

Press release
For immediate release

New APM data reveals more project skills and project professionals are needed across industry to deliver projects that will benefit UK society

- The majority (64%) of APM survey respondents think there are skills gaps in their industry sector
- 69% of project professionals think that their industry sector would benefit from having more project/programme professionals.
- APM encourages business leaders and employers to adopt a more strategic approach to project management, invest in training and take advantage of diverse skillsets available to them.

A new survey carried out by Association for Project Management (APM), the chartered membership organisation for the project profession, has revealed that the UK is facing a significant skills gap in project management across the UK and industry sectors, which could have serious implications for businesses, the economy and society as a whole.

The findings have been revealed as APM launches its new campaign, [Future Lives and Landscapes](#), which is raising awareness of how projects benefit society in the UK, by transforming the nation's economic, social and physical landscape.

APM partnered with research company Censuswide to survey 1,000 project professionals working on projects intended to deliver a social benefit¹. The majority (64%) of respondents think there are some skills gaps in their industry or sector, including 8% who say there are 'significant' gaps. In addition, 69% of project professionals think that their industry sector would benefit from having more project/programme professionals.

Under a quarter (23%) of project professionals surveyed feel that within their industry or sector, they are very confident there will be enough project/programme professionals to deliver similar projects in the next five years.

Project skills most valued by project professionals, as highlighted in a new APM reportⁱⁱ include communications skills, project leadership, stakeholder engagement, people management and planning and monitoring skills. Communication skills are seen to be the most important skill, a reflection of the industry's changing working culture since the pandemic.

The industry sectors in which survey respondents feel there are the biggest projects skills gaps include healthcare (78%), retail, catering and leisure (68%) and education (62%).

Respondents who feel there are some or significant project skills gaps in their industry or sector:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|-----|
| • Healthcare | 78% |
| • Retail, Catering and Leisure | 68% |
| • Manufacturing and Utilities | 62% |
| • Education | 62% |
| • IT and Telecoms | 60% |
| • Finance | 54% |
| • Architecture, Engineering and Building | 47% |

Respondents who feel that more project/programme professionals are needed for the benefit or delivery projects in their industry or sector:

- Healthcare 87%
- Finance 72%
- Retail, Catering and Leisure 68%
- Education 65%
- IT and Telecoms 64%
- Manufacturing 63%
- Architecture, Engineering and Building 60%

The regional picture:

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of survey respondents also say there are project skills gaps in the region of the UK where they work, which are impacting the delivery of projects for the benefit of society. This includes 8% of respondents who think there are 'significant' project skills gaps in their region.

Furthermore, there is no region of the UK where the majority of professionals working on a project with a social benefit feel there are no skills gaps. In every region, most project professionals feel there are at least some. In addition to skills, the survey revealed concerns around the number of project professionals available to work on projects.

The majority of respondents (55%) think more project professionals are needed in the region where they work to deliver projects that will benefit society (regardless of their industry or sector).

Projects as drivers of social benefits is one of the themes of APM's [Change Changes conference](#), taking place in Birmingham on 8 June. The conference will explore the changing environment for project leadership and delivery.

Professor Adam Boddison OBE, Chief Executive of APM said, "As the chartered membership organisation for the project profession, we want to make sure the UK is able to deliver the projects that will benefit society – now and in the future. To achieve this, we must understand the current and future landscape for the projects and programmes creating social benefits in the UK, including the issues affecting them.



"It's clear from our study that there are concerns around skills and the numbers of project professionals needed for successful project delivery. Projects that are poorly managed and that have inadequate skills within the team can experience delays, cost overruns, and fail to make the positive difference in people's lives that they intended.

"The skills gap in projects needs to be addressed, and so we're calling on business leaders and employers to invest in training and development for project managers, and to prioritise recruitment and retention of skilled project professionals. This could mean more apprenticeships, on-the-job training and increased funding for professional development qualifications.

"We're urging businesses to adopt a more strategic approach to project management, including an increase in numbers of chartered professionals, promoting diversity and inclusion in the field, and investing in new technologies and approaches.

"We're also working with government to make sure the power of projects is understood at the highest level, and why it is so important that publicly funded projects have the skills and resource needed to succeed."

Further information and survey findings can be found at [Future Lives and Landscapes](#).

Ends

For more information about the survey or to speak to an APM spokesperson contact Hayley.mountstevens@apm.org.uk

Notes to editors:

¹ Projects with a societal benefit includes projects which improve living standards, enhance wellbeing, help increase social equality, or reduce geographic inequality.

ii Taken from APM's Salary and Market Trends report 2023

All figures rounded to the nearest 1%