



2003 Generic Skills Survey

Results for Ceredigion

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 Ceredigion

| | Number of respondents (before weighting) |
|----------------------|---|
| The Employer Survey | 202 |
| The Household Survey | 207 |

KEY FACTS

- Employers in Ceredigion rated understanding customer needs and communication skills as the generic skills most in demand at high or advanced level.
- 56% 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 30% found communication skills to be lacking.
- 50% of people who were not working would like to be in either full time or part time paid work

DEMOGRAPHICS

Employer Survey:

- 69% of employers were based entirely on a single site, compared with 62% throughout Wales. 7% of employers were a head office, compared with 5% nationally. Similarly, employers were less likely to be one of a multiple site employer, with only 25% being so (compared with 33% nationally).
- 42% of employers in Ceredigion had fewer than 5 employees, similar to the national pattern. Only 4% had 25 or more employees, compared with 8% nationally.

Household Survey:

- 23% reported having a health problem or long-term disability.
- Education levels were high, with 56% of respondents educated to NVQ 3 equivalent or higher, compared with 42% nationally. 14% had no qualifications at all, compared with 21% nationally
- The number of Welsh language speakers was high, with 36% stating that they spoke fluent Welsh, and 73% having at least some ability. 19% stated that Welsh was their first language at home.
- 4% stated that a language other than English or Welsh was their first language.

Ceredigion

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 44% saying high or advanced IT skills will be required in the future, compared with 32% 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 (75%)
 - 3) Ability to follow instructions (75%)
 - 4) Team working skills (75%)
 - 5) Showing initiative (72%)
 - 6) Adaptability/flexibility (72%).
- The skills employers expected to need most at high or advanced level in the future were identical:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (88%)
 - 2) Communication skills (80%)
 - 3) Team working skills (79%)
 - 4) Adaptability/flexibility (79%)
 - 5) Ability to follow instructions (77%)
 - 6) Showing initiative (76%).

SKILL GAPS

- 23% of employers surveyed reported that a significant skills gap exists 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.

Employers' attitudes towards skills:

- 49% of employers surveyed strongly agreed that their employees have sufficient skills to meet business needs, whilst 36% tended to agree
- 48% strongly agreed that investment in skills has brought business benefits with 30% tending to agree
- 82% 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 investment in skills had brought benefits to their business:

- 35% reported competing on customer service as a benefit
- 31% saw competing on quality as a benefit
- 22% found that investment in skills had increased productivity
- 18% reported that it had accelerated business growth
- 13% of employers introduced new products or services; and
- 12% reported increased profits.

SKILL SHORTAGES

Hard-to-fill vacancies (HTFV):

- 22% of employers surveyed reported having one or more vacancies
- of these employers, 76% reported that some or all of these vacancies were hard-to-fill
- the net effect of this is that 16% of all employers surveyed reported currently having HTFV.

SCHOOL LEAVERS, COLLEGE LEAVERS AND GRADUATE RECRUITS

Recruitment of school leavers, college leavers and graduates:

- 44% of employers surveyed stated they recruited school leavers
- 39% recruited college leavers
- 34% recruited graduates
- 40% recruited none of the above.

Skills lacking in school and college leavers:

- 56% 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:

- 30% reported a lack of communication skills
- 25% reported that school and college leavers lacked the ability to show initiative
- 15% reported a lack of leadership and motivational skills
- 13% reported a lack of work experience and
- 12% reported a lack of numeracy skills.

Skills lacking in graduates:

- 45% 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
- 82% 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:

- 42% for managers and senior officials
- 28% for professional occupations
- 26% for skilled trade occupations
- 21% for administrative and secretarial occupations
- 18% for sales and customer service occupations.

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:

- 28% found the cost of training in the local area to be prohibitive
- 27% of employers couldn't afford for staff to have time off for training and
- 10% reported that training was not available locally.

Household Survey

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS:

| Employment/training: Status of respondent | Percent |
|--|---------|
| Full-time work (31 hours or more a week) | 37% |
| Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week) | 23% |
| Full-time education | 20% |
| At home/not seeking work | 10% |
| Long-term sick or disabled | 6% |
| Retired | 4% |
| Part-time education | 3% |
| Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA | 2% |

- 50% 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.
- Of those not employed, 11% were in some form of work 1 year ago, and 26% 2 years ago:

| Activity status of respondents compared over time | 2 years ago | 1 year ago |
|---|-------------|------------|
| Long-term sick or disabled | 12% | 17% |
| At home/not seeking work | 14% | 24% |
| Full-time education | 38% | 40% |
| Full-time work (31 hours or more a week) | 19% | 5% |
| Retired | 5% | 8% |
| Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week) | 8% | 6% |

- 23% of all respondents reported having a health problem or disability that they expected to last for more than a year. Of these, 66% said it affected the kind of paid work they might be able to do, and 47% said it affects the amount of paid work they were able to do.
- 25% of respondents were involved with a local organisation on a voluntary basis.

Sources of careers advice:

- 44% 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:

- 32% relied on family, friends and colleagues for advice
- 23% used web-sites to seek careers advice
- 20% had sought advice from School/college careers advice and/or teacher/lecturers whilst
- 19% used JobCentre/JobCentre Plus
- 12% used course tutors/teachers
- 11% used recruitment agencies.

SUPPLY OF SKILLS

- Respondents (both working and not working) were asked what level of generic skills they already had, and which skills they felt were required for their current job, or the job they want 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 perceived gaps at advanced level, particularly in problem solving skills (25% reported requiring formal qualifications at this level, 19% reported possessing them), and team working skills (32% required, 27% possessed).
- The six skills with the highest percentage of respondents in work rating themselves as high or advanced were:
 - 1) Adaptability/flexibility (91%)
 - 2) Showing Initiative (91%)
 - 3) Communication skills (91%)
 - 4) Understanding customer needs (88%)
 - 5) Team working skills (88%)
 - 6) Ability to learn (86%).

Types of training individuals would like to be involved in:

- 75% of all individuals interviewed would like to be involved in training.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 47% 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
- 37% would like to participate in taught courses that lead to qualifications
- 23% would like to receive supervised training whilst doing their job
- 22% would like to be involved in achieving credits or a step towards qualifications
- 20% want to be involved in any other taught course, instruction or tuition
- 19% would like to study for qualifications without participating in a taught course
- 10% would participate in any other non-taught course or training
- 25% would not like to be involved in any of these options.

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

- 65% 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:

- 37% had spent time keeping up to date with developments in the type of work that they do
- 34% had been on taught courses designed to help them develop skills that they might use in a job
- 27% had been on taught courses that were meant to lead to qualifications
- 23% received supervised training whilst they were actually doing a job and
- 18% had been on another taught course, instruction or tuition.

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

- 70% reported an increase in confidence in their own abilities
- 52% said they were able to do their jobs better
- 38% developed personal interests unrelated to work
- 26% got more satisfaction out of the work they were doing at the time
- 7% were able to get new jobs.

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

- 83% of all individuals interviewed stated that they experienced barriers to learning or studying new things.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 36% 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
- 19% said that work pressures and their hours of work prevented them from learning or studying
- 12% said that it was too expensive
- 6% said that it was too far for them to travel and 3% 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:

- 47% preferred to learn by doing practical things
- 39% preferred to learn alone or by self-study and
- 38% preferred to exchange ideas and information with others.

Preferred learning methods:

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

- 78% preferred to use books or written materials for learning something new
- 61% reported lectures as a preferred learning method
- 40% reported the CD-ROM/computer software packages as a preferred learning method
- 38% also reported the Internet as a preferred learning method t and
- 33% reported videos as a preferred learning method.

