THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

CONSERVATION LABOUR MARKET INTELLIGENCE

June 2022

Report on Survey Findings

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Executive Summary

The Institute of Conservation (Icon) undertook Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) research to understand the shape and extent of the conservation sector in 2022. This work has been based on the Heritage Labour Market Intelligence Toolkit developed by Icon alongside the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and Historic England. This report will be used to inform our workforce-related policy work and to ensure that we can provide effective advocacy and support for conservation and heritage science.

Summary snapshot of the conservation workforce

- 41% of respondents worked either as business owners or represented private practice conservation businesses employing more than 1 person. A further 27% of respondents worked as freelancers. The remaining 32% of respondents represented various types of public or charity sector organisations.

- 73% of organisations who responded employed less than 9 employees within their conservation teams, including 45% who only employed one conservation professional.

- 53% of workers were employed on a full-time basis regardless of the type of contract they worked under. 29% were reported to be working part time roles, including 2% who employed individuals under zero hours contracts.

- Staff turnover within the conservation workforce was identified as being relatively low, with 68% reporting less than 5% turnover in their workforce over the previous 12 months. It was also seen as unlikely that any significant changes in the overall number of roles in the coming 12 months. It is important to note that this survey was undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic which may have impacted these findings.

- 32% of respondents indicated that recruitment had been challenging, with the majority citing a low overall number of applications received as well as a low number meeting the requirements for the jobs which had been advertised.

Educational attainment and professional accreditation

- It was clear that the conservation workforce is highly educated, with 88% of organisations reporting that their conservation workforce was qualified to bachelor's degree level or above, with 56% holding a master's level qualification.

- 78% of respondents indicated that they required or desired that their members be either Pathway or Accredited members of Icon, which included 69% who required or desired that their conservation workforce were Accredited members of Icon.

Skill requirements

- The most in-demand aspect of conservation practice was Collections Care / Preventive Conservation followed by Interventive practice and then Conservation Management.

- The materials specific skills and knowledge which were consistently rated as being in high demand included: works of art on paper, archives / library materials, paper, books and photographic materials. This was broadly true for all aspects of conservation practice.

However, we note that low levels of skills demand among respondents in not an indicator as to the relative importance of those skills - it is likely to be more nuanced depending on the aspect of conservation practice and the material knowledge and understanding required to perform the job role.

  - It may be that a low number of practitioners is required to service the volume of conservation work in that part of the sector.
  - Work may be required to stimulate the development of skills in order to effectively meet the needs of conservation work in that part of the sector.
  - There may be a need to stimulate the demand for conservation skills and knowledge among employers and commissioners of conservation services.

For example, a specialist area such as engineering conservation may display all of these indicators, with a low number of individuals currently practicing, but a recognised need to increase that number and a corresponding need to increase the use of appropriately qualified individuals to carry out engineering conservation work.

There are also areas of practice that do not fall within the scope of the work carried out by many employers in this survey – architectural conservation is good example of this. It is clear that there is a large number of built heritage assets and a corresponding high number of practitioners, but this data has not been captured in this research.

It is evident that further focused research is required to investigate the specific skills needs within these parts of the conservation profession.

- There is a clear demand for communication, project management and digital skills amongst the conservation workforce. This is likely to be reflective of the changing nature of the role of professional conservators in adapting to technology, the changing nature of the commissioning of conservation work and more externally focused job roles.

Salaries and benefits

- The median salary levels identified through this survey were broadly similar to those identified through Icon's 'Conservation Salaries Survey 2022'. This survey showed that the median conservator earnt between £25,000 and £29,999 / year – this is compared to a median of £30,500 and mean of £31,800 identified through the separate salaries survey.

International workforce

- 30% of organisations were reported to employ non-UK passport holders within their workforce. This was not seen as being something that was likely to change over the coming 12 months. The majority, 74%, highlighted that they had not experienced any issues in recruitment However, for the 15% of respondents who had experienced challenges almost all could be put down to stricter immigration rules post-Brexit which had proven challenging to negotiate for those concerned.

Introduction and methodology

Effective and reliable Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) Research can, over time, highlight trends, challenges and opportunities. It can encourage collaboration between professional and trade bodies, employers, statutory organisations and government. LMI research can aid understanding of sector needs and be used to develop strategies and action plans, and to support decision-making. These decisions can benefit individuals, professions and trades across the heritage sector as well as clients and society as a whole.

For the Institute of Conservation (Icon), this work is essential in helping us to understand the shape and extent of the conservation sector in 2022. We will use this research to inform our workforce-related policy work and to ensure that we can provide effective advocacy and support for conservation and heritage science.

Before undertaking this research, Icon partnered with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and Historic England to develop the 'Heritage Labour Market Intelligence Toolkit' The aim was to implement a common approach to LMI Research, so that research can be shared and importantly compared and aggregated across the heritage sector. The LMI toolkit was designed as a modular survey that can be readily implemented on a regular basis to allow users to easily montor trends within the labour market across the heritage sector.

Rather than surveying individuals, this research sampled organisations that employ professional conservators. The 56 organisations who responded to this survey were selected from a pre-sampled list to ensure that there was representation from all employer types and all aspects of conservation practice represented in the sample pool. At the time of the survey the 56 respondents employed a total of 633 conservation professionals. Given this level of response we are 95% confident with a margin of error of +/- 3.6% that the sample is representative of the conservation profession as a whole.

Survey respondents:

Alison Stanton Textile Conservation
Alison Stock Limited
Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales
AR Conservation
Arca Preservation
Bendix Library Conservation
British Library
British Museum
Bronwen Faulkner conservation
Carvers & Gilders Ltd
Culture Coventry
Culture Perth & Kinross
Derbyshire Record Office
East Anglian Conservation Services
Eden Stained Glass
Egan, Matthews & Rose Ltd.
Emily O'Reilly ACR Paper Conservation
English Heritage
Historic Royal Palaces
Houses of Parliament Restoration and Renewal
Janie Lightfoot Textiles LLP
Jowett Conservation of Paintings
Leicestershire County Council
LR Conservation
Modern British Conservation
Museum Conservation Services Ltd.
National Conservation Service
National Galleries of Scotland
National Museum of the Royal Navy
National Museums Liverpool
National Museums Scotland
National Portrait Gallery
Natural History Conservation
Rieveley Ceramics
Ros Hodges Ceramics Conservation
Scottish Wall Paintings Conservators
Spencer & Fry
Sturge Conservation Studio
South West Museum Development
Codex Conservation
Tate
The London Library
The Textile Restoration Studio
TO Conservation
UCL Culture
Victoria and Albert Museum

About your organisation

In the first section of the survey, respondents were asked to outline the nature of their organisation. Data collected included information relating to business type, focus of their activities, turnover and where in the UK they operated. This information was monitored during the survey period to ensure that there was widespread representation from across the conservation profession.

Organisation type

Respondents were first asked to define their business type. These were classified as:

- Freelancer
- Sole Proprietor / Sole Trader
- Charity
- Central government organisation
- Central government organisation sub-unit
- Local government organisation
- Local government organisation sub-unit
- Non-departmental public body
- Private limited company
- Public limited company
- Social enterprise
- University or other education institution
- University of other education institution sub-unit

58% of respondents reported being freelancers or operating as a sole proprietor or sole trader. The remaining 42% of respondents mainly operated as a Charity, Private Limited Company or Non-departmental public body.

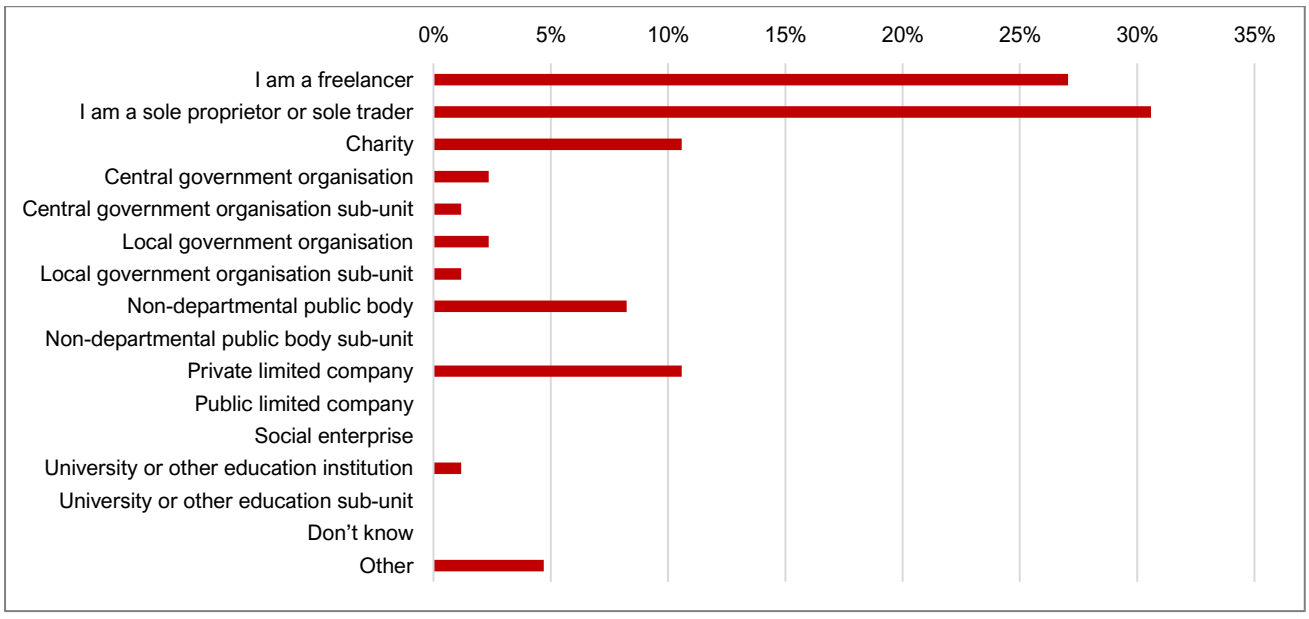

Figure 1: Organisation type

Activity focus

Standard Industry Classification (SIC) codes are the indicators used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to classify business establishments by the principal type of economic activity in which they're engaged.

Respondents were asked to indicate which SIC code best represented their business activity.

For the purposes of this survey, the most relevant SIC codes were identified as:

71.11/1 - Architectural activities
84.11 - General public administration activities
85.42 - Tertiary education
90.03 - Artistic Creation
91.01 - Library and archive activities
91.02 - Museums activities
91.03 - Operation of historical sites & similar visitor attractions
94.12 - Activities of professional membership organisations

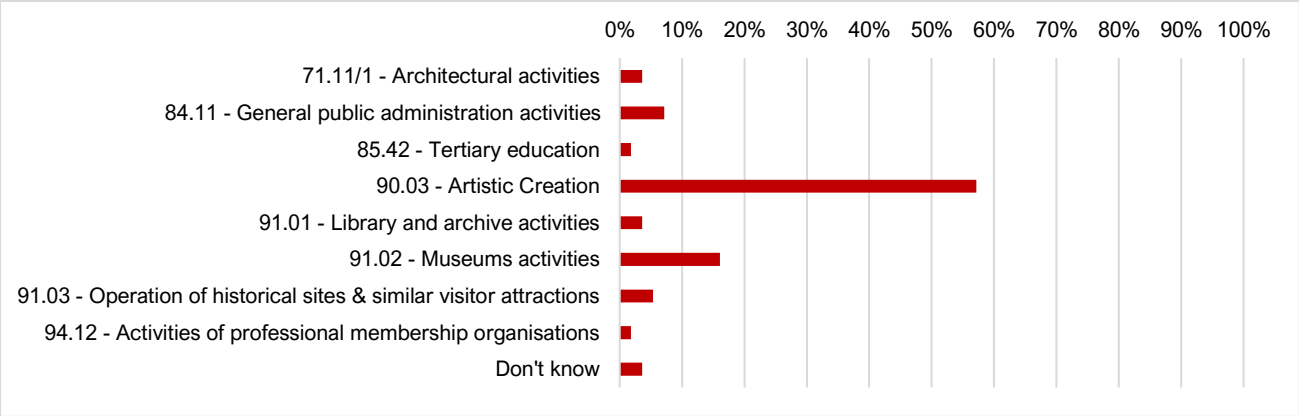

Figure 2: Organisation Standard Industry Classification (SIC) code

54% of those who responded fell within '90.03 – Artistic Creation', which although titled as *creation* includes those working in "restoring of works of art such as paintings etc". All organisations who responded that SIC 90.03 was the most appropriate code were self-employed individuals or private companies. The remaining organisations were divided across the other categories represented above.

The SIC Codes were published in 2007. There are no current plans to undertake any review of these classifications.

Turnover

Participants were then asked to indicate their annual turnover. The majority of the respondents, 48%, indicated that their turnover was up to £99,999 / year; 14% between £100,000 and £999,999 and 23% reporting that their organisations turned over more than £1,000,000 per year. All organisations with a turnover of less than £99,999 / year defined themselves as freelancers or self-employed individuals with all but one organisation reporting a turnover of under £81,000.

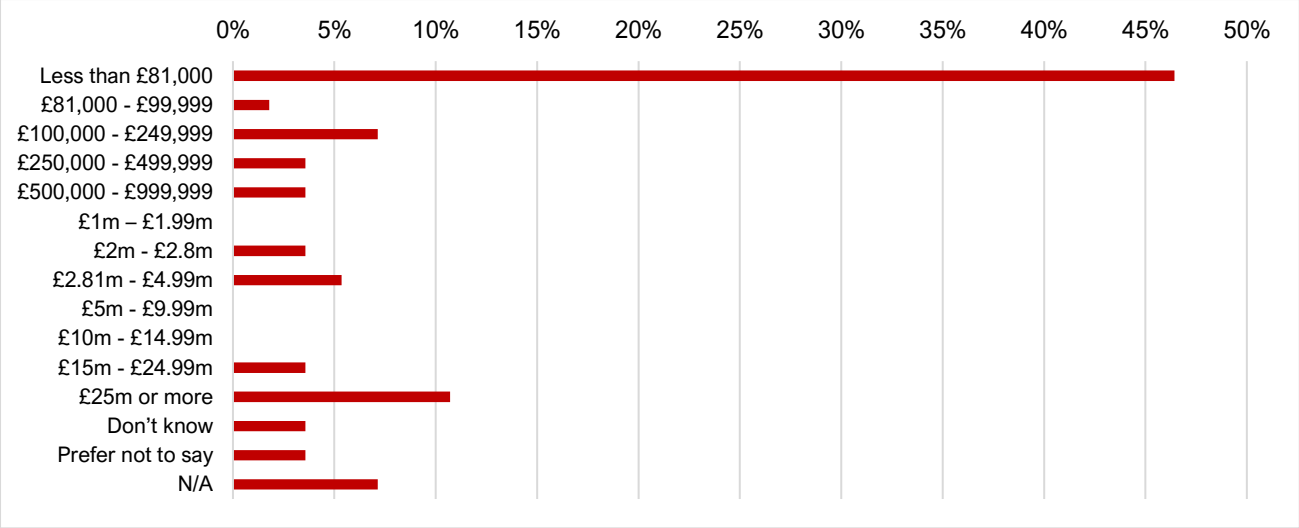

Figure 3: Turnover of organisations

Proportion of work focused on heritage activities

Respondents were asked to indicate which proportion of their organisation's work was focused on heritage activities, for example within a local authority context the majority of the turnover is likely to be associated with the delivery of core public services. For the purposes of this survey, heritage activity included all heritage related services such as archaeology and architectural services as well as conservation.

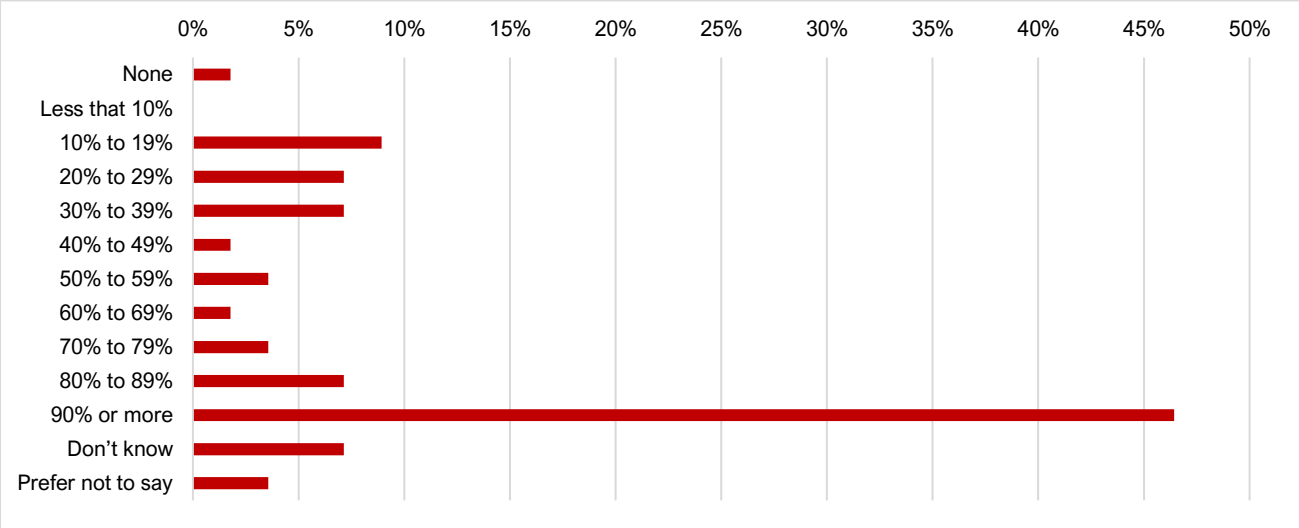

Figure 4: Proportion of work focussed on heritage activities

The responses here broadly reflected the answers to the question related to business type with 63% of respondents indicating that at least 50% of their work was focused on heritage activities, including 46% reporting that at least 90% of their work was focused on heritage activities.

Area of operation

Respondents were asked to indicate the geographic areas in which they operated. Whilst respondents were asked to indicate whether they operated outside of the UK, this survey has been focused on understanding the skills and needs of the conservation profession as it relates to the UK workforce.

59% and 50% of respondents indicated that they undertook work in London and the South East of England respectively. However, there was strong representation for all parts of the UK.

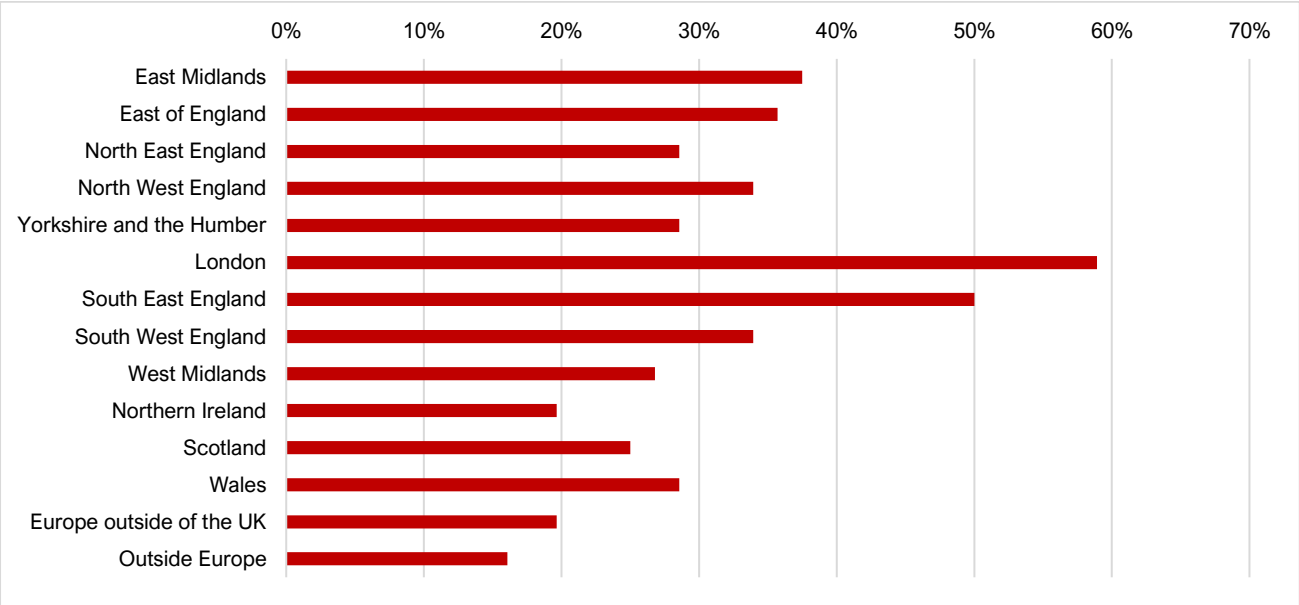

Figure 5: Geographical area of operation

About your workforce

Through the next series of questions, respondents were asked to provide further details about the individuals within their workforce. Respondents were asked to include self-employed individuals and subcontractors as part of their workforce if they were used on a regular basis.

Total size of workforce

77% of respondents were from Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), i.e., those organisations who employ less than 250 staff members. This included 7% operating as medium sized enterprises (employing 51 to 250 people), 9% as small businesses (employing between 11 and 50) and 61% operating as micro-businesses (employing less than 10 people).

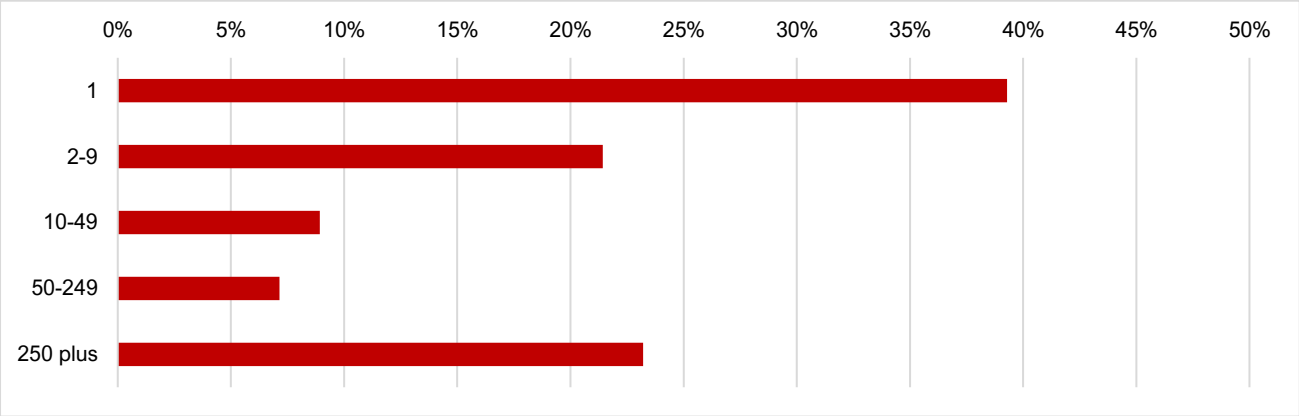

Figure 6: Total size of workforce within organisations surveyed

Standard Occupancy Classification of Heritage Workforce

Respondents were asked to indicate which Standard Occupancy Classifications (SOC) codes which were relevant to workers within their organisations. SOC codes are the indicators used by the Government to classify and compare data as it relates to an individual's occupational focus.

The SOC 2010 codes were used as the most up to date codes at the time of the survey. A rationalisation of the codes was released in December 2021, which continue to be revised and updated. The following codes were used:

2141 - Conservation professionals
2431 - Architects
2432 - Town planning officers
2434 - Chartered surveyors
3114 - Building and civil engineering technicians
2912 - Archaeologists
2452 - Archivists and curators

There was a lack of clarity over accurate use of the SOC coding to properly identify the individuals employed by the respondents. The majority, 84% indicated that their workforce included individuals who would fall under "2141 Conservation professionals". This code however was largely focused on those individuals primarily employed in environmental conservation roles. Subsequent to the survey, Icon provided feedback to the ONS which has resulted in "2452 - Archivists and curators" being renamed 2452 – Archivists, conservators and curators".

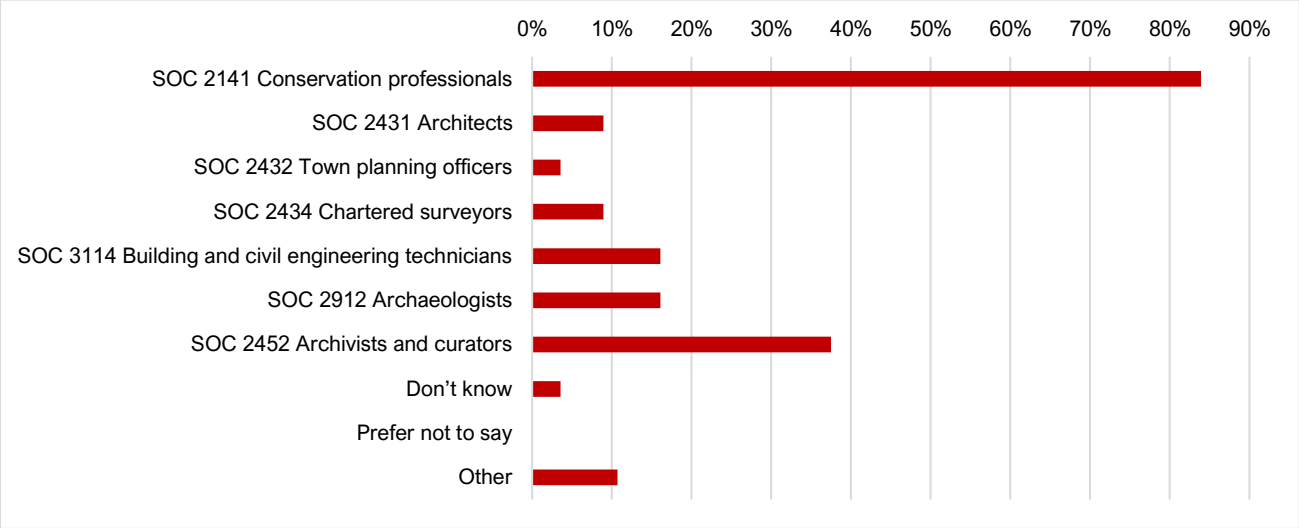

Figure 7: Standard Occupancy Code of workforce

Size of conservation workforce

73% of organisations responding to the survey employed 9 conservation professionals or less, including 45% who only employed one conservation professional (either because they were self-employed, or they operated as the sole conservator in an organisation) or within small teams.

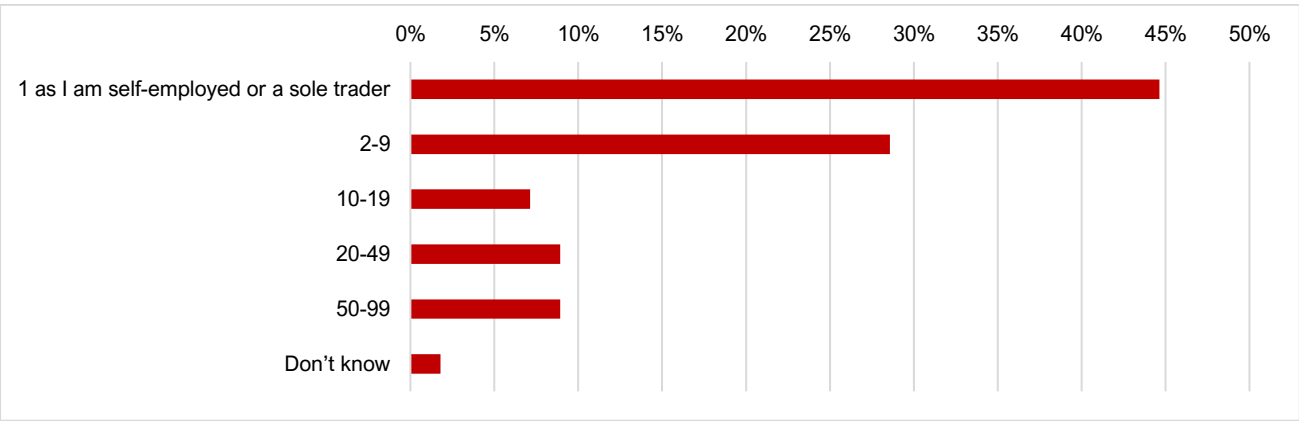

Figure 8: Size of conservation workforce relative to employer sample

Employment status of conservation workforce

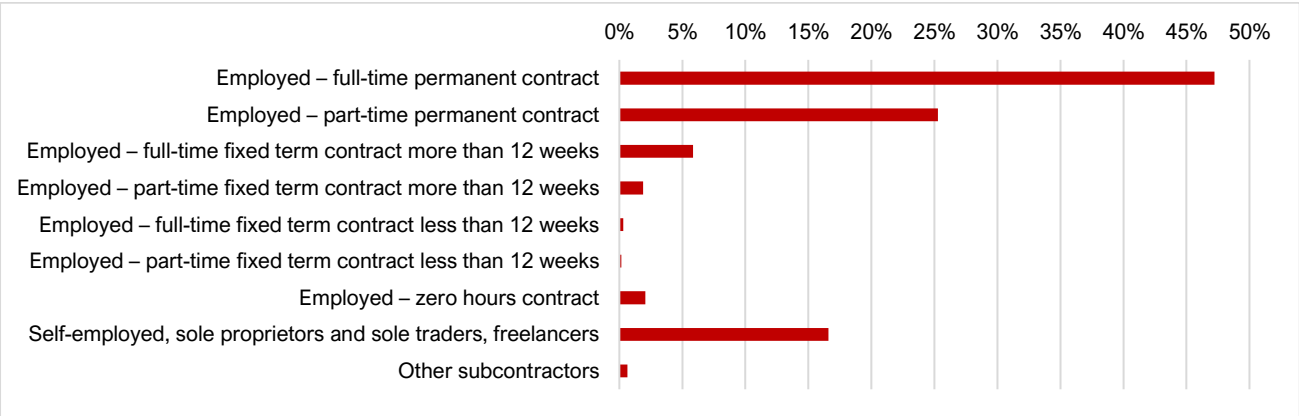

Figure 9: Employment status of conservation professionals

Respondents were asked to indicate the nature of the employment of their conservation workforce. This data related to 633 roles within the sample. 53% of workers are employed on a full-time basis, 30% on a part time basis and 17% operate as self-employed.

73% of conservators are employed on permanent contracts and 10% are employed on fixed term contracts which includes 2% who are employed on zero hours contracts.

Job role of conservation workforce

63% of those operating in the profession are employed as practitioners, 21% are in managerial roles and 16% are employed as assistants, technicians or trainees. Whilst job titles have been used to give a broad indication of the level of responsibility, it is recognised that they are only partly useful – it would not be considered unusual for a conservator to be employed in a practitioner position, but still be required to demonstrate a lot of autonomy within their job role.

Further analysis was carried our as part of Icon's Conservation Salaries Survey, which gathered more specific data as it related to the relative responsibilities associated with individual roles and job titles.

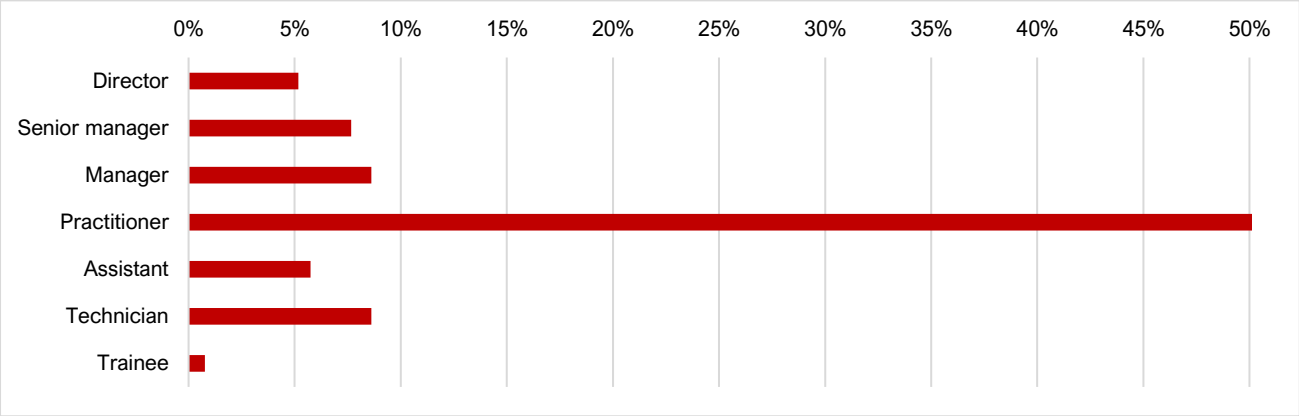

Figure 10: Job roles within the conservation workforce

Apprentices

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they employed any apprentices within their conservation workforce. It is important to note that types of apprenticeships vary across the UK, with different 'Standards' (used in England) and 'Frameworks' (used in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) being in place across each nation within the UK. Individuals are matched to an apprenticeship framework / standard based on their job role or skill development need.

Conservation specific apprenticeships are only offered in England. These are the 'Cultural Heritage Conservation Technician' and 'Cultural Heritage Conservator' apprenticeship standards. There are no direct conservation apprenticeships elsewhere in the UK, although conservation is mentioned within the more general 'Cultural Heritage Framework' in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

7% of organisations indicated that they employed apprentices within their conservation workforce. Of those apprentices, 7 were registered on the 'Cultural Heritage Conservator' standard, and 1 was registered on a management related apprenticeship standard. The relatively low number of apprentices is not surprising within the broader conservation workforce and the fact that the conservation specific apprenticeships standards have only recently been introduced in England.

Employee turnover

Employee turnover was relatively low within the profession, with 75% of those responding staff turnover of under 10% within the previous 12 months. When asked how likely it was that there would be change within the workforce over the coming 12 months – the majority, 55%, indicated that no change was likely, and 29% were projecting an increase in their conservation workforce. 9% reported that their workforce was likely to shrink.

Given the timing of the survey, towards the end of the various national lockdowns associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, it is unclear how this picture will change in the coming months. The questions around workforce size and turnover will be run again in 2023 to discern whether or not the rates identified have altered in any way.

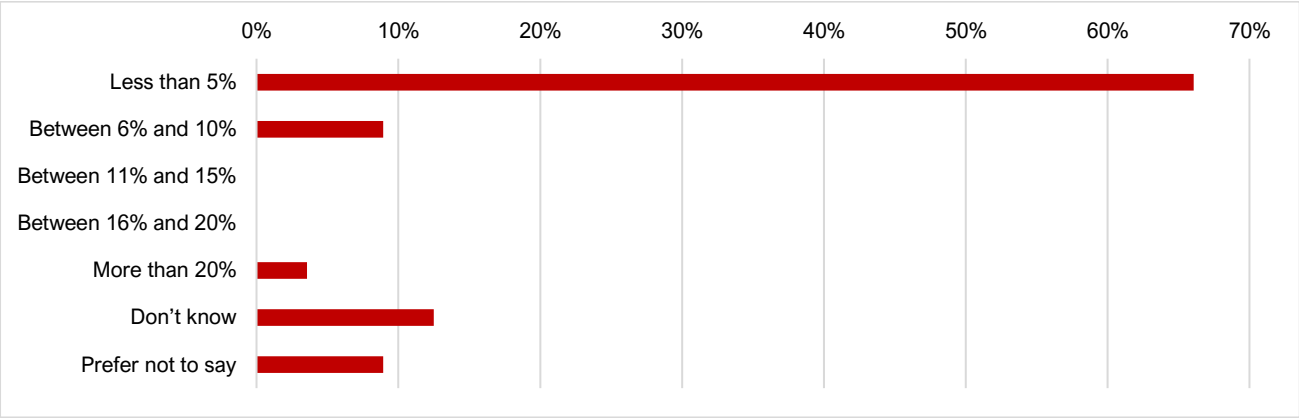

Figure 11: Employee turnover over previous 12 months

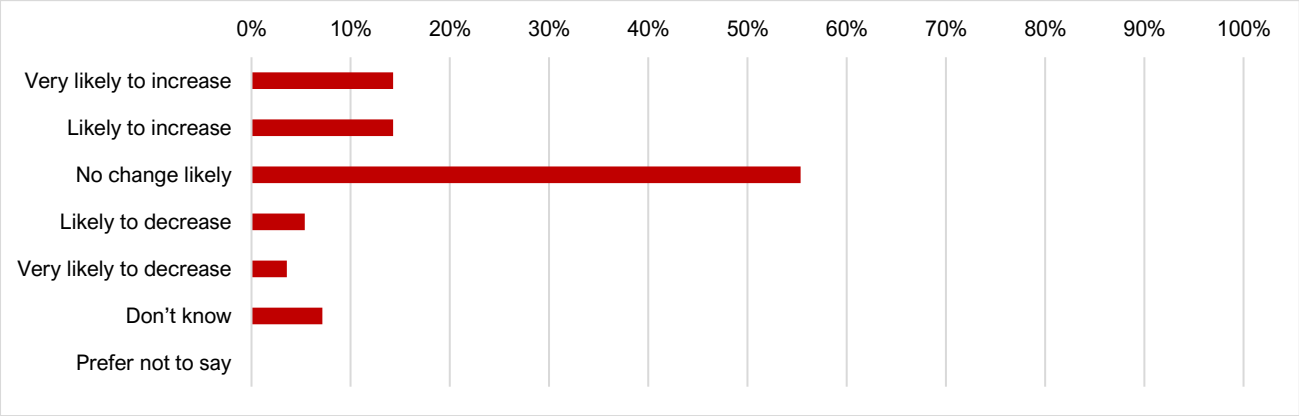

Figure 12: Likelihood of changes within workforce

Recruitment of conservation professionals

Asked specifically about the recruitment of staff over the last 12 months, 34% reported that they had taken on new staff within their conservation workforce. 32% of respondents highlighted that they had faced challenges when recruiting staff with conservation skills over the last 12 months.

28% of respondents highlighted that a low number of applicants with the required skills was the biggest factor that had impacted on their ability to recruit for vacant positions. This was particularly evident for those positions where highly specialist skills were being sought and there may be a small number of individuals with those skills and experience.

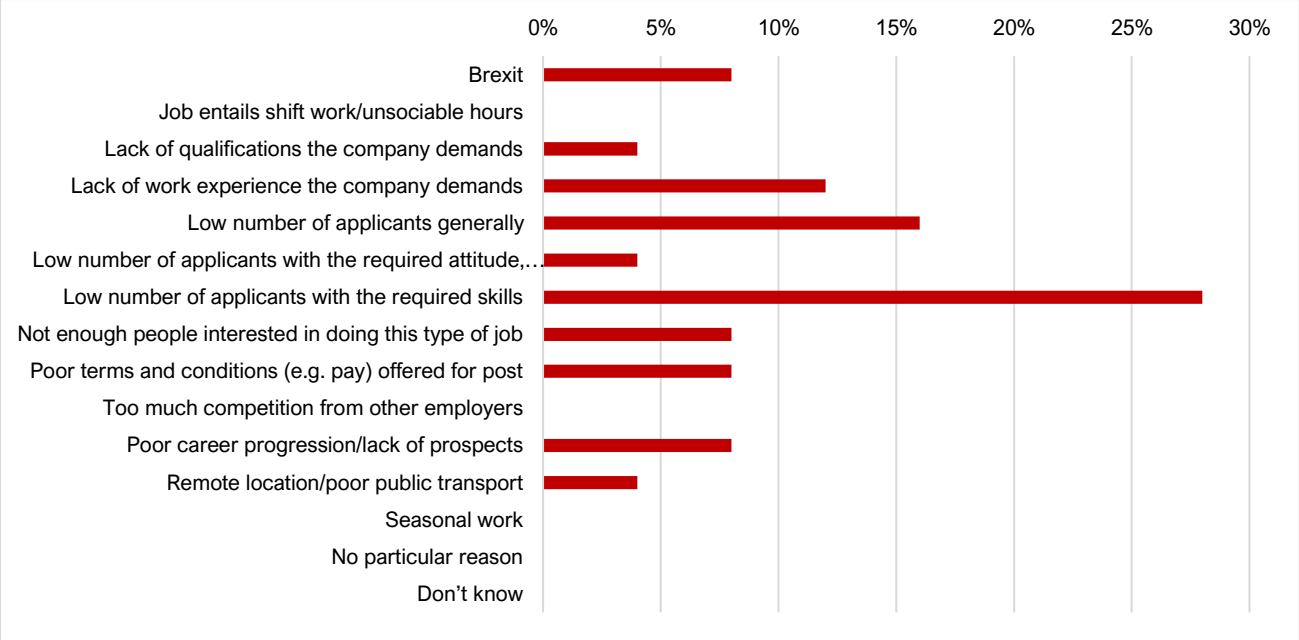

Figure 13: Nature of recruitment challenges

Volunteer numbers

21% of organisations responding to the survey indicated that volunteers formed a key part of their overall workforce. Of those, the majority 75% had taken on 9 or less volunteers over the previous 12 months.

Volunteer numbers was one of the areas that was reported to have been most strongly impacted by the lockdowns and changing work practices associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Under normal circumstances the numbers would have been much higher.

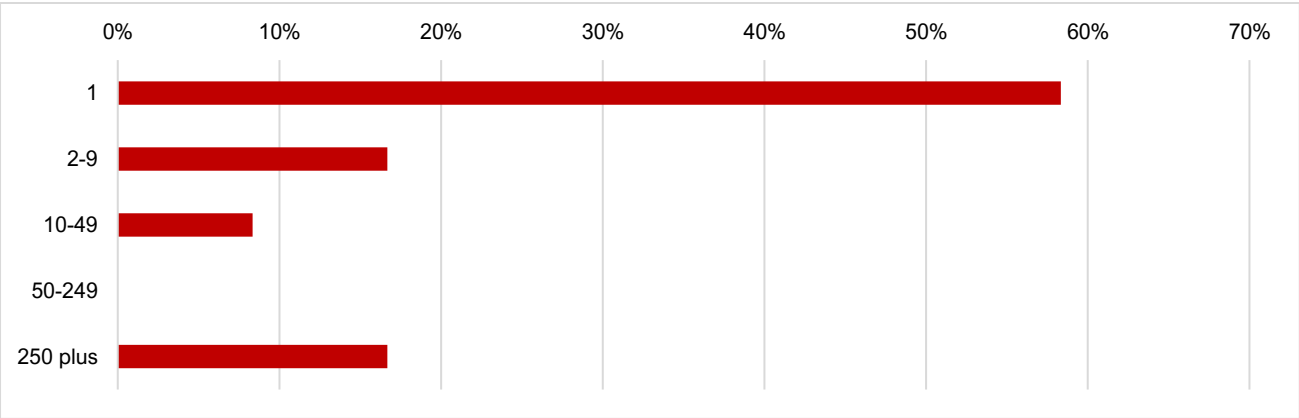

Figure 14: Volunteer numbers

Educational attainment and professional accreditation

In this section we sought to find out about the level of educational attainment and professional accreditation that were present within the conservation workforce.

Educational attainment of workforce

Standard qualification classifications are noted differently in Scotland from England, Northern Ireland and Wales. The levels of positions have been combined in the following way:

England, Northern Ireland & Wales	Scotland	Qualification examples
Entry-level	Levels 1 to 3	Entry-level
Level 1	Level 4	NVQ / SVQ Level 1
Level 2	Level 5	NVQ / SVQ Level 2
Level 3	Level 6	A Level / Higher
Level 4	Level 7	HNC, NVQ Level 4 / Advanced Higher
Level 5	Level 8	HND
Level 6	Level 9-10	Bachelor's Degree
Level 7	Level 11	Master's Degree
Level 8	Level 12	PhD

Figure 15: Equivalency of qualifications across UK

Respondents were asked to indicate the most common educational attainment of their conservation workforce as it compared to their general workforce and those with specialist heritage skills. The conservation profession is a highly educated sector, with the vast majority of individuals (88%) or employers employing staff with a bachelor's level qualification or higher. This is significant when compared to the broader heritage workforce and the general workforce were 71% and 67% held higher level qualifications respectively.

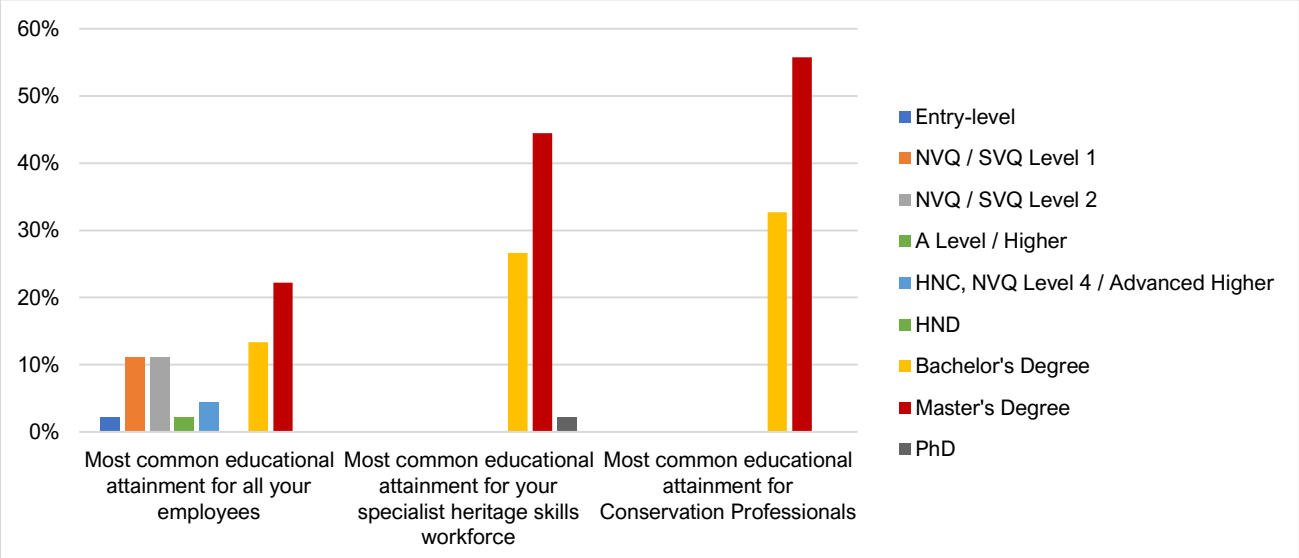

Figure 16: Most common educational attainment

These findings clearly mirrored the findings of Icon's Conservation Salaries Survey (2022), which noted that 82% of roles required at least a bachelor's level qualification.

Professional accreditation requirements

Respondents were then asked to indicate the most common level of professional accreditation in their workforce. 78% of respondents indicated that they required or desired that their staff be either Pathway or Accredited members of Icon, which included 69% who required or desired that their conservation workforce were Accredited members of Icon.

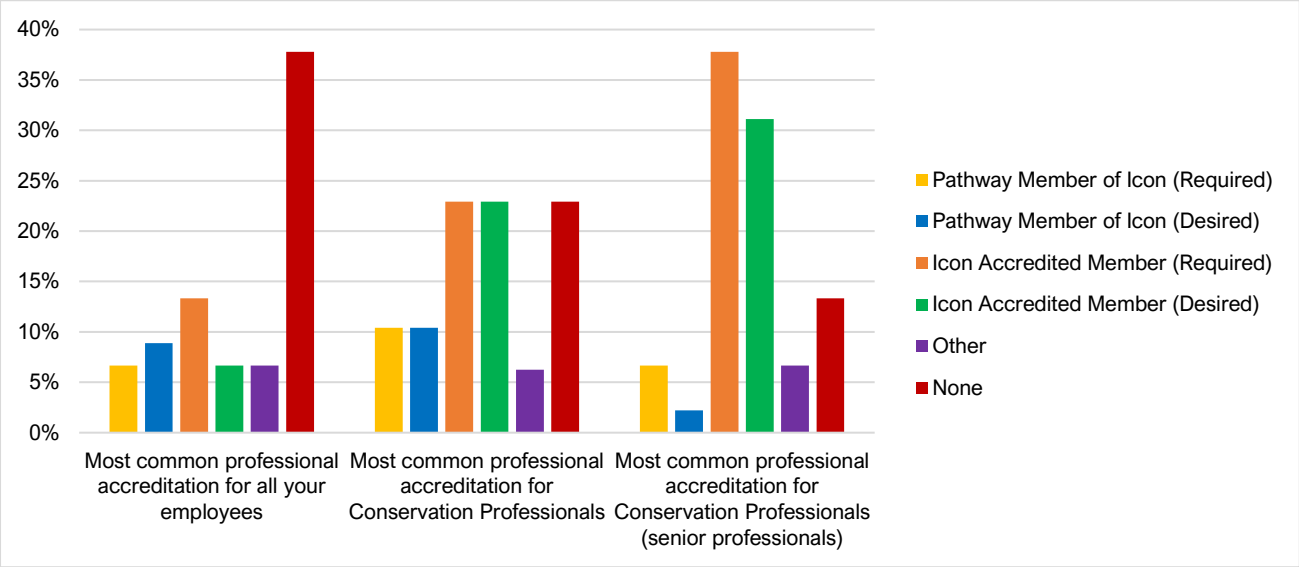

Figure 17: Most common professional accreditation requirements

Skills

The next series of questions delved into the specific skills and underpinning knowledge required of professional conservators. In this section we have firstly focused on the different aspects of conservation practice, followed by a breakdown of the broad range of different material types that this knowledge is expected to relate to.

Aspect of conservation practice

Respondents were asked to indicate the aspect of conservation practice to which the material knowledge relates. For the purposes of the survey these were defined as:

- **Collections Care / Preventive:** All conservation activities designed and applied indirectly to an object to prevent or minimise future damage or deterioration or decay. Examples are environmental control and pest management.
- **Conservation Management:** Overall project management, which may include bringing in other individuals with the technical knowledge to implement conservation measures or to undertake further research.
- **Education:** The practice of passing knowledge to another individual through formal or informal means.
- **Interventive / Remedial Conservation**: Actions applied directly to an object to arrest deterioration and/or to limit damage.
- **Research / Conservation Science:** Analytical research to inform the development of conservation knowledge. May relate to specific objects, treatments or material types.

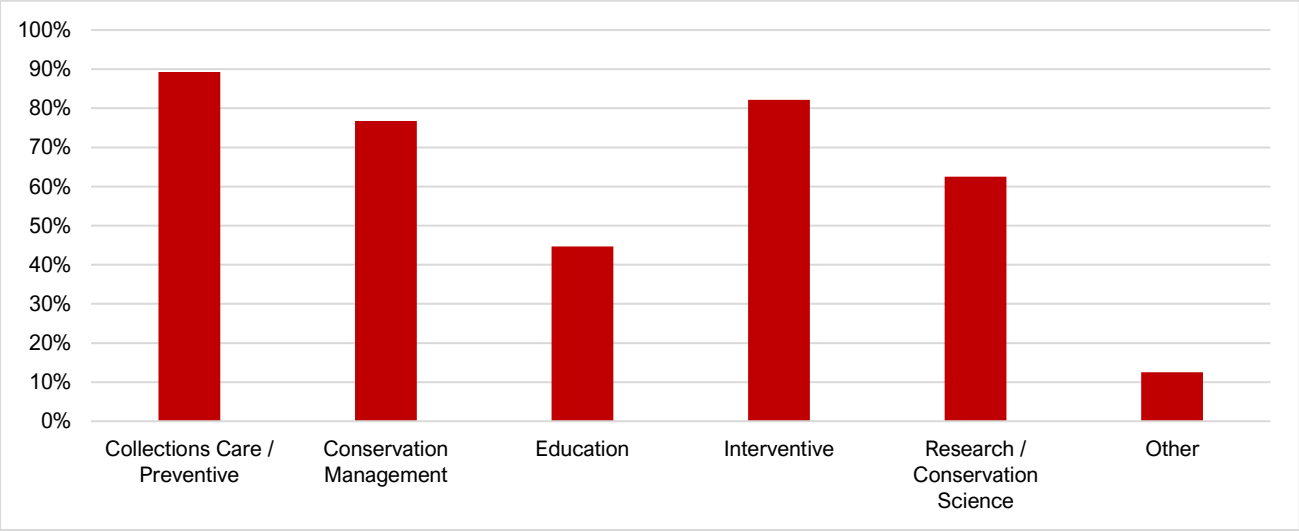

Figure 18: Skills demand relating to different aspects of conservation practice

The most in demand aspect of conservation practice was identified as Collections Care / Preventive conservation, with 89% of employers requiring some degree of practice within their organisations. This was closely followed by Interventive conservation at 82% and Conservation Management at 77%.

Looking deeper into range of material knowledge that was required to perform these broad job roles, it was clear that Collections Care / Preventive requires the broadest material knowledge, requiring knowledge of an average of 11 material types. This is followed by Conservation Management at 6 and Interventive Conservation at 5.

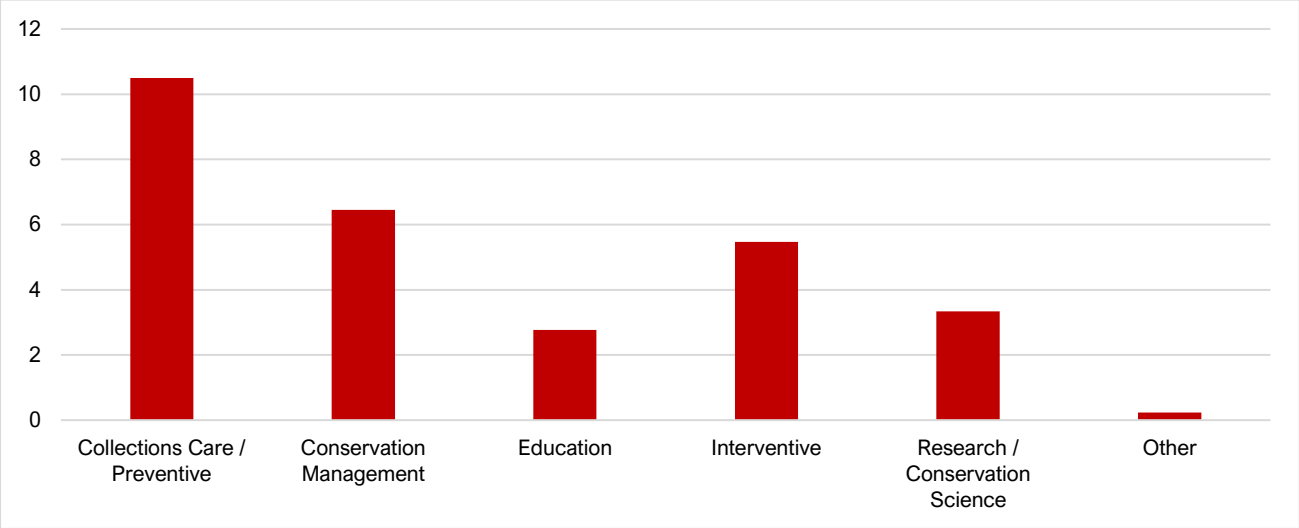

Figure 19: Average breadth of material knowledge by aspect of conservation practice

Material Specific Knowledge and understanding

Respondents were asked to note the specialist material knowledge that was required within their workforce, and the nature of conservation practice that this related to, i.e., collections care, management, interventive practice, etc.

	Collections Care / Preventive	Conservation Management	Education	Interventive	Research / Conservation Science
Archaeology	32%	23%	11%	23%	14%
Architecture	11%	5%	2%	2%	0%
Archives / Library Materials	54%	34%	14%	27%	14%
Books	50%	32%	11%	27%	16%
Ceramics	32%	23%	11%	21%	13%
Decorative Surfaces	30%	18%	5%	14%	13%
Engineering	16%	9%	4%	9%	5%
Ethnography	25%	11%	7%	14%	5%
Frames	36%	25%	11%	27%	13%
Furniture	29%	20%	7%	11%	11%
Glass	34%	21%	13%	16%	11%
Historic Interiors	27%	21%	9%	14%	11%
Horology	20%	9%	4%	7%	5%
Leather	39%	21%	9%	20%	7%
Manuscripts	39%	23%	9%	21%	13%
Metals	32%	21%	9%	23%	16%
Modern Materials	39%	27%	7%	21%	18%
Musical Instruments	21%	11%	4%	7%	4%
Natural History	29%	16%	9%	13%	7%
Objects	43%	32%	13%	32%	13%
Paintings	39%	27%	11%	21%	18%
Paper	50%	38%	18%	32%	23%
Photographic Materials	43%	27%	13%	25%	20%

Sculpture	38%	25%	11%	21%	11%
Social History	27%	16%	9%	20%	7%
Stained and Painted Glass	27%	16%	7%	13%	9%
Stone	36%	18%	9%	20%	11%
Textiles	46%	29%	14%	25%	21%
Wall Paintings	16%	14%	5%	13%	11%
Wood	36%	21%	9%	25%	14%
Works of art on paper	55%	34%	16%	34%	27%

Figure 20: Material knowledge relating to the different aspects of conservation practice

In the table above we have highlighted (in green) the top five areas of each material specialism by aspect of conservation practice in which knowledge is required. There are two areas of knowledge that consistently ranked in the top five: Paper, and Works of Art on Paper. This was followed by Archive / Library Materials, Books, Textiles and Objects.

Looking at the other side of the scale at those areas which were identified as at least demand, Engineering, Musical Instruments, Horology and Architecture feature prominently. However, that in itself does not in any way suggest a lack of importance of these aspects of material knowledge, rather is more likely to imply that:

- there are a lower overall number of practitioners in these areas and so demand could outstrip supply of skilled professionals.
- the nature of the collections within the organisations responding to the survey.
- not all professionals or even commissioners in those areas of conservation practice may necessarily identify what they do as being 'conservation'. For example, this is very likely to be true for architectural conservation, where it is recognised that there is a high demand, not least in the private market – however those individuals may consider themselves to be practicing in commercial restoration or construction.

Work related skills

The next series of questions focused on the work-related skills that were deemed as being important by the organisations completing the survey. Communication, digital and project management skills were highly sought after by respondents. In addition, several respondents highlighted the importance of well-developed hand skill in order to cope with the technical aspects of the role.

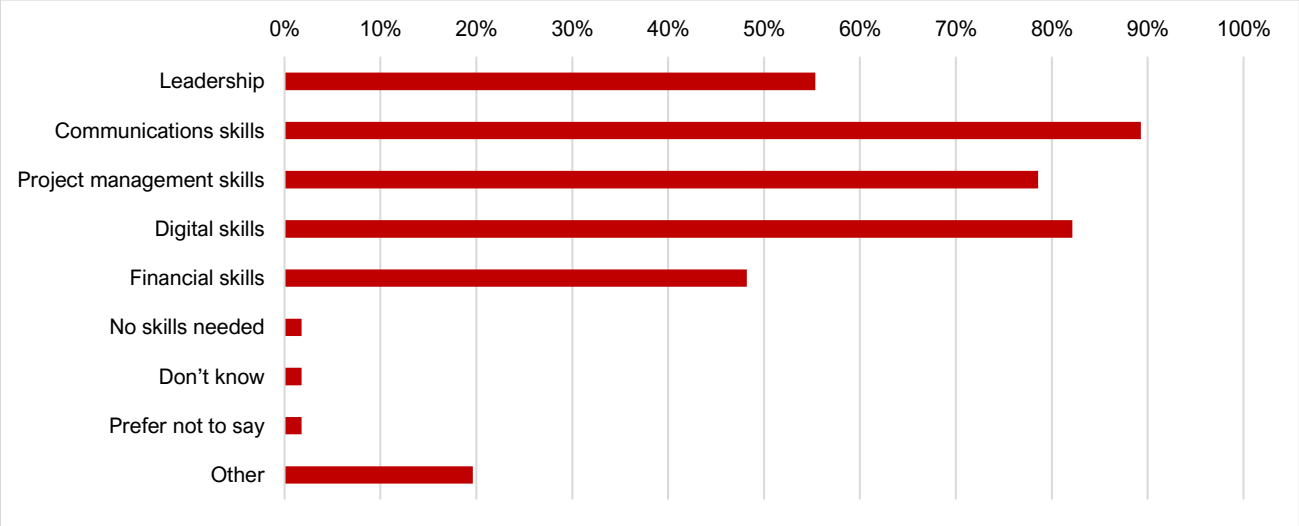

Figure 21: Work related skill needs

Skills gaps and continuing professional development

56% of respondents indicated that there were no significant skills gaps within their workforce, however 32% did highlight issues. When asked to provide further detail as to the nature of the skills gaps, these can be broadly broken down into two main areas, those that relate directly to conservation practice and those relating to broader work-related skills.

Conservation Skills Gaps

Survey respondents identified the following 11 areas of conservation practice (both relating to material knowledge and interventive practice) that were seen as lacking within their current workforce.

- Architectural / Building Conservation
- Book Binding
- Engineering
- Gold Finishing
- Heritage / Conservation Science
- Paintings
- Photographic Materials
- Plastics
- Sculpture
- Textiles
- Time Based Media

Given the relatively small number of respondents to this question, it is not possible to infer that there is a sector wide gap in these areas, however this is evidently an area where further monitoring and research is required in order to understand the nature of these gaps and to understand whether the issue is a question of skills supply, or whether there is another issue which is preventing the individual organisations bringing in individuals with the required skills.

Work related

A smaller number of respondents highlighted that there were gaps within the broader work-related skills in their workforce. These principally related to the following six areas:

- Leadership
- Marketing
- People management
- Social media
- Technical digital skills

In the same way as the conservation skills identified above, it is not possible to infer whether these areas of skill represent a sector wide skills shortage, indeed it is unlikely to be the case. However, at the same time it is a useful indicator as to the broader range of skills that area valued by employers within the conservation sector.

How skills gaps are addressed

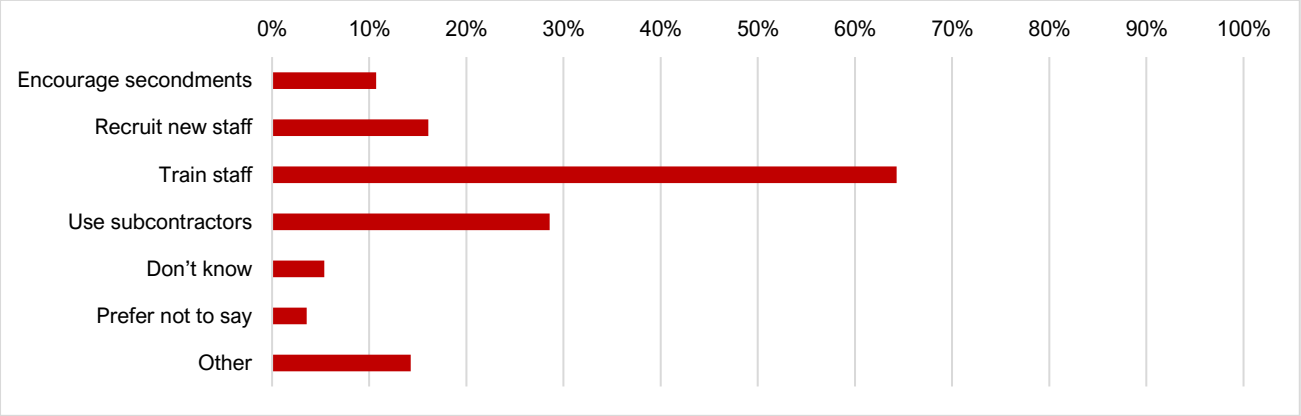

Figure 22: How skills gaps are addressed

When asked how skills gaps are addressed in the workforce, the majority of employers (64%) highlighted that they sought to support training for existing staff members. This is delivered through formal training courses, or more commonly through informal skill sharing within teams. Significantly, 29% of respondents highlighted that they used subcontractors either through commissioning individual projects, or by bringing in freelancers on a longer-term basis.

Salary and benefits

Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to salary levels and benefits provided to their conservation workforce. At the same time as completing this research, Icon carried out a separate salaries survey which provides a greater level of detail of the salaries paid to individual professionals.

Median full-time equivalent conservator salary

The mean average full time equivalent (FTE) salary identified through Icon's 2022 Salaries Survey was £31,814, with a median of £30,500. This is broadly comparable to the findings of the LMI research which showed that the 25% of the conservation workforce were shown to earn between £25,000 and £29,999 / year FTE, and 16% earning between £30,000 and £34,999 / year FTE

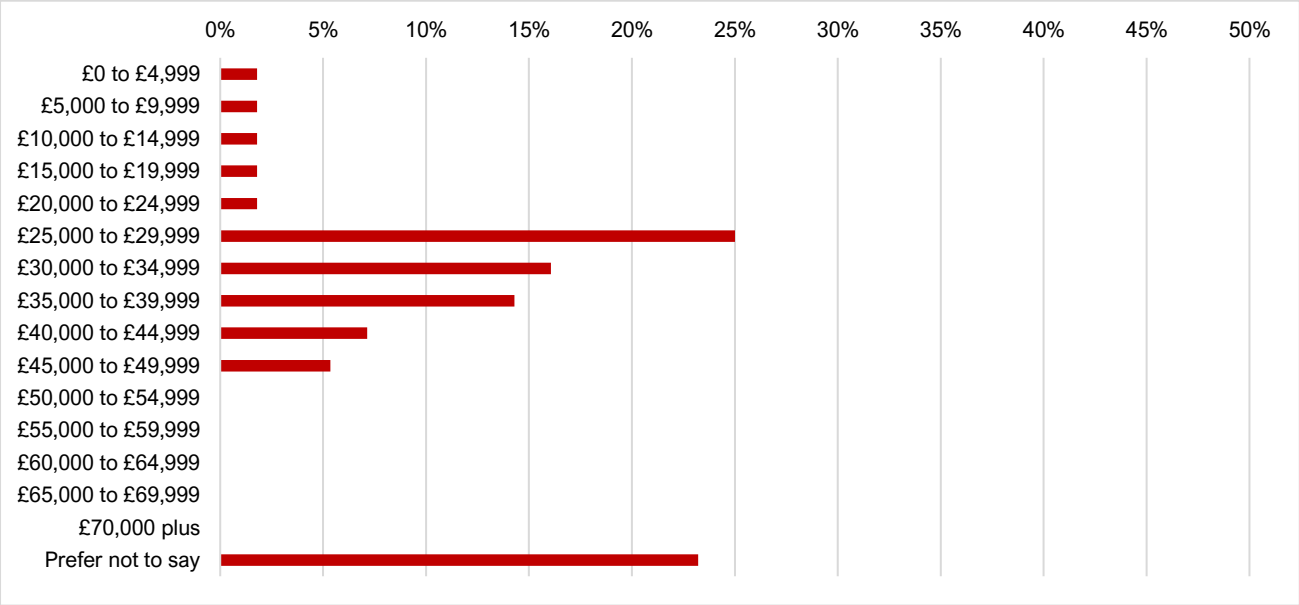

Figure 23: Median full-time equivalent conservator salary

Salary changes over previous 12 months

Respondents were then asked to indicate whether their conservation employees had received a salary increase over the past 12 months. 19% reported that staff had received a pay rise, whereas 50% of those responding highlighted that their staff had not received any increase in salary. This is again reflective of the findings of the Salaries Survey.

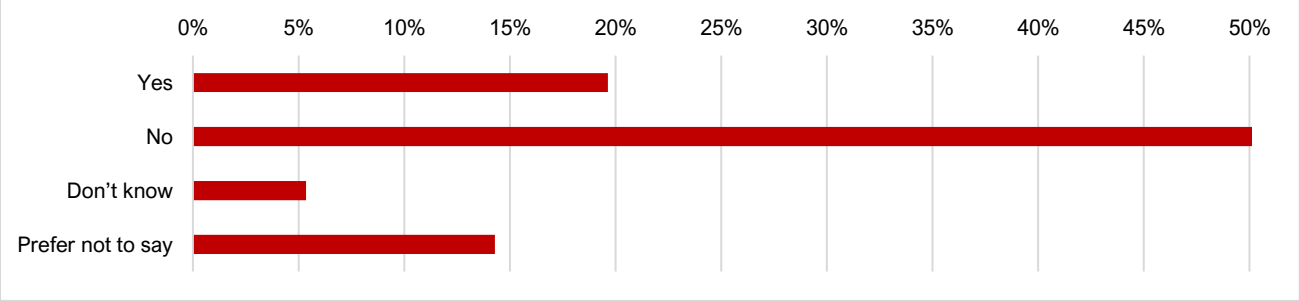

Figure 24: Salary increases over previous 12 months

Employee Benefits

76% of respondents indicated that their employees took part in a contributory pension scheme, and 61% highlighted that there was a death in service benefit associated with their role. A small number of respondents indicated that their staff received access to discounted health and wellbeing services, discounts at shops and reciprocal arrangements with other heritage institutions to access exhibitions.

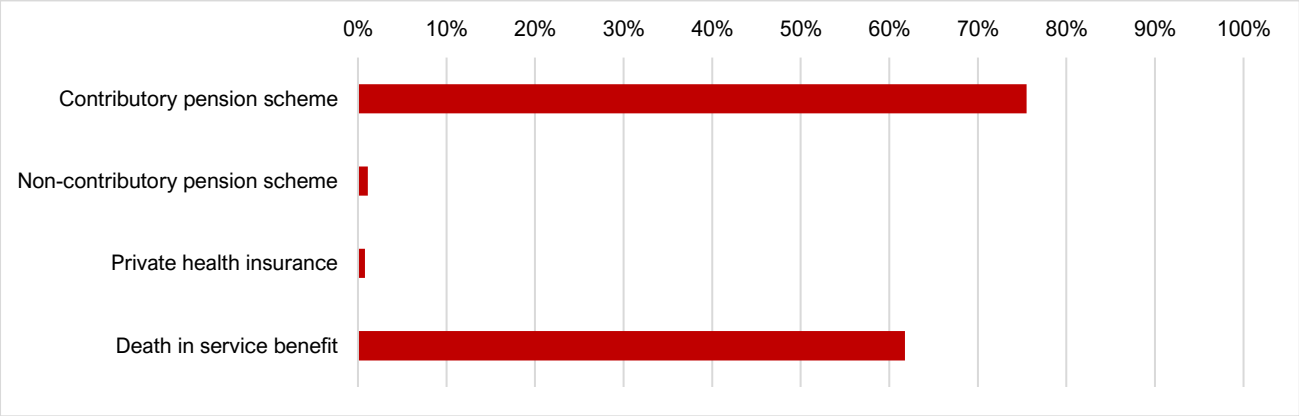

Figure 25: Employee benefits

International workforce

The final series of questions related to the international conservation workforce, working for employers based in the UK.

Non-UK Passport holders

30% of survey respondents indicated that at least one member of their conservation workforce was a holder of a non-UK passport.

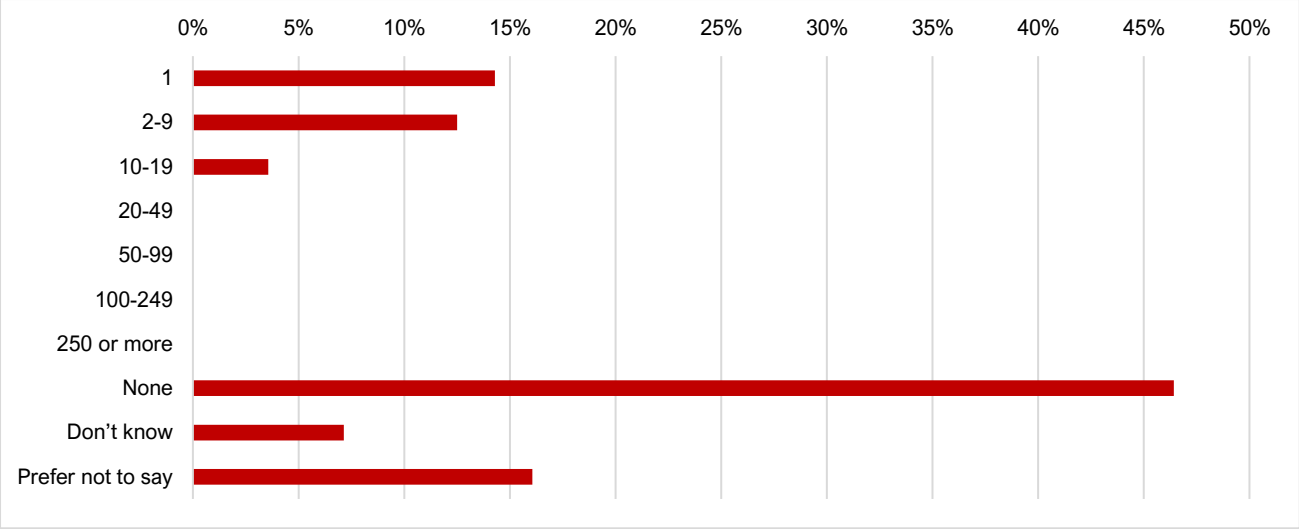

Figure 26: Percentage of organisations employing non-UK passport holders

Likelihood of change in employment levels of non-UK passport holders

When asked whether there was likely to be any change in the numbers of non-UK passport holders who were employed, 64% felt that it was likely that there would be no change to the current levels over the subsequent 12 months. 11% reported that they felt the figure was likely to grow, with a small number, 2% indicating that they expected the number to decrease.

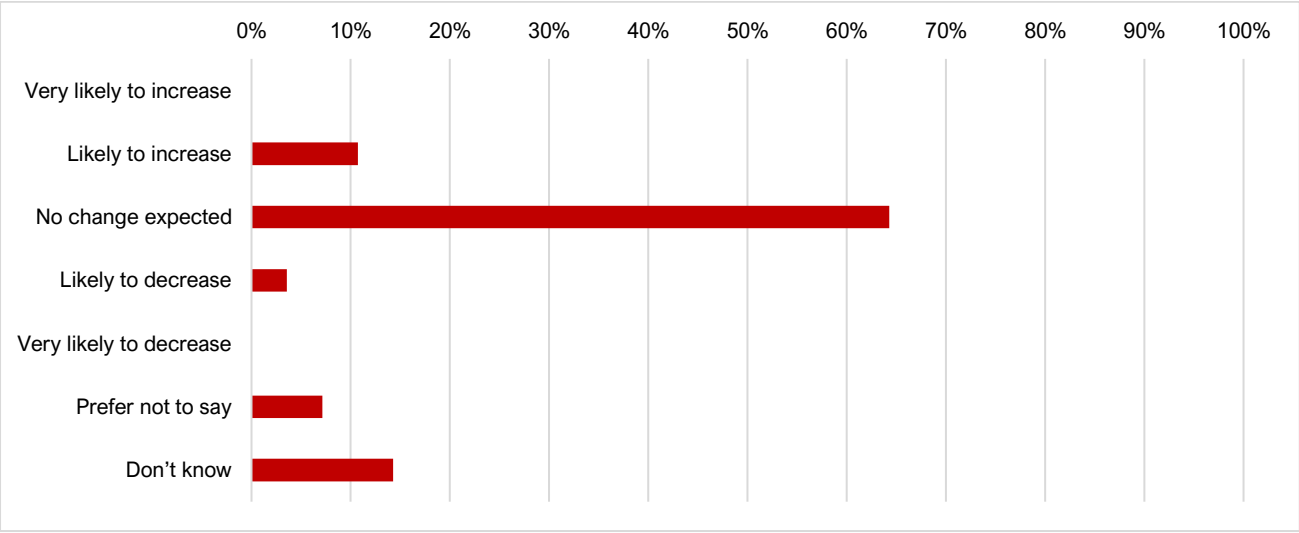

Figure 27: Likelihood of change in employment levels of non-UK passport holders

Dependency on international workforce

23% of respondents reported that they were dependent on recruiting non-UK passport holders to fulfil conservation roles within their organisations.

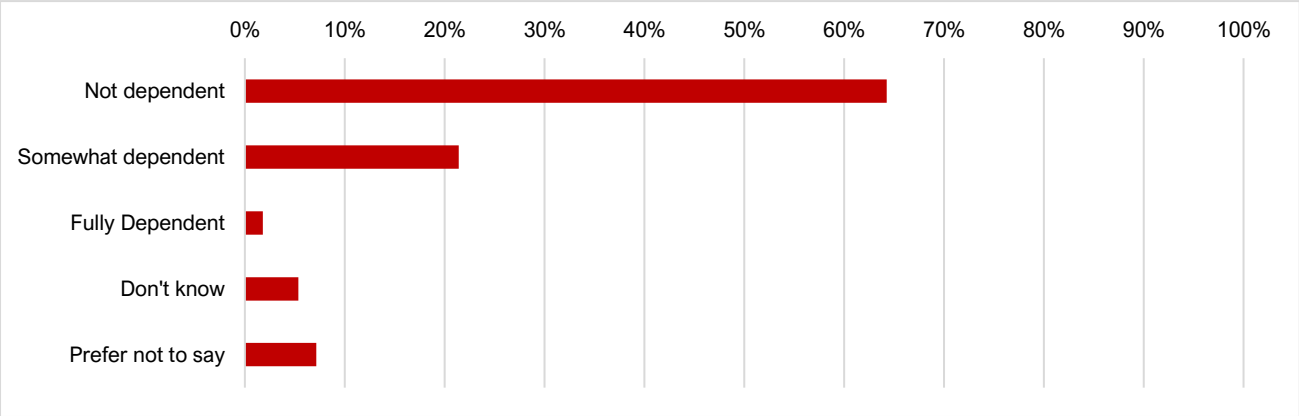

Figure 28: Level of dependency on international workforce

Challenges in recruiting internationally

The final question asked respondents to indicate whether there had been any challenges experienced in recruiting workers who were not UK passport holders. The majority, 74%, highlighted that they had not experienced any issues. However, for the 15% of respondents who had experienced challenges almost all could be put down to stricter immigration rules post-Brexit which had proven challenging to negotiate for those concerned.

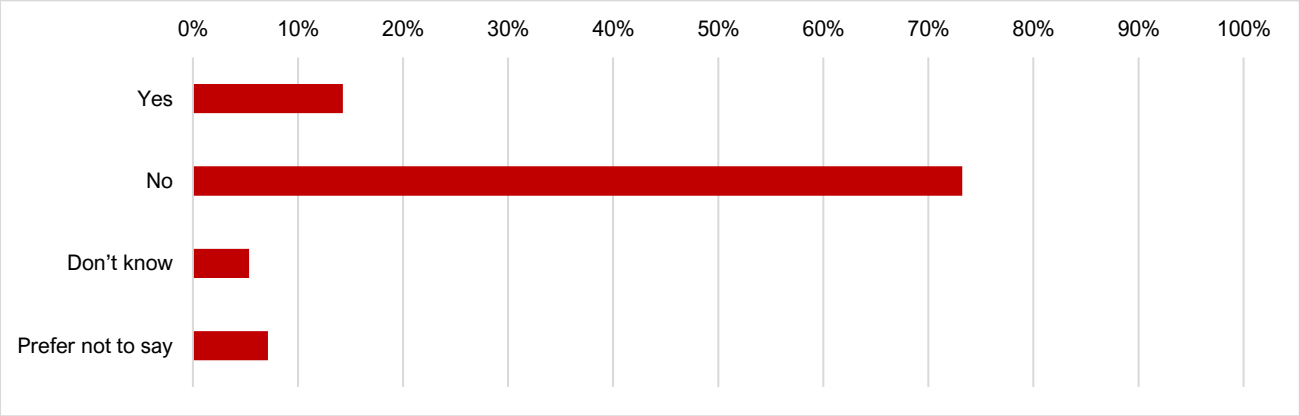

Figure 29: Challenges in recruiting international workers

Conclusions

The 2022 Conservation Labour Market Intelligence research has enabled us to gain a clearer understanding of the nature of the conservation workforce in the UK. This research will be used to inform Icon's work to advocate for the conservation profession.

The conservation workforce is clearly highly educated and skilled, with a wide range of material knowledge and understanding of conservation practice being required by workers within the sector. Conservators are most likely to be employed by public sector organisations, but the sector also includes a significant number of freelancers and those operating in micro-businesses with a turnover of under £81,000 year.

Analysis of skills needs shows that a broad range of material knowledge is required to operate as a conservator in 2022, with a clear requirement for those practicing in collections care / preventive conservation and conservation management in particular, in addition to interventive conservation practice.

The materials-specific skills and knowledge which were consistently rated as being in high demand included: works of art on paper, archives / library materials, paper, books, and photographic materials. This was broadly true for all types of conservation practice.

There were several specialist skills areas that were considered as being in low demand. However we note that low demand is not an indicator as to the relative importance of those skills – it is likely to be more nuanced depending on the aspect of conservation practice and the material knowledge and understanding required to perform the job role. There could be several different interpretations of this. It may be that:

- A low number of practitioners is required to service the volume of conservation work in that part of the sector
- Work may be required to stimulate the development of skills in order to effectively meet the needs of conservation work in that part of the sector.
- There may be a need to stimulate the demand for conservation skills and knowledge among employers and commissioners of conservation services.

For example, a specialist area such as engineering conservation may conform to this pattern, with a low number of individuals currently practicing, leading to a risk of a future skills gap and a corresponding need to increase the use of appropriately qualified individuals to carry out engineering conservation work to stimulate interest in training in this field.

Like all parts of the economy, the conservation sector faces many challenges in the current economic climate, not least from years of restrained institutional budgets which impact both the public and private sector workforce.

Whilst the conservation sector has proven to be remarkably resilient, particularly over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a real risk that even a small reduction in the overall workforce could have significant impacts on the ongoing care of collections. This risk is heightened by the understanding that some of these areas of practice have a low existing number of practitioners.

While this point-in-time survey offers many insights into the health of the conservation workforce we note that the survey must be run on a regular basis to ensure that any changes in the overall shape of the

conservation workforce are proactively identified. This will give time for remedial strategies and policies to be put in place and will create space to work with stakeholders from across the heritage sector to ensure that skills gaps are addressed effectively. Working collaboratively, we can ensure that the conservation workforce is dynamic and able to adapt so that our collective cultural heritage can continue to be protected and preserved for future generations.