

**National Contact Centre Employer Customer Survey:  
July – December 2008**

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## **National Contact Centre Employer Customer Survey: Analysis of July – December 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. Planning & Research collate the results from this survey twice a year. This report continues the process for the second 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<sup>1</sup>, using randomizing software. From the 643 companies selected overall, the file contained 226 valid responses, providing a response rate of 35%, 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 for this period appears to understate the proportion of companies that used the website. Thirty-nine percent of surveyed companies stated that they notified their vacancies using the FÁS website, while the NCC Activity report shows that more than half of vacancies were notified through the website in the latter half of 2008.

### *How did Companies Hear of the Contact Centre?*

A new question was added at the start of 2008, asking companies how they had heard of the service provided by the National Contact Centre. Some 157 companies could recall where they had heard of the service. The most common means of hearing about the service was through referrals from FÁS offices (39%), followed by personal recommendations (28%), and the internet (26%). Four percent of companies heard through marketing (television, newspaper or contact by FÁS).

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<sup>1</sup> Some vacancies are excluded from the survey - vacancies based outside of Ireland; vacancies notified by recruitment agencies; and Community Employment programme vacancies. The vacancies selected in the sample have been stratified by region, reflecting the regional distribution of vacancies notified nationally.

### *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 226 companies asked, 202 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**

<b>Score</b>	<b>Overall (%)</b>	<b>Web (%)</b>
1 (low)	1	0
2	1	1
3	4	15
4	45	54
5 (high)	48	30
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>4.13</b>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>156</b>

The website continued to receive positive ratings (84% of companies rated it positively), although its average score was lower than the overall rating – 4.13 compared to 4.38. 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**  
**Number of Applications Received**

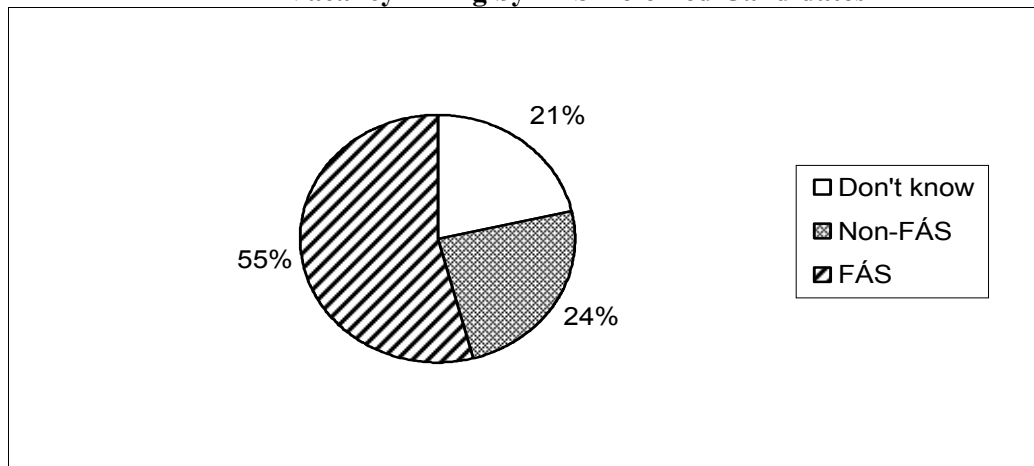
<b>Range</b>	<b>Percent of Companies</b>
0	3
1-3	7
4-10	31
11-19	24
20+	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>217</b>

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 (59%) received more than ten applications for their vacancy. Three percent of companies received no applications.

In terms of vacancy filling, 86% had successfully filled at least one of their vacancies by the time of the survey (within eight weeks of notification), while the other 14% had not<sup>2</sup>. Seven of the employers interviewed (3%) had their vacancies flagged for work permits. Of these seven work permit vacancies, six 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 employers with filled vacancies, one in five employers (21%) did not know if the selected candidate was referred by FÁS. Of those employers who knew (145 employers), 69% had filled their vacancies with FÁS-referred candidates (or, 55% of all employers). Figure 2 below displays this information.

**Figure 2**  
**Vacancy Filling by FÁS Referred Candidates**



#### *Contact by FÁS*

The survey 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. Two out of five companies (40%) stated that they had been contacted by FÁS. One in ten

<sup>2</sup> Four out of five vacancies notified by the surveyed companies were for one position (81%) and a further 10% were for two positions. Six percent were for three to five positions and 2% were for 10-15 positions.

companies (10%) did not know whether they had been contacted by FÁS after notifying their vacancy, and a half of companies (50%) stated that they had not been contacted by FÁS.

#### *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 92 companies (41%) were aware that there are grants. Two-fifths 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 a further two-fifths had heard from their local FÁS office. The rest had heard from: an information pack sent by the Contact Centre previously; having hired a person with a disability; or word of mouth. The National Contact Centre continues to send information on disability supports to interested employers.

#### *Other Questions*

All companies were asked if they would use the FÁS service again – 94% of the companies that responded said that they would, which is a very positive response (though slightly lower than previous reports). Companies were also invited to make any comments on the service they received from FÁS. Some 140 respondents made comments. Two-thirds of these were positive comments on the service, with general remarks such as being “very happy” or “happy with the service”, “useful” or “excellent”. In terms of less positive feedback, some employers commented that there was no response or a poor response to their vacancy, and that there were unsuitable applicants (10%). This compares with 5% of comments that the employer was delighted with the number and suitability of applicants. There were some comments that the range of job codes available to employers was not extensive enough. Five percent (or seven companies) said that they had problems with the website because it was slow and cumbersome.

#### *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 compares the average customer feedback scores from previous reports with the scores from this report. The average rating found in this report (4.38) is very similar to that found in the previous report (4.39). The range of average scores has been fairly consistent since the survey began, ranging between 4.23 and 4.54. The ratings found in the last two reports fall midway between these two scores.

**Figure 3  
Customer Feedback Comparison**

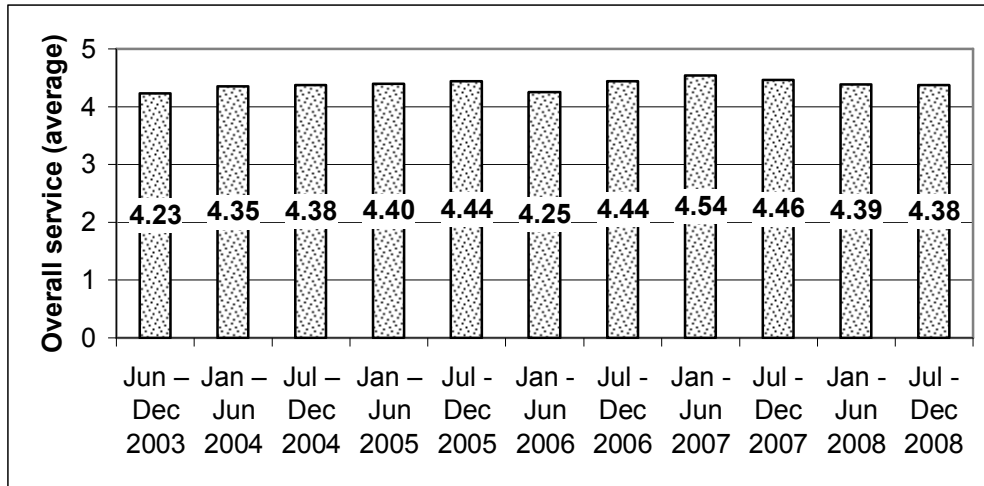
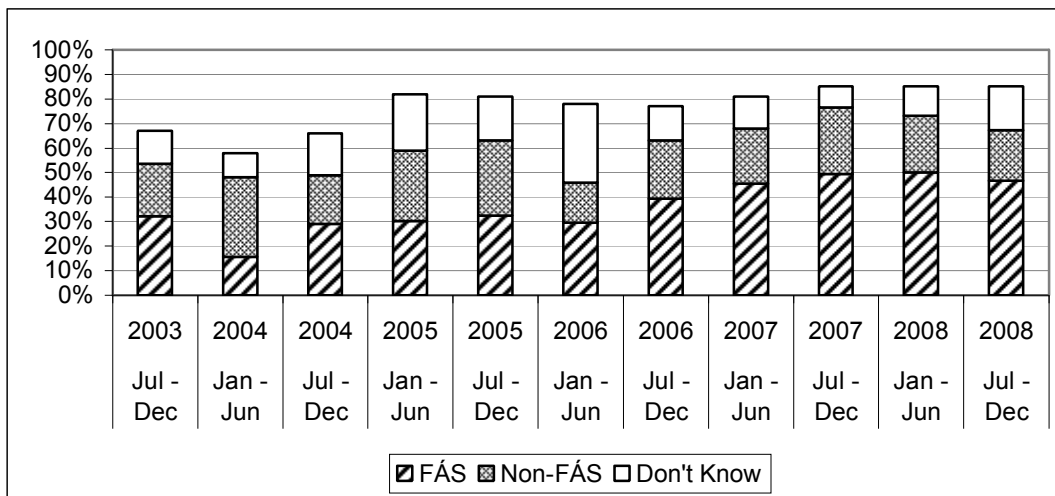


Figure 4 compares the percentage of vacancies that were filled over time and, of those filled vacancies, how many were filled by FÁS candidates. The bar total shows the percentage of companies that had filled their vacancy by the time of the survey (i.e. within two months of notification). Each bar is 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.

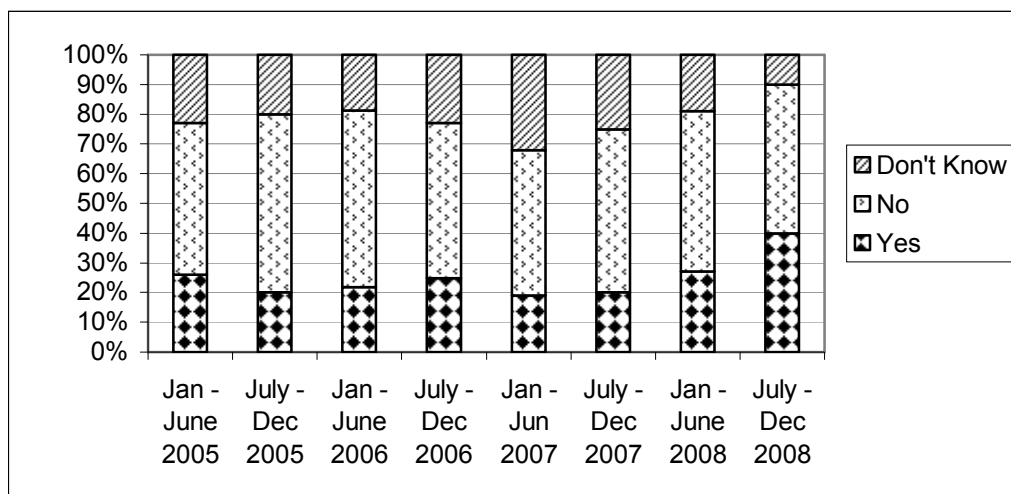
**Figure 4  
Percentage of Companies that Filled Vacancies with FÁS-referred Candidates**



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 second half of 2007 saw an increase from this level, with approximately 85% of companies stating that they had at least one of their vacancies filled by the time of the survey, and this higher level has been maintained throughout 2008. This current report finds 86% of vacancies being filled. This speedier filling of vacancies is to be expected, given the current looser labour market.

The higher proportion of vacancies being filled by a FÁS-referred candidate has persisted also, with approximately a half of notified vacancies being filled by FÁS<sup>3</sup>, 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). The percentage of "don't know" responses increased in this report (18% compared to 12% in the previous report).

**Figure 5**  
**Percentage of Companies Contacted by their Local FÁS Office**



As can be seen in Figure 5 above, the proportion of companies that stated that they were contacted by their local FÁS office subsequent to notifying their vacancy had remained quite stable over time. The percentage stating that they had been contacted had ranged from 19% to 27% since the question was added in January 2005. There was a noticeable increase in this

<sup>3</sup> 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.

report, with 40% of companies stating that they were contacted by FÁS. While 40% is the highest proportion yet of companies being contacted subsequent to notifying their vacancy, the proportion stating that they were not contacted remained similar to previous reports (50%). What changed is that the percentage of “don’t know” decreased down to 10%.

### *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-four percent of companies positively rated the website. In terms of vacancy filling, a large proportion of companies (86%) had their vacancy filled within two months of notifying it and more than half (55%) of filled vacancies were filled by FÁS-referred candidates. Two-fifths of companies (40%) were contacted by their local FÁS office subsequent to notifying their vacancy, which is a noticeable increase from previous surveys.

The increase in the proportion of companies who were aware of disability grants seen in the January – June 2008 report, up from 14% to 37%, was maintained in the latter half of 2008, with 41% of surveyed companies aware of disability grants.