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Welsh Government

Employer Skills Survey 2024

Core results: Mid Wales slide pack

Department for Education

IFF Research

Introduction

Slide Pack Information

- The seventh survey in this biennial series
- Includes content which was previously covered in the Employer Perspectives Survey
- This slide pack focuses on the following core areas of the survey:
  - Recruitment and skill-shortage vacancies
  - Skills gaps in the existing workforce
  - Training and workforce development
  - Employer practices: High Performance Working Practices, use of Artificial Intelligence and Net Zero strategies

Further detail – including on other survey areas – is available in the Wales reports and data tables

Methodology

- The population covered by the survey comprised UK employers at the site level (rather than at an organisational level) with at least 2 employees on the payroll. Sole traders with a single person on the payroll were excluded.
- The survey encompassed sites across the whole of the UK, covering all sectors of the economy (the commercial, public and charitable spheres).
- ESS 2024 was the second in the series to use a Random Probability Sampling (RPS) approach, where the sample is processed according to agreed protocols, meaning that sites have an equal and known probability of being sampled.
- Data was collected via Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Employers were offered the option to be interviewed in Welsh or English.
- The overall response rate for sites in Wales was 71%, calculated as ‘achieved interviews’ as a proportion of all respondents who were successfully contacted and reached a final outcome (including those who refused, or who quit during the interview). The response rate for Wales was higher than those for the other UK nations, which ranged from 63% to 66%.
- Further detailed technical information is available in the accompanying Technical Report, published on the DfE website.

Reporting conventions

- The terms ‘site’ and ‘employer’ are used interchangeably throughout this report to avoid excessive repetition.
- All comparisons referred to in the slide pack are statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence. This applies to differences between survey subgroups, such as region, size and sector, and also to differences over time. In some places, the highest or lowest subgroups are reported to give an indication of range, however this does not suggest statistical significance.
- Throughout the report unweighted base figures are shown on tables and charts to give an indication of the statistical reliability of the figures. These figures are always based on the number of sites answering a question, as this is the information required to determine statistical reliability.
- In tables, ‘zero’ is denoted as a dash (‘-’); and an asterisk is used (‘*’) if the figure is larger than zero but less than 0.5%. All volume measures have been rounded to the nearest 100.
- Throughout the slide pack, figures with a base size of fewer than 30 sites are not reported (a double asterisk (**) is displayed instead), and figures with a base size of 30 to 49 are denoted by a single asterisk (*) next to the data value and should be treated with caution as the margin of error for these results is larger and therefore the results are less statistically reliable.
- Please note that, unless otherwise stated, all figures presented in this slide pack are taken from responses by employers to the ESS 2024 survey and therefore represent their views.

Questionnaire coverage

Large sections of the ESS survey were modularised to ensure that ESS and EPS legacy questions could be covered without adding significantly to interview length. All employers were asked a set of core questions and one modularised set of questions, after being randomly allocated to a module. The survey structure (in order of how questions were asked to employers) is shown below:

- **Vacancies and skill shortage vacancies**
- Recruitment channels (Module C)
- Recruitment of education leavers (Module C)
- Work placements and work inspiration activities (Module B)
- **Workforce composition and skills gaps**
- **Underutilisation (Module A)**
- Upskilling (Module A)
- **Training and workforce development**
- Investment in Training
- Vocational qualifications (Module B)
- **Apprenticeships (Module A)**
- National Occupational Standards (Module D)
- **High Performance Working Practices (Module D)**
- **Current and future use of AI**
- **Net Zero**

Only the topics in **bold** are covered in this slide pack

Achieved interviews

By nation and region	Population	Number of interviews
Wales	86,800	5,605
Mid Wales	9,700	717
By size (number of employees): Mid Wales	Population	Number of interviews
2-4	6,400	248
5-24	2,900	341
25-49	300	89
50-99	100	27
100+	100	12

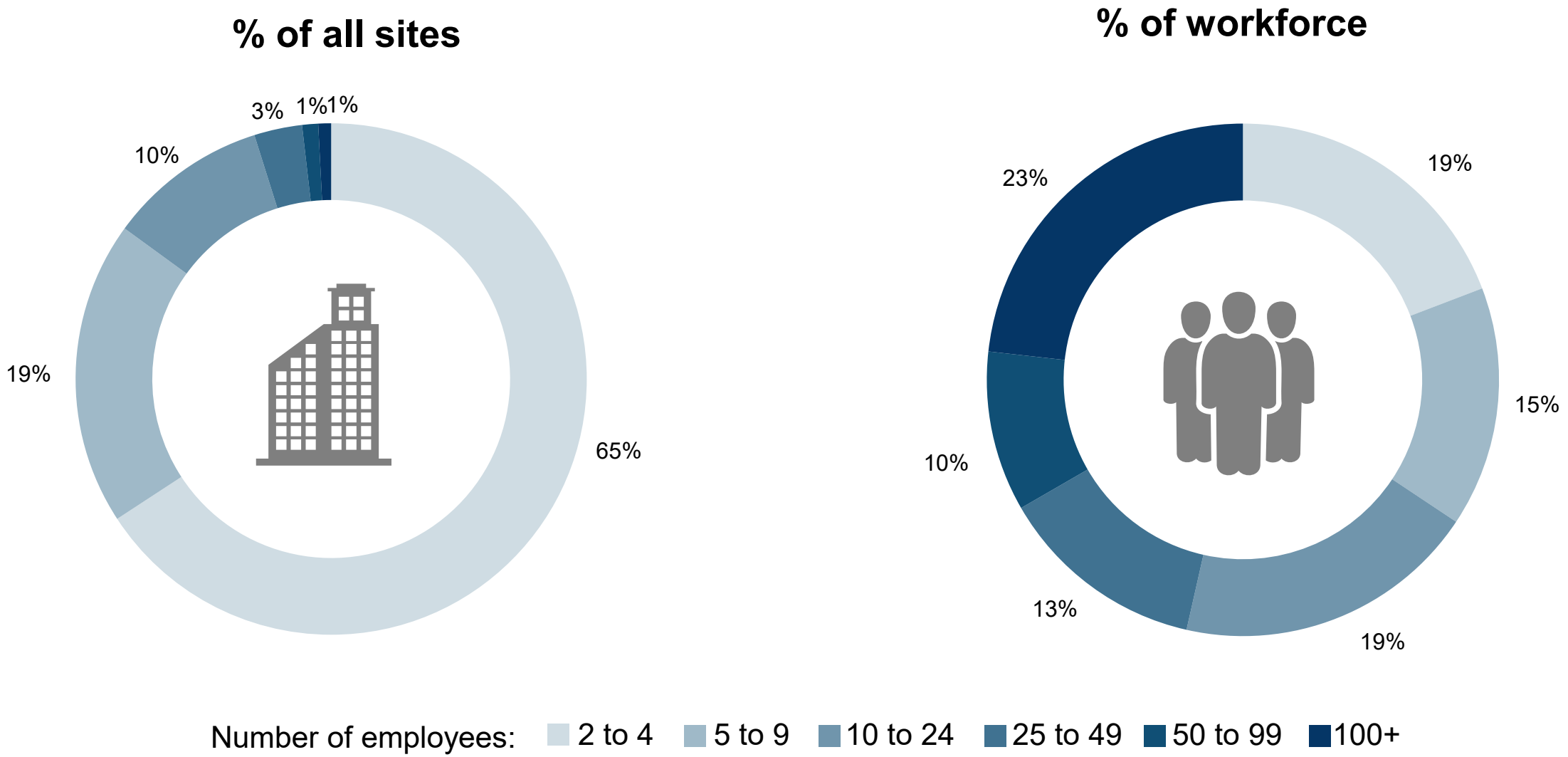
By sector (Mid Wales)	Population	Number of interviews
Primary Sector & Utilities	3,200	121
Manufacturing	400	65
Construction	800	28
Wholesale & Retail	1,400	118
Hotels & Restaurants	1,000	99
Transport & Storage	200	17
Information & Communications	200	6
Financial Services	100	10
Business Services	1,200	91
Public Administration	100	6
Education	300	53
Health & Social Work	500	70
Arts & Other Services	500	33

All the figures presented in this slide pack are subject to a margin of error. At a 95% confidence level, the maximum margin of error is 4 percentage points (p.p.) for Mid Wales. Within Mid Wales, for sectors which are in scope for reporting (with a base size of 30 or more), at the 95% confidence level, the margin of error for results based on ‘all sites’ ranges from 9 p.p. for Wholesale & Retail to 16 p.p. for Arts & Other Services.

Due to small base sizes for sub-groups and higher margin of error, care should be taken when comparing sub-group differences over time

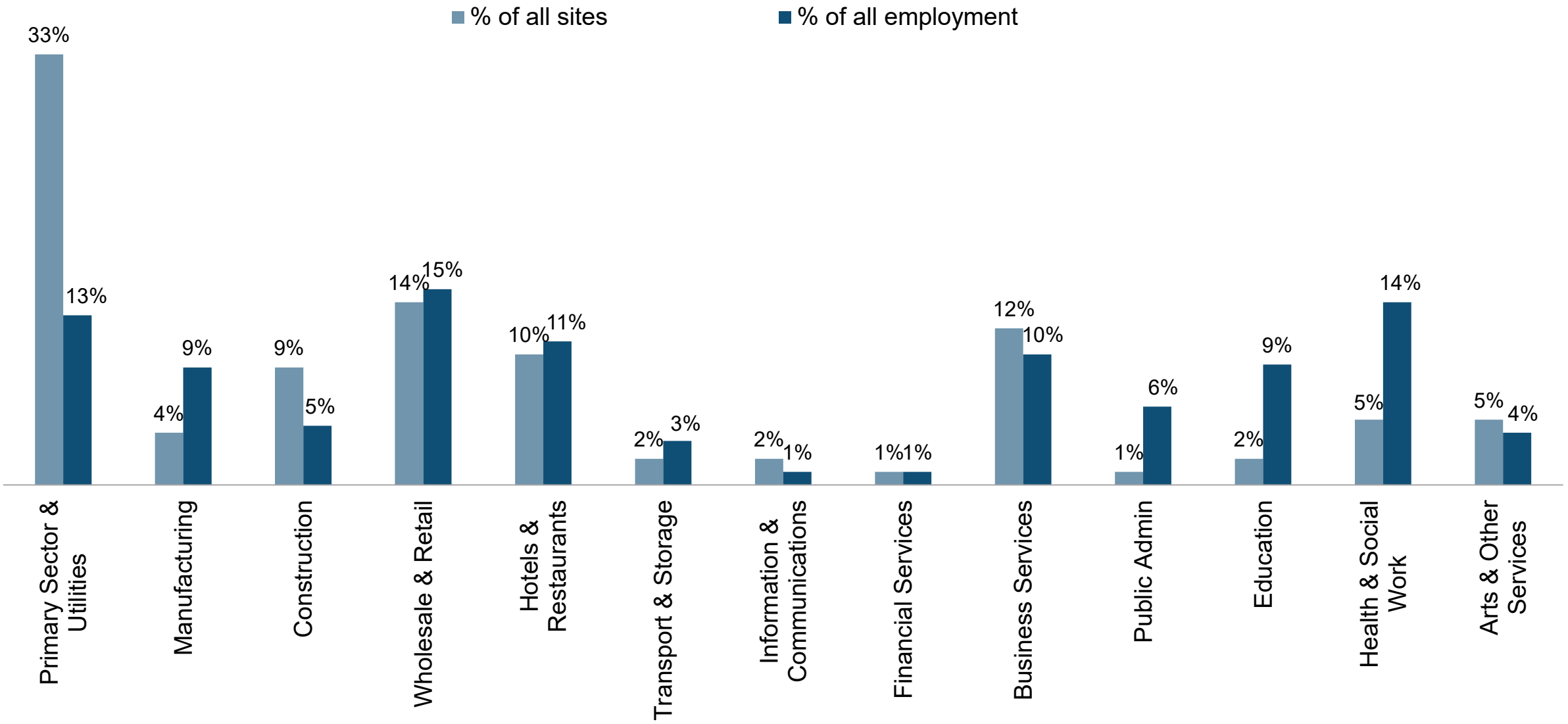
Population counts taken from the ONS Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), and have been rounded to the nearest hundred.

Survey population Mid Wales: employer size profile by number of employees



Source: ONS Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR).

Survey population Mid Wales: sector



Source: ONS Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR)

Key definitions

Site base	Proportions are based on the number of sites, defined here as a single location of an organisation, where at least two people work.
Employment base	Proportions are based on the total number of employees and working proprietors across sites.

	Vacancies	**Skill-shortage vacancies (SSVs)**	**Skills gaps**
Incidence	Proportion of sites reporting at least one vacancy	Proportion of sites reporting at least one skill-shortage vacancy (i.e. vacancies which are reported to be hard-to-fill because applicants lack relevant skills, qualifications or experience)	Proportion of sites with at least one employee deemed by their employer to be not fully proficient in their role
Density	Vacancies as a proportion of all employment	Skill-shortage vacancies as a proportion of all vacancies	The number of staff reported as not fully proficient as a proportion of all employment

Overview

- Overall, the vacancy picture in Mid Wales remained similar to 2022. Mid Wales had the lowest proportion of employers reporting vacancies across all Welsh regions.
- Similarly, the proportion of employers reporting skills gaps and the density of skills gaps remained consistent with previous years. The proportion of employers with at least one employee with qualifications or skills more advanced that required for their role was in line with the Wales average, although the proportion of the workforce with under-utilised skills and qualifications was higher in Mid Wales compared with Wales as a whole.
- The proportion of employers that had provided training in Mid Wales in the last 12 months was lower than Wales as a whole. While the proportion of employers that provided training was similar to 2022, there was a significant increase in the proportion of staff trained.
- Looking at employer practices, a minority in Mid Wales were considered to be High Performance Working (HPW) employers. Similarly, small proportions of employers reported using Artificial Intelligence (AI) or said they had a Net Zero strategy in place.

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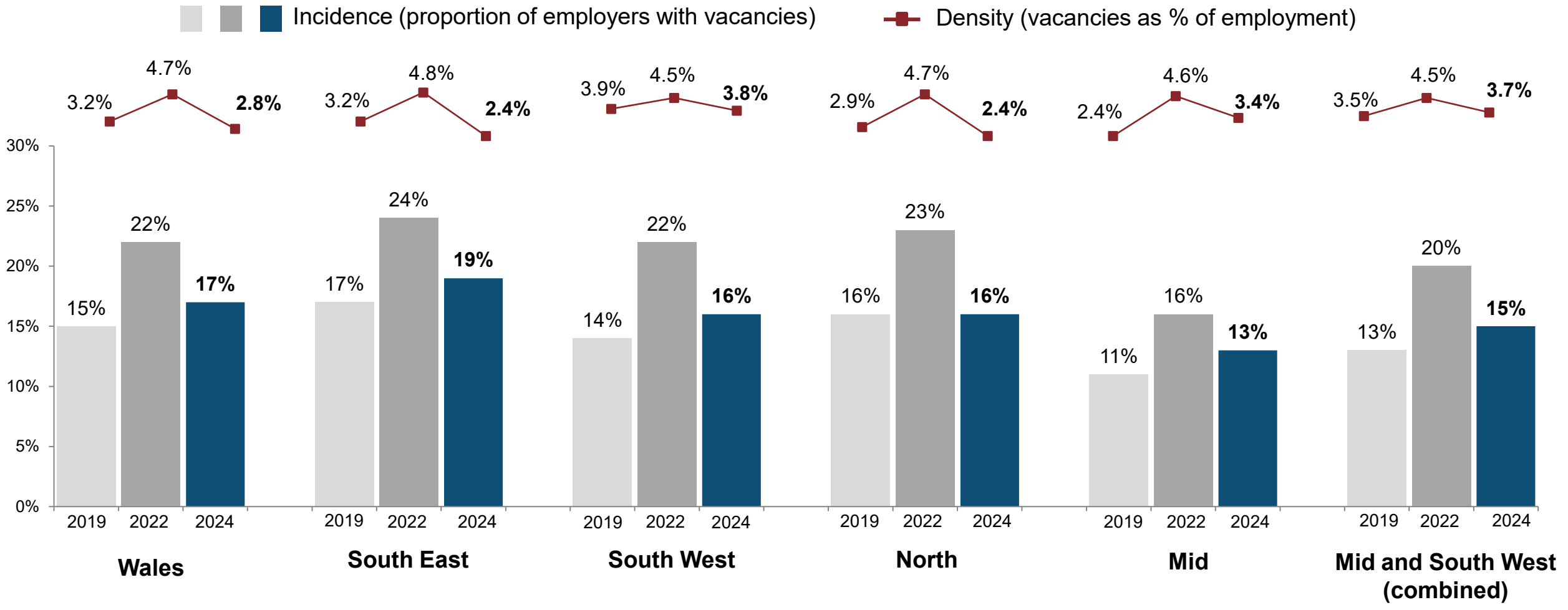
Recruitment and skill-shortage vacancies

Department for Education

IFF Research

Vacancy incidence decreased across each Welsh region, except in Mid Wales, returning to 2019 levels. Vacancy density decreased in South East Wales and North Wales

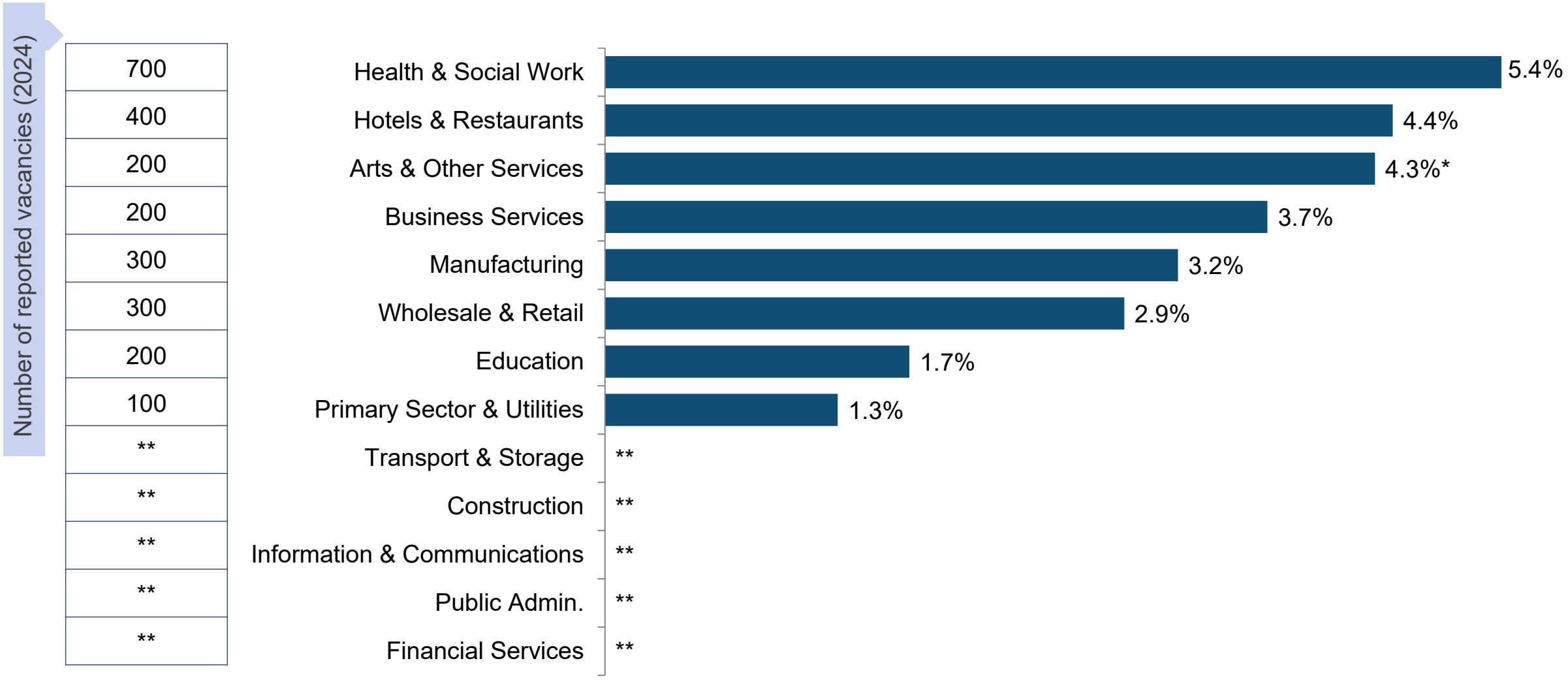


Wales	South East	South West	North	Mid	Mid and South West (combined)
35,700	15,500	10,400	7,000	2,700	13,100

Number of reported vacancies (2024)

Base: All sites in Wales (2024: 5,605; 2022: 4,825; 2019: 6,773). 2024 regional base sizes range from 717 in Mid Wales to 2,310 in South East Wales.

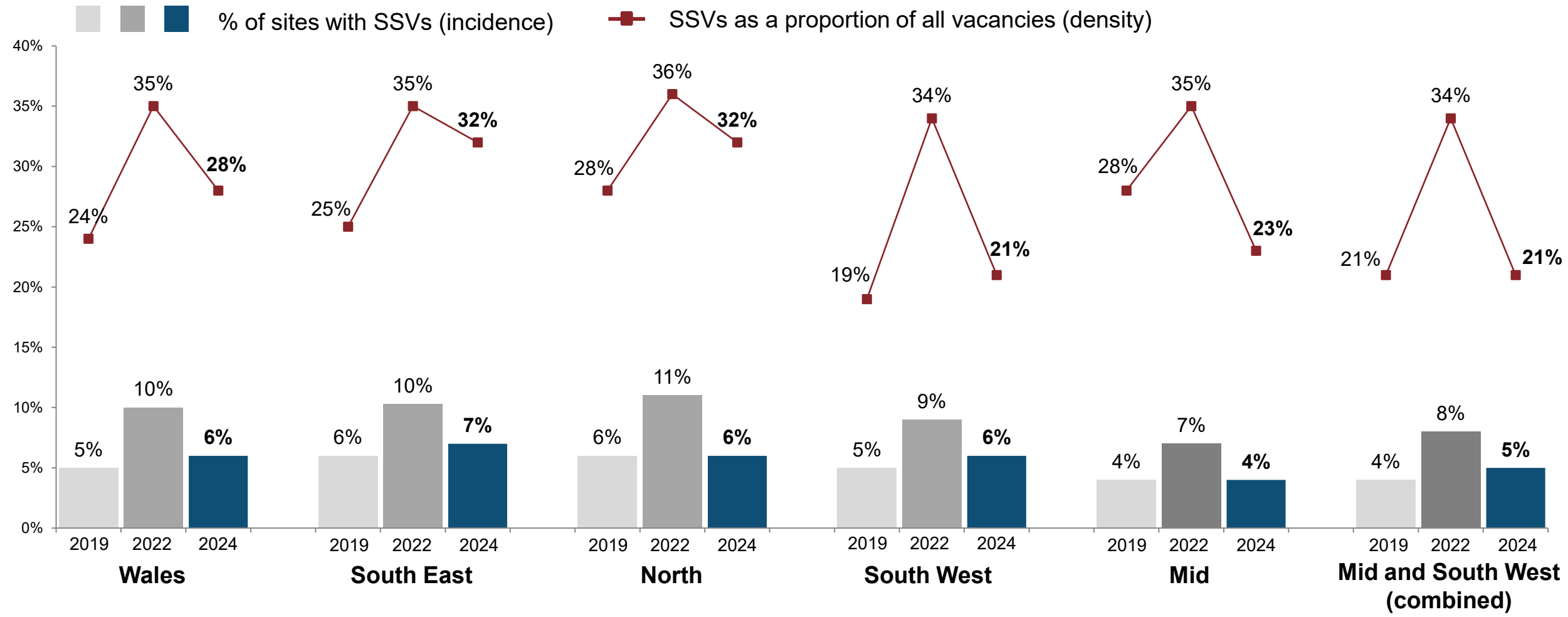
By sector, vacancy density was highest in the Health and Social Work sector



Base: All sites in Mid Wales (base sizes range from 33 in Arts and Other Services to 121 Primary Sector and Utilities).

Where base sizes are under 30 within a sector, data has been removed (denoted by a double asterisk); where base sizes are between 30 and 49, an asterisk has been included next to the data value. When base sizes are small, volume and density measures at subgroup level can be heavily influenced by a small number of cases. Results should be interpreted with caution.

SSV incidence decreased across all regions to levels similar to 2019, and was highest in South East Wales and lowest in Mid Wales



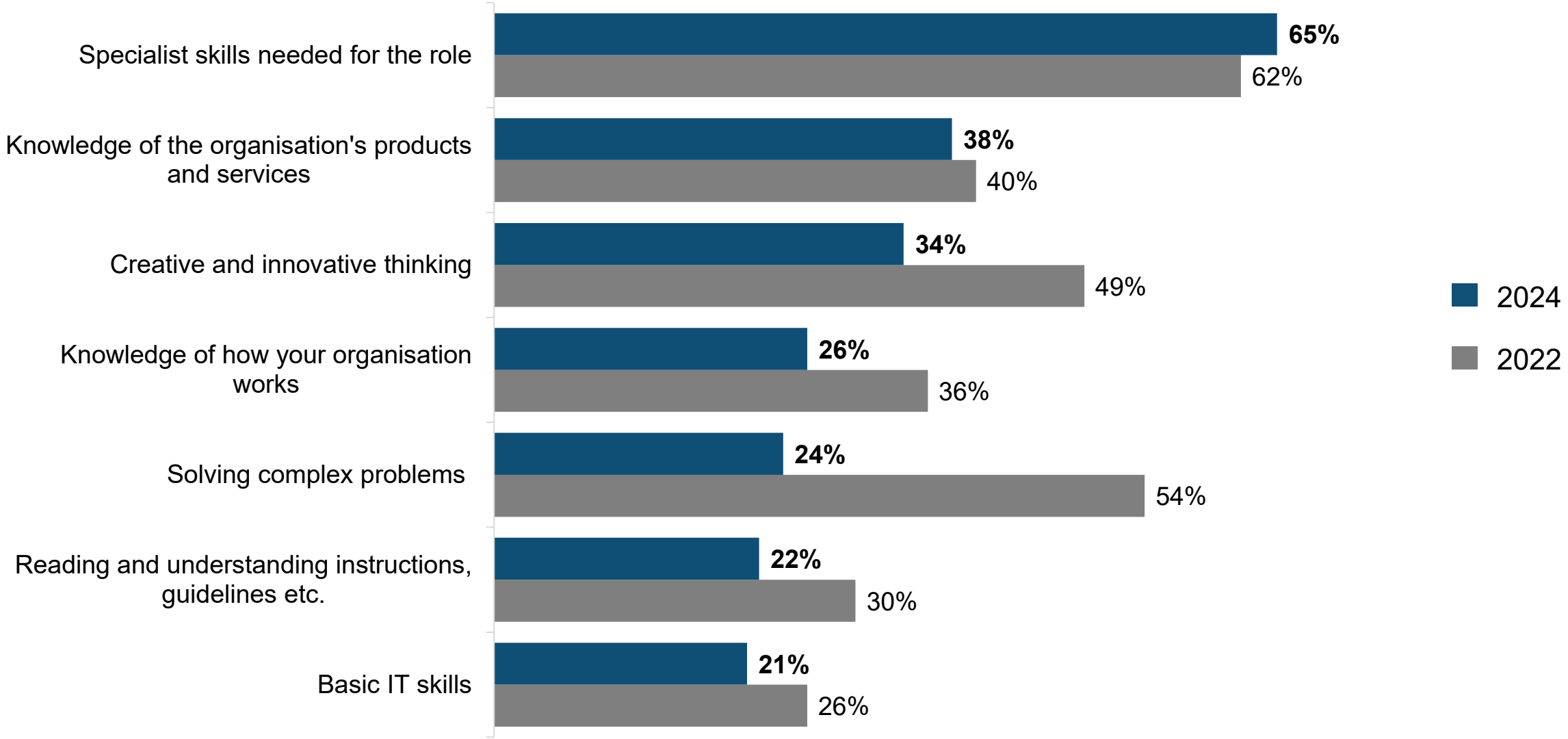
Wales	South East	North	South West	Mid	Mid and South West (combined)
10,100	5,000	2,200	2,200	600	2,800

Number of skill-shortage vacancies (2024)

Base for incidence of skill-shortage vacancies: All sites in Wales: (2024: 5,605; 2022: 4,825; 2019: 6,773). 2024 regional base sizes range from 454 in Mid Wales to 1,321 in South East Wales.

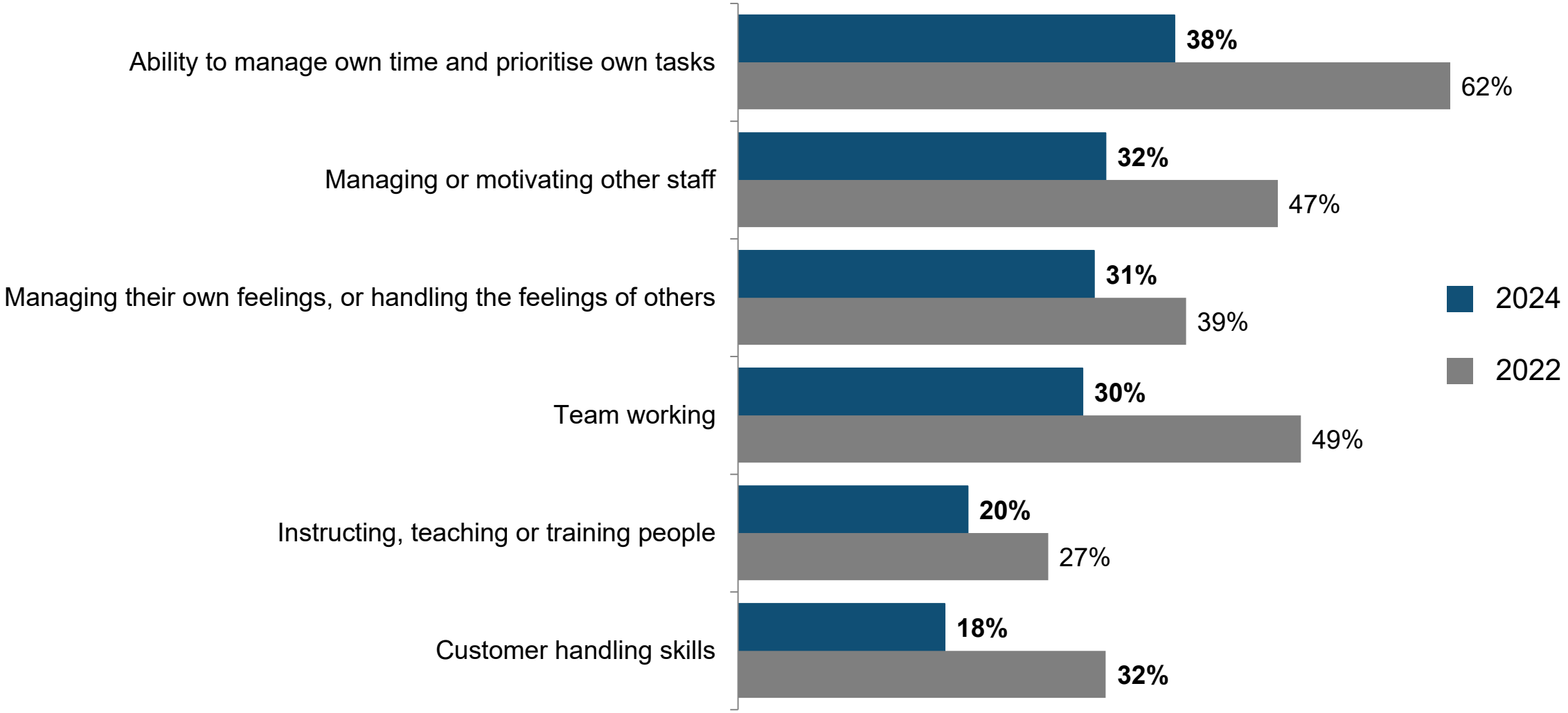
Base for density: All sites in Wales with vacancies: (2024: 1,300; 2019: 1,503; 2022; 1,560). 2024 regional base sizes range from 160 in Mid Wales to 552 in South East Wales.

Specialist skills remain the most common skill lacked by applicants, while most reported skills saw a decrease



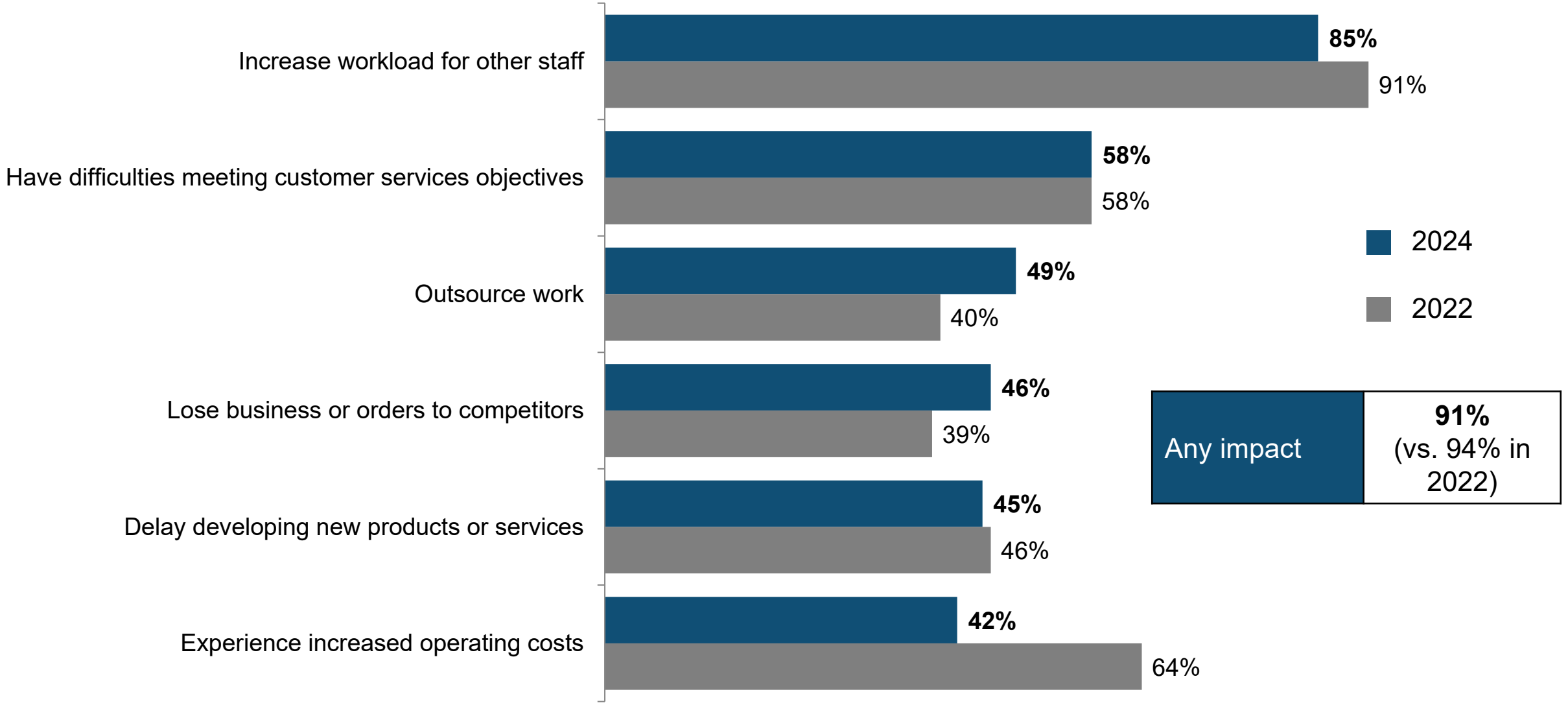
Base: All with skill-shortage vacancies in Mid Wales (2024: 50; 2022: 82). Figures are shown as a percentage of all skill-shortage vacancies followed up (not a percentage of all sites).

The most common people and personal skill reported to be lacking among SSV applicants were time management and task prioritisation, as in 2022



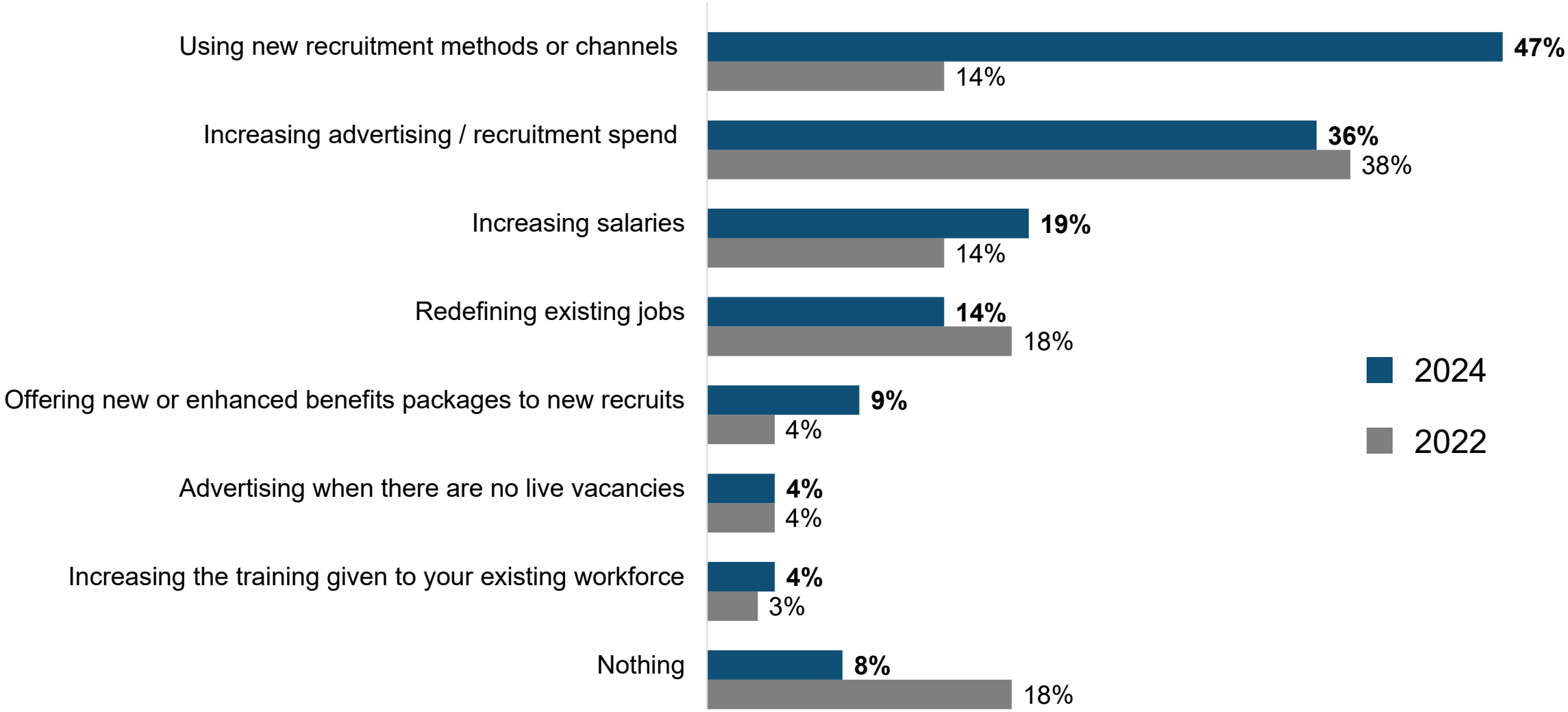
Base: All with skill-shortage vacancies in Mid Wales (2024: 50; 2022: 82)
Figures are shown as a percentage of all skill-shortage vacancies followed up (not a percentage of all sites)

The most commonly reported impact of SSVs was an increased workload for other staff, as was the case in 2022



Base: All sites in Mid Wales with hard-to-fill vacancies that are all as a result of skill shortages (2024: 43; 2022: 66).

In 2024, employers were notably more likely to use new recruitment methods or channels to fill hard-to-fill vacancies



Base: All sites in Mid Wales with hard-to-fill vacancies that are all as a result of skill shortages (2024: 43; 2022: 66).

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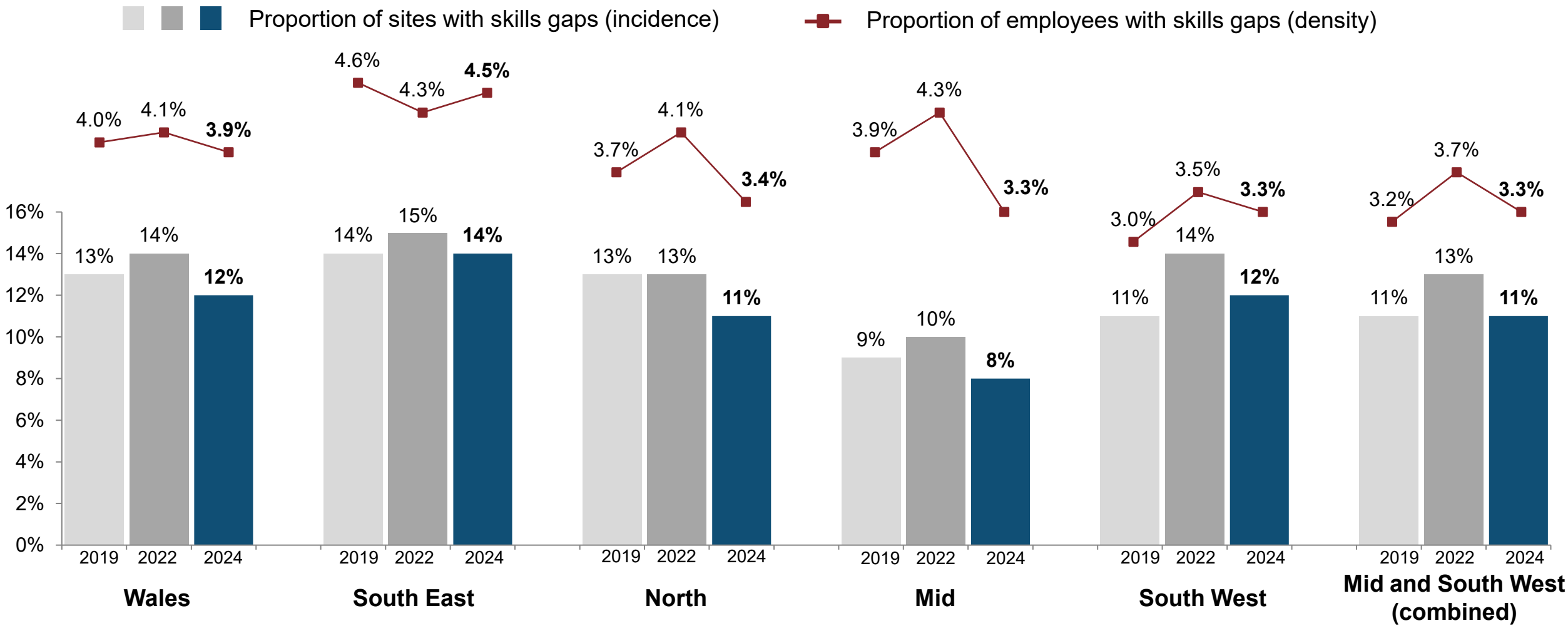
Skills gaps in the existing workforce

Department for Education

IFF Research

Skills gap incidence and density remained in line with 2022 and 2019 levels across all Welsh regions

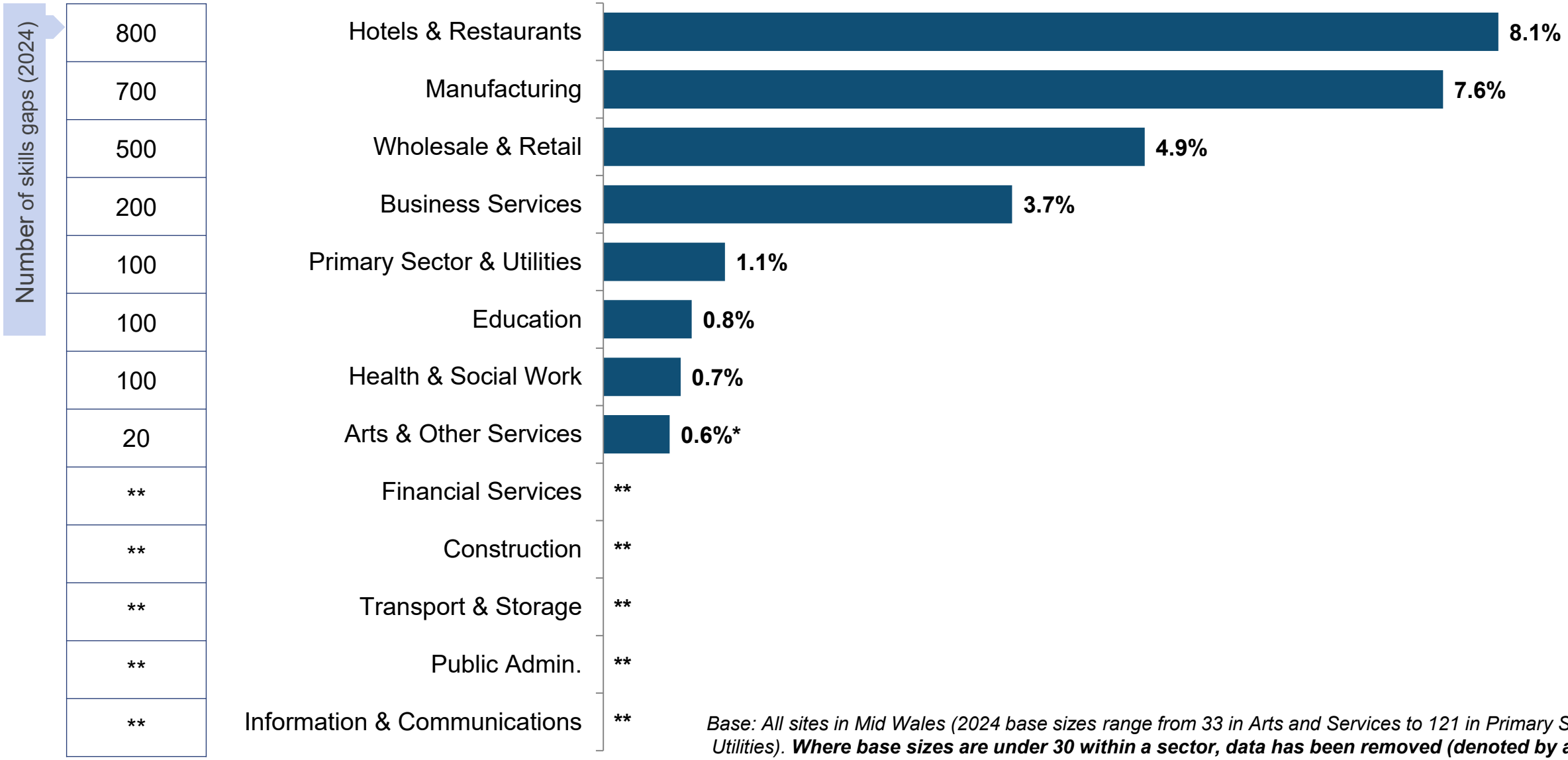


Wales	South East	North	Mid	South West	Mid and South West (combined)
50,400	28,900	9,900	2,700	8,900	11,600

Number of skills gaps (2024)

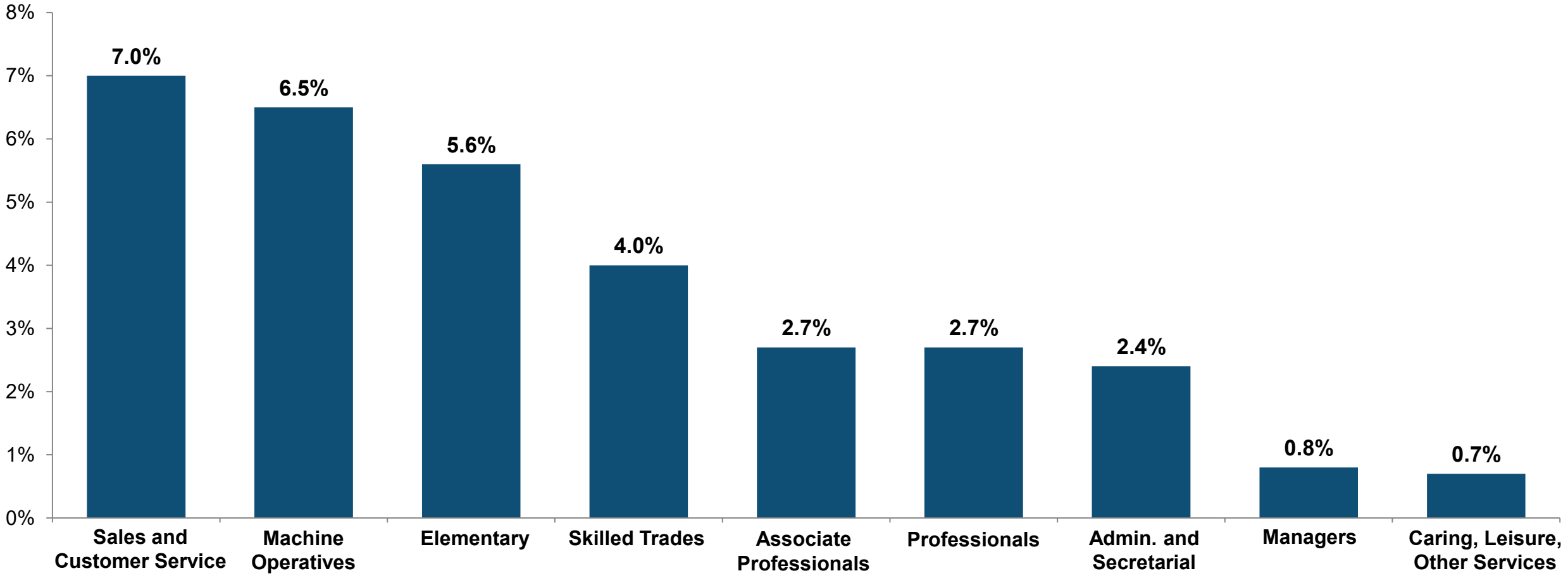
Base: All sites in Wales (2024: 5,605; 2022: 4,825; 2019: 6,773). 2024 regional base sizes range from 717 in Mid Wales to 2,310 in South East Wales.

The density of skills gaps was highest in the Hotels & Restaurants sector



Base: All sites in Mid Wales (2024 base sizes range from 33 in Arts and Services to 121 in Primary Sectors & Utilities). ***Where base sizes are under 30 within a sector, data has been removed (denoted by a double asterisk); where base sizes are between 30 and 49, an asterisk has been included next to the data value. When base sizes are small, volume and density measures at subgroup level can be heavily influenced by a small number of cases. Results should be interpreted with caution.***

By occupation, density of skills gaps was highest among Sales & Customer Service roles

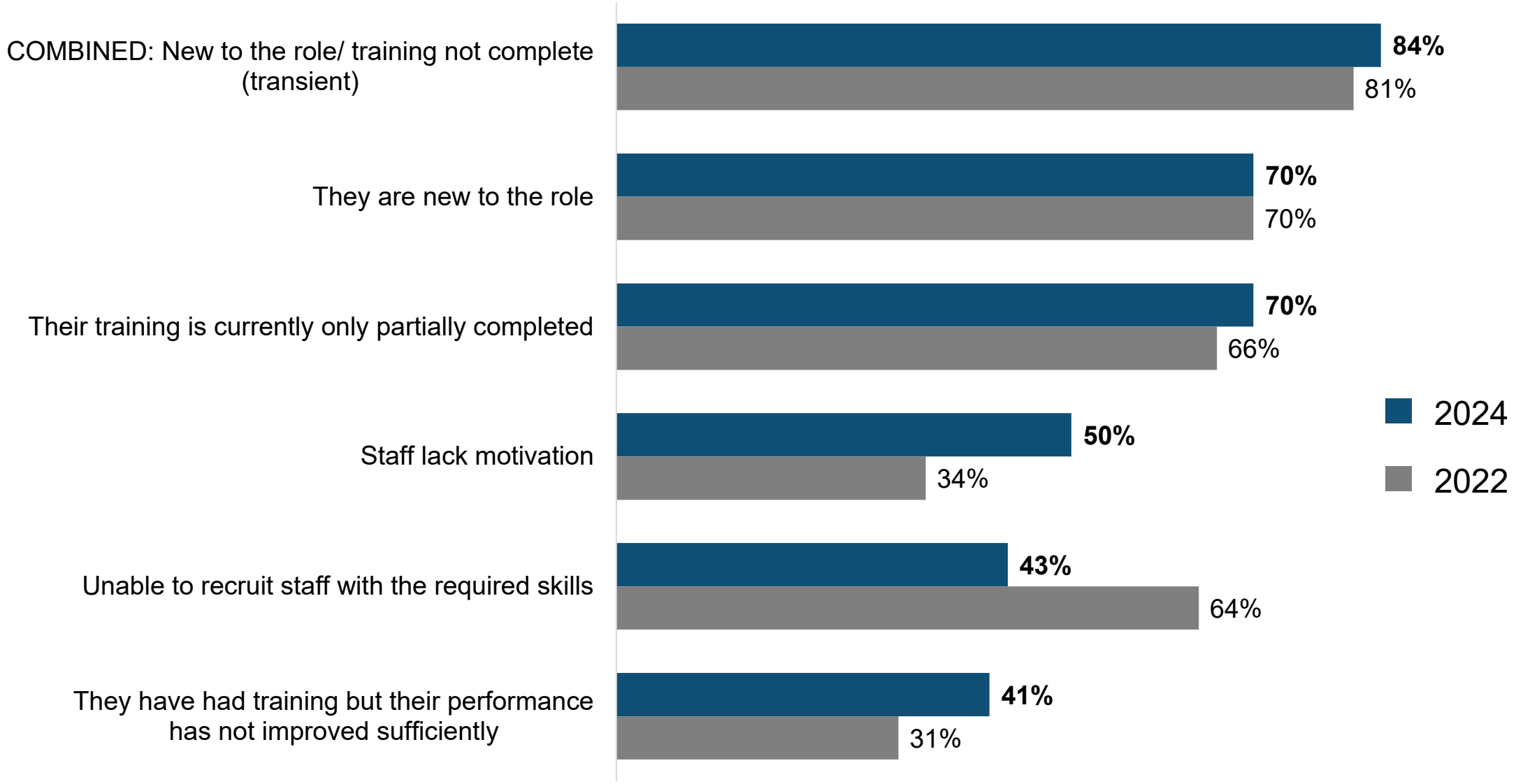


400	600	800	300	100	100	200	200	100

Number of skills gaps (2024)

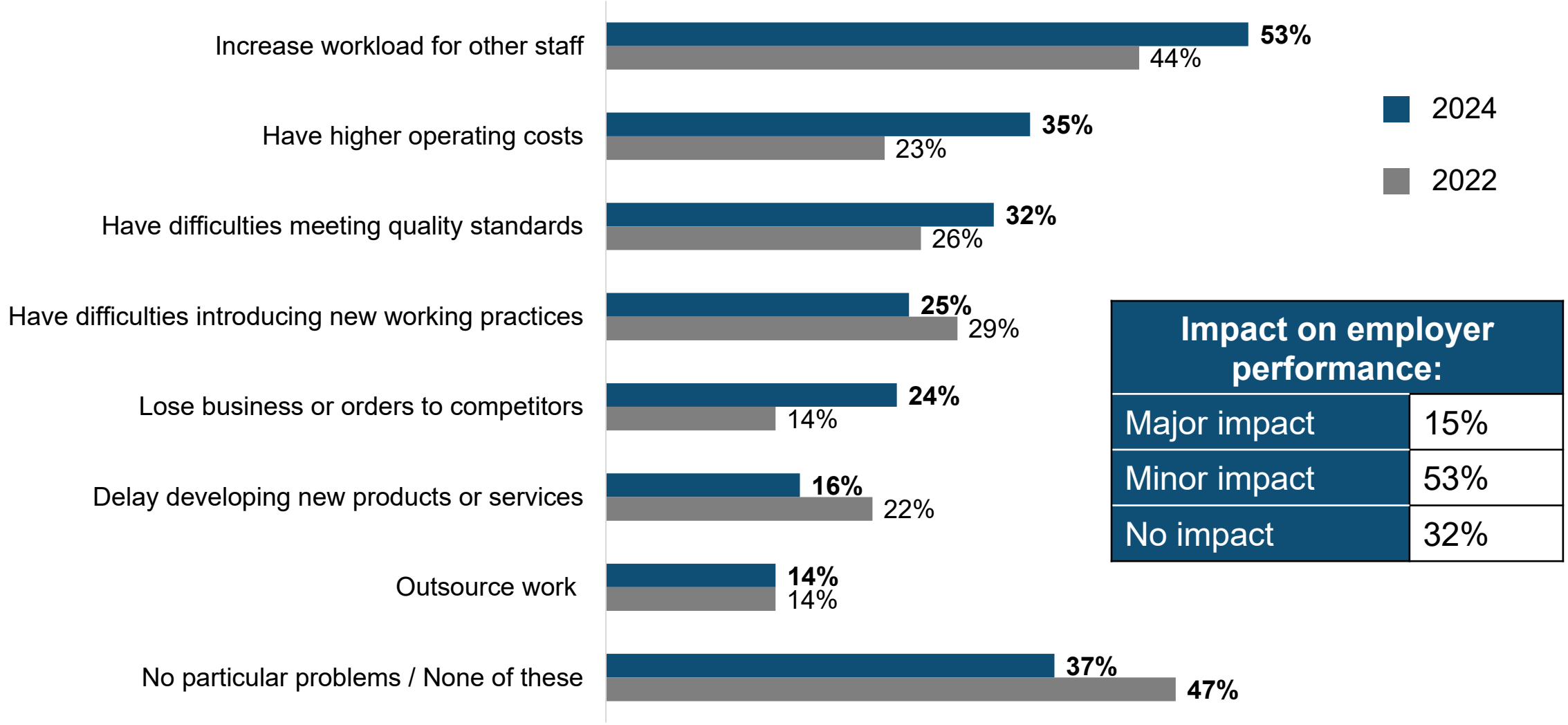
Base: All sites in Mid Wales with staff in the given occupations (2024 base sizes range from 99 for Associate Professionals to 671 for Managers).

Transient factors continued to be the leading causes of skills gaps



Base: All sites with skills gaps - up to 2 occupations followed up (2024: 114; 2022: 121)
Figures are shown as a percentage of all skills gaps (not a percentage of all sites).

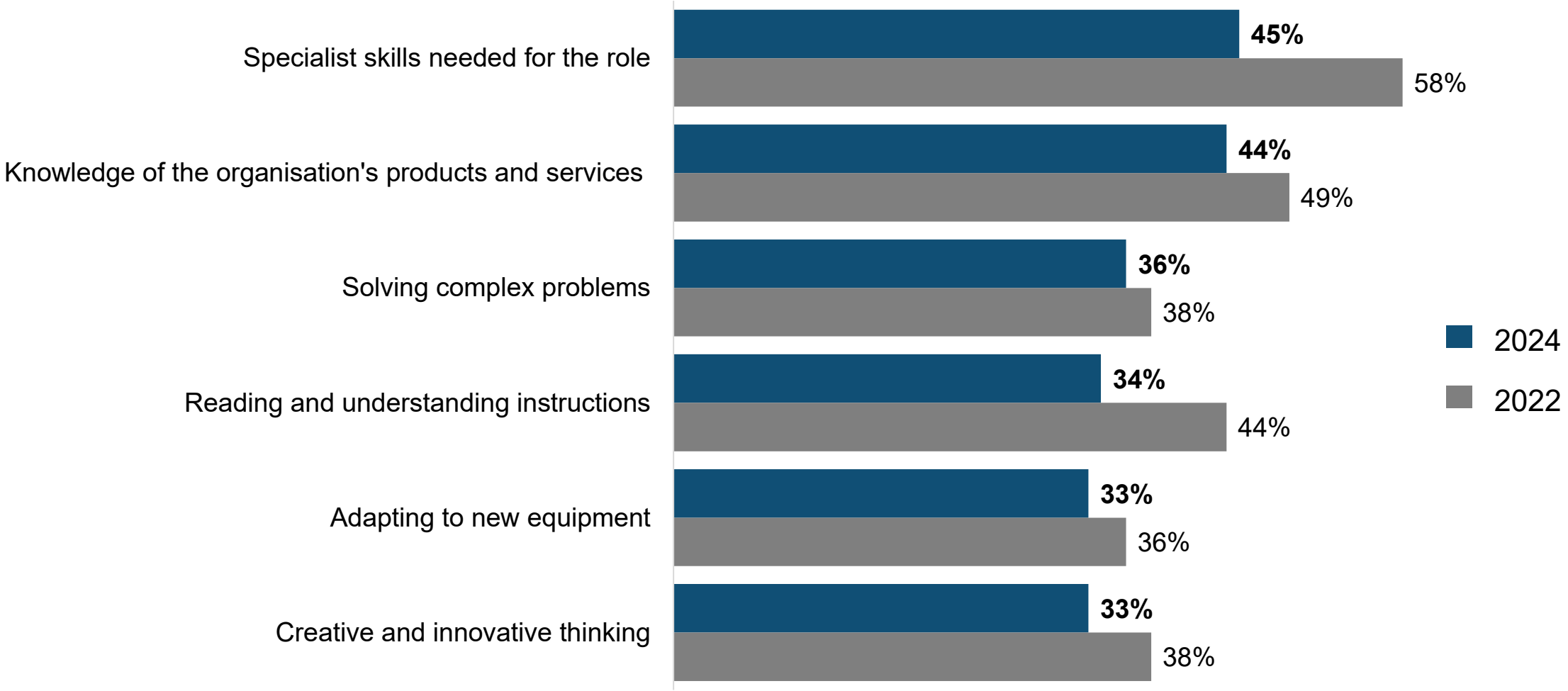
As when looking at SSVs, the main impact of skills gaps continued to be increased workloads for other staff members



Impact on employer performance:	
Major impact	15%
Minor impact	53%
No impact	32%

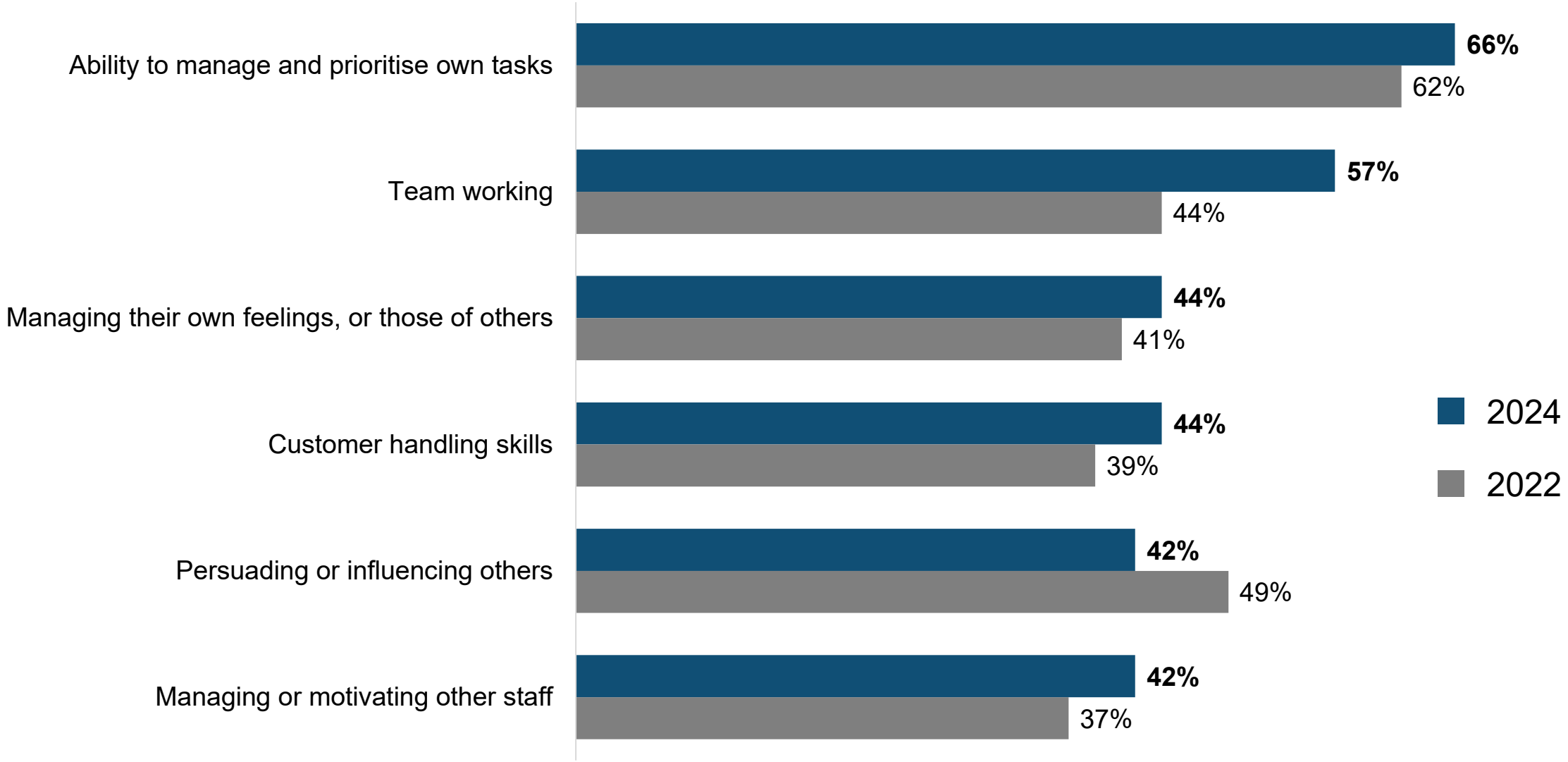
Base: All sites with skills gaps (2024: 114; 2022: 121).

Specialist skills or knowledge remained the most common technical and practical skill reported as lacking among the existing workforce



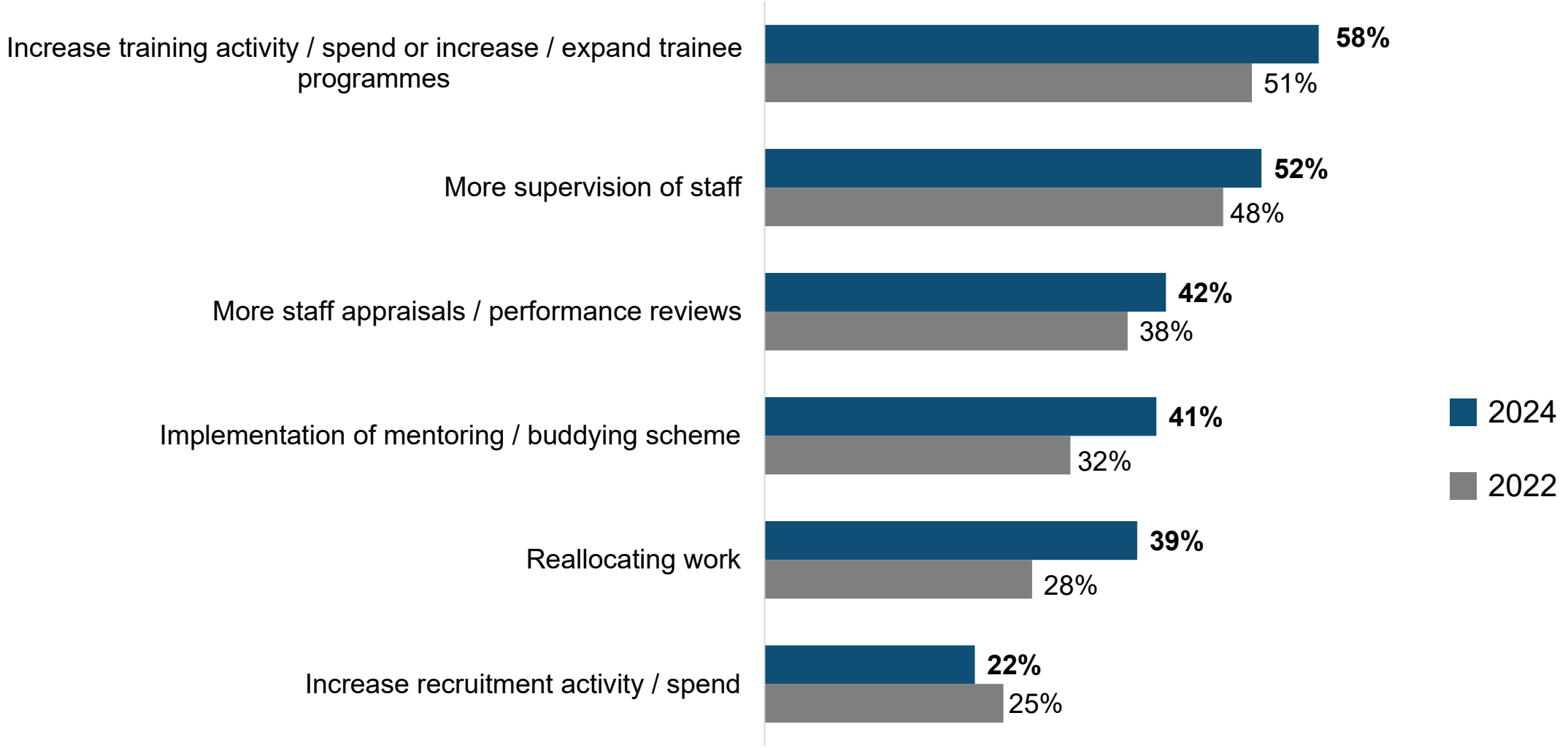
Base: All sites with skills gaps - up to 2 occupations followed up (2024: 114; 2022: 121)
Figures are shown as a percentage of all skills gaps (not a percentage of all sites).

The most common skill lacking was the ability to manage their own time and prioritise tasks



Base: All sites with skills gaps - up to 2 occupations followed up (2024: 114; 2022: 121
Figures are shown as a percentage of all skills gaps (not a percentage of all sites).

The most common action taken to overcome skills gaps continues to be to increase training activity / spend or to increase / expand trainee programmes



Base: All sites in Mid Wales with skills gaps (2024: 114; 2022: 121).

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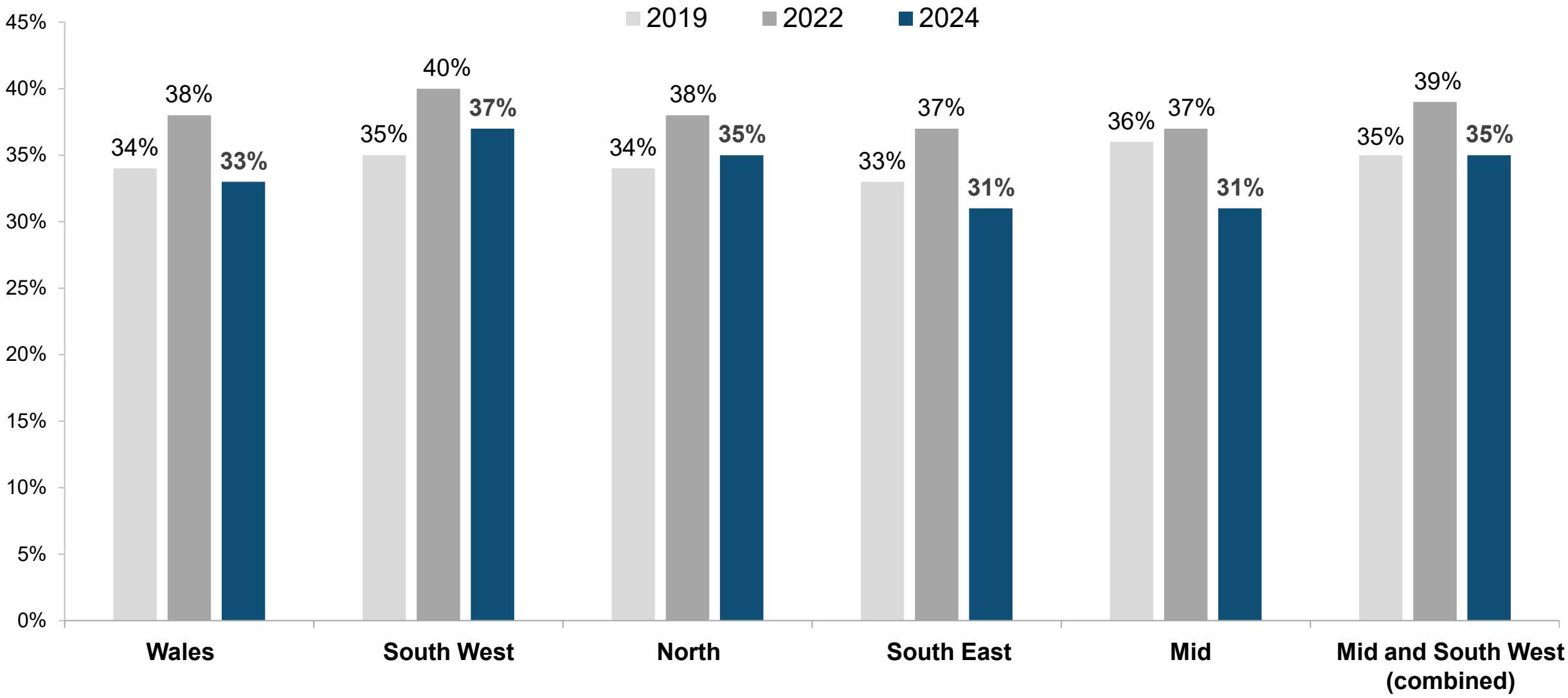
Under-use of skills and qualifications

Department for Education

IFF Research

South East Wales was the only Welsh region which saw a notable decrease in the proportion of sites with underutilised staff when compared with 2022



Base: All sites 2024 (Module A): Wales: 1,379; regional base sizes range from 181 in Mid Wales to 568 in South East Wales.

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Training and workforce development

Department for Education

IFF Research

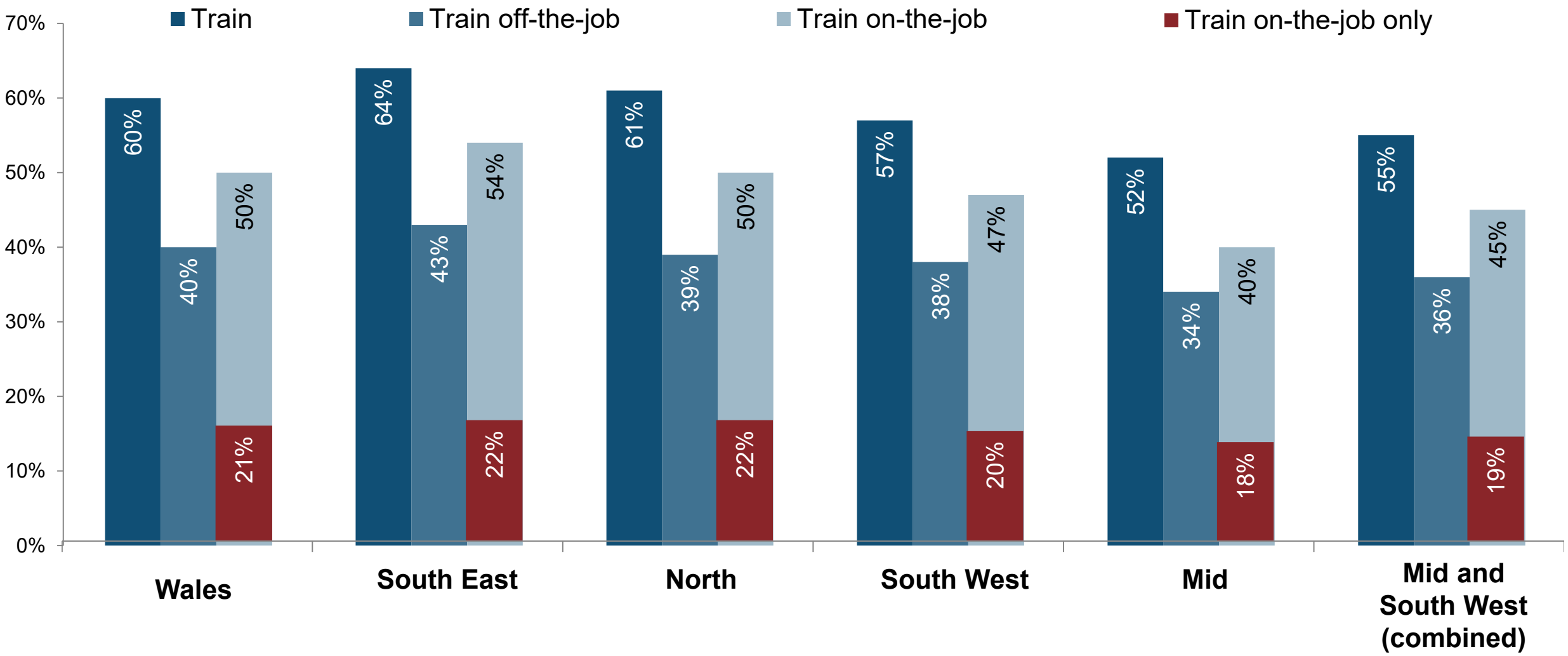
Training and workforce development – Mid Wales summary

Measure	2015	2017	2019	2022	2024
% of employers that train	54%	58%	58%	49%	**52%**
% of employers that train *on*-the-job	41%	42%	40%	42%	**40%**
% of employers that train *off*-the-job	40%	44%	43%	29%	**34%**
% that *only* train *on*-the-job	14%	13%	14%	20%	**18%**
% of staff trained over the last 12 months	71%	67%	57%	61%	**67%**
Days training per person trained	6.6	9.4	6.4	5.2	**5.8**
Total training days provided	0.4m	0.5m	0.3m	0.3m	**0.3m**

The number of training days per person trained in Mid Wales has remained consistent with 2022

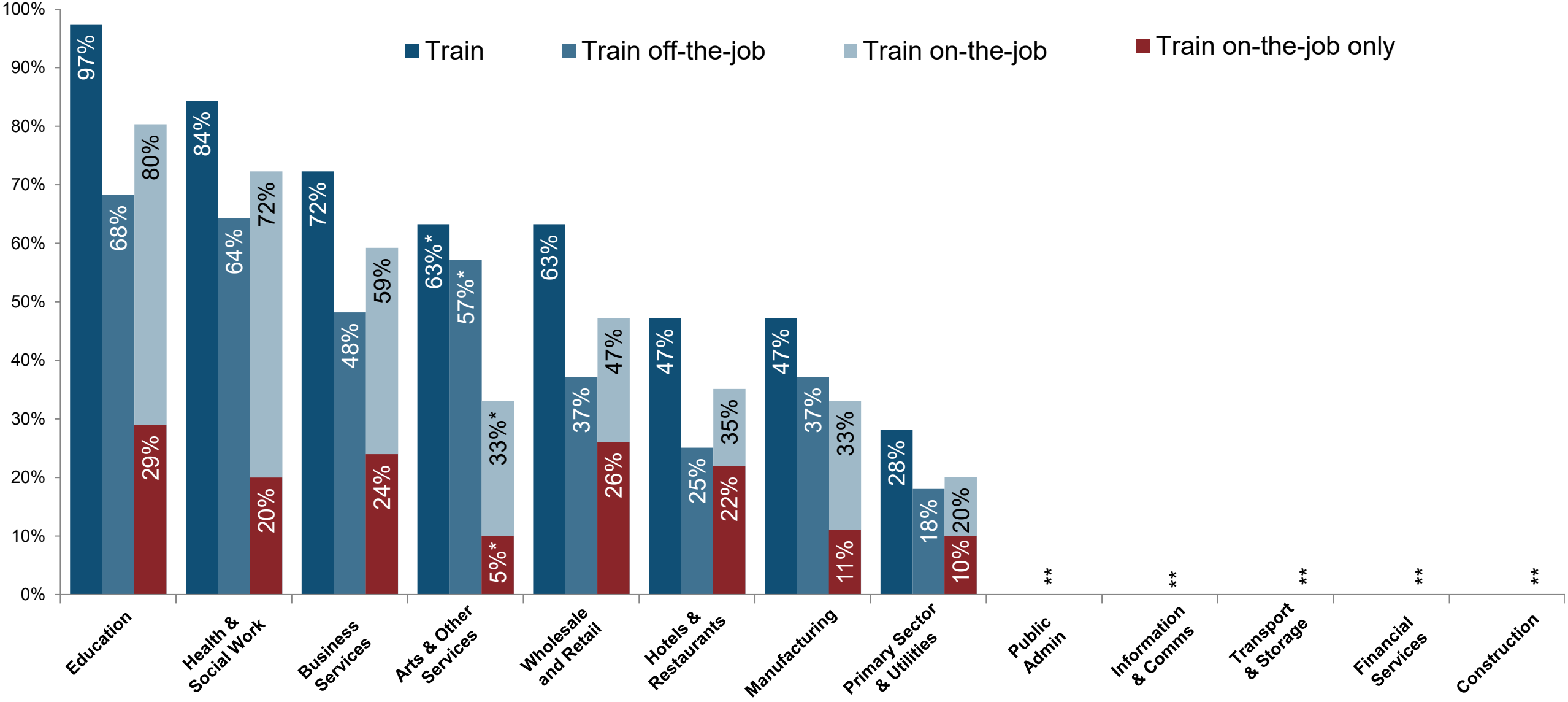
By nation and region	Days per person trained			Total training days		
	2019	2022	**2024**	2019	2022	**2024**
Wales	5.1	6.8	**6.6**	4.2m	5.3m	**5.4m**
North	5.5	6.9	**4.9**	1.1m	1.3m	**0.9m**
Mid	6.4	5.2	**5.8**	0.3m	0.3m	**0.3m**
South East	4.7	7.4	**8.0**	1.9m	2.8m	**3.3m**
South West	5.4	5.7	**5.3**	0.9m	1.0m	**0.9m**
Mid and South West (combined)	5.6	5.6	**5.4**	1.2m	1.2m	**1.2m**

Employers in South East Wales were most likely to have funded or arranged training for their staff. Mid Wales employers were least likely to have done so



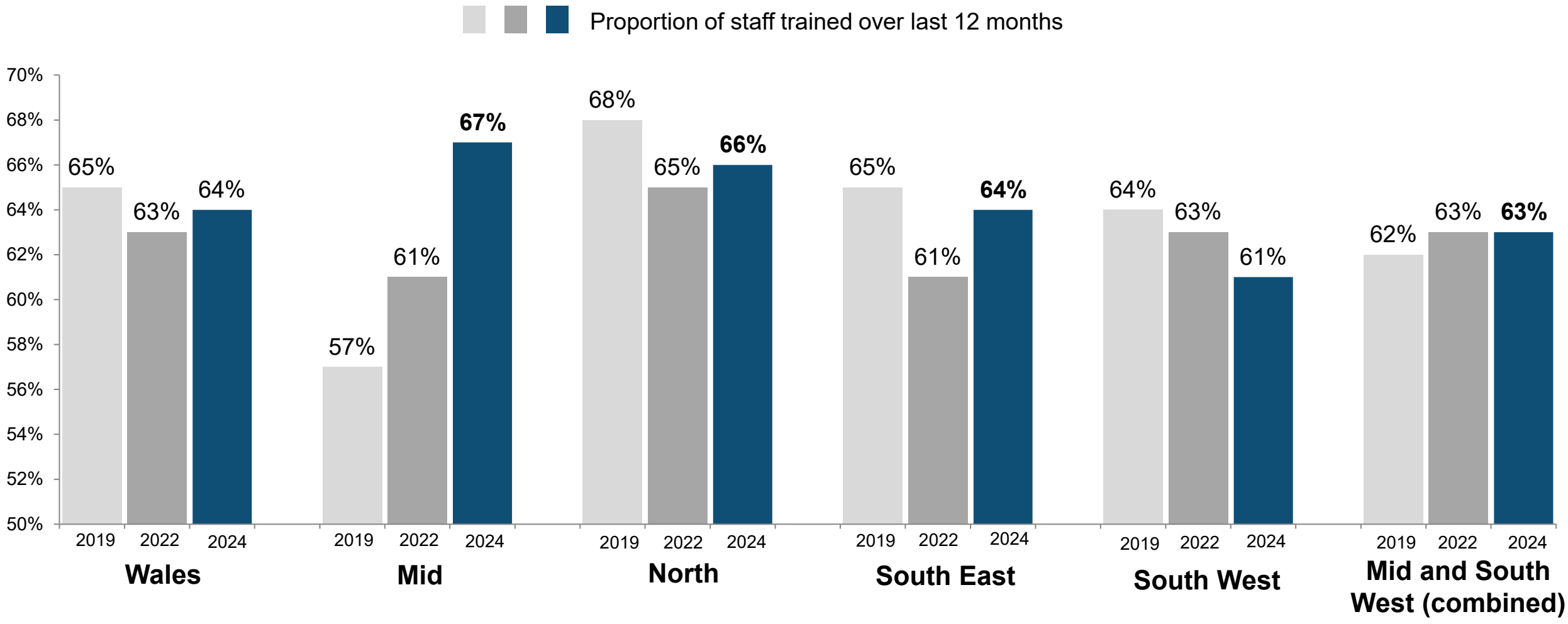
Base: All sites in Wales: 5,605; Regional base sizes range from 717 in Mid Wales to 2,310 in South East Wales.

Employers in Education and Health and Social Work were most likely to have provided any training



Base: All sites in Mid Wales 2024 (base sizes range from 33 in Arts & Other Services to 121 in Primary Sector & Utilities). ***Where base sizes are under 30 within a sector, data has been removed (denoted by a double asterisk); where base sizes are between 30 and 49, an asterisk has been included next to the data value.***

The proportion of staff trained in Mid Wales increased from 2022 and 2019

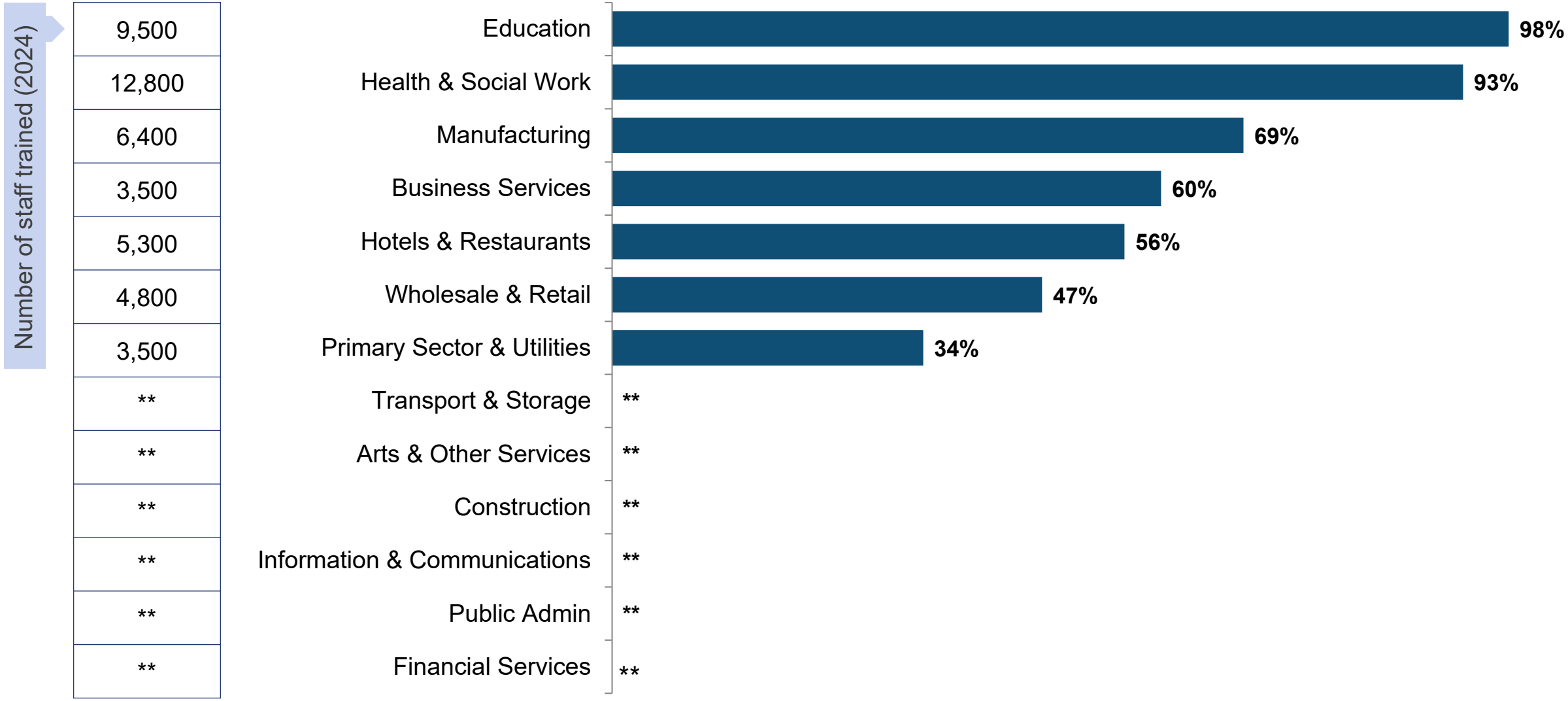


823,400	54,000	192,000	410,700	166,700	220,700

Number of staff trained (2024)

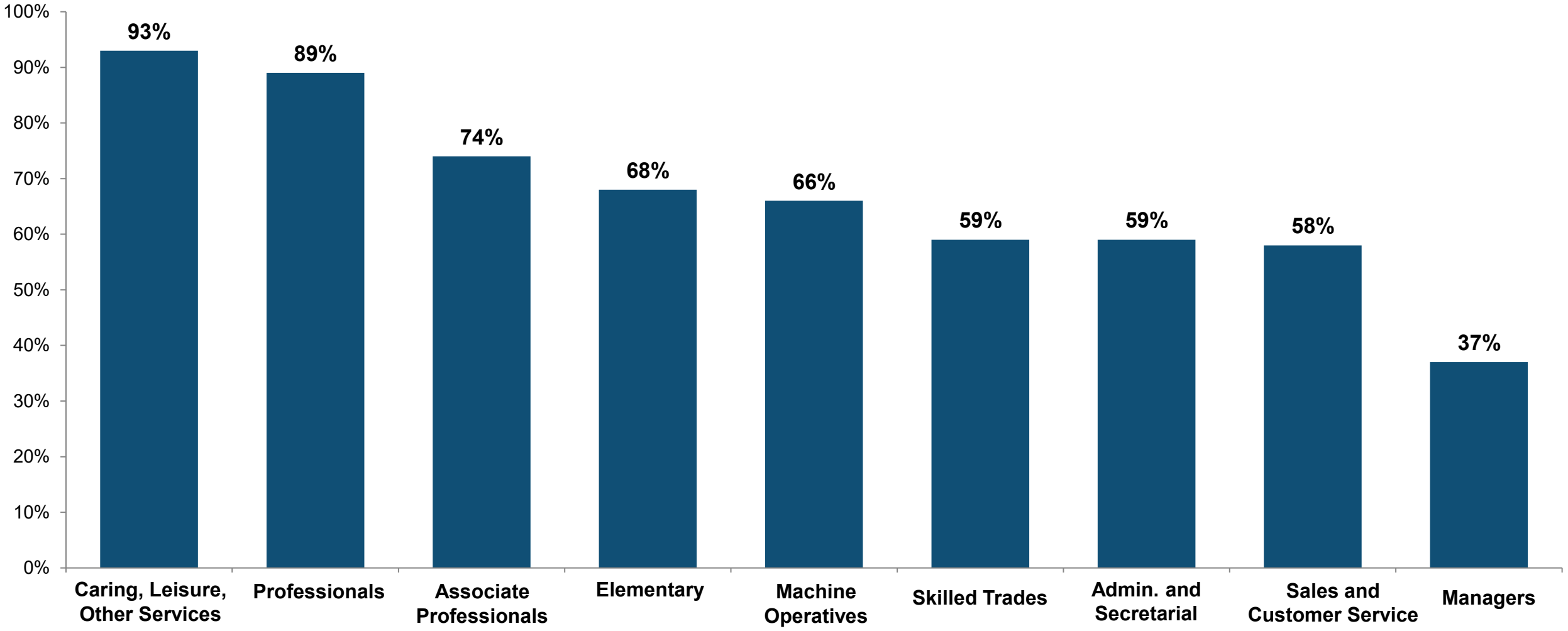
Base: All sites in Wales (2024: 5,605; 2022: 4,825; 2019: 6,773). 2024 regional base sizes range from 717 in Mid Wales to 2,310 in South East Wales.

Employers in the Education and Health & Social Work sectors had trained the highest proportions of their staff



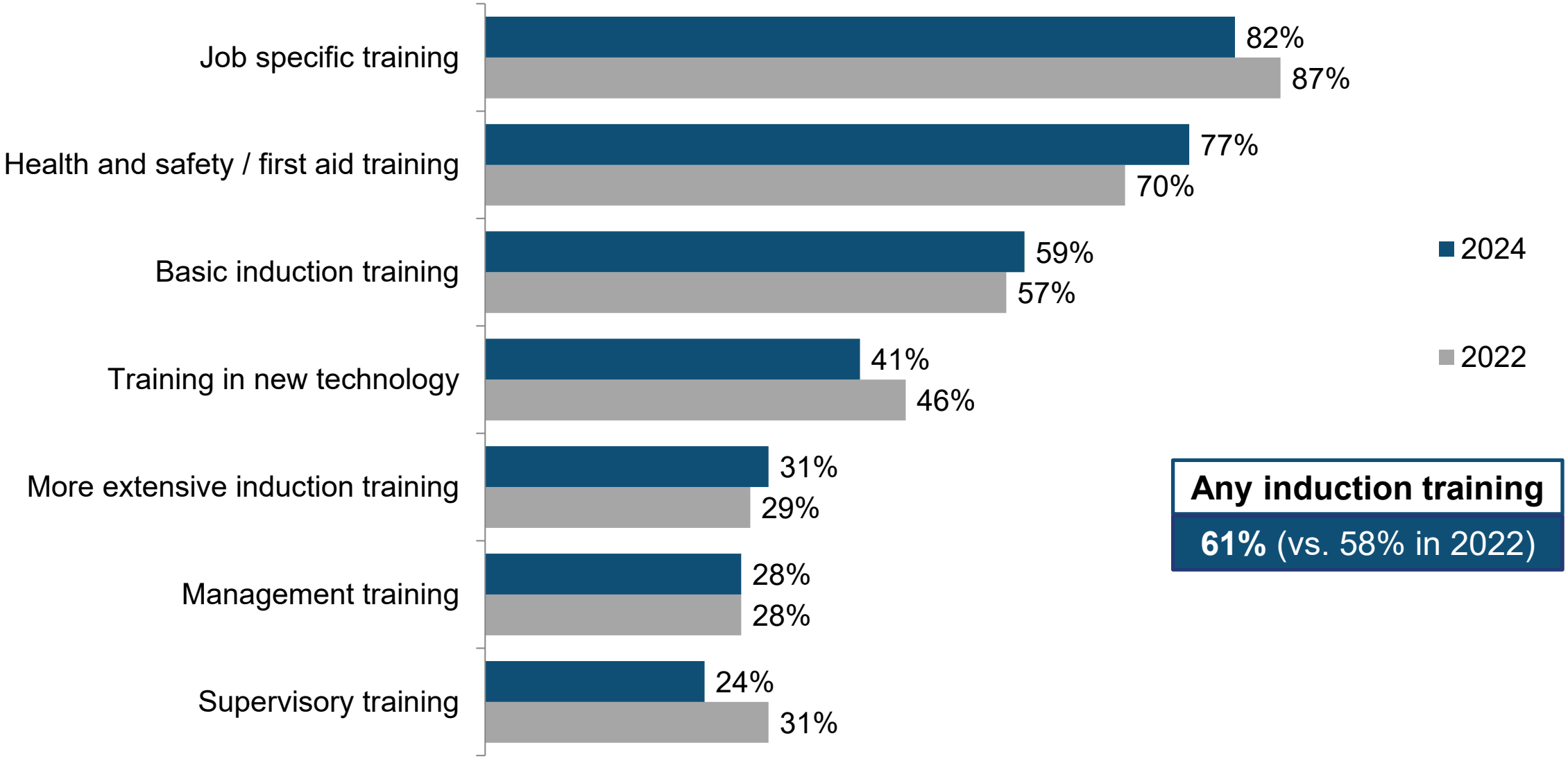
Base: All sites in Mid Wales 2024 (base sizes range from 53 in Education to 121 in Primary Sector & Utilities). ***Where base sizes are under 30 within a sector for 2024, data has been removed (denoted by a double asterisk); where base sizes are between 30 and 49, an asterisk has been included next to the data value. When base sizes are small, volume and density measures at subgroup level can be heavily influenced by a small number of cases. Results should be interpreted with caution.***

Those in Caring, Leisure & Other Services and Professional roles were most likely to have received training in the past 12 months



Base: All that employ each occupation in Mid Wales (excluding modelled data) (2024 base sizes range from 65 for Machine Operatives to 308 for Managers).

The most common type of training, as in 2022, was job specific training, followed by health and safety / first aid training

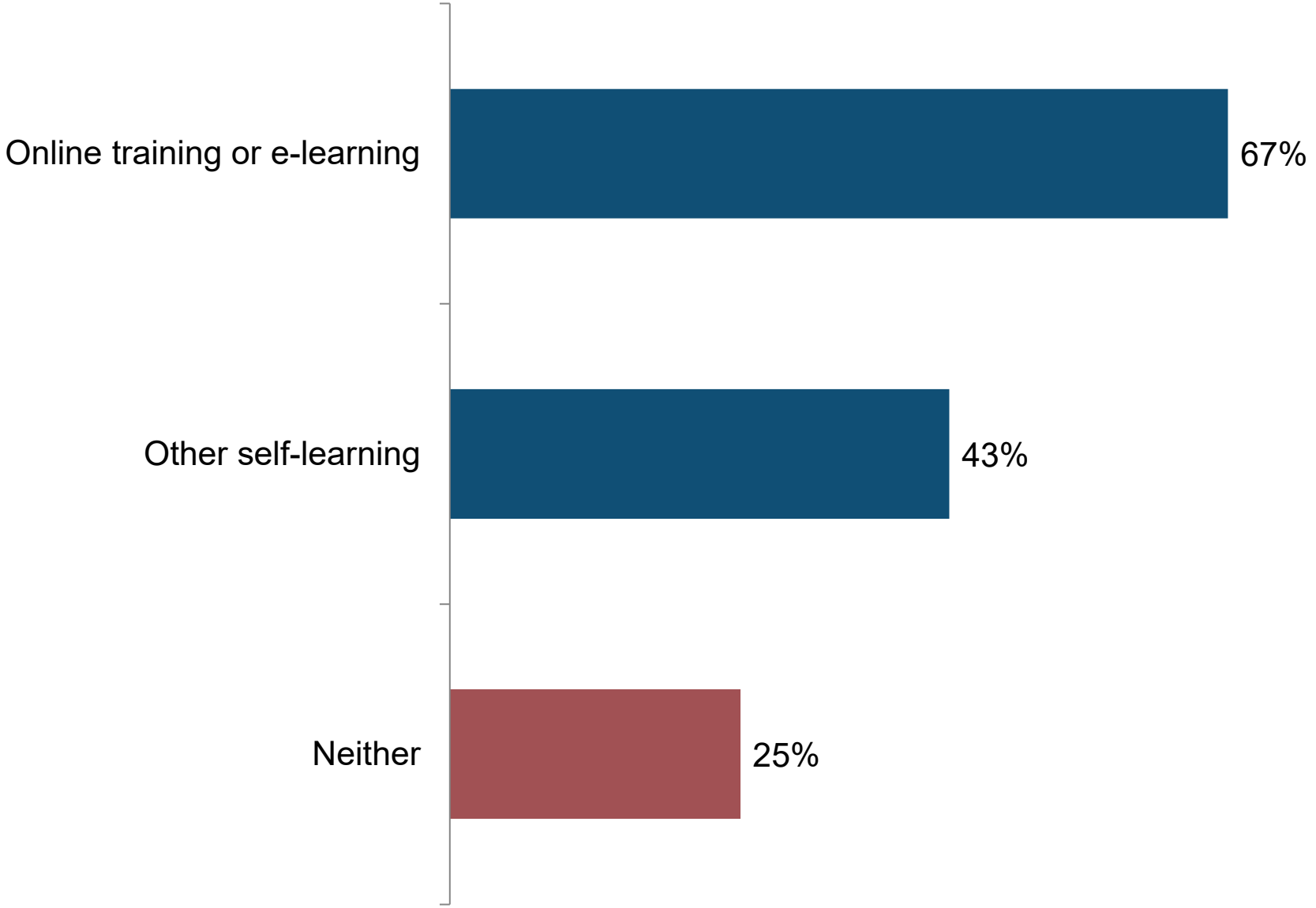


Any induction training

61% (vs. 58% in 2022)

Base: All sites in Mid Wales that train (2024: 481; 2022: 456).

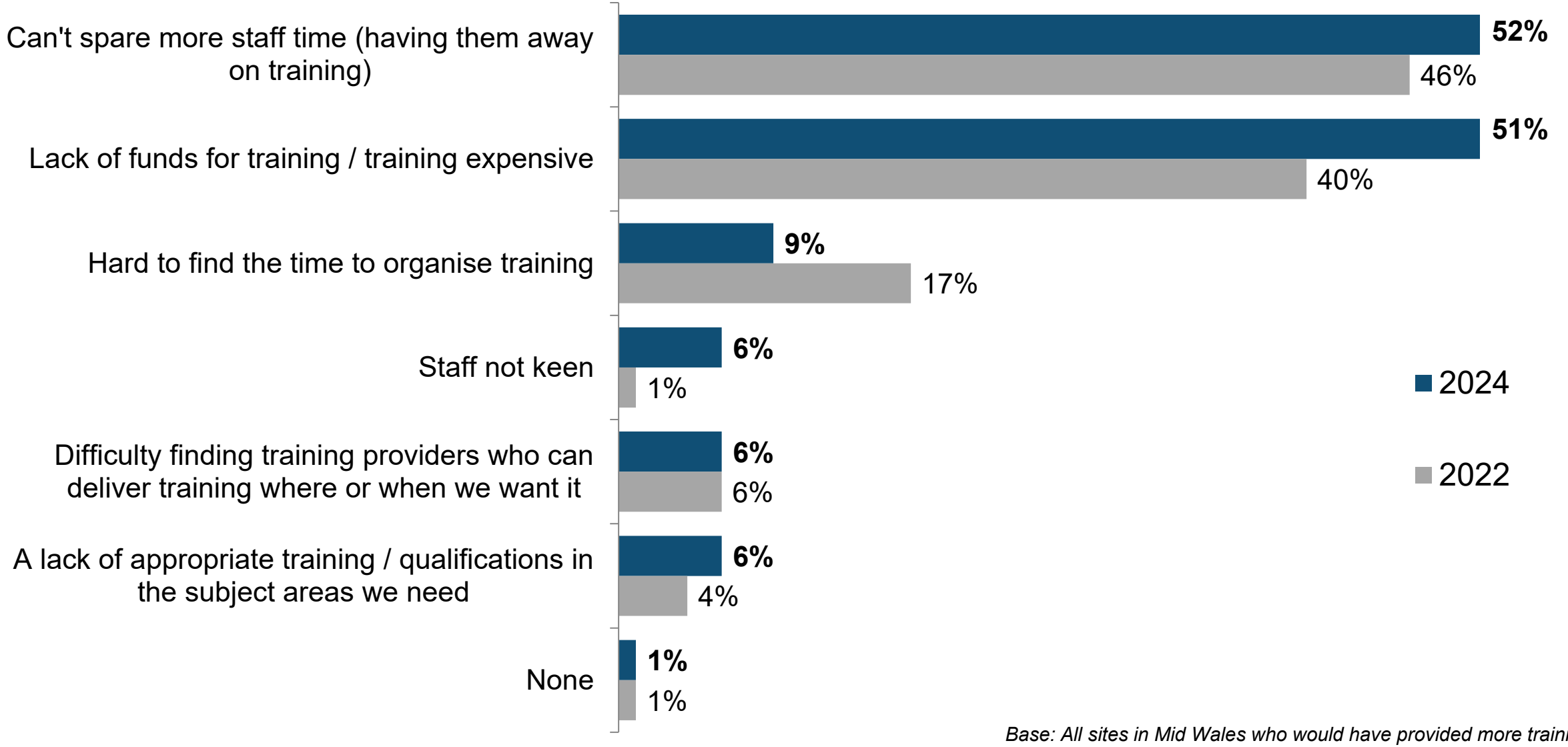
Over two-thirds of employers that trained their staff offered online or e-learning training



Any online training or self-learning	74%
Both	36%

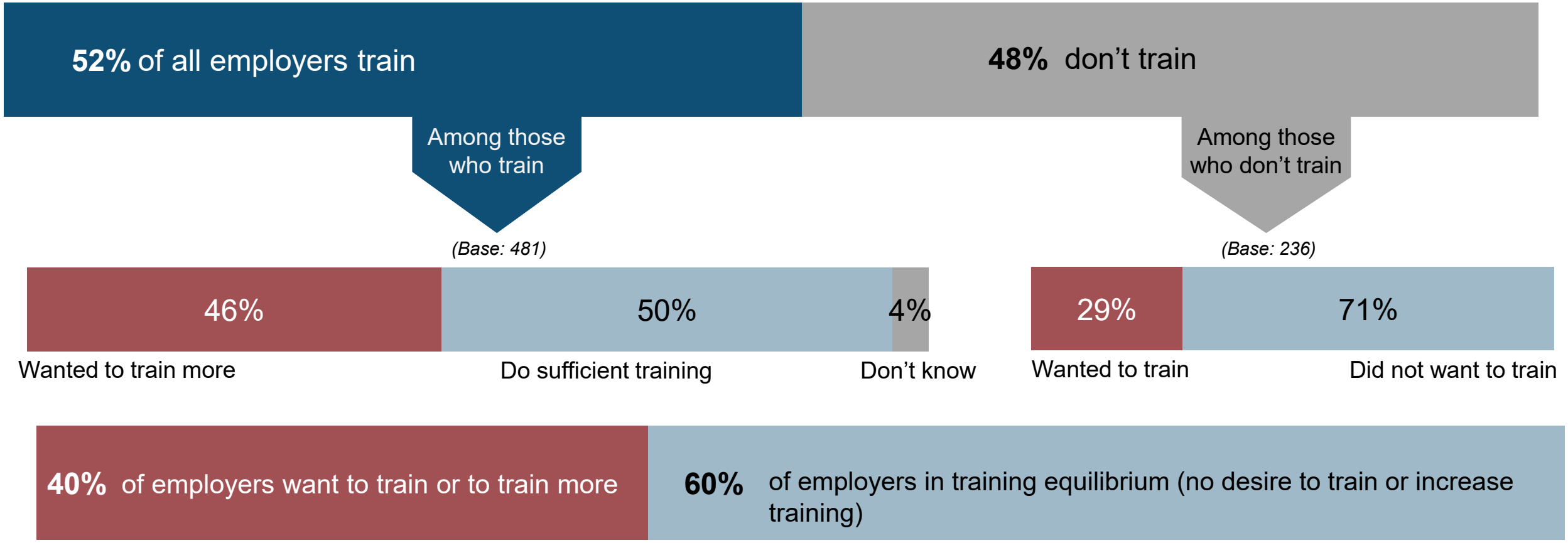
Base: All sites in Mid Wales that train (2024: 481).

The inability to spare more staff time and a lack of funds for training were the most cited barriers to employers providing more training



Base: All sites in Mid Wales who would have provided more training in the past 12 months if they could (2024: 247; 2022: 249).

A majority of employers were content with their current levels of training



*Note training employers responding 'Don't know' (4%) have been included in the group 'Want to train more' on the final measure

Base: All sites in Mid Wales (717). Note, the percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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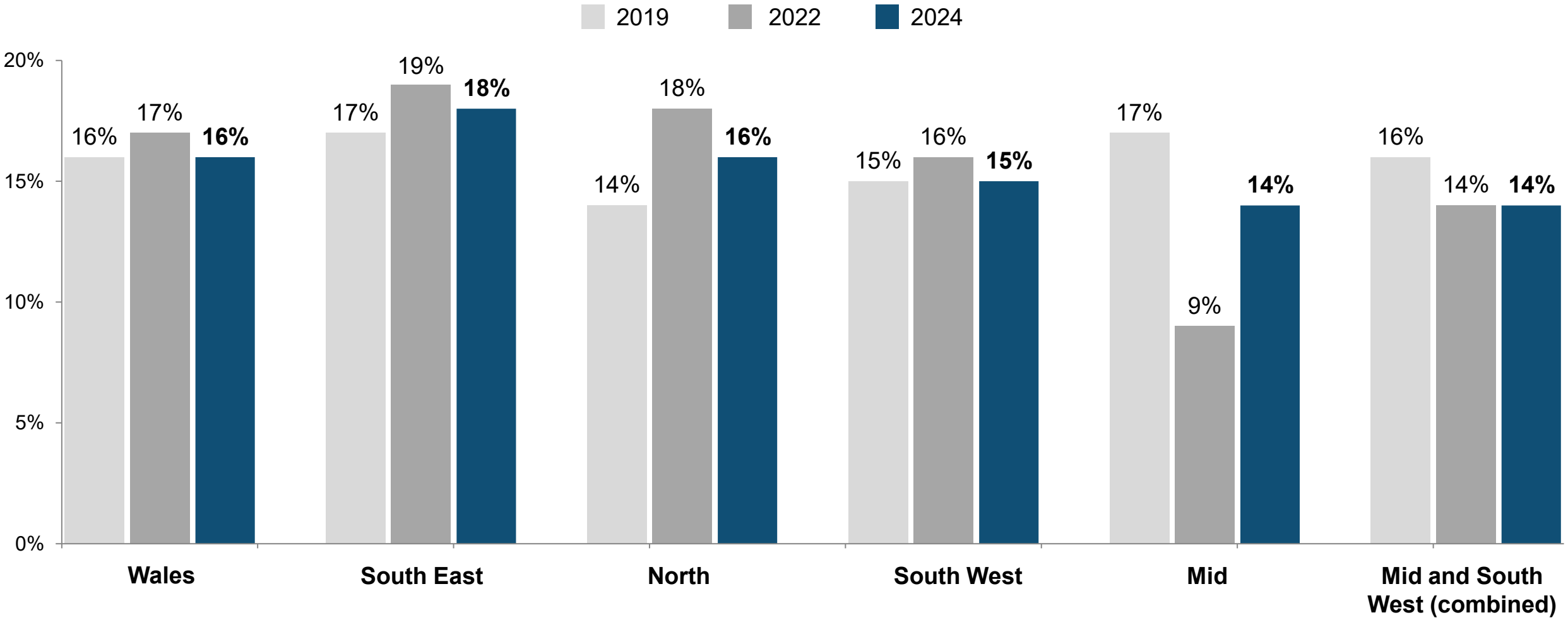
Apprenticeships

Department for Education

IFF Research

The proportion of employers who offered apprenticeships was similar to previous years across the Welsh regions



Base: All sites in Wales (Module A) 2024: 1,379; 2022: 1,239; 2019: 1,704. 2024 regional base size ranges from 181 in Mid Wales to 568 in South East Wales.

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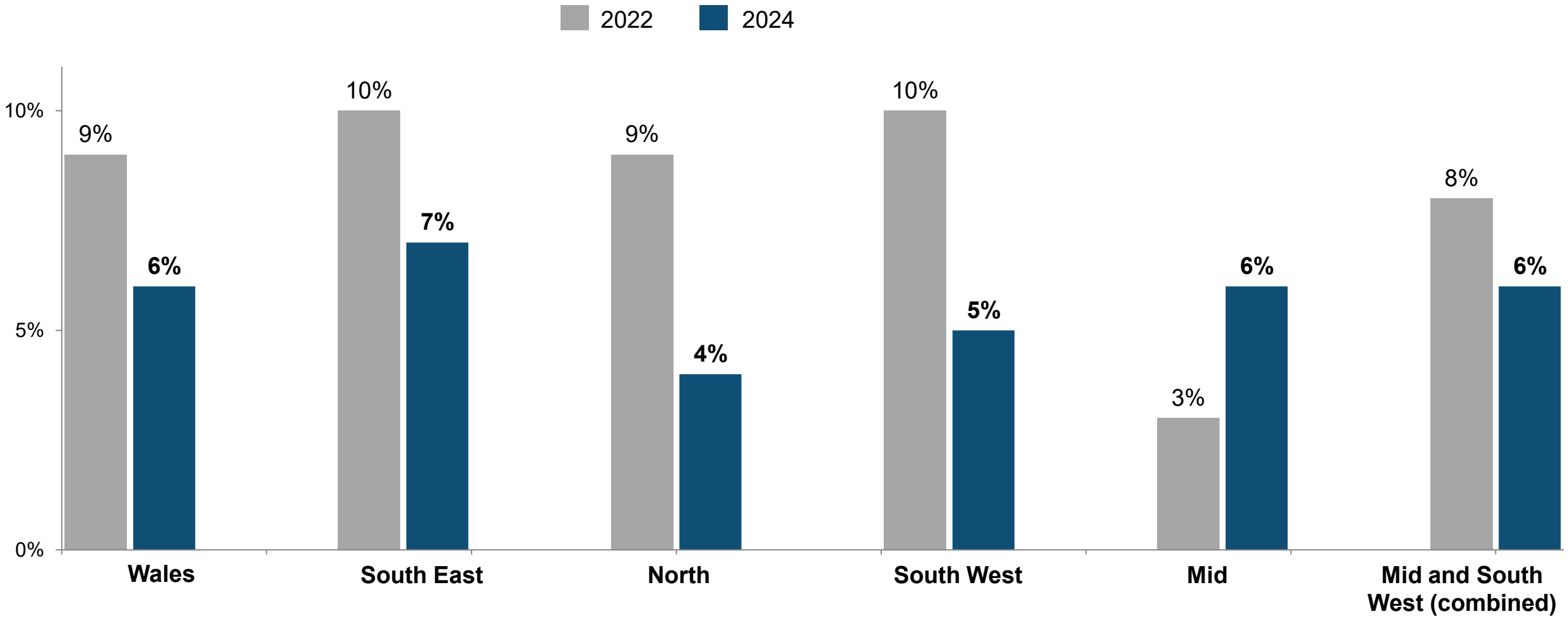
High Performance Working Practices

High Performance Working (HPW) practices are practices recognised to ensure employee skills are harnessed, nurtured and used to their best effect

Department for Education

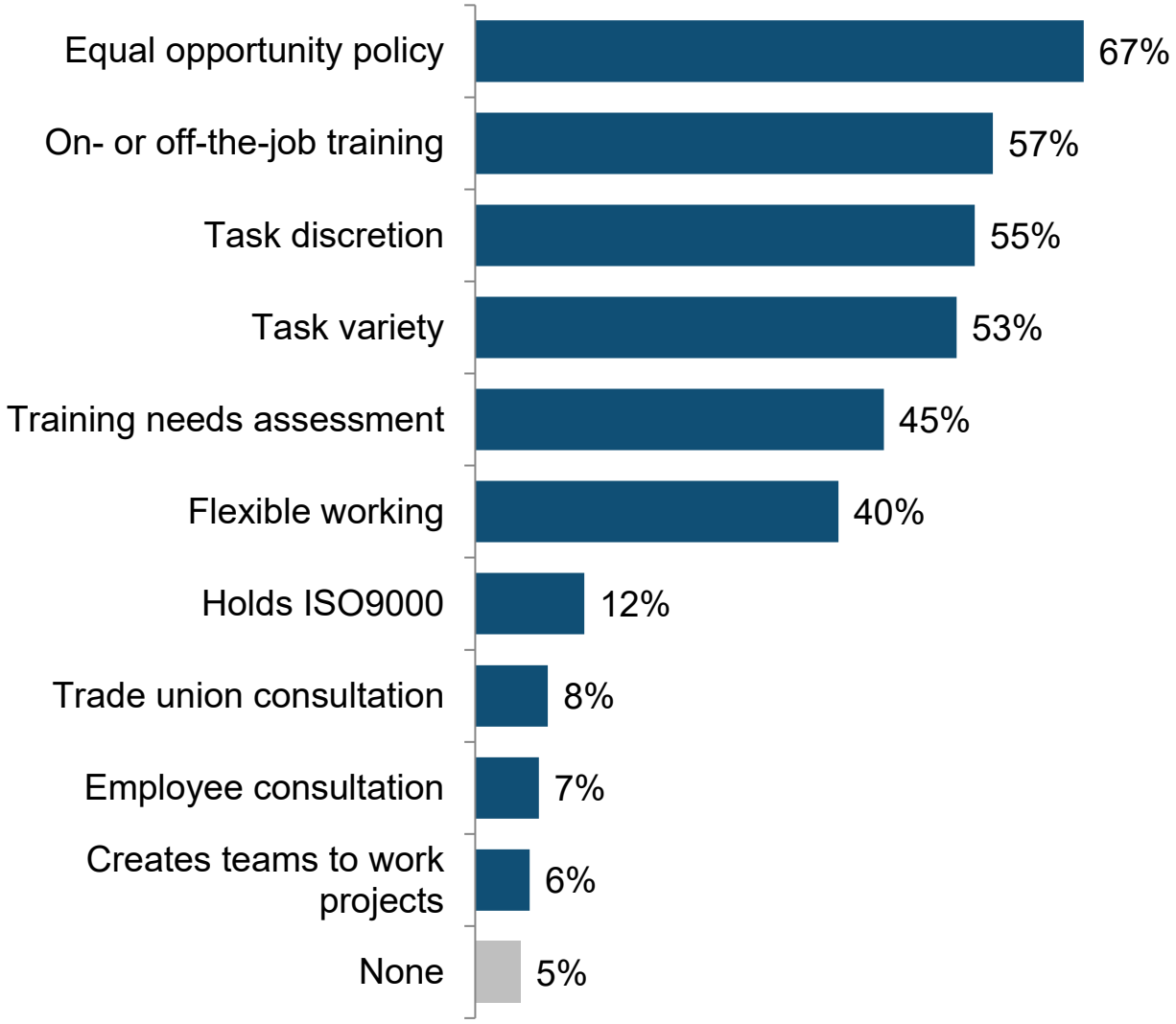
IFF Research

The proportion of HPW employers in Mid Wales was in line with Wales overall. Employers in North Wales were least likely to be HPW employers.



Base: All sites in Wales 2024: 1,398; 2022 (Module D): 1,153. 2024 regional base size ranges from 190 in Mid Wales to 595 in South East Wales.

The most common HPW practice implemented by employers was having an equal opportunity policy



6%

were HPW employers (defined as having 7 of 10 HPW measures in place)

4 practices

was the average number of HPW practices adopted

Base: All sites in Mid Wales (190).

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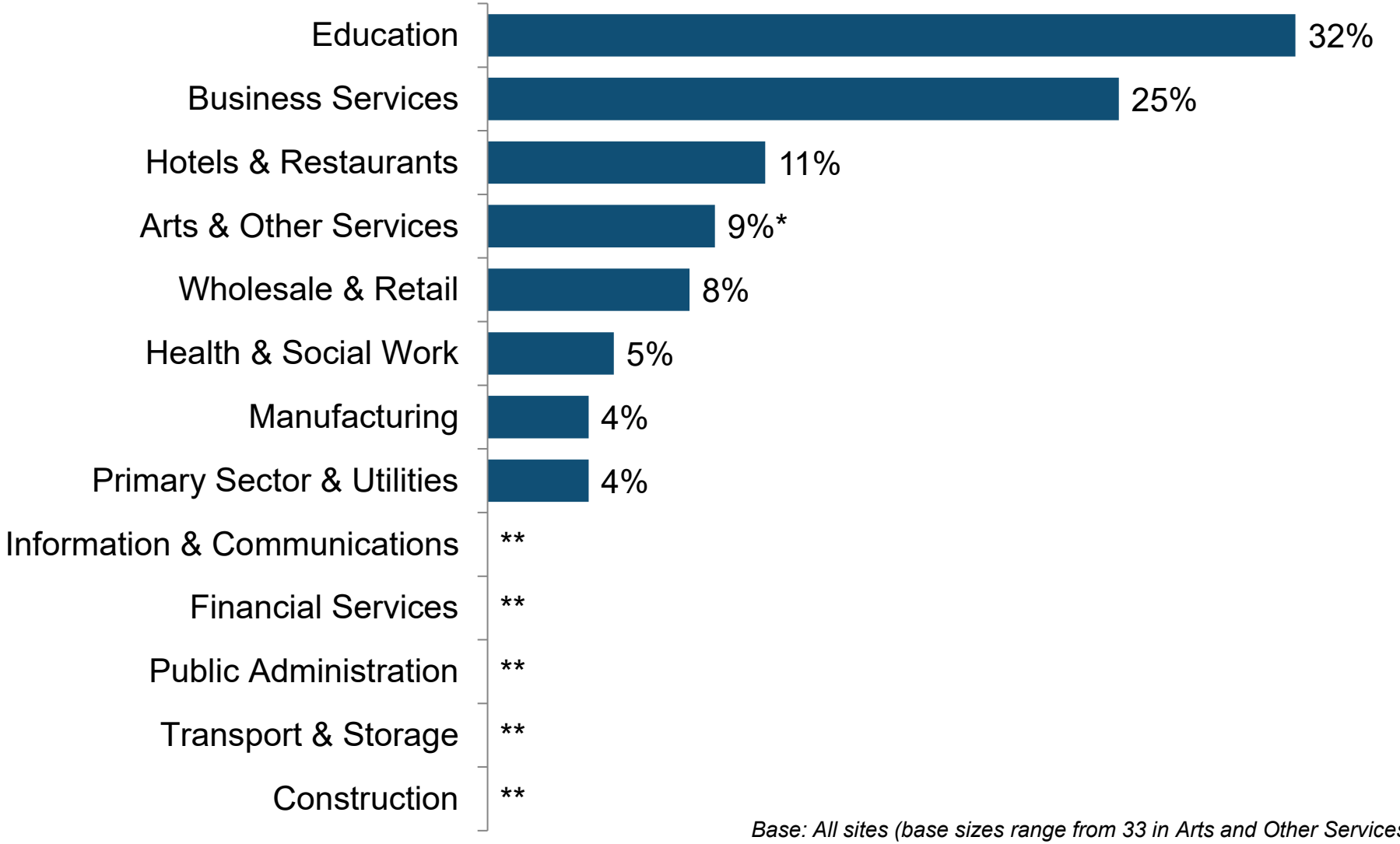
Current and planned use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Department for Education

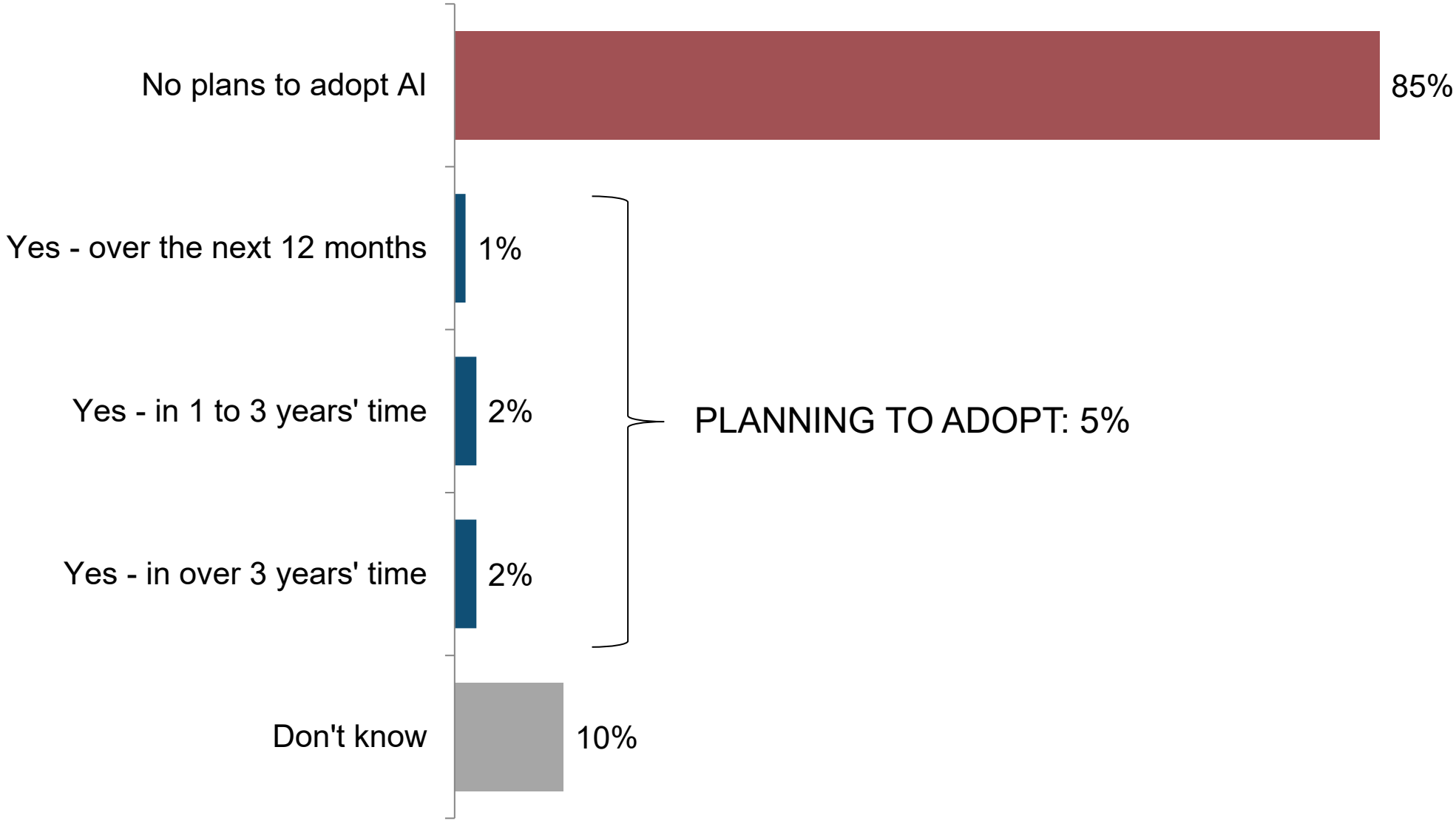
IFF Research

AI use was most common among Education employers



Base: All sites (base sizes range from 33 in Arts and Other Services to 121 in Primary Sector and Utilities). ***Where base sizes are under 30 within a sector, data has been removed (denoted by a double asterisk); where base sizes are between 30 and 49, an asterisk has been included next to the data value.***

Most employers not using AI had no plans to adopt it



Base: All sites that do not use Artificial Intelligence (AI) (605).

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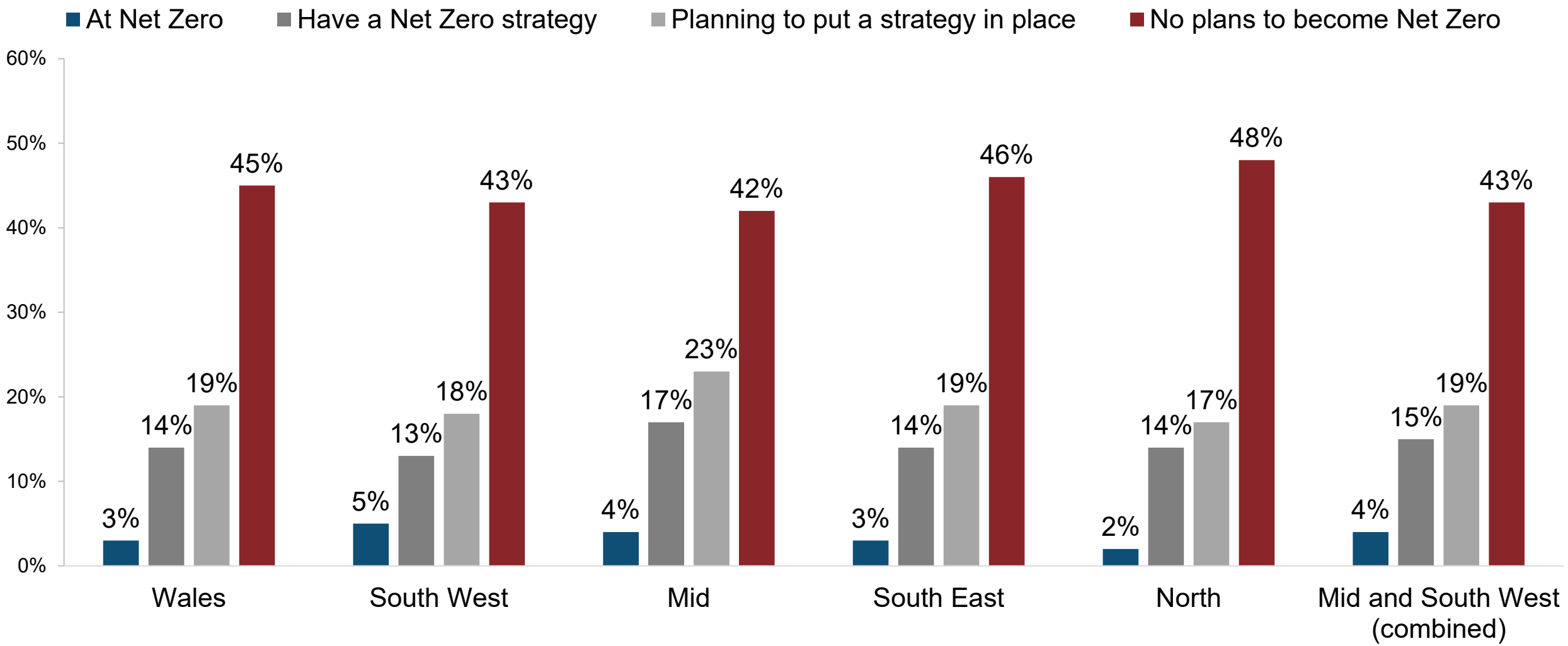
Net Zero

Department for Education

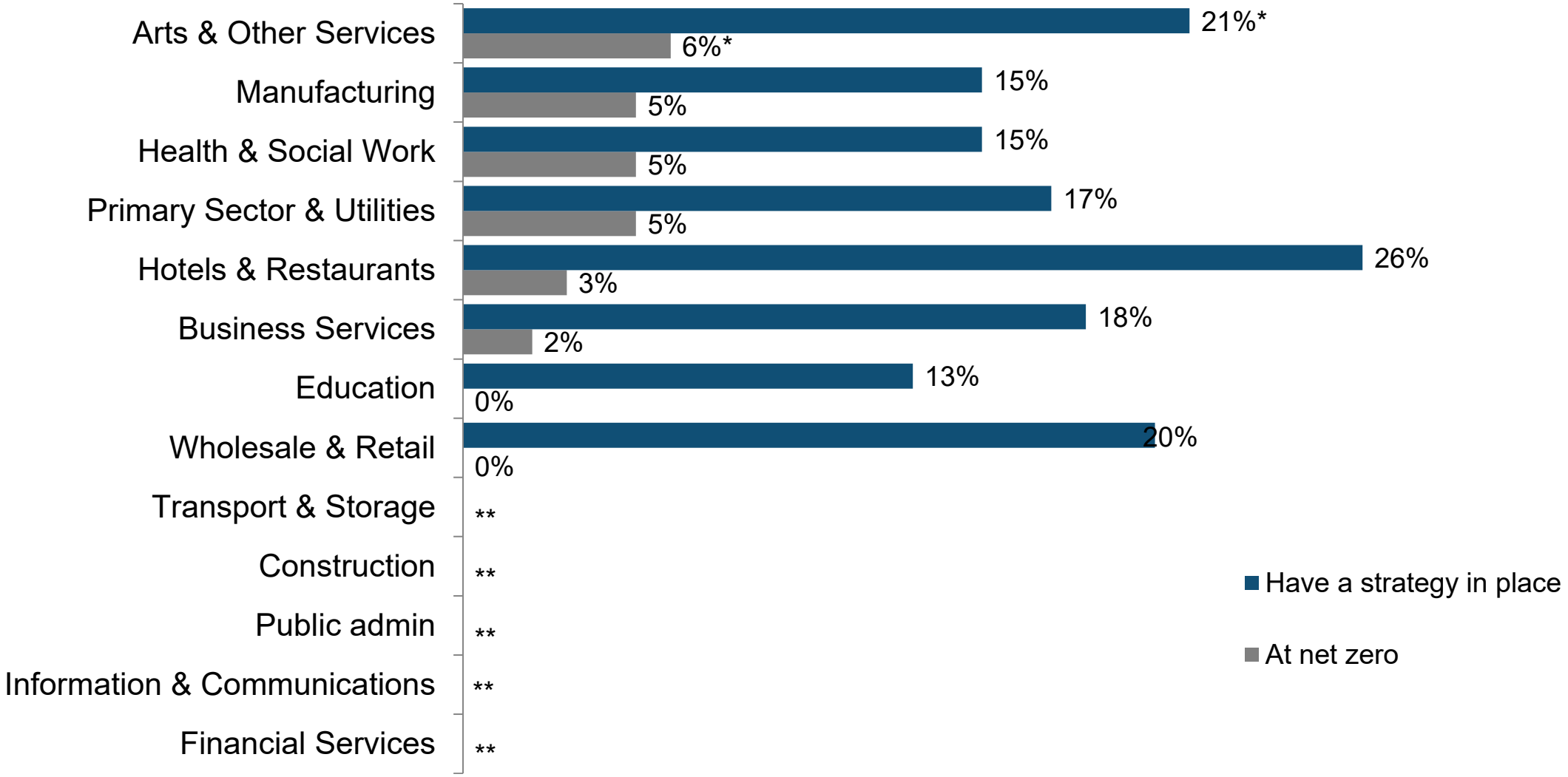
IFF Research

Mid Wales was the region most likely to have a Net Zero strategy in place



Base: All sites in Wales (5,605). Regional base size ranges from 717 in Mid Wales to 2,310 in South East Wales.

Arts & Other Services had the highest proportion of employers already at Net Zero



Base: All sites in Mid Wales (717). Sector base sizes range from 33 in Arts and Other Services to 121 in Primary Sector and Utilities).
Where base sizes are under 30 within a sector, data has been removed (denoted by a double asterisk); where base sizes are between 30 and 49, an asterisk has been included next to the data value.

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Summary and conclusions

Department for Education

IFF Research

Summary of Findings - 1

- **Incidence of vacancies (13%) and density of vacancies (3.4%) remained consistent with previous years.**
- **Skill-shortage vacancies (SSVs) affected a smaller proportion of employers than in 2022** (4% vs. 7% in 2022). SSVs made up nearly a fifth of all vacancies (23%), which was less than in 2022 (35%).
- The proportion of employers reporting skills gaps (8%) and the density of skills gaps (3.3%) **remained consistent with previous years**.
- **Employers in Hotels and Restaurants and Manufacturing had the highest density of skills gaps** (8.1% and 7.6% respectively). As with the rest of Wales, **the occupation with the largest skills gap density was Sales and Customer Service roles** (7%)**.**
- **As in 2022, a large proportion of skills gaps were caused, at least partly, by transient causes (84%),** such as being new to the role and not having completed their training yet. For **15% of employers, skills gaps had a major impact on the organisation**, with a further 53% reporting a minor impact. The most common impact being an increased workload for other staff (53%).
- Employers reported that **specialist skills (45%)** and **knowledge of the organisation products and services (44%)** were the technical skills most often missing in employees. **Ability to manage and prioritise own tasks (66%)** and **team working (57%)** were the soft skills most frequently reported as missing in employees.

Summary of Findings - 2

- Nearly **a third (31%)** of **staff in Mid Wales were underutilised** in their current job role, compared with 37% in 2022 (this was not a statistically significant decrease).
- **The proportion of employers that had provided training in Mid Wales in the last 12 months was lower than Wales as a whole (52% vs. 60%)** and was consistent with 2022 (49%). The proportion of staff trained increased from 61% in 2022 to 67% in 2024.
- Employers in the Education sector trained the highest proportion of their staff (98%), whereas staff in **Primary Sector and Utilities were least likely to have received training** (35%). By occupation, **Caring, Leisure & Other Services staff** (93%) and **Professionals** (89%) were the occupations most likely to receive training while **Managers were least likely** (37%).
- **Around a fifth (14%) of Mid Wales employers currently had, or offered apprenticeships,** in line with the Wales average (16%).
- A small proportion of employers in Mid Wales (6%) were **considered to be a High Performance Working employer,** in line with the 2022 figure (3%) and the Wales average in 2024 (6%).
- One in 10 (10%) of employers used AI, with **employers in the Education sector (32%) being the most likely to do so**. Among those who did not use AI, over three-quarters (85%) had no plans to do so.
- **A minority of employers in Mid Wales said they were at Net Zero (4%)**. A further 17% had a strategy in place to become Net Zero, the highest proportion of all the Welsh regions (14% across Wales).

Conclusions

- Mid Wales had the lowest proportion of employers reporting vacancies across all Welsh regions, and levels of vacancies have remained relatively consistent in the region since 2019. Challenges around the skills supply had lessened in Mid Wales since 2022, with the proportion of vacances which were skill-shortage vacances (SSVs) decreasing from 35% in 2022 to 23% in 2024.
- In terms of the internal skills picture, the proportion of employers with skills gaps was lower in Mid Wales than across Wales overall. Skills challenges continued to be detrimental to employers in Mid Wales, with the most commonly reported impact continuing to be an increased workload for the existing workforce, which is consistent with employers across Wales and the UK.
- Training and workforce development can be a means of addressing skills challenges. A lower proportion of employers in Mid Wales (52%) reported arranging or funding training for their staff in the last 12 months compared to other regions in Wales (60% across Wales overall). It remained the case that many employers did not feel their staff required training as they are already fully proficient.
- The proportion of employers who had apprentices, or offered apprenticeships, was largely consistent with levels across Wales and with 2022 in Mid Wales. However, a lower proportion reported that they plan to offer them in the future when compared to 2022, a trend seen across other regions in Wales and the UK.
- Looking at employer practices, a minority in Mid Wales were considered to be High Performance Working (HPW) employers. One in 10 employers (10%) in Mid Wales said their site currently uses AI, in line with the proportion across other Welsh regions, and around 1 in 6 employers (17%) had a Net Zero strategy in place, the highest proportion by region.