PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR MARINE
EMPLOYERS SKILL SURVEY

December 2020

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Portsmouth Harbour Marine Employers Skills Survey. On behalf of the Directors Members, Advisors and the Chief Executive, it is my pleasure to introduce this important document which I hope you will find to be of value in these challenging times. Whilst the data was collected before the full impact of COVID-19 was realised, it nevertheless contains some important information which should steer our collective response.

This survey was commissioned to establish how local marine sector businesses see the skills of their workforces and how they envisage this will change in the future. It was completed by companies within the Portsmouth Harbour Marine area, namely Fareham, Gosport and Portsmouth. The research has established that the majority of marine businesses are concerned about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce. Whilst there is much detail in the body of the report, the main points from the survey that I wish to convey to you are:

- The survey had a broad spectrum of respondents from Portsmouth Harbour based marine and maritime businesses ranging from micro businesses up to large scale local employers
- The broad spread of businesses which responded included manufacturing marine businesses, service companies, water sports providers, designers and retail businesses
- The majority of marine businesses in the area are either micro (0-9) or small businesses with up to 50 employees
- There survey showed that the area has many skills. However, it did reveal that are shortages in some technical skills including engineering, composite, IT and laminating
- The main soft skills that are cited as lacking are time management, decision making, self-management and work ethic
- Most companies felt that their workforce was appropriate to current demand, but approximately one third of businesses felt their current workforce would not meet their future business needs
- Three quarters of businesses were worried about aging workforce – definite need to build career paths for young people to meet future skills needs
- There was more of a skills gap identified in Gosport than Portsmouth
- Almost half of companies reported difficulty in recruiting certain job roles including engineers, apprentices, composite specialists, shipwrights and managers
- More than half the respondents were not planning to recruit an apprentice in the next 12 months
- The key reasons given for not employing an apprentice were cost, lack of job openings and lack of time to train apprentices.
- There is a need to promote the apprentice scheme and especially the degree apprentice schemes
- 43% of respondents felt the current education system does not adequately prepare young people for the world of work
- Whilst many companies are supportive of work placements, 48% of businesses do not feel they can offer work experience to students
- Many businesses do not consider taking part in careers events

Portsmouth Harbour Marine believes that it has a role in helping to address these issues, and intends to:

- Create a schools programme to promote maritime careers. This would include providing young people with on the water experiences
- Encourage businesses to create work experience schemes, by running work experience seminars for local businesses using the work-experience pathway as a starting point
- Encourage businesses to embrace apprenticeship schemes, by running apprenticeship seminars for local businesses

All of us at Portsmouth Harbour Marine are committed to addressing these issues and welcome the opportunity to work with you in this endeavour. If you would like further information, please contact the Chief Executive Mark Bowden at mark@portsmouthharbourmarine.org.uk

Richard Powell OBE
Chairman Portsmouth Harbour Marine

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the Portsmouth Harbour Marine Employers' Skills survey. This consultation gave businesses in the Portsmouth Harbour Marine (PHM) area the opportunity to provide their views about the skill needs and requirements at present and in the coming years.

2.0 Background

Portsmouth Harbour Marine (PHM) was established in 2019 to expand the Gosport Marine Scene into a harbour-wide operation. One of the key aims of PHM is to 'work with schools, colleges and marine businesses to improve the work readiness of young people and individuals for employment within the local marine sector'.

To meet this key aim, a key component of the work programme is to understand the position that local marine sector businesses are currently in with regards to the skills of their workforces and how they envisage this will change in the future. A piece of research was commissioned to collect this insight.

3.0 Research

3.1 Objectives

1. To understand local businesses current skill needs
2. To gain insight into local businesses future skill needs
3. To assess if businesses struggle to recruit to roles within their organisations
4. To understand the current and future level of apprenticeship enrolment and identify any barriers which prevent businesses recruiting apprenticeships
5. To gain insight into how well businesses think the current education system prepares young people for the world of work
6. To understand what training courses, if any, local businesses would like to see more of in Portsmouth and surrounding areas

3.2 Methodology

A survey was developed which focussed questioning around the six key areas outlined in section 3.1. The survey was launched week beginning Monday 9 March 2020 and was open for four weeks to enable as many businesses as possible time to complete it.

The survey was promoted through the following marketing and communication channels:

- Portsmouth Harbour Marine business distribution list
- Portsmouth City Council email marketing distribution list
- Portsmouth Harbour Marine social media platforms
- Portsmouth City Council social media platforms

4.0 Response rate

Using the various channels of marketing and communications listed in section 3.2, the survey attracted 64 responses. There are approximately 220 marine businesses in Portsmouth Harbour Marine area, therefore, assuming this as the "total population" for a measure of statistical robustness this volume of responses ensures a margin of error of 10% at 95% confidence levels. While this is slightly higher than the targeted margin of error, it is important to note that the Coronavirus outbreak occurred during the fieldwork period of this consultation which will have likely impacted the response rate.

5.0 Summary of findings

A summary of the analysis undertaken on the data collected from the consultation survey is provided in the following section.

1. Responses from the following marine sectors were the most common – 'marina services and boatyard operations' and 'water sports providers', each accounting for 19% of the total responses.

2. Although some sectors were more represented than others, all marine sectors were represented in the sample. A comprehensive list of all sectors in order of popularity are listed below:

Marine sectors
Marina service and boatyard operations
Water sports providers
Manufacturing & boat building
General engineering
Professional services
Mast/spar manufacturer
Marine equipment supply chain
Marine logistics
Other (not marine specific)
Ship and yacht design
Chandlery including retail
Composites

3. Whilst the majority of the sample were represented by micro businesses with 0 to 9 employees (56%), all business sizes were represented fairly well. Small businesses with 10 to 50 employees made up for 20% of respondents, medium to large businesses with between 50 to 249 employees made up 17%, and larger businesses with over 250 employees represented 7%.

4. The largest proportion of the responding businesses (41%) are located in Gosport, and 28% and 11% of respondents are located in Portsmouth and Fareham, respectively. In Portsmouth, a higher proportion of businesses are micro businesses (i.e. having fewer than 50 employees) than seen in other areas; 88% compared to 71% in Gosport and 69% elsewhere.

5. 16% of respondents were not confident that their current business needs are being met by their current workforce. Respondents based in Gosport and Elsewhere (which includes Southampton and Fareham), are the least confident with 16% and 23% disagreeing respectively. Conversely, businesses in Portsmouth are most confident that their current business needs are being met with 94% agreeing.

6. In terms of business size, larger businesses (>50 employees) are most likely to feel that their current business needs are not being met by their current workforce; 27 % compared to only 11% of smaller businesses (<50 employees) who feel like their current business needs are not being met by their current workforce. *(Note: Due to the small base number of larger businesses, the findings indicate a general trend rather than forming statistically robust data from which to draw stronger conclusions from).*

7. The four commonly selected technical skills that respondents feel are lacking in their workforces' capabilities to meet their current business needs were engineering skills, composite skills, IT skills and laminating skills.

8. The four most commonly selected soft skills that respondents feel are lacking in their current workforce were, equally, 'time management', 'decision making', 'self-management' and 'work ethic' which were each selected by a third of the sample (33%).

9. A slightly larger soft skills gap was identified in Gosport and Elsewhere; 13% and 15% respectively. Smaller businesses, and those based in Portsmouth were least likely to feel like they were lacking soft skills; just 6% of businesses based in Portsmouth mentioned any.

10. Three of the listed soft skills were not selected by a single respondent. These were: interpersonal skills, problem solving skills and planning skills.

11. Four marine sectors are lacking in the soft skills needed to satisfy their current business needs. The sector most lacking is 'mast/ spar manufacturer' (50% agreeing) then, 'manufacturing and boat building' (25% agreeing), and equally 'professional services' and 'marina services and boatyard operations' where 17% each agree.

12. Findings show that 39% of respondents feel their current workforce does not meet their future business needs compared to 61% of respondents who feel their current workforce do meet their future business needs.

13. A future skills gap where businesses felt their current workforce lacked the necessary skills to meet their future needs was identified in Gosport (40%) and in a majority of businesses located elsewhere (58%). This is compared to businesses based in Portsmouth where 71% feel confident that their current workforce has the necessary skills for their future business needs.

14. The sectors most lacking in future soft skills are equally 'new and used boat sales' and 'chandlery' where 100% of the businesses in those sectors agreed that they were lacking. Some sectors were not concerned that they lacked the soft skills to satisfy their future business needs. These sectors were, 'ship and yacht design', 'marine equipment and supply chain', 'composites', and 'other non-marine specific' sectors.

15. The three most common technical skills that responding businesses reported they were currently lacking to meet their future business needs were, 'composite skills', 'IT skills' and

'engineering skills'. The other less common skills that were listed included 'management skills', 'welders', 'data analysing skills' and 'electric diagnostics skills'.

16. The most listed 'soft skill' that businesses thought was missing from their current workforce was 'decision-making' which was selected by 35% of this cohort - this is similar to the findings of the soft skills missing from current workforces. 'Planning skills' was the next most selected skill (29% of respondents). 'Interpersonal skills' was the only listed skill that was not selected by a single respondent.

17. The perceived future skills gaps is slightly larger in Gosport and elsewhere than in Portsmouth; 26% in Gosport and 31% Elsewhere. In Portsmouth, businesses were least likely to feel like they are lacking future soft skills; just under a quarter mentioned any (24%).

18. Almost half of larger businesses (47%) felt that their current workforce is lacking the soft skills needed to meet their future business needs compared to 20% of smaller businesses.

19. There appears to be a middle to long term difference in the skills gap where 61% of respondents are not concerned about the skills in their current workforce meeting their future needs although 75% are concerned about an ageing workforce. Businesses may be confident that they can fill the skills gap in the near future but are worried about it in the longer term.

20. Almost half of the respondents (48%) expressed that they do struggle to recruit in certain job roles whereas 52% feel that they do not struggle with recruitment to specific job roles in their business.

21. The five most reoccurring job roles that businesses have struggled to recruit in the past 12 months, in order of popularity are 'engineers', 'apprentices', 'composite', 'shipwrights' and 'managers'.

22. The locations that have struggled the most to recruit in certain roles in the past 12 months are those based Elsewhere with 60% agreeing. Businesses based in Gosport are evenly divided with half of them saying they have struggled, with businesses in Portsmouth struggling the least although levels are still quite high with 38%.

23. Larger businesses (>50 employees) have found it most difficult to recruit in certain roles with 82% agreeing they have struggled in the past 12 months. In comparison, smaller businesses with fewer than 50 employees, have struggled less however the figures are still sizeable with almost 40% of them having experienced difficulties in the past year.

24. Over half of the responding businesses do not currently employ or plan to employ an apprentice over the next 12 months (56%).

25. The four main reasons that businesses gave for not currently employing or having no plans to employ an apprentice were, 'a lack of job openings for apprenticeships' (55% of this cohort), 'the financial cost of employing an apprentice (wages, training costs etc.)' (21% of

this cohort), 'insufficient time to train and manage an apprentice' (also 21% of this cohort), followed by 'having a poor experience of employing an apprentice in the past' (17%).

26. For businesses that currently recruit or plan to recruit apprentices over the next 12 months, the four most common roles are in 'engineering', 'marketing', 'administration' and 'boatbuilding'.

27. Just under half of businesses who currently employ, or who are planning to employ an apprentice over the coming 12 months, employ, or plan to employ, just one apprentice (48%), a further 17% do, or plan to employ, two and 13% do, or plan to employ three apprentices. One business (representing 4% of this cohort) offers hundreds of apprenticeships across its site, vastly increasing the number of apprentice opportunities in the marine sector in Portsmouth.

28. Apprentice employers are more likely to feel that apprentice roles help bridge the gap from education to employment for young people. Differences in disagreement levels are less noticeable, where 43% of apprentice employers and 41% of non-apprentice employers disagree, the difference is made up in the much larger proportion of apprentice employers saying they 'neither agree or disagree' (50% compared to 37%).

29. 12 % of respondents do not understand the apprentice system and over a quarter (29%) have a neutral understanding - selecting neither agree nor disagree to understanding the apprentice system. However, the majority of respondents (59%), regardless of whether or not they employ (or plan to) apprentices, agree that they understand the apprenticeship system.

30. Those already employing, or planning to employ, an apprentice are more confident in their understanding, with 26% of businesses responding that they 'strongly agree' that they understand the apprentice system compared to businesses not employing apprentices where only 4% 'strongly agree'.

31. Larger businesses are more confident in their understanding of the apprentice system with 73% saying they 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that they understand it, in comparison to 55% of smaller businesses. These figures are in line with earlier findings which show that a higher proportion of larger businesses currently employ, or plan to employ, an apprentice in the next 12 months - unsurprising that businesses involved in apprenticeship schemes have a greater understanding of them than those not employing apprentices.

32. 26% of respondents do not understand degree apprenticeships which shows much lower levels of understanding when compared to the usual apprentice system. Just over a third (35%) responded that they understand degree apprenticeships and 39% of respondents have a 'neutral' understanding (selected neither agree nor disagree).

33. When findings are split by whether or not businesses currently employ (or plan to) employ apprentices, variation is seen in the degree of understanding with 17% of those employing apprentices 'strongly agreeing' that they understand degree apprenticeships, compared to businesses not employing apprentices where 0% 'strongly agree'.

34. 43% of responding businesses had negative feelings on the current education system where they do not think the system adequately prepares young people for the world of work (selected 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'). The same percentage of respondents had neutral feelings (selected 'neither agree nor disagree').

35. Businesses not employing apprentices are the most positive towards the education system preparing young people for the world of work; 22% of them agree that it does, whereas only 4% of businesses employing apprentices agree with this statement (albeit strongly).

36. The majority of business located outside of Portsmouth and Gosport do not feel that the current education system adequately prepares young people for the world of work (55% of respondents). In comparison, businesses based in Gosport are less sure - whilst fewer businesses disagree (40% 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'), almost half say they 'neither agree nor disagree' (48%). Opinions from businesses in Portsmouth are slightly more divided; 44% do not agree that the education system prepares young people for the world of work. Comparing across all locations, Portsmouth businesses had the highest, but still modest, proportion agreeing that the education system does prepare young people for the world of work (19% of Portsmouth businesses).

37. Businesses with under 50 employees are less confident than larger businesses that the current education system prepares young people for the world of work; 46% of smaller businesses 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' that it prepares them compared to 36% of larger businesses.

38. The most common theme when respondents were asked how they think the education system can better prepare young people for the world of work was for schools to focus more on vocational or life skills (30%), then to focus on improved work experience along with comments that young people need to be better prepared for the reality of working (20%).

39. The majority of respondents are concerned (75%) about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce. Some more so than others; 20% 'strongly agree' and 55% 'agree' that they are concerned about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce. A fifth of respondents (20%) 'neither agree nor disagree' and only 6% 'disagree'.

40. Analysis by business location reveals that there are wide concerns about an ageing workforce regardless of location, with over half of each location agreeing (56%).

41. Concerns about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce are common across smaller and larger businesses, larger businesses have the greatest concerns with 91% 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' that they are concerned compared to 72% of smaller businesses.

42. The most common plan for addressing the future skills gap due to an ageing workforce was to use training (44%), where most mention using experienced members of staff to train junior members. Apprentice schemes (28%) was the second most popular method mentioned, followed by recruitment (13%).

43. Just under half of businesses cannot offer work experience to students (46%).

44. Employers that already (or plan to) offer apprenticeship roles are more likely to support work experience programmes (73% of this cohort). However, over a third of businesses not supporting apprenticeship roles (38%) do support work experience programmes.

45. Those already supporting young people in apprenticeships or work experience roles are more likely to consider taking part in career events (69% of this cohort) compared to those not open to apprenticeships or work experience (36% of this cohort). This does however demonstrate that businesses not offering apprentice or work experience roles would still be open to attending career events to reach young people.

46. The majority of businesses would consider taking part in career events regardless of where they are based. Those based in Gosport are the least likely to take part, 48% say they would not consider being part of a careers event at a local school or college. In Portsmouth, 60% say they would consider taking part, and elsewhere three quarters of businesses are interested in career events.

47. Larger businesses are more likely to consider taking part in careers events than smaller businesses; 70% of businesses with 50+ employees would consider taking part compared to 56% of those with fewer than 50 employees.

48. The survey concluded by asking respondents which training courses would help meet the needs of their business. The majority had clear ideas which centred around three main skill areas; general business training, online/ marketing skills and specialist skills. In the general business training area, training courses included health and safety, planning, and leadership/management courses. Specialist skills courses included composites, boat dismantling, and vendor specific training such as in Cisco and Crestron. In the online/marketing skills area, training courses in basic IT, media and online marketing would be beneficial.

49. The majority of respondents were happy to be contacted again by Portsmouth Harbour Marine to discuss the topic of training courses further (86%).

*Full breakdowns are available in the following sections of this report.*

6.0 Sample

Respondents were asked to choose which marine sector their business or the business they represent is in from a list of 12 standard marine sectors. An 'other' option was also included so that respondents can list their specific sector if it was not captured in the standard marine sectors listed in the survey question.

Respondents came from a wide range of marine sectors as shown in Figure 1 below. 'Marina services and boatyard operations' and 'water sports provider' were the most common response both accounting for 19% of the total responses. 'Manufacturing & boat building' (13%), 'general

engineering' (11%) and 'professional services' (10%) were the next most common responses in order of popularity.

Figure 1: Respondents by marine sector
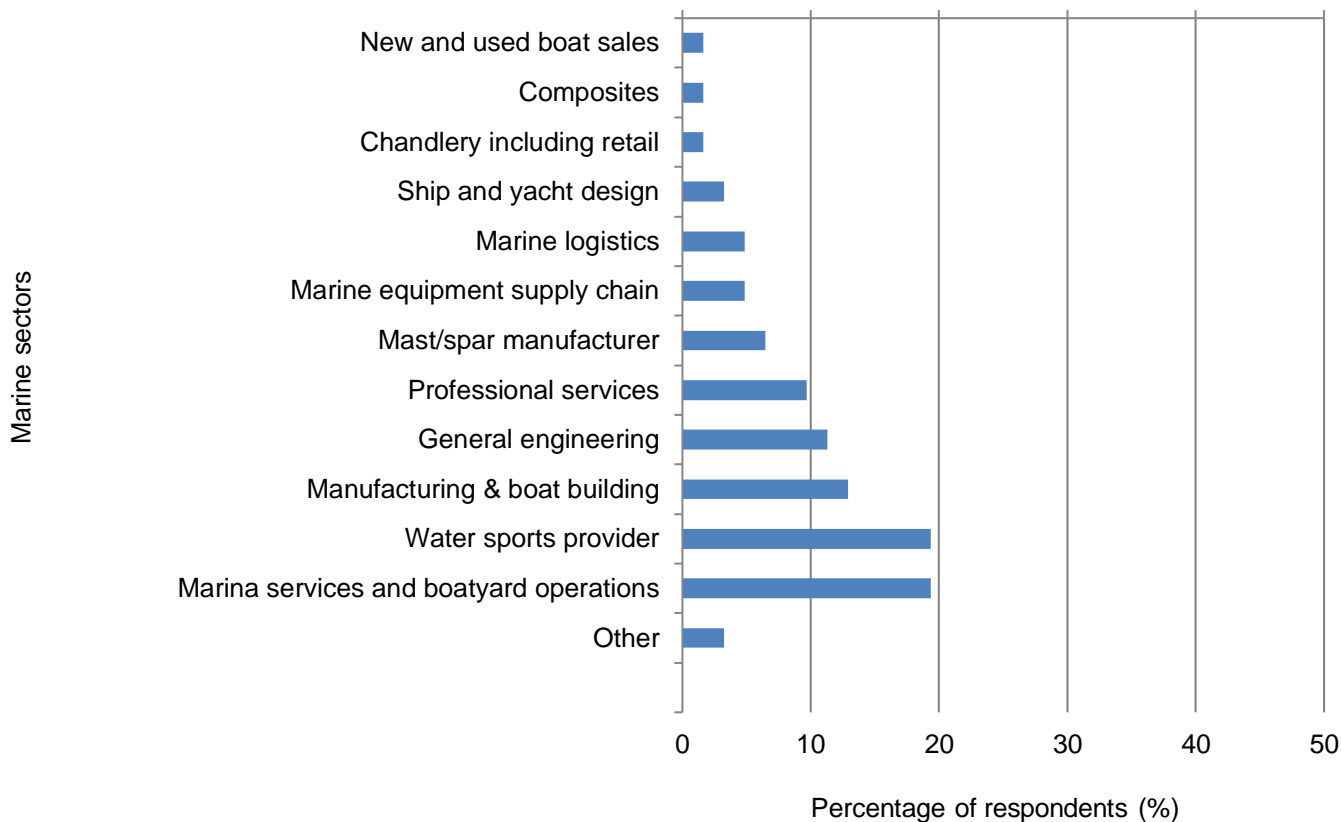
Base: 62

Business size data (number of employees) was also collected - Figure 2 on the following page shows the percentage of respondents according to their business size. The majority of respondents (56%) were micro businesses with 0 to 9 employees, whereas large businesses with over 250 employees were least represented in this sample (7%).

Figure 2: Business size (number of employees) distribution
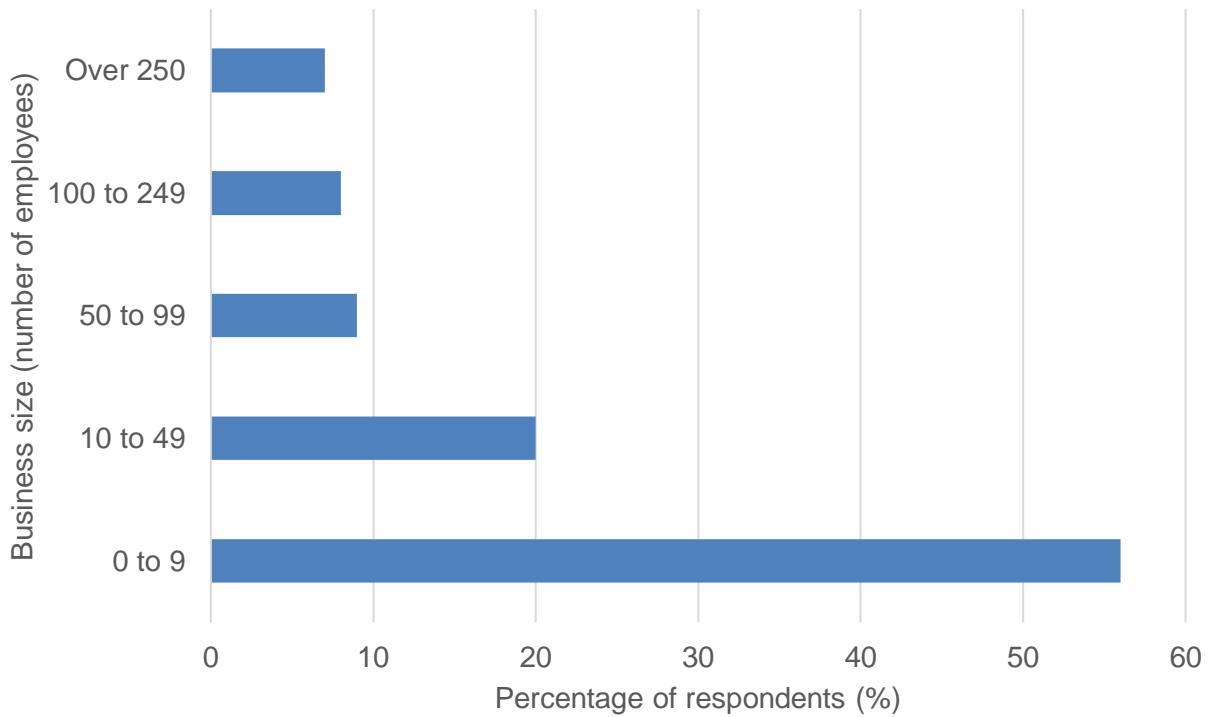
Business postcode information was collected in the consultation survey (if a responding business has multiple premises in the area, the postcode of the "main premises" was collected). As Figure 3 shows, the largest proportion of respondents (41%) were from businesses in Gosport, followed by businesses in Portsmouth (28%) and Fareham (11%).

Figure 3: Respondents by postcode district
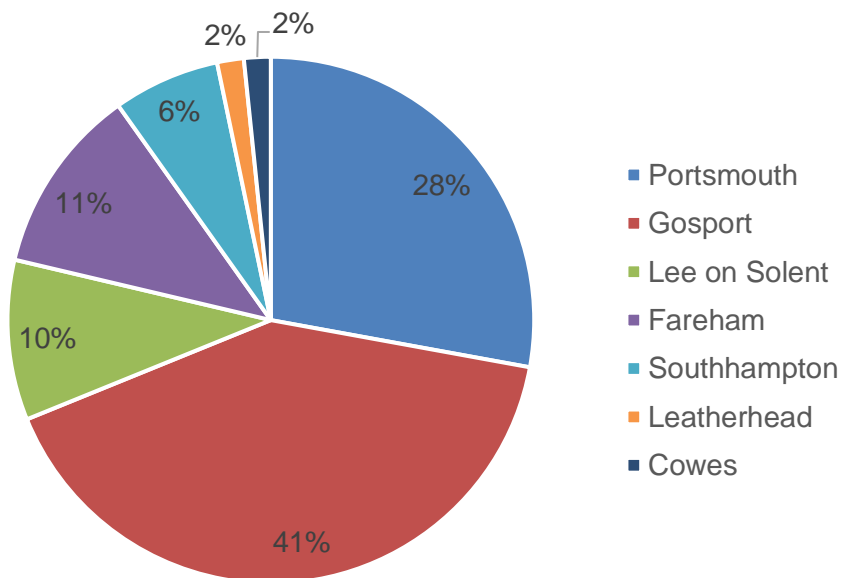
Figure 4 shows the size of businesses in each location. For the purpose of maximising base numbers, Gosport has been grouped with Lee-on-Solent (so includes all PO12 and PO13 postcodes). A higher proportion of businesses in Portsmouth are smaller (i.e. having fewer than 50 employees) than seen in other areas; 88% compared to 71% in Gosport and 69% Elsewhere.

Figure 4: Location of business by business size (number of employees)
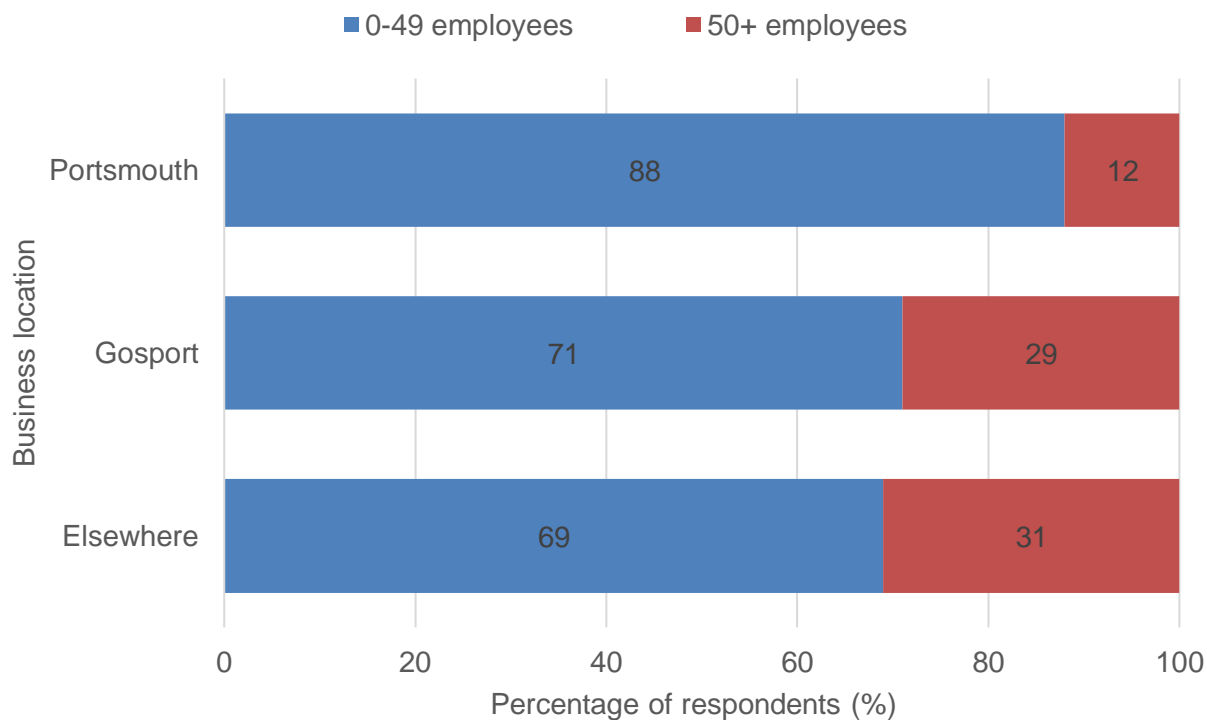
Base: Portsmouth (17) | Gosport (31) | Elsewhere (13)

7.0 Analysis of results

This section of the report is divided into the following six sections each of which represents the outcomes of the questions included in the survey to provide results to the research objectives listed in section 3.2:

- Current skill needs
- Future skill needs
- Hard to recruit roles in the Portsmouth area
- Apprenticeships
- Businesses' view of the current education system
- Training courses

7.1 Current skill needs

Questions were included in the survey to understand if responding businesses' current workforces meet their current business needs and to identify any current hard and/or soft skill needs.

Figure 5 shows that the majority of the respondents (84%) feel their current workforce do meet their current business needs compared to 16% of respondents that do not.

Figure 5: Respondents by current workforce needs

■ Current workforce meets current needs ■ Current workforce does not meet current needs
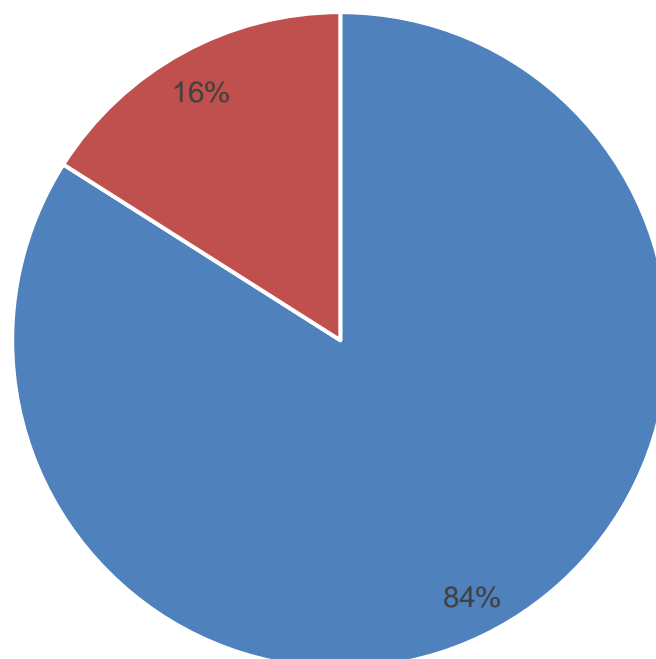
Base: 64

Whilst business in different locations all follow the total sample trend with the vast majority feeling that their current workforce meet their current business needs, there is some variation worth noting. Figure 6 on the following page shows that businesses based in Portsmouth are most confident that

their current business needs are met (94% agree), those based in Gosport are slightly less confident (84% agree) and businesses located Elsewhere are the least confident (77% agree).

Figure 6: Current workforce needs by location of business
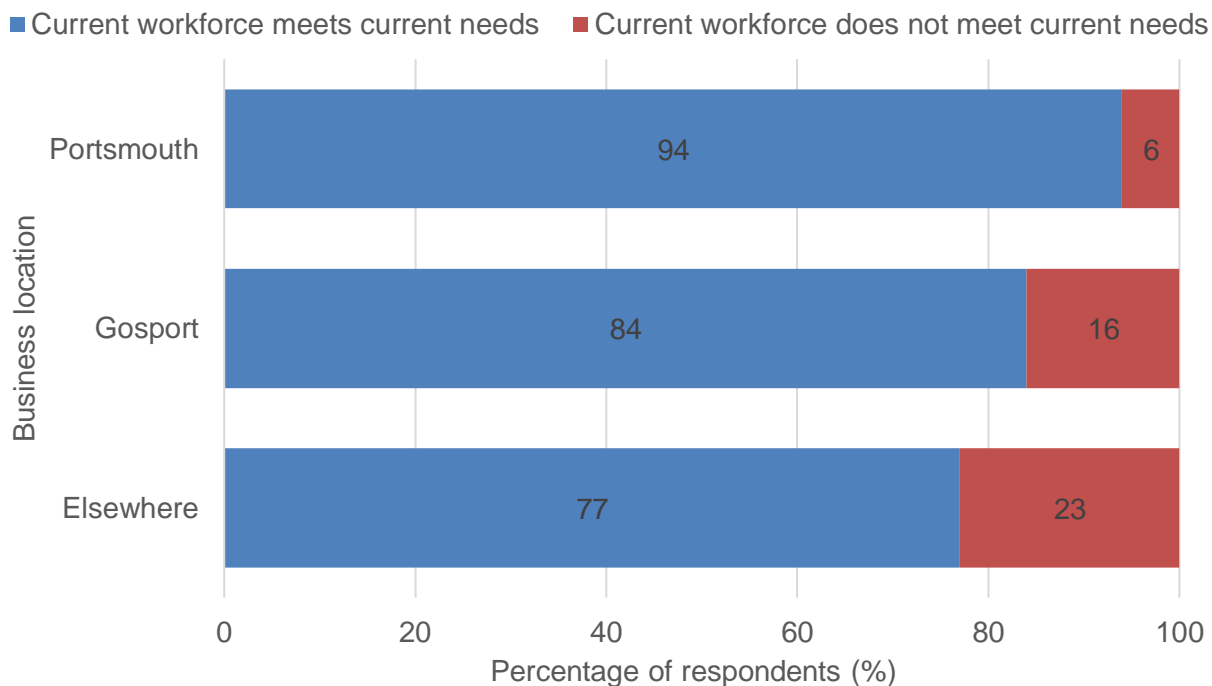
Base: Portsmouth (17) | Gosport (31) | Elsewhere (13)

Smaller businesses are most likely to feel like their current business needs are being met by their current workforce; 89% agree whereas only 73% of larger businesses (50+ employees) feel that their current needs are being met - see Figure 7.

It is important to note the small base number of larger businesses here (and in the report ahead). Findings indicate a general trend across different sized businesses, rather than forming statistically robust data from which to draw stronger conclusions from.

Figure 7: Current workforce needs by size of business (number of employees)
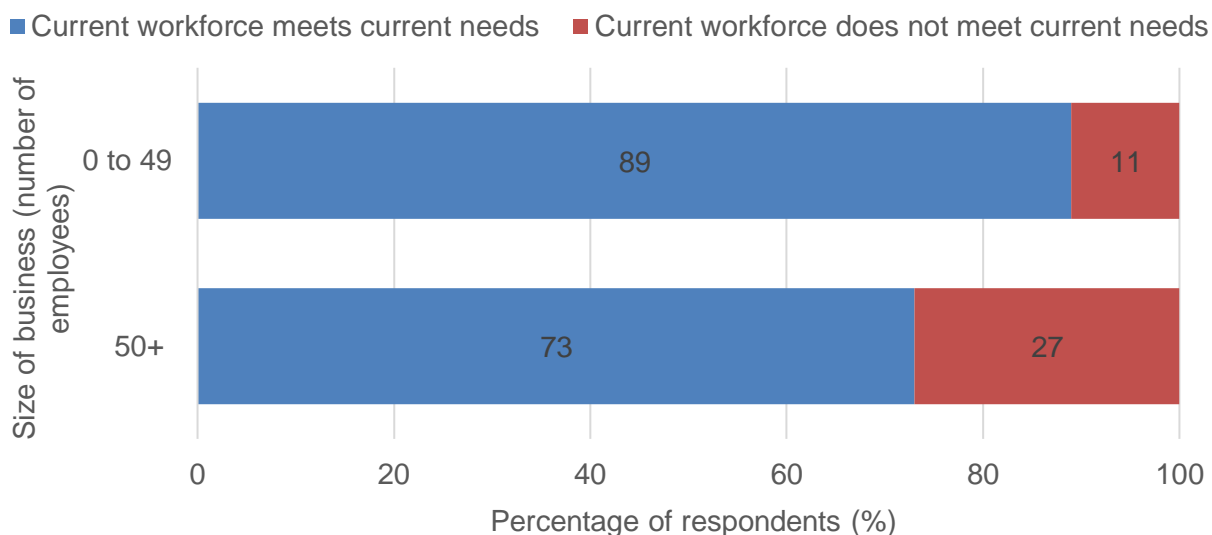
The 16% of respondents that do not feel their current workforce meet their current needs as a business were then asked to list which "technical skills" (marine specific skill sets that are easy to quantify) that their workforce currently lack and rank in order of importance.

Table 1 presents the four most occurring technical skills that were provided in response to this open-ended question (in order of ranked importance where one is most important).

Table 1: Common technical skills lacking in current workforce to meet their current business needs

1	Engineering Skills
2	Composites
3	IT skills
4	Laminating skills

The same cohort of respondents were then asked to select a maximum of three soft skills (also known as "people skills or "interpersonal skills") from a list of 14 options, 'other' was also included to capture any missed current soft skill needs. Figure 8 shows that the four most selected soft skills were 'time management', 'self-management', 'decision -making' and 'work ethic' which were each selected by a third of the cohort. In contrast, three of the listed soft skills were not selected by a single respondent (planning skills, team working, professionalism, interpersonal skills and oral communication).

When those that selected 'other' were asked to specify what soft skills were lacking in their current workforce, 'IT awareness' was a common response to this open-ended question.

It is important to note the small base number of eight respondents here, while this does not invalidate the findings of this analysis, it should be recognised as a limitation when this output is being used.

Figure 8: Soft skills lacking from workforces to meet current needs
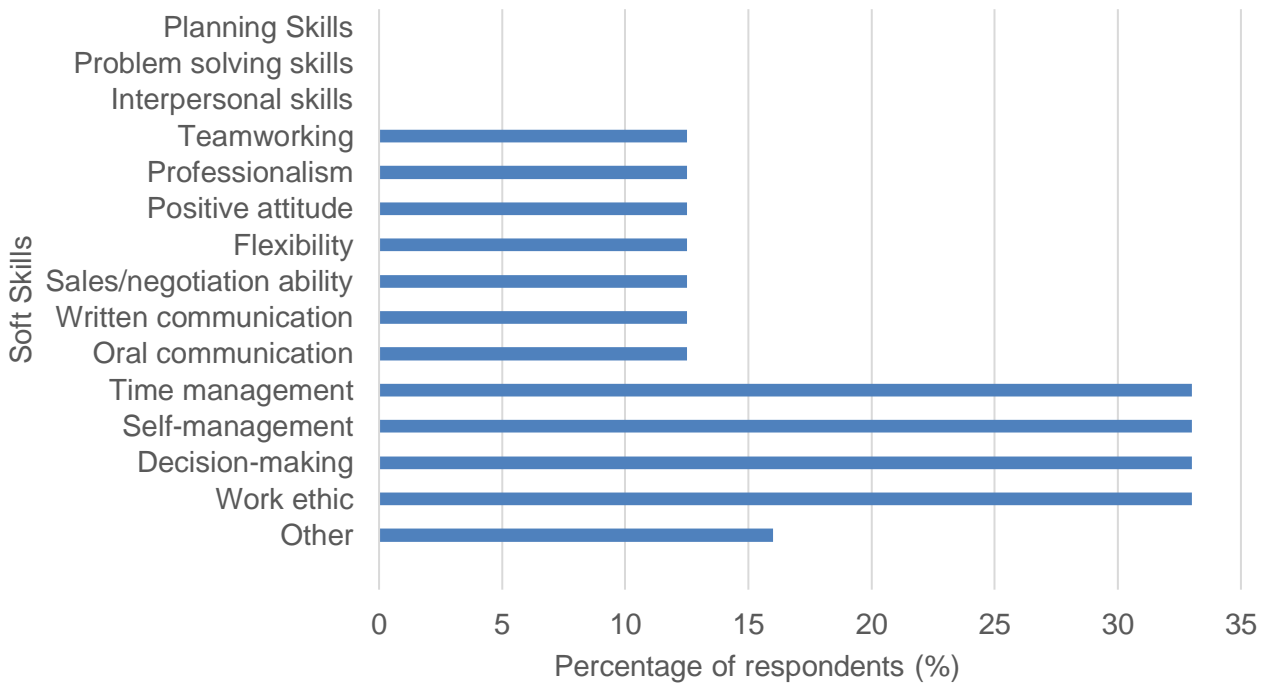
Base: 8

Overall, smaller businesses and those based in Portsmouth were least likely to feel like they were lacking soft skills; just 6% of businesses based in Portsmouth mentioned any (Figure 9). In Gosport and Elsewhere, a slightly larger soft skills gap was identified; 13% in Gosport and 15% Elsewhere.

Figure 9: Soft skill needs (lacking from workforce) by location
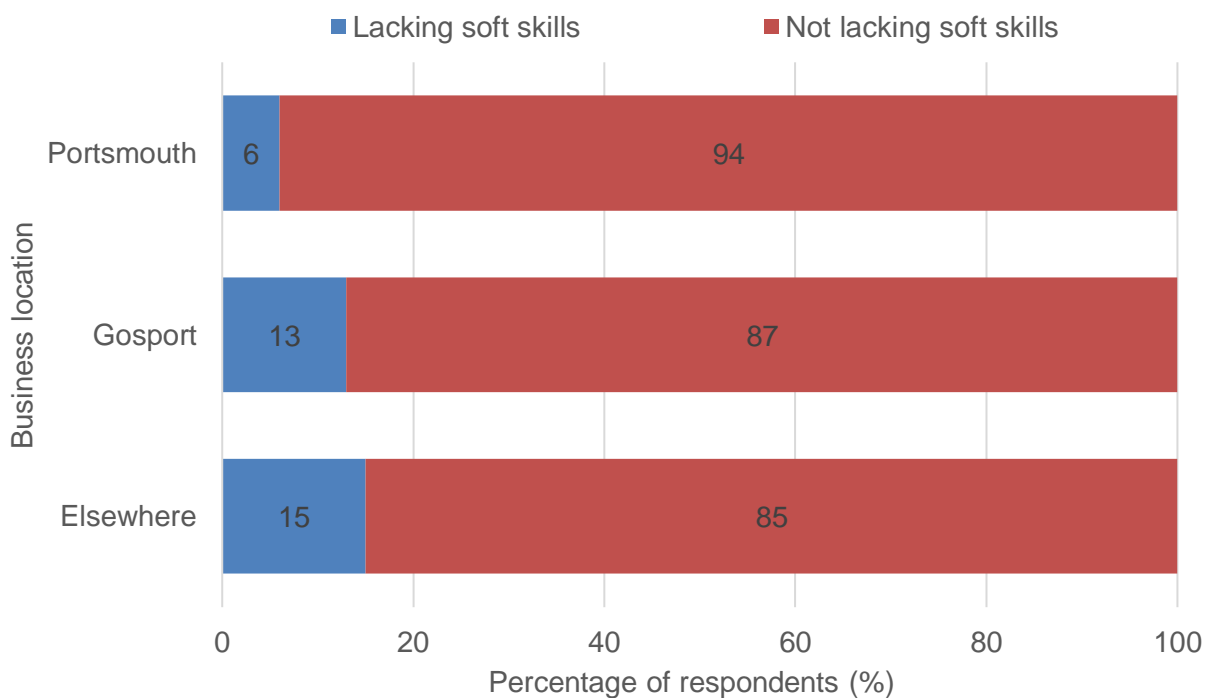
Base: Portsmouth (17) | Gosport (31) | Elsewhere (13)

Figure 10 on the following page shows that the vast majority of marine business sectors do not feel that they lack the soft skills in their workforce to meet their current business needs (89% disagreeing). Four sectors are lacking in the soft skills needed to satisfy their current business needs. The sector most lacking is 'mast/ spar manufacturer' (50% agreeing), 'manufacturing and boat building' (25% agreeing), and equally 'professional services and marina services and boatyard operations' (17% agreeing).

Figure 10: Soft skill needs (lacking from workforce) by marine business sector
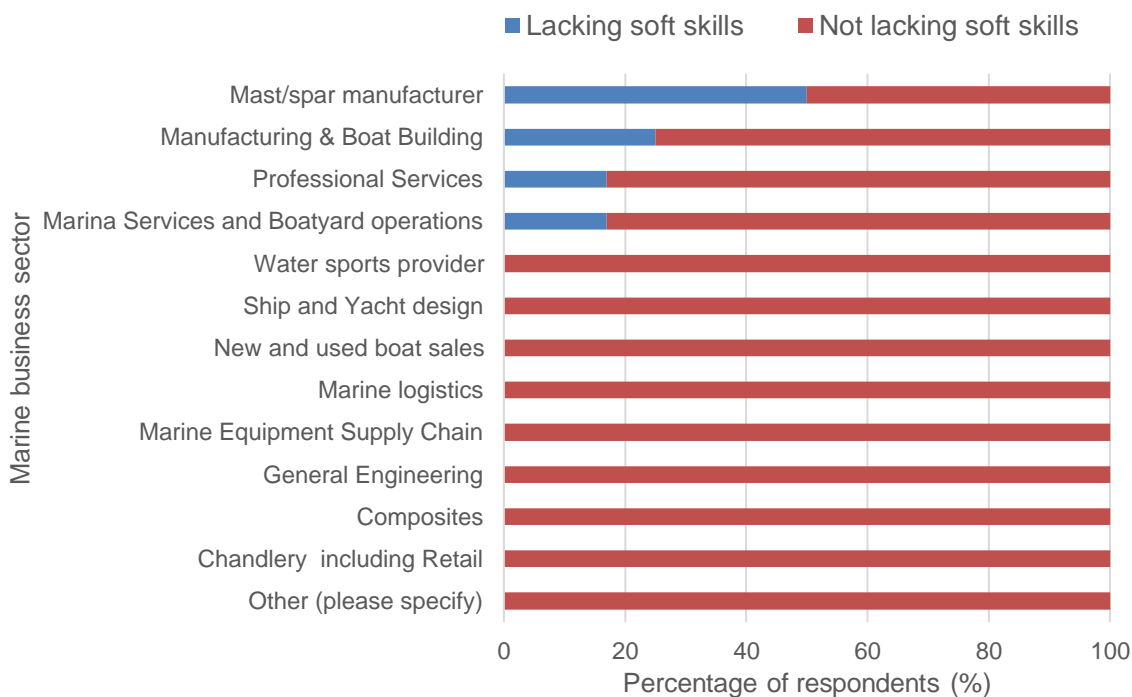
Base: Ranging from 1 to 12 for different sectors

7.2 Future skill needs

Questions were included in the survey to understand if responding businesses' think their current workforces meet their future business needs and to identify any future hard and/or soft skill needs.

The results in Figure 11 on the next page show that a majority of the respondents (61%) feel their current workforce does meet their future business needs compared to 39% of respondents that think their current workforce does not meet their future business needs.

■ Current workforce meets future skill needs ■ Current workforce does not meet future skills needs
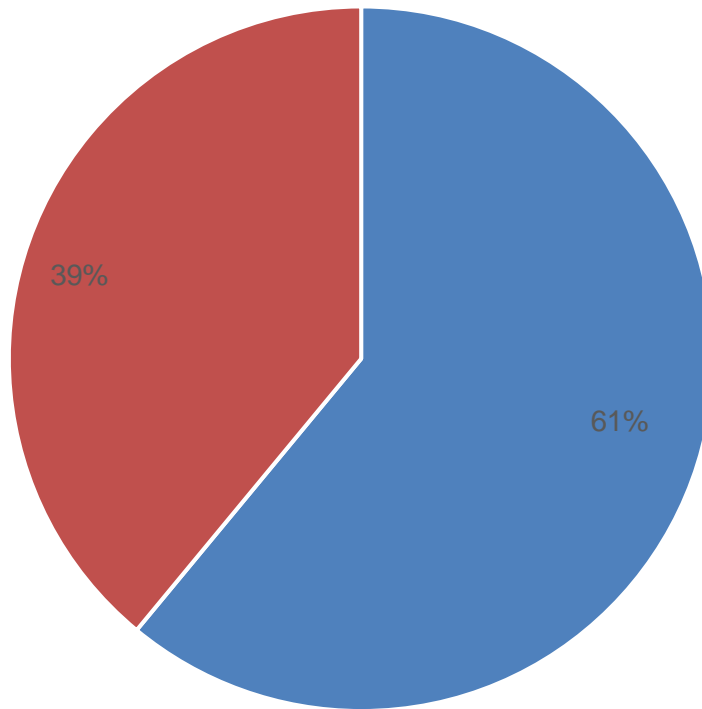

Base: 61

Businesses based in Portsmouth are most likely to say that their current workforce has the necessary skills for their future business needs (71% of respondents) - see Figure 12 on the following page. Similarly in Gosport, the majority of businesses feel that their future business needs will be met by current skills (60%), however they are less confident than those based in Portsmouth. Elsewhere a larger future skills gap was identified with the majority of businesses disagreeing that their future needs would be met by the skills of the current workforce (58% of respondents).

In terms of business size, results follow the pattern seen by location however to a much greater extent; larger businesses (50+ employees) feel that there is a definite future skills gap (72% of respondents), whereas only a minority of smaller businesses (1-49 employees) have concerns about future business needs being met by the current workforce (30% of respondents).

Figure 12: Future skill needs by location of business
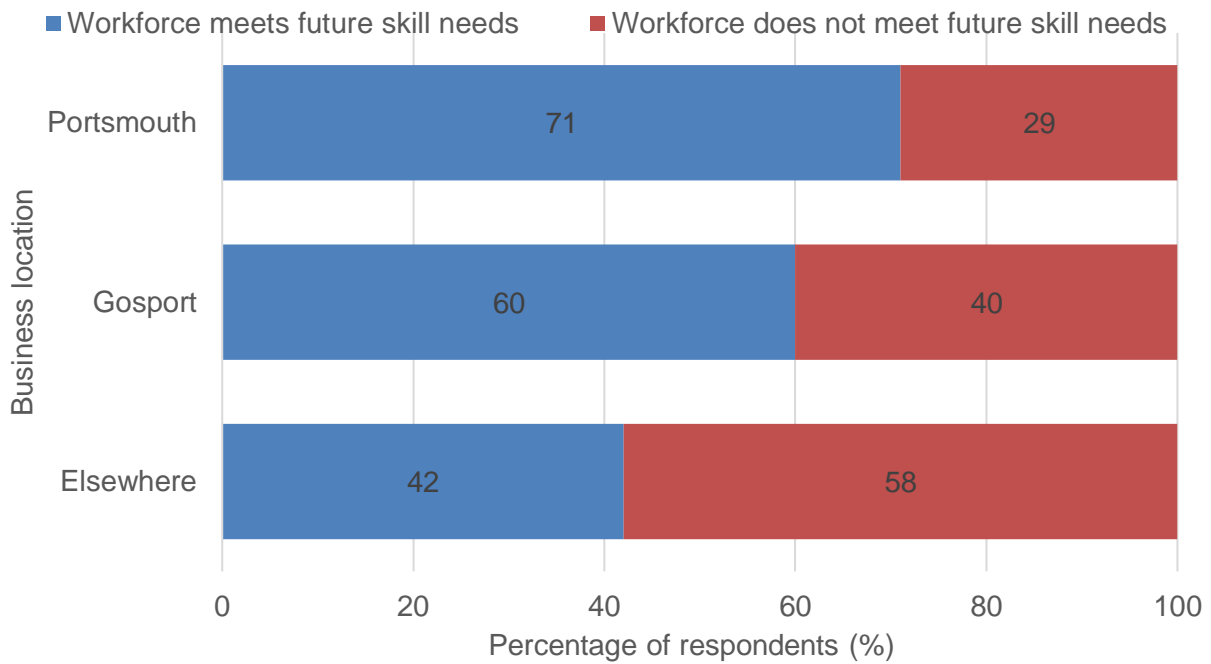
In the same way as the current skill needs section of the consultation survey - see Section 7.1 - the 39% of respondents that expressed the view that their current workforce are lacking in skills to meet the future needs of their business were then asked further questions about the type of skills they are lacking.

Table 2 shows the three most common "technical skills" in order of importance that were listed in the open-ended question (each responding business could provide a maximum of three hard skills they are currently lacking to meet their future business needs). The other less common skills that were listed included 'management skills', 'welders', 'data analysing skills' and 'electric diagnostics skills'.

Table 2: the three most listed technical skills that respondents acknowledged are lacking in their workforces to meet their future business needs

1	Composite skills
2	IT skills
4	Engineering skills

Figure 13 on the following page shows that the most selected "soft skill" was 'decision-making' which was selected by 35% of this cohort - this is similar to the findings of the soft skills missing from current workforces (see Figure 8, Section 7.1). Planning skills was the next most selected skill (29% of respondents). 'Interpersonal skills' was the only listed skill that was not selected by a single respondent.

*Figure 13: Respondents by future workforce skill needs*
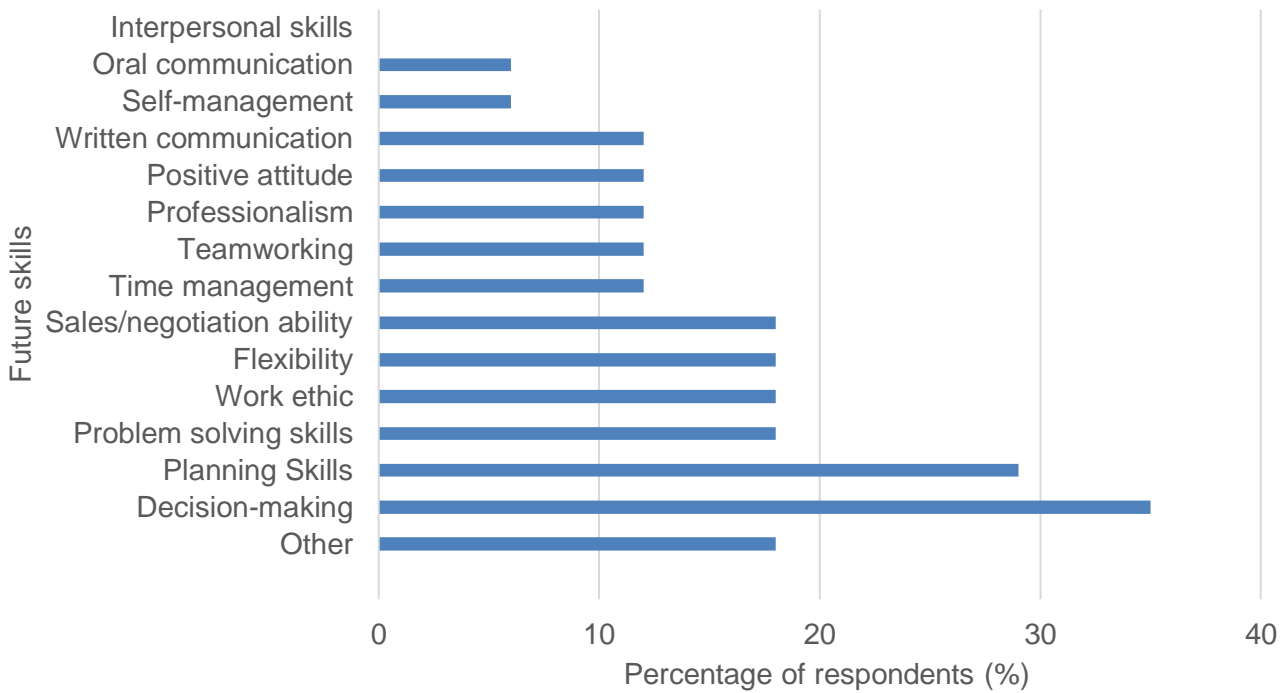
Businesses based in Portsmouth were least likely to feel that they are lacking future soft skills; just under a quarter mentioned any (24%) - see Figure 14. The perceived future skills gaps in other locations is only slightly larger; 26% Gosport and 31% Elsewhere.

Figure 14: Future soft skill needs (lacking from workforce) by location
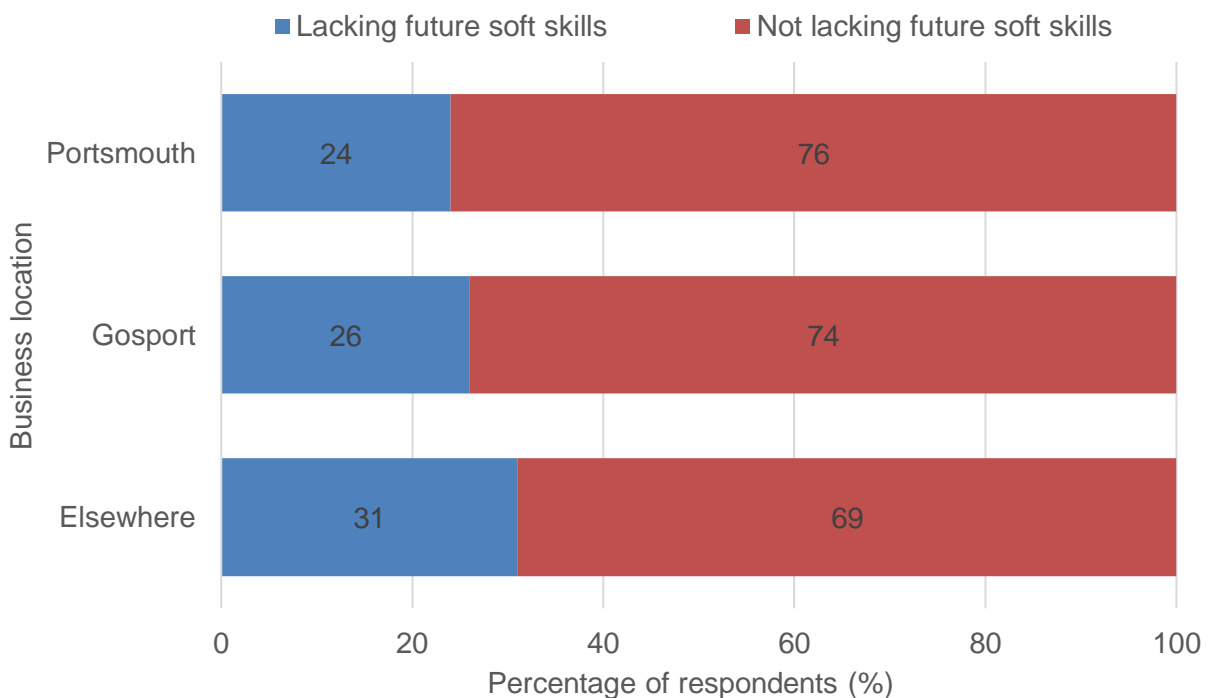
When looking at soft skills lacking for future business needs by business size (Figure 15), it is evident that there is a marked difference between smaller businesses, who are far less likely to have listed any soft skills that they were lacking, and larger businesses who were more evenly divided. Just 20% of smaller businesses felt that their current workforce is lacking soft skills to meet their future business needs, compared to 47% of larger businesses.

Figure 15: Future soft skill needs (lacking from workforce) by business size (number of employees)
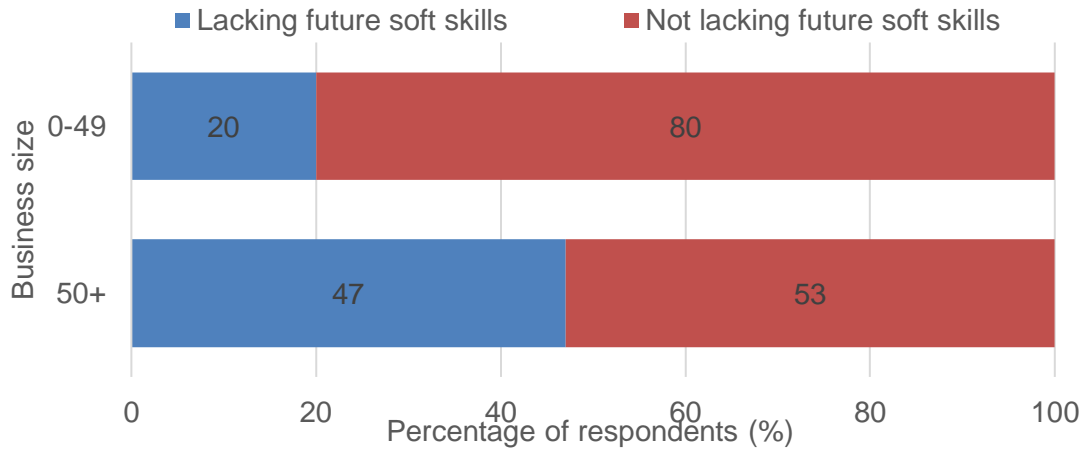
Figure 16 shows that the sectors most lacking in future soft skills are equally 'new and used boat sales' and 'chandlery' where 100 % of the businesses in those sectors agreed that they were lacking. Some sectors were not lacking in future soft skills as all businesses in their sector disagreed. These sectors were, 'ship and yacht design', marine equipment and supply chain', 'composites', and 'other non-marine specific' sectors.

*Figure 16: Future soft skill needs (lacking from workforce) by marine business sector*
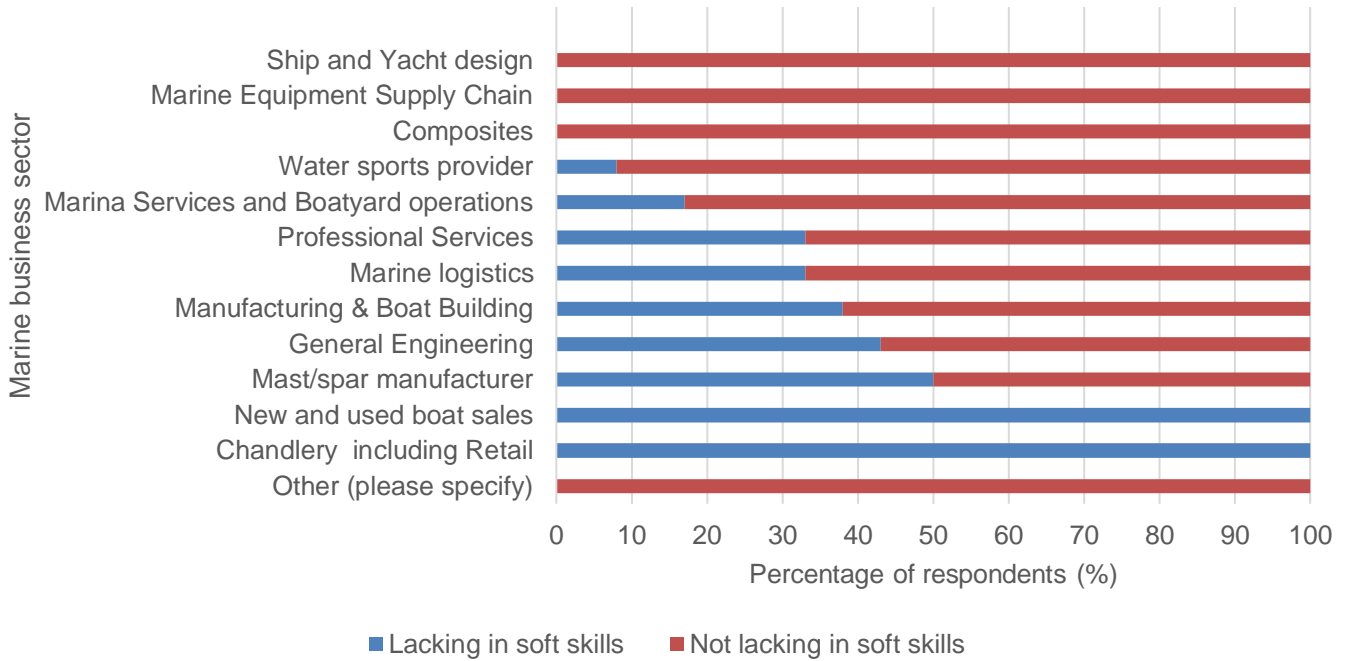
Base: Ranging from 1 to 12 for individual sectors

Overall more sectors are concerned about the skills gap in their future work force than in their current work force.

7.3 Hard to recruit roles in the PHM area

The consultation survey then explored whether respondents struggle to recruit to certain job roles in their businesses. A small majority of respondents (52%) expressed that they do <u>not</u> struggle to recruit in certain job roles whereas 48% acknowledged that they do struggle (Figure 17).

*Figure 17: Respondents by hard to recruit roles in the past 12 months*
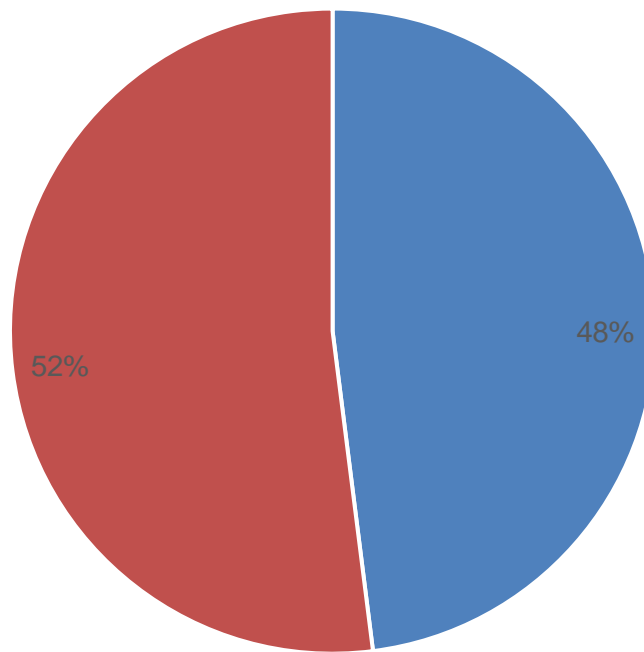
Figure 18 on the following page looks at business struggling to recruit certain roles by location; those based in Portsmouth have struggled the least although levels are still quite high with 38% having struggled to recruit certain job roles in the past 12 months. Businesses in Gosport are evenly divided with half of them saying they have struggled, and elsewhere businesses have had the biggest struggle - 60% have found it difficult to recruit certain roles in the past 12 months.

Figure 18: Hard to recruit roles (in the past 12 months) by location
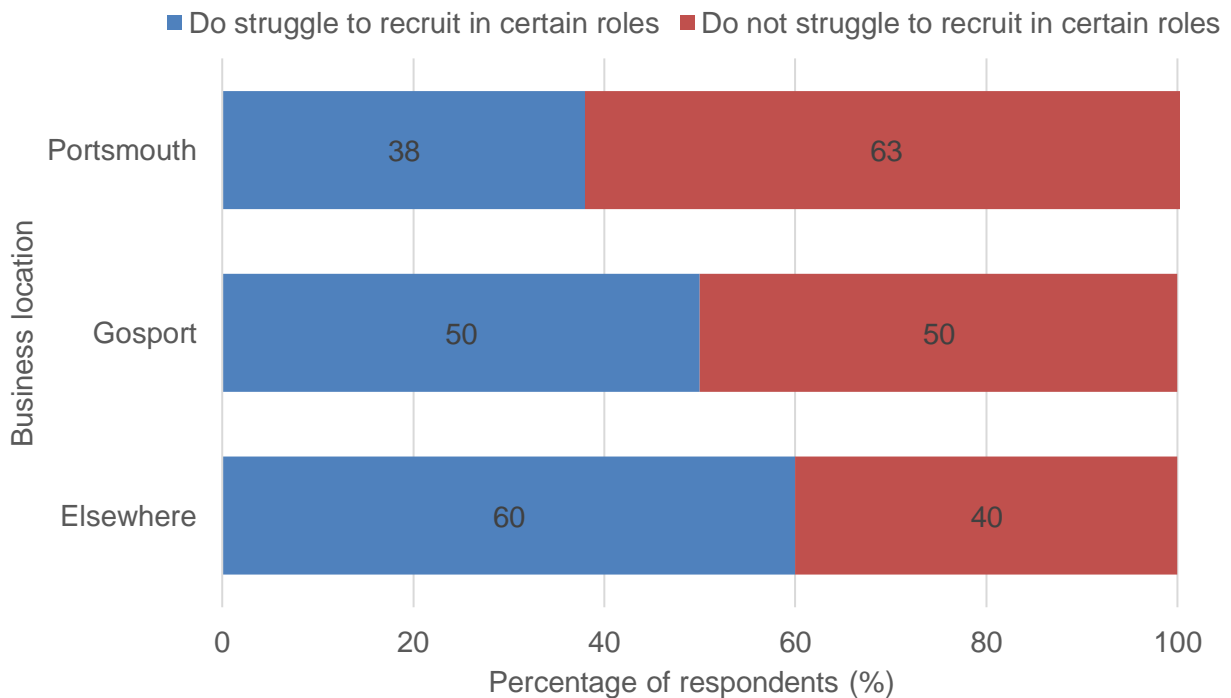
Smaller businesses, i.e. those with fewer than 50 employees, have struggled less than larger businesses in the past 12 months to recruit in certain roles (Figure 19). Whilst fewer smaller businesses have struggled, the figures are still sizeable with almost 40% of them having experienced difficulties in the past year. In comparison 82% of larger businesses have found it difficult to recruit to certain roles.

Figure 19: Hard to recruit roles (in the past 12 months) by business size (number of employees)
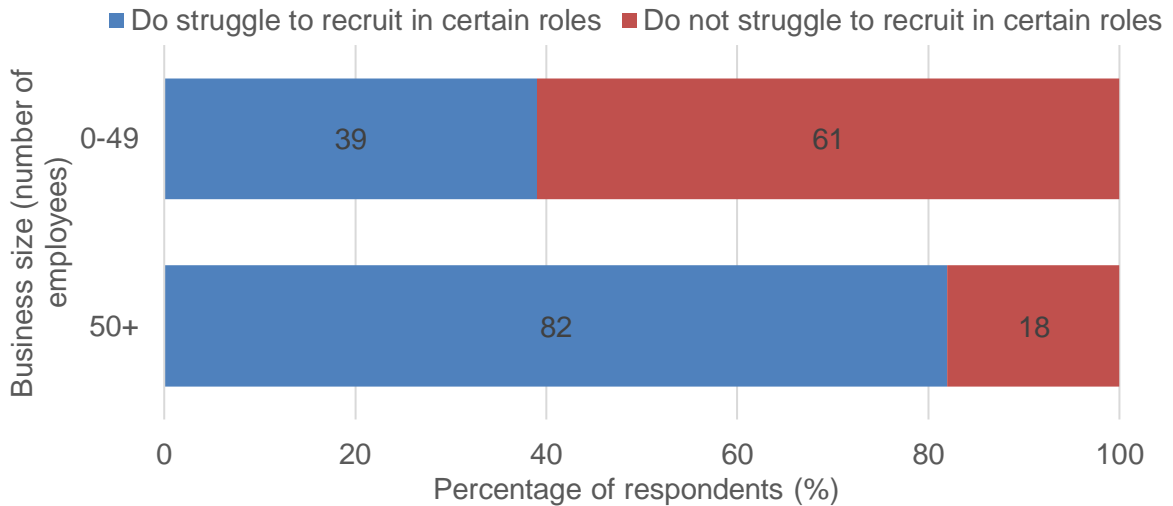
Base: 0-49 employees (41) | 50+ employees (11)

The 48% of respondents that selected they do struggle to recruit to certain job roles in their businesses in the past 12 months were then asked to input the job roles they most often struggle to recruit to. Table 3 shows the five most reoccurring job roles in order of popularity (where 1 is most common) that respondent's provided to this open-ended question.
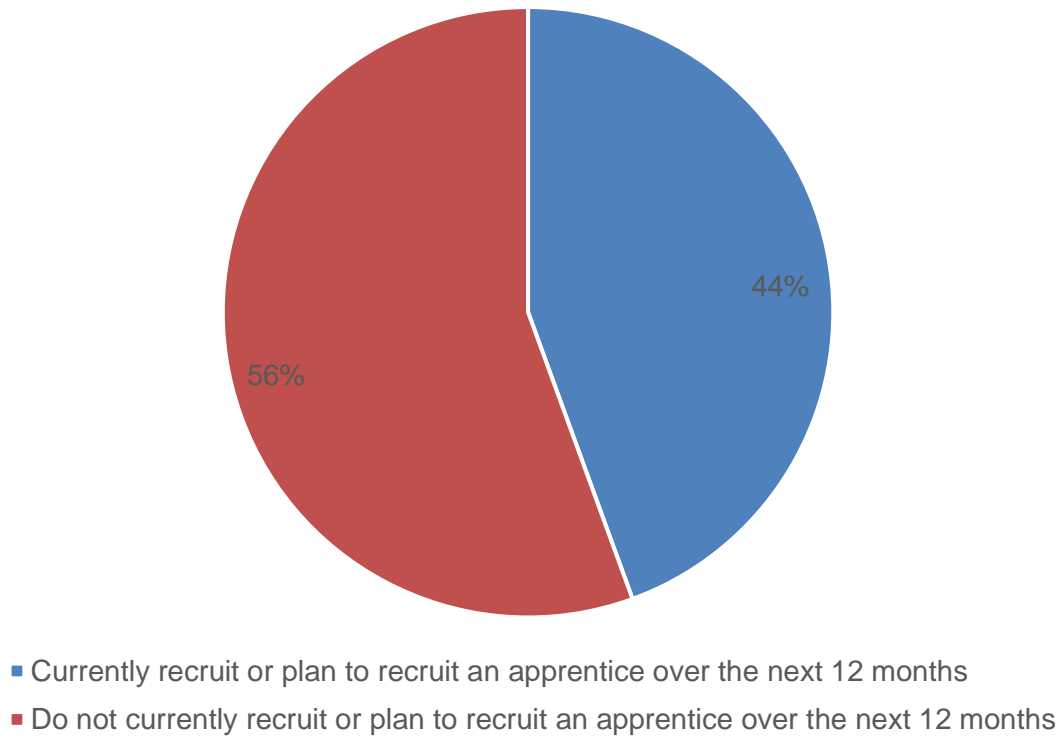
Table 3: Top 5 job roles that businesses struggle to recruit in

1	Engineers
2	Apprentices
3	Composite
4	Shipwrights
5	Managers

7.4 Apprenticeships

The majority of businesses in the sample (56% of respondents) do not currently employ, and are not planning to employ, an apprentice over the coming 12 months (Figure 20). This means that 44% of marine businesses in the sample currently do employ, or are planning to recruit an apprentice in the next 12 months.

- Currently recruit or plan to recruit an apprentice over the next 12 months
- Do not currently recruit or plan to recruit an apprentice over the next 12 months

Base: 46

Almost three quarters (73%) of larger businesses (those with 50+ employees) either currently recruit or plan to recruit an apprentice over the next 12 months, this compares to just 39% of smaller businesses - see Figure 21.

Figure 21: Past 12 month apprenticeship recruitment by business size (number of employees)

- Currently recruit or plan to recruit an apprentice over the next 12 months
- Do not currently recruit or plan to recruit an apprentice over the next 12 months
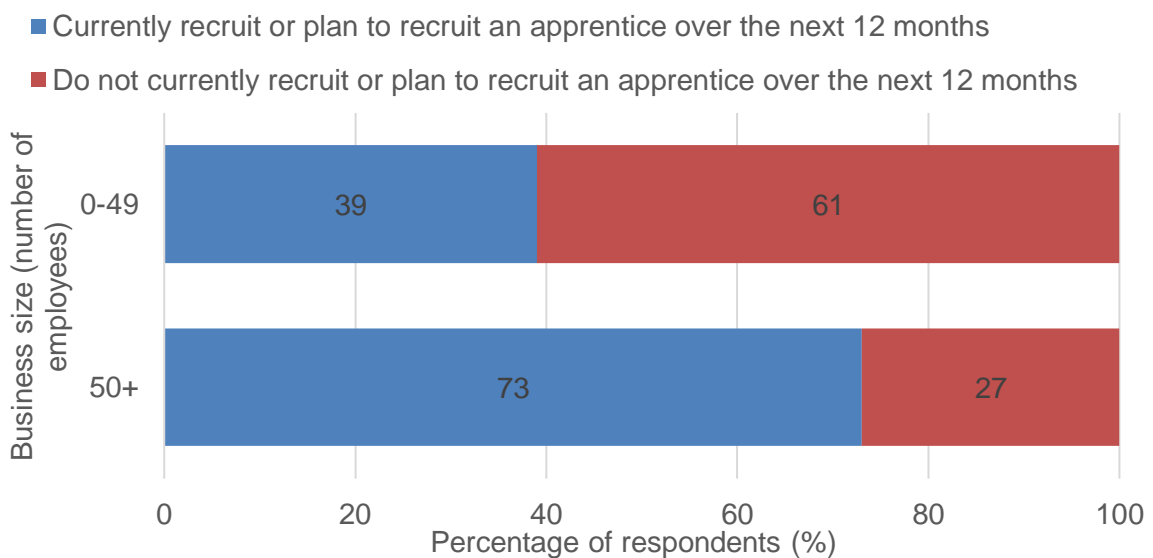
Base: 0-49 employees (41) | 50+ employees (11)

The 44% of businesses who currently employ, or who are planning to employ an apprentice over the coming 12 months, were then asked how many apprentices they currently, or plan to, employ (see Table 4). Just under half of these businesses employ, or plan to employ, just one apprentice (48%), a further 17% do, or plan to, employ two apprentices and 13% do, or plan to, employ three apprentices. One business (representing 4% of this cohort) offers hundreds of apprenticeships across its site, vastly increasing the number of apprentice opportunities in the marine sector in Portsmouth.

Table 4: Number of apprentices that businesses currently, or plan to, employ.

Number of apprentices	Percentage (%)
One	48
Two, or up to two	17
Three, or up to three	13
Four	4
Five	4
Six	4
Eight	4
Hundreds	4

Base: 23

Overall, apprentice opportunities appear relatively limited in the marine sector in the PHM area; over half of businesses in the sample do not employ and are not planning to employ an apprentice, and of those that do half are only offering one apprentice role. There is one business offering 'hundreds' of apprenticeship roles which vastly changes the apprenticeship picture for the Portsmouth marine industry, however that business only represents one sector of the industry and so might not appeal to all interested in working within the industry.

The 44% of respondents that acknowledged that they do currently or are planning to employ an apprentice in the next 12 months were then asked which roles they employ or plan to employ apprentices in. Table 5 shows the four most reoccurring roles in order of popularity (where 1 is most common) that respondent's provided to this open-ended question.

Aside from the four roles listed in Table 5, a number of other roles were mentioned, including 'boatbuilding', 'charter operation', 'yacht maintenance', 'project management', 'software design' and 'technical systems'.

Table 5: Four most common apprentice roles

1	Engineering
2	Marketing
3	Administration
4	Boatbuilding

Respondents not currently employing, and with no plans to employ, an apprentice were asked what their reasons for not doing so are. The respondents were presented with a list of six barriers plus an

'other' option and asked to tick each option that applied, Figure 22 shows the full sample results of this.

The main barrier to offering apprenticeships is a lack of job openings for apprenticeships (55% of this cohort), the second most popular response was the financial cost of employing an apprentice (wages, training costs etc.) (21% of this cohort) and 'insufficient time to train and manage an apprentice' (21% of this cohort), followed by having a poor experience of employing an apprentice in the past (17%).

Figure 22: Reasons for not offering apprenticeship roles

Base: Those not employing or planning to employ an apprentice (29)

Businesses were then asked the extent to which they understood the apprentice system. Figure 23 shows that the majority of respondents (59%), regardless of whether or not they employ (or plan to) apprentices, agree that they understand the apprenticeship system. Over a quarter of respondents neither agree nor disagree that they understand the apprenticeship system (29%) and 12% do not understand the apprentice system.

Figure 23 also shows results by whether or not businesses currently (or plan to) employ apprentices, there is little variation in top level results (agree/ disagree). A more in depth look into agree ratings shows that those already employing, or planning to employ, an apprentice are more confident in their understanding, 26% of them 'strongly agree' that they understand the apprentice system compared to businesses not employing apprentices where 4% 'strongly agree'.

Figure 23: Respondents by apprentice system understanding.
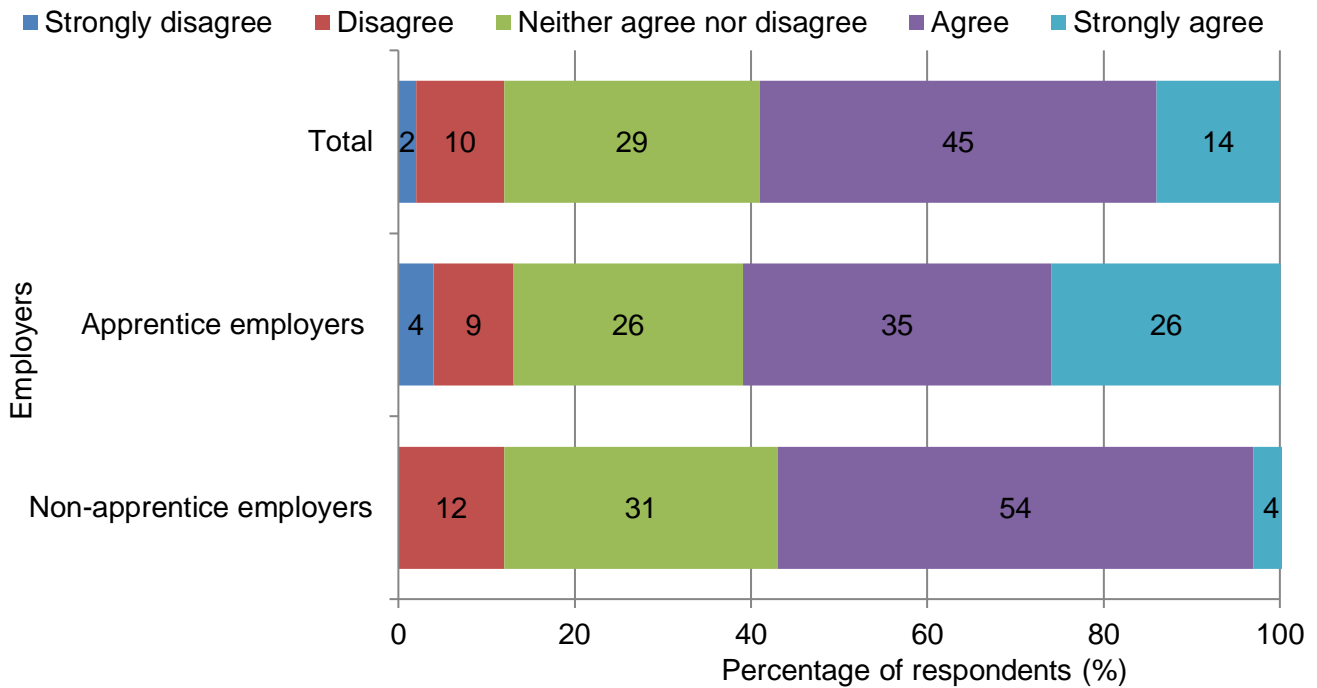
Base: Total (49) | Apprentice employers (23) | Non-apprentice employers (26)

Figure 24 shows that larger businesses are more confident in their understanding of the apprentice system with 73% saying they 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that they understand it, in comparison to 55% of smaller businesses. These figures are in line with findings from Figure 19 which show that a higher proportion of larger businesses currently employ, or plan to employ an apprentice in the next 12 months - unsurprising that businesses involved in apprenticeship schemes have a greater understanding of them than those not employing apprentices.

Figure 24: Apprentice system understanding by business size (number of employees).
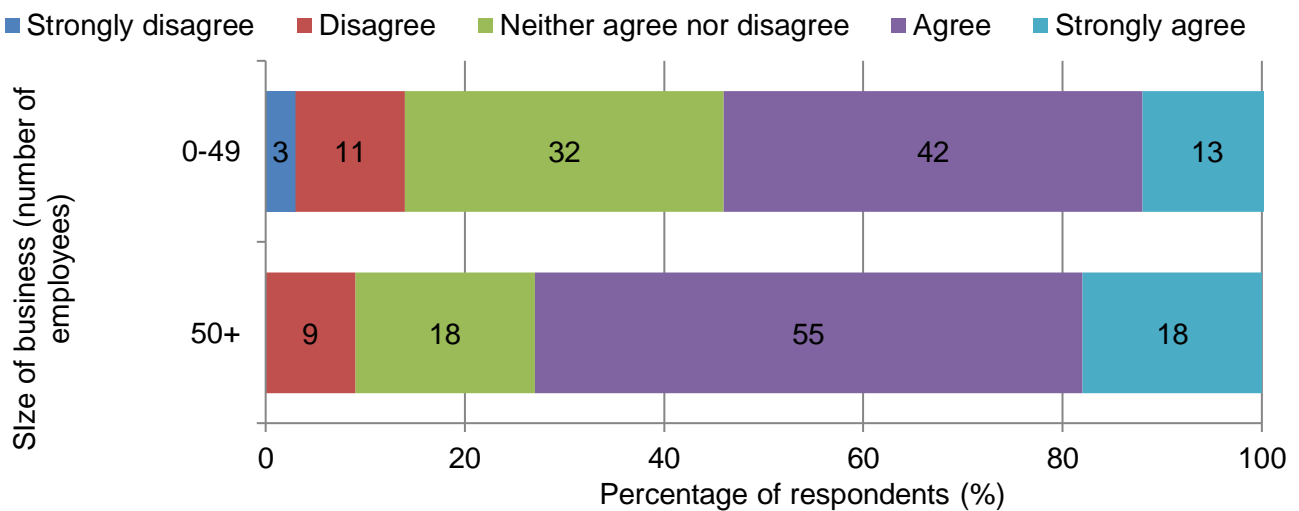
Base: 0-49 employees (41) | 50+ employees (11)

Degree apprenticeships are a new type of programme offered by some universities, they are similar to higher apprenticeships, but differ in that they provide an opportunity to gain a full bachelor's degree (Level 6) or master's degree (Level 7). Respondents were asked if they understood degree apprenticeships, as Figure 25 shows, levels of understanding are lower compared to the apprentice system. A much smaller proportion, just over a third say they understand degree apprenticeships (35%), 39% of respondents have a 'neutral' understanding and 26% of respondents do not understand these apprenticeships.

Figure 25: Respondents by degree apprenticeships understanding.
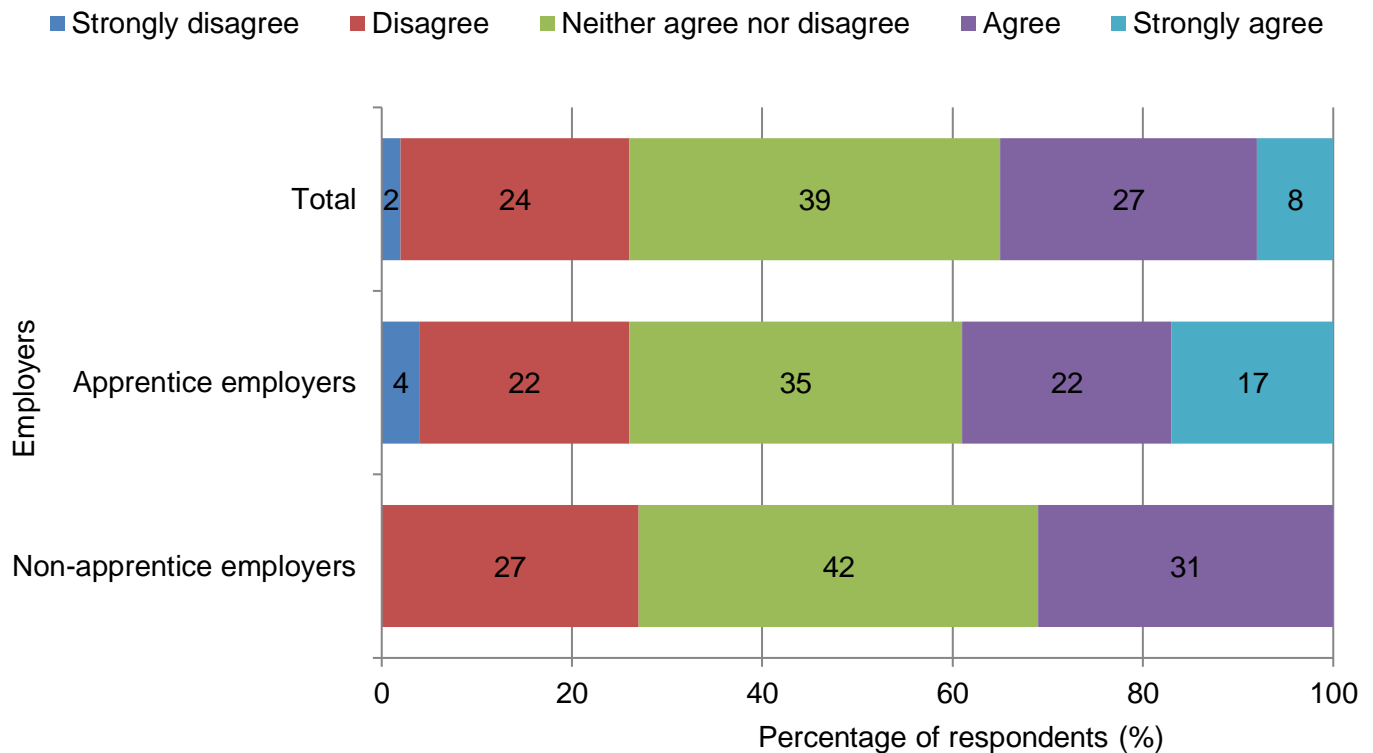
Base: Total (49) | Apprentice employers (23) | Non-apprentice employers (26)

Results are also split by whether or not businesses currently (or plan to) employ apprentices, as previously seen, overall top level trends remain consistent however variation is seen in the degree of understanding with 17% of those employing apprentices 'strongly agree' that they understand degree apprenticeships, compared to businesses not employing apprentices where 0% 'strongly agree'.
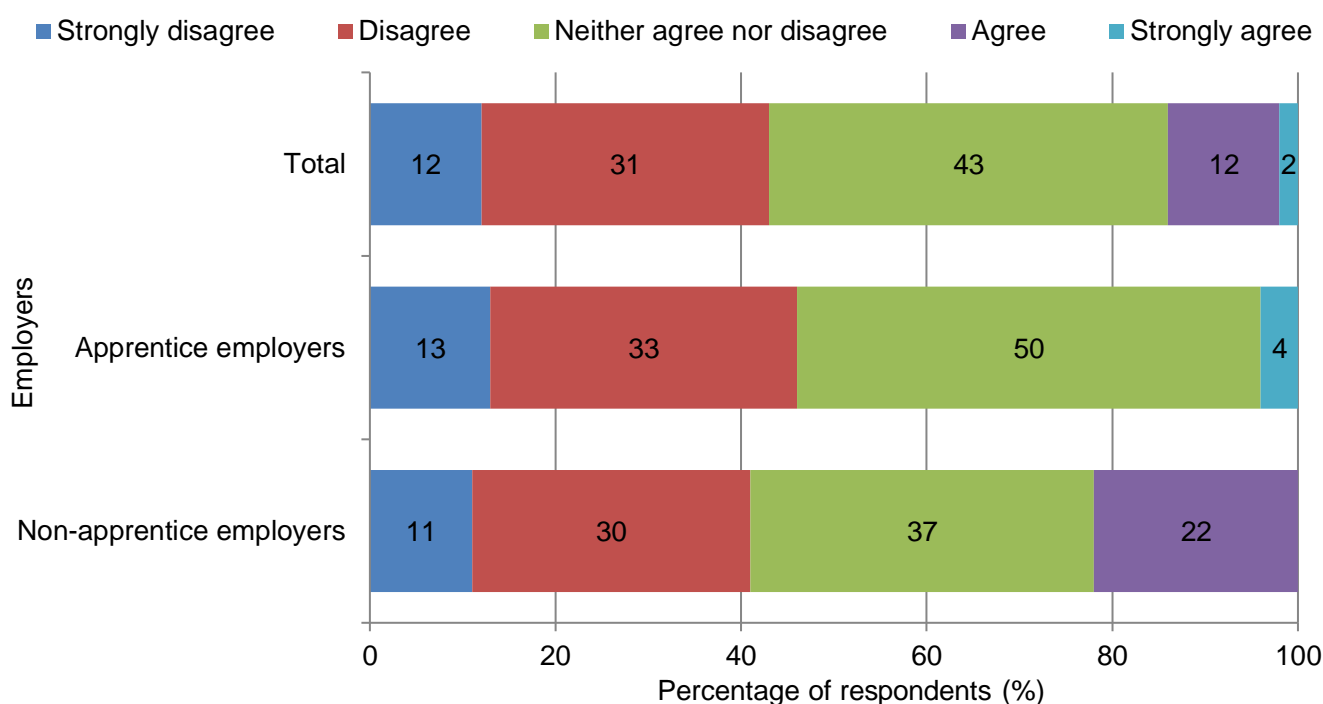
7.5 Businesses' view of the current education system

The survey then asked respondents for their thoughts on the current education system and if they think it adequately prepares young people for the world of work. Figure 26 on the following page shows that only a small proportion of respondents agree that education system prepares young people for the world of work (14% of respondents) and the same proportion of respondents (43%) have neutral or negative views of how the current educations system prepares young people for the

world of work (note here that a negative view is a respondent that selected 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' to the statement in the survey).

Businesses not employing apprentices are the most positive towards the education system preparing young people for the world of work; 22% of them agree that it does (see Figure 26), in comparison only 4% of businesses employing apprentices agree with this statement (albeit strongly). These results suggest that apprentice employers might feel that apprentice roles help bridge the gap from education to employment for young people. Differences in disagreement levels are less noticeable, 43% of apprentice employers and 41% of non-apprentice employers disagree, the difference is made up in the much larger proportion of apprentice employers saying they 'neither agree or disagree' (50% compared to 37%).

Figure 26: Respondents by opinions of the current education system and if it adequately prepares young people for the world of work


Base: Total (51) | Apprentice employers (24) | Non-apprentice employers (27)

Figure 27 shows that the majority of business located outside of Portsmouth and Gosport do not feel that the current education system adequately prepares young people for the world of work (55% of respondents). In comparison businesses based in Gosport are less sure - whilst fewer disagree (40% 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'), almost half say they 'neither agree nor disagree' (48%). Opinions from businesses in Portsmouth are slightly more divided; 44% do not agree that it prepares

young people for the world of work, and the highest, but still modest, proportion of all locations agree that it does prepare them (19%).

Figure 27: Opinions of the current education system and if it adequately prepares young people for the world of work by business location.
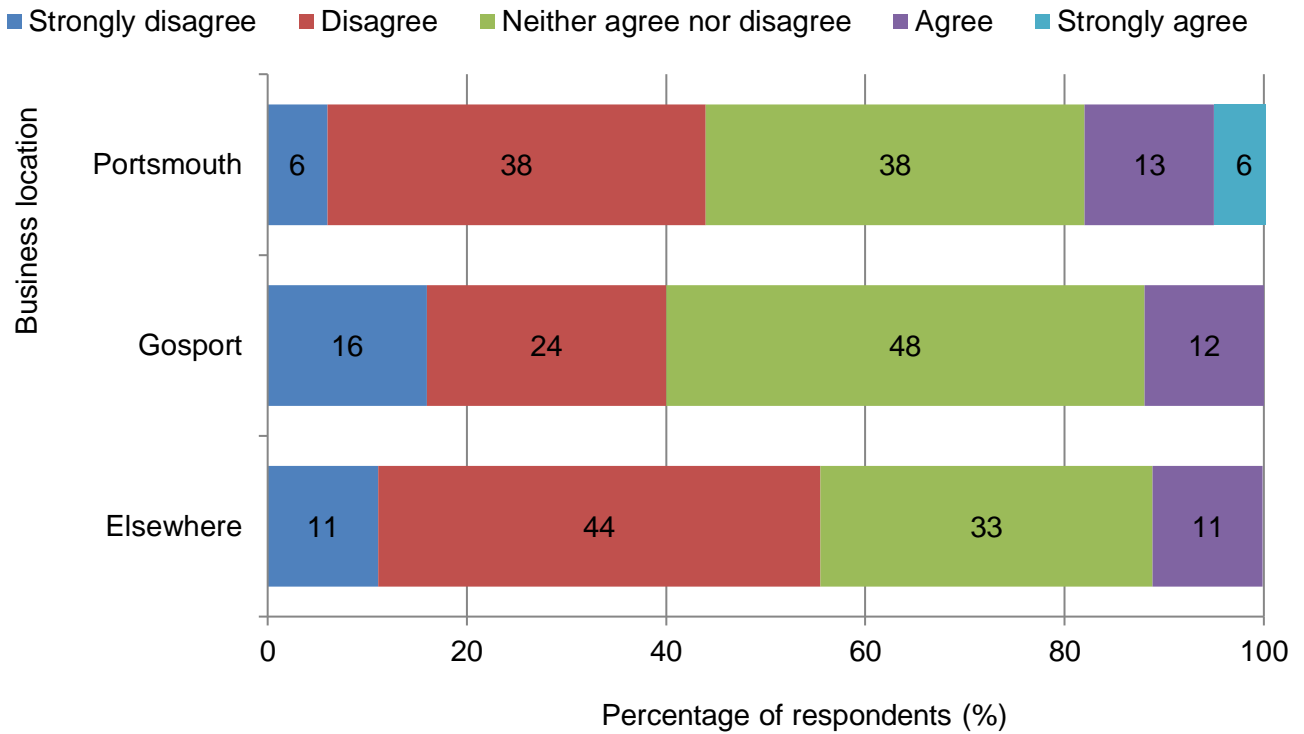
Base: Portsmouth (16) | Gosport (26) | Elsewhere (10)

Businesses with 0-49 employees are less confident than larger businesses that the current education system prepares young people for the world of work (see Figure 28); 46% of smaller businesses 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' that it prepares them compared to 36% of larger businesses.

Figure 28: Opinions of the current education system and if it adequately prepares young people for the world of work by business size (number of employees).
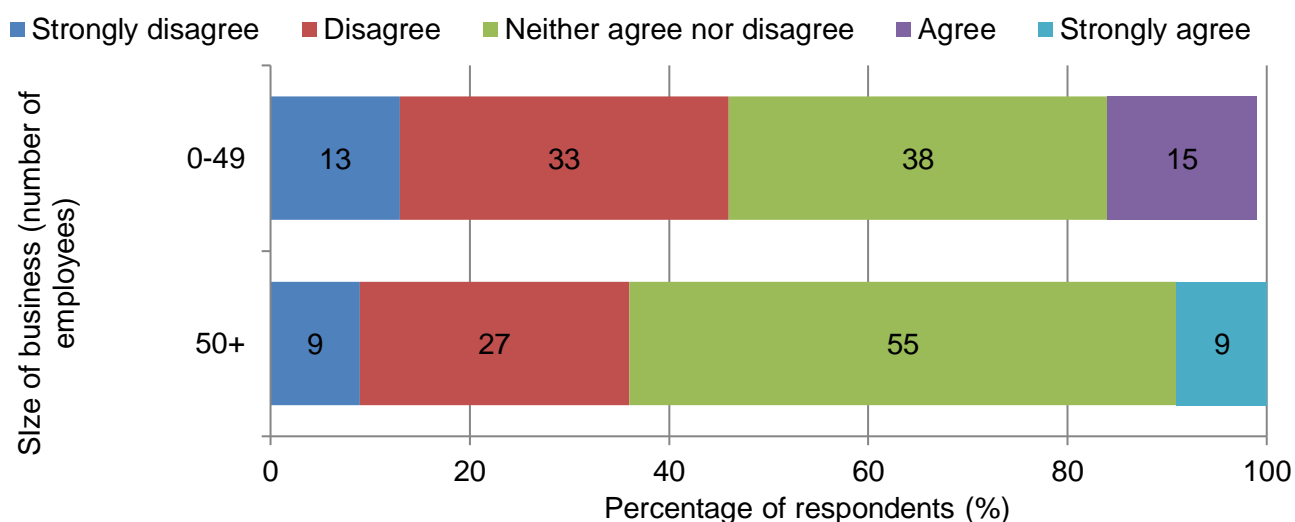
Base: 0-49 employees (39) | 50+ employees (11)

Respondents disagreeing that the education system prepares young people for the world of work were asked how they think it could do a better job. Table 6 shows the main themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses to this question.

The most common theme was for schools to focus more on vocational or life skills, for example one respondent said "…handling some real life issues, book learning on its own not enough anymore". Improved work experience opportunities was the second most popular comment along with comments that young people need to be better prepared for the reality of working, for example "preparing young people for the culture and expectations of a workplace".

Table 6: Popular themes for suggested improvements to the current education system

Theme	%
More focus on vocational/ life skills	30
More/ better work experience	20
Prepare them for the reality of working	20
Better collaboration between schools and businesses	15
Career advice	15
More relevant learning at school	15
Other	10

Base: Disagreeing that the education system prepares young people for the world of work (20)

The survey then asked respondents whether they were concerned about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce. The majority of respondents are concerned (75%), some more so than others; 20% 'strongly agree' and 55% 'agree' that they are concerned about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce, see Figure 29. A fifth of respondents (20%) 'neither agree nor disagree' and just 6% 'disagree'.
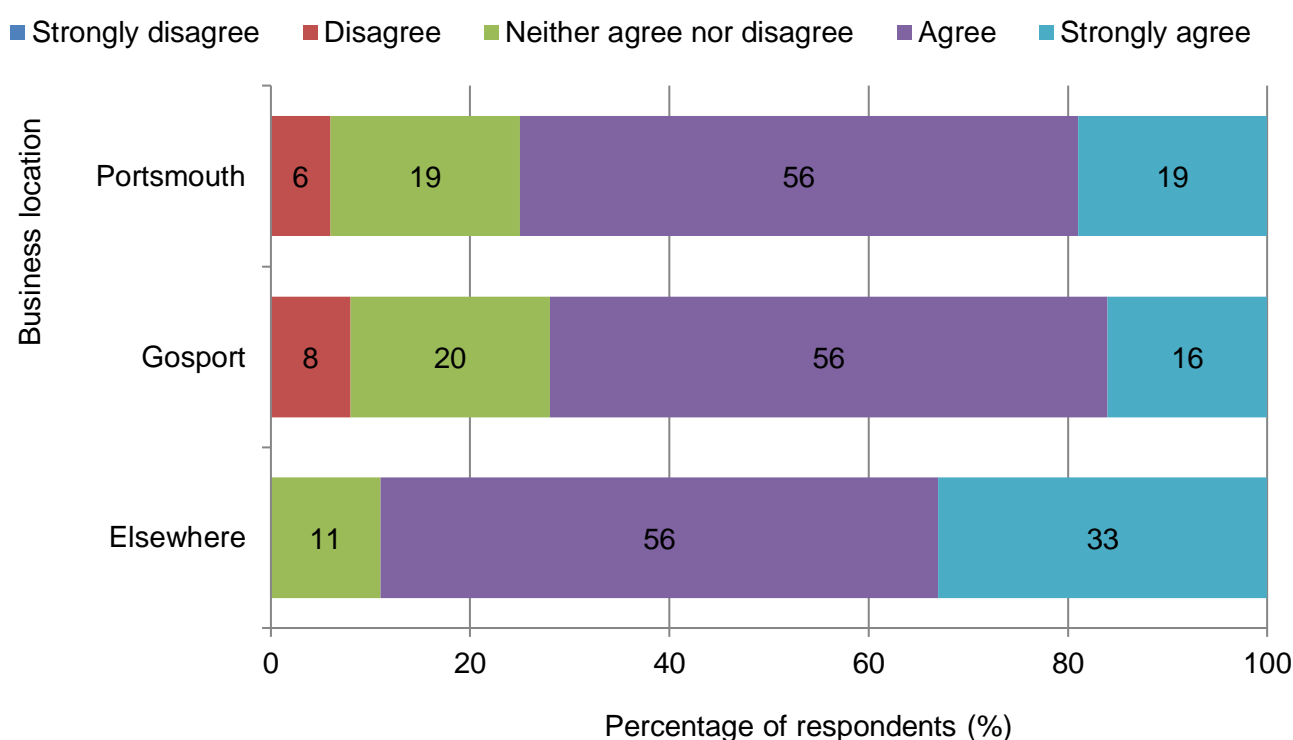
Figure 29: Respondents by agreement with 'I am concerned about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce'
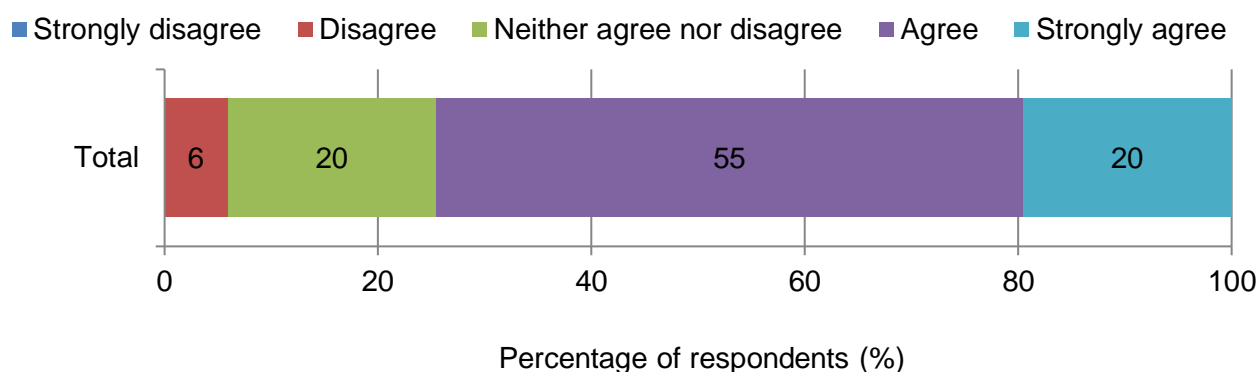
Base: Total (51)

Analysis by business location reveals that there are wide concerns about an ageing workforce regardless of location, see Figure 30.
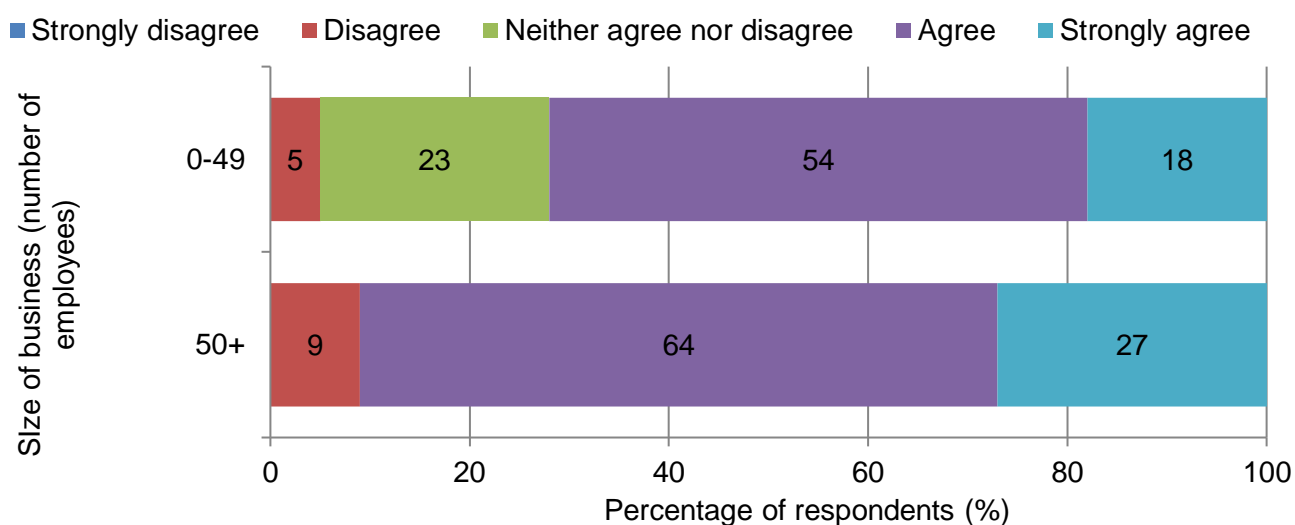
Figure 30: Concerns about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce by business location.

Base: Portsmouth (16) | Gosport (25) | Elsewhere (9)

It is clear from Figure 31 below that again concerns about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce are common across smaller and larger businesses, larger businesses have the greatest concerns with 91% 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' that they are concerned compared to 72% of smaller businesses.

Figure 31: Concerns about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce by business size (number of employees).

Base: 0-49 employees (39) | 50+ employees (11)

Respondents agreeing that they are concerned about a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce were then asked how they were planning to address it. Table 7 shows qualitative analysis from the open-ended responses – it shows that the most popular plan is to use training to fill a future skills gap, most mention using experienced members of staff to train junior members. Apprentice schemes was the second most popular thing mentioned, followed by recruitment.

Table 7: Main ways that businesses are planning to address a future skills gap

Action	%
Training	44
Apprentice scheme	28
Recruitment	13
Develop current skills	9
Other	6
Unsure	13

Base: Concerned that there will be a future skills gap due to an ageing workforce (34)

All respondents were asked whether they could offer work experience to students, Figure 32 shows responses both at total sample level and split by whether or not businesses offer apprenticeship roles. Overall, 54% of businesses can offer work experience to students, employers offering apprenticeship roles are the most likely to support work experience programmes (73% of this cohort). It is reassuring to see that 38% of businesses not supporting apprenticeship roles do however support work experience; indicating that businesses are not taking an all or nothing approach to supporting and employing young people starting out in the marine sector.

Figure 32: Businesses offering work experience to students
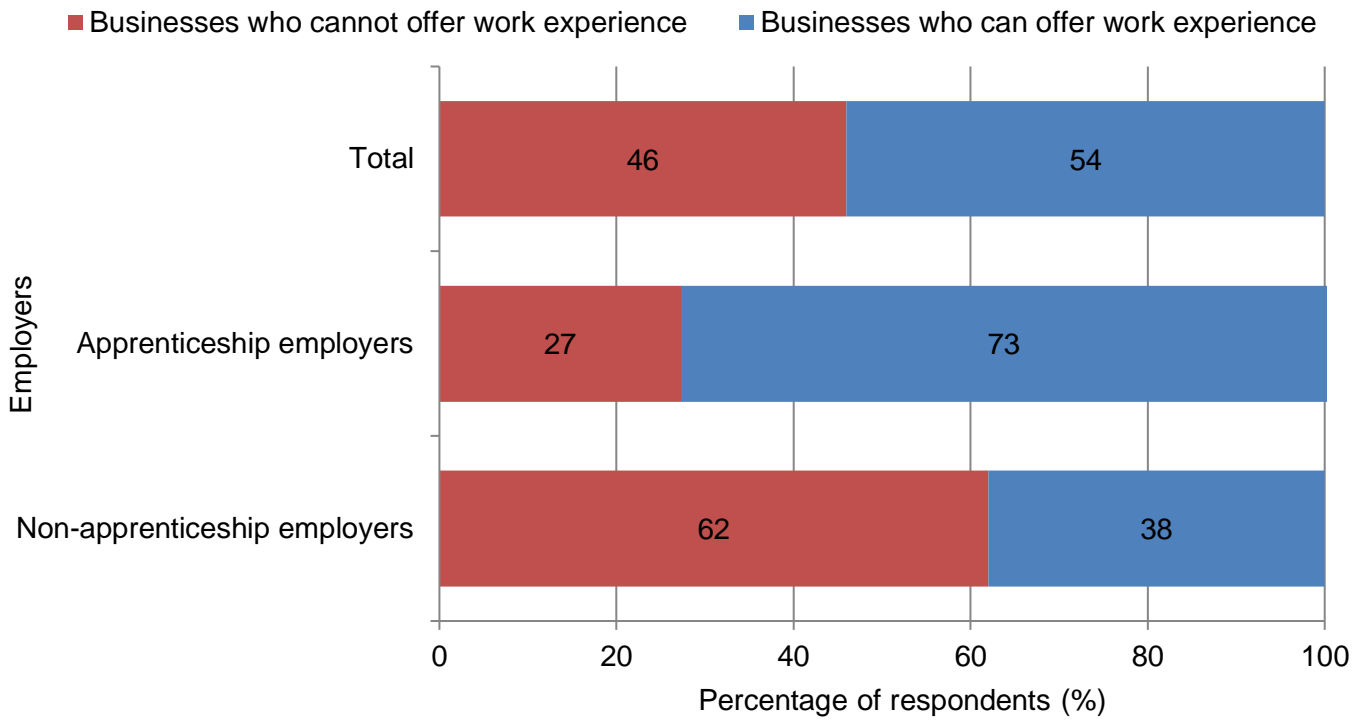
Base: Total (48) | Apprentice employers (22) | Non-apprentice employers (26)

Smaller businesses and those based in Portsmouth are the most likely to offer work experience to students. Figure 33 shows results by business location - 63% of smaller businesses offer work experience to students compared to around half of businesses based elsewhere. 57% of smaller businesses offer work experience compared to 50% of larger businesses.

Figure 33: *Businesses offering work experience to students by business location*
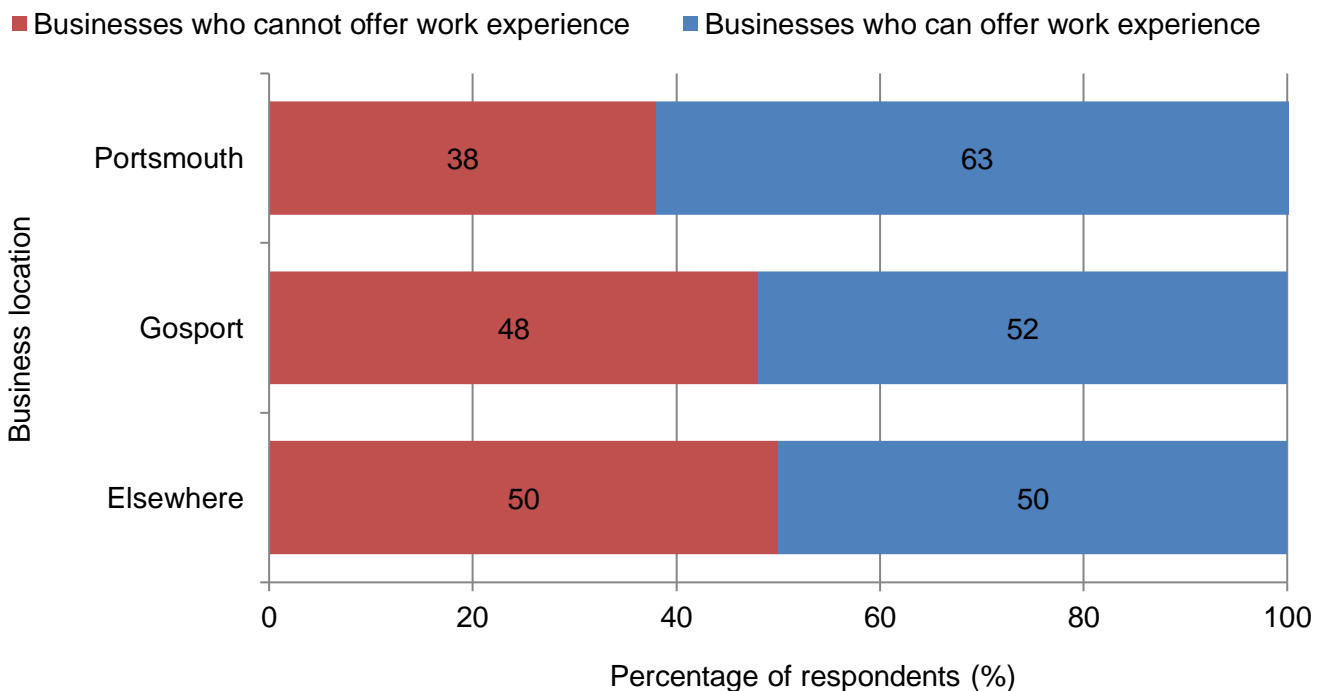
Base: Portsmouth (16) | Gosport (23) | Elsewhere (8)

The survey then asked respondents whether they would take part in career events at a local school or college, Figure 34 shows that the majority of businesses would be interested in taking part (59%).

Figure 34 also shows, those already supporting young people in apprenticeships or work experience roles are more likely to consider taking part (69% of this cohort) compared to those not open to apprenticeships or work experience (36% of this cohort). This does however demonstrate that businesses not offering apprentice or work experience roles would still be open to attending career events to reach young people.
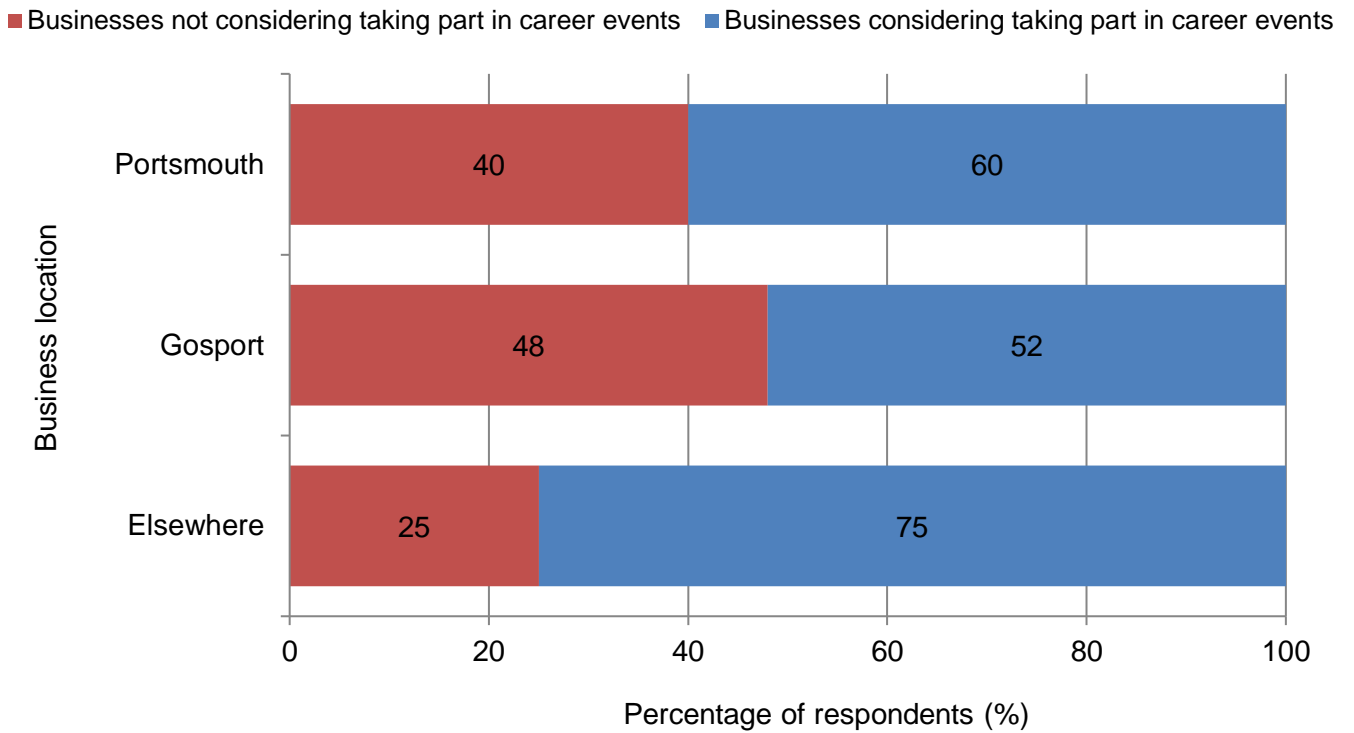
Figure 34: Businesses considering taking part in career events at a local school/ college

■ Businesses not considering taking part in career events   ■ Businesses considering taking part in career events
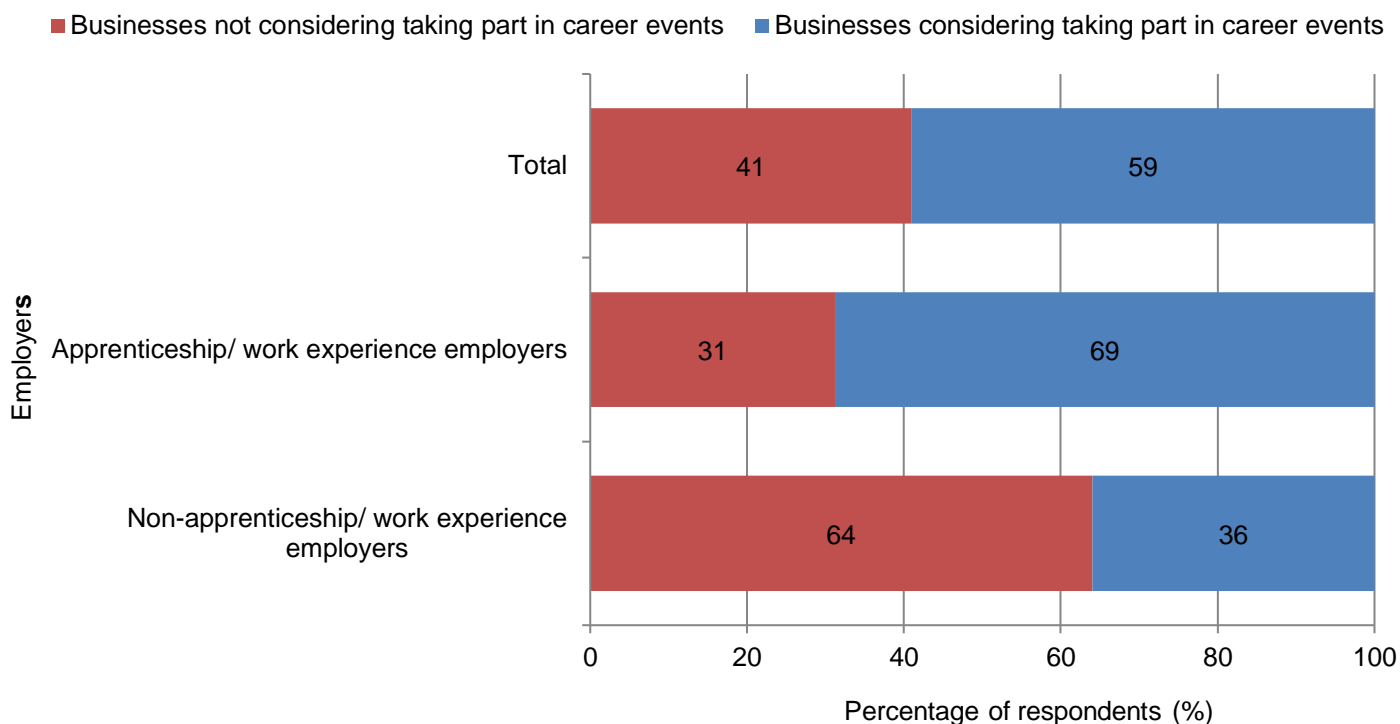
Base: Total (46) | Apprentice/ WE employers (32) | Non-apprentice/ WE employers (14)

The majority of businesses would consider taking part in career events regardless of where they are based (Figure 35). Those based in Gosport are the least likely to take part, 48% say they would not consider being part of a careers event at a local school or college. In Portsmouth 60% say they would consider taking part, and elsewhere three quarters of businesses are interested in career events.

Figure 35: Consideration towards taking part in career events at a local school/ college by business location.

Base: Portsmouth (16) | Gosport (23) | Elsewhere (8)

Figure 36 shows that larger businesses are more likely to consider taking part in careers events than smaller businesses; 70% of businesses with 50+ employees would consider taking part compared to 56% of those with fewer than 50 employees.

Figure 36: Consideration towards taking part in career events at a local school/ college by business size (number of employees).
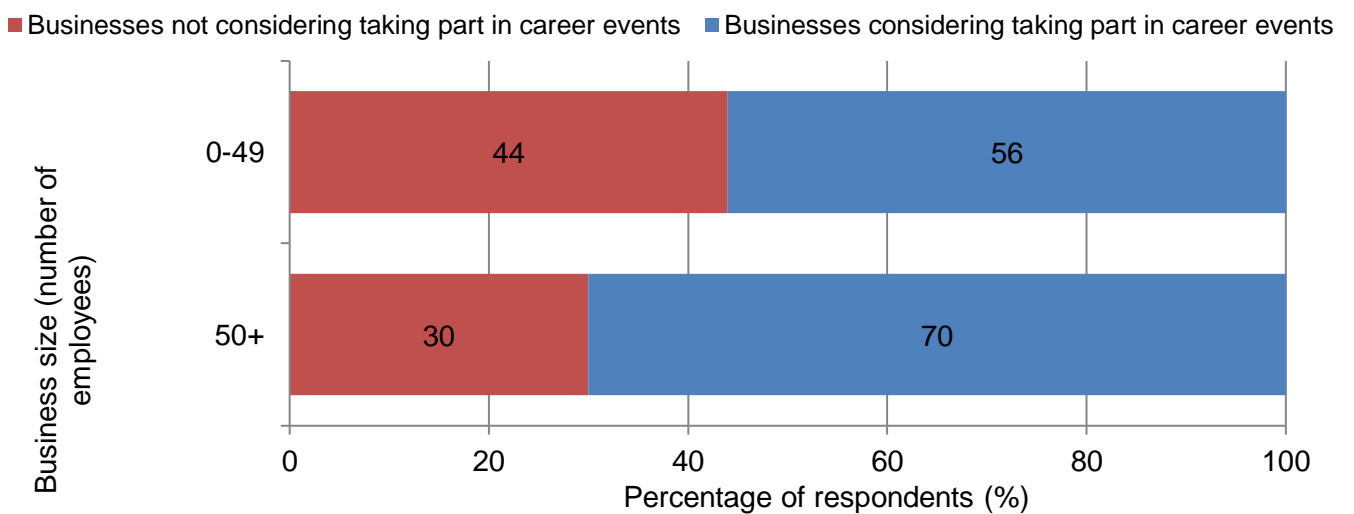
Base: 0-49 employees (36) | 50+ employees (10)

7.6 Training courses

The main survey concluded by asking respondents which training courses would help meet the needs of their business. The majority had clear ideas which centred around three main areas; general business training, online/ marketing skills and specialist skills.

The most popular course, being mentioned by three respondents, was health and safety (see Figure 37). General business training courses cover areas such as business growth, planning, management and customer service. Online and marketing skills courses ranged from basic IT knowledge through to media and online marketing. The specialist skills courses covered a wide of areas specific to the businesses involved, for example boat dismantling, driver training, hand tool skills, electrical and engineering.

Figure 37: Suggested training courses to help meet the needs of the business

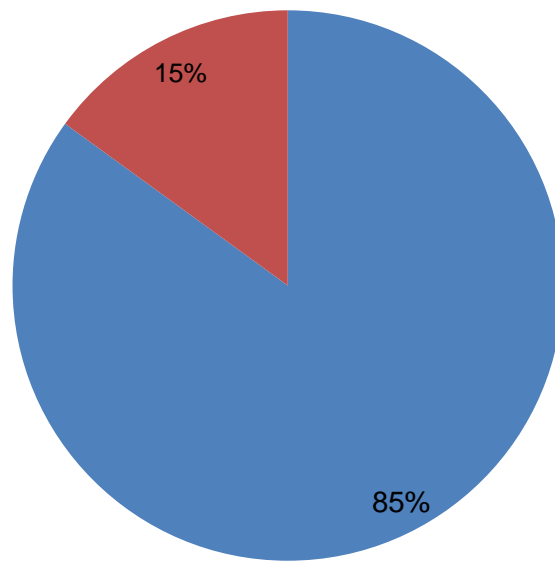| General business training	Specialist skills
Health and safety	Boat dismantling
Business Growth	Composites
Planning	Driver training
Leadership and management	Electrical and electronic
Customer service/ relationships	Marine and mechanical engineering
Oral and confidence training	Material technology
	Metal work
	Power Boat Instructor course
	Small tool and power tool understanding
Online/ marketing skills	Hand tool skills
Basic IT knowledge	Technical training
Online competence	Vendor-specific training (Cisco, Crestron)
Media	Advanced RYA courses
Online marketing	Application development training

Respondents were asked whether they would be happy for someone from Portsmouth Harbour Marine to contact them to discuss the topic of training courses further, positively the majority of respondents are happy to be contacted (85%) – see Figure 38.

A couple of respondents left comments detailing how they would be happy to help out, their offer to help often stems from their passion for the marine industry for example "I am also available to assist in helping to develop this regional hub in delivering training and other services, as am an advocate of the marine and maritime sector".

Figure 38: Respondents by level of consent given to be contacted by Portsmouth Harbour Marine to discuss the topic further.

■ Agree to be contacted   ■ Do not agree to be contacted

Base: 40