



2003 Generic Skills Survey

Results for Gwynedd

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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 Gwynedd

	Number of respondents (before weighting)
The Employer Survey	295
The Household Survey	226

KEY FACTS

- Employers in Gwynedd rated understanding customer needs and the ability to follow instructions as the generic skills most in demand at a high or advanced level.
- 28% of employers who reported HTFV believed the main cause was a lack of applicants prepared to work for the market rate or interested in the type of work.
- 52% 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 26% found communication skills to be lacking.
- 47% of people who were not working would like to be either full time or part time paid work.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Employer Survey:

- 65% of employers were based on a single site, and 83% were private sector employers, roughly in line with the national pattern.
- 39% of employers in Gwynedd had fewer than 5 employees, and 78% had fewer than 10, again similar to the national pattern.

Household Survey:

- 17% reported having a health problem or long-term disability, compared with 24% throughout Wales.
- 39% of respondents were educated to NVQ 3 equivalent or higher, compared with 42% nationally. Only 13% had no qualifications at all, compared with 21% nationally.
- The number of Welsh language speakers was very high, with 72% stating that they spoke fluent Welsh, and 89% having at least some ability. 57% stated that Welsh was their first language at home.

Gwynedd

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 expected to be for Information Technology skills, with 46% saying high or advanced IT skills will be required in the future, compared with 31% 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) Ability to follow instructions (79%)
 - 2) Understanding customer needs (78%)
 - 3) Adaptability/flexibility (73%)
 - 4) Showing initiative (72%)
 - 5) Team working skills (71%)
 - 6) Communication skills (69%).
- The skills employers expect to need most at high or advanced level in the future were identical:
 - 1) Understanding customer needs (82%)
 - 2) Ability to follow instructions (81%)
 - 3) Showing initiative (76%)
 - 4) Team working skills (76%)
 - 5) Adaptability/flexibility (75%)
 - 6) Communication skills (73%).

SKILL GAPS

- 19% 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 their business objectives.

Occupations and skills gaps:

- Of those reporting a skills gap, 28% of employers surveyed believed that a gap in managers and senior officials has had the most significant impact on their business, with 24% regarding skilled trade occupations as having the worst gap.

Main measures taken to tackle the skills gap:

Of those reporting a skills gap:

- 50% provided further training
- 19% increased or expanded trainee programmes and
- 11% of employers did nothing, preferring to leave it to the market.

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
- 45% strongly agreed that investment in skills has brought business benefits with 32% tending to agree
- 78% of employers strongly agreed that having a skilled workforce is crucial to the success of their business, whilst 17% 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:

- 43% reported competing on customer service as a benefit
- 32% reported that investment in skills had increased productivity
- 28% saw competing on quality as a benefit
- 14% reported increased profits as a result of the investment, and 11% felt it had accelerated business growth
- 9% of employers had introduced new products or processes and
- 6% reported that staff morale had improved as a result of the investment.

SKILL SHORTAGES

Hard-to-fill vacancies (HTFV):

- 25% of employers surveyed reported having one or more vacancies
- of these employers, 75% reported that some or all of these vacancies were hard-to-fill
- the net effect of this is that 19% of all employers surveyed reported currently having HTFV.

Causes of HTFV:

Employer with HTFV believed the main cause of them to be as follows:

	Percent
Lack of applicants/people willing to work for market rate /interested in this type of work	28%
Applicants lack the relevant skills we require	20%
Applicants lack the relevant experience	14%
Job entails shift work/unsociable hours	10%
Applicants lack motivation/right attitude	8%
Remote location/poor public transport	4%
People with required skills don't want to relocate to this area	4%
Lack of resources to carry out effective recruitment	2%
Applicants lack the qualifications we want	1%
Good economic climate	1%
Poor image of sector	1%

Consequences of HTFV:

Of those employers reporting HTFV:

- 16% of reported that there had been no impact on their business due to HTFV
- 21% reported a loss of business to competitors
- 19% reported a loss of quality in service
- 14% reported their employer cannot expand the business and meet growth targets
- 13% reported difficulties in meeting customer service objectives and
- 12% reported an increase in pressure/stress/workload on other staff.

Measures taken to tackle the problem of HTFV:

- 36% of all employers reporting HTFV had expanded their recruitment channels (as opposed to geography) to tackle the problem of HTFV
- 13% reported that they had highlighted the problem to local providers, such as colleges and training bodies
- 12% reported that they offered additional training and personal development opportunities and
- 11% reported that they had recruited from different geographical areas.

SCHOOL LEAVERS, COLLEGE LEAVERS AND GRADUATE RECRUITS

Recruitment of school leavers, college leavers and graduates:

- 44% of employers surveyed stated they recruited school leavers
- 42% recruited college leavers
- 38% recruited graduates
- 33% recruited none of the above.

Skills lacking in school and college leavers:

- 52% 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:

- 26% reported a lack of communication skills
- 21% reported that school and college leavers lacked literacy skills
- 18% reported that school and college leavers lacked the ability to follow instructions and
- 17% reported numeracy skills were lacking.

Skills lacking in graduates:

- 28% 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:

- 52% of all employers had arranged off-the-job training for their employees over the previous 12 months when surveyed
- 80% 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:

- 46% for managers and senior officials
- 32% for skilled trade occupations
- 26% for professional occupations
- 24% for administrative and secretarial occupations
- 23% for sales and customer service occupations.

Barriers to training provision:

- 33% 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:

- 36% of employers couldn't afford for staff to have time off for training
- 17% found the cost of training in the local area to be prohibitive and
- 6% reported that 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)	47%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	22%
Full-time education	12%
At home/not seeking work	9%
Retired	4%
Long-term sick or disabled	4%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	3%
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	3%
Part-time education	3%
Local or government training scheme (including New Deal) involving paid work	1%

- 47% of people who were not working would like to be in full or part time paid work of some sort.
- Of those not employed, 29% 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	33%	23%
At home/not seeking work	26%	27%
Long-term sick or disabled	14%	11%
Full-time work (31 hours or more a week)	11%	21%
Retired	8%	8%
Part-time work (less than 31 hours a week)	6%	8%
Registered unemployed/signing on for JSA	5%	3%
Part-time education	1%	1%

- 17% of all respondents reported having a health problem or disability that they expected to last for more than a year. Of these, 58% said it affected the kind of paid work they might be able to do, and 57% said it affected the amount of paid work they were able to do.
- 8% of respondents were involved with a local organisation on a voluntary basis.

Sources of careers advice:

- 42% 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:

- 21% used JobCentre/JobCentre Plus
- 14% had sought advice from School/college careers advice and/or teacher/lecturers whilst 13% relied on family, friends and colleagues for advice
- 9% used job/careers fairs
- 8% stated that they used course tutors/teachers
- 8% used websites to seek careers advice
- 9% used Careers (Wales) advisers 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 were some minor perceived gaps at advanced level, particularly in understanding customer needs (39% reported requiring skills, 35% reported possessing them).
- The six skills with the highest percentage of respondents in work rating themselves as high or advanced were:
 - 1) Ability to follow instructions (82%)
 - 2) Communication skills (81%)
 - 3) Team working skills (81%)
 - 4) Understanding customer needs (81%)
 - 5) Showing initiative (80%)
 - 6) Adaptability/flexibility (74%).

Types of training individuals would like to be involved in:

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

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 35% of individuals would like to participate in taught courses that lead to qualifications
- 28% 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
- 20% stated that they would like time to keep up to date with developments in the area that they work in
- 17% would like to receive supervised training whilst doing their job
- 16% any other taught course, instruction or tuition
- 15% would like to study for qualifications without participating in a taught course
- 12% would like to be involved in achieving credits or a step towards qualifications
- 6% 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:

- 59% 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:

- 30% of respondents had been on taught courses designed to help them develop skills that might be used in a job
- 25% had been on taught courses that were meant to lead to qualifications
- 21% had spent time keeping up-to-date on with developments in the type of work that they do, e.g. reading books, manuals or attending seminars
- 14% had received supervised training whilst they were actually doing a job and
- 7% 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:

- 51% reported an increase in confidence in their own abilities
- 45% said they were able to do their jobs better
- 33% learned new skills for the job they were doing at the time
- 23% got more satisfaction out of the work they were doing at the time
- 16% developed personal interests unrelated to work.

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

- 57% of all individuals interviewed stated that they experienced barriers to learning or studying new things.

Of all individuals interviewed:

- 19% of individuals felt that they will not have enough time to learn or study in the coming year, whilst 19% specified that family and child care commitments were too great
- 10% said it was too expensive
- 6% said work pressures and their hours of work prevented them from learning or studying
- 1% said it was too far for them to travel and a further 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:

- 46% preferred to learn by doing practical things
- 42% preferred to learn alone or by self-study and
- 33% preferred to learn in a group being instructed by a teacher or tutor.

Preferred learning methods:

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

- 74% preferred to learn by using books or written materials 52% reported lectures as a preferred learning method;
- 36% reported the Internet as a preferred learning method
- 31% reported videos as a preferred learning method and
- 25% reported TV programmes as a preferred learning method.

