



2003 Generic Skills Survey

Results for Carmarthenshire

Future Skills Wales 2003 Generic Skills Survey

Results for Carmarthenshire

The Future Skills Wales 2003 Generic Skills Survey looks at the skill needs of employers in Wales and the skills offered by the people living in Wales as well as the demands for learning and training amongst employers and people in Wales. It comprises of an Employer's Survey and a Household Survey. Both surveys focus on generic skills, which are skills that are transferable across occupational groups.

The Employer Survey: 6,020 establishments with a minimum of two employees were interviewed between February and April 2003. The sample was drawn from the Yellow Pages Business Database and stratified by the unitary authority (UA) and within each authority by employee size and industry. This data has been weighted by the UA level, the number of employees and SIC using 2001 Annual Business Inquiry data.

The Household Survey: 6,025 households were interviewed face-to-face, across Wales, between February and July 2003. The interviews were constructed in such a way as to be representative of the total Welsh population using ONS (Office for National Statistics) 1996 mid-year estimates for gender and age of the population at UA (Unitary Authority) level.

Survey Totals for Carmarthenshire

	Number of respondents (before weighting)
The Employer Survey	341
The Household Survey	320

KEY FACTS

- Employers in Carmarthenshire rated understanding customer needs and the ability to follow instructions as the generic skills most in demand at a high or advanced level
- 29% of employers who reported HTFV believed the main cause to be a lack of applicants with the appropriate skills.
- 53% of employers who recruit school or college leavers reported a significant gap between the skills possessed by a leaver and those expected by the employer. Of these 43% found communication skills to be lacking.
- 45% of people who were not working would like to be in either full time or part time paid work.

Demographics

Employer Survey:

- 66% of employers were based entirely on a single site, compared with 62% throughout Wales. 29% were one of a multiple site employer, and 5% a head office.
- 42% of employers in Carmarthenshire had fewer than 5 employees, and 78% had fewer than 10, similar to the national pattern.

Household Survey:

- 28% reported having a health problem or long-term disability, slightly higher than the national average (24%).
- 44% of respondents were educated to NVQ 3 equivalent or higher. 22% had no qualifications at all.
- The number of Welsh language speakers was high, with 35% stating that they spoke fluent Welsh, and 81% having at least some ability. 17% stated that Welsh was their first language at home.

Carmarthenshire

Employer Survey

FUTURE SKILLS

- Employers were asked about which generic skills were required at the time of the survey (on a scale of 1=not required to 5=advanced), and what they felt the requirement would be for the same skills in the future (3 years from the time of the survey).
- Employers believed that for each of the skills in the survey, there would be a higher level required in the future. The most significant increase was expected to be for Information Technology skills, with 44% saying high or advanced IT skills will be required in the future, compared with just 30% at the time of the survey.
- The six skills with the greatest requirement at the time of the survey (in terms of percentage of employers requiring them at high or advanced level) were :
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (77%)
 - 2) Ability to follow instructions (73%)
 - 3) Adaptability/flexibility (72%)
 - 4) Communication skills (71%)
 - 5) Team working skills (69%)
 - 6) Showing initiative (67%).
- The skills employers expect to need most at high or advanced level in the future were identical:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (81%)
 - 2) Adaptability/flexibility (80%)
 - 3) Ability to follow instructions (77%)
 - 4) Communication skills (76%)
 - 5) Team working skills (74%)
 - 6) Showing initiative (73%).

SKILL GAPS

- 26% of employers surveyed reported that a significant skills gap existed amongst their employees, that is, between the type of skills their employees possessed at the time of the survey and those required to meet their business objectives.

Occupations and skills gaps:

- Of those reporting a skills gap, 30% of employers believed that a gap in skilled trade occupations had had the most significant impact on their business, with 24% regarding sales and customer service occupations as having the most impact.

Main measures taken to tackle the skills gap:

Of those reporting a skills gap:

- 59% reported that they had provided further training
- 14% had increased the level of apprentice/trainee programmes
- 9% changed working practices
- 8% increased recruitment activities
- 7% of the employers said that they had done nothing, preferring to leave it to the market and
- 4% reported more supervision.

Employers' attitudes towards skills:

- 48% of employers surveyed strongly agreed that their employees have sufficient skills to meet business needs, whilst 38% tended to agree
- 40% strongly agreed that investment in skills has brought business benefits with 34% tending to agree
- 81% of employers strongly agreed that having a skilled workforce is crucial to the success of their business, whilst 13% tended to agree with this statement.

Investment in skills - areas of benefit

Of those employers who believed investment in skills had brought benefits to their business:

- 36% reported on customer service as a benefit
- 29% saw competing on quality as a benefit
- 28% reported that investment in skills had increased productivity
- 25% reported increased profits as a result of investment
- 10% of employers had introduced new products or processes
- 10% felt it had accelerated business growth and
- 8% reported that staff morale had improved as a result of the investment.

SKILL SHORTAGES

Hard-to-fill vacancies (HTFV):

- 22% of employers surveyed reported having one or more vacancies
- Of these employers, 73% reported that some or all of these vacancies were hard-to-fill
- The net effect of this is that 16% of all employers surveyed reported currently having HTFV.

Causes of HTFV:

Employers with HTFV believed the main cause of them to be as follows:

	Percent
Applicants lack the relevant skills we require	29%
Lack of applicants/people willing to work for market rate /interested in this type of work	24%
Applicants lack motivation/right attitude	8%
Job entails shift work/unsociable hours	6%
Remote location/poor public transport	5%
Too much competition from other employers	5%
Applicants lack the relevant experience	5%
Employer/industry unable to pay market rate	5%
Bad economic climate	3%
Poor career progression / lack of prospects	3%
Poor image of sector	2%
Applicants lack the qualifications we want	2%
Lack of resources to carry out effective recruitment	2%

Consequences of HTFV:

Of those employers reporting HTFV:

- 9% reported that there had been no impact on their business due to HTFV
- 27% reported there had been a loss of business to competitors due to HTFV
- 15% stressed their employer has had difficulties in meeting customer service objectives
- 14% reported they can't expand the business and meet growth targets
- 14% reported a loss of quality in service
- 13% reported an increase in stress, more work and pressure on other staff
- 9% reported there has been no effect on the business.

Measures taken to tackle the problem of HTFV:

- 44% of all employers reporting HTFV had expanded their recruitment channel (as opposed to geography) to tackle the problem of HTFV
- 26% had done no measures
- 9% had increased training and development within the workforce and
- 8% reported to have recruited from different geographical areas.

SCHOOL LEAVERS, COLLEGE LEAVERS AND GRADUATE RECRUITS

Recruitment of school and college leavers and graduates:

- 45% of employers surveyed stated they recruited school leavers
- 36% recruited college leavers
- 30% recruited graduates
- 40% recruited none of the above.

Skills lacking in school and college leavers:

- 53% of employers who recruit school or college leavers reported a significant gap between the skills the leavers have and those that are expected of them when first recruited.

Of those reporting a gap:

- 43% reported a lack of communication skills
- 30% reported a lack of ability to show initiative
- 19% reported a lack of lacked an understanding of customer needs
- 13% reported a lack of leadership and motivational skills and
- 12% reported a lack of numeracy skills.

Skills lacking in graduates:

- 31% reported a significant gap between the skills that graduates have and those that are expected of them when first recruited.

TRAINING

Employers were asked about off-the-job training, that is training that takes place away from the immediate work position:

- 55% of all employers had arranged off-the-job training for their employees over the previous 12 months when surveyed
- 83% of employers who had arranged training said that they had had no problems in finding an appropriate training provider.

Employers who had arranged training did so for the following type of occupations:

- 47% for managers and senior officials
- 26% for sales and customer service occupations
- 26% for skilled trade occupations
- 25% for administrative and secretarial occupations
- 21% for professional occupations.

Barriers to training provision:

- 27% of employers questioned stated that there were no barriers to the amount of training they provided.

Of those reporting barriers, three factors dominated as being the most important barriers to training provision:

- 30% of employers couldn't afford for staff to have time off for training
- 26% found the cost of training in the local area to be prohibitive and
- 8% reported that the training was not relevant to the needs of their business.

Household Survey

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS:

Employment/training: Status of respondent	Percent
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	45%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	17%
Long-term sick or disabled	13%
At home/not seeking work	9%
Full-time education	9%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	5%
Retired	3%
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	2%
Part-time education	1%

- 45% of people who were not working would like to be in full or part time paid work of some sort.
- 50% of respondents who were not in full time or part time paid work said it was because health or disability prevented them. 18% were responsible for looking after family/household members, other than children and 10% of those not in work said that they wanted to look after their children, with 7% stating that they don't want a job.
- Of those not employed, 18% were in some form of work 1 year ago, and 25% 2 years ago:

Activity status of respondents compared over time	2 years ago	1 year ago
Long-term sick or disabled	27%	28%
At home/not seeking work	23%	25%
Full-time education	22%	23%
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	16%	10%
Retired	5%	6%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	9%	8%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	2%	5%
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	1%	2%

- 28% of all respondents reported having a health problem or disability that they expected to last for more than a year. Of these, 72% said it affected the kind of paid work they might be able to do, and 61% said it affected the amount of paid work they were able to do.
- 15% of respondents were involved with a local organisation on a voluntary basis.

Sources of careers advice:

- 42% of individuals interviewed said they sought careers advice in the 2 years leading up to the survey.

Respondents, who had sought careers advice, had used a variety of sources:

- 23% used JobCentre/JobCentre Plus
- 15% relied on family, friends and colleagues for advice, whilst 10% had sought advice from School/college careers advice and/or teacher/lecturers
- 10% used web-sites to seek careers advice
- 6% stated that course tutors/teachers
- 5% reported that they used job/careers fairs
- 4% used Careers (Wales) advisers
- 4% used recruitment agencies
- 4% used their line managers and/or their personnel departments.

SUPPLY OF SKILLS

- Respondents (both working and not working) were asked what level of generic skills they already had, and what level of skills they felt were required for their current job (those working), or for the job they want (those not working) on a scale of not required to advanced.
- Those in work reported that their skill levels were sufficient for, and in most cases well above, their employer's need for all skills at basic, intermediate and high level. There were some minor perceived gaps at advanced level, in problem solving skills (27% reported requiring formal qualifications at this level, 23% reported possessing them), and understanding customer needs (38% required, 35% possessed).
- The six skills with the highest percentage of respondents in work rating themselves as high or advanced were:
 - 1) Ability to follow instructions (90%)
 - 2) Adaptability/flexibility (88%)
 - 3) Showing Initiative (87%)
 - 4) Communication skills (86%)
 - 5) Understanding customer needs (83%)
 - 6) Team working skills (81%).
- Those out of work reported that their levels at some skills were insufficient for the jobs they want. Particularly in short supply at intermediate level or above were IT skills (53% reported requiring skills, 44% reported possessing them). At high level or above there were significant perceived gaps in management skills (43% required, 28% possessed), and entrepreneurial skills (27% required, 13% possessed). At

advanced level there were significant perceived gaps in team working skills (21% required, 12% possessed), and management skills (13% required, 6% possessed).

- The six skills with the highest percentage of respondents out of work rating the need for them in the job they wanted as high or advanced were:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (78%)
 - 2) Communication skills (75%)
 - 3) Ability to follow instructions (73%)
 - 4) Showing initiative (73%)
 - 5) Adaptability/flexibility (69%)
 - 6) Team working skills (67%).

Types of training individuals would like to be involved in:

- 60% of all individuals interviewed would like to be involved in training.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 27% of individuals felt that they would like to be involved in taught courses designed to help them develop the skills that they might use in a job
- 25% would like to participate in taught courses that lead to qualifications
- 21% stated that they would like time to keep up to date with the developments in the area that they work in
- 15% would like to be involved in achieving credits or a step towards qualifications
- 12% would like to study for qualifications without participating in a taught course
- 12% would like to receive supervised training whilst doing their job
- 10% want to be involved in any other taught course, instruction or tuition
- 9% would participate in any other non-taught course or training
- 40% would not like to be involved in any of these options.

Types of training or learning actually carried out in the past 12 months:

- 55% of all respondents had undertaken training in the 12 months leading up to the survey.

All individuals were asked about any training they had been involved in, in the 12 months leading up to the survey:

- 27% of respondents had been on taught courses designed to help them develop skills that they might use in a job
- 27% spent time keeping up to date with developments in the type of work that they did
- 18% had been on taught courses that were meant to lead to qualifications
- 17% had received supervised training whilst they were actually doing a job and
- 14% had been on another taught course, instruction or tuition.

Of those who had done any of the above, the most common outcomes of the training or learning were:

- 57% reported an increase in confidence in their own abilities
- 44% said they were able to do their jobs better
- 27% got more satisfaction out of the work they were doing at the time
- 20% developed personal interests unrelated to work
- 16% got a pay rise as a result.

Barriers to learning or studying new things in the coming year:

- 63% of all individuals interviewed stated that they experienced barriers to learning or studying new things.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 24% of individuals felt that they will not have enough time to learn or study in the coming year, whilst 17% specified that family and child care commitments were too great
- 13% said that work pressures and their hours of work prevented them from learning or studying
- 8% said that it was too expensive
- 1% said there was a lack of suitable courses available.

Preferred learning styles:

All respondents were asked to comment on their preferred learning styles:

- 41% preferred to learn by doing practical things
- 39% preferred to learn alone or self-study and
- 34% preferred to learn in a group being instructed by a teacher or tutor.

Preferred learning methods:

All respondents were asked to comment on their preferred methods of learning:

- 64% of individuals preferred to use books or written materials for learning something new
- 45% reported lectures as a preferred learning method
- 38% reported videos as a preferred learning method
- 33% reported the CD-ROM/computer software packages as a preferred learning method and
- 28% reported TV programmes as a preferred learning method.

