

The trees and timber industry primarily involves the establishment, care, maintenance and management of trees, woodlands and forests. The industry is comprised of different types of businesses, including arboriculture, forestry establishment, harvesting and greenwood trades.

Overview

The Office of National Statistics provides data for trees and timber (SIC 02). This category includes silviculture and other forestry activities such as: logging, gathering of wild growing non-wood products and support services to forestry. SIC 02 does not however include arboriculture, which appears in SIC code 01.41 (agricultural service activities; landscape gardening). The data is therefore likely to underestimate the true size of this industry within the UK.

There are a variety of levels of jobs within the industry ranging from tree climbers and forest workers through to consultants, arboricultural officers and forest managers.

Business figures¹:

- Official statistics estimate that there are 3,260 businesses that fall within the trees and timber SIC code in the UK.

Businesses by size¹:

- Businesses that fall within the trees and timber SIC code have a smaller than average business size; 94% have a workforce of fewer than ten staff, compared with 83% across all businesses in the UK.

	Trees and timber UK	All sectors UK
0-4 employees	84%	68%
5-9 employees	10%	15%
10-19 employees	4%	8%
20-49 employees	2%	6%
50-99 employees	1%	2%
100+ employees	0%	1%

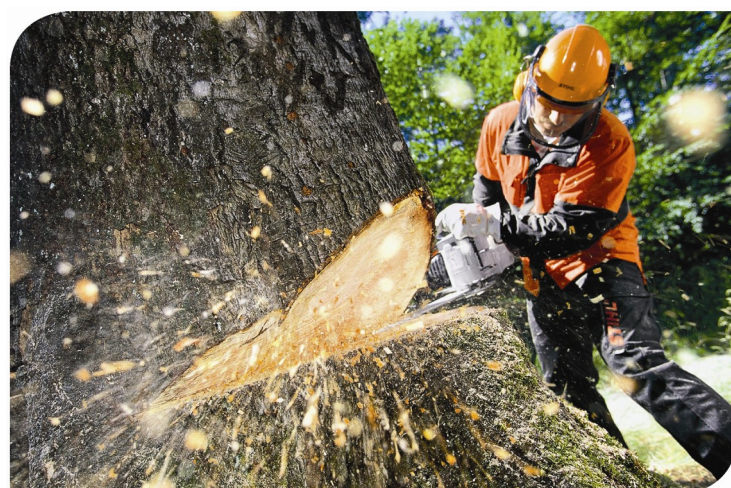
Employment figures²:

- Official statistics estimate that there are 21,700 people employed within trees and timber in the UK.

Size and scope

Nation/Region	Businesses* 1, 3		Employment* 2,3	
	Count	%	Count	%
UK	3,260	100%	21,700	100%
Northern Ireland	60	2%	400	2%
Scotland	860	26%	6,200	28%
Wales	280	8%	1,950	9%
England	2,080	64%	13,150	61%
East of England	240	7%	1,350	6%
East Midlands	160	5%	1,500	7%
London	100	3%	450	2%
North East	120	4%	50	<1%
North West	180	6%	350	2%
South East	520	16%	4,000	18%
South West	420	13%	2,850	13%
West Midlands	220	6%	1,400	6%
Yorkshire and the Humber	160	5%	1,200	6%

* Business and employment figures will underestimate the true size of the industry as they exclude greenwood trades and the arboricultural industry.



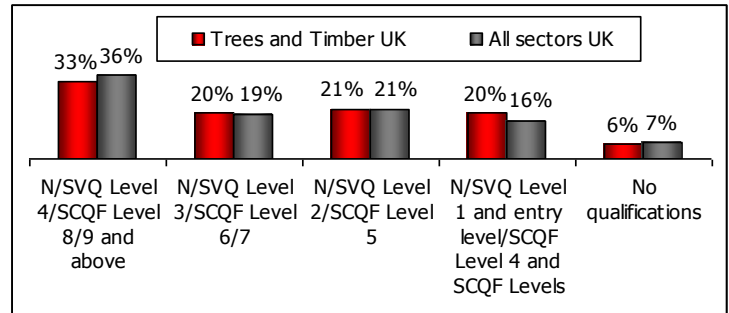
Workforce demographics²

Gender			
Male	93%	Female	7%
Age band			
16-24	21%	45-54	23%
25-34	22%	55-64	18%
35-44	15%	65+	1%
Employment			
Full-time	96%	Part-time	4%
Ethnicity			
White	98%	Non-white	2%
Occupations			
Managers and senior officials (e.g. arboricultural manager, head forester)	13%		
Professional occupations (e.g. forestry/ arboricultural consultant)	3%		
Associate professional and technical occupations (e.g. arboricultural team leader/supervisor)	2%		
Administrative, clerical and secretarial occupations (e.g. office worker)	4%		
Skilled trade occupations (e.g. forest worker, ground worker, tree climber, establishment/harvesting contractors)	39%		
Personal service occupations (e.g. social/community forester)	<1%		
Sales and customer service occupations (e.g. general sales worker)	1%		
Transport and machine operatives (e.g. forest machine operator, chainsaw operator)	2%		
Elementary occupations (e.g. general forestry/arboricultural worker)	37%		



Qualification levels⁷

The sector workforce is highly skilled and official statistics show that 33% of the workforce are qualified to N/SVQ Level 4/SCQF Level 8/9 and above (graduate level) compared to 36% for the national average and 6% have no qualifications.²



Learning supply

- Approximately 100 apprentices undertook a framework in trees and timber in 2007-08 in the UK⁴
- An estimated 2,200 learners enrolled on qualifications or courses delivered by FE colleges/work-based learning in trees and timber related subjects in the UK in 2008-09; ranging from professional qualifications to leisure courses. In addition, an estimated 3,400 learners enrolled on qualifications or courses relating to chainsaws and around 1,000 enrolled on courses relating to horticulture/forestry machinery⁵
- The industry had an estimated 800 learners undertaking related qualifications at Higher Education Institutions in the UK in 2008-09⁶.

Employment projections 2010-20⁸

Over the next ten years (2010 to 2020) the overall level of employment in the trees and timber industry is expected to decline by approximately 6,000. In contrast, the replacement demand (replacement of workers due to mortality, retirement, career moves, or related reasons) is an estimated 8,000, therefore there is a net total requirement for approximately 1,000 people within the industry⁷.

Incidence of skills shortage vacancies

- 8% of employers within the trees and timber industry had a vacancy at the time they were surveyed. This is compared with 7% for the land-based and environmental sector as a whole in England¹⁰ and highlights the low level of vacancies
- The most common reason for hard-to-fill vacancies was due to skills shortages
- The most commonly cited skills lacking in applicants were technical and practical (job-specific skills), customer handling and problem solving skills.

	Trees & timber industry	Lantra sector
% with a vacancy	8%	7%
% with a hard-to-fill vacancy (HtFV)	2%	3%
% with a skills shortage vacancy (SSV)	2%	2%
HtFVs as a % of vacancies	16%	43%
SSVs as a % of vacancies	16%	32%

Incidence of skill gaps

- 19% of employers within the trees and timber industry reported a skills gap (i.e. the extent to which employees are work ready) compared to 15% overall in the land-based and environmental sector in England¹⁰
- The most commonly cited skills that need improving are technical and practical (job-specific skills), problem solving, team working, oral communication and customer handling.

	Trees & timber industry	Lantra sector
% of establishments reporting skill gaps	19%	15%
Number of employees with a skill gap	1,515	26,500
Skill gaps as % of employment	7%	6%

In forest harvesting, there have been numerous evolutionary innovations, such as the development and implementation of log grading systems; the gradual move from manual to mechanised harvesting; and the use of low-impact harvesters that reduce soil compaction and enable year-round harvesting and access to softer soils.

More recently innovation to improve real-time communication between harvesters, transport operators and processing facilities (using global positioning system (GPS) and optimisation software) allows just-in-time deliveries of roundwood and reduces the amount of working capital tied up in raw material stocks. The current skills that employers feel are going to be increasingly important to the sector are:

- Technical skills (e.g. operating machinery/chainsaw, tree surgery and tree knowledge)
- ICT skills (e.g. forestry using GPS)
- Leadership/management skills (e.g. project planning)
- Essential skills (i.e. literacy, numeracy and communication and customer relations).

Drivers for change

Economic conditions

- Forestry is a long-term investment and businesses bear long-term costs before seeing any return
- The industry structure is one that includes a few nationally significant businesses and many small businesses resulting in a lack of coordination or mechanisms for partnership working, development of markets and investment
- The world timber market is volatile and UK forestry businesses trading within a global commodity market experience price variations which makes business planning difficult
- Competition from imported timber in terms of value, quality and consistency of supply
- Increasing concern that the woodfuel/biomass markets will drive up demand and base price for timber.

Impact on skills

- Business advice, guidance and support
- Business planning and management skills
- Sales and marketing; ICT and commerce.

Technology change and knowledge transfer

- Increases necessity to incorporate ICT skills
- Inclusion in training and development programmes.

Impact on skills

- Research into new methods and processes
- Technology transfer business development
- Training to use new technologies.

Labour supply and competition

- Attracting new entrants of all ages and providing opportunities for career progression and development
- Increased competition
- Increased involvement of volunteers in forestry.

Impact on skills

- Effective marketing of careers
- Better careers advice and guidance for all
- Proper recognition of competence for all
- Integrated frameworks to support lifelong learning and Continued Professional Development (CPD)
- Entrepreneurial education
- Need for training volunteers and paid employees in volunteer management.

Policy and legislation

- UK Government and devolved governments' policies (e.g. Scottish Forestry Strategy)
- Uncertainty of funding and lack of flexibility in grant schemes
- Changes in legislation, especially in relation to safety issues and safe working practices.

Impact on skills

- Requirement for common European standards and competence checks
- Influencing skills for those in advisory positions
- Legislation and consumer rights
- Knowledge and understanding of legal obligations and consumer rights
- Risk assessments
- Professional indemnity insurance for the self-employed.

Health and safety

- Legislative requirements
- Safer working environment
- Reduction in occupational hazards to minimise ill health
- Biosecurity as the increasing incidence of disease outbreaks and the threat of new tree pests and disease becomes a reality.

Impact on skills

- Awareness raising, knowledge and control of new pests and disease
- Improved learning provision in terms of CPD
- Recognition of health and safety competence.



Consumer demand

- Demand for wood fuel is on the increase
- Increased customer awareness of origin has enhanced the need for environmental certification of products.

Impact on skills

- Research community to provide knowledge
- Development of biomass supply chains.

Climate change

- Need to adapt to changing climate in the longer term like the change in the range of tree species and management of scarce water supplies
- Contribute to climate change mitigation e.g. lowering carbon emissions and investigating carbon sequestration in trees
- Environmental sustainability and greater protection of forest species
- Support biodiversity.

Impact on skills

- Adoption of methods to mitigate climate change
- Respond to specific skills/re-skilling issues
- Changes in silvicultural techniques (thinning/continuous cover forestry)
- Localise trade and procurement
- Resource management.

Sources and information

- 1 Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) 2010
- 2 Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2009-10
- 3 Figures and percentages may not add up due to rounding
- 4 Data Service (England), DCELLS (Wales), Skills Development Scotland/Scottish Funding Council (SDS/SFC), DARD/DEL (Northern Ireland)
- 5 Data Service (England), DCELLS (Wales), Skills Development Scotland/Scottish Funding Council (SDS/SFC), DARD/DEL (Northern Ireland)
- 6 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
- 7 Lantra Model for Employment Forecasting (LMEF) 2010 (Figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000) Figures represent estimates of minimum job openings to satisfy replacement and expansionary demand. This may be higher or lower depending on future conditions
- 8 National Employer Skills Survey 2009
- 9 State of the World's Forests, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2011
- 10 Recent industry specific data is unavailable for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Lantra website

For further information regarding this factsheet, Lantra and the sector, please visit: www.lantra.co.uk

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