www.cymru.gov.uk

Interim Evaluation of the Delivery and Quality Assurance of Post-16 Basic Skills Provision in Wales
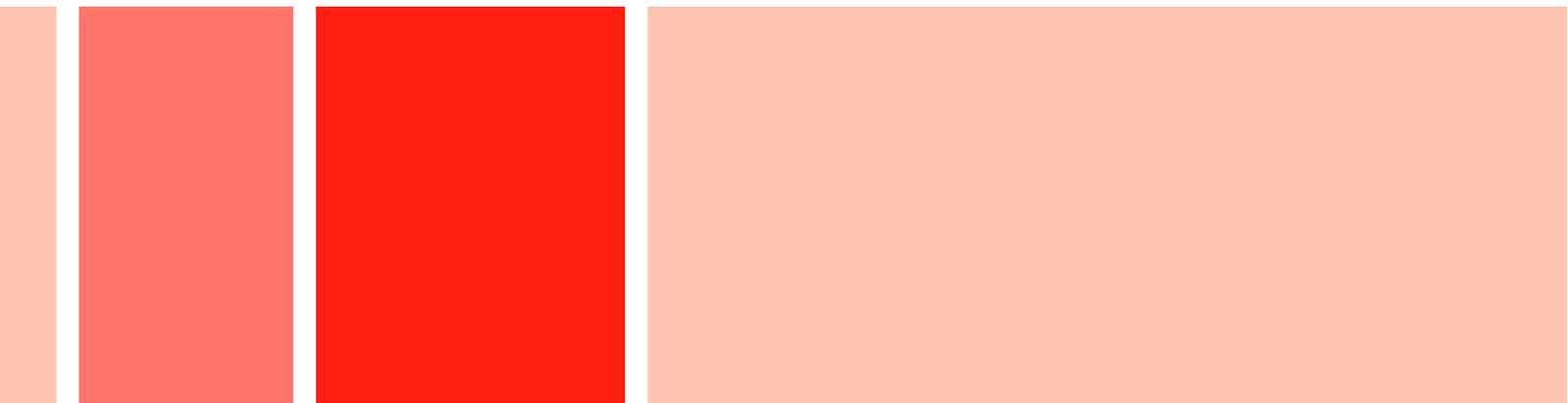
Evaluation of the Delivery and Quality Assurance of Post-16 Basic Skills Provision in Wales

Louise Starks and Philip Wilson
York Consulting LLP

Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

Table of Contents

<u>Annexes:</u>

Annex A: Key Areas of Investigation

Annex B: Consultation Guides and Surveys

Annex C: Theoretical Model

Annex D: Survey Issues

Glossary of Acronyms

ACL: Adult and Community Learning

ABSSTTP: Adult Basic Skills Supporter/Tutor Training Programme

Aslef: Britain's trade union for train drivers

Bectu: the UK's media and entertainment trade union

BFAWU: Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union

BSiW: Basic Skills in the Workplace

CMS: Client Management System (Menter a Busnes)

CPD: Continuous Professional Development

EPA: Employer Pledge Award

ESF: European Social Funding

ESiW: Essential Skills in the Workplace

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages

ESW: Essential Skills Wales (Qualification)

ESWT: Essential Skills Wales Team

FBU: Fire Brigade Union

FEIs Further Education Institutions

GMB: a general trade union in the UK

ICT: Information, Communication and Technology

KPI: Key Performance Indicator

MaB: Menter a Busnes

RIC: Regional Important Company

RCN: Royal College of Nursing

UCATT: Unions of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians

ULR: Union Learning Representative

Unison: public sector workers union

WEFO: Wales European Funding Office

WBL: Work Based Learning (provider)

WTUC: Wales Trades Union Congress

WULF: Welsh Union Learning Fund

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. York Consulting Limited Liability Partnership (YCL) was commissioned in 2011 to carry out an interim evaluation of the Welsh Government's Delivery and Quality Assurance of Post-16 Basic Skills Provision in Wales.

2. Key elements of the evaluation included:

    •   An evaluation of the European Social Funded (ESF) Basic Skills in the Workplace (BSiW) programme.

    •   A review of the Post-16 Basic Skills Quality Standard.

    •   A review of the compatibility of Welsh Union Learning Funded (WULF) activity with the Welsh Government's Essential Skills strategy.

3. This report focuses on the progress and challenges in delivering the BSiW programme and the compatibility of WULF funded union led learning in the workplace. A review of the Post-16 Basic Skills Quality Standard was carried out in 2012, and was submitted as a separate report to the Welsh Government.

Aims of the Basic Skills in the Workplace Programme

4. The BSiW programme was designed around two key aims:

    •   To improve the basic skills of adults in the workplace by engaging learners through employers in Basic Skills training and qualifications.

    •   To increase training and Continual Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for essential skills tutors, coaches and mentors in order to fill the current skills gap and to provide essential skills support in new and innovative ways.

5. The qualifications offered through this programme originally included Basic Skills qualifications in Application of Number; Communication; and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) up to and including Level 1. The programme also includes funding for Basic Skills Support/Teacher Training from Level 2 to Level 5 teaching qualifications.

6. After a Welsh Government review of ESF funded programmes in 2010, a revised bid was submitted to the Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) in November 2011 that combined BSiW programmes with Rural IT. This amalgamation of projects drove a change in the qualifications offered in BSiW, and learning was extended to include Information Communication and Technology and other Essential Skills Wales qualifications up to and including Level 2. The name of the programme was also changed to Essential Skills in the Workplace (ESiW). This report refers to the ESiW programme hereafter, unless content specifically relates to the BSiW period.

Performance of the ESiW Programme to Date

7. Targets for the ESiW programme have been revised from the original business plan and are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: ESiW Programme Targets

Targets	Dec 2010 [1]	Mar 2012		
	Total	Total	Convergence	Competitiveness
Forecast Project Cost	£17,500,000	£21,679,242	£15,176,415	£6,504,178
Total Participants [2]	29,643	15,894	11,128	4,766
Participants (excluding tutors)	27,991	14,242	9,987	4,255
Total Participants Gaining Qualifications	-	12,715	8,902	3,813
Total Number of Achieved Qualifications [3]	14,822	18,022	11,926	6,096
Employers Engaged	1,031	2,384	1,673	711
Equality and Diversity Strategies	511*	882	619	263
Tutors Trained	1,652	1,652	1,141	511
Employer Pledge	1,031	-	-	-
Participants Gaining Part Qualifications	-	1,823	-	-

Essential Skills in the Workplace Business Plans

[1]: data from original evaluation Invitation to Tender, disaggregated data not available

[2]: this is the figure monitored by the Claim Reports

[3]: Participants can achieve more than one qualification within the scope of this programme

*=estimated figures because no target information available

8. The programme began in April 2010 (although provision did not start until a year later) and is currently planned to end in June 2015.

9. The current number of employers participating in the programme is 1,254 (**Section 3, Figure 3.4**), which represents 53% of the overall target (2,384). Performance against target for Competitiveness areas is higher at 60% (426 employers) than Convergence areas at 49% (828 employers).

10. Total participants/learners to December 2012 stands at 4,088 and participants have more than doubled over the previous six months from 1,612. Performance towards the key target of participants on the programme started off slowly in the first three quarters of programme delivery from April 2011 to December 2011, but has picked up in the last three quarters to

December 2012. The total (4,088) represents just under a quarter (24%) of the overall target (15,894).This is higher in Competitiveness areas (32%) compared with Convergence areas (23%).

Qualifications Achieved

11. By the end of December 2012, a total of 2,647 learner qualifications had been achieved (**Table 2**).

Table 2: Total Learner Qualifications by Qualification Level

Qualification Started	Convergence		Competitiveness		Total	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Entry Level 1	197	14%	185	16%	382	14%
Entry Level 2	55	4%	124	10%	179	7%
Entry Level 3	186	13%	184	15%	370	14%
Level 1	744	51%	453	38%	1,197	45%
Level 2	247	17%	206	17%	453	17%
Not Known	29	2%	37	3%	66	2%
Total	**1,458**	**100%**	**1,189**	**100%**	**2,647**	**100%**

Source: Welsh Government Programme qualifications spreadsheet

12. The proportion of learner qualifications achieved in Competitive areas (45%) is higher than the 30% split planned for.

13. In terms of level of qualifications, 45% of qualifications achieved were at Level 1. Over a third of qualifications (35%) were achieved at below Level 1. Two providers account for almost half (49%) of all qualifications achieved to date.

14. As of December 2010, a total of 269 tutor training qualifications had been achieved. This is 16% of the overall target and represents a considerable underperformance. This may present issues in the future if demand for essential skills learning increases over the coming years.

ESiW Programme Expenditure

15. As of December 2012, gross accumulative expenditure on the programme was just over £3 million, representing 14% of the overall programme value (see **Table 3**). This is higher for the Competitiveness areas at 17% compared with 13% in the Convergence areas.

Table 3: Expenditure to Date

	December 2012	Total Budget	%
Overall Programme	£3,051,422	£21,679,242	14%
Convergence	£1,937,632	£15,176,415	13%
Competitiveness	£1,113,790	£6,502,827	17%

Source: WEFO 2007-13 European Funding Claim Reports

Challenges in Delivering ESiW to Date

16. The slower than anticipated recruitment of learners in the first three quarters from April 2011 to December 2011 was caused by a number of factors:

- The original design of the BSiW programme required engagement of employers through the Employer Pledge. Providers reported quite significant problems with engaging employers through the Employer Pledge which in turn restricted the recruitment of learners. The requirement to recruit learners through the Employer Pledge was removed in the transition to the ESiW programme and learners are now engaged directly through providers. As a result of the changes the Employer Pledge Award is not prioritised and there is a risk that it becomes a somewhat redundant concept.

- A lack of engagement with the Employer Pledge Award has impacts on the number of employers achieving equality and diversity policies, and these have become lower order priorities among providers. Performance against this target is low and is anticipated to be back-loaded. The effect of lower prioritisation, creates a risk that expected outputs may not emerge.

- The learning offer in the BSiW programme was not flexible and providers stated it was difficult to recruit sufficient learner numbers. However, since the transition to ESiW and inclusion of Level 2 qualifications, and the ICT qualification in particular, more learners and employers have been attracted to the programme.

- Despite the changes some providers have struggled to engage sufficient employers and still find the process of 'selling' to businesses challenging. As a result they have struggled to achieve their learner profiles and have renegotiated contracted profiles downwards. Some of the more successful providers (typically Work Based Learning providers) have delivered the learning offer as part of a broader workforce/business development approach and have prioritised the ESiW to a greater extent.

- Some providers have indicated that competition between competing programmes is a concern, creating a risk of under-performance in certain geographical areas.

17. To address the shortfall in activity, Menter A Busnes were contracted in 2012 to improve levels of employer identification and up take of learning. To date, Menter A Busnes have focused on establishing relationships with key stakeholders and developing a database and website to facilitate engagement. In total, 39 referrals to 12 providers have been generated. Over the coming months, the number of employer referrals to providers needs to increase to meet the target number of businesses (1,003) by June 2015.

Impact of the ESiW Programme on Employers and Learners

18. Results from a telephone survey of 107 employers engaged in the ESiW programme showed there were very high levels of satisfaction with the training received, with nearly nine of out ten (88%) employers rating the quality of the training as good or excellent.

19. Most employers (89%) recognised that the learning delivered was made relevant to the workplace and/or job responsibilities. Employers were also recognising the impact of the training on employees' skills and confidence levels including improved communication, customer service skills and reduced sick leave. Organisationally, a half of employers were reporting improved productivity and an improved public image.

20. A third of employers have provided further essential skills training to employees over the last year. This is encouraging and demonstrates an investment and commitment to essential skills learning by the employer.

21. A survey of 212 learners also showed they had a very positive experience of the training undertaken. They were satisfied with the quality of the training and reported it was very useful for improving their skills both at work and at home. Most learners recognised the value of their training to their work and job responsibilities. Over two thirds of learners would not have engaged in the learning if it had not been for the ESiW offer, suggesting high levels of added value to the local learning offer.

22. It is worth noting that a third of the ESiW learners[1] had a Level 3 or above qualification prior to participating on ESiW, and an additional 18% had a Level 2 qualification prior to ESiW learning. This may suggest that learners who are more confident in certain areas of learning are using the ESiW learning offer to brush up on their skills. Learners with qualifications below Level 2 made up 44% of the ESiW learning population.

23. Although a half of the ESiW learner population have a prior qualification at or above Level 2, the majority of qualifications (80%) are being delivered at below Level 2.

---

[1] Using information available through the WEFO Claim Reports

24. As a result of the training, learners reported feeling more confident in their basic skills (numeracy, communication and ICT). In addition, learners reported improved confidence, enthusiasm to learn and a willingness to take on more responsibility at work. Job satisfaction also improved for more than half of learners, and just under a half reported a greater potential to earn a better salary.

Compatibility with WULF Funded Projects

25. The research included a review of the compatibility of WULF funded projects with the ESiW programme. This involved interviews with ten unions, a review of WULF monitoring data and case studies of union led learning in four workplaces. This review showed a high level of compatibility with the ESiW programme, bringing particular learning advantages to the workplace. These include:

- **Developing a learning infrastructure** (learning centres, learning committees, learning agreements) that brings opportunities to learn to the workplace.

- **Developing the capacity of unions/Union Learning Representatives (ULR)** and other activities to raise awareness of essential skills issues among employers and to encourage colleagues to participate in learning.

- **Developing partnerships with providers** supported by learning agreements that detail the specific requirements of union led learning and essential skills learning. This helps ensure that learning meets the needs of the learner.

26. One of the key challenges going forward for WULF is the ability of unions to evidence the extent to which learners participating in WULF funded learning progress on to Essential Skills Wales qualifications. Currently, it is not

possible to track this learning pathway due to the lack of an evidence trail between unions and providers.

ESiW Going Forward

27.   The ESiW programme is forecast to meet its objectives on employer engagement by March 2014. While this is positive, it should be noted that the target for employers is secondary to total learners, as engagement with employers is the mechanism by which participants are recruited.

28.   The programme monitoring data clearly shows an increase in performance in learner engagement from December 2011 to December 2012. Projections suggest that if the current pattern of delivery is maintained then the participant target will be achieved by the end of the programme.

29.   Current projections on a conversion rate of 80% would show that this target could be achieved and learner survey data indicates that 80% of learners are achieving a qualification.

30.   However, it is harder to be certain whether achieving the participant target will lead to the target number of qualifications being attained owing to the time lag in qualifications being completed. If the assumption of an 80% conversion is achieved, then targets are likely to be met. However, currently the conversion rate stands at 34% for Convergence and 32% for Competitiveness areas.

31.   For the programme to recruit the necessary participants, the three–pronged business development approach (providers, unions and Menter a Busnes) must be successful. When looking at learner to employer ratios, there needs to be an increased emphasis on generating more learners per employer engaged. To date, the ratio of learners to employers stands at 3.3 learners per employer (Convergence 3.1 and Competitiveness 3.6). The low ratio may be down to the time lag between getting employers engaged, identifying employees' essential skills training needs and then actually arranging the training. The equivalent ratio based on planned activity is 6.7. This may

indicate that more larger employers need to be engaged, although it might just be that large employers are not putting through as many learners as expected.

32. In addition, there is need for continued provider activity and possibly a greater level of priority given to the programme by certain providers. Some providers are clearly not prioritising the ESiW programme and this is affecting learner participation in particular areas of Wales: Merthyr Tydfil (1%, 42 learners), Neath Port Talbot (1%, 71 learners), Monmouthshire (1%, 78 learners), Ceredigion (1%, 80 learners) and Blaenau Gwent (1%, 81 learners).

33. Although this research confirmed that the removal of the Post–16 Basic Skills Quality Standard is generally accepted by providers[2], three areas of risk for the ESiW programme include:

- Essential skills delivery becomes a lower strategic priority within provider organisations (the Quality Standard was acknowledged to have helped give essential skills status within provider organisations).

- Reduced focus on understanding the market and what businesses and local areas need (the needs assessment was part of the Quality Standard process).

- The extent of synergy between other departments and programmes within provider organisations could be improved, especially for further education colleges.

34. In addition, providers are not taking up the opportunity to expand their Essential Skills teaching workforce. There has been limited demand from providers for tutor training and there is a risk that this element of the programme underachieves quite significantly. This may have an impact on

---

[2] See separate report published by the Welsh Government, *'Review of the Post-16 Basic Skills Report'* (November 2012).

programme capacity at later stages if larger volumes of learners create a bottle-neck for delivery.

35.   It is not clear at this point what impact this may have on the overall performance of the programme. A more pertinent point to consider, is the longer term impact on the ability of Wales to address its adult skills deficit without substantial increases in provider capacity (in terms of knowledge and expertise).

Recommendations

36.   In view of the programme's underperformance and to ensure the programme meets its targets, we recommend the following:

Recommendation One: Monitor Trends in Participant Engagement

- Review reasons why certain trends are occurring as they are, and if appropriate, make adjustments to provider profiles. For example this could include numbers of older learners, learners with a disability and location of learners. This could be done through a workshop style discussion with providers and Menter a Busnes.

Recommendation Two: The Menter a Busnes Contract

- Ensure a monthly profile of referrals is agreed with Menter a Busnes.

- Track the numbers of learners engaging as a result of referrals to estimate likely contribution to the target and the required contribution of providers.

Recommendation Three: Review the Performance of the Tutor Training Programme

- Seek to support providers to encourage engagement in the tutor training programme. Review provider recruitment plans to ensure the network of providers continues to develop in line with programme requirements.

Recommendation Four: Review Potential Barriers to Delivery in Certain Geographical Areas

- Utilise feedback from Menter a Busnes activities to inform on programme performance. For example, this could include a review of the effects of the South West Wales Regional Essential Skills Project on recruitment onto the ESiW programme.

- Seek marketing plans from providers including how they intend to work with other related ESF and government programmes within and out with their organisations.

Recommendation Five: Review the Value of the Employer Pledge Award

- Consult with providers to consider the value of the Employer Pledge Award and likelihood targets will be met.

- Review the impact of a deficit in Equality and Diversity Strategies on the overall performance of the programme.

Recommendation Six: Measuring Impact on Employers

- Consider reviewing essential skills impact on a small number of employers through detailed and longitudinal case study work.

1   Introduction

1.1   In its 2011 Programme for Government, the Welsh Government made clear its commitment to 'improving Welsh skills for employment'[3]. In addressing these areas, the Welsh Government undertook to 'evaluate current post-16 essential skills activity and define policy to influence future delivery'.

1.2   York Consulting Limited Liability Partnership (YCL) was commissioned by the Welsh Government to carry out an evaluation of the delivery and quality assurance of post-16 essential skills provision in Wales.

1.3   This report provides an interim evaluation of the Essential Skills in the Workplace (ESiW) programme funded by European Social Funding (ESF). The programme continues to 2015 and this is an interim evaluation of the programme.

Background and Context

1.4   The Welsh Government, alongside the then Basic Skills Agency, published its first National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales in April 2001. This and the subsequent 'Words Talk Numbers Count: The Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy to Improve Basic Literacy and Numeracy in Wales' (2005) set in train a range of interventions aimed primarily at building the capacity of the education and training system to equip children, young people and adults with the literacy and numeracy skills needed.

---

[3] Welsh Government Programme for Funding (2011) Page 4.

1.5   The Skills and Employment Strategy[4], whilst acknowledging improvements in levels of unemployment in 2007, reiterated the weaknesses in the workforce regarding the essential skills deficits when compared to other regions in the UK. The Skills and Employment Strategy set out the Government's commitment to delivering free essential skills provision to learners up to and including Level 1.

1.6   Among the key priorities within Skills that Work for Wales[5] are:

- Improving the levels of basic literacy and numeracy skills in the workforce.

- Ensuring everyone has the skills essential to take up employment and maintain their employability within the labour market.

- Establishing effective and efficient learning provision.

1.7   The commitment to the Employer Pledge as a way of incentivising employers to deliver training by offering free provision was also endorsed, as was the role that trade unions have in promoting the Employer Pledge.

1.8   English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) was identified as a priority in the National Learning and Skills Assessment[6]. ESOL alongside essential skills provision was also included in the offer of free provision set out in The Skills and Employment Strategy.

---

[4] Welsh Government (2008) Skills That Work for Wales.
[5] Ibid (2008)
[6] Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Welsh Assembly Government), (2007). National learning and Skills Assessment Update 2007-2010.

1.9   The Welsh Government's essential skills programme also focuses on
       developing the capacity, knowledge and expertise of providers to deliver
       essential skills. Estyn's findings from March 2010[7] evidenced a higher
       standard of teaching and learning being delivered by teachers with relevant
       adult basic skills training and ESOL qualifications and experience. The report
       also states that: *"overall, nearly all practitioners…feel that specialist
       knowledge and training are essential to deliver* [essential skills] *effectively to
       adults"*[8]. This would support the view that any increase in essential skills
       levels in Wales requires an investment in the teaching capacity, skills and
       knowledge of the provider network.

Progress to date in essential skills attainment levels in adults

1.10   Evidence from the 2010 National Survey of Adult Skills shows that there has
       been an improvement in literacy levels, suggesting that essential skills
       interventions delivered over the last seven or more years have enjoyed some
       success[9].

1.11   The survey showed that there had been a decrease in the proportion of
       adults whose literacy levels were at or below Entry Level from 25% in 2004 to
       12% in 2010. However, there has been little change in numeracy levels: 51%
       of adults were assessed to have Entry Level numeracy skills or below, similar
       to the 53% in 2004[10].

---

[7] The quality and relevance of staff training to deliver adult basic education and English for
    speakers of other languages, Estyn, March 2010.
[8] Ibid (2010)
[9] National Survey of Adults Skills in Wales, 2010.
[10] Ibid (2010).

The Basic Skills in the Workplace Programme

1.12 To tackle the skills shortages among adults in the workplace, the Basic Skills in the Workplace programme (BSiW), funded through European Social Funding was launched in December 2010. Aims of the programme are to:

"…raise levels of basic skills in the employed workforce through increased and enhanced basic skills support within the workplace. Working in partnership with employers, the project will raise awareness of the benefits of a skilled workforce and will provide additional support to address identified essential skills"[11].

1.13 The BSiW is targeted at those who are in employment but lack the essential skills required to undertake their work effectively. The programme's business plan was developed in 2010 with the following key objectives:

- To increase the provision of essential skills support in the workplace by developing, piloting and delivering courses to participants, tailored to individual needs and contextualised within the workplace.

- To increase employer engagement in the delivery of essential skills support by recruiting employers to the Employer Pledge Programme.

- To increase training and CPD opportunities for essential skills tutors, coaches and mentors in order to fill the current skills gap and to provide essential skills support in new and innovative ways.

- To standardise and improve resources to promote, support and improve the quality of essential skills learning.

---

[11] Welsh Government, Essential Skills in the Workplace Business Plan, February 2013.

1.14 The programme has gone through a series of changes (described in more detail in Section Two and Section Four), and in April 2012, was re-launched under a new name of Essential Skills in the Workplace (ESiW). This report will refer to the programme as ESiW throughout unless it specifically references the BSiW phase.

1.15 Key features of the ESiW programme are:

- The Employer Pledge Award, designed to embed long term commitment from employers to addressing essential skills needs in the workplace.

- Learning, free of charge, in Essential Skills Wales (ESW) qualifications in Communication; Application of Numbers; Information, Communication and Technology (ICT); and ESOL from pre-entry to Level 2.

- Training to improve capacity among providers to deliver essential skills in the workplace.

- Menter a Busnes contracted in 2012 to improve employer engagement and uptake of ESW qualifications.

1.16 The ESiW evaluation, forms part of a wider interim evaluation of Post-16 Essential Skills provision. Part of the evaluation included a review of the Post-16 Quality Standard, implemented in 2008, to support the infrastructure of essential skills delivery.

Evaluation Aims

1.17 Aims of the evaluation as specified by the Welsh Government were to:

"Evaluate the effectiveness of delivery and impact of the ESiW and WULF projects and the supporting Post-16 Quality Standard to determine their strengths and weaknesses, assess their sustainability and to recommend their future shape to improve the outcomes and impact of essential skills provision to adults in the workplace"[12].

1.18 Work on the Post-16 Quality Standard was undertaken in 2012 and is the subject of a separate report[13].

1.19 This is an interim evaluation of the ESiW programme performance. Specifically, the aims were to evaluate the project's design and delivery to determine:

- Whether the provision is appropriate to the learner groups and to determine the characteristics of the employers and learners engaging with the provision.

- Whether the key elements of the programme are effectively implemented to meet delivery aims and objectives.

- The outputs and extent of positive outcomes of the programme and its cost benefit.

- Identify barriers, constraints and issues, current and potential which may influence the future delivery of the programme.

---

[12] Welsh Government tender specification for contract No. C123/2011/12
[13] The evaluation of the post-16 Quality Standard was completed in November 2012 and is available as a separate report from the Welsh Government. This report includes key findings only.

- Assess the added value of the projects and make recommendations for its future shape and delivery.

- Assess the compatibility of the WULF projects focussing on essential skills with the ESiW programme.

- Review the effectiveness of the Post-16 Quality Standard on the strategic planning, delivery, resourcing, monitoring and evaluation of the Post-16 essential skills providers and its impact on learner skills and progression.

1.20 Findings from this report will be used by DfES senior management and policy makers to inform future decisions regarding the scope and funding of essential skills projects and the shaping of future essential skill policy for Wales.

Evaluation Methodology

Methodological approach

1.21 **Key Areas of Investigation (Annex A)** were defined from which all consultation guides and surveys were designed. This ensured that evidence generated from the study supported the evaluation's aims and objectives. All agreed consultation guides and surveys are included in **Annex B**.

1.22 **A Theoretical Model** of programme delivery (**Annex C**) was designed to articulate the assumptions behind the successful delivery of ESiW programme. This enabled the evaluation to monitor and report on progress and challenges of programme performance against each key element.

Method

1.23 The evaluation used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to evidence the outcomes and impact of the ESiW programme.

1.24 Quantitative data was generated from:

- **Telephone survey of employers**: to establish the extent to which learning has been delivered as a result of recent ESiW or WULF funding; impact of the funded learning on their workforce; and views of the Employer Pledge. This was completed in two phases due to insufficient numbers in the first round. In total across two phases, 107 employers were interviewed. The first phase was conducted in July 2012 and the second phase in February 2013.

- **Telephone survey of learners**: this was to establish their learning, and skills needs prior to participating in the essential skills learning and the impact of this learning. This was completed in two phases due to insufficient contacts in the first phase. The first round resulted in 45 responses and the second round resulted in 167. In total 212 were interviewed. The first phase was conducted in July 2012 and the second phase in February 2013.

- **Analysis of ESiW programme data**: the Welsh Government collected performance data from each of the providers against key performance targets. This information is collated in three monthly submissions to Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and was forwarded to York Consulting to provide evidence of programme outputs.

1.25 There were some minor changes made to the surveys from the first round to the second round. **Annex D** details the changes and adjustments made to the questions and this paper should be reviewed when considering the responses to certain questions on both the employer and learner surveys.

1.26 The response rates achieved for the Employer and Learner surveys are shown in **Table 1.1**. The table below indicates the sample outcome with response rates. The effective response rate for the employer survey was 76% and for the employee survey was 69%.

Table 1.1: Response Rates for Employer and Learner Surveys

Sample Outcome	Employers	Employees
Total sample issued (main sample)	*489*	*917*
No telephone number	26	122
Valid sample issued	*463*	*795*
Successful interviews	107	212
Unadjusted response rate	**23%**	**27%**
Unsuccessfuls:		
Not required	322	488
Refusals	34	175
Adjusted response rate	**76%**	**69%**

1.27 Qualitative data was generated from:

- **Stakeholder interviews**: including members from the Welsh Government with particular interest in the strategy, members from the Wales Employment and Skills Board, The National Training Federation for Wales, Wales TUC and unions accessing WULF funding related to ESW. These interviews sought to understand the emerging policy direction by detailing the successes and challenges of improving adult skills through a range of different interventions.

- **Consultations with 20 providers**: this focussed on issues such as engaging employers, delivering learning, CPD of tutors and views of the Employer Pledge. Consultations were conducted over the telephone and through email using a pre-designed set of questions; these were forwarded to consultees prior to the interview to allow time to prepare responses if necessary. These questions were approved by the Welsh Government and are attached in **Annex C.**

- **Literature review**: to contextualise other countries' approaches to quality assurance and to scope out the feasibility of a cost benefit exercise.

- **Consultations with ten unions**: interviews with union WULF project leads were carried out which focussed on the successes and challenges of engaging learners in the workplace and the degree to which union-led learning encourages learners to participate in essential skills.

- **Case studies of learning delivered in nine workplaces**: to capture the benefits of essential skills learning and WULF funded union-led learning. The evaluation included visits to workplaces. Interviews were carried out with learners, tutors delivering the learning, a representative from the employer (workforce development manager, human resource manager, training manager, chief executives) and union learning representatives (where unionised).

- **Provider case studies of four providers delivering ESiW**: the four providers included one Further Education Institution (FEI) leading a consortium in North East Wales, two work-based learning providers (WBL) operating pan-Wales, and one adult and community learning (ACL) provider operating in South Wales.

- **Consultation with Menter a Busness (MaB)** regarding their contract to promote the ESiW and engage employers.

Sampling

Provider sampling

1.28 The Welsh Government forwarded a list of consultees (seventeen provider contacts and three Quality Standard assessors). The sample was not created to be representative of the population of providers in Wales. Providers were included in the sample because they are contracted to deliver the ESiW programme. In total, 15 providers and three assessors were interviewed.

1.29 In addition to the telephone consultation, six providers submitted written responses (one of these providers had previously been consulted over the telephone).

1.30 The sample of providers' whose views are represented in this report therefore, includes:

- Five Work Based Learning providers.

- Five Adult and Community Learning providers.

- Ten Further Education colleges.

Employer survey sampling and sampling errors

1.31 Data provided by the Welsh Government did not contain any information regarding employer statistics other than post-codes. In the first phase, this did not allow calls to be conducted under a sampling frame dictated by quotas as there were insufficient employer contact details. 189 employers (those where a telephone number was supplied) were called and 42 were completed. In the second phase, the survey focussed on generating a random sample of employers from across all areas in Wales which was representative of postcode areas. A sampling framework of just over 300 employers was identified (from a potential database of 722 employers with telephone contact and who had not been interviewed during Phase I) and 65 employer interviews were completed. In total, 107 responses were achieved.

1.32 For top line statistics relating to all 107 employer respondents and based on the different proportions responding to a given question, the sampling errors at the 95% confidence interval are as follows:

- 50% proportion responding, sample error = +/- 9.0%.

- 30%/70% proportion responding, sample error = +/- 8.2%.

- 10%/90% proportion responding, sample error = +/- 5.4%.

Employee survey sampling and sampling errors

1.33 A database provided by the Welsh Government did not allow for any sampling. The population of learners at the time of surveying was unknown in terms of Competitive and Convergence areas. Therefore, the survey focussed on generating responses from across Wales. 52% of learners have been surveyed from Convergence and 48% from Competiveness. In total, 212 responses were completed (45 from an overall database of 117 with contact data provided during Phase I and 167 from a random sample of just over 800 selected from an overall database of 2,697 with contact data during Phase II).

1.34 For top line statistics relating to all 212 employee respondents and based on the different proportions responding to a given question, the sampling error at the 95% confidence interval, are as follows:

- 50% proportion responding, sample error = +/- 6.5%.

- 30%/70% proportion responding, sample error = +/- 5.9%.

- 10%/90% proportion responding, sample error = +/- 3.9%.

Workplace case studies

1.35 Nine employer case studies were identified through a mix of provider and union consultations. Case studies were selected using the following criteria:

- Learning had been delivered (either essential skills of WULF related learning).

- Ensuring a mix of sectors.

- Representing learning being delivered by a mix of providers (FEI, ACL and WBL).

- Achieving representation from Convergence and Competitiveness areas.

1.36 The sampling achieved:

- Seven workplaces where essential skills learning was currently being delivered.

- Representation from the Public Administration (1), Construction sector (2), Transport and Storage (Rail, 1, Storage, 1), Health and Social Care (2), Manufacturing (1), Water Activities Services (1).

- Providers engaged in delivery included FEI (4), ACL (2), WBL (4). One union-led learning workplace involved one WBL provider and one FEI.

- Convergence and Competitiveness split was four workplaces in Convergence only areas, two in Competitive only areas and four organisations operating pan-Wales.

Economic Analysis of the Programme

1.37 A scoping exercise to undertake an economic analysis of the benefits of the ESiW programme was carried out in order to ascertain the feasibility of such a study. This included a review of literature and consideration of possible approaches.

1.38 Review of literature on measuring the monetary benefits of basic skills.

1.39 As part of this study we explored approaches to measuring the costs and benefits of basic skills. This was undertaken using a limited review of relevant documents identified through internet searches and references listed in the bibliography.

1.40 In this section the term basic skills is used to include essential skills (as this is the generally used term amongst UK and international literature).

Cost benefit analysis approaches

1.41 The overall finding is that limited research has been undertaken with respect to costs and benefits of basic skills (NRDC[14] 2003; CfBT[15] 2010).

1.42 The key areas where benefits have been identified for employers are included in **Table 1.2**, which informed our development of the analytical framework, questionnaires and topic guides. These sources did not provide evidence of statistical significance.

Table 1.2: Benefits to Employers of Improved Workforce Basic Skills

- Increased self-confidence of staff (NRDC 2003, ABC Canada 2008[16])
- Higher productivity (NRDC 2003, ABC Canada 2008)
- Improved employee relations (ABC Canada, 2008)
- Customer satisfaction (NRDC 2003)
- Increases in quality of work (ABC Canada, 2008)
- Increased work effort (ABC Canada, 2008)
- More effective use of technology (ABC Canada, 2008)
- Lower labour turnover (NRDC 2003)
- Safer workplaces (NRDC 2003)

---

[14] National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (2003) The benefits to employers of raising workforce basic skills levels: a review of the literature http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/5693/1/Ananiadouthebenefitspart1.pdf
[15] CfBT (2010) Findings from the CfBT Education Trust International Review http://www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/pdf/18LoRes_AdultSkillsBook.pdf
[16] ABC Canada (2008) The Benefits of Improving Literacy Skills in the Workplace http://abclifeliteracy.ca/files/workplace_skills.pdf

1.43 Benefits to individuals are identified in **Table 1.3** below. Those identified as statistically significant for a given author are in bold.

Table 1.3: Benefits to Individuals of Improved Basic Skills

- Employment gains (**CEE[17] 2000**, **Bynner[18] 2001**, NEISR[19] 2007, CfBT 2010, **BIS[20] 2011**)
- Job satisfaction and improved promotion prospects (**NIESR 2007**, CfBT 2010)
- Earning gains (**CEE 2000**, NRDC 2003, **NIESR 2007**, **BIS 2011**)
- Influence on continued education (**NIESR 2007**, CfBT 2010)
- Self-perceived improved skills in reading, writing and mathematics (**NIESR 2007**)
- Suffer less from poor physical and mental health (**Bynner 2001**, **NIESR 2007**)
- Positive self-image, self-esteem and self-confidence (NRDC 2003, NIESR 2007, CfBT 2010, BIS 2011)
- Positive impact on parents' involvement with their children's education (Bynner 2001, NIESR 2007).

1.44 We identified two studies that attempted to value costs and benefits (see **Table 1.4**). However, we concluded that neither provides a template or proxy measures that can be applied reliably to the current ESiW programme as a basis to assess costs and benefits.

---

[17] Centre for the Economics of Education (2000) Measuring and Assessing the Impact of Basic Skills on Labour Market Outcomes http://cee.lse.ac.uk/ceedps/ceedp03.pdf

[18] Bynner, J. et al (2001) Improving Adult Basic Skills Benefits to the Individual and to Society http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR251.pdf

[19] NEISR (2007) Evaluation of the Impact of Skills for Life Learning: Longitudinal Survey of Learners, Wave 3 http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR824.pdf

[20] BIS (2011) Review of Research and Evaluation on Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/BISCore/further-education-skills/docs/R/11-1418-review-research-on-improving-adult-skills.pdf

Table 1.4: Studies of Costs and Benefits in Basic Skills Training

> **Krueger and Rouse** (1994, 1998) **study of the impact of workplace basic skills tuition** summarised in National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (2003) study, reviewed a New Jersey (US) basic skills programme. The programme was delivered to 480 low-skilled workers at two mid-sized companies, running for 16 months, subsidised by the federal government. The authors found small effects on earnings, staff turnover and absenteeism. Their assessment of the rate of return indicated that in one company the training paid for itself, although they were not certain that other companies would find it worthwhile in the absence of the subsidy.
>
> **Gallup was commissioned by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) in 1992** to undertake a survey of 400 employers. When trying to assess the value of the benefit of basic skills training they looked at the costs felt by employers of not addressing the problem; 15% of employers provided an estimate of costs of basic skills deficiencies. It focused on the numbers of customer orders cancelled, the numbers of orders produced incorrectly and the numbers of customers lost during the year due to problems which could have been avoided with better basic skills among staff. It also covered the cost of supervisory staff that could be saved if basic skills were better and the cost of recruiting staff externally due to limitations of existing staff.   Their work estimated that the annual cost for a business with more than 50 employees was £166,000 in 2002. The cost to the UK economy was £4.8 billion.

1.45 Following a review of this information, it was agreed with the Welsh Government that a cost benefit analysis would not be feasible within the scope of this interim evaluation. A cost analysis on the programme was undertaken to ascertain the cost of delivering qualifications within the ESiW programme to date.

Evaluation Governance

1.46 The methodology was agreed by a Steering Group led by the Welsh Government's Employability and Skills Team with expert input from the Post-16 Essential Skills Team and the Knowledge and Analytical Services. This team has monitored and supported the performance of the evaluation throughout to ensure that the evaluation was delivered in line with Welsh Government and Government Social Research (GSR) requirements.

Ethics

1.47 The main ethical considerations raised by this research are detailed below:

Providing informed consent and permission to participate in the research

1.48 The nature of the research was explained to all research participants so that they were able to make an informed decision about their participation. All research participants were made aware that their involvement in the research was voluntary. They were also advised that they could withdraw their consent at any time.

Confidentiality and anonymity

1.49 Confidentiality was assured to research participants. Face to face interviews were recorded with the permission of participants. Research participants were also informed that the information they provided would be anonymised. Some of the information provided by research participants was not included in the case study write ups to help maintain anonymity.

2 Programme Design and Delivery

Summary

2.1 The ESiW programme offers employers the opportunity to up-skill its workforce by identifying and addressing the essential skills needs of staff. It also enables providers to increase their capacity by up-skilling tutors. The MaB activity is designed to provide the programme with additional capacity to support providers in engaging employers.

2.2 Whilst the aims, objectives and outcomes of the programme are simply defined, the programme has a degree of complexity that requires quite considerable programme management and monitoring of performance.

2.3 The next section details progress in programme outputs and Section Four discusses some of the issues and challenges that have impacted on overall programme performance to date.

Introduction

2.4 This section describes the key elements of the design of the ESiW programme. This includes detail regarding:

- **Engaging Employers in the Programme**: including the Employer Pledge Award and the recent contracting of MaB.

- **Delivering Essential Skills in the Workplace**: including changes to the learning offer, provider performance and development of provider capacity and quality assurance.

Engaging Employers in the Programme

2.5 The programme was designed to engage employers initially through the Employer Pledge. As part of the programme redesign, and to boost the performance of the programme, MaB has been contracted to engage employers.

The Employer Pledge

2.6   The Employer Pledge was envisaged by the Welsh Government to be the
key route through which employers would engage with essential skills
delivery.

*"Engagement with employers is fundamental to the delivery of this project,
both through the delivery of the Employer Pledge Programme and through
the delivery of training via a procured training provider network"*[21].

2.7   Engagement of employers through this route was the principal method of
addressing disadvantage (Equal Opportunities Objective 5.1) and improving
equality of opportunity (Equal Opportunities Objective 5.2 and 5.4) among
women and black and ethnic minority people.

2.8   The Welsh Government contracted 15 providers to deliver the Employer
Pledge and the original business plan set out a target of over 700 employers
to achieve the pledge. However, in the most recent business plan (February
2013) this target was replaced with a target to engage 1,673 employers in
essential skills delivery. The vision is that providers will encourage committed
employers to apply for the Employer Pledge Award (EPA) as a way of
demonstrating their commitment to workforce development.

2.9   The EPA is designed to run alongside any training being delivered by
providers. Employers can receive support through the EPA to address
essential skills needs in their workforce. Advice, support and training is
available under the EPA and is offered by the Welsh Government as part of a
wider workforce development programme that includes skills needs
assessment, advice and training (apprenticeship, other work based learning
and leadership and management) provision. The EPA, therefore, is designed
to be part of an assessment and training strategy, relevant to the entire
workforce and to encourage progression in skills development.

---

[21] Welsh Government, *Basic Skills in the Workplace, Business Plan* (2010, v2)

2.10 To achieve the award, employers must be actively engaged in delivering essential skills and, with the support of a provider, be developing a training plan that shows they are undertaking the following:

- Raising awareness of essential skills among their workforce.

- Reviewing their working procedures (induction and appraisal).

- Carrying out initial assessment of essential skills.

- Engendering a focus on essential skills in the workplace (through reviewing readability of documents, identifying essential skills champions, providing progression plans for learners and reviewing the training plan).

2.11 The ESiW contract manager quality assures the process on an on-going basis and, once it is evidenced that the correct procedures are embedded in the employer organisation, an EPA is issued to the organisation.

Menter a Busnes

2.12 In 2012, MaB was contracted to promote the Essential Skills in the Workplace (ESiW) programme, through direct engagement with identified stakeholders, partners, and Welsh businesses.[22] MaB supports training providers by identifying and engaging companies and forwarding referrals to relevant providers.

2.13 The focus of the work contracted to MaB is as follows:

- **Engaging with Anchor Companies and Regionally Important Companies:** to raise awareness and engage these businesses onto the programme, working with unions where appropriate.

---

[22] Menter a Busnes Revised Programme Specification, 2012

- **Engage with Public Sector Organisations:** to encourage the public sector engagement in essential skills by reviewing internal processes and procedures.

- **Engage Unionised Companies through union-led learning and WTUC:** by developing a strategic partnership with the Wales TUC through the Union Learning Officers and Wales TUC Development Officers.

- **Sector specific work:** including marketing and awareness raising with Welsh Government sector priority areas to promote take up on the ESiW programme.

- **ESF workplace projects:** to engage with an agreed list of other ESF workplace projects in order to ensure a coherent joined up service for employers and/or participants.

- **Marketing and networking:** involving activities to raise awareness and promote the ESiW programme.

- **ESiW website:** to develop and maintain a website to support the core activities above and support the provider network by providing information, guidance and tools to existing and potential employers and participants.

- **CMS Database:** to develop and maintain a management database holding all information for providers and partners to improve awareness of activity in each Welsh business or public sector organisation.

- **Promote the Employer Pledge Award:** MaB promote the EPA when engaging with businesses to encourage take up.

2.14 The total value of the MaB contract is profiled at £1,180,870 (Convergence: £826,630 and Competitiveness: £354,240). Just over a third of the budget relates to payments of £400 per business referred for 1003 businesses (Convergence: 702 and Competitiveness: 301) and two-thirds relates to a fixed monthly payment for the above aspects of work (over three years).

2.15 The MaB team for ESiW consists of the following roles spread across all areas of Wales:

- One Project Director.

- One Project Manager.

- Four Project Officers.

Delivering Essential Skills in the Workplace

2.16 The ESiW programme has gone through a number of changes with regards the learning offer. This was undertaken as a result of feedback on the limitations of the programme design and providers underperforming against their profiles (see Sections Three and Four).

The ESiW Learning Offer

2.17 The original learning offer conceived under the BSiW programme included an initial assessment of learner needs, and following on from the identification of need, contextualised delivery of ESW qualifications in Communication and Application of Number (AON) at Entry Levels 1-3 and up to and including Level 1 qualifications. This learning offer ran from April 2010 through to March 2012.

2.18 Since April 2012, the BSiW and Rural IT projects merged and became the ESiW programme offer. As a result of this and other changes the offer has been extended and now includes the provision of Essential Skills Wales qualification in Communication, Application of Number, Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) at Entry Levels 1-3, Level 1 and Level 2. Learners can only study an ICT qualification where they have no additional literacy or numeracy need or where these skills needs are being supported alongside the ICT qualification.

2.19 Learners can also undertake more than one qualification concurrently. For example a learner can access training in each of the three areas where need is evidenced through an Initial Assessment (IA). Learners can also participate in qualifications at two different levels concurrently. A learner can now start a Level 1 Application of Number before completing an Entry level in the same qualification area.

2.20 In addition, providers can deliver taster packages to encourage learners to participate in learning. Learners can undertake a maximum of two Developing Essential Skills Units, OCN or equivalent credits, providing these can be used as evidence towards the full ESW qualification. Upon completion of the Developing Essential Skills Units or equivalent, learners are encouraged to progress onto a relevant ESW qualification at the appropriate level.

2.21 The rules regarding minimum number of learners has been removed and providers can work on a one to one basis with learners.

Providers delivering of essential skills qualifications

2.22 The Welsh Government commissioned 13 providers as either independent providers (delivering against their own ESiW profiles) or as a lead provider of a consortium delivering against profiles divided across a number of local providers. There is a mix of work-based learning (WBL) providers, further education institutions (FEIs), as well as adult and community learning (ACL) providers delivering the Essential Skills Qualification Wales qualifications. The idea of the consortia was to extend the capacity and flexibility in provision while at the same time reducing demands on the Welsh Government regarding the administration of individual provider performance. It was envisaged that an approach based on a consortium of providers would also encourage networking and sharing of effective practice among providers.

2.23 The Welsh Government agreed performance profiles with providers. Performance against profile is managed through an ESiW provider manager in the Welsh Government. In total, profiles include:

- 14,242 learners to be supported (Convergence 9,987; Competitiveness 4,255).

- 2,384 employers to be engaged (Convergence 1,673; Competitiveness 711).

- 18,022 (Convergence 11,926; Competitiveness 6,096) Essential Skills Qualifications to be gained, including tutor training qualifications at Level 3 and 4 (840) (Convergence 588; Competitiveness 252).

2.24 Providers are paid for outputs and outcomes against the following:

- Qualification unit achievement.

- ESW Start Payment.

- ESW Achievement Payment.

- ESOL Start Payment.

- ESOL Achievement Payment.

- Employer Pledge Award.

2.25 This has changed since the early phase (BSiW, Phase I) where there were payments for processes such as providers raising awareness among employers, providers developing Learning Organisation Plans and Reviewing Organisations Procedures. Phase II profiles are more outcomes focussed.

Developing capacity in essential skills delivery

2.26 The Welsh Government recognised that in order to increase participation in ESW qualification, providers would need to increase their essential skills training delivery capacity. An earlier report from Estyn[23] stated that "*nearly all training providers found it difficult to access Level 3 training and… that Level 4 and level 5 qualifications were not easily available for teachers*"[24]. The Welsh Government, therefore, secured £2,170,000 of WEFO funding to develop provider capacity. The target for engaging tutors in essential skills training and continuous professional development is (TPP) 1,652 (Convergence 1,141, Competitiveness 511).[25]

---

[23] The quality and relevance of staff training to deliver adult basic education and English for speakers of other languages, Estyn, March 2010.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Programme targets and outputs are described in more detail in Section Three.

Quality Assurance (The Post-16 Quality Standard)

2.27 The post-16 Quality Standard came into being in 2008 following the Quality Mark as a way of improving the quality assurance of providers. All providers contracted to deliver under the ESiW programme were required to have the post-16 Quality Standard or confirmation from the Welsh Government that their accreditation with the Quality Mark was still valid and would allow them to contract to deliver essential skills.

2.28 Post-16 quality assurance processes have developed considerably with the introduction of the Quality and Effectiveness Framework (QEF) (2009), common inspection framework (Estyn) and Self Assessment Reports (SARs). These collectively help ensure that providers regularly monitor and review the quality of their provision. Providers were also expressing concerns that they had to duplicate evidence for the different forms of quality inspections. Within this context, the Welsh Government requested the evaluation include a review of the relevancy and added value of the post-16 Quality Standard.

2.29 This report does not include the detail of the review which was submitted to the Welsh Government in a previous report[26]. It will, however, incorporate a summary of the key findings and recommendations.

---

[26] Welsh Government (2012) *Review of the Post-16 Quality Standard*

3   ESiW Performance against Programme Outputs

Summary

3.1   Current data suggests that the programme could achieve the target number of participants if the current level of participation is maintained. It is harder to be certain about the numbers of qualifications due to the lag effect.

3.2   Over half of the target numbers of employers (53%) have been engaged to date. However, there is a need to achieve a higher number of learners per employer to achieve the target number of participants, or to increase the number of employers expected to engage with the programme.

3.3   Unit costs may be lower than planned depending on overall spending on the programme.

3.4   There may be certain sub-targets which may not be achieved, for example:

- People with a disability.

- Older participants.

3.5   There are some characteristics of participants which may need to be considered in future delivery of the programme, such as locality of learners (some areas have low levels of participants compared to others).

Introduction

3.6   In order to review performance of the programme it is necessary to review current targets. **Table 3.1** below sets out the original targets from December 2010 and the revised targets from March 2012, derived from the Business Plan, since the programme was merged to form Essential Skills in the Workplace. Most of the targets were increased although total participants were revised downwards. A number of secondary targets also exist which are referenced in the later analysis (covering gender, age, disability and qualifications).

Table 3.1: Targets for the ESiW Programme

Targets	Dec 2010 [1]	Mar 2012		
	Total	Total	Convergence	Competitiveness
Forecast Project Cost	£17,500,000	£21,679,242	£15,176,415	£6,504,178
Total Participants [2]	29,643	15,894	11,128	4,766
Participants (excluding tutors)	27,991	14,242	9,987	4,255
Total Participants Gaining Qualifications	-	12,715	8,902	3,813
Total Number of Achieved Qualifications [3]	14,822	18,022	11,926	6,096
Employers Engaged	1,031	2,384	1,673	711
Equality and Diversity Strategies	511*	882	619	263
Tutors Trained	1,652	1,652	1,141	511
Employer Pledge	1,031	-	-	-
Participants Gaining Part Qualifications	-	1,823	-	-

Essential Skills in the Workplace Business Plans

[1]: Data from original evaluation Invitation to Tender, disaggregated data not available

[2]: This is the figure monitored by the WEFO Claim Reports

[3]: Participants can achieve more than one qualification within the scope of this programme.

*= Includes estimated figure for Competitiveness due to no target information being available. Estimation based on target information for Convergence.

3.7 The change in targets resulted from the change in programme from BSiW to ESiW (including the incorporation of the Rural IT programme). The main changes in the targets were:

- An overall increase in programme budget.

- Lower numbers of total participants.

- Increased numbers of achieved qualifications as learners could undertake multiple qualifications.

- Increased numbers of employers involved as it was realised smaller numbers of learners were generated from each employer.

- The Employer Pledge ceased to be a targeted element.

3.8 The data used as part of this analysis is from the December 2012 Claim Reports submitted to WEFO. Not all of the targets are reported on in the claim reports.

3.9 Gross cumulative expenditure on the programme to December 2012 is just over £3 million representing 14% of the overall programme value (see **Table 3.2**). This is higher for the Competitiveness areas at 17% compared with 13% in the Convergence areas.

Table 3.2: Expenditure to Date

|	**December 2012**	**Total Budget**	**%**
Overall Programme	£3,051,422	£21,679,242	14%
Convergence	£1,937,632	£15,176,415	13%
Competitiveness	£1,113,790	£6,502,827	17%

Source: WEFO 2007-13 European Funding Claim Reports

High Level Performance Data

3.10 Total participants engaged to date (4,088) represent just under a quarter (24%) of the overall target (15,894). This is higher in the Competitiveness areas (32%) compared with Convergence areas (23%).

3.11 Performance towards the key target of participants on the programme (**Figure 3.1**) started off slowly in the first three quarters of programme delivery from April 2011 to December 2011, but has picked up in the last three quarters to December 2012, reaching 4,088 participants. A trend line based on the last three quarters suggests that if the current pattern of delivery is maintained then the target will be achieved by the end of the programme.
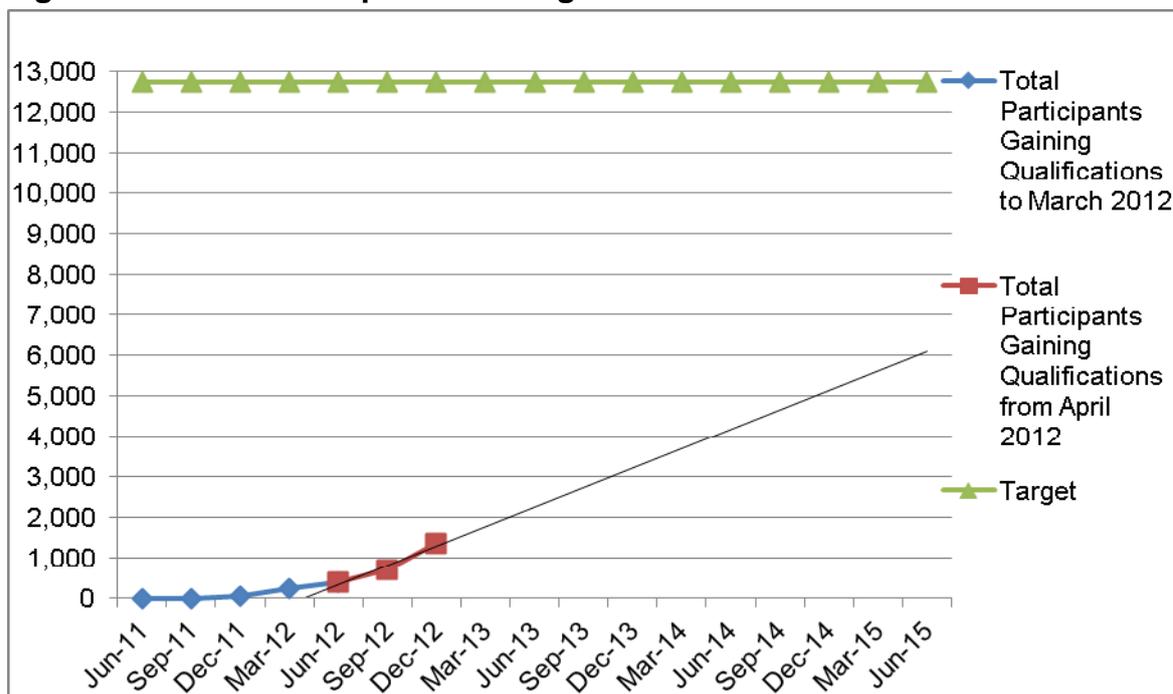
Figure 3.1: Total Participants on ESiW
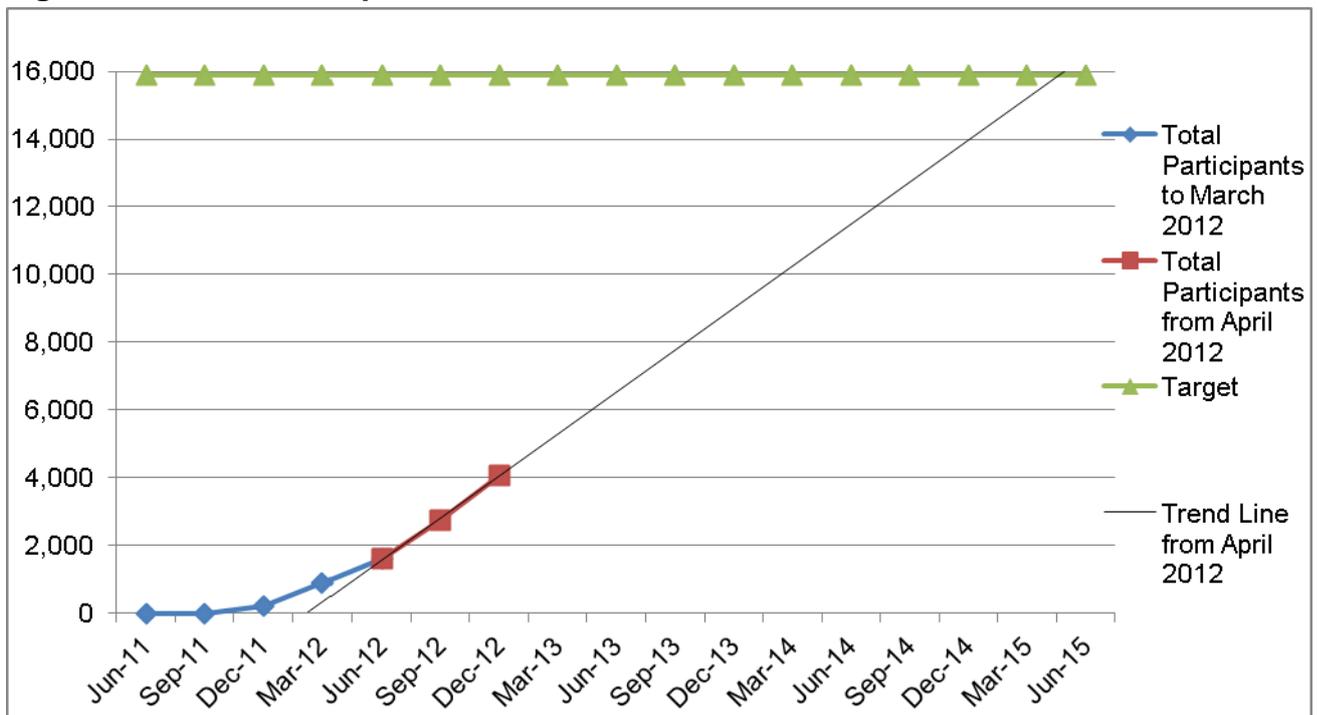
Source: WEFO 2007-13 European Funding Claim Reports. Note: data includes tutors. Note: data for March return was contained within June return; therefore March data has been estimated on a linear basis

3.12 Overall, the programme is aiming to achieve a conversion rate of 80% of participants achieving at least one qualification. The current number of participants achieving qualifications is 1,365 (**Figure 3.2**). These figures imply that the current conversion rate is 33%, however confirming the achievement of a qualification to the monitoring returns has a time lag. Therefore, we would expect the actual percentage to be higher for the 4,088 current participants.

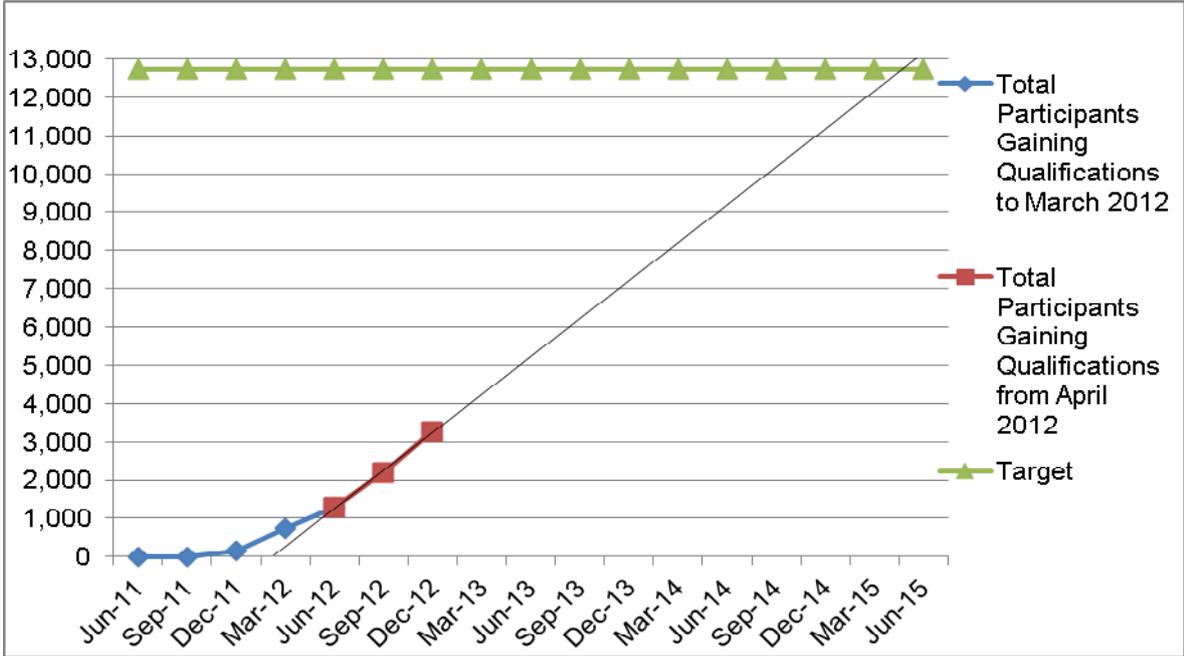**Figure 3.2: Total Participants Gaining Qualifications**

Source: WEFO 2007-13 European Funding Claim Reports. Note: data includes tutors
Note: data for March return was contained within June return; therefore March data has been estimated on a linear basis.

3.13 The conversion rate is slightly higher in Convergence areas (34%) compared with Competitiveness areas (32%).

3.14 Based on the current rate of performance, using a linear trend line, the programme would not achieve its target (**Figure 3.2**). However, if an 80% conversion rate was achieved for all current participants then the target would be met over the life of the programme (**Figure 3.3**).

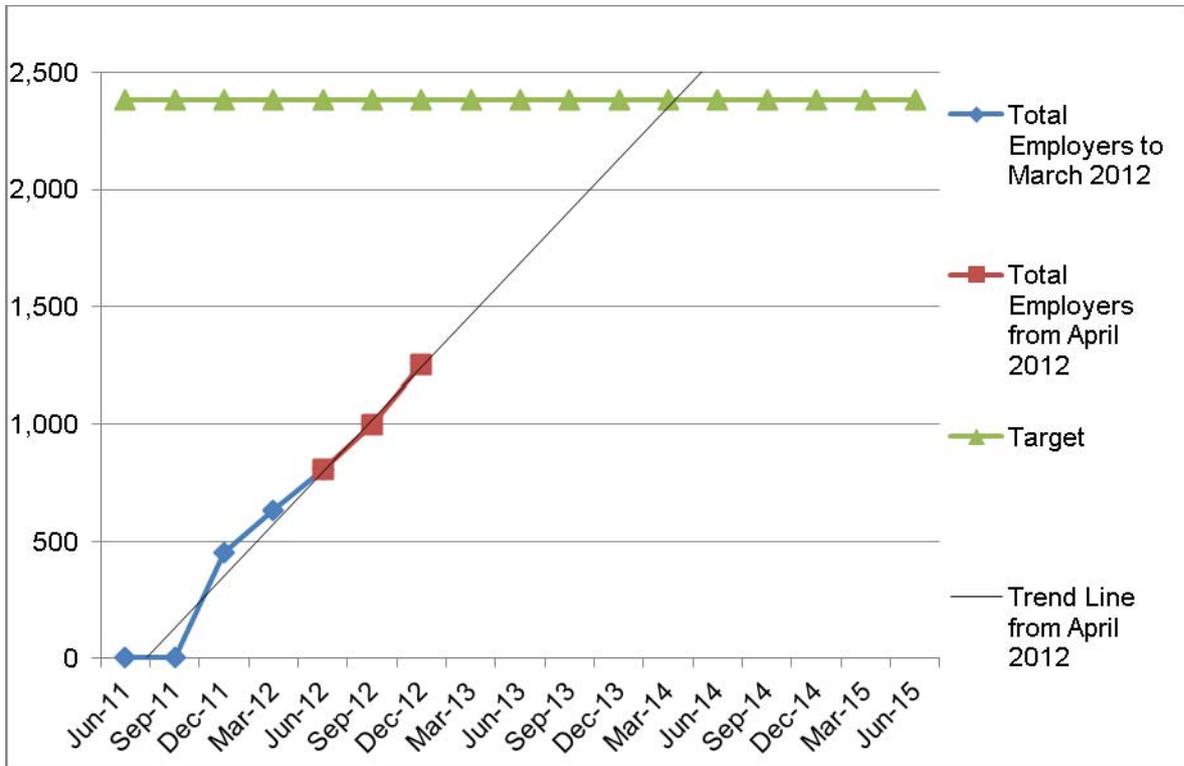**Figure 3.3: Participants Gaining Qualifications (80% Conversion Rate)**

Source: WEFO 2007-13 European Funding Claim Reports. Note: data includes tutors. Note: data for March return was contained within June return therefore March data has been estimated on a linear basis.

3.15 The current number of employers participating in the programme is 1,254 (**Figure 3.4**), which represents 53% of the overall target (2,384).

Figure 3.4: Total Employers Engaged

Source: WEFO 2007-13 European Funding Claim Reports; Note: this data includes tutors. Note: data for March return was contained within June return therefore March data has been estimated on a linear basis.

3.16 While this is positive, it should be noted that the target for employers is secondary to total learners, as engagement with employers is the mechanism by which participants are recruited. If the current pattern is projected forward, then the targeted number of employers will be achieved by March 2014.

3.17 Performance against target for Competitiveness areas is higher at 60% (426 employers) than Convergence areas 49% (828 employers).

3.18 To date, the ratio of learners to employers stands at 3.3 learners per employer (Convergence 3.1 and Competitiveness 3.6). The low ratio may be due to the time lag between getting employers engaged, identifying employees essential skills training needs and then actually arranging the training. The equivalent ratio based on planned activity is 6.7. This suggests that more learners need to be identified for each employer engaged. This may indicate that more larger employers need to be engaged, although it might just be that large employers are not putting through as many learners as expected.

3.19 Numbers of employers achieving an equality and diversity strategy are low, currently standing at 41 employers (although this has not changed during the six months to December 2012) compared with a target of 882.

3.20 The Employer Pledge Award is no longer targeted and there are no employers that have achieved the award to date.

Detailed Level Performance Data

3.21 The criteria analysed below are all monitored through the Funding Claim reports.

Participant location

3.22 The highest levels of participation are in Cardiff (15%, 599 learners) and Caerphilly (10%, 393 learners). This is perhaps unsurprising given the population size of Cardiff and surrounding areas. However, much lower levels of participation exist in Merthyr Tydfil (1%, 42 learners), Neath Port Talbot (1%, 71 learners), Monmouthshire (1%, 78 learners), Ceredigion (1%, 80 learners) and Blaenau Gwent (1%, 81 learners).

3.23 There are no targets for the location of learners. However, it is important to ensure balanced levels of effort are applied to all areas relative to their population. It would also be useful to explore the reasons for this variable performance, in case there are some systematic reasons for lower performance in certain areas.

3.24 A very similar pattern emerges when we consider the achievement of qualifications by participant location. However, from the provider visits we are aware that some providers are behind in evidencing the achievement of qualifications, suggesting that data may not be in line with actual delivery.

Learners who are migrants

3.25 One in ten learners are migrants. The majority are EU migrants (8%, 321 learners) with a few non-EU migrants (2%, 92 learners). The proportion of EU-migrants in Competitiveness areas is higher (10%) than in Convergence areas (6%).

3.26 A slightly higher proportion of those achieving qualifications are EU migrants (8%, 110 learners) than non-EU migrants (4%, 52 learners). Again this is higher for EU migrants in Competitiveness areas (13%) than in Convergence areas (6%).

3.27 There are no targets for learners who are migrants.

Female learners

3.28 Three fifths of learners are female (61%, 2,507 learners). These figures are the same across Competitiveness and Convergence areas. 64% of those achieving of qualifications are female. This far exceeds the target of 45% from the Business Plan. We can conclude that the programme is on course to achieve this target and may need to focus more on engaging male learners.

Prior skills of learners

3.29 Over a fifth of learners (22%, 920 learners) had no previous qualifications when starting the programme. The proportion is higher (see **Table 3.3**) for Competitiveness areas. This raises a question of whether there are more unskilled learners needing essential skills in Competitiveness areas, or whether providers have been more successful at reaching them. The larger number of large employers engaged with the programme might suggest the former reason.

3.30 There are no targets for learners' prior qualifications. Comparison with National Adult Learner Survey (NALS) data demonstrates the higher level of individuals with no qualifications involved in BSiW, although this is a simple comparison as NALS covers the working age population not in full time education.

Table 3.3: Learners' Previous Qualifications

Prior Qualifications	All Learners		Convergence	Competitiveness	NALS [1]
None	920	22%	20%	26%	8%
Below NQF level 2	925	22%	23%	21%	23%
At NQF level 2	745	18%	19%	17%	17%
At NQF level 3	714	17%	18%	16%	15%
At NQF level 4-6	678	16%	16%	17%	29%
At NQF level 7-8	142	3%	3%	4%	8%

Source: WEFO 2007-13 European Funding Claim Reports

[1] National Adult Learner Survey 2010 (England only).

Employment status of learners

3.31 Most learners were employed when they started the programme (94%, 3,860) with 6% (264) self-employed. All self-employed learners came from Convergence areas; there are none in Competitiveness areas.

3.32 Almost all those achieving qualifications are employed (99%, 1,358), with five self-employed and two unemployed (probably as a result of losing their job).

3.33 There are no targets for learners' employment status.

Learners with a disability

3.34 Only 3% (112) of learners have a disability. This is a long way from the target of 45% of learners. This target would appear to be set too high given the incidence of people with disabilities (one fifth of the working age population[27]) in the population which is likely to be lower for those in work. Around 2% of those receiving a qualification is a learner with a disability.

Learners from black and minority ethnic groups

3.35 Around 5% (204) of learners are from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. This is above the proportion of people from BME groups in Wales (2.1%[28]) and suggests the programme is successfully reaching BME communities. It may also suggest that BME employees have particular essential skills needs. Some of these learners will be ESOL learners, although the data does not provide this information.

3.36 The rate of achievement of qualifications is high among learners from BME groups, at 8%.

Age of learners

3.37 More than two thirds of learners are aged between 25 and 54 (69%, 2,851 learners). The proportion (over 55) is 15% (594), which is below the target of 35% of older learners. This may be an issue related to engaging older learners in the workforce, who may be less inclined to participate in essential skills learning. However, the target looks, at this stage, unlikely to be achieved.

3.38 Only 12% of learners achieving a qualification are aged over 55.

---

[27] http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/health2011/111206/?lang=en
[28] http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/43843

Qualifications achieved

3.39 By the end of December 2012 a total of 2,916 qualifications had been achieved (**Tables 3.4 and 3.5**). 2,647 were learner qualifications. The proportion of learner qualifications achieved in the Competitiveness areas (45%) is higher than the 30% split that was planned for.

Table 3.4: Total Learner Qualifications by Qualification Level

	Convergence		Competitiveness		Total	
Qualification Started	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Entry Level 1	197	14%	185	16%	382	14%
Entry Level 2	55	4%	124	10%	179	7%
Entry Level 3	186	13%	184	15%	370	14%
Level 1	744	51%	453	38%	1,197	45%
Level 2	247	17%	206	17%	453	17%
Not Known	29	2%	37	3%	66	2%
Total	**1,458**	**100%**	**1,189**	**100%**	**2,647**	**100%**

Source: Welsh Government Programme qualifications spreadsheet

3.40 In terms of level, the majority of qualifications achieved (45%) were at Level 1 (**Table 3.4**). Over a third of qualifications (35%) were achieved at below Level 1. Two providers account for almost half (49%) of all qualifications achieved to date.

3.41 A total of 269 tutor training qualifications have been achieved **(Table 3.5)**. The proportion of tutor qualifications achieved in the Competitiveness areas (36%) is closer to the planned 30% split.

Table 3.5: Total Tutor Qualifications

	Convergence		Competitiveness		Total	
Qualification Started	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
ABSSTTP - CPD	23	13%	30	31%	53	20%
ABSSTTP - Level 2	48	28%	20	21%	68	25%
ABSSTTP - Level 2 Awareness	10	6%	0	0%	10	4%
ABSSTTP - Level 3	66	38%	29	30%	95	35%
ABSSTTP - Level 4/5	25	15%	18	19%	43	16%
Total	**172**	**100%**	**97**	**100%**	**269**	**100%**

Source: Welsh Government Programme qualifications spreadsheet
*ABSSTPP stands for Adult Basic Skills Support/Teacher Training Programme

3.42 In terms of types of qualifications, there is a broad spread across the different levels (**Table 3.6**). The largest number of qualifications is in Level 1 Communication (18%, n=488) followed by Level 1 Application of Number (16%, n=430). Around a third of learners have achieved more than one qualification.

Table 3.6: Qualifications Achieved by Course Title

	Convergence		Competitiveness		Total	
Qualification Started	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
ESW Entry Level 1 Application Of Number	83	6%	96	8%	179	7%
ESW Entry Level 1 Certificate In ESOL Skills For Life	4	0%	0	0%	4	0%
ESW Entry Level 1 Communication	109	7%	70	6%	179	7%
ESW Entry Level 1 ICT	1	0%	19	2%	20	1%
ESW Entry Level 2 Application Of Number	10	1%	33	3%	43	2%
ESW Entry Level 2 Communication	20	1%	42	4%	62	2%
ESW Entry Level 2 ICT	25	2%	49	4%	74	3%
ESW Entry Level 3 Application Of Number	43	3%	66	6%	109	4%

Qualification Started	Convergence		Competitiveness		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
ESW Entry Level 3 Certificate In ESOL Skills For Life	4	0%	0	0%	4	0%
ESW Entry Level 3 Communication	47	3%	49	4%	96	4%
ESW Entry Level 3 ICT	92	6%	69	6%	161	6%
ESW Level 1 Application Of Number	263	18%	167	14%	430	16%
ESW Level 1 Certificate In ESOL Skills For Life	6	0%	7	1%	13	0%
ESW Level 1 Communication	333	23%	155	13%	488	18%
ESW Level 1 ICT	142	10%	124	10%	266	10%
ESW Level 2 Application of Number	99	7%	88	7%	187	7%
ESW Level 2 Communication	102	7%	72	6%	174	7%
ESW Level 2 ICT	46	3%	46	4%	92	3%
ICT	11	1%	31	3%	42	2%
Numeracy	15	1%	3	0%	18	1%
Application of Number	3	0%	0	0%	3	0%
Speaking	0	0%	3	0%	3	0%
Total	1,458	100%	1,189	100%	2,647	100%

Source: Welsh Government Programme Monitoring Data

Location of employers

3.43 The highest levels of engagement of employers are in Cardiff (10%, n=129 employers), Gwynedd (9%, n=116 employers), Carmarthen (8%, n=102 employers) and Powys (8%, n=95 employers). The latter three areas may seem surprising given their rural nature but this may be related to the incorporation of the Rural IT element into the ESiW Programme.

3.44 The areas with the lowest numbers of employers engaged were: Blaenau Gwent (1%, 15 employers), Merthyr Tydfil (2%, 21 employers), Flintshire (2%, 21 employers), Caerphilly (2%, n=31 employers),and Vale of Glamorgan (2%, n=29 employers). While some areas will have more and larger employers - meaning the absolute numbers do not need to be so high - the variation could be an indication of under-performance in certain areas. There is a correlation between low numbers of learners and employers on the programme, particularly in Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil. These are two of the most deprived areas of Wales, which highlights the challenges for the programme to deliver in these areas.

Cost Effectiveness of the ESiW Programme

3.45 Based on current targets and funding levels the anticipated unit costs are as outlined in **Table 3.7**. The unit cost per participant is £1,364. The cost per participant gaining a qualification (£1,705) is slightly higher because not all participants are expected to achieve a qualification. The unit cost per qualification is slightly lower (£1,203) as some participants are expected to achieve more than one qualification.

Table 3.7: Unit Costs, Based on Programme Targets

	Convergence	Competitiveness	TOTAL
Participants	11,128	4,766	15,894
Participants gaining qualifications	8,902	3,813	12,715
Total qualifications	11,926	6,096	18,022
Expenditure	£15,176,415	£6,502,827	21,679,242
Cost per participant	£1,364	£1,364	£1,364
Cost per participant gaining a qualification	£1,705	£1,706	£1,705
Cost per qualification	£1,273	£1,067	£1,203

Source: Business Plan V4

3.46 The current unit costs to December 2012 are presented in **Table 3.8**. The current unit cost per participant (£647) is less than half of the value estimated from target information as less overall funding has been drawn down to date. The final value is expected to be higher as total expenditure rises through, for example, payments for achieving qualifications. Cost per participant gaining a qualification (£1,937) is higher than that based on target data because much smaller numbers of participants gaining qualifications are recorded to date. There is a lag effect on achievement of qualifications which means this is artificially low. The unit cost per qualification (£907) is below the planned figure.

3.47 The costs per participant and per qualification are lower for Competitiveness areas than Convergence because the volumes are proportionately higher.

Table 3.8: Unit Costs, Based on Current Programme Performance

	Convergence	Competitiveness	TOTAL
Participants	2,551	1,537	4,088
Participants gaining qualifications	871	494	1,365
Total qualifications	1,630	1,286	2,916
Expenditure	£1,937,632	£706,855	£2,644,487
Cost per participant	£760	£460	£647
Cost per participant gaining a qualification	£2,225	£1,431	£1,937
Cost per qualification	£1,189	£550	£907

Source: based on data from ESF Claims Returns and Qualifications from Welsh Government spreadsheet

4 Programme Implementation

Summary

4.1 The programme has experienced a number of quite significant challenges and has undergone changes and improvements to both the process of engagement and the learning offer. As a result, the programme is beginning to make progress.

4.2 Significantly the Employer Pledge Award (EPA) is no longer the tool by which employers are engaged initially and, to date, no claims have been made by providers for outputs against the EPA. There are risks that the EPA will lose impetus and will impact on the targets for Equality and Diversity Strategies.

4.3 MaB has been contracted to engage with 1,003 employers, but are making slower than expected progress in this area.

4.4 Some providers are beginning to improve delivery and the programme is showing quite considerable gains with both employers and participant engagement. However, the number of qualifications gained is still very much below profile and considerable activity needs to take place to ensure this target is achieved over the next two years.

4.5 Achieving the goals will require continued effort from MaB and providers, which may place added demands on providers in terms of delivering learner outcomes. Review of the provider capacity element of the programme is perhaps needed at this stage to consider how providers can be encouraged and supported to extend their capacity.

Introduction

4.6 As the previous section has described, the target for engaging employers in the ESiW programme is 2,384. To date, providers have engaged with 1,254 employers which is 53% of the target. There were significant barriers to engaging employers in the first phase of the programme (BSiW), which has resulted in lower than expected engagement levels. As a result there has been a change in the ESiW engagement model.

4.7 The target for engaging learners (excluding tutors) is 14,242. As of December 2012, the total number of learners (including tutors) engaged in the programme was 4,088[29]; this is around 28% of the target. In addition, to achieve the qualification target, the learner to employer ratio required is 6.7 learners to each employer but currently stands at 3.3 learners to each employer.

4.8 Meeting the programme targets requires a provider network with sufficient capacity, skills and knowledge to deliver against these challenging targets. Targets for tutor development are set at 1,652 learning episodes being delivered to tutors. To date just 69 claims have been made by providers for tutor training.

4.9 This performance presents challenges for the Welsh Government in terms of ensuring ESF funds can be used as originally planned to meet the programme aims.

---

[29] It is not possible to report on the total number of learners without tutors engaged on the programme as WEFO reporting does not show this. However, it is estimated that just over 60 tutors have accessed training.

4.10 This section describes some of the challenges and successes of the ESiW programme from the programme's start in 2010 through to December 2013. This includes a review of:

- Employer engagement methods: EPA, provider engagement and the progress of MaB.

- The delivery of learning in the workplace including a look at the learning offer.

- Challenges in delivering the ESiW programme.

- Developing provider capacity and the value of the post-16 Quality Standard.

4.11 Data has been provided by the Welsh Government to enable the evaluation to view progress in context with overall programme performance (outputs and outcomes).

4.12 Evidence in this section has been generated from:

- Welsh Government's provider monitoring data.

- Quarterly reporting to WEFO.

- Provider consultations and case studies.

- Employer case studies.

- Interviews with learners.

- Interviews with union project managers.

Engaging Employers in the Programme

Use of the Employer Pledge Award

4.13 The original design of the BSiW programme involved the use of the Employer Pledge to engage employers. The benefits of this for the programme were that it would encourage employers to develop clear strategies on, and a commitment to, essential skills delivery in the workplace. For the employers, the benefits would be that they could be accredited with an award that would demonstrate their commitment to training their workforce.

4.14 Since amending the programme to the ESiW, providers have re-profiled their engagement in the EPA. Data from the Welsh Government shows that collectively, providers are profiled to deliver 333 EPAs. In Convergence areas, there is a profile for 179 EPAs and, in Competitive areas, 154 EPAs.

4.15 Data showing activity from April 2010 to December 2012 shows that no EPA claims were submitted by providers. Two employers with whom we have consulted did have the EPA, although these were gained previous to the ESiW programme. One employer was about to be awarded the EPA and one had been working towards it but had since lost momentum. Consultations with providers and employers evidenced there is general support for the principle of an EPA.

"I think it's a good thing to encourage employers to take a hard look at their skills deficits and to commit to doing something about it." (Provider)

"We were happy to work towards the pledge, and at the time it added momentum to what we were doing, it showed the workforce we were committed to developing their skills." (Employer who had achieved the EPA prior to the ESiW)

4.16 However, while the EPA does have support in principle, providers have not, and are not, prioritising this element of delivery. A number of reasons were given for the lack of focus on the EPA (see **Table 4.1** below)**.**

Table 4.1: Providers' Views of the Employer Pledge

"Starting the Employer Pledge with employers can be too daunting, it can put them off from engaging with us."

"We are concentrating on delivery first and then, when we feel the time is right, we'll work on the pledge."

"It was way too bureaucratic and too linear…it was based on flawed assumptions about the way in which employers engage and….there had been too great an emphasis on process issues in the project's design rather on what it was intended to achieve."

"Employers are not really motivated by the Pledge. They'll do it if we push it but it's not something they want to be recognised for."

"It takes a lot of time to deliver for the money we receive…it doesn't make a lot of business sense to do it up front."

4.17 There was acknowledgement by providers that the paperwork required to award the EPA, in the first phase of the programme has significantly reduced and that, as a result, it is more of an attractive element. However, there is still clearly an issue with the lack of progress in awarding the EPA. It is not seen as a tool through which providers can effectively engage employers.

4.18 It should also be mentioned that, when consulted, most union project workers were not promoting the EPA. There seemed to be lack of understanding regarding the EPA and what was involved in achieving it. One WULF project manager stated that all local health boards had signed the Employer Pledge, but this was not transferring in to delivery in local areas. This is in part due to constraints regarding which providers can deliver under the EPA and was limiting the potential for unions to work with a range of providers.

4.19 When providers were asked about the future of the EPA, there were a few (three) that either suggested or agreed that it could be more successfully embedded into the Investors in People (IiP) award. The fact that the IiP is a well recognised award makes this an attractive idea.

4.20 Attitudes towards this raises a question for the Welsh Government with regards the costs associated with marketing and delivery the EPA and value for money. There is no evidence from this study so far that the Employer Pledge increases the likelihood that workers will engage in essential skills learning. As one employer put it:

"It would be nice to have it but I'm not really sure what benefits it would bring." (Employer)

4.21 The EPA encourages businesses to focus on how strategies can be improved to ensure equality of opportunity in the workplace. The lack of progress in the EPA may impact the target for businesses developing Equality and Diversity strategies.

Provider performance in engaging employers in the ESiW programme

4.22 The key stimulant in terms of engaging employers in essential skills delivery is directly through providers identifying employers and delivering learning. Providers have independence in how they plan to meet the targets in terms of sectors, business size and geography.

4.23 The Welsh Government Essential Skills in the Workplace Team (ESWT) monitors the overall performance of providers, through regular visits and by reviewing claims data. Providers are assigned a performance rating of red, amber or green (RAG) to indicate how well they are doing against their agreed profiles. Assessments undertaken in August 2012 showed that the ESWT had a number of concerns with provider performance. This is shown in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

	Green	**Amber**	**Red**
Businesses registered	5	6	1
Participants registered	3	4	5
Qualification starts	3	4	5
Qualifications complete	2	5	5
Totals	13	19	16

Source: ESWT provider monitoring data.

4.24 According to the RAG rating and data provided by the Welsh Government, there were significant concerns (red RAG ratings for 3 or more KPIs) about the overall performance of five providers. In addition, comments provided by the ESWT revealed the reasons and extent of concerns. As a result of many providers not meeting profiles, the Welsh Government agreed, in many cases, to re-profile by reducing outputs. Quite recently, according to provider consultations, some providers have increased their profiles due to strong performance and investing considerably in their essential skills workforce (sales teams, tutors and assessors). A more recent RAG rating of providers' performance undertaken in May 2013, shows improved levels of confidence among the Welsh Government, with seven providers being rated with a Green status and five providers with an Amber status. Just one provider is rated as Red. This is due to providers having more realistic profiles, but also due to providers improving their performance.

4.25 When comparing provider performance, Work-based Learning (WBL) providers appear to be performing better than Further Education Institutions (FEIs). However, due to consortia arrangements (FEIs leading a consortia with contracted WBL providers), it is not possible to make firm conclusions regarding the performance of FEIs against WBL providers generally.

4.26 However, consultations and visits with providers revealed some key differences in approaches to identifying and engaging employers. WBL providers are more likely to utilise staff with business development or sales expertise. These staff are responsible for identifying employers and generating leads only. One WBL provider visited as part of a case study had invested heavily in the process of identifying and engaging employers.

Table 4.3: A Work Based Learning Provider's Approach to Engaging Employers in Essential Skills Training

This WBL provider operates a successful business across Wales offering a range of training to businesses across Wales.

They have recently invested heavily in their tele-sales team and now operate with a team of 20 experienced staff. The role of the tele-sales team is to identify *"quality leads"* for the six Business Development Managers (BDM) who operate across Wales. Quality leads means that they agree with the employer what training needs they are interested in and provide the BDM with employers that understand the training remit and are committed to engaging in the ESiW programme.

"This ensures that we maximise the value and expertise of our Business Development Managers and ensure that we only visit employers who want to progress with training." (Operations Director)

BDM cover a specific geographic area, building up knowledge of employers and skills needs. They are targeted to meet with three businesses each day to discuss the specifics of their training needs and to draw up a training plan. Not until the business has agreed the training plan do tutors engage in the process.

"It's all about the skills of the tele-sales team and the skills of the BDM to understand the needs of the employer and tailor the information and advice accordingly. It's hard work sometimes, but you have to invest in training staff and you have to manage the business on a week by week basis to make sure we are meeting our targets." (Operations Director)

4.27 This provider prioritises essential skills delivery and as a result is exceeding its key performance indicators. Another WBL employs a handful of 'sector specialist consultants' on a freelance basis and these individuals help identify where ESiW might be of benefit, drawing upon their wider skills to take a holistic look at businesses and to sell the concept of essential skills within wider business development plans.

4.28 In contrast, FEIs appear to be utilising essential skills tutors to generate employer leads, often building on existing relationships with learners and local employers, or by responding to requests for training from unions and/or the Wales TUC.

4.29 Clearly, however, there are limitations to this approach with regards to the potential to *stimulate* demand among employers in essential skills training. Employers are often less aware of essential skills training needs, and are more reluctant to invest in essential skills training for a range of reasons[30]. The survey indicated employers' reluctance to train staff because of the need to plan alternative cover, particularly with shift workers. There was also a perception that providers were not going to be flexible enough in their delivery to accommodate their needs, and the cost of training was a deterrent.

4.30 In a number of interviews with providers, it was clear that many tutors were not comfortable in promoting the ESiW offer to employers where there were no existing relationships. They reported it was time consuming and, ultimately, impacted on their capacity to deliver learning.

"I spend a lot of time with an employer and quite often it results in very little in the way of training at the end." (FE Tutor)

4.31 FEIs and Adult and Community Learning (ACL) providers have, as a result of a lack of capacity and confidence in meeting their required outputs, reduced their overall profiles. The ESWT meet with providers who are underperforming regularly to review their outputs and discuss any issues.

4.32 There is qualitative evidence of some development in this area from more 'traditional' providers to develop this role and some FEIs are now delivering awareness training on how to engage employers. For example, one FEI is looking at developing a greater level of joint working with the college's WBL provision to draw on their employer networks and skills. There are also examples of ACL providers developing marketing strategies and promoting ESiW by attending business conferences and Chambers of Commerce.

---

[30] UKCES (2012) *Engaging Low Skills Employees in Workplace Learning.* Evidence Report 43 (page ii).

4.33 It was envisioned that, by delivering the programme through provider consortia, this would provide a level of flexibility of provision within areas. In addition, it would help providers share expertise. There are some examples of provider consortia developing a joined up strategy to engage employers, agreeing the sectors and geographical areas.

4.34 One consortium lead described how they are developing a joint working strategy with very large employers such as the NHS Health Board. Because of the potential overlap in engaging employers, it is important to ensure all consortium members know who is working within each hospital and each site. A shared database has been developed of employer contacts to avoid duplication.

4.35 There are other examples of consortia meeting to share resources and ideas regarding how to engage employers and learners. For example, one provider has developed an IT initial assessment tool to help quickly identify learning needs and this has been shared with other providers in the consortium.

4.36 Very recent discussions with one lead consortia demonstrates that provider confidence in ESiW has improved and that some providers are about to extend their agreed profiles. There are also reports from a small number of FEIs, ACL and WBL providers that essential skills teams are expanding to capitalise on the opportunities in the ESiW programme.

4.37 However, meeting the programme outputs on learner qualifications may require a step change in the way some providers work. Part of the solution, implemented by the Welsh Government, is contracting MaB to generate additional leads for providers.

Menter a Busnes – progress on key areas of activity

4.38 MaB was contracted to promote the ESiW through direct engagement with Welsh businesses. Since April 2012, to date, the Menter a Busnes team has been working to establish relationships with key stakeholders and develop the programme tools defined in the Annual Operating Plan.

4.39 Progress to date on each of the key areas is as follows:

- **Engaging with Anchor Companies and Regionally Important Companies:** only a small number of contacts have been made to date. Due to the on-going internal refocusing of programme development it was agreed that this objective would be put on hold until the final policy view was agreed in regards to engagement with regionally important companies.

- **Engaging with Public Sector Organisations:** many public sector organisations have been targeted and some are already involved in ESiW. Development work with public sector organisations to engage with the programme has been undertaken.

- **Engaging Unionised Companies through WULF and WTUC:** relationships have been established with Wales TUC and WULF to engage with unionised workplaces. However, no new establishments have yet been identified.

- **Sector Specific Work:** extensive work has been undertaken with three key sectors:

  - **Care**: Work with Care Council Wales has led to links with the four regional partnerships in Wales and presentations at sector events.

  - **Education**: building on good practice in Gwynedd, a number of schools have been targeted in North Wales and in South Wales.

  - **Tourism**: through links with the Mid Wales Tourism Partnership, the sector has been identified as having a need for staff development, although arrangements for small and micro businesses will need to be organised.

  - **Other sectors**: now that the ESiW programme is available to the agriculture, fisheries and food sectors, links have been progressed to develop tailored packages of support.

- **ESF Workplace Projects:** to ensure an integrated approach, relationships have been established with the following ESF projects: Regional Essential Skills; Workforce Development Programme; Y Dyfodol; Skills for the Workforce; Want to Work; WAVE (Women Adding Value to the Economy); Pembrokeshire Energy Sector Training; Chwarae Teg; and Jobs Growth Wales.

4.40 **Marketing and Networking:** this has involved attendance at various events such as the Business Fayre in Cardiff, promotion to public sector organisations and projects, attendance at employer networking events and other conferences/events.

- **Providers:** individual and group meetings have been held with providers to establish relationships and working arrangements. From discussions with providers, they are aware of Menter a Busnes and their role. Providers, on the whole, recognise the value of another channel to employers and some have received a few leads. There is some concern regarding the low volumes of referrals to date and they are expecting increased numbers of leads over time.

- **ESiW Website:** the development of the website has been on-going and is expected to go live shortly. A presentation has been made to providers. The purpose of the website will be to articulate the benefits of essential skills training to employers and learners. It will also include case studies highlighting the benefits that employers and learners have experienced.

- **CMS Database:** the CMS system was initially envisaged as a referral system. However, discussions with the Welsh Government led to it being adapted into a database which could hold the details of training and participants from providers. However, concerns have been raised by providers that this would be unworkable for the following reasons:

  - Administrative cost of re-entering data.

- Cost of collecting and additional data.

- Feeling a new system was being imposed.

- **Promote the Employer Pledge Award:** MaB promote the Employer Pledge indirectly when discussing essential skills with an employer.

4.41 Some of the challenges to delivery that have emerged include:

- Overlap in South West Wales with another essential skills ESF funded programme (which many providers are also contracted to).

- Delays in issuing all-Wales marketing materials may have limited the impact of marketing for some events. The materials are expected to be cleared shortly.

- Getting a clear picture of exactly what provision is offered by providers, in order for MaB to promote ESiW to employers across Wales, has been a challenge. MaB has, therefore, developed a matrix which makes it clear what each consortium can deliver and where.

- One area of need identified is the lack of Welsh language provision available in South Wales.

Information generated by Menter a Busnes

4.42 The two types of performance information provided by MaB to the Welsh Government are referrals to providers and details of marketing activity.

4.43 Total referrals to March 2013 are presented in **Table 4.4**. In total, 12 providers have received referrals, ranging from one referral to 16 referrals with a mean average of 3.3 per provider.

Table 4.4: Numbers of Referrals from Menter a Busnes to Date

Referrals	Number
November 2012	2
December 2012	16
January 2013	10
February 2013	7
March 2013	4
Total (to date)	39

Source: Essential Skills in the Workplace Claim forms

4.44 In terms of evidencing marketing activity, MaB provides the Welsh Government with details of all contacts made (**Table 4.5**). Accepting that not all activity carries the same weight, a simple analysis confirms that the majority of activity has focused on establishing relationships with providers and undertaking marketing activity. There has been activity around the public sector, with unions and other ESF projects.

Table 4.5: Activities Meetings/Visits/Events undertaken by Menter a Busnes

	Anchor	RiCs	Public	Union	Sectors	ESF	Providers	Marketing
Sept 2012	0	0	0	5	0	1	16	4
Oct 2012	1	0	5	3	0	0	13	13
Nov 2012	1	0	2	6	0	1	10	11
Dec 2012	0	0	1	1	0	5	9	7
Jan 2013	2	4	2	0	3	2	13	8
Feb 2013	0	0	11	3	2	4	9	9
Mar 2013	0	1	1	2	4	2	7	4
Total	**4**	**5**	**22**	**20**	**9**	**15**	**77**	**56**

Source: Menter a Busnes Monthly Proforma/Claim Forms

4.45 To summarise, it seems too early to assess the impact of the MaB activity in engaging employers. This is in part due to the nature of activity undertaken to date. What is clear is that the number of employer referrals to providers needs to increase to meet the target number of businesses (1,003) by June 2015.

4.46 An issue to be explored in further evaluation rounds will be the results of the referrals. For example, key areas of investigation should include the quality of referrals (i.e. whether learning was delivered and how many learners were engaged through this model). It is not clear whether information is being collected in a way that would enable the Welsh Government to determine this.

4.47 MaB see their role as maximising contact with Small and Medium Sized (SME) employers across Wales. Over time, their experience should ensure the engagement of more SMEs. However, the volumes required for the overall programme target may require more emphasis on larger companies where larger numbers of learners may be found. There is a need to be clear whose role it is to work with larger companies.

4.48 The sector focus includes sectors where staff with essential skills needs are often employed but only one of the three (Tourism) is currently a Welsh Government priority sector[31]. We note this, not because there is a flaw in the strategy, but because the original intention of the ESiW programme was stated as supporting the Welsh Government priority sectors. Obviously there is time to move into other sectors as the programme develops.

---

[31] http://wales.gov.uk/topics/businessandeconomy/sectors/?lang=en. Welsh Government Priority Sectors: Creative industries; Information, Communication and Technology (ICT); Energy and Environment; Advanced materials and manufacturing; Life Sciences; Financial and Professional services; Food and Farming; Construction; Tourism.

4.49 MaB is in a unique position to capture understanding of the availability of provision on the ground. For example, it has identified challenges linked to the Rural IT element of the Programme and agriculture businesses. However, other issues exist such as overlaps with other ESF programmes, for example, the South East Wales Regional Essential Skills Programme. The intelligence collected by MaB across Wales regarding delivery issues, provider capacity and expertise, should be utilised by the ESWT in a timely fashion. This has happened to some extent, but some issues have not been discussed due to difficulties with arranging meetings, linked to the Welsh Government reorganisation. The ESWT should ensure that it can capture intelligence and if necessary influence provider activity and programme policy.

4.50 The recent challenges of implementing the CMS system may affect the relationship between MaB and providers. It is important that this situation is resolved in a way that does not negatively affect the flow of information and leads between MaB and providers.

Delivering Learning on the ESiW Programme

The Learning Offer in Phase I (April 2010 to March 2012)

4.51 Providers' access to learners was restricted initially by the requirement to undertake the Employer Pledge before delivering any learning.

"We had learners waiting to start and we couldn't get going because of all the paper work." (Provider)

4.52 Some providers stated they had become disillusioned with the programme losing confidence and impetus in delivery, focussing on other projects instead of the ESiW.

"We've got to be mindful of our other contracts and when this was taking up so much of our time we left it until problems were resolved…it's a constant juggling game." (Provider Manager)

4.53 In addition, the lack of flexibility within the learning offer in the early phase resulted in low levels of attainment in ESW qualifications. Learners were not able to take more than one qualification concurrently, and providers were not able to deliver at Level 2. These restrictions created barriers to learner engagement and progression.

4.54 Providers also stated that the remit of having a minimum number of learners on courses caused some significant problems in delivery, particularly among small employers.

"For some business, particularly in construction, where there are skills needs, but business are often small, there may only be one learner we could work with. The logistics of bringing learners together from different sites was a nightmare." (Tutor)

4.55 Therefore, Phase I (BSiW) of the programme presented some significant problems to the ESWT in terms of improving overall programme performance. In consultations, providers have credited the ESWT for making the necessary changes.

"The Welsh Government consulted with us, listened to us and has made all the necessary changes…it is now a viable offer and we can move on now and deliver." (Provider Manager)

Delivering Learning Phase II (ESiW) (April 2012 to June 2014)

4.56 The learning offer has been extended and improved in some significant areas. This has resulted in increased engagement of learners and in learner progression.

4.57 A significant extension to the offer is the inclusion of ESW qualifications at Level 2. Previous to this, learners could only progress to Level 1. Extending to Level 2 has resulted in a wider pool from which potential learners can be drawn. There were many examples of providers progressing learners from Level 1 to Level 2. To date, the programme data shows that qualifications attained at Level 2 total 328 (not including tutor training). This is 15% of the overall total. It is expected that this proportion will grow as more learners are progressed over the remainder of the programme.

4.58 A key addition at Level 2 is the inclusion of an ESW qualification in ICT. Many providers stated that this is an important hook for employers and learners into essential skills learning.

"People know they're not alone in having an IT skills need. It's easy for them to put up their hand and say, 'I need some of that'. Then, once we get them in, we can say, 'let's look at your literacy.' " (Tutor)

"For me, being able to use this programme to help implement a new way of working [hand held tablets] *has been brilliant. It's come at the right time for the changes we were implementing."* (Employer, Training Manager)

4.59 Due to the merging of the Rural IT project, providers are now able to deliver ESOL up to Level 2. Although this is not a significant element of the ESiW programme, it has benefited some providers where there is a demand for this learning, particularly in the south of Wales. To date, 21 ESOL claims have been made by providers.

4.60 The extension of the learning offer included learners being able to take units of ESW qualifications, rather than commit to a whole ESW qualification. The inclusion of ESW qualification units is also welcomed by providers. One consortium chair reported that they had used unit qualifications for *'time starved care providers'* focussing on report writing skills. Although, at the point of consulting with providers in 2012, most had not delivered unit qualifications, they felt it was a useful addition to their offer.

"Some learners are not ready to take on a whole qualification and some employers may use it as a way of testing out the learning we deliver. It has to be a good thing to have this option." (Provider)

4.61 With the improvement in programme structure and learning offer, there is a definite sense from providers that this is now a viable programme and makes sense for them to invest in with both budgets and resources. As one provider stated:

"*The 'pipeline of activity' is currently flowing which should mean that our targets will be exceeded."* (Provider)

On-going Challenges in Delivering ESiW

4.62 There are still some challenges in delivering the ESiW programme:

- Engaging employers in a period of economic downturn.

- Delivering in certain sectors is more challenging.

- Delivering learning efficiently and effectively.

4.63 Providers reported that trying to engage employers in periods of economic downturn is difficult, particularly where employers are not currently investing in training. Evidence from one of the case studies highlighted this very clearly when listening in to a number of calls conducted by telesales staff to promote the learning offer. Frequently, employers were saying that they could not afford the time, or it was not something they were considering at this moment in time, even when it was made very clear that the learning provision was free.

"It's particularly difficult to convince small employers to get involved… they just think about the cost and the delays." (Tele Sales Officer)

4.64 One private training provider stated that they worked hard to overcome this by delivering highly tailored consultancy support. Their approach was to convince employers that their offer of training and support would improve overall business performance. However, this approach requires providers to have high level business development knowledge as well as the ability to engage and teach essential skills learners.

Table 4.6: Engaging Employers through a Business Consultancy Approach

This WBL provider's approach to delivering ESiW is to provide a highly tailored business consultancy approach, drawing on sector specialist experts as and when required. The provider conducts a review of business performance more generally, which then enables them to design training solutions tailored to the business's needs, part of which is likely to include the ESiW offer.

"Engaging employers in essential skills has to be sold as if it's part of the solution, building the 'development blocks for the company, rather than identifying weak staff members. We're selling something that's free here, but there's a huge cost to the employer in staff time. You have to 'know your onions' in order to inform companies about the implications of involvement, whilst also maintaining their interest and enthusiasm." (Provider Manager)

"A great deal of groundwork needs to be done with some employers before any meaningful training can be delivered. It can't be done overnight. This means that training providers need to 'plan for the long game' in allocating funding to employers and individual employees." (Provider Manager)

Working closely with a specialist Mental Health and Learning Disability support service, the provider utilised the expertise of a sector specialist in delivering learning that contributes to their wider business needs. They have developed a successful relationship with the employer, delivering essential skills learning as part of staff development to ensure they can gain the Level 3 Children and Young People QCF qualification. Learning has been contextualised to help develop the knowledge and skills of learners as well as allow them to gain Level 2 qualifications in Communication.

According to the service manager, the ESiW training was also useful in "*getting a feel for staff who were going to be committed to doing their QCF and those who weren't."* (Care Service Manager)

The employer was impressed by the provider, stating:

"They clearly understand the pressure that we're under from the regulators to get people trained and they've been fantastic, providing a flexible, tailored approach." (Care Service Manager)

4.65 It is worth noting that the flexibility within the ESiW programme in terms of allowing more than 12 months to deliver the training and claim funding means that providers can work to develop longer term solutions for businesses. Promoting the business case for ESiW provision seems crucial in periods of economic downturn. In some cases, providers may be linking ESiW to other forms of work based learning, but there appears to be a limited amount of integration with other provision. Typically, ESW provision is being delivered as a discreet form of learning.

4.66 Providers reported challenges with delivering in certain sectors, often characterised by shift work where attending learners would upset shift patterns or, in manufacturing, where releasing staff required cover on manufacturing process lines. This is a long standing issue for many providers. Some providers have found solutions by shaping their learning offer to deliver training at night time or very early in the mornings. Some have worked with unions and the Wales TUC where WULF funding provides an additional lever to negotiating time off for staff to learn.

4.67 In addition, manufacturing organisations, characterised by large numbers of low skilled workers, often lack a training culture. As a result, there can be a lack of ownership and promotion of learning opportunities from senior managers to their staff. A number of providers reported the considerable set up time required, particularly for new employers where essentials skills training was a new provision.

"We can waste lots of time attending drop in sessions in canteens etc, but unless there is someone driving it, we're lucky if we get more than one or two learners from this." (Provider Tutor)

4.68 This is particularly the case where managers are remote from the initiative and not driving forward the learning. This can also be a feature of union-led learning and providers need to ensure that employers give out the right messages before providers spend any significant time undertaking raising awareness days.

4.69 Some providers minimise set up time by working on a one to one level with learners. This enables tutors to arrange learning times directly with learners, minimising disruption. Delivering learning in this way seemed to have advantages for both providers and learners, ensuring a tailored approach to learning, and enabling learners to progress quickly because of the intensity of support. However, this delivery model is utilised by WBL providers using tutors contracted to support. It is not an efficient use of provider resources and would not be cost effective for many providers employing tutors on a permanent basis. In addition, consultations with some learners suggests this form of learning would not suit all learners.

Building Provider Capacity in Essential Skills Delivery

4.70 A key element of the ESiW programme is to develop the skills and capacity of the provider network to respond to the increased demand for ESW qualifications. To date just 85 claims have been made by providers for tutor development.

4.71 If this is a true reflection of the level of up-skilling, this is a concern: not only in terms of the performance of the ESiW programme *per se*, but with regards to the ability of Wales to move forward at an appropriate rate to address skills deficits of adults. Consultations undertaken as part of this evaluation revealed a number of factors relating to tutor training that may be affecting take-up. These were:

- A lack of demand for training from tutors and providers.

- Access to training.

- CPD delivered among providers reducing demand for formal higher level training.

4.72 Interviews with providers were conducted in the summer of 2012, as the programme was just beginning to have an impact. At this point, although there was some evidence of a few providers recruiting one or two additional tutors, this had not become a pressing issue for most providers. Indeed, providers were choosing to reduce the size of their contracts rather than focus on recruiting additional staff to meet demanding targets.

4.73 Whilst delivering essential skills training to adult learners requires a particular set of skills and knowledge, the ESiW programme offers providers the opportunity to expand and develop teaching skills in applicants that may not come from a teaching background but could have business development expertise or industry related experience. However, there was very little evidence of any kind of recruitment strategy that would enable FEIs in particular to expand their delivery in the workplace.

4.74 Some WBL providers that are more commercially oriented are expanding their essential skills teams, training staff and developing their business/learning offer, while others are not. A point for the ESWT to consider is whether there is an opportunity for these providers to receive business support themselves to help them develop their training and learning provision.

4.75 Providers, when asked about the qualification levels held by essential skills tutors, reported that most were trained to Level 3, a few held a Level 4 qualification and a few held a Level 5 qualification. Most essential skills tutors reported that having a Level 3 qualification was sufficient. What was considered to be more important, once a Level 3 had been attained, was ensuring that staff have appropriate skills and knowledge regarding how to contextualise learning in different businesses/sectors.

4.76 Some providers reported how working as part of a consortium had helped develop knowledge and expertise, particularly across provider 'types' (FEIs, WBL and ACL). One WBL tutor and chair of a consortium (FEI) described how they had undertaken peer mentoring of each other's delivery and provided feedback as to how lessons could be improved. However, examples of this were few.

4.77 Some WBL providers were delivering training 'in-house' bringing in external assessors to accredit the training.

4.78 There was recognition of training needs among staff, particularly with the change in the learning offer now including the IT ESW qualification:

"We're having to look at our own skill set now and admit that we don't have the right mix of skills to deliver IT alongside literacy [Communication] *and numeracy."*

4.79 A small number of providers reported some access issues to provision, particularly in the mid-Wales where one organisation said that accessing training required considerable travel. One provider stated that it is easier to access training in the North of Wales since the start of the programme. One provider stated that accessing ESOL tutor training in South Wales was difficult and as a result had learners waiting.

4.80 Currently, the overall picture of the impact the ESiW programme on capacity building appears to be one of (relatively) low levels of demand among providers to both identify potential tutors and to develop tutors' skills beyond Level 3.

The value of the Post-16 Quality Standard

4.81 This evaluation consulted with seventeen providers on the value of the post-16 Quality Standard to individual providers and the provider network more generally. There was consensus around the fact that the standard provided quality assurances for the network, ensuring a benchmark for good quality essential (basic) skills delivery. However, concerns were expressed about duplication of effort in the assessment process with the Estyn Common Inspection Framework, provider Self Assessment Procedures (SARs) and the Quality and Curriculum Framework (QCF).

4.82 Following submission of a previous report[32], the standard has been reviewed and the Welsh Government is proposing to move to a system of voluntary accreditation of providers.

4.83 Of relevance to this section, in terms of developing provider capacity, is the potential to adapt an element of the standard to encourage providers to engage with local business to establish local business needs and relationships. Providers were asked to use local data to establish learning needs. While this has considerable merit, there was little evidence of how this exercise influenced providers' essential skills strategies and promoted training to business. As one employer from a manufacturing company reported in a case study visit:

"Providers need to get face to face with businesses to understand what we need." (Employer)

4.84 This evaluation does not have evidence that providers have not done this and, clearly, the provider network is very strong and active in Wales.

---

[32] Welsh Government (2012). *Review of the Post-16 Quality Standard.*

5   Impact on Employers

Summary

5.1   Prior to involvement in the ESiW programme, most employers (64%) did not recognise the lack of essential skills in their workforce as a major issue, with only a quarter of all employers (25%) having delivered any essential skills training. Evidence here demonstrates that the programme has influenced this awareness and engagement significantly. The programme is delivering high levels of additionality with over half (54%) of employers reporting they would *probably not* or *definitely not* have delivered essential skills training anyway.

5.2   Among employers, there were very high levels of satisfaction with the training with nearly nine of out ten (88%) employers rating the quality of the training as *good* or *excellent.* Employers were very satisfied with the training arrangements and frequency of training delivered. Most employers (89%) recognised that the learning delivered was made relevant to the workplace and/or job responsibilities (89%). Crucially, nearly four fifths of employers (79%) said that the training had *met* or *exceeded* their expectations.

5.3   Employers were also recognising the impact of the training on learners' skills and confidence levels including improved communication, customer service skills and reduced sick leave. Organisationally, a half were reporting improved productivity and an improved public image.

5.4   There is strong indication that essential skills learning is becoming embedded into a training culture within participating companies, with three quarters of all employers reporting staff were given time off to undertake training. A third of employers have provided further essential skills training to employees over the last year. This suggests that the support has led to more employers engaging in essential skills training, given only 25% were involved in training prior to the ESiW programme. This is encouraging and demonstrates a real investment and commitment by the employer.

Introduction

5.5 This section looks at the impact of the programme on employers. Evidence for this section is drawn from the employer survey and workplace case studies.

5.6 The total number of survey responses received from employers was 107[33]. The survey was undertaken in two rounds: round 1 (July 2012) resulted in 42 responses and round 2 (February 2013), 65 responses.

5.7 There are a number of methodological issues related to the design of the questionnaire between the two survey rounds, which need to be considered. These relate to the changes of the offer from BSiW to ESiW and the inclusion of ICT in the latter programme. Questions regarding ICT were only asked to employers in the second round. In addition, some amendments to response categories were made to reduce responses to a four point rather than a six point scale. Responses from the first round were grouped in order to report total responses across both surveys. For more explanation, see **Annex D**. Responses generated are representative of the proportion of employers engaged on the programme to date:

- 69% (n=74) of respondent employers were from Convergence areas (the proportion engaged to date on ESiW is 66% (828 employers).

- 31% (n=33) of respondent employers were from Competitiveness areas (the proportion engaged to date on ESiW is 34% (426 employers).

5.8 Generally, statistical data from the employer survey is not significant when broken down to Convergence and Competitiveness areas.

5.9 Responses were generated from all 22 local authority areas of Wales.

---

[33] Therefore numbers reported as "n=" are out of 107, unless there were non-responses.

Essential Skills Issues and Previous Training

Background information

5.10 Prior to engaging in the ESiW programme, almost two thirds of employers (64%, n=69) felt the lack of essential skills amongst their workforce was a *small* or *very small* issue (see **Table 5.1**). A third (n=36) felt it was a *very significant* or *significant* issue.

Table 5.1: Prior to engaging in the ESiW programme, how much of an issue was the lack of essential skills amongst your workforce?...by Competitive and Convergence areas[34]

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Very significant issue	11 (15%)	2 (6%)	13 (12%)
Significant issue	15 (20%)	8 (24%)	23 (21%)
Small issue	27 (36%)	12 (36%)	39 (36%)
Very small issue	19 (26%)	11 (33%)	30 (28%)
Don't know/No reply	2 (3%)	-	2 (1%)
Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Base=107 employers

5.11 Prior to engaging in the ESiW programme, half of employers (n=53) thought that communication skills posed one of the biggest issues for their organisation (see **Table 5.2**). 47% (n=50) and 44% (n=47) thought numeracy and literacy, respectively, posed one of the biggest issues. 9% (n=10) thought English as a second language (ESOL) posed one of the biggest issues.

---

[34] Totals presented in the tables may not equal 100% due to rounding

Table 5.2: Which areas of poor essential skills posed the biggest issue(s) for your organisation?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Communication	38 (51%)	15 (45%)	53 (50%)
Literacy	33 (45%)	14 (42%)	47 (44%)
Numeracy	33 (45%)	17 (52%)	50 (47%)
English as a second language (ESOL)	5 (7%)	5 (15%)	10 (9%)
Don't know/No reply	3 (4%)	1 (3%)	4 (4%)

Multi-response question; Base=107 employers

5.12 **Table 5.3** shows how employers thought low level essential skills affected their workforce.

Table 5.3: In what way did low level essential skills in the workforce impact on the organisation?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
It affected communication with customers or other organisations	27 (36%)	11 (33%)	38 (36%)
It affected our workforce relations	22 (30%)	4 (12%)	26 (24%)
It affected staff productivity	21 (28%)	4 (12%)	25 (23%)
It affected our customer service	21 (28%)	3 (9%)	24 (22%)
It affected staff motivation	19 (26%)	4 (12%)	23 (21%)
It affected our public image	12 (16%)	1 (3%)	13 (12%)
It affected business sales	7 (9%)	1 (3%)	8 (7%)
It affected staff turnover/retention	6 (8%)	-	6 (6%)
It had no impact upon the business	16 (22%)	8 (24%)	24 (22%)
Other (specify)	19 (26%)	12 (36%)	31 (29%)

Multi-response question; Base=107 employers; responses sorted for ease of reading from the original questionnaire order.

5.13 Over a third of employers (36%, n=38) thought that low level essential skills in the workforce affected communication with customers and other organisations. Other areas identified by more than a fifth of businesses included workforce relations, staff productivity, customer service and staff motivation.

5.14 Just over a fifth of employers (22%, n=24) thought that low level essential skills in the workforce had not affected their business (see Table 5.3).

5.15 Qualitative results from the employer survey showed that employers recognised the impact of skills deficits in literacy, numeracy, IT related skills and personal attributes, such as a lack of confidence (see **Table 5.4**).

Table 5.4: Employers Recognising Skills Deficits in the Workplace

"This only became evident when we got a new computer system and some staff did not know how to work with computers."

"It affected email communication in particular."

"We had concerns over staff's low levels of numeracy, potentially affecting the administration of medicine accurately."

"We had issues with number work when staff were inputting data."

"It affected the ability of the company to expand and for staff to progress through the organisation."

Source: Employer Survey Data

5.16 Two of the qualitative responses from the survey were from providers that reiterated the need to up-skill their tutors:

"It affected the ability of staff to support learners."

"It affected the ability to teach people up to date ICT skills."

5.17 One of the workplace case studies from the construction sector showed that an employer used the training specifically to address compliance to health and safety rules and directions regarding handling substances hazardous to health.

Table 5.5: Prior to getting involved with the ESiW programme, had the organisation been involved in (or provided) any previous essential skills training to employees at all?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Yes	19 (26%)	8 (24%)	27 (25%)
No	52 (70%)	24 (73%)	76 (71%)
Don't know	3 (4%)	1 (3%)	4 (4%)

Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Base=107 employers

5.18 **Table 5.5** shows that a quarter of employers (25%, n=27) said that the organisation had been involved in (or provided) essential skills training to employees, prior to their involvement in the ESiW programme. This suggests the programme is successfully engaging 71% (n=76) of new employers who had not previously provided essential skills training.

5.19 **Table 5.6** shows in that area employers had previously provided training.

Table 5.6: What was the nature of the essential skills training made available?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Communication (reading, writing, listening and talking)	18 (95%)	8 (100%)	26 (96%)
Numeracy	10 (53%)	4 (50%)	14 (52%)
ICT	4 (21%)	-	4 (15%)
English as a second language (ESOL)	2 (11%)	-	2 (7%)
Total	19 (100%)	8 (100%)	27 (100%)

Multi-response question; Base=27 employers who said 'yes' to the question: Prior to getting involved with the ESiW programme, had the organisation been involved in (or provided) any previous essential skills training to employees at all.

5.20 Of the 27 employers who had been involved in (or provided) essential skills training to employers prior to their involvement in the ESiW programme, almost all (96%, n=26) had undertaken training in Communication. Just over half (52%, n=14) undertook training in Numeracy. Smaller proportions had undertaken ICT and ESOL training.

5.21 Of those that had been involved in previous training (27), 30% (n = 8) had paid for it from their own company funds and two thirds (66%, n = 18) had used Government or provider funding.

Engagement in ESiW

5.22 The most common way to first hear about the ESiW programme was directly from a provider (48%, n=51). The next most common way was from a Welsh Government member of staff (17%, n=18). Others heard from a mixture of other employees/colleagues (5%) and from promotional material (5%). Smaller numbers of employers heard through other routes such as networking, through existing training schemes (Apprenticeships) and voluntary and community organisations/conferences.

5.23 **Table 5.7** shows what it was about the programme that appealed to employers.

Table 5.7: What was it about the ESiW programme that appealed to you as an employer?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Free training	33 (45%)	19 (58%)	52 (49%)
Provision of training at the business premises	29 (39%)	12 (36%)	41 (38%)
Tailored training to meet business needs	34 (46%)	5 (15%)	39 (36%)
Assistance to identify training needs	27 (36%)	5 (15%)	32 (30%)
Subsidised training	3 (4%)	2 (6%)	5 (5%)
Other	29 (39%)	15 (45%)	44 (41%)
Don't Know	3 (3%)		3 (3%)
Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Multi-response question; Base=107 employers

5.24 The attribute of the programme that most appealed to employers was that the training was free (49%, n=52). This was followed by that fact that provision was delivered at the business premises (38%, n=41); that the training was tailored to meet business needs (36%, n=39); and that there was assistance in identifying training needs (30%, n=32).

5.25 Although not statistically significant, higher proportions of employers in Convergence areas cited 'tailored training to meet business needs' and 'assistance in identifying training needs' as appealing attributes of the programme, compared with those in Competitiveness areas.

5.26 For all employers in the case studies, the fact that training could be made available to them on site was very important.

"This minimises disruption in terms of the time that staff need to do the training. It also means we're in control of it so they can do a morning's work and then go in to the training cabin for the afternoon for a couple of hours." (Construction Employer)

5.27 **Table 5.8** shows the reason why employers engaged in the programme.

Table 5.8: Reasons for Employers Engaging in the Programme

"It will help with using our new operating system."
"We want to get staff working to a higher standard."
"We wanted to up-skill staff to better help clients, and to communicate better with managers."
"The advantages that it could bring to employees to improve work rate and effectiveness"
"To offer career paths rather than just jobs."
"Investing in staff so that they felt valued."
"It provided an opportunity for everyone to get involved."

5.28 The majority of the qualitative comments refer to the advantages of up-skilling staff to the business, but there is also recognition that it benefits staff personally.

5.29 One employer case study from the Care sector demonstrated the importance of ensuring that all staff had appropriate levels of literacy.

"Given the level of scrutiny which we are subjected to by regulators and commissioners, it is essential that paperwork (most records are maintained in paper rather than electronic form) is 'up to scratch' and the impact of

mistakes arising out of weak literacy skills is, therefore, potentially great."
(Employer)

5.30 This employer had, to an extent, got round the literacy issues by adopting tick boxes in forms and had put a lot of training material into audio format on the computers.

"It was about putting in extra support for those with literacy issues."
(Employer)

5.31 Now that the training is offered free of charge, it gave this employer an opportunity to up-skill with no additional charge and with the potential to reduce the longer term burden on support required.

Views of Training Delivered

5.32 **Table 5.9** shows the level of satisfaction with training arrangements.

Table 5.9: Overall how satisfied were you with the arrangements for putting the training into place at your organisation?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Very satisfied	55 (74%)	25 (76%)	80 (75%)
Fairly satisfied	15 (20%)	5 (15%)	20 (19%)
Dissatisfied	2 (3%)	1 (3%)	3 (3%)
Very dissatisfied	-	2 (6%)	2 (2%)
Don't know	2 (3%)	-	2 (2%)
Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Base=107 employers

5.33 Three quarters of employers were very satisfied (75%, n=80) with the arrangements for putting the training into place at their organisation. Combining those who were very and fairly satisfied, this gives 94% satisfaction. A small minority were dissatisfied (3%, n=3) and very dissatisfied (2%, n=2). A few comments from the survey regarding issues related to the timing of training describe some of the reasons:

"Due to staff undertaking part time and shift work, it was difficult to arrange training."

"It was difficult for employees working on a rota basis, to have to come in for training, e.g. following a night shift."

"The timing - ran from 5pm until 7pm in the evening, so staff had to stay behind."

5.34 There are examples from employer case studies where providers have made considerable efforts to make tutors available outside of standard working times (for example at 6 in the morning before shifts start), but delivering to shift workers is still a considerable barrier for many employers.

Learner to employer ratios

5.35 **Table 5.10** shows how many employees, employers reported were accessing training.

Table 5.10: In total, how many employees have accessed essential skills training via the ESiW programme?... by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Between 1 and 5	39 (53%)	16 (48%)	55 (51%)
Between 6 and 10	17 (23%)	9 (27%)	26 (24%)
Between 11 and 15	3 (4%)	3 (9%)	6 (6%)
Between 16 and 20	3 (4%)	1 (3%)	4 (4%)
Between 21 and 25	3 (4%)	-	3 (3%)
26 or more	8 (11%)	4 (12%)	12 (11%)
No reply	1 (1%)	-	1 (1%)
Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Base=107 employers

5.36 One of the issues raised in the performance of the programme was the learner to employer ratios (see **Section 3**). The performance data indicated that, on average, there are just over three learners per employer.

91

5.37 Table 5.10 shows that just over half of all employers (51%, n=55) reported that between one and five employees had accessed the programme). This will be in part, due to a relaxation of the minimum quotas for providers delivering learning.

5.38 Just over one in ten employers (11%, n=12) said that 26 or more employees had accessed the programme.

5.39 The survey data reports higher numbers of learners per employer compared with performance data. When taking the mid-point of each category and assume 28 as the midpoint for the '26 or more' category then the average number of learners per employer is 8.6 compared with 3.3 from performance data. The likely explanation is that these are employers who have been on the programme longer, hence they had more chance for employees to engage. Additionally, there are probably more larger employers than across the total numbers engaged on the programme. (Information about the size of employers is not available so this cannot be corroborated).

5.40 A number of providers delivered learning on a one-to-one basis. As a model of delivery, this has limitations in terms of engaging sufficient learners on to the programme. In addition, it also limits the extent to which employers recognised the value of up-skilling staff to their business. One employer case study revealed a level of disinterest from the overall manager of a large maintenance and repair company who *"would not have a view as to the benefits of the learning on the company"*; due to just two learners participating in the ESiW programme to date.

Time off to Learn

5.41 Encouragingly, three quarters of employers (75%, n=80) said that staff were given time off work to undertake learning and 10% (n=11) of employers said the time to undertake the training was split between work and personal time, with 15% (n=16) saying were required to undertake training in their own time.

5.42 Qualitative evidence confirms this mix; with some employers providing a 50/50 split with workers being released from duty an hour early but being asked to give up an hour of their time in order to demonstrate their commitment to learning. Other workers were allowed to study with tutors during the day as and when the lessons were scheduled.

5.43 Local authorities have particular arrangements agreed often through workplace learning agreements with unions. This often secures some time off to learn.

5.44 One local authority case study showed that a consensus had been reached regarding training, whereby the council allowed staff to use their works' vehicles to travel to the training. The training started at 16:30 and finished at 18.30 and the council allowed half an hour off work to travel to the training.

Contextualised learning

5.45 **Table 5.11** shows that nine in ten employers (89%, n=95) stated that the learning delivered was made relevant to the workplace and/or job responsibilities and a small minority said 'no' (6%, n=6).

Table 5.11: Was the learning delivered made relevant to the workplace/job responsibilities... by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Yes	67 (91%)	28 (85%)	95 (89%)
No	3 (4%)	3 (9%)	6 (6%)
Don't know/remember	4 (5%)	2 (6%)	6 (6%)
Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Base=107 employers

5.46 The benefits of contextualised learning for the learner were very clearly seen in the employer case studies. There were many examples of providers delivering learning that was closely relevant to the skills and knowledge that employees needed.

5.47 One example was of a learner undertaking ICT and Numeracy Level 1 learning concurrently. She had been given a project by her employer to investigate disparities in payments from a large retailer for the organisation's service. The learner worked with the tutor to plan and undertake the numerical task and to develop a presentation of the findings to her employer using spreadsheets and PowerPoint.

Nature of training

5.48 Three quarters of employers (75%, n=80) said that the nature of training delivered included communication skills, followed by 64% (n=69) who said numeracy skills. A quarter indicated the training delivered included ICT skills and just under a tenth indicated ESOL (9%, n=10).

5.49 Around half of employers stated that all their employees went on to secure at least one type of essential/essential skills qualification. Employers reported the qualifications obtained by employees were:

- Communication Level 1 (31%).
- Application of Number Level 1 (25%).
- Communication Level 2 (21%).
- Application of Number Level 2 (21%).
- Communication Entry Level (12%).
- ICT Level 1 (5%).

5.50 **Table 5.12** shows how valuable employers consider essential skills qualifications to their organisation.

Table 5.12: How valuable do you consider these qualifications to your organisation?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Very valuable	43 (66%)	16 (62%)	59 (65%)
Fairly valuable	12 (18%)	6 (23%)	18 (20%)
Not valuable	1 (2%)	1 (4%)	2 (2%)
Not at all valuable	-	-	-
Don't know/No reply	9 (14%)	3 (12%)	12 (13%)
Total	65 (100%)	26 (100%)	91 (100%)

Base=91 employers

5.51 Nearly two thirds of employers said that the qualifications were very valuable to their organisation (65%, n=59); a fifth (20%, n=18) said fairly valuable, although 13% (n=12) said that they did not know.

5.52 For a few employers, the ESiW training was an essential part of their workforce development and underpinned other forms of training required by industry. For example, one social care provider used the training as a way of ensuring that all learners were prepared for the Level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma QCF qualification.

5.53 Other changes in industry (for example: increased regulation in the water industry and increased computerisation in the rail industry) has placed additional skills demands on workers. Using the ESiW qualifications and contextualised learning provides a method by which companies have developed the essential skills and knowledge required for their industry.

5.54 Many employers responding to the survey commented that by providing their workforce with the opportunity to up-skill helped demonstrate they were investing in their workforce.

"It helps demonstrate our commitment to continuous professional development."

"It shows our willingness as a company to invest in our staff."

"Training shows that we invest in our staff and their skills."

Engagement in the Employer Pledge Award (EPA)

5.55 Just over a third of employers said that they had secured the Employer Pledge (36%, n=38); a further 5% had applied for it (n=5) (see **Table 5.13**). However, national programme performance data shows that no claims have been made against the EPA to date. These employers may have gained the Employer Pledge prior to this programme.

Table 5.13: Has your business applied for, or secured the Employer Pledge Award?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Yes - secured it	29 (39%)	9 (27%)	38 (36%)
Yes - Applied for it	3 (4%)	2 (6%)	5 (5%)
No - Not applied for it	24 (32%)	15 (45%)	39 (36%)
Don't know	18 (24%)	7 (21%)	25 (23%)
Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Base=107 employers

5.56 Just over a third of employers had not applied for it (36%, n=39) and just under a quarter did not know (23%, n=25).

Table 5.14: Reasons Why Employer Applied for the Employer Pledge

"[The Employer Pledge] *helps ensure consistency in the documents produced."*

"[The Employer Pledge] *gave a focus to the training and way of running the business."*

"[The Employer Pledge] *grounds everything and underpins training."*

"It helped to identify those who had opportunities with company."*

"Promoting organisation as a good local employer, and maintain links with local college."

"[The Employer Pledge] shows willingness to train and support staff."

"Shows commitment to want to invest in employees, and to the outside it can demonstrate being a good employer."

5.57 The main reason why employers said that they had applied for the Employer Pledge was to demonstrate their commitment to training the workforce (42%, n=18). **Table 5.14** shows qualitative responses from employers regarding the Employer Pledge. This shows a range of recognised benefits including embedding a systematic focus on delivering essential skills and promoting the company's support of staff training.

5.58 The main reason why employers did not apply for the Employer Pledge were because they were not aware of it or had not considered it (69%, n=27).

Satisfaction with the Training Received

5.59 **Table 5.15** shows that the majority of employers reported very good experiences of the training received under the ESiW programme.

Table 5.15: How closely did the essential skills provision made available via the ESiW programme match your expectations as an employer... by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Exceeded expectations	6 (8%)	10 (30%)	16 (15%)
Met expectations	52 (70%)	17 (52%)	69 (64%)
Did not live up to expectations	11 (15%)	6 (18%)	17 (16%)
Don't know	5 (7%)	-	5 (5%)
Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Base=107 employers

5.60 Nearly four fifths of employers (79%, n=85) responding to the survey stated that the ESiW programme had *met* or *exceeded* their expectations. Employers also stated they were likely to use the learning providers again, with 79% (n=85) saying that they would *definitely* do so and 9% (n=9) said they probably would.

5.61 The case studies revealed some very positive stories about the relationships developed between employers and providers. One provider helped develop an employer's approach to recruitment and induction and worked with the employer to develop methods of identifying essential skills needs in all new recruits.

"We now have a system that identifies any skills needs in these essential areas…this is part of a process, is very transparent and is seen as part of staff development overall, with no stigma. It's been a huge step in the right direction for us."

5.62 88% of employers stated that the quality of the training received was either excellent or good. Employers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the frequency of training (90%, n=97).

5.63 However, 16% of employers (n=17) responded that the programme *did not live up to expectations*. A few employers gave responses in the survey regarding the reasons for their dissatisfaction (see **Table 5.16**).

Table 5.16: Employers' Reasons for Dissatisfaction with the Training

"It didn't provide what the employees needed."

"Basically, it didn't train employees, training needs not addressed."

"The training course was waiting for funding before being able to continue and we decided as a company to change providers due to the length of time it took to complete the course."

"I would say that the assessor needed training himself, he left before course finished and wasn't replaced."

"[They were] *un-professional, unprepared, not well organised, there were gaps in training dates and tutors changed often."*

5.64 Due to this dissatisfaction, 9% (n=9) said they would either *probably not* or *definitely not* use the learning provider again.

5.65 This shows that over two thirds of employers (66%, n=67) identified aspects of the training that went particularly well. **Table 5.7** details more comments from employers regarding what went well:

Table 5.17: Employers' Reasons on their Satisfaction with the Training

"*The computer work and the ability of the provider to adapt the content of the course to suit our needs.*"
"*The training was linked in to subjects to which staff could relate.*"
"*The development of confidence and impact on productivity.*"
"*On site training which made it relevant to the work undertaken.*"
"*I appreciated financial assistance with the training and the fact that workers could complete the course during work hours.*"
"*Initial assessments were very useful.*"
"*Initial assessment has become part of company procedure.*"
"*Engaged with the staff very well - lots of effort made by provider.*"
"*The fact that the trainer was flexible and also empathetic with the individual being trained.*"
"*The flexibility worked well - shifts, timing and this was business critical.*"

5.66 These comments clearly show the strength of relationships developed between provider and employer and the flexibility of provision.

5.67 Under two fifths of employers (38%%, n=41) identified aspects of the training that could have been improved. These aspects are included in **Table 5.18**.

Table 5.18: Aspects of Training that could be improved

"*Some staff found it difficult to focus when only on a course every three weeks.*"
"*Tutors missing sessions - as training was only an hour a week can be difficult to remember previous work.*"
"*Trainers were not correcting employees; they just seemed to be getting them through course - didn't get anything out of it.*"
"*The length of time it took to train workers. The course could have been completed in a shorter period of time.*"
"*Time scale was quite intense.*"
"*More information was needed at the beginning. It was a bit of an unknown to start.*"
"*It needed integrating more it into our work, not taught in the class.*"
"*The training was restricted to 9-5, but staff work 24 hour shift patterns. Sometimes it was difficult to fit in training.*"

5.68 These comments reveal some concerns over the duration of the course, for some it was too long, and for others, too short. There is clearly a need for providers to tailor the programme to suit the needs of both learners and employers. Providers also need to manage expectations of employers and to communicate the course content.

5.69 Some providers do manage to deliver to business shift patterns, as demonstrated in the positive comments. Providers delivering in sectors characterised by shift patterns, need to develop a training strategy to ensure that staff working to shift patterns, have equal access to the learning opportunity.

Impact of ESiW Training

5.70 As a result of employers' involvement in the ESiW programme, employers identified improvements in workforce communication skills (72%, n=77), followed by workforce numeracy skills (58%, n=62) (see **Table 5.19**). Just over a third of employers (35%, n=37) identified improvements in ICT skills (this is likely to be higher towards the end of the programme as more employers engage in ICT training as the programme progresses). These percentages are broadly in line with the proportions of employers indicating the training was covering the respective area; although only 25% of employers said they were undertaking ICT training – suggesting that some employers see ICT impacts resulting from ESiW training in other areas.

Table 5.19: As a result of your involvement in the ESiW programme has your organisations experienced an… ... by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Improvement in workforce numeracy skills	42 (57%)	20 (61%)	62 (58%)
Improvement in workforce communication skills	54 (73%)	23 (70%)	77 (72%)
Improvement in workforce ICT skills	21 (28%)	16 (48%)	37 (35%)

Base=107 employers; Respondents replying 'yes' compared to all other responses (no, don't know, no reply)

5.71 Related to the question at Table 5.17, **Figure 5.1** shows that a slightly higher number of employers (22%, n=24) did not feel that there had been an improvement in numeracy skills. A large number of employers (54%, n=58) said they did not know or were unable to reply on the question of whether there had been an improvement in ICT skills (most likely because so few have undertaken ICT skills training).

Figure 5.1: As a result of your involvement in the ESiW programme has your organisation experienced an…...by Competitive and Convergence areas
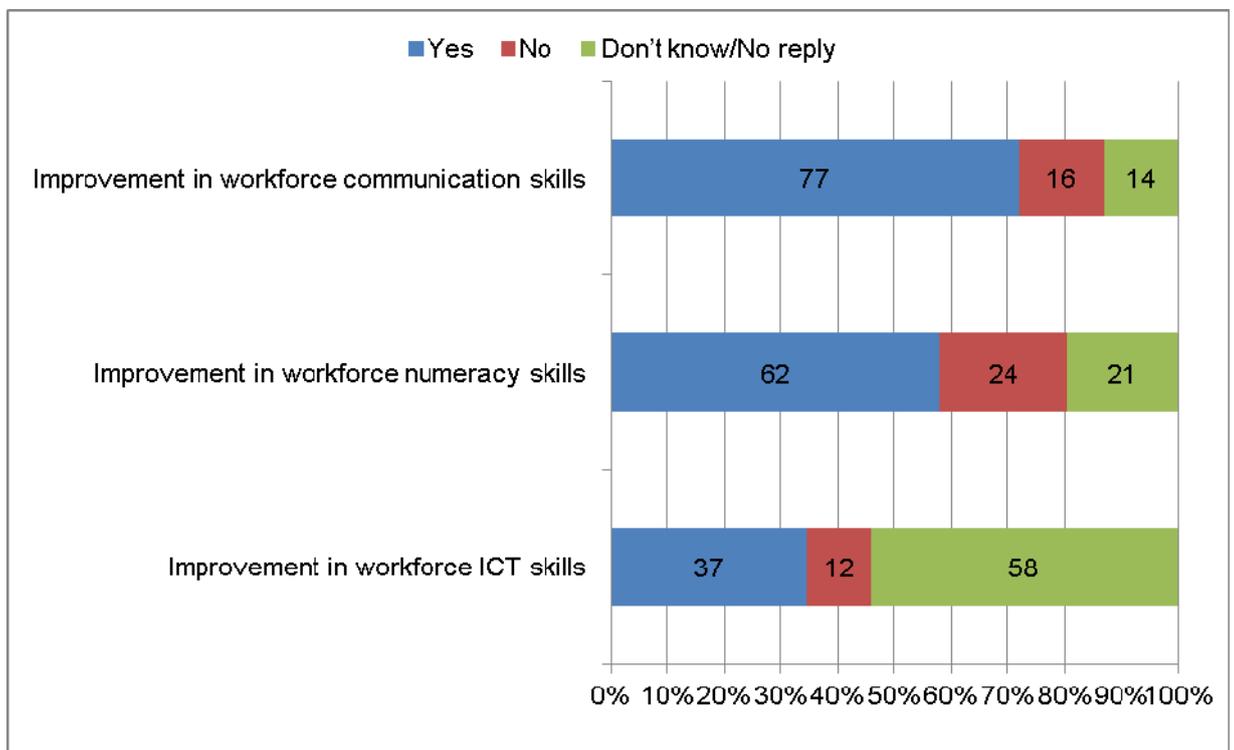
Base=107 employers

5.72 **Figure 5.1** shows that a slightly higher number of employers (22%, n=24) did not feel that there had been an improvement in numeracy skills. A large number of employers (54%, n=58) said they did not know or were unable to reply on the question of whether there had been an improvement in ICT skills (most likely because so few have undertaken ICT skills training).

5.73 Employers in the case studies revealed an increased confidence in their workforce's ability to carry out certain tasks. These included:

- Following health and safety instructions.

- Improved report writing on client's health and welfare needs.

- Handling calculations for staff's mileage claims.

- Understanding measurements to help set up high specification machinery.

5.74 One of the key areas that employers often commented on was the increase in staff's abilities and confidence in working independently. One case study showed how, instead of a worker asking for advice about an instruction, he would take a little more time, read it himself and then carry out the task required. This prevented others from having to help him and so minimised disruption on the manufacturing shop floor. Another case study generated evidence from an employer describing the impact on his workers at a construction company (see **Table 5.20**).

Table 5.20: Benefits of Training to a Construction Business

Starting in November, two courses were delivered (the first on communication and the second on numeracy, both at Level 1) with the same four learners. All learners were men ranging from their early 30s to their late 50s. Three were employed as carpenters and one was a site foreman. The Managing Director reported that the feedback he had received from them had been very encouraging. The employer reported the main benefits of the training to him were an increased compliance with health and safety requirements: *"They understand all their documentation now and can sign it themselves."* He also argued that the four employees have grown in confidence and are more able to tackle some elements of their work individually. For example: "[Name of worker] *can now write a request for materials that he needs. He would not have done that before".* He also noted that it was more likely that they keep their own time-sheets now (whereas before they would have probably asked their wives or partners to do it for fear of getting their spelling wrong). He also hoped that the training had led to an increase in their self-worth as they realised the business was investing in their personal development.

5.75 The increased confidence in workers revealed in some of the case studies is corroborated by findings from the employer survey: 81% (n=87) of employers reported *greater confidence and enthusiasm at work* and being *able to undertake jobs better* (81%, n=87) (see **Table 5.21**). There was also impact on *improved morale* (73%, n=78) and *reduced absenteeism/sickness* (71%, n=76), *willingness to take on responsibility* (65%, n=70) and *improved compliance with health and safety practices* (61%, n=65).

Table 5.21: As a result of your involvement in the ESIW programme have you observed any of the following impacts amongst those recently engaged in training?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Greater confidence and enthusiasm to work	60 (81%)	27 (82%)	87 (81%)
Able to undertake jobs better	60 (81%)	27 (82%)	87 (81%)
Improved morale	55 (74%)	23 (70%)	78 (73%)
Reduced absenteeism/sickness	52 (70%)	24 (73%)	76 (71%)
Willingness to take on responsibility	47 (64%)	23 (70%)	70 (65%)
Improved compliance with health and safety practices	43 (58%)	22 (67%)	65 (61%)
More prepared to contribute at meetings	15 (20%)	3 (9%)	18 (17%)

Base=107 employers; Respondents replying 'yes' compared to all other responses (no, don't know, no reply)
Note: responses sorted for ease of reading

5.76 **Figure 5.2** shows how the 'no' and non-responses break down.

Figure 5.2: As a result of your involvement in the ESIW programme have you observed any of the following impacts amongst those recently engaged in training?...by Competitive and Convergence areas
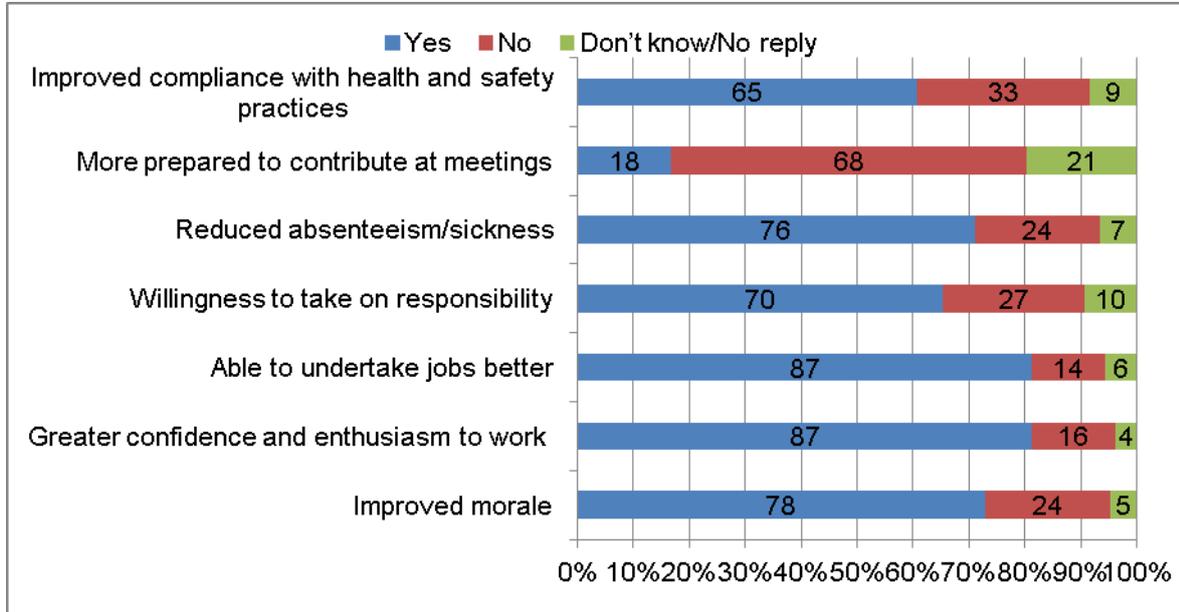
Base= 107 Employers

5.77 his indicates some gaps in employers' recognition of improved skills, with 68% (n=73) recognising no impact on improved communication in meetings, 33% (n=35) recognising no improvement in Health and Safety compliance and 27% (n=29) reporting no change in willingness of staff to take on additional responsibility.

5.78 Benefits to employees in terms of immediate rewards have not been a key feature of increased skills. Over half of employers (54%, n=58) said that *none* of their staff had been promoted or taken on different roles or received increased pay as a result of the training. This may be because not all the training is directly relevant to a person's job role; this was evident in a case study visit to a public sector organisation where employees had volunteered for essential skills training through a union-facilitated route.

5.79 In terms of notable benefits to employers, 70% (n=75) of employers observed *improved customer service* as a result of staff's improved skills (see **Table 5.22**).

Table 5.22: Have you observed any of the following impacts to organisational performance as a result of your involvement with the ESiW programme?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Improved customer service	52 (70%)	23 (70%)	75 (70%)
Improved communication with customers or other organisations	50 (68%)	20 (61%)	70 (65%)
Raised workforce productivity	39 (53%)	20 (61%)	59 (55%)
Improved public image of organisation	44 (59%)	11 (33%)	55 (51%)
Increased organisation competitiveness	29 (39%)	9 (27%)	38 (36%)
Reduced staff turnover	21 (28%)	9 (27%)	30 (28%)
Increase in sales	15 (20%)	4 (12%)	19 (18%)

Base=107 employers; Respondents replying 'yes' compared to all other responses (no, don't know, no reply)

Note: responses sorted for ease of reading

5.80 This was followed by *improved communication with customers or other organisations* (65%, n=70) and *raised workforce productivity* (55%, n=59). Just over half (51%, n=55) felt that being involved in the ESiW programme had *improved their public image.* Over a third of employers observed *increased organisation competitiveness* (36%, n=38), over a quarter (28%, n=30) *reduced staff turnover* and just less than a fifth (18%, n=19), *an increase in sales.* These are important factors that can influence the profitability of a business.

5.81 These responses are broadly in line with the order of responses to the earlier question about the way in which low levels of essential skills impacted on the organisation (**Table 5.3**); suggesting that the programme has been successful in addressing the key areas identified as problems by employers.

5.82 **Figure 5.3** shows how the response 'no' and non-responses break down. More than half of employers said that they had not observed increases in sales (51%, n=55), reductions in staff turnover (51%, n=55) or increases in organisation competitiveness (54%, n=58).

Figure 5.3: Have you observed any of the following impacts to organisational performance as a result of your involvement with the ESiW programme?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

Base= 107 Employers

5.83 In terms of the positive effects of the training, **Table 5.23** shows that 38% (n=40) of employers reported the positive impacts *exceeded* or *far exceeded* their expectations.

Table 5.23: How closely did any positive effects of the training provision match your initial expectations?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Far exceeded expectations	6 (8%)	1 (3%)	7 (7%)
Exceeded expectations	20 (27%)	13 (39%)	33 (31%)
Met expectations exactly	31 (42%)	14 (42%)	45 (42%)
Didn't quite live up to expectations	9 (12%)	2 (6%)	11 (10%)
Didn't live up to expectations at all	2 (3%)	2 (6%)	4 (4%)
Don't know	6 (8%)	1 (3%)	7 (7%)
Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Base=107 Employers

5.84 For 42% (n=45) it met expectations exactly. However for 14% (n=15), it *did not quite live up to expectations* or *did not live up to expectations at all* (employers did not give reasons why the positive effects had not met their expectations). This may indicate a need for continual improvement of the quality of training as well as improved dialogue between providers and employers regarding both the content of the planned training and the potential positive impacts. This would ensure that employers do not have unrealistic expectations regarding the impact of the programme and also that providers deliver training that employers need.

Additionality of the ESiW programme

Table 5.24: Had your organisation NOT become involved in the training through the ESiW programme, how likely is it that you would have delivered essential/essential skills training anyway?...by Competitive and Convergence areas.

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Definitely	10 (14%)	4 (12%)	14 (13%)
Probably	23 (31%)	12 (36%)	35 (33%)
Probably not	29 (39%)	15 (45%)	44 (41%)
Definitely not	12 (16%)	2 (6%)	14 (13%)
Don't know	-	-	-
Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Base=107 employers

5.85 The ESiW programme has encouraged employers to deliver essential skills training who would not otherwise have engaged in delivery (see **Table 5.24**) this shows that 54% stated they would *probably not* or *definitely not* have delivered essential skills training if not through the ESiW programme. 13% (n=14) of employers said they would have *definitely* delivered essential skills training which would indicate a degree of deadweight in the programme impact.

ESiW Leading to Learner Progression or Further Training

5.86 A third of employers (33%, n=35) reported having provided further essential skills training to employees over the last year. This suggests that the support has led to more employers engaging in essential skills training, given only 25% were involved in training prior to the programme. The other two thirds (66%, n=71) say they have not provided further training. The employer case study visits revealed varying levels of learning being delivered in the workplace. For three organisations, essential skills delivery was well developed; learners had progressed on to do further learning and more learning episodes were being delivered to new learners. This was due to employers being fully committed to essential skills training and understanding the benefits of improving their workforce's skills.

5.87 For one organisation, workplace learning was being led by the union and WULF funding had been used to develop a learning centre. Essential skills learning was at the initial assessment stage only.

5.88 For three organisations, essential skills learning has just begun to be delivered but a good relationship had been developed with the providers and was likely to continue.

5.89 For one organisation, embedding essential skills delivery into their training was proving very difficult. This was due to: staff working shift patterns; low levels of workers 'volunteering' to learn; but also, perhaps, due to a lack of on-going commitment to improve essential skills within the company's senior managers. This may be a case where a focus on the EPA could help employers to develop a longer term strategy and commitment on delivering essential skills.

5.90 Results from the survey show that among those employers that had provided further essential skills training to employees over the last year (n=35), 57% (n=20) used their own resources to fund the training; this is almost double the percentage of employers who used their own resources to fund training prior to essential skills.

5.91 Looking to the next 12 months, **Table 5.25** shows how likely employers are to provide further essential skills training.

Table 5.25: How likely is the organisation to provide further essential skills training in the coming 12 months?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Very likely	32 (43%)	12 (36%)	44 (41%)
Fairly likely	18 (24%)	13 (39%)	31 (29%)
Fairly unlikely	12 (16%)	3 (9%)	15 (14%)
Very unlikely	6 (8%)	3 (9%)	9 (8%)
Don't know	6 (8%)	2 (6%)	8 (7%)
Total	74 (100%)	33 (100%)	107 (100%)

Base=107 employers

5.92 Seven out of ten employers (n=75) said they are very likely or fairly likely to provide further essential skills training in the coming 12 months. This is significantly higher than the 25% of employers that had been involved in essential skills training prior to the programme and may suggest that employers' awareness of the need to train in essential skills has been raised.

Table 5.26: Had you not been involved in the ESiW programme would your organisation arrange this further essential skills training for staff anyway?...by Competitive and Convergence areas

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Definitely	8 (16%)	4 (16%)	12 (16%)
Probably	11 (22%)	8 (32%)	19 (25%)
Probably not	9 (18%)	8 (32%)	17 (23%)
Definitely not	2 (4%)	-	2 (3%)
Don't know/No reply	20 (40%)	5 (20%)	22 (29%)
Total	50 (100%)	25 (100%)	75 (100%)

Base=75 employers who said their organisation was very likely or fairly likely to provide any further essential skills training to employees in the coming 12 months

5.93 **Table 5.26** shows, of those employers likely to provide essential skills training (75) how many would have done it without ESiW. Just over two fifths of employers (41%, n=31) said they would definitely or probably have arranged this further essential skills training for staff anyway, had they not been involved in the ESiW programme. Just over a quarter (26%, n=19) said they would definitely not or probably not, indicating good level of added value.

6   Impact on Learners

Summary

6.1   Learners were overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of the training, its usefulness and value (to themselves and an employer) and its length. Most learners felt the training was made relevant to their work/job responsibilities.

6.2   More learners felt confident in their basic skills (numeracy, communication and ICT) after the training than before it. In addition, other main impacts of the training reported by learners are (self) confidence, enthusiasm to learn, providing a better service to customers and taking on more responsibility at work. Job satisfaction also improved for more than half of all learners, as had the potential to earn a better salary for just under half. Learners have been able to use new skills at work as a result of the training, particularly communication, teamwork and ICT.

6.3   Two thirds of learners would probably not or definitely not have undertaken similar training without the offer of ESiW, which shows the training is adding value to the local offer. Over three quarters of learners are likely to get involved in further training over the next year, with most of these having taken up or considering further opportunities[35]. In a third of the cases this is training that would probably or definitely not have been undertaken.

6.4   Although over two third of learners had undertaken training within the last five years, ESiW attracted over a third of learners who either have not undertaken training in the last five years or not at all. This is encouraging and shows that ESiW is able to attract learners who have not undertaking training for a significant amount of time and some who have undertaken no training at all.

---

[35] See **Table 6.24**.

Introduction

6.5   This section details the impact of the programme to date on learners. It draws on evidence from the learner survey and employer case study visits where learners were interviewed.

6.6   There are a number of methodological issues related to the changes made to the learner questionnaire between the two survey rounds. These relate to the changes of the offer from BSiW to ESiW and the inclusion of ICT in the latter programme. Questions regarding ICT were only asked to learners in the second round. In addition, some amendments to response categories were made to reduce responses to a four point rather than a six point scale. Responses from the first round were grouped in order to report total responses across both surveys. For more explanation, see **Annex D**.

6.7   Generally, statistical data from the learner survey is not significant when broken down to Convergence and Competitiveness areas.

Background to Learners

Learners interviewed face to face

6.8   In total 25 learners were consulted from eight workplaces. One workplace could not identify any learners. Learners had undertaken a mix of learning including Application of Number (AON) Communication and ICT, but none had done any ESOL learning.   Seven learners were female and 18 were male (nine of the learners interviewed were from the construction sector).

Survey respondents

6.9   The total number of learner responses received was 212[36].

---

[36] Therefore N=212 unless stated otherwise.

6.10 Most of the learners (68%, n=145) that responded had completed their ESiW training course(s) before undertaking the survey. 20% (n=42) of learners were still undertaking the course and 11% (n=24)[37] had not completed a course (i.e. they started but dropped out): the majority of which (n=17) were due to exceptional ("Other") reasons (mainly redundancy/changing job (n=7) and provider delivery issues (n=9).

6.11 Responses were received from across 19 of the 22 local authority areas of Wales. 52% of completions were from learners in Convergence areas (n=110); 48% by learners in Competitiveness areas (n=102).

6.12 Analysis of the gender of learners shows that 60% were female (n=127); 40% were male (n=85).

6.13 **Table 6.1** shows the programme is appealing to older workers, with just under a half (48%) of learners being recruited from the over 45s' age brackets.

Table 6.1: Age of Learners

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
18 and under	1 (1%)	- (0%)	1 (0%)
19-24	13 (12%)	6 (6%)	19 (9%)
25-34	15 (14%)	25 (26%)	40 (19%)
35-44	28 (25%)	19 (20%)	47 (23%)
45-54	37 (34%)	29 (30%)	66 (32%)
55-64	14 (13%)	15 (16%)	29 (14%)
65+	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)
Total	110	96	206

Base= 206 learners

6.14 94% of learners were White British (n=194) and 92% do not consider themselves to have a disability (n=190).

---

[37] One learner did not know.

6.15 All these attributes are in line with the split identified from the management information, which indicates that the sample of survey participants is representative of the population of learners.

6.16 Just less than a third (31%, n=64) were members of a trade union, which shows that the programme is working well to penetrate non-unionised workplaces (67%)[38].

6.17 As would be expected in this survey, the vast majority of learners were in employment, but 3% of learners were now unemployed (**Table 6.2**). Most learners (62%) were in full-time work, with a significant minority (29%) in part-time work.

Table 6.2: Current Work Status

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
In full time work	73 (66%)	59 (58%)	132 (62%)
In part time work	31 (28%)	31 (30%)	62 (29%)
In shift work	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)
Self-employed	- (0%)	3 (3%)	3 (1%)
Unemployed	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	6 (3%)
Other (Specify)	1 (1%)	4 (4%)	5 (2%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.18 Further analysis shows that 50% of females and 13% of males were in part time work suggesting that the programme is successfully attracting part time female workers wanting to up-skill. Only 2% of workers work shift patterns and this corroborates some of the issues that providers face in trying to work in sectors characterised by shift work.

6.19 The vast majority of learners are still with the same employer for whom they undertook ESiW training (Table 6.2). However, 11% had since left employment where they undertook training.

---

[38] Five learners (2%) did not disclose their union status.

6.20 **Table 6.3** shows that a considerable number of learners surveyed (43%, n=89), held a qualification at Level 3 or above suggesting that learners were either brushing up skills or had lower skills in certain areas. This compares to a third of all ESiW learners who had a Level 3 or above qualification. Just over a third of learners surveyed had a Level 2 qualification (compared to 18% of all ESiW learners) and 15% had Level 1 or below compared to 44% on all ESiW learners. Slightly more females surveyed (12%, n=15) held no qualification, compared to (6%, n=5) of males.

Table 6.3: What was the highest qualification you held?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
No qualification	12 (11%)	8 (8%)	20 (9%)
Entry level	1 (1%)	4 (4%)	5 (2%)
Level 1 (NVQ 1, OCN 1, GNVQ)	6 (5%)	2 (2%)	8 (4%)
Level 2 (GCSE A*-C, NVQ 2, OCN 2, GNVQ Intermediate, BTEC First Diploma)	37 (34%)	36 (35%)	73 (34%)
Level 3 (A-Level, BTEC National Award, NVQ 3, OCN 3, Modern Apprenticeships)	28 (25%)	22 (22%)	50 (24%)
Level 4 (HNC, NVQ 4)	5 (5%)	5 (5%)	10 (5%)
Level 5 or 6 (Degree, Degree Honours, HND, NVQ 5)	10 (9%)	15 (15%)	25 (12%)
Level 7 (Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	4 (2%)
Other (Specify)	5 (5%)	6 (6%)	11 (5%)
Don't know	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	6 (3%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

Involvement in Learning and Training Prior to ESiW

6.21 **Table 6.4** shows that the programme has successfully recruited learners who either have not undertaken training in the last ten years or have never had any training or learning (24%, n=50).

Table 6.4: When was the last time you did any learning or training?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Within the last year	42 (38%)	19 (19%)	61 (29%)
Between 1 and 5 years	34 (31%)	40 (39%)	74 (35%)
Between 5 and 10 years before the ESiW course	9 (8%)	14 (14%)	23 (11%)
More than 10 years before the ESiW course	16 (15%)	20 (20%)	36 (17%)
Never	8 (7%)	6 (6%)	14 (7%)
Don't know	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.22 More learners had undertaken training in communication and ICT related areas (reading, writing and communication), than in numeracy and only a small number had engaged in any ESOL training. Not surprisingly, those with higher qualifications (Level 3 and above) had undertaken more prior training than those with qualifications at lower levels.

6.23 Learners were asked whether they had done any essential skills training – 61 reported not having done any essential skills training, **Table 6.5** shows the reasons.

6.24 Learners were specifically asked about engagement in essential skills training and 29%, (n=61) reported not having done any essential skills training previously.

Table 6.5: Why had you never undertaken any essential skills training before?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Not recognised any need to do so	13 (45%)	15 (47%)	28 (46%)
Never offered essential skills training before	12 (41%)	14 (44%)	26 (43%)
Lack of time	4 (14%)	6 (19%)	10 (16%)
Too costly	3 (10%)	1 (3%)	4 (7%)
Fears about own ability to undertake training	2 (7%)	2 (6%)	4 (7%)
Did not know where to get training	3 (10%)	- (0%)	3 (5%)
Stigma attached to essential skills training	- (0%)	- (0%)	- (0%)
Other (specify)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)	4 (7%)
No reply	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (3%)
Total	29	32	61

Base= 61 learners who reported not having done any essential skills training previously

6.25 Nearly half reported having not done any essential skills training because there was no recognition of any need to do so (46%, n=28) and having never being offered essential skills training before (43%, n=26). 16%, (n=10) reported a lack of time most of whom were females (7%, n=8). No one stated it was because of a stigma attached to essential skills training. Case studies revealed that employees who volunteer to come forward for training are not put off by the stigma attached to revealing their skills deficits. There were anecdotal responses from employers/managers and ULRs that suggested some employees were not participating in this training because of a reluctance or perceived vulnerability in revealing their skills deficits.

Confidence in their skills prior to undertaking learning

6.26 Prior to undertaking any learning, learners stated they were more confident in communication related skills (reading and writing) than numeracy. Learners in the first survey tranche (n=45) were very confident or confident in reading (82%, n=37), writing (67%, n=30) and communicating with customers or colleagues (80%, n=36). 75% (n=125) of learners in the second tranche were confident or very confident in communicating[39]. In dealing with numbers, 60% of learners stated they were confident or very confident. 54% (n=90) of learners responding to the second tranche were confident or very confident with ICT.

6.27 This is somewhat corroborated by the interviews with learners where the majority of learners said they were stronger in some areas than others. Clearly, this is the value in requiring providers to undertake initial assessments with learners to establish areas of strength and where learning can be improved.

Motivations for Learner to Undertake Training

6.28 **Table 6.6** shows that the vast majority (81%) of learners heard about the training from their employer, suggesting that the learning is employer led. 9% of learners stated they had heard about the learning through a provider/college, suggesting that this was integrated into other forms of learning provision. Interestingly only 5% heard of the learning from their union, although 31% of learners were from unionised workplaces.

---

[39] It is not possible to report these collectively as the responses do not match from the first to the second survey. (See **Annex D**)

Table 6.6: How did you first hear about the training course(s)?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
From employer	90 (82%)	81 (79%)	171 (81%)
From a provider/college	8 (7%)	12 (12%)	20 (9%)
From your union	5 (5%)	5 (5%)	10 (5%)
Promotional material	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	6 (3%)
From colleagues	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (2%)
Other - please specify	6 (5%)	5 (5%)	11 (5%)
Can't remember	- (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (0%)
No reply	1 (1%)	- (0%)	1 (0%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.29 **Table 6.7** shows that, rather surprisingly, nearly half (47%, n=99) of all learners undertook the training because employers insisted upon it. We have no evidence from case studies that learners had been 'forced' into learning.

Table 6.7: What/Who encouraged you to do it?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Employer insisted upon me doing the training	55 (50%)	44 (43%)	99 (47%)
Training was free	29 (26%)	41 (40%)	70 (33%)
Training was convenient at place of work	27 (25%)	39 (38%)	66 (31%)
Training was made available during working hours	27 (25%)	34 (33%)	61 (29%)
I wanted to get a qualification	24 (22%)	35 (34%)	59 (28%)
Assistance to identify training needs	15 (14%)	20 (20%)	35 (17%)
I had not been offered training before	11 (10%)	15 (15%)	26 (12%)
I wanted to go for a particular/better/new job	11 (10%)	7 (7%)	18 (8%)
Encouragement from the Union/Union Learning Representative	3 (3%)	5 (5%)	8 (4%)
Other (please specify)	30 (27%)	10 (10%)	40 (19%)
Don't know	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.30 A third of learners were encouraged to participate because the training was free and just less than a third (31%) because training was delivered at work. Interestingly, 29% of learners stated they were able to study during work hours, which also attracted them to learn.

6.31 **Table 6.8** shows that common learner motivations for training were to obtain a qualification (36%, n=76); improve ICT skills (35%, n=75); and do better in their current job (33%, n=71).

Table 6.8: What did you hope to get out of it?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
To obtain a qualification	37 (34%)	39 (38%)	76 (36%)
To improve ICT skills	36 (33%)	39 (38%)	75 (35%)
To do better in current job	35 (32%)	36 (35%)	71 (33%)
To improve numeracy skills	23 (21%)	33 (32%)	56 (26%)
To improve communication skills[40]	-	-	55 (26%)
To obtain new job or promotion	18 (16%)	14 (14%)	32 (15%)
To earn a better salary	6 (5%)	9 (9%)	15 (7%)
Other (please specify)	32 (29%)	14 (14%)	46 (22%)
Don't know	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.32 32% (n=33) of learners in Competitiveness areas wanted to improve their numeracy skills, against only 21% (n=23) in Convergence areas. Looking at data by gender shows that more females than males wanted to improve their numeracy skills, and more males than females wanted to improve their communication skills, reflecting their earlier identified strengths and weaknesses.

---

[40] Due to different question formats between the first and second survey tranches, a breakdown by Convergence/Competitiveness area has not been provided.

ESiW Training Undertaken

6.33 Most learners (63%, n=134) had studied one ESiW course, 24% (n=51) two and 12% (n=25) had studied more than two. Most learners' courses focused on communication (55%, n=117) and numeracy (51%, n=108) and, (50%, n=95) of second tranche survey respondents studied ICT. Only 3% of learners studied ESOL, representing the small number of providers delivering ESOL.

6.34 Some of the learning may have been done concurrently, for example learners undertaking an ICT course alongside communication or application of number. Interviews with learners and providers suggested that this was a good way of developing a range of skills, keeping learning interesting to the learner and of ensuring that learning was kept relevant to roles and responsibilities.

6.35 Not all learners had completed the training at the point of being surveyed. Of those that had (54%, n=145), 115 (79%) achieved a qualification, suggesting some learners finished the course without obtaining a qualification. This is much higher than the current qualification conversion rate of 33%, but indicates that the target of 80% conversion rate for the ESiW programme is realistic.

6.36 Learners achieved a range of qualifications at different levels and subject areas (**Table 6.9**). Competitiveness learners obtained proportionally greater numbers of Communication Level 1 qualifications (32% versus 9%), Application of Number Level 1 (28% versus 13%) and ICT Level 1 (11% versus 1%) courses than their Convergence counterparts. More learners from Convergence achieved Communication Level 2 (24%) than learners in Competitive areas (6%).

Table 6.9: What qualification(s) did you get?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
No reply	- (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)
Communication Entry Level	4 (6%)	1 (2%)	5 (4%)
Communication Level 1	6 (9%)	15 (32%)	21 (18%)
Communication Level 2	16 (24%)	3 (6%)	19 (17%)
Application of Number Entry Level	5 (7%)	- (0%)	5 (4%)
Application of Number Level 1	9 (13%)	13 (28%)	22 (19%)
Application of Number Level 2	11 (16%)	7 (15%)	18 (16%)
Application of Number Level 3	- (0%)	- (0%)	- (0%)
ESOL	1 (1%)	- (0%)	1 (1%)
ICT Entry Level	3 (4%)	2 (4%)	5 (4%)
ICT Level 1	1 (1%)	5 (11%)	6 (5%)
ICT Level 2	8 (12%)	5 (11%)	13 (11%)
Other (please specify)	22 (32%)	9 (19%)	31 (27%)
Total	68	47	115

Base=115 learners who had completed the training and achieved a qualification.

6.37 The national data shows that the split of qualifications attained by learners (not including tutors) is 36% in numeracy, 36% in literacy, 22% ICT and 1% ESOL.

6.38 **Table 6.10** shows that the vast majority of learners (81%, n=93) who received a qualification found the course to be valuable (very valuable and fairly valuable).

Table 6.10: How valuable is this/are these essential skills qualifications to you?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Very valuable	29 (43%)	25 (53%)	54 (47%)
Fairly valuable	24 (35%)	15 (32%)	39 (34%)
Not valuable	6 (9%)	3 (6%)	9 (8%)
Not at all valuable	4 (6%)	2 (4%)	6 (5%)
Don't know	5 (7%)	2 (4%)	7 (6%)
Total	68	47	115

Base=115 learners who had completed the training and achieved a qualification.

6.39 Learners from the case studies who had attained a qualification recognised their achievement and a few commented on the benefits of having a certificate to show employers their level of competence.

"You never know when it's going to be useful, plus it shows my boss that I want to learn." (Learner)

6.40 Qualitative responses from survey respondents suggested having the qualification helped improve their self-confidence and confidence in specific areas like literacy or numeracy. None of the learners consulted as part of the case studies suggested that their motivation to learn was related to financial rewards. A few recognised that improving their skills could help them progress at work and take on more responsibility.

"I want to be in a position to take on more responsibility and to do that, I've got to improve with my maths." (Learner)

6.41 **Table 6.11** shows that how valuable learners consider their qualifications are to their employer, 58% of learners believed that their essential skills qualification was valuable to the employers.

Table 6.11: How valuable is this/are these essential skills qualifications to your employer?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Very valuable	29 (43%)	22 (47%)	51 (44%)
Fairly valuable	28 (41%)	15 (32%)	43 (37%)
Not valuable	4 (6%)	3 (6%)	7 (6%)
Not at all valuable	0	0	0
Not employed at present	1 (1%)	2 (4%)	3 (3%)
Don't know	6 (9%)	5 (11%)	11 (10%)
Total	68	47	115

Base=115 learners who had completed the training and achieved a qualification.

6.42 This may refer more to the qualification than the up-skilling, but it shows that many learners think employers do value essential skills qualifications.

6.43 There was evidence of a degree of ambivalence among supervisors or line managers regarding the value of the learning in some workplaces. This was sometimes because the drive for participating on the course was from higher up in the organisation and, by removing workers to learn, this caused an element of disruption. Some workplaces needed to work harder to communicate and promote the benefits of learning to all employees. There was some evidence of conflict in the learners' minds between the priorities of their regular job and the learning that they are doing.

"Sometimes I get the feeling that there is a bit of resentment when I down tools to come and learn." (Learner)

"I do feel that this is a bit second place to our work." (Learner)

Learners' Views of the Learning Provision

6.44 **Table 6.12** shows the level of learners' satisfaction of their training.

6.45 Table 6.12: Thinking about the quality of the training, would you say it was:

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Excellent	53 (48%)	55 (54%)	108 (51%)
Good	43 (39%)	36 (35%)	79 (37%)
Moderate	10 (9%)	7 (7%)	17 (8%)
Poor	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1%)
Don't know/don't remember	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
No reply	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (1%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.46 Learners were overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of the training they received. Table 6.12 shows that 51% thought the quality of the training was excellent and 37% felt it was good. Only 3 out of 212 responses felt it was poor (1%). This is corroborated both in the employer survey and in our case studies of employers.

6.47 In the case study visits, learners regularly reported enjoying the learning and developing good relationships with providers whom they trusted.

"You could e-mail them at home if there was anything you didn't understand or were stuck on … they would reply … if you e-mailed them on a Wednesday night, by the next morning, they would have replied." (Learner)

6.48 Many learners talked about how difficult it felt to walk through the door to meet a provider for the first time for an initial assessment.

"I was so nervous, I didn't know who else was doing it and didn't know what to expect, I haven't sat a test for years." (Learner)

6.49 Delivering learning in the workplace also appeared to have the added benefits to learners of putting them at their ease. This is an essential feature of the ESiW programme for both learners and employers, making learning for 'non-traditional' learners much more accessible and appealing.

"There's no way I would have gone down to the local college to do an assessment, absolutely no way." (Learner)

"It's very relaxed … and although you're learning, you're learning at a comfortable pace and it's enjoyable … there's no pressure on you … you can do it at your speed." (Learner)

6.50 The majority of learners from the survey (92%, n=195) stated that the training received was fairly or very useful.

Table 6.13: How useful was the training to you?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Very useful	60 (55%)	56 (55%)	116 (55%)
Fairly useful	41 (37%)	38 (37%)	79 (37%)
Not useful	5 (5%)	4 (4%)	9 (4%)
Not at all useful	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	6 (3%)
Don't know/don't remember	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.51 Providers focussed on delivering learning to groups of learners of similar abilities to ensure they got the most of their learning time.

"I've learned that it's worth organising the learning so that all learners of similar abilities study together…this is particularly important in IT when learners can get frustrated when they have to wait." (Tutor)

6.52 Only 9 responses felt the training was not useful (3%) and only 6 felt it was not at all useful (1%).

6.53 77% felt the length of the course was about right. 10% thought it was too long and 8% too short.

6.54 **Table 6.14** shows most learners (81%, n=172) felt the training was made relevant to their work/job responsibilities 85% (n=94) of learners in Convergence areas and 76% (n=78 in Competitiveness areas. 17% (n=37) felt learning was not relevant.

Table 6.14: Was the training made relevant to your work/job responsibilities?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Yes	94 (85%)	78 (76%)	172 (81%)
No	14 (13%)	23 (23%)	37 (17%)
Don't know/don't remember	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1%)
No reply	- (0%)	- (0%)	- (0%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.55 Providers worked hard, doing considerable preparation time to contextualise learning. This table provides an indication that they have made the learning relevant to the learners and their role in the workplace.

6.56 **Table 6.15** shows that 71% (n=150) of all learners were given time off work by their employer to train and 19% (n-41) were not.

Table 6.15: Did your employer give you time off to train?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Yes	69 (63%)	81 (79%)	150 (71%)
No	27 (25%)	14 (14%)	41 (19%)
Part work and part personal time	11 (10%)	5 (5%)	16 (8%)
Other	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (1%)
Don't know/don't remember	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
No reply	- (0%)	- (0%)	- (0%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.57 This was higher in the Convergence area and for males, and older workers, this suggests that more could be done to facilitate training for employees in Convergence areas, females and younger workers. It is possible that learners would be more likely to be given time off to learn when learning is made very relevant to their role. There was little difference between unionised and non-unionised learners. 8% completed in part work and part personal time.

6.58 In eight of the case studies (one was not currently delivering any learning), all staff were given some time off to learn. In four organisations, learning was fully conducted in work time.

"It was basically a win win opportunity because you're getting taught in company time … so basically you're getting paid for training, which is unusual in this day and age." (ULR)

6.59 Some employers preferred to ask for a time contribution from learners in order to ensure that learners were committed to the learning and not simply doing it to get relief from their duties.

Impact of the Learning

6.60 Most learners (76%, n=162) reported having learnt new skills that were relevant to work, particularly males (82% versus 72% of females). Of the 162 that reported learning new skills, 142 reported using these skills at work. (See **Table 6.16**).

Table 6.16: How have you been able to use these new skills at work?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Communication with others/working in a team	35 (45%)	23 (36%)	58 (41%)
Using spreadsheets and databases on the PC	27 (35%)	27 (42%)	54 (38%)
Using word processing on the PC	24 (31%)	24 (38%)	48 (34%)
Using the Internet	27 (35%)	17 (27%)	44 (31%)
Using e-mail	27 (35%)	16 (25%)	43 (30%)
Dealing with paperwork and general correspondence	24 (31%)	15 (23%)	39 (27%)
Dealing with customers and customer requests	21 (27%)	15 (23%)	36 (25%)
Following instructions/understanding information/memos/guidance at work	17 (22%)	11 (17%)	28 (20%)
Calculating measurements/costs or other numerical tasks	13 (17%)	9 (14%)	22 (15%)
Other (please specify)	26 (33%)	12 (19%)	38 (27%)
Total	78	64	142

Base=142 learners who reported using the skills at work.

6.61 Of the 162 that reported learning new skills, 142 reported using these skills at work (**Table 6.16**). They reported being able to use these skills in communicating with others/ working in a team (41%); using spreadsheets and databases (38%) on the PC; and using word processing on the PC (impact on IT skills may be higher as this was not asked in the first tranche).

6.62 There was evidence from learners and employers that learning undertaken was directly relevant to work roles (see **Table 6.17** below).

Table 6.17: Example of Impact of Learning

Suzanne's,[41] role was to manage the placement of staff in large retail organisations where they were responsible for the repair and maintenance of shopping trollies.

Suzanne did an initial assessment and came out just below a Level 1 in literacy, numeracy and IT. Therefore, the provider chose to do a period of consolidation and progressed Suzanne through all of these qualifications concurrently. This was made easier for Suzanne as she conducted all areas of learning based on a project that her workplace had asked her to do. As a result, Suzanne stated that the skills she developed were all relevant and useful.

"I've been learning how to use spreadsheets and doing calculations using Excel. I've also focussed on delivering a presentation in work with all the findings from my project." (Suzanne).

Contextualising the learning in this way has meant that Suzanne continued developing her skills outside of the learning period.

"This helps get support from my employer because they know that they are benefiting from me doing this learning also."

When asked what difference this had made to her, Suzanne replied:

"*I love it; I'm doing so much more now at work and home, things just come easier to me."*

Suzanne has continued with her learning and is now progressing on to Level 2 numeracy.

6.63 Learners in the construction sector reported a range of skills they had developed since doing the Level 1 Communication and Numeracy:

- One employee noted that the quality of his e-mails to colleagues and architects had improved and that he was much more confident in drafting e-mails. *"I can even spot grammar errors in e-mails I receive!"*

- Another employee explained that he had, for the first time, started to enjoy Maths and has attempted a few calculations in work independently – as a carpenter he is required to calculate

---

[41] Suzanne is not her real name.

measurements and would have requested help from a colleague to do so previously.

- One learner noted that they would like to continue with essential skills learning, focussing on IT so *"I can keep up with the kids".*

6.64 Some learners when consulted found it hard to give particular examples of the impact of the learning on their skills. Quite often they would express an increase in confidence or just generally state their reading has got better. Often, employers noted the differences in workers to a greater extent. This was a comment made about a learner who had just attained her Level 1 Communication.

"The transformation in her is remarkable. She has gone from being under-confident and relying on other people to make decisions for her, to being much more independent. It's like she's a whole different person." (Employer)

6.65 62% (n=123) of learners stated they were able to use new skills in their life outside work (58% from Convergence areas; 43% from Competitiveness areas).

6.66 **Table 6.18** shows the areas in which learners have reported using their new skills.

Table 6.18: In what areas have you been able to use any new skills learnt in your life outside work?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Undertaking research/browsing on the Internet	25 (35%)	13 (25%)	38 (31%)
Communicating with family or friends	20 (28%)	13 (25%)	33 (27%)
Dealing with public organisations	14 (20%)	16 (31%)	30 (24%)
Dealing with personal correspondence	14 (20%)	10 (19%)	24 (20%)
Budgeting household accounts	14 (20%)	9 (17%)	23 (19%)
Fill in forms	12 (17%)	11 (21%)	23 (19%)
On-line shopping	11 (15%)	12 (23%)	23 (19%)
In community groups or organisations	8 (11%)	8 (15%)	16 (13%)
Supporting children with homework	11 (15%)	4 (8%)	15 (12%)
Reading for pleasure	9 (13%)	3 (6%)	12 (10%)
Other (specify)	17 (24%)	8 (15%)	25 (20%)
No reply	1 (1%)	- (0%)	1 (1%)
Total	71	52	123

Base=123 learners who reported using skills at home.

6.67 **Table 6.18** shows the main areas were undertaking research/browsing on the Internet (impact may be higher as this was not asked in the first tranche); communicating with family or friends, e.g. via e-mail (particularly amongst males); and dealing with public organisations (e.g. to sort out council tax, deal with local authority). 26% of females (n=19) have been able to use their skills in budgeting household accounts, compared to only 8% of males (n=4), perhaps reflecting relative roles at home.

6.68 One learner reported that some of the areas covered on his ICT course coincided with what his 15 year old son was being taught at school. He was encouraged by this:

"It convinced me I was going the right way, because that's what the kids are being taught. It made me think that I can maybe help him now." (Learner)

6.69 Learners were asked how confident they felt in literacy, numeracy and communication[42].

Table 6.19: How confident would you say you are now in dealing with numbers?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Very confident	16 (25%)	10 (22%)	26 (24%)
Confident	38 (60%)	31 (67%)	69 (63%)
Not confident	5 (8%)	3 (7%)	8 (7%)
Not at all confident	- (0%)	- (0%)	- (0%)
D/k	3 (5%)	- (0%)	3 (3%)
No reply	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	3 (3%)
Total	63	46	109

Base=109 learners who undertook numeracy courses

6.70 Of those undertaking relevant courses: 87% (n=95) felt confident or very confident in numeracy (**Table 6.19**), and looking at gender splits for this question, particularly males. This is significantly larger than the 60% that were confident or very confident with numeracy before the training.

6.71 96% (n=22) of learners responding to the first survey tranche felt confident or very confident in reading and writing: both higher than they did before the training (82% and 67% respectively). 11 out of 13 (85%) felt confident in communicating with customers or colleagues, up from 80%, n=36) before the training[43]. 90% (n=74) in the second tranche felt confident or very confident in communicating, up from 75% before the training.

6.72 89% (n=74) felt confident or very confident in ICT (only asked of the second tranche), up from 54% before the training.

---

[42] Due to issues in the survey data collection, we are not able to report on communication and numeracy across both survey tranches.
[43] Note however the smaller numbers responding to the later questions.

6.73 **Table 6.20** shows the main impacts of the training, which are: self-confidence; enthusiasm to learn; providing a better service to customers (particularly females, 79% versus 67%, perhaps reflecting different job roles); and taking on more responsibility at work. Job satisfaction also improved for more than half of learners, and potential to earn a better salary for just under half (but particularly females, 51% versus 42%: however, this could reflect relatively lower existing salaries).

Table 6.20: Impacts of training[44]

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
You are more confident	100 (91%)	86 (84%)	186 (88%)
You are more enthusiastic to learn	92 (84%)	86 (84%)	178 (84%)
You provide a better service to customers	81 (74%)	76 (75%)	157 (74%)
You can take on more responsibility at work	84 (76%)	70 (69%)	154 (73%)
Your job satisfaction has improved	74 (67%)	60 (59%)	134 (63%)
You have the potential to earn a better salary	53 (48%)	48 (47%)	101 (48%)
You take less time off work due to sickness	29 (26%)	23 (23%)	52 (25%)
You have applied for or secured a promotion in work	23 (21%)	16 (16%)	39 (18%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.74 52% (n=111) felt training met their expectations. 30% (n=64) felt it exceeded them; 14% (n=29) felt it did not live up to expectations (**Table 6.21**).

---

[44] Respondents Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing with the following statements.

Table 6.21: How closely did the training meet your expectations?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Exceed your expectations	31 (28%)	33 (32%)	64 (30%)
Meet your expectations	58 (53%)	53 (52%)	111 (52%)
Didn't live up to expectations	18 (16%)	11 (11%)	29 (14%)
Don't know	3 (3%)	5 (5%)	8 (4%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.75 Information from four employers as to why it did not meet their expectations included the following issues:

- The training did not provide what the employees needed.

- Length of time the provider took to receive funding put of employer.

- The skills of the assessor were not adequate and he left before course finished and was not replaced in time.

- The provision was unprofessional, ill prepared and not well organised and tutors changed often.

Additonality of ESiW

6.76 **Table 6.22** shows that a combined 67% (n=142) of learners would probably not or definitely not have undertaken similar training without the offer of the ESiW training. This indicates that the training is adding value to the local offer. This feeling was stronger in Competitiveness areas than Convergence ones (71% versus 64%).

Table 6.22: Had your employer not offered you the essential skills training do you think you would have done similar training anyway?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Definitely	14 (13%)	6 (6%)	20 (9%)
Probably	25 (23%)	23 (23%)	48 (23%)
Probably not	31 (28%)	48 (47%)	79 (37%)
Definitely not	39 (35%)	24 (24%)	63 (30%)
Don't know	- (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (0%)
No reply	1 (1%)	- (0%)	1 (0%)
Total	110	102	212

Progression onto Further Learning

6.77 Encouragingly, **Table 6.23** shows that 76% (n=162) of learners are very or fairly likely to get involved in further training over the next year. In a third of these cases this is training that would probably or definitely not have been undertaken, suggesting the course does encourage further training or learning. For a minority of learners (17%), further training or learning was not a prior consideration.

Table 6.23: How likely are you to get involved in any further training over the next year?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Very likely	44 (40%)	45 (44%)	89 (42%)
Fairly likely	44 (40%)	29 (28%)	73 (34%)
Fairly unlikely	9 (8%)	15 (15%)	24 (11%)
Very unlikely	9 (8%)	4 (4%)	13 (6%)
Don't know	4 (4%)	9 (9%)	13 (6%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.78 **Table 6.24** shows that 27% (n=57) have taken up further training or learning opportunities, with a further 55% that are considering taking up further opportunities, across a number of Levels. However, 11% were fairly unlikely and 6% very unlikely to progress.

Table 6.24: Have you taken up any further training or learning opportunities since completing the ESiW essential skills course?

	Convergence	Competitiveness	Total
Yes	29 (26%)	28 (27%)	57 (27%)
No - but considered doing so	60 (55%)	56 (55%)	116 (55%)
No - not likely to do so	20 (18%)	15 (15%)	35 (17%)
Don't know	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	4 (2%)
Total	110	102	212

Base= 212 learners

6.79 Just over a third (34% n=19) of learners who had undertaken additional learning stated that they would not have done this learning without first being engaged on the essential skills course. However, a higher number (39%, n=22) of learners would definitely have done so.

7 Compatibility of WULF Union Projects to the ESiW Programme

Summary

7.1 This section demonstrates that the WULF funded projects focussing on essential skills are highly compatible with the Welsh Government's Essential Skills in the Workplace programme. Particular areas of compatibility are demonstrated through the unions' focus on:

- **Developing a learning infrastructure** (learning centres, learning committees, learning agreements) that brings learning opportunities to the learners.

- **Developing the capacity of unions/ULRs** and other activities to raise awareness of essential skills issues among employers and to encourage colleagues to participate in learning.

- **Developing partnerships with providers** supported by learning agreements that detail the specific requirements of union led learning and essential skills learning.

7.2 There are some challenges regarding the value of non-vocational learning to ESiW, and the degree to which WULF funded activity delivers progression of learners into ESiW. There is qualitative evidence from employers and unions that suggests it does but, without evidence from providers, this is not quantifiable.

Introduction

7.3 This section considers the aims, objectives and outcomes of WULF funded projects and the benefits of union led learning more generally in encouraging essential skills learning in the workplace. It goes on to provide a summary on the benefits and challenges of union led learning and the compatibility of WULF funded projects with the ESiW programme.

7.4   Evidence is generated from:

- Ten consultations regarding WULF funded projects with representatives from: RCN, Bectu, Unison (North and Mid Wales projects), GMB, FBU, Unite, UCATT, BFAWU and ASLEF.

- Four union led learning case studies.

- WULF project monitoring data.

Sampling WULF projects

7.5   The Welsh Government forwarded contact details and description of union WULF projects that had received funding from two different WULF funding streams relating to 2010-2013 and 2011-2014.

7.6   A decision was made to consult with only the programmes from the 2010-2013 funding stream, in order to capture the majority of outputs and outcomes of the projects.

Aims and Activities of WULF Funded Projects

7.7   Evidence from the union monitoring forms and consultations with unions, show that unions have been undertaking a number of activities that appear to be contributing significantly to raising awareness of learning opportunities and developing and embedding learning in the workplace. Key activities of WULF projects have included:

- Establishing learning committees or steering groups.

- Developing capacity: recruiting and training ULRs to promote learning and establishing learning centres.

- Awareness raising and engagement activities.

- Delivering non-vocational and work related learning.

- Engaging learners in essential skills provision.

- Developing partnerships.

Establishing learning committees

7.8 With the support of the Wales TUC, unions delivering WULF funded projects have established learning committees to help govern the development of learning in the workplace. These committees provide an effective forum for unions to develop learning agreements with employers; negotiate time off for learning; promote learning opportunities; discuss training opportunities and monitor and review delivery. Providers often participate in steering group meetings, along with training managers, ULRs and union project workers. Consultations with providers and employers regarding the development of learning in the workplace show that good relationships are being developed between providers and employers.

"Our steering group meets regularly, and is now led by a ULR. It has really helped to develop relations with the union and our ULRs and makes sure that we communicate effectively." (Employer Training Manager)

7.9 Learning Committees also help engender a longer term focus on learning in the workplace.

"We have developed a learning agreement as a result of the strength of our partnership and our good relationship with the union." (Services Manager)

Developing capacity within unions and the workplace

7.10 Many unions have focussed on developing the skills and capacity of URLs to support learning in the workplace. For example, Bectu reported working closely with the TUC to get a bespoke model of training delivered to twenty ULRs through a residential weekend course. Recently, Bectu developed an Essential Skills toolkit to help ULRs identify skills needs among colleagues. ULRs in the RCN are assisting the union in identifying learning needs in health care support workers and send training requests to the project worker which helps her plan provision.

7.11 Some unions (for example Unite, Aslef and UCATT) have reported setting up learning centres. A learning centre, developed as part of the Unite project, operates from a manufacturing company in Ebbw Vale (see **Table 7.1**). The vision for the centre is that it will open its doors to neighbouring businesses on the industrial site.

Table 7.1: WULF Funding used to develop a Learning Centre

Using funding from WULF 2010-13, Unite opened a learning hub in 2012 that will provide a range of training opportunities to workers in the organisation.

The learning hub has provision for 12 learners and provides access to IT facilities, including the internet. The learning centre has been used to deliver digital photography and sign language courses. Recently (April 2012), Coleg Gwent has undertaken essential skills screening and initial assessments of six learners with a view to delivering Essential Skills ICT with either Communication or Application of Number.

Coleg Gwent reported that this is a new partnership with the organisation and, although in its early days, were optimistic that the facilities and the extent of support and engagement from the union and senior management would result in longer term delivery of training and qualifications.

"We are just at the start of the process, but there seems to be lots of enthusiasm from staff. Working with [name of ULR] *means that learners on the factory floor are encouraged to come to the learner centre, and this should help promote the learning opportunity".*

The plant manager has been engaged and supportive from the start of the project, and is match funding the training offer from the company training budget to deliver work related trade courses such as Hydraulics, First Aid, Health and Safety.

"We would not have progressed the learning in our company as well without the union support. Their ability to engage colleagues in learning is far greater than ours...with WULF funding we have been able to marry what the employers want to do with the skills that I need to develop." (Operations Manager)

7.12 As a result of WULF funding more generally, Arriva trains have a number of learning hubs dotted around the network, supported by a "library of laptops" that can be transported between hubs. This helps facilitate access to Learndirect courses and other IT courses.

Awareness raising and engagement

7.13 Unions received funding to carry out a considerable amount of awareness raising and engagement activities. For example, project managers and ULRs have travelled around various work sites (i.e. local authorities, train depots) promoting essential skills and encouraging learners to sign up for initial taster sessions. This type of activity is one of the key avenues through which the (unionised) Welsh workforce is made aware of essential skills and learning opportunities more generally. Many unions consulted are now focussing on 'adult learners' week' and making plans for further awareness raising activities.

Delivering non-vocational and work related learning

7.14 On the whole, learning delivered through WULF is largely work related but non-vocational, most people engaging in learning for their own pleasure or interest, rather than to develop specific work related skills. For example, unions have been providing sign language courses, Spanish, football coaching, and digital photography.

7.15 ULRs and employers commented that providing this type of learning opportunity helps re-engage people in learning as well as develop people's confidence in learning new skills. Courses such as digital photography for example help develop confidence in using IT software and sign language helps develop communication skills.

7.16 Some unions have also focussed on delivering basic IT courses. All four cases studies revealed IT skills needs as the result of the introduction of new computerised operating systems.

"We've gone from working out of the office with all the paperwork to going mobile and relying on our computers." (Operations Inspector, Utilities Company)

7.17 Unions are developing bespoke basic IT courses (related to units of ESW ICT qualifications) in partnership with providers (for example Unison with the Workers Education Association, and Arriva with Learndirect and Cardiff and Vale College) to meet particular IT needs.

7.18 Unison used WULF to develop and deliver work-related training at Level 2 to improve caring and communication skills in social care staff. In particular, this focussed on understanding the use of language and communication skills as well as developing confidence in staff's ability.

"This dedicated training provided through WULF has really helped us develop a sense of responsibility for how we work and how we influence the working environment" (Staff and Quality Development Manager).

7.19 This training also helped develop the skills and confidence among staff in this organisation to go on and participate in essential skills learning delivered through the local Further Education Institutions.

Engaging learners in essential skills provision

7.20 Many unions have engaged learners in essential skills learning, particularly in ICT at Levels 1 and 2 with Communication AoN.

"IT seems to be the hook for many of these learners; it's something that has an immediate appeal. Once we get them in the learning mode, we can introduce other elements alongside more easily." (FE College)

7.21 Where learning provision is newly delivered in workplaces, unions have worked closely with providers, often starting off with a small number of learners to pilot the delivery before rolling out more widely.

7.22 From the consultations and case studies, we have evidence that essential skills learning has been delivered across a range of sectors including the public sector, construction sector, manufacturing, utilities, social care, the rail and food sector. There are many examples of a range of staff (i.e. school crossing staff, street custodians, housing maintenance, health care assistants) studying all levels and qualifications (Communication, ICT, application of number and some ESOL learning). **Table 7.2** details training delivered in a large care home.

Table 7.2: Training Delivered for a Large Social Care Home Provider

Five years ago, a large social care home provider was approached by Unison to host a union project worker to help develop essential skills provision in the organisation. The timing of the offer of joint working was very apt for the business which was beginning to engage with the problems that essential skills deficits were presenting the organisation (for example, staff not understanding training requirements or work instructions). Prior to the ESiW programme, the business was awarded the Employer Pledge which *"provided a framework against which they could benchmark their approach to addressing essential skills needs."* Since then, the company has developed very strong and effective relations with Unison, recognising the value of the WULF project manager. "[Name of project worker] *is integral to the organisation's whole approach to the essential skills agenda."* (Training and Quality Manager)

With the support and advice from Unison, the service has integrated support with essential skills in to their recruitment and training strategy.

"If we have an applicant whom we consider to have the right attributes, but who has an essential skills deficit, we provide essential skills training as part of their probationary period. We do not wish to turn someone away, just because of an essential skills need, when they could perform a good caring role." (Training and Quality Manager).

The service has worked hard to address the issues around stigma and encouraged all staff to undertake an initial assessment.

"We've been upfront and honest with essential skills and not tried to dress it up as anything else, but we've provided reassurances to staff to encourage them to engage in the learning offer." (Training and Quality Manager)

Essential Skills training is fully embedded in the training culture and tutors from Coleg Menai are carrying out assessments and delivering ESW initial assessments and training on an on-going basis.

7.23 In the food sector, the BFAWU has improved workforce stability by providing ESOL to five Nepalese learners who have now been taken on as permanent staff (due to them passing a pre-requisite qualification in Food Hygiene.)

Benefits of Union Led learning

7.24 There were a number of benefits evidenced from the WULF related project activity in the case studies. Where employers and unions worked together to introduce learning in the workplaces, there were particular benefits to workers.

7.25 **Flexibility of WULF funding:** One of the key strengths of WULF is the degree of flexibility it affords unions and employers. It helps to develop relationships with providers to deliver a range of learning aimed at meeting the needs and interests of learners. This has encouraged learners to engage in learning, some for the first time in years.

"It's been great to see people coming together to learn and visibly enjoying it. I've had people come out of a session and say 'why didn't we do this years ago?'" (ULR)

"It is the kick start needed, when trying to engage learners who have not done any [learning] *for years."* (Union Project Officer)

7.26 Employers also benefit from the flexibility of WULF funding to engender a learning culture in the workplace.

"With WULF, I've been able to demonstrate [to staff] *that I want them to learn and develop skills. Allowing them to pursue something of interest to them has improved relationships between management and staff."* (Employer)

"We wanted to make sure that we positioned the training as something for the guys … that it was for their own personal development and not to do with the business as such … even though, as a business, we're going to benefit." (Training Manager)

7.27 **ULRs can be the crucial link in promoting learning in the workplace:**
Many ULRs are passionate about developing learning opportunities in the
workplace. In two of the four case studies, the lead ULRs have been
instrumental in setting up learning centres, raising awareness and keeping
the momentum going through steering groups (see Table 7.3).

Table 7.3: ULRs Helping Develop Training in the Workplace for a Large Utilities Company

A large utilities company provided operational staff with initial training on the use of handheld computers. This was very specific to the task that they needed to do for their job and many staff remained uncertain about using the technology. This was compounded by software glitches in the early days, which undermined what little confidence a number of novice IT users had. *"There were issues with the software package, and they thought it was something they were doing wrong… it was system errors, but they didn't have experience of things like that, so they thought it was down to what they were doing."* In this context, the ULR credited the company in developing this training for *"asking people like myself to help develop the training with them."* In essence, he felt that the company recognised that ULRs know and understand the workforce.

7.28 Some unions have a strong network of ULRs that help promote learning
opportunities and engage learners. For example, the RCN union reported
good levels of ULR support who help to identify learning needs in health care
support workers. UCATT stated that ULR support on construction sites is
essential when trying to promote the idea of learning. Links have been made
with a tutor from a construction training provider who is also a ULR; this has
helped the union make connections with workers on construction sites.

7.29 Employers also recognised the benefits of having ULR support:

"We couldn't have done this without [name of ULR]*. He's sorted out the
learning centre, sourced the learning courses, kept the lads engaged.
Without him, this would have taken so much longer, and I doubt we would
have got to where we are now."* (Union Project Support Worker)

7.30 **Developing Learning Agreements:** learning agreements help embed a learning culture in the workplace and are the means by which unions agree equitable training policies. Employers take Learning Agreements seriously as they often stipulate how much time staff are entitled to when participating in learning. They also agree how many ULRs the employers will agree to and time allowed for learning duties. This activity has direct links with developing the Employer Pledge and two unions demonstrated working closely with providers to embed a commitment to learning through the Pledge. For example, the BFAWU have successfully worked with a local college and private training provider to get all five key bakeries in the south of Wales signed up to the Employer Pledge.

7.31 **Delivering learning through a partnership model:** there is considerable evidence of unions developing effective working relationships with employers, unions, providers and with other voluntary and community organisations. A recognised benefit of WULF is that it provides resources for a fully funded project manager to develop relationships and provide continuity of support:

"This has been the best project that we have been involved in, by far and it's down to the union project manager who's been amazing." (Employer Training Manager)

7.32 Unison has adopted a model of project delivery whereby the project manager role is hosted by a key employer. This helps forge strong and effective relationships with the employer, improves the understanding of the needs of the business and sector more generally.

"Working in this way means that the relationship between the union and the employer is strengthened. There is a greater degree of trust and understanding. It's not without its challenges, but it means that we can find solutions much quicker." (Unison Project Manager)

"Having [name of union project worker] *on site means we understand each other…we have developed a strong relationship and he has helped us*

develop systems to ensure we identify and support basic skills learners."
(Employer Training Manager)

7.33 Unison has also developed a practice guide[45] on how to develop effective partnership agreements with learning providers. They have developed a partnership agreement with the Worker's Education Association that ensures that all courses delivered to learners will be mapped to the Essential Skills framework. UCATT have developed partnership agreements with six providers. This demonstrates the longer term focus that unions have on developing effective relationships with providers and on ensuring quality in learning provision that meets the needs of their union members and businesses.

7.34 Many projects have been focussing on improving the skills of the local authority workforce, and have developed strong and long lasting relationships with local authorities over many years. UCATT, Unison and Unite, in particular, have been very active relating to essential skills learning in local authorities. For example, UCATT have worked with one borough council to deliver ESW ICT with Essential Skills in Communication focusing on Asbestos. Thirteen learners have completed the qualifications. UCATT and Unite, in particular, have been working closely together to provide a comprehensive learning offer to the workforce in the public sector and construction.

"Without pooling our resources and skills, a lot of the work we deliver wouldn't happen; we have to work in partnership with other unions." (UCATT)

---

[45] Unison, WULF Best Practice Guideline: Developing Partnership Agreements with Learning Providers. See here:
http://issuu.com/connectinglearners/docs/creating_partnership_agreements?mode=window

7.35 Some learning committees have representation from more than one union, where unions are combing resources to develop and deliver learning or where the sector is represented by a number of different unions. For example, Bectu has been working jointly with Equity, the musician's union, the Writer's Guild to develop the learning opportunities in the creative arts and design sector.

7.36 This degree of partnership work across unions helps to ensure that WULF funding, which focuses on capacity building (developing the learning infrastructure), is matched with funding focussing on learning delivery.

Challenges in Delivering Learning through Union Led Learning

7.37 A number of challenges in delivering learning through WULF funding were evident in the consultations and case studies.

7.38 **Engaging employers that are very geographically spread out** is resource intensive. This has been mentioned by a number of unions. Union project managers have been challenged by the extent of geographical coverage required. In some projects, one project manager seemed insufficient to deliver the full range of outputs. There are examples of unions extending certain support roles in order to cover the role of the project manager. In some projects, the project manager reported delays in learning delivery due to the scale of activity planned. For example, one union was trying to engage six LAs in North Wales and was struggling to meet objectives within the planned timescales due to the time required to move employers from engagement to delivery.

7.39 **Engaging a workforce that is deregulated** or has low union recognition poses challenges to unions. This is particularly apparent in the construction sector, where many workers work long hours and where release time for learning can be difficult to negotiate. Engaging with these sectors requires a longer lead in time and strong partnership work with providers at the earliest stage so that employers are clear about the learning offer.

7.40 **Shift work** creates challenges in certain sectors, such as the rail sector in terms of getting staff together to undertake screenings and to deliver learning. There are some examples of providers delivering learning to night shift staff, and this is one solution. Where unions have managed to arrange provision for night time learning, this information could be shared with other unions and providers.

7.41 **Engaging staff most in need of essential skills learning** is still a challenge. Although there are examples of employers and unions doing this well, there is evidence that workers most in need of the learning provision are not coming forward for learning. The main reasons for this are concerns of being stigmatised and feeling vulnerable to demotions or redundancies. Employers and unions need to work closely together to ensure that all staff feel supported to engage in learning, regardless of their skills levels.

7.42 **Lack of continuity in funding** created some uncertainty among unions and employers. This resulted in pauses in learning activities and uncertainty among project managers and learners regarding access to learning provision.

"The recent announcements regarding extensions to funding have been delayed, and this led to a good deal of insecurity…I have not been able to progress with some learner requests for IT for fear that I could not pay for them." (Union Project Manager)

7.43 **Delivering non-vocational learning** (football coaching, sign language, Spanish) – whilst considered valuable by employers and ULRs, does not necessarily lead to learners engaging in essential skills qualifications. Encouraging learners to progress to essential skills qualifications requires a particular focus and added investment from the employer.

8   Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

8.1   This report provides an interim evaluation of the ESiW programme. It includes a review of the essential skills delivery, alongside the compatibility of union led, WULF funded learning activity.

8.2   An earlier report submitted to the Welsh Government in 2012 provided a review of the Post-16 Quality Standard.

Key Findings

Evaluation of the ESiW programme

8.3   The programme began in April 2010 and is currently planned to end in June 2015. The findings presented in this report are interim findings.

8.4   In terms of overall ESiW performance, the programme faced a number of challenges in the first phase which significantly constrained delivery.

8.5   Since March 2012, and as a result of the restructuring to the ESiW, overall performance has improved significantly.

8.6   Total participants to December 2012 (4,088) have more than doubled over the previous six months from 1,612. If this level of improvement continues to the end of the programme, the current participant target should be achieved.

8.7   However, it is harder to be certain whether achieving the participant target will lead to the target number of qualifications being attained owing to the time lag in qualifications being completed. If the assumption of an 80% conversion is achieved, then targets are likely to be met. However, currently the conversion rate stands at 34% for Convergence and 32% for Competitiveness.

8.8 There are some variations on lower order targets such as numbers of people with a disability and older people. There is also some variation by geography.

8.9 Overall, the ESiW programme represents a substantial investment and if the programme participation target is achieved, it will reach just over 1% of the employed population[46] across Wales.

Engagement and business development

8.10 The major factor in engaging the necessary number of participants has been engaging businesses. This has been the single biggest challenge for the programme.

8.11 The Employer Pledge, originally required to be completed before learning could be delivered, caused significant delays and many providers reported losing confidence in the delivery model. In April 2012, the move to the ESiW programme included withdrawing the need for employers to have the Employer Pledge. Although providers still have profiles to deliver the EPA, no claims have been made by providers against EPA profiles and the award is at risk of becoming a somewhat redundant tool.

8.12 In the early phase, providers struggled to engage sufficient employers and some still find the process of 'selling' to businesses challenging. This was in part, due to the Employer Pledge being a pre-requisite of training, but also due to restrictions in the learning offer, which providers felt reduced the viability of the programme.

8.13 However, there are some exceptions, with providers that have a more commercial model of business development and providers that have recruited large numbers of businesses in line with their targets. Other important avenues to engaging employers include: through unions and through a single national approach (MaB).

---

[46] Labour Force Survey, Dec-Feb 2013, Total in Employment (seasonally adjusted) = 1,350,000

8.14 For the programme to recruit the necessary participants, the three–pronged business development approach (providers, unions, and MaB) must be successful. Based on the current target numbers of employers, there needs to be an increased emphasis on generating more learners per employer engaged. MaB activity is only just becoming established, with the website soon to become live. Having a clear idea about the profile of referrals, and confidence the target will be achieved, is paramount.

8.15 Challenges to the programme have meant that the EPA and employers achieving equality and diversity policies have become lower order priorities. Performance against targets are low and are anticipated to be back-loaded. They are necessarily 'down the line' activities; however, the effect of lower prioritisation, creates a risk that expected outputs may not emerge.

Programme design and delivery

8.16 There has been overwhelming support for the changes introduced in April 2012.

8.17 In practice, some elements have had more impact than others. For example, the extension to Level 2 has resulted in more qualifications than might have otherwise occurred. Similarly the inclusion of the ESW ICT qualification, linking to other essential skills qualifications, has been beneficial. However, there has been limited use of unit qualifications to date, although this learning offer does receive support.

8.18 In terms of provider delivery, some providers and provider consortia have struggled to deliver against initially agreed profiles. This may be due to a lag effect, with more employers and learners expected towards the end of the programme, but may also be the effect of competition between competing programmes, creating a risk of under-performance in certain geographical areas.

Provider capacity

8.19 In terms of capacity development, there has been limited demand from providers for tutor training and there is a risk that this element of the programme underachieves quite significantly. This may have an impact on programme capacity at later stages if larger volumes of learners create a bottle-neck for delivery. Some providers are benefiting from the opportunities presented in the ESiW programme and are expanding their business by recruiting additional staff and extending their contract. However, other providers are reducing the value of the contracts. It is not clear at this point what impact this may have on the overall performance of the programme. A more pertinent point is to consider the longer term impact on the ability of Wales to address its adult skills deficit without substantial increases in provider capacity (in terms of knowledge and expertise).

8.20 The removal of the Quality Standard is generally accepted by providers. However, three areas of risk for the ESiW programme include:

8.21 Essential skills delivery becomes a lower strategic priority within provider organisations (the Quality Standard was acknowledged to have helped give essential skills status within provider organisations).

8.22 Reduced focus on understanding the market and what businesses and local areas need (the needs assessment was part of the Quality Standard process).

8.23 The extent of synergy between other departments and programmes within provider organisations could be improved, especially for further education colleges.

Satisfaction and impact of ESiW

8.24 Employers report overwhelming satisfaction with the learning for their organisations. There were high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the training.

8.25 The degree to which providers contextualised the learning has added considerable value to the learning on behalf of the employer. Providers have worked hard to develop good relationships with employers.

8.26 There is evidence that the programme has raised considerable awareness of the need for essential skills training. The results of the employer survey show that many more employers are likely to engage in further essential skills learning than had been engaged in learning prior to the programme.

8.27 In terms of impact, over half of employers (53%) surveyed report that they definitely would not, or probably would not have engaged with essential skills learning without the programme. Employers reported immediate benefits with regards improvement in workforce skills. They also recognised benefits to the company of improved customer services, increased competitiveness and reduced sick leave.

8.28 A quarter of learners were attracted back into learning after not having done any for ten years or more. Learners were highly satisfied with the learning they received and considered it to be very useful for their role. The contextualisation of the learning was equally important to the learner, and this helped them maintain interest. Using data generated from the survey data, nearly eight out of ten learners achieve a qualification, which is in line with programme assumptions of 80% attainment.

8.29 Fewer learners were motivated by financial rewards, but wanted to improve their skills. Over two thirds of learners said that they would probably not or definitely not have done similar training if it had not been offered by their employer as part of the ESiW programme. Over three quarters of the learners stated they were likely to get involved in further learning over the next year.

Compatibility with WULF funded projects

8.30 Evidence from the consultations and case studies with unions demonstrated that WULF funded projects focussing on essential skills are highly compatible with the Welsh Government's essential skills provision. WULF funded projects have helped develop a learning infrastructure (learning centres, learning committees, learning agreements) that brings learning to the learners; helps raise awareness of essential skills issues among employers; and encourage colleagues to participate in learning. Employers have recognised the value of unions and ULRs in particular in promoting learning to their workforce.

Recommendations

8.31 In view of the programme's underperformance and to ensure the programme meets its targets, we recommend the following:

Recommendation One: Monitor Trends in Participant Engagement

- Review reasons why certain trends are occurring as they are, and if appropriate, make adjustments to provider profiles: for example, the number of older learners, learners with a disability and location of learners. This could be done through a workshop style discussion with providers and Menter a Busnes.

Recommendation Two: The Menter a Busnes Contract

- Ensure a monthly profile of referrals is agreed with Menter a Busnes.

- Track the numbers of learners engaging as a result of Menter a Busnes referrals to estimate likely contribution to the target and the required contribution of providers.

Recommendation Three: Review the Performance of the Tutor Training Programme

- Seek to support providers to encourage engagement in the tutor training programme. Review provider recruitment plans to ensure the network of providers continues to develop in line with programme requirements.

Recommendation Four: Review Potential Barriers to Delivery in Certain Geographical Areas

- Utilise feedback from Menter a Busnes activities to inform on programme performance: for example, how the South West Wales Regional Essential Skills Project affects recruitment onto the ESiW programme.

- Seek marketing plans from providers including how they intend to work with other related ESF and government programmes within and out with their organisations.

Recommendation Five: Review the Value of the Employer Pledge Award

- Consult with providers to consider the value of the Employer Pledge Award and the likelihood that targets will be met.

- Review the impact of a deficit in Equality and Diversity Strategies on the overall performance of the programme.

Recommendation Six: Measuring Impact on Employers

- Consider reviewing essential skills impact on a small number of employers through detailed and longitudinal case study work.

Annex A: Key Areas of Investigation

Key Areas of Investigation for the Evaluation of Delivery and Quality Assurance of Post-16 Basic Skills Provision in Wales		
Area of Impact	**Key Questions**	**Research Activity**

1. Strategic Impact	• How well are the interventions supporting the critical vision for basic skills learning?
	   – The number of adults with poor basic skills should be diminished significantly
	   – What progress has been made over the last year to reduce the number of adults without appropriate basic skills? Is this sufficient?
	   – How can progress in numeracy be achieved?
	   – How sustainable is progress and delivery?
	• What are the implications for future policy decisions?
		• Stakeholder consultations
		• Programme data analysis
		• Survey results
		• Case studies
		• Validation event

2. Impact of Basic Skills in the Workplace	**Programme Performance against the aims and objectives** • How many learners have accessed training? • What is the uptake of training in literacy as against numeracy? • What percentage has gained an identified qualification? • Numbers and profile of businesses engaged: Size, sector, region. • Is the programme on target? • What is the variability in ratios of learners to employers and what are the possible causes? **Programme Delivery** • What types of programmes of support have been funded? • What is the rationale for the range of programmes? • How do programmes vary in nature and scope across the region? What are the key drivers of difference? • How well have individual programmes performed against targets? • Are there common challenges such as employer engagement, provider capacity or programme monitoring that hinder performance? • How does the employer pledge overcome barriers to engagement? • What are the longer term benefits of employers signing up to the pledge? • What are the key enablers in programme delivery, such as learning advocates, funding flexibility, peer led learning? • What is the likely impact of BSIW on workplace learning over the longer term? • Do employers recognise the benefits of delivering basic skills training to their workforce? What are these and what evidence do they have? **Developing provider capacity** • How many practitioners have accessed the training Levels 2-5? • What are the barriers to practitioners accessing further training and development? • How/has the additional training enabled practitioners to support learner progression?	Evidence gathered from: • BSIW monitoring data • Documentary review of programme reports • Stakeholder consultations • Survey of employers • Case studies of workplaces

Key Areas of Investigation for the Evaluation of Delivery and Quality Assurance of Post-16 Basic Skills Provision in Wales		
Area of Impact	**Key Questions**	**Research Activity**
	• Do providers have the capacity to support learners across the range of basic skills? **Added Value** What is the added value of range of projects? For example: – encouraging learner progression; – stimulating additional training; – building sustainable relationships between providers and employers – providing cost effective approaches to embedding learning	
3. Impact of the Quality Standard	**Improving learning strategies and provision throughout Wales** • How has the development of the quality standard influenced strategic planning across Wales? For example in developing new relationships between organisations and the setting of clearer learning outcomes based on prior learning outcomes? • How have businesses integrated basic skills training into workforce development procedures as part of a whole organisation approach? • How have joint working relations between providers and employers improved as a result of QS? **Supporting learners** • How has the QS improved learner identification and support? • What is the experience of learners of the QS – have they noticed an improvement in their support? • How has this influenced learner engagement, achievement and progression?	• Telephone consultations with WBL providers; • Case studies of providers • Learner interviews
4. Impact and compatibility of WULF	Questions will be similar in nature to those detailed against BSIW, but some specific questions will be added as follows: **Programme Performance** • What programme outcomes are WULF funded programmes contributing to? • How compatible are they to BSIW outputs and outcomes? **Programme Delivery** • To what extent is WULF enabling unions to embed learning strategies in workplaces? • Is WULF helping unions access new workplaces or extend existing support? • What lessons can be learned from WULF programmes that can be shared more generally, such as the use of learning advocates (ULRs) • Has the role of ULRs been expanded and improved as a result of WULF	• Stakeholder consultations • Analysis of WULF data • Workplace Case studies • Focus groups with ULRs

Key Areas of Investigation for the Evaluation of Delivery and Quality Assurance of Post-16 Basic Skills Provision in Wales		
Area of Impact	**Key Questions**	**Research Activity**
	• What is the impact of learning centres in workplaces and has WULF funding been able to capitalise on this? **Programme Compatibility** • To what extent can the projects funded by WULF be integrated into BSiW? • How can WULF projects help improve the performance of BSiW? • What if any are the challenges of including WULF programmes into BSiW? •	
5. Impact on Learners	• What are the characteristics of learners engaged in work based learning (age, gender, disability, ethnicity) • What is the distribution of qualifications achieved? (levels, numeracy, literacy, ESOL) • How have previous barriers to learning been removed for learners? • What barriers still remain? • What attracted learners into learning? • What were their experiences of the learning, positive and negative? • What type of learning appeals to learners? Online, independent, group learning? • Are learners able to manage their own learning? • How were learning objectives identified? How was progressed reviewed?	• Interviews with learners • Online learner survey
6. Cost Effectiveness and Sustainability	• What impact has the programme had and is this cost effective? • What is the unit cost per qualification achieved and per learner achieving a ESW level 1 qualification • Which projects elicit the greatest value for money (unit cost of learners achieving a ESW level 1 or above) • Is there evidence of match funding which is helping develop capacity for learner support? • Is there evidence of workplaces accessing longer term funding or learning support arrangements – what are these?	• Programme data • Stakeholder consultations • Case studies • Survey of employers • Learner views

**Annex B:
Consultation Guides and Surveys**

Essential Skills in the Workplace

Workplace Case Study

Aims of the Employer Case Study

The aims of the employer case study are to capture the impact of the learning delivered in the workplace and to establish the longer term impact of the training delivered in the workplace. One of the key benefits of the ESiW programme is in developing a long term commitment to delivering training in the workplace. These case studies will seek to determine the sustainability of training as a result of ESiW.

Note for consultant:

We need to gather a range of information that shows the starting point from a training perspective so that any BSiW or ESiW training can be put into perspective.

The purpose of the workplace case studies are to understand:

a)   **Employer Background**
b)   **Training History**
c)   **Employer Pledge**
d)   **Delivering Essential Skills Learning**
e)   **Work with Unions**
f)   **Impact of Learning**

The people to be interviewed will depend on the size of the organisation and whether public or private sector. If a small business, the interview should include the manager/director etc of the business. If part of a larger public sector organisation, we need to speak with the person who has been involved in setting up the partnership with the provider and understands the learning delivered. This may possibly be the Workforce Development Manager or Head of Department. We will also need to speak with someone who can provide anecdotal responses to the impact of the learning.

A) Background

1. What sector does the company align itself to?

2. How many employees are there in the company?

   a.   Include at this site

3. How long has the company been in existence?

4. Is the company unionised (if so, which union(s)?

B) Training History

5. Are they aware of any training needs and/or skills gaps in the organisation with regards Essential Skills needs among the workforce? (i.e. literacy, numeracy, ICT, ESOL needs)

   a.   How much of an issue was/is the deficit in Essential Skills for the business?

6. How does this How does this impact on the business

   i.   Productivity

   ii.   Team work

   iii. Quality of output

   iv.   Customer service

   v.   Other

7. Can you give an example of how the skills needs were/are detrimental to the business?

8. Has the employer been involved in carrying out a training needs analysis which identifies its skills gaps and training needs? When did this take place and by whom?

   a.   How was this done, did people self-select or was this strategy driven?

    b.   Was it the t provider who is delivering the BSiW/ESiW training that identified need?

9. Does the workplace have a recognised training plan which sets out goals in terms of staff training relating to Essential Skills? When was this developed and how was this developed – did it involve any union support?

10. What workforce development initiatives does the company engage with and has this changed as a result of BSiW/ESiW?

C) Employer Pledge Award

1. Is the employer aware of the Employer Pledge Award?

2. Does the workplace have it or is it working towards the Employer Pledge Award?

3. If no, why not:

    a. Are they aware of it?

        i.   Has the provider introduced it?

4. Why have they not engaged in it?

    a. Did they feel it was too resource intensive?

    b. Did they feel they cannot commit to the requirements?

5. Do they envisage other impacts?

    a. Did this happen or not?

6. If Yes:

    a. What impact do they think having the EPA has on the company's actions in terms of a broader strategy to meet needs in ES?

    b. Is there a commitment to longer term support in Essential Skills for learners

    c. What does this mean with regarding planning and delivering training?

D) Delivering Essential Skills Learning in the Workplace

7. Why did the employer decide to engage in delivering ES within the workplace?

    a. Provider led

    b. Employer demand led through a recognised need?

    c. Social responsibility

8. Has the company developed further /new links with the provider as a result of engaging with the BSiW or ESiW

9. How is Essential Skills learning delivered in the workplace?

    a. One to one?

    b. Group learning

    c. Time off to train? /negotiated with the unions?

    d. Part of the Workforce Development Plan

10. Is there a Learning Centre in the workplace that supports ES learning? What does it consist of?

    a. How/why was this developed? Was it developed in partnership with the union(s)?

11. What learning has been taking place as a result of the ESiW programme?

    a. Area of learning

    b. Qualifications

    c. How many learners have gone through the BSiW or ESiW programme since the start?

    d. What types of learning have come forward for the learning

      i.   Part time/full time

     ii.   Age

    iii.   Gender

     iv. Areas of work

12. How does the Essential Skills learning contribute to the overall learning/skills development strategy of employees?

13. What is their experience of the learning delivered by the provider?

    a. Organising the learning

    b. Quality of learning delivered

    c. Relevancy of learning delivered

    d. In terms of value for money

14. Do you feel that this Essential Skills activity is sustainable?

    a. How or why will it be sustained?

    b. Relationship with provider?

E) (If relevant) Working with Unions to Deliver Training Opportunities in the Workplace

1. How many unions are represented in the workplace?

2. Does the workplace have any ULRs? How many ULRs have been trained in the workplace?

3. What role has the ULR or union had in helping develop a learning strategy or helping deliver learning in the workplace?

4. Has a partnership developed between the local provider, union and ULR?

5. To what extent to you feel the unions/ULRs have contributed to the learning agenda in the workplace?

6. Has the workplace developed a Learning Agreement which provides ULRs and employees with reasonable time off to undertake learning activities? How was this Learning Agreement developed? (Is it a national or local agreement?) What is the substance of the Learning Agreement

7. Do you feel this benefits the learning or training in the workplace. Has the fact that the workplace got a Learning Agreement, stimulated additional learning?

8. Has the workplace accessed any WULF funding?

    a. Has the employer noticed any difference between WULF funded/led learning activity to BSiW led learning activity?

9. If the organisation had not accessed BSiW or ESiW funded training, would you have delivered the ES training anyway?

    a. How do you say this, what evidence is there for this?

    b. What on-going commitment to training is there?

F)   Impact of Learning

1. Which staffing roles have benefited from the learning?

    a. Has this had a benefit on their performance in particular roles?

2. Has the employer seen any benefits as a result of this learning?

    a. In what areas?

        i.   Motivation of staff

        ii. Productivity

        iii. Team work

        iv. Time keeping

      v.   Sickness

     vi.   Quality of product

    vii.   Customer service

   viii.   Other….

3. Have staff been more motivated to take on further learning?

   a. If yes, in what areas?

4. Have there been any negative aspects to the learning on learners?

   a. Cost

   b. Learner expectations

   c. Loss of confidence if they were unsuccessful

G) General Comments

Does the employer have any comments or recommendations for the Welsh Government on the ESiW programme?

Essential Skills in the Workplace

Learner/non learner Topic Guide

Aims of the interview with learners and non-learner

The aims of learner interviews are to establish the impact of the learning on the learner, their experience of the learning and whether they will continue to develop skills and continue learning.

The aims of the interview with non-learners are to establish why some employees have not been involved in the learning, the barriers and what could encourage them to participate

Note to consultant

The methodology is to conduct focus groups with both sets of learners/non-learners. However, we may need to be flexible regarding conducting focus group and undertake a small number (2 – 3) of one to one interviews with learners if they cannot be available at the same time, or if learners do not wish to discuss their learning/background.

We will be available to provide any support as necessary either prior to or post interviews.

A) Background

1. Introduction and general background about the person(s) and their role(s)?

    a. Which part of the organisation do you work in?

    b. Do you work full/part time, shifts, sub-contractor?

    c. How long have you worked in company/their role?

2. How did you become aware of the learning on offer?

    a) From a colleague

b) From their supervisor

c) From the workforce development manager/ HR / Personnel

d) ULR

e) From a taster session ran by the provider?

f) Already participated in learning previously and found out through the college

g) Other

3. How did the employer or provider introduce the learning opportunity to you?

4. Did you feel you got enough information about what it was about and what you were required to do?

5. Why did you decide to become involved in learning?

   a) What were your expectations?
   b) What did you want to achieve?

6. How would you describe your learning background?

   a. Length of time since last did any skills training
   b. Experience at school
   c. Highest qualifications do they have?

B) Learning Activity

1. How did you find out what you wanted or needed to focus on, were you given some form of assessment?

   a. Did you feel comfortable about this process or anxious in any way?

   b. Did you get any feedback on what the results were and therefore what learning you could focus on to improve your skills (reading, writing, numbers, ICT)?

   c. Were you happy with this level of information?

      i. How could it have been improved?

2. What area of learning have you been doing at work? (Literacy, Numeracy, ICT, ESOL)

3. Have you undertaken any qualifications?

4. What level of qualification have you studied?

   a. If did bite-sized learning, explore the benefits

   b. If did whole certificate, explore the experience

      i. Length of time taken

     ii. Difficulty in achieving it

[If did ICT]

   a. Did you gain any other qualifications alongside ICT?

      i. How did this work? Was it a good experience?

5. Were you given the opportunity to make decisions about what you learned and at what pace?

6. Did you develop a learning portfolio or discuss a learning plan with their tutor?

C) Benefits

1. What did you expect to get out of the learning you were involved in?

   a. Improve on skills [reading, writing, communications, IT, numbers]

   b. Improve confidence levels?

   c. To help with children's homework

   d. Have some fun/time off work?

2. Did your learning experience match your expectations? If not why not?

3. Do you feel this learning has improved your skills and understanding in this area?

   a. If yes, in what area?
   b. If no, why not? (was it just about achieving the qualification or does the learner feel they have improved their skills and knowledge?)

4. How do you feel you have benefited from the learning?

   a. Can do things better at work (examples)

   b. Understand instructions/calculations better…

   c. get on with people better

   d. more confident

   e. promotional prospects

   f. job security

   g. financial benefits

   h. other (helping children with their homework)

D)   Support/Barriers

1. Were there any difficulties for you in starting the learning?

2. What support/encouragement did you get from your employer to undertake this learning?

   a. Unpaid/paid time off, how this helped

   b. Appropriate advice/guidance to undertaking a qualification?

   c. Support/encouragement throughout the qualification?

3. What if any were the barriers to you undertaking learning?
   a. Child care
   b. Time

c. Personal barriers, such as confidence

d. Lack of knowledge or information about the opportunities

e. Lack of awareness about the need to improve your reading or maths

f. Has this learning experience i.e. being given in the workplace, helped to take away those barriers or confirmed them?

Future learning Opportunities

1. Do you feel that there are opportunities in the workplace for you to do some more learning if you wish?

2. Have you had any more information from the providers about further learning opportunities?

3. If not in the workplace, do you think you will continue to do any more learning outside of the workplace?

E)   Interview with Non- Learners

We need to select non learning carefully through the use of a contact within the workplace. This could be from learners that have been interviewed, from HR staff or other managers who know the workforce. Non-learners need to be comparable with learners in terms of job roles and skills.

1. Introduction and general background about the person(s) and their role(s)?

   a. Which part of the organisation do they work in?

   b. Do they work full/part time, shifts, sub-contractor?

   c. How long worked in company/their role?

2. Are you aware that learning to support workers in things like reading, writing and maths has been delivered in your workplace recently?
   a. Yes
   b. No (not at the time)
      i. *Explore why this was the case and what they felt about this.*

3. Have you signed up for any of this recent learning?

4. Why did you not sign up for the learning offered through (provider name)?

    d. Did not feel the need to/ don't need those skills in my role?

    e. Was not given the opportunity to?

    f. Personal reasons (confidence, time, child care etc)

    g. Others

5. How did the employer or provider introduce the learning opportunity to you?
    a. Was it encouraged by the employer?
    b. Was it introduced as a one off learning opportunity or as an opportunity to begin learning again?
6. Did you feel you got enough information about what it was about and what you would have to do? *Explore what could have been improved.*

[Explore their learning background…]

7. When did you last do any form of formal learning *(other than Health and Safety or other forms of compulsory training, [except work related qualifications]).*

8. What was this in (if post-16)

9. What was your experience of school? For example were you a confident learner, did you enjoy learning?

10. What certificates or qualifications do you managed to achieve?

If established a need for additional learning…look at additional support that may encourage participation

11. Would you consider undertaking any learning similar to that that has been delivered in the workplace in the future?

12. What type of support would help you to take-up the learning offer?

a. Taster sessions?

b. One to one discussion with the provider/tutor

c. Child care facilities?

d. An observation of a class?

e. Discussion with a ULR (if relevant)

f. What else?

13. *If no to Q27,* why not?

    a. Lack of interest?

    b. Low confidence?

    c. Time

14. Do you feel your employer invests in your personal / skills training?

    a. If no, is that one of the reasons they have not participated?

    b. What could/should be done to improve this?

Perceived Benefits

15. Do you think you would benefit from improving any of your (what's called) basic skills such as reading and writing or maths?

16. How do you think that improving your 'basic skills' would help you in your life?

    a. Workplace

    b. At home

    c. Personally

    d. Financially

17. Have you noticed a difference in any of your colleagues as a result of the learning they have been on?

   a. Confidence

   b. Team work

   c. Reading, writing, number etc

Any additional comments they would like to make?

Essential Skills in the Workplace

Provider Case Study Visits

Aim of the Provide Case Study

The aims of the provider case study are to understand how the delivery of the ESiW is progressing and the key challenges to date. This will take into account the changes from the BSiW programme and how the provider expects to deliver in the future against their contract.

We will probe around areas of identifying and engaging employers, partnership working, and delivering learning, as well as impact.

Note: We will not now directly address issues relating the Quality Standard as this has been covered in previous activity. However, where they may be specific links, we will seek to corroborate its impact.

These case studies are pre-arranged and providers will have a set of questions to help them prepare. We can offer on-going support and information for any provider prior or post case study visit.

Key Objectives

Key objectives of the case study are to understand:

a) **the background to the provider;**

b) **how providers identify and engage employers;**

c) **whether the programme has influenced provider partnerships and the longer term benefits of these for the Essential Skills agenda;**

d) **the contribution of the Employer Pledge in improving engagement and commitment of employers;**

e) CPD of Tutors;

f) the learning delivered in the workplace;

g) their views of the impact on learners and learning;

h) comments or recommendations;

A) Provider Background

Note for consultant:

We need to obtain provider background in order to put the ESiW programme performance into perspective. After that, we should ensure we are asking about the ESiW/BSiW programme specifically and how they are performing against this programme; identify key challenges and how they have or are planning to address them.

These questions will be covered with the provider manager or head of the Essential Skills contract for the provider.

1. Is the provider an FE, WBL, or ACL provider?

2. How long has the provider been delivering basic skills learning in the workplace?

    a. What history in terms of working with employers/sectors does the provider have?

3. How was contract with the Welsh Government for BSiW negotiated?

    a. Who with, and when and what was their experience of this?

    b. How were targets set?

        i. Based on previous knowledge of capacity and need or something else?

  c. Were these targets challenging?

    i. If so, why or why not?

4. How is the provider delivering against their profile?

  a. Businesses registered

  b. Participants registered

  c. Qualification starts: by type of qualification/level

  d. Qualification completes

5. What are their key challenges in delivering to target?

6. How have they tried to address these?

7. Have they had to re-profile and why?

8. What has gone particularly well and why

B) Identifying and Engaging Employers

These questions can be covered with the provider manager/head of ES and/or with tutors/head of business development responsible for identifying and engaging employers.

1. How does the provider identify potential employers?

  a. Do they have a strategy that targets certain sectors, geographical areas or learners?

  b. Has the Quality Standard (Element 1 in particular), influenced this? (If they have the QS)

  c. Are there particular sectors or business sizes that are difficult to engage with and how do they overcome this?

2. How does the provider develop links with new employers?

a. Do they have a dedicated team of staff responsible for engaging employers or are the tutors also responsible for developing links?

3. What are the challenges that providers face in engaging employers in Essential Skills Wales qualifications in the workplace and how they overcome these?

   These could include for example: issues relating to low levels of understanding/demand from employers to train staff; over saturation of providers in particular areas; cost of provision; provider confidence in engaging employers.

4. Do they work with unions to help engage employers or promote learning to learners?

   a. How do they do this?

      i. Do they work through specific roles within the workplace such as Union Learning Representatives, Union Staff Representatives

      ii. Do you they work through/with the Wales TUC?

5. Do unions aid access to employers and learners?

   a. In what way?

   b. If not, what are the challenges in working with unions?

6. Has the offer in the ESiW improved the likelihood that employers will engage in the programme?

   a. If so, what are the particular elements of the programme that make it more likely that employers will engage?

   b. If not, why not and what would could be improved to help engage employers?

7. How many employers are they currently working with?

8. Do they have capacity to deliver more learning in the workplace?

    a. If so, how confident are they that they can increase demand and work to capacity?

    b. What is their strategy for doing this? (This will probably link with the question below)

C) Development of Strategic Partnerships

1. Does the provider operate as part of a consortium?

    a. Who with?

    b. For how long?

    c. What were the reasons for operating as part of a consortium?

2. What are the benefits to the provider?

    a. Sharing of best practice? CPD/staff training?

    b. What are the challenges in working in a consortium?

3. Does operating as a consortium improve the offer to learners or employers?

    a. For example: identifying learners and linking in with appropriate provision?

4. What would improve consortium working?

D) Employer Pledge Awards

1. Is the provider targeted to achieve any Employer Pledge awards? If no, why not?

2. If yes…

    a. What progress are they making towards this target?

      b. Why is progress below or above target?

3. What are the benefits and challenges of delivering the Employer Pledge Award?

      a. Is it cost effective for the provider?

      b. How long does it take from engagement to achievement?

      c. Why do some employers agree to the award and some not?

      d. Is it more appropriate or realistic for some employers to achieve the award than others? If so, why?

      e. Has the Employer Pledge Award influenced how providers commit to delivering training in the workplace?

      f. Do employers display the Employer Pledge Award?

      g. Can the Employer Pledge Award be improved?

E) CPD of tutors

These questions should be discussed with tutors delivering the ESiW programme in the workplace.

1. How many tutors work in the Essential Skills team that deliver learning in the workplace?

      a. Has this increased or decreased over the last three years?

2. What highest qualifications do they hold?

      a. What highest qualification level do they feel they need?

      b. Are there benefits of doing a higher level qualification above level 3?

3. What is their view that the Level 4 qualification is no longer available?

      a. Have any of them got this and what were the benefits of this qualification?

4. Do the tutors specialise in numeracy or literacy or ICT?

    a. How do they develop their expertise in their subject areas?

        i. For example, does the consortium support cross provider sharing of best practice? *(If so, please get an example of how this works and what they share)*

5. Are there any particular areas for development in terms of provider expertise that the provider is focussing upon?

    a. Are there any issues with accessing development training for tutors?

F) Learning Delivered in the Workplace

These questions should be discussed with tutors delivering the ESiW programme in the workplace.

1. How does the provider assess for learning needs?

    a. Is this done through a discussion with the employer and on a one to one learner level?

    b. How do they determine in the workplace which learners should be given the training?

        i. Is this is voluntary or is there any workplace development strategy that feeds into the training offered?

    c. To what extent are employers engaged in the development of strategies to sustain learning in the workplace beyond ESiW?

2. Is the suite of qualifications offered through the ESiW programme fit for all learners?

    d. Have particular changes to the qualifications improved the opportunities both for engaging learners and for accrediting learning.

        i. For example, the inclusion of ICT

> > ii. The rule change regarding studying two qualifications simultaneously

> e. Has/will the development of the bite size qualification units improve the take up of learning amongst learners?

> > i. Have you delivered any bite-sized units?

> > ii. If not, why not?

3. Are there any negative impacts of the changes to the qualifications?

4. Has the provider integrated the learning offer with other forms of learning delivery? (Some providers have piggy backed on other funding streams that do not include Essential Skills qualifications, but the learner has an ES need).

5. How is the learning delivered? One to One or group learning?

> f. What has influenced the delivery of learning?

> > i. Employer releasing learners from duties

> > ii. Learner preference?

6. What are the challenges/benefits of delivering learning in the workplace?

7. Is the learning contextualised depending upon the sector?

> g. How has the learning content been developed?

> h. Does the provider share ideas with other providers to help develop lesson plans/sessions etc?

> i. Has this element improved over the duration of the programme?

> j. How important is contextualising learning for learners?

8. Which area of learning have you been delivering? Communication, application of number or ICT

k. What affects demand for this learning? Employers needs or learners or both?

l. Is there sufficient demand from learners/employers to meet the learner targets in numeracy?

m. What are the particular challenges in addressing numeracy and how does the provider overcome these?

G) Impact on learners

1. What do you perceive to be the impact on learners of the ESiW programme? For example:

    a. How many learners are returning to learning for the first time since leaving school?

    b. What profile of learners and learning has this supported?

        i. Levels of learning

        ii. Areas of learning

        iii. Age of learners

        iv. Gender of learners

2. Can they provide examples of how the learning they have delivered has helped learners in their work or personal lives (if they know)?

    This may be as a result of specific requests from employers to fulfil some training that the provider has contextualised and delivered through ESiW

3. How many of the provider's learners continue with other forms of qualifications as a result of the BSiW or ESW qualification obtained?

4. What influences this continuation of learning?

    a. Employer support

      b. Union support

      c. Personal aspiration/circumstances

5. Can learner progression be improved for the learner?

H) General Comments

1. Are there any particular comments or suggestions the provider has for improving learning in the workplace or the ESiW programme?

Union Consultation

Contact name:

Union:

Sector:

Geographical Area:

Project name:

Introduction

We are contacting you as your name has been given to YCL as the key contact for the [name of project] project. YCL is undertaking a study on behalf of the Welsh Government to see whether WULF funded basic skills projects are compatible with ESiW programmes funded by the Welsh Government with a view to developing greater joint working between the unions and the Welsh Government to developing essential skills for the workforce in Wales.

All responses you provide will be treated confidentially and anything you say will be anonymised in any reporting.

1. **Key aims of the project**

    a. Confirm the project name and key aims of the project against the information provided by Welsh Government

    b. Confirm when funding was received and for how long the project has been operating

    c. Confirm the geographical areas in which the project is focussing

    d. What sectors / occupations is the project focussing upon?

    e. What types of employers are being engaged in the project?

        I. Private

II. Public sector

III. Mixture of public and private

IV. Employer sizes

2. **Context of the programme**

   a. Is this project focussing on developing new learning opportunities in the workplace, or is it extending existing learning opportunities, or both?

   b. Is it developing new links with providers or building on existing links or both?

3. **Role of the project manager**

   a. What is your role in managing and reviewing the project delivery?

   b. Is this your only role or do you do this as part of other union activities?

   c. How do you support the various learning being developed in the different geographical areas?

      a. Arranging meetings between providers and employers

      b. Visiting employers to help engage in training

   d. How do you help develop learning in the workplace?

   e. What are the main challenges in your role?

4. **Performance of the programme**

   a. How long has the project been running for?

   b. What are the key targets the project is working towards?

   c. What qualification levels are the project focussing on?

      I. Pre-entry

      II. Level 1,2,3

III. A range of qualifications

d. What areas of learning are being delivered?

I. Vocational - examples of qualifications achieved

II. Non-vocational – examples of qualifications achieved

e. How many learners are profiled to be supported?

f. Is the programme focussing on specific cohorts of learners?

I. Older learners

II. First time return learners

III. Gender

IV. Ethnicity

5. **Engaging employers**

a. How has the programme helped identify and engage employers?

b. Has it engaged *new* employers?

I. How does the project engage new employers?

1. Do you work with the TUC to establish steering groups?

2. Do you work through Union Learning Representatives?

3. Other Union Representatives?

c. What are the key strengths with regards union led learning that you have evidenced in this project?

d. Have any employers developed a workplace learning agreement that will help sustain learning in the workplace as a result of this activity?

6. **Delivering learning**

    a. How are potential learners identified?

        a. Through ULRs?

        b. Through a broader workforce development strategy that is led by the employer?

        c. Through providers carrying out training needs analysis?

    b. How are learners encouraged to participate in learning?

    c. How are learners needs identified?

    d. How are learners encouraged to continue with their learning – any evidence of this

        I. For example, any evidence of learners undertaking non vocational learning leading to essential skills learning or undertaking learning at a higher level?

    e. Is learning delivered in learning centres established in the workplace?

        I. Is this a union learning centre?

7. **Working with providers**

    a. How do you establish links with providers to deliver workplace learning?

    b. What are the challenges in working with providers?

    c. How/Do the challenges vary from FE colleges to private providers?

8. **Employer Pledge**

    a. What are your views of the Employer Pledge?

    b. Do you work with providers to encourage employers to participate in the pledge?

c. Have you any evidence that the pledge encourages a longer term commitment to learning in the workplace?

9. **Benefits and challenges of union led learning delivering essential skills**

   a. In what ways do you feel that WULF funded programmes can successfully contribute to the essential skills in the workplace government agenda? (For example negotiating time off to learn, establishing workplace learning agreements)

      b. Do you perceive there to be any specific challenges in delivering essential skills in the workplace via union led learning?

         1. What are these?

            a. Funding issues?

            b. Qualifications that learners want to undertake?

            c. Time required to undertake this type of learning in the workplace?

10. **Sustainability of learning delivered in the workplace**

   a. Has this project helped develop sustainable links with providers and employers to deliver learning in the workplace?

   b. What other sources of funding are you able to access to continue developing learning in the workplace?

   c. How will the union continue to support learning in the workplace at the end of this round of WULF funding?

11. **Any other comments**

BASIC SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE (BSIW) EVALUATION: EMPLOYER SURVEY

SECTION A: CODING AND INTRODUCTION

A2.   **Respondent Details:**

Employer Name

Contact Name

Telephone number

A3.   **Programme Area shown on Database**

○ *Convergence*   ○ *Competitiveness*

A4.   **Local Authority shown on Database**

○ *Anglesey*	○ *Ceredigion*	○ *Monmouth*	○ *Rhondda Cynon Taf*
○ *Blaenau Gwent*	○ *Conwy*	○ *Neath Port Talbot*	○ *Swansea*
○ *Bridgend*	○ *Denbighshire*	○ *Newport*	○ *Torfaen*
○ *Caerphilly*	○ *Flintshire*	○ *Pembrokeshire*	○ *Vale of Glamorgan*
○ *Cardiff*	○ *Gwynedd*	○ *Powys*	○ *Wrexham*
○ *Carmarthenshire*	○ *Merthyr Tydfil*		

Good morning/afternoon. May I speak to <NAMED RESPONDENT>? It's in connection with a survey we are conducting on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Hello, My name is <NAME> from Old Bell 3, and I'm part of the team which has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to assess the effectiveness of its Basic Skills In the Workplace programme and to find out how the Programme might be improved.

I understand that your company was involved in the BSiW at some stage during the period between January 2011 and April 2012. Is this right?

I'd like to ask you some questions about your experience of the BSiW programme. All responses will be treated in strict confidence. First can I check would you prefer to conduct the interview in English or Welsh?

It should take no more than 20 minutes or so. Is now a good time?

REASSURANCES IF NECESSARY THROUGHOUT THIS SECTION:

Old Bell 3 is an independent research company. All of our work is carried out according to a strict Code of Conduct, which means that everything you tell us will be treated in the strictest confidence and we will not pass your name on to anyone outside the research team.

If you would like to check Old Bell 3's credentials, you can call Gary Jones at the Welsh Government on 01443 663735. If you would like more information about the research we are conducting, please call Nia Bryer on 01558 668649.

SECTION B: BASIC SKILLS ISSUES AND PREVIOUS TRAINING

Before I talk to you about the Basic Skills in the Workplace Programme, I'd like to just ask you a few questions about basic skills issues within your organisation and any previous basic skills training that you would have been involved with:

B1. **Prior to engaging in the BSIW programme how much of an issue was the lack of basic skills amongst your workforce?**
[READ OUT. CODE ONE]

○ *Very significant issue*　　　　○ *Small issue*　　　　○ *Don't know*

○ *Significant issue*　　　　○ *Very small issue*

B2. **Which areas of poor basic skills posed the biggest issue(s) for your organisation?**
[READ OUT. MULTICODE]

☐ *Literacy*　　　　☐ *Communication*

☐ *Numeracy*　　　　☐ *English as a second language (ESOL)*

B3. **In what way did low level basic skills in the workforce impact upon the organisation?**
[PROMPT IF REQUIRED. MULTICODE]

☐ *It affected communication with customers or other organisations*　　　　☐ *It affected staff productivity*

☐ *It affected our workforce relations*　　　　☐ *It affected staff motivation*

☐ *It affected business sales*　　　　☐ *It affected staff turnover/retention*

☐ *It affected our customer service*　　　　☐ *It had no impact upon the business*

☐ *It affected our public image*　　　　☐ *Other (specify)*

Please specify other impacts:

B4. **Prior to getting involved with the BSiW programme, had the organisation been involved in (or provided) any previous basic skills training to employees at all?**

○ *Yes*　　　　○ *No*　　　　○ *Don't know*

B5. **[ASK IF B4=YES]What was the nature of the basic skills training made available?**
[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ *Literacy*　　　　☐ *Communication*

☐ *Numeracy*　　　　☐ *ESOL (English as a second language)*

B6. **[ASK IF B4=YES]When was this basic skills training made available?**
[PROMPT.SELECT ONE]

○ *Within the last year*　　　　○ *More than two years ago*

○ *Within the last two years*　　　　○ *Don't know*

B7. **[ASK IF B4=YES]How was this basic skills training funded?**
[PROMPT. SELECT ALL]

☐ *Using the company's own resources*　　　　☐ *Union Learning Fund*

☐ *Using Welsh Government grant support*　　　　☐ *Other - please specify*

☐ *Via provider funding (e.g. FE college)*　　　　☐ *Don't know*

Please specify what other sources of funding was used:

B8. **[ASK IF B4=NO]Why had your business not previously been involved in any basic skills training for its workforce?**
[PROMPT AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

- [ ] *Had not identified need*
- [ ] *Not a training priority for business*
- [ ] *Lack of funding*
- [ ] *Lack of desire amongst employees*

- [ ] *Lack of appropriate provision available*
- [ ] *Difficulties releasing staff to train*
- [ ] *Other (specify)*
- [ ] *Don't know*

If other please specify

[   ]

SECTION C: ROUTE INTO BASIC SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE

C1. **How did you first hear about the BSiW programme?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. ALLOW MULTICODE]

☐ *Directly from a BSiW provider/college*

☐ *From a Welsh Government member of staff*

☐ *Via the Welsh Government's Business Skills Hotline*

☐ *Via the Business Wales web-site*

☐ *From other employers*

☐ *From employees/colleagues*

☐ *From an Union or Union representatives*

☐ *Promotional material*

☐ *Read about it in the press*

☐ *Other - please specify*

☐ *Can't remember*

Please specify other methods

_____

C2. **What was it about the BSiW programme that appealed to you as an employer?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE]

☐ *Free training*

☐ *Subsidised training*

☐ *Assistance to identify training needs*

☐ *Tailored training to meet business needs*

☐ *Provision of training at the business premises*

☐ *No specific advantage*

☐ *Other*

☐ *Don't know*

Please specify other reasons:

_____

C3. **Overall how satisfied were you with the arrangements for putting the training into place at your organisation?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ *Very satisfied*

○ *Fairly satisfied*

○ *Dissatisfied*

○ *Very dissatisfied*

○ *Don't know*

C4. **How, if at all, could the arrangements have been improved?**

_____

SECTION D: TRAINING DELIVERED

D1. **In total, how many employees have accessed basic skills training via the BSiW programme?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ *Between 1 and 5*

○ *Between 6 and 10*

○ *Between 11 and 15*

○ *Between 16 and 20*

○ *Between 21 and 25*

○ *26 and over*

D2. **Were staff given time off to undertake learning?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ *Yes*

○ *No*

○ *Part work and part personal time*

○ *Other*

○ *(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember*

D3. **Was the learning delivered made relevant to the workplace / job responsibilities?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ *Yes*

○ *No*

○ *(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember*

D4. **What was the nature of the basic skills training delivered to employees?**
[PROMPT IF REQUIRED. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ *Literacy*

☐ *Numeracy*

☐ *Communication*

☐ *ESOL (English as second language)*

D5. **Which of the following qualifications were obtained by employees who participated in the basic skills training?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ *Communication Entry Level*

☐ *Communication Level 1*

☐ *Communication Level 2*

☐ *Application of Number Entry Level*

☐ *Application of Number Level 1*

☐ *Application of Number Level 2*

☐ *ESOL (English as Second Langnguage)*

☐ *Other (please specify)*

☐ *No qualifications were obtained*

If other please specify

[ ]

D6. **ASK IF D5=QUALIFICATIONS WERE OBTAINEDWhat proportion of employees who accessed basic skills training went on to secure at least one type of basic skills qualification?**
[PROMPT. SELECT ONE]

○ *Less than a quarter*

○ *Between a quarter and half*

○ *Between half and three-quarters*

○ *Between three-quarters and nearly all*

○ *All of them*

○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

D7. **ASK IF D5=QUALIFICATIONS WERE OBTAINEDHow valuable do you consider these basic skills qualifications to your organisation?**
[READ OUT AND SELECT ONE]

○ *Very valuable*

○ *Fairly valuable*

○ *Not valuable*

○ *Not at all valuable*

○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

D8. **D7=VERY OR FAIRLY VALUABLEIn what way have these basic skills qualifications been valuable to your organisation?**

SECTION E: EMPLOYER PLEDGE

E1. **Has your business applied for, or secured the Basic Skills Employer Pledge? [SELECT ONE]**

○ *Yes - secured it*

○ *Yes - Applied for it*

○ *No - Not applied for it*

○ *Don't know*

E2. **ASK IF E1=SECURED OR APPLIED FOR EMPLOYER PLEDGEWhy did you apply for the Employer Pledge**

○ *To access support in identifying and addressing basic skills needs*

○ *To demonstrate our commitment to training the workforce*

○ *To help ensure that basic skills training is embedded in our training strategy*

○ *Other [specify]*

○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

Please specify other reasons:

E3. **ASK IF E1=SECURED OR APPLIED FOR EMPLOYER PLEDGEWhat benefits does/will the Employer Pledge bring to your organisation?**

E4. **ASK IF E1=NO NOT APPLIED FORPLEDGEWhy have you not applied for the Employer Pledge? [UNPROMPTED. MULTICODE]**

☐ *Not aware of it / haven't considered it*

☐ *We don't feel it will add anything to our business' profile*

☐ *It won't change how we engage with basic skills training*

☐ *Other (specify)*

☐ *Don't know*

If other please specify

SECTION F: SATISFACTION WITH PROVISION

F1. **How closely did the basic skills provision made available via the BSiW programme match your expectations as an employer?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Matched exactly*
- ○ *Largely matched*
- ○ *Matched in some areas*
- ○ *Did not match at all*
- ○ *(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember*

F2. **ASK IF F1= MATHCED IN SOME AREAS OR DID NOT MATCH AT ALL Why do you say that the basic skills provision did not match all or most of your expectations?**

```
```

F3. **How would you rate the quality of the training your staff received? Would you say it was:**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Excellent*
- ○ *Good*
- ○ *Moderate*
- ○ *Poor*
- ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know/don't remember*

F4. **How satisfied were you with the frequency of the training made available to your staff?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Very satisfied*
- ○ *Satisfied*
- ○ *Not satisfied*
- ○ *Not at all satisfied*
- ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know/don't remember*

F5. **Would you use this/these particular learning providers again?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Definitely*
- ○ *Probably*
- ○ *Probably not*
- ○ *Definitely not*
- ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

F6. **Were there any aspects of the training which went particularly well?**

```
```

F7. **Were there any aspects of the training which could have been improved and, if so how?**

```
```

SECTION F: EFFECTS OF BSiW

G1. As a result of your involvement with the BSiW programme has your organisation experienced an:

	Yes	No	Don't know
Improvement in workforce literacy skills	○	○	○
Improvement in workforce numeracy skills	○	○	○
Improvement in workforce communication skills	○	○	○

G2. To what extent has the BSIW programme addressed any basic skills gaps which may have existed within your organisation?
[READ OUT. CODE ONE]

○ To a large extent

○ To some extent

○ To no extent

○ To no extent at all

○ We were not aware of any basic skills gaps prior to engaging with BSiW

○ [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know

G3. As a result of your involvement with the BSiW programme have you observed any of the following impacts amongst those recently engaged in learning?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Improved morale	○	○	○
Greater confidence and enthusiasm to work	○	○	○
Able to undertake jobs better	○	○	○
More willing to take part in company training activities	○	○	○
Willingness to take on responsibility	○	○	○
Reduced absenteeism/sickness	○	○	○
More prepared to contribute at meetings	○	○	○
Improved compliance with health and safety practices	○	○	○

G4. How many of your staff who undertook the training have been promoted, taken on different roles or received increased pay as a result of the training?
[CODE ONE]

○ None

○ Less than a quarter

○ Between a quarter and half

○ Between half and three-quarters

○ Between three-quarters and nearly all

○ All of them

○ [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know

G5. **Have you observed any the following impacts to organisational performance as a result of your involvement with the BSiW programme?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
Improved communication with customers or other organisations	○	○	○
Improved customer service	○	○	○
Improved public image of organisation	○	○	○
Raised workforce productivity	○	○	○
Increased organisation competitiveness	○	○	○
Reduced staff turnover	○	○	○
Increase in sales	○	○	○

G6. **How closely did any positive effects of the training provision match your initial expectations? [READ OUT. CODE ONE]**

○ *Far exceeded expectations*

○ *Exceeded expectations*

○ *Met expectations exactly*

○ *Didn't quite live up to expectations*

○ *Didn't live up to expectations at all*

○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

SECTION H: IN THE ABSENCE OF BSIW

H1. **Had your organisation NOT become involved in the training through the BSiW programme, how likely is it that you would have delivered basic skills training anyway? [READ OUT. SELECT ONE]**

○ *Definitely*

○ *Very likely*

○ *Quite likely*

○ *Unlikely*

○ *Very unlikely*

○ *Definitely not*

○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

SECTION I: FURTHER TRAINING

I1. **Has your organisation provided any further basic skills training to employees over the last year?**

○ *Yes*   ○ *No*   ○ *Don't know*

I2. **ASK IF I1=YESWhat has been the nature of the additional basic skills training put in place? [Prompt for type and level of qualification]**

```

```

I3. **ASK IF I1=YESHow did your organisation fund the additional basic skills training?**
[PROMPT IF REQUIRED. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

- ☐ *Using the company's own resources*
- ☐ *Using Welsh Government grant support*
- ☐ *Via provider funding (e.g. FE college)*
- ☐ *Union Learning Fund*
- ☐ *Other - please specify*
- ☐ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

If other please specify

I4. **ASK IF I1=YESHad you not been involved in the BSiW programme would your organisation have arranged this additional basic skills training for staff anyway? READ OUT. SELECT ONE**

- ○ *Definitely yes*
- ○ *Very likely*
- ○ *Quite likely*
- ○ *Unlikely*
- ○ *Very unlikely*
- ○ *Definitely not*
- ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

I5. **How likely is the organisation to provide further basic skills training in the coming 12 months?**

- ○ *Very likely*
- ○ *Fairly likely*
- ○ *Fairly unlikely*
- ○ *Very unlikely*
- ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

I6. **ASK IF I.5=VERY OR FAIRLY LIKELYWhat will be the nature of this further basic skills training?**
[Prompt for type and level of qualification]

I7. **ASK IF I.5=VERY OR FAIRLY LIKELYHad you not been involved in the BSiW programme would your organisation arrange this further basic skills training for staff anyway?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Definitely yes*
- ○ *Very likely*
- ○ *Quite likely*
- ○ *Unlikely*
- ○ *Very unlikely*
- ○ *Definitely no*
- ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

SECTION J: BUSINESS DETAILS

J1. Can I just end by checking one or two things about you and your organisation? Can you tell me your job title?

- ○ Owner
- ○ Director
- ○ Site manager
- ○ HR manager
- ○ Other (SPECIFY)

If other please specify

[   ]

J2. How many people does the organisation employ at the site where you work?

- ○ Less than10 employees
- ○ 10-49 employees
- ○ 50-249 employees
- ○ 250 + employees
- ○ Don't know

J3. What is your line of business?
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. SELECT ONE

- ○ Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- ○ Mining and QUarrying
- ○ Manufacturing (inc food and drinks)
- ○ Electricity or Water Activities/Services
- ○ Construction
- ○ Wholesale and retail (inc motor vehicles)
- ○ Accommodation and food service activities
- ○ Transport and storage
- ○ Information and Communication (e.g. publishing, broadcasting, programming)
- ○ Financial and insurance activities
- ○ Real Estate activities
- ○ Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (e.g. legal, accounting, advertising, translation)
- ○ Administrative and SUpport Service Activities (e.g. rental, travel, services to buildings, office administration)
- ○ Public Administration and Defence
- ○ Education (including schools and colleges)
- ○ Health and Social work (including care homes)
- ○ Arts, entertainment and recreation (including sport, libraries)
- ○ Other services (personal services e.g. cleaning, hair)
- ○ Other (please specify)

Please specify OTHER sector:

[   ]

J4. When was the organisation established?

[   ]

J5. **Lastly, which trade unions, if any, are recognised in the business?**
[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ Amicus/AEEU	☐ Equity	☐ NASUWT	☐ TSSA
☐ ASLEF	☐ FBU	☐ NATFHE	☐ TGWU
☐ AUT	☐ GFTU	☐ NUJ	☐ TUC
☐ BECTU	☐ GMB	☐ NUT	☐ UCATT
☐ BFAWU	☐ GPMU	☐ PCS	☐ Unifi
☐ BSU	☐ IFMA	☐ POA	☐ Unison
☐ CATU	☐ ISTC	☐ Prospect	☐ URTU
☐ Connect	☐ KFAT	☐ RCM	☐ USDAW
☐ CSEU	☐ LAUT	☐ RCN	☐ No union is recognised
☐ CWU	☐ MSF/Amicus	☐ RMT	☐ Other
☐ CYWU	☐ Musicians' Union	☐ SCP	
☐ EDAP	☐ NAPO	☐ SOR	

Please specify other union:

```

```

SECTION K: FOLLOW UP

K1. **Thank you**
As part of our research, we would like to conduct more in-depth face to face visits with a small number of employers who have been involved in the BSiW programme. Would you be prepared to take part in such an interview?

○ Yes   ○ No

K2. **[If prepared to take part] Can I check the best telephone number and e-mail address to contact you on?**

Telephone Number
E-mail address

Thank you for completing this survey.

BASIC SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE (BSIW) EVALUATION: EMPLOYEE SURVEY

SECTION A: CODING AND INTRODUCTION

A2. **Respondent Details:**

Employee Name

Employer Name

Telephone number

A3. **Programme Area shown on Database**

○ *Convergence*   ○ *Competitiveness*

A4. **Gender**

○ *Male*   ○ *Female*

A5. **Local Authority shown on Database**

○ *Anglesey*	○ *Ceredigion*	○ *Monmouth*	○ *Rhondda Cynon Taf*
○ *Blaenau Gwent*	○ *Conwy*	○ *Neath Port Talbot*	○ *Swansea*
○ *Bridgend*	○ *Denbighshire*	○ *Newport*	○ *Torfaen*
○ *Caerphilly*	○ *Flintshire*	○ *Pembrokeshire*	○ *Vale of Glamorgan*
○ *Cardiff*	○ *Gwynedd*	○ *Powys*	○ *Wrexham*
○ *Carmarthenshire*	○ *Merthyr Tydfil*		

Good morning/afternoon. May I speak to <NAMED RESPONDENT>? It's in connection with a survey we are conducting on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Hello, My name is <NAME> from Old Bell 3, and I'm part of the team which has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to look at its Basic Skills In the Workplace Programme. I understand that you would have received training as part of the programme at some stage during the period between January 2011 and April 2012. Is this right? According to our records, you received either numeracy, literacy, communication or English as a second language training at your place of work. Do you remember this now?

I'd like to ask you some questions about your experience of the training. All responses will be treated in strict confidence. First can I check would you prefer to conduct the interview in English or Welsh?It should take no more than 10 minutes or so. Is now a good time?

Old Bell 3 is an independent research company. All of our work is carried out according to a strict Code of Conduct, which means that everything you tell us will be treated in the strictest confidence and we will not pass your name on to anyone outside the research team. If you would like to check Old Bell 3's credentials, you can call Gary Jones at the Welsh Government on 01443 66373. If you would like more information about the research we are conducting, please call Nia Bryer on 01558 668649.

SECTION B: BASIC SKILLS ISSUES AND PREVIOUS TRAINING

B1. **Can I check if you still work at <NAME OF EMPLOYER>?**

○ Yes   ○ No

B2. **Are you currently? [CODE BEST FIT]**

○ In full time work   ○ On incapacity benefits

○ In part time work   ○ Unemployed

○ In shift work   ○ A carer

○ Self-employed   ○ Other (Specify)

○ Working as a volunteer

If other please specify

_____

In answering these next few questions, I'd like you to think about your situation before you got involved with the BSiW training course.

B3. **What was the highest qualification you held? [PROMPT IF REQUIRED. CODE ONE]**

○ No qualification

○ Entry level

○ Level 1 (NVQ 1, OCN 1, GNVQ)

○ Level 2 (GCSE A*-C, NVQ 2, OCN 2, GNVQ Intermediate, BTEC First Diploma)

○ Level 3 (A-Level, BTEC National Award, NVQ 3, OCN 3, Modern Apprenticeships)

○ Level 4 (HNC, NVQ 4)

○ Level 5 or 6 (Degree, Degree Honours, HND, NVQ 5)

○ Level 7 (Masters Degree, Postgraduate Diploma)

○ Other (Specify)

○ Don't know

Please specify other type of qualification

_____

B4. **When was the last time you did any learning or training?**
[NOTE TO RESEARCHER: Do not consider any previous school education].
[PROMPT AND CODE ONE]

○ Within the last year

○ Between 1 and 5 years

○ Between 5 and 10 years before the BSiW course

○ More than 10 years before the BSiW course

○ Never

○ Don't know

B5. **ASK IF B4= DID DO PREVIOUS TRAINING**
Did you have to do this training as part of your job?

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know

B6. **Had you undertaken any training on any of these before? [Do not consider school education here]**

	Yes	No	Don't know
Literacy (Reading or Writing)	○	○	○
Numeracy (Maths or Application of Number)	○	○	○
Communication	○	○	○
English as a second language (ESOL)	○	○	○

B7. **ASK IF B6=NO PREVIOUS BASIC SKILLS TRAINING UNDERTAKEN**
Why had you never undertaken any basic skills training before?
[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ *Not recognised any need to do so*

☐ *Never offered basic skills training before*

☐ *Did not know where to get training*

☐ *Lack of time*

☐ *Too costly*

☐ *Stigma attached to basic skills training*

☐ *Fears about own ability to undertake training*

☐ *Other (specify)*

Please specify other reasons:

[ ]

B8. **How confident would you say were you in:**

	Very confident	Confident	Not confident	Not at all confident	Don't know
Reading	○	○	○	○	○
Writing	○	○	○	○	○
Dealing with numbers	○	○	○	○	○
Communicating with customers or colleagues	○	○	○	○	○

B9. **Of these, which one area were you most concerned about before training?**
[CODE ONE]

○ *Literacy*   ○ *None of them*

○ *Numeracy*   ○ *All of them*

○ *Communication*

SECTION C: Now moving on to the training you have done

C1. **How did you first hear about the training course(s)?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. ALLOW MULTICODE]

☐ *From employer*   ☐ *Promotional material*

☐ *From colleagues*   ☐ *Other - please specify*

☐ *From your union*   ☐ *Can't remember*

☐ *From a provider/college*

Please specify other method:

[   ]

C2. **What/Who encouraged you to do it?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. ALLOW MULTICODE]

☐ *Employer insisted upon me doing the training*

☐ *Encouragement from the Union/Union Learning Representative*

☐ *Training was free*

☐ *Training was convenient at place of work*

☐ *Training was made available during working hours*

☐ *Assistance to identify training needs*

☐ *I had not been offered training before*

☐ *I wanted to get a qualification*

☐ *I wanted to go for a particular/better/new job*

☐ *Other (please specify)*

☐ *Don't know*

Please specify other reason

[   ]

C3. **What did you hope to get out of it?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE]

☐ *To improve literacy skills*

☐ *To improve numeracy skills*

☐ *To improve IT skills*

☐ *To improve communication skills*

☐ *To do better in current job*

☐ *To obtain new job or promotion*

☐ *To earn a better salary*

☐ *To obtain a qualification*

☐ *Other (please specify)*

☐ *Don't know*

Please specify other reason

[   ]

SECTION D: BSiW TRAINING UNDERTAKEN

D1. **Did you complete a basic skills test or task at the start?**

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know

D2. **ASK IF D1=YES**
Was the test explained clearly to you?

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know

D3. **ASK IF D1=YES**
Did you understand what you had to do?

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know

D4. **ASK IF D1=YES**
Were you given enough time to do the test?

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know

D5. **ASK IF D1=YES**
Was there anything about the basic skills test that could have been done better?

[ ]

D6. **Had you done a basic skills test (like this) before?**

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know

D7. **IF D6=YES**
How many basic skills test had you done before? [prompt for approximate number. Do not include BSIW assessment]

○ 1   ○ 4-5   ○ Don't know
○ 2-3   ○ 6 or more

D8. **Thinking about the BSiW training, how many courses did you attend?**
[Do not record number of sessions here. Count a series of sessions on the same subject and at the same level as one course. Of respondent has attended sessions covering two different subjects or different levels count as two courses.]

○ One   ○ Two   ○ More than two

D9. **Did these cover:**
[MULTICODE]

☐ Literacy   ☐ Communication
☐ Numeracy   ☐ English as a second language (ESOL)

D10. **Did you finish the training course(s)?**

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Still undertaking it/them   ○ Don't know

D11. **ASK IF D10=NO**
Why did you not finish it?
[PROMPT AND MULTICODE]

☐   *Personal reasons*

☐   *Work commitments*

☐   *Course was inappropriate or irrelevant*

☐   *Course was too difficult*

☐   *Other (specify)*

☐   *Don't know*

Please specify other reason:

[_____]

D12. **Did you get a qualification afterwards?**

○   *Yes*   ○   *No*   ○   *Not yet*   ○   *Don't know*

D13. **ASK IF D12=YES**
What qualification(s) did you get?
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE]

☐   *Communication Entry Level*

☐   *Communication Level 1*

☐   *Communication Level 2*

☐   *Application of Number Entry Level*

☐   *Application of Number Level 1*

☐   *Application of Number Level 2*

☐   *ESOL (English as a Second Language)*

☐   *Other (please specify)*

Please specify other reasons:

[_____]

D14. **ASK IF D12=YES**
How valuable is this / are these basic skills qualification to you?
[READ OUT AND SELECT ONE]

○   *Very valuable*   ○   *Not valuable*   ○   *Don't know*

○   *Fairly valuable*   ○   *Not at all valuable*

D15. **ASK IF D14=VERY OR FAIRLY VALUABLE**
Why are they valuable to you

[_____]

D16. **ASK IF D12=YES**
How valuable is this / are these basic skills qualification to your employer?
[READ OUT AND SELECT ONE]

○   *Very valuable*   ○   *Not valuable*   ○   *Not employed at present*

○   *Fairly valuable*   ○   *Not at all valuable*   ○   *Don't know*

SECTION E: SATISFACTION WITH PROVISION

E1. **Thinking about the quality of the training, would you say it was:**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

○ Excellent   ○ Poor

○ Good   ○ Very poor

○ OK   ○ (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember

E2. **How useful was the training to you? Would you say it was:**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

○ Very useful   ○ Not useful   ○ (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember

○ Fairly useful   ○ Not at all useful

E3. **Did you think that the length of the course(s) was/were:**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

○ About right   ○ Too short

○ Too long   ○ (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember

E4. **Did your employer give you time off to train?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ Yes   ○ Other

○ No   ○ (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember

○ Part work and part personal time

E5. **Was the training made relevant to your work / job responsibilities?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember

SECTION F: IMPACT OF BSiW

F1. **Did you learn new skills that could be used at work?**

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know

F2. **ASK IF FI=YES**
Have you been able to use these new skills at work?
[SELECT ONE]

○ Yes   ○ Not currently working

○ No   ○ Don't know

F3. **ASK IF F2=YES**
How have you been able to use these new skills at work?
[PROMPT AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ *Dealing with customers and customer requests*

☐ *Dealing with paperwork and general correspondence*

☐ *Communication with others/ working in a team*

☐ *Following instructions / understanding information/memos/guidance at work*

☐ *Calculating measurements / costs or other numerical tasks*

☐ *Dealing with customers and customer requests*

☐ *Other (please specify)*

Please specify other ways:

_____

F4. **Have you been able to use any new skills learnt in your life outside work?**

○ *Yes*　　　　　　○ *No*　　　　　　○ *Don't know*

F5. **ASK IF F4=YES**
In what areas?
[PROMPT AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ *Supporting children with homework*

☐ *Reading for pleasure*

☐ *Dealing with public organisations (e.g. sort out council tax, deal with local authority)*

☐ *In community groups or organisations*

☐ *Dealing with personal correspondence*

☐ *Budgeting household accounts*

☐ *Fill in forms*

☐ *Other (specify)*

If other please specify

_____

F6. **[ONLY ASK FOR COURSES UNDERTAKEN AT D9 SO IF D9=LITERACY ASK ABOUT READING AND WRITING; IF D9-NUMERACY ASK ABOUT DEALING WITH NUMBERS; IF D9=COMMUNICATION ASK ABOUT COMMUNICATING WIT CUSTOMERS AND COLLEAGUES]**

How confident would you say you are now in:

	Very confident	*Confident*	*Not confident*	*Not at all confident*	*D/k*
Reading	○	○	○	○	○
Writing	○	○	○	○	○
Dealing with numbers	○	○	○	○	○
Communicating with customers or colleagues	○	○	○	○	○

F7. **I will now read out some statements to you and I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with them. Can you tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither, disagree or strongly disagree with them?**

As a result of the training:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	D/K
You are more confident	○	○	○	○	○	○
You are more enthusiastic to learn	○	○	○	○	○	○
You can take on more responsibility at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
You provide a better service to customers	○	○	○	○	○	○
You take less time off work due to sickness	○	○	○	○	○	○
Your job satisfaction has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
You have applied for or secured a promotion in work	○	○	○	○	○	○
You have the potential to earn a better salary	○	○	○	○	○	○

F8. **How closely did the training meet your expectations? Did the training:**
[READ OUT. CODE ONE]

○ *Far exceeded expectations*

○ *Exceeded expectations*

○ *Met expectations exactly*

○ *Didn't quite live up to expectations*

○ *Didn't quite live up to expectations*

○ *(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know*

SECTION G: IN THE ABSENCE OF BSIW

G1. **Had your employer not offered you the basic skills training do you think you would you have done similar training anyway?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

○ *Definitely would have done*

○ *Probably would have*

○ *Not sure*

○ *Probably would not*

○ *Definitely would not*

○ *Don't know*

G2. **IF C1=ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE UNION OR UNION LEARNING REPRESENTATIVE**

You told me earlier that the Union or Union Learning Representative had encouraged you to do the learning. I will now read out some statements to you and I'd like you to tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with them.

[Tick one box in each row]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	D/K
Without the union supported learning project I would not have considered doing any learning	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was considering doing some learning, but the project encouraged me to do something about it	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was considering doing some learning, but the practical help/opportunity provided by the project made it possible	○	○	○	○	○	○
It made no difference, I would have done some learning anyway	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION F: FURTHER TRAINING

H1. **Have you taken up any further training or learning opportunities since completing the BSiW basic skills course?**

○ *Yes*

○ *No - but considered doing so*

○ *No - not likely to do so*

○ *Don't know*

H2. **ASK IF H1=YES**
What has this further training involved?
SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

☐ *Literacy* ☐ *Other (specify)*

☐ *Numeracy* ☐ *Don't know*

☐ *Communication*

Please specify other type of training underdaken:

[   ]

H3. **ASK IF H1=YES**
Who delivered this course?
SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

☐ *Local college/FE College*

☐ *[Not a college] Independent (work based learning) provider*

☐ *Employer*

☐ *Other (specify)*

☐ *Don't know*

Please specify other type of provider:

[   ]

H4. **ASK IF H1=YES**
Had you not done the basic skills course would you have done this further training anyway?
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Definitely would have*
- ○ *Probably would have*
- ○ *Not sure*
- ○ *Probably would not*
- ○ *Definitely would not*

H5. **How likely are you to get involved in any further training or over the next year?**

○ *Very likely*	○ *Fairly unlikely*	○ *Don't know*
○ *Fairly likely*	○ *Very unlikely*	

H6. **ASK IF H5=VERY OR FAIRLY LIKELY**
What type of training will you do?
[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ *Literacy*	☐ *IT*
☐ *Numeracy*	☐ *Other (specify)*
☐ *Communication*	☐ *Don't know*

Please specify other type of training:

SECTION I: PERSONAL DETAILS

I1. **Finally I have a few personal questions to ask you such as your age and whether you are a member of a trade union. Would you be prepared to answer these?**

○ *Yes*	○ *No*

I2. **Are you:**

○ *18 and under*	○ *25-34*	○ *45-54*	○ *65+*
○ *19-24*	○ *35-44*	○ *55-64*	

I3. What is your ethnic group?

- ○ White - Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- ○ White -Irish
- ○ White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ○ Any Other White background, please write in below
- ○ Mixed/multiple ethnic: White and Black Caribbean
- ○ Mixed/multiple ethnic: White and Black African
- ○ Mixed/multiple ethnic: White and Asian
- ○ Any Other Mixed/multiple background, please write in below
- ○ Asian, Asian British: Indian

- ○ Asian, Asian British: Pakistani
- ○ Asian, Asian British: Bangladeshi
- ○ Asian, Asian British: Chinese
- ○ Any Other Asian background, please write in below
- ○ Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African
- ○ Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean
- ○ Any Other Back/African/Caribbean background, please write in below
- ○ Other ethnic group: Arab
- ○ Any other ethnic group, please write in below
- ○ Don't want to disclose

Please specify:

[   ]

I4. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? [Include problems related to old age]

- ○ Yes, limited a lot
- ○ Yes, limited a little

- ○ No
- ○ Don't want to disclose

I5. Are you a member of a trade union?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't know/ Don't want to disclose

I6. ASK IF I5=YES
Which trade union(s) are you a member of?
[SELECT ONE]

☐ Amicus/AEEU	☐ Equity	☐ NASUWT	☐ TSSA
☐ ASLEF	☐ FBU	☐ NATFHE	☐ TGWU
☐ AUT	☐ GFTU	☐ NUJ	☐ TUC
☐ BECTU	☐ GMB	☐ NUT	☐ UCATT
☐ BFAWU	☐ GPMU	☐ PCS	☐ Unifi
☐ BSU	☐ IFMA	☐ POA	☐ Unison
☐ CATU	☐ ISTC	☐ Prospect	☐ URTU
☐ Connect	☐ KFAT	☐ RCM	☐ USDAW
☐ CSEU	☐ LAUT	☐ RCN	☐ Other
☐ CWU	☐ MSF/Amicus	☐ RMT	
☐ CYWU	☐ Musicians' Union	☐ SCP	
☐ EDAP	☐ NAPO	☐ SOR	

Please specify other trade union:

[   ]

Thank you for completing this survey.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE (ESIW) EVALUATION: EMPLOYER SURVEY

SECTION A: CODING AND INTRODUCTION

A2. **Respondent Details:**

Employer Name

Contact Name

Telephone number

A3. **Programme Area shown on Database**

○ *Convergence*

○ *Competitiveness*

A4. **Local Authority shown on Database**

○ *Anglesey*	○ *Ceredigion*	○ *Monmouth*	○ *Rhondda Cynon Taf*
○ *Blaenau Gwent*	○ *Conwy*	○ *Neath Port Talbot*	○ *Swansea*
○ *Bridgend*	○ *Denbighshire*	○ *Newport*	○ *Torfaen*
○ *Caerphilly*	○ *Flintshire*	○ *Pembrokeshire*	○ *Vale of Glamorgan*
○ *Cardiff*	○ *Gwynedd*	○ *Powys*	○ *Wrexham*
○ *Carmarthenshire*	○ *Merthyr Tydfil*		

SECTION B: BASIC SKILLS ISSUES AND PREVIOUS TRAINING

Before I talk to you about the Essential/ Basic Skills in the Workplace Programme, I'd like to just ask you a few questions about basic/essential skills issues within your organisation and any previous basic skills training that you would have been involved with:

B1. **Prior to engaging in the BSIW/ESiW programme how much of an issue was the lack of basic skills amongst your workforce?**
[READ OUT. CODE ONE]

- ○ *Very significant issue*
- ○ *Significant issue*
- ○ *Small issue*
- ○ *Very small issue*
- ○ *Don't know*

B2. **Which areas of poor basic/essential skills posed the biggest issue(s) for your organisation?**
[READ OUT. MULTICODE]

- ☐ *Literacy*
- ☐ *Numeracy*
- ☐ *Communication*
- ☐ *English as a second language (ESOL)*

B3. **In what way did low level basic skills in the workforce impact upon the organisation?**
[PROMPT IF REQUIRED. MULTICODE]

- ☐ *It affected communication with customers or other organisations*
- ☐ *It affected our workforce relations*
- ☐ *It affected business sales*
- ☐ *It affected our customer service*
- ☐ *It affected our public image*
- ☐ *It affected staff productivity*
- ☐ *It affected staff motivation*
- ☐ *It affected staff turnover/retention*
- ☐ *It had no impact upon the business*
- ☐ *Other (specify)*

Please specify other impacts:

B4. **Prior to getting involved with the BSiW/ESiW programme, had the organisation been involved in (or provided) any previous basic skills training to employees at all?**

- ○ *Yes*
- ○ *No*
- ○ *Don't know*

B5. **[ASK IF B4=YES]**
What was the nature of the basic/essential skills training made available?
[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

- ☐ *Numeracy*
- ☐ *Communication (reading, writing, listening and talking)*
- ☐ *ICT*
- ☐ *English as a second language (ESOL)*

B6. **[ASK IF B4=YES]**
When was this basic/essential skills training made available?
[PROMPT.SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Within the last year*
- ○ *Within the last two years*
- ○ *More than two years ago*
- ○ *Don't know*

B7. **[ASK IF B4=YES]**
How was this basic/essential skills training funded?
[PROMPT. SELECT ALL]

☐ Using the company's own resources   ☐ Union Learning Fund

☐ Using Welsh Government grant support   ☐ Other - please specify

☐ Via provider funding (e.g. FE college)   ☐ Don't know

Please specify what other sources of funding was used:

[   ]

B8. **[ASK IF B4=NO]**
Why had your business not previously been involved in any basic/essential skills training for its workforce?
[PROMPT AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ Had not identified need   ☐ Lack of appropriate provision available

☐ Not a training priority for business   ☐ Difficulties releasing staff to train

☐ Lack of funding   ☐ Other (specify)

☐ Lack of desire amongst employees   ☐ Don't know

If other please specify

[   ]

SECTION C: ROUTE INTO BSiW/ESiW

C1. **How did you first hear about the BSiW/ESiW programme?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. ALLOW MULTICODE]

☐ Directly from a BSiW/ESiW provider/college

☐ From a Welsh Government member of staff

☐ Via the Welsh Government's Business Skills Hotline

☐ Via the Business Wales web-site

☐ From other employers

☐ From employees/colleagues

☐ From an Union or Union representatives

☐ Promotional material

☐ Read about it in the press

☐ Other - please specify

☐ Can't remember

Please specify other methods

[   ]

C2. **What was it about the BSiW/ESiW programme that appealed to you as an employer?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE]

☐ *Free training*

☐ *Subsidised training*

☐ *Assistance to identify training needs*

☐ *Tailored training to meet business needs*

☐ *Provision of training at the business premises*

☐ *No specific advantage*

☐ *Other*

☐ *Don't know*

Please specify other reasons:

C3. **Overall how satisfied were you with the arrangements for putting the training into place at your organisation?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ *Very satisfied*

○ *Fairly satisfied*

○ *Dissatisfied*

○ *Very dissatisfied*

○ *Don't know*

C4. **How, if at all, could the arrangements have been improved?**

SECTION D: TRAINING DELIVERED

D1. **In total, how many employees have accessed basic/essential skills training via the BSiW/ESiW programme?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ *Between 1 and 5* ○ *Between 16 and 20*

○ *Between 6 and 10* ○ *Between 21 and 25*

○ *Between 11 and 15* ○ *26 or more*

D2. **Were staff given time off to undertake learning?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ *Yes* ○ *Other*

○ *No* ○ *(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember*

○ *Part work and part personal time*

D3. **Was the learning delivered made relevant to the workplace / job responsibilities?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ *Yes* ○ *(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember*

○ *No*

D4. **What was the nature of the basic/essential skills training delivered to employees?**
[PROMPT IF REQUIRED. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

- [ ] *Numeracy*
- [ ] *Communication (reading, writing, listening & talking)*
- [ ] *ICT*
- [ ] *ESOL (English as second language)*

D5. **Which of the following qualifications were obtained by employees who participated in the basic/essential skills training?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

- [ ] *Communication Entry Level*
- [ ] *Communication Level 1*
- [ ] *Communication Level 2*
- [ ] *Application of Number Entry Level*
- [ ] *Application of Number Level 1*
- [ ] *Application of Number Level 2*
- [ ] *Application of Number Level 3*

- [ ] *ESOL (English as Second Language)*
- [ ] *ICT Entry Level*
- [ ] *ICT Level 1*
- [ ] *ICT LEvel 2*
- [ ] *Other (please specify)*
- [ ] *No qualifications were obtained*

If other please specify

_____

D6. **ASK IF D5=QUALIFICATIONS WERE OBTAINED**
What proportion of employees who accessed basic/essential skills training went on to secure at least one type of basic/essential skills qualification?
[PROMPT. SELECT ONE]

- ( ) *Less than a quarter*
- ( ) *Between a quarter and half*
- ( ) *Between half and three-quarters*
- ( ) *Between three-quarters and nearly all*
- ( ) *All of them*
- ( ) *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

D7. **ASK IF D5=QUALIFICATIONS WERE OBTAINED**
How valuable do you consider these s qualifications to your organisation?
[READ OUT AND SELECT ONE]

- ( ) *Very valuable*
- ( ) *Fairly valuable*
- ( ) *Not valuable*
- ( ) *Not at all valuable*
- ( ) *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

D8. **D7=VERY OR FAIRLY VALUABLE**
In what way have these qualifications been valuable to your organisation?

_____

D9. **D7=NOT OR NOT AT ALL VALUABLE**
WHy are they not valuable to your organisation?

_____

SECTION E: EMPLOYER PLEDGE

E1. **Has your business applied for, or secured the Basic Skills Employer Pledge? [SELECT ONE]**

◌ *Yes - secured it*
◌ *Yes - Applied for it*

◌ *No - Not applied for it*
◌ *Don't know*

E2. **ASK IF E1=SECURED OR APPLIED FOR EMPLOYER PLEDGE**
Why did you apply for the Employer Pledge

◌ *To access support in identifying and addressing basic skills needs*
◌ *To demonstrate our commitment to training the workforce*
◌ *To help ensure that basic skills training is embedded in our training strategy*
◌ *Other [specify]*
◌ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*
Please specify other reasons:

[   ]

E3. **ASK IF E1=SECURED OR APPLIED FOR EMPLOYER PLEDGE**
What benefits does/will the Employer Pledge bring to your organisation?

[   ]

E4. **ASK IF E1=NO NOT APPLIED FOR PLEDGE**
Why have you not applied for the Employer Pledge?
[UNPROMPTED. MULTICODE]

☐ *Not aware of it / haven't considered it*
☐ *We don't feel it will add anything to our business' profile*
☐ *It won't change how we engage with basic skills training*
☐ *Other (specify)*
☐ *Don't know*
If other please specify

[   ]

SECTION F: SATISFACTION WITH PROVISION

F1. **How closely did the basic skills provision made available via the BSiW/ESiW programme match your expectations as an employer?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Exceeded expectations*
- ○ *Met expectations*
- ○ *Did not live up to expectations*
- ○ *(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember*

F2. **ASK IF F1= DID NOT LIVE UP TO EXPECTATIONS**
Why do you say that the provision did not live up to your expectations?

```

```

F3. **How would you rate the quality of the training your staff received? Would you say it was:**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Excellent*
- ○ *Good*
- ○ *Moderate*
- ○ *Poor*
- ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know/don't remember*

F4. **How satisfied were you with the frequency of the training made available to your staff?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Very satisfied*
- ○ *Satisfied*
- ○ *Not satisfied*
- ○ *Not at all satisfied*
- ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know/don't remember*

F5. **Would you use this/these particular learning providers again?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

- ○ *Definitely*
- ○ *Probably*
- ○ *Probably not*
- ○ *Definitely not*
- ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

F6. **Were there any aspects of the training which went particularly well?**

```

```

F7. **Were there any aspects of the training which could have been improved and, if so how?**

```

```

SECTION G: EFFECTS OF BSiW/ESiW

G1. **As a result of your involvement with the BSiW/ESiW programme has your organisation experienced an:**

	Yes	No	Don't know
Improvement in workforce numeracy skills	○	○	○
Improvement in workforce communication skills	○	○	○
Improvement in workforce ICT skills	○	○	○

G2. **To what extent has the BSIW/ESIW programme addressed any basic/essential skills gaps which may have existed within your organisation?**
[READ OUT. CODE ONE]

○ *To a large extent*

○ *To some extent*

○ *To no extent*

○ *To no extent at all*

○ *We were not aware of any basic/essential skills gaps prior to engaging with BSiW/ESiW*

○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

G3. **As a result of your involvement with the BSiW/ESiW programme have you observed any of the following impacts amongst those recently engaged in learning?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
Improved morale	○	○	○
Greater confidence and enthusiasm to work	○	○	○
Able to undertake jobs better	○	○	○
More willing to take part in company training activities	○	○	○
Willingness to take on responsibility	○	○	○
Reduced absenteeism/sickness	○	○	○
More prepared to contribute at meetings	○	○	○
Improved compliance with health and safety practices	○	○	○

G4. **How many of your staff who undertook the training have been promoted, taken on different roles or received increased pay as a result of the training?**
[CODE ONE]

○ *None*

○ *Less than a quarter*

○ *Between a quarter and half*

○ *Between half and three-quarters*

○ *Between three-quarters and nearly all*

○ *All of them*

○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

G5. **Have you observed any the following impacts to organisational performance as a result of your involvement with the BSiW/ESiW programme?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
Improved communication with customers or other organisations	○	○	○
Improved customer service	○	○	○
Improved public image of organisation	○	○	○
Raised workforce productivity	○	○	○
Increased organisation competitiveness	○	○	○
Reduced staff turnover	○	○	○
Increase in sales	○	○	○

G6. **How closely did any positive effects of the training provision match your initial expectations? [READ OUT. CODE ONE]**

○ *Far exceeded expectations*

○ *Exceeded expectations*

○ *Met expectations exactly*

○ *Didn't quite live up to expectations*

○ *Didn't live up to expectations at all*

○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

SECTION H: IN THE ABSENCE OF BSiW/ESiW

H1. **Had your organisation NOT become involved in the training through the BSiW/ESiW programme, how likely is it that you would have delivered basic/essential skills training anyway? [READ OUT. SELECT ONE]**

○ *Definitely*

○ *Probably*

○ *Probably not*

○ *Definitely not*

○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

SECTION I: FURTHER TRAINING

I1. **Has your organisation provided any further basic/essential skills training to employees over the last year?**

  ○ *Yes*   ○ *No*   ○ *Don't know*

I2. **ASK IF I1=YES**
What has been the nature of the additional basic/essential skills training put in place? [Prompt for type and level of qualification]

[   ]

I3. **ASK IF I1=YES**
How did your organisation fund the additional basic/essential skills training?
[PROMPT IF REQUIRED. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ *Using the company's own resources*

☐ *Using Welsh Government grant support*

☐ *Via provider funding (e.g. FE college)*

☐ *Union Learning Fund*

☐ *Other - please specify*

☐ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

If other please specify

[   ]

I4. **ASK IF I1=YES**
Had you not been involved in the BSiW/ESiW programme would your organisation have arranged this additional basic skills training for staff anyway? READ OUT. SELECT ONE

  ○ *Definitely*   ○ *Probably not*   ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

  ○ *Probably*   ○ *Definitely not*

I5. **How likely is the organisation to provide further basic or essential skills training in the coming 12 months?**

  ○ *Very likely*   ○ *Fairly unlikely*   ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

  ○ *Fairly likely*   ○ *Very unlikely*

I6. **ASK IF I.5=VERY OR FAIRLY LIKELY**
What will be the nature of this further basic/essential skills training? [Prompt for type and level of qualification]

[   ]

I7. **ASK IF I.5=VERY OR FAIRLY LIKELY**
Had you not been involved in the BSiW/ESiW programme would your organisation arrange this further basic/essential skills training for staff anyway?
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

  ○ *Definitely*   ○ *Probably not*   ○ *[DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know*

  ○ *Probably*   ○ *Definitely not*

SECTION J: BUSINESS DETAILS

J1. **Can I just end by checking one or two things about you and your organisation? Can you tell me your job title?**

- ○ *Owner*
- ○ *Director*
- ○ *Site manager*
- ○ *HR manager*
- ○ *Other (SPECIFY)*

If other please specify

J2. **How many people does the organisation employ at the site where you work?**

- ○ *Less than10 employees*
- ○ *10-49 employees*
- ○ *50-249 employees*
- ○ *250 + employees*
- ○ *Don't know*

J3. **What is your line of business?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. SELECT ONE

- ○ *Agriculture, forestry and fishing*
- ○ *Mining and Quarrying*
- ○ *Manufacturing (inc food and drinks)*
- ○ *Electricity or Water Activities/Services*
- ○ *Construction*
- ○ *Wholesale and retail (inc motor vehicles)*
- ○ *Accommodation and food service activities*
- ○ *Transport and storage*
- ○ *Information and Communication (e.g. publishing, broadcasting, programming)*
- ○ *Financial and insurance activities*

- ○ *Real Estate activities*
- ○ *Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (e.g. legal, accounting, advertising, translation)*
- ○ *Administrative and Support Service Activities (e.g. rental, travel, services to buildings, office administration)*
- ○ *Public Administration and Defence*
- ○ *Education (including schools and colleges)*
- ○ *Health and Social work (including care homes)*
- ○ *Arts, entertainment and recreation (including sport, libraries)*
- ○ *Other services (personal services e.g. cleaning, hair)*
- ○ *Other (please specify)*

Please specify OTHER sector:

J4. **When was the organisation established?**

J5. **Lastly, which trade unions, if any, are recognised in the business?**
[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ Amicus/AEEU	☐ Equity	☐ NASUWT	☐ TSSA
☐ ASLEF	☐ FBU	☐ NATFHE	☐ TGWU
☐ AUT	☐ GFTU	☐ NUJ	☐ TUC
☐ BECTU	☐ GMB	☐ NUT	☐ UCATT
☐ BFAWU	☐ GPMU	☐ PCS	☐ Unifi
☐ BSU	☐ IFMA	☐ POA	☐ Unison
☐ CATU	☐ ISTC	☐ Prospect	☐ URTU
☐ Connect	☐ KFAT	☐ RCM	☐ USDAW
☐ CSEU	☐ LAUT	☐ RCN	☐ No union is recognised
☐ CWU	☐ MSF/Amicus	☐ RMT	☐ Other
☐ CYWU	☐ Musicians' Union	☐ SCP	
☐ EDAP	☐ NAPO	☐ SOR	

If other please specify

[   ]

SECTION K: FOLLOW UP

K1. **Thank you**
As part of our research, we would like to conduct more in-depth face to face visits with a small number of employers who have been involved in the BSiW/ESiW programme. Would you be prepared to take part in such an interview?

○ Yes   ○ No

K2. **[If prepared to take part] Can I check the best telephone number and e-mail address to contact you on?**

Telephone Number   [   ]

E-mail address   [   ]

Thank you for completing this survey.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE (ESIW) EVALUATION: EMPLOYEE SURVEY

SECTION A: CODING AND INTRODUCTION

A2. **Respondent Details:**

Employee Name

Employer Name

Telephone number

A3. **Programme Area shown on Database**

○ Convergence ○ Competitiveness

A4. **Gender**

○ Male ○ Female

A5. **Local Authority shown on Database**

○ Anglesey	○ Ceredigion	○ Monmouth	○ Rhondda Cynon Taf
○ Blaenau Gwent	○ Conwy	○ Neath Port Talbot	○ Swansea
○ Bridgend	○ Denbighshire	○ Newport	○ Torfaen
○ Caerphilly	○ Flintshire	○ Pembrokeshire	○ Vale of Glamorgan
○ Cardiff	○ Gwynedd	○ Powys	○ Wrexham
○ Carmarthenshire	○ Merthyr Tydfil		

Good morning/afternoon. May I speak to <NAMED RESPONDENT>? It's in connection with a survey we are conducting on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Hello, My name is <NAME> from Old Bell 3, and I'm part of the team which has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to look at its Basic/Essential Skills In the Workplace Programme and find out how the Programme might be improved. I understand that you would have received training as part of the programme at some stage during the period between April and December 2012. Is this right? According to our records, you received either numeracy, literacy, communication, ICT or English as a second language training at your place of work. Do you remember this now?

I'd like to ask you some questions about your experience of the training. All responses will be treated in strict confidence. First can I check would you prefer to conduct the interview in English or Welsh?It should take no more than 15 minutes or so. Is now a good time?

Old Bell 3 is an independent research company. All of our work is carried out according to a strict Code of Conduct, which means that everything you tell us will be treated in the strictest confidence and we will not pass your name on to anyone outside the research team. If you would like to check Old Bell 3's credentials, you can call Gary Jones at the Welsh Government on 01443 66373. If you would like more information about the research we are conducting, please call Nia Bryer on 01558 668649.

SECTION B: BASIC SKILLS ISSUES AND PREVIOUS TRAINING

B1. **Can I check if you still work at <NAME OF EMPLOYER>?**

○ *Yes* ○ *No*

B2. **Are you currently? [CODE BEST FIT]**

○ *In full time work* ○ *On incapacity benefits*

○ *In part time work* ○ *Unemployed*

○ *In shift work* ○ *A carer*

○ *Self-employed* ○ *Other (Specify)*

○ *Working as a volunteer*

If other please specify

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

In answering these next few questions, I'd like you to think about your situation before you got involved with the BSiW/ESiW training course.

B3. **What was the highest qualification you held? [PROMPT IF REQUIRED. CODE ONE]**

○ *No qualification*

○ *Entry level*

○ *Level 1 (NVQ 1, OCN 1, GNVQ)*

○ *Level 2 (GCSE A*-C, NVQ 2, OCN 2, GNVQ Intermediate, BTEC First Diploma)*

○ *Level 3 (A-Level, BTEC National Award, NVQ 3, OCN 3, Modern Apprenticeships)*

○ *Level 4 (HNC, NVQ 4)*

○ *Level 5 or 6 (Degree, Degree Honours, HND, NVQ 5)*

○ *Level 7 (Masters Degree, Postgraduate Diploma)*

○ *Other (Specify)*

○ *Don't know*

Please specify other type of qualification

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

B4. **When was the last time you did any learning or training?**
[NOTE TO RESEARCHER: Do not consider any previous school education].
[PROMPT AND CODE ONE]

○ *Within the last year*

○ *Between 1 and 5 years*

○ *Between 5 and 10 years before the BSiW/ESiW course*

○ *More than 10 years before the BSiW/ESiW course*

○ *Never*

○ *Don't know*

B5. **ASK IF B4= DID DO PREVIOUS TRAINING**
Did you have to do this training as part of your job?

○ *Yes* ○ *No* ○ *Don't know*

B6. Had you undertaken any training on any of these before? [Do not consider school education here]

	Yes	No	Don't know
Numeracy (Maths or Application of Numbers)	○	○	○
Communication (reading, writing, speaking and listening)	○	○	○
English as a second language (ESOL)	○	○	○
ICT	○	○	○

B7. **ASK IF B6=NO PREVIOUS BASIC OR ESSENTIAL SKILLS TRAINING UNDERTAKEN**
Why had you never undertaken any basic skills training before?
[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ Not recognised any need to do so

☐ Never offered basic skills training before

☐ Did not know where to get training

☐ Lack of time

☐ Too costly

☐ Stigma attached to basic skills training

☐ Fears about own ability to undertake training

☐ Other (specify)

Please specify other reasons:

B8. Before doing the BSiW/ESiW course how confident would you say were you in:

	Very confident	Confident	Not confident	Not at all confident	Don't know
Dealing with numbers	○	○	○	○	○
Communicating (reading, writing, speaking and listening)	○	○	○	○	○
ICT	○	○	○	○	○

B9. **Of these, which one area were you most concerned about before training?**
[CODE ONE]

○ Numeracy
○ Communication (reading, writing, speaking and listening)

○ ICT
○ None of them
○ All of them

SECTION C: Now moving on to the training you have done (i.e. the BSiW or ESiW course)

C1. **How did you first hear about the training course(s)?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. ALLOW MULTICODE]

☐ *From employer*   ☐ *Promotional material*

☐ *From colleagues*   ☐ *Other - please specify*

☐ *From your union*   ☐ *Can't remember*

☐ *From a provider/college*

Please specify other method:

[_____]

C2. **What/Who encouraged you to do it?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. ALLOW MULTICODE]

☐ *Employer insisted upon me doing the training*

☐ *Encouragement from the Union/Union Learning Representative*

☐ *Training was free*

☐ *Training was convenient at place of work*

☐ *Training was made available during working hours*

☐ *Assistance to identify training needs*

☐ *I had not been offered training before*

☐ *I wanted to get a qualification*

☐ *I wanted to go for a particular/better/new job*

☐ *Other (please specify)*

☐ *Don't know*

Please specify other reason

[_____]

C3. **What did you hope to get out of it?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE]

☐ *To improve numeracy skills*

☐ *To improve ICT skills*

☐ *To improve communication skills*

☐ *To do better in current job*

☐ *To obtain new job or promotion*

☐ *To earn a better salary*

☐ *To obtain a qualification*

☐ *Other (please specify)*

☐ *Don't know*

Please specify other reason

[_____]

SECTION D: BSiW/ESiW TRAINING UNDERTAKEN

D1. **Did you complete a basic (or essential) skills assessment at the start?**

○ *Yes*   ○ *No*   ○ *Don't know*

D2. **ASK IF D1=YES**
Was the assessment explained clearly to you?

○ *Yes*   ○ *No*   ○ *Don't know*

D3. **ASK IF D1=YES**
Did you understand what you had to do?

○ *Yes*   ○ *No*   ○ *Don't know*

D4. **ASK IF D1=YES**
Were you given enough time to do it?

○ *Yes*   ○ *No*   ○ *Don't know*

D5. **ASK IF D1=YES**
Was there anything about the basic skills assessment that could have been done better?

>

D6. **Had you done a basic skills assessment (like this) before?**

○ *Yes*   ○ *No*   ○ *Don't know*

D7. **IF D6=YES**
How many basic (or essential) skills assessment had you done before? [prompt for approximate number. Do not include BSIW/ESiW assessment]

○ *1*   ○ *4-5*   ○ *Don't know*
○ *2-3*   ○ *6 or more*

D8. **Thinking about the BSiW/ESiW training, how many courses did you attend?**
[Do not record number of sessions here. Count a series of sessions on the same subject and at the same level as one course. If respondent has attended sessions covering two different subjects or different levels count as two courses.]

○ *One*   ○ *Two*   ○ *More than two*

D9. **Did these cover:**
[MULTICODE]

☐ *Numeracy*   ☐ *ICT*
☐ *Communication*   ☐ *English as a second language (ESOL)*

D10. **Did you finish the training course(s)?**

○ *Yes*   ○ *No*   ○ *Still undertaking it/them*   ○ *Don't know*

D11. **ASK IF D10=NO**
Why did you not finish it?
[PROMPT AND MULTICODE]

- ☐ Personal reasons
- ☐ Work commitments
- ☐ Course was inappropriate or irrelevant
- ☐ Course was too difficult
- ☐ Other (specify)
- ☐ Don't know

Please specify other reason:

[   ]

D12. **Did you get a qualification afterwards?**

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Not yet   ○ Don't know

D13. **ASK IF D12=YES**
What qualification(s) did you get?
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE]

- ☐ Communication Entry Level
- ☐ Communication Level 1
- ☐ Communication Level 2
- ☐ Application of Number Entry Level
- ☐ Application of Number Level 1
- ☐ Application of Number Level 2
- ☐ Application of Number Level 3
- ☐ ESOL (English as a Second Language)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Please specify other reasons:

[   ]

D14. **ASK IF D12=YES**
How valuable is this / are these basic (or essential) skills qualification to you?
[READ OUT AND SELECT ONE]

○ Very valuable   ○ Not valuable   ○ Don't know
○ Fairly valuable   ○ Not at all valuable

D15. **ASK IF D14=VERY OR FAIRLY VALUABLE**
Why are they valuable to you?

[   ]

D16. **ASK IF D14=NOT or NOT AT ALL VALUABLE**
Why are they not valuable to you?

[   ]

D17. **ASK IF D12=YES**
How valuable is this / are these basic/essential skills qualification to your employer?
[READ OUT AND SELECT ONE]

○ Very valuable   ○ Not valuable   ○ Not employed at present

○ Fairly valuable   ○ Not at all valuable   ○ Don't know

D18. **ASK IF D17= VERY OR FAIRLY VALUABLE**
Why are they valuable to your employer?

```

```

D19. **ASK IF D17= NOT OR NOT AT ALL VALUABLE**
Why are they not valuable to your employer?

```

```

SECTION E: SATISFACTION WITH BSiW /ESiW PROVISION

E1. **Thinking about the quality of the training, would you say it was:**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

○ Excellent   ○ Moderate   ○ (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember

○ Good   ○ Poor

E2. **How useful was the training to you? Would you say it was:**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

○ Very useful   ○ Not useful   ○ (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember

○ Fairly useful   ○ Not at all useful

E3. **Did you think that the length of the course(s) was/were:**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

○ About right   ○ Too short

○ Too long   ○ (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember

E4. **Did your employer give you time off to train?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ Yes   ○ Other

○ No   ○ (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember

○ Part work and part personal time

E5. **Was the training made relevant to your work / job responsibilities?**
[SELECT ONE]

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know/don't remember

SECTION F: IMPACT OF BSiW / ESiW

F1. **Did you learn new skills that could be used at work?**

○ Yes　　　　　○ No　　　　　○ Don't know

F2. **ASK IF FI=YES**
Have you been able to use these new skills at work?
[SELECT ONE]

○ Yes　　　　　　　　　　○ Not currently working
○ No　　　　　　　　　　 ○ Don't know

F3. **ASK IF F2=YES**
How have you been able to use these new skills at work?
[PROMPT AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ Dealing with customers and customer requests

☐ Dealing with paperwork and general correspondence

☐ Communication with others/ working in a team

☐ Following instructions / understanding information/memos/guidance at work

☐ Calculating measurements / costs or other numerical tasks

☐ Using the Internet

☐ Using e-mail

☐ Using work processing on the PC

☐ Using spreadsheets and databases on the PC

☐ Other (please specify)

Please specify other ways:

[   ]

F4. **Have you been able to use any new skills learnt in your life outside work?**

○ Yes　　　　　○ No　　　　　○ Don't know

F5. **ASK IF F4=YES**
In what areas?
[PROMPT AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ Supporting children with homework

☐ Reading for pleasure

☐ Dealing with public organisations (e.g. sort out council tax, deal with local authority)

☐ In community groups or organisations

☐ Dealing with personal correspondence

☐ Budgeting household accounts

☐ Fill in forms

☐ Communicating with family or friends e.g. via e-mail

☐ Undertaking research/browing on the Internet

☐ On-line shopping

☐ Other (specify)

If other please specify

[   ]

F6. **[ONLY ASK FOR COURSES UNDERTAKEN AT D9 SO IF D9=NUMERACY ASK ABOUT DEALING WIT NUMBERS; IF D9= COMMUNICATING ASK ABOUT READING, WRITING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING AND IF D9=ICT ASK ABOUT USING ICT]**

How confident would you say you are now in:

	Very confident	Confident	Not confident	Not at all confident	D/k
Dealing with numbers	○	○	○	○	○
Communicating	○	○	○	○	○
Using ICT	○	○	○	○	○

F7. **I will now read out some statements to you and I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with them. Can you tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with them?**

As a result of the training:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	D/K
You are more confident	○	○	○	○	○	○
You are more enthusiastic to learn	○	○	○	○	○	○
You can take on more responsibility at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
You provide a better service to customers	○	○	○	○	○	○
You take less time off work due to sickness	○	○	○	○	○	○
Your job satisfaction has improved	○	○	○	○	○	○
You have applied for or secured a promotion in work	○	○	○	○	○	○
You have the potential to earn a better salary	○	○	○	○	○	○

F8. **How closely did the training meet your expectations? Did the training:**
[READ OUT. CODE ONE]

○ *Exceed your expectations*

○ *Meet your expectations*

○ *Didn't live up to expectations*

○ *(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know*

SECTION G: IN THE ABSENCE OF BSIW/ESiW

G1. **Had your employer not offered you the basic skills training do you think you would you have done similar training anyway?**
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

○ *Definitely*

○ *Probably*

○ *Probably not*

○ *Definitely not*

○ *[Do not prompt] Don't know*

G2. **IF C1=ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE UNION OR UNION LEARNING REPRESENTATIVE**

You told me earlier that the Union or Union Learning Representative had encouraged you to do the learning. I will now read out some statements to you and I'd like you to tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with them.

[Tick one box in each row]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	D/K
Without the union supported learning project I would not have considered doing any learning	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was considering doing some learning, but the project encouraged me to do something about it	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was considering doing some learning, but the practical help/opportunity provided by the project made it possible	○	○	○	○	○	○
It made no difference, I would have done some learning anyway	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION F: FURTHER TRAINING

H1. **Have you taken up any further training or learning opportunities since completing the BSiW/ESiW basic/essential skills course?**

○ Yes

○ No - but considered doing so

○ No - not likely to do so

○ Don't know

H2. **ASK IF H1=YES**
What has this further training involved?
SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

☐ Numeracy

☐ Communication (reading, writing, listening and talking)

☐ ICT

☐ Other (specify)

☐ Don't know

Please specify other type of training underdaken:

[   ]

H3. **ASK IF H1=YES**
Who delivered this course?
SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

☐ Local college/FE College

☐ [Not a college] Independent (work based learning) provider

☐ Employer

☐ Other (specify)

☐ Don't know

Please specify other type of provider:

[   ]

H4. **ASK IF H1=YES**
Had you not done the basic/essential skills course would you have done this further training anyway?
[READ OUT. SELECT ONE]

○ Definitely

○ Probably

○ Probably not

○ Definitely not

H5. **How likely are you to get involved in any further training or over the next year?**

○ Very likely

○ Fairly likely

○ Fairly unlikely

○ Very unlikely

○ Don't know

H6. **ASK IF H5=VERY OR FAIRLY LIKELY**
What type of training will you do?
[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ Numeracy

☐ Communication (reading, writing etc)

☐ ICT

☐ Other (specify)

☐ Don't know

Please specify other type of training:

[   ]

SECTION I: PERSONAL DETAILS

I1. **Finally I have a few personal questions to ask you such as your age and whether you are a member of a trade union. Would you be prepared to answer these?**

○ *Yes*   ○ *No*

I2. **Are you:**

○ *18 and under*   ○ *25-34*   ○ *45-54*   ○ *65+*
○ *19-24*   ○ *35-44*   ○ *55-64*

I3. **What is your ethnic group?**

○ *White - Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British*

○ *White -Irish*

○ *White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller*

○ *Any Other White background, please write in below*

○ *Mixed/multiple ethnic: White and Black Caribbean*

○ *Mixed/multiple ethnic: White and Black African*

○ *Mixed/multiple ethnic: White and Asian*

○ *Any Other Mixed/multiple background, please write in below*

○ *Asian, Asian British: Indian*

○ *Asian, Asian British: Pakistani*

○ *Asian, Asian British: Bangladeshi*

○ *Asian, Asian British: Chinese*

○ *Any Other Asian background, please write in below*

○ *Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African*

○ *Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean*

○ *Any Other Back/African/Caribbean background, please write in below*

○ *Other ethnic group: Arab*

○ *Any other ethnic group, please write in below*

○ *Don't want to disclose*

Please specify:

[   ]

I4. **Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? [Include problems related to old age]**

○ *Yes, limited a lot*   ○ *No*
○ *Yes, limited a little*   ○ *Don't want to disclose*

I5. **Are you a member of a trade union?**

○ *Yes*   ○ *No*   ○ *Don't know/ Don't want to disclose*

I6. **ASK IF I5=YES**
Which trade union(s) are you a member of?
[SELECT ONE]

☐ Amicus/AEEU	☐ Equity	☐ NASUWT	☐ TSSA
☐ ASLEF	☐ FBU	☐ NATFHE	☐ TGWU
☐ AUT	☐ GFTU	☐ NUJ	☐ TUC
☐ BECTU	☐ GMB	☐ NUT	☐ UCATT
☐ BFAWU	☐ GPMU	☐ PCS	☐ Unifi
☐ BSU	☐ IFMA	☐ POA	☐ Unison
☐ CATU	☐ ISTC	☐ Prospect	☐ URTU
☐ Connect	☐ KFAT	☐ RCM	☐ USDAW
☐ CSEU	☐ LAUT	☐ RCN	☐ Other
☐ CWU	☐ MSF/Amicus	☐ RMT	
☐ CYWU	☐ Musicians' Union	☐ SCP	
☐ EDAP	☐ NAPO	☐ SOR	

Please specify other trade union:

[   ]

I7. **Finally, could you tell me in which sector do you work?**
[PROMPT IF NECESSARY. SELECT ONE

○ Agriculture, forestry and fishing

○ Mining and Quarrying

○ Manufacturing (inc food and drinks)

○ Electricity or Water Activities/Services

○ Construction

○ Wholesale and retail (inc motor vehicles)

○ Accommodation and food service activities

○ Transport and storage

○ Information and Communication (e.g. publishing, broadcasting, programming)

○ Financial and insurance activities

○ Real Estate activities

○ Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (e.g. legal, accounting, advertising, translation)

○ Administrative and Support Service Activities (e.g. rental, travel, services to buildings, office administration)

○ Public Administration and Defence

○ Education (including schools and colleges)

○ Health and Social work (including care homes)

○ Arts, entertainment and recreation (including sport, libraries)

○ Other services (personal services e.g. cleaning, hair)

○ Not working

○ Other (please specify)

Please specify OTHER sector:

[   ]

Thank you for completing this survey.

**Annex C:
Theoretical Model**

The following table presents the assumptions behind the initiatives and also a series of challenges that may militate against the anticipated outcomes. The evaluation will seek to determine the narrative and provide evidence to track outputs and substantiate outcomes.

Table C1: Theoretical Model

Level/Initiative	Early Activity	Early Outputs	Interim Outcomes	Longer Term Outcomes
Employer Pledge	The Employer Pledge is used by providers to promote basic skills training to employers who typically do not provide training in basic skills to staff.	Workplaces are increasingly engaged through the Pledge through a skills assessment. Providers develop relations with new employers	Employers provide access to basic skills training for their staff. Training episodes are repeated and learners have further learning opportunities.	Training has become an embedded part of the culture in the workplace.
Challenges	*Providers mainly engage with those employers already delivering training, reducing the reach/impact of the Pledge.* *Employers are not attracted to the pledge for reasons of cost/commitment.*	*Few new learners are engaged.*	*Momentum of the Pledge is slow to gather pace.*	*Reduced longer term impact particularly to continued training in basic skills.*
Quality Standard	Providers assess their performance. Strategies are put in place to develop basic skills training capacity. Strategies developed to identify new learners and engage learners.	Providers' up-skill on basic skills delivery. Learning support structures are improved so improving the learning experience.	Providers increase partnerships/engagement with basic skills learners. Providers evidence greater engagement with a range of organisations in basic skills learning.	Attainment is improved across the range of basic skills learning.
Challenges	*The Quality Standard improves support, but requires increased paper work so reducing provider capacity to work with learners.*		*The number of learners achieving a qualification may not increase as provider capacity is reduced.*	
Unions	Unions support ULRs in the workplace and negotiate	New partnerships with providers are developed.	New learners are encouraged to engage in learning with their	Unions take on a greater degree of responsibility in

Level/Initiative	Early Activity	Early Outputs	Interim Outcomes	Longer Term Outcomes
	learning opportunities with employers. Funds are used to develop new partnerships with providers. Funding is used to extend existing provision	New ULRs are trained to support learning. Learning centres are established or further developed.	colleagues/provider support. Learners continue to learn and may become active in their unions as a result of increased confidence and skills.	embedding learning in their strategies. Partnerships between employers and unions are strengthened. Workplace learning agreements are becoming mainstreamed in the workplace.
Challenges	*Unions struggle to negotiate with employers and little progress is made in the short term.*	*Learning support is not flexible or regular enough and does not appeal to learners* *ULRs are trained but do not remain active.*	*Difficulty in getting time off for learning prevents some learners engaging*	*Learning is not embedded but is delivered through a single intervention that is not mainstreamed.*
Workplace	Employers are encouraged to participate and begin to look at their skills gaps	Assessment of skills gaps are undertaken and policies to improve basic skills begin to take shape	Learning is delivered and learners begin to develop skills and gain qualifications	The culture of learning becomes embedded and more learning takes place. Learners'progress and new learners come on board.
Challenges	*Training often becomes a lower priority especially in a recession*	*Basic skills provision depends on the quality of initial assessment*	*Infrastructure and support are critical in the workplace at this stage*	*Employer motivation can ware in the face of business priorities*
Learner	Learners are encouraged to participate in a learning opportunity at work	Learners begin learning and grow in confidence with learning	Learners gain a qualification, improve their skills levels and get a desire to do further learning	Learners continue to learn, developing their portfolio of skills
Challenges	*Learners must overcome personal challenges of recognising their own needs*	*This is the critical point when learners need employer support*	*Funding and encouragement become critical factors in maintaining momentum*	*Some learners can grow in their existing job roles for others progression is required*

**Annex D:
Survey Issues**

Details of Questions Changed and Implications on Analysis

Employee Survey

A total of 212 individuals were surveyed – 45 during the first round and 167 during the second round. The merged data survey can be taken as accurate other than for the following points (mainly relating to literacy/communication issues):

B6. Had you undertaken any training on any of these before?

- First Survey: 12 had undertaken training on literacy, 13 on communication, 11 on numeracy and 3 on ESOL. 7 had done both literacy and communication training previously. Thus 18 of the 45 respondents had done either or both literacy and communication training previously.

- Second Survey: 47 of 167 had done training on communication (defined as reading, writing, speaking and listening)

- In total then 65 of 212 (31%) had done training on communication[1].

- Note that on ICT 55 of 167 had done training on ICT previously as this question was not asked of first survey cohort.

B8. How confident would you say were you in:

- It's impossible to 'merge' the data here as respondents gave different answers in the first survey to their confident in reading, writing and communicating so:

- First Survey: Of the 45 interviewed: 17 were very confident, 20 confident, 7 not confident and 1 not at all confident in reading. 14 were very confident, 16 confident, 14 not confident and 1 not at all confident in writing., 18 were very confident, 18 were confident, 7 not confident and 1 not at all confident in communicating with customers or colleagues.

- Second Survey: 30 of 167 said they were very confident and 95 confident in communicating. 27 were not confident and one not at all confident. 8 did not know.

---

[1] Including those who would have done literacy training only in first survey.

- The question on ICT was not asked of the first tranche survey

B9: Of these which one area were you most concerned about before training:

- The merged survey data is accurate.

- First Survey: 11 said literacy and 4 said communication. In total then 15 said either literacy or communication

- Second Survey: 29 said communication.

- In total 44 said they were concerned about communication[2]

- The question on ICT was not asked of the first tranche survey

C3: What did you hope to get out of it?

- First Survey: 9 said to improve literacy skills and 6 said to improve communication skills. 2 said both so in all 13 said either literacy or communication skills

- Second Survey: 42 said to improve communication skills

- In total 55 of 212 (26%) said to improve communication skills[3]

D9: Did these cover:

- First Survey: 25 said literacy and 13 said communication of 45 respondents. Of these 8 said both literacy and communication so 30 said either literacy and/or communication.

- Second Survey: 86 said communication

- In total 116 of 212 said that the course had covered communication[4]

- 83 of 167 had done ICT courses as this was not asked of first tranche surveyed.

---

[2] Including those who noted literacy only in first survey.
[3] Including those who noted to improve literacy skills only in first survey.
[4] Including those who had attended literacy courses only in first survey.

D16 – only asked of second tranche survey

D18 – only asked of second tranche survey

D19 – only asked of second tranche survey

F3 – options 6-9 only asked of second tranche survey

F5 – options 9 and 10 only asked of second tranche survey

F6 How confident would you say you are now in:

- It's impossible to 'merge' the data here as respondents gave different answers in the first survey to their confidence in reading, writing and communicating etc:

- First Survey: 11 were very confident, 11 confident and one did not know in reading, 11 were very confident, 11 confident and 1 did not know in writing. 7 were very confident 4 were confident and 1 not confident and 1 did not know about communicating with customers or colleagues.

- Second Survey: 32 were very confident, 42 were confident, 5 not confident and 3 did not know in communicating.

- The question on ICT was only asked of the second survey.

F8 – You can use the data in the merged survey. The second tranche survey has only four options whereas the first tranche survey had six options. Thus the first two options from the first survey (far exceeded and exceeded) have been included under 'exceeded and the two options (didn't quite live up to and didn't live up to at all) included under the 'didn't live up to expectations'.

H2 – What has this further training involved?

- First Survey – 4 said literacy and 4 said communication. Of these two respondents selected both options so in all 6 had done either or both literacy and communication

- Second Survey – 4 had done communication training

- In total then 10 of the 212 respondents had done further communication training[5]

H4 – not possible to categorise the one respondent who chose 'not sure' in the first tranche survey so this respondent is not shown on the merged findings.

H6 What type of training will you do?

- First Survey – 11 said literacy and 6 said communication. OF these five said both so 12 said literacy and/or communication.

- Second Survey – 19 said communication

- In total 31 said that they would do further training in communication.

I7 – The merged data only presents data for second tranche survey.

Employer Survey

A total of 107 employers were surveyed – 42 during the first round and 65 during the second round. The data presented in the ESIW Merged Employer Survey pdf can be taken as accurate other than for the following points:

B5: What was the nature of the previous training made available:

- First Survey – 3 said literacy and 4 said communication. None said both literacy and communication so a total of 7 said either literacy/communication

- Second Survey – 19 said communication

- In total 26 said communication (including those who noted literacy only in first survey)

- Note ICT was only asked in second survey

D4 – What was the nature of training delivered as part of programme?

---

[5] Including those who noted that they had done literacy training only.

- First Survey: 29 said literacy and 19 said communication. Of these 14 said both so 34 said either.

- Second Survey: 46 said communication

- In total 60 of 212 said they delivered communication training (including those who stated literacy training only in first survey)

- Note ICT was only asked in second survey

D5- ICT related qualifications only asked of second tranche survey

F1 – Use data in merged survey although it's been very difficult to match up these two different set of options but I've gone for:

- Matched exactly and largely matched options from first survey both included into 'met expectations'

- Matched in some areas and did not match at all from first survey both included under 'did not live up to expectations'

G1b – As a result of your involvement with the programme has your organisation experienced an:

- First Survey: 28 said that they had seen an improvement in literacy skills and 30 said they had seen an improvement in communication skills. Of these 58, 27 had seen an improvement to both literacy and communication skills. So in all 31 had seen an improvement in either literacy or communication.

- Second Survey: 47 said that they had seen an improvement in communication skills

- In total 78 of the 212 had seen an improvement in communication skills (including those who indicated an improvement to literacy only skills in first survey.)

- ICT skills only asked of second survey

H1 – I've mapped the two sets of different options use in Survey one and two as below:

- Definitely – definitely

- Very likely – probably

- Quite likely – probably

- Unlikely – probably not

- Very unlikely – probably not

- Definitely not – definitely not

I1 - I've mapped the two sets of different options as below:

- Definitely – definitely

- Very likely – probably

- Quite likely – probably

- Unlikely – probably not

- Very unlikely – probably not

- Definitely not – definitely not

I7 - I've mapped the two sets of different options as below:

- Definitely – definitely

- Very likely – probably

- Quite likely – probably

- Unlikely – probably not

- Very unlikely – probably not

- Definitely not – definitely not