



2003 Generic Skills Survey

Results for Conwy

Future Skills Wales 2003 Generic Skills Survey

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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 Conwy

	Number of respondents (before weighting)
The Employer Survey	240
The Household Survey	205

KEY FACTS

- Companies in Conwy rated understanding customer needs and the ability to follow instructions as the generic skills most in demand at a high or advanced level.
- Of employers who identified hard to fill vacancies (HTFV), 25% believed the main cause was a lack of applicants with the relevant skills.
- 50% 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 42% found communication skills to be lacking.
- 48% of people who were not working would like to be in either full time or part time paid work.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Employer Survey:

- 8% of employers in Conwy were a head office, compared with 5% nationally. Similarly, employers were less likely to be based on a single site only, with only 57% being so (compared with 62% nationally).
- 86% of Conwy employers were private sector, compared with 82% nationally.

Household Survey:

- 19% reported having a health problem or long-term disability, compared with 24% throughout Wales.
- 45% of respondents were educated to NVQ 3 equivalent or higher, compared with 42% nationally. 17% had no qualifications at all, compared with 21% nationally.
- 22% of respondents stated that they spoke fluent Welsh, and 65% had at least some ability. 9% stated that Welsh was their first language at home.

Conwy

Employer Survey

FUTURE SKILLS

- Employers were asked about which generic skills they 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 individual skills listed, there would be a higher level required in the future. The most significant increase was for Information Technology skills, with 42% saying high or advanced IT skills will be required in the future, compared with just 24% 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 (75%)
 - 2) Ability to follow instructions (72%)
 - 3) Team working skills (71%)
 - 4) Communication skills (70%)
 - 5) Adaptability/flexibility (69%)
 - 6) Showing initiative (69%).
- The skills employers expect to be need most at high or advanced level in the future were identical:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (75%)
 - 2) Ability to follow instructions (72%)
 - 3) Team working skills (71%)
 - 4) Communication skills (70%)
 - 5) Adaptability/flexibility (69%)
 - 6) Showing initiative (69%).

SKILL GAPS

- 14% of employers surveyed reported a significant skills gap amongst their employees, that is, between the types 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, 27% of employers believed that a gap in skilled sales and customer service occupations had the most impact on their business, with 25% regarding skilled trade occupations as having the most impact.

Employers' attitudes towards skills:

- 55% of employers surveyed strongly agreed that their employees have sufficient skills to meet business needs, whilst 36% tended to agree
- 49% strongly agreed that investment in skills has brought business benefits with 33% tending to agree
- 78% of employers strongly agreed that having a skilled workforce is crucial to the success of their business, whilst 12% tended to agree with this statement.

Investment in skills -areas of benefit

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

- 35% reported on customer service as a benefit
- 23% reported increased profits as a result of investment, and 22% felt it had accelerated business growth
- 20% found that investment in skills had increased productivity
- 20% saw competing on quality as a benefit
- 5% reported that staff morale had improved as a result of the investment and
- 4% of employers stated their reputation or image has improved as a result of investment in skills.

SKILL SHORTAGES

Hard-to-fill vacancies (HTFV):

- 20% of employers surveyed reported having one or more vacancies
- Of these employers, 65% reported that some or all of these vacancies were hard-to-fill
- The net effect of this is that 13% of all employers surveyed reported currently having HTFV.

SCHOOL LEAVERS, COLLEGE LEAVERS AND GRADUATE RECRUITS

Recruitment of school and college leavers and graduates:

- 40% of employers surveyed stated they recruited school leavers
- 37% recruited college leavers
- 29% recruited graduates
- 46% recruited none of the above.

Skills lacking in school and college leavers:

- 50% 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:

- 42% reported a lack of communication skills
- 24 reported a lack of ability to show initiative
- 22% reported a lack of literacy skills
- 20% reported a lack of numeracy skills and
- 14% reported a lack of leadership and motivational.

Skills lacking in graduates:

- 26% of employers who recruit graduates reported a significant gap between the skills the 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:

- 47% of all employers had arranged off-the-job training for their employees over the previous 12 months when surveyed
- 91% 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:

- 62% for managers and senior officials
- 36% for sales and customer service occupations
- 28% for administrative and secretarial occupations
- 28% for skilled trade occupations
- 17% for elementary occupations.

Barriers to training provision:

- 37% 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:

- 32% of employers couldn't afford for staff to have time off for training
- 21% found the cost of training in the local area to be prohibitive and
- 7% 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)	58%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	22%
Long-term sick or disabled	4%
At home/not seeking work	7%
Full-time education	6%
Part-time education	3%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	3%
Retired	2%

- 19% of respondents reported having a health problem or disability that they expected to last for more than a year.
- 11% of all respondents were involved with a local organisation on a voluntary basis.

Sources of careers advice:

- 37% of individuals interviewed said they had sought careers advice in the 2 years leading up to the survey.

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

- 15% used Job Centres/ JobCentre Plus
- 10% had sought advice from School/college careers advice and/or teacher/lecturers whilst 12% relied on family, friends and colleagues for advice
- 12% used web-sites to seek careers advice
- 9% used course tutors/teachers.

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, high and advanced level.

- The six skills with the highest percentage of respondents in work rating themselves as high or advanced were:
 - 1) Adaptability/flexibility (89%)
 - 2) Team working skills (87%)
 - 3) Communication skills (86%)
 - 4) Understanding customer needs (85%)
 - 5) Ability to follow instructions (84%)
 - 6) Showing Initiative (83%).

Types of training individuals would like to be involved in:

- 76% of all individuals interviewed reported that they would like to be involved in training.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 42% 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
- 41% would like to participate in taught courses that lead to qualifications
- 30% stated that they would like time to keep up to date with developments in the area that they work in
- 21% would like to receive supervised training while they are actually on the job
- 19% want to be involved in any other taught course, instruction or tuition
- 17% want to be achieving a credit/step towards a qualification
- 17% would like to study for qualifications without participating in a taught course
- 13% would participate in any other non-taught course or training
- 24% would not like to be involved in any of these options.

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

- 64% 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:

- 42% of respondents had been on taught courses designed to help them develop skills that they might use in a job
- 34% spent time keeping up to date with developments in the type of work that they did
- 30% had been on taught courses that were meant to lead to qualifications
- 25% had been on another taught course, instruction or tuition and
- 15% had received supervised training whilst they were actually doing a job.

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

- 50% reported an increase in confidence in their own abilities
- 48% said they learned a new skill for the job they were doing
- 47% said they were able to do their jobs better
- 28% got more satisfaction out of the work they were doing at the time
- 15% developed personal interests unrelated to work.

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

- 52% of all individuals interviewed stated that they experienced barriers to learning or studying new things.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 27% of individuals felt that they will not have enough time to learn or study in the coming year, whilst 15% specified that family and child care commitments were too great
- 9% said that work pressures and their hours of work prevented them from learning or studying
- 9% said that it was too expensive
- 2% said that it was too far for them to travel and 1% said that a lack of transport prohibited them in learning or studying.

Preferred learning styles:

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

- 52% preferred to learn by doing practical things
- 47% preferred to learn in a group being instructed by a teacher or tutor and
- 36% preferred to learn whilst carrying out group activities organised/facilitated by a teacher or tutor.

Preferred learning methods:

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

- 68% would like to use books or written materials for learning something new
- 50% reported lectures as a preferred learning method
- 44% reported the CD-ROM/computer software packages as a preferred learning method
- 39% reported the Internet as a preferred learning method and
- 32% reported videos as a preferred learning method.

