Attitudes to becoming a heat pump technician trainer

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About The MCS Foundation

Our vision is to make every UK home carbon-free. The MCS Foundation helps drive positive change to decarbonise homes heat and energy through our work programmes, grants and advocacy. We support engagement programmes, fund research and facilitate innovative solutions to drive widespread adoption of renewables to help achieve a Net Zero future. In addition, the Foundation oversees the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) which defines, maintains and improves quality standards for renewable energy at buildings scale.

About Shift Insight

Shift Insight (Shift) is a leading research consultancy working exclusively for sectors related to sustainability, education and membership.

Shift delivers quality market research insights across a diverse set of clients, always taking into account the individuality of each client, project and respondent group to create bespoke research designs. We use a range of methodologies, including qualitative, quantitative and desk research.

Executive summary

Background and methodology

The growing demand for heat pump installations will inevitably lead to a need for more trained heat pump installers, and with that a need for more people qualified to train them. Given that context, The MCS Foundation sought to understand the motivations and barriers associated with becoming a heat pump technician trainer, as well as investigating installers and trainers' perceptions of the role.

The Foundation commissioned Shift Insight to carry out research on this topic. We completed this in three phases.

Phase 1: Interviews with heat pump technician trainers

We conducted 45-minute interviews with 12 trainers about the journey to becoming a trainer.

Phase 2: Survey to heat pump technicians

A 22-question online survey was sent to heat pump technicians to provide insight into positive and negative patterns of perceptions of becoming a technician, based on demographics such as age and employment status. We received 78 usable responses.

Phase 3: Interviews with heat pump technicians

We conducted interviews with 10 technicians recruited through the survey, lasting 45 minutes each. These provided deeper insights into the reasons heat pump technicians were either interested or not interested in becoming trainers, and potential motivations for becoming trainers.

What were heat pump technician trainers' motivations for becoming a trainer?

There did not appear to be a particular moment or trigger for heat pump technician trainers to become trainers. Some thought about it early in their careers when they were in education themselves, while others considered turning to training later to stay part of a fast-changing industry.

Trainers tended to be motivated for personal or social reasons over environmental and financial.

Personal	Social	Environmental	Financial
• Career development and personal growth. • Passion for mentoring and teaching. • Desire for a different work/life balance.	• Addressing industry skills gaps. • Desire to help others improve their skills with new technologies. • Encouragement from colleagues and peers to become a trainer. • Sense of community and connection in a training role. • Recognition of the need to improve training quality in the industry.	• Interest in renewables and low carbon technologies.	*Finances were not considered to be a motivating factor due to pay disparity between technicians/installers and trainers.*

What were the challenges heat pump technician trainers faced when becoming a trainer?

Trainers reported several key challenges to becoming trainers, which could be split into three main categories:

Training and development challenges

- Existing courses for heat pump technician training were considered insufficient and poorly structured – hindering both trainers' own preparation and the effectiveness of training new technicians.
- Some trainers lacked the practical experience of installing a heat pump, leading to a lack of confidence.
- Trainers' own training on heat pumps was poor and sometimes product-focused rather than installation-focused.
- Trainers were not always sure which qualifications they were required to have to become a heat pump technician trainer.

Financial challenges

- There is a significant gap between what technicians and trainers can earn, which can be a deterrent to becoming a trainer.

Attitudinal challenges

- Trainers reported that there was resistance to low carbon heating systems from others in the sector – for example, experienced gas engineers were sceptical about heat pumps.

Would heat pump technicians consider becoming a trainer?

26% of technicians had considered becoming a heat pump technician trainer.

While most technicians agreed that the trainer role was something they had the skills for, only just over a quarter had considered taking on the role. This may be due to the **majority (71%) being satisfied with their current role as a technician**.

Current technicians:

- Enjoyed the role for its problem-solving and technical challenges, because it was hands-on work and it enabled them to be part of a growing and innovative industry.
- Were confident in their ability to do their job well – 94% of current technicians agreed with the statement: 'I am good at working as a technician'.
- Plan to stay in the role for the next three years (78% agreed).

Former technicians:

- Were less confident than current technicians in their skills as a heat pump technician (83% agreed).
- Were less satisfied with the role (52% agreed) than current technicians.
- Were not likely to return to being a heat pump technician (28% agreed).

What were heat pump technicians' perceptions of becoming a trainer?

Key headlines

76% believed they have the skills to become a heat pump technician trainer.

56% agreed that it would be easy for them to switch to.

31% thought it would involve getting a good salary.

29% thought it would have good future prospects for promotion or pay increases.

Many technicians who were considering becoming a trainer were only in the early stages, despite many reporting that it was a role they could switch to easily. Financial concerns may play a part in technicians' hesitation – the majority did not feel that a trainer would achieve a good salary nor have good future prospects.

Motivations and challenges

Technicians who had considered becoming a heat pump technician trainer were largely motivated by:

- Wanting to improve the quality of installations in the industry (71%).
- A desire to share their knowledge and experience (67%).

Technicians who had not considered the role reported that the main barriers were:

- Feeling it would not be financially viable (43%).
- Enjoying the hands-on work of their current role (36%).

- Not having enough time to take on a training role (31%).

Support and resources required

When technicians were asked what support and resources might encourage them to pursue the role of heat pump technician trainer more seriously, 21% said nothing would encourage them.

However, others provided potential support options, such as:

- Good/increased salary (26%)
- Improved training quality (24%)
- Clearly defined career progression (15%)

An alternative role?

56% of respondents indicated that they would be interested in working with a training provider that supports heat pump technician trainers as a **paid industry expert or consultant on a part-time basis**. 36% stated they were very interested in this proposition.

Recommendations

Based on the insights in this report, to encourage more heat pump technicians to become trainers we recommend:

- **Lobbying for better pay for heat pump technician trainers** and increased financial incentives for taking on the role
- **Facilitating more investment from manufacturers in providing good quality training** to heat pump technicians and those who train them
- **Encouraging colleges and training centres to offer part-time paid expert positions** to heat pump technicians so they can gain experience in teaching
- **Supporting employers in continuing to offer mentoring and training opportunities** to heat pump technicians, helping develop their teaching skills
- **Developing a clearer career progression pathway** from heat pump technician to heat pump technician trainer
- **Avoiding frequent policy changes around environmental and sustainability issues** to provide more certainty in the renewable energy industry

Background and methodology

Background

The Climate Change Committee state in their Balanced Pathway[1] that annual UK heat pump installations will need to rise from around 60,000 in 2024 to 1.5 million by 2035 if we are to meet our climate change goals. It is estimated that in 2023 there were around 2,000 active MCS-certified heat pump technicians. To meet Climate Change Committee installation targets, the Heat Pump Association estimates that around 70,000 qualified installers will be needed by 2035.[2] Despite this discrepancy in numbers, the sector is on track to train the future heat pump installation workforce needed to accelerate the deployment of heat pumps in line with projected targets[3], but certainty and increased consumer demand are needed to encourage trained individuals to become active in the workforce. But before someone can install a heat pump, they need to be trained how to do so – which will require a significant increase in the number of people delivering training.

In England, there are now 28 registered training providers approved to deliver the Low Carbon Heating Technician apprenticeship[4,5] – currently the only apprenticeship aimed solely at training heat pump technicians – and a larger number providing Level 3 qualifications in the gas and electrical skills needed to install heat pumps.

The MCS Foundation sought to understand what heat pump technician trainers think the motivations and barriers are to becoming a trainer, as well as investigating installers and trainers' perceptions of becoming a trainer. The report findings add empirical evidence to the currently anecdotal evidence emerging from the sector on the topic, and will be of value across all stakeholders in the sector as the heat pump rollout gathers momentum.

Language used in this report

As the research was focused on understanding the motivations and barriers to becoming a trainer or tutor to those who install and design heat pumps, we have used the terms 'heat pump technician' and 'heat pump technician trainer' as shorthand throughout the report for consistency.

[1] https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/The-Seventh-Carbon-Budget.pdf

[2] https://www.heatpumps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/HPA-Projecting-the-Future-Domestic-Heat-Pump-Workforce-Report.pdf

[3] https://www.heatpumps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/HPA-Post-Training-Support-Infographic-2025.pdf

[4] Note that not all training providers are actively delivering the apprenticeship – at the time of writing, there are 7.

[5] https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/courses/717/providers?location=

Research objectives

To understand heat pump technician trainers' motivations and barriers to becoming a trainer

To understand heat pump technicians' perceptions of becoming a trainer

There was an additional research objective that was dependent on response rates, which was partially met: to explore the target areas for messaging about becoming a trainer.

Methodology

The research was conducted in three phases. For more information on the participants and respondents in each phase, please see the appendix.

Phase 1: Trainer interviews

- **Method:** Shift Insight spoke with 12 heat pump technician trainers.
- **Purpose:** To provide the research team with insights about the journey to becoming a trainer.
- **Details:** Interviews lasted 45 minutes each; trainers were offered a £65 incentive.

Phase 2: Technician survey

- **Method:** A 22-question online survey was conducted with heat pump technicians.
- **Purpose:** To provide insight into positive and negative patterns of perceptions, based on demographics such as age and employment status.
- **Details:** The survey received 78 usable responses, split between 49 current heat pump technicians and 29 former heat pump technicians. We offered a three prize draws of £150 as a thank-you for their time.
- ***Note:*** *The small response rate means that the findings are not statistically significant, but can be used as an indicator of wider views.*

Phase 3: Technician interviews

- **Method:** To further explore the survey results, 10 interviews were conducted with heat pump technicians.
- **Purpose:** To provide deeper insights into the reasons heat pump technicians were either interested or not interested in becoming trainers, as well as potential motivations for becoming trainers.
- **Audience:** 4 of the interviews were conducted with technicians interested in becoming trainers, while 6 were with those who were not interested.
- **Details:** Interviews lasted 45 minutes each; technicians were offered a £65 incentive as a thank you for their time.

Being a heat pump technician trainer

Journey to becoming a trainer

The point at which heat pump technician trainers considered becoming a trainer varied among interview participants. For most the desire evolved organically over time, based on their previous experience of informal teaching and mentoring. Participants mentioned that this was also influenced by working within a changing sector and thinking about their place in the industry. In some cases, interviewees experienced a distinct trigger moment, often related to personal circumstances. However, a desire to teach in a subject area they found interesting was a key factor discussed in most interviews.

Factors considered early in their careers

Many participants noted they had previous experience in education, such as teaching experience in the army or teaching other courses in a college. They stated that becoming a heat pump technician trainer felt like a natural career move, as they had missed being a teacher. Those who were not technicians often transitioned directly from a different teaching role. A small number mentioned that they had considered becoming a trainer early on in their career when they were completing their apprenticeships. Some linked this to a standard of teaching and learning that they were not always completely satisfied with, wanting to be involved in improving this for future generations.

When I started as a lecturer, I knew that there was something missing from the plumbing and gas curriculum.

Training and Development Lead, Phase 1

The training I got was quite good from British Gas, but some training that I did since then was not so good. I think specifically with low carbon stuff because it's still a fairly new thing to incorporate into heating systems. I think I wanted to be a part of that and be a part of delivering it effectively.

Head of Training and IQA, Phase 1

Factors considered later in their career

Some interview participants stated that a desire to become a trainer came a bit later in their careers. A few noted that 'future proofing' and becoming a key part of a changing industry was a contributing factor to their decision-making.

Because of the way the industry's going. All those years ago, I've always kept an eye on it and, and I'm really probably thinking about getting into low carbon training was way back in 2010 because I could see the way the future was... I just thought, you know, this is the future.

Training Operations Manager, Phase 1

One specifically mentioned that the introduction of the Low Carbon Heating Technician Apprenticeship standards encouraged them to become a trainer, while others referred more generally to an increased focus on renewables in the sector.

However, this rarely was the key trigger – rather, it was an ongoing consideration. One participant had a specific desire to be involved in heat pump technician training as it sat at a challenging intersection for many people involved previously in heating engineering:

> *Somebody who I was working in the industry with 20 years ago opened up a trainer centre 10 years ago and I thought it would be good. Because with heat pumps it's sometimes hard for a gas technician or a heating technician or a plumber or an electrician or HVAC individual, because it transcends all those different disciplines. So, it's really trying to give them an insight as to the whole suite.*
>
> **Lecturer, Phase 1**

Where clearer 'trigger' moments existed, they tended to be related to personal circumstances. For some participants, this was having children and wanting a more consistent routine. One participant who was previously a technician discussed suffering from a shoulder injury, so wanted to spend less time in the field.

Motivations for becoming a heat pump technician trainer

Personal and social motivations were largely more important than environmental and financial motivations.

Personal motivations

Personal motivations for becoming a trainer included:

- **Career development and personal growth:** Many saw becoming a trainer as an exciting new challenge and an opportunity to expand their skillset. One described this as 'adding more strings to your bow'. Several participants viewed this as a natural next step in their career. This was especially true for those who wanted to stay in the industry long-term, but to transition away from the physically demanding aspects of installing as they got older.
- **Passion for mentoring and teaching:** Many technicians had prior experience mentoring apprentices and sharing their knowledge. They found this aspect of their job especially rewarding. These individuals received a strong sense of personal satisfaction after witnessing learners have 'light bulb' moments, in which complex concepts or technical details suddenly click into place.
- **Desire for a different work/life balance:** Those with young families were especially motivated by the appeal of more regular hours, less physical strain, and improved work/life balance compared to site-based installation work.

Social motivations

- **Addressing industry skills gaps:** Many participants indicated they were frustrated by the current training, and wanted to become trainers to address any skills gaps.

> *Meeting the industry's skills gap, meeting needs. That is the focus. So, my employer's needs, my apprentices' needs. Making sure that young adults get into the industry and trying to stop there being this crisis, which is clearly occurring where we just don't have enough technicians and we're retiring faster than we're making new technicians.*
>
> **Operations Manager, Phase 1**

- **Desire to help others improve their skills with new technologies:** Some participants stated that older professionals in the gas industry, who had been in the field for many years, were initially resistant

to new technology – often due to a lack of understanding. Changing their perceptions and demonstrating the technology's effectiveness was viewed as a key motivator.

- **Encouragement from colleagues and peers to become a trainer:** Some participants thought positive encouragement from colleagues, mentors or respected members of the technician community could significantly boost confidence and motivation to take on training roles.
- **Sense of community and connection in a training role:** One participant mentioned that working alone can be isolating. They were motivated by the opportunity to interact with like-minded people who want to learn, providing a level of social interaction that installation work typically lacks.
- **Recognition of the need to improve training quality in the industry:** Some participants discussed common misconceptions about the effectiveness of low carbon heating technologies – critics frequently claim the systems do not work. However, they emphasised that the problem is usually with installers who have not received adequate training, not the technology itself. Providing high-quality training was viewed as a means of challenging and changing these beliefs.

Environmental motivations

When asked directly if there were any environmental motivations to becoming a trainer, a few trainers expressed a genuine interest in renewables or low carbon technology. This served as motivation for some who wanted to be at the forefront of industry change, passing this knowledge onto others. However, it was not a top-of-mind motivation.

Financial motivations

There was little to no financial motivation to becoming a trainer. Participants generally experienced a pay cut or no salary increase when transitioning to a trainer role.

Challenges to becoming a heat pump technician trainer

Trainers explained that they faced a variety of challenges to becoming a heat pump technician trainer, including:

- **Financial barriers and pay disparity:** Trainers frequently reported that financial challenges – particularly the significant pay gap between installation work and training roles – were a major deterrent to becoming trainers.

I took a huge pay cut to get into training. So, it was the financial implications of actually starting at the bottom of the ladder as someone who was predominantly just an engineer and didn't have those skills was a huge part in the decision to actually take the chance and go into it.

Managing Director, Phase 1

- **Inadequate and inconsistent training programmes:** Many trainers found existing heat pump technician training courses to be insufficient, inconsistent or poorly structured – hindering both their own preparation and the effectiveness of training new technicians.
- **Resistance to change and attitudinal challenges:** Trainers reported that there was resistance to low carbon heating systems from others in the sector – for example, experienced gas engineers were sceptical about heat pumps.

- **Lack of practical experience:** A few trainers mentioned that when they first started training on heat pumps, they had not installed one themselves, which meant they lacked confidence in teaching.

> *The college said there was a demand to deliver the qualification and I was teaching it to the best of my ability. But I'd never actually fitted a heat pump. You know, I was still new to the technology and even though I have got plumbing qualifications and I did used to be a plumber, that was quite a long time ago. You know, I'm more of an electrician now, so that was a challenge. And to be fair to the place I used to work, they did on one occasion, maybe two, they did get somebody in who'd, who'd installed heat pumps and he would help me deliver and correct me when I was wrong and stuff like that, which did help. But yeah, the actual experience side of it was challenging, the lack of experience.*
>
> **Technical trainer, Phase 1**

- **Poor training to gain experience:** Some trainers reported that their own training on heat pumps was poor and that manufacturer training can be product-focused rather than installation-focused.
- **Lack of clear pathway for trainers:** Trainers were not always sure which qualifications they were required to have to become a heat pump technician trainer.
- **Lack of foundational knowledge of trainees:** Some trainers reported that trainees, including experienced installers, had gaps in their foundational knowledge of heating design.

Heat pump technicians' perceptions of becoming a trainer

Job satisfaction as a technician

In their role as a heat pump technician, survey respondents reported that they most enjoyed problem-solving and technical challenges (55%), engaging in hands-on, practical, skilled work (38%), being part of a growing and innovative industry (36%) and contributing to environmental sustainability (35%). These findings suggest that respondents value the practical application of their skills to solve real-world challenges.

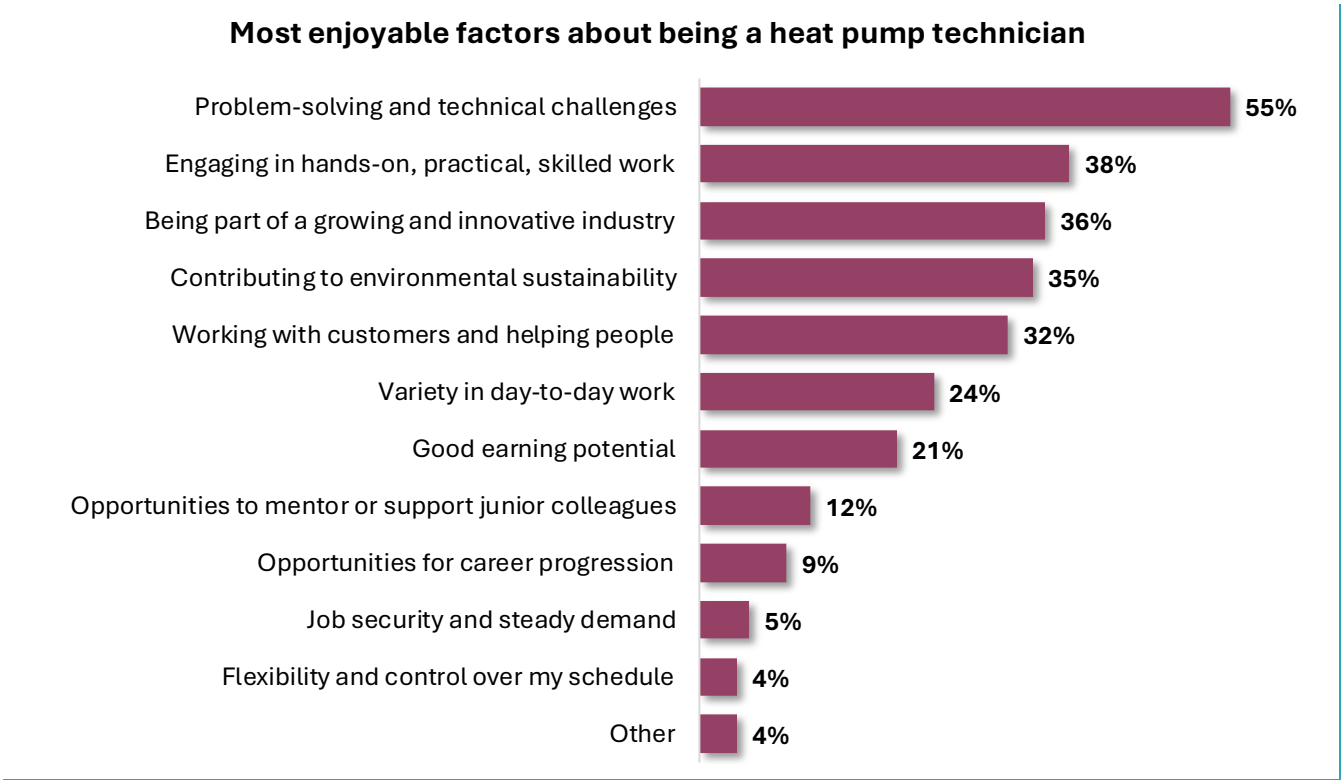

Figure 1: What do you/did enjoy most about your role as a heat pump technician? Multi choice question. Asked to all. Base n = 78.

However, only 12% of respondents stated that opportunities to mentor/support junior colleagues were an aspect of their role they enjoyed – indicating that it was not a top-of-mind priority for the majority. Similarly, only 9% enjoyed the opportunities for career progression in their role, which could indicate either they were not interested in career progression, or current career progression pathways were not in line with respondents' aspirations.

Both current and former heat pump technicians felt confident in their ability in the role – 94% of current technicians and 83% of former technicians agreed. Most current technicians also reported being satisfied in their role (74%), but this proportion was notably lower among former technicians (52%).

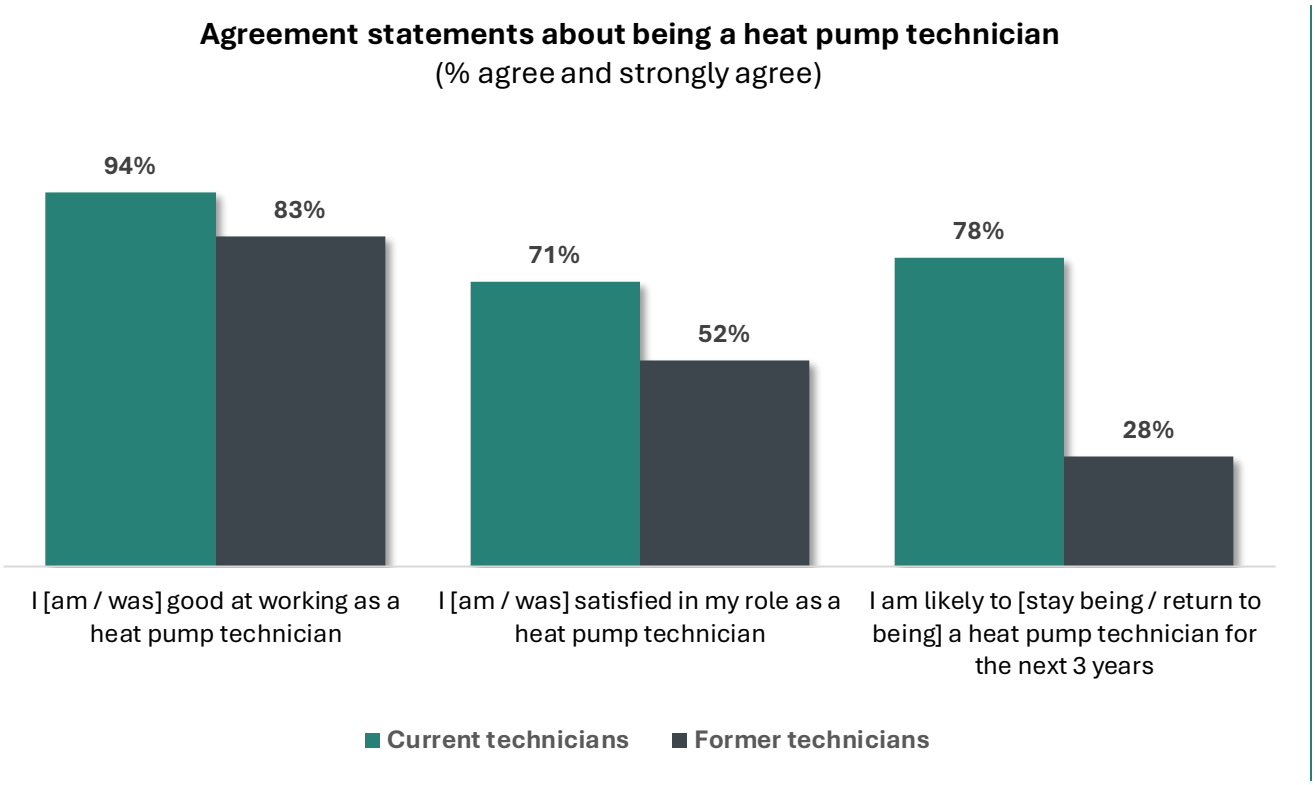

Figure 2: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Asked to all. Base n: Current technician = 49, former technician = 29.

Additionally, those who currently install heat pumps were more likely to continue in the role over the next three years (78%), further reinforcing their general satisfaction in their role, which they potentially have little desire to change at this stage in their career.

Only 28% of former technicians reported they would consider returning to the role within the next 3 years, indicating that there are trained heat pump installers who are not using these skills and may not again.

On the other hand, 60% of survey respondents highlighted administrative or compliance burdens as a regular challenge in their role. 40% also cited a lack of public awareness or understanding of heat pumps. Other commonly selected challenges included pressure to keep costs low while maintaining quality, and uncertainty around government incentives or policy changes – both chosen by 35% of respondents.

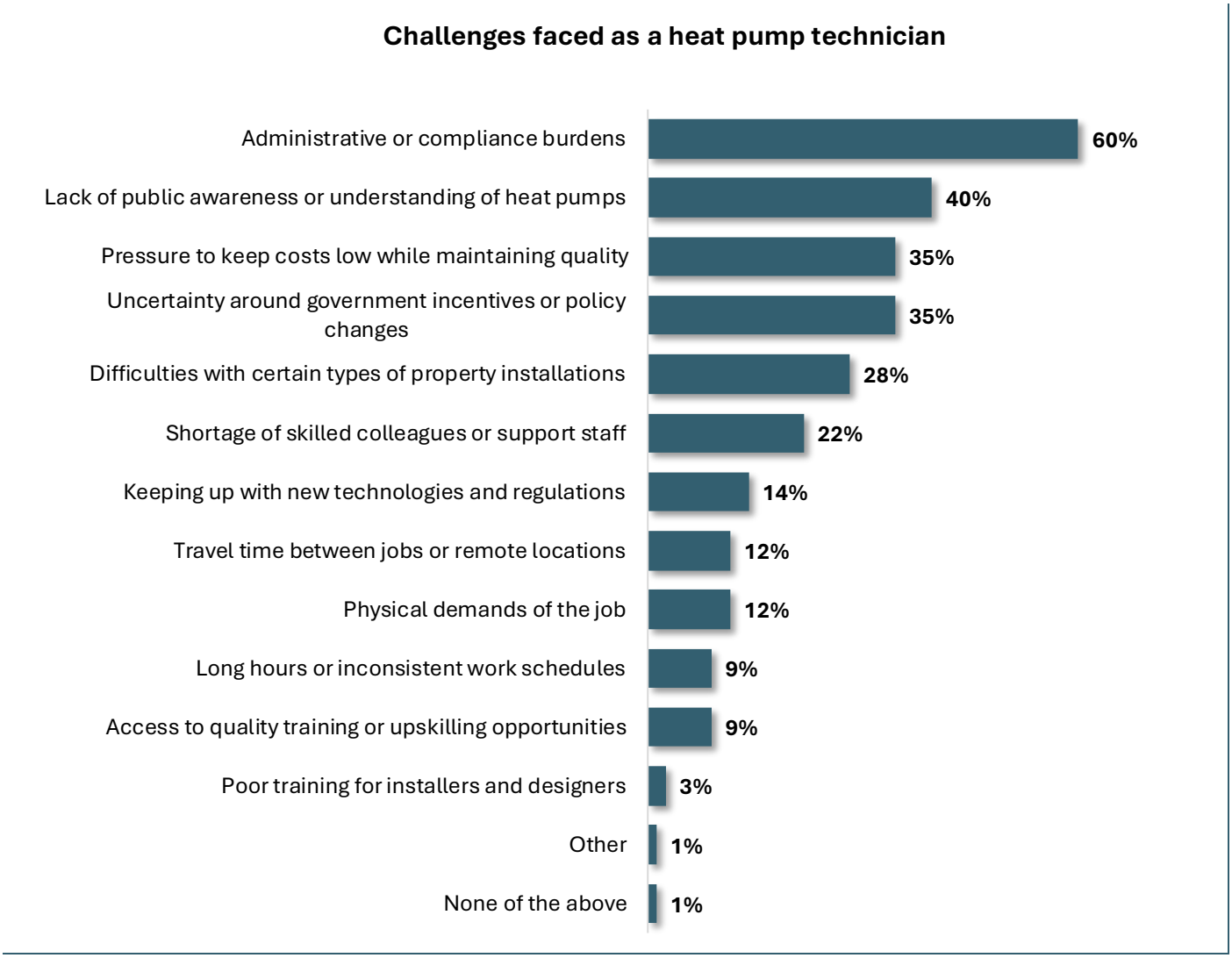

Figure 3: Which of the following are/were regularly a challenge for you in your role as a heat pump technician, if any? Multi choice question. Asked to all. Base n = 78.

While 22% of survey respondents felt that a shortage of skilled colleagues or support staff was a regular challenge, only 3% thought poor training for installers and designers was a barrier. This suggests that technicians believe broader workforce capacity issues are the challenge rather than the quality of training itself. However, some trainers may disagree with this assessment, as they were motivated to take on the trainer role to improve training quality within the sector.

Perceptions of the trainer role

Survey respondents were asked a series of agreement statements to assess the extent to which they felt the heat pump technician trainer role involved specific attributes.

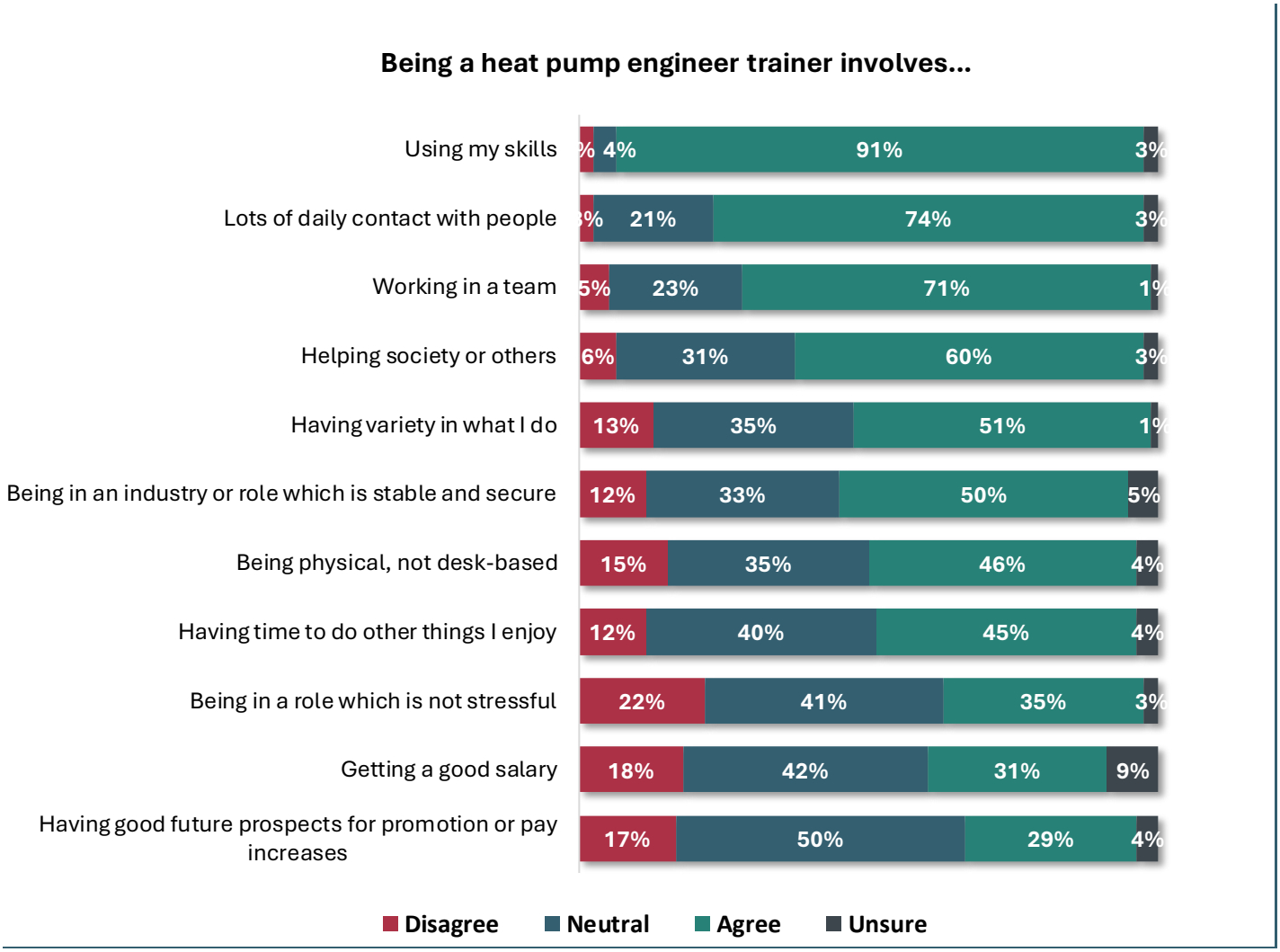

Figure 4: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Being a heat pump engineer trainer involves... Asked to all. Base n = 78.

Respondents were least likely to agree that being a heat pump technician trainer involved good future prospects – only 29% believed the role included good opportunities for promotion or pay increases. This perception was more pronounced among current technicians (24%) than former technicians (38%), perhaps because former technicians had experience in other roles. Another attribute that respondents felt was less likely to be associated with the trainer role was low stress – a notable 22% disagreed, a higher proportion than for other statements. This could be due to general perceptions of stress levels related to teaching. Technicians also were far less likely to agree that being a trainer comes with a good salary (31%), although a notable 9% were unsure of this, rather than disagreeing outright. This suggests they may require more information to make an informed decision.

Do current heat pump technicians think they could be a trainer?

All survey respondents were provided with the following overview of the heat pump technician trainer role:

- **Teaching:** Delivering structured technical training, creating and/or implementing lesson plans, looking after the welfare of those in training.
- **Assessing:** Assessing others fairly in training centres and on-site, making sure correct processes are followed, taking part in standardisation activities to ensure a consistent, quality experience.

- **Quality Assurance:** Ensuring Quality Assurance is undertaken for candidates, correctly assembling relevant documentation for candidates, checking the entry and eligibility requirements of the course being delivered.

Respondents were then asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about how well the trainer role applied to them.

Figure 5: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Being a heat pump engineer trainer involves... Asked to all. Base n = 78.

Around three quarters of respondents agreed that being a heat pump technician trainer was something they currently have the skills for (76%) and would be good at (73%). Those who thought being a heat pump technician trainer involved helping society or others and using their skills were most likely to report that they would be good at the role (87% and 80%, respectively).

Just over half of respondents felt they currently have the qualifications for the training role (55%). Those who had gained a heat pump design qualification were notably more likely to feel this way (74%) than those with other qualifications related to heat pump installations (55%).

In terms of personal motivators to becoming a trainer, a similar proportion of respondents indicated that they felt the role would be a job that they would enjoy (54%) and would be a good job for someone like them (51%).

Only 22% of respondents felt that becoming a heat pump technician trainer would be encouraged by their employer. This is perhaps unsurprising as many of the technicians were in full-time employment as installers and it is unlikely that an organisation would want to lose them.

Who would become a trainer?

We provided survey respondents with a list of other careers and asked which they had considered. Only 26% of survey respondents had considered heat pump technician trainer as a role, which was far behind the most frequently chosen response of plumbing and heating engineer (53%).

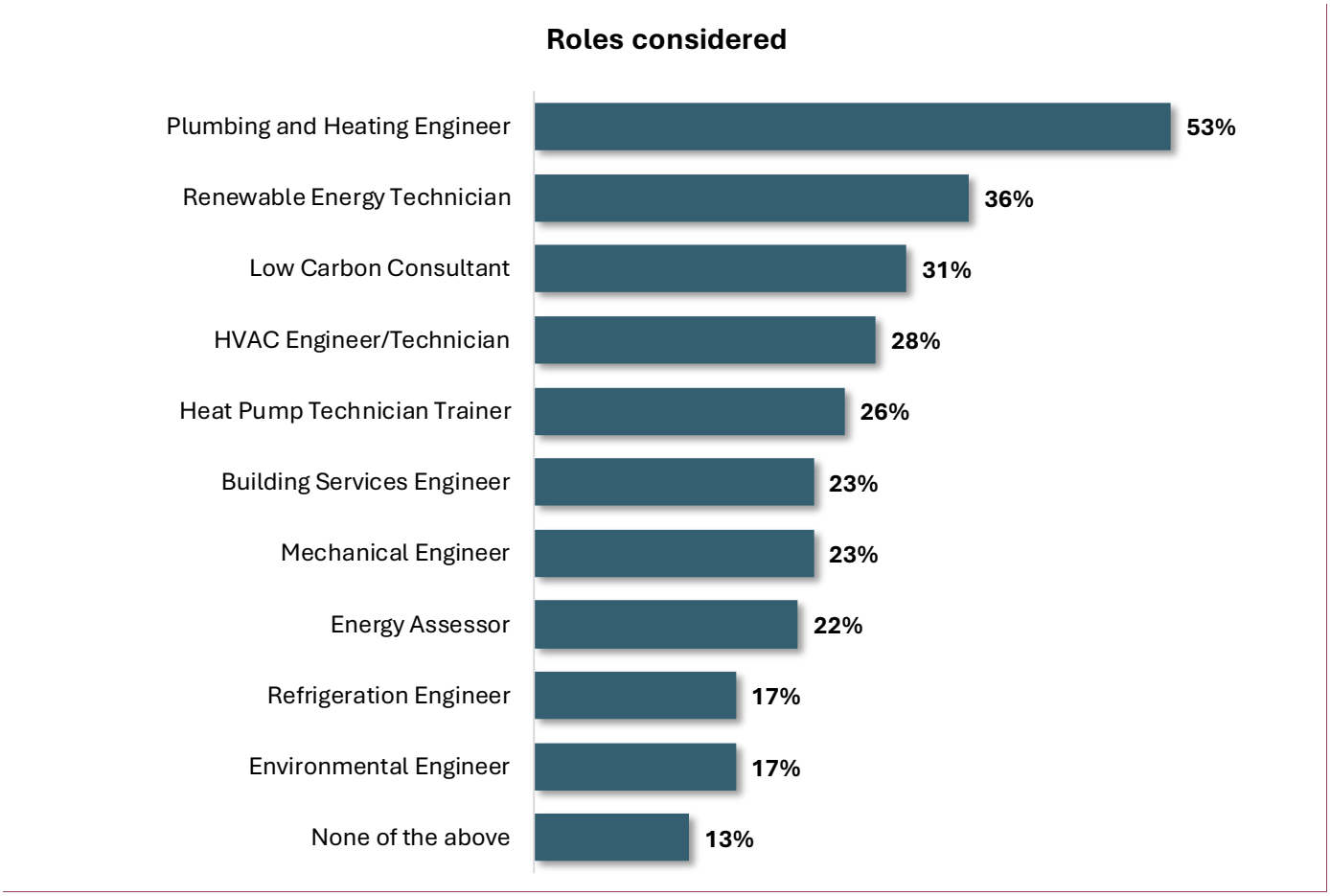

Figure 6: Which of these roles have you considered as possible roles for yourself? Asked to all. Multi choice. Base n = 78.

However, there was some movement towards more sustainable roles. When taking the more explicitly sustainable roles together (renewable energy technician, low carbon consultant, heat pump technician trainer and environmental engineer), 56% of respondents would consider at least one of these. There were no notable differences in age groups or regions in terms of roles selected.

Of those who would consider becoming a heat pump technician trainer, 38% stated they were only considering the change at this point, suggesting they were quite early in the process. However, it is important to note this was a relatively small number of the overall sample in absolute terms.

Actions in relation to considering becoming a heat pump technician trainer	
I am only considering the change at this point	38%
I have looked into the necessary training/qualifications I would need	21%
I have discussed this with those who are already trainers	17%
I am interested in becoming a heat pump technician trainer but I'm not sure where to look for advice	17%
I have discussed this with peers in similar roles to myself	13%
I have applied to or begun the necessary training/qualifications I would need	8%
Other	8%

Table 1: Which of the following have you done in relation to your considering becoming a heat pump technician trainer? Only asked to those who indicated they would be interested in becoming a heat pump technician trainer. Base n = 24.

Motivations for technicians to become a trainer

What are the key motivations to becoming a trainer?

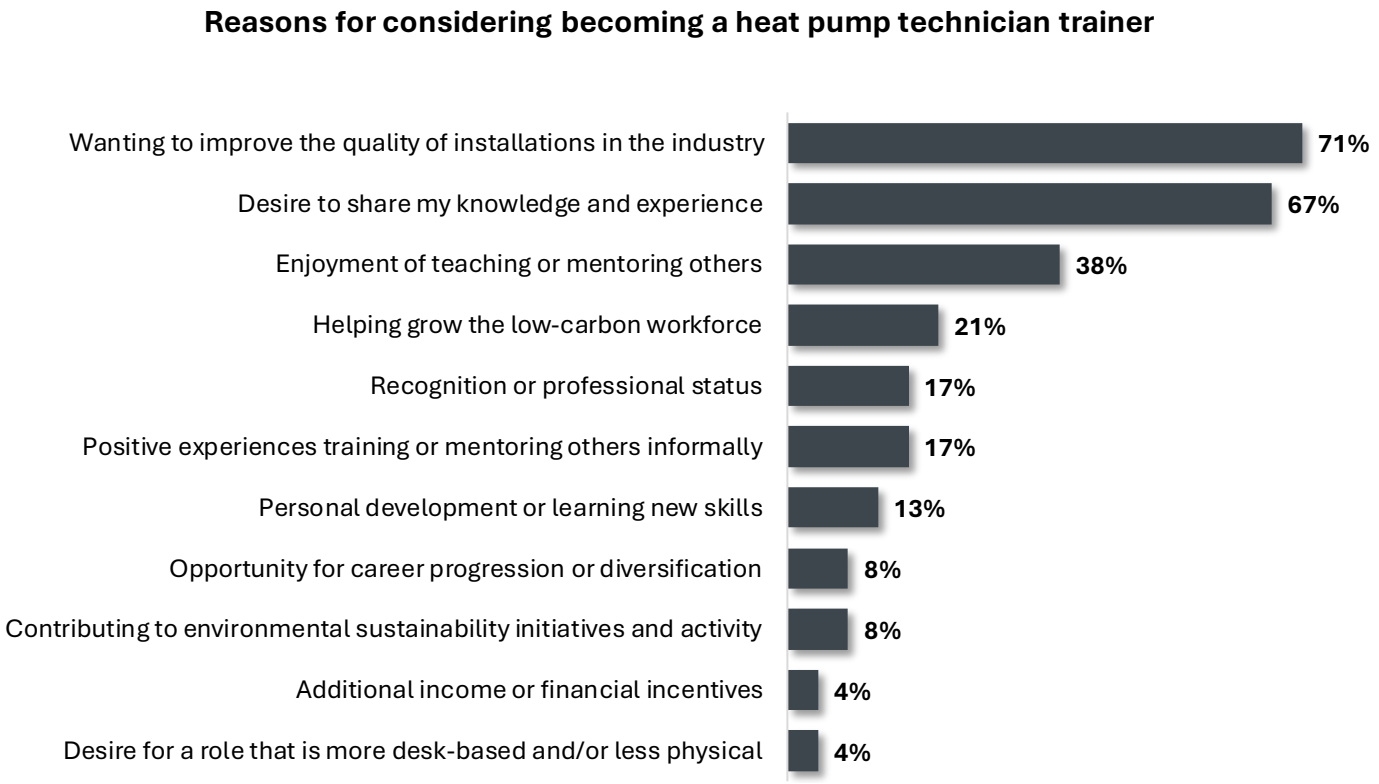

Figure 7: Which of the following are reasons for this? Asked to those interested in becoming a trainer. Multi choice. Base n = 24.

Survey respondents who were interested in becoming heat pump technician trainers were asked about their motivations for doing so. The most common motivating factors selected were wanting to improve the quality of installations in the industry (71%), a desire to share knowledge and experience (67%) and enjoyment of teaching or mentoring others (38%). Although earlier in the survey, technicians did not indicate that poor training was a challenge, the findings here suggest the primary driver is a commitment to raising industry standards, which perhaps highlights current dissatisfaction with the perceived quality of installation and training, and aligns with current trainers' motivations. Survey respondents also appeared to be motivated by personal interest, were willing to support less experienced technicians and held a general interest in passing on knowledge.

The factors selected least were contribution to the environment (8%), additional income or finance (4%) and desire for a role that is more desk-based and less physical (4%). The lack of interest in contributing to environmental initiatives – while wanting to improve the quality of installations – perhaps is indicative of a stronger focus on excellence and reputation than sustainability. The minimal interest in financial gains suggests that those pursuing trainer roles are more likely to be those driven by personal motivations than financial incentives.

Findings from interviews with those interested in becoming trainers aligned with the survey findings. As with current trainers, personal and social motivations were largely more important than environmental and financial motivations.

New things, new challenges. I like stuff to do, otherwise it's just boring doing the same stuff day in, day out. It's nice to have new challenges and set yourself to new goals to achieve.

Interested in becoming a trainer, Phase 3

Motivating factors for those not interested

In interviews, we asked those not interested in becoming a trainer what might motivate them to become a trainer and, perhaps as expected, the main factor discussed was pay. Many stated they would consider the role if it was financially viable. This meant receiving a similar salary to what they are earning currently as installers.

It just depends on what they were paying. You can go from being an installer and quite easily making £500 to £600 a day. You're not going to get that kind of money as a trainer.

Not interested in becoming a trainer, Phase 3

This was particularly true for those who ran their own business and had more to consider than personal financial cost.

Another related suggestion was to make taking on apprentices more viable – for example, by covering costs such as national insurance to ensure that training apprentices does not result in a financial loss for the employer. Currently, employers do not pay national insurance contributions for apprentices under 25 years old who earn less than £50,270 per year[6] – perhaps the respondent's suggestion was to extend this further.

[6] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-insurance-contributions-for-under-25s-employer-guide/paying-employer-national-insurance-contributions-for-apprentices-under-25

Barriers to technicians becoming trainers

What are the key barriers to becoming a trainer?

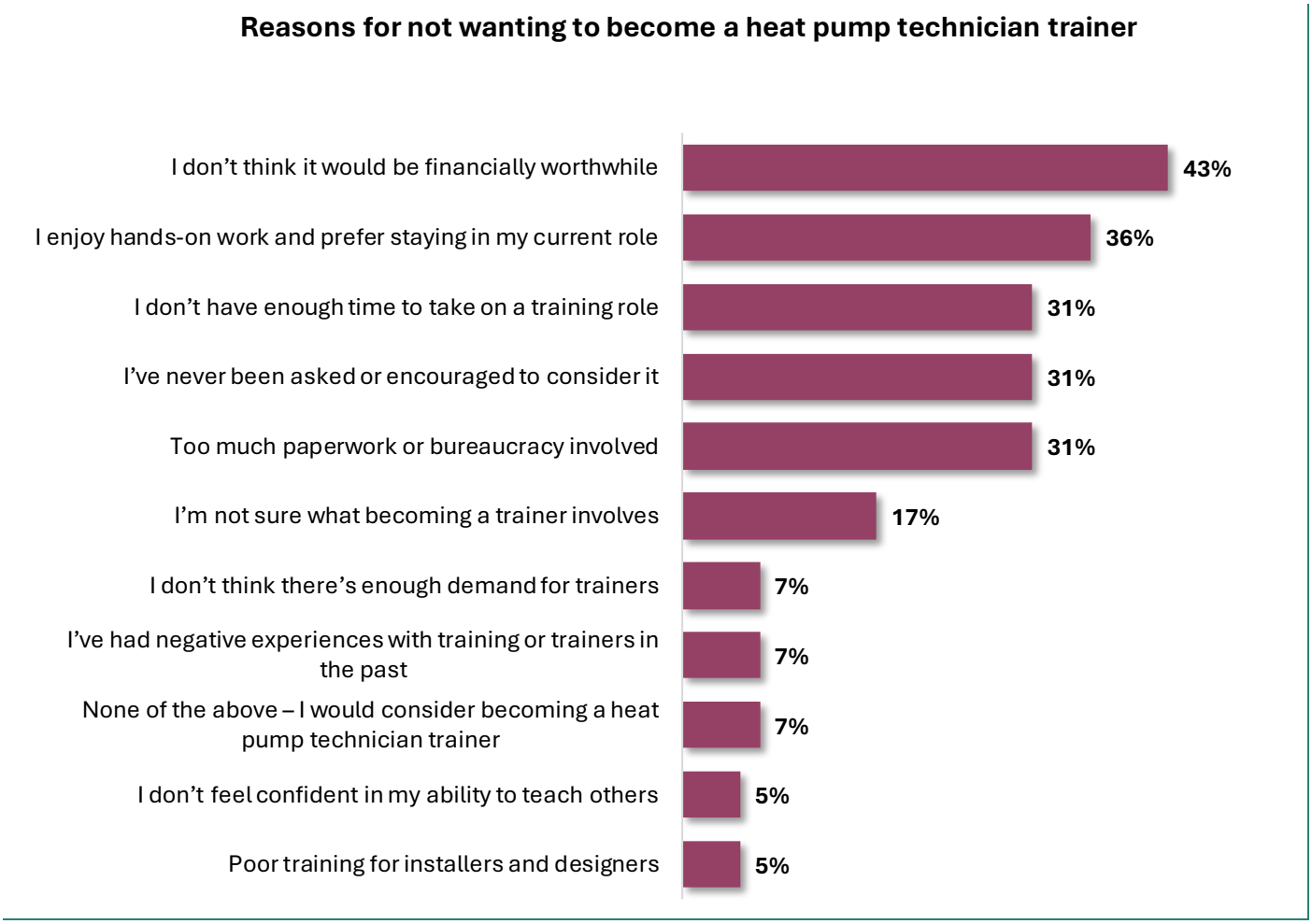

Figure 8: Which of the following are reasons for [not wanting to become a heat pump technician trainer]? Asked to those not interested in becoming a trainer. Multi choice. Base n = 58.

For survey respondents, the main barrier to considering a role as a trainer was financial (43%). This was followed by enjoying hands-on work and preferring to stay in their current role (36%) and not having enough time to take on a training role (31%). Not having enough time is an interesting finding, as it suggests that technicians may view training as a supplementary or side role, rather than a full-time position. This is supported by findings reported later demonstrating that many respondents would be interested in working with a training provider supporting heat pump technician trainers as a paid industry expert or consultant, on a part-time basis.

A lack of confidence in their abilities (5%) and insufficient training for installers and designers (5%) were the least selected barriers. This aligns with the findings reported earlier that most respondents felt capable of taking on a training role – likely due to their existing responsibilities, such as mentoring apprentices or sharing knowledge within their teams.

Heat pump technicians who were interviewed reiterated many of the barriers outlined by heat pump technician trainers. Some additional areas they mentioned include:

- **Location and lifestyle considerations:** Some technicians reported that there was a lack of suitable locations to deliver training, particularly due to a limited availability at local colleges in their area. This

was especially true for one participant based in the Channel Islands, where there were no opportunities for additional trainers due to the region's small size.

- **Uncertainty due to government policy:** Some technicians were concerned about the frequent changes in government policy, which have created uncertainty in the industry. They were worried that if a new government takes power, the current green agenda will be abandoned.

What could encourage technicians to become trainers?

Support and resources

In an open question, survey respondents were presented with the opportunity to explore the support or resources they would like to see available that would encourage them to pursue a heat pump technician trainer role more seriously. These responses were then coded into thematic categories.

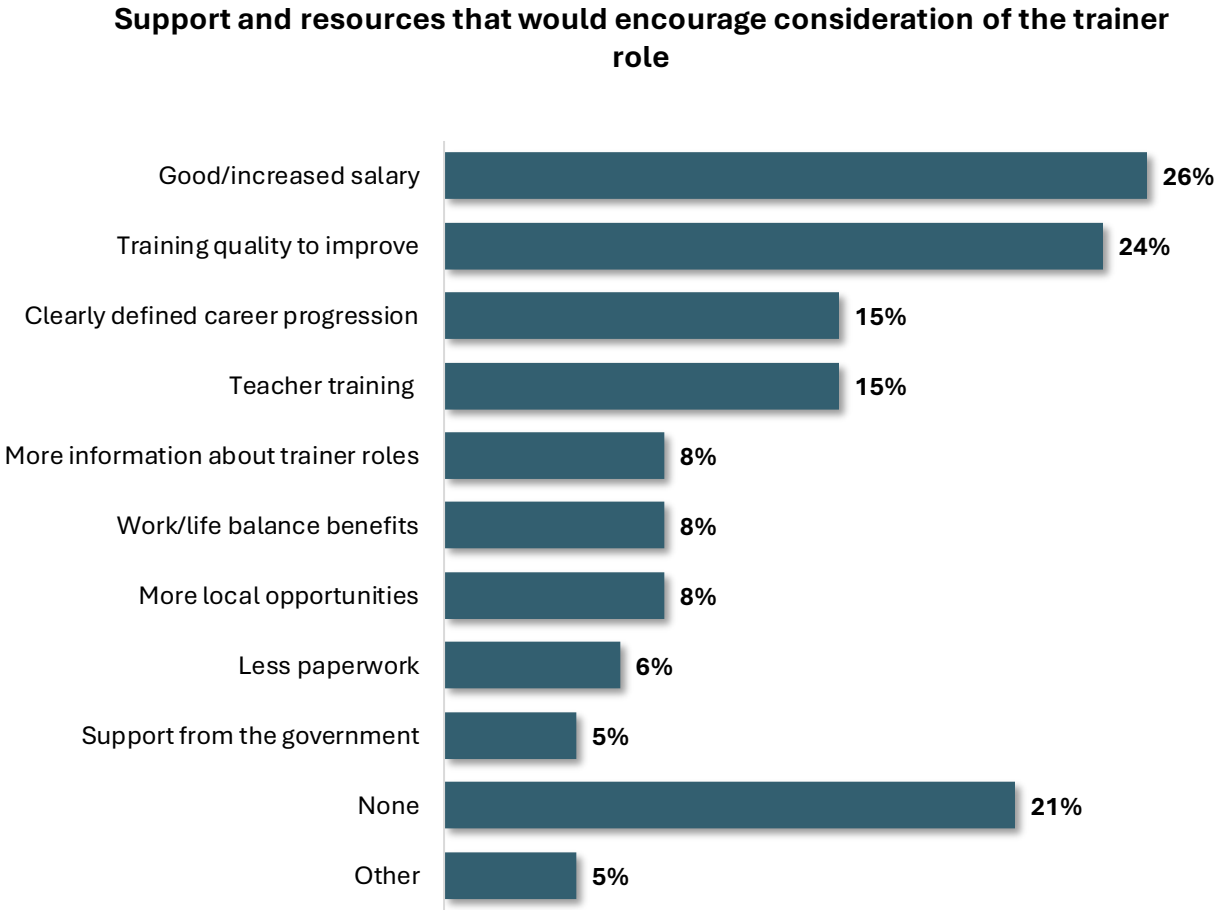

Figure 9: What support or resources would you like to see available that would encourage you to pursue a heat pump technician trainer role more seriously? Asked to all. Open question coded into themes. Base n = 62.

The area most commonly mentioned was an increased salary, cited by 26% of respondents. This reflects a broader concern highlighted earlier in the report. These findings suggest that financial concerns are the main barrier to pursuing the trainer role.

24% of respondents also wanted to see improvement in the quality of training available to heat pump technicians. Responses indicated that a dissatisfaction with the currently available training meant they were reluctant to consider taking on the trainer role. A couple reported they would not 'enjoy teaching from PowerPoint' and that 'current training is obsolete and not fit for purpose'. For current heat pump technicians, dissatisfaction with training appeared to be a barrier – in contrast, dissatisfaction with training was a motivating factor for those who are now heat pump technician trainers.

15% of respondents indicated they would like teacher training to encourage them to consider the trainer role. This is likely a key gap in their skills. As reported earlier in the report, 76% of respondents felt they currently had the skills for the trainer role (Figure 5). However, there was a notable drop, of around 20 percentage points, when asked whether it would be easy to switch into the role and whether they currently held the necessary

qualifications. This suggests that although many technicians may feel capable, there may be a gap in formal recognition or awareness and access to structured pathways. Some respondents also highlighted that a current challenge in their role was access to quality training or upskilling opportunities, which may act as a barrier to formalising their skills and making the transition into a trainer role.

15% of respondents also identified clearly defined career progression as an area where they would like more support. Respondents appeared unlikely to perceive the trainer role as offering strong prospects for progression – as mentioned earlier in the report, only 29% believed the role involved good future prospects for promotion or pay increases (Figure 4). This perceived lack of career progression may therefore present another significant barrier to pursuing the role and looks to be an important perception to change. This need for career development support may also be linked to a lack of awareness, as 17% of respondents who were not interested in the trainer role said they were unsure of what the trainer role entailed. Despite this, issues around career progression may be more reflective of broader issues within the whole low carbon heating profession – only 9% of respondents reported enjoying the opportunities for career progression in their current roles.

Alternative roles to being a trainer

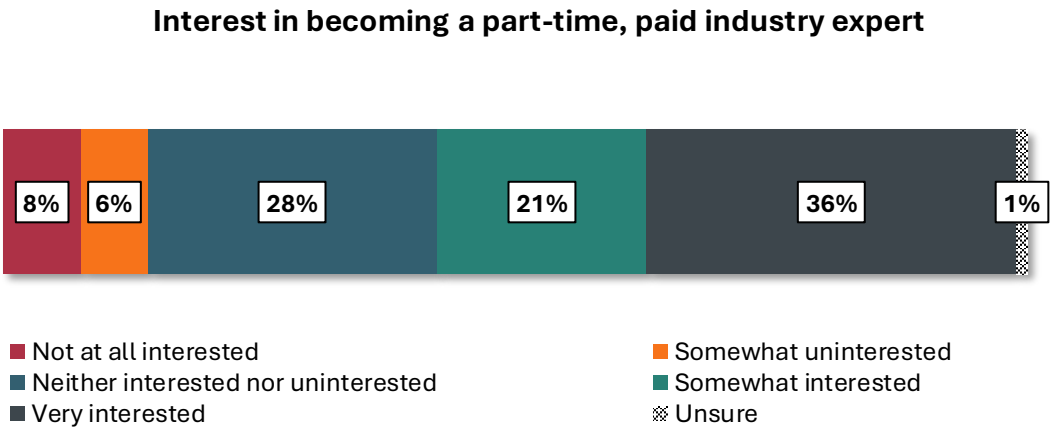

Figure 10: To what extent would you be interested in working with a training provider supporting heat pump technician trainers as a paid industry expert or consultant, on a part-time basis? Asked to all. Base n = 77.

57% of respondents indicated that they would be interested in working with a training provider that supports heat pump technician trainers as a paid industry expert or consultant on a part-time basis. 36% stated they were very interested in this proposition. Interest was particularly high among those who had previously considered roles such as heat pump technician trainer (75%).

Support from employers appeared to be a strong influencing factor – 88% of those who felt the trainer role would be encouraged by their employer expressed an interest in this proposition, compared to 46% of those who did not. Similarly, 68% of respondents who felt they could easily switch into the trainer role were interested, compared to 41% of the rest. This suggests that perceived employer support and confidence in transitioning into the training role are core motivators. This reiterates the potential importance of clearer pathways and the value of employer endorsements in encouraging technicians to engage with training roles.

Only 14% of technicians expressed a lack of interest in the expert role. 28% reported they were neither interested nor uninterested – indicating a sizeable group that could potentially be open to this opportunity given the necessary support and resources.

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

Crucially, while financial considerations were taken into account by heat pump technicians considering becoming a heat pump technician trainer, those who have successfully become trainers were not motivated by finances. Indeed, the lack of a clear and obvious financial incentive was the most commonly stated barrier to increasing the number of trainers. Heat pump technicians who were not considering a trainer role did not feel it was financially worthwhile and many would like to have the opportunity to earn a good salary to consider changing roles. Technicians often felt they could be better paid when installing and designing heating systems. However, current trainers were often not motivated by finances – they were motivated instead by personal reasons, such as work/life balance, and social reasons, such as improving existing training. This disconnect between current trainers' motivations and technicians' motivations indicates that at present becoming a trainer is likely to remain a limited proposition for technicians without financial incentives.

Offering a more flexible way for existing heat pump technicians to contribute to training and making them aware of this opportunity could be a useful mechanism for exposing technicians to more formalised teaching. Although only a small number of survey respondents were considering becoming a full-time heat pump technician trainer, over half of survey respondents would consider taking a paid role to provide expert advice and guidance to colleges on a part-time basis. This was seen to offer an opportunity to share their expertise, while maintaining their main role as a heat pump technician – which was important as they were generally satisfied with their role and liked the hands-on nature of the work, and as technicians are likely to earn more money installing, it would mean less of a pay cut than becoming a full-time trainer. If heat pump technicians are provided the opportunity to contribute to training in a flexible way this may increase their interest in becoming a full-time heat pump technician trainer – there were several trainers who reported that their prior experience teaching or mentoring was a motivating factor in their decision to become a full-time trainer.

Trainers were concerned that current training offered to those becoming heat pump technicians was not good enough. This had motivated some to take on this role, as they wanted to help improve the training offered. However, in the survey, only a small proportion of current heat pump technicians who were not interested in becoming a trainer indicated that training for installation and design was poor.

In addition to having the opportunity to earn a good salary, technicians could be encouraged to become a trainer if they had a clear sense of career progression. Technicians were not always sure if being a trainer came with a good salary, nor if they would have good future prospects for promotion or pay increases. This suggests they require more information about the role to make an informed decision.

Overall, there was a limited appetite for becoming a full-time heat pump technician trainer among the surveyed respondents, particularly due to financial concerns. However, heat pump technicians and trainers were often motivated by a desire to share their knowledge and expertise – perhaps this could be achieved by providing more opportunities for heat pump technicians to offer paid expert advice and guidance to colleges.

Recommendations

Based on the insights in this report, to encourage more heat pump technicians to become trainers we recommend:

- **Lobbying for better pay for heat pump technician trainers** and increased financial incentives for taking on the role.
- **Facilitating more investment from manufacturers in providing good quality training** to heat pump technicians and those who train them.
- **Encouraging colleges and training centres to offer part-time paid expert positions** to heat pump technicians so they can gain experience in teaching.
- **Supporting employers in continuing to offer mentoring and training opportunities** to heat pump technicians, helping develop their teaching skills.
- **Developing a clearer career progression pathway** from heat pump technician to heat pump technician trainer.
- **Avoiding frequent policy changes around environmental and sustainability issues** to provide more certainty in the renewable energy industry.

Appendix: Profile of participants

Phase 1: Trainer interviews

We conducted 12 interviews with current heat pump technician trainers.

Note: The base n for some questions is 11 rather than 12 because one participant was recruited through the survey so not all responses to screening questions were answered.

Many of the trainers had been in their role for over 10 years.

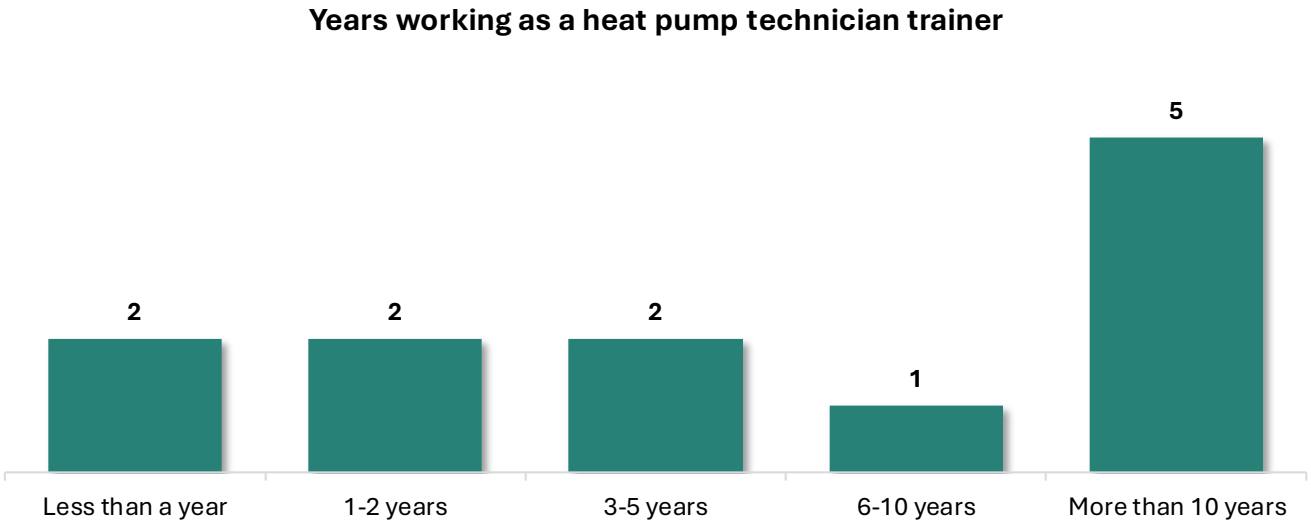

Figure 11: Base n = 12. Single choice question.

More than half of the trainers had previously worked as a heat pump technician.

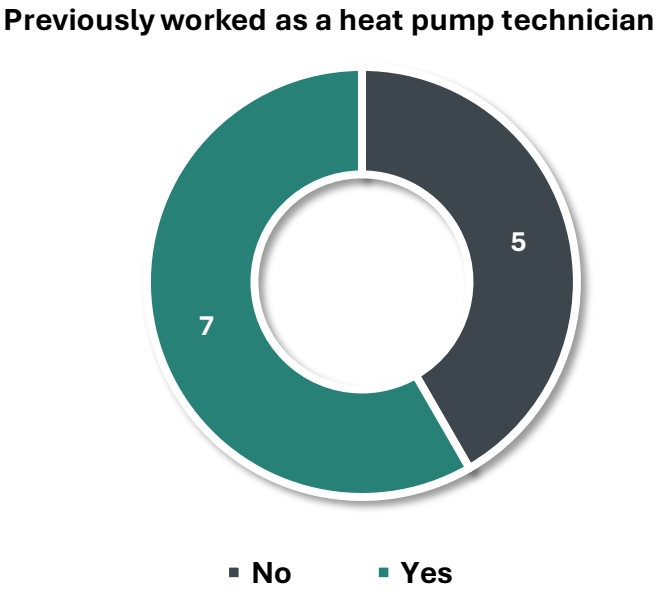

Figure 12: Base n = 12. Single choice question.

All trainers had experience with air source heat pump systems.

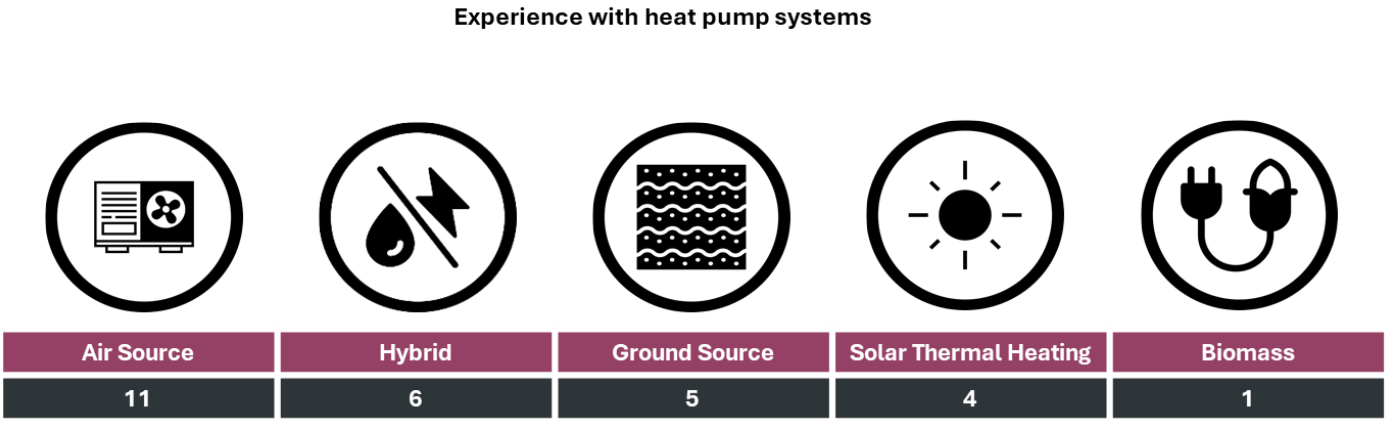

Figure 13: Base n = 12. Multi choice question.

Trainers' qualifications included:

- F-Gas
- ASHP Installation and Maintenance
- Low Temperature Heating and Hot Water Design
- Water Regulations
- Manufacture Courses
- Level 3 Installation and Maintenance of Domestic Heat Pumps

Phase 2: Technician survey

A total of 78 technicians responded to the survey.

There were roughly even proportions of those who were employed full-time, ran a business with employees or were freelance/self-employed.

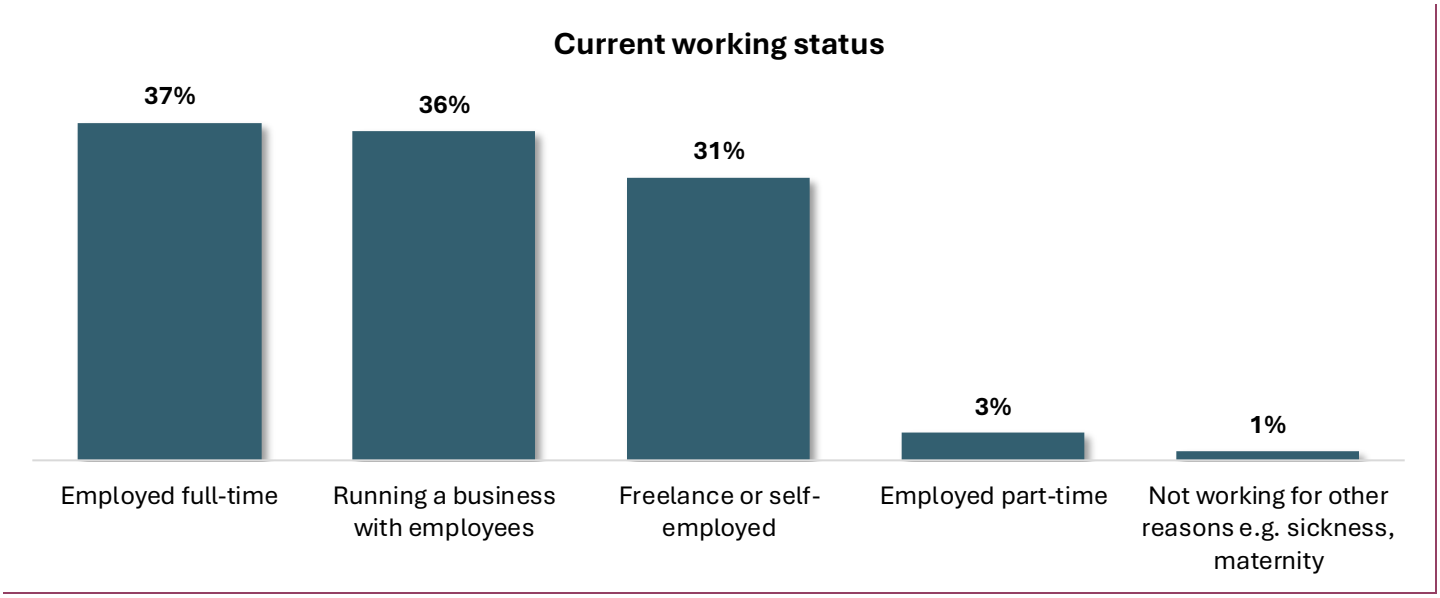

Figure 14: Base n = 78. Single choice question.

None of the survey respondents were currently working as trainers, which was a pre-requisite for completing the survey. About half (51%) had no training experience, and about a third (33%) mentored as part of their current role.

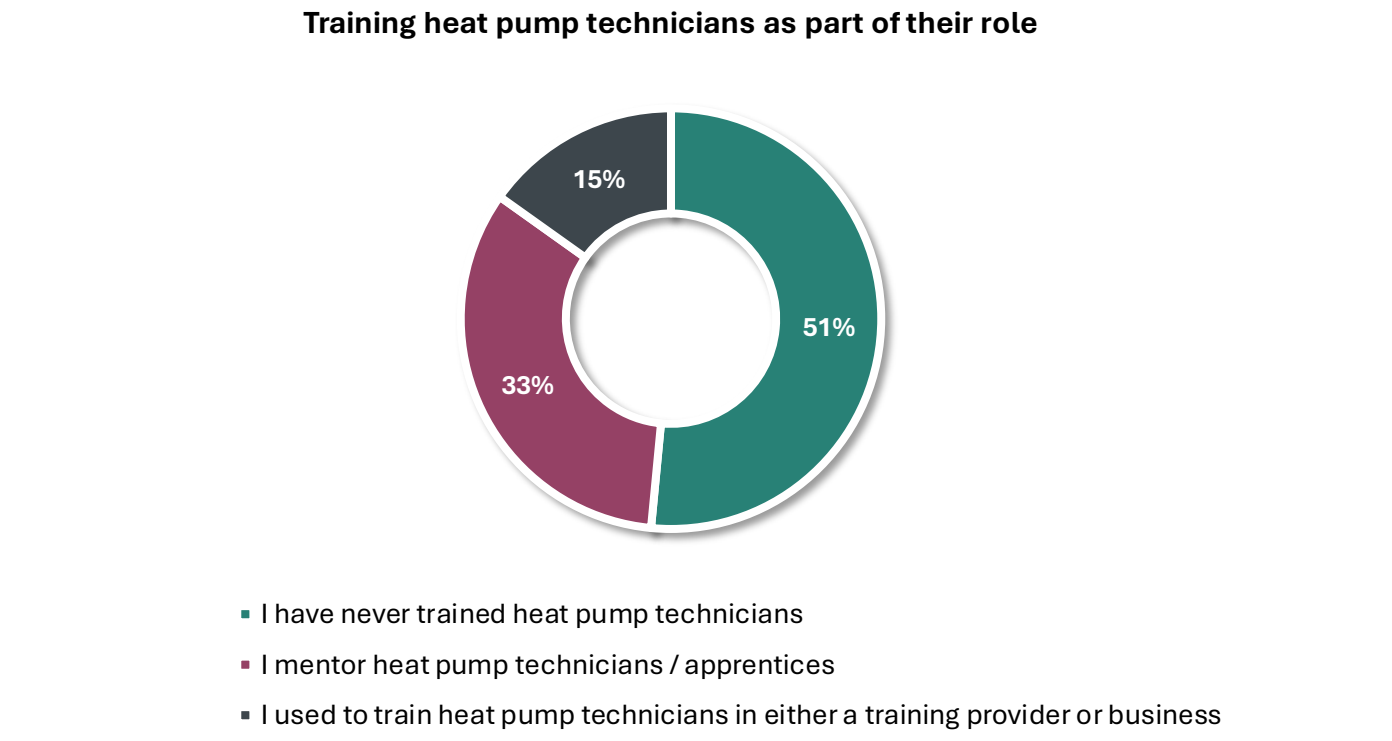

Figure 15: Base n = 78. Single choice question.

Most were qualified in water regulation (91%), unvented hot water (90%) and heat pump design and installation (72%).

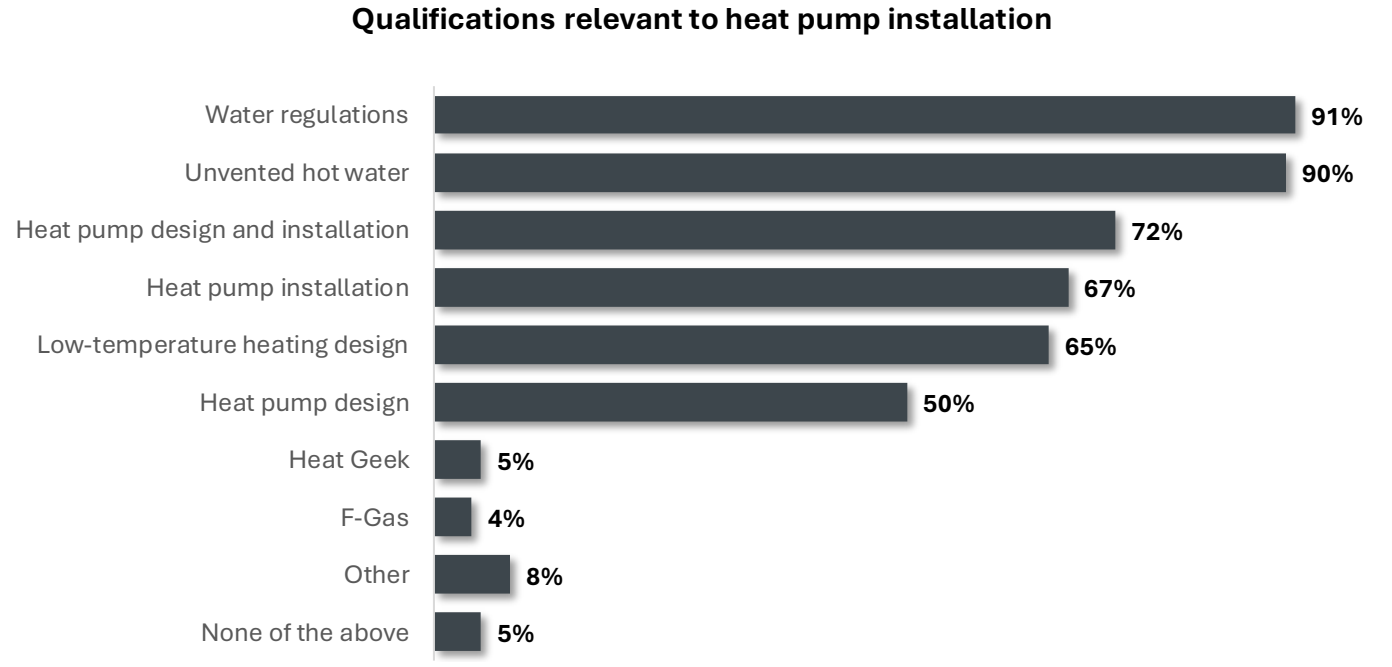

Figure 16: Base n = 78. Multi choice question.

37% of technicians had been installing heat pumps for more than 10 years.

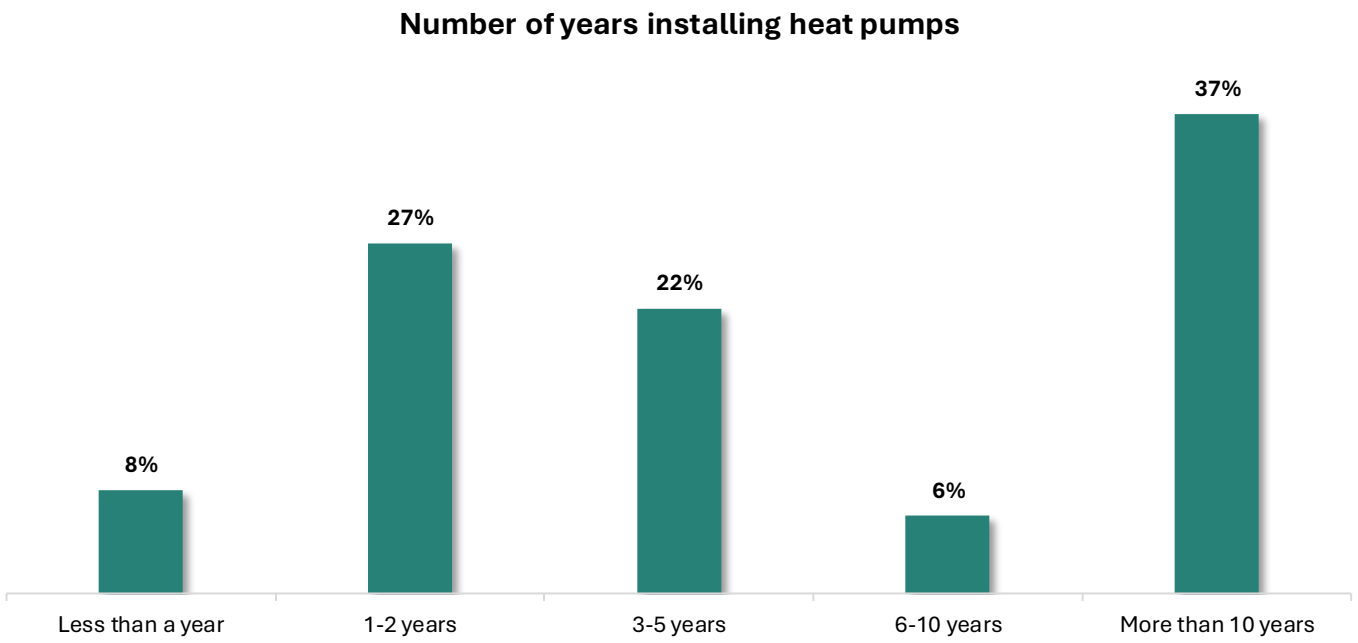

Figure 17: Base n = 78. Single choice question.

All survey respondents had experience with air source heat pump systems.

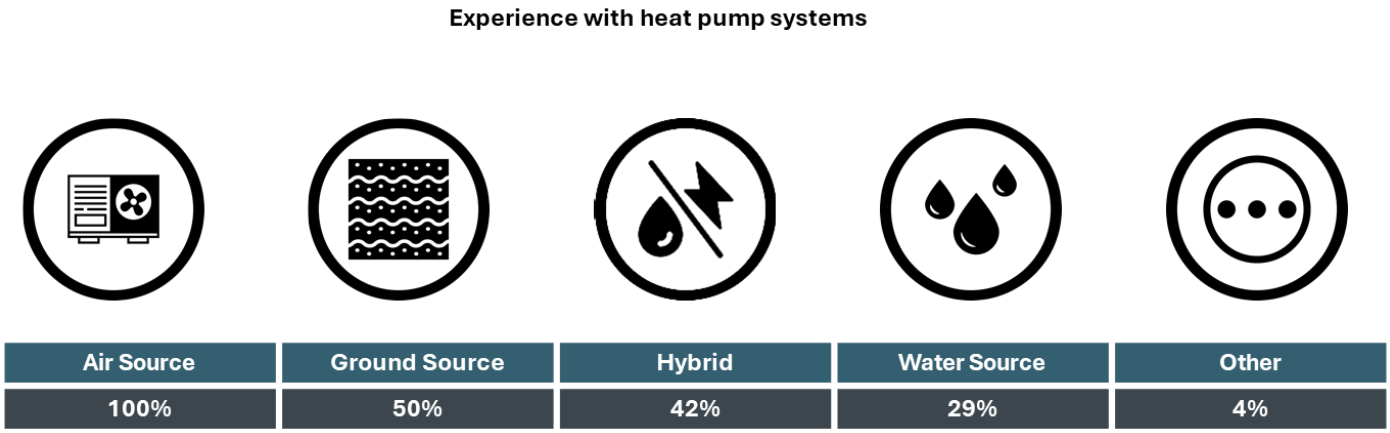

Figure 18: Base n = 78. Multi choice question.

Phase 3: Technician interviews

A total of 10 technicians were interviewed.

The majority currently installed heat pumps in their day-to-day work.

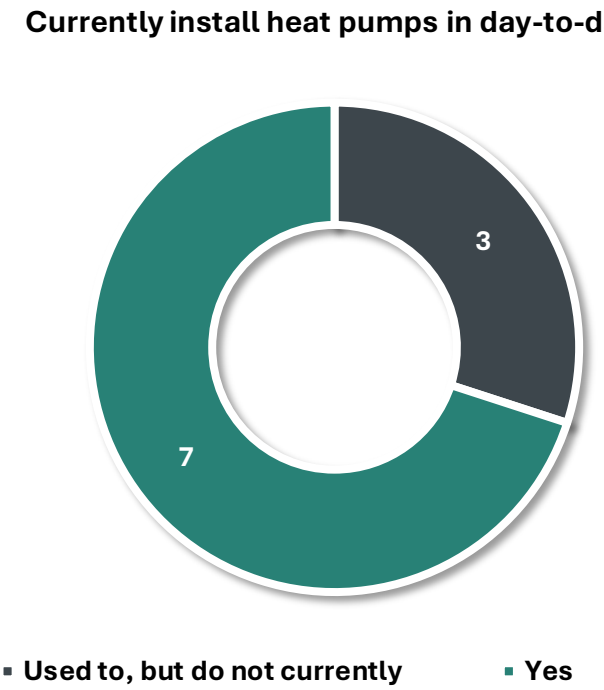

Figure 19: Base n = 10. Single choice question.

Most technicians interviewed were employed full-time.

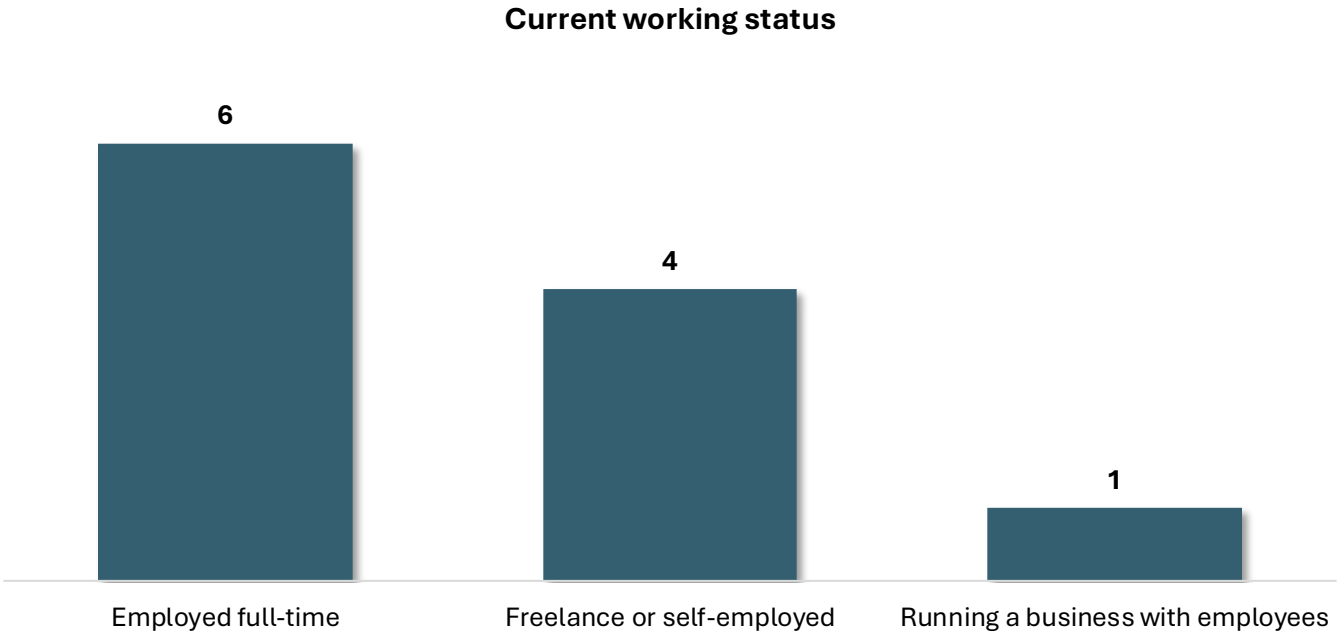

Figure 20: Base n = 10. Single choice question.

There was a roughly equal split among those who previously trained heat pump technicians, those currently mentoring, and those who never trained technicians.

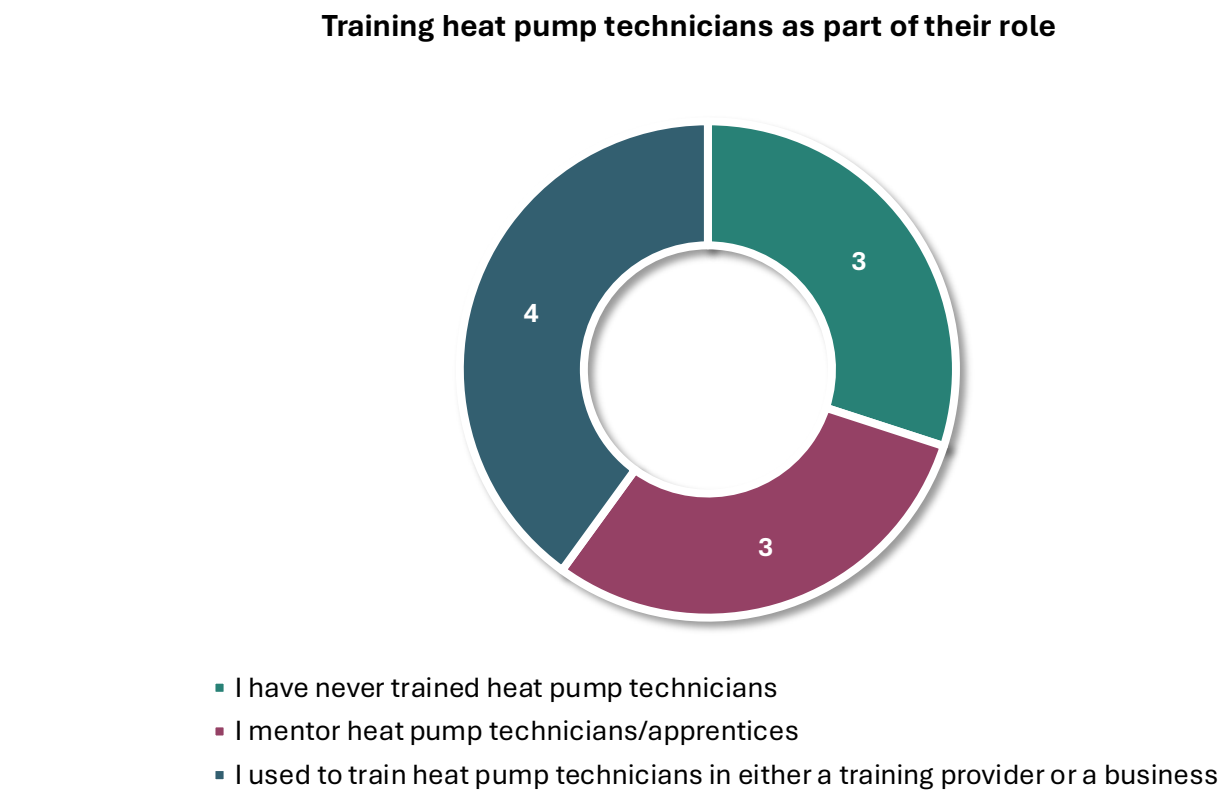

Figure 21: Base n = 10. Single choice question.

Most technicians interviewed held more specific heat pump qualifications in addition to water qualifications.

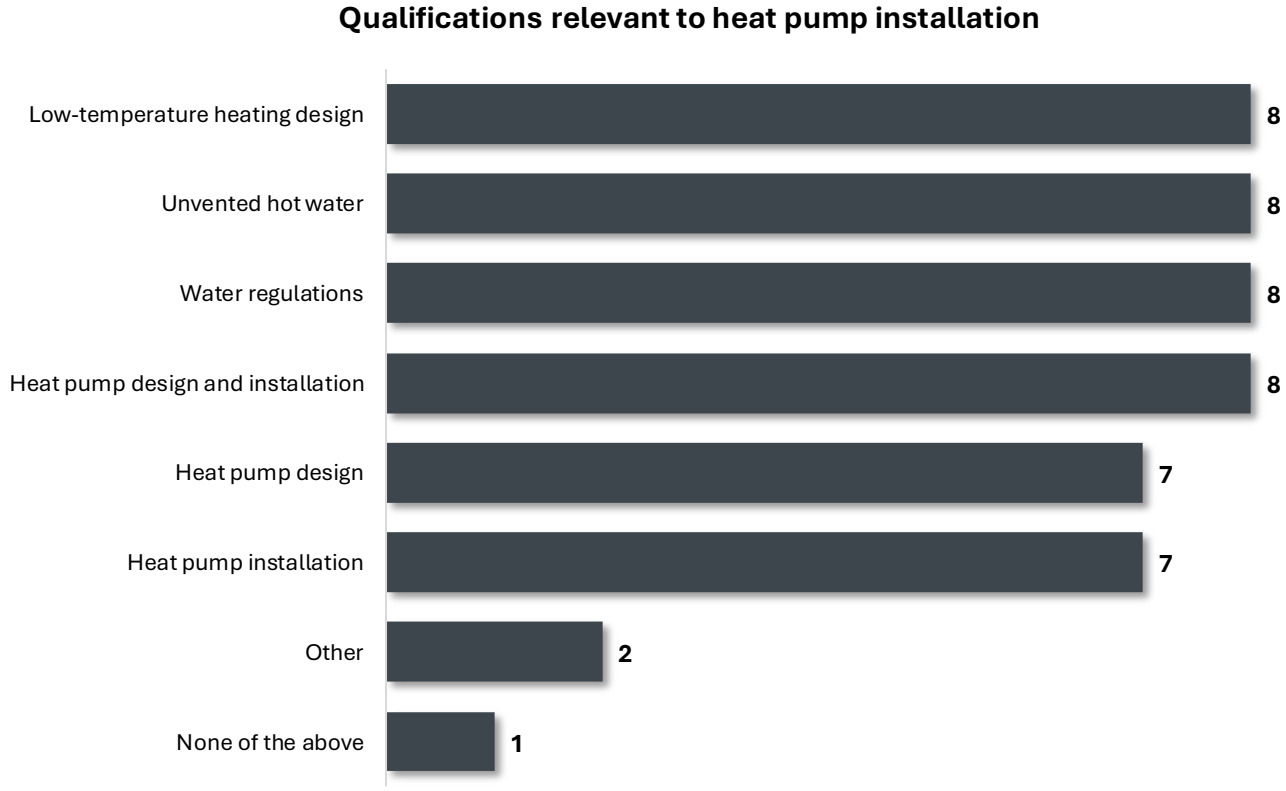

Figure 22: Base n = 10. Multi choice question

All technicians interviewed had experience with air source heat pump systems. There was strong representation of those who had experience with ground source, hybrid and water source.

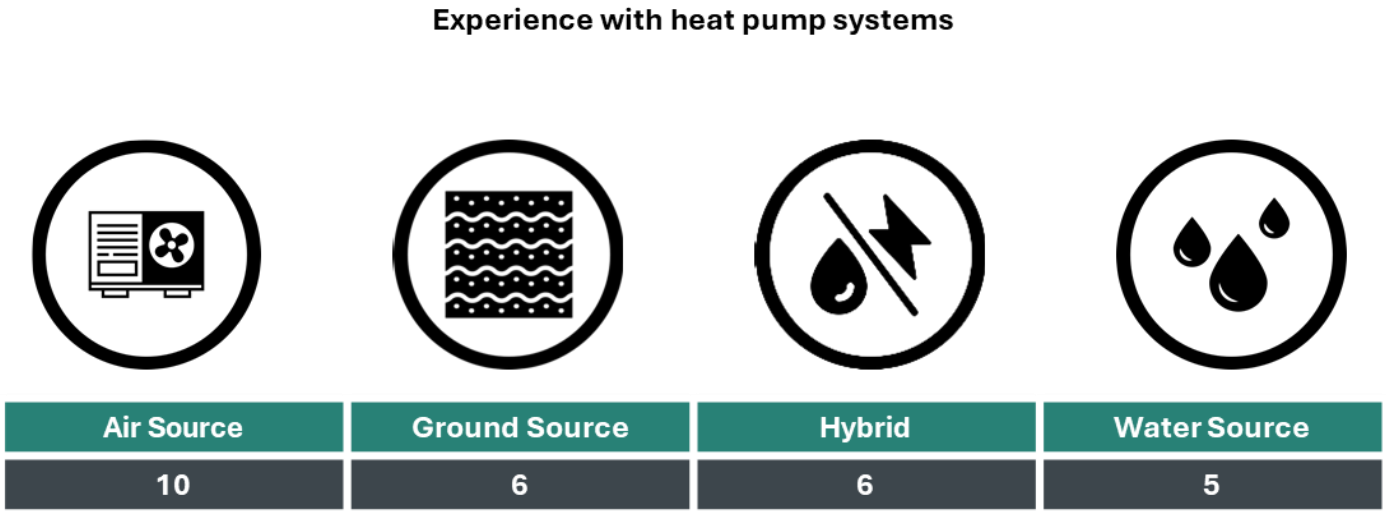

Figure 23: Base n = 10. Multi choice question.