

Review of Education and Training within the Hospitality and Catering Sector in the West Midlands

Final Report, March 2004

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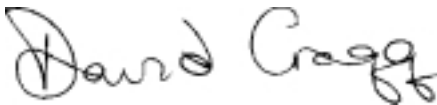
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Foreword

The West Midlands Regional Review of Hospitality and Catering has been a comprehensive exercise featuring a detailed analysis of the demand for education and training in the sector and of the provision made by the region's colleges and work based learning providers. The views of employers, students, and trainees have been actively sought and have informed the conclusions and recommendations in this report. The single most important issue is the mismatch between the requirement for trained staff and the numbers being trained, with the key shortages being in skilled occupations such as chefs. The opportunities for providers are obvious with employer based assessment and work based learning being obvious areas for a rapid growth in provision.

I would like to express my thanks to everyone who contributed to the review. The Steering Committee worked long and hard, particularly Brian Turner the chair who in addition to leading the process spent a great deal of time travelling around the region to look at facilities and gain the views of practitioners and employers. His commitment was much appreciated by all who met him.

This report contains a number of far reaching conclusions and recommendations and the new regional structure of the LSC will help with the implementation. Our network of Centres of Vocational Excellence in the West Midlands also has a key role to play in developing the scale and quality of provision. This includes promoting Modern Apprenticeships to employers and young people as a viable alternative route to a career in the industry, which also has progression opportunities into higher education, and supporting all providers through staff and curriculum development. We are fortunate in the region in having the Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative studies which has an international reputation for its catering and hospitality programmes at all levels and the report looks to the college to give clear leadership in enhancing the perception of the industry amongst potential students and trainees.



David Cragg

LSC Regional Director West Midlands
Learning and Skills Council

1. Introduction

Sector reviews of the education and training provision compared to employment trends and needs are a key feature of the work of the Learning and Skills Council as part of a revised strategy for meeting the skills demand of the future. Typically, these reviews have been undertaken on a local basis, but due to the relatively small size of this sector and the tendency for learners and employers to operate across the boundaries of the six geographical areas, it was agreed to review Hospitality and Catering on a regional basis within the West Midlands. The review commenced in May 2003 and concluded in February 2004

The review was undertaken against a background of national research suggesting that the sector is failing to meet the essential needs of employers who are experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties as well as significant skills gaps within their existing workforce.

A Steering Group chaired by Brian Turner CBE was established and comprised of local employers, professional bodies, work-based training providers and colleges including the two Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), Connexions, Advantage West Midlands and representatives from each of the six LSCs in the region.

The members of the Steering Group are identified at Annex B.

2. Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the review is described within the Terms of Reference (Annex A).

To summarise the terms:

- Informing the future strategy and planning process of the West Midlands LSCs and local providers in the public and private training sectors
- Identifying gaps in and duplication of provision especially with respect to future demand for skilled people.
- Analysing the impact of significant local and regional developments on patterns of demand for skilled people
- Supporting the development of a catering and hospitality 'network' of excellence amongst key providers covering opportunities for new development including the co-location and/or consolidation of resources and expertise. This may include new Centre of Vocational Excellence proposals

3. Conduct of the Review

Whilst the Hospitality and Catering sector is relatively well defined there are a number of catering occupations that fall between food preparation and food production/supply. There are also some that are related to travel and tourism. Following an initial review of available data and early outcomes of some research within the sector, the Steering Group agreed the scope of occupations and qualifications that would be included within this review. These are identified within Annex D.

The regional perspective of this review afforded the opportunity to explore the current and potential impact of the two newly established CoVEs and to identify any issues that were influenced by local differences in supply and demand for skills in the West Midlands. Regional networks of employers and systems for collaboration in delivery did not exist; therefore it was important to develop groups of employers and co-ordinate data collection in all of the six local areas of the region. This work was co-ordinated by Birmingham & Solihull LSC and included the establishment of a Data sub-group and the use of a central co-ordinator and contracted researchers to undertake visits, compile the report and undertake a students perceptions survey. The Chair of the Steering Group also undertook a programme of visits to each area to explore a sample of facilities and resources and to meet with employers, providers and students.

The review drew upon a range of sources:

Analysis of regional data on the current provision for learners

This included a regional compilation of provision made by Colleges and Work Based providers including statistics for recruitment, retention and achievement.

Analysis of Labour Market Needs and issues defined by employers

This was drawn from the national survey and supplemented by the views expressed by employer groups and professional bodies through discussion with the Chair and an external researcher.

Analysis of current facilities and quality of provision

This was informed by an analysis of College and Provider inspection reports and from the visits made by the Chair and an external researcher.

Discussions with Providers

The Chair of the Steering Group with the support of an external researcher had discussions with a cross-section of providers, to put the outcomes of the data analysis into context.

Survey of student perceptions

A survey of students perceptions of current course provision and career opportunities was undertaken by Dr Peter Quaife: Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Aston . The survey included students who did not complete their programme as well as current learners in College and Work-Based provision.

Other relevant research

Recent or current research within the sector including the Labour Market Review for 2003 undertaken by the Hospitality Training Foundation (HtF), the National Employers survey (LSC), Local employers surveys and early outcomes of sector research from Advantage West Midlands.

4. Hospitality & Catering – National Perspective

The Hospitality Training Foundation concluded a national Labour Market Review in 2003 the key findings noted that employment within the hospitality industry continues to grow employing nearly 1.7 million people within the UK of whom just over half a million (31%) are employed within restaurants.

Kitchen porters represent the largest occupation (25%) followed by chefs/cooks (16%) and waiting staff (13%)

Since 2001, there has been a fall of 2.7% in the number of full-time employees to 48.1% with just under two-thirds of the total workforce represented by women.

The average age of the workforce has risen due to a significant increase in the age range 30-49 although a quarter of the pub workforce is aged under 19. One in five of all contract catering employees are aged over 50.

Nationally, the number of vacancies has fallen since 2001 by 8.1% with 93,360 recorded in 2002. The highest demand to fill vacancies is for kitchen porters (35%), followed by bar staff (24%), chefs (21%) and waiting staff (15%).

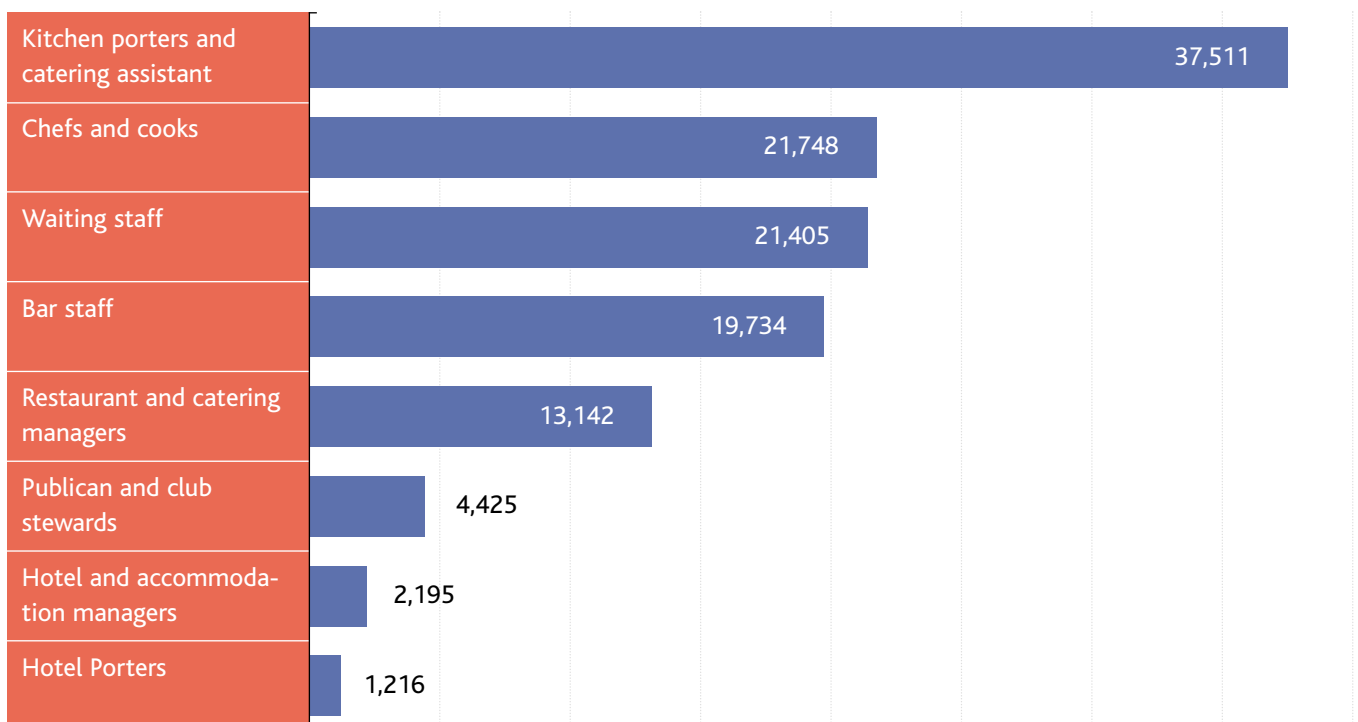
Salaries have risen marginally by 0.8% compared to a figure of 4.5% across all sectors with male workers earning more than female colleagues due to a trend that there are proportionally more women in occupations with low pay levels. Within the main occupations, the salary typically ranges from £28,850 for Catering Managers to £13,000 for Assistant chefs with some exceptions for large employers.

76% of all establishments employ less than 10 people, although the total number is declining (0.3%) but at a slower rate than in 1999 (2.8%). The number of establishments in contract catering has declined but there has been an increase in the number of people employed in this part of the sector. The HtF suggest that this may be due to changes in competitive tendering for public sector contracts.

West Midlands

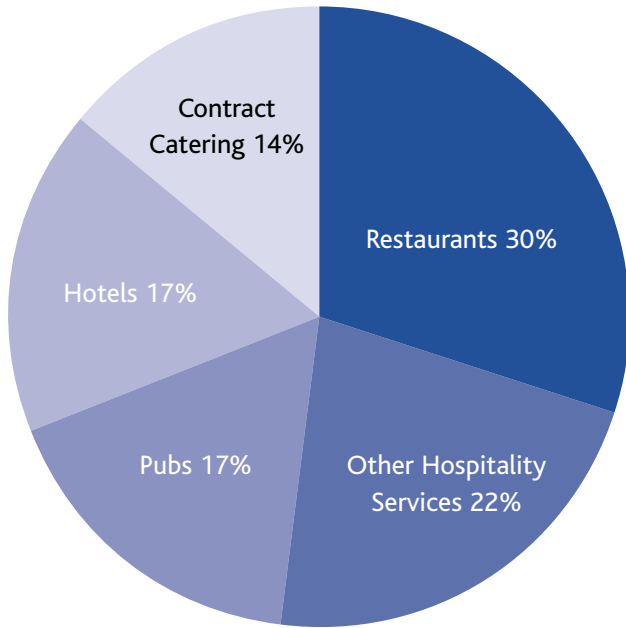
The West Midlands has the second least number of notified vacancies (8.9% of all vacancies) in the English regions after the North East (4.8%). The range of vacancies mirrors those for the rest of the UK.

Figure 1: West Midlands Vacancies 2001 (Source: HtF Labour Market Review 2003)



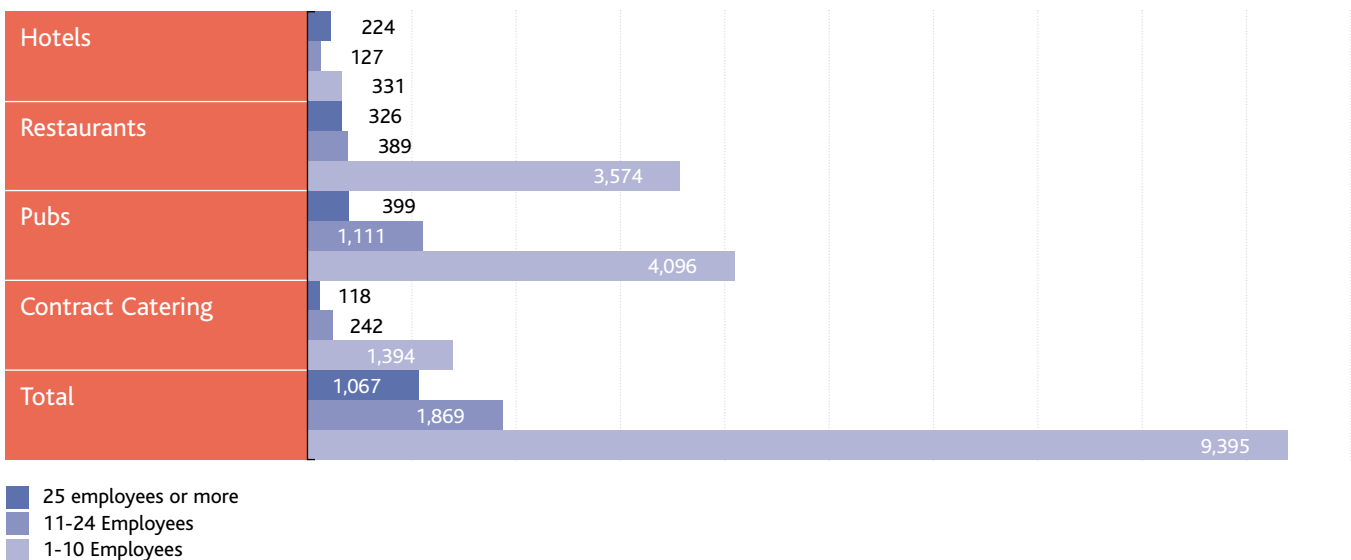
Over 133,000 people were employed in 2002 within the sector in the West Midlands, with nearly a third located in restaurants. Nearly one worker in every six is employed in hotels with an equal number employed within pubs and clubs. These figures broadly reflect the national profile.

Figure 2: West Midlands Hospitality Workforce 2002
(Source: HtF Labour Market Review 2003)



The sector is dominated by small enterprises with a few large employers. Three-quarters of the 12,300 establishments in the West Midlands employ ten people or less and only 9% of establishments have twenty-five or more employees. Small employers have greater difficulties in releasing staff for training and it is difficult to swiftly engage with large numbers of unconnected employers.

Figure 3: West Midlands Hospitality establishments by size of workforce 2001
(Source: HtF Labour Market Review 2003)



Qualifications and learning supply –National perspective

Since 2001, the proportion of the hospitality workforce without a qualification has increased by 7.5% to about 21% of all employees. The figure for restaurants is higher at 24.7% .

Over a quarter of the workforce has not gained a qualification above GCSE grades A-C or equivalent. The figures suggest that over a quarter of the workforce have not gained a formal qualification since leaving compulsory, full-time education.

Table 1: Highest qualifications held by hospitality employees by sector and percentage qualification breakdown

	Hotels	%	Rest'nts	%	Pubs	%	Contract Catering	%	Hospitality Businesses	%
Degree	8834	3.8	18392	4.3	10889	4.8	4441	2.9	42556	4.1
HND/HNC	8147	3.5	12081	2.8	6729	3.0	5391	3.5	32348	3.1
NVQ/SVQ level 3	4440	1.9	10692	2.5	6371	2.8	6664	4.4	28167	2.7
'A' Level or equivalent	19796	8.5	32915	7.7	41721	18.6	5053	3.3	99485	9.6
OND	6456	2.8	7078	1.7	5986	2.7	2476	1.6	21996	2.1
NVQ/SVQ level 2	16281	7.0	16068	3.8	8469	3.8	9674	6.3	50492	4.9
GCSE A-C or equivalent	72527	31.2	115908	27.2	62129	27.7	41218	26.9	291782	28.1
Other qualifications	53758	23.1	107635	25.3	44062	19.6	47151	30.8	252606	24.4
No qualifications	42492	18.3	105497	24.7	38200	17.0	31072	20.3	217261	21.0

Source: 2002 Labour Force Survey

The figure for "Other qualifications" represents mostly industry-specific qualifications such as health and safety, food hygiene and short programmes such as sugar craft, bookkeeping, bakery and customer service.

A greater percentage of waiting staff, chefs and bar staff have gained higher education awards than those in managerial occupations such as publicans and hotel managers. This may partly be due to the number of graduates working in the sector as a temporary measure but also highlights the lack of management qualifications being taken up.

Within England, the number of enrolments on hotel and catering programmes has increased for the first time in five years by 2.5%. However, the number of registrations in higher education awards from BTEC certificates to HND continues to decline over the same period with a fall of 5% in registrations. There has been a slight increase in first and higher degrees with 4050 awarded in 2000-01.

By January 2002 there had been 541,090 registrations for NVQs at levels 1 – 4 and 270,080 awards, suggesting that around half of all candidates do not complete their awards. The numbers of enrolments on NVQs continues to rise with a 17% increase between 2001 and 2002 of which the majority were on food preparation and cooking qualifications at level 2.

By July 2001, there had been just over 29,000 apprentices enrolled on Foundation Modern Apprenticeships but an analysis of the leavers' statistics suggests that 42% of

apprentices do not complete the programme and of nearly 37,000 Advanced Modern Apprentices (AMAs) the figure for non-completion is higher at 53%. The HtF suggest that this poor retention may be due to a number of conflicting factors including: poor initial assessment, changing career aspirations and poor job retention across the industry.

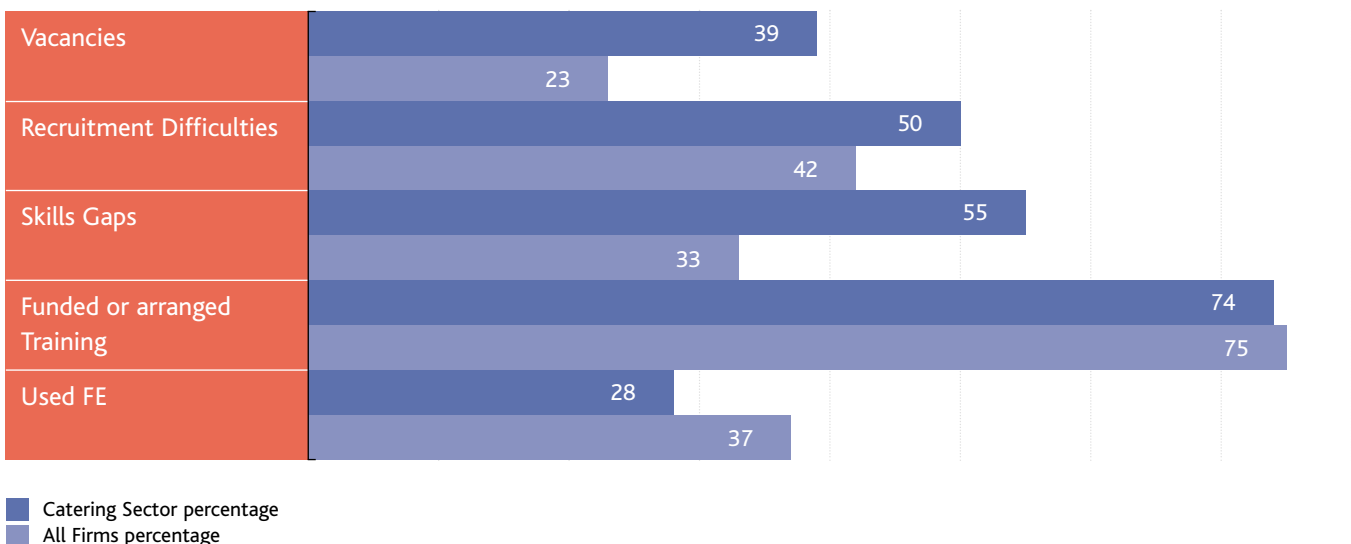
5. Hospitality & Catering in the West Midlands

During 2003, the LSC undertook a National Employer Skills Survey to identify current and potential demands for skills and training. After extracting information that was specific to the West Midlands and based upon responses from 476 employers, a number of emerging issues were identified. These are summarised as follows with additional comments drawn from the meetings with employers during the review.

Catering businesses in the West Midlands face a range of pronounced skills challenges:

- They are more likely to be attempting to recruit new staff to meet their labour and skill needs.
- They are more likely to be encountering difficulties in filling vacant positions.
- They are more likely than firms in other sectors to have identified a gap between the skills of their workforce and those required to take the business forward.

Figure 4: Employer Skills Issues in the West Midlands



However, despite these skills problems, catering organisations are no more likely than those in other sectors to be investing in the training and development of their workforce. More than a quarter provides no training or development whatsoever. Of the three quarters that do, about half is related to mandatory training for legal compliance and some informal coaching by others.

Usage of FE college training provision is particularly low in the sector. Less than 30% of those providing training have sourced this from FE institutions.

Recruitment Activity, Skill Gaps and Shortages

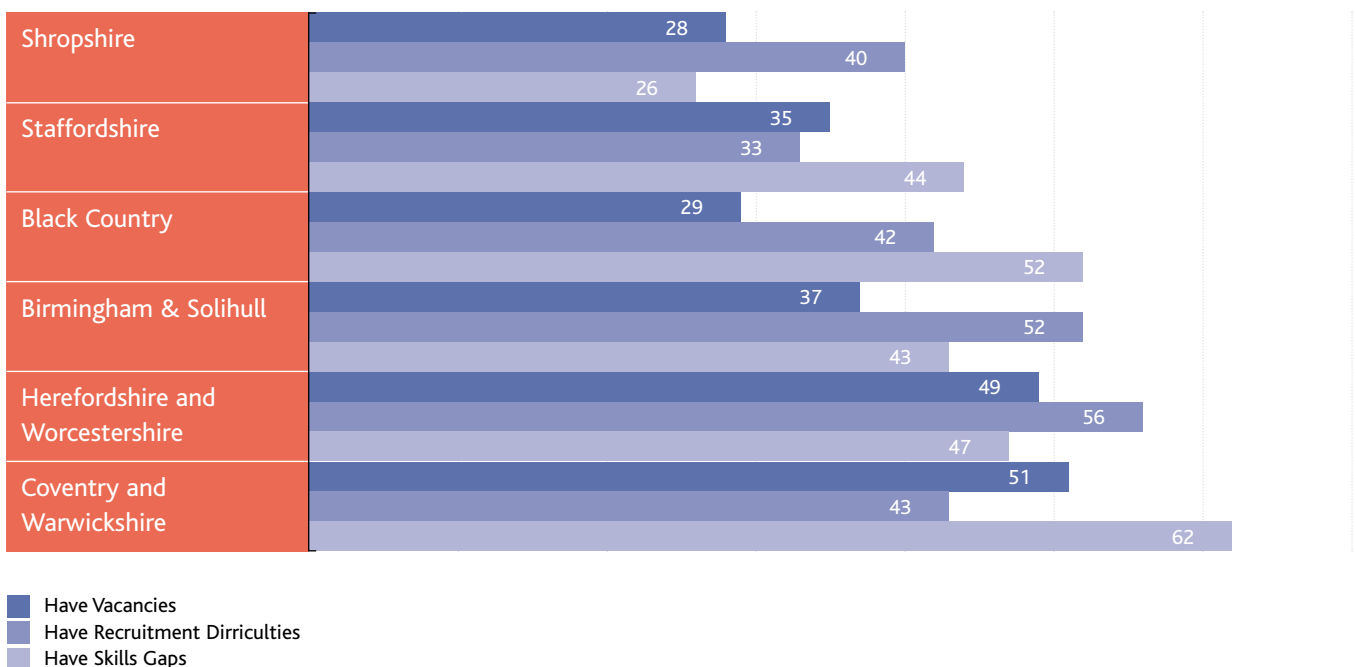
While recruitment activity, skill gaps and shortages can be identified throughout the West Midlands, there appears to be a particular 'hotspot' in the south and east of the region. While still significant, problems appear to be less pronounced in the North and West:

- Half of all catering organisations are currently looking to recruit in Herefordshire and Worcestershire and in Coventry and Warwickshire, while the figure is 35% in Staffordshire and 28% in Shropshire.
- Some 56% of organisations in Herefordshire and Worcestershire are experiencing recruitment difficulties, which compares with 40% in Shropshire and 33% in Staffordshire.
- Some 60% of organisations in Coventry and Warwickshire have identified gaps in the skills of their workforce, which compares with 43% in Staffordshire and 26% in Shropshire.

While recruitment difficulties partly reflect the negative image of the sector in terms of issues such as working conditions and unsociable hours, there are also problems relating to the quality of applicants and the need for specific skills.

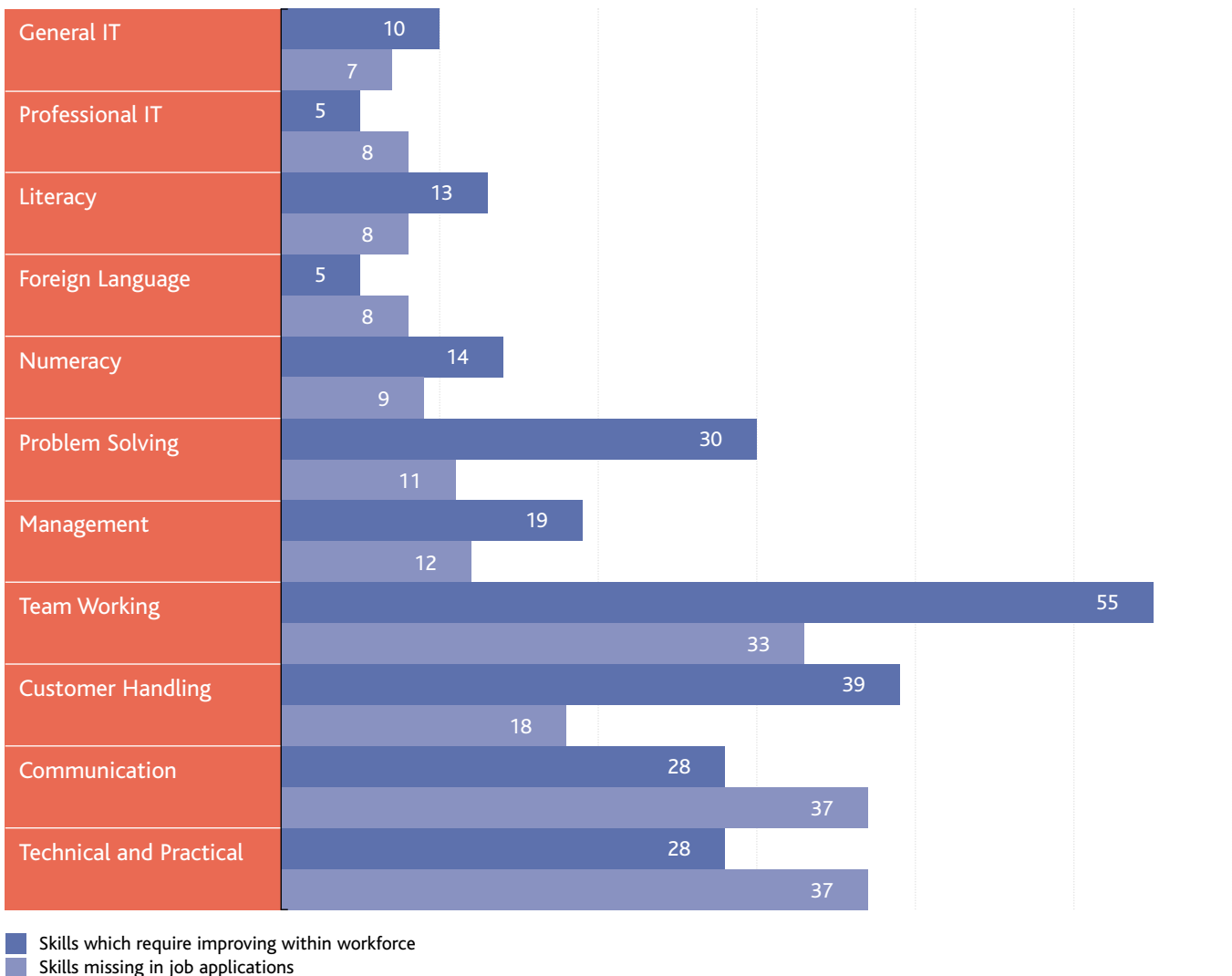
- There are problems across the full spectrum of occupations. Nearly 60% of organisations with vacancies are experiencing recruitment difficulties relating to chefs and other skilled areas such as bar, waiting staff and front-of-house occupations. All employers in the review confirmed that they had recruitment difficulties of some nature, with some continuously recruiting in an attempt to fill vacancies caused by the migration of people to marginally better pay or conditions.
- About a third of employers indicated that well qualified staff also migrate out of the area to London or abroad. Whilst some had adopted more flexible working patterns to address the traditional perception of unsociable hours, this had only a partial impact upon recruitment. Some difficulties related to travel in remote locations and responding to seasonal needs.
- A significant number of employers are recruiting from outside the West Midlands with a minority in the "higher" end of the restaurateur sub-sector seeking recruits from outside the UK. New employers associated with the Birmingham Bull-Ring retail development were unable to source suitable candidates in the West Midlands.

Figure 5: Employer Skills by LSC Area (Percentage of employers)



- A third of establishments feel that job applicants are deficient in technical and practical skills and 40% highlight deficiencies among their existing workforce. The majority of employers indicated that they were concerned about the levels of competence amongst qualified staff that they recruited. These concerns roughly fell into four areas:
 - Newly qualified – Employers felt that recently qualified employees were not as competent as they would expect in relation to some specific areas such as preparation of basic sauces and menus in catering or housekeeping procedures and standards in hotels. They also lacked expected levels of initiative taking.
 - Contemporary methods of food preparation – Conversely, several employers felt that many recruits lacked skills in the use of new and emerging methods of food preparation such as the use of cook-freeze and prepared sauces and portions. This was particularly evident within the public sector employers such as hospital and local government catering operators. Some felt that the available qualifications did not support the needs of the quickservice parts of the sector.
 - Specialist areas. A minority of employers reported that new and existing employees lacked sufficient skills in meeting specialist needs including food preparation for special dietary requirements, cultural cuisine, confectionery and bakery. Several owners of specialist Asian cuisine including Balti Restaurants indicated that recruits often lacked skills and knowledge of relevant food preparation and use of specialist equipment.
 - Managerial skills. Typically, this sector tends to identify managers from within the specialisms rather than recruit people with generic management skills or provide structured management development. With the exception of the larger employers, there are few natural progression paths to develop experience. Consequently, employers find it difficult to recruit managers with a sufficient range of management skills in addition to the relevant technical competence.

Figure 6: Skill Shortages by Type (percent of Firms)



- There are also major deficiencies in a range of 'softer' generic skills. Nearly 60% feel that their workforce is deficient in customer handling skills and nearly a third have identified deficiencies in job applicants. Nearly half of employers feel that their existing workforce is also deficient in communication skills. Employers consulted in this review confirmed the findings although most indicated that the lack of customer handling and general communication skills was more evident amongst the younger employees, especially recent school leavers.
- Employers also indicated that younger applicants lacked an appropriate understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of the working environment. Whilst this may be an inevitable attribute of school leavers, it appeared to be more pronounced than other sectors. Where possible, employers tend to prefer to recruit people with greater levels of experience and understanding but few are attracted by relatively low rates of pay.
- A minority of employers noted that a lack of basic skills in literacy and numeracy was becoming an issue, as legislation requires greater use of written procedures, recording and calculating basic volumes.

Figure 7: Recruitment Difficulties by Occupation (percentage of Firms with vacancies)



The trend in skills shortages is increasing. Rising customer expectations and increasing market competition within this sector are demanding greater levels of skills in literacy, numeracy, customer care, marketing, problem solving and team-working. The pace of change also demands a more flexible workforce whilst pay and conditions have only marginally improved. Consequently, employers are becoming more aware of the deficiencies in the existing workforce as well as within potential recruits and they are also realising the demand for more effective range of management skills.

Investment in Training and Workforce Development

More than 70% of catering organisations invest in some kind of training and development for their staff. However, very few offer training in all of the areas where skill deficiencies are particularly significant. While three quarters of those funding training provide job specific technical and practical skills, 90% provide mandatory health and safety training and 70% report that they provide induction

training, only 1% provide training in customer care or service. This contrasts strongly with the suggestion in other research that customer service was high on the list of skill shortages amongst both existing and potential staff.

Interviews with employers tend to confirm the survey findings. Several felt that they had to spend time enhancing or retraining in technical skills and processes as a priority within limited internal resources. Food hygiene and safety training were inevitably provided because of legislative requirements. Whilst many provide short-term advice and informal coaching, only the larger employers systematically identify training needs and provide the softer skills training such as customer service, up-selling and team building.

Several managers of smaller employers indicated that they either did not feel it was their job to identify and deliver softer skills or that they were unsure of how to identify them. They often noted that they would like further management development for themselves but did not feel they had enough time to pursue development or were unsure of where to source relevant training.

Figure 8: Types of training provided by employers (Percent of Firms Arranging Training)

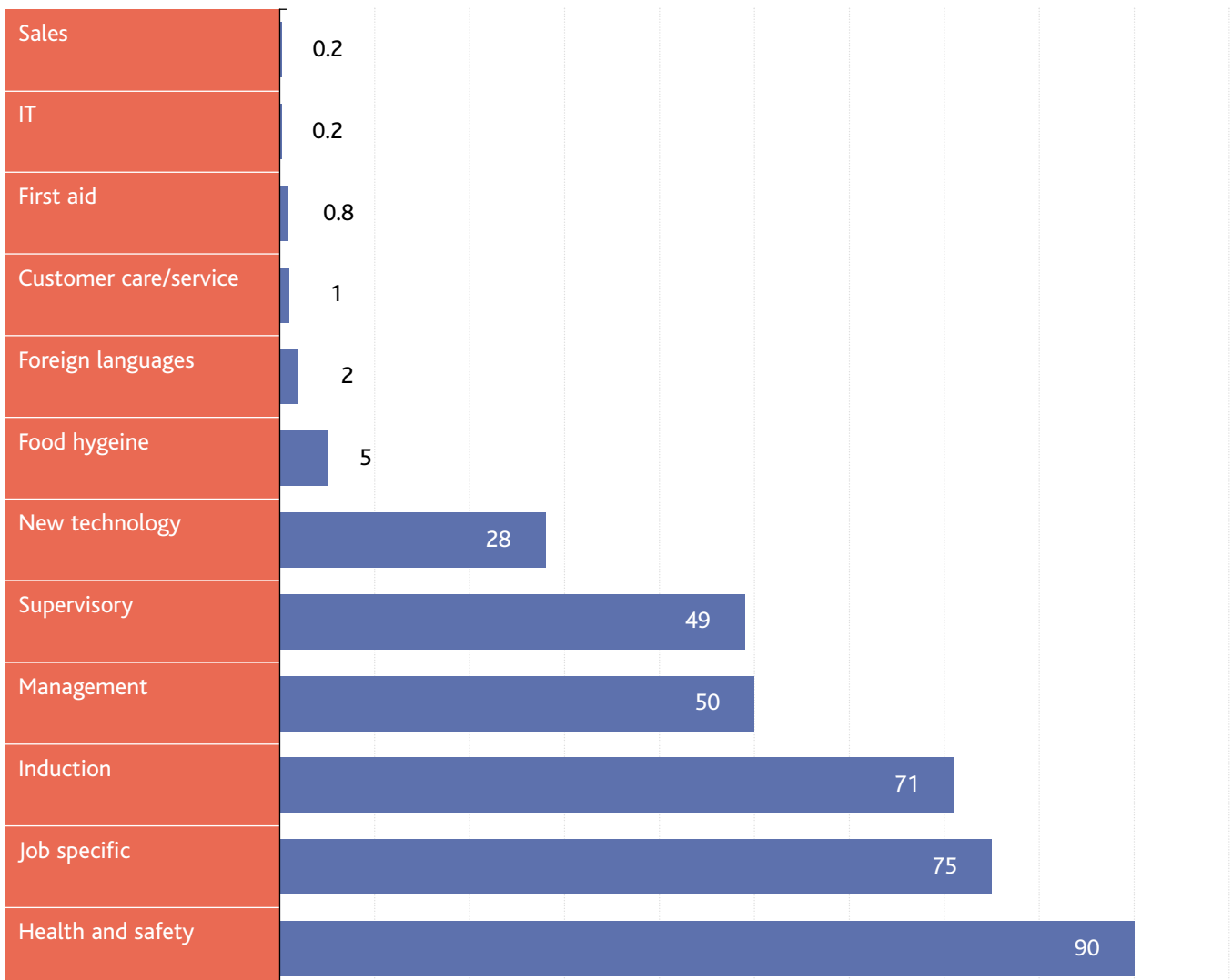
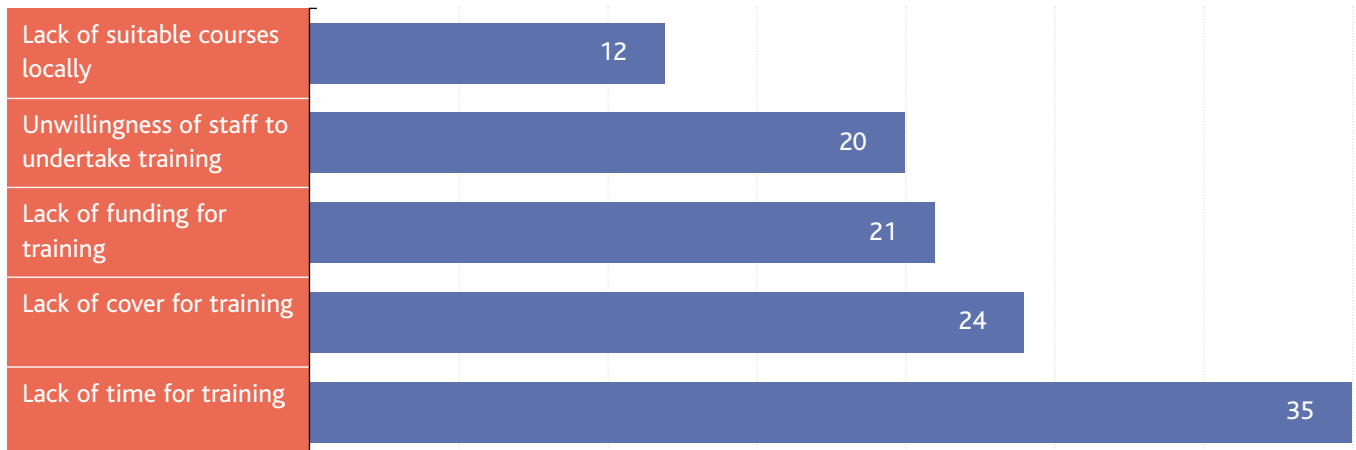


Figure 9: Barriers to Investment in Training (Percent of firms)

Organisations cited a range of factors limiting their ability to invest in workforce training and development. Although only 12% of organisations highlighted a lack of appropriate courses available in their area, a third pointed to problems associated with releasing staff from the workplace.

Interviews with employers, learners and providers confirm that the prime reason for not releasing staff for development was the lack of resources to arrange cover and release staff during working hours. This was sometimes compounded by recruitment difficulties resulting in staff working longer hours and covering for other people's responsibilities.

Most employers felt that college based courses were not flexible enough so that they could release staff at more convenient times and were critical about how relevant some content was which influenced the level of encouragement they gave to staff to attend.

Of those that used work-based provision, there was some criticism of a few providers who were inflexible about the timing of visits and the "disruption" caused when assessments have to be planned and carried out. Consequently, they became less inclined to commit further people and resources to training. Learners have also indicated that some employers were reluctant to provide resources and opportunities for assessment of processes such as the preparation of dishes that were part of the qualification but do not feature in the employer's services or menus.

Within the employer survey, 20% indicated that staff were unwilling to undertake training. Whilst the review did not interview staff who were not undertaking training, anecdotal evidence drawn from learners that have "dropped out" of programmes and discussions with employers suggest a number of reasons.

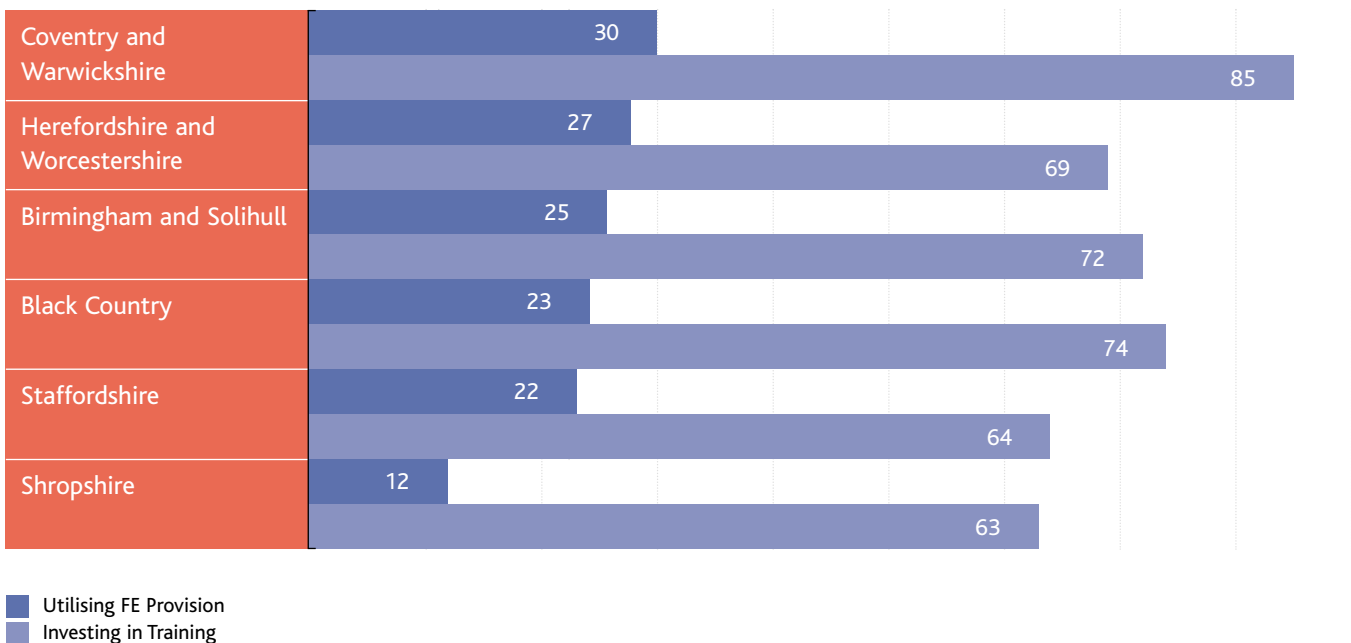
- Amongst younger employees, there is an expectation to undertake training and gain qualifications but several have noted that they have never been asked for these qualifications when applying for jobs and if they do mention them, they are either not valued or not understood by employers.
- The sector typically attracts people with a preference for practical skills rather than those requiring a good level of basic skills. However, the training is perceived to be too academic and bureaucratic. Current learners indicated that the requirement for paperwork had increased in recent times.
- The mandatory Key Skills examination requirements within the Modern Apprenticeship frameworks were a universal disincentive to attend for learners, employers and most providers. Few employers provided sufficient time and opportunity to complete paperwork or develop learning which meant learners had to fit this in on the end of a shift or at home. Whilst this situation may reflect the experience in many other sectors, the prevalence of long and unsociable hours of work in this sector compounds the effect upon motivation to train.
- Among older employees, there is a greater reluctance to undertake structured training. This may be due to a mixture of a fear about returning to an academic environment and fitting this into work-life commitments. A significant number of older workers balance their work with family commitments. There is a perception that there is no time to attend training and it is not available to fit in with these commitments.
- In common with their younger colleagues, several have commented that most employers outside the large private and public sector groups fail to attach any significant value to qualifications that they have achieved. Where there is encouragement to learn, employers note that funding support usually ceases for those aged 25+ and is therefore perceived as a disincentive.

Regional variances in investment

The proportion of organisations investing in training for staff varies across the region, as does the proportion taking advantage of courses provided by FE colleges:

- While some 85% of catering organisations in Coventry and Warwickshire arrange training for staff, the figure falls to 74% in the Black Country, 72% in Birmingham and Solihull and 69% in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The figure is just 64% in Staffordshire and 63% in Shropshire.
- While 30% of organisations arranging training from Coventry and Warwickshire use FE colleges, the figure falls to 27% in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, 25% in Birmingham and Solihull and 23% in the Black Country. The figure is just 22% in Staffordshire and 12% in Shropshire.

Figure 10: Employer Skills Issues in the West Midlands



Interviews with employers and learners suggest that market competition, staffing differences, travelling distances and choice of provider may be significant factors in producing these regional variances.

Small employers in the more rural parts of the region are more likely to have greater levels of staff retention due to a less competitive local economy and lower costs of living. Consequently, there is less of a need to invest in training each year. Employees have time to attain an acceptable level of competence in their responsibilities. Most of this training is provided in-house and is not accredited.

Where younger employees are recruited either directly or through a provider, travelling to a college or provider becomes a significant factor; especially where the public transport infrastructure is poor or only operates to normal working hours.

Employers have less perceived choice of both provider and range of provision within the more rural areas. In broad

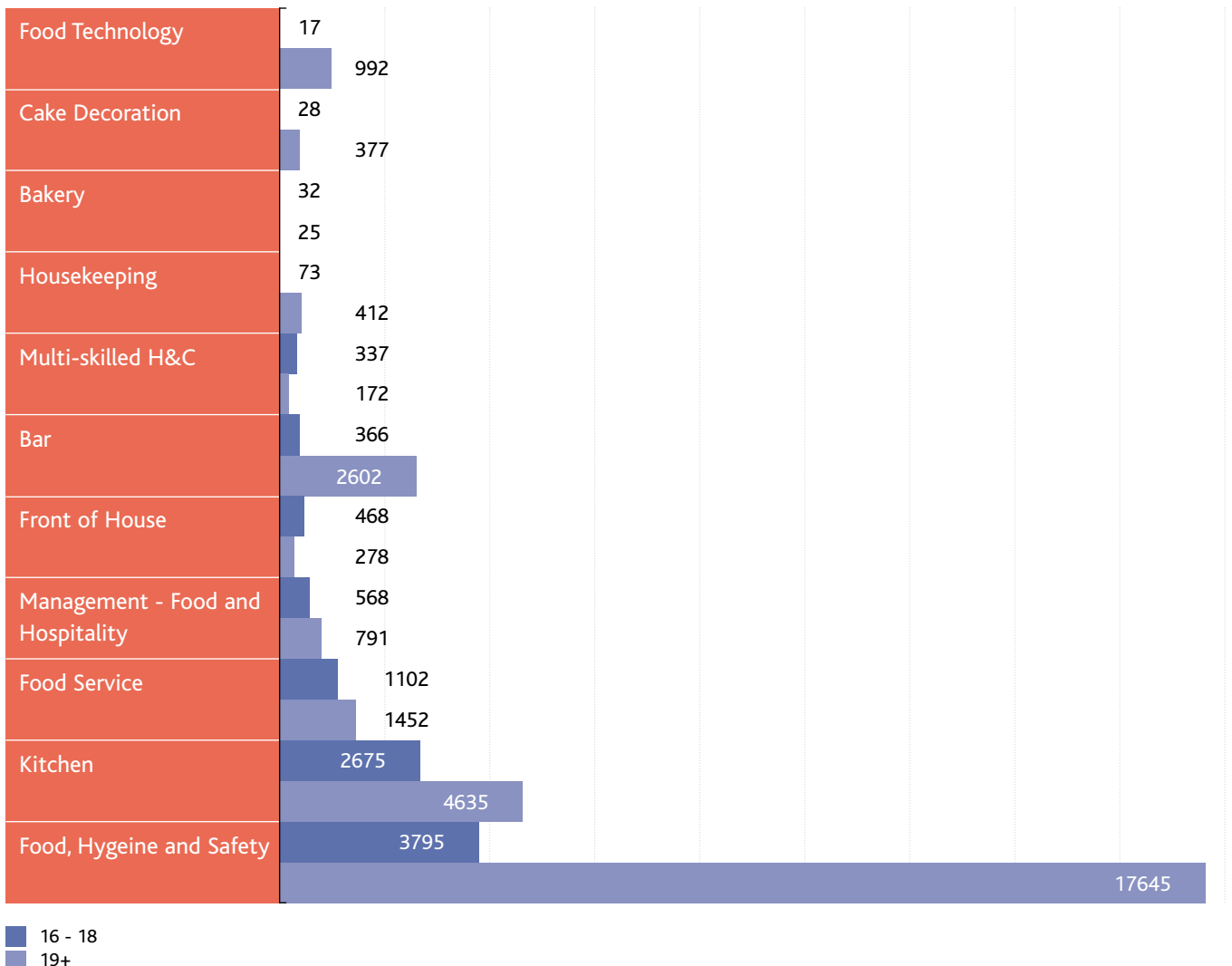
terms, those that have a working relationship with a provider will be aware of what can be delivered and limit their access to the extent of that provision which may not match their need. Alternative provision is perceived to be too distant to access.

Employers within more urban locations tend to have a greater awareness of the market competition and the contribution that trained staff plays in maintaining a competitive edge. However, they are also concerned that trained staff may be poached by competitors for only a small increase in pay.

6. Education and Training provision

Using the latest data available (2001-2002 for FE colleges and 2002-2003 for Work based Learning) there were nearly 69,000 enrolments on Hospitality and Catering related programmes within the West Midlands. These are delivered by 23 colleges and 30 work-based providers contracted to the LSC. (See Annex C for a listing of providers).

Figure 11: West Midlands Enrolments



About one third of these enrolments were within the 16 - 18 age group. Just over 50 qualifications are offered ranging from short course basic food hygiene to first degree and delivered in full and part time modes. These statistics do not include a small number of directly contracted employer programmes which do not attract funding.

By far the single most dominant area of provision with nearly 40% of all enrolments represents learners undertaking the short Food Hygiene and Safety qualifications, which are a legislative requirement within the sector and form part of the Technical Certificate. Although it is not possible to extrapolate from the data, it is likely that many of the learners on longer-term qualifications will also have been enrolled on food hygiene certificate courses at the same time.

Only 10% (7307) are engaged with kitchen food preparation qualifications including programmes for training and developing chefs – the most significant skill shortage.

The next most significant category of qualifications relate to licensed bar professions with just under 6% of whom the majority are aged 19+.

About 5.5% of provision supports Food Service and Food Technology.

Just under 2% of provision is directed to management qualifications within the sector.

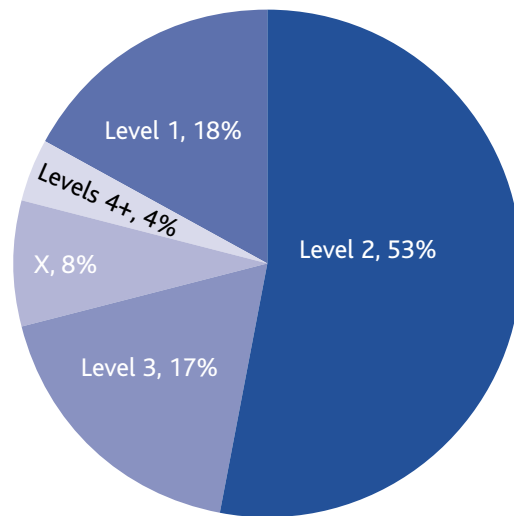
Levels of provision

Within the West Midlands, just over half of all enrolments are aimed at level two qualifications or equivalent with 18% at level one. However, nearly half of these two levels are comprised of the short food hygiene and safety qualifications that are also included within technical certificates or are mandatory requirements.

Nearly one in five enrolments are for level three qualifications.

Within the West Midlands, 4% (2730) of all qualifications are aimed at level four or above representing managerial or higher technical skill qualifications. Nearly half of these are generic management qualifications.

Levels of Qualifications



Typical Modes of Delivery

Whilst there are some significant variances, there are two prevailing modes of delivery dependent upon the type of provider. Colleges tend to deliver most programmes either on a full time or part-time (day release) basis utilising classroom based learning environments for knowledge delivery and Realistic Work Environments (RWEs) to provide practical experience and opportunities for assessment. RWEs range from traditional restaurants to quick-service outlets, internet cafes and sandwich bar outlets. Most of the College provision is timetabled during the day although some courses are provided in twilight, weekend or evening sessions. The majority of assessments tend to be undertaken on College premises. Due to the difficulties in providing RWEs for Hotel Housekeeping, few colleges are involved with this provision.

Work Based Learning Providers tend to utilise the employer’s premises and resources to provide practical experience and assessment opportunities on the job with most using local training rooms for knowledge delivery or the use of individual learning packages and tutorials in the workplace. A minority of providers arrange for learners to experience different employers and environments.

Key Skills development and assessments are undertaken within training rooms or acceptable facilities within employer’s premises. The majority of assessments take place on site using peripatetic or work-based assessors. The work-based training provision includes three organisations that operate either nationally or regionally despite operating separate contracts with each LSC or the national office.

To gain a broader experience of working environments, students at Herefordshire College of Technology spend some of their course on site at a local contract caterers. In return – local employers act as guest lecturers.

Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE)

There are currently two Centres of Vocational Excellence for this sector that are situated within the West Midlands with two bids currently under consideration.

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism & Creative Studies is one of the original 15 Pathfinder CoVEs established nationally in 2001. Since then it has developed: part-time provision for NVQ 3, a number of up-skilling programmes for employers and a website for the dissemination and sharing of good practice.

Further developments include: the refurbishment of kitchens and Realistic Work Environments, increased use of e-learning, development of progression awards and a series of masterclasses. The College has a long-standing national reputation within this sector and has by far the greatest range of resources and qualified staff within the region. As a newly accredited Higher Education establishment, the college also provides pathways for progression within the sector.

Stratford-upon-Avon College acts as the host for the Coventry & Warwickshire CoVE, which incorporates a number of Colleges in the area including those situated in Rugby and Coventry. Having only just recently been established, the CoVE is developing a network of provision, establishing employer groups and has commenced a significant refurbishment of facilities and resources include new kitchens, seminar rooms and RWE's.

The regional impact of the CoVEs is limited. Few providers or employers indicated that they had any awareness or engagement with the current CoVEs in terms of accessing information, developing best practice, engaging employers or mapping provision and progression routes. Whilst CoVEs were not necessarily established to address regional issues, there is little improvement in the perception of engagement at a more local level. For example: colleges and providers situated within the geographical area between two current CoVEs have little or no engagement.

Colleges and providers situated at the periphery of the region perceive that the existing CoVEs regard themselves as too remote to have any engagement although there is some potential for involvement. Other CoVEs situated just outside the region (e.g. Wales, Gloucestershire and Derbyshire) may be geographically closer but are regarded as less accessible due to funding boundaries.

Special Needs

Nearly every College and two work-based providers provide specialist programmes that support the learning and development of learners with special needs – either physical or cognitive. Most of these programmes are aimed at developing life skills and independence. A minority are aimed at learners with basic catering and hospitality skills for suitable job opportunities in the sector. Whilst all providers have specialist staff, some providers have dedicated resource areas for special needs, whilst others utilise the mainstream resources.

Quality of Provision

A review of inspections carried out within the last 18 months indicate that most of the current provision has been graded as satisfactory with about 16% graded as good.

However, about 9% of providers were graded as unsatisfactory requiring significant improvements before re-inspection.

Whilst a detailed analysis of 73 providers would be unwieldy, a review of all reports available suggests a number of frequently occurring issues:

Key Strengths	Key Weaknesses
Frequent and effective visits to employers.	Low retention rates on long courses and MA Frameworks
Well-resourced on-the- job training.	Poor achievement rates on long courses
Good working relationships with employers.	Poor use of management information
Structured development of trainers, co-ordinators and assessors.	Unstructured off-the-job training
Comprehensive induction process.	Poor completion rates for Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks
Effective pastoral support for learners.	Insufficient checking on students' understanding
Effective involvement of employers in programme design and delivery.	Unsatisfactory resources (dated and insufficient)
Flexibility of delivery to accommodate employers' needs.	Training content not reflecting current trade practices.
Good promotion of training to under-represented groups.	Insufficient realistic conditions for assessment in college or training centre
Effective curriculum management.	Ineffective management of sub-contracted provision
Well-planned theme events and use of external tutors.	Poor levels of employer involvement
	Insufficient access to support for independent study
	Inadequate Key Skills support

There is a clear trend within the reports that suggests the greater the degree of involvement with employers combined with a flexible yet supportive learning environment, the higher the retention and achievement rates become. This trend was also evident from the visits to providers and discussions with employers and learners.

Physical resources

Physical facilities and resources vary in terms of quality, age and the range of equipment available. Catering learning environments require a large investment of resources to upgrade and maintain, so refits occur infrequently. Consequently the facilities in the kitchen, bar and restaurant areas in some colleges are perceived as dated and worn by both learners and employers. In a number of colleges, equipment has been withdrawn on safety grounds and either not replaced or a less robust domestic equivalent supplied. Equally, the culinary utensils available may not reflect the quality and range available in employer locations due to economic factors.

Several colleges have recently refurbished their facilities and efforts are being made to reflect more contemporary forms of environment including sandwich shops, Internet Cafés and quick-service outlets. Most of these facilities are situated within the college or campus but one or two colleges operate an external facility.

Within the West Midlands, Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies offers the greatest range of different environments and contemporary equipment for kitchen, food preparation and outlets including specialist areas for meat, bread, vegetable, cake and fish preparation amongst others. A number of other colleges have developed unique or specialised environments to meet the needs of a specific part of the sector.

Several colleges have developed specialist facilities and programmes for areas such as Asian and Chinese cuisine, vegetarian options, school meals and special diets. However, the overall provision of facilities for supporting cultural cuisine is relatively scarce with only two colleges appearing to provide a significant range of programmes and resources.

Very few colleges are equipped to provide sufficient practical training and assessment opportunities for hotel and hospitality programmes.

Walsall College of Arts and Technology have recruited from local employers for specialist lecturers to develop a customised programme including competitions to support Asian Cuisine.

Staff resources and vocational competence.

Personnel employed by both colleges and work-based providers have mostly been recruited from within the sector and possess relevant vocational and assessment qualifications. A significant number of catering tutors and assessors reflect long service and experience within education. Staff development strategies vary tremendously between all types of providers. Several staff remain involved with their relevant trade areas through links with employers or their own efforts. This work experience ranges from employment during holidays and weekends in restaurants, exhibition events and functions, to short unpaid sabbaticals in European restaurants and hotels.

All staff at one college are required to spend 2 weeks a year in an appropriate but different work location. These include local pubs, fast food outlets, sandwich bars and Balti restaurants.

Entitlement and support for such continuous professional development varies between providers with some opting for around one to two weeks per year. Very few providers take a planned approach to this development by arranging links with employers to address gaps in experience and to update knowledge of contemporary processes and equipment.

Due to the dominance of full-time provision in colleges, only a small number of vocational staff are involved with assessment in the workplace or even visiting local employers where students may have temporary placements or work part-time in the industry. Restrictions on time and resources usually prevent such opportunities but those colleges that find a solution to this problem report a greater level of understanding in contemporary practices.

Learning experiences

There are some notable differences in the facilitation of learning experiences between college providers. In broad terms, they are divided between those that are tutor led within year groups and those that employ a mixed group of experiences and abilities that are sometimes led by a nominated learner. Both approaches have their merits and pitfalls but discussions with learners and some employers suggest that the latter helps to develop confidence and team skills that are required in employment.

Level three students within Stratford-upon-Avon College, take turns to plan the meal and manage the kitchens and restaurant, working with a mixed ability team from all levels. Students felt this helped in developing their team working skills at work.

Whilst the options within the qualification structures allow for a range of skill areas that are relevant to different employer needs, there is evidence from discussions that providers are concentrating resources on delivery of the core units and only a few common options.

Work-based learning providers provide some learning input within training rooms but rely more readily on the use of the employer's resources to provide practical experience and training. Whilst most employers and learners indicated that this may be more relevant than a RWE in a College, there are difficulties encountered when covering aspects of the qualification requirements that are not part of the employer's usual services or resources. A few providers negotiate alternative opportunities through other employers where this is possible.

Assessment

Assessment strategies within colleges are also varied. Most are reliant upon assessment in the College – even for part-time programmes. Some have engaged work-based providers to undertake assessments in the workplace whilst others have recruited or developed peripatetic assessors. External Verifiers and inspection teams have noted an underlying trend for insufficient management or verification of assessment and inadequate links between training delivery, assessment requirements and contemporary practice.

BEL Training are developing an electronic portfolio to help reduce the reliance on paperwork and aid tracking of assessment.

Work-based providers naturally make greater use of assessment in the workplace with some being flexible enough to undertake assessments at weekends and in the evenings. A small number of providers have trained and accredited employer staff to become assessors although this can be a lengthy process with the introduction of new assessor awards and awarding body requirements. Some employers are concerned about the amount of time and paperwork required of in-house assessors. Providers experience difficulties where there is high turnover affecting continuity of work-based assessment.

Recruitment

College providers tend to operate on fixed dates for entry to establish viable group sizes. Increasing numbers of colleges are becoming more flexible allowing recruitment at other times. Work-based providers are usually more flexible about entry since most of their recruitment operates in response to the needs of employer who are the primary source for recruitment.

Nearly all providers report difficulties in the level of ability, motivation and numbers of recruits to both programmes and MA frameworks.

A number of factors were cited as the potential reasons for this.

Solihull College starts programmes early in August to allow for dropout. This helps to facilitate transfer onto other programmes and sectors by September.

Image of the sector

All stakeholders felt the sector suffered from a poor image of unsociable hours, poor pay and a poor understanding of the range of jobs within the sector. Employers and providers felt that the decline of catering related learning in the school curriculum combined with poor knowledge of the sector by those influencing career choice (Parents, Carers and Connexions) was resulting in a trend for this image to become worse with consequences for recruitment, in terms of numbers, ability and breadth of choice in the sector.

Within this context, restaurant catering had a higher profile than food preparation, quick service and hospitality. Awareness of culturally related hospitality and catering provision such as Asian Cuisine is weak despite the development of some provision in the region.

Whilst several learners felt that the higher profile given to catering by the television media was a positive influence on their decision to enter the profession, many indicated that the reality was very different in their experience. Learners suggested that the main influences upon their decisions were a positive but realistic involvement in work experience programmes or temporary employment and family or friends who had experience of the sector.

Most providers are engaged in some form of collaboration with work experience programmes or the 14-19 curriculum. However they indicated that schools have a tendency to send low ability or un-committed students on these programmes. A notable exception to this perception within the region can be found in Worcestershire where improvements in the matching of young learners to employers and providers is regarded as very effective.

Ability of recruits on entry

Most providers report that recruitment to full-time programmes suffer from decreasing levels of basic skills amongst young people. Consequently, there are increasing demands on resources for development and support programmes on entry with most colleges deploying

specialist support to diagnose and develop these skills. Some higher ability learners felt that the time and resources being given over to their peers requiring this additional support adversely affected their own development and achievement.

Some providers suggested that schools are retaining the more able and self-motivated learners to meet funding targets.

Recruitment levels appear to be improved where there has been significant and sustained partnership activity between schools, employers and providers, for example providing open days and taster events improves quality and volumes in recruitment.

Retention

Whilst the overall retention rate of about 82% compares very favourably with other sectors, the large number of short programmes relating to food hygiene and safety distorts this figure. Although there are notable exceptions, retention on longer programmes is generally weaker at 73% with even poorer performance experienced with regard to Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks.

Factors affecting dropout are perceived by providers to be due to: poorer levels of basic skills, the Key Skills test requirement, envy for better conditions in other sectors and a lack of commitment and support by employers, parents and carers.

Interviews with early leavers suggest that the majority have transferred to other sectors. Reasons for this decision centred mainly on the intense amount of hard physical work, long unsociable hours and the profession not meeting expectations. However, they were also critical of the level and content of the programmes of learning. Several felt that the content was not challenging enough to be credible in the trade when compared to their employer's expectations. On occasions this led to conflict between employer and provider. Others felt that the focus of their course lacked sufficient practical skills with an over reliance on paperwork and theory utilising complex phraseology that staff were reluctant or unavailable to explain.

A significant factor that influenced retention levels was the role of work-place co-ordinators in maintaining a link between employer and provider. Early leavers had experienced a lack of continuity in co-ordinators and infrequent meetings with the employer.

Of those who leave programmes but stay within the sector, their prime incentive has been marginally better pay, conditions or opportunities. Some found it difficult to

arrange for a continuation or transfer of their training with a new employer.

Key Skills Test

Within modern apprenticeship frameworks, a significant factor in poor completion rates is the requirement for mandatory Key Skills Assessments. Without exception all providers, learners and employers felt that the method of assessment was inappropriate and that the content was not contextualised sufficiently. Nearly every provider experienced high levels of non-attendance for the examination despite attempts to provide incentives or moving locations close to employer's premises.

Progression opportunities

The sector currently lacks clearly defined career paths except for the traditional hierarchy that operates within large kitchens. Consequently there is a lack of natural demand for progression other than where a framework is adopted or the provider encourages learners and employers to take the next level. Despite identifying a need for higher skills, some employers fear that staff who are qualified at their expense will be poached by other employers.

Whilst learners may be encouraged to progress from level 2 to 3, providers report difficulties in making the transition due to the demands upon a higher level of both basic and key skills, as well as the need for appropriate opportunities for assessment in the workplace.

The colleges that encourage multi level teams in RWEs have less difficulty. Hospitality level 3 qualifications require a range of tasks that are not available in many work environments.

The Technical certificate increasingly requires examination skills that are challenging to a significant number of potential learners.

Progression above level 3 is rare and inconsistent. Employers are broadly unaware of this provision despite several comments that providers do not satisfy a demand for developing management and leadership skills including the use of initiative. Outside of the Birmingham area, several employers and providers suggested that the Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies may operate higher skills and technical programmes but these were regarded as too distant to send employees.

There are significant numbers of employers led by owner-managers who have developed their own business and management skills through experience without formal training. Only the larger private sector groups and the

public sector employers tend to consider structured management development and these are inclined to make use of generic management qualifications.

Several Colleges are developing foundation degrees through partnerships with HE institutions both within and outside the West Midlands. However the degree of involvement by employers in the developments of foundation degrees appears to be low or restricted to one or two large employers with specific needs, consequently there is a risk that these will service a very limited segment of the sector.

Some existing level four programmes have failed to recruit viable numbers. There appears to be no clear routes for progression between providers, or even an awareness of the provision available locally or regionally.

Employer engagement and expectations

The level and depth of employer engagement varies between providers but is generally regarded as challenging by the providers and limited by the employers. Most stakeholders regarded effective employer engagement as the most critical success factor in achieving higher levels of retention and achievement.

Most providers have a range of strategies to maintain links with their existing employer base. These may include the use of employer seminars, briefing events, masterclasses, presentations and competitions. Most employers welcomed these interventions but some felt that they did not have the opportunity to ask questions and make critical contributions to programme design and delivery. Some employers were frustrated by an inability to understand or influence the topics delivered by providers because they had no access to the tutors, even though there was a visiting co-ordinator. Only 11% of employers felt that local colleges had involved them in any aspect of programme design or delivery. The equivalent figure for work-based providers was lower at 10%.

Hereford College of Technology have established an Employer Panel that is regularly consulted about curriculum design and assessment. The Panel have instigated the development of employee programmes for customer service, selling and handling conflict.

A number of the employers within discussion groups indicated that they would like to become involved in the design and delivery of training as occasional tutors for specialist provision. Conversely, some providers were frustrated by a lack of support for learners by their employers despite many efforts to engage them in

discussions about progress of learners and the content of programmes. Employers admitted that their own personal time was a limited resource and indicated they were willing to collaborate with providers if there was a genuine possibility of improving provision.

Some learners noted that co-operation between employer and provider tended to become weaker as programmes progressed. Ironically, the need for greater co-operation increased as the programme progressed and this effect often lead to the learners being caught between conflicting methods and standards.

Employers prefer flexibility in delivery with regard to employee release and the timing of training. They also value involvement by the provider in the workplace by vocationally competent assessors/co-ordinators who are sensitive to the pressures and constraints on resources.

Catering employers are critical of how realistic an environment can be provided in a college with high ratios of students to customers. (Whilst they accept that the pressures of a kitchen or restaurant cannot be replicated, they did not feel that assessment in this environment was always appropriate).

Hospitality employers and providers do not feel that providers can create a realistic work environment for the non-catering skills. This is partly due to the difficulties in re-creating realistic housekeeping and hotel room environments although the design of the Technical Certificate in Reception/ Housekeeping is exam based.

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies has several Realistic Work Environments including a pub, college canteen/bistro and a restaurant. There are also specialist areas for bread, cake, fish and meat preparation. Students and staff gain the opportunity to have a broad experience.

There is an increasing expectation by some employers that achievers should be able to immediately step into the full job-role unsupervised and they feel that providers are failing to do this. Discussions suggest that this may stem from a comparison with previous traditional qualification routes that were focussed upon a narrower range of skills but gave greater opportunities for the practice of technical skills and processes. Many of the current owners, managers and chefs possess these qualifications.

Representatives of culturally specific cuisine, such as Balti, do not feel there is sufficient and appropriate provision to meet their needs. Some employers felt that there was a need for more specialism to meet the needs of their

segment of the sector. This particularly applied to the pub-meal and quickservice employers but they were similar suggestions made by larger employers such as the public sector and contract catering.

Several employers felt frustrated by the differential in provision and funding for those aged 25+ given the numbers of more mature staff in the sector.

Generally, employers were less concerned about achieving a qualification and more concerned about establishing a solid foundation in a range of basic food skills with consistent standards of knowledge.

Several employers would like to have access to a greater level of relevant provision for those aged 25 or over. This would particularly include provision at level three.

Employment engagement appears to be limited to the existing base of those currently or recently supported with only marginal improvement over recent times. Discussions with employers that are either disengaged or have not been involved with the existing provider base indicate that they do not perceive local providers in a positive light or as potential developers of their workforce despite identifying needs that could be addressed. Some of these perceptions are based upon poor experiences in the distant past and others from crude cold-calling initiatives by providers.

Employers are unclear about where to access information on providers when considering training for their workforce. Once they have established a link with one provider, they tend to stay with that provider – even if they have needs for alternative provision.

Many employers were influenced by an “Alumni effect” which some providers utilised. Most managers and owners had approached the provider that they had trained at themselves even though they may have criticisms of the programme or were aware of alternative provision.

Few employers were aware of the existence or purpose of CoVEs in the region although some employers in Coventry and Warwickshire were aware of some changes in the provision locally.

Engagement with schools and a vocational curriculum

NEW College in Redditch has developed a customised programme with accreditation for local schools. Collaboration with school staff has improved the level of understanding about the sector.

All colleges and some of the work-based providers are increasingly becoming involved with local schools in providing resources, learning environments and accreditation for the vocational curriculum. Both the level of involvement and the degree of success is varied across the region and between providers.

Some colleges have worked alongside school personnel to develop programmes whilst others have no involvement except to receive nominated students and provide a number of experiences and learning inputs.

Where there are accredited programmes, the choice is again varied from adapting existing level 1 material to the use of bespoke qualifications and workbooks.

As with work-experience, there is a lack of understanding about the range and potential opportunities available which influences school staff in nominating students. Some providers suspect that schools are retaining high achievers who may wish to enter the sector so that their own academic targets can be met. Consequently, the majority of students are low achievers or are poorly motivated.

Whilst all areas have some form of agency for co-ordination between school and providers, most are weak or immature. The only exception appears to be Project 19 in Worcestershire where the matching of learner to provider and work experience seems to be more successful than others.

Several colleges indicated there was a need to develop some core materials and a consistent yet flexible programme. Whilst most were developing their own, this was resource intensive for relatively small numbers and return. There were benefits to be gained in terms of consistency and shared development in establishing a way of co-ordinating production.

7. Conclusions

- 1 The issues relating to the supply of Hospitality and Catering education and training within the West Midlands broadly reflect the national situation in terms of adequacy for the market's needs, performance of learning programmes and engagement with employers.
- 2 The current volumes and quality of supply do not begin to approach addressing the potential needs of the sector and the statistics are distorted by the large number of short duration programmes aimed at meeting legislative requirements in food hygiene and safety. Provision needs to be ramped up to meet demand and there needs to be a greater focus within strategic planning and resourcing on meeting the major skills gaps, particularly within catering.
- 3 The supply framework does not make adequate provision for niche specialisms including quickservice, pub food preparation, cultural cuisine and meals regeneration. Whilst some areas are responding to these needs, some are only partly covered in an attempt to balance resources for core and traditional programmes against specialisms. Employers are unclear about what can be delivered.
- 4 There is an urgent need to raise the profile of the sector so that there is a greater understanding of the range of professions available and a universal positive but realistic appreciation of work expectations, conditions and benefits.
- 5 Access to a range of relevant, high quality work experience opportunities and effective links between schools and vocational providers is a critical factor in securing effective levels of recruitment and subsequent retention. Therefore greater collaboration with work experience and the 14 – 16 curriculum between schools, employers and providers is essential.
- 6 Provision needs to become more flexible and relevant to contemporary practice. Significant large numbers of learners are accredited on full-time programmes in colleges with little or no real experience in the workplace. Work-based learning not only provides more realistic opportunities to gain competence but also engages the employer in a longer-term involvement in learning. Opportunities for work-based learning need to be increased for both full-time learners and existing staff.
- 7 Management development tends to be scarce and ad-hoc. There needs to be a more consistent yet flexible level of provision and accreditation that can be promoted to all employers. Improving the skill-set of managers to include the market benefits of developing and retaining staff could in turn help to improve engagement between providers and employers.
- 8 Throughout the West Midlands, there are many examples of good practice and alternative approaches to learning, assessment and specialist skills but these are rarely shared. Employers and learners are seeking flexibility and innovation. There needs to be greater levels of collaboration between all types of providers and an effective process for disseminating good practice.
- 9 Compared to other sectors, progression beyond level 3 and into HE is poor in terms of volumes and clarity of the range of provision. There is no tradition of progression except for chefs. A number of foundation degrees are being developed and a few providers have existing qualifications available but the pathways between qualifications and providers are not established.
- 10 Employers are not engaged sufficiently in terms of volumes and level of involvement with programme design and delivery. Consequently actual demand for training does not appear to relate the need of the sector and provision only matches demand. This accounts for poor levels of understanding about provision amongst all employers and inadequate appreciation of skill needs amongst providers. There is a need for a campaign to engage a greater volume of employers on a more consistent basis over time.
- 11 Assessment and qualification requirements are increasingly being perceived as too prescriptive, bureaucratic and inflexible. Whilst some providers have found ways of responding to new quality requirements, the sector would benefit from developing more appropriate ways of assessing Key Skills, collective streamlining of assessment documentation and developing flexible learning packages.
- 12 The roles and objectives of the current and emerging CoVEs are not clearly appreciated by employers and most providers. Consequently, their impact on the region is currently weak. They have a pivotal role in helping to share good practice, stimulate and share the skill-set of all providers, encourage collaboration and develop the sector. It is essential that they develop a higher profile locally and consideration should be given to developing a more regional role and co-ordinating their activity.
- 13 Refurbishment of Realistic Work Environments (RWEs) requires significant and increasing levels of capital resources if they are to be relevant and contemporary. Attempting to provide a comprehensive range of RWEs

in a single location is prohibitive in terms of cost and space. Consideration should be given to the potential of a more strategic planning and deployment of specialised RWEs across the region and developing greater collaboration between providers to provide a range of opportunities and specialist skills.

- 14 A combination of low levels of pay and the limitations of funding criteria impact upon the participation of some learners. The potential for greater flexibility for access by those aged 25 and over, including the funding of units and incentives to release staff should be explored.

8. Learning and Skills Balance Sheet

Market Requirements	Provider Position
Increased volumes of employees in all areas requiring improved levels of technical and softer skills.	Meeting current demand for short legislative skills. Insufficient capacity to address both up-skilling of workforce and skilling of new employees if recruitment difficulties resolved
Demand for greater range of management skills in existing and future workforce.	Provision exists but traditionally poor recruitment. Need for more flexible methods of delivery and greater profile of management qualification amongst employers across the sector.
Greater representation of older workers. Majority of workforce is under 25	Need to widen recruitment base and improve access to older workers and labour market returners.
Flexible working to accommodate unsociable hours and shift patterns	College based provision is often restrained by college calendar and hours. Becoming more flexible. Need to develop more flexibility in provision including greater use of work-based learning.
Assessment and learning materials and methods that are appropriate to the prevalent styles and abilities of employees	Materials and methods are often bureaucratic and key skills assessments lack relevance and appropriate assessment methods.
Frequent continuous recruitment activity to cope with high turnover and migration to other sectors	Need to develop closer links with employers and schools to improve recruitment and satisfaction with career choice.
Opportunities for career progression and opportunities to combat low levels of pay and unsociable working hours	Progression routes are unclear with low uptake. Provision is sporadic and uncoordinated. Some foundation degrees in development.
New processes and procedures emerging – particularly in the quick-service area of the sector.	New NVQ in Food preparation available but several providers not reflecting contemporary practice in other programmes. Need to improve links with employers
Provision for specialist, segmented parts of the sector – e.g. Pub catering or family owned Asian restaurants seeking to recruit outside of the family.	Some specialised provision but insufficient provision to support existing and emerging changes in sector including cultural cuisine
High levels of confidence in the level and standard of current qualifications in the sector. Need to be relevant to contemporary practice.	Providers are meeting the standards required of the current qualifications. Colleges reliant on Realistic Work Environments Need to improve understanding amongst employers, promote examples of excellence and provide additional learning environments in the workplace.
Simple and well-known access to objective information and guidance on training and qualifications.	Information based with each provider. No clear access points or available materials.

9. Recommendations

The hospitality and catering sector requires a greater strategic focus on addressing the outcomes of this review and of the other emerging research from Advantage West Midlands, the Hospitality Training Foundation and the LSC national survey of employers. Currently planning is often encompassed within a broader sector description that includes retail. Whilst there are many features shared with retail, such as the need to broaden access to Modern Apprenticeships and the entitlement to training to level 2 through dedicated initiatives for employers such as the Employer Training Pilot, there are a number of critical differences that risk being lost in a shared strategy. The following recommendations should be considered by local LSCs and providers within the West Midlands in developing a more focussed strategy.

1. Supply of Learning

- a Stimulate a major increase in the levels of learning provision across the spectrum of catering and hospitality occupations in the region with the aim of reducing the gap between supply and the needs of the sector. Particular skill shortages are in the skilled occupations of front of house, bar staff, waiting staff and chefs. This will not only require an increase in the number of enrolments on core programmes but also a significant improvement in the levels of engagement with employers to provide and assess work based learning.
- b Adopt a more local deployment of provision that allows for the development of niche specialist programmes such as quick-service, pub food, and cultural cuisine, whilst retaining access to core programmes and qualifications.
- c Develop a consistent yet flexible framework for management development and qualifications that can be promoted and delivered across the region. The curriculum for management development should include elements on developing people and work-based learning. Consider how the current management programmes delivered by centres such as the Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies can be delivered remotely and through other colleges.
- d Ensure there is a greater access to progression beyond level three and into Higher Education across the region. There is a clear role for the existing and emerging Centres of Vocational Excellence to co-ordinate and develop greater awareness of progression routes and to ensure that programme entry requirements are compatible with the range of providers and programmes at level two.

2. Data Collection and Analysis

- a Build upon the work done to cluster supply data collected by the LSC locally and regionally and analyse it effectively to compensate for the distortion produced by short course provision. Use this data to plan and revise strategies and targets to improve levels of supply for specific occupations.
- b Develop the existing sources of labour market intelligence to establish a more detailed analysis of employer's needs and disseminate this to the supply network.
- c Consider ways of assisting and encouraging employers to undertake skills audits so that they can both qualify and quantify the skills gaps within their existing workforce and communicate these to potential suppliers of development.
- d Undertake a curriculum mapping exercise to establish the range of qualifications, delivery modes and options available in the local area and region. Include mapping of potential progression routes. Use the outcome to identify gaps and provide information for employers, providers and learners.

3. Raising the Profile of the Sector

- a Develop a co-ordinated regional strategy for promoting the range of professions and the potential benefits of the sector which complements activity undertaken by the Hospitality Training Foundation and emerging Sector Skills Council. Encourage employers to become involved as champions in awareness raising events within schools and providing case study material.
- b Develop a greater level of planning and employer involvement in the provision of work experience opportunities to secure an improved range of quality placement opportunities. Coordinate the promotion of these opportunities to schools and advisers of careers.
- c Develop a single objective point of reference and information that can be promoted and accessed by employers, learners and providers.
- d Develop attractive and informative materials to promote the sector using a range of local case studies and success stories.
- e Build upon current best practice in 14-16 curriculum provision and disseminate successful approaches across the region via the Centres of vocational Excellence and Connexions.
- f Promote and develop the existing international links

made by providers to enable a broader experience of international cuisine, career opportunities and the learning links for languages.

4. Collaboration

- a Review the role of the existing and future Centres of Vocational Excellence, particularly the Birmingham College of Food tourism and Creative Studies, within a regional context and encourage them to develop and co-ordinate more effective networks of all types of providers to disseminate best practice.
- b Make more effective use of sharing physical and staff resources and collaborate to improve upon assessment documentation and strategies.
- c Explore ways of improving collaboration between providers so that employers and learners can access a greater level of flexibility and customised delivery.
- d Develop appropriate medium for sharing best practice and communicating effectively between providers.
- e Consider developing the specialist role for the Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies in supporting the development of languages in catering and hospitality with language providers such as the Brasshouse Centre.

5. Staff development

- a Establish guidelines and recommendations for effective levels of staff development including the updating of vocational experience, addressing gaps in the range of experiences, and the training of assessors for work based learning.
- b Encourage and support greater levels of employer access to college based tutors through visits to employer premises and meeting at employer events.
- c Support the development of specialist tutors from ethnic communities to improve the capacity to provide learning in cultural cuisine.
- d Encourage greater levels of staff exchange between providers, particularly where there are limited numbers of specialists across the region.
- e Reaffirm the role of Centres of Vocational Excellence in stimulating and supporting effective staff development across all providers including pre and post inspection activity.
- f Build upon the current examples of best practice to encourage greater use of employers as visiting tutors and

improve upon the current levels of work-based learning.

6. Working with employers

- a Improve the existing level of employer engagement to include far greater volumes of disengaged employers. Improve the planning and facilitation of events to ensure employers feel they have an opportunity to influence curriculum design and delivery.
- b Develop more opportunities for local employers to be involved with the delivery of learning through demonstrations within provider locations and visits to employers where viable.
- c Engage the co-operation of professional representative bodies, restaurants, and hotels and "celebrity chefs" to encourage the involvement of employers in information and consultation events.

7. Programme design and delivery

- a Encourage all providers to systematically compare the methods and processes used within training to the contemporary practices of their employers and make adjustments where appropriate. Consider the potential for providing additional training to higher standards where this is required by employers.
- b Increase the number of work-based learning opportunities being provided within college programmes so that learners gain broader and more realistic experiences and employers become more involved with providers.
- c Consider the potential for more strategic refurbishment and geographic deployment of specialised realistic work environments across the region and encourage sharing of learning opportunities across colleges and providers.
- d Encourage college providers to develop greater flexibility in the way they timetable and deliver learning to accommodate employer's constraints on release.
- e Develop upon existing best practice to integrate Key Skills delivery within the main vocational programme.
- f Develop more resources for independent learning that are appropriate for the dominant, task-based learning styles and phraseology of employees in this sector.
- g Consider ways of providing access to specialist and progression programmes in the more rural areas of the region. This may include collaboration between providers to deliver local programmes.

8. Funding

- a Consider ways of providing incentives to small employers to release learners for training without adding to long working shifts. This could include accessing current and future programmes such as train2gain where appropriate.
- b Consider ways of compensating the impact of funding limitations upon employees aged 25 or more to encourage greater levels of engagement in learning by more mature employees.
- c Consider ways of funding units of qualifications to allow for greater flexibility and meeting the needs of employers.

10. Implementation Strategy

Following the publication of this report a small working group will be established comprising representatives of the West Midlands LSCs, colleges and providers, employers, and the Connexions Service to implement the recommendations. The group will work with established groups throughout the region such as the Midland Association of Restaurateurs, Caterers and Hoteliers in developing an action plan and clear responsibilities in relation to each recommendation.

Annex A - Terms of Reference

Catering and Hospitality Education and Training Review for the West Midlands Region

Terms of Reference

1. Drivers for Change

- Policy statement on the future of further education in England – Address by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment to the Conference of the Association of Colleges, 21 November 2000 – DfEE pamphlet : “Colleges for Excellence & Innovation”
- Development of DfES policy on Centres of Vocational Excellence in Colleges.
- Developments within the Retail and Hospitality sector in the Region, such as the focus on “soft skills”, entry-level skills, along with difficulties in recruitment.
- Current National LSC policy on the need for and process for undertaking Strategic Area Reviews

2. Purpose

To undertake a comprehensive review of all relevant catering and hospitality education and training provision in the West Midlands Region with the aim of:

- Informing the future strategy and planning process of the West Midlands LSCs and local providers in the public and private training sectors
- Identifying gaps in and duplication of provision especially with respect to future demand for skilled people.
- Analysing the impact of significant local and regional developments on patterns of demand for skilled people
- Supporting the development of a catering and hospitality ‘network’ of excellence amongst key providers covering opportunities for new development including the co-location and/or consolidation of resources and expertise. This may include new Centre of Vocational Excellence proposals

3. Scope

- The review will seek to measure and benchmark the current performance of education and training providers in the Catering and Hospitality sector.
- It will encompass all Further Education Colleges, Work Based Learning Providers, and private providers with a specialism in this area of work.
- By mapping current and predicted demand for skilled people as evidenced by the local and regional research being carried out in the West Midlands area and amongst a selection of key employers, it should be

possible to forecast demand for education and training in the short to medium term. The research, which was recently conducted by the Sector Skills Taskforce in Birmingham and Solihull, will provide valuable background material.

- It will be necessary to identify where the supply of education and training is not meeting the current and future needs of individuals and employers and to seek innovative ways of addressing the issues
- Proposals for the future of Catering and Hospitality Sector education and training in the West Midlands region will be developed in full collaboration with all key stakeholders.

(a) Criteria

Recruitment, Retention and Achievement

To gather and analyse information on the following:

- Numbers of student/trainee enrolments
- Retention/completion rates
- Student/trainee achievements
- Progression routes/destinations on completion.
- Quality of hospitality and catering education and training facilities

(b) Current and predicted future demand

To identify demand for students/trainees according to:-

- Qualification level
- Level of experience
- Employer views on recruitment issues

(c) Secretary of State's Policy Statement

- We must have a further education sector which is flexible and responsive, and sharply focused on meeting the skills needs of employers, sector by sector’
- ‘I envisage a network of specialist centres of excellence built around colleges or groups of colleges working with business partners’
- I will ask the Learning and Skills Council to make the development of vocational specialisation in colleges a major part of its strategic planning’
- Effective employer networks built around specialisms .. are an essential pre-condition for long term success’

4. Implementation

Catering and Hospitality Sector Education and Training
Review Steering Group

A steering group will be set up to oversee the Review and support its implementation. Its membership will be drawn from relevant employers, colleges, training providers, HE providers, professional associations, Business Link and West Midlands local LSCs.

Suggested membership:

- Chair: Brian Turner
- One Director/Senior Manager from each local LSC area
- One senior member of staff from a college in each local LSC area
- 2 WBL representatives
- 2 employers
- 2 representatives from employer organisations

The work will be carried out in three phases.

Phase 1 May - June 2003

A comprehensive desk research exercise will be undertaken of both the demand side and the supply side

Phase 2 June - September 2003

Research will be undertaken with individual colleges and training providers examining facilities and other resources .

Phase 3 September – November 2003

Analysis of information gathered, Production of final report to include conclusions and recommendations. Development of an implementation strategy.

March 2003

Annex B - Membership of the Steering Group

Brian Turner CBE (Chair)	Chef Patron	Brian Turner Mayfair - Millennium Hotel
Charles Anderson	Deputy Principal	Stratford Upon Avon College
Andreas Antona	Chef Patron	Seipson Restaurant
Tim Atkinson	Senior Manager – Learning Programmes	Birmingham and Solihull LSC
Jenny Beard	Regional Cluster Skills Manager - Food and Drink	Advantage West Midlands
Sue Blake	Workforce Development Manager	Staffordshire LSC
Jaine Clarke	Director of Workforce Development	Black Country LSC
Mike Duckett	Regional Cluster Skills Manager for Leisure and Tourism	Advantage West Midlands
Stephen Dunne	Managing Director	Midland Association of Restaurateurs, Caterers and Hoteliers
Stephen Farmer	Representative	Hotel and Catering Institutional Management Association (HCIMA)
Christine Gillam	Section Leader	Tamworth and Lichfield College
Gavin Graham	Centre Manager	HCTC Ltd.
Clifford Grauers	General Manager	Hyatt Regency Hotel
Mary Green	Vice Principal	City College
Louise Harris	Workforce Development Adviser	Coventry and Warwickshire Learning and Skills Council
Ruki Kaur	Centre Manager	Springboard UK Limited
Derrick McDonagh	General Manager	The Jury's Inn
Eddie McIntyre	Principal	Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies
Dan Mistry	Chief Executive	Bilston Resource Centre
John Peart	Representative	Midlands Association of Chefs
Frances Roberts	Performance Advisor	Hereford and Worcester Learning and Skills Council
Carole Tobin	Employer Services Manager	Birmingham and Solihull Connexions
Margaret Tovey	District Manager	Jobcentre Plus
Stuart Vickers	Research and Analysis Manager	Shropshire Learning and Skills Council
		Support for Steering Group
Liz Deakin	Sector Co-ordinator	Birmingham & Solihull LSC
George Hardwick	Operations Manager	Birmingham & Solihull LSC
Julie Hope	Operations Co-ordinator	Birmingham & Solihull LSC
Bob Morrison	Partner - Researcher	Optimus Associates

Annex C - Current providers

Birmingham and Solihull

- 1 Bellis Training & Assessment Centre
- 2 Birmingham Academy Trading Ltd.
- 3 Birmingham Chamber Training Ltd
- 4 Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies
- 5 Birmingham Rathbone Society
- 6 Bournville College
- 7 City College
- 8 Hotel & Catering Training Company Ltd (HCTC)
- 9 Protocol Consultancy Services
- 10 Solihull College
- 11 TBG Learning Ltd.
- 12 VT Plus Training PLC

Black Country

- 13 City of Wolverhampton College
- 14 College of Continuing Education in Walsall
- 15 Dudley College of Technology
- 16 Halesowen College
- 17 Hotel & Catering Training Company Ltd (HCTC)
- 18 King Edwards VI College, Stourbridge
- 19 Manor Farm Community Association
- 20 Mercia CS Ltd
- 21 Protocol Consultancy Services
- 22 Rathbone Training
- 23 Sandwell Adult Education Service
- 24 Sandwell College
- 25 Sandwell New Horizons
- 26 Stourbridge College
- 27 TBG Learning Ltd.
- 28 Trinity Training Services Ltd.
- 29 VT Plus Training PLC
- 30 Walsall College of Arts and Technology
- 31 Wolverhampton Adult Education Service

Coventry & Warwickshire

- 32 Birmingham Hotel & Catering Academy
- 33 CWT
- 34 ETW
- 35 Henley College
- 36 North Warwickshire and Hinckley College
- 37 North Warwickshire and Hinckley Training
- 38 Nuneaton Training Centre
- 39 Protocol Skills Ltd
- 40 Rugby College
- 41 South Warwickshire Training
- 42 Stratford-upon-Avon College
- 43 Three A's Pertemps Training Ltd
- 44 VT Plus Training PLC

45 Zenith Partnership

Herefordshire & Worcestershire

- 46 County Training,
- 47 Hotel & Catering Training Company Ltd (HCTC)
- 48 Herefordshire College of Technology
- 49 Howarth Handcorn Training & Development
- 50 Kidderminster College
- 51 NEW College
- 52 Protocol Skills Ltd
- 53 VT Plus Training
- 54 Worcester College of Technology

Shropshire

- 55 Hotel & Catering Training Company Ltd (HCTC)
- 56 Powys Training
- 57 Protocol Skills Ltd
- 58 Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology
- 59 Shropshire County Training
- 60 VT Plus

Staffordshire

- 61 B E L Training
- 62 Borough Training Services
- 63 Cannock Chase Technical College
- 64 Hotel & Catering Training Company Ltd (HCTC)
- 65 In 2 Work Ltd.
- 66 Innterskill Ltd
- 67 Newstart at Burton College
- 68 Stafford College
- 69 Stoke-on-Trent College of F.E.
- 70 The Training Partnership
- 71 Total People Limited
- 72 VT Plus

Annex D – Clusters for Data Analysis

No	Cluster Title	Keywords
1	Kitchen	Food preparation Catering Introductory Quick Service Kitchen Supervision Preparing & Serving Food
2	Bakery	Craft Baking, Bakery
3	Cake Decoration	Cake Decoration
4	Food Service	Food Service Food & Drink Restaurant Supervision Table Service
5	Bar	Licensee Wines & Spirits Bar Service, Licensed
6	Front of House	Hotel Catering Welcome Host Customer Service Reception
7	Housekeeping	Housekeeping
8	Management Food & Hospitality	NVQ Level 4 & Higher qualifications
9	Food hygiene & safety	Food Hygiene Food Safety
10	Food Technology	Manufacturing
11	Multi-skilled H&C	Various
20	Non-catering	All other qualifications, not listed above, in this Area of Learning – non-catering

