

A BPF Members Survey

The role of EU workers in the UK plastics industry

April 2017

Participation

The survey was conducted in April 2017.

The survey, which was open exclusively to members of the British Plastics Federation, was completed by 88 firms.

The respondents were drawn from the following plastics industry sectors represented within the BPF:

Plastics Processors	70%
Raw Materials (Producers and Distributors)	16%
Recyclers	3%
Machinery and Equipment	3%
Other	7%

Size of Business

£0-5m	22%
£5-10m	25%
£10-25m	17%
£25-50m	10%
£50-100m	17%
£100-250m	6%
£250-500m	1%
Over £500m	1%

Location of Firms

East Midlands	11%
East of England	9%
London	7%
North East	2%
North West	15%
Northern Ireland	3%
Scotland	7%
South East	18%
South West	16%
Wales	14%
West Midlands	9 %
Yorkshire and Humberside	11%

Staff by Nationality

UK	83%
EU (non-UK	15%
Rest of the World	2%

Roles Carried out by EU (Non-UK) Staff

Management (supervisor and up)	20%
Technical (setter, technician, engineer etc.)	24%
Low skilled workers (i.e. shop floor)	53%
Other	2%

Companies Who Recruit Temporary Staff During Busy Periods

Yes	52%
No	48%

Temporary Staff by Nationality

UK	48%
EU (non-UK	48%
Rest of the World	4%

Current turnover of permanent staff (%)? (i.e. number of leavers as a % of the total permanent workforce annualized)

7%

As a direct result of the EU referendum, have you experienced any changes to your overall workforce?

No change	58%
EU nationals are concerned about their right to remain in the UK	36%
EU nationals are considering leaving	14%
Difficulties in filling vacancies	10%
EU nationals have left	8%
Some workers have expressed concern about undertaking business visits or working temporarily in other EU member states	7%
EU nationals seeking pay increases (to offset impact of devaluation of sterling)	1%

As an employer, do you think the job opportunities for EU workers in the UK are currently hindered due to uncertainty about their ability to remain working within the UK long term?

Yes	57%
No	43%

If you have experienced a difficulty in recruiting or retaining staff since the referendum which position(s) have been most affected?

Shop Floor	44%
Engineers	31%
Technical Management	16%
Apprentices	9%
Management/Supervisory	9%
Sales Force	9%

What feasible alternatives do you see to recruiting EU migrants?

Employing UK workers	61%
Training existing staff	39%
Automating the role	29%
Employing non-EU workers	27%
Moving activity elsewhere	14%
Stopping activity	3%

What are your main preferences for a new immigration policy?

Short and simple application process	59%
Covers low skilled workers as well as skilled	51%
Fast processing time for applications	36%
Low cost to my organisation	29%
Enables us to meet short term, temporary needs	26%



British Plastics Federation

British Plastics Federation

BPF House
6 Bath Place
Rivington Street
London
EC2A 3JE

Tel
020 7457 5000
Fax
020 7457 5020