

The Need for *Speed!*

Unlocking successful candidate onboarding through digitisation of the screening process



Executive Summary

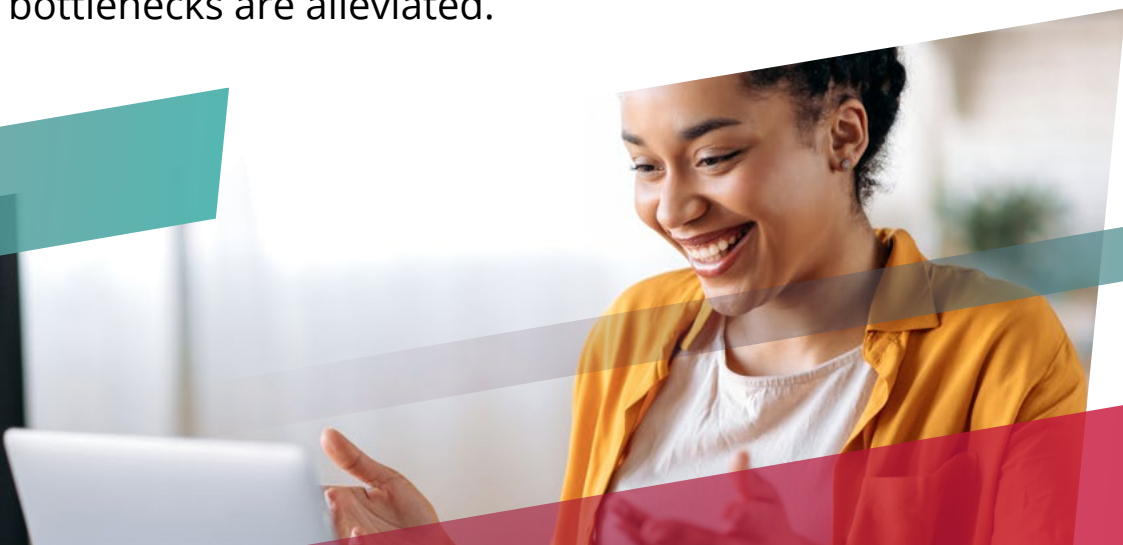
Our survey, undertaken in conjunction with IHR in the first half of 2022, revealed the many challenges that companies are facing in complying with increasing legislative asks and the impact this is having on their recruitment outcomes. Never has there been such an imperative to digitise the candidate screening process for faster hiring alongside the delivery of a better experience for all parties.



Our research indicated that:

- More than eight in ten (83%) UK companies are losing candidates due to the time taken to complete pre-employment screening checks.
- For six in ten (61%) UK companies, screening processes are being impacted by delays in governmental processing of key documentation and checks.
- One in eight UK employers (13%) have been challenged by changes to the Off-Payroll (IR35) and/or Immigration System processes and a further third (34%) – including half of the UK's largest enterprises - are unsure of the impact.
- Seven in ten (69%) UK enterprises have made adjustments to their screening process as a consequence of candidate shortages.
- Half (49%) of those UK enterprises who responded to our survey are already utilising candidate screening technology.
- The changes of the last two years brought about by the pandemic accelerated the digitisation of screening.
 - The most significant advantages of the change are noted as the shift to working from home/flexible working, the increased pool of potential talent that is now available as a consequence and the permanence of Digital Right to Work checks.
 - The key perceived remaining challenges/risks associated with the last two years of change from a candidate screening perspective are the shift to IDVT, ongoing challenges associated with post-Brexit RTW protocols, and the need for speed due to fewer available candidates.

Going forwards organisations should harness the huge potential of automation to help them onboard talent faster and more efficiently. However, time-savings will only be fully realised once governmental bottlenecks are alleviated.



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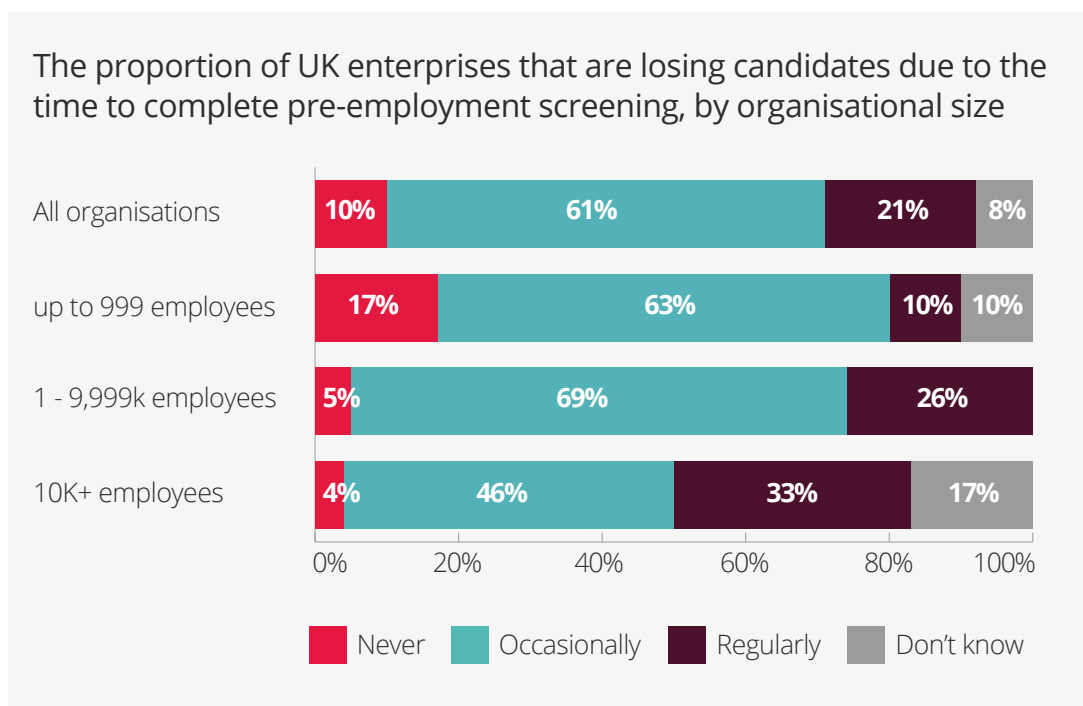


The state of candidate screening in 2022

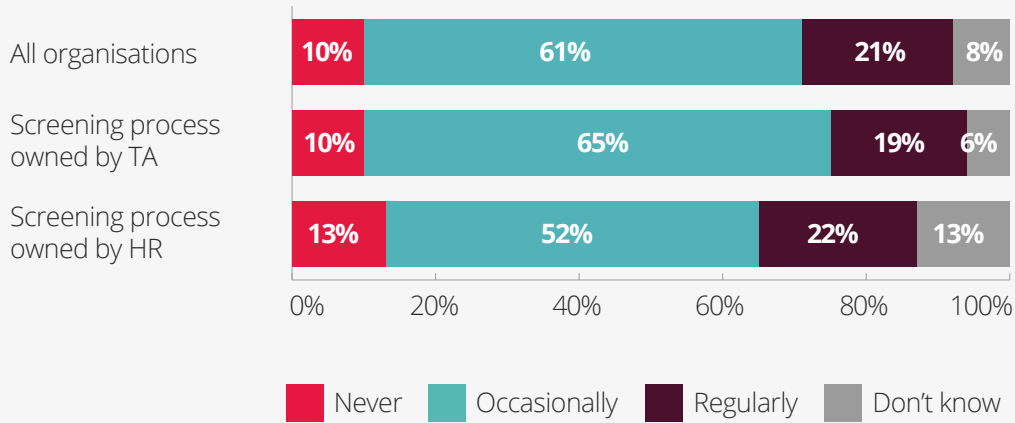
More than eight in ten (83%) UK companies are losing candidates due to the time taken to complete pre-employment screening checks.

Just one in ten UK employers believe that they never lose candidates due to delays in completion of pre-engagement candidate screening processes. In contrast, more than eight in ten (83%) report occasionally (61%) or regularly (22%) losing candidates due to screening process delays.

- This increases to 94% amongst organisations with 1,000-9,999 employees.
- Whilst these figures are lower amongst smaller (up to 999 employee: 73%) and very large organisations (10,000+ employee: 76%), there are notable proportions (10% and 17%, respectively) where respondents are not clear whether candidates are being lost.



The proportions of UK enterprises that are losing candidates due to the time to complete pre-employment screening, by screening ownership

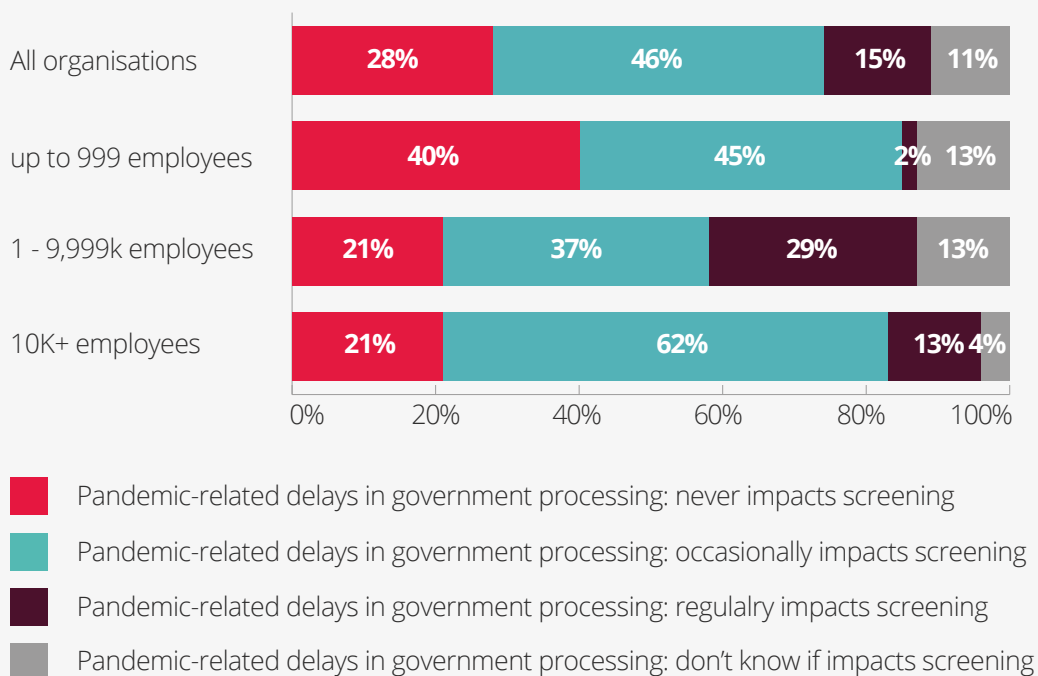


For six in ten (61%) UK companies, screening processes are being impacted by delays in governmental processing of key documentation and checks



Amongst the 61% of UK organisations that reported their candidate screening process was impacted by pandemic-related delays in governmental processing, the proportion increases to 76% amongst the largest (10,000+ employee) enterprises. It is also higher (67%) amongst those who regularly lose candidates due to the length of time taken to complete pre-employment screening checks. A further 11% do not know if they are being impacted.

The impact of governmental processing delays on the candidate screening process, by organisational size



Just one in ten (11%) organisations have made attempts to mitigate the impact of governmental delays in processing of documents and approvals.

In terms of what organisations have been able to do to counteract these delays, one in ten (11%) have taken action to mitigate the impact. Employers have introduced measures such as starting screening processes earlier, adding resource and enhancing their communication with candidates during the onboarding process.

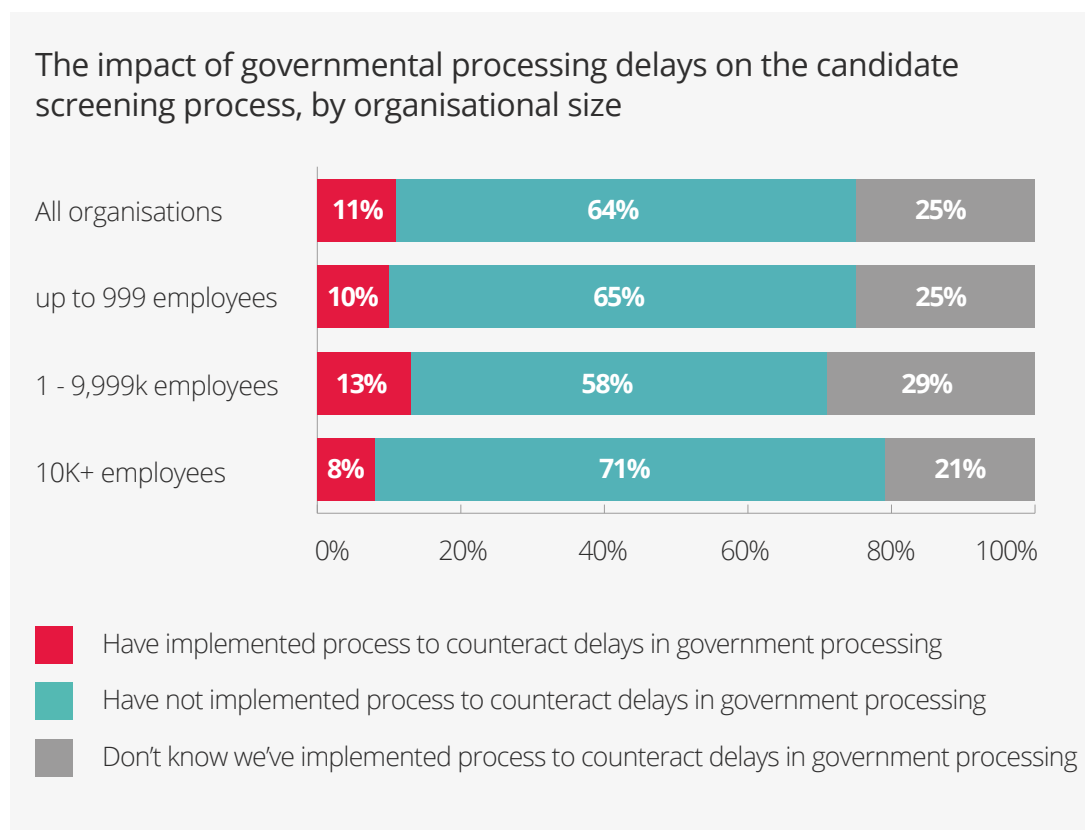
How have organisations made attempts to mitigate the impact of governmental delays?

“ Earlier checks and more resource assigned ”

“ Asking for details as early in the process as possible to kick off the process ”

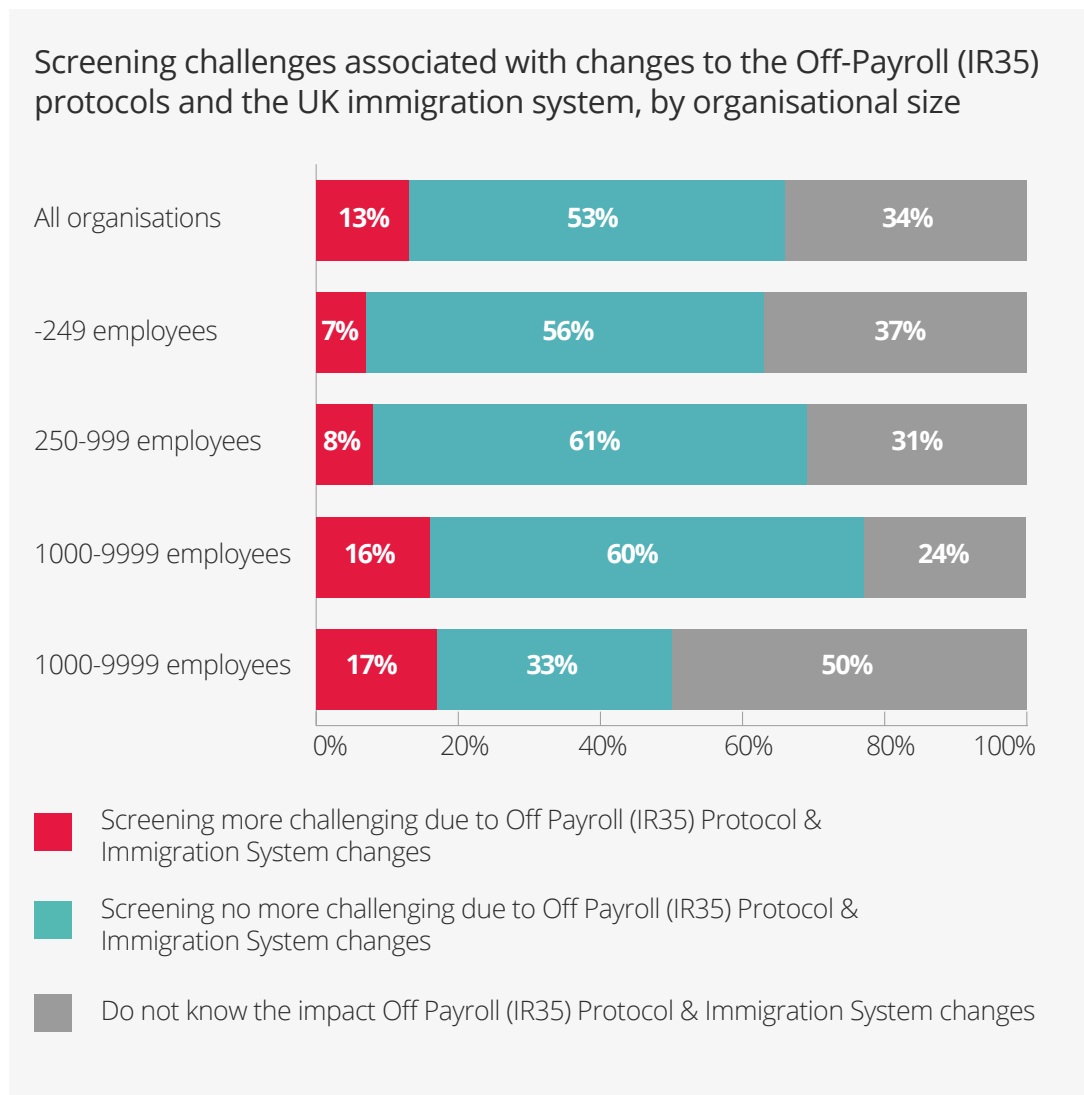
“ Paying for specialist immigration advice ”

“ Communicating clearly from the outset what the process is and how long it may take-regular comms in between ”



One in eight UK employers (13%) know that they have been challenged by changes to the Off-Payroll (IR35) and/or Immigration System processes. Concerningly, a further third (34%) – including half of the UK’s largest enterprises - are unsure of the impact.

Whilst one in eight (13%) of all UK enterprises report that they have faced candidate screening challenges associated with changes to the Off-Payroll (IR35) and/or Immigration System changes, this increased to one in six with either 1,000-9,999 (16%) or 10,000+ employees (17%). Moreover, whilst a further one third (34%) of respondents across all enterprises were uncertain of the impact, this rose to half (50%) of those in 10,000+ employee enterprises.



Seven in ten (69%) UK enterprises have made adjustments to their screening process as a consequence of candidate shortages.

Across 2020 and 2021, the combined impact of the pandemic, the UK's exit from the EU, planned legislative change within the contingent labour arena and the rise of remote working options generated unprecedented turmoil within the UK labour market.

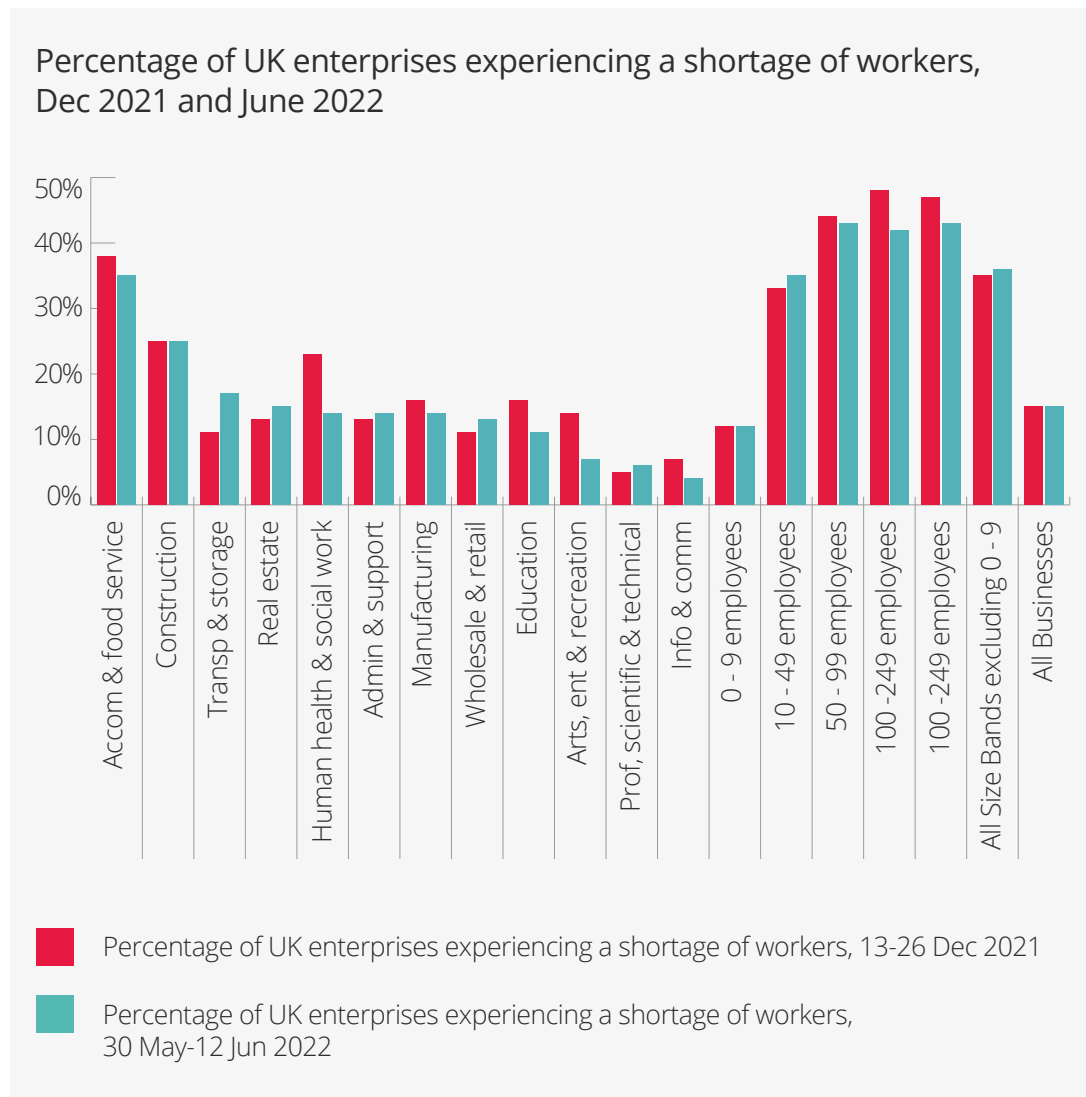
By Q2 2021, the official vacancy total had surpassed the pre-COVID (Q1 2020) level and continues to run at record levels. Job advertising levels have followed suit, with employers struggling to access the talent that they need. The net result has been an acute, ongoing worker shortage in almost every sector.

- At 1.3 million in Mar-May 2022, UK vacancy numbers continued at an all-time high
- Job advertising levels rose to 140% of pre-pandemic (Feb 2020) levels by late 2021 and were still running at 120%+ in early June 2022.
- From the pool of all-country nationals applying to come to work in the UK in the twelve months leading up to March 2022, there were a total of 277k work visas granted. Of these, just 33k were work-related visas granted to EEA and Swiss nationals seeking to come to the UK, representing 12% of all work-related visas.

Source: Access Screening analysis of ONS and Home Office data



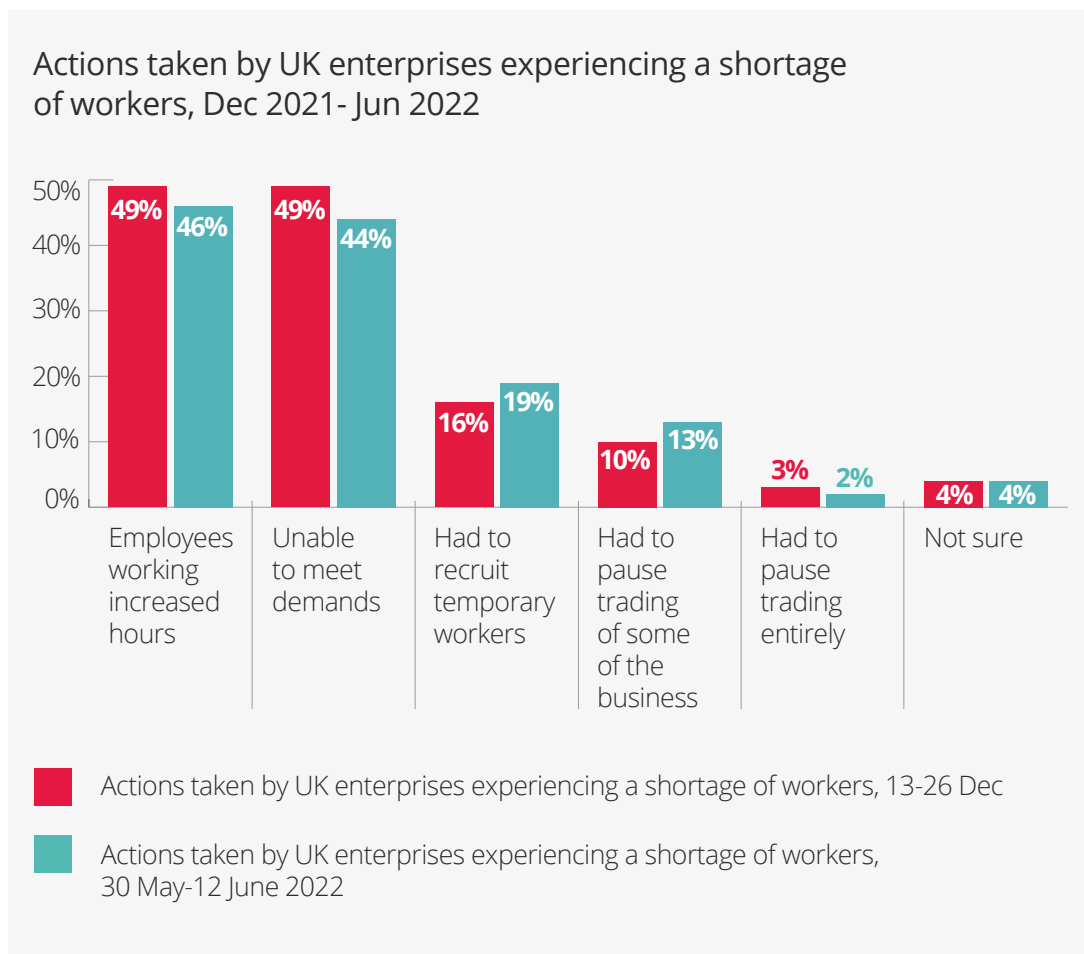
As to the extent to which UK businesses are continuing to experience worker shortages – either as a result of finding vacancies hard to fill, or due to sickness absence – 36% of those with 10+ employees were operating with a shortfall during the first half of June 2022. Given this is a similar level to December 2021, there seems to be no signs of hiring challenges letting up.



Source: Access Screening analysis of ONS data

In terms of the impact of ongoing skills shortages on UK enterprise, in June 2022 a concerning 44% were unable to meet business demands. Whilst 46% relied on employees to work more hours, a notable 19% had recruited temporary workers – the third consecutive monthly rise.

As such, skills shortages are placing additional pressures on businesses increasing the need to adjust screening processes to accommodate the increased reliance upon contingent labour.

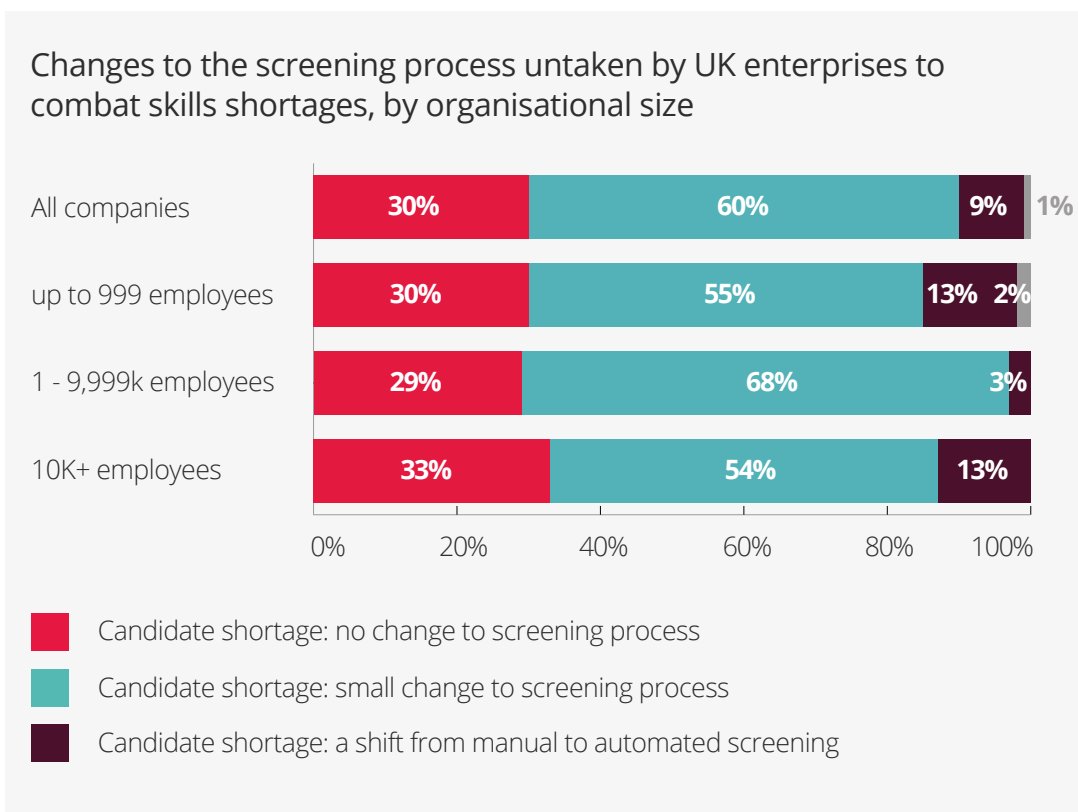


Source: Access Screening analysis of ONS data



In order to accommodate these challenges, seven in ten UK employers by Spring 2022 had either made small changes to their screening process (60%) or had moved from a manual to an automated process (9%).

The proportion that had made small adjustments rose to 68% amongst those with 1,000-9,999 employees, whilst just 3% had fully automated the process.



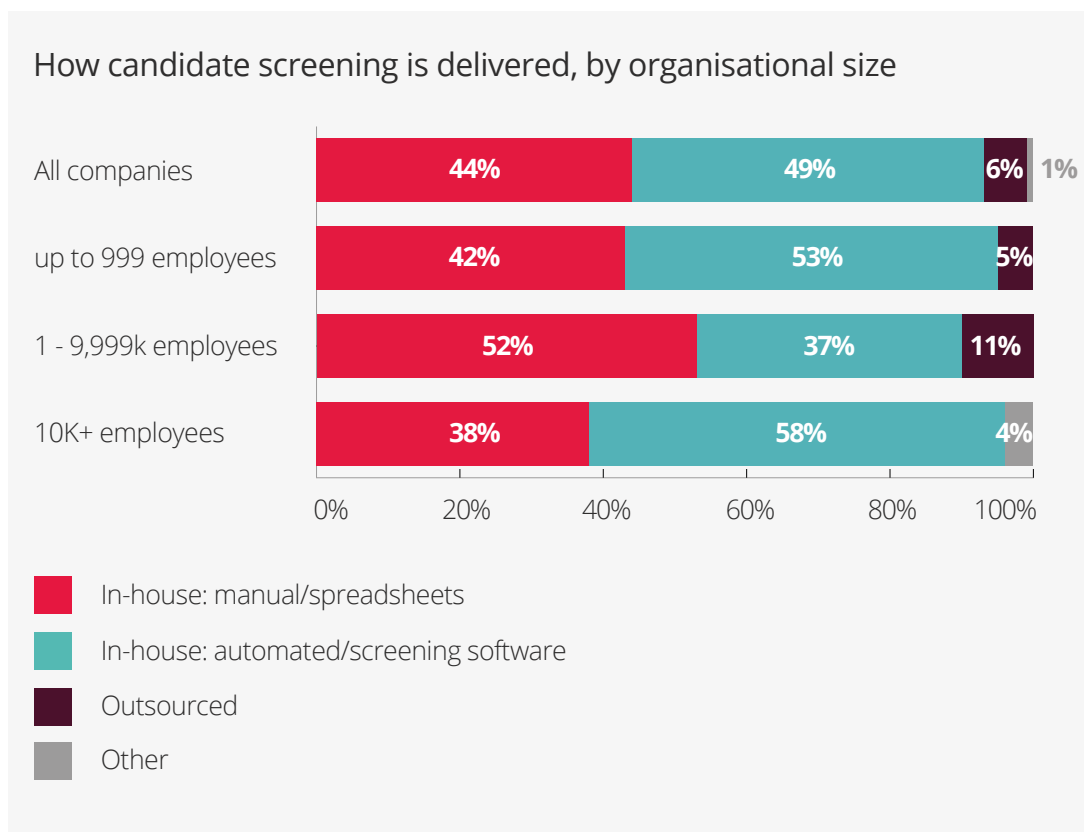
“ We have made significant changes - using different platforms and, in some cases, having same day interviews. It has become very fast paced. ”

50-99 employee enterprise in the Technology sector

Half of UK enterprises (49%) were conducting candidate vetting with the support of screening technology.

In contrast, a slightly lower proportion (44%) were still operating a manual screening process, utilising spreadsheets, whilst 6% had outsourced the entire function.

Organisations with both up to 999 or 10,000+ employees are the most progressed in terms of adoption of screening technology, at 53% and 58% respectively; whilst just 37% of enterprises with 1,000-9,999 employees have similarly moved to an automated process. Surprisingly, it is amongst this latter cohort that outsourcing is most prevalent as highlighted by 11% of respondents.



The most significant advantages of changes to candidate screening are noted as the shift to working from home (WFH) / flexible working, the increased pool of potential talent that is now available as a consequence of Digital RTW checks

The key benefit of the last two years of change, as cited by the survey respondents, is the increased flexibility around location of workers and the fact that this has increased the pool of candidates from which they can source.

The increased number of applicants that has been generated as a consequence has led to a rise in the volume of associated screening and communication activity.

Why have organisations turned to the support of screening technology?

“
We can consider more people based on wider geography / WFH ”

“
The flexibility and efficiency of being able to interview all candidates virtually ”

“
Online interviews and right to work checks. Increase in the area we are able to search in for candidates ”

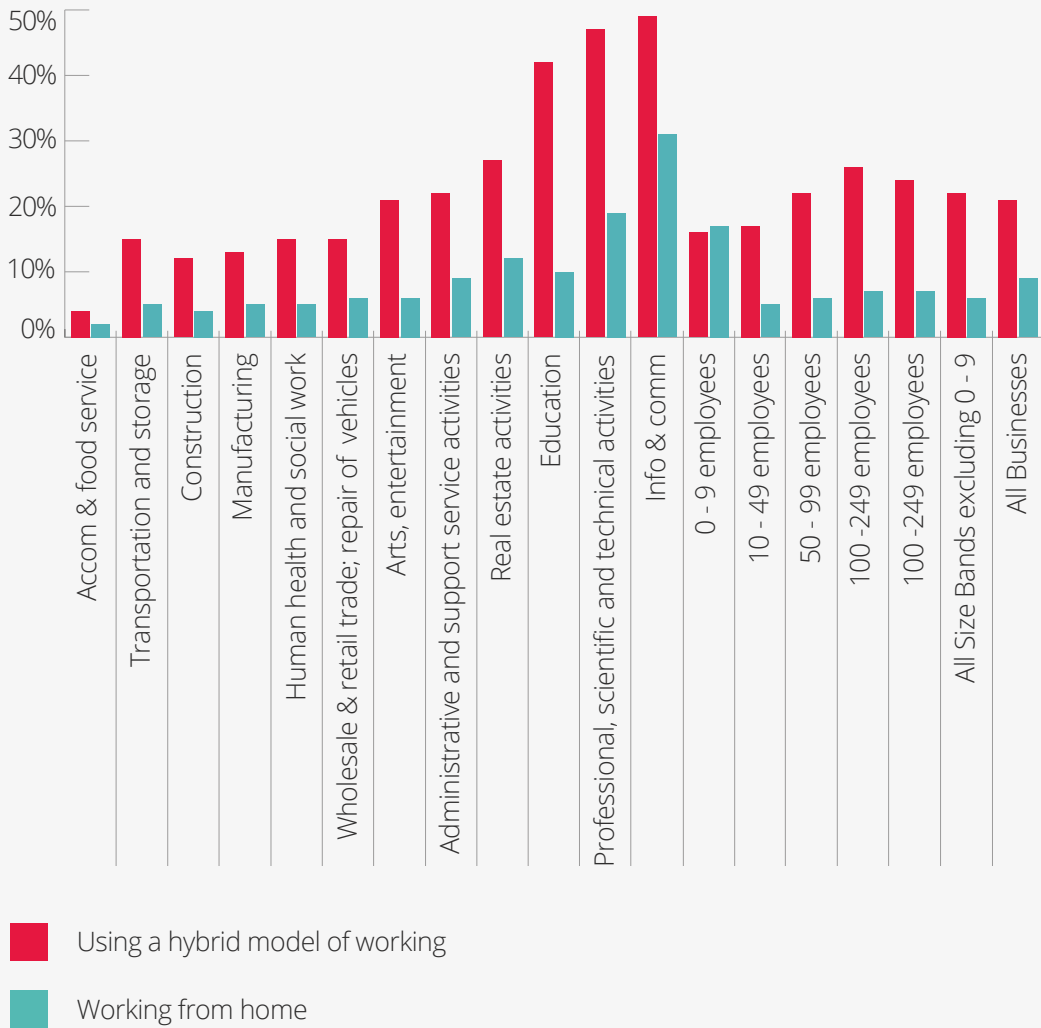
By April 2022, three in ten UK workers (30%) were still either working exclusively from home (9%) or working on a hybrid home / on-premise basis (21%). By industry, however, this varied considerably with a combined 80% within the Information and Communication sector and 66% within Professional, Scientific and Technical industries continuing to work fully or partially at home.

What benefits are UK enterprises seeing since turning to a digital screening process?

“
Candidates registering more easily especially if already in work ”

“
Speed of hire and compliance team time. Candidate does not have to present in person ”

Work location, by company size and industry (% of workforce amongst those currently trading), 1-30 Apr 2022

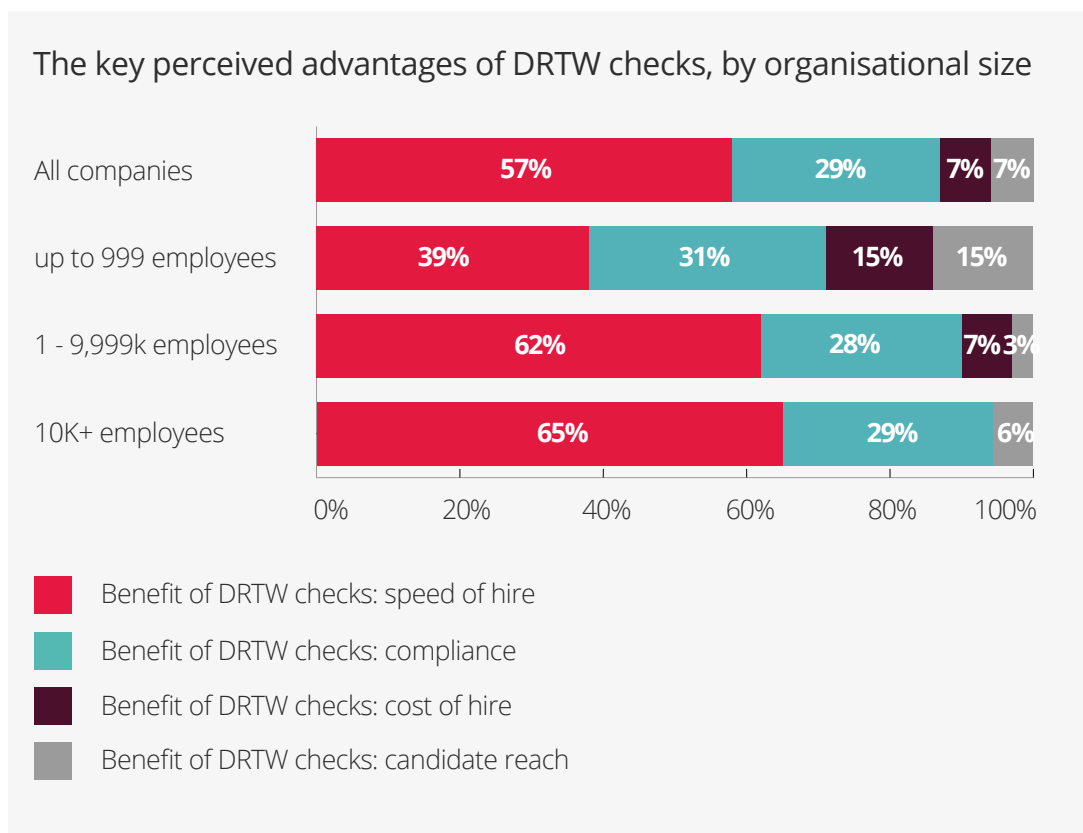


Source: Access Screening analysis of ONS data

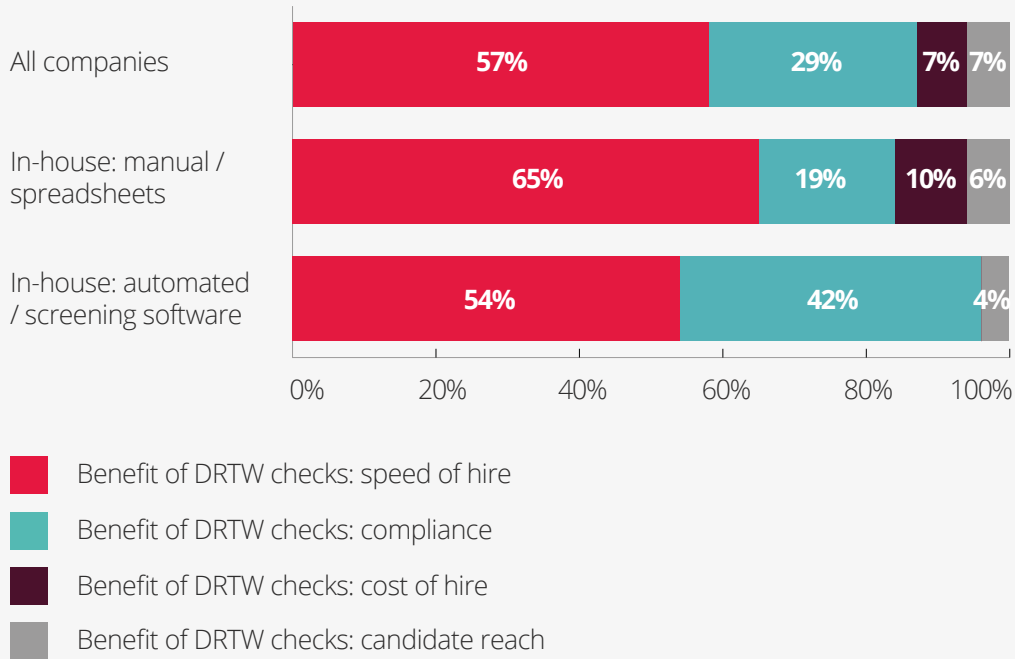
Running in parallel with this move to home working, the shift to Digital Right to Work (DRTW) checks and video interviewing are perceived to be of significant benefit within the sourcing and screening process, beyond the initial crisis-driven necessity.

The standout advantages the introduction of digital RTWs are noted as enabling speed to hire (as cited by 58% of respondents) and enhanced compliance (29%).

The benefit of improved speed was notably heightened amongst enterprises with 1,000-9,999 employees and those operating manual screening process. In contrast, benefits of enhanced compliance through use of DRTW checks are accentuated within the UK's largest (10,000+ employee) enterprises and those operating an automated screening process.



The key perceived advantages of DRTW checks, by organisational screening process



The key perceived remaining challenges / risks associated with the last two years of change, to candidate screening, are the shift to IDVT, ongoing challenges associated with post Brexit RTW protocols and the need for speed, to secure candidates.



Whilst DRTW checks have become a permanent feature of the candidate screening process, the news that from 1 October 2022 these will only be accessible via Identity Documentation Verification Technology (IDVT) will present new challenges for employers and their recruitment partners. Unsurprisingly, respondents flagged this area as an ongoing challenge associated with the change of the last two years.

There are also ongoing concerns about the post Brexit protocols and permissions associated with accessing and enabling talent from overseas to work or study in the UK. And with remote working removing the geographical boundaries that have been historically associated with many job opportunities, the need for speed and a slick candidate experience to secure talent from the post-pandemic and post-Brexit diminished UK talent pool, has never been as critical as it is now.

“

The complexities of the various Brexit changes for RTW and the stages that have changed for the worker, including those for students and graduates ”

“

Candidates being in many processes, so the need for speed ”

“

The competitive market, as candidates have more opportunities ”



The implications of identified changes

The need for speed to secure candidates – many of whom are in multiple recruitment processes.

With many respondents acknowledging that candidates are often in multiple recruitment processes – and they are in a race to the line to secure them before their competitors – the need for speed in conducting pre-employment background checks has become increasingly pressing.

When the pandemic hit, and Premier Care needed to scale up to both support increased demand and provide replacement staff struck by illness or the need to self-isolate, they took a swift but holistic view on how to develop a non-contact onboarding strategy.



We now have a virtual interview system followed by an automated screening process and virtual online training platform. ”

Daniel Isterling, MD of Premier Care

The net result is that Premier is now able to onboard staff within five days by using Access Screening.

Similarly, by centralising the screening process and team, engineering recruiter Rullion managed to reduce the onboarding process time from three weeks to seven days.



The need for a heightened candidate experience to match heightened candidate expectations.

Beyond the need for just speed, the importance of offering a professional and efficient screening process is fast becoming an expectation rather than a service differentiator, as part of the candidate experience.

“
In the healthcare sector, it's all about compliance and speed. Doing the two together is the art of Access Screening”

Premier Care

When Rullion commenced on its journey of transforming its screening processes, they put themselves in the shoes of the candidate and determined that they would build a solution that matched 'consumer' expectations; a seamless, automated process that guided the candidate through the onboarding journey. A dedicated advisor is also at hand, should additional support be required.

“
Our advisors in Candidate Services are now one team. Every candidate has a dedicated advisor. It has transformed candidate experience.”

Rullion

“
Having a branded candidate portal makes us look professional, adding to the positive impression we want to present.”

Premier Care



Realising the potential of the opportunities for a better screening experience

With around three in ten UK-based workers continuing to work solely or partially off-premise, the concept of WFH has become a lasting legacy of the pandemic. This has presented hirers with the opportunity to remove the legacy geographical constraints associated with recruiting exclusively on-premise workers, increasing the candidate pool but also increasing competition for talent.

Virtual interviewing, screening, onboarding and working, has become the go-to end-to-end process for hirers who are able to realise its full potential. It is enabling them to fill vacancies that they were previously challenged by, and/or secure talent that was previously out of their reach.

The DRTW process is a step change that employers and their recruitment partners had been calling for over the past few years. With the UK government now on the brink of requiring an additional layer of security and compliance, via IDVT, there is just one more step to go before the full potential of the paradigm shift can be realised. Once the remaining teething problems of the new international recruitment and freelancer hiring process are overcome and pandemic-related bottlenecks within governmental processing are alleviated, the true potential of automated screening processes will be realised.



Addressing the key remaining challenges

Identification Document Validation Technology (IDVT)

With the introduction of IDVT currently scheduled for 1 October 2022, this was frequently mentioned by survey respondents as a remaining challenge resulting from the pandemic related changes to the screening process.

With IDVT coming in various forms, with different capabilities and costs, hirers and/or their recruitment partners will need to assess the levels of assurances that are acceptable for their individual business by taking account of:

- The risks that the organisation will need to manage, including:
 - **Process:** making the change before October 2022 is a legal requirement. Preparation is key. Many organisations have already adopted screening software ahead of the deadline in order to manage their risk and improve efficiencies.
 - **Fairness:** there are some concerns about whether digital checks are fair to every group, for those unable to use the digital process and whether the government is doing enough meaning some processes still need to be done manually.
- The costs of the system
 - There will be associated costs in adopting IDVT as with any system implementation. However, automated screening software is proven to deliver huge efficiencies and operational cost savings by managing processes digitally.
- Organisation-specific requirements. These include:
 - Processing volumes, which are likely to determine whether it is best for the organisation to deploy software themselves or operate via a service provider
 - The need for integration with other systems and solutions
 - | With cloud-based technology, the set-up is intuitive and easy to configure.

[Find out more about IDVT through our online guide](#)

Summary and conclusions

With more than eight in ten (83%) UK companies losing candidates due to the time taken to complete pre-employment screening checks, flaws within current screening processes are damaging to both employers, who are delayed from accessing the skills they need, and candidates delayed from earning income. Moreover, with the cost of living accelerating, the latter has taken on a heightened importance.

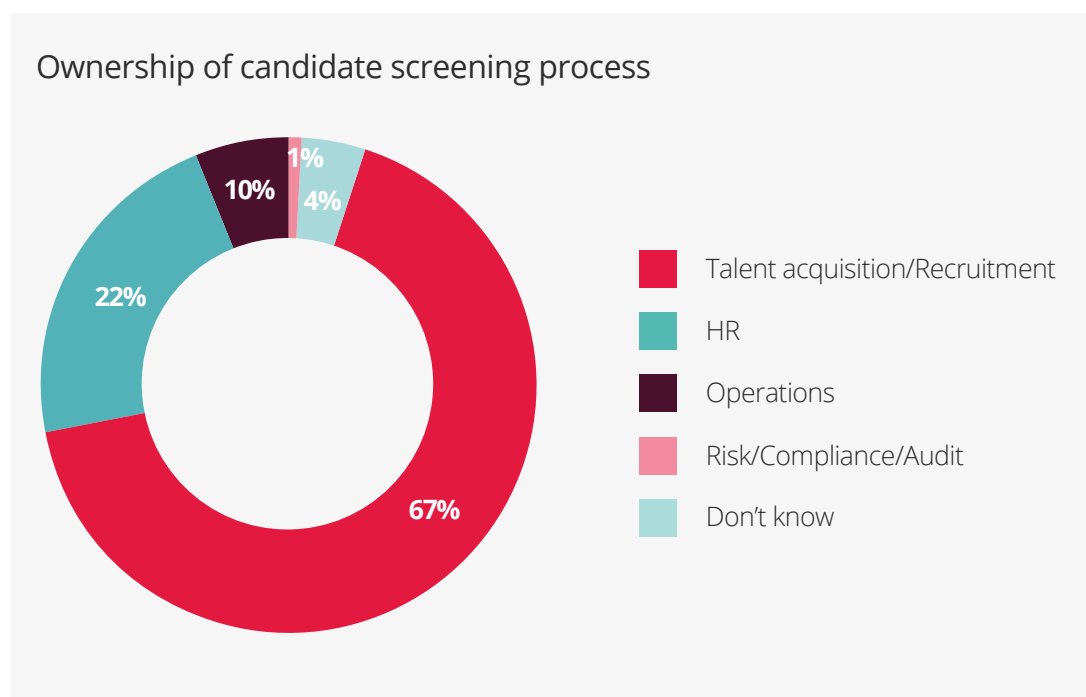
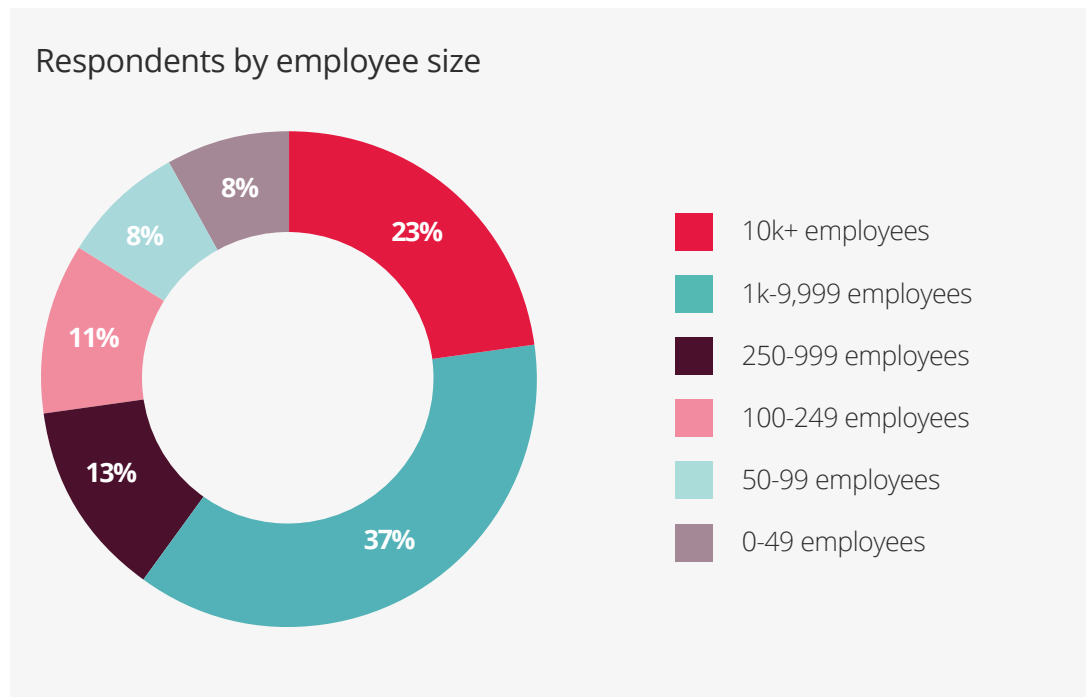
The change opportunities that have occurred over the last two years, largely brought about by the pandemic and its associated lockdowns, present huge potential for a step change to occur within onboarding processes. Once governmental processing bottlenecks and the teething problems associated with new protocols for securing international and freelance talent are alleviated, UK organisations will truly have the opportunity to realise the potential of change that has emerged from adversity.



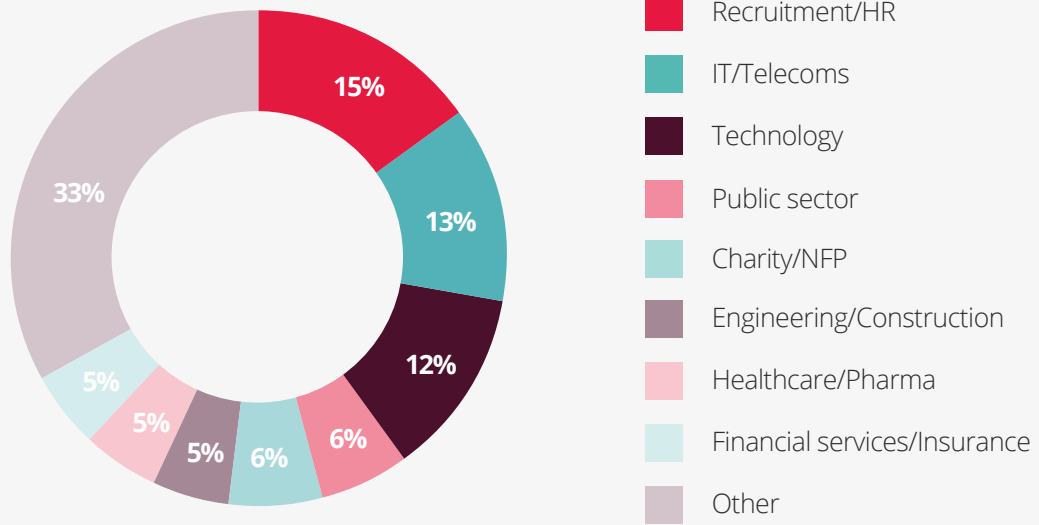
Survey demographics

Our survey received responses from 102 employers and recruitment partners across the period March-May 2022.

They span all size of organisation, a broad range of industry sectors and the full-spectrum of where ownership for the candidate screening process resides.



Respondents by Industry





Discover how Access Screening can help your agency be more productive and efficient - giving you the freedom to focus on clients and candidates, Access Recruitment's screening solution helps the UK's top agencies to simplify the everyday running of their background screening checks to fuel efficiency and productivity, control costs and enable growth.

Automated pre-employment screening checks for faster onboarding. Reduce your time to hire, comply with confidence and hire the right candidate every time with background screening software. With a tight talent market, can your business afford not to increase the efficiency of your hiring process?

[Find out more](#)



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