



2003 Generic Skills Survey

Results for Neath Port Talbot

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 Neath Port Talbot

	Number of respondents (before weighting)
The Employer Survey	200
The Household Survey	263

KEY FACTS

- Employers in Neath Port Talbot rated understanding customer needs and adaptability and flexibility as the generic skills most in demand at a high or advanced level.
- 44% 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 44% found communication skills to be lacking.
- 42% of people who were not working would like to be in either full time or part time paid work.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Employer Survey:

- 37% of employers in Neath Port Talbot were one of a multiple site employer, compared with 33% nationally. Similarly, employers were slightly less likely to be based on a single site only, with only 59% being so (compared with 62% nationally).
- There were comparatively few very small employers of fewer than 5 employees in Neath Port Talbot (28% compared with 40% nationally), however 76% of employers had fewer than 10 employees, in line with the national figure (77%).

Household Survey:

- 33% reported having a health problem or long-term disability, compared with 24% throughout Wales.
- 39% of respondents were educated to NVQ 3 equivalent or higher, compared with 42% nationally. 27% had no qualifications at all, compared with 21% nationally.
- 44% of respondents stated that they had some ability in the Welsh language, with 12% having better than basic ability. 5% stated that Welsh was their first language at home.

Neath Port Talbot

Employer Survey

FUTURE SKILLS

- Employers were asked about which generic skills are 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 increases were for organising own learning and development, with 52% saying high or advanced skills will be required in the future, compared with 39% at the time of the survey, and Information Technology skills, with 47% requiring high or advanced skills in the future, compared with 35% when surveyed.
- 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 (73%)
 - 2) Adaptability/flexibility (70%)
 - 3) Ability to follow instructions (70%)
 - 4) Team working skills (69%)
 - 5) Communication skills (69%)
 - 6) Showing initiative (67%).
- The skills employers expect to need most at high or advanced level in three years were identical:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (80%)
 - 2) Communication skills (76%)
 - 3) Adaptability/flexibility (73%)
 - 4) Ability to follow instructions (73%)
 - 5) Team working skills (72%)
 - 6) Showing initiative (72%).

SKILL GAPS

- 16% 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.

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
- 51% strongly agreed that investment in skills has brought business benefits with 32% tending to agree
- 79% of employers strongly agreed that having a skilled workforce is crucial to the success of their business, whilst 17% 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:

- 31% reported on competing on customer service as a benefit
- 27% reported that investment in skills had increased productivity
- 24% saw competing on quality as a benefit
- 17% reported increased profits as a result of the investment, and 16% felt it had accelerated business growth
- 14% of employers had introduced new products or processes and
- 7% reported that staff morale had improved as a result of investment.

SKILL SHORTAGES

Hard-to-fill vacancies (HTFV):

- 20% of employers surveyed reported having one or more vacancies
- of these employers, 66% 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 leavers, college leavers and graduates:

- 32% of employers surveyed stated they recruited school leavers
- 41% recruited college leavers
- 31% recruited graduates
- 43% recruited none of the above.

Skills lacking in school and college leavers:

- 44% 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:

- 44% reported a lack of communication skills
- 26% reported that school and college leavers lacked the ability to show initiative
- 19% reported a lack of ability to follow instructions
- 17% lacked numeracy skills and
- 15% lacked literacy skills.

Skills lacking in graduates:

- 29% 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:

- 60% of all employers had arranged off-the-job training for their employees over the previous 12 months when surveyed
- 69% of these employers used external sources to provide off-the-job training
- 92% 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:

- 57% for managers and senior officials
- 35% for administrative and secretarial occupations
- 25% for skilled trade occupations
- 24% for professional occupations
- 19% for elementary occupations.

Barriers to training provision:

- 34% 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:

- 29% of employers couldn't afford for staff to have time off for training
- 29% found the cost of training in local area to be prohibitive and
- 9% found the time of day the courses are run to be inconvenient.

Household Survey

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS:

Employment/training: Status of respondent	Percent
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	46%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	19%
Long-term sick or disabled	15%
At home/not seeking work	10%
Full-time education	6%
Part-time education	6%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	3%
Retired	2%
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	2%

- 42% of respondents not working at the time of the survey would like to be in full or part time paid work of some sort.
- 43% of respondents who were not in full time or part time paid work said it was because their health or disability prevented them. 18% were responsible for looking after children and family/household members and 5% of those not in work said there was no childcare available, with 4% stating that childcare was too expensive.
- Of those not employed, 15 % were in some form of work 1 year ago, and 23% 2 years ago:

Activity status of respondents compared over time	2 years ago	1 year ago
Long-term sick or disabled	29%	34%
At home/not seeking work	23%	25%
Full-time education	16%	15%
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	15%	9%
Retired	5%	6%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	7%	6%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	3%	5%

- 33% of all respondents reported having a health problem or disability that they expected to last for more than a year. Of these, 74% said it affected the kind of paid work they might be able to do, and 65% said it affected the amount of paid work they were able to do.
- 14% of respondents were involved with a local organisation on a voluntary basis.

Sources of careers advice:

- 48% of individuals interviewed said they sought careers advice in the 2 years leading up to the survey.

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

- 23% used JobCentre/JobCentre Plus
- 15% used web-sites to seek careers advice
- 15% relied on family, friends and colleagues for advice whilst 12% had sought advice from school/college careers advice and/or teacher/lecturers
- 9% stated that course tutors/teachers
- 8% used Careers (Wales) advisers
- 8% used recruitment agencies and
- 7% 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, particularly in understanding customer needs (28% reported requiring formal qualifications at this level, 24% reported possessing them), and management skills (9% required, 6% possessed).
- The six skills with the highest percentage of respondents in work rating themselves as high or advanced were:
 - 1) Ability to follow instructions (86%)
 - 2) Team working skills (83%)
 - 3) Adaptability/flexibility (81%)
 - 4) Understanding customer needs (78%)
 - 5) Showing initiative (78%)
 - 6) Communication skills (77%).
- Those out of work reported that their levels at some skills were insufficient for the jobs they want. Particularly in short supply at high level or above were IT skills (25% reported requiring skills, 18% reported possessing them), and problem solving skills (37% required, 33% possessed). At advanced level there were significant perceived gaps in communication skills (21% required, 12% possessed) and IT skills (8% required, 0% possessed).

- The six skills with the highest percentage of respondents out of work rating the need for them in the job they want as high or advanced were:
 - 1) Communication skills (72%)
 - 2) Understanding customer needs (65%)
 - 3) Ability to follow instructions (64%)
 - 4) Team working skills (60%)
 - 5) Adaptability and flexibility (52%)
 - 6) Showing initiative (51%).

Types of training individuals would like to be involved in:

- 65% of all individuals interviewed would like to be involved in training.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 36% of individuals would like to participate in taught courses that lead to qualifications
- 31% 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
- 19% would like to be involved in achieving credits or a step towards qualifications
- 18.2% stated that they would like time to keep up to date with the developments in the area that they work in
- 18% would like to receive supervised training whilst doing their job
- 13% would like to study for qualifications without participating in a taught course
- 11% want to be involved in any other taught course, instruction or tuition
- 8% would participate in any other non-taught course or training
- 33% would not like to be involved in any of these options.

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

- 57% 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:

- 35 of respondents had been on taught courses designed to help them develop skills that might be used in a job
- 27% of respondents spent time keeping up-to-date with developments in the type of work that they did, e.g. reading books, manuals or attending seminars
- 23% had been on taught courses that were meant to lead to qualifications
- 19% had received supervised training while they were actually doing a job and
- 17% had been on another taught course whilst they were doing a job.

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

- 52% reported an increase in confidence in their own abilities
- 48% said they were able to do their jobs better
- 45% learned new skills for the job they were doing at the time
- 24% got more satisfaction out of the work they were doing at the time
- 16% developed personal interests unrelated to work.

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

- 68% of all individuals interviewed stated that they experienced barriers to learning or studying new things.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 18% of individuals felt that they will not have enough time to learn or study in the coming year, whilst 18% 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 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:

- 49% preferred to learn by doing practical things;
- 38% preferred to learn in a group being instructed by a teacher or tutor; and
- 31% preferred to learn by practising something by themselves.

Preferred learning methods:

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

- 68% of individuals would like to use books or written materials for learning something new
- 41% reported lectures as a preferred learning method
- 41% reported videos as a preferred learning method
- 36% reported the Internet as a preferred learning method and
- 34% reported CD-ROM/computer software packages as a preferred learning method.

