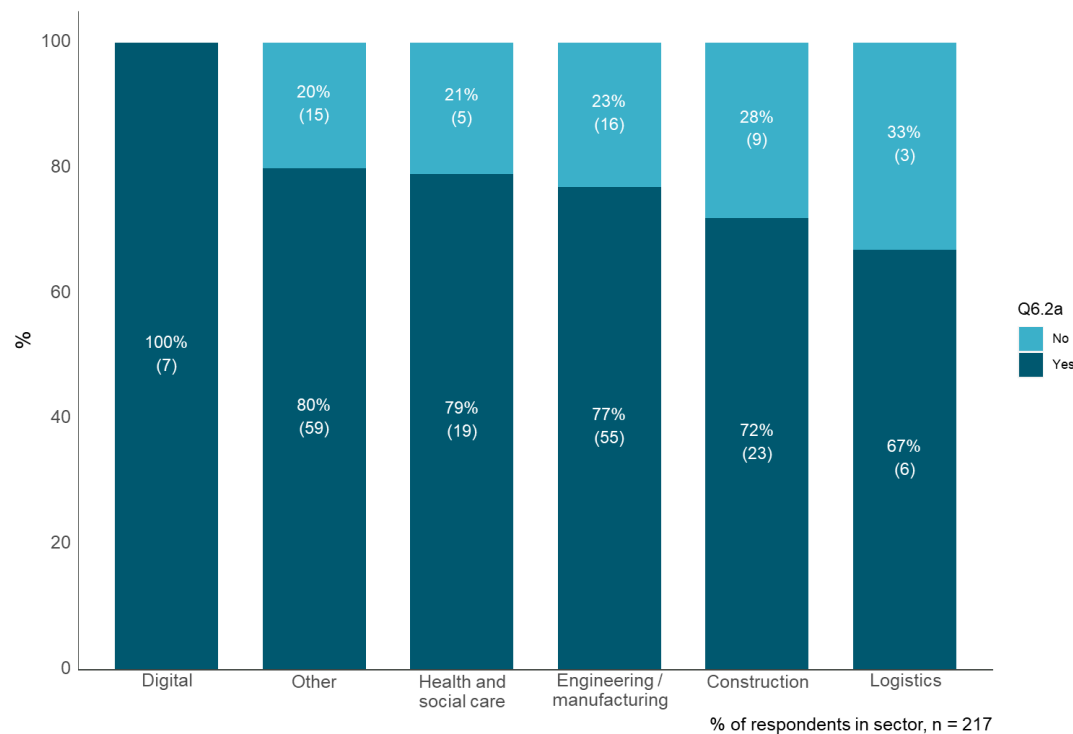
Marketing Apprenticeships

The majority of respondents have worked with education providers to market their apprenticeship/ work experience offer and this is true within each of the sectors.

Q6.2a Have you worked with education providers / hubs to market your apprenticeship / work experience offer?

78% (169)

22% (48)

No   Yes

% of businesses responding to question, n = 217

Q6.2a
No
Yes

Q6.2a Have you worked with education providers / hubs to market your apprenticeship / work experience offer?

Sector	No	Yes
Digital		100% (7)
Other	20% (15)	80% (59)
Health and social care	21% (5)	79% (19)
Engineering / manufacturing	23% (16)	77% (55)
Construction	28% (9)	72% (23)
Logistics	33% (3)	67% (6)

% of respondents in sector, n = 217

Q6.2a
No
Yes

Marketing Apprenticeships

Q6.2a Have you worked with education providers / hubs to market your apprenticeship / work experience offer?

% of respondents in locality, n = 216
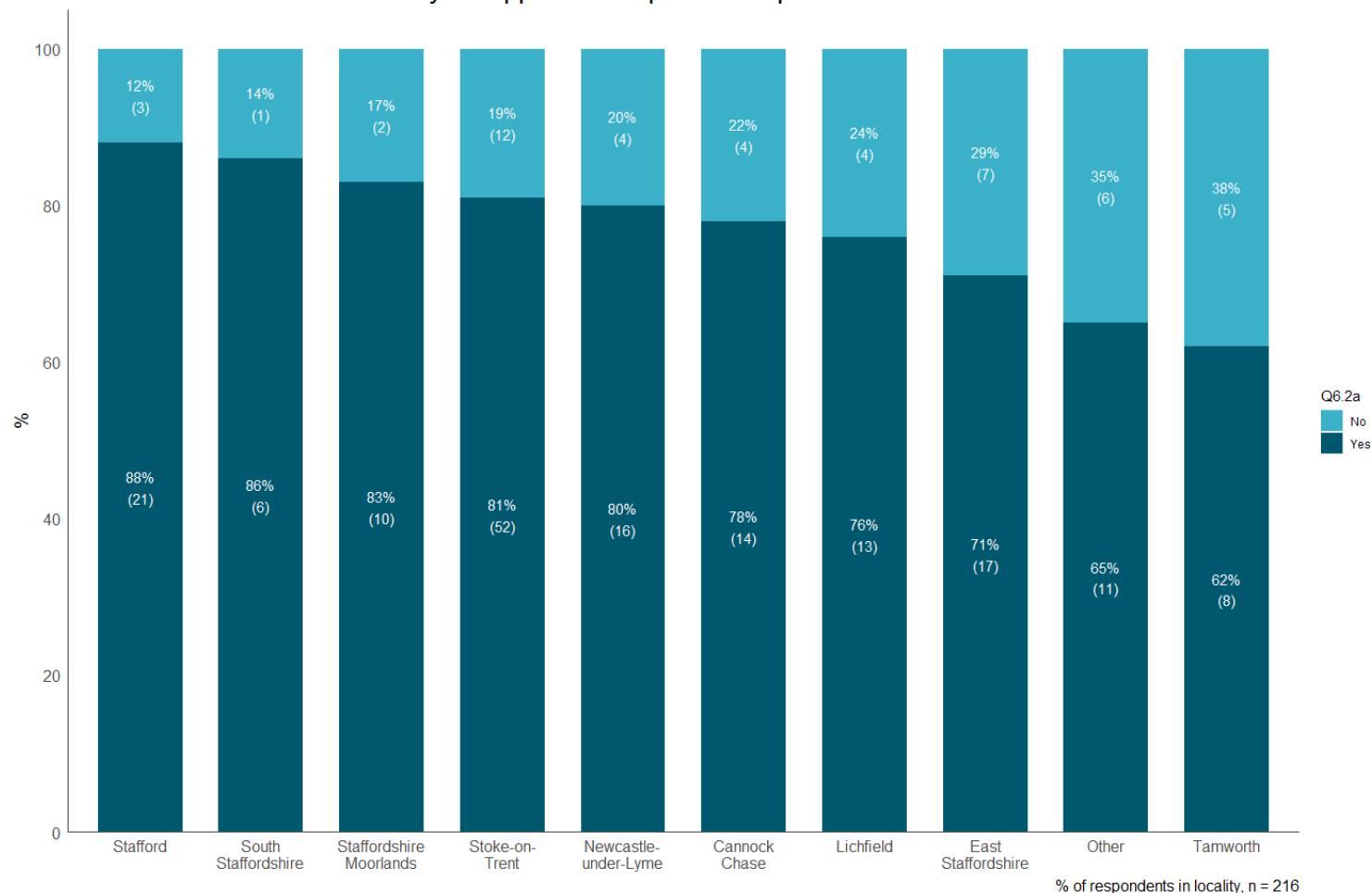
The proportion working with education providers to market their offer varies slightly across the localities of the area.

Tamworth has the lowest proportion of firms saying they have worked with education providers/hubs.

Collaborating with education providers?

The main reason given for not working with education providers is that there is no need to do so to attract interest. There is an openness to collaborating; 67% say they will look into collaboration in future.

Q6.2c: Which of the following are reasons why you haven't worked with education and training providers
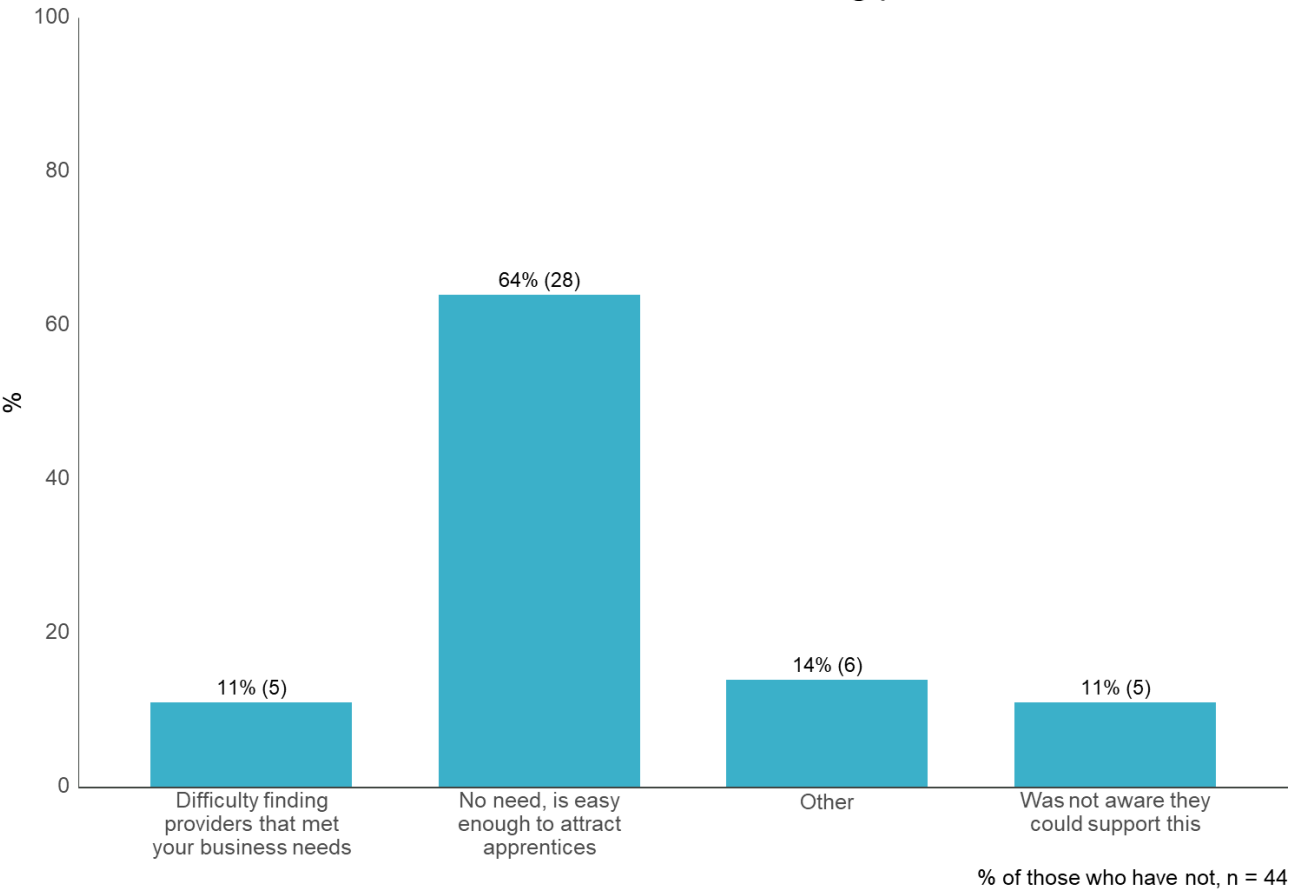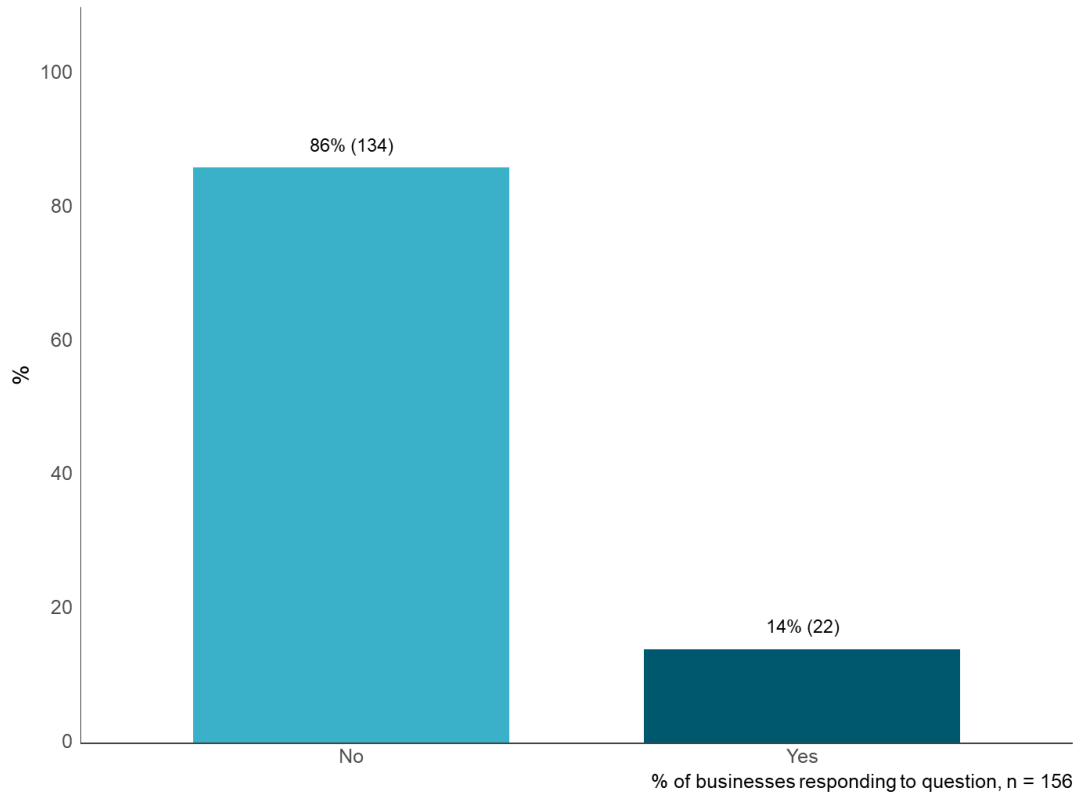
Q6.2d: Will you look into collaboration in the future?

% of those who have not, n = 44

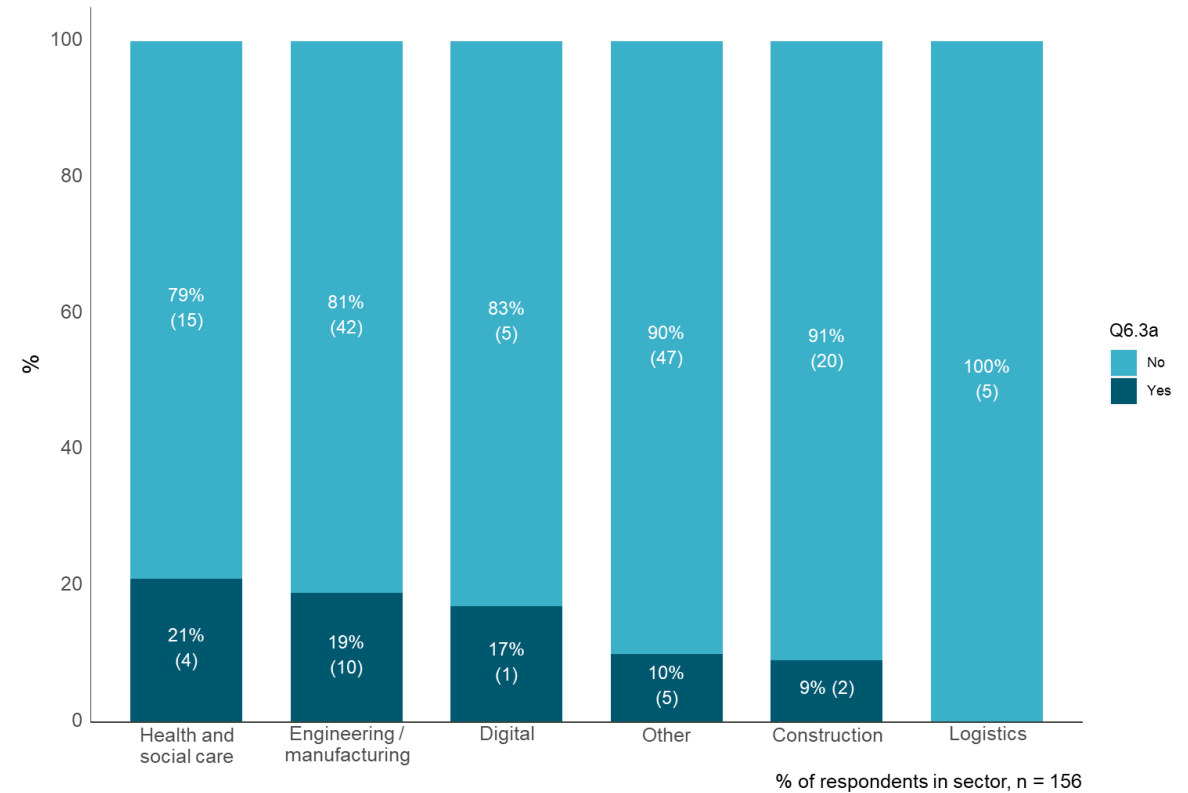% who have not worked with education providers , n = 45
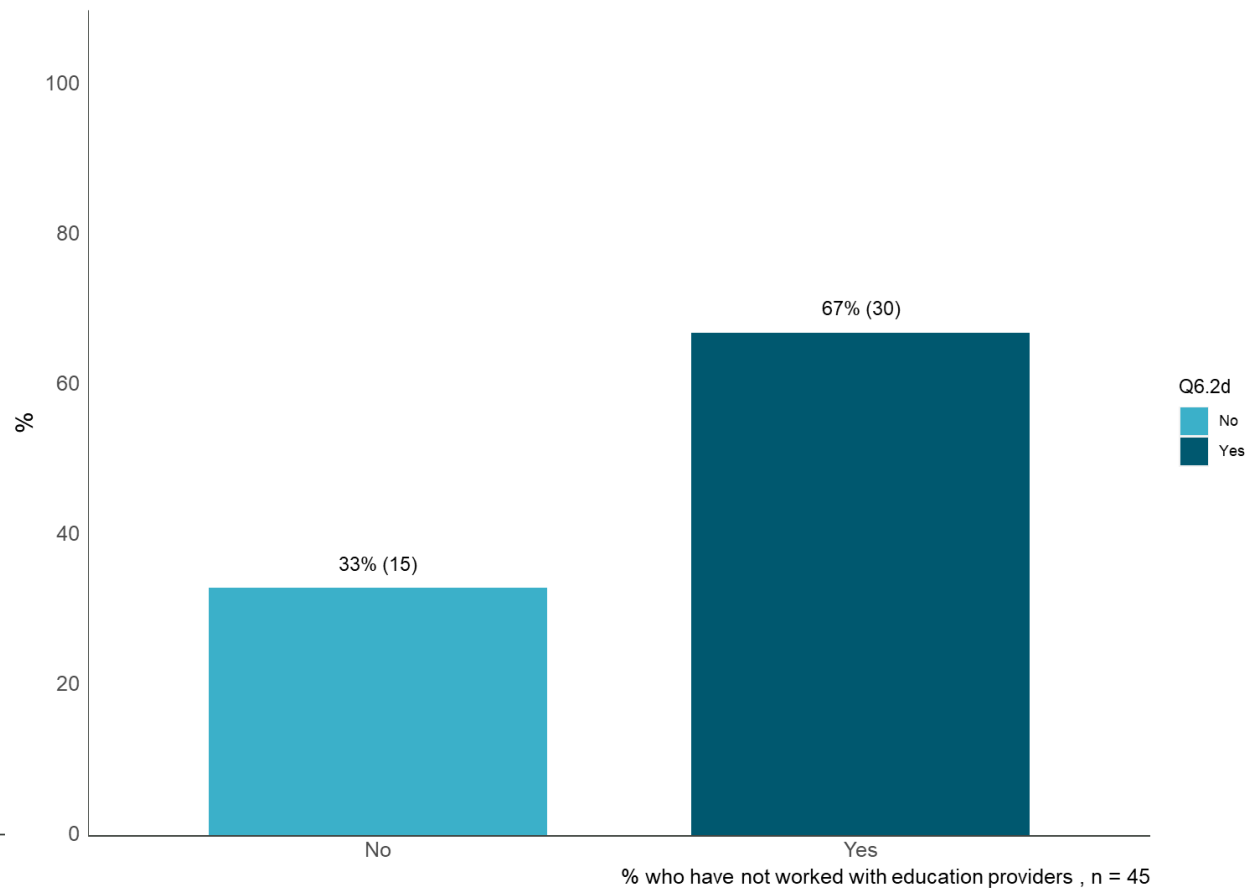
Retaining Apprentices

Firms do not struggle to retain apprentices after their apprenticeships end. The sectors where the most firms are struggling are Health and Social Care and Engineering/Manufacturing but these sectors still have 79% and 81% of firms saying they do not struggle.

Q6.3a Do you struggle to retain apprentices once their apprenticeship has finished?

86% (134)

14% (22)

No

Yes

% of businesses responding to question, n = 156

Q6.3a Do you struggle to retain apprentices once their apprenticeship has finished?

	Health and social care	Engineering / manufacturing	Digital	Other	Construction	Logistics
No	79% (15)	81% (42)	83% (5)	90% (47)	91% (20)	100% (5)
Yes	21% (4)	19% (10)	17% (1)	10% (5)	9% (2)	

Q6.3a
No
Yes

% of respondents in sector, n = 156

Retaining Apprentices

Q6.3a Do you struggle to retain apprentices once their apprenticeship has finished?

% of respondents in locality, n = 155

Q6.3a
- No
- Yes

There are notable geographic differences in how easy firms find it to retain apprentices, with the percentage finding it hard ranging from 6% in Stoke-on-Trent to 41% in East Staffordshire.

Metro——Dynamics
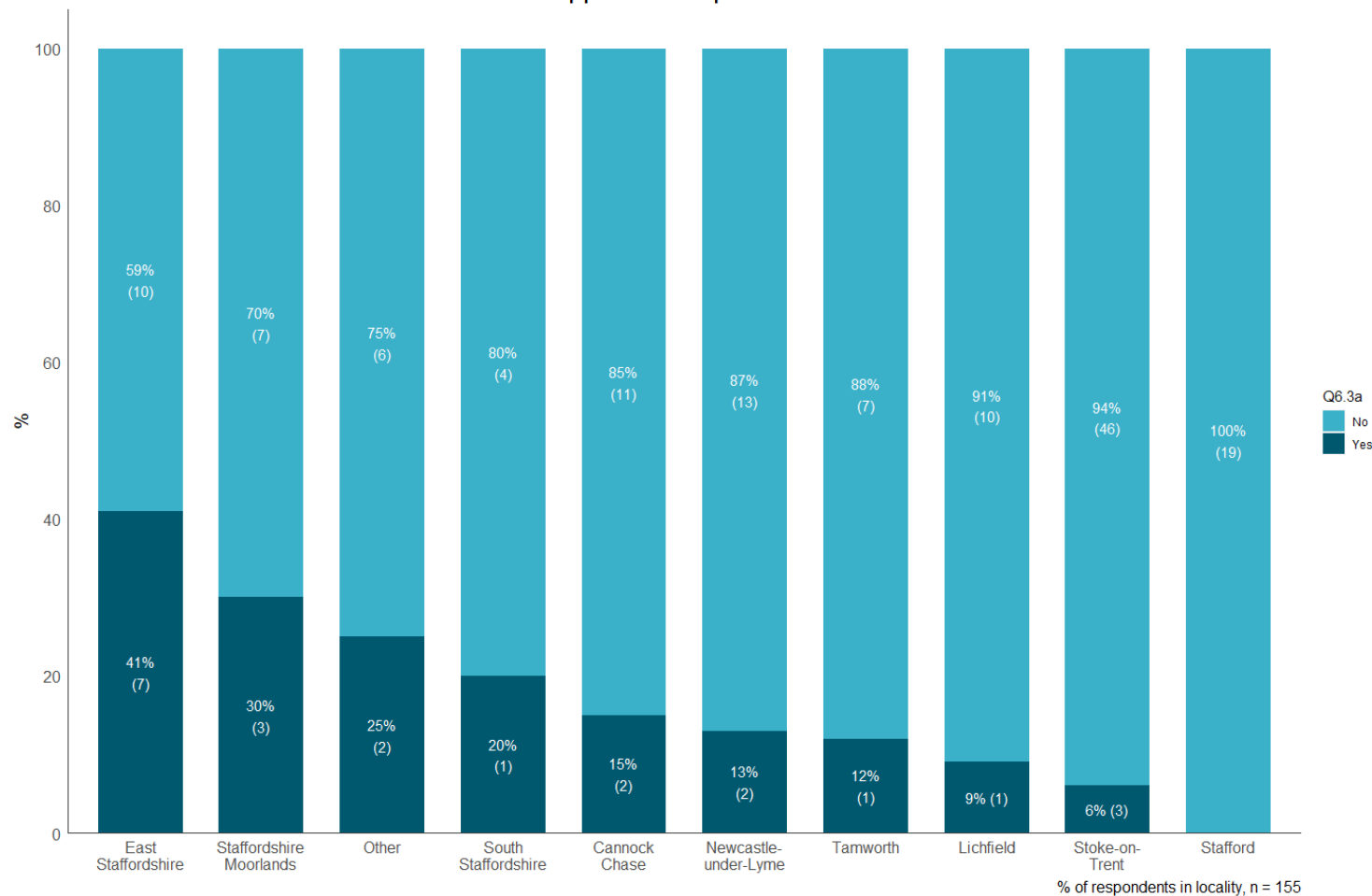
Q6.3b Can you comment on why you think this is?

Respondents reported that:

- Apprentices leave the organisation at the end of the scheme
- Some don't finish apprenticeships
- Some move on to larger firms offering higher pay
- Some move on to try a different occupation

Retaining Apprentices

Q6.3c: Approximately what proportion of your apprentices stay with your business following the completion of their apprenticeship?
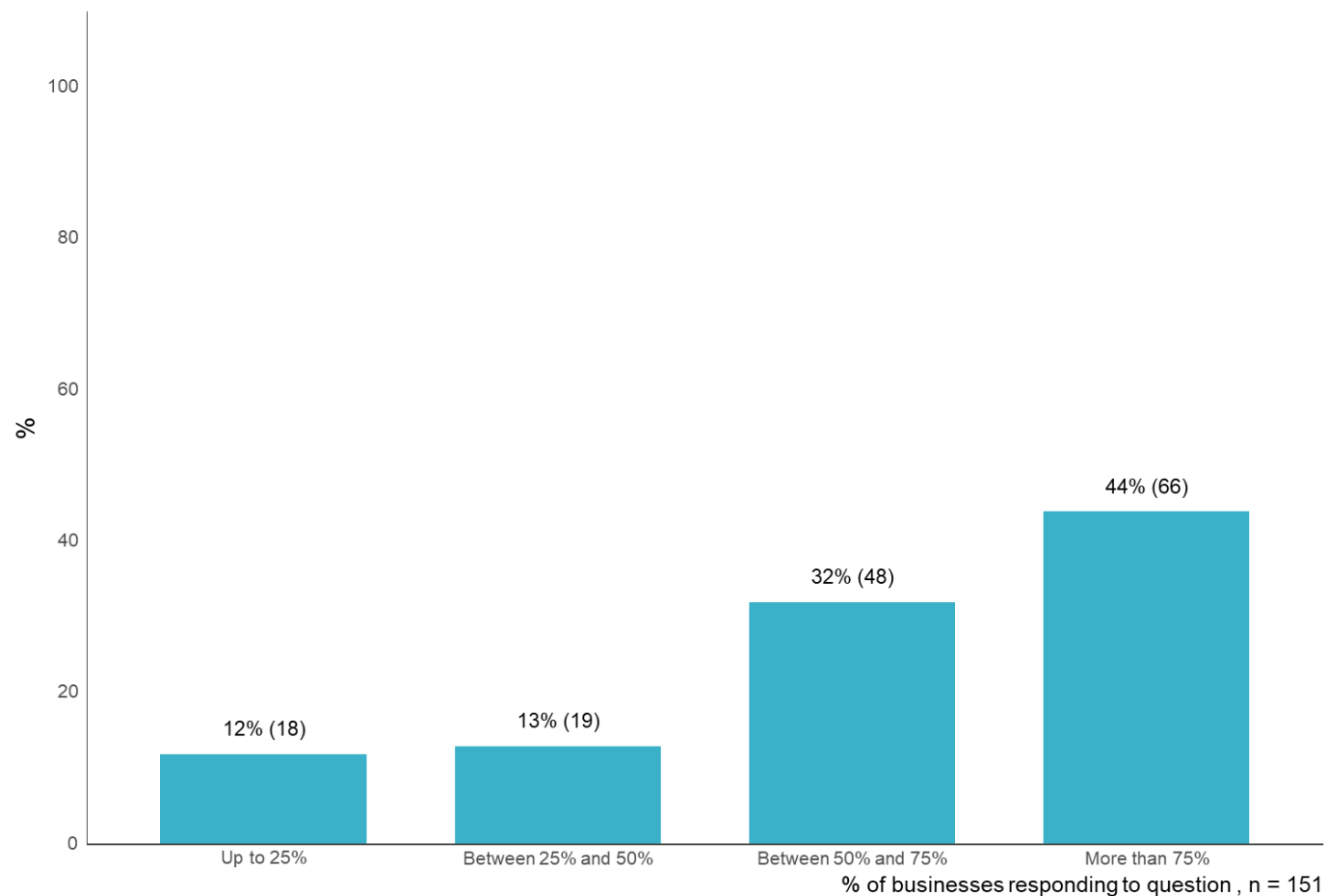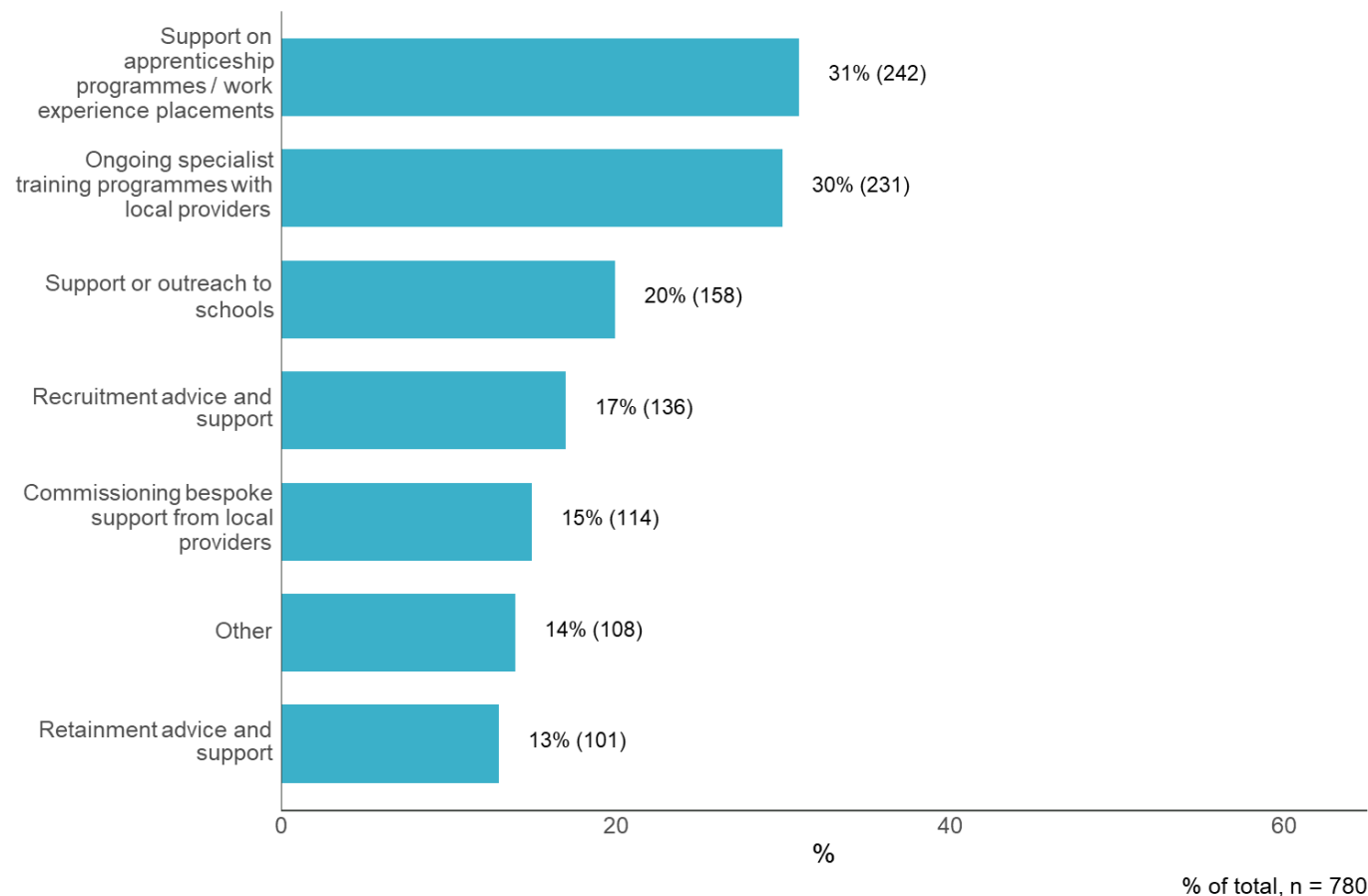
Businesses surveyed retain most of their apprentices; 44% keep more than three quarters of their apprentices and 32% retain between half and three quarters.

% of businesses responding to question , n = 151

Support for businesses

Metro —— Dynamics

Business Support

Q7.1: What support would benefit your business for future recruitment, retainment, and training issues? Please select all that apply?

Category	%
Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements	31% (242)
Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers	30% (231)
Support or outreach to schools	20% (158)
Recruitment advice and support	17% (136)
Commissioning bespoke support from local providers	15% (114)
Other	14% (108)
Retainment advice and support	13% (101)

%

% of total, n = 780

The most frequent response is that they would benefit from support on apprenticeships/work experience (31%) and specialist training programs with local providers (30%).
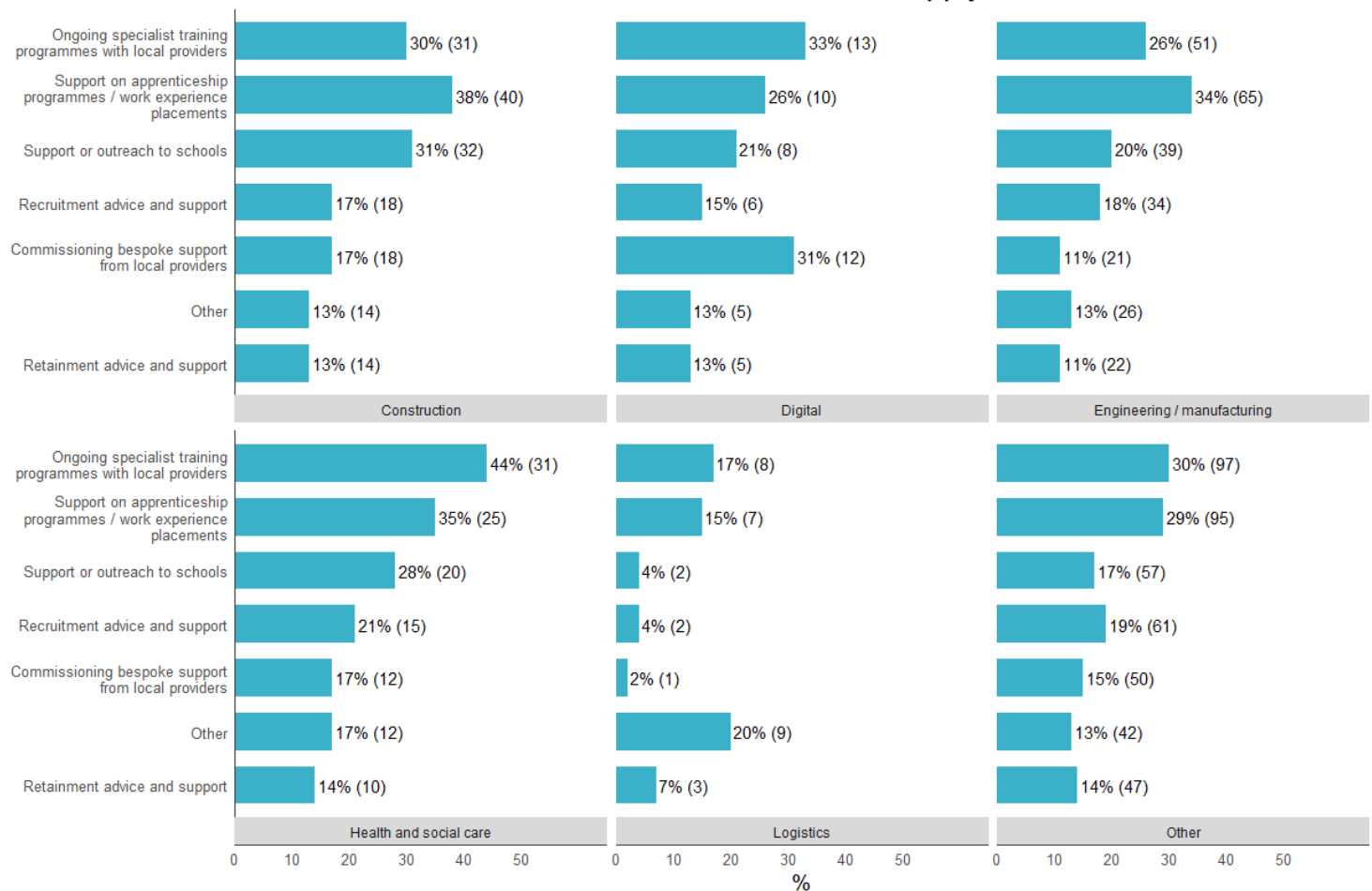
Q7.1 cont. 'Other' responses

Responses included:

- Support from colleges and universities for training and advertising recruitment opportunities

- Government funding for training

- Information on apprenticeship schemes

- Digital support

- Public transport improvements

Business Support

Q7.1: What support would benefit your business for future recruitment, retainment, and training issues? Please select all that apply?
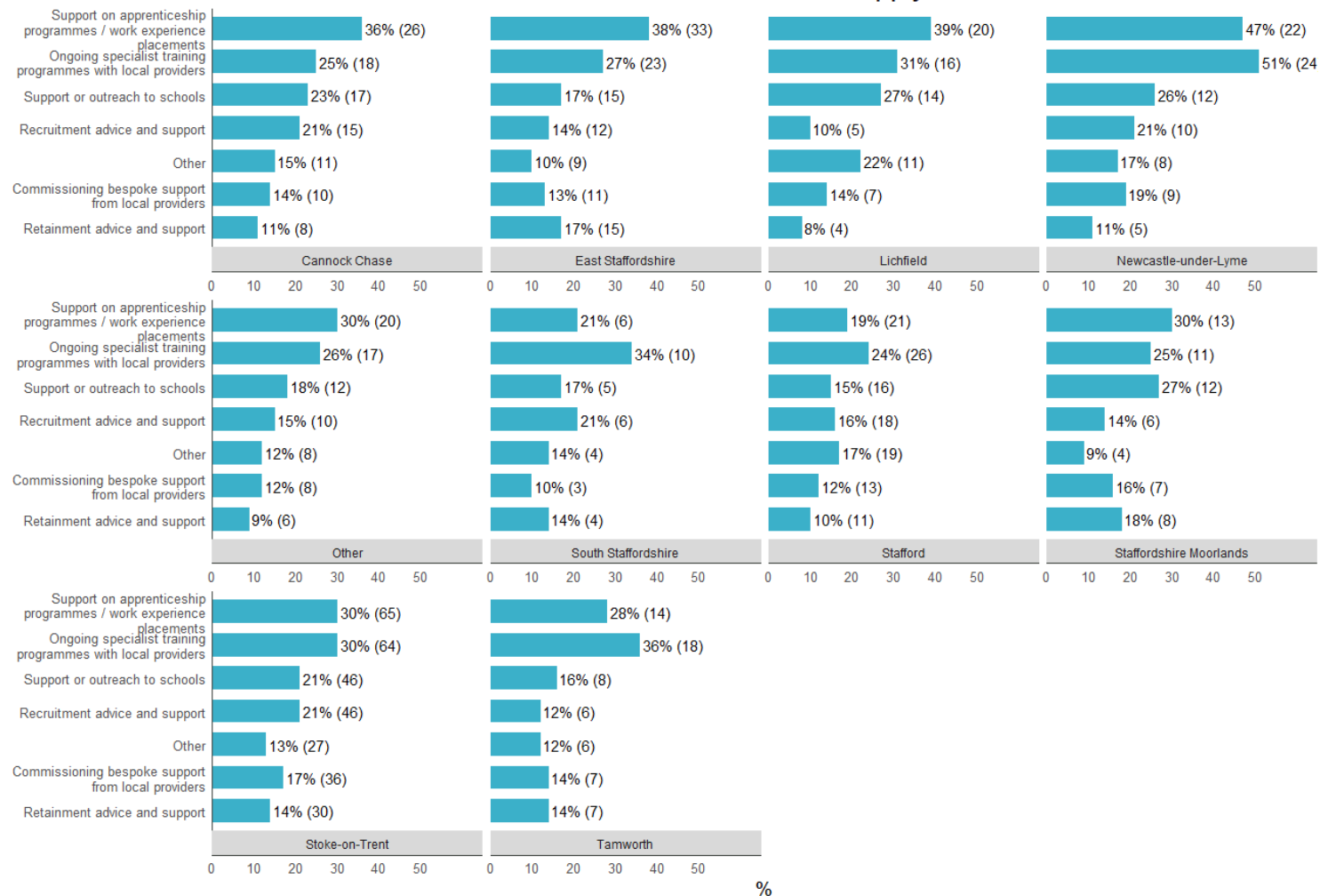

Across each sector, businesses tend to be interested in specialist training programs with local providers and support on apprenticeship and work experience placements.

Digital businesses are more likely to express interest in commissioning bespoke support.

% of sector, n = 780

Business Support

Q7.1:What support would benefit your business for future recruitment, retainment, and training issues? Please select all that apply?

Cannock Chase
- Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements: 36% (26)
- Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers: 25% (18)
- Support or outreach to schools: 23% (17)
- Recruitment advice and support: 21% (15)
- Other: 15% (11)
- Commissioning bespoke support from local providers: 14% (10)
- Retainment advice and support: 11% (8)

East Staffordshire
- Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements: 38% (33)
- Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers: 27% (23)
- Support or outreach to schools: 17% (15)
- Recruitment advice and support: 14% (12)
- Other: 10% (9)
- Commissioning bespoke support from local providers: 13% (11)
- Retainment advice and support: 17% (15)

Lichfield
- Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements: 39% (20)
- Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers: 31% (16)
- Support or outreach to schools: 27% (14)
- Recruitment advice and support: 10% (5)
- Other: 22% (11)
- Commissioning bespoke support from local providers: 14% (7)
- Retainment advice and support: 8% (4)

Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements: 47% (22)
- Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers: 51% (24)
- Support or outreach to schools: 26% (12)
- Recruitment advice and support: 21% (10)
- Other: 17% (8)
- Commissioning bespoke support from local providers: 19% (9)
- Retainment advice and support: 11% (5)

Other
- Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements: 30% (20)
- Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers: 26% (17)
- Support or outreach to schools: 18% (12)
- Recruitment advice and support: 15% (10)
- Other: 12% (8)
- Commissioning bespoke support from local providers: 12% (8)
- Retainment advice and support: 9% (6)

South Staffordshire
- Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements: 21% (6)
- Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers: 34% (10)
- Support or outreach to schools: 17% (5)
- Recruitment advice and support: 21% (6)
- Other: 14% (4)
- Commissioning bespoke support from local providers: 10% (3)
- Retainment advice and support: 14% (4)

Stafford
- Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements: 19% (21)
- Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers: 24% (26)
- Support or outreach to schools: 15% (16)
- Recruitment advice and support: 16% (18)
- Other: 17% (19)
- Commissioning bespoke support from local providers: 12% (13)
- Retainment advice and support: 10% (11)

Staffordshire Moorlands
- Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements: 30% (13)
- Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers: 25% (11)
- Support or outreach to schools: 27% (12)
- Recruitment advice and support: 14% (6)
- Other: 9% (4)
- Commissioning bespoke support from local providers: 16% (7)
- Retainment advice and support: 18% (8)

Stoke-on-Trent
- Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements: 30% (65)
- Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers: 30% (64)
- Support or outreach to schools: 21% (46)
- Recruitment advice and support: 21% (46)
- Other: 13% (27)
- Commissioning bespoke support from local providers: 17% (36)
- Retainment advice and support: 14% (30)

Tamworth
- Support on apprenticeship programmes / work experience placements: 28% (14)
- Ongoing specialist training programmes with local providers: 36% (18)
- Support or outreach to schools: 16% (8)
- Recruitment advice and support: 12% (6)
- Other: 12% (6)
- Commissioning bespoke support from local providers: 14% (7)
- Retainment advice and support: 14% (7)

%

% of locality, n = 770

The support that businesses are interested in follows similar patterns across areas: with specialist training programs with local providers and support on apprenticeship and work experience placements common answers across the LEP area.
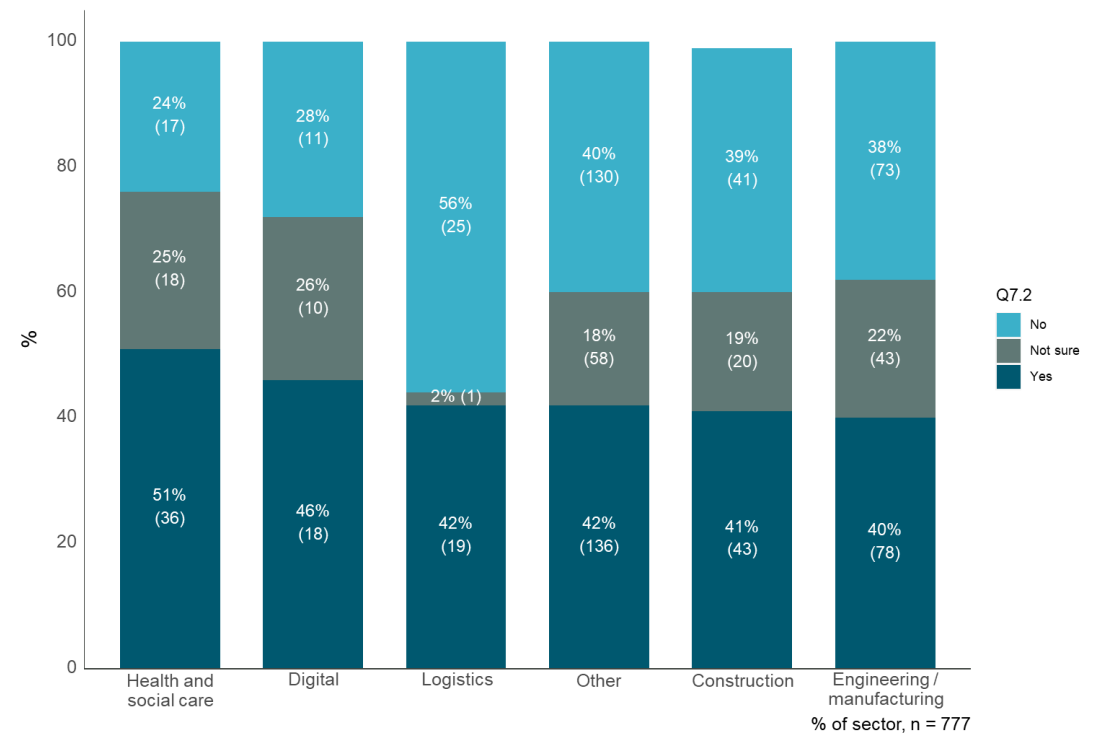
Future Support Interventions

Views on support interventions are mixed, with 19% of businesses unsure whether this is something they would be interested in. This varies by sector, with a higher percentage in the Digital and Health and Social Care sectors saying that they would be interested in support.

Q7.2 Would you be interested in future support interventions from SSLEP or other support organisations?
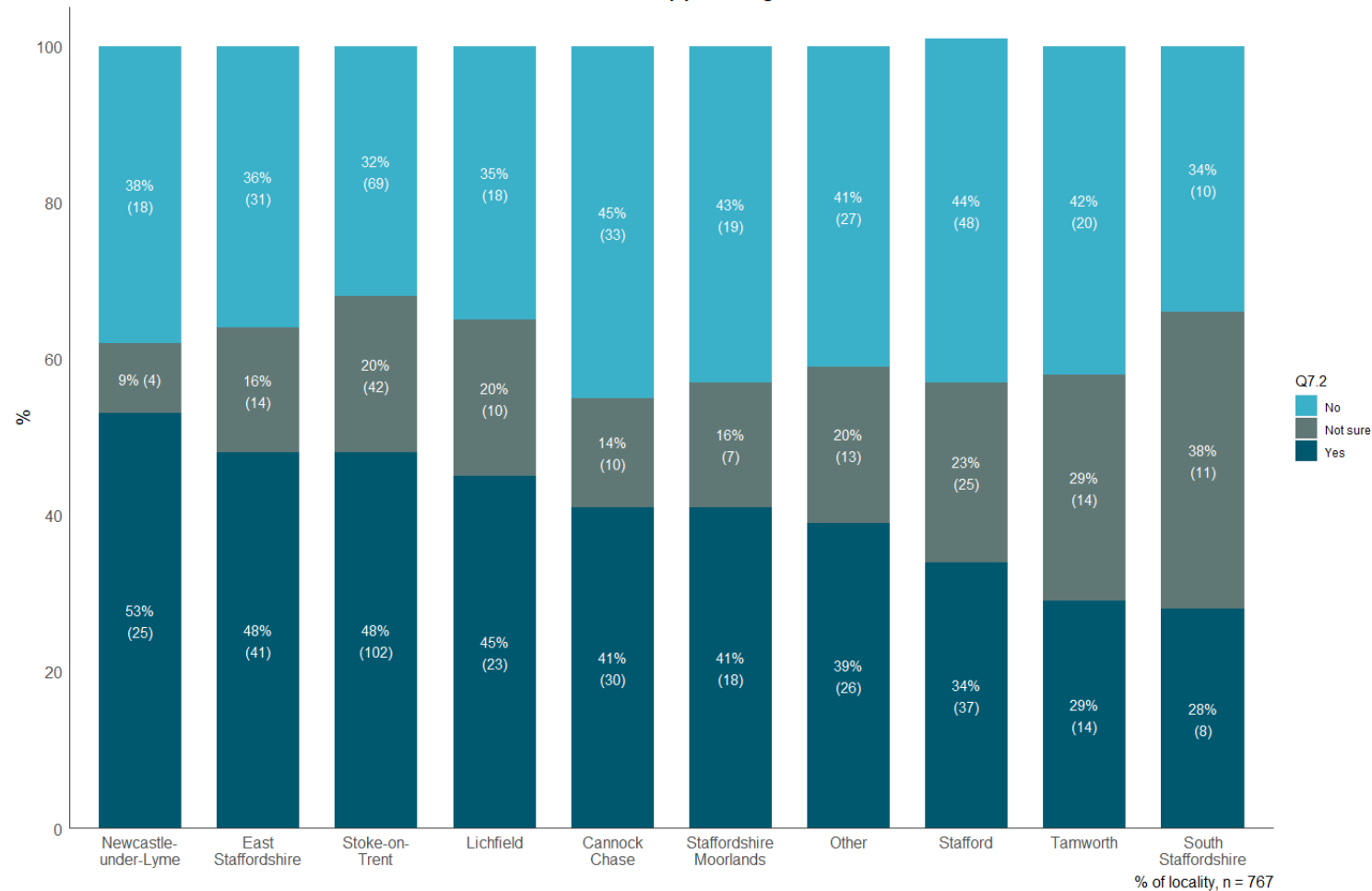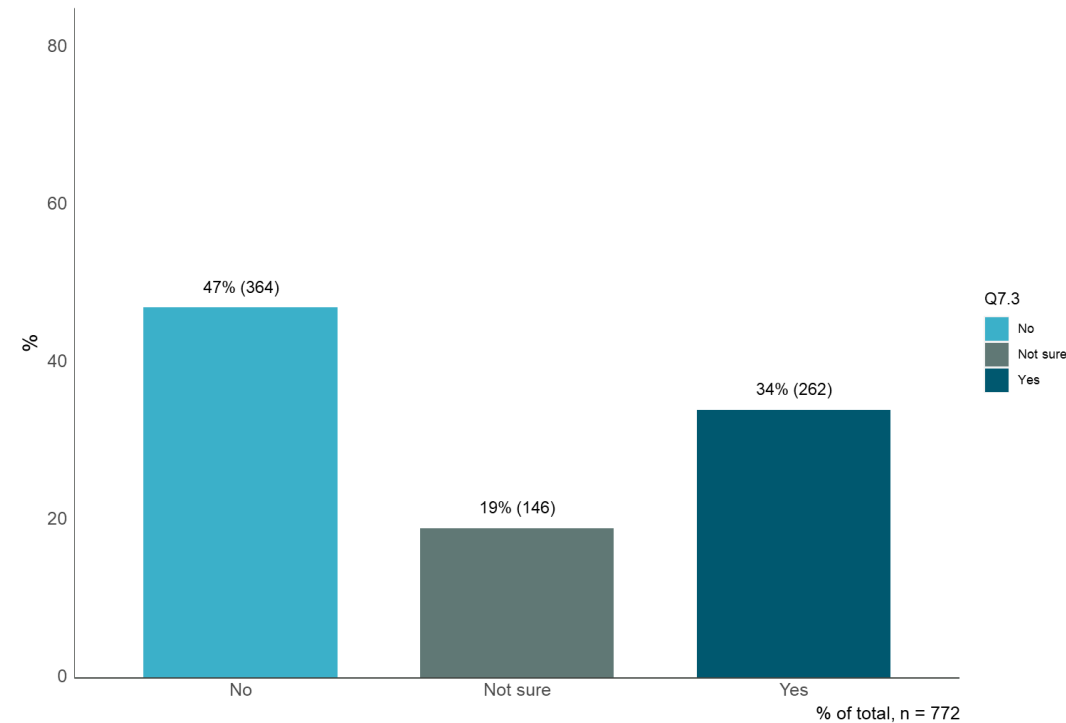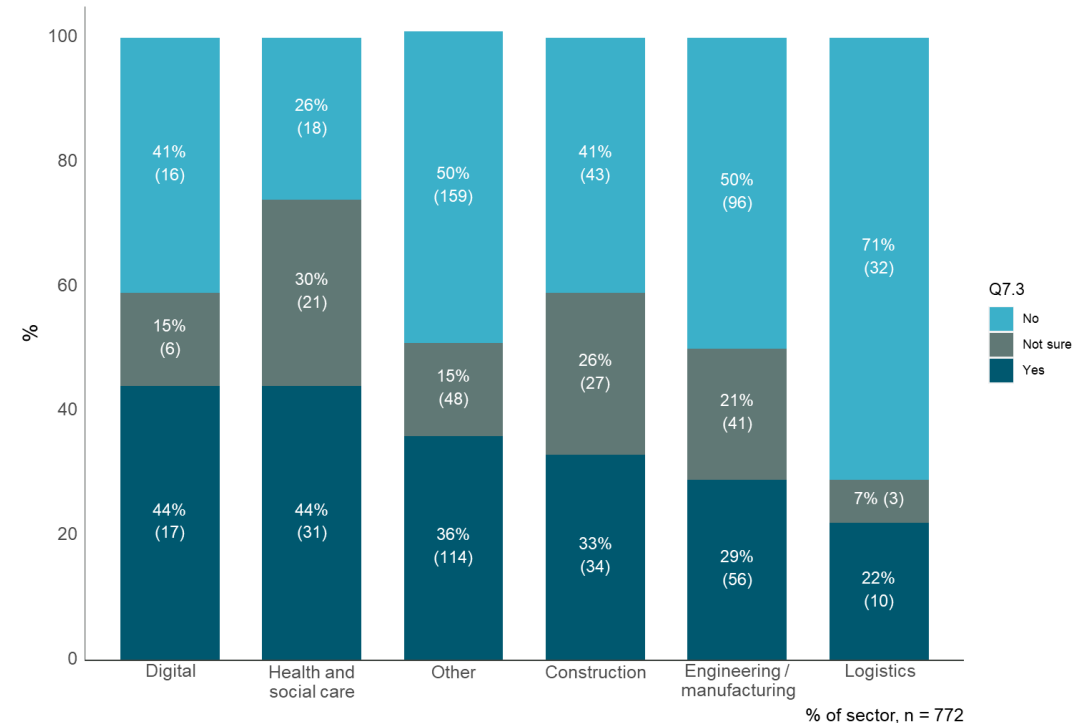
% of total, n = 777

Q7.2 Would you be interested in future support interventions from SSLEP or other support organisations?

% of sector, n = 777
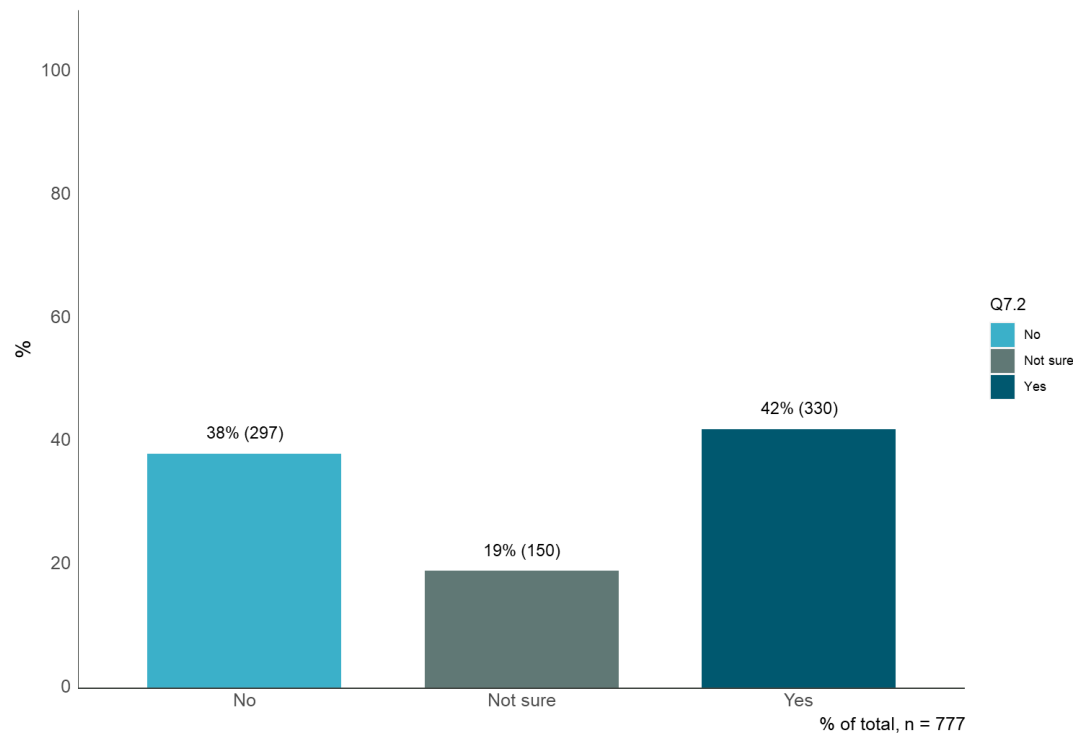
Future Support Interventions

Q7.2 Would you be interested in future support interventions from SSLEP or other support organisations?

% of locality, n = 767

The geographic picture is mixed, with high levels of uncertainty in some places and in the place where the highest percentage of firms are interested in this support just 53% say they are.

Partnership Working

Q7.3 Would you be interested in partnership working with other organisations to help upskill your current workforce or recruit new employees?
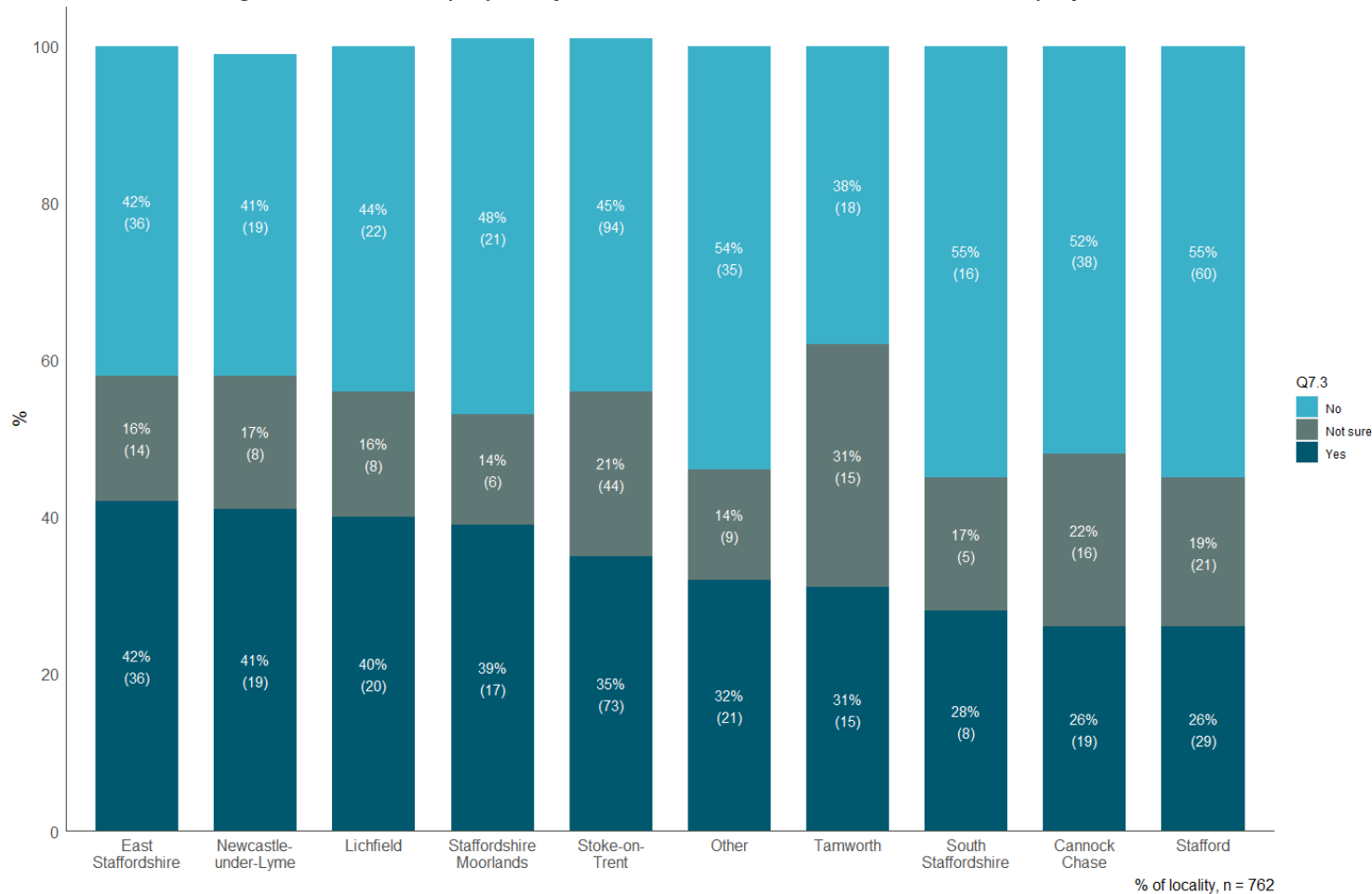
There is some geographic variation but the picture is again a mixed one, with quite even percentages saying yes and no and a number who are unsure.