

**National Contact Centre Employer Customer Survey:
January – June 2008**

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National Contact Centre Employer Customer Survey: Analysis of January – June 2008 Data

Introduction

The National Contact Centre in Edenderry commenced, in June 2003, a process of making follow-up telephone contacts with a sample of employers that had earlier notified them of vacancies. This report continues the process for the first half of 2008.

Data

Companies that had notified their vacancies to the Contact Centre two months previously were randomly selected in each of the six months, using randomizing software. From the 623 companies selected overall, the file contained 201 valid responses, providing a response rate of 32%, which is good for a telephone survey.

Means of Notification

Companies can notify their vacancy details to the National Contact Centre through a variety of means – by telephone, by the FÁS website, by email, or by fax. The sample appears to be representative of the overall population. Almost a half of all vacancies in the survey were notified using the FÁS website (49%), which is very close to the overall percentage of 48% (reported in the NCC Activity report) for the first six months of 2008.

How did Companies Hear of Contact Centre?

A new question was added this year to the survey, asking companies how they had heard of the service provided by the National Contact Centre. Some 141 companies could recall where they had heard of the service. The most common means of hearing about the service was through the internet (33%), followed by personal recommendations (25%), and referrals from FÁS offices (23%). Thirteen percent had heard from advertisements, either in newspapers (6%), radio (5%), or television (2%). A further six percent were aware of the service from other means, such as other interaction with FÁS or from their previous employment.

Customer Feedback

Employers were asked to rate overall service provision and the website on a scale of one to five, with one being the lowest and five being the highest. The results displayed in Table 1

show a very positive level of satisfaction with the overall service provided. Of the 201 companies asked, 190 responded. The most common rating given by companies was five (the highest rating), the average score was over four, and there were very few low ratings. The overall service rating was very high, with 93% rating the service positively.

**Table 1
Customer Feedback Scores**

Score	Overall (%)	Web (%)
1 (low)	3	5
2	1	0
3	4	10
4	41	44
5 (high)	52	41
Average Score	4.39	4.16
Total Responses	190	164

The website continued to receive positive ratings (85% of companies rated it positively), although its average score was lower than the overall rating – 4.16 compared to 4.39. All companies were asked to rate the website (with the option of not rating it if the question was not applicable). This was to capture responses from companies that had chosen not to use the website to notify their vacancy because they did not find it a good service.

Vacancy Filling

There were three questions asked about vacancy filling. These were: the number of applications received, was the vacancy successfully filled, and did the selected candidate come through FÁS. Table 2 shows the number of applications the employer received. Companies were asked to specify in a range. As can be seen in the table, more than half of companies (54%) received more than ten applications for their vacancy. Five percent of companies received no applications, which is the highest proportion of companies not receiving applications since this survey began.

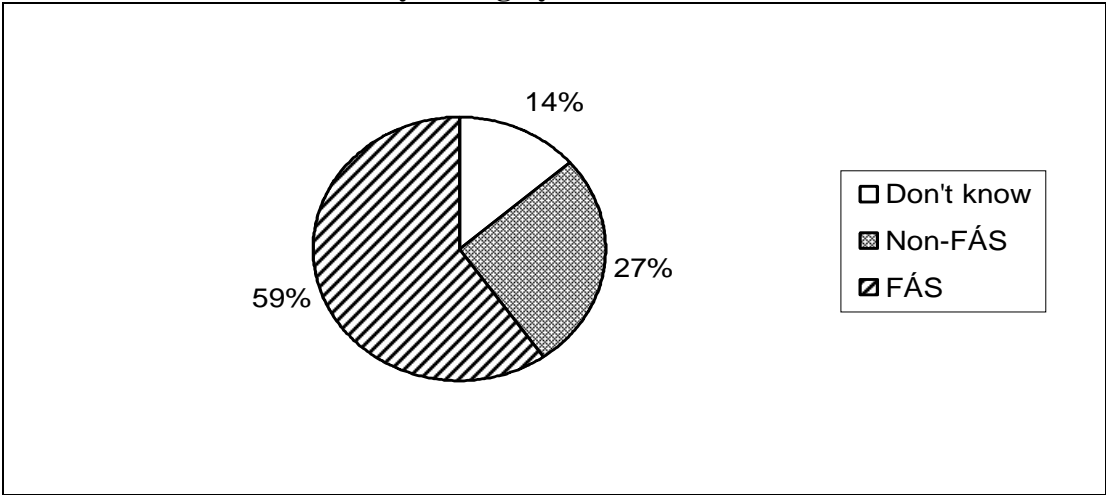
**Table 2
Number of Applications Received**

Range	Percent of Companies
0	5
1-3	6
4-10	37
11-19	20
20+	34
Total	100
Total Responses	200

In terms of vacancy filling, 85% had successfully filled at least one of their vacancies by the time of the survey (within eight weeks of notification), while the other 15% had not. Five of the employers interviewed (2%) had their vacancies flagged for work permits. Of these five work permit vacancies, all of them had been filled by the time of the survey.

Employers who had filled their vacancies were asked whether the vacancy had been filled by a FÁS-referred candidate. Of the 169 employers with filled vacancies, 14% of employers did not know if the selected candidate was referred by FÁS. Of the remainder (145 employers), 69% had filled their vacancies with FÁS-referred candidates. Figure 2 below displays this information.

Figure 2
Vacancy Filling by FÁS Referred Candidates



Contact by FÁS

From January 2005, the survey has included a question asking whether the company had received a telephone call from their local FÁS office in relation to their vacancy, subsequent to notification. This question is asked to determine the level of follow-up received by companies from FÁS. A fifth of companies (19%) did not know whether they had been contacted by FÁS after notifying their vacancy. More than a half of companies (54%) stated that they were not contacted and just over one in four companies said they were contacted by FÁS (27%).

Awareness of Disability Grants

A new question has been asked since July 2007, asking employers if they are aware of financial assistance available to employers in recruiting people with disabilities. Some 75 companies (37%) were aware that there are grants, up noticeably from 14% in the last report. A fifth of these companies had heard from the FÁS Freephone Service message (played if and

when an employer is placed on hold when phoning FÁS), and almost a third (31%) had heard from their local FÁS office. The rest had heard from e.g. other employers, their HR department, or word of mouth. The National Contact Centre sent information on disability supports to interested employers.

Other Questions

All companies were asked if they would use the FÁS service again, and 97% of the companies that responded said that they would, which is a very positive response, and consistent with previous reports. Companies were also invited to make any comments on the service they received from FÁS. Some 38 respondents made comments. More than half of these comments (55%) were employers stating that they were “very happy” with the service provided and that the service was “very good” or “excellent”. A further fifth of comments (21%) stated that the service was “good” or “fine”. Other positive comments included appreciation of: the matching service offered by FÁS, the level of response received for their vacancy, and the help received from the Contact Centre in wording their vacancy notifications. In terms of less positive feedback, a few employers commented that there was no response or a poor response to their vacancy (10%, or four companies). In addition, a few companies stated that they received a lot of applications from unsuitable candidates, which one employer described as being “time-consuming”.

Comparison with previous surveys

As the surveys continue to be carried out over time, long-term trends in customer feedback and vacancy filling can be monitored.

**Figure 3
Customer Feedback Comparison**

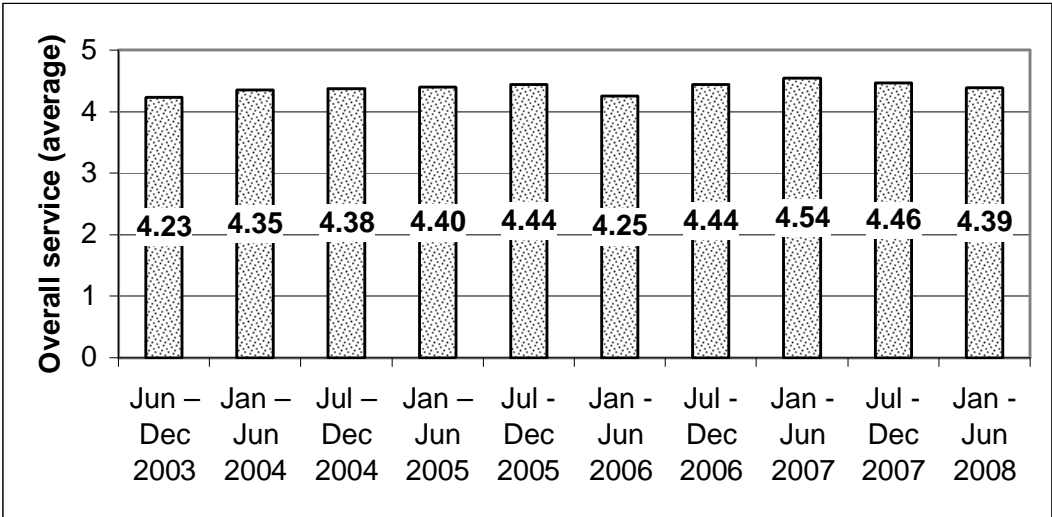
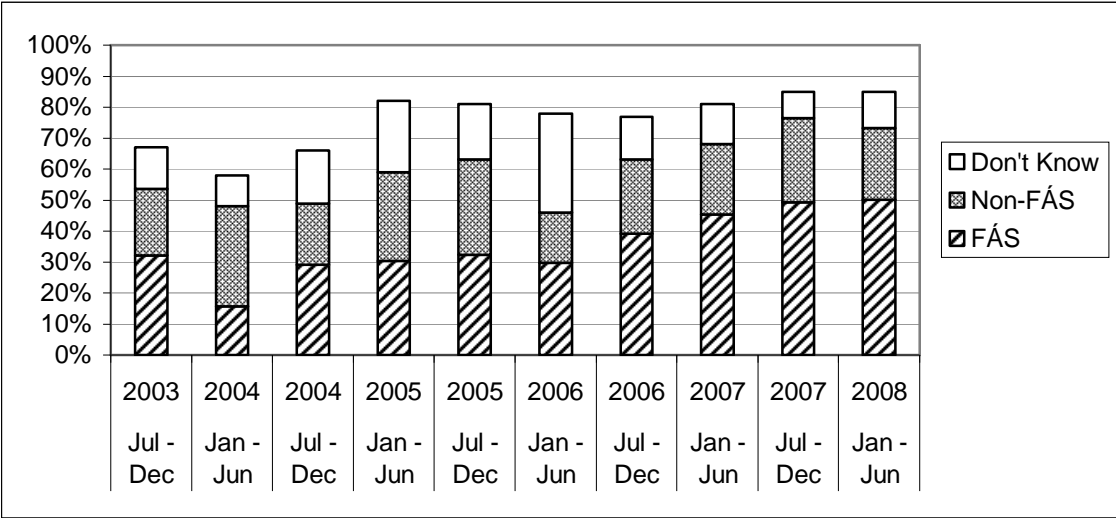


Figure 3 compares the average customer feedback scores from previous reports with the scores from this report. There was a slight decrease in the average rating given in the first six months of 2008, with a rating of 4.39 compared to the all-time high rating of 4.54 in the first six months of 2007. The average rating of 4.39 is the median rating found so far i.e. a half of the ratings published in these reports have been higher than 4.39 and a half have been lower.

Figure 4 compares the percentage of vacancies that were filled over time and, of those filled vacancies, how many were filled by FÁS candidates. The bar total shows the percentage of companies that had filled their vacancy by the time of the survey (i.e. within two months of notification). Each bar is broken into three component parts. The base represents the proportion of employers who stated that they filled their vacancy with a FÁS-referred client. The middle section displays the proportion of employers who stated that they filled their vacancy from a source other than FÁS. The top section shows the proportion of employers who did not know whether the selected candidate was referred from FÁS.

Figure 4
Percentage of Companies that Filled Vacancies with FÁS-referred Candidates

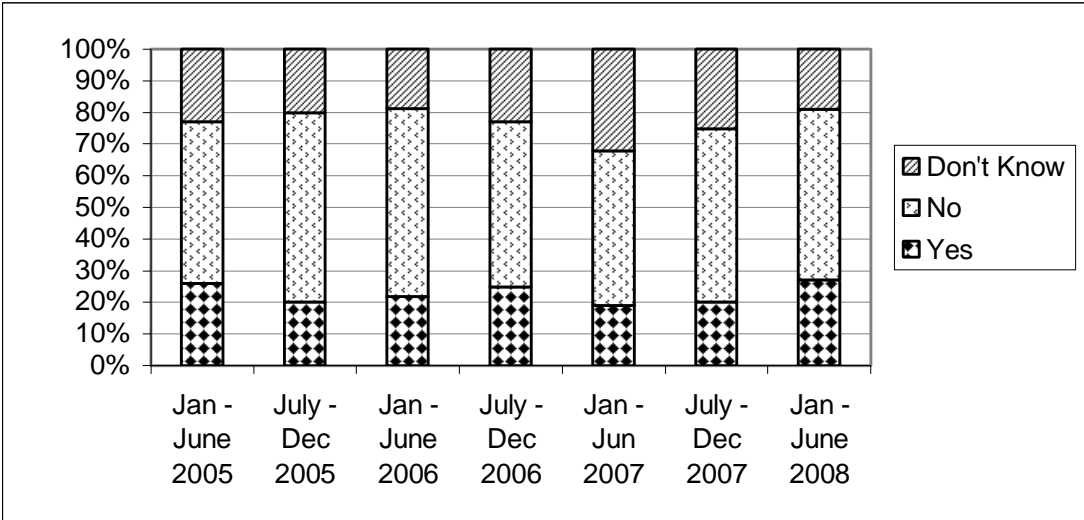


The percentage of vacancies filled at the time of the survey remained broadly similar from the first half of 2005 to the first half of 2007, at approximately 80%, which was higher than the levels found in 2003 and 2004. The previous report found an increase from this level, with 85% of companies stating that they had at least one of their vacancies filled by the time of the survey. This current report also finds 85% of vacancies being filled.

The higher level of vacancies being filled by a FÁS-referred candidate has persisted also, with a half of notified vacancies being filled by FÁS¹, compared to a third in 2004 – 2005. It should be noted that the figures from some previous reports may underestimate the actual percentage filled by FÁS-referred candidates, however, as a higher proportion of companies responded that they didn't know if the candidate was FÁS-referred (as it is assumed that none of the “Don't Know” candidates came via FÁS).

As can be seen in Figure 5 below, the proportion of companies that state that they were contacted by their local FÁS office subsequent to notifying their vacancy has remained quite stable over time. The percentage stating that they had been contacted has ranged from 19% to 27% since the question was added in January 2005, with 27% of companies stating that they were contacted in the current report. While 27% is the highest proportion yet of companies being contacted subsequent to notifying their vacancy, the proportion stating that they were not contacted remained the same as the previous report (54% compared to 55%). What changed is that the percentage of “don't know” decreased from 25% to 19%.

Figure 5
Percentage of Companies Contacted by their Local FÁS Office



Summary

The findings from the National Contact Centre Employer Survey continue to be very positive. Satisfaction ratings with the overall service remain high. Ninety-three percent of companies positively rated the overall service provided. Eighty-five percent of companies positively rated the website. In terms of vacancy filling, a large proportion of companies (85%) had

¹ See Shay Conway & Roger Fox's *Survey of Employers' Usage of FÁS Services- 2007* which found that 50% of vacancies notified to FÁS by employers were filled by a FÁS candidate.

their vacancy filled within two months of notifying it and a half (50%) of notified vacancies were filled by FÁS-referred candidates. More than a quarter of companies (27%) were contacted by their local FÁS office subsequent to notifying their vacancy.

There has been a noticeable increase in the proportion of companies who were aware of disability grants, up from 14% in the previous report to 37% in this report. Almost a third (31%) had heard about the grants from their local FÁS office, while a fifth had heard from the FÁS Freephone Service message that is played when and if an employer is placed on hold when phoning FÁS.

A new question was added to the survey this year, asking companies how they had heard of the National Contact Centre service. Of the companies that could recall where they had heard (141 companies), one in three said they learnt of the service from the internet, and one in four had received personal recommendations.