

Sector Skills Assessment

UK wide Report

January 2010



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Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents findings from across all strands of research that were carried out as part of the project to inform Lifelong Learning UK's Sector Skills Assessment for the lifelong learning sector. It is informed by a literature review and secondary information analysis, supported by primary research with stakeholders and employers.

The project ran between August and December 2009 and aimed to update the current evidence base, which comprises data collected up until 2006 and incorporated into the Sector Skills Agreement (Lifelong Learning UK 2008). In order to achieve this, the research involved consideration of the following issues:

- The drivers of skills demand
- Current skills shortages and gaps
- Future skills needs
- Training and workforce development.

This report presents UK wide findings from the research. A UK wide summary report and four nation based reports are also available.

Overall conclusions

Some brief conclusions from the research are set out below before outlining the key priorities for the lifelong learning sector.

Drivers of skills demand

Skills demand is driven by a wide range of factors. According to the research, a significant driver of change is public policy and legislation, which may be cross sector or sector specific, UK wide or specifically relevant to England. Policies implemented by Central Government in relation to learning and skills have an important impact in influencing skills needs and priorities across the lifelong learning sector in England, particularly in relation to curriculum, quality, regulation, the changing provider infrastructure, working with children and young people, equality and diversity, professionalisation of the workforce, for example in youth work, and the wider further education (FE) sector including FE Colleges, work based learning (WBL) and adult and community learning (ACL).

Other significant skills drivers identified through the research include: economic conditions, in particular dealing with the impact of the current economic downturn, globalisation, including the need to interact with and enter global markets; technological change, especially the need to keep pace with new developments; demographics, including the ageing workforce and the need for succession planning, environmental issues and priorities, and consumer demand, which may be related to the demands of employers, learners or clients seeking support through career guidance.

Drivers operate on a variety of scales, for example, local, regional, sub-national, national, UK, European and global scales, and in different timescales. Some are immediate, for example, lower

apprenticeship recruitment levels within employers because of company reductions. Others take longer to filter through to local levels, especially where there is less of an immediate requirement to respond – for example the agenda associated with a low carbon industry. This may be because pressure on resources requires those in the lifelong learning sector to prioritise, which in turn has implications for the focus of national and local resources.

The impact of these skills drivers means that the lifelong learning sector will need to continue to become more adaptable, flexible and responsive to change. There is an increased demand for efficiencies and more effective working between stakeholders, employers and employees across the sector as a whole and within specific areas of work. This requires broader skills sets, including collaboration and partnership working to share effective practice and take advantage of economies of scale.

Current skills needs

Skills gaps and shortages persist, although to varying extents, in the lifelong learning sector in relation to, amongst others, technical, practical and job-specific skills, leadership and management, customer service, general and professional IT skills, team working, and in Wales, Welsh language skills.

Additional skills gaps exist in relation to employer engagement, management and leadership, bid writing and negotiation, advocacy, awareness of equality and diversity, policy and funding knowledge, and creativity and innovation.

The main reasons behind these skills gaps were reported to be a combination of internal and external pressures and the pace of change of policy and other skills drivers.

The findings from the research suggest that lifelong learning employers are looking for a combination of job-specific skills such as teaching with additional ‘process’ skills such as project management, management and leadership, and negotiation skills. This has significant implications in terms of employing subject specialists and developing their process skills. An alternative approach would be to provide training in subject specialisms for those with more generic process skills.

Anticipating what lies ahead

Several characteristics of future skills and employment modes were identified through the primary research including the need for flexibility and adaptability amongst employees, the need for more short-term, part-time and contract work, the need for more training courses to be provided outside of normal working hours and the need to become more industry and vocationally focused.

Other important future skills needs highlighted by interviewees include the continued need to keep pace with changes in technology, engage with communities and employers, have greater awareness of policy analysis and bid writing, become more innovative, develop leadership and management skills and develop numeracy and literacy skills.

There is an important distinction between future skills that are ‘continual needs’ – which broadly mirror current skills needs, suggesting they are perceived as long term issues or those difficult to address and ‘new needs’ or those that are arising from new and emerging issues.

The consideration of future skills needs has important implications for stakeholders and employers in the lifelong learning sector, in terms of addressing the current skills shortages and gaps within the increasingly pressured circumstances brought about by the economic downturn, whilst also retaining a long-term vision and preparing the workforce for the future.

A positive finding from the research is the confidence stakeholders and employers had in the sector’s ability to adapt to change. Despite the reference to changing political, economic and cultural contexts, it was reported by interviewees that in the main their organisations are generally responsive to the need to change and adapt in order to ensure continued survival.

Training and workforce development

The research has identified that a significant amount of training and development is occurring within the lifelong learning sector. Employers report accessing development opportunities from a wide range of sources including FE, HE, work based learning providers, Local Authorities and professional bodies. A significant amount of development is provided in-house, drawing on in-house formal training and development expertise or through involving non-training based staff in initiatives such as shadowing, peer observation, coaching and mentoring, and sharing effective practice. This reflects findings from other strands of the research where it was found that, during the current tighter financial times, employers rely far more on in-house training and development and other creative and innovative methods to encourage staff development opportunities.

As anticipated, barriers to providing training and development opportunities were reported amongst interviewees in relation to the lack of funds to support training and development activities and lack of time to release staff. Other barriers include the length of training courses, location of training, personal barriers and gaps in provision.

Collaboration with other organisations – either to share good practice or benefit from economies of scale through sending larger groups on training courses – was cited as an important method which organisations use to address their issues related to training. This highlights the importance of stakeholder organisations in terms of promoting and facilitating partnership working amongst organisations who are not already engaged in this.

Priorities for the lifelong learning sector

It is recommended that action is taken to address the skills needs identified within the lifelong learning sector. However, these recommendations or ‘priorities for action’ will need to be re-visited and potentially adapted as part of an on-going process to identify, address and overcome skills needs. The research suggests the following priorities:

Key sector wide skills priorities

- Skills for managing change including keeping pace with emerging technologies, leadership and management of change, planning for and responding to the implications of policy changes for organisations, problem solving skills and creativity
- Skills in working with others including partnership and collaboration, engaging with communities, engaging with and understanding the needs and demands of employers - enabling the development of a more demand led lifelong learning sector, and customer service
- General business skills including project management, marketing, PR, advocacy, budget planning and financial management, skills relating to innovation and entrepreneurship, bid writing and negotiation skills
- Specific skills including basic, key or essential skills, skills combinations, technical, practical and job specific skills
- Teaching and learning related skills priorities across the lifelong learning sector include skills in blended learning, skills at supporting the employability of others, skills in sustainable development, innovation and education, skills in teaching priority sector subjects, technician class skills and skills for embedding equality and diversity

Specific priorities

In certain areas of work, for some types of employer, and in certain geographical areas, there are specific 'hotspots' of skills need which are noted in the main body of this report. The best response to these needs is focused, time-limited actions to address the barriers that are holding back skills development.

Generic constraints

There are a number of generic issues which hold back skills development in England and across the lifelong learning sector. In particular:

- The lack of resources for training and development activities including both funding and time
- A need to recognise training and development requirements
- The current rapid change and diversification of roles
- The need to prepare for an unknown future
- Some specific gaps in training and development provision
- The ageing workforce demographic

Actions to address skills priorities

In order to respond to the issues faced within England, we will need to create a landscape in which these approaches to skills development are facilitated, encouraged and valued:

- Increased collaboration and partnership working to share effective practice and take advantage of economies of scale
- Use of secondments, based on a sustainable business interchange model, to bring new skills into an organisation and enable staff to develop skills in new roles
- Further quality improvement in identification of staff training and development needs – National Occupational Standards can be useful here
- Increased provision of in house staff training where possible
- Focus on continuing professional development to keep pace with change and respond to the diversification of roles
- Development of transferable skill sets
- Embedding of equality and diversity into working policy and practice – a diverse workforce will ensure that the sector takes full advantage of a wide range of skills and abilities
- Development of short courses, bite sized training and on-line access to learning
- Organisations may need to improve the opportunity for staff to develop leading edge ICT practice

1. Introduction

This report presents findings from across all strands of research that were carried out as part of the project to inform Lifelong Learning UK's Sector Skills Assessment within the lifelong learning sector. It is informed by a literature review and secondary information analysis, supported by primary research with stakeholders and employers.

1.1 Background

In August 2009, Lifelong Learning UK commissioned LSN to carry out research to contribute towards their sector skills assessment. The project ran until December 2009 and aimed to update the current evidence base about skills issues and priorities within the sector.

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) is the independent employer-led sector skills council responsible for the professional development of those working in career guidance, community learning and development (CLD), further education (FE), higher education (HE), libraries, archives and information services (LAIS) and work based learning (WBL) across the UK. Lifelong Learning UK represents around 1.2 million people working in lifelong learning in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and is the voice of employers in this sector on skills issues. Lifelong Learning UK provides the strategic perspective for workforce planning and development and influences and shapes relevant policy across the four UK nations. It leads the collection of workforce data and provides analysis on workforce characteristics and trends to better inform future workforce planning.

Like the other Sector Skills Councils, Lifelong Learning UK was required to develop a Sector Skills Agreement. These were developed to encourage collaborative working between Sector Skills Councils and their employers, with stakeholders, the Government(s) and other partner organisations. The aim was to enable the delivery of an agreed action plan to meet the priority skills needs of the sector. The Sector Skills Agreement for the lifelong learning sector (Lifelong Learning UK 2008a) was completed in March 2008. As the research feeding into this work was completed at the end of 2006, the information needed to be updated as part of the sector skills assessment.

The sector skills assessment has to be completed by all Sector Skills Councils on an annual basis in order to provide 'informative evidence resources that can be consulted and used as the basis for policy development' (UKCES 2009).

1.2 Research aims and objectives

The research aims to inform the sector skills assessment through gathering up-to-date information about current and future skills issues and requirements within the sector, in relation to the four UK nations and five areas of work covered by Lifelong Learning UK.

The research comprises six specific objectives, namely to:

1. Gather information from across the four UK nations (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), paying specific attention to geographical differences in the sector and highlighting where specific skills issues are manifest

2. Highlight how individual nation perspectives differ from the UK-wide position in nature and scale, making it clear why taking a separate nation perspective might be important
3. Provide a comprehensive overview of skills and requirements in five of Lifelong Learning UK's areas of work, namely:
 - Community learning and development (CLD)
 - Further Education (FE) – FE within this report focuses specifically on FE Colleges
 - Higher Education (HE)
 - Libraries, archives and Information Services (LAIS)
 - Work Based Learning (WBL)

(Research into the career guidance area of work was carried out recently by TBR and the findings will also inform this report)

4. Obtain up-to-date information, in each of the four nations and five areas of work on:
 - Drivers of skills demand – including an analysis of the current and recent performance and competitive position of the sector, the economic structure and condition of the sector, the factors driving this performance and position and the skills implications.
 - Current skills needs – involving an analysis of the current and expected skills needs in the sector, taking into account the different needs of different types of employers, including an analysis of skills gaps and shortages.
 - Future skills needs – including an analysis of future trends to help ensure appropriate anticipation of needs and likely developments. This may involve assessment of economic, sectoral and occupational trends and future prediction and development of potential scenarios for the future.
 - Current and planned training and development provision – incorporating an analysis of training and development provision offered by employers to their staff

(The findings from previous research on the career guidance area of work (TBR, 2009) will be integrated)

5. Identify key differences between sectors, nations and regions to ensure Lifelong Learning UK targets future support appropriately
6. Make practical recommendations, based on the evidence collected, about how the skills priorities within the lifelong learning sector should best be tackled

1.3 Methodology

To meet the aims and objectives of the sector skills assessment, a multi-stranded methodology incorporating primary and secondary information analysis has been adopted, including the following strands of work:

- **Literature review** – carried out by Lifelong Learning UK to identify the existing evidence base relating to the topics of interest, and to inform the primary research and the reports.

- **Review and analysis of secondary data¹** – carried out by Lifelong Learning UK to identify and analyse relevant existing data and to inform the primary research and the reports.
- **Research about skills needs in the Career Guidance** area of work carried out by TBR (July 2009) involving an online survey of 1,478 career guidance professionals, 39 in-depth interviews with career guidance practitioners and four skills workshops with 45 attendees.
- **Interviews with 20 stakeholders from all nations and areas of work (except career guidance)** – to gather information from representatives from key organisations on drivers for skills demand, and broad skills issues relating to their sector now and in the future.
- **Interviews with 100 employers from all nations and areas of work (except career guidance)** – to collate detailed information mainly about issues relating to skills gaps and shortages.
- **Analysis** to assess information from all strands of work in order to identify skills priorities for the lifelong learning sector.
- **Consultation with key sector stakeholders** to validate the findings.

1.4 Interviews with stakeholders

The purpose of the interviews with stakeholders was to gather perspectives from key organisations representing the lifelong learning sector. The interview schedule (see Appendix 1) was designed in consultation with Lifelong Learning UK. Key stakeholders were sent an email invitation (see Appendix 2) to take part in a telephone interview and this was followed up by a telephone call.

Insights gained from the findings were used to identify key issues that were investigated further through interviews with employers.

1.5 Interviews with employers

The purpose of the interviews with employers was to gather perspectives from key organisations representing the lifelong learning sector. In order to make best use of existing data and address any gaps where data may be out of date or based on smaller numbers, two interview schedules were designed to cover the following areas:

- Schedule 1: Northern Ireland; Scotland; Wales; Archives and Record Management, WBL and Youth Work in England
- Schedule 2: England – all areas of work except Archives and Record Management, WBL and Youth Work

¹ Key sources include the employer skills surveys for each nation, although it is important to note that the data from Northern Ireland and Wales was collected in 2005, the data from Scotland collected in 2008 and for England in 2007.

Additional questions were also included in the schedule for interviewees in Wales, relating to the Welsh language.

The interviews were primarily qualitative although the schedules did include some quantitative questions to enable us to gather headline information from each area of work and nation, which was then explored in more detail through the qualitative questions.

The interview schedules (see Appendix 3) were designed in consultation with Lifelong Learning UK. Key employers were sent an email invitation (see Appendix 4) to take part in a telephone interview and this was followed up by a telephone call. At the request of the employer, one interview was carried out in Welsh.

The interviews have generated a wealth of information and have provided an opportunity to explore specific situations and perspectives about skills requirements with a range of employers. The sample of employers to be interviewed was agreed with Lifelong Learning UK and was designed to cover, as far as possible, each area of work within each nation.

1.6 Structure of this report

Following this introductory Chapter, Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the profile of sector stakeholders and employers involved in the research. Chapters 3-6 present findings from the research in relation to: drivers of skills demand, current skills needs, anticipating what lies ahead and training and workforce development. Chapter 7 provides some summary conclusions, before Chapter 8 sets out key priorities for the lifelong learning sector.

2. Profile of the sector and the research participants

2.1 The lifelong learning sector across the UK

Employers in the lifelong learning sector

There are more than 53,000 employers in the lifelong learning sector across the UK. The table below shows the distribution of employers by nation and area of work.

Table 1: Estimates of the number of lifelong learning employers by nation and area of work

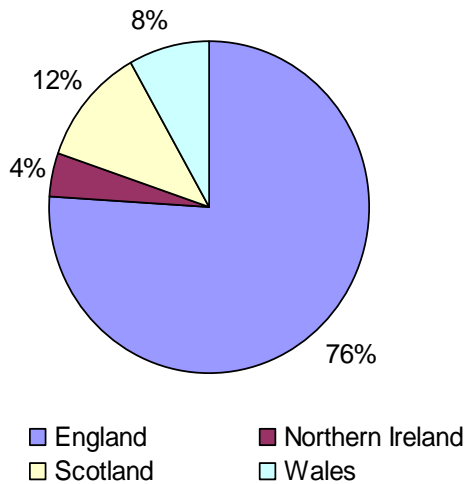
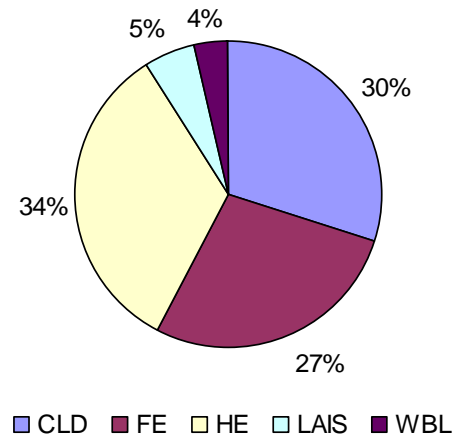
| | CLD ⁽¹⁾ | FE | HE ⁽⁶⁾ | LAIS ⁽¹⁷⁾ | WBL | All areas of work |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| England | 41,568 | 369 ⁽²⁾ | 133 | 545 | 1,150 ⁽¹¹⁾ | 43,765 |
| Northern Ireland | 1,000 | 6 ⁽³⁾ | 4 ⁽³⁾ | 35 | 110 ⁽⁸⁾ | 1,155 |
| Scotland | 5,019 | 43 ⁽⁴⁾ | 22 | 88 | 389 ⁽⁹⁾ | 5,561 |
| Wales | 2,417 | 25 ⁽⁵⁾ | 12 | 54 | 90 ⁽¹⁰⁾ | 2,598 |
| UK | 50,004 | 443 | 171 | 722 | 1,739 | 53,079 |

SOURCES: ¹Lifelong Learning UK and stakeholder estimate; ²Lifelong Learning UK Staff Individualised Record 2007-2008; ³Department for Employment and Learning 2009; ⁴Scottish Funding Council 2008; ⁵fforwm 2009; ⁶Higher Education Statistics Agency 2007-2008; ⁷Lifelong Learning UK archives workforce profile 2007; ⁸LSDA NI database, 2008; ⁹Skills Development Scotland, 2008; ¹⁰Welsh Assembly Government 2007-2008; ¹¹Association of Learning Providers.

Based on the table above, approximately 83 per cent of lifelong learning employers are in England, 10 per cent are in Scotland, five per cent are in Wales and two per cent are in Northern Ireland. In each of the four nations the vast majority of employers are in the community learning and development area of work. Further and higher education represent the smallest proportion of the sector in terms of number of organisations, however they consist of a relatively greater proportion of the workforce, as shown in the next section.

Size of lifelong learning workforce

There are approximately 1.2 million people working in the lifelong learning sector across the UK. The figures below present the distribution of the workforce by nation and area of work. Just over three-quarters of all staff work in England, 12 per cent work in Scotland, eight per cent in Wales and four per cent in Northern Ireland.

Figure 1: Distribution of the lifelong learning workforce by nation**Figure 2: Distribution of the lifelong learning workforce by area of work**

2.2 Stakeholder sample

A series of in-depth telephone interviews were carried out with 20 stakeholders in the lifelong learning sector from a range of organisations, as shown in Table 2. The interviews have generated a wealth of information and have provided an opportunity to explore specific situations and perspectives about skills requirements with a range of stakeholders. The sample of stakeholders to be interviewed was designed to cover, as far as possible, each area of work within each nation. In addition interviews were completed with representatives from two Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) within England. Although it has not been possible to cover every area of work in each nation, some stakeholders have been able to provide information about more than one area of work. Table 2 shows the organisations of stakeholders interviewed.

Table 2: Stakeholder organisations consulted

| | England | Northern Ireland | Wales | Scotland |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| CLD | Third Sector Skills | Voluntary Community Unit, Department for Social Development, Northern Ireland | Welsh Assembly Government | Scottish Government, Lifelong Learning Directorate |
| FE | Learning and Skills Improvement Service | LSDA Northern Ireland | Fforwm – rebranded as ColegauCymru / CollegesWales on 11 th November 2009 | Scotland's Colleges |
| HE | Higher Education Academy | University of Ulster, Northern Ireland | University of Wales Institute, Cardiff | HE Academy Scotland |
| LIAS | CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) | Libraries and Information Council, Northern Ireland | CILIP Cymru | Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) |
| WBL | Association of Learning Providers | | | Skills Development Scotland |
| RDAs | South East of England Regional Development Agency | | | |
| | One North East | | | |

2.3 Employer sample

Table 3 sets out information about the sample of employer interviewees by area of work and nation. This report is based on analysis of 100 interviews carried out between November and December 2009.

Table 3: Sample of employer interviewees by area of work and nation

| Area of work | Nation | | | | Total |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------|----------|-------|--------------|
| | England | Northern Ireland | Scotland | Wales | |
| CLD | 6 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 20 |
| FE Colleges | 19 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 28 |
| HE | 7 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 18 |
| LAIS | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 17 |
| WBL | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 17 |
| Total | 42 | 17 | 20 | 21 | 100 |

3. Drivers of skills demand

The literature review identified a series of skills drivers (confirmed through primary research) within the lifelong learning sector. The overarching categories of drivers which were very evident within the research were policy, and the impact of the economic downturn and the economic condition of the sector, although a series of other skills drivers are also important.

3.1 Policy

The literature review identified a series of skills drivers (confirmed through primary research) within the lifelong learning sector. According to these, a significant driver of change is public policy and legislation, which may be cross sector or sector specific, UK wide or nation specific. Policies implemented by each nation's Government in relation to skills and education have an important impact in influencing skills needs and priorities across the lifelong learning sector within each nation, particularly in relation to curriculum, working with children and young people, equality and diversity, funding, professionalisation of the workforce, quality and regulation. The following are all indicative examples of policy drivers identified in the research – the list includes cross nation and nation specific policies:

Cross-nation policies

- The **Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)** will mean increased pressure on all youth organisations, as they must ensure all their volunteers have been through an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. This new legislation covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland is part of the new Vetting and Barring Scheme, initiated in the wake of the Soham murders, although similar legislation has been passed in Scotland. The requirements have been in place since January 2009, although organisations have some time to comply. The ISA will create a register of all those cleared to work with under-16s and vulnerable adults. This legislation builds on previous requirements, but is part of a rolling and continuous programme of checking, and so has both an administrative and financial impact on youth organisations, particularly those voluntary and community groups with limited income.
- **Freedom of information Act and Data Protection Act** both require the storing and releasing of data to be more regulated and monitored than may have been the case previously. These policies were particularly mentioned by libraries and information staff, and those working for public bodies, as having new skills implications for staff.
- **Equality and diversity requirements and legislation** related to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). This legislation requires employers across England, Wales and Scotland to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees to work at their organisation. This was reported by employers to require staff to be trained in dealing with reasonable adjustments.
- **Local authority funding in England, Wales and Northern Ireland**, as given by Central Government has in the main decreased over the past few years, and this was mentioned by a number of respondents in different nations and sectors. It has either had the effect of forcing an increase in council tax, or, in most cases, a reduction in front-line services and more bidding and procurement.

England

- Policy drivers from the Government for Local Authorities to provide **integrated services for children and young people**. This change to the structures of LAs means that youth services are no longer separate from the administration of schools or social services. Although a positive step in bringing together services in different areas, it requires more skills in dealing both with the expectations of individuals in different areas of children's services, and with how to deliver youth services within a context of children's services. A related issue is **service transformation in Local Authorities** where a number of services are brought together to make the experience easier and clearer for the user. This has similar implications to the development of children's services.
- **14-19 reforms** – from April 2010, responsibility for securing sufficient education and training for all young people, including those aged 16-19 and 19-25 year olds being assessed for a learning difficulty and/or disability, as well as juveniles in custody will pass from the LSC to Local Authorities. In addition, the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) will be established as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) to support Local Authorities discharge their planning and commissioning functions and to ensure funding and budgetary control within the system.
- **Machinery of Government changes** around the dissolution of the LSC and the development of a Skills Funding Agency (SFA). This move towards demand-led funding is still under development. A move to demand-led funding will require greater and extended skills in the FE sector in England, although it is, as yet, unclear as to what these specific requirements and related skills will be.
- **Caps on initiatives such as train to gain and apprenticeships** for FE and work based learning in England have an impact on how many students an organisation can recruit. In particular, for train to gain, once an organisation has reached the funding cap, there are constraints on the recruiting of additional trainees. This means providers cannot always respond to employer demand - although there have been increases in target numbers in certain specialisms and in the technical apprenticeships.
- **The Learning Revolution White Paper** (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills 2009) promotes the benefits associated with informal learning, as a way of developing skills, improving the well-being of communities, and developing the confidence of individuals. This has skills impacts for those working in CLD who will be tasked with the role of increasing access to informal learning, building confidence amongst individuals who would not normally engage in learning, and facilitating networks of support and solidarity.
- **14-19 Diplomas** in England have brought about new requirements around Child Protection, where it is necessary to ensure staff in FE Sector organisations are aware of the legislation and what it means. In particular, 14 year olds studying in Colleges and with work based learning providers requires both new skills to deal with the particular needs of younger individuals on courses, and also an understanding of how to safeguard young people. In addition, it also

requires all staff to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority, mentioned above, as they will be dealing with young people under the age of 16.

- **Central Government** initiatives resulting in a reduction in the amount of Government funded adult provision offered at FE sector organisations have impacted upon the type of staff needed. The rising expectation that adult education provision will be accredited has led to a reduction in the ‘traditional’ student in adult provision, as organisations need to recruit learners who need basic functional skills rather than for example, those wanting to study sculpture for leisure purposes. This change has meant a shift in the skills of staff required to deliver a different profile of provision.
- **Increased requirement for staff within the FE sector in England to have relevant teaching qualifications** affects the way FE Colleges (plus other LSC providers with a contractual requirement for their teaching staff to hold such qualifications) can recruit. From 2007, all new teachers in FE Colleges need to hold either Qualified Teacher in Learning and Skills (QTLS) or Associate Teacher in Learning and Skills (ATLS) status as part of initiatives to ensure the quality of teaching in FE Colleges. Existing teachers who began teaching in FE Colleges before 2001 are exempt from having to complete the new qualifications, but nevertheless may take the opportunity to upgrade their skills. There is a five year window, from 2007, to enable people to achieve the required certificates, but the requirement has a clear impact on the selection of new teachers in FE, and for the security of existing teachers.
- **Risk assessment and health and safety legislation** applies to all those seeking to deliver learning, who need to assess the risks involved for the learners, and individuals, may need to attend training in the particular area before delivering the learning.
- **Increasing participation age** – through the *Education and Skills Act 2008*, the Government has legislated to raise the compulsory participation age in England to 18 by 2015. Young people are required to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday through full-time or part-time education; or through training – if they are also employed, self-employed or volunteering – for more than 20 hours a week. This will place additional demands on staff in learning providers in engaging all young people.
- **Policies related to social cohesion and community engagement** for all educational bodies have an impact in the teaching of post-16 citizenship in FE Colleges, the provision of a quiet room in learning providers, and outreach to encourage non-English speakers to use the internet in a library. These all require distinct and different skills that may not have been needed 10 or 20 years ago, and this has an impact on the skills need to implement community cohesion and engagement as a duty.
- **Priority sectors related to national strategies** can have an impact upon skills requirements and demand – for example in England six key priority sectors have been identified by the Government, including digital Britain, the low carbon industry, advanced manufacturing, professional services and financial services, life sciences and pharmaceuticals, engineering and construction.

Northern Ireland

- The ***Success through skills strategy in Northern Ireland*** published by the Department for Education and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI) in 2006 encompassed 16 projects, the progress of which was reported by DELNI in 2008. This major policy document sets out a number of issues which will change the face of education and training in Northern Ireland, including developing 'flexible menu-based provision' for lifelong learning, improving quality across the lifelong learning sector and encouraging greater partnership working across all areas of work and schools. In terms of staff skills, the policy objectives include measures to develop a 'clearer understanding of regional and local labour market demand' across the wider business community in Northern Ireland, as well as in the lifelong learning sector. This policy should help identify specific skills needs and ensure they are addressed.
- **Government policy impacts** on the type of courses providers are funded to provide. For example there is a current emphasis on courses for the unemployed, as a result of the economic downturn. Colleges and work based learning providers in particular are affected by changes in the provision as a result of Government policy impacts, and need to be flexible in terms of their skills base and ability to provide learning.
- **Increased regulation in youth work and informal learning** has developed in Northern Ireland in order to allow youth workers to help deliver the extended schools agenda, and through this to try to re-engage young people at risk of exclusion, or those defined as hard-to-reach. However, enabling youth workers to either work in school or as part of the school day requires new skills and has created new pressures on those directing youth work.
- **Regulatory pressures**, in particular a new Charity Commission in Northern Ireland has meant the enforcement of the need to demonstrate public benefit as an educational institution, affecting private providers especially. It has also meant greater regulations and awareness required by staff working in relevant organisations.

Scotland

- **More localised funding** - Single Outcome Agreements between Local Authorities and the Scottish National Party (SNP) Government in Scotland mean that councils have greater fiscal freedom and decision making power in how they deliver local and national outcomes (the specific strategic goals set by Government). However, the impact on community and other learning providers who deliver cross-Authority border or even national programmes is that they have to deal with a greater number of different individuals to deliver projects and initiatives. One respondent running a national programme was required to deal with all 32 Local Authorities, and finding the transition to this way of working difficult. It requires greater relationship management than was previously necessary, and so staff had to develop new skills in this area.
- The '**Curriculum for Excellence**' in Scotland – Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), supports the Scottish Government's overarching goal of sustainable economic growth. CfE is about raising standards of achievement for all through improved learning, not new curricular content, with the aim of eliminating the tail of underachievement. The framework is already largely in place, except for the important element of guidance on assessment. This is intended to be a quality based response to global change, aimed at equipping children and young people with

knowledge, skills and attributes needed for the twenty-first century, and designed to help children achieve at the highest levels. The first children from this system will arrive in higher education in 2014. The change will affect further education earlier than this in terms of the different curriculum emphasis, and therefore skills requirements, of lecturers and tutors in adapting to the new curriculum content. The CfE has immediate skills implications for the entire lifelong learning workforce in Scotland because the curriculum must be delivered through partnership working. Some schools are already looking to employers within CLD and FE to support delivery. Knowledge and awareness of the skills issues brought about by the CfE is currently very mixed within the lifelong learning sector.

- In 2008, the Scottish Government introduced fifteen **National Outcomes**, setting objectives for the next ten years. The Outcomes are designed to enable the priorities of the Government to be understood and to provide a clear structure for delivery. The following National Outcomes will have the greatest impact on the skills needs of the lifelong learning sector:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| National Outcome 2: | We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people |
| National Outcome 3: | We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation |
| National Outcome 4: | Our young people are as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens |
| National Outcome 7: | We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society |
| National Outcome 11: | We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions |
| National Outcome 15: | In Scotland, our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs |

- **Skills for Scotland: a lifelong skills strategy** lays out the Scottish Government's plan to develop a cohesive lifelong learning system centered upon the individual but also responsive to employer needs. This key policy document asks learning and training providers to fulfill specific actions. This includes:
 - Considering themselves as part of one system geared towards helping people develop the skills they need, where articulation, integration and working with other providers are the norm
 - Developing strong partnerships and communication links to ensure that information about an individual's support needs, learning styles and achievements are shared (to ensure learning and achievements outside of school are recognised)
 - Providing high quality, relevant, learning opportunities that have value in the workplace
 - Making effective use of labour market information and information, advice and guidance

This strategy requires those in lifelong learning to further improve the skills required for collaborative working and lays a strong emphasis on learning provision which is demand led - in other words it must meet the needs of industry in order to drive the economy. Since the publication of the skills strategy the Scottish Government has begun to drive a 'skills utilisation' agenda which aims to increase the productivity of what is currently a highly qualified workforce in Scotland. As part of this the Government is reviewing leadership and management skills, a skills gap which was also identified in the primary research.

Wales

- **Quality and Effectiveness frameworks** being rolled out across Wales by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), as part of the quality agenda for post-16 learning, require a different way of working and different teaching styles. This policy arose from ‘Skills that Work for Wales’ in 2008, and is part of a move to increase quality and transform the provider network in the learning and skills sector in Wales. The new frameworks mean the WAG will fund only the highest quality learning provision, and will enable learners to be more involved in decision-making about new courses. This will mean Colleges have to be more responsive to demand, and interact differently with learners.
- **The transformation of the provider network** discussed as part of Skills that Work for Wales (WAG 2008), aims to extend the choice of 14-19 learning available to young people, as well as ensuring the network of providers is cost effective. The move here towards more partnership delivery, is envisaged as working hand in hand with the quality and effectiveness frameworks, to ensure that 14-19 learning in Wales is delivered at a high level of quality and with a range of choices for each young person. For learning providers, guidance on transformation published in 2008, indicated that providers could begin to submit their own proposals on working in partnership to enhance delivery. Changes in delivery of courses, and in particular working in partnership with other providers, will require organisations and employees to develop new skills in this way of working. This may also be an issue in ACL where the document Skills that Work for Wales (WAG 2008) also proposed ACL partnerships to be funded according to particular priorities identified by the WAG.
- The **Higher Education Review in Wales** published in June 2009 prioritised the development of an effective means-tested bursary system operating in Wales, and access to higher education in Wales from any class, age group, or background. It highlighted the need for HE-FE partnership, and as such, higher education in Wales can be included as part of the provider transformation mentioned above. Currently Welsh students attending a higher education institution (HEI) in Wales do not pay the ‘top-up’ section of the fee, although non-Welsh UK students studying at an HEI in Wales do. It has been suggested that the WAG would like to replace the universal fee subsidy for Welsh students studying at an HEI in Wales with a means-tested bursary, although it is unlikely that any decision will be made until the results of the current fees review being undertaken by Central Government are known.
- Proposals for **Welsh medium education** to be extended across schools, and particularly in the 14-19 age group, to ensure there are sufficient Welsh speakers for the demands of the economy in Wales, is likely to have a major impact on skills required in the lifelong learning sector. The proposals also include greater speaking in Welsh in non-school settings, both for young people talking to their parents/carers in Welsh, and for more Welsh-speaking in workplaces. This ambitious plan is likely to require many more Welsh speakers, as well as encouraging more individuals to learn Welsh.
- The Welsh Assembly Government’s **Provider Audit and Governance Service (PAG)** ensures that WAG funding for post-16 education is being applied appropriately by Local Authorities. This impacts on workloads in Local Authorities, but ensures Colleges and others receive the funds they are entitled to.

- Welsh Assembly Government's **14-19 learning pathways** have incorporated a role for youth services. This is a positive step for youth workers, as they are part of informal and community learning, although it will require a re-focusing of areas of youth work which will impact on skills needs within youth work in Wales.
- **Community strategies** to be developed according to Local Authority priorities in consultation with other local, national, community and voluntary organisations working in the area. These local priorities for economic and social development are tied into national plans to ensure consistency. Providers in the learning and skills sector need to react to these community strategies by delivering courses to meet the priorities they have identified.
- Changes made to **international student visas** by the Home Office were an issue for Welsh HEIs. The changes require more input from HEIs, and deny the student the right to appeal a visa decision. The impact of this visa issue is to increase the administration relating to student visas, and to reduce the number of students who come from abroad to study in Wales.
- Objective 1 **European funding** for West Wales and the Valleys is very welcome, providing £1.3bn in grant funding for this area, as it has an income level of less than 75% of the European Union average. However, the nature of the grant funding and the bidding process requires the skills to put together successful bids for funding. This is a skill area which, according to one stakeholder, is currently lacking, and needs greater support to build up these skills to obtain other funding in the future when Objective 1 reduces.

3.2 The impact of the economic downturn and economic condition of the sector

The current economic downturn clearly impacts across the occupational spectrum. Perhaps unsurprisingly within this climate, the majority of sector stakeholders involved in the primary research reported that due to the economic downturn, the economic condition of their areas of work was 'fragile' or 'vulnerable'. Uncertainty about funding sources was also mentioned as a difficulty. Not knowing whether a certain budget will be available for the medium-term was cited as a barrier to providing high quality services, as planning and investment become difficult. This highlights an important skills need, related to bidding and negotiation skills, to ensure existing funding sources are maintained and new sources secured within an increasingly competitive arena. In addition there is a need for skills in efficient procurement and outsourcing to make the most effective and efficient use of the funds available.

Research with employers found that the key impacts of the economic downturn across the lifelong learning sector include diminishing funding sources, which impacts upon the level of service that can be provided; increased numbers of applicants for vacancies, although it was reported that the quality of applicants can vary significantly because people with a range of skills sets find themselves looking for work; increased student numbers, particularly within FE Colleges, which will require staff to develop the necessary skills to deal with larger class sizes and to provide a wider range of courses, a reduction in apprenticeships in some nations because companies are not recruiting within the current economic climate and increased demand for career guidance created amongst those who want to be confident of staying in work as well as those out of work. However, there are active schemes in Wales and Northern Ireland to safeguard the number of apprenticeship schemes taken up.

Many of these findings were also apparent in literature documenting the impact of the economic downturn on specific areas of work. For instance, evidence related to the increased demand for FE College and HE places due to the economic downturn has been reported upon in the Guardian (August 2009 and October 2009). According to the report, the main applicants are the recently unemployed, who are redirected into training to make themselves more competitive in a tighter labour market. In February 2009, the University College Admissions Service (UCAS) reported a record number of applicants, with 465,000 for the 2009/10 academic year, a 7.8% increase over the previous year and a 9.5% increase since 2007. Within HE, journalism, politics, nursing and economics courses all saw strong growth, while finance and construction courses fell behind. Courses leading to public-sector jobs saw strong growth. There was also a large increase in the number of applications for postgraduate study at some universities.

However, the economic crisis has slashed endowments made to higher education institutions. In December 2008, The Guardian reported that these might have lost as much as £250 million, with the University of Glasgow losing a third and University College London nearly a quarter. Oxford and Cambridge were both predicted to lose about 15 percent of their endowments. University research budgets, especially where funded through links with business, may be equally affected.

Graduate unemployment is expected to rise during the economic downturn. A Guardian survey of 100 top employers in mid January 2009 reported that on average, they would be cutting graduate placements by about one-sixth, with heavier losses in the financial services industry. The public sector and a few retailers were expanding the number of graduate placements they are offering. The figures suggest that public-sector employment may become attractive to graduates and unemployed practitioners, which could include an expansion in the number of people entering the FE teaching profession. It is important to note that public sector spending is likely to contract over the next few years, and this will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect (The Independent, 2009).

Within the current economic climate, the value of libraries as sources of free reading and information for the public becomes more important. The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) have not yet published their 2008/09 figures, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the economic downturn is encouraging more people to use libraries (see for example, the Improvement and Development Agency website, Communications in a recession—The Big Picture). Some are visiting for information about careers or jobs (if they have been made redundant, for instance) and some are coming in for free books. However, libraries will not be able to provide services to meet this increased demand unless they receive adequate investment, during and beyond the economic downturn. With tighter budgets, Local Authorities may reduce their investment in libraries.

3.3 Other Drivers of Skills Demand

Other significant skills drivers identified through literature and primary research include:

Changes in technology – stakeholders and employers across all areas of work commented that the rapid pace of change in relation to new technology has created the need to develop new skills and ensure that equipment and training keeps pace with this change. Across the lifelong learning sector it was reported that there has been a demand for e-learning and other types of learning and service delivery, focusing far more on the use of technology. Within the LAIS area of work, technology was cited as an important driver by the majority of interviewees. One interviewee described how her organisation has had to reposition itself as a digital library, which involved

collecting more digital material and making greater use of digital preservation techniques and digitisation - all of which creates additional skills demand on existing staff. Another interviewee working in archives explained that technology is having a significant impact on the way records are created and preserved, and also on the way customers expect the service to be delivered. The interviewee reported that, increasingly people are expecting to find everything they want, for example, some wish to access parish registers on a computer at home via the internet.

A significant aspect of technological change which is heavily covered in the relevant literature is the impact of technological advances on those who are left behind, or are digitally marginalised. The findings of the report 'Does the internet improve lives?' (UK Online Centres 2009) identified a correlation linking social and digital exclusion, with those at a social disadvantage over three times more likely to be digitally excluded – this includes at least 15 per cent of the population. In her 2009 report 'Independent Review of ICT User Skills', (Morris 2009), Baroness Estelle Morris, similarly found that those who are socially excluded with few or no qualifications make up a large proportion of the groups who are 'digitally excluded'. The report was primarily England focused, however according to the report much of the research is UK based, and actions identified may be equally applicable to the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Such findings have prompted a range of official recommendations, initiatives and policies aimed at increasing digital access within adult learning in England, including:

- An entitlement for digital life skills with an emphasis on coordinating provision through one body with one point of contact for adult learners (see Morris 2009)
- The maintenance and promotion of a directory of online resources for informal learning by Becta (see DIUS 2009)
- My Guide – a Department for Children, Schools and Families sponsored course aimed at helping people conduct effective web searches for information on informal learning opportunities (DIUS 2009)

The focus on digitally excluded groups has a direct impact on informal adult learning. This has a subsequent impact on the skills required within CLD to provide adequate support to those in socially disadvantaged groups who are most likely to be left behind as technology continues to become more advanced.

Another aspect of technological change which is relevant to skills, is the inclusion of 'Digital Britain' as a key theme in the Department for Business Innovation and Skills' (BIS), 'Building Britain's Future: New Industry, New Jobs' paper. This has an explicit impact on the demands placed on HE in response to increased applications for computer science courses, and on work based learning and FE, with digital media skills placing increased demand on train to gain and apprenticeships. The essential point identified within this report is that digital media is regarded as 'a major growth sector upon which the economy depends', and as such, demand consistent skills development across the lifelong sector to support and supply skills, the levels and nature of which are still evolving and advancing.

Employer needs and engaging with and responding to employers – according to several interviewees, responding to the needs of employers is a significant skills driver, and particularly emphasises the need to equip the workforce with higher level skills and vocational skills. For example a work based learning interviewee in England reported that employers in the local area were demanding more courses and training around customer service, therefore:

“We have had to widen our courses to respond to employers in our local area into things like Call Centre Management – but for this we need an assessor who is qualified to assess in IT, management and customer service – we have these skills to some extent, but it is just about refining them. It’s all about providing the types of training that employers want”

The demand by employers for more vocational courses was mentioned as a specific skills driver amongst several FE College interviewees.

Learner demand – interviewees within FE Colleges and HE reported that learner demand and responding to the needs of learners was an important driver of skills. It was commented upon that fewer students can afford to study full time so they are looking for more part-time courses, which require different skills sets and working patterns amongst staff within these areas of work.

Reductions in funding and funding constraints – it was emphasised by several interviewees that reductions in funding and funding constraints can be a significant driver of skills demand, in terms of ensuring organisations have the necessary skills to compete for those funding sources which are available, or through making efficiency savings. As one interviewee within CLD in Northern Ireland explained, her organisation previously looked towards the private sector for support. However, this is no longer possible because of the economic downturn, so her organisation had to develop new skills in identifying and securing new funding streams. Other interviewees also noted that funding priorities had some impact in terms of determining the skills required to deliver provision or services to meet the requirements of funding priorities. For example, CLD interviewees reported that funding priorities within their Local Authority could be focused on women, young people or the unemployed.

Regional / sub-regional influences - a CLD interviewee from Wales reported that, in areas with high levels of long term unemployment, for example the South Wales valleys, there is a need to provide training around employability skills, that are focused on getting the long term unemployed back into work. Another CLD interviewee summarised this point by saying:

“It is largely about what people think they need to deliver in their own communities – it varies from area to area and impacts upon what they look to us to deliver, whether that’s working with the unemployed, the homeless or on some other issue”

One FE College interviewee in the South West of England commented that:

“There is a lot of tourism and leisure in the area. We opened a surf academy because this is where the surf is and it will help the learners going into industry – this is an example of us having to respond to the local community”

Globalisation – interviewees within the HE area of work reported that this was a significant skills driver in ensuring they are able to compete internationally to attract students from abroad. New skills are also required to facilitate learning for students who are coming to study in the UK from eastern European regions, the Middle East, India and elsewhere.

A report by the Warwick Institute for Employment Research (2008) provided analysis on the level and nature of international activities undertaken by FE Colleges, and an assessment of the key opportunities in international markets for Colleges. The research found that ‘push factors’ for engagement in international activities included the need to build up alternative income streams to

compensate for reduced funding for adult learning and, to some extent, Government driven initiatives aimed at internationalising Colleges. Among the 'pull factors' were, for example: the College's vision in relation to widening the horizons of staff and students, preparing them to work in an increasingly global economy; the pursuit of opportunities to expand the College; and financial incentives which support Colleges in venturing into new markets.

Sustainability and environmental issues – research within both FE Colleges and HE found that there is a need to develop skills to enable staff to research and develop products within these areas. In addition, national strategies related to environmental issues have an impact upon skills requirements and demand – for instance, 'green' policies about alternative energy strategies, the developments in the low carbon industry and refocusing research funding towards climate change.

Demographics – The UK population is expected to increase to around 69.5 million by the year 2054, and this is expected to be an increasingly ageing population. Demand for lifelong learning amongst older learners is therefore likely to increase. This may require updating of staff skills and new approaches to service delivery (Lifelong Learning UK 2008a). The ageing workforce also presents a need for succession planning. This will be to account for the wealth and skills that will be lost through retirements. However with Government plans to increase the retirement age, there may also be a challenge in continuing to develop older workers. The expected fall in the number of 18-20 year olds in the next ten years, could also affect recruitment to the lifelong learning workforce.

Drivers operate on a variety of scales, for example, local, regional, sub-national, national, UK, European and global scales and in different timescales. Some are immediate, for example, lower apprenticeship recruitment levels by employers because of company reductions. Others take longer to filter through to local levels, especially where there is less of an immediate requirement to respond – for example the agenda associated with low carbon industry. This may be because pressure on resources requires those in the lifelong learning sector to prioritise, which in turn has implications for the focus of national and local resources.

Evidence from the primary research suggests that the impact of these skills drivers mean the lifelong learning sector will need to continue to become more adaptable, flexible and responsive to change. There is an increased demand for efficiencies and more effective working between stakeholders, employers and employees across the sector as a whole and within specific areas of work. This will require more specialised skills sets, including collaboration and partnership working to share effective practice and take advantage of economies of scale.

4. Current skills needs

This Chapter presents key findings based on information relating to skills shortages and gaps in the lifelong learning sector. The headline statistics are drawn from the employer skills surveys in each of the four nations and broad comparisons are made across the nations where possible. This information is supplemented by primary research carried out in the sector.

Terminology

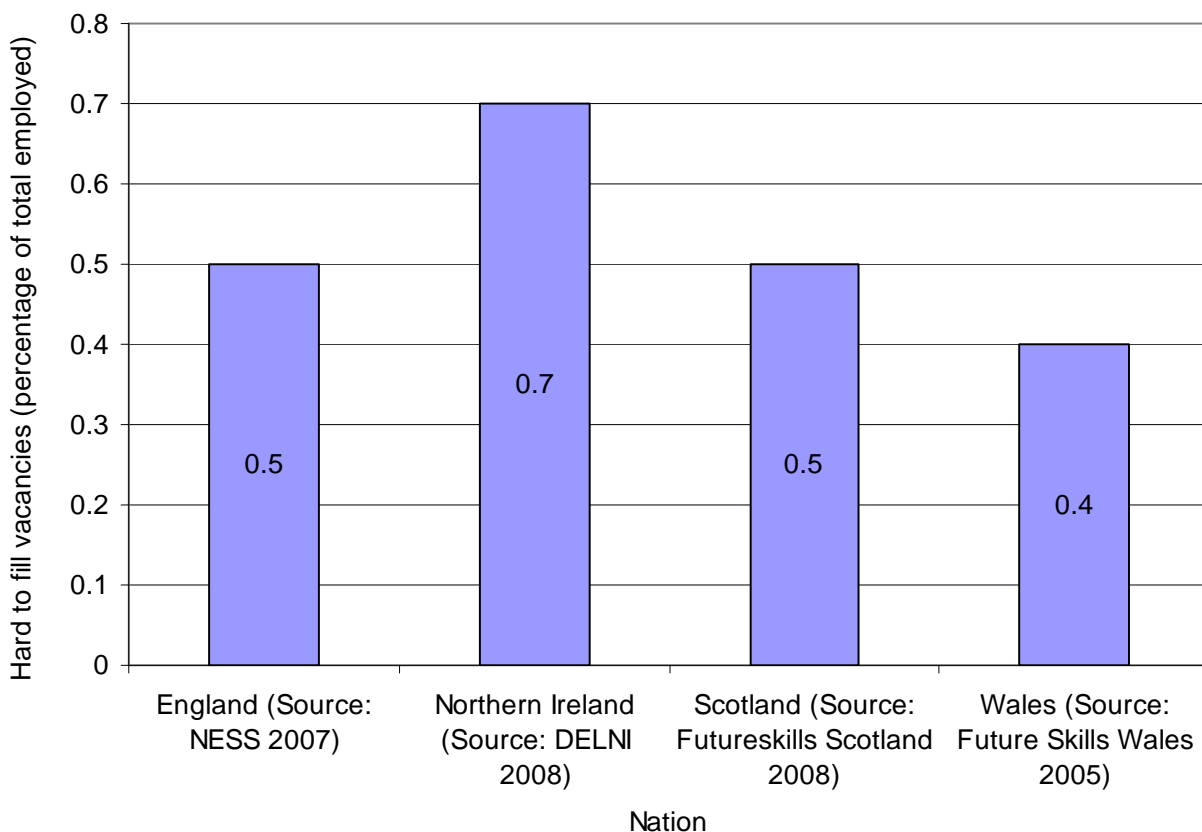
Hard-to-fill vacancies are those vacancies described by employers as being particularly difficult to fill. Reasons often include skills related issues, but may simply involve such aspects as the employer being based in a remote location, poor pay or terms and conditions of employment (Lifelong Learning UK 2008b).

Skills shortage vacancies are those hard-to-fill vacancies which result from a lack of applicants with the required skills, work experience or qualifications (Lifelong Learning UK 2008b).

4.1 Skills shortages and recruitment difficulties

As displayed in figure 3, the review of secondary data by Lifelong Learning UK found that the number of hard-to-fill vacancies as a percentage of the total employed in the lifelong learning sector is similar in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Figure 3: Bar Chart to show hard to fill vacancies as a percentage of total employed within the lifelong learning sector



Note: because of the range in original sources, evidence for bases are unavailable for Scotland and Wales, although the lifelong learning samples within the National Employer Skills Survey in England and the Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey were 2,385 and 158 respectively.

Skills shortage vacancies as a percentage of hard-to-fill vacancies in the lifelong learning sector are 67 per cent for England (Learning and Skills Council 2008) and approximately 51 per cent for Scotland (Future Skills Scotland 2008). Data is unavailable for Wales and Northern Ireland because there were too few responses from the sector in these nations to generate robust statistics.

The Association of Colleges' (AoC) survey of staff recruitment and shortages (2008) amongst FE Colleges (excluding Sixth Form Colleges) in England and Wales, found that amongst the 92 participating Colleges in September 2008, 50 per cent had management staff vacancies; 96 per cent had teaching staff vacancies; and 95 per cent had support staff vacancies. Of all teaching vacancies reported, 14.9 per cent were in construction. The top ten vacancy areas comprise construction, basic skills, other visual and performing arts and media, health, social care and public services, business, engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and ICT. Of all support staff vacancies, 33.7 per cent were administrative or clerical and 29.5 per cent were learning support.

The Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) conducted an online recruitment and retention survey during July and August 2008 amongst higher education institutions across the UK. 114 out of a potential 162 UK HEI organisations responded (97 from England, seven from Scotland, seven from Wales and three from Northern Ireland). Overall, it was reported that recruitment and retention is not a major problem for the majority of organisations. Problems exist but tend to be confined to specific occupational categories or academic subjects. Most HEIs reported that they 'sometimes' experience recruitment difficulties for academic, administrative and professional and technical staff, but for clerical and manual staff groups the majority of respondents reported that they never have recruitment difficulties. Subject areas for which academic recruitment shortages occur include business and management, accounting and finance, and law.

Over a fifth of respondents to the UCEA survey believed that pay levels in the private sector were affecting the recruitment of academic staff, but this was a reduction from a third of respondents in 2005. Over a third felt that the recruitment of professional and support staff was affected by private sector pay levels but again, this is a reduction from three fifths reported the 2005 survey. Aside from pay, the main challenge perceived by HEIs was their geographical location. This affected the recruitment of academics and professional and support staff.

The most common adverse impacts of unfilled vacancies identified through secondary analysis and primary research include increased staff workload, loss of business, delays developing new products or services and reduced quality of provision.

The National Employer Skills Survey for England in 2007 (Learning and Skills Council 2008) reported that skills shortages exist across the lifelong learning sector in relation to technical, practical and job-specific skills, problem solving, general and professional IT skills, numeracy and literacy. These findings were supported by the primary research which found that these skills shortages exist, to some extent, across the whole of the UK.

The nature of **technical, practical and job-specific skills shortages** varied between areas of work. For example within CLD interviewees reported a lack of applicants amongst youth workers and community work staff who can communicate effectively and have awareness of changing

legislation. Shortages were also reported amongst applicants able to teach literacy and numeracy. Within FE Colleges, the main barrier to recruitment identified by many employers was that applicants had the vocational experience but not the qualifications to teach. More specific skills shortages related to teaching particular subjects, particularly construction, engineering, science and building trades such as plumbing, carpentry and bricklaying. To a lesser extent, specialist subjects were also identified including marine engineering, hairdressing, social care, basic skills and early years.

Another reported skills shortage is in the area of management and leadership skills. Recruiting where the post required a combination of skills could be challenging. Within HE job-specific skills shortages relate to the need for applicants to demonstrate a combination of management and specialist subject expertise. Other recruitment difficulties identified related to skills shortages in specialist expertise and research acumen, project management experience, knowledge of teaching and a willingness to work flexibly and financially skilled staff with sales and marketing expertise. It was also reported that newly qualified applicants within FE Colleges could lack the practical, industry-related experience needed.

Within LAIS difficulties were reported in recruiting younger staff with the required skills. Concern was expressed that the sector would subsequently face difficulty as senior existing staff retire. Librarian specific skills shortages identified included cataloguing, archiving, records management, and record conservation. More generic shortages included a lack of understanding of legal frameworks such as the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection, IT skills and use of digital technology. Within work based learning a range of different skills shortages were identified, including aptitude and skills to work with young people in the 14 to 19 age group, knowledge and experience of the S/NVQ delivery system, assessors with the relevant skills and qualifications – many applicants do not have the combination of both. One employer gave an example of their difficulty over a period of nine months in recruiting a health and safety officer with the necessary qualification as well as the relevant experience.

Across all areas of work it was reported that problem solving skills shortages exist amongst applicants mainly for management roles, where applicants lack the necessary skills and experience to develop with innovative and creative solutions. Within CLD specific problem solving skills were identified in relation to strategic planning and preparing competitive bids.

General and professional IT skills shortages varied between areas of work. For example within CLD it was reported that applicants lacked the necessary skills to work with young people through the use of social networking sites and video editing. Within FE Colleges, ACL and work based learning providers it was reported that IT skills shortages exist because the use of IT is not necessarily commonplace in some subject disciplines such as hairdressing, social care, theatre, construction, and art. It was reported across all areas that general IT skills can be lacking amongst applicants for domestic and support roles, although several employers did comment that there has been an improvement in the IT skills of applicants over recent years, especially amongst younger applicants who are more adept at using technology. Within FE Colleges and HE it was reported that professional IT skills shortages are apparent in relation to some specialist software packages, or in relation to programming and data security. LAIS employers also commented that applicants lack professional IT skills related to the use of database and digital technology in relation to library and archive work. One employer from LAIS identified the need for skills not only in relation to IT usage but also to being able to teach others in the community to use IT themselves.

Numeracy and literacy skills shortages were reported to exist across all areas of work, particularly in relation to domestic and support roles such as caterers, cleaners and some administration staff. There was some evidence of these skills shortages amongst tutors particularly within construction or trade disciplines. Report writing skills shortages were also reported amongst CLD and LAIS employers.

Additional skills shortages found to exist through the primary research relate to tutors and assessors not having the required qualifications to teach within the wider FE sector, teaching learners with disabilities, leadership skills, awareness of legal and policy frameworks, project management, line management skills, negotiation and contract management skills, and customer service skills.

Primary research by TBR with career guidance professionals found that the most severe skills shortages in the occupation are wider awareness of career guidance industry developments, creativity and innovation and up to date knowledge of best practice. Less severe but common skills shortages include the ability to apply best practice, negotiation skills and time management skills.

Actions to overcome skills shortages

Research evidence suggests that the most common actions taken to overcome skills shortages include:

- **Introduction of market supplements** – this is an element of salary paid in addition to the evaluated grade applicable to a post. The payment is added to the remuneration in order to arrive at the level of salary that will be sufficient to recruit and/or retain a member of staff. The UCEA (2008) survey found that the most common technique amongst UK HEIs to tackle recruitment and retention issues was the introduction of market supplements. More HEIs reported providing these for support staff (4 in 10) than for academic staff (around 3 in 10).
- **The use of temporary staff** - agency staff, volunteers or consultants – to ‘fill in’. Whilst this provides a short-term solution, there can be significant cost and resource implications, particularly for HR departments. This was also found to be an issue amongst FE Colleges (excluding Sixth Form Colleges) in England and Wales through the AoC survey (2008).
- **Recruiting of applicants without the necessary skills and then offering them training** – for example, an FE College interviewee in Wales reported that his organisation had recruited business support staff, and then run basic skills training and mentoring schemes to support them and enable them to develop the necessary skills for the role. Similarly, an interviewee within the archives sector in Wales reported recruiting a member who was unable to speak Welsh, on the condition that they attended a Welsh language course at the local university
- **Wider recruitment campaigns** using a range of sources and agencies, for example recruitment websites, recruitment agencies and Jobcentres. One interviewee from HE in Wales described how they repositioned how they advertised to recruit Welsh speakers through local papers, Welsh language networks, and Welsh language email listings.
- **Recruitment of staff with transferable skills** – attempting to recruit people from other areas of work or sectors who will have developed skills such as project management, leadership, and financial skills through other roles

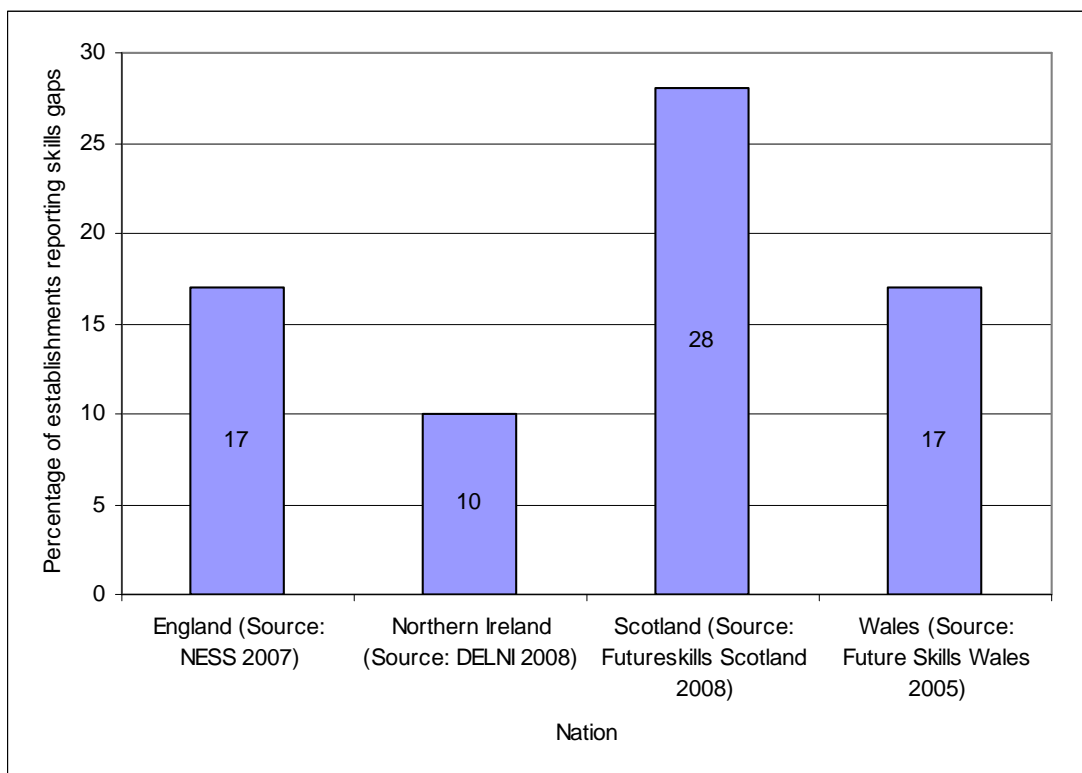
- **Skills development and promotion of internal staff** – several employers reported their organisations have implemented action learning initiatives aimed at increasing the capabilities and skills of existing staff to develop them for promotion. The UCEA (2008) survey also found that a quarter of HEIs reported upgrading posts for support staff.

4.2 Skills gaps

Skills gaps exist when employers employ staff whom they believe are not fully proficient in their job (Lifelong Learning UK 2008b).

Skills gaps are common across the lifelong learning sector workforce. A secondary analysis of the employer skills survey in each nation identified the percentage of skills gaps experienced by the lifelong learning sector. These are displayed in figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Bar Chart to show percentage of establishments reporting skills gaps within the lifelong learning sector



Note: because of the range in original sources, evidence base data are unavailable for Scotland and Wales. The lifelong learning samples within the Employer Skills Survey in England and the Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey were 2,385 and 158 respectively.

Overall, from this secondary analysis, the most common skills gaps identified include technical, practical and job-specific skills, management skills, customer service skills, general IT user skills and team working. These results are supported by research with employers, which identified that these skills gaps continue to exist in the lifelong learning sector.

As with skills shortages, the nature of technical, practical and job-specific skills gaps varied across all areas of work. Within CLD, job-specific skills gaps related to financial management, awareness of and ability to respond to child protection issues, and data management and analysis. Within FE Colleges, it was emphasised that some teachers who had been in post for a considerable time could lack the skills derived from more recent vocational experience. It was also emphasised that some teachers are slower to embrace e-learning technology. With HE, job-specific skills gaps are reported to relate to contextual knowledge about public policy and an understanding of how private sector businesses operate. Within LAIS job-specific skills gaps relate to a lack of technical expertise in cataloguing and managing records, digital preservation and conservation skills. A lack of specialist skills in Latin for working with historical records was also mentioned.

Management skills gaps were reported to exist across all areas of work, particularly where people had been promoted who had good technical knowledge but not the same level of skills in management and leadership.

Customer service skills gaps were also reported to exist across all areas of work, particularly in relation to frontline staff and those involved with dealing with new client groups – for example 14-16 year olds in FE Colleges and local employers.

The majority of **general IT user skills gaps** were reported to exist amongst older sections of the workforce. Within FE Colleges, it was reported that effective use of IT is occurring for teaching purposes but staff are generally weaker at using IT for research and administration purposes, meaning the most 'efficient' route is not always taken.

Team working skills gaps were reported to exist across all areas of work in relation to a lack of communication skills, amongst geographically dispersed campuses or offices, and where autonomous working has been historical.

Other skills gaps identified through the primary research that are both UK and sector wide, and can also be related to the skills drivers mentioned above include:

- Skills related to dealing with the impacts of globalisation and ensuring organisations are able to interact with global markets, and particularly in the case of HE, compete on a global scale
- Skills related to responding to consumer demand, including the demands of employers, learners and local communities
- Skills related to developing new products and services to respond to environmental issues and priorities such as the low carbon industry
- Management and leadership skills. Related to this, a clear issue emerging from much of Lifelong Learning UK's equality and diversity work is that mentoring, shadowing and leadership programmes for particular equalities groups do not take into account the fact that participants will often return to the provider setting quite motivated but can become stifled by managers and others who do not understand how to accommodate career development requirements. This results in people from certain backgrounds (particularly BME backgrounds) not having an equality of opportunity to demonstrate, or develop, their skills further and feeling demoralised as a result (Equality and Diversity Team, Lifelong Learning UK unpublished data).
- Skills related to collaboration and partnership working within and between organisations and with local groups and communities

- Employer engagement particularly within FE Colleges, and to some extent HE, where there is now an increasing need for institutions to develop closer relationships with employers and market their services more effectively
- Skills relating to Information Communications Technology (ICT), Information and Learning Technology (ILT) and exploiting new technologies. It is anticipated that changes in technology will impact across all areas of work – from teaching and learning practices, including greater use of e-learning and virtual learning environments, to the digitisation and preservation techniques of libraries and archives and information management needs and analysis
- Embedding the principle of equality and diversity into working policy and practice
- In Wales, a skills gap continues to exist in relation to the ability of employees to provide a service through the medium of Welsh. Welsh language skills gaps tended to exist amongst teaching staff, lecturers and academic staff who were less likely to be native Welsh speakers than locally based administrative and support staff. There is also a higher demand on the level of Welsh language proficiency that teaching staff require because of the depth of understanding needed to use it as a medium through which to teach. A high proportion of employers reported difficulty recruiting staff who were not only qualified in the Welsh language, but also spoke it with fluency and proficiency.

Skills gaps that are more specific to each area of work are as follows:

Community Learning and Development

- Several important skills needs specific to the CLD sector were highlighted by research with stakeholders and employers in the sector. These mainly include skills for working with communities, young people, and disadvantaged groups. One CLD stakeholder cited this as an essential area of operation in terms of providing an effective service and demonstrating key capabilities to funders:

“We are targeting the most disadvantaged groups and what we really need is skills for working with these groups, working with the most excluded, working with young people and school leavers, a focussed recognition of learner achievement, assisting people to demonstrate what they have achieved..... we need to be able to maintain educational funding. We do this by demonstrating that we are skilled in the right areas.” (CLD stakeholder)

- There is also a broader requirement for skills related to committee development, financial planning and planning events.
- Other skills that were cited by interviewees as important, and currently lacking, include the skills needed to enable adult learners to develop numeracy and literacy skills and employability skills.
- Additional skills requirements within the sector relate to changing policy, legislation and funding areas. With funding sources becoming increasingly scarce, it is important to develop skills around specialist areas such as bid writing and negotiation skills.
- It was also reported that within youth work, there are some gaps in terms of qualifications, which are now being highlighted by employers because of the professionalisation agenda, which requires a more highly qualified workforce.

Further Education Colleges

- Skills development around independent learning time was highlighted as important for lecturers in supporting greater learner autonomy and independence.
- It was reported that within FE Colleges, and to a lesser extent HE, there is a need for more effective teaching and learning, including blended learning involving a range of teaching methods and sites, and in particular focussing on more online resources.
- Subject specific skills gaps were reported for practical courses such as construction, marine and motor engineering and the 'vocational currency' of teachers and tutors from industry.
- Skills gaps in relation to innovation and entrepreneurship were identified within FE Colleges and HE and deemed to be necessary in enabling engagement with employers
- The 14-19 Diplomas mean that young people from the age of 14 are also being taught within FE settings in England. This requires a different set of skills from dealing with older or adult learners, such as providing greater pastoral care and behaviour management.
- Following the 2007 Government reforms to the teaching and development of teachers, tutors and trainers in the FE sector in England, there is now a far greater emphasis on being qualified to teach within the lifelong learning sector.

Higher Education

- As in other areas of work, it was reported that in HE skills gaps exist in relation to leadership and management. This was described as an issue, at all occupational levels from senior strategic managers through to early career lecturers. The specific example was given of young lecturers who have progressed quickly through their undergraduate, MSc and PhD degrees to become lecturers and are then given programmes or large scale projects to manage without having been exposed to, or gained prior experience of, project management skills.
- It was reported that there is a need within HE to ensure a greater focus on the employer agenda, in particular being more responsive and open to a demand-led employer approach. This may require the development of new skill sets possibly also for academics who traditionally are required to focus on research and teaching. In the current climate. Interviewees emphasised that it is important for HE institutions to ensure staff have the appropriate blend of academic experience and technical ability.
- An important skills need is linked to developing innovation and creativity in HE. It was reported that there currently exist, a wealth of untapped expertise within the sector, especially amongst academics. However, the challenge is in harnessing these skills and using them to develop new products and enter new markets. Related to this, there is substantial research particularly in relation to ethnicity (Equality Challenge Unit 2009) and disability (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education 2008), and to a lesser extent in relation to gender (Times Higher Education March 2008 and July 2009) that academics from particular backgrounds do not have equal opportunity to develop their expertise across the full range of academic settings.
- Engaging with blended learning and new technologies was also cited as an important skills gap within HE.

Libraries, Archives and Information Services

- Skills needs in the LAIS area of work relate to the use of ICT, including Web 2.0 to support learners (including remote learning) and information management.
- Another skills need results from the need for libraries to compete with other services by marketing themselves, to raising awareness of services, and by making library services even more accessible. This could include, for example, publicising the fact that the service is free.
- There is a growing need for managers and service leaders to be able to evaluate and assess the impact of the service and to use evidence to advocate the value of the service in order to procure resources, develop partnerships and position the service within the wider organisation.
- In local Government services, the move towards strategic commissioning and the outsourcing of service delivery is generating a new need for skills such as development of service level specifications and contract management.
- Practical skills needs were also highlighted such as stock management, budgeting and customer services.
- Skills gaps were also identified around the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts and the impact this has on releasing information, particularly for public bodies.

Work based learning

- A significant skills gap identified by interviewees within work based learning focused on the complexities of dealing with demand-led funding, including understanding the demand-led funding formula, data management, in relation to submitting information to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and contracting, relating to developments such as the maximum contract value and its use.
- It was also suggested that the workforce reforms focus too much on teaching and not on other essential skills for delivering learning in the workplace. The specific example was given that work based learning trainers have to work side-by-side with learners and their supervisors, often meaning that trainers have to effectively manage the learner's supervisors to continue imparting learning on the job, which is one of the realities of the workplace. A skills gap was reported to exist amongst trainers who have to achieve the continuing commitment of the learner's supervisor to helping the learner with their studies.
- Awareness of risk management and health and safety legislation were identified as skills needs by work based learning interviewees because of the rate of change and increasing requirement when seeking contracts to deliver provision.
- Skills gaps were identified in relation to dealing with the increased regulation and inspection of work based learning
- As in FE, in England the 14-19 Diplomas and other initiatives mean that young people from the age of 14 are being taught within work based learning settings. This requires a different set of skills from dealing with older or adult learners, such as providing greater pastoral care and behaviour management.
- Following the 2007 Government reforms to the teaching and development of teachers, tutors and trainers in the wider FE sector in England, there is now a far greater emphasis on being qualified to teach within the lifelong learning sector. This requirement has implications for professional development skills for both teaching staff and those supporting their professional development.

Career guidance

- Primary research by TBR identified the most severe skills gaps within career guidance as mirroring those which are identified as severe skills shortages, namely wider awareness of career guidance industry developments, up to date knowledge of best practice, and creativity and innovation. Less common skills gaps include numeracy and literacy, which are critical as a foundation for effective performance in any professional role and skills in negotiation and partnership working, which are of importance in career guidance activities which require interaction with many other bodies.

Priority sectors

- The Government has introduced six priority sectors for England, digital Britain, the low carbon industry, advanced manufacturing, engineering and construction, professional and financial services and life sciences and pharmaceuticals. Given that the lifelong learning sector workforce is important for supplying training and skills for the UK workforce in the wider economy, employer interviewees across the UK were asked a series of questions about the readiness of their organisation to support each of these priority sectors. Although limited, it was evident that there are pockets of high quality activity occurring to support each priority sector. There are sound processes in place which form a good foundation upon which to build and expand.
- The HE employers tended to be at the forefront of each respective industry. In the case of most of the priority sectors, HE employers stated that they had developed various teaching, research or consultancy roles to support priority sectors in terms of expertise. FE College and work based learning employers focused primarily on their teaching roles, and in some cases links with industry and employers, particularly where they operated a system of apprenticeships. CLD often had limited or no involvement in priority sectors. However where CLD based employers could identify links with priority sectors, their priorities were advancing in relation to the opportunities of learners, rather than supplying training to support industry. These illustrative examples demonstrate that some activity is occurring in the lifelong learning sector in relation to priority sectors; however they suggest that some skills gaps exist in relation to some sectors in terms of increasing involvement, through teaching, research or consultancy roles.

Reasons for skills gaps

Skills gaps exist partly as a consequence of the fast paced nature of occupational change. The lifelong learning sector must remain up to speed with developments in professional practice and the wider economic and labour market environment. Findings from the research suggest that the need for rapid change is perceived to be due to a combination of internal and external pressures, and related to the pace of change in policy and other skills drivers. These factors all place increased emphasis on the need for staff to become more responsive and to change and adapt their job roles and skills. Other significant reasons for skills gaps that were reported include:

- Increased requirement for management and leadership skills – many interviewees reported that these skills are important specifically within the context of change management, including for example the re-organisation, re-structuring and mergers that are occurring with both FE Colleges and HE. As the employers reported, organisations are changing and managers need to be able to lead and facilitate these changes. However people who have been engaged in teaching for a number of years and have then been promoted to managers, whilst they may possess a range of technical skills, do not necessarily have the relevant management skills because they have not previously required them.

“We promote from within, so people are technically skilled and then get a management role that they need training for” (FE College interviewee)

“Academics are experts in their field rather than managers; they get promoted because of their academic achievements but then have to develop management and leadership skills” (HE employer)

“For middle managers in the service, it is more likely that they have progressed in the role through promotion and may not necessarily have all the skills. The organisation is trying to make sure that young managers do get some training and support to improve their supervision skills.” (LAIS employer)

Several interviewees also commented that CPD for management and leadership has not been prioritised within recent years.

- **Settled and ageing workforce** – according to several interviewees across the five areas of work it can often be perceived that there is “no new blood” coming in. Staff may have been in jobs for a long time and need to be reminded of how things are changing and to update their skills, which some staff are reported to be reluctant to do. As one interviewee from the LAIS area of work commented:

“We tend to retain staff for long periods, turnover is pretty low, people get stale and out of date and don’t like to retrain.” (LAIS employer)

- **The pace of change and new developments with technology and ICT** have created skills gaps within these areas. Some interviewees suggested that this is especially the case in vocational areas that do not necessarily major in IT skills, but where more technical skills are important – for example, social work, hairdressing and joinery. One HE interviewee commented that sometimes the University has not invested enough in technology. Whereas another HE interviewee commented that:

“Often our students are more at home with technology than our staff; HE is slow to embrace technology ... and this has been exacerbated by how fast it is moving.”

One work based learning employer commented that his organisation did not have many computers, networks or interactive white boards until recently and so staff have had to learn to use these and incorporate them as part of their teaching.

- **Lack of funding for CPD** was identified as a significant reason behind skills gaps whereby the necessary opportunities have not been in place for staff to develop their skills to respond to changing circumstances. As one interviewee commented:

“Funding is the problem ... and when it is being chopped and changed from one year to the next it is difficult to plan and arrange as training for these technical skills is expensive.”

LAIS employers reported that there has been a lack of a mandate for CPD for Libraries staff and similarly within conservation and preservation. According to one employer there has never been a proper commitment to training or developing in these areas in the last 10 years. A CLD employer reported that in tougher financial times, the training budget is the first to be cut. Whilst attempts are made to deliver training in-house, employers do not necessarily have dedicated training staff which means that trainers often carry out this work in addition to their regular workload.

- **Lack of relevant training within specific areas** – several interviewees from across all areas of work commented that often they were not able to find training provision that fully met their needs or offered enough specialism or job-specific training for what they needed. This highlights the need for truly demand led training provision. For example, one interviewee within CLD reported that:

“I don't think some of the training organisations are training people in the areas we are interested in. There is no practical or operational level training around. For example, within community development workers come out of degrees or training with a lot of theory but no practical experience - the training is either not provided or not practical enough”

- **Diversification of job roles** – some interviewees commented that job roles are now becoming more diverse and employees are required to have a wide range of skills and continually keep up-dating their skills. As one interviewee in particular commented:

“Jobs are so diverse these days and so much is required from an individual member of staff - you have to know so much to be occupationally competent, qualified, get on well with people, be a good all rounder - and not everyone can meet all these needs. There is also a requirement for you to be willing to update your skills and qualifications and not everyone has the willingness or the time to do this” (WBL interviewee)

- **Employment patterns** – it was commented upon by interviewees in Wales, particularly within FE Colleges and HE that often people from outside of Wales are applying for academic jobs, and that they often do not have the ability to speak Welsh.
- **Organisations and staff working in silos** – some interviewees across all areas suggested there was a need for greater collaboration between organisations and staff within organisations, rather than a high level of working in isolation. It is perceived that through sharing knowledge and experience some skills gaps can be addressed.
- **Staff turnover** – one interviewee within CLD in Wales reported that staff turnover can lead to skills gaps because it can take new staff up to a year to “acclimatise” and get up to speed with the specific working of the organisation.
- **Higher earning potential within industry or other sectors** – several interviewees, particularly within FE Colleges, commented that staff are able to secure higher wages in other sectors outside FE, meaning that Colleges are unable to attract workers with the relevant experience or skills. As one interviewee commented:

“For the vocational areas, obviously people get better money in industry”

- **Uniqueness of small organisations** – a work based learning interviewee reported that he works at a very specialised type of organisation, so unless applicants for jobs are from very similar organisations they are unlikely to have the skills needed. The relatively small size of

an organisation was also highlighted as a reason behind skills gaps by another interviewee in CLD. According to them:

“Small organisations are always looking for people with a broader range of skills and they expect people to develop but not everyone is able to do this. We have not been able to sufficiently invest enough in supporting people to learn and develop their skills and this can be an issue”

The key adverse impacts of skills shortages and gaps found through the research include:

- **Lower productivity** and lack of efficiency
- Inability of organisations **to react to new opportunities** and expand the business
- Lack of competitiveness or business-like approach which can result in **loss of market share**
- **Increased workload for existing staff**, which can lead to increased stress levels and decreased staff morale
- Organisations being **unable to develop and enhance services** as quickly as they would like or need to in order to respond to change
- **Reliance on contractors and agency staff**, which can provide a short-term solution which has significant cost implications
- Potential **damage to reputation** if the service an organisation aims to offer is compromised
- **Backlogs** in work – this was particularly mentioned by interviewees in LAIS where ongoing cataloguing can become backlogged
- **Organisations being unable to meet the demands of customers** – for example within FE Colleges and HE a shortage of lecturers may mean that it is not possible to deliver the range of courses demanded; and within Wales if there is a shortage of staff with language skills it means the organisation is unable to provide the service required within bi-lingual or Welsh speaking areas. It was reported that this can lead to lower levels of customer satisfaction
- **Organisations being unable to obtain funding** because they are lacking the necessary bid writing and negotiation skills. Within HE it was reported that skills shortages and gaps can have an impact upon the **Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)**, Research Excellence Framework (REF) and league tables
- Organisations being unable to offer a wide range of trips and activities, for example within the CLD sector, particularly youth work interviewees in particular reported this as being a result of staff vacancies – meaning users of the service were only provided with limited experiences
- **Limited scope for sharing knowledge and problem solving**. For example, as one HE interviewee commented:

“Due to the absence of staff with the specific skills we need, we are unable to think broadly enough to address the issues”

Actions to overcome skills gaps reported by professionals across the lifelong learning sector, included:

- **Identification of training needs** through staff appraisals, staff surveys and by management – as one FE College interviewee describes:

“We are an Investor in People organisation – we have annual performance reviews which focus on the skills that each individual needs to meet targets on our annual plan, and assess their competencies for their job. We talk to staff about their changing job role and any new competencies they may need. We find that often people will identify small areas in the role they’ve been asked to take on so in-house mentoring becomes important, building their confidence before seeking training”

- Provision of **training for staff** – this was reported to have many different forms, including internal training, on-the-job training, online training, mentoring schemes, and external training. Sources of external training include the Local Authority, private training suppliers, professional bodies, HE providers and FE College providers. Specific areas that interviewees identified that they have sent staff on training for included LSIS courses in leadership and management, IT, customer service, job-specific training from professional bodies, Prince2 project management training, leadership and communication training and Welsh language training in Wales.
- Internal **sharing of good practice** and lessons learnt from training courses attended
- Facilitation of **staff away days** to concentrate on skills development in relation to specific issues
- **Collaboration with other organisations** to share good practice and knowledge – for example a CLD interviewee in Wales reported that their organisation was working with a national IT centre at the local University to develop skills around the use of new technology
- **Secondments of staff** with the required skills from other organisations
- The appointment of **new staff** with the necessary skills

5. Anticipating what lies ahead

5.1 Critical success factors

Evidence from the research about anticipating what lies ahead, relates to the readiness or preparedness of the sector to adapt to changes. In this context, there are a number of characteristics or 'critical success factors' that will be important in ensuring future skills needs are responded to effectively. These include, increased:

- **flexibility and the need for the lifelong learning sector to become more responsive to the needs of the wider economy and its employers** – to be able to engage effectively with employers and respond to their demands through the provision of relevant services
- **use of ICT in learning and delivery** as the power of modern communication is harnessed
- **responsiveness and adaptability to policy changes and other skills drivers** - employers would benefit from additional support from Central and devolved Governments and stakeholder organisations, in terms of guidance indicating what specific new policies will mean for employers and how their practices will need to adapt
- **emphasis on individuals becoming managers of their own learning needs** and becoming proactive in completing training units to 'top up' their existing skills
- **development of transferable skills amongst employees.** Transferable skills can be described as skills that are learned and developed in one context and that are useful in another. As several employers commented, there are no-longer '*jobs for life*', instead people must be far more responsive to changing employment and economic patterns
- **short-term and part-time working**, including contract work and job-shares because of the increasing rate of change and employer requirements to respond flexibly. This will mean employers would potentially benefit from additional support in terms of workforce planning and HR practices. It may also be necessary to provide support for employees who find themselves having to convert from the stability of a secure full-time role to more uncertain or shorter-term roles
- **emphasis on professional qualifications amongst the lifelong learning sector workforce.** This will mean it is necessary to ensure that employers and employees are fully informed about which qualifications the workforce requires. It will also be important to ensure support is targeted to help alleviate the cost and time implications associated with ensuring staff have the necessary qualifications as well as relevant skills and experience
- **demand for the provision of courses outside of normal working hours**, and training for employees that is less academic and more industry focused, with a particular emphasis on competency based learning
- **emphasis on employers in the sector becoming more proactive**, rather than reactive

- **recognition of the contribution a diverse workforce can make** - in order to ensure employers make full use of the benefits of an increasingly diverse workforce; further support is required in terms of supporting employers to fully integrate equality and diversity policies and other initiatives such as the Disability Discrimination Act.

Although not mentioned to a great extent in the primary research, the TBR report refers to the possibility of a change of Government in 2010. Because policy is such a key driver of change and therefore skills needs, it is worth considering the future changes that might occur if there is a change of Governing Party at the next general election. In their Policy Green paper *Building Skills, Transforming Lives: A Training and Apprenticeships Revolution* (The Conservative Party, 2008), the Conservative Party set out various proposals including the expansion of work-focused apprenticeships, more community learning to improve skills and employability and supply side reforms to reduce the bureaucracy associated with further education.

5.2 Specific future skills

The specific future skills identified through the primary research are listed below. There is an important distinction however between future skills that are 'continual needs' and 'new needs'. Continual needs broadly mirror current skills needs, suggesting they are perceived as long term issues or those that are difficult to address. New needs are those that are more responsive to new and emerging issues. These are likely to be issues where training or skills development may not have previously existed.

Continual skills needs highlighted by interviewees include:

- Keeping pace with change in information technology and the digital world
- Engaging with communities, especially disadvantaged groups and those who are excluded or marginalised, which will require a specific skills set in terms of accessing and engaging these groups
- Employer engagement, especially within HE, FE and WBL where organisations are having to become more responsive to the needs and demands of employers
- Leadership and management skills to enable managers to inspire and lead their workforce through periods of change and uncertainty, including, for example, changing job roles, changing work patterns, re-organisation and re-structuring
- Key skills – defined as the skills that are commonly needed for success in a range of activities in education and training, and work and life in general - for example, the application of number, communication, information and communication technology, problem solving and working with others – and skills in literacy and numeracy
- Customer service skills, in particular as organisations are expected to respond far more to the demands of learners or customers in providing a quality service
- Skills combinations, particularly within FE, HE and WBL including a combination of industry and subject specific knowledge and experience

Future skills needs that are responsive to new and emerging issues include:

- Skills needs relating to policy analysis, especially amongst managers – for example, being able to understand the shifting policy context and anticipate, plan for, and respond to the implications of the policy changes for organisations
- Greater emphasis on bid writing and negotiation skills to enable organisations to compete for diminishing funding sources and negotiate to maintain or extend their current funding streams, especially within the current economic climate
- Skills related to innovation and entrepreneurship to ensure new business development, particularly in global markets
- The continued support within areas of high unemployment for tutors within CLD, FE Colleges, and work based learning to support those looking for work to develop employability skills, for example self-management, team working, business and customer awareness, problem solving, communication and literacy, the application of numeracy, and the application of information technology
- The development of skills to enable research, innovation and product development, such as training and awareness raising, will be needed to address prominent issues such as climate change and sustainability. The Skills for Growth report, produced by Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (November 2009) sets out plans in which Colleges will be required to improve and expand courses in areas where there is a demand for trained technicians such as green technologies
- Increasing demands for skills related to budget planning and financial management to ensure organisations can cope with and adapt to more complex funding procedures and streams
- Increasing demands for problem solving skills and creativity to ensure organisations are able to keep pace with changing skills and policy drivers
- Skills related to the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF) reforms including understanding the size and level of qualifications, developing more flexible training programmes for learners and tracking learner achievement through the use of a unique learner number (ULN) and an individual's electronic learner record
- Skills development in the areas of marketing, PR and advocacy to ensure that organisations remain competitive, reach wider markets and secure new business through skills development in the areas of marketing, PR and advocacy.

The evidence suggests that skills drivers influence future, as well as current, skills needs, for example, skills needs in relation to policy, economic conditions, technological change and consumer demand are cited as future skills needs. The consideration of future skills needs has important implications for employers in terms of addressing the current skills shortages and gaps within the increasingly pressured circumstances brought about by the economic downturn, whilst retaining a long-term vision and preparing the workforce for the future.

5.3 Collaboration and partnership working

There is an increasing requirement that individual lifelong learning employers work with others across the sector, through partnerships and collaboration. Employers interviewed from CLD, HE, LAIS and work based learning reported that their organisations are already involved in partnership working with other organisations or local providers. A more mixed response was reported by interviewees in FE Colleges – although there were examples of partnership working between FE providers within the devolved nations, this remains a more substantial challenge in England.

Community Learning and Development – employers from CLD all reported that their organisations were heavily involved in partnerships with a range of different organisations, including: other local services; local FE and HE providers; other community development organisations; Local Authorities and other councils, and the voluntary sector. Several employers commented that partnership working was an, “in-built part of their ethos” and specific examples of partnerships were given in relation to the delivery of training, bidding for tenders and funding, and enabling organisations to draw on a wide range of skills from different areas of work.

In terms of skills gaps within this area, it was reported that it can take time to develop relationships with other organisations and become familiar with their ways of working and practices. As one CLD interviewee in England reported:

“There are Government expectations for us to integrate with other services for young people, so for example we brought Connexions in-house. But there is pressure to do more of that. We do have a lot of collaboration with other services but the Government want us to have even more. This does have some impact on skills. It does take time to make more robust relationships with other organisations”.

There were many other examples of collaborative working in the smaller nations – Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales - where a major advantage comes from the smaller size of the population in these nations and the smaller number of bodies to bring around the table.

Further education - Interviewees within FE Colleges reported a more mixed response to partnership working. Although the majority of interviewees agreed it would become more important in the future, the degree of partnership working and collaboration currently occurring was varied and appeared lower in England. For example, one interviewee identified it as a particular skills need, reporting that:

“With our teaching and learning mentors it is difficult to work across organisations because they are there to teach and have not had to work at that level in partnership before. We have made limited progress because we are not well equipped”

Another interviewee suggested that due to the uncertainty brought about by the current economic climate, employers are unwilling or unable to invest in partnership working because they are not sure what is going to happen. Whilst this is maybe not a specific skills need it is an important issue in relation to promoting partnership working.

There were however, some positive examples. Interviewees from FE Colleges within Scotland and Northern Ireland reported that they have been working in partnerships with other Colleges in their nations for a number of years and are well experienced at it. As one interviewee in Scotland explained that:

“Because the College sector in Scotland is small, all Colleges have been collaborating for a significant number of years, including for example with specialist Colleges and other Colleges in the same geographical areas to share resources and skills”

An interviewee in Wales also mentioned that FE Colleges were good at collaboration and this was because there is limited competition between Colleges, something which may not necessarily be the case in England. However there were also some positive examples coming from England, with the following interviewees reporting that:

“We are making good progress - there is a lot of activity with diplomas with schools in the area. We have an Employer Responsive team; they set up partnerships with local businesses. We also work in partnership with LAs and trusts” (FE College employer, England)

“We are making progress. We have partnerships with other Colleges doing things together in terms of development, for example joint governor training, sending our teachers to another College to be trained, joint training events with other schools, Colleges and sixth forms on for example, A level updates.”

In terms of the necessary skills required, it was reported that negotiation skills are vital in terms of being able to deal with people from different areas of work, sometimes with different priorities. Throughout interviews, interviewees referred to the need for good leadership and management skills to drive and inspire partnership working.

Higher education - Within the HE sector numerous examples were provided by interviewees of collaboration working, including collaboration amongst the Russell Group Universities, collaborations with FE in Scotland and Northern Ireland, collaborations with other universities in relation to research projects, collaborations with professional bodies for training.

Knowledge can also be transferred directly between higher education institutions and business and industry. For example, a new initiative called Interface was set up in Scotland in 2005 to help facilitate direct links between business and universities. Interface was created as a central access point to help business and industry make the best use of Scotland’s university research base by increasing the knowledge exchange links between them. Interface matches the expertise, knowledge, skills and facilities that exist within twenty of Scotland’s universities to business needs, particularly those of SMEs, on a no-fee basis. Although Interface’s focus is primarily Scottish, 15 per cent of enquiries have come from south of the border, and a further five per cent have come from mainland Europe.

Libraries, archives and information services - Interviewees within the LAIS area of work were also able to provide examples of partnership working and reported that they felt progress is being made. One interviewee described several initiatives his organisation has been involved in over the last few years, for example partnerships and other close links with Adult Education organisations.

Another interviewee suggested that her organisation was moving towards a closer partnership between the cultural service block including the arts, museums, libraries and records. One interviewee described partnerships with charity organisations that deliver training. Skills gaps that were highlighted by one interviewee in relation to collaborative working included contract management, networking, and negotiation skills.

Work Based Learning - WBL interviewees in England reported that they tend to establish partnerships with other private organisations rather than Colleges, as the following interviewees described:

“We have good partnerships and networking skills and collaborate with other agencies. Some of the Colleges find this difficult, they find it easier to subcontract rather than work in partnership.”

“We haven't got involved because FE/HE do not know what they are doing. We do network with private providers”.

It was emphasised by interviewees that it is important when working in partnership to draw on the strengths of the organisations and individuals involved. For example, one work based learning provider in Northern Ireland reported that they were working with a local College to help them work with ‘hard to reach’ learners. The partnership had specifically been formed because the work based learning provider had staff who were better at engaging with this group.

Several work based learning interviewees in Wales reported that their organisation is working in partnership and collaboration with the National Training Federation for Wales.

For work based learning interviewees partnerships were likely to be more appropriate or successful when working with non-competitors, even if they are located some distance away.

5.4 Adapting to change

A positive finding of the primary research is the confidence sector stakeholders and employers had in the sector’s ability to adapt to change. Despite the reference to changing political, economic and cultural contexts, it was reported by interviewees that on the whole their organisations are generally responsive to the need to change and adapt in order to ensure continued survival, although further or continued improvement is needed.

The need for flexibility and adaptability was cited as important in ensuring that change is responded to effectively. The need for good management and leadership and a willingness to consult with, and receive feedback from, staff was also suggested to be important. In addition, interviewees commented that training and workforce development were important in terms of ensuring staff are equipped and prepared to deal with change.

Several interviewees from small organisations within CLD and work based learning reported that they found it easier to adapt to change because of their size, which enabled them to remain ‘fleet footed and nimble’. In contrast a HE interviewee reported that it took longer for her organisation to adapt to change because its size and scale proved a hindrance, given also that there was a responsibility to protect the ‘brand’ of the organisation.

Specific examples of change that were provided within FE Colleges in both Wales and Northern Ireland included College mergers linked with policy initiatives (as outlined in Chapter 3.1), which interviewees reported had at times been a difficult and painful process that they have come through in a positive way. It was also highlighted by some interviewees in FE Colleges that, although they are working well to adapt to change, they still need to be more responsive to the needs of employers. Within the LAIS area of work, interviewees reported that they had coped with and adapted to changes in regulation in relation to the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts through establishing networks with other libraries or archives to share good practice and experience.

It was noted by some interviewees however that at times change can be complex and difficult to implement, especially amongst staff who have been in their roles for a long time and were perceived to be more resistant to change. This was a particular issue raised amongst interviewees in the LAIS area of work. An interviewee in CLD in Northern Ireland also felt that the youth service does not adapt well to change or the unknown.

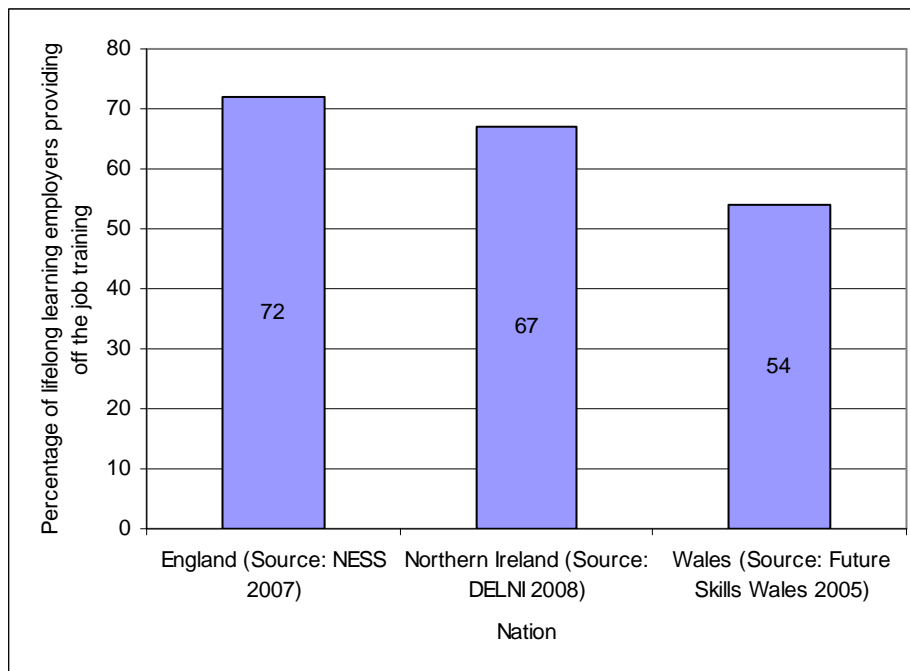
6. Training and workforce development

6.1 Training provision

This Chapter presents key findings based on information relating to training provided by employers in the lifelong learning sector for their staff. The information presented draws on data from the employer skills survey in each of the four nations and primary research with employers in the lifelong learning sector.

Figure 5 displays the percentage of lifelong learning employers that provide off the job training in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. England (72 per cent) and Northern Ireland (67 per cent) employers were more likely to provide off the job training than lifelong learning employers in Wales, although caution should be exercised because of the range in sources and sample sizes.

Figure 5: Bar Chart to show percentage of lifelong learning employers providing off the job training



Note: Data is not available for off-the-job training in Scotland; however according to data obtained by Future Skills Scotland approximately 80 per cent of lifelong learning employers do provide some training. Evidence base figures are not available for Scotland or Wales, although the lifelong learning samples within the Employer Skills Survey in England and the Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey were 2,385 and 158 respectively.

The majority (79 per cent) of employers involved in the primary research reported that their organisation has a training plan. However, more employers in CLD and FE Colleges reported that training plans are in place compared with fewer in LAIS. The majority of employers also reported that their training budgets had remained the same since the end of the last financial year (2008-2009). The minority that reported increases said that these were due to investment in leadership, more expensive training courses, increased Government funding or a response to an expanding workforce. Those that report decreases in training budgets attributed these mainly to the current economic climate.

Employers reported that, for all levels of staff, the greatest amount of accredited training is supplied through formal in-house training, HE providers; commercial work based learning suppliers and professional bodies. For all levels of staff, non-accredited training is supplied through formal in-house training, informal 'learning on the job' and commercial work based learning suppliers.

Research in the career guidance area of work found that, where training is taken up, the most common form is the S/NVQ in Advice and Guidance. This is followed by industry accredited training and post-graduate level training. There is also extensive use of non-accredited training in career guidance throughout the UK. This is seen as a particularly important method of 'topping up' or refreshing the skills of practitioners.

6.2 Barriers to training

The National Employer Skills Survey in England, 2007 (Learning and Skills Council 2008) found that the barriers that prevented further training (within the group of establishments who did provide training in the 12 months prior to the survey), mainly reflect internal issues to be addressed within the establishment, rather than any lack on the part of learning providers from whom training was sourced. 61 per cent of lifelong learning establishments stated that more training would have been too costly in financial terms and 45 per cent reported that they could not spare the time involved in staff being away on training. A lack of funds for training, or that training was too expensive, was more frequently reported by charity or voluntary sector organisations, and less often by establishments seeking a profit. Not being able to spare more staff time was reported frequently by central Government financed bodies, and less often by establishments seeking a profit.

These barriers were confirmed through research with employers from across the UK. A number of employers took this opportunity to emphasise their commitment to training and the motivation of staff to engage in CPD in order to enhance their skills and qualifications. However, the majority of employers did cite financial constraints and a lack of time to release staff as significant barriers to providing more training. This was particularly mentioned as an issue by smaller organisations, who often find it impossible to provide staff cover for when others are attending training.

There were some additional barriers mentioned by employers, which prevented them from enabling staff to access training provision, or limited the amount and type of training they could access. Key responses included:

- **The length of training courses** – it was indicated by some interviewees that the length of training courses, for example one day or one evening a week over a period of weeks or months, possibly even a year, can be a big commitment for people with busy work and life schedules
- **The lack of mandatory training** – this was highlighted by one CLD employer in Northern Ireland who said that, unlike social work and other professions, there is no mandatory training for youth work
- **Location of training** – several employers from across all nations emphasised that at times the distance and cost of travel needed to attend training sessions was prohibitive. This was

particularly the case for organisations within rural areas or those some distance away from major cities such as London and Manchester.

- **Personal barriers** – several employers from across all areas of work commented that in some instances, it is difficult for people to admit that they need training within a specific topic area. Some interviewees gave the example of IT, especially amongst older members of staff who may not like admitting they need help in this area. Another employer in a FE College in Wales reported that there can be a:

“lack of understanding by SMT [Senior Management Team] and people who have been practitioners for a long time who perceive that they do not need training. But the question is – do they have 20 years of experience or 1 year of experience repeated 20 times?”

- **Gaps in provision** – several employers reported that they had been unable to find the necessary training they required. For example an interviewee from a FE College in England reported that she had been unable to find training related to legislation and an interviewee in England also reported a gap in provision:

“Our county records manager identified a training need but nothing was available for them – the need related to carrying out analysis of our business processes and how records need to be maintained”

Research with employers found that due to these barriers, and particularly within the current economic climate, employers have to become more innovative and creative with their training practices. This was also found to be the case by the Institute of Directors (IOD) who surveyed its members in November 2008, to gain an insight into how organisations had been affected by the early stages of the economic downturn. In April and May, the IOD conducted a further survey to provide a six-month update of findings. The survey found that investment in training held up well under the economic pressure, nonetheless some organisations had no alternative but to trim their training budget (IOD, 2009).

Furthermore, the economic downturn is prompting many organisations to re-assess the type of training offered – with nearly half prioritising ‘essential training’ (i.e. short courses to meet immediate business needs) over ‘investment training’ (focused on meeting longer term strategic aims, for example through degrees and professional qualifications). The study also found that the financial pressures of the economic downturn have forced many organisations to adapt creatively when balancing their strategic focus on skills against the requirement for increased efficiency. Examples of new approaches include taking training in-house, using experienced staff to train others, sharing training with companies in a bartering system, encouraging the ‘cascade’ of learning amongst employees and increased use of online training courses.

Research with employers also found a series of innovative solutions to address barriers to training, many of which mirror those found in the IOD survey, including:

- Reviewing and prioritising training needs to identify training which is essential and desirable
- Greater use of e-learning including for sharing good practice

- Providing more in-house training, although it was commented on that this can place increasing pressure on those with responsibility for training, especially if they are carrying out other roles as well
- Encouraging and promoting the use of peer review between staff, shadowing techniques and sharing of effective practice
- Setting up partnership arrangements with other organisations, for example collaboration with FE, HE and work based learning providers, to deliver training or take advantage of economies of scale when purchasing training for larger groups rather than individuals

6.3 Equalities barriers

There are several training and skills related matters which are affected by equality and diversity issues. In order that lifelong learning is equally accessible to a diverse population, it is important that providers and relevant staff have an understanding of the needs of all learners. Several interviewees, predominantly based in HE and FE Colleges, referred to mandatory equality and diversity training for their staff. The level of equality and diversity awareness that providers demonstrate has a key impact on the quality of service that they are able to deliver to those who experience barriers, such as those with dyspraxia or those whose first language is not English.

In addition, given the changes in the profile of the workforce, there is a need to recognise: the contribution an increasingly diverse workforce can make; the additional support that staff may need in attending training, the emphasis that needs to be placed on inclusive training and the recognition of the capabilities of those from marginalised groups when it comes to training opportunities related to career progression. Several recent research reports highlight that some groups are still marginalised within the workforce. For example, The Equality Challenge Unit's 2009 report 'The experience of black and minority ethnic staff working in higher education' cited the Wright et al., 2007, finding that 'BME staff report negative assumptions being made about their abilities, assumptions which they feel are influenced by their ethnicity.' This could have implications for the type of access that various groups have to training as part of CPD in certain circumstances.

In addition the 2008 NIACE publication 'From Compliance to Culture Change: disabled staff working in lifelong learning - Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning' identified several barriers to disabled staff accessing training. This report pointed to the fact that ideal practice within training included 'reasonable adjustments' and 'anticipatory measures' to ensure that staff with disabilities had full access to training on offer. It was recognised that this approach was available in many cases; however there were still examples where the approach was absent. A significant barrier suggested by this report was the stigma that some disabled staff felt that they would experience by disclosing their disability. Without a full understanding of the barriers that disabled staff face, there is a limit to the level of skills with which employers are able to equip those staff, potentially putting them at a relative disadvantage. The report goes on to suggest that good leadership, sensitive management and the 'anticipation of requirements of disabled staff, including providing 'reasonable adjustments' for individuals' will serve to ensure not just that training is accessible but that disabled staff can feel confident to ask for essential support.

The issue of access has implications for skills in relation to equality and diversity. There is a need to equip staff with a broad enough understanding of the barriers faced by marginalised groups to take account of these in delivery of learning. Skills are also needed to be able to create an

environment where disabled staff feel comfortable to ask for necessary support during training. There also needs to be an emphasis on the adequate recognition of the abilities of BME staff so that appropriate training is identified and offered which enables them to progress. A failure to acknowledge the key issues relating to equality and diversity could result in groups of the workforce missing out or not being able to make full use of the training which they need to deliver effective learning.

6.4 Training modes

Sector stakeholders and employers both reported a series of 'modes' of training that they felt needed to be more widely available in the sector. Amongst the majority of stakeholders there was agreement that there was a need for more flexible and bespoke CPD, for example more modularised CPD to enable employees to undertake 'bite-sized' learning or build towards an accredited programme.

Online learning was suggested by several stakeholders as something that could be more widely adopted, because it offers more flexibility and enables employees to complete training at a convenient time. Emphasis was also placed on ensuring that off the job training is relevant to the workplace and is of an industry recognised standard.

Providing further opportunities for tutors and lecturers from HE and FE to spend more time within their specific industry-related areas through work placements was also championed by stakeholders.

7. Conclusions

In this final Chapter, findings from each of the strands of this study, including the data and literature reviews and primary research with employers, stakeholders and career guidance practitioners, are considered in order to present some summary conclusions in relation to the research objectives.

As set out in Chapter one, the purpose of this research is to inform Lifelong learning UK's sector skills assessment through gathering up-to-date information about the current and future skills issues and requirements within the lifelong learning sector in relation to the four UK nations and five areas of work covered by Lifelong Learning UK. Evidence from across the interviews with stakeholders will be used to address the research objectives stated in the introduction which can be mapped under the following headings:

- Drivers of skills demand
- Current skills needs
- Future skills needs
- Training and workforce development

7.1 Drivers of skills demand

Skills demand is driven by a wide range of factors. According to the research, a significant driver of change is public policy and legislation, which may be cross sector or sector specific, UK wide or nation specific. Policies implemented by each nation's Government in relation to skills and education have an important impact in influencing skills needs and priorities across the lifelong learning sector within each nation, particularly in relation to: curriculum, working with children and young people, equality and diversity, funding, professionalisation of the workforce, quality, regulation and the changing provider infrastructure.

Other significant skills drivers identified through the research include economic conditions, in particular dealing with the impact of the current economic downturn, globalisation, including the need to interact with and enter global markets, technological change, especially the need to keep pace with new developments, demographics, including the ageing workforce and the need for succession planning, environmental issues and priorities and consumer demand, which may be related to the demands of employers, learners or clients seeking support through career guidance.

Drivers operate on a variety of scales, for example, local, regional, sub-national, national, UK, European and global scales, and in different timescales. Some are immediate, for example, lower apprenticeship recruitment levels in employers because of company reductions. Others take longer to filter through to local levels, especially where there is less of an immediate requirement to respond – for example the agenda associated with the low carbon industry. This may be because pressure on resources requires those in the lifelong learning sector to prioritise, which in turn has implications for the focus of national and local resources.

The impact of these skills drivers means that the lifelong learning sector will need to continue to become more adaptable, flexible and responsive to change. There is an increased demand for efficiencies and more effective working between stakeholders, employers and employees across the sector as a whole and within specific areas of work. This requires broader skills sets, including

collaboration and partnership working to share effective practice and take advantage of economies of scale.

7.2 Current skills needs

Skills gaps and shortages persist, although to varying extents, in the lifelong learning sector in relation to, amongst others technical, practical and job-specific skills, leadership and management, customer service, general and professional IT skills, team working and in Wales, Welsh language skills.

Additional skills gaps exist in relation to employer engagement, management and leadership, bid writing and negotiation, advocacy, awareness of equality and diversity, policy and funding knowledge and creativity and innovation.

The main reasons behind these skills gaps were reported to be a combination of internal and external pressures and the pace of change of policy and other skills drivers.

The findings from the research suggest that employers are looking for a combination of job-specific skills such as teaching with additional 'process' skills such as project management, management and leadership, and negotiation skills. This has significant implications in terms of employing subject specialists and developing their process skills. An alternative approach would be to provide training in subject specialisms for those with more generic process skills.

7.3 Anticipating what lies ahead

Several characteristics of future skills and employment modes were identified through the primary research including the need for flexibility and adaptability amongst employees, the need for more short-term, part-time and contract work, the need for more training courses to be provided outside of normal working hours and the need to become more industry and vocationally focused.

Other important future skills needs highlighted by interviewees include the continued need to keep pace with changes in technology, engage with communities and employers, have greater awareness of policy analysis and bid writing, become more innovative, develop leadership and management skills and develop numeracy and literacy skills.

There is an important distinction between future skills that are 'continual needs' – which broadly mirror current skills needs, suggesting they are perceived as long term issues or those difficult to address and 'new needs' or those that are arising from new and emerging issues.

The consideration of future skills needs has important implications for stakeholders and employers in the lifelong learning sector, in terms of addressing the current skills shortages and gaps within the increasingly pressured circumstances brought about by the economic downturn, whilst also retaining a long-term vision and preparing the workforce for the future.

A positive finding from the research is the confidence stakeholders and employers had in the sector's ability to adapt to change. Despite the reference to changing political, economic and

cultural contexts, it was reported by interviewees that in the main their organisations are generally responsive to the need to change and adapt in order to ensure continued survival.

7.4 Training and workforce development

The research has identified that a significant amount of training is occurring within the lifelong learning sector. Employers report accessing training from a wide range of sources including FE, HE, work based learning suppliers, Local Authorities and professional bodies. A significant amount of training is provided in-house, drawing on in-house formal training expertise or through involvement of non-training based staff in initiatives such as shadowing, peer observation, coaching and mentoring, and sharing effective practice. This reflects findings from other strands of the research where it was found that, during the current tighter financial times, employers rely far more on in-house training and other creative and innovative methods to encourage staff development.

As anticipated, barriers to providing training were reported amongst interviewees in relation to the lack of funds to support training and lack of time to release staff for training. Other barriers include the length of training courses, location of training, personal barriers and gaps in provision.

Collaboration with other organisations – either to share good practice or benefit from economies of scale through sending larger groups on training courses – was cited as an important method which organisations use to address their issues related to training. This highlights the importance of stakeholder organisations in terms of promoting and facilitating partnership working amongst organisations who are not already engaged in this.

8. Priorities for the lifelong learning sector

Action should be taken to address the skills needs identified within the lifelong learning sector. However, these 'priorities for action' will need to be re-visited and updated as part of an on-going process to identify, address and overcome skills needs. The research suggests the following priorities:

8.1 Key skills priorities

- Skills for managing change including keeping pace with emerging technologies, leadership and management of change, planning for and responding to the implications of policy changes for organisations, problem solving skills and creativity
- Skills in working with others including partnership and collaboration, engaging with communities, engaging with and understanding the needs and demands of employers - enabling the development of a more demand led lifelong learning sector, and customer service
- General business skills including project management, marketing, PR, advocacy, budget planning and financial management, skills relating to innovation and entrepreneurship, bid writing and negotiation skills
- Specific skills including basic, key or essential skills, skills combinations, technical, practical and job specific skills
- Teaching and learning related skills including skills in blended learning skills at supporting the employability of others, skills in sustainable development, innovation and education;, skills in teaching priority sector subjects, technician class skills and skills for embedding equality and diversity

8.2 Specific priorities

In certain geographical areas, occupations, and types of employer there are specific 'hotspots' of skills need which are noted in the main body of this report. These can be addressed with focused, time-limited actions to reduce the barriers that are holding back skills development.

8.3 Generic constraints

There are a number of generic issues which hold back skills development across the lifelong learning sector. In particular:

- Lack of resources for training and development activities including both funding and time
- Need to recognise training and development needs
- Rapid change and diversification of roles
- Need to prepare for an unknown future
- Some specific gaps in training and development provision
- The ageing workforce demographic

8.4 Recommendations

The impact of these issues can be addressed by creating a landscape in which the following approaches to skills development are facilitated, encouraged and valued:

- Increased collaboration and partnership working to share effective practice and take advantage of economies of scale
- Use of secondments, based on a sustainable Business Interchange model, to bring new skills into an organisation and enable staff to develop skills in new roles
- Further quality improvement in identification of staff training and development needs – National Occupational Standards can be useful here
- Increased provision of in house staff training where possible
- Focus on continuing professional development to keep pace with change and respond to the diversification of roles
- Development of transferable skill sets
- Embedding of equality and diversity into working policy and practice – a diverse workforce will ensure that the sector takes full advantage of a wide range of skills and abilities
- Development of short courses, bite sized training and on-line access to learning
- Organisations may need to improve the opportunity for staff to develop leading edge ICT practice

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Appendix 1: Stakeholder interview schedule

The Learning Skills Network (LSN) is an independent not for profit agency that works to undertake research and development activity in the post-16 education sector. As you may be aware, we are currently carrying out research to enable Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) to update their sector skills assessment for the post-16 education sector. The research aims to gather information to provide a comprehensive overview of skills and requirements in Lifelong Learning UK's constituency areas and across the four UK nations. Specifically the research is intended to gather up-to-date information about the drivers of skills demand, current and future skills needs and current and planned training provision.

There are a number of strands to the research, including consultations with stakeholders and employers in the sector. We are carrying out this particular interview to gather information and insight about your current and future skills needs, gaps in skills and potential impacts on your business.

Background *(please complete before the interview)*

1. Name of organisation
2. Please provide information about the coverage and remit of your organisation in relation to the post-16 educational sector. *(Probe regional and national locations of business)*
 - UK wide
 - England
 - Wales
 - Scotland
 - Northern Ireland
3. Which Lifelong Learning UK constituency area(s) is(are) your organisation located within:
 - Community learning and development (CLD)
 - Further education (FE)
 - Higher education (HE)
 - Libraries, archives and information services (LAIS)
 - Work based learning (WBL)?
4. Could you start by confirming your job title and explaining a bit about your roles and responsibilities?

Current and future skills requirements

5. In your opinion, what are the current skills requirements in the post 16 education sector?*(probe according to constituency area and occupational area and job role):*
 - *Community learning and development (CLD) – especially youth work*
 - *Further education (FE)*
 - *Higher education (HE)*
 - *Libraries, archives and information services (LAIS)*
 - *Work based learning (WBL)*

6. What do you perceive to be the main skills gaps and shortages within the sector? (*probe according to constituency area and occupational area/job role*)
7. Why do you think these skills gaps and shortages arise? *Please specify examples in occupational areas?*
8. What are the impacts of these skills gaps and shortages? (*For example are skills deficiencies contributing to any difficulties? If so, how is this influencing the performance and competitiveness of the sector?*)
9. Can you suggest ways to address these shortages?
10. In what ways, if any, do you think the current skills requirements in the sector will change in the future? For example. What do you think will be the future skills drivers? (*Probe according to constituency area and occupational area/job role*)
11. Why do you say this?
12. What type of skills do you think will be required in the post 16 education sector in the future?
13. (*Probe according to constituency area and occupational area/job type*)
14. What do you think the impact of these changes will be:
 - For the current workforce
 - For employers
 - For stakeholder organisations?
15. How do you think the sector will be able to adapt to these changes? Is it prepared or taking steps to address these issues now? (*Probe for specific examples?*)
16. What needs to be done to ensure the sector is able to adapt to these changes?
17. How is the sector responding to these changes?

Priorities for the post-16 education sector workforce

18. What do you think the current priorities for the following groups should be (probe by constituency area):
 - Employees in the post-16 education workforce
 - Employers in the post-16 education sector
 - Stakeholder organisations?
19. Is it possible to differentiate these by Nation (that is England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) or English regions? Is it possible to identify where particular skills needs and gaps are most manifest?

20. What do you think the future priorities for the following groups should be (probe by constituency area)

- Employees in the post-16 education workforce
- Employers in the post-16 education sector
- Stakeholder organisations?

21. Is it possible to differentiate these by Nation (that is. England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) or English regions? Is it possible to identify. where particular skills needs and gaps are most manifest?

The availability of training provision

22. What do you understand to be the current training needs within the sector? (*probe according to constituency and occupation*)

23. How well do you feel these needs are met by the current training provision on offer by employers to their staff? (*probe according to constituency and occupation*)

24. What types of training do you feel the sector needs to provide more or less of? [*For example qualifications, skills development, accredited, non-accredited training, on the job training, off the job training*]

25. What do you anticipate the future training needs will be within the sector? (*probe according to constituency and occupation*)

26. In what ways can these training needs be met?

Skills drivers

27. In your opinion, what drives change and the demand for skills in the post-16 education sector? For example policy, regulation, technology, change in consumption patterns, globalisation, economic climate.

28. What do you perceive to be the main impacts of these change drivers across the post-16 education sector?

29. How does the sector define success, competitiveness and good performance?

30. How would you describe the current and recent performance and competitive position of the sector?

31. What factors are driving this performance and position?

32. How would you describe the current economic structure and condition of the sector?

33. What market and regulatory pressures are employers facing?

34. What are the skills implications of this position?

Recommendations

35. Can you make any suggestions about how the current and future skills priorities within the post-16 education sector should best be tackled?
36. Many thanks for your time, is there anything else you would like to add in relation to the skills priorities or the sector skills assessment for the post-16 education sector?
37. Finally, we would like to invite you to provide some feedback about the findings from our research. We will email you a 2 page summary for your comment. Would you be available in October and interested in providing feedback to the project team?

Many thanks for your time.

Appendix 2: Email inviting stakeholders to participate in the research

Dear [named contact]

Lifelong Learning UK's (LLUK's) Sector Skills Assessment update

I believe someone from LLUK has been in touch with you about our research to update their sector skills assessment for the post-16 education sector.

As you may be aware, LSN has been commissioned by LLUK to update the current evidence base to inform their sector skills assessment. This involves investigating the drivers of skills demand; current skills gaps and shortages; future skills needs; and the availability of training provision.

The research involves gathering information from across the four UK nations and five of LLUK's work areas, including:

- Community Learning and Development (CLD)
- Higher Education (HE)
- Further Education (FE)
- Libraries, Archives and Information Services (LAIS)
- Work Based Learning (WBL)

There are a number of strands to this research, including interviews with stakeholders and employers.

You have been identified as a key stakeholder in the sector and we would very much like to speak to you as part of our current round of telephone interviews. The interview will take roughly 30 minutes and involve a series of questions to explore your opinion and perspective about the following issues:

- skills drivers
- current and future skills requirements
- priorities for the workforce
- the availability of training provision
- recommendations

Any information you provide will remain anonymous.

I'd be grateful if you could confirm whether you would be happy to take part in a telephone interview, and, if so, to let us know when might be a convenient time; either by return email or by calling Norma Brown on 020 7492 5184 or Katherine Jones on 020 7492 5295 at LSN. Katherine will also be more than happy to answer any other queries you have relating to the research. LSN is a not-for-profit organisation committed to making a difference in the education and skills sector.

Kind regards

Katherine

Dr Katherine Jones
Researcher – Evaluation and Skills
Learning and Skills Network

Norma Brown
Project Officer – Evaluation and Skills
Learning and Skills Network

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Appendix 3: Employer interview schedule

Alternative employer interview schedule

For

England (except Archives and Record Management; WBL and Youth Work)

The Learning Skills Network (LSN) is an independent not for profit agency that works to undertake research and development activity in the post-16 education sector. As you may be aware, we are currently carrying out research to enable Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) (*the independent, employer-led sector skills council responsible for the professional development of staff working in the post-16 education sector*) to update their sector skills assessment. The research aims to gather information to provide a comprehensive overview of skills and requirements in LLUK's constituency areas and across the four UK nations. Specifically the research is intended to gather up-to-date information about the drivers of skills demand, current and future skills needs and current and planned training provision.

There are a number of strands to the research, including consultations with stakeholders and employers in the sector. We are carrying out this particular interview to gather information and insight into your current and future skills needs, gaps in skills and associated impacts on your business.

All information provided will remain confidential and anonymous and will be used solely for research purposes as part of LLUK's sector skills assessment. This interview is not being recorded but the interviewer will be taking notes throughout.

Notes to interviewers:

*To help with the various lists the interviewee will be sent a topic guide and a prompt card with a list of occupations, qualifications and definitions of skill groups. Please ensure the **respondent** has this before the interview.*

*LLUK require greater emphasis on the FE sector (define this as: ACL, WBL and FE colleges) in England. **Please can you endeavour to capture as much information about this sector in England as possible***

Name of interviewer:

Name of interviewee:

Employer information *[complete as many questions as possible in this section before the interview]*

1. Name of employer
2. In which English region(s) is your organisation based? (*Probe to capture all regions?*)
 - South East
 - South West
 - North East
 - North West
 - East Midlands

- West Midlands
 - East of England
 - London
 - Yorkshire and Humberside
3. How would you define the geographical area(s) in which your organisation is based?(*probe urban, rural area or urban/rural mix*)
4. Which of the areas of work best covers your organisation?
- Community learning and development (CLD)
 - Further education (FE)
 - Higher education (HE)
 - Libraries, archives and information services (LAIS): or
 - Work based learning (WBL)
5. If community learning and development, which area?
- Community based adult learning
 - Community development
 - Community education
 - Family learning
 - Working with parents
 - Youth work
 - Development education: or
 - Other (please specify)
6. *Using the response(s) from question 5 use the table below to probe the interviewee*
What type of organisation do you work in?

| CLD | FE | HE | LAIS | WBL |
|--|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Local government service | General further education college | University | Govt library and information service | Public sector work based training provider |
| Voluntary organisation | Specialist further education college | University college | National govt archive | Private work based training provider |
| Charity | Sixth form college | Other higher education institution | Education library | Not for profit work based training provider |
| Community organisation | Public sector work based training provider | Further education college | Local govt archive | Other (please specify) |
| Further education college | Private sector work based training provider | Other (please specify) | Health library | |
| Higher education institution | Not for profit work based training provider | | Business archive | |
| Archive library or information service | Other (please specify) | | Industrial or commercial library | |
| Public sector work based training provider | | | Charity archive | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Private sector work based training provider | | | Information service | |
| Not-for-profit work based training provider | | | Specialist repository | |
| Other (please specify) | | | Prison library | |
| | | | Film, sound or specialist media archive | |
| | | | Public library | |
| | | | Rare books or special collections library | |
| | | | School library | |
| | | | Records management service | |
| | | | Other (please specify) | |

7. What is your job title?
8. How many paid employees work in your organisation *[Try to obtain actual figure if possible, if not use the bands shown below]*:
- Actual figure:
 - Less than 10
 - Between 10 -49
 - Between 50 – 249: or
 - 250 and above
9. Approximately how many volunteers work in your organisation? *[As a figure]*
10. Can I check if you are aware of Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and their role in the sector?
- Yes
 - No: or
 - Comment:

FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FOR **ALL STAFF** (PAID AND VOLUNTEERS)

Current hard to fill vacancies and skills shortages

Hard to fill vacancies: vacancies described by employers as being particularly difficult to fill. Reasons often include skills related issues, but may simply involve such aspects as the employer being based in a remote location, poor pay or terms and conditions of employment

Skills shortage vacancies: are those hard-to-fill vacancies which result from a lack of applicants with the required skills, work experience or qualifications.

11. Research as part of the National Employer Skills Survey in 2007 identified that the lifelong learning sector was experiencing **hard to fill vacancies**. Is this the case for your organisation and, if so, would you say the number of hard-to-fill vacancies has increased, decreased or stayed the same since 2007?

Current skills shortages

12. The National Employer Skills Survey (2007) also identified a series of **skills shortages** amongst applicants. For each skill – can you confirm whether it presents a challenge for your organisation when recruiting and provide some detail about the actual nature of the skills shortages and occupations most affected?

| Skill shortage | Challenge or problem when recruiting? (y/n) | Specific examples – <i>obtain as much info as practical about the actual nature of the skill shortage</i> | Occupations most affected |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| Technical, practical or job-specific | | | |
| Problem solving | | | |
| General IT skills | | | |
| IT professional skills | | | |
| Numeracy | | | |
| Literacy | | | |
| Foreign language | | | |

13. Are there any additional skills shortages you are currently experiencing in your organisation, and which occupations do these most effect?
14. What are the main impacts, or what does it actually mean for you having these vacancies un-filled within your organisation? *E.g. lose business to competitors; delay developing new services; difficulties meeting quality standards; increased workload for other staff etc* (**only a short answer required**)
15. What actions has your organisation carried out to overcome skills shortage vacancies? *E.g. increasing advertising/recruitment spend, using new recruitment methods/channels, increasing the training given to the existing workforce to fill the vacancies* (**only a short answer required**)

Current skills gaps

Skills gaps: occur in cases when employers believe their staff are not fully proficient in their job

16. The National Employer Skills Survey (2007) identified a series of **skills gaps** amongst the existing workforce. For each skill – can you confirm whether it still presents a challenge amongst current employees and provide some detail about the nature of the gaps and occupations most affected?

| Skill gaps | Still / actually an issue | Specific examples – obtain as much info as practical | Occupations most affected |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Technical, practical or job-specific | | | |
| Management skills | | | |
| Customer service | | | |
| General IT user | | | |
| Team working | | | |

17. Are there any additional skills gaps you are currently experiencing in your organisation and which occupations do these most effect?
18. What do you perceive to be the reasons behind these skills gaps within your organisation? **(only short answer is needed)**
19. What are the main impacts for your organisation in having these skills gaps? **(only short answer is needed)**
20. How is your organisation working to address these skills gaps? **(only short answer is needed)**
21. What support do you feel you need to overcome these skills gaps? **(only short answer is needed)**

Training and workforce development

22. Does your organisation have a training plan that specifies the level and type of training employees will need in the coming year?
23. Does your organisation have 'Investor in People' status?
24. Who provides the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities for existing staff in your organisation?

Interviewer – tick as many boxes that apply

| Occupation categories | Accredited | | | | | | | | Non-accredited | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----|----|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|----|----|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------|
| | Formal in-house training | FE | HE | Private training supplier | Voluntary training supplier | Local Authority services | Informal learning on the job | Other | Formal in-house training | FE | HE | Private training supplier | Voluntary training supplier | Local Authority services | Informal learning on the job | Other |
| Managers and related role | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching staff and related roles | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Support roles | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

25. Please give examples of 'other' types of training provision, if applicable

26. Broadly speaking, what percentage of staff within your organisation have received training in the last 12 months that has been funded or arranged by your organisation? (**Obtain specific % if possible, if not use bands**)

- Actual %
- None
- Up to 20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%: or
- 81-100%

27. What would you say are the main barriers preventing your organisation providing training, or more training? (**only short answer is required**)

PROBE:

- Lack of funds for training
- Organisations being unable to spare staff time for training
- Other

28. Can you suggest any possible solutions to overcome these barriers (**especially lack of funding and being unable to spare staff time**)?

29. Has your training budget increased, decreased or remained the same since end of the 2008/2009 financial year? What are the reasons for this? *[Check impact of recession]*

- Increased
- Decreased
- Remained the same

Reasons

.....

Drivers of skills demand

30. What impact has the recession had on your organisation in terms of current and future skills shortages and gaps, and training provision?

31. What are the current market and regulatory pressures on your organisation?

32. What factors influence which skills are needed within your area of work *(for example policy, the current economic climate, technology or globalisation)*

Future skills needs and ability of the sector to adapt to change

33. What do you think will be the most important changes in employment/skills needs for your organisation in the next 5-10 years?

[Probe for interviewers]

- *Professional qualifications will become more important*
- *Skills become more important than formal qualifications*
- *There is an increase in the levels of qualifications required for entry*
- *There is an increasing focus on recognising and accrediting prior experience*
- *Employers proactively invest in the skills development of their existing workforce*
- *Employees increasingly invest in their own skills development*
- *Employers increasingly recognise the role and contribution of a diverse workforce*
- *Employers increasingly meet their skills needs by employing staff from overseas*
- *Wages become more competitive*
- *Employers increasingly employ staff on short term contracts*
- *Employers offer short courses to existing workforce to meet demand*
- *Other- [please specify]*

34. There is an increasing requirement that individual (lifelong learning) employers work with others across the sector, for example through partnership or collaboration. What progress is your organisation making towards this aim? How well equipped is your organisation, in terms of the skills required, to participate in this area?

35. How well do you feel your organisation adapts to change? *(Probe internal changes or external changes e.g. recession).*

36. How have you adapted to change? *Probe for examples*

Cluster questions

The UK government has introduced 6 priority areas (or clusters). Given that your workforce is important in supplying training and skills to the UK workforce in the wider economy, we have a series of questions about the readiness of your organisation to support each of the cluster areas:

[Information for interviewer: the Digital Britain project was launched by the government in October 2008, seeking to harness digital technology and position the UK as a long-term leader in communications. The strategy included the provision of 100% broadband coverage of the UK by 2012, plans to maximise digital opportunities and plans to boost digital participation amongst the UK workforce and population].

37. How prepared is your organisation to provide training and learning to industry in support of the government's **Digital Britain initiative** (in other words, enabling the UK to become a leader in communications and digital technology and boosting digital participation amongst the UK workforce).

- Very
- Partially
- Not very
- Don't know

38. How is your organisation embracing the use of new and emerging technologies?

39. What support does your organisation require in embracing the use of new technologies? What are the implications of this?

40. Would you say that you broadly provide training / learning to any of these areas?

- **Low Carbon Industry:** the UK Low Carbon Industrial Strategy was launched in July 2009 with a core objective of ensuring that businesses and workers are equipped to maximise the economic opportunities and minimize the costs of the transition to a low carbon economy, for example from the rapidly developing civil nuclear industry and renewable energy sector.
- **Advanced Manufacturing:** describes businesses using a high level of design or scientific skills to produce technologically advanced products and processes. Because of the specialised requirements involved, these are usually goods and associated services of high value.
- Engineering and construction
- Professional and financial services – professional services are infrequent, technical, or unique functions performed by independent contractors or consultants.
- Life sciences and pharmaceuticals

(Note to interviewers: If yes for any, please continue to relevant questions below?)

41. How prepared is your organisation to provide training and / or learning to industry on **reducing carbon emissions:**

- Very
- Partially
- Not very: or
- Don't know?

42. What sort of impact is skills development in the low carbon industry likely to have on your workforce?

43. How prepared is your organisation to provide training and / or learning to the **Advanced Manufacturing** industry:
- Very
 - Partially
 - Not very
 - Don't know?
44. More specifically, in what ways is your organisation supporting **Advanced Manufacturing**?
For example, through new courses or new modes of delivery in FE and HE
45. What technological skills or support can you supply businesses with to help them enter new markets overseas?
46. What sort of impact is skills development in **Advanced Manufacturing** likely to have on your workforce?
47. How prepared is your organisation to provide training / learning to the **Engineering and Construction** industry:
- Very
 - Partially
 - Not very: or
 - Don't know?
48. More specifically, in what ways is your workforce assisting the engineering and construction industry to improve productivity and skills?
49. What sort of impact is skills development in engineering and construction likely to have on your workforce?
50. How prepared is your organisation to provide training and / or learning to the **Professional and Financial Services** sector:
- Very
 - Partially
 - Not very: or
 - Don't know?
51. More specifically, in what ways is your workforce helping to support and maintain UK global competitiveness in this area?
52. What impact is skills development in professional and financial services likely to have on your workforce?

53. How prepared is your organisation to provide training and / or learning to the **Life Sciences and Pharmaceuticals** industry:

- Very
- Partially
- Not very: or
- Don't know?

54. What sort of impact is skills development in the **Life Sciences and Pharmaceuticals** industry likely to have on your workforce?

Section 7: Recommendations

55. Can you offer any recommendations on how the current and future skills priorities within your organisation and the lifelong learning sector as a whole should best be tackled?

56. Is there anything else you would like to add in relation to skills priorities within the lifelong learning sector that you feel has not been covered already?

Thank you very much for your time

Alternative employer interview schedule

For:

Northern Ireland; Wales; Scotland – all areas of work

Archives and Record Management; Work based learning and Youth Work in England

The Learning Skills Network (LSN) is an independent not for profit agency that works to undertake research and development activity in the post-16 education sector. As you may be aware, we are currently carrying out research to enable Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) (*the independent employer-led sector skills council responsible for the professional development of staff working in the UK lifelong learning / post 16 education sector*) to update their sector skills assessment. The research aims to gather information to provide a comprehensive overview of skills and requirements in LLUK's constituency areas and across the four UK nations. Specifically the research is intended to gather up-to-date information about the drivers of skills demands, current and future skills needs, and current and planned training provision.

There are a number of strands to the research, including consultations with stakeholders and employers in the sector. We are carrying out this particular interview to gather information and insight into your current and future skills needs, gaps in skills and potential impacts on your business.

All information provided will remain confidential and anonymous and will be used solely for research purposes as part of LLUK's sector skills assessment.

This interview is not being recorded but the interviewer will be taking notes throughout.

Notes to interviewers:

*To help with the various lists the interviewee will be sent a topic guide and a prompt card with a list of occupations, qualifications and definitions of skill groups. Please ensure the **respondent** has this before the interview.*

*LLUK require greater emphasis on the FE sector (define this as: ACL, WBL and FE colleges) in England. Please **can you endeavour to capture as much info about this sector in England as possible?***

Name of interviewer:

Name of interviewee:

Employer information (*complete as many questions as possible in this section before the interview*)

57. Name of employer / organisation

58. In which nation are you based: (*probe for different national locations*)

- England
- Wales
- Scotland: or
- Northern Ireland?

59. *If England was selected*

In which English region(s) is your organisation based: (*probe for different regions*)

- South East
- South West
- North East
- North West
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- East of England
- London: or
- Yorkshire and Humberside?

60. How would you define the geographical area your organisation is based? (*probe for urban,, rural area, or urban/rural mix*)

61. Which of the following areas of work describes your organisation:

- Community learning and development (CLD)
- Further education (FE)
- Higher education (HE)
- Libraries, archives and information services (LAIS): or
- Work based learning (WBL)?

62. If community learning and development in Wales, Northern Ireland or England which area:

- Community based adult learning
- Community development
- Community education
- Family learning
- Working with parents
- Youth work
- Development education: or
- Other (please specify)?

63. If community learning and development in Scotland, which area

- Community learning / capacity building
- Adult learning: or
- Youth work?

64. *Using the response(s) from question 5 use the table below to probe the interviewee*

In what type of organisation do you work?

| CLD | FE | HE | LAIS | WBL |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Local government service | General further education college | University | Govt library and information service | Public sector work based training provider |
| Voluntary organisation | Specialist further education college | University college | National govt archive | Private work based training provider |
| Charity | Sixth form college | Other higher education institution | Education library | Not for profit work based training provider |

| Community organisation | Public sector work based training provider | Other (please specify) | Local govt archive | Other (please specify) |
|---|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Further education college | Private sector work based training provider | | Health library | |
| Higher education institution | Other (please specify) | | Business archive | |
| Archive library or information service | | | Industrial or commercial library | |
| Public sector work based training provider | | | Charity archive | |
| Private sector work based training provider | | | Information service | |
| Other (please specify) | | | Specialist repository | |
| | | | Prison library | |
| | | | Film, sound or specialist media archive | |
| | | | Public library | |
| | | | Rare books or special collections library | |
| | | | School library | |
| | | | Records management service | |
| | | | Other (please specify) | |

65. What is your job title?

66. How many paid employees work in your organisation? *(Try to get actual figure if possible, if not use bands)*

- Less than 10
- Between 10 -49
- Between 50 – 249
- 250 and above

67. Approximately how many volunteers work in your organisation?

68. Can I check, before participating in this research, were you aware of Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and their role in the sector?

- Yes
- No
- Comment

Employers in Wales only

69. What percentage of employees working in your organisation are Welsh speakers?

70. Is there a demand for your organisation to provide teaching or other related services through the medium of Welsh?

71. What percentage of employees is confident in providing teaching or other related services through the medium of Welsh?

72. How satisfied are you with the Welsh speaking skills of your existing staff:

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know: or
- Not relevant?

73. Can you please explain your answer and its impacts?

Current hard to fill vacancies and skills shortages

Hard to fill vacancies: vacancies described by employers as being particularly difficult to fill. Reasons often include skills related issues, but may simply involve such aspects as the employer being based in a remote location, poor pay or terms and conditions of employment

Skills shortage vacancies: are those hard-to-fill vacancies which result from a lack of applicants with the required skills, work experience or qualifications.

74. Are you experiencing or have you experienced difficulty recruiting for vacancies within your organisation in the last 12 months?

75. The National Employer Skills Survey (2007) identified a series of **skills shortages** amongst applicants. For each skill can you confirm whether it presents a challenge for your organisation when recruiting and provide some detail about the actual nature of the skills shortages and occupations most affected?

| Skill shortage | Challenge or problem when recruiting? (y/n) | Specific examples – <i>obtain as much info as practical about the actual nature of the skill shortage</i> | Occupations most affected |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| Technical, practical or job-specific | | | |
| Problem solving | | | |
| General IT skills | | | |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| IT professional skills | | | |
| Numeracy | | | |
| Literacy | | | |
| Foreign language | | | |
| Welsh language skills | | | |

76. Are there any additional skills shortages you are currently experiencing in your organisation, and which occupations do these most effect?
77. What are the main impacts of having these vacancies unfilled within your organisation? *For example. loss of business to competitors, delays in developing new services, difficulties meeting quality standards, increased workload for other staff and so on* (**only a short answer is required**)
78. What actions has your organisation taken to overcome skills shortages? *For example. increasing spending on advertising and recruitment, using new recruitment methods and channels, increasing the training given to the existing workforce to fill vacancies* (**only a short answer is required**)

Current skills gaps

Skills gaps - occur in cases when employers believe their staff are not fully proficient in their job

79. Broadly speaking, what percentage of staff that you employ do you perceive to not be fully proficient in their job for the following occupational categories:

| NESS/WSLL categories | % not proficient |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Managers | |
| Professionals | |
| Associate professionals | |
| Administrative/clerical staff | |
| Skilled trades | |
| Personal service staff | |
| Sales/customer service staff | |
| Machine operatives | |
| Elementary staff | |

80. The National Employer Skills Survey (2007) identified a series of skills gaps amongst the existing workforce. For each skill can you confirm whether it still presents a challenge amongst current employees and provide some detail about the nature of the gaps and occupations most affected?

| Skill gaps | Still / actually an issue | Specific examples – obtain as much info as practical | Occupations most affected |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Technical, practical or job-specific | | | |
| Management skills | | | |

| | | | |
|------------------|--|--|--|
| Customer service | | | |
| General IT user | | | |
| Team working | | | |

81. Are there any additional skills gaps you are currently experiencing in your organisation, and which occupations do these most effect?
82. What do you perceive to be the reasons behind these skills gaps within your organisation? (only a short answer is needed)
83. What are the main impacts of having these skills gaps within your organisation? (only a short answer is needed)
84. How is your organisation working to address these skills gaps within your organisation? (only a short answer is needed)
85. What support would you, as an employer, benefit from in addressing these gaps? (only a short answer is needed)

Training and workforce development

86. Does your organisation have a training plan that specifies the level and type of training employees will need in the coming year?
87. Does your organisation have 'Investor in People' status?
88. Who provides the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or training activities for existing staff in your organisation?

Interviewer – tick as many boxes that apply

| Occupation categories | Accredited | | | | | | | | Non-accredited | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|----|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------|----------------|----|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| | HE | FE | Formal in-house training | Informal learning on the job | Private training supplier | Voluntary training supplier | Local Authority services | Other | HE | FE | Formal in-house training | Informal learning on the job | Private training supplier | Voluntary training supplier | Local Authority services | Other |
| Managers and related role | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching staff and related roles | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Support staff | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

89. Please give examples of 'other' types of training provision, if applicable

90. What percentage of staff within your organisation has received training in the last 12 months? (Try to obtain a specific percentage, if not probe within the bands if required)

- Specific percentage
- None
- Up to 20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%: or
- 81-100%

91. What would you say are the main barriers to your organisation providing training or more training?

Probe for

- Lack of funds for training
- Organisations being unable to spare staff time for training
- Other reasons

92. Can you suggest any possible solutions to overcome these barriers? (especially lack of funding and being unable to spare staff time)

93. Has your training budget increased, decreased or remained the same since end of the 2008/2009 financial year? What are the reasons for this? [Check impact of recession]

Drivers of skills demand

94. What impact has the recession had on your organisation in terms of current and future skills shortages and gaps, as well as training provision?

95. What are the current market and regulatory pressures on your organisation?

96. What factors influence which skills are needed within your area of work (*For example policy, the current economic climate, technology, globalisation etc*)

Future skills needs and ability of the sector to adapt to change

- *Professional qualifications will become more important*
- Skills become more important than formal qualifications
- There is an increase in the levels of qualifications required for entry
- There is an increasing focus on recognising and accrediting prior experience
- Employers proactively invest in the skills development of their existing workforce
- Employees increasingly invest in their own skills development
- Employers increasingly recognise the role and contribution of a diverse workforce
- Employers increasingly meet their skills needs by employing staff from overseas
- Wages become more competitive
- Employers increasingly employ staff on short term contracts
- Employers offer short courses to existing workforce to meet demand
- *Other- please specify*

97. There is an increasing requirement that individual (lifelong learning) employers work with others across the sector i.e. through partnership or collaboration. What progress is your organisation making towards this? How well equipped is your organisation in terms of the necessary skills?
98. How well do you feel your organisation adapts to change? *Probe: internal changes or external changes e.g. the recession.*
99. How have you adapted to change? *Probe for examples*

Cluster questions

The UK government has introduced 6 priority areas (or clusters). Given that your workforce is important for supplying training and skills for the UK workforce in the wider economy, we have a series of questions about the readiness of your workforce to support each of the cluster areas:

(info for interviewer) Digital Britain project was launched by government in October 2008 – seeks to position the UK as a long-term leader in communications and harnessing digital technology. Includes: 100% broadband coverage in UK by 2012; plans to maximise digital opportunities; and plans to boost digital participation.

1. How prepared is your organisation to provide training and / or learning to industry on Digital Britain?
 - Very
 - Partially
 - Not very: or
 - Don't know

2. How is your organisation embracing the use of new and emerging technologies?
3. What support does your organisation require to harness the use of new technologies? What are the implications of this?
4. Do you provide any training and / or learning in any of these areas?
 - **Low Carbon Industry:** *the UK Low Carbon Industrial Strategy was launched in July 2009 with a core objective of ensuring that businesses and workers are equipped to maximise the economic opportunities and minimize the costs of the transition to a low carbon economy, for example from the rapidly developing civil nuclear industry and renewable energy sector.*
 - **Advanced Manufacturing:** *describes businesses using a high level of design or scientific skills to produce technologically advanced products and processes. Because of the specialised requirements involved, these are usually goods and associated services of high value, such as civil aircraft and space products as well as military hardware.*
 - **Engineering and Construction**
 - **Professional and Financial Services:** *professional services are infrequent, technical, or unique functions performed by independent contractors or consultants .For example the provision of business advisory services at all stages of the business cycle.*
 - **Life Sciences and Pharmaceuticals:** *describes businesses highly dependent significant investment in research and development over the medium to long term in order to bring new products to market.*

(Note to interviewers: If yes for any, please continue to relevant questions below?)

(Information for interviewers) The UK Low Carbon Industrial Strategy was launched in July 2009 with the core objective of ensuring that businesses and workers are equipped to maximise the economic opportunities and minimise the costs of the transition to a low carbon economy; for example from the rapidly developing civil nuclear industry and renewable energy sector

5. How prepared is your organisation to provide training / learning to industry on **reducing carbon emissions**?
 - Very
 - Partially
 - Not very: or
 - Don't know?

6. What sort of impact is skills development in the low carbon industry likely to have on your workforce?

7. How prepared is your organisation to provide training / learning to the **Advanced Manufacturing**:
 - Very
 - Partially
 - Not very: or
 - Don't know?

8. More specifically, in what ways is your organisation supporting advanced manufacturing? For example, through new courses or new modes of delivery in Further Education and Higher Education

9. What technological skills or support can you supply businesses with to help them enter new markets overseas?

10. What impact is skills development in **Advanced Manufacturing** likely to have on your workforce?

11. How prepared is your organisation to provide training and/or learning to the **Engineering and Construction industry**:
 - Very
 - Partially
 - Not very: or
 - Don't know?

12. More specifically, in what ways is your workforce assisting the **Engineering and Construction** industry to improve productivity and skills?

13. What sort of impact is skills development in engineering and construction likely to have on your workforce?

14. How prepared is your organisation to provide training / learning to the **Professional and Financial Services**:

- Very
- Partially
- Not very: or
- Don't know?

15. More specifically, in what ways is your workforce helping to support and maintain UK global competitiveness in this area?

16. What impact is skills development in **Professional and Financial Services** likely to have on your workforce?

17. How prepared is your organisation to provide training / learning to the **Life sciences and Pharmaceuticals** industry:

- Very
- Partially
- Not very: or
- Don't know?

18. More specifically, in what ways is your workforce supporting those in the NHS to become effective champions of innovation?

19. What sort of impact is skills development in the **Life sciences and Pharmaceuticals** industry likely to have on your workforce?

Section 7: Recommendations

20. Can you offer any recommendations on how the current and future skills priorities within your organisation and the lifelong learning sector as a whole should best be tackled?

21. Is there anything else you would like to add in relation to skills priorities within the lifelong learning sector that you feel has not been covered already?

Thank you very much for your time

Appendix 4: Request email for employers



Dear [named contact]

Lifelong Learning UK's (LLUK's) Sector Skills Assessment update

We are writing to ask you or a colleague to participate in a telephone interview as part of LSN's work for LLUK to update their Sector Skills Assessment for the post-16 education sector.

LSN is an independent not-for-profit agency that undertakes research and development in the education sector. We have been commissioned by LLUK to update the current evidence base to inform their sector skills assessment. This involves investigating: the drivers of skills demand; current skills gaps and shortages; future skills needs; and the availability of training provision.

The research involves gathering information from across the four UK nations and five of LLUK's work areas, including:

- Community Learning and Development (CLD)
- Higher Education (HE)
- Further Education (FE)
- Libraries, Archives and Information Services (LAIS)
- Work Based Learning (WBL)

There are a number of strands to this research, including interviews with stakeholders and employers.

You have been identified by LLUK as an employer in the sector that they have had previous involvement with, and we would very much like to speak to you as part of our current round of telephone interviews. The interview will take up to 30 minutes and involve a series of questions to explore your opinion and perspective on the following issues:

- Current skills shortages and hard-to-fill vacancies
- Current skills gaps
- Training for the current workforce
- Drivers of skills demand
- Future skills needs
- Recommendations

Any information you provide will remain anonymous.

A colleague will contact you in the next few days to see if you are able to participate and to arrange a convenient time. Alternatively if you would like to respond to this email with a convenient time/date when you are available to participate in an interview between now and 5th November that would be much appreciated. If you would like any further information about the project please contact Katherine Jones at LSN on 020 7492 5295 or email kjones@lsnlearning.org.uk. LSN is a not-for-profit organisation committed to making a difference in the education and skills sector.

Kind regards

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