



Playwork People 2: research into the characteristics of the playwork workforce

SkillsActive

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the second phase of Playwork People research. The findings are based on the results of two separate surveys: one of playwork employers and one of playwork employees conducted in 2005.

1.1 Background

The Playwork Unit at SkillsActive works to set and maintain standards in training and qualifications for playworkers, and aims to increase the profile of play. To ensure that this remit is met there is a need for robust and reliable data about the characteristics of the playwork workforce.

The Playwork People research project started with Part One in 2003. Part One consisted of a survey of employees in the playwork sector and it aimed to find out where playworkers are, investigate their working patterns, demographic characteristics, training history and needs. Data was gathered using a self completion questionnaire in 2003 and 2004 and was informed and supplemented by additional qualitative data collection.

Playwork People Part Two aims to build on the findings of Part One by repeating a developed version of the employee survey and additionally undertaking a survey of employers. Both Part Two surveys were carried out as self completion questionnaires in 2005. The results of both the Part Two questionnaires will be the focus of this report.

This data is important for many reasons, among which are the better understanding of the playwork workforce and the assessment of the uptake of, and need, for training in the sector. This in turn has the potential to help improve training of those working in playwork, to enhance the working life of playworkers, to increase the quality of playwork provision, and to raise the profile of the playwork sector as a whole. This research has already contributed extensively to a Sector Skills Agreement for playwork and the UK Strategy for Playwork Education and Training 2005 – 2010.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of the Playwork People research project is to:

Provide data and information to underpin and inform the development and understanding of the playwork workforce and training / qualifications provision.

The specific objectives of Playwork People 2 were to:

- Develop and conduct a new survey of playwork employers to profile the workforce, understand recruitment and vacancies, identify workforce skills and skills gaps and assess workforce development and training.
- Develop and conduct a survey of employees in the playwork sector in order to profile the workforce, their skills and qualifications.

- Compare the findings to the Playwork People 1 research.
- Use the findings as a basis for on-going research and to identify gaps in knowledge for future research projects.

1.3 Methodology

Fieldwork for Playwork People 2 was conducted during 2005 by using a self-completion questionnaire that was distributed by post, via the internet and email and given out at events. The aim was to reach as many playworkers as possible, across the whole spectrum of playwork settings.

Each playwork organisation was sent one questionnaire to be completed by the owner, manager or supervisor of the setting who had responsibility for employing and managing staff and a number of questionnaires for playwork employees at the same setting to complete.

Questionnaires were designed and piloted by SkillsActive based on the questionnaire used for Playwork People 1.

1.4 Survey response

216 responses were received from playwork employers and 456 from playwork employees across England. This is sufficient to give a broadly reliable picture of the playwork workforce, the skills, training and qualifications of playwork employees and the requirements of employers at a national level. However the sample size is not large enough for a full regional analysis. Only the South West has been analysed as a separate sub-sample for both employees and employers and the North West, West Midlands and North East for employees because of response rates over 50. The results for these regions have been compared to the results for England as a whole and a short paper is included in the appendices.

Table 1.4(a): Breakdown of responses for the employer and employee surveys by English region

	Employees responding		Employers responding	
	Absolute	%	Absolute	%
South West	137	30.0%	69	31.9%
North West	63	13.8%	13	6.0%
West Midlands	63	13.8%	8	3.7%
North East	54	11.8%	25	11.6%
East Midlands	48	10.5%	24	11.1%
South East	40	8.8%	26	12.0%
Yorkshire and Humber	18	3.9%	11	5.1%
London	4	0.9%	5	2.3%
East	2	0.4%	8	3.7%
No response	27	5.9%	27	12.5%
TOTAL	456	99.8%*	216	99.9%*

* Percentages do not sum to 100% because of rounding.

1.5 Definitions

There is no single source of contacts for playworkers or playwork employers. As such the survey was reliant on the contact databases of the Regional Centres for Playwork Education and Training and a snowball effect of questionnaires being passed on through networks. To some degree there is an element of self-selection where only those who consider themselves to be playworkers or playwork employers and feel that the questionnaire is relevant to them will respond. For example, respondents include some people who may not be considered to be playworkers in some parts of the sector, such as leisure workers and uniformed group leaders.

2. PLAYWORK EMPLOYEES

This section provides an analysis of the findings of the survey of employees undertaken in 2005 and where possible draws comparisons with the survey of employees undertaken in 2003/4 for Playwork People 1. This data has also been supplemented, where appropriate, with information from the recent Skill Needs Assessment¹ for playwork, which included research conducted by Experian and SkillsActive's own report on holiday playworkers².

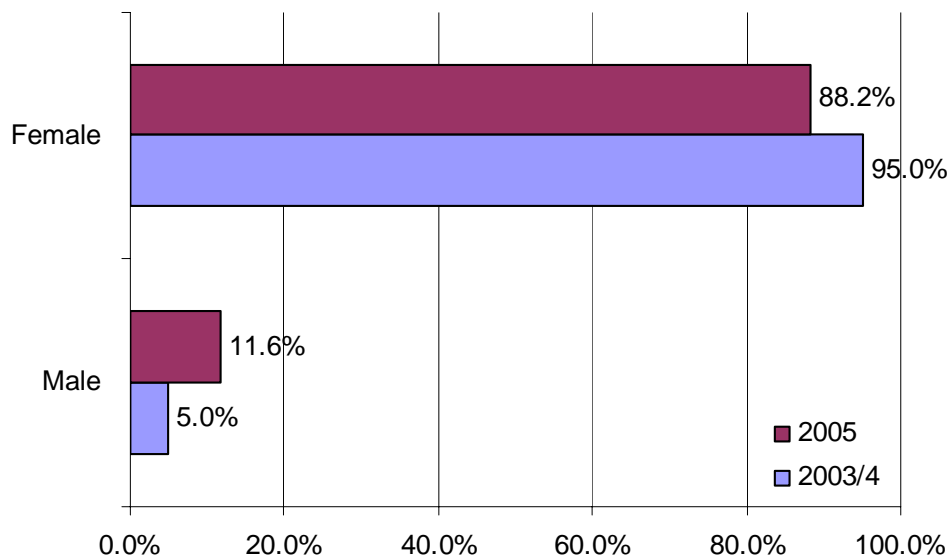
2.1 Profile of the workforce

Playwork employees were asked basic demographic questions in order to provide an analysis of the demographic characteristics of the playwork workforce.

2.1.1 Gender

The workforce is predominately female, with 88% of workers in 2005 being women. However comparison between the two research phases suggests that the proportion of male workers in the sector is increasing.

Diagram 2.1.1(a): Gender in the playwork workforce



Playwork Employees

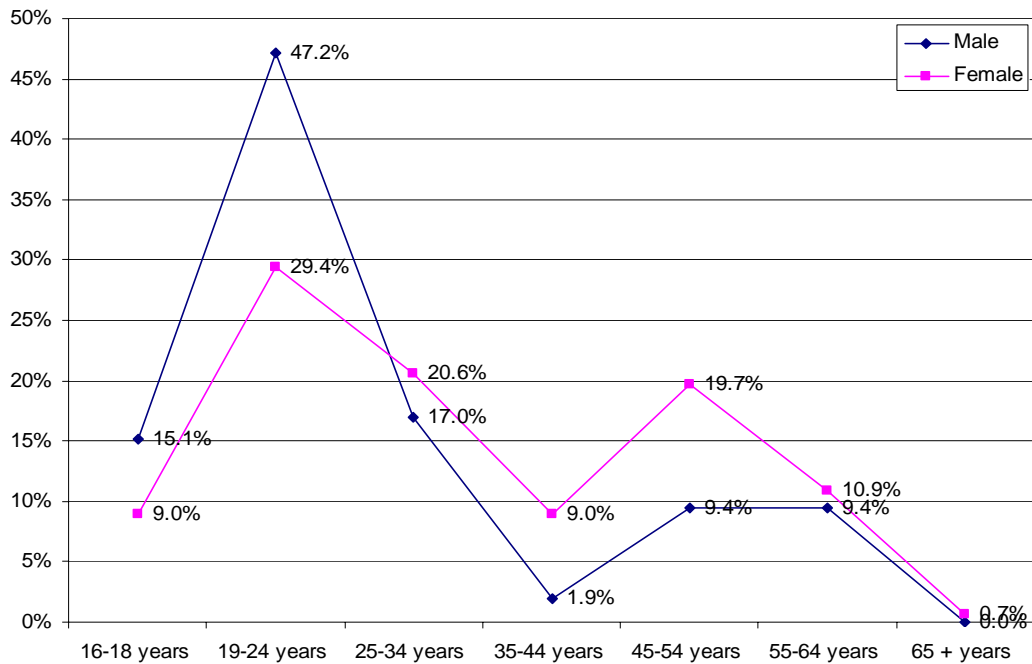
Base: all respondents

Nearly half (47.2%) of male respondents are aged between 19 and 24, compared to 29.4% of female playworkers in this age range. The proportion of female playworkers in the 45 to 54 years age range outweighs male playworkers.

¹ Skill Needs Assessment for Playwork, SkillsActive, October 2005

² Dimensions of Holiday Playwork, SkillsActive, June 2005

Diagram 2.1.1(b): Age profile of male and female playworkers

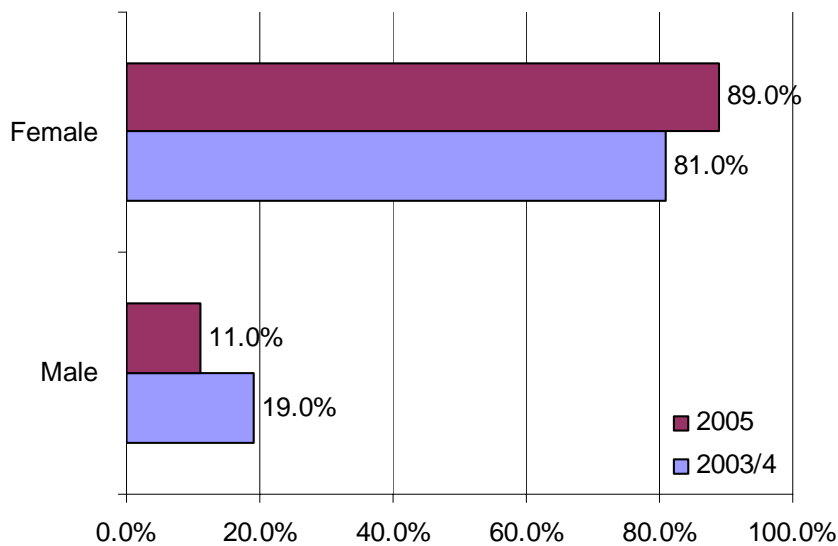


Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

At supervisory level the picture is now more balanced than it was in 2003/4, with the number of females reaching supervisory level now proportionate to their representation in the sector. This may reflect the younger age profile of male employees who are entering the sector in more junior positions.

Diagram 2.1.1(c): Gender in the playwork workforce at supervisory level



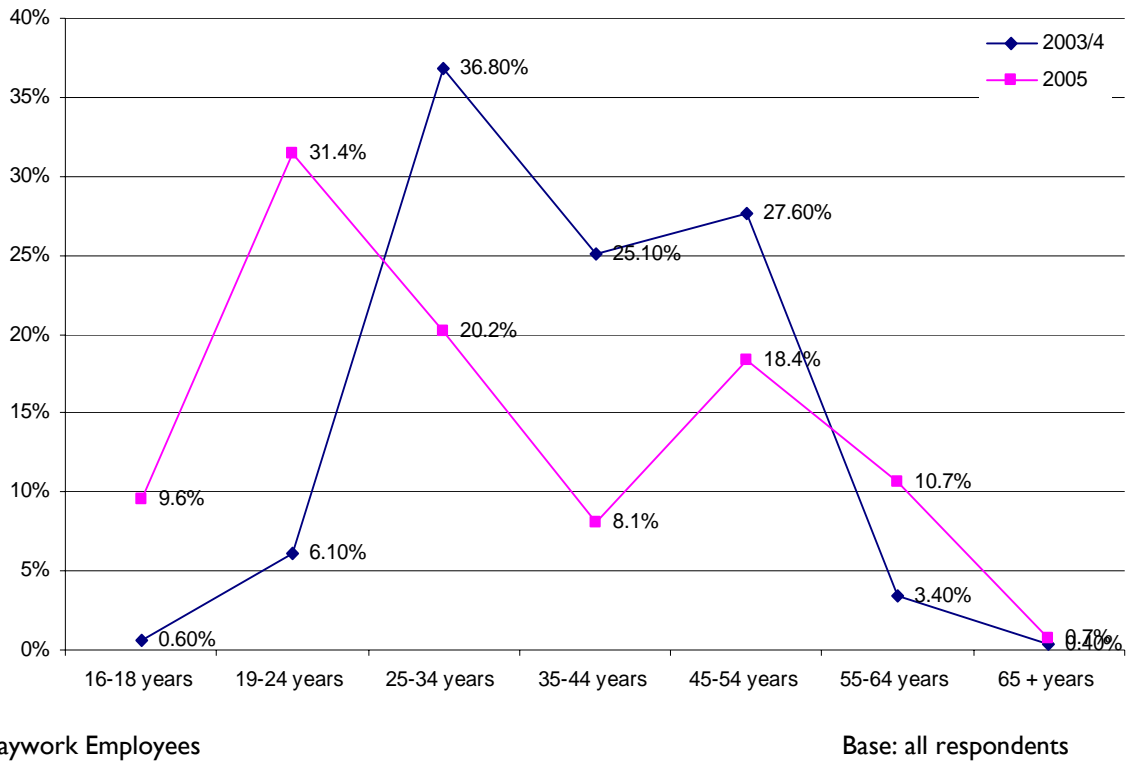
Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

2.1.2 Age

The age profile of employees in the sector differs considerably from 2003/4 to 2005, particularly in the 19 to 24 years age range. This may be partly because employers were asked to complete a separate employer survey in 2005 and therefore did not complete the employee survey themselves. If employers are managers, supervisors and owners of settings this might have a significant impact on the age profile of respondents. However the average age reported by employees is 34 years old, which is little different to the average age of employees reported in the survey of employers, which is 32 years old.

Diagram 2.1.2(a): Age profile of the playwork workforce



2.1.3 Ethnicity

Nationally, the playwork workforce is predominantly white. Only 5.3% of respondents indicated an ethnic origin other than white compared to 7% in the working population as a whole. Statistically there is no significant difference between this and the 4% non-white respondents to the 2003/4 survey. However the Dimensions of Holiday Playwork research reveals that there is a higher proportion of ethnic minority workers amongst holiday playworkers with 12% of respondents being from a non-white background.

Table 2.1.3(a): Ethnic background of playworkers

Ethnic background	% response
White	92.8%
Asian or Asian British	1.8%
Mixed race	1.3%
Black or black British	0.9%
Chinese	0.0%
Other	1.3%

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

2.1.4 Disability

2.4% of employees consider themselves to have a disability. This is lower than the prevalence of disability in the working population as a whole, but higher than the 0.6% of respondents who considered themselves to have a disability in 2003/4.

2.2 Role in the sector

All respondents are directly involved in some way with play and playwork. All respondents reported to be in face-to-face playwork positions or managers or directors of services, owners or proprietors of provision or committee members.

The majority of job roles in playwork are for face-to-face playworkers. However there is considerable variation in the duties that people with different job titles perform, especially as playworkers increase in seniority in their setting. For instance, some employees working at a supervisory level appear to be almost exclusively managerial, others are primarily working face-to-face with children, whilst taking a managerial role with other staff.

Respondents were asked to choose from a list the option/s that best described their job. This was a subjective process, and many respondents chose to specify more than one option. Those that specified 'other' were mainly Play Development Officers or Child Minders.

The majority of respondents (46.9%) described themselves as playworkers.

Table 2.2(a): Playworkers job roles

Role	% response
Playworker	46.9%
Play Assistant	19.7%
Other	17.5%
Supervisor	13.8%
Senior Playworker	13.2%
Manager	9.2%
Committee Member	2.6%
Owner / Proprietor	2.4%
Trainer / Assessor	2.4%
Chairperson	0.7%
Director	0.4%

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

2.2.1 Play settings

Playworkers are employed in a broad range of settings as set out in the table below. 44.5% of respondents specified an open ended response, when asked to indicate the place where they work, rather than choosing one of the multiple choice options on the questionnaire. Where possible open ended responses have been back coded and included in the table. However there were limitations to doing this, and the category “school” encompasses respondents who stated “after school club” or “before school club” or both, and assumes that this play provision is actually based on the school site.

It should also be noted that holiday play schemes are significantly under-represented because this was not provided as an option on the questionnaire and respondents working at holiday play schemes often chose “local authority play unit” if the scheme was run by a local authority as an alternative.

The “other” category that remains uncoded in the table includes community playworkers and play rangers who do not work in a fixed setting as well as playworkers who do not work in a play setting but bring play to other environments e.g. hospitals and prisons. Defining settings adequately is a key area for development in future research.

It is still accurate to say that most play settings are either based on school premises or connected with schools in some way. Adventure playgrounds have the smallest representation in this survey, which accurately reflects the proportion of adventure playgrounds in England, in comparison to other play settings.

Table 2.2.1(a): Type of setting where playworkers are working

Location	% response
School play centre	16.0%
School related	16.0%
Other	15.6%
Play unit or centre	14.3%
Local authority play unit	9.4%
Open access	5.3%
Sports / leisure centre	5.3%
Nursery	3.7%
Adventure playground	2.4%
Holiday play scheme	2.2%
Play association	2.0%
Church	1.8%
Playbus / mobile unit	1.5%
Own home	1.5%
Youth club	1.1%
Play training association	0.7%
Hospital	0.7%
Prison	0.7%
Family centre	0.4%

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

2.2.2 Status of play provision

Playwork provision falls into the voluntary, statutory and private sectors. Playworkers responding to 2005's survey were split more evenly between all three types of employers than in 2003/4. However voluntary organisations and charities are still the predominant employers in the sector.

Table 2.2.2(a): Status of play provision

Employer status	2003/4	2005
Voluntary organisation or charity	63.4%	32.2%
Private business	12.8%	32.0%
Organisation run by a local authority	18.3%	25.2%
Other	5.5%	9.6%

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

2.3 Work patterns

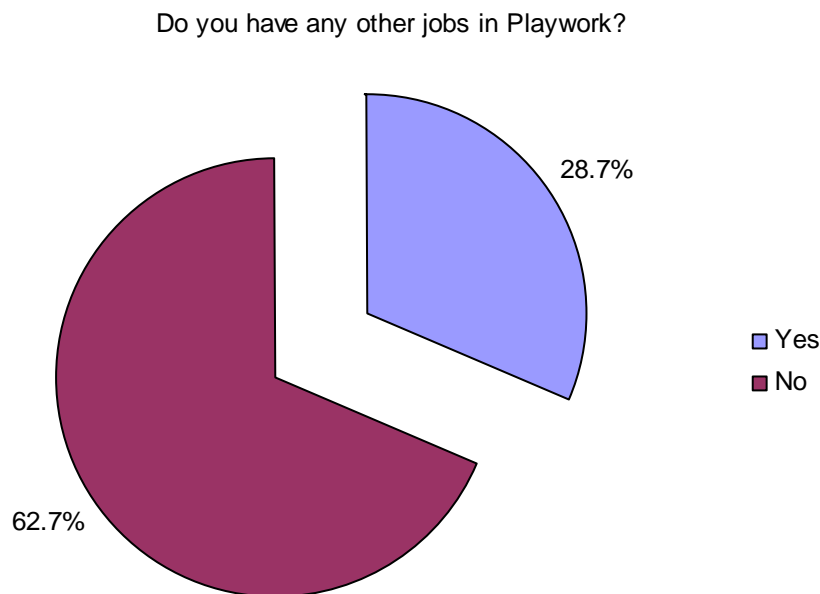
Employees were asked to give details of their main playwork employer when asked about their work patterns. They were asked to judge this based on the hours worked for their main employer rather than on income received. Thus the main playwork job could be paid or

voluntary work. Asking about the main job recognised that some playworkers may have jobs in more than one role, setting or type of work.

2.3.1 Playwork jobs

28.7% of playwork employees work in more than one playwork job. The workforce is predominantly part-time or seasonal and there is a trend for playworkers to have more than one part-time job, usually within playwork or the wider childcare industry. This pattern reflects the nature of the job opportunities available, with the majority of face-to-face playwork positions on offer being part-time or seasonal (either within school term time or school holidays).

Diagram 2.3.1(a): Proportion of playwork employees with more than one job in playwork



Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

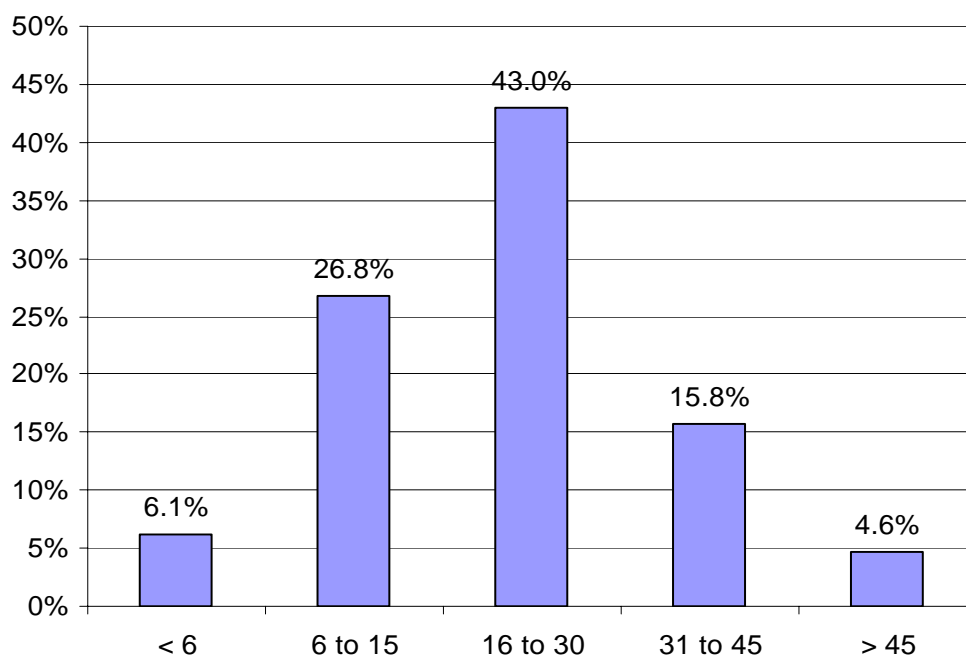
2.3.2 Hours worked

Diagram 2.3.2(a) illustrates the hours worked per week by playwork employees, including full-time and part-time employees, the self-employed and volunteers. There are a large proportion of part-time workers in the playwork sector and the average number of hours worked by employees in the sector is lower than the national average for all job types. We know from qualitative research that many playwork jobs are part-time because of the requirements of the job around children's school hours.

- The average number of hours worked by the sector is 21.6 (compared to a national average of 31.4 hours for women and 42.2 hours for men)³.
- Overall 75.9% of the workforce work part-time (30 hours or less) and 20.4% work full-time.

³ 2001 Census: Hours of Work in England and Wales, Office of National Statistics

Diagram 2.3.2(a): The number of hours per week worked by employees in their main playwork job



Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

2.3.3 Pay

Employees were asked how much they are paid per hour in their main playwork job. This varied from £1.50 per hour (for a private business dependent on making a profit) to £18.00 per hour for the manager of a play setting.

The overall average salary is £4.29 per hour. However it is difficult to reliably state an average salary since 30.3% of respondents did not answer this question and the extremes of pay at either end of the scale skew the average. The median⁴ pay is £5.75 per hour, which seems to give a good indication of the true picture.

Table 2.3.3(a): Pay per hour in main playwork job

Average pay	£4.29
Median pay	£5.75

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

The following bullet points describe the key features of playworker's pay as indicated by the survey:

- In 2005, the mean hourly pay for a play assistant or playworker was £5.63 per hour and the mean hourly pay for a supervisor or manager was £7.61 per hour. This is in comparison to £4.70 per hour for a non-supervisory playworker and £6.80 per hour for a supervisor in 2003/4.

⁴ The value which is the middle one when all values are arranged in order of size.

- There is little difference between the average pay of playworkers and play assistants in local authority run provision and provision run by a voluntary organisation or charity: the average salary for a playworker or play assistant working in local authority provision is £5.77 per hour compared to £5.84 per hour for a playworker or play assistant working in voluntary or charitable provision.

2.3.4 Length of employment in playwork

In 2005, 71.9% of employees had been working in playwork for 5 years or less, compared to 62.4% in the previous 2003/04 survey. Table 2.3.4(a) suggests that the sector has attracted a substantial number of new recruits in past year, but at the expense of more experienced workers, since the proportion of playworkers with 10 years plus experience has fallen by 8.5%.

Table 2.3.4(a): Length of employment in playwork

Length of employment in playwork	2003/4	2005
Less than one year	12.2%	21.7%
1-2 years	17.8%	27.6%
3-5 years	32.4%	22.6%
5-10 years	16.6%	13.2%
10 years plus	21.0%	12.5%

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

3. PLAYWORK ORGANISATIONS

This section provides an analysis of the findings of the survey of employers undertaken in 2005 looking at organisation type and structure. This data has also been supplemented, where appropriate, with information from the recent Skill Needs Assessment⁵ for the playwork sector, which included research conducted by Experian and SkillsActive’s own report on holiday playworkers⁶.

3.1 Profile of playwork organisations

Employers were asked to provide information about the staff they employed and the setting they run.

3.1.1 Organisation type

When asked about the kind of provision they run most employers stated two or three different types – most frequently they ran after school provision and holiday play schemes.

Diagram 3.1.1(a): Type of provision run by playwork employers

Type of play provision	% response
After school club	64.4%
Holiday play scheme	63.0%
Open access centre	6.0%
Weekend play scheme	5.1%
Play training organisation	4.6%
Local authority play unit	4.2%
Play bus / mobile unit	3.7%
Adventure playground	3.2%
Play association	3.2%
School play centre	2.8%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

3.1.2 Organisation size

The number of staff an organisation employs and its turnover are a good indication of size. Playwork organisations are known to be small in size, and the employer survey indicates that on average there are 10 members of staff employed at a playwork setting. (This differs for managers of multiple sites who are likely to manage an average of 7 staff members at each site).

When asked to estimate turnover a large number of respondents (19.0%) replied: “don’t know” or gave no response (30.2%). However, the results do show that the majority of playwork settings are small or micro-businesses with a turnover of less than £50,000. Organisations that

⁵ Skill Needs Assessment for Playwork, SkillsActive, October 2005

⁶ Dimensions of Holiday Playwork, SkillsActive, June 2005

have a turnover of over £100,000 are most likely to be multi-site operators such as local authorities, hospitals, leisure centres or large kids club networks.

Table 3.1.2(a): Approximate total turnover in the last financial year

	All respondents	Single-setting	Multiple-settings
Less than £19,999	18.4%	25.6%	1.9%
£20,000 - £49,999	10.6%	13.6%	3.8%
£50,000 - £99,999	7.8%	4.8%	15.4%
£100,000+	14.0%	3.2%	40.4%
Don't know	19.0%	22.4%	11.5%
No response	30.2%	30.4%	27.0%

Playwork Employers

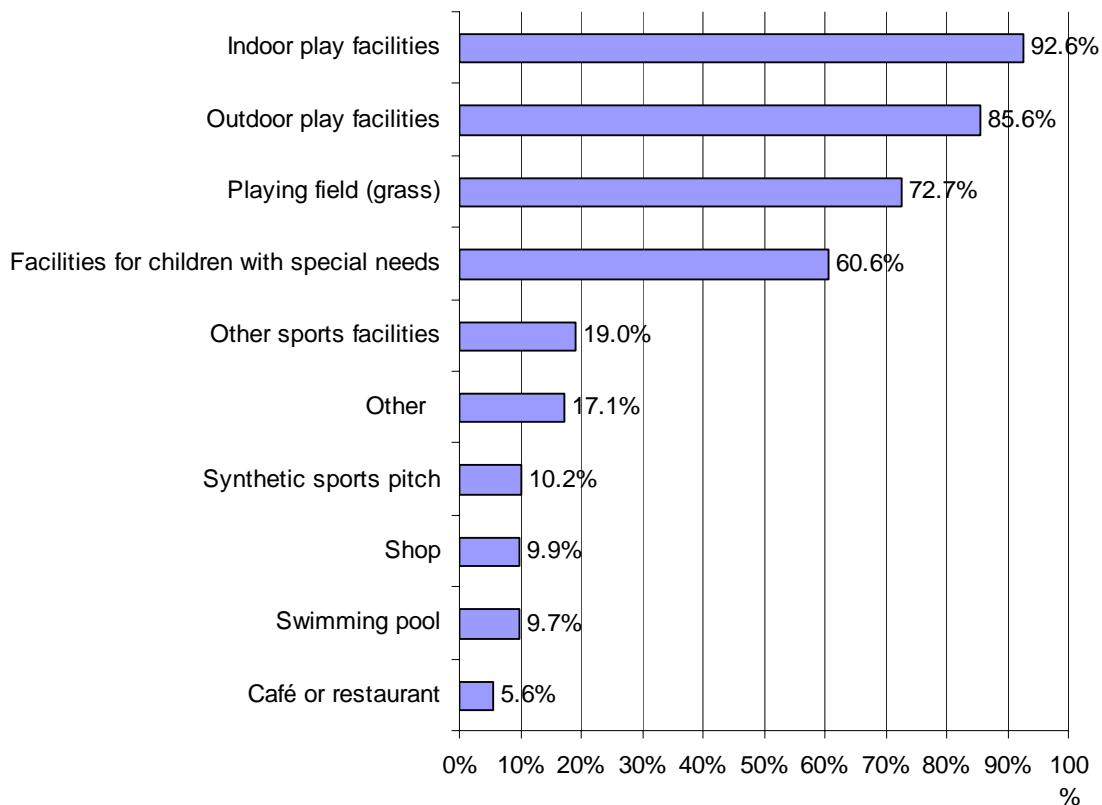
Base: all respondents

3.1.3 Facilities and services

Almost all play settings have access to indoor play facilities (92.6%) – those that don't are mainly adventure playgrounds and mobile play units or play buses. Three out of five settings (60.6%) have facilities for children with special needs.

“Other” facilities, where specified, were most likely to be computers, internet access, arts, crafts or cooking facilities.

Diagram 3.1.3(a): Facilities and services available at playwork settings



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Nearly three out of four play settings (73.6%) are run on a site that is used for play as well as other purposes, in the majority of cases these are school premises. Therefore many play settings have access to the facilities in the diagram above because they are available on the school grounds but many do not have sole use.

Nearly two thirds of play settings operate in a town or city (64.8%) and the remaining play settings are located in a village or other rural place (30.6%). 89.4% of rural play settings have access to a playing field compared to 71.4% in a town or city.

3.1.4 Volunteers

According to employers, approximately 15.9% of all playwork employees are volunteers. However it is known that many playworkers work in a voluntary capacity as well as being paid playworkers. This figure is comparable with the findings of the holiday playwork research which found that 15% of holiday playworkers are volunteers (44% work in face-to-face roles, 48% managerial / non face-to-face roles and 8.2% in other operational positions).

Nearly half (48.6%) of all playwork provision is made up of voluntary, charitable or not for profit organisations. Most of these are holiday play schemes (65.7%) or after school clubs (68.6%), or both. Over half (55.2%) of these organisations are funded by income from parents or carers.

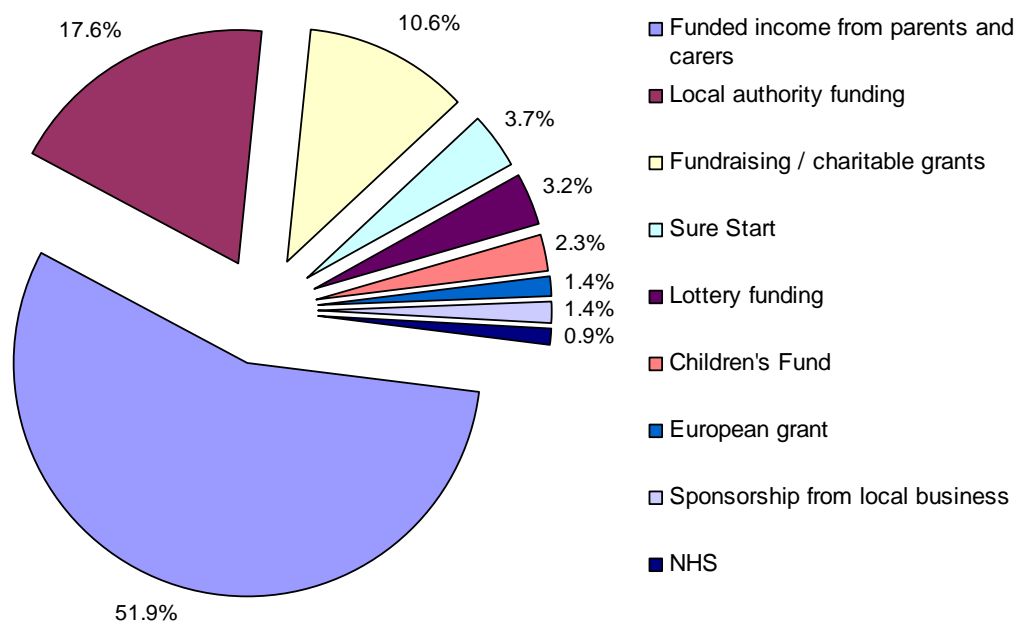
Approximately half (56.2%) of all playwork settings are run by a voluntary management committee. 78.8% of organisations run by a voluntary management committee describe themselves as voluntary or charitable organisations and 10.2% as social enterprises.

3.1.5 Funding

Playwork organisations frequently rely on a combination of income sources, with income from parents and carers having the biggest impact followed by local authority funding and fundraising or charitable grants. SkillsActive qualitative research suggests that income from parents and carers is often used to supplement funding from other sources and that putting fees up drives down demand, particularly in deprived areas.⁷

One in ten organisations relies on funding from fundraising activities or grants from charitable trusts. In many cases this is one-off funding that supplements the income of play provision because it is not self-sustaining on fees alone. Many of these grants are one-off or project specific and therefore have an implication for the sustainability of play provision.

Figure 3.1.5(a): Funding structure of playwork provision



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

3.1.6 Organisation aim or purpose

10.6% of organisations work specially with children with disabilities. Other organisation aims, stated in free text, focused around providing quality low-cost childcare. Although the responses are too varied to collate into reliable statistics, some illustrative quotes are given below as examples:

“To provide quality childcare at an affordable cost”.

“To provide good quality, safe and affordable childcare, before and after school and during school holidays”.

“Quality childcare at an affordable price”.

⁷ Skill Needs Assessment for Playwork, SkillsActive, October 2005

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Some organisations providing play had very specific aims, depending on their setting or location. For example:

“Therapeutic and specialised to help children and young people, families cope with hospitalisation and hospital treatment and procedures etc and prepare for needles, transplant, death etc”.

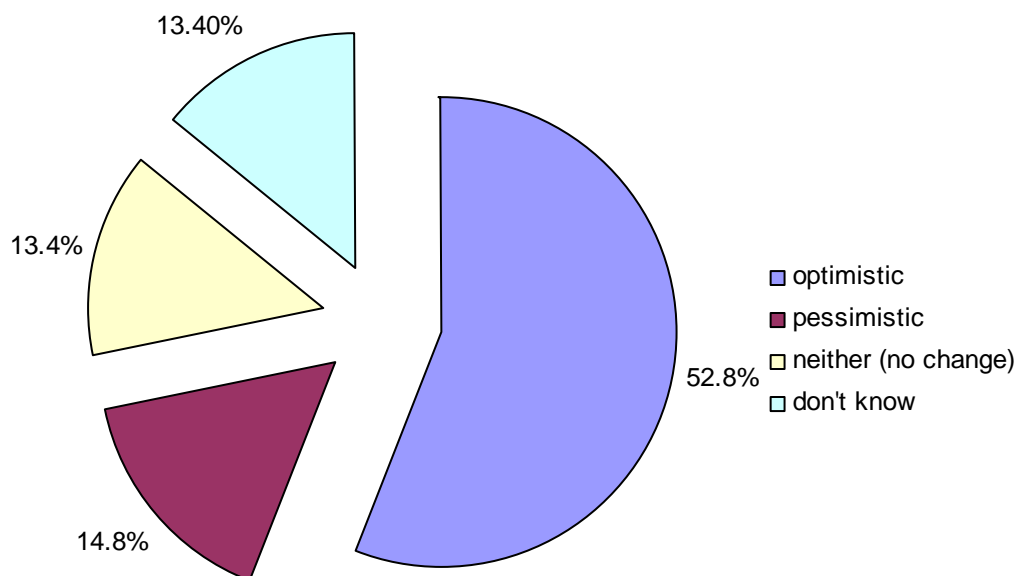
“To provide provision for autistic children”.

Or, for example, by providing play for Rape Crisis or specifically for the children of women from black minority ethnic communities.

3.1.7 Prospects for play provision

Employers were asked to describe the prospects for their play provision over the next three years. Just over half (52.8%) of employers described the prospects for their organisation as optimistic.

Diagram 3.1.7(a): Prospects for play provision over the next three years



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

3.1.8 Challenges for play provision

Employers were asked to describe the biggest challenges for their play provision in the coming three years. Interestingly, given that it was an open ended question, 85.6% of employers provided an answer to this question. The answers were varied but revealed certain key themes, which are described below with illustrative quotes:

- **Funding** - one third of employers (32.9%), responding to this question, expect funding to be a challenge. Respondents described a lack of funding as creating insecurity in terms of the long-term future of the provision, but also in terms of employment and job security. Key challenges were: maintaining funding, creating sustainability for provision through continued funding and fundraising through applying for grants.

“To find funding for provision that we are providing: funders like new projects not ongoing ones”.

“To try to get sufficient funding to keep the club running whilst keeping the fees affordable for parents”.

“[We are] in year two of a three year funding programme. Continuation of this and sustainability for the out of school club with NOF⁸ funding is our biggest challenge”.

- **Staff** – 17.8% of respondents expect to have difficulty finding and retaining staff with the appropriate qualifications, at all levels, especially to meet Ofsted standards. Maintaining the number of volunteers in voluntary management committees was also seen as a key challenge in this area.

“Maintaining qualified staff and ensuring a reasonable pay structure”.

“Maintaining enough volunteers for management committee and maintaining dedicated qualified staff”.

“To recruit qualified staff. In this area we find it hard to find NVQ 3 playwork staff and therefore have not run under 8’s day camps for nearly two years”.

“Complying with all relevant Ofsted issues and recruiting suitability qualified staff”.

- **Premises / equipment** - 11.4% of respondents answering this question felt that premises or equipment were going to be a big challenge for them over the next three years. A lot of comments focused on the need to move premises or to renew worn equipment as well as the challenges of inadequate or shared premises.

“Moving to bigger premises so we can accommodate a larger number of children”.

“Wear and tear – items starting to wear out”.

“To improve resources and equipment to children and provide wider variety”.

- **Government policy especially the Extended Schools Agenda** was seen as a big challenge over the next three years by 10.8% of respondents. The Extended Schools Agenda was viewed as both an opportunity and a threat by respondents.

“The introduction of wrap around care provided by schools could have a detrimental effect unless they are willing to work with local provision”.

⁸ New Opportunities Fund now the Big Lottery

“Keeping play as the focus with pressure by Government to encourage homework in the Extended Schools Agenda”.

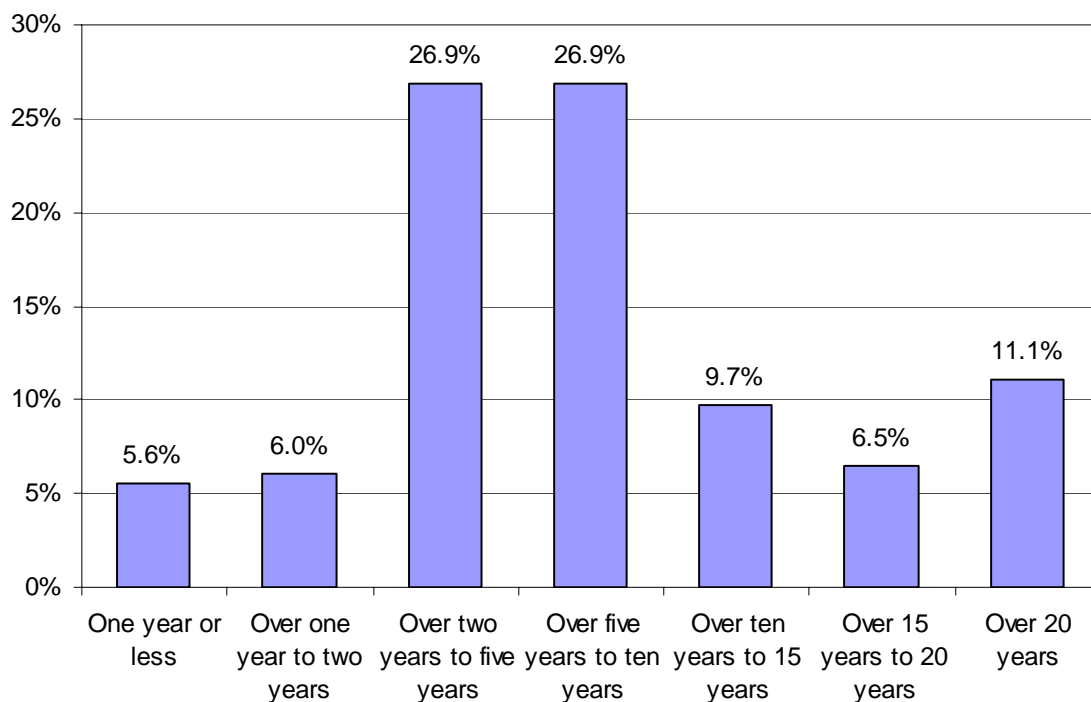
“Play (after school clubs) is to be transferred in line management to the schools they are based at in order that the trust can focus on development and take advantage of extended schools whilst promoting free play and the play ethos”.

“What will be the affect of extended schools on our provision? Numbers are good and rising currently; we cannot run provision externally in all the six schools we are collecting from at present or the other schools that we receive pupils from”.

3.1.9 Sustainability

The average length of time that play provision has been running is ten years. The chart below shows that over half of employers stated that their play provision had been running for between two and ten years. There appears to be more well-established play organisations, who have been operating for over ten years, than there are new organisations starting up. It is however possible that less new organisations completed the questionnaire because they do not yet exist on known databases.

Diagram 3.1.9(a): Number of years that play provision has been running



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

4. TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

This chapter draws together the findings of the Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employees) and the Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employers) in terms of the training and qualifications undertaken by the playwork workforce.

4.1 Current qualifications profile of the sector

The following sections aim to give a picture of the qualifications and training undertaken by the sector. Qualifications and training have been grouped into qualifications and training courses that are generic, playwork specific and childcare or early years related.

4.1.1 Playwork qualifications

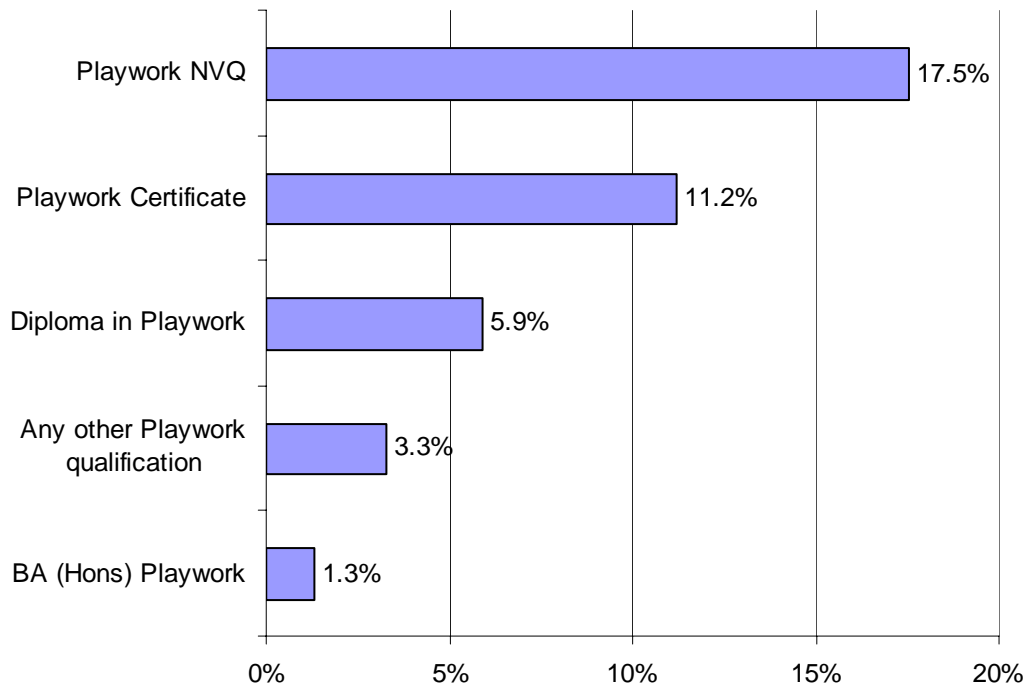
Employees were asked to detail what qualifications and training they have undertaken in playwork. The answers given were open-ended and have been back-coded for analysis (because of the variety of responses and the incompleteness of some responses this has been subject to a degree of interpretation).

According to the Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employers), only two out of five (39.3%) of the playwork workforce have a playwork specific qualification.

Playwork qualifications undertaken are most likely to be playwork NVQs at level 2 or level 3 and CACHE⁹ certificates. Where specified by respondents, the majority of Playwork Certificates were held at level two and respondents with playwork NVQs were divided approximately equally between level two and level three.

⁹ The Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) one of the awarding bodies for playwork qualifications

Diagram 4.1.1(a): Playwork specific qualifications reported by employees



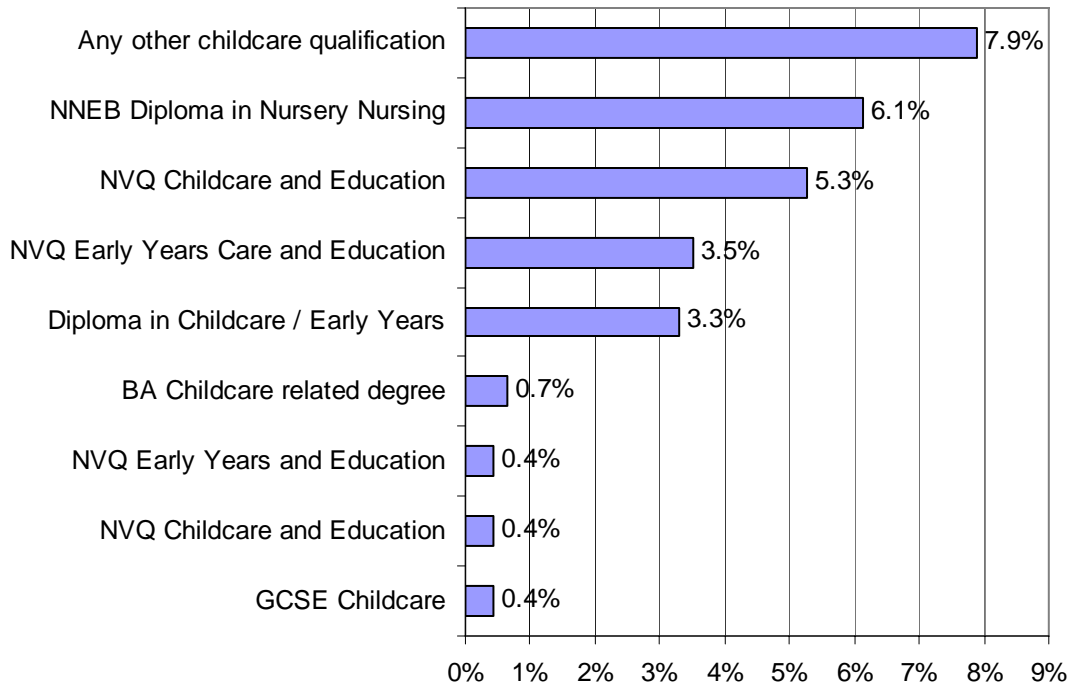
Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

4.1.2 Childcare / early years qualifications

Over one quarter (28.1%) of playworkers hold a qualification in childcare or early years. We know from qualitative research that employers will often recruit staff with early years qualifications because they do not get enough applicants with playwork specific qualifications.

Diagram 4.1.2(a): Childcare or early years qualifications reported by employees



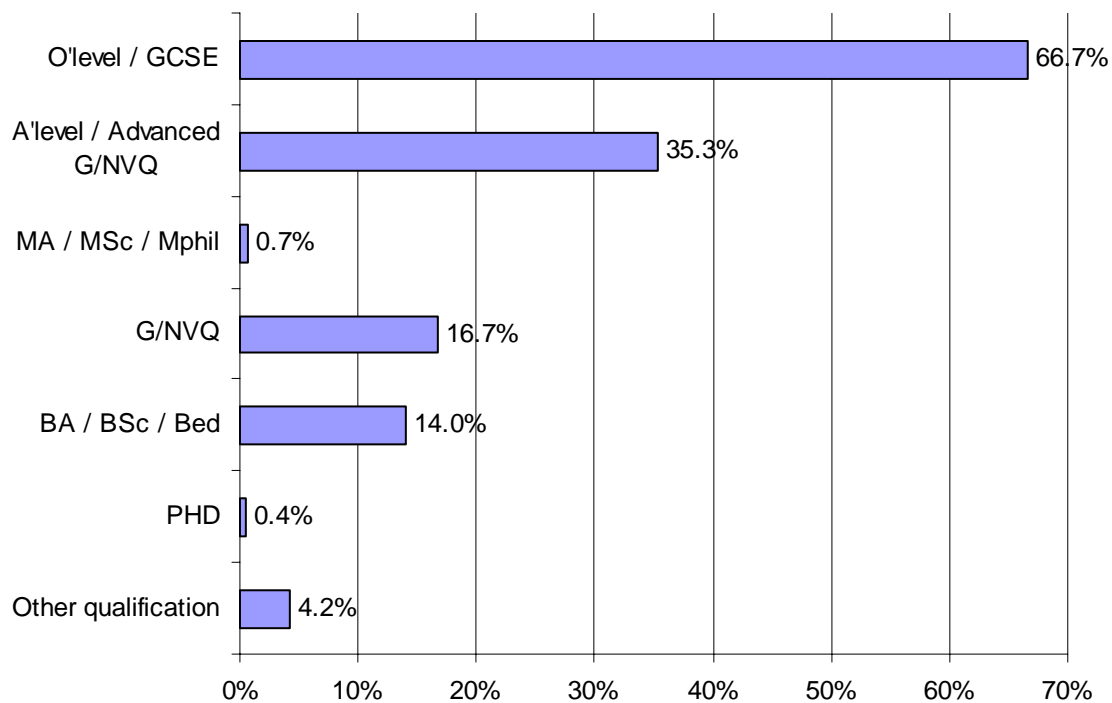
Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

4.1.3 Other qualifications

Playworkers were asked to specify what qualifications they have that are not related to playwork. Two thirds (66.7%) hold O' levels or GCSEs and one third (35.3%) A' levels.

Diagram 4.1.3(a): Other qualifications held by playworkers (not related to playwork or childcare)



Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

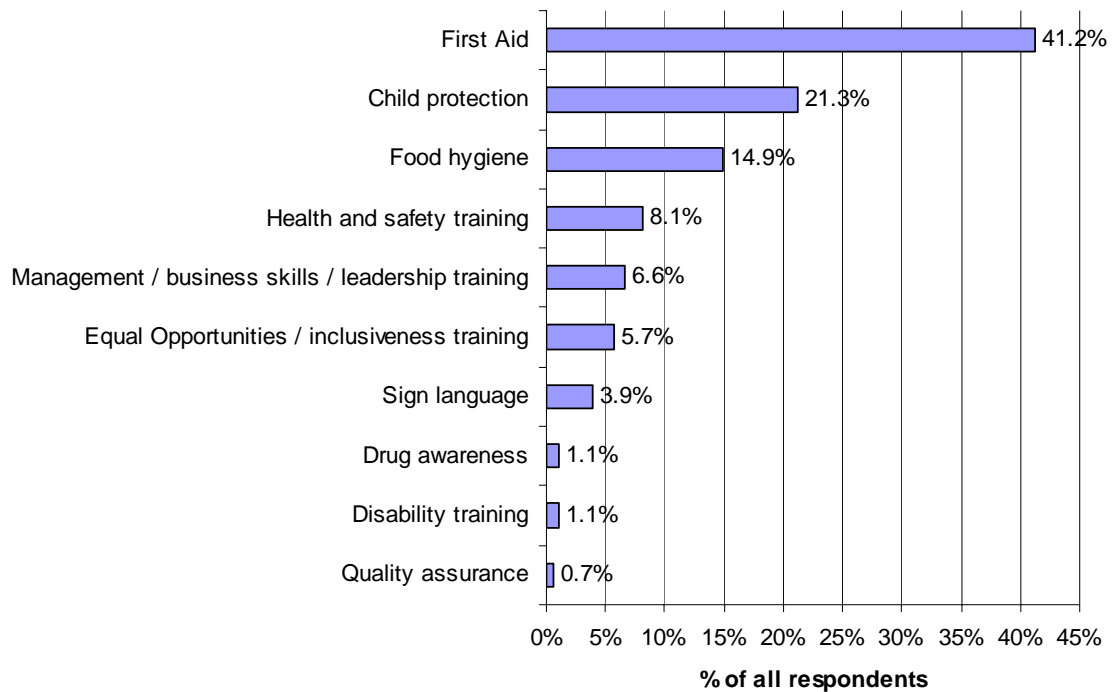
4.2 Playwork training

4.2.1 Type of training

Employees were asked about training they had undertaken in playwork or that was important for their playwork job. Diagram 4.2.1(a) below illustrates the most frequently completed training courses that are not playwork specific, but nonetheless, essential for many playworkers in their roles.

Two out of five employees had undertaken a first aid course: some of this training was specifically in paediatric first aid. Child protection and food hygiene were also popular courses. The majority of people doing management / business skills / leadership training are working as managers or supervisors.

Diagram 4.2.1(a): Generic training courses undertaken by playwork employees

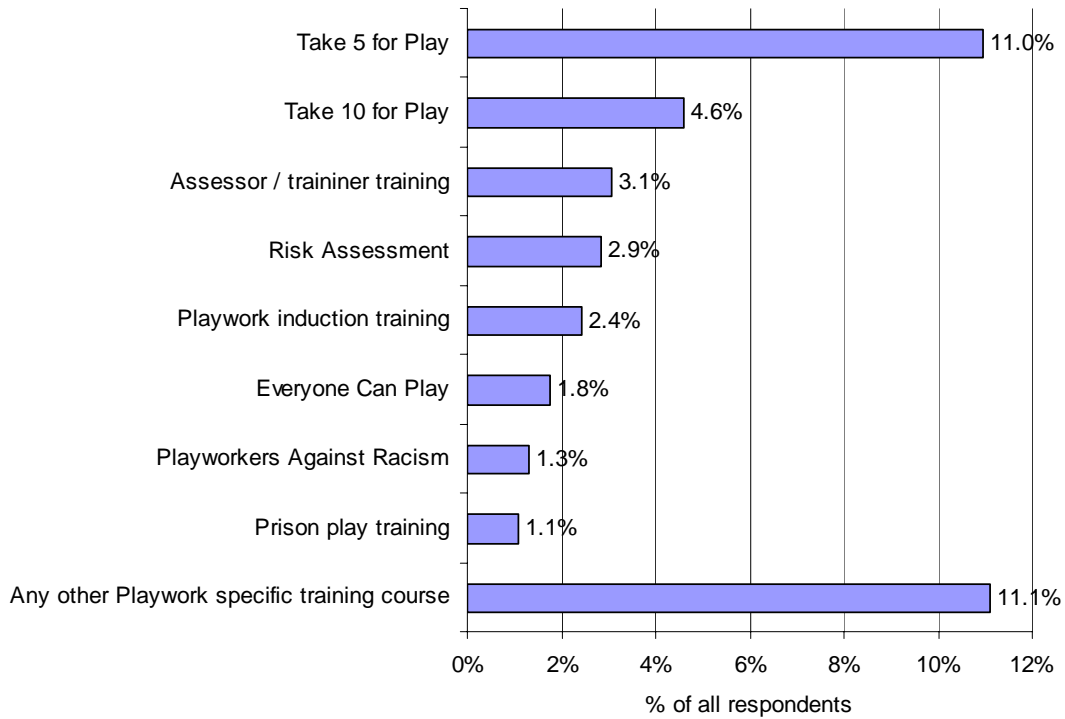


Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

Playwork specific training courses undertaken by employees were varied and included specialist one-day courses as well as longer training courses designed to contribute towards a qualification. Take 5 for Play and Take 10 for Play were the single most frequently mentioned play specific training courses.

Diagram 4.2.1(b): Playwork specific training courses undertaken by playwork employees

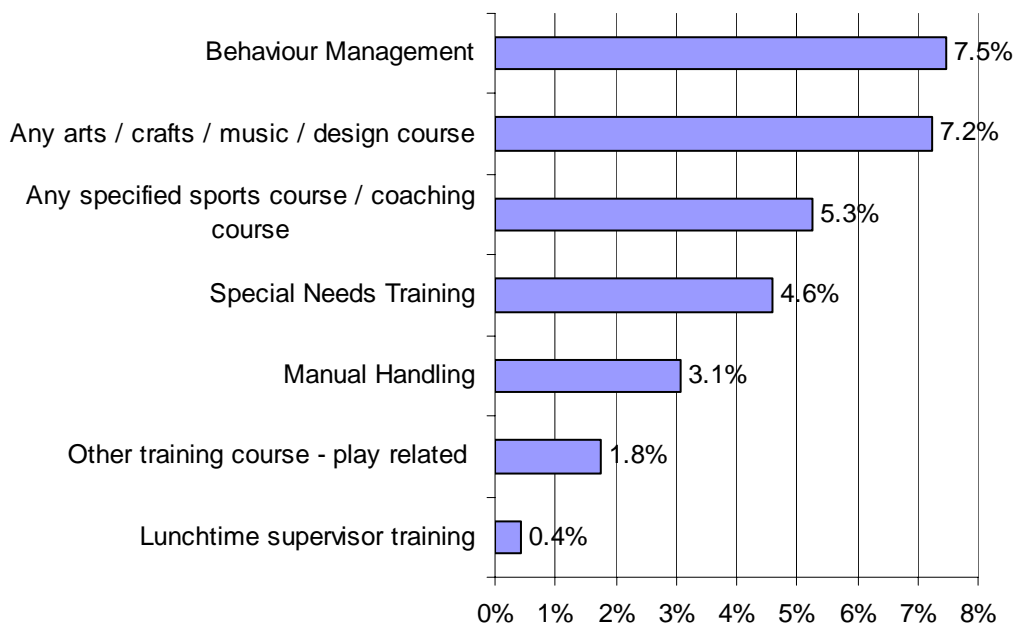


Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

Training related to playwork most commonly included behaviour management and any arts, crafts, music or design course.

Diagram 4.2.1(c): Training reported by employees related to playwork



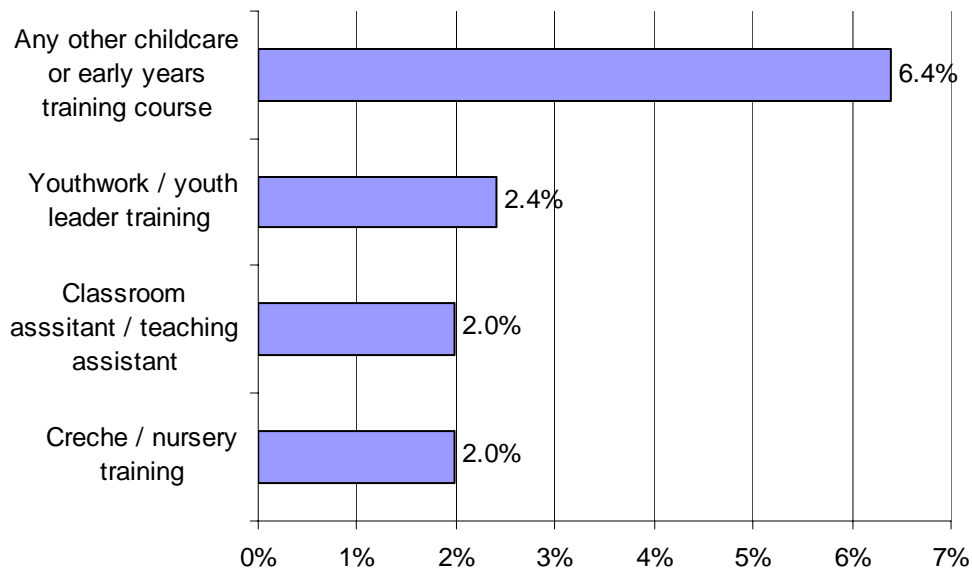
Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

Playwork People 2

Employees has also undertaken a wide variety of courses with a childcare or early years focus.

Diagram 4.2.1(d): Training courses undertaken by employees that are related to other childcare roles



Playwork Employees

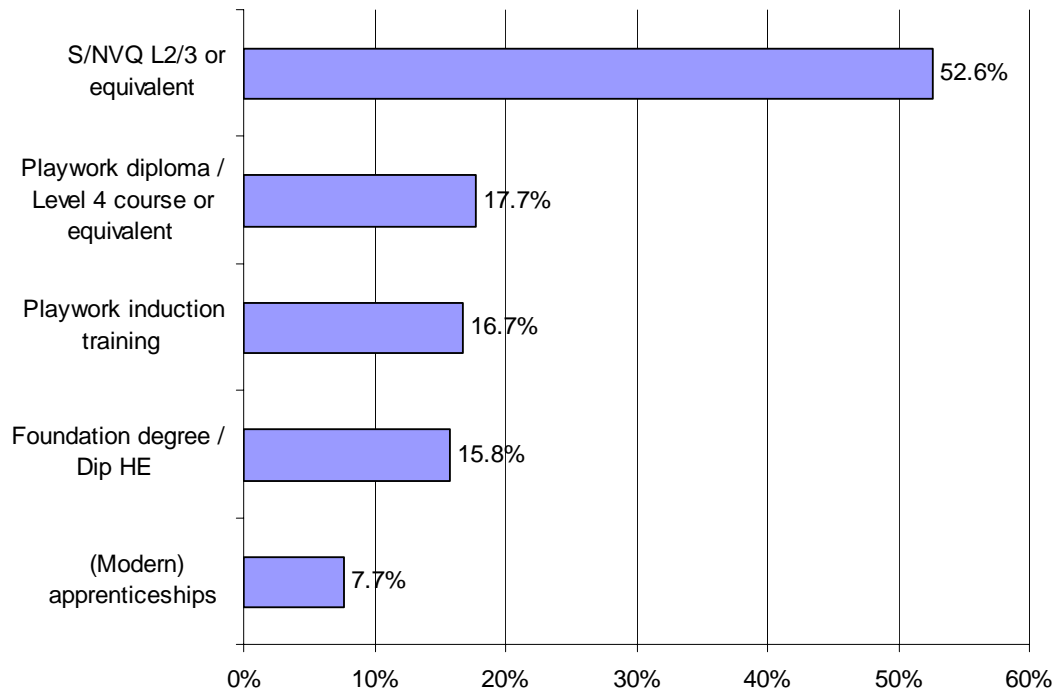
Base: all respondents

4.2.2 Training undertaken

According to employers, 42.4% of all employees received some form of training (including informal in-house training) in the last 12 months. Just over one third (34.5%) of this training was intended to lead to a qualification.

Playwork employers state that, over half (52.6%) of staff are working towards an NVQ at level 2 or 3 or an equivalent qualification. Similar proportions are working towards a playwork diploma / level 4 course or equivalent (17.7%), playwork induction training (16.7%), or a Foundation degree / Dip HE (15.8%). The smallest number of staff are involved in a structured training programme for an apprenticeship (7.7%).

Diagram 4.2.2(a): Proportion of organisations employing staff involved in structured training programmes in order to gain the following qualifications

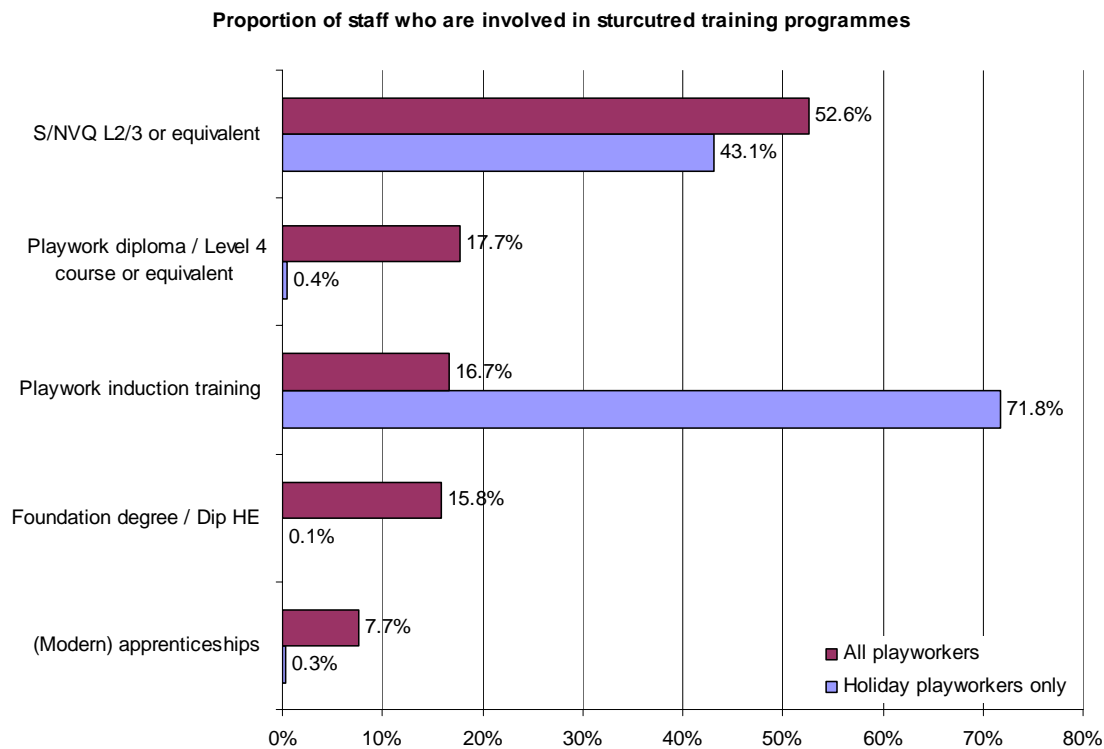


Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

The diagram overleaf shows that this picture is significantly different for holiday playworkers where 71.8% of organisations have staff working on a playwork induction training programme. (This would be expected given the purpose of the induction training specifically for seasonal workers in order to meet Ofsted standards).

Diagram 4.2.2(b): Proportion of staff who are involved in structured training programmes



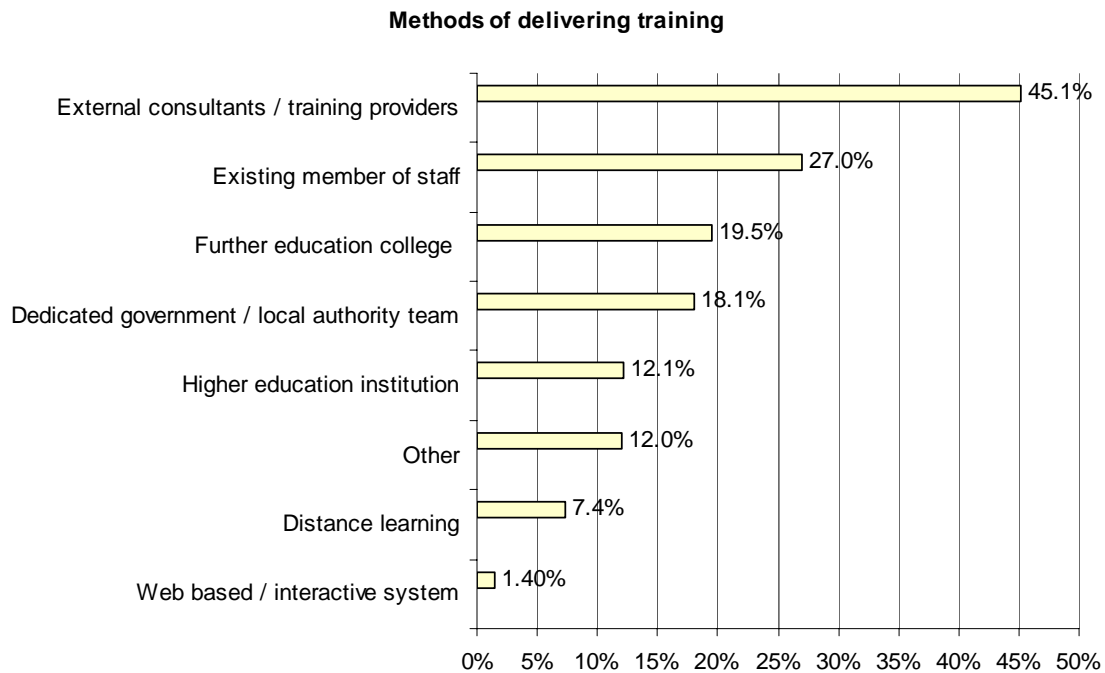
Base: Playwork Employers
Dimensions of Holiday Playwork 2005

Base: all respondents
Holiday Playworkers: 329

4.2.3 Training delivery

According to employers a large proportion of training is delivered by external consultants or training providers (45.1%). Over one quarter (27%) is delivered by an existing member of staff and 19.5% by further education colleges. Dedicated Government or local authority teams are an important source of training provision, specified as a method of training delivery by 18.1% of respondents. Added to this 12% of respondents indicated another method of training other than those listed on the questionnaire and were most likely to specify training delivered by Government agencies such as Sure Start or local authority Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs).

Diagram 4.2.3(a): Methods of training delivery



Playwork Employers

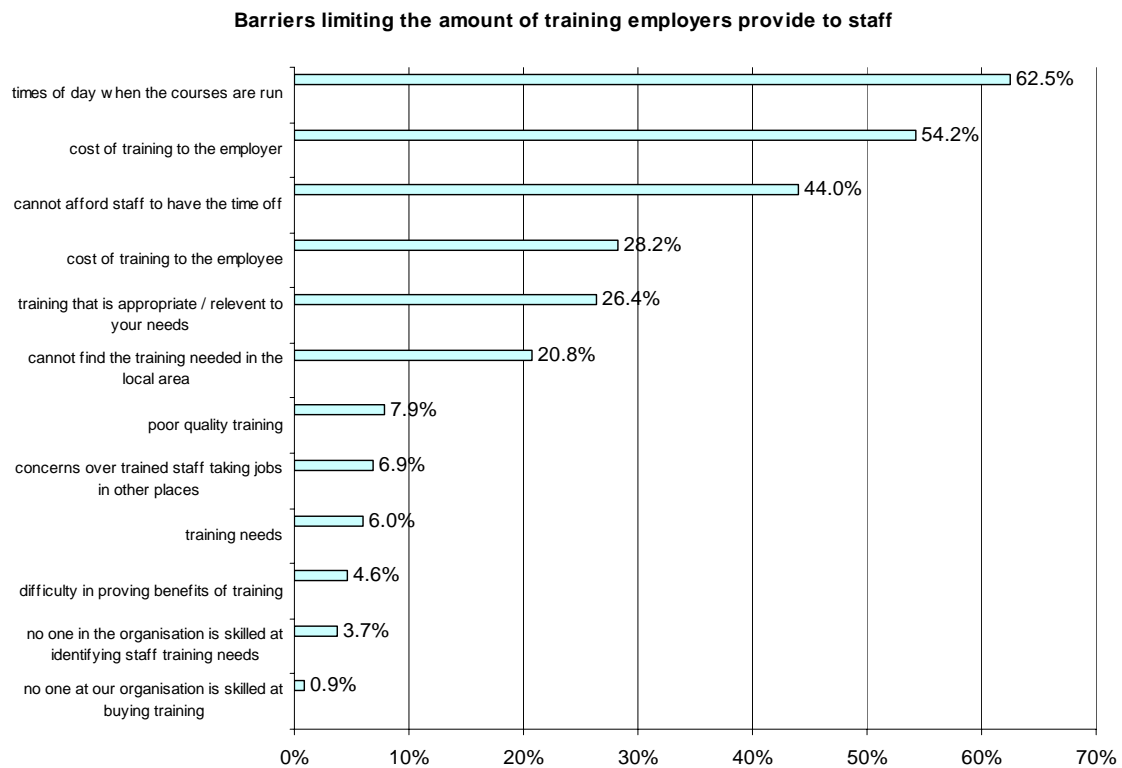
Base: all respondents

One of the biggest factors limiting the provision of training is the time of day when courses are run. Nearly two thirds (62.5%) of employers cited this factor as a barrier. It was also raised and discussed in several focus groups, where it was recognised that many playworkers work part-time around family commitments and as a consequence find training courses difficult to attend as they often mean an additional time commitment. It was also highlighted that play settings are generally micro-businesses employing between 5 and 10 people and employers have difficulty in giving members of staff time off to attend training during their normal working hours as they still need to meet statutory staff / child ratios.

Staff who only work seasonally for holiday play schemes are frequently students who are studying during term-time and although they would like to do playwork training and qualifications, courses are not normally run during the holidays.

Playwork People 2

Diagram 4.2.3(b): Barriers limiting the amount of training employers provide for staff



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

As might be expected, employers stated that they would be more likely to provide additional training for their staff if financial assistance were available to help with the cost of training. 79.7% of employers agreed strongly or tended to agree with this statement. A similar proportion – 73.2% - strongly agreed or tended to agree that they would be likely to provide more training if courses were flexible in terms of how they are delivered. The results of these two statements reflect the two biggest barriers identified in the diagram above.

Table 4.2.3(a): Reasons that might encourage employers to provide more training

Would you be likely to provide more training for your staff if:					
	<i>Agree strongly</i>	<i>Tend to agree</i>	<i>Neither / nor</i>	<i>Tend to disagree</i>	<i>Disagree strongly</i>
Financial assistance were available to help with the cost of training	61.6%	18.1%	2.8%	0.9%	0.9%
Courses were more flexible in terms of how they are delivered	44.0%	29.2%	6.9%	3.2%	1.9%
More relevant courses were available	35.2%	31.5%	9.3%	4.2%	3.2%
Better quality providers were available locally	26.4%	24.1%	22.2%	4.2%	5.1%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

4.2.4 Playwork training and qualification needs

Only one third (35.3%) of employees answered a question asking what other training or qualifications in playwork they need. 28.8% of respondents to this question said that they need a level 3 qualification in playwork, 13.1% a level 4 qualification or above and 11.1% a level 2 qualification.

4.2.5 Spend on training

Whether or not an organisation has a business plan, training and personnel plan and / or training budget gives a good indication of its commitment to plan and provide training for its staff. Only one third (33.5%) of playwork organisations have a specific training budget and just under a quarter (24.2%) have a written training and personnel plan.

Table 4.2.5(a): Proportion of organisations that have a training budget or business plan

Does your organisation have...?	
A training budget	33.5%
A written business plan	27.0%
A written training & personnel plan	24.2%
An informal business plan	20.9%
None of the above	6.5%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Nearly 10% of playwork organisations do not spend anything on training, which has obvious implications for the skills and professional development of their workforce. The majority of organisations (25.5%) spent between £100 and £249 on training in the past 12 months. Only those organisations with a turnover of over £100,000 spent £5,000 or more on training.

Table 4.2.5(b): Amount spent on training by playwork organisations in the past 12 months

Spend	% response
Nothing	9.3%
Under £100	10.6%
£100 - £249	25.5%
£500 - £999	19.4%
£1,000 - £4,999	10.6%
£5,000 - £9,999	3.7%
£20,000 - £29,000	0.5%
£30,000 +	0.9%
Don't know	12.5%
No response	7.0%
TOTAL	100.0%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

5. RECRUITMENT AND VACANCIES

This chapter examines recruitment from the point of view of employers and discusses the findings of the Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employers).

5.1 Vacancies

In total 940 vacancies were reported in the last 12 months by the 216 employers responding to the Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employers). This equates to 29.7% of all employment being vacancies. Almost one third of employers (31.5%) had a vacancy on their voluntary management committee or board of trustees at the time of completing the survey. 14.9% of all vacancies in the last 12 months were for volunteers.

5.1.1 Hard-to-fill vacancies

Almost one third (32.6%) of vacancies were described by employers as hard-to-fill. This suggests that hard-to-fill vacancies are a significant problem for the sector. Broken down by job type it appears that hard-to-fill vacancies are most likely to be experienced in voluntary staff vacancies and staff at supervisory level.

Table 5.1.1(a): Hard-to-fill vacancies as a proportion of total vacancies by job type

Job type	Hard-to-fill vacancies as a proportion of total vacancies
Supervisor	55.7%
Face to face playworkers	35.3%
Sessional staff / people for specific activities / entertainers	15.6%
Voluntary staff	60.7%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

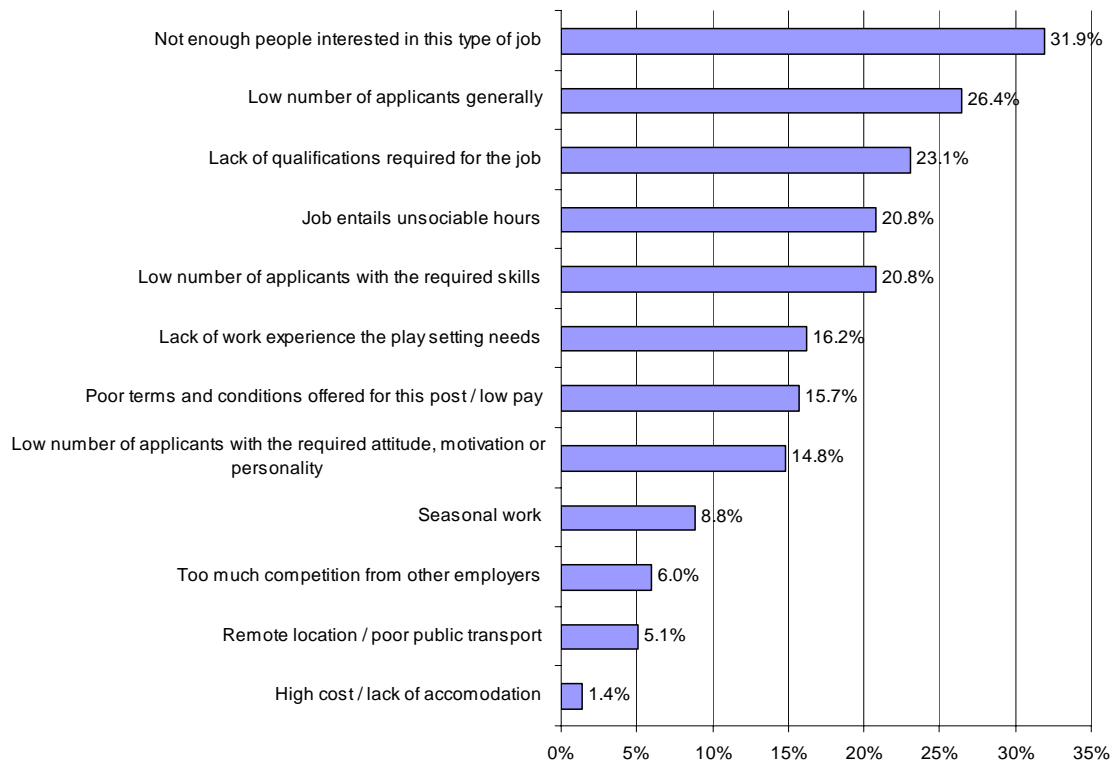
5.1.2 Skills shortages

Skills shortages occur when businesses cannot recruit enough people who are appropriately qualified, skilled or experienced. Skills shortages are deemed to exist when employers have a vacancy which they are finding hard-to-fill and the reasons for it being hard-to-fill are related to shortcomings in the skills, qualifications or experience of applicants.

Employers who had experienced a hard-to-fill vacancy in the previous 12 months were asked why these vacancies were hard-to-fill. The three skills shortage reasons for hard-to-fill vacancies (low number of applicants with the required skills, lack of qualifications required for the job and lack of work experience the play setting needs) featured prominently in the main factors given by employers.

The top two reasons for hard-to-fill vacancies are “not enough people interested in this type of job” (31.9% of employers experiencing a hard-to-fill vacancy) and “low number of applicants generally” (26.4%) pointing towards a lack of awareness of playwork as a profession or poor pay and conditions acting as a disincentive to apply for playwork roles. Lack of interest might also be a reflection of the poor pay and conditions experienced in the sector (see Diagram 5.1.2(a) overleaf).

Diagram 5.1.2(a): Reasons why vacancies have been hard-to-fill



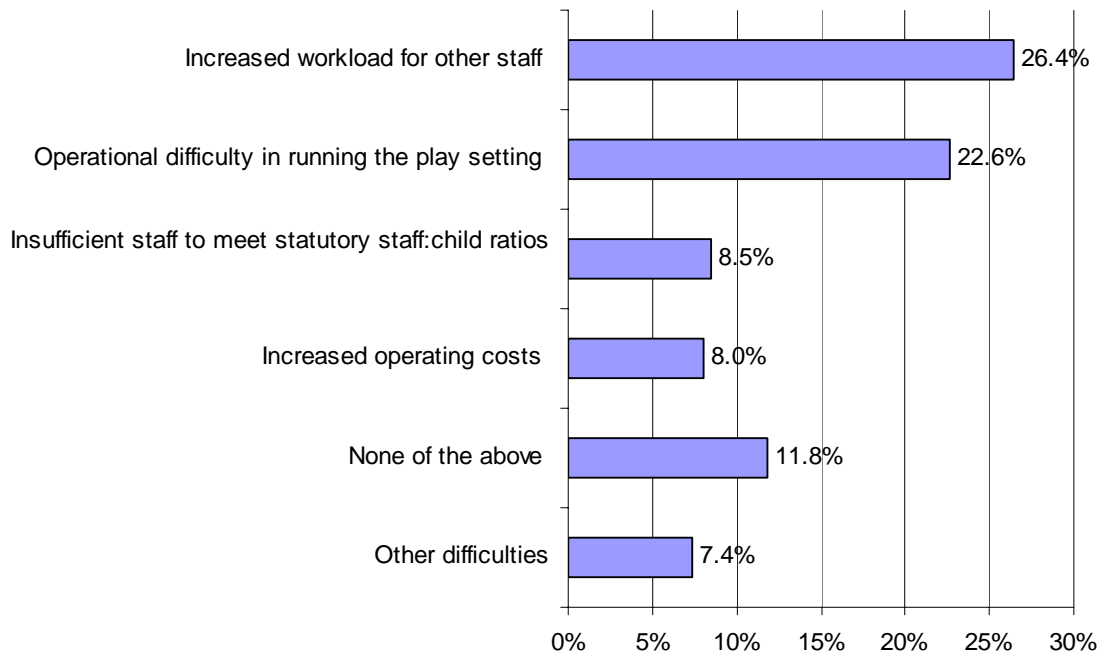
Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

It is important to understand the impact that hard-to-fill vacancies are having on playwork organisations. The most frequently cited implications are an increased workload for other staff (26.4%) suggesting that other staff take on the duties and workload of those hard-to-fill vacancies. Other difficulties cited were difficulties meeting Ofsted requirements and statutory staff / child ratios.

Playwork People 2

Diagram 5.1.2(b): Impact of hard-to-fill vacancies on employers



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Qualitative research¹⁰ has told us that playwork employers have difficulty recruiting people with the skills they need and they expect to provide training on the job. Employers discussed how they had difficulty employing staff with playwork specific skills and frequently looked for other childcare qualifications as an alternative. 61.1% of employers responding to the Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employers) “strongly agreed” or “tended to agree” with the statement “when recruiting, we have problems finding people with the skills that we need”.

Table 5.1.2(a): Attitudinal statements about skills and education

	Agree strongly	Tend to agree	Neither / nor	Tend to disagree	Disagree strongly
When recruiting, we have problems finding people with the skills that we need	22.7%	38.4%	15.7%	9.7%	2.3%
The education system does not supply enough people who are equipped with the skills we need	17.1%	27.8%	30.6%	9.7%	0.5%

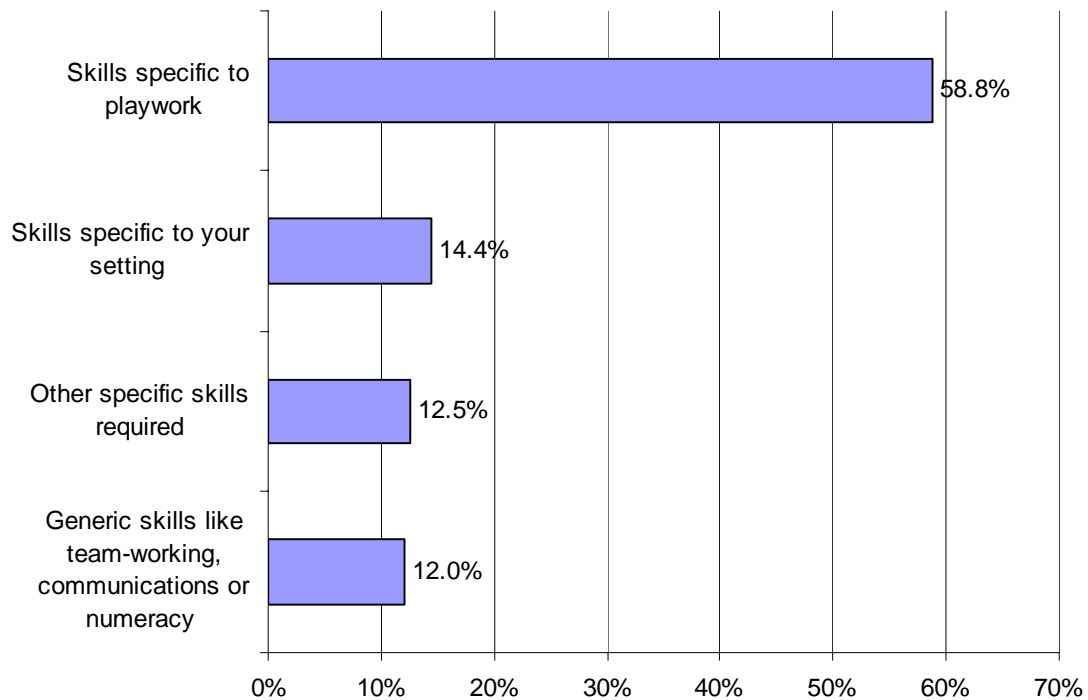
Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Research shows that although new recruits are skilled, they do not have the skills required for the playwork jobs they are applying for. This is often because the qualifications they do have are not specific to playwork. Diagram 5.1.2(b) shows that over half (58.8%) of employers find that skills specific to playwork are lacking in new recruits.

¹⁰ SkillsActive Employer Consultation Events 2005

Diagram 5.1.2(c): Types of skills employers have found lacking when recruiting



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

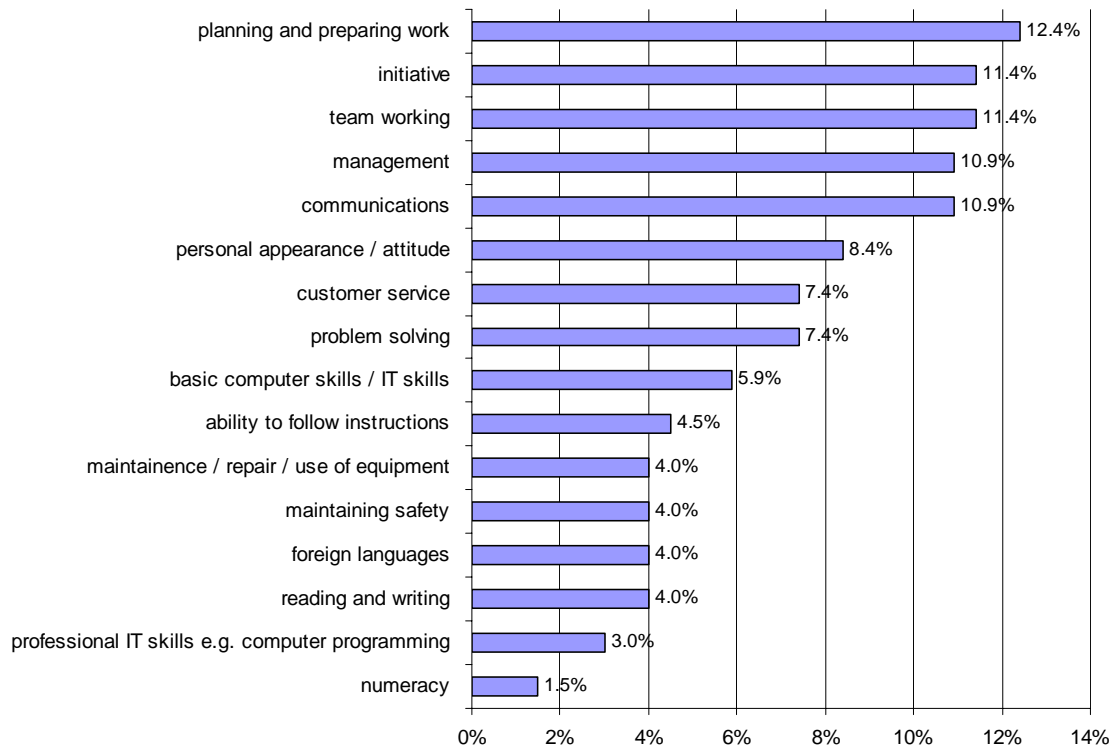
Where employers had detailed “other specific skills required” (12.5% of employers illustrated in the diagram above) most had mentioned skills for working with children with special needs or an awareness of disability. There were also several mentions of recruits lacking the level 2 and level 3 qualifications needed to meet Ofsted requirements.

5.1.3 Skills gaps

Skills gaps exist when members of the existing workforce are thought to have lower skills than are necessary to meet business or industry objectives, in other words when employers regard some of their staff as not being fully proficient to meet the requirements of their job.

Almost one third (29.2%) of employers responding to the Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employers) identified a skills gap in their workforce. These respondents identified a spread of skills lacking in their organisations, with no one skill standing out. Softer skills such as team working (11.4%) and initiative (11.4%) were likely to be experienced as skills gaps, as well as planning and preparing work (12.4%), a skill which can be particularly important for playworkers.

Diagram 5.1.3 (a): Skills gaps experienced

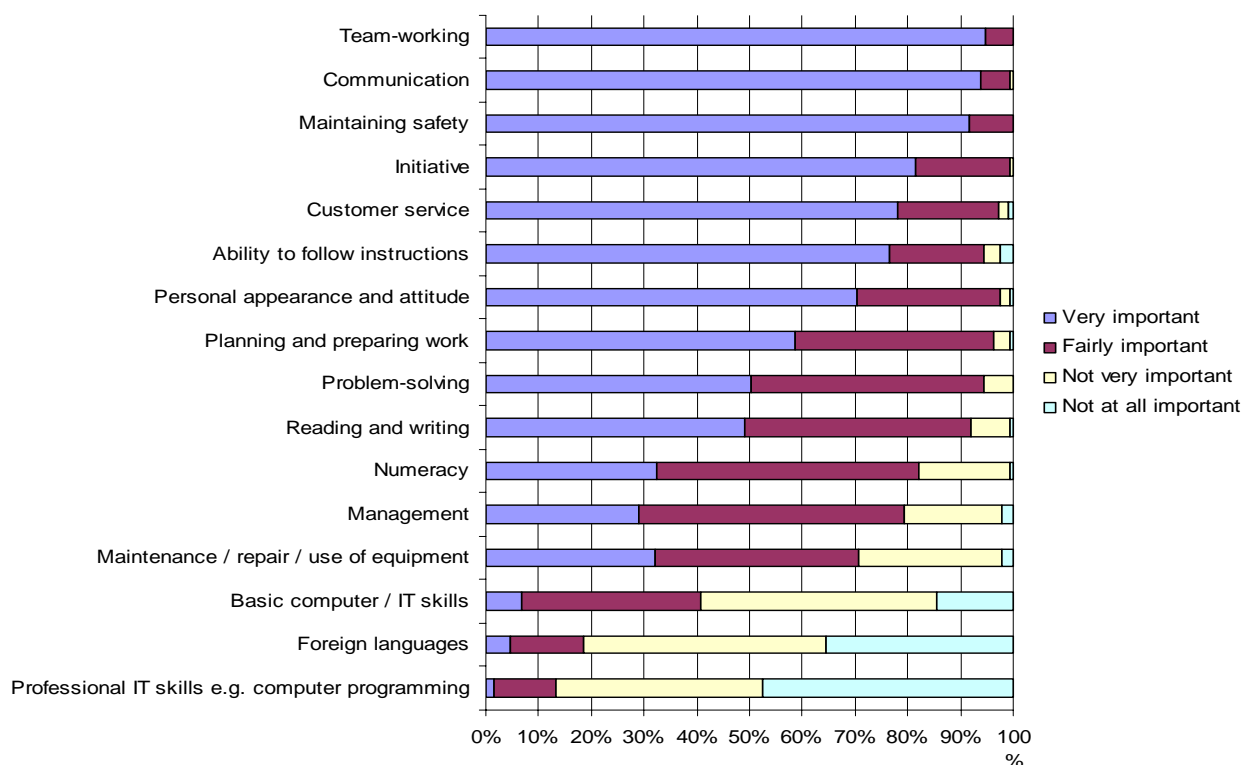


Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Relatively low importance is given to IT skills and foreign languages by employers in the sector. The Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employers) shows that IT is one of the least important skills for playworkers (53% said that basic IT skills are “not very important” or “not very important at all”). Employers attending qualitative consultation events agreed and said that for face-to-face playworkers and playwork assistants it was more important to have practical skills and an aptitude for working with children than IT skills. However to progress in playwork careers, IT skills are required for marketing and fundraising and by supervisory and management positions, such as for budget control.

Diagram 5.1.3(b): Importance of specific skills to playwork employers



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Table 5.1.3(a): Importance of specific skills to playwork employers

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important
Team working	93.5%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Communication	92.6%	5.6%	0.5%	0.0%
Maintaining safety	90.3%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Initiative	80.1%	17.6%	0.5%	0.0%
Customer service	75.9%	18.5%	1.9%	0.9%
Ability to follow instructions	74.1%	17.1%	3.2%	2.3%
Personal appearance and attitude	69.4%	26.9%	1.9%	0.5%
Planning and preparing work	56.9%	36.6%	3.2%	0.5%
Problem-solving	49.5%	43.1%	5.6%	0.0%
Reading and writing	47.7%	41.7%	7.4%	0.5%
Numeracy	31.9%	48.6%	17.1%	0.5%
Maintenance / repair / use of equipment	20.4%	24.5%	17.1%	1.4%
Management	27.3%	47.7%	17.6%	1.9%
Basic computer / IT skills	6.5%	32.9%	43.1%	13.9%
Foreign languages	4.2%	13.0%	42.6%	32.9%
Professional IT skills e.g. computer programming	0.9%	7.4%	24.5%	29.6%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Playwork People 2

It is important to view the above table in light of the fact that 47.2% of respondents specified a further skill that they consider to be very important other than those that were given on the questionnaire and detailed in the table above. Where specified these were given as literal responses and those most frequently cited have been coded in Table 5.1.3(c) below. 28.2% of those employers specifying an additional skill consider knowledge of playwork principles to be very important.

Table 5.1.3(c): Other skills considered very important to playwork employers

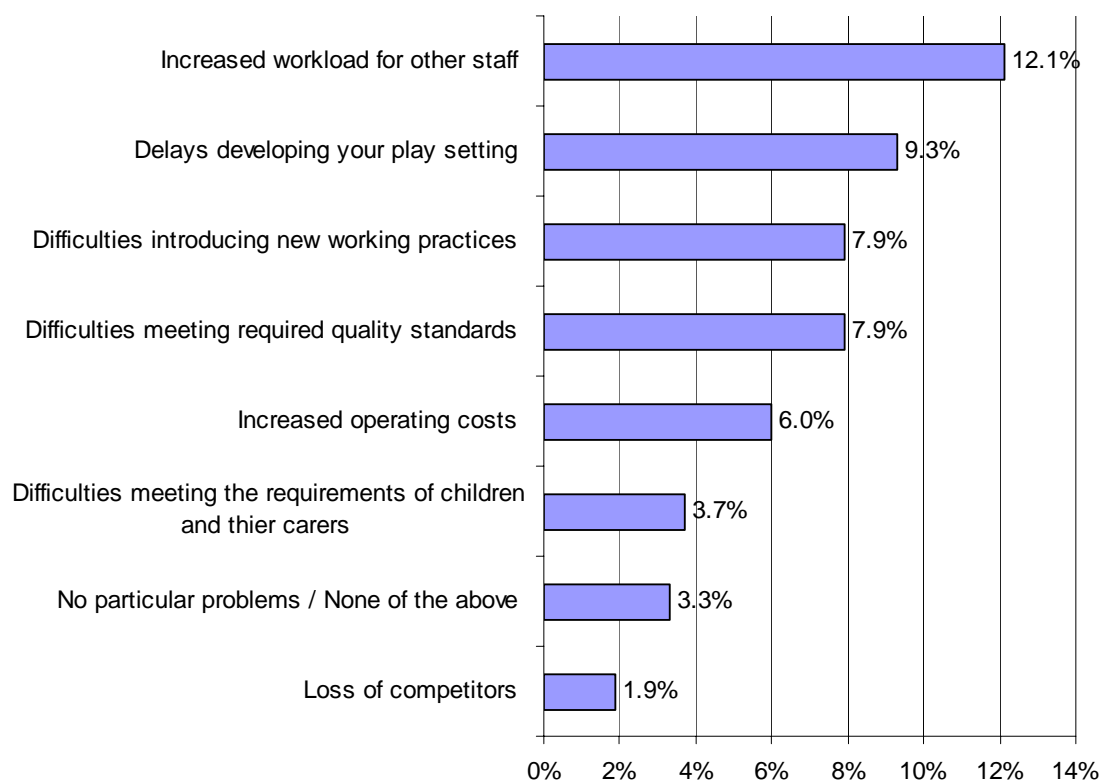
Other skill	% response
Knowledge of playwork principles	28.2%
Ability to play / work with children	6.7%
Knowledge of Ofsted requirements	6.1%
Behaviour management	4.3%
Child protection	4.3%
Disability awareness	4.3%
First Aid	4.3%
Understanding of child development	4.3%
Other reason	37.4%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Just over half (52.1%) of employers answered a question about the affect of skills gaps on their organisation. As with hard-to-fill vacancies the biggest impact of skills gaps is an increased workload for other staff (12.1%). Skills gaps also appear to impact on organisations by delaying employers from developing their play settings (9.3%) and by causing difficulties in introducing new working practices (7.9%).

Diagram 5.1.3(c): Affect of skills gaps on organisations over the last three years



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

5.1.4 Factors influencing skill needs

Employers were most likely to say that “new legislation or regulatory requirements” (36.3%) or “government policy, initiatives or new funding” (24.2%) had affected the skills that they need in their workforce over the last three years. The first statement points towards the influence of Ofsted standards for the regulation of childcare and the second statement recognises the important influence of Government policy such as the Extended Schools Agenda mentioned in the key challenges in section 3.1.8 above.

Table 5.1.4(a): Factors affecting employers skill needs in the past three years

Factors	% response
New legislation or regulatory requirements	36.3%
Government policy / initiatives / new funding	24.2%
The expectations of children and parents / carers	14.4%
Insurance / codes of practice / warranty issues	9.8%
Difficulties meeting required quality standards	9.3%
New IT facilities	7.0%
Skills needs have not really changed	6.0%
The addition of new facilities the last 2-3 years	5.1%

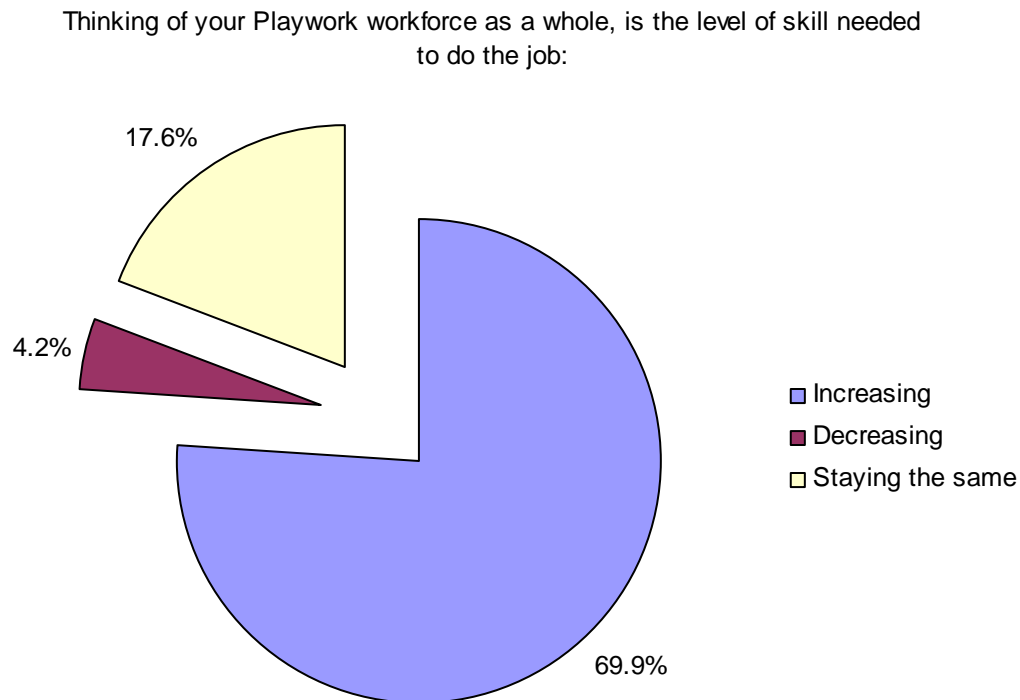
Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Playwork People 2

Over two thirds (69.9%) of playwork employers believe that the level of skill needed to do playwork jobs is increasing. Only 4.2% thought that the level of skill was decreasing and 17.6% staying the same. Through qualitative research it is understood that this reflects the need for employers to have staff appropriately qualified to meet Ofsted standards.

Diagram 5.1.4(a): Playwork employers view on the level of skill needed in the playwork workforce



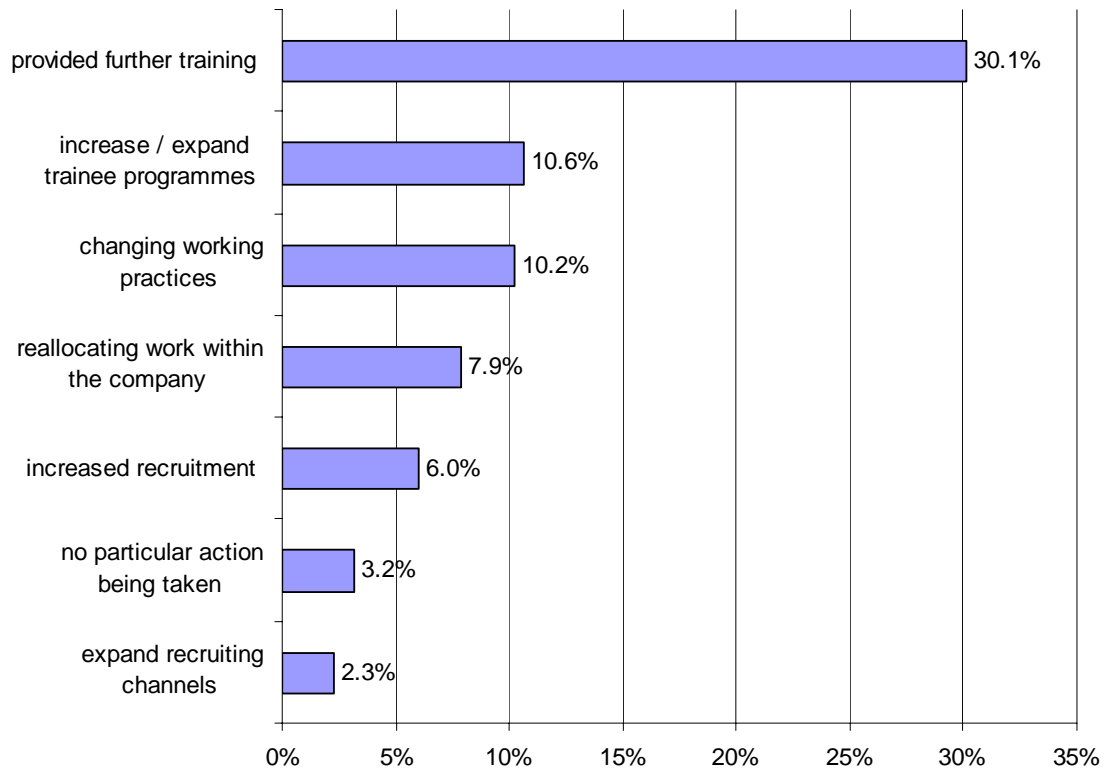
Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

5.1.5 Overcoming skills gaps

In response to a skills gap playwork employers are most likely to provide further training for their workforce (30.1%). Only 3.2% of employers would take no action.

Diagram 5.1.5(a): Action taken by playwork organisations to overcome skills gaps



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

6. SUMMARY

Playwork People 2 consisted of two surveys undertaken in 2005:

- A survey of playwork employees which received 456 responses, and
- A survey of playwork employers which received 216 responses.

The following sections aim to provide a summary of the findings which are discussed in detail in the main body of the report.

6.1 Playwork employees

We know that the playwork workforce is predominately female (88%), however this appears to be changing with slightly more male respondents in 2005 than in 2003/04. When cross-tabulated against age we see that female employees have an older age profile while the number of male employees peaks in the 19-24 year old age range.

Playworkers from ethnic minority background are still under-represented in the playwork workforce, with 5.3% of respondents coming from an ethnic origin other than white compared to 7% in the working population as a whole.

Employees undertake a variety of roles within the sector. However all respondents to the Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employees) had face-to-face roles or managerial roles, including being a member of a voluntary management committee. Nearly half of employees (46.9%) described their role as “playworker”.

The majority of play settings are based on school grounds and encompass one or more of the following: breakfast clubs, after school clubs and holiday play schemes. Having said this a wide variety of settings were reported by playwork employees beyond those listed in the multiple choice options on the questionnaire, including sports / leisure centres, places of worship, family centres, prisons and hospitals.

The workforce is predominately part-time, with 21.6 being the average number of hours worked by employees in the sector per week. As a consequence it appears that a high proportion (28.7%) of playworkers have more than one job in the sector. For example, they may work at an after school club and a breakfast club during term time and at a holiday play scheme during school holidays.

6.2 Playwork organisations

Most employers replying to the survey managed after school clubs (64%), holiday play schemes (63%) or both. The survey shows that these organisations are most likely to be small in size and on average employ less than ten members of staff. As might be expected from a sector predominately made up of micro-businesses, the majority of organisations (36.8%) have a turnover of less than £50,000.

Almost all play settings have access to indoor play facilities (93%) – those that don't are mainly adventure playgrounds and mobile play units or play buses. Three out of five (61%) have facilities for children with special needs.

Approximately 16% of playworkers are volunteers and over half (56%) of all playwork settings are run by a voluntary management committee. Nearly half (48.6%) of all playwork settings describe themselves as voluntary, charitable or not for profit organisations.

Playwork organisations frequently rely on a combination of income sources, with income from parents and carers (51.9%) having the biggest impact followed by local authority funding (17.6%) and fundraising or charitable grants (10.6%). Many settings apply for one-off or project specific grants which do not guarantee sustainability or give them the capacity to invest or plan for training.

Only half of employers (53%) are optimistic about the future prospects for their play provision and the remaining half presented a mixed picture with 15% “pessimistic”, 13% “neither” and 13% saying that they “didn't know” what the future held for their setting/s. Employers saw challenges ahead for their organisations including the sustainability of funding, qualifications and quality of staff, renewing equipment or moving premises and government policy – especially around the Extended Schools Agenda.

6.3 Training and qualifications

Only two out of five (39%) playworkers have a playwork specific qualification, the majority of which are level 2 or level 3 NVQs and CACHE playwork certificates. Over a quarter (28%) of playworkers hold a childcare or early years qualification. According to employers, over half (53%) of their staff are currently working towards an NVQ at level 2 or level 3 or an equivalent qualification.

The majority of playworkers have undertaken short courses in generic subjects such as, first aid, child protection and / or food hygiene. Playwork specific training courses undertaken by employees were varied and included specialist one-day courses as well as longer training courses designed to contribute towards a qualifications. Take 5 for Play and Take 10 for Play were the single most frequently mentioned play specific training courses.

Nearly half (45%) of all training is delivered by external consultants and a quarter (27%) is delivered internally by an existing member of staff. Dedicated Government or local authority teams are an important source of training provision, specified as a method of training delivery by 18% of employers.

Barriers to training, given by employers, include: the time of day (62.5%) when courses are run and the cost of training to the employer (54.2%). Currently most employers spend between £100 and £249 on training per year and as might be expected, most employers said that they would provide more training if additional funding were available.

6.4 Recruitment and vacancies

In total 940 vacancies were reported in the preceding 12 months by 216 employers, which equates to 30% of all employment being vacancies.

Hard-to-fill vacancies appear to be a significant problem for the sector with one third (33%) of vacancies described by employers as hard-to-fill. The top two reasons for hard-to-fill vacancies are “not enough people interested in this type of job” (31.9%) and “low number of applicants generally” (26.4%). 12.1% of organisations affected by hard-to-fill vacancies in the last 12 months experienced an increased workload on other members of staff.

Employers identified a severe shortage of applicants with skills specific to playwork with 59% saying that “skills specific to playwork” are lacking when recruiting. 61% of employers also “strongly agreed” or “tended to agree” with the statement that “when recruiting, we have problems finding people with the skills that we need”. Research shows that although new recruits are generally skilled they do not have the skills required for the playwork jobs they are applying for.

Skills gaps amongst existing employees also have an impact on playwork organisations, with almost a third (29%) of employers identifying a skills gap in their existing workforce. Generic skills such as team working (11.4%), initiative (11.4%), and planning and preparing work (12.4%) were said to be lacking. All of these skills were also considered to be “very important” by playwork employers but what stood out according to employers, as a key skill, was “knowledge of playwork principles” (28.2%). The level of skill needed in the sector was seen to be increasing by 70% of employers and skill needs were most likely to be affected by “new legislation or regulatory requirements” (36.3%) and “government policy, initiative or new funding” (24.2%).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Recommendations for developing future phases of Playwork People have been detailed below along with areas for further research.

7.1 Continuous workforce data

The results of the Playwork People 1 and 2 surveys have provided baseline data for ongoing research and statistical analysis of the playwork workforce. Increasingly robust data needs to be collected to ensure a continually improving understanding of workforce development needs and of employers and people working in the sector. It is suggested that the next survey phase – Playwork People 3 – is planned for 2007.

7.2 Quality, up-to-date database

A good quality, up-to-date database is essential to the success of future research phases of Playwork People because there is currently no single reliable source of contacts for playworkers to provide a sampling frame. The development and improvement of existing databases will help to improve response rates and achieve a regional breakdown of results. A mapping exercise should be considered, to map play settings by type region-by-region in order to collect and update contacts on a systematic basis e.g. contacting local authorities for a list of play provision that they manage. As well as contact details a database could include basic details about setting type and ownership which would allow specific groups to be filtered and sampled for further targeted research.

7.3 Achieve a regional breakdown

It is essential that Playwork People 3 achieves high enough response rates for all regions to provide a picture of the workforce in each English region. The support needed to make this happen should be identified and the survey methodology planned well in advance with this objective in mind.

Funding for Playwork People does not extend to the home countries and the potential for developing partnerships to collect similar workforce data in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland should be explored. This would complement the UK Strategy for Playwork Education and Training 2005-2010 and the UK-wide remit of the Playwork Unit at SkillsActive.

7.4 Improve and develop the questionnaire

A number of improvements could be made to the questionnaire to improve the accuracy of future data collected (it should be noted that where possible questions need to remain the same to allow comparison of findings between research phases for Playwork People):

Playwork People 2

- Multiple choice options for some questions should be revised in the light of Part Two research findings. For example, when asked to describe the play setting they work in 44.5% of respondents specified “other” rather than choosing one of the options already listed on the questionnaire. This suggests that the options given do not adequately describe the settings in which playworkers work.
- Distinguish between qualifications undertaken full-time or part-time.
- Tie down open ended questions with information from Part Two about what qualifications are being undertaken by developing multiple choice options to improve accuracy.
- Find out what playwork qualifications are currently being studied for as well as those that have already been undertaken in the past.

7.5 In-depth research projects

The findings of Playwork People 2 can be used as the basis for focused projects where a need for further information can be identified. For example:

- The nature of volunteering in the sector.
- Job roles that playworkers are undertaking and how they define themselves. Particularly with reference to new roles that are emerging in the sector such as Play Rangers.
- Case studies on the variety and nature of play provision in the sector.

APPENDIX ONE: REGIONAL ANALYSIS

I. QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Table I(a) indicates the number of questionnaire responses for the regions that are analysed in this section. These regions are included because the cut off point for analysis has been taken as 50 responses. This is the generally accepted minimum number of responses needed for any meaningful and reliable analysis. Therefore the employee survey has been analysed for the South West, North West, West Midlands and the North East and the employer survey for the South West region only. A complete breakdown of all the responses for each survey for all nine English regions is contained Chapter I Table I.4(a).

Table I(a): Responses for regions and questionnaires analysed in this section

	Employees responding	Employers responding
	Absolute	Absolute
South West (SW)	137	69
North West (NW)	63	-
West Midlands (WM)	63	-
North East (NE)	54	-

Playwork Employees

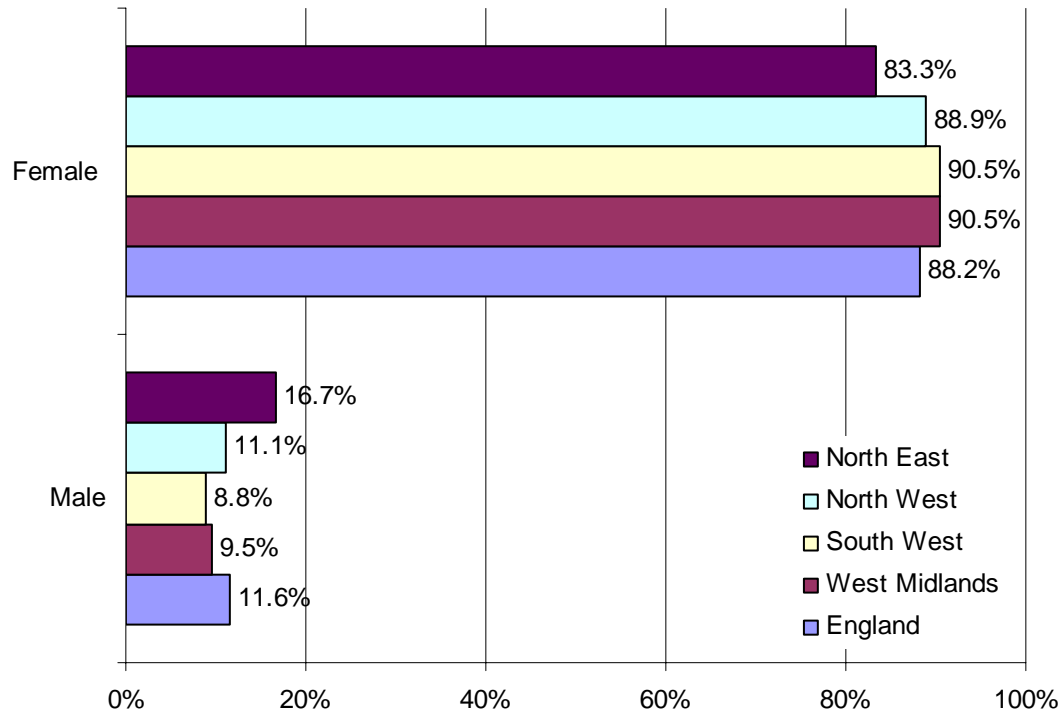
Base: all respondents

2. PLAYWORK EMPLOYEES

2.1 Profile of the workforce in the regions compared to England as a whole

The biggest difference in gender profile is in the North East region where the percentage of male workers in the sector is over 5 percentage points more than in England as a whole. In comparison the smallest proportion of male workers is in the South West region, where only 8.8% of the workforce are men compared to 11.6% in England as a whole.

Diagram 2.1(a): Gender split in the playwork workforce in the regions compared to England as a whole



Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

The age profile of the workforce differs across the regions. Compared to England as a whole the following observations about the age of the playwork workforce in the regions analysed can be made:

- 16-18 year olds are under represented in the North East with only 3.7% of the workforce aged between 16 and 18 compared to 9.6% in England as a whole. However there are more 19 – 24 years old in the North East than any other region analysed with 38.9% of the workforce comprising this age group compared to 31.4% in England. 55-64 year olds are also well represented in the North East at 18.5% of the workforce compared to 10.7% in England as a whole.
- The West Midlands has the lowest representation of 19-24 years olds than any other region, with only 22.2% of the workforce in the West Midlands made up of 19-24 year olds compared to 31.4% in England, and the highest proportion of 45-54 year olds who make up a quarter (25.4%) of the workforce in the West Midlands compared to 18.4% in England as a whole.

- As might be expected, there are very few playworkers in the sector aged 65 or over. The largest proportion of respondents in this age group were in the North West with 1.6% of respondents in this age group, more than double than for England as a whole at 0.7%. Along with the fact that one sixth (15.9%) of the workforce in the North West are aged 16-18 compared to only 9.6% in England, it suggests that the playwork workforce in the North West has good representation at either end of the age scale.
- In the South West playworkers are most likely to be aged between 19-24 and 45-54, with 36.5% of the workforce in the South West in the 19-24 age range and 20.4% aged 45-54, compared to 31.4% and 18.4% in England respectively. This follows the peaks in ages demonstrated in the England data as a whole.

Table 2.1(a): Age profile of the playwork workforce in the regions compared to England as a whole

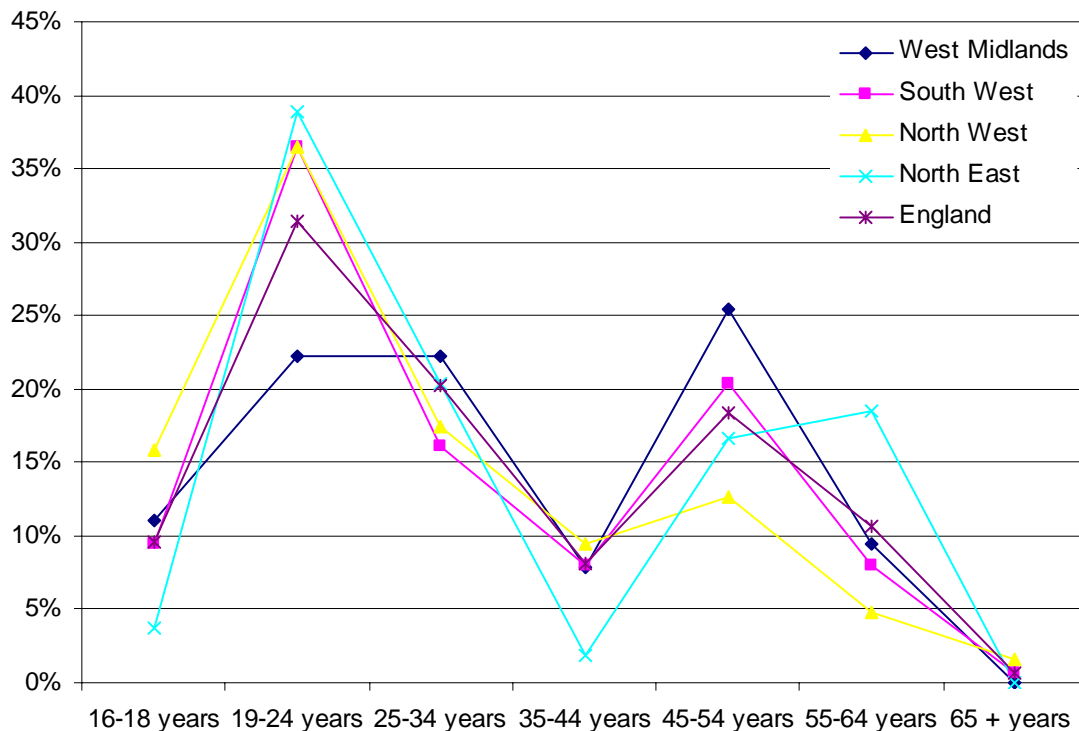
	NE	NW	SW	WM	England
Age	% response	% response	% response	% response	% response
16-18 years	3.7%	15.9%	9.5%	11.1%	9.6%
19-24 years	38.9%	36.5%	36.5%	22.2%	31.4%
25-34 years	20.4%	17.5%	16.1%	22.2%	20.2%
35-44 years	1.9%	9.5%	8.0%	7.9%	8.1%
45-54 years	16.7%	12.7%	20.4%	25.4%	18.4%
55-64 years	18.5%	4.8%	8.0%	9.5%	10.7%
65 + years	0.0%	1.6%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

Playwork People 2

Diagram 2.1(b): Age profile of the playwork workforce in the regions compared to England



Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

There is no significant difference between the proportion of playworkers from an ethnic minority background in the South West compared to England as a whole. In the North East and the North West none of the employees responding to the survey were from an ethnic minority background. In the West Midlands 4.8% of respondents are from Asian or Asian British backgrounds and 3.2% are of mixed race. This suggests that the diversity of the workforce is dependent on the diversity of the region itself, however regional measurement is still not sensitive enough to pick up localised areas where ethnic minorities may be better represented e.g. urban areas such as Bristol or Bradford.

The only significant difference from England, in terms of disability, is in the North West, where 3.2% of respondents consider themselves to have a disability.

Table 2.1(b): Ethnicity of respondents broken down by regions compared to England as a whole

	NE	NW	SW	WM	England
Asian or Asian British	0	0	1.5%	4.8%	1.8%
Black or Black British	0	0	1.5%	0	0.9%
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed race	0	1.6%	0.7%	3.2%	1.3%
White	98.1%	98.4%	89.85	88.9%	92.8%
Other ethnic background	0	0	2.9%	0	1.3%

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

As might be expected with a subjective question, the proportion of playworkers identifying with particular job roles differs from region to region. What is consistent is that most respondents in all regions analysed consider themselves to be “playworkers” and a high proportion described themselves as “other” - perhaps feeling that the options available to them on the questionnaire do not adequately describe their role.

Table 2.1(c): Playworkers job roles in the regions compared to England as a whole

Role	NE % response	NW % response	SW % response	WM % response	England % response
Playworker	57.4%	57.1%	44.5%	54.0%	46.9%
Play Assistant	13.0%	22.2%	19.7%	23.8%	19.7%
Other	16.7%	17.5%	17.5%	11.1%	17.5%
Supervisor	7.4%	11.1%	13.9%	11.1%	13.8%
Senior Playworker	13.0%	9.5%	19.7%	7.9%	13.2%
Manager	11.1%	4.8%	4.4%	7.9%	9.2%
Committee Member	11.1%	1.6%	0.7%	1.6%	2.6%
Owner / Proprietor	0.0%	3.2%	0.7%	4.8%	2.4%
Trainer / Assessor	5.6%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%
Chairperson	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.7%
Director	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.4%

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

2.2 Type of setting

Employees were asked to describe the type of setting where they work using a multiple choice list. Due to the high number of non-responses and the high proportion of respondents who ticked “other” it has not been possible to accurately break down this question by region. However it can be said that across all the regions analysed, most play settings are based on school premises but they are not necessarily run or funded by the host school.

The status of play provision differs considerably across the regions. For example, nearly half (46.0%) of play organisations in the North West are run by a local authority compared to 15.9% in the West Midlands and 25.2% in England as a whole. These extreme differences could be representative of the types of organisations on the regional databases used for the survey and it is an area that needs to be clarified with further research.

Table 2.2(a): Status of play provision in the regions compared to England

Employer status	NE	NW	SW	WM	England
Voluntary organisation or charity	44.4%	19.0%	35.0%	17.5%	32.2%
Private business	31.5%	22.2%	30.7%	57.1%	32.0%
Organisation run by a local authority	20.4%	46.0%	18.2%	15.9%	25.2%
Other	7.4%	4.8%	15.3%	6.3%	9.6%

Playwork Employees

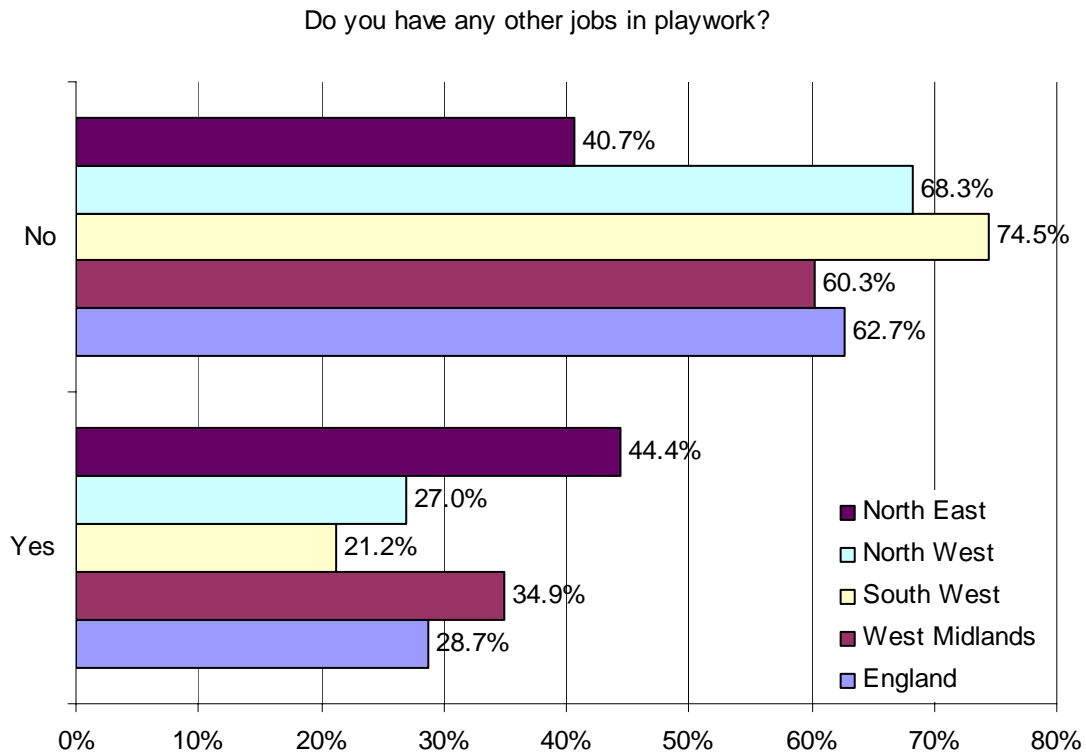
Base: all respondents

As explained in the main body of this report, we know that a large proportion (28.7%) of playworkers hold more than one playwork job due to the part-time nature of many positions. It

Playwork People 2

is interesting to see such a difference across the regions, with nearly half (44.4%) of playworkers in the North East holding more than one job compared to only 21.2% of playworkers in the South West and an average for England of 28.7%.

Diagram 2.2(a): Proportion of playwork employees with more than one playwork job in the regions compared to England



Playwork Employees

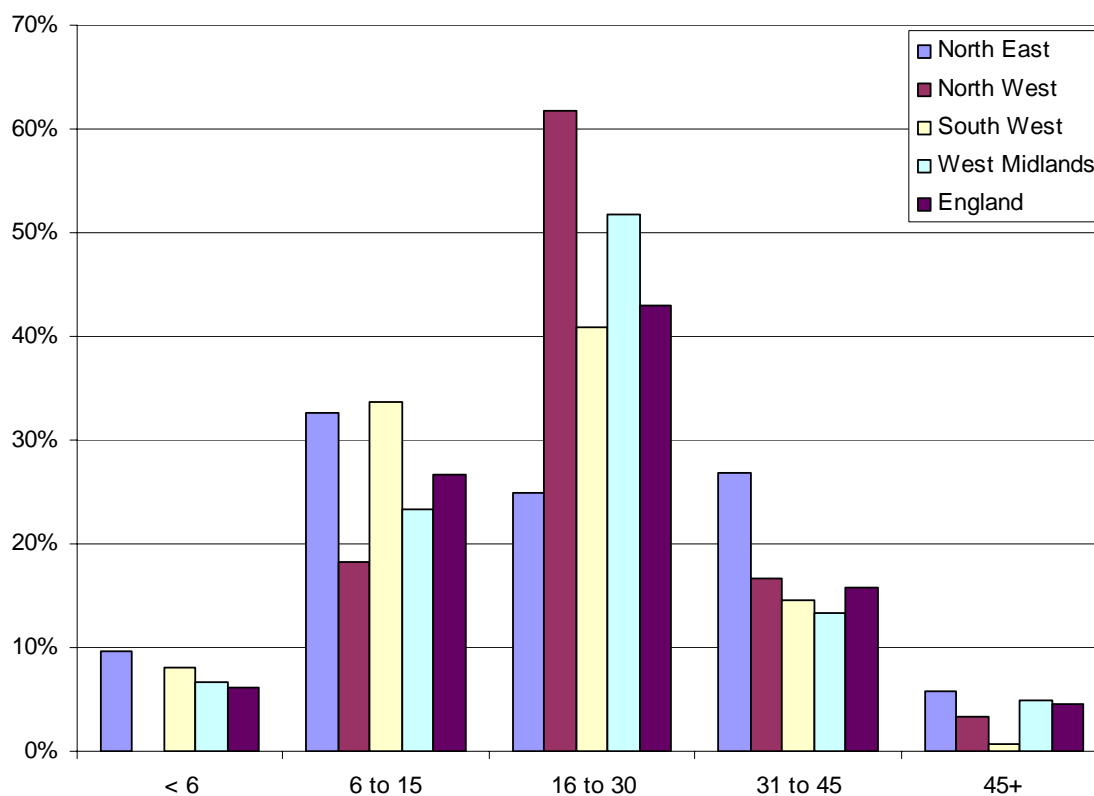
Base: all respondents

Playworkers were asked to state the number of hours that they usually work in their main playwork job. The average number of hours worked by playwork employees in the regions analysed is:

- North West is 23.1 hours
- West Midlands is 22.1 hours
- North East is 21.9 hours
- South West is 19.9 hours

This is compared to an average of 21.6 hours per week in England as a whole. It shows that although playworkers are still most likely to be part-time, the greatest number of hours worked is in the North West and the fewest in the South West, with a difference of three hours. It is interesting to note that the North East, where workers are most likely to hold more than one playwork job, is one of the regions where playworkers work the fewest hours in their main playwork job thus having the capacity or need to take on another role. However this does not seem to be the case for the South West where fewest hours are worked yet workers are the least likely to take on more than one playwork role.

Diagram 2.2(b): The number of hours worked by employees per week in their main playwork job, in the regions compared to England



Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

The Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employees) asked respondents how much they are paid in their main playwork job. These responses have been analysed to find out the average (mean) pay. However two statistical analyses have been presented in the table below as the median¹¹ hourly pay presents a more accurate picture that is not skewed by extremes of pay at either end of the scale. These figures should be viewed with caution because of the large proportion of respondents that chose not to reply to this question, which means that the actual responses per region were very small.

Table 2.2(b): Pay per hour in each region

Region	Mean pay per hr	Median pay per hr
North East	£6.76	£6.00
North West	£6.12	£5.64
South West	£4.93	£6.00
West Midlands	£5.85	£5.50
England	£4.29	£5.75

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

The North West has the highest proportion of playworkers who have been employed in the sector for less than one year (44.4%) – over twice as many as for England as a whole (21.7%).

¹¹ The value which is the middle one when all values are arranged in order of size.

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The longest serving playworkers are based in the North East, where 18.5% of employees have been employed for 10 years or more compared to 4.8% in the North West.

Table 2.2(c): Length of employment in playwork in the regions compared to England

Length of employment in playwork	NE	NW	SW	WM	England
Less than one year	11.1%	44.4%	16.1%	23.8%	21.7%
1-2 years	25.9%	19.0%	28.5%	39.7%	27.6%
3-5 years	29.6%	22.2%	28.5%	15.9%	22.6%
5-10 years	11.1%	6.3%	15.3%	7.9%	13.2%
10 years plus	18.5%	4.8%	8.8%	12.7%	12.5%

Playwork Employees

Base: all respondents

3. PLAYWORK ORGANISATIONS

This section looks at the results of the Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employers) for the South West, in comparison to England as a whole. The South West is the only region that has been analysed because, as referred to above, responses from playwork employers for this region reached over 50.

3.1 Profile of playwork organisations in the South West

Almost three quarters (72.5%) of employers responding in the South West represent after-school clubs and / or holiday play schemes. This is more than for England as a whole where after-school clubs accounted for around two thirds of provision (64.4%). However open access centres, weekend play schemes and play training organisations were less well represented in the South West than for England as a whole.

Table 3.1(a): Type of provision run by playwork employers in the South West compared to England

	SW	England
Type of play provision	% response	% response
After school club	72.5%	64.4%
Holiday play scheme	72.5%	63.0%
Open access centre	1.4%	6.0%
Weekend play scheme	1.4%	5.1%
Play training organisation	1.4%	4.6%
Local authority play unit	1.4%	4.2%
Play bus / mobile unit	1.4%	3.7%
Adventure playground	0.0%	3.2%
Play association	4.3%	3.2%
School play centre	1.4%	2.8%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

One third (33.3%) of playwork employers in the South West estimated their annual turnover at less than £20,000, compared to only 18.4% in England as a whole. However, it should be noted that 82.6% of employers in the South West were completing the questionnaire about only one place where play is provided and 17.4% for more than one place where play is provided, compared to 70.8% for one site across England and 28.2% for multiple sites across England.

Playwork People 2

Table 3.1(b): Approximate total turnover of play provision in the South West compared to England in the last financial year

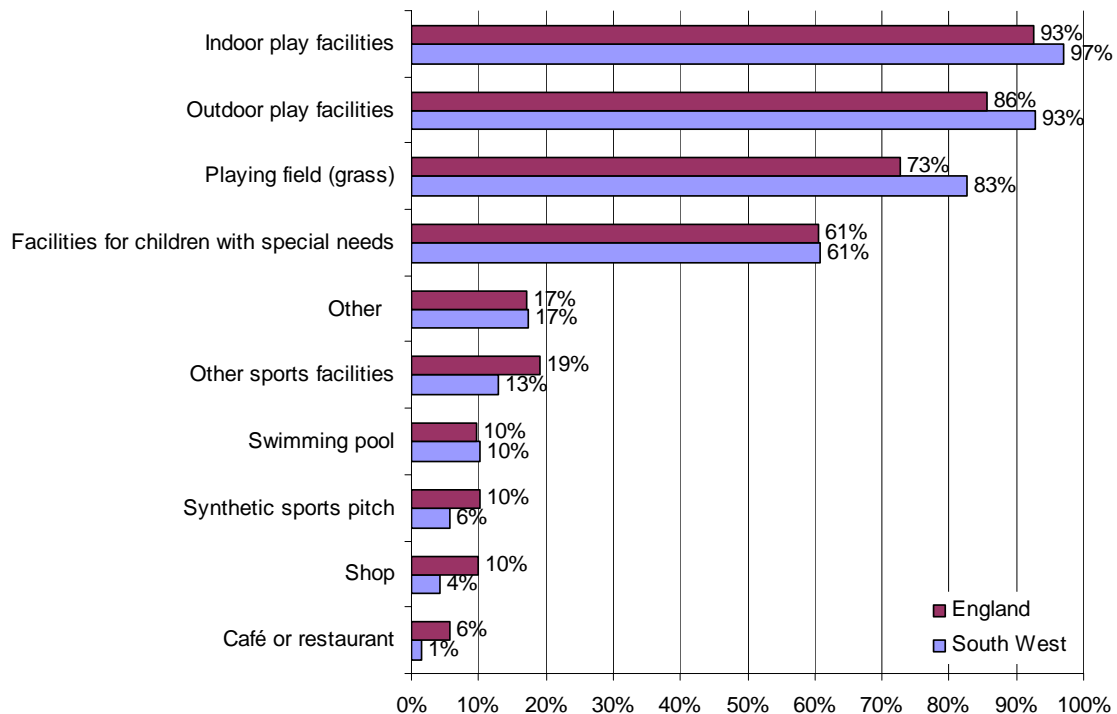
	SW	England
Less than £19,999	33.3%	18.4%
£20,000 - £49,999	15.9%	10.6%
£50,000 - £99,999	8.7%	7.8%
£100,000+	7.2%	14.0%
Don't know	23.2%	19.0%
No response	11.7%	30.2%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

As might be expected, play provision in the South West generally has greater access to outdoor playing facilities and a grass playing field compared to England as a whole. However they have less access to other sports facilities, including a synthetic sports pitch and built facilities such as a shop, café or restaurant.

Diagram 3.1(a): Facilities and services available at playwork settings in the South West compared to England

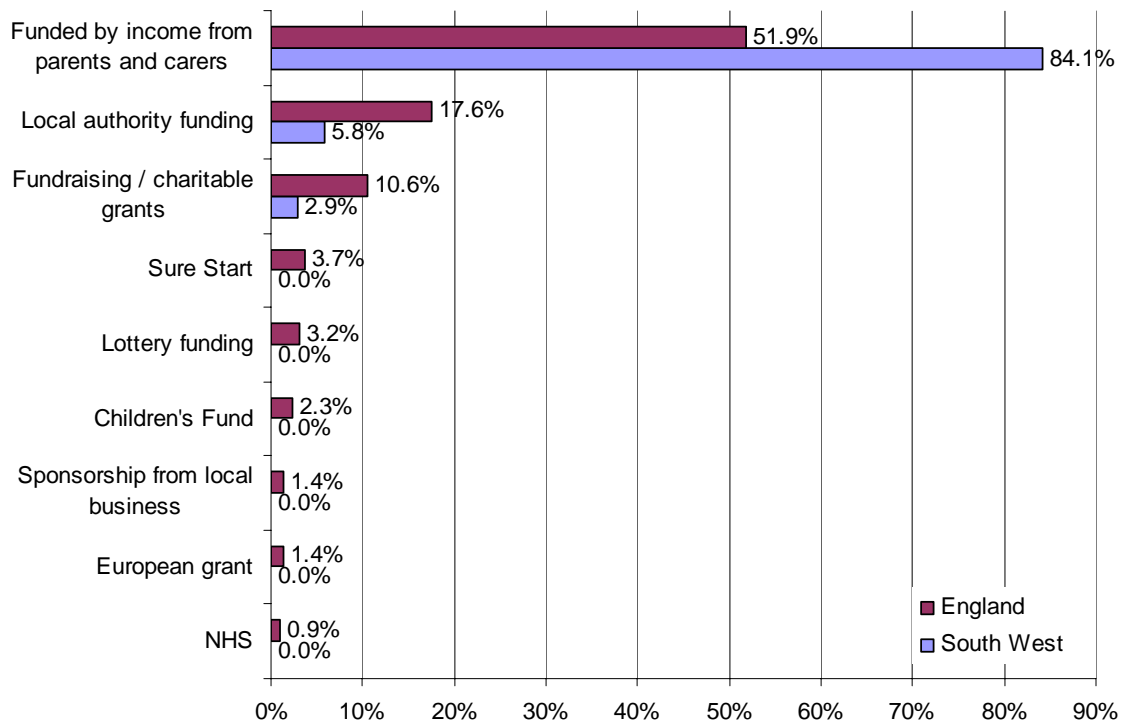


Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Analysing sources of funding for play provision in the South West seems to suggest that funding comes from only three sources: parents and carers, local authorities and fundraising activities or charitable grants. Provision in the South West appears to be heavily reliant on parents and carers for income, with 84.1% of employers stating this income source compared to 51.9% for England as a whole.

Diagram 3.1(b): Funding structure of play provision in the South West compared to England



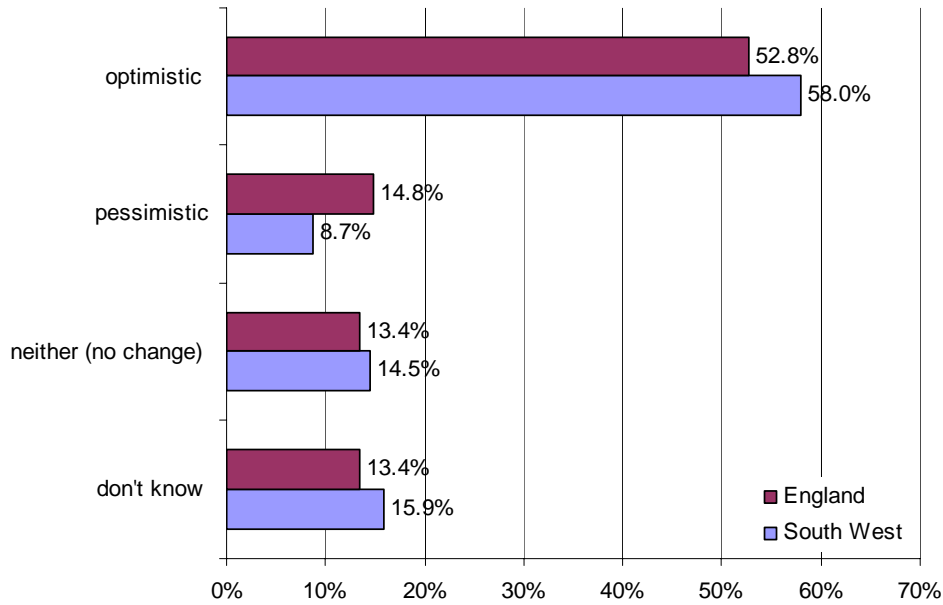
Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Employers in the South West are more likely to be optimistic about the prospects for their play provision over the next three years. A slightly higher proportion saw no change in prospects or claimed they did not know compared to England as a whole.

Playwork People 2

Diagram 3.1(c): Prospects for play provision in the South West compared to England over the next three years

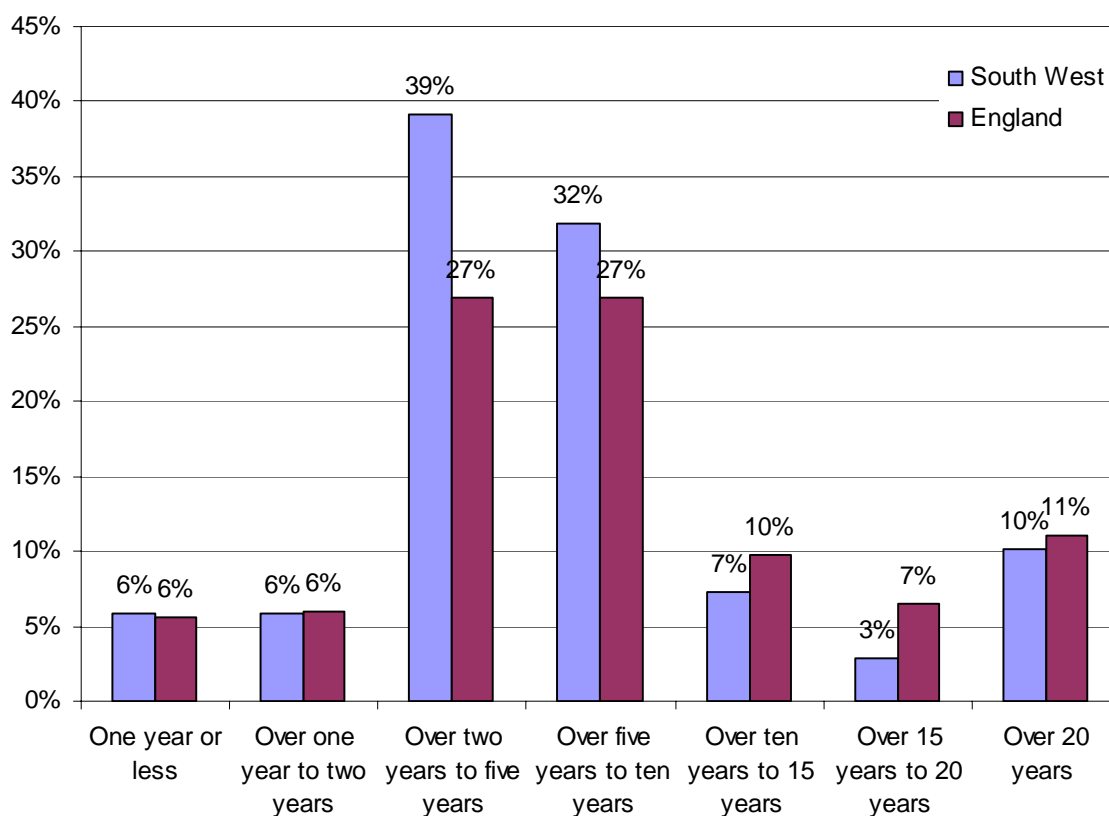


Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Play provision appears to be less well established in the South West than in England as a whole. A considerably larger proportion of play settings have been running for between two and ten years when compared to England and less for over ten years.

Diagram 3.1(d): Number of years that play provision has been running in the South West compared to England



Playwork Employers

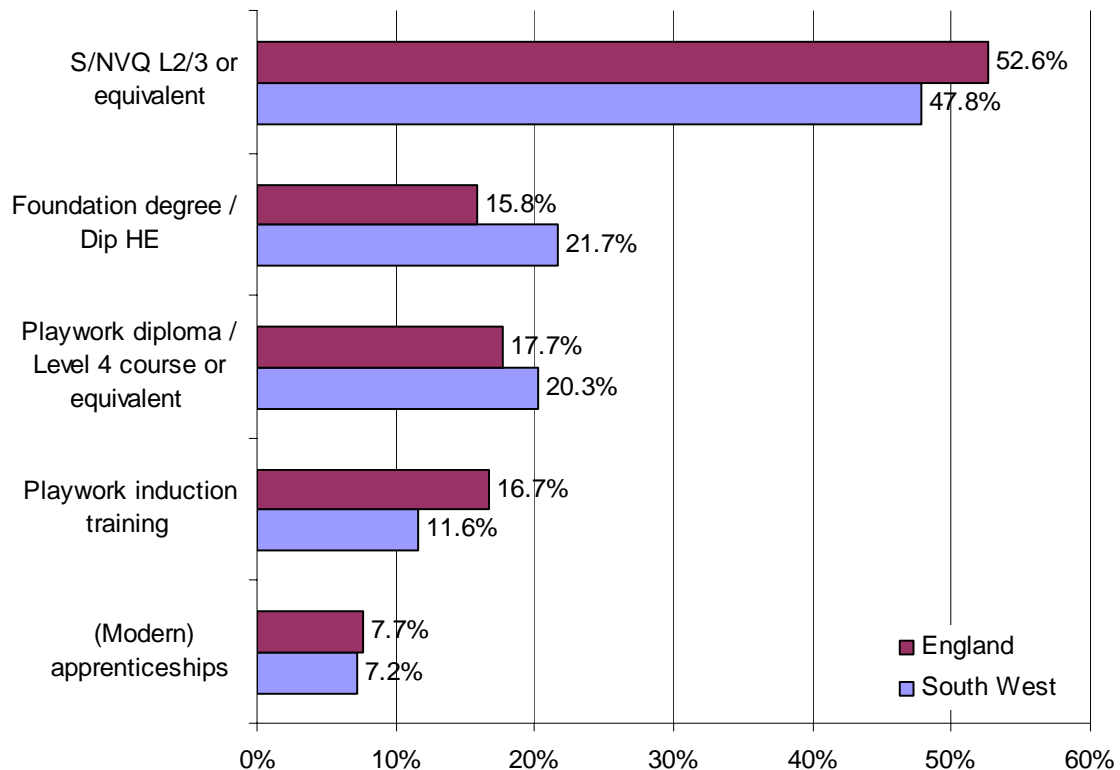
Base: all respondents

3.2 Training and qualifications

Employers in the South West appear to be more committed to the training and development of their staff than the average playwork employer in England. 49.3% of employers in the South West have a member of staff undertaking training that is intended to lead to a qualification compared to only 34.5% in the whole of England. It also appears that training programmes are supported to a higher level in the South West than in England, with 21.7% of staff in the South West undertaking structured training for a Foundation degree or Higher Education diploma compared to 15.8% in England as a whole. However it is not clear from this question whether these training programmes are nominally supported by employers or whether they are actually providing financial support or time off for study for example.

Playwork People 2

Diagram 3.2(a): Proportion of organisations employing staff involved in structured training programmes in order to gain the following qualifications in the South West compared to England as a whole

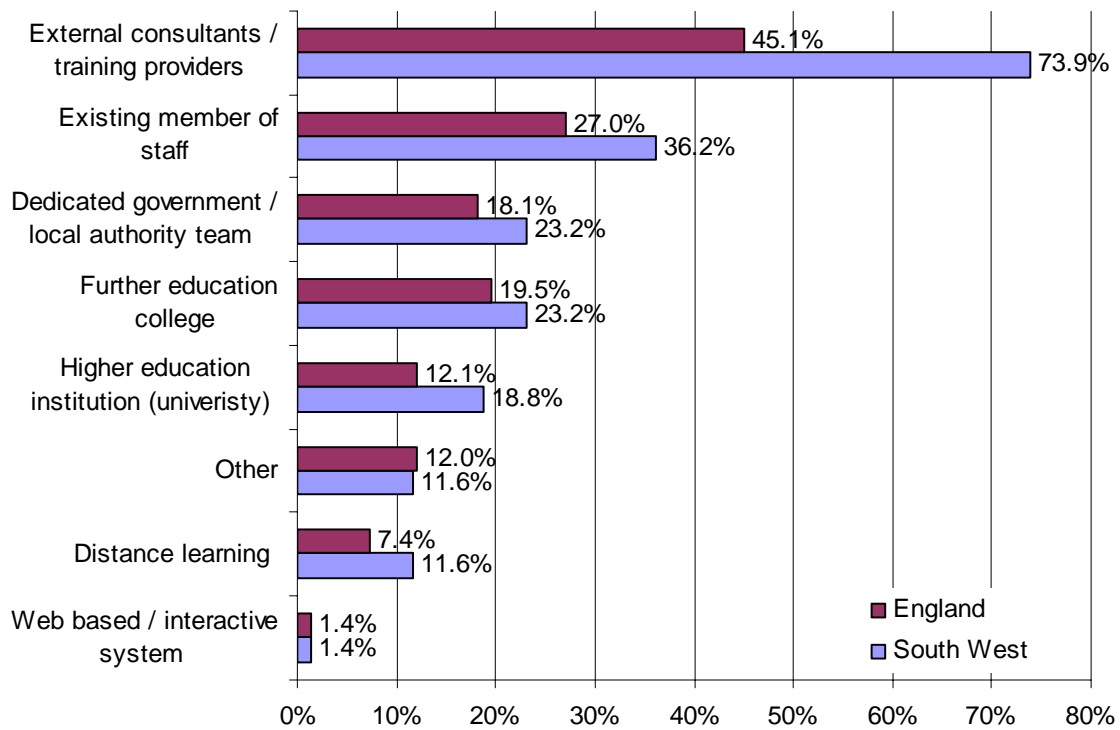


Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Considerably more employers are using external consultants or training providers to deliver training for their employees, with nearly three quarters (73.9%) of employers in the South West using this method of delivery compared to under half (45.1%) in England. A higher proportion of employers are also relying on an existing member of staff to provide training in the South West than in England and both of these factors probably point to the fact that employers in the South West are in general supplying more training than other regions in England.

Diagram 3.2(b): Methods of training delivery in the South West compared to England as a whole



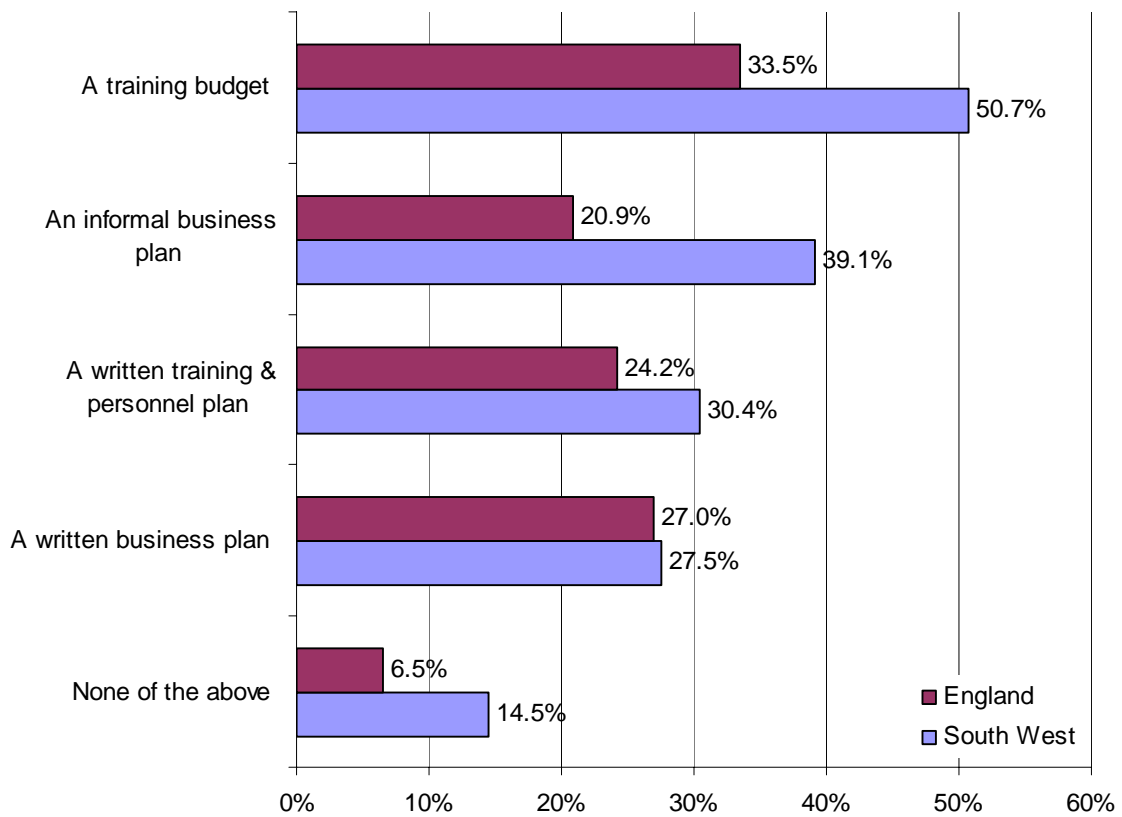
Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

As might be expected, a large proportion of employers (75.4%) in the South West said that they would provide additional training if “financial assistance were available to help with the cost of training”.

Half of playwork settings (50.7%) in the South West have a training budget compared to only a third (33.5%) in England as whole. This provides another indication that employers in the South West have a bigger commitment to training than other regions in England.

Diagram 3.2(c): Proportion of organisations in the South West that have a training budget or business plan compared to England as a whole



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Training also seems to be better funded in the South West compared to England as a whole. The majority of employers in the South West are spending between £500 and £999 on training compared to the £100 to £249 in England.

Table 3.2(a): Amount spent on training on training by playwork organisations in the South West compared to England in the past 12 months

	South West	England
Spend	% response	% response
Nothing	7.2%	9.3%
Under £100	18.8%	10.6%
£100 - £249	26.1%	25.5%
£500 - £999	29.0%	19.4%
£1,000 - £4,999	5.8%	10.6%
£5,000 - £9,999	0	3.7%
£20,000 - £29,000	0	0.5%
£30,000 +	0	0.9%
Don't know	7.2%	12.5%
No response	5.9%	7.0%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

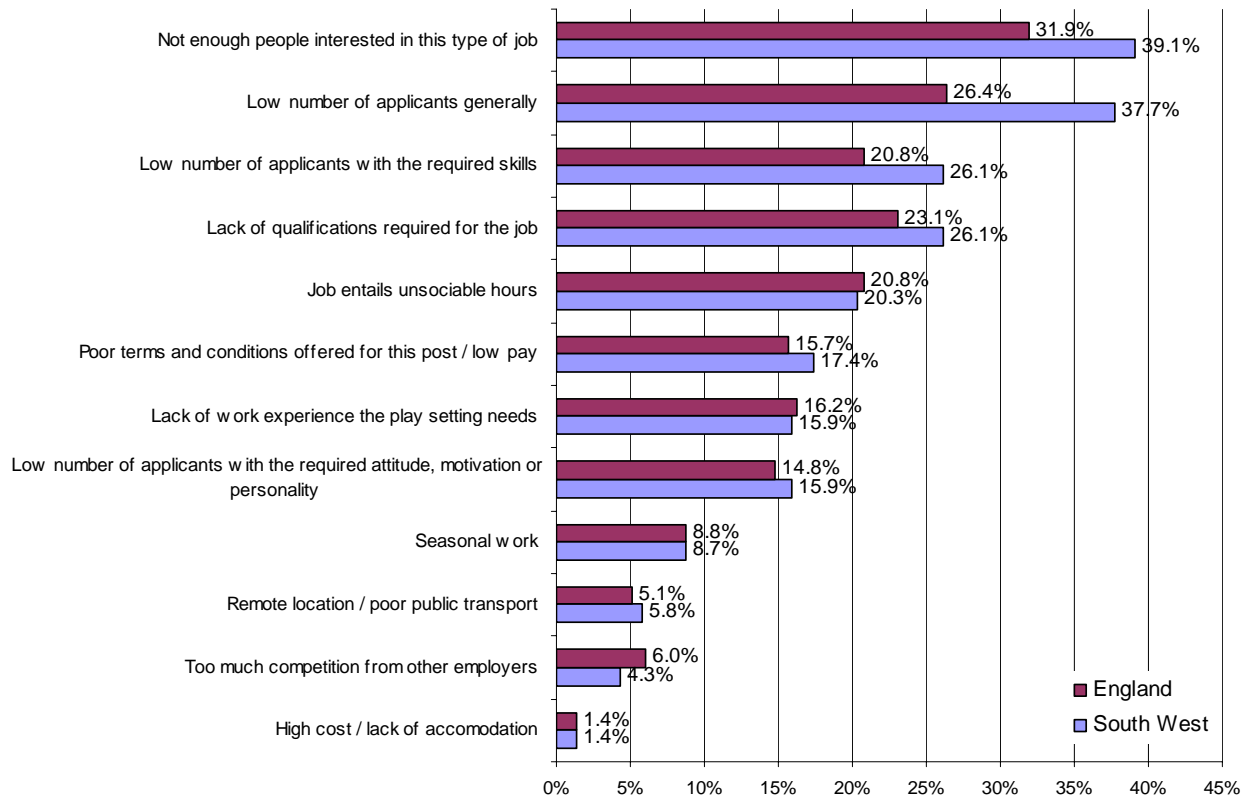
2.3 Recruitment and vacancies

In total 171 vacancies were reported in the last 12 months by the 69 employers in the South West responding to the Playwork Labour Force Survey 2005 (Employers). 87 of these vacancies were described by employers as hard-to-fill. This means that half (50.9%) of all vacancies experienced by employers in the last 12 months were hard-to-fill. This is a very high percentage of vacancies that are hard-to-fill compared to the 32.6% of vacancies across England that were described as hard-to-fill, indicating that there may be serious recruitment problems in the South West

The most frequently given reasons why these posts were hard-to-fill were the same as for England as a whole, including “not enough people interested in this type of job” (39.1%), “low number of applicants generally” (37.7%) and “lack of qualifications required for the job” (26.1%).

Playwork People 2

Diagram 2.3(a): Reasons why vacancies have been hard-to-fill in the South West compared to England as a whole



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

As with the findings for England as a whole, employers in the South West agree that they have a problem recruiting people with the skills that they need and in particular have found skills specific to playwork lacking. 71% of employers in the South West agreed strongly or tended to agree that when recruiting they have problems finding people with the skills that they need.

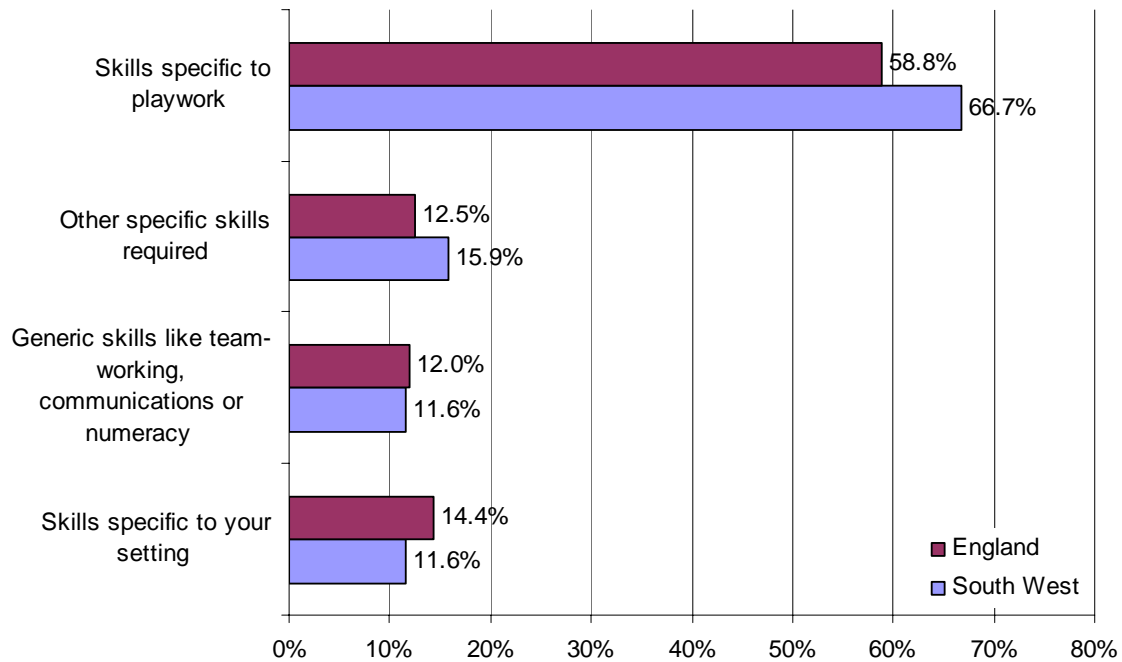
Table 2.3(a) Attitudinal statements about skills and education in the South West

	Agree strongly	Tend to agree	Neither / nor	Tend to disagree	Disagree strongly
When recruiting, we have problems finding people with the skills that we need	26.1%	44.9%	13.0%	7.2%	0
The education system does not supply enough people who are equipped with the skills we need	20.3%	26.1%	39.1%	4.3%	0

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Diagram 2.3(b): Types of skills employers have found lacking when recruiting in the South West compared to England as a whole



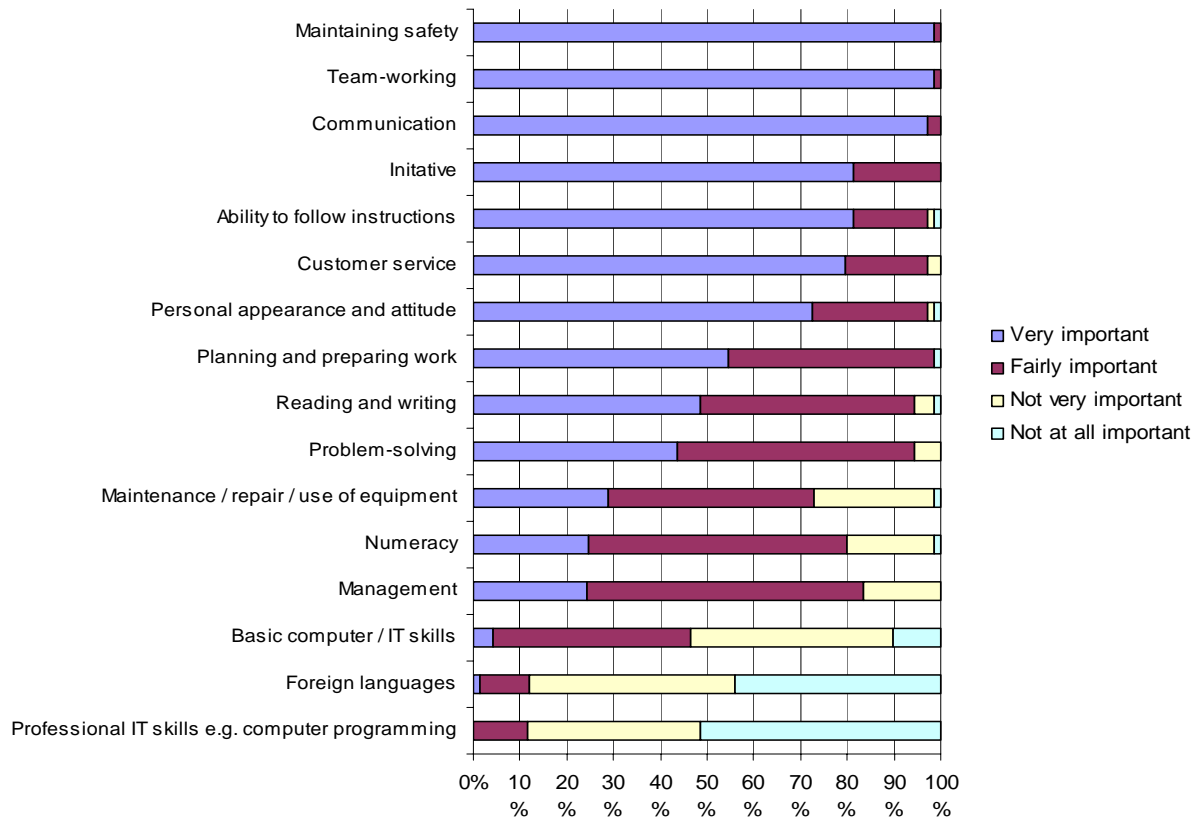
Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Employers were asked about the skills that are important for their employees to have. “Maintaining safety”, “team working” and “communication” were the skills that were most likely to be rated as “very important” by employers in the South West and by employers in the rest of England. Employers in the South West were also in agreement with employers in the rest of England over the three least important skills: “professional IT skills”, “foreign languages”, and “basic computer / IT skills”.

Playwork People 2

Diagram 2.3(c): Importance of specific skills to playwork employers in the South West



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Table 2.3(b): Importance of specific skills to playwork employers in the South West

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important
Maintaining safety	98.6%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Team-working	98.6%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Communication	97.1%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Ability to follow instructions	81.2%	15.9%	1.4%	1.4%
Initiative	81.2%	18.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Customer service	79.7%	17.4%	2.9%	0.0%
Personal appearance and attitude	72.5%	24.6%	1.4%	1.4%
Planning and preparing work	53.6%	43.5%	0.0%	1.4%
Reading and writing	47.8%	44.9%	4.3%	1.4%
Problem-solving	43.5%	50.7%	5.8%	0.0%
Maintenance / repair / use of equipment	27.5%	42.0%	24.6%	1.4%
Numeracy	24.6%	55.1%	18.8%	1.4%
Management	23.2%	56.5%	15.9%	0.0%
Basic computer / IT skills	4.3%	42.0%	43.5%	10.1%
Foreign languages	1.4%	10.1%	42.0%	42.0%
Professional IT skills e.g. computer programming	0.0%	11.6%	36.2%	50.7%

Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

2.4 Factors influencing skill needs

Over half (53.6%) of employers in the South West stated that “new legislation or regulatory requirements” influences the skills they needs from their workforce, compared to over a third (36.3%) in England. However employers in the South West are also more likely to say that “skills needs have not really changed” compared to England as a whole, with 13% of employers in the South West stating this compared to only 6% in England.

Table 2.4(a): Factors influencing skill needs in the South West compared to England as a whole

	South West	England
Factors	% response	% response
New legislation or regulatory requirements	53.6%	36.3%
Government policy / initiatives / new funding	29.0%	24.2%
The expectations of children and parents / carers	18.8%	14.4%
Difficulties meeting required quality standards	14.5%	9.3%
Skills needs have not really changed	13.0%	6.0%
Insurance / codes of practice / warranty issues	10.1%	9.8%
New IT facilities	8.7%	7.0%
The addition of new facilities the last 2-3 years	7.2%	5.1%

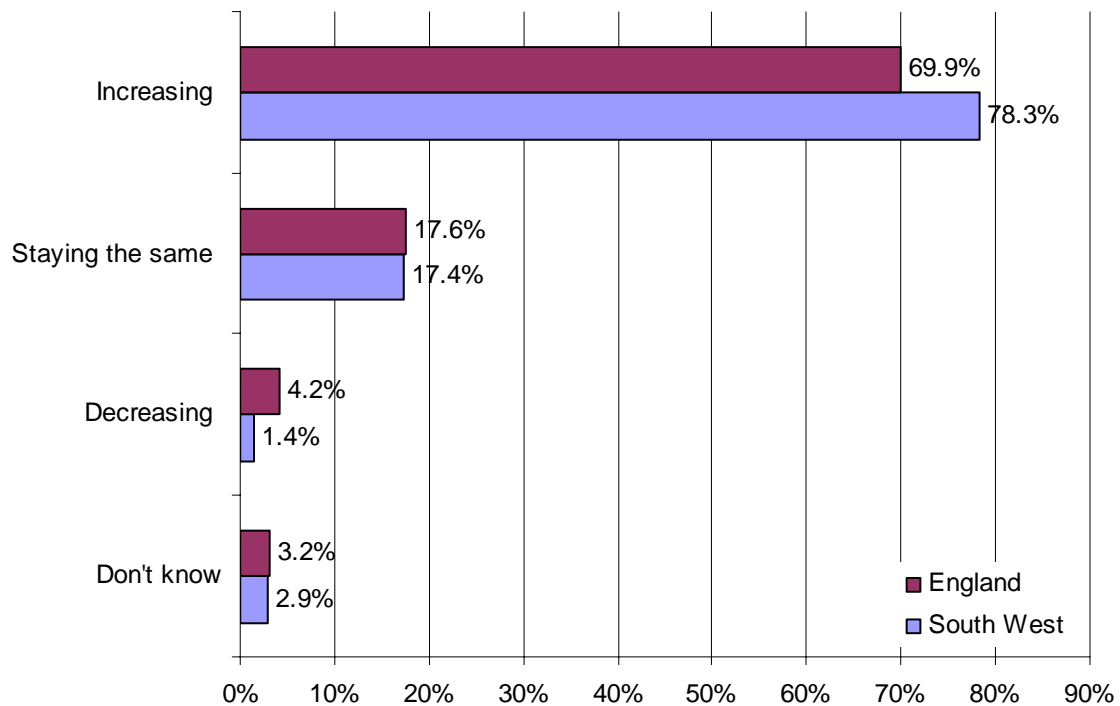
Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Playwork employers in the South West are more likely to view the level of skill needed from their workforce as increasing compared to England as a whole. However, overall more employers in the South West chose to answer this question than in the rest of England.

Playwork People 2

Diagram 2.4(a): Playwork employers view on the level of skill needed in the playwork workforce in the South West compared to England as a whole

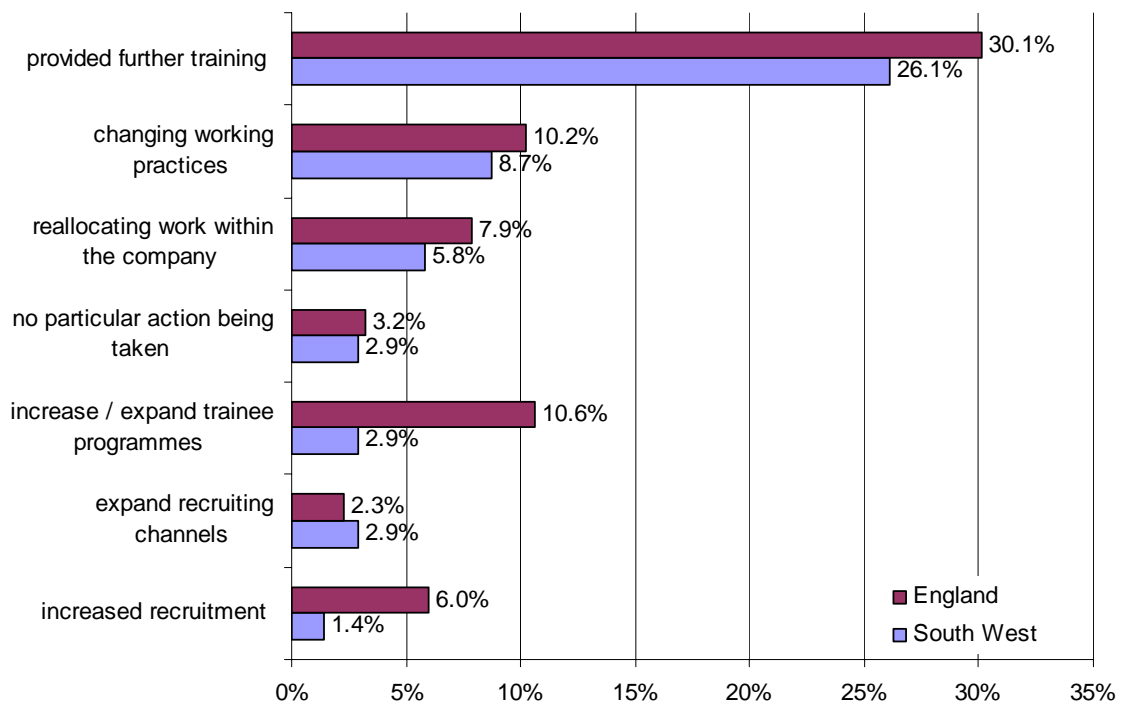


Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

To overcome skills gaps in the South West employers are most likely to provide further training, with 26.1% of employers in the South West stating this solution. Compared to England as a whole employers are significantly less likely to “increase or expand trainee programmes” (2.9%) or “increase recruitment” (1.4%) in response to skills gaps in the South West.

Diagram 2.4(b): Action taken by playwork organisations to overcome skills gaps in the South West compared to England as a whole



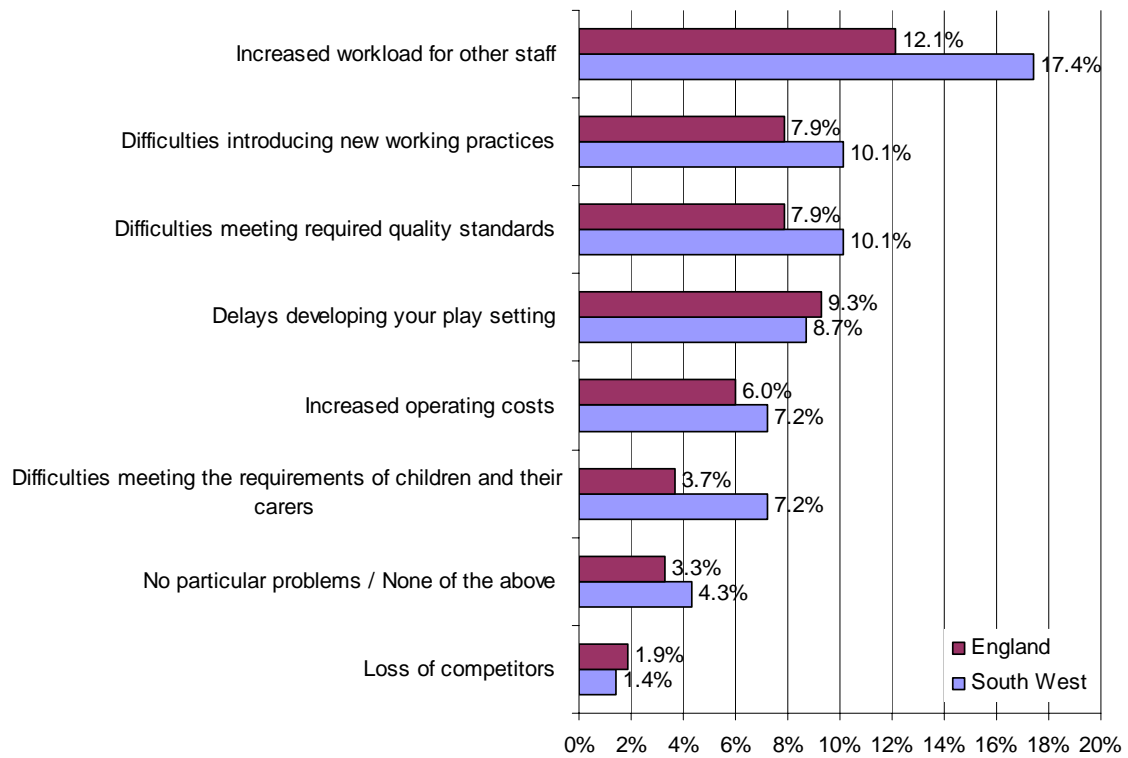
Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents

Skills gaps impact on all organisations and as with England, skills gaps are most likely to increase the workload for other staff in the South West, with 17.4% of employers in the South West noting this impact.

Playwork People 2

Diagram 2.4(c): Affect of skills gaps on organisations in the South West compared to England over the last three years



Playwork Employers

Base: all respondents