



Hair Council
HAIR COUNCIL

H a i r d r e s s i n g a n d B a r b e r i n g

the case for Mandatory Registration

Foreword

As a hairdresser all of my life, I have always been immensely proud of my profession and have never been able to understand why the industry has not had the recognition it deserves.

Perception of our industry amongst the public, other industries, educational establishments and indeed successive careers advisors, has never really fully appreciated the many skills it takes to be a great hairdresser or barber, nor the amount of training and continual development needed to compete in the industry as a whole and in today's ever changing marketplace.

Governments historically have not felt the need to have our industry regulated, but for us to achieve the status that the industry, individuals and the public need, to change these outdated perceptions, we have to become far more professional in our approach and indeed the whole business of the 'UK Hairdressing Industry.'

Therefore, this report was commissioned, to find out just how important it was to both industry and the public, to have hairdressing and barbering properly and professionally regulated.

My thanks to all those from both industry, and the consumers that contributed and responded to this survey, and to the organisations that continue to support our journey to finally gain the professional status the UK hairdressing and barbering industry so richly deserves.

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CEO/Registrar – The Hair and Barber Council

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Introduction

The Hair Council was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1964 with the aim of raising standards and improving professionalism within the hairdressing and barbering industry by encouraging every hairdresser to join the UK Register of Qualified Hairdressers. Whilst state registration is mandatory for doctors, nurses, dentists and several other professions, hairdressers and barbers can only be encouraged to register voluntarily. Therefore the ambition of the Hair Council is to increase the number of hairdressers who join the UK Register of Qualified Hairdressers and stimulate and influence parliamentary debate which will bring about a statutory change to make state registration mandatory. In addition, the Barber Council, part of the Hair Council, was established in 2014 and shares this same vision.

A mandatory register of hairdressers and barbers would aim to fulfil a number of outcomes which cannot be guaranteed if membership of the register remains voluntary. These outcomes include:

- Regulation of the industry
- Minimum required qualifications to practices
- Raised industry standards
- Better health and safety
- Increased public confidence in and appreciation of professionalism within the industry

Both the Hair Council and the Barber Council steering boards are made up of senior hairdressers / barbers and educators along with representatives from other industry associations, the wholesale trade, manufacturers, journalists and qualification awarding organisations.

The Skills for Health and Justice research department was commissioned to deliver this objective and independent piece of work. They are experts at analysing workforce development issues and have produced a range of reports for government departments and wider public sector agencies.

The research on mandatory registration was conducted with reference to the current and future skills needs of the sector and the external factors that might influence decision making. It is informed by the subjective views of stakeholders and the latest government data on the sector's workforce. The report will cover the following:

- *Section one* provides a brief background summary which sets the scene for the report in terms of the current UK Register of Qualified Hairdressers and the skills and qualifications environment.
- *Section two* presents a one page executive summary which draws out the research headlines in relation to the findings from the primary fieldwork – online survey, interviews and consumer survey. In addition to this, further summaries can be found in an accompanying one page ‘key findings’ paper and a three page ‘extended summary’.
- *Section three* contains a summary of the research aims and objective and sets out the key question to be addressed.
- *Sections four* provides details of the research methodology employed and those participants engaged in the research.
- *Section five* is focused on an assessment of the primary research. It presents the case for and against mandatory registration, exploring barriers and enablers, considers what mandatory registration might look like and what needs to be accomplished in trying to achieve this.
- *Section six* considers the views of stakeholders in relation to workforce skills and qualifications.
- *Section seven* takes a look at the external drivers of change that might influence the future shape of the hairdressing and barbering sector.
- *Section eight* concludes the report and provides recommendations for action by The Hair Council and wider stakeholders.

Section one: Background

The Voluntary UK Register of Hairdressers / Barbers

The Hair Council currently operates a voluntary UK Register which is open to qualifying graduate hairdressers / barbers, hairdressers / barbers and senior hairdressers / barbers. Its stated aims are to:

- Protect the industry from unscrupulous practitioners
- Raise standards and professionalism
- Change perceptions of hairdressing / barbering as an industry
- Enhance the status of the workforce
- Increase public trust and confidence

In addition, it provides a number of personal benefits for individuals including a certificate underwritten by an Act of Parliament, the right to use the initials State Registered Hairdresser and the right to apply for the Master Craftsman Diploma.

Current qualifying requirements of the voluntary register

In order to gain membership of the UK Register, hairdressers and barbers must fulfil minimum qualification requirements which will allow them to be state registered. These are based on their role at the time of application and consist of the following:

Graduate Hairdresser / Barber	Hairdresser / Barber	Senior Hairdresser / Barber
NVQ Level 2 issued within the previous 24 months or apprenticeship certificate issued within the previous 24 months	NVQ Level 2 or equivalent issued over 24 months prior to application or proof of actively working as a hairdresser or barber for six or more years	NVQ Level 3 or equivalent issued over 36 months prior to application or proof of actively working as a hairdresser or barber for nine or more years

The campaign for mandatory registration

The Hair Council has consistently campaigned to change the status of the register from *voluntary* to *mandatory* and was taken action to support this which includes:

- Implementing a 'Public Affairs and Influencing Strategy'
- Meeting and lobbying MPs, AMs, MLAs, SMPs and other relevant senior policy officials.

- Securing support from MPs to set up an ‘All Party Parliamentary Group’ for state registration.
- Establishing regional events with constituency members, employers and staff to raise awareness of the valuable contribution the industry makes to the UK economy.

The education and skills environment

The case for a mandatory register needs to be set in the context of the skills and training needs of employers and employees, the standards and qualifications in existence across the sector and with an appreciation of the emerging skills and qualifications arena. Indeed, this research comes at a time of considerable upheaval following recent government reviews and legislation. This includes the *Sainsbury Review*ⁱ and the resultant *Post 16 Skills Plan*ⁱⁱ, the *Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education*ⁱⁱⁱ, the *Technical and Further Education Act 2017* (which received Royal Assent in April 2017) and the imminent *Apprenticeship Levy*^{iv}.

The Technical and Further Education Act 2017 allows for the expansion of the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education, giving it a greater role in overseeing a new structure for post-16 education in line with the Skills Plan^v. The government’s vision for technical education is centred on Lord Sainsbury’s independent panel and the subsequent post-16 Skills Plan which sets out a pathway for supporting young people and adults to secure skilled employment which meets the needs of the economy. Under the Skills Plan, students aged 16 to 18 will be able to choose from one of 15 technical routes which will group occupations together to reflect where there are shared training requirements.

In addition, recent changes to apprenticeships have been made with the premise of putting employers in the driving seat. By the end of 2017, apprenticeship frameworks will be withdrawn to new starters^{vi} and replaced by apprenticeship standards. These standards have been developed by Trailblazer groups^{vii} to meet the needs of sectors and employers. Alongside these new standards, the apprenticeship levy has been introduced in April 2017 as to increase in the quality and quantity of apprenticeships^{viii}.

The apprenticeship levy means that employers with a salary bill over £3 million each year must pay into the levy; this subsequently supports employers in training and assessment for apprentices^{ix}. The apprenticeship levy has received some criticism in that some employers might scale back on non-apprenticeship training or try to incorporate *other forms of training into apprenticeships in order to recover their costs*.^x The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education will monitor quality across apprenticeships and all technical education.

From a hairdressing and barbering perspective, there will be a range of opportunities associated with the proposed Hair and Beauty Skills Plan which awarding organisations will compete to deliver. These developments present significant challenges for all stakeholders involved in the development, delivery and awarding of qualifications – training providers

(both private and college based), awarding bodies and employers. All stakeholders will also have to deal with the added complication of scenarios across the nations, as the Skills Plan will only cover England, with different regulation existing in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This may cause some issues for those larger organisations with a footprint across all nations.

This research is set within the perspective of this emerging landscape and the Hair Council, in its campaign to establish a mandatory UK Register of hairdressers and Barbers, will need to take this into account.

Section two: Executive summary

- In conducting this research, a mixed methods approach was adopted and included a brief desk review, analysis of national datasets, an online survey, interviews across the hair and barbering sector and a consumer survey of 2,000 individuals.
- Findings from the research overwhelmingly indicate that there is widespread support for the introduction of a mandatory register.
- 82% of respondents stated that hairdressers / barbers should be trained and qualified in order to practice in the United Kingdom and 74% stated that a practising hairdresser / barber should have a 'licence' for carrying out services.
- In addition, 70% of respondents would be concerned, from a health and safety point of view, if their hairdresser / barber was not properly trained and qualified and 80% of respondents would feel more reassured if all hairdressers and barbers had to be properly trained and qualified in order to carry out any services on people's hair.
- Participants in the online survey and the interviews were very strongly in favour of a mandatory registration scheme based on agreed minimum qualifications.
- 78% of respondents stated it would be a good idea to make membership of the Hair Council's UK Register of Qualified Hairdressers / Barbers mandatory.
- In addition, when asked whether they would recommend state registration / membership of the Hair Council, 94% said they would.
- Of those respondents who indicated they were not members of the Hair Council, 58% said they would consider joining the voluntary register.
- An overwhelming number of respondents had heard of the Hair Council (95%) however over 55% of participants were not Hair Council members.
- Barriers to a mandatory register include setting appropriate time limits qualification; mapping out acceptable continuous professional development in terms of keeping up standards and refresher training; fixing the joining fee at an acceptable rate and the impact on training costs for employers.
- Respondents were very clear that a mandatory register would increase consumer confidence in their hairdresser / barber.
- A number of staff skills gaps were identified by stakeholders which will need to be considered in the light of the qualifying criteria for membership of the current voluntary register and the potential mandatory register.
- Overall, there is strong evidence for mandatory registration emanating from within this research which The Hair Council can take back to the sector and out to policy formers, politicians and standards setting / regulatory agencies.
- The Hair Council should use this evidence in line with the skills, training and qualifications findings from this report to present a case for mandatory registration, based on backing from sector stakeholders and support from consumers.

Section three: Aims of the research

This research is primarily focused on determining the need and appetite for a UK register of hairdressers and barbers founded on agreed industry training standards. The research also presents a snapshot of the latest hair and barbering workforce data and an analysis of the views of stakeholders regarding skills, qualifications and career development. In addition to canvassing the industry, the research captures consumer opinions on their expectations of the training and qualifications standards required to practise hairdressing and barbering.

In conducting this research, extensive engagement has taken place with employers, employees, self-employed, trainers, assessors, suppliers and the general public. The aim of this research is to provide the Hair Council¹ with an independent, objective assessment of the merits of a mandatory UK register of hairdressers and barbers. In addition, a further aim of this is to capture the emerging picture in terms of skills and qualifications across the sector.

The research explores the following themes and issues:

- The case for mandatory training / registration – pros, cons, enablers and barriers
- Current workforce roles and qualifications
- Levels of staff competence and development needs
- Skills gaps and shortages
- Future skills and qualifications needs
- Key issues confronting the hair and barbering sector

¹ Reference to the Hair Council is inclusive of the Barber Council

Section four: Methodology and approach

In conducting this research, a mixed methods approach was adopted as this provides more robust results than any one single method and also provides the opportunity for triangulation². The following activities were conducted:

- A secondary review of national datasets to present a current profile of the hair and beauty workforce
- A brief assessment of recent government reviews and legislation to contextualise the qualifications and skills landscape
- An online survey of stakeholders from the hair and barbering sector.
- Interviews with key individuals across the hair and barbering sector
- A consumer survey of members of the general public.

Research participants

Consumer survey

The national polling agency 'One Poll' was engaged to conduct a consumer survey across the UK which was focused on capturing participants' views on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements regarding the value of training for barbers and hairdressers

2,000 participants responded to the survey of which 51% were male and 49% female. The table below indicates the age range of respondents:

Age	% response
18-24	11.75%
25-34	17.05%
35-44	16.10%
45-54	18.00%
55+	37.10%

The survey was geographically diverse with all UK regions represented as follows:

² Triangulation is a technique that enables the validation of data through the referencing and analysis of two or more methods.

East Anglia	8.75%
East Midlands	7.15%
London	13.00%
North East	4.00%
North West	11.00%
Northern Ireland	3.00%
Scotland	8.05%
South East	13.65%
South West	9.05%
Wales	5.05%
West Midlands	9.25%
Yorkshire and the Humber	8.05%

Online survey

An online survey was carried out across the hair and barbering industry to determine participants' views on skills, qualifications and training. 702 individuals responded to the survey and the following represents the demographic and establishment breakdown of the participants:

Demographics

- 76.8% of all respondents were female with 22.3% male (0.9% preferred not to say)
- 94.6% indicated they were white, 3.5% were from black and ethnic minorities (1.9% preferred not to say)
- 3.5% indicated they had a disability, 1.3% preferred not to say
- 201 respondents were employers, 221 were self-employed and 236 were employees.

Nature of establishments

- 484 respondents indicated that their business activity included hairdressing, 359 barbering and 196 beauty treatments.
- Most respondents indicated that their business was conducted from one independent establishment, this was followed by operation from a mobile facility and home based working.
- 37% of respondents stated that their business was in a 'high street' location.

Interviews

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with 22 stakeholder representatives from the sector to further develop the themes arising from the survey. These involved employers, training providers, suppliers, awarding organisations, trade associations, government statutory authorities, employers and employees.

Section five: The case for a mandatory register

This section draws together the wide range of information, views and opinions gathered from both industry stakeholders and consumers. It contains an analysis of the findings from responses to the online survey, participant interviews and the consumer survey.

The merits of a mandatory register

There appears to be significant backing from both the industry and consumers for a mandatory register and for barbers and hairdressers to be adequately trained in order to practice. Results from both the online survey of industry stakeholders and the consumer survey of 2,000 members of the public confirm that there is a significant majority in favour of a mandatory register. The following findings illustrate the strength of feeling:

Consumers:

- 82% of respondents stated that hairdressers / barbers should be trained and qualified in order to practice in the United Kingdom.
- 74% stated that a practising hairdresser / barber should have a 'licence' which proves they have the necessary qualifications / training to be able to carry out any hair / barber service on people's hair.
- 70% of respondents would be concerned, from a health and safety point of view, if their hairdresser / barber was not properly trained and qualified.
- 80% of respondents would feel more reassured if all hairdressers and barbers had to be properly trained and qualified in order to carry out any hair / barber service on people's hair.

Stakeholders:

Participants in the online survey and the interviews were very strongly in favour of a mandatory registration scheme based on agreed minimum qualifications. 78% of respondents stated it would be a good idea to make membership of the Hair Council's UK Register of Qualified Hairdressers / Barbers mandatory. In addition, when asked whether they would recommend state registration / membership of the Hair Council, 94% said they would. Of those respondents who indicated they were not members of the Hair Council, 58% said they would consider joining the voluntary register. An overwhelming number of respondents had heard of the Hair Council (95%) however over 55% of participants were not Hair Council members. This all indicates a very constructive response to the possible creation of a mandatory register.

Respondents were very positive about the benefits to the industry and consumers of having a register of qualified hairdressers / barbers and overwhelmingly agreed that this would contribute to the following:

- making individuals more professional (85.8% of those responding)
- increasing safety at work (72.4%)
- raising public confidence (79.8%)
- increasing public awareness (73.9%)
- bringing about better standards (79.9%)

In addition, those individuals who were members of the Hair Council strongly identified with some of the important personal benefits of belonging to a register. In particular, respondents stated that it was important to them that membership brought them recognition through the Hairdressers Registration Act (98%), the right to use the initials State Registered Hairdresser (74%), credentials necessary to practise hairdressing / barbering outside the UK (90.3%) and the right to apply for the Master Craftsman Diploma (79.7%). Those respondents that indicated they were not members of the Hair Council also cited these benefits when asked what would be important to them if they were to consider joining. In addition, all respondents (members and non-members) offered suggestions for other benefits they would like to see built into membership. These included:

- Support to campaign for lower business rates for service industries
- Continued professional training offered to all members once or twice a year
- Discounted access to more shows / seminars
- Education workshops
- Health and safety updates

A number of respondents raised issues which covered the marketing of the Hair Council from the perspective of hairdressers / barbers and the general public. This coalesced around two issues, firstly, respondents' desires for the council to further promote those hairdressers / barbers who are members of the Hair Council – through posters, spotlights on individual establishments etc. Secondly, respondents referenced the need to make the public more aware of the benefits of the register to consumers – through social media, campaigns etc. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they thought that the majority of consumers were aware whether their hairdresser / barber was qualified or unqualified. On a scale of one to ten (where one was completely unaware and ten was completely aware), most respondents (29%) selected a rating of one, around 60% selected a rating of three or less and only 11% selected a rating of eight or more.

Many respondents expressed the view that a mandatory register would exert significant impact on public confidence and the recognition of professionalism in the sector. The following (verbatim) statements capture these sentiments:

'It would be beneficial if the Hair Council advertised more on social media. Pointing out the advantage of choosing a State registered hairdresser'

'Marketing for public awareness, this would add value to the registration'

'Promotion to the public of the register so they can understand and actually recognise professionals'

When faced directly with the question 'what do you think the impact of a mandatory UK Register of Hairdressers / Barbers might have on consumers', respondents were very clear that a mandatory register would increase consumer confidence in their hairdresser / barber. 83% said that this was likely with only 7% saying it was unlikely.

In a survey of this kind, there is always a danger of bias introduced through over-representation of 'interested parties'. In this case, those respondents who are members of the Hair Council might respond more positively about the need for a mandatory register than non-members. Conversely, their increased knowledge and experience of the Hair Council might lead them to be more critical – e.g. they might not be entirely happy with the benefits they receive from membership.

However, in comparing some of the responses from both members and non-members of the Hair Council, there appeared to be little difference between these groups in the findings related to some of the key themes and questions. Whilst there was tendency for members to be more strongly affirmative in their responses than non-members, the examples in the following table illustrate how similar in general terms, the responses were from both groups:

Question	Member response	Non-member response
<i>The register of qualified hairdressers / barbers contributes to making individuals more professional</i>	92.8% agree	80.4% agree
<i>The register of qualified hairdressers / barbers contributes to increased safety at work</i>	82.7% agree	64.4% agree
<i>The register of qualified hairdressers / barbers contributes to increased public confidence</i>	84.6% agree	75.9% agree
<i>The register of qualified hairdressers / barbers contributes to increasing public awareness</i>	78.4% agree	70.4% agree
<i>The register of qualified hairdressers / barbers contributes to better standards</i>	86.0% agreed	75.3% agree
<i>If consumers became aware that their regular hairdresser / barber was unqualified, do you think that this would cause them to choose an alternative, qualified hairdresser / barber?</i>	44.4% stated yes	35.9% stated yes
<i>Consumers would welcome the fact that registration might raise standards</i>	88.3% thought this likely	81.5% thought this likely
<i>There would be fewer consumer complaints</i>	56.4% thought this likely	40.2% thought this likely

Barriers to a mandatory register

Overall, the online survey and the interviews with stakeholders across the sector generated very positive views supporting minimum training standards and qualifications for hairdressers / barbers. This was true for both current members and non-members of the Hair Council and presents a very strong argument for the establishment of mandatory registration. However, the road to a mandatory register is paved with barriers and the Hair Council alongside other like minded agencies will need to account for and negotiate these barriers in order to realise their aims. Some of these barriers will include:

- getting a convincing level of support from employers, employers
- setting appropriate time limits for individuals to obtain minimum requirements
- mapping out acceptable continuous professional development expectations in terms of keeping up standards and refresher training
- fixing the joining fee at an acceptable rate
- the impact on training costs for employers / employees

- the knock-on effect in terms of consumer prices
- convincing policy makers to back the register
- ensuring a mandatory register is embedded in law

Many of these barriers will require considerable ongoing consultation and negotiation with stakeholders.

Cost of joining a mandatory register

The cost of joining the register will present a number of issues that need addressing by both the Hair Council and stakeholders across the sector. These issues include:

- the initial joining fee
- the training to achieve minimum standards
- possible displacement of other training
- expectations around who will pay for the joining fee – employers or employees?
- cost implications for all stakeholders
- impact on salary levels

Currently, the fee for becoming a member of the Hair Council is £42. Almost 60% of respondents thought this price was about right with over half of those were not members agreeing with this.

Evidence of previous research indicates that employers are already experiencing a strain on resources and any extra expenditure is likely to exacerbate this. Beautiful Britain 2016^{xi} cited a national small business report which claimed that a fifth of professionals are unable to afford to take on apprenticeships and 38% believe that the increase of the National Living wage will have a negative impact on their hiring prospects.^{xii} In the light of this, the Hair Council will need to take into account the views of employers and employees regarding the membership fee and other expenses associated with a mandatory register. However, in addition to the personal benefits of becoming a member, arguments could be made that better standards, increased consumer confidence, better health and safety knowledge and an up-skilling of staff would all offset the cost. In addition, a genuine case could be made with regard to the possible social value created by the introduction of a mandatory register.

Qualification for a mandatory register

If the concept of a mandatory register becomes a reality, there will need to be a negotiated period of time within which those practicing hairdressers and barbers who do not meet the minimum qualifying requirements can acquire them. In addition, there will need to be a strategy in place to account for those hairdressers / barbers who have not achieved the requirement within the given time limit. The Hair Council will have to manage what could be a bureaucratic nightmare which will rely on employers logging the status of employees, self-

employed practitioners adopting a similar process and the Hair Council keeping effective records for checking on progress, chasing achievements and putting in place timings for any refresh requirements. If and when a mandatory register gains traction in law, consideration will need to be made regarding penalties for non compliance.

In respect of respondents views on the time limit that practitioners should be afforded to qualify for membership there 35.5% of respondents stated two years and 32.7% stated 12 months. However, when split between current members and non-members, the following time limits were specified:

Time limit for achieving qualifying status	Member	Non-member
6 months	9.6%	10.4%
12 months	29.4%	35.3%
18 months	9.6%	10.4%
2 years	35.8	35.3%
Other	15.5%	8.7%

Interestingly, non-members have a tendency to suggest a lower time-frame for achieving qualifying status than do current members.

Impact of a mandatory register on stakeholders

Finally, the research drew out some of the possible benefits that a mandatory register might bring to a range of stakeholders. The best way to communicate this is to let participants speak for themselves. Therefore, the following selection of quotes which reflect a consensus of views, are presented verbatim from the open questions in the survey and from the individual interviews.

Benefits to salon owner / self-employed

'Official recognition'

'To identify to members of the public that we are qualified stylists with high standards'

'Marketing tool to attract new business'

'Regulated industry'

Benefits to consumers

'A higher level of trust'

'Confidence and reassurance that they are going to get first class treatment'

'Enhanced guarantees of safety and hygiene'

'Knowledge that their barber or hair stylist is qualified, accountable and holds insurance'

Benefits to employees

'Being registered is an honour and shows you are qualified in your work'

'Having been a stylist for 30 or so years, I think it's important to have a professional recognition of the years of training and education we all complete'

'Pride in my trade and reassurance to my clients and staff I have the relevant capabilities'

Section six: Skills and qualifications within the sector

In addition to seeking to understand the strength of feeling behind the possibility of a mandatory register, the online survey and the interviews, sought to present a subjective view on the skills and qualifications issues confronting industry stakeholders. The following captures some of the key findings from the survey:

Routes into hairdressing barbering

Respondents were asked to rank various entry points into the industry based on the most popular route taken by staff. Apprenticeships were overwhelmingly cited as the commonest route, ranked top by over 62% of respondents. This was followed by full-time college, private training provider and part-time college. Other less traditional routes were:

- On the job training
- School based vocational training
- Training abroad
- No formal training

Qualification levels

Most staff within hairdressing and barbering establishments had achieved a level two qualification. 85.5% of respondents³ indicated that either the majority of staff (31.9% of respondents) or all staff (53.6%) within their establishment had reached this level. The comparison of staff qualification levels is as the follows:

Level	All staff	Majority of all staff
One	51.7%	17.2%
Two	53.6%	31.9%
Three	27.0%	49.3%
Four	10.6%	13.9%
No qualifications	2.2%	7.3%

³ This category incorporates those respondents whose business employs staff - either employees, employers or self-employed with staff.

Over a third of respondents indicated that their business required staff to progress to higher levels. 51.5% stated that their business supports / would support staff to progress to higher levels. Only one in ten respondents indicated that their business did not need staff to progress to higher than level two. However, over 93% of respondents said that staff within their business engaged in training.

The qualification levels of those respondents who were self-employed (without staff) were generally higher than those who were employed. The most common level reported by self-employed respondents was level three (43.0%) – the totals across all levels for this group were:

Level	% of self-employed at this level	Difference compared to all staff levels
One	1.6%	-50.1%
Two	15.5%	-38.1%
Three	43.0%	+16.0%
Four	32.1%	+21.5%
No qualifications	7.8%	+5.6%

Skills issues

Hairdressing and barbering are becoming ever increasingly more technical. This is in response to the demands of consumers and the development of products. One of the key skills gaps emerging from the research was the ability to keep up with this pace of change. Initially, this relies on trainers being trained to train. It also requires acquisition of new products and equipments, availability of training provision and investment in time and money.

Other skills issues were split between hard and soft skills. As well as the hard skills relating to technical proficiency (e.g. microblading), a major issue raised was around basic skills in terms of literacy and maths. A great number of comments centred on the need to work with new entrants on these basic skills, often accompanied by comments on the failure of schools to address this at an earlier stage. This was also linked to the perceived lack of credence afforded to the sector by careers advisors. The ‘dumbing down’ of hairdressing / barbering at school was blamed for creating a culture of learning within which those who are interested in a career in the sector, don’t understand the need to acquire a breadth of skills that include maths and English.

Given that these days, going to the hairdressers / barbers is becoming a whole new 'customer experience', greater demands are placed on 'soft skills'. It is clear from the research that employers feel that there are clear gaps in this area, in particular amongst new entrants. Some of the identified 'soft skills' were flexibility, coping strategies; communications; relationship building, self-confidence; decision-making; motivation; team-working; creativity; problem solving and negotiation.

Section seven: Future challenges

The hair and barbering industry is fast evolving, with new technologies and products entering the market at a pace. In meeting the demands of this, there is recognition that new qualifications will need to be developed and new skills acquired. Findings from the survey and the interviews indicate that the following skills will be required in ever greater numbers:

- Technical skills such as micro-blading and colouring
- Advanced use of information technology and social media
- Skills in order to keep up with evolving regulation such as safeguarding, prevent agenda, health and safety
- Brand knowledge and awareness
- Softer skills relating to communications, customer service, problem solving, team working, time-management
- Increased basic skills in English and numeracy
- Continuous professional development for qualified individuals to keep up with developments
- Business proficiency

In addition to skills challenges within the sector, there are many internal and external drivers of change which will require stakeholders to work together to develop appropriate action. One of these will, as discussed, be the case for mandatory registration and with it membership of the Hair Council. In order for this to become reality, there will be a number of barriers to overcome and a compelling case will need to be made in parliamentary circles. However, this is not the only driver that will impact on the industry. There are other drivers which will challenge the sector

The table below captures some of the potential key drivers emerging from the research and in particular the interviews with individuals from the industry.

Driver	Characteristics of driver
<p style="text-align: center;">Political –</p> <p>Any national political trends or circumstances affecting the nation or a significant proportion of the population e.g. a change in Government.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of government • Policy development • Brexit • New legislation • Sainsbury report / Skills Plan • Apprenticeship Levy
<p style="text-align: center;">Economic –</p> <p>Any economic trends or circumstances affecting a significant proportion of a population e.g. cost of products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding streams for training • Internal cost of training • Consumer demands for lower prices • Increasingly competitive market • Cost of new products / innovations • Low-end businesses driving profits down
<p style="text-align: center;">Social –</p> <p>Any trend or set of circumstances relevant to a significant proportion of the population at large e.g. ageing population</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends in the sector e.g. male grooming • Diversification of business activity • Use of social media by consumers • Demographics • Luxuries now seen as standard • Health and fitness demands
<p style="text-align: center;">Technological –</p> <p>Any technological advance or changing use of technology that is having an impact on a significant proportion of a population e.g. online learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pace of innovation • New products • Internet • Globalisation • Marketing using IT
<p style="text-align: center;">Legal –</p> <p>New legislation affecting a significant proportion of a population e.g. employment law.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased regulation – health and safety • Mandatory registration • Prevent agenda • Implications of withdrawal from EU
<p style="text-align: center;">Environmental -</p> <p>Any trends or circumstances relating to matters to do with the physical world e.g. re-cycling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalisation • ‘Green’ lobby • Sustainability • Water shortages • Carbon neutrality

Section eight: Conclusion and recommendations

The hair industry is, for the most part, populated by technical and skilled staff, with a justifiable pride in their professionalism. Although conventional stereotypes still exist (the barber on the corner of the street with a 'first come, first served' service model), the industry is now characterised by variety, complexity and commercialism. New technologies have heralded in new workforce skills, consumer demand has challenged employers to diversify and the training and qualifications landscape is evolving to cope with this.

The sector is facing stiff challenges – not least increased competition from outside traditional boundaries e.g. salons in supermarkets and hospitals etc. External drivers of change loom large in the form of legislation and environmental issues and the changing vocational educational system, presents serious food for thought for all stakeholders. This research has centred on the issue of whether or not a mandatory register would be welcome, effective and impactful. The following observations and recommendations highlight the primary findings:

- There would appear to be overwhelming backing for a mandatory UK register of Hairdressers and Barbers. This backing can be found from within the industry (all stakeholders) and within the general public.
- Support from within the industry includes current members of the register and non-members
- Members recognise the personal benefits which voluntary registration brings to them.
- Non-members identify the benefits they would acquire through membership
- All stakeholders acknowledge that mandatory registration would have a positive impact on:
 - Consumer confidence
 - Industry standards
 - Professionalism
 - Self-confidence
 - Health and Safety
- The majority of stakeholders felt that consumers would not know that their hairdresser / barber was qualified.
- Consumers stated that hairdressers / barbers should be trained and qualified and that they should have a 'licence' which proves they have the necessary qualifications / training to be able to carry out any hair / barber service on people's hair.
- In addition, consumers stated that they would be concerned, from a health and safety point of view, if their hairdresser / barber was not properly trained and

qualified and that they would feel more reassured if all hairdressers and barbers had to be properly trained and qualified in order to carry out any hair / barber service on people's hair.

- The Hair Council should work with other stakeholders to challenge secondary schools and careers agencies to better market the attraction of the sector. A better understanding of careers routes (especially non-traditional) available to potential recruits would be especially welcome. In addition, students interested in pursuing a career in hair and barbering should be encouraged and supported to acquire a good level of functional skills.
- Qualification levels of staff in the sector tend to coalesce around level 2 but employers have expressed their support for staff acquiring higher levels. The Hair Council should seek opportunities to promote this amongst training providers and the awarding organisation.
- It is likely that higher level qualifications will be increasingly required in order to meet the needs of more technical advances.
- There will be inevitable barriers in the journey towards mandatory registration – the Hair Council will need to anticipate and confront these as early as possible. These will include:
 - Agreement on the cost of membership
 - Setting acceptable time limits for acquiring qualifying standards
 - Planning an approach to refresher training / CPD
 - Administration of a complex membership scheme
 - Monitoring the register
 - Policing non-compliance
- Skills gaps have been identified by stakeholders – these should be taken into account when determining the qualifying criteria for membership of the current voluntary register and the potential mandatory register.
- Additionally, in campaigning for a mandatory register, the Hair Council should use this research to guide its thoughts on supporting the sectors' needs in terms of qualifications and training.
- There is strong evidence for mandatory registration emanating from within this research which The Hair Council can take back to the sector and out to policy formers, politicians and standards setting / regulatory agencies.
- The Hair Council should use this evidence in line with the skills, training and qualifications findings from this report to present a case for mandatory registration, based on backing from sector stakeholders and support from consumers.

References

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