



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Cultivating Skills in Historic and Botanic Gardens: Careers, Occupations and Skills Required for the Management and Maintenance of Historic and Botanic Gardens



A report by Lantra on behalf of
English Heritage

March 2012

LANTRA
Land-based and environmental skills

A report by Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for the land-based and environmental industries, on behalf of English Heritage.

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1 Executive summary

This study was commissioned to provide an updated perspective on changing demands on the skills that sustain England's outstanding heritage of gardens and parks, the last having been undertaken in 2005.

There is clear evidence that the challenges are evolving for gardens and parks, a foundation stone of the UK visitor economy on the one hand, and a key component of healthy urban communities on the other. Garden managers identify a clear need for the skills to meet those challenges, and express concern.

Key themes that emerge in the study, and that characterise the challenges, are:

- The demand for skills to manage ever-increasing visitor numbers, and their impact upon an inherently fragile landscape. Many gardens have reported significant increases in visitor numbers in recent years, reflecting wider tourism trends (steady increases in visitor numbers to attractions averaging 3.2% each year since 2005 are reported by VisitEngland, Visitor Attraction Trends in England 2010) and the impact of economic circumstances
- A continuing need for investment in the maintenance and repair of infrastructure, requiring more skilled people to ensure that further degradation is minimised and to find creative ways to resolve significant problems in the face of severe financial constraints
- The recognition of a need for new approaches to garden management in the face of environmental change, recognised to be having an impact today, and anticipated by managers to be more serious as the years progress.

Overall, a greater breadth of knowledge and experience is demanded, though there are clear differences in emphasis between public parks, which require more generic skills to manage work programmes and to engage their communities, and gardens, which demand a greater depth of underpinning knowledge in horticulture and related subjects, as well as managing the visitor experience.

The sector has become very reliant upon a small number of well-established training institutions to provide successive generations of skilled horticulturists that can meet the diversity of challenges in our gardens and parks. The impact of innovative training schemes such as the lottery-funded Historic and Botanic Gardens Bursary Scheme (HBGBS) is therefore all the more noticeable in this study, and demonstrates that there is an appetite to provide training across the range of gardens where the right kind of support can be applied.

The study provides a reminder of the rich opportunity for volunteers in gardens and parks, providing highly valued support for the continued quality of visitor experience on the one hand, but gaining immeasurable enhancement in their own quality of life on the other. Volunteering provides an important route into a career in gardens and parks, too, for a profession that relies heavily upon career changers.

2 Background

This report has been commissioned by English Heritage, the Government's advisor on the historic environment, and Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for the Environmental and Land-based Sector. The study builds upon that undertaken by E3 Marketing in 2005, on behalf of a consortium of organisations involved with heritage and botanic gardens.

The research has been undertaken to update our understanding of the sector, in relation to:

- Occupations and organisational structures
- Salary structures
- Career paths, qualifications and experience
- Current and future staffing needs and skill shortages
- Demographic, economic and business information.

The report is based upon objective data, obtained from questionnaires completed by people working in the sector, and from a limited amount of additional qualitative information from discussions with staff.

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3 Sample and methodology

The project methodology was planned to provide a degree of consistency with a previous study (2005), undertaken by E3 Marketing, which itself was planned to be compatible with another study of skills undertaken by E3 for the National Trust (2003).

The scope of the study was England-based historic and botanic gardens selected from:

- Members of the organisation PlantNetwork
- Members of the Historic Houses Association
- Gardens listed in Hudson's Gardens directory
- Gardens managed by English Heritage
- Gardens managed by the National Trust
- Public parks that were awarded Green Flags in 2008.

3.1 Postal survey

Questionnaires were constructed in consultation with the sponsor organisations, addressed to:

- Eight hundred garden managers, of which 134 responded (16%)
- Two hundred garden staff, of which 98 responded (33%)
- Additional data from trainees and volunteers informed the study.

3.2 Analysis

The sample size has dictated the nature and extent of analysis. Data has been assessed in aggregate across the managers' and staff's surveys. A further level of analysis was possible in the managers' survey to identify significant differences between responses from (i) public parks and (ii) the other parks and gardens. Whereas designation as a public park proved unambiguous, respondents from other types of garden or park were less frequently able to categorise their site so unambiguously.

Data has been presented to compare relative proportions of the respective samples, and it should be noted that sample sizes differed markedly between public parks and other gardens.

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4 Significant findings

4.1 Rising to expectations

The study identifies three key challenges for the future management of gardens and parks, each with consequences for the skills demands on their workforce:

- Rising visitor numbers. Ever-increasing visitor pressure is reported by managers and owners to be creating real conflict with the protection of the asset. Some smaller private gardens recognise the need to bring in visitors to maintain the financial viability of their estates, which is a problem that affects all aspects of management and maintenance, and presents a real challenge to the skill of garden teams
- Maintaining the infrastructure. A need for continuing infrastructure investment and conservation of important heritage is identified by owners and managers
- Environmental change. The study reveals awareness among garden and park managers of the need to respond effectively to a rapidly changing environment, and the challenges it poses in many aspects of maintenance and development of the gardens in their charge. Climate change is perceived by a number of managers and owners to be having a real impact today.

4.2 Developing the profession

Characteristics of the workforce

- Ninety-two per cent of employee respondents categorised their ethnic group as white British, with only one respondent identifying any group other than white (Indian). This is a lower proportion than that reported for heritage and botanic gardens in 2005 (98%; E3), although this does not include public parks and the associated, sometimes contractor-based workforce
- The managers' survey reports an average of 78% male staff (22% female) across all sites included. The employees' survey indicates 66% male, 34% female, which is broadly consistent with published information on the labour market for the sector (Lantra). The study does not provide adequate data to examine further gender-related issues beyond the evidence of more male-dominated staffing in public parks, and females being more significant in heritage and botanic gardens
- The age distribution of employees in the survey shows a peak within the 35-44 age range (32%). The age structure of the sample shows only a small number of younger entrants to the profession (6%, which is consistent with the E3 analysis of 2005 at 5%) and a significant proportion aged 55-65 (18%). None were recorded past the current normal retirement age of 65. In 2005, the lack of young entrants to the profession was flagged as a matter for concern and this situation has not

changed

- There is evidence of difference in the younger age categories between public parks and other gardens with more (perhaps relating to unskilled) under 25 in public parks, and fewer aged 25-34. The latter observation may be related to two factors. Firstly, the evidence suggests lower retention of young people in public park roles over the past ten years. Secondly, a lower level of recruitment of people into public parks in an early second career is indicated, which the evidence suggests is an important route into the profession in other gardens
- The study indicates a general uplift in salaries (p44) at the lower end of the scale, compared with E3 (2005). Seventeen per cent of respondents reported that their salary was below £15,000, where E3 had reported 39%. Forty-three per cent reported a salary of £15,000 to £20,000, where E3 had found 24%. Similar numbers reported salaries over £20,000 to those identified by E3. The analysis is too coarse for any adjustment to be made for overall rates of inflation since 2005
- The study does not provide adequate data to map salaries against skills.

4.3 Developing skills to meet the challenge

- Skills gaps are identified by owners and managers (p27) relating to underpinning knowledge: plant identification, pest and disease knowledge, and understanding of horticultural maintenance feature highly. The concern echoes that of managers interviewed in the E3 2005 study and to an extent may reflect the increasing recognition of the pressures that follow from environmental change
- In considering what skills have proved hard to recruit (p27), a marked difference was identified in the responses from public park managers compared with other types of park and garden. The former gave significantly more emphasis to general employability skills while the latter concentrated upon technical and academic ability in horticulture, and upon proven experience in the field
- The employees' study (p38) reveals the diversity of responsibilities undertaken by the garden workforce, with evidence of more demand on people for their breadth of knowledge and skills, handling a diversity of issues associated with running and developing the garden or park
- The managers' survey provides evidence of the importance of smaller organisations in the provision of traineeship opportunities beyond the limited number of major training institutions. A number provide apprenticeships and others commented that they would be prepared to consider them, or would respond positively to being approached to provide them
- The employees' study emphasises the importance of career changers to the overall structure of the workforce (p39), with a 'peak' of recruitment to the sector among respondents aged 30-39 (16% of the total)
- The Historic and Botanic Gardens Bursary Scheme (HBGBS) was noted by a diversity of garden managers and employees in providing additional training opportunities

- The significance of the major providers of formal training (Kew, Edinburgh, Wisley) in providing the foundation of the sector's requirements for relevant craft and other skills is demonstrated in both the managers' and employees' studies (pp35, 45)
- The managers' and employees' studies (pp29, 48) reveal the current level of training activity, emphasising that there is not always a structured approach to the identification of training needs, nor validation of skills acquired through qualifications. However, there is recognition of the value of training on both sides, and evidence of provision being made, both to meet the needs of the job and to offer progression.

4.4 The significance of volunteers

- Among private organisations, the importance of volunteers in sustaining garden operations is apparent in the managers' study (p20). This contrasts with the management of public parks, where it is often reported that no formal volunteer group is identified
- In contrast, the social significance of parks in providing volunteer opportunities for young people is evident in the managers' study (p21)
- Garden managers identify strongly with the significance of volunteering for older people. By contributing to the garden, an important social opportunity is gained for those in retirement.

4.5 Salary opportunities in the sector

- This required additional follow up to the original survey as many respondents did not take into consideration the senior positions that individuals can aspire to and often overlooked when viewing careers within the sector
- From a survey of those organisations listed in '3' (pp5), the broadest expanse of salary was from £14,000 to £73,000.
- The greatest increase in salary was the £15,000 to £20,000 bracket, where the percentage is now 43%, as opposed to the 2005 survey where the percentage was 24%.

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5 Summary of results

This section provides a summary of survey data collected.

5.1 Garden managers' survey

About the garden/park

Q2. Which of the following best describes your garden/park?

- Most gardens originated as designed landscapes (75 of 138, 54% designated as such here), though many have an overlaid function that complicates their straightforward classification. A number of respondents had difficulty assigning a single classification to their garden as a result. Public parks, however, were unequivocally identified in the study.

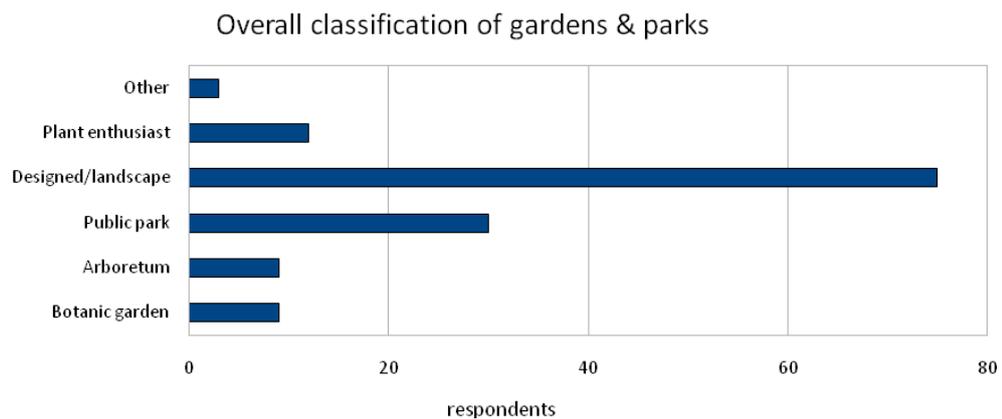


Figure 1

Q3. When was the garden/park established?

Q4. Who owns the garden/park?

- Of 134 respondents, the most common form of ownership was national organisations (43), principally the National Trust
- Of the six gardens in ownership categories not listed, four were owned by universities.

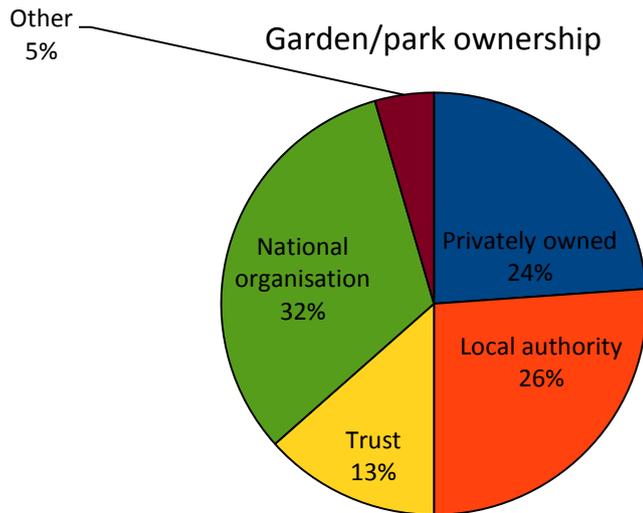


Figure 2

Q5. Approximately how many visitors do you have to your garden/park per year?

- Respondents provided more or less precise visitor numbers for gated gardens/parks (Figure 3), though reliable information was frequently cited as unavailable for open public parks, or cited as a simple order of magnitude. A number of respondents cited increasing visitation as an issue elsewhere in the survey.

Q6. What size is the garden/park?

Q7. What is your approximate average maintenance budget (excluding salaries) per year?

- The sample reflects the diversity of garden sizes and visitor numbers (Figure 3)
- The maintenance budget is not correlated with garden size, and is dependent upon the purpose of the garden and visitor pressure.

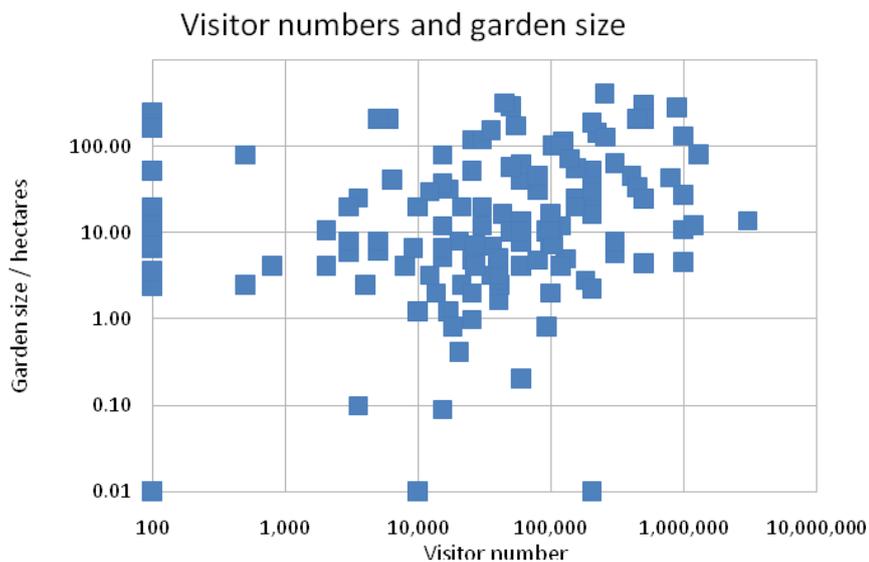


Figure 3

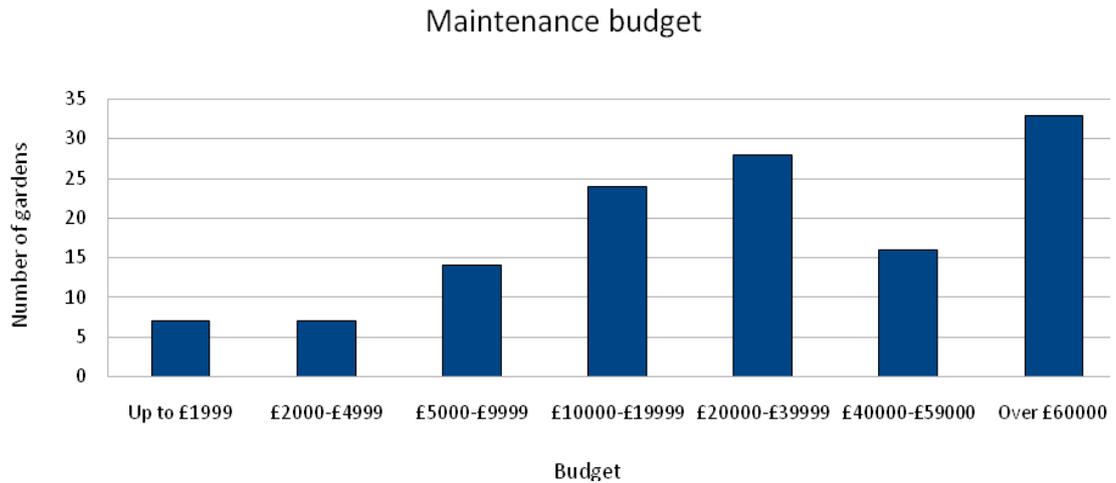


Figure 4

Q8. What are the main issues affecting your garden/park at present?

- Narrative responses were commonly related to financial constraints and pressures. Others focused upon handling unpredictable or extreme weather, which some respondents related directly to climate change. A number of respondents also identified increasing visitation as a matter for concern
- Skills issues were directly referenced by a number of respondents, including the need to assure succession in an aging workforce
- In public parks, the impact of antisocial behaviour features strongly (where it is notably absent from the primary concerns of other gardens and parks), alongside visitor pressure.

5.2 Abbreviated responses

Public parks

- Value for money from maintenance contracts; vandalism
- Vandalism; dogs; budget cuts...
- Budget and lack of staff
- Budget; public spending
- Drainage...
- Local Authority budget cuts
- Pressures to reduce revenue spend...
- Local Authority budget cuts
- Lack of financial resources...
- Dilapidated state...
- Littering; cycling; vandalism; budget cuts
- Dry lawns
- Litter collection...
- Antisocial behaviour... Staffing numbers...
- Vandalism...
- Vandalism; greylag geese...
- Antisocial behaviour...
- Antisocial behaviour
- Some antisocial behaviour...
- Vandalism; poor quality grounds maintenance staff
- Low budget; dog owners; cyclists; graffiti
- Water wheel requires refurbishing...
- Landscape renewal; pressure of use; parking
- Finding sufficient funds...vandalism...
- Large numbers of visitors...
- Funding; vandalism.

Other parks and gardens

- Funding...
- Path erosion...
- Finance...
- Bureaucracy
- Health and safety regulations
- Financial constraints
- Developing higher income...
- Funding uncertainty...
- Dwindling Government grant-in-aid
- Income generation
- Funding...
- Funding; staffing levels

- Funding for capital developments
- Create a stronger overseas profile
- Reorganising collection...
- Deteriorating infrastructure...
- Lack of funds
- Park regeneration project...
- Funding for future dev...
- Lack of money...
- Visitor pressure
- Close proximity to a youth hostel
- Flooding, phytophthora
- Honey fungus
- Dry weather
- Not enough staff
- Old trees
- Access versus conservation
- Protection of setting; visitor facilities
- Visitors and events; maintenance costs; pressure to use unskilled staff; health and safety
- Lack of funding...
- Flooding...
- Balance between conservation and generating income
- Drought; organic practices; limited resources...
- Wear and tear; climate change; lack of skilled gardeners
- Environmental; visitor pressure
- Over-visiting; drought
- Increasing access; stock/public issues; weather (heavy storms)
- Continued restoration projects; funding; lack of staff
- Lack of qualified staff; funding
- Wear and tear
- Staff cut-backs
- Restoration of a Victorian parterre
- Impact of events...
- Lack of funds; all-year opening; phytophthora; badgers
- Building new visitor centre
- Very heavy rainfall...
- Access for less able; maintenance of infrastructure; increasing visitor numbers...
- Income generation v conservation
- Climate change; low staffing level; visitor pressure
- Reduction in staff numbers...
- Box blight; visitor pressure; staffing
- Weather
- Drought
- None
- Blocked water garden pools...
- Tree disease...

- Maintaining visitor numbers...
- Could always use more staff and visitors
- Major redevelopment
- Lack of funds...
- Rabbit damage
- Change of ownership
- Lack of money...
- Controlling visitor numbers
- Workforce at retirement and no fresh blood being trained
- Coach access for tour GPS...
- Hotel guests
- Lack of money
- Marketing for wider audience and more visitors
- Phytophthora ramorum; aging plant collection
- In park: upkeep of landscape...
- Reduced visitor spending
- Impact from events; high visitor wear
- Drop in visitor numbers
- Shortage of visitors
- Restoration project
- Ground elder
- Heavy footfall; tree cover strategy; drought stress
- Climate change...
- Manpower; poor state of equipment
- Lack of money for maintenance...
- Too few paid staff and over-reliance on volunteers
- Balancing conservation needs against visitor access
- Increasing visitor numbers...
- Lack of money
- Labour costs; health and safety...
- Ownership
- Need to improve interpretation; broaden audience appeal; plant recording...
- Drought; deer; rabbit.

5.3 Workforce

Q9. Overall, how many people does this garden/park employ (including administration, etc.)?

Q10. How many of these are full-time/part-time?

Q11. Please estimate how many staff you lose per year (through leavers, retirees etc.)

- Data on overall employment that is directly associated with the garden/park was often provided by respondents from independent organisations for which the garden was the primary business, but those for which the garden was a subsidiary activity or for which services were contracted out gave a variety of responses, depending upon their role within the organisation and their knowledge of structure for those services. Data was sometimes skewed by seasonal staff which might be associated, for instance, with catering.

5.4 Horticultural staff

Q12. What percentage of your horticultural staff identify with the following ethnic groups?

- Of 122 managers responding (Figure 5), 21 (18%) recorded ethnic origins of staff other than white British (principally other European ethnic groups). Of these, few respondents provided detail associated with other ethnic origins.

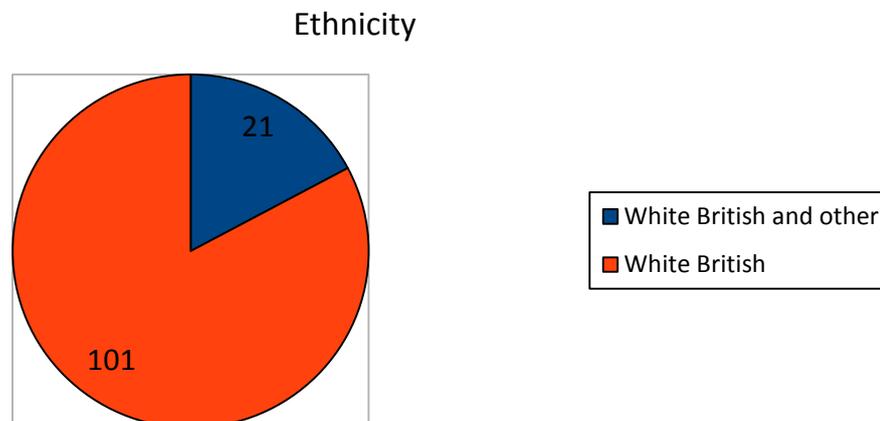


Figure 5

Q13. How many staff are employed in the following occupations?

Q14. How many garden/park staff do you employ?

Q15. How many of these are full-time/part-time?

- Almost exactly equal numbers of garden and park staff are recorded as occupying elementary, skilled and managerial roles (Figure 6)
- The study reflects the perspective of the person responsible for the garden. In some cases this will be the owner of the property, in others it will be delegated to a professional manager, and the study does not provide evidence related to any potential bias between the two in assessing levels of skill or responsibility across the team.

Garden/park staff occupations

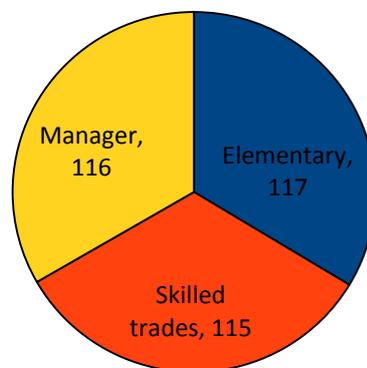


Figure 6

Q16. Approximately how many of your garden/park staff are categorised in the following age groups?:

- 672 of 976 staff recorded in the managers' survey (69%) were reported to be under 45 years old (Figure 7), and the greater proportion (36%) between 35 and 44, suggesting a shift toward a younger age profile from the previous (2005) study
- There is little significant difference in age profile between public parks and other gardens (Figure 8), perhaps surprisingly, given the other differences that are revealed in this study. However, there is some evidence of difference in the younger age categories: more (perhaps unskilled) under 25 in public parks, fewer aged 25-34. The latter observation may be related to two factors: a lower retention of young people in public park roles over the past ten years, or otherwise a lower level of recruitment of people into public parks in an early second career.

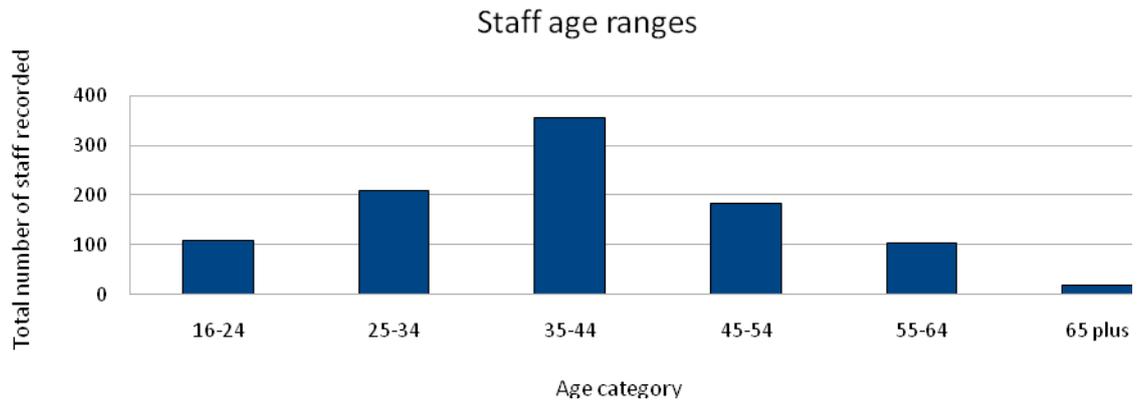


Figure 7

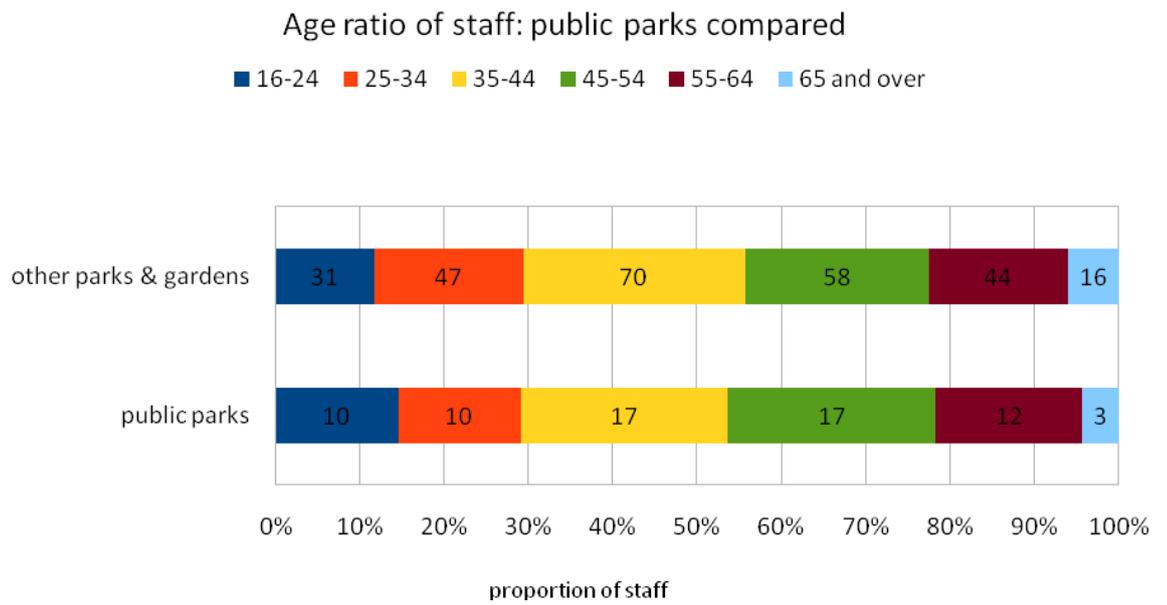


Figure 8

Q17. What is the gender split of garden/park staff?

- An average of 78% of staff are reported to be male (22% female) across all gardens and parks in the survey (Figure 9)
- There is a marked difference in gender balance between public parks and other gardens (Figure 10), with over 90% male staff in the former

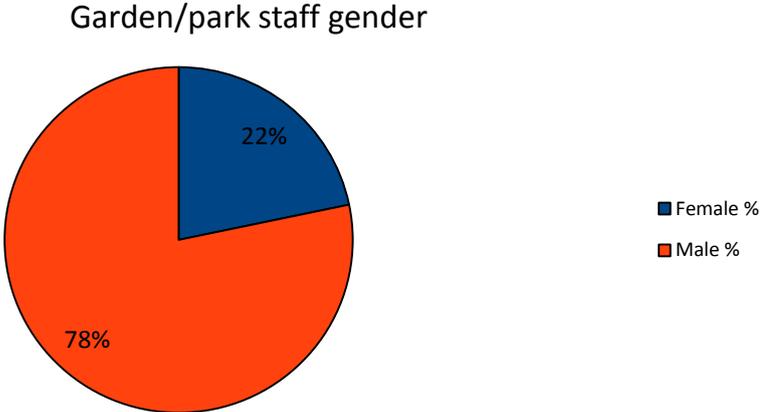


Figure 9

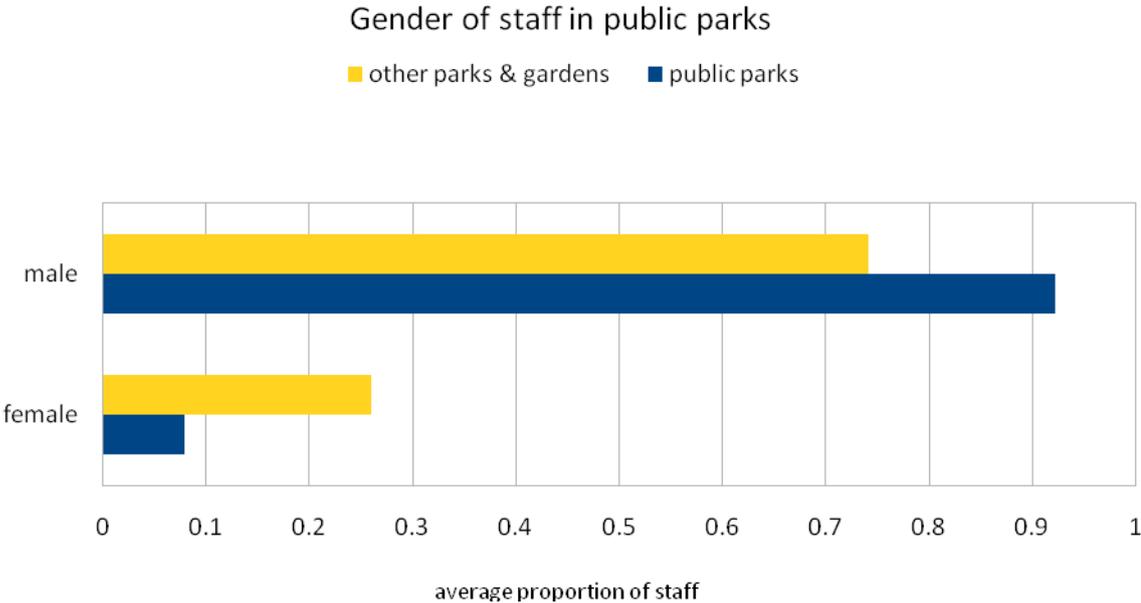


Figure 10

5.5 Volunteers

Q18. How many garden/park maintenance volunteers do you have?

- A total of 1,775 volunteers were recorded in the survey across 129 gardens (an average of 14 in each garden). Volunteers were seldom associated with public parks.

Q19. What are the main reasons volunteers give for volunteering at your garden?

- Volunteers are most frequently cited as participating in order to support the garden (74 respondents, 55% of total respondents, Figure 11). The study indicates how important gardens and parks are in providing practical learning opportunities for people through volunteering
- A significant number of parks and gardens report that their volunteering schemes fulfil a social need for the people involved (23%). This is particularly evident among public parks (Figure 12); while attracting similar levels of support from people who value the green space asset, the parks in particular fulfil an additional role engaging people with social needs.

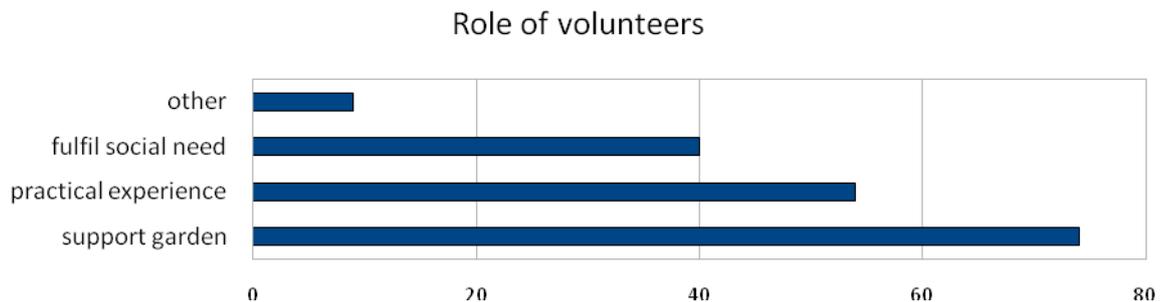


Figure 11

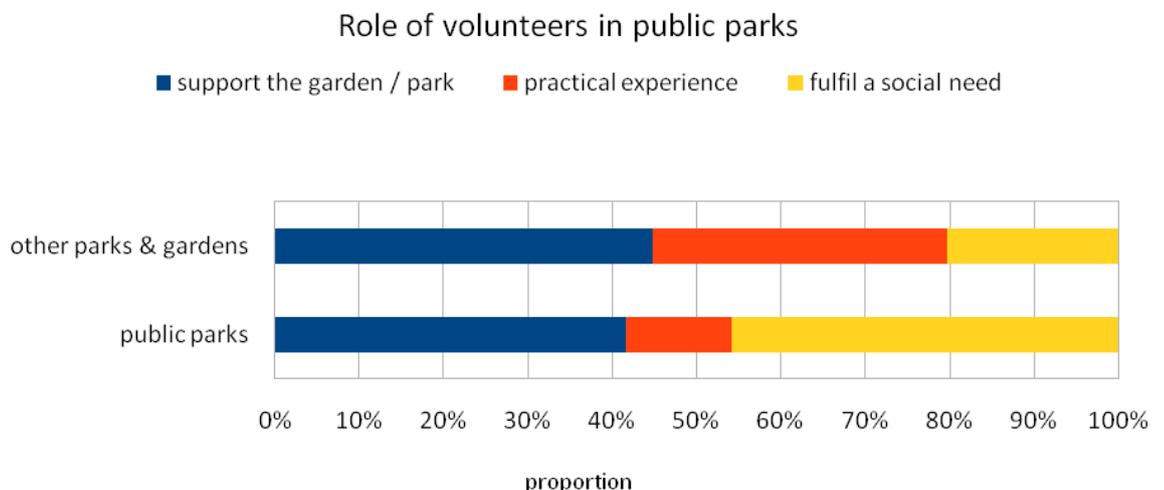


Figure 12

Q20. Approximately how many of your garden/park maintenance volunteers are aged:

- The age profile of volunteers (63% over the age of 45; 21% over 65, Figure 13) reflects the general interest in gardens and gardening in the wider population, and correlates with the primary reason for participation being to 'support the garden'
- Local Authority parks report a higher proportion of young people (<45) involved as volunteers through organised schemes and to obtain practical experience.

Age of garden maintenance volunteers

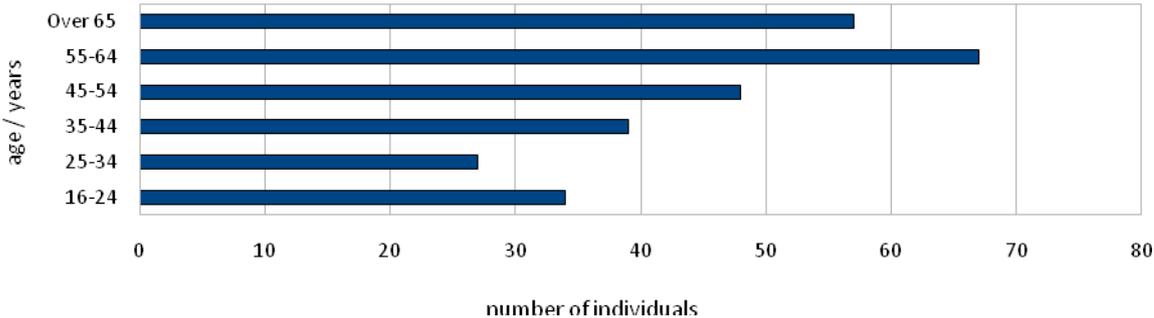


Figure 13

Q21. Does your garden/park take part in any formal volunteering programmes?

- More gardens support school work placements (34% of the total number of gardens, Figure 14) than any other volunteering scheme in the survey
- Differences between public parks and other gardens are found in the extent of partnership with volunteer programmes (Figure 15). Fewer school work placements in public parks may affect their ability to attract young people as prospective employees. The social benefit of parks is emphasised with their greater relative attention to health and community organisations, and offender rehabilitation.

Volunteer programmes associated with gardens & parks

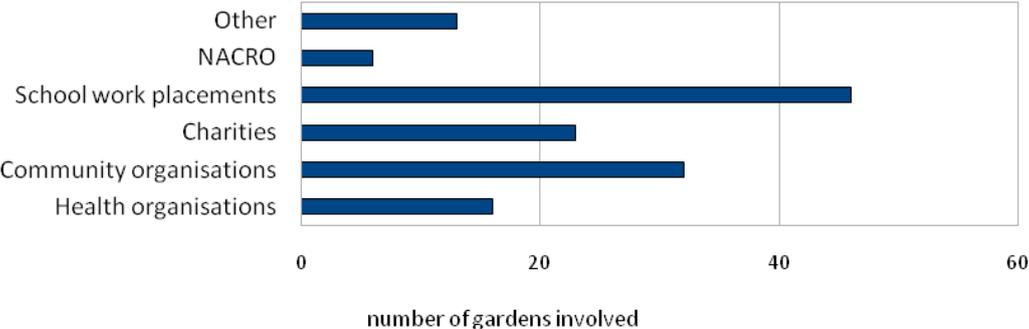


Figure 14

Volunteering programmes in public parks

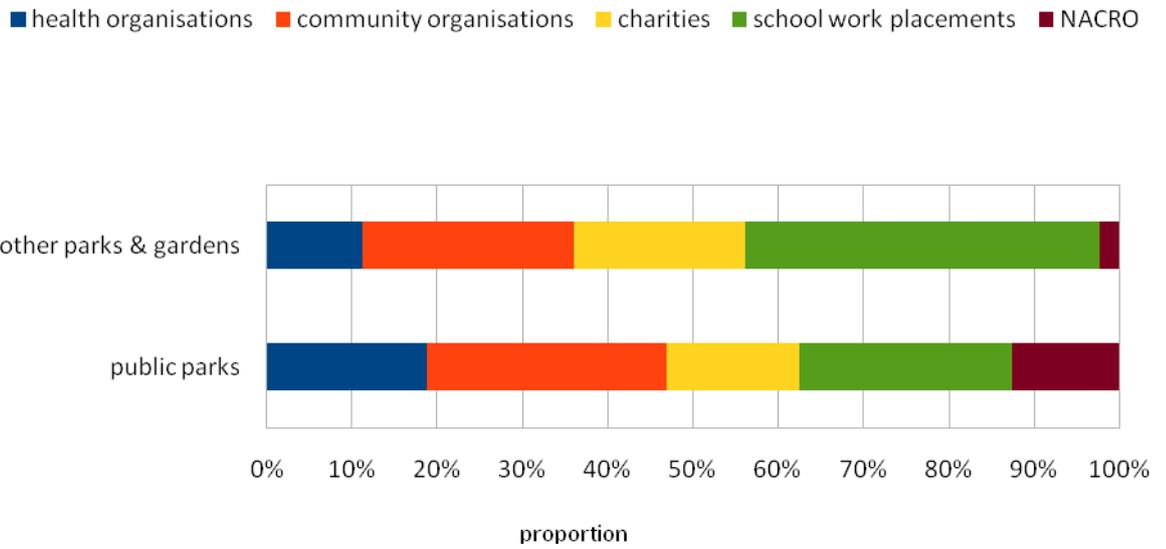


Figure 15

Q22. Do you offer any formal training and development to your volunteers?

- Ninety-nine respondents (73%) answered questions on the training of volunteers (Figure 16), of which 70% provided some sort of training. In the main, this was reported to relate to on-the-job tuition, health and safety, manual handling and the use of equipment (with some detail provided by 67 respondents, 97% of those offering training).

Gardens & parks training their volunteers

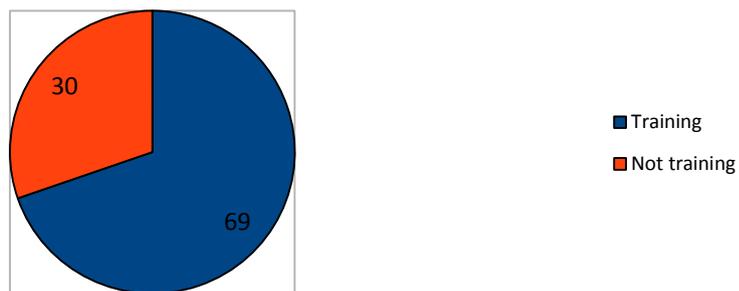


Figure 16

5.6 Skills and shortages

Q23. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- When looking to take on new recruits, we have problems finding people with skills that we need. 80 of 125 respondents (64%) reported difficulty in finding people with the right skills (Figure 17). More public park managers reported this problem than other garden managers (Figure 18)

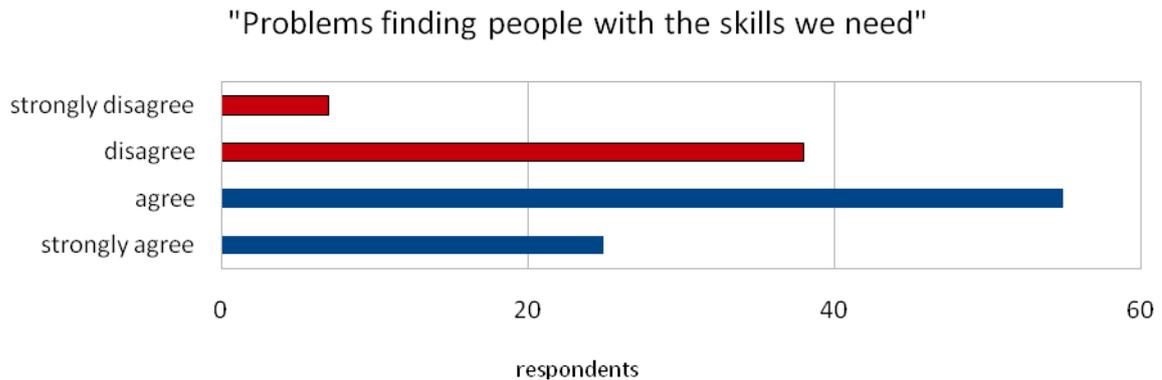


Figure 17

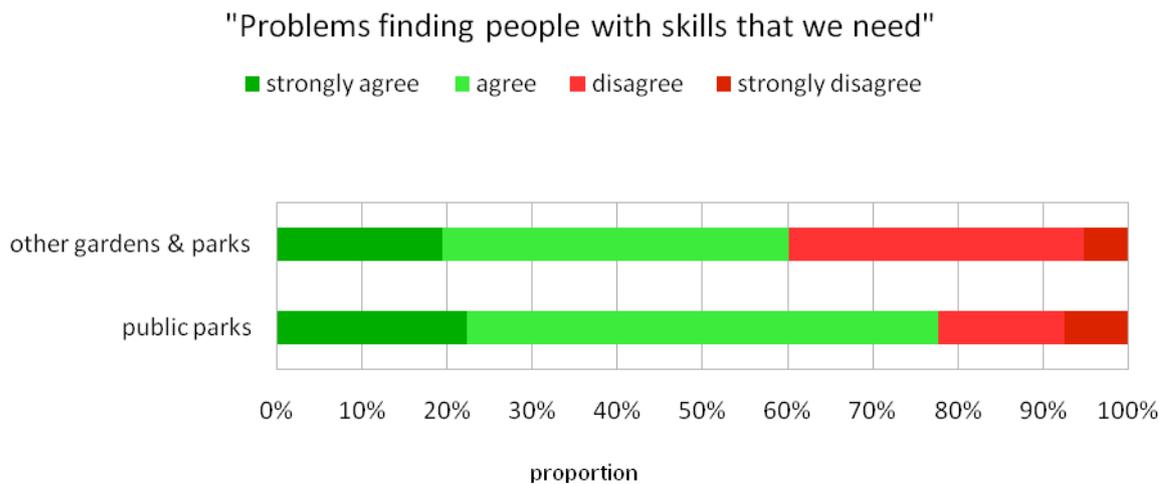


Figure 18

- The education system does not supply enough people equipped with the skills they need to start working with us
- Eighty-three of 123 respondents (67%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 19). The response was broadly similar from public parks as other gardens (Figure 20).

"The education system does not supply us with enough skilled people"

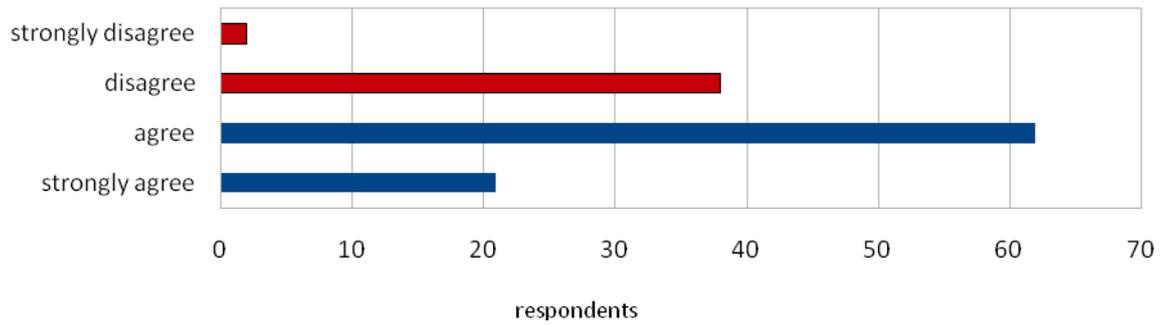


Figure 19

"The education system does not supply us with enough skilled people"

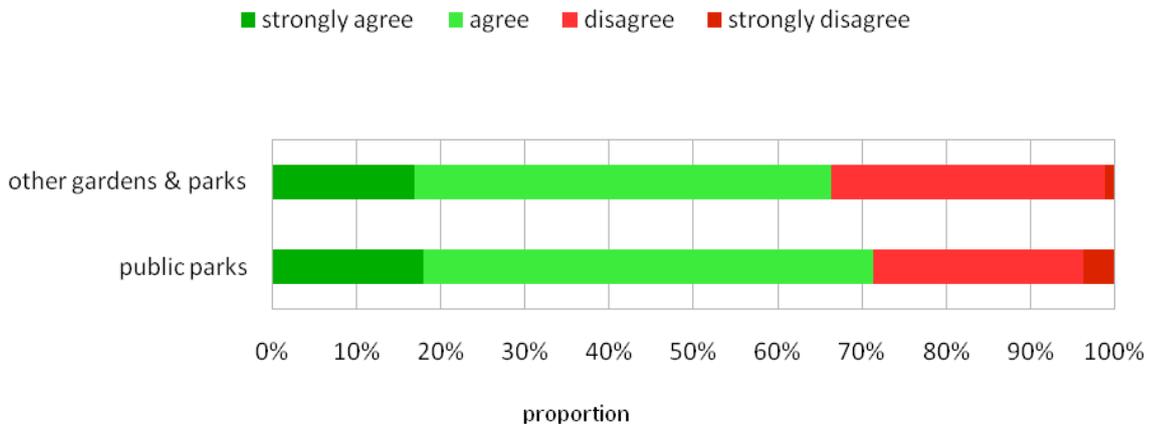


Figure 20

Holding onto valued staff presents us with a significant problem

- Ninety-six of 126 respondents (76%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement (Figure 21); the response was broadly similar from public parks and other gardens (Figure 22).

"Holding onto valued staff presents us with a significant problem"

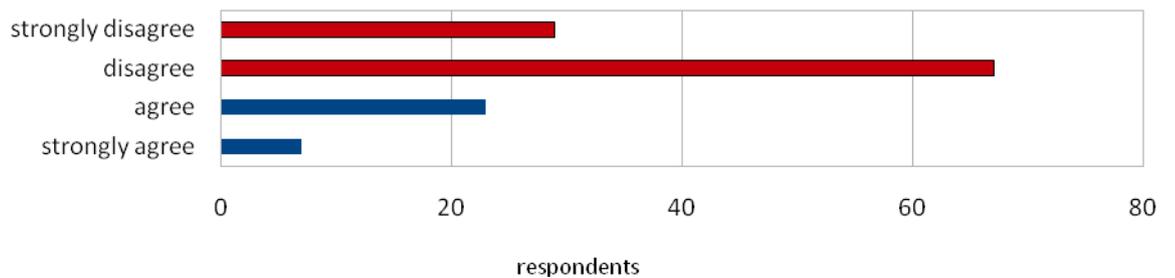


Figure 21

"Holding onto valued staff presents us with a significant problem"

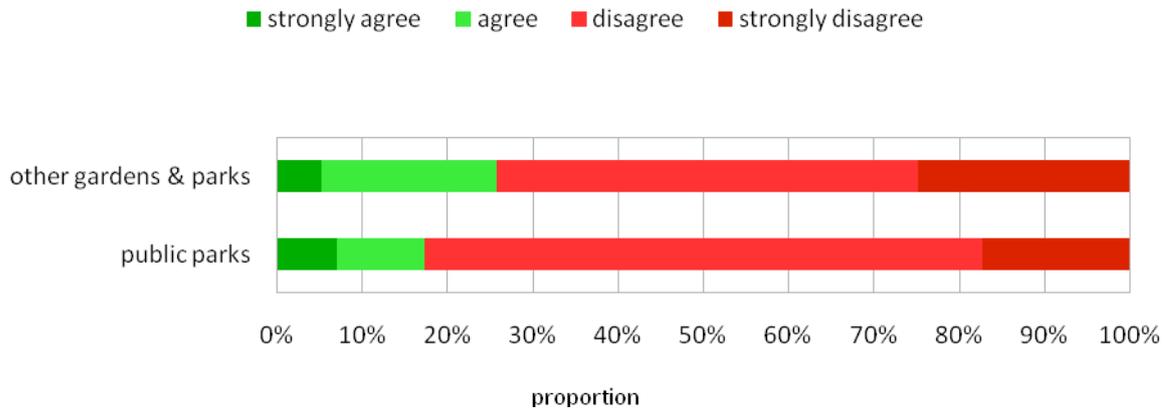


Figure 22

- My current staff have the skills they require to undertake their role proficiently
- Of 125 respondents, 112 (90%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (Figure 23); again, the response from public parks was similar to other gardens (Figure 24).

"Current staff have the skills they require"

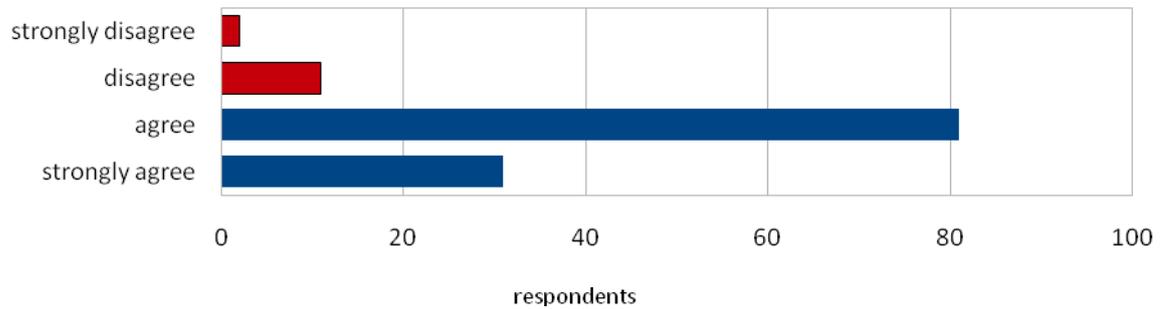


Figure 23

"Current staff have the skills they require"

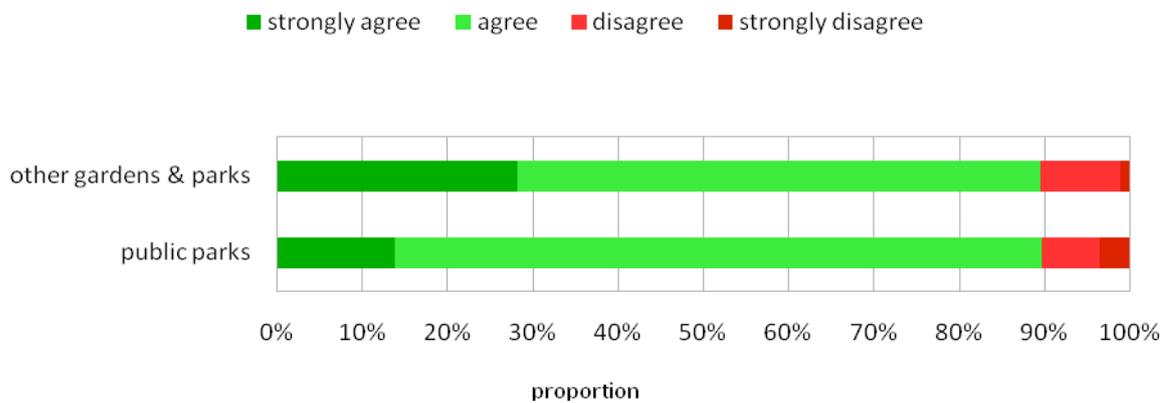


Figure 24

Q24. Which of the following skills do you find difficult to obtain from horticultural applicants?

- Respondents were asked to identify all the skills that they found difficult to obtain from a list of 23 suggested (Figure 25). Although prompted, few identified any other (unlisted) skills that were significant
- Thirty-five of the 135 respondents (26%) did not indicate any problematic skills, and indeed some of these marked the sheets to indicate that they had no difficulty at all. Where this was the case, it appears to have been generally for private gardens
- Horticultural theory is highly valued by respondents, with plant identification, pest and disease and horticultural maintenance knowledge each featuring strongly (taken together, 25% of the total responses)
- The craft skills, demonstrated by technical capability and built on experience, are evidently significant gaps, collectively accounting for 14% of total responses.

A marked difference was identified in the responses from public park managers compared with other parks and gardens (Figure 26). The former gave significantly more emphasis to general employment skills while the latter concentrated on technical and academic ability.

Skills that gardens & parks find difficult to obtain

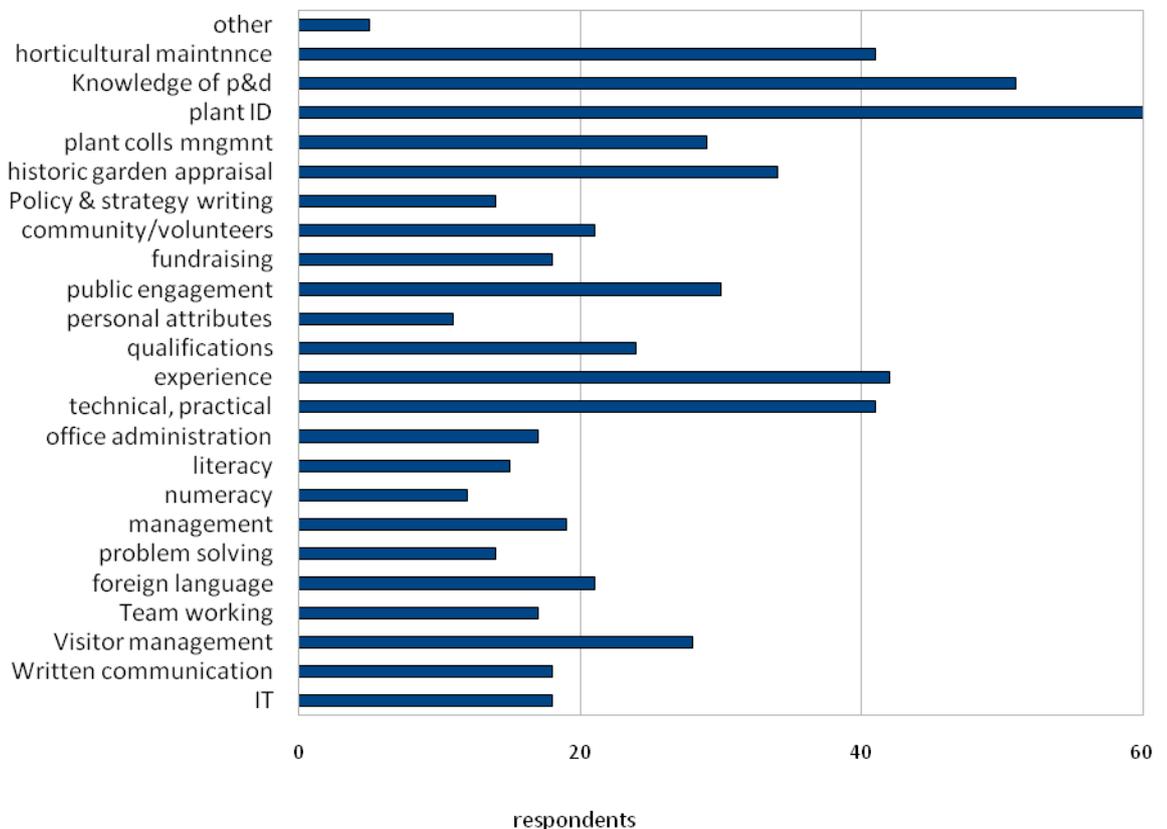


Figure 25

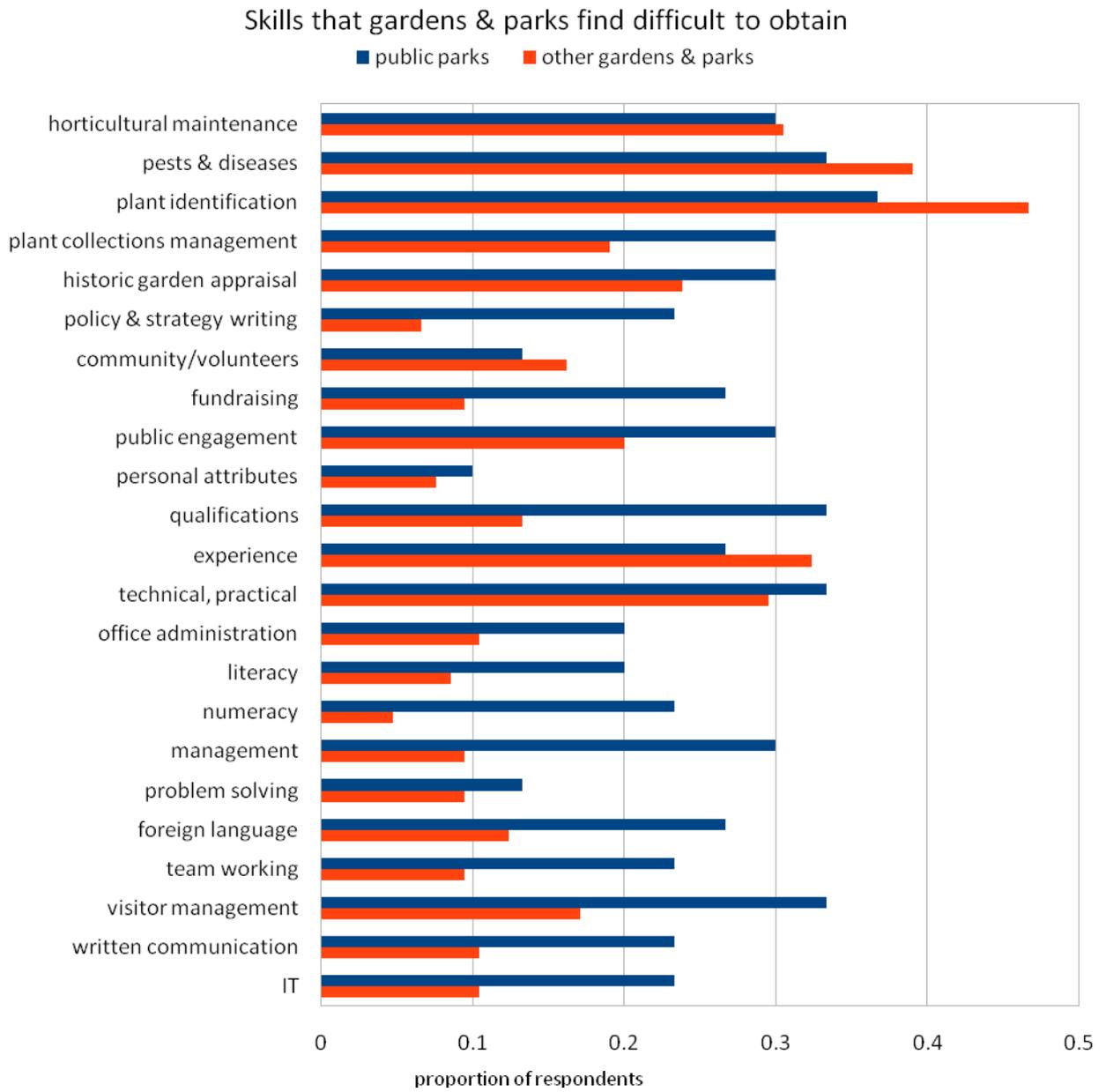


Figure 26

5.7 Workforce training and development

Q25. Over the past 12 months, have you formally arranged training for employees, whether on or off-the-job?

- Formal courses were reported to be the most significant training instrument for managers surveyed (Figure 27), alongside informal coaching.



Figure 27

Q26. How many employees over the past twelve months have been trained towards a nationally recognised qualification?

Q27. What proportion of your staff has received training in the past 12 months?

Q28. Do you have a training plan that specifies in advance the level and type of training your employees will need in the coming year?

- The study provides an indication of the level of on going training activity across the workforce, and the extent to which that training is validated with a qualification
- Sixty-five of 127 respondents (48%) indicated that one or more members of staff had been trained for a qualification within the past year (Figure 28). Almost all (124) respondents also indicated the total number of staff employed by the garden or park, revealing the proportion of the overall staff team trained in that period
- One hundred respondents of 115 (87%) reported that at least some staff had received training within the past year. Of these, 40 reported that all had received training in this period

- Of 125 respondents, 60% reported that training plans (Figure 29) had been prepared for their staff.

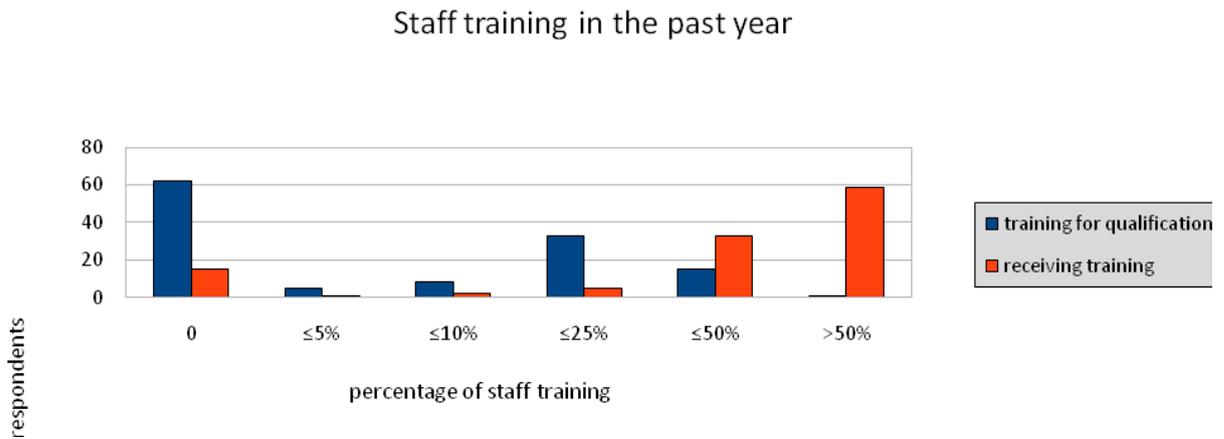


Figure 28

Q29. Does your garden/park have a budget for training expenditure?

- Of 125 respondents, 68% reported that a budget was allocated for training staff in their garden or park (Figure 30). Public parks and larger institutions consistently reported that provision was made.

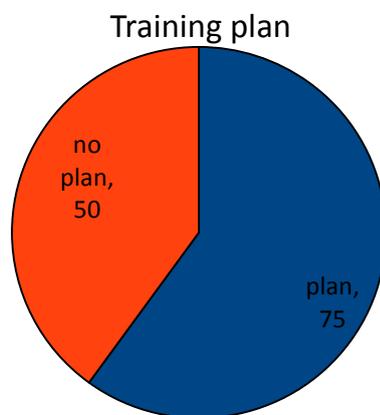


Figure 29

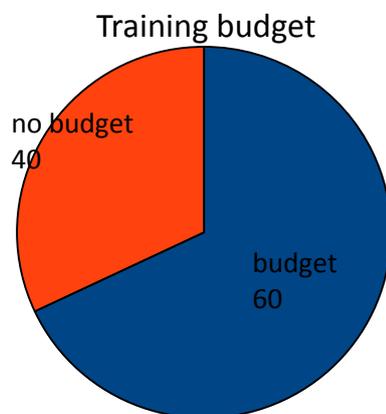


Figure 30

Q30. What percentage of staff have a formal written job description?

- Nineteen of 120 respondents (16%) reported that less than the full garden staff team were provided with formal job descriptions (Figure 31); these related characteristically to gardens in private ownership. In contrast, public parks and larger institutions universally reported that such systems were in place.

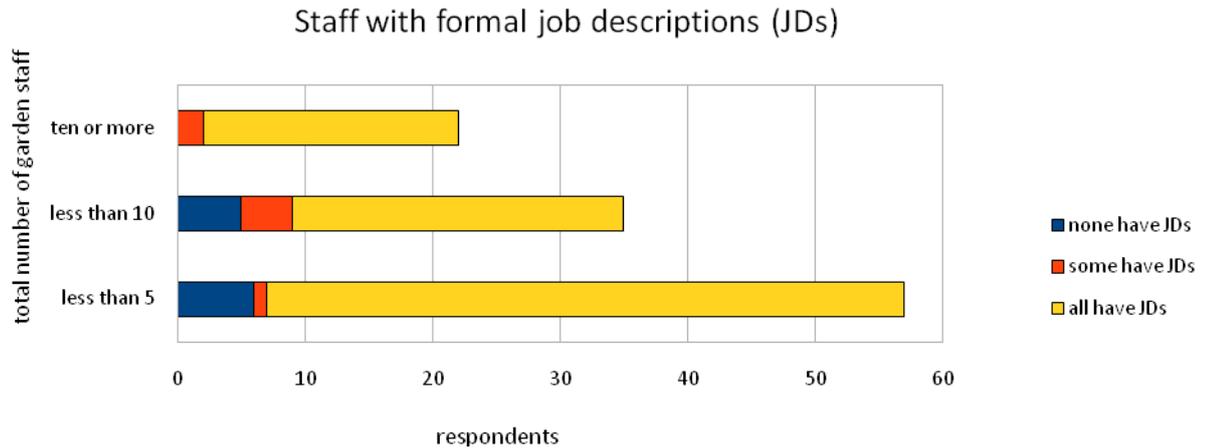


Figure 31

Q31. Does this garden/park formally assess whether individual employees have gaps in their skills?

- The majority of respondents (72%) reported that a formal assessment was made of skills needs among their staff.

Q32. What percentage of staff has an annual performance review?

- The greater majority of respondents reported that all their staff had formal performance reviews (Figure 32). The study did not reveal whether, in cases where only some staff had performance reviews, these related to particular groups within the team (e.g. supervisors or skilled employees).

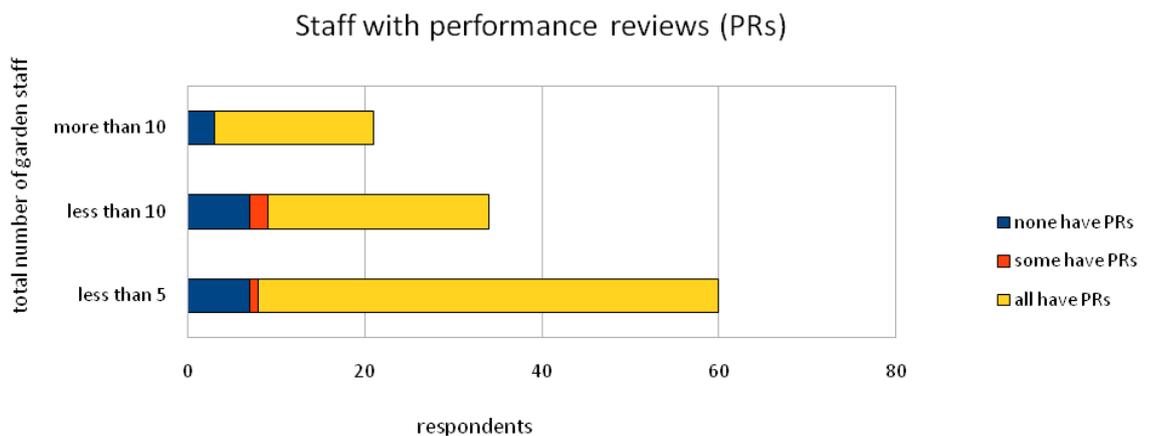


Figure 32

Q33. Do you formally assess whether the training and development received by an employee has had an impact on their performance?

- Of 122 respondents, 77 (63%) reported that they assessed the impact of training (Figure 34): only a small number are failing to follow through from the identification of need to identify where training has had the desired effect.

Skills gap analysis

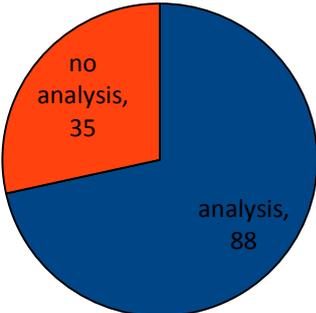


Figure 33

Organisations assessing impact of their staff training

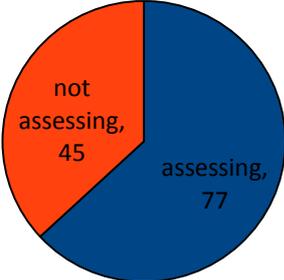


Figure 34

Q34. What barriers, if any, have been preventing your organisation providing more training over the last 12 months for employees?

- Funding and the closely related issue of available staff time (and time to organise), were the most frequently cited barriers to training (Figure 35): funding was cited by 74 respondents (54% of total responses). A lack of motivation among staff was also identified (21% of total responses)
- Among larger organisations, a concern that decisions were removed from the workplace to Head Office was apparent
- The survey did not solicit comment from those gardens that identified 'no barriers' to training, though a small number of private garden owners and managers separately reported this
- Notably, there was little differentiation in views on the impact of funding or staff time in preventing the delivery of training, in spite of their dominance as issues overall. Differences are apparent, however, with respect to certain issues that might be related to organisational structure and team motivation
- Significantly more public park managers identified a lack of staff enthusiasm for training as an issue (Figure 36)
- Other barriers that were of greater significance for public park managers related to the availability of training provision and the lack of qualifications available in the subject
- Public park managers also reported that decisions related to training were removed from their direct influence, being taken elsewhere in the organisational structure. The survey did not address the question of how this relates to the contracting out of horticultural services
- More private and other gardens, in contrast, reported that organisation time was a barrier to training, perhaps associated with the predominance of smaller enterprises among their number

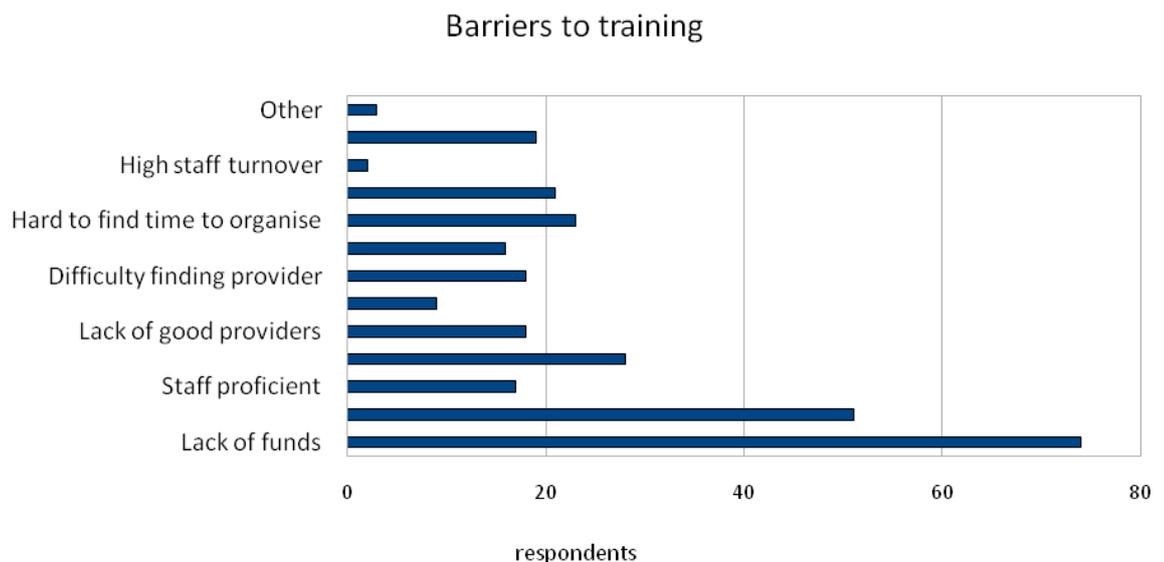


Figure 35

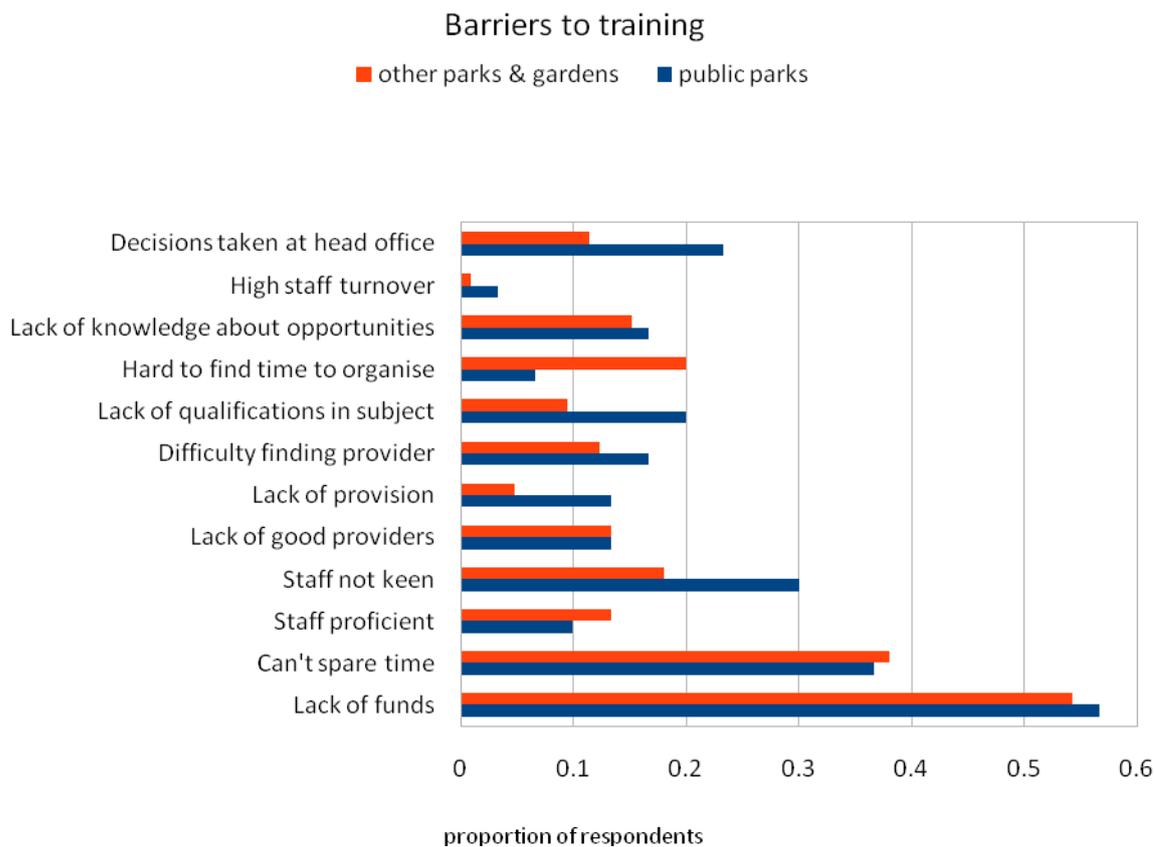


Figure 36

Q35. How satisfied are you that the training is generally meeting your business and skills needs?

- Ninety-three respondents (85%) reported that the existing training provision was meeting their business needs (Figure 37). Some dissatisfaction was associated with larger organisations for which the garden or park was not a primary activity. There was no significant difference in satisfaction with training, from the manager's point of view, between public parks and other respondents (Figure 38).



Figure 37



Figure 38

Q36. Have you received any public funding to support your training?

- The question of public funding was confusing to a number of respondents, and particularly those working in the public sector, who queried whether all their work was publicly funded. However, a number of private gardens recorded the receipt of public funding to support their training.

5.8 Traineeships

Q37. Do you offer traineeships?

- Of 127 respondents, 35% reported that they offered traineeships (Figure 39), including apprenticeships. Of those that did not, a number reported that the garden was too small or an unsuitable learning environment, there was no staff time available for supervision, or staff lacked the skills and experience to provide training
- Some gardens owned by national organisations suggested that, because a formal training scheme operated across the organisation and only certain gardens could participate, this prevented their garden from offering a traineeship.

Gardens and parks offering traineeships

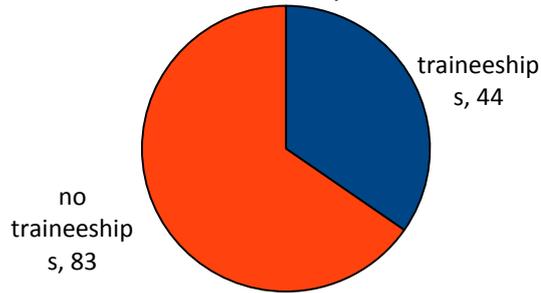


Figure 39

Q38. How long does your traineeship last?

- Among the 41 respondents offering traineeships, the length of the scheme was more or less equally balanced between one, two (including apprenticeships) and three years (National Trust Careership) (Figure 40).

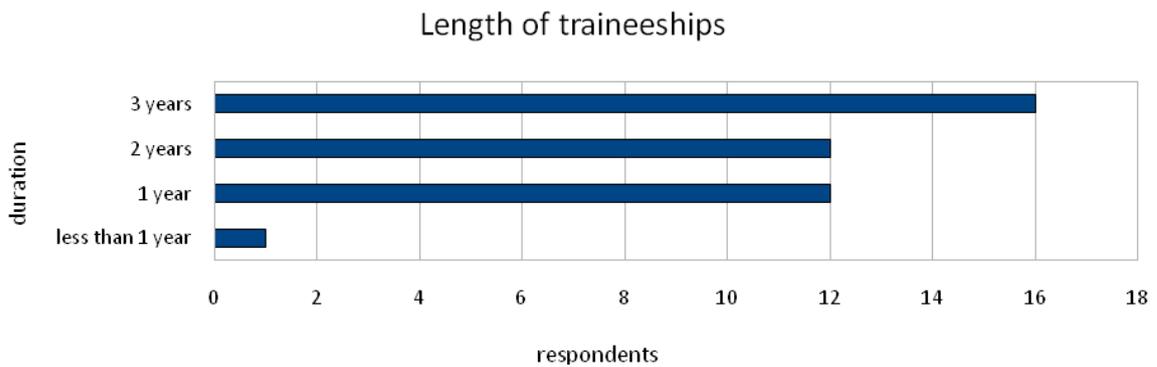


Figure 40

Traineeships were variously titled:

- Careership (National Trust)
- Apprenticeship
- NVQ Apprenticeship
- HBGBS Trainee (Historic and Botanic Gardens Bursary Scheme)
- Apprentice Gardener
- Trainee Gardener
- Horticultural Traineeship
- PGG Traineeship (Professional Gardeners Guild)
- Grounds Assistant
- Student Programme.

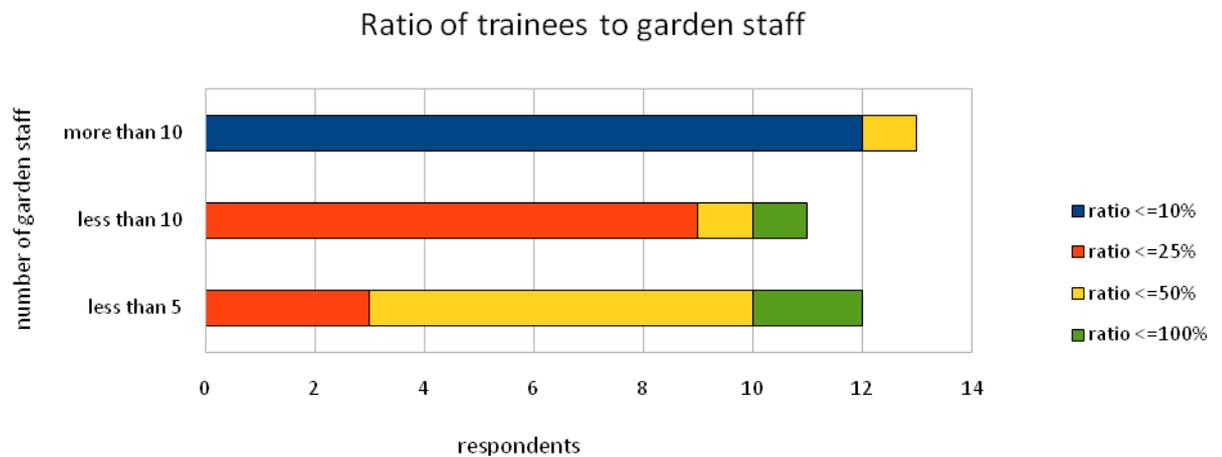
Q39. How many trainees do you currently employ? How many of these are paid / unpaid?

Q40. On average, how many new trainees do you employ throughout the year?

Q41. How often does your garden recruit trainees?

- Seventy-two per cent of the 39 respondents reported that they employed a single trainee position (all 39 offered paid positions; none unpaid). A few reported that this position was held vacant in the current year, with some advising that this was for financial reasons.

The chart below (Figure 41) indicates the extent to which small gardens manage a high ratio of trainees to gardeners (often one trainee for every two gardeners), whereas larger gardens generally support a ratio of up to one trainee for every ten gardeners.



For example, for gardens with fewer than five staff, the majority of respondents reported that the ratio of trainees to staff was less than (or equal to) 50% (i.e. 2 staff for each trainee) Figure 41

Q42. Do you have any non-EU trainees?

- Only one non-EU trainee was recorded in the survey, with one respondent noting that current UK Border Agency regulations prevented candidates from most countries entering the UK.

Q43. What is the traineeship salary per year?

Q44. Who funds the traineeship?

- The lower salaries of five respondents related to apprenticeships, which attract additional support (Figure 42). Higher salaries were reported most frequently from National Trust Careership trainees, though other schemes in major gardens were not represented.

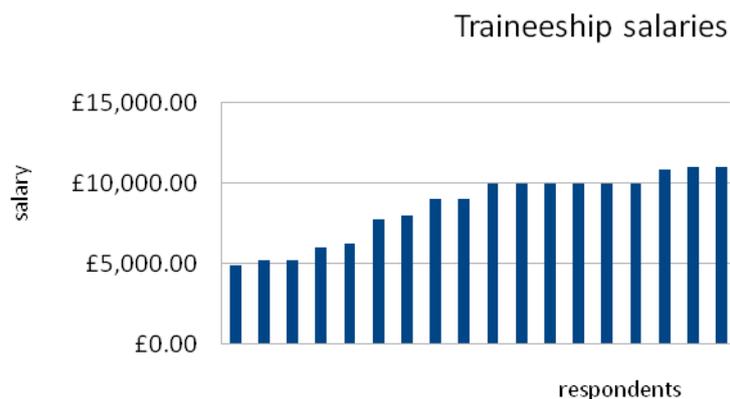


Figure 42

Q45. Do trainees receive any other benefits (i.e. accommodation, qualifications etc.)?

Other benefits offered by employers for trainees include:

- Support for formal qualifications (NVQ Level 2,3; RHS Qualifications), including day release
- Subsidised accommodation
- External work placements
- Corporate clothing
- Employees' survey.

5.10 Employee Survey

Q1a. Age and gender

- With 98 respondents, the age distribution of employees in the survey (Figure 43) shows a peak within the 35-44 age range (32%). The age structure of the sample shows only a small number of younger entrants to the profession (6%) and a significant proportion aged 55-65 (18%). None were recorded past the current normal retirement age of 65
- Sixty-five respondents indicated gender, of which 66% were male (Figure 44).

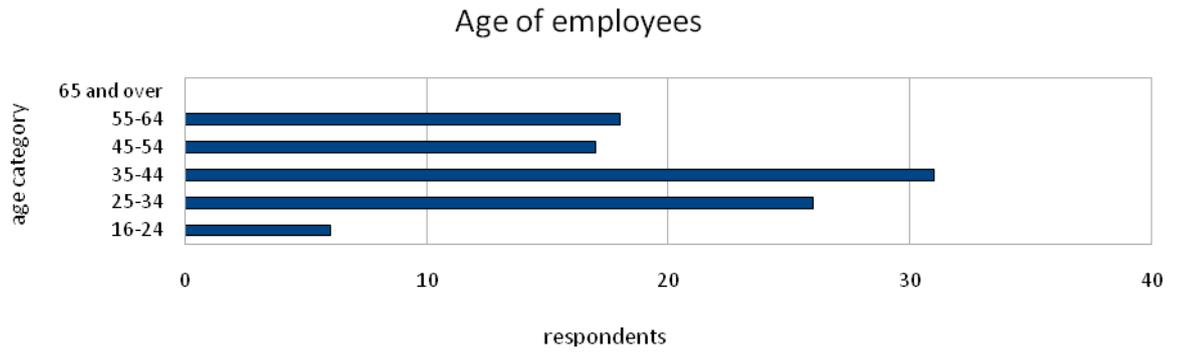


Figure 43

Gender of employees

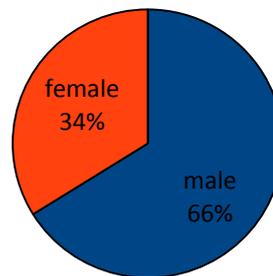


Figure 44

Q1b. Ethnic group

- Ninety-two per cent of respondents categorised their ethnic group as white British (Figure 46), with only one respondent identifying any group other than white (Indian). This is a lower proportion than that reported for heritage and botanic gardens in 2005 (98%; E3), which however does not include public parks and the associated, often contractor-based workforce.

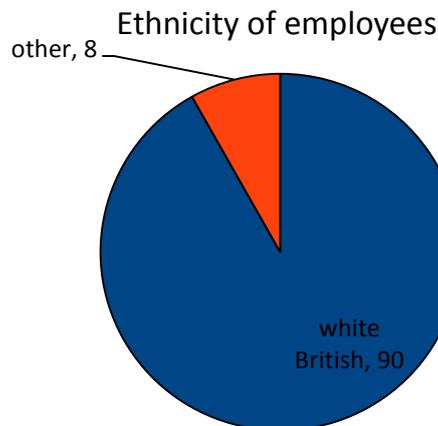
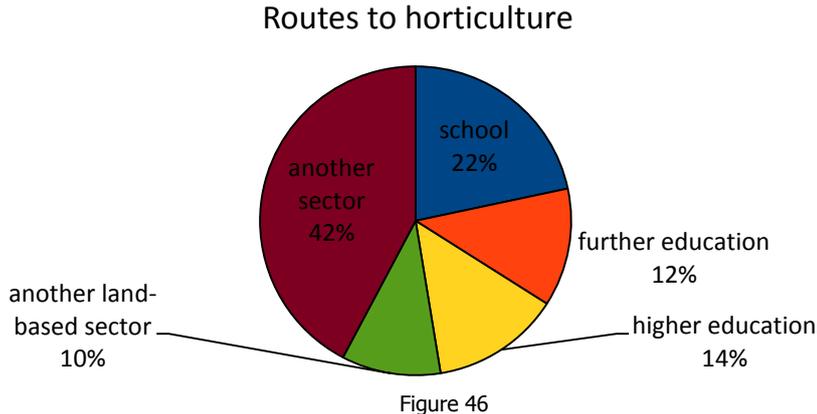


Figure 45

Q1c. When you first started your career in horticulture, was this straight from:

- More than half of respondents (51 of 97, 52%; Figure 46) identified themselves as career-changers (from another land-based sector or from another sector altogether)
- Of those that pursued horticultural education after school, roughly equal numbers progressed through further and higher education, though the latter dominated among respondents from the major botanic gardens.



Q1d. How old were you when you started?

- A quarter of respondents (Figure 47) started their horticultural career at an age that equates to the completion of basic education (under 18 years). An additional 17% progressed to a career at age 18/19. Few reported transferring to the workplace at 20, with more progressing after further studies or initially working in other sectors, up to age 24 (18%)
- A second 'peak' of recruitment to the sector among respondents aged 30-39 (16% of the total) demonstrates the continuing significance of second career entrants to the profession.

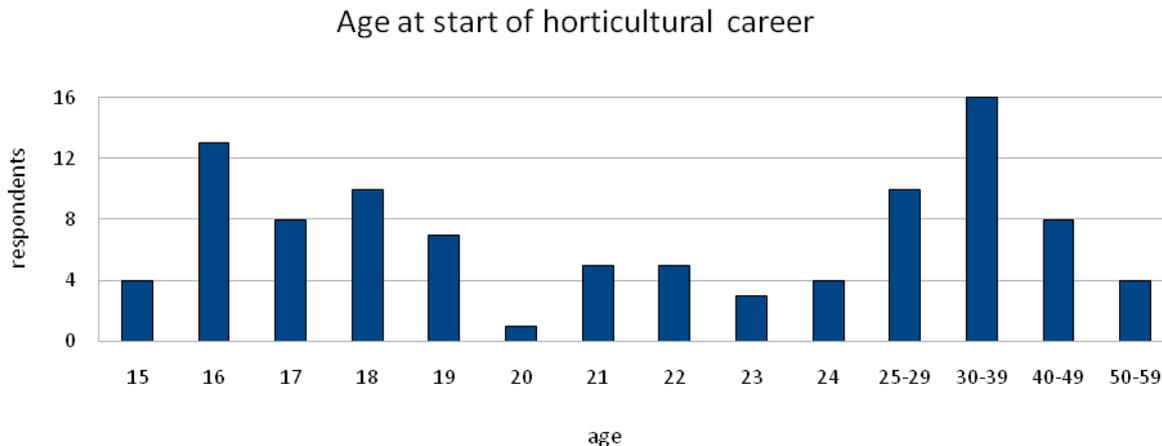


Figure 47

5.10 About your work

Q2a. Do you work full-time/part-time?

Q2b. How many hours per week are you contracted to work?

Q2c. Do you work above this amount?

Q2d. Is your contract permanent or temporary?

- Almost all (96%) respondents reported that they worked a full-time contract, working between 35 and 43 hours a week, with just over one-third (35% of respondents) reporting that they worked additional hours, averaging 5.6 additional hours per week (no data on payment for additional hours)
- Eighty-seven per cent of respondents reported that they were retained on a permanent contract.

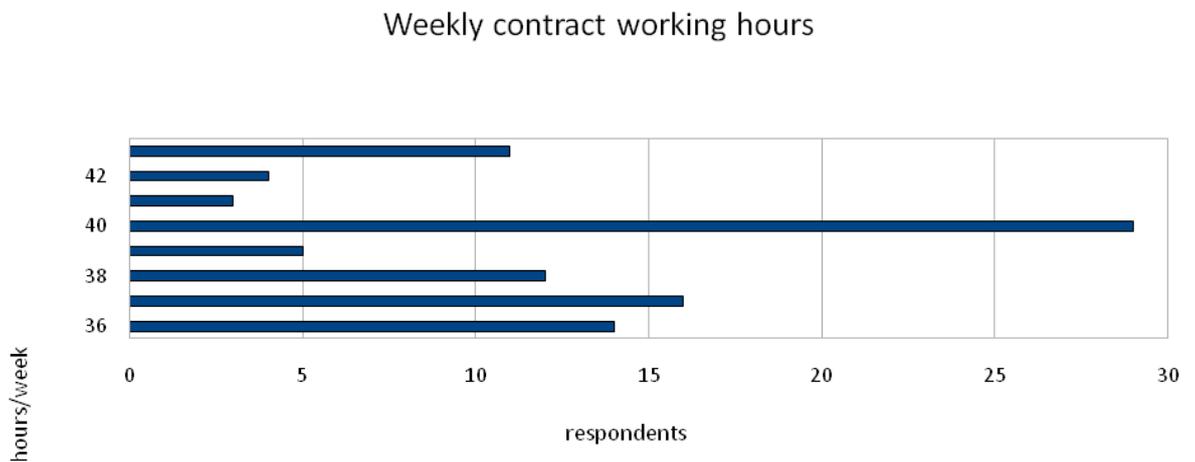


Figure 48

Extra hours worked regularly

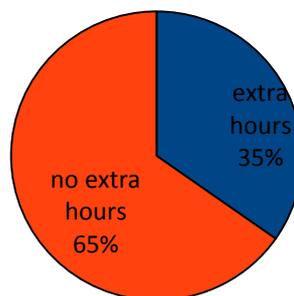


Figure 49

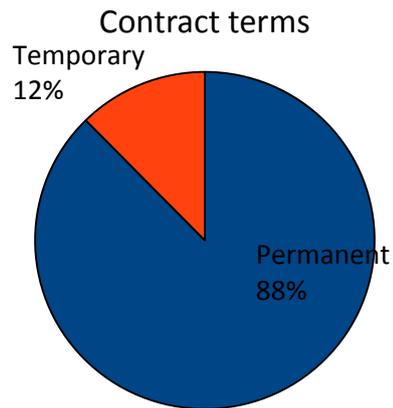


Figure 50

Q2e. How long have you worked at this site?

Q2f. How long have you worked in horticulture?

- The average length of career (Figure 51) among respondents was 14½ years, and for their current post the average was eight years, indicating a low level of staff turnover. Such a result is consistent with previous studies, including that by E3 in 2005.

Length of post and horticultural career

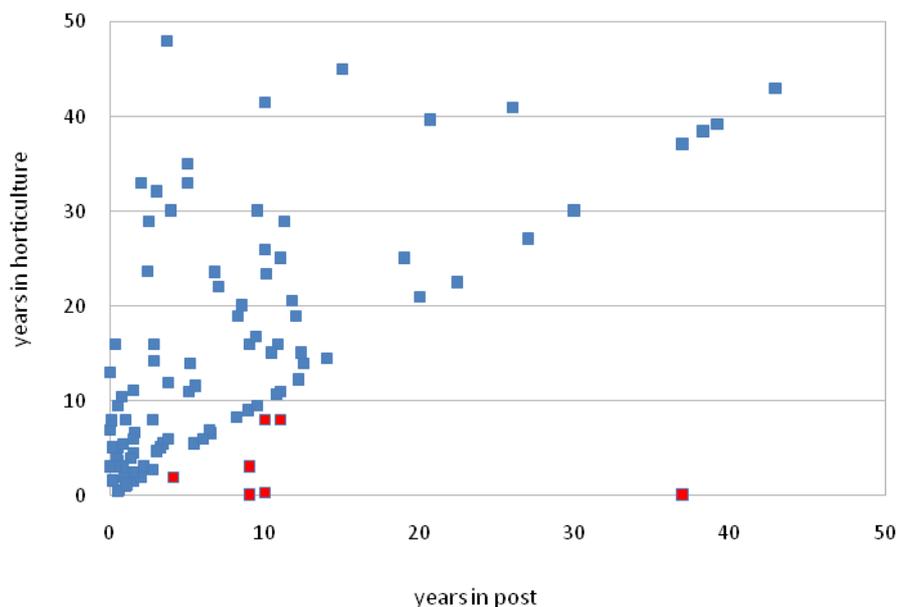


Figure 51

Q2g. Is the horticultural profession your first and only career?

- Almost half (48%) of respondents reported that horticulture was their first and only career
- Analysis of the distribution of career changers across age groups (Figure 52-55) indicates that, given the low turnover identified, a slight trend has developed towards more likelihood of change to horticulture as a second career among younger people in the industry. This has implications for the development of skills and strategies for training.

Career changers aged 25-34

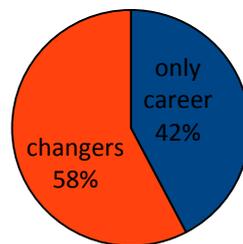


Figure 52

Career changers aged 35-44

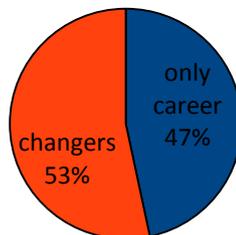


Figure 53

Career changers aged 45-54

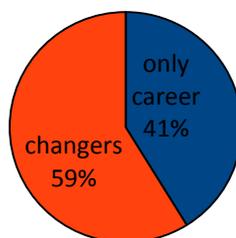


Figure 54

Career changers aged 55-64

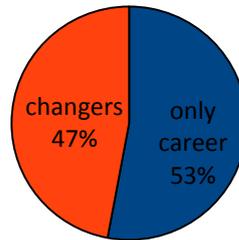


Figure 5543

Q2h. Your annual salary, including bonuses

Comparing the study with that undertaken by E3 in 2005:

- Seventeen percent of staff had a salary of less than £15,000 (2005: 39%)
- Forty-three percent had a salary of between £15,000 and £20,000 (2005: 24%)
- Thirty two percent had a salary between £20,000 and £30,000 (2005: 29%)
- Five percent had a salary of more than £30,000 (2005: 8%)
- Two percent reported higher salaries. Further investigation identified that managers who undertook the completion of the managers' survey (section 11) tended not to include themselves in their response to this part of the questionnaire

Additional survey

An additional survey was carried out to ascertain the salary levels across the sector including those senior roles that individuals could achieve.

- The break down covered a range of some 609 employees, representing 185 gardens and other associated appointments in senior management positions.
- The replies varied from trainees under £15,000 (minimum salary), to one at £73,000.

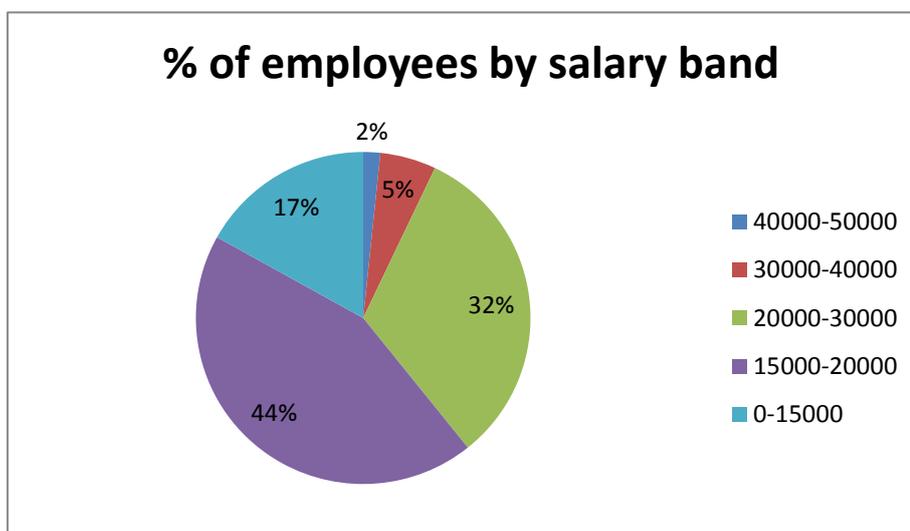


Figure 56

5.11 Horticultural qualifications

Q3. About your horticultural qualifications

- Among 100 respondents (Figure 57), City & Guilds qualifications in practical horticulture dominate (levels I, II and III; 28% of respondents), closely followed by NVQ/SVQ (levels I, II and III, 25%) and the RHS Level 2 qualification (formerly the RHS General Certificate; 22%)
- A lack of responses from senior garden managers may explain the absence of staff reporting that they hold the Mhort qualification
- The study did not discriminate between levels of formal qualification.

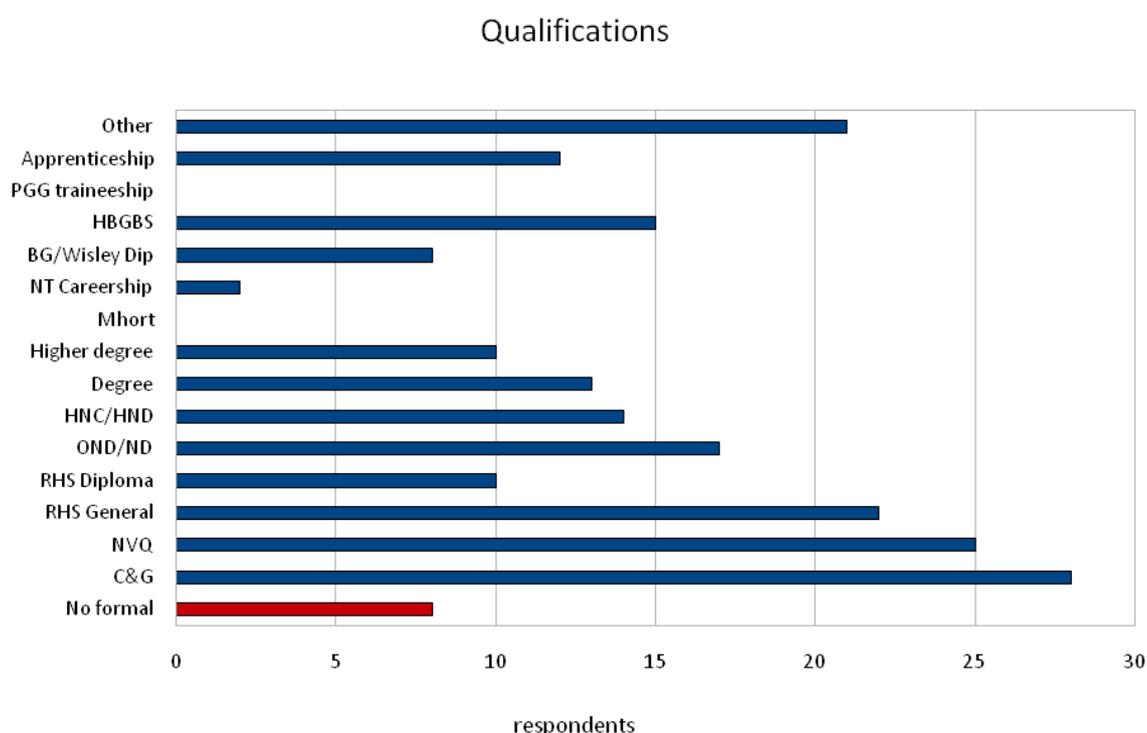


Figure 44

5.12 About your skills

Q4a. Which of the following tasks do you carry out on a regular basis?

- Only 25% of 92 respondents reported that less than a quarter of their workload depend on self-taught skills (Figure 59); 36% reported that more than half of their workload depend on self-taught skills
- The diversity of tasks undertaken by many employees is illustrated by evidence in the study. Seventeen per cent of respondents (Figure 60) reported they regularly undertook at least 14 of the 17 principle activities of the garden/park (listed below, Figure 58).

Tasks carried out regularly

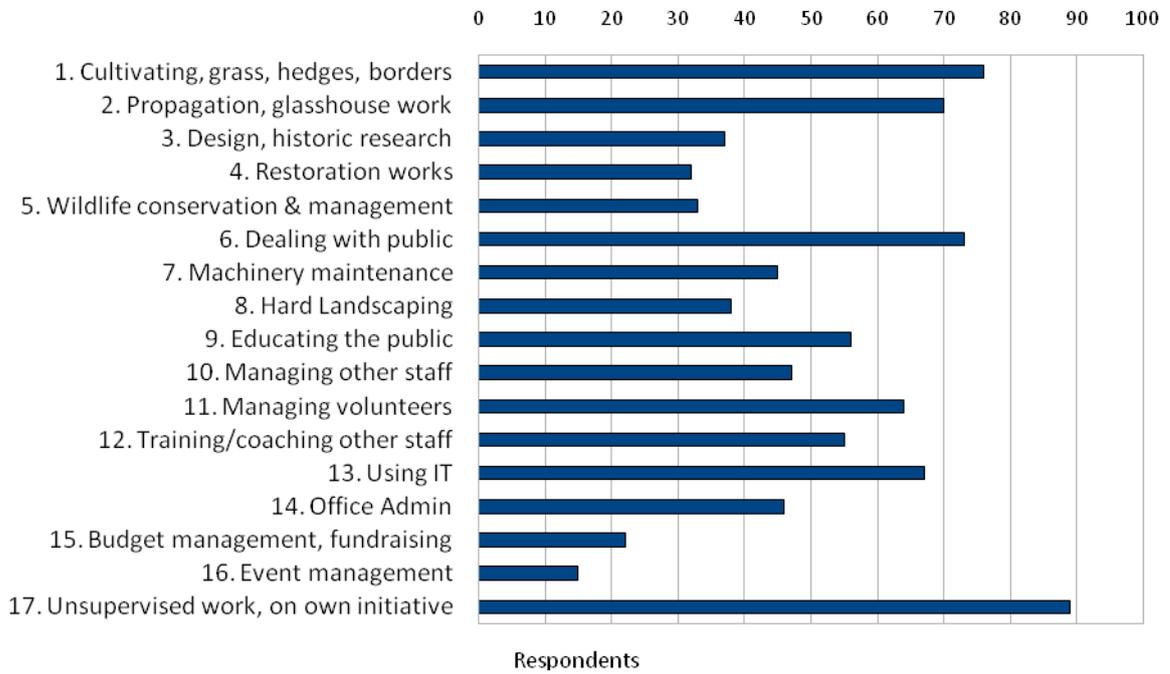


Figure 45

Work depending upon self-taught skills

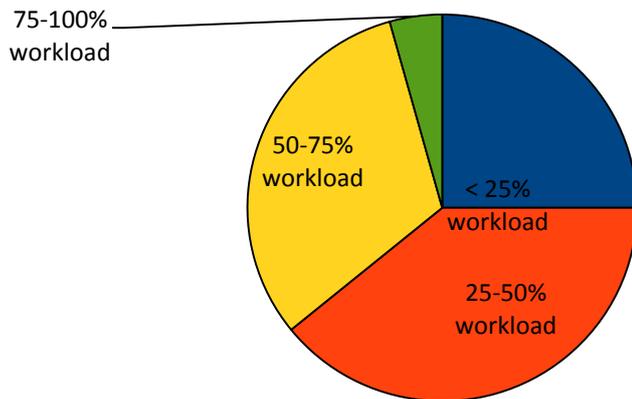


Figure 46

Diversity of tasks carried out

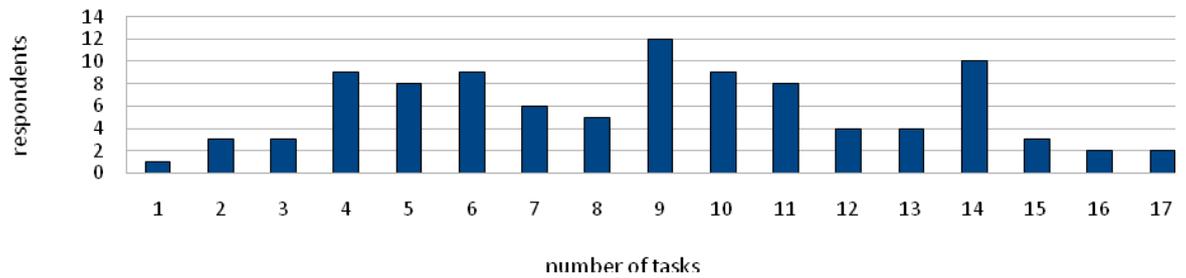


Figure 47

Q4b. Which of the skills do you see using more of in the future?

- Respondents provided clear evidence (Figure 61) of a need for greater emphasis on people-related skills (e.g. educating, managing staff and volunteers, dealing with visitors) to meet the challenges of their roles and careers in the future.

Skill expected to be used more in the future

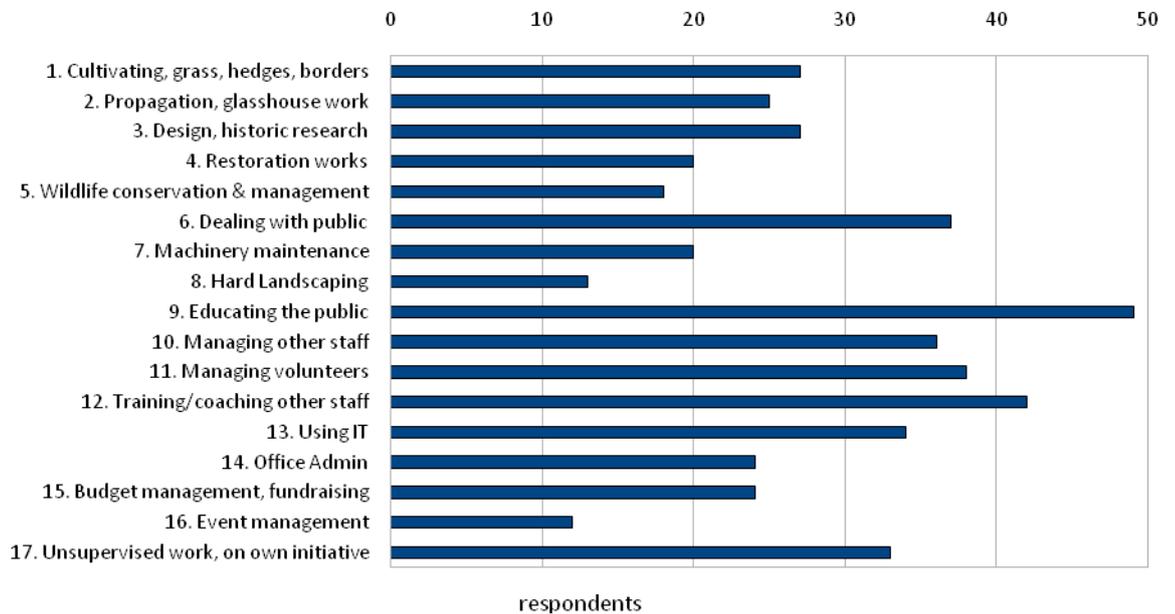


Figure 48

Q4c. Any other skills you feel will become an increasing part of your horticultural career?

The following skills were identified by respondents as important to their future:

- Arboriculture
- Buying and selling stock
- Climbing
- Communication of science
- Community work
- Consultancy; horticultural advice
- Control systems maintenance
- Floristry; cutting garden
- Formal taxonomy skills; plant knowledge
- GPS; GIS mapping
- Growing edible crops
- Irrigation conservation and management
- Managing health and safety
- Marketing
- National and international partnerships
- Organic and conservation skills
- Presentation skills; journalism; interview skills
- Project management
- Trade union work
- Writing articles for magazines, websites, information boards, brochures.

Q4d. Have you undertaken any formal training at your place of work in the last 12 months?

Q4e. Would you like to receive training?

- Seventy per cent of 99 respondents reported that they had received formal training within the past year.

Formal training within past 12 months

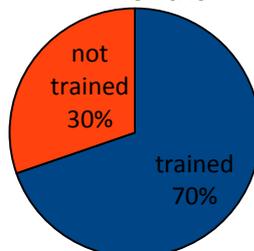


Figure 49



Figure 50

Other skills training requested by respondents included:

- Arboriculture; botanical illustration; chainsaw; conservation; habitat surveying; design; first aid; floristry; botanical illustration; sensory; top fruit; Demeter and other similar systems; garden design; health and safety; historic restoration; machinery use and maintenance; plant identification; propagation; restoration ecology; RHS Qualifications; revenue generation; science communication; soil analysis; technology within horticulture; tractor, loader, trailer entitlement; tree surveys; tropical plant identification; pests/disease/invasive weeds; turf care; viticulture.

Q4f. How many employers have you worked for in your horticultural career?

- Nine per cent of 96 respondents have worked for seven or more employers through their career; 58% have worked for three or fewer employers.

Length of service with an employer

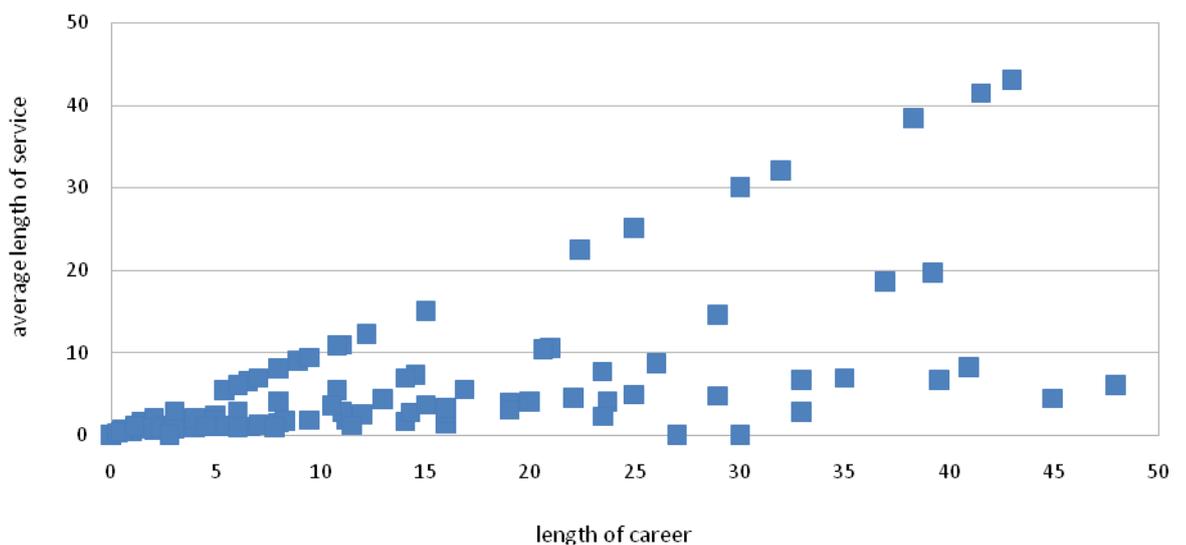


Figure 51

Q5. Would you recommend horticulture as a career?

- Eighty-nine per cent of 95 respondents reported that they would recommend horticulture as a career. Many were enthusiastic in their endorsement, though equally scathing about the question of pay.

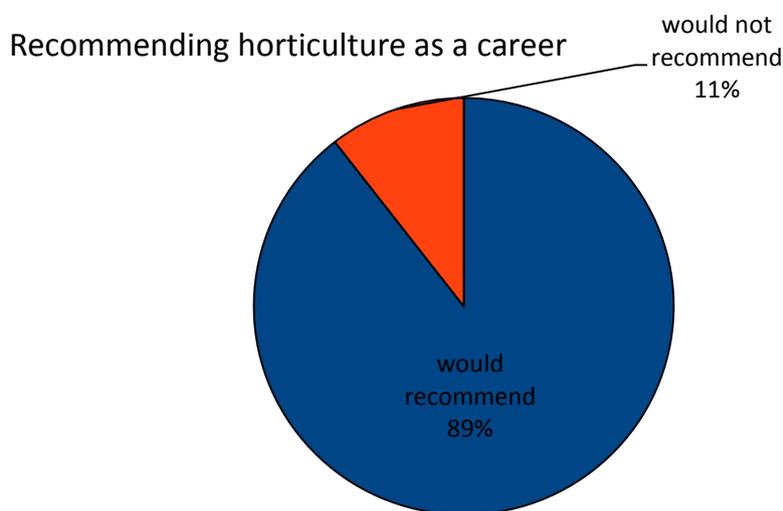


Figure 52

Reasons given for recommending horticulture as a career:

- "Rewarding and satisfying career
- It's a way of life
- The chances of getting a job are quite good...
- Fantastic career but unfortunately can be very low paid...
- Despite poor pay, it's a rewarding job, varied and I enjoy working in a team and meeting the public
- Rewarding but poorly paid
- A chance to make a difference to others and enjoy the magic of nature
- It's a very rewarding career. You take part in changing people's thinking including the green and alternatives for a healthier lifestyle and climate
- To benefit personal learning outdoors, always learning, good environment
- A rewarding career, but I would advise obtaining horticultural qualifications but you have to remember that the pay is going to be low compared to the high level of skill base because it is incredibly varied; great work outside; but pay is appalling
- Way of life; outdoor work
- Outdoor life; varied work
- Highly skilled; using initiative
- Interesting and varied work within the sector; outdoor lifestyle; meeting people
- Horticulture gives everyone a chance, you do not have to be extremely intelligent to get enjoyment and job satisfaction, all levels can achieve personal satisfaction in creating beautiful gardens

- Yes to young entrants if on a good traineeship; no to career changers – always seen as too old/too inexperienced
- Good job satisfaction; healthy lifestyle but only to those who already enjoy being outside in most weather. For me it is a deeply fulfilling career
- A rewarding career but with serious rider to warn of widespread low pay
- Healthy, happy, uses brain and body > diverse and challenging, close to nature
- Very enjoyable, satisfying and rewarding. Always interesting and learn something new every day
- Enjoy working outside in a physically active job. Seasonal work – notice the seasons. Varied work – always something to do. Enjoy working in a beautiful historic environment that visitors enjoy
- Just a fantastic industry to be involved with
- Lifestyle and type of satisfying work carried out
- It is really enjoyable to work with and in nature. It can be physical which helps to keep you fit. 'I love it'
- Outdoors, healthy, active, diverse subjects, the good life, make a difference, relevant subjects for living today, travel, beauty, great colleagues, creative living and working in the seasons and the satisfaction and joy of growing and creating landscapes with plants
- Yes, because it's a good career choice; no as it's poor pay
- Yes because it can be very enjoyable; no because of the pay
- Enjoyable – so many facets: science and art together. Working with beautiful things – plants/flowers. Generally working with nice people!
- With the skills you learn, you can survive off foraged plants, medicinal plants, create awe-inspiring designs and art, increase sensory stimulation for people with life problems/learning difficulties and could travel world
- Out of doors; physical; rewarding; relatively stress-free (not completely!); working with nature
- Job satisfaction
- It's a skilled job as an early career, but not to raise a family; when you get loads of training and skills you need to move as your wage isn't enough to keep the family if the money was good
- Good honest work; earn more respect for the planet; increasingly important sector of industry due to deforestation and climate change; able to learn so much
- It's very interesting; always learning; important to life, everything we need/use comes from plants
- The job satisfaction can be great but the pay is poor
- If it was paid better it would be the perfect job!
- Fulfilling job with much variation day-to-day; takes a lot of skill and you are constantly learning
- Healthy lifestyle; living closer to our ancestral beginnings; chance to travel, exchanges what else is there to do that's better?
- If you get the right employer it can be a highly rewarding and satisfying career
- Only if you love it and aren't focused on making money
- Very therapeutic; can see the end result
- Yes, but only for people who like working outside all weather and love plants

- Horticulture is best way to keep the planet green, educate others the need of the hour in conservation and forest restoration and research for better mankind!
- Dependent on individual making the recommendation to – job satisfaction
- It's enjoyable, enthusiasm a must; good job satisfaction, but low wages are a deterrent
- Very pleasurable, fulfilling and exciting
- Provided another skill also present
- It's brilliant, healthy, important, morally fine, interesting, international, useful
- Job satisfaction, creative
- Amazing job satisfaction; being outside in the elements; essential life skills and planet stewardship skills
- I feel that the more people that work in horticulture, the more people will understand the rudiments of sustainable living.”

Reasons for not recommending horticulture as a career:

- “Poor pay, limited prospects
- Poorly paid
- Inflexible working hours (mainly early starts)
- Head gardeners – difficult people to work with often
- I feel it is underrated by other careers and people so does not have respect, therefore we don't always have the career ladder to climb or the money that we as trained professionals deserve
- It depends what sector, overall I probably wouldn't recommend it as I think gardeners are undervalued in this industry and underpaid for what is a physically demanding job and is often seen as something 'anyone' can do without qualifications. But it can't be beaten through spring, summer...
- Awful pay; regarded as low status
- Occupation (by employers who should know better)
- Low wages and low profile
- Wages are too low
- Not until the pay is better
- Poor money; poor for your body; v hard work
- Pay/pain.”

Q5a. Were you encouraged or discouraged in considering the horticultural profession?

- Of 80 respondents, 63% reported that they were encouraged into horticulture (Figure 66); and 15% discouraged. Family, friends and school teachers were cited as influences on both sides, and pay often quoted as a reason to avoid the sector, even for those encouraged for other reasons.

Were you encouraged to choose horticulture?

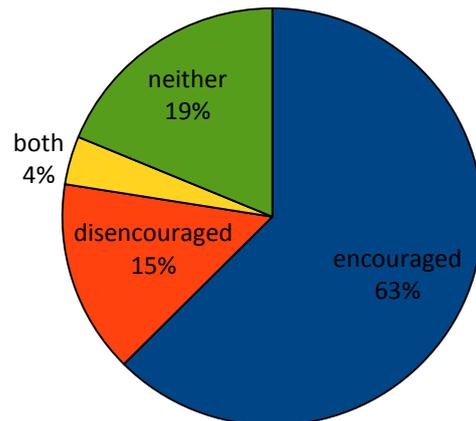


Figure 53

Q6. Do you see yourself staying in the horticultural sector in the next three years?

- Ninety-two per cent of respondents reported that they intended to stay within the profession.



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