



**TIGA<sup>TM</sup>**

**SKILLS, TRAINING  
AND EDUCATION  
IN THE GAMES  
INDUSTRY**

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**APRIL 2026**

**TIGA<sup>TM</sup>**

**TIGA.ORG**



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## 1. ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### **Dr Richard Wilson OBE is the CEO of TIGA, the trade association representing the video games industry in the UK.**

At TIGA, Richard has successfully [campaigned](#) for the introduction of Video Games Tax Relief and an effective Video Games Expenditure Credit, delivered 17 years of profitable growth, introduced an accreditation system for university and college games courses, launched the prestigious TIGA Games Industry Awards and TIGA Games Education Awards, delivered award winning [Games Education Conference](#), spearheaded the [Start-Up, Scale-Up and Grow Conference](#), dramatically raised the profile of the industry in media and political circles and won 32 business awards and commendations.

[www.tiga.org](http://www.tiga.org)



## 2. ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

**TIGA would like to thank the University of Portsmouth for kindly sponsoring this report.**



For 22 years the University of Portsmouth has provided award-winning undergraduate and postgraduate education in games programming, art, design and production. It has been accredited by TIGA since the inception of the accreditation scheme, with both its staff and students experiencing consistent success at the TIGA awards over the years. At the heart of [UoP games courses](#) is industry engagement, from curriculum co-design, to fortnightly visiting speakers, to large-scale live briefs with well-known studios and adjacent industries in the region and beyond. The popularity of these courses - enjoyed by upwards of 400 students per year - combined with the team's excellent track record for producing discipline-aware, industry-oriented graduates, is a great source of pride for the University and its community.

#### **Dr Neil Dansey**

Programme Lead (Games)  
School of Film, Media, and Creative Technologies  
University of Portsmouth

## 3. ABOUT TIGA

TIGA IS THE TRADE ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE UK VIDEO GAMES INDUSTRY

TIGA represents developers, digital publishers, service companies and education providers. TIGA's vision is to make the UK the best place in the world to develop video games.

**To this end, TIGA:**

- 1) •campaigns for our industry and advances [policies](#) and [improvements to VGTR](#) to grow our sector;**
- 2) •enhances education and skills through our [accreditation programme](#), the [TIGA Games Education Awards](#) and our [education conferences](#);**
- 3) •promotes best practice through the [TIGA Games Industry Awards](#);**
- 4) conducts primary research into the games sector, surveying hundreds of companies each year about the business environment and the [state of the sector](#).**





4. ABOUT THE  
UK VIDEO GAMES  
INDUSTRY

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2025, THE UK VIDEO GAMES INDUSTRY EMPLOYED ALMOST 27,350 FULL TIME EQUIVALENT DEVELOPMENT ROLES IN 2,110 GAMES COMPANIES (DOWN FROM APPROXIMATELY 28,500 EMPLOYED IN 2175 COMPANIES IN MAY 2024).<sup>1</sup>

Our industry provides high skilled employment: over 80 per cent of the development workforce in many studios are qualified to degree level or above.<sup>2</sup> The industry supports economic growth in clusters throughout the UK: approximately 78 per cent of the workforce is based outside of London. Games development is export-focused: 95 per cent of games development studios export at least some of their content.<sup>3</sup> In addition, our video games development sector is supported by 283 companies that provide it with key services, including QA, localisation, music, audio, script, art and animation. As of September 2025, these companies employed 3,136 highly skilled people<sup>4</sup> (down from 3,289 people employed in 278 companies as of May 2024).





## 5. SKILLS SURVEY 2025

**34 games companies employing 3,064 developers, or 11 per cent of the UK games development workforce, responded to a TIGA skills survey in Q4 2025. Small, medium and large studios developing games for console, mobile, PC and VR participated in the survey. Participants come from game clusters across the UK.**

TIGA's skills survey took place during an ongoing downturn in the video games industry. Globally, over 36,000 jobs were lost in the games workforce between January 2022 and September 2025.<sup>5</sup>

The UK games development sector is facing its most severe downturn on record, with employment falling at the fastest rate ever measured and start-up activity collapsing to a 15-year low. The findings from the recently published TIGA Making Games in the UK 2025 report show that the games development sector lost 1,537 development jobs in the year to September 2025 – a 4.5 per cent fall that abruptly ends 14 consecutive years of growth for the UK games sector. Including knock-on effects in the supply chain (2,810), an estimated 4,347 jobs have been lost overall.<sup>6</sup>

Between May 2024 and September 2025, 491 games companies cut 3,655 full-time development roles, while 513 growing companies added only 2,751 jobs.

A combination of structural pressures are driving the downturn, including sluggish global games sales,<sup>7</sup> poor access to finance<sup>8</sup> for early-stage studios, and pandemic-era over-investment followed by restructuring. The UK games industry also competes on an unlevel playing field, with jurisdictions including Australia, France and Quebec offering more [generous tax incentives](#) for games production than the UK.

Please note that percentages are rounded throughout this survey and so will not always add up to 100 per cent.

5. <https://publish.obsidian.md/vg-layoffs/Archive/2025>

6. Gibson, N., Gibson R., Wilson, R., *Making Games in the UK 2026* (TIGA, 2026).

7. After record games sales of \$197 billion in 2021 due to Covid-induced lockdowns, the consumer games market has now suffered three years of decline or slower growth, reaching \$188 billion in 2022, \$193 billion in 2023 and \$199 billion in 2024. See: <https://gamedevreports.substack.com/p/ampere-analysis-the-gaming-market-9c6>

8. Investment in start-ups and early stage games companies has declined in recent years. \$2.1bn was invested in privately held games companies globally in the twelve months to September 2025. This is less than half of the \$4.7bn in the twelve months to Sept 2024 and less than 1/6th of the \$13.1bn in the twelve months to Sept 2022. Source: Aream & InvestGame Video Game Market Update Q3 2025.



## 6. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Training

All games businesses in our survey provided training for their employees. 33 per cent provide on-the-job training not leading to qualifications and a further 25 per cent provide formal courses not culminating in qualifications. 16 per cent of companies facilitated training leading to the acquisition of professional qualifications.

### Training days

The average (mean) number of training days provided by games businesses in our survey was 13.5 days per employee. The mode number of training days was five and the median number of training days was eight.

### Extent of skill shortages

'Skill shortages' refers to a shortage of skills or experience an employer is looking for outside of a business. Over the past 12 months, 64 per cent of games businesses in our survey found it easy or very easy to fill vacancies (up from 43 per cent in 2024). Conversely, 29 per cent of games businesses in our survey found it difficult or very difficult to fill vacancies in their workforce (down from 50 per cent in 2024). This is significantly down on our survey in 2023, when 68 per cent of games businesses found it difficult or very difficult to fill vacancies.

### Forces driving skill shortages

79 per cent of respondents who had experienced skills shortages over the last 12 months suggested that this was due to a shortage of applicants with required skills, experience or qualifications.

### Type of skill shortages

Of those games businesses that experienced skill shortages over the last year, 57 per cent reported difficulties filling vacancies in Programming, 14 per cent Art and 14 per cent Design.

### Impact of skill shortages

The biggest impact of skill shortages is on existing staff, according to our survey. 62 per cent of respondents experiencing skill shortages said that it increased the workload for other staff. Additionally, 40 per cent said that hard-to-fill vacancies had driven a greater need to outsource work. Only 23 per cent of those organisations suffering from skill shortages said that this had hindered the growth of their business.

### Games businesses' response to skill shortages

Games businesses experiencing skill shortages over the last 12 months have taken a variety of measures to mitigate the challenge. 68 per cent have made internal promotions; 47 per cent have redefined existing jobs; 57 per cent have outsourced work; and 51 per cent have increased training for existing staff.

### Extent of skill gaps

Games businesses responding to our skills survey on average estimated that 89 per cent of their teams were fully proficient in their roles. The mode for the proportion of teams fully proficient in their roles was 100 per cent and the median was 95 per cent. The UK games development sector has a highly competent workforce.



### Impact of skill gaps

'Skill gaps' refers to employees who are not fully proficient at their jobs. 70 per cent of those games businesses reporting skill gaps amongst their existing teams over the last 12 months said that this had increased the workload for other staff. 43 per cent said that skill gaps had resulted in an increase in their company's operating costs.

### The nature of skill gaps

Of those respondents identifying skill gaps amongst employees, 31 per cent referred to deficiencies in leadership and management skills (e.g. delegating, giving feedback, etc).

### New recruits

In a typical year, games businesses on average recruit 82 per cent of new hires from existing industry practitioners, 17 per cent are recent graduates and only one per cent are apprentices.

### Skills crisis?

43 per cent of games businesses in our survey do not think that the industry faces a skills crisis, 49 per cent think that there is a skills crisis and 9 per cent do not know. Although a relatively high proportion of respondents suggest the existence of a skills crisis, only 23 per cent of those experiencing skill shortages state that this is hindering the growth of their business (see above).

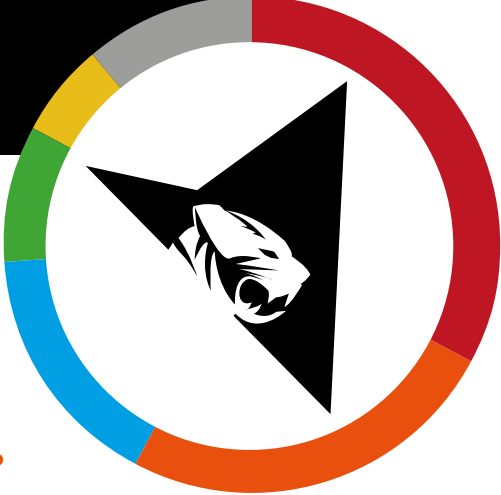
### Universities

Higher education provides a vital part of the talent pipeline for the games industry. Respondents to our survey were asked to identify the single most important action that they would like universities to take to enhance the quality of graduates. Common themes articulated by respondents included the need for universities to incorporate industry projects into courses, collaborate with studios, ensure students have experience of industry tools and workflows, promote teamwork, problem-solving and iterative design.

7. KEY SURVEY  
FINDINGS**7.1 Provision of training**

All companies that took part in our survey provide some form of training. 33 per cent of respondents provide on-the-job training not leading to qualifications and a further 25 per cent provide formal courses not culminating in qualifications. 16 per cent of companies facilitate training leading to the acquisition of professional qualifications. 9 per cent provide vocational training leading to apprenticeship qualifications. 6 per cent provide a time allowance toward completing a postgraduate course at university. 11 per cent provide other forms of training.

**WHAT PROVISION  
OF TRAINING DO  
YOU PROVIDE?:**

- 
- ▶ **On-the-job training not leading to qualifications: 33%**
  - ▶ **Formal courses, both in-house and external, not leading to qualifications: 25%**
  - ▶ **Professional qualifications (e.g. accountancy examinations, CIPD qualifications etc.) 16%**
  - ▶ **Vocational training leading to Apprenticeship qualifications: 9%**
  - ▶ **Time allowance toward completing a postgraduate course at university: 6%**
  - ▶ **Other training provision: 11%**

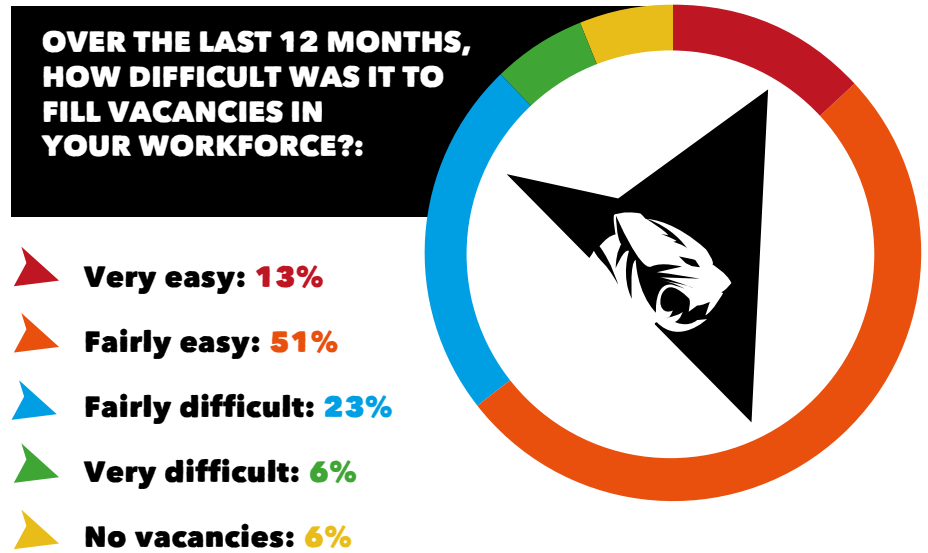
**7.2 Training days**

The average (mean) number of training days provided by games businesses in our survey was 13.5 days per employee. The mode number of training days was five and the median number of training days was eight.



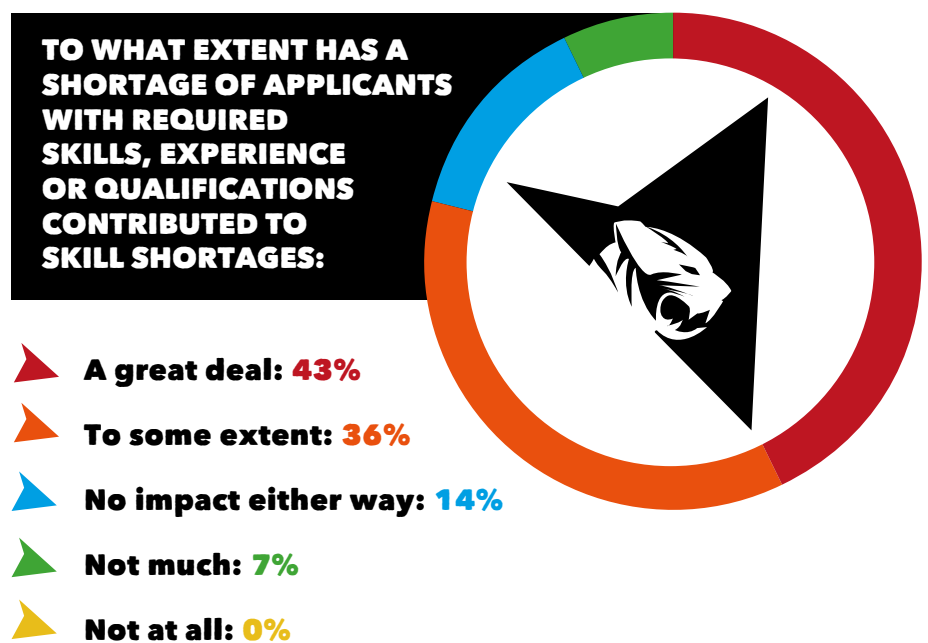
### 7.3 Extent of skill shortages

Over the past 12 months, 64 per cent of games businesses in our survey found it easy or very easy to fill vacancies (compared to 51 per cent in the previous survey in 2024). Conversely, 29 per cent of games businesses in our survey found it difficult or very difficult to fill vacancies in their workforce (compared to 50 per cent in the previous survey in 2024).



### 7.4 Factors contributing to skill shortages

79 per cent of respondents who had experienced skills shortages over the last 12 months suggested that this was due to a shortage of applicants with required skills, experience or qualifications. This is down from 93 per cent of respondents in 2023.





**TO WHAT EXTENT HAS  
A POOR IMAGE OF THE  
INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTED  
TO SKILL SHORTAGES:**

- ▶ **Not at all: 50%**
- ▶ **Not much: 21%**
- ▶ **No impact either way: 21%**
- ▶ **To some extent: 7%**
- ▶ **A great deal: 0%**



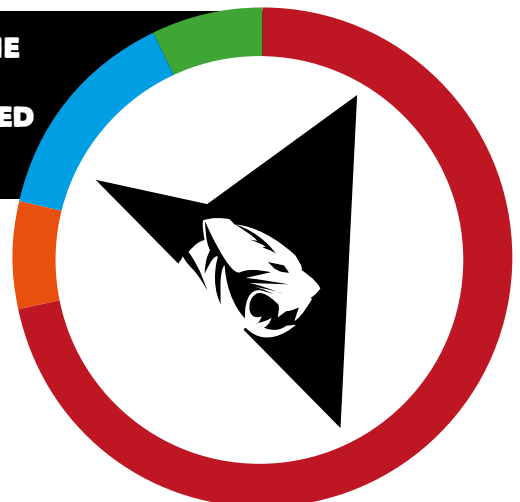
**TO WHAT EXTENT HAS  
THE LOCATION OF YOUR  
BUSINESS CONTRIBUTED  
TO SKILL SHORTAGES:**

- ▶ **Not at all: 29%**
- ▶ **Not much: 21%**
- ▶ **No impact either way: 43%**
- ▶ **To some extent: 0%**
- ▶ **A great deal: 7%**



**TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE  
COST OF RECRUITMENT  
ADVERTISING CONTRIBUTED  
TO SKILL SHORTAGES?:**

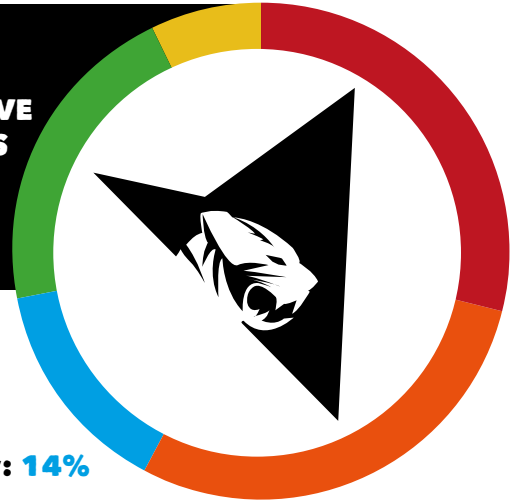
- ▶ **Not at all: 71%**
- ▶ **Not much: 7%**
- ▶ **No impact either way: 14%**
- ▶ **To some extent: 7%**
- ▶ **A great deal: 0%**





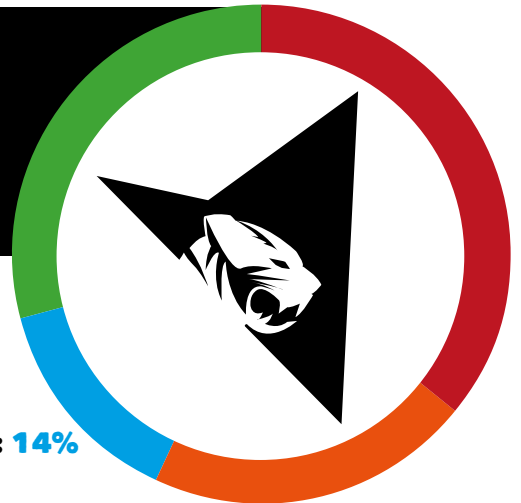
**TO WHAT EXTENT HAS AN INABILITY TO OFFER SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRIBUTED TO SKILL SHORTAGES?:**

- ▶ **Not at all: 29%**
- ▶ **Not much: 29%**
- ▶ **No impact either way: 14%**
- ▶ **To some extent: 21%**
- ▶ **A great deal: 7%**



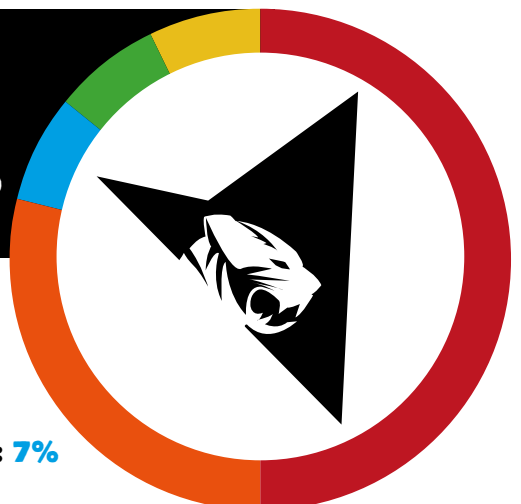
**TO WHAT EXTENT HAS POACHING OF SKILLED STAFF BY OTHER GAMES BUSINESSES IN THE UK CONTRIBUTED TO SKILL SHORTAGES?:**

- ▶ **Not at all: 36%**
- ▶ **Not much: 21%**
- ▶ **No impact either way: 14%**
- ▶ **To some extent: 29%**
- ▶ **A great deal: 0%**






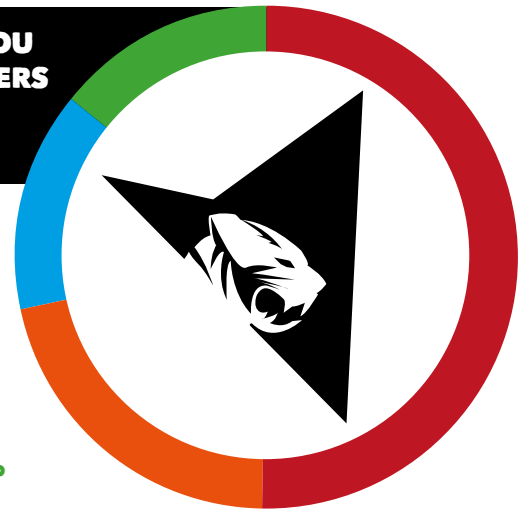
**TO WHAT EXTENT HAS POACHING OF SKILLED STAFF BY OTHER GAMES BUSINESSES OUTSIDE OF THE UK CONTRIBUTED TO SKILL SHORTAGES?:**

- ▶ **Not at all: 50%**
- ▶ **Not much: 29%**
- ▶ **No impact either way: 7%**
- ▶ **To some extent: 7%**
- ▶ **A great deal: 7%**



**TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU LOSING EXISTING WORKERS OUT OF FEARS AROUND JOB SECURITY?**






-  **Not at all: 50%**
-  **Not much: 21%**
-  **No impact either way: 14%**
-  **To some extent: 14%**
-  **A great deal: 0%**

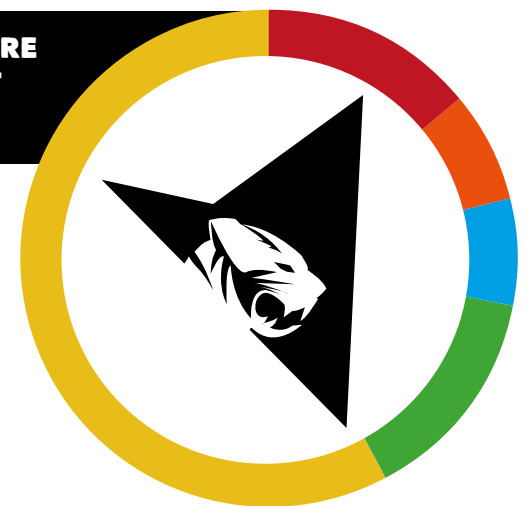


**7.5 Type of skill shortages**

Of those games businesses that experienced skill shortages over the last year, 57 per cent reported difficulties filling vacancies in Programming, 14 per cent Art and 14 per cent Design.

**WHAT TYPE OF SKILLS ARE YOU FINDING DIFFICULT TO FILL VACANCIES IN?:**

-  **Art: 14%**
-  **Community Management: 7%**
-  **Data Science: 7%**
-  **Design: 14%**
-  **Programming: 57%**





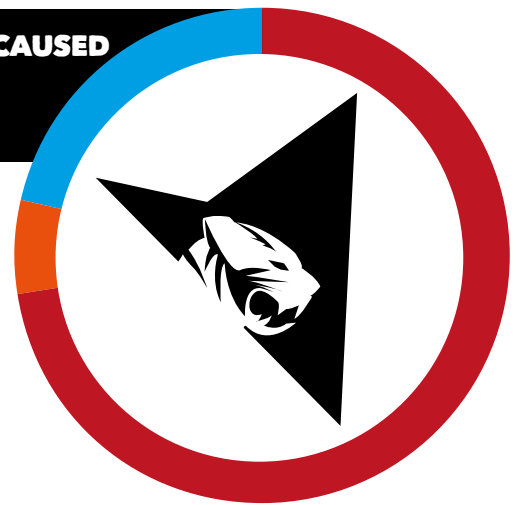
### 7.6 Impact of skill shortages

The biggest impact of skill shortages is on existing staff, according to our survey. 62 per cent of respondents experiencing skill shortages said that it increased the workload for other staff. Additionally, 40 per cent said that hard-to-fill vacancies had driven a greater need to outsource work.

However, only 32 per cent of games businesses that experienced skill shortages over the last 12 months said that this had delayed the development of new products and services (down from 54 per cent in the previous survey in 2024). 23 per cent said that skill shortages had hindered the growth of their organisation (compared to 46 per cent in the previous survey in 2024). Only 6 per cent of respondents suffering from skill shortages said that this caused business orders to be lost to competitors.

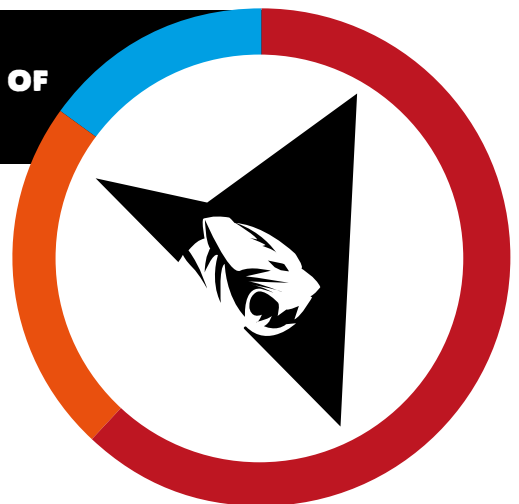
#### HAVE SKILL SHORTAGES CAUSED BUSINESS ORDERS TO BE LOST TO COMPETITORS?:

- ▶ **No: 72%**
- ▶ **Yes: 6%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 21%**



#### HAVE SKILL SHORTAGES HINDERED THE GROWTH OF YOUR ORGANISATION?:

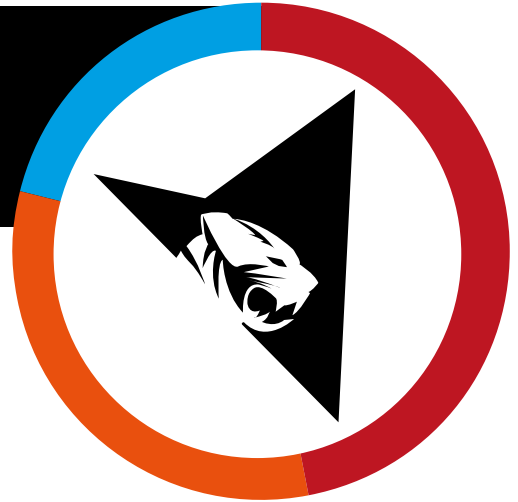
- ▶ **No: 62%**
- ▶ **Yes: 23%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 15%**





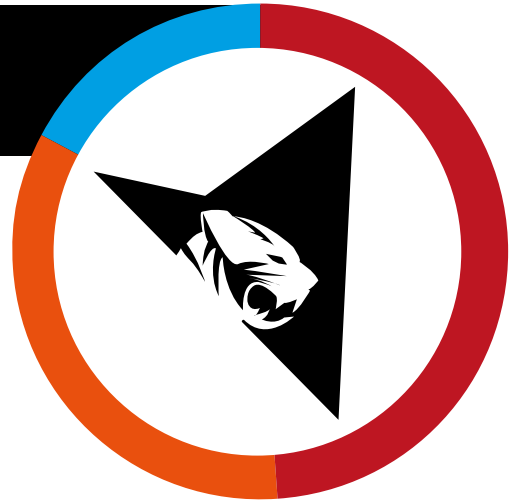
**HAVE SKILL SHORTAGES  
DELAYED THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF NEW  
PRODUCTS/SERVICES IN  
YOUR ORGANISATION?:**

- ▶ **No: 47%**
- ▶ **Yes: 32%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 21%**



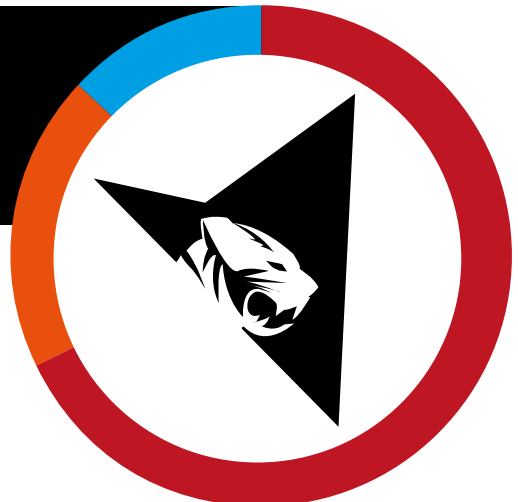
**HAVE SKILL SHORTAGES  
INCREASED YOUR  
OPERATING COSTS?:**

- ▶ **No: 49%**
- ▶ **Yes: 34%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 17%**



**HAVE SKILL SHORTAGES  
MADE IT HARDER  
TO INTRODUCE NEW  
WORKING PRACTICES  
IN YOUR BUSINESS?:**

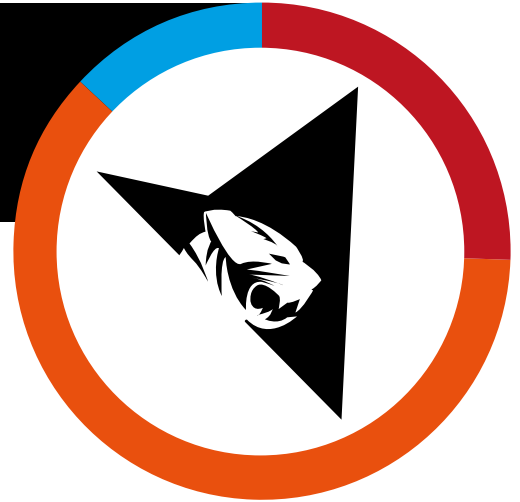
- ▶ **No: 68%**
- ▶ **Yes: 19%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 13%**





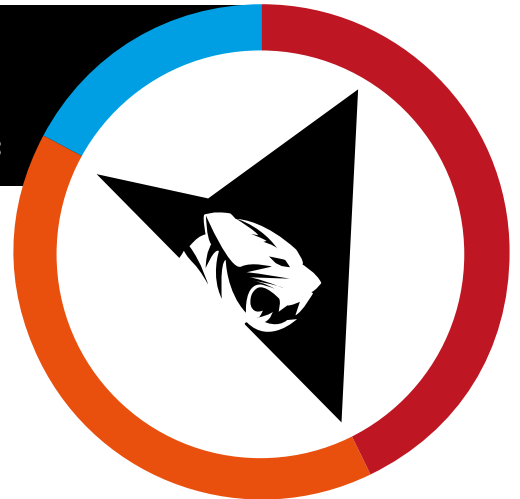
**HAVE SKILL SHORTAGES  
HAD THE EFFECT OF  
INCREASING THE  
WORKLOAD OF YOUR  
EXISTING STAFF?:**

- ▶ **No: 26%**
- ▶ **Yes: 62%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 13%**



**HAVE SKILL SHORTAGES  
HAD THE EFFECT OF  
INCREASING THE NEED  
TO OUTSOURCE WORK?:**

- ▶ **No: 43%**
- ▶ **Yes: 40%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 17%**



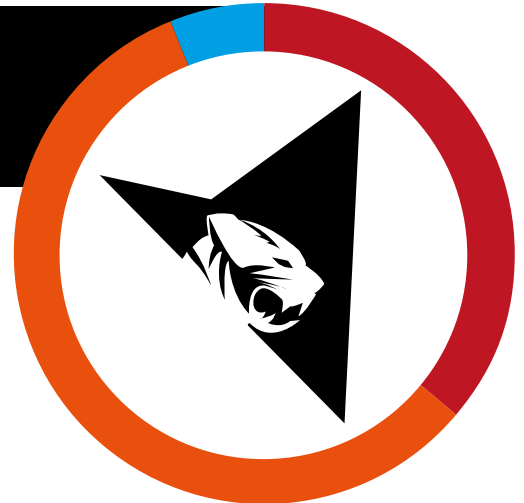


### 7.7 Games businesses' response to skill shortages

Games businesses experiencing skill shortages over the last 12 months have taken a variety of measures to mitigate the challenge. 68 per cent have made internal promotions; 47 per cent have redefined existing jobs; 57 per cent have outsourced work; and 51 per cent have increased training for existing staff.

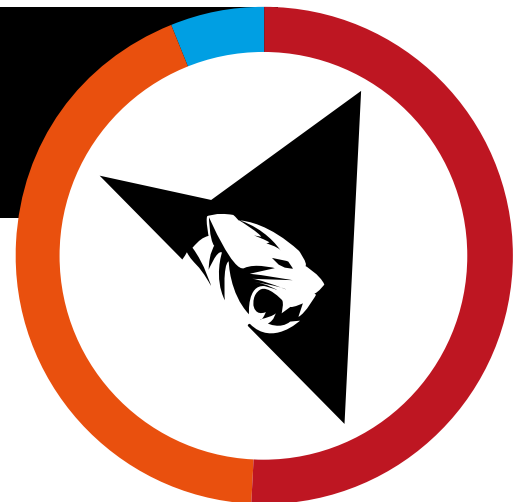
#### HAS YOUR BUSINESS INCREASED SALARIES TO ADDRESS SKILL SHORTAGES?:

- ▶ **Yes: 36%**
- ▶ **No: 57%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 6%**



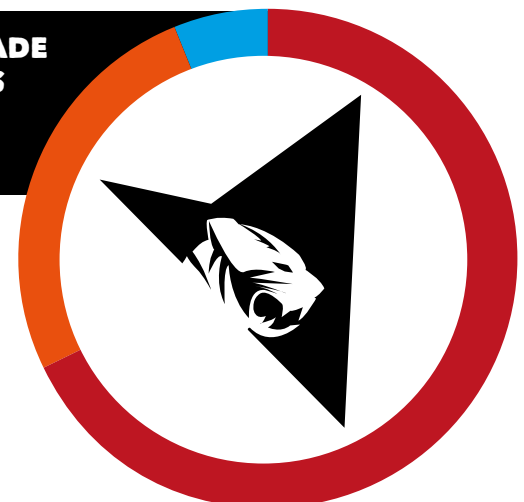
#### HAS YOUR BUSINESS INCREASED TRAINING FOR EXISTING STAFF TO AMELIORATE SKILL SHORTAGES?:

- ▶ **Yes: 51%**
- ▶ **No: 43%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 6%**



#### HAS YOUR BUSINESS MADE INTERNAL PROMOTIONS TO TACKLE SKILL SHORTAGES?:

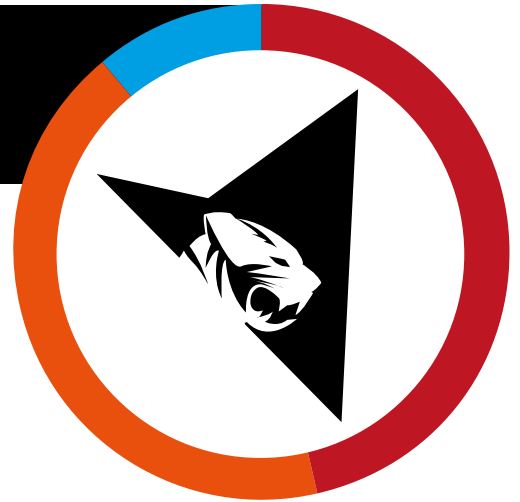
- ▶ **Yes: 68%**
- ▶ **No: 26%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 6%**





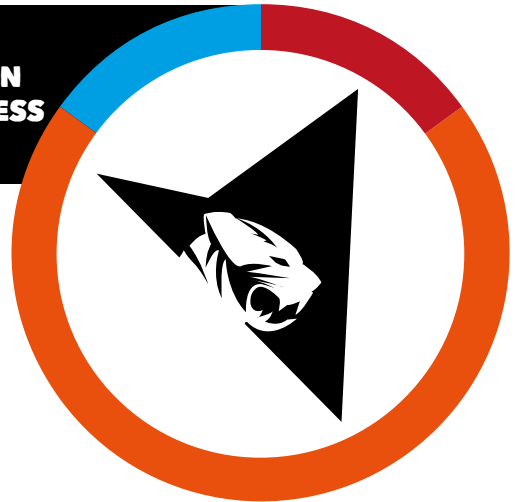
**HAS YOUR BUSINESS  
REDEFINED EXISTING  
JOBS TO ADDRESS SKILL  
SHORTAGES?:**

- ▶ **Yes: 47%**
- ▶ **No: 43%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 11%**



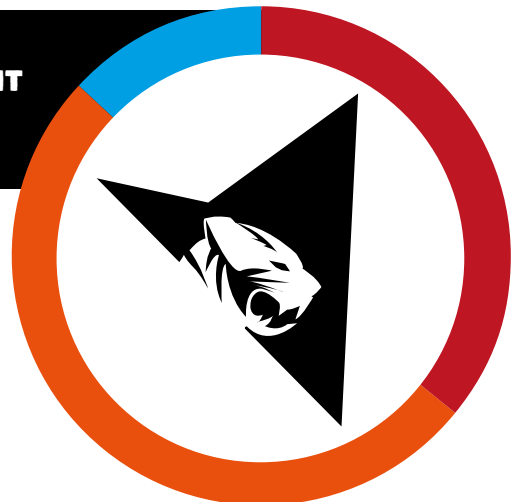
**HAS YOUR BUSINESS  
INCREASED SPENDING ON  
RECRUITMENT TO ADDRESS  
SKILL SHORTAGES?:**

- ▶ **Yes: 15%**
- ▶ **No: 70%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 15%**



**HAS YOUR BUSINESS  
TRIED NEW RECRUITMENT  
METHODS TO ADDRESS  
SKILL SHORTAGES?:**

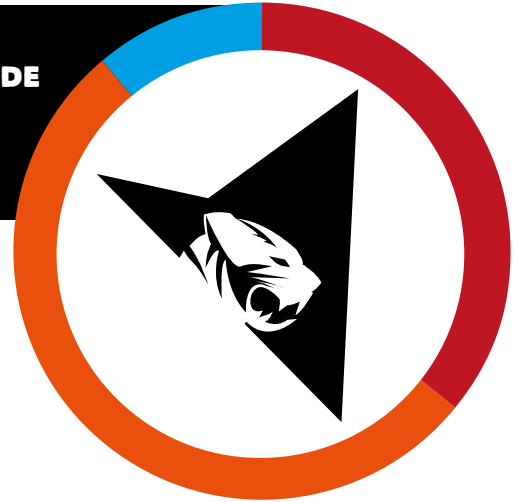
- ▶ **Yes: 36%**
- ▶ **No: 51%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 13%**





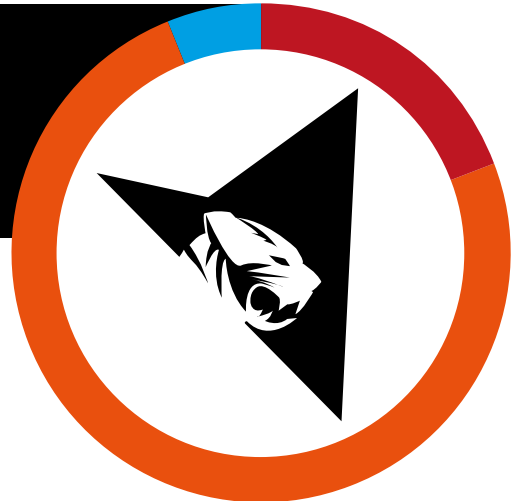
**HAS YOUR BUSINESS  
RECRUITED FROM OUTSIDE  
OF THE INDUSTRY  
TO ADDRESS SKILL  
SHORTAGES?**

- ▶ **Yes: 36%**
- ▶ **No: 53%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 11%**



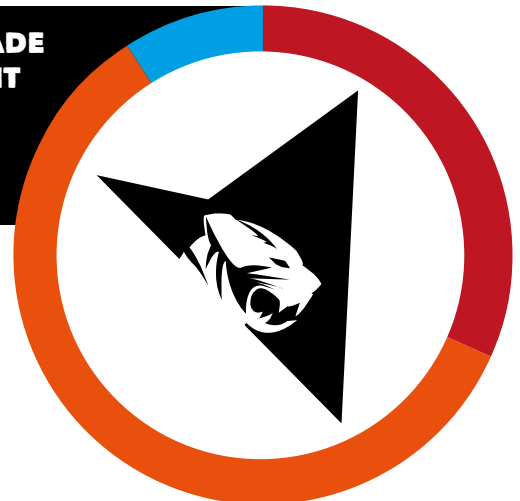
**HAS YOUR BUSINESS  
OFFERED INTERNSHIPS  
OR APPRENTICESHIPS  
TO ADDRESS SKILL  
SHORTAGES?**

- ▶ **Yes: 19%**
- ▶ **No: 74%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 6%**



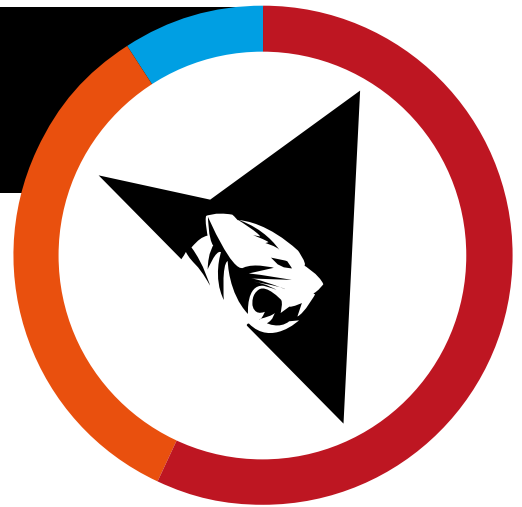
**HAS YOUR BUSINESS MADE  
USE OF VISAS TO RECRUIT  
FROM OUTSIDE OF THE  
UK TO ADDRESS SKILL  
SHORTAGES?**

- ▶ **Yes: 32%**
- ▶ **No: 60%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 9%**



### HAS YOUR BUSINESS OUTSOURCED WORK IN RESPONSE TO SKILL SHORTAGES?

- ▶ **Yes: 57%**
- ▶ **No: 34%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 9%**



### 7.8 Skill gaps

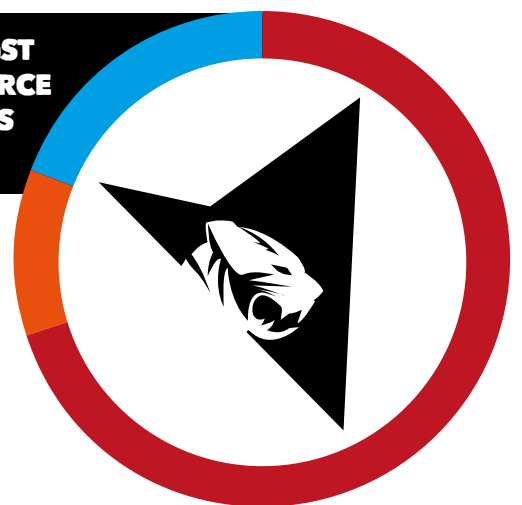
Games businesses responding to our skills survey on average (mean) estimated that 89 per cent of their teams were fully proficient in their roles. The mode for the proportion of teams fully proficient in their roles was 100 per cent and the median was 95 per cent. The UK games development sector has a highly competent workforce. Skill gaps in the video games industry are less acute than skills shortages.

### 7.9 Impact of skill gaps

70 per cent of games businesses reporting skill gaps amongst their existing teams over the last 12 months said that this had increased the workload for other staff. 43 per cent said that skill gaps had resulted in an increase in their company's operating costs. 38 per cent noted that skill gaps had caused delays in developing new products and services.

### HAVE SKILL GAPS AMONGST YOUR EXISTING WORKFORCE RESULTED IN LOST ORDERS TO COMPETITORS?

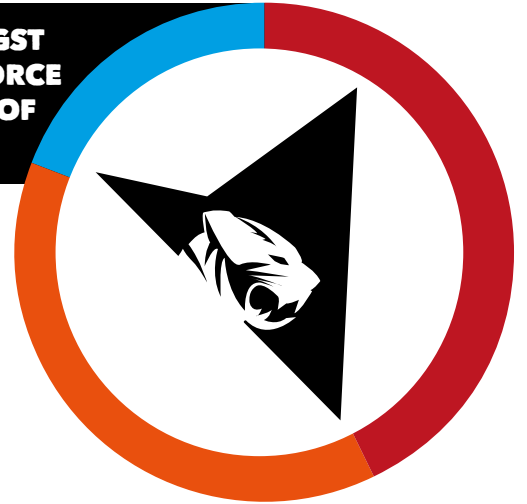
- ▶ **No: 70%**
- ▶ **Yes: 11%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 19%**





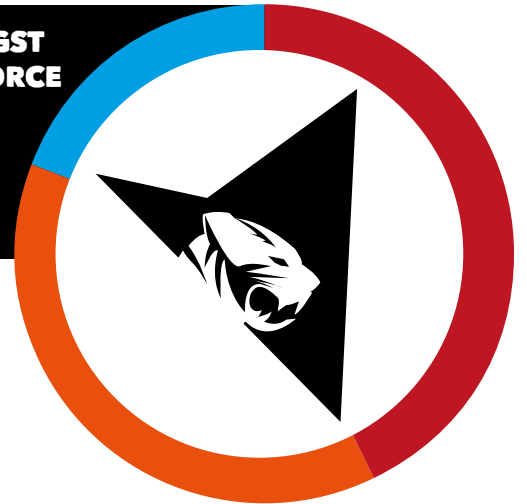
**HAVE SKILL GAPS AMONGST  
YOUR EXISTING WORKFORCE  
HINDERED THE GROWTH OF  
YOUR ORGANISATION?**

- ▶ **No: 43%**
- ▶ **Yes: 38%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 19%**



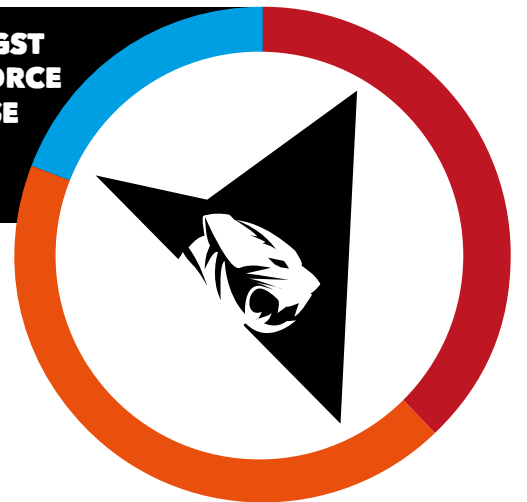
**HAVE SKILL GAPS AMONGST  
YOUR EXISTING WORKFORCE  
CAUSED DELAYS IN  
DEVELOPING NEW  
PRODUCTS AND  
SERVICES?**

- ▶ **No: 43%**
- ▶ **Yes: 38%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 19%**



**HAVE SKILL GAPS AMONGST  
YOUR EXISTING WORKFORCE  
RESULTED IN AN INCREASE  
IN YOUR COMPANY'S  
OPERATING COSTS?**

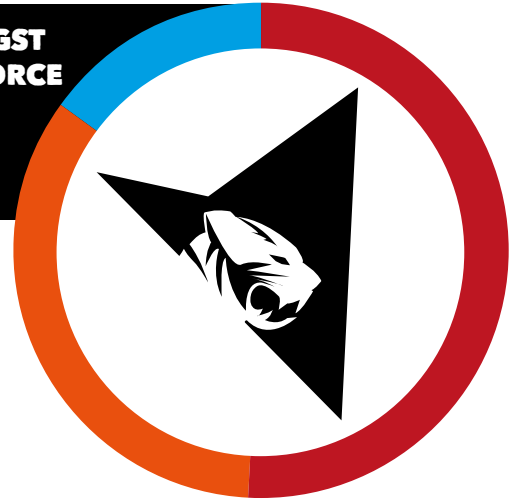
- ▶ **No: 38%**
- ▶ **Yes: 43%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 19%**





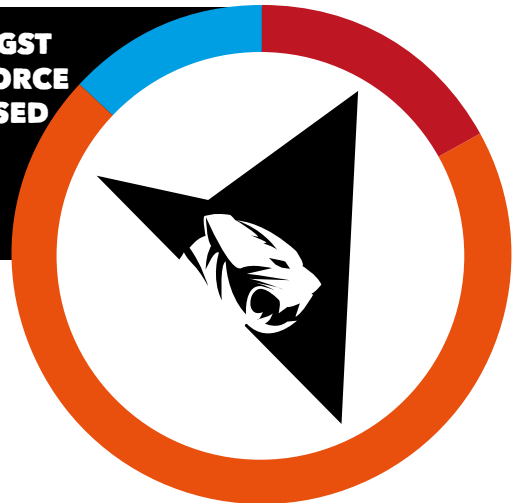
**HAVE SKILL GAPS AMONGST  
YOUR EXISTING WORKFORCE  
LEAD TO DIFFICULTIES  
IN INTRODUCING NEW  
WORKING PRACTICES?**

- ▶ **No: 51%**
- ▶ **Yes: 34%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 15%**



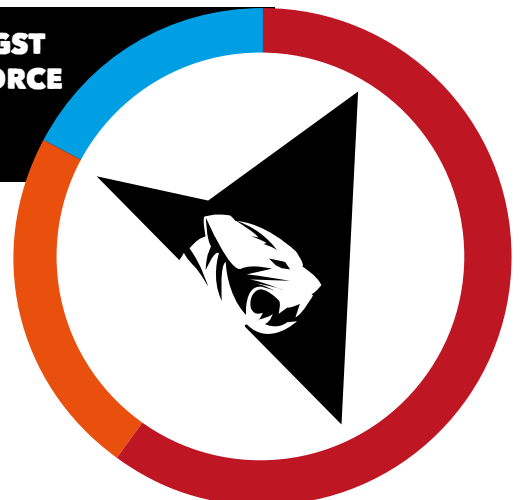
**HAVE SKILL GAPS AMONGST  
YOUR EXISTING WORKFORCE  
RESULTED IN AN INCREASED  
WORKLOAD FOR OTHER  
STAFF IN YOUR  
BUSINESS?:**

- ▶ **No: 17%**
- ▶ **Yes: 70%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 13%**



**HAVE SKILL GAPS AMONGST  
YOUR EXISTING WORKFORCE  
INCREASED THE NEED TO  
OUTSOURCE WORK?**

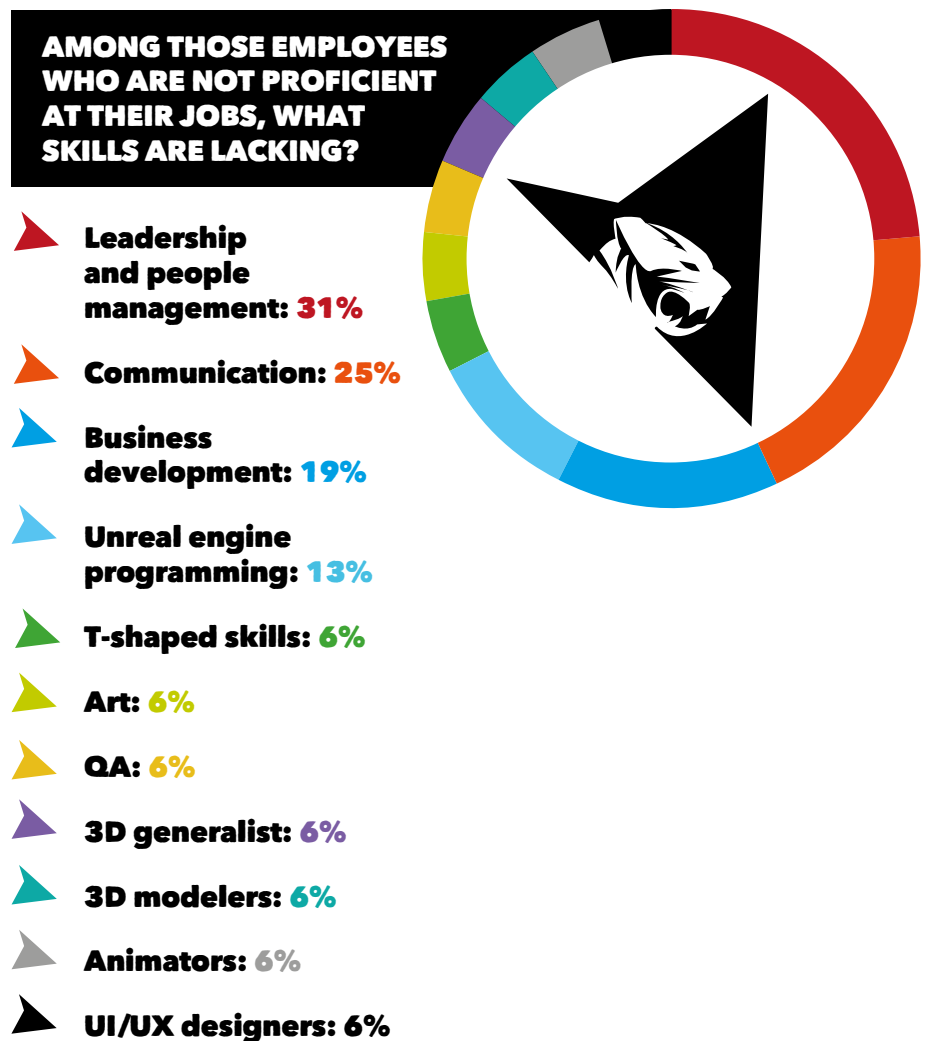
- ▶ **No: 60%**
- ▶ **Yes: 23%**
- ▶ **Don't know: 17%**





### 7.10 The nature of skill gaps

Of those respondents identifying skill gaps amongst employees, 31 per cent referred to deficiencies in leadership and management skills (e.g. delegating, giving feedback, etc). Other respondents suggested gaps in communication skills (25 per cent) and business development skills. Some respondents cited technical gaps including in relation to Unreal Engine programming skills, Art, QA, 3D generalists, 3D modellers, animators, UI/UX designers and a lack of people with T-shaped skills. Overall, though, respondents reporting skill gaps had little in common, with the exception of reporting gaps in relation to leadership and management skills.



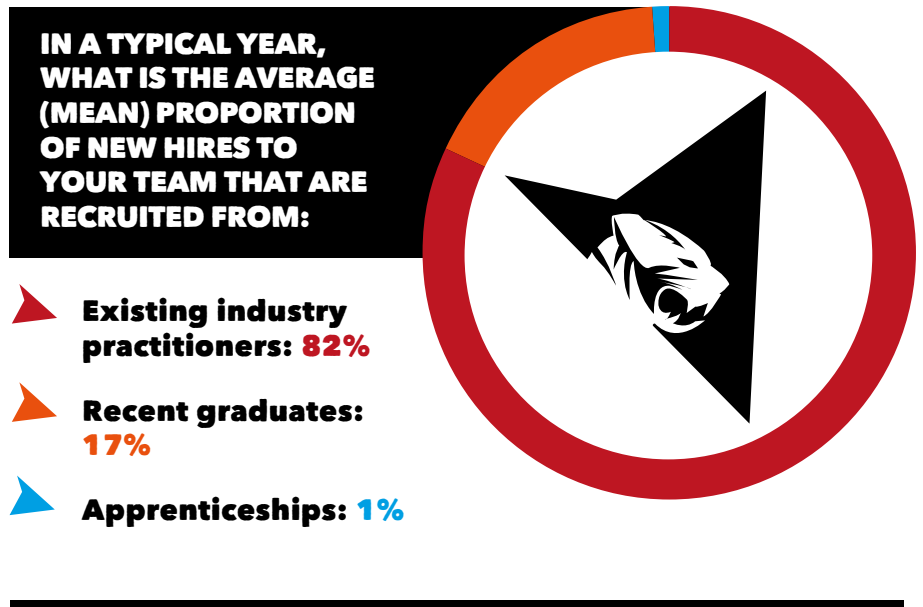


### 7.11 New recruits

Games businesses in our survey recruit most of their new hires in a typical year from existing industry practitioners. In a typical year, games businesses on average recruit 82 per cent of new hires from existing industry practitioners (this is the mean score). The mode for the proportion of new hires in a typical year recruited from industry practitioners was 100 per cent and the median was 85 per cent.

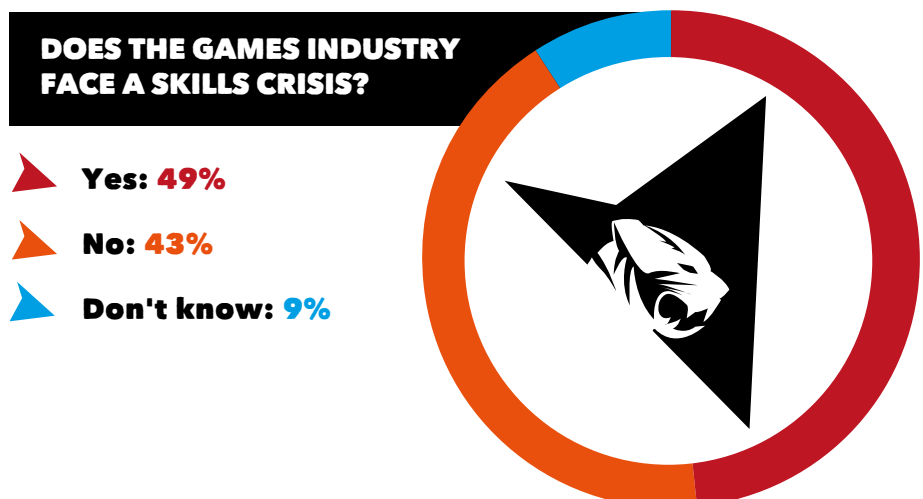
Conversely, games businesses in a usual year recruit 17 per cent of their new hires from recent graduates on average (mean). The mode for the proportion of new hires in a standard year recruited from new graduates was 0 per cent and 10 per cent and the median was 10 per cent.

Finally, games businesses in a typical year recruit one per cent of their new hires from apprentices on average (mean). The mode for the proportion of new hires in a standard year recruited from apprentices was 0 per cent and the median was 0 per cent.



### 7.12 A Skills Crisis?

49 per cent of games businesses in our survey think that the industry faces a skills crisis, 43 per cent do not think that there is a skills crisis and 9 per cent do not know.





### 7.13 Universities

Higher education provides a critically important part of the talent pipeline for the games industry. Respondents to our survey were asked to identify the single most important action that they would like universities to take to enhance the quality of graduates. The following actions were identified:

- Teach graduates skills that studios need.
- Teach C++ and do not leave this teaching to the final year of studies.
- Integrate practical, industry-driven experience into the curriculum. Embed real-world projects into courses, pursue collaboration with game studios, and ensure students have exposure to current tools and workflows (e.g., game engines, version control, agile development). By simulating professional environments and emphasising teamwork, problem-solving, and iterative design, graduates will leave with both technical proficiency and the soft skills needed to thrive in the industry.
- Attitude and behaviours are critical. Graduates need to be able to work in a team, think critically, manage priorities, communicate, stay curious and have a growth mindset.
- Go beyond technical skills and develop interpersonal, communicational, organisational, planning skills and knowledge.
- Liaise with games industry companies to help steer the content of courses to ensure industry relevance and understanding of evolving industry practices.
- Encourage good quality portfolio development.
- Ensure students' familiarity with industry production systems, pipelines and workflows.



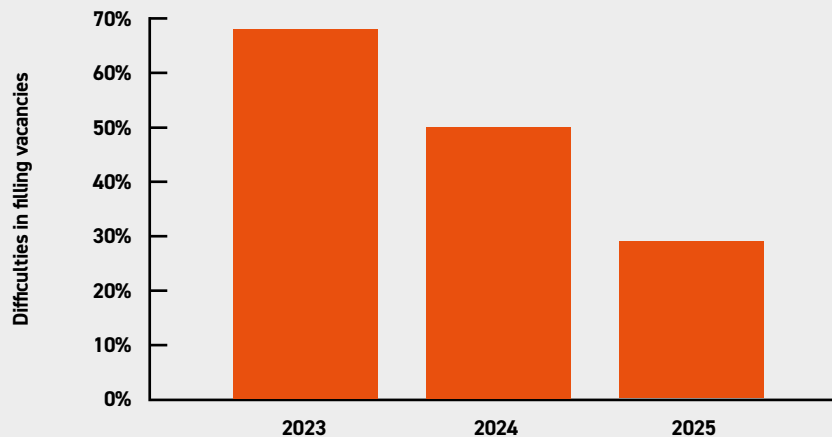
## 8. CONCLUSION

Games development requires a mix of high technology skills in programming, artificial intelligence, mathematics, internet, physics, graphics processing, user interface, audio, production and digital marketing skills, which are underpinned by STEM training; and animation, artistic, design and narrative skills, which are underpinned by arts training.

The UK education system produces a strong supply of highly skilled people available to work in video games. [75 UK universities](#) provide undergraduate degrees in Games and Animation.

In the 2023/24 academic year, there were 15,450 undergraduate enrolments across all UK higher education (HE) providers in the subject area 'Computer games and animation' (common aggregation hierarchy (CAH) subject code 11-01-06).<sup>9</sup> This strong supply of high skilled graduates underpins growth in our sector.

The global downturn in the video games industry has suppressed headcount growth, including in the UK. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the proportion of games businesses in our surveys reporting difficulties in filling vacancies in their workforce have declined from 68 per cent in 2023 to 50 per cent in 2024 and to just 29 per cent in our 2025 survey.



Skill shortages have declined but not disappeared. An undersupply of experienced specialists and the creation of new roles driven by technological and commercial developments for which relatively few people can fill, combine to generate skills shortages in the UK games industry. For certain roles there is a shortage of applicants with the required skills, experience or qualifications.

UK games businesses have taken steps to address this challenge. Studios have invested in training. TIGA enhances education and skills through our [accreditation programme](#), the [TIGA Games Education Awards](#) and our [education conferences](#), which bring industry and academia together to share best practice. Other steps taken by games businesses in response to skills shortages include: new recruitment methods; outsourcing of work; internal promotions; redefining existing job roles; increased expenditure on recruitment; higher salaries; increased training; and use of work permits.

These activities have minimised skills gaps (i.e. existing employees inside a business lacking the right skills). Games businesses responding to our skills survey on average (mean) estimated that 89 per cent of their teams were fully proficient in their roles. Yet some skill shortages (i.e. a shortage of skills or experience the employer is looking for outside of a business) persist. 29 per cent of games businesses in our survey found it difficult or very difficult to fill vacancies in their workforce (down from 50 per cent in 2024).

9. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-09-11/76672>



**The Government should consider the following areas and issues as part of a campaign to enhance education, skills and training.**

### **1. Schools**

The English education system has a variety of strengths. 67 per cent of outcomes at GCSE were at grade 4 or above in 2025. Almost 78 per cent of [outcomes](#) in A levels were grade C or above in England (2025). The [National Curriculum](#) for primary and secondary schools in England ensures a broad range of study. STEM subjects were amongst the most [popular](#) A level subjects in 2024. Moreover, the English education system enables a high proportion of students to progress to tertiary education and attain a tertiary qualification. The [share of 25–34-year-olds with a tertiary qualification in the UK](#) increased from 52 per cent to 60 per cent between 2019 and 2024, which exceeds the OECD average by 12 per cent.

However, the Government needs to do more to raise student attainment in key subjects such as Maths and English in primary and secondary schools. Only 62 per cent of pupils reached the standard expected of them in reading, writing and maths at [Key Stage 2](#) in 2024-5 (up from 61 per cent on the previous year). Additionally, [45.4 per cent of pupils achieved a grade 5 or higher](#) in both English and Maths. This is a decrease of 0.5 percentage points from 45.9 per cent compared to 2023/24, and an increase of 2.2 percentage points from 43.2 per cent compared to 2018/19.

There has been a decline in the total number of entries in [Art and Design](#) at GCSE and A level. Many schools no longer offer Arts subjects at [GCSE level at all](#). Games development requires a mix of high technology skills in programming, artificial intelligence, mathematics, internet, physics, graphics processing, user interface, audio, production and digital marketing skills, which are underpinned by STEM training; and animation, artistic, design and narrative skills, which are underpinned by arts training. The decline in entries for Art subjects at GCSE and A level is disappointing and means that many students are missing out on creative and enriching subjects.

[Creative thinking](#) has been highlighted as one of the key skills for the future workplace. Creative thinking should be further encouraged in our education system. The Government should explore how more students can be given opportunities to learn and study artistic subjects, which support creativity. At the same time, the Government should avoid overloading the content of the National Curriculum and increasing burdens on schools, especially without any commensurate increase in resources.

### **2. Further Education Colleges**

[Further Education Colleges](#) perform a vital role in the English education system. Many provide BTEC courses relevant to the video games industry (see point 4 below). Unfortunately, between 2010 and 2019-20, real terms per student funding fell 14 per cent in English colleges.<sup>10</sup> FE colleges need to be adequately funded. The Government [plans](#) to invest an additional £1.2 billion per year in skills by 2028 to 2029 to support 1.3 million learners a year, including an additional 65,000 learners per year by the end of the current Parliament. Technical Excellence Colleges will also be introduced, acting as hubs of excellence in specific sectors.<sup>11</sup>

### **3. Higher Education**

UK higher education is a success story. [The sector](#) delivers £71 billion in Gross Value Added and supports 750,000 jobs. For every £1 of public money invested in the higher education sector across the UK, £14 is put back into the economy. The UK is an [attractive location](#) for international students. In 2023, 23 per cent of all tertiary students were international. The UK hosted 749,000 international students in 2023, second only to the USA. The Government can help to ensure that the UK remains

10. *Financial Times*, 25th November 2022.

11. Average funding per student in general FE colleges for 2024/25 was £6,753, rising to £7,419 for 2025/26. See: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2026-03-05/118148>



world leading in video games development by ensuring that higher education is adequately funded. The UK video games industry depends upon higher education for skilled graduates. Although the UK investment in tertiary education is comparatively high,<sup>12</sup> challenges exist. Domestic per student funding has fallen in real terms by about [25 per cent](#) since 2015-2016. 44 per cent of higher education providers forecasted a deficit for 2024-25. Domestic teaching is undertaken at [£1.7 billion loss](#) in England and is cross-subsidised by tuition fees paid by international students. The Government plans to automatically increase tuition fees for higher education providers in line with inflation. However, the Government also intends to impose a new [International Student Levy](#), which could have a negative impact on university finances.

The Government wants universities to offer more flexible, modular provision and improve progression routes from further into higher education, supported by transferable credits.

The Government could explore the case for establishing an [Industrial Secondments Programme \(ISP\)](#) to enhance skills development by enabling games lecturers to spend up to 12 months in a games development business.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4. Training

While training by employers across all sectors of the UK economy may be disappointing,<sup>14</sup> this is not the case with UK game developers. All games businesses participating in our last three skill surveys provided training for their employees, including on the job training and formal courses not leading to qualifications. However, micro and small businesses may underinvest in skills training in comparison to larger businesses because they have fewer resources.<sup>15</sup> The Government could consider the case for fiscal incentives for smaller studios to invest in training, including for formal courses and qualifications.<sup>16</sup>

#### 5. Video game qualifications

BTECs currently provide an important route for many learners who wish to study video games at university. BTECs are 'large' qualifications, similar in size to two or three A Levels. This enables breadth of learning. Students can try out various aspects of game development, including computer programming, game engines, concept art, 2D graphics, modelling, game narratives, game audio and gameplay theory.

Under the Government's plans, students will in future choose either a T Level (a 'large' qualification equivalent to 3 A Levels) or new V Levels ('small' qualifications equivalent to one A Level).

However, existing T Levels do not comprehensively meet the needs for games education. The Media, Broadcast and Production T Level has no pathway for games development. The Digital Software Development T Level includes programming, testing and development, but this is not specific to games. Neither T Level offers opportunities for learning for games artists or animators. T Levels also require

12. Total expenditure per student at tertiary level (including research and development) in the UK is 35,350 US dollars. This is among the highest in OECD countries and 65 per cent above the OECD average. See [Education at a glance 2025: United Kingdom](#) (OECD, 2025).

13. The Government's position is that it is for individual universities to work with businesses to develop initiatives such as industrial secondments. See <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2026-03-05/118147>

14. British firms spend only half as much on training per employee as European. See: Data from Eurostat, cited in 'Why don't British companies train their staff?' The Economist, February 21st 2023. Additionally, employer investment in training in the UK fell [by 18.5 per cent](#) in real terms between 2011 and 2024, along with a reduction in the average number of training days per trainee. See *Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper*.

15. The Government does not provide centrally administered grant funding specifically for development of commercial and business skills for SMEs. However, the development of such skills could be very beneficial for SME studios and indeed SMEs generally. The Help to Grow: Management is a UK wide leadership programme for SME leaders, which is 90% government subsidised, with a participant fee of £750. Responsibility for business skills funding is devolved to local government. See: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2026-03-04/117658/>

16. 45 per cent of UK SME employers offer training to their employees. UK game developers therefore compare relatively well to SMEs generally. See: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2026-03-04/117659/>



learners to secure an industry placement of about 45 days duration, which can entail logistical challenges given the predominance of small and micro firms in the video games sector.

BTECs will be redeveloped into V Levels to meet Government criteria, once these have been consulted on and confirmed. Games, animation and VFX has been listed as its own category of qualifications (possibly more than one or one with pathways) but only as small, 1 A Level equivalent V Level(s).

However, small V Levels mean that learners will not have the existing opportunities to study the many different aspects of games development referred to earlier. There could also be less time for teamwork. Learning opportunities could be narrowed. There is a good case for at least some V Levels to be 'large' qualifications (equivalent to at least two A Levels). This would ensure learners receive sufficient breadth and depth of learning, have opportunities to make games, enable team working and support progression to higher education and employment.

### **6. Apprenticeships**

Some games studios pay the Apprenticeship Levy but struggle to benefit from apprenticeship programmes. This is partly because there are currently only two game specific programmes – Digital Community Manager Level 4 and Game Programmer Level 7. For most studios, apprenticeships are not the answer to their recruitment needs. It is unnecessarily restrictive for the Government to prioritise apprenticeships as the preferred form of workplace training in all economic sectors. A one-size-fits-all approach to training and qualifications is not necessarily in the interest of employees, businesses, or the wider economy. Encouragingly, the Government has stated that it wants to enable employers to use the levy on [short, flexible training courses](#) (called apprenticeship units), starting from April 2026. This approach could enable games businesses to respond to skill needs more quickly and invest in more industry relevant training.

### **7. Migration**

Employers in the games industry typically prefer to hire employees from the UK. However, this is not always possible because of skill shortages. The Government should ensure that the UK's migration system enables games businesses to effectively recruit highly skilled people from overseas. These personnel bring new skills, insights and perspectives which benefit indigenous development teams. If the UK has a migration system that enables studios to recruit highly skilled people from overseas cost effectively, then they will be able to seize new commercial opportunities, increase employment and expand their businesses more easily. In turn, this will strengthen the appeal of the UK to foreign direct investment.<sup>17</sup>

### **8. Internships**

Industry placements bring real-world experience, build industry knowledge, develop transferable skills, opportunities to build a professional network and increase employability. Students often study more effectively on their return and disseminate their knowledge and enthusiasm to their colleagues, to staff and help update the curriculum. TIGA university members report that placements outside of the games industry can be nearly as beneficial as those within it. Most studios in the UK are tiny (78 per cent employ four or fewer people) and may lack the resources to offer internships. The Government could explore the potential for incentivising studios to provide student internships.<sup>18</sup>

17. The Migration Advisory Committee wrote on 27th February 2026 to the Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, Home Secretary, that it is planning to review visa routes to examine how the immigration system could be used to ["attract top talent to the UK"](#).

18. The UK Government does not provide any specific programme to incentivise the provision of work placements. Universities, as autonomous institutions, have responsibility for designing and developing courses and working with businesses in relation to internships. Nonetheless, given the positive impact of internships for students, it seems unfortunate that there is no policy measure to encourage internship provision. See: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2026-03-05/118146>

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