



2003 Generic Skills Survey

Results for Cardiff

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 Cardiff

	Number of respondents (before weighting)
The Employer Survey	666
The Household Survey	607

KEY FACTS

- Employers in Cardiff rated understanding customer needs and communication skills as the generic skills most in demand at high or advance level.
- Of employers who identified hard to fill vacancies (HTFV), 21% believed the main cause was a lack of applicants with the relevant skills.
- 46% 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.
- 39% of people who were not working would like to be in either full time or part time paid work.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Employer Survey:

- 41% of employers in Cardiff were one of a multiple site employer, compared with 33% nationally. 7% of employers were a head office, compared with 5% nationally. Similarly, employers were less likely to be based on a single site only, with only 52% being so (compared with 62% nationally).
- 30% of employers in Cardiff had 10 or more employees, compared with 23% nationally.

Household Survey:

- 17% reported having a health problem or long-term disability, compared with 24% throughout Wales.
- 8% of respondents were from a non-white ethnic group.
- Education levels were high, with 49% of respondents educated to NVQ 3 equivalent or higher, compared with 42% nationally. 16% had no qualifications at all, compared with 21% nationally.
- 39% of respondents stated that they had some ability in the Welsh language, with 11% having better than basic ability. 3% stated that Welsh was their first language at home.
- 8% stated that a language other than English or Welsh was their first language.

Cardiff

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 56% saying high or advanced IT skills will be required in the future, compared with 43% 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 (84%)
 - 2) Communication skills (79%)
 - 3) Ability to follow instructions (78%)
 - 4) Team working skills (77%)
 - 5) Adaptability/flexibility (75%)
 - 6) Showing initiative (73%).
- The skills employers expect to be need most at high or advanced level in the future were identical:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (88%)
 - 2) Communication skills (83%)
 - 3) Team working skills (82%) **were :**
 - 4) Ability to follow instructions (80%)
 - 5) Showing initiative (80%)
 - 6) Adaptability/flexibility (79%).

SKILL GAPS

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

Occupations and skills gaps:

- Of those reporting a skills gap, 25% of employers believed that a gap in sales and customer service occupations has had the most significant impact on their business, with 22% reporting managers and senior officials as having the most significant impact.

Main measures taken to tackle the skills gap:

Of those reporting a skills gap:

- 54% said they had provided further training
- 17% increased their level of apprentice or trainee programmes
- 16% of the employers said they had done nothing, preferring to leave the problem to market forces
- 10% had increased recruitment activities
- 4% had changed their working practices and
- 3% had more reviews and team meetings.

Employers' attitudes towards skills:

- 51% of employers surveyed strongly agreed that their employees have sufficient skills to meet business needs, whilst 38% tended to agree
- 48% strongly agreed that investment in skills has brought business benefits with 33% tending to agree
- 81% of employers strongly agreed that having a skilled workforce is crucial to the success of their business, whilst 15% 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:

- 33% reported competing on customer service as a benefit
- 33% found that investment in skills had increased productivity
- 24% reported increased profits as a result of investment
- 19% saw competing on quality as a benefit
- 18% felt it had accelerated business growth and
- 9% reported introducing new products or processes.

SKILL SHORTAGES

Hard-to-fill vacancies (HTFV):

- 26% of employers surveyed reported having one or more vacancies at the time of the survey
- Of these employers, 54% reported that some or all of these vacancies were hard-to-fill
- The net effect of this is that 14% 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	21%
Lack of applicants/people willing to work for market rate /interested in this type of work	14%
Applicants lack the relevant experience	13%
Job entails shift work/unsociable hours	9%
Applicants lack motivation/right attitude	9%
Applicants lack the qualifications we want	6%
Employer/industry unable to pay market rate	5%
Bad economic climate	3%
Poor career progression / lack of prospects	2%
Too much competition from other employers	1%
People with required skills don't want to relocate to this area	1%
Remote location/poor public transport	1%

Consequences of HTFV:

Of those employers reporting HTFV:

- 22% reported that there had been no impact on their business due to HTFV
- 17% reported a loss of business to competitors
- 15% reported increased stress/workload/pressure on staff
- 14% reported they could not expand the business and meet growth targets
- 13% reported a loss of efficiency/increased wastage and
- 10% reported delays in developing new products/services.

Measures taken to tackle the problem of HTFV:

- 41% of all employers reporting HTFV had expanded their recruitment channels (as opposed to geography) to tackle the problem of hard-to-fill vacancies
- 8% reported that they had offered higher pay or perks (e.g. car, pension, health insurance and holidays)
- 7% reported that they had increased training and development within the workforce and

- 6% reported that they had increased the use of agency and temporary staff.

SCHOOL LEAVERS, COLLEGE LEAVERS AND GRADUATE RECRUITS

Recruitment of school leavers, college leavers and graduates:

- 38% of employers surveyed stated they recruited school leavers
- 42% recruited college leavers
- 44% recruited graduates
- 38% recruited none of the above.

Skills lacking in school and college leavers:

- 46% 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
- 21% reported a lack of literacy skills
- 20% reported a lack of ability to show initiative
- 18% lacked numeracy skills and
- 16% reported a lack of problem solving skills.

Skills lacking in graduates:

- 37% 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.

Of those reporting a gap:

- 25% reported a lack of communication skills
- 18% reported a lack of initiative
- 15 reported a lack of understanding customer needs
- 12% reported a lack of team working skills
- 10% believed graduates lacked Information Technology skills.

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
- 89% of employers who had arranged training said that they 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
- 34% for administrative and secretarial occupations
- 32% for professional occupations
- 24% for sales and customer service occupations.

Of those reporting problems in arranging training:

- 25% had specific problem with I.T. skills/computer/software training
- 15% had a problem with finding relevant courses and
- 12% with management training.

Barriers to training provision:

- 29% 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% of employers couldn't afford for staff to have time off for training
- 28% 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)	37%
Full-time education	20%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	17%
At home/not seeking work	13%
Long-term sick or disabled	6%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	4%
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	2%
Retired	2%
Part-time education	2%

- 39% of people who were not working at the time of the survey would like to be in full or part time paid work of some sort.
- 44% of respondents that were not in full time or part time paid work said it was because education prevented them. 19% reported that health or disability prevented them from working and 17% of those not in work responded that they wanted to look after children/other family/household members, with 9% stating that they did not want a job.
- Of those not employed, 14% were in some form of work 1 year ago, and 16% 2 years ago:

Activity status of respondents compared over time	2 years ago	1 year ago
Full-time education	40%	39%
At home/not seeking work	23%	25%
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	12%	9%
Long-term sick or disabled	11%	13%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	4%	3%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	4%	5%
Retired	4%	3%

- 17% of respondents reported having a health problem or disability that they expected to last for more than a year. Of these, 62% 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.
- 13% of all respondents were involved with a local organisation on a voluntary basis.

Sources of career advice:

- 45% 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:

- 16% used web-sites to seek careers advice
- 14% reported using JobCentre/JobCentre Plus
- 13% had sought advice from School/college careers advice and/or teacher/lecturers whilst 12% relied on family, friends and colleagues for advice
- 11% used recruitment agencies
- 10% used Careers (Wales) advisers
- 8% stated that course tutors/teachers
- 8% used job/careers fairs and
- 3% 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, high and advanced level.
- The six skills with the highest percentage of respondents in work rating themselves as having high or advanced levels were:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (92%)
 - 2) Ability to follow instructions (90%)
 - 3) Communication skills (89%)
 - 4) Team working skills (88%)
 - 5) Showing Initiative (88%)
 - 6) Adaptability/flexibility (87%).
- 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 entrepreneurial skills (20% reported requiring formal qualifications at this level, 9% reported possessing them), and formal qualifications (40% required, 34% possessed). At advanced level there were perceived gaps in management skills (11% required, 6% possessed), and understanding customer needs (20% required, 15% 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) Understanding customer needs (71%)
 - 2) Team working skills (65%)
 - 3) Ability to follow instructions (64%)
 - 4) Communication skills (61%)
 - 5) Adaptability/flexibility (57%)
 - 6) Showing initiative (56%).

Types of training individuals would like to be involved in:

- 68% of all individuals interviewed reported that they would like to be involved in training.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 35% 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
- 31% would like to participate in taught courses that lead to qualifications
- 23% 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
- 17% would like to be involved in achieving credits or a step towards qualifications
- 16% would participate in any other taught course, instruction or tuition
- 15% would like to study for qualifications without participating in a taught course
- 9% would participate in any other non-taught course or training
- 32% would not like to be involved in any of these options.

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

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

- 29% of respondents had been on taught courses designed to help them develop skills that they might use in a job
- 24% spent time keeping up to date with developments in the type of work that they did
- 20% 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
- 11% had achieved a credit or step towards a qualification.

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

- 66% reported an increase in confidence in their own abilities
- 46% said they learned new skills for the job they were doing at the time
- 42% said they were able to do their jobs better
- 29% got more satisfaction out of the work they were doing at the time
- 15% got a pay rise as a result.

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

- 41% of all individuals interviewed stated that they experienced barriers to learning or studying new things.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 12% specified that family and child care commitments were too great, whilst 8% of individuals felt that they will not have enough time to learn or study in the coming year
- 7% said that it was too expensive
- 5% said that work pressures and their hours of work prevented them from learning or studying.

Preferred learning styles:

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

- 40% preferred to learn by doing practical things
- 39% preferred to learn in a group being instructed by a teacher or tutor and
- 33% preferred to learn alone or by self-study.

Preferred learning methods:

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

- 59% would like to use books or written materials for learning something new
- 46% reported lectures as a preferred learning method
- 32% reported the Internet as a preferred learning method
- 26% reported the CD-ROM/computer software packages as a preferred learning method and
- 24% reported videos as a preferred learning method.

