

Professional Services

Sector demand landscape

- The Professional Services sector employs 1.35 million people (3% of the UK workforce), accounting for over £277 billion and 12% of the UK's economy.
- As of 2025, there were around 40,000 vacancies in professional services, costing the UK economy up to £1.7 billion if unfilled.
- Skills shortages are a major factor behind recruitment challenges, with automation and new technologies increasing the demand for upskilling.
- Persistent difficulties in filling roles, alongside rapid technological change, are among the most significant barriers to growth and productivity in the sector.

The business case for Professional Services engagement in careers education

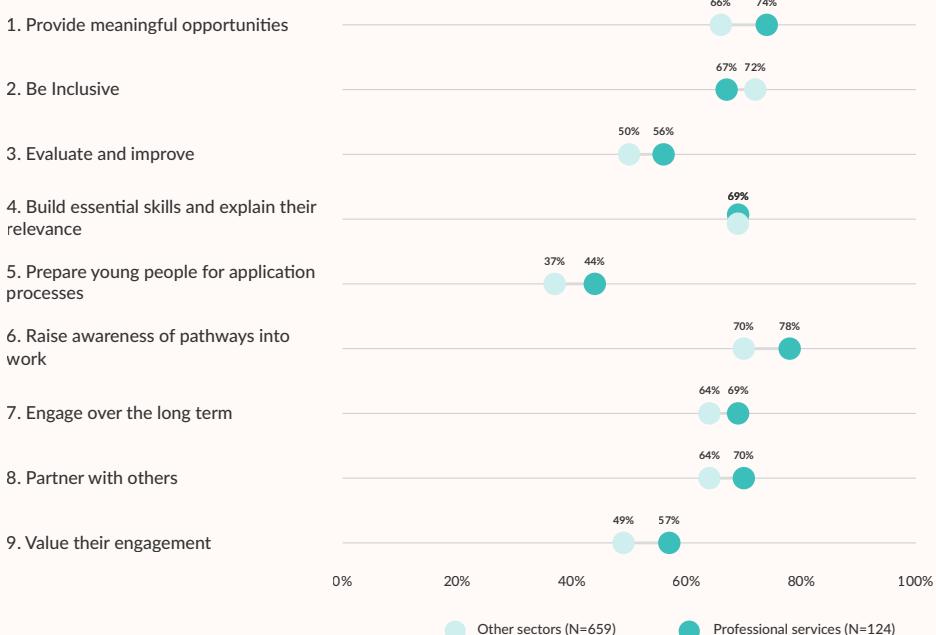
Employers in the Professional Services sector showed a higher level of achievement in several Standards compared to other sectors, in particular:

- Standard 9:** Value the engagement (+8%pts vs other sectors)
- Standard 6:** Raise awareness of pathways into work (+8%pts vs other sectors)
- Standard 1:** Provide meaningful opportunities (+8% vs other sectors)

Strong engagement in these Standards will help address workforce challenges, however employers in the sector were less likely to achieve against **Standard 2:** Be Inclusive (-5%pts vs other sectors). As shown in our main report, employers who target under-represented cohorts are more likely to report benefits in their talent pipelines.

Fig 1: Employers in the Professional Services sector were most likely to achieve Standards 1, 6, and 9

% of Employers achieving or exceeding each standard in the Professional Services sector compared to employers in other sectors



Source: Employer Standards data, end of September 2025 (N=783; Professional services, N=124).

With rapid technological and structural changes in this sector, engaging in careers education with schools and colleges has never been more important. Employers in this sector agree that outreach has helped to:

- **encourage young people to apply for jobs in the sector** (91% reported this benefit)
- **develop new talent pipelines** (80% reported this benefit)
- **bringing apprentices into the organisation** (78% reported this benefit).

Most employers in the Professional Services sector agree that **young people's essential employability skills are improving** because of their careers outreach (74% reported this benefit)

Young people's interest in the industry and confidence in their Essential Skills

This strong engagement from the Professional Services sector is also reflected in the interest from young people: **6% of Year 11 students express a desire to work in the sector**.

The most popular roles for aspiring Professional Services professionals are:

- lawyer (39%)
- finance (18%)
- sales & marketing (17%)

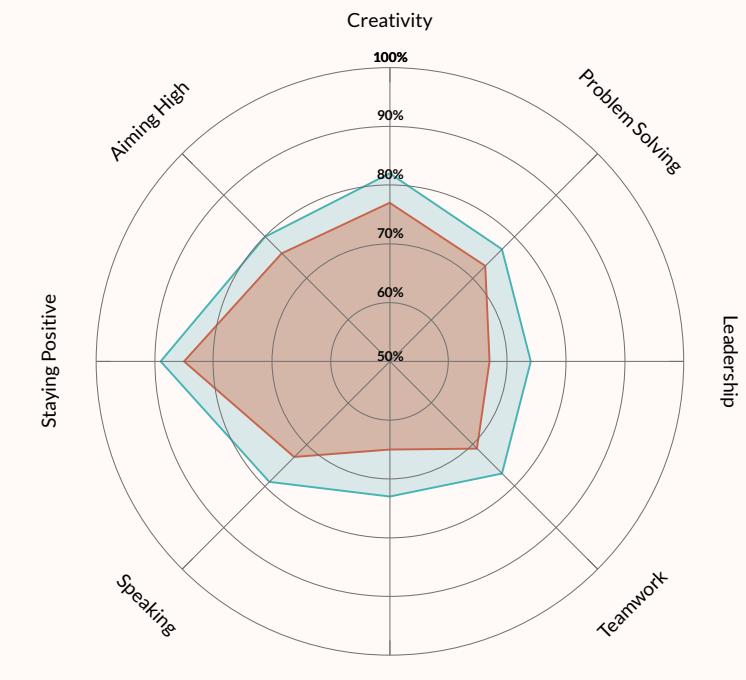
Overall, employers who help young people practise and progress essential skills in workplace experiences are 72% more likely to say that that young people's employability skills are improving as a result of their engagement.

According to Future Skills Questionnaire data, young people in year 11 interested in Professional Services are more often confident than their peers in all Essential Skills, particularly **Leadership** (+8%pts), **Listening** (+7%pts), and **Speaking** (+7%pts), likely reflecting the variety of roles encompassed by the sector.

To see the full insights, including other industry snapshots, click [here](#)

Fig 2: They are more likely to be confident than their peers in all Essential Skills

% of Year 11 young people saying they are confident in each Essential Skill



Other (N=25,323)

Professional services (N=1,519)

Source: Future Skills Questionnaire data, end of July 2025 (Year 11 responding to the industry/career question, N=26,842)