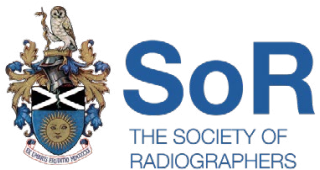


Diagnostic Radiography Workforce

2023 UK Census

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Each year the Society of Radiographers (SoR) undertakes a UK-wide diagnostic radiography workforce census to gain intelligence about the clinical imaging radiography workforce.

SoR is the professional body and trade union for the whole of the radiographic workforce, and we collect this data to support and advance the interests of our profession, for example as evidence to the Pay Review Body.

We collect data that encompasses the whole of the radiographic workforce, from clinical support workers to advanced and consultant practitioners. Our data also allows recognition of the breadth of

professional activities carried out by our workforce over and above the activities of imaging acquisition and reporting, allowing us to provide evidence to support workforce modelling, education and training requirements across the whole of the United Kingdom.

It is of note that our report and data are accessible to all.

As ever, the census collection was undertaken at a time when services were facing significant pressures, with an increase in demand and a fatigued workforce. We would like to express our sincere thanks to those services who submitted their data.

The 2023 workforce census captures data about the diagnostic radiography workforce in the UK at a census date of 1 November 2023. Radiology services managers (or equivalents) were asked to answer the census on behalf of all diagnostic radiography (medical imaging) services in their hospital/workplace or organisation. They were asked to include details of all practitioners in the career framework, from clinical support workers and assistant practitioners through to advanced and consultant practitioners, including apprenticeship posts (England only) and trainee assistant practitioners. Together these are referred to as the 'diagnostic radiography workforce' in this report. Excluded are clerical workers, clinical scientists, radiotherapy staff and third-party-managed services where the staff are employed by the third party.

Respondents were asked about their:

- Contact details and details of the workplaces and medical imaging modalities on behalf of which they were responding
- Total diagnostic radiography workforce establishment (whole time equivalent) by Agenda for Change (AfC) band
- Establishment per reported modality by AfC band
- Vacancy rates by AfC band
- Leaving reasons
- Internationally educated radiographers
- Apprenticeships
- Professional activities
- Postgraduate training
- Advanced and consultant practice
- Agency staff data
- Additional comments

Data collection was carried out using the online survey tool Alchemer® between November 2023 and January 2024. Email invitations were sent to 147 providers of medical imaging services in the UK, identified using the SoR's database.

The census was also promoted via the Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR) publications, website and social media.

Some 630* respondents opened the survey, with 75 reportable datasets received. (*The total of 630 respondents was, we believe, due to a general link mistakenly being promoted in an SoR publication.)

Of the 75 returns, 19 were from a single modality service within a larger NHS organisation (i.e. completed by the modality lead). Returns were checked to ensure that the data received from these 19 was not part of data returned from the full NHS service completions.

This data is reported in an appendix (section 21) of this report but excluded from the main findings highlighted in the executive summary.

Of the 75 returns, not every respondent answered every question. Data from NHS, independent sector (IS) and single modality NHS providers is reported below with an 'n' number indicating the number of respondents to each question.

Where appropriate, data has been reported by UK nation.

Data collected from IS providers has been reported separately. Where appropriate, combined NHS and IS data is reported.

Links to the questions for the 2023 census can be found in the [downloads section](#) at the end of this report.

◀ 2. Summary findings

Due to the small number of returns, these results should be treated with caution, and any assumptions made regarding the main findings are based purely on the number of responses received.

Consequently, this report cannot depict a UK-wide or nation picture but can only show data from across the 35 responding NHS trusts/health boards.

Vacancy rates

- The average UK vacancy rate (NHS) reported at the time of the census date of 1 November 2023 by the 35 NHS respondents is 9.1%.
- By UK nation, the average NHS vacancy rates reported at the census date of 1 November 2023 are 9.82% for England, 12.8% for Northern Ireland, 5.07% for Scotland and 6.05% for Wales.
- The average vacancy rate reported by the 21 returning IS organisations at the time of the census date is 7.1%.

Vacancy rates AfC band

- Reported vacancy rates by AfC

band 5 and IS equivalent are 10% and 13.3%, respectively.

- IS respondents reported a vacancy rate for clinical support workforce band 2 of 29.85%.

Leaving reasons

The main reasons respondents gave for postholders leaving their organisations (both NHS and IS) were career development or promotion within another NHS imaging department/NHS other department or post in a higher education institution (HEI)/research institution, followed by personal reasons.

Apprenticeship posts

As of 1 November 2023, 15 NHS and 1 IS respondents reported having apprenticeship posts ranging from support worker to advanced practitioner and sonographer.

Professional activities – NHS

Respondents reported that NHS bands 2 to 7 spend approximately 53% to 85% of their time on clinical-related activities, while bands 8a to 8d spend 45% to 76% of their time

on leadership and management-related activities.

Professional activities – IS

Respondents reported that bands 2 to 7 typically spend approximately 50% to 80% of their time on clinical-related activities, while bands 8a to 8d allocate 30% to 40% of their time to leadership and management-related activities.

Internationally educated radiographers

No conclusions are drawn due to the low number of responses.

Postgraduate training

No conclusions are drawn due to the low number of responses.

Advanced and consultant practice

No conclusions are drawn due to the low number of responses.

Agency staff data

No conclusions are drawn due to the low number of responses **and due to the nature of how the question was asked, which did not allow for departments to select 0%.**

Additional comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments. Many comments related to the survey questions; those relating to service provision and workforce are reported below.

Major issue with lack of funding for postgraduate training or backfill across all modalities.

All advanced practice radiographers have both clinical enhanced scope of practice as well as management functions; these can be competing needs and proved difficult to maintain balance and focus of

staff. Consultant radiographer role much more appealing with a mostly clinical focus and little to no management functions. Assistant practitioners have undertaken additional roles such as leading on promoting informed choice activities and learning disability championing; no career progression for them will eventually lead to attrition, it is felt. Very little career progression opportunities for band 6s due to workforce demographics may also lead to attrition for progression. Management becoming an increasing difficult and challenging career path and less staff willing to go that route, wanting to remain clinical.

Links to the questions for the 2023 census can be found in the [downloads section](#) at the end of this report.

➤ 3. NHS data collection

This section of the report will review the data submitted by the 35 respondents who are responding on behalf of an NHS organisation.

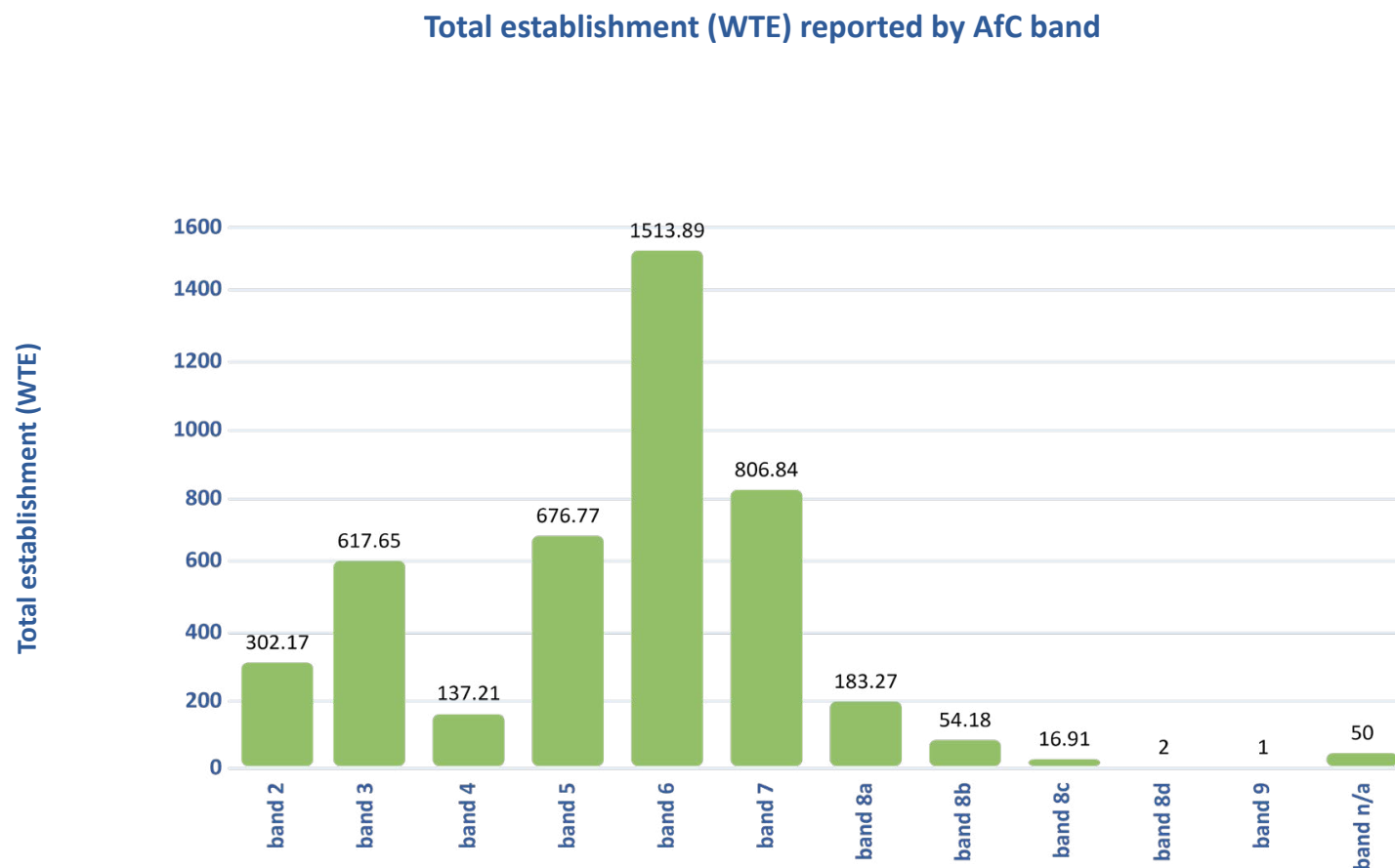
➤ 3.1 NHS: Establishment and vacancy rates

Thirty-five NHS respondents completed the census questionnaire in full on behalf of their respective NHS healthcare organisation, with 23 responses from NHS England, 3 from Northern Ireland, 7 from Scotland and 2 from Wales.

Please find a breakdown of the data submitted in the following section.

3.2. NHS: Diagnostic radiography workforce establishment (WTE) by AfC band and UK country

Respondents were asked to detail the total diagnostic radiography workforce establishment WTE by AfC band as of 1 November 2023. Note that the number of services responding to this question was 35. The responses are detailed in Figures 1 and 2.



Agenda for Change (AfC) band

Figure 1. NHS diagnostic radiography WTE reported by AfC band (n=35)

NHS: Total diagnostic radiography workforce establishment (WTE) by UK county

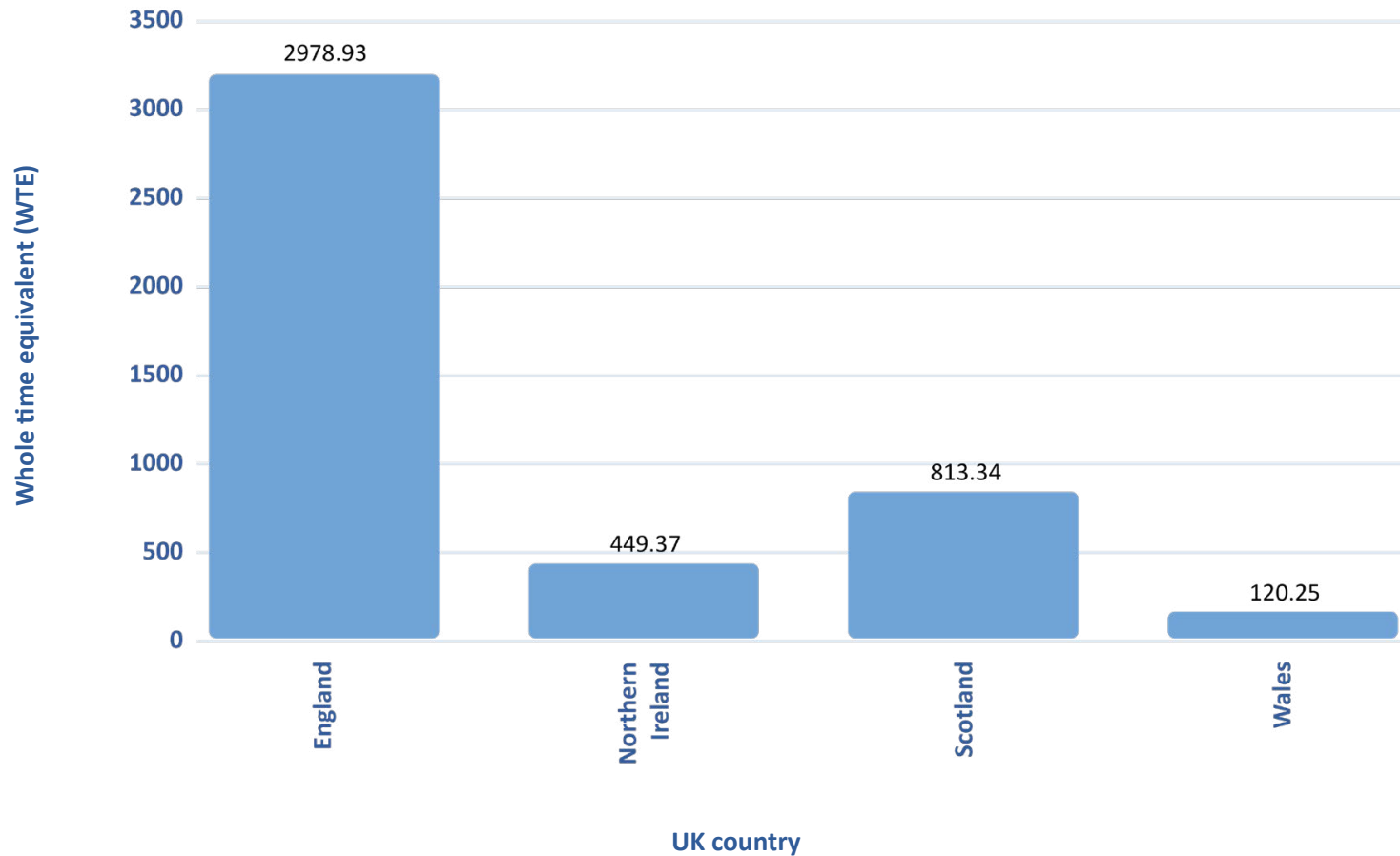


Figure 2. NHS diagnostic radiography WTE reported by UK country (n=35)

3.3. NHS and independent sector combined: Total diagnostic radiography workforce establishment (WTE) by AfC

*or equivalent as reported by the 21 IS organisation returns.

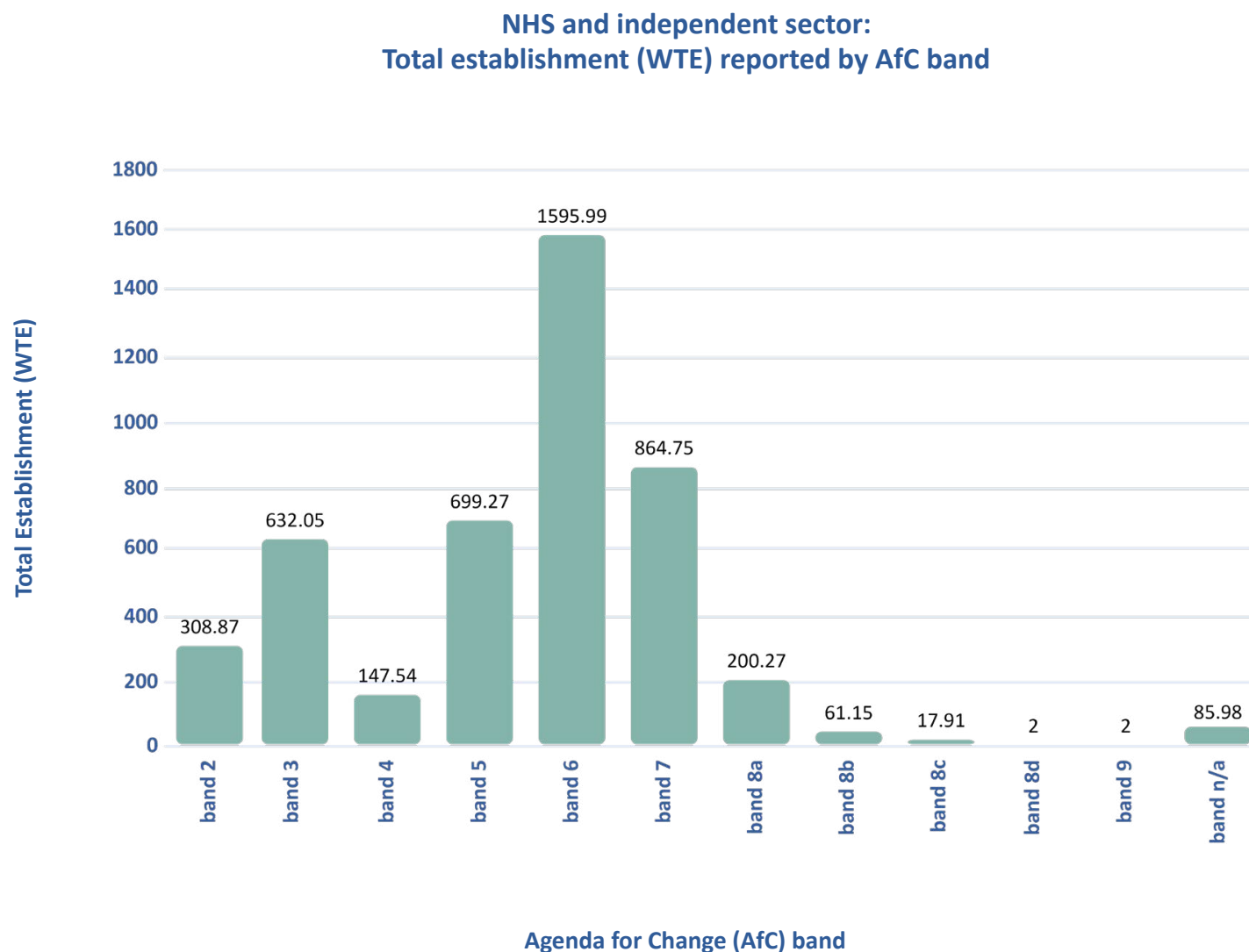


Figure 3. NHS and IS diagnostic radiography WTE reported by AfC band* (n=56)

4. NHS: Vacancy rates

Respondents were asked to provide the number of diagnostic radiography workforce posts that were vacant (WTE) as of 1 November 2023. Figures 4 and 5 show the vacancy rates by UK country and AfC band. Of the 33 respondents to this question, only one organisation reported a band 9 post in its establishment.

Vacancy rate is defined as the total number of WTE vacancies as a percentage of the WTE establishment number of staff.

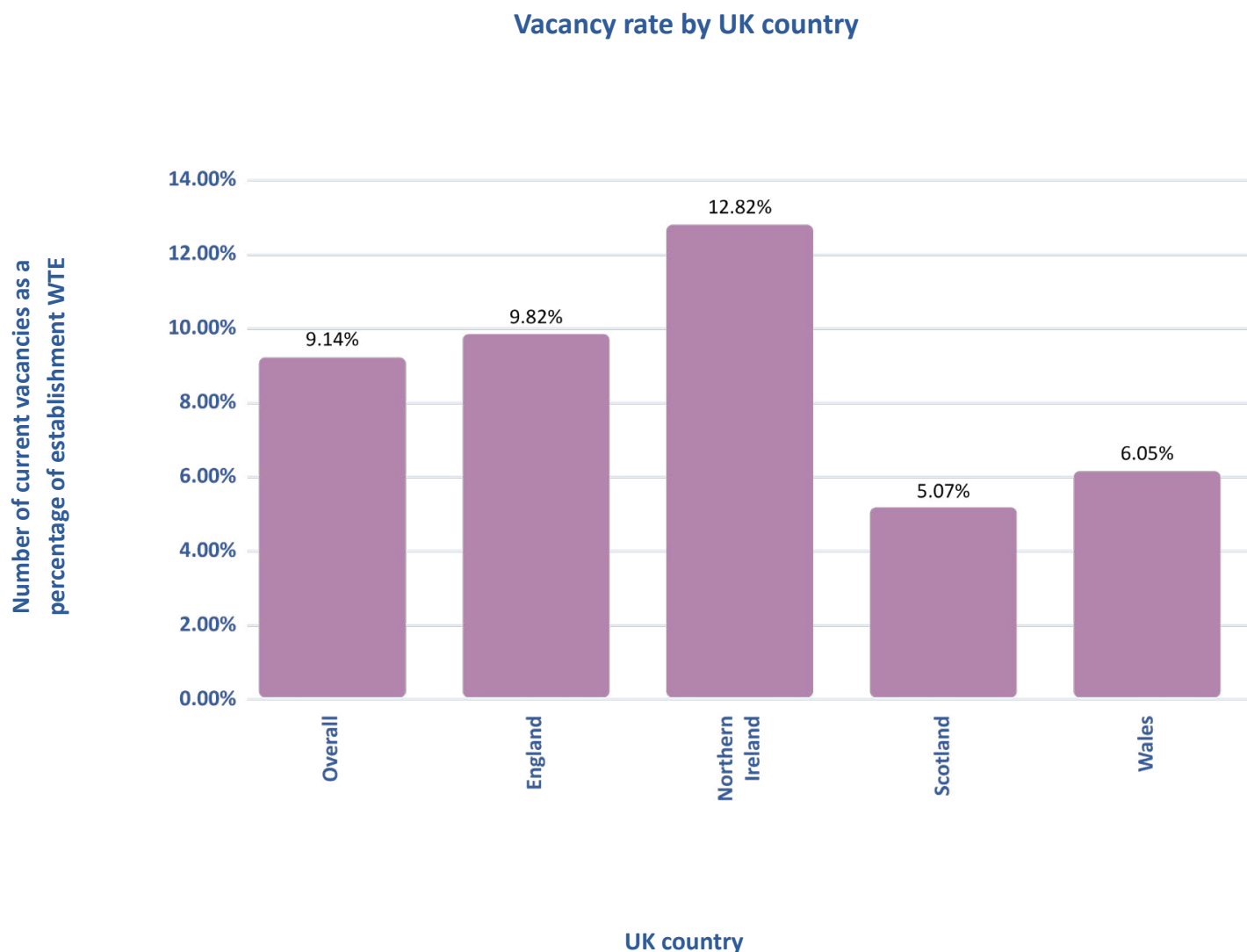
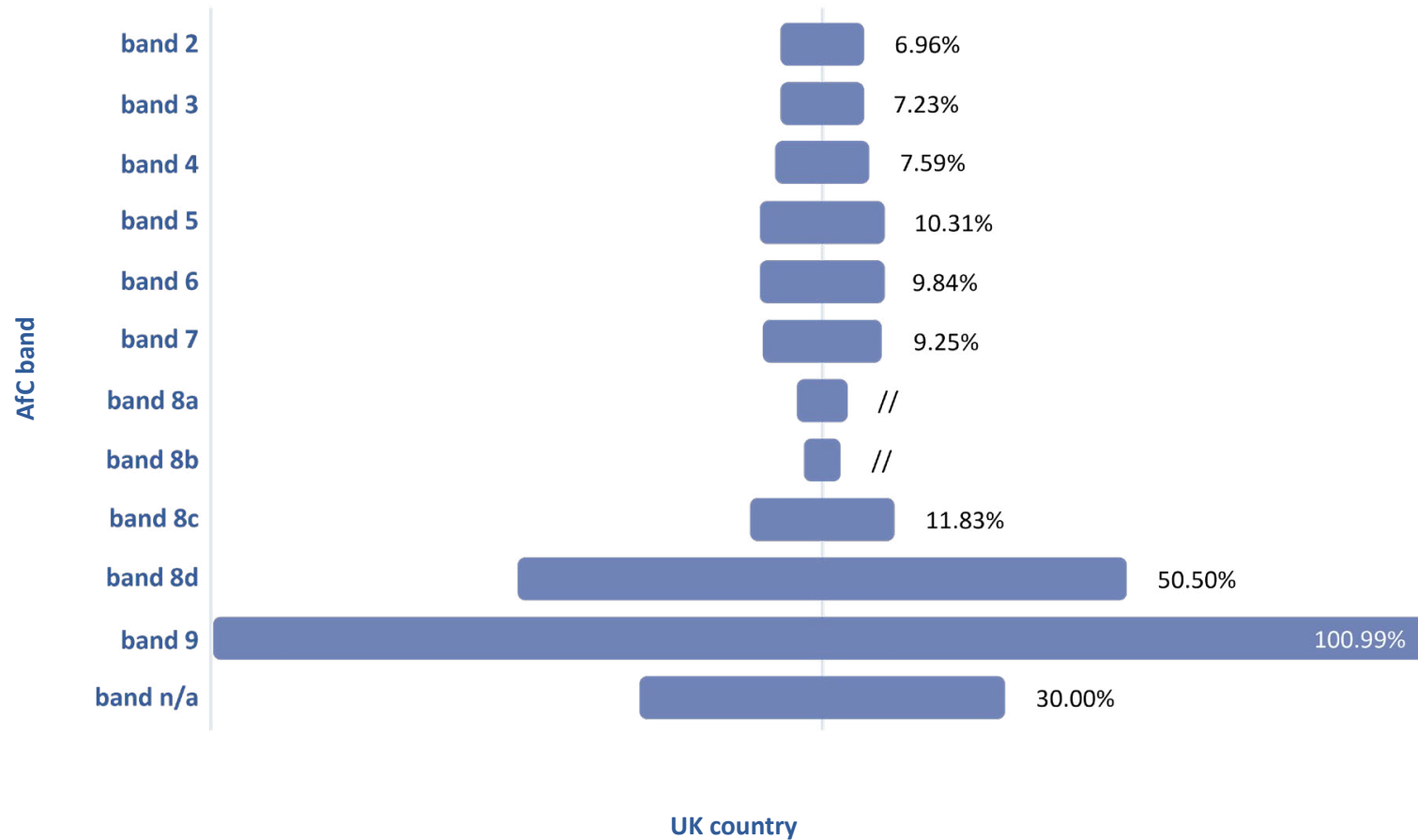


Figure 4. NHS vacancy rates by UK country (n=35)

NHS Vacancy rates by AfC band



Note: In Figure 5, the 100% vacancy rate for band 9 relates to a single organisation.

Figure 5. NHS vacancy rates by AfC band (n=33)

NHS vacancy rates by AfC band

AfC band	Number of diagnostic radiography workforce posts that are vacant (WTE) as of 1 November 2023	Total establishment (WTE)	Vacancy rate
band 2	21.03	302.17	6.96%
band 3	44.67	617.65	7.23%
band 4	10.41	137.21	7.59%
band 5	69.77	676.77	10.31%
band 6	149.02	1513.89	9.84%
band 7	74.63	806.84	9.25%
band 8a	8.07	183.27	4.40%
band 8b	2	54.18	3.69%
band 8c	2	16.91	11.83%
band 8d	1	2	50.00%
band 9	1	1	100.00%
band N/A	15	50	30.00%

Table 1. NHS vacancy rates by AfC band (n=33)

5. NHS and independent sector combined: Vacancy rates

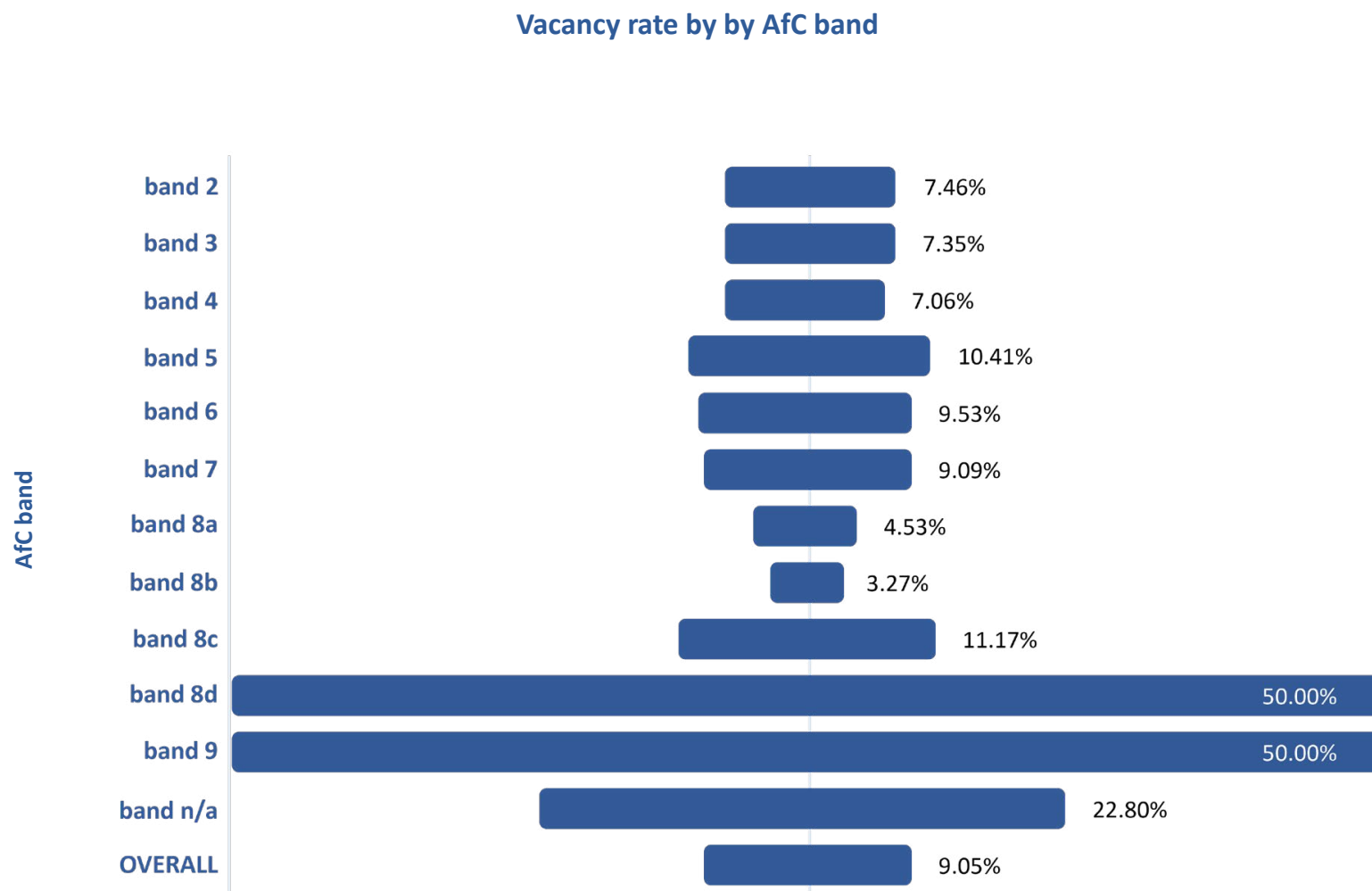
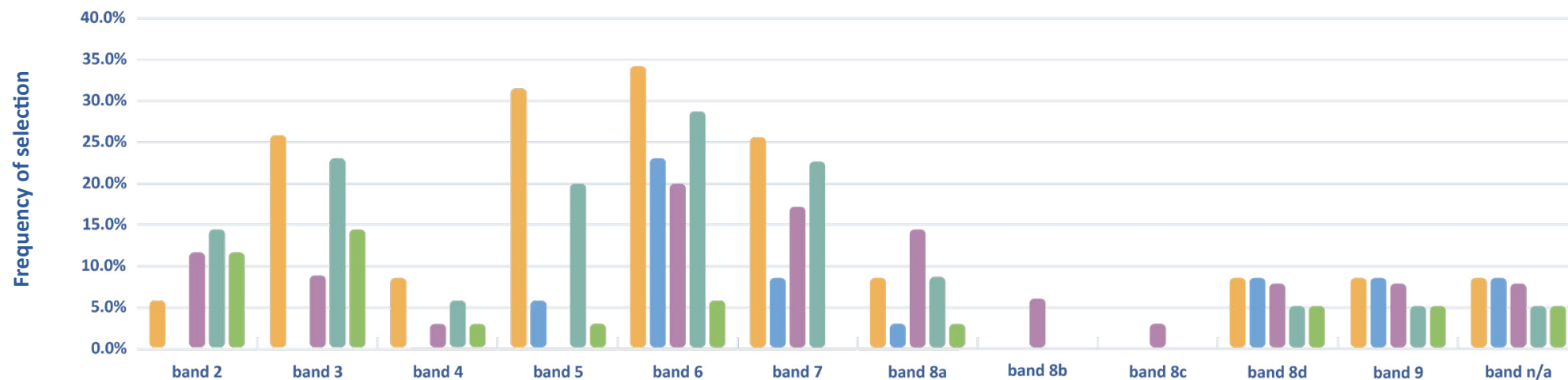


Figure 6. NHS and IS vacancy rates by AfC band or IS equivalent (n=56)

6. NHS: Leaving reasons

Leaver reasons



Reasons for leaving post

Figure 7. NHS leaving reasons by AfC band (n=20)

- Career development or promotion within another NHS imaging department / NHS other department OR post in HEI / Research institution
- Left to undertake work as an agency or independent sector radiographer
- Retirement
- Personal reasons
- Reasons unknown

The main reasons respondents gave for postholders leaving their organisations were career development or promotion within another NHS imaging department/NHS other department or post in HEI/ research institution, followed by personal reasons.

◀ 7. NHS: Internationally educated radiographers

Respondents were asked to state the percentage of internationally educated radiographers within their workforce. Table 2 shows the frequency of each listed percentage selected by respondents.

Note: The 90% reported internationally educated workforce was from a satellite unit of a larger NHS trust.

Percentage of internationally educated radiographers in your workforce as of 1 November 2023	Frequency of percentage selected
10%	12
20%	3
30%	2
40%	3
50%	1
60%	1
70%	0
80%	0
90%	1
100%	0

Table 2. Percentage of internationally educated radiographers in the workforce by frequency of selection (**n=23**)

8. NHS: Apprenticeships

Respondents were asked about radiography support and assistant workforce apprenticeship posts and radiographer apprenticeship posts within the career framework.

Table 3 gives a full breakdown of the data submitted. While we did not ask for specific apprenticeship levels, this data relates to support workforce apprenticeships, diagnostic radiographer apprenticeships and sonographer apprenticeships.

Support workforce apprenticeship posts as of 1 November 2023	Frequency of selection	Diagnostic radiographer apprenticeship posts as of 1 November 2023	Frequency of selection
Healthcare support worker	2	Diagnostic radiographer integrated degree	11
Senior healthcare support worker	2	Enhanced clinical practitioner	0
Mammography associate	3	Advanced clinical practitioner	1
Healthcare assistant practitioner	6	Sonographer degree	2

Table 3. Support workforce and diagnostic radiographer apprenticeship posts as of 1 November 2023 (n=21)

As of 1 November 2023, 15 out of 35 respondents reported having apprenticeship posts.

13 support workforce apprenticeship posts were reported.

14 diagnostic radiographer apprenticeship posts were reported. Two other apprenticeship posts were reported that were not included in the previous two categories (1 apprenticeship senior leader MSc and 1 leadership post).

NHS professional activities

9. NHS: Professional activities

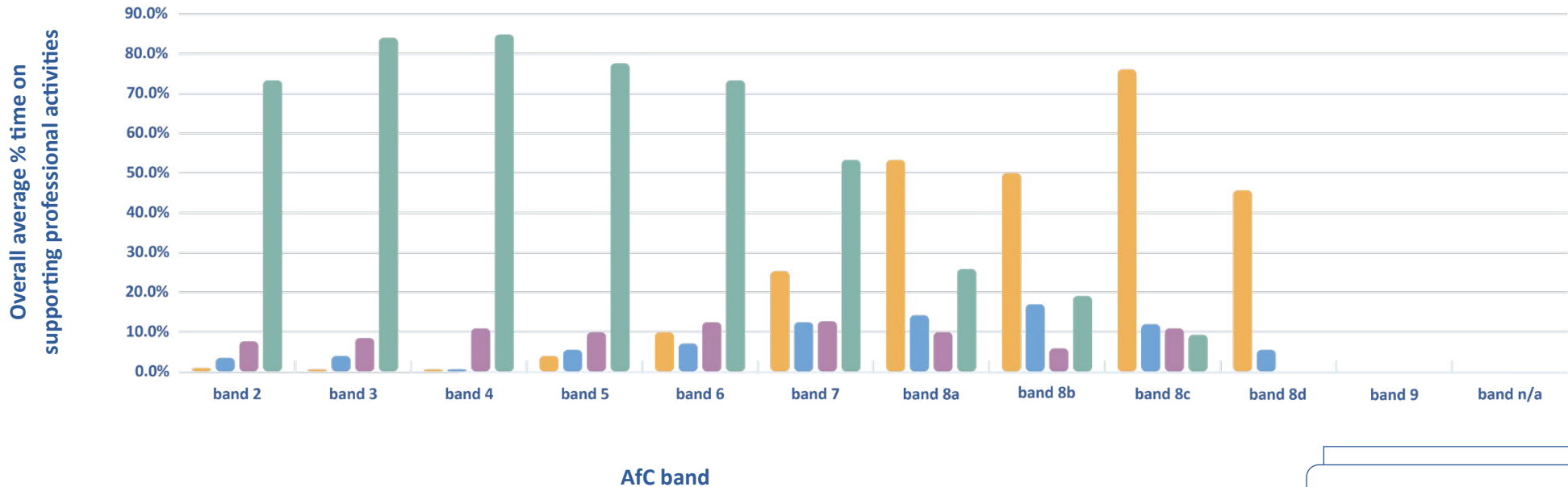


Figure 8. Estimated percentage of time spent on supporting professional activities by AfC band (n=21)

Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of time staff spend on supporting professional activities in an average working week. Supporting professional activities underpin the delivery of imaging services but are not directly patient facing. They include leadership, management, PACS, quality improvement, quality management, quality standard for imaging, research, service development, training and development.

Figure 8 shows that bands 2 to 7 spend approximately 53% to 85% of their time on clinical-related activities, while bands 8a to 8d spend 45% to 76% of their time on leadership and management-related activities.

- Leadership and management
- Quality Improvement / Quality management / QSI (Quality Standard for Imaging) / Service development / Research
- Education and Training and Development
- Clinical

◀ 10. NHS: Postgraduate education and training

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of staff supported in postgraduate training for each listed modality as of 1 November 2023. The modalities with the highest support are ultrasound and reporting (including all modalities). Figure 9 provides full details.

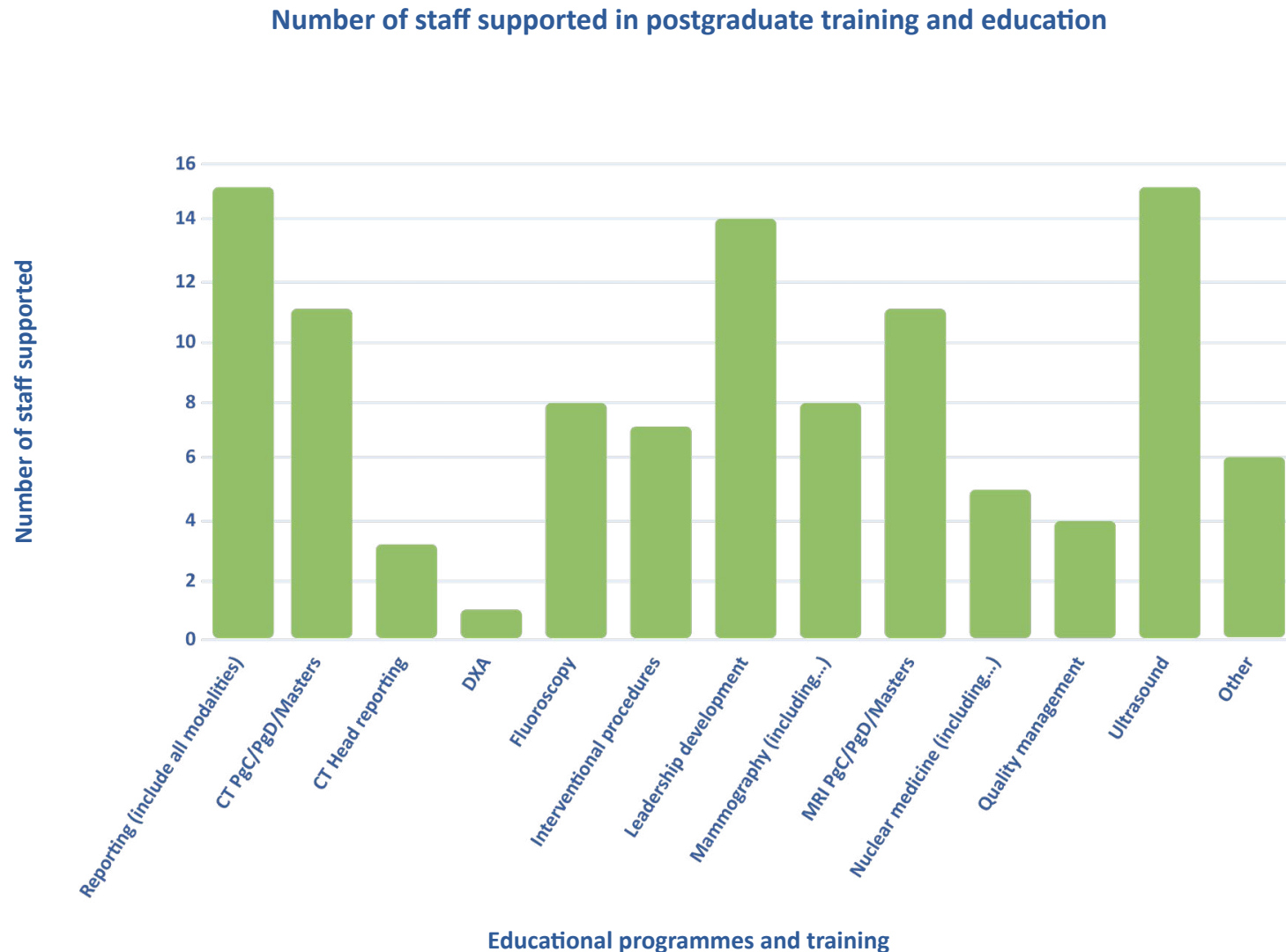


Figure 9. Number of staff supported in postgraduate training and education (n=22)

➤ 11. NHS: Advanced and consultant practitioners in post

Respondents were asked to report the number of practitioners in advanced and consultant roles (WTE). For the 22 organisations that responded to this question, 5.3% of practitioners were in advanced practice roles and 0.6% were in consultant practice roles.

➤ 12. NHS: Agency staff data

Respondents were asked to state the percentage of the workforce comprised of agency or temporary staff. On average, among the 22 respondents who answered this question, the percentage was 13%.

Note: Due to respondents being unable to select less than 10%, this data should be treated with caution.

➤ 13. Independent sector data collection

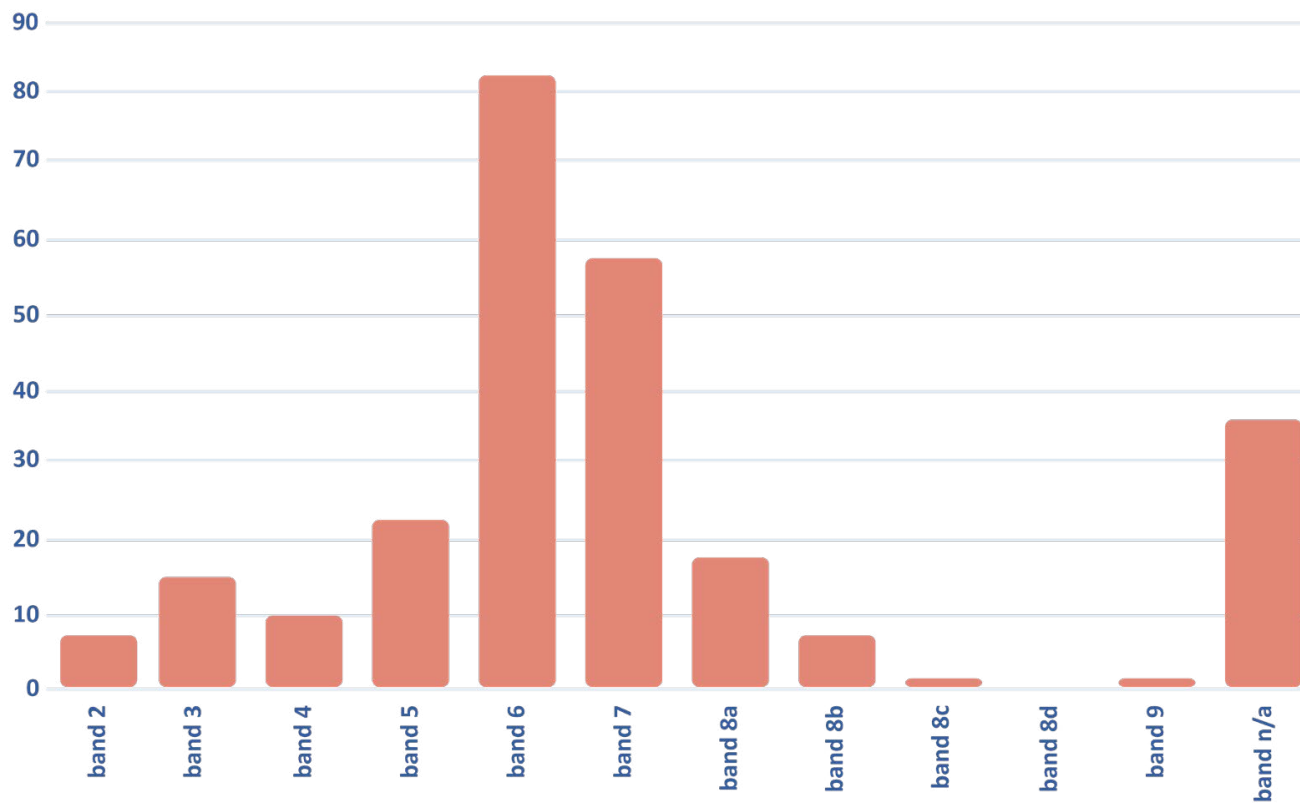
This section of the report will review the data submitted by those who are responding on behalf of an IS organisation.

➤ 13.1. Independent sector: Establishment and vacancy rates

Twenty-one respondents completed the census questionnaire representing their respective healthcare organisations. The following section gives a detailed breakdown of the submitted data.

Respondents were asked to report establishment numbers for each modality as of 1 November 2023. The modalities with the highest establishment WTE figures are X-ray (including symptomatic mammography), MRI and ultrasound.

Total establishment (WTE) reported by AfC band



Agenda for Change (AfC) band

Figure 10. IS diagnostic radiography WTE reported by AfC band (n=21)

13.2. Independent sector: Total diagnostic workforce establishment (WTE) by AfC band equivalent and modality

Respondents were asked to provide a detailed breakdown of the total diagnostic radiography workforce establishment WTE by equivalent AfC band as of 1 November 2023. These figures are outlined in Figure 10. Similar to the NHS data, bands 6 and 7 exhibit the highest establishment numbers, while bands 8c to 9 demonstrate the lowest.

Establishment per reported modality by Agenda for Change (AfC) band

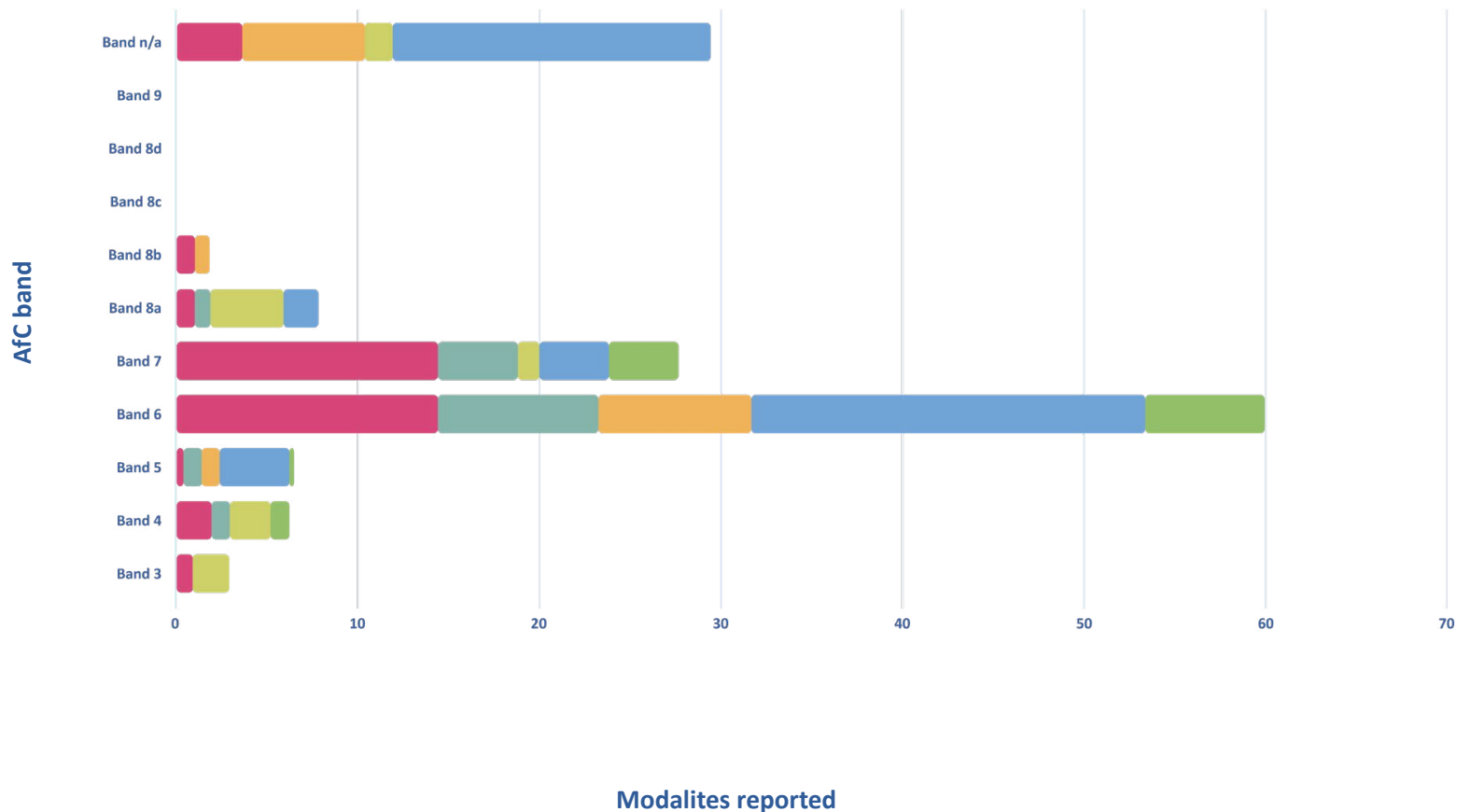


Figure 11 displays the establishment numbers of each reported modality by AfC band. The modality with the highest establishment number is X-ray (including symptomatic mammography), with 21.8 WTE at band 6 and 17.5 for band n/a.

- MRI
- CT
- Fluoroscopy (including cardiac, Vasc/non vasc intervention)
- Nuclear medicine (including PET-CT)
- Ultrasound
- X-ray
- Other (including DXA and molecular imaging)

Vacancy rates by AfC band

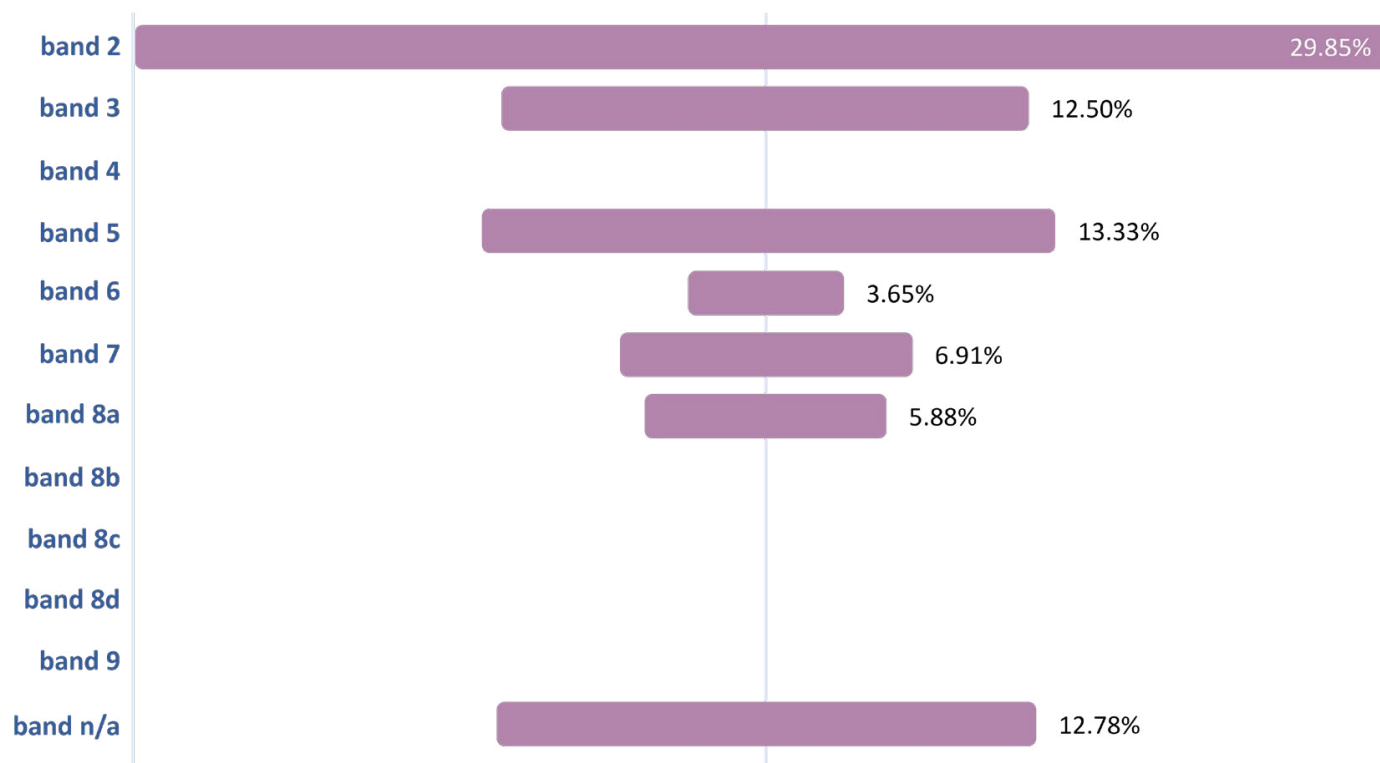


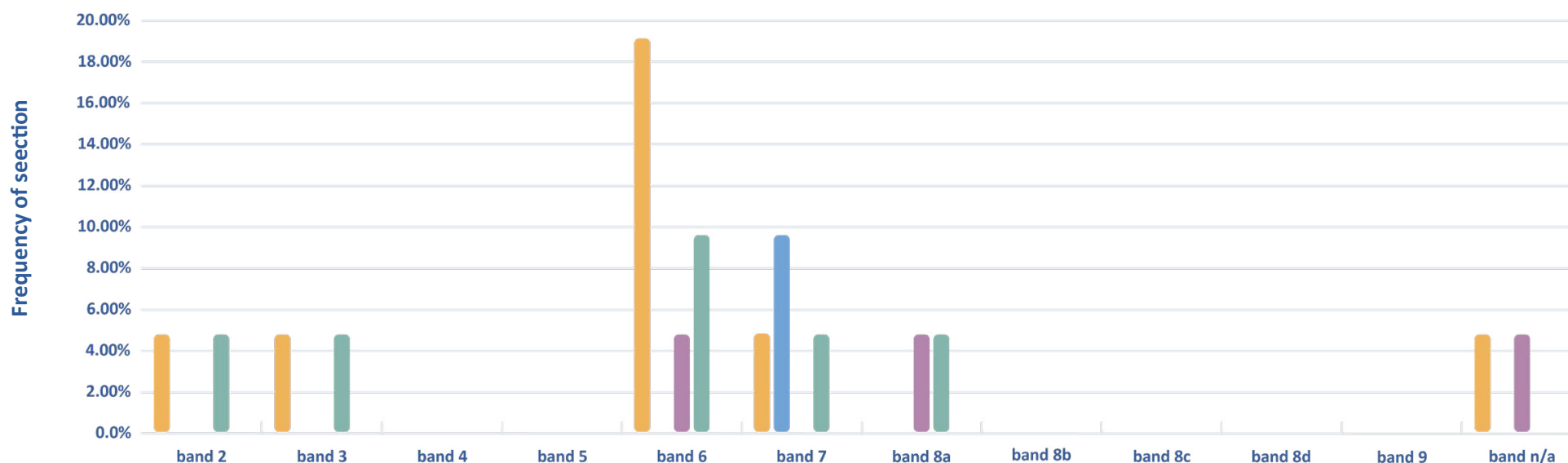
Figure 12. IS vacancy rates by AfC band (n=21)

14. Independent sector: Vacancy rates by AfC band equivalent

Respondents were asked to provide the number of vacant diagnostic radiography workforce posts (WTE) as of 1 November 2023. Figure 12 illustrates the vacancy rates by AfC band. Band 2 and 5 exhibit the highest vacancy rates, with 29.8% and 13.3%, respectively.

15. Independent sector: Leaving reasons

Leaving reasons



Reasons for leaving post

Figure 13. IS leaving reasons by AfC band (n=21)

- Career development or promotion within another NHS imaging department / NHS other department OR post in HEI / Research institution
- Left to undertake work as an agency or independent sector radiographer
- Retirement
- Personal reasons
- Reasons unknown

The primary reason respondents give for postholders leaving their organisations is career development or promotion within another NHS imaging department/NHS department or a post in HEI/Research institution, followed by personal reasons.

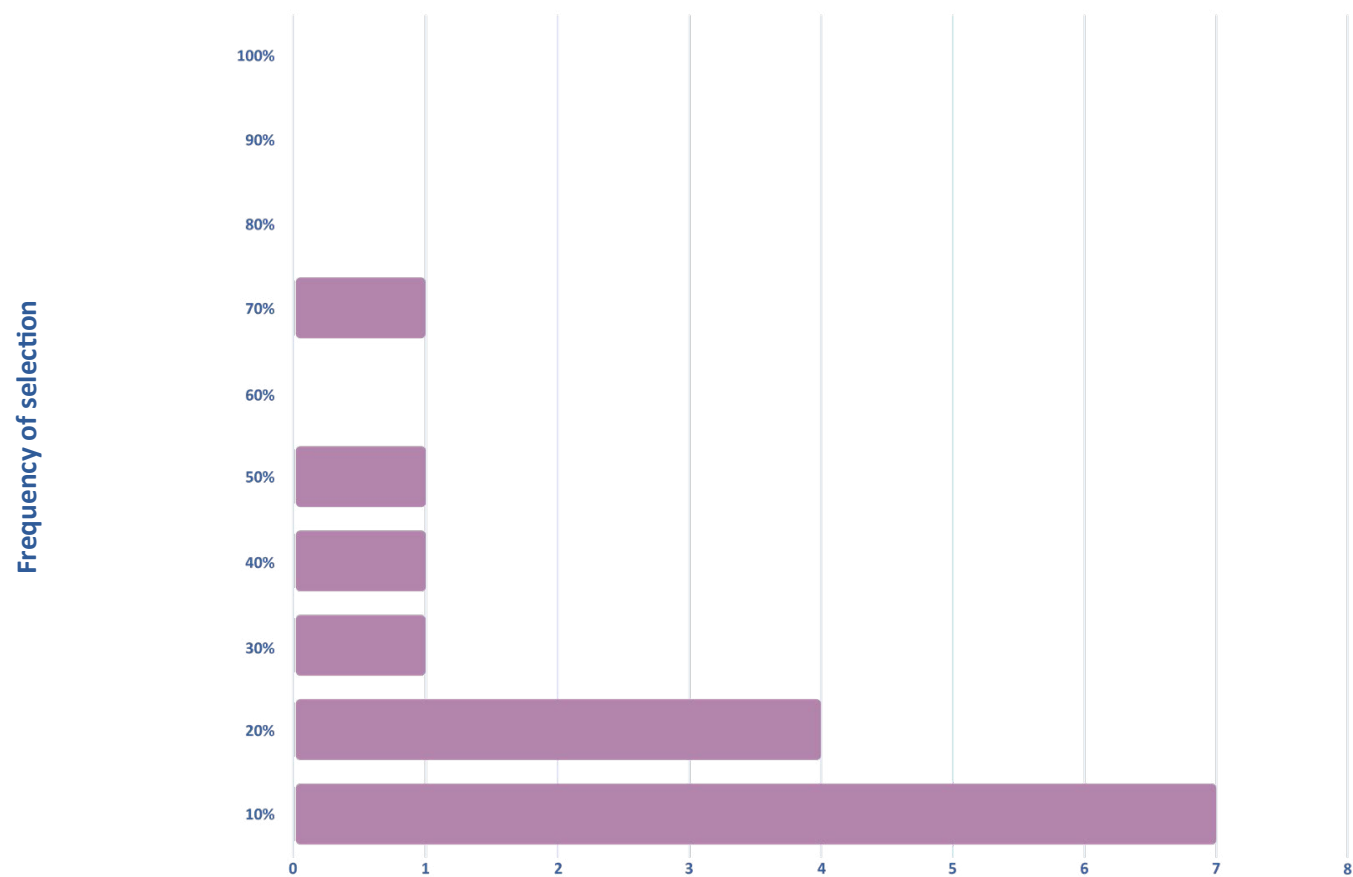
◀ 16. Independent sector: International recruitment

Respondents were asked to indicate the percentage of internationally educated radiographers within their workforce. Table 4 and Figure 14 outline the frequency of each listed percentage selected by respondents. The majority of respondents reported that 10% of their workforce is comprised of internationally educated radiographers.

Percentage of internationally educated radiographers in your workforce as of 1 November 2023	Frequency of percentage selected
10%	7
20%	4
30%	1
40%	1
50%	1
60%	0
70%	1
80%	0
90%	0
100%	0

Table 4. Percentage of internationally educated radiographers in the workforce by AfC band (n=15)

Internationally educated radiographers



Percentage of internationally educated radiographers in your workforce as of 1 November 2023

Figure 14. Percentage of internationally educated radiographers in the workforce by AfC band (n=15)

➤ 17. Independent sector: Apprenticeships

Respondents were asked about radiography support and assistant workforce apprenticeship posts and radiographer apprenticeship posts within the career framework. The following gives a breakdown of the submitted data:

- Out of 15 respondents, one reported having apprenticeship posts as of 1 November 2023.
- One support workforce apprenticeship post was reported, specifically, one healthcare assistant practitioner apprenticeship.
- One diagnostic radiographer apprenticeship post was reported, specifically, one diagnostic radiographer integrated degree apprenticeship.
- Additionally, two other apprenticeship posts were reported as of 1 November 2023, which were not included in the previous two questions. These were two management apprenticeships.

Professional activities

18. Independent sector: Professional activities

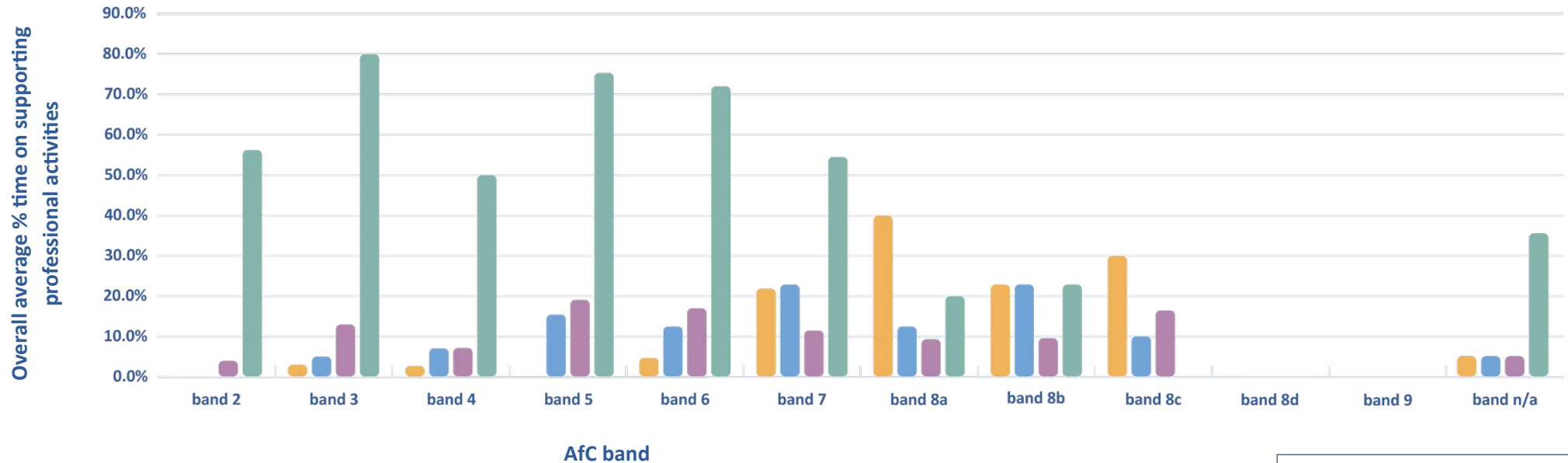


Figure 15. Estimated percentage of time spent on supporting professional activities by AfC band (n=13)

Respondents were asked to estimate the approximate percentage of time staff spend on supporting professional activities in an average working week. Supporting professional activities underpin the delivery of imaging services but are not directly patient facing. They include leadership, management, PACS, quality improvement, quality management, quality standard for imaging, research, service development, training and development.

Figure 15 and Table 5 illustrate that bands 2 to 7 typically spend approximately 50% to 80% of their time on clinical-related activities, while bands 8a to 8d allocate 30% to 40% of their time to leadership and management-related

- Leadership and management
- Quality Improvement / Quality management / QSI (Quality Standard for Imaging) / Service development / Research
- Education and Training and Development
- Clinical

AfC Band	Leadership and management	Quality improvement / Quality management / QSI (Quality Standard for Imaging) / Service development / Research	Education and training and development	Clinical
band 2	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	56.0%
band 3	3.0%	5.0%	13.0%	80.0%
band 4	3.0%	7.0%	7.0%	50.0%
band 5	0.0%	15.0%	18.0%	75.0%
band 6	4.0%	12.0%	16.0%	71.0%
band 7	22.0%	23.0%	11.0%	54.0%
band 8a	40.0%	12%	9.0%	20.0%
band 8b	22.0%	22.0%	10.0%	22.0%
band 8c	30.0%	10.0%	16.0%	0.0%
band 8d	0.0%	0%	0.0%	0.0%
band 9	0.0%	0%	0.0%	0.0%
band N/A	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	35.0%

Table 5. Estimated percentage of time spent on supporting professional activities by AfC band (**n=13**)

◀ 19. Independent sector: Postgraduate training

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of staff supported in postgraduate training for each listed modality as of 1 November 2023. The modality with the highest selection is leadership development. Figure 16 provides detailed information. activities.

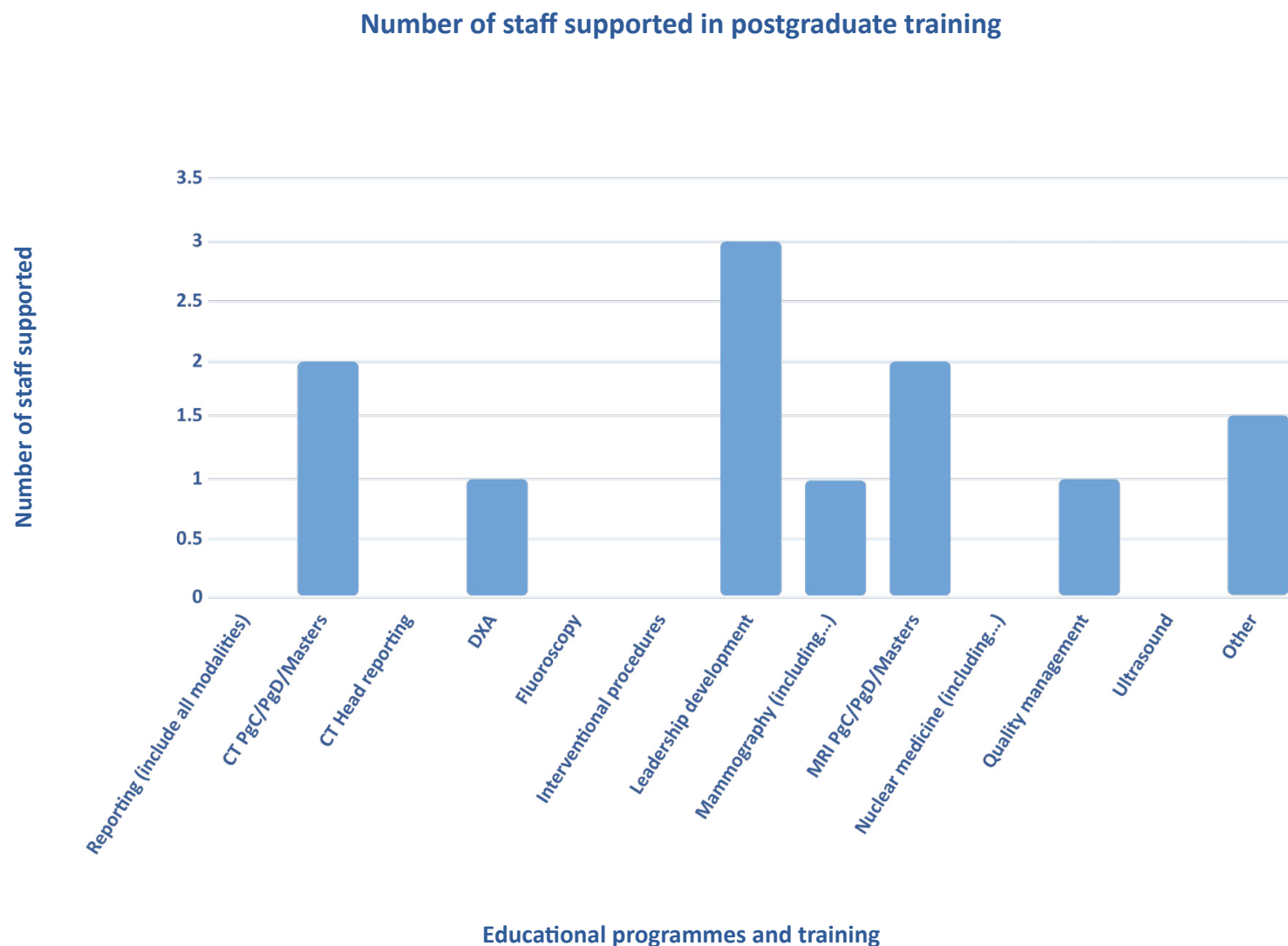


Figure 16. Number of staff supported in postgraduate training (n=13)

➤ 20. Independent sector: Advanced and consultant practice

Respondents were asked to report the number of practitioners in advanced and consultant roles (WTE). Among the 13 organisations that provided data, the total WTE for advanced practitioners was 7.75, while no consultant practitioners were reported.

➤ 21. Independent sector: Agency staff data

Respondents were asked to state the percentage of the workforce comprised of agency or temporary staff. On average, among the 13 respondents who answered this question, the percentage was 13%.

➤ 22. NHS single modality data

This section of the report depicts only the data submitted by respondents representing a single modality on behalf of an NHS organisation.

Reported establishment numbers

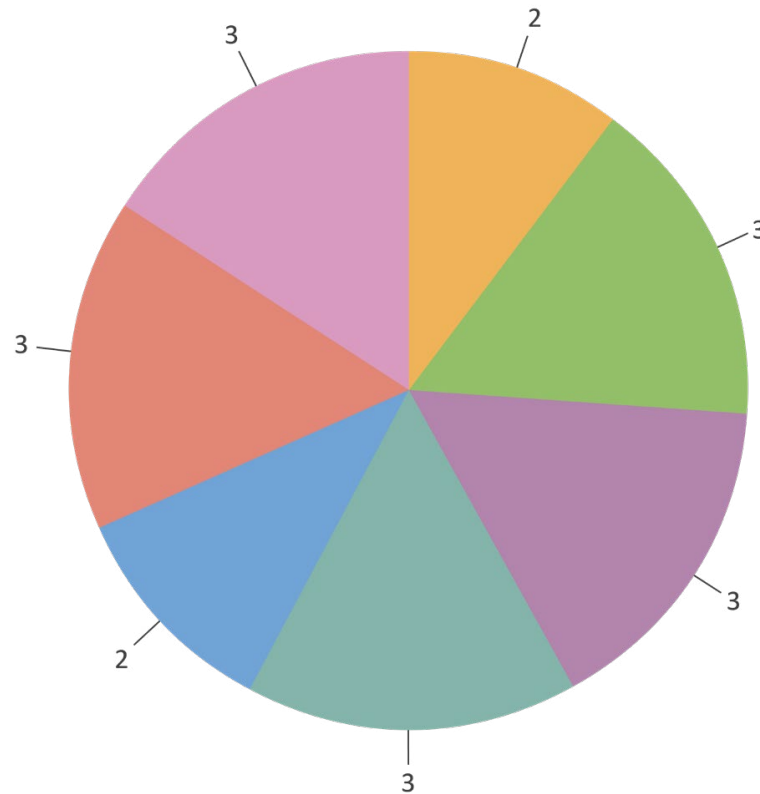


Figure 17. NHS single modality: Establishment numbers per reported modality (**n=19**)

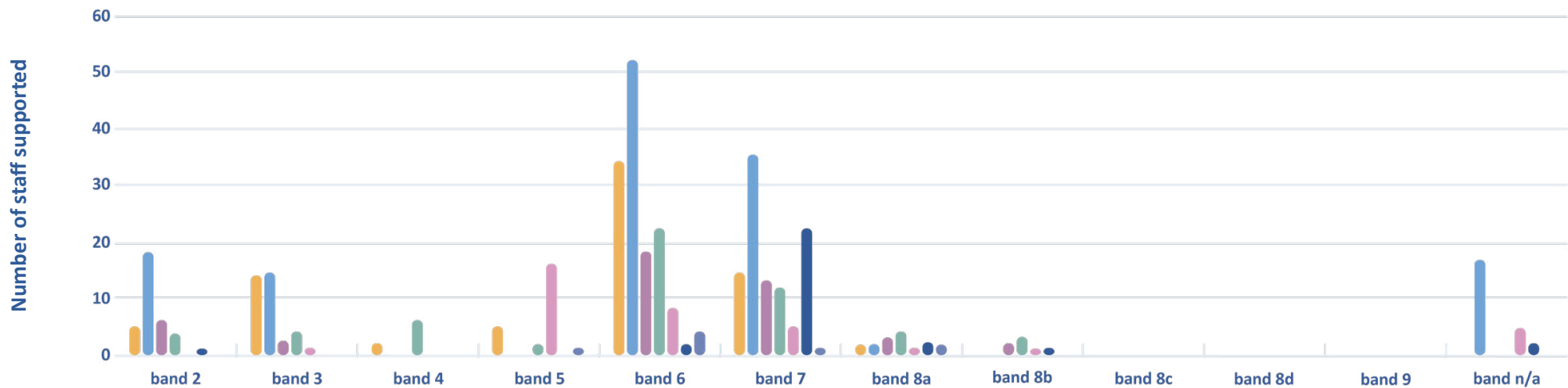
22.1. NHS single modality data: Establishment and vacancy rates

Nineteen respondents completed the census questionnaire on behalf of their respective healthcare organisations. It is important to note that respondents provided data for a single modality only. Figure 17 shows a breakdown of the establishment numbers reported for each modality as of 1 November 2023.

- MRI
- CT
- Fluoroscopy (including cardiac, Vasc/non vasc intervention)
- Mammography
- Nuclear medicine (including PET-CT)
- Ultrasound
- X-ray

Establishment per reported modality by Agenda for Change (AfC) band

22.2. NHS single modality: Total diagnostic workforce establishment (WTE) by AfC band and modality



AfC band

Figure 18. NHS single modality: Diagnostic radiography workforce establishment (WTE) per reported modality by AfC band (n=19)

- MRI
- CT
- Fluoroscopy (including cardiac, Vasc/non vasc intervention)
- Mammography
- Nuclear medicine (including PET-CT)
- Ultrasound
- X-ray

Figure 18 illustrates the establishment numbers of each reported modality by AfC band. The modality with the highest establishment number is CT, with 52.06 WTE at band 6 and 35.32 WTE at band 7.

Vacancy rate of reported modalities

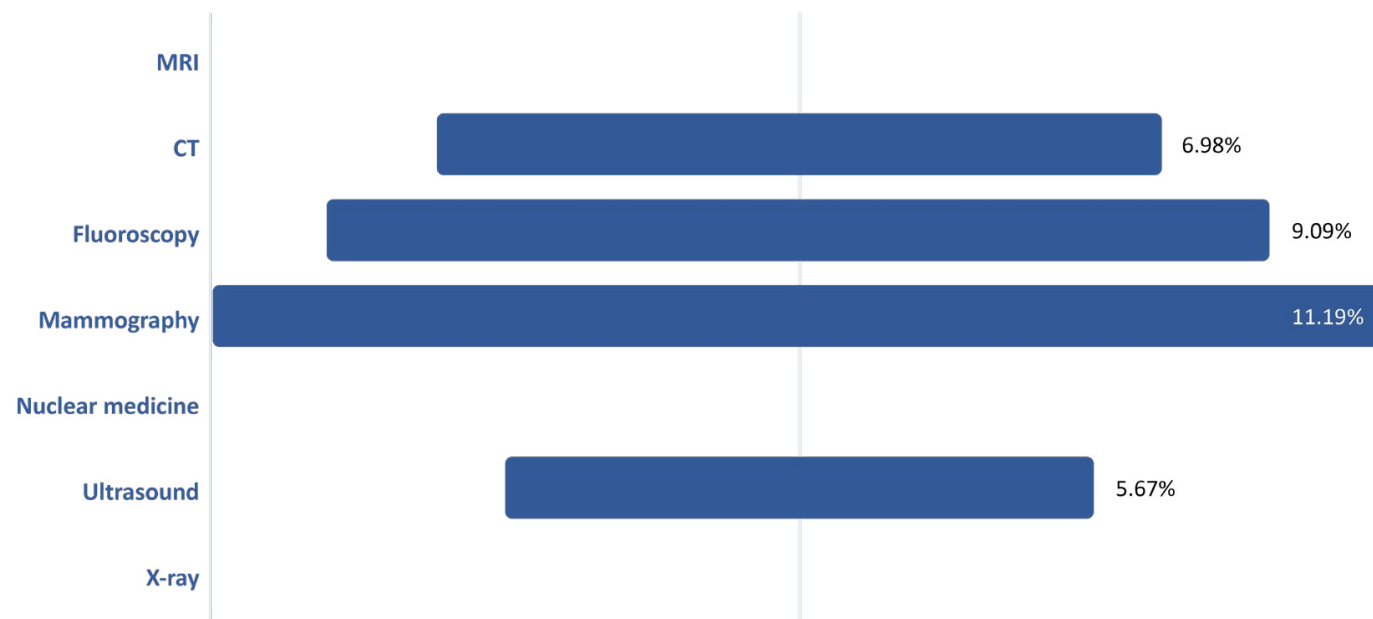


Figure 19. NHS single modality vacancy rates (n=19)

23. NHS single modality: Vacancy rates by modality

Respondents were asked to provide the number of vacant diagnostic radiography workforce posts as of 1 November 2023. Figure 19 displays the vacancy rates by reported modality.

24. NHS single modality: Leaving reasons

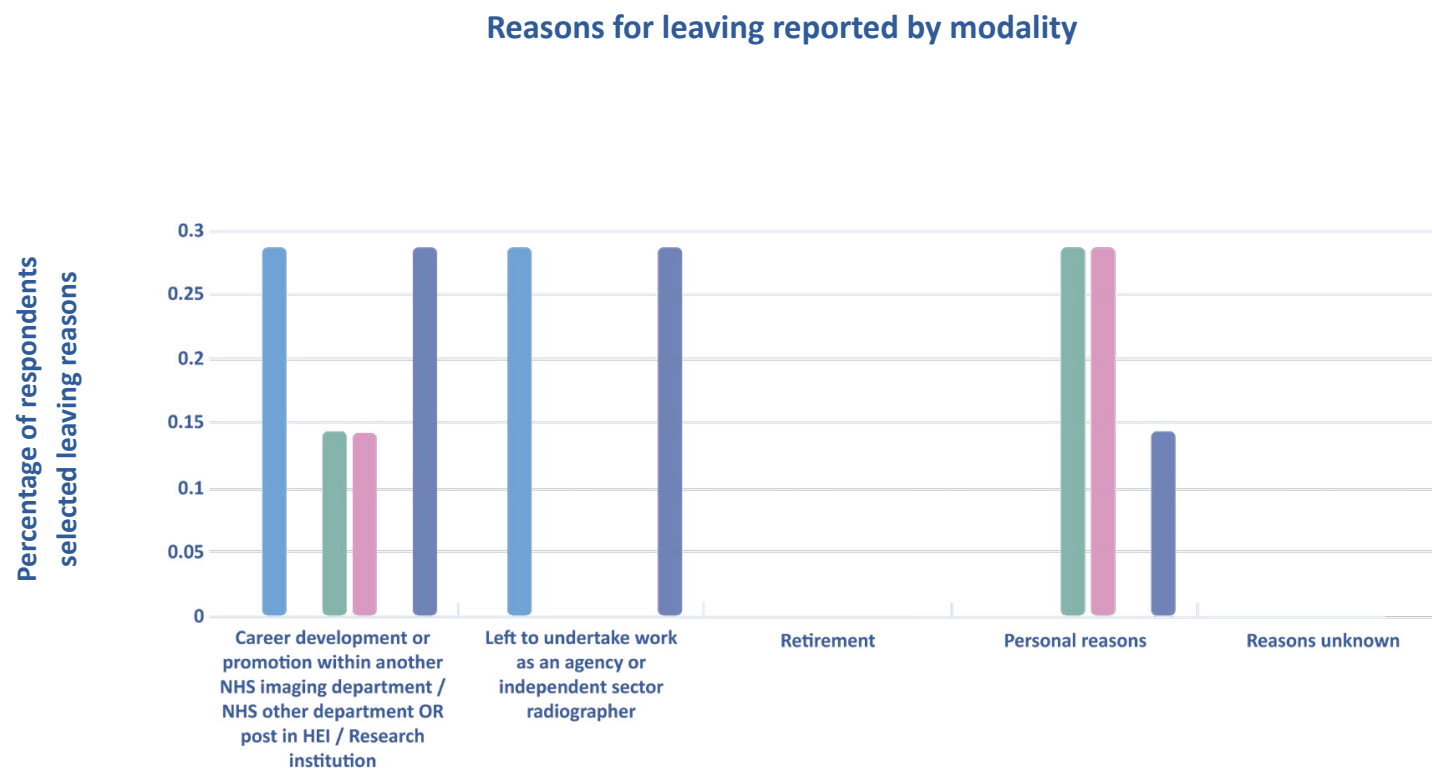


Figure 20. NHS single modality: Leaving reasons (n=7)

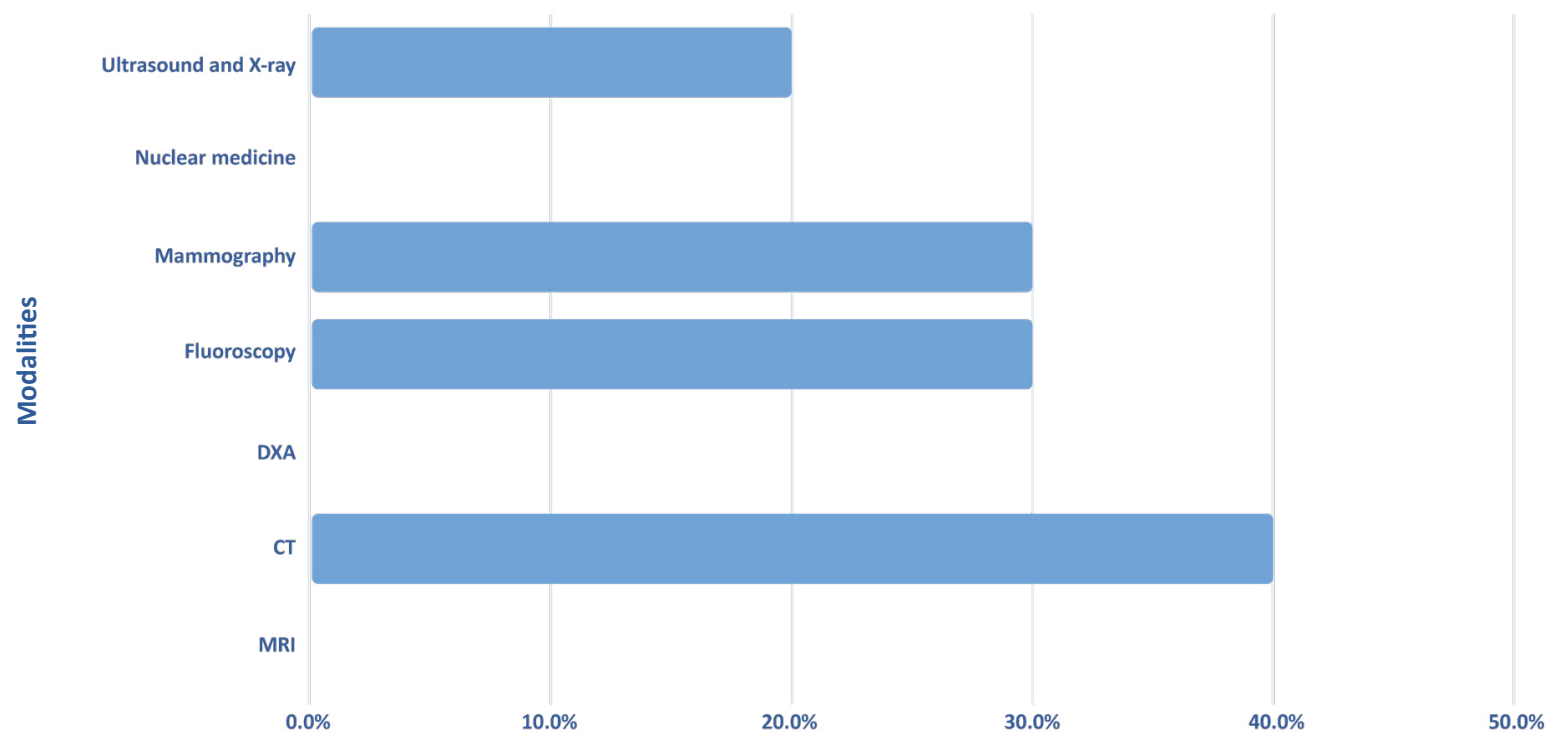
◀ 25. NHS single modality: International recruitment

Respondents were asked to indicate the percentage of internationally educated radiographers within the workforce.

Modalities reported	Percentage of internationally educated radiographers in your workforce as of 1 November 2023
MRI	0.0%
CT	40.0%
DXA	0.0%
Fluoroscopy (including cardiac, vascular/ non-vascular intervention)	30.0%
Mammography	30.0%
Nuclear medicine (including PET-CT)	0.0%
Ultrasound and X-ray	20.0%

Table 6. Percentage of internationally educated radiographers in the workforce by modality (n=7)

Internationally educated radiographers



Percentage of internationally educated radiographers in your workforce as of 1 November 2023

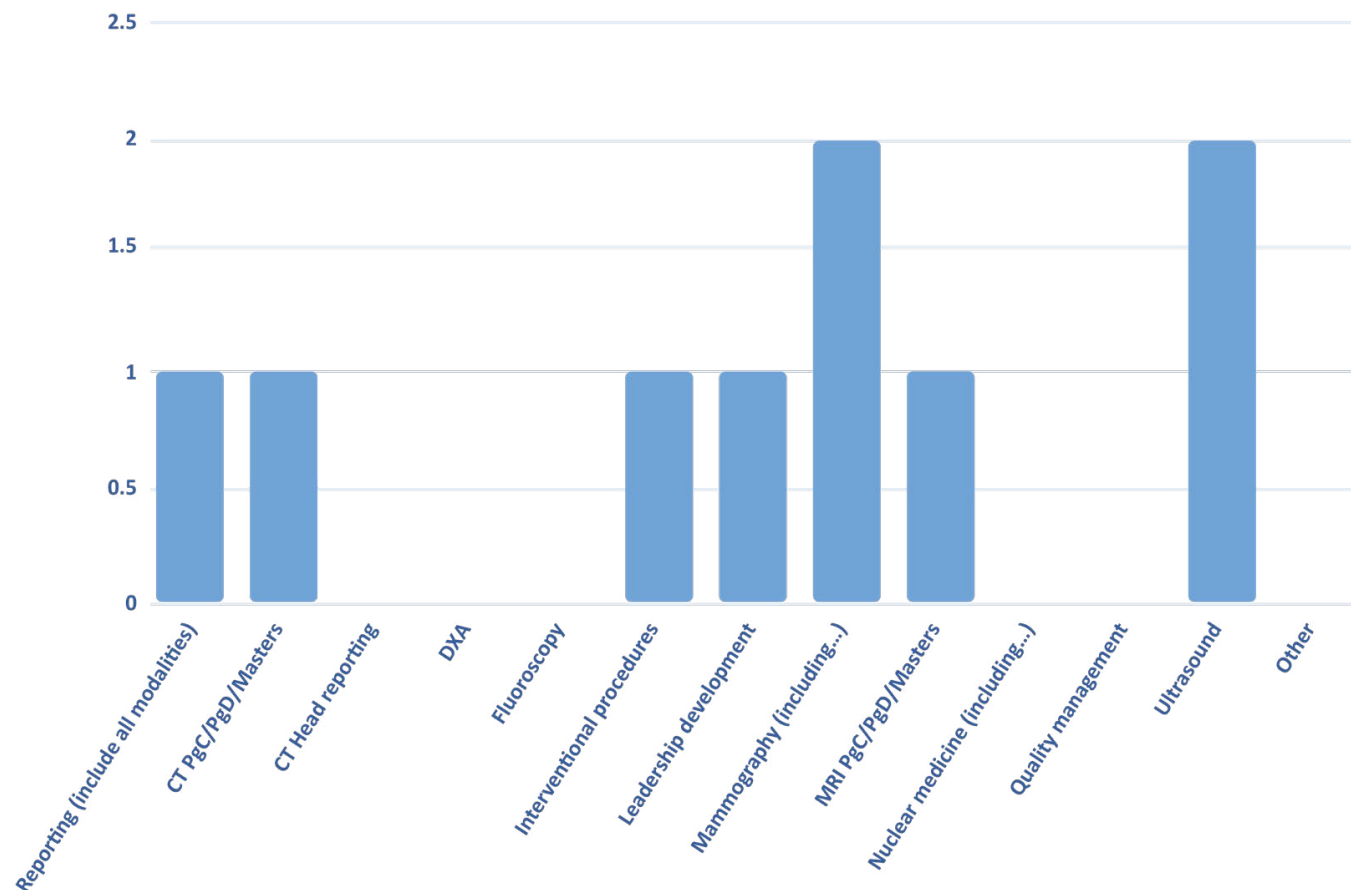
Figure 21. Percentage of internationally educated radiographers in the workforce by modality (n=7)

➤ 26. NHS single modality: Apprenticeships

Respondents were asked about radiography support and assistant workforce apprenticeship posts, as well as radiographer apprenticeship posts within the career framework. The responses were as follows:

- One support workforce apprenticeship post was reported as of 1 November 2023: one mammography associate.
- No diagnostic radiographer apprenticeship posts were reported as of 1 November 2023.
- Additionally, no other apprenticeship posts were reported as of 1 November 2023 that were not included in the previous two questions.

Number of staff supported in postgraduate training



Educational programmes and training

Figure 22. Number of staff supported in postgraduate training (n=7)

27. NHS single modality: Postgraduate training

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of staff supported in postgraduate training for each of the listed modalities as of 1 November 2023. Figure 22 presents the reported responses.

◀ 28. NHS single modality: Advanced and consultant practice

Respondents were asked to state the number of practitioners in advanced and consultant roles (WTE). Details of responses are provided in Table 7.

Modality	Advanced practitioners	Consultant practitioners
MRI	0	0
CT	0	0
DXA	0	0
Fluoroscopy (including cardiac, vascular/non-vascular intervention)	11	0
Mammography	6.4	2
Nuclear medicine (including PET-CT)	0	0
Ultrasound	0	0
X-ray	0	0

Table 7. Number of practitioners in advanced and consultant roles by reported modality (n=7)

Agency or temporary staff per reported modality

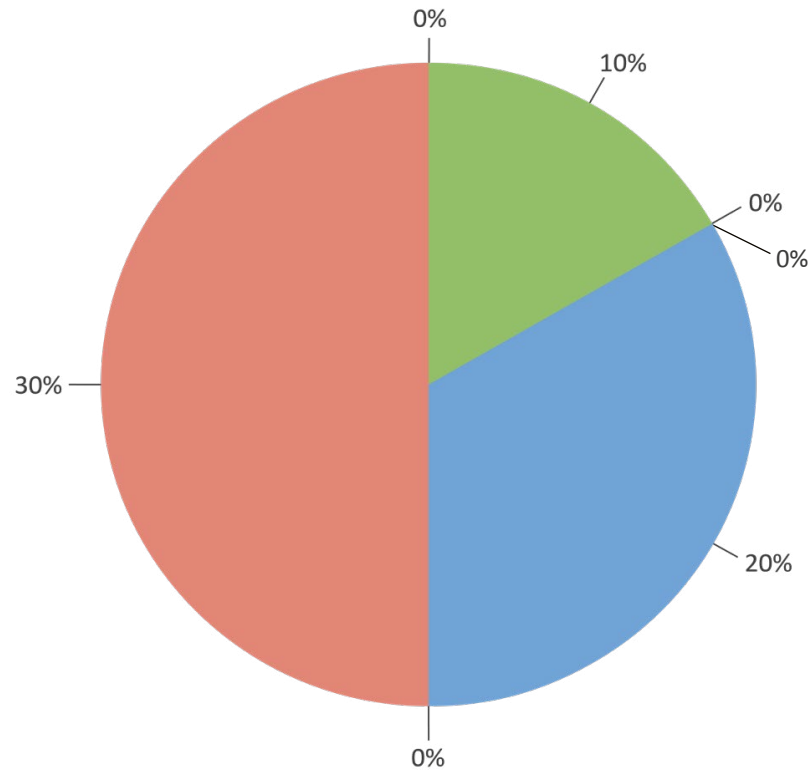


Figure 23. Agency or temporary staff per reported modality (n=7)

29. NHS single modality: Agency staff data

Respondents were asked to state the percentage of the workforce composed of agency or temporary staff. Figure 23 provides a breakdown of this information for each reported modality.

- MRI
- CT
- DXA
- Fluoroscopy (including cardiac, Vasc/non vasc intervention)
- Mammography
- Nuclear medicine (including PET-CT)
- Ultrasound and X-ray

➤ 30. Downloads

Accessible from:

[SoR Diagnostic Radiography Workforce UK Census 2023 assets](#)

