



2003 Generic Skills Survey

Results for Bridgend

Future Skills Wales 2003 Generic Skills Survey

Results for Bridgend

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 Bridgend

	Number of respondents (before weighting)
The Employer Survey	226
The Household Survey	260

KEY FACTS

- Employers in Bridgend rated understanding customer needs and communication skills as the generic skills most in demand at a high or advanced level.
- 45% 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, 47% found communication skills to be lacking.
- 41% of people who were not working would like to be in either full time or part time paid work.

Demographics

Employer Survey:

- 46% of employers in Bridgend 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 51% being so (compared with 62%).
- There were comparatively few very small employers of fewer than 5 employees in Bridgend (33% compared with 40% nationally), however 75% of employers had fewer than 10 employees, roughly in line with the national pattern.

Household Survey:

- 28% reported having a health problem or long-term disability, slightly higher than the national average (24%).
- 38% of respondents were educated to NVQ 3 equivalent or higher, compared with 42% nationally. 26% had no qualifications at all, compared with 21% nationally.
- 63% of respondents stated that they had no ability in the Welsh language at all, and only 1% stated that Welsh was their first language at home.

Bridgend

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, a higher level would be required in the future. The most significant increase was for Information Technology skills, with 51 saying high or advanced IT skills will be required in the future, compared with 35% 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 (78%)
 - 2) Showing initiative (73%)
 - 3) Communication skills (71%)
 - 4) Team working skills (71%)
 - 5) Adaptability/flexibility (71%)
 - 6) Ability to follow instructions (69%).
- The skills employers expect to need the most at high or advanced level in the future were similar:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (81%)
 - 2) Showing initiative (77%)
 - 3) Adaptability/flexibility (77%)
 - 4) Communication skills (77%)
 - 5) Team working skills (76%)
 - 6) Ability to follow instructions (71%).

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 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 surveyed believed that a skill gap amongst managers and senior officials has had the most significant impact on their business, with 21% regarding skilled trade occupations as having the most significant impact.

Main measures taken to tackle the skills gap:

Of those reporting a skills gap:

- 44% said they had provided further training
- 24% increased their apprentice/training programmes
- 19% left it to the market
- 13% changed their working practices as a way of resolving the problem
- 5% of the employers said they had increased their recruitment activity and
- 1% reported undertaking more reviews/team meetings.

Employers' attitudes towards skills:

- 49% of employers surveyed strongly agreed that their employees have sufficient skills to meet business needs, whilst 43% tended to agree
- 42% strongly agreed that investment in skills has brought business benefits with 29% tending to agree
- 80% of employers strongly agreed that having a skilled workforce is crucial to the success of their business, whilst 14% 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:

- 28% reported competing on customer service as one of these
- 28% reported that investment in skills had increased productivity
- 19% saw competing on quality as a benefit
- 16% reported increased profits as a result of the investment, and 13% felt it had accelerated business growth
- 7% of employers had introduced new products or processes
- 7% reported that staff morale had improved as a result of the investment in skills.

SKILL SHORTAGES

Hard-to-fill vacancies (HTFV):

- 25% of employers surveyed reported having one or more vacancies
- Of these employers, 62% reported that some or all of these vacancies were hard-to-fill
- The net effect of this is that 15% 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
- 43% recruited college leavers
- 29% recruited graduates
- 45% recruited none of the above.

Skills lacking in school and college leavers:

- 45% 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:

- 47% reported a lack of communication skills;
- 35% reported a lack of showing initiative;
- 29% reported a lack of numeracy skills;
- 27% reported a lack of ability to follow instructions; and
- 26% reported a lack of literacy skills as a problem.

Skills lacking in graduates:

- 23% 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:

- 49% of all employers had arranged off-the-job training for their employees over the previous 12 months when surveyed.
- 94% 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:

- 50% for managers and senior officials
- 29% for administrative and secretarial occupations
- 29% for sales and customer service occupations
- 27% for skilled trade occupations
- 23% 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:

- 28% of employers couldn't afford staff to have time off for training
- 23% found the cost of training in local area to be prohibitive and
- 9% reported that the time of day that courses are run were inconvenient.

Household Survey

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS:

Employment/training: Status of respondent	Percent
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	51%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	16%
Long-term sick or disabled	13%
At home/not seeking work	9%
Full-time education	5%
Retired	4%
Part-time education	2%
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	1%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	1%

- 41% of people who were not working at the time of the survey reported that they would like to be in full or part time paid work of some sort.
- 34% of respondents that were not in full time or part time paid work said it was because health or disability prevented them. 32% were responsible for looking after children and family/household members and 3% of those not in work said that they didn't need to work, with 12% stating that there was a lack of suitable jobs locally.
- Of those not employed, 14% were in some form of work 1 year ago, and 21% 2 years ago:

Activity status of respondents compared over time	2 years ago	1 year ago
Long-term sick or disabled	28%	32%
At home/not seeking work	19%	26%
Full-time education	16%	13%
Retired	6%	8%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	5%	7%
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	16%	7%
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	1%	2%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	1%	1%

- 28% of all respondents reported having a health problem or disability that they expected to last for more than a year. Of these, 64% said it affects the kind of paid work they might be able to do, and 56% said it affects the amount of paid work they were able to do.
- 12% of 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:

- 17% used JobCentre/JobCentre Plus
- 14% had relied on family, friends and colleagues for advice
- 11% used web-sites to seek careers advice
- 7% used recruitment agencies
- 6% sought advice from school/college careers advice and/or teacher/lecturers
- 5% used job/careers fairs and
- 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 was a minor perceived gap at advanced level in adaptability/flexibility (29% reported requiring skills, 26% reported possessing them).
- The six skills with the highest percentage of respondents in work rating themselves as having high or advanced levels were:
 - 1) Communication skills (90%)
 - 2) Adaptability/flexibility (89%)
 - 3) Understanding customer needs (86%)
 - 4) Showing Initiative (86%)
 - 5) Team working skills (84%)
 - 6) Ability to follow instructions (82%).

Types of training individuals would like to be involved in:

- 67% all respondents reported that they would like to be involved with training.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 34% 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
- 28% would like to participate in taught courses that lead to qualifications
- 24 % stated that they would like time to keep up to date with the developments in the area that they work in

- 24% would like to be involved in achieving credits or a step towards qualifications.
- 19% would like to receive supervised training whilst doing their job
- 16% would like to study for qualifications without participating in a taught course.
- 15% want to be involved in any other taught course, instruction or tuition
- 10% would participate in any other non-taught course or training
- 31% would not like to be involved in any of these options.

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

- 52% of all respondents had undertaken training in the 12 months leading up to the survey.
- 25% of respondents spent time keeping up to date with developments in the type of work that you, e.g., reading books, manuals or attending seminars
- 25% had been on taught courses designed to help you develop skills that you might use in a job
- 22% had been on taught courses that were meant to lead to qualifications
- 19% had received supervised training while you were actually doing a job
- 17% had been on another taught course, instruction or tuition
- 8% had been on another non-taught course or training.

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

- 73% reported an increase in confidence in their own abilities
- 51% said they were able to do their jobs better
- 44% learned new skills for the job they were doing at the time
- 25% got more satisfaction out of the work they were doing at the time
- 22% developed personal interests unrelated to work.

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

- 75% of all individuals interviewed stated that they experienced barriers to learning or studying new things.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 34% of individuals felt that they will not have enough time to learn or study in the coming year, whilst 22% specified that family and child care commitments were too great
- 25% said that work pressures and their hours of work prevented them from learning or studying
- 12% 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
- 36% preferred to exchange ideas/information with others
- 35% preferred to learn by watching demonstrations.

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
- 48% reported lectures as a preferred learning method
- 35% reported CD ROM/computer software packages as a preferred learning method
- 33% reported videos as a preferred learning method and
- 32% reported TV programmes as desirable learning tools as a preferred learning method.

