



Fire Industry Association

**Is there a skills crisis in
the fire industry?**

Welcome!

The survey results contained within this report are the result of a number of research actions that the FIA has taken in response to the anecdotal stories of recruitment issues perpetuated within our industry.

Our members initially 'raised the alarm' (excuse the pun) about the current recruitment crisis through our various Council meetings. We then escalated this issue and began investigating further, consulting other member companies and speaking to recruiters who also backed up this claim. However, there was no data to support this and it was difficult to gauge how widespread the issue was across regions of the UK and which sectors were suffering the most.

It has often been noted that the fire industry as a whole is an 'invisible' industry, and not the industry that young people immediately think of when considering a career path. After holding a focus group with some school leavers, it became even clearer: this age group were totally unaware the job opportunities available in our industry. But with some further discussion, they gained some understanding and began to ask questions about what jobs they could potentially do.

It has become clear, now more than ever, that we can influence young people into thinking about careers in the fire industry; we can raise awareness; we can start discussions with key individuals.

However, before we could start engaging we needed to find out what the industry itself thought of this issue. Contained within these pages you will find out what level of job roles have been the most difficult to recruit for, how many people aged 16-25 have been hired nationally, and how those young people found out about the role.

Take the time to digest the information – as it could be beneficial in changing your strategy for hiring. Perhaps the most surprising statistic was that less than 10% of hires were as a result of the job being posted through the job centre. Even less were through school careers advisors or a Google search. These are all methods that can be utilised to spread the word about vacancies.

A final note for your thoughts: don't rule out those that have no experience coming straight from school or college. The FIA provides a comprehensive suite of training and nationally recognised qualifications that you can rely on to bring those new hires up to speed. By doing so, you'll be bolstering your business, as well as the industry, and securing the future of a young individual – something we should all be proud of.

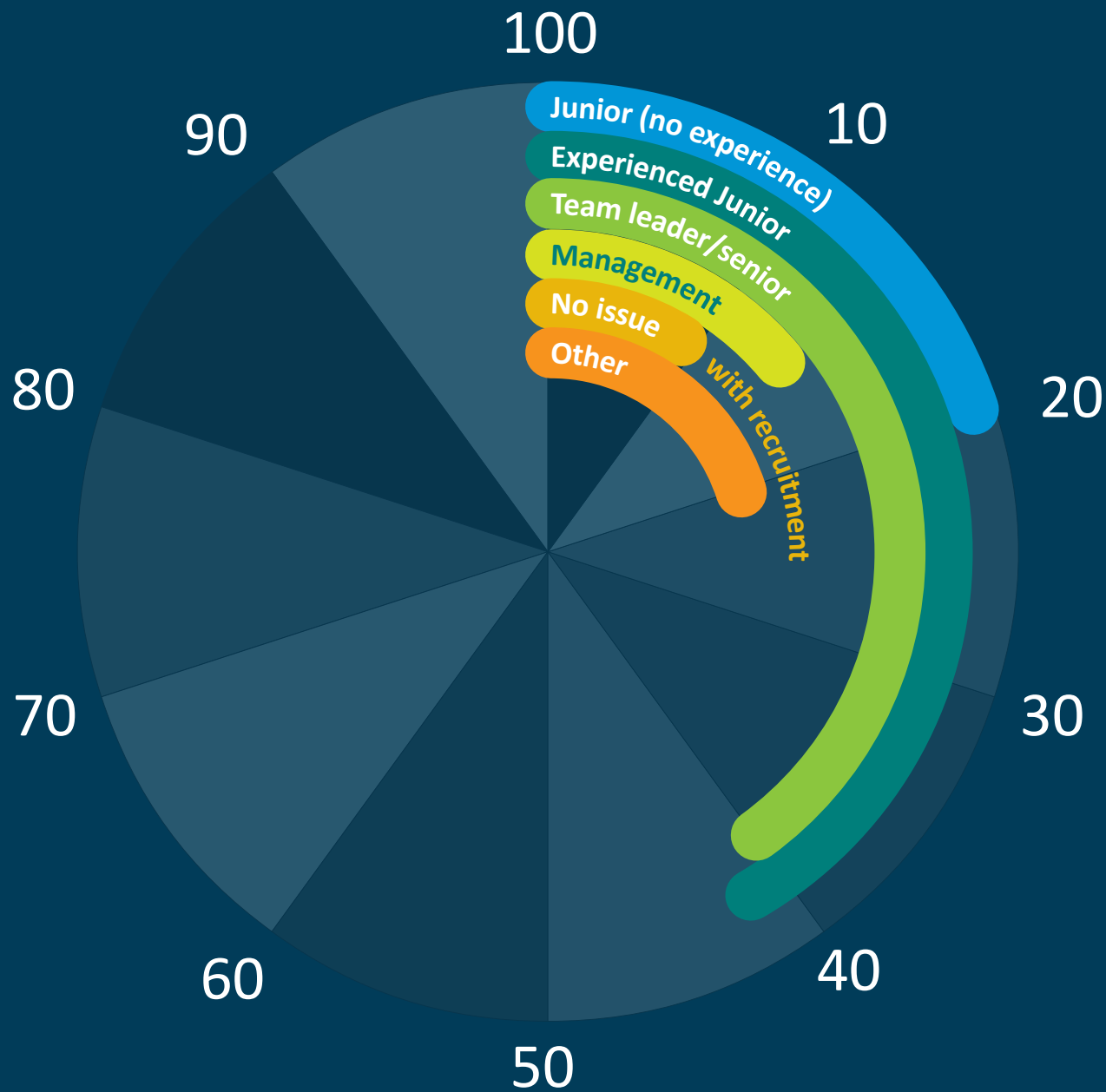
Ian Moore
CEO

How can we find out?

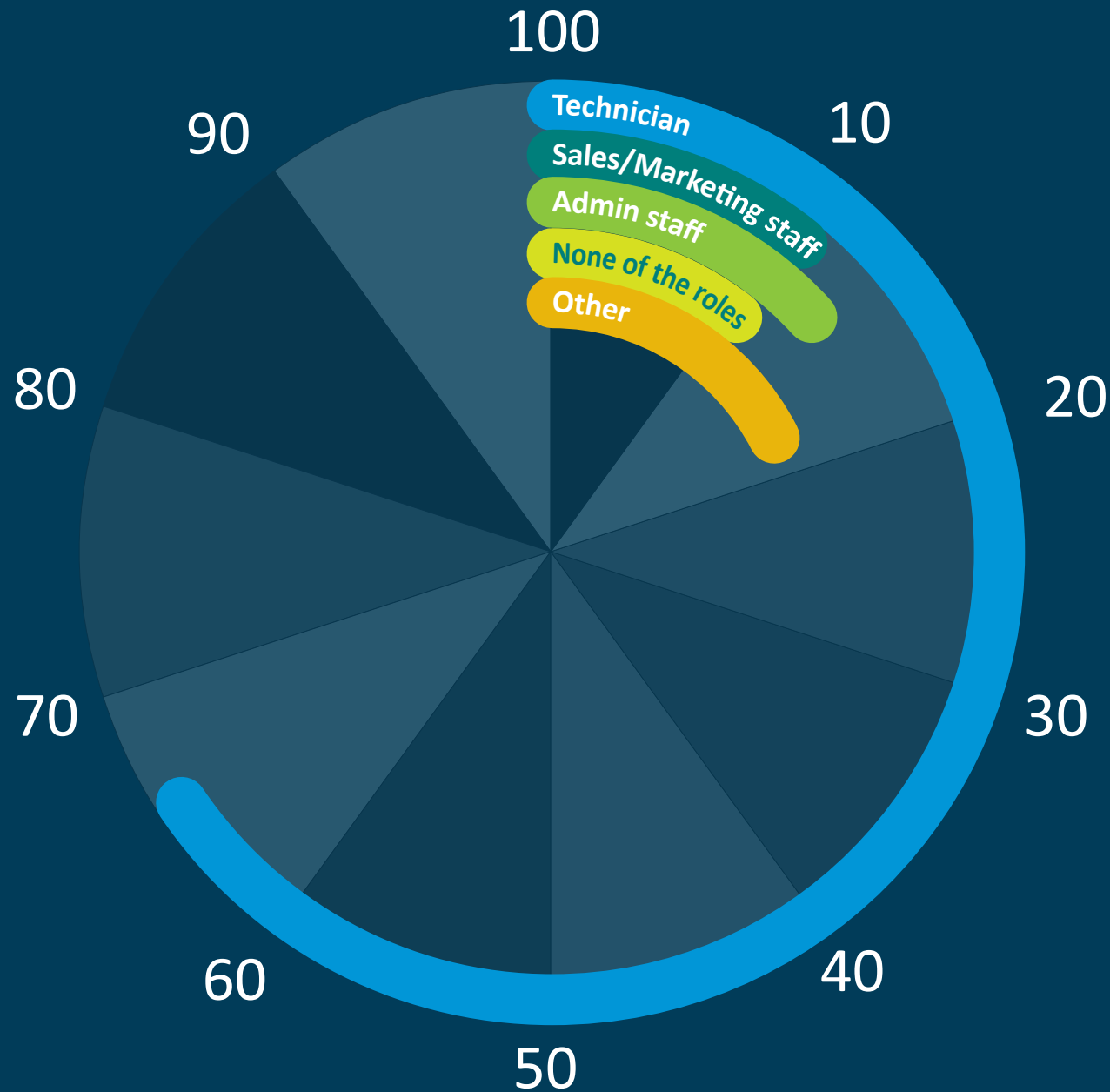
Which sectors in the industry are facing the biggest skills gap?
Are these gaps specific to certain job roles or regions?

- 121 companies replied
- 50% FIA members and 50% non-members
- 10 key questions

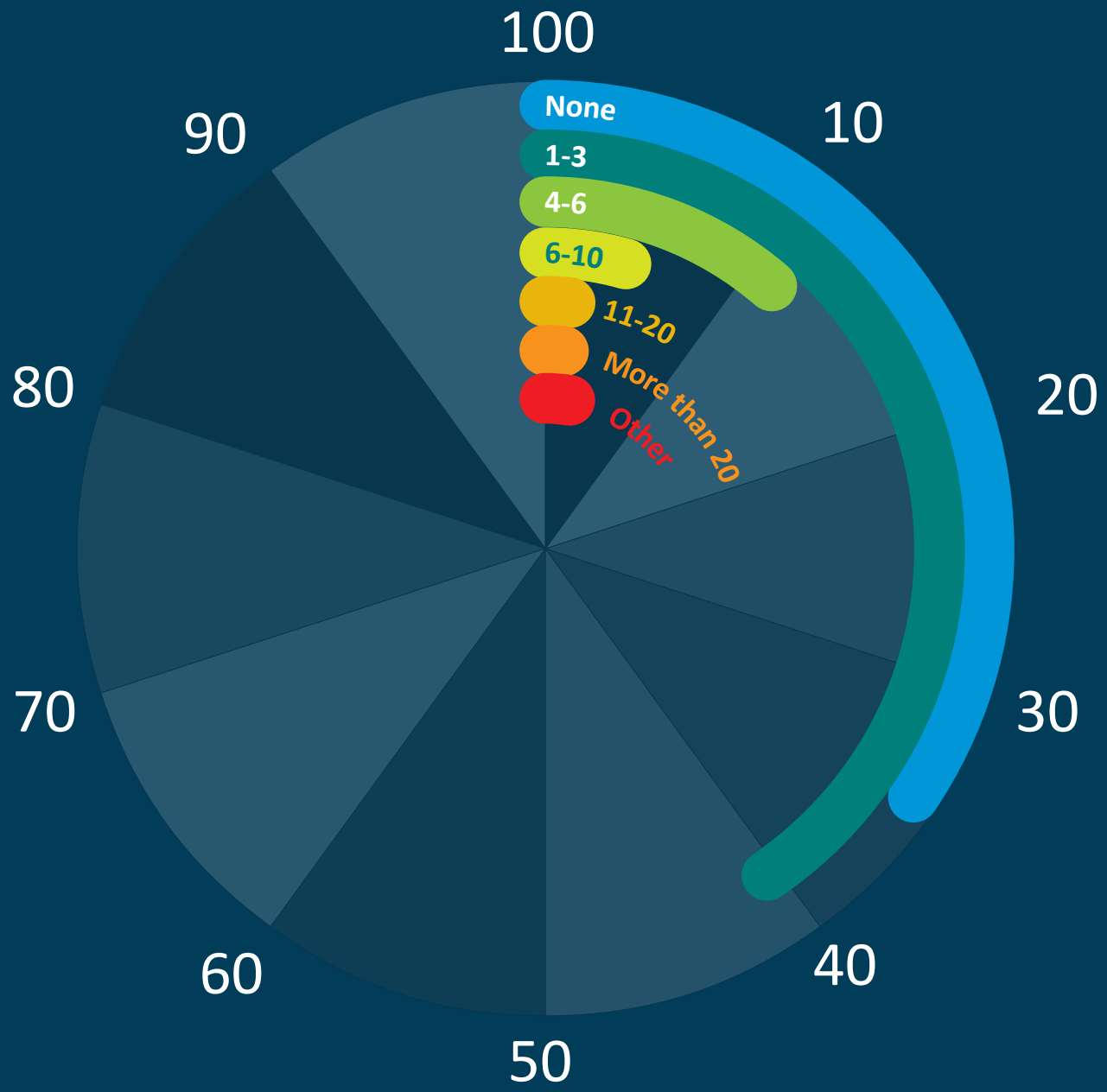
What level of job roles have you been struggling to recruit recently (in the last 18 months)?



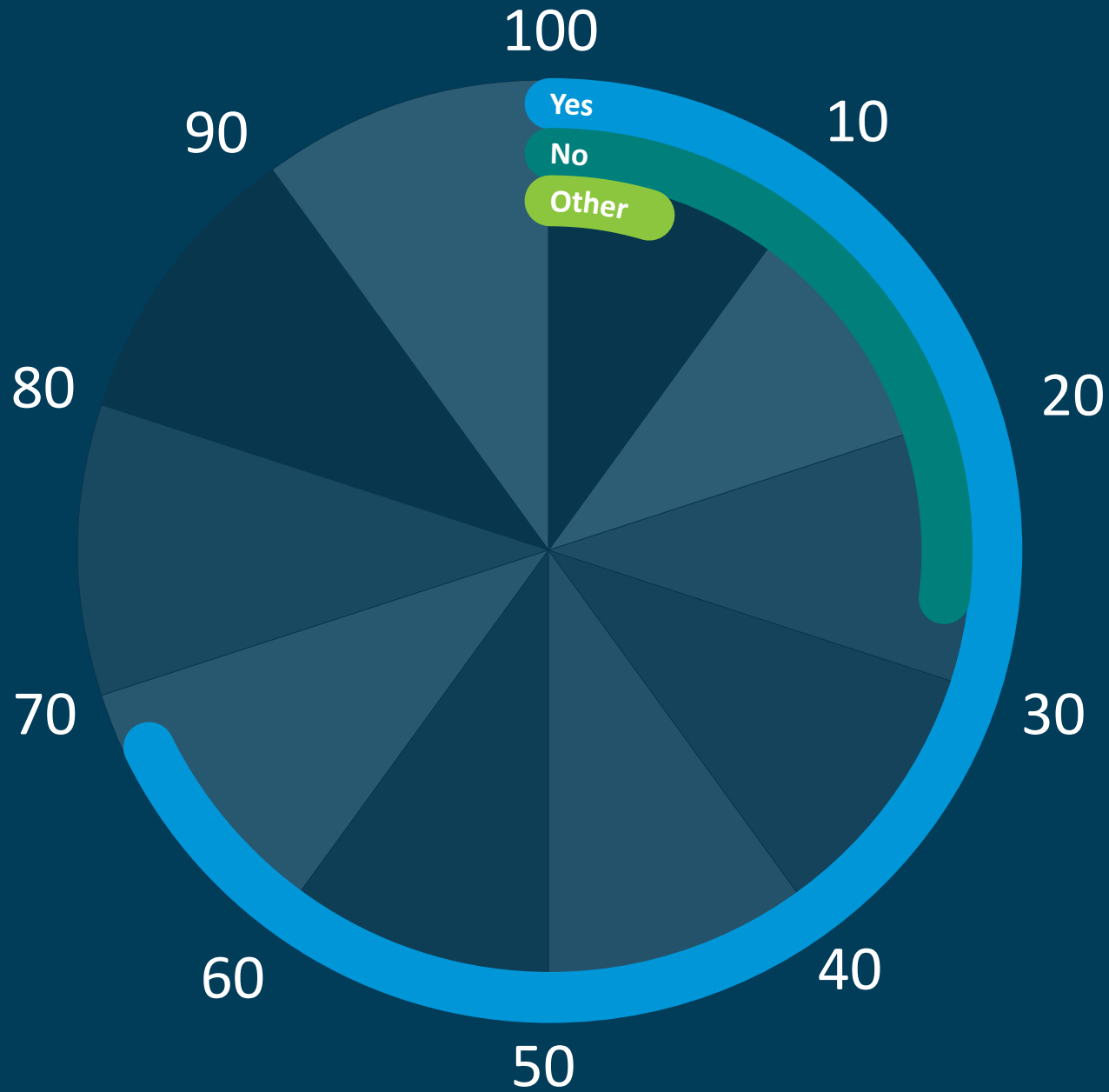
What roles have you been struggling to recruit that would be suitable for applicants aged 16-25?



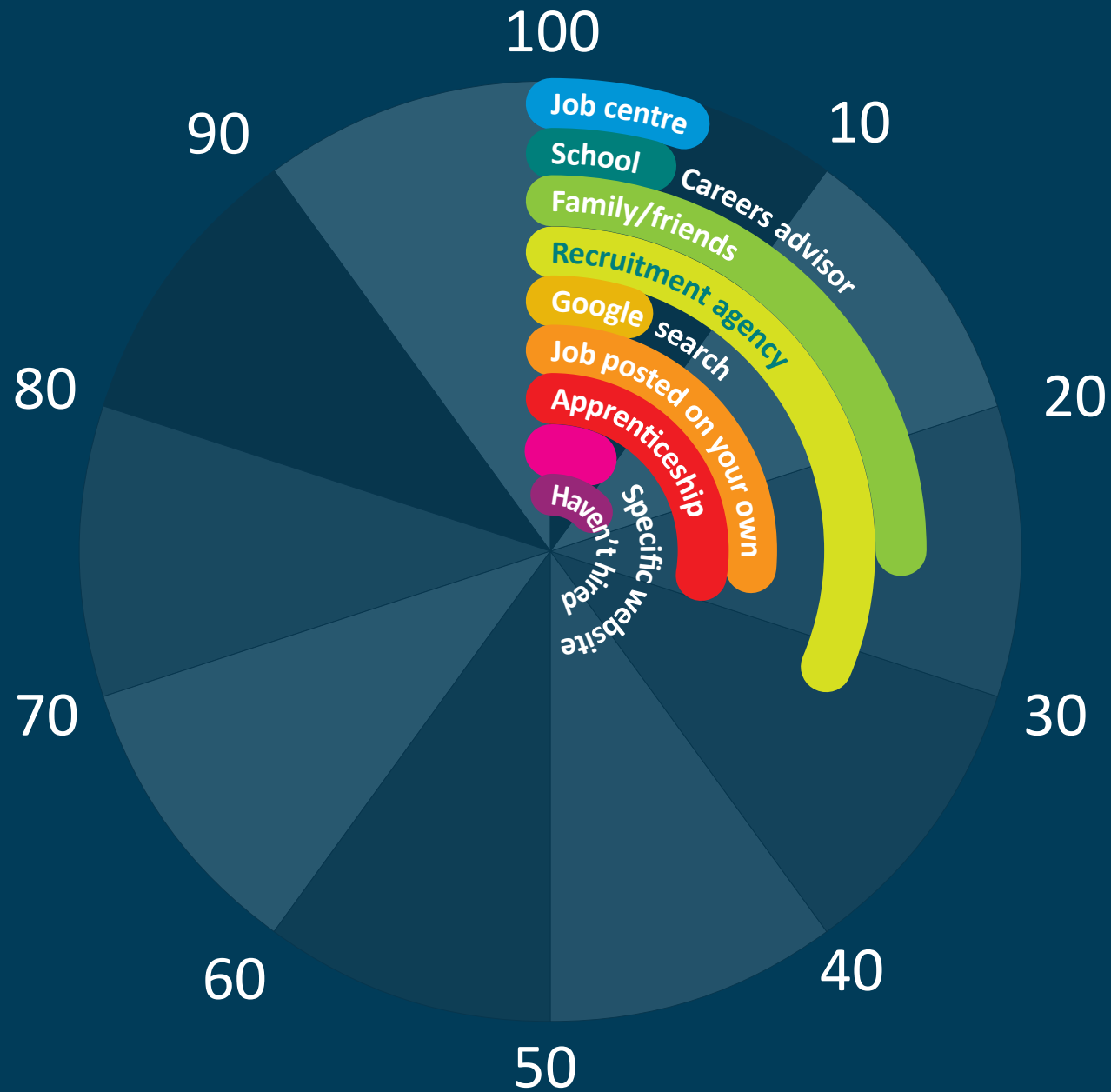
How many people aged 16-25 have you hired in the last 18 months?



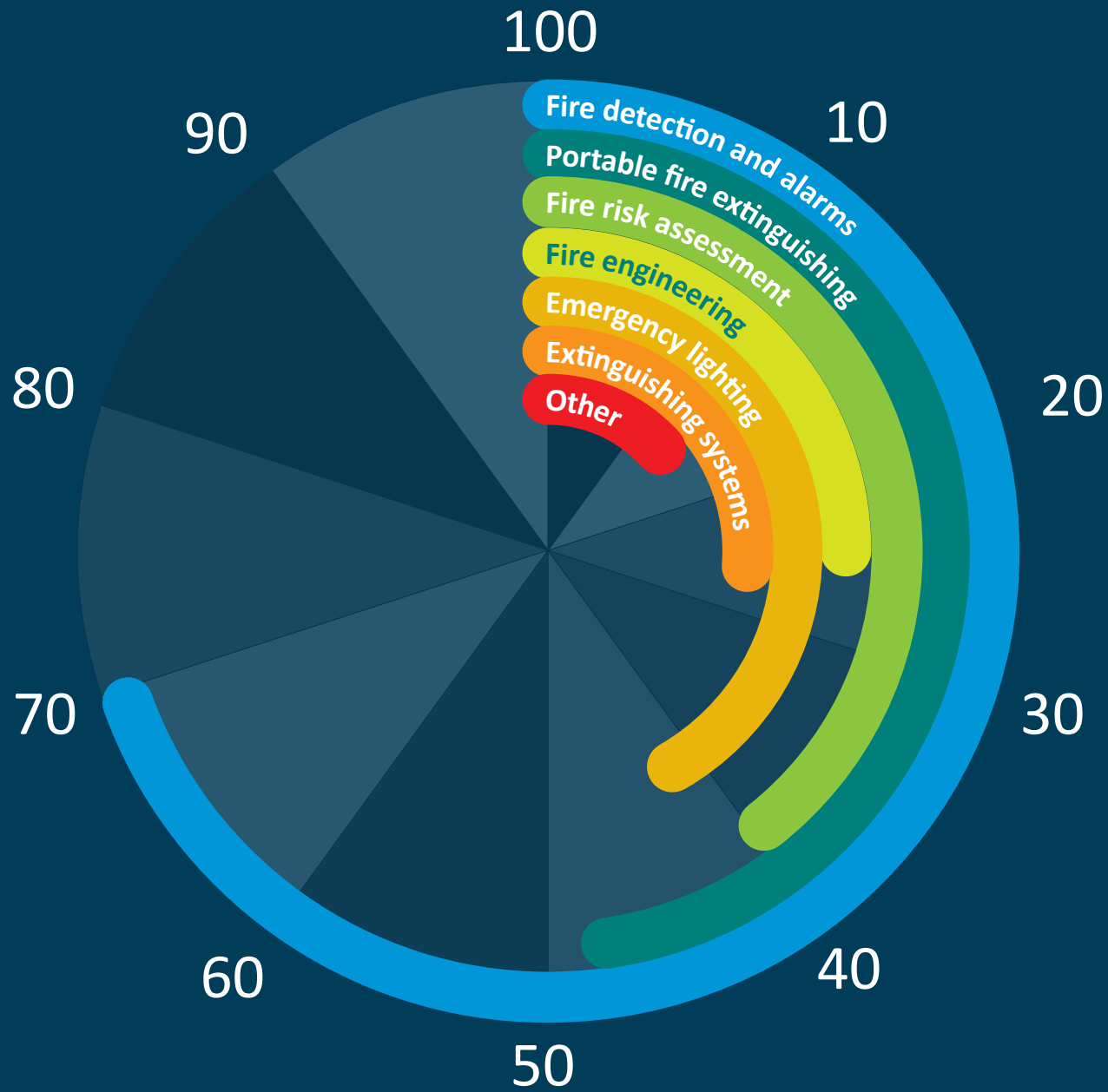
Do you plan to hire anyone aged 16-25 in the next 12 months?



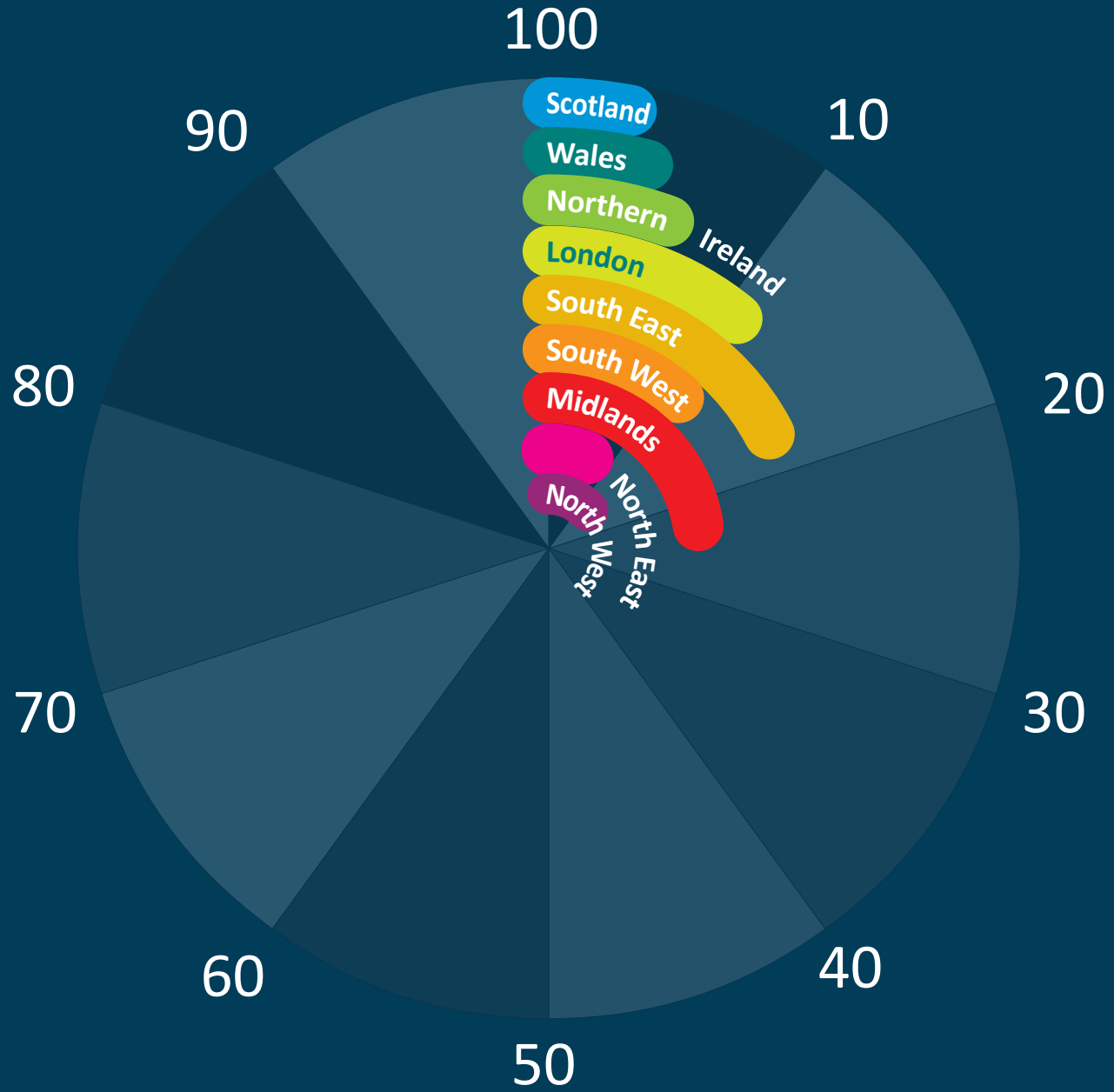
If you hired anyone aged 16-25 in the last 5 years, how did they find out about the role?



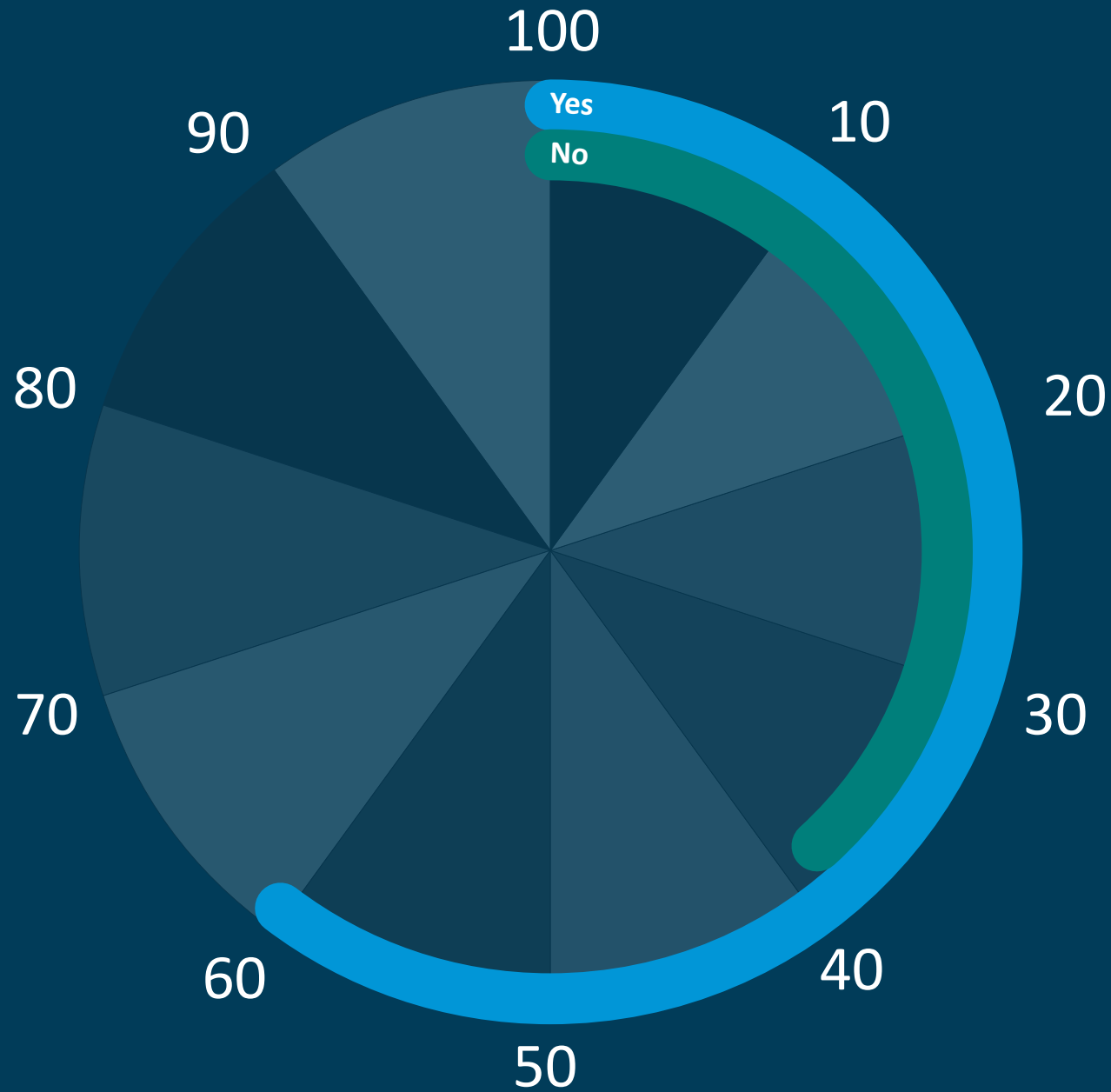
What sectors do you operate in?



In which region?



Would you be interested in helping us to roll out a new scheme to promote careers in the fire industry to 16-25 year olds?



Where do we go from here?

- Online survey for schools and colleges
- Online survey for recruitment agencies
- Plan an awareness campaign based on this information
- Promoting the fire industry to school leavers
 - School / College tour (careers advice)
- We've made a start with nationally recognised qualifications

Why Study and Pass?

- Defines competence
- Increase relevant knowledge
- Increase confidence
- Gain credibility
- Career progression

First Range of Courses Developed

Common Units

- Foundation in Fire Detection and Alarm
- Environment
- Health & Safety at Work

Role Specific Units

- Fire Detection and Alarm **Design** Theory and Regulatory Requirements
- Fire Detection and Alarm **Installation** Theory and Regulatory Requirements
- Fire Detection and Alarm **Maintenance** Theory and Regulatory Requirements
- Fire Detection and Alarm **Commissioning** Theory and Regulatory Requirements

Developing a Career Pathway

- Awareness
- Apprenticeships
- On job training
- Basic external training courses
- Nationally recognized learning courses (e.g. FIA QCF level 3)
- University Degree (e.g. UCLAN – University of Central Lancashire)

Conclusions

This survey gives a brief overview of the results we gained.

For deeper analysis, the responses were then filtered by sector, by location, and then finally sector with location, e.g. Fire Risk Assessors in the Midlands versus those in London.

Below is a summary of our conclusions of the two areas that we gained the most responses from.

London:

- Has more people searching online for jobs, with slightly more friends and family recommending the industry as a career. Slightly more job centres are helping individuals access jobs.
- No school careers advisors are informing young people.
- London has more of a problem with team leaders and management than the midlands.
- The need for experienced junior staff is still a significant concern.
- The biggest sector answering this survey was FD&A, followed by a large group of Fire Engineering companies and Emergency Lighting.

Midlands:

- Has a much bigger problem with recruitment in general than London.
- Some school careers advisors are informing young people, but this could be higher. In the midlands companies are relying more on recruiters, and posting jobs on their own websites doesn't necessarily mean that they are being found online (Google search is less prevalent).
- The Midlands has more of a problem with experienced junior staff and the 'other' category (which just lists a few job roles), rather than management or team leaders.
- The biggest sector answering this survey was FD&A, followed by Portable Extinguishing.



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