Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport

Official Statistics

Skills gaps and shortages in the creative industries: Employer perceptions and actions, UK, 2022 - research report

Updated 12 February 2025

Contents

Key points

- The incidence of skills gaps and skill-shortage vacancies in the creative industries is smaller than in all businesses.

- However, there are specific skills gaps and specific types of skills difficult to

obtain in job applicants that are higher in creative industries than compared to all businesses.

- The majority of businesses in the creative industries with a skills gap perceive these skills gaps as having an impact on their performance

- Patterns of skills gaps and skill-shortage vacancies by occupation are distinctive in the creative industries. Creative industries have larger proportions of skills gaps among professional occupations and sales and customer service occupations, and higher proportions of skill-shortage vacancies among professional occupations and associate professionals positions as compared to all sectors. This partly reflects the higher proportion of the workforce employed in higher level occupations.

1. Introduction

The analysis that follows is drawn from the Department for Education's Employer Skills Survey (ESS); a large-scale survey of employers across the UK. ESS asks questions associated with recruitment, employees' skills, employers' existing and anticipated skills needs, employers' training offer, and business strategy. The latest available data is from the 2022 survey.

In May 2024, DCMS published Official Statistics in development on DCMS Sector Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps, based on the 2022 ESS survey. The key findings for the creative industries are as follows:

- across the economy as a whole, 23.2% of employers had at least one vacancy. For the creative industries, employers with vacancies are lower (17.6%) (table 2b in DCMS Sector Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps: 2022, UK)

- 7.2% of creative industries employers report at least a skill-shortage vacancy. This is also lower than the average for all businesses (9.8%) (table 2a in DCMS Sector Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps: 2022, UK). The percentage of vacancies that are due to skills shortages is also lower for the creative industries (33%), than all sectors (35.5%) (table 3a in DCMS Sector Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps: 2022, UK)

- across the economy as a whole, 15.1% of employers report skills gaps in their workforce. This is lower for creative industries businesses (10.5%) (table 2c in DCMS Sector Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps: 2022, UK). 5.7% of the workforce in all sectors have skills gaps, in line with (i.e. not significantly different to) the

creative industries average (4.9%) (table 3b in [DCMS Sector Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps: 2022, UK](#))

- the picture varies for individual subsectors, although low sample sizes lead to some of the results being less accurate. For example, in architecture, the proportion of vacancies that are due to skills shortages is higher (43.8%) than that for all employers in creative industries (33.0%) and all sectors (35.5%) (table 3a in [DCMS Sector Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps: 2022, UK](#)). Only 1.6% of the workforce working in publishing has skills gaps, while this is 15.3% for advertising and marketing, and 4.9% on average in the creative industries (table 3b in [DCMS Sector Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps: 2022, UK](#))

In this ad-hoc release, we present additional statistics from the Employer Skills Survey for the creative industries. Specifically:

- section 2 focuses on the skills gaps of the creative industries workforce, including the types of skills gaps, incidence and density of skills gaps by creative industries subsector, the causes of skills gaps, the impact of skills gaps on establishment performance, and responses of businesses to skills gaps
- section 3 focuses on skills-shortage vacancies, and presents data on the type of skills shortages experienced by employers in the creative industries, the incidence of vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies and skill-shortage vacancies by subsector, the impact of skill-shortage vacancies on establishment performance, and responses of businesses to skill-shortage vacancies
- section 4 analyses the distribution of skills gaps and shortages by occupation, and presents a list of occupations in greatest demand in the creative industries

2. Skills gaps in the creative industries

Skills gaps are where an employee is judged by their employer to be not fully proficient in their role, as they lack the skills and the knowledge to carry out the tasks associated to their job.

## 2.1. Types of skills that need to be improved within

the workforce

ESS 2022 allows for analysis of the types of skills gaps that are present for creative industries businesses. There are three categories: technical/practical skills gaps, IT-related skills gaps, and soft/people skills gaps.

2.1.1. Technical/practical skills gaps

The technical/practical skills gap impacting the largest proportion of creative industries businesses is in "specialist skills and knowledge for the role", with 67.8% of creative industries businesses with skills gaps reporting this as a skills gap (figure 1)[footnote 1]. This is followed by "skills associated with solving complex problems" (54.1%), "creative and innovative thinking" (53.5%), "knowledge of products and services" (50.1%), and "advanced and specialist IT skills" (46.0%). Apart from "knowledge of product and services", creative industries businesses are reporting skills gaps in all these areas in statistically significantly higher proportions than all UK businesses.

Figure 1: Two-thirds of creative industries businesses with skills gaps experienced that skills gap in "specialist skills or knowledge needed to perform the role"
Technical/practical skills that need improving (as a % of businesses with skills gaps), UK 2022
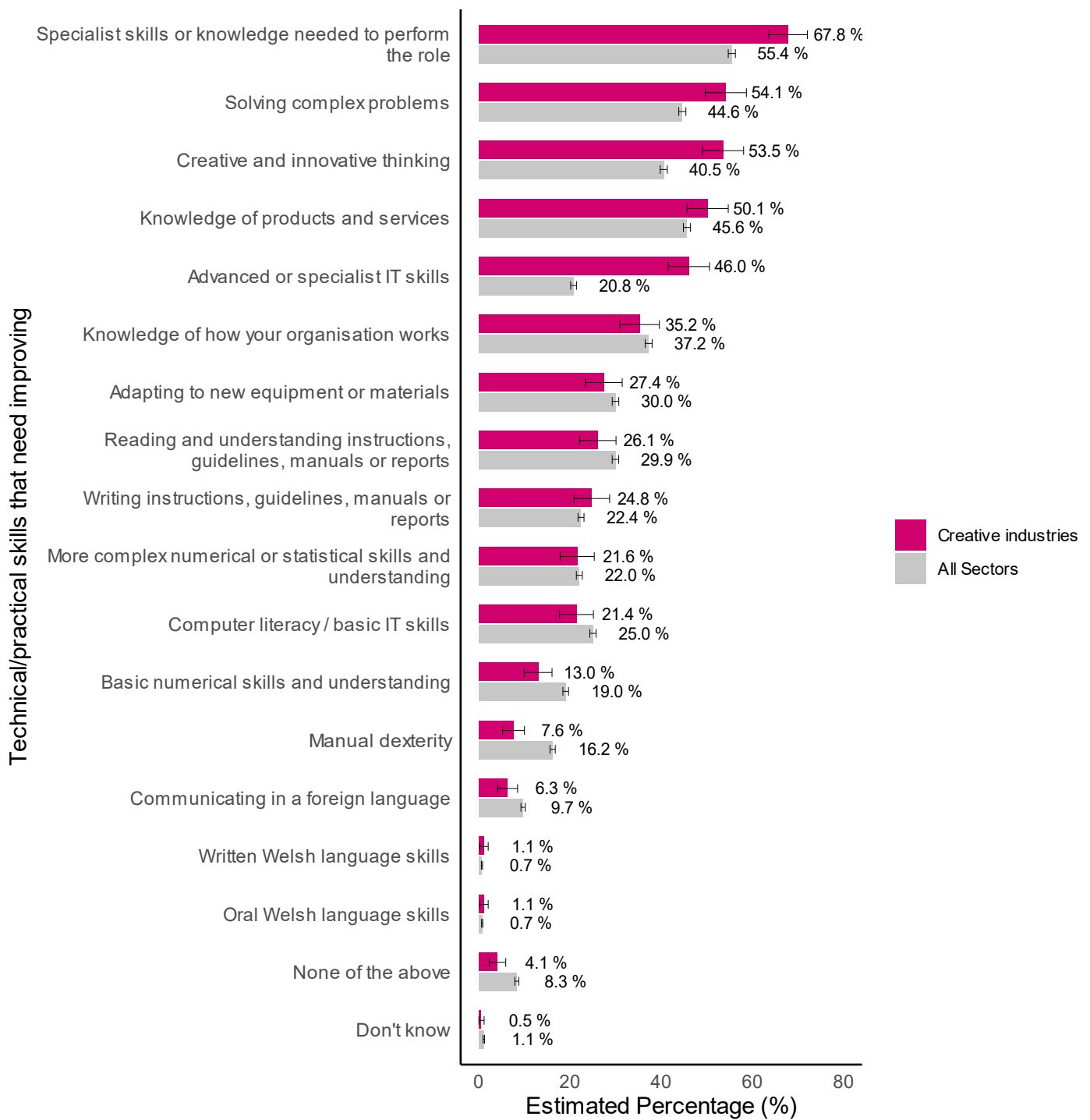
Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education

Notes:

- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

2.1.2. IT-related skills gaps

Figure 2 shows that of those businesses with a skills gap caused by a lack of IT skills, a higher proportion of creative industries businesses than all businesses report an IT-related skills gaps in areas such as "graphic design/design engineering skills" (19.9%), "app programming and development skills" (11.9%), "data analysis/analytics/data science skills" (10.2%), "multimedia production skills" (8.4%)

and "web development skills" (8.2%).

Figure 2: Creative industries businesses with a skills gap caused by a lack of IT skills report higher skills gaps in areas such as graphic design and app programming than all UK businesses

IT skills that need improving (as a % of businesses with skills gaps caused by a lack of IT skills), UK 2022

IT skills that need improving (y-axis), *Estimated Percentage (%)* (x-axis)

IT skills that need improving	Creative industries	All Sectors
Specialist software or hardware / internal systems	22.0 %	23.1 %
Graphic design / design engineering skills	19.9 %	4.8 %
Basic Microsoft Office applications skills	16.0 %	30.2 %
Application ('app') programming and development skills	11.9 %	6.6 %
Data analysis / analytics / data science skills	10.2 %	5.2 %
Advanced Microsoft Office skills	9.3 %	14.5 %
Multimedia production skills	8.4 %	1.7 %
Web development skills	8.2 %	2.7 %
Building and maintaining IT systems and networks	5.6 %	3.7 %
Foundation digital skills	5.5 %	18.7 %
Social media / digital marketing skills	5.1 %	1.6 %
Communicating via email	4.1 %	7.0 %
Database skills	3.1 %	1.5 %
Skills using new or updated company software or systems	2.3 %	4.5 %
Using the internet to find solutions to problems	1.8 %	2.9 %
Accounting / finance software or systems	1.8 %	2.6 %
Being safe and legal online	1.1 %	1.9 %
Cloud-based and other storage systems skills	0.8 %	0.5 %
Completing transactions online		2.7 %
EPOS / till systems		2.4 %
Animation skills	0.0 %	0.6 %
Other	10.4 %	9.2 %
Don't know	4.9 %	4.3 %

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education

Notes:

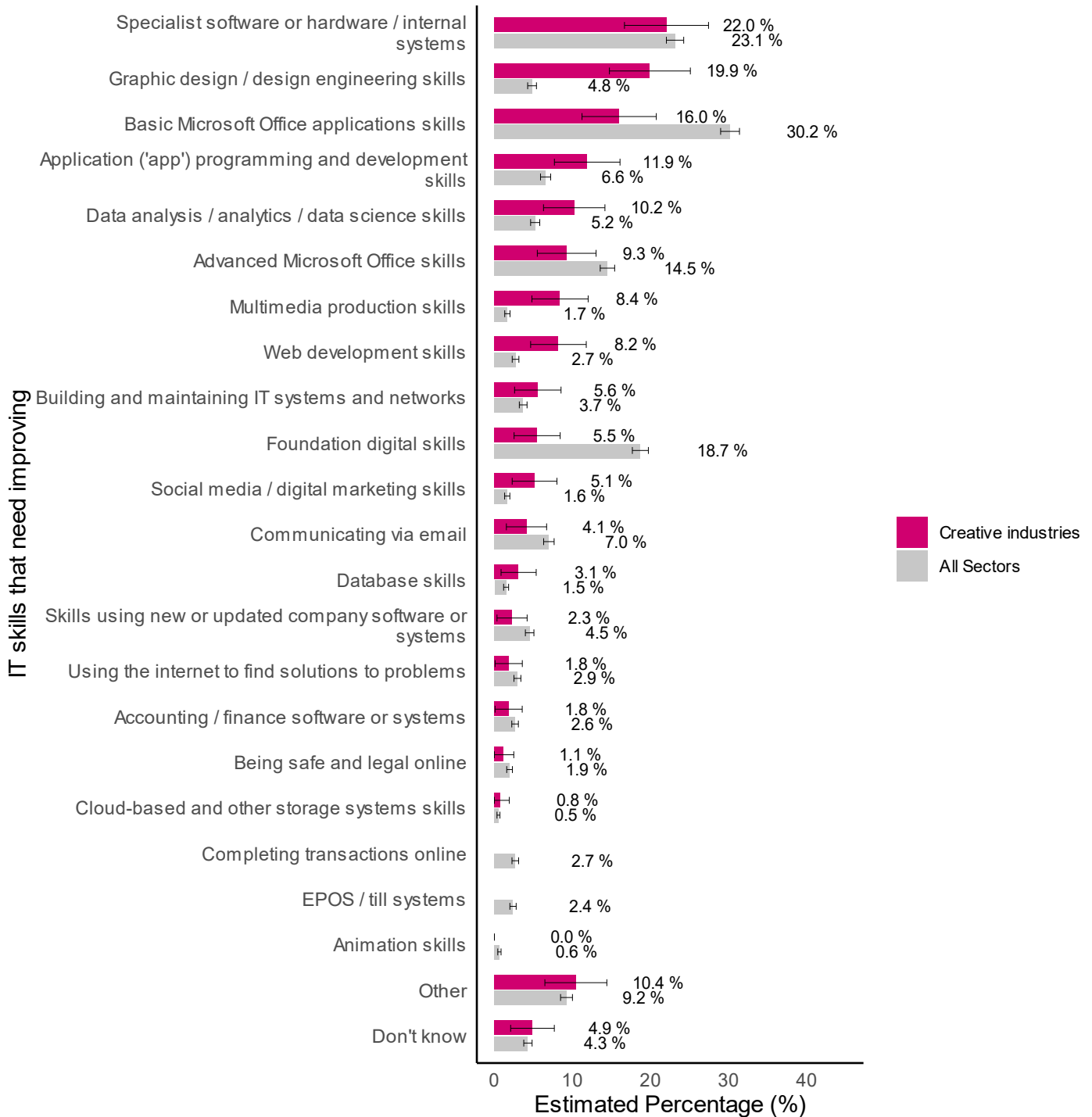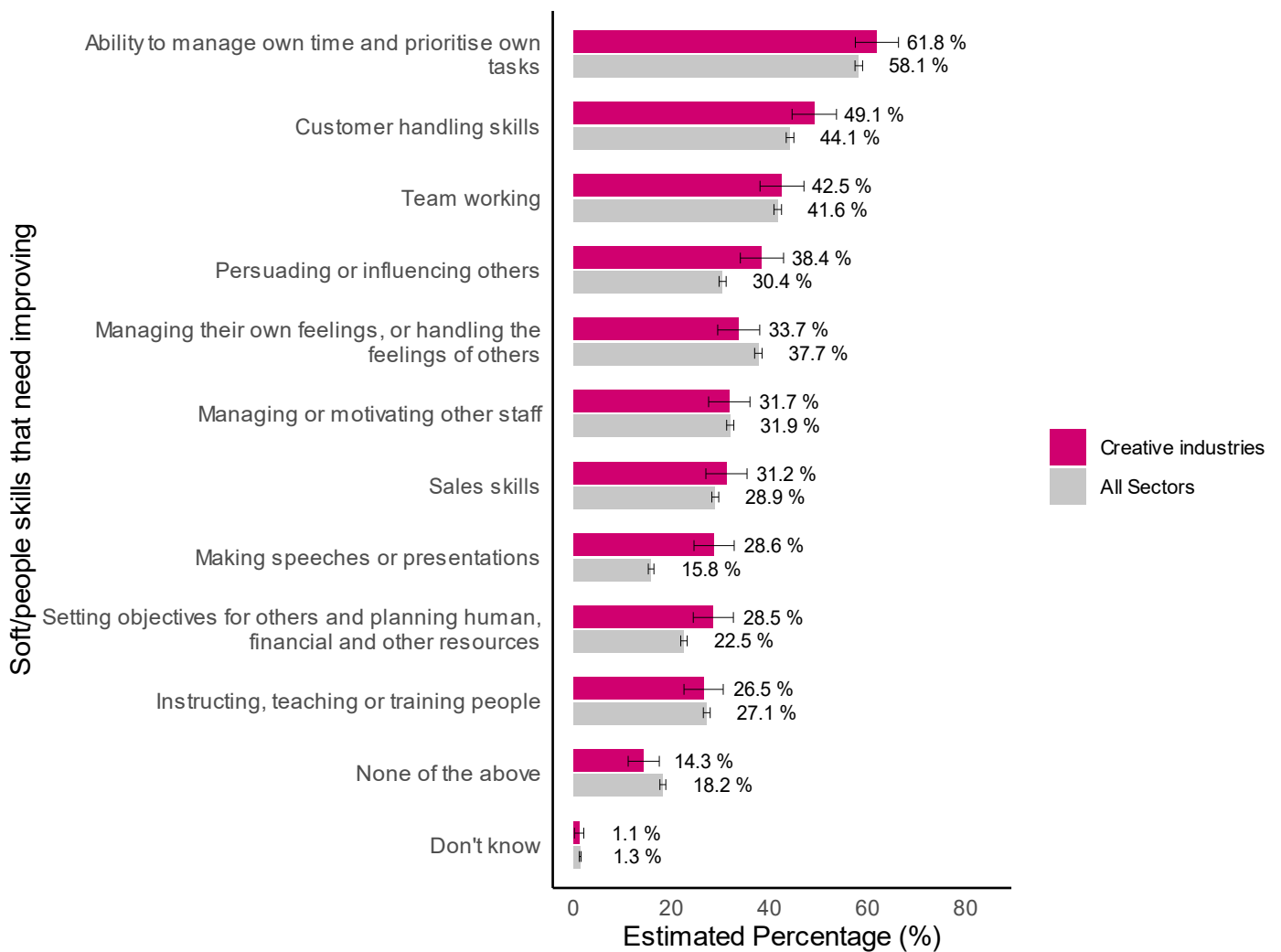- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

- answers mentioned by more than 0% but fewer than 0.5% of respondents are not shown, and confidence intervals are not provided

2.1.3. Soft/people skills gaps

The most common types of soft/people skills gaps reported by creative industries businesses and all businesses with skills gaps are "ability to manage own time and prioritise own tasks", "customer handling skills" and "team working" (figure 3). These are reported in similar proportions by creative industries businesses and all businesses with skills gaps. Of those businesses reporting skills gaps, there are some soft/people skills where higher proportions of creative industries businesses are reporting gaps when compared to all businesses, such as "persuading and influencing others" (38.4% of creative industries businesses with a skills gap vs. 30.4% of all UK businesses with a skills gap), "making speeches and presentations" (28.6% vs. 15.8%), and "setting objectives for others and planning human, financial and other resources" (28.5% vs. 22.5%).

Figure 3: Of those businesses reporting skills gaps, creative industries businesses report similar soft/people skills gaps when compared to all UK businesses
Soft/people skills that need improving (as a % of businesses with skills gaps), UK 2022

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education

Notes:

- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

2.2. Skills gaps incidence and density by creative industries subsector

There are two main indicators of skills gaps:

- incidence of skills gaps, that is defined as the percentage of businesses where at least one member of staff is judged to be not fully proficient in their role

- skills gaps density, which is the proportion of employees judged not fully proficient in their role

Table 1 shows that the incidence of skills gaps in the creative industries is 10.5%. This is significantly lower than the average across the economy (15.1%). No creative industries subsector has a significantly higher incidence of skills gaps than the economy as a whole. However, we see more variation when we consider the density of skills gaps. Table 1 shows that although creative industries businesses have a similar proportion of the workforce with skills gaps than all businesses as a whole (4.9% and 5.7%), there are clear differences between subsectors with the lowest (publishing, 1.6%) and highest (advertising and marketing 15.3%) proportions.

Table 1: Skills gaps incidence and skills gaps density by creative industries subsector, UK 2022

	Percentage of businesses with a skills gaps in their workforce (%)	Lower estimate	Upper estimate	Percentage of workforce with a skills gap (%)	Lower estimate	Upper Estimate
Advertising and marketing	14.2	10.3	18.1	15.3	11.3	19.3
Architecture	9.4	7.1	11.8	2.9	1.6	4.3
Crafts	c	c	c	c	c	c
Design and designer fashion	8.3	5.0	11.7	4.8	2.2	7.3
Film, TV, video, radio and photography	11.0	8.1	13.8	4.3	2.4	6.1
IT, software and computer	11.5	9.1	13.9	3.9	2.4	5.3

services						
Publishing	8.4	5.4	11.4	1.6	0.2	3.0
Museums, galleries and libraries	10.2	6.3	14.1	4.8	2.0	7.5
Music, performing and visual arts	10.3	7.1	13.5	3.8	1.8	5.8
Creative Industries	10.5	9.5	11.6	4.9	4.2	5.6
All Sectors	15.1	14.8	15.3	5.7	5.5	5.9

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education
Notes:

- estimates based on fewer than 30 respondents are suppressed ('c')

- 'Lower estimate' and 'Upper estimate' represent the lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence interval of the estimated percentages

2.3. Causes of skills gaps

Creative industries businesses report similar main causes of skills gaps to all businesses: 66.2% of creative industries businesses with skills gaps report that employers "are new to the role" and 63.6% that "training is only partially complete" (figure 4). Of those businesses reporting skills gaps, fewer creative industries businesses than all businesses are reporting problems recruiting staff with the required skills (26.3% vs. 31.1%), and staff lacking motivation (20.1% vs. 27.7%).

Of those businesses reporting skills gaps, a larger proportion of creative industries businesses are reporting that "the development of new products and services" is a cause of skills gaps than all businesses report (19.9% vs. 14.9%). As section 2.4 and 3.3 show, delays to new products and services are one of the most significant

impacts of skills gaps and skill-shortage vacancies.

Figure 4: Of those businesses reporting skills gaps, smaller proportions of creative industries businesses than all businesses are reporting being "unable to recruit staff with the required skills" and that "staff lack motivation".

Causes of skills gaps (as a % of businesses with skills gaps), UK 2022
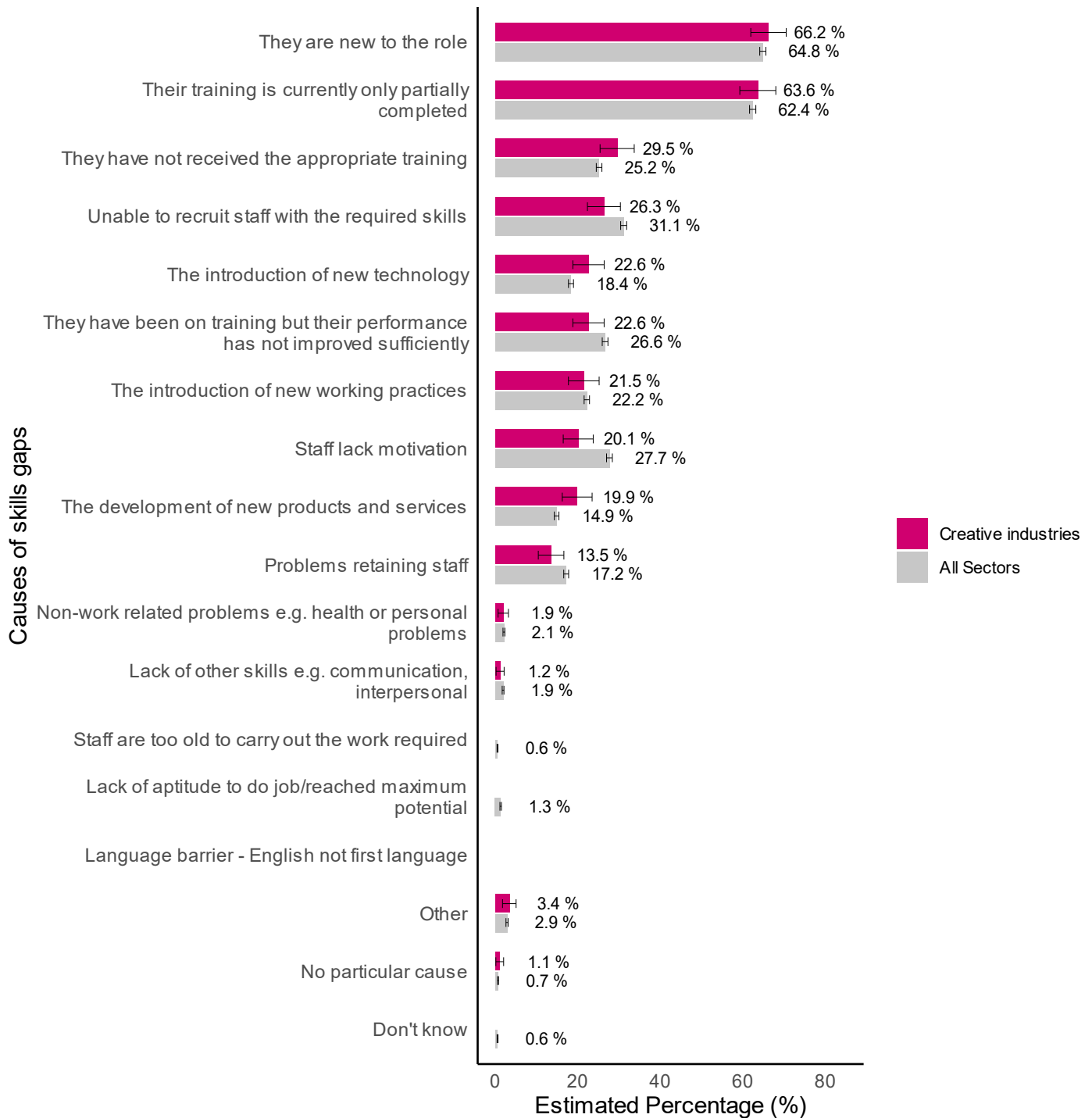
Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education

Notes:

- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

- answers mentioned by more than 0% but fewer than 0.5% of respondents are not shown, and confidence intervals are not provided

2.4. Impacts and responses to skills gaps

This section explores the perceived impact of skills gaps, and the actions that creative industries businesses are taking to address them.

Where businesses have a skills gap, the perception of whether these have an impact on establishment performance is similar between all businesses and creative industries businesses (67.2% of creative industries and 65.1% of all businesses report a major or minor impact) (figure 5).

Figure 5: Where businesses have a skills gap, the perception of whether they have an impact on establishment performance is similar between all business and creative industries businesses
Impacts of skills gaps on establishment performance (as a % of businesses with skills gaps), UK 2022
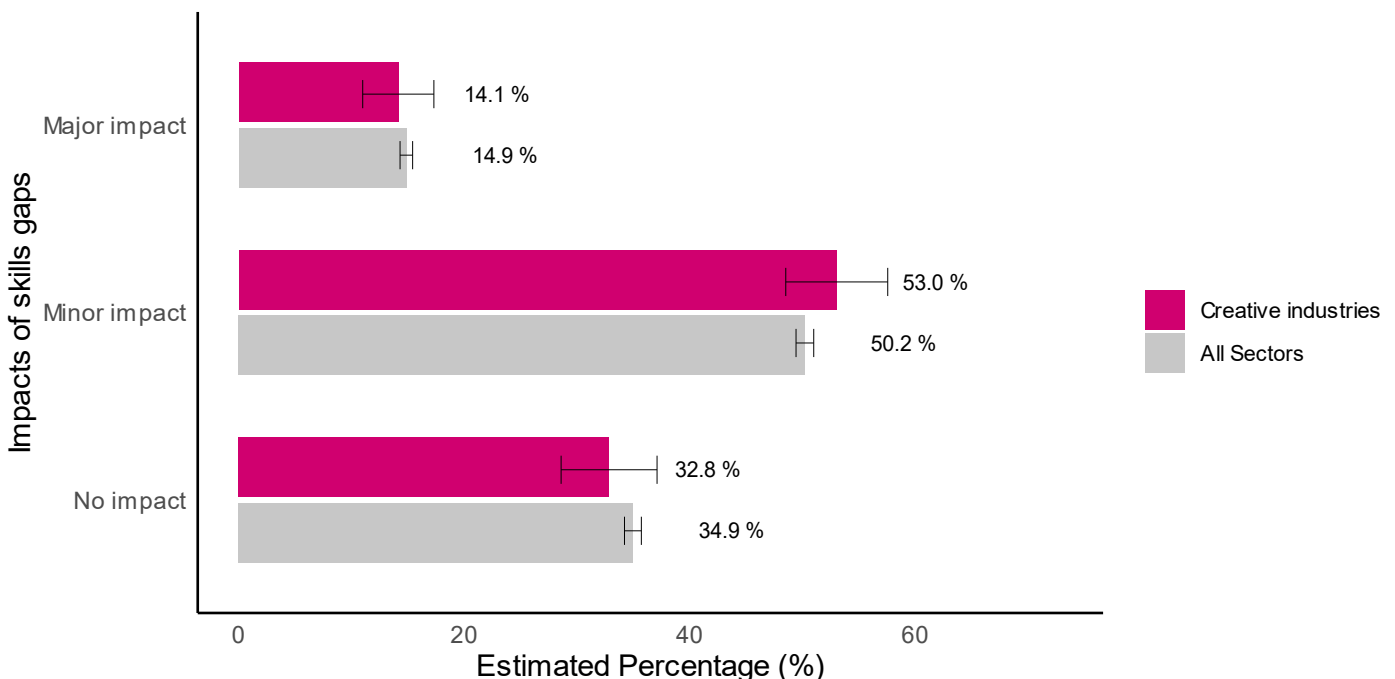
Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education
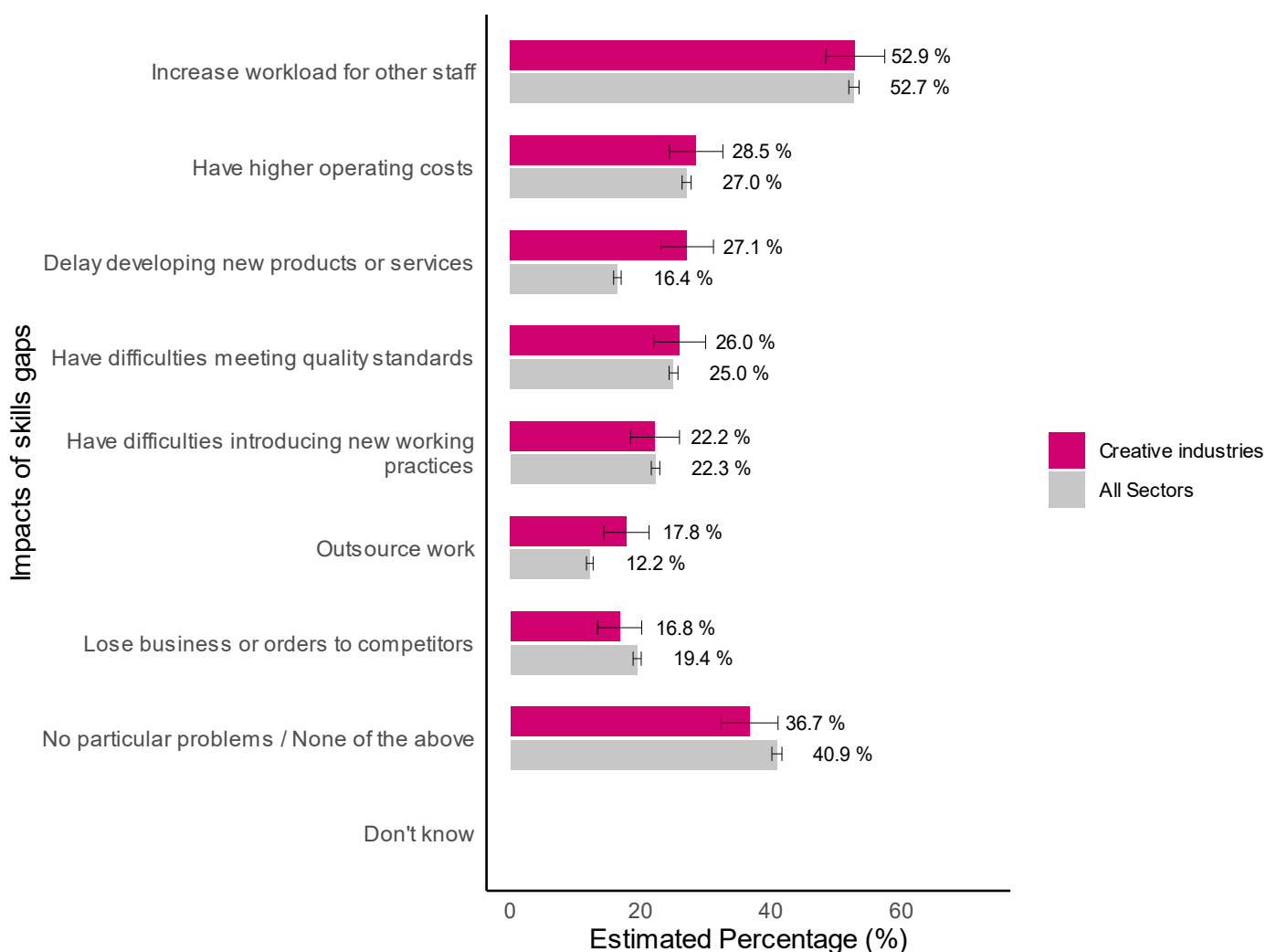**Notes:**
- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

The reported impacts of skills gaps on establishment performance by creative industries subsectors are presented in table A1 in the Data Tables. Small sample sizes make comparison between subsectors of the creative industries difficult, and no differences are statistically significant.

The broad impacts and responses to skills gaps are broken down in figure 6 and 7. Of those businesses reporting skills gaps, the most common impact of skills gaps reported by creative industries and all businesses is to "increase workload of other staff" (52.9%, not statistically different from 52.7%). Of those businesses reporting skills gaps, "delaying developing new products or services" (27.1% vs. 16.4%) and "outsourcing work" (17.8% vs. 12.2%) are more often reported by creative industries businesses than all businesses. Types of impacts of skills gaps by creative industries subsectors are presented in table A2 in the Data Tables.

Figure 6: Higher proportions of creative industries businesses with a skills gap are outsourcing work and delaying developing new products or services compared with all businesses as a consequence
Impacts of skills gaps (as a % of businesses with skills gaps), UK 2022

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the

Department for Education

Notes:

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Of those businesses reporting skills gaps, businesses' responses to skills gaps are similar in creative industries and all businesses (figure 7), with "increase in training or training programmes" and "more supervision of staff" being reported by a majority of businesses both in the creative industries, and all sectors. There are however some responses reported in higher proportions by creative industries businesses with a skills gap than to all businesses with a skills gap, i.e. "changing working practices" (31.7% vs. 25.9%).

Figure 7: Creative industries businesses' responses to skills gaps are similar to all businesses

Responses to skills gaps (as a % of businesses with skills gaps), UK 2022
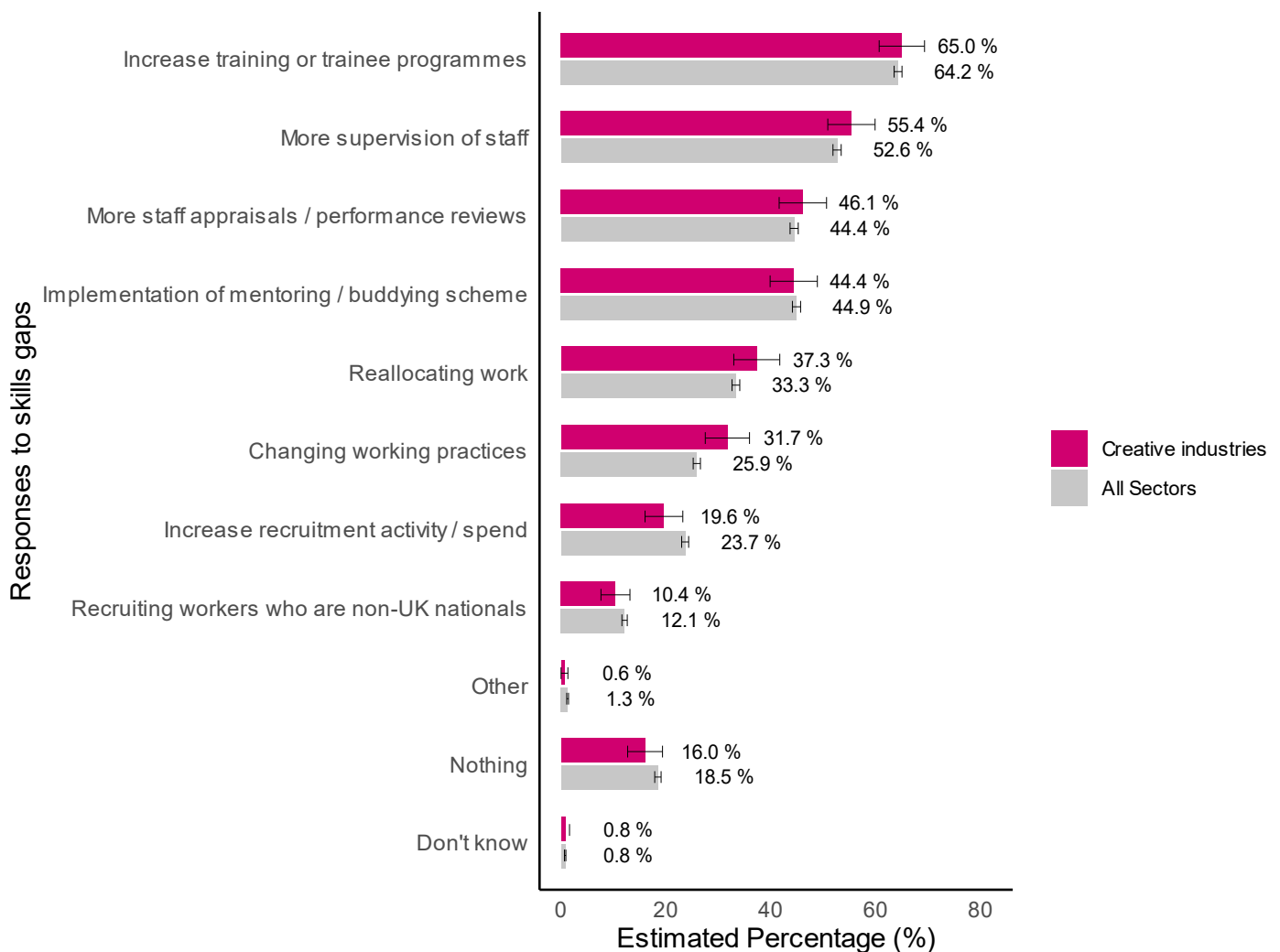
Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the

Notes:

- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

3. Skill-shortage vacancies in the creative industries

ESS 2022 allows analysis of the skill-shortage vacancies that are present for creative industries businesses. Skill-shortage vacancies occur when a vacancy is proving hard to fill due to applicants not having the right skills, qualifications and experience.

3.1. Skills found difficult to obtain from applicants

As with skills gaps, ESS collects data on three categories of skills found difficult to obtain from applicants: technical/practical skills, IT-related skills, and soft/people skills.

3.1.1. Technical/practical skills found difficult to obtain from applicants

Figure 8 shows the range of technical/practical skills found difficult to obtain from applicants by creative industries businesses and all businesses that report having skill-shortage vacancies. Of those businesses reporting having skill-shortage vacancies, there are several areas where higher proportions of creative industries businesses than all businesses are reporting technical/practical skills found difficult to obtain from applicants:

- specialist skills and knowledge needed to perform the role (76.4% of creative industries businesses with a skill-shortage vacancy vs. 65.4% of all businesses with a skill-shortage vacancy)

- solving complex problems (51.4% vs. 43.0%)

- knowledge of products and services (51.1% vs. 44.5%)

- creative and innovative thinking (49.9% vs. 43.0%)

- advanced and specialist IT skills (48.5% vs. 20.9%)

Figure 8: Higher proportions of creative industries businesses with skill-shortage vacancies report lack of "advanced and specialist IT skills" as a reason for skill-shortage vacancies, when compared to all businesses
Technical/Practical skills found difficult to obtain from applicants (as % of businesses with skill-shortage vacancies), UK 2022
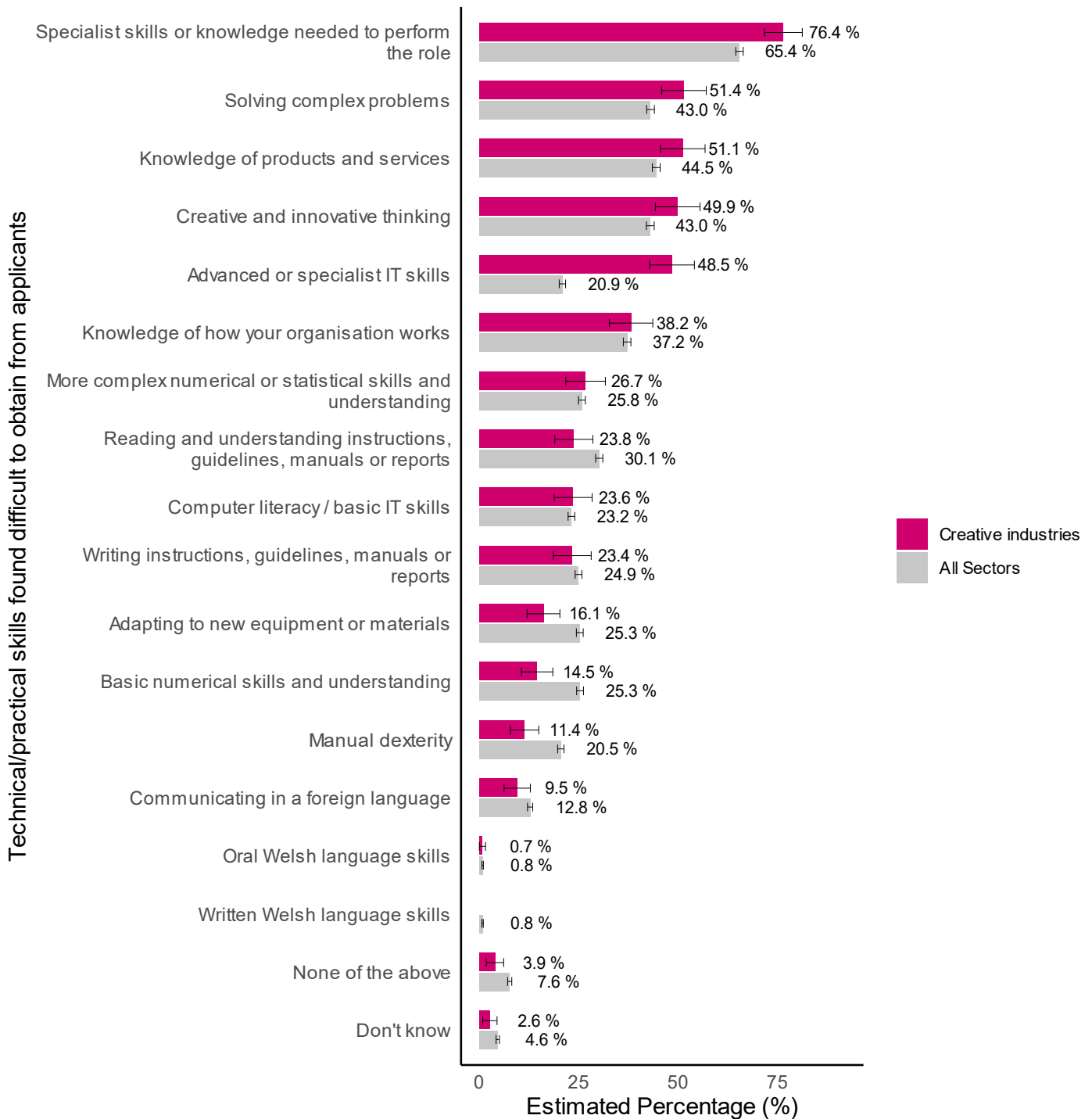
Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education
Notes:
- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

- answers mentioned by more than 0% but fewer than 0.5% of respondents are not shown, and confidence intervals are not provided

3.1.2. IT-related skills found difficult to obtain from applicants

When businesses report skill-shortage vacancies caused by a lack of IT skills, there are some IT-related skills that businesses in the creative industries find more difficult to obtain than businesses as a whole, for example, "graphic design/design engineering skills" (22.5% vs. 6.4%) and "application programming and development skills" (15.0% vs. 7.8%). All businesses with a skill-shortage vacancy caused by a lack of IT skills are more likely to report lack of skills associated with "foundation level digital skills" (22.4% all businesses vs. 6.8% creative industries), "communicating via email" (9.0% vs. 0.7%) and "basic Microsoft office application skills" (30.9% vs. 15.2%) in comparison to creative industries businesses with a skill-shortage vacancy caused by a lack of IT skills.

Figure 9: The IT-related skills that the creative industries businesses with skill-shortage vacancies caused by a lack of IT skills are most likely to report as being hard to obtain are "specialised software or hardware/internal systems" skills and "graphic design/design engineering skills"

IT skills found difficult to obtain from applicants (as % of businesses with skill-shortage vacancies caused by a lack of IT skills), UK 2022

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education

Notes:

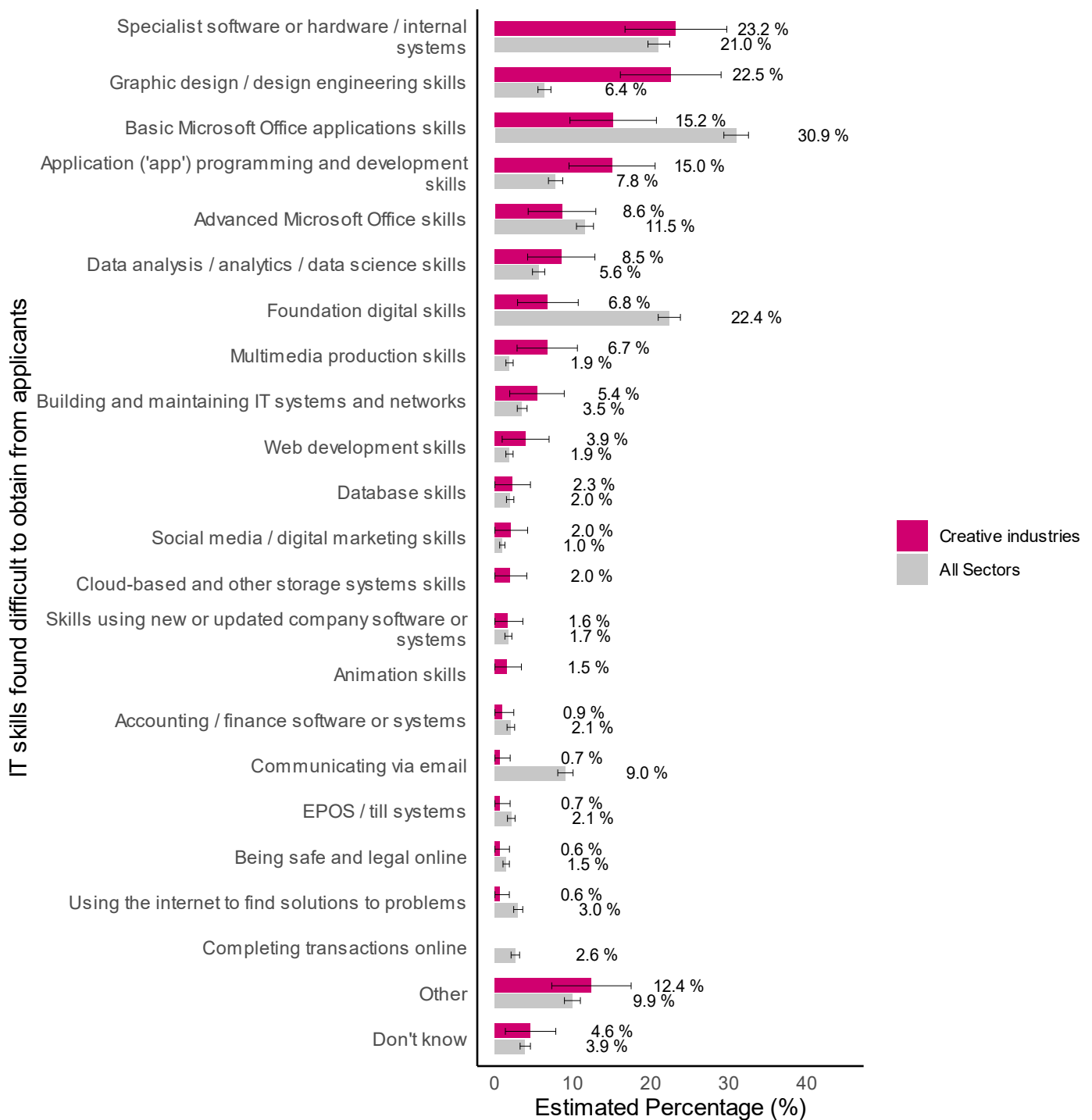- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

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3.1.3. Soft/people skills found difficult to obtain from applicants

In both the creative industries and all businesses with skill-shortage vacancies, businesses most commonly report it is difficult to obtain the "ability to manage own time and prioritise own tasks" and "customer handling skills" (figure 10). There are

some soft/people skills where higher proportions of creative industries businesses with skill-shortage vacancies are reporting shortages when compared to all businesses with skill-shortage vacancies, such as "sales skills" (31.8% vs. 23.4%) and "making speeches and presentations" (26.4% vs. 15.4%).

Figure 10: Of those businesses reporting a skill- shortage vacancy, a higher proportion of creative industries businesses report soft/people skills shortages in "sales skills" and "making speeches and presentations" than in all businesses
Soft/people skills found difficult to obtain from applicants (as % of businesses with skill-shortage vacancies), UK 2022
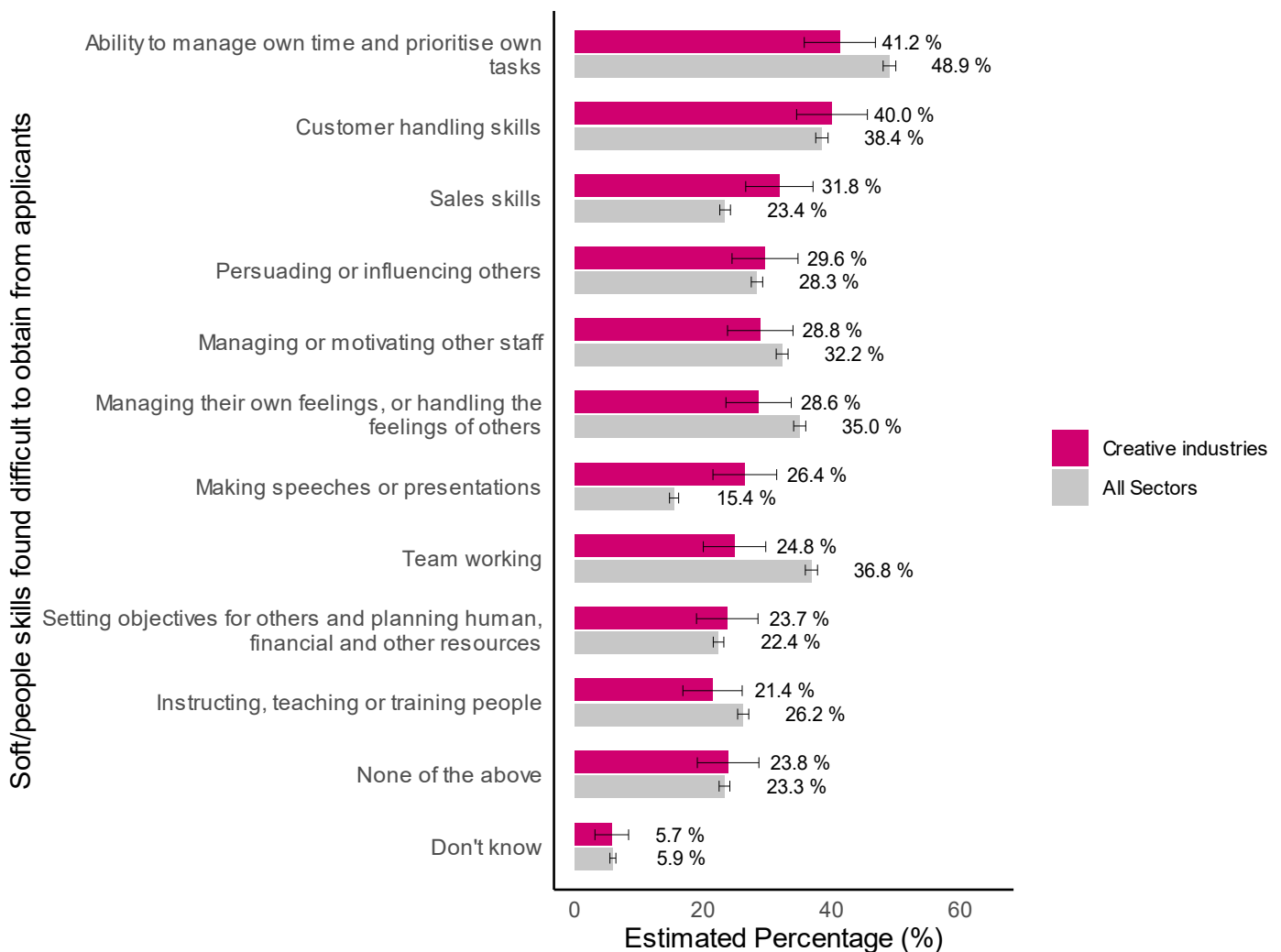
Notes:
- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

3.2. Vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies, and skill-shortage vacancies by creative industries subsector

This section presents data on vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies, and skill-shortage vacancies in the creative industries, its subsectors, and in all businesses.

Hard-to-fill vacancies are a subset of vacancies, where employers report difficulties filling the roles.

Skill-shortage vacancies are a subset of hard-to-fill vacancies, i.e. are vacancies that are proving hard to fill due to applicants not having the right skills, qualifications and experience.

Table 2 presents data on:

- incidence of vacancies, i.e. the percentage of establishments with at least one vacancy

- incidence of hard-to-fill vacancies, i.e. the percentage of establishments with at least one hard-to-fill vacancy

- incidence of skill-shortage vacancies, i.e. the percentage of establishments with at least one skill-shortage vacancy

Table 2 shows that at least one vacancy is reported by 17.6% of creative industries employers, lower than the rate for the whole economy (23.2%). Looking at the data by subsector, we see a higher proportion of museums, galleries and libraries (25.5%) are reporting vacancies than the creative industries as a whole, however this is in line with the average of all employers.

14.6% of all employers suggest they have hard-to-fill vacancies. This is significantly higher than 9.2% of creative industries employers reporting hard-to-fill vacancies. All creative industries subsectors are less likely to report at least one hard-to-fill vacancy than the average for all employers.

The percentage of employers reporting at least one skill-shortage vacancy is also

lower for creative industries than all businesses (7.2% vs. 9.8%). A number of creative subsectors report levels of skills shortages that are not significantly different from all sectors (i.e. advertising and marketing, architecture, design and designer fashion, and IT, software and computer services).

Table 2: Percentage of businesses with vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies and skill-shortage vacancies by creative industries subsector, UK 2022

	Percentage of businesses with a vacancy (%)	Lower estimate	Upper estimate	Percentage of businesses with a hard-to-fill vacancy (%)	Lower estimate	Upper estimate
Advertising and marketing	20.3	15.8	24.8	10.7	7.2	14.2
Architecture	18.6	15.5	21.8	10.0	7.6	12.5
Crafts	c	c	c	c	c	c
Design and designer fashion	16.2	11.7	20.6	10.1	6.4	13.7
Film, TV, video, radio and photography	16.8	13.4	20.2	8.7	6.1	11.3
IT, software and computer services	16.1	13.4	18.9	9.8	7.6	12.0
Publishing	15.1	11.2	19.1	7.3	4.4	10.1
Museums, galleries and libraries	25.5	19.9	31.0	8.6	5.0	12.2

Music, performing and visual arts	17.7	13.7	21.7	7.7	4.9	10.5
Creative Industries	17.6	16.3	18.9	9.2	8.2	10.2
All Sectors	23.2	22.9	23.5	14.6	14.4	14.9

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education
Notes:

- estimates based on fewer than 30 respondents are suppressed ('c')

- 'Lower estimate' and 'Upper estimate' represent lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence interval of the estimated percentages

In 2022, at the time of the survey, employers in the creative industries reported 49,008 vacancies. Of these, 21,784 were hard-to-fill, and of these hard-to-fill vacancies, 16,166 were hard-to-fill due to candidates not having the right skills, qualifications and experience, i.e. were skill-shortage vacancies[footnote 2].

Table 3 presents the following indicators:

- the number of hard-to-fill vacancies as a proportion of all vacancies (hard-to-fill vacancies density)

- the number of skill-shortage vacancies as a proportion of all hard-to-fill vacancies

- the number of skill-shortage vacancies as a proportion of all vacancies (skill-shortage vacancies density)

Compared to all sectors, table 3 shows that in the creative industries there are fewer hard-to-fill vacancies as a proportion of all vacancies (44.5% of all vacancies in the creative industries vs. 56.9% in all sectors), but the ones that exist, are more likely to be skill-shortage vacancies (74.2% of all hard-to-fill vacancies in the creative industries are skill-shortage vacancies vs. 62.5% in all sectors). Overall, 33% of all vacancies in the creative industries are skill-shortage vacancies vs. 35.5% for all sectors.

Table 3: Summary of vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies and skill-shortage vacancies by creative industries subsector, UK 2022

	Number of hard-to-fill vacancies as a proportion of all vacancies (%)	Lower estimate	Upper estimate	Number of skill-shortage vacancies as a proportion of all hard-to-fill vacancies (%)	Lower estimate	Upper estimate	
Advertising and marketing	36.0	30.6	41.4	70.9	65.8	76.0	
Architecture	51.8	47.7	55.9	84.6	81.7	87.5	
Crafts	c	c	c	c	c	c	
Design and designer fashion	57.4	51.4	63.3	67.7	62.0	73.3	
Film, TV, video, radio and photography	51.3	46.7	55.8	62.3	57.9	66.7	
IT, software and computer services	42.8	39.0	46.5	83.1	80.3	85.9	
Publishing	36.6	31.3	41.9	84.2	80.2	88.2	
Museums, galleries and libraries	29.8	24.0	35.6	53.4	47.0	59.7	
Music, performing and visual	47.0	41.8	52.2	61.8	56.7	66.9	

arts							
Creative Industries	44.5	42.7	46.2	74.2	72.7	75.7	
All Sectors	56.9	56.5	57.2	62.5	62.1	62.8	

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education
Notes:

- estimates based on fewer than 30 respondents are suppressed ('c')

- 'Lower estimate' and 'Upper estimate' represent the lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence interval of the estimated percentages

This is in line with the picture presented in figure 11, which shows that of those businesses with hard-to-fill vacancies, compared to all sectors, employers in the creative industries are more likely to say the reason for having a hard-to-fill vacancy includes "applicants lack the required skills" (this is reported by 44.5% vs. 31.1% of respondents) and "lack the required work experience" (18.6% vs. 12.6%). On the other hand, creative industries employers are significantly less likely than all sectors employers to report causes such as "not enough people interested in doing this type of job" (12.8% vs. 24.9%), "poor terms and conditions offered" (12.7% vs. 17.5%), "low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality" (8.4% vs. 12.6%).

Figure 11: Of those businesses with hard-to-fill vacancies, businesses in the creative industries are more likely to say the reason for having a hard-to-fill vacancy includes applicants lacking the required skills and required work experience
Main causes of having a hard-to-fill vacancy (as % of businesses with hard-to-fill vacancies), UK 2022

Causes of having a hard-to-fill vacancy (y-axis)
Estimated Percentage (%) (x-axis)

Legend:
- Creative industries (magenta)
- All Sectors (grey)

Cause	Creative industries	All Sectors
Low number of applicants with the required skills	44.5 %	31.1 %
Low number of applicants generally	25.7 %	24.4 %
Lack of work experience the company demands	18.6 %	12.6 %
Not enough people interested in doing this type of job	12.8 %	24.9 %
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post	12.7 %	17.5 %
Lack of qualifications the company demands	12.6 %	9.5 %
Too much competition from other employers	10.8 %	8.4 %
Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality	8.4 %	12.6 %
Remote location/poor public transport	7.8 %	7.5 %
Brexit has made it more difficult to recruit EU nationals	3.8 %	4.8 %
Job entails shift work/unsociable hours	3.6 %	7.7 %
COVID-19 has limited the availability of candidates	1.9 %	4.9 %
COVID-19 has hindered the recruitment process	1.8 %	3.6 %
Lack of funding for the position	1.6 %	0.7 %
Low number of suitable applicants inc. Age of applicants	1.6 %	2.5 %
Seasonal work	1.4 %	0.9 %
People want to work from home / not in the office	1.3 %	1.1 %
Poor career progression / lack of prospects	1.0 %	1.2 %
Not full-time/permanent	1.0 %	2.0 %
Poor recruitment channels/mechanisms (inc. lack/cost of advertising)	0.8 %	1.0 %
High turnover of staff / problems with staff retention	0.6 %	1.0 %
People want part-time work / fewer hours		0.7 %
Benefits trap		1.1 %
Difficulty with work permits/immigration issues for non-EU staff		
Other	5.8 %	6.5 %
No particular reason		0.6 %
Don't know	2.0 %	1.9 %

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education

Notes:

- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

- answers mentioned by more than 0% but fewer than 0.5% of respondents are not

3.3. Impacts and responses to skill-shortage vacancies

Figure 12 shows the overall impacts of skill-shortage vacancies on creative businesses and all businesses that report having skill-shortage vacancies. "Increasing workload for other staff" is reported as the most common impact in both creative businesses and all businesses (88.1% and 84.6%). In general, for businesses with skill-shortage vacancies, responses from creative businesses look similar to all businesses. There are some differences, including more creative industries businesses with skill-shortage vacancies reporting the impact of skills shortages to include "delaying developing new products or services" (58.3% of creative industries businesses vs. 40.6% of all businesses) and "outsourcing work" (48.3% vs. 32.2%) compared to all businesses.

Figure 12: Of those businesses with hard-to-fill vacancies that are all as a result of skill-shortages, more creative industries businesses report the impacts of skills shortages include to "delay developing new products or services" and "outsource work" compared to all businesses
Impacts of skill shortages (as a % of all businesses with hard-to-fill vacancies that are all as a result of skill shortages), UK 2022

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education

Notes:

- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

- answers mentioned by more than 0% but fewer than 0.5% of respondents are not shown, and confidence intervals are not provided
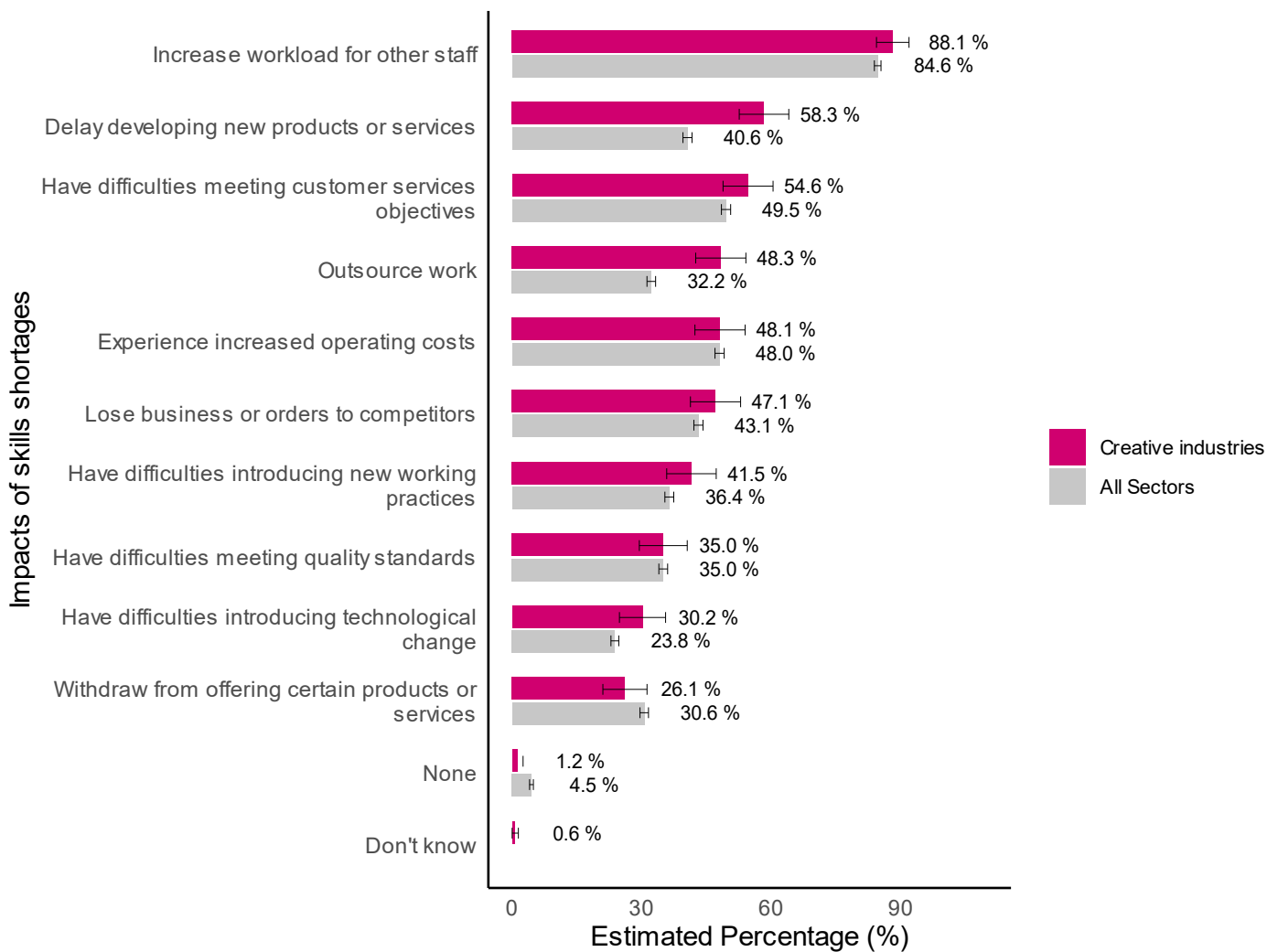
Figure 13 shows the range of actions taken by all employers reporting skill-shortages as compared to creative industries employers reporting skill-shortages, in response to skill shortages. Of businesses with skill-shortage vacancies, a lower proportion of creative industries employers suggest they have taken actions in response to skill shortages on "increasing advertising and recruitment spend" (25.6% vs. 33.2%), as compared to all employers, and a higher proportions of creative industries businesses report using contractors or contracting out to address the impacts of skills issues as compared to all businesses (13.0% vs. 8.1%).

Figure 13: Of those businesses with hard-to-fill vacancies that are all as a result of skill-shortages, lower proportions of creative industries employers are suggesting they had taken actions on advertising and recruitment

spending in response to skills shortages, as compared to all employers, while higher proportions report "bringing in contractors to do the work, or contracting it out"

Responses to skill shortages (as a % of all businesses with hard-to-fill vacancies that are all as a result of skill shortages), UK 2022
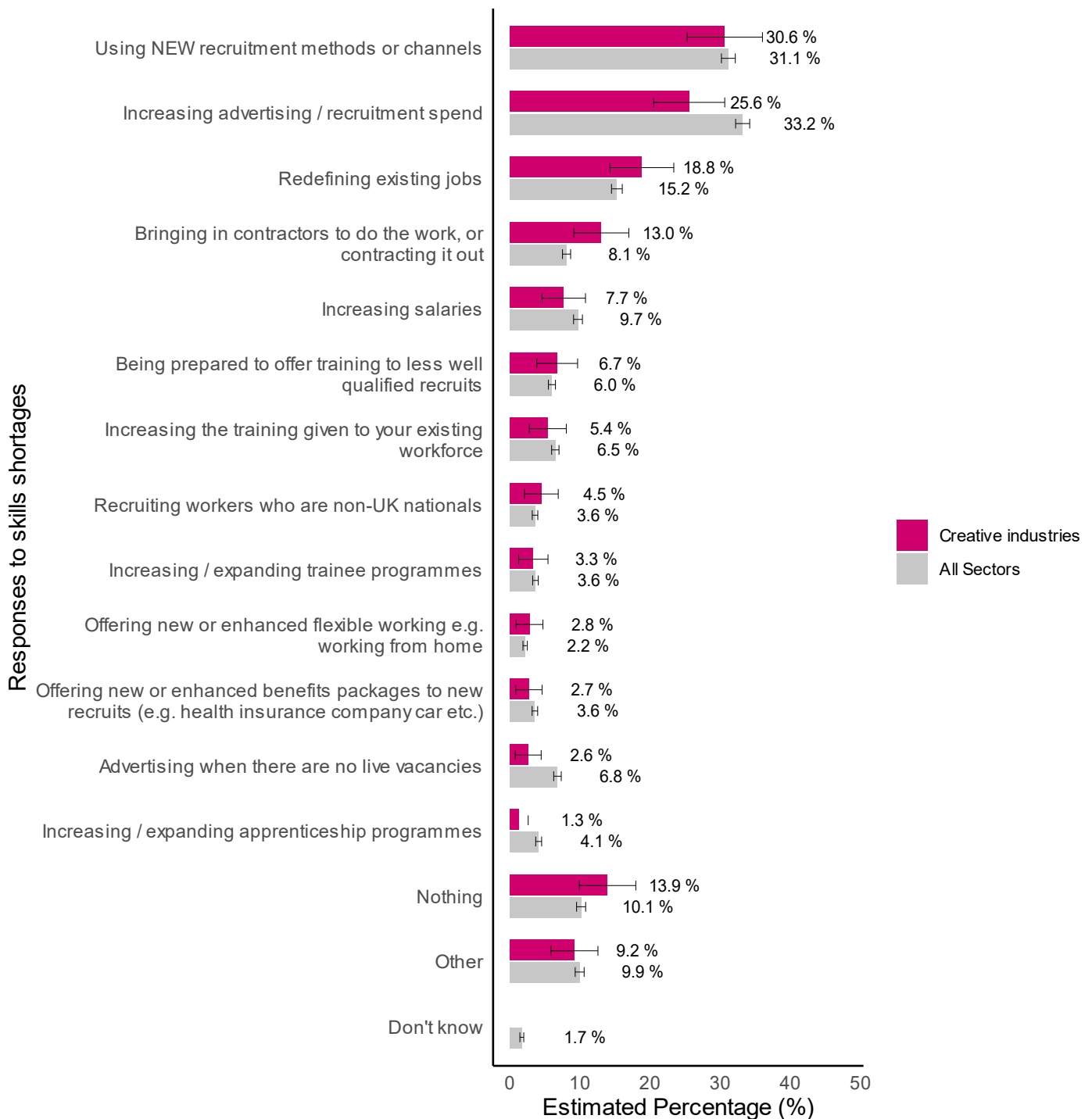
Notes:

- error bars represent 95% confidence intervals of the estimated percentages

- answers mentioned by more than 0% but fewer than 0.5% of respondents are not

4. Skills needs by occupation in the creative industries

4.1. Skills gaps by occupation

Alongside understanding creative industries businesses' perceptions of skills issues, ESS 2022 has data on which occupations are needed across the economy. This allows analysis of demand for occupations in creative industries businesses.

Table 4 shows the profile of the workforce employed at the establishment, by occupation. This includes employees, working proprietors or owners, but excludes self-employed, outside contractor or agency staff[footnote 3]. According to the data from this survey, 62.3% percent of the creative industries workforce is employed in the three higher level sets of occupations: managers, directors and senior officials, professional occupations, for example graphic designers and journalists, and associate professionals, for example writers, artists and musicians[footnote 4]. This is against 35.4% in all sectors.

Table 4: Profile of employment by occupation, UK 2022

	Creative Industries			All Sectors		
	%	Lower estimate	Upper estimate	%	Lower estimate	U e:
Managers, directors and senior officials	27.1	25.6	28.6	17.4	17.1	1
Professional occupations	25.5	24.0	27.0	12.4	12.1	1.
Associate professional occupations	9.7	8.7	10.7	5.7	5.5	5

Administrative/secretarial occupations	11.0	9.9	12.1	12.0	11.8	1:
Skilled trades occupations	5.5	4.7	6.3	7.9	7.7	8
Caring, leisure and other services occupations	0.4	0.2	0.6	10.1	9.9	1(
Sales and customer services occupations	15.5	14.3	16.8	11.2	11.0	1
Process, plant and machine operatives	1.5	1.1	1.9	8.5	8.3	8
Elementary occupations	3.8	3.1	4.4	14.9	14.6	1:

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education
Notes:
- 'Lower estimate' and 'Upper estimate' represent the lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence interval of the estimated percentages

Table 5 provides a picture of the profile of skills gaps by occupation. Skills gaps are more likely to be found among professional occupations (20% of all skills gaps in the sector) and sales and customer service occupations (44.2%) compared with 9.5% and 15.7% in all sectors.

Table 5: Profile of skills gaps by occupation UK 2022

	Creative Industries			All Sectors		
	%	Lower estimate	Upper estimate	%	Lower estimate	U e:
Managers, directors and senior officials	7.6	6.6	8.5	7.5	7.4	7
Professional occupations	20.0	18.6	21.3	9.5	9.2	9

Associate professional occupations	5.9	5.1	6.7	5.0	4.9	5
Administrative/secretarial occupations	9.8	8.7	10.8	10.7	10.5	1
Skilled trades occupations	6.7	5.8	7.6	10.2	9.9	1
Caring, leisure and other services occupations	0.4	0.2	0.6	8.3	8.1	8
Sales and customer services occupations	44.2	42.5	45.9	15.7	15.4	1
Process, plant and machine operatives	1.5	1.1	1.9	9.2	9.0	9
Elementary occupations	4.0	3.4	4.7	23.9	23.6	2

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education
Notes:

- 'Lower estimate' and 'Upper estimate' represent the lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence interval of the estimated percentages

4.2. Vacancies and skill-shortage vacancies by occupation

70.2% of all vacancies and 75.0% of all skill-shortage vacancies in the creative industries are for managerial, professionals and associate professionals positions. This is a higher proportion than 26.6% and 25.8% respectively in all sectors.

Table 6: Profile of job vacancies by occupation, UK 2022

	Creative Industries			All Sectors		
	%	Lower	Upper	%	Lower	U

	estimate	estimate		estimate	e
Managers, directors and senior officials	3.7	3.1	4.4	3.0	2.9	3
Professional occupations	36.0	34.3	37.6	12.7	12.4	1
Associate professional occupations	30.5	28.9	32.1	10.9	10.7	1
Administrative/secretarial occupations	10.3	9.2	11.3	8.5	8.3	8
Skilled trades occupations	5.9	5.1	6.8	12.5	12.2	1
Caring, leisure and other services occupations	1.6	1.1	2.0	17.7	17.4	1
Sales and customer services occupations	6.3	5.5	7.2	9.3	9.1	9
Process, plant and machine occupations	1.1	0.7	1.4	8.5	8.3	8
Elementary occupations	4.5	3.8	5.2	16.4	16.2	1
Unclassified occupations	0.2	0	0.3	0.4	0.4	0

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education
Notes:
- 'Lower estimate' and 'Upper estimate' represent the lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence interval of the estimated percentages

Table 7: Profile of skill-shortage vacancies by occupation, UK 2022

	Creative Industries			All Sectors		
	%	Lower	Upper	%	Lower	U

	estimate	estimate		estimate	e
Managers, directors and senior officials	3.1	2.5	3.7	2.3	2.2	2
Professional occupations	41.1	39.4	42.8	13.6	13.3	1
Associate professional occupations	30.8	29.2	32.4	9.9	9.6	1
Administrative/secretarial occupations	4.6	3.9	5.3	8.8	8.6	9
Skilled trades occupations	8.0	7.1	9.0	17.8	17.5	1
Caring, leisure and other services occupations	0.7	0.4	0.9	19.2	18.9	1
Sales and customer services occupations	5.9	5.1	6.8	8.1	7.9	8
Process, plant and machine occupations	2.1	1.6	2.6	8.3	8.1	8
Elementary occupations	3.6	3.0	4.2	11.8	11.5	1
Unclassified occupations	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set, from the Department for Education
Notes:

- 'Lower estimate' and 'Upper estimate' represent the lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence interval of the estimated percentages

4.3. In-demand occupations in the creative industries

The broad patterns of occupations discussed in sections 4.1 and 4.2 can be

analysed in more detail through detailed occupational codes (at 3 and 4 digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC code)).

Table 8 presents occupations that are most in demand by creative industries businesses. It uses 3 digit SOC codes to give information on the broad clusters of occupations for which creative industries businesses are reporting the highest number of vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies, and highest skills shortages. The table is sorted by total number of vacancies.

Respondents are generally citing skills issues and, to a certain extent, experience issues, rather than a lack of qualifications, as the reason for vacancies in these occupations being skill-shortage vacancies.

Table 8: Top occupations in demand in the creative industries (3-digit SOC code)

3 Digit SOC code	Description	Total number of vacancies	Total number of hard-to-fill vacancies	Total number of skill-shortage vacancies	If vacancy is skill-shortage vacancies, % of businesses saying this is due to lack of skills	If vacancy is skill-shortage vacancies, % of businesses saying this is due to lack of experience
213	Information technology professionals	5,434	1,822	1,650	91.2	37.4
355	Sales, marketing and related associate professionals	5,391	2,224	1,478	67.7	49.5
249	Media professionals	3,712	1,334	936	58.5	63.7
245	Architects, chartered architectural	3,345	1,848	1,676	65.8	48.7

	technologists, planning officers, surveyors and construction professionals					
341	Artistic, literary and media occupations	2,944	1,872	1,004	69.4	29.8
214	Web and multimedia design professionals	2,257	1,089	562	100.0	30.4
415	Other administrative occupations	2,085	588	316	68.7	46.2
215	Conservation and environment professionals	2,017	1,232	1,135	80.8	49.5
312	CAD, drawing and architectural technicians	1,700	888	746	80.2	53.9
413	Administrative occupations: records	1,551	369	162	31.7	73.9
926	Other elementary services occupations	1,301	421	198	34.3	100.0
313	Information Technology	1,239	764	620	65.1	29.2

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2022, Occupational data set, from the Department for Education
Notes:

- the table is sorted by total number of vacancies

- the 95% confidence interval of the estimated percentages is provided in the Data Tables (table T8)

Table 9 presents a more detailed set of occupations that are in greatest demand in the creative industries. It uses 4 digit SOC codes, allowing for the analysis to specify more exactly the types of occupations where there are the highest number of vacancies and highest number of skills shortages.

The most vacancies in creative industries are reported for SOC code 3554 "advertising and marketing associate professionals", while the most skill-shortage vacancies are for SOC code 2451 ("architects") and 2134 ("programmers and software development professionals").

The proportions of vacancies that are driven by skill-shortage vary between individual occupations. Aside from library clerks and assistants, for all of the occupations in table 9 over 60% of responses cite lack of skills as a reason for the skill-shortage vacancy. But across skills, experience and qualifications occupational shortages are generally the result of a blend of all three factors.

Table 9: Top occupations in demand in the creative industries (4-digit SOC code)

SOC code 2020	Description	Total number of vacancies	Total number of hard-to-fill vacancies	Total number of skill-shortage vacancies	If vacancy is skill-shortage vacancies, % of businesses saying this is due to lack of skills	If vacancy is skill-shortage vacancies, % of businesses saying this is due to lack of experience
3554	Advertising and marketing	3,054	1,096	489	67.1	46.9

	associate professionals					
2451	Architects	2,948	1,541	1,368	69.9	45.6
c	c	c	c	c	c	c
2493	Public relations professionals	2,130	982	653	64.1	68.5
2134	Programmers and software development professionals	2,067	1,333	1,177	86.0	39.7
4159	Other administrative occupations n.e.c.	1,993	570	316	68.7	46.2
3417	Photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators	1,776	1,253	547	63.7	16.5
3120	CAD, drawing and architectural technicians	1,700	888	746	80.2	53.9
2142	Graphic and multimedia designers	1,617	730	339	100.0	27.3
2152	Environment professionals	1,532	867	827	81.2	45.3
4135	Library clerks and assistants	1,223	318	134	42.2	65.3
3556	Sales accounts	1,095	511	432	80.4	44.0

and business
development
managers

Notes:

- estimates based on fewer than 30 respondents are suppressed ('c')

- the table is sorted by total number of vacancies

- the 95% confidence interval of the estimated percentages is provided in the Data Tables (table T9)

Data sources

Department for Education (2023). Employer Skills Survey 2022, Main UK data set.

Department for Education (2023). Employer Skills Survey 2022, Occupational data set.

1. All data presented in charts and tables in this research report can also be found in the Data Tables. In Data Tables, table numbers start with 'F' if they are presented in charts in this research report, and with 'T' if they are presented in tables. ↩

2. These figures are based on the survey question "How many vacancies, if any, do you currently have at this establishment?", and subsequent questions on the number of vacancies that are proving hard to fill, and the reason for this. The figures have been estimated by applying sampling weights, as described in the Technical and quality assurance report. ↩

3. This data should not be considered a picture of overall workforce occupational profile in the sector, as the ESS is a survey of employers only. ↩

4. More details of the occupations in these categories can be found here https://www.skillssurvey.co.uk/jobs ↩

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