

**FAS VACANCY FILLING SURVEY 2001
SUMMARY**

600 Companies' reactions to the level of service received from FAS in relation to the filling of job vacancies notified by them to FAS.

**Aisling Byrne
Planning & Research
FAS**

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FÁS Vacancy Filling Survey 2001: Summary

1. Introduction & Methodology

1.1 Introduction

In the first ten months of 2001 FÁS received over 80,000 vacancy notifications from employers. These were published in its Employment Services Offices and over 425,000 persons were referred to the vacancies. The vacancies were notified either directly to local FÁS offices or to the central telephone-based service, *CallNet*. Employers also had the option of placing their vacancies on the internet-based *Job Bank Service*. In a small number of cases FÁS was informed either by the employer or the job seeker as to when these vacancies were filled, however in many cases FÁS received no feedback.

It is important for FÁS to get a more accurate assessment of its vacancy filling activity. In response to this a telephone survey of 600 employers that notified FÁS of vacancies was conducted in 1998. The aim of this survey is to provide similar information for 2001. The survey has two objectives: to get a more accurate assessment of its vacancy filling activity, and to obtain information on employers use of and satisfaction with FÁS Employment Services.

1.2 Survey Methodology

The Adelaide Group Business Research & Communications conducted a telephone survey of 600 employers that notified FÁS of vacancies in May 2001. The survey was based on a sample from each of the FÁS regions. The sample was made up of 150 vacancies from Dublin North, 90 vacancies from the South West region – the two largest and busiest regions, and of 45 vacancies in each of the other regions. The survey is confined to one vacancy notification per employer to ensure a broader representation of employers' views. The sample was randomly selected from a database of 2000 companies, fieldwork took place between August 1st and September 14th 2001 and a report was presented by the *Adelaide Group* in November.

2. Results of Survey

2.1 Employer Profile

The majority of employers (88%) interviewed had under 50 employees, and were located in the construction (12%), manufacturing (12%), catering (10%), retail (9%) and 'other' (32%) sectors.

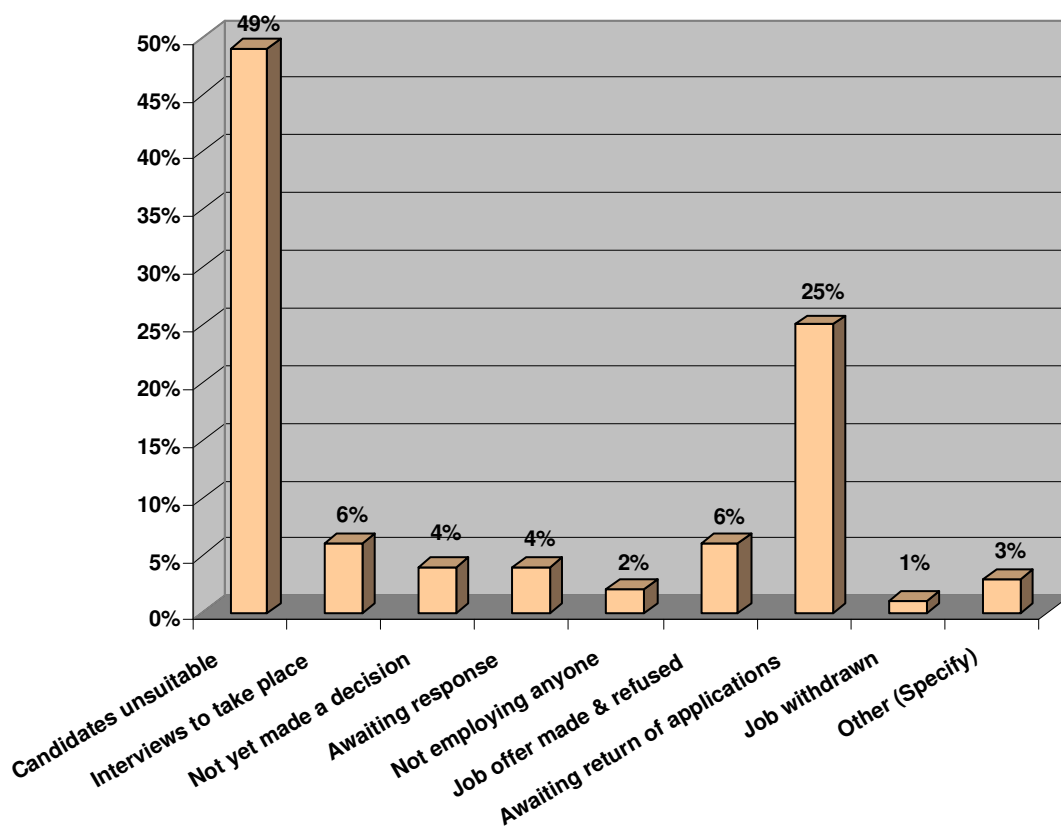
Sector

Manufacturing	12%
Wholesale	5%
Retail	9%
Finance/Banking	3%
Transport/Distribution	5%
Catering	10%

Agriculture	3%
Computers/ Information Technology	4%
Construction	12%
Public Sector	5%
Other	32%

Similar to 1998 the particular vacancy notified tended to be full-time (79%). When asked about the current status of the vacancy notified, employers reported that 76% had been filled with 24% still remaining unfilled. Reasons given for the vacancy not being filled were almost exclusively related to candidates' unsuitability (49%) and insufficient interest/ or where an employer was still awaiting the return of applications (25%). Other reasons given were that interviews were still to take place (6%), the job offer was made and refused (6%), the employer had not yet made a decision (4%), the job offer was made and the employer was awaiting a response from the successful candidate (4%), and a decision was made not to employ anyone at that time (2%).

Figure 1 : Reasons why the vacancy has not yet been filled



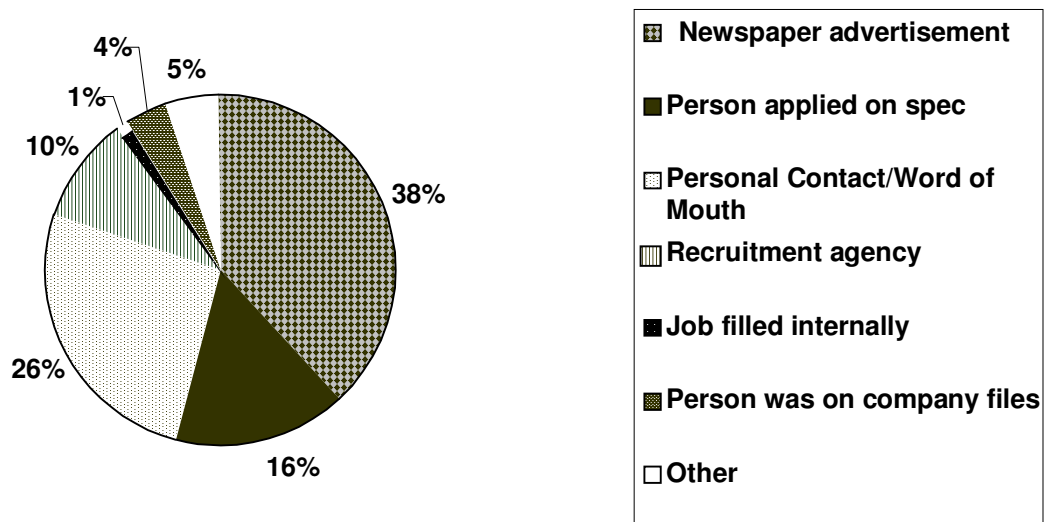
2.2 Vacancies filled by FAS

Fifty-four per cent of vacancies notified were filled by someone sent by FAS, this is an increase of 16 percentage points on the 1998 Survey. At a regional level this ranged from 46% to 71%.

Of the 43% of vacancies not filled by FAS a high proportion were filled through newspaper advertisements (38%), through personal contact/word of mouth (26%), and by a person applying on spec (16%). Just 10% of vacancies were filled through other recruitment agencies.

Although the survey is not statistically representative if we applied the percentages to the 80,000 vacancy notifications received from employers we could say that employers reported that 60,800 of the vacancies had been filled and 43,200 were filled by someone sent by FÁS.

Figure 2: Vacancies not filled by FÁS - how they were filled



2.3 Quality of FAS Candidates

In general more than half of employers (56%) rated the quality of candidates referred from FAS between *fairly good* to *excellent*, another one-third of employers gave candidates an average rating, while 11% of employers viewed the quality of candidates negatively rating them from *fairly poor* to *terrible*.

When employers were asked to rate the quality of candidates ranging from *terrible* to *excellent* in eight specific areas, for example their suitability for the job, punctuality, and enthusiasm etc. fewer candidates were rated from *fairly good* to *excellent*. Table 1 shows the percentage ratings and how this compares to 1998.

<i>Table 1 Percentage Ratings of Fairly Good to Excellent by Employers of FAS Candidates</i>		
	1998	2001
Their suitability for the job	23%	20%
Punctuality	13%	19%
Enthusiasm/motivation at interview	18%	19%
Skills & Expertise	27%	20%
Neat Appearance	11%	18%
Understanding of the job	21%	18%
Qualifications	24%	19%
Experience	34%	21%

Table 1 shows that in 2001 approximately 20% of employers gave candidates a positive rating in the eight areas set out. Nearly another one-third of employers gave candidates an average rating, while the remaining employers (over 50%) were not satisfied with the quality of candidates in these areas, rating them between *fairly poor* to *terrible*.

When compared to 1998 Employers' ratings of candidates' experience dropped by 13 percentage points. Rating of candidates' skills and expertise dropped by 7 percentage points and ratings of candidates qualifications dropped by 5 percentage points over the same period. Overall this shows a decrease in skill related areas.

2.4 Level of Screening of FAS Candidates

There is a marked decrease in the level of screening provided to employers in this survey when compared to the 1998 survey. Just 29% of employers in this survey said that screening of candidates took place in the case of a vacancy, this compares to 45% in 1998. Where screening did take place the quality of the screening process was rated highly, with 51% of employers rating the screening as *fairly good* to *very good* and 12% rating the service as *excellent*. However, the number of employers rating the quality of the screening process as *excellent* fell 5 percentage points compared to 1998.

Q.4(c) Did screening of candidates by FAS take place in the case of this vacancy?

	1998	2001	Deviation
Yes	45%	29%	-16%
No	33%	50%	+17%
Don't Know	22%	21%	-1%
Total	100%	100%	

(If Yes)

Q.4(d) How would you rate the quality of the screening process in the case of this vacancy?

	1998	2001	Deviation
Excellent	17%	12%	-5%
Very good	15%	13%	-2%
Fairly good	32%	38%	+6%
Neither good/poor	14%	28%	+14%
Fairly poor	10%	2%	-8%
Very poor	2%	3%	+1%
Terrible	1%	4%	+3%

2.5 CallNet System

Employers in the three Dublin regions, the South West region and the South East Region, where the CallNet System is in operation were asked if they were aware of the system. Seventy-nine percent of employers were aware of the system, of these 92% had used the system and there was a satisfaction rate of 68%.

At a regional level results show that awareness of the system was lowest in the South East (68%) where the CallNet System was most recently introduced. Awareness in the Dublin regions ranged from 88% in Dublin North, 86% in Dublin West and 79% in Dublin South. Satisfaction with the CallNet system was also lowest in the South East, with just 42% satisfaction among employers, again this may be indicative of their relatively recent involvement with the system. Satisfaction in the Dublin regions ranged from 93% in Dublin South, 74% in Dublin North and 68% in Dublin West.

Employers were then asked what advantages they believed the CallNet System had over the previous system. All of the comments received were recorded, the following gives a flavour of the type of information that was recorded.

Question: What advantages do you believe the CallNet system offers over the previous system?

Positive comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “It generates a huge response, I just call a freephone number and am getting responses the next day”• “Freephone is excellent, quick and easy to use”• “Huge coverage”• “Big response each time used”• “Freephone number is much more convenient than going down to the local office”• “Good for reaching a wide variety of candidates”• “Excellent response”• “Like system layout, easier than going through FAS office, easy to use”
Negative comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “A lot of replies but poor quality”• “No screening therefore candidates apply at their own discretion, which is not good”• “Works well but a lot of time wasters”• “We get a lot of CVs from the system but the office ads seem to get more suitable people”

3 The Quality of the Recruitment Service

3.1 Rating of Services by Employers

Employers were asked to rate the quality of six aspects of FÁS services ranging from *terrible* to *excellent*. Table 3 shows the percentage rating of fairly *good* to *excellent* given to FAS services by employers and how this compares to 1998.

Employers rated the politeness and courtesy of FAS staff highly (90%). The speed with which FAS recruited (71%), the efficiency and professionalism of FAS staff (88%) and the provision of a sufficient number of FAS candidates (70%) was appreciated by a majority of employers. The quality of the follow-up provided on the vacancy notified was rated *fairly good* to *excellent* by nearly 70% of employers.

<i>Table 2</i> <i>Percentage Ratings of Fairly Good to Excellent by Employers of FAS Services</i>		
	1998	2001
Politeness & Courtesy of FAS Staff	89%	90%
Efficiency & Professionalism	69%	88%
Speed FAS Recruited	49%	71%
Provision of sufficient Number of Candidates	26%	70%
Follow-Up Provided	48%	69%
Meeting Deadlines	27%	68%

An improvement in all services can be seen when compared to 1998. The most notable improvements are in the provision of a sufficient number of candidates to choose from and in meeting deadlines agreed. Seventy per cent of employers rated the provision of a sufficient number of candidates from *fairly good* to *excellent* compared to just 26% in 1998. Similarly 68% of employers rated the meeting of deadlines from *fairly good* to *excellent* compared to 27% in 1998.

Employers were also asked what they feel the most favourable aspect of using the FAS Recruitment/Vacancy Filling Service is. The following comments provide a snapshot of some aspects mentioned.

Most favourable aspects of using the FAS Recruitment/Vacancy Filling Service

- “Amount of candidates to choose from”
- “Great efficient service”
- “Easy and convenient to access the system”
- “FAS is a name you associate with recruiting good staff”
- “Great commitment of FAS staff in filling positions”
- “A great labour source, follow-up is excellent”

3.2 Future use of the Recruitment/Vacancy Filling Service

Two-thirds of employers (67%) felt encouraged by FAS to use the vacancy filling service. Some of the most favourable aspects of using the vacancy filling service relate to its convenience, its accessibility, and the large response generated by the service. Ninety-two percent of employers interviewed said they would use the service again, this compares with 88% in 1998.

Employers were asked what improvements they think FAS could make to meet their vacancy needs. All of the comments made were recorded, the following is a sample:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Screen and ensure only suitably skilled people apply”• “ensure people applying are genuine”• “inform people how to get the best out of the service”• “Provide interview training”• “Screen and increase communication with employers”• “Provide help with CV preparation”. |
|---------------------|--|

More improved screening was the most commonly recorded improvement employers mentioned.

4 Conclusion

From these survey findings areas for improvement relate to the quality of candidates applying for vacancies, the need for greater follow-up by FAS Employment staff in relation to vacancy filling activities and screening of candidates. Nine out of ten Employers surveyed said they would use FAS services again, this suggests an increased demand on FAS to meet their recruitment requirements.