



2003 Generic Skills Survey

Results for Wrexham

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 Wrexham

	Number of respondents (before weighting)
The Employer Survey	232
The Household Survey	261

KEY FACTS

- Employers in Wrexham rated “understanding customer needs” and “the ability to follow instructions” as the most important generic skills. People in work considered themselves to have good levels of these skills, in particular “team working skills”. People not in work also saw “team working skills” as one of their strongest skills, along with “adaptability and flexibility” and “communication skills”. However, they ranked themselves lower “the ability to learn”.
- 47% 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 45% found communication skills to be lacking.
- 39% of people who were not working would like to be in either full time or part time paid work.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Employer Survey:

- 39% of employers in Wrexham were one of a multiple site employer, compared with 33% nationally. Similarly, employers were less likely to be based on a single site only, with only 58% being so (compared with 62% nationally).

Household Survey:

- 24% of respondents reported having a health problem or long-term disability.
- 36% of respondents were educated to NVQ 3 equivalent or higher, compared with 42% nationally. 23% had no qualifications at all, compared with 21% nationally.
- 44% of respondents stated that they had some ability in the Welsh language, with 16% saying they had a better than basic ability.

Wrexham

Employer Survey

FUTURE SKILLS

- Employers were asked about which generic skills they felt they required at the time of the survey (on a scale of 1=not required to 5=advanced), and what they believed 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 for Information Technology skills, with 43% saying high or advanced level IT skills will be required in the future, compared with just 24% at the time of the survey.
- The six skills which employers required the most at the time of the survey (in terms of percentage of employers requiring them at a high or advanced level) were:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (85%)
 - 2) Ability to follow instructions (77%)
 - 3) Communication skills (76%)
 - 4) Showing initiative (74%)
 - 5) Team working skills (74%)
 - 6) Adaptability/flexibility (73%).
- The skills expected to need most at high or advanced level in the future were identical:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (88%)
 - 2) Ability to follow instructions (81%)
 - 3) Communication skills (80%)
 - 4) Team working skills (79%)
 - 5) Showing initiative (78%)
 - 6) Adaptability/flexibility (78%).

SKILL GAPS

- 20% of employers surveyed reported that a significant skills gap existed amongst their employees, that is, between the type of skills their employees possessed and those needed to meet their business objectives.

Employers' attitudes towards skills:

- 38% of employers surveyed strongly agreed that their employees had sufficient skills to meet business needs, whilst 51% tended to agree
- 47% strongly agreed that investment in skills had brought business benefits with 32% tending to agree
- 76% of employers strongly agreed that having a skilled workforce was crucial to the success of their business, whilst 18% 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:

- 32% reported competing on customer service as a benefit
- 27% found that investment in had skills increased productivity
- 21% reported increased profits as a result of investment in skills
- 17% saw competing on quality as a benefit, and 3% felt it had accelerated business growth
- 11% of employers had introduced new products or processes
- 8% of employers reported that it had increased staff morale.

SKILL SHORTAGES

Hard-to-fill vacancies (HTFV):

- 18% of employers surveyed reported having one or more vacancies
- Of these employers, 49% reported that some or all of these vacancies were hard-to-fill
- The net effect of this is that 9% of all employers surveyed reported currently having HTFV.

SCHOOL LEAVERS, COLLEGE LEAVERS AND GRADUATE RECRUITS

Recruitment of school leavers, college leavers and graduates:

- 45% of employers surveyed stated they recruited school leavers
- 36% recruited college leavers
- 25% recruited graduates
- 41% recruited none of the above.

Skills lacking in school and college leavers:

- 47% 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:

- 45% reported a lack of communication skills
- 26% reported that school/college leavers lacked the ability to show initiative
- 17% believed that school and college leavers lacked an understanding of customer needs
- 12% stated that there was a lack of numeracy skills and
- 11% reported that school and college leavers lacked problem-solving skills.

Skills lacking in graduates:

- 29% of employers who recruit graduates 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:

- 59% of all employers had arranged off-the-job training for their employees over the previous 12 months when surveyed
- 90% 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:

- 60% for managers and senior officials
- 24% for skilled trade occupations
- 23% for sales and customer service occupations
- 21% for administrative and secretarial occupations
- 20% for professional 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:

- 31% found the cost of training in local area to be prohibitive
- 26% of employers couldn't afford staff to have time off for training
- 9% reported the time of day courses were run was inconvenient.

Household Survey

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS:

	Percent
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	46%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	20%
At home/not seeking work	11%
Full-time education	10%
Long-term sick or disabled	9%
Retired	3%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	3%
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	1%

- 39% of people who were not working would like to be in full or part time paid work of some sort.
- 43% of respondents who were not working said it was because health or disability prevented them. 7% were responsible for looking after children and family/household members and 7% of those not in work said that they didn't need to work, with 3% stating that there was a lack of suitable jobs locally.
- Of those not currently employed, 19% were in some form of work 1 year ago, and 25% 2 years ago:

Activity status	2 years ago	1 year ago
Long-term sick or disabled	21%	22%
At home/not seeking work	24%	28%
Full-time education	20%	21%
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	17%	14%
Retired	8%	6%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	6%	5%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	5%	5%

- 24% of all respondents reported a health problem or disability that they expected to last for more than a year. Of these, 68% say it affected the kind of paid work they were able to do, and 66% say 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:

- 40% 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:

- 22% used JobCentre/JobCentre Plus
- 19% had sought advice from family, friends and colleagues
- 13% used web-sites to seek careers advice
- 11% used recruitment agencies
- 9% relied on school/college careers advice and/or teacher/lecturers for advice
- 7% used job/careers fairs and
- 7% used Careers (Wales) advisers.

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 management skills (10% reported requiring formal qualifications at this level, 8% reported possessing them), understanding customer needs (30% required, 27% possessed), and leadership/motivational skills (13% required, 10% possessed).
- The six skills with the highest percentage of respondents in work rating themselves as high or advanced were:
 - 1) Team working skills (77%)
 - 2) Ability to follow instructions (76%)
 - 3) Showing initiative (73%)
 - 4) Communication skills (72%)
 - 5) Adaptability and flexibility (69%)
 - 6) Understanding customer needs (66%).

Types of training individuals would like to be involved in:

- 59% of all individuals interviewed would like to be involved in training.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 26% 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
- 26% would like to participate in taught courses that lead to qualifications
- 17% stated that they would like time to keep up to date with the developments in the area that they work in
- 13% would like to be involved in achieving credits or a step towards qualifications
- 10% would like to receive supervised training whilst doing their job
- 10% would like to study for qualifications without participating in a taught course
- 9% want to be involved in any other taught course, instruction or tuition
- 6% would participate in any other non-taught course or training
- 42% would not like to be involved in any of these options.

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

- 50% 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 you develop skills that you might use in a job
- 19% had spent time keeping up to date with developments in the type of work you do, e.g. reading books, manuals or attending seminars
- 17% had been on taught courses that were meant to lead to qualifications
- 10% received supervised training while you were actually doing a job
- 9% had been on another taught course, instruction or tuition
- 6% had achieved a credit/step towards a qualification.

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

- 48% reported an increase in confidence in their own abilities
- 44% said they were able to do their jobs better
- 41% reported they had learned new skills for the job they were doing at the time
- 20% got more satisfaction out of the work they were doing at the time
- 15% stated nothing happened.

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:

- 14% 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
- 11% said that work pressures and their hours of work prevented them from learning or studying
- 2% said it was too expensive.

Preferred learning styles:

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

- 45% preferred to learn by doing practical things
- 41% preferred to learn in a group being instructed by a teacher or tutor and
- 30% preferred to learn alone or by self-study.

Preferred learning methods:

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

- 55% of individuals would like to use books or written materials for learning something new
- 40% reported lectures as a preferred learning method
- 30% reported CD-ROM/computer software packages as a preferred learning method
- 30% reported the Internet as a preferred learning method and
- 26% reported Videos as a preferred learning method.

