

NTDA conducts national staffing and skills shortage survey

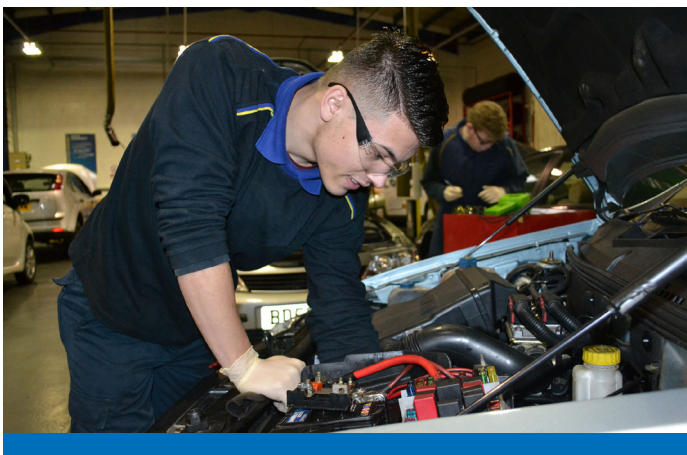
As has been widely reported, and frequently commented on, in both the trade and national press, the automotive aftermarket is facing a skills crisis, with an analysis published by the IMI in March last year, showing that automotive vacancies are at their highest level for 20 years, exceeding 23,000 and accounting for approximately 4% of the workforce. Motor trades had the sixth highest vacancy rate of all industry sectors at that point and very little has improved since then.

The tyre retail and automotive aftercare sector is no exception and some NTDA members are reporting significant challenges in recruiting tyre and service technicians, tyre repair technicians, commercial and industrial tyre technicians, mechanics, MOT testers and other roles. The growing skills shortage is now the biggest threat to future viability of the trade.



What is most frustrating about this situation, is that the tyre retail and automotive aftercare sector is buoyant. Many NTDA members are reporting extremely robust customer and growth potential, but with healthy profitability constantly vulnerable to the inability to recruit. Put in simple terms by some NTDA member feedback; *“You just need to look at the number of vehicles on the road and the ageing car parc. The work is here, but we just don’t have enough technicians to do it”*.

This comment is often repeated and applies well beyond ‘roads’ with agricultural, OTR, industrial and other specialist tyre providers also reporting a shortage of technicians, in particular repair technicians. There can be no doubt, that more needs to be done to attract people into the trade and in order to better understand the true extent of the current problem for its members, the NTDA has commissioned independent agency Build Public Relations to carry out a national staffing and skills shortage survey across its membership.



Commenting on the survey NTDA CEO Stefan Hay said: *“We can’t just sit here and lament the current situation, we need to take proactive and positive action and with this survey we are looking to collect both quantitative and qualitative data through an online survey with our members which will be complemented by interviews with leading recruitment and HR specialists, training providers and senior people within other automotive trade associations and institutes. The results of this survey will help the NTDA to shape its policy position, lobby Government, focus our efforts and provide better educated guidance to our members.”*

The NTDA can already demonstrate that there is no shortage of willingness among its members and the wider trade to professionally develop existing employees. The highly popular NTDA Tyre Technician Professional Development Scheme (TTPDS) which encompasses the REACT, Commercial Tyre Technician, Retail Tyre Technician and Responsible Tyre Repair Technician licences is a prime example. In aggregate, over 11,000 tyre technicians have been trained, assessed as competent and issued with a licence under the scheme to date and it is anticipated, that in excess of 2,500 new licences will be issued in 2023 alone, as many more companies become approved to deliver the licensing programmes.

Stefan continued: *“The success of the TTPDS is an example of what can be achieved when the trade works together. Leading manufacturers, training providers, tyre distributors/retailers and aftermarket suppliers have all engaged and are delivering training that is relevant and fit for purpose and not just designed to tick the funding boxes. What we now need, is for Government to work with us to support the expansion of the TTPDS to cover apprenticeships, but also to promote the excellent career opportunities that exist within the trade which due to rapid technological advancement in tyre and vehicle technologies, continues to offer an interesting, stable and progressive career path.”*

Although attempts to run a national Specialist Tyre Operative apprentice programme have been challenging, many NTDA members continue to run their own highly successful, and frequently oversubscribed, apprenticeship programmes which is evidenced in the quality of entrants the NTDA receives on an annual basis for its National Tyre Technician Apprentice of the Year Award.



Stefan concluded: *“Our trade is exciting, engaging, increasingly diverse and ever-changing and it offers great careers, but we are in danger of making it even more vulnerable if we do not work together to raise awareness of the range of opportunities on offer. Not engaging in apprentice training, not offering professional development to existing employees, not being respectful to, and genuinely valuing, our people will just facilitate a race to the bottom, where there can be no winners. So, I’m calling for all members across the UK to respond to the survey and come together under the NTDA to start thinking outside of traditional parameters and help us to ensure a brighter future.”*

The NTDA will be publishing the findings of its survey in an Industry Skills Shortage Research and Policy Report in Q2 2023.

Reminder: come and meet the NTDA Team

in Halls 18-19, stand M110 near the
Modern Garage Hub on **6-8 June 2023**
at the NEC Birmingham

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