



**2003 Generic Skills Survey**  

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**Results for Denbighshire**

## 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 Denbighshire

	Number of respondents (before weighting)
The Employer Survey	203
The Household Survey	215

## KEY FACTS

- Employers in Denbighshire rated understanding customer needs and communication skills as the generic skills most in demand at a high or advanced level.
- 54% of employers who recruit school or college leavers reported a significant gap between the skills possessed by a leaver and those they expected them to possess. Of these 38% found communication skills to be lacking.
- 60% 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 Denbighshire 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 55% being so (compared with 62% nationally).
- 27% of employers in Denbighshire had 10 or more employees, compared with 23% nationally.

### Household Survey:

- 21% reported having a health problem or long-term disability.
- 43% of respondents were educated to NVQ 3 equivalent or higher. Only 13% had no qualifications at all, compared with 21% nationally.
- 56% of respondents stated that they had some ability in the Welsh language, however only 3% were fluent speakers.

# Denbighshire

## *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 skills in the survey, there would be a higher level required in the future. The most significant increases were for Information Technology skills, with 44% saying high or advanced IT skills will be required in the future, compared with 30% at the time of the survey, and organising own learning and development, with 49% requiring high or advanced skills in the future, compared with 35% at the time of the survey.
- The six skills with the greatest requirement (in terms of percentage of employers requiring them at high or advanced level) were :
  - 1) Understanding customer needs (78%)
  - 2) Ability to follow instructions (76%)
  - 3) Communication skills (74%)
  - 4) Team working skills (69%)
  - 5) Showing initiative (68%)
  - 6) Adaptability/flexibility (65%).
- The skills employers expect to need most at high or advanced level in the future were identical:
  - 1) Understanding customer needs (85%)
  - 2) Ability to follow instructions (80%)
  - 3) Communication skills (79%)
  - 4) Team working skills (75%)
  - 5) Showing initiative (75%)
  - 6) Adaptability/flexibility (70%).

## **SKILL GAPS**

- 17% 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:**

- 45% of employers surveyed strongly agreed that their employees had sufficient skills to meet business needs, whilst 39% tended to agree
- 46% strongly agreed that investment in skills has brought business benefits with 32% tending to agree
- 77% 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 has brought benefits to their business:

- 40% reported on competing on customer service as a benefit;
- 27% saw competing on quality as a benefit;
- 22% reported that investment in skills had increased productivity;
- 19% reported increased profits as a result of the investment, and 18% felt it had accelerated business growth;
- 10% of employers had introduced new products or processes; and
- 9% reported that staff morale had improved as a result of the investment.

## **SKILL SHORTAGES**

### **Hard-to-fill vacancies (HTFV):**

- 22% of employers surveyed reported currently having one or more vacancies
- of these employers, 73% 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:**

- 43% of employers surveyed stated they recruited school leavers
- 43% recruited college leavers
- 34% recruited graduates
- 42% recruited none of the above.

### **Skills lacking in school and college leavers:**

- 54% 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:

- 38% reported a lack of communication skills
- 29% believed that school and college leavers lacked the ability to show initiative
- 19% reported a lack of literacy skills
- 18% reported a lack of common sense and
- 16% believed a lack of numeracy skills.

### **Skills lacking in graduates:**

- 36% 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:

- 58% of all employers had arranged off-the-job training for their employees over the previous 12 months when surveyed
- 86% 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:

- 56% for managers and senior officials
- 33% for administrative and secretarial occupations
- 28% for professional occupations
- 21% for sales and customer service occupations
- 19% for skilled trade occupations.

### **Barriers to training provision:**

- 35% 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:

- 30% of employers couldn't afford staff to have time off for training
- 25% found the cost of training in the local area to be prohibitive and
- 4% reported that the 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)	56%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	16%
Long-term sick or disabled	8%
At home/not seeking work	8%
Full-time education	6%
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	3%
Retired	2%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	2%

- 40% 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 15% 2 years ago:

Activity status of respondents compared over time	2 years ago	1 year ago
Long-term sick or disabled	23%	29%
At home/not seeking work	26%	28%
Full-time education	22%	20%
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	10%	7%
Retired	7%	7%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	5%	3%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	5%	3%
Part-time education	2%	2%

- 21% of all respondents reported having a health problem or disability that they expect to last for more than a year. Of these, 70% said it affected the kind of paid work they might be able to do, and 62% said it affects the amount of paid work they were able to do.
- 16% of respondents said they were involved with a local organisation on a voluntary basis.

### **Sources of careers advice:**

- 35% 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:

- 18% used Job Centres /JobCentre Plus
- 10% used web-sites to seek careers advice
- 10% relied on family, friends and colleagues for advice
- 7% used recruitment agencies
- 11% had sought advice from school/college careers advice and/or teacher/lecturers whilst
- 5% 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 high or advanced are:
  - 1) Ability to follow instructions (89%)
  - 2) Understanding customer needs (88%)
  - 3) Adaptability/flexibility (83%)
  - 4) Team working skills (83%)
  - 5) Showing Initiative (83%)
  - 6) Communication skills (82%).

### **Types of training individuals would like to be involved in:**

- 64% of all individuals interviewed would like to be involved in 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
- 32% would like to participate in taught courses that lead to qualifications
- 27% 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
- 14% want to be involved in any other taught course, instruction or tuition
- 10% would like to study for qualifications without participating in a taught course
- 7% would participate in any other non-taught course or training
- 36% would not like to be involved in any of these options.

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

- 53% 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:

- 32% of respondents had been on taught courses designed to help them develop skills that they might use in a job
- 26% spent time keeping up-to-date with developments in the type of work that they do
- 20% had been on another taught course, instruction or tuition
- 16% had been on taught courses that were meant to lead to qualifications and
- 12% had received supervised training whilst they were actually doing a job.

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

- 53% said they were able to do their jobs better
- 52% said they learned a new skill for the job they were doing at the time
- 44% reported an increase in confidence in their own abilities
- 23% got more satisfaction out of the work they were doing at the time
- 9% got a pay rise as a result.

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

- 66% of all individuals interviewed stated that they experienced barriers to learning or studying new things.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 30% of individuals felt that they will not have enough time to learn or study in the coming year, whilst 24% specified that family and child care commitments were too great
- 15% said that work pressures and their hours of work prevented them from learning or studying
- 4% said it was too expensive
- 2% 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:

- 42% preferred to learn by doing practical things
- 48% preferred to learn in a group being instructed by a teacher or tutor
- 29% preferred to learn alone or by self-study.

### **Preferred learning methods:**

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

- 71% of individuals preferred to use books or written materials for learning something new
- 44% reported lectures as a preferred learning method
- 39% reported the Internet as a preferred learning method
- 33% reported CD-ROM/computer software packages as a preferred learning method and
- 30% reported videos as a preferred learning method.

