

A wide-angle photograph of a large, industrial seafood processing facility. Several workers in dark jackets and high-visibility vests are standing in the background, working at long tables covered with white plastic trays. The room is brightly lit with overhead fluorescent lights.

SEAFISH

SEAFISH ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

UK Seafood Processing Sector Labour

Quarterly Update 2 (April - June 2018)





UK Seafood Processing Sector Quarterly Update 2 (April - June 2018)

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Executive Summary

- In June 2018, Seafish collected data on the ease of recruitment and retention of staff in the UK seafood processing sector during the second quarter of 2018 (April - June) as part of a 2-year series of quarterly surveys. The sample of processing sites responding represents around 60% of FTE jobs in the sector.
- 38% of seafood processors in the sample said that they had found it more difficult to fill vacancies in the second quarter of 2018 (April - June) than in the first quarter (January - March) of the year, compared to 5% of respondents who said they had found recruitment easier. This change in ease of recruitment can be in part explained by an expected seasonal increase in landings by the fishing fleet meaning that processing sites needed to recruit more staff in April - June 2018.
- Larger processing sites reported more difficulties in recruitment than smaller sites. More than two thirds of sites in the 250+ FTE size band said that recruitment had become more difficult than in the preceding quarter; all sites in the 1-10 FTE size band reported no difference in ease of recruitment with most sites saying they had no need to recruit.
- The key factor affecting recruitment in April - June 2018 was a shortage of candidates.
- According to 14% of survey respondents (10 processing sites) people from the EU are less willing to come to the UK to work in seafood processing. Explanations for this included the uncertainty surrounding Brexit, the lower value of sterling, and efforts of European countries to encourage their citizens to return home (including financial incentives).
- 8% of respondents (6 processing sites) said they had no problem recruiting staff in April - June 2018; these were all smaller sites with fewer than 25 FTEs.
- According to processors, the main barrier to recruiting British staff in the seafood processing industry remains the negative perception of the industry held by potential candidates. Over half of respondents said this was a barrier to recruiting British staff.
- A quarter of respondents said that low levels of local unemployment were a barrier to recruiting British staff.
- The most reported method used for direct recruitment of permanent, temporary and seasonal staff in the processing sector was via word of mouth through existing employees.
- Over 80% of processors in the sample said that they would increase their efforts to recruit locally if they were unable to hire enough staff using their current recruitment techniques.
- Processors were least confident about their ability to recruit enough high-skilled staff. Almost 40% of respondents said they were slightly doubtful or doubtful about their ability to recruit enough high-skilled staff in July - September 2018.
- Processors were generally confident about their ability to meet their planned production levels in the next quarter.

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1. Introduction and background

Research by Seafish has shown that the seafood processing sector is heavily reliant on workers from other EEA countries. There have been reports from the sector that the labour pool is contracting with some processors reporting a shortage of locally available workers at current wage rates. It is important for policy makers and industry to have accurate information about recruitment and staff retention in the seafood processing sector. This report presents the findings of the third quarterly survey of ease of recruitment in the seafood processing sector carried out by Seafish as part of a UK-wide project funded by Defra.

At project design meetings held by Seafish in October 2017, seafood processors recognised that recruitment and retention of workers, for seasonal, temporary and permanent roles, was becoming a concern for some businesses. At the meeting it was agreed that more information on recruitment in the sector was needed to inform future policy decisions.

It was agreed that Seafish would carry out a series of quarterly surveys to collect quantitative and qualitative evidence from processors on ease of recruitment, confidence in recruiting and retaining enough staff, and adaptations businesses would make if they could not recruit enough workers. Key research questions this study aimed to address were:

- *How has the changing labour market affected recruitment and retention of staff?*
- *What are the main barriers to recruiting British staff in the sea food processing sector?*
- *How do companies plan to adapt if they are unable to recruit and retain a sufficient workforce?*
- *What investments in automation could processors make if they cannot get enough workers and how would investment impact the number of staff businesses need to employ?*

The first quarterly survey (covering the period October - December 2017) was carried out alongside the Seafish annual survey of workforce composition in the seafood processing sector in December 2017. A second quarterly survey was carried out in April 2018 covering the period of January to March 2018.

Findings of the first two quarterly surveys are available on the Seafish website. The next quarterly survey will be carried out in September 2018 and the next annual survey of workforce composition will be carried out in November 2018.

2. Methods

The third quarterly survey was carried out in July 2018 and asked about processors' experience of recruitment in the preceding quarter (April - June 2018). The survey also asked processors about their expectations for recruitment and staff retention for the following quarter (July - September 2018). Processors received questionnaires by email and were invited to complete the survey electronically (see Appendix 1). Some companies were contacted and interviewed by phone to ensure a good level of coverage.

Seafish collected data from 73 individual processing sites operated by 59 processing companies in the third quarterly survey on recruitment and retention of staff. Table 1 shows the breakdown of sampled sites by size band (number of FTEs) According to the 2016 Seafish processing sector census (the most recent available complete population data) the processing sites which submitted data for this quarterly survey accounted for 59% of full time equivalent (FTE) jobs in the sector in 2016 (10,449 FTEs).

The third quarterly survey collected data from more seafood processing sites than previous surveys. The sample includes 34 responses from processing sites in England, 35 from Scotland, and 4 from Northern Ireland. There were no responses from sites in Wales.

Table 1: Number of survey responses by processing site size (FTE Band) according to the 2016 Seafish processing sector census. Source: Seafish

FTE Band	Quarter 1 (Oct-Dec 2017)	Quarter 2 (Jan-Mar 2018)	Quarter 3 (Apr-Jun 2018)
1-10	9	2	7
11-49	26	14	26
50-249	15	15	24
250+	15	19	16

3. Ease of recruitment in the seafood processing sector

Only 5% of seafood processors in the survey (four sites) reported that they had found it easier to fill vacancies in the second quarter of 2018 (April - June) than in the first three months of the year.

The high proportion of seafood processors reporting that recruitment was easier in January – March 2018, when compared to the final quarter of 2017, was attributed to planned reductions in production following the busy festive season.

The number of seafood processors reporting that recruitment was more difficult compared to January - March increased from 27% of respondents in the previous survey to 38% in the current survey, see figure 1.

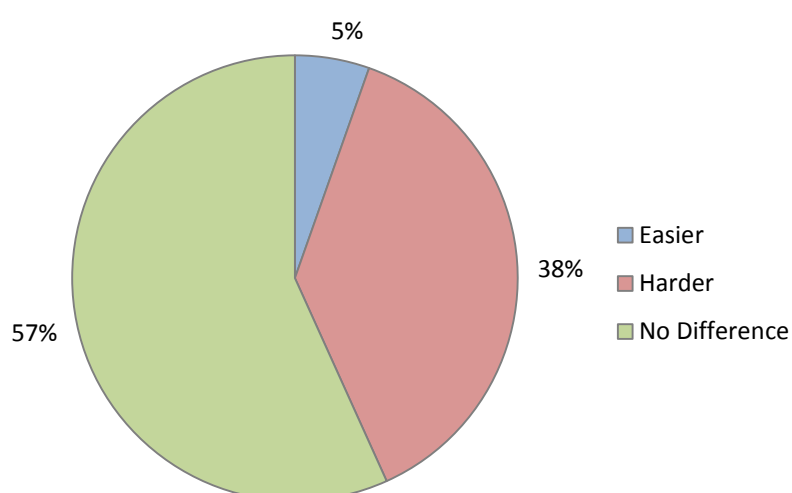


Figure 1: Proportion of processing sites in the sample reporting that recruitment in the second quarter of 2018 (April to June 2018) was easier, harder, or no different from the previous quarter (based on responses from 73 processing sites). Source: Seafish.

Some processors described the period of January to March as their “*low season*”. This meant that workers who had been employed for the festive season were available to take up other roles in the company or take jobs at other processing sites. In April 2018 several processors said that their

production would increase in summer months and they expected recruitment to become more difficult as demand for staff increased across the industry.

Compared to the entire sample, a greater proportion of large seafood processing sites are finding recruitment more difficult, as shown in figure 2. More sites in the largest FTE bands (50-249 and 250+) found it more difficult to recruit enough workers between April and June 2018.

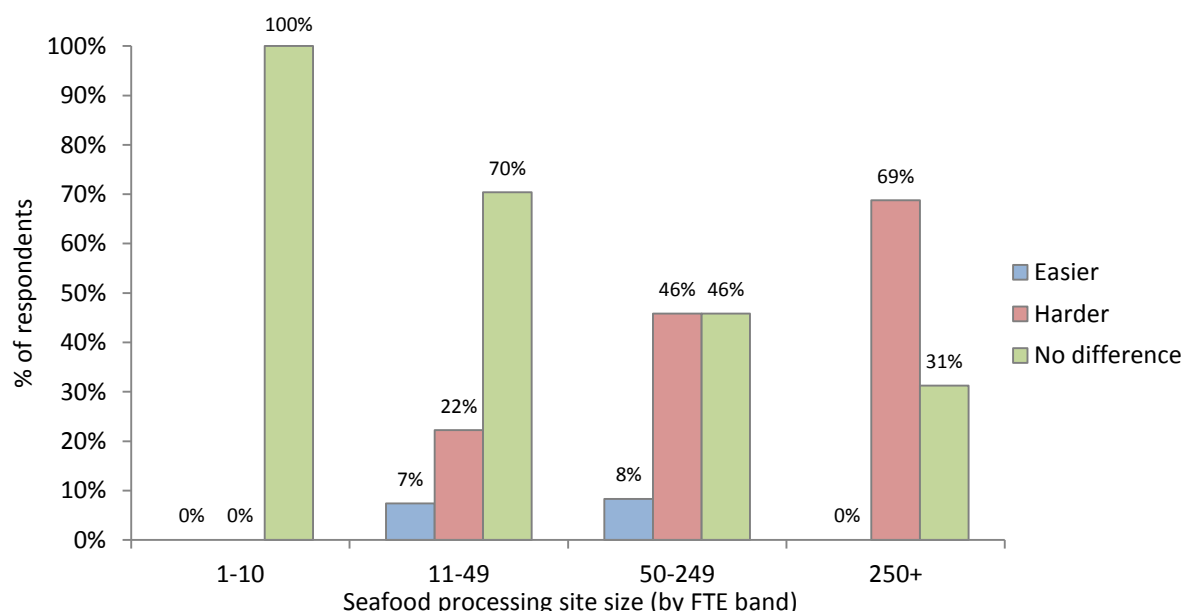


Figure 2: Proportion of processing sites in the sample reporting that recruitment in the second quarter of 2018 (April to June 2018) was easier, harder, or no different from the previous quarter (based on responses from 73 processing sites) by processing site size. Source: Seafish.

Previous research by Seafish has shown that processing site size is a major factor influencing the nationality mix of the workforce, with larger sites more likely to employ a higher proportion of non-British workers¹. The reliance of larger seafood processing sites on workers from other EEA countries means they are more likely to be affected by a contracting supply of workers from Europe.

In this survey, no processors in the 250+ FTE size band said that recruitment in the past quarter was easier than the preceding one.

There were seven sites in the sample in the 1-10 FTE band. All of these sites said they experienced no difference in ease of recruitment. Six of these sites commented that they had no need to recruit because they had very stable workforces and expected no staff turnover. One of these six sites said they had not had to recruit any new staff in over a decade.

Almost half of the Grampian-based seafood processors in the survey reported that recruitment had become more difficult in the April - June period when compared to the first quarter of 2018. Previous research by Seafish found that seafood processing sites in the Grampian region employed the largest proportion of non-British staff². This suggests that seafood processors in the Grampian region are more likely to be affected by changes in the availability of European workers.

¹, ² Seafish Economic Analysis: UK seafood processing sector labour 2018.

“Our European workers are scared of the Brexit outcome and are returning home. We’re finding it more and more difficult to attract EU workers.”

Seafood processor in Grampian

Only two of the sample’s seafood processing sites based in Humberside reported that recruitment in April – June 2018 was easier than in January – March 2018, see figure 3.

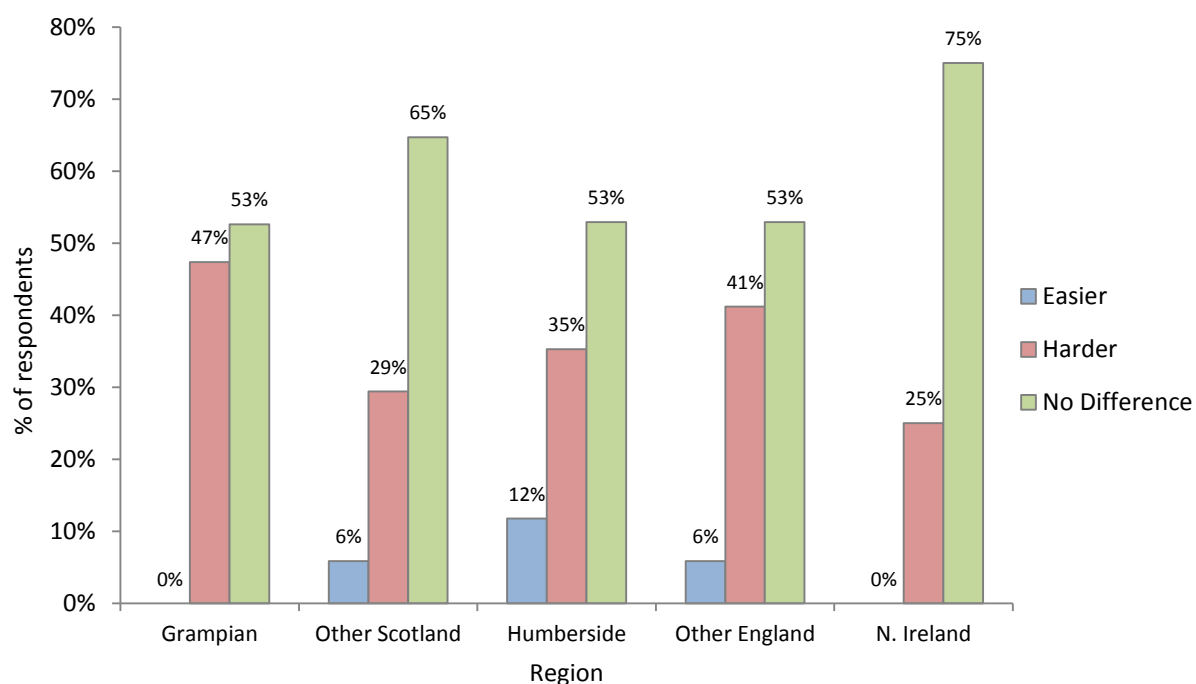


Figure 3: Proportion of processing sites in the sample reporting that recruitment in the second quarter of 2018 (April - June 2018) was easier, harder, or no different from the previous quarter (based on responses from 73 processing sites) by processing region. Due to the number of survey responses, data from the rest of England and Scotland (excluding Humberside and Grampian respectively) is aggregated. There were no survey respondents from Wales. Source: Seafish.

Two processors (in different regions of the UK) said that recruitment had become easier this quarter, specifically due to the shutdown of other processing plants in their areas, leading to increased availability of local candidates.

No seafood processors in Grampian or Northern Ireland said that recruitment had been easier in April-June 2018 than in the preceding quarter (January – March 2018).

4. Factors affecting recruitment in the seafood processing sector

One in five survey respondents said that a shortage of candidates was the main factor affecting recruitment, see figure 4. Respondents gave a variety of possible explanations for the shortage.

Ten seafood processors (14% of respondents) said that the UK has become a less desirable destination for EU workers. The reason most commonly given for this was the uncertainty surrounding Brexit and concerns that staff may not be able to stay in the UK post-Brexit.

To help retain current EU workers, some processors said they were already offering their existing staff assistance to apply for UK residency.

“We depend on workers from abroad; the unclear Brexit situation is the biggest factor affecting our recruitment.”

Seafood processor in the Midlands

Further explanations for the unwillingness of EU citizens to come to the UK for work included the decreased value of sterling compared to other currencies, European people feeling unwelcome in the UK, and EU member states encouraging their citizens to return home through offers of guaranteed jobs, financial incentives or housing.

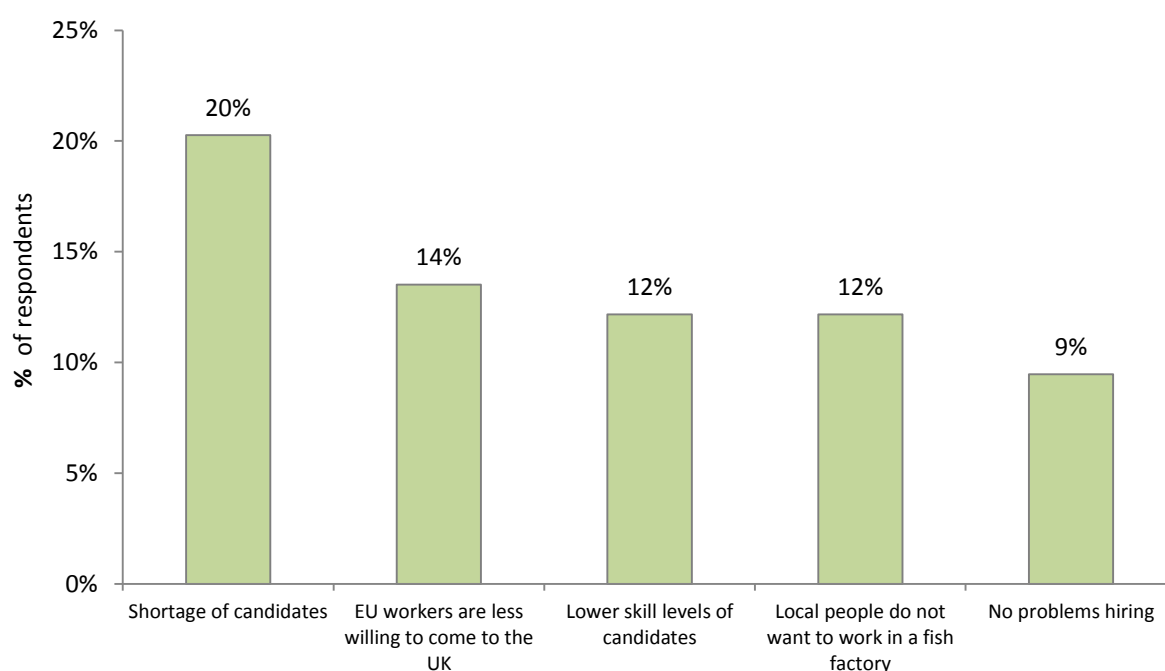


Figure 4: Barriers to recruitment in the seafood processing sector in April – June 2018. Respondents could comment on all factors, positive or negative, that applied to their company. Source: Seafish.

Other factors affecting ease of recruitment include low levels of local unemployment and the unwillingness of British candidates to work in the seafood processing sector (for more information on barriers to recruiting British staff in the seafood processing sector see section 6).

Some processors said they were struggling to find candidates with the right skill sets or experience for the roles they had available. Comments on skills shortages were generally related to industry-specific roles, such as filleting fish or operating fish processing machinery. However, one processor commented that they were struggling to hire workers with transferable skills, such as HGV drivers, due to competition from other industries in the area.

5. Recruitment methods in the seafood processing sector

The most commonly reported method used for direct recruitment of permanent, temporary and seasonal staff in the seafood processing sector was by word of mouth through existing employees (mentioned by 44% of respondents). Online advertising was the second most common response, with the website *Indeed* being the most-mentioned platform. Other sites mentioned included *Gumtree* and *Total Jobs*. Popular methods of recruitment are shown in figure 5.

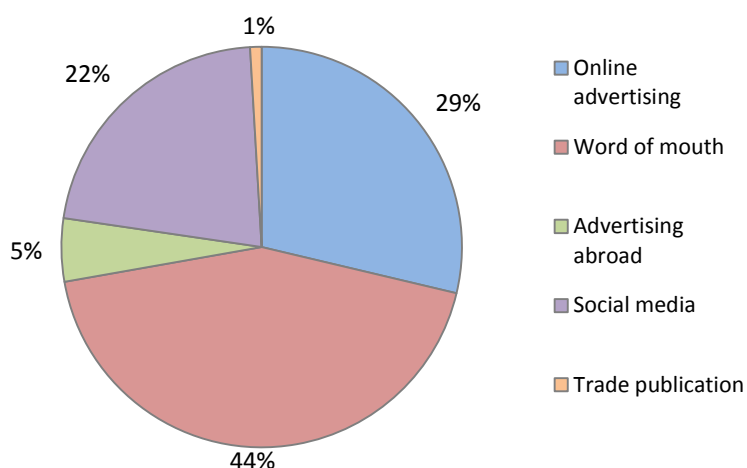


Figure 5: Reported methods of directly recruiting permanent, temporary or seasonal workers in the seafood processing sector in April – June 2018. Based on responses from 73 seafood processing sites. Source: Seafish

Social media was identified as a recruitment method in 22% of responses, with *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *LinkedIn* mentioned most often by processors. The most commonly reported method used for indirectly recruiting permanent, temporary and seasonal staff in the processing sector was recruitment through an employment agency (71% of responses).

6. Barriers to recruiting UK staff

When asked about the main barriers to recruiting British staff in the seafood processing sector, 55% of respondents stated that most British job seekers do not want to work in a seafood processing factory, see figure 6. Research by the Food & Drink Federation showed that 62% of their membership believed that the unattractiveness of the food and drink sector was a main barrier to recruitment.³

Processors acknowledged that fish processing is a physically demanding job in a cold and wet working environment. Some processors suggested that this led to difficulties in recruiting and retaining British staff. One processor, who used the local Job Centre as a source of candidates, said that the realities of the working environment are not properly communicated to potential candidates leading to new staff quitting after only a few hours or days of work.

“A lot of recruits turn up not realising how wet and cold conditions in the factory can be, especially in the winter. As a result most British candidates don’t want to work in the industry.”

Processor in Central Scotland

³ Food & Drink Federation. *Breaking the Chain: Key workforce considerations for the UK food and drink supply chain as we leave the EU*. 2017.

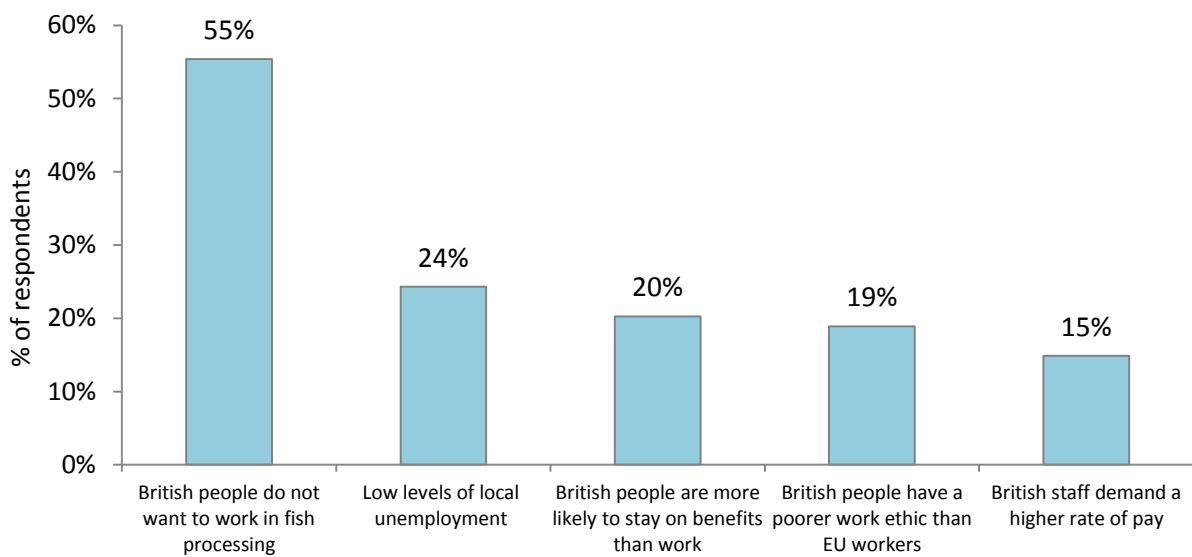


Figure 6: Barriers to recruiting British staff in the seafood processing sector in April - June 2018. Based on 152 responses from 67 processing sites. Respondents were able to comment on all factors that applied to their site. Source: Seafish.

One in five seafood processors in the survey thought that some British people believed they were better off claiming benefits than working. One processor went further saying that they would frequently invite candidates for interviews who would not show up; the processor believed that some candidates were applying for jobs only so they were eligible to claim benefits.

“We have a lot of applicants who are currently receiving benefits. They apply for roles but when we give them an interview, or a job offer, they do not reply.”

Processor in Humberside

Almost a quarter of seafood processors who responded to the survey (18 sites) reported that low levels of local unemployment were a key barrier to employing British staff. Some factories are located in remote areas, meaning the locally available labour pool is relatively small.

Other common responses include that British workers do not want to work unsociable hours (early mornings, nights or weekends), British workers do not want physically demanding jobs, and British workers are less reliable than their EU counterparts.

“There is no interest in the fish industry; the younger generation prefer to work elsewhere. Factory work seems to be seen as a last resort.”

Processor in Humberside

Several processors commented that British workers do not want to work in fish processing long term, often only lasting several days or a week. One processor remarked that British workers often quit before they can be trained to carry out more skilled roles in the factory.

Seven seafood processing sites (9% of respondents) said they have no problems in recruiting British staff. All sites which reported having no problems in recruiting British staff were in the 1-10 or 11-49 FTE jobs size bracket.

7. Company adaptations in response to recruitment issues

Processors were asked what adaptations their company would make if they were unable to recruit enough workers using their existing recruitment methods. Over 80% of respondents said they would increase their efforts to recruit locally, see figure 7.

In the current survey, 68% of respondents said they would increase their use of employment agencies to supply workers. In October 2017 Seafish carried out phone interviews of six popular employment agencies which supply workers to the seafood processing sector. Researchers asked about changes in availability of candidates and demand for workers from the processing sector. All employment agencies surveyed said they were finding it more difficult to attract enough suitably skilled candidates to meet the demand for labour from the UK seafood processing industry.⁴

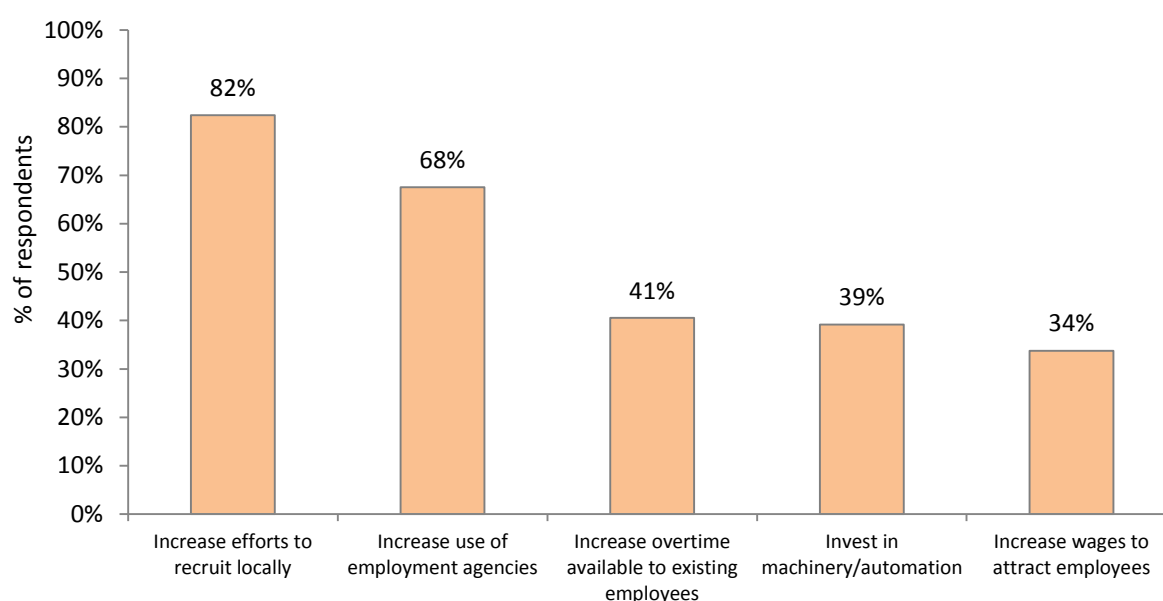


Figure 7: Adaptations seafood processing sites would aim to make if they were not able to recruit enough staff. Based on 242 answers given by 73 individual processing sites. Respondents were able to comment on all adaptations that applied to their processing site. Source: Seafish.

Several processors discussed the efforts they are already making to retain the staff they have. Efforts include offering assistance and financial support to non-UK employees seeking UK residency, increasing wages and overtime available, trying to ensure consistency of work through their purchase of raw materials, and forming an employee council to improve working conditions.

Over 40% of survey respondents (30 sites) said they would increase overtime available to current employees in response to difficulties in recruiting new staff. Whilst this is a lower percentage than the previous survey, the increased sample size from this survey means the actual number of respondents is almost the same as in the January - March 2018 survey, in which 29 sites commented that they would increase overtime available in response to recruitment difficulties.

“We are going to do our best to apply for a sponsor licence for non-EEA workers. With the suspension of tier 3, we will be very fortunate to be awarded tier 2 but we have to do something. It is getting scary now.”

Processor in Grampian

⁴ Unpublished research by Seafish, October 2017

Three processors said that they were doing as much as possible to deal with the recruitment difficulties they are already facing, stating that they were unsure what else they could do if the situation worsened.

Investment in machinery or automation was noted as a solution to recruitment issues by 39% of respondents to the survey (29 sites). Processes that respondents said they would consider automating include grading, filleting, pin-boning, scaling, slicing and packing. Several processors said they already automate where possible and that investment in machinery is part of their planned continuous improvement projects.

Interestingly, most processors did not think that automation would reduce the number of people they employ. Instead, machinery would be used to increase productivity of existing workers either by increasing throughput, efficiency or accuracy of processes. One processor commented that investment in automation would actually lead to problems in recruiting enough high-skilled staff able to use and maintain machines.

“We would not lose any existing staff but we would be less dependent on attracting new staff.”

Processor in SW England

Respondents from five processing sites (operated by four companies) in the sample said they would relocate inside the UK if they were unable to recruit enough staff. Five other processing sites said they would relocate outside the UK if they were unable to recruit enough staff.

8. Confidence in recruiting and retaining staff

Processors were asked about their confidence in their company’s ability to recruit and retain enough high-skilled, low-skilled and seasonal staff in the next quarter and to meet their planned levels of production in the next quarter (July - September 2018), see figure 8. Processors were able to select “N/A” if a question was not applicable to them; “N/A” responses are not shown in figure 8. In total, 29 sites selected N/A for their confidence in recruiting and retaining enough seasonal staff as they did not employ seasonal staff.

Processors’ confidence in their ability to recruit enough staff across all skill levels was lower in the second quarter of 2018 (April - June) than the first quarter (January - March).

Processors were generally confident about their ability to retain staff in the next three months (July - September); with 66% of respondents saying they were confident or very confident they would retain their high-skilled staff and 62% saying they were confident or very confident about retaining low-skilled staff.

Respondents’ confidence in meeting planned levels of production in the next three months has decreased slightly compared to previous surveys; 17% of respondents in the current survey said they were slightly doubtful that they would meet planned levels of production with a further 4% saying they were very doubtful. Several processors attributed this scepticism to fluctuations in supply from the catching sector, most notably low catches of brown crab in the south-west of England and of Nephrops in Scotland.

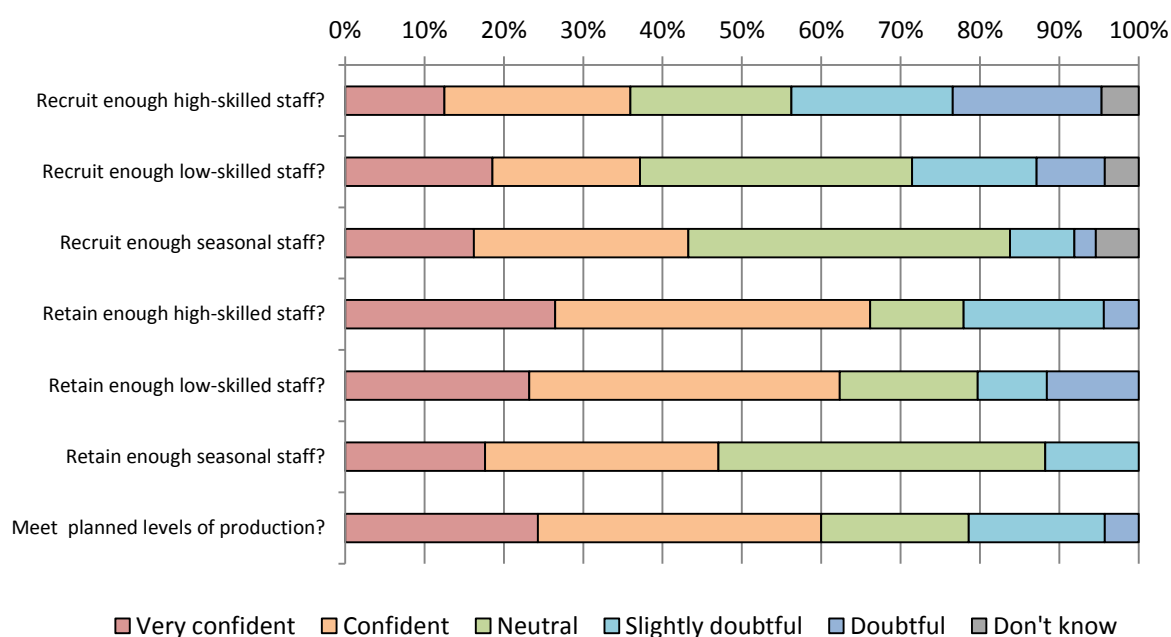


Figure 8: Seafood processors' confidence in their ability to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of high-skilled, low-skilled, and seasonal staff and in their ability to meet planned production levels in the next quarter (July - September 2018). Respondents could select "N/A" if the field did not apply to their site and these responses were removed from the final analysis. Source: Seafish.

9. Comparative analysis of Q2 and Q3 panel of respondents

In total, 39 seafood processing sites completed the quarterly survey in both Q2 (covering January - March) and in Q3 (covering April - June). These responses have been analysed independently of other responses in order to reveal quarterly changes in survey responses from the same group of processors.

The number of processors in the panel saying that recruitment was easier in the current quarter compared to the preceding quarter fell from nine sites in Q2 to one site in Q3, as shown in figure 9.

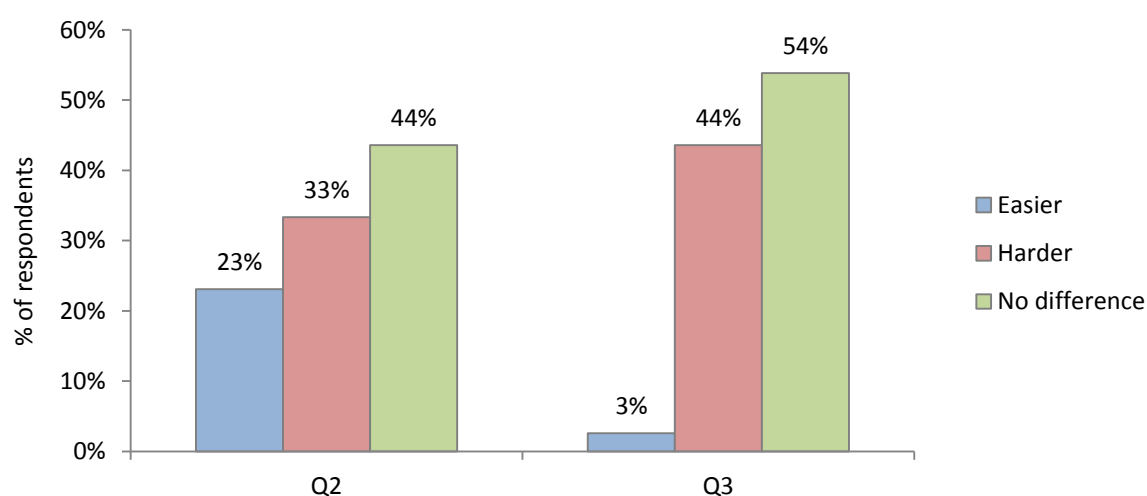


Figure 9: Proportion of processing sites reporting that recruitment was easier, harder, or no different from the previous quarter. Based on responses from 39 processing sites which responded to both the April 2018 survey (Q2: January - March) and July 2018 survey (Q3: April - June). Source: Seafish.

Figure 10 shows perceived ease of recruitment in Q2 and Q3 compared to the previous quarter, by respondents in both surveys. Results are split by processing site size (FTE band) according to the 2016 Seafish processing sector census.

The number of processor sites in the panel reporting that recruitment was easier in the previous quarter decreased in all size bands.

The largest decrease was seen in the 250+ FTE size band – for Q2 six respondents in the size band said recruitment was easier compared to the previous quarter but in the July survey no respondents in the group said that recruitment was easier.

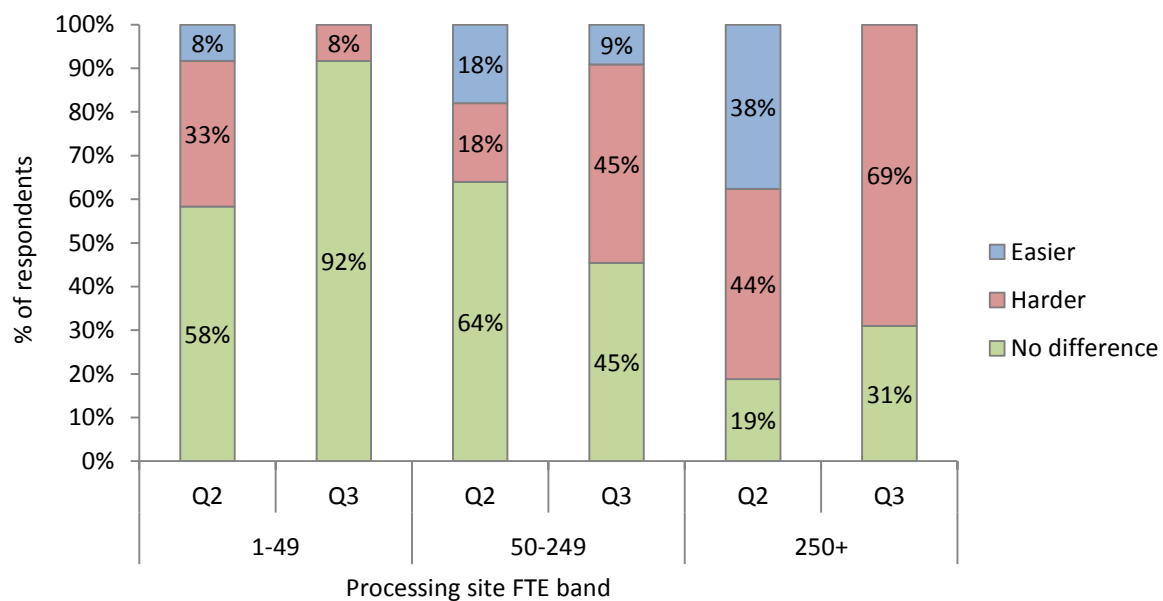


Figure 10: Proportion of processing sites reporting that recruitment was easier, harder, or no different from the previous quarter, in the following FTE bands: 1-49 (12 sites), 50-249 (11 sites) and 250+ (16 sites). Based on responses from 39 processing sites which responded to both the April 2018 survey (Q2: January - March) and July 2018 survey (Q3: April - June). Source: Seafish.

Analysis of the panel results shows consistency in the adaptations companies would make if they could not recruit enough staff using their existing recruitment methods, see figure 11.

The proportion of respondents who said they would increase efforts to recruit locally increased from 67% of sites in April to 91% of sites in July.

For Q2 24 respondents (62% of the panel sample) said they would increase overtime available to existing employees, however the number of processors giving this answer halved for Q3 to only 31% of the sample.

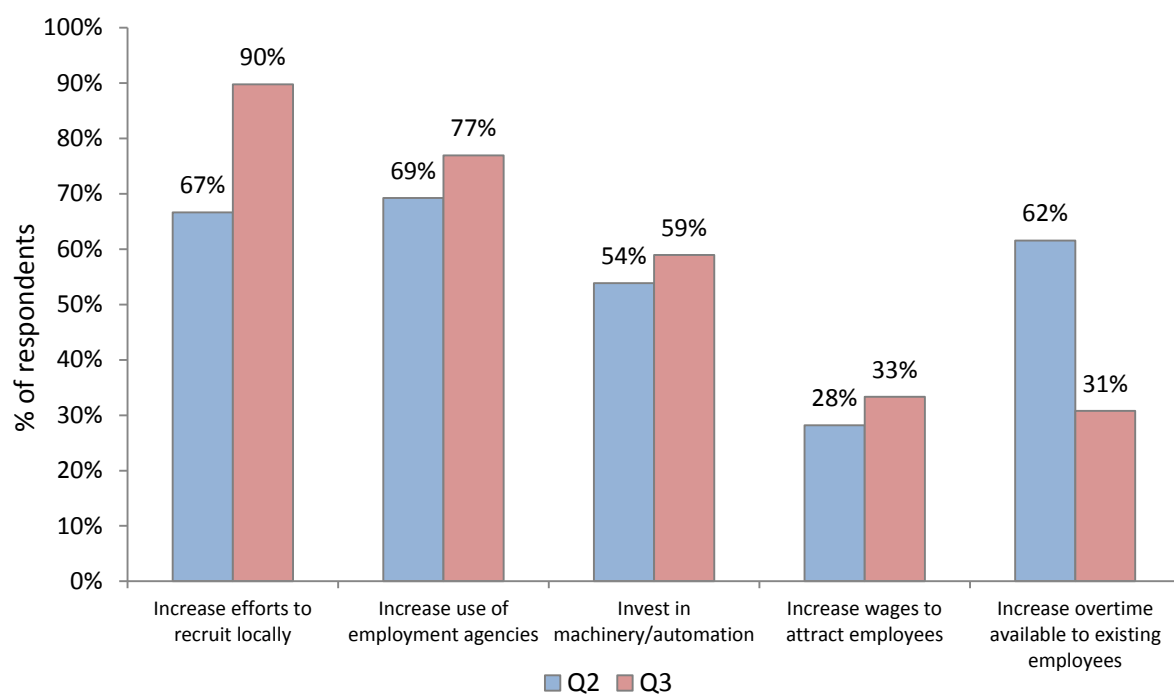


Figure 11: Adaptations seafood processing sites would aim to make if they were not able to recruit enough staff, as reported by a panel of seafood processors who responded to surveys in April and July 2018. Respondents were able to comment on all adaptations that applied to their business. Source: Seafish.

10. Automation in the seafood processing sector

A key topic in this ongoing survey work is how seafood processors would respond if they were unable to recruit enough workers. One of the most popular answers to this question is that sites would invest more money in machinery to replace workers, increase productivity of workers, or reduce the need to recruit people in the future.

A greater proportion of larger processing sites identify investment in automation as a possible response to difficulties in recruiting enough staff, see figure 12.

Automation is suited to processes in which there is consistency in the raw material and product, and when there is a high level of production. Automation is less suited to processes which are variable (such as variations in fish size or species), or that require complex decision-making. These factors, combined with the high initial cost of investing in machinery, mean that automation is a more viable option for larger processors.

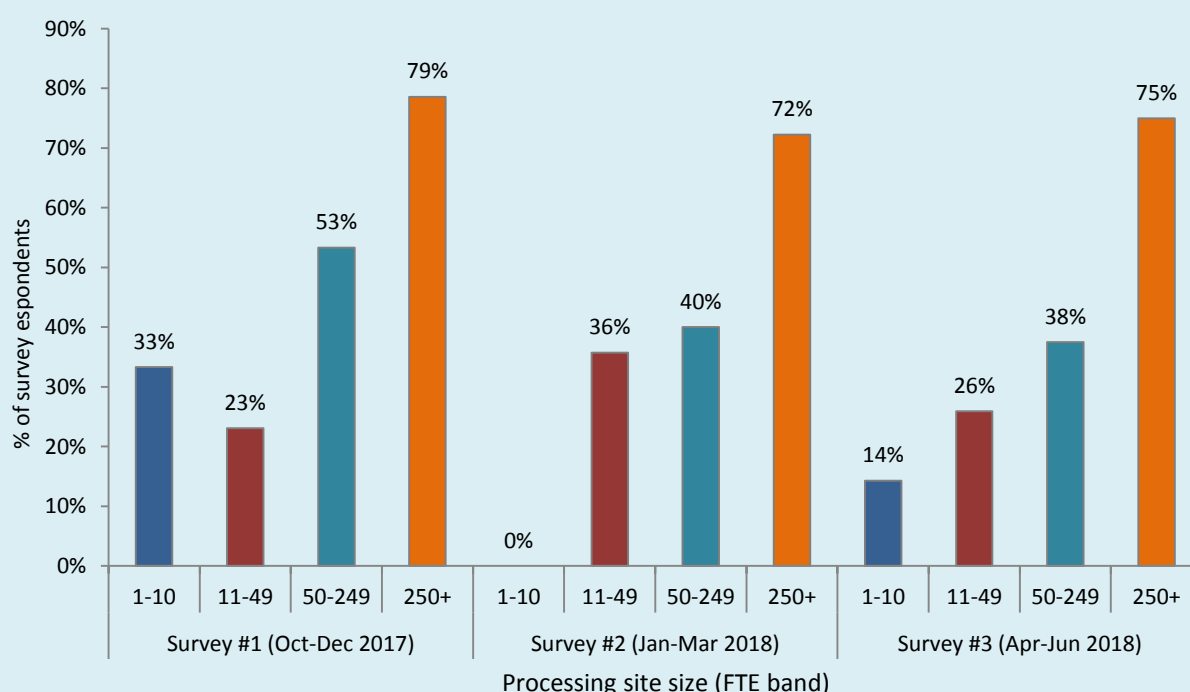


Figure 12: Proportion of sampled seafood processing sites reporting that they would increase investment in automation in response to difficulties in recruiting enough staff, by processing site size (FTE band). Based on responses to Seafish surveys on ease of recruitment in December 2017, April 2018 and July 2018. Source: Seafish.

As part of the survey, Seafish carried out semi-structured interviews with seafood processors to find out their views on the current state of automation in the industry and the potential for increased reliance on machinery in the future.

The most commonly mentioned potential benefits of automation, identified by seafood processors, are listed below:

- Reduced number of employees required leading to lower operational costs
- Higher productivity of existing employees
- Increased throughput of raw materials
- Increased consistency of product (e.g. consistency in portion size)
- Prevent workplace accidents or injuries by minimising risks (e.g. heavy lifting)

“Possible areas for automation are where there is consistency in the product: for us that is when the products enter and leave the factory in boxes.”

According to interviewees, one of the main barriers to increased adoption of automation in the seafood processing sector is that the technology required doesn't exist.

“We already automate where possible; the biggest barrier we have is that the specific technologies we need don't exist.”

Some processes currently carried out by employees are intricate (such as peeling prawns) or require visual identification or grading of products, or are done on a relatively small scale. This makes automation inappropriate or extremely difficult.

“We don't deal with a high enough volume of a single species to justify investing in automation. We respond to what the fleet is catching.”

One interviewee in the Grampian region said that the problem is not only that the technology they need doesn't exist, but the uniqueness of processes they would like to automate means that the machinery is unlikely to be developed. As there were only 377 fish processing sites which derived over 50% of their turnover from saltwater species in 2016, the potential market for seafood processing machinery in the UK is relatively small.

“Technology development companies may be put off the seafood processing sector as they may only sell a few machines and might not see a return on research and development investment.”

Key barriers to automation in the seafood processing sector reported during interviews include:

- High initial costs for processors, particularly if bespoke machinery is required
- Variation in wild-caught fish in terms of fish species, size and volume of fish processed
- Variation in products customers want, for example scallops can be shucked by machine but the roe is discarded so the final product is not right for the UK and EU markets
- Difficulties in automating delicate processes such as peeling prawns or rodding pelagic fish
- Technology does not exist to carry out some processes
- Yield from some automated processes can be lower than yield by hand processing
- Products may be of poorer quality or may be damaged by machine handling
- Lack of investment in development of machinery specific to fish processing
- No incentive for technology companies to develop specialised machinery for a small market
- May reduce the number of employees required but can create higher-skilled roles for operation or maintenance of machinery, which are harder to fill

Whilst technology will undoubtedly play a greater role in the future of seafood processing it is clear from discussions with industry that it not a solution to all problems related to staffing issues. Over the next few months Seafish will explore how mechanisation is being used both as a substitute for labour in seafood businesses and as a means of increasing productivity of existing labour forces. This research will identify implications, opportunities and threats for the UK industry.

11. Conclusions

Only 5% of seafood processors in the sample said that they had found it easier to fill vacancies in April - June 2018 than in the preceding quarter. Over half of survey respondents (57%) said they had observed no difference in the ease of recruitment whilst 38% of respondents said that recruitment in April - June 2018 was more difficult than the preceding quarter. In the previous survey some processors predicted that recruitment would become more difficult in April - June due to an expected seasonal increase in landings by the fleet.

Larger seafood processing sites were more likely than smaller sites to have difficulties recruiting workers. All seafood processors in the 1-10 FTE size band (7 sites) in the sample reported no difference in recruitment in April - June 2018 compared to January - March. In contrast 69% of sites in the 250+ FTE size band (11 sites) said recruitment was more difficult than the previous quarter.

The key factor affecting the ease of recruitment in April - June 2018 was a shortage of candidates. One in five survey respondents reported that a shortage of candidates was a major factor affecting ease of recruitment. Some respondents to the previous survey predicted this change in ease of recruitment in response to an expected seasonal increase in landings by the fleet.

The main barrier to recruiting British staff in the seafood processing industry remains the negative perception of the industry held by potential candidates. In total, 55% of processors in the sample said that the main barrier to recruiting British staff is that British workers do not want to work in seafood processing factories. Reasons for this included the physicality of the job, the cold and wet working environment and unsociable working hours. One fifth of respondents said that British candidates *"are more likely to stay on benefits than work."*

Over 80% of processors in the sample said that they would increase their efforts to recruit locally if they were unable to hire enough staff using their current recruitment techniques. Increasing efforts to recruit locally remained the most common response to questions about adaptations processors would make if they could not recruit enough workers. The next most common response was to increase use of employment agencies (68% of respondents) and increase overtime available to existing workers (41% of respondents).

Seafood processors confidence in their ability to recruit enough staff across all skill levels in the next quarter was lower in July 2018 than in April 2018. In total 39% of respondents said they were doubtful or slightly doubtful about their ability to recruit enough high-skilled staff in the next quarter (July – September). However 66% of respondents said they were confident or very confident about retaining their existing high-skilled staff.

Almost two thirds of seafood processors in the sample were confident about their ability to meet their planned production levels in July - September 2018. Only 4% of respondents (3 sites) were doubtful about meeting planned production levels; 16% (11 sites) said they were slightly doubtful.

There was an increase in the proportion of respondents that said recruitment in the most recent quarter was more difficult than in the previous quarter. For Q2 (January - March) 35% of the panel said recruitment in the quarter had been easier and 44% said it had been more difficult than the preceding quarter. For Q3 (April - June) no respondents said recruitment in the quarter had been easier and 69% said it had been more difficult than the preceding quarter.

Seafish will continue to collect and publish robust and reliable information on the seafood processing sector workforce. The next Seafish quarterly survey is due in September 2018 and the next annual survey of workforce composition will be carried out in November 2018.

Appendix 1 – Quarterly Survey Questionnaire

Seafood Processing Sector - Labour Availability Evidence Gathering (Quarterly)

For the period: **April to June 2018**

1. General information

a. Company name:	
b. Site/facility/unit name	
c. Site postcode	
d. Company contact name:	
e. Contact email:	

2. Current vacancies

a. How many vacancies do you have open on the day of completing this survey?							
b. On average, how many days are vacancies open for?							
c. Compared to last quarter, has the time it takes to fill vacancies:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Increased</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Decreased</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stayed the same</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Increased	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decreased	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stayed the same	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Decreased	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Stayed the same	<input type="checkbox"/>						

3.a. Are you finding it easier, harder, or no difference to fill vacancies this quarter compared to the previous quarter?

Easier	Harder	No difference
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

3.b. Why do you think this is? Please tell us all the reasons affecting ease of recruitment:

Enter text here

4.a. How many seasonal staff did you aim to recruit in the past quarter?

4.b. How many seasonal staff actually recruit in the past quarter?

5. How did you recruit permanent, temporary and seasonal staff in the past quarter? (please select all that apply)

Direct recruiting	Permanent	Temporary	Seasonal	Details (which sites/publications/countries if applicable)
Online advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advertising abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Trade publication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Indirect recruiting	Permanent	Temporary	Seasonal	Details (which agencies if applicable)
Employment agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Job Centre referral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Enter text here				

6. In the next three months, how confident are you in your company's ability to:

	Very confident	Confident	Neutral	Slightly doubtful	Very doubtful	Don't know	Not applicable
a. Recruit enough high-skilled staff?							
b. Recruit enough low-skilled staff?							
c. Recruit enough seasonal staff?							
d. Retain enough high-skilled staff?							
e. Retain enough low-skilled staff?							
e. Retain enough seasonal staff?							
f. Meet your planned levels of production?							

7. In your opinion, what are the main barriers to recruiting British staff in your company

Enter text here

8.a. How would your company adapt if you can't get enough workers? (tick all that apply)

a. Increase efforts to recruit locally	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Increase use of employment agencies to provide labour	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Increase wages to attract employees	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Increase overtime available to existing employees	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Reduce production	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Reduce purchasing of raw materials	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Relocate inside the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Relocate outside of the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Increase investment in machinery (if applicable see Q8.b. and 8.c.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Diversify business to suit available labour	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Company would not be affected	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. No adaptation necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Company would become unviable (no adaptation possible)	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Enter text here

8.b. Please describe the investment in machinery that your business would make if you can't recruit enough workers (if applicable)

#

8.c. What is the expected impact this investment would have on the number of staff your business needs to employ? (if applicable)

Enter text here

9. Is there any further information you would like to share about the business impacts of the EU-exit on your company with regard to labour availability?

Enter text here

*****END OF THE QUARTERLY SURVEY*****