



The Polymers Industry includes:

- Plastics processing
- Rubber products (excluding the manufacture and retreading of rubber tyres and tubes)

The Polymer Industry comprises four discrete processing areas: Plastics Processing, Rubber Processing, Polymer Composites Processing and Signmaking. Over 7,500 companies operate within the sector employing some 286,000 employees. This figure rises to approximately 400,000 employees when companies who process polymers as a secondary operation to their main business, are taken into consideration. The industry is extremely dynamic, being subject to many changes and opportunities arising from technological change, development of new materials and processing technology; not least, the development of new products and changes in consumer requirements.

The industries require innovators, technologists, designers and highly skilled processing technicians to remain at the forefront of developments and changes in the world demand for more versatile, lightweight, low-cost and energy-saving products and applications.

Products and component parts developed using polymers, are used in many applications. Each year the demand steadily grows.

*Aerospace * Automotive * Marine * Defence * Medical * Electrical * Electronic * Construction * Transportation * Consumer and Domestic Products * Leisure

Economic picture of the Polymers Industry¹

Industry	Turnover	GVA ²	GVA per employee
Manufacture Plastic products	£18.07bn	£6.57bn	£37,107
Manufacture Rubber products	£1.69bn	£0.74bn	£37,050
Totals	£19.76bn	£7.31bn	Average £37,102

Industry details³

The UK is one of the **top 5** Plastics Processing countries in the EU

Sales in the Plastics industry account for **2.1%** of UK GDP

The UK's Plastics Processors consume **4.8 million tonnes of material**

Packaging accounts for **36%** of consumption

The UK produces **2.5 million tonnes of plastics** per annum

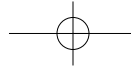
In 2004 the average hourly wage in the UK and US was \$22.9 compared to China at 1US\$

The Composites industry is buoyant with a predicted growth of **4%** per annum

¹Annual Business Inquiry 2005 - data released 2007, available through the Office of National Statistics

²GVA is the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs which are used up in production

³British Plastics Association www.bpf.co.uk



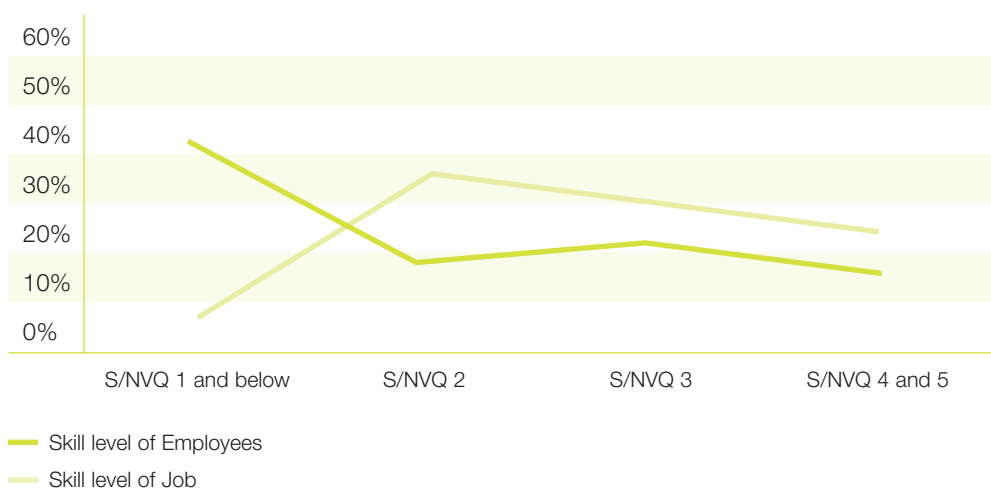
The Polymers Industry Workforce⁴

Workforce Distribution		Occupation Distribution	
Number of Employers ⁵	7,500	Managers and Senior Officials	20%
Number of Employees ⁵	276,000*	Professional Occupations	4%
Age of workforce		Associate Professional and Technical	9%
– 16-24	10%	Administrative and Secretarial	8%
– 25-34	22%	Skilled Trades Occupations	15%
– 35-44	27%	Sales and Customer Service Occupations	2%
– 45-54	25%	Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	35%
– 55+	16%	Elementary Occupations	7%
Ethnicity			
– White	94%		
– Non-white	6%		
Gender			
– Female	21%		
– Male	79%		

* Industry estimates can exceed ABI employee data due to contractor workforce and SIC limitations

The Skills Gap⁵

Skills Gap in the Polymers Industry



There is an over supply of people qualified at S/NVQ level 1 and below compared to the number of jobs at that level in the Polymers Industry.

Elementary occupations only account for 7% of the overall workforce.

There is a 36% SURPLUS of people qualified at S/NVQ level 1.

There is an under supply of people qualified to S/NVQ level 2 and 3 compared to the proportion of jobs at those levels in the Polymers Industry.

Level 2 and level 3 occupations account for 69% of the Polymers Industry.

There is a 29% DEFICIT of people qualified at S/NVQ levels 2 and 3.

Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Listing⁶

The Polymer Industry by SIC code: 25.13 25.21 25.22 25.23/1 25.23/2 25.24

⁴Labour Force Survey January 2006 - December 2006

⁵Cogent Industry Estimates

⁶Office of National Statistics - Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2003

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